

**Deepika's revelation**  
 Actor Deepika Padukone says she used to hide therapy sessions from the public during her battle with depression  
 LEISURE | P2

**Truce in Turkiye**  
 Outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party militant group declares immediate ceasefire in a step toward ending a 40-year insurgency  
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**GST collections up**  
 Gross GST collections rise by 9.1% to about Rs 1.84 lakh crore in February, boosted by domestic consumption  
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**India to take over**  
 A seemingly invincible India will be eager to sharpen their game against spin and give a run to second-line players ahead of the semifinal  
 SPORTS | P12



**COLD ADVENTURE:** Some of 2461 polar swimmers wait in the water to set a world record for the largest polar bear dip at a lake in Most, Czech Republic, Saturday AP/PTI

## Atlantic divide

Deep fissures have emerged between traditional allies, the US and Europe, after a remarkable showdown between US President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office, with European leaders lining up to show solidarity with Zelenskyy. Within a short time after the extraordinary clash, prime ministers and presidents from the north, south, east and west of the continent posted on social media in support of Zelenskyy and Ukraine in the war against Russia's invasion. While they did not directly criticise the US president, their comments made it clear they stood by Kyiv. Russia, meanwhile, didn't miss the opportunity to vent its ire against foe Zelenskyy saying it was "a miracle of restraint" how Trump and his deputy held themselves back from "hitting that scumbag". Analysts say the stunning blow-up at the White House came after weeks of frustration by Trump and his top aides who saw the Ukrainian leader as an obstacle to their goals of quickly ending the war.

**AGENCIES**

**New York, March 1:** Ukraine's European partners as well as other global leaders rallied behind President Volodymyr Zelenskyy while the White House touted support for President Donald Trump's 'American First strength' after a remarkable showdown in the Oval Office between the two leaders. Zelenskyy departed the White House Friday after an unprecedented verbal clash in the Oval Office between him and Trump and Vice President JD Vance. The heated exchange between Trump and Zelenskyy and the resulting outpouring of support for the Ukrainian leader highlighted the deep fissures that have emerged between America and Europe over Ukraine. Zelenskyy's timeline on X was filled with messages of support from European allies and other countries from across the world. His response to all the messages was "Thank you for your support." President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, who was in India Friday for an official visit, said in a post on X, "Your dignity honours the bravery of the Ukrainian people. Be strong, be brave, be fearless. You are never alone, dear President @ZelenskyyUa. We will continue working with you for a just and lasting peace."

French President Emmanuel Macron, who met Trump at the White House just this past Monday, said in a post on X that there is an aggressor: Russia. "There is a victim: Ukraine. We were right to help Ukraine and sanction Russia three years ago—and to keep doing so. Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, a close Trump ally, she would call for an EU-US summit to get diplomacy back on track. Reacting to their spat, Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova wrote on Telegram Friday that Zelenskyy's biggest lie of all his lies was his assertion in the White House that the Kyiv regime in 2022 was alone, without support. "How Trump and (Vice President JD) Vance held back from hitting that scumbag is a miracle of restraint," she said.

### DISCREPANCY IN CLASS X EXAM QUESTION PAPER

**Bhubaneswar, March 1:** Board of Secondary Education (BSE) authorities admitted a discrepancy in the question paper of Science subject, the examination of which was held Saturday. Students and teachers found the discrepancy after the question papers were distributed among the candidates. It was found that in set-C of the science question paper, the total marks are 96 and not the required 100. However, in three other sets of the same subject, questions for full 100 marks were there. "A question carrying 4 marks was missing in 'C' set paper. The BSE will look into the matter and students will not be affected, the Board will take some measures during evaluation of answer sheets," BSE president Srikant Tarai said.

### CPI(ML) Liberation slams CPI(M) 'note'

**New Delhi, March 1:** Disapproving of the CPI(M) note clarifying that it does not consider the Modi government or the Indian State as "neo-fascist", CPI(ML) Liberation General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya said Saturday that any "downplaying of the fascist danger" at this juncture can only erode the electoral strength and moral authority of the communists. His remarks came days after the CPI(M) issued the note to its state units on the draft political resolution for the upcoming party congress and stressed that the stand is different from that of the CPI and CPI(ML). In an article published on the website of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, Bhattacharya questioned if the CPI(M)'s stand is due to the immediate electoral circumstances faced by the party in West Bengal and Kerala and if any communist party can "increase its strength and role by obfuscating the central political question of the day". The draft political resolution of the CPI(M), which will be discussed at the party congress in Tamil Nadu's Madurai in April, said that "the push to impose a reactionary Hindutva agenda and the authoritarian drive to suppress the opposition and democracy display neo-fascist characteristics". In the note, the CPI(M) has clarified that talking about the political setup showing "neo-fascist characteristics" does not mean that the party is calling the Modi government fascist or neo-fascist.

### Class VI student found 'pregnant'

**Keonjhar, March 1:** Days after two Class X girls delivered babies in Malkangiri and Jajpur districts respectively, a 12-year old girl studying at an ST/SC school in Champua of Keonjhar district was reportedly found pregnant, prompting a police probe, Saturday. The girl is studying in Class VI in the school which is run by the state SC/ST department. Her pregnancy was detected during a monthly medical check-up at the school. Champua police launched an investigation after the headmaster of the school lodged a complaint Friday evening. Sources said that the girl had gone home during Makar Sankranti holidays in January. She returned to the school hostel February 25 when the ANM found irregularities in the monthly periods of two girls during their regular health examinations. Following this, pregnancy tests were carried out on the two girls at the Keonjhar district headquarters hospital where the report of one of the girls came positive. District administration officials visited the school and asked the headmaster to report the matter to the police which registered a case and sent the girl again for medical examination to a health centre at Joda where the report came out negative. Champua police IIC, Debaki Nayak said "During the medical examination of the girl at Joda health centre the report was found negative. However, the school authorities had lodged a complaint after the initial report came out positive. The truth can be ascertained only after the investigation gets completed." District Welfare Officer Prabir Kumar Deo dismissed claims of the girl's pregnancy while terming those as false.

### Titilagarh sizzles at 38.5 degrees Celsius

**Bhubaneswar, March 1:** Titilagarh in western Odisha recorded the highest temperature at 38.5°C Saturday as a heatwave gripped the state right from the beginning of March. As many as 11 cities across the state recorded temperatures of 37°C or higher. According to the regional meteorological centre, Jharsuguda recorded a maximum of 38.2 degrees Celsius, Bolangir 38°C, Sonepur and Angul 37.7°C each.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Have'n't you seen? Zelenskyy even snubbed Trump. But stopped the war after just one call from Modi ji!

### Woman flogged by sorcerers

**Sundargarh/Bargaon, March 1:** In a shocking case of blind-faith, two alleged sorcerers brutally whipped a woman for nearly five hours at Litipada village under Bargaon block in Sundargarh district Friday evening, seriously injuring her. The victim was identified as Sangita Bage, wife of Muna Bage. Sources said that a youth in Litipada village was mentally unstable for which his family members sought the help of a sorcerer named Gagan from Machamara village for cure. The sorcerer explained to the family members that evil spirits, or some planetary influences, were causing his ailment. On Friday evening, Gagan and his associate visited the house of Asha Bage in Litipada to perform the rituals. During the rituals, at around 8 pm, the sorcerers suddenly began whipping Sangita, who had come to witness the proceedings. Later, at 10 pm, they allegedly barged into her house and ransacked the puja room. The assault on the woman continued intermittently till late at night. The sorcerers allegedly ignored Muna's pleas to stop the beatings. Though no formal police complaint was lodged in connection with the incident at the time of filing the report, the incident sparked tension in the village. To combat such atrocities by sorcerers on indigenous tribal communities, social activist Shashiprabha Bindhani had filed a public interest petition, prompting the state government to enact a dedicated law in 2013 that criminalised these practices. However, despite legal measures, no significant awareness campaigns have been conducted to educate the public, social activist Subhashree Ray said.

### Newton used beer to write his theory of gravity

Sir Isaac Newton wrote his theory of gravity in a homemade ink created with beer as a key ingredient, according to a study. Newton published his theory of calculus, his three eponymous laws of motion and the detailed theory of gravity in the 1687 work - Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica (the Principia). The book would form the foundation of physical science. A paper in the Royal Society's journal - Notes and Records - has revealed two ink recipes in Newton's various works. While one includes a quart of wine, the other utilises a quart of 'strong beer or ale'. "Though chemical analysis of the ink in Newton's voluminous manuscript corpus has yet to be carried out, many 17th-century authors used beer as a solvent in their home-made writing ink," Snobelen said. "Newton's two surviving ink recipes confirm that he followed in this craft, at least while he was at Cambridge," the historian added. Writing in the paper itself, the researchers said, "When Newton penned, with the very beer-based ink in which this recipe is written, the words 'it will endure many years', he wrote more truly than he likely imagined." The wooden mug will be on public display at the Royal Society in central London from March 4 alongside items including Newton's greatest work, the Principia, and the scientist's death mask, which was prepared shortly after his death to serve as a likeness for sculptures.

## Yoggram and Niramayam

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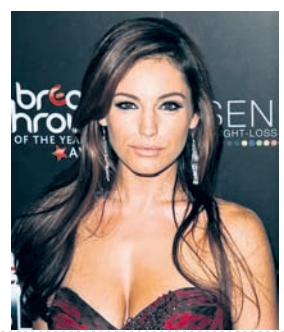
**Special- Doctors retired from government or private jobs and have no source of income will be provided 100% free Yoga, Ayurveda, Panchkarma, and Shatkarma treatments as we want to have the privilege of serving them.**

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Akshatarpan	Hydro Therapy	Ozone Therapy	Leech Therapy

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**8954666111, 8954666222, 8954666333 (Working hours - 6 am to 10 pm),**  
**or visit: www.patanjaliwellness.com | booking@patanjaliwellness.com**  
**If you cannot make online payment, you can come here and register directly.**

# leisure

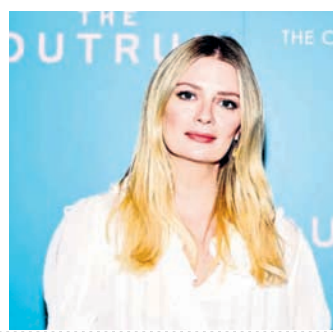


## KELLY BROOK ADMITS FAME RUINED HER LIFE

Former glamour model Kelly Brook says she would never want the level of fame she had when she was appearing in lads mags again. "It has ruined my life on a couple of occasions, so I just don't want it anymore," admitted the 45-year-old.

## MISCHA: I'M A HUGE OASIS FAN

British-American actress Mischa Barton is a huge *Oasis* fan and wants to see the Britpop band on their reunion tour later this year. The 39-year-old appeared in the music video *Everybody's on the Run* for Noel Gallagher's *High Flying Birds* in 2011.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today people will actually drag you into altercations, so flash the peace sign if you must. You may face some sort of legal troubles from peace-loving groups. Therefore, Ganesha advises you to meditate, take a walk or just seek out the company of your near and dear ones.

**TAURUS**  
Today, you need to take hold of your emotions. Ganesha urges you to get carried away by your feelings. Instead, you should try to maintain a practical, sensible frame of mind. Women are like to feature prominently in your life during the day. Try to be magnanimous and open hearted.

**GEMINI**  
An extremely profitable and progressive day awaits you. You may come into a handsome inheritance. Your responsibilities will increase along with a possible promotion at work. However, do not let your success go to your head, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Ganesha advises you to watch your back today. However, he wants to make it clear that you may be at the receiving end of others' actions. Anyway, your cautious and watchful approach will save you from needless discomfiture. In short, life will teach you priceless and precious lessons today, predicts Ganesha.

**LEO**  
You have to let go of your stubborn and obstinate streak. You will need to compromise according to the situation. If you do not have such an attitude, arguments and confrontations with your business partners, friends and family members are possible. You do not like delays, however you will be forced to postpone important events, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
You are quick-witted, sharp and artistic to the core, says Ganesha, so you may go ahead and enrapture people with your special abilities, perhaps at a social gathering. However, Ganesha says it would be better if you could conserve some of that enthusiasm in order to focus your attention on issues of greater importance.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says you will be able to show your love and appreciation for your beloved. Small issues will crop up and keep you tensed and uncomfortable today. Just remember good days and old memories and life will seem good again.

**SCORPIO**  
According to Ganesha, it's a good day for long term and real estate investments. It may lead to benefits and profits in long run. Sit back, relax and enjoy the pleasures of life before you miss out on them. Welcome all the opportunities with open arms.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The wheel of fortune turns towards you today, says Ganesha. Make a wish and it's bound to come true. However don't be over-confident when it comes to decision-making. In case of disappointments, "this too shall pass" would be the best remedy.

**CAPRICORN**  
Overcome with feelings, you may take decisions that may stand in the way of success. Don't let your sentiments ruin your future prospects because the damage done will be beyond repair, warns Ganesha. Today, there are also chances that your down-to-earth nature and amiable approach will win the hearts of many. A bit of caution and guidance from the elderly will help you move on the right path.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will be on a spending spree today. But, make sure that your desire to enjoy life doesn't burn a hole in your pocket. Watch your words and steps, as people are observing your every move. You have put all of your eggs in one basket, so make sure that you don't mess up and lose everything that you have, advises Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
Today your professional and love life will cause worry. You will want to be emotionally balanced but you may not find the time to sort things out. Long sightedness and open discussions will help resolve matters easily.

## Nandita wishes to give back

**Mumbai:** Acclaimed actress Nandita Das has never been one to follow the beaten path. Known for her unconventional choices in cinema, she will next be seen in the forthcoming drama *Ziddi Girls* as Professor Handa.

The Fire actress revealed that when she was approached for the movie, it wasn't just the character of Professor Handa that spoke to her—it was the spirit of the story itself. She explained, "I do resonate with Professor Handa's character. I've had many such mentors in my life, whose biggest inspirational asset was their conviction and how they lived by it. I have had many such strong women in my life, and I try to pass that sense of conviction and purpose to other young women."

Nandita further revealed that when director Shonali Bose first reached out to her for the role, the story sparked a sense of nostalgia, but also hesitation. She disclosed, "At the beginning I felt the role was small and not particularly challenging. But then, I thought about all the wonderful actors who have done cameos in my films—those who believed in the story and supported it. This was my time to pay it forward."

Produced by Pritish Nandy under Pritish Nandy Communications, the show has been created by Rangita Pritish Nandy and Ishita Pritish Nandy.

*Ziddi Girls* is streaming on Prime Video in India and over 240 countries and territories worldwide.

## Triptii's quiet escape

**Mumbai:** Bollywood's rising star Triptii Dimri has been making waves with her performances, but beyond the glitz and glamour, she craves solitude and quiet moments. In a recent interview with *Cosmo India*, the actress opened up about her love for solo travel, revealing details about a unique experience in a remote French village.

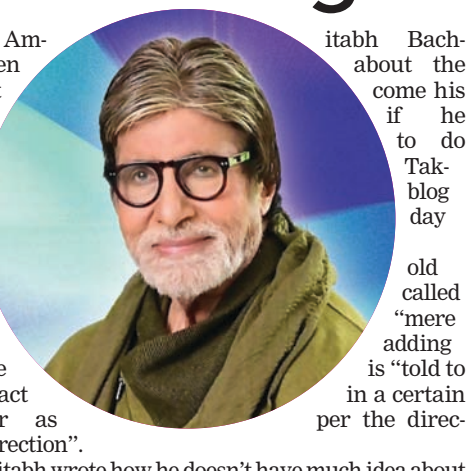
In an industry that demands constant engagement, Triptii acknowledges the importance of stepping back. "I think last year was quite hectic for me, and while I have no complaints, I feel like when you are continuously working, you need to also mentally disconnect," she shared. For her, escaping to a secluded destination is not just about relaxation but also about self-reflection and regaining mental clarity.

Unlike the usual celebrity get-aways to exotic beach resorts or bustling European cities, Dimri opted for an intimate and quiet escape. She revealed that she traveled to a remote village in France, inhabited by only 10 people. "It was the most beautiful trip of my life, and I plan to go there every now and then since I felt such positivity there—that's how I want to feel most of the time," she said.

AGENCIES

## Big B on his old age challenges

**Mumbai:** Actor Amchan has spoken projects that way wondering will "be able justice to it". ing to his on Fri- night, the 82-year- actor himself a puppet", that he do and act manner as



Amityabh Bach- about the come his if he do Tak- blog day old called "mere adding is "told to in a certain per the direc- tor's direction".

Amityabh wrote how he doesn't have much idea about the state of the movie industry. "Meetings and meetings and meetings abound for work to come... and this makes it a test, a challenge... what to take what to refute what to politely refuse... The point is that the discussions eventually end up with the topic of the Film Industry, and its functioning and the State it is in... None of which I am conversant with AT ALL," his post read. "The concern has ever been, what is the work I am getting and will I or shall I be able to do justice to it... what happens after that is a blur... the Production, the Costs, the Marketing, the Exhibition... et al... just an unknown non-understandable dark, blur... Selecting a project has ever been the decisions of the 'other' - the makers and the writers and all those concerned with the making of a film. I am a mere puppet, told to do and act in a certain manner as per the director's direction... and that is it," added the Kalki actor.



## Deepika shares her battle with anxiety

**Mumbai:** Deepika Padukone has openly spoken about her struggle with depression as she highlights the significance of mental health care.

The actress revealed that she used to hide therapy sessions from the public during her battle with depression. "I was at the peak of my career, doing everything I loved," the Om Shanti Om actress shared with an entertainment portal. While she expected fatigue and exhaustion to be part of her profession, she realised something was wrong the morning she collapsed.

Deepika shared, "I went for a whole bunch of scans, but over the next couple of weeks, I realized I wasn't feeling any better." She added, "There was this weird feeling in my stomach. I would just keep crying and breaking down at the drop of

a hat. I just didn't feel like myself." Initially, she kept her therapy sessions private, going to great lengths to avoid the paparazzi. "We didn't want it to be seen that I was going to the therapist... We were so covert and didn't tell anyone about how I was feeling," she shared.

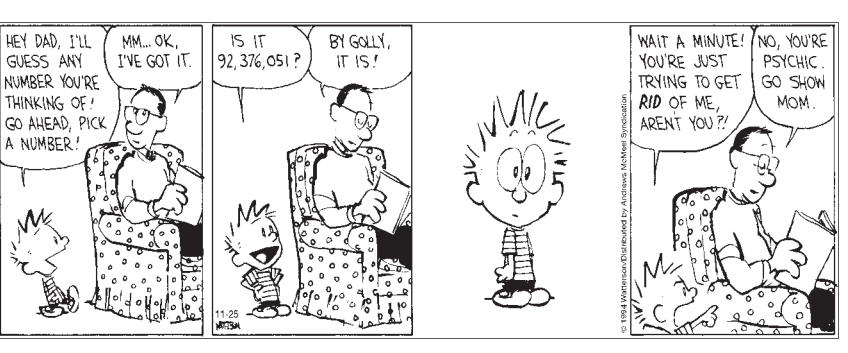
As she began to heal, Deepika became aware of the stigma surrounding mental health and felt compelled to speak up. "I wondered why we had hushed everything up and why there was so much stigma around mental health," she reflected.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

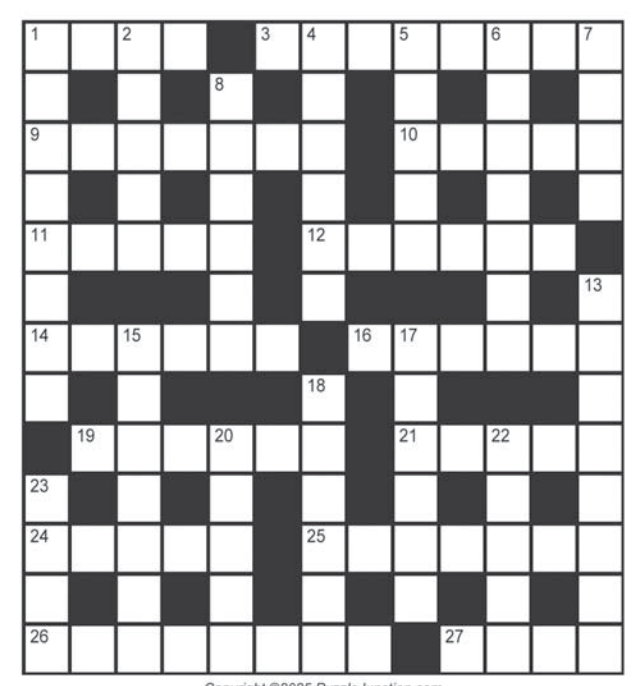


### BREVITY



### FUN post

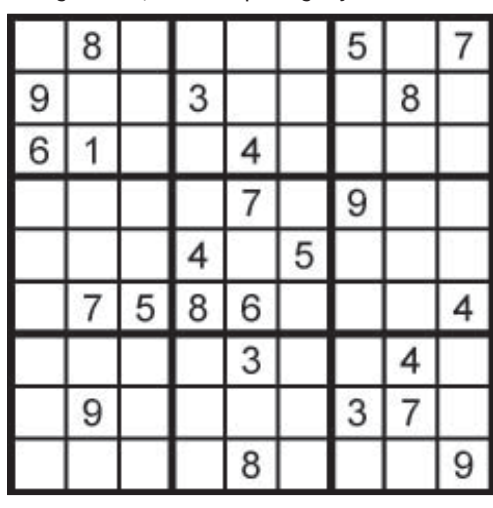
### CROSSWORD



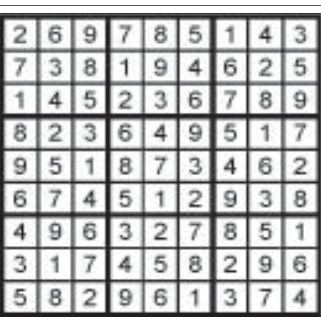
- Across**
- 1 Nimbus
  - 3 Circumvent
  - 9 Negative stimulation
  - 10 Odour
  - 11 Blanched
  - 12 Toboggan
  - 14 Morals
  - 16 Body decoration
  - 19 Jury verdict
  - 21 Protective covering
  - 24 Bury
  - 25 Plumber's friend
  - 26 Dissolve (4,4)
  - 27 Lazy Susan
  - Down**
  - 1 Deep trouble (3,5)
  - 2 Coniferous tree
  - 4 Steep
  - 5 Wipe clean
  - 6 Idea
  - 7 Swamp thing
  - 8 French brandy
  - 13 Maternally
  - 15 Inhabited by apparitions
  - 17 Protective covering
  - 18 Nearsighted-ness
  - 20 Cocoon contents
  - 22 Potent potable
  - 23 Squabble

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Artistes perform during 29th Guru Pranam Utsav organised by Sushama Sangeet Sadan at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



# downtown

## SC: Borrower not 'consumer' if loan taken for profit generation

**AGENCIES**  
**New Delhi, March 1:** A borrower cannot be called a 'consumer' under the Consumer Protection Act if the loan was taken from the bank for a profit-generating exercise, the Supreme Court has said.  
 A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Prashant Kumar Mishra was hearing an appeal filed by the Central Bank of India against an order of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC).  
 The NCDRC had directed the bank to pay a compensation of Rs 75 lakh along with litigation cost to the Ad Bureau Advertising Pvt Limited for the alleged incorrect reporting of the borrower as a defaulter to the Credit Information Bureau of India



payments, a litigation was initiated before the Debts Recovery Tribunal and the matter was finalised by one-time payment of Rs 3.56 crore.  
 The Ad Bureau Advertising Pvt Limited contended that despite paying the amount as per the one-time settlement, the bank marked it as a defaulter to the CIBIL, which resulted in its reputational damage and business loss.  
 The company then approached the NCDRC alleging deficiency of service on the part of the bank.  
 The NCDRC allowed the Ad Bureau Advertising Pvt Limited's petition (Consumer Complaint) and directed the bank to pay a compensation of Rs 75 lakh and issue a certificate stating that the loan account was

settled and no outstanding dues remained.  
 The top court said, "We are cognisant of the fact that respondent No. 1 (company) would not be excluded from the definition of consumer merely on account of the fact that it is a commercial entity/enterprise. But what has weighed with us in coming to the conclusion that in the instant case, respondent No. 1 cannot be said to be a 'consumer' is the fact that the transaction in question i.e. obtaining a project loan did have a close nexus with a profit-generating activity and in fact, the dominant purpose for getting this loan sanctioned was to generate profits upon successful post-production of the movie titled 'Kochadaiyaan'," the bench said.

## Cong workers clash with cops during City protest



**Bhubaneswar, March 1:** Congress workers clashed with police personnel near Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's residence here Saturday while protesting crimes against women in the state.  
 Hundreds of Congress workers, led by the party's state president Bhakta Charan Das, marched towards the CM's residence on the Mahatma Gandhi Marg, shouting slogans denouncing the attacks on women.  
 "Over 1,600 cases of crimes against women, including 54 gangrapes, were registered in the last eight months. Children are getting pregnant in state-run schools. What is happening in the land of Lord Jagannath?" Das told reporters, attacking the BJP which came to power in the state in June last year.

**Over 1,600 cases of crimes against women, including 54 gangrapes, were registered in the last eight months. Children are getting pregnant in state-run schools. What is happening in the land of Lord Jagannath?**  
 BHAKTA CHARAN DAS | CONGRESS STATE PRESIDENT

"We have a tribal leader as the Chief Minister and he has utterly failed to protect the state's girls and women," she alleged.  
 The Congress workers clashed with the police when they were stopped a few hundred metres away from the CM's residence.  
 Several activists scuffled with the police personnel who tried to prevent them from proceeding further.  
 After taking charge as the state Congress president, Das has been raising the issue of women's safety regularly.  
 He formed a team February 26, and it has been tasked to visit different districts to look into cases of atrocities against women.  
 "At least seven women are subjected to atrocities in some form or the other every day in the state," Das claimed.

## Subhadra Yojana: 5th phase of 1st instalment March 6

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Bhubaneswar, March 1:** The state government Saturday announced that the fifth phase money of the first instalment under Subhadra Yojana will be released March 6.  
 Around 1.7 lakh women beneficiaries are slated to receive the Subhadra money in the fifth phase of first instalment March 6, the Chief Minister's Office said in a post on X handle.  
 Similarly, over one crore beneficiaries would get the second instalment of financial assistance under the flagship scheme on the occasion of International Women's Day — March 8.



**SUMMER AHEAD:** Students cover their head and face as daytime temperature soars, in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

## State govt launches new website for ration cards

### Suresh Pant new PCCF



**Bhubaneswar, March 1:** The state government appointed Suresh Pant as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and Head of Forest Force (HoFF), Saturday.  
 The 1990-batch Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer will replace Debidutta Biswal, an officer of 1988 batch who retired Friday.  
 Pant, who hails from Uttarakhand, had been serving as the Managing Director of Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC) Limited since 2021.

**AGENCIES**  
**Bhubaneswar, March 1:** The state government Saturday launched a website for the issuance of new ration cards.  
 Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said this website will help in enrolling the eligible people who have been left out.  
 He also said that by the end of this month, all pending work related to e-KYC verification will be completed.  
 Names of lakhs of ineligible people have been deleted from the list of beneficiaries, Patra said, adding that errors in the list will be rectified soon.  
 Some government employees, who are ineligible, have voluntarily returned their ration cards, he said.  
 The FS&CW Minister said the government will conduct a door-to-door survey of the people who file I-T returns, and those who earn 'handsome money' will be removed from the list of beneficiaries.

**FS&CW MIN SAYS**  
 "Some government employees, who are ineligible, have voluntarily returned their ration cards"  
 "The government will conduct a door-to-door survey of the people who file I-T returns, and those who earn 'handsome money' will be removed from the list of beneficiaries"  
 "Names of about four lakh people have been removed from the list of beneficiaries"

He said people can apply for new ration cards on the website that was launched.  
 A total of 3.25 crore people in the state are beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), while another 6.48 lakh people have been covered under the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS).  
 Names of about four lakh people have been removed from the list of beneficiaries, officials said.

## Human activities can affect body clock of mammals: Study

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

**New Delhi, March 1:** Human-driven activities, including climate change, could be affecting body clocks of mammals, according to a global study that found that only 39 per cent of the species are behaving in line with what previous research says.  
 Further, because of the environmental changes and the resulting effects, a majority of previous research related to body clocks of mammals could be outdated, researchers, including those from The University of Sydney, Australia, said.  
 All animals are known to have circadian rhythms, or body clocks, regulating activities over a 24-hour period -- also called diel cycle. Collectively, the rhythms can develop into a generalised behaviour for a species.  
 However, climate change threatens to upend these established patterns with unexpected consequences,



All animals are known to have circadian rhythms, or body clocks, regulating activities over a 24-hour period -- also called diel cycle. Collectively, the rhythms can develop into a generalised behaviour for a species

es, the researchers said.  
 For their analysis, published in the journal Science Advances, the team analysed video camera footage of 445 mammal species to note activity patterns over a 24-hour period.  
 Results were compared with previous studies.  
 "Through a global network representing 38 countries, we leveraged 8.9 million mammalian observations to create a library of 14,587 standardised diel activity estimates for 445 species," the authors wrote.  
 "Overall, we found only 39 per

cent agreement between our results and reference classifications, which further suggests that we need to re-evaluate species diel behaviour to fully understand their niche and how to conserve them in an anthropogenic world," they said.  
 The team looked at whether circadian activity was responsive or resistant to environmental changes.  
 The species showed a high plasticity in their diel patterns, indicating an ability to adjust daily activity depending on environmental conditions, the authors said.  
 Finally, among a selected 126 species, the team studied how geography affected diel plasticity.  
 "Distance from the equator, daylight hours per day, and exposure to human activity influenced diel phenotypes for 74 per cent of these species," they wrote.  
 Data for the study was taken from the Global Animal Diel Activity Project, which includes 217 collaborators from 20,080 camera sites across 38 countries.

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# Key conspirator held in Vani Vihar murder



saillants—three men and two women—brutally attacked Sahadev Naik near the Vani Vihar railway overbridge (ROB). The assailants hacked him to death over an unresolved dispute, despite heightened security in the City due to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) event. The shocking incident raised concerns over law enforcement's ability to curb violent crimes in the city.

the accused has a criminal record, having been booked earlier in a theft case by the Capital police. His arrest comes weeks after Mancheswar police nabbed a 40-year-old woman, February 11, for her alleged involvement in the murder. The chilling murder took place January 8, when five as-

Following the murder, police launched an intense 24-hour operation that resulted in the arrest of five key suspects from Nayagarh. Sushanta Nayak has been booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and was produced before a local court Saturday.



**SIGNATURE DELICACY:** Women savour Dahibara-Aloodam, a famous street food of the Millennium City, at a function organised by the district administration at the Silver City Boat Club in Cuttack to mark Dahibara Utsav, Saturday

# Tusker tramples man to death

# YOUTH SUFFERS ACID ATTACK DURING SLEEP

**Champua range sees 2 fatalities in 10 days**



**The mishap occurred when the animal strayed into the village leaving the villagers panicked as they ran helter-skelter to save their lives**

POST NEWS NETWORK



for emergency treatment. Given the severity of his injuries, he was later shifted to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar for advanced medical care.

**Keonjhar, March 1:** A man was trampled to death by a tusker at Nambira village under Bamebari forest section of Champua forest range in Keonjhar district, Thursday night.

The deceased was identified as Hari Munda, 41. The mishap occurred when the animal strayed into the village leaving the villagers panicked as they ran helter-skelter to save their lives. Hari spotted the animal near his house and tried to shoo it away by beating a tin. Enraged, the animal chased Hari and pinned him to the ground before trampling him to death. A cattle shed was also destroyed during the chase, according to Hari's family members. On being informed, Bamebari forest personnel reached the spot and drove away the animal. The body was seized and sent for post-mortem to Keonjhar.

Ashok Das, Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF), Keonjhar said, "Compensation will be provided as per the government norms. We are tracking the movement of the elephants and sensitising the locals. The villagers have been urged not to go near the elephants and tease them." Notably, this was second death due to elephant attack during last ten days in areas under the Champua forest range. Earlier, a 22-year-old youth was killed in elephant attack February 20. The deceased was identified as Karan Karua

of Badanai village under Champua police limits.

**Basudevpur/Sabarang, March 1:** In a shocking incident, a 26-year-old youth sustained grievous burn injuries after unidentified miscreants poured acid on him while he was asleep at his residence in Ramchandrapur village under Lakshmidaspur panchayat, late Friday night. The attack has triggered panic and outrage among locals, who have demanded swift police action.

unaware of the lurking danger. Taking advantage of the late hours, the assailants poured acid on him through an open window and fled the scene.

Palei's agonising screams woke up his family, who rushed to his aid. They found him writhing in pain, with severe burns on his face, eyes, and chest. Without delay, he was taken to Basudevpur hospital

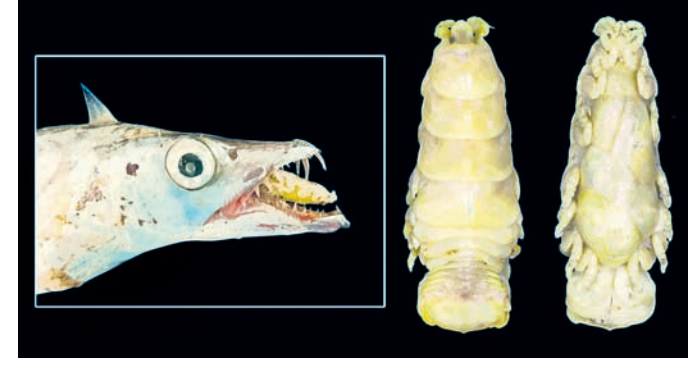
# Speeding container truck collides with tourist bus; 10 hurt

# New marine parasitic isopod species found

# ADAPT TO RAPID TECH ADVANCES: ECOR GM



**Berhampur, March 1:** A new species of parasitic isopod, named 'Lobothorax Bharat' was identified by the department of Zoology in Berhampur University recently. The research work was initiated by the National Research Institute, in collaboration with the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Gopalpur Regional Centre.



The genetic analysis showed 2.5-2.6 per cent difference from Lobothorax typus and a 23.9-32.2 per cent variation from other related species. Parasitic isopods are known to infect marine and estuarine fishes impacting their growth, which in turn affects aquaculture industries and their productivity.

POST NEWS NETWORK

model within Railways. He also highlighted the crucial role of automation, maintenance, and diagnostics in modern railway operations. The celebration was attended by ECoR additional general manager, principal heads of departments of ECoR, and senior officials, including the principal chief electrical engineer, who collectively recognised the remarkable journey of railway electrification in the country.

**Bhadrak, March 1:** Ten people were injured following a collision between a stationary tourist bus and a speeding container truck in Bhadrak district Saturday, police said.

The isopod specimens were collected from fish landing centres at Bahabalpur in Balasore and Gopalpur between March and May, 2023. Researchers from the university and ZSI jointly conducted extensive study and analysed six samples of the specimens of the isopod from the host fish Trichiurus lepturus (family Trichiuridae).

The research team, lead by Jaya Kishor Seth also included research scholars Sandeep Kumar Mohapatra and Sammitra Roy, along with scientists Basudev Tripathi (ZSI, Pune) and Anil Mohapatra (ZSI, Gopalpur). Globally, around 380 species of parasitic isopods have been documented, with India being home to approximately 70 species. Around 25 specimens are found in Odisha.

The newly-discovered isopod is a buccal-attaching parasite that affixes itself to the tongue of its host species. Fresh specimens are creamy white but turn yellowish-brown or dark brown upon preservation. The genetic analysis showed 2.5-2.6 per cent difference from Lobothorax typus and a 23.9-32.2 per cent variation from other related species.

**Bhubaneswar, March 1:** Adapt to rapid technological advancements and prepare for the next 25 years, said East Coast Railway (ECoR) general manager Parmeshwar Funkwal during the centenary celebration of the launch of India's first electric train February 3, 1925.

The ECoR general manager said, "From the launch of a 16km electric train service in 1925 to achieving 100 per cent broad gauge electrification in 2024, the transformation has been extraordinary."

The bus, heading to Puri, had halted near Chhatabara to change a punctured tyre when the container truck rammed into it from behind, said Mahaprasad Nayak, Inspector-In-Charge of Bhandaripokhari police station.

# Kanhakund back in spotlight after Mahindra's X comments

The injured were taken to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) for treatment, he said. Later, four of them were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, the officer added.

**Bhubaneswar, March 1:** State government Saturday rushed a team to Kanhakund, a natural rock formation on the river Ib in Sundergarh district, for verification of its actual position after being informed about the place by industrialist Anand Mahindra.

bringing this spot to our notice. Sometimes, it so happens that the state government misses out on such places which are highlighted by nature lovers and others. We will certainly develop that place and consult Anand ji in making Kanhakund as a global tourist destination," Parida said. The Deputy CM said she has already issued an order for the spot verification of the place and officials will reach the tourist destination soon.



Located at about 130km from Sambalpur and Rourkela and just 44.2 km from the district headquarters, Kanhakund remains relatively underdeveloped

"We will also seek his visionary ideas to develop the Kanhakund. We have taken his suggestions very positively to develop the tourist destination. We thank him from the core of our heart and will develop the place taking his suggestions."

**WEATHER**

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	34.2°	34.2°
Min Temp	21.4°	20.0°
Humidity	70%	68%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

**FORECAST**  
Mainly clear sky

Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida, who also holds the Tourism portfolio, said the state government will develop the place as a global tourist destination.

Anand Mahindra, the chairperson of Mahindra and Mahindra, had recently brought the unique tourist destination to the knowledge of the government through a re-post made by a nature lover Aarayan. He has also tagged three pictures

of the place. Mahindra in a post on X February 27, said, "No need to compare it to the Grand Canyon. This is unique in its own way. Not sure if these pics are

photoshopped, but even if they are to an extent, these formations are... AMAZING Hello @odisha\_tourism what can we do to make this first a national destination and then

The scenic beauty of the landscape coupled with the gushing water's gurgling sound is a sure recipe to mesmerise anyone

A Delhi-based traveller Aarayan had shared pictures of Kanhakund on X and mentioned its clear blue waters and granite beds. In the same post, he questioned why such offbeat places were not on the tourism map of India.

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SRI AUROBINDO



# Trump's Real Target

What is one to write about hours after a day when the US president scolds Ukraine's leader about gambling with world war? In November last year, which is to say only three months ago, it was reported that the Biden administration had 'allowed' Ukraine to use American made missiles to attack deep inside Russia to escalate the war. After this, Reuters ran a report with the headline 'Biden risking World War 3 with missile decision, says Russian lawmaker'.

The month before that, October 2024, the head of the United States' largest bank was quoted in a headline which read 'Western power is at risk and there could be a World War 3, says JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon'. He was referring not only to the war in Ukraine but also the genocide in Gaza and the rise of China as being trigger events for something wider.

So the circus that unfolded at the famous Oval Office in the White House on Friday was not the only time that we have been discussing the potential obliteration of humankind. What is one to make of this? Let us try to see if some sense can be made of what is going on.

To begin, what does Donald Trump want? On the surface it is hard to tell because he talks so much and so casually about so many things. His detractors say this is because he is stupid and mercurial but it is difficult to square this with a person who won the US presidency twice. Let us assume that he knows what he is doing.

The view that appears to be most coherent is that the real target of the American president is China. He wants to handicap its rise so that it does not equal the US in power. He wants the dollar to remain the only reserve global currency and he wants China to cede some ground on manufacturing and exports back to the US.

And so all of his larger actions should be seen, according to this view, from the China lens.

China is scheduled to equal and then exceed the US economy over the next couple of decades if past growth rates hold. Trump does not want to allow that. His first term's tariffs and other restrictions that came under Biden on China, such as the ban on high end computer chips with the naked desire that China not progress technologically are the largest part of that plan. In this term Trump added 10 per cent additional tariff on all Chinese goods coming into the US and then another 10 per cent that is scheduled to come into effect this week. He has said he could go as high as 60 per cent. This will introduce high levels of uncertainty and turbulence in China and also the US because many industries are intertwined. Several people have pointed out directly to Trump that this will affect American consumers as much as it will the Chinese companies but he has repeatedly waved this concern off.

His open threat to BRICS against using currencies other than the dollar is another part of the plan to keep China under control.

Under this view, to continue its logic, the US involvement in Ukraine and the Middle East is a distraction which has to end quickly so that the main business of China can be focussed on. China is America's only peer competitor, not Russia and not anybody else. Therefore, it makes little sense to be diverted from the overall mission.

The two years of continuous and murderous bombing of Gaza ended with a peace deal that Trump forced on Israel in January, and now it seems like Ukraine will have to capitulate to Russia after the ending of US backing. If this view is correct, after that happens, meaning after Russia has prevailed over Ukraine, there will be sharper US focus on China. But if this is the case, then why is Trump also going after America's largest trading partners and allies and Mexico and Canada?

Under this view that we have assumed to be Trump's, the suggestion is that it is a continuation of his desire to keep America ahead of China. The tariffs have introduced a level of chaos and uncertainty in the global markets and that always leads to a strengthening of the dollar, as we are witnessing. The only counter here is that a stronger dollar then makes it even harder for the US to export its manufactures and the trade deficits that Trump wants to reduce remain in place. Perhaps Trump has thought about this also, and perhaps he has not. We shall see: four years is a long time.

The larger question mark is how China will react. China has not reached the position it has today because it has been the beneficiary of external largesse. It has a large and talented population that has moved its economy and industry up the value chain faster than any nation in history over a period of just 40 years. It will defend its position and it will do what it can to first equal and then overtake the US. China's ambitions cannot be determined by America.

China's leader cannot be summoned to the White House king's court and scolded and forced to bend the knee as other allies have been made to do. And as recent developments in artificial intelligence, and the growth of Chinese exports to the rest of the world in 2024 show (China has a trillion dollar trade surplus), the tariffs by themselves may slow but not stop China.

So if this view that Trump's primary quest is to ensure America retains its global dominance is correct, the ending of the Ukraine war will clear his Oval Office desk to focus on the task at hand. What comes next, whether world war or something else, absolutely nobody knows.



Aakar Patel

SO IF THIS VIEW THAT TRUMP'S PRIMARY QUEST IS TO ENSURE AMERICA RETAINS ITS GLOBAL DOMINANCE IS CORRECT, THE ENDING OF THE UKRAINE WAR WILL CLEAR HIS OVAL OFFICE DESK TO FOCUS ON THE TASK AT HAND



Lekha Rattanani

COLOMBIA, BRAZIL AND MEXICO HAVE BROUGHT INTO SHARP FOCUS THE MISTREATMENT OF DEPORTEES RETURNED TO THEIR COUNTRIES

On 19 Feb., the White House posted a 41 second video showing deportees being put in shackles as they are herded into an airplane for deportation operations as part of the Donald Trump administration efforts to remove illegal immigrants ('illegal aliens' as they are known there) from US territory. The video did not show the faces of the deportees or the US officials but the jackets the latter wore clearly shows them to be from ERO, which is short for Enforcement & Removal Operations of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The video was to achieve nothing but mock, embarrass, and humiliate not only the deportees, many of whom are from India, but also their nations and their people as a whole.

The video was shockingly titled: "ASMR: Illegal Alien Deportation Flight," and it has over a 100 million views on the social media platform owned by Elon Musk, called 'X'. ASMR in the video refers to the tingling sound of steel chains as they are laid out on the tarmac, as prisoners step forward and are shackled one by one. ASMR, which is short for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response, is a sense of satisfaction and pleasant tingling ('tingles') felt down the spine, triggered by certain sounds in some people, like the crushing of tissue paper or popping of bubble wrap. The sound of steel shackles being laid out is the tingle they love. Musk retweeted the video with the words: "Haha Wow," with images of a medal and an emoji of a green-skinned, pointy-eared goblin.

The dehumanisation of deportees is not just in the way they are treated. There is a story of 'aliens' being deep wired into the head of Americans, with multiple layers at play, like white supremacy, the criminalisation of poverty and/or the

FOCUS HUMAN RIGHTS

# DEHUMANISING DEPORTEES



India's quiet acceptance of this dehumanisation and mistreatment stands out. Smaller nations have done better. They hold up as an example of a good response

normalisation of abuse. There has to be something rotten in the head for an official account of the US President to issue such a video and for his most-trusted lieutenant to laugh as he retweets it. It is important for all nations to whom the deportees are being returned to not allow the US to get away with normalising this conduct, and to let the US know that deportation is fine but mistreating human beings is not. Treating them in this manner is behaviour that is closer to a fascist regime that sees other human beings as lesser than human.

As a nation that is the biggest, strongest and the largest economy among those being targeted for deportation, India must make this protest heard. In this, India has clearly, loudly, miserably failed. India even appears to justify the actions of the US. Was it not India's external affairs minister S Jaishankar who said in a statement on 6 Feb.: "The Standard Operating Procedure for deportation by aircraft used by ICE, that is effective from 2012, I repeat, that is effective from 2012, provides for the use of restraints. However, we have been informed by ICE that women and children are not restrained. Further, the needs of deportees

during transit related to food or other necessities, including possible medical emergencies, are attended to. During toilet breaks, deportees are temporarily unrestrained if needed in that regard. This is applicable to chartered civilian aircraft as well as military aircraft. There has been no change, I repeat, no change, from past procedure for the flight undertaken by the US on 5 February 2025."

Jaishankar seems to be saying that the present government is doing what earlier Indian governments have done - accepting what is standard US procedure for returning deportees. There is a difference this time though. Earlier operations were quiet, but now deportees are being returned in a widely publicised manner that mocks at and humiliates them and their countries. India's quiet acceptance of this dehumanisation and mistreatment stands out.

Smaller nations have done better. They hold up as an example of a good response. Colombia, Brazil and Mexico have brought into sharp focus the mistreatment of deportees returned to their countries. The angry responses of the two South American nations and Mexico stand out like a shining example of a good and measured response.

There are images of President Gustavo Petro addressing Colombian deportees on a commercial flight. He was the first to raise a voice when he refused to allow in a US military cargo flight bearing deportees. "I deny the entry of American planes carrying Colombian migrants into our territory," Petro had said on the social media platform 'X'. "The United States must establish a protocol for the dignified treatment of migrants before we receive them." Colombia sent planes to get back deportees and Petro even offered the presidential plane to return his people with dignity. This is in sharp contrast to the Indian response.

Three batches of deportees have been returned to India, handcuffed and chained at the feet, aboard the stuffy confines of US military cargo aircraft. On 23 February, the fourth and latest batch of Indian deportees arrived at Indra Gandhi International Airport. Unlike the earlier groups who returned handcuffed and chained on US military cargo flights, this batch of 12 came back on a commercial flight from Panama. They were unshackled and wearing electronic devices on their legs, but the deportees did recount torture and hardship at the Tijuana camp, on the US-Mexico border, where US officials made them sit on the floor for hours in extreme cold before leaving for Panama on a commercial flight. They noted that countries like Colombia, Brazil and Mexico denounced this treatment of their people while India remained silent adding to their problems.

None of these countries are anywhere close to the might of the US, yet they have made a point by saying: You cannot treat our people badly. We will not remain silent if you do so. India can learn some lessons here.

The writer is the Managing Editor of The Billion Press.  
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SPECTRUM GEO-ECONOMICS

# A new Gulf growth model

Over the last three years, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) has signed agreements with leading MNCs to build new manufacturing facilities in the Kingdom. Yet, despite sufficient oil wealth to entice global players, past attempts at this type of industrial policy did not bear fruit. Is this time different?

There are signs it might be, owing to multiple factors, such as improvements in state capacity and infrastructure and the declining cost of renewable energy. Perhaps even more important is the Gulf monarchies' growing ability to understand and manipulate the shifting geo-economic landscape to carve out a place for themselves in global value chains, which have become increasingly contested with the rise of major rival blocs.

It is not just Chinese companies that have started to engage with the region. In the UAE, Microsoft recently signed a \$1.5 billion agreement to invest in the state-owned tech company G42, and the Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri has formed a joint venture

with the Emirati technology and defense conglomerate EDGE Group to export naval vessels to non-NATO partners.

These developments are occurring against a backdrop in which states in the region have become prolific entrepreneurs - a phenomenon that is particularly visible in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Seeking to industrialize and modernize through a distinctly state-capitalist model, domestic sovereign wealth funds have established or acquired dozens of firms in a variety of sectors, and these have become the preferred partners of foreign industrial players looking to set up shop in the Gulf. But while the vast resources and capacity provided by the state have created a host of new opportunities, it remains to be seen whether there is sufficient market discipline to establish a sustainable, export-oriented industrial strategy.

Combined with the expansion of this state capitalist model, today's shifting geopolitical landscape may offer new opportunities. Multipolarity and the rise of alternative blocs such as the BRICS

have given relatively autonomous middle powers like Saudi Arabia and the UAE a stronger negotiating position, allowing them to muscle in on global value chains that previously lay beyond their reach. This new dynamic has been on display in trade talks between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and counterparts like the EU and the UK, in attempts to attract global finance, technology, and sport to the region, and in the economic relationship with China - the GCC's most important trade partner. Saudi Arabia's recent hosting of preliminary talks between US and Russian diplomats is an early sign of the central role to which Gulf states are aspiring under US President Donald Trump's second administration. These changes in the international system, combined with a more muscular industrial strategy aimed at attracting multinationals, have fueled a rapid change in fortunes.

Following a slow start, renewables are now being deployed at a rapid pace across most of the region, and this trend is helping Gulf states

localize important parts of these value chains. Already, two of the world's largest solar panel manufacturers - China's LONGi and JinkoSolar - are planning assembly lines in Saudi Arabia in partnership with the PIF. Moreover, the proliferation of cheap renewables supports the case for an export-oriented green-hydrogen strategy. The world's largest such facility should open in the Saudi northwest in 2026, and the UAE and Oman have plans to host other, similarly notable projects.

Betting on this kind of industrial strategy is not without risks, though. Globally, it is not yet clear that newly fashionable industrial policies are working out so well. Nonetheless, the coming months and years may represent the best chance the region has ever had to develop a viable post-oil growth model.

Faris Al-Sulayman is Co-Founder of Haala Energy. Steffen Hertog is Professor of Comparative Politics at the London School of Economics.  
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Faris Al-Sulayman & Steffen Hertog

MULTIPOLARITY AND THE RISE OF ALTERNATIVE BLOCS SUCH AS THE BRICS HAVE GIVEN RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS MIDDLE POWERS LIKE SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UAE A STRONGER NEGOTIATING POSITION

WISDOM CORNER

There's no reality except the one contained within us. That's why so many people live an unreal life. They take images outside them for reality and never allow the world within them to assert itself.

HERMANN HESSE

Man is not a machine that can be remodelled for quite other purposes as occasion demands, in the hope that it will go on functioning as regularly as before but in a quite different way. He carries his whole history with him; in his very structure is written the history of mankind.

CARL JUNG

There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can't move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies.

ROBERT FROST

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 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

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Justice delayed

Sir, The life imprisonment handed down to former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar for his nefarious role in the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom stands as a somber testament to the profound fissures within India's judicial machinery. While the pronouncement reaffirms the time-honoured maxim that none stand above the law, the disquieting passage of over four decades to arrive at this juncture exposes the inertia and inefficacy that have long plagued the corridors of justice. In a nation where justice delayed is synonymous with justice denied, this prolonged legal odyssey has not only denied closure to the victims but has also cast an enduring shadow upon the very credibility of the judicial process itself. The protracted struggle for justice endured by survivors, many of whom lost entire families to orchestrated carnage, paints a heart-wrenching portrait of resilience against a callous and lethargic system. For forty agonising years, they navigated an unforgiving labyrinth of legal hurdles, where justice appeared not merely distant, but deliberately obstructed by political interference and institutional indifference. Had the mechanisms of justice functioned with the urgency befitting the enormity of the crime, this verdict could have arrived at a time when solace still held meaning - when justice could have served as balm rather than a hollow echo.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Pesticide regulation

Sir, Pesticides are sprayed on crops to control pests and increase yield among other reasons. It is also known that pesticides are added to fruits and vegetables to enhance their longevity. Pesticide residue, that is the trace pesticide left in food, spares no food. Once the use of pesticides exceeds the safe level, then it is a cause of worry. Its levels in food and feed should not exceed the maximum residue limit (MRL) to protect consumer safety. Nevertheless, commercial farming is an unavoidable reality. Farmers themselves are at the risk of pesticide contamination via direct contact or inhalation. Strict testing and scrupulous monitoring of pesticide residues in food is better said than done though one cannot deny that India's food safety and food quality regulator Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is burdened by shortage of manpower.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

CAG report flags Covid-19 fund misuse, drug crunch

DELHI HEALTH SYSTEM



team (RRT) constituted in March 2020 in the wake of Covid to ensure emergency preparedness "failed" to carry out its assigned task, said the CAG audit report.

Its mandate was to ensure that prompt adequate emergency preparedness and appropriate response structure are put in place to tackle the outbreak.

"Audit observed shortcomings in the functioning of RRT as well as a total disregard for its instructions by various agencies. After its constitution, the RRT met only five times, all in 2020 and no meeting was held in 2021 and 2022," said the report.

Activities suggested by the RRT which could have helped in better management of Covid outbreak were not implemented which defeated the purpose of its formation, the report said.

In view of outbreak of the Covid pandemic, the Delhi government had constituted a Death Audit Committee to audit each and every death in which the patient was Covid positive in the government and private hospitals.

"It was also noticed that Death Audit Committee did not analyse any case of Covid death during the period January to December 2021. From the records furnished to audit, (January 2022 to April 2022), it was observed that out of 938 deaths reported, only 684 deaths were analysed by the Committee," said the report.

In the remaining 254 cases (27.07 per cent), case sheets of Covid deaths were not furnished by the hospitals concerned, it said.

Even in Covid death cases, 707 deaths (March to June 2020) in LNH and 42 deaths (March to May 2020) in RGSSH were not subjected to such audit, thereby depriving hospitals the feedback for making informed decisions in clinical care, added the report.

Management of Health Services in the Assembly.

The report said the Delhi government received ₹787.91 crore under emergency Covid response plan from the Centre, out of which only ₹542.84 crore was spent till November 2021.

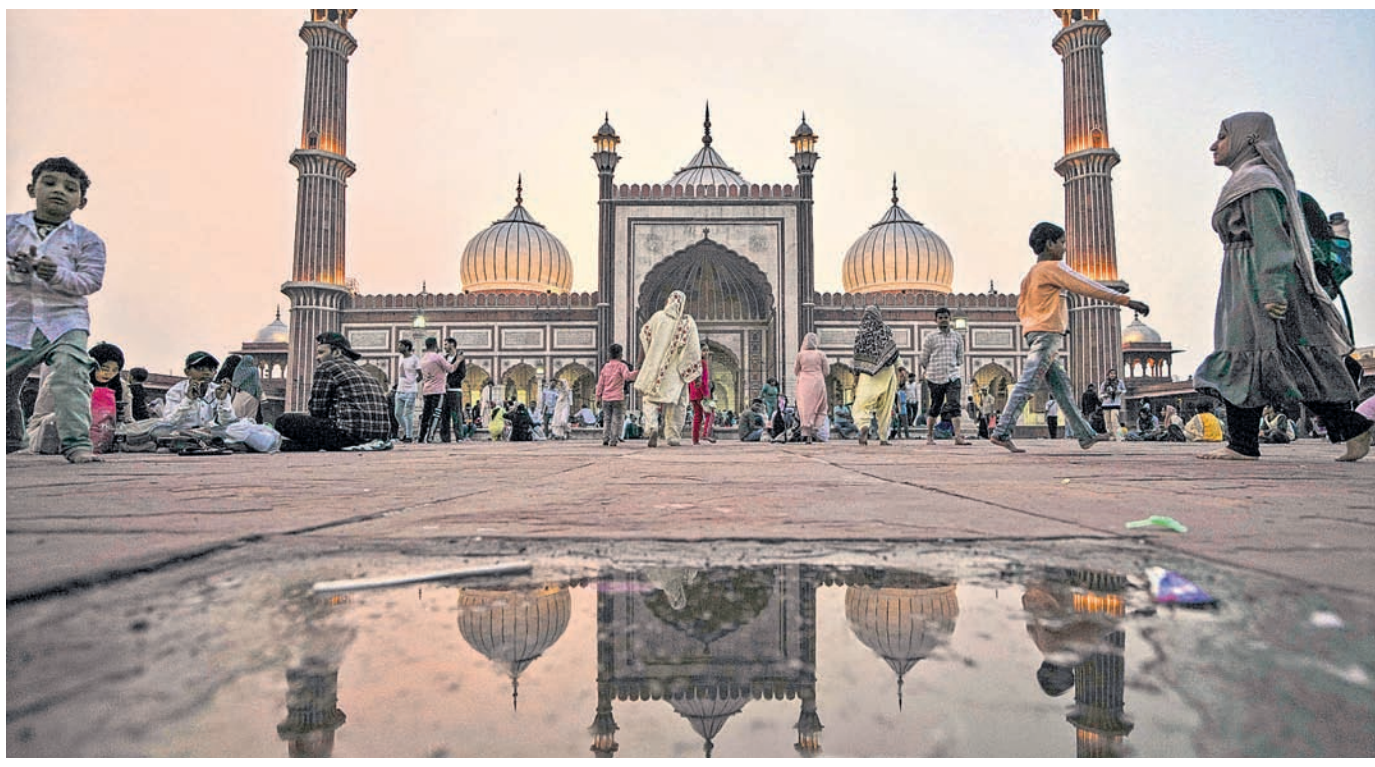
The report pointed to "significant" percentage of savings (unspent amount) under several heads.

"The reasons for under-utilization of funds for implementation of the Covid-19 emergency response was not provided to the auditors by the Delhi government," it said.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released ₹9.60 crore in two installments - ₹3.46 crore in January 2021 and ₹6.14 crore in March 2021 - to the Health department of Delhi government for "COVID-19 Vaccination" but these funds were released to Delhi State Health Society (DSHS) in April and May 2021 only, said the report.

"The DSHS had remitted the funds to the integrated district health societies for further distribution. As per utilisation certificate, ₹7.93 crore out of ₹9.60 crore remained unspent as of March 2022," the report revealed.

The State Rapid Response



Muslim devotees visit Jama Masjid ahead of the holy month of Ramadan, in New Delhi, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

64,910 girls quit higher studies in WB

Educationists corroborate the trend of declining interest among female aspirants in the state to go for higher education after secondary examination



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 1: The number of female students appearing for the higher secondary examinations conducted by the West Bengal state board has drastically reduced, raising questions about whether they are increasingly reluctant to appear for the exam.

This question was fueled by the comparative figure of female aspirants appearing for the "Ucha Madhyamik (Higher Secondary)" examination conducted by the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHSE) in March this year to the corresponding figure of female

aspirants in the "Madhyamik (Secondary examination)" conducted by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBSE) in 2023.

The Madhyamik aspirants in 2023 are the Ucha Madhyamik aspirants this year.

As per figures from the state education department, the number of female aspirants in the 2023 Madhyamik examination was 3,42,902. However, the number of female aspirants in the Ucha Madhyamik examination scheduled for next

month this year is 2,77,992. A total of 64,910 female students have opted out.

This means that the number of female Ucha Madhyamik has declined by 19 per cent from a similar figure in the 2023 Madhyamik examination.

Educationists believe that the logical conclusion from this decline is that a major section of such female aspirants has dropped out after passing out "Madhyamik" education, while a small section might have migrated to different

boards. The first is the declining number of monthly allowance recipients under the Kanyashree Prakalpa, which is the state's own dole-cum-development scheme to encourage young girls to pursue higher education, where the monthly allowance is ₹1,000.

In the 2023-24 academic year, the number of recipients of the monthly allowance under this scheme was 20.69 lakh. However, with just a month remaining for the ongoing academic year of 2024-25 to end, the number of recipients stands at around 15.75 lakh, as per the figures of the state education department.

In the state budget proposals for the financial year 2025-26, the proposal for budgetary allotment for higher education in West Bengal had shown a marginal increase over the corresponding figure of 2024-25. The proposed budgetary allocation for higher education for 2025-26 is ₹6,593.58 crore, marginally higher than the figure of ₹6,401.11 crore proposed for 2024-25.

No fuel for overage vehicles from April in Delhi

The move aims to curb vehicular emissions and put a check on air pollution in the city which remains a persistent challenge for the residents



"We are setting up gadgets at our petrol pumps that will identify vehicles older than 15 years. They will not be provided fuel," Sirsa said.

A senior official of the Delhi government told PTI that diesel-run vehicles older than 10 years will also be denied fuel after March 31.

According to rough estimates, there are around 55 lakh overage vehicles, 66 per cent of which are two-wheelers and 54 per cent four-wheelers, the officer said.

Giving more details about the implementation of new rules, the officer said many fuel stations in Delhi have already installed AI-enabled cameras to check violations of pollution under control (PUC) certificate rules.

"These cameras currently detect vehicles which do not have PUC certificate and the fuel pump staff deny fuel to

such vehicles. We can also use these AI-enabled cameras to detect the age of particular vehicles. For this, we need to upgrade our system," the officer added. He said the fuel pumps which currently do not have such devices will have them installed soon.

Moreover, the Delhi government will deploy teams to identify overage vehicles and ensure they are either prevented from entering the city or removed if already present.

The government's decision aligns with a 2018 Supreme Court ruling that banned diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years in Delhi. A 2014 National Green Tribunal order prohibits parking of vehicles aged over 15 years in public areas.

The government also plans to phase out nearly 90 per cent of CNG-driven public trans-

port buses in Delhi by December 2025, replacing them with electric buses to promote cleaner and more sustainable transport.

According to the Delhi government, 11,000 buses, including around 8,000 e-buses, will be procured by 2026.

Sirsa said procurement of 3,680 e-buses will be completed by September this year to encourage people to avail public transport for their daily commute. During the meeting, the minister was informed that around 7,600 buses, including 2002 e-buses, are plying in Delhi, another official said.

In November, the Centre for Science and Environment said in its report that vehicular emission is the top contributor to Delhi's pollution during winters -- more than stubble burning, road dust or bursting of firecrackers -- with over 50 per cent of pollution from local sources linked to the city's fragmented transportation system. Nischal Singhania, the president of the Delhi Petrol Dealers Association, welcomed the move and said, "Vehicles older than 15 years are already banned in Delhi by the Supreme Court."

"We already have apparatus to detect vehicles without pollution under control (PUC) certificates. I think those can be used to detect vehicles older than 15 years," he said.

New fleet of yellow taxis hits Kolkata roads

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 1: In an effort to revive the iconic yellow taxis which are dwindling in numbers with time, the West Bengal government in association with a private company, has launched a fleet of 20 modern cars.



The hatchback cars were flagged off by the state transport minister Snehasis Chakraborty Friday.

The transport secretary, Soumitra Mohan, and other officials were also present on the occasion.

Christened 'Yellow Heritage Cabs', the fleet is likely to evoke the nostalgia and emotions surrounding the iconic yellow taxis which have been an integral part of the city for many years.

According to a transport department official 3,000 such cabs hit the streets in two months. The private company has entered into an agreement with a leading automobile company to launch the new yellow taxis in the city.

All the taxis will have modern features, including seat belts and airbags, he said.

TMC begins voter list verification drive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 1: Trinamool Congress leaders Saturday began a door-to-door campaign to scrutinise the electoral rolls amid allegations of voter list manipulation by the BJP ahead of next year's assembly polls in West Bengal.

Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim personally carried out the voter list verification drive in the Chetla area of south Kolkata.

"The BJP is trying to manipulate the electoral rolls by bringing in fake voters from other states. So, along with our party workers, we are on a door-to-door visit to verify the voter list," Hakim told reporters.

Local TMC leaders were also busy in a similar exercise in the Bhabanipur assembly constituency of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

The verification drive is being carried out by party workers in other places as well, as instructed by Banerjee, also the TMC supremo.

Tender Call Notice No-04/2024-25. Sealed Tenders are invited for the interested bidder for the civil work under BDO, Nuagaon of Sundargarh district. The detail of works eligibility, estimated cost, EMD, Cost of Tender paper has been uploaded in the district website www.sundargarh.odisha.gov.in. The bidder should be a "B" or "C" class contractor. They have to submit the bid document to the undersigned in the address of "Office of the B.D.O., Nuagaon, At/Po-Nuagaon, Pin-770035, Dist.- Sundargarh (Odisha)" through Registered Post/Speed Post only on or before 21/03/2025 (up to 05.00 P.M.). DTCN & other details can be downloaded from the Dist. website www.sundargarh.odisha.gov.in from 27/02/2025 to 13/03/2025. The authority reserves the right to cancel or reject the entire process without assigning any reason thereof. The tender will be opened on dt. 24/03/2025 at 11.00 A.M. in the Office of the undersigned in the presence of the bidders or his/her representatives. Sd./- Block Development Officer Nuagaon

Delhi experiences warmer Feb this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Delhi experienced a warm February this year, with both maximum and minimum temperatures showing a rise compared to the previous year.

According to the weather department's data, the average maximum temperature for the month was 26.7 degrees Celsius, higher than last year's average of 24.4 degrees Celsius.

Similarly, the average mini-



mum temperature was 11.6 degrees Celsius, making it the highest February minimum in the last six years.

The last time the city recorded such a warm average minimum temperature was in 2017.

The month also witnessed a record-breaking night, with the minimum temperature settling at 19.5 degrees Celsius February 27, marking the hottest February night in 74 years.

According to the data, this

broke all previous records since 1951. On the same day, the maximum temperature peaked at 32.4 degrees Celsius, making it the warmest day of the month.

Additionally, with a cloudy sky, the maximum temperature was recorded at 27 degrees Celsius Friday, 0.9 notch above the seasonal average, while the minimum was recorded at 18.4 degrees Celsius, the second highest minimum this month, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, R.W.S&S DIVISION, SAMBALPUR. E-mail: ewrswsbp@gmail.com "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE Bid Identification No. RWSS (SBP) : 11/2024-25 1. Name of the Work : Laying of HDPE pipeline, fixing of valves, construction of valve chambers & FHCT for piped water supply to village Bhalipaali under Dhankauda Block of Sambalpur District. 2. Total Number of Work : 01 No. (One) 3. Estimated Cost : Rs.11.28 lakhs 4. Class of Contractor : D & C 5. Period of Completion : Three months



For decades, the world referred to India as their back office. Now, India is becoming the new factory of the world. We are no longer just a workforce but instead becoming a world force

RAHUL THANKS PORTERS FOR SAVING LIVES

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday urged the government to draw lessons from the February 15 tragedy at New Delhi Railway Station in which several passengers lost their lives in a stampede and hoped concrete steps would be taken to prevent such incidents.



of the day quote

While crimes against women have come down in the state due to government interventions, their occurrence even now in a progressive society like that of Kerala was a matter of serious concern



The steel was sourced from leading manufacturers like TATA, JSW, and SAIL, ensuring high-quality material for the project. This highlights India's self-reliance in infrastructure development and commitment to the Make in India initiative



There is only one cabinet. There is no shadow cabinet in our country. The BJP has ruled here till now. Now, the people's government will do its work



Compensation must be paid to workers affected by GRAP: SC

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said compensation should be paid to affected workers using funds collected as labour cess



New Delhi, March 1: The Supreme Court directed Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan to pay compensation to construction workers whenever they are affected by the closure of activities due to GRAP measures in Delhi-NCR even if there is no specific court order on it.

"Even if there is no specific direction of the court to pay compensation, the NCR States shall pay compensation," it said.

The top court had earlier pulled up the Delhi government for not paying the full subsistence allowance to construction workers, who went without work due to the curbs imposed to combat air pollution in the national capital.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said compensation should be paid to affected workers using funds collected as labour cess.

During the hearing Friday, the court was informed that Haryana, in the first and second phases of GRAP-4, has paid a compensation to 2,68,759 and 2,24,881 workers, respectively.

The Delhi government was directed to convene a meeting of the workers' union immediately to ensure their registration.

Anti-pollution measures under Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) are implemented based on average air quality in Delhi-NCR.

Besides this, the process of paying compensation to around 95,000 workers for the January 2025 GRAP 4 period is underway.

Similar directions were passed for Rajasthan, where two districts Bharatpur and Alwar, fall in the NCR, besides 14 districts of Haryana and eight districts of UP, to convene a meeting of workers' unions and pay the subsistence allowance.

The bench said, "As far as 2024 and 2025 are concerned we have issued directions to the state to pay compensation. We make it clear that hereafter whenever the construction activities are required to be closed due to implementation of GRAP measures, compensation shall be paid to the affected workers in terms of directions issued by this court dated 24th November 2021."

Rajasthan government disclosed that compensation had been paid to 3,197 workers, while Uttar Pradesh informed that compensation had been disbursed to 4,88,246, 4,84,157, and 691 workers affected during phases 1, 2, and 3 of GRAP, respectively.

The top court directed the chief secretaries of NCR states December 2, to appear before it through video-conferencing to inform whether or not any subsistence allowance was paid to the construction workers who went without work owing to the restrictions.

SHORT TAKES

Punjab begins anti-drugs op

Chandigarh: Punjab Police has launched a statewide operation against drugs, conducting raids at 750 locations as the cabinet sub-committee on the drug menace held its first meeting Saturday, officials said.

Paid maternity leave for ASHAs

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has approved the payment of gratuity, paid maternity leave and the increase of retirement age to Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA).

Whereabouts of 4 trapped men located

Telangana minister put the chances of their survival at 'one per cent'

TUNNEL COLLAPSE



Nagarkurnool (Telangana), March 1: The rescue operations to pull out the eight persons trapped inside the partially collapsed SLBC tunnel here for a week saw a breakthrough Saturday with the whereabouts of four of them being located, though a Telangana minister put the chances of their survival at "one per cent."

of the four whose whereabouts have been found, the minister recalled he had said on the first day itself that the chances of survival of the trapped persons are remote.

completed by Sunday evening. Scientists from the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) used Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and detected some "anomalies" inside the tunnel, providing a crucial lead in the operation.

Eight persons have been trapped under the collapsed roof of the Srisailem Left Bank Canal tunnel since February 22 and the rescue operations are in full swing to pull them out to safety

State Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao, who attended a meeting with officials involved in the rescue operation along with Irrigation Minister N Utam Kumar Reddy, said there was lot of progress during the last couple of days.

Krishna Rao added desilting was being carried out manually where the whereabouts of four persons has been identified which is expected to be

The other four appear to have been stuck beneath the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM), the minister said. It may take some time to get a breakthrough about them, he said.

Woman advocate attacked with chemical in court

Lucknow/Moradabad (UP), March 1: A woman lawyer was allegedly attacked with an inflammable substance in a Moradabad court by two male litigants, police Saturday said.



The incident took place Thursday at around 10.30 am in a court in Thakurdwara tehsil. Advocate Shashibala in her complaint said her tenant Satyendra dropped her near the main gate of the court. About a minute later, Sachin Kumar and his relative Nitin Kumar, who were hiding there, threw some inflammable substance on her from behind, she said.

They have been booked under sections 124 (1) (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by use of acid etc) and 351 (3) (criminal intimidation) of the BNS at Thakurdwara Police Station in Moradabad, police said.

The two are residents of Udhham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhnad, police said. Shashibala said one of them also put a country-made pistol to her temple and said, 'today we will give you a very good gift.' The two decamped when she raised an alarm and drew the attention of other lawyers. The chemical burned her clothes and parts of her body. Shashibala said she is pursuing some cases in Thakurdwara court against Sachin and Nitin.

"The incident seems suspicious. The CCTV footage show the accused at some other location. And this is not a case of acid attack; some inflammable material was used. The medical examination also does not confirm this. The matter is being investigated," Superintendent of Police (Rural) Kunwar Akash Singh told PTI. He said Sachin and Nitin have been seen to have entered the district from Kashipur in Uttarakhnad and took the same route back.

Of 50 workers rescued, 4 die; search on for 4 amid bad weather

The avalanche hit the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) camp between Mana and Badrinath between 5:30 am and 6 am Friday, burying 55 workers inside eight containers and a shed

labourers were missing but one of them -- Sunil Kumar from Kangra in Himachal Pradesh -- has reached home safely on his own and now, the search is focused on the four remaining workers.

UTTARAKHAND AVALANCHE



Dehradun, March 1: Fifty workers have been pulled out of snow from the site of an avalanche-hit BRO camp in Mana village in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, but four of them died Saturday as rescuers raced against time to trace four more labourers feared trapped. According to latest rescue updates provided by the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority (USDMA), five

The avalanche hit the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) camp between Mana and Badrinath between 5:30 am and 6 am Friday, burying 55 workers inside eight containers and a shed, according to the Army. Thirty-three of them were rescued by Friday night and 17 Saturday.

Indian Army Aviation Corps, two of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and a civil chopper hired by the Army -- have been engaged in the operation, Army's Public Relations Officer (PRO) Lieutenant Colonel Manish Shrivastava said. Located three kilometres from Badrinath, Mana is the last village on the India-Tibet border at

the death of four rescued labourers. One died during treatment in Jyotirmath and three in Badrinath-Mana, it said.

Officials said 24 people were brought to the Army hospital with injuries and two of them were referred to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rishikesh.

The deceased were identified as Mohindra Pal and Jitendra Singh from Himachal Pradesh, Manjit Yadav from Uttar Pradesh and Alok Yadav from Uttarakhand, the USDMA said.

According to the Army PRO, Lt Gen. Anindya Sengupta, GOC-in-C, Central Command, and Lt Gen. D G Mishra, GOC, Uttar Bharat, have reached the avalanche site to monitor the rescue operations.

The four labourers still missing are Harmesh Chand from Himachal Pradesh, Ashok from Uttar Pradesh and Anil Kumar and Arvind Singh from Uttarakhand, it added.

Lt Gen. Sengupta said movement by road is impossible since it is clogged by snow. The Badrinath-Joshimath highway is blocked at 15-20 places, he added. However, the USDMA subsequently said the three remaining containers have also been located but no worker was found in those.

Army officials said the rescue operation Saturday was mostly carried out by the Army and IAF helicopters as the approach road was blocked by snow at several points, making vehicular movement nearly impossible.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami did an aerial survey of the avalanche-hit site and reviewed the relief-and-rescue operations at Jyotirmath.





Philanthropic endeavours should not be driven by the philosophy of commodification and commercialisation. Our healthcare and education systems are being plagued by these

FIRST 'WE PARK' OPENED IN KOLLAM

Kerala Tourism Minister PA Mohamed Riyas inaugurated the 'WE Park' located under the railway bridge near SN College here, Saturday. 'WE Park' is the first project completed under the Kerala government's new design policy, which aims to beautify and enhance the productivity of unused urban spaces



of the day quote

Let the probe get over and let the facts come to the fore. After that, action will be taken against those who vandalised public property. They will not be spared. Does anyone damage his own house's window panes if an accused is not arrested?

AJIT PAWAR | DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER, MAHARASHTRA

I won't comment on how far and to whom the voices of temples, mosques, or Gurudwaras reach, but the voice of the temple of democracy reaches everyone—be it Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, the rich, or the poor

HEMANT SOREN | CHIEF MINISTER, JHARKHAND

Shiv Sena (UBT) will stake claim to the post of LoP in the Vidhan Sabha. Even if the strength of MLAs is less, there is no law or provision in the Constitution which says that the House should function without the LoP. Shiv Sena (UBT) has the strength of 20

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

Shah reviews Manipur security

Aiming to bring normalcy in Manipur, Amit Shah directs security forces to ensure free movement of people on roads from March 8

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday directed security forces to ensure free movement of people on all routes in Manipur from March 8 and also called for strict action against those creating obstructions.

The direction was given here by Shah at a high-level meeting where the security situation of Manipur was discussed threadbare.

The order bears significance as travel through the areas inhabited by Imphal valley-based Meiteis and neighbouring hills based Kukis was totally prohibited since ethnic violence broke out between the two communities in May 2023.

While Kukis travel mostly through Mizoram to go outside the state, the Meiteis don't go to the hills dominated by the Kukis. This confidence building step came 10 days after Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla ordered those holding illegal and looted arms to surrender before the security posts.

Chairing the review meeting, Shah also said the Centre remains fully committed to restoring lasting peace in the state and is providing all necessary assistance in this regard.



This confidence building step came 10 days after Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla ordered those holding illegal and looted arms to surrender before the security posts

The home minister directed that free movement of people should be ensured on all roads of Manipur from March 8, according to an official statement.

He also said that strict action should be taken against those creating obstructions on the roads. This was the first such meeting held after the imposition of President's rule in the northeastern state, which has been witnessing ethnic violence since May 2023. Over 250 people have lost their lives in the violence.

Sources said Shah took stock of the security situation in Manipur and a detailed briefing was given on the overall law and order situation in the state.

He directed that the fencing work on both sides of the designated entry points along Manipur's international border should be completed at the earliest.

The home minister said to make Manipur drug-free, the entire network involved in the drug trade should be dismantled. Those who attended the meet-

ing included Governor Bhalla, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, Deputy Chief of Army Staff and Commander of the Army's Eastern Command among others.

President's rule was imposed in Manipur February 13 after N Biren Singh resigned as chief minister.

The state Assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation. The security review was held after the February 20 ultimatum given by the governor to everyone holding illegal and looted arms to surrender.

During the seven-day period, more than 300 weapons were surrendered by the public, primarily in the valley districts.

These include 246 firearms surrendered by Meitei radical group Arambai Tengglol. Bhalla Friday extended the deadline for the surrender of looted and illegal arms until 4 pm March 6 following demands by people from both hill and valley areas for additional time.

Several thousand arms were looted from police in different places in Manipur during the initial phase of the ethnic violence that began about 22 months ago.



A visitor poses for a photograph at the NDMC Flower Festival 2025, at Central Park, Connaught Place in New Delhi, Saturday

SIMULTANEOUS POLLS

Question of ballot paper out of your scope: Centre to panel



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Protest held against incineration of Bhopal gas tragedy waste

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhar (MP), March 1: A group of women staged an agitation in Pithampur town in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district Saturday to protest against the incineration of the waste linked to the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, a day after its trial burning began.

However, the protesters ended the sit-in within half-an-hour after the police held discussions with them, an official said.

The trial incineration of 10 tonnes out of a total of 337 tonnes of hazardous waste commenced Friday afternoon in Pithampur area with initial reports indicating that the air quality and other monitored parameters were within normal ranges.

But to oppose the incineration of the waste in Pithampur, several women gathered near the local bus stand, sporting black bands on their foreheads and holding pictures of Dr BR Ambedkar.

During the sit-in, protest leader Monika Solanki said, "A huge number of people died due to the Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984 as a result of toxic gas leak from the Union Carbide factory. The bones of the victims of this industrial disaster are also being burnt at the incinerator along with the waste."

Bengal education minister attacked by SFI leaders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 1: Members of CPI(M) students wing SFI and Naxalite AISA gheraoed West Bengal Education minister Bratya Basu and damaged the windscreen of his vehicle in the Jadavpur University campus here Saturday to press for their demands for declaring students union election dates in the state at the earliest.

Basu who went to the JU campus to attend the annual general meeting of West Bengal College and University Professors Association (WBCUPA), tried to speak to the agitating students while leaving the campus but was surrounded by around 100 students who damaged the windscreen of his car, showed him shoes and smashed the rearview mirror of his vehicle.

The minister was later taken to state-run SSKM Hospital where he complained about uneasiness and suffering gashes on his left hand which was hit by broken glass shreds. His security personnel had a trying time to escort him to his vehicle. "I have undergone an x-ray test as I felt pain in my chest. However, doctors told me



there was no serious injury. There were some external marks on the upper part of my body but these are not serious," he told reporters while leaving the hospital.

"I was ready to talk to the protesting students. Even the SFI handed over a memorandum to me, but when I was about to board the car again, over 100 protestors turned aggressive and surrounded me. I was ready to speak to five representatives even in the presence of the vice-chancellor, but they did not want constructive dialogue. They wanted chaos and lawlessness. They tried to attack my vehicle," the minister said after the medical check-up

at the state-run hospital. He said the protestors did not entirely belong to SFI but other ultra-left outfits active on the campus as well.

The minister said despite grave provocations on the part of the agitating students, his security guards did not react nor did he seek intervention from the accompanying police escort as "we don't believe in violence and entry of police into campus."

Basu, who is also the president of WBCUPA, said the real undemocratic, unruly self of the left student's outfit was exposed by their protests as they shouted slogans against the members of the teaching community.

In northeast India, a border fence could cut through villages, lives

Residents have been worried about another, less visible, local landmark: the border between India and Myanmar, which runs right through the village's centre

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Longwa, March 1: To the people who live there, Longwa is a typical hilltop village. The most imposing structure is a corrugated tin roof belonging to the Angh, a hereditary tribal chief.

But recently, residents have been worried about another, less visible, local landmark: the border between India and Myanmar, which runs right through the village's centre.

National boundaries never mattered before to the local Konyak tribe. "I eat in Myanmar and sleep in India," says Tonyei Phawang, the Angh, whose house sits on the border.

The Indian government is now seeking to stop border crossings for the first time, revoking a system that made it legal for Indigenous people to cross freely and threatening to build a border fence that could

cut villages like Longwa in two.

Two countries, one community

Longwa's marketplace was bustling with shoppers from the Myanmar side, motorbikes loaded with as much salt, flour, biscuits, clothes, milk, tea, soap as they could carry a Thursday in December. The nearest town with a market on the other side of the border is Lahe, a full day's drive away.

Locals have long come and gone to shop, study or seek medical care, with no sign that they're crossing an international border except a border marker sitting on a hilltop in the village. The Angh and village council members say their forefathers had no idea that the concrete pillar was meant to divide them when it was built in the early 1970s.

Like dozens of other Indigenous Naga tribes, the Konyak's



land straddles the mountains that divide India and Myanmar. Naga villages are usually built on hilltops for security, something that wasn't considered when the British East India Company drew the border in an agreement with the then-King-

dom of Burma.

The Constitution of India does not allow dual citizenship, but people in Longwa see themselves as belonging to both countries.

"I am from both India and Burma," Phawang said, using

another name for the country officially known as Myanmar. "I vote in the Burmese election. And when the Indian election comes I vote there too."

Phawang is chief of six Konyak villages in India and more than 30 in Myanmar, whose residents pay allegiance with a yearly feast as they have for some 10 generations.

Border guards and fences could cut the village

Until recently, residents from both sides could travel legally within 16 kilometers (9.9 miles) of the border, but that started to change in February 2024, when the government revoked the Free Movement Regime "to ensure the internal security of the country and to maintain the demographic structure of India's North Eastern states bordering Myanmar."

Change has come slowly in

Longwa: it took almost a year before soldiers stationed in the village began checking documents, and Longwa residents still move freely after their shifts end in the early afternoon. But people from other villages in Myanmar are afraid to travel beyond Longwa to reach schools or medical care, said B. Phohi Konyak, a former local leader of an organization representing Konyak women.

Indian Home Minister Amit Shah said the government has decided to construct a fence along the entire 1,643-kilometer (1,021-mile) long Indo-Myanmar border.

If it follows the legal border, it would have to cut through dozens of houses. Of the 990 buildings in the village, 170 lie on the boundary line — including a government school, the church and an army camp.

POST OF THE DAY

This ugly exchange between Trump-Vance-Zelensky is a spectacle - a reality TV show like no other

What struck me the most about this 'conversation' between 'world leaders' is the American President and his VP downing and deriding the previous US gov

There is no governance in continuity - not anymore We live in a world where sensitive politics with global impact is being discussed by heads of state on live TV

RIP diplomacy!

@SupriyaShrinat

SHORT TAKES

2006 NRI murder: Lifer for 10 persons

Ahmedabad: A sessions court here has sentenced 10 persons to rigorous life imprisonment for the murder of an NRI in 2006 after he sought accountability for foreign funds he helped raise for a spiritual organisation.

5 of family killed in roof collapse

Tarn Taran (Punjab): Five members of a family died after the roof of their house collapsed while they were asleep, police said Saturday. The incident occurred at around 4:30 am in village Pandori Gola here, said police. The structure of the house was in dilapidated condition. Some waste material was kept at the roof of the house and because of its weight, the roof collapsed.

Two Naxalites gunned down

Sukma: Two Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district Saturday, police said. He said personnel from the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action — an elite unit of the CRPF) are involved in the operation launched Friday based on inputs about the presence of Maoists in the area.

# international



**There is enough fuel stocks and no question of a shortage. People have begun panic buying for no reason**  
ANIL JAYANTHA FERNANDO | DEPUTY FM, SRI LANKA

## MT EVEREST REOPENED

China Saturday reopened the scenic area of Mt Everest, known as Mount Qomolangma, in the Tibet Autonomous Region after it was closed to the public following the January earthquake. The area was closed January 7 after a 6.8-magnitude quake struck Dingri, home to the northern base camp of the world's highest peak, Mount Qomolangma



## of the day quote

**Pressuring, coercion and threat is not the right way to deal with China. Instead, mutual respect is the basic prerequisite**  
LIU PENGYU | SPOKESPERSON, CHINA'S EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON



**We believe that time has come for full decolonisation... not piecemeal or partial or phased**  
MARK GOLDING | OPPOSITION PNP LEADER, JAMAICA



**The rise in anti-Muslim hate crime is unacceptable and has no place in our society. That's why we've committed to defining Anti-Muslim Hatred/ Islamophobia, as a crucial step forward in tackling it and creating a society where everyone feels safe and welcome**  
ANGELA RAYNER | SECRETARY OF STATE, MHCLG



## TRUMP-ZELENSKY SPAT

# Ukraine exposed in war with Russia

*The meltdown between Trump and Zelenskiy in the White House leaves the Ukrainian leader more exposed than ever in the three-year war, during which his country has relied heavily on aid and weapons supplied by Trump's predecessor Joe Biden*

REUTERS

**Washington, March 1:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's meeting with Donald Trump ended in disaster Friday, after the two leaders clashed in an extraordinary exchange before the world's media at the White House over the war with Russia.



Zelenskiy had seen the meeting in the Oval Office as an opportunity to convince the United States not to side with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who ordered the invasion of Ukraine three years ago.

Instead US President Trump and Vice President JD Vance laid into Zelenskiy, saying he showed disrespect, driving relations with Kyiv's most important wartime ally to a new low. The Ukrainian leader was told to leave, a US official said.

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An agreement between Ukraine and the United States to jointly develop Ukraine's rich natural resources, which Kyiv and its European allies had hoped would usher in better relations, was left unsigned and in limbo.

The already-tense meeting blew up when Vance stressed the need for diplomacy to resolve the biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two. Zelenskiy, his arms folded, countered that Putin could not be trusted and noted that Vance had never visited Ukraine.

The head of the Ukrainian armed forces, Oleksandr Syrskyi, posted a statement on Telegram affirming that his troops stood by Zelenskiy and that Ukraine's strength was in its unity.

Anxious Ukrainians following from afar largely rallied around their leader but fretted

about the prospects of continuing flows of US military aid that the country has relied on.

In Congress, reaction from Trump's Republican Party was mixed, while Democrats lambasted his handling of the meeting.

The Ukrainian leader conducted the meeting in his non-native English, and as it progressed he was drowned out by Trump and Vance.

**EARLY EXIT**

After the talks, Trump directed two top aides to tell Zelenskiy it was time to leave, even as attendants were preparing to serve lunch to the delegations, according to a White House official.

The Ukrainians were instructed to depart despite their desire to continue the talks, the official added.

The falling-out meant that

**The US president has lurched toward Russia since taking over as president, shocking traditional allies in Europe and beyond and leaving Ukraine increasingly vulnerable**

Zelenskiy, who won billions of dollars of US weaponry and moral support from the Biden administration, is facing a sharply different attitude from Trump. Trump wants to quickly wind down the three-year war, improve ties with Russia and recoup money spent to support Ukraine.

Ukraine has rapidly expanded its defense industry production but remains heavily reliant on foreign military assistance, while also struggling to replenish manpower as it battles a much larger foe.

While Ukraine repelled Russia's invasion from the outskirts of Kyiv and recaptured swaths of territory in 2022, Russia still controls around a fifth of Ukraine and has been slowly taking ground since a failed Ukrainian counteroffensive in 2023.

Kyiv's troops hold a chunk of land in Russia's western Kursk region after a 2024 incursion.

Trump has engaged in a long-distance feud with Zelenskiy in recent weeks, criticizing his handling of the war, calling him a "dictator" and urging him to agree to the minerals deal. He subsequently distanced himself from the "dictator" remark.

## MOSCOW GLOATS



REUTERS

**Moscow, March 1:** Russia reacted with glee Friday to the bitter clash between Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelenskiy in the White House, saying the Ukrainian leader got what he deserved.

The acrimonious shouting match was a gift to Moscow, which is working to build ties with Trump's new administration while trying to discredit Zelenskiy and undermine his legitimacy.

Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev said Zelenskiy, who was accused by Trump and Vice President JD Vance of being disrespectful towards the United States, had received a "solid slap".

"A brutal dressing down in the Oval Office," Medvedev, who is deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, posted on Telegram.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said it was a miracle that Trump and Vance restrained themselves from hitting Zelenskiy during the argument, which was broadcast on news channels around the world. She said Zelenskiy was biting the hand that fed him.

Hardline nationalist TV commentator Vladimir Solovyov announced a special show devoted to "Zelenskiy's suicide in the White House".

Medvedev, in his post, insulted Zelenskiy and said he had finally been told the truth to his face that, as he put it, "the Kyiv regime is playing with World War Three." He called for military aid to Ukraine to be halted, something Moscow has long been pushing for.

Russia has long portrayed Zelenskiy as an unstable and self-obsessed US puppet who was used by the previous Biden administration to try to inflict a strategic defeat on Moscow by "fighting to the last Ukrainian."

Zelenskiy has rejected that characterisation, saying he is doing all he can to defend his country from Russia with help from Ukraine's allies.

The rapid rapprochement between Moscow and Washington has worried Ukraine and its European allies, who fear that Trump and President Vladimir Putin could cut a deal that leaves them sidelined and undermines their security.

Putin has said repeatedly that Zelenskiy is not a legitimate leader because his five-year term expired last year. Ukraine has been unable to hold elections because it has been under martial law since full-scale war erupted in February 2022.

Former Kremlin adviser Sergei Markov said the Oval Office clash was likely to accelerate the end of Zelenskiy's political career, something some Russian officials have been keen to see for some time, believing it will be easier to strike a peace deal with someone else. "The main conclusion that everyone has drawn from the public scandal of Zelenskiy and Trump is that Zelenskiy is completely out of line and should step down from the presidency as soon as possible," said Markov.

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**Zelenskiy lost this round with a deafening rattle. And he will have to crawl to the next one on his knees**  
KONSTANTIN KOSACHYOV | DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF RUSSIA'S UPPER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Pak's tax shortfall widens to Rs 606bn

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's tax shortfall widened to Rs 606 billion in the first eight months of this fiscal year, piling up pressure on authorities for violating commitments made with the International Monetary Fund. The fund provided a \$7 billion loan but imposed strict conditions, including on tax collection. The Express Tribune reported that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) sustained a colossal shortfall of Rs 606 billion against the July-February target of Rs 7.95 trillion because it provisionally pooled Rs 7.342 trillion during this fiscal year's July-February period.

### B'desh delegation to travel to India

**Dhaka:** An 11-member Bangladeshi delegation will travel to India Monday for a meeting regarding the Ganga Water Treaty, which is due for renewal in 2026. India and Bangladesh are set to hold the 86th meeting of the joint committee of technical experts next week regarding the renewal of the 30-year-old treaty for sharing the waters of the trans-boundary river. "The Bangladeshi delegation, led by Muhammad Abul Hossen, member of the Joint River Commission (JRC), will reach Kolkata March 3 and immediately leave on a two-day visit to the joint observation site on the Ganges at Farakka until the morning of March 5," The Daily Star newspaper said.

## 40-YEAR LONG WAR

*The development could give Erdogan a domestic boost and an historic opportunity to bring peace and development to southeast Turkey where the conflict has killed thousands and severely hurt the economy*

REUTERS

**Ankara, March 1:** The outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group declared

## Kurdish militants declare truce with Turkiye

an immediate ceasefire Saturday, a news agency close to it said, heading jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan's disarmament call, in a major step toward ending a 40-year insurgency against the Turkish state.

Ocalan Thursday called on the PKK to lay down its arms and dissolve, a move that President Tayyip Erdogan's government and the opposition pro-Kurdish DEM party voiced support for.

If successful, the move could have wide-ranging implications for the region, while ending a conflict that has killed



more than 40,000 people since the PKK - now based in the mountains of northern Iraq - launched its armed insurgency in 1984.

The group said it hoped Ankara would give Ocalan, held in near total isolation since 1999, more freedoms so he can lead a disarmament process, adding that the necessary political and democratic conditions must be established for it to succeed.

"We, as the PKK, fully agree with the content of the call and state that, from our front, we will heed the necessities of the call and implement it," the group said in a statement, according to the Firat news agency.

"Beyond this, issues like laying down arms being put into practice can only be realised

under the practical leadership of Leader Apo," the group said, using its nickname for Ocalan, adding it would halt all hostilities immediately unless attacked.

The PKK, designated a terrorist group by Turkey and its Western allies, said it was ready to convene a congress, as Ocalan called for, but the necessary security conditions should be established for him to "personally direct and run" it.

Previous efforts to end the insurgency, held in the years 2009-11 and 2013-15, failed and resulted in increased violence.

## Hamas sees 'no progress' on second ceasefire phase

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Cairo, March 1:** The latest round of talks on the second phase of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas has made no progress so far, and it was unclear whether the talks would resume Saturday, a senior Hamas official said.

The first phase of the ceasefire, which paused 15 months of fighting in the Gaza Strip, saw the release of 33 hostages, including eight bodies, in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Phase one expires Saturday.

## WEEK'S BEST PICS



Deacons take part in a mass for their jubilee in St Peter's Basilica at The Vatican Sunday February 23 that was supposed to be presided over by Pope Francis who was admitted at Rome's Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic



A protestor holds a placard at the Brandenburg Gate, illuminated in Ukrainian colors, during a demonstration against Russia's war on Ukraine as they mark the third anniversary of the full-scale invasion in Berlin, Monday, February 24



A man plays a guitar and harmonica, as riot police clash with demonstrators, at a protest near the Greek parliament in Athens, February 28



Palestinians spin steel wool sparklers amid the rubble of buildings, ahead of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, at Jabalia refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip, February 28

# Business



**Some of them (Nifty stocks) may have seen some downfall, but by and large the Nifty still reflects decent valuations**  
**PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER**

## TUHIN KANTA PANDEY ASSUMES CHARGE

Tuhin Kanta Pandey assumed charge as the 11th chairman of capital markets regulator Sebi Saturday. Pandey, a career bureaucrat who was serving as the Finance Secretary till now, was appointed chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) by the government Thursday. He replaces Madhabi Puri Buch, whose three-year tenure ended Friday.



### of the day quote

**We have a very good opportunity to do a win-win bargain. So we can really turn it into a win-win situation. Now that the reciprocal tariff threat is coming, it is doubly beneficial that we also, in the process, hold the United States to reciprocal tariff reductions as well, and get access for our goods that we export to them**



**ARVIND PANAGARIYA | CHAIRMAN OF THE 16TH FINANCE COMMISSION**

**A developed India cannot be built without the development of agriculture and prosperity of farmers**



**SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUDHAN | AGRICULTURE MINISTER**

**Fundamentally our business was built on the back of dynamic pricing. Now, it was not designed on models that today's world of AI is using because we started our business 7-8 years back**



**RITESH AGARWAL | OYO CO-FOUNDER AND CEO**

# GST collections rise 9% to ₹1.84L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 1:** Gross GST collections rose by 9.1 per cent to about ₹1.84 lakh crore in February, boosted by domestic consumption and indicating potential economic revival.

As per the official data released Saturday, on a gross basis, mop up from Central GST stood at ₹35,204 crore, State GST at ₹43,704 crore, Integrated GST at ₹90,870 crore and compensation cess of ₹13,868 crore.

GST revenues from domestic transactions jumped 10.2 per cent to ₹1.42 lakh crore while that from imports grew 5.4 per cent to ₹41,702 crore during February.

Total refunds issued during February were ₹20,889 crore, a 17.3 per cent increase over the year-ago period. Net GST collections during February 2025 grew 8.1 per cent to about ₹1.63 lakh crore.

Gross and net GST revenues in February 2024 were ₹1.68 lakh crore and ₹1.50 lakh crore, respectively.

The gross GST collections



in February 2025, at ₹1.84 lakh crore are, however, lower than ₹1.96 lakh crore collected in January 2025.

EY Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal said the robust GST collection figures indicate that the Indian economy is withstanding global economic challenges.

"The consistent rise in domestic GST revenue compared to import-related collections points to the effective implementation of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat policies. Furthermore,

the government's increased disbursement of domestic and export refunds, including those related to inverted duty structures, demonstrates its commitment to easing working capital pressures on businesses," Agarwal said.

KPMG, Indirect Tax Head & Partner, Abhishek Jain said, "GST collections growth of 10.2 per cent on domestic supplies and overall growth of 9.1 per cent indicates a potential revival of economy for Q4. If the Maha Kumbh effect comes

into play, next month's revenue growth could be even better."

Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said while GST collections in large manufacturing and consuming states like Haryana, UP, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, MP, Karnataka have shown handsome increases in the range of 10-20 per cent, a detailed evaluation on the reasons for the low growth in the range of 1-4 per cent in Telangana, Gujarat, Assam, AP and Odisha could provide reasons on the factors responsible for growth in GST collections.

Tax Connect Advisory Services LLP Partner Vivek Jalan said this year's GST collection is almost on target and that is one of the reasons for revised estimates pegging the fiscal deficit for FY24-25 lower at 4.8 per cent, below the budgeted 4.9 per cent.

So far this fiscal (April-February), gross GST collections have grown 9.4 per cent to about ₹20.13 lakh crore, while net GST collections rose 8.6 per cent to over ₹17.79 lakh crore.

# 98.18% of ₹2000 notes returned: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

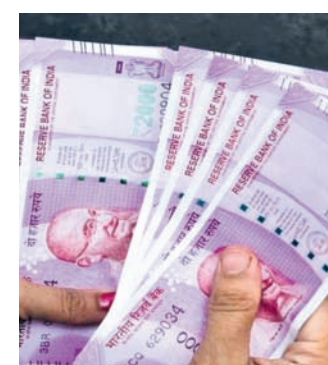
**Mumbai, March 1:** The Reserve Bank Saturday said 98.18 per cent of the ₹2000 banknotes have been returned to the banking system, and only ₹6,471 crore worth such notes are still with the public.

On May 19, 2023, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the withdrawal of ₹2000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

The total value of ₹2000 banknotes in circulation, which was ₹3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, declined to ₹6,471 crore at the close of business on February 28, 2025, RBI said.

"Thus, 98.18 per cent of the ₹2000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it said in a statement.

The facility for deposit and/or exchange of the ₹2000 banknotes was available at all bank branches till October 7, 2023. However, this facility is



still available at the 19 issue offices of the Reserve Bank.

Since October 9, 2023, RBI issue offices are also accepting ₹2000 banknotes from individuals and entities for deposit into their bank accounts.

Further, members of the public can also send ₹2000 banknotes through India Post from any post office within the country to any of the RBI issue offices for credit to their bank accounts.

The ₹2000 banknotes continue to be legal tender.

# India to grow at 6.5% in FY26: IMF



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New York, March 1:** Multilateral financing agency International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that India will retain its position as the fastest-growing major economy by clocking a GDP growth of 6.5 per cent in 2025-26, on the back of robust private investment and macroeconomic stability.

India's strong economic performance, the IMF said, provides an opportunity for the country to advance critical and challenging structural reforms to realise the ambition of becoming an advanced economy by 2047. "Real GDP is expected to grow at 6.5 per cent in 2024-25 and 2025-26, supported by robust growth in private consumption on the back of sustained macroeconomic and financial stability."

According to the second advance estimate released by the Indian government, the country's economy is expected to clock a growth rate of 6.5 per cent during 2024-25. "Headline inflation is expected to converge to target as food price shocks wane," the IMF said after Article IV consultations with India.

The IMF statement also underlined the need for deeper implementation of structural reforms to boost private investment and employment, and push growth.

"...comprehensive structural reforms are crucial to create high-quality jobs, invigorate investment, and unleash higher potential growth. Efforts should focus on implementing labour market reforms, strengthening human capital, and supporting greater participation of women in the labour force," it added.

Boosting private investment and FDI, the IMF statement said, was vital and would require stable policy frameworks, greater ease of doing business, governance reforms, and increased trade integration. These would include both tariff and non-tariff reduction measures.

It further said that despite recent moderation, India's economic growth has remained robust, with GDP growth of 6 per cent y-o-y in the first half of 2024-25. Inflation has broadly declined within the tolerance band of the Reserve Bank (of 2 to 6 per cent), though food price fluctuations have created some volatility, the statement said.

# Maruti sales up; Hyundai, Tata decline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 1:** Leading passenger vehicle maker Maruti Suzuki Saturday reported marginal growth while Hyundai and Tata Motors posted a decline in their sales in February as a slowdown in the market continued with demand remaining muted.

On the other hand, Mahindra & Mahindra and Toyota Kirloskar Motor posted double-digit growth riding on their SUV and MPV models.

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its total domestic passenger vehicle sales were at 1,60,791 units last month as compared with 1,60,271 units in the year-ago month, a marginal year-on-year growth.

Sales of the company's mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, declined to 10,226 units as against 14,782 units in same month last year, while those of compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, and WagonR, rose to 72,942 units as compared to 71,627 units in the year-ago month.

MSI said its utility vehicles, consisting of Grand Vitara Brezza, Ertiga, XL6, Jimmy clocked higher sales at 65,033 units last month as compared to 61,234 units earlier.

Rival Hyundai Motor India said it dispatched 47,727 units to dealers in the domestic market last month, a drop of 5 per cent as compared with 50,201 units in February 2024.

"On the domestic sales front, despite geopolitical challenges, we remain optimistic that the proposed tax reforms in the Union Budget 2025 and improved liquidity will provide the much-needed demand boost to the market," Hyundai Motor



India Whole-time Director and CEO Tarun Garg said.

Tata Motors said its domestic passenger vehicle (PV) sales, including electric vehicles, were down 9 per cent at 46,435 units as compared with 51,267 units a year ago.

On the other hand, M&M said its utility vehicles sales in the domestic market were at 50,420 vehicles, a growth of 19 per cent as compared with 42,401 units in February last year.

"This strong performance is a result of a continued positive momentum for our SUV portfolio," Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Automotive Division President Veejay Nakra said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said its overall sales increased 13 per cent year-on-year to 28,414 units in February as compared to 25,220 units in February 2024. The company dispatched 26,414 units to its dealers in the domestic market

and exported 2,000 units.

"MPVs and SUVs continue to be the primary growth drivers, contributing 68 per cent to overall sales," Toyota Kirloskar Motor Vice President, Sales-Service-Used Car Business Varinder Wadhwa said.

The strong demand for models such as the Innova Crysta, Innova Hycross, Urban Cruiser Hyryder, Hilux, Fortuner, Legend, and Rumion reflects the growing preference for reliable and quality products, he added.

Kia India also reported a 23.8 per cent rise in total sales at 25,026 units in February compared to 20,200 units sold in the same month last year.

"Kia India continues to grow steadily, driven by strong customer demand and our commitment to delivering cutting-edge mobility solutions...With a diverse and evolving product lineup, Kia India continues to respond to market demand with

agility and precision," Kia India Senior Vice President and Head of Sales and Marketing, Hardeep Singh Brar said.

Similarly, JSW MG Motor India reported a 16.3 per cent rise in retail sales at 4,956 units in February this year compared to 4,261 units in the same month last year.

In the two-wheeler segment, Royal Enfield reported a 19 per cent year-on-year rise in total sales at 90,670 units in February as compared to 75,935 units in the same month a year ago.

The company's domestic sales were at 80,799 units, as against 67,922 units in February last year, up 19 per cent. Exports jumped 23 per cent to 9,871 units last month compared to 8,013 units in February 2024.

Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt Ltd (SMIPL) posted total sales of 90,206 units last month, down from 97,435 units in February last year.

# DeepSeek claims theoretical cost-profit ratio of 545% per day

**The revelation could further rattle AI stocks outside China that plunged in January after web and app chatbots powered by its R1 and V3 models surged in popularity worldwide**

REUTERS

**Beijing, March 1:** Chinese AI startup DeepSeek Saturday disclosed some cost and revenue data related to its hit V3 and R1 models, claiming a theoretical cost-profit ratio of up to 545 per cent per day, though it cautioned that actual revenue would be significantly lower.

This marks the first time the Hangzhou-based company has revealed any information about



its profit margins from less computationally intensive "inference" tasks, the stage after training that involves trained AI models making predictions or performing tasks, such as through chatbots.

The revelation could further rattle AI stocks outside China that plunged in January after web and app chatbots powered by its R1 and V3 models surged in popularity worldwide.

The sell-off was partly caused

by DeepSeek's claims that it spent less than \$6 million on chips used to train the model, much less than what U.S. rivals like OpenAI have spent.

The chips DeepSeek claims it used, Nvidia's H800, are also

much less powerful than what OpenAI and other U.S. AI firms have access to, making investors question even further U.S. AI firms' pledges to spend billions of dollars on cutting-edge chips.

DeepSeek said in a GitHub post published Saturday that assuming the cost of renting one H800 chip is \$2 per hour, the total daily inference cost for its V3 and R1 models is \$87,072. In contrast, the theoretical daily revenue generated by these models is \$562,027, leading to a cost-profit ratio of 545 per cent. In a year this would add up to just over \$200 million in revenue.

However, the firm added that its "actual revenue is substantially lower" because the cost of using its V3 model is lower than the R1 model, only some services are monetized as web and app access remain free, and developers pay less during off-peak hours.

# MICROSOFT SHUTTING DOWN SKYPE IN MAY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**New York, March 1:** Microsoft is closing down Skype, the video-calling service it bought for \$8.5 billion in 2011, which had helped spark a transformation in how people communicate online.

The tech giant said Friday it will retire Skype in May and shift some of its services to Microsoft Teams, its flagship videoconferencing and team applications platform.

Skype users will be able to use their existing accounts to log into Teams. Microsoft has for years prioritised Teams over Skype and the decision to fold the brand reflects the tech giant's desire to streamline its main communications app as it faces a host of competitors.

Founded in 2003 by a group of engineers in Tallinn, Estonia, Skype was a pioneer in making telephone calls using the internet instead of landlines.

