



**NO CHANGE OF FORTUNE:** Women labourers Thursday work at a brick kiln ahead of International Women's Day in Karad area of Maharashtra. PTI PHOTO

## ADR'S TWIN BLOWS

*With just a few days remaining for the Election Commission (EC) to announce poll dates, Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) seems to have dealt twin blows to major political parties wishing to splurge on voters to win the electoral battle. The leading non-profit election watchdog has made public an analysis of the national parties' audit reports and donation statements filed with the EC to claim that 82.42 per cent of their income from 'unknown sources' are tied to contentious electoral bonds. It also moved a contempt plea in Supreme Court challenging the State Bank of India's application for extension of time to disclose details of each electoral bond encashed by political parties.*

ties were considered - BJP, Congress, CPI-M, BSP, AAP and NPP. The BJP declared the highest income from unknown sources among the national parties at Rs 1,400 crore or 76.39 per cent of the total amount. The Congress declared an amount of Rs 315.11 crore (17.19 per cent). The BSP has declared that it did not receive any funds from voluntary contributions - above or below Rs 20,000, sale of coupons or electoral bonds, or unknown sources of income, the ADR said. Though the amount of donations from electoral bonds has been highlighted for the national parties, state parties also get a substantial amount of money from electoral bonds, it noted.

23 is Rs 3,076.88 crore, it said. Donations from voluntary contributions below Rs 20,000 formed 10 per cent of the income from unknown sources, totalling Rs 183.28 crore. The ADR advocates for full disclosure of all donors under RTI Act and proposes that the mode of payment for all donations, regardless of the amount, be declared in the audit reports submitted to the I-T Department and the EC. Last month, the SC scrapped the government's electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding, terming it 'un-constitutional' and ordering disclosure of the names of the purchasers, value of the bonds and their recipients. Meanwhile, the ADR moved a contempt plea in the SC Thursday challenging the State Bank of India's (SBI) application seeking an extension of time till June 30 to disclose the details of each electoral bond encashed by political parties. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud took note of the submissions made by lawyer Prashant Bhushan, who appeared in the court on behalf of ADR, that he was seeking initiation of contempt proceedings in the case. Bhushan said the SBI's plea is likely to be listed March 11 and the contempt application should also be heard together. The SC had last month directed the SBI to furnish the details to the EC by March 6. The SBI moved the SC March 4, seeking extension of time till June 30 to disclose details of electoral bonds.



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 7:** About 82 per cent of the total income from 'unknown sources' declared by national political parties in 2022-23 came from electoral bonds, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). The ADR also said that the analysis of the national parties' audit reports and donation statements filed with the Election Commission (EC) shows that the sources remain largely unknown. Out of the Rs 1,832.88 crore as income from 'unknown sources', the share of income from electoral bonds was Rs 1,510 crore or 82.42 per cent, according to the analysis of the financial reports for the fiscal year 2022-23 submitted to the poll panel, it stated. For this study, six national par-

ties were considered - BJP, Congress, CPI-M, BSP, AAP and NPP. The BJP declared the highest income from unknown sources among the national parties at Rs 1,400 crore or 76.39 per cent of the total amount. The Congress declared an amount of Rs 315.11 crore (17.19 per cent). The BSP has declared that it did not receive any funds from voluntary contributions - above or below Rs 20,000, sale of coupons or electoral bonds, or unknown sources of income, the ADR said. Though the amount of donations from electoral bonds has been highlighted for the national parties, state parties also get a substantial amount of money from electoral bonds, it noted. Between 2004-05 and 2022-23, the national parties collected Rs 19,083 crore from unknown sources, it said. In addition, the Congress and the CPI(M) have also declared a combined income of Rs 136.79 crore from the sale of coupons, constituting 7.46 per cent of the income from unknown sources, its analysis showed. The BSP received Rs 29.27 crore from other known sources of income which included bank interest (Rs 15.05 crore), membership fees (Rs 13.73 crore), gain on sale of immovable property (Rs 28.49 lakh) and interest on income tax refund for 2021-22 (Rs 20.65 lakh), the organisation said. The total income of the six national political parties in 2022-

### CENTRE RAISES DA

**New Delhi:** The Centre Thursday hiked Dearness Allowance (DA) to 50 per cent of basic pay from the existing rate of 46 per cent effective from January 1 this year, benefitting over one crore employees and pensioners ahead of general elections.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You mean we have to congratulate all women today... including those in opposition-ruled states?

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	74119.39 ↑ 33.40
NIFTY	22493.55 ↑ 19.50
DOLLAR	82.69 ↓ ₹0.12
EURO	90.34 ↑ ₹0.08
GOLD	₹65,326 ↑ ₹148
SILVER	₹ 74,510 ↑ ₹372

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	33.8°C	31.6°C
Min Temp	24.1°C	24.0°C
Humidity	83%	85%
Rainfall	10mm	182mm

FORECAST  
LIGHT RAIN VERY LIKELY TO OCCUR

## Remuneration hike for 49,522 ASHAS

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** In what would bring cheers to 49,522 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) in Odisha, the state government hiked their monthly remuneration from Rs 4,500 to Rs 7,000, Thursday. The service exit incentive for ASHAS has also been enhanced from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh.

The government estimates an additional annual expenditure of Rs 148.57 crore for the increased pay of ASHAS. With this, the total expenditure towards pay of ASHAS will amount to Rs 209 crore annually, along with an additional Rs 55 lakh towards payment of exit incentives. **Outsourced staffers' pay up** The government also announced a 25 per cent hike in

the monthly remuneration of outsourced employees working in various departments of the Odisha government through service provider agencies. Outsourced workers having more than five years of experience will be paid Rs 1,000 extra per month. Outsourced women employees will get 120 days of maternity leave.

## Amid tie-up buzz, BJD leaders fly to New Delhi

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** A day after Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held separate meetings reportedly on the possibility of forging an alliance before the upcoming elections, BJD leaders - 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian and party's organisational secretary Pranab Prakash Das - flew down to New Delhi Thursday amid speculations over their meeting with the saffron party top brass in the national capital over the issue.

Though senior BJD leaders said after the meeting Wednesday that the party's decision would be in the 'larger interest of the state', a number of legislators were unsure whether they could contest the next elections. "Nobody has any idea whether he or she would be able to contest. Any seat may fall in the share of either party," said a BJD leader who attended the meeting at Naveen Niwas. Even very senior BJD leaders were not sure whether they could contest from their existing seats, he said, adding that the party's electoral alliance was broken exactly 15 years ago in March 2009, following the BJP's demand for more seats. Though both parties have so far agreed to go for alliance, the seat sharing between the two parties is yet to be finalised, he said. BJD insiders said that the ruling party which has 112 members in the 147-member

Assembly would like to retain its seats in the alliance while BJP has been demanding 55 seats. While BJD wants at least 112 Assembly seats leaving the remaining 35 for BJP, it has not been accepted by the leaders of the saffron party. BJD leader Sasmit Patra had earlier claimed that the regional party would win in 120 seats. The BJP which has eight MPs in the Lok Sabha from Odisha, in turn, has been demanding 14 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats in the state. But the BJD is ready to concede only 10, sources said.

"Whatever decision our central and state leaderships take, we will abide by that," Lekhasree Samantsinghar, said Odisha BJP's vice-president, adding that the entire BJP state leadership including its president Manmohan Samal has been camping in Delhi. BJP sources said that the state leaders held a marathon discussion at the residence of Vijay Pal Singh Tomar, the BJP election in-charge for Odisha. The state BJP leaders were told to stay for one or two more days in the national capital till seat sharing is finalised. The BJD and the BJP were in alliance for around 11 years between 1998 and 2009 and fought three Lok Sabha and two Assembly elections together. When Janata Dal was split in 1998, Patnaik formed his own party and joined the Vajpayee-led BJP government, as the steel and mines minister.

## Last month warmest Feb on record

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

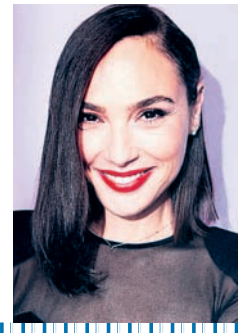
**Paris, March 7:** Last month was the warmest February on record globally, the ninth straight month of historic high temperatures across the planet as climate change steers the world into 'uncharted territory', Europe's climate monitor said Thursday. The last year has seen an onslaught of storms, crop-withering drought and devastating fires, as human-caused climate change - intensified by the naturally-occurring El Nino weather phenomenon - stoked warming to likely the hottest levels in over 100,000 years. Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) serv-

ice last month said the period from February 2023 to January 2024 marked the first time Earth had endured 12 consecutive months of temperatures 1.5 degrees Celsius hotter than the pre-industrial era. That trend has continued, it confirmed in its latest monthly update, with February as a whole 1.77C warmer than the monthly estimate for 1850-1900, the pre-industrial reference period. Temperatures spiked across swathes of the planet in February, from Siberia to South America, with Europe also registering its second warmest winter on record. In the first half of the

month, daily global temperatures were 'exceptionally high', Copernicus said, with four consecutive days registering averages 2C higher than pre-industrial times - just months after the world registered its first single day above that limit. This was the longest streak over 2C on record, said C3S director Carlo Buontempo, adding the heat was 'remarkable'. But it does not mark a

breach of the 2015 Paris climate deal limit of 'well below' 2C and preferably 1.5C, which is measured over decades. Copernicus' direct data from across the planet goes back to the 1940s, but Buontempo said that taking into account what scientists know about historical temperatures, "Our civilization has never had to cope with this climate." "In that sense, I think the definition of uncharted territory is appropriate," he told AFP, adding global warming posed an unprecedented challenge to "our cities, our culture, our transport system, our energy system."

# leisure



## GADOT WELCOMES HER FOURTH BABY

Actress Gal Gadot has welcomed her fourth baby with husband Jaron Varsano and made the announcement on social media with a picture. Gadot took to Instagram, where she posted a photograph of holding the newborn in the hospital, reports *people.com*

## KATE WINSET SECRETLY BATTLED EATING DISORDER

Actress Kate Winslet shared that she secretly battled an eating disorder earlier in her career but she 'never told anyone about it'. She emphasised the harmful association between compliments and weight, vowing to confront anyone who mentions it.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
Logic and reasoning will hold court, while creativity takes a backseat today. There are challenges at work, but you are a dynamo and will meet them up front. All tensions will be relieved by the loving touch of your near and dear. Such is life, sums up Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
Today, you will strike a great balance between your professional and personal life, predicts Ganesh. You will save your money from being swindled by others. You may be lagging in the race to catch up with your goals, but will not be disappointed by what you achieve. It is an auspicious day to undertake business deals and start new projects, feels Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you will have a tendency to remain possessive about your personal belongings, says Ganesh. You are likely to join personality development courses to achieve your ultimate goals. An unpleasant occurrence is likely to throw you off guard. But remember, there is hope when there is life.

**CANCER**  
You may have a way with words, but women somehow always have their way with you. Your problem is that while you may use your words to pull some strings, the master puppeteer, in most cases, will be a woman. So, to keep yourself happy, you may have to make the concerned woman happy.

**LEO**  
You may not have a halo around your head, but that most certainly does not deter you from playing the spiritual card today, says Ganesh. On this auspicious day, it is through religious scriptures that you satiate your desire to attain the intangible. Spend some time meditating on the finer aspects of life; you will be amazed at the answers such contemplation can throw up.

**VIRGO**  
Today, your ingenuity will breed ideas like rabbits. You have the healer's hands, and so shall you make right many a wrong, predicts Ganesh. You shall be most understanding, and reading people's mind will do wonders for you and your beloved.

**LIBRA**  
A wistful day lies ahead of you, says Ganesh. This day, just like 'on the summer day that we flew kites', may be the standard when it comes to wanting to have a better future. Ganesh expects a sea of change in your outlook, thanks to your sweetheart's noble gesture today.

**SCORPIO**  
Dear friends and soul mates will bring you much relief and calm today, says Ganesh. Spend as much time as possible with them. Romantic escapades with your beloved will be heaven in itself. Blood relations will stand true and strong in matters of importance, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Tempers will fly today, warns Ganesh. Rein in your anger by the leash of control and restraint. But the buck will stop somewhere! When it does, dig your feet in and battle the crunch situation, advises Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your outstanding intellectual ability will not only yield exciting results for you, but will also help your close associates who will have progressed a great deal in their career because of your valuable advice, says Ganesh. Scores of problems may come your way, but you will have nothing to worry about. You will deal with each one of them with ease. A project approved for implementation will be successful, and will earn you the reputation of being a perfectionist.

**AQUARIUS**  
Your communication skills will work wonders today. Your eloquence will win you precious brownie points, and may prove highly beneficial in meetings. In fact, all your arguments will sound very persuasive. The trick is not to get ruffled, says Ganesh, when people don't agree with you.

**PISCES**  
An auspicious time for starting new projects, today will see you make substantial investments in your future. Your family is the foundation of your success, and keeping that in mind will provide you with some vital insights. Your smile wins many a heart today, says Ganesh.

# Shriya's take on nepotism

**Mumbai:** Actress Shriya Saran has given her two cents on the topic of nepotism and said that even top star Shah Rukh Khan was an outsider when he entered the industry.

Talking about the insider-outsider debate, Shriya said: "Everybody was an outsider once - even Shah Rukh Khan was an outsider when he entered the industry. Things are changing immensely now and it'll only keep changing as long as the debate is healthy."

"However, what really needs to change is that there should be more screen tests for everyone. Every production should have an easier and simpler way of screen testing, so that it opens many doors for all people."

The actress emphasised her commitment to doing what she wants, wearing what she likes, and not letting societal perceptions dictate her choices. The actress's candid revelations shed light on the challenges and stereotypes faced by women in the entertainment world, even as they navigate personal milestones like marriage and motherhood.

Shriya will next be seen in *Showtime*, which also stars Emraan Hashmi, Mahima Makwana with Mouni Roy, Rajeev Khandelwal, Vishal Vashishtha, Neeraj Madhav, Vijay Raaz and Naseeruddin Shah.

*Showtime* will stream from March 8 on Disney+ Hotstar. IANS



## Turkish actress Hande's fascination for India

**Mumbai:** Turkish TV actress Hande Erceci, currently on her maiden visit to India, says she has always been fascinated with everything Indian and would like to work with top stars like Aamir Khan and Hrithik Roshan in the future. Erceci, who gained international recognition for shows such as *Ask Laftan Anlamaz*, *Gunesin Kizlari*, and *Sen Cal Kapimi*, attended a session at the FICCI Frames Thursday.

"I've been interested in learning about different cultures since I was young. I was already interested in this Indian culture, and I wanted to see India. I told one of my friends that I wanted to go to India. I like how people follow the culture here. I wanted to wear a traditional sari. But I don't have much time here. I would like to work with Hrithik Roshan, Aamir Khan, and Sidharth Malhotra. This is the right time for me to be here. A new door is opening for me to do something here," Erceci told PTI.

The actor believes she was destined to visit India one day. "My agent asked me if I would like to go to India for FICCI Frames this year. I instantly said yes, as I was thinking of coming here. I feel this is a universal plan," she said through an interpreter. PTI

## Kangana compares herself with Lata

Actress Kangana Ranaut, who wasn't spotted alongside the scores of other film industry personalities at Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's recent pre-wedding festivities, appeared to take a dig at her industry colleagues who put on shows at the three-day bash. She said that she has turned down every opportunity to perform as hired entertainer at private events, comparing herself with legendary singer late Lata Mangeshkar.

The legend had reportedly turned down millions of dollars to just show up at a private bash, according to her sister, Asha Bhosle. Kangana reposted a news article about Asha's old comments, which she'd made on a reality show. The Queen actress wrote in an Instagram story, "I have been through worse financial setbacks, but Lata ji and I are only two people who have massive hit songs to our credit."

She continued, "But no matter how many temptations I got I never danced in the weddings, many super hit item songs were also offered to me, soon I avoided award shows also. It takes strong character and dignity to say no to fame and money, in the world of short cuts young generation needs to understand only wealth one can acquire is the wealth of integrity." AGENCIES



# When Ash said 'no' to Troy over intimate scenes

**Mumbai:** Before Priyanka Chopra and Deepika Padukone, it was Aishwarya Rai Bachchan who won hearts with her talent in the Hollywood film industry. She appeared on several talk shows and impressed people with her wit and charm. The blue-eyed diva has worked in international movies like *Bride and Prejudice*, *Mistress of Spices*, *Provoked*, *The Pink Panther 2* and *The Last Legion*. With her fantastic acting and bewitching beauty, Aishwarya made a place for herself in the West. Hence, even today, many top stars sometimes mention her name in their interviews.

There was a time when the *Ponniyin Selvan* actress was getting multiple offers to work on Hollywood projects. However, Aishwarya was quite selective and slowly distanced herself from working in English or international movies due to scheduling issues. One such film the actress was offered, which she rejected, was Brad Pitt's starrer *Troy*.

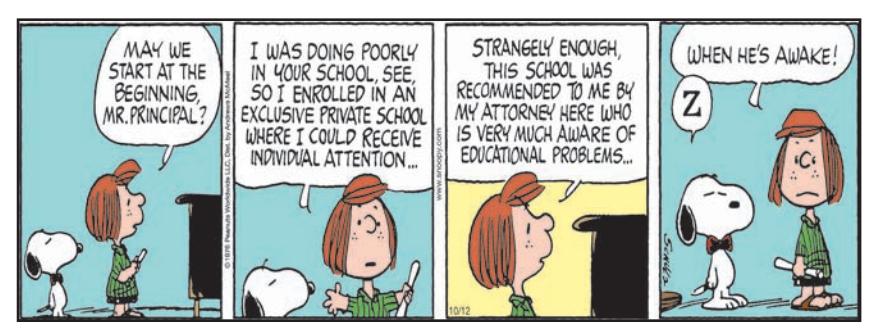
In an interview with PTI, Aishwarya revealed why she refused to be a part of Wolfgang Petersen's historical war film. The *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil* actress said, "One of the reasons I de-

clined *Troy* was that there were some very explicit lovemaking scenes in the script, and a lot of kisses. I was like, 'Oh my God! I'm not sure'. I couldn't imagine being comfortable with it."

