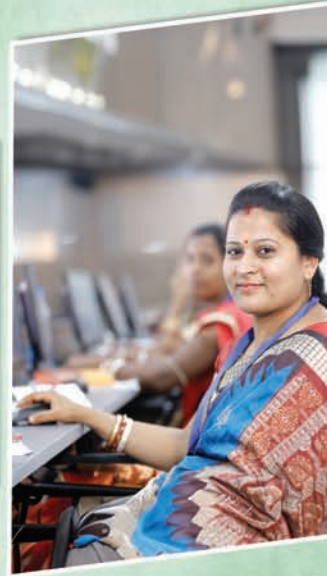




## Empowering Women with 'Mission Shakti'

Over 70 Lakh Women Accessing Loans upto ₹10 Lakh Without Interest



OIPR-15001/13/0850/2324

DSPL-861

### Yediyurappa booked

**BANGALORE:** Senior BJP leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa has been booked under the POCSO Act based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl, police said here. P7

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Let's go. It was a wrong tip-off. I've checked their accounts. They have donated through electoral bonds

# Probe quid pro quo: Cong

The publication of the electoral bonds data by the Election Commission of India, acting upon the direction of the Supreme Court, has opened a Pandora's Box with the Opposition Congress training its guns on the ruling BJP, accusing it of indulging in corruption of the highest order. The now-scraped scheme was designed in such a way that it would financially enrich only one party to such an extent that no other party would stand a chance to compete with it. The Opposition Congress has demanded an investigation by a Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the alleged quid pro quo.

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 15:** The Congress Friday demanded a high-level probe by the Supreme Court against the ruling BJP and freezing of its bank accounts for alleged corruption in the electoral bonds scheme, as it claimed the party got 50 per cent of the money received through these bonds.

The Opposition party alleged that the electoral bonds data has exposed the 'corrupt tactics' of the BJP such as 'quid pro quo,' grant of 'protection' to companies against donations, accepting 'kickbacks,' and money laundering through shell companies.

A day after data pertaining to electoral bonds scheme was made public following Supreme Court directions, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge took a swipe at the BJP, saying, "PM Modi says 'Na khaunga, na khane doonga', but it seems that he only meant 'Sirf BJP ko khi-launga'." In a post on X, he said the data released by State Bank of India shows BJP got nearly 50 per cent of the total electoral bonds money, while the principal opposition party, Indian National Congress got only 11 per cent of the funds. "There are many dubious donors. Who are these people? Which companies are these? Why have so many companies do-

nated only after ED, IT and CBI raids? Who exerted the pressure on such companies," he asked.

"We demand the highest level of enquiry by the Supreme Court to investigate this saga of corruption by the BJP," the Congress chief said in his post.

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal Friday described the electoral bonds scheme as a 'very big scam' and demanded that a special investigation team (SIT) be set up with court-appointed officials to probe the alleged quid pro quo and wrongdoings under it. Sibal, a senior advocate is leading the arguments for the petitioners in a case in the SC against electoral bonds.

# SC raps SBI for incomplete data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 15:** Admonishing the State Bank of India (SBI) for furnishing incomplete information, the Supreme Court said Friday the bank was required to provide the number unique to each electoral bond that would disclose the link between the buyer and the recipient political party. It issued a notice to the country's largest bank to explain the reasons for non-disclosure of unique alpha numeric numbers in compliance of its directions, saying the SBI was 'duty bound' to reveal them.

A five-judge bench headed by

Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the apex court had, in its verdict in the electoral bonds case, directed the disclosure of all the details of the bonds, including the purchaser, amount and date of purchase.

All details have to be furnished by the SBI, the CJI observed, a day after the Election Commission put out the entire list of entities that purchased electoral bonds for making political donations. The bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai, JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, issued notice to the SBI and posted the matter for resumed hearing March 18.



## BSKY: Ensuring Quality Healthcare for All

Nearly 4 crore people are benefiting from BSKY & BSKY Nabin Card



DSPL - 859

### Highlights of 'Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana'

- ▶ Universal Cashless Healthcare at Government Facilities.
- ▶ Health Coverage Up to ₹5 Lakh per Family and ₹10 Lakh for Women.
- ▶ Monthly Cashless Treatments ₹270 Crore for 1.3 lakh People in Private Empanelled Hospitals.

Information & Public Relations Department

OIPR-15001/13/0846/2324







## MEGHAN LAUNCHING NEW LIFESTYLE BRAND

Announcing her new firm in a series of cryptic Instagram posts, Meghan, Duchess of Sussex revealed she is launching a new lifestyle brand years after she shut her Tig blog.

## BROSNAN ASKED TO PAY \$1.5K FOR HIKING TOO CLOSE TO HOT SPRINGS

Two months ago, former James Bond actor Pierce Brosnan came close to hot springs at the Yellowstone National Park, where acid rising from the ground can reach boiling temperatures, in the western US. A judge has now ordered him to pay a fine of more than \$1,500 for the offence.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181

**ARIES**  
You will desire absolute freedom in whatever you do today. A lot of entertainment is on the cards for teenagers, like window shopping or going for a movie. Kids may demand a treat from you. Generally, family affairs dominate today.

**TAURUS**  
You will wake up feeling determined and decisive today, says Ganesha. Be careful as your rigid views may make you seem stubborn. You may not be willing to come half way during a conflict and will make a habit of articulating your viewpoint. Tension at the workplace will eat through most of your time today, feels Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
You will feel blue and out of sorts today. You will feel that you are all alone in the world, emotionally. Your repressed desires and your philosophical streak will come to the fore today and will influence your dark mood, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
With Ganesha's grace, whatever you think or persevere will be successful. Students will excel and finish pending work. You can display your imagination excellently. In short, a day of happiness and variety.

**LEO**  
Most of your time will be spent at the work place. You will excel in all your tasks today. Professional relationships will be marked by co-operation. You will have cordial relations with your colleagues. It is an auspicious and progressive day for business, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Avoid all kinds of prejudice and do not allow intolerance to enter your mind today, advises Ganesha. In all likelihood, you will look around yourself in search of love and affection. You will do well to keep negativity at bay as otherwise it may cow you down. Ganesha suggests that you marshal all your courage to live as per your convictions.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says those of you who are married or in love will experience a good time today. As you spend more time with your life partner by going out for a drive or for dinner, you will come closer to them. Today is a day full of joy, vigor and happiness for you.

**SCORPIO**  
Being a workaholic may divert your attention from your family and you may have to bear the consequences. It's time to sort differences with your spouse. But, all this while, you need to be calm and patient. Watch your words in case of any arguments, warns Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
It's time for invitations and grooving all night long. And even eat like a glutton. But, for a change you are not on a mood to party, though it is unlike you. You reject the idea of socialising and hitting the dance floor. And your friends do not like your changed avatar, says Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**  
Though less, you will get money from your investments and other resources. Don't ignore pending projects; complete them at the earliest so that you will have clear picture about your requirements and responsibilities, advises Ganesha. Once you are done with them, you will enjoy happy times with your friends and family in the evening.

**AQUARIUS**  
Meeting people from the different walks of life, having a good conversation with them and widening the horizon of your knowledge - this will be the highlight of today for you. At work, you will have a busy day with plenty of meetings, discussions, planning and execution, feels Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
Today you will get attention from the opposite sex and this will play an important role in your success in the near future. Due to the favourable alignment of the planets you will receive more than your expectations. Ganesha feels that even though you are a calculative and cautious person, you will tend to be aggressive, outgoing and willing to take risks today.

## Sara shares secrets behind career high

**Mumbai:** Sara Ali Khan is kickstarting 2024 with a lineup of releases. Apart from playing challenging roles, Sara is also known for her goofy reels and travel hikes, which she keeps sharing with her fans on social media. She recently opened up about her off-screen experiences that have helped her scale greater heights in her career.

In an interaction with an entertainment portal, when quizzed about the secret behind her success, she said, "I think living with a single mother has a huge role to play in it. At a very early age, I realised nobody is going to do anything for you. It's not that I don't get help, I do. But ultimately, you are the mover and initiator of your life. If you are lucky, stars align and God wills, then it will happen. You can't be waiting around for things to happen, it doesn't work like that."

When asked about playing the central character in *Ae Watan Mere Watan*, Sara said, "It is the most gratifying experience to be headlining a film like this. It's about time, be-

cause you are going to see a side of me which even I have not seen before."  
*Ae Watan Mere Watan* also features Sachin Khedekar, Abhay Verma, Sparsh Shrivastav, Alexx O'Neil and Anand Tiwari in crucial roles.

## Divya: I don't like to over-push myself



**Mumbai:** Actress-filmmaker Divya Khosla may be tagged as a fashion diva for her life on the screen but in real life, she says she doesn't bother about her make-up or hair. "In my day-to-day life, I am very laid back

when it comes to fashion," Divya, who walked as a showstopper at the LFW x FDCI, told IANS in an exclusive chat.

"I am someone who doesn't bother about make-up or hair. My hair is most of the time messy. Even in the paparazzi pictures, you'd see I am mostly in chappals," added Divya, who is all set to make her Telugu debut with *Hero Heroine*.

An actress, director and producer, Divya donnes several hats. Which one is more daunting for her?

"I just enjoy working. Life is never easy not just for me but for everyone because the world is so competitive today...I am not somebody who likes to over-push myself and I think that's what helps me find balance in life."

Divya says her creativity and my work is the most important thing.

"If you have this balance then nothing daunts you," she added. IANS

## 3-day Vagdevi Theatre Festival kicks off with Odia play *Bidroha Nija Biruddhare*



Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy lighted the lamp (L); A scene from the play



**Bhubaneswar:** Vagdevi Theatre Festival, a three-day drama extravaganza organised by City-based Vagdevi Literature Trust, began here at Bhanjakala Mandap, Friday.

The inaugural evening featured an Odia play titled *Bidroha Nija Biruddhare*. Written by Gadadhara Nanda, the play was directed by Pabitra Mohanty. Set on the inner conflicts of human beings, the drama left view-

ers with some intriguing questions: Is the acquisition of wealth everything in life? Is spirituality worth nothing?

Needless to say, the play's pace held the audience spellbound and kept them on the edge of their seats throughout.

Festival director Mamata Tripathy, urging the viewers to enjoy the dramas in large numbers, stated that the Vagdevi Literature Trust will present each day a play with different flavour, emotion,

design, and pace.

"All the characters in our plays are very intricately crafted. Be a part of the festival to promote Odia language and theatre," she added.

Among the luminaries, Dharitri and Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy, Zain Foundation chief Gargi Bhattacharya, noted physician Dr Alok Kanungo, eminent dramatist Satyabrata Rout and storyteller Ajay Swain were present on the occasion. PWN

## Big B undergoes angioplasty



**Mumbai:** Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has reportedly been admitted to Kokilaben Hospital, in Andheri, Mumbai, and has undergone an angioplasty.

According to the sources, "He underwent an angioplasty, but there is still no confirmation regarding his health update."

Big B, who is an avid social media user, took to X and wrote: "T4950-in gratitude ever..."

In his blog, Amitabh, who was last seen in *Ganapath*, said: "Ever in gratitude for all your prayers and love... Ever in gratitude for the grace of your affection...ever in gratitude for your continuity...Love and more later."

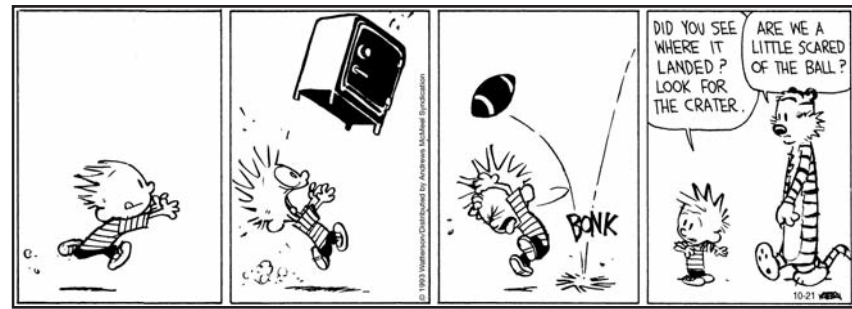
More details are awaited on the same.

Meanwhile, on the work front, he next has *Kalki 2898 AD*, *Butterfly*, and *Vettaiyan*. IANS

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

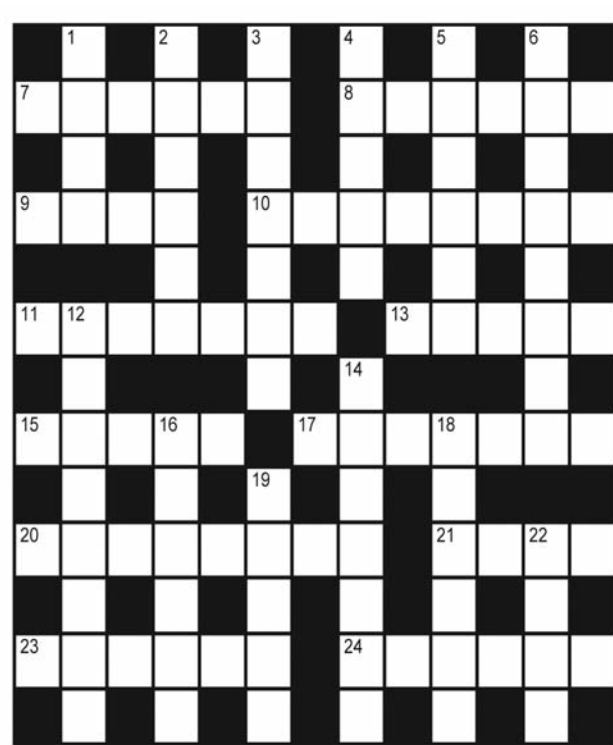


### BREVITY



### FUN post

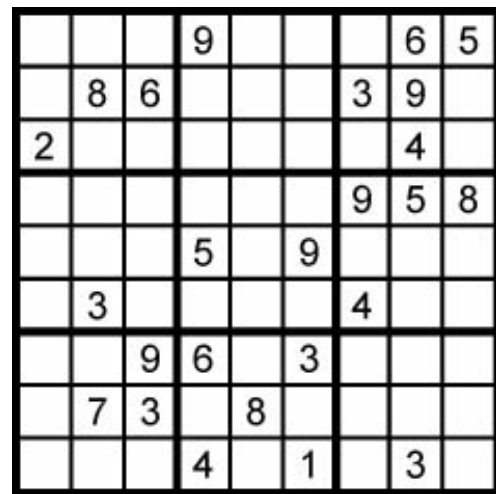
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Magician's word
  - 8 Luxurious (2,4)
  - 9 Arrogant person
  - 10 Taboo
  - 11 Reach
  - 13 Repent
  - 15 Brim over
  - 17 Maim
  - 20 Word game
- Down**
- 1 Home appliance
  - 2 Functional
  - 3 Inmate
  - 4 Love
  - 5 Nearly
  - 6 Outside
  - 12 Actor's worry
  - 14 Bump from a spot (3-4)
  - 16 Abhor
  - 18 Trifling
  - 19 Submarine (1-4)
  - 22 Sheet of ice

### SUDOKU

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

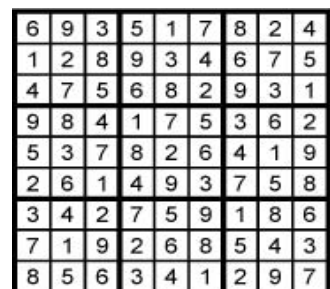


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



### Habitat rights

Odisha government awards habitat rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 to Paudi Bhuyana community in Deogarh district

DOWNTOWN | P2

### Russians vote

Voters cast ballots in Russia Friday for a three-day presidential election that is all but certain to extend Vladimir Putin's rule

INTERNATIONAL | P8

### GDP data 'mystifying'

Former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian says latest GDP numbers are 'absolutely mystifying' and difficult to comprehend

BUSINESS | P9

### ICC won't force India

Crickets world body ICC says that it will not force BCCI to disregard the government's directive and play in Pakistan

SPORTS | BACK PAGE



GLAM & GLORY: Models walk the ramp showcasing the creations by clothing brand ITRH during the Lakme Fashion Week in Mumbai, Friday

## POLL SCHEDULE TO BE OUT TODAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: The Election Commission will announce the schedule for the Lok Sabha polls Saturday. In a post on X, the poll panel said a press conference to announce the schedule for Lok Sabha elections and some state Assemblies will be held at 3 pm Saturday.

