

# OrissaPOST

HERE . NOW



## Aiming high

Actor Kriti Sanon says though she feels secure now, she is restless to push herself to the next level

LEISURE | P2



## Gaza ceasefire vetoed

Russia and China Friday vetoed a US-led draft resolution at the Security Council on a ceasefire in Gaza

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## World's first CNG bike

Bajaj Auto is developing a portfolio of clean fuel CNG motorcycles, and the first such bike will hit the market in June

BUSINESS | P11



## Delhi face Punjab

All eyes will be on Rishabh Pant, who makes a resilient return to the field, when Delhi Capitals take on Punjab Kings today

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | SATURDAY MARCH 23 2024

12 PAGES | ₹5.00



**MAJOR MILESTONE:** Pushpak, a Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV-TD), makes a landing autonomously with precision on the runway after being released from an off-nominal position, at Aeronautical Test Range, in Chitradurga, Karnataka, Friday

# Will go solo: Samal

The state unit of the BJP has announced that they won't be forming an alliance with the ruling BJD and would be going alone for both the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Odisha. It is pertinent to note that BJP president JP Nadda has not made any comment on this matter. In this scenario, the party's state leadership taking this strong stance means no alliance. Hours after the BJP's announcement, the ruling BJD too declared that the party will contest all the Assembly and Lok Sabha seats in the state.

## Will contest all 21 LS, 147 Assembly seats: BJD

**Bhubaneswar:** The BJD Friday announced that it will field candidates in all 21 Lok Sabha and 147 Assembly seats in the state. The declaration came hours after the Opposition BJP said that it would go solo in the upcoming elections, which will be held simultaneously. Talks on a pre-poll alliance were being held between the ruling BJD and Opposition BJP for the past few days. "BJD will contest in all 147 assembly constituencies and all 21 Lok Sabha (seats)," BJD general secretary (organisation) Pranab Prakash Das posted on X. Das claimed that the party would win more than three-fourth of the seats. "With blessings of Lord Jagannath and faith of the people of Odisha, BJD has been serving the state and transforming it like never before in every sector," the BJD leader said. The state will go to simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and Assembly in four phases - May 13, 20, 25 and June 1.

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** The BJP will go solo in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Odisha, state party president Manmohan Samal said Friday. "Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will fight this election alone in all 21 Lok Sabha and 147 Assembly seats to create a developed India and a developed Odisha under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to fulfil the hopes, aspirations and aspirations of four and a half crore Odias," Samal said in a post on X. The BJP leader, in his post, also thanked the BJD government, led by Chief Minister

Naveen Patnaik, for supporting the Narendra Modi government at the Centre on all the issues of national importance. Stressing that a 'double-engine' government in the state will ensure accelerated growth for the state, he also invoked Odia pride while noting that his party has failed to agree with the ruling BJD over several matters related to the people of Odisha. "We are feeling that development and welfare programmes for the poor are accelerated wherever a double engine government is present ruling in the country and such states are also growing in all sectors," the state

BJP president said. "However, many welfare programmes of the Modi government are not reaching the poor people at the grassroots level, as a result of which, they aren't reaping any benefit from it. We have not been able to agree with the state government on several matters concerning the dignity of Odia (Odia Asmita), the pride of Odisha and the self-interest of Odia people," he added. Following the decision to go solo, celebrations broke out at the BJP state headquarters where party workers danced, burst firecrackers and distributed sweets.

# Mahtab quits BJD

AGENCIES

**Cuttack, March 22:** Senior BJD MP and one of its founder members Bhartruhari Mahtab resigned from the primary membership of the party Friday. Mahtab, a six-time MP from the Cuttack Lok Sabha constituency, said: "I have sent my resignation letter to BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at 4 pm today." The parliamentarian said he quit the party as he did not get ample opportunity to work freely

in the BJD. "Dear Naveen Babu, with a broken heart, I am forced to disassociate myself from the party in which I was involved since its inception. I, too, had some contribution towards its growth. I resign from the primary membership of the party through this letter. Please accept it immediately," Mahtab said. Mahtab's resignation came a day after a special court in Cuttack framed charges against him in a case related to the alleged assault of a police officer on duty 13 years ago.

# Damodar Rout dies at 81

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** Senior leader Damodar Rout died at a hospital in Bhubaneswar Friday, his family said. Rout, 81, is survived by his son Sambit Routray, the BJD MLA of Paradip, and daughter Pritinanda, a corporator of Bhubaneswar. Rout's wife Snehalata Mohapatra, a retired school teacher, had died earlier. Rout was admitted to the hospital March 18 after a heart attack and was on ventilator. He

was declared brain-dead Thursday. Governor Raghubar Das, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and several noted personalities expressed their grief over Rout's demise. A veterinary doctor by profession, he had joined politics in the 1970s after being influenced by the legendary Biju Patnaik. He was first elected to the Assembly in 1977. He has been an MLA seven times -- five times from Erasama in Jagatsinghpur and twice from Paradip.



# BUSINESS EMINENCE AWARDS

**23 March 2024**

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**11 AM ONWARDS**

**Bhubaneswar**

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SAMAJBADI SOCIETY

## Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS)

KISS is a School, a College, and a Deemed to be University  
(Established U/S 3 of UGC Act, 1956) Bhubaneswar-751024, Odisha, India  
Organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council - ECOSOC since 2015)

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) is the world's first tribal institution, fully residential and fully free. KISS was granted Deemed to be University status by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India in 2017, making it the first University exclusively for tribal students in the world. The University focuses on teaching and research in unique and emerging areas of knowledge related to tribal studies.

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## 'GRANDCHILDREN ARE LIKE HAVING KIDS ON STEROIDS'

American singer and actress Marie Osmond has opened up about being a grandmother of eight. She admitted that looking after grandchildren is like 'having your kids on steroids' because she loves them so much.

## WHEN NICOLE BURST OUT LAUGHING ON SEEING HER FATHER'S BODY

Actress Nicole Kidman has talked about how her body and mind went into a state of shock when she saw her father lying in his casket. The actress said that the grim sight led to her bursting into a fit of laughter.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Your charismatic appeal is always ready-to-use. And today, you will possibly reap rich dividends through it. But there is always scope for improvement and you will find yourself drawn to altruism. Ganesh guarantees satisfaction in lending a helping hand to the needy.

**TAURUS**  
You will enjoy your responsibilities at the home front, says Ganesh. People whom you trusted to watch your back might let you down today. Remember, what you sow is what you reap, so do not fall short of putting in the effort required to make something fruitful.

**GEMINI**  
A favourable day to put an end to all the doubts surrounding your ability to do well, especially in the field of communication. People around you will find you incredibly charming and enchanting. You will win hearts with your verve and panache.

**CANCER**  
It is quite possible that your personal life will take precedence over your professional life. You will not be able to repress or ignore your feelings, and you should not either, says Ganesh. But you should be careful about how you express yourself in public.

**LEO**  
No matter how far you go, there is always a horizon that you desire to reach. And what holds true for all outer projections of life most certainly holds true for one's inner self as well, reminds Ganesh. Bear this in mind as you strive to improve yourself in as many ways as possible.

**VIRGO**  
Financial doldrums are headed your way today. In order to seek what you desire, expect shelling out a hefty price. You might just net those short-term goals in the evening. Ganesh foretells large and important business deals will end the day on a high note.

**LIBRA**  
Today will be fabulous for you, especially if you are in the world of business. Long-term deals seem to be on the cards for you. If you happen to be a government officer, luck favours you today. Keep your ears and eyes open, there may be news of a possible promotion. All Ganesh has to say to you today is, keep your options open and hopes alive.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesh feels that your intuitive feelings will rule your actions today. You will need to break past your stress threshold and tackle work with zeal and zest. Follow your instincts and relax to some good music when the burden of work is overwhelming.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Ganesh sees a spectacular day in store for you, especially if you are an artist. Radio jockeys will be heard and cheered for. Television anchors will receive thundering applause and golden opportunities. Go ahead — seize the day!

**CAPRICORN**  
Your extraordinary skills, passion for perfection, and an overpowering personality will inspire and motivate those around you, says Ganesh. Many will, in fact, emulate your actions, so much so that you could most likely have a fan following. But while the inspired lot may achieve success and move on to target higher goals, you are likely to miss out on the best of opportunities to make money.

**AQUARIUS**  
Spirituality is your new passion and Calvin Klein matters less today! Mysticism attracts you, says Ganesh. This may lead you to seek solace in holy books and religious places. It's going to take some time for you to understand that spiritual attainment can be had in the flesh-and-blood world as well.

**PISCES**  
You are ceaselessly driven to find room for improvement. A part-time course to enhance your skills or to increase your efficiency is what you will likely be pursuing today, says Ganesh.

## Kriti wants to evolve as an actor

**Mumbai:** In Indian cinema, where lineage often seems to dictate success, Kriti Sanon has emerged as a refreshing anomaly.

Her recent accolade, winning a National Award for her performance in *Mimi*, serves as a testament to her remarkable journey. Despite catapulting to the top league of Indian actors, Kriti remains grounded, acknowledging that there is still much to achieve.

In a recent interview with Forbes India, she articulated her drive for continuous growth, stating, "Right now, I'm feeling secure but at the same time, I'm also restless to push myself to the next level. I just want to keep growing and evolving. I would love it if some girl sitting in Patparganj would think; if she can do it, I can do it."

Talking about her career, she revealed that her parents were supportive of it but also wanted her to finish her B.Tech in case her career did not take off. "They

were worried," she said. "There is nothing secure about this profession. Everything changes every Friday, even after you are a part of the industry. I was giving multiple auditions, and then just waiting to hear from them. It was a phase where I didn't know whether I will make it or not—and that was unsettling," she added.



## Saiee talks about her 'safety net'

**Mumbai:** Actor Saiee Manjrekar feels grateful that she can call Salman Khan, her 'safety net'.

The 22-year-old made her debut with Khan starrer *Dabangg 3* (2019) and has ever since called him her mentor and guide.

Daughter of ace filmmaker Mahesh Manjrekar, she also values her special access to her father whenever she needs work related advice.

In an interaction with a news portal, Saiee opened up about whether debuting in the mega franchise *Dabangg* cast a shadow on her recognition and acting skills. She said, "No one ever came to watch *Dabangg 3* for me. It was a Salman Khan film that I got to be a part of. There's nothing better

than that for a new comer. The amount of recognition it got me would have taken me years to build that up."

According to Saiee, while her father would never interfere in her professional decisions, she loves their 'dinner table conversations' discussing his work.

"He'll give me the best advice from a director's perception. But there's also a lot of constructive criticism after watching my film," she said.

Saiee stated that her dad and Khan are her 'protective figures'.

"Because entering the industry at such a young age, a safety net was so important to feel secure. I can't imagine how it must be for people who come in on their own," concluded the actress.

### NATAKA PARIKRAMA-2024 COMES TO AN END



On the last evening of the three-day festival, the members of Uttar Purush performed play *Saralara Chithi*, an adaptation from an Amrita Pritam's work at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Friday. The drama was designed and directed by troupe's secretary Debadutta Pati. Eminent theatre director Dhirendranath Mallick was conferred with Asim Basu Samman in the evening.

## Sharvari's long note for her 'guiding light'

**Mumbai:** The much-awaited teaser of Nikhil Advani's action-packed *Vedaa* starring John Abraham and Sharvari Wagh was released recently on social media. Sharvari, who will be seen in an action-packed and intense role in the film, has been receiving love from her fans.

While fans awaited the film's release, Sharvari took to social media, shared a long gratitude note for the team, and called Advani her 'guiding light'.

The actress, taking to Instagram, wrote, "I came to this beautiful industry with no backing, knowing fully well that every film that I do has to be a hit or get acclaim for me to survive. Along the way, I met mentors who I can truly call my guardian angels. @nikkhiladvani sir, you are my guiding light. You believed in me. You told me to have faith in myself, and you gave me #Vedaa."

She carried on, "@thejohnabraham, thank you for everything. You are the boss of action, and you have been my North Star through the filming. I'm glad I can now reach out to you and take your advice on almost everything."

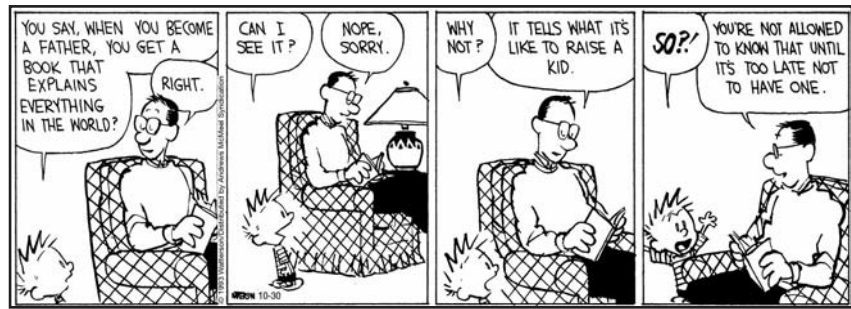
"I live to fight another day because of you guys. I live to dream another day because of you. Thank you, everyone, for the love. It's overwhelming to see the teaser of #Vedaa trending at No. 1! It's surreal," she wrote in conclusion.

### FUN post

#### PEANUTS



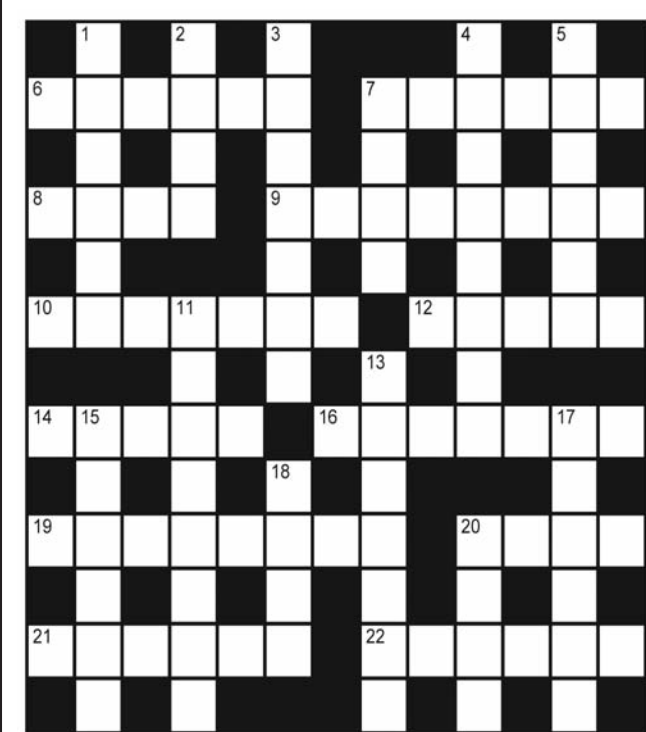
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### BREVITY



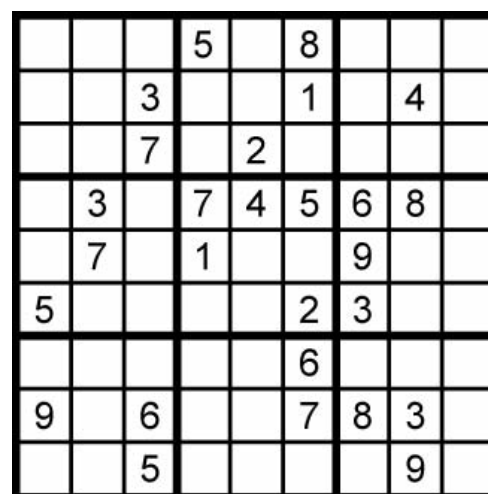
#### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 6 Arrival
  - 7 Altitude
  - 8 Hoodwink
  - 9 Anticipated
  - 10 Salt shaker?
  - 12 Measuring stick
  - 14 Take the honey and run
  - 16 Refrain
  - 19 Introduction
  - 20 Having the necessary means
  - 21 South China Sea feeder
  - 22 Empty
  - 3 Creeks
  - 4 Sales ploy
  - 5 Breathe with difficulty
  - 7 Diet target
  - 11 French pastry
  - 13 Witness
  - 15 Pantry
  - 17 Bonaire, e.g.
  - 18 All excited
  - 20 Shoe part
- Down**
- 1 Detestable
  - 2 Water source

#### 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

## ELECTORAL BONDS

# 41 tainted firms funded ₹2,471 cr to BJP: Activists

Calling the electoral bond scheme the biggest scam of Independent India, senior advocate Prashant Bhushan alleged four categories of corruption was done through it

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: Forty-one companies facing probe by the CBI, the ED and the I-T Department gave ₹2,471 crore to the BJP through electoral bonds, and ₹1,698 crore of it was donated after raids by these agencies, civil society activists who challenged the poll funding scheme in the Supreme Court claimed Friday.

Addressing the media after the Election Commission made public a fresh data set of electoral bonds, senior advocate Prashant Bhushan, who appeared for the petitioners in the court, said at least 30 shell companies purchased electoral bonds worth over ₹143 crore.

