



HEALTHY ODISHA, HAPPY ODISHA



LAUNCHING OF NEW BSKY NABIN CARD

“EVERY LIFE IS PRECIOUS”


Chief Minister, Odisha



by
SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

6TH MARCH 2024 | 11:00 AM

HEALTH ASSURANCE FOR OVER **3.8 CRORE** PEOPLE
IN EMPANELLED PRIVATE HOSPITALS

ANNUAL COVERAGE OF **RS. 5 LAKH** FOR ALL FAMILY MEMBERS
AND **RS. 10 LAKH** FOR WOMEN MEMBERS OF FAMILY IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS

800+ HOSPITALS EMPANELLED ACROSS THE COUNTRY

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

leisure



KUMAIL NANJIANI TO STAR IN ONLY MURDERS IN THE BUILDING

Pakistani-American actor Kumail Nanjiani will be seen starring in the fourth season of the mystery comedy-drama television series *Only Murders in the Building*, which is currently in production, reports *deadline.com*.

LINDSAY EXCITED TO WORK WITH JAMIE LEE CURTIS

Actress Lindsay Lohan shared that she is excited to once again work with Academy Award-winning actress Jamie Lee Curtis in the sequel to their popular 2003 film *Freaky Friday*, reports *people.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be torn between work and family as both try to grab your attention. You may reserve the evening for having fun. You crave to become famous and are likely to accomplish your ambition shortly. You have Ganesh's blessings to support you.

TAURUS
Ganesh sees you happily engaged in attending to day to day affairs. The day will turn out to be a hectic one. Do not expect too many time outs or even small breaks. Fortunately you will not be too uncomfortable with your tight schedule and will feel as fresh and easy at cease work as you had been at the beginning of the day.

GEMINI
An auspicious day awaits you. You will pay more attention to your family than to your career or at the work-front. This will mean the resolution of some long pending issues and projects at home. An enjoyable time with your family and children awaits you, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Ganesh says that this is good day to buy new house or car. It is likely that you shift to a new house shortly. So be prepared for a ceremony like housewarming. You will achieve tranquil mind through yoga and meditation. It will radiate a new energy, enthusiasm and optimism in you.

LEO
You will have to bear more responsibilities in the office. You need to carefully weigh your alternatives before making a decision. On the personal front, you will need to watch against minor conflicts with your partner cropping up. You will be able to take part in entertaining and fun activities, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today you will find yourself delving deep into your inner self. You will reap a lot of monetary rewards, and will be generous in spending it on your near and dear ones. Ganesh says that you may make up for the pressures at work by entertaining yourself with material pleasures. You will seek the company of someone with whom you can have an intimate chat.

LIBRA
If there's a knock on your door today, there's a very strong possibility it might be a marriage proposal. Don't get startled, and grab opportunities that come knocking (literally!). The stars send you a partner who shall be your match in every way. Have a long and happy married life, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
You may deviate a little from mundane chores and take up creative activities like cooking and gardening. Today, according to Ganesh, you wish to do smart work and not just hard work. Family joys and pleasures will replace work satisfaction.

SAGITTARIUS
Today is a curiously interesting day for you. While you are always well-groomed, today, you may take that extra bit of care to look best and attract a lot of praise for that too, especially from those glam hounds around you. That immaculate charm you are carrying today will enhance your business fortunes.

CAPRICORN
If wasteful expenditure has left your bank balance a tad below what you had anticipated, you will have reasons to rejoice today, says Ganesh. Cash inflow – and a substantial amount of it – is likely and will make you feel nice about your finances. Work will go on as usual. The only change may be a discernible change in the work ambience; it may get a little more comfortable.

AQUARIUS
Do you wish to have a new car or any other property? Make the bookings today, as it is favourable day to make such purchases. You will prioritise your needs and consider available finances so that you can have your dream car or house. In the evening, you will find solace in temple or any other religious places, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Sometimes you are so kind and charitable that you sacrifice your own well-being and happiness for the sake of others. This streak within you may emerge as you engage in a selfless deed. You will have a strong desire to do something for your family and your home.

Mumbai: Actress Huma Qureshi, who is gearing up for *Maharani Season 3*, has referred to herself as a defender of the Hindi film industry while reflecting on her journey. In a recent interview, she addressed the political discrimination in the industry, stating that it is a universal problem and should not be singled out against Bollywood in particular.

Huma's stance on industry politics

While speaking with a media agency, she stated that every industry has its downside, and politics exists in every field. Favouritism and a lack of opportunities are common occurrences everywhere. "If we start exposing every industry, it would be like opening a can of worms," she added.

She emphasised that human nature is the main cause of complications, and one cannot expect a utopian world where everything is perfect with equal opportunities. In the same interview, she also discussed the opportunities she missed and the struggles she faced. According to her, no place is perfect. She has been in Mumbai for more than 12 years and has faced numerous struggles. "I would even be refused auditions, had no money, and borrowed from friends. But all of it is normal for anyone starting out. But at the end of the day, this industry has given me so much. I would forever be grateful," the *Tarla* actress concluded.

AGENCIES

Rashmika bats for inclusivity in filmdom

Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna, renowned for her roles in films like *Animal* and *Pushpa*, delves into the ongoing debate between the South and North Indian film industries, shedding light on the evolving landscape of the Indian film fraternity.

In a recent interview, she reflected on her journey, noting the completion of her 22nd film, a milestone that symbolises her perseverance and growth. Despite the challenges encountered along the way, she feels grateful, self-assured, and relieved, recognising the trust she has garnered from audiences for her portrayal of significant characters and compelling narratives, thus assuming the role of a storyteller who brings solace to others.

Regarding her forthcoming venture, *Pushpa 2*, slated for release on Independence Day, Mandanna disclosed that production is progressing smoothly, with nearly 50 days already invested in filming. She assures audiences of an enhanced cinematic experience, attributing this to the meticulous attention to detail and character development evident throughout the project.

The actress, who has successfully straddled both Hindi and South Indian cinema, stresses her pan-Indian appeal, advocating for the dissolution of distinctions between the two industries. She advocates for the industry to be recognised as the Indian film industry, underscoring the unity within the nation's entertainment sector and celebrating the collaborative spirit that transcends linguistic boundaries. She also expresses her joy in contributing to this positive shift towards inclusivity and cooperation within the industry.



SRK'S COMMENT AT AMBANI EVENT SPARKS ROW

Jamnagar: Actor Shah Rukh Khan has sparked controversy following a remark he made about *RRR* actor Ram Charan during Anant Ambani's pre-wedding celebration, where he was dancing with Salman Khan and Aamir Khan.

The comment, made two days after the event, drew criticism, with some accusing it of containing racial undertones. Even Charan's makeup artist, Zeba Hassan, expressed disappointment on Instagram towards SRK's words.

The incident unfolded as Shah Rukh Khan, Salman, and Aamir attempted the hook step of the song *Naatu Naatu* on stage but encountered difficulties. Seeking assistance, SRK called out to Ram Charan, known for his appearance in the original song alongside NTR Jr. in the movie *RRR*. However, his choice of words, specifically, "Bhend idly vada Ram charan kahan hai tu???" stirred controversy.

Zeba Hassan shared the video on her Instagram stories, stating, "I walked out after this. So disrespectful towards a star like @alwaysramcharan."

The pre-wedding festivities hosted esteemed guests such as pop star Rihanna, business magnates, and world leaders, alongside cinema legends like Shah Rukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth, Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, at the residential township near Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) petroleum refinery in Jamnagar.



Mumbai: Actress Rani Mukerji, who recently graced the FICCI Frames 2024 event in Mumbai, went on to laud the Hindi film industry.

Hailing commercial hits, the *Black* actress shared, "I'm truly thrilled that the theatrical business is back, led by entertainers like *Pathaan*, *Jawan*, *Gadar 2*, *Tiger 3*, *Animal*, *Leo*, *Salaar*, *Jailor*, and *RDX*. They have all created box office history in a single calendar year and pulled audiences into theatres. *Pathaan* was released at a time when the single-screen theatre business was shutting down. I want to congratulate my industry for showing the world that Hindi cinema cannot fall prey to social media trolling."

Noting the contribution of content-driven cinema, she added, "It was also the year when the underdogs won; those who challenged the status quo won. The fact that everyone was made to believe that content-driven films wouldn't do well theatrically and were restricted to OTT was busted by

RANI LAUDS DISRUPTIVE CONTENT

films like *Mrs. Chatterjee vs. Norway*, *12th Fail*, *The Kerala Story*, *Oh My God 2*, *Baapin Bhaari Deva*, *Kabuliwala*, *Kathal*, etc."

"The past year in cinema shattered myths, connecting with evolving audiences who seek unique and disruptive content. Cinema's diverse emotions and narratives continue to unite and inspire globally, marking a disruptive year for Hindi cinema," concluded the actress.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

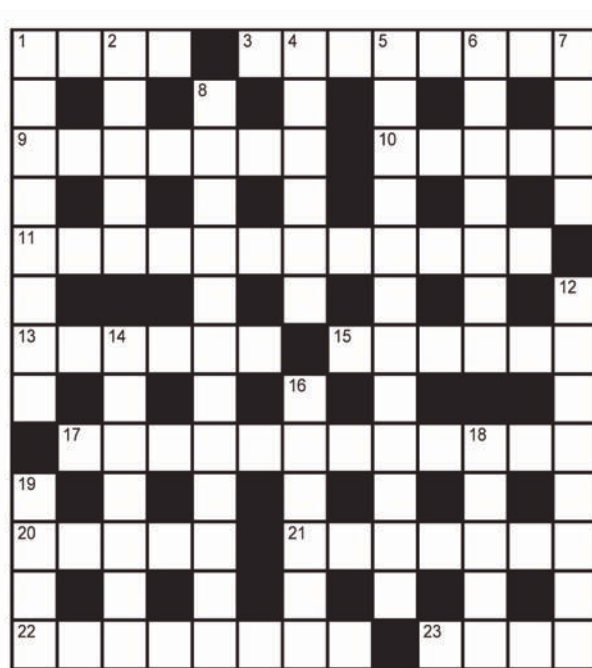


BREVITY



FUN post

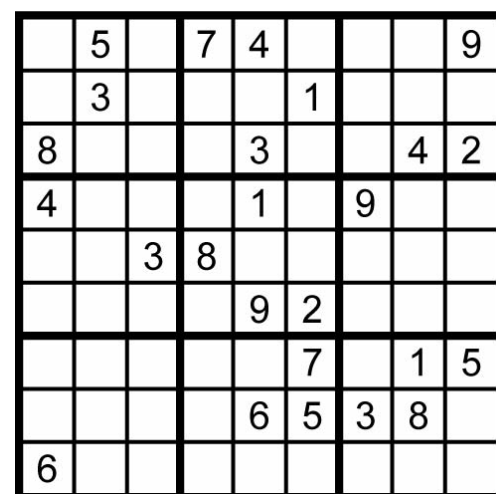
CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Scratch
 - 3 Teacher
 - 9 Apparition
 - 10 Dialect
 - 11 Protecting
 - 13 Mystery
 - 15 Dealer
 - 17 Formal wear (7,5)
 - 20 Winery process
 - 21 Certain blankets
- Down
- 1 Fraud
 - 2 Husk
 - 4 Humiliate
 - 5 Young talent (5,7)
 - 6 Diluted
 - 7 Incline
- 8 Theatre supervisor (5,7)
- 12 Arm of the North Atlantic (5,3)
- 14 Bill
- 16 To no avail (2,4)
- 18 Muse of poetry
- 19 Summer coolers

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.