The term of the present Lok Sabha ends June 16 and a new House has to be constituted before that. The term of the Assemblies in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh is coming to an end on various dates in June.

Last time the Lok Sabha polls were announced March 10 and held in seven phases beginning April 11. Votes were counted May 23. In 2014 also, the EC had sent invites for its poll schedule press conference a day in advance. The invite was sent in the evening for the presser to be held early next day. Nearly 97 crore people are eligible to cast vote in the upcoming polls at over 12 lakh polling stations.

In the last parliamentary polls, the BJP had won 303 seats while the Congress got 52 seats. It could not muster enough numbers to claim the position of Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

The 2024 parliamentary polls are being seen as a do or die battle for the opposition INDIA bloc.

According to a News 18 opinion poll, the BJP-led NDA is headed for a 'historic mandate' in the upcoming polls. The opinion poll claimed that the NDA is set to win 411 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha with the BJP alone clinching a record 350 seats.

## ED arrests Kavitha in Delhi liquor scam case

Hyderabad/New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Friday arrested BRS leader K Kavitha after a daylong raid on her premises in Hyderabad and took her to Delhi for questioning

in a money laundering case linked to the now-scraped Delhi excise policy, agency sources said. Kavitha, 46, a Telangana Legislative Council member, was arrested by the central probe

agency at 5:20 pm from her residence at Banjara Hills in Hyderabad, according to the arrest memo. Her husband DR Anil Kumar was informed about her arrest, ED officials said. P7

## Jobs to 5L if voted to power in state: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 15: Ahead of the Lok Sabha and Odisha Assembly elections, the Congress Friday unveiled its manifesto and a 10-point guarantee card, promising jobs to five lakh youths if voted to power.

The party released its manifesto and guarantee card in the presence of AICC Odisha in-charge Ajoy Kumar, state president Sarat Pattanayak, and OPEC manifesto committee chairman Panchanan Kanungo.

Addressing the media, Kumar said if the party comes to power, they will increase the paddy MSP to ₹3,000 per quintal by providing a bonus.

The party also pledged to waive farm loans, provide a pension of ₹2,000 per month to farmers and agricultural labourers above 60 years old, and offer unemployment allowance of ₹3,000 per month for three years. "We will provide employment to five lakh youths and an unemployment allowance of ₹3,000 per month for three years. The party will also ensure that only local youths will be employed in the industries of the state," Kumar said.

Additionally, the party vowed to provide loans up to ₹25 lakh without a mortgage for setting up micro and small industries for all graduates.

They also pledged to offer 200 units of free electricity to every domestic consumer and free treatment up to ₹25 lakh in government and private hospitals for all, including government servants. More than 1.15 crore people are expected to benefit from the health insurance scheme, Kumar said.

To appeal to women voters, the party promised to waive bank loans for all women SHGs and introduce the Gruhalaxmi Yojana, providing ₹2,000 per month to every woman head of household. The manifesto also included a promise to provide 50 per cent reservation to women students in educational institutions.

Furthermore, the Congress leader announced plans to provide a cooking gas cylinder at ₹500 every month to each family, as well as a social security pension of ₹2,000 for old age persons, widows, and persons with disabilities.

Immediate reservation of 27% will be provided to the OBCs and SEBCs in educational institutions and government jobs, he said, adding that the party also pledged to conduct a socio-economic caste census in the state.

The party also promised to refund the chit fund amount to affected depositors within six months of taking office.

# Modi, Nadda yet to take call on alliance

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 15: Amid speculations over a BJD-BJP alliance in Odisha, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Friday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP national president JP Nadda are yet to take any decision on the saffron party's course of action in the state.

Speaking at the India Today Conclave 2024 in New Delhi, Shah exuded confidence that the saffron party will gain significantly in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Odisha.

To a query on any possible alliance between the BJP and the ruling BJD in Odisha, Shah said, "I don't want to talk much over the issue since the Prime Minister and the party president are yet to decide on the future course of action in Odisha. All I can say is whatever our course of action may be, the BJP will see significant gains both in Lok Sabha and in Assembly elections."

On being asked if it is philosophically possible for a tie-up between the No. 1 and No. 2 party



I don't want to talk much over the issue (alliance) since the Prime Minister and the party president are yet to decide on the future course of action in Odisha

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

in Odisha, Shah said, "We are in hardcore politics. And there is no place for philosophy in it. It is the arithmetic of victory and defeat that matters. We have to strike a balance between the win-loss mathematics and ideology while choosing an alliance partner."

Shah reiterated the Prime

Minister's statement that the BJP will get more than 370 seats and the NDA over 400 seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

"We have a track record of 10 years and an agenda for the next 25 years. It is an agenda to create a great India and that is why the public is putting faith in us," he said.

Earlier, top BJD leaders gathered for a meeting at Naveen Niwas Thursday evening.

Emerging out of the meeting, BJD vice-president and MLA Debi Prasad Mishra told reporters that the party discussed poll preparations, strategies and the situation in each constituency. "In the meeting, BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik gave certain suggestions to party observers in various districts, who presented reports of the ground situation," Mishra said, evading questions on the alliance.

BJP state president Manmohan Samal, who returned to Bhubaneswar Thursday morning, was asked to rush back to Delhi and attend a meeting of the party's top brass in the evening.

## Neuro issues lead global ill health

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: Neurological conditions such as epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease and dementia are now the leading cause of ill health and disability globally, affecting 3.4 billion people in 2021, according to a major new analysis published in The Lancet Neurology journal.

Globally, the number of people living with, or dying from, neurological conditions such as stroke, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and meningitis has risen substantially over the past 30 years. This is due to the growth and ageing of the global population as well as increased exposure to environmental, metabolic, and lifestyle risk factors, the researchers said.

The study suggests that worldwide, the overall amount of dis-



ability, illness, and premature death -- a measurement known as disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) -- caused by neurological conditions increased by 18 per cent over the past 31 years, rising from around 375 million years of healthy life lost in 1990 to 443 million years in 2021.

The analysis from the Global Burden of Disease, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2021 shows that the absolute number of DALYs is increasing in large part due to ageing and

growing populations worldwide.

The top 10 contributors to neurological health loss in 2021 were stroke, neonatal encephalopathy (brain injury), migraine, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, diabetic neuropathy (nerve damage), meningitis, epilepsy, neurological complications from preterm birth, autism spectrum disorder, and nervous system cancers, the researchers said.

Neurological consequences of COVID-19 (cognitive impairment and Guillain-Barre syndrome) ranked 20th, accounting for 2.48 million years of healthy life lost in 2021, they said.

The most prevalent neurological disorders in 2021 were tension-type headaches (around 2 billion cases) and migraines (about 1.1 billion cases). Diabetic neuropathy is the fastest-growing of all neurological conditions, the researchers said.

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION

## ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁଙ୍କ ଯତ୍ନ ପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତିବଦ୍ଧତା

ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ଉନ୍ନତ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟସେବା ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ ସେବା

- ୫୩୦ଟି 'ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁପତ୍ନୀ କର୍ଷଣ' (ଏନ୍.ବି.ସି.ସି.) କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ଅଛି
- ୪୯ ଟି 'ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁ ଉପଲବ୍ଧତା କର୍ଷଣ' (ଏନ୍.ବି.ଏସ୍.ସ୍) ରେ ୫୦୧୯ ନବଜାତକ ସଫଳତାର ସହିତ ଚିକିତ୍ସିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି
- ୪୪ ଟି 'ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁ ଯତ୍ନ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର' (ଏସ୍.ଏନ୍.ସି.ସ୍) ରେ ୫୧୨୮୭ ନବଜାତକ ସଫଳତାର ସହିତ ଚିକିତ୍ସିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି
- ୭୭ଟି 'କଙ୍ଗାଲୁ ମା ଯତ୍ନ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର' (କେ.ଏମ୍.ସି.)ରେ ୨୧୧୮୯ ନବଜାତକ ସେବା ପାଇଛନ୍ତି

ସୁସ୍ଥ ଓଡ଼ିଶା, ସୁଖୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶା

### ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁର ବିପଦ ସଙ୍କେତ

ମିନିଟକୁ ୬୦ ଥରରୁ ଅଧିକ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ନେବା	ବାତ ମାରିବା	ନିଶ୍ୱେଜ ରହିବା
ନିଶ୍ୱାସପ୍ରସ୍ତାପ ନେବା ସମୟରେ ଛାତି ତଳଭାଗ ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଯିବା	ମା'ସ୍ତନର ଖାଲ ନପାରିବା	କୂର୍ ହେବା
ଦେହ ଥଣ୍ଡା ଲାଗିବା		

ଏସବୁ ବିପଦ ଲକ୍ଷଣ ଦେଖାଦେଲେ ତୁରନ୍ତ ଆଶା/ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକର୍ମୀଙ୍କୁ ପରାମର୍ଶ କରି ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କ ଆବଶ୍ୟକୀୟ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସମସ୍ତ ସରକାରୀ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରେ ବିନାମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ ।

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା



# Paudi Bhuyan community gets habitat rights under FRA



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, March 15:** In a historic move, the state government under the 'Mo Jungle Jami Yojana (MJJM)' Friday awarded Habitat Rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) to Paudi Bhuyan community in 32 villages of Deogarh district. Chief Secretary Pradeep K Jena handed over the Habitat Rights titles to the community leaders at Lok Seva Bhawan, making the Paudi Bhuyan, a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PTVG) the first indigenous community from Odisha to receive such rights. It is the fourth such title awarded in India under the category after the Bharia PVTG in Madhya Pradesh and Kamar PVTG and Baiga PVTG in

part of the facilitating NGOs have culminated the official recognition of the Paudi Bhuyan Community in Deogarh. "There are 75 centrally recognized PVTGs in India. This special category from among the Scheduled Tribes was conceptualised during the 4th Five-Year Plan based on the report of the Dhebar Commission (1960-61). They were included based on the recommendations of Tribal Research Institutes of the respective states. Odisha houses 13 PVTGs, the highest among all the states," Tripathy said. Notably, September 15, 2021, the Paudi Bhuyan community filed the Habitat Rights Claim through the Bamunda Anchalika Paudi Bhuyan Samaj. The Habitat Rights claim of the Paudi Bhuyan PVTG community underwent a thorough review and received approval. Expressing his happiness, Deogarh Collector Somesh Upadhyay said, "The Habitat Rights to Paudi Bhuyan community will ensure the protection of their territorial habitat, generational knowledge, cultural identity and livelihood." He further said the Habitat Rights under FRA will certainly help in recognizing their distinct cultural heritage and traditions.

Chhattisgarh had legal title and rights over their forest habitats. During the entire claim filing process, the technical support was extended by Scheduled Caste Scheduled Tribe Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) under the ST&SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare Department. Hailing the move, department commissioner-cum-secretary Roopa Roshan Sahoo said, "It is a proud moment for all of us as the first PVTG community from Odisha, Paudi Bhuyans from Deogarh have been awarded Habitat Rights under FRA." Calling it a 'significant milestone' SCSTRTI director Indramani Tripathy said the programme management unit team along with the unwavering sup-



**IN DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH:** Dharitri and Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy speaks during a panel discussion at a conclave organised by the Editors Guild of India at Kamla Devi Complex, IIC, New Delhi, Friday. Senior Supreme Court advocates Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Shyam Divan, and EGI President Anant Nath are seen

## Defamation hinders press freedom: Satpathy

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, March 15:** The tardy and costly process of fighting defamation cases poses a major challenge to freedom of press in India, said Dharitri and Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy, here, Friday. Speaking at a panel discussion joined by legal luminaries and veteran journalists at the Editors Guild of India (EGI) conclave - Press freedom in India: Present and the future - at Kamla Devi Complex at India International Centre (IIC), Satpathy said, "By the time a journalist has to fight his case

### EDITORS GUILD OF INDIA CONCLAVE

against defamation, it is so expensive and so time consuming, even the toughest of them falter and fall." He said that regulatory or legal uncertainties are a major cause hampering free speech. "Add to that are the complications brought about by subordinate judiciary unfamiliar and incapable to deal with laws like defamation," the veteran journalist observed. The discussion on - what are the possible interventions to protect the space for press free-

dom with respect to the legal framework, including the new digital laws, and the criminal laws - new and existing? - was moderated by The Caravan Editor and EGI President Anant Nath. Other panellists included senior Supreme Court advocates Shyam Divan and Abhishek Manu Singhvi. "Free press is the first enemy of a dictatorship," said Singhvi, adding, "More important than the law is the approach or the misuse of that law... it is how you approach the subject of law

and how you deal with it and regulate it that matters." He said the object is not to be right in law, rather to send a message. Divan said, "There are going to be situations where even the most innocent law can be misused to land you (journalists) in a terrible position." He suggested organisations like the Editors Guild build a coalition of lawyers to have a relief structure available for journalists. The day-long conclave was split into multiple sessions that saw participation of eminent editors, authors, journalists, educationists and lawyers.

## 2,630 Agniveers pass out from INS Chilka

**Bhubaneswar:** As many as 2,630 Agniveers, including 396 women, of the Indian Navy graduated from INS Chilka in a ceremonial Evening Passing out Parade Friday under the aegis of Southern Naval Command. The parade was reviewed by Adm R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), in the presence of VADM V Srinivas, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command. Sudarshan Sahoo, Guest of Honour, M Suranjay Singh (MCPO I-PT) high achiever sports person, high achiever veterans Khushi Ram, Hon S K (Ex MCPO WTR) and Narendra Kumar (Ex PO WTR) were also present during the event. "The passing out parade marks, not only the successful culmination of 16 weeks of their ab-initio rigorous naval training, but also the start of a new voyage in the Indian Navy, where men and women will work together to make the Indian Navy a combat ready, credible, cohesive and future proof force," said Kumar.

## Milk Mantra to market SHG millet products

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 15:** Milk Mantra Dairy Private Limited will now look after the marketing and sales of women self-help groups' (WSHG's) Millet Shakti products on online platforms in the state. A memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed Friday by Milk Mantra Dairy Private Limited with Radharani WSHG of Bhubaneswar and Dibyajyoti WSHG of Rourkela. The MoA signing ceremony was held at Krishi Bhawan in the presence of the director of agriculture and food production. The agreement, exchanged between both parties, is aimed at formalising the marketing and sale of Millet Shakti products of both WSHGs on the online portal of Milk Mantra (Daily Moo). As per the arrangement, Milk Mantra will pick orders from concerned WSHGs and stock in its storage. The consumers can place orders on Daily Moo and the millet products

shall be delivered to their doorstep by the Milk Mantra. The products shall be made available in the Bhubaneswar capital region as well as Rourkela urban region for the customers. Official sources said under trial supplies, sales of over Rs 60,000 have been done as the demand among consumers is very high for the Millet Shakti products. "This innovative way of marketing and selling millet products, sources said, shall provide an enhanced income source to the WSHGs which is important for making the millet-based enterprises financially sustainable in the long term," said the official. As per the response of the sales, more WSHGs, more products and more regions across Odisha will be expanded within this arrangement. The director of agriculture and food production advised both the parties, the WSHGs and Milk Mantra to work sincerely to make the initiative successful.