He said 33 groups which have got 172 major contracts and project approvals from the government also made donations

through electoral bonds. "They have got a total of ₹3.7 lakh crore in projects and contracts, in exchange for ₹1,751 crore electoral bond donations to the BJP," he alleged. In at least 49 cases, Bhushan alleged, ₹62,000 crore in postpaid contracts/project approvals were given by the Centre or BJP-led state governments, for which ₹580 crore in 'kickbacks' in form of electoral bonds were given to BJP within three months.

Bhushan claimed Kalpataru Group gave ₹5.5 crore to the BJP within three months of an I-T Department raid on it August 3 last year. "Future Gaming gave Rs 60 crore to the BJP within three months of I-T and ED raids November 12, 2023 and December 1, 2021 respectively. Aurobindo Pharma gave Rs 5 crore to the BJP within three months of ED raid November 10, 2022," he added.

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court scrapped the electoral bonds scheme calling it 'un-constitutional', and ordered the release of all details related to the bonds purchased and redeemed.



RIOT OF COLOURS: Women drenched in colours celebrate Holi in Nadia in West Bengal, Friday

PTI PHOTO

# Kejriwal remanded till March 28

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 22: A court here Friday sent Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal to the ED's custody till March 28, a day after his arrest in the excise policy-linked money laundering case.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja at the Rouse Avenue court said Kejriwal will be produced before the court March 28 at 2 pm. The court passed the order on the ED's application seeking a 10-day custody in the case.

The ED has claimed that Kejriwal 'took advantage' of being the Chief Minister of Delhi to facilitate money laundering by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which is a 'major beneficiary' of the proceeds of crimes generated in the alleged liquor scam case.

"Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister of NCT of Delhi is the kingpin and key conspirator of the Delhi excise scam in collusion with ministers of Delhi government, AAP leaders and other persons," the federal agency informed a special PMLA court while seeking his custody.

The ED claimed in its remand papers that "Arvind Kejriwal was involved in the conspiracy of formulation of the excise policy 2021-22 to favour certain persons and also involved in the demanding of kickbacks from liquor businessmen in exchange of favours granting in the said policy." The 55-year-old former IRS officer and activist was ar-



rested by the ED Thursday under the anti-money laundering law from his official residence in the Civil Lines area of Delhi.

The ED charged that Kejriwal "was directly involved in the use of proceeds of crime generated in the Goa election campaign of the AAP (in 2022) to which he is the convener and the ultimate decision maker."

It informed the court it has recorded the statements of various people engaged in the elec-

tion campaign-related activities of the AAP during the Goa polls and it was found that "cash payments were made to them for work like survey workers, area managers, assembly managers etc."

"These persons and activities related to the election campaign were overall managed by Vijay Nair (former AAP communications chief arrested in this case) and Durgesh Pathak, AAP MLA."

The agency claimed these charges were also corroborated

by one of the candidates of AAP for Goa elections of 2022 who said he received funds for election expenses "in cash" from the AAP volunteers in Goa.

The ED, for the first time in the about two-year-old probe, said the AAP was the "major beneficiary of the proceeds of crime generated in the Delhi liquor scam."

It alleged that a part of these proceeds of crime, to the tune of about ₹45 crore in cash, was utilised in the election campaign of AAP in Goa assembly polls.

It claimed these funds were transferred to Goa via four 'Angadiya' routes.

The 'Angadiya' network is known to move huge cash funds from one location to the other.

"In this manner, AAP has committed the offence of money laundering through Sh Arvind Kejriwal and the offences thus are covered by section 70 of the PMLA," it said.

It said that as the national convener and member of the national executive, Kejriwal was "ultimately responsible for the funds being used in the election expenses including their generation". The agency said it recorded the statement of AAP Rajya Sabha MP and national treasurer ND Gupta last year who told it that while Kejriwal was the overall incharge of the party, no sanction of the national executive or the political affairs committee is taken for deciding election expenses.

# State likely to see 40°C around Holi



AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 22: The probability of temperatures soaring to 40 degrees Celsius around the festival of Holi late March has multiplied due to climate change, according to an analysis of temperature data since 1970.

Researchers at the US-based Climate Central, an independent group of scientists, conducted the analysis to place India within the context of global warming trends. In the climate of the early 1970s, it would be exceedingly rare to encounter temperatures in late March above 40 degrees Celsius. Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar had a more than 5 per cent chance of experiencing such temperatures, they said.

However, the analysis revealed that the chance of reaching 40 degrees Celsius has since expanded to include nine states: Odisha, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

Maharashtra now has the highest probability at 14 per cent.

To show this change, the researchers calculated the difference between the warming rates in March and April, expressed as the change in average temperature since 1970.

The researchers said a total of 37 cities now have at least a 1 per cent chance of experiencing 40 degrees Celsius or warmer temperatures, and 11 cities have a 10 per cent or greater probability. With the exception of Madurai, the 15 cities with the highest risk of experiencing temperatures above 4 degree Celsius are in central India, the analysis showed. Bilaspur faces the highest risk at 31 per cent, and its chances of reaching 40 degrees Celsius is now 2.5 times higher than in the 1970s.

Indore shows the largest change in risk, with an 8 per cent probability, 8.1 times higher than in the past.

Madurai and Bhopal also have very large changes (7.1 and 5.5

times higher, respectively) and relatively high overall risk (19 per cent and 12 per cent).

Climate Central said March and April are warming across India. Every region considered had net warming during both March and April. During March, the northern and western regions have the fastest warming, with the largest change since 1970 in March occurring in Jammu and Kashmir (2.8 degree Celsius).

Warming is more uniform in April and Mizoram has the largest change since 1970 (1.9 degree Celsius).

"There has been an abrupt transition in the temperatures from cool winter-like temperatures to much warmer conditions now. After the strong warming trend observed in February, March is also likely to follow the same pattern. These warming trends in India are a clear sign of the impacts of human-led climate change," said Andrew Pershing, VP for Science, Climate Central.

The independent group of scientists and communicators previously said that winters are quickly transitioning into summer-like conditions in north India, shortening the spring season. The average temperatures in states in north India showed either a cooling trend or slight warming in January, followed by strong warming in February. This indicates that these regions are now experiencing abrupt transitions from cool winter-like temperatures into much warmer conditions traditionally observed in March, the researchers said.

Mahesh Palawat, Vice President - Meteorology and Climate Change, Skymet Weather, said, "There is no denying the fact that climate change is behind the soaring mercury levels. Heatwaves in March were rare but with the increasing global warming, the probability of heatwaves or high temperatures has increased. We will witness similar weather conditions this year as well."

## Earth Hour tonight

Earth Hour is a global event observed annually on the last Saturday of March to raise awareness about climate change and promote energy conservation. It will be observed this year March 23 from 8:30pm to 9:30pm (IST), during which people are urged to switch off lights and electrical appliances in a symbolic gesture towards energy conservation. The occasion provides an opportunity for reflection and contemplation on actions that contribute to a healthier planet.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Work harder for Mission 400 plus. Polls are nearing and many opposition leaders are still roaming free

## MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VIATION
SENSEX	72831.94	↑ 190.75
NIFTY	22096.75	↑ 84.80
DOLLAR	83.68	↑ ₹0.54
EURO	90.52	↓ ₹0.20
GOLD	₹66,077	↓ ₹112
SILVER	₹74,881	↓ ₹200

# Milky Way's 'Shakti', 'Shiva' identified

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 22: Earliest 'building blocks' of our Milky Way galaxy have been identified from 12-13 billion years ago, which is very close in time to when the universe's first galaxies started to form, according to a new research. Naming these groups of stars 'Shakti' and 'Shiva', astronomers said the findings are the equivalent of 'finding traces of an initial settlement that grew into a large present-day city.'

Milky Way is said to have formed by the merging of smaller galaxies, making way for 'fairly large building blocks,' according to the researchers.

When galaxies collide and their stellar populations mingle, most of the stars retain very basic properties, directly linked to the speed and direction of their origin galaxy, they explained.

In this study published in The



Astrophysical Journal, the research team from Max Planck Institute for Astronomy, Germany, analysed stellar datasets and found that stars from the merging galaxies were crowded around two specific signatures of energy and angular momentum, or the rate at which a spinning object's rotating speed changes. Two different star

groups were thus formed - 'Shakti' and 'Shiva'.

The study's co-author Khyati Malhan named these two structures 'Shakti' and 'Shiva', the latter one of the principal deities of Hinduism and the former a female cosmic force often portrayed as Shiva's consort.

The researchers found that the 'like-minded' stars forming

Shakti and Shiva, and coming from two different galaxies, had a higher angular momentum compared to the stars at the heart of the Milky Way.

The higher angular momentum observed was consistent with the stellar groups that had belonged to separate galaxies merging with the Milky Way, the team said.

Also, all these stars were low in metal content, signalling that they were formed a long time ago. Stars formed recently contain more of heavier metallic elements, they explained.

Therefore, their energy and angular momentum, along with low metallic content, comparable with that of the stars at the heart of Milky Way, makes 'Shakti' and 'Shiva' good candidates for some of the earliest ancestors of Milky Way, the researchers said.

"Shakti and Shiva represent two of those early, massive progenitors that coalesced at high redshift - perhaps 12 gigayears

ago - perhaps the last event from the protogalaxy before disk formation commenced," they wrote in their study. A gigayear has a billion years.

Shakti and Shiva might be the first two additions to the heart of the Milky Way, initiating its growth towards a large galaxy, said study co-author Hans-Walter Rix from Max Planck Institute for Astronomy.

For their analysis, the researchers used the data provided by the European Space Agency's Gaia satellite and combined it with the stellar datasets from the US Sloan Digital Sky Survey, having detailed information about the stars' chemical composition.

Launched in 2013, Gaia's dataset now includes positions, changes in the positions and distances for almost 1.5 billion stars within our galaxy, providing an ideal dataset for this kind of 'big data galactic archeology,' the team said.

# Recycle for water conservation: CM

# 'AIIMS providing counselling to parents on genetic disorders'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

## WORLD WATER DAY



sustainable and climate resilience societies.

Ranjan Panda, convenor of Water Initiatives, said, "The space of rivers is shrinking in our minds, perceptions, dreams, societies, cultures, economies and geographies. We must work together to change this fate of the rivers by engaging with almost all section of the society and institutions."

City-based DAV Public School, Unit VIII, and Orissa Environmental Society, organised an exhibition on Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE) Friday for the World Water Day with participation of various schools from all over Bhubaneswar, with over 60 exhibits showcasing cases of efficient water use.

The programme was inaugurated by Principal Ipsita Das. Former ADG Project Tiger, Arup Kumar Nayak, SN Patra, president of OES and secretary JK Panigrahi, joining as chief guest, said, "We have to join hands together to walk forward towards a developed future which incorporates happiness and well-being of all."

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** AIIMS, Bhubaneswar has been providing genetic counselling to parents of babies with Down syndrome and other such genetic disorders, said Manisha R Gaikwad, head of department of anatomy at an outreach programme on Down Syndrome organised by the department of the City AIIMS in association with the Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), Chandaka, here Thursday.

Speaking at the event, AIIMS executive director Ashutosh Biswas emphasised on organising such sensitising outreach programmes to put more light on Down syndrome and other genetic disorders. He appreciated the effort of the department for taking such an initiative.

"AIIMS perinatal clinic comprises of experts from various specialties like obstetrics and gynaecology (O&G), paediatrics, neonatology, anatomy and psychiatry, who have been providing comprehensive genetic coun-



selling to the parents," said Gaikwad.

She further added that the cytogenetic laboratory in the national institute also helps in detecting the common chromosomal anomalies in conditions like Down syndrome through karyotyping.

"Down syndrome is the commonest Trisomy with a prevalence of 1 in 830 births in India. A baby with the syndrome will have a flat facial profile, upward slanting eyes, simian crease and sandal gap. The babies also suffer from repeated respiratory infections, congenital heart disease and intellectual disability," she said.

As the incidence of Down syndrome increases with in-

creased maternal age, awareness among the public, medical professionals will help in timely detection of the condition and will lead to appropriate action, stressed the experts.

"While providing various therapies for common genetic disorders such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, the approach should be single centered and patient centric," said Satya Narayan Mohapatra, director of IHS. He added that handling patients with common genetic disorders is a continuous process including identification, prevention and lifelong management for which we should change the stereotype in the society.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Jayashree Priyadarshane Pradhan, W/o- Manoj Kumar Mohanty resident of ward No.-41, Janpath, P.O./P.S.-Kharvel Nagar, Unit-3, Plot-M, near Alishan Showroom Lane, Bhubaneswar, Dist.-Khurda, PIN- 751001, Odisha declare by this affidavit No.-C.F. No.-36 dtd. 02.01.2020 that now onwards I shall be known as Jayashree Mohanty for all future purposes.

## LOST

My self Ajay Kumar Dalei, Son of Sadananda Dalei, Village- Muktapur, P.O.- Kerandatangi, P.S.-Chandpur, Dist.-Nayagarh, PIN- 752024, Odisha, I have lost my sale deed No.1412101551. When I was coming from Chandpur to my Village-Kerandatangi on the way I have lost my document. If anybody found please contact my Adv. Deepak Kumar Sahoo, Mob.: 9937058785 (D22864).

I, Mr. Ghanashyam, Sahoo S/o - Satrughna Sahoo, residing at Village - Bodhei, PO - Dagarapada, PS - Tirtol, Dist - Jagatsinghpur, Stated that on dtd. 14:03:2024 due to our carelessness. My original link ROR - bearing khata No.117/9, plot No-177,178 & 179 and RSD No - 41,1850 & 1851, Mouza - Bindhapada, Tahasil - Tirtol, PS - Tirtol, Dist - Jagatsinghpur which was lost or misplaced some where and inspite of my best efforts it is still untraced. If anybody found that document please contact with our advocate. Adv.-Deepak Kumar Sahoo Contact No.-9937058785

My Dalil Registration No.-2513, dtd.21.03.1972, area A0.212 1/2dec., plot No.-45/1381 has been lost in transit. If anybody finds this document kindly contact tel. 06742380073, 9437070073. Indumati Rout, Cuttackroad, Bhubaneswar-6



AUSPICIOUS OCCASION: Priests consecrate a log of wood for construction of Rukuna Rath of Lord Lingaraj in Old Town area of Bhubaneswar, Friday

WEATHER table with columns BBSR, CTC, Max Temp, Min Temp, Humidity, Rainfall, FORECAST

## KISS receives NAAC 'A' grade

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** KISS Deemed-to-be-University has been awarded the prestigious 'A' grade accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in its first cycle of accreditation. The university is the first institution in the country to achieve this feat in its first attempt at accreditation by NAAC.

The recognition by NAAC as an 'A' grade institution is a testament to the quality of education and the dedication to academic excellence at KISS University. The Ministry of Education granted deemed-to-be-university status to KISS in 2017, acknowledging its significant contributions to the field of education.

Founder of KIIT and KISS Achyuta Samanta said, "Happy

to announce KISS Deemed to be University got NAAC A grade, a unique feat, adding to accolades like the UNESCO Literacy Prize 2022. This marks an academic pinnacle for our fully free, residential school for tribal children."

KISS is the only university in the world that offers education to tribal students free of cost. The accreditation underscores the university's commitment to providing quality education.

## TMC urges Naveen to ensure security of Bengalis in Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Derek O'Brien has expressed concern over alleged harassment of people from West Bengal in Bhadrak district and sought Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's intervention.

In a letter to Patnaik Thursday, O'Brien, who is the leader of the Trinamool Congress Parliamentary party in the Rajya Sabha, said that the victims hailed from Bengal's Murshidabad district.

He urged the Chief Minister to "take cognizance of the matter and ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice."

The TMC leader mentioned that around 100 people from Bengal's Murshidabad district stay and earn a livelihood in Bhadrak.

Recently, they were physically assaulted by the local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders and forced to flee.

"They were beaten up with a bat after they refused to show documents to prove their Indian citizenship," the leader's letter said. A few days before this incident, they were videographed illegally, and a video labelling them as "Bangladeshi informants" was circulated on social media, the letter said, adding that circulation of the video led

to more targeted physical assault by the BJP leaders and supporters. The TMC leader also mentioned in the letter that people of Odisha and West Bengal have held a close affinity for each other. "At a personal level, as you know, my family and I have always shared a fond relationship with Odisha," the letter said.

Derek further mentioned in the letter that the Constitution of India guarantees the right to live and earn freely and peacefully no matter where one might belong.

"The assault on the people of Murshidabad must not become a blot on our nation's ethos," it said. Meanwhile, Bharak police said that a local BJP leader Sayan Parida was arrested in connection with the attacks on the vendors from Murshidabad.

"Local police have been asked to take strict measures. These activities will not be tolerated," Bhadrak Superintendent of Police Varun Guntapalli told reporters.



## FIRE IN CITY

**Bhubaneswar:** A fire broke out in a commercial complex at KIIT Square here Friday, officials said. There were no reports of any injury, they said. The blaze first erupted on the second floor around 4pm and then spread to the third floor of the building, and a number of fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames, the officials said. The fire-fighting operations were still underway when the last report came in. "Four Fire Services teams have been engaged to control the blaze," Fire Officer Abani Kumar Swain said. The fire likely broke out due to a short-circuit. However, the exact cause of the blaze could be ascertained after an investigation, he said.