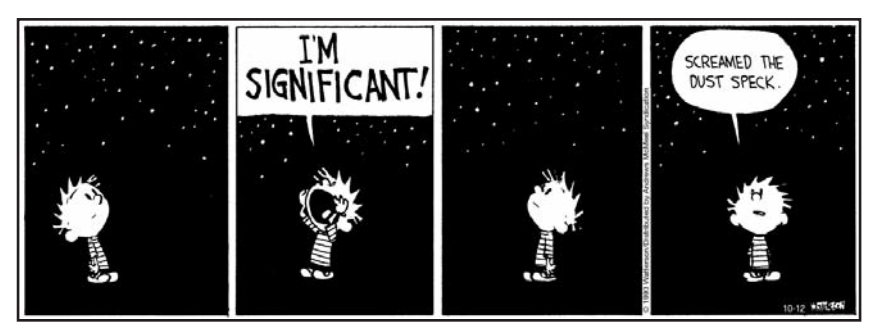
In the same interview, the Devdas actress revealed that Michael Douglas had brought a script for her when he came to India back then. Even Will Smith wanted to work with her for *Hancock* and *Seven Pounds*. Aishwarya stated that she didn't reject these movies because she had an attitude. There were scheduling issues, and she didn't have time to work overseas.

Earlier in 2012, Brad Pitt shared that he would like to work with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan as she's a versatile actress. He called her one of the most popular Bollywood actresses who became popular in the West because of her style, beauty and acting skills. He addressed how they missed an opportunity to work together in *Troy*. AGENCIES

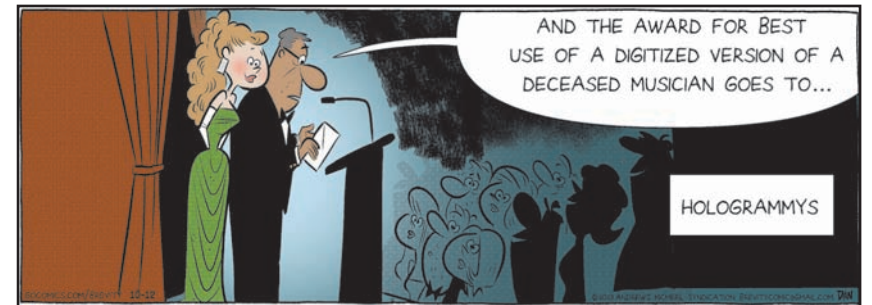
### PEANUTS



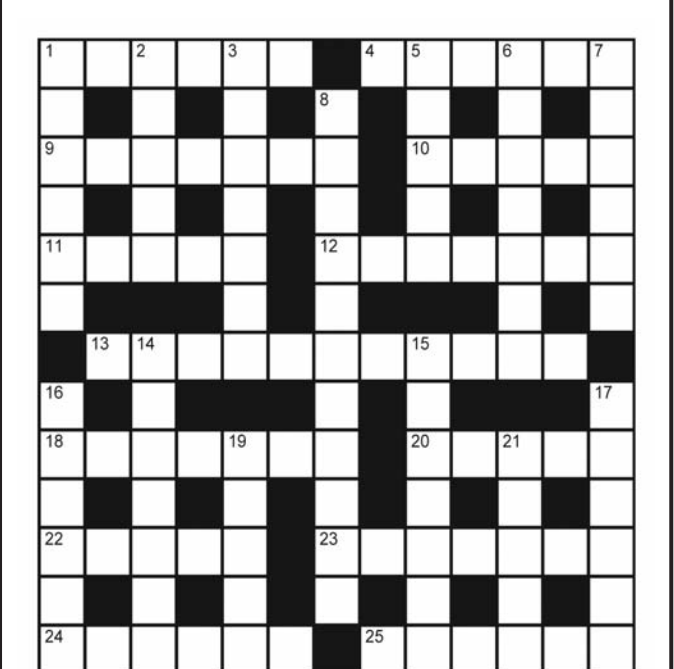
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



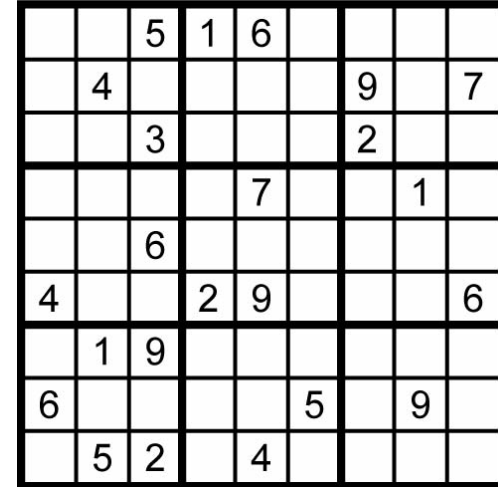
## FUN post CROSSWORD



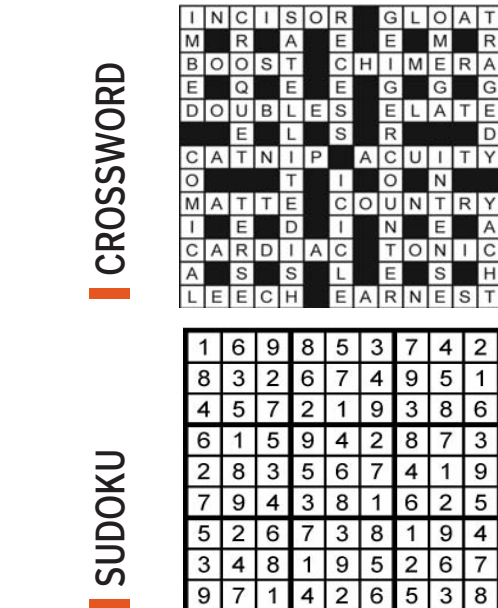
- Across**  
1 Artist's workplace  
4 Sea eagle  
9 Deplorable  
10 Proposal  
11 Caterpillar, for one  
12 Brisk, musically  
13 Sneaky  
18 Reddish purple  
20 Small three-masted vessel
- Down**  
22 Utopian  
23 Vanity tour? (3,4)  
24 Man, for one  
25 Appraise
- Across**  
7 Eurasian herb  
8 Not mentally confused  
14 Type of weapon  
15 Toxic  
16 Ratify  
17 Rifle attachments  
19 Hot stuff  
21 Nautical trash hauler

### 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



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown

## Adyasha Satpathy among Outlook's Women Architects of New India

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** Chief Executive of Dharitri and Orissa POST, Adyasha Satpathy, has featured as one of new India's women architects by leading magazine Outlook.

Satpathy has been placed the list of 36 top woman achievers of the country, including Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, fashion de-

signer Masaba Gupta, actress Nayanthara, entrepreneur Ananya Birla, film director Zoya Akhtar and producer Gunnet Monga Kapoor, in the magazine's special feature on the International Women's Day, titled 'Women Architects of New India'.

"Business woman, mother, wife, coffee addict and nature lover, Adyasha Satpathy wears many hats. She, glides through all her



address various societal problems and raise awareness among the people, focusing on the youth who represent the future of the country.

From the banner of Dharitri, Adyasha conducts various events and conferences to bring together people of excellence on a common platform. Several correspondents and journalists from different media houses were felicitated for their exemplary works in the field of investigative journalism, at the glorious event of the golden anniversary celebration of Odisha's leading daily. Addressing journalists at the special function, Tathagata Satpathy, a seasoned editor, spoke of the demise of dependence on secondary sources in journalism, which is creating a vacuum in the domain of ground reporting, resulting in misinterpretations and lack of depth in news reports.

### Champion of Change

Leading a movement towards a stronger and more vibrant media landscape

**Adyasha Satpathy**  
CEO, Dharitri Odia daily and Orissa POST English daily

Dharitri, being the most popular Odia daily, the publication follows strict adherence to immaculate Odia vocabulary, resulting in a strong reader base for the newspaper across Odisha. Hrushikesh Maitik, president of Odisha Sahitya Akademi endorsed that journalists at Dharitri continue to maintain the philosophy with which it was created and, therefore, has been able to uphold its critical editorial policy.

Climate issues being foremost on her mind, Adyasha is an advocate of environment conservation. She started the 'Dharitri Climate Fund', which will be given to young climate warriors at the grassroots for helping them in their endeavours in addressing climate change. An inclusive towards awareness drive is the creation of 'Dharitri Youth Concave'. Tathagata feels that such concaves bring together people, youth in particular, under one platform and provide them an opportunity to talk, discuss and thus, be aware and educate.

"In today's busy life, reporters tend to miss out vital aspects of a news story in search of a bigger lead. Later, these smaller developments become an important news story," Adyasha, in the capacity of the leading lady of the organisation said. "The observational skills of a reporter must be concerned with every arc of the story."

roles comfortably," said the article on Satpathy who has been instrumental in creating awareness on preserving environment.

She is a 'Champion of Change' who 'led a movement towards a stronger and more vibrant media landscape', captioned the magazine.

Speaking about her climate obligations, Satpathy is an advocate of environment conservation as she started the 'Dharitri Climate Fund', which is given away to young cli-

mate warriors at the grassroots for helping them in their endeavour in addressing climate change.

The Outlook write-up highlights the great feats and accomplishments of some notable 'change-making women', who have been responsible for trend-setting firsts and impressive cultural shifts. And in celebrating these stories, it celebrates the 'Indian every woman', fighting her daily battles with grit and grace, dreams and commitment.

**"Our government is working steadfastly to make the life of every person in society easy. Be it senior citizens, divyangjan, tribal people or the deprived sections of the society, our topmost priority is to serve and protect the interests of 140 crore Indians. ■"**

**- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister**

### Empowerment Through Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana & ADIP Scheme

Distribution of Assistive Devices to Senior Citizens and Divyangjan Under RVY & ADIP Scheme

For Senior Citizens of BPL category or having monthly income not more than **15000/-**

Facility of registration is also available for new beneficiaries at the camp

Total cost being borne by the Government of India

Date	Place	Time
08.03.2024	Shree Ram Rangmanch, Kota	11:00 AM
09.03.2024	Divine Public School, Maruti Nagar Khairabad, District Kota	
10.03.2024	Kashipuri Hindu Dharamshala Ground, Sangod, District Kota	
11.03.2024	Krishi Upaj Mandi, Keshavpura Patan, District Bundi	10:00 AM
	Purani Krishi Upaj Mandi, Bundi	12:00 PM

In the August Presence of  
**SHRI OM BIRLA**  
HON'BLE SPEAKER, LOK SABHA

**Transforming Lives of Senior Citizens**

Free distribution of assistive devices at the camp to **5700** identified beneficiaries

Distribution of **20476** devices under Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana and ADIP Scheme

Toll Free National Helpline for Senior Citizens **14567**

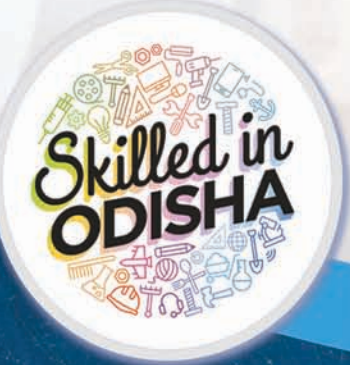
To know more, log on to <https://socialjustice.gov.in/>

Follow on Social Media /Department of Social Justice and Empowerment



## 16.93 lakh youth have been successfully trained under Skill Development Program since 2014\*

### Building a Prosperous & Skilled Odisha



### Transforming Vocational Education With

- Exclusive coaching for unparalleled learning experiences.
- 'Sudakshya' scheme offers free ITI and Polytechnic education to girl students.
- Includes experience certificates, and stipends.
- Emphasizing on physical health and holistic development.

cbc 38101/13/0074/2324

DSPL - 806

## New website of WODC launched

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** Chairman of Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) Asit Tripathy launched the Council's new website here Thursday.

Speaking on this occasion, Tripathy said the information about western Odisha projects including implementation, progress and completion, budget of the council and success stories can be obtained from the website. In the state budget for financial year 2024-25, the allocation for the Council has been increased to ₹500 crore.

The Council has been working for development of 11 districts in western Odisha where the government implements projects for industrial development, agricultural prosperity, restoration of historical sites, beautification of tourist spots, construction of cement concrete (CC) roads in rural areas, construction of modern multi-purpose auditoriums in cities, development of dams and surrounding beautification.

One can directly access the portal by clicking wodcportal.odisha.gov.in in the browser. After clearing the cache and browser history in Google Chrome, one can log in and reach the new portal.

# Government to revise Senior Citizens Policy



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** The state government has launched an initiative to revise its Senior Citizens Policy to adapt to changing demographics and evolving scenarios, officials said.

To facilitate the revision, the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), organised a consultative meeting here, Thursday.

The meeting was attended by senior officers, representatives from various organisations, and academics who discussed several aspects related to the revision of the policy.

It was emphasised during the meeting that the issues faced by senior citizens are multidimensional and require collaboration across government departments, public and private sectors, NGOs, voluntary organizations, civil society, and local communities, an official said.

SSEPD principal secretary

Bishnupada Sethi highlighted that Odisha is expected to have approximately 70 lakh senior citizens by 2026.

He stressed on the importance of recognising the diversity within the senior citizen population and providing tailored support accordingly.

The state government has prioritised the development and promotion of participatory processes, critical service delivery, and empathetic initiatives for senior citizens, he said.

Suggestions made during the meeting included the recognition of the need for sustainable support systems to reduce poverty and vulnerability among senior citizens, as well as improving their health and well-being.

Strategic interventions such as income security, health security, safety, welfare, and intergenerational bonding, along with facilitating their participatory role in community contributions, were also discussed as part of the revised policy framework.

## E Smart Clinic project for rural India kicks off

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Mumbai, March 7:** With an aim to revolutionise healthcare in rural India, Lords Mark Industries Ltd in collaboration with Unnat Bharat Abhiyan started taking initiatives for the implementation of the groundbreaking E Smart Clinic project.

The project was recently inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi at AIIMS Rajkot.

Speaking on this occasion, Lord's Mark Industries Ltd Executive Director Manav Teli said, "This initiative underscores our commitment to innovation and accessibility in healthcare, empowering individuals across rural India with cutting-edge diagnostics and expert medical consultations at an unprecedented affordability."



**NEW CHAPTER:** Credai members during the opening of its new chapter at Balasore recently. Association president Swadesh Kumar Routray was present on the occasion. OP PHOTO

# 602 projects approved in Sambalpur & Deogarh

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik sanctions 310 projects at a cost of ₹10.27 crore in Sambalpur and 292 projects worth ₹8.18 crore in Deogarh

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday approved as many as 602 projects in Sambalpur and Deogarh districts.

On second day of 'One Day Governance' towards quick grievance redressal, 5T and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian received petitions from people of the two districts through video-conference and the chief minister sanctioned the projects on the same day.

On the instructions of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Pandian interacted with the people who had gathered at Mini Stadium in Naktideul and Subanpalli Dhanu Yatra Field in Jamankira of Sambalpur and Tileibani High School Field and Bahadaposi Field in Barkote of Deogarh district.

Based on the grievance petitions received from the people, the chief minister sanctioned 310 projects at a cost of ₹10.27 crore in Sambalpur and 292 projects worth ₹8.18 crore in Deogarh.



The sanction orders were also sent to the petitioners over their mobile phones.

Pandian said since his visit to the two districts in July last year, projects worth ₹630 crore have been taken up based on petitions and feedback.

Major decisions taken by the chief minister on the day

included increase in social security pensions across all categories by ₹500 each that would benefit around 58 lakh beneficiaries, increase in financial assistance under MAMATA Yojana from ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 and interest-free loans upto ₹10 lakh for Mission Shakti groups.

## CLASSIFIED

### AFFIDAVIT

I, Kamala Swain, W/o Pravakar Kahalsingh, resident of Ward No.4, At/Po- Mardabadi, PS-Bolagarh, Dist- Khordha, Pin-752066 Odisha declare by this affidavit No.334, dtd.16.02.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as KAMALA KAHALSINGH for all future purposes.

### LOST

I, Mr. Abani Kumar Swain, S/o Gopinath Swain residing at Village-Baulapada, P.O.-Sunugoradi, P.S.-Nimapada, Dist.-Puri stated that on dtd. 03.03.2024 due to our carelessness, my original link ROR dated 30.10.1987 bearing Khata No.106/3, Plot No.- 307/370, Mouza-Raid Bazar, Tahasil-Nimapada, P.S.-Nimapada, Dist.-Puri which was in favour of seller Mr. Rajkishor Nayak was lost or misplaced some where and in spite of my best efforts it is still untraced. If anybody found that document please contact with our advocate. Adv. Deepak Kumar Sahoo, Contact No.- 9937058785.

By an affidavit before Notary Public, Umerkote, I Sri Jagadish Chandra Mridha, S/o Bijay Krishna Mridha, resident of Vill/P.O.- Jamruna, Dist.-Nabarangpur to state that the Original Sale Deed of my Landed Property Ext. of Ac.0.05 Cents under Plot No.- 249/6271437, Khata No.- 87/598, Mouza/Tahasil-Umerkote, vide Doc No.- 251/1991 dtd.15.04.1991 executed before Sub-regd., Umerkote has been lost/misplaced in SBI, Umerkote Main Branch. The matter has been reported to IIC, Umerkote PS for its SDE. Sd/- Deponent

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

# 33% reservation, rural edu on women's priority list

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** As the state gears up for general and assembly elections, the women of Odisha are curious to know what the government has to offer them to make them feel special and empowered. Orissa Post caught up with a few women to know their thoughts on International Women's Day:

**Namrata Chadha**, a social activist who works for the women empowerment, said, "As this year's theme is Invest in Women, so I will ask both the state and Central government to implement 33 per cent reservation immediately. We know that the Reservation Bill will be implemented in 2029 but if government is so concerned about women empowerment then they

should try to implement it sooner than later."

**Matrumayee Priyadarshini**, a social ac-

tivist who works for the underprivileged said, "The government should try to focus more on livelihood of the young women population. It will be the happiest day when a woman can say 'I will definitely take a stand for my livelihood because I know my government will support me'."

An educationist and Mother's Public School principal **Poly Patnaik** was more concerned about women education. She said that proper education for women, especially in rural areas, should be given priority as the educated women help in building the nation.

**Actress Barsha Patnaik** whose new movie Trikania will be releasing on Women's

day said that as an actor and producer I would demand from the government that they should help the film industry by support its development by giving subsidy and increase the number of cinema halls."

**SAI International Education Group** chairperson **Silpi Sahoo** said, "On this International Women's Day, let the figures resound with every educated girl. As an advocate of empowerment and inclusion through education, I fervently support and envision a world where every girl, armed with knowledge, defies limits. Together, let's shape a future where every girl's potential is nurtured and celebrated."