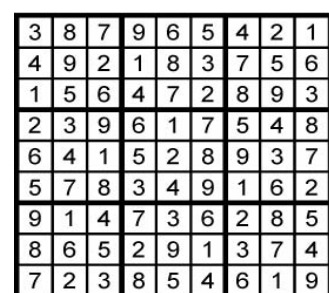


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

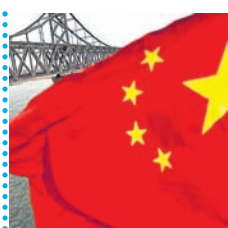


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Nabin Odisha Magic Card
CM Naveen Patnaik launches Nabin Odisha Magic Card web portal on the birth anniversary of legendary leader Biju Patnaik, Tuesday

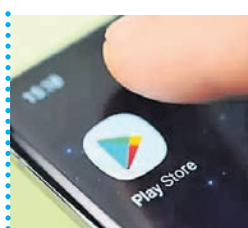
STATE | P3



Boost to defence

China increases its defence budget by 7.2 per cent to USD 232 billion as it continues with the massive modernisation of its military

INTERNATIONAL | P8



Google relists apps

Google begins reinstating Indian apps it had delisted from Play Store as it caved in to government criticism

BUSINESS | P9



Chahar crashes out

Lakshya Chahar becomes the 4th Indian boxer to crash out in the opening round of the first World Olympic Boxing Qualifier

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | WEDNESDAY MARCH 6 2024

P1

SHORT TAKES
Two minor boys meet watery grave

Dhamnagar: Tragedy struck Naurigadia village under Bhandarpokhari block in Bhadrak district Tuesday afternoon, when two minor boys met watery grave while taking bath in a pond. The deceased were identified as Hemanta Biswal, son of Alekha Biswal, and Kartik Biswal, son of Basudev Biswal of the village. Both were studying in Class V. The duo had gone to Gohiratikiri Mutt to collect berries and then they proceeded to take bath in a pond. While taking bath, they drowned in the waterbody.

2 die in Ganjam road accident

Khallikote: Two persons were killed while another sustained injuries as the motorcycle on which they were travelling hit a utility pole near Bania-Chikili road under Khallikote police limits in Ganjam district. The deceased were identified as Pintu Pradhan and Ganesh Pradhan, both residents of Kalinjipalli village under Chikili panchayat of Ganjam district. According to sources, three youths were on their way back home after attending a wedding ceremony at Bania village when the mishap occurred.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



SC has ended your immunity. But, I know a party that you can join for full immunity from media, ED, CBI...

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	73677.13	↓ 195.16
NIFTY	22356.30	↓ 49.30
DOLLAR	82.97	↑ ₹0.00
EURO	90.09	↓ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹64,723	↑ ₹261
SILVER	₹ 73,410	↓ ₹57

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	35.2°C	34.2°C
Min Temp	24.5°C	24.0°C
Humidity	89%	78%
Rainfall	0.2mm	Nil

FORECAST
Light rain/thundershowers very likely to occur



MOMENT TO CHERISH: Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented a portrait by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during inauguration and foundation stone laying of various projects at Chandikhole in Jajpur district, Tuesday

BJP-BJD bonhomie

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence over the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) while sparing no words for Congress during his back-to-back public appearances in Jajpur district Tuesday, which coincided with the birth anniversary of late Biju Patnaik, has given rise to speculations that the BJP is in no mood to open its cards till the eleventh hour before the announcement of Lok Sabha and Assembly poll dates. The speculations stem from the fact that over the weekend the BJP state leadership had made it clear that the party will have no truck with the BJD, sentiments quickly echoed by the BJD. Making matters more intriguing, the old bonhomie between PM Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik - who is also the BJD president - was writ large on and off the stage. For observers it nevertheless, came as a disappointment as neither spark, nor did smoke fly in Modi's speeches. Modi slammed the Congress, alleging that the party and its allies only focused on filling their coffers before 2014, when they were in power at the Centre. Modi also charged the Opposition leaders with making personal attacks on him as he worked for the 140 crore people of the country whom he considered his family. Addressing a rally at Benapur in Jajpur district which is considered a stronghold of the ruling BJD, the prime minister said the Central government wants Odisha to become the gateway for 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India). Overwhelmed at the massive turnout at his public meeting which he described as the blessings of Lord Jagannath, Modi

shared dais with Modi at the launch of multiple development projects worth over ₹19,600 crore at Chandikhole, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik lauded the former for his efforts to make India an 'economic powerhouse' and said that development has given a new identity to Odisha.

PNN & AGENCIES

Jajpur, March 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday attacked the Congress, alleging that the party and its allies only focused on filling their coffers before 2014, when they were in power at the Centre.

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Overwhelmed at the massive turnout at his public meeting which he described as the blessings of Lord Jagannath, Modi

said it reflects the mood in the East and Odisha's resolve which is 'Ab Ki Baar, 400 Paar' (this time, NDA will get over 400 Lok Sabha seats).

Later in the day, Modi launched multiple development projects worth over ₹19,600 crore in the district.

The projects that were launched are related to different sectors, including Oil & Gas, Railways, Road, Transport & Highways and Atomic Energy. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Bishweswar Tudu were also present on the occasion. Modi also paid tribute to former Odisha chief minister Biju Patnaik on his birth anniversary.

Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his efforts to make India an 'economic powerhouse', Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik asserted that development has given a new identity to the state.

"The prime minister has set a new direction for India. He is taking India on an accelerated drive to make it an economic powerhouse. India is now the fifth largest economy and is marching forward to become the number 3 in a few years," the chief minister said. **MORE P3**

No Indian troops after May 10: Muizzu

AGENCIES

Male, March 5: Stepping up his anti-India rhetoric, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has affirmed that no Indian military personnel, not even those in civilian clothing, would be present inside his country after May 10, a media report said Tuesday.

Muizzu's statement comes less than a week after an Indian civilian team reached the Maldives to take charge of one of the three aviation platforms in the island nation, well ahead of the March 10 deadline agreed by the two nations for the withdrawal of Indian military personnel.

Addressing the Baa atoll Eydhafushi residential community during his tour across the atoll, the President stated that due to his government's success in expelling Indian troops from the country, people who spread false rumours, are attempting to twist the situation, a news portal Edition.Mv reported.

"That these people [Indian military] are not departing, that they are returning after changing their uniforms into civilian clothing. We must not indulge such thoughts that instil doubts in our hearts and spread lies,"



the portal quoted Muizzu, widely regarded as a pro-China leader, as saying.

"There will be no Indian troops in the country come May 10. Not in uniform and not in civilian clothing. The Indian military will not be residing in this country in any form of clothing. I state this with confidence," he said, on a day when his country signed an agreement with China to receive free military aid.

Earlier last month, after a high-level meeting in Delhi February 2 between the two sides, the Maldivian foreign ministry said India would replace its military personnel operating the three aviation platforms in the Maldives by May 10 and the first phase of the process would be completed by March 10.

In his maiden address to Parliament February 5, he made similar remarks.

Bombay High Court acquits GN Saibaba in Maoist link case

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: The Bombay High Court Tuesday acquitted former Delhi University professor G N Saibaba in a case in which he was accused of having links with the banned CPI (Maoist). Later in the day, the Maharashtra government moved the Supreme Court challenging the order.

Earlier, the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court acquitted Saibaba, noting that the prosecution failed to prove the case against him.

The high court also set aside the life sentence imposed on Saibaba, 54, and acquitted five other accused in the case.

"The prosecution has failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt the case against the accused persons," a division bench of Justices Vinay Joshi and Valmiki SA Menezes said. It held as 'null and void' the sanction procured by the prosecution to charge the accused under anti-terror law, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

FRESH ADVISORY FOR INDIANS IN ISRAEL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jerusalem, March 5: The Indian Embassy in Israel issued an advisory Tuesday, urging its nationals to move to safer areas in the country, a day after a missile fired from Lebanon killed one Indian and injured two others.

"In view of the prevailing security situation and local safety advisories, all Indian nationals in Israel, especially those working in or visiting border areas in the north and south, are advised to relocate to safe areas within Israel," the mission said in an advisory posted on various social media platforms. "The embassy remains in touch with the Israeli authorities to ensure the safety of all our nationals," the advisory added.

At 11am Monday, an anti-tank missile hit a plantation in Margalioth, a Moshav (collective agricultural community), in the Galilee region in north of Israel.