## Hepatitis B vaccination dismally low in India

Despite the availability of an effective vaccine against the Hepatitis B virus for over 30 years, its uptake has been low in India due to poor knowledge and lack of awareness, according to a study by Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is a major global health issue, affecting around 296 million people globally and causing approximately 887,000 deaths yearly due to complications like liver end-stage liver cirrhosis and liver cancer.

India has about "37 million HBV carriers", said the researchers in the paper. Yet the knowledge about the disease as well of the preventive vaccine was found to be low.

The team surveyed 3,500 participants, excluding healthcare workers and individuals below 18 years.

Their findings, published in the online platform Cureus, showed that just 25 per cent people had adequate knowledge about the virus, such as its transmission methods, effects on the liver, and the critical importance of vaccination.

Further, only 22.7 per cent of people were found to have com-



pleted the full Hepatitis B vaccination course.

"This low vaccination rate is alarming, especially considering the virus's prevalence and the vaccine's effectiveness in preventing infection development of advanced liver disease called cirrhosis and liver cancer," the principal investigator Anil Arora quoted on Friday. Arora hails from the institute of liver, gastroenterology, and pancreaticobiliary sciences, at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

The study also highlighted disparities in vaccination uptake gender, education levels, and the urban-rural divide.

Arora emphasised the need for targeted public health in-

terventions to improve awareness and vaccination coverage.

"Educational campaigns should focus on the general public, with particular emphasis on females, older individuals, those with lower education levels, and rural residents, who demonstrated lower knowledge scores and vaccination rates in the study participants."

"In addition, efforts should be made to increase awareness about the importance of completing the full vaccination schedule, for adequate efficacy as it was not uncommon for people to have one or two doses of vaccination and forget the last one," Arora said.

Only 22.7 per cent of people were found to have completed the full Hepatitis B vaccination course

The study also highlighted disparities in vaccination uptake gender, education levels, and the urban-rural divide

India has about "37 million HBV carriers", said the researchers in the paper

According to a study published in the National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), the occurrence of Hepatitis B in India is significant, with an estimated 40 million people suffering from the infection, constituting approximately 11% of the global burden. The population prevalence of chronic HBV infection in India is around 3-4 per cent.

Hepatitis B is transmitted through percutaneous or percutaneous exposure to infected body fluids or blood products, with transmission routes including vertical transmission from mother to child, horizontal transmission between individuals, sexual contact, and parenteral exposure like blood transfusions or intravenous drug abuse.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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# Illegal mine near school causing severe pollution

11 years after OSPCB investigation, no action has been taken as company, admin silent



ing the school. The government provided land for relocation of the school, but locals have expressed their dissatisfaction as the company is not keen on building the school.

On the other hand, the company has been making efforts to proceed with the construction of the proposed pellet plant for its own profit despite the recent protest by locals in the Gram Sabha.

Sadananda Rana, the vice-president of the company, said that the decision to relocate the school to the acquired land is with the government. "Construction of the school will be done by the government. We have been informed that we will pay the money. The land shown is of old forest type," he said.

"Measures are being taken for pollution control and people's convenience," said Prashant Kar, Regional Officer of the OSPCB. "Permission has not been granted for the factory. We will study why the school near the mine has not been shifted and take steps," he added.

It is worth mentioning here that the lifting capacity of this mine is 2.5 million tonne per year. Heavy dust and smoke pollution due to mine operation and transportation of ore have affected nearby human settlements, airstrip, schools, and also wildlife.

Questions have been raised as to how this mine has been approved. While the company sources said the mine will be shut in just about 5-6 years, people have been asking why they are interested in building a factory.

Locals complain that neither the administration nor the state government's committee, or the people's representatives are looking into this problem. The non-resolution of such issues has raised doubts about the role of the State Pollution Control Board and the local administration.

According to sources, Tonto Primary School is just about 50 metre away from the mine's lease boundary. Pollution caused by mining activities and transportation of minerals has made life hard for nearby villagers and children studying in the school.

Notably, an investigation in this regard was conducted about 11 years back in 2013. The probe conducted on behalf of the Orissa State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB) revealed that the school was facing severe dust pollution and recommended the administration to shift it to a safer place. Similarly, the Champua Sub-Collector, Education department as well as the Mining department inspected and reported to the Keonjhar Collector.

Based on all the reports, the then District Collector Bishnu Prasad Sahu wrote to the Secretary of School and Public Education department that the air pollution is spreading due to proximity of Tonto Primary School to the mine. Thereafter, the school was informed that there is a need to transfer it to another place.

However, locals have alleged that the mine has been functioning since then without shift-

## MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR KILLING WIFE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, March 22:** The District and Sessions Court, Ganjam Wednesday convicted a man for murdering his wife in 2022 and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Apart from the sentence, Judge Rupashree Chowdhury also slapped a fine of ₹15,000 on the convict. In default, the convict Narayan Sahu has to undergo additional nine months of rigorous imprisonment (RI), the judge ordered.

As per the case diary, the incident took place December 17,



2022. Narayan, a resident of Juragaon under Patapur police limits in Ganjam district, used to fight with his wife Jayanti Sahu frequently over petty issues. An

argument broke out between them on the fateful day following which Narayan allegedly killed Jayanti and threw her body to a vegetable farm behind their residence.

After getting the news, Cheru Sahu, the deceased's brother, lodged a complaint at Patapur police station alleging that his sister was murdered by his brother-in-law. Acting on the com-

plaint, police seized the body and registered a murder case (No-458/22). Police arrested Narayan and forwarded him to court. Later the then Patapur PS IIC, Sabyasachi Malla submitted the charge sheet in court. Since his arrest, Narayan was lodged in a jail as an under-trial prisoner (UTP).

The judge pronounced the verdict after hearing from 10 witnesses and going through the investigation report. Cadre public prosecutor Trilochan Parida was pleading the case from government's side.

## GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2024

# RSP conferred with Platinum award

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, March 22:** Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has been conferred with the prestigious Platinum award in Global Environment Awards 2024 at the Global Clean Energy Summit 2024.

RSP GM (Environment Engineering) VVR Murty and GM (Business Excellence) Anubinda Mohanty received the award on behalf of the plant at a function held at New Delhi March 20.

RSP participated in the competition for the first time and won the 'Platinum' award, the highest award as a recognition of RSP's excellent endeavour in environment management in every aspect.

RSP has been adopting state-of-the-art environment-friendly steel-making technologies, progressively, since its inception.

The comprehensive air pollution control measures implemented by RSP include the installation of multi-cyclones, wet



scrubbers, bag houses, electrostatic precipitators, and dry fog dust suppression systems.

The plant maintains sophisticated systems for monitoring and controlling emissions, such as Online Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Systems and Online Continuous Stack Emission Monitoring Systems.

The dedicated Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) are strategically placed throughout the units, ensuring the recycling of treated water back into the production process.

RSP also adheres to stringent monitoring and control standards through online Effluent Quality Monitoring Systems

(EQMS), with all online monitoring systems seamlessly integrated with the servers of both the State Pollution Control Board and the Central Pollution Control Board.

The plant is actively pursuing an ambitious Zero Liquid Discharge project and implementing the waste gas recovery systems.

On the solid waste management front, RSP has embraced the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover' principle with a primary focus on reducing basic raw material consumption at its source.

This strategic approach not only minimises resource usage but also safeguards the environment from the harmful impacts associated with waste dumping.

In a bid to enhance green cover, RSP has undertaken extensive afforestation efforts and planted about 52 lakh trees, and developed 40 picturesque gardens and parks within both the steel plant premises and the steel township.

## Driver burnt alive as two trucks collide in Nuapada

**Nuapada:** In a tragic incident, a truck driver was charred to death after his vehicle caught fire following a collision with another truck near Chatigauda village on the Biju Expressway under Sinapali police limits in Nuapada district in the wee hours of Friday. The deceased driver has been identified as Mouslim Khan.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP- TENDER-2024-09, Dtd. 19.03.2024

**Name of work :** COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OF DATALOGGING SYSTEM MAKE-EFFTRONICS SYSTEMS PVT. LTD. OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION FOR THREE YEARS.

**Tender Value :** ₹ 2,19,22,651.20, EMD: ₹ 2,59,600.00, Cost of Tender document: ₹ 11,800.00

**Tender closing Date & Time:** At 1100 hrs. on 11.04.2024.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against the e-tenders.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : [www.treps.gov.in](http://www.treps.gov.in)

Note: The prospective bidders are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/condition issued for this tender.

**Div. Signal & Telecom Engineer (Sig) PR-1200/O/23-24 Sambalpur**

**DICGC** निक्षेप बीमा और क्रेडिट गारंटी निगम  
DEPOSIT INSURANCE AND CREDIT GUARANTEE CORPORATION  
(बैंक और वित्त सेवा के लिए सुरक्षा के साथ सुरक्षा)  
Wholly owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India.

**Unidentifiable and untraceable depositors in claims prepared by liquidators**

Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) settles claims prepared by liquidators in terms of provisions contained in Sections 17 and 18 of DICGC Act, 1961. The claims of insured depositors who were marked unidentifiable (depositors who were not paid due to non-availability of KYC documents at the time of sanction of main claim) /untraceable (depositors whose claims were sanctioned but remain undischarged and refunded to DICGC) by liquidators is provided for by DICGC. Instructions have been issued to Registrar of Cooperative Societies and liquidators of banks (liquidated between January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2013) to contact such depositors and submit the claims, if any, to DICGC. Depositors of these banks are advised to approach the respective liquidators with officially valid documents/ of identity in case of unpaid claims. The list of banks is available on DICGC website [www.dicgc.org.in](http://www.dicgc.org.in).

"Don't get cheated by E-mails/SMSs/Calls promising you money."

## Principal makes advances on tribal girl; held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, March 22:** Police arrested the principal of a higher secondary school for allegedly making advances on a tribal girl student at MV-79 under Kalimela block in this district late Thursday night.

The accused was identified as Prashant Kumar Padhy, the principal of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Higher Secondary School. He has been booked under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act after the girl filed a complaint against him, accusing him of an indecent romantic proposal.

As per the complainant, the accused

principal offered to help her in exams and in the pretext of passing her with good marks, approached her for having a physical relationship.

The student then reached out to the Superintendent of Police (SP) and District Education Officer (DEO) and lodged a written complaint against the accused principal. As per the order of Malkangiri SP Nitesh Wadhvani, a police team along with the DEO went to the school and after investigation found the principal guilty and arrested him. After arrest, the principal is being interrogated by the police at Malkangiri police station and will be forwarded to court Monday, said the police.

## Nat'l conference A<sup>2</sup>IS-24 at FMU

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, March 22:** The Department of Computer Science at Fakir Mohan University here in collaboration with IEEE GRSS Kolkata Chapter has organised a two-day 'National Conference on Advances in AI Systems' (A<sup>2</sup>IS-2024).

FMU VC Santosh Kumar Tripathy said this conference is a ground-breaking event that promises to be a pivotal gathering for researchers, practitioners, industry leaders, policymakers, and enthusiasts alike, offering a dynamic platform to explore the latest advancements, exchange ideas, and shape the future of AI systems. He also highlighted about interaction



with researchers, practitioners, and industry professionals at conferences can help students establish valuable connections, collaborations, and partnerships, which can lead to new opportunities and insights.

The conference intends to provide opportunities to learn about the latest advancements, methodologies,

and best practices in AI research and applications from leading experts in the field and also raise awareness about the potential of AI to address societal challenges, improve quality of life, and drive economic growth, while also addressing concerns and misconceptions.

Over 300 participants from Sri Lanka, South Korea, West Bengal, Delhi, Hyderabad, Chhattisgarh, Bhubaneswar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Baripada, Dhenkanal, Burla, Jaipur, Dharmashala, Mumbai, Gujarat, Berhampur and Balasure including academicians, scientists, scholars and students working and having an interest in AI have gathered for the inaugural ceremony.

**Central Bank of India**  
Regional Office: Plot No.: 108-B, 1st Floor, Unit - VII, Surya Nagar, Near Gopabandhu Square, Bhubaneswar-751003

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer** of the **Central Bank of India** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the following Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notices. The Borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned below. The Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **Central Bank of India** for an amount stated and interest thereon. **The Borrower's/Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

JAJPUR ROAD BRANCH/ Name of the Account/ Borrowers & Address	Name and Address of Guarantors/Mortgagors	Amount demanded in Securitisation Notice	Date of Securitisation Notice/Date of Possession	Description of Mortgaged / Charged Properties
<b>Borrower:</b> M/s. Shree Bhandar, Prop.: Giarisi Lal Gupta(Deceased), S/o: Late Sagarmal Gupta, All Legal Heirs of Late Giarisi Lal Gupta, S/o: Late Sagarmal Gupta are: 1) Parbati Devi, 2) Balkrishna Gupta, 3) Balamukunda Gupta, 4) Prabha Mahawar, 5) Hema Gupta, 6) Lalita Gupta, All are At: Bhatia Unit - 4, Vyasanagar, Jaipur Road, Dist.: Jaipur - 755019	<b>Guarantor:</b> Mr. Mahendra Gupta, S/o: Late Sagarmal Gupta / <b>Mortgagor:</b> Giarisi Lal Gupta(Deceased), S/o: Late Sagarmal Gupta, All Legal Heirs of Late Giarisi Lal Gupta, S/o: Late Sagarmal Gupta are: 1) Parbati Devi, 2) Balkrishna Gupta, 3) Balamukunda Gupta, 4) Prabha Mahawar, 5) Hema Gupta, 6) Lalita Gupta, All are At: Bhatia Unit - 4, Vyasanagar, Jaipur Road, Dist.: Jaipur - 755019	₹23,32,508/- as on 15.12.2023 + interest thereon & other expenses etc.	16.12.2023 (Demand Notice Published in "The Statesman" (English Daily News Paper) & "The Samaj" (Odia Daily News Paper) on 23.12.2023) / 19.03.2024	All that part & parcel of the property in the name of Giarisi Lal Gupta (Deceased), S/o: Late Sagarmal Gupta, All Legal Heirs of Late Giarisi Lal Gupta, S/o: Late Sagarmal Gupta are: 1) Parbati Devi, 2) Balkrishna Gupta, 3) Balamukunda Gupta, 4) Prabha Mahawar, 5) Hema Gupta, 6) Lalita Gupta, situated at Khata No.: 27/1, Corresponding to R.P. Case Khata No.: 643/20, Plot No.: 1059 (P), Corresponding to R.P. Case Plot No.: 1542, Area: Ac. 0.080 Dec., Mouza: Bhatia Unit-4, P.S: Jajpur Road, Tahasil: Vyasanagar, Dist.: Jajpur, Bounded by North: Prafulla Kumar Mallick, South: Gyasi Debi, East: Passage, West: Prafulla Kumar Mallick
<b>Borrower:</b> Umakanta Samal, S/o: Late Jubaraj Samal, At: Salakana, P.O/P.S: Korei, Dist.: Jajpur, PIN - 755022	<b>Guarantors / Mortgagors:</b> Jubaraj Samal (Deceased), S/o: Mr. Giridhari Samal, All Legal Heirs of Late Jubaraj Samal, S/o: Mr. Giridhari Samal are: 1) Malati Samal, 2) Umakanta Samal, 3) Kandhei Samal, 4) Laxmipriya Rout, All are At: Salakana, P.O/P.S: Korei, Dist.: Jajpur, PIN - 755022	₹10,66,029/- as on 23.11.2023 + interest thereon & other expenses etc.	24.11.2023 (Demand Notice Published in "The Statesman" (English Daily News Paper) & "The Samaj" (Odia Daily News Paper) on 23.12.2023) / 19.03.2024	All that part & parcel of the property in the name of Jubaraj Samal (Deceased), S/o: Mr. Giridhari Samal, All Legal Heirs of Late Jubaraj Samal, S/o: Mr. Giridhari Samal are: 1) Malati Samal, 2) Umakanta Samal, 3) Kandhei Samal, 4) Laxmipriya Rout, situated at Mouza: Salakana, Khata No.: 30, Plot No.: 239, Area: Ac. 0.040 Dec., Plot No.: 240, Area: Ac. 0.110 Dec., Plot No.: 432, Area: Ac. 0.060 Dec., Plot No.: 374, Area: Ac. 0.010 Dec., Plot No.: 372, Area: Ac. 0.030 Dec., Plot No.: 377, Area: Ac. 0.020 Dec., Plot No.: 429, Area: Ac. 0.050 Dec., Plot No.: 379, Area: Ac. 0.020 Dec., Tahasil: Vyasanagar No.: 307, P.S: Korei, Dist.: Jajpur, Bounded by East: Own Land & Biswanath Biswal, West: Road, South: Ramachandra Sahoo, North: Dasarathi Biswal & Own Land

**Place: Bhubaneswar Date: 22.03.2024**

**Authorised Officer Central Bank of India**

The consciousness one has is much more important than the act one performs. And the most apparently useless acts can become very productive if they are performed with true consciousness.