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## Akanksha with a mission to protect environment

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** The empathetic and compassionate nature in a woman plays an important role in addressing the climate change issues, said Akanksha Priyadarshini, Chief Executive Officer of Aurassure, a climate-tech startup based in Bhubaneswar. The innate emotional tendency of a woman works best to heal the cracked bits of environment, she added.

After passing out from National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela in 2016, Akanksha bagged a lucrative offer at Deloitte as a software engineer. However, she declined it as it was always her wish to create and build something of her own.

# Lesser known women impacting lives

DEBI MOHANTY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** Liza Guada, 19, M Madhusmita, 31, Minati Sahoo, 26 and P Yasoda Devi, 20, seem to enjoy their new identity and status in their own colony- Bhubaneswar's Sikharchandi Nagar, a slum which houses over 1,700 families and approximately 7,500 people. As local healthcare volunteers, their contribution has earned them respect.

A majority of the males in Sikharchandi Nagar are daily wagers; they are mostly carpenters, masons, and painters. The women work as household help.

Though Liza and Yasoda have a few months' work experience at a call centre, they intend to pursue a career in healthcare. "We will try to have a career in the field that we are associated with today," says the duo.

While Liza's father is a migrant worker, Yasoda's is a mason. Both intermediate pass outs, also aim to complete their degree courses in future.



On the other hand Madhusmita and Minati- both married and have babies- intend to work here and for their fellow neighbours.

Incidentally, these four are among the nine volunteers identified in 2022 in collaboration with community groups by Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) an NGO. The guidelines of the National Skill Qualification Framework

(NSQF) were duly followed during the screening process.

According to CYSD's Uppali Mohanty who heads the initiative, improving health and wellbeing of marginalised poor in urban slum, the aim of the project is to create awareness and change behavioral approach towards health and sanitation, strengthen capacity of the frontline workers and community institutions. The

project has been running in two urban slums- Sikharchandi Nagar and Dhirkuti.

As part of the project, the chosen women volunteers underwent a comprehensive three-month certification course on General Duty Assistance (GDA). The course covered crucial aspects of healthcare, ensuring they are well-equipped to serve their community effectively. Post training, they have been operating in their respective localities, while one of them has got a job in a private medical college.

Apart from checking blood pressure, blood sugar level, they measure weights and offer first-aid provision. Each of them is equipped with instruments for the job.

Almost every day, they spend time with pregnant and lactating women and guide them on their diets and practices for the well being of the mother and child. Their daily routine involves training the adolescent girls on hygiene, cleanliness and dietary practices. In emergencies,

they also escort the locals to the nearby hospital.

Also in their spare time, these paramedics assist the Anganwadi worker, ANM and Asha worker in different programmes. Currently, they are busy in the pulse polio drive in their colony. "These girls are doing a good job, most importantly they have raised the residents awareness on healthcare and personal hygiene," says the Asha worker in Sikharchandi Nagar, Renuka Pradhan.

For these girls though, this journey of theirs didn't have a smooth beginning. "Initially we faced resistance; many even didn't allow us into their houses," say Liza, Madhusmita, Minati and Yasoda.

However, the resident's attitude changed after a few days. In due process the colony's outlook has witnessed a change too.

"These girls deserve credit for the positive change they have brought about in this colony," thought an elderly woman who didn't wish to be named.



Moving ahead, she worked as a hardware development engineer at a tech-start-up, Phoneix Robotix, which is currently owned by her husband. May 2022, shaping her dreams into reality, Akanksha started Aurassure, with a vision to provide real-time weather forecast data through IOT-enabled systems. It empowers the government and citizens with the real-time awareness of the environment, facilitating informed decisions and a healthy lifestyle. Tasting its first bit of success, the startup secured ₹4 crore in seed round from Unicorn India, September 20, 2023. Later, the startup was honoured with National awards for e-governance, for its meticulous approach towards mitigating environmental disasters.

Revealing the secret behind Aurassure's success, she said that all it needs is a strong idea.

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# 9 yrs on, Namtara shootout still haunts

# Kangaroo court ostracises Anganwadi worker

PNN & AGENCIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, March 7:** The police firing on unarmed women carrying out an anti-liquor campaign at Namtara in Kendrapara district on the occasion of International Women's Day in 2015 still lingers in the minds of the people, a report said.



Sasmita Jena

Meanwhile, the incident has completed nine years, the report added.

However, the incident is still fresh in the minds of people as scores of unarmed women agitating for a cause had to face the police onslaught on that day. A woman Sasmita Jena, who was rendered critical in the firing, is yet to forget that day as a bullet is still stuck in her abdomen. However, despite the police onslaught, the women of Namtara still continue to fight against liquor sale. Moreover, the state government which or-

dered for a RDC probe is yet to publish the report.

The women of Namtara also alleged that they have not received proper compensation. Another woman Benga Jena who was shot twice by police said her normal life has been hit since that incident. She said that hailing from a Dalit family, financial scarcity always plagues them.

They were facing acute financial hardship in meeting their family expenses but their men folk used to consume liquor

at the local liquor shop. They apprised the administrative officials and the political leaders about their problem but their problems were never addressed.

Left with no option, they staged a protest outside the village liquor shop on the occasion of International Women's Day in 2015. However, the district police fired at them leaving 37 of them critical.

The police firing has failed to deter them but have further strengthened their resolve to continue with their agitation against liquor sale in their village.

A girl Rashmita, who was then studying in Class-IX, said that two bullets hit her when she was returning home from tuition. She recovered but had to dropout from studies.

Another girl Reeta Jena who was then studying in Class-VIII said the police firing changed her course of life. She failed to

complete her studies. She is now suffering from knee pain due to the police firing and is not able to walk properly.

Srikant Jena, a member of Odisha Nisha Nibaran Abhiyan said the incident which occurred March 8 shook the whole state. The state government then directed the RDC, Central Division to conduct a probe into the incident. The then RDC Akhila Bihari Ota took charge of the probe March 12 and recorded the statements of 57 witnesses by September, 2016. He informed that the report will be available by October, 2016 but it is yet to be published. The affected women have allegedly received only pittance as compensation after the OSHRC intervened.

When contacted, ADM Pitambar Samal said all injured women have received Rs 50,000 as compensation while Rs 1.5 lakh has been given to Sasmita Jena.

**Nayagarh, March 7:** A kangaroo court has allegedly ostracised an Anganwadi worker and her husband at Badabarana village under Nayagarh's Nuagaon police limits, as per reports.

The couple Rojalin Mohanty and her husband Pitabas Mohanty were allegedly barred from using village resources like fire and water after the kangaroo court ruled a domestic dispute against them.

They alleged that their domestic dispute with the parents of Pitabas was taken to the Kangaroo court and it ruled against Rojalin and him, ostracising them from the village. The kangaroo court even barred children from attending classes at the village Anganwadi centre because Rojalin works there.

"We had a quarrel in our family on December 16, 2023. Some influential villagers including Anganwadi helper Rupali



Aparajita Mohanty and her mother-in-law Binapani Mohanty ostracised us over our domestic dispute. They have even barred children from taking food from the Anganwadi centre because I work there," alleged Rojalin.

"On the day of our domestic quarrel, the villagers offered help to my parents in return for siding with them. The villagers also asked my parents to sever all relationships with us. They

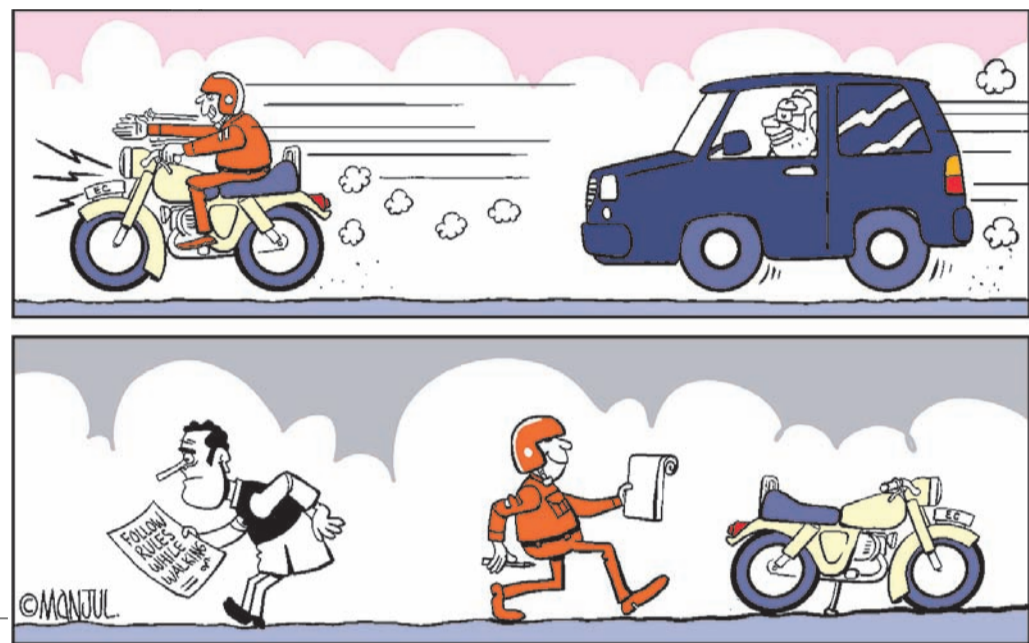
ostracised me and my wife. They even barred children from coming to Anganwadi centres for their studies," said the husband.

A complaint was lodged at Nuagaon police station by the couple. But they alleged the police are yet to take any action.

Asked about the alleged ostracisation and the police complaint, Nuagaon Police IIC, Narayan Chandra Lenka said, "A case has been registered in this regard. As far as the Anganwadi centre is concerned, the CDPO is enquiring why the children are not coming to the Anganwadi centre under the supervision of the BDO."

"We have launched a probe in this connection. But we are trying to resolve the issue with discussion. We have called the village leaders and the family, and are trying to make them compromise with each other. We want harmony in the village. I am hopeful that all the disputes will be resolved soon," Lenka added.

## POLITICKLE BY MANJUL



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, March 7:** Biramitrapur MLA Shankar Oram and his predecessor from the Assembly segment George Tirkey Thursday staged a demonstration separately in front of the Rourkela SP Office demanding to trace a missing person. A resident of Titerkela gram panchayat under Nuagaon block in Sundargarh district has been missing since February 29.

Mangala Kissan, 44, had come to Jhirpani weekly market to sell vegetables in an SUV, February 29. Later, he went missing to everyone's surprise. His last mobile location was traced to Vedvyas March 1; however, he had been missing since then. His family members lodged a complaint at Jhirpani police sta-



tion but no foreseeable development has taken in the case. Neither Kissan nor the vehicle in which he had come to Jhirpani could be traced.

The impatient family members had taken the help of the Biramitrapur MLA Shankar Oram and three days back they had met the Rourkela SP Mitrabhanu Mohapatra in his office but in vain. As a result, Oram along with the family

members of the missing person and residents of his village demonstrated in front of the SP office demanding quick investigation into the case.

Speaking to the media, Oram said, "It is unfortunate that a farmer goes missing in broad daylight from the middle of the city like Rourkela. The police are doing nothing in this regard when over a week has passed. We don't believe the police and its

attitude towards this case."

He further alleged that, "We believe because he is a commoner that the police are not taking the case seriously. We are not going to sit and wait for police action. We will continue to put pressure on the police to trace Kissan quickly."

Meanwhile, Tirkey said, "Police is neither active nor serious about it. The Jhirpani police have been directed to check all toll gates. But nothing was found so our strong suspicion is they must have passed through Biramitrapur. It is unfortunate. Such cases are happening very often."

He pointed his finger towards one person as he said, "There is someone named Sukru Pradhan in Joram and we have requested the police to track him to find Kissan."



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“Whatsoever has courage can give courage to others just as the flame of the candle can light up another.”  
THE MOTHER



## Why Trump Can't Win

Donald Trump was the unlikeliest of American presidents. When he launched his campaign in 2016, the closest he had come to executive authority was pretending to fire contestants on a business-themed reality show. As ridiculous as it seemed, the image of Trump sitting behind a massive boardroom table uttering his imitable catchphrase – “You’re fired” – convinced millions of American voters, including many who hadn’t voted previously, that he was a man who knew how to get things done.

That impression, together with good timing and good luck, enabled Trump to defeat political icon Hillary Clinton in a race that appeared tailor-made for her. But contrary to what Trump might claim, his victory was extremely narrow. In fact, he lost the popular vote by 2.8 million votes – a larger margin than any other US president in history.

Since then, Trump has proved toxic at the ballot box. In the 2018 midterms, the Democrats trounced Trump’s Republican Party. In the 2020 presidential election, Trump lost narrowly in the Electoral College, and in a landslide in the popular vote. In the 2022 midterm elections, Trump’s handpicked candidates were routed across the country, and Democratic candidates either held their seats or won Republican seats in key states – including Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin – often by wide margins.

While these failures might have inspired some Republican grumbling, Trump ended up firmly in control of the party apparatus, its leadership, and its most extreme members. It is a pattern the GOP will come to regret later this year, when both Trump and the Republican Party face what is likely to be a devastating electoral defeat.

Trump’s erratic behaviour, anti-democratic rhetoric, and threats against his opponents will contribute to his loss in November’s presidential election. But it is America’s demographic makeup that will ultimately send Trump into permanent retirement. The old wisdom that “demographics is destiny” – coined by the French philosopher Auguste Comte – may well be more relevant to the outcome than it has been to any previous presidential election.

Between the 2016 and 2024 elections, some 20 million older voters will have died, and about 32 million younger Americans will have reached voting age. Many young voters disdain both parties, and Republicans are actively recruiting (mostly white men) on college campuses. But the issues that are dearest to Gen Z’s heart – such as reproductive rights, democracy, and the environment – will keep most of them voting Democratic.

The reality is that since Trump entered US politics in 2016, the Republican Party has become older, whiter, more male, and more extreme. It is also smaller, and Trump’s unwillingness to cross his base makes it difficult, if not impossible, to attract moderates and independents.

US President Joe Biden has more voters available to him than Trump does. That does not mean victory will be easy, but it does mean he can survive more voters staying home. If Trump is to win, he will need every possible voter in his party to show up, and he must pick up votes from as-yet-undecided Americans who might have long ago soured on him, not only because of his personal behaviour, but also because of policy.

The Republican Party is on the wrong side of every major issue facing the American people. Consider reproductive rights. The Republican-hijacked US Supreme Court decided in 2022 to overturn Roe v. Wade, which had ensured abortion rights for half a century. Ultra-conservative state legislatures have outlawed abortion even in cases of rape or incest. And the Alabama Supreme Court recently delivered a ruling equating frozen embryos with children. This trend has pushed women and moderates even more firmly into the arms of the Democrats – or, at least, into the undecided or “anyone but Trump” camps.

On national security, Trump has often aligned himself with America’s traditional adversaries, thereby upsetting, angering, or confusing a key electoral cohort. Many older Republicans still carry the spirit of Ronald Reagan in their hearts, and view America as a “shining city on a hill,” a beacon of freedom and democracy to people around the world. For those who are old enough to remember the Cold War, Russia is an American foe through and through.

These Republicans largely find Russia’s invasion of democratic Ukraine unacceptable: one recent survey found that 43% of Republicans believe the United States is providing either too little or the right amount of aid to Ukraine. They certainly do not approve of Trump’s threats to abandon NATO and even encourage Russian aggression against members that do not meet their military-spending obligations. Trump’s affinity for authoritarian states – from Russia to Hungary to Saudi Arabia – is anathema to them.

Until this week, Republicans still had another option: Nikki Haley, a former US ambassador to the United Nations. Haley’s escalating attacks on Trump’s policy record seem to have had an impact. In the New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina primaries, she captured about 30% of the vote. But Haley has now ended her presidential campaign, after losing the “Super Tuesday” primaries in 14 states.

So far, however, Haley has declined to endorse Trump, declaring that it is up to him to win the support of her voters. And there is good reason to doubt that he will succeed. In fact, rather than voting for Trump in November, many of Haley’s supporters are likely either to stay home or to vote for Biden. In Iowa, 49% of self-identified Haley caucusgoers said they would do just that.

Trump lost the 2020 election, and then incited an insurrection. Since then, he has moderated neither his rhetoric nor his behaviour; on the contrary, he has become more extreme. If this depresses Republican voter turnout even marginally, Trump is in for a major defeat. There simply aren’t enough American voters willing to put him back in the White House.

The writer is a co-founder of The Lincoln Project, a pro-democracy organisation founded by former Republican strategists with the goal of defeating Donald Trump, and host of The Lincoln Project Podcast.

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Reed Galen

The reality is that since Trump entered US politics in 2016, the Republican Party has become older, whiter, more male, and more extreme



DK Giri

THE INDIA-FRENCH SPACE PARTNERSHIP IS NEARLY SIX DECADES OLD

AM S. Jaishankar met Anne-Marie Descotes, Secretary General of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs Tuesday last to review the strategic partnership between the two countries. The meeting took place under the mechanism of Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) that has been taking place between India and France. The outcome of the meeting, according to Jaishankar is that “Strategic partnership between two nations is growing from strength to strength.”

During the meeting, both countries took stock of various aspects of bilateralism which was initiated in the strategic partnership between the two launched on 26 January 1998. This was the first strategic partnership India had with any country. The pillars of this partnership are sectors like defence and security, civil-nuclear matters, space, maritime security, digitalisation, cyber security, advance computing, counter terrorism, climate change, renewable energies, sustainable growth and development. It also has a strong India-Pacific component. The other instrument which outlined the contours of bilateralism is the India-France Horizon 2047 Roadmap devised on 14 July 2023 when Prime Minister Modi visited Paris as a Guest of Honour on their National Day. This was when the strategic partnership completed 25 years. Now the Roadmap extends this partnership for another 25 years.

On the recent dialogue, the FOC is the central mechanism between two countries that deals with all aspects of India-France exchanges. It offers a platform for both nations to align their priorities and cooperate effectively on shared challenges. Overall, the FOC consultations are indicative of strengthening bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two nations.

### FOCUS INDO-FRENCH TIES

# STRENGTH TO STRENGTH



France is considered to be a steady and reliable partner. As India wishes to see and seeks to build a multipolar world, France will be a big ally

On 4 March, two other bilateral dialogues took place: India and France Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Dialogue. The two sides discussed developments relating to nuclear, chemical and biological domains. It also covered conventional weapons including AI in military domain and lethal autonomous weapon systems and multilateral export control regimes.

