

DSPL-620



ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଭାଗ  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର



## ପ୍ରଥମ ବିଶ୍ୱ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ୨୦୨୪

୩ରୁ ୫ ଫେବୃଆରୀ | ଜନତା ମଇଦାନ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

### ପ୍ରଥମ ବିଶ୍ୱ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀର ତୃତୀୟ ଦିବସରେ

OIPR-15001/13/0330/2324



ଗୌରବମୟ ଅତୀତର ସ୍ମୃତିଚାରଣ ଏବଂ  
ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷାର ପରିକଳ୍ପନା  
୨୦୩୬ରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା : ନବଦିଗନ୍ତର ସମ୍ଭାବନା  
ଶ୍ରୀ ସୁବ୍ରତ ବାଗଚୀ ଏବଂ ୫-ଟି ଓ ନବୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା  
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ଆଲୋଚନା: ପଦ୍ମଶ୍ରୀ ହରମାନ କୁଲକେ ଏବଂ  
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ସ୍ଥାନ: ଜନତା ମଇଦାନ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର





## MARSHMELLO TO HEADLINE SUNBURN HOLI TOUR IN INDIA

Grammy-nominated DJ and producer Marshmello is thrilled to headline the Sunburn Holi tour in India. Expressing excitement about returning for the Holi festival, he emphasised the unique energy and passion of the Indian audience, eagerly anticipating performances in Bengaluru, New Delhi, Mumbai, and Pune March 22-25.

## STERLING BROWN PREDICTS HIS LOSS AT THE OSCARS

Actor Sterling K. Brown expressed uncertainty about winning an Oscar in the Best Supporting Actor category alongside Robert Downey Jr. on *The Graham Norton Show*. Despite predicting Downey Jr.'s victory, Brown gracefully accepted his potential loss, praising his deserving talent.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You are very sensitive, and some people will disturb your peace of mind today. However, getting irritated will only make matters worse. Reflect in isolation what may be at the root of the problem. Ganesh says it is closer to you than you think.

**TAURUS**  
This day you are going to be particularly conscious of your beliefs and principles. You will be very proud and sensitive, and are not likely to brook any adverse comment or criticism. Anyone who dares to question or deride them will get a fitting response from you. Ganesh, however warns you to be more tolerant of others' views and beliefs.

**GEMINI**  
You will be filled with concern and sensitivity towards others, and will bestow your blessings upon many. However, being too emotional is not advisable. Your emotions could get in the way of your progress at the work-front. You need to listen to your head over your heart when it comes to professional matters, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Ganesh says that it will be a day of challenge. You will be tempted to plunge into a new venture. But there is no need for haste or anxiety in this regard. Pending work will be completed. Business deals and transactions will end on happy note. Translocation due to business or domestic reasons is possible.

**LEO**  
You will be busy on the work front today. It is a good day for those who are self-employed. Housewives will remain extremely busy with household matters. You will be able to work according to your desire though, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Close members of your family and friends will take up most of your time today. Students will have to pay more attention to studies as exams are upcoming, and they will have to learn to balance study and free time. Ganesh says today is a good time to buy property. All in all, it is a day when you can afford to relax and let your mind pursue its interests.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says today will be a wonderful day and bring forth a breakthrough for you. You shall get to know and learn a lot from top most officials and elderly people. The higher ups in your office will give you good support today. Ganesh warns you to stay away from judicial proceedings or pleadings, as today is not a good day for fighting court battles.

**SCORPIO**  
"It's a dream come true," you may utter these words in surprise today, feels Ganesh. Your palatial home is ready or you may just get the keys of your much desired vehicle. You may have an extended celebration by receiving or giving gifts to your closed ones.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
No wonder, if you feel like you are stuck in a rut. Your energy level and enthusiasm has gone for a toss due to mundane routine. Unfortunately, your stars too seem to be lazy today, and there's nothing on the cards that can cheer you up. Ganesh advises to let the day pass calmly and wait for a better tomorrow.

**CAPRICORN**  
At times you are very direct in your approach and often end up hurting your near ones badly. Today, you'll bandage some old wounds and make efforts to restore old relationships, says Ganesh. But, your struggle to improve rapport may not be as successful as you want it to be.

**AQUARIUS**  
The cupid may strike you today! The singles may feel the energy and excitement of budding romance. Equally blissful day for the married couples, too, as they will spend quality time with each other.

**PISCES**  
Unexpected expenses are likely to crop up today. There are strong indications that you will set out upon a journey or a picnic to some nearby place, without too much prior planning. However, the journey will be comfortable and your travel plans will go off without a hitch. Even if you don't undertake any travel today, you will find yourself poring over the memories of your earlier sojourns, says Ganesh.

# ALAYA'S CANDID CONFESSION

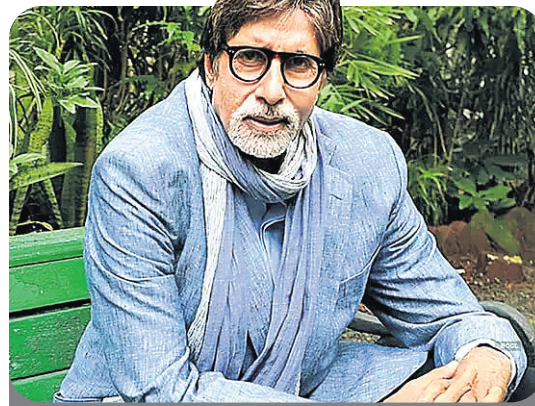
**Mumbai:** As *Jawaani Jaaneman* celebrated its fourth anniversary, actress Alaya F. shared insights into her journey in the film industry. During an interview with a media agency, she candidly discussed her initial reservations about pursuing acting, despite having familial ties to the industry.

She confessed that she actively avoided entering the field, observing her family's involvement and thinking, 'Anything but this, I don't want to do it.' Originally aspiring to become a director, her perspective shifted during a directing class that incorporated an acting component. Realising her natural aptitude for memorising lines quickly, she acknowledged possessing a genuine skill in acting.

Recalling her transition, the *Freddy* actress revealed applying to an acting school during a summer break and outlining her five-year plan to her family after securing admission. She emphasised the meticulous process of recording scenes, submitting essays, transcripts, and other requirements for the audition.

Despite a three-year gap between films due to the pandemic, the *U-turn* actress expressed gratitude for the highs and lows in her career, focusing on maximising every opportunity. Looking ahead to 2024, she discussed her ambition to reach a broader audience by exploring mass commercial projects and continuing to select diverse roles. Reflecting on her debut alongside Saif Ali Khan, she deemed it one of the best decisions she ever made.

AGENCIES



## Amitabh takes trip down memory lane

**Mumbai:** Megastar Amitabh Bachchan said that he never paid attention to conversations revolving around how his films do. He insisted that one does their work and the rest will take care of itself. Big B took to his blog, where he wrote about the 1988 film *Shahenshah*, which had a 'historic advance booking.' He wrote, "*Shahenshah!* ...the film had a historic advance booking which has not been repeated in Hindi film history ...all cinemas were sold out by February 1, 1988—two weeks before the film's release!! ...never before! ...never again!! ... Courtesy: Ef Saikarun and his trend mark #MoDD™ ..."

The cine icon said that he never had this information. "Goodness this information is heartening to read ...must confess I never knew about it ...and quite honestly had never paid attention to such conversation," he said.

He then shared some wisdom about how focusing on work matters, and the rest follows. "Do your work and that's it ...the rest shall take care of itself ...if it deserves merit, it shall get it ...if it does not nothing in the world shall be around it to justify the effect ...Love and more later," he wrote.

On the work front, Big B will be seen next in *Kalki 2898 AD*, along with Prabhas, Kamal Haasan, and Deepika Padukone.

AGENCIES

**Mumbai:** Actress Sanjana Sanghi recently discussed her perspective on the film industry in an interview. She also talked about life beyond movies and her idea of an ideal man.

While expressing her admiration for Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Anushka Sharma, who have openly addressed the challenges, she *Dil*

*Bechara* actress highlighted the industry's tendency to glorify workaholicism. She pointed out the potential toll on health and stressed the significance of investing in a life beyond films to enhance one's artistry.

Discussing her views on love, she expressed her belief in love at first sight, considering herself a hopeless romantic. She credited her parents for this perspective, as they fell in love at a young age and exclusively dated each other before marrying early. Growing up with a romanticised view of finding one's true love and soulmate from the start, she acknowledged, at 27, that love is more than just attraction; it entails significant sacrifice and commitment.

When asked about the qualities she looks for in a man, she shared that everyone has a type, a commonality among the people they date. She emphasised the importance of feeling safe with the person she's with, stating that without that sense of security, there wouldn't be a second date, regardless of the person's success or good looks.