THE MOTHER



Newfound Favour

The appointment of retired IAS officer Navneet Kumar Sehgal as the chairperson of Prasar Bharati Board has all the signs of the complex and subtly adversarial interplay between the Centre and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Sehgal, undoubtedly, brings a wealth of experience, having served in senior roles in Uttar Pradesh. Just before retiring in 2023, he was Chief Secretary in the Department of Sports and Youth, but also known for his media management skills and his role in organizing UP's global investor summit and hosting the prestigious MotoGP in Noida.

But his career trajectory has been marked by remarkable comebacks after periods of being sidelined. Sehgal was once considered one of UP's most influential officers, an integral member of 'Team 9', a group of nine IAS officers closely associated with Adityanath.

However, after retiring it appears that Sehgal was not given a significant position by the Uttar Pradesh government, suggesting that perhaps he had fallen out with Yogi. But observers suggest that Sehgal, no longer in Yogi's inner circle, has now found favour with the Narendra Modi government at the Centre.

From being the troubleshooter for the UP government, Sehgal will now be called upon to contribute substantially to Modi's media management, especially amid a crucial national election.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

Ashok Khemka's long battle for justice

The recent Supreme Court verdict on Haryana IAS officer Ashok Khemka's annual confidential report (ACR) has sparked the debate about how bureaucrats are evaluated and who should have the authority to do so.

Back in June 2017, the famed whistleblower received an overall grade of 8.22 from the state chief secretary, who was the reporting authority. Then, the state Health Minister, acting as the reviewing authority, bumped up Khemka's grade to 9.22.

Despite several representations to contest the decision, Khemka first appealed to the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), pleading for the removal of adverse remarks and restoration of grades and remarks by the reviewing authority.

But the legal rollercoaster didn't end there. The Supreme Court chimed in, highlighting the unresolved status of Khemka's representation before the accepting authority, which is yet to decide on the matter.

It is clear that the case of Ashok Khemka isn't just about one officer, but about the broader challenges and complexities of administration and ensuring transparency and justice along the way.

Surprise reshuffle sparks speculation

Madhup Kumar Tiwari had barely settled into his role as Special Commissioner of Police for Law and Order when he received a surprising transfer to Chandigarh as DGP in February.

Surendra Kumar Yadav, who was reassigned from Delhi to assume the role of DGP in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has now been named the new DGP in Chandigarh.

Sources have informed DKB that Tiwari, upon his transfer from Delhi to Chandigarh, reportedly protested, arguing that his recent assignment of overseeing law and order in Delhi should have precluded the need for relocation.

There is some speculation that the reversal decision may be linked to the mishandling of the Chandigarh mayoral elections and the ensuing controversy surrounding Anil Masih's role, which caused a lot of embarrassment to the central government.

Meanwhile, the incumbent DG of Arunachal Pradesh Devesh Srivastava, who was initially slated for a transfer to Delhi Police in an earlier notification, finds his Delhi posting is on hold, albeit temporarily.

While such sudden shifts are not infrequent, especially during poll season, these do create some unease among those in khaki.

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WISDOM CORNER

- The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others - MAHATMA GANDHI
Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends? - ABRAHAM LINCOLN
Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again. - NELSON MANDELA

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1775: Patrick Henry, a major figure of the American Revolution, delivered the well-known speech featuring the phrase "give me liberty or give me death" at the second Virginia Convention, at St. John's Church, Richmond.
1933: The German Reichstag, dominated by the Nazi Party and German National People's Party, voted to pass the Enabling Act, thereby assuring Nazi primacy, in a process that began with the Reichstag fire about a month prior.
1983: In a nationwide television address, U.S. President Ronald Reagan announced the Strategic Defense Initiative, popularly known as Star Wars, a proposed strategic defensive system against potential nuclear attacks.
1998: James Cameron's epic drama Titanic (1997) won 11 Academy Awards, tying the record set by Ben-Hur (1959).

ZOMBIFICATION OF PARTIES

FOCUS POLITICS

Among her final acts as chair of the Republican National Committee, Ronna McDaniel requested that her colleagues endorse the two people handpicked by Donald Trump to replace her.



Some politicians install relatives as successors, thus turning a party into a quasi-dynasty or a political family business. That is what the Gandhi family did to the Indian National Congress, to the detriment of the party and Indian democracy alike.



Jan-Werner Mueller

CULT LEADERS CAN COMMAND THEIR FOLLOWERS IN WAYS THAT EVEN THE MOST CHARISMATIC POLITICIAN CANNOT

Trump is hardly the only far-right populist leader to have subjugated a political party to his will. The hijacking of a party's machinery is a common pattern among populists and would-be autocrats, and history shows that it can have truly dire consequences for a democratic political system.

True, appeals for democracy and pluralism within political parties can sound like idealism. Endless, exhausting, pedantic debates usually result in a "victory" for the most eloquent party hack - or perhaps for the person with no childcare responsibilities the next morning.

But internal debates do often yield better policy ideas. At a minimum, the winners will have a stronger sense of the opposing arguments and the evidence for them. They also will be more likely to respect the legitimacy of the losers in any given intra-party debate.

ers feel that they have gotten a fair hearing, they will be less likely to quit the party.

By respecting legitimate opposition within their own party, politicians demonstrate their commitment to the basic rules of the democratic game. When internal contests are close, the winners will continue to face off against other party heavyweights, who in turn may provide a check against them if they stray too far from the party's core commitments.

But Trump has transformed the Republican Party into something like a personality cult. Those criticizing him have been cast out and vilified (and often personally threatened with violence). Rather than treating Nikki Haley as a worthy adversary in what political theorist Nancy Rosenblum calls a democratic "regulated rivalry," Trump denied her any standing in the party.

ambassador to the United Nations during his term as president.

Equally telling, the Republican Party no longer even bothers to offer anything like a proper campaign programme. Before the 2020 election, it simply reissued its 2016 programme and pledged total fealty to Trump. A party with a real programme can bear an election loss and simply redouble its efforts to bring voters over to its side the next time.

Some politicians deal with this challenge by installing relatives as successors, thus turning a party into a quasi-dynasty or a political family business. That is what the Gandhi family did to the Indian National Congress, to the detriment of the party and Indian democracy alike.

SPECTRUM GOVERNANCE

Preventing land grab and acquisition

The alleged land grabbing at Sandeshkhali village in West Bengal by a TMC leader continues to hit headlines, but such incidences shouldn't come as a big surprise as the poor can rattle off cases of their land being unfairly taken either by the government or business houses with the support of political leaders.



Dhurjati Mukherjee

EVEN THE GOVERNMENT HAS SOMEWHAT FORCIBLY TAKEN LAND FROM PEOPLE FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS BY PAYING A PALTRY SUM

This case has, however, drawn much more attention unlike others, as it's got entangled in the murky BJP-TMC rivalry and the alleged sexual abuse of the village women, which of course is unacceptable in any civil society. Developments such as Prime Minister Modi referring to the incident innumerable times during his recent visits to the state; a division bench of Calcutta High Court directing the state to file an affidavit stating the plan to restore the farmlands allegedly grabbed and turned into pisciculture ponds; directing the CBI to file an affidavit stating how protection could be given to those who had lodged police complaints against land grabbing and sexual torture, do make news and shall be forgotten later.

The larger picture, of land grab or land acquisition, which has been a phenomenon in the country since the 50s and 60s, simply gets lost. It would not be wrong to recall that even the government has somewhat forcibly taken land from people for various projects like widening of roads and highways, railway projects, power projects etc. And this has been done by paying a paltry sum to the villagers.

At that time, there was no National Rehabilitation Policy, and the government didn't deem it necessary to rehabilitate them properly so that these poor people could make a living at their new site. The suffering of those whose land was taken away had been documented as survival continued to haunt them. Insofar as land acquisition is concerned, government could justify it on grounds that it has been taken for essential infrastructure projects, but the question remains who benefits the most from such action.

movement of cars benefit the rich and middle-income sections of society.

It is well-known that the land acquisition laws that India inherited from colonial times were undoubtedly heavily loaded against the interests of landowners and other people dependent on land for their livelihood. The Acts passed have enhanced the scale of compensation to be received by landowners and additionally provided for their rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) in the event of displacement.

In fact, the Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Act of 2013 diluted most of the ruthless provisions of Land Acquisition Act of 1894 and, most importantly, it made a deliberate attempt to put in place the building block for easy accessibility of land.

Most states did not think it fit to judiciously enforce the provisions of the Act introduced in 2013, as is the case with others. Moreover, with most of the state governments demarcating lands as Special Economic Zones, the problem has been getting worse. In recent years, the Act has

Cult leaders can command their followers in ways that even the most charismatic politician cannot. A proper party would have found a way to stop Trump and his fanatical fans before the insurrection of January 6, 2021. And even after that, Republicans could have shown courage and some commitment to their own professed principles by impeaching Trump in February 2021.

It is not just Trump, though. At one point while he was in office, former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro had no political party at all, and thus no check on his power from somewhat like-minded politicians. Other far-right populists do have parties, but they run them in a highly autocratic fashion.

Strengthening party regulations might help. In the Netherlands, the party of far-right populist Geert Wilders has only two members: Wilders and a foundation with one member, who just so happens to be Wilders. Such one-man rule (literally) would not be legal in neighboring Germany, where the country's Basic Law affirms that parties' "internal organization must conform to democratic principles."

Yes, there is a limit to internal party democracy: it can tip into factionalism, which can turn off voters; and it can provoke unproductive or esoteric debates that make parties seem overly sectarian. But the Republican Party's transformation into an authoritarian tool shows why such risks are worth taking.

The writer is Professor of Politics at Princeton University.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

been violated and it's said farmers have to unwillingly part with their land with very little compensation and a bleak future.

Land acquisition is indeed a sensitive subject and there are reports indicating that people whose land has been virtually taken have not benefitted to the extent they should have. It is critical to take stock of how much land has been taken away in the last five decades or so and whether the people, whose land has been taken away, are properly rehabilitated, as per the National Rehabilitation Policy, and earning enough for a decent livelihood for themselves and their family.

It is also feared that in majority cases, the people who take away such land have the blessings of the ruling party, and in some others, leaders get a share of such transactions.

Not only should fair and just compensation be given, but culprits who cheat the poor in the process of acquiring land must be brought to book. Headlines of land grab or action against a solitary case is not a remedy.

INF

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Daunting task

Sir, Rituraj Gaikwad will step into the role of captain for CSK, succeeding MS Dhoni. The iconic 'Thala' stepped down as captain after leading CSK for 15 years. He guided the Yellow Brigade to win five titles, the most recent being in the thrilling 2023 final that extended to a third day. Rituraj has an arduous task ahead of him, but he shouldn't be too concerned with experienced players like Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja, and Ajinkya Rahane to mentor him.

N J Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Ball in SC court

Sir, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is finally caught in the net of Enforcement Directorate, in the money laundering and corruption charges in excise policy case. It has been so long since that ED is sending repeated summons to him, and now finally ED took him with them after two hours of interrogation. This arrest comes at a time when general elections are very close in the country. The arrest by ED, comes at a great criticism from all the opposition altogether. There is no doubt that, ED works in nexus with the government of the day, and now the burden to prove his innocence lies on the Delhi Chief Minister. However, he appealed before the Supreme Court for immediate intervention. This will be another point of opposition unity against the BJP. It will be interesting to note, what the Supreme Court will comprehend in this case.

Kirti Wadhawan, KANPUR

The giant killer

Sir, Indian badminton star Lakshya Sen was ranked sixth in the world for a brief period in 2022. Then he was on a high after entering the final of the prestigious All England badminton. But a series of early exits and injuries ensured he plunged to a lowly 25 only to cling on to world number 19 ranking later. The 23-year-old hit a purple patch in his career again by lifting the men's singles trophy in the Canadian open BWF series. However, by entering the semis of the 2024 All England, where he lost to the eventual champion Indonesia's Jonatan Christie, Lakshya has sent signals that he is here to stay. Lakshya scalped fourth seeded Anders Antonsen and World number ten Lee Zii Jia en route to the semifinals. Lakshya is a giant killer as he has the knack of coming from behind to outfox his opponents.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

# Battle spices up with Annamalai in the ring

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, March 22:** In the April 19 Lok Sabha polls, undoubtedly, the battle for Coimbatore will be the most watched in Tamil Nadu as the ruling DMK and main opposition AIADMK - the well entrenched Dravidian titans will see a new, aggressive challenger in the IPS officer-turned-politician, BJP's K Annamalai.

In the wake of fresh challenge from Annamalai, the BJP state chief who has vowed to win the western belt for his party, the ruling DMK chose to not allot the Coimbatore seat, the hub of western Tamil Nadu to allies. Instead, the DMK has fielded its own candidate Ganapathi P Rajkumar from Coimbatore, which is also known as Kovai locally.

In this battle of prestige, the DMK is determined to demonstrate that it continues to be all powerful in the region - its ally CPI(M) nominee PR Natarajan won the seat in 2019. The AIADMK, on its part has resolved to disprove the ruling party and has nominated its IT wing chief Singai G Ramachandran who hails from the same region.

For over four decades, the western region of Tamil Nadu, popularly known as 'Kongu mandalam' in Tamil has been without doubt the AIADMK's bas-



It has made significant electoral gains even in losing causes, such as in 2006 and 2021.

Traditionally, though BJP had some pockets of influence in western Tamil Nadu including Coimbatore, it was woefully insufficient to win enough votes to emerge victorious. Thirty-eight year old Annamalai, a native of western Tamil Nadu, belonging to the dominant Gounder community, according to party workers, decided to change the scenario by 'building on strength' in the region.

Coimbatore and the Nilgiris were among the regions in west-

ern Tamil Nadu that the BJP, especially under Annamalai has focused in a sustained manner to build the party. Roping in regional level leaders, like former elected representatives and opinion makers at the local level has been part of the BJP's strategy to bring about a real change in its electoral fortunes in the Dravidian state. Coimbatore-Nilgiris region is the crown jewel of the Saffron party is eyeing to make deeper inroads in the state.

Annamalai was arguably the first BJP leader in the state to aggressively target the Dravidian ideology and the key two parties --DMK and AIADMK-- that represent it

■ Annamalai was arguably the first BJP leader in the state to aggressively target the Dravidian ideology and the key two parties --DMK and AIADMK-- that represent it

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ties --DMK and AIADMK-- that represent it.

In fact, the reason given by the AIADMK last year to snap ties with the BJP was that the Saffron party brass did nothing to stop Annamalai from targeting Dravidian ideologue CN Annadurai and late party matriarch J Jayalalithaa.

With Annamalai often taking the lead in targeting the DMK on allegations of corruption besides everyday issues, the AIADMK was perceived by sections of people to be lagging behind in showing the spirit of real opposition.

The fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi took out a well-attended roadshow here on Monday, shows the focus the party has given to Coimbatore. Incidentally, he had attended events in two other districts in the 'Kongu' region - Tiruppur and Salem, in the past one month.

# UP gears up for bypolls to four Assembly seats

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, March 22:** Along with the Lok Sabha elections, Uttar Pradesh will also witness bypolls to four Assembly seats - Lucknow East, Dadraul in Shahjahanpur district, Gainsari in Balrampur district and Duddhi in Sonbhadra district.

Three of the four seats - Lucknow East, Dadraul and Duddhi - were held by the BJP while Gainsari was with the Samajwadi Party.

The election in the Lucknow East seat was necessitated following the death of sitting MLA Ashutosh Tandon November 9, 2023. A three-time MLA from the seat, Ashutosh Tandon - son of former minister Lalji Tandon - was a cabinet minister in the first government of Yogi Adityanath.

The seat has been a BJP stronghold but the party is yet to announce its candidate for the bypoll. Other parties have also not announced their candidates for the seat. Polling in Lucknow East Assembly constituency will be held May 20, the fifth phase of the general elections.

Bypoll to the Dadraul Assembly constituency in Shahjahanpur district will take place May 13 in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha



The Assembly seat became vacant following the death of BJP MLA Manvendra Singh January 5 after a prolonged illness. He was 70.

Having been with the Congress for a long time, Manvendra Singh joined the BJP in 2017 and became an MLA from Dadraul. He retained his seat in the 2022 polls.

The voters of the Gainsari Assembly seat will exercise their franchise May 25, the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha polls. The constituency in Balrampur district was declared vacant following the demise of sitting Samajwadi Party MLA Shiv Pratap Yadav January 26 at the age of 74. Shiv Pratap Yadav had started his political career from Lok Dal and was a four-time MLA from Gainsari.

The bypolls to the Duddhi Assembly segment in Sonbhadra district will be held June 1, the seventh phase of the general elections. The Assembly constituency reserved for Scheduled Tribes, fell vacant following the disqualification of the BJP's Ram Dular Gond from the House after being convicted in a rape case.

Ram Dular Gond was sentenced to 25 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping a girl nine years ago. He was disqualified as a member of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly in December 2023. "Our effort will be to win all four seats and the candidates will be announced soon," said a BJP functionary. A Samajwadi Party (SP) spokesman said that they will also declare their candidates well in time.