France's mystery 'Invader' marks cities with art

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, March 5: For the Paris Olympics, it could almost be a new sport: Score points by hunting down mosaics that a mystery artist who calls himself 'Invader' has cemented to walls across France's capital, the world and even had carried aloft to the International Space Station. Vincent Giraud, one of the artist's Parisian fans, is already an avid player. He downloaded Invader's addictive 'Flash Invaders' mobile-phone game that awards points to users who find and photograph the colorful and quirky pieces of pixelated art. Quickly hooked, Giraud has in

just a year already tracked down 1,565 of them, accumulating so many points that he has rocketed into the leaderboard's top 1,000, out of more than 360,000 players. "In a few months I found and flashed all those in Paris," says Giraud, game-name Vince-Vader. Hunting for Invader mosaics, looking up and around for them on walls, pavements, bridges and even atop the Eiffel Tower, is 'another way of discovering the city.' Put simply: When Olympic visitors flock to their millions to Paris for the July 26-Aug. 11 Games, they'll be crowding onto the turf of France's most international, invasive and intriguing contemporary street



artist. It will be one invasion coming face-to-face with another. Like Banksy, the British street artist he is sometimes likened to, Invader is elusive, fiercely pro-

tective of his anonymity and operating on the margins of illegality. He comes, glues, and disappears into the night, leaving behind his signature pixelated mosaics made mostly with small ceramic and glass tiles. Most resemble the aliens from the Space Invaders arcade game. Others are wonderfully elaborate, such as still lifes of fruit or, in New York, portraits of Lou Reed and Andy Warhol. Some reference pop culture — Spiderman, Star Wars, Bugs Bunny, Ninja Turtles, pizza and the like. Some hint at deep research, including a portrait of guitarist Django Reinhardt facing the house where he lived, south of Paris in Samois-sur-Seine. Since the first catalogued mosaic of a blue Space Invader went up on a Paris street in 1998, numbered PA_01, Invader has colonized the world. There are

now more than 4,000 of his mosaics in cities and towns on all continents except Antarctica. London, Tokyo, Los Angeles and other cities were invaded in 1999; New York, Geneva and more in 2000; Hong Kong in 2001; Berlin, Bangkok, Melbourne. On and on. The 4,000th mosaic was glued to a brick wall in Potosi, 4,000 meters (13,100 feet) up in the Bolivian Andes, in 2021. The European Space Agency installed Invader's Space2 mosaic aboard the International Space Station in 2015. In Paris — by far his most invaded location — the artist's footprint is larger than ever as the Olympics loom.

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Building relationship is our USP: Agarwal

Sun Honda, a top player in the motorcycle dealership category, is located in Baripada, Mayurbhanj. Over the course of its journey, the dealership has established a firm foothold in the industry.

The man behind this venture is a young entrepreneur, Anesh Agarwal, proprietor of Sun Automotives (Sun Honda). He has done MBA and later worked in JP Morgan Chase for two years in Bangalore but had to quit the job to join his family business. With a vision to do something all by himself, he opted for a Honda two-wheeler dealership and has been running this business successfully for over a decade. In an interaction with Orissa POST, Agarwal shares his entrepreneurial journey. Excerpts...



- The two-wheeler market in India is on a roll riding on the back of rural sales growth. Are you also witnessing this surge in sales in the Odisha market?
- It is a known fact that a big share of two-wheeler sales comes from the rural market. Mayurbhanj, being a rural district, has a unique potential for growth in its economy. So yes, the market has witnessed a surge in sales. But factors like change in cultivation and weather changes have their effects on the rural market. So we cannot just depend on the rural background, there are loads of other factors that need to be considered.
- What are the leading challenges that the industry is facing?
- Honda family in the last two years has witnessed a huge crunch in supply on account of which the supply couldn't meet the demand. In this scenario, it was challenging to maintain the leading position in the market. Also, availability of skilled manpower, evolving customer needs and inflation are key challenges the industry is facing.
- Last year, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India unveiled its EV roadmap. What are your views about electric vehicles and how excited are you regarding this green transition?
- The roadmap is a blueprint for developing EV business structure in India, which includes new EV technologies and infrastructure. Of course, I am eagerly waiting for the launch of Honda EV. This green transition is a much required step for the world as it has benefits like lower running cost, low maintenance, zero tailpipe emission, less air-pollution, less noise and many more.
- How has been your journey so far? What do you think is your USP? How important is customer satisfaction in this line of business?
- My journey so far has been really amazing. I have garnered a lot of knowledge working in this field and am still learning. As far as our USP in concerned, I believe in relationship building. One has to consider every customer's requirement and try to fulfill their needs as much as possible. Customer satisfaction is the most critical challenge in this line of business. At the time of servicing, we take proper care which in return cements the trust in customers' hearts that they are at the best place and that they can rely on us for further services.
- As an entrepreneur, why did you choose to enter this line of business? What advice will you give to new entrants in the two-wheeler market?
- Rice milling and trading in rice is my family business. So as discussed earlier, with a vision to do something by myself and different from my family business, I opted for Honda due to the quality of products. For new entrants, I will suggest developing an appropriate business module. Marketing is one of the most crucial aspects to prepare the complete layout and strategies to attract customers with unique features. You can offer discounts and deals to influence customers to make purchases. Most importantly, having a friendly relation with the media is essential running a successful business.



RICH TRIBUTES: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pays tributes to legendary leader and former CM Biju Patnaik on his birth anniversary in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

5 GET LIFE TERM FOR MURDER

Kendrapara, March 5: A local court here Tuesday sentenced five people to life imprisonment for killing a 65-year-old widow in the district in 2020. They were also convicted for injuring the woman's son and daughter-in-law critically. The incident took place May 29, 2020 at Similia village under Pattamundai Model Police Station over a longstanding land dispute. Additional Public Prosecutor Sanjay Kumar Jena said. A land dispute was going on between Kusuma Swain, the victim, and a fellow villager, Parikhita Swain. On the fateful day, the family members of Parikhita attacked Kusuma, her son and daughter-in-law with sharp-edged weapons. All three sustained critical injuries and were rescued by the locals. They were rushed to a nearby hospital where Kusuma succumbed to her injuries.

Devpt has given new identity to Odisha: CM

Jajpur, March 5: Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his efforts to make India an 'economic powerhouse', Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday asserted that development has given a new identity to Odisha. Patnaik was speaking at a function at Chandikhole in Jajpur district, where the PM laid the foundation and dedicated to the nation various development projects worth over ₹19,600 crore. "The prime minister has set a new direction for India. He is taking India on an accelerated drive to make it an economic powerhouse. India is now the fifth largest economy and is marching forward to become



the number 3 in a few years," the chief minister said. "It is a matter of happiness that the PM has launched several projects for Odisha including Chandikhol-Paradeep national highway, expansion of several other NHs, a desalination plant, an LPG terminal at Paradip, a gas pipeline project, and a new train line," he said. Patnaik thanked the PM for his focus on the development of Odisha. Stating that Odisha is going to become a major manufacturing

hub of eastern India, Patnaik said the state has witnessed transformation through the development of both social and physical infrastructure. "Women members of Mission Shakti are becoming entrepreneurs. Odisha has also received the second-highest investment in the country," he claimed. "Development has given a new identity to Odisha. But still much more has to be done," he added. He said the ambitious Srimandir Parikrama Project and Samalei Project have been inaugurated. Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan thanked the PM for launching several developmental projects for Odisha and also conferring Padma Awards on 49 Odias in the last 10 years.

REVAMPED BJD WEBSITE

Bhubaneswar, March 5: BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the revamped citizen-centric website of the party on the occasion of the birth anniversary of legendary leader and former Odisha CM Biju Patnaik, Tuesday. The website (bjdodisha.org.in) showcases multiple pillars of 5T-led transformation across sectors such as women empowerment, inclusive development, tribal welfare, youth & sports, agriculture, IT and investments, BJD MP Manas Mangaraj said in a statement. 5T is a governance model in Odisha, based on teamwork, transparency, technology and time leading to transformation. The website (bjdodisha.org.in) showcases multiple pillars of 5T-led transformation across sectors such as women empowerment, inclusive development, tribal welfare, youth & sports, agriculture, IT and investments. The website underscores the party's commitment towards strengthening people's voices, making them a partner in the state's progress.

The website also underscores the party's commitment towards strengthening people's voices, making them a partner in the state's progress, Mangaraj said. A separate section is dedicated to citizen welfare, where the party has listed all state government schemes, the MP said. The BJD organised cycle rallies and walkathons in different Assembly constituencies across the state to remember the legendary leader. The party leaders paid floral tributes to the statues of the statesman. The leaders also distributed fruits in hospitals and old-age homes. Biju Patnaik served as Odisha chief minister twice and was also a Union minister. His son Naveen Patnaik founded the BJD following his death in 1997 and has been the state's chief minister since 2000.

NABIN ODISHA MAGIC CARD WEB PORTAL LAUNCHED

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched Nabin Odisha Magic Card web portal on the occasion of the birth anniversary of legendary leader Biju Patnaik, Tuesday. 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian, as per the direction of the CM, attended the Nua-O Scholarship distribution programme at Sports Complex in Malkangiri, where he interacted with students from all over the district. On the occasion, Pandian distributed ₹5.19 crore worth Nua-O Scholarship sanction orders to 5,069 students of 10 colleges of the district. Launching the Nabin Odisha Magic Card web portal, Patnaik said youths are the wealth of the nation. "The state government's objective is to help youths realise their true potential and contribute towards the society and the nation. To achieve this, the government has launched Nua-O programme and Nua-O



Scholarship. The Nabin Odisha Magic Card is a revolutionary step in the endeavour towards youth empowerment. This will go a long way to help students in personality development and reduce the financial burden on parents as well," Patnaik said. Later in the day, Pandian attended the Nua-O Scholarship distribution programme at Utkal University, Rama Devi Women's University and BJB (Autonomous) College in Bhubaneswar. The Nabin Odisha Chairman distributed Nua-O Scholarship sanction orders worth ₹8.53 crore among 8,480 students of the three premier educational institutions. He said undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students are eligible to register for the Nabin Odisha Magic Card by visiting www.magiccard.odisha.gov.in beginning Tuesday. The card distribution will begin August 15, Pandian said. On the occasion, Pandian elaborated on the Nabin Odisha Magic Card, a point-system based smart card which will engage and empower the youth.

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Class IV-V	12-20 March	Skating, Swimming	Bhutanese Art & Craft, Bhutanese Dance	Spanish, Design Thinking, Dining Etiquette, Future Tech, Science Project
Class VI-VII	12-20 March	Skating, Swimming, Squash	Origami & Quilling	Ideate Hub, Spanish, Innovations in Motion, Future Tech, Dining Etiquette
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THE MOTHER

Gagging The Premier

The world media is stunned by a development in China that can be described as yet another example of the autocratic behaviour of China's President Xi Jinping. He seems to be sending out the message to both his own people and the world that he alone stands out as the country's main figure. Nothing else can explain the sudden announcement that for the first time in three decades the Chinese Premier will not host a Press conference at the end of the annual parliamentary sessions, which began in Beijing March 4. The customary media interaction will also be scrapped for future years of the current National People's Congress' term, barring exceptional circumstances, declared Lou Qinqian, spokesman for the NPC, China's top legislative body.