## Woman's body found in Bindu Sagar tank

**Bhubaneswar:** The body of a woman was fished out of Bindu Sagar tank, under Lingaraj Police Station limits here, Friday. The deceased was identified as Trupti Das, 53, a resident of IRC village in Nayapalli. The deceased's family members reportedly told the police that she was mentally unstable. She did not return home since Thursday after she went to visit the Lingaraj temple. Initial probe by the Lingaraj police has revealed that the woman slipped and fell into the tank while walking along the banks. She died by drowning, police said. The police have sent the body to the Capital Hospital for autopsy to ascertain the exact cause of death. The deceased is survived by two sons.

## 2 new railway lines for state

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 15:** Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Friday announced the sanction of two new railway line projects for Odisha. East Coast Railway (ECoR) sources said these two projects were demanded by the public for a long time. One of the projects is Digha-Jaleswar (Chandaneswar-Jaleswar), a 42 km long railway line project that will be done on the fast track. The approval process has been completed and work will start. This connectivity will give a boost to the regional economy and tourism as new areas get connected to the mainstream, ECoR sources said. The Jaleswar-Chandaneswar line will connect famous shaivite shrines such as Chandaneswar temple and Bhusandeswar temple of Balasore



district with Jaleswar station. This line will promote regional socio-economic upliftment, and connectivity to the students, pilgrims, farmers, and local traders of the region. The connectivity to the hinterland of Jaleswar and Bhograi blocks of Balasore districts will also benefit the fisheries sector and local agricultural produce. ECoR sources said the Final Location Survey (FLS) for the new line between Angul and Nayagarh Town via Narasinghpur-Kantilo-Khandapada and a chord line between Khurda Town and Kaipadar Road (120kms) has been sanctioned.

## Vinod Kumar gets 3-yr in jail; 9th conviction

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 15:** The Special Vigilance Court here awarded a three-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) to four persons, including former Odisha Rural Housing Development Corporation (ORHDC) Managing Director (MD) Vinod Kumar, for corruption, Friday. It is the ninth conviction of the former ORHDC MD for corruption. Apart from Kumar, former ORHDC Executive Director (Technical) Purna Chandra Das, former ORHDC Accounts Officer Pradeep Kumar Rout and VIKASH, a non-profit organisation, Secretary Ashok Kumar Nanda were convicted by the court under multiple Sections of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and 420 and 120-B of the IPC. The court also slapped a penalty of Rs 25,000 on each of the convicts. Failure to pay the penalty would entail additional two-month RI.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

In the Court of Executive Magistrate, Bhadrak, I, Srimati Sethi @ Binapani Sethi aged 68 Yrs., W/o. Budhiram Sethi, At/P.O.: Baro, P.S.: Tihidi, Dist.: Bhadrak declared that the both name spelling mentioned above as Srimati Sethi & Binapani Sethi, W/o. Budhiram Sethi is one & same person.

By virtue of affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar on 13.03.2024, I Nihar Ranjan Parida, aged about 33 years, S/o- Prabhat Kumar Parida, resident of Plot No.- 884, Palasuni, P.O- Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar- 751010 inform all that my father's name is written as Pravat Kumar Parida in my Aadhaar Card. In most of my records, Father's name is written Prabhat Kumar Parida. Prabhat Kumar Parida & Pravat Kumar Parida is one and same person for all purpose.

Sd/- Nihar Ranjan Parida



**AT LORD'S ABODE:** Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Ramesh Sinha along with his family members after paying obeisance to the Srimandir deities in Puri, Friday

## Acharya airlifted to Bhubaneswar

**Bhubaneswar:** Senior BJD vice-president and former MP Prasanna Acharya sustained serious injuries when his car collided head-on with a truck in Sambalpur district in the early hours of Friday, police said. The accident took place at around 1am near Baladhih in Rairakhol when the former MP was on his way to Sambalpur from Bhubaneswar. His car collided with an oxygen-laden tanker. Acharya and his PSO were admitted to hospital while his driver sustained minor injuries, police said. Sambalpur Superintendent of Police Mukesh Bhamu said both Acharya and his PSO were out of danger. The former MP was initially admitted to an ICU of a private hospital in Sambalpur but was later airlifted to Bhubaneswar and is now being treated at Apollo hospital.

## IDCO to purchase Bargarh sugar factory land

**Bhubaneswar:** State government Friday decided to transfer the land of Bargarh Sugar factory to IDCO for setting up industries in future, an official at the Chief Minister's Office said. The state-owned Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) will purchase the land in two phases, he said. Since the crushing operation at the Bargarh sugar factory could not be carried out for various reasons such as shortage of funds for repair, renovation and maintenance of the machinery, the state government decided to liquidate the unit. The factory has a total of 103.21 acres of land. Out of this, IDCO will purchase the encroachment-free land of 72.12 acres at a bench-mark valuation in the first phase, the official said. The remaining portion of the land will be given to IDCO after it is made free from all litigation and encroachment. Then IDCO will be able to use the whole patch of land for industrial purposes. Meanwhile, IDCO has paid Rs 40.68 crore to the ADM-cum liquidator of Bargarh Co-operative Sugar Mills for transferring the ownership of the encroachment-free land in its favour.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	72643.43 ↓ 453.85
NIFTY	22023.35 ↓ 123.30
DOLLAR	82.90 ↑ ₹0.02
EURO	90.29 ↓ ₹0.39
GOLD	₹65,630 ↑ ₹35
SILVER	₹75,924 ↑ ₹698

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	34.9°C	35.0°C
Min Temp	24.8°C	24.0°C
Humidity	95%	85%
Rainfall	1.2	Nil
FORECAST		
LIGHT TO MODERATE RAIN		

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Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Babuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 977517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.





# THE MAGNIFICENT



## Years of UP emerging as an investment hub

Unified by a common mission and being led under the 'double-engine' growth model, UP's new Industrial Investment and Employment Promotion Policy 2022 is opening new doors for investments and revenue.

UP has been able to deliver an exceptional 'Ease of Doing Business' environment for industries and has been ranked as an 'Achiever' state in the country. Uttar Pradesh's new industrial policy aims to bolster the conducive business-friendly environment in the state by ensuring simplification of procedures, leveraging digital systems to promote timely and transparent working, and timely clearances benchmarked with the best and most responsive facilitation services. Single Window Portal (SWP) of Uttar Pradesh — Nivesh Mitra — is currently one of the largest single window portals among SWPs of states/UTs (offering more than 454 services of 37 departments).

In 2018, Yogi Adityanath's action-driven government green flagged investment projects worth more than Rs 4.28 lakh crore through the Investors Summit, while in 2023 the Global Investment Summit saw a proposed investment of over Rs 40 lakh crore, out of which Rs 10 lakh crore has already come on ground as witnessed in the Ground Breaking Ceremony in February 2024. In the last seven years, the state's image has changed as a result of good governance, infrastructure development, and policy reforms, making UP the top destination for businesses and investments. A fresh budgetary provision of Rs 250 crore has been made to attract FDI as well as investments from Fortune Global 500 and Fortune India 500 companies in the state.


Years  
powered by  
'double-engine'  
government  
in Uttar Pradesh





Do not belong to the past dawns,  
but to the noons of future.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Trend Reversal

In Modi sarkar's initial years since 2014, senior babus witnessed uncertain tenures, often shuffled between ministries within months. Even those in ministries like Defence, Home and Finance, and with fixed two-year tenures, faced premature transfers. But now, after a decade, this trend has noticeably reversed. Secretary-level officials now enjoy extended tenures, some serving for three-four years in the same ministry.

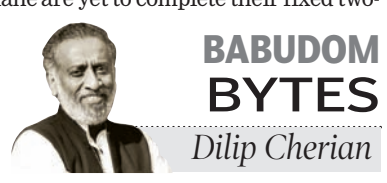
For instance, Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla has had four extensions since August 2019. Similarly, T.V. Somanathan and Tuhin Kant Pandey, secretaries in the Finance Ministry, have held their positions since December 2019 and October 2019, respectively. This extended service trend is not limited to a few; several other officers serve longer tenures than before.

The current Finance Secretary Ajay Seth and Secretary, Department of Public Expenditure, Ali Raza Rizvi have been in their roles since April 2021, while Vivek Joshi, Finance Services Secretary, has served since November 2022. This trend is seen across other ministries and departments, including higher education, housing, urban affairs, and drinking water and sanitation.

Some exceptions like Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra and Defence Secretary Giridhar Armane are yet to complete their fixed two-year terms, but clearly, there is a deliberate change in the governance style. Officials now have more stability, creating better coordination between ministries and states, and ensuring project approvals and implementation.

This is no coincidence, observers note. Increasingly, IAS officers being empanelled as secretaries have several years left before retirement. This strategic shift, thus, ensures appointees have adequate time to make substantial contributions, rather than sail through ceremonial stints.

Of course, a major babu reshuffle is expected after a new government assumes power, with empanelled officers likely to take up new postings. This seems to suggest that secretaries in the future may enjoy even longer tenures. While frequent transfers plagued previous governments, Modi's efforts signify a systemic change.



**BABUDOM BYTES**  
Dilip Cherian



Rebecca Ray and Ulrich Volz  
**MAKING FINANCING FOR CLIMATE ACTION AND CONSERVATION AFFORDABLE IS AMONG THE MOST URGENT CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE WORLD**

### FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

# CLIMATE FINANCE GOALS

Emerging-market and developing economies (EMDEs) will need an estimated \$2.4 trillion in climate investment annually to meet climate goals, according to the Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance, with \$1 trillion coming from external sources. Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require even more financing: an increase of \$3.5 trillion in new investments annually by 2030. These are daunting figures. But they are also negotiable.



**Multilateral development banks can raise the threshold for countries to access concessional lending, pursue capital increases that support higher lending, and work with governments and the private sector to reduce and share risks**

Raising trillions of dollars in new external finance would be difficult at the best of times. It is even trickier when the world is facing an escalating debt crisis. After examining newly available data on 108 EMDEs, the Boston University Global Development Policy Center found that more than half – 62 countries – are already at high risk of debt distress. Moreover, an additional 33 countries are severely constrained in their ability to access capital markets, owing largely to poor economic-growth prospects following the COVID-19 pandemic, advanced-economy interest-rate hikes, and below-investment-grade bond ratings.

The vast majority of EMDEs are thus facing debt distress or prohibitively high borrowing costs. But these are precisely the countries that are most in need of financing to meet climate and development goals. Of these 95 countries, 83 have higher needs for investment in climate-change mitigation (lowering emissions) or adaptation (building resilience against extreme weather events) than the typical (median) country. And 73 of

them have more potential to expand their national protected areas, either on land or in their coastal waters, than the typical country.

A key problem is that investments in, say, protecting nature do not necessarily boost short-term economic growth. Instead, they build long-term resilience – including a greater ability to withstand extreme weather events like hurricanes and droughts – thereby making future crises less likely. This includes future debt crises: climate vulnerability and nature loss can undermine debt sustainability, and climate change increases sovereign risk and the cost of capital.

To break the cycle of environmental and economic crises, and move toward a new cycle of sustainable growth, countries must invest now. That is why any strategy for addressing climate change and delivering on

the SDGs must include measures to lower barriers to new finance, including targeted debt relief and more creative financing arrangements.

Debt relief is unavoidable. An ambitious debt-relief initiative akin to the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, which the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank established in 1996, should be created to provide meaningful debt relief for the dozens of countries facing full-blown sovereign-debt crisis.

For this to work, all creditors must actively participate. To understand why, consider that at least half of the total external sovereign debt stock in 27 debt-distressed countries – many of which are low-income countries or small island developing states – is owed to multilateral creditors. This means that, even if all bilateral and private

debt were canceled, some of the world's most vulnerable countries would remain weighed down by debt.

Major creditors must also take steps to reduce the cost of capital for certain types of investments, such as those that advance climate goals. To this end, many proposals have already been put forward. For example, Sustainable Future Bonds may allow for longer repayment terms and lower interest rates, making them better suited for investments with longer-term payouts.

Multilateral development banks (MDBs) also have an important role to play in providing EMDEs with easier access to capital. For example, they can raise the threshold for countries to access concessional lending, pursue capital increases that support higher lending, and work with governments and the private sector to reduce and share risks.

Making financing for climate action and conservation affordable is among the most urgent challenges confronting the world. The solution is clear: a combination of targeted debt relief, credit enhancements, and MDB reform. But so far, there has been a lack of will to implement it. If this does not change soon, we will learn firsthand that the costs of inaction far outweigh the costs of prevention.

Rebecca Ray is a senior academic researcher at the Boston University Global Development Policy Center while Ulrich Volz is Professor of Economics and Director of the Centre for Sustainable Finance at SOAS, University of London

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### Transfer raises questions

The recent transfer of Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Manoj Joshi has left many babus within the government scratching their heads. Joshi has been moved to the Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development, replacing Nidhi Khare, who was moved to the Department of Consumer Affairs as Officer on Special Duty. Joshi has been replaced by Anurag Jain, Secretary of Road Transport and Highways, as an additional charge.

Joshi's transfer came as a surprise to many, considering his relatively recent appointment as MoHUA Secretary in December 2021. During his tenure, Joshi oversaw several important projects, including the construction of the new Parliament and the development of several government estates and secretariat buildings. But it appears that his tenure may have been cut short due to an incident during a press conference where he revealed data regarding the Pay-Jal Sarveksha, which raised eyebrows in some quarters and led to his transfer.

While this incident may be cited as the primary reason for Joshi's transfer, some babus question whether it was the sole factor. After all, if a misstep in handling sensitive information is grounds for removal, then other officials should have faced similar consequences. For instance, Agriculture Secretary Manoj Ahuja's draft note resulted in the controversial "Rath Prabhari" notification, causing significant embarrassment to the government in Parliament. Similarly, NITI CEO BVR Subrahmanyam faced scrutiny after an audio recording of his seminar discussing issues related to the 15th Finance Commission surfaced recently.

### Inquiry in Haryana ignites controversy

Y. Puran Kumar, a 2001-batch IPS officer in Haryana is embroiled in a contentious battle against a senior IAS officer, lodging a series of complaints alleging "harassment and humiliation" over nearly two months. His latest grievance is directed towards the formation of a committee last month, comprising three former IAS officers, tasked with probing into his accusations.

Expressing vehement opposition to the composition of the committee, Kumar has labelled it as "legally irrelevant" and "blatantly illegal" in his representation to the Haryana government. Yet, despite his objections, the committee is continuing with its investigative proceedings, even summoning Kumar to provide evidence and deliver a statement on the various issues outlined by the panel.

Sources informed DKB that the issue started in October last year, when Kumar initially complained against a senior IAS officer and others, citing multiple charges, including violations under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

As the inquiry progresses, it is not clear yet what Kumar has against the former IAS officers – Rajan Gupta, Navraj Sandhu and P.K. Das – who comprise the inquiry panel. He has, instead, followed up by filing four more complaints against the senior IAS officer, escalating the tensions between the two officials.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](mailto:dilipthecherian@twitter.com). Let's multiply the effect

### SPECTRUM INDIA-FTA PACT

# Breakthrough in building trade ties

The signing of Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) on 10th March between India and EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries is a real breakthrough for India on building trade relations. This is because India has been negotiating an EFTA with European Union (EU) since 2007, which is yet to conclude. In the meantime, India managed to sign it with four EFTA countries which are small in population but strong in economy. These countries participate in European Single Market of EU and part of the Schengen area. The countries are Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.