# Ayodhya gears up for Ram Navami

According to official sources, efforts are being made to ensure the safety and comfort of the devotees during Ram Navami by providing water and mats on the open floors, keeping in view the approaching hot weather conditions



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ayodhya, March 22:** The Ayodhya administration is gearing up for the next big event of the year after the consecration ceremony held in January. The event is 'Ram Navami' - the first after the opening of the temple - and the festival is expected to attract the biggest ever inflow of devotees.

Ram Navami, the festival that celebrates the birth of Lord Ram, will be observed on the ninth day of Chaitra Navratri and will fall April 17. Meetings are being held between Ram Janmabhoomi Trust members and district administration, focusing on the challenge of controlling the crowd and serving the pilgrims who will start arriving in Ayodhya three days before the

will ensure availability and regular supply of essentials such as milk, sugar, tea, foodgrains and vegetables etc in dharamshalas, temples, tent cities and hotels where the pilgrims will stay," said a senior official.

The administration is also making elaborate arrangements for a dip in Saryu river and focus is also on providing public toilets and regular cleaning for which more than 2,000 sanitation workers will be involved.

Anil Mishra, trustee of Ram Temple Trust, said that a huge crowd was expected in Ayodhya around, before and after Ram Navami, so a plan was being prepared after brainstorming on all the issues ranging from security arrangements to providing easy darshan to the devotees and ensuring that they did not face any problem.

He added that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath himself was monitoring the arrangements and the Trust was also planning the best management for all the visitors.

Ram Navami celebration will begin with a prayer to the sun early in the morning. At mid-day, when Lord Ram is supposed to have been born, a special prayer will be performed. People will sing devotional songs in praise of Lord Ram and rock images of him in a cradle to celebrate his birth.

Rath yatras or chariot processions of Ram, his wife Sita, brother Lakshman and devotee Hanuman will be taken out from many temples and people will gather on the banks of the sacred river Saryu for a holy dip.



People shop for Holi at Lohar Gali, in Agra

PTI PHOTO

# IIT-M scientists develop electric standing wheelchair

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, March 22:** Scientists at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, here, have developed NeoStand - an indigenously developed electric standing wheelchair, officials said.

Available at Rs 89,990, the electric wheelchair enables a wheelchair-bound physically challenged person to stand and perform his or her work whichever he intends to. It may be taking a book from a shelf or having a cup of coffee by standing over the counter or even to maintain eye contact during conversations.

The project was led by TTK Centre for Rehabilitation Research and Device Development Head professor Sujatha Srinivasan and her team at the institute.

"Several patents have been secured following the development of this product. Three to four research scholars have worked on this project. I am actually overjoyed on seeing this product as it provides the freedom to do what a wheelchair borne person intends to do," IIT Madras Director Professor V Kamakoti said after launching the wheelchair.

He referred to a similar initiative by IIT-M scientists who performed robotic operation to clean septic tanks in residential houses as currently manual scavengers involved in taking up such works. "We cannot import these kinds of chairs because of costs. We should therefore produce such chairs which are cost-effective," he said.

Ramya, a beneficiary who received the electric standing wheelchair at an event here, said



she would be able to stand and assist her mother while cooking since the earlier wheelchair did not allow her to stand.

"The most difficult part is I cannot stand when the National Anthem is played at functions. While others stand, I will be sit-

ting as we are using wheelchair. I am very happy today, as with the use of this electric standing wheelchair I will be able to stand now when the National Anthem is played," she said.

According to NeoMotion Assistive Solutions Pvt Ltd, Co-Founder, Swostik Dash, NeoStand redefines the wheelchair experience with its user-centric design. NeoMotion Assistive Solutions Pvt Ltd, is an IIT Madras incubated start-up engaged in development of wheelchairs among many others.

The 'NeoStand' promises the users the freedom to sit for prolonged hours and stand comfortably when needed reducing the risk of secondary health complications. Its compactness ensures easy manoeuvrability through tight spaces, enhancing accessibility.

# ODOP helping UP traders, artisans

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, March 22:** The ODOP Scheme has immensely benefited the handicraft traders and is also enhancing the innovative skills of the artisans in Uttar Pradesh, said a government spokesman.

The next level up in One District One Product (ODOP) will come from incubation centres to help entrepreneurs of the changing business ecosystem in terms of technology, innovation and use of AI in business operations.

The spokesman said it was imperative that MSME units evolve with the dynamic business environment and keep themselves updated of the recent business practices and trends. Pranjal Yadav, secretary, MSME, meanwhile, said that the MSMEs were important for any state because of their role as employment providers.

He stated that MSME and SME



players of Uttar Pradesh were informed about the various schemes and incentives being extended by the state to boost the sector.

He reiterated the state's commitment to offer a basket of incentives for the MSMEs and SMEs.

Talking about the textile policy and textile park, recently introduced by the government to boost the textile industry in the state, Pranjal Yadav said that MSMEs were the backbone of a robust economy and lauded the state government's commitment on the count.

# UP children will write to parents, urging them to vote

**PARENTS WILL ALSO BE REQUESTED TO SIGN A 'PLEDGE LETTER' TO ENSURE THAT THEY AND ALL ELIGIBLE MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILY USE THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE IN 2024 LOK SABHA POLLS**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, March 22:** Schoolchildren in Uttar Pradesh will soon be writing to their parents saying, "My future is linked with a strong democracy of the country and for this I would like you to pledge to check your names in the voter list and surely



vote in the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls."

This is the initiative of the Election Commission (EC) under which the Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer, Navdeep Rinwa, has roped in the district administration and the Education department to go all out to in-

crease the voter turnout so as to bring it on a par with the national average.

The measure is part of EC's SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) initiative, officials said. The office of the Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer

has written to the Director General (school education) seeking help of school children of Uttar Pradesh in writing letters to their parents.

Parents will also be requested to sign a 'pledge letter' to ensure that they and all eligible members of their family use their right to vote in 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Both parents would sign the pledge letter providing their address, mobile number and e-mail id.

Pratap Singh Baghel, Director, Uttar Pradesh Basic Education, has sent a letter to all basic shiksha adhikaris (BSAs) to download soft copies of comics, which are a relevant and irreplaceable outreach medium, even in this age of digital media. The initiative also has a 'comic touch' with characters like Chacha Chaudhary and Sabu, being used to convey election-related information creatively, officials

added.

They will be used to motivate all 1.9 crore schoolchildren associated with the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Department in writing moving letters to their parents to participate enthusiastically in the electoral process.

With a significant following among children and teenagers, this medium enables the EC to effectively engage with the youth, fostering a sense of informed and responsible citizenship from an early age, officials said.

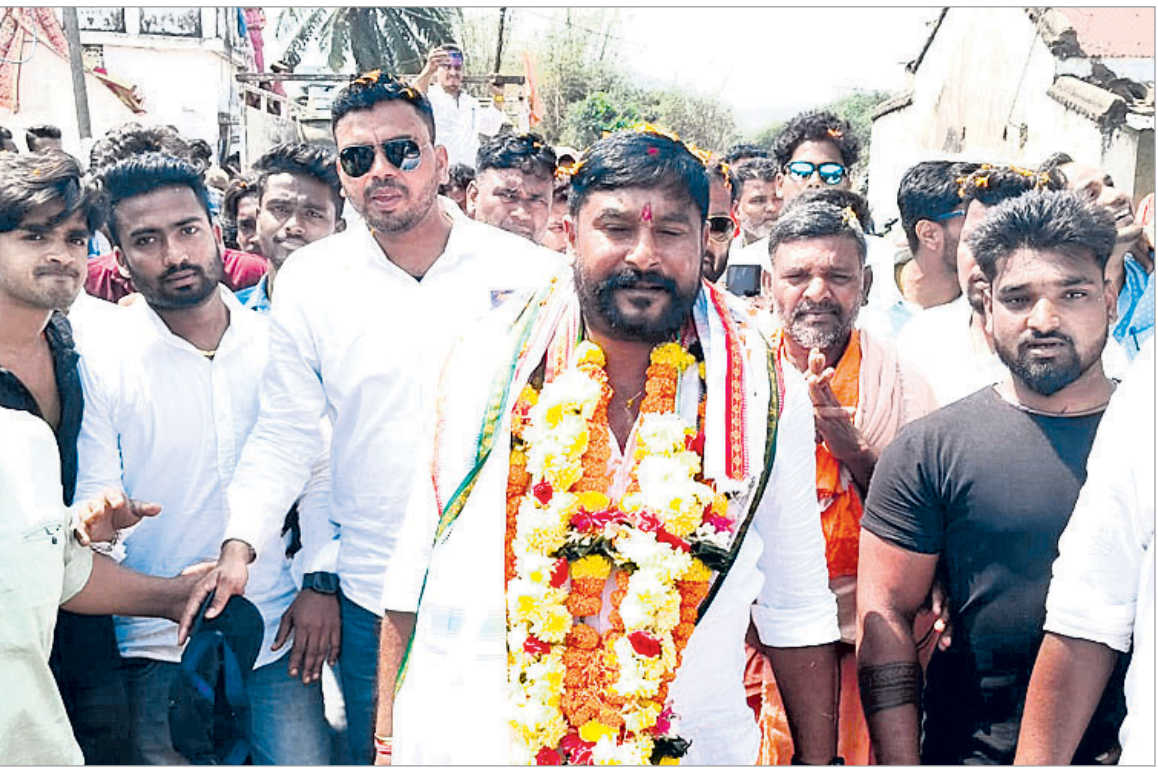
The initiative is important because Uttar Pradesh has been falling short of the national average for successive general elections. In 2019, Uttar Pradesh's poll percentage was 59.21 per cent as against the national average of 67.4 per cent. Similarly in 2014, voter turnout in Uttar Pradesh was 58.44 per cent against the country's average of 66.44 per cent.



A merger and workers' meet of BJD presided over by Suryananda Pal and attended by Jaleswar MLA Aswini Kumar Patra in progress at Gobarghata village under Jaleswar block in Balasore district, Friday



Congress leader Jayadev Jena addresses a workers' meet at Patana in Keonjhar district, Friday



Sanakhemundi MLA Ramesh Chandra Jena (Congress) takes out a rally along with his supporters at Chhatrapur in Ganjam, Friday



BJP leader and former minister Surama Padhy holds a press conference at the party's state office in Bhubaneswar, Friday

## Close contest on cards in Biramitrapur

SITTING BJP MLA SHANKAR ORAM LIKELY TO FACE A ROUGH RIDE THIS TIME

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

**Rourkela, March 22:** Biramitrapur is another Assembly segment under Sundargarh Lok Sabha constituency which is set to witness a close contest between contesting candidates in the forthcoming elections. The seat is reserved for candidates belonging to the Scheduled Tribe (ST). At the peak of the Congress regime, party candidates had managed to win only twice, in 1980 and 85, respectively. Apart from these two victories, this tribal dominated constituency has seen independents, Janta Dal, JMM, Samata Kranti Dal (SKD) and, the latest being, BJD candidates securing victory. "The constituency has a trend of not supporting the Congress despite having a sizable tribal population," said Dr. Prabhat Mallick, a retired professor of History. He opined that the tribes here have a rebellious past. Amco Simco the great tribal uprising against British Rule took place here. "Perhaps that is the reason



SHANKAR ORAM



ROHIT JOSEPH TIRKEY

they have never been supporters of Congress, rather mostly voted against it," he said. Besides, the tribal voters had a liking for the Sibru Soren-led tribal movement in neighbouring Jharkhand, which shares a border with Biramitrapur. "The voters are definitely influenced by the ideology and hence JMM won here thrice," argued Dr Mallick. Firebrand tribal leader George Tirkey won from here in 1995 and 2000. Over the time, he fell out with Soren and, in 2004, left it. Still, JMM's influence remained intact as party nominee Nihar Surin won from here in 2004. Tirkey, who was no more of his earlier charm, however, won again in 2010 as an independent, and thereafter on a SKD ticket in 2014.

In 2019, BJP's Shankar Oram won from here. This was amongst the three seats that the saffron party won in this district. It is said RSS threw its weight behind Oram and ensured his victory. However, this time people in the know of things as well as surveys are indicating a very rough ride ahead for Oram. Sanjay Barua, a local said, "Oram lost contact with the people and became very indifferent. It seems success went to his head and this led to a gradual loss of his popularity." Last time, Oram, a lifelong RSS volunteer, polled 60,937 votes (34.86 per cent), and BJD's Makhlu Ekka got 44,586 (25.36%) votes. Tirkey's Son Rohit Joseph Tirkey gave a good fight to BJD and polled 44,212 (25.15%) votes

and came third. The JMM came a distant fourth with slightly over 14,000 votes. However, this time, BJD may repeat Makhlu as he is popular and also close to the party's inner circle. A political analyst said, "He (Makhlu) will start with more than fifty thousand votes lead because Shankar is facing huge dissension and will get almost wiped out in several pockets." But, another interesting equation is emerging here. George's attempt to get into the BJD fold never materialised. Now he is very active in his stronghold and lobbying for his son Rohit. "If Rohit gets the ticket, then it will be a cakewalk for BJD," said a BJP dissident. There is a possibility that Congress and JMM may come together and field a common candidate. The combination of the two parties will be a formidable force. Nevertheless, in the event of an alliance between the two parties the poll equations will undergo change, and Oram is precisely eyeing that, said one of his supporters.

## Centre misusing probe agencies: INDIA bloc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 22:** A day after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), a delegation of leaders of the INDIA bloc parties approached the Election Commission of India alleging "unrelenting, blatant and illegal deployment of Central agencies" by the ruling BJP to stifle the opposition parties. In a memorandum submitted to the EC, the INDIA party leaders submitted a list of recent instances of central agencies targeting opposition parties and alleged an absence of a level playing field for the opposition. The leaders also suggested that the poll panel should change the heads of the probe agencies during the election to ensure a fair play. Speaking to the media after the meeting, Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi said, "We pointed out this is not a normal complaint, it is a larger issue of effecting, impairing, undermining, and sabotaging

the basic structure of the Indian constitution. "We pointed out that the level playing field is the heart and soul of free and fair elections. And free and fair elections are the heart and soul of democracy itself. Democracy has been held repeatedly by the Supreme Court to be part of basic structure," he said. Singhvi added, "The moment you skew, render the level playing field in a non level playing field, what do you do? You are actually affecting democracy and therefore the basic structure. How do you do it, you use and misuse agencies blatantly." Singhvi said cases which are 20 years old have been resurrected to target the opposition. "...If you had to take action, I am assuming for a minute action is justified... Why can't the action be deferred to June-July, what is the need to arrest him today? What is the need to raid him tomorrow? Right in the middle of the election. It is because you want to win by unfair means before the first vote is cast," he alleged, referring to the arrest of Kejriwal.

## NAP to field candidates in all LS, Assembly seats

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Phulnakshara, March 22:** The newly-formed National Apni Party (NAP) will field candidates for all the 21 Lok Sabha and 147 Assembly seats in Odisha. This was revealed during a press meet held here, Thursday. Addressing the media at a hotel under Pahal police station in Khurda district, NAP's national president Bhagat Singh Bisht said the party will field candidates in all the Lok Sabha and Assembly seats while some of the names have been finalised. The party has decided to nominate Amulya Mallick from Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha seat and Birendra Oraon from Kalahandi Lok Sabha seat. Similarly, the meeting also revealed that names of the candidates for eight Assembly seats have been finalised. The party appointed Swadhin Kumar Ray as its state president at its inaugural function attended by its Odisha in-charge Ashok Kumar Mishra and national secretary Prem Anand Mishra. Similarly, Bikash Puhan and Laxmidhar Pradhan were appointed as state secretary and state joint secretary of the party, respectively. NAP also made its poll manifesto public with several promises to woo the voters. In its manifesto, the party listed pro-people measures like measures for development of farmers and agriculture, 300 units free electricity for domestic consumers and Rs 10 lakh health insurance for every family of Odisha. The party president asserted that NAP will fulfil these promises if it comes to power in Odisha.

## Social media replaces traditional campaign methods

NO ONE NEEDS BANNERS, FLAGS AND CUT-OUTS AS THE ENTIRE CAMPAIGN SEEMS TO HAVE SHRUNK INTO THE MOBILE PHONES. THOUGH THE SHOPS ARE STACKED WITH BANNERS, PHOTOGRAPHS OF LEADERS, T-SHIRTS, PENS, BALLOONS, THERE ARE NO TAKERS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, March 22:** Social media has replaced the traditional poll advertisement methods in Uttar Pradesh (UP) as many of the people associated with the selling of advertising material find it increasingly difficult to sell the advertising material. Manku Gupta - three generations of his family have been in the business of selling election-related memorabilia - has not yet put up his stall outside the Samajwadi Party office in Lucknow as he finds the going

tough now. "No one needs banners, flags and cut-outs. The entire campaign seems to have shrunk into the mobile phones. We have banners, photographs of leaders, T-shirts, pens, balloons but there are no takers," he says. Bansi Lal, a salesman at a stall outside the BJD office, says that stickers of Modi-Yogi are doing a brisk sale but other items remain unsold. "Candidates are relying on social media to connect with the voters because that does not cost money. Many candidates are



sending audio messages on the phone to voters which can be done from one location. That is why campaigning is not very

visible in the constituencies. "Earlier, candidates used to come here and take away loads of banners and flags but not anymore. Everyone has become tech-savvy and are creating memes of leaders of other parties and posting them on Instagram which are a huge hit," he explains. However, he hopes that his stocks of flags and banners would 'vanish in a day' when rallies of top leaders are held. Candidates, on the other hand, say that the entire complexion of electioneering has changed -

mainly after Covid. "I am even trying to address people in different villages through an online meet and hope to succeed," said a candidate. "It is much more economical and convenient to campaign through social media. The campaign, through the audio-visual medium, also has greater recall value," said a BJP candidate from central UP. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's digital India campaign has made everyone tech-savvy which was proving to be a boon in the elections.