The other meeting that took place on 5 March was the Strategic Space Dialogue, the second in the series. Under this, both sides reviewed the progress since the first dialogue and the bilateral engagement in the space sector. They also talked about possibility of cooperation in the G2G and commercial segments. The inaugural India-France Strategic Space Dialogue was held in Paris on 26 June 2023. There was also discussion on the implementation of the Letter of Intent recently signed on Defence Space Cooperation – capacity building, training and space exchanges and Defence Space Industrial Cooperation.

The India-French space partnership is nearly six decades old; it dates back to 1964 when India’s space programme was inchoate as it was experimenting with sounding rockets for Thumba in Kerala. The partnership that evolved covered

collaborations in technologies for satellite launches, research, operational applications, innovation and NewSpace partnerships for Deep Space Exploration. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) have been partnering closely in the fields of space medicine, astronaut health monitoring, life support, radiation protection, space debris protection and personal hygiene systems. The dialogues covered a wide range of issues and multiple sectors: science and technology, blue economy, institutional dialogue mechanism, cooperation in Indo-Pacific region, climate action, energy transition, health, trilateral and plurilateral cooperation.

India-France bilateral relations go back to the 17th century when trade exchanges started between the two countries. Until 1954, France maintained a colonial presence in the Indian Sub-Continent. In particular, a former French territory, Puducherry is a popular tourism destination of numerous French travellers to India. After the signing of strategic partnership in 1998, the progress in all areas of bilateral cooperation has been significant. There have been regular high-level exchanges. The commercial exchanges also have

grown in areas like defence, nuclear energy and space.

In fact, France was the first country with which India entered into a Nuclear Energy Agreement following the waiver given by IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency and Nuclear Supplier Group. The waiver enabled India to begin full civil nuclear cooperation with the international community.

The dialogues on 4 and 5 March foster the relationship between France and India in terms of collaboration with deeper understanding on shared priorities and challenges. The relationship is built on shared interests on several areas in Indian Pacific region and other global issues. Prime Minister Modi and President Macron share a strong bond. In August 2019, France has been called “India’s new best friend” by the Hudson Institute, an American think tank based in Washington. France is inviting Indian students in a big way to study in French institutions. As many as 1700 courses are taught in English language in French institutions. There are upto 4,00,000 Indians working in French companies in India. To bolster India’s defence, 36 Rafal Aircrafts have been delivered.

All in all, France is considered to be a steady and reliable partner. As India wishes to see and seeks to build a multipolar world, France will be a big ally. France has been opposed to the hegemony of either US or former Soviet Union. Hence it collaborated with Germany in constructing the EU as a new pole of influence in the world politics. EU has not become so is another discussion. In any case, the India-France relation is good for both countries and may contribute to shaping a new world order.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism.

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### SPECTRUM INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

# Invest in women, inspire inclusion



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

WOMEN FACE PERSISTENT BARRIERS MAINLY BECAUSE OF DISCRIMINATION AND CULTURALLY ENTRENCHED IDEAS ABOUT GENDER ROLES

In the era of scientific progress, problems like gender inequality and gender discrimination reflect the simple fact that we live in a man’s world. Women face persistent barriers mainly because of discrimination and culturally entrenched ideas about gender roles. The 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), covering 85% of global population, reveals that close to 9 out of 10 men and women hold fundamental biases against women.

The risks of gender-based violence are only rising as our world is engulfed in conflict, humanitarian emergencies, environmental and economic crises and displacement. According to UN Women, globally, an estimated 73.6 crore women—almost one in three—have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life. This figure does not include sexual harassment. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, globally, nearly 89,000 women and girls were killed intentionally in 2022, the highest yearly number recorded in the past two decades. In 2022, around 48,800 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family mem-

bers, up from 47,000 in 2020. This means that, on average, more than 133 women or girls were killed every day by someone in their own family.

Similarly, 47 countries still have no repercussions for husbands who rape their wife, 270 crore women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men, 45 countries do not have specific laws against domestic violence. Across five regions, 82% of women parliamentarians reported having experienced some form of psychological violence while serving their terms.

Coming to India, the NCRB report 2022 detailed a substantial escalation in reported crimes against women, soaring from 3,71,503 cases in 2020 to 4,45,256 cases in 2022. A significant proportion of crimes against women involve ‘cruelty by husband or his relatives’ (31.4%). This amounts to 1,40,000 cases.

The Global Gender Gap Persists despite so much hype on gender equality. According to the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index 2023, the World has to wait 131 years. In the case of India to bridge the gender gap at the present rate of progress. It will be more as it has only bridged the 64.3 per cent gender gap as against 68.4 per cent in the world. India ranks 113 out of 190 coun-

tries in the World Bank’s Women, Business and Law Index 2024, according to the 10th edition of the report released on 4 March, 2024. Indian women enjoyed 60% of the legal rights given to men as per the new report, lower than the global average of 64.2%.

Women remain less likely to participate in the labour market than men around the world. Women are over-represented in informal and vulnerable employment. Women are slightly more likely to be unemployed than men but experience a much larger jobs gap. In the agricultural sector, women are over-represented in seasonal, informal, part-time, and low-wage work with limited access to social protection. Women have to bear the brunt of job losses whenever the economy is not performing well. Violence and harassment in the world of work affect women regardless of age, location, income, or social status. The economic cost of discriminatory social institutions and violence against women to the global economy is estimated to be approximately \$6 trillion annually.

International Women’s Day serves as a reminder for the work still needed to be done to empower women and advance their rights globally. The theme of International Women’s Day 2024

is “Invest in women: Accelerate progress,” while the campaign theme is “#InspireInclusion.”

Investing in women benefits the entire society. According to UN Women, investing in women is a human rights imperative and cornerstone for building inclusive societies. It is a human rights issue because the global economic and financial systems are complicit in perpetuating gender inequality. According to UN Women, by investing in women, we can spur change and speed the transition towards a healthier, safer, and more equal world for all. Ensuring women’s and girls’ rights across all aspects of life is the only way to secure prosperous and just economies, and a healthy planet for future generations.

The campaign theme “#InspireInclusion” has larger implications. The fact is that when we inspire others to understand and value women’s inclusion, we forge a better world. And when women themselves are inspired to be included, there’s a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment. The aim is to inspire others to understand and value women’s inclusion so we can forge a better world.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.

### Cover-up bid

Sir, State Bank of India’s application in Supreme Court seeking time till 30 June for furnishing information on Electoral Bonds is a clear attempt to cover up the massive scam before general elections. SBI is acting at the behest of ruling BJP so that the political corporate nexus where companies like Adani group benefitted in lieu of donations to BJP are not exposed before elections. SBI has provided a lame excuse that they need four more months to compile some 44,000 transactions. SBI has 2.2 lakh employees with a daily average of 44 million transactions. Moreover, Supreme Court had directed SBI in 2019 to keep the information ready. What they were doing for the past five years? All eyes are on Supreme Court. Unless Supreme Court takes some strong action, trust of citizens in the judiciary will also be eroded.

Barna Baihaba Panda, BHUBANESWAR

### No more immunity

Sir, The Supreme Court correctly reversed its 1998 ruling that granted immunity to MLAs and MPs from criminal charges for accepting bribes for speeches or votes in the House. There was a necessity for such a determination because the exemption violates democratic values. The most recent case was Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra, whose Lok Sabha membership was revoked some time ago for receiving gifts for raising questions in Parliament. Following the Supreme Court’s judgement, a criminal case can be filed at the MP-MLA court. Whatever the case may be, it is widely known that some MPs have previously been accused of asking questions in exchange for money. It is also worth noting that cases of taking money to vote in Legislative Council and Rajya Sabha elections have become more prevalent. The problems of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha MLA Sita Soren will undoubtedly worsen as a result of the Supreme Court’s ruling. She is suspected of accepting bribes in exchange for voting for an independent candidate in the Rajya Sabha elections of 2012.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### WISDOM CORNER

“I have learned over the years that when one’s mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear.” ROSA PARKS

“Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power, but in character and goodness. People are just people, and all people have faults and shortcomings, but all of us are born with a basic goodness.” ANNE FRANK

“You are the sum total of everything you’ve ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot - it’s all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive.” MAYA ANGELOU

# ED raids SP MLA's premises in Kanpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kanpur/Lucknow, March 7:** The Enforcement Directorate Thursday conducted searches at the premises of Samajwadi Party MLA Irfan Solanki and his family members in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, as part of a money laundering investigation, official sources said.

Solanki (44) is currently lodged in the Maharajganj prison and is a four-time MLA from Sisamau assembly seat in Kanpur district. About five premises of Solanki including his residence in defence colony Jajmau, a linked property in Becon Ganj area that of his jailed brother Rizwan is being covered by ED teams from the Lucknow



**SOLANKI IS CURRENTLY LODGED IN THE MAHARAJGANJ PRISON AND IS A FOUR-TIME MLA FROM SISAMAU ASSEMBLY SEAT IN KANPUR DISTRICT.**

**THE MLA FROM THE SP, LED BY FORMER CHIEF MINISTER AKHILESH YADAV, HAS BEEN LODGED IN THE MAHARAJGANJ PRISON SINCE DECEMBER 2022 IN CONNECTION WITH SEVERAL CRIMINAL CASES**

zonal office, the sources said. The premises of Shaukat Ali, builder Hazi Wasi and party leader Noori Shaukat apart from some others in Kanpur and a premise in Mumbai in

Maharashtra were also raided early morning along with a security escort of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, they said. Some documents and electronic gadgets have been recovered by the agency officials. The search action was launched by

# Bodies become 'headache' for Goa's morgue

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



**Panaji, March 7:** Two dead bodies, probably of Nigerians, have become a 'headache' for the morgue of the coastal state as they have been preserved since 2016 and 2019, respectively.

Recently two morgues (North and South) in Goa got breathing space after 75 dead bodies were disposed of. However, a morgue in North Goa has been waiting for a procedure to vacate two compartments occupied by foreigners for the last many years.

Sources in Goa Medical College informed that there were around 72 dead bodies in North and 32 in South Goa's morgue facility, of which around 58 and 17 respectively were disposed of recently after the intervention of district collectors.

"After the recent disposal, in GMC we have 14 dead bodies, while 15 dead bodies are in South Goa District Hospital. From our

process," the doctor further said. Sources said that these dead bodies are of Nigerians, who used false passports to enter India, now become a problem even for police to trace their contacts. "One dead body was preserved December 21, 2016 and another January 1, 2019. Both probably were from Nigeria. Such dead bodies become a headache for us," the doctor further said.

IGP Omvir Singh Bishnoi, said that these dead bodies have been identified and the police are in the process of handover these bodies to their families. "We have already sent the 'No Objection Certificate' to the Collector. They have to do the further process. If their embassy doesn't accept the dead bodies then after sending three reminders, we will write to them that we will dispose of these corpses," Bishnoi said, adding the reminders were sent via the Ministry of Home Affairs.

side we keep informing the concerned authorities, that we are only custodians of these dead bodies, formalities have to be done by the collector's office to dispose of these bodies," a senior doctor from GMC said. "There are two dead bodies of foreigners, who had died in prison in 2016 and 2019, respectively. I don't know why there is a delay in contacting their embassies and handing over the bodies to families. IGP Prisons has to take cognizance of the matter and should expedite the

# Security beefed up for Maha Shivratri



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, March 7:** Uttar Pradesh DGP Prashant Kumar has issued security and traffic management guidelines to all police commissioners, additional Director Generals of all police zones, IG/DIG of police ranges and the district police chiefs for the upcoming Maha Shivratri festival March 8.

He said that the police must work closely with the organisers, peace committees, and camp managers to maintain law and order.

"Stringent security will be implemented at 'jalabhishek' locations, including anti-sabotage checks and QRT deployment. Special focus will be on securing Kanwar yatra routes, sensitive areas, and crucial locations.

Additional officers will be present along routes, particularly at night, to address emergencies and ensure pilgrim safety," said the DGP.

Prashant Kumar emphasised significant increase of police presence, with pickets, mobile patrols, and foot patrols along Kanwar routes. UP112 vehicles will be deployed as and where needed, he added.

He said that festival registers must be updated and potential trouble spots identified for enhanced security. He instructed all field police officers to ensure that public address systems remain fully functional. More patrols will be deployed, and local intelligence units will monitor social media closely for any mis-leading content.

# INDIA bloc lacks unity, has no vision: BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

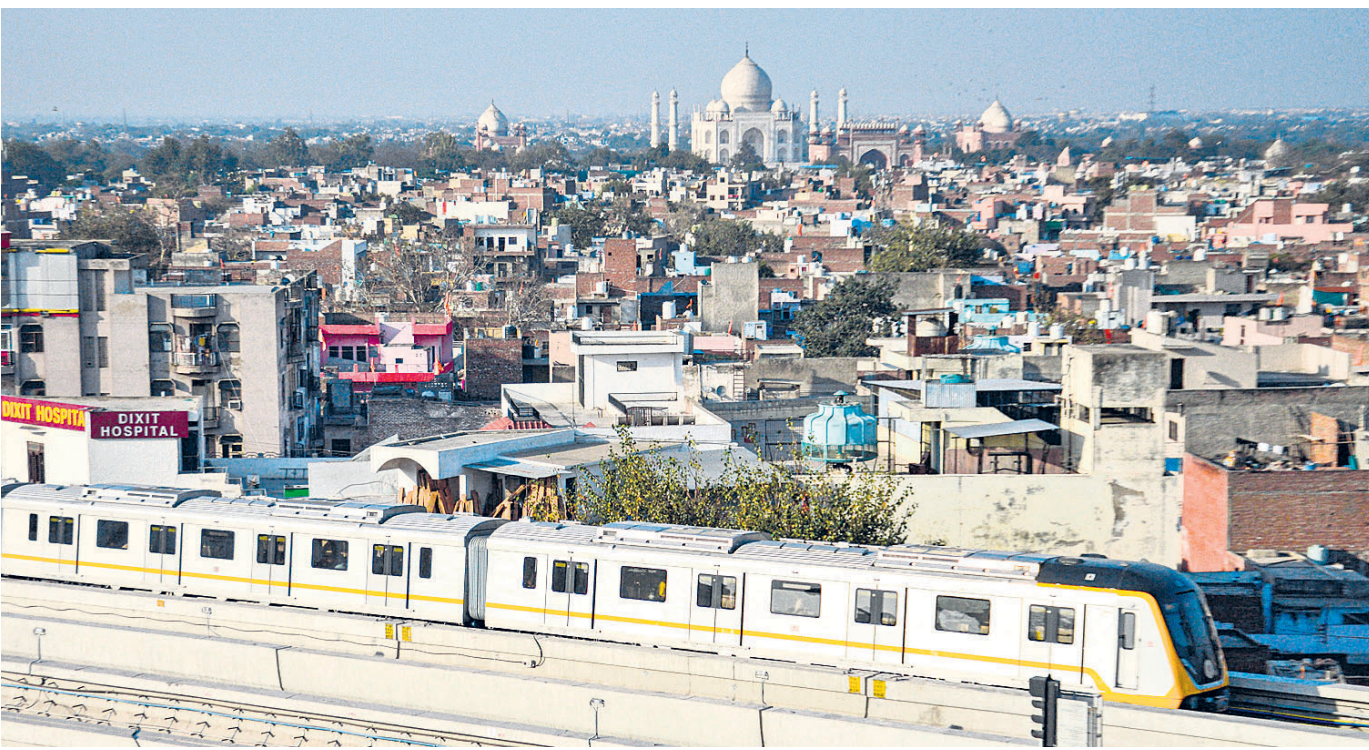
**Panaji, March 7:** The Opposition grouping INDIA has no unity, vision or agenda for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, claimed the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party here Thursday.

BJP Goa spokesman Yatish Naik said that hours after the constituents of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) met in Goa, the Congress and AAP were seen sparring in the Punjab Assembly.

Leaders of INDIA parties, including Congress, Aam Aadmi Party, Goa Forward Party, Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (Sharad Pawar) met here on Wednesday and decided to set up a coordination committee to formulate a joint strategy for the Lok Sabha elections in Goa.

The coastal state has two Lok Sabha constituencies - North Goa and South Goa. In the 2019 general elections, the BJP won the North Goa seat, while the other went to the Congress. Addressing a press conference in Panaji, Naik said on Thursday that the Opposition bloc was focussed on resurrecting a "rejected dynast who has failed time and again".

The BJP spokesman claimed the INDIA grouping lacks unity. "One partner claims that they will not support the alliance if ticket is given to a particular candidate. There are huge differences within the alliance," he said, adding that it has no "vision or agenda" for the upcoming polls.



Newly-launched Agra Metro train runs on its track in the backdrop of the Taj Mahal in Agra

PTI PHOTO

# 'Cops must adopt compassionate practices'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, March 7:** The Goa child rights commission Thursday said police should adopt compassionate practices within the investigative process while handling the POCSO Act cases and prioritise mental health and well-being of the young victims.

The Goa State Commission for Protection of Child Rights unveiled a guidance document for the police, underscoring a significant enhancement in the framework for the protection of children's rights within the state, reflecting a proactive approach towards their welfare.

"The document emphasises the integration of compassionate practices within the investigative process, ensuring that children and their families are not just seen as case numbers but are provided with the emotional support and understanding they desperately need during such traumatic times," GSCPCR chairman Peter F Borges said. The commission said the document envisions a child-friendly approach that prioritises the mental health and well-being of young victims, encouraging a sensitive handling that can significantly mitigate the adverse impacts of the legal process on their fragile states.

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The EOIs should reach us by 20/03/2024. For further details and the EOI format, the interested parties may please visit SAIL website [www.saitenders.co.in](http://www.saitenders.co.in).

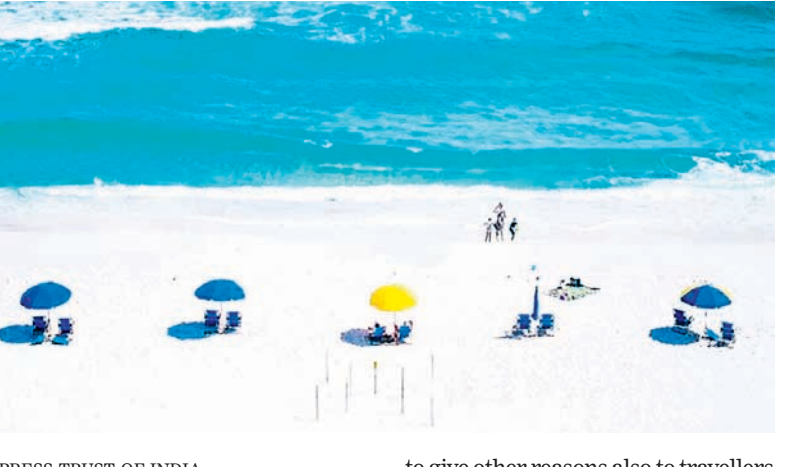
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# Co-working spaces for visitors soon on Goa beaches: Tourism official

The Goa tourism department wants to give other reasons also to travellers to come to the state, the official said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, March 7:** Co-working spaces for people visiting Goa will soon come up on the Morjim and Ashwem beaches in the coastal state, a tourism department official has said.