On the work front, Sanjana was last seen in *Dhak Dhak* and *Kadak Singh*.

AGENCIES



## Sanjana says she's hopeless romantic

**Mumbai:** Actress and model Poonam Pandey, who is currently facing a lot of backlash on the Internet for faking her death in order to raise awareness about cervical cancer, has issued a statement addressing the flak. Recently, she took to her Instagram and shared a video of herself defending her action of faking her death to get people to talk about cervical cancer. She said in the video, "For those who think I'm being insensitive, I would like to tell you, my mother suffered cancer. She had throat cancer and I have seen this in my house how bad it gets. Here, I was promoting something for a good cause, a cancer which is preventable yet so many women die. In the live session with *Hauterfly*, I said this very clearly that none of the parties got paid for this."

She continued, "We did this to raise awareness, and it has. A lot of people, who had no idea of cervical cancer are Googling it now, and it is trending right now. I'm getting a lot of comments and DMs where women are telling me that they're getting the HPV vaccine and they're getting their pap smear test done."

She further mentioned, "I have not done this for publicity, I don't need publicity. I knew very well that I would face this kind of backlash, apart from knowing that I did this because I did it for a good cause, guys. Aap logon ne meri death ke baare mein suna toh aap sab log cervical cancer ke baare mein baat kar rahe the. The moment you got to know that I'm alive, you guys are now targeting me for doing something for a good cause. Cervical cancer ke baare mein agar sab baat karte toh mujhe ye sab karne ki zaroorat nahi patti, and guys, my PR is not involved in this."

## Poonam defends her 'death' stunt



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

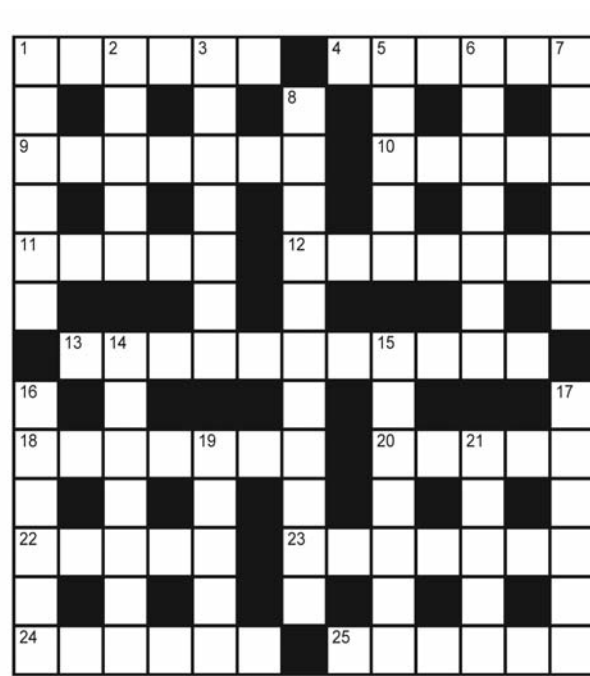


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Symbolic sports figure
  - 4 At a crossroads
  - 9 Essence
  - 10 Invitee
  - 11 Frequently
  - 12 Coward
  - 13 Like some billboards (3-8)
  - 18 Type of exam
  - 20 Shred (3,2)
  - 22 Hockey term
  - 23 Dumpling
  - 24 Give a pep talk
  - 25 Phrase structure
  - 7 Tummy crunches (3-3)
  - 8 Skin doctor's specialty
  - 14 "Shmooze," for example
  - 15 Choirmaster's aim
  - 16 Referee
  - 17 Egyptian tourist site
  - 19 Stogie
  - 21 Sewing stitch

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

				2	3		7
	5					6	8
9			8			5	
		6					
	2					4	
	1	6			9		
2	4		3	9	5		
	5	1					3
3				2	8		

### SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

M	A	P	G	A	P	U	L	T	R	A	
E	I	A	L	N	I	T	E				
D	A	Z	E	D	A	U	D	I	T	O	R
I	Z	G	N	O	A	O					
A	M	A	R	E	T	T	O				
Z	T	S	A								
W	I	Z	A	R	D	A	C	T	U	A	L
O	Y	A	H	N							
R	U	D	E								
K	E	T	I	E	C						
O	R	C	H	A	R	D					
U	O	U	I	E	R	S					
T	R	Y	S	T							
C	A	D									
N	E	T									

SUDOKU

9	5	3	1	2	8	6	4	7
4	7	8	6	5	9	1	3	2
6	1	2	7	4	3	9	8	5
7	8	5	9	1	4	3	2	6
2	3	9	5	8	6	4	7	1
1	6	4	2	3	7	8	5	9
5	4	6	3	9	2	7	1	8
3	2	7	8	6	1	5	9	4
8	9	1	4	7	5	2	6	3

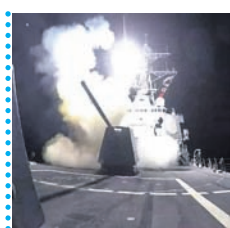
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



### Won't join BJP: Kejri

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal claims BJP is trying to compel him and other AAP leaders to join the saffron party

NATIONAL | P7



### Joint strikes

The United States and Britain launch strikes against 36 Houthi targets in Yemen killing many

INTERNATIONAL | P8



### Sticking to status-quo

Reserve Bank likely to continue with pause on lending rate in upcoming bi-monthly monetary policy this week

BUSINESS | P9



### Gill props India

Shubman Gill scores his 3rd Test century as India set England a target of 399 in the second Test

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY FEBRUARY 5 2024

P1

## SHORT TAKES

### Uttarakhand nod for UCC draft

**Dehradun:** The final draft of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) was approved by the Uttarakhand Cabinet here Sunday, paving the way for its tabling in the state Assembly whose special four-day session begins Monday. The Cabinet passed the UCC draft at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami at his official residence. The final draft of the UCC running into 740 pages in four volumes was submitted to Dhami here Friday by a five-member panel headed by retired judge.

### Odisha Budget session from today

**Bhubaneswar:** The Budget session of the Odisha Assembly will commence Monday. It will be a brief session running from February 5 to 13 during which Finance Minister Vikram Keshari Arukha will present an interim budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal. This will be the last session of the Assembly before the general elections due later this year. Assembly Speaker Pramila Mallik convened Sunday a meeting of the legislators from all parties to discuss the schedule of the Budget session. The Speaker sought their cooperation.

### Odisha govt inks pact with JNU

**Bhubaneswar:** The Odisha government signed Sunday an MoU with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) for the establishment of a centre for Odia studies at the varsity. The proposed Biju Patnaik Special Centre for Odia Studies aims at delving into the leadership, governance and contribution of former Odisha CM Biju Patnaik, officials said. The MoU was signed between Higher Education Secretary Arvind Agrawal and JNU vice-chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit.



**LOOKING CUTE:** A dog all decked up for the show organised by Odisha Kennel Club at the OUAT Veterinary ground in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

# Gram Nyayalayas fail to deliver justice

■ These courts were set up for the speedy disposition of justice, but have failed to do so

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 4:** Odisha was among the states that were the first to introduce 'Gram Nyayalayas', or village courts, after the Act paving the way for them came into effect October 2, 2009. A little less than 15 years later, far from ensuring speedy justice to those who need it the most, the state's 'Gram Nyayalayas' are mired in a pile of pending cases because of the apathy of the key stakeholders, including the police, lawyers and the Odisha government.

The Law Commission, in its 114th report in 1986, had proposed that 'Gram Nyayalayas' be set up across the country to ensure access to justice for the weaker sections of the society and reduce delays in the delivery of justice. Odisha rolled out the concept in 2009 to deliver justice at their doorsteps. Currently Odisha has 20 operational 'Gram Nyayalayas' out of the 24 that have so far been notified by the state government. Odisha had received ₹524 lakh from the Centre to set up these centres.

However, the village courts are yet to fully achieve the objectives they were set up for: The



**MORE THAN 45K CASES PENDING IN 'GRAM NYAYALAYAS'**

**OUT OF THE 24 GRAM NYAYALAYAS IN ODISHA, 20 ARE OPERATIONAL**

'Gram Nyayalayas', that were expected to reduce the pendency of cases in subordinate courts, themselves now have a huge backlog themselves. Odisha is second to Uttar Pradesh in the number of pending cases in the 'Gram Nyayalayas'

The data available in the 'Gram Nyayalaya' portal of the Department of Justice reveals that a total of 45,874, cases are pending in the 'Gram Nyayalayas'. Among them 1,124 are civil and the remaining 44,750 are criminal cases.