Negotiations for a trade agreement began with EFTA in 2008, one year later than that with EU. And it has been concluded earlier. The negotiators of EFTA felt that the agreement signifies success as it precedes any such agreement with the EU or any developed economy.

It has created a couple of firsts. For the first time, India is signing an FTA with four developed countries which constitute a powerful economic bloc in Europe. Beginning in 2008, negotiations covered 13 rounds and then were put on hold in November 2013. They were resumed after gap of 10 years last year in October. And in less than six months, the TEPA was signed. The agreement consists of 14

chapters. It focuses on market access related to goods, rules of origin, trade facilitation, technical barriers to trade, investment proportion, market access to services, intellectual property rights, trade and sustainable development and many other legal provisions. Significantly, the agreement will see considerable tariff reduction, increase in market access and simplification of customs procedure. Most of all, the investment of 100 billion USD is the highlight of the agreement which provided the breakthrough moment.

This is the second such full-fledged FTA signed after India's agreement with the United Arab Emirates. Indian industries have welcomed the trade agreement. The Director General of Confederation of Indian Industry opined that the agreement will yield multi-dimensional gains to Indian industries.

As noted, the negotiations concluded in a fast-track mode and the deal was signed just a few days, ahead of the announcement of dates for Lok Sabha elections in India. However, the political-electoral angle in the negotiations could not be attributed to EFTA countries although the incumbent Union Government could dangle it to the electorate as a prize they have secured.

A question was asked to the Swiss State Secretary by an Indian journalist, "Did you think this deal would happen before Indian

elections?" Her answer was candid. She said that one can never be 100 per cent sure in such negotiations involving five countries. "But I really felt sincere interest, trust and friendship between India and EFTA negotiators". She pointed out that the agreement on investment chapter was a breakthrough moment.

According to TEPA's Chapter 7 that deals with investment promotion and cooperation, both sides are agreed that first tranche of 50-billion USD will be invested within 10 years and another 50 billion in the next five years. The EFTA side clarified in terms of riders that it is not the states that make the investment; it is the companies which do. Norwegian Trade Minister said in a press conference that, "It is about creating the right environment, speaking to our companies and then tracing and tracking development. It is also recorded that if the investment is not made within 15 years with a three-year grace period and another two years in negotiations, India will be entitled to withdrawing some of its trade concessions.

It is the investment that will define the parameters of success. India should do everything possible to facilitate that investment. Many investors know that India is a big market but are equally aware of the bottlenecks. It is for New Delhi to clear such impediments and make it investment friendly.

Likewise, India's export regime has to improve. Timely clearance of goods by the Indian Custom Department is necessary. The timelines for delivery have to be adhered to by the Indian companies. The quality check is another issue that Indian exporters must be wary of. In my research on India-EU trade, these issues were pointed out by EU officials.

The agreement will come into force after the ratification by EFTA countries expected by the end of this year. Switzerland, the biggest of the four, will possibly bring the agreement for ratification by Swiss Parliament in the autumn session. So, by the end of the year, the agreement should come into force. Other countries which have a different time span for ratification process would also complete it by the end of the year.

The agreement is indeed a momentous occasion for Indian trade despite the murmur on timing of the agreement which is just before the elections. It is an achievement that Indians should be happy about. This will perhaps open up of the possibility of such agreements in general with other developing countries and hasten the process with the EU in particular. New Delhi should set an example by successfully implementing the TEPA.

The writer is Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism.

INFIA



DK Giri

**MANY INVESTORS KNOW THAT INDIA IS A BIG MARKET BUT ARE EQUALLY AWARE OF THE BOTTLENECKS**

### WISDOM CORNER

- Words empty as the wind are best left unsaid. HOMER
- There are only two tragedies in life: one is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. OSCAR WILDE
- Let your life lightly dance on the edges of Time like dew on the tip of a leaf. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1521:** Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan, sailing under the Spanish flag on his circumnavigation of the globe, reached the Philippines, securing the first alliance in the Pacific Islands for Spain.
- 1802:** The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York – one of the oldest service academies in the world – was originally founded as a training centre for the U.S. Corps of Engineers.
- 1921:** The Treaty of Moscow established friendly relations between the nationalist government of Turkey and the Soviet Union.
- 1926:** American inventor Robert H. Goddard launched the first successful liquid-propellant rocket.
- 1978:** The Amoco Cadiz tanker ran aground and broke in two, releasing nearly 69 million gallons of light crude oil off the coast of Brittany, France; it was then the largest oil spill in the world.

## 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, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Matter of concern

Sir, Apropos, 'Maldives tourism takes a hit' in Orissa POST, March 15. It's an adverse impact of the strained relationship between India and the Maldives. But diplomacy is the art and practice of building and maintaining relationships and conducting negotiations using tact and mutual respect. This does not seem to be the case between India and the Maldives, as both have been distancing themselves from each other. Maldives President Mohamad Muizzu does not want Indian soldiers to remain on Maldivian soil after May 10, whether in uniform or not. He should have realised that his predecessors had sought India's help, and that is how the troops were posted there. India has the naval and maritime wherewithal to monitor the situation lest India's security be threatened. Though Muizzu wants patients from the Maldives to go to Thailand and the UAE for treatment, the fact remains that India is the most favourite destination for medical tourists even from Arab nations. However, when a Chinese vessel berths itself close to Indian territorial waters, it is a matter of concern for India.

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Bond, electoral bonds

Sir, The Election Commission published on its website the data received from the State Bank of India (SBI) about electoral bonds, following a Supreme Court directive to release the information before March 15. The single largest donor on the list is Future Gaming and Hotel Services PR, which donated a cumulative sum of ₹1,368 crores via electoral bonds to political parties between April 12, 2019 and January 24, 2024. From among parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party saw the lion's share of electoral bonds encashed by parties – worth ₹6,060.5 crore and amounting to 47.5% of the total bonds encashed by all parties. The data provided by the SBI does not include the serial numbers of the bonds. The ECI had sought the return of the documents pertaining to electoral bonds given confidentially to the Court in a sealed cover and sealed boxes in compliance with two orders on April 12, 2019 and November 2, 2023. It said it had not retained copies of these documents. No wonder, the Supreme Court rapped the SBI for not disclosing the electoral bonds numbers (unique alphanumeric numbers) and issued notice to the central bank, seeking a response by March 18.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI





DSPL - 862



### Empowering Odisha's Farmers

## Over 64 Lakh Families Benefiting from KALIA YOJANA

OIPR-15001/13/0852/2324

### TRAFFIC CHAOS IN DELHI

## Nearly 80 ageing buses break down daily: Data

## Water supply to be hit in parts of Delhi

EXPLAINING THE REASONS FOR THE FREQUENT BREAKDOWNS, FORMER DEPUTY TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER ANIL CHHIKARA SAID THE CNG-RUN BUSES ARE PRONE TO OVERHEATING IN ENGINES, SHORT CIRCUITS AND OTHER ISSUES THAT AFFECT VEHICLES WITH AGE

**New Delhi, March 15:** It's a familiar sight on the roads of Delhi: a ragged DTC bus huffs and puffs as it struggles to climb one of the many flyovers dotting the capital. Before reaching the crest, the bus puffs one last time and simply gives up. The ensuing traffic chaos caused by the stalled bus blocking one lane -- sometimes one and a half lanes -- is a frequent nightmare faced by commuters almost every day. Data obtained by PTI from Delhi Traffic Police has revealed that a whopping 79 DTC or cluster buses broke down every day in Delhi between July 2022 and June 2023 with around 40 minutes taken to attend to the situation. "I am fed up!" said Rajesh Vishwakarma, a resident of



Indraprastha Extension who commutes daily to his office in Connaught Place. He said he often encounters broken buses on Vikas Marg, leading up to ITO via the Yamuna Bridge. "The situation is worse when a bus breaks down in the morn-

Equally vexed are officials of the Delhi Traffic Police, who routinely post on social media: "Traffic is affected due to breakdown of a bus." Replying to one such post on X, formerly Twitter, a frustrated Amrit Dave said she was stuck in a traffic jam near the IIT flyover for one and a half hours recently after a bus stopped on the Outer Ring Road on a section between IIT and New Delhi. Every breakdown causes hours of inconvenience, as most flyovers and roads in the capital are two lanes. With one lane blocked, a line of honking cars, tempos, autorickshaws, motorcycles and every other kind of transportation clog the road. Impatient drivers try to get ahead by cutting into each other's paths, worsening the snarl. Often, a bus, possibly with a tree branch stuck on it to serve

as a futile and feeble indicator of non-service, would have broken down while straddling both lanes, resulting in near total blockage of traffic and greater chaos. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) SK Singh told PTI that the major challenge police face during the breakdown of a bus is the massive traffic jam it results in. Officials blame the age of the buses for the frequent breakdowns. The Delhi Transport Corporation, or DTC, has a fleet of 7,582 buses. Of these, 2,644 were procured by the state-owned public transporter between 2007 and 2010. The DTC and cluster buses ferry more than 41 lakh passengers every day, making them the most important means of commute for many residents of NCR.

**New Delhi, March 15:** Due to maintenance work at Delhi Cantonment booster pumping station, water supply will be affected in several areas March 15 and 16, the DJB said. "Due to major maintenance work at Delhi Cantonment booster pumping station, after sudden breakdown in the common header line, the water supply in the command area of 1500 mm dia South Delhi main and 1000 mm dia Palam main will be affected," a notification from Delhi Jal Board said. It said that water supply will not be available, or will available at low pressure in the evening of March 15 and morning of March 16. "Residents are advised to store sufficient quantity of water in advance as per requirement. Water tanker will



be available on request," the DJB notification said. Areas where water supply will be affected are Delhi Cantonment, RK Puram, Vasant Vihar, Katwaria Sarai, Ber Sarai, Kishan Garh, Safdarjung, Munirka, INA, and Mehrauli. Other areas where water supply will be affected are Green Park, Safdarjung Enclave, Janakpuri, Deer Park, Greater Kailash, NDMC areas, Moti Bagh, Nanak Pura, Vasant Enclave, Shanti Niketan, AIIMS, the command areas of Palam Reservoir and adjoining areas.

### DELHI FIRE INCIDENTS

## 39 dead, over 100 injured since Jan

**New Delhi, March 15:** Thirty-nine people have died and more than 100 have suffered injuries in fire incidents in the national capital so far this year, officials data Thursday. According to data released by the Delhi Fire Services (DFS), 16 people lost their lives in fire in January, another 16 in February and seven in March till Thursday. Fire incidents led to 51 injuries in January, 42 in February and 14 until March 14, it stated. From January 1 to March 14, the DFS has received 2,682 fire-related calls. On Thursday, two children and a married couple died due to suffocation after a massive fire broke out in a residential building in the Shastri Nagar area of Delhi's Shahdara. In another major incident, 11 people died in an explosion and subsequent blaze in a paint factory at Dayalpur market in outer Delhi's Alipur. Four people were injured in the fire that broke out February 15. The charred bodies of the 11 victims, 10 men and a woman, were recovered



from the factory, which also houses chemical godowns. The fire, which was preceded by a blast, had spread to nearby buildings, including a drug rehabilitation centre and eight shops. A police constable also sustained injuries, including burns, in the blaze. In another incident in February, an 83-year-old woman died and her granddaughter sustained injuries after they jumped off the fourth floor of a residential building in south-west Delhi's Dwarka when a fire broke out in their apartment.

## Sukhu inaugurates escalators at hilltop Jakhu temple

**Shimla, March 15:** Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu Thursday inaugurated the state's first outdoor escalators at the hilltop Hanuman temple Jakhu in Shimla at a height of 2,455 metres above sea level. The escalators, in the ₹7.94 crore project, have a carrying capacity of 6,000 people per hour and have been installed by Schindler India. The Chief Minister said the four escalators from the parking lot would facilitate the people visiting the temple. The escalators are built with double drive with safety brakes



on both sides for the safety of passengers. Paintings depicting the sto-

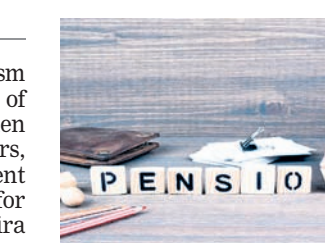
ryline of Ramayana have been installed at each level. The escalators have a combination of materials on the facade of louvres and polycarbonate sheets that allow ample natural light to enter and ACP sheets on the lower part of the escalators have been used for good ventilation. Moreover, LED spotlights have been installed to beautify the experience of pilgrims using the escalators. The Chief Minister said the Jakhu temple was a main religious attraction for the visitors and steps will be taken to provide other basic facilities as well. He also paid obeisance at the Hanuman Temple.

### 11 new diarrhoea cases reported in HP's Hamirpur

**Hamirpur (HP):** Eleven new cases of diarrhoea were reported Friday in the Tauni Devi area of Hamirpur district. The addition has raised the total number of cases in the district to 415, with 367 patients cured so far, said Hamirpur Chief medical Officer (CMO) Dr RK Agnihotri. The official said the administration has been distributing medicines to the affected and has appealed to the people to use boiled water. On Thursday, four water samples from the area were found unfit for human consumption, he said. A diarrhoea outbreak has been reported in 31 villages of 13 panchayats, including villages Gwaradu, Lohakhar, Tauni Devi, Chahad, Tapre, Bari, Mahade, Ghalot, Siswa, Barin, Khandehra, Ladayoh and Jhanikkar, officials said. This is for the third time in the past 14 months that a diarrhoea outbreak has been witnessed in Hamirpur district. In January 2023, about 1,000 people were down with diarrhoea in the Rangas area of Nadaun, the assembly constituency of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu.

## Notification for granting pension to women issued in Himachal

**Shimla, March 15:** Facing criticism for not honouring a poll promise of giving ₹1,500 per month to women in the age bracket of 18 to 59 years, the Himachal Pradesh government issued a notification Thursday for granting pension under the Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi Yojana. On March 4, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced that the state government will give ₹1,500 per month to women and said a sum of ₹800 crore would be spent on the initiative, benefitting more than five lakh women annually. According to the notification, income-tax payers, women monks per-



manently staying in monasteries, family members of employees, pensioners of central and state governments and employees of panchayati raj institutions, local bodies and public sector undertakings of the state and central governments will not get the amount. The other categories excluded from the pension are contractual employees,

outsourced employees, daily wagers, part-time employees, ex-servicemen and their widows, anganwadi workers and helpers, Asha workers, mid-day meal workers, multi-task workers and beneficiaries of social security pension. Providing ₹1,500 monthly to women was one of the 10 "guarantees" given by the ruling Congress in Himachal Pradesh ahead of the Assembly polls. Former chief minister and Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur has accused Sukhu of misleading women as the Congress had promised to give ₹1,500 per month to women in the age group of 18 to 60 years. There are around 22 lakh women in the said age group in Himachal Pradesh.

**fincare** Small Finance Bank  
Registered Office: 301-306, 3rd Floor, ABHIJEET-V, Opp. Mayor's Bungalow, Law Garden Road, Mithakhalli, Ahmedabad - 380006, Gujarat. www.fincarebank.com

### LOAN AGAINST GOLD - AUCTION NOTICE ON "AS IS WHERE IS" BASIS

The below mentioned borrower/s have been issued notices to pay their outstanding amounts towards the loan against gold facilities availed from Fincare Small Finance Bank Ltd ("Bank"). Since the borrower/s has/have failed to repay his/their dues, we are constrained to conduct an auction of pledged gold items/articles on 21 March 2024 between 11:00 AM - 03:00 PM (Time) at below mentioned branches according to the mode specified therein. In case of deceased borrowers, all conditions will be applicable to legal heirs. Please note that in the event of failure of the above auction, the bank reserves its right to conduct another auction without prior intimation.