# national

## of the day quote

It is unfortunate the Election Commission has not intervened. Freezing accounts over reassessment of taxes dating back to 1994 not only stifles the Congress but democracy itself. This is a clear indication the Union government is engaging in unfair practices

The condition in the country is same. Aurangzeb acted in a way that he would speak sweetly to everyone and seize the kingdom. He even adopted the policy of divide and rule. And the people from Gujarat who went to Delhi have adopted the same policy for Maharashtra and the country. History is repeating itself

Akhilesh ji does not want to take anyone along. He does not want to allow any person from backward class, Dalit community or minority community to become a leader

## SHORT TAKES

**1 dead, 10 injured**  
**Supaul:** One person was killed and 10 people were injured as a portion of an under-construction bridge collapsed in Bihar's Supaul district in the early hours of Friday, officials said. The 10.2-km bridge was being constructed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) over the Koshi river between Bheja in Madhubani and Bakaur in Supaul district, they said.

**ASI starts survey**  
**Dhar (MP):** The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Friday conducted survey of the controversial Bhojshala/Kamal Maula Mosque complex situated in the tribal-dominated Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh and made preparations for using carbon-dating equipment, officials said here. A 15-member ASI team along with senior local police and district administration officials readied the site for scientific assessments following a Madhya Pradesh High Court directive to conduct a 'scientific survey' within six weeks.

**Elvish granted bail**  
**Noida:** A Gautam Buddha Nagar court Friday granted bail to controversial YouTuber Siddharth Yadav alias Elvish Yadav in suspended drugs case, his lawyers said. Yadav was arrested by the Noida police Sunday in connection with its probe into suspected use of snake venoms as recreational drugs in parties he hosted.

The BJP is offering Rs 50 crore each to ruling Congress MLAs to resign and also promising them funds in subsequent byelections after they quit, as part of 'Operation Kamala'



SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

**AIR INDIA FINED ₹80 LAKH**  
 Aviation regulator DGCA Friday imposed an ₹80 lakh penalty on Air India for violations of flight duty and fatigue management norms, including failure to provide adequate rest to flight crew before and after ultra-long haul flights



# Massive setback for Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 22:** In a massive setback to the Congress party ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Delhi High Court Friday dismissed its pleas challenging the reassessment proceedings initiated against it by the Income Tax Department, saying the tax authority has collated "substantial and concrete" evidence warranting further scrutiny and examination.

A bench of Justices Yashwant Varma and Purushendra Kumar Kaurav said the party had challenged the assessment proceedings at a belated stage as it is to be completed by March 31, 2024. The party filed the petitions only on March 19, it said. The High Court said while the notice was issued to the party by the I-T Department March 7, 2023, the satisfaction note by the assessing officer (AO) appeared to have been provided to the petitioner June 28 and 30, 2023. The court said the statutory time-frames mandate assessment to be completed within 12 months from the time when the books of accounts or material are



handed over to the AO of the non-searched person. "This would mean that in the present case and taking the date of handing over or recordal of satisfaction as constituting the date from which that period is liable to be reckoned, the assessment is liable to be completed by March 31, 2024," the bench said. It said, "The writ petitioner has thus chosen to approach this court only a few days before the time for completion of assessment would expire and at the proverbial fag end of the proceedings. We consequently find no justification to interdict the assessment proceedings at this belated stage by invoking our jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution."

years 2014-15 to 2016-17. It has contended that Section 153C action was based on searches which were conducted on four individuals in April, 2019. It said that on the basis of the material which was gathered in those searches, the AO also drew corresponding satisfaction notes for initiation of proceedings against the Congress party.

The petitioner's counsel submitted that the assessment which was proposed to be undertaken for Assessment Years (AY) 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 would be barred by the period of limitation and the I-T department could have gone back to a maximum of six assessment years. The counsel contended that assessment under Section 153C of the Act could have at best covered the period of AYs 2017-18 to 2020-21 and the three additional AYs 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 would be barred by limitation. The I-T department, however, asserted there was no violation of any statutory provision by the tax authority and that as per the material recovered, the "escaped" income of the party is more than Rs 520 crore.

## Ponmudy sworn in as minister by Guv

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, March 22:** Senior DMK leader K Ponmudy was Friday sworn in as Minister by Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi, a day after the Supreme Court's nudge. About three months after he lost his post following his conviction by the Madras High Court December 19, 2023 in a disproportionate assets case, Ponmudy is now again the Tamil Nadu Minister for Higher Education. In a simple ceremony at the Raj Bhavan, Ravi administered the oath of office and secrecy to Ponmudy in the presence of Chief Minister M K Stalin and a couple of other ministers including Udhayanidhi Stalin and Ma Subramanian.

Ponmudy was assigned higher education portfolio, which was briefly held by Backward Classes Minister R S Rajakannappan. The subject of Khadi and Village Industries Board held previously by Rajakannappan has been restored to him. R Gandhi had held the subject of Khadi in addition to his portfolio Handlooms and Textiles. In December, consequent to Ponmudy's conviction portfolios were reshuffled. Ponmudy's swearing-in as Minister marks the end of a face-off between Stalin and Ravi. While Stalin had on March 13 written to Ravi to swear in Ponmudy as Minister and allot him higher education, it was declined by Governor who said Ponmudy's conviction had only been suspended and not set aside. Following this, the DMK regime approached the Supreme Court. Hearing the matter, the apex court expressed "serious concern" over the conduct of Governor Ravi as he refused to reinduct Ponmudi even after it suspended his conviction. The Supreme Court directed him to decide the issue within 24 hours.



A pedestrian walks past a graffiti depicting the importance of water on the occasion of 'World Water Day', in Bhopal, Friday

## DELHI EXCISE POLICY CASE

# Supreme Court denies bail to Kavitha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 22:** In a setback to BRS leader K Kavitha, the Supreme Court Friday refused to grant her bail in the money laundering case related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. The development came a day after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in the same case. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna, MM Sundresh and Bela M Trivedi asked Kavitha to approach the trial court, saying it is a practice which this court is following and cannot bypass the protocol. "Issue notice. Counter affidavit shall be filed in six weeks. Rejoinder, if any, in six weeks. It will be open to the petitioner to move the trial court or invoke any other remedy for grant of bail,"

the bench said, adding all pleas and contentions available to the petitioner are left open. It clarified that the court has not made any comments on merits of the case. The bench said as far as Kavitha's plea challenging the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) is concerned, the court is issuing notice to the ED and seeking its response. "The petition challenging the provisions (of PMLA) will come up with the pending matters," the bench told senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Kavitha. At the outset, Sibal told the bench that he has one request to the court that he should not be asked to go to the High Court. "Please see what is happening in our country. People are being arrested on the basis of an approver's statement. I am



very upset," he said. The bench told Sibal, "As a counsel, you should never be upset. Don't be so emotional. Main writ petition can be put up for hearing

with other petitions (pending matters) in July. As far as bail is concerned, we are very clear, you have to go to the trial court." When Sibal referred to the arrest of former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and other political leaders, the bench asked him not to make political statements. "We have been very clear and uniformly following this practice in this bench. All of us in principle agree we should not, because there is a political person or someone who can directly afford to come to the Supreme Court, bypass all the statutory and constitutional forums," the bench said. Sibal then referred the statement made by the ED in the court last year in September that she is not an accused. The bench said it is not going into the merit of the case at the moment.

## ISRO achieves major milestone

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, March 22:** ISRO Friday said it has achieved a major milestone in the area of reusable launch vehicle technology through the RLV LEX-02 landing experiment. This is the second of the series conducted at Aeronautical Test Range, Chitradurga, in Karnataka at 7:10 am. After the RLV-LEX-01 mission was accomplished last year, RLV-LEX-02 demonstrated the autonomous landing capability of reusable launch vehicle (RLV) from off-nominal initial conditions at release from helicopter, the Bangalore-headquartered space agency said in a statement. "The RLV was made to undertake more difficult maneuvers with dispersions, correct both cross-range and downrange and land on the runway in a fully autonomous mode," it said. The winged vehicle, called Pushpak, was lifted by an Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter and was released from 4.5 km altitude. After release at a distance of 4 km from the runway, Pushpak autonomously approached the runway along with cross-range corrections. It landed precisely on the runway and came to a halt using its brake parachute, landing gear brakes and nose wheel steering system, ISRO said. It added that this mission successfully simulated the approach and high-speed landing conditions of RLV returning from space. "With this second mission, ISRO has re-validated the indigenously developed technologies in the areas of navigation, control systems, landing gear and deceleration systems essential for performing a high-speed autonomous landing of a space-returning vehicle," the space agency said.

# WATER STORAGE IN COUNTRY'S RESERVOIRS AT JUST 38%

Bangalore hosts 14,000 borewells with 6,900 of them having dried up. Water bodies have either been encroached upon or have dried up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 22:** Ahead of the summer season, the live storage capacity in India's 150 primary reservoirs stands at just 38 per cent of their total capacity, which is less than the last decade's average for the same period, according to data. Cities like Bangalore are already grappling with a shortfall of water of around 500 million litres per day (MLD), against a demand of 2,600 MLD. Karnataka, among other states, registered lower storage levels compared to the same period last year, according to the weekly bulletin by the Central Water Commission. Bangalore hosts 14,000 borewells with 6,900 of them

having dried up. Water bodies have either been encroached upon or have dried up. The city requires 2,600 MLD of water, out of which 1,470 MLD is sourced from the Cauvery river and 650 MLD from borewells, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah had said. Several other states, including Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (two combined projects in both states), and Tamil Nadu, also reported lower storage levels compared to last year. The total live storage capacity of these 150 reservoirs is 178,784 BCM, which accounts for about



69.35 per cent of the nation's total live storage capacity estimated at 257,812 billion cubic metres, according to official data. According to the reservoir

storage bulletin Thursday, the live storage available in these reservoirs is 67,591 BCM, representing 38 per cent of their total live storage capacity. However, during the corresponding period last year, the live storage available was 80,557 BCM, with an average of 72,396 BCM over the past decade. Thus, the current live storage in these 150 reservoirs amounts to 84 per cent of the storage during the same period last year and 93 per cent of the average storage over the past decade. "The overall storage position in the country is lower than the corresponding period last year and also falls short of the average storage over the past ten years for the same period," stated the bulletin. The Southern region, which includes states like Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (two combined projects in both states),

Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, monitors 42 reservoirs with a total live storage capacity of 53,334 BCM. As of the Reservoir Storage Bulletin dated 21.03.2024, the total live storage available in these reservoirs is 12,287 BCM, which constitutes 23 per cent of their total live storage capacity. This marks a decrease compared to the storage levels during the corresponding period last year (39 per cent) and the average storage over the past ten years (32 per cent). Thus, the current storage levels in the Southern region are lower than those observed during the same period last year and also fall below the average storage over the past ten years.

# international



**The European Council has just decided to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Congratulations! Your place is in our European family**  
**CHARLES MICHEL** | PRESIDENT, EU COUNCIL

**OZ CLOSER TO N-SUB FLEET**  
Australia is set to provide 4.6 billion Australian dollars (\$3 billion) to British industry to support the construction of nuclear-powered submarines and ensure its new fleet arrives on time, the two countries said Friday



## of the day quote

The basic principle of international humanitarian law is the protection of civilians. We must stick to principles in Ukraine as in Gaza without double standards  
**ANTONIO GUTERRES** | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

We propose the imposition of tariffs on these Russian imports to mitigate the growing risk to our markets and our farmers  
**URSULA VON DER LEYEN** | PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The Syria crisis remains one of the most deadly to civilians in the world. Hostilities continue to plague various parts of Syria and have recently seen a sharp spike, especially in the north  
**ADAM ABDELMOULA** | UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, SYRIA

# No ceasefire in Gaza

**RUSSIA, CHINA VETO US RESOLUTION CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE IN GAZA**

**AGENCIES**  
**United Nations, March 22:** Russia and China Friday vetoed a US-led draft resolution at the Security Council on a ceasefire in Gaza, with Moscow accusing Washington of a "hypocritical spectacle" that does not pressure Israel.

The United States, Israel's main ally which has vetoed previous ceasefire calls, put forward the resolution which for the first time would have supported "the imperative of an immediate and sustained ceasefire" and condemned the October 7 attack by Hamas.

Russia and China exercised their vetoes, Algeria also voted against and Guyana abstained. The other 11 Security Council members voted in favor, including permanent members France and Britain.

Russia's ambassador, Vasily Nebenzia, said that the United States was doing nothing to rein in Israel, mocking Washington for speaking of a ceasefire after "Gaza has been virtually wiped off the face of the Earth."

"We have observed a typical hypocritical spectacle. The American product is exceedingly politicized, with the sole purpose being to play to voters and throw them a bone in the form of some kind of a mention of a ceasefire in Gaza," he said.

The resolution will "ensure the impunity of Israel, whose crimes are not even assessed in the draft."

The draft links a ceasefire to ongoing talks, led by Qatar with support from the United States and Egypt, to halt the war in return for Hamas releasing hostages.



The US ambassador, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, called the Russian and Chinese vetoes "not just cynical" but also "petty."

"Russia and China simply did not want to vote for a resolution that was penned by the United States," she said.

The Security Council had already adopted two resolutions on the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza, but none calling for a cease-fire.

Russia and China vetoed a US-sponsored resolution in late October calling for pauses in the fighting to deliver aid, protection of civilians, and a halt to arming Hamas. They said it didn't reflect global calls for a cease-fire.

The US, Israel's closest ally, has vetoed three resolutions demanding a cease-fire, the most

**The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 11 members in favour, three against and one abstention**

recent an Arab-backed measure supported by 13 council members with one abstention February 20.

Dire consequences Palestinian militants killed some 1,200 people in the surprise October 7 attack

into southern Israel that triggered the war, and abducted another 250 people. Hamas is still believed to be holding some 100 people hostage, as well as the remains of 30 others.

In Gaza, the Health Ministry raised the death toll in the territory Thursday to nearly 32,000 Palestinians. It doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count but says women and children make up two-thirds of the dead.

Israel faces mounting pressure from even its closest allies to streamline the entry of aid

## SHORT TAKES

### Woman gets lifer over blasphemy

**Lahore:** A Pakistani court in Punjab province has sentenced a 40-year-old woman to life in prison after finding her guilty of burning pages of Islam's holy book, a court official said Friday. Asia Bibi, a Muslim resident of the thickly populated Bedian Road area of Lahore, was arrested by police in 2021 on a complaint by a man of her locality who accused her of burning a copy of the Quran outside her house. "The Lahore sessions court on Thursday handed down life imprisonment to Asia Bibi on the charges of desecration of the Holy Quran," a court official told PTI. Her counsel, advocate Sarmad Ali, pointed out fundamental flaws in the case against Asia saying she did not commit any blasphemy and she was implicated wrongfully by her neighbour to settle a personal score.

### Haiti gang leader shot dead

**Port-Au-Prince:** Attacks, including a shooting that left a gang leader dead, flared in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, Thursday as political groups appeared nearer to finalizing a transition council to take over from an absent government. A police operation killed the head of the Delmas 95 gang, Ernst Julme, known as Ti Greg, a day after another gang leader was killed in an apparent resurgence of vigilante justice, police and sources confirmed. The death of Julme, a member of gang leader Jimmy "Barbeque" Cherizier's "Viv Ansanm" alliance, marks a setback for gangs' moves to take over more of the city. Julme had recently escaped from Haiti's largest prison in a mass jailbreak.

## TIDBITS

### Deepfake images: Meloni seeks compensation

**Rome:** Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni has been asked to testify in court July 2 in the trial of two men who are accused of making deepfake pornographic images using her face and posting them online. Meloni, who is listed as an injured party in the trial in Sassari in Sardinia, is seeking 100,000 euros (\$108,212) in symbolic damages and will donate any award to an Interior Ministry fund for women victims of domestic violence, her attorney Maria Giulia Marongiu said in an email Friday to The Associated Press. "The crime in question is particularly odious, as it allegedly involves the uploading of fabricated pornographic images that could affect any unsuspecting woman with damaging consequences for her reputation and private life," Marongiu said. "Given the role played by Giorgia Meloni, it seemed all the more fitting that she should be a civil plaintiff, in the hope that this would be useful in raising awareness of the issue also on behalf of the many women who often remain defenceless." According to the ANSA news agency, Italy's postal police in 2020 identified the father and son who allegedly uploaded the deepfake images to a US-based porn site by tracing the data to one of their cell phones. At the time Meloni was not premier, but head of her Brothers of Italy party.