Many other reasons are also responsible for the poor show of village courts across the country. Sources said that in many places police officials are re-

luctant to file cases in 'Gram Nyayalayas'. This has led to the diminishing importance of such courts, they added.

Officials also pointed out that the lack of judicial officers are also harming the Nyayalayas. They added that unless the courts are held on a regular basis, the whole purpose of setting up of such Nyayalayas will fail.

"Majority of States have now set up regular courts at Taluka level. Though no state has opposed setting up of Gram Nyayalayas, however reluctance of police officials and other State functionaries to invoke jurisdiction of 'Gram Nyayalayas', lukewarm response of Bar, non-availability of notaries and stamp vendors, problem of concurrent jurisdiction of regular courts are other issues indicated by the States, which are coming in the way of operationalisation of the scheme," an official stated. He added that people will have to depend on speedy disposition of justice by 'Gram Nyayalayas'.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



**Much before Poonam Pandey, I faked my own death to raise awareness about bank loan defaulters**

	BBSR	CTC
<b>Max Temp</b>	31.7°C	30.2°C
<b>Min Temp</b>	20.5°C	20.0°C
<b>Humidity</b>	95%	90%
<b>Rainfall</b>	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
DRY WEATHER VERY LIKELY

## Telangana man holds Odisha minor captive

*It has been alleged that the deceased paid ₹50,000 to free his daughter*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Belpada, Feb 4:** A migrant labourer died Sunday at Sulekela village under this tehsil in Bolangir district. The deceased has been identified as Kanhu Mallick. He had recently returned from a brick kiln in Telangana. The deceased's family alleged that Kanhu was frequently tortured by the owner of the brick kiln. They added that the person has kept his 10-year-old daughter as captive. Kanhu is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Other residents informed that the brick kiln owner had demanded a hefty sum from Kanhu to release his daughter. They added that despite Kanhu giving ₹50,000 to the owner, his daughter

was not released. They said that Kanhu was also beaten up badly and forced to leave the place. With no other option, Kanhu had to return to his own village.

The family of Kanhu and other residents of the village staged a demonstration in front of the tehsil office here. They demanded the local administration look into the matter and bring the minor back from Telangana.

According to a source, Kanhu had gone to Telangana along with his family to earn a living. He was allegedly being tortured by the employer and later fell sick. Despite sickness, the owner made Kanhu work for long hours and also did not give him proper food, other co-workers alleged.

Subsequently, the owner released Kanhu, but kept his minor daughter as 'mortgage'. Locals said that Kanhu had sold his only piece land to bring his daughter back.

## UP man held for spying

*The accused, working at the embassy in Moscow, was passing on vital information related to the Indian Army and the Ministry of External Affairs to ISI handlers*

AGENCIES

**Lucknow, Feb 4:** The police in Uttar Pradesh have arrested an Indian national working at the country's embassy in Moscow for allegedly spying for Pakistan's ISI, officials said here Sunday.

The Meerut field unit of UP's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) called Satendra Siwal, who was working as an IBSA (India Based Security Assistant) in the Indian Embassy in Moscow from 2021, for interrogation, a statement released by the ATS said. Siwal, a resident of Shahmahiuddinpur



village in Hapur, could not give satisfactory answers and confessed to his crime during 'questioning', the release added.

Siwal was arrested after an FIR was registered against him at ATS police station here under Section 121A of the IPC (waging war against the country) and the Official Secrets Act, 1923, the statement informed.

The ATS in its probe through electronic and physical surveillance found that Siwal was involved in anti-India activities with the network of the ISI handlers, the agency said and added that Siwal was providing im-

portant confidential information regarding the strategic activities of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian military establishments for money.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it is aware of Siwal's arrest and is working with the investigative authorities in this case.

The ATS said it was receiving intelligence inputs from various confidential sources that the handlers of the Pakistani intelligence agency ISI, through some persons, were luring the employees of the MEA with money to obtain strategically important information related to the Indian Army that is likely to pose a huge threat to the internal and external security of India. The ATS informed that it was keeping a watch on Siwal for some time before grilling him.

## MAOIST KILLED IN ENCOUNTER

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baliguda, Feb 4:** A Maoist was gunned down during exchange of fire between the rebels and security forces in Kandhamal district, police said here, Sunday. The deceased was identified as top rebel leader, Dasuru of KKBN division who carried a reward of ₹5 lakh on his head. The slain Maoist was a native of Sukma district in neighbouring Chhattisgarh. Police also seized some Maoist literature and a .303 rifle from the place where the man was killed. He was wanted in over 22 cases, including murders of civilians and attacks on security forces.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team comprising jawans of Special Operation Group (SOG) and District Voluntary Force (DVF) launched a search operation in the forests of Kakerkupa area and adjoining villages under Baliguda police limits, Saturday evening. During the operation,



the red rebels opened fire on the cops. Police also retaliated and in the process Dasuru was killed.

Officials said that one of the jawans also suffered injuries on his hand. He was first taken to Baliguda hospital and then Sunday he was shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur. He is currently undergoing treatment and his condition is stated to be stable, Jai Narayan Pankaj, Inspector General of Southern Range, Berhampur, said.

Pankaj also stated that the encounter continued for some time. The rebels then fled the spot taking advantage of darkness. A combing operation is continuing in the area, Pankaj added.

## LACK OF TENANT VERIFICATION LEADS TO THEFTS: COPS

*In the last couple of months more than 30 theft cases have been reported from various parts of the Odisha capital and in most incidents these are suspected to be the handiwork of people from outside Bhubaneswar*

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 4:** The instances of daring thefts and burglaries in housing societies and private residences in secluded areas across the city, is giving sleepless nights to citizens. It has posed serious question marks on the efficacy of the Property Offence Prevention and Detection (POPD) unit - the dedicated cell set up by Commissionerate Police at every station to deal with such crimes.

Experts say the failure of cops in the POPD units - which

at present are lying in a state of neglect and disarray three years after their creation - to maintain a strict tenant verification module has resulted in giving a free run to migrant workers, who are turning out to be the culprits in a majority of these offences.

In 2021, the City police had launched POPD units with a 'mandate to bring about a curb in robbery, theft and dacoity cases through mandatory verification of tenants' (criminal antecedent in every police station limit. These anti-property-of-



fence units are known to be managed in all 23 police stations here, whose estimated 13 lakh population is on a steady increase.

These specialised units are supervised by ACPs in their respective zones. They are supposed to monitor the property crime graph of police stations comprising inspectors, sub-inspectors and constables.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 2022 figures, the Bhubaneswar Urban Police District (UPD) recorded 602 cases of robbery, 373 burglaries and 2,058 thefts in various parts of the City.

But what has exacerbated the present situation is the occurrence of more than 30 apartment thefts in the past couple of

months, while the detection rate has been abysmally low with just a handful of arrests.

A senior officer at a City police station, who spoke requesting anonymity, said a large number of culprits in burglary cases have been identified to be migrant workers who engage themselves in several odd-jobs during the day. They use the cover of the night to strike at secluded flats for robbery.

Sample this. Around eight masked miscreants armed with iron rods and knives cut the iron-grilled window and barge inside a home under Nandankanan police limits November 25. The owner of the house, Rajesh Chand and his wife were sleeping with their two children in the bedroom. The couple panicked at the sight of the thieves and handed over all

valuables in the house without a murmur. The miscreants tied up the entire family with bed sheets and locked them up in the bathroom before escaping.

Even nearly three months after the chilling burglary, the police are yet to make any headway in the crime. Nandankanan police station IIC Biswaranjan Nayak said the burglary is suspected to be the handiwork of a Bangladeshi gang following meticulous recce.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh said it is practically impossible for cops to maintain identification details of every tenant in the city. "Often in the aftermath of any major house burglary, the police officers solely rely on the account of locals and informers," he added. **More P3**



# downtown

**IN MEMORIAM**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik offer tributes at a statue of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das on the latter's 90th death anniversary, near Raj Bhavan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



**COLOURS OF CELEBRATIONS:** A story telling session during BhuFesto at IG Park in Bhubaneswar (Pic-1), A trainer takes out his canine at the dog show at OUAT ground (Pic-2), Visitors take selfie at the First World Odia Language Conference at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar (Pic-3), the Commissionerate Police HQs illuminated with colourful lights to mark the first First World Odia Language Conference in Bhubaneswar

## 5T Chairman reviews projects in Puri dist

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 4:** Chairman 5T and Nabin Odisha Kartik Pandian Sunday visited Puri to review the progress of various developmental works in the district and interact with students and general public.