The Goa government wants to promote the state as a tourism destination not only for its beaches but also for other activities, state tourism secretary Sanjeev Ahuja said at the ITB Berlin, the world's leading travel trade show.

The three-day event began March 5. "We want to invite more tourists specially from Europe and high spending tourists from other destinations by providing them an all round experience," he said.

The Goa tourism department wants

to give other reasons also to travellers to come to the state, the official said. He said the concept of co-working spaces on the beaches has been introduced by the department led by minister Rohan Khaunte wherein the state will give nomad visa to the people who can come here, work and also enjoy the beaches.

The facilities at Morjim and Ashwem beaches are taking shape and would be ready soon, the official said. The state government has already signed an agreement with the Temple Connect (organisation dedicated to the revival and development of the temple eco-system) for this purpose, the official said.

the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, he said.

Speaking about regenerative tourism, Ahuja said the state government wants to involve the local people, culture, cuisine, festivals and even farmers into the tourism spectrum through this concept. There are very few people who would know that Goa has huge temples which can be developed from the tourism perspective, he said, adding that even churches are covered under this concept.

The state tourism department has already signed an agreement with the Temple Connect (organisation dedicated to the revival and development of the temple eco-system) for this purpose, the official said.

Besides beach tourism, importance is also being given to spiritual tourism through the concept of regenerative tourism, he said. Visitors will also be given an experience of spice and cashew plantations in the coastal state. "We want to give them an experience of having food directly from the farm," the official said. He said activities like hiking have also been introduced for visitors by the tourism department.

The carnival, organised in the state every year, is already being promoted by the department. "It will also promote the festival like Chikhhal Kalo, where people play with mud. It is like the Tomatina festival (a tomato-throwing spectacle in Spain)," he said.

**Bank of India**  
Zonal Office: Baripada  
Bank of India Building, Lal Bazaar, In front of MKC school, PIN-757001

**DEMAND NOTICE**

**DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002**

You, the below mentioned Borrower/Partners/Guarantor, have availed loan from **BANK OF INDIA, Baripada Branch** by mortgaging your immovable properties. You, the below mentioned Borrower/Partners/Guarantor, have stood as Borrower/Partners/Guarantor in respect of the said loan so availed. Consequently the default committed by you all, your loan account/s has been classified as Non Performing Assets. The Bank has, for the recovery of the outstanding dues, issued a Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the Act) which could not be served and therefore the contents of the same are being published herewith as per section 13(2) of the Act read with rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 as and by way of service upon you. Details of the Borrower/Partners/Guarantor property mortgaged, outstanding dues, Demand Notice sent under section 13(2) and amount claimed thereunder are given as under.

BARIPADA BRANCH / Name and Address of the Borrower/Partners/Guarantor	Date of Notice under SARFAESI Act	Amount as per Notice under SARFAESI Act	Details of the mortgaged property
<b>Borrower: M/s. Jay Mata De Minerals / Partners: 1) Mrs. Somapika Mohanty, W/o.: Mr. Biswaraj Mohanty, 2) Mrs. Suman Bhatta / Guarantor: Mr. Biswaraj Mohanty, All are Ward No.: 04, Old Parade Padia, P.O.: Baripada, Mayurbhanj-757001</b>	<b>29.02.2024</b>	<b>₹ 7,48,704.65 + interest and other expenses thereon</b>	<b>1) Hypothecation of Stocks of Stone Chips, 2) EOM of Land situated over Mouza: Chaulaghari, Bangriposi, Khata No.: 125/33, Plot No.: 108, admeasuring Area: Ac.1.420 Dec. i.e. 61855.2 Sqft., standing in the name of Mrs. Samapika Mohanty, W/o.: Mr. Biswaraj Mohanty</b>

You the borrower and Borrower/Guarantor/Mortgagor are therefore called upon to make payment of the above mentioned amount due with further interest payment in full within **60 days** of this notice failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to take action under the said Act to enforce the above-mentioned securities.

Also please note that as per section 13(2) of the Act, you are, in the meanwhile, restrained from transferring the above-referred mortgaged properties by way of sale, lease or otherwise without our consent.

**Place : Baripada, Date: 07.03.2024**

**Authorised Officer, Bank of India**

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
[Rule-8(1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer** of the **Bank of India, Bahalda Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the Borrower/Mortgagor/Co-Borrower in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Mortgagor/Co-Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Mortgagor/Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of India, Bahalda Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to discharge the secured assets.**

BAHALDA BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Mortgagor/Co-Borrower	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
<b>Borrower/Mortgagor: Shri Santulal Agarwal, S/o.: Jagannath Agarwal, / Co-Borrower/ Mortgagor: Amit Kumar Agarwal, S/o.: Santulal Agarwal, Both are At/PO.: Bahalda, Dist.: Mayurbhanj, Odisha-757046</b>	<b>₹6,90,901.49 + interest &amp; expenses thereon</b>	<b>19.10.2023 / 06.03.2024</b>	<b>Equitable Mortgage of Property situated over Khata No.: 585/503, Plot No.: 2104/3475, Area: Ac.0.040 Dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, at Bahalda, P.S.: Bahalda, P.S. No.: 11, Dist.: Mayurbhanj standing in the name of Santulal Agarwal &amp; Amit Kumar Agarwal.</b>

**Place: Baripada, Date: 07.03.2024**

**Authorised Officer, Bank of India**



# LAccMI: MALKANGIRI, GAJAPATI & KALAHANDI ROUTE CHART

## MALKANGIRI ROUTE CHART

Grid of route charts for Malkangiri district, organized by block (e.g., Bhatikote, Bhatikote, Bhatikote). Each block contains a table with columns for bus number, route, and schedule.



### A grand beginning from Malkangiri

The vision to connect villages with blocks, and blocks with district headquarters by easing the daily commute hasles of people with a revolutionary transport system became a reality when the LAccMi bus service was flagged off in Malkangiri district on October 12, 2023, in the presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and 5T Chairman Kartik Pandian. The bus service was successful in connecting all the 111 Gram Panchayats of the district with the district headquarters. At present, 36 buses are plying on various routes of the district. The highlight of the bus service is the communication it has been able to establish in the remote tribal hamlets of the district, including areas in Bondaghati, for the first time ever.

### FILLIP TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative, or LAccMi, has given a boost to women empowerment in the state. Designated routes under the bus service are managed by women SHG members (maintenance, management, and operations) in every district. The affordable bus service has not just empowered women but fostered community welfare and become a beacon of social change. By making women self-reliant, LAccMi has fostered leadership quality in them. The convenient bus service at doorsteps in villages has ensured hassle free commute for women to distant places for education, business purposes or attending various offices on a regular basis.



Our aim is to make panchayats the epicentre of development and strengthen rural economy. LAccMi will play poignant role in this direction.

LAccMi has not only made women self-reliant but has also enabled them to see new dreams. Along with their own income, they have been able to foot their family expenses. It feels nice to interact with people from various walks of life on a daily basis. The initiative perfectly gels with the theme of the International Women's Day.

N.B. - Green boxes (connecting blocks), blue boxes (connecting district HQs)

## KALAHANDI ROUTE CHART

Grid of route charts for Kalahandi district, organized by block (e.g., Bhatikote, Bhatikote, Bhatikote). Each block contains a table with columns for bus number, route, and schedule.

## GAJAPATI ROUTE CHART

Grid of route charts for Gajapati district, organized by block (e.g., Bhatikote, Bhatikote, Bhatikote). Each block contains a table with columns for bus number, route, and schedule.







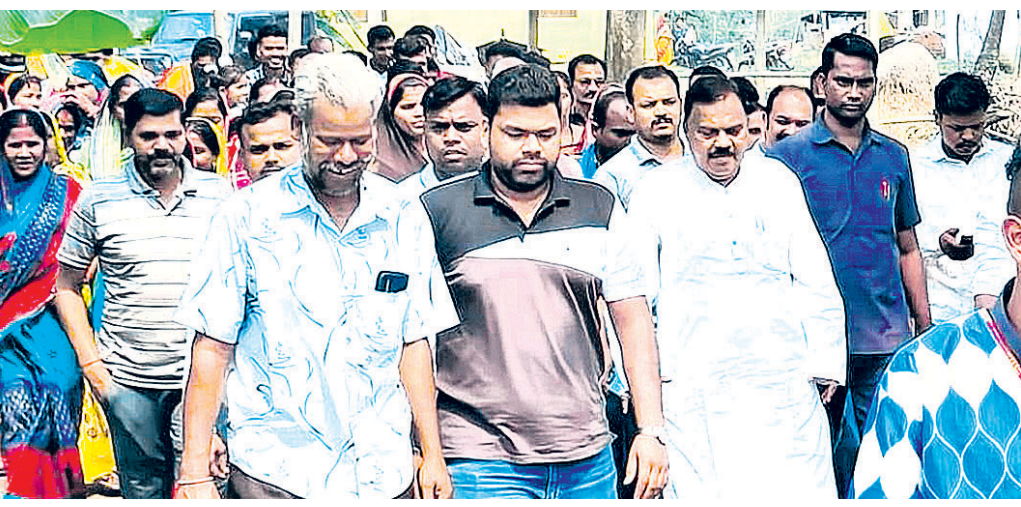


**WOMEN CONNECT:** With elections ahead, BJD leaders attending a mega gathering of women organised by Biju Mahila Janata Dal, the women's wing of the party on the eve of International Women's Day at Kabisuryanagar in Ganjam district, Thursday



**POLL BOYCOTT THREAT:** Youths of Deogaon and Jarasingha areas in Bolangir district stage a demonstration outside the Deogaon tehsil office, Thursday warning to boycott the upcoming polls if their demand to halt express trains at Deogaon railway station is not met

## Angul may come out of family politics this time



**Angul, March 7:** Angul Assembly segment has been a witness to family politics in the 24-year-long BJD reign in the state. However, this time around, the Assembly constituency may slip out of family politics if indications are anything to go by. The seat has been held by the family of Rajanikant Singh since 2000. Rajanikant's father Adwait Prasad Singh was elected from this seat to the state Assembly on a BJD ticket in 2000 election. Later, Rajanikant won in four successive elections from this seat starting 2004. Belying all speculations, Rajanikant managed to get the party ticket in the last moment and won this seat in 2019 elections providing fodder for political discussions. The sharp decline in the victory margin of Rajanikant provided ample scope for such discussions. Keeping these things in mind, political observers are of the opinion that the Assembly constituency may set itself free in the 2024 elections. According to political analysts, the victory margin of Rajanikant who won his first election in 2004 was 18,449 votes.

The BJD fielded him again in 2009 and the margin was just 2,000 more than 2004 elections. In the subsequent two elections, Rajanikant won from this seat but the margin has been declining. His victory margins were 20,343 in the 2014 elections and 8,822 in the 2019 elections, which are indicative of the declining popularity of Rajanikant. It has become a cause of concern for the BJD authorities and created ripples in the ruling party. However, after long years, BJD gaining control of the Angul Municipality is the only consolation for the ruling party. Nevertheless, getting the ticket again for this seat will not be that easy for Rajanikant, observers said. They said that Rajanikant has not become fully successful in resolving the various problems in his constituency. The establishment of Hiding irrigation project in Bantala area, providing protection to people from elephant menace and establishment of a fire station are some of the demands that are yet to be realised. The round the clock supply of drinking water from Mahanadi has remained in promise. He has tried to restore his

image by bringing his son Arunav Singh to the forefront of politics but with little success. He plans to field his son in his place but many party leaders and workers are yet to accept him. On the other hand, Dinesh Pradhan, the two time president of Biju Yuva Janata Dal (BYJD) in Angul and advisor of Basudha is now a much discussed name in the BJD camp. Pradhan is stated to be a close confidante of BJD's state organisational secretary and enjoys the support of youths in this constituency. He has become frontrunner for the BJD party ticket in the 2024 election as party leaders in-charge of the party organisation at different places rely on him in organisational matters. The founder and managing director of Adarsh group Mahesh Dhal is another name in the fray for the BJD ticket. His posters do not carry the party symbol of BJD but an image of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. The former president of Angul Zilla Parishad Girija Nandini is another aspirant in the fray if the BJD decides to play the women card for Angul seat. However, who will finally get the ticket for the Angul Assembly seat is yet to be seen.

## Senior BJP leader Bijoy Mohapatra's son joins BJD

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's political opponent and BJD leader Bijoy Mohapatra's son Arabinda Mohapatra Thursday joined the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD). Arabinda thanked Patnaik and his close aide V K Pandian after joining the BJD at Sankha Bhavan, the party's headquarters here, and a party's scarf was handed over to him. He later met the Chief Minister at his residence, Naveen Niwas. Arabinda was welcomed in

the party by Patnaik, who is also BJD president, in the presence of several leaders, MLAs and observers of Kendrapada district. "I welcome Arabinda Mohapatra to the Biju Janata Dal. You (Arabinda) work hard for development of the Kendrapada district. He is the son of Bijoy babu," Patnaik said during a programme at his residence. Speculations were rife that Arabinda could join the BJD. According to sources, his father Bijoy Mohapatra's close aides had, in a recent meeting, suggested that Arabinda should



join the BJD. The development comes at a time when the BJP and the BJD are likely to form an alliance ahead of the Lok Sabha and the

Odisha Assembly elections, 15 years after their break-up in 2009. Bijoy, the four-time MLA, was a close aide of late Biju Patnaik, the father of Naveen, and was also instrumental in the formation of BJD. Bijoy, however, formed the Orissa Gana Parishad in 2001 after he was ousted from the BJD in 2001. He later merged his party with Sharad Pawar's NCP. The veteran leader joined the BJP after the NCP entered into an alliance with the BJD for the 2009 polls.

## BJD-BJP forming alliance to 'loot' natural resources of Odisha: Cong

Although there was no formal announcement regarding a pre-poll alliance between the ruling BJD and the Opposition BJP in Odisha, leaders from both parties have hinted at a mutual tie-up before the Lok Sabha and assembly elections

**Bhubaneswar, March 7:** With the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) hinting at a potential alliance with the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Odisha Congress president Sarat Pattanayak Thursday alleged that both the parties are teaming up to exploit the state and its natural resources, including mines. He pointed out both the parties had formed a coalition government from 2001 to 2009 and had collaborated on various fronts. Pattanayak highlighted instances where the BJD had supported significant bills introduced by the BJP in Parliament and had even allocated a Rajya Sabha seat to the BJP twice. He accused the BJD government of being embroiled in corruption scandals, including chit fund and mining scams, and suggested that the BJD's alliance with the BJP stemmed from fear of exposure. "The BJD government is deep in corruption including chit fund and mining scams. So, the BJD has surrendered itself before the BJP," Pattanayak said.



He questioned the BJD's commitment to the state's interests, citing unfulfilled promises such

as the increase in paddy minimum support price (MSP) and the demand for special category status for Odisha. "If the BJD is working for the interest of the state, the party should have asked the BJP to fulfill these demands of Odisha," Pattanayak said. He asserted that the Congress is the only viable alternative in the state and claimed that the people are in support of the grand old party. He expressed confidence that the Congress would form the next government in the state, positioning the party as the true representative of people's interests.

## Naidu to meet BJP leaders over possible pre-poll alliance

**New Delhi, March 7:** Telugu Desam Party president N Chandrababu Naidu arrived here Thursday and may meet senior BJP leaders amid a buzz that the two parties are likely to revive their alliance for Lok Sabha and assembly polls, which will be held simultaneously in Andhra Pradesh. The TDP was part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance but exited in 2018 when Naidu was the state's Chief Minister. Sources said both parties are

**Naidu had met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J P Nadda in February, bolstering speculation that they are headed for an alliance even though things have not crystallised so far**

open to joining hands but a lot will depend on whether they reach a mutually agreeable seat-sharing arrangement. Actor Pawan Kalyan-led Jana Sena Party, which has been a member of the NDA, has already joined hands with the TDP and has been urging the BJP to follow suit. Sources said both the parties have had differences over the number of seats the BJP will fight in the state where it does not have much presence. The state has 25 Lok Sabha and 175 assembly seats and the BJP is keen to contest between eight to 10 parliamentary constituencies. A TDP leader said his party believes that giving "too many" seats to the BJP will hand over an advantage to the state's ruling YSR Congress. What has complicated matters for the BJP is that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, the president of the YSR Congress, has been unambiguously supportive of the Modi government's agenda in Parliament and shares a good personal rapport with its senior leaders. The BJP has been working to expand the NDA for some time as it eyes a bigger victory in the Lok Sabha polls, expected in April-May.

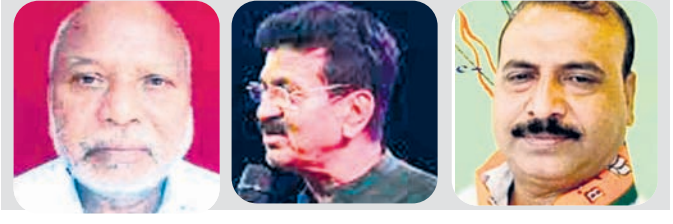
## RAHUL'S NYAY YATRA Cong promises right to employment for youth

**Jaipur, March 7:** The Congress Thursday promised right to employment as well as apprenticeships for youths in a series of assurances made by its leader Rahul Gandhi at a rally in Rajasthan's Banswara. If the party is voted power in the Lok Sabha elections, 30 lakh vacant government posts will be filled and a law would be enacted to curb government recruitment examination question paper leaks, he said addressing a gathering during his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. The former Congress chief also promised a legal guarantee on minimum support price for crops to farmers, social security for gig workers and a Rs 5,000 crore fund for start-ups. The Congress will provide right to employment, Rahul

Gandhi said. Every young diploma and degree holder in the country will have the right to apprenticeships in the private and government sectors, he said. They will get a one-year apprenticeship during which they will be paid Rs 1 lakh, the Congress leader said. Targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gandhi said, "There are 30 lakh government vacancies in India. Modi ji doesn't get them filled. The BJP doesn't fill them. After coming to power, our first step will be to fill these posts." Referring to the issue of paper leaks, he assured that the Congress will standardise the government recruitment exam process and stop its outsourcing. The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra entered Rajasthan in Banswara from Madhya Pradesh.