**E-Auction Branch Details (E-auction will be conducted by using Weblink https://gold.samil.in)**

<b>BHADRAK</b> - 23660001421820 23660001588584   <b>CUTTACK</b> - 23660001034338 23660001057974   <b>HINJILICUT</b> - 23660001087037   <b>JAJPUR</b> - 23660000522137 23660001599073 23660001618470   <b>KUAKHIA</b> - 23660000680818 23660001647804 23660001927328
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Note: The auction is subject to certain terms and conditions mentioned in the bid form, which is made available before the commencement of auction.

Sd/-  
Manager  
Fincare Small Finance Bank

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, DHENKANAL**  
No. 1310/ Dt. 12.03.2024

### e-Procurement Notice

**Bid Identification No. DMID / 16 / 2023-24**  
e-mail ID: eemidk@yahoo.co.in

No.A-1715:- The Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Dhenkanal on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites online percentage rate tender through 'e' procurement for the works as detailed in the Annexure to this bid notice.

Name of the work	Civil works in different Blocks of Dhenkanal District under the scheme DPIW and MIPSP for the year 2024-25.
No. of works	04 (Four) Nos. only
Estimated cost	Varies from 9.00 lakhs to 12.70 lakh (Approximately)
Cost of tender paper	4000/- to 6000/- (Non-refundable)
Period of completion	03 (Three) calendar months
Availability of bid documents for sale and receipt through online	From dt. 18.03.2024, 10.00 A.M. to dt. 03.04.2024, upto 5.00 P.M.
Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	03.04.2024 (5.00 P.M.)
Date of technical bid opening through online	On dt. 04.04.2024 at 11.00 A.M. in the Office of the S.E., M.I. Division, Dhenkanal
Mode of payment of bid cost	Online
Digital signature certificate of bidder	The bidder must possess compatible digital signature certificate (DSC)
The detail tender call notice can also be seen in the DOWR website	http://dowr.orissa.gov.in
Name and address of the OIT	Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Dhenkanal, AT/PO / District-dhenkanal, Ph.No. / Fax No. / 06762- 224461, Email ID: eemidk@yahoo.co.in

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement market place <http://tenders.orissa.gov.in>

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Dhenkanal  
OIPR-32027/11/0010/2324

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender No. MCSW-Truck-23-24-34

### Name of the Work: HIRING OF TRUCK (CAPACITY: 03,07 MT) AND HIRING OF TRUCK/TRAILER (CAPACITY: 09,13,16,22 MT OR HIGHER CAPACITY AS PER RAILWAY DEMAND) FOR TRANSPORTATION OF MATERIALS FROM ANYWHERE TO ANYWHERE OF VARIOUS UNITS OF INDIAN RAILWAY FOR CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR.

Advertised Value: ₹ 34,77,436/-, EMD: ₹ 69,600/-, Period of Completion: 12 Months.

Bidding start date: 19.03.2024, Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 02.04.2024.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

Complete details & tender documents will be available at website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in)

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (P), PR-1175/O/23-24, CRW/Mancheswar

**Bank of India**  
Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jaydev Bihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Ph.:0674-2362249

### Gold Auction Notice

It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, person engaged in the business of gold ornaments and general public that in spite of repeated notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues to the Bank. Notice is hereby published that if they fail to deposit all their dues in their respective gold loan accounts (including Up-to-date interest and all costs, charges/expenses) by 29.03.2024, their pledged gold ornaments will be auctioned at **Tangi Branch Premises on 30.03.2024 at 11.00 AM**. For this Bank shall not be held responsible for any inconvenience or damage caused to the concerned borrowers and no allegations or representations will be entertained from any borrowers in this regard. Bank reserves the right to cancel the auction without assigning any reason in case, the bidding price so arrived at is observed to be low or inadequate. Further, if needed be Bank reserves the right to change the date and time of the above scheduled auction or cancel the same without assigning any reasons thereon. Purity and net weight and reserve price of gold ornaments/ coins etc. will be available to interested bidders on auction date and auction venue/auction portal.

Sl. No.	A/c. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)	Gross Wt. in Gram	Net Wt. in Gram	Total Dues as on 14.03.2024 (excluding unapplied interest Charges, Cost & Expenses)
1.	511677610000475	Nibedita Sahoo, D/o- Parsuram Sahoo, At: Khardasahi, PO: Bhatimunda, PS: Tangi, Cuttack-754022.	10.600	10.000	₹ 25,500.00
2.	511677610000140	Shyam Sundar Sahoo, S/o- Alekha Chandra Sahoo, At: Ramagarh, PO: Kotasahi, Tangi, Cuttack-754022.	16.360	16.000	₹ 47,712.71

Place: Bhubaneswar  
Date: 15.03.2024

Zonal Manager, Bank of India



## BJP upbeat about Sundargarh Assembly seat

WE WILL NOT LET GO THIS SEAT AT ANY COST, SAY THE SAFFRON PARTY CADRES

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

**Rourkela, March 15:** District headquarters Sundargarh is one of the key Assembly constituencies in the district. The BJD has never won from here despite putting in all efforts, and will leave no stone unturned to ensure victory for the party candidate this time around in the event the alliance discussions with the BJD failed.

That will make it a straight fight between the BJP and BJD since Congress has become a spent force here.

Interestingly, the seat was either won by the Congress or BJP over the years. BJD could never win this prestigious seat ever since its creation in 1997. Therefore, this is going to be a matter of prestige for the BJD to romp home this time.

The constituency at present is represented by Kusum Tete of BJP. In 2019, she defeated BJD's Jogesh Singh by a margin of 7,364 votes. While Tete had bagged 83,118 votes, Singh managed to secure 75,734 votes. Congress candidate Amita Biswal, daughter of former chief minister Hemananda Biswal pooled just 12,087 votes.

Interestingly Singh suffered defeat after he defected from



Kusum Tete



Jogesh Singh

Congress and contested on a BJD ticket. "It seems BJD symbol was not lucky for him as he had won the seat in 2009 and

been favourable to BJD. It used to be the bastion of former Congress heavyweight Kishore Patel, who had sway over the constituency



in the 1990s'. Patel had a strong presence in the area which was popularly known as his 'back-

yard', said another local voter. The BJP managed to win here on two occasions, and the victorious candidates were Shankarshan Naik and Sushma Patel. In fact, Sushma won in a byelection following the death of her husband Shankarshan.

Fortune smiled on Tete who was earlier a BJD leader and a close ally of minister Sarada Nayak. "When Singh was taken into the BJD fold, Tete moved to the BJP camp at the instance of Sarada, and rest is history, as they say," said a BJP activist.

Now in all likelihood Tete, who has remained fairly active in the constituency, is going to be repeated. "She has been successfully raising the issues of the constituency on all platforms," said Shakti Patel, a resident of Sundargarh town.

Recently she brought Governor Raghuraj Das to a slum cluster to show the living condition of the inhabitants, which was a deviation from the Governor's itinerary, Patel said to drive home his point.

Nevertheless, the BJP appears optimistic about Tete's victory, alliance or sans it. "We will win on our own and don't require the help of BJD, with or without a coalition," said a senior district BJP functionary.

## Former BJD MPs Yashbanta, Sakuntala join Congress



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, March 15:** BJD's former Keonjhar Lok Sabha MP Yashbanta Narayan Singh Laguri along with his wife Sakuntala Laguri, also an ex-MP of Keonjhar, joined Congress Friday.

Yashbanta had won the Keonjhar Lok Sabha seat in 2009 defeating BJP candidate Ananta Nayak, whereas his wife Sakuntala emerged victorious on a BJD ticket from the same seat by trouncing Nayak in 2014.

In 2019, despite 'better performance', they failed to get a BJD ticket. The regional party

rather picked Chandrani Murmu for Keonjhar parliamentary constituency and was able to retain it.

"We both joined the Congress party in the Pradesh Congress Committee office in presence of AICC incharge to Odisha Ajay Kumar, OPCC president Sarat Pattanayak, party leader Bijay Patnaik and other eminent leaders," said Yashbanta.

"BJD is not a democratic party. It has become a proprietor firm. It is controlled by a single non-Odia leader. We quit BJD protesting anti-Odia attitude of the party. We felt suffocated and

quit" Yashbanta said. The former MP also said, "We won the last two elections with a better margin. But later the party neglected us. In the last 10 years, I have been neither given a post nor called for any party programme which hurt us. Now, we will serve the people of Keonjhar like earlier."

"Congress is a national party that has been working for the development of India since independence and its sacrifice for Indian independence could give good governance. We will work hard for the party," he said.

## Jagadev adds fuel to tie-up suspense

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 15:** Amid swirling uncertainty over a possible alliance between Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ahead of the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, a statement by Chilika MLA Prasanta Kumar Jagadev, who has recently joined BJP after quitting the regional party, has added further fuel to the suspense.

About the alliance talks, Jagadev said that it all started from BJD side. The regional party is creating confusion as several BJD leaders and workers are joining the saffron camp one after another, Jagadev said.

"We are preparing for the election in the 147 Assembly and 21 Lok Sabha seats. The discussion about alliance never started from BJP," said the legislator.

## Arindam quits BJD, joins BJP

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, March 15:** Odia actor and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) state general secretary Arindam Roy Friday resigned from the primary membership of the party and, within a few hours, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In a letter to BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Roy wrote, "I, Arindam Roy, General Secretary of your party beg to state that I have been working in your party since 2009 and have been the star campaigner of your party since 2014. I have been working at the grassroots level as an observer in various elections in Cuttack, Tirtol, Tirtol, Tirtol by-election, and Koraput (Zilla Parishad & Municipal elections). But with a heavy heart, I am very sorry to say that my work has not yet been recognised by you or your appointed

members. I have been trying to meet my leader, which is you, for quite some time, but unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity to meet you."

He also wrote, "Therefore, I feel that I do not fit the criteria of meeting you, and my place in your party is nothing. So I am resigning from the post of General Secretary, BJD, and the primary membership of your party. I hope you will understand my situation and not keep any grudge against me."

A few hours after submitting his resignation, the RAM actor joined the BJP in state party office. Arindam was welcomed to the party by BJP's state unit president Manmohan Samal and other leaders at the party office here. Soon after joining the saffron party, Arindam said, "I joined BJP inspired by the leadership of the Prime Minister. I will work for BJP as long as I can."



Arindam Roy joins BJP at a merger meeting at the saffron party's state office in Bhubaneswar, Friday

## SC to examine policy on grant of free symbols

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 15:** The Supreme Court Friday sought a response from the Election Commission (EC) on a plea of Tamil Nadu-based unrecognised political party, Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK), challenging the allotment of free symbols to unrecognised political parties on a first come, first served basis.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra also issued a notice to another unrecognised political party which was granted the poll symbol which was earlier with NTK.

The High Court March 1 had dismissed the petition of NTK challenging the allotment of free symbols by the poll panel to un-



recognised political parties on first come, first served basis.

It had rejected the contention of the petitioner, NTK, that the Election Symbols Order to this effect was arbitrary and unconstitutional, saying a contrary view would operate against the very essence of having free symbols.

The petitioner was aggrieved by the allotment of free symbol

While issuing the notice on the petition, the CJ said the appeal will be taken up for hearing after the Holi vacation

'ganna kisan' (sugarcane farmer) to another political party in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

While issuing the notice on the petition, the CJ said the appeal will be taken up for hearing after the Holi vacation.

The top court said it will examine the scheme of Paragraph 10B (B) of the Election Symbols Order which deals with grant of free symbol to parties and candidates on FCFS basis.

## SP declares 6 LS candidates from UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, March 15:** The Samajwadi Party (SP) Friday announced six more candidates in Uttar Pradesh for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

SP has named Yashvir Singh as its candidate in Bijnor, Manoj Kumar from Nagina, Bhanu Pratap Singh from Meerut, Brijendra Singh from Aligarh, Daroga Saroj from Lalganj, and Jasvir Valmiki from Hathras. The party has also given one seat - Bhadohi - to the Trinamool Congress from its share. The likely contestant will be either Rajesh Pati Tripathi or his son Lalitesh.

From the family of Congress leader Kamalapati Tripathi, they had quit the Congress in 2021 and joined the Trinamool.

## Alliance with BRS: BSP to contest two seats in T'gana

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, March 15:** The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) will contest the Hyderabad and Nagarkurnool (SC) Lok Sabha seats, out of the total 17 constituencies in Telangana, as part of its alliance with the K Chandrasekhar Rao-led Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS).

A BRS release Friday said Rao, also known as KCR, has allocated the two seats to the BSP.

BSP's Telangana unit president RS Praveen Kumar, formerly an IPS officer, would contest from Nagarkurnool

constituency, a BSP release said.

The candidate from Hyderabad would be announced soon, it said. Hyderabad is represented in the outgoing Lok Sabha by AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi. The BRS and BSP March 5 announced a pre-poll alliance in Telangana for the LS polls following talks between KCR and Praveen Kumar.

KCR had then said there is an ideological similarity between the two parties on various issues as the previous BRS government headed by him had implemented Dalit Bandhu and other schemes for the welfare of Dalits and others.

Claiming that secularism is in danger in the country due to the BJP, Praveen Kumar had said his party has decided to work together with BRS to safeguard Telangana from the BJP and also "Congress, which is becoming like the BJP".

The BRS has protected secularism, he said. The BRS March 13 said BSP Rajya Sabha member Ramji Gautam, Praveen Kumar and other party leaders held a meeting with KCR at the latter's residence here.

The BRS has so far announced its candidates from 11 Lok Sabha seats.



CONG RALLY: Congress workers take out a Pada Yatra at Tanara in Raghunathpur, Friday



POLL PREP: A meeting of BJD workers of Paradip Assembly segment in progress, Friday



# national



**Price of LPG cylinder was increased by Rs 700 by the BJP government and then reduced by Rs 100 on the eve of elections. The same kind of sleight of hand has been practised in the case of petrol and diesel**

**P CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER**

## FIRST BATCH REPLACED

India Friday said its first team of military personnel that was operating an advanced light helicopter in the Maldives has returned from the island nation. The military team has been replaced by civilian technical experts







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OIPR-1500113/0853/2324

# Excise policy scam: Kavitha arrested

**Hyderabad/New Delhi, March 15:** The Enforcement Directorate Friday arrested BRS leader K Kavitha after a daylong raid at her premises in Hyderabad and was taking her to Delhi for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy, agency sources said.

Kavitha, 46, a Telangana Legislative Council member, was arrested by the central probe agency at 5:20 pm from her residence at Banjara Hills in Hyderabad, according to the arrest memo. Her husband D R Anil Kumar was informed about her arrest, ED officials said.

Agency sources said the BRS leader was being brought to



Delhi for questioning. The arrest of Kavitha, the daughter of former Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, came after a daylong raid by the ED at her premises in Hyderabad.

The ED questioned Kavitha thrice last year in this case and again summoned her this year but she did not depose citing a Supreme Court direction that allowed her protection from any coercive action. Talking to reporters in Hyderabad, BRS leader and former Telangana minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy Kavitha was being taken to Delhi on a 8:45 pm flight. He alleged that the move was "pre-planned" and said they would protest against it. BRS working president K T Rama Rao, former minister Harish Rao and a

large number of party workers gathered at Kavitha's residence and raised slogans.