He participated in the Nua-O Program and interacted with students of all colleges of Puri. He discussed with the students on Nua-O program providing a platform for youngsters to showcase their talent and to help achieve overall personality development in addition to their academic achievements.

Pandian emphasised the students to work hard with self-confidence to achieve success in life. He said that the college transformation projects in the district will be completed by March. He motivated the students to aim high and mentioned about the achievements of some prominent personalities from Puri district like Prasanna Kumar Hota, Retd. Health Secretary, Govt of India; Gopal



Nanda, Ex - DG, Odisha Police; Kishore Jena, Athlete; Jayanti Behera, Paralympic athlete; Malay Kumar Mishra, Ambassador of India to the Republic of Hungary; Sudarshan Sahoo, Sculpture artist; Sudarshan Pattnaik, sand artist and Ashok Mohapatra, Ex-Director, AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

He said that so many role models have emerged from Puri district who have all been students from different government

schools and colleges. They achieved success because of hard work and determination. He motivated the students to believe in their goals and work hard with self confidence. Pandian directed the officials concerned to complete the work as per timeline.

He also reviewed the progress of Konark Heritage Area Development Project at a cost of ₹172 crore.

Later, he reviewed the progress of 10 Multipurpose Cyclone shelters at a total cost of ₹20 crore.

He also reviewed other Major Temple development projects - Loknath Temple, Puri at a cost of ₹35.42 crore; Maa Mangala Temple, Kakatpur at a cost of ₹11.85 crore; Alarnath Pitha, Brahmagiri at a cost of ₹9.11 crore; Siruli Mahaveer temple at a cost of ₹6.02 crore; Baliharchandi temple at a cost of ₹5.41 crore; Somnath temple, Nimapara at a cost of ₹4.94 crore.

He also reviewed the progress of other projects of the district including Mega PWS, major roads and bridges and major health infrastructure projects.

Some of the major projects have been taken up after the previous visit of Pandian to Puri district in August 2023, when he attended the grievance meetings and took feedback from the public.

He interacted with the public at Bhudan Field, Talabania at Puri and received the grievances on various issues and assured early resolution.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Assembly budget session from today

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 4:** The budget session of the Assembly will begin Monday with the address of Governor Raghubar Das, an official said.

The session will continue till February 13.

Finance Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha will present the vote-on-account for the first four months of the 2024-25 fiscal, on February 8 and the appropriation bill for the vote-on-account will be tabled February 9.

Assembly Speaker Pramila Mallik Sunday convened an all-party meeting for the smooth conduct of the short-term session.

BJP chief whip Mohan Majhi said that the party leaders would raise issues, including 'non-implementation' of central schemes such as Ayushman Bharat in Odisha and the state government's alleged negligence towards tribals.

The government has called a short-term session only to announce some schemes to woo the voters ahead of the twin polls in the state, Majhi said, alleging that many state schemes have been closed down after a few months.

Meanwhile, Congress legislature party leader Narasingha Mishra alleged that the Centre and Odisha government are playing politics over religion.

"The BJD and BJP are two sides of the same coin," he said.

Besides, the Congress party would raise issues such as "unemployment, lack of teachers in schools and colleges, deteriorating health system among others", Mishra said.

On the other hand, government chief whip Prasanta Muduli said, "We are fully prepared to face all questions and issues raised by the opposition for the interest of the state and its people."

## Tenant antecedent verification still a distant dream

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 4:** The norm to rent out a house in cities like Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai requires the tenants to produce character verification certificates from their respective native police stations before landlords.

However, the alleged laxity of Commissionerate Police in adopting a practice that scrutinizes antecedent verification of tenants, among whom migrants form a sizeable part, has been proving detrimental to the security of the denizens.

The streak of burglaries in the City is on the rise. Over the past two days, two cases of apartment thefts have been reported under Mancheswar and Pahala police stations, respectively. In an uncanny resemblance with the earlier instances, these flats too were robbed by masked men when the inmates were away.

The burglary at Kalyani Heights under Pahala police limits involved loss of gold jewellery worth ₹20 lakh and ₹15,000 cash, said a policeman. The theft at two homes in Satyabadi apartment under Mancheswar police limits, recorded a sweep of gold jewels worth ₹25 lakh. Moreover, the Nayapalli police in the past month busted two interstate burglary gangs, and made more than 8 arrests.

In both the detections, preliminary investigations revealed a striking similarity among the miscreants who hailed from different states, like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Gujarat and others, who did odd-jobs in the day, and struck at isolated apartment homes during night hours.

In addition to this, the arrested individuals were later ascertained to have alleged involvements in over 7 burglaries and robberies in the city.

In the meantime, the POPD



cells depict a dismal state at police stations across the City. Incidentally, officials at many police stations admitted of not keeping an active maintenance of the identification details of the tenants, of whom migrants form a major part.

Juneja Kerketta, SI at Chandrasekharpur police station said in order to tackle rampant house robberies, the police are undertaking active night patrolling from 12:30 am till 4 am. On being asked whether tenants

were required to submit documents for antecedent verification proof with the landlords, who in turn should intimate the police, she feigned her ignorance about the same.

Echoing in a similar way, SI Subhranshu Mohapatra at Nayapalli police station said it is impractical for cops to keep verification record of every tenant. "However, the police keep a close watch on workers engaged in menial jobs, such as construction works or domestic help, to prevent any adverse situation," he added.

Incidentally, the city has the biggest slum cluster, Salia Sahi under Nayapalli police station jurisdiction, which reports highest instances of crime in the entire City. It has been observed in the past that the informal settlement of thousands of migrants, who arrive from different corners of the state and India in the slum, had been responsi-

ble for numerous illegal activities such as hooch trade or illegal gun running.

In a precautionary measure, the POPD unit has also created a slum-based voluntary body, Basti Mitra, which is authorized to maintain identification details of each slum inmates. This apart, the team also keeps a close vigil on freshly released or bailed convicts, and their involvement in robberies or theft, if any.

Salia Sahi Slum Community President, Jaidev Naik said there has hardly been any response whenever the police intervention is sought for initiating a crackdown against criminals. "This is double-standard," he said.

The role of the Basti Mitra, which is meant to coordinate with police for preventing any potential crime incident, has turned to be nothing less than just hype, Naik added.



## BATTLING THE ODDS

AN ACCOUNT OF EARLY ODISHA WOMEN WRITERS - KUNTALA KUMARI SABAT, KOKILA DEVI AND BIDYUT PRABHA DEVI

By the early twentieth century, Odia literary landscape began boasting its dense and diverse range of boisterous writers. The only observation, however, about this thick yield would be that women were painfully sparse in proportion due to no fault of their own. Much like any other part of the nation then, it took a while for the women to struggle through and, in some cases, overcome societal apprehensions "to create a literature of their own." Given that those were the tumultuous pre-independence times, it was a true ordeal for women to gain access to quality education.

But fierce souls like Kuntala Kumari Sabat (1901-1938), Kokila Devi (1896-1936) and Bidyut Prabha Devi (1926-1977) couldn't be weighed down by just the degree of societal pressures. They chose instead to harness the tide of revolution and employ it to generate a female-led sensitivity to literature, history and the larger society.

The full-fledged urge for female education began gaining pace once Smt. Reba Roy set up the first Girls' high School in Cuttack. It is to the credit of this school that legends like Kuntala Kumari Sabat could come to the forefront of women's struggle for literacy and independence. The beacon of Odia resurrection that Fakir Mohan Senapati had lit on the coast glowed even brighter in the spirits of these women. Sabat had multiple experiences at her hand during her stay in Burma and later in Khordha, which shaped her political consciousness. Being a

doctor of excellent caliber did not limit her to the profession. If anything, then it exposed her to the plethora of ailments that women went through in their domesticity. These experiences then found a reflection in her writings, which narrated the pain of the feminine gender explicitly and further emphasised the need for social revolution. Her works - "Utkalara Nari Samsya" (1934), "Bharatiya Mahila Prasanga" (1935), "Biswa Biplabini" (1930), etc are all intricately detailed with the lives of women when bonded by matrimony at a tender age and is laced elaborately with the dual problem of caste and gender discrimination that has a tenacious grip over the larger society. Moreover, she was even courageous to draft a poignant "Nari Dabi" in 1934, which unclouded the social and domestic locations where women could claim justice unaided. She was indeed ahead of her times for having raised her voice against evils like marital rape and subjugation of females, which rarely make an appearance in Odia literature at that junction in literary history.