## Circumspect BJP in 'wait and watch' mode

**Rourkela, March 7:** The likely 'alliance' between BJD and BJP is yet to take a final shape. However, the BJP is circumspect over the entire development. Speaking to Orissa POST, Dhiren Senapaty, state BJP spokesperson said, "Please wait and watch. Let the development come. An alliance has three stages: First is to come to a conclusion. The second is on the exact seat sharing. Finally, who will lead and a common minimum programme." He further added, "We are a disciplined party. Whatever instruction will come from the party in the interest of the party and country we will abide by that. We are prepared for every situation." However, the prospect of a possible alliance has certainly given heartburn to many both in BJD and BJP, as one ob-



server said, "In case of an alliance the BJD will definitely stake its claim on Rourkela and Rajgangpur. This will definitely cause a very difficult situation for many aspirants of party tickets in BJP." His obvious indication was towards Nihar Ray in Rourkela, who lost last time from here to BJD's Sarada Nayak, Minister for Labour and waiting to stake his claim. His supporters are saying in case of an alliance the party will make a heavy case for Rourkela and Rajgangpur seat. Also, Senapaty, being a front runner this time, is a possible

candidate. Similarly, in BJD apart from Sarada Nayak, there are quite a few aspirants like Kuna Das working hard to get a party nomination. At Rajgangpur, veteran BJD leader Mangala Kissan may seem to have withdrawn from the race, but has brought his son Anil to the front instead. Apart from him there are other hopefuls like Benedict Tirkey, a Sarada favourite and Madhuri Lugun, chairman of Rajgangpur Municipality. However, Kissan, owing to his strong organisational base among

the dominant Kissan tribe and overall grip, cannot be ignored. Narasingha Minz is among the front runners. In the last election he came third to BJD. The effective vote difference was mere 76 votes while Congress's candidate Rajan Ekka won it by a margin of just 851. So, given the current scenario, BJP is very confident of winning the seat this time in case of a solo run. Besides, there are a few other names in the list of aspirants like Santosh Tirkey and Mahendra Majhi. However, in both the seats BJD will face a tough test this time if the alliance fails. In Rourkela, Sarada Nayak's main Achilles Heel will be the growing anti-incumbency against him in particular, despite ironically remaining the most popular. The Ram Mandir consecration and the 2024 new voters are the two other factors.

## of the day quote

Congress was in power for a long time in the country since Independence. They didn't see our Scheduled Caste (SC) brothers from a humanitarian point of view

J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

We should not ignore the fact that the Modi government has not discriminated against any caste, community, region or religion in terms of development, and therefore, there should also not be any hesitation in any community in voting for the BJP

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

When I demanded a caste survey, the PM said there are no castes in India. But he himself had said many times in the past that he is an OBC. When I demanded a caste survey, he said there is no caste. He refused to conduct a caste survey at the behest of his industrialist friends

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

## SHORT TAKES

### Court summons Kejriwal March 16

**New Delhi:** A Delhi court Thursday issued summons to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on a fresh complaint by the ED for evading its summonses in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise scam, saying there were "sufficient grounds" for proceeding against him. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra directed Kejriwal to appear before the court March 16.

### Cong's poll body meets

**New Delhi:** The top leadership of the Congress is attending a meeting in the national capital Thursday to finalise the party's candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Sonia Gandhi and general secretary, organisation, K C Venugopal, as well as other senior leaders who are part of the Congress' Central Election Committee (CEC) were present at the meeting.

### Padmaja joins BJP

**New Delhi:** Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Congress leader Padmaja Venugopal, the daughter of former Kerala chief minister K Karunakaran, joined the BJP here Thursday and said she was not happy with the grand old party for several years as it lacked a strong leadership. Addressing a press conference with the BJP leaders at the party headquarters here, Venugopal said she tried to reach out to the Congress top brass several times to raise her grievances but was never given an appointment.



It is an important occasion to emphasise the need to provide equal opportunities for women and empower them in all spheres of life. Even today, women face several challenges which we need to address

DROUPADI MURMU  
PRESIDENT OF INDIA

### CABINET APPROVES INDIA AI MISSION

The Cabinet approves India AI mission with an outlay of ₹10,372 crore for five years, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said Thursday. The approved corpus will be used to create a large computing infrastructure



# SC questions Speaker's decision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 7:** The Supreme Court Thursday questioned the use of "legislative majority" test by Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar while deciding that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led faction was the real Shiv Sena, and summoned the original records relating to the disqualification row from the speaker's office.

Hearing a plea of the Uddhav Thackeray faction against the speaker's order declaring the Shinde bloc as the "real political party" after the split in the Shiv Sena in June 2022, the top court also took note of the claim of senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for the group led by the Chief Minister, about "forgery" in some relevant documents.

"The original records shall be summoned from the office of the adjudicating authority (speaker)," said the bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, and fixed the Thackeray faction's plea for hearing April 8.

The bench said it was keeping open the issue of maintainability of the petition of the Thackeray faction.

The top court, which had issued notice on the Thackeray group's petition January 22, asked Shinde and his MLAs to file a response positively on or before April 1.

The speaker had, in an order January 10, declared the Shiv Sena bloc led by Shinde as the "real political party" after the split in June 2022. He had also rejected the Thackeray faction's plea to disqualify 16 MLAs of the ruling camp, including Shinde.

The bench took note of the submissions of senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Thackeray group, that there was a distinction between "legislative majority and organisational majority" post de-

## SENA VS SENNA



fection. The senior lawyer said there was a judgement which held that legislative majority post defection would not necessarily mean real majority. Questioning the use of test of "legislative majority" to ascertain which faction was the real party, the CJ referred to the order of the speaker and said, "Is this not contrary to the judgment? The whole submission is contrary to the judgment of our court".

"See para... The speaker said 'which faction is the real political party' is discernible from the legislative majority which existed when the rival factions emerged". Is it not contrary to the judgment?" the CJ asked. Salve opposed the Thackeray group's petition and said the Bombay High Court be allowed to adjudicate the issue as the Shinde faction has moved there assailing a part of the speaker's order which refused to disqualify certain MLAs of the Thackeray faction.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, also appearing for the Shinde faction, referred to a recent judgement and said the high court be allowed to hear and decide it.

At the outset, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who along with Singhvi appeared for the Thackeray group, said time was of the essence in the matter as

the term of the assembly was expiring in October, and hence, remanding the case to the high court would render the whole issue "infructuous".

Salve questioned the authenticity of some documents and referred to the resolution of June, 2022 by which Shinde was removed as the leader of the Shiv Sena legislature party. He said the documents produced by the Thackeray group were fabricated and referred to alleged discrepancies in the resolution.

This led the bench to order summoning of records from the office of the speaker.

The court said it will hear the final arguments April 8 and decide the issues including the maintainability of the plea of the Thackeray faction.

On January 22, the top court had sought responses from the chief minister and other lawmakers of his group on the plea. The Thackeray faction, in its petition filed through MLA Sunil Prabhu, has alleged that Shinde "unconstitutionally usurped power" and is heading an "unconstitutional government".

Challenging the orders passed by the speaker, the Thackeray faction has claimed they are "patently unlawful and perverse" and that instead of punishing the act of defection, they reward the defectors by holding that

The apex court, which had issued notice on the Thackeray group's petition, asked Shinde and his MLAs to file a response positively on or before April 1 and listed the plea for final hearing April 8

they comprise the real political party. "All impugned decisions are premised on a common finding that the majority of legislators represented the will of the political party, and therefore, they are not liable for disqualification," the plea said.

This amounts to a complete inversion of the 10th Schedule, which is intended to disqualify legislators who act against their political party, it said.

In his ruling on the disqualification petitions, the speaker did not disqualify any MLA belonging to the rival camps.

The Shinde group had the support of 37 out of the total 54 Sena MLAs when the party split in June 2022, the speaker had noted. The Election Commission had given the 'Shiv Sena' name and 'bow and arrow' symbol to the Shinde-led faction in early 2023.

In his order on the disqualification petitions filed by the Shinde-led Sena and the rival Thackeray faction against each other's MLAs, Narwekar had said Sunil Prabhu of the Sena (UBT) ceased to be the whip from June 21, 2022 (when the party split) and legislator Bharat Gogawale of the Shinde group became the authorised whip.

The speaker had also held that the Shiv Sena 'pramukhi' (chief) did not have the power to remove any leader from the party. He did not accept the argument that the will of the party chief and the will of the party were synonymous.

# CBI busts network sending Indians to Russia-Ukraine war



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 7:** The Central Bureau of Investigation Thursday busted a major human trafficking network that took Indian youngsters to the Russia-Ukraine war zone in the garb of providing them jobs abroad, officials said.

They said the agency has found 35 instances in which youngsters were taken to Russia after being lured with false promises of high-paying jobs via social media channels and local contacts and agents.

Efforts are underway to identify the victims, the officials said.

In a statement here, a CBI spokesperson said the trafficked Indian nationals were trained in combat roles and deployed across front bases in the Russia-Ukraine war zone against their wishes, putting their lives in danger.

The federal agency has registered an FIR against some visa consultancy firms and agents. It was followed by searches in 13 locations across Delhi, Thiruvananthapuram, Mumbai, Ambala, Chandigarh, Madurai and Chennai.

"The human trafficking network of these agents is spread over several states across the country and they are operating in an organised manner," the

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had issued a warning last month to Indian citizens about the dangers of being recruited for support roles in the Russian army

The MEA has also been in contact with Russian authorities to ensure the safe return of around 20 Indians who are still stranded in Russia

spokesperson said.

The central probe agency has booked 24x7 RAS Overseas Foundation in Delhi and its director Suyash Mukut, O S D Bros Travels & Visa Services Pvt Ltd in Mumbai and its director Rakesh Pandey Adventure Visa Services Pvt Ltd in Chandigarh and its director Manjeet Singh, and Baba Vlogs Overseas Recruitment Solutions Pvt Ltd in Dubai and its director Faisal Abdul Mutalib Khan alias Baba.

"It has been ascertained that some of the victims also suffered grievous injuries in the war zone," the official said. "So far, cash worth over ₹50 lakh, incriminating documents and electronic records like laptops, mobiles, desktops and CCTV footage have been seized. Searches are going on. Certain suspects have also been detained for questioning at various locations," he added.

## TIDBITS

### Navy rescues crew after ship attacked in Gulf of Aden

**New Delhi:** Indian warship INS Kolkata rescued 21 crew members, including an Indian national, after three of their colleagues in a Barbados-flagged cargo vessel were killed following a Houthi missile strike on the bulk carrier in the Gulf of Aden Wednesday. The deaths were the first since the Houthi militants began attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea and adjoining shipping lanes in response to Israel's military offensive in Gaza. The crew abandoned the vessel True Confidence after the attack, military officials said. INS Kolkata, deployed for maritime security operations in the Gulf of Aden, arrived at the scene of action at 4.45 pm Wednesday and rescued 21 crew members, including one Indian national, from a life raft using its integral helicopter and boats, Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said.

### Three convicts awarded life sentence

**New Delhi:** A court here Thursday awarded rigorous life imprisonment to three people convicted of killing photographer Ankit Saxena in February 2018 over an interfaith love affair, saying death sentence in the case was not justified. Additional Sessions Judge Sunil Kumar Sharma was hearing the case against Akbar Ali and Shahnaz Begum, the parents of Saxena's girlfriend Shehzadi, and maternal uncle Mohammad Salim. "After balancing the aggravating and mitigating circumstances, if the court comes to the conclusion that there is a possibility of rehabilitation of the convicts, a death sentence is not justified," the judge said.

### Govt extends ₹300 LPG subsidy for FY25

**New Delhi:** Ahead of general elections, the government Thursday announced the extension of ₹300 per LPG cylinder subsidy to poor women under the Ujjwala Yojana for the next fiscal starting April 1. The government had in October last year hiked the subsidy from ₹200 per 14.2-kg cylinders for up to 12 refills per year to ₹300 per bottle. The ₹300 per cylinder subsidy was for the current fiscal, which ends March 31. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has now decided to extend this subsidy to 2024-25, Union Minister Piyush Goyal told reporters here.

### UCO Bank scam: CBI raids 67 locations

**New Delhi:** The CBI has conducted searches at 67 locations in seven cities of Rajasthan and Maharashtra in connection with the ₹820-crore Immediate Payment System (IMPS) scam in UCO bank, officials said Thursday. The searches that started Wednesday and continued till Thursday pertain to the mammoth scam in UCO Bank that transpired in three days - November 10-13, 2023 - through 8,53,049 transactions spread across 2,874 branches in 41,296 accounts across 35 states and Union territories.



BJP women leaders being stopped from heading towards Sandeshkhali by the West Bengal Police, at New Town on the outskirts of Kolkata

# B'lore schools may face closure as water crisis worsens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, March 7:** A coaching centre in Vijayanagar in Bangalore asked its students to attend classes online due to an 'emergency' for a week.

Similarly, a school on Bannerghatta Road in the city shut down, asking the students to attend classes virtually. The 'emergency' is the acute water crisis.

Karnataka, especially its capital, is facing one of the worst water crisis in recent years due to poor rainfall in 2023. The Indian Meteorology Department has attributed the scanty rains to El Nino effect.

One can gauge the grim situation from the fact that water tankers were seen inside Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's office residence on Kumarakrupa Road in

Bangalore.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said the borewell in his house in Sadashivanagar in the state capital has gone dry for the first time. This happened despite the fact that Sadashivanagar is located next to Sankey Lake. Water tankers running frequently on the Bangalore roads have become a common sight now.

On normal days, the water suppliers used to charge ₹700 to ₹800 per tanker but due to excess demand, they are charging somewhere between ₹1,500 and ₹1,800 per tanker, according to Shivakumar. The office-bearers of the Residents' Welfare Associations (RWA) in the city are facing the brunt of its members for doing nothing to save them from water crisis. "We are a family of six members. A tanker of water



lasts for five days even if we use it judiciously. It means we need six-tankers of water a month, which will cost us about ₹9,000 a month. How long can we spend money like this?" Sharaschandra, a resident of Uttarhalli in Bangalore, said.

Deputy CM Shivakumar, who is in charge of Bangalore

Development, announced taking over private tankers and private borewells to meet the water demand in Bangalore. Even milk tankers will be used to supply water. The government is also mulling over fixing the rate for water per tanker.

According to Siddaramaiah, out of 136 Taluks in Karnataka,

Karnataka, especially its capital, is facing one of the worst water crisis in recent years due to poor rainfall in 2023

The Indian Meteorology Department has attributed the scanty rains to El Nino effect

123 Taluks have been declared drought hit and 109 are severely affected. The Karnataka government has also decided to set up Taluk level control rooms and helpline to address water woes.

Taluk level task forces led by the area MLA have been set up to ensure water supply and an adequate supply of fodder for cattle.

According to IMD scientist A Prasad, there was an El Nino effect last year, which is moderating this year too but is likely to decline. Its effect was evident as summer set in the third and

fourth week of February, which otherwise happens only in March in Bangalore, he explained.

Bangalore recorded 36 degree Celsius temperature Wednesday (March 6), the officer said.

"36 degree Celsius was not the highest. There were occasions when temperatures went up to 37.3 degree in March, 1986 but that happened towards the end of the month. We still have 24 days to go this March," Prasad pointed out.

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) as well as the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike are under pressure to provide water to people. A BWSSB official said the situation is grim because the Krishnaraja Sagar Dam in Mandya district from where Cauvery water is supplied to Bangalore does not have adequate water due to summer.

### Cafe blast: 'Bomber' travelled to Ballari after planting IED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, March 7:** Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara Thursday said sleuths investigating into the blast at the city's popular eatery 'The Rameshwaram Cafe' last week have got certain "good leads", as the prime suspect changed his clothes after the incident, and travelled by a bus.

He said the suspect is said to have travelled towards the district headquarters town of Tumakuru by a bus after the explosion, and officials are following the leads and verifying his movement till Ballari. Meanwhile, a week after the blast at Rameshwaram Cafe in Brookefield, the popular eatery is set to reopen the branch Friday on the auspicious occasion of Shivaratri.

# international



I believe that Malaysia and Australia have a duty to try the utmost to encourage the United States, China and other major players in the Asia-Pacific to conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to the enhancement of regional cooperation and economic integration

ANWAR IBRAHIM | MALAYSIA PM

## SHEHBAZ THANKS MODI

Pakistan's newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday thanked his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for felicitating him on his re-election



## of the day quote

We, of course, welcome the Prime Minister's statement. The United States values its relationship with both India and Pakistan, and we want to see them have a productive and peaceful relationship

MATTHEW MILLER | US STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON

Our objective is to establish long-term peace, security and stability in Afghanistan

RUCHIRA KAMBOJ | PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE UN

Prime Minister Chinh and I discussed our shared determination to grow our trade and investment links to support both our countries' economic prosperity

ANTHONY ALBANESE | AUSTRALIAN PM

# SWEDEN JOINS NATO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, March 7: Sweden Thursday formally joined NATO as the 32nd member of the transatlantic military alliance, ending decades of post-World War II neutrality as concerns about Russian aggression in Europe have spiked following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and Secretary of State Antony Blinken presided at a ceremony in which Sweden's "instrument of accession" to the alliance was officially deposited at the State Department.

"This is a historic moment for Sweden. It's history for the alliance. It's history for the transatlantic relationship," Blinken said. "Our NATO alliance is now stronger, larger than it's ever been." Kristersson wrote in a social media post that "we are therefore a safer country."

Later Thursday, Kristersson will visit the White House and then be a guest of honour at President Joe Biden's State of the Union address to Congress. The White House said that having Sweden as a NATO ally "will make the United States and our allies even safer."

"NATO is the most powerful defensive alliance in the history of the world, and it is as critical today to ensuring the security of our citizens as it was 75 years ago when our alliance was founded out of the wreckage of World War II," it said in a statement. NATO



Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg described it as "a historic day."

"Sweden will now take its rightful place at NATO's table, with an equal say in shaping NATO policies and decisions," he said in a statement. The Swedish flag will be raised outside the military organization's headquarters in Brussels Monday.

Stoltenberg underscored that the Nordic country "now enjoys the protection granted under Article 5, the ultimate guarantee of allies' freedom and security."

Article 5 of NATO's treaty obliges all members to come to the aid of an ally whose territory or security is under threat. It has only been activated once - by the US after the September 11, 2001, attacks - and is the collective security guarantee that Sweden has sought since Russia invaded Ukraine.