Meanwhile, a video was shared by the BRS showing Kavitha's brother and party working president K T Rama Rao arguing with the ED officials, saying the agency has violated an undertaking given to the Supreme Court. "You are in serious trouble," he was heard telling the officials in the video, which went viral. In the video he also alleged that the family members were not allowed to enter the house even after the searches were completed.

"Search is over and an arrest warrant is produced and now she (ED official) says you cannot come in. Family cannot

come in and she also says they have no transit warrant and cannot produce before a magistrate, but she wants to make a case," he said.

Reacting to her arrest, Union Minister for Tourism G Kishan Reddy said that ED raids are part of its inquiry into the case. "She was also avoiding questioning by the ED by showing some reasons. If she's not guilty and not involved in the liquor case, Kavitha needs to appear before the ED or CBI to prove her innocence," Reddy said.

The Enforcement Directorate had claimed Kavitha was linked to a "South Group" lobby of liquor traders who were trying to play a larger role under the now scrapped Delhi excise policy for 2021-22.

# India trashes criticism against CAA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 15:** India Friday strongly trashed the criticism against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), including by the United States, and said "vote-bank politics" should not determine views about a "laudable initiative" to help those in distress.

Lectures by those who have a limited understanding of India's pluralistic traditions and the region's post-partition history are best not attempted, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

His strong comments at a media briefing came when asked about the criticism against the CAA from Washington and various other parts of the globe. "The CAA is about giving citizenship, not about taking away citizenship. It addresses the issue of statelessness, provides human dignity and supports human rights," Jaiswal said, asserting that the law is an internal matter of India. "As regards the US State Department's statement on the implementation of the CAA, we are of the view that it is misplaced, misinformed and unwarranted," the MEA spokesperson said at a media briefing.

# Top court refuses to stay appointment of new ECs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 15:** The Supreme Court Friday refused to stay the appointments of new Election Commissioners (ECs) under a 2023 law that excluded the chief justice of India from the selection panel.

A bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna, Dipankar Datta and Augustine George Masih told the petitioners, who pointed out that a meeting for the selection of ECs was pre-poned, to file a separate application pointing out the fact.

Refusing to stay the appointments made in accordance with the 2023 law, the bench said, "Normally and generally, we do not stay a law by way of an interim order." It deferred till March 21 the hearing on a batch of pleas challenging the appointments



of two ECs under the 2023 law.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, who appeared in the court on behalf of petitioner Jaya Thakur, said when a judgment has been passed, there cannot be any transgression. He contended that there was a clear-cut transgression in the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service

and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

Singh read out a March 2, 2023 verdict of the apex court, in which a panel comprising the prime minister, the leader of opposition and the CJI was constituted for the appointment of ECs and the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).

Justice Khanna asked Singh to read the direction given in the verdict and said it was held that the three-member panel will operate till Parliament comes up with a law on the issue. Singh said the court had earlier stayed ordinances where there were transgressions of its verdicts. The bench then asked Singh to file a fresh application (regarding the appointment of ECs) and said the court will hear the matter on March 21, along with other petitions that have challenged the 2023 law.

# Yediyurappa booked under POCSO Act

**Bangalore:** Senior BJP leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has been booked under the POCSO Act based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl, police said here Friday. The girl's mother alleged that Yediyurappa sexually assaulted her daughter during a meeting February 2. Denying the charge, the 81-year-old BJP Parliamentary Board member said he would fight the case legally. Home Minister G Parameshwara said: "Some people say the woman is mentally sick." The complainant alleged that the incident took place February 2 when her daughter went with her to meet Yediyurappa at his residence. Hours after the Sadashivanagar police booked the case under section 8 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act and Section 354 A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Karnataka DGP issued an order transferring it to CID for further investigation.




**DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NANDANKANAN ZOOLOGICAL PARK**  
P.O-BARANG, DIST-KHURDA, PIN-754005  
PHONE (M) 9437022023  
Email: deputydirector.kanan@gmail.com  
No.MM-518: **e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
**Bid Identification No. DD-NKN-39/PMU/NKZP2023-24, Dt.14.03.2024**

1	Name of the Work	Construction of Hall at 1st Floor of Zoo Laboratory for Bio-Banking facilities inside Nandankanan zoological park for the year 2023-2024.
2	No. of Works	1 (One) No.
3	Date of availability of bid document in the portal	15.03.2024
4	Last date for receipt of bids in the portal	02.04.2024
5	Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)	03.04.2024
6	Name & Address of Officer Inviting Tender (OIT)	Deputy Director, Nandankanan Zoological Park, P.O-Barang, Dist- Khorda, Pin-754005

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.  
OIPR-08070/11/0037/2324 Sd./- Deputy Director, Nandankanan Zoological Park

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RWS&S MECHANICAL DIVISION,**  
PLOT NO. D-2/24, MANCHESWAR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, BHUBANESWAR-751010  
e-Mail: eemrwsbsr9@gmail.com  
**TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. SEMBBSR/01 (3) 2024-25.**

No.O-2828: The Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Mechanical Division, Bhubaneswar, Plot- D-2/24, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-10 on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites item rate tender online conformity with Detailed Tender Call Notice from registered and established Manpower Service Provider to provide service of water well, drilling, skilled personnel to the Sub-Division office under Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Mechanical Division, Bhubaneswar as per the requirement.

Sl. No.	Description of Items	No.	Estimated Cost (Approximately per year)	Cost of Bid document	EMD
1	RWSS Mechanical Sub-Division, Dhenkanal				
1	H.V. Driver	1 No.	Rs.22,64,426.00 (excluding GST)	6000/-	@1% of quoted rate
2	A.P.D.	1 No.			
3	Asst. Driller	3 Nos.			
4	Boring mate	7 Nos.			
5	Khallas	3 Nos.			

Tender document with detail technical requirement, scope of the work, term and condition will be available online in Govt. Website [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in) from date 20.03.2024 (10 A.M) to 20.04.2024 up-to 05.30 P.M. The tender will be opened on dt. 22.04.2024 at 12 P.M onwards in Office of the Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Mechanical Division, Bhubaneswar in presence of the bidder or their authorized representative as availability. The interested man power service providers may submit the tender document complete in all respect and duly signed along with other requisite document failing which the tender is liable for rejection. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.  
OIPR-32528/11/0005/2324 Sd./- Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Mechanical Division, Bhubaneswar

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF P.R & D.W OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, TALCHER INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) IDENTIFICATION NO. TAL-03/2023-24**  
E-mail-ori-talcher@nic.in

No. i-672:- The Block Development Officer, Talcher on behalf of PR &DW Department, Govt. of Odisha invites percentage of rates BID in double cover system for 1 (One) No. of work i.e. 1) Construction of Community Centre at Baulpur, Karnapur from the class of eligible Bidders as mentioned in column 4 (Four), registered with the State Government and Contractors of the equivalent Grade/ Class registered with Central Government /MES/Railways to be eventually drawn up in PWD P-I form, for execution of building (Civil Work). The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the Bid. If successful the Bidder who has not registered under State Government has to register under the State PWD in appropriate Class of eligibility before signing the Agreement.

- The sale of BID documents will be started from Dt.18.03.2024 to 02.04.2024 up to 5 P.M.
- The Bid documents will be received through speed post/registered post latest by 02.04.2024, up to 5 P.M.
- The Bid documents will be opened on 03.04.2024 at 11 A.M. till completion.
- For other details you can visit the website [www.angul.nic.in](http://www.angul.nic.in) or in the Office of the BDO, Talcher during office hour.

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Talcher  
OIPR-19261/11/0003/2324

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER CUTTACK (R&B) DIVISION NO.1, CUTTACK**  
E-mail I.D. - eepwdcuttack@gmail.com, Tele/Fax No. (0671)- 2304128  
No.B-1966 **GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" Procurement Notice e-Procurement Notice for Building (E.I.) works**  
**Bid Identification No. S.E. CTC (R&B)-74 of 2023-24**

The Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division No.1, Cuttack on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites on Percentage rate basis bid in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractor for Building work (Fire Fighting) as mentioned below.

1. Name of the Work	04 (Four) Nos. of Works
2. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	From dt.18.03.2024 to 5 PM of dt.27.03.2024
3. Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	5 PM of dt.27.03.2024
4. Date & time of opening of bids	11 A.M. of dt.28.03.2024
5. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division No.1, Cuttack

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in/>  
Sd./- (Er. P.K. Majhi), Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division No.1  
OIPR-34091/11/0061/2324

**BHUBANESWAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
**COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**  
No. 13655/BMC NOTICE INVITING TENDER Dt.14.03.2024  
**BID Reference No. BMC-EE-DD-41/2023-24 Dt.14.03.2024**

No. C-3326: On behalf of the Commissioner, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Online e-Tender Percentage Rate Bids are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Drainage Division and BMC from the intending and eligible class/category of bidders in conformity with the Detailed Tender Call Notice for execution of the works mentioned in the DTCN.

- Total No. of Works for which Tenders invited: 2 Nos.
- Place of Execution: Different locations in Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation area.
- Estimated Cost of Individual work: Rs.14,23,654/- to Rs.17,00,430/-
- Class of Contractors: Class - 'D & C'
- Intending bidders have to participate through "Online" bidding only. The website for online bidding is <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.
- The bid documents will be available in the above website from 10.30 A.M. on Dt.18.03.2024 to 5.00 P.M. on Dt.27.03.2024 for online bidding.
- Bids received online will be opened at 11.00 A.M. on Dt.28.03.2024.
- Any corrigendum will be displayed in the website <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.

On behalf of Commissioner, BMC, Bhubaneswar  
Sd./- Superintending Engineer Drainage Division, BMC  
OIPR-13002/11/0359/2324

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF DISTRICT MEDICAL & PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER, BARGARH**  
No. 1656 dt. 14.03.24  
**NOTICE**

No.E-962:- It is informed that the tender submission end date for purchase of Anti-TB drugs, vide Short Tender Call Notice No.1299, dt.01.03.2024 is extended till 20.03.2024 upto 4 PM. For terms and conditions regarding Tender Call Notice, please log on to the district website [www.bargarh.nic.in](http://www.bargarh.nic.in).

Sd./- Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer, Bargarh  
OIPR-10124/11/0025/2324

**ZILLA SWASTHYA SAMITI, BHADRAK DISTRICT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT, NHM O/O-CDM&PHO, DIST-BHADRAK**  
**NOTICE**  
Advt. No.05/2024 Date:13.03.2024

No.E-960: In pursuance to the Advertisement No.01/2023, Dated 07.01.2023 of CDM & PHO, Bhadrak the notice for attending computer test for the post of DEO-cum-Accountant and written test & viva-voce for the post of Counselor under NHM, Bhadrak has been uploaded in district website. Interested candidates may visit in the district website i.e. [www.bhadrak.nic.in](http://www.bhadrak.nic.in) for details.

Sd./- CDM & Public Health Officer -cum-DMO, Bhadrak  
OIPR-10123/11/0016/2324

**WORKS DEPARTMENT No. B-1968 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ROURKELA (R&B) DIVISION UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA**  
E-Mail Id - eepwdrkl@gmail.com  
**Government of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice**  
**Bid Identification No.: 179/ 2023-2024 Dated: 14.03.2024**

- Number of works: 02 (Two) number of Works.
- Estimated cost: Rs.36.47 Lakhs & Rs.48.61 Lakhs.
- Period of completion: 3 (Three) calendar months
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: Dt. 21.03.2024 at 11.00 A.M.
- Last date/ Time for receipt of bids in the portal: Dt.28.03.2024 up to 05.00 P.M.
- Date of opening of Bid: Dt.30.03.2024 at 11.00 A.M.
- Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid: Superintending Engineer, (R & B) Division, Rourkela, Uditnagar.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>  
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Rourkela (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34068/11/0053/2324

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No.CAD-4656 THE CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER CUM EO, ZILLA PARISHAD, NABARANGPUR**  
"e" Procurement Notice - CDO-NAB-03/2022-23  
**BID IDENTIFICATION NO.CDO-NAB-03/2022-23**

1	Name of the Work	Construction of addl.Class room for the year 2022-23
2	Total No.of Package	94 Nos.
3	Tender Cost (Approx.)	Rs.9.00 Lakhs to 12.00 Lakhs as per DTCN
4	Bid Security	Rs.9000/- to 12000/-
5	Cost of Tender Paper (Online)	Rs.4000/- to 6000/- as per DTCN
6	Period of Completion	As per DTCN
7	Availability of Tender online for bidding	From 22.03.2024 at 11.00 AM to 30.03.2024 upto 5.00 P.M.
8	Date and Place of Opening	Dt.02.04.2024 at 11.00 AM in the office of the Chief Development Officer cum EO, Zilla Parishad, Nabarangpur
9	Tender Inviting Authority	Chief Development Officer, Cum EO, Zilla Parishad, Nabarangpur

Further details can be seen from the website <http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>. Any addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation to the above notice will be published in this website only.  
Sd./- Chief Development Officer Cum EO, Zilla Parishad, Nabarangpur  
OIPR-19233/11/0005/2324



# international



Everyone who was involved in the October 7 massacre will be brought to justice. Either we will eliminate them or will put them on trial in Israel  
**YOAV GALLANT** | ISRAELI DEFENCE MINISTER

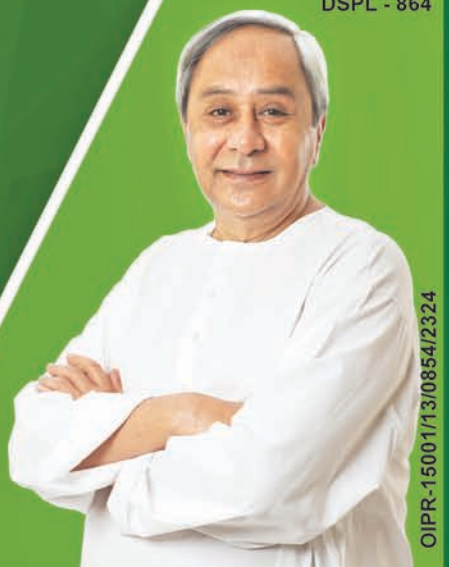
## McDONALD'S APOLOGISES

McDonald's apologised Friday for a global technology outage that shuttered some restaurants for hours. The company said the outage was caused by a third-party technology provider and was not a cybersecurity issue



## 'Ama Bank' Ensures Banking Services in Every Panchayat

2,750 'Ama Bank' Operational, Expanding to 7,050 by March



### SHORT TAKES

#### PM Modi to visit Bhutan next week

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted an invitation extended by his Bhutan counterpart Dasho Tshering Tobgay, on behalf of the king Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, to visit the Himalayan kingdom next week. The two prime ministers met in the national capital Thursday, sharing warm hugs and handshakes, and discussed a range of issues to strengthen relations between the two neighbouring nations.

#### German, French and Polish leaders meet

**Berlin:** The leaders of Germany, France and Poland plan to meet in Berlin Friday to discuss support for Ukraine, seeking to send a signal of unity and solidarity as Kyiv grapples with a shortage of military resources and Russia votes in an election all but certain to extend President Vladimir Putin's reign. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is welcoming French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk for a summit of the so-called "Weimar Triangle" of the three major European powers, a format that they are trying to revitalise after relations were strained under Poland's previous nationalist government.

#### Missile strike kills 16 in Ukraine

**Kyiv:** A Russian missile attack blasted homes in the southern Ukrainian city of Odesa Friday, followed by a second missile that targeted first responders who arrived at the scene, officials said. At least 16 people were killed. The attack occurred as Russians began voting in a Presidential election that is all but certain to extend Vladimir Putin's rule by another six years after he crushed dissent, and as the war in Ukraine stretches into its third year. The dead included a paramedic and an emergency service worker. At least 53 other people were wounded, officials said.