Sabat's reputation is certainly incomparable; however, the same cannot be alleged about many of her predecessors and contemporaries. Smt. Kokila Devi was one such contemporary whose con-

tributions to literature often went unsung. Being widowed at an early age, Kokila Devi had her fair share of bitter experiences that served as the foundation to her literary oeuvre. Aspirations for a better world for women and independence from the clutches of the Britishers were a central theme of all her works. She wrote as if it was her duty to be writing about the plight of women, and that candid attitude in her narration gained her the status of activist who never even quivered once before expressing the harshness of reality she had experienced. An illustrious example of the same would be her portrait of "Bilasini". The practicality of life gained supremacy in her work as she paid no false reverence to leading an idealistic life. In suggesting widow remarriage, her revolutionary attitude unfurled itself and etched the permanence of her ideas.

Sharing the same literary space and time was another lady of letters - Smt. Bidyut Prabha Devi who wrote immensely with a sentimental fervour. The romantic her remained unfettered even at the most distasteful events, and her lengthy poetic expression is testimony to the same. She had a knack for putting together even the toughest of the events in the simplest of words, which echoed the unharmonious nature of the domestic life that women around her lived through.

Just like the above two dignitaries, Bidyut Prabha Devi too suffered through the rampant patriarchy and craved for nothing but creative independence. Her poems fought conservatism and made an effort towards establishing as the greater evil. A

significant portion of her poems were also dedicated to expressing the magnificence of Odisha. In "Sabita" (1947), she exhibited her patriotism in an outright romantic fashion that was idiosyncratic of her. Beginning from fighting for their own education to voicing against the forces of discrimination, these legendary women spearheaded the Odia literary movement; however, the negligence they are facing today at the hands of the readers and populace is far more brutal than the scrutiny they had faced earlier. This claim stems from the fact that along with a strong urge for a free Odia state and better living conditions for women, these three women, in particular, shared an extremely short span of lives.

Unlike Fakir Mohan Senapati, they did not enjoy decades-long popularity. At first, they were failed by fate and now by the readers who have somehow sidelined their significance while being fastidious about whom to read. In retrospect, writer/historian Sachidananda Mohanty seems a little hasty in referring to them as "Rabati's sisters" and their writings as the "Lost Tradition". While there is some truth to his former assertion, at the same time, there is also a stripping off of credits that occurs in ascribing so in the latter. These women didn't let their domesticity obstruct them and immortalised their short lives by creating a storm within the readers, and hence, as readers, we now have the balls in our court to decide the revival of the tradition that they have set forth by not just championing great ordeals but also by exposing the soreness of our own attitudes.

*Soumya Nayak, Research Scholar, Centre For Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad*

## Youth take the lead



Language is not just a vehicle of thought, or a medium of expression, it is the first symbol of racial identity. Like a perennial river, it continues to flow in succession from one generation to another. Beginning with the collection of mystical poetics by the Sarala Sahitya and Bhagabata of Jagannath Das, Odia literature evolved and developed into its full glory over generations. Nevertheless, the historic First World Odia Language Conference has infused new possibilities and spirit in the youth. A new lease of energy has been infused into billions of Odias for the development, protection and propagation of their language.

A matching reflection of the new energy can be found in the thousands of young talents coming from the nook and corner of Odisha who are enthusiastically participating in the World Odia Language Conference in Bhubaneswar. "Language holds key to the future" is the core message of this language conference. The conference showcases a wonderful gathering of the young talents who will lead the state in various fields in future. There are certain standards to gauge the success of every event and institution. The way the youth of Odisha have expressed their enthusiasm, joy and aspirations in various aspects of this language conference, it certainly points towards the creation of a golden Odisha.

In view of the increasing affinity of the youth towards their mother tongue, many exhibition rooms have been put up at the conference. This conference has been organized with an aim to foster love, interest and spiritual knowledge among them through various competitions. A galaxy of writers, thinkers

and researchers are giving their opinions in the various events organized at the conference. The representatives of Odisha's youth are also putting forward their opinion, asking questions and discussing various topics with the panellists in the interactive sessions. In the presence of renowned litterateur Padma Vibhushan Dr Sitakanth Mahapatra, Padma Bhushan Dr Pratibha Ray, the recipient of the First World Language honour Debi Prashanta Patnaik, Prof Pritish Acharya, researcher Subas Pani, researcher Bhaskar Mishra, these young students are sharing their information and knowledge, and expressing their opinions at the various discussions.

The special achievement of the First World Odia Language

Conference has been the message that the future of Odisha will be in the hands of right, capable and competent leaders in the coming days.

By blending the history and traditions of Odisha with the language of the digital age, the youths are presenting Odia identity in an appropriate way. The future of language lies in computer keyboards, sophisticated fonts, artificial intelligence and robots. 'The Dome of the Future' is a beautiful representation of how modern applications and technology can be used in the spread of the Odia language.

Here at the conference, the new generation is especially trying to see what can be done for the upliftment of the Odia language through the use of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics.

### WHAT THEY SAY

**I am really happy to attend the World Odia Language Conference today. Such efforts of the state government are commendable. I am grateful to have the opportunity to speak on ancient historical and literary traditions. A language that has ancient roots and distinct evolution is called a Classical language. Odia is the first language of the Indo-Aryan language family in eastern and northern India**

**This Odisha government initiative is an opportunity for us to learn about our language, and foster love for the language amongst us. I got a chance to speak on Jagannath consciousness. Shri Jagannath is the symbol of all consciousness. Mahaprabhu is the icon of Odia race and its identity**

**The First World Odia Language Conference has become possible due to the efforts of hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik. Ancient and medieval Odia literature has a long history, speciality and peculiarities. It has perfectly described art, culture and nature, and enriched Odia literature. The description of Jagannath culture in the medieval literature is a testimony to the love and affection of Odias towards their language**

SIDDHARTH KUMAR SAHU | RAVENSHAW COLLEGIATE SCHOOL, CUTTACK  
SATYABRATA DAS | UTKAL UNIVERSITY  
PRATIBHA PARIDA | CAPITAL HIGH SCHOOL, BHUBANESWAR



## Kantakabi: The poet of Odisha's State Song

Kantakabi Lakshmikanta Mohapatra was a versatile genius, who has left his indelible imprints in various genres of Oriya literature.

A leading freedom fighter and a great nationalist poet of rare caliber, Lakshmikanta's immortal patriotic songs were a perennial source of inspiration for the people of Orissa during the movement for a separate state of Orissa and the freedom struggle of India. He tried his hand at nearly all forms of literature - drama, parody, poetry, short story, novel.. you name it. His writings were characterised by an indomitable nationalistic spirit, a strong sense of humour and exquisite craftsmanship.

As a musician and an actor, he also contributed enormously to the rich tradition of the performing arts in Orissa (Odisha). Lakshmikanta, popularly known as 'Kantakabi' in the state, occupies a unique place in the socio-political-cultural life of Odisha. He made a significant contribution to Odia literature at a time when the very existence of the Odia language was under threat due to the conspiracies hatched by the neighboring states. Neither Odisha nor Odia had an independent identity then. But Odias were gradually awakened and provoked to react sharply to the unjust domination of the neighboring states through the fiery writings of the early nationalists.

The political movement for a separate Orissa province gained momentum through the tireless efforts of 'Utkala Sammilani'. Kantakabi made an immense contribution to Odia literature during this crucial phase. His composition, 'Bande Utkala Janani' was adopted as the welcome song at the Balasore session of the 'Utkal Sammilani'. The



distinguished guests on that session, Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das and Utkala Gauraba Madhusudan Das, praised the young poet highly for having penned such a powerful patriotic song. 'Bande Utkala' and other popular patriotic songs like 'Koti Koti Kanthe Aji' and 'Udaee Nishana Bajai Bheri' written by Lakshmikanta stirred the souls of millions of Odias during their long, two-pronged battle - one against the domination of the neighboring states and for an independent Odia identity, language, culture and province and the other for the freedom of India. Kantakabi contributed immensely to both struggles through his powerful writings.

A multi-faceted personality, Kantakabi dabbled in almost all genres of litera-

ture and makes one forget the agonies of life.

Far from being dreamy-eyed, he discovers new dimensions of reality in 'Jeevan Sangeeta'. That is why Kantakabi's songs are a source of inspiration for somebody who has lost all hope in life and gives him immense strength to face his challenges.

Kantakabi founded a literary journal named 'Dagara', which was not only regarded highly by the contemporary intelligentsia but also adored by common readers for its unique style of writing. This distinguished man of letters was a prolific writer in English too. He once wrote a drama in English for 'The Observer' on request. A French lady was so moved by his story 'Music of the Whistle' published in 'Current Affairs' that she took it upon herself to translate it into French. He himself translated his masterpiece, 'Jeevan Sangeeta' (Songs of the Soul) into English in the forties, but it was published by the Kantakabi Centenary Committee only in 1988 - a full 35 years after his death.

