

Ongoing challenges

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Actor Aarushi Nishank highlights ongoing gender disparities, emphasising persistent pay gaps in the Indian film industry

LEISURE | P2



Gaza aid halted

Israel blocks the entry of aid trucks into Gaza as a standoff over the truce that has halted fighting for the past six weeks escalates

INTERNATIONAL | P10

BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY | MARCH 3, 2025

FPIs quit equities

Foreign investors pull out ₹34,574cr from equity markets in February pushing total outflows to ₹1.12L-cr in 2025

BUSINESS | P11

India beat Kiwis

Shreyas Iyer's pressure-defying fifty and Varun Chakravarthy's spin masterclass help India script a 44-run win over New Zealand

SPORTS | P12

12 PAGE |₹5.00

CHAMOLI AVALANCHE

Rescue op ends; all bodies found

Dehradun, March 2: The bodies of the last four of the trapped labourers were pulled out from the site of the avalanche-hit Border Roads Organisation (BRO) camp in Chamoli Sunday, taking the death toll to eight as authorities ended the nearly 60-hour

Army doctors said 46 workers who were rescued Saturday have been brought to the military hospital in Jyotirmath. Two of them have been referred to AIIMS, Rishikesh. Three of the workers are in critical condition, Lt Col DS Maldhya said. The body of the last missing worker has also been retrieved. The recovery marks the culmination of the Mana Village Res cue operation, Defence Public Relations Officer (PRO) Lt Co Manish Shrivastava said. "Out of the 54 labourers who went missing after the avalanche, 46 were rescued alive and eight found dead," Chamoli District Magistrate Sandeep Tiwari said. Four bodies were retrieved Saturday and as many Sunday. The avalanche hit the BRO camp between Mana and Badri nath Friday, burying the 54 workers inside eight containers and a shed. Earlier, it was believed that the total number of trapped labourers was 55 but one of them

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

rescue operation.



REVEL AMID RUBBLE: As the sun sets, Palestinians sit at a large table surrounded by the rubble of destroyed homes and buildings as they gather for iftar, the fast-breaking meal, on the first day of Ramadan in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, Saturday AP/PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Mega steel plant in Patana soon: Majhi

Keonjhar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday said a mega steel plant with an investment of around ₹40,000 crore will be jointly set up by JSW and POSCO in Keonjhar district's Patana area. Addressing a public gathering at ipua, Majni said, to set up a mega steel plant in Keonjhar district. God was kind enough to make me the chief minister to realise this dream." In addition to Patana area, the CM said steel industries would be developed in various parts of the district, with a total investment exceeding ₹1 lakh crore. **P5**

Even after retirement from a tumultuous innings as Sebi chief. controversies continued to trail Madhavi Puri Buch when a special court in Mumbai ordered filing of an FIR against the first woman to head the stock market regulator and five others for fraud. Buch, whose tenure ended Friday, was earlier in the eye of a political storm after US-based short-seller Hindenburg accused her of having conflict of interest that prevented a thorough examination of manipulation and fraud claims at the Adani Group. The Adani Group, however, has denied all the allegations. The court order comes at a time when India has become the worst-performing global

stock market with Sensex and

Nifty marking the longest losing

streak since 1996. Meanwhile,

the Sebi said it would be initi-

ating appropriate legal steps to

Mumbai, March 2: A special

'mother of all Indian languag-

es,' may not have originated

in India. Instead. it is believed

to have been introduced by

nomadic groups from the Eur-

asian Steppe, a Business Today

ic and linguistic evidence in-

dicating that Sanskrit arrived

ancient pastoralists spread

lan-

The report highlights genet-

challenge this order.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Buch and five other officials in connection with alleged stock market fraud and regulatory violations

There is prima facie evidence of regulatory lapses and collusion, requiring a fair and



and regulations thereunder. The complainant claimed that the Sebi officials failed in their statutory duty, facilitated market manipulation, and enabled corporate fraud by allowing the listing of a company that did not

Rape convict killed with **BOOK BUCH: COURT** arrows; couple arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuanrmunda, March 2: A rape convict, who had been released from jail on bail, was shot dead with arrows by a



was on unauthorised leave and

had reached home safely.

2 road mishaps claim six lives

Rourkela/Baripada: Six persons were killed while another suffered serious injuries in two separate road accidents that occurred in Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj districts in a span of 24 hours. In the first incident, three persons, including a minor girl, were killed after the bike on which they were returning from the ongoing Vedvyas fair at Vedvyas shrine was knocked down by a speeding truck under Kuanrmunda police limits in Sundargarh district, late Saturday night. In the second incident, three persons were killed and another was seriously injured after two motorcycles collided head-on in P5 Mayurbhanj district Sunday.

impartial probe, the Special ACB Court Judge, Shashikant Eknathrao Bangar, said in the order passed Saturday.

The court order also noted that the allegations disclose a cognisable offence, necessitating an investigation.

The inaction by law enforcement (agencies) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) necessitates judicial intervention under the provisions of the CrPC (Criminal

Procedure Code), it added. Apart from Buch, the other officials against whom the court has ordered registration of the FIR are BSE's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Sundararaman Ramamurthy, its then chairman and public interest director Pramod Agarwal and Sebi's three whole

court here has directed the Antime members Ashwani Bhatia, ti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to Ananth Naravan G and Kamregister an FIR against former lesh Chandra Varshney. Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri

The court said it will monitor

the probe, and sought a status report (of the case) within 30 days. The Sebi said it would be initiating appropriate legal steps to challenge this order and remains committed to ensuring due regulatory compliance in all matters.

The complainant, Sapan Shrivastava (47), who is a media reporter, had sought an investigation into the alleged offences committed by the proposed accused, involving largescale financial fraud, regulatory violations and corruption.

The allegations pertain to the fraudulent listing of a company on the stock exchange with the active connivance of regulatory authorities, particularly the Sebi, without compliance under the SEBI Act, 1992 and rules

meet the prescribed norms.

Despite approaching the police station and regulatory bodies concerned on multiple occa sions, no action has been taken by them, the complainant said.

The court, after considering the material on record, directed the ACB Worli, Mumbai Region, to register an FIR under relevant provisions of the IPC, Prevention of Corruption Act, SEBI Act. and other applicable laws.

Reacting to the court order, the Sebi in a statement said, "A Miscellaneous Application was filed before the ACB Court. Mumbai against the former Chairperson of SEBI, three current Whole Time Members of SE-BI and two officials of the BSE.' The Sebi said it would be ini-

tiating appropriate legal steps to challenge this order and remains committed to ensuring due regulatory compliance in all matters.

couple Saturday night under Biramitrapur police limits in Sundargarh district, police said Sunday.

The deceased has been identified as Anuraj alias Raj Kumar Yadav (36) from Aurangabad in Bihar.

The accused couple has been arrested, police said adding that they have registered a case (71/25) in this connection and initiated an investigation.

According to the police, Raj Kumar worked as a plumber and was staying in a rented house near an under-construction water tank in Kuanrmunda block. In 2023, he was jailed for allegedly raping the accused woman, his neighbour. Recently, he was released from prison on bail.

After his release, Raj Kumar reportedly entered the woman's house Saturday night, issued threats, and misbehaved with her. Enraged by his actions,

the woman and her husband attacked him with arrows Police recovered Raj Kumar's body from a pond near the water tank, Sunday. His chest was pierced with three poison-tipped arrows, which were seized. Another arrow was recovered from the couple's house

Biramitrapur police station officer in-charge Ramprasad Nag, Kuanrmunda outpost officer Abhava Mahapatra, and a forensic team from Sundargarh visited the crime scene for investigation.

During questioning, the couple confessed that Raj Kumar again attempted to assault the woman after returning from jail. Frustrated by his repeated harassment, the couple planned and executed the murder.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



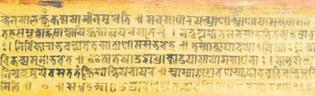
We can't invite more than one sensible panelist... or it might accidentally turn into a meaningful debate!

POST NEWS NETWORK

a crucial role in this processnot only influencing Europe Bhubaneswar, March 2: Rebut also shaping the linguistic cent studies suggest that Sanlandscape of Asia. skrit, often regarded as the

Migrant farmers from the Caucasus and indigenous hunter-gatherer communities contributed to the development of hybrid cultures that eventually gave rise to Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages. DNA studies trace Sanskrit's lineage to nomadic groups near the Black Sea, challenging traditional beliefs about its origins.

in India through migrations Far from being purely Indifrom the Steppe region, where an, Sanskrit's ancestry appears to be deeply intertwined with a broader history of migration, guages across continents. The cultural exchange, and linguis-Yamnaya people, who thrived tic evolution. Researchers now around 5,000 years ago, played suggest its roots lie in the in-



Is Sanskrit Indian? Experts differ on its origin

teractions between early European and Asian populations, reshaping long-held narratives about India's linguistic

heritage. Sanskrit is closely tied to the Aryan migration and their language evolution, which is a kev historical factor in

its arrival in India. It wasn't originally native to the Indian

subcontinent, but it became the language of culture, religion, and intellectual thought in In-

> Agreeing to the report findings, noted Mumbai-based linguist Yatin Sawant said Aryans are thought to have originated in the Steppes

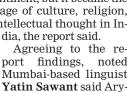
into India, they brought with them their language, which evolved into what we now know as Vedic Sanskrit," Sawant, currently posted as an Additional Excise Commissioner told Orissa POST.

> Vedic Sanskrit is a much earlier and ancient form of the language compared to classical Sanskrit, which emerged later. Hence, the earliest and oldest

Veda- Rigveda - has descriptions of Indus river and not the Ganges, proving that Sanskrit and the people who used it were not native to this sub continent and were restricted to only Indus river and thereabouts . It is believed to have been spoken by the Indo-Aryan tribes who entered the Indian subcontinent, settled in the northwestern region, and gradually spread across the Indo-Gangetic plains, he said.

Speaking in tandem, well known archeologist $\mathbf{D}\mathbf{r}$ Kurush F Dalal said "We all agree that Sanskrit language is born out of the Proto-In do-Iranian (PII) language which is the mother of

Avesta and Rig Vedic Sanskrit. PII in turn comes from Proto-Indo-European (PIE) language which is the mother of both Latin and Greek - the root of European languages and The Indo-Iranian language es, respectively." Contd... P4



of Central Asia or the Caucasus region. "And as they moved



report said.



proto-Indo-European















SUR



HARRISON FORD TO SKIP OSCARS FOLLOWING SHINGLES DIAGNOSIS

Hollywood icon Harrison Ford, 82, has stepped down from presenting at the 2025 Academy Awards due to a shingles diagnosis. Ford, who attended the SAG Awards days before falling ill, is reportedly doing well. He is active in 1923 Season 2 production.

Awards history.

Best Production.

standing performance in the

lead role has earned her a Best

Actress nomination, while Zoe

AL PACINO TO STAR IN HOSTAGE **THRILLER DEAD MAN'S WIRE**

Al Pacino has joined the cast of renowned filmmaker Gus Van Sant's upcoming movie Dead Man's Wire. The Oscar winner will feature alongside Bill Skarsgard, Dacre Montgomery, Myha'la, Cary Elwes and Colman Domingo in the movie, based on the true hostage situation which occurred in the US February 8, 1977.



E FORECAST GaneshaSpeaks.com

accuracy • reliability • trust

Emotions always pose obstacles. When things go wrong, life seems dispirited. But Ganesha advises you to look at the positive side of things, like the food on the dining table or the clothes in your wardrobe, and you will thank God for granting you a blessed life.

TAURUS

This day your energy levels are likely to be below par. You may tend to be restless, inactive, and averse to exerting yourself in any way. Routine tasks, even the important ones could remain unattended But, says Ganesha, you will try to pull yoursel together later in the day, make amends by trying to do something meaningful. Towards this end, success will smile upon you

GEMINI

You have great business plans and can't wait to launch a few of vour ideas

today. Your colleagues will lend you their complete support. You may spend the evening decorating your home or finding peace in the arms of your beloved.



You will finalise business dealings with your partners

today. Your high spirits may be subdued later in the day. However, as evening approaches and you get ready for a party, you will be back in your elements, cracking jokes and generally putting a smile on people's faces.

LEO

You will be in the mood to provide assistance to others. however you may not be able to succeed in your endeavour. The later half of the day will see your doubts melt away and the picture will become much

more clearer. You will need to work hard to attain desired results today, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Your focus levels will reach their highest point today, says Ganesha. Working will be fun and you shall finish your jobs

quickly and efficiently. A twist of tale may crop up its head; worry not, as physical intimacy will take your love affair to the next level, savs Ganesha

LIBRA

Ganesha says you shall have good news in the

family regarding the progress of your children. You will present them valuable gifts and will appreciate their efficiency. Due to no reason, in the afternoon vou will experience a feeling of sadness. Ganeshji advises you not to take small things on your mind.

AARUSHI on gender disparity "This film is about six women

MUMBAI: Actor-producer Aarushi Nishank has opened who defied the odds, and we up about the ongoing challenghad to fight for its recognition. es faced by women in Bolly-Women's stories deserve more wood, particularly addressing prominence, and it's time we the persistent pay gaps and genchange the narrative. der disparities in the industry.

news agency, "Unfor-

tunately, disparities

still exist, even in

the 21st century.

Women in Bolly-

wood have long

faced pay gaps

and other chal-

lenges. Tarini

also faced sev-

eral hurdles,

but I prefer

to talk about

them once

the film is

released and

success-

She

ful."

add-

ed,

Sharing her thoughts on the Reflecting on her experiencongoing debate around nepotism, Nishank stated, "The es, she stressed that despite advancements in society, women path I have chosen is certainin the film industry continue ly tough. Interestingly, I have to encounter significant obstaexperienced a mix of nepotism. cles, even in the 21st century. In one space, I am considered an outsider, while in another, Former Union minister and ex-Uttarakhand chief minister I am seen as a political insid-Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank's daughter Aarushi told this

er. While nepotism may give some people an initial platform, success is never guaranteed. Many star kids have not been able to sustain their careers. Ultimatetalent, ly, hard work. and perse-

verance determine an actor's success.

Emilia Pérez sweeps nominations with 13 nods **OSCARS** 2025 **E** milia Pérez, a French-Mexican musi-cal directed by Jacques Saldana has been nominated

for Best Supporting Actress. Emilia Pérez tells the story Audiard, has made history of a Mexican cartel leader who at the 2025 Oscars with 13 undergoes a gender transition nominations, becoming the to escape his violent past, most-nominated non-English blending a musical and crime language film in Academy

drama narrative. Following closely with 10 The film has been recnominations each are The Brutalist, a drama about an ognised in major categories, including Best Picture, Best architect chasing the Ameri-Director, Best International can dream after surviving the Feature Film, Best Song, Best Holocaust, and Wicked, a film Score, Best Screenplay, and exploring the origin story of the Wicked Witch of the West. Karla Sofia Gascon's out-

From the Middle East, No Other Land, a Palestinian-Israeli documentary about journalist Basel Adra's efforts to



E/VILLIA PEREZ

protect the West Bank village of Masafer Yatta from Israeli

settlers, has been nominated for Best Documentary Feature. The film has received critical acclaim, winning top prizes from the Gotham Awards, International Documentary Association, and Los Angeles Film Critics Association.

Meanwhile, In the Shadow of the Cypress, an Iranian animated short by Hossein Molayemi and Shirin Sohani, is nominated in the Best Animated Short Film category.

The 97th Academy Awards, originally set for January 17, were delayed due to the Los Angeles wildfires, prompting the Academy to extend the voting window. AGENCIES

Pooja's hustle

MUMBAI: Pooja Hegde, who has made her mark in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi films, recently reflected on her journey in the industry, emphasising the challenges of not having a film-producing support system. She shared how each film is crucial for her, as she doesn't have the luxury of someone backing her for future projects if one doesn't succeed. "Every film can make or break you, and you have to push through the setbacks to secure your next opportunity," she said, acknowledging the constant hustle behind her career.

Expressing a deep emotional connection to Bollywood, Pooja revealed her desire to work more in Hindi cinema. She remarked, "Who doesn't want to make it big in Bollywood?" Having grown up watching these films, she is thrilled that her South films have reached Hindi audiences, and now she seeks to strike a balance between both industries.

Pooja's ultimate goal is to leave behind a legacy of quality work, regardless of the language. Inspired by the films she grew up with, she hopes her own performances will make a lasting impact. With an ever-expanding filmography, Pooja is excited about her upcoming Tamil film Retro, where fans can expect another memorable

performance

FORGET

MARCIE

IT

Vidya issues 'scam alert'

MUMBAI: Actress Vidya Balan, who was recently seen in Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, is the latest actor from the film industry falling prey to the increasingly dangerous use of the Artificial Intelligence

(AI).

ac-

The

tress took to her Instagram, and shared the video in question notifying her followers about its lack of authenticity. She urged her followers to not take any thing on face value in current times

where it is so easy to generate video content using deep fakes.

She also penned a long note in the caption asking her follow ers to be mindful of misleading information, and stressed upon the practice of verifying any thing that's available on the Internet

She wrote, "There are multiple videos currently circulating on social media and WhatsApp, which appear to feature me. How ever. I want to clarify

that the videos are AI-generated and inauthentic. I have no involvement in its creation or

dissemination, nor do I endorse its content in any way. Any claims made in the videos should not be attributed to me, as it does not reflect my views or work"

"I urge ev ervone to ver ifv informa before tion sharing and cautious be of misleading AI-generatcontent. ed #FakeAlert #Stay-Aware", she added.

SCORPIO

Your spouse will shower you with love and warmth today. The afternoon sun may bring good news from distant relatives. On the home front, family members will get special attention, predicts Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

You shall push yourself to the limit to make sure your authority goes unquestioned. Colleagues and seniors will laud you for your commitment. Expect that wallet to get heavier as you receive some cash gains, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Socialising is on the cards, and with increase in the number of acquaintances will be the increase of your social clout, says Ganesha. Later in the day, you will take to reading, and will pick just about any book. You will set out in search for peace as dusk sets in, and will find solace in holy places, where you would strive to improve your concentration power.

AQUARIUS

Today, you will realise the importance of time in the business world. Ganesha says you will understand how much risk is involved in going about things in a haphazard manner. As a natural corollary, you will revamp and reschedule a lot of your plans, whether it's business or travel or just a family vacation.

PISCES

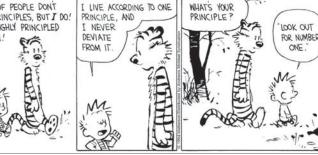
You will need to be as scheming as the proverbial fox if you hope to wriggle out of the tricky situations that you are likely to find yourself embroiled in today. Keep your temper in check if things don't go your way initially, for the answers to your troubles will come sooner rather than later, says Ganesha.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES

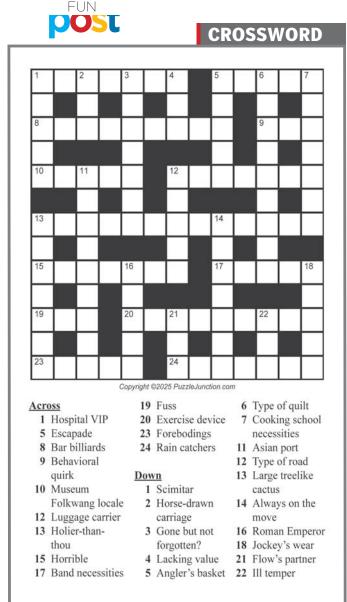




WHAT'S YOUR

BREVITY





CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

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.

			8	6				
5								2
3	s		2	9	7			
		6	1		-	4	T Î	
		1						
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6	9				8			5
	1	3						
8		7		1	4		6	

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

11	A		0		S	1	D	E	S	т	E	Ρ
п	A	L	0		3		D	E	0	1	E	-
0		A		С		Ν		R		Н		E
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Т		Ν		Α		0		0		А		Е
1	Ν	Т	Е	R		Ρ	L	U	Ν	G	Е	R
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F	Α	D	Е	A	W	A	Y		Т	R	A	Y
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3	8	4	6	9	2	5	1	7
9	5	2	3	1	7	4	8	6
6	1	7	5	4	8	2	9	3
4	6	8	1	7	3	9	5	2
1	3	9	4	2	5		6	8
2	7	5	8	6	9	1	3	4
7	2	1	9	3	6	8	4	5
8	9	6	2	5	4			1
5	4	3	7	8	1	6	2	9











SUDOKU



IssaP MONDAY | MARCH 3, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR owntown

ASSUMING OFFICE

Junior doctors welcome Dr Ratna Renu Baliarsingh, who took charge as the Dean and Principal of the SCB Dental College and Hospital in Cuttack, Sunday



Govt to groom 50 tribal students for pilot training



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 2: The state government will provide preparatory pilot training to 50 tribal students, mostly women, to make them ready for the professional course, an official said Sunday.

The Commerce and Transport department has recently issued a tender to hire a professional agency to provide the training.

As per the tender document, the government, through the selected private agency, will identify at least 300 tribal students. from whom 50 will be shortlisted through proper screening for the preparatory training.

The selected 50 students, mostly women, will receive coaching, covering all selection parameters of airline cadet pilot assessment, in Bhu-

ovt will identify at least 300 Gtribal students of whom 50 will be shortlisted through proper screening to impart the preparatory training

he shortlisted students, mostly women, will receive coaching, covering all selection parameters of airline cadet pilot assessment in Bhubaneswar for eight weeks

he coaching is aimed at preparing the candidates to clear the cadet pilot assessment and make them ready for the basic foundation programme syllabus set by DGCA

baneswar for eight weeks, the official said.

The coaching is aimed at preparing the candidates to clear the cadet pilot assessment and also make them ready for the basic foundation

programme syllabus set by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and give an overview of the flying training course, he said.

The programme aims to train the selected candidates in English proficiency, personal development, self-improvement and grooming, basic aviation knowledge, human performance and limitations, aptitude and psychometric tests, group discussion and interview, portable simulator training for hand-eye-foot coordination and spatial orientation, among others.

The private agency will provide training for a period of eight weeks, with an average teaching schedule of six hours per day for five days a week. It will include self-supervised studies, computer-based training and mock examinations, he added.

Regular assessments will be conducted upon completion of each module and special training will be provided during weekends for those lagging behind, the Transport department

official said. After completion of the preparatory training, all the 50 students will sit for the final round of selection by private airlines such as Air India and IndiGo.

They will again shortlist top 10 students through their own tests and provide them technical training to make them professional pilots, he added

Bhubaneswar, March 2: The state government will release ₹5,000 each to 1.7 lakh women beneficiaries under Subhadra Yojana March 6, an official said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

This will be the fifth phase of disbursement of the scheme's first instalment.

pathbreaking "Odisha's scheme, #SUBHADRA crosses 1 crore milestone. More than 1.7 lakh women will receive the 1st instalment of ₹ 5.000 in phase-5 on March 6, 2025. Keeping our

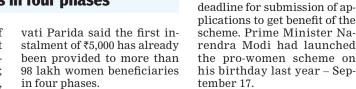
5th phase Subhadra assistance March 6 **Deputy CM Pravati Parida said the first** instalment of ₹5,000 has already been provided to more than 98 lakh women beneficiaries in four phases

promise, the 2nd instalment of ₹5.000 will be disbursed to about 1 crore women on #InternationalWomensDay (March 8, 2025); with its women on the move, Odisha marches ahead," the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a post on X.

tory of Odisha, one crore people have been covered under one Deputy Chief Minister Prascheme and that too, in a short

8 rooms gutted

TANGI: At least eight ooms belonging to four families were reduced to cinders in a major fire mishap at Bindhania village under this gram panchayat of Khurda district Sunday. Accord ing to reports, the fire erupted from Shikhar Behera's house, later engulfed the adjacent houses of Pankaj Behera, Prashant Sahu and Rabi Behera. Soon, locals informed the firefighters at Tangi who reached the spot and doused the inferno. However, they failed to save the eight



"For the first time in the his-

Karram

Kurram

his birthday last year - September 17. The scheme is designed to provide eligible women aged 21 to 60 years with ₹ 50.000 over five

years, from 2024-25 to 2028-29.

span of eight months," Parida

who is also in charge of the

Women and Child Development

She said March 31 will be the

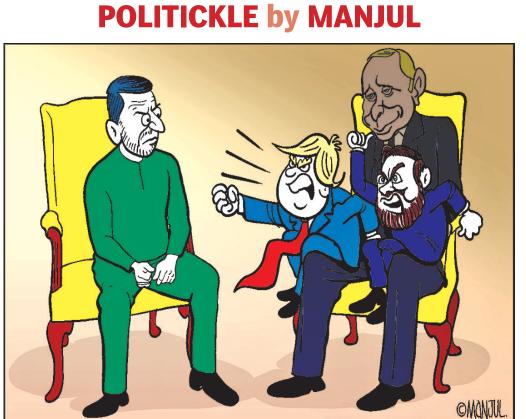
Department, told reporters.

Miscreants set parked SUV ablaze in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 2: In blatant disregard for law and order in the City, two unidentified miscreants set a parked sports utility vehicle (SUV) afire after pouring diesel on it in Dumduma area under Khandagiri police station here late Saturday night.

The vehicle owner, who wished not to be named for safety reasons, said the incident took place at midnight when





RUN-UP TO WOMEN'S DAY: Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida felicitates the winners of different competitions held during the state-level youth conclave as part of International Women's Day celebrations, organised by Women and Child Development department at Rama Devi Women's University in Bhubaneswar, Sunday PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Website : www.lijjat.com Email : enquiry@lijjat.com

Shaadi, Utsav ya Tyohar...

Kurram...

Karram ...

Lijjat Papad Ho Harbarm

she was at her sister's residence in Nayapalli area of the City. "Minutes after I reached my sister's place, my neighbours called me over phone that our vehicle is on fire. Initially, I suspected an electric short-circuit as the cause of the blaze. However, upon reviewing CCTV footage, I saw two unidentified men reaching our residence on a motorcycle and setting my vehicle on fire after pouring diesel on it," she said.

Firefighters from Baramunda Fire Station were called in who managed to douse the blaze. While the front portion, including the engine, was gutted, the middle and rear sections of the black Scorpio (OD 33 AK 7070) could be salvaged due to swift response of the fire services personnel.

IIC of Khandagiri police station Abhimanyu Das stated that efforts are on to identify the perpetrators. "We are scanning CCTV footage of the area to trace the suspects. Preliminary investigations have not revealed any known enmity involving the complainant that could have led to this act," he said.

A case has been registered under Sections 3(5) and 25 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the IIC said, adding that further investigations are ongoing to apprehend the culprits at the earliest



Bolangir records 38.1 degrees Celsius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

houses from raging fire.

Bhubaneswar, March 2: Several places across Odisha experienced hot weather conditions Sunday with mercury crossing 38 degrees Celsius in Bolangir. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Bolangir recorded a maximum temperature of 38.1 degrees Celsius Sunday.

Five other places recorded temperatures above 37 degrees Celsius. They are: Angul (37.9), Titilagarh (37.6), Jharsuguda and Bhadrak (37.5), and Jajpur (37.2). Bhawanipatna, Sonepur and Baripada recorded a maximum temperature of 37 degrees Celsius. Likwise, Bhubaneswar recorded a day temperature of 36.1 degrees Celsius. There will be no large change in the temperatures over the next fourfive days, the IMD said.

As per seasonal forecast, the maximum temperature will remain above normal in March. April and May.

Policies need to factor in global uncertainties: Mishra

THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO PM EXPRESSES OPTIMISM ON INDIA'S ABILITY TO WITHSTAND GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES WITH ITS VAST CONSUMPTION BASE AND DEMOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGE. AUGMENTED BY A ROBUST DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 2: Any policy making in Government of India set-up has to factor in uncertainty with a focus on a comprehensive framework and an outcome-oriented constructive mindset, said Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr PK Mishra, while interacting with a senior journalist at a recent 'Business Standard Manthan Summit' here.

Addressing a wide array of issues, Mishra said that the government had been successful in tackling turmoil like Covid-19 pandemic, Ukraine-Russia conflict and West Asia crisis with a focus on being 'Atmanirbhar'. He attributed this to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi focussed on readiness to address the challenges posed

emergent issues. In his interaction, Mishra elaborated how the Indian economy faced several challenges:

by being resilient and by intro-

ducing reforms to tackle the

geopolitical tensions, disruptions in global supply chains, and energy transition.

In the event of Covid-19 pandemic when the whole world, including India, appeared to be in turmoil, India could navigate the challenges effectively and successfully. It took several measures on economic reforms in addition to providing some stimulus packages. The growth momentum was restored, he said.

Mishra also highlighted the government's initiative of production linked initiative (PLI) schemes and leveraging of consumption base and demographic advantage of India among others. On India's PLI scheme, Mishra pointed out its positive impact but stressed the importance of long-term evaluation.

In the context of the ongoing protectionism and breakdown of the Washington Consensus, Mishra explained how India's policy stance in its economic engagement with the world has been consistent. India con-



tinues with its belief in engagement with other countries on the basis of mutual benefit, he said. Citing examples of recent free trade agreements (FTAs) with Australia, UAE and EFTA, he referred to the ongoing negotiations with the UK and the EU. "This approach will help us mitigating the emerging challenges," Mishra said.

The Principal Secretary to the PM impressed upon the

need to tackle uncertainty with a new approach where not only risk assessment but also building an 'anti-fragile system' should be our objective. He emphasised that our systems should not just be resilient but also 'anti-fragile'.

Mishra made a reference to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's recent visit to US describing it as "very positive" from the perspective of enhanc-

ing trade relations and building on 'opportunities' rather than simply reacting to crisis, being the focus. He said that not only bilateral, regional, but also multilateral relationships in the evolving global trade environment are changing the economic landscape. He expressed optimism on India's vast consumption base and a demographic advantage; augmented by a robust digital public infrastructure and technological capabilities. He remarked that India should be able to sustain external pressures and negotiate from a position of strength.

Quoting works of economic analyst Nassim Nicholas Taleb, Mishra stressed on creating anti-fragile systems rather than merely focussing on resilient ones. He said that policies are framed with analytical perspective with sustainability focus.

On India's agriculture front, Mishra said the sector continues to account for about 46 per cent of the country's workforce, even though its share in the gross domestic product (GDP) has declined from almost 50 per cent in 1970s to 18 per cent in present times. Diversifying agriculture holds the key, he opined.

On Civil Services reforms. Mishra said that India showcases continuous and evolving efforts to modernise and strength en the civil services to keep pace with the changing needs of governance. The approach is also to have continuous in novation, lifelong learning and steadfast integrity. During the last decade, personnel manage ment system has undergone unprecedented transformation. New initiatives such as 'Mission Karmayogi' and 'Integrated Government Online Training (iGoT) platform have introduced competency based and holistic approach to personnel management. Reforms will continue in areas such as adopting new technologies e.g. Artificial Intelligence for making governance more accessible, efficient and citizen-friendly.











OrissaPOST

MONDAY | MARCH 3, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

lowntown



MCL marathon marks **Coal India's 50 years**

from participants across the

The event was flagged off in

the presence of Deputy Chief

Minister Pravati Parida, Rev-

enue Minister Suresh Pujari,

country.

Anant Kaole.

of all age groups.



Aimed at promoting fitness and community participation, the marathon brought together over 5,600 runners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 2: Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd (CIL), organised a grand half marathon Sunday to commemorate 50 years of Coal India's establishment. The marathon, held at Kalinga Stadium, saw an overwhelming response

Medicine shortage hits SCBMCH's 'Niramaya'

Cuttack: Patients at SCBMCH are struggling to get essential orthopaedic medicines from the 'Niramaya' counter due to stock shortages. Sunday, several patients were turned away or redirected to other centres. The family of Anita Mallik, a patient admitted for 16 days, said they are forced to buy costly medicines from private stores Despite a recent restructuring of Niramaya centres, shortages persist. SCBMCH authorities remain unavailable for comment.

WEATHER

WEATHER								
BBSR	СТС							
36.1°	34.2°							
21.0°	19.0°							
73%	67%							
Nil	Nil							
(y	×							
	36.1° 21.0° 73% Nil							

SSIFIED

ories, including the 21 km half marathon, 10 km run, 5 km

A total of ₹45.34 lakh in prize noney was distributed amond

5 km run, and a fun run. This ensured participation from both seasoned marathoners and beginners, making the event inclusive and competitive.

Adding prestige to the event. Olympian and badminton star Saina Nehwal served as the brand ambassador. She expressed her admiration for the City's enthusiasm, saying, "I am amazed by the incredible turnout. The people of Bhubaneswar are truly dedicated to

fitness and an active lifestyle. Sports Minister Suryanshi Suraj, CIL Chairman PM In the Half Marathon, Lili Prasad, and MCL CMD Uday Das from West Bengal won the female category, while Prince Aimed at promoting fitness Kumar from Uttar Pradesh seand community participation, cured victory in the male catethe marathon brought together gory. Deputy CM Parida, Saina over 5,600 runners, including Nehwal, and other dignitaries

professional athletes, fitness presented prizes to the winners. enthusiasts, and individuals A total of ₹45.34 lakh in prize money was distributed among The race featured multiple participants across different categories, including the 21 race categories, making the km half marathon. 10 km run. event a grand success.

Parents to meet CM



TALENT HONOURED: Hindustani vocalist A Maheswar Rao receives the Guru Balakrushna Dash Samman 2025 from Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy during the 19th Guru Pranam Utsay, organised by Sushama Sangeet Sadan at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

RSC to unveil Dinosaur Park today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 2: The Regional Science Centre (RSC), Bhubaneswar, a unit of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), is set to unveil an exciting new attraction, "Dinosaur Alive!!! In the Prehistoric Kingdom,' here Monday

The state-of-the-art Dinosaur Park is designed to offer visitors an immersive experience of the prehistoric world.

The park will be inaugurated by Science and Technology Minister Krushna Chandra Patra, who will be the chief guest at the event. He will be joined by department's principal secretary Chithra Arumugam, National Council of Science

Museums (NCSM) director general Arijit Dutta Choudhurv and other dignitaries. According to RSC project coordinator Kapil Jain, the

park features giant, lifelike, animated dinosaur models, bringing the Jurassic era to life. The environment has been carefully curated to resemble

a prehistoric forest, complete with dynamic lighting, syn chronised sound effects, and motion-activated displays. The park will offer guided

tours, where visitors can explore the evolution, habitat, di et, and extinction of these fascinating creatures. A special light and sound show will add to the excitement, making the journey even more engaging.

This initiative not only serves as an entertainment zone but also promotes scientif ic curiosity and raises aware ness about paleontology and the Earth's natural history.

The park will be open to the public daily from 11am to 6pm, with two light and sound shows scheduled at 6:20pm and 7pm, starting from March 4.

GSI hosts walkathon for 175th anniversary

Bhubaneswar, March 2: The Geological Survey of India (GSI) organised a walkathon Sunday as part of its 175th-anniversary celebrations, which will be officially observed March 4.

The state unit of GSI conducted a 3.5 km walkathon in Bhubaneswar, witnessing participation from around 400 individuals, including GSI employees, sister organisations like NMDC, NALCO, IBM, CGWB, IMMT, the Department of Geology and Mining, students from Rajdhani College and Utkal University, and the general public. A large number of retired GSI officers and staff also took part, encouraging young scientists.

CONTINUED FROM P1

Is Sanskrit Indian? Experts differ on its origin

Dr Dalal, who is also a historian, said PIE originated in the region of central Asia and the Indo-Iranian borderlands from which PII came about. "So happened the birth of Sanskrit (Rig Vedic not Classical - they are two almost diff languages). The geographical location can very happily be in a region to the north and west of modern India," he said while adding that identifying the place of origin of Sanskrit does not, in any way, diminishes the status

to India appears fundamentally flawed. "Even if one goes by India's linguistic traditions, one would know that Sanskrit is the language of the Vedas and no other literature existed prior to that. Veda is still regarded as the oldest scripture in the world which is validated by research and scientific studies," Shukla told Orissa POST.

es which still exist. Sanskrit is very much of Indian origin and we have the first grammar written by Panini which all linguists across the world uphold as a pioneering work." He said the assertion of Sanskrit being an imported language could have stemmed from its connect with Greek and Latin.

Strongly disagreeing with the findings that Sanskrit was brought to India by Steppe nomads,

Interestingly, Patnaik partially agreed to DMK chief MK Stalin's claims that over 25 north Indian languages have been destroyed by the



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 2: The standoff between the BJEM School Parents' Association and the school authorities over the recent tuition fee hike remained unresolved, prompting parents to escalate their protest. They have now decided to meet Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at his grievance cell Monday, demanding intervention and action against the fee increase. Sunday, nearly 500 parents

gathered at BJEM School to protest against the 20 per cent annual fee hike. The parents' committee engaged in discussions with the school administration, raising several key demands, including no fee hikes, publication of a five-year balance sheet on the school's website, and the inclusion of two parents in the school management committee (SMC) to ensure transparency.



creasing fees annually without such consultation. Odisha Abhibhabak Mahasangha (OAM) working president Prasanna Bisoi confirmed

that they would approach the CM to demand strict action against what they describe as unjustified exploitation by private schools.

On the other hand, BJEM School Principal Sandhya Jena defended the hike, stating that

POST NEWS NETWORK

it aligns with the Justice KP Mohapatra Committee's recommendations. She explained that the increase was necessary to sustain the institution, covering teacher salaries and essential

AFFIDAVIT

I, Sasmita Sethi, W/o Prashant Sethi, **Resident of Bansi** Bihar, Andilo - P.O./P.S. -Balianta, Bhubaneswar, Dist. - Khordha, PIN -752101, Odisha, declare by this Affidavit No.50, Dtd. - 25.02.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as SASMITA KUMARI SETHY for all future purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar dated 01.03.2025 I, SK FAJIL, Address At - Dhamara, Sankhajori, P.O. -Narasinghpurhat, Bansada, Dist. - Bhadrak, Odisha -756171 declare that I have changed my name from SK FAZIL to SK FAJIL. Henceforth, I shall be known as SK FAJIL for all purposes. SK FAJIL

expenses. She also highlighted the school's compliance with the Right to Education (RTE) Act, which mandates reserving 25 per cent of seats for economically weaker sections (EWS). adding financial pressure on the institution.

of the language

Noted Sanskrit scholar and Director of Malaviya Bhawan at Banaras Hindu University, Professor Rajaram Shukla however, said the argument that Sanskrit migrated Prakash C Pattnaik,

Senior Professor (retd) Modern Indian

Languages and Literary Studies at the University of Delhi (DU), said. "Steppe nomads used entirely different languag-

invasion of hegemonic Hindi-Sanskrit languages. "It's true that some languages were destroyed by Hindi. But that was primarily because Hindi is a recent and simpler language. he told **Orissa POST**.

Subhadra Shakti Mela ends with ₹5 crore turnover

Thousands gathered to celebrate women's entrepreneurship, with SHG members showcasing their talents, securing record sales, and earning well-deserved recognition

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 2: The nine-day Subhadra Shakti Mela 2025 concluded Sunday here at Janata Maidan, marking a grand celebration of women's entrepreneurship and empowerment. The event, organised to support self-help group (SHG) members, witnessed an overwhelming footfall of over nine lakh visitors and generated a record-breaking business turnover of ₹5 crore.

The mela provided a crucial platform for over 300 SHGs from all 30 districts of Odisha to showcase their diverse range of products, reinforcing the government's dedication

to strengthening women-led businesses.

The stalls displayed an arrav of handwoven textiles. intricate handicrafts, organic food products, spices, and eco-friendly goods. One of the biggest attractions was the food court, which drew large crowds with its selection of millet-based delicacies and traditional Odia flavours. The final day of the event was graced by Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, who

led the celebrations and felicitated outstanding SHG entrepreneurs. The closing ceremony began with a warm welcome, the offering of plant saplings, and a floral tribute to



the Holy Trinity, followed by an address by Mission Shakti Commissioner-cum-Secretary Shalini Pandit.

Prominent actresses Pinky Pradhan and Anu Choudhury addressed the gathering, praising the resilience and entrepreneurial spirit of SHG women. Revenue & Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari also highlighted the government's commitment to financial empowerment and self-reliance for women

through various initiatives.

A key highlight of the event was the felicitation of top-performing SHGs and Producer Groups (PGs). A total of 25 SHGs and PGs were honoured across nine award categories for their exceptional contributions to women's entrepreneurship. Winners were presented with cash prizes of ₹30,000 for first place, ₹25,000 for second place, and ₹20,000 for third place, along with certificates and trophies as a

mark of recognition.

Among the awardees, Maa Vaishnodevi PG from M Rampur, Kalahandi, which specialises in handloom products, stood out with ₹6 lakh in sales during the mela. In recognition of their outstanding performance, Deputy CM Parida awarded them a special cash prize of ₹50,000.

Speaking at the event, Parida emphasised how the mela has played a pivotal role in strengthening market linkages and helping SHG women move towards becoming "Lakhpati Didis"—a government initiative aimed at enabling SHG members to earn sustainable incomes.

The event concluded with SHG product presentations to dignitaries and a vote of thanks by Mission Shakti department's State Mission Director-cum-CEO Monica Privadarshini.

was a vibrant cultural cele bration, featuring a Sambalpuri Night that showcased the state's rich folk traditions. The high-energy performances by folk artists, musicians, and dancers added to the festive mood, making the closing ceremony a memorable affair.

The Subhadra Shakti Mela 2025 was more than just an exhibition-it was a move ment towards economic empowerment, self-reliance, and sustainable livelihoods for women entrepreneurs. Over 700 SHG members from 312 blocks actively participated, including 100 women from tribal districts, 170 from aspirational districts, and 90 from KBK districts.

With its resounding success, the mela has reinforced its role as a transformative platform for women-led enterprises, empowering them to achieve greater financial independence and economic stability.

The grand finale of the mela

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state



JSW-POSCO to set up mega steel plant in Patana: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Keonjhar, March 2: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday said a mega steel plant with an investment of around ₹40,000 crore will be jointly set up by JSW and POSCO in Keonjhar district's Patna area.

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Addressing a public gathering at Champua, Majhi said, 'I had vowed to set up a mega steel plant in Keonjhar district. God was kind enough to make me the Chief Minister to realise this dream.

In addition to Patna area, the CM said steel industries would be developed in various parts of the district, with a total investment exceeding ₹1 lakh crore. On January 28, during the

Utkarsh Odisha-Make in Odisha Conclave,' the JSW Group, led by Sajjan Jindal, signed an MoU with the state government to establish a 5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) steel plant in Keonjhar.

In October last year, the JSW Group and South Korean steel giant POSCO had signed an MoU to set up an integrated steel plant in India with an initial capacity of 5 MTPA.

However, the companies have not revealed the location where the steel plant will come up.

During his speech, the CM also announced a grant of ₹4 crore for the construction of a three-storey building at Chandra Sekhar College in Champua.

Earlier, Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj had announced ₹3.30 crore grant for the development of the college.

The CM also released a song titled 'People's CM Mohan' at the event in Keonjhar.

'Government working to boost farmers' income'



The government is commit-L ted and actively working towards increasing farmers income in the state, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said.

"Farmers are the backbone of society, tirelessly working through droughts, rains, and extreme cold to provide food for all. Their contribution is invaluable, and no amount of gratitude can truly suffice.' Majhi said while inaugurating the Regional Agriculture Machinery Fair in Keonjhar, Sunday. The five-day event, organised at Dharanidhar University's sports ground, aims to

profitability.

to farmers' welfare.

introduce modern agricultural tools to improve efficiency and The Chief Minister said Odisha is an agrarian state where incomes, with a budgetary pro-60 per cent of the population relies on farming and related

activities for their livelihood. Minister added. He said in just 24 minutes of the new government taking office, it had decided to implement the

Krushak Samruddhi Yojana, underscoring its commitment Majhi highlighted that the cial provisions in the Budget, adoption of advanced agriculhe said

efficiency, productivity, and profitability. "Modernizing farming methods will not only improve yields but also help farmers compete in the global market. The state's 2025-26 Budget includes multiple initiatives to support agriculture and farmer welfare, backed by substantial financial allocations," he said.

The government is purchasing paddy from farmers under the Samruddha Krushak Yojana at ₹3,100 per quintal. The Budget for the scheme has been increased from ₹5,000 crore to ₹6,000 crore. "Additionally, the Central government's PM-Kisan programme has been integrated with the state's CM-Kisan initiative to boost farmers'

vision of ₹2020 crore," the Chief He said to enhance food security and nutrition through

millet cultivation, the 'Shri Anna Abhiyan' will be expanded to 177 blocks across all 30 districts, with dedicated finan-



Six killed in separate road mishaps

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 2: Six persons were killed while another suffered serious injuries in two separate road accidents that occurred in Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj districts in a span of 24 hours.

In the first incident, three persons, including a minor girl, were killed after the bike they were travelling on was knocked down by a speeding truck, under Kuarmunda police limits in Sundargarh district, late Saturday night. The deceased were identified as Dilip Sanamati, 24, Saharei Lakra, 20, and Anjali Kusima, 14. All of them were residents of Jalangbira gram panchayat and related to each other.

SDPO Biramitrapur, Susant Dash, said Saturday night, the trio was returning home on a bike after visiting the ongoing Vedvyas Fair at Vedvyas. At around 11.30 pm when they were travelling near the Barabanki crossing, a speeding truck coming from Jharkhand hit the two-wheeler from behind and sped away.

The trio fell off the vehicle in the impact of the crash. While the two men died on the spot. locals helped shift the injured girl to Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) with the help of police. However, doctors declared her dead upon arrival, Dash added.

"We have registered a case against the truck driver. Efforts are on to trace him and the vehicle," Dash added.

In the other incident, three persons were killed and another seriously injured after two motorcycles on which they were travelling collided head-on in Mavurbhanj district Sunday, police said. The accident took place on Karanjia-Khiching road near Mahadevsal, they added.

Among the deceased two were identified. They were Mataram Gagrai, 60, and Rajat Kumar Chattar, 26. while another deceased is yet to be identified, said Sumant Sethi, officer incharge, Raruan police station. Police have registered a case in this connection and sent the bodies for post-mortem. The injured person has been admitted to Karanjia sub-divisional hospital, he said.

claimed they were not informed

by the college authorities about

that no representative from

the college or hostel man-

agement was present at the

hospital when they arrived.

Attempts to contact college

chairman Tara Prasad Sat-

apathy on his mobile num-

ber (+91 94370 79364) were

unsuccessful as his phone

was switched off. An officer

The family pointed out

their son's death.

Girl student dies by suicide over 'inappropriate frisking'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, March 2: An 18-year-old girl student in Kendrapara district died allegedly by suicide after being 'frisked inappropriately' by a male teacher before she entered an examination hall, police said

Sunday. The mother of the student lodged a police complaint Saturday, alleging that her daughter was 'inappropriate ly frisked by a male teacher February 19 when she appeared for the ongoing exams conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Educa tion (CHSE), Odisha at Pattamundai College, a senior officer said.

Instead of female teachers. the girl students were alleged ly frisked by men, which was against the CHSE guidelines Pattamundai Rural Police Sta tion inspector-in-charge (IIC) Dheeraj Lenka said, quoting the contents of the FIR.

"Upset over the harassment. the class XII student ended her life February 24," the complainant said.

"The complaint was lodged yesterday. We have launched an investigation and are verifying the CCTV footage to ascertain what happened. If evidence is found, legal action will be initiated against the accused," Lenka said. authori The college ties, however, denied the

allegation.

Majhi joins mini marathon on STR conservation

GENCIES

Baripada, March 2: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday flagged off a mini-marathon to promote the conservation of Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhani district.

Majhi, on a two-day visit to Mayurbhanj district, participated in the mini marathon (Run for Similipal) by running a short distance. Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia was also present at the event.



Majhi said the Similipal biosphere is famous across the world. To create awareness among people for its conservation and protection, the mara-

Baripada in the district. Similipal, located in Mayurbhanj district, is a UNES-

CO-recognised site. Spread over 2,750 square kilometres, the reserve has varieties of plant species and 96 types of orchids. It is home to 42 species of mammals, 242 varieties of birds and 30 reptile categories.

Besides rare melanistic tigers, Royal Bengal Tigers, leopards. Asian elephants. sambar.

Student drowns in pond; family cries foul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, March 2: An 18-year-old student from a privately-run industrial training institute in the district died after drowning in a pond where authorities allegedly sent a group of students to take bath owing to shortage of water at the hostel, Sunday.

The incident sparked outrage in the locality, while parents of the deceased student demanded thorough investigation as they suspected foul play. Officers at the Dhenkanal Sadar police station said the student, Pritiprabhu Pattnaik, was

enrolled at Bajiraut Institute of Engineering and Technology in Govindpur.

According to reports, students at the hostel were sent to a pond for bathing due to a water shortage in the hostel. While bathing, Pritiprabhu drowned. Locals rescued him and rushed him to the district headquarters hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Meanwhile, Pritiprabhu's parents, Alok Pattnaik and Sasmita Pattnaik - residents of at the Sadar police station. Banchua village under Anandpur police station in Keonjhar district - expressed shock and anger at the incident. They

thon was organised, he said. Over 900 students participated in the 10-km mini marathon kicked off from Jashipur near

barking deer, gaur, jungle cat, wild boar, four-horned antelope and giant squirrels are also found in it.

Purnachandra Rout, said no formal complaint had been lodged by the deceased's family till 8:30 pm, Sunday.

"Girl students are frisked by female staffers before they are allowed to enter exam halls. The allegation that a male teacher inappropriately frisked a student is not true, Pattamundai College Principal Dilip Kumar Bhuyan said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/24-25/ E-Tender/111, Dt. 25.02.2025 (1) Tender No. eTenderSouthKUR 329-2024, Dtd.: 18.02.2025 329-2024, DTG.: T6.02.2025 DESCRIPTION ALL REPAIR & MAINTENANCE OF P.WAY ZONAL WORKS FOR A PERIOD UPTO 30/9/2025 FROM KM. 572.13 TO 631.20 BETWEEN GANJAM-JHADUPUDI UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (P.WAY)/BRAHMAPUR OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 105.61 Lakhs, EMD : ₹ 2,02,800/-(2) Tender No. eTender-HQ-KUR-330-2024, Dtd.: 19.02.2025 DESCRIPTION : PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT OF DRAINAGE SYSTEM AT LIMITED HEIGHT SUBWAY (BRIDGE NO. 60A) AT LEVEL CROSSING NO. KP-28 IN BETWEEN SAKHIGOPAL AND MALTIPATPUR STATIONS ON KHURDA ROAD-PUR MAIN LINE OF KHURDA ROAD Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 228.48 Lakhs, EMD : ₹2,64,200/-Completion Period : 07 (Seven) Mont (for SI. No. 1) and 08 (Eight) Months (for SI No. 2)

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 12.03.2025 (for both the Tenders)

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-lenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any

omplete information including e-tende ocuments of the above e-Tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 (Ten days before the date of closing of tende to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) PR-1034/P/24-25 Khurda Road

New Ratnagiri discoveries may reveal Odisha's Buddhist past

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, March 2: In the hills of Ratnagiri in Odisha, 15 archaeologists have been working over the last three months to uncover ancient Kalinga's Buddhist legacy and ties with Southeast Asia.

And they have had success, with the recovery of three colossal Buddha heads, inscriptions and votive stupas, among other relics, at a shrine complex.

The latest excavation at Ratnagiri in Jajpur district, about 80 km from state capital Bhubaneswar, started on December 5 after a gap of 63 years. ASI's Superintending Archaeologist (Puri circle) Dibishada Brajasundar Garnayak told PTI.

He said the importance of the recovered materials will be known only after a proper analysis. Garanayak did not hide his surprise at the recovery of the Buddha heads.

"These are extremely beautiful and perfect works of art on stone. There are even wrinkles on the neck," he said.

Another archaeologist said that though Buddha heads were found at Ratnagiri during the first excavation between 1958 and 1961, the noses and ears were broken.

"This time the heads are in perfect shape. One of the three heads is the biggest one recovered so far. It is about 1.5 m high. A stone pedestal, used for holding the Buddha head,



has also been found," he said. Garnayak said a stone elephant was also recovered

during the excavation. Another shrine complex was found along with a large number of votive stupas -- a sym-

bolic mound or reliquary that honours Lord Buddha, he said. "Discovery of such a large number of votive stupas indicates that Ratnagiri was a major religious centre for Bud-

dhist monks," he added.

The archaeologists also found some other stone-carved palms and fingers of a Buddha statue. The excavation also led to the recovery of clay pottery, which is believed to be 1,200-1,300 years old.

These recoveries could indicate the food habits, spiritual behaviour and social culture of people of that time, researchers said, adding that other household articles and terracotta tovs of animals such as dogs and elephants found at the site will also help in understanding of life back then.

The excavation also recovered a palm of a Buddha statue, an ancient wall and inscribed relics dating back to the 8th and 9th century CE, they said.

Ratnagiri is a part of the 'Diamond Triangle' -- a collection of three Buddhist sites, the others being Udayagiri and Lalitgiri. It is believed that Buddhism flourished in Ratnagiri between the 5th and 13th centuries CE, and the new discoveries could help in a deeper understanding of the region's history, they added.

Ratnagiri was a centre for Mahayana and Tantrayana Buddhism, researchers said.

Buddhism in the region gained prominence under emperor Ashoka after the Kalinga War (261 BCE), and Ratnagiri has served as a major centre from where Buddhism reached other parts of the world, particularly Southeast Asia, said historian Anil Dhir.

Infant branded 40 times with hot iron rod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Umarkote, March 2: In a reminder of the prevalence of superstitious and harmful traditional practices in the state, a one-month-old baby boy was branded more than 40 times with a hot iron rod by his family members for curing him of some disease. The child has suffered serious burns in the process

According to reports, the incident took place at Phundalpada village under the Gambhariguda gram panchavat of Chandahandi block in Nabarangpur district. The infant, son of one Saroja Kumar Nayak, re-

CDMO Nabarangpur, Santosh Kumar Panda said cases of hot branding has resurfaced in the district after a long time

portedly suffered from some aliment that caused stiffness of body and frequent crying. Heeding to a misguided belief, the family members resorted to branding him with a hot iron multiple times on head and stomach. Initially, the baby stopped crying, cementing the family's belief in the practice. However, after two days, he began to experience unbearable pain and resumed crying. Family members then took him to Umarkote Hospital around 1 pm Sunday.

Senior paediatric specialist and Nabarangpur chief district medical officer (CDMO) Santosh Kumar Panda immediately examined the baby and initiated treatment to stabilise him. Expressing concern over the incident, he said that cases of hot branding had resurfaced in the district after a long time. He also stressed the urgent need to re-launch awareness campaigns against the dangerous practice.



2 No. of works	: 1 (one) no.				
3 Date of availability of bid document in the portal	: 01.03.2025				
4 Class of Contractor	: 'B' and 'C' Class contractors				
5 Last date for receipt of bids in the portal	: 10.03.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.				
6 Date of pre-Bid meeting	: 04.03.2025 at 11.30 A.M.				
7 Date of opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)	: 11.03.2025 at 10.00 A.M.				
8 Name & Address of Officer Inviting Tender (OIT)	: Deputy Director, Nandankanan Zoological Park, P.O.				
	- Barang, Dist Khorda, Pin - 754005				
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal https://tenderodisha.gov.in.					

Sd./- Deputy Director Nandankanan Zoological Park

Web : www.nandankanan.org







OIPR-08070/11/0050/2425



power post



FOCUS STOCK MARKET

The world is deafened with useless words

THE MOTHER

Dangerous & Fatal

The unprecedented showdown between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 28 February at the Oval Office of the White House marked one of the most intense public confrontations between world leaders in recent memory. The world was kind of stunned to watch live the typically reserved nature of diplomacy give way to accusations, raised voices, finger pointing and exasperated gestures. The final 90 seconds of diplomatic meltdown at the end of the meeting that had lasted for nearly 139 minutes raised several key questions. One is whether Trump and Vice President JD Vance deliberately provoked Zelenskyy, whom Trump had recently referred to as a "dictator," into a clash. Another equally important question is whether Zelenskyy's response was overly emotional, potentially harming his country's interests.

Regardless of these speculations, the heated exchange appeared to extinguish, at least for the time being, Ukraine's hopes of securing the United States as a dependable ally in its efforts to repel and ultimately resolve Russia's three-year aggression. The minerals agreement with Kyiv was framed by some as a means to compensate the US for future support to Ukraine; however, Trump remained notably ambiguous about whether Washington would provide solid security guarantees in return. Now, that mineral deal is seemingly put on hold for the foreseeable future. While Trump wants a pay back from Ukraine for the billions of dollars that the US has invested in this 3 year war, the words of Robert F Kennedy Jr should also not be ignored. According to RFK Jr, all those billions were merely money laundered by American multi -national arms manufacturing companies and Ukraine mostly had to buy American made weapons to fight the war. That huge amount of money was taken back to America by companies like Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, General Dynamics, Boeing and Lockheed Martin. "It's a war that should have never happened. It's a war the Russians tried repeatedly to settle on terms that were very, very beneficial to Ukraine and us. The major thing they wanted was for us to keep NATO out of Ukraine. The big military contractors want to add new countries to NATO all the time...," RFK Jr said.

Following the Oval Office blowout, Ukraine's European allies and several global leaders expressed their solidarity with Zelenskyy, while the White House emphasized its backing for President Trump's "America First" policy. Zelenskyy's timeline on social media platform 'X' was flooded with supportive messages from European allies and countries worldwide. In response to the outpouring of support, the Ukrainian leader replied, "Thank you for your support." While many of Trump's domestic supporters have expressed joy over the outcome of the meeting, the true celebration appeared to be emanating from the Kremlin. Since assuming the presidency, Trump has gravitated towards Russia, alarming traditional allies in Europe and elsewhere, and putting Ukraine in a precarious position. The Oval Office outburst marked the most overt indication of this shift. Regardless of Trump's intentions, the situation appears highly favourable for Moscow. While Russia has been making gains on the battlefield, Ukraine finds itself in stark conflict with its primary supporter.

Any which way, Zelenskyy deserves accolades for the way he has led his country in the brutal war against a powerful aggressor all through these three years. Even after the dressing down in White House, he remains resolute in his commitment for the Ukrainian cause.

There is, however, one huge mistake that Zelenskyy committed as the leader of a nation. His campaigning in favor of the Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris in Pennsylvania in 2024, as mentioned by JD Vance in the passing, seems to have not been taken kindly by the present US administration. Here's a lesson for other countries, including India, that as the leader of a country, one should avoid taking sides in another country's politics and especially never get involved in some other nation's election. Worse is to go against the mood of the local population, something India did in the case of Bangladesh and is paying the price. It is doing the same thing in Myanmar too by siding with the junta and thereby, antagonising the people of Myanmar now. In future, when the military fails and falls in Burma, the citizens of that country will continue to view India as being a nation inimical to their common interests. Meanwhile, a day following the White House blowout, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer gave a rousing reception to Zelenskyy in London, assuring him of the UK's steadfast support. Britain, France, and Ukraine subsequently came together to develop a ceasefire proposal to present to the United States. All these countries know it very well that making any progress in resolving the Ukraine crisis will be impossible without US support. Europe has been uneasy since Trump initiated direct peace talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who had been isolated by most Western leaders since invading Ukraine three years ago. The scramble to remain relevant and protect European interests as their once stalwart ally appeared to be cosying up to Putin was even more troubling when Trump called Zelenskyy a dictator and falsely said that Ukraine started the war. Meetings in recent days, especially those involving Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron had provided some hope — until Zelenskyy's disastrous visit to the White House which proved to be the last straw. The Oval Office showdown marked yet another example of Trump's sweeping attempts to alter longstanding American policy positions during his first six weeks back in office, signalling further uncertainty for traditional American allies and partners who are already feeling the pressure to prove their value in Trump's view. This development follows closely on the heels of Trump's suggestion to permanently relocate Palestinians from Gaza and consider an American takeover of the area, as well as his commitment to impose significant tariffs on goods from Mexico and Canada starting this week. The unfolding events since 20 January reaffirm once again what former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had famously said: "It may be dangerous to be America's enemy, but to be America's friend is fatal.

THE \$1 TRILLION DROP

ndian stocks have been on a losing streak since the release of the Hindenburg report on a major corporate entity in January 2024. Over the past year, the market has struggled, requiring significant reforms to rebound. While international capital continues to flow into India, much of it is for short durations rather than long-term investments. The consistent flight of trillions of dollars by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) has become a troubling trend, with long-term investors lacking confidence.

Since October 2024, India's market capitalization has dropped by nearly \$1 trillion, while China's has risen by \$2 trillion, indicating a strategic shift in foreign institutional investor (FII) flows. If India aspires to become a global economic powerhouse, it must rethink its economic policies. Occasional rises in Sensex and Nifty should not be mistaken for market stability or econom-

ic strength. The Indian market saw a sharp correction from its September 2024 peak due to high valuations, concerns over slowing growth, weaker earnings, and global uncertainties, including fears of a tariff war following US President Donald Trump's election. On 28 February 2025, a market bloodbath saw key indices crashing by 1.9%, wiping out 18% of investor wealth since September 2024. The Sensex plunged 16% (12,256 points), while the Nifty tumbled 18% (3,991 points) from their record highs on September 26, 2024. Broader markets suffered even steeper losses, with the BSE MidCap and SmallCap indices dropping over 20%. Global market instability, driven by protectionist policies, further exacerbates India's challenges. The downturn in Asian stocks is also attributed to Trump's aggressive economic stance. Investor sentiment was shaken when Trump con-



The Indian market saw a sharp correction from its September 2024 peak due to high valuations, concerns over slowing growth, weaker earnings, and global uncertainties, including fears of a tariff war following US President Donald Trump's election

Mexico and Canada, effective 4 March, 2025.

Domestic factors have also played a significant role in India's market woes. The country's core sectors have struggled, manufacturing has been operating below optimal levels, and even agriculture has experienced setbacks in production. This further dented investor confidence.

Economic growth in Asia's third-largest economy has slowed sharply this fiscal. High inflation and stagnant incomes have constrained household spending, leading to weaker corporate earnings. Since October 2024, FPIs have withdrawn nearly \$25 billion, turning India's once top-performing stock index into one of the worst. The rupee's persistent depreciation, hitting record lows, makes India's expensive stock market even less attractive.

Unless corporate earnings show significant improvement or valuations undergo meaningful corrections, a broader market recovery remains elusive. The government appears to have overestimated stock market performance in its budget projections. For the 2025–26 fiscal, the Centre expects securities transaction tax (STT) collections to reach ₹78,000 crore—an ambitious target compared to ₹37,000 crore in actual collections for 2024–25 and ₹55,000 crore in revised estimates. This projection reflects a 40% increase over the revised figures and a staggering 63% growth over the ₹33,778 crore

collected in 2023–24. Despite ongoing challenges, some experts argue that the Indian stock market has deepened significantly in recent years. They contend that indices like Nifty and Sensex no longer fully represent the broader market. While large-cap valuations have moderated, mid-and small-cap valuations remain elevated.

However, the scenario is not entirely bleak. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been advocating for structural reforms to ensure sustained economic growth in India. Additionally, India is strengthening economic ties with the European Union (EU), as evidenced by ongoing discussions with EU President Ursula von der Leyen on defence, security strategy, and free trade. Trade between India and the EU has now reached \$135 billion, surpassing India's \$120 billion trade with the US. Indian companies are making strategic global acquisitions, particularly in steel and other industries. India's GDP growth rate remains resilient at around 6.4% in 2025, despite market turbulence. India is also expanding its

trade footprint in Southeast Asia, Australia, and other emerging markets. The government's efforts to stimulate domestic demand through wage revisions could further support economic recovery. Plans to revise salaries for 48.67 lakh central government employees and 67.95 lakh pensioners, along with 20 million state and local government employees, are expected to spur consumption.

Regulatory reforms have also been gaining traction. In 2024, SEBI introduced several key measures, including cooling down the derivatives segment, enhancing transparency in SME listings, and deepening the fund management ecosystem. Notably, SEBI implemented a same-day settlement cycle, a groundbreaking move in global markets. Nonetheless, corporate earnings remain a concern. Nifty 50 companies posted just 5% earnings growth in the last quarter-the third consecutive quarter of single-digit gains after two years of strong double-digit expansion. While corporate earnings in 2025 may see some improvement, it is unlikely to be substantial enough to attract significant international investment. Inflationary pressures and rising unemployment continue to pose risks, particularly for export-driven sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, and specialty chemicals.

While the Indian stock market is facing significant headwinds, there are pockets of resilience. Structural reforms, policy shifts, and government initiatives aimed at boosting domestic demand could help stabilize the market. However, restoring investor confidenceboth domestic and international-will require sustained efforts to address economic vulnerabilities, improve corporate earnings, and implement transparent regulatory practices. India then can hope to position itself as an attractive long-term investment destination. INFA

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

When decades-old alliances crumble

L ast month, Europeans came to understand that their closest ally,

firmed 25% tariffs on European

automobiles and new levies on

ship role for Europe to fill. Europeans learned plenty about the new administration's geopolitical stance from US Vice President JD Vance's speech in Munich, where he cynically voiced support for Germany's pro-Russian far right just a week before federal elections.

means developing a new continental security concept to allow burden shifting within

confident in managing their own relations with China. Munich made clear that the long era of postwar At-

lanticism is over. A powerful

reversal is underway, and it

would be wishful thinking to



Shibaji Saina

THE RUPEE'S PERSISTENT DEPRECIATION, HITTING

RECORD LOWS, MAKES INDIA'S EXPENSIVE STOCK MARKET

EVEN LESS ATTRACTIVE

WISDOM CORNER

Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility

SIGMUND FREUD

- Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved
- You begin saving the world by saving one man at a time; all else is grandiose romanticism or politics

CHARLES BUKOWSKI



THE SITUATION IN THE US SHOULD PUSH EUROPEANS TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH OTHER IMPORTANT

PARTNERS SUCH AS JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA, AND AUSTRALIA the United States, is no longer interested in the kind of trustful cooperation that has defined the transatlantic relationship for eight decades. By disrespecting allies, attempting to strong-arm Ukraine, and meddling in European domestic affairs, the US has transformed itself from Europe's most important partner and Ukraine's most ardent supporter into something resembling an adversary.

To be sure, as US President Donald Trump begins negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin over Ukraine's fate, no one (not even the Americans) really knows what strategy the US is pursuing. The recent Munich Security Conference made it clear that Europe can no longer ignore America's longstanding grievance over the distribution of defense spending within NATO. Nor is spending the only issue. As the US shifts its focus to Asia (and to itself), there is a large political and military leader-

While Ukraine represents the most immediate challenge, securing European sovereignty will be a much larger and longer-term project. Europeans must systematically rethink their approach to security. If Ukraine and Russia do reach a deal, it will fall largely on Europeans to ensure that it holds, since the US wants to reduce its commitments and is no longer a reliable partner. In this scenario, Europeans would need to strike a balance between enforcing the peace in Ukraine and preserving the capacity to defend other territories bordering Russia such as in Scandinavia or the Baltics.

Willing and able Europeans must not delay in deepening security and defense cooperation on the continent. That NATO, which will remain the best framework for collective defense even if the US steps back or leaves the alliance.

Yet as crucial as NATO will be, the EU also must step up its own efforts to defend its borders and preserve liberal democracy at home. Though the EU will not transform into a Defense Union or create a European army, it can do more to provide critical public goods. Promoting energy security and domestic innovation will be essential in the years ahead. Shared strategies, with joint funding, can position Europeans as much stronger players in these highly contested sectors.

Europeans need to rebuild their muscles, not only because old alliances are crumbling, but also because the geopolitical landscape is shifting. The situation in the US should push Europeans to strengthen relations with other important partners such as Japan, South Korea,

and Australia, and to be more

hope that the damage done by the Trump administration can simply be repaired in the future. Europe must build on its strengths and assume responsibility for its own security within NATO. The EU, the UK, and Norway have more than 500 million people and collective purchasing power greater than that of the US. And despite

chasing power greater than that of the US. And despite domestic political tensions, they have the institutional stability that navigating this moment of crisis requires. Europe has the resources to catapult itself forward in technology, the digital economy, defense, and other critical sectors, and Munich showed that it must waste no time in doing so.

The writer is a member of the Executive Board of the Bertelsmann Stiftung. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Best of the worst

Sir, The epic verbal duel between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his American counterpart, Donald Trump, will go down in the annals of diplomacy as being the best of the worst. One takeaway from the meet, encounter, rather, --- being suited is ok, but it is more important to be suitable. Zelenskyy sure did give Trump and Vance as good as he got. As Douglas Mac Arthur rightly said, "A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent." And Zelenskyy fits the bill to a tee. .

Avinash Godboley, DEWAS

Silent crisis

Sir, World Hearing Day is observed on 3 March. It reminds us silently but seriously the problems of hearing. The day encourages individuals to take action by understanding the importance of early detection, prevention, and treatment. It is really shocking to know that one in four people will suffer from hearing problems by 2050. The WHO has set the alarm bells ringing stating that currently one in five people have hearing problems but most often it is just ignored and uncared for. The same amount of care and attention that we give for various other ailments is sadly not given for matters related to hearing except when we have severe pain in the ear or some other problem. The WHO has called in for global action and has asked the nations across the globe to take immediate measures to check this 'silent danger' which can put thousands into a state of 'complete silence' if issues related to this health menace are not properly addressed. The day also emphasises the dignity of those suffering from hearing loss and discourages disrespectful behaviour towards them. The theme for World Hearing Day 2025 is "Changing mindsets: Empower yourself to make ear and hearing care a reality for all!'

M Pradyu, KANNUR



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



B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

















Ganga water unfit for bathing at several places in Bihar: Survey Ekana stadium gets ₹28 crore tax notice PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Bihar State Pollution Control Board monitors the water quality of the Ganga at 34 locations in the state on a fortnightly basis, officials said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, March 2: The water of the Ganga river in Bihar is not fit for bathing at most places in the state due to the presence of a higher value of "bacteriological population", according to the Bihar Economic Survey 2024-25. The Bihar State Pollution

Control Board (BSPCB) monitors the water quality of the Ganga at 34 locations in the state on a fortnightly basis, officials said. According to the Economic Survey recently tabled in the state assembly, 'The water quality of Ganga

indicates the presence of a higher value of bacteriological population (total coliform and faecal coliform). This is mainly due to the discharge of sewage/ domestic waste water from cities located on the banks of Ganga and her tributaries.

The survey cited the latest water quality test results of the BSPCB. "The other parameters... pH (acidity or basicity), dissolved oxygen and bio-chemical oxygen demand (BOD) have been observed within the prescribed limit in the river and her tributaries in Bihar, indicating that water is fit for aquatic life, wildlife propagation, fisheries and irrigation," it said.

Important towns located on the banks of the river include Buxar, Chapra (Saran),



Dighwara, Sonepur, Maner, Danapur, Patna, Fatuha, Bakhtiyarpur, Barh, Mokama, Begusarai, Khagaria, Lakhisarai, Manihari, Munger, Jamalpur, Sultanganj,

Bhagalpur and Kahalgaon Reacting to the report, D K Shukla, Chairman of the BSPCB, told PTI that the presence of a higher value of bacteriological population in

the Ganga river is a matter of concern. "Faecal coliform bacteria are found in excreta that contaminates water through untreated sewage. The higher the level, the higher is the presence of disease-causing pathogens in water. According to the CPCB standards, the permissible limit of faecal coliform is 2,500 MPN/100 ml," Shukla said.

At most places, the presence of total coliform and faecal co liform in the Ganga is much higher, indicating it is not fit for bathing, he said. The BSPCB is taking measures to ensure that sewage treatment plants (STP) in the state function properly, the senior official said. "The BSPCB is also monitoring the effluent/sewage quality generated from the industrial units as well as STP/sewerage drains. Presently, 2,561 water/ effluent/sewage samples from different sources have been collected by the board," the survey said.

As per the latest data of the BSPCB related to the quality of the Ganga accessed by PTI, the level of faecal coliform measured at Kachchi Dargah-Bidupur Bridge was 3,500 MPN/100 ml, Gulabi Ghat (5,400 MPN/100 ml), Triveni Ghat (5,400 MPN/100 ml), Gaighat (3,500 MPN/100 ml). Kewala Ghat (5.400 MPN/100 ml), Gandhi Ghat, NIT (3,500 MPN/100 ml) and Hathidah (5,400 MPN/100 ml).

How Prayagraj has learned to live with stories of stampedes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, March 2: "My uncle had saved his sister by pulling her out of the river waters by her hair as she slipped below amid the commotion," says citybased advocate Niranjan Lal recalling the 1954 Kumbh Mela stampede stories he had heard from his aunt who survived it.

This was the first Kumbh in Allahabad after Independence, and the tragic incident took place February 3 on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya. According to official estimates, several hundred had died in the stampede.

Seventy-one years later, a stampede took place January 29, again on Mauni Amavasya day as a massive crowd sought to enter into the Triveni Sangam waters for the 'amrit snan'. Lal, 67, and his wife were camping in a Swiss cottage in Sector 6 of Mahakukbh Nagar, when they got a call from their son at home late night, cautioning them not to go to the Sangam due to the stampede.

"We didn't step out from the camp until the sun came out,

his was the first Kumbh in Allahabad after Independence, and the tragic incident took place February 3 on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya

According to official estimates, Aseveral hundred had died in the

stampede Seventy-one years later, a Stampede took place January 29, again on Mauni Amavasya day as a massive crowd sought to enter into the Triveni Sangam waters for the 'amrit snan'

cal resident knew what to do in case the crowd became unmanageable," Lal told PTI here.

Lal belongs to an old family of Allahabad (renamed Prayagraj in 2018), many of whose members have performed 'kalpwas' and bathing rituals at all Kumbh melas held here post Independence.

His wife, Saloni Niranjan kept the family tradition, and observed the rituals at Maha Kumbh this year, after her mother-in-law's death in 2019. "We were married in 1988,

and few months later, the 1989 Kumbh Mela happened. And, I and my wife have been part of all successive Kumbh also since then. But, the 1954 tragedy is something my uncle and 'bua' (aunt) used to talk about. She told me how she was saved by my father's elder brother while she was drowning during the incident," Lal reminisced, adding, his 'bua' who was born in 1920s and also used to observe rituals. died in 1986.

Lal's father, Govind Prasad. a government officer was at the family camp in the mela area when the disaster took place. The incident of the 1954 stampede was then described as a "national tragedy".

Akshat Lal, 32, son of Niranjan Lal, says, he used to hear stories about the old Kumbh Melas from his grandmother and aunt, whose mother was rescued during the 1954 stampede.

The young scholar, who even wrote a 100-odd-page book "Kumbh: A Divine Show at Allahabad" in 2013, has researched extensively on the subject. Another stampede took place at Allahabad Junction (now Prayagraj Junction) during the 2013 Kumbh Mela in which scores of people died.

After the 1954 stampede, an inquiry committee was set up and it made a slew of recommendations for better crowd management and ensuring the

safety of pilgrims. "If one looks at the Maha Kumbh 2025, a VVIP culture was promoted during it, and aggressive marketing and '144 years' hype was used to draw people to the mela. The authorities were somehow complacent and some so-called celebrities were telling on social media that arrangements were 'great' and people should flock to San-



People with their pets pose for pictures during a cat show at Bihar Animal Sciences University, in Patna, Bihar PTI PHOTO

sites like Mathura, Vrindavan,

Nandgaon, Barsana, Gokul and

The organisation declared

that Holi is a festival of love

and harmony for the Sanatan

community and opposed any in-

volvement of Muslims in selling

colors or entering the festivities.

from their intentions. They

could cause disturbances,"

Gaur alleged. Supporting the

demand, Dharam Raksha

Sangh's national coordinator

'We still perceive a threat

Dauji," he stated.

HOLI CELEBRATIONS

Hindutva outfit seeks ban on participation of Muslims in UP

Committee secretary Tanveer Ahmed, who is the legal rep resentative of the Muslim side in the temple-mosque dispute dismissed these statements as be allowed if they provided a written assurance to the Hindus. "Otherwise, they should

ment must ensure it," he said. Meanwhile, Dinesh Sharma, a petitioner in the Sri Krishna during the recently concluded

divisive. "Holi in Braj has always been celebrated with love and peace. There has never been any complaint from any community. Even great Krish na devotees like Ras Khan and Taj Bibi, who were Muslims, are revered here," he said. Ahmed highlighted that even

Lucknow. March 2: The Luc

know Municipal Corporation

has issued a Rs 28.42 crore

property tax notice to the

Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari

Vaipavee International Cricket

Stadium, also known as Ekana

stadium, officials said Sunday

the Women's Premier League

matches scheduled this month

and the Indian Premier League

matches in April, raising con

cerns over their smooth conduct

has termed the notice "unjust'

and plans to meet Chief Min

ister Yogi Adityanath to seek

relief. According to a state

ment from Additional Munic

ipal Commissioner Pankaj

Srivastava, Zone 4 of the mu nicipal corporation issued the

The amount includes Rs 5.45

crore in tax due since Decem ber 1, 2020, and an outstanding balance of Rs 22.97 crore, the statement said, adding, the decision has been taken as per legal provisions and will be strictly enforced. Srivastava clarified that only the sports grounds and stadiums of gov

ernment-aided or recognised

non-aided educational institu

tions are exempt from property

tax. Since Ekana stadium does

not fall under this category, it

matches, professional sports

events and cultural pro

grammes with ticket sales

Therefore, the property tax assessment is justified. Currently,

only property tax is being lev

ied, and there is no action or

water or sewerage charges,

Srivastava added. He said the

stadium administration had

previously objected to the tax

assessment, but those objec-

tions were deemed baseless.

"Ekana stadium hosts IPI

is liable to pay the tax.

notice Saturday.

The stadium administration

The notice comes ahead of

and at around 11 am, we went to Dashashwamedh Ghat on Ganga, located near Sector 6. There were huge crowds in the mela area, in the streets and at the ghat. We were aware of the tragedy that had unfolded a few hours ago, and therefore we were alert, and being a lo-

gam, which were a factor for overcrowding and eventually a stampede," he alleged.

The Uttar Pradesh government had, however, maintained that ample arrangements were made, and the theme itself was 'Bhavya Divya Surakshit Maha Kumbh'.

Dharam Raksha Sangh's national president Saurabh Gaur claimed that recent incidents in Bareilly showed people belonging to the Muslim community threatening the Hindus. "We have decided to prohibit the entry of Muslims in Holi celebrations at major pilgrimage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

celebrations.

Mathura (UP), March 2:

The Dharam Raksha Sangh, a

Hindu nationalist outfit based

in Vrindavan, has issued a

statement expressing distrust

towards the Muslim commu-

nity and alleged the possibility

of disturbances during the Holi

The group has urged Uttar

Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath to impose restric-

tions on their participation.

Acharya Badrish likened the Muslims to "separatists and jihadists" and urged the government to enforce a ban similar to restrictions placed on Muslim participation in Garba festivities in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Badrish suggested that Muslims could

Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute, wrote a letter to the chief minister in his blood and demanded a ban on the entry of Muslims into Braj's Holi celebrations. He alleged that Muslims could "spit on sweets' during the festivities. In response, Shahi Idgah Intazamia

be kept away and the govern-

Maha Kumbh, the Muslims provided shelter and food to the Hindu pilgrims, showcasing communal harmony. Ahmed said while the Dharam Raksha Sangh's statement may reflect personal opinions, it is up to the government to respond to their demands.

Women farmers in Bihar turn to solar pumps

Women are exploring new avenues, from setting up atta chakkis (flour mills) to running rice mills powered by solar energy. The savings from reduced irrigation costs have allowed families to invest in their children's education, pay off debts, and even plan for weddings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Muzaffarpur, March 2: Indu Devi, a 35-year-old widow from Survahi village, knows the weight of despair all too well. When her husband was hanged over a land dispute, she was left with little more than a small patch of land and debts.

But then, she heard about the concept of using solar pumps in fields for business. Despite her initial fears of how would she, a woman with no technical knowledge, operate a pump? She took the leap of faith. Today, she earns a steady income by supplying water to neighbouring fields.

"It's just a switch on and off. But it has given me a way to survive," she said. In this area. Indu's story is inspirational but not unique. A number of women, as part of self-help groups (SHGs), have invested in solar pumps on their land for irrigation, transforming their lives and livelihoods.

For decades, irrigation has been a major challenge in Bihar. With erratic rainfall, extreme summers amid climate change and unreliable electricity, farmers have struggled



to grow crops. Diesel pumps Devki Devi, a mother of three were expensive and inefficient, from Kakrachak in Muzaffarleaving smallholder farmers, pur, recalled how her alcoholic especially women, at the mercy of the weather.

"The introduction of solar-powered irrigation pumps and a 10 per cent interest rate, has changed the game. These Devki installed a 5 HP capacipumps, operated by women, ty pump in July 2023. She now provide water at a fraction of supplies water to 12 farms at a rate of Rs 229 per acre, less the cost, ensuring that even the smallest plots of land can than the amount spent on dieflourish," said Mukesh Chansel pumps. In just a few months, dra, team leader at Aga Khan she has earned enough to cover Rural Support Programme, her family's expenses and even who helped with the installasave some money in the bank. tion of the solar pumps in Muzaffarpur. But stepping out these women with men in their for women has not been easy. families continues. Women like

Sita Devi and Rashmi Kumari have faced resistance from their families and communities. One of another challenges is the initial capital investment. Many women, especially those from marginalised communities, struggle to arrange the funds needed to install the solar pumps.

Like Sangita Devi, a 75-yearold from Karanpur, who just had enough land to install a solar pump, addressed this by taking a Rs 2.5 lakh loan from her village SHG. With her children grown and gone, she had no source of income. Today, she supplies water to nearby farms and dreams of converting her thatched hut into a pucca home with her savings. Another challenge is the maintenance of the solar panels. While the pumps are relatively easy to operate, keeping the panels clean and ensuring they function optimally requires regular attention.

The women have risen to this challenge, learning the basics of maintenance and even training others in their communities, Chandra said, But despite these challenges, the women have persevered.

Tejashwi demands hike in pension

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, March 2: A day before the Nitish Kumar government in Bihar is scheduled to present its last budget ahead of the assembly elections this year, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav Sunday demanded an increase in social security pensions and cash transfer of Rs 2.500 per month to poor women.

Yadav, the leader of the Oppo sition in the Assembly, said he expected that the government would announce 200 units of free electricity for all consumers in the state. Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, who also holds the finance portfolio, will table the state budget for the financial year 2025-26 in the Assembly Monday

Talking to reporters Yadav alleged, "The NDA government at the Centre as well as in the state are least bothered about the welfare of the people of Bihar." He also claimed that the social security pensions have not been increased by the state government for the last 20 years.

The leader of the opposition said, "The amount paid to people above 60 years, widows, and people with disabilities (PwDs) should be increased to Rs 1,500 per month from the existing Rs 400, which is the lowest in the country." He also said, "We demand a substantial increase



in social security pensions, transfer of Rs 2500 per month each to women from poor and deprived sections of society and 200 units of free electricity to all consumers in the state.

The NDA government in the state must accept these demands and should announce these initiatives in the budget for the next financial year. Yaday said.

"The RJD has already made it clear that if it comes to power in the upcoming elections, Rs 2,500 per month will be transferred into the bank accounts of women belonging to deprived sections. Besides, 200 units of electricity consumption will be made free for all residents of the state. Employment will be provided to the youth," he said. The former deputy chief

minister claimed that the RJD

is the "party which always ful fils its promises made at the time of polls". "We deliver on our promises whenever we get a chance," he asserted.

Yadav also said people would give a befitting reply to the BJP-led central government in the coming Assembly polls as "Bihar has been given step-motherly treatment by the Centre in the Union budget for the year 2025-26"

The RJD leader also demand ed restoration of reservations for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and backward classes from 50 per cent to 65 per cent he said. "The previous grand alliance government, of which the RJD was a part, increased the quota for deprived castes from 50 per cent to 65 per cent in government jobs and educa tional institutions, taking the overall reservation to 75 per cent in light of the Bihar caste survey." he said. However, the BJP moved a court and got the "entire issue entangled in legal battles", Yadav claimed.

Alleging that "the BJP eats away reservation and steals quota", Yadav said, "We want restoration of the quota".

He claimed, "Due to the non-implementation of 65 per cent reservation, candidates from SC/ST, OBC and EBC (eco nomically backward class) are suffering from a direct loss of 16 per cent reservation."







husband initially resisted the

With a loan of 1.5 lakh rupees

However, the struggle of

idea of a solar pump

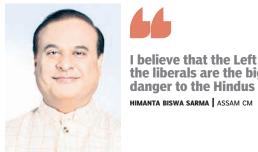








national



OVER 50K REUNITED WITH FAMILIES AT MAHA KUMBH believe that the Left and the liberals are the biggest

More than 50,000 people who were separated from their families amid the massive crowd of devotees at the 45-day Maha Kumbh were successfully reunited with their loved ones, the UP government said Sunday





Every expressway should have hospitals on both sides, just like food plazas Trauma centres.

ambulances, and trained staff should be stationed at divisional headquarters hospitals YOGI ADITYANATH UTTAR PRADESH CM

Let me refer to some changes that are worri somely alarming, concerning.

Our civilisation al ethos tells us inclusivity. Should there be a confrontational stance on language in the land of Bharat JAGDEEP DHANKHAR VICE PRESIDENT

Farmers who don't have a permanent power connection will be given the facilitv for ₹ 5. We want to do good for cultivators and better their lives MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

SHORT TAKES

Truck-ambulance collision claims 3

Kolkata: Three persons were killed and five injured when an ambulance collided with a truck in West Bengal's Nadia district Sunday morning. police said. The truck, heading towards Krishnanagar. collided head-on with the ambulance at Bara Jaguli on NH 12, police added. The ambulance, coming from Pakur in Jharkhand, had eight people on board, including the driver. The injured were taken to JNM Hospital in Kalvani. where the on-duty physician declared three of them dead on arrival. The deceased included two women, police said.

IPS officer suspended

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh government Sunday suspended senior IPS officer P V Sunil Kumar for allegedly making repeated foreign visits

Congress worker found dead, party seeks probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 2: A day after the body of Congress worker Himani Narwal was found stuffed in a suitcase in Rohtak, the Haryana Police Sunday set up a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the murder. Meanwhile, the family of Narwal refused to cremate her body until her killers are arrested. They also alleged that some leaders in the Congress party envied her political rise in a short span

An SIT has been set up and four teams of Rohtak police are already looking for the culprits behind the incident, a police official said. Narwal, who was in her late 20s, lived at Vijay Nagar in Rohtak. Her body, which was found in a suitcase in Rohtak district Saturday, bore some injury marks, police said.

Postmortem of the body was conducted by a board of doctors in Rohtak, the official said. Haryana Congress leaders described Narwal as an active and dedicated party worker. who also took part in Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra earlier. They said she was pursuing law degree and had been associated with the party for the last nearly a decade.

Narwal's family said they will not cremate her till killers are arrested. Her mother Savita, who spoke to reporters in Rohtak, alleged that some leaders in her party envied her political rise in a short span. "It could be anyone in the party who was jealous about her rise or it could be anyone else," the mother, who was accompanied by her son Jatin, said. Latching

46 pc turnout in Harvana civic polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 2: Forty-six per cent of the more than 51 lakh eligible voters for civic body polls in Harvana exercised their franchise Sunday, officials said.

The polling was peaceful, they added. Voting was held to elect the mayors and ward



Meanwhile, the family of Narwal refused to cremate her body until her killers are arrested. They also alleged that some leaders in the Congress party envied her political rise in a short span

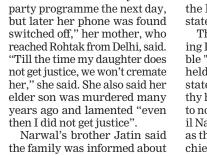
The 22-year-old woman lived at Vijay Nagar in Rohtak, police said

An SIT has been set up and four teams of Rohtak police are already looking for the culprits behind the incident

> on to her comment, Haryana minister and BJP leader Anil Vij said the allegations levelled by Narwal's mother are 'serious"

"To move ahead, push others behind, this is Congress' old culture," Vij told reporters in Ambala when asked about the murder. He also said police are conducting a thorough probe in the murder case.

Savita said her daughter used to work for the party till late hours and had dedicated her life for it. "Last time. I talked to her February 27. She



the murder Saturday afternoon. Former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda Sunday said he spoke to Rohtak's superintendent of police regarding the murder case, adding that police and the government should ensure speedy justice for the victim's family. According to a statement, Hooda spoke to the victim's family and offered his condolences.

Congress leader and party MLA from Rohtak B B Batra said Narwal was a "very good and active" worker of the party. She used to participate in various programmes of the party. Batra added.

TRAVAILS OF FISHERMEN DMK also responsible for 'wrong' of 1974: TN Guv

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, March 2: Rather than politicising the fishermen's issue and faulting the Centre for it, a constructive approach by the state government would go a long way in wiping the tears of fishers, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi said Sunday

After meeting the protesting fishermen at Rameswaram, who sought quick release of arrested fishermen and their boats from Sri Lanka, Ravi said the fishing community was a victim of an "iniquitous agreement" of 1974 (between India and Sri Lanka), which was extremely insensitive to the livelihood concerns of the state's poor fishermen

The governor alleged the ruling DMK was equally responsible "for the wrong of 1974" as it held power at that time in the state. Law Minister S Regupathy hit back at Ravi, asking him to not "compete" with BJP Tamil Nadu President K Annamalai as the Saffron party's state unit chief is available for politics.

Regupathy asked Ravi to stop his "fictitious tales" about Katchatheevu and urged the governor to take up with PM Narendra Modi the matter of release of Tamil Nadu fishermen from Sri Lanka. The minister said the governor's allegation of the "wrong of 1974" was a rusted tool and seeking to refute Ravi, he underscored several points. It includes then Chief Minister, M Karunanidhi submitting proof that Katchatheevu is part of India, opposing ceding of Katchatheevu in Parliament and seeking cancelling of the pact between India and Sri Lanka over Katchatheevu.



Regupathy said though the BJP leadership took up the Katchatheevu issue in a big way ahead of the 2024 LS polls, the party was defeated in all the 39 constituencies in the state and also in the lone segment in neighbouring Pondicherry.

In a post on 'X'. Governor Ravi said: "In my visit to Rameswaram today, I met our distressed brothers and sisters from fishing community. I deeply sympathise with them. They are victims of an iniquitous agreement of 1974 which was extremely insensitive to the livelihood concerns of our poor fishermen. The then governments in Delhi and Chennai committed a grave sin by depriving our fishermen of their traditional fishing rights in the sea around Katchatheevu island. Since then our fishing community have been suffering enduring hardship. They are arrested and their boats confiscated by Sri Lankan authorities. This enduring problem has to have an enduring solution. The state and central govts together have to work towards it.

Instead of politicising this issue and faulting the Central Government a constructive approach by the State Government will go a long way in wiping the tears of our affected people.

Omar chairs meeting of alliance partners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, March 2: As Jammu and Kashmir is preparing for the first budget session in seven years, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Sunday chaired a joint meeting of the alliance partners here and discussed various issues for the smooth functioning of the house.

The 40-day budget session, having a total of 22 sittings, is scheduled to start March 3 with the address of Lt Governor.

This will be the first budget of the government after it assumed power in October last year

Abdullah, who is set to present the budget March 7, had held the charge of home and General Administrative Department among others during his previous stint as the chief minister in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir from

2009 to 2014 The previous five budgets were presented and passed by the parliament in the absence of the legislative Assembly in J&K, while the then governor Satya Pal Malik led the state administrative council to pass the budget for 2019-2020 following the fall of the PDP-**BJP** government in June 2018

The joint meeting, attended by Congress legislative party leader G A Mir and CPI(M) MLA M Y Tarigami among others, took place shortly af ter Abdullah presided over a separate legislature party meeting of the National Conference at his official resi dence here.

The Congress legislature party also met separately at Residency Road party head quarters before Mir joined the meeting convened by Abdullah. National Conference president Farooq Abdullah also attended the joint meeting

Mayawati removes nephew Akash from key BSP posts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 2: BSP chief Mayawati Sunday removed her nephew Akash Anand from all party posts, appointing his father Anand Kumar and Rajya Sabha MP Ramji Gautam as national coordinators in his

on charges of factionalism and anti-party activities. She said she would not name a successor in her lifetime. The party and the movement are supreme and relations like brother, sister and their

children come later, she add-

ed. Mayawati appointed her

without prior permission during the previous YSRCP regime. In a government order, Chief Secretary K Vijayanand stated that Kumar, a DGP-rank officer awaiting posting, had deviated from the travel plan approved by the government during those overseas trips.

PM Modi visits Somnath temple

Junagadh: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday offered obeisance at the revered Somnath temple in Guiarat's Gir Somnath district and prayed for the health and prosperity of countrymen. The PM, who arrived at Jamnagar in Gujarat Saturday evening on a three-day state visit, started his day by visiting Vantara, an animal rescue, conservation and rehabilitation centre there. Later, he reached Somnath temple, the first of the 12 jyotirlings, located in Prabhas Patan and offered prayers to Lord Shiva.

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Gangster held

Chandigarh: Punjab Police Sunday said it has arrested a gangster and seized from him three sophisticated weapons sourced from Pakistan. The accused was identified as Hardeep Singh alias Deepa, a resident of Ferozepur. Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said police seized a 9 mm Glock pistol, a .30 mm Beretta pistol and a pump action gun, along with three magazines and 141 cartridges, from Hardeep Singh. Besides, 45 grams of heroin was also recovered from his possession, he said.

members of seven municipal corporations -- Gurugram, Manesar, Faridabad, Hisar, Rohtak, Karnal and Yamunanagar. Bypolls for the mayors' posts in Ambala and Sonipat were also held. The voting was held from 8 am to 6 pm. The turnout in the civic polls was recorded at 46 per cent, the officials said, adding that the overall percentage may slightly increase once the entire data is collected. Elections were also held for the posts of presidents and ward members in four municipal councils --Ambala Sadar, Pataudi Jatoli Mandi, Thanesar and Sirsa. A bypoll was also held for the president's post in the Sohna



Visitors at the Karnataka State Legislature Book Fair, at Vidhana Soudha in Bangalore, Karnataka

place, and said she would not name a successor in her lifetime.

The party is supreme and relations can come later, said the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister who had sacked Akash Anand last year only to later reinstate him and appoint him her political successor.

Removing Akash Anand from all party posts. Mayawati hit out at his father-in-law Ashok Siddharth and said he had divided the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) into two groups and tried to weaken it, according to a party statement.

He also ruined the political career of Akash Anand, she said. Mayawati last month expelled Siddharth from the BSP

brother Anand Kumar and Ramji Gautam as national coordinators to oversee party affairs across India.

Appreciating Anand Kumar, who is also the BSP's national vice-president, she said he al wavs worked with devotion for the party

"Be it paperwork, Income Tax, court issues, all are handled by Anand Kumar, who quit his government job. He also looked after (BSP found er) Kanshi Ram when he was ill," she said.

Anand Kumar decided to marry his children into non-political families so that no one tries to damage the party like Siddharth did, she said in a statement.

Zoo breeding programmes face funding challenges: Panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Municipal Council.

New Delhi, March 2: While India's zoos have made "notable" progress in breeding endangered species under conservation programmes that started around a decade ago, a government panel says that persistent gaps in execution, funding and species management hinder

their overall success. The Central Zoo Authority (CZA), which is responsible for overseeing and guiding national-level ex situ conservation efforts, constituted a committee in 2023 to review and evaluate the state of conservation breeding programmes in zoos across the country.

In 2007, the CZA selected 74 species for breeding in 43 zoos. By 2014, 26 high-priority species were shortlisted and breeding programmes began for 23. According to the report

of the committee submitted to the CZA recently, while India's zoos have made "notable progress in housing and breeding several endangered species, the overall effectiveness of conservation breeding programmes is hindered by persistent foundational and operational challenges".

The committee said that Rs 10.81 crore was allocated for conservation breeding between 2006 and 2011 and ₹18.13 crore between 2011 and 2021. Over time, with the decrease in the CZA's funding, zoos now receive limited financial support, mainly for maintenance.

According to the report, Artiodactyla (even-toed ungulates), Carnivora (meat-eating mammals) and Galliformes (game birds) are among the most targeted groups. However, many of their breeding programmes have either not



The committee said that Rs Over time, with the 10.81 crore was allocated for decrease in the CZA's conservation breeding between 2006 and 2011 and Rs 18.13 crore between 2011 and 2021

started or are poorly managed. The report said errors in species identification, such as with the Alpine Musk Deer and Himalavan Serow, make managing populations difficult. The committee also high-



diversity, improper tracking and poor record-keeping reduce the success of conservation breeding programmes. While some successes, such as the Gaur (Bos gaurus) and Indian Chevrotain (Moschiola indica), demonstrate the potential for growth and recovery, they also "expose broader challenges including inconsistent record-keeping, uncoordinated transfers and inadequate husbandry practices", the committee said.

Primates, Squamata (reptiles), and Perissodactyla (odd-toed ungulates) struggle with low birth rates and poor genetic diversity. Animals like the King Cobra and Western Hoolock Gibbon have specific environmental needs that are not being met, which reduces their chances of successful breeding.

It said that some birds and reptiles, like vultures (Whiterumped and Indian Vultures), have seen population growth. However, problems such as unsexed individuals and poor use of founder stock limit genetic diversity. Certain species, like the Nicobar Pigeon and Red-crowned Roofed Turtle, have small, stable populations but need better management. They said that many species, such as the Indian Giant Squirrel and Indian Pangolin, are declining due to low breeding success and poor tracking.

The Himalayan Salamander has shown recent growth but only at one facility without structured management. The committee said that small pop ulations, poor demographic and genetic monitoring, improper husbandry practices inadequate technical supervision, poor documentation, lack of animal identification poor adherence to breeding protocols and lack of coordination between zoos are common challenges across all groups of animals.











nationa



Children are the future of the country. Their dreams, education and knowledge would contribute to making India a strong and developed nation SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HP CM

ARUNACHAL CONDUCTS 1ST ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

Arunachal Pradesh has successfully carried out its first artificial insemination using imported sex-sorted Holstein Friesian semen, officials said. The successful procedure was carried out Friday by the state's Dairy Development Department at the Central Cattle Breeding Farm in Nirjuli, near here, where the first cow underwent insemination using the imported semen





The BJP is preventing PDA (Pichre, Dalit and Alpashankhak) people from holding positions like

CO (Circle Officer) and SO (Station Officer). In the 2027 assembly elections, the PDA will unite to oust the BJP from power AKHILESH YADAV SP CHIEF

I have not put any condition on any one and there is no need to put any condition. I'm a

Karyakarta, I work according to what the party tells me. Putting conditions or blackmailing is not in my blood. I'm a loyal Congress worker D K SHIVAKUMAR | KARNATAKA DEPUTY CM

We got a clear indication from our high command that the Congress is very much connected with the people of Kerala emotionally and politically.

People are looking for a change, so we should not do anything that will disrespect the people of Kerala RAHUL GANDHI CONGRESS LEADER



Kerala's GST

collection is

Per capita Post

Settlement SGST

collected from 1

HEALTHY



April 2024 to 28 February 2025, Kerala = 8,363 Tamil Nadu = 8,962, Gujarat = 9,259 Telangana = 10,540, Karnataka = 11,068, Jharkhand = 3,220 Uttar Pradesh = 3,246

@VarierAravind

SHORT TAKES

SC acquits woman awarded life term

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has acquitted a woman from Haryana who was awarded life-term in a

Union Minister Khadse's daughter, friends harassed

Jalgaon, March 2: Union Minister Raksha Khadse Sunday lodged a police complaint regarding the harassment of her daughter and some of her friends by a group of men at an event in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district, following which one person was arrested.

The FIR was registered on the complaint of Khadse at Muktainagar police station in connection with an incident that occurred at Sant Muktai Yatra in Kothali village Friday night. Seven persons have been

named in the FIR, of which one, identified as Soham Mali, has been arrested, a Muktainagar police station official said in the evening. He added that teams have been formed the nab the other accused.

The seven have been charged with stalking and other offences under Bharativa Nyava Sanhita and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, while Information Technology Act provisions have been invoked since they tried to take pictures and videos of the girls without permission, the official informed.

The bodyguards accompanying the girls named the seven persons, the police official added. Talking to reporters earlier in the day, the Union minister and BJP leader said, "I was in Gujarat, so my daughter called me to ask for permission to go. I asked her to take a guard and two to three staff members along. My daughter and her friends were followed and pushed, and their photos and videos were taken. When my staff objected, the boys resorted to unruly behaviour, and a

mob of 30 to 40 people gathered.' Khadse said when she returned home this morning, her daughter told her that the same group had misbehaved with her



February 24 at a public event. "It is unfortunate. If such things happen to an MP or Union minister's daughter, imagine what common people have to go through," she said. Khadse said some locals

in Muktainagar told her that this group harassed girls on their way to school. "I have spoken to the chief

minister and the deputy superintendent of police," she said, demanding that the culprits be arrested. Speaking to reporters in Raigad, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "Those who harassed Khadse's daughter are from a political party. The local police have arrested some of them and registered a case. There will be strict action taken against them."

Raksha Khadse's fatherin-law, former minister and NCP (SP) leader Eknath Khadse said, "The police have already received several complaints against these youths in the past, but no effective steps were taken. These boys are hardened criminals.

He claimed that crimes against women have increased in Maharashtra, and criminals are not afraid of the police.

'Girls do not come forward to lodge complaints. Parents believe that the names of their daughters should not be disclosed. We complained as we had no option left," he said. "I have spoken to the DSP

and IG. When we went to the police station first, we were

SNIPPETS

complaint of Khadse at Muktainagar police station in connec tion with an incident that occurred at Sant Muktai Yatra in Kothali village Friday night

Seven persons have been named in the FIR, of which one, identified as Soham Mali, has been arrested, a Muktainagar police sta tion official said in the evening

made to sit for two hours. The police told us to rethink the issue as it relates to girls. The youths have beaten up the police also. These people have political protection," the NCP (SP) leader said.

Reacting to the development, Maharashtra Congress chief Harshvardhan Sapkal claimed the law and order situation in the state has collapsed under the Mahavuti government

"The incident of Union Minister Khadse's daughter being molested by thugs and security guards being pushed is extremely worrying and shows

sitting in the police station because persons who molested her daughter and other girls were not being arrested.

Sapkal said, "There has been an increase in atrocities against women and girls in the state. If the daughter of a Union minister is unsafe, it is better not to think about girls of common citizens," he said. He said CM Fadnavis, who also holds the Home portfolio, has lost focus.

"The fact that a minister's daughter was molested even in the presence of security guards is a sign that the law and order has gone havwire. Fadnavis should resign from the post of home minister and give the state a full-time competent home minister for the safety of mothers and sisters in the state." the Congress leader said.

Kerala man shot dead at Jordan-Israel border

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 2: A man from Kerala was reportedly shot dead at the Jordan-Israel border, according to his relatives here.

The deceased has been identified as Ani Thomas Gabriel, 47. a native of Thumba. Gabriel's family said Sunday that they received an email from the Indian Embassy March 1 confirming his death. "We received an email from the Indian Embassy in Jordan about his death, but there has been no further communication after that," Metilda a relative, told PTI Sunday.

The incident occurred February 10, when Jordanian soldiers opened fire at the bor der. Gabriel's relative, Edison was also shot but survived and has since returned home with injuries, according to family sources.

Gabriel had left home February 5, saying he was going to Velankanni, a Christian pilgrimage centre in Tamil Nadu, a relative told a TV channel. According to TV reports, Ga briel and Edison were part of a four-member group attempting to cross the border from Jordan into Israel with the help of an agent. All four had arrived in Jordan on a three month visit visa.

The Jordanian army intercepted them at the border, but as they attempted to escape, the soldiers opened fire. Gabriel was reportedly shot in the head. while Edison sustained a leg injury and was taken to a Jordanian army hospital. After receiving treatment, he was repatriated to India.

Duplication of voter card numbers: EC to update system



The poll authority also asserted that duplicate numbers do not necessarily imply fake voters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 2: Amid reports flagging issuance of identical voter card numbers to electors in two different states. the Election Commission Sunday said it will rectify the issue and also update its technology-driven platform.

The poll authority also asserted that duplicate numbers do not necessarily imply fake voters. It said while the elector photo identity card (EPIC) numbers of some of the voters "may be identical", the other details, including demographic details, assembly constituency and polling booth, are different.

"Irrespective of the EPIC number. any elector can cast a vote only at their designated polling station in their respective constituency in their state or Union territory where they are enrolled in the electoral roll and nowhere else," the poll panel said.

It explained that identical EPIC numbers or series were allotted to some electors from different states and Union territories due to a "decentralised and manual mechanism" being followed prior to shifting of the electoral roll database of all states to the ERONET (Elector al Roll Management) platform.

This resulted in certain state chief electoral officers using the same EPIC alpha-numeric series and leaving a scope for the possibility of duplicate EPIC numbers being allotted to electors in different assembly constituencies in different states the poll body said.

According to the EC web site, ERONET helps election officials maintain the electoral system "by removing duplicate entries and inclusion of mi grated electors". "To allay any apprehensions, the commission has decided to ensure allotment of unique EPIC number to registered electors. Any case of duplicate EPIC number will be rectified by allotting a unique

EPIC number," the EC said. The ERONET 2.0 platform will be updated to aid and assist in this process, it said.



SFI calls for strike in

WB universities today Kolkata: CPI(M)'s student wing SFI Sunday called for a strike in West Bengal universities March 3, demanding Education Minister Bratya Basu's resignation over the injuries of two protestors at Jadavpur University. The windscreen of the minister's car was smashed by protesters and two of the agitators were injured, one of them seriously. when the tyre of one of the vehicles in his convoy grazed past them Saturday. Students Federation of India (SFI) state committee member Shuvajit Sarkar told PTI Sunday the strike call has been given mainly focusing on university campuses in protest against the "entry of outsiders sheltered by TMC who instigated the violence and vandalism in the Jadavpur university campus March 1." CPI(M) West Bengal secretary Md Salim said, "So far I know the strike call will be confined within university campuses and there is no reason to be apprehensive about the vehicular movement outside.

that women and girls are not safe in the state," he said. He claimed that Khadse was

minor. A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and Rajesh Bindal acquitted the woman after finding fault with the version of the prosecution and the finding of conviction recorded by the trial court on the basis of recovery of weapon 'gandasi' (axe), which was upheld by the high court. "In our considered view, both the courts have committed an error in placing substantial reliance upon a mere recovery of the weapon, while the body of the deceased was found much earlier and that too, not at the instance of the appellant. Thus, we are constrained to extend the benefit of doubt to the appellant," the bench said.

Delhi court acquits 5 men

New Delhi: A court here has acquitted five men in a 2015 kidnapping case, saving the prosecution's story was improbable, unbelievable and riddled with doubts. "The evidence adduced by the prosecution is not worthy of acceptance and there is a serious shadow of doubt cast upon it and not worthv of inspiring any confidence. Hence, they strike at the very root of the prosecution story rendering it to be improbable and unbelievable." Additional Sessions Judge said.

Infant dies during police raid

Jaipur: A one-month-old infant died allegedly during a police raid in Alwar district of Rajasthan, an official said Sunday, adding that the family has registered a case against two policemen in connection with the incident. Maharashtra's Palghar district out of jealousy, with a senior police official claiming he took inspiration for the act from a Hindi film about a serial killer, a police official said. The girl's body was found on Sriram Nagar hillock at around 4.30 am, the Pelhar police station official said. "We have detained a 13-year-old boy from Nalasopara. The deceased is his cousin. He allegedly killed her out of jealousy since he thought everyone pampered her," senior inspector Jitendra Vankute of Pelhar police station told PTI. "The girl had gone missing Saturday evening after which her kin approached police. CCTV footage from the vicinity of a nearby company showed the boy taking the girl somewhere. The boy first tried to mislead police but later confessed," he said.

Inspired by film, boy kills

child he was jealous of

Palghar: A teen boy was detained Sunday

for allegedly murdering a 6-year-old girl in

Workers celan walls of Vidhana Soudha ahead of the Karnataka Assembly session, in Bangalore

PTI PHOTO

UP court acquits 45 in rioting case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kanpur (UP), March 2: A court here has acquitted 45 individuals in a 27-year-old case of rioting, which claimed the life of a police gunner, due to lack of evidence.

The violence took place January 9, 1998, when hundreds of people protested demanding the arrest of those responsible for allegedly assaulting the Imam of a mosque in Laxmipurwa area of Kanpur and disrupting the district's power supply.

The fast track court's recent decision to acquit all 45 accused came after the prosecution failed to present a strong case against the undertrials, according to defense counsel Shakeel Ahmad Bundel who represented 24 of the 77 accused in the case. Bundel said all the 45 accused were out on bail prior to the court's verdict.

While the court acquitted the accused in the rioting case, it sentenced four individuals to three years in prison under the Arms Act. Government counsel Rajendra Uttam said that all four convicts were granted bail. as their sentence was less than three years.

Defense counsel Bundel provided details about the events leading to the riot. He said that the violent incident oc curred January 9, 1998, when hundreds of people took to the streets, demanding the arrest of those responsible for assaulting the Imam of a mosque in Laxmipurwa, and disrupting the district's power supply.

'40% global population lacks education in their language'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 2: Forty per cent of the global population does not have access to education in a language they speak or understand, according to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) team. Despite countries' growing understanding of the role of home language, policy uptake remains limited. Implementation challenges include limited teacher capacity to use home languages, unavailability of materials in home languages and community opposition, it said. In some low- and middle-income countries, this figure rises to 90 per cent. More

officials said, recommending nations to implement multilingual education policies and practices with the goal of creating educational systems that benefit all learners

Devendra Fadnavis denies 'cold war' with Shinde

wants to compete with Salim-Javed, the legendary screenwriting duo. He was addressing a press conference

with deputy CMs Shinde and Ajit Pawar after a cabinet meeting and customary tea party ahead of the four-

week budget session of the Assembly, which begins Monday. "There is no war. Those who know both of us

will remember what we do when we are together," said Fadnavis, pointing to their meetings before

Shinde's rebellion split the undivided Shiv Sena and sunk the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in 2022.

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Sunday scoffed at speculations of a "cold war"

between him and his deputy Eknath Shinde, and mocked Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, quipping he

The team, which has come up with a report titled "Languages matter: Global guidance on multilingual education". noted that as migration increases, linguistic diversity is becoming a global reality and classrooms with learners from diverse language backgrounds are more common. Over 31 million displaced youth are facing language barriers in education. The report was compiled on the 25th anniversary of International Mother Language Day, celebrating a quarter-century of dedicated



efforts to preserve and promote the use of mother tongues. The report comes at a time when India is in the process of implementing the new National Education Policy (NEP) that

advocates multilingual education. The three-language policy in school education has drawn opposition from some states. According to the analysis by the team, the gap between **O**ver 31 million displaced youth are facing language barriers in education

he report was compiled on the 25th anniversary of International Mother Language Day, celebrating a guarter-century of dedicated efforts to preserve and promote the use of mother tongues

the two groups increased on average between 2010 and 2022, from 12 to 18 percentage points in reading and from 10 to 15 percentage points in mathematics. This suggests that learners who do not speak the language of instruction at home, whether for historical reasons or due to migration and displacement, are at a

bigger risk of leaning loss. In the second category, immigration brings new languages to classrooms in richer countries enriching linguistic diversity but also posing challenges in instruction and assessment.

The GEM team has recom mended that educational language policies should prioritise context-specific approaches and language transition must be backed by curriculum adjustments and supported by teaching and learning materi als adapted for that grade.

Planning for strong support systems outside of schools to ensure the success of new mul tilingual education policies and supporting school leaders to foster inclusion in schools are also among the recommendations.





than a quarter of a billion

learners are affected, GEM









international



Ramazan this year comes with a new flavour. This is the Ramazan of victory and liberation HUSSAM HAJ-HUSSEIN INTERIM MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, SYRIA

POPE'S HEALTH STABLE

Pope Francis was in stable condition and resting on Sunday as he continued his recovery from double pneumonia, but again skipped his weekly noon blessing to avoid even a brief public appearance. For the third weekend in a row, Francis cancelled the appointment delivering the Angelus prayer





Trump makes English official language of US **OUTBREAK SPREADS US sees first measles**

We have gone from being a global laughing stock ... to being aı unexpected pro tagonist. The eyes

of the world are now on Argentina after a long time

JAVIER MILEI PRESIDENT, ARGENTINA

There's a real problem for European leaders to pick up the pieces and try and move forward It's going to be a

damage limitation exercise. It's going to have to be an exercise in where do we go from here? PETER RICKETTS | FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, BRITAIN

The trade dispute will have far-reaching spillover effects,

from price increases and paperwork backlogs to longer wait times at the US-Canada border for both people and products

LAURIE TRAUTMAN | DIRECTOR (BORDER POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE), WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

SHORT TAKES

Iran's Parl fires economy minister

Tehran: Iran's parliament Sunday impeached the country's economy minister and voted to remove him from office, amid growing concerns over the crashing rial and accusations of mismanagement. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf announced that 182 out of 273 lawmakers voted to dismiss Abdolnasser Hemmati, just six months after President Masoud Pezeshkian's government took office Pezeshkian, who defended Hemmati, emphasised that the government is locked in a tough battle with the West He called for greater unity and cooperation from Parliament to face these challenges. The decision comes amid rising tensions over Iran's nuclear program and worsening relations with the West. Iran's economy has been severely affected by international sanctions, especially after the US withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal. In 2015, the rial

Washington, March 2: President Donald Trump has signed an executive order designating English as the official language of the United States.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The order allows government agencies and organizations that receive federal funding to choose whether to continue to offer documents and services in

For decades, lawmakers in Congress have introduced legislation to designate English as the official language of the US, but those efforts have not succeeded language other than English.

It rescinds a mandate from former President Bill Clinton that required the government and organizations that received federal funding to provide lan-

guage assistance to non-English speakers. "Establishing English as the official language will not only streamline communication but also reinforce shared national

values, and create a more cohesive and efficient society," according to the order signed by Trump on Saturday.

"In welcoming new Americans, a policy of encouraging the learning and adoption of our national language will make the United States a shared home and empower new citi zens to achieve the American dream," the order also states. Speaking English not only opens doors economically, but it helps newcomers engage in their communities, participate in national traditions, and give



back to our society."

More than 30 states have already passed laws designating English as their official language, according to US En-

STANDOFF OVER TRUCE

glish, a group that advocates for making English the official language in the United States. Within hours of Trump's inauguration last month, the new administration took down the

official White House website. Hispanic advocacy groups and others expressed confusion and frustration at the change. The White House said at the time it was committed to bringing the Spanish language version of the website back online. As of Saturday, it was still not restored.

death in over decade PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Houston, March 2: The United States has recorded its first

measles-related death in over a decade, as a growing number of cases sweeps across the coun try, with Texas emerging as the epicentre of the outbreak

has infected individuals in at least nine states, sending sev eral to hospitals.

The Texas Department of State Health Services Saturday confirmed 146 measles cases as of February 28. A school-aged child in west Texas, who was unvaccinated, succumbed to the highly contagious but pre ventable respiratory disease on Wednesday, marking the first measles-related death in the US in over a decade.

The outbreak in Texas has spread to neighbouring New Mexico, the officials said.

Dr Peter Hotez, a pediatrician and virologist at Baylor College of Medicine, warned that the outbreak is a direct consequence of declining vac cination rates. "When vaccination coverage drops below 90%, measles can spread like wildfire. One infected person can transmit the virus to up to 18 others," he said.

Wealth gap widens Chinese inequalities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, March 2: China's wealthiest individuals continue to grow richer, widening economic inequalities in the country despite the ruling Communist Party's efforts to

control private businesses and implement policies aimed at boosting people's incomes, a report here said. The combined wealth o

the 5.12 million families in China with over six million yuan (\$824,000) in assets was stated to be about 150 trillion yuan (over \$seven trillion) in 2024, according to a report published by the Hurun Re search Institute.

Of this, the wealthiest 130,000 families accounted for 58 per cent in 2024, which is up from 56 per cent a vear earlier, the

Starmer hugs Zelenskyy after White House clash Israel halts Gaza aid *The first phase of the*

UK's PM tries to revive hope for *Ukraine peace at summit*

REUTERS

London, March 2: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer will try to revive hope for peace in Ukraine at a meeting with Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other Western leaders Sunday, two days after the Ukrainian president clashed with US President Donald Trump.

After the heated row with Trump, who threatened to stop support for Ukraine after accusing Zelenskyy of being ungrateful for US aid, the Ukrainian leader flew from Washington to London Saturday to be greeted with a warm hug from Starmer. Starmer said Sunday an urgent round of calls to Trump. Zelenskyy and French President Emmanuel Macron over

the weekend had cemented the idea that a "coalition TARMER of the willing" in OFFERS Europe would **'UNWAVERING** need to move **SUPPORT' FOR UKRAINE** quickly to come up with **EUROPE LOOKING AT HOW** IT CAN PROVIDE WEAPONS, a peace plan FINANCE to be presented to the Unit-UK, FRANCE AND UKRAINE ed States. **TO PRESENT DEAL**

That meant **TO TRUMP** Europe moving faster than it has done to show it can defend itself, Starmer said, adding he was not criticising other nations but making it clear that coun-



done anything wrong Friday. He described watching the spat between Zelenskyy and Trump in the Oval Office as un-

comfortable viewing, but was keen to push the conversation forward by offering himself as a go-between for Europe and

the United States. Starmer will ask leaders how they can step up to provide Kyiv with aid before any peace talks begin, given that many are struggling with public filimited

nances. Lacking the weaponrv and depth of ammunition stocks of the United States, European leaders have so far offered expressions of support after the Zelenskyy row, with Germany calling for the release

pullout and a lasting ceasefire REUTERS Jerusalem, March 2: Israel blocked the entry of aid trucks into Gaza Sunday as a standoff over the truce that has halted fighting for the past six weeks escalated, with Hamas calling on Egyptian and Qatari medi-

negotiate the second

phase, in which Hamas

was to release dozens of

remaining hostages in

return for an Israeli

ators to intervene. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said earlier that it had adopted a proposal by US President Donald Trump's envoy. Steve Witkoff, for a temporary ceasefire in Gaza for the Ramadan and Passover periods, hours after the first phase of the previously agreed ceasefire expired.

If agreed, the truce would halt fighting until the end of the Ramadan fasting period around March 31 and the Jewish Passover holiday around April 20. The truce would be condi-

tional on Hamas releasing half of the living and dead hostages on the first day, with the remainder released at the conclusion, if an agreement is reached on a permanent ceasefire.

ficials said Israeli gunfire had killed four Palestinians in separate attacks in the northern and southern Gaza Strip.

must be release for

ceasefire to continue

The Israeli military said that 'suspects" were identified close to its troops in northern Gaza and that they had planted a bomb. It added that an airstrike was carried out to "eliminate

Egyptian sources said Friday that the Israeli delega tion in Cairo had sought to extend the first phase by 42 days, while Hamas wanted to move to the second phase of the ceasefire deal. Spokesman Hazem Qassem said on Saturday that the group rejected Israel's "formulation' of extending the first phase.

end to the war.

Israel says hostages Hamas wants Israel Negotiations ongoing

to move to second

phase of ceasefire

the threat."

In the first phase of the

troops from Gaza, and a final

However the talks never began and Israel says all its hostages must be returned for fighting to stop.

threat of renewed

violence remains

"Israel will not allow a ceasefire without the release of our hostages," Netanyahu's office said, announcing that the entry of all goods and supplies into the Gaza Strip would be halted. "If Hamas persists in its refusal, there will be additional conse

auences. Hamas has denounced Israel's move as "blackmail" and a "blatant coup against the agreement". "We call on mediators to



Spanish language version of the

officials said. The highly contagious virus

but by the time Pezeshkian took office in July, it had plummeted to 584,000 to the dollar. Recently, it dropped even further, with exchange shops in Tehran trading 930,000 rials for each dollar.

was worth 32,000 to the dollar

Nepal arrests Indians for trafficking drugs

Kathmandu: Three people,

including two Indians, were Sunday arrested from Nepalgunj sub-metropolitan city for trafficking narcotic drugs, Nepal Police said. Jiyaul Haque Shesh, 38, and Kishore, 18, both from Kolkata in India, and Nafis Mohmad Kabadiya, 24, a resident of Nepalgunj, were arrested along with 5,000 tablets of Tramadol, a type of narcotic drug, a Nepal Police News Bulletin said. A team of police dispatched from Jayaspur police station arrested the trio with the drug during a security check on an Indian number plate motorbike headed towards Nepal from India, it said.

More troops sent to **US-Mexico border**

Washington: The Pentagon is sending about 3.000 more active-duty troops to the US-Mexico border as President Donald Trump seeks to clamp down on illegal immigration and fulfil a central promise of his campaign. US officials said Saturday. The forces will arrive along the nearly 2,000mile border in the coming weeks. Already, about 9,200 US troops in total are at the southern border, including 4.200 deployed under federal orders and about 5.000 National Guard troops under the control of governors.

ain and France had by offering peacekeeping troops

tries needed to step up as Brit-

"Rather than moving at the pace of every single country in Europe, which would in the end be quite a slow process, we've got to probably get to a coalition of the willing now," he told the BBC.

"The UK and France are the most advanced on the thinking of this and that is why President Macron and I are working on this plan, which we will then discuss with the US," he said, adding he did not think Zelenskyy had

of 3 billion euros (\$3.1 billion) for Ukraine.

Starmer is trying to revive a possible peace deal with Russia by convincing Trump that Europe can step up to defend itself. Some leaders might also encourage Zelenskyy to go back into talks with the US leader. He said the war was at a turn-

ing point three years into the invasion, and he offered "unwavering support for Ukraine" by doubling down on providing capacity, training and aid to Kyiv.

Hamas says it is committed to the originally agreed ceasefire that had been scheduled to move into a second phase, with negotiations aimed at a permanent end to the war, and it has rejected the idea of a temporary extension to the 42-day truce. Reflecting the fragility of the ceasefire deal, local health of-

ceasefire, Hamas handed over 33 Israeli hostages as well as five Thais returned in an unscheduled release, in exchange for around 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees from Israeli jails and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from some of their positions in Gaza.

Under the original agreement, the second phase was intended to see the start of negotiations over the release of the remaining 59 hostages. the full withdrawal of Israeli

agreement, in all its phases. it said, adding that the only way to get the hostages back would be to adhere to the agreement and start talks for the second phase. Over the past six weeks,

pressure the occupation to ful-

fill its obligations under the

both sides have accused the other of breaching the agreement. But despite repeated hiccups, it has remained in place while the hostage-for-prisoner exchange envisaged in the first phase was completed.

report said.

China's per capita disposable income was stated to be 41,314 yuan (over \$41,314) last year. up 5.3 per cent from 2023, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported, citing the report.

Analysts have warned that Beijing needs to work harder to narrow the wealth gap in society more broadly as it tries to ignite a private sector-led economic recovery, the Post reported Sunday.

Energy transition: Challenges & opportunities

Tn 2024, global production of wind and solar energy reached unprecedented levels—figures that would have seemed unimaginable just a short time ago. Over the last 15 years, the contributions of wind and solar energy to the world's electricity generation have surged from nearly zero to 15 percent, while the cost of solar panels has plummeted by as much as 90 percent. These advancements signify a significant step forward in the energy transition—the movement away from a hydrocarbon-centric energy mix towards a low-carbon future dominated by renewable sources. However, 2024 also marked a record year for another reason: energy production from oil and coal reached all-time highs. Over a longer timeframe, the proportion of hydrocarbons in the global primary energy mix has barely changed, decreasing from 85 percent in 1990 to around 80 percent today. This suggests that what we are witnessing is less of an

"energy transition" and more of an "energy addition." Rather than replacing conventional energy sources, the growth of renewables is coming on top of that of conventional sources. And with Donald Trump's return to the U.S. presidency, priorities will focus again on conventional energy production and what his administration calls "energy dominance."

Concern about climate change had raised expectations for a rapid shift away from carbon-based fuels. But the realities of the global energy system have confounded those expectations, making clear that the transitionfrom an energy system based largely on oil, gas, and coal to one based mostly on wind, solar, batteries, hydrogen, and biofuels-will be much more difficult, costly, and complicated than was initially expected. What's more, the history of past energy transitions suggests that this

should not come as a surprise: those were also "energy



additions," with each adding to rather than eliminating prior sources.

As a result, the world is far from on track to achieve the often stated target of reaching, by 2050, "net-zero emissions"-a balance in which any residual emissions are offset by removals of emissions from the atmosphere. And there is no clear plan for get-

ting on track or for delivering the magnitude of investment that would be required to do so. The International Energy Agency projected in 2021 that. for the world to meet 2050 targets, greenhouse gas emissions would need to decline from 33.9 gigatons in 2020 to 21.2 gigatons in 2030; thus far, emissions have gone in the other direction, reaching 37.4 gigatons in

2023 (and there's no reason to think that a 40 percent decline in just seven years will be remotely feasible). Other facts similarly reflect the challenges of transition. The Biden administration set a goal of electric vehicles accounting for 50 percent of new cars sold in the United States by 2030; yet that number remains just ten percent, with automakers slashing investment in electric vehicles as they face multibillion-dollar losses.

Past transitions, such as the shift from wood to coal, were motivated by improved functionality and lower costs, incentives that are not vet present across much of the entire energy system. The scale of the transition means that it will also be very costly. Technological, policy, and geopolitical uncertainty makes it challenging to estimate the costs associated with achieving net zero by 2050. But one thing is certain: the costs will be substantial.

Any path to emissions reductions will have to go through the global South, because that is where substantial growth in energy demand will be. Yet its nations face particularly daunting challenges in attracting the capital necessarv to move away from cheap. coal-based sources of energy (or from wood and waste) in large part because renewable energy projects often entail high upfront capital costs, long-term investment horizons. and policy and regulatory uncertainties while natural gas projects are rejected on ESG grounds. A combination of multilateral grant funding and more private investment is necessary to increase the flow of money to the global South.

Ever since Abraham Darby switched to coal from wood more than three centuries ago, technological innovation has been central to every evolution in energy production. Investments in and research, development, and deployment of clean energy technologies have driven significant declines in cost for solar and wind. AGENCIES











Business



I strongly believe in hard work. Indians must work hard, whether it's 80 hours or 90 hours a week. If your ambition is to move from a \$4 trillion to a \$30 trillion economy, you can't do it through entertainment or by following the views of some film stars AMITABH KANT | FORMER CEO, NITI AAYOG

NO CANDIDATE FOR BPCL TOP JOB

After HPCL, the government headhunter struggled to find a suitable candidate for the top job at Bharat Petroleum, as most applicants were narrow specialists lacking multidisciplinary experience needed to run a large organisation



BEARISH TREND

Mcap of eight of top-10

most valued cos erodes

New Delhi, March 2: The

crore in a holiday-shortened

last week, with Tata Consul

Last week, the BSE bench

mark gauge Sensex tanked

2,112.96 points or 2.80 per cent,

671.2 points or 2.94 per cent.

In February alone, the Nif

ty dropped 1,383.7 points or

5.88 per cent. The Sensex lost

4,302.47 points or 5.55 per cent.

Tata Consultancy Services

(TCS) plunged ₹1,09,211.97

crore to ₹12,60,505.51 crore

the most among the top-10

firms. With the sharp decline

in its market valuation TCS

slipped to the third rank in

the top-10 most valued firms

chart from the previous sec

ond place. HDFC Bank over

took TCS to become the sec

The valuation of Infosys

Bharti Airtel's market valu-

ation eroded by ₹39,230.1 crore

to ₹8,94,993.67 crore and that

of Reliance Industries dropped

₹38.025.97 crore to ₹16,23,343.45

State Bank of India's valua

tion diminished by ₹29,718.99

crore to ₹6,14,236.97 crore.

The market capitalisation

(mcap) of ICICI Bank slumped

₹20,775.78 crore to ₹8,49,803.90

Reliance Industries re

mained the most valued firm

followed by HDFC Bank, TCS.

Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, In

fosys, State Bank of India, Ba-

jaj Finance, Hindustan Unile-

tanked ₹52,697.93 crore to

ond most valuable firm.

₹7.01.002.22 crore.

crore.

crore

ver and ITC.

The market valuation of

trend in equities.



India's tariffs are consistent with WTO (World Trade **Organisation**)

rules. They are the result of a single undertaking at the WTO which all

countries including the US have approved in 1995...Indian tariffs are WTO compliant. The Indian side needs to explain (this) to the US AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

India's booming short-form video market is just about getting started, with demand

for engaging local content and uptake in smaller locations fuelling growth MANOHAR SINGH CHARAN | CHIEF FINANCIAL

OFFICER, SHARECHAT AND MOJ



ture, Hindustan Zinc is on track to double its production to two MTPA by 2030, as our zinc plays a critical role in steel galvanization PRIYA AGARWAL HEBBAR

CHAIRPERSON, HINDUSTAN ZING

SHORT TAKES

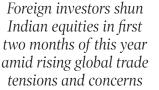
Coal production up 5.73% in April-Feb

New Delhi: Cumulative coal production reached 928.95 million tonne (MT) in the April-February period this fiscal (FY25), reflecting a 5.73 per cent increase compared to 878.55 MT in the same period last year, the government said Saturday. Moreover, cumulative coal dispatch has risen to 929.41 MT, marking a 5.50 per cent growth from 880.92 MT in the previous year, the Ministry of Coal said in a statement. "India's coal sector continues its strong performance with significant growth in production and dispatch up to February 2025," the ministry added. Coal production from 'Captive and

Other' entities stood at 173.58

CAUTIOUS APPROACH

FPIs outflow hits ₹1.12L-cr in 2025



over corporate earnings growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 2: Foreign investors have pulled out ₹34.574 crore from the Indian equity markets in February pushing total outflows to ₹1.12 lakh crore in the first two months of 2025 amid rising global trade tensions and concerns over corporate earnings growth.

"Elevated valuations of Indian equities, alongside concerns about corporate earnings growth, have led to a sustained outflow of FPIs," Vipul Bhowar. Senior Director - Listed Investments, Waterfield Advisors, said. According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) offloaded shares worth ₹34.574 crore from Indian equities in

February This came following a net outflow of ₹78,027 crore in the

entire January. With these, the total outflow by FPIs has reached ₹1,12,601 crore in 2025 so far, data with the depositories showed.

The massive selling by FPIs has resulted in the BSE's benchmark Sensex falling over 6 per cent vear-to-date.

The recent market sell-off has been influenced by rising US



Foreign investors withdraw ₹34,574cr from equities in Feb moving money to Chinese stocks

This came following net outflow of ₹78,027cr in entire Jan

attractive valuations Massive selling drags VK VIJAYAKUMAR CHIEF INVESTMENT Sensex as it plunges over 6% YTD

bond yields, a strengthening US dollar, and global economic uncertainties, leading to a shift in investor focus towards US assets, Bhowar said. According to him, the earn-

ings reports for the third quarter of fiscal year 2025 have been modest, indicating an atmosphere of uncertainty.

This issue is further compounded by falling commodity prices and reduced consumer spending, which adversely

impact corporate profits and diminish the appeal of Indian equities to foreign investors, he added. An important paradox in

FPIs selling is that they are selling heavily in financial services, the sector which is doing

US tariff related developments, FIIs trading key drivers for mkts: Analysts

H

In February alone, the NSE Nifty tanked 1,383.7 points or 5.88%. The BSE Sensex lost 4,302.47 points or 5.55% last month

Indian tariffs are WTO compliant: GTRI PRESS TRUST OF INDIA RIFFS TARIFFS TARIF

New Delhi, March 2: India's import duties are in compliance with the global trade rules and the government should convey this to the US administration. economic think tank

restrictions on data flows, it

said, adding India has resisted

these demands for decades and

is still not prepared to accept.

on multiple occasions have al-

leged that India has high tariffs

and termed it "tariff king" and

Tariffs are import duties

"tariff abuser"

US President Donald Trump

FPIs are focused on selling

in India because valuations

well and the valuations are

attractive. Additionally, they

withdrew money from the debt

market. They pulled out ₹8,932

crore from debt general limit

and ₹2.666 crore from debt vol-

The overall trend indicates

a cautious approach by foreign

investors, who scaled back in-

vestments in Indian equities

significantly in 2024, with net

the extraordinary ₹1.71 lakh

crore net inflows in 2023, driv-

en by optimism over India's

strong economic fundamentals.

In comparison, 2022 saw a net

outflow of ₹1.21 lakh crore amid

aggressive rate hikes by global

central banks.

inflows of just ₹427 crore. This contrasts sharply with

untary retention route.

in India are high and

where valuations are much lower.

But in the process, they are selling

in the best performing sector with

STRATEGIST, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

MF sector sees massive AUM growth in 16 years

The mutual fund industry has played a pivotal role in empowering Indian households and investors to be a part of the country's growth story, providing a platform for wealth creation and financial inclusion

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 2: The mutual fund industry has seen significant growth in assets under management (AUM) -- from ₹5.89 lakh crore in May 2008 to ₹53.4 lakh crore in March 2024 a report showed Saturday.

The steady increase in the share of mutual funds in Indi an household savings, from 7.6 per cent in FY21 to 8.4 per cent in FY 23. is a testament to the industry's growing relevance and the faith that investors have reposed in it, according to the report by the Associa tion of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), along with Crisil.

The mutual fund industry has played a pivotal role in empowering Indian households and investors to be a part of the country's growth story, providing a platform for wealth creation and financial inclusion.

Despite ongoing volatility in the stock market, assets under management (AUM) for all open-ended schemes grew marginally by 0.49 per cent to reach ₹66.98 lakh crore in January.

According to the AMFI report, mutual funds have made it possible for investors to benefit from a diversified portfolio managed by experienced pro-

ARIFFS



fessionals, even with a modest investment.

"The industry has seen a significant increase in digital transactions, with approximately 90 per cent of all mutual fund purchases being made through digital channels in FY 2024." the report mentioned.

The regulator, SEBI, has played a crucial role in maintaining the integrity and stability of the mutual fund landscape. According to Navneet Munot, Chairman of AMFI, the regulatory framework has not only helped in protecting investors but has also encouraged fund managers to adhere to high standards of accountability and operational excellence.

"In doing so, SEBI has reinforced the credibility of mutual funds as reliable investment vehicles, making them the preferred choice for investors looking to plan important life goals such as retirement, housing, children's education and long-term wealth creation," he maintained.

Retail investors have played a pivotal role in providing stability to capital markets and driving the mutual fund industry's growth.

TARIFFS

RIFFS

TARIFFS

'Women investors now account for over 25 per cent of individual investors and hold 33 per cent of the total AUM," the report noted.

ARIFFS

TARIFFS

India's tariffs are consistent with WTO (World Trade Organisation) rules. They are the result of a single undertaking at the WTO which all countries including the US have approved in 1995...Indian tariffs

MT up to February, registering a 30.16 per cent increase from 133.36 MT in the corresponding period last year.

21 Indian startups raise over \$105mn

New Delhi: About 21 Indian startups collectively raised approximately \$105.87 million this week, with securing funding across different stages. Among them, three startups raised funds at the growth stage, while 16 early-stage startups attracted investments. In the previous week, nearly 22 startups raised around \$184.4 million. On average, in the last eight weeks, startup funding has stood at approximately \$317.35 million per week, with around 28 deals taking place weekly. Bangalore emerged as the top city for startup funding, with nine deals taking place, followed by Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, and other cities. Among sectors, fintech led the funding race with four deals, followed by e-commerce, healthtech, spacetech, and gaming startups, which secured two deals each.

NCL sets production target of 139MT

New Delhi: Coal India arm Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL) expects to achieve the production target of 139 million tonnes for the current fiscal. In a statement, NCL said that till February the subsidiary produced 128.13 million tonnes and "we are hopeful that we will also achieve our annual target". The company's dispatch was 125.78 MT in the April-February period of the current fiscal. NCL's dispatch target for the current fiscal is 139 million tonnes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

week, analysts said.

weak due to escalating trade

tariff concerns and foreign fund

"Investors will be closely

watching key events, includ-

ing the tariff policy, and job-

less claims. In the near term.

market conditions are expect-

ed to remain weak, with a

outflows, experts noted.

as earnings improve from Q1 New Delhi, March 2: Equity FY26 and global trade policy markets will take cues from the uncertainties subside," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geoiit US tariff related developments. global trends and trading ac-Financial Services, said. tivity of foreign investors this

From macroeconomic space. announcement of HSBC manufacturing and services PMI data Markets may face volatile during the week would also be trends going ahead as investor sentiment continue to remain tracked by investors.

gradual recovery anticipated

The Indian economy grew by 6.2 per cent in the December quarter, recovering sequentially from seven-quarter lows, but the expansion came in lower than last year and at a time when it faces growing headwinds from the threat of a US tariff war.

GTRI said Sunday

It also said that negotiating a comprehensive free trade agreement with the US presents several challenges.

The US may push India to imposed and collected by the open government procurement government and paid by companies to bring foreign goods to American firms, reduce agricultural subsidies, weaken into the country patent protections by allow-"India's tariffs are consising evergreening, and remove

ARIFFS

tent with WTO (World Trade Organisation) rules. They are the result of a single undertaking at the WTO which all countries including the US have approved in 1995...Indian tariffs are WTO compliant. The Indian side needs to explain (this) to the US," the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

are WTO compliant. The Indian side needs to explain (this) to the US

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

The 166-member forum is the only international body that nations argue that the commitdeals with the rules of trade ments made under TRIPS and between nations

When the WTO was established in 1995, developed nations agreed to let developing countries retain higher tariffs in exchange for commitments on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), services trade liberalization, and agricultural rules that primarily favoured wealthier nations.

agriculture have disproportionately benefited developed countries, limiting their ability to industrialise. Trump while talking about India's high tariffs convenient ly forgets this," he added.

He also said that India's exports to America often have low local value addition and this must be considered when assessing trade balances between the two countries.

He said many developing

An upright and stable landing makes Firefly

first private outfit to put a spacecraft on the

moon without crashing or falling over. Even

countries have faltered, with only five claiming

success: Russia, the US, China, India and Japan

- a startup founded a decade ago - the

Flocking to space: US firm Firefly scores first moon landing

Private lunar lander Blue Ghost aces moon touchdown with special delivery for NASA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cape Canaveral, March 2: A private lunar lander carrying a drill, vacuum and other experiments for NASA touched down on the moon Sunday, the latest in a string of companies looking to kickstart business on Earth's celestial neighbour ahead of astronaut missions.

Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost lander descended from lunar orbit on autopilot, aiming for the slopes of an ancient volcanic dome in an impact basin on the moon's northeastern edge of the near side

Confirmation of successful

touchdown came from the com-

pany's Mission Control outside

Austin, Texas, following the ac-

tion some 225,000 miles (360,000

We're on the moon," Firefly's

"You all stuck the landing.

Will Coogan, chief engineer for the lander, reported.

A half hour after landing, Blue Ghost started to send back pictures from the surface, the first one a selfie somewhat obscured by the sun's glare. The second shot included the home planet, a blue dot glimmering in the blackness of space.

Two other companies' landers are hot on Blue Ghost's heels, with the next one expected to join it on the moon later this week

Blue Ghost — named after a rare US species of fireflies had its size and shape going for it. The squat four-legged lander stands 6-foot-6 (2 metres) tall and 11 feet (3.5 metres) wide, providing extra stability,

according to the company. Launched in mid-January from Florida, the lander carried 10 experiments to the moon for



NASA. The space agency paid \$101 million for the delivery, plus \$44 million for the science and tech on board.

It's the third mission under NASA's commercial lunar delivery programme, intended to ignite a lunar economy of competing private businesses while scouting around before astronauts show up later this

On its way to the moon, Blue Ghost beamed back exquisite pictures of the home planet. The lander continued to stun once in orbit around the moon, with detailed shots of the moon's gray pockmarked surface.

Another lander — a tall and skinny 15-footer (4 metres tall) built and operated by Houston-based Intuitive Machines - is due to land on the moon Thursday. It's aiming for the bottom of the moon, just 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the south pole. That's closer to the pole than the company got last year with its first lander, which broke a leg and tipped over.

Despite the tumble, Intuitive Machines' lander put the US back on the moon for the first time since NASA astronauts closed out the Apollo programme in 1972.

A third lander from the Japanese company ispace is still three months from landing. It shared a rocket ride with Blue Ghost from Cape Canaveral January 15, taking a longer, windier route. Like Intuitive Machines, ispace is also attempting to land on the moon for the second time. Its first lander crashed in 2023.

The moon is littered with wreckage not only from ispace, but dozens of other failed attempts over the decades.





kilometers) away.







SPORTS

India Spin their way to win Yuki wins maiden ATP 500 doubles title

Shreyas fifty, Varun's fifer help Men in Blue beat New Zealand by 44 runs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, March 2: Shreyas Iyer's pressure-defying fifty and Varun Chakravarthy's spin masterclass helped India script a 44-run win over New Zealand here Sunday to top Group A, setting up the semifinal against Australia in the Champions Trophy.

OrissaPOS

MONDAY | MARCH 3, 2025 | BHUBANESWAR

Iyer made a composed 79 off 98 balls under pressure but New Zealand, led by pacer Mark Henry (5/42), managed to stifle India to an under-par 249 for nine

Chasing 250 was not a tall order for New Zealand's capable batting unit but they struggled against India's spin quartet led by Chakravarthy (5/42) to be all out for 205 in 45.3 overs. Kane Williamson's





gritty 81 went in vain. India will face Australia,

who finished second in Group B, in the first semifinal here Tuesday while the Kiwis play South Africa in the other semifinal in Lahore Wednesday. As they have been doing

throughout this tournament, the Indian spinners placed efficiency ahead of wizardry, and bowled in a manner suited to the conditions

Ravindra Jadeja found massive turn off the pitch but the New Zealand batters were done in by the effort from Chakravarthy who relentlessly targeted the stumps.

Spinners took over once Hardik Pandya got rid of Rachin Ravindra early

who Williamson, was dropped on 17 by stumper KL Rahul off Axar Patel, played

As table toppers, India will face Australia in the first semifinal Tuesday while New Zealand will play South Africa in Lahore Wednesday

a refined innings full of placements and elegance, but there hardly was any support for him from the other end.

There was a 44-run alliance between him and Daryl Mitchell for third wicket, but just as it was blooming Kuldeep Yadav trapped the latter in front.

They lost Tom Latham (14), Glenn Phillips (12) and Michael Bracewell (2) in quick succession, however, William-

son remained unruffled by the rumblings.

He used soft hands for deft placement of balls through the gaps, but two lofted cover drives off Jadeja for fours adorned his innings like bright diamonds.

But Axar deceived an oncharge Williamson with a slightly fuller and slanted delivery, and Rahul just had to remove the bails from the stumps. The dismissal effectively

sealed the match in favour of India

Earlier, Iyer shared a wellpaced 98 runs alliance with Axar (42 off 61 balls) for the fourth wicket and Hardik (45 off 45) played a quick-fire innings towards the end to help India survive a top-order meltdown. It was a slightly different situation for Iver as in the last few

matches, the top three batters had given him the cushion of runs. It had enabled him to bat with some degree of freedom in those matches.

But here he had to build the innings from the scratch and he did that job with perfection while making fifty off 75 balls with a single off Ravindra The natural flair was on show on occasions as Iver once lofted pacer Will O'Rourke for a six over long on and Axar gave him excellent company on a rather slow pitch.

But Axar departed against the flow of the game when his attempt to scoop Ravindra over short fine leg ended in the hands of Williamson. A century was there for the taking for Iyer but a feeble pull off O'Rourke was gobbled by up Will Young inside the covers.

Rahul, who now bats at a rather inexplicable No 6 slot, looked promising while making 23 off 29 balls that contained a brilliant hit over long-on for a six off Ravindra.

But Latham latched on to a lovely catch behind the stumps off the edge off left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner, who once again came up with a good spell that contained a series of speed off balls at just over 70 kmph.

Those dismissals hurt India but Hardik, who produced some beefy hits, ensured that India reached near the 250-mark. Before Iyer's rescue act and Hardik's fire, India were tottering at 30 for 3 with skipper Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli getting out cheaply.

Brief Scores

India: 249 for 9 in 50 overs (Shreyas Iyer 79; Matt Henry 5/42). New Zealand 205 all out in 45.3 overs (Kane Williamson 81; Varun Chakravarthy 5/42).



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, March 2: India's Yuki Bhambri claimed his maiden ATP 500 men's doubles title after he and his Australian partner Alexei Popyrin staged a dramatic comeback to edge past world No 14 Harri Heliovaara of Finland and Great Britain's Henry Patten at the Dubai Tennis Championships here.

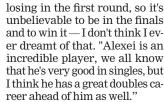
Having lost the first set, the duo saved four match points in the second set against Heliovaara and Patten to seal a 3-67-610-8 win in a 51-minute contest Saturday.

It was just about having fun on the court YUKI BHAMBRI PROFESSIONAL TENNIS PLAYER, INDIA

With this win, Bhambri is set to achieve a career-high ranking of No 40 in the PIF ATP Rankings Monday. Their title-winning run featured a string of impressive wins. The duo had a stunning run,

first eliminating World No 1. Marcelo Arevalo of El Salvador and Mate Pavic of Croatia 4-6 7-6(1) 10-3. In the quarterfinals, the Indo-Australian pair won 5-7 7-6(5) 10-5 against the British duo of Julian Cash and Lloyd Glasspool. Then in the last-four, they

ousted Jamie Murray of Great Britain and John Peers of Australia 5-4 4-6 10-7. "We went match by match. We were so close to



Greece-born Stephanos Tsit sipas claimed the men's singles title after beating Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3 6-3.

Bollipalli wins Chile Open doubles title

India's Rithvik Choudary Bollipalli and his Colombian partner Nicolas Barrientos stunned top seeds Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni of Argentina in straight sets to win the Chile Open tennis tournament in Santiago. The unseeded Indo-Colombian pair defeated Gonzalez and Molteni 6-3 6-2 in the final that lasted for a little over one hour Saturday, Bollipall and Barrientos dominated from the word go and served 11 aces in the match as against their opponent's just one en route to winning the ATP 250 tournament



National Level Wheelchair Cricket Tournament kicks off in Sundargarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, March 2: The National Level Wheelchair Cricket Tournament commenced with great enthusiasm at Sundargarh, Odisha, celebrating the resilience and sportsmanship of Divyang (differently-abled) athletes from



Vidarbha clinch third Ranji title

The team got hold of the trophy after earning the decisive first innings 37-run lead over Kerala



duced dominant performances throughout the Ranji Trophy season which was, for the first time in its 90-year history, split into two halves.

Vidarbha emerged as the best team across all the four groups in the league stage with six wins in seven matches giving them 40 points.

Unlike Kerala who also had

across the country. The event was officially inaugurated by Shri Manoj Satyawan Mahajan, IAS, Collector and District Magistrate of Sundargarh.

The tournament, organized to promote inclusivity in sports, witnessed the presence of several distinguished guests, including Shri Praveen Singh Sengar, Founder of Prayas India Charity Foundation: the President of Pravas India Charity Foundation Odisha Chapter; ASP Sundargarh; DEO Sundargarh; and the Sub-Collector of Sundargarh. Their support highlighted the significance of empowering Divyang athletes through such

national-level competitions.

The opening matches were intense, with players showcasing exceptional cricketing skills and determination. Maharashtra started strong with a commanding victory over Tamil Nadu, while Telangana secured a well-fought win against Gujarat. Haryana concluded the day by defeating Uttar Pradesh in an exciting contest.

The tournament has garnered immense enthusiasm, drawing attention from sports lovers, so-

cial organizations, and government officials alike. Pravas India Charity Foundation, which has been at the forefront of Divyang empowerment, played a key role in organizing the event, ensuring a platform for these talented athletes to shine. Speaking at the event,

Praveen Singh Sengar, Founder of Prayas India Charity Foundation, emphasized the importance of such tournaments in fostering confidence and opportunities for Divyang athletes.



Nagpur, March 2: A magnificent run in domestic cricket this season culminated in a third Ranii Trophy title for Vidarbha, who emerged champions on the basis of their first-innings lead in the summit clash, which ended in a draw at their home ground Sunday.

The fate of the contest was all but sealed on the third evening when Vidarbha edged ahead with a slender lead of 37 runs in the first innings, having dismissed a doughty Kerala

for 342 after putting on 379 runs batting first.

Kerala, the first-time finalists, fought hard but Vidarbha were rewarded for their incredible hard work and discipline throughout a season in which they not only clinched the Ranji Trophy but also ended as the runner-up in the 50-overs Vijay Hazare Trophy.

It is for the third time that Vidarbha have won the Ranji

Trophy title, having done so earlier with their two consecutive wins in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons.

Vidarbha's win now also makes them one of the strongest outfits in the Indian domestic cricket, for they had also finished as the runner-up in the Ranji Trophy last season.

The team under the captaincy of Akshav Wadkar and head coach Usman Ghani proluck on their side in the knock outs when they beat Jammu and Kashmir (quarterfinal) and Gujarat (semifinal) by barest of margins and progressed on basis of first-innings leads. Vidar bha grabbed outright wins.

Vidarbha crushed Tamil Nadu, last year's semifinalists by 198 runs in the quarterfinal and went on to pummel defending champions Mumbai by 80 runs in the semifinal.

Overall, Vidarbha won nine of the 10 matches they played in the Ranji Trophy this season, which reflects the dominance of the team in India's premier domestic competition

SHORT TAKES

Krishna breaks NR

New Delhi: India's Krishna Jayasankar, currently studying in the USA, broke the women's shot put indoor national record when she won the bronze medal at the Mountain West Indoor Track and Field Championship in Albuquerque with an effort of 16.03m. The 22-yearold Krishna, who was representing University of Nevada, bettered the previous Indian indoor national record of 15.54m set by Maharashtra's Poornarao Rane in 2023. Krishna's 16.03m effort Saturday came in the last round.

Aus focus on spin

Dubai: Australia had an intense three-hour practice session at the ICC Academy here Sunday afternoon with the focus firmly on their play against spin. While senior pros like Steve Smith and Travis Head had a light hit the youngsters went full throttle. The Australian team opted for seven ICC academy based net bowlers -- all spin ners including slow left-arm orthodox Harshit Seth, a 20 year old UAE player. besides two left arm Chinaman bowl ers, as many off-spinners and a leginner. Australia finished second ir Group B behind South Africa and both teams are camping in the UAE, waiting to know who their opponents will be in the semifinals. Australia will face table toppers from Group A, either India or New Zealand, in their last four clash.

India has strong case in 2036 Olympics bid: Coe Pragg outwits Keymer to join Aravindh in lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 2: International Olympic Committee (IOC) president's post contender Sebastian Coe feels India's bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games is a "strong case" but competition will be tough with several other countries throwing their hats in the ring.

India has already submitted a 'Letter of Intent' to host the 2036 Olympics and Paralympic Games to the IOC's Future Host Commission, taking the first concrete step in an ambitious plan after months of informal dialogue with the global sport's apex body.

"Well, you won't be surprised given my background to say that I'm obviously very happy

that India is committed to global sport and particularly the Olympic movement. I'm very happy to hear that. "And look, it will be very

competitive. It won't be the only bidder, but the case that it (In-



dia) can make is a very strong case," Coe told PTI in an exclusive interview.

Poland, Indonesia, South Africa, Qatar, Hungary, Turkey, Mexico and Egypt are among other countries which have expressed a desire to host the 2036 Olympics.

The 2036 Games host nation will not be known before 2026.

But it is certain that the host will be chosen during the presidency of the winner of the March 20 election of the new IOC chief. Coe, whose maternal grandfather is an Indian from Punjab, is considered the frontrunner among the seven candidates contesting for elections to succeed Thomas Bach

The 68-year-old Coe, a double Olympic 1500m gold medallist, also advised India to not end its ambition to organise the Olympics if it does not get the 2036 Games hosting rights.

"Plenty of cities have bid and lost and come back. Interestingly, when London won in 2005 (for the 2012 edition), it defeated Paris. We all have just been to the Paris Olympic Games (in 2024)," said the Briton, who is currently heading World Athletics. "Rio was one of the cities that didn't make it past the initial evaluation for the 2012 bid. And they had the Games immediately after Britain in 2016.

"So it is by no means the end of the story. And even the legacv from bidding is an extremely strong legacy.

More than 100 members of the IOC will vote March 20 in the Greek resort of Costa Navarino, where the 144th IOC Session will be held from March 18 to 21.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prague, March 2: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa scored his second victory on the trot, outwitting Vincent Keymer of Germany to join compatriot Aravindh Chithambaram at the top on three points after the end of the fourth round of the Prague Masters here.

Aravindh survived some initial hiccups before signing peace with Sam Shankland of the United States, while top seed Wei Yi of China finally found his form at the expense of local star David Navara.

Anish Giri of Netherlands played out his fourth draw in as many games with Gurel Ediz of Turkey, while Czech GM Nguyen Thai Dai Van also drew with Quang Leim Le of Vietnam in the other two games of the 10-player round-robin tournament.



With Praggnanadhaa and Aravindh in front, Shankland Keymer, Giri and Le share the third spot a full point behind and it looks like the race for the title will be between the two Indians only with five rounds still to come.

Almost a month back Key mer had beaten Praggnanand haa in the Tata Steel Masters and the Indian avenged his defeat fighting from what looked like a shaky French defense with black.

Keymer was caught off guard in the middlegame.

Praggnanandhaa went for the trade of queens and got his counter attack rolling.

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as IOC president.