The Press conference - first held in 1988 and established as a standard practice from 1993 - is one of the annual events media across the world look forward to for a direct interaction with a topmost leader of China, its Prime Minister. It is one of the rare occasions when such a high ranking Chinese leader takes questions from local and international media. Though questions are often tightly scripted and chosen in advance, yet the occasion offers the outside world a chance to get first hand information from the top leadership on policy directions. It has especially been regarded as a platform for China to indicate its diplomatic priorities in terms of the questions selected as well as which country's media they come from. It also gives an opportunity to the world to interact with a familiar face in Chinese leadership since the President and Communist Party secretary seldom talk directly to outside media.

The specious plea made for scrapping the Press conference is that the leadership after a review had come to the conclusion that it is redundant as it often overlapped with similar events during the two sessions. Premier Li Qiang will only deliver the government work report to the NPC followed by two written reports from the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance outlining plans and the budget.

To defend this decision, the Chinese leadership has gone to the length of explaining that government reports have specifically addressed society's main concerns and these will be shared with the media and the public "can learn about their content easily." But, it is one thing to access official reports and another to get them directly from the mouth of the Chinese Premier and ask for clarifications from him. The media as well as the ruling establishment anywhere know the difference. The Chinese leadership cannot feign ignorance of the importance of the exercise.

Observers, however, say the change is rather in line with China's political development and concentration of power in the hands of Xi. The party's leadership has been firmly established and the State Council's role is now mainly about implementing the party's decisions. The role and status of the Premier, who heads the State Council, is therefore adjusted accordingly.

It also reflects the change in power dynamics in China. The Premier's job is now mainly to do with the economy and social affairs. But the media use the Press conference to ask questions on foreign affairs and China's grand strategy than on its internal economy. It is here that Xi seems to be extra-cautious as foreign affairs are increasingly centralised in his own hands. He can ill afford to let Li take questions on foreign affairs and slip up, which may have far reaching consequences for China trying to become the world's number one economic power.

Certainly, the new fiat may have a negative impact since live televised interaction with foreign media gives a chance to everyone interested in China, especially foreign investors, to hear directly from the Chinese leadership. It will also be an opportunity missed for China to explain itself. Now more than ever, the perception of China's lack of transparency is getting confirmed. This will further impact China's image to the outside world when it comes to openness.

Of course, Xi, like any other autocrat now strutting the world stage, does not seem to care.

ALGORITHM & ITS DISCONTENTS

FOCUS BIG TECH

In a new lawsuit in the US against Meta, 41 states and the District of Columbia argue that two of the company's social-media products - Instagram and Facebook - are not just addictive but detrimental to children's well-being. Meta is accused of engaging in a "scheme to exploit young users for profit," including by showing harmful content that keeps them glued to their screens. According to one recent poll, 17-year-olds in the US spend 5.8 hours per day on social media. How did it come to this? The answer, in a word, is "engagement." Deploying algorithms to maximise user engagement is how Big Tech maximises shareholder value, with short-term profits often overriding longer-term business objectives, not to mention societal health.



Mariana Mazzucato

AI-POWERED ALGORITHMS WILL INFLUENCE NOT JUST WHAT WE CONSUME, BUT HOW WE PRODUCE AND CREATE

Although Facebook started as a basic service that connected friends and acquaintances online, its design gradually evolved not to meet user needs and preferences, but to keep them on the platform and away from others. In pursuit of this objective, the company regularly disregarded explicit consumer preferences regarding the kind of content users wanted to see, their privacy, and data sharing. Putting immediate profits first means funneling users toward "clicks," even though this approach generally favours inferior, sensational material, rather than fairly rewarding participants from across a broader ecosystem of content creators, users, and advertisers. We call these profits "algorithmic attention rents," because they are generated by passive ownership (like a landlord) rather than from entrepreneurial production to meet consumers' needs.

Mapping rents in today's economy requires understanding how dominant platforms exploit their algorithmic control over users. When an algorithm degrades the quality of the content it promotes, it is exploiting users' trust and the dominant position that network effects reinforce. That is why Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can get away with cramming their feeds with ads and "recommended" addictive content. The Meta suit is ultimately about its algorithmic practices that are carefully constructed to maximise user "engagement" - keeping users on the platform for longer and provoking more comments, likes, and reposts. Often, a good way to do this is to display harmful and borderline illegal content, and to transform time on the platform into a compulsive activity, with features like "infinite scroll" and nonstop notifications and alerts (many of the same techniques are used, to great effect, by the gambling industry).

Now that advances in artificial intelligence already supercharge algorithmic recommendations, making them even more addictive, there is an urgent need for new governance structures oriented toward the "common good" (rather than a narrowly conceived notion of "shareholder value") and symbiotic partnerships between business, government, and civil society. Fortunately, it is well within policymakers' power to shape these markets for the better. First, rather than relying only on competition and antitrust law, policymakers should adopt technological tools to ensure that platforms cannot unfairly lock in users and developers. One way to prevent anti-competitive "walled gardens" is by mandating data portability and interoperability across digital services, so that users can move more seamlessly between platforms, depending on where their needs and preferences are best met. Second, corporate governance reform is essential, since max-



Deploying algorithms to maximise user engagement is how Big Tech maximises shareholder value, with short-term profits often overriding longer-term business objectives, not to mention societal health

impact on profits without overly harming user retention; but this ignores the impact on acquiring new users, not to mention most other potentially harmful long-term effects. Good data science shows that optimising recommender systems for long-term, delayed rewards (such as customer satisfaction, retention, and new-user adoption) is the best way for a company to drive long-term growth and profitability - assuming it can stop focusing primarily on the next quarterly-earnings report. In 2020, a team within Meta determined that fewer intrusive notifications would be better for both app usage and user satisfaction over a longer period of time (one year). Long-term effects differed sharply from short-term effects.

Fifth, public AI should be deployed to evaluate the quality of algorithmic outputs, particularly advertising. Given the considerable harms arising from platforms lowering the standard of acceptable ads, the UK's advertising watchdog will now use AI tools to scrutinise ads and identify those making "dodgy claims." Other authorities should follow suit. Creating a digital environment that rewards value creation from innovation, and punishes value extraction from rents (especially in core digital markets), is the fundamental economic challenge of our time. Safeguarding the health of Big Tech's users and the entire ecosystem means ensuring that algorithms are not beholden to shareholders' immediate profit concerns. If business leaders are serious about stakeholder value, they should accept the need to create value in a fundamentally different way - drawing on the five principles above.

Meta's forthcoming trial cannot undo past mistakes. But as we prepare for the next generation of AI products, we must establish proper algorithmic oversight. AI-powered algorithms will influence not just what we consume, but how we produce and create; not just what we choose, but what we think. We must not get this wrong.

The writer is a Professor at University College London. #PROJECTSYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

- Every moment there is creation, every moment destruction. There is no absolute creation, no absolute destruction. Both are movement, and that is eternal. RAMANA MAHARSHI
- All fixed set patterns are incapable of adaptability or pliability. The truth is outside of all fixed patterns. BRUCE LEE
- It is important to expect nothing, to take every experience, including the negative ones, as merely steps on the path, and to proceed. RAM DASS

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1475: Italian Renaissance artist Michelangelo—who exerted an unparalleled influence on Western sculpture, painting, and architecture and whose works rank among the most famous in existence—was born in the Republic of Florence.
- 1857: U.S. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney announced the Dred Scott decision, making slavery legal in all U.S. territories.
- 1899: The German company Bayer trademarked the name Aspirin for its drug made from acetylsalicylic acid. Acetylsalicylic acid was first isolated in 1897 by German chemist Felix Hoffmann. Today, the medication is sold by Bayer and is on the World Health Organization's list of essential medicines.
- 1924: King Tut's tomb opened. On this day in 1924, the Egyptian government opened the mummy case of King Tutankhamen, ruler of Egypt in the 14th century bce, whose burial chamber had been discovered in 1922 by renowned British archaeologist Howard Carter.
- 1957: Ghana becomes the first African country to gain independence from colonial rule. Ghana emerged as a sovereign state from the former British colonies Gold Coast and Togoland. Kwame Nkrumah was the country's first leader.
- 1964: American boxer Cassius Clay took the name Muhammad Ali, which was given to him by his spiritual mentor, Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam.

LOL Visit the barber



A man and a little boy entered a barbershop together. After the man received the full treatment - shave, shampoo, manicure and haircut - he placed the boy in the chair. "I'm goin' to buy a green tie to wear for the parade," he said. "I'll be back in a few minutes."

When the boy's haircut was completed and the man still hadn't returned, the barber said, "Looks like your daddy's forgotten all about you." "That wasn't my daddy," said the boy. "He just walked up, took me by the hand and said, 'Come on, son, we're gonna get a free haircut!'"

IN JEST THIS

Men need more exercise than women



Melvin Durai

MEN SHOULD GET PRIORITY ON ALL THE TREADMILLS!

Here's some good news for women: you need to exercise about half as long as men do to realise the same health benefits. That's what a scientific study has shown. So if you happen to be living with a man, make sure you get him to do most of the work around the house. Keep him moving. Tell him it's because you care about him.

Husband: "Hey, why did you switch channels?"
Wife: "It's my turn to watch TV. From now on, I'm going to watch TV twice as much as you do."
Husband: "Why's that?"
Wife: "Because you need twice as much exercise as I do. Which reminds me: when was the last time you did any mopping?"

For the scientific study, researchers focused on aerobic activity and strength training, so household cleaning would only qualify if you keep moving non-stop for a few minutes, and periodically lift the refrigerator to clean under it.

The study, based on data from more than 400,000 adults aged

27-61, found that women needed only 140 minutes (under 2.5 hours) of moderate aerobic activity per week to reduce their risk of premature death by 18 per cent. Men needed 300 minutes for the same health benefit. With vigorous exercise, women needed just 57 minutes per week to reduce their risk by 19 per cent, while men needed 110 minutes!

It's important to get the word out about this. I especially want to get the word out to all the women at my gym who are hogging the treadmills. Men should get priority on all the treadmills!

The results of the study were published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. My gym, unfortunately, does not subscribe to this journal. I'll have to forward the results to the manager, recommending that she displays the following sign prominently: "Attention ladies: if you see a man walking toward an exercise machine, please step aside. He needs it more than you do."