Kantakabi was at once a creative writer and a critic. His caustic criticism of erring politicians and despotic feudal chiefs earned him an awe-inspiring reputation. His creative writings, on the other hand, were expressions of his free spirit unencumbered by egotism. Apart from his bountiful contribution to Odia literature, Kantakabi's family also actively participated in the freedom movement. His sister Kokila Devi, brothers Sitakanta and Kamalakanta, two sons Nityananda and Gour Chandra all participated in different phases of the freedom struggle and courted arrest time and again.

Born to Radhamani Devi and Choudhury Bhagabat Prasad

Samantaray Mahapatra as their eldest son on 9th December 1888 at Dhuapatria lane of Cuttack city, Kantakabi breathed his last on 24th February 1953. His death was mourned by legions of his admirers. His father Bhagabat Prasad was also a great nationalistic leader, who was elected to the Orissa-Bihar Legislative Council four times and served as its Deputy Speaker for two terms. As a social reformer, Bhagabat Prasad played a significant role in the eradication of the dowry system and the reduction of wasteful wedding expenses.

Kantakabi's mother, Radhamani was a voracious reader and memorised the Vedas and the Upanishads. Both father and mother had a great impact in the making of Kantakabi. The Odisha Legislative Assembly conduced the death of Kantakabi on 2nd March 1953, within a week of his sad demise. The then Chief Minister Nabakrishna Choudhury, the Opposition Leader Sradhakhar Supakar and the Speaker Nanda Kishore Das expressed their heart-felt grief.

They said; "Kantakabi's death has not only created a void in the literary world, but has also irreparably damaged the public life of Orissa. Especially, his efforts to cleanse politics through satire shall be remembered by the posterity ad infinitum." Lakshmikanta was christened 'Kantakabi' not by any royal family or by the government, but by his innumerable admirers. In the nineties, Odisha became the first state in the entire country to adopt a patriotic song - 'Bande Utkala Janani' - for singing at the valedictory session of the Legislative Assembly.

*Prabhakalyan Mohapatra  
The writer is a Bhubaneswar-based freelance journalist (Odisha Review)*

### First World Odia Language Conference: Day III (Feb 5)

- HALL-1: (PLENARY HALL) ADIKABI SARALA DAS HALL**
  - Talk : Prof. Arlo Griffiths (10.00 - 10.45 am)
  - Talk : Prof. Annette Schmiedchen (10.45 - 11.30 am)
  - Odisha@2036: A Space For Tomorrow (Part-1) (11.30 am - 2.00 pm)
  - Odia@2036: A Space For Tomorrow (Part II) & Valedictory Function (3.00 - 5.30 pm)
- HALL-2: ATIBADI JAGANNATH DAS HALL**
  - Odia as Language in IT Age: The Opportunities and Way Forward (11.30 am - 2.00 pm)
- HALL-3: KABI SAMRAT UPENDRA BHANJA HALL**
  - Culture and Heritage: The Soft Power of the State (11.30 am - 2.00 pm)
- HALL-4: BYASAKABI FAKIR MOHAN SENAPATI HALL**
  - Translation: From Odia and into Odia (11.30 am - 2.00 pm)
- HALL-5: PRAKRUTI KABI GANGADHAR MEHER HALL**
  - Odia as a Language of Science (11.30 am - 2.00 pm)



Icon of the Seas, the world's largest cruise ship, sails out of Government Cut between Fisher Island, right, and Miami Beach as it departs PortMiami on its first public cruise



Divers perform an underwater lion dance at the KLCC Aquaria ahead of Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Children react as Palestinians fleeing Khan Younis, due to the Israeli ground operation, move towards Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip



Guardsmen move along the Rio Grande in small boats past rows of concertina wire placed to help curb illegal crossings, in Eagle Pass, Texas



Participants take part in the 'Lokmat Maha Marathon' at Kasturchand Park ground in Nagpur



A Houthi follower carries a machine gun as he rides on a motorcycle during a parade in solidarity with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and to show support to Houthi strikes on ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, in Sanaa, Yemen



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' in Bokaro



Workers spread rice grain on a field to dry them in the Sun in Nadia

REUTERS/AP/PTI PHOTOS



# national

## of the day quote

The women, who are among the main supporters of the BJP, are ashamed of because of the plight of the women wrestlers, the gruesome incident in Manipur, the incident of mother-daughter being burnt to death and countless other incidents of insult to women, they are not with BJP this time

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

The statements in the CAG report are being twisted deliberately by the opposition to engage in malicious propaganda. The Trinamool Congress will not take responsibility for the Left's lack of accountability during their regime as we have followed all protocols while in power

DEREK O'BRIEN | TMC MP

In the last 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought about a positive change in political resolve, thinking and culture by eliminating the deceit of appeasement and replacing it with the power of inclusive empowerment

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | BJP LEADER

## Judge's death: Priyanka slams UP govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 4: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Sunday slammed the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh after the body of a woman civil judge was found hanging in her quarters, saying she wonders what kind of fear an ordinary girl must feel living there.

A murder case has been registered against unidentified people in the death of the judge in UP's Budaun district, following a complaint filed by her father, a police officer said Sunday.

In a post in X on Hindi, Priyanka Gandhi said a few weeks ago in Banda, a woman judge asked for euthanasia and now the body of another woman judge has been found in her house in Budaun.

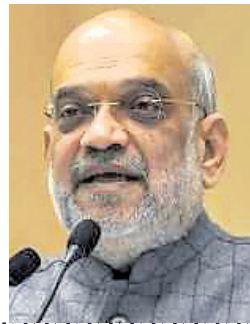
The family of the deceased judge has raised serious questions on the probe into her death, the Congress general secretary said. "If this is the condition of security of women judges under the BJP rule, then imagine with what fear an ordinary girl must be living through every day," Priyanka Gandhi said.



According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Uttar Pradesh is number one in crimes against women, she said. "Every hour, eight women become victims of crime. Uttar Pradesh has become completely unsafe for women, because all the big claims of safety are only in advertisements. The statistics of increasing crimes against women show how serious the government actually is about women's safety," the Congress general secretary said.

"Now only the awareness of women and society will bring them out of this whirlpool of oppression and violence," she said. The body of Civil Judge (Junior Division) Jyotsna Rai, 27, was recovered Saturday. It was suspected that she had killed herself. She reportedly left behind a suicide note.

Her father, who reached Budaun Saturday evening, however, claimed his daughter was killed and her killers hanged her body from the ceiling fan in her bedroom to make it look like a suicide, a police officer said.



Crimes and criminals do not respect geographical borders and hence, different law enforcement agencies should not consider any border as hindrance and rather consider them as meeting points for solving crimes  
AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

## SNOWFALL DISRUPTS FLIGHT OPERATIONS

All flights to and from Srinagar airport in Kashmir were cancelled Sunday due to snowfall in the valley, officials said. The snowfall, which began late Saturday night, had stopped briefly early in the morning, allowing clearance of the runway



# Being compelled to join BJP, but won't: Kejriwal



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 4: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Sunday claimed that the BJP had been trying to compel him and other AAP leaders to join the party and asserted they would not do so as they had done no wrong. The BJP dismissed his claim as an attempt to "distract and trick" the people of Delhi.

Kejriwal's remarks come at a time he has been asked to join the Delhi Police probe into his allegations that the BJP attempted to "poach" AAP MLAs and is facing summons from the Enforcement Directorate in an excise policy linked money laundering case. Addressing an event where he laid the foundation of two schools in Kirari, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief claimed that the BJP wanted them to join the party but he was firm on not doing so.

"They can hatch any conspiracy against us but nothing is going to happen. I am standing firm against them and I am not going to bow down. They

## Atishi gets notice

NEW DELHI: Delhi Minister Atishi Sunday said the notice served to her by the city police in connection with the MLA poaching allegation made by her does not have any mention of an FIR or include penal provisions. She said at a press conference that they have sympathy for the Crime Branch officers who are being forced by their "political bosses" to indulge in such "theatrics". "Yesterday (Saturday), the Delhi Police's Crime Branch served a notice to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Today, they served a notice to me. However, the notice does not have any mention of an FIR. It does not even include any section of the IPC (Indian Penal Code) or CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure) or PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) or Prevention of Corruption Act," she said.

say, 'come and join BJP and we will leave you alone'. But I will never join BJP. Why should we join BJP? If you join BJP, all sins are forgiven," Kejriwal said.

The Chief Minister said they were working to improve schools

and hospitals in the national capital and asked what was wrong in that. Later in a post on X, Kejriwal asserted that all cases against AAP leaders were false.