#### Croatia to hold Parl election April 17

**Zagreb:** Croatia will hold a parliamentary election April 17, the country's President said Friday. President Zoran Milanovic scheduled the vote after Croatia's Parliament dissolved Thursday. The ballot next month will pit the ruling conservative Croatian Democratic Union against a group of centre and left-leaning parties who have announced they will run as an alliance. Milanovic also set the country's voting for the European Parliament June 7.

#### PIO family killed in 'suspicious' fire

**Ottawa:** An Indian-origin couple and their teenage daughter were killed in a "suspicious" fire which tore through their home last week in Canada's Ontario province, police said Friday. A fire engulfed a home at the Big Sky Way and Van Kirk Drive area of Brampton March 7, a press release by the Peel Police said.

# Israel rejects Hamas truce offer

A ship carrying 200 tons of aid approached the coast of Gaza Friday in a mission to inaugurate a sea route from Cyprus to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in the enclave five months into the war between Israel and Hamas



Vessel towed from Cyprus carrying 200 tonnes of food arrives off coast of Gaza. At least 21 killed and 150 wounded queuing for food Thursday night. Israel said it would send a delegation to Qatar for fresh talks on a ceasefire and hostage release in Gaza.

AGENCIES

**Gaza Strip/Cairo/Dubai, March 15:** The first ship carrying food aid reached the coast of the Gaza Strip Friday, where hopes for a ceasefire to rescue the population from starvation suffered a new blow after Israel rejected the latest truce counter-proposal from Hamas.

The Open Arms vessel, carrying 200 tonnes of food, could be seen in the distance off the beach of the coastal strip, where it had been towed from Cyprus. The charity World Central Kitchen (WCK) aims to deliver the aid on a temporary jetty, though precise details of how supplies would reach shore have not been made clear. If the new sea route is successful, it may help to ease the hunger crisis affecting Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of people face malnourishment and hospitals in the worst-stricken northern areas have reported children dying of starvation. However, aid agencies have repeatedly said that plans to bring in aid by sea and through air drops will not be enough to

satisfy the territory's vast needs. The war began with an attack by Hamas Islamist fighters from Gaza who killed 1,200 people and seized 253 hostages in Israel October 7, according to Israeli tallies. Since then, an Israeli assault has killed more than 31,000 people and driven nearly the entire 2.3 million population of Gaza from their homes. Hamas presented mediators with its latest counter-offer for a weeks-long ceasefire, but this was rejected by Israel, which said it was based on "unrealistic demands". **STILL WORKING ON A DEAL** Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior Hamas official, told Reuters Israel's rejection showed that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "determined to pursue the aggression against our people and undermine all efforts exerted to reach a ceasefire agreement". It was up to Washington to

push its ally Israel to accept a ceasefire, he said. US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators had hoped to reach a ceasefire in time for the Ramadan Muslim holy month, but that deadline passed this week. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, whose country hosted the main negotiations this month, said he was still working hard to reach a deal. The United Nations says all of Gaza's 2.3 million people are suffering from a food crisis and a quarter of them are on the precipice of famine, especially in the north. Israel, which sealed off all land routes into Gaza apart from two crossings on the territory's southern edge, denies blame for hunger and says aid agencies should do a better job distributing food. The agencies say they need better access and security, both of which are the responsibility of Israeli forces who

have blockaded the strip and stormed its cities. **TWENTY-ONE KILLED AT AID DISTRIBUTION** The distribution of the limited aid that arrives has been chaotic and frequently violent under the watch of Israeli tanks. In one of the worst reported incidents yet, Gaza health authorities reported at least 21 people had been killed and 150 wounded Thursday night, blaming Israeli forces for opening fire into a crowd queuing up for food at a road junction near Gaza City. Israel denied its troops were to blame, as it has in past incidents, including the deadliest so far, February 29, when more than 100 people were killed.

There are increasing signs of friction between Washington and its close ally Israel over the conduct of the war, which officials in President Joe Biden's administration say is being waged with too little care for Palestinian civilians. US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, the highest ranking Jewish official in the United States and a leader of Biden's Democratic Party, called Thursday for Israelis to hold an election and replace Netanyahu. He described Netanyahu as an obstacle to peace who was destroying Israel's international standing. "Israel cannot survive if it becomes a pariah," Schumer said. Netanyahu's Likud Party said his policies had widespread public support. "Senator Schumer is expected to respect Israel's elected government and not undermine it," it said. "This is always true, and even more so in wartime."

# 21 dead after migrant boat sinks off Turkey



AGENCIES

**Ankara, March 15:** A rubber dinghy carrying migrants sank off Turkey's northern Aegean coast Friday, killing at least 21 people, officials said.

Turkish coast guard personnel rescued two migrants from the sea off the town of Eceabat in Canakkale province, while two others reached the shore by themselves and notified officials, Gov. Ilhami Aktas said. It was not clear how many people were on the boat when it sank and the coast guard was continuing to search the area, he said. A statement from Aktas' office later said five of the dead were children. The migrants' nationalities were not

immediately known. Eighteen rescue boats, a plane, two helicopters and a drone were involved in the search and rescue mission, the statement said. Ambulances were on standby at a nearby port, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported. Although their numbers have declined in recent years, migrants mostly from the Middle East and Africa often leave Turkey to try to reach Greece in search of a better life in European countries. Some migrants leaving Turkey also attempt to sail to Italy. The Turkish coast guard said it caught at least 93 migrants attempting to leave the Turkish coast on boats this week.

The Turkish coast guard said it caught at least 93 migrants attempting to leave the Turkish coast on boats this week

### SNIPPETS

#### Chinese satellites heading to Moon fail to reach orbit

**Beijing:** A pair of Chinese satellites failed to reach a planned orbit on their way to the Moon after experiencing abnormalities, a rare setback for Beijing's high-profile space programme. The satellites, known as DRO-A and DRO-B, were launched Wednesday evening from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in the Sichuan Province, the launch centre said in a press release Thursday. They were carried by a Yuanzheng-15 (Expedition-15) upper-stage aircraft, attached to a Long March-2C carrier rocket, it said. The first and second stages of the rocket operated normally, while the upper stage encountered an abnormality during flight, causing the satellites to fail to enter the preset orbit accurately, it said. The relevant disposal work is currently underway, state-run Xinhua news agency reported, citing the launch centre. The plan was for the two satellites to head towards the Moon and enter a distant retrograde orbit (DRO).

#### US, G-7 allies warn Iran against supplying missiles to Russia

**Washington:** The United States and allies warned Iran Friday that major Western economies will pile new sanctions on Tehran if it moves forward with an advancing plan to provide ballistic missiles to Russia for its war with Ukraine. The Biden administration has raised alarms for months that Russia is seeking close-range ballistic missiles from Iran as Moscow struggles to replenish its dwindling supplies. The US has yet to confirm that missiles have moved from Iran to Russia. But US officials are alarmed by comments by Iranian officials that suggest that a deal is imminent. One action that the Group of Seven countries are mulling is to prohibit Iran Air, the country's national air carrier, from flying to Europe, according to a senior Biden administration official. The official, who was not authorised to comment and insisted on anonymity, declined to preview other sanctions that the US is mulling beyond describing the potential action as "significant measures." "Were Iran to proceed with providing ballistic missiles or related technology to Russia, we are prepared to respond swiftly and in a coordinated manner including with new and significant measures against Iran," the G-7 leaders said in a statement.

# How Putin keeps winning Russian elections

Voters headed to the polls in Russia Friday for a three-day presidential election that is all but certain to extend President Vladimir Putin's rule by six more years after he stifled dissent



**Moscow, March 15:** In a Russia at war, there is only one real candidate and only one winner: Vladimir Putin. As Russians cast their ballots in the March 15-17 election, the 71-year-old former KGB lieutenant colonel's popularity is high amid strong support for the war in Ukraine. The West views Putin as an autocrat, a war criminal, a killer and even, as US President Joe Biden said last month, a "crazy

SOB" who US officials say has enslaved Russia in a corrupt dictatorship that leads to strategic ruin. But in Russia the war has helped Putin tighten his grip on power and boost his popularity with Russians, according to polls and interviews with senior Russian sources. "Don't have any doubt: this is a job for life," said one powerful Russian who is acquainted with thinking at the top levels of the

Kremlin. He spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity to voice his views on political issues. "Putin has no competitors - he is at a completely different level. The West made a very serious mistake by helping to unify a large part of the Russian elite and the Russian population around Putin with its sanctions and its vilification of Russia." Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in

In many ways, Ukraine is at the heart of this election, political analysts and Opposition figures say. They say Putin wants to use his all-but-assured electoral victory as evidence that the war and his handling of it enjoys widespread support. The Opposition, meanwhile, hopes to use the vote to demonstrate their discontent with both the war and the Kremlin.

February 2022 after eight years of conflict in eastern Ukraine between Kyiv's forces on one side and pro-Russian Ukrainians and Russian proxies on the other. Tens of thousands of soldiers have been killed and many more wounded on both sides, thousands of Ukrainian civilians are dead and Ukraine's economy and infrastructure have suffered damage worth hundreds of bil-

lions of dollars. The Kremlin banned two politicians from the ballot who sought to run on an antiwar agenda and attracted genuine — albeit not overwhelming — support, thus depriving the voters of any choice on the "main issue of Russia's political agenda", said political analyst Abbas Gallyamov, who used to work as Putin's speechwriter. Russia's scattered Opposition has urged those unhappy with Putin or the war to show up at the polls at noon Sunday, the final day of voting, in protest. The strategy was endorsed by Navalny not long before his death. "We need to use election day to show that we exist and there are many of us, we are actual, living, real people and we are against Putin. What to do next is up to you. You can vote for any candidate except Putin. You could ruin your ballot," his widow, Yulia Navalnaya, said.

## Al-Shabaab siege of Mogadishu hotel ends, attackers killed

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Mogadishu, March 15:** Security forces in Somalia say they have killed all five attackers who laid siege to a hotel in a normally secure area of the capital. Police spokesperson Kasim Roble said Friday that three soldiers were killed and 27 people injured in the Thursday night attack on the SYL Hotel in Mogadishu. The Somali extremist group al-Shabab said on Telegram Thursday that its fighters managed to penetrate the hotel, which is not far from the Presidential palace and is patronised by government officials. "The situation is now calm, the hotel is secure now, and lawmakers and other hotel residents started returning, and the security situation returned to normal," Roble said. Journalists were barred from accessing the hotel after the siege ended. Attacks in the seaside capital had declined in recent weeks as security was beefed up. Al-Shabab, which opposes Somalia's central government, has been responsible for many deadly attacks on hotels and other places in the past.







**I allow the markets to play on their own. We should leave it to the wisdom of the market because all of us have seen that despite huge fluctuations globally, the Indian market has maintained a certain level of sanity**

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER**

## GOVT OKAYS EV POLICY

The government Friday approved an electric-vehicle policy, under which import duty concessions will be given to companies setting up manufacturing units in the country with a minimum investment of \$500 million, a move aimed at attracting major global players like US-based Tesla



# Q3 GDP numbers mystifying: Ex-CEA

According to Subramanian, while the buzz is that the economy has become a very good place to invest, in the last few quarters, and last few years, it has actually declined sharply



if India has become such an attractive place, why is not there more foreign direct investment. "Private investment, corporate investment is well below levels in 2016," Subramanian pointed out.

Responding to a question, the former CEA noted that Indians really need to disabuse themselves of the notion that India is a big market. "We are not a very big market."

Elaborating further, he said while India's GDP is over \$3 trillion, the middle class market share would be about \$750 billion. "You compare that with the global economy, it is \$20-30 trillion. We are making the mistake now of thinking that we can grow based on the domestic market, which I think is a fatal error of judgment," Subramanian said.

Noting that no successful country in the post World War period achieved 7-8 per cent growth rate without 15 per cent growth in manufacturing exports, he said, "You cannot get that from the domestic model."

The former CEA observed that there is a need to examine whether the government policy is creating a level playing field for all investors or not.

"I cannot understand why, despite the hardware being done, despite the banking system being cleaned up, despite the China plus one opportunity, our private investment is stuck," he said.

bers is 1 to 1.5 per cent, actual inflation in the economy is somewhere between 3 and 5 per cent.

"The economy is growing at seven and a half per cent, even though private consumption is at 3 per cent," he pointed out.

And in the latest data, Subramanian said errors and omissions, which are not accounted for, are actually about 4.3 percentage points out of the estimated 7.6 per cent growth for FY24.

"So it's a lot of stuff about the numbers which you know, I don't understand. I am not saying these are wrong. That's for others to judge," the former CEA said.

According to Subramanian, while the buzz is that the economy has become a very good place to invest in, in the last few quarters, and last few years, it has actually declined sharply.

"... You can see foreign direct investment actually collapsed quite a bit."

The former CEA wondered

## Sense of responsibility reflects risk taking capacity: Mishra

Carcinova Cancer Hospital is a centre of excellence for comprehensive cancer care services at Cuttack in Odisha. It was started in May 2020 by a group of highly experienced oncologists from Odisha under the leadership of Dr Kshitish Chandra Mishra with an objective to make cancer treatment affordable and accessible to the people of the state and eastern India. The hospital has emerged as a landmark healthcare destination for the people under the guidance of Dr Prangyan Paramita Mishra, director, Carcinova Cancer Hospital. In a conversation with **Orissa POST**, Dr Prangyan shares her journey. Excerpts...



### What are the challenges behind running a cancer hospital in Odisha?

Among many challenges that the healthcare industry is facing, regulations and access to finance are the most prominent ones. Access to finance is important for entrepreneurs in general, but even more so in healthcare sector. Longer timelines and higher levels of requirements to obtain funding are often an insurmountable obstacle for the industry. To promote innovation in the health sector, it is important to strike an appropriate regulatory balance. While regulation is necessary to protect patients and to ensure that only safe and high-quality services enter the market, excessive regulation can stifle innovation.

### What is your speciality among other cancer hospitals in the state?

Carcinova Hospital focuses on bringing in humane care, commitment and contribution as our core values and in our way of treating patients. As we are completely doctor-owned, the hospital shares no corporate association aid in keeping the patient's interest paramount. We are also proud to introduce Halcyon Radiotherapy facility for the first time in Odisha and eastern India. It is the most

effective, safe and non-toxic cancer treatment available and makes an impact on the way a patient is managed. We are proud of providing dedicated, successful and satisfactory cancer care with contemporary state-of-the-art technology. We provide seamless cancer care under one roof through our services including diagnostics, therapies including surgical oncology, medical oncology, radiation oncology and nuclear medicine.

### How has your journey been so far?

Carcinova is one of the newest cancer hospitals in the state. We started it with the vision to bring in specialised and affordable world-class cancer treatment close to home. We aim to set a new benchmark in cancer care through consistent research and development. Our forte is cancer prevention through awareness, diagnosis, imaging and treatment from the trustworthy hands of largest oncologists' conglomerate from all premier institutes of India.

### What advice will you give to the new entrants trying their luck in healthcare?

Healthcare is a tricky

business. In my opinion, bearing the sense of responsibility reflects risk taking capacity and it is most important attribute of an entrepreneur in healthcare industry. One also has to perform a variety of managerial functions like determination of business objectives, service analysis, market research, organisation of sales, procuring equipment and material, recruitment of clinical and non-clinical people and undertaking of business operations. You need to closely work with patients and understand the challenges they go through.