It's not just the cardio machines that men need more, it's also the strength-training ones.

Indeed, the study found that three weekly sessions of muscle-strengthening exercise gave men their greatest mortality benefit, reducing their risk of early death from all causes by 14 per cent. But what did women need to do to get the same benefit? Just one session per week!

What's more, men who did strength training reduced their risk of a cardiovascular-related death by 11 per cent, whereas women reduced their risk by a whopping 30 per cent!

Men, as you can imagine, are not too thrilled about these findings. Thirty-something man: "Did you hear that men need exercise more than women?"

Male friend: "That can't be true. I definitely need women more than exercise."

Man: "No, I mean, men need to exercise more. I need to exercise twice as much as my wife to get the same health benefits. That's so unfair!"

Friend: "Would you like to trade places with her?"

Man: "Yes, definitely. In a sec-

ond."

Friend: "What about childbirth?"

Man: "I think I can survive that."

Friend: "You'd also have to endure menstrual pain."

Man: "I think I can handle that. I'd take lots of ibuprofen."

Friend: "You'd have to pee sitting down."

Man: "Heck, no! I didn't think of that! I'd rather exercise more."

The results of the scientific study can be seen in two ways, of course. It's not just about men having to exercise more than women, it's also about women gaining significant health benefits by just exercising a little.

"Even a limited amount of regular exercise can provide a major benefit, and it turns out this is especially true for women," said Dr. Susan Cheng, a cardiologist at Cedars-Sinai, Los Angeles, and co-author of the study.

That's truly good news for women. Just remember, ladies: you don't need to spend an eternity on the treadmill.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Baffling claim

Sir, It is baffling that State Bank of India, the sole handler of anonymous donations to political parties through the means of electoral bonds, has sought time from the Supreme Court till 30 June to make the details public. The SBI's claim of "decoding data and matching donors to the donations is a complex process" is strange given the fact that living in digital India, everything is computerised and any required data is available with a click of the mouse. Also, SBI seeking more time to submit the data is unacceptable, since big donations to political parties, palpably haven't been made on a daily basis to make it difficult to compile the data in a short time. It is more than clear that the SBI, at the behest of the government, is not willing to share the data by 6 March, the SC's set deadline, as any immediate disclosure of the same before the general elections will be a huge embarrassment and a blow to the ruling party at the Centre, being the biggest beneficiary of the scheme.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Stressed medicos

Sir, Between 2018 and 2022, as many as 64 MBBS students reportedly took their own lives and 58 post graduate students followed suit, ostensibly due to severe anxiety and depression. Also, 1270 students discontinued their studies midway. These are unwanted numbers not only for the students, who nurse high hopes of becoming doctors, but also for the government and the society that face an acute paucity of qualified doctors. The National Medical Commission (NMC) has put in place a 15-member task force to address the issue. It has rightly asked the task force to study existing literature and data on mental health and suicide incidents among medical students apart from analysing the factors contributing to the trend and come out with a plan to combat the issues. At present, both the UG and the PG students are overburdened with syllabus and work. A high prevalence of anxiety, depression, fear of failure and suicidal thoughts are common among them.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



Cong slams 'Modi ka Parivar' drive

Bhubaneswar, March 5: The Congress Tuesday sought clarification from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) whether fugitive businessmen Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya were also in "Modi ka Parivar".

Congress spokesperson Pawan Kherra raised the issue at a press conference here after BJP leaders suffixed "Modi ka Parivar" to their names on their social media profiles, a day after RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav took a jibe at him for having no family.

Kherra asked, "Were not Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, Pawan Singh, Nirav Modi, and Vijay Mallya also Modi ka Parivar?"

Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh is a BJP MP and former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief, who is accused of sexually harassing women wrestlers.

Pawan Singh is a Bhojpuri singer-actor who withdrew his name as BJP Lok Sabha poll candidate from West Bengal's Asansol seat Sunday. West Bengal's ruling TMC alleged that many of his songs were

crude and depicted women in a vulgar way.

"(PM Narendra) Modi has completed 10 years in office and his associate Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has completed 24 years in Odisha. We want to ask the PM what action has been taken on the chit fund scam and mining scam in Odisha," Kherra said ahead of the Prime Minister's visit to the state.

Were not Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, Pawan Singh, Nirav Modi, and Vijay Mallya also Modi ka Parivar
PAWAN KHERRA | CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

Claiming that lakhs of people in Odisha have been affected by the 'multi-crore scams', the Congress leader alleged that none has got back their money.

Despite recommendations made by a commission, no CBI probe was conducted in the mining scam and no one was arrested, Kherra claimed.

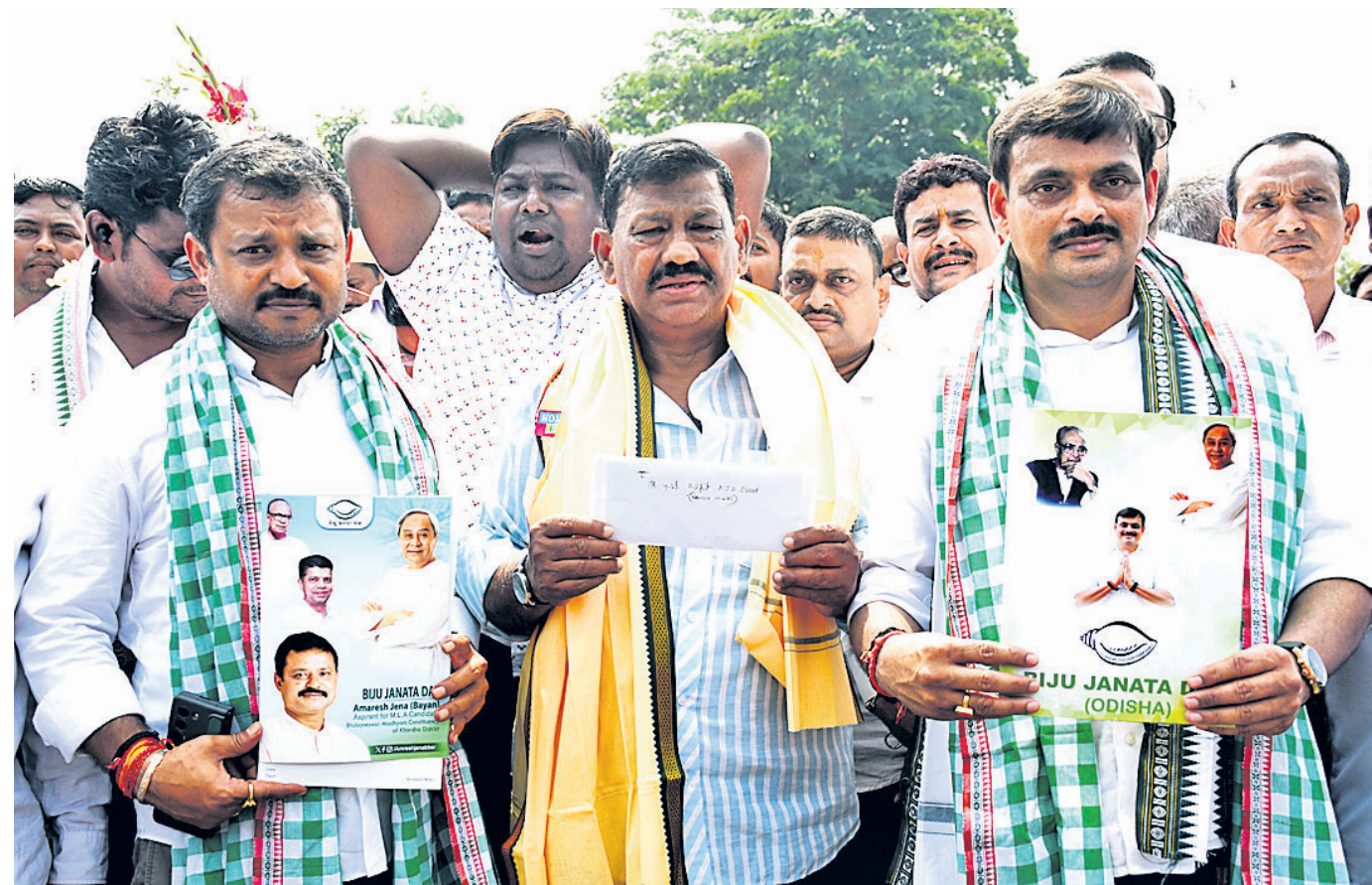
He said, "Whenever there is a corruption or scam in the state, the BJP comes to BJD's rescue. Recently, the BJD has allotted one Rajya Sabha seat to the BJP."

Kherra asked the Prime Minister to disclose the kind of relation the BJP has with the BJD. "Earlier, there was an invisible relation between the two parties, but now, it has become visible to all," he said.

Kherra said that the Congress, after coming to power, will take strong action against persons involved in the chit fund and mining scams.

"Valuable land and forests of Odisha are being sold to outsiders. The rights of the people of the state are being provided to outsiders. One non-Odia man became king of the state and has been roaming in choppers," he alleged without naming anyone. Now, Odisha is ready for change and the Congress will bring the change for them, he said.

He claimed that Congress' vote share in Odisha is going to increase by 30 to 35 per cent in upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls.



RUSH FOR TICKETS: BJD's Amaresh Jena (left), former Bhubaneswar mayor Mihir Mohanty (middle) and Biranchi Narayan Mahasupakar (right) on their way to Naveen Niwas seeking tickets for the upcoming elections, Tuesday

KOREI ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Party hopping headache for BJD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, March 5: Even though the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is making all-out efforts to win the upcoming elections in Jajpur district, especially Korei Assembly segment, the recent crossover by former Bari MLA Debasis Nayak to BJP and possibility of defection by some other leaders have become a cause of concern for the regional party.

The party has started preparing for Assembly elections after the panchayat elections got over in Jajpur district. BJD leaders are looking no stone unturned to quell any form of dissidence and rebellion that might crop up like the one that occurred during panchayat polls.

However, Debasis Nayak defecting to BJP has raised the political temperature in Jajpur district. After Bari, all eyes are now on Korei Assembly segment, a crucial constituency in the district. This constituency has hit the headlines after Jajpur MLA Pranab Prakash Das aka



Bobby announced that development of Korei is his responsibility. Bobby, who is also the organisational secretary of BJD, made this announcement while attending a felicitation programme at Malaanandpur Square, February 25.