### Largest of its kind: Israel seizes West Bank land

**Jerusalem:** Israel reported Friday the seizure of 800 hectares (1,977 acres) of land in the occupied West Bank, which activists called the largest action of its kind in decades. Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich declared as "state lands" the area in the northern Jordan Valley, as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Israel for Gaza war talks. Israeli settlement watchdog Peace Now said the size of the seized area is the largest since 1993's Oslo Accords, and that "2024 marks a peak in the extent of declarations of state land". Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. "While there are those in Israel and the world who seek to undermine our right over the Judea and Samaria area and the country in general, we are promoting settlement through hard work and in a strategic manner all over the country," Smotrich said, using Israel's term for the West Bank. Settlements in the Palestinian territories are illegal under international law. Smotrich, who heads the extreme-right Religious Zionism party, lives in a settlement.



## LARGEST AIR STRIKE

### Russia blasts Ukraine's energy facilities

**Kyiv, March 22:** Russia Friday staged its largest air strike on Ukrainian energy infrastructure of the war, opens new tab, hitting a vast dam, killing at least five people and leaving more than a million others without electricity, Kyiv said. Ukraine, which has long urged allies to supply more air defenses, said its energy system had received emergency power supplies from neighbouring Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as seven of its regions faced blackouts. The attack by Russia, which vowed last week to punish Kyiv for conducting attacks and strikes during its presidential election, brought back memories of the first winter of the invasion when Moscow regularly bombed the power grid. "Russia is at war against people's ordinary lives. My condolences to the families and loved ones of those killed in this terror," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram messenger. Russia denies deliberately targeting civilians, though the war that began with its full-scale invasion in February 2022 has resulted in the deaths of thousands of people, the uprooting of millions and the destruction of Ukrainian towns and cities. Moscow says attacks on Ukraine's power infrastructure are legitimate strikes aimed at weakening the enemy's military. Ukraine's largest dam, the DniproHES in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia, suffered strikes to its hydraulic structures and to the dam itself, state hydro power company Ukrhydroenergo said, adding there was no risk of a breach.



- Over 150 missiles and drones fired in attack
- Kyiv says Russia targeted energy facilities
- Over a million people cut off from power in Ukraine
- Ukraine's largest dam hit but no danger of breach

# Muizzu seeks debt relief from India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Male, March 22:** After his anti-India rhetoric, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has struck a reconciliatory tone, saying India will continue to remain his country's "closest ally" and urged New Delhi to provide debt relief to the archipelago nation. The Maldives owed approximately \$400.9 million to India by the end of last year. Ever since he took oath as the president in November last year, the pro-China Maldivian leader has pursued a hardline stand towards India and within hours had demanded that Indian military personnel operating three aviation platforms be repatriated from his country by May 10. On Thursday, in his first in-



terview with the local media since assuming office, Muizzu said India was instrumental in providing aid to the Maldives and has implemented the "greatest number" of projects. India will continue to remain the Maldives' closest ally, he said and emphasised that there was no question about it, Maldives news portal Edition.Mv said in a report that carried excerpts of Muizzu's interview to its Dhivehi language sister-publi-

cation 'Mihaaru.' Muizzu's comments praising India came after the first batch of Indian military personnel left the island nation this month as planned. By May 10, Muizzu had demanded that all 88 military personnel, manning the three Indian aviation platforms, should leave the country. India has been providing humanitarian and medical evacuation services to the people of the Maldives for the last few years using two helicopters and a Dornier aircraft. The Maldives' proximity to India, barely 70 nautical miles from the island of Minicoy in Lakshadweep and 300 nautical miles from the mainland's western coast, and its location at the hub of commercial sea lanes running through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) gives it significant strategic importance. During the interview, Muizzu urged India to accommodate debt relief measures for the Maldives in the repayment of "the hefty loans taken over consecutive governments." "The conditions we have inherited are such that there are very large loans taken from India. Hence, we are holding discussions to explore leniencies in the repayment structure of these loans. Instead of halting any ongoing projects ... To proceed with them at speed, so I see no reason for any adverse effects (on Maldives-India relations)," Muizzu added. Muizzu's conciliatory comments towards India came ahead of Parliament elections in Maldives slated in mid-April.

## In a first, Canada to cut temporary residents, put cap on immigration

**Ottawa, March 22:** Canada plans to reduce its temporary residents and set a cap on temporary immigration for the first time ever, Immigration Minister Marc Miller said Thursday, the latest government effort to address a housing shortage and stretched essential services. In recent years Canada has seen a sharp rise in international students, foreign workers and other temporary residents who come to the country on time-limited visas as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's gov-



ernment relied on immigration to drive economic growth and plug labor gaps. But the Liberal government has also come under political pressure for its immigration policies, with critics arguing they have exacerbated a housing crunch. Some services provided by the provinces, such as education and healthcare, are also struggling to keep up with population growth. The government wants to reduce temporary residents to 5% of the total population over the next three years from 6.5% in 2023, Miller said. That would be a cut of about 20% from Canada's 2.5 million temporary residents in 2023. Miller will convene a meeting with his provincial and territorial counterparts in May to finalize the plan. "Starting this fall for the first time, we will expand the immigration levels plan to include both temporary resident arrivals and permanent resident arrivals," he said, referring to the federal government's immigration targets. In November, the Trudeau government said it would stop ramping up immigration for permanent residents from 2026 onwards. In January, Canada announced a two-year cap on the intake of foreign students and said it would stop giving work permits to some students after graduation as it seeks to rein in record numbers of newcomers.

**We need to ensure the number of temporary residents entering the country is at a sustainable level**  
**MARC MILLER** | IMMIGRATION MINISTER

# business



India is looking at Africa for minerals, including cobalt, and other critical minerals  
VL KANTHA RAO | MINES SECRETARY

## UNCTAD OPTIMISTIC ABOUT TRADE OUTLOOK

Moderating global inflation and improving economic growth forecasts an optimistic outlook for world trade in 2024, says the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The decline in the value of global trade throughout 2023 was primarily driven by reduced demand in developed nations and trade weaknesses within East Asia and Latin American regions, UNCTAD said in its 'Global Trade Update'



## of the day quote

In our continuous endeavour to help customers embrace a digital-first future, the Synergy Lounge will function as a co-innovation and co-development center specifically focusing on AI, GenAI and next-gen technologies

KUNAL PUROHIT | CHIEF DIGITAL SERVICES OFFICER, TECH MAHINDRA

The partnership with Pharmazz and launch of this first-in-class drug marks the latest in our effort to enter into strategic collaborations to bring novel molecules to India to meet genuine unmet patient needs

MV RAMANA | CEO, BRANDED MARKETS (INDIA AND EMERGING MARKETS), DR REDDY'S

We urge the authorities to direct (cooperative) NAFED to establish procurement centers in major mandal areas to facilitate the purchase of mustard seeds at MSP, thereby supporting market stability and farmer welfare

AJAY JHUNHUNWALA | PRESIDENT, SEA

# Bajaj to launch world's first CNG bike in June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, March 22:** Bajaj Auto is developing a portfolio of clean fuel CNG motorcycles, and the first such bike will hit the market in June, Bajaj Auto Managing Director Rajiv Bajaj said here Friday.

The bike will run on CNG and would hit the roads in June, he said. The new bike would target mileage-conscious consumers and is expected to launch under a different brand. It is expected that CNG bikes will be priced



higher than their petrol counterparts due to the higher cost of manufacturing besides having a special tank to offer petrol and CNG fuel options to offer convenience to customers. Bajaj said there was a 50-65% reduction in fuel cost and oper-

We have to stay relevant and adapt to changes. We transitioned from scooters in the 60s to motorcycles in the 90s and now to electric vehicles. We will soon launch the world's first CNG motorcycle

RAJIV BAJAJ | MD, BAJAJ AUTO

ating costs. The emission levels were lower compared to ICE vehicles. The CNG prototype had seen a 50% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>, 75% in Carbon Monoxide and a

reduction of almost 90% in non-methane hydrocarbon emissions. Bajaj also said that Pulsar launched 20 years ago will hit 2 million units soon.

Meanwhile, the Bajaj Group committed Rs 5,000 crore to social impact initiatives over 5 years, with a focus on skill development, under 'Bajaj Beyond' the Group's new identity for all its CSR and charitable programmes.

This will benefit over 2 crore of tomorrow's youth and enable them to take advantage of the em-

ployment and entrepreneurial opportunities offered by India's growing economy.

"Social responsibility is deeply entwined in the Bajaj Family's businesses and its philanthropic endeavours through generations. In the last 10 years alone, the Bajaj Group has contributed close to Rs 4,000 crore towards CSR initiatives largely focused on skilling and education, health, livelihood, water conservation, and several other areas of development," Bajaj Auto Chairman Niraj Bajaj said.

# Forex kitty rises to \$642.50bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, March 22:** India's forex reserves increased by \$6.396 billion to \$642.492 billion for the week ended March 15, the Reserve Bank said Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had risen by \$10.47 billion to \$636.095 billion.



In October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year.

For the week ended March 15, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by \$6.034 billion to \$568.386 billion, the data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by \$425 million to \$51.14 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by \$65 million to \$18.276 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was down by \$129 million to \$4.689 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

## Govt rejects HZL plan to split firm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 22:** The mines ministry has rejected a proposal by Vedanta group's firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) to split the company into different entities, a top official Friday said.

The government is the largest minority shareholder in Hindustan Zinc, owning a 29.54 per cent stake in the company.

"We have not agreed to the proposal," Mines Secretary VL Kantha Rao told reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

Hindustan Zinc had earlier announced its plans of spinning off business into separate entities, including zinc and silver, to increase its market capitalisation.

# ₹ TOUCHES NEW NADIR

Rupee falls 48 paise to hit all-time low of 83.61 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, March 22:** The rupee depreciated 48 paise to settle at an all-time low of 83.61 against the American currency Friday, tracking a surging greenback against major crosses in the overseas markets and weak Asian peers.

Foreign fund outflows also dented market sentiment, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 83.28 against the greenback, and finally settled at a record low of 83.61, registering a fall of 48 paise from the previous close of 83.13.

In intraday trade, the rupee touched a low of 83.65 against the American currency. The rupee had earlier recorded its lowest closing level of 83.40 December 13, 2023.

"The US dollar Index surged higher against the basket of currencies this Friday afternoon session in Asia and was set to advance for the second straight week, underpinned by bets that other major central banks could



start cutting interest rates earlier than the Federal Reserve," Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities, said.

According to Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, the US dollar strengthened on weak euro and pound.

Euro declined as the Swiss National Bank (SNB) surprised the markets by cutting interest rates by 25 bps to 1.5 per cent, which raised the odds of a rate cut by the European Central Bank (ECB) in June 2024.

The pound also fell after the Bank of England kept interest rates unchanged at 5.25 per cent. Two hawkish committee members, who voted for a rate hike in the previous meeting, also voted for a no rate hike. Robust economic data from the US also favoured the US dollar,

The rupee had earlier recorded its lowest closing level of 83.40 December 13, 2023

with a negative bias on the strong US dollar and expectations of a bounce back in crude oil prices. However, a positive tone in the domestic markets may support the rupee at lower levels. Any selling of dollars by the RBI may also support the rupee," Choudhary added.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 190.75 points or 0.26 per cent higher at 72,831.94. The broader NSE Nifty rose 84.80 points or 0.39 per cent to 22,096.75.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital market Friday as they offloaded shares worth ₹3,309.76 crore, according to exchange data.

"This decline was primarily influenced by the performance of the Chinese Yuan, particularly its offshore counterpart...His has spread negativity across Asian peers. However, reluctance among Chinese-funded institutions in the offshore market to provide Yuan liquidity for forward transactions helped to stabilize the market," CR Forex Advisors MD Amit Pabari said.

The rupee had earlier recorded its lowest closing level of 83.40 December 13, 2023

## SHORT TAKES

### DGCA slaps ₹80L fine on Air India

**New Delhi:** Aviation watchdog DGCA Friday imposed a fine of Rs 80 lakh on Air India for violations of norms related to flight duty time limitations and fatigue management system of flight crew. The decision came after the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) conducted a spot audit of Air India in January, during which evidence was collected and fleet-wise random reports were analysed. "The analysis of reports and evidence revealed that Air India Limited operated flight(s) with both flight crew aged above 60 years flying together in a few instances. The operator was also found deficient in providing adequate weekly rest, adequate rest before & after ultra-long range flights and adequate rest on layover to the flight crew, which violates the extant provisions of the Civil Aviation Requirements pertaining to FDTL," the regulator said.



When asked about the reason for the rejection of the proposal, the Secretary said "Whatever report we have in front of us we are not convinced as a shareholder."

Hindustan Zinc had earlier said that it has engaged a leading advisory firm to study its plans to spin off the business.

Earlier, Hindustan Zinc had said the company's board has decided to undertake a "comprehensive review of its corporate structure for unlocking potential value".

According to a regulatory filing, the move is aimed at creating separate legal entities for zinc, lead, silver, and recycling businesses.

The strategic objectives outlined by the company's board for undertaking such an exercise included unlocking value for all stakeholders and creating businesses that are positioned to better capitalise their distinct market positions and deliver long-term growth.

Besides, the move aims at forming appropriate capital structure and capital allocation policies based on business-specific dynamics and sharpen focus on core competencies and appropriate realignment of the company's resources.

## BIZ BUZZ

### BoM holds All India Hindi Conference

**New Delhi:** Bank of Maharashtra, a leading public Sector Bank of the country, has organised All India Hindi Conference on the topic of "Bhabisya Ki Banking" for all the banks, financial institutions and insurance companies in Delhi. In this conference, IAS Sushree Anshu Arya, Secretary, Official Language Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, was present as the Chief Guest. Ashish Pandey, Executive Director, Bank of Maharashtra presided over the programme. Sushree Chitra Dattar, General Manager, K Rajesh Kumar, General Manager, Human Resource Department and Rajbhasha, Hari Shankar Batsa, Zonal Manager, Delhi Zone and Rajendra Srivastav, Deputy General Manager (Official Language) were also present on this occasion. The conference was attended by a large number of top executives and Rajbhasha officials from all banks, financial institutions and insurance companies.



### Airtel announces special IPL Bonanza offers

**New Delhi:** Cricket fever captivates the nation once again as Indian Premier League, the biggest T20 tournament, starts today. To celebrate the occasion, Airtel has unveiled special, limited period IPL Bonanza offers for its users starting from Rs 39. For all prepaid customers, Airtel has revised its existing Unlimited Data pack plans of Rs 49 and Rs 99 to special two new packs at Rs 39 and Rs 79 respectively. The packs are customized for IPL 2024 to offer uninterrupted connectivity to Airtel cricket fans and ensure they don't run out of data while streaming the matches. For DTH users, Airtel Digital TV has associated with Star Sports to elevate viewer experience during the ongoing IPL 2024 season. This associations enables bringing Star Sports' innovative 4K service on Airtel Digital TV, just in time for more immersive experience for cricket fans this IPL season.

# Outlook for FY25 positive: FinMin

## THE MONTHLY ECONOMIC REVIEW SAID ROBUST INVESTMENT ACTIVITY IS DRIVING GROWTH AMID A STEADY RISE IN CONSUMPTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 22:** The finance ministry Friday said with an uptick in private investment and inflation trending down, India's outlook for the next fiscal looks positive.

The Monthly Economic Review also said that inclusion of Indian bonds in Bloomberg bond index from January 2025 should bolster inflows.

It said robust investment activity is driving growth amid a steady rise in consumption.



"The continued focus on public investment seems to have crowded in private investment," said the February edition of the review by Department of Economic Affairs.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) has revised upwards the GDP growth estimate for current fiscal to 7.6 per cent from 7.3 per cent.

India grew above 8 per cent for three consecutive quarters, reaffirming its position as a stand-out performer amid sluggish global growth trends. Various agencies echo a similar senti-

ment revising the FY24 growth estimates of India closer to 8 per cent, the ministry said.

"On the whole, India looks positively towards the dawn of FY25," the review said.

It said increased demand for residential properties in tier-2 and tier-3 cities augurs well for furthering construction activity.

Non-farm employment has revived, improving the capacity to absorb the labour leaving agriculture.

"The ascent of manufacturing sector employment is expected to be marked by upscaling of enterprises and sunrise sectors emerging as catalysts for generating quality employment," it added.

It said strong growth accompanied by stable inflation and external account and progressive employment outlook will help the Indian economy close the current financial year on a positive note.

# Apple antitrust suit mirrors strategy that beat Microsoft

## THE US SUED APPLE CLAIMING THE TECH BEHEMOTH ILLEGALLY MAINTAINED A MONOPOLY FOR ITS IPHONE BY STIFLING COMPETITION AND IMPOSING HIGH COSTS ON CONSUMERS

REUTERS

**Washington, March 22:** The US government's antitrust lawsuit against Apple draws on the watershed 1998 case that broke Microsoft's stranglehold on desktop software, but that may prove to be an imperfect blueprint for addressing smartphone competition.

The market for the iPhone today looks very different from the near-monopoly enjoyed by Microsoft's Windows operating system two decades ago, and the government as a result may face a tougher time in taking on Apple, legal experts said.

The Department of Justice,

along with 15 state governments, accused Apple of unlawfully monopolizing the smartphone market through restrictions on app developers that curb choice and innovation, which it said forces consumers to pay higher prices.

Apple said the government is wrong on the facts and law.

The government has to prove that Apple's business practices were "exclusionary" and harmed consumers by degrading the quality of rival products, according to several legal experts.

The government accused Apple of suppressing technologies that would have increased competition among smartphones



in five areas: so-called "super apps," cloud-streamed gaming apps, messaging apps, smart-watches and digital wallets.

One example the government gave is familiar to anyone who texts from an iPhone to a user of an Android phone — the dreaded "green bubble" that results in hindrances such as grainy photos sent by text that don't apply when texting between two phones using Apple's iOS operating system.

Antitrust enforcers said Apple was rapidly expanding its in-

fluence and power in industries including content creation and financial services.

By comparison, Microsoft was accused of abusing its market dominance to impede users from freely installing software on computers using the company's operating system.

That might sound similar to Apple's control over the app store, but legal experts said there are important differences.

Apple can contract with whom it want and to design products as it sees fit, legal experts said.

## MARKET SHARE

Microsoft was forced to open its operating system because it controlled 95% of desktop operating systems in the 1990s. By comparison, Apple had 55% of the North American market for smartphones at the end of September based on shipments, with the rest largely made up of phones using Google's Android operating system, according to Canalsy, a market analysis firm.

The Justice Department seeks to define the market as that of smartphones in the United States. Apple representatives said they will try to persuade the court to define the market as the global smartphone market.

Apple and rival Samsung Electronics each had about a 20% market share globally in 2023, though Apple beat Samsung slightly on shipments, Canalsy data showed.

Microsoft "clearly was a monopolist and there were no ef-

fective competitors in the PC operating system space," Ross said. On the other hand, Android "is very popular, especially in the rest of the world, and is a very effective competitor with iOS."

In 2021, in an antitrust case brought by "Fortnite" creator Epic Games, a federal judge found after a trial that Epic failed to prove that Apple users were "locked-in" to their iPhones and would not switch to Android devices.

Litigator Melissa Maxman in Washington said the Microsoft case changed the tech landscape and lauded the government's lawsuit as a step toward greater competition in the smartphone market.

"If you open up the market for other competitors to get in you will see prices go down and quality go up," Maxman said. "That's exactly what was said in Microsoft — and guess what, it was true."

# India fail to impress CSK off to a winning start

Ruturaj's captaincy reign begins with a 6-wicket victory over RCB



the Indian midfield slowly began to clamp their control. Lallianzuala Chhangte, prancing down the left, found an unmarked Manvir with a low cross. But the latter, who had drifted inside from the right flank, sent his shot wide.

Despite India's control over the game, Afghanistan kept finding chances, especially on the counter. Mosawer Ahadi was released down the right flank, as he cut in and unleashed a left-footed curler that India custodian Gurpreet Singh Sandhu grabbed with both hands.

Manvir had more than one opportunity to score in the first half itself. A corner from Chhangte, and a cross whipped in by fullback Nikhil Poojary were great chances for the India forward to score, but both went begging, as the first half came to a close.

After Manvir, it was Vikram Pratap's turn in the second half to miss a couple of chances. While on the first occasion, the ball was just a yard too far, the 22-year-old managed to wriggle past his marker on the second opportunity, only to run into a cul-de-sac, where the angle was too narrow for him to take a crack at the goal.

His last opportunity came just minutes ahead of the hour mark, when he managed to get into the six-yard box unmarked, and connected a header onto a cross by Akash Mishra. But the effort went inches wide.

Subhasish Bose was added to the list of Indian players who managed to get a free header inside the Afghanistan box, as he nodded a Colaco corner inches wide of the target.

As the match went into injury time, Colaco created one last opportunity, sprinting down the right flank. His low cross missed captain Sunil Chhetri, but landed at Mahesh's feet, as the latter tried to feint his marker to create shooting space but he was soon dispossessed.

India and Afghanistan will now shift to Guwahati, where they will face off again March 26, for their second encounter in the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup.



MEMORABLE OUTING: Mustafizur Rahman (centre) was surrounded by his teammates in celebration after a wicket

AGENCIES

**Chennai, March 22:** Ruturaj Gaikwad, who was handed over the captaincy of Chennai Super Kings, began his leadership journey in IPL with a superb six-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League season-opener here, Friday.

And it all began with Bangladesh left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman's four-wicket (4/29) burst left RCB totter at 78/5 inside 12 overs. However, a splendid 95-run stand between Anuj Rawat (48, 25b, 4x4, 3x6) and veteran Dinesh Karthik (38 n o, 26b, 3x4, 2x6) helped the visitors reach 173/6.

In response, CSK were off to flying start courtesy IPL debutant Rachin Ravindra (37, 15b, 3x4, 3x6) and skipper Ruturaj (15) himself as the duo stitched together 38 runs inside four overs. Ajinkya Rahane (27) and Daryll Mitchell (22) too contributed well with the willow but couldn't turn them into match-winning ones.

There was a time when the home team were struggling at 110/4 in 12.3 overs, but Shivam Dube (34 n o, 28b, 4x4, 1x6) and Ravindra Jadeja (25 n o) ensured their side cross the finish line without anymore hiccups with

a match-winning unbeaten 66-run fifth-wicket stand.

Earlier, Mustafizur brought back memories of his rookie days with his cerebral variations but an impressive rear-guard action from Rawat and Karthik took RCB to a respectable 173/6.

Pacer Tushar Deshpande (0/47) was smashed for 25 runs by south-paw Rawat, who added invaluable 95 runs for the sixth wicket off 50 balls with veteran Karthik. RCB knocked 83 runs in their last 6 overs. Rawat hit four fours and three sixes in his innings. This was after Mustafizur took four wickets in his first two overs to reduce RCB to 78/5.

'Fizz' as he is known in the cricketing fraternity wouldn't have got a first eleven nod had Matheesha Pathirana been fit to represent the 'Yellow Brigade'.

Brought in the Powerplay to stop a rampaging Faf du Plessis (35, 23b, 8x4), Mustafizur, gauging the pace of the track, didn't keep it too full and bowled between the 7-8 metre length to extract enough bounce to get a couple of dismissals.

Virat Kohli made 21 off 20 balls in his first competitive game in more than two months. Having got to face only six deliveries in the Powerplay, Kohli never looked in rhythm after a two-month pa-

ternity break as a mistimed pull led to his dismissal.

Ajinkya Rahane caught it at deep mid-wicket but as he was about to slide out, he flicked it inside for Rachin Ravindra to complete the relay catch. Mustafizur's best delivery however was one that cleaned up Green when he rolled his wrists to bowl a cutter with a wobbly seam.

At the onset, Deepak Chahar (1/37) did look woefully short of match practice, as his loopy outswingers got harsh treatment first up from Du Plessis. But RCB's joy was short-lived as the skipper was caught in the deep after a brisk knock.

Rajat Patidar's (0) wretched run since England Tests continued as he nicked one to MS Dhoni behind stumps. The break in momentum for RCB worked in Chahar's favour as a change of ends saw him bowl one that pitched on back of length and moved a shade to have Glenn Maxwell caught behind.

#### BRIEF SCORES

RCB 173/6 (Anuj Rawat 48, Dinesh Karthik 38 n o, Faf du Plessis 35; Mustafizur Rahman 4/29) lost to CSK 176/4 (Rachin Ravindra 37, Shivam Dube 34 n o, Ajinkya Rahane 27, Ravindra Jadeja 25 n o; Cameron Green 2/27) by 6 wickets.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Abha (Saudi Arabia), March 22:** India played out a goalless draw against Afghanistan after both sides failed to turn their opportunities into goals in a Group A fixture of the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers here.

It was end-to-end contest in the first half Thursday night with India coming close to scoring through Manvir Singh on two occasions and the hosts too had their share of chances.

With this result, India climbed to the second spot in Group A with four points from three matches, followed by Kuwait, who are on three points from as many games. The equation was quite clear for both teams. A win would do either side a world of good.

India have provisionally taken the second spot in Group A, three points ahead of Kuwait, who lost to Qatar 0-3 earlier in the night. Afghanistan, following a draw and to losses are fourth in the group.

A feisty midfield battle ensued in the opening exchanges as lunging tackles were frequently on display at the Damac Stadium. While Afghanistan looked to use their pace and physical built to assert dominance, India were intent on playing a passing game.

Vikram Partap Singh, who had earned his senior national team debut in January, was a constant thorn in the flesh of the Afghanistan defence. The forward kept drifting between the centre and the wing, often switching with Manvir, which caused

much confusion in the Afghanistan ranks.

With India and Afghanistan resorting to open football, the first half (45+3 minutes) saw a wave of attacking moves but the strikers were not able to come alive in the final third, leaving coaches Igor Stimac and Ashley Westwood a bit frustrated as they shouted instructions from the touchline.

India were on the offensive from the word go and caused some anxious moments in the Afghanistan defence. Had Manvir not spurned a great chance in the 17th minute, the visitors would have taken an early lead in their away leg of the second round of the 2026 World Cup and 2027 AFC Asian Cup preliminary joint qualification match.

After a few early exchanges,

## All eyes on Pant as DC take on Punjab



Rishabh Pant has a laugh during an IPL captains' event in Chennai, Thursday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh, March 22:** Rishabh Pant's resilient return to the cricket field in multiple roles will be the focus when Delhi Capitals take on Punjab Kings in their IPL opener here Saturday, both teams hoping to erase the disappointment of below-par performances in the last season.

Pant's miraculous escape from a life-threatening car crash in December 2022 has now become a tale of perseverance after the big-hitting wicketkeeper-batter made a faster than expected recovery to be back in action.

He has been cleared to play as a keeper-batter and has the additional responsibility of captaining the side, taking back the position from David Warner, who led DC to a ninth-place finish in the 10-team tournament last year.

It has taken 15 months of hard work, courage and determination for Pant to be ready to lead DC again. He is a massive shot in the arm for the team whose best-ever performance in the IPL till date is a runners-up finish in 2020.

It is not yet clear whether Pant will start his keeping duties immediately. In case he doesn't, DC will fall back on either West Indian Shai Hope or South African's Tristan Stubbs. DC have a potent fast bowling arsenal, backed up by an explosive batting lineup.

Warner, who recently retired from the Test cricket, will be hoping to make a mark and secure a spot in the T20 World Cup-bound Australian side.

In Prithvi Shaw, Mitchell Marsh, Pant and Stubbs, DC have explosive batting line-up, while their bowling attack will be led by Anrich Nortje in the company of Indian veteran Ishant Sharma, Mukesh Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav and Axa Patel. **PBKS look to shed past baggage**

The Punjab trophy cabinet is empty too. They have made it to the final only once, in 2014, losing to Kolkata Knight Riders on that occasion. After finishing sixth for four consecutive seasons between 2019 and 2022, PBKS dropped to eighth in 2023, and will look to turn things around this time.

In Shikhar Dhawan, PBKS have a skipper who would be desperate to prove a point after being side-lined from the national set-up. PBKS have a new vice-captain in Jitesh Sharma but Jonny Bairstow's form would be a concern.

The side have some feisty all-rounders in Sikandar Raza, Sam Curran, Liam Livingstone and Rishi Dhawan while the bowling attack will be led by Kagiso Rabada in the company of Arshdeep Singh, Harshal Patel and Nathan Ellis. But they have rarely come together as a unit to go the distance, making Delhi the favourites for the day game.

## Iyer takes spotlight in Starc vs Cummins showdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, March 22:** Shreyas Iyer's comeback from a long injury layoff will be in focus as IPL's two biggest signings, Australian pacers Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins, go head to head in Kolkata Knight Riders' opening match against Sunrisers Hyderabad here Saturday.

The Indian batter, after missing the entire season last year due to a back injury, returns to lead KKR, who have made some tactical additions while keeping the nucleus of the side intact.

Shreyas sparked with the bat with a 95 in Mumbai's Ranji Trophy triumph recently but it remains to be seen whether he'll be available for all the matches, given his fitness concerns.

KKR's most successful leader Gautam Gambhir is back in his second innings as a mentor. His partnership with head coach Chandrakant Pandit, a shrewd tactician in domestic circuit, will be the key to their revival.

Under the Gambhir's captaincy, KKR had a golden run



from 2011-2017 -- two IPL titles, five playoffs and a runners-up finish in the now defunct Champions League T20 tournament.

The biggest signing of this

IPL is with KKR, and by acquiring Starc at a record sum of Rs 24.75-crore, the left-arm quick will be under huge pressure to perform.

His spell in powerplay and

the death overs will be the key. Starc and Andre Russell are the only two experienced pacers in KKR's ranks, and with no like-for-like replacements for them, their workload management will be crucial.

KKR boast of a star-studded top-order batting lineup in Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Phil Salt, Venkatesh Iyer and Shreyas to go with the Russell-Rinku Singh firepower at the death.

But the Gambhir-mentored side will rely heavily on the home conditions to offer some spin so as to give the likes of Sunil Narine, Varun Chakravarthy and Suyash Sharma some assistance.

Starc will have his skipper Cummins leading SRH in the adjacent dug-out as the Australian captain will also have his task cut out. Cummins (Rs 20.50-crore) is the second-most expensive buy in this IPL and all eyes will be on him to revive the fortunes of the side that has had two wooden- spoon finishes in the last three seasons.

On paper, KKR with a star-

**MATCHDAY**  
Indian Premier League

**PBKS vs DC**  
Time: 03:30 PM

**KKR vs SRH**  
Time: 07:30 PM

Telecast: Star Sports Network  
Stream: Jio Cinema

studded batting and spin-heavy attack to complement Starc's pace, will be overwhelming favourites.

But SRH, under the shrewd captaincy of Cummins, will definitely fancy their chances. Travis Head and Heinrich Klaasen's batting firepower in the powerplay and death overs will be vital.

Their bowling also looks balanced with the experienced Cummins and India's veteran death-overs specialist Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the lineup, while the likes of Washington Sundar and Wanindu Hasaranga, if available, will be crucial in the spin department.

## Sindhu, Sen bow out, Srikanth advances

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Basel (Switzerland), March 22:** Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu's run at the Swiss Open was cut short by a Japanese teenager, while top Indian male shuttler Lakshya Sen lost to Lee Chia-Hao of Chinese-Taipei in the pre-quarterfinals of the Super 300 tournament here.

Ace Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth, Priyansh Rajawat and Kiran George won their respective men's singles round-of-16 matches to advance to the quarterfinals late Thursday night.

Sindhu, after bowing out in the second round of the recently concluded All England Championships, lost to Japan's 17-year-old junior world champion Tomoka Miyazaki 21-16, 19-21, 16-21, while Sen was eliminated by Lee Chia-hao 17-21, 15-21 in just 38 minutes in the round-



of 16 contest.

Srikanth, though, secured a place in the quarterfinals by defeating top seed Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia 21-61, 21-15, while Rajawat got the better of Lei La Xi of China 21-14, 21-13 to clinch a last-eight berth.

George struggled against French shuttler Alex Lanier before prevailing 18-21, 22-20, 21-18 in a gruelling 71-minute contest to book a quarterfinal berth.

Srikanth will take on Lee Chia-Hao, while Rajawat will clash against Chinese-Taipei's Chou

Tien-Chen in the last-eight round. George will look to get past Rasmus Gemke of Denmark to secure a place in the semifinals.

Earlier Thursday, the Indian women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand progressed to the quarterfinals with a straight-game win over compatriots Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra. The eighth seeded pair brushed aside fellow Indians Priya and Shruti, ranked 75th in the world, 21-10, 21-12.

World No.26 Treesa and Gayatri, who are sharing the 14th place in the Olympic Games qualification ranking, will face Australia's Setyana Mapasa and Angela Yu in the next round.

World No. 20 Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa, who are 6,296 points ahead of Treesa and Gayatri in the Paris qualification race at 12th spot, lost 17-21, 16-21 to Japan's world No. 30 Rui Hirokami and Yuna Kato.

## Sathiyam achieves rare feat, wins WTT Feeder Series title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 22:** Star paddler G Sathiyam has become the first-ever Indian to win a men's singles trophy at a WTT Feeder Series event in Beirut, Lebanon. He defeated compatriot Manav Thakkar 3-1 (6-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-4) on the final day of WTT Feeder Beirut 2024 Thursday night.

Seeded No.11, Sathiyam enjoyed a rewarding path to the final in the Lebanese capital, taking down No.5 seed Harmeet Desai (15-13, 6-11, 11-8, 13-11) and top seed Chuang Chih-Yuan (11-8, 11-13, 11-8, 11-9) along the way.

The result marks Sathiyam's first men's singles success at a WTT event, and his first singles title at an international ranking event since ITTF Czech International Open 2021.