DSPL-860

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# No pressure on India to play in Pak: ICC

## Jurel plays down comparison with legendary Dhoni

EVEN THOUGH THE TWO TEAMS HAVE PLAYED IN GLOBAL EVENTS, INDIA HAVE NOT PLAYED ANY BILATERAL SERIES OR IN PAKISTAN FOR MORE THAN A DECADE

The last time India played Pakistan in a bilateral series was in 2012-13  
India now play Pakistan only in ICC and ACC events and that too at neutral venues  
Pakistan, who will be hosting the Champions Trophy wants India to visit the country and not play at a neutral venue



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: ICC won't pressurise India to play in Pakistan in the Champions Trophy next year as there is a government policy against it, sources privy to the meeting which is being held in Dubai, said here Friday. As a result a 'hybrid model' to host next year's Champions Trophy in Pakistan remains an option as India's participation in Pakistan cannot be guaranteed.  
The Champions Trophy, which will be played February-March 2025, is not on the agenda but newly-elected PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi has stated that he wants to speak with his BCCI counterpart Jay Shah as well as ICC bigwigs on the sidelines, seeking some kind of assurance of India's participation. However, an ICC Board member said that any decision by BCCI, will only be taken closer to the tourna-

ment and once again, the idea of using UAE as a potential venue cannot be entirely discarded.  
"Every member can raise concerns for discussion at ICC executive board meetings and then it would go to a vote. But if the

government (of a member nation) expressly says that they can't play in Pakistan, ICC would need to look for an alternative," a veteran administrator, who has attended multiple board meetings on conditions of

anonymity, said. "ICC doesn't expect its members to go against any policy/instructions issued by its own government," he added.  
Teams from England, Australia, New Zealand have all travelled to Pakistan in the recent

past. The BCCI will also be under pressure to visit the strife-torn country for the multi-nation engagement.  
Asked if any hesitation from India would lead to a vote against the country, the source said such

### STOP-CLOCK SYSTEM IN WHITE BALL GAMES

DUBAI: Cracking the whip on time-wasting tactics in white ball cricket, the ICC announced Friday that the stop-clock system, which requires teams to start a new over within 60 seconds of the previous one to avoid penalty runs, will become a permanent feature starting with the T20 World Cup this year. The failure of the fielding side to be ready to bowl the first ball of their next over within the stipulated 60 seconds will attract two warnings, and the subsequent breaches will lead to a five-run penalty per incident. "The stop-clock is set to become permanent in all ODIs and T20Is from June 2024, starting with the ICC men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and USA," the ICC said in a statement after its annual board meeting here.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: He might be drawing comparisons with Mahendra Singh Dhoni, but wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel said Friday nobody can quite match up to the former India captain. Jurel asserted that he would rather focus on carving his own niche in international cricket.  
Jurel made his Test debut during the recently-concluded series against England. He was sharp behind the wickets, solid with the bat and quite instinctive while guiding captain Rohit Sharma during DRS calls.  
Jurel's assured performance prompted the legendary Sunil Gavaskar to compare Jurel with Dhoni, but the 23-year-old, who is the son of a Kargil war veteran, begged to differ.  
"Thank you so much Gavaskar sir for comparing me with Dhoni sir. But I want to say personally that no one can replicate what Dhoni sir has done," Jurel said at a programme here.  
"There is only one Dhoni. Always was and always will be. For me, I just want to be Dhruv Jurel. Whatever I do, I want to do as Dhruv Jurel. But Dhoni sir is a legend and he will always remain like that," added the young wicketkeeper-batter.  
Jurel called Tests the 'purest' form of the game and said getting the India cap was a dream come true for him. He also dismissed comparisons between IPL and Test cricket as 'very unrealistic'.  
"It (getting the Test cap and getting the man of the match) hasn't yet sunk in. It was a pleasure to play Tests, the purest form of cricket," Jurel said.  
"(For me) IPL has not reduced the love for (Test) cricket. When I got the India Test cap, it was a different feeling altogether. There is no contest whatsoever (between the two). Test cricket is at a different level," asserted the youngster.  
Jurel also added that he would like to 'control the controllables' and not think too much ahead.

## Govt boost for sports bodies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 15: In a major boost for development of sports in Odisha, the state government has doubled the grant and financial aid to various sports associations segregated in different categories. Now sports associations featuring in 'A' category will get ₹12 lakh annually while 'B', 'C' and 'D' category sports associations will get ₹8 lakh, ₹5 lakh and ₹3 lakh respectively, the government said in a notification issued by the Sports and Youth Services department here Friday.  
The grants to district athletic associations and district sports associations have also been modified. Now districts with more than 20 blocks will get a grant of ₹4 lakh annually while districts with more than 15 blocks but less than 20 will get ₹3 lakh. Similarly districts with 10-14 blocks and those with less than 10 blocks will get ₹2 lakh and ₹1.5 lakh respectively.  
It should be stated here that the Odisha government, in the

### Silver for Shriyanka

Bhubaneswar: Odisha's Shriyanka Sadangi, a student of KIIT University, bagged a silver medal Friday in the 50m rifle 3 positions event at International Shooting Grand Prix in Poland. Shriyanka had earlier qualified for the Paris Olympics in October 2023.

past, has taken various steps for developing sports in the state as well as nurturing talented sportspersons. Under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, sports infrastructure has developed rapidly. The Odisha government has taken sports to each and every village with initiatives like Nua-O-Nabin Odisha competitions. Also medal-winners in all forms of competitions at the national and international level have been provided with cash incentives on a regular basis. This has been done so that more and more youngsters are attracted to sports.

## 'We are eyeing gold, nothing else'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: Indian men's hockey team skipper Harmanpreet Singh feels there is still room for improvement as his team chase the coveted gold at Paris Olympics. He said the players will look to fine-tune their final preparations during next month's Australia tour.  
Eight-time champions India won their last gold medal in the 1980 Moscow Olympics. The Indians, however, managed to break the podium jinx in the last Tokyo Games, where they won a bronze.  
"If we look at the performance of the team it is a good sign, we aren't overconfident but we are fighting against all the top sides. The confidence of the team is on a high," Harmanpreet stated Friday. "The goal is gold medal; there are no second thoughts about it. Nothing else matters," the Indian skipper added.  
Since emerging victorious in the Asian Champions Trophy



last year, the India went on to win the Asian Games and directly qualify for the Paris Olympics while also putting up a good show in the home leg of the FIH Pro League. India are currently placed third in the FIH Pro League standings with 15 points

from eight games.  
"It was a positive campaign. All matches in Pro League are tough as you play against the best teams of the world. Our performance has been good. If you talk about our matches against Australia and the Netherlands,

we played really well," Harmanpreet pointed out. "We learnt a lot, the team have improved a lot. We gained in confidence. Overall it was a good performance," added the skipper.  
Asked about areas of improvement, the skipper said: "There are only two areas where we need to improve. How you defend in your 'D' and how you attack. We have to keep in mind that we can't be successful every time. Our target should be not to concede penalty corners when the opponents enter our 'D'."

### SHORT TAKES

#### Emphatic victory for Odisha eves

Pune: Hockey Association of Odisha carved out an impressive 9-1 win over Goans Hockey in a Pool E match of the Senior Women's National Championships played here Friday. Dipti Lakra (fifth, 12th minutes), Dipi Monika Toppo (10th, 51st) and Aten Topno (12th, 34th) struck twice each for the Odisha team. The other goals were scored by Jivan Kishori Toppo (29th), Nitu Lakra (57th) and Anupa Barla (60th). Geeta Rathod scored the consolation goal for the Goans in the 47th minute.

#### Valiant Sharath loses to Lebrun

New Delhi: Achanta Sharath Kamal's remarkable journey in the Singapore Smash 2024 table tennis tournament came to an end as he succumbed to a 1-4 defeat against World No. 6, Felix Lebrun of France in the quarterfinals Friday. Sharath lost 9-11, 2-11, 7-11, 11-9, 8-11 to Lebrun in the 32-minute encounter. During his journey to the quarterfinals, Sharath had defeated a number of players who were higher ranked than him. However, Sunday, the 17-year-old Lebrun was superior.

#### Ngidi ruled out

New Delhi: South African pacer Lungi Ngidi, who was signed by the Delhi Capitals, has been ruled out of IPL 2024 due to an injury, the franchise said in a release Friday. In place of Ngidi, the Delhi side have roped in Australian all-rounder Jake Fraser-McGurk. The 21-year-old Australian is a hard-hitting opener and leg-spinner from Melbourne.

## Alcaraz dodges off bees to beat Zverev

SPANIARD FACES SINNER WHO IS ON A 19-0 STREAK

AGENCIES

Indian Wells, March 15: Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz fought off swarming bees and Alexander Zverev here Thursday to set up a semifinal clash with Jannik Sinner at the Indian Wells tennis tournament.  
World No.2 Alcaraz was stung on the forehead and temporarily forced from the court as a 'bee invasion' halted his quarterfinal against Germany's Zverev with just two games completed. He looked none the worse for wear when play resumed after a delay of almost two hours, polishing off a 6-3, 6-1 victory and avenging a quarterfinal loss to Zverev at the Australian Open.  
Sinner powered into the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Czech Jiri Lehecka pushing his match win streak to 19. Sinner's winning streak stretches back through last year's Davis Cup final and includes a perfect 16-0 record in 2024.  
In Saturday's semifinals he'll be out to turn the tables on Alcaraz, who beat him at the same stage last year on the way to the title in the California desert.  
Alcaraz said he never imagined his title defence would find him ducking for cover amid a swarm of bees. He and Zverev were just two games into their match when the bees overwhelmed proceedings, Alcaraz swatting and swiping at the insects after being stung on the forehead.



Carlos Alcaraz has a look of surprise on his face as bees interrupt his match against Alexander Zverev

The bees swarmed the remote-controlled 'spider cam' and Alcaraz and Zverev had already run for cover when chair umpire Mohamed Lahyani announced 'Ladies and gentlemen, play is suspended due to bee invasion'.  
"It was strange, I've never seen something like that on a tennis court," Alcaraz said after the match. "When we ran out of the court, we were watching the bee invasion on the TV and we laughed a lot about it. It was funny for me," Alcaraz added.  
The players were brought back on court to warm up after which Alcaraz had no more trouble - either with the bees or Zverev.  
Alcaraz can expect a tough challenge against Sinner, who captured his first Grand Slam title in Melbourne and has since lifted the trophy in Rotterdam. In breezy conditions on court two, Sinner was in firm control, breaking Lehecka early in each set and saving the only breakpoint he faced in the match.

## RCB STUN MUMBAI, ENTER WPL FINAL

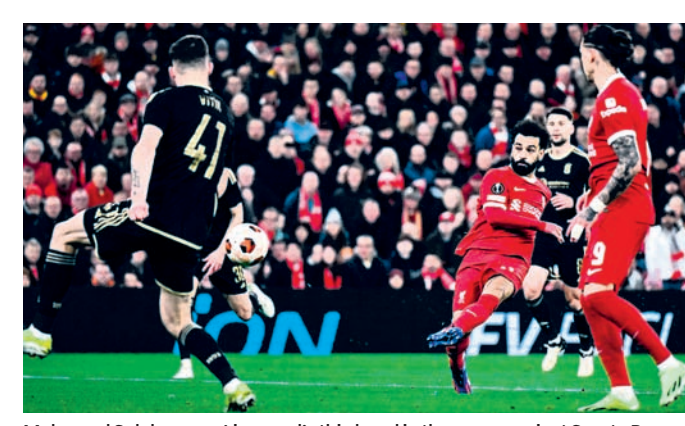
AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 15: Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) stunned Mumbai Indians (MI) by five runs in the 'Eliminator' to enter the final of the Women's Premier League at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here Friday. RCB after scoring 135 for six restricted their much-fancied opponents to 130 for six in 20 overs to emerge victorious.  
MI batters were guilty for their downfall. A number of them including captain Harmanpreet Kaur (33) got starts, but failed to play a match-winning innings. The others who had a look in, but were dismissed were Yastika Bhatia (19), Nat Sciver-Brunt (23) while Amilia Kerr (27 n o) ran out of partners.  
On a slow pitch, the RCB bowlers stuck to their line and length and the team fielded brilliantly. Shriyanka Pati (2/16) was the most successful bowler for RCB.  
Earlier, the RCB innings was given some sort of respectability by Ellyse Perry (66, 50b, 8x4, 1x6). Notwithstanding the early loss of skipper Smriti Mandhana (10), Perry kept her cool and played a vital knock. A late flourish by Georgia Wareham (18 n o, 10b, 1x4, 1x6) saw RCB go past the 130-run mark and give their bowlers a total to defend.  
Hayley Matthews (2/18), Sciver-Brunt (2/18) and Saika Ishaque (2/27) shared the six RCB wickets to fall. However, in the end, it did not help as RCB held their nerves at crucial junctures to enter the final.

## Liverpool thrash Sparta Prague

AGENCIES

Paris, March 15: Liverpool scored four times inside 14 minutes Thursday evening in a 6-1 thrashing of Sparta Prague at the Anfield to reach the quarterfinals of the Europa League. AC Milan, Marseille, Roma and West Ham were among the other sides to also book their place in the last eight.  
Despite leading 5-1 from the first leg, Jurgen Klopp named a surprisingly strong Liverpool side and was well-rewarded as the Reds remain on course for a quadruple of trophies.  
Darwin Nunez and 19-year-old Bobby Clark got Klopp's men off to a flying start before Mohamed Salah marked his first club start since January 1 with his 20th goal of the season. Cody Gakpo fired in the fourth before Liverpool briefly took their foot off the gas ahead of Sunday's trip to Manchester United in the FA Cup. Veljko Birmanec pulled a goal back for Sparta, but Dominik Szoboszlai and Gakpo completed the rout in the second half.  
"It was an amazing win - an amazing first 15 minutes," said Gakpo after an 11-2 aggregate victory. "It's what we had in mind. It shows the confidence in the team at the moment," he added.  
West Ham trailed 0-1 from the first leg against Freiburg but roared back to reach a European quarterfinal for the third consecutive season.  
Lucas Paqueta turned home a corner at the far post before Jarrod Bowen blasted home to



Mohamed Salah scores Liverpool's third goal in the game against Sparta Prague played Thursday

### REAL FACE MAN CITY IN CL

Nyon (Switzerland): Real Madrid and Manchester City will meet in a heavyweight Champions League quarterfinal between the past two winners and the only two teams to win all eight games in this season's competition. Madrid will host the first leg April 9 or 10 and the return will be the week after in Manchester. Kylian Mbappé's path to a first Champions League title with Paris Saint-Germain in his farewell season will have to go through Barcelona. PSG host the first leg. Arsenal were drawn to play the first leg at home against Bayern Munich.

turn the tie around before half time. In the second session Aaron Cresswell arrowed a shot into the far corner and Mohammed Kudus then took centre stage to secure a record European win for David Moyes' men.  
The Ghanaian ran from deep inside his own half through the heart of the Freiburg midfield and defence to slot in the fourth. A few minutes later he got his second as he smashed home from the edge of the box.  
"Obviously we've got two or three exceptional individual players who helped us get goals," said Moyes. "It was a brilliant performance for us to win by five goals."  
Seven-time European champions AC Milan cruised into the last eight with a 3-1 win over 10-man Slavia Prague. Three quick goals from Christian Pulisic, Ruben Loftus-Cheek and Rafael Leao killed off the tie before half time. Even though Milan slowed down the pace, they had chances galore. However, they could not utilize those. Atalanta beat Sporting Lisbon 2-1 in another game played on the night to go through 3-2 on aggregate.