"If we had done something wrong, we would have joined BJP like others who got their cases closed. When we have not done anything wrong, why should we join BJP? All the cases filed against us are false. If not today, tomorrow, all the cases will end," he said in the post in Hindi.

He also said development works will not stop in Delhi, and "as long as are alive, we will continue to serve the country and society." Responding to Kejriwal's remarks, the BJP's Delhi unit chief Virendra Sachdeva said, "Arvind Kejriwal is afraid of investigation by probe agencies, that's why he is lying. He wants to distract and trick the people of Delhi and that's why he is dreaming about the things that will never happen."

Kejriwal and cabinet minister Atishi have been served notices by the Delhi Police Crime Branch in connection with the allegations levelled by them that the BJP was attempting to "poach" AAP MLAs.

Kejriwal has skipped five summonses issued by the Enforcement Directorate for questioning him in the excise policy linked money laundering case. The BJP has questioned his decision to skip the notices while the AAP has alleged that it is a conspiracy to arrest Kejriwal ahead of the Lok Sabha elections to stop him from campaigning.

## Ladakh shuts down as thousands march for statehood

AGENCIES

Leh, Feb 4: Ladakh witnessed a complete shutdown Saturday as many people marched demanding statehood and constitutional protections under the sixth schedule for the Union Territory.

The shutdown in the region was called by the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance. Thousands marched across the main city of Leh in freezing temperatures, shouting slogans demanding statehood for Ladakh, the implementation of the sixth schedule of the Constitution, and also separate parliament seats for Leh and Kargil districts.

The shutdown was observed despite the Centre's announcement to hold talks with representatives of the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance.

The Centre has constituted a high-powered committee headed by Minister of State (Home Affairs) Nityanand Rai to address the demands of the people of Ladakh.

The people of Ladakh said they couldn't live under an unending bureaucratic rule in the Union Territory and only a full statehood - where they elect their representatives to govern the region - could fulfill their demand.

Ladakh was carved out as a separate Union Territory after Article 370 was scrapped and the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated and downgraded into two Union Territories in August 2019.

But within just two years, the people of Leh and Kargil felt politically dispossessed and have jointly risen against the Centre.

In December, the Centre held its first meeting in Ladakh and asked both the bodies from Leh and Kargil to submit their demands.

# Sharad Pawar group: Ajit 'praying for uncle's death'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Pune Feb 4: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar Sunday took a veiled jibe at Nationalist Congress Party founder Sharad Pawar by alluding to his age and speaking about the "sentimental appeal of a last election".

The Sharad Pawar faction hit back claiming the comments were "inhuman" and accused the deputy CM of "praying for the death" of the party founder. Ajit Pawar split the NCP in July last year and joined the Eknath Shinde government along with eight MLAs. He has since then routinely justified his revolt by saying elders, a reference to octogenarian Sharad Pawar, should have given way to the next generation.

Attacking Sharad Pawar (83) without taking his name, the Deputy CM said, "I do not know when some people are going to stop. There might be a sentimental appeal that this would be the last election. Do not know which will be the last election." He was speaking at a gathering in Baramati in Pune district.

Hitting back, MLA Jitendra Awhad of the Sharad Pawar faction claimed the deputy CM had "crossed all limits of decency" with his remarks. "Ajit Pawar must think about his inhuman comments in which he allegedly prayed for the death of Sharad Pawar. Maharashtra now knows what kind of a man Ajit Pawar is," Awhad said.

Sharad Pawar's contribution to Maharashtra will stay on forever, Awhad said. Sharad Pawar has remained undefeated in Assembly and Lok Sabha polls since the late 1960s and is cur-



rently a Rajya Sabha member.

The deputy CM also spoke about his faction's Lok Sabha plans at the gathering. "You listened to a senior for so many years. Now listen to me and vote for the Lok Sabha candidate I am going to field. I can then tell Prime Minister Narendra Modi that people have voted for my candidate. Do not forget who came to help when you were in trouble," he said.

"In the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, consider me as your candidate. If you give votes to a person who belongs to my party, then I will talk to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for sizable funds for projects in Baramati," he said.

The deputy CM said he completed multiple projects efficiently and firmly believed no one had done as much for the region in the past five years. "An international airport will be built in Pune soon. Talks have been held with (deputy CM) Devendra Fadnis on it. People of Baramati have made finance minister. Multiple projects will come up in Baramati," he claimed.



An artist gives final touches to idols of Lord Ganesha ahead of Maghi Ganesh Jayanti, at Lalbaug in Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The Project Gunupur Sand Bed - I Quarry located at village Gunupur under Gunupur Tahasil of Rayagada Dist., Odisha has accorded necessary Environment Clearance from SEIAA, Odisha vide EC Identification No. EC22B001OR123629, Dated 22.07.2022 and copies of the EC are available with SEIAA, Odisha and on the websites of Odisha State Pollution Control Board, Bhubaneswar.

## JMM-led coalition MLAs return to Ranchi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, Feb 4: The MLAs of Jharkhand's JMM-led alliance excluded confidence to win the trust vote in the Assembly Monday, soon after their return to Ranchi from Hyderabad Sunday evening.

The legislators landed at the Birsa Munda Airport here in a chartered flight and were taken to the Circuit House in the city in two buses. "Our MLAs are united... We have the support of 48 to 50 legislators," minister Alamgir Alam said.

JMM lawmaker Mithilesh Thakur also asserted that the JMM-led coalition will sail

through the trust vote. "Many BJP legislators are also in support of the alliance in the state," he claimed. However, Biranchi Narain, Chief Whip of the BJP, said the coalition was set to lose the vote of confidence Monday.

He said the MLAs in Hyderabad were kept under strict surveillance, which indicates that they were not confident of winning. The Champai Soren-led coalition government in Jharkhand will seek a vote of confidence Monday, the first day of the two-day Assembly session. Soren was administered the oath of office by Governor CP Radhakrishnan at the Raj Bhavan February 2.

# Everyday household items behind rising cancer cases: Experts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 4: Everyday items used in households such as plastic bottles, tea bags, beauty products, and e-cigarettes and hookahs are contributing to the escalating danger of cancer, warned health experts on World Cancer Day Sunday.

World Cancer Day is observed February 4 each year. The theme this year is 'Close the Care Gap'. Earlier this week, the World Health Organization's cancer agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), in a stark warning said that new cancer diagnosis is projected to skyrocket by 77 per cent by 2050, reaching over 35 million cases annually.

The agency attributed the alarming to a combination of

lifestyle and environmental factors, with tobacco, alcohol, obesity, and air pollution identified as the key culprits. According to Dr J.B. Sharma, Senior Consultant in Medical Oncology at Action Cancer Hospital, several commonly used items at home are potentially increasing the risk of cancer.

"Plastic bottles used for drinking water may contain microplastics, and the habit of drinking hot tea from plastic bags or using white-coloured mayonnaise in food items can introduce harmful chemicals, such as epichlorohydrin, into the body, raising the likelihood of cancer," he said.

Moreover, modern technologies, while making life easier, pose risks. Using plastic utensils in ovens or consuming food



cooked in non-stick cookware can expose individuals to harmful chemicals like endocrine-disrupting agents, potentially leading to cancer. Awareness of these factors is crucial in mitigating the risk and promoting a

healthier lifestyle, the experts said.

Further everyday beauty products also raise the risk of cancer. Nail polish and nail polish removers harbour hazardous chemicals, including toluene, formalde-

hyde, and acetone, which are known carcinogens.

"Chemical-laden hair products, such as those containing formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing agents, pose a significant cancer risk. The use of certain hair straightening products can lead to both short-term and long-term health issues," said Dr Rajit Channa, Senior Consultant in Medical Oncology at Dharamshila Narayana Superspecialty Hospital.

Recognising and avoiding these carcinogenic agents in daily beauty routines is crucial for preventing potential cancer-related complications. Further, oncologists are witnessing a surge in cancers among youth, driven by e-cigarettes. Similarly, the growing trend of hookah

consumption among the youth introduces various harmful chemicals, particularly in flavoured variants.

"The popularity of e-cigarettes as an alternative to traditional smoking is on the rise. However, the chemicals used in e-cigarettes, such as nicotine, formaldehyde, tin, nickel, lead, chromium, arsenic, and diacetyl metal, significantly increase the risk of lung cancer," said Dr Randeep Singh, Senior Consultant and Director of Medical Oncology at Narayana Hospital, Gurugram.

The experts explained that both e-cigarettes and flavoured hookahs contain dangerous chemicals like diacetyl, carbon monoxide, cadmium, ammonia, radon, methane, and acetone, elevating the risk of cancer.



Sri Lanka has achieved progress in its economic recovery process due to the steadfast support of citizens to a comprehensive long-term national rebuilding programme despite facing hardships

SUNAK SPEAKS ON RACISM

Rishi Sunak, the UK's Indian-origin Prime Minister, has said that he experienced "racism" when he was a child and his parents sent him for extra drama lessons so that he could "speak properly" without an accent to "fit in"



of the day quote

Israel has no intention of maintaining the occupation of Gaza or displacing civilians

Delivering modernisation to more than 1.4 billion people will be a remarkable achievement in human history...

The threat posed by China offers an opportunity for the US and India to make strong agreements, including a genuine Free Trade Agreement...

Houthis vow response after US, British strikes

AGENCIES

Washington/Aden/Baghdad, Feb 4: The United States and Britain launched strikes against 36 Houthi targets in Yemen, in the second day of major US operations against Iran-linked groups...

The strikes late Saturday hit buried weapons storage facilities, missile systems, launchers and other capabilities the Houthis have used to attack Red Sea shipping...

They are the latest blows in a conflict that has spread into the Middle East since October 7, when the Palestinian militant group Hamas stormed Israel from the Gaza Strip...

The Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said the strikes "will not pass without a response and consequences."

The Yemen strikes are running parallel to an unfolding US campaign of retaliation over the killing of three American soldiers in a drone strike by Iran-backed militants...

On Friday, the US carried out the first wave of that retaliation, striking in Iraq and Syria more than 85 targets linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and militias it backs...

The violence has added to concerns of the potential for further escalation. Iran, a supporter of Hamas, has so far avoided any direct role in the conflict...



Houthi tribesmen gather to show defiance after air strikes on Houthi positions near Sanaa, Yemen

- Houthis vow response after latest US, British attacks
Strikes came a day after US retaliation in Iraq, Syria
Iran not interested in direct confrontation - analyst
Baghdad funeral march held for 17 killed in US strikes
Oman has 'grave concern' over 'continuous escalation'

The Pentagon has said it does not believe Tehran wants war either: US Republicans have been putting pressure on President Joe Biden, a Democrat, to deal a blow to Iran directly.

HOUTHIS SAY WON'T BE DETERRED The Houthis, who control swathes of Yemen, say their attacks are in solidarity with Palestinians as Israel strikes Gaza.

Mahjoob Zweiri, Director of the Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University, did not expect a change in Iran's approach even after the latest US strikes.

Iran's foreign ministry said the latest attacks on Yemen were "a flagrant violation of international law by the United States and Britain".

Sarea, the Houthi spokesperson, suggested in a statement on social media that the group would press on.

MASSIVE STRIKE

28 killed in Ukrainian attack on Lysychansk bakery

REUTERS

Moscow, Feb 4: Russia said Sunday that Ukraine killed at least 28 people, including nine women and a child, when its armed forces struck a bakery and restaurant in Russian-controlled eastern Ukraine with Western-supplied rockets.

Russian-backed officials said that Ukraine struck the bakery in the city of Lysychansk at about 1230 GMT Saturday with US-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS).

Emergency workers worked through the night searching for survivors in the rubble of what remained of the shattered Adriatic Restaurant on Moskovska Street...

"The armed forces of Ukraine opened fire on a bakery in Lysychansk," said Leonid Pasechnik, the Russian-installed head of the Luhansk region which is now controlled by Russian forces.

Russia's emergency ministry said 10 people had been pulled from the rubble alive.

Ukraine has not yet commented on the attack. Russia took control of swathes of eastern Ukraine after President Vladimir Putin ordered an invasion in February 2022...

Russia now controls around 18% of its neighbour - and considers the land it holds part of Russia.



AT LEAST 28 KILLED BY UKRAINIAN SHELLING

FOUR MORE IN INTENSIVE CARE IN GRAVE CONDITION

NINE WOMEN AND A CHILD KILLED

RUSSIAN OFFICIALS SAY US HIMARS WERE USED

Ukraine and the West say they will never accept the annexation of that territory.

Russia's foreign ministry condemned the Ukrainian attack, saying the West should think about why its financial support to Kyiv was being used to kill civilians.

"According to preliminary data, the strike was carried out using Western weapons," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

From the design and colour of the wrecked building and a sign matching file imagery of the area, Reuters was able to confirm the location of a video the Russian emergencies ministry shared.

It matches a location on Google Maps identified as the Adriatic Restaurant on Moskovska Street, Lysychansk.

Namibian President passes away at 82



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Harare (Zimbabwe), Feb 4: Hage Geingob, President of Namibia, one of Africa's most stable democracies, died Sunday while receiving medical treatment at a local hospital, his office announced.

The Namibian presidency said Geingob's medical team at Lady Pohamba Hospital did its best to help him, but he died with his wife, Monica Geingos, and children by his side, in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Geingob was undergoing treatment for cancer. The 82-year-old had a colonoscopy and a gastroscopy January 8, followed by a biopsy, his office said last month.

Geingob, president of the southern African nation since 2015, was set to finish his second and final term in office this year. He was the country's third president since it gained independence in 1990...

After spending nearly three decades in exile in neighboring Botswana and the US as an anti-apartheid activist, Geingob returned to Namibia as its first prime minister from 1990 to 2002. He also served in the same capacity from 2008 to 2012.

SHORT TAKES

S Korea summons Russian envoy

Seoul: South Korea has called in Russian diplomats to lodge complaints over Moscow's criticism of President Yoon Suk Yeol for remarks about North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal...

Heavy rains lash Karachi

Karachi: Heavy rains lashed Karachi city for the second consecutive day Sunday, as political parties intensified their campaigning for Thursday's general elections...

Denver shooting: 2 dead, 6 injured

Denver: Two people have died following a report of an early morning shooting that injured six people in Denver Sunday, police said.

Senegal police fire tear gas

Dakar (Senegal): Senegal's police Sunday fired tear gas at opposition supporters who were protesting against the decision by President Macky Sall to postpone the February 25 election...

SNIPPETS

El Salvador votes in President election

SAN SALVADOR: Salvadorans are voting Sunday in presidential and legislative elections that are largely about the tradeoff between security and democracy.

Myanmar Border Guards seek shelter in Bangladesh

DHAKA: At least 58 soldiers of Myanmar's paramilitary Border Guard Police (BGP) escaping the junta-run country took shelter in Bangladesh amid reports of heavy gunfights between the government troops and the rebel resistance fighters...

ECP disqualifies Mahmood Qureshi

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's election commission has disqualified Shah Mahmood Qureshi, a close aide of jailed ex-prime minister Imran Khan, from contesting elections for five years after the former foreign minister was sentenced to 10 years in prison for leaking state secrets.

Biden wins South Carolina Democratic primary

WASHINGTON: Incumbent US President Joe Biden has secured a decisive win in the Democratic presidential primary in the crucial state of South Carolina, notching his first official victory in his largely unobstructed path to become his party's nominee for a possible rematch against Donald Trump in the November 5 election.

'Unprecedented catastrophe': Chile wildfires kill many

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Santiago (Chile), Feb 4: Firefighters wrestled Sunday with massive forest fires that broke out in central Chile two days earlier, as officials extended curfews in cities most heavily affected by the blazes and said at least 64 people were killed.

The fires have been burning with the highest intensity around the city of Vina del Mar, where a famous botanical garden founded in 1931 was destroyed by the flames on Sunday.

Several neighbourhoods on the eastern edge of Vina del Mar have been devoured by flames and smoke, trapping some people in their homes.

Officials said 200 people have been reported missing in Vina del Mar and the surrounding area.

The city of 3,000,000 people is a popular beach resort and also hosts a famous music festival during the southern hemisphere's summer.

Rodrigo Mundaca, the governor of the Valparaíso region, said Sunday that he believed some of the fires could have been intentionally caused, replicating a theory that had also been mentioned Saturday by President Gabriel Boric.



"These fires began in four points that lit up simultaneously," Mundaca said. "As authorities we will have to work rigorously to find who is responsible."

The deadliest of the fires were in the Valparaíso region, where authorities urged thousands of people to evacuate their homes

The fires around Vina del Mar began in mountainous forested areas that are hard to reach. But they have moved into densely populated neighbourhoods on the city's periphery despite efforts by Chilean authorities to slow down the flames.

people in areas affected by the fires to evacuate their homes as quickly as possible, while those further from the fires are being told to stay at home in order to facilitate the transit of fire engines and ambulances.

The fires broke out during a week of record high temperatures in central Chile. Over the past two months, the El Niño weather pattern has caused droughts and high temperatures in western South America that have also increased the risk of forest fires.