This one-liner by Bobby sparked concern among the party workers and ticket aspirants for Korei seat. Chatters were abuzz that the ruling party might give the ticket to Das and field him from Korei constituency. Speculations are rife that a new political equation might be formed for Korei and Jajpur

Assembly seats. Meanwhile, BJP has been holding merger meetings at various places in the district after the panchayat elections. The saffron party's rise in strength after the panchayat elections has encouraged the aspirants, party workers and leaders.

On the other hand, the ruling BJD is also pulling out all the stops to prevent the BJP from gaining further strength. It is trying to create a political environment so that the saffron camp does not become an alternative for the rebels.

On the other hand, ticket aspirants from BJP Biswajit Nayak and Alexander Das are taking every step to exhibit the strength of the saffron party.

Recently, Das had conducted a meeting in Vyasanagar which was attended by over 5,000 people. The show of strength by BJP has concerned the BJD. The ruling party has realised that BJP is not that weak like Congress.

The ruling party has launched

a covert war against the BJP and trying to scuttle its forward march. The state government declaring Panikoili as a notified area council (NAC) is one such move by BJD to stop the forward march of the saffron party.

Bobby's 'excessive concern' for Korei has concerned the incumbent MLA Ashok Bal, former MLA-cum-Mo College chairperson Akash Dasnayak and former Vyasanagar Municipality chairperson Sabita Rout. Sources said that they apprehend that they would lose the race if the party decides to field Bobby from Korei.

Speculations are rife that given the situation many influential BJD leaders are preparing to defect to BJP if the saffron party assures them of a ticket.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Chandikhole, Tuesday, has boosted the morale of BJP workers and leaders. In the given situation, Korei politics will become more fascinating if some dissident BJD leaders and workers decide to defect to BJP.

More aspirants for BJP as vote share increases



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, March 5: A rise in vote share for the BJP in last general and panchayat elections has led to an increase in the number of aspirants in the saffron party in Balikuda-Erasama Assembly segment of Jagatsinghpur district, a report said.

The candidate of the ruling BJD had won this seat in 2009, 2014 and 2019 elections. The BJP, buoyed by an increase in vote share, has launched preparations to perform even better in the 2024 elections. The rise in vote share during the last general and panchayat elections has led to an increase in the number of candidates aspiring for tickets from the saffron party.

The 2019 election had created an opportunity for BJP while there was a nationwide wave for the party. Senior BJD leader Dr Damodar Rout had then switched over to BJP and contested from this seat. It was then said that Rout will win the election by influencing the majority of voters with his political acumen and experience which he had earned over the years. However, this remained a pipedream as he failed to secure even the second position.

In 2009 elections, BJP received 3.78 per cent votes while it received 2.05 per cent votes in 2014 elections. The vote share went up

sharply in 2019 when the saffron party polled 19.5 per cent votes or 37,611 votes in the election. The ruling BJD received 53.83

BALIKUDA-ERASAMA ASSEMBLY SEGMENT

per cent votes while the Congress candidate secured 25.53 per cent votes. The political equation in the constituency started changing since then. Later, Rout left BJP but that failed to have any impact in the party's position in the constituency. This was reflected in the 2022 Zilla Parishad election as more votes were cast for the saffron party candidates.

Party leaders and workers claim that the public opinion is in favour of BJP. Political analysts claim that this might be the reason for which the number of aspirants is increasing in BJP. Party workers attributed the role of party leader Khirod Chandra Parida in the increase in vote share for the saffron party.

Parida is known as a good organiser in the constituency. He was in RSS since 1980 and with ABVP from 1982. Parida joined BJP and is now working as a whole timer for the party after retiring from government service in 2021.

He is also working as the co-ordinator of the party organisation in Balikuda-Erasama con-

stituency. Parida said that he expects to get ticket and become the party candidate from this Assembly constituency in the 2024 election.

District executive member Sibabrata Das is another aspirant for the party ticket from this constituency. He left Congress during the last election and joined the saffron party. He was earlier a Zilla Parishad member of the Congress party and a known personality in Balikuda area.

Similarly, special invitee member of BJP's state executive Sanjay Mohanty is another aspirant for the party ticket. He joined BJP during the 2019 election. The district executive member Sashikant Parida is also another aspirant for the party ticket while Satya Sarathi Mohanty who lives in Haryana has also joined the race for the party ticket. Satya Sarathi reached the constituency around three months back and started works to galvanise the party organisation.

He somehow became disputed in some incidents. A merger meeting was scheduled to be held at Erasama January 29 but was cancelled later. Later, the merger meeting was held at Balikuda instead of Erasama March 3 but BJP's state president Manmohan Samal stayed away from the meeting. This has been giving a different message to the voters.

Koraput villagers warn of poll boycott

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, March 5: Residents of five villages under Sadar police limits in this district have warned of boycotting the upcoming polls over lack of an underpass near the railway line passing near Ghatamundar and Tiadiputa villages, a report said Tuesday.

The matter came to the fore after villagers staged a rail roko on the railway track near Ghatamundar and Tiadiputa villages. The agitation disrupted rail services on the route with many trains remaining stranded at Koraput and Suku railway stations.

The villagers relented after



the railway authorities assured to construct an underpass following the intervention of the district Collector V Keerthi Vasani.

While leaving, they warned to boycott the upcoming polls if the railway authorities do not construct an underpass before

the general elections.

The villagers alleged that the Kolab river flows on one side of their villages while the rail route passes on the other side. Their miseries multiply during the rainy season.

They said that the residents of the five villages have to cross the railway line everyday to attend to their work or tend to their livestock on the grassland opposite the track. Many villagers and livestock die or are rendered critical while crossing the track. They have been demanding construction of an underpass for a long period but their pleas have fallen on deaf ears of the railway authorities.



Workers and leaders of various parties join BJD at a merger meeting at Bonai in Sundargarh district, Tuesday



Congress leaders and party workers at an organisational meeting of the party at Paschima Simulia village under Gadpada panchayat of Basta block in Balasore district, Tuesday



In the last seven years, more than 70 paper leak cases have shattered the dreams of more than two crore students

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

INAUGURATION TODAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will Wednesday inaugurate the Howrah Maidan-Esplanade section of the East-West Metro corridor, a part of which runs under a river - the Hooghly



'LaccMi' BUSES ARE OPERATING IN OVER 6,000 PANCHAYATS

BENEFITING MORE THAN 36.4 MILLION PEOPLE ACROSS ODISHA

DADLS-796

OIPR-1500/13/0661/2324

SHORT TAKES

Restaurant manager held

Gurugram: The Gurugram police has arrested the manager of a local restaurant from where five people were taken to hospital after they were allegedly served dry ice instead of a mouth freshener, officials said Tuesday. The five diners, who are friends, began vomiting and suffered bleeding in the mouth after consuming the dry ice served to them in an apparent mix-up at the La Forestta cafe-cum-restaurant in Sector 90.

Paper leak: UP gov't takes action

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government Tuesday removed Renuka Mishra as the chairperson of the UP Police Recruitment and Promotion Board amid allegations of the question paper of a constable recruitment examination being leaked. Mishra has been put on the "wait list" after her removal from the post and Director Vigilance Rajiv Krishna given the additional responsibility of the board, official sources said.

Karnataka gov't gets bomb threat

Bangalore: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar Tuesday said that he and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah have received an email threatening to cause explosions in the State if they don't pay up \$2.5 million (Rs 20.7 crore). The state Congress chief also said that he has forwarded the email to the police officers who are now on the job to trace the sender. "I and the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah received the mail three days ago. It is in my phone and I have sent it to the police for investigation," he said. According to him, the sender is Shahid Khan10786, who has also shared another email ID for future communication.

BIG RELIEF FOR SHIVAKUMAR



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Bangalore, March 5: In a relief to Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, the Supreme Court Tuesday quashed a 2018 money laundering case against him and another accused in the matter. Shivakumar thanked the top court for dismissing the money laundering probe against him, and said the central agencies are planning to file an appeal against the order but he is equally prepared for it. The Congress leader had moved the top court against the 2019 order of Karnataka High Court that refused to quash the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summons issued to him in an alleged case of money laundering. A bench of justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan set aside the High Court order and allowed the appeals filed by Shivakumar and Karnataka Bhawan (Delhi) employee A Hanumanthaiah. "Appeals are allowed, the proceedings initiated against the appellants under the PMLA are hereby quashed," the bench said. Shivakumar, who is also the Karnataka Congress chief, said he would soon let people know how the CBI targeted him. "I got

information about the relief from the Supreme Court. I learnt that the cases framed against me were found wrong. Today is a day of joy after many difficulties in life," he said in Bangalore. When asked whether he felt that the journey was not easy, Shivakumar said he never felt the journey was difficult. "I went to jail confidently. The more they trouble me, I will only rise politically," he said. "I prostrate before the judges in the Supreme Court from here. I have been saying that I did nothing but yet I faced numerous problems," he added. Shivakumar was booked along with Haumanthaiah for alleged offences under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The case dates back to August 2017 when the Income Tax department had carried out searches at multiple premises in Delhi as part of its alleged tax evasion probe against Shivakumar, his alleged business associate and liquor trader Sachin Narayan, another associate Sunil Kumar Sharma who operated a fleet of luxury buses, Karnataka Bhawan (Delhi) employee A Hanumanthaiah and former state government employee and caretaker posted at the Karnataka Bhawan Rajendra N.

Govt using SBI as shield to hide dubious dealings: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: The Congress Tuesday attacked the Centre over the State Bank of India moving the Supreme Court to seek more time to disclose electoral bond details, alleging that the Modi government is using the country's largest bank as a shield to hide its "dubious dealings". The State Bank of India (SBI) Monday moved the Supreme Court seeking an extension till June 30 to disclose details of each electoral bond encashed by political parties. In its verdict last month, the top court directed SBI to furnish the details to the Election Commission of India by March 6. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said the party's position on the electoral bonds scheme is that it is "opaque, undemocratic and destroyed the level playing field". "The (Narendra) Modi government is using the largest bank of our country as a shield to hide its dubious dealings through electoral bonds," he said. No less than the Supreme Court of India had struck down the Modi government's "black money conversion scheme" of electoral bonds, holding it "unconstitutional", "violative of RTI" and "illegal" and asked SBI to furnish donor details by March 6, he said. "But the BJP wants it to be done after the Lok Sabha elections by June 30, Kharge said, adding that the tenure of the Lok Sabha will end June 16. Alleging that the BJP was the main beneficiary of the "fraudulent" electoral bonds scheme, Kharge said, "Isn't the government conveniently hiding the BJP's shady dealings where contracts of highways, ports, airports, power plants etc were handed over to Prime Minister



THE STATE BANK OF INDIA MONDAY MOVED THE SUPREME COURT SEEKING AN EXTENSION TILL JUNE 30 TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF EACH ELECTORAL BOND ENCASHED BY POLITICAL PARTIES

Narendra Modi's cronies in lieu of these opaque electoral bonds?" "Experts say that the 44,434 automated data entries of donors can be divulged and matched in just 24 hours. Why does SBI then need four more months to collate this information?" he said. He alleged, "The Congress was crystal clear that the electoral bonds scheme was opaque, undemocratic and destroyed the level playing field. But the Modi government, PMO (Prime Minister's Office) and the FM (finance ministry) bulldozed every institution - RBI, Election Commission, Parliament and the opposition to fill the BJP's coffers."

Calcutta HC judge to join BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 5: Abhijit Gangopadhyay announced Tuesday that he is joining the BJP, hours after he resigned as a judge of the Calcutta High Court. Addressing a press conference, he alleged that the TMC was "synonymous with corruption" and he would fight it till the end. "I will be joining the BJP, possibly on March 7. I am joining the BJP as it is a national party, which is fighting against the corruption of the TMC in Bengal," he said. Gangopadhyay, whose rulings on various education-related matters stirred political debates, refrained from giving a direct reply on whether he would contest the Lok Sabha polls. "It is for the BJP leadership to decide whether they want me to fight. Whatever they decide I will accept," he said. Gangopadhyay said he would fight against the "injustice" and "corruption" of the TMC. "TMC leaders have been using derogatory language against me for quite some time. If they don't like a judgment, then they can't just verbally attack a judge. Such investigations only helped me to take the decision to join politics and fight the TMC, which is synonymous with corruption in Bengal," he said. "The days of the TMC are numbered in West Bengal. The CPI (M)-led Left Front was decimated in the 2009 Lok Sabha polls, ultimately leading to their defeat in the 2011 assembly polls. The TMC will also face the same fate," he claimed. On joining the BJP, he said the decision was taken over the last few days. "I was on leave for the last few days and got in touch with the BJP. They also contacted me. I felt this is the right platform to fight against the TMC," he said. Asked about the allegations of corruption against Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari of the BJP, Gangopadhyay said it was "a cooked up case to frame him and other TMC leaders" to pave the way for a top TMC leader's accession in the party's power structure.



Members of Bharatiya Kisan Union raise slogans during a protest outside the Deputy Commissioner's office in support of farmers' demands in Amritsar PTI PHOTO

Six disqualified Himachal Congress MLAs move SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: Six Congress MLAs, who were disqualified after they cross-voted in the recent Rajya Sabha polls in Himachal Pradesh, moved the Supreme Court Tuesday against their disqualification. The ex-MLAs have filed a plea against the February 29 decision of the state Legislative Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania. These Congress rebels, who had voted in favour of BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha polls February 27, later abstained from voting on the Budget, defying a party whip. Senior Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi lost the Rajya Sabha election owing to cross voting by the rebels. The ruling Congress had sought their disqualification on the ground that they abstained from voting on the Budget, defying a party whip. The disqualified MLAs are Rajinder Rana, Sudhir Sharma, Inder Dutt Lakhnani, Devinder Kumar Bhutoo, Ravi Thakur and Chetanya Sharma.

ED ATTACK CASE: CBI REGISTERS FIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: The CBI has taken over the investigation into the attack on Enforcement Directorate officers by a mob in Sandeshkhali January 5, registering an FIR Tuesday hours after the Calcutta High Court directed the state police to hand over the case to the central agency, officials said. The CBI promptly acted on the orders of the High Court which had directed Tuesday that the central probe agency be handed over the case and the custody of suspended TMC leader Shajahan Sheikh by 4:30 pm. A CBI team reached the CID office in Kolkata with paramilitary forces to take custody of Sheikh, who was arrested by the state police February 29 in connection with the attack, but he was not handed over to the agency by the West Bengal police. "We have not handed him over as the state government has moved the Supreme Court (against the HC order)," an official said in Kolkata. Earlier

in the day, the High Court slammed the West Bengal Police for "totally biased" conduct and said every attempt is being made to delay the probe to "protect" the accused. A team of ED officials was attacked by a nearly 1,000-strong mob January 5 when they went to raid the house of Sheikh, who allegedly has close links with arrested former state food minister Jyoti Priya Mallick, in connection with the multi-crore ration distribution scam in West Bengal. "There can be no better case than the case on hand which requires to be transferred to be investigated by CBI," a High Court division bench headed by Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam ruled Tuesday. Within hours of the HC acceding to the Enforcement Directorate's request, the West Bengal government moved the Supreme Court challenging the order but an apex court bench refused an urgent listing of the plea and asked its counsel to mention the matter before the Registrar General.

international



Our defense spending goes to too many different weapon systems, primarily bought from outside the EU

HUNT FOR 'SPY' BALLOON

Polish media reported Tuesday that three unidentified objects looking like weather balloons have been found in the country's northeast, and some of them had Cyrillic inscriptions



of the day quote

India and South Korea have a growing responsibility to actively contribute to the reshaping of the global order

We have got the mandate to improve the economy of the country and that is the top priority of our government. Our government will work hard to promote investment in the country and provide facilities to the business community

There are likely more children fighting for their lives somewhere in one of Gaza's few remaining hospitals, and likely even more children in the north unable to obtain care at all

Amid tensions, China hikes defence budget

IN RECENT MONTHS, TENSIONS SIMMERED BETWEEN CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINES AS MANILA, BACKED BY THE US, STEPPED UP EFFORTS TO ASSERT ITS RIGHTS OVER THE PART OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA FIRMLY RESISTED BY THE CHINESE COAST GUARD SHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, March 5: China Tuesday increased its defence budget by 7.2 per cent to \$232 billion as it continues with the massive modernisation of its military amid prevailing tensions over Taiwan, the South China Sea, border frictions with India and increasing rivalry with the US.

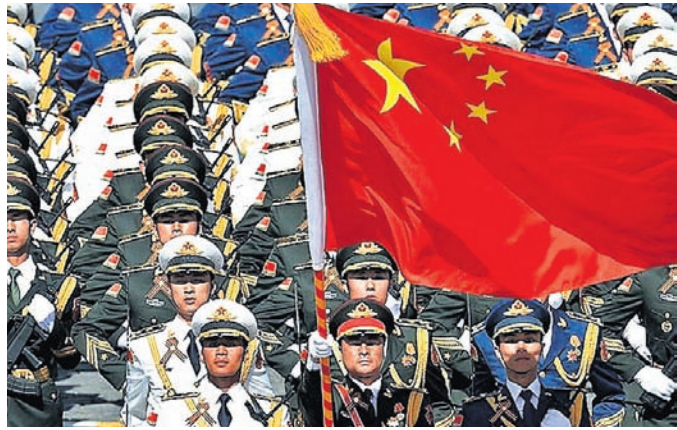
China, which is the second highest spender on defence after the US, has allocated 1.67 trillion yuan (about \$232 billion) for defence spending. The US defence budget for the last year amounted to \$886 billion.

The increase in terms of the percentage of China's defence budget was the same as last year. China last year hiked its defence budget by 7.2 per cent to 1.55 trillion yuan (about \$225 billion), marking the eighth consecutive year of increase in its military spending.

Like its previous budgets, this year's defence budget of China was almost three times higher than that of India.

India's defence allocation this year amounted to Rs 6,21,541 crore (about \$74.8 billion). While hiking the defence budget, China proposed a modest around five per cent target this year for the growth of its economy which is in a slowdown mode.

China is yet to resolve fully the eastern Ladakh standoff with India in May 2020 as a result of the action by its military which



China has simmering territorial disputes with some of its neighbours. China views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland, even by force

Beijing claims most of the South China Sea, while the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims

caused the Galwan Valley clash that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

Proposing the defence budget hike in the National People's Conference (NPC), China's Parliament, Premier Li Qiang said the armed forces will strengthen all-around military training and combat readiness, make well-coordinated efforts to improve military preparedness and devote great energy to training under combat conditions, to firmly safeguard China's national sovereignty, security, and development interests.

"We will modernise the military governance system, ad-

vance military development as outlined in the 14th Five-Year Plan, and speed up the implementation of major defence-related projects," he said in his first work report submitted to the NPC Tuesday attended by President Xi Jinping.

Also, China's current proceeding of the NPC in which substantial Chinese military personnel are delegates, is keenly watched this year due to recent purges of the military carried out by Xi, who heads the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC) the overall high command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Last October, China abruptly dismissed Defence

China vows to work with Maldives

China Tuesday vowed to work with the Maldives to build a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership with the island nation and underlined that normal cooperation between the two does not "target" any third party and will not be disrupted by any 3rd party. Asked for her comments on China's military agreement with the Maldives at a press briefing here, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning referred the media to "competent Chinese authorities" for details. "More broadly, China is committed to working with the Maldives to build a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership," she said.

Minister Gen Li Shangfu reportedly for corruption. Before becoming the Defence Minister, Li headed the country's Rocket (missiles) force, a key organ of the military.

After that, nine generals, including top commanders, from the rocket force have been removed from the NPC for suspected "violations of discipline and the law" - usually a euphemism for corruption.

Observers say while there is no imminent plan of war for China to expand its defence budget, Beijing is expected to continue "buying time", meaning steady growth in military spending to build up capacity

so that it can achieve its goal of reunification with self-ruled Taiwan, and to narrow the military power gap with the United States. But the budget is also expected to take into account the risk of an armed conflict triggered by something "unpredictable", with more military encounters in the disputed South China Sea, Taiwan electing a new independence-leaning president in January, and a possible comeback of Donald Trump (as president) in the US, a report in the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post said.

The PLA has a target of 2027 - the year of its centenary - to achieve its costly modernisation goals, paving the way for it to become a "world-class" military power by 2049.

Li said the government will consolidate and enhance the integration of national strategies and strategic capabilities, refine the system and layout of defence-related science, technology, and industries, raise public awareness concerning national defence, and strengthen national defence mobilisation and readiness of reserve forces, he said in a statement.

On Taiwan, Li said: "We will implement our Party's overall policy for the new era on resolving the Taiwan question, stay committed to the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, and resolutely oppose separatist activities aimed at "Taiwan independence" and external interference".

Prachanda allies agree on power-sharing deal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 5: Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and his allies Tuesday struck a power-sharing deal that includes sharing of the premier's position, reviving the left alliance in the politically fragile country following his dramatic move to terminate an alliance with the Nepali Congress.

Prachanda, a former guerilla leader, forged a new alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) - the second-biggest party - led by former premier KP Sharma Oli on Monday following which three ministers took the oath of office.

A meeting of the top leaders of the Maoist Centre, UML, the Rashtriya Swatantra Party and the Janata Samajbadi Party agreed on an eight-point deal signed by Prachanda along with UML chair Oli, RSP chairperson Rabi Lamichhane and Samajbadi Party chief Upendra Yadav, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported.

"The [new] coalition has been formed among like-minded parties for good governance, development, social justice and prosperity. The government will be led by Maoist Centre chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal," reads the first point of the agreement.

The Prime Minister's post would be divided between Prachanda and Oli, the paper said.

SHORT TAKES

Parag Agrawal sues Musk

San Francisco: Indian-origin Parag Agrawal, former CEO of Twitter (now called X), and three other employees have sued Elon Musk for about \$128 million in unpaid severance. Agrawal, along with ex-chief financial officer Ned Segal, former Twitter head of legal and policy Vijaya Gadde and former Twitter General Counsel, Sean Edgett, have filed the lawsuit against the billionaire. Musk Tuesday reacted with just an emoji, when a follower posted: "Parag Agrawal is suing Elon Musk claiming that he did in fact get a lot done that week". The lawsuit claimed that the Tesla CEO showed "special ire" towards them by "publicly vowing to withhold their severance payments of around \$200 million", when he took over Twitter in 2022 for \$44 billion.

2 killed in midair plane collision

Nairobi: Two planes collided midair above the Nairobi National Park, sending the smaller plane crashing in the park and killing two people, police said Tuesday. The bigger plane, a Dash 8 operated by Safarilink Aviation airline with 44 on board, including five crew members, was heading to the coastal resort town of Diani when crew reported a loud bang soon after takeoff from Wilson Airport and decided to turn back, the airline reported.

US warship enters Jeju naval base

Seoul: A US Navy destroyer arrived at a naval base on the southern island of Jeju Tuesday for a replenishment purpose, the South Korean Navy said. The USS Higgins Arleigh Burke-class destroyer entered the base to replenish supplies and for crewmembers' rest, a day after South Korea and the US began their annual combined Freedom Shield exercise for an 11-day run, Yonhap news agency reported.

India hits out at Pak

United Nations/Geneva: India has slammed Pakistan as it raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir at the UN Human Rights Council, saying it should introspect on its own appalling human rights record and "deserved global reputation" as the "world's terrorism factory". Under Secretary in India's Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva Jagpreet Kaur exercised the country's Right of Reply at the General Debate at the 55th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council Monday after Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), raked the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in its statement.

Trump aims to trounce Haley



REUTERS



tion for Trump would set up a rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden in November's election. Biden is expected to win Tuesday's Democratic contests easily, though activists opposed to Biden's Israel policy are calling on Muslim Americans and progressives to vote "uncommitted" in Minnesota in protest. Haley, a former UN ambassador under Trump, has faced mounting questions about how long she will continue her long-shot campaign, particularly after losing her home state of South Carolina 10 days ago.

She has not made any promises beyond Super Tuesday, and her campaign has not scheduled any public events Tuesday or beyond.

"As much as everybody wants to go and push me out, I'm not ready to get out yet," she told Fox News in an interview Tuesday morning.

Trump was leading Haley in every Super Tuesday state where public polling data was available, according to poll tracking

The former president, who has dominated the Republican campaign from the start despite his litany of criminal charges, has swept all but one of the contests so far, winnowing a sprawling Republican field of candidates down to two

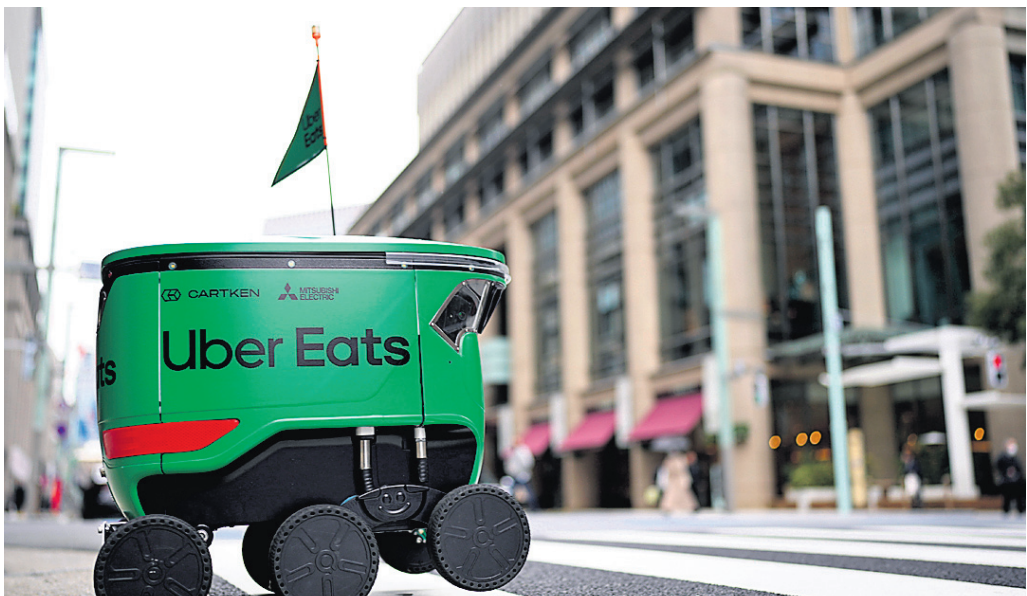
website 538. In California and Texas, which together account for more than 300 delegates, Trump was ahead by an average of more than 50 percentage points.

But Haley allies see a narrow window of opportunity to eke out a win in states including Virginia, Massachusetts and Vermont, which have more of the wealthy, college-educated voters who tend to support her candidacy.

Those three states are also among several on Super Tuesday that do not require primary voters be registered Republicans. Independent and moderate voters have favored Haley over Trump in early voting states, according to exit polls from Edison Research.

Asked if he would reach out to Haley after Tuesday's results, Trump said his focus was on Biden.

"I think we're going to win every state tonight," he told Fox News in a separate interview.



An Uber Eats food delivery robot crosses a street during its demonstration for media in Tokyo, Japan. Uber Eats Japan plans to launch the robot delivery service in a neighborhood in Tokyo, Wednesday

TIDBITS

Small plane crashes, kills 5

Nashville (US): A single-engine plane crashed near a highway in Nashville, Tennessee, just a few miles short of the airport it had tried to reach for an emergency landing, killing five people aboard, authorities said. The pilot made an emergency call to John C. Tune Airport around 7:40 pm Monday, reported engine trouble and was given clearance to make an emergency landing, Metro Nashville Police Department spokesman Don Aaron said. A short time later the pilot radioed that the aircraft would not reach the airport, he said.

Doctors face license suspensions

Seoul: Thousands of striking junior doctors in South Korea faced proceedings to suspend their medical licenses Tuesday, while authorities pushed for police investigations into leaders of the walkouts that have disrupted hospital operations. Nearly 9,000 of South Korea's 13,000 medical interns and residents have been refusing to work for the past two weeks to protest a government plan to enroll thousands more students in the country's medical schools in coming years. The government ordered them to return to work by February 29, citing a threat to public health, but most have defied the threats of license suspensions and prosecutions.

FB, Insta back online after global outage

Washington: Meta-owned Facebook and Instagram were back up Tuesday after a more than two-hour outage that was caused by a technical issue and impacted hundreds of thousands of users globally. The disruptions started at around 10:00 am ET (1500 GMT), with many users saying on rival social media platform X they had been booted out of Facebook and Instagram and were unable to log in. "We are aware of the incident and at this time, we are not aware of any specific malicious cyber activity at this time," a spokesperson for the White House National Security Council said.

Child malnutrition 'particularly extreme' in North Gaza: WHO

AGENCIES

Geneva, March 5: United Nations organisations said Tuesday that child malnutrition levels in northern Gaza were "particularly extreme" and about three times higher than in the south of the Palestinian enclave where more aid has been available.

Richard Peepkorn, WHO representative for Gaza and the West Bank, said that one-in-six children under two years of age were acutely malnourished in northern Gaza.

"This was in January. So the situation is likely to be greater today," Peepkorn added, referring to when the data was recorded. UNICEF spokesperson James Elder said malnu-

trition rates for children under five in northern Gaza, where access to aid has been highly limited since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas October 7, were three times higher than those in Rafah in the south.

Elder said this showed that "when that trickle of aid can come in, it does make a life saving difference."

At least 15 children have died over the past few days from malnutrition and dehydration at Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Gaza, the health ministry in Gaza said Sunday.

Calls for Israel to do more to address the humanitarian crisis have grown louder since the deaths of Palestinians lining up for aid in Gaza last month.



Gaza health authorities said 118 people were killed, attributing the deaths to Israeli fire and calling it a massacre.

Israel, which says many people were trampled or run over, has pledged to investigate.

Adding to hunger, there is a growing risk from infectious diseases, with nine-in-10

'Latest talks have ended with no breakthrough'

Cairo: Three days of negotiations with Hamas over a cease-fire in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages ended Tuesday without a breakthrough, Egyptian officials said, less than a week before the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the informal deadline for a deal. The United States, Qatar and Egypt have spent weeks trying to broker an agreement in which Hamas would release up to 40 hostages in return for a monthlong cease-fire, the release of some Palestinian prisoners and an influx of aid to address the humanitarian catastrophe in the isolated territory.

city of children," Elder told reporters in Geneva, referring to Israel's stated aim of rooting out Hamas battalions it says are hiding there.

"Rafah has about three quarters of a million children living there," Elder said in a statement.

Israel last month intensified its bombardment of Rafah, where about 1.5 million people are estimated to be crammed, most of them having fled their homes further north to escape Israel's military onslaught.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has said that a quarter of the population - 5,76,000 people - are one step from famine, nearly five months after Israel's assault on Gaza began.

