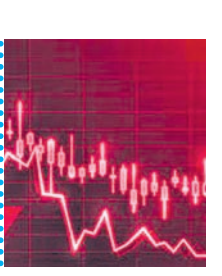




Triptii's heritage
Actor Triptii Dimri opens up about the enriching experiences of her childhood in the Himalayan foothills
LEISURE | P2



Trump triggers trade war
US President Donald Trump's new 25 per cent tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada take effect Tuesday
INTERNATIONAL | P10



Benchmarks bleed
Falling for the third straight day, benchmark BSE Sensex declines by 96 points to close below the 73,000-mark
BUSINESS | P11



OFC aim for play-offs
With their chances of grabbing a spot in the playoff on the line, Odissha FC take on Jamshedpur FC in a crucial match of the ISL
SPORTS | P12

Not enough judges in trial courts to hear POCSO cases, says SC

New Delhi, March 4: The Supreme Court Tuesday said there were not enough judges in trial courts in the country to implement its directions like setting up of a special court in each district to exclusively deal with sexual offences against children under the POCSO law.

A bench comprising Justices Bela M Trivedi and Prasanna B Varale was hearing a suo motu case of 2019 titled: "In Re Alarming Rise in the Number of Reported Child Rape Incidents."

The apex court in 2019 passed a slew of directions, including setting up of a centrally-funded designated court in each district with over 100 FIRs under the POCSO Act to deal exclusively with cases of sexual offences against children.

On Tuesday, Justice Trivedi said keeping in mind the vacancies in district courts, some directions remained unrealised.

"We do not have judges in district courts. Vacancies are lying unfilled for years together. We are not getting enough judges in the district judiciary," she said.

The judge gave Gujarat's example where she said there were not enough judges to deal with such cases. When a lawyer pointed to lack of infrastructure, the bench lamented the dearth of judges to use the infrastructure.

The bench observed other directions in the 2019 judgement seemed to have been complied with and the suo-motu case could be disposed of on the next hearing March 25.

The top court's 2019 directions also prescribed a short clip, intended to spread awareness on the prevention of child abuse and prosecution of crimes against children, to be screened in theatres and aired by television channels at regular intervals.

INDIA STORM INTO CHAMPIONS TROPHY FINAL



DECISIVE INNINGS: Virat Kohli plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy semi-final cricket match between India and Australia, in Dubai, UAE, Tuesday

Dubai, March 4: Virat Kohli did not finish the chase for once but his measured 84-run knock steered India into their fifth Champions Trophy final with a clinical four-wicket win over an under-strength and profligate Australia in the first last-four clash here Tuesday.

The Indian triumph ensures that the final of the eight-team competition will now be held here instead of Lahore, the original host of the marquee clash, as Rohit Sharma's men will not travel there owing to security concerns.

Player of the match Kohli (84, 98 balls, 5x4) was the fulcrum of Indian batting as they scaled down 265 in 48.1 overs after Steve Smith (73) and Alex Carey (61) led the Aussies to 264. Now, India will await the winner of the second semifinal between South Africa and New Zealand at Lahore on Wednesday.

Kohli had wonderful support from Shreyas Iyer (45) with whom he realised 91 runs for the third wicket, and steadied the ship after the early departures of skipper Rohit Sharma (28) and Shubman Gill (9).

Australia were weakened by the absence of some of their premier stars, but India had not beaten them in the knockouts of an ICC tournament since the quarter-final of the 2011 World Cup.

However, Kohli was determined to correct that anomaly. The pitch used for the semifinal was fresh but much smoother than the ones on which the previous matches were played.

Divide over delimitation

The Union government's proposed delimitation exercise for redrawing parliamentary constituencies has raised the hackles of political leaders across southern states, virtually creating a divide between north and south. Many political parties of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana see this exercise as an attempt to subvert their voices by reducing their representation in the Parliament. Their argument is that they are being punished in terms of reduced seats in the Parliament since the southern states have controlled their population, an indication of their relative prosperity and high literacy levels as compared to the northern states. The southern states contend that population alone should not be a criteria to conduct the delimitation exercise

New Delhi, March 4: India's wealthy southern states are up in arms against a proposal by the Centre to redraw boundaries of parliamentary constituencies, arguing it will result in less representation for them compared to the poorer, more populous northern states.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

AT LOGGERHEADS

- The Stalin-led Tamil Nadu government has been consistent in highlighting its opposition to the Centre over many issues
- Apart from the delimitation exercise, opposition to the National Education Policy, NEET, and alleged Hindi imposition are the other issues

population and implementing reforms," Reddy said. "The census will show the disparity and a new delimitation plan must be framed."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said the southern states will not lose representation in the delimitation process.

"The Modi government has made it clear that after delimitation, on pro rata basis, not a single seat will be reduced in any southern state," he said last week. But Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on X that Shah's comments were "not credible."

Many southern leaders were expected to attend Wednesday's meeting called by Stalin. The BJP has said it will not attend.

Stalin will chair the all-party meeting, which is likely to take on the Centre over the issue. For the DMK regime, which has been at loggerheads with the Centre over several issues including non-release of education funds by the Union government, the proposed delimitation exercise has become a fresh point of contention.

He said a new ratio for drawing up constitutional boundaries must be done after a census.

"We (southern states) should not be punished for controlling

Online game addict kills parents, sister

Paradip, March 4: A 21-year-old college student bludgeoned his parents and sister to death in Jagatsinghpur district Tuesday morning as they were opposed to his addiction to online games, police said.

The incident took place in Jayabada Sethi Sahi area under the Jagatsinghpur police station limits around 3am as the student used stones or any other hard objects to smash the heads of his father, mother and sister, Superintendent of Police Bhawani Sankar Udgata said.

A preliminary investigation revealed that accused Surjyakant Sethy was annoyed with his parents and sister for "opposing him playing online games on his mobile phone," Jagatsinghpur police station inspector-in-charge Prabhassahu said.

The deceased were identified as Prasant Sethy alias Kalia, 65, his wife Kanaklata, 62, and daughter Rosalin, 25.

"After the incident, Surjyakant Sethy hid near the village, and later he was arrested," the SP said.

Udgata said the youth was suspected to have a mental health issue.

Local MLA Amarendra Das said the family members had once come to him over some land dispute.

One of the villagers, who informed the police about the ghastly incident, told media that Surjyakant Tuesday came to his house and informed him about killing his parents and sister. The villagers rushed to his house where the bodies of

Denied ₹10 for gutkha, man beheads father

BARIPADA: A 40-year-old man in Mayurbhanj district beheaded his father Tuesday after he refused to give him ₹10 to buy gutkha, police said. The accused went to a police station carrying the severed head to surrender himself, a senior officer said. "The man beheaded his 70-year-old father with a sharp-edged weapon and surrendered at Chandua police station along with the severed head. His mother fled the spot. The murder took place following a heated exchange of words between the accused and his parents," he said. The deceased was identified as Baidhar Singh. Baripada Sub-Divisional Police Officer Pravat Mallick said, "The murder occurred over a petty issue. The accused became angry when his father refused to pay ₹10 for gutkha." The police reached the village along with a forensic team, and an investigation is underway, the officer said.

the deceased were found in a pool of blood.

A police team, led by the SP, and a forensic team reached the spot and started an investigation, another officer said.

The bodies were sent for post-mortem, he added.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

More focus on wildlife, sir? But we already have a jungle raj here

Coke to lipsticks: Key ingredient smuggled from Sudan

London, March 4: Gum arabic, a vital ingredient used in everything from Coca-Cola to M&M's confectionaries, is increasingly being trafficked from rebel-held areas of war-torn Sudan, traders and industry sources say, complicating Western companies' efforts to insulate their supply chains from the conflict.

Sudan produces around 80% of the world's gum arabic, a natural substance harvested from acacia trees that's widely used to mix, stabilise and thicken ingredients in mass-market products including L'Oreal lipsticks and Nestle petfood.

The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), at war since April 2023 with Sudan's national army, seized control late last year of the main gum-harvesting regions of Kordofan and

without proper certification, according to conversations with eight producers and buyers who are directly involved in gum arabic trading or based in Sudan.

The gum is also exported through informal border markets, two traders told Reuters.

Asked for comment, a RSF representative said that the force had protected the gum arabic trade and only collected small fees, adding that talk of any lawbreaking was propaganda against the paramilitary group. Last month, the RSF signed a charter with allied groups establishing a parallel government in the parts of Sudan it controls.