"Sweden's accession makes NATO stronger, Sweden safer and the whole alliance more secure," Stoltenberg said. He added that the move "demonstrates that NATO's door remains open and that every nation has the right to choose its own path."

Sweden, along with Finland, which joined NATO last year, both abandoned long-standing military neutrality that was a hallmark of the Nordic states' Cold War foreign policy after Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2022.

Biden, in his speech to Congress, is expected to cite

The White House said that having Sweden as a NATO ally 'will make the United States and our allies even safer'

"This is a historic moment for Sweden. It's history for the transatlantic relationship," Blinken said

# Ceasefire talks next week, says Hamas

The US, Egypt and Qatar have been trying for weeks to broker an agreement on a six-week ceasefire and the release of 40 hostages held in Gaza in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned in Israel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, March 7: Hamas said Thursday that its delegation has left Cairo and that talks on a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release will resume next week, making it extremely unlikely that mediators will broker a deal before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Egyptian officials had earlier said the negotiations reached an impasse over Hamas' demand for a phased process culminating in an end to the war. But they did not rule out a deal before Ramadan, which is expected to begin Sunday and has emerged as an informal deadline.

Hamas spokesman Jihad Taha said Israel "refuses to commit to and give guarantees regarding the cease-fire, the return of the displaced, and withdrawal from the areas of its incursion." But he said the talks were still ongoing and would resume next week. There was no immediate comment from Israel.

The US, Egypt and Qatar have been trying for weeks to broker an agreement on a six-week ceasefire and the release of 40 hostages held in Gaza in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned in Israel. The Egyptian officials said Hamas has agreed on the main terms of



such an agreement as a first stage, but wants commitments that it will lead to an eventual, more permanent cease-fire.

Hamas has said it will not release all of the remaining hostages without a full Israeli withdrawal from the territory. Palestinian militants are believed to be holding around 100 hostages, and the remains of 30 others, captured during Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel that triggered the war.

Hamas is also demanding the release of a large number of prisoners, including top militants serving life sentences, in exchange for the remaining hostages.

Israel has publicly ruled out those demands, saying it intends to resume the offensive after any cease-fire with the goal of destroying Hamas.

## SHORT TAKES

### Czech farmers block traffic

Prague: Czech farmers blocked traffic in Prague Thursday, cramming the streets with hundreds of tractors and other vehicles as they rallied against the government and agriculture policies set by the European Union. Public transport came to a standstill during the morning rush hour in several parts of the Czech capital. The street leading to the government office where the protesters planned to present their demands was completely blocked. "Our goal is not to block the traffic in Prague, our goal is to present the problems in agriculture," said Martin Pycha, the head of the Czech Agricultural Association, one of the organizers of the protest.

### Woman, daughter fatally shot

Worcester: A mother and her 11-year-old daughter were fatally shot while sitting in a parked SUV in a Massachusetts neighbourhood. Police arrested one man and were searching for another. The mother and daughter were shot shortly after 3 pm Monday in Worcester, police said. Officers found them inside the SUV. They were taken to a hospital, where they were both pronounced dead, police said. One man was arrested Tuesday.

### 1 killed, 3 injured

Tehran: A fire at an oil refinery in the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas killed at least one person and injured three, state media said Thursday. A furnace at the refinery caught fire as it was being repaired at about 11 am local time, state TV reports.

# US trying to suppress China's rise: Wang Yi



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, March 7: China's foreign minister accused the US Thursday of devising tactics to suppress China's rise and criticised the Biden administration for adding more Chinese companies to its sanctions lists.

Wang Yi, speaking to media during the annual meeting of China's legislature, said China's relations with the US have improved since President Xi Jinping and Joe Biden met in November, but America has not fulfilled its promises.

"If the US always says one thing and does another, where is its credibility as a major power? If the US gets nervous and anxious when it hears the word China, 'where is its confidence as a major power?'" he said. "If the US is obsessed with suppressing China, it will eventually harm itself."

Wang also demanded that members of the UN Security Council stop blocking Palestine from becoming a member of the United Nations. The 70-year-old

veteran diplomat, who has earned Xi's trust, returned to the foreign minister's post last summer after his successor, Qin Gang, was abruptly dismissed without explanation after a half year on the job. Wang is also the ruling Communist Party's top foreign affairs official, a more senior position that he moved to when Qin became foreign minister at the end of 2022.

Analysts had speculated the Communist Party might use the weeklong meeting of the National People's Congress to name a new foreign minister, but that appeared off the table after an agenda released on the eve of the opening session did not include personnel changes.

China's UN ambassador, Zhang Jun, said during a Security Council debate in January that China supports Palestine becoming a full member as soon as possible, as a first step toward creating a Palestinian state, according to Chinese media reports.

Wang called Thursday for a major international conference to draw up a roadmap and timetable for a two-state solution. "We support Palestine becoming a full member of the United Nations and call on individual members of the Security Council not to set obstacles for this anymore," he said.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visits a western operational training base in North Korea

PTI PHOTO

# 4 children among six found dead in Ottawa

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ottawa, March 7: Police in Canada's capital, Ottawa, were investigating Thursday the deaths of six people including four children and two adults found in a house in the southern part of the city.

A seventh person is in hospital with serious, but non-life-threatening injuries. Police were called to the home in the

Barrhaven area at around 11 pm Wednesday night.

A suspect was arrested quickly after that and police said there is no ongoing threat to public safety.

It was not immediately announced how the victims died.

Ottawa Police Chief Eric Stubbins told local radio stations that police do not believe the deaths were the result of domestic or intimate partner vio-

lence. However, he said they're also still trying to determine the relationship between the suspect and the victims.

Stubbins said it was a "very tragic scene." Neither the identities of the deceased nor the age or identity of the person in hospital have been confirmed. Police said investigative teams remain at the site and asked anyone with information to contact the homicide unit.

# More Chinese women choosing singledom as economy stutters

PRESIDENT XI JINPING LAST YEAR STRESSED THE NEED TO 'CULTIVATE A NEW CULTURE OF MARRIAGE AND CHILDBEARING' AS CHINA'S POPULATION FELL FOR A SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR AND NEW BIRTHS REACHED HISTORIC LOWS

REUTERS

Xian, China, March 7: Freelance copywriter Chai Wanrou thinks marriage is an unfair institution. Like many young women in China, she is part of a growing movement that envisions a future with no husband and no children, presenting the government with a challenge it could do without.

"Regardless of whether you're extremely successful or just ordinary, women still make the biggest sacrifices at home," the 28-year-old feminist said at a cafe in the northwestern city of Xian. "Many who got married in previous generations, especially women, sacrificed themselves and their career development, and didn't get the happy life they were promised. Living my own

life well is difficult enough nowadays," she said.

President Xi Jinping last year stressed the need to "cultivate a new culture of marriage and childbearing" as China's population fell for a second consecutive year and new births reached historic lows. Chinese Premier Li Qiang also vowed to "work towards a birth-friendly society" and boost childcare services in this year's government work report.

The Communist Party views the nuclear family as the bedrock of social stability, with unmarried mothers stigmatised and largely denied benefits. But a growing number of educated women, facing unprecedented insecurity amid record youth unemployment and an economic downturn, are espousing "sin-



gleism" instead.

China's single population aged over 15 hit a record 239 million in 2021, according to official data. Marriage registrations rebounded slightly last year due to a pandemic backlog, after reaching historic lows in 2022. A 2021 Communist Youth League survey

of some 2,900 unmarried urban young people found that 44% of women do not plan to marry.

Marriage, however, is still regarded as a milestone of adulthood in China and the proportion of adults who never marry remains low. But in another sign of its declining popularity, many

Chinese are delaying tying the knot, with the average age of first marriage rising to 28.67 in 2020 from 24.89 in 2010, according to census data.

In Shanghai, this figure reached 30.6 for men and 29.2 for women last year, according to city statistics. "Feminist activism is basically not allowed (in China), but refusing marriage and childbirth can be said to be... a form of non-violent disobedience towards the patriarchal state," said Lu Pin, a Chinese feminist activist based in the United States.

After decades of improving women's education levels, workforce participation and social mobility, Chinese authorities now face a dilemma as the same group of women have become increasingly resistant to their propaganda. Long-term single lifestyles

are gradually becoming more widespread in China, giving rise to online communities of mostly single women who seek solidarity from like-minded people. Posts with the hashtags "No marriage, no children" from female influencers often in their thirties or forties on Xiaohongshu, China's Instagram, regularly gain thousands of likes.

One anti-marriage forum on Douban, another social media platform, has 9,200 members, while another dedicated to "singleism" has 3,600 members who discuss collective retirement plans, among other topics. Liao Yueyi, a 24-year-old unemployed graduate in the southern city of Nanning, recently declared to her mother that she "wakes up from nightmares about having children".

# PAKISTAN GETS FIRST SIKH MINISTER IN PUNJAB PROVINCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, March 7: Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, an influential minority leader, has been sworn in as a provincial minister, making him the first Sikh to occupy a ministerial position in post-partition Punjab. Belonging to the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, Arora has returned to the Lahore provincial assembly for the third term after winning the February 8 polls.

Arora, 49, was recently elected Pardhan (president) of the Pakistan Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee and also as the ambassador to the Kartarpur Corridor. He was administered the oath



along with 17 others Wednesday.

Arora has been allotted the portfolio of minorities of Punjab province in the cabinet of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, incidentally, also the first woman to hold the post in the country. According to sources, Arora has close connections with the military establishment.

"Singh's brother is also looking after the affairs of the Kartarpur Corridor," another member representing the Christian minority community of Punjab, Khalil Tahir Sindhu said Thursday.

Born October 11, 1974 at Nankana Sahib and hailing from the Narowal district, Arora was also the first-ever Sikh member of the Punjab provincial assembly taking oath in 2013.

He has done post-graduation in social enterprise and studied at the Government College, Lahore, Punjab University, Lahore and Harvard Business School in the US.

He also served as a member of the National Commission for Minorities, chairman of the Standing Committee on Commerce & Investment and remained as Patron-in-chief of the Pakistan Sikh Council.

# business



**(Mobile phones worth) \$11 billion were exported last year. In the coming days, you will see exports to the tune of \$50-60 billion. 10 lakh people work in electronics manufacturing. In the coming days, 25 lakh people will work in electronics manufacturing**

**ASHWINI VAISHNAW** | UNION IT AND COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER

## TATA MOTORS TO HIKE VEHICLE PRICES

Tata Motors Thursday said it will increase prices of its commercial vehicles by up to 2 per cent from April 1, 2024. The price increase is to offset the residual impact of the past input costs, the auto major said. This is the second increase in CV prices in 2024 announced by Tata Motors



## Customer relationship our priority: Agrawala

Ramawatar Agrawala was born in a well-established business family at Jatni under Khurda district. He spent his childhood days with his father surrounded in a business environment. After the completion of his higher studies in Commerce, he ventured into developing his own business. With an enormous experience and knowledge of customer satisfaction, Ramawatar Agrawala, managing director of Shri Balaji Incense Industries (Madhukunj) achieved a special place in the local market. He has successfully created a brand that is known to every house in the state for its quality. In a conversation with **Orissa POST**, Agrawala shares his journey in the incense sticks market. Excerpts...



### How is the demand of incense sticks in Odisha market?

The incense sticks market is surging in the state in terms of demand. Even the trust of customers towards the brand has shown constant growth. At Madhukunj, we give more importance to trust and transparency. We have been trying our best to launch diverse and quality products to meet the demand.

### What are the raw materials required for production?

The production of incense sticks may look easy but it requires a range of raw materials and modern technology to manufacture quality products and to maintain the identity and presence of the brand. To prepare best quality products, we need special bamboo, coal, gicate powder and various liquid materials.

### While manufacturing, how much importance do you give to processing?

We have always focused on manufacturing quality products. In the process of manufacturing, we give specific importance while selecting raw materials. During preparation we keep our products under strict supervision. While processing, skilled workforce and modern tech-

nology are required the most.

### How do you face the customer demand and grievances?

In the market, the demand of the brand is ever-rising. We always give priority to customer and market demands. As our customers are important to us, we do our business with complete trust and with the belief that we are giving the best services. To solve customer queries and grievances, we have opened a special helpline and are going to launch other platforms for the same. We have appointed an experienced marketing team to take cognisance of such matters.

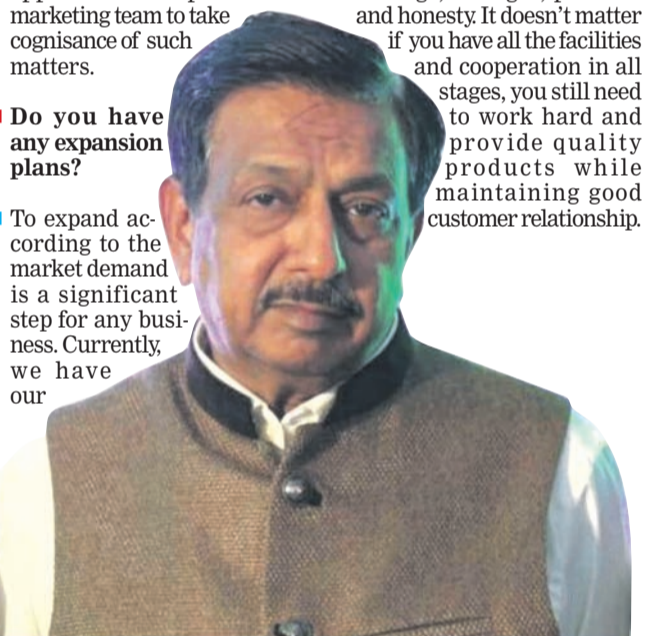
### Do you have any expansion plans?

To expand according to the market demand is a significant step for any business. Currently, we have our

presence all over Odisha and other prominent states like West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. We are also planning to expand our business to states like Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

### Being a successful entrepreneur, what suggestions do you have for newbies who want to enter this industry?

In recent times, doing a business may look like a better profession to become successful. But to sustain in an industry like this, one must have courage, strength, patience and honesty. It doesn't matter if you have all the facilities and cooperation in all stages, you still need to work hard and provide quality products while maintaining good customer relationship.



# D-St ends at new peak

**IN A HIGHLY VOLATILE TRADE, SENSEX, NIFTY EDGE HIGHER TO SETTLE AT FRESH LIFETIME HIGHS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, March 7:** Benchmark Sensex and Nifty edged higher to close at fresh record highs Thursday driven by gains in metal and FMCG shares amid firm global trends and foreign fund inflows.

In a highly volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 33.40 points or 0.05 per cent to settle at a new peak of 74,119.39. During the day, it jumped 159.18 points or 0.21 per cent to hit an all-time high of 74,245.17. The broader Nifty rose by 19.50



points or 0.09 per cent to close at a record 22,493.55. During the day it climbed 51.6 points or 0.22 per cent to an all-time high of 22,525.65.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Steel rose the most by 3.9 per cent. JSW Steel gained 2.09 per cent, Tata Motors by 2.14 per cent, Bajaj Finserv by 2 per cent, and Bajaj Finance by 1.71 per cent. Asian Paints, ITC and Nestle were also among the

major gainers.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank and Power Grid were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.70 per cent and midcap index spurred by 0.39 per cent.

Among the indices, metal jumped 1.36 per cent, capital goods climbed 1.05 per cent. Commodities (1 per cent), FMCG (0.98 per cent), telecommunication (0.98 per cent) and industrials (0.93 per cent) also advanced.

Auto, bankex, oil & gas and realty were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul settled in the green while Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were trading on a mixed note. The US markets ended in positive ter-

ritory Wednesday.

Analysts said that global indices exhibited mixed sentiments, driven by the Fed's signals of hope for a potential rate cut this year.

Further clarity on the labour market, anticipated with the release of non-farm payroll data on Friday, will offer insights into potential rate adjustments, they added.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹2,766.75 crore Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.65 per cent to \$82.42 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark jumped 408.86 points or 0.55 per cent to settle at a new record high of 74,085.99 Wednesday. The Nifty climbed 117.75 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at a fresh closing peak of 22,474.05.

## Lalchnd announces 'End of Season' sale

**Bhubaneswar:** Lalchnd, the most renowned and trusted jeweller in Eastern India, has launched its much-awaited 'End of Season' sale.



The wedding season is still ongoing and Lalchnd has brought in some irresistible deals for all its customers, offering a discount through making

charges (MC) of only ₹699 per gram on all HUID-hallmarked gold ornaments.

This is the lowest MC ever on HUID-hallmarked gold. The jeweller is also offering an incredible flat discount of ₹27,500 per carat on diamond value. There is a well-timed discount of flat 20% on select international branded watches as well. Lalchnd Jewellers is also offering a whop-

ping 50% reduction on the making charges of silver ornaments, in addition to a discount of 15% on various other branded items. The brand has even assured its customers of a seamless exchange process by providing 100% gold value on BIS-hallmarked old gold at all its showrooms. Lalchnd Jewellers

Founder and Chairman Sunjoy Hans has confirmed that this is a limited-time promotion and that customers should make the best of this golden opportunity. Known for pioneering transformative changes in Odisha's jewellery industry, Lalchnd has always prioritized customer satisfaction and welfare.

## Moody's raises growth forecast to 8% for FY24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 7:** Moody's Ratings Thursday raised India's GDP growth forecast for FY24 to around 8 per cent from 6.6 per cent on the back of strong domestic consumption and capital expenditure.

The estimate comes a day after RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the economic growth in the current financial year could be close to 8 per cent in view of the third quarter GDP data released

by the government.

The latest estimate of Moody's is about 140 basis points higher than the earlier projection of 6.6 per cent made in November 2023.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) has projected 8.4 per cent growth in December quarter of the current financial year. It has also revised GDP estimates for the first and second quarters to 8.2 per cent and 8.1 per cent from 7.8 per cent and 7.6 per cent, respectively.

## RBI tightens rules for business cards

REUTERS

**Bangalore, March 7:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Thursday tightened rules for credit and debit cards used for business accounts.

The RBI asked business card-issuers to put in place an effective mechanism to monitor end use of funds.

Last month, the RBI had ordered Visa to stop using an unauthorized route to make business-to-business card payments which used fintech companies as an intermediary. The regulator Thursday also said that card-issuers cannot share data of customers with outsourcing partners, unless it is "essential to discharge the functions" of the outsourcing partners.