In recent months, traders in countries with lower-gum arabic production than Sudan, such as Chad and Senegal, or which barely exported it before the war, like Egypt

and South Sudan, have begun to aggressively offer the commodity at cheap prices and without proof it is conflict-free, two buyers who have been approached by traders told Reuters.

While the acacia trees that yield gum arabic grow across the Africa's arid Sahel region-known as the 'gum belt' - Sudan has become by far the world's biggest exporter due to its extensive groves.

Herve Canevet, Global Marketing Specialist at Singapore-based supplier of specialty food ingredients Eco-Agri, said it was often difficult to determine where gum supplies are coming from as many traders would not say if their product has been smuggled.

"Today, the gum in Sudan, I would say all of it is smuggled, because there's no real authority in the country," he said.

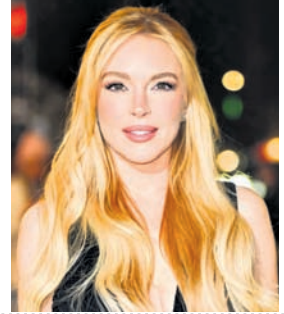


A farmer carries collected gum arabic from an acacia tree in western Sudan



A police team conducts probe at the victims' house, Tuesday; (inset) accused Surjyakant Sethy in police custody

leisure



LOHAN: FREAKIER FRIDAY WILL BE EVERYTHING THE FANS WANT

Hollywood actress Lindsay Lohan has promised that *Freakier Friday* will be everything that the fans want ahead of its release later this year. Lohan played the role of Anna Coleman in the 2003 body swap comedy and now she has reunited with her on-screen mother Jamie Lee Curtis for the sequel.

SHARON STONE EMBRACES CHANGES IN HER BODY

Hollywood actress Sharon Stone has shared her perspective on aging, saying that she embraces the changes in her body and feels the importance of nurturing herself. "A lot of people give up as they get older, but I don't," the *Basic Instinct* actress told *The Times*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

The boredom of your monotonous life will now begin to tell on you. A change of trappings is what you probably have on mind. Money matters are not a big deal, and a little quick change may result in an evening get-together. Ganesha says you will like to flaunt your pretty and peaceful ambience.

TAURUS

Today you are likely to reach out for things that are beyond your reach and capabilities. Ganesha, nevertheless, assures that you will succeed in attaining your objectives through sheer force of your self confidence and self conviction. The first half of the day will provide you lots of love and affection of elders and superiors. You are likely to devote the evening to making yourself look smart good and feel great. A visit to a beauty parlour cannot be ruled out.

GEMINI

You will be bound by the bonds of love with your friends today. Deep introspection will provide the much-needed balm to your fragile state of mind. You need to keep your temper in check, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Today, you may get to spend a wonderful time with your loved ones, foresees Ganesha. Besides pleasure, the day will also fare well for business. As an entrepreneur, you may be able to see important deals and ventures coming through. You may go on a tour for business purposes in the later half of the day. At work, you will be at the top of your game.

LEO

You are advised against being too emotional today. You will be able to excel in all spheres of your life today owing to your desire to change your attitude towards life. There is a possibility of re-decorating or renovating your house today. All in all, a progressive day awaits, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

The way you feel today will bring about many changes in your behaviour, says Ganesha. You will probably make some choices that will involve some high expenditure. In the afternoon, you may entertain relatives and friends at home, says Ganesha.

LIBRA

Settle in soon, because you have a long day ahead. There is every possibility that you shall remain very busy for most part of the day, predicts Ganesha. Don't be surprised if you can't seem to find the time or the appetite even for a sluggish lunch — it is one of the drawbacks of a hectic schedule. But rest assured, your craving and hankering shall be back in time for a fine and scrumptious dinner.

SCORPIO

Ganesha foresees that you may not be at the best of your health as agitation and irritation create pressure on your physical being. Watch your temper and tongue, or a critical situation may take an ugly turn. Keep away from unnecessary discussion with peers or colleagues.

SAGITTARIUS

The day has to offer you a good mixture of work and fun, says Ganesha. Feeling protective about your loved ones, you are ready to fulfil all their needs and demands. An action-packed day at office with meetings lined-up for you. This forces you to unwind in a luxurious way as you plan a family outing or a quick visit to salon for relaxation.

CAPRICORN

You will perform a balancing act today. On one hand you'll be working very hard to meet your targets, while on the other hand, you will take some time out for your hobbies. Your boss and team-members will shower praises on you. But, all that glitters is not gold, warns Ganesha. Do not take their words on the face value, as you may not be understanding the hidden meaning.

AQUARIUS

You are not at a laid back person. You like to be active and be a part of the action happening all around. Now is your time! Take an initiative and grab the opportunity, after all, early bird catches the worm. Till the end of the first half of the day, you will be in a jovial mood. But, the mounting pressure of work may become difficult to handle.

PISCES

Today you will find yourself caught in two minds. As a result of which, you will find yourself unable to take a firm decision. Put off important decisions until you find yourself in a better frame of mind, says Ganesha. Post afternoon should see you bonding with old friends and you will begin to see old relationships in a new light.

Triptii shares her Himalayan roots

Mumbai: Actress Triptii Dimri opened up about her deep connection to her Pahadi roots, offering a glimpse into the simple yet enriching experiences of her childhood in the Himalayan foothills.

In a recent interview with Cosmo India, Triptii reflected on her upbringing and said, "We would be out playing all day, from six in the morning to 11 at night. I would play with the village kids, drink water straight from the stream, and watch my mother clean the house with geeli mitti (wet mud). I remember I would sit around and just take in the earthy smell, which is like when you mix wood and rain together, and sometimes, I would eat that too."

These vivid memories highlight the unpretentious and nature-centric lifestyle of her community, where daily activities were intertwined with the natural environment.

Delving deeper into the essence of her Pahadi identity, Triptii remarked, "Being pahadi is about simplicity and being close to nature. It's something that keeps you grounded even when life gets overwhelming, or when you feel like an outsider in a big city. You still carry that rawness which makes you special."

This perspective sheds light on how her heritage has played a pivotal role in shaping her resilience and authenticity, especially as she navigates the complexities of urban life and the entertainment industry.



Kubbra's confession

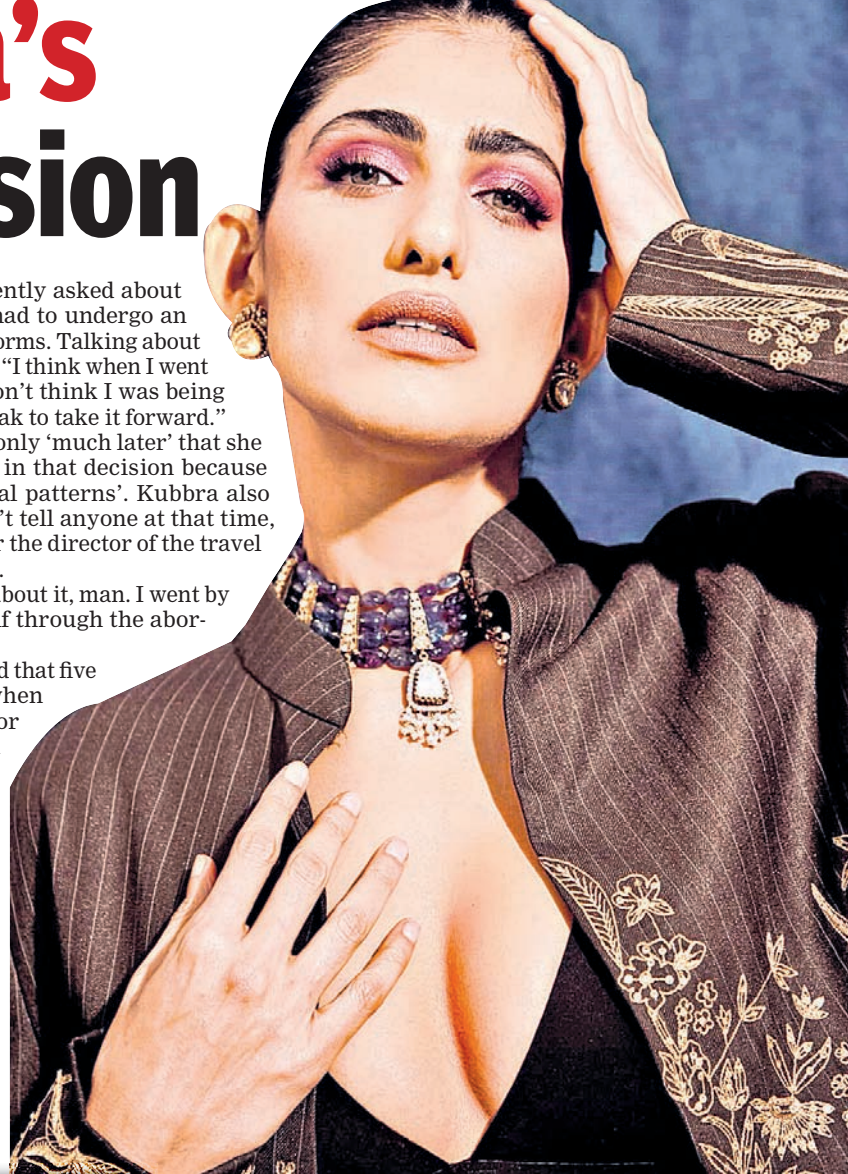
Mumbai: Actor Kubbra Sait was recently asked about the strength she must have had to undergo an abortion and defy societal norms. Talking about that phase, the actress said, "I think when I went through the abortion, I don't think I was being strong at all. I was too weak to take it forward."

She admitted that it's only 'much later' that she felt there was strength in that decision because she broke 'stereotypical patterns'. Kubbra also revealed that she didn't tell anyone at that time, neither her friends nor the director of the travel show she was hosting.

"And no one knew about it, man. I went by myself and got myself through the abortion," she said.

Kubbra also revealed that five or six years later, when she was shooting for her show, she would get 'hot and sick' and 'extremely cranky' because she was 'bleeding heavily'. And she still didn't share what she was going through with those around her. Only when she wrote it in her book, *Open Book: Not Quite a Memoir (2022)*, did she realise she needed to share the story and be 'kind' about the decisions she has made in life.

Kubbra was last seen in *Deva*, where Shahid Kapoor and Pooja Hegde were in lead roles.



India's first female superstar quit movies at 26, left country

Mumbai: The history of Indian cinema began in the early 1910s when Dadasaheb Phalke pioneered motion pictures. But it was the advent of the talkies created a new phenomenon - the cine icons. Today, we call them superstars. KL Saigal, Karan Dewan, and Ashok Kumar were among the first screen icons in Indian cinema. And their counterpart was a teenager who ruled the screens, setting records that were broken only eight decades later.



'JUBILEE GIRL' MUMTAZ SHANTI

Mumtaz Shanti was one of the earliest successful female stars in what would become Bollywood. Mumtaz began her career as a child artist in Punjabi films in 1937, before moving to lead roles with

Mangti in 1942. In the same year, she made her Hindi debut as a lead star with *Basant*. She was 16 years old at the

time. *Basant* was a roaring success, running in theatres for 76 weeks and becoming the highest-grossing Indian film of the year. The following year, Mumtaz again tasted success with *Kismet*, the first Indian film to earn Rs 1 crore. All of 17, Mumtaz was now called the 'Jubilee Girl' as all her four releases had been jubilee hits.

Over the next few years, Mumtaz appeared in more hits like *Ghar Ki Izzat* (1948) and *Aahuti* (1950). She worked with all the top stars of the time and even played a senior lead to 'younger' stars like Dilip Kumar.

In the late 40s, Mumtaz married Wali Sahab, a filmmaker. And even though she continued acting after that, family

soon became her priority. In 1952, the couple decided to move to Pakistan and with this, Mumtaz's fledgling movie career came to an end.

The actor was only 26 at the time. She lived in Lahore for the remainder of her life, where she died in 1989, at the age of 63.

Many of the records set by her films lasted decades. For instance, *Kismet* ran in one theatre for three years, a record that was only broken in 1978 by *Sholay* and eventually by *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*. Two of her films - *Basant* and *Kismet* - remained in the most-watched Indian films' top 50 list till 2021, almost eight decades after release.

Warner's acting debut in India

Chennai: Australian cricketer David Warner has done a cameo in director Venky Kudumula's upcoming Telugu action entertainer *Robinhood*, featuring actor Nithin in the lead, one of the film's producers Y Ravi Shankar has now disclosed.

During a promotional event for the film *Kingston*, featuring G V Prakash in the lead, the producer was asked for updates on his film *Robinhood* by the anchor.

Responding to her request, he said Australian cricketer David Warner had done a cameo in the film much to the delight of fans and film buffs. The producer immediately apologised to director Venky Kudumula for having the information without his permission.

"We are very happy to have launched David Warner in India with our *Robinhood*," he said.

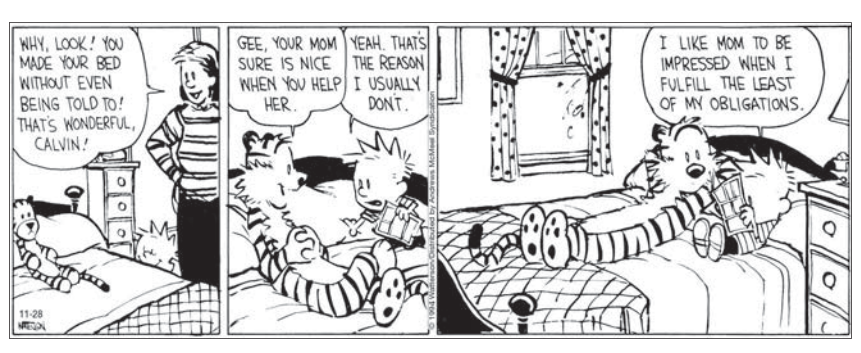
The release of the film, which was originally scheduled to hit screens last year, has now been pushed to March 28 this year. Produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar, *Robinhood* has Chery as its CEO and Hari Tummala as its Executive producer. It has been directed by Venky Kudumula and features Nithin and Sree Leela in the lead.



PEANUTS



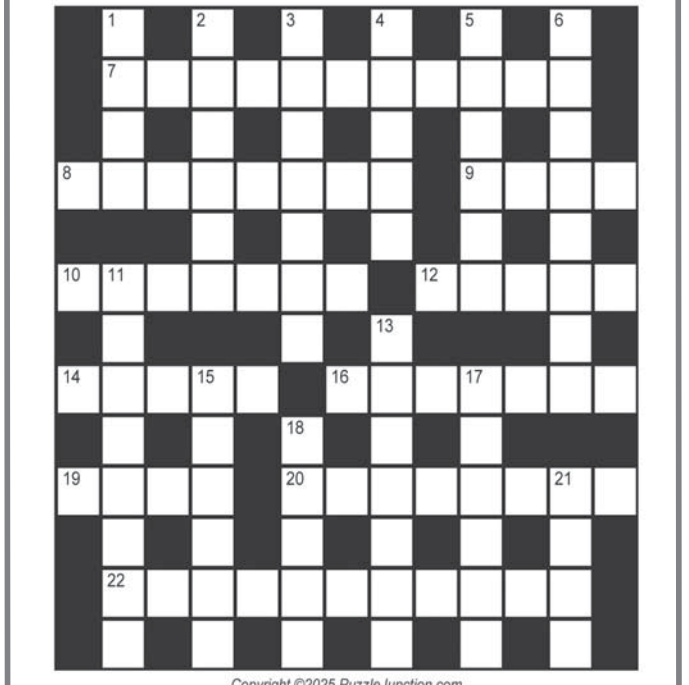
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



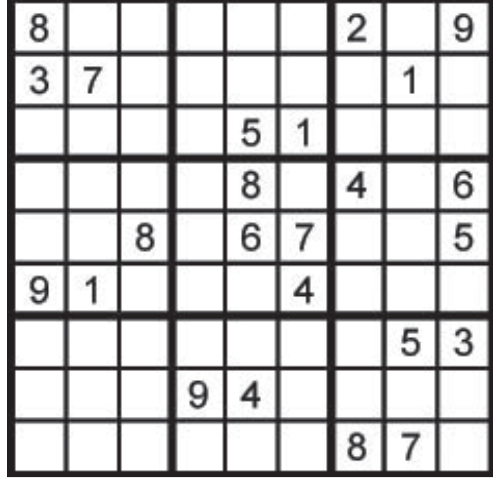
CROSSWORD



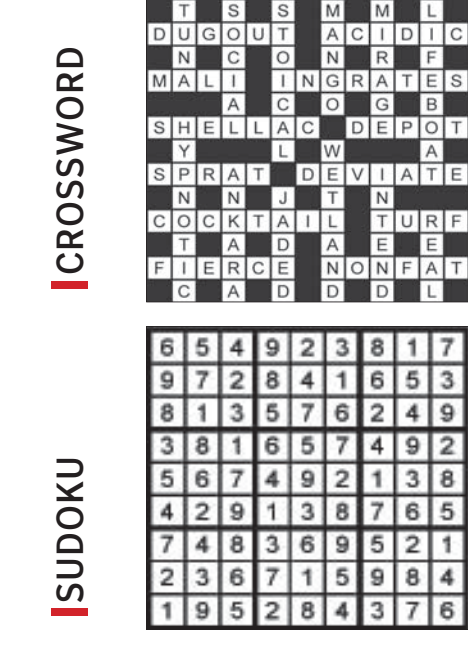
- Across**
- 7 Horse race conclusion, at times (5,6)
 - 8 Winter fight, maybe
 - 9 Fax button
 - 10 Médoc or Rioja, e.g. (3,4)
 - 12 Small vascular growth
 - 14 Salon activity
 - 16 Collision on the highway (5-2)
 - 19 Banana skin
 - 20 Like the desert floor
 - 22 Studio couch
- Down**
- 1 Sign in a store window
 - 2 Conference
 - 3 Lettuce type
 - 4 Goofy
 - 5 Debacle
 - 6 Words to a life saver (5,3)
 - 11 Proof
 - 13 Hotel's free offering
 - 15 Type of solution
 - 17 Moth-eaten
 - 18 Theatre employee
 - 21 Split personalities?

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

STATE ON THE CUSP OF BECOMING A SOLAR HUB

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 4: With the vagaries of global warming and climate change have already started taking toll on every sphere of life including health, environment, crop yield and quality of life, transition from conventional energy to renewable energy has become the need of the hour. Since solar energy is gaining popularity because of its cost-effectiveness, Odisha with its long coastline and abundant solar resources is fast emerging as a major player in India's solar energy sector. Several companies have already set up their solar plants in the eastern state while some others are in the fray, providing the much-needed impetus to employment generation and environment conservation.

Reports said in order to meet its renewable energy goals, Odisha aims to add 10.95 (giga watt) GW renewable energy by 2030, with 7.5GW coming from solar projects. Districts like Bolangir, Ganjam and Angul are becoming hotspots for solar energy equipment manufacturing with several projects already in operation and some others are in progress.

Prominent solar companies such as Welspun New Energy, Jakson Engineers, Saatvik Solar, and Inox Solar are setting up plants in Ganjam, Dhenkanal and Khurda districts for production of solar equipment like solar panels, inverters, solar cells, batteries and solar chimneys.

The amount of sunlight that strikes the earth's surface in an hour and a half is enough to handle the entire world's energy consumption for a full year. Solar technologies convert sunlight into electrical energy either through photovoltaic (PV) panels or through mirrors that concentrate solar radiation. This energy can be used to generate electricity or be stored in inverters or batteries.

According to Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, the state has attracted investment proposals worth ₹4.33 lakh crore in renewable energy sector, including ₹2,151 crore (approx) pertaining to solar power, during 'Utkarsh Odisha - Make



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The state has attracted investment proposals worth ₹4.33 lakh crore in renewable energy sector, including ₹2,151 crore in solar power

Solar power currently accounts for 21% (616.98 MW) of Odisha's total renewable energy capacity of 2,938 MW

Districts like Bolangir, Ganjam and Angul are becoming hotspots for solar energy equipment manufacturing

The Union and state governments are providing subsidies to the tune of ₹78,000 and ₹60,000, respectively for installation of 3-kw solar system - covering more than 80% of the total cost

In Odisha Conclave 2025'. This is expected to provide a significant boost to the state's industrial but low-carbon expansion.

Energy department Principal Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev said, "Odisha is on the cusp of a big energy transition. The demand for clean and affordable energy has never been more important to address the global challenge of climate change."

Solar power currently accounts for 21 per cent (616.98 MW) of Odisha's total renewable energy capacity of 2,938 MW, including hydro. This includes 508 MW of ground-mounted, 58 MW of rooftop, and 42 MW of off-grid solar capacity.

The state's Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR), 2022 offers a wide range of incentives for solar manufacturers, such as exemptions on electricity duty, capital investment subsidies, and reduction in stamp duty. Odisha's solar energy potential is supported by more than 300 sunny days annually and solar radiation of 5.3 kWh per square metre on an average.

According to a study conducted by International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology (iFoREST), Odisha currently faces a significant challenge in managing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, estimated at 305 million metric tonnes (MMT) CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) in 2022-23 - three times the national average. Independent studies indicate that without intervention, emissions could rise by 118 per cent in a usual scenario and 150 per cent in a high growth scenario. However, the state could limit this increase to 60 per cent above current levels, with focused efforts on a green economy, the study mentioned.

Mandvi Singh, programme director of iFoREST, stated that India's solar growth is expanding beyond traditional geographies, and Odisha is well-positioned to utilise the growth opportunity. The state has the potential to be a leader in the eastern region, with over 200 GW of untapped potential. Strategic investments in floating, rooftop and agrivoltaic solar can help drive economic growth in the state while reducing emissions.

Saatvik Solar's senior manager, Marketing, Vineet Kumar said, "Odisha has the potential to create an integrated renewable energy ecosystem from the ground up, spanning the entire value chain from wafers to modules." The firm is investing ₹1,366.56 crore for setting up a 2.5-GW per annum solar cell manufacturing facility at Gopalpur in Ganjam district.

Kumar added that the state's industrial infrastructure, ports and availability of skilled workforce make it an ideal location for large-scale solar manufacturing. Its extensive coastline has substantial opportunities for solar projects.

Stating that the state's industrial policy is promising, MD of Crux Power Ltd Chandrasekhar Mishra said growth of local solar industry will be crucial for long-term sustainability.

The state's power consumers are now interested in installing solar panels on rooftops as both the Central and state governments are providing subsidy for the purpose.

Jayant Sahu of Solar Sack said, "The Union and state governments are providing subsidies to the tune of ₹78,000 and ₹60,000, respectively for installation of 3-kw solar system - covering more than 80 per cent of the total cost. Since a consumer is generating electricity, he/she can save on the monthly power bills. Over time, this would offset the initial installation costs, and after some years, the user would get free electricity. The savings would continue as long as the solar panels remain functional."

Sumanta Pradhan, state head of V Guard, which sells off-grid solar panels under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, said that solar energy will help reduce electricity bills upto 80 per cent.

Ranjit Patra, an expert on solar power, said that Odisha has a huge potential for all commercial, residential, industrial and large-scale projects. With subsidy from state and Centre, individuals can get the return on investment (ROI) in five years.

Urban planner and solar user Piyush Ranjan Rout opined that Odisha, with its stable political climate and robust industrial policies, is well-positioned to cater to eastern India's solar market. The state will play a critical role in India's renewable energy goals.

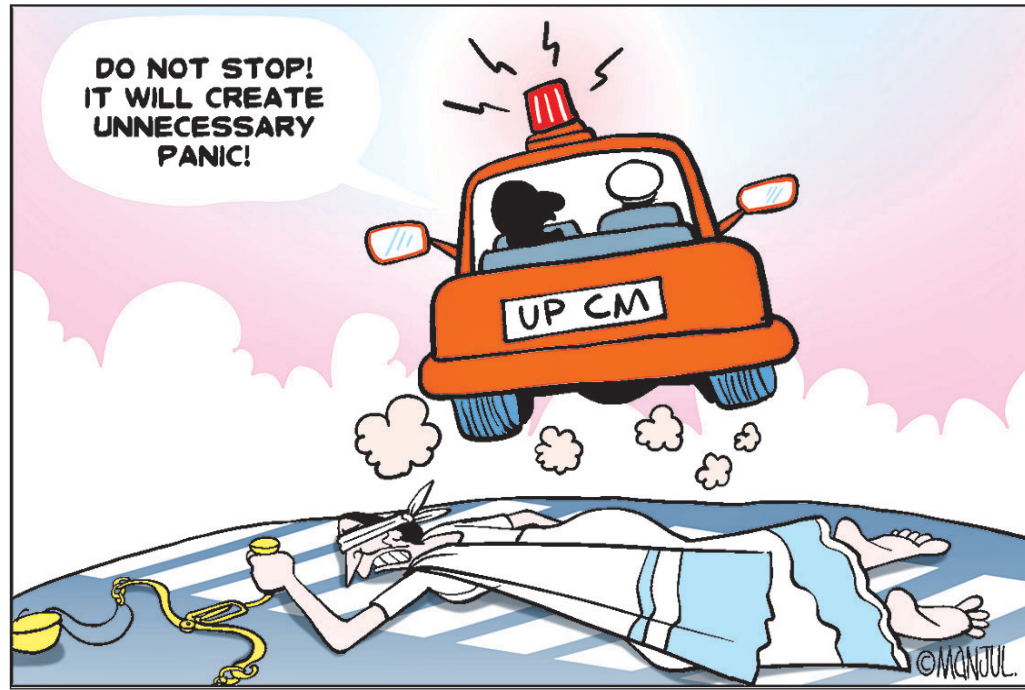
Earlier, Debi Prasad Malla, 29, Akash Mohapatra, 27, Ramakanta Sahoo, 20, Sagar Samal, 24, Biren Rout, 20, and

CIVIC AFFAIRS

Cuttack Municipal Corporation council meeting in progress in the Silver City, Tuesday



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



CM: ₹4L ex gratia for kin of 2 job aspirants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 4: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday announced ex gratia assistance of ₹4 lakh each for the kin of two government job aspirants who died during physical tests.

The money would be released from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF), an official statement said. The two job aspirants lost their lives while participating in physical tests conducted by the Odisha

The two job aspirants lost their lives while participating in physical tests conducted by the Odisha Staff Selection Commission

Staff Selection Commission (OSSC), officials said.

The physical tests were being conducted for the recruit-

ment of forest guards, foresters, and livestock inspectors, they said.

The deceased were identified as Byomakesh Nayak of Keonjhar district and Prabin Kumar Panda from Rourkela in Sundargarh district.

Prabin was appearing in the test for recruitment for the posts of forest guard and forester. During the 25-km run from Bhabanipur to Baragada, he collapsed and later died at a hospital, they added.

2 interstate ATM burglars nabbed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 4: A few days after arresting six members of an interstate burglars' gang for uprooting an ATM in Sriram Nagar area here and decamping with the machine containing ₹21.77 lakh cash January 24, the twin city Commissioner Police Tuesday arrested two more members of the notorious gang in connection with the heist.

Briefing media, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Pinak Mishra said ₹38,000 in cash and two mobile phones were recovered from the possession of A Rustom, 36, of Uttar Pradesh, and Sk Mijanur Rahman, 45, of West Bengal. Rustom was arrested from Ghaziabad in UP, while Rahman was apprehended from West Bengal.

Earlier, Debi Prasad Malla, 29, Akash Mohapatra, 27, Ramakanta Sahoo, 20, Sagar Samal, 24, Biren Rout, 20, and

Akash Mukherji, 23, have been arrested March 1 in connection with the incident and ₹1.6 lakh in cash, two bikes and six mobile phones were recovered from them, the DCP said.

According to the DCP, the planning for the theft began in 2022 when Rahman met Malla, the mastermind, at Jharpada jail. "While Rahman was serving jail term for an ATM heist in Dhauri area, Malla was in jail for a murder under Airfield police station limits," Mishra said, adding that when the two were out on interim bail, they managed to rope in others.

"With technical examination, CCTV analysis and local sources, police found clues regarding the involvement of local criminals and outsiders in this case. Subsequently, different teams were formed and raids were conducted inside and outside the state and the suspects were apprehended," he said.

Man held for raping minor

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, March 4: A 62-year-old man was arrested on charges of raping a four-year-old girl under Kendrapara Sadar police limits here, police said Tuesday.

Briefing media, Kendrapara Sadar inspector-in-charge (IIC) Bimal Mallick said the victim's family approached them Monday night alleging that their four-year-old daughter was playing near the house when Pravakar Mallick took her to a lonely place and raped her.

Acting on the complaint, Kendrapara Sadar police registered a case under various Sections, including 65 of BNS and 4 of the POCSO Act, and arrested the accused. The accused was produced before the local court which remanded him into jail custody.

HOLI AHEAD: A street vendor arranges Holi articles at his makeshift shop in Choudhury Bazar area of Cuttack, Tuesday, as the state gears up to celebrate the festival of colours
PIC: RAKISHORE MOHANTY

Stop illegal construction: Centre to OCZMA

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Puri, March 4: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), 2022 has directed the Odisha Coastal Zone Management Authority (OCZMA) to halt ongoing unauthorised constructions in Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) of Puri.

In a letter, the ministry instructed the OCZMA to halt illegal constructions, take immediate action against the

violators and submit an action taken report.

The Centre's move came in response to a petition filed by Beach Protection Council of Odisha president Jagannath Bastia. The petitioner alleged that around 35 unauthorised multi-storey hotels and commercial buildings were being constructed in Puri's CRZ in violation of CRZ norms.

Bastia said that despite bringing these blatant viola-

tions to the attention of the relevant state authorities, little action has been taken to stop the illegal constructions or initiate legal proceedings against the violators.

He alleged that empowered regulatory bodies, including the PKDA and Puri Municipality, have remained mysteriously silent on the issue. Their inaction has emboldened violators to proceed with construction in prohibited coastal areas.



No school, college holiday today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 4: A day after announcing that March 5 would be observed as the birth anniversary of former CM Biju Patnaik and not as Panchayati Raj Diwas, the state government Tuesday said that all schools and colleges in Odisha will remain open on the day.

In a letter, School and Mass Education department Additional Secretary Durga Prasad Mohapatra directed all the district education officers to ensure schools are open and classes are conducted Wednesday. Similarly, Higher Education department Joint Secretary Mousumi Nayak directed all higher educational institutes to remain open and conduct classes March 5.

Notably, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) Monday said that Panchayati Raj Diwas will be observed April 24 instead of March 5. While Odisha observed Panchayati Raj Diwas March 5 since the 1990s to coincide with Biju Patnaik's birthday, the national Panchayati Raj Diwas is celebrated April 24.

"To overcome the inconsistency at the national and state levels in the celebration of Panchayati Raj Diwas, the state government has decided to no longer celebrate March 5 as Panchayati Raj Diwas in Odisha and will instead celebrate it April 24," the CMO said.

The state government also decided to observe Public Service Day April 24.

Universities foundation of Viksit Odisha: Governor

Governor Kambhampati highlights the crucial role of universities in driving Odisha's academic excellence, innovation, and overall development



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 4: Our universities are the foundation of Viksit Odisha and Viksit Bharat. As academic leaders, you have the responsibility to foster excellence, drive reforms, and ensure our institutions remain dynamic centers of knowledge, Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati said Tuesday.

Addressing vice-chancellors at a conference at Raj Bhavan, the Governor highlighted the importance of higher education in state's development. The event brought together Deputy Chief Minister, Ministers, Secretaries of various departments, and senior university officials to discuss key academic priorities.

The Governor underscored the effective implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, stressing its transformative potential. He called for timely examinations, swift result publication, and prompt certificate distribution to maintain academic efficiency. He emphasised that quality research must drive innovation and societal progress.

The conference covered a wide range of topics, including the implementation of NEP 2020, examination procedures, result publication and certificate distribution

ency, the Governor urged universities to conduct regular audits for financial accountability. Expressing concern over rising sexual harassment cases in higher education institutions, he called for strict preventive measures and a zero-tolerance policy to ensure student safety. He also stressed the need for cybersecurity awareness in educational institutions. Encouraging increased student participation in the National Cadet Corps (NCC), the Governor stressed its role in instilling discipline, leadership, and national service values.

vati Parida, Minister of Law, Works, and Excise Prithviraj Harichandan, Health and Family Welfare, Electronics, and IT Minister Mukesh Mahaling, Higher Education, Odia Language, Literature, and Culture Minister Suryavanshi Suraj, and Industries, Skill Development, and Technical Education Minister Sampad Chandra Swain attended the conference. They reaffirmed their commitment to making higher education and technical education more dynamic and relevant in Odisha.

The conference covered a wide range of topics, including the implementation of NEP 2020, examination procedures, result publication, certificate distribution, research programmes, and enhancing the academic environment.

Other key discussions focused on increasing NCC enrolment, addressing sexual harassment in higher education institutions, strengthening cybersecurity, conducting periodic audits, ensuring compliance with audit objections, and adopting the e-office platform in universities. Additionally, matters related to NAAC accreditation compliance and the promotion of teachers under the Career Advancement Scheme of the UGC were reviewed.

The conference concluded with a collective commitment to strengthening the state's higher education system, aligning it with national aspirations, and setting new benchmarks in academic excellence and governance.



MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Artistes perform during the 20th Odissi Sangeet and Laghu Sangeet Samaroha-2025 at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

NSUI demands CM's resignation over girl's suicide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 4: Members of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) Tuesday staged a protest here over the suicidal death of a Class XII girl of Kendrapara district, and demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi.

Holding banners and party flags, the NSUI activists demonstrated at Master Canteen Square, burning effigies of Majhi and School & Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond.

"The students are not safe even on their college campuses. The suicidal death case is a burning example of that," NSUI state president Udit Pradhan said.

The 18-year-old student allegedly died by suicide February 24 after being "frisked inappropriately" by a male teacher February 19

"Though more than a week has passed since the incident, the government is yet to take any action in this regard. We demand the resignation of the chief minister and Gond," he said.

The 18-year-old student allegedly died by suicide February 24 after being "frisked inappropriately" by a male teacher February 19, when she appeared for the ongoing ex-



ams conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) at Pattamundai College. The case is under investigation.

"If the government fails to deliver justice to the girl student, the NSUI will intensify its protest across the state," Pradhan added.

Ouat concludes training on animal eye treatment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 4: The department of Veterinary Surgery and Radiology at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) marked the concluding day of 21 days winter school on 'Modern Techniques for Clinical Management of Ophthalmic Affections in Animals' here Tuesday.

Around 23 students from different institutions across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha participated in the training programme, which be-



As part of the practical exposure, participants visited Nandankanan Zoo, where they observed the glaucoma treatment of a lion named Shivam

gan February 12. Department of Veterinary Surgery and Radiology head Jayakrushna Das emphasised the significance of the programme in enhancing academ-

ic understanding of ophthalmic treatments. "Through this rigorous module, we aim to equip students with the knowledge to drive future discoveries in veterinary eye care. With dedicat-

ed eye surgeries becoming rare, such training will help students build a strong foundation for their careers," he said.

As part of the practical exposure, participants visited Nandankanan Zoo, where they observed the glaucoma treatment of a lion named Shivam. The procedure helped relieve the lion's discomfort and provided valuable hands-on learning, Das added.

Senior veterinarians, including DB Patil, V Devjprasad, K Rambabu, Srikant Sahoo, Sujata Das, AK Ray, Sujoy Mukherjee, Smrutirekha Priyadarshini, and Samir Mohapatra conducted lecture sessions during the programme. Additionally, virtual sessions were delivered by faculty members from IVRI Mumbai and a course facilitator from Bahrain.

OASME WOMEN'S WING EVENT MARCH 9



RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 4: The Women's Wing of the Odisha Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (OASME) has announced HerStory 2025, a flagship event celebrating women achievers, will take place March 9. The announcement was made during a press conference here Tuesday.

The event will feature a grand award ceremony, live

product launches by women-led startups, and motivational coaching sessions. Additionally, discussions on e-commerce, work-life balance, and overcoming failures will be conducted. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with Shark Tank fame entrepreneurs, artists, and business leaders. Cultural showcases and networking opportunities will also be part of the event. Speaking at the press confer-

ence, chairperson of OASME Women's Wing Jyotirmayee Mohanty emphasised that HerStory 2025 is about "inspiring, empowering, and celebrating women who break barriers."

OASME vice chairperson Amrita Patra described it as "an unforgettable experience bringing together trailblazing women achievers."

The event will be graced by dignitaries including ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Minister Nityananda Gond, Minister of State for Industries, Skill Development, and Technical Education Sampad Chandra Swain, Additional Chief Secretary Hemant Sharma, OASME chairman Gouri Sankar Dash, and OASME general secretary Satwik Swain, among others.

WEATHER

Table with weather details: BBSR, CTC, Max Temp, Min Temp, Humidity, Rainfall, FORECAST.

MARKET WATCH

Table with market watch details: INDEX, VARIATION, SENSEX, NIFTY, DOLLAR, EURO, GOLD, SILVER.

Paralakhemundi rly station statue sparks controversy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 4: The historic Paralakhemundi railway station, undergoing transformation under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, has found itself at the center of controversy over a newly-installed statue.

As the first Odisha-dedicated railway line and the first royal railway station of the state, the station holds immense historical significance.

However, the installation of an unidentifiable statue, bearing no resemblance to Maharaja Gourachandra Gajapati or Maharaja Krishna Chandra Gajapati, has sparked widespread outrage among locals and heritage advocates.

Maharaja Gourachandra Gajapati was instrumental in establishing the Naupada-Paralakhemundi Light Railway in 1898-99, connecting the princely state to the broader railway



network. His contributions were foundational to Odisha's rail history.

Meanwhile, Maharaja Krishna Chandra Gajapati, known as the architect of Odisha's statehood, played a crucial role in expanding and strengthening railway connectivity.

The presence of a misplaced statue, failing to represent these stalwarts, has been perceived as an insult to the heritage and pride

of the region.

Local residents and heritage activists have voiced their disappointment, questioning how such an inaccurate installation was approved.

There is now a growing demand to replace the existing structure with statues of both Maharaja Gourachandra Gajapati Narayana Deb II and Maharaja Krishna Chandra Gajapati Narayana Deb, ensur-

ing their rightful tribute at the station premises.

Apanna Parichha Smruti Sansad (APSS) secretary Murali Dhar Parichha, who has been advocating for Paralakhemundi's heritage status and railway development, stated that the railway station is not just an infrastructure project but a symbol of Odisha's history, culture, and identity.

He emphasised that the ongoing redevelopment under the Amrit Bharat scheme is an opportunity to not only modernise the station but also honor the legacy of the visionaries who built it.

"The demand for proper statues is not merely about aesthetics but about respect, accuracy, and rightful tribute to the pioneers of Odisha's railway heritage," said Parichha. He further added that a formal letter would soon be submitted to the East Coast Railway's

general manager, along with the Khurda Road and Waltair Divisions, urging them to rectify the issue.

In 2024, the Ministry of Railways sanctioned ₹12 crore for the development of Paralakhemundi railway station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

The proposed redevelopment plan includes a new 1,375 sq m building with a 72 sq m commercial area. Additionally, a 12-metre-wide foot overbridge will be constructed, providing seamless access between platforms 1 and 2. As Paralakhemundi station moves forward into a new era, residents insist that its historical legacy must be preserved and accurately represented.

Authorities are now under pressure to act swiftly and replace the unidentifiable structure with statues that genuinely reflect the region's great railway visionaries.

Min Mahapatra meets Vaishnaw over rail issues



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 4: Housing & Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at Rail Bhawan in New Delhi Tuesday to discuss key railway matters concerning Odisha, particularly Mayurbhanj district.

Mahapatra urged the restoration of the previous schedule of the Bangriposi-Puri Superfast Express, emphasising its importance for passengers. Vaishnaw assured that the request would be reviewed.

He also pressed for the early implementation of the Baripada Railway Bypass Project to boost development and ease congestion in Baripada town.

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SPCB serves closure notice to 11 polluting industrial units



The SPCB action was subsequent to receipt of regular complaints against polluting sponge iron units at various industrial areas around Rourkela

Rourkela, March 4: The State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) has issued closure notices to 11 industrial units and show-cause notices to an additional 78 units here for violating pollution norms.

An SPCB official said the units which have been served closure notices include Rajesh Sahani and Das Enterprises in Kalunga industrial area; Pal Metal Industries and Swastik Ispat Private Limited in Kuanrunda; Utkal Matrics Private Limited, Sree Jagannath

Traders, Scan Steel Limited, Gangpur Minerals, Sri Ram Minerals and Maa Kali Industries located in various industrial areas.

SPCB Regional Officer and Additional Chief Environment Scientist Dr Anup Mallick said, "Those served closure notices will have to shut down their units with immediate effect. The closure will remain in effect till they abide by, or comply with, all the required norms of pollution control." All the units need to have dust arrester in the electrostatic precipitator (ESP) installed, he said.

The official said SPCB carried out investigations of the industrial units at Kaunga, Kuanrunda and Bonai areas. The inspections were carried out at the sponge iron units during night time in these areas. The SPCB action was subsequent to receipt of regular complaints against the polluting sponge iron units.

Meta Sponge, Seeta Sponge

and Mahaveer Fero Sponge are among the worst polluting units at Kalunga which have been served with show-cause notices. They have been asked to file their replies within 15 days. Besides, they have been warned that any failure to comply with pollution norms will invite closure notice. It is worth mentioning here that a massive protest was staged against Mahaveer Fero sometime back.

Meanwhile, Pramod Biswal a resident of Kalunga said, "We are suffering from both industrial pollution and the dust flying out of the damaged roads due to the movement of heavy vehicles. Our lives have become miserable. I welcome the SPCB move."

Interestingly, following the SPCB action, waters is now being sprinkled on the roads at Kalunga industrial estate.

Meanwhile, the official said, 22 units have been levied fines and instructed to obey with the pollution norms, while application for additional time for compliance by four more units have been rejected by the SPCB. "Thirteen units have been ordered to appear before the SPCB for instructions," the official added.

Giving details about the crackdown, Dr Mallick said, "We received information about low quality coal being used in all the units, which was confirmed during our inspection. Fine dust particles were found in large numbers due to the use of the low-quality coal by these units."

He said though Rourkela and its nearby areas come under the national clean air programme, these units failed to comply with the SPCB's instruction to use to use clean fuel technology.



JUMBO MARCH: A tusker roams on the State Highway-53, near Chhayalsingh Bazar in Bhadrak district, after it separated from its herd Tuesday, sending Forest and police personnel on its trail to capture the gentle giant

Criminal injured in police encounter

Sambalpur: A notorious criminal in Sambalpur district sustained a bullet injury in an encounter with police Tuesday morning, a senior officer said. The encounter took place at Hirakud Airstrip Road near Lamadunguri, under Ainthapali Police Station limits, when a team of police personnel attempted to apprehend Mahesh Kumar, wanted in several cases, around 5:45 am, he said.

"Upon seeing the police team, Mahesh tried to flee the spot and fired at the personnel. The police team also retaliated. Mahesh sustained a bullet injury on his left leg. He was rescued and admitted to VIMSAR at Burla," the officer said. The Sambalpur Police had been tracking him for a while, he added. "Mahesh is now out of danger. We have seized one 7mm pistol and ammunition, ₹40,000 in cash and a motorcycle from him," the officer said. Several loot, robbery and other cases have been registered against the accused in Sambalpur and adjoining districts, the police said. The latest case was filed Monday. Mahesh had snatched ₹45,000 from a person at gunpoint in the Ainthapali police station area of Sambalpur, the officer added.

Ward member held for stripping woman on Kendrapara village road

Kendrapara, March 4: A ward member, along with another person, was arrested Tuesday for allegedly dragging and stripping a middle-aged woman on a village road in broad daylight Monday.

The arrests were effected after a video of the incident went viral on social media. The accused were identified as Ranjan Swain, the ward member, and Narahari Swain.

IIC Bimal Mallick of Kendrapara Sadar police station said that long-standing enmity and disputes led to this shocking incident involving a woman from Samalpur of Kapaleswar Gram Panchayat, under Kendrapara Sadar police station limits.

Mallick said the victim was

dragged, stripped, molested, and assaulted on the village road by fellow villagers, including the ward member. He said the accused even attempted to strangle her.

According to the police, ward member Ranjan Swain had an on-going dispute with Bijay Das, which was supposed to be settled amicably Monday in the village. However, tensions grew between the families of Ranjan Swain

and Bijay Das. Following the altercation, Ranjan Swain and Narahari Swain allegedly dragged Pravatı Das, daughter-in-law of Bijay Das, out of her house and stripped her on the village road. She was also sexually assaulted.

The victim's daughter, Laxmi Priya, lodged a complaint against 10 villagers, including the ward member and Narahari.

Swain too also filed a counter complaint against Pravatı Das, alleging that she had attacked him.

The Sadar police registered two cases and arrested both Ranjan and Narahari who were later produced in a SD-JM court for remand.

Mallick said an inquiry is underway to apprehend other individuals involved in the crime.

EOW, STF conduct searches at locations linked to Raja Chakra

Keonjhar, March 4: A joint team of Economic Offence Wing (EOW) and Special Task Force (STF) personnel conducted searches at multiple locations belonging to BJD leader Raja Chakra Tuesday in connection with an alleged scam linked to the Gandhamardan Loading Cooperative Society agency in Keonjhar.

The EOW sleuths quizzed Chakra regarding alleged financial irregularities at his office in Bhubaneswar Monday. On Tuesday, joint teams from the EOW and the STF searched multiple locations associated with him, including his loading agency office at Suakati in Keonjhar district, his residence in Keonjhar town, his farmhouse in Gopalpur under Ghatgaon block of the district, and at the checkpoint of industrial corridor.

Mangrove forest project in Kendrapara buried in files

Kendrapara, March 4: Despite repeated government promises, a proposed mangrove afforestation project aimed at protecting coastal regions in the district remains buried in official files, even as rising sea levels continue to threaten local villages.

According to reports, rapid coastal erosion due to frequent tidal surges, which is accelerating the destruction of coastal areas, has put islands like Nashi, Habelikati, Babubali, and Eka-kula in the district at risk. This has sparked panic among the residents as little is being done to check the adverse impact of coastal erosion.

In 2017, the then state government announced plans to create 400 hectares of mangrove forest in the Rajnagar and Mahakalapara blocks of Kendrapara district. This project aimed to expand green cover to a total of 3,500 hectares along the coast

and riverbanks. However, the initiative is yet to materialise beyond official announcements.

The geo-synthetic tube wall project, built on Pentha coast to curb coastal erosion, has also failed to deliver expected results, reports said. Environmentalists, including Hemant Kumar Rout, Prabhu Prasad Mohapatra, Arun Kumar Kanungo, and Sheikh Chand, emphasise that creating mangrove forests within a 10-kilometer coastal buffer zone would significantly reduce the impact of natural disasters.

They argue that while local authorities focus on disaster preparedness meetings and are seen on their toes in providing relief and rescue measures, long-term protective measures such as mangrove afforestation are being overlooked.

Residents of Kendrapara district face recurring natural disasters, including cyclones, floods, and the looming threat of tsunamis. Although the state

government's Forest and Environment department initially prioritised mangrove afforestation, the project has yet to be implemented effectively.

The Green Mahanadi Mission was announced by the state government July 24, 2018. The mission was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, with a plan to plant more than 5 crore saplings across 41,000 hectares along the banks of the Mahanadi, Ib, and 'Tel rivers for afforestation.

Although the Mahanadi River flows through Kendrapara district, no specific locations were identified for this initia-

EAST COAST RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2025-04, Dt. 25.02.2025

NAME OF WORK: PROVISION OF DUAL UFSBI IN EXISTING UFSBI SYSTEM OF MAKE M/S DELTRON EQUIPMENT & SYSTEM FOR RELIABILITY IMPROVEMENT IN EXISTING SECTIONS IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION.

Tender Value in (₹) 2,15,69,792.56, EMD (₹) : 2,57,900.00

Date and time of closing of Tender: At 1100 Hrs. of 20.03.2025

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders 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 consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

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

Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) / PR-1038/P/24-25 Sambalpur

EAST COAST RAILWAY

File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/24-25/E-Tender/113, Dt.:28.02.2025

Tender No. etenderdkur-331-2024 Dt.: 20.02.2025

DESCRIPTION: DEEP SCREENING OF TRACK, POINTS & CROSSINGS AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS AT KHURDA ROAD YARD AND APPROACHES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/PWAY/ KHURDA ROAD OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 263.63 Lakh, EMD : ₹ 2,81,800/-, Completion Period: 10 (Ten) Months.

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 17.03.2025.

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders 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 consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents 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 tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-II Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer(s)/ bidder(s) can participate on e-tendering.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg) / PR-1039/P/24-25 Khurda Road

Sonepur Royal Palace faces ruin, restoration urged

Sonepur, March 4: The historic Sonepur royal palace, a silent witness to the region's rich history, is now on the verge of collapse due to neglect and lack of maintenance.

The palace's grand domes and intricately designed walls are crumbling. Once a symbol of art, culture, and architectural brilliance, the structure is now deteriorating day by day. The palace, which no longer houses the royal family, has been overtaken by wild vegetation, and has become a refuge for reptiles.

In its prime, Sonepur was known for its administrative influence, education, and prestige. The palace holds invaluable records of the former princely state. Built with sturdy stonework along the banks of the Mahanadi River, it once stood as an architectural marvel. However, years of neglect have pushed it to the brink of complete ruin.

Locals and heritage enthusiasts are demanding its restoration before it is lost forever. They emphasise that the palace should be preserved as a historical landmark rather than left to decay.



Amongst them, Sitaanshu Shekhar Mishra, president of the Subarnapur Sachetan Nagarik Sangha, has urged the government to take immediate steps to restore the palace. "If neglected further, the historical landmark will soon be lost, surviving only in memories and history books," he said.

The period from August 8, 1902, to April 29, 1937 - under the rule of king Biramitrodaya - is regarded as the golden era of Sonepur's princely rule. During his reign in 1905, the Sonepur state transitioned from Central Provinces to

the Bengal-administered Orissa Division.

Biramitrodaya established the Sonepur Trust Fund in 1925 for the development of the state. His court played a crucial role in promoting the Odia language and literature, publishing hundreds of books in Sanskrit, Odia, Bengali, and English. With his support, in 1919, the University of Calcutta introduced an Odia MA course. He also established the "Sonepur Chair" in both the Odia department at the University of Calcutta and the English department at Ravenshaw College, contributing

significantly to the spread of higher education in Odisha.

To further educational development, he founded Maharaja High School in 1913, and established several Sanskrit schools, providing free food and lodging for students. He also played a key role in publishing books on revenue law and land regulations.

The last ruler, Sudhanshu Bhushan Singh Deo, governed a vast territory from this palace until 1948.

However, the majestic structure is now partially in ruins. Its rooftop terraces once offered breathtaking views of the Mahanadi River, where the royal family would gather. Inside the palace, there were halls such as Badal Mahal, an armory, a treasury, a courtroom, and a revenue office. The queen's residences, Anantapur and Uwas, were known for their intricate craftsmanship.

Now, the palace stands as a crumbling reminder of a bygone era.

Locals and office bearers of social organisations said if neglected further, the historical landmark will soon be lost, surviving only in memories and history books.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Rajesh Badaik** S/o Sh. Rajesh Badaik (Mangra), R/o VPO Rantobirkera, Tehsil Lathi Kata, Distt Sunder Garh, Odisha has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence case FIR No. 369/2019 U/S 376D/506 IPC at P.S. Subhash Place, North West Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Rajesh Badaik** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Rajesh Badaik** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 82 Cr.P.C. has been initiated in the case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Rajesh Badaik** accused of FIR No. 369/2019 U/S 376D/506 IPC at P.S. Subhash Place, North West Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on **15.04.2025**.

By Order: Ms. Jasjeet Kaur, Additional Session Judge-04 (POCSO), Room No. 203, Second Floor, District Court, Rohini, Delhi.

DP/2696/NW/2025

Government of Odisha

E-mail: ID-sectcrb_2006@yahoo.co.in, Tel/Fax-0671-2301751/2302751

Corrigendum to Bid Identification No.CCE.Ctc(R&B) 15/2024-25

Tender Reference No. CCE.Ctc. (R&B) 15/2024-25

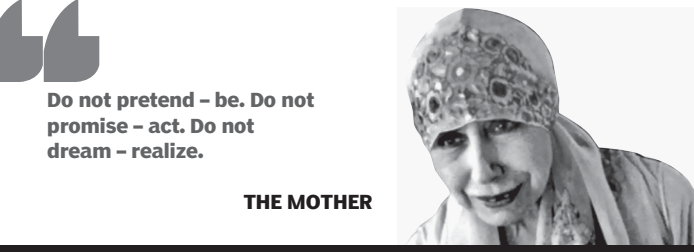
No.B-The Bid availability period and Date of opening of the tenders have been modified due to unavoidable circumstances. The modified dates are as follows:-

Sl. No.	Bid Identification No.	Bid Availability period as per Tender Notice	Revised Bid Availability period	Bid Opening Date as per Tender Notice	Revised opening Date
1	CCE.Ctc. (R&B) 15/2024-25	27.01.2025 to 5.30 Hours of 10.02.2025	10.03.2025 to 5.30 Hours of 24.03.2025	11.02.2025 at 11.00 Hours	25.03.2025 at 11.00 Hours

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. Further details can be seen from the website <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

OIPR-34012/11/0030/2425

Sd./- Chief Construction Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Circle



Do not pretend – be. Do not promise – act. Do not dream – realize.

THE MOTHER

Summit of Hope

Europe has made it clear that it will not accept a so-called peace deal for Ukraine clinched by the US (and as proposed by Russia) in so many words by President Donald Trump. The mood of the European leaders was summed up in the words of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer who told a London summit on 2 March that Europe has got its “once-in-a-generation moment” for its security. The announcement came only three days after Trump and Vice President JD Vance had given a complete dressing down to Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for virtually challenging the ceasefire plan that Trump drew up after talking to the “aggressor” Russian President Vladimir Putin. Starmer explained at the summit that the meeting had three goals - Ukraine’s short-term needs, securing a lasting deal to end the conflict and planning for strong security guarantees. Trump had shot down Zelenskyy’s fervent plea during their televised interactions for the US providing security guarantees to his country before a ceasefire deal with Putin. The US President insisted that the business deal between the US and Ukraine for extracting precious minerals for the US from Ukraine was itself the security guarantee, while Zelenskyy explained Putin had violated ceasefire agreements “25 times since 2014 and nobody did anything” to stop him. He made it clear to Trump that a ceasefire without security guarantees by the US would be meaningless, going by the past experiences.

As Zelenskyy left Washington crest-fallen, he needed European countries to rally behind his country and defend it against the Russian might. The UK, France, Italy and some other countries of Europe did not waste time and assured Ukraine of their support not simply in words, but also in concrete terms through signing multi-million pounds worth deals to supply arms and materials from the UK to Ukraine. In his opening remarks at the summit, Starmer told Zelenskyy: “I hope you know that we are all with you and the people of Ukraine for as long as it takes, everyone around this table.” This was music to Ukraine’s ears and alarm for Russia which had hailed Trump and Vance for berating Zelenskyy.

French President Emmanuel Macron, Canada’s outgoing leader Justin Trudeau and the heads of several European countries, the European Union and NATO were all present at the summit. The way these leaders closed ranks in defence of Ukraine brought a smile to the face of Zelenskyy. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni told Starmer it was of utmost importance that “we avoid the risk that the West divides” over the war in Ukraine. The two leaders may prove vital in formulating a peace process acceptable to both Trump and Europe since both have developed some kind of relationship with Trump.

Macron in his speech said no one should have any confusion about who the aggressor is. This is in sharp contrast to Trump’s conciliatory approach to Putin. Macron told the summit in no uncertain terms: “There is an aggressor: Russia.”

The British PM took it further when he said this is “not a moment for more talk, it’s time to act.” Accordingly, leaders on the continent went ahead with their plan to forge a path towards a ceasefire in Ukraine. He also told the media he was working with France and a small number of other nations to craft a plan to stop the fighting, which would then be presented to the US.

Macron in an interview with a French daily drew the contours of the plan proposing a month-long limited ceasefire in Ukraine. The second phase, he said, would involve troops on the ground. The plan appears to torpedo the negotiation process that Trump’s administration opened with Russia last month. At the same time, it suggests Europe is well aware such a plan would be viable only if Trump gives his seal of approval. European leaders are understood to have resolved to persuade Trump to agree to their plan. As part of this strategy, Zelenskyy said at the London summit that he is ready to sign a deal with the US for extracting minerals from Ukraine. The deal was not signed after Trump and Vance bullied Zelenskyy.

Predictably, the Kremlin was not happy with the development in London as it expected Trump’s belligerence against Zelenskyy would make European leaders fall in line and accept the peace overtures of the US President that seemed to have been tailored by Russia, keeping its interests in the forefront. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the funding pledges from European leaders - including a \$2 billion air-defence missiles deal from Britain - will cause the war to drag on. While no one can fault these European leaders of backing Ukraine, it must be understood that western powers are scared of Putin and his intentions. If Ukraine falls, Poland becomes the front line. Then comes Germany which will open up the whole of Europe to the Russian army and on how fast it can move forward. It is also true that war alone seems to bring these tall leaders together. They never seem to get united for peace.

This has made Russia’s frustration palpable, as visible in Peskov’s words that someone should force Zelenskyy to change his position as he doesn’t want peace. The wonderful aspect of the Trump era is that countries like Ukraine, UK, Poland, Taiwan, France, Italy, South Korea and Japan have now, perforce, are compelled to start thinking of creating an alternate force by themselves. Stop depending on the US. India too has to learn to play the cards properly now and in future.

WISDOM CORNER

To practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness. **CONFUCIUS**

Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage. **MAYA ANGELOU**

When you encourage others, you in the process are encouraged because you’re making a commitment and difference in that person’s life. Encouragement really does make a difference. **ZIG