If data needs to be shared, explicit consent from the cardholder will need to be obtained, the RBI said, adding the storage and ownership of card data should remain with the card-issuer.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024

### Pan-Odisha CSR by SBI

**Bhubaneswar:** State Bank of India Bhubaneswar Circle has celebrated International Women's Day 2024 at local head office and in all regional business offices across the state. United Nations has declared theme for International Women's Day 2024 as "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress". Accordingly, to work out as per the theme, Bhubaneswar Circle, under the leadership of Chief General Manager Dinesh Pruthi, has undertaken corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative of donating 630 sewing machines and umbrellas to deserving and needy women beneficiaries in all 21 RBOs of SBI. In an event carried out at local head office Bhubaneswar, CGM Pruthi inaugurated the mega CSR events by donation of sewing machines and umbrellas to deserving women. GM (NW-I) Ponnambalam Murugan, GM (NW-II) Uttam Kumar Hazra Chowdhury, DGM & CDO Manoj Kumar Singh along with other officials and staff members were present on the occasion. The event was managed by AGM (HR) Purnendu Mohapatra.



### Canara holds 'Canara Bazar'

**Bhubaneswar:** Canara Bank, Circle Office, Bhubaneswar organised 'Canara Baza' at CO Bhubaneswar March 7 on the eve of International Women's Day celebration in order to support women empowerment and promote entrepreneurship among women. The Canara Bazar was formally inaugurated by Jagdish Chander, General Manager and Circle Head of Canara Bank, Circle Office, Bhubaneswar under the bank's initiative under Centre for Entrepreneurship Development for Women. Self Help



Groups from all over the state, which have been financed by Canara Bank, had come to show case and sell their hand made products. The members of SHGs appreciated Canara Bank for the financial support extended to them and also thanked for providing a platform to display and sell their products.

## EVs will be cheaper to produce: Gartner

REUTERS

**Washington, March 7:** Battery electric vehicles will be, on average, cheaper to produce than a comparable internal combustion engine by 2027 thanks to new manufacturing methods that are lowering production costs, market research firm Gartner said Thursday.

Gartner expects production costs to drop considerably faster than the costs of batteries, which are the most expensive part of an EV and account for around 40% of the vehicle's price.

Gartner said its analysis was driven by "innovations that simplify production costs such as centralized vehicle architecture or



the introduction of gigacasting that help reduce manufacturing cost and assembly time."

Gigapresses are massive casting machines pioneered by US market leader Tesla to make large single pieces of vehicle underbodies, streamline production and

Gartner also expects that about 15% of EV firms founded since the last decade will be acquired or bankrupt by 2027

reduce the work of robots.

"This (the new technology) means BEVs will reach ICE cost parity much faster than initially expected, but at the same time, it will make some repairs of BEVs considerably costlier," said Pedro Pacheco, Vice President of Research at Gartner.

The market research firm expects the average cost of repairing

an EV body and battery after a serious accident to rise 30% by 2027. That could make vehicles suffering a collision more prone to a total write-off, as Gartner added that the repair could cost more than the residual value.

High costs tied to repairing EVs are already a concern among potential buyers. Gartner said there could be a consumer backlash if reductions in production costs come at the expense of higher repair costs.

"This does not mean the EV sector is crumbling. It is simply entering a new phase where companies with the best products and services will win over the remaining," Pacheco said.

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2	Total No. of Works	01 (One) No. Only
3	Estimated Cost	Approximately Rs. 14.18 Lakhs
4	Class of Contractor	As mentioned against work
5	Period of Completion	As mentioned against work
6	Date and time of availability of Bid Document in portal	From 10.00 A.M. on 13.03.2024 and upto 5.30 P.M. on 20.03.2024
7	Last date/time for receipt of Bid Document in portal	Upto 5.30 P.M. on 20.03.2024
8	Date/Time of Opening of Technical Bid	From 11.00 A.M. on 21.03.2024 At: O/o. SE, M.I. Division, Rayagada on Online
9	Name and Address of Officer Inviting the Bid	Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Rayagada
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# INDIA SPIN WEB AROUND ENGLAND

Kuldeep, Ashwin leave England in tailspin before Jaiswal, Rohit fifties put the hosts on front foot in the 5th Test



**IMPRESSIVE OUTING:** Kuldeep Yadav was delighted after dismissing Ollie Pope at the stroke of lunch, Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dharamsala, March 7:** The fragility of England batters against high-quality spin was exposed once again before India showed them how to bat on a flat track by cruising to 135/1 at stumps on day one of the fifth and final Test here Thursday.

Opting to bat, England were all at sea against the mastery of left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav, whose fourth five-wicket haul (5/72) in Tests allowed India to bowl out the visitors for 218 in their first innings shortly after tea.

Playing his 100th Test, Ravichandran Ashwin cleaned up the tail with four wickets (4/51) while Ravindra Jadeja (1/17) bagged the prized scalp of Joe Root (26). Contrary to expectations, all 10 wickets went to the spinners at the scenic HPCA Stadium and the last seven batsmen fell while adding only 43 runs.

India came out to bat in bright sunshine and Rohit Sharma (52 batting, 83b, 6x4, 2x6) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (57, 58b, 5x4, 3x6) put the hosts in firm control with a 104-run stand. India reached 135 for one in 30 overs at close. Shubman Gill (26 batting, 39b, 2x4, 2x6) was batting alongside Rohit.

It was the highest opening stand of this series for India

and was broken when Jaiswal got a bit carried away to be stumped off Shoab Bashir (1/64) after collecting back-to-back boundaries.

The ball did not do much for the England pacers and spinners compared to their Indian counterparts. Jaiswal was watchful to start with and waited for the spinners to be in operation. He put Bashir to sword in his very first over by dispatching him for three sixes into the stands, two of them over extra cover.

The Indian skipper, at the other end, too played confidently. He made his intentions clear by pulling a 150kmph rising delivery off Mark Wood over fine leg for six in the fourth over of the

innings.

However, India's march to command started in the second session when they reduced the visitors to 194/8 at tea as Kuldeep engineered a middle-order collapse that saw England lose three wickets for no run.

All of a sudden England found themselves reeling at 175/6 from three down on the same score. England lost six wickets in the middle session for 94 runs.

Kuldeep could have got rid of Zak Crawley (79, 108b, 11x4, 1x6) on the second ball after lunch break but India opted against DRS for a catch. But the 29-year-old spinner did not have to wait long thereafter as he got one to turn massively from the imaginary fifth stump to shatter the



**MEMORABLE OUTING:** Ravichandran Ashwin walks through a guard of honour in his 100th Test, Thursday

England opener's leg-stump. Both the inward drift and the sharp turn led to Crawley's dismissal.

Jonny Bairstow (29, 19b, 2x4, 2x6), who is also playing his 100th Test, showed plenty of intent in his innings but could not last long. Like the other batters, he could not read Kuldeep from his hands and got a faint outside edge off a googly.

He went for a review but ended up wasting it, exactly what Joe Root (26) and Ben Stokes (0) did on the same score of 175. Jadeja trapped Root in front with a straighter one. Stokes was the fifth victim of Kuldeep who had the opposition skipper plumb in front with a googly. Ashwin sent back Hartley and Wood in quick session to join the spinners' party.

In the morning, Crawley made a classy unbeaten half century after surviving an extended opening spell from the Indian pacers before Kuldeep struck twice to leave the visitors at 100/2 at lunch.

On expected lines, the skillful duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj made the ball talk but Ben Duckett (27) and Crawley were able to see off the

first 14 overs of fast bowling after being beaten multiple times.

Siraj ended up bowling eight overs in the morning session and Bumrah seven with both conceding 24 runs. Kuldeep came to bowl in the 18th over and struck instantly.

Despite being hit for two fours off his first five balls, Kuldeep was not afraid to flight the ball and was rewarded when Duckett's mistimed hit was pounced by Gill, who took a spectacular catch running backwards from cover.

Like Duckett, Crawley too was beaten by the pacers in the first hour of play but he picked the right balls to flaunt his cover drives. He reached his fourth half century of the series, but that remained the only bright spot for England this day.

## BRIEF SCORES

**ENGLAND 218**  
(Zak Crawley 79, Jonny Bairstow 29; Kuldeep Yadav 5/72, Ravichandran Ashwin 4/51);  
**INDIA 135/1**  
(Yashasvi Jaiswal 57, Rohit Sharma 52 batting).  
Match to continue.



**LETTING THE WILLOWS TALK:** Rohit Sharma and Yashasvi Jaiswal guide the ball through off-side during their innings



**C** if you play regularly, you get more confident about your bowling. Game awareness also comes with it. It is very important to keep playing regularly as it makes your bowling sharp

In the beginning, it was very challenging (finding his place in playing XI). I had changed my action, it took six to eight months to find that rhythm. Now, things are all set and I am enjoying it. In Ranchi, I tried something with my run-up (faster approach to the crease as it was a slow surface), and I practice that regularly

Bowling is all about fitness. I have worked a lot on my fitness in the last 18 months. I have been able to make certain changes in my bowling because of improved fitness

KULDEEP YADAV

IPL has been a hugely popular tournament; a lot of kids want to play T20 and get into the IPL. I really do wish that they get there. But remember one thing, this format (Test)... it is in a lot of things that life wouldn't teach you. I think Test cricket is what life is. It is the closest synergy that you can find to life. It will teach you to adapt, dealing with pressures

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN

I had a lot of confidence that he (Ashwin) would become a good Test player and a quality Test bowler, first a match-winner for the state (Tamil Nadu) then a match-winner for India. When you play first-class cricket, you have a different mindset compared to Test cricket; you take time to adapt to the environment, but he took no time at all, and it felt like he was born to play Test cricket

SUNIL SUBRAMANIAM | ASHWIN'S COACH



**EMOTIONAL MOMENT:** Jonny Bairstow wipes away tears, alongside his mother Janet, ahead of his milestone Test appearance

**220** Balls bowled by Indian spinners in the first innings of the Dharamsala Test. These are the fewest that a team's spinners have bowled to take all ten wickets in the first innings of a Test match, surpassing the previous best of 250 by Pakistan, also against England in 2022

**1871** Balls taken by Kuldeep Yadav to reach 50 Test wickets – the fewest for any Indian bowler bettering Axar Patel's 2205-ball feat for the milestone. Among all spinners, he's the second fastest to the landmark, behind England's Johnny Briggs (1512 balls)

**16** Innings needed for Yashasvi Jaiswal to complete 1000 Test runs, the second-fastest for an Indian in the format. Vinod Kambli remains the quickest (14 innings). Jaiswal is the fastest Indian to reach 1000 runs as an opener in men's Tests, bettering the record held by his captain Rohit Sharma (17 innings)

**9** Tests played by Jaiswal to breach the 1000-run mark in Tests, the joint second-fastest in history along with Herbert Sutcliffe, George Headley and Everton Weekes. Only Donald Bradman is ahead (7)

**712** Runs by Jaiswal so far this series, the most by an Indian batter in a Test series against England, surpassing Virat Kohli's 655 in 2016. Jaiswal's series tally is currently the third-highest for an Indian in a Test series, behind Sunil Gavaskar's 774 in 1971 and 732 in 1978-79, both against West Indies

**1976** The previous instance of Indian spinners taking 10 wickets on the first day of a Test – vs New Zealand in Auckland. The last time Indian spinners took all 10 wickets on the first day of a home Test was in 1973, also against England in Chennai

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### From Nadal to Nagal

**INDIAN WELLS:** Indian tennis star Sumit Nagal has advanced to the main draw of the BNP Paribas Open as a 'lucky loser' after Spanish superstar Rafael Nadal withdrew from the event citing lack of readiness to play at the highest level. The 26-year-old Nagal had lost in the second round of the qualifying tournament but got the big break as he was the highest ranked player in that draw. He is currently placed 101st in the ATP rankings and was entitled to go through in case of a last-minute main draw withdrawal.

### Last IPL appearance

**DHARAMSALA:** India wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik is all set to make his last IPL appearance in the 2024 edition beginning March 22, and he will decide on his international retirement after the lucrative T20 league. The 38-year-old, who is currently contracted with the Royal Challengers Bangalore, has played in all the 16 editions of the IPL since 2008 and has only missed two matches across 16 seasons. "This 2024 edition will be his (Karthik's) last IPL. He will decide his international retirement after the IPL," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

### Archers impress

**DUBAI:** Rakesh Kumar won two medals as Indian archers returned with one gold, one silver and one bronze at the 8th Faza Para Archery World Ranking Tournament here Thursday. Rakesh Kumar defeated Ken Swagumilang of Indonesia 147-143 to win the gold medal in the compound men's open event. Rakesh secured a double when he partnered Sheetal Devi to defeat their rivals from Korea 155-152 to bag the compound mixed team open bronze medal. India also pocketed a silver medal through Pooja who lost to Elisabetta Mijno of Italy 0-6 in the women's recurve open final.

## Sindhu rallies into quarters, Srikanth out of French Open



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Paris, March 7:** India's PV Sindhu produced another impressive show as she rallied to a three-game win over USA's Beiwen Zhang to advance to the women's singles quarterfinals but it was curtains for Kidambi Srikanth at the French Open Super 750 badminton tournament here Thursday.

Playing her first BWF tour event since returning from a knee injury, Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, battled her

way from an opening-game reversal to outgun World No.10 Zhang 13-21, 21-10, 21-14 to enter her first quarterfinal of the season.

The World No.11 will face either Olympic champion and second seed Chen Yu Fei of China or Denmark's Line Christophersen, making the contest an acid test for the Indian, who is eyeing a third medal at the Paris Games.

Srikanth, who showed his mastery over Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen on Wednesday, once again hit a roadblock, this time against Guang Zu to suffer yet another round-of-16 loss, something which will bother him as he held a flawless 5-0 record against the Chinese ahead of the match. The former World No.1 lost 21-19, 12-21, 20-22 to the World No.17 Chinese after battling for 78 minutes.

## Mumbai Indians eves crush UP Warriorz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 7:** Mumbai Indians extracted sweet revenge on UP Warriorz, defeating them by 42 runs to climb to the second spot in the standings of the WPL here Thursday.

Opting to bat, MI overcame early jitters to post a decent 160/6. While Nat Sciver-Brunt (45, 31b, 8x4) and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (33, 30b, 3x4, 1x6) added 59 off 46 balls for the third wicket to steady MI's ship, the innings got impetus due to Amelia Kerr (39, 23b, 6x4) and rising star Sajeevan Sajana's (22 n o, 14b, 4x4) knocks. The duo added 43 in 4.2 overs towards the end.

UPW struggled in their chase, finding runs difficult to come by as they could manage 118/9. The win was a sweet revenge for MI who lost by seven wickets against UPW, February 28 in Bangalore. UPW's problems compounded when they lost three key wick-



Mumbai Indians players celebrate fall of a UP Warriorz wicket, Thursday

ets – skipper Alyssa Healy, Kiran Navgire and Chamari Athapaththu – inside the first five overs for just 15 runs.

UPW never really recovered from the torrid start as the asking rate kept on climbing with every over. The likes of Grace Harris (15) and Deepti Sharma (53 n o, 36b, 6x4, 2x6) too found the going tough. Even though

Deepti opened up towards the end, by then the match was out of UPW's grasp.

UPW's struggle can be gauged from the fact that only three batters – Harris, Deepti and Shweta Sehrawat (17) – managed double digit scores. Saika Ishaque (3/27) and Nat Sciver-Brunt (2/14) were the main wicket-takers for MI. Earlier, MI did not have the best

of starts after opting to bat as they lost both the openers Yastika Bhatia and Hayley Mathews inside the fourth over. Both the batters were dismissed by Athapaththu.

While Sciver-Brunt played her shots during her aggressive knock, Harmanpreet preferred to play the role of an anchor. But just when the partnership was looking threatening, Sciver-Brunt was cleaned up by left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad (1/34).

Saima Thakor (1/19) then breached Harmanpreet's defence before Deepti sent back Amanjot Kaur. But Kerr and Sajana helped MI cross 150-mark.

**BRIEF SCORES:** MI Women 160/6 (Nat Sciver-Brunt 45, Amelia Kerr 39, Harmanpreet Kaur 33; Chamari Athapaththu 2/27) beat UPW Women 118/9 (Deepti Sharma 53 n o, Shweta Sehrawat 17; Saika Ishaque 3/27, Nat Sciver-Brunt 2/14) by 42 runs.

## REAL MADRID PIP RB LEIPZIG FOR CL LAST 8 BERTH

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, March 7:** A tough day for Carlo Ancelotti ended on a good note as Real Madrid advanced to the quarterfinals of the Champions League (CL) for the fourth straight season despite a lackluster performance against Leipzig Wednesday.

After being accused of tax fraud by Spanish tax authorities during the day, Ancelotti saw Madrid struggle in a 1-1 draw with Leipzig that was just enough to put the European powerhouse into the last eight thanks to the 1-0 win from the first leg in Germany three weeks ago. Madrid were outplayed during parts of the match at the Santiago



Bernabeu, drawing some jeers by the home crowd, but held on to advance 2-1 on aggregate.

Earlier, prosecutors in Madrid accused Ancelotti of defrauding Spanish tax authorities of 1 million euros in 2014 and 2015 during his first stint with the

club. Prosecutors are seeking a prison sentence of four years and nine months for the Italian coach, claiming he used a shell company to hide parts of his income from image rights.

Vinicius Junior put the hosts ahead after an assist by Jude Bellingham in the 65th and a gritty Leipzig side equalised with captain Willi Orban in the 68th.

### MAN CITY PURSUIT ON

Manchester City continued their pursuit of back-to-back Champions League titles by advancing to the quarterfinals with a 3-1 win over Copenhagen Wednesday. Goals from Manuel Akanji, Julian Alvarez and Erling Haaland at Etihad Stadium saw City complete a 6-2 aggregate win.

It is the seventh straight season Pep Guardiola's team have advanced to the last eight stage and this latest victory extended an unbeaten home run in the Champions League that stretches back 30 games to 2018.

## Pragg finishes joint second at Prague Masters tourney

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Prague, March 7:** R Praggnanandhaa tried hard but had to settle for a draw with David Navara of Czech Republic in the final round of Prague Masters chess tournament that concluded here Thursday.

With five draws happening between 10 players in the final round nothing actually changed. Abudattar had won the event with a round to spare clocking 6/8 and he inched up to 6.5 points for probably his career best performance.

Praggnanandhaa to his credit ended on a plus score clocking five points alongside Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran and surprise packet Ngen Thai Dai Van of Czech Republic with all three of them tallying five points out of a possible nine.

Gukesh, Richard Rapport of Romania and David Navara, the local star ended on 4.5 points sharing the fifth spot followed by Bartel and Keymer having 3.5 points each. Vidit Gujrathi had to be content with a last place finish on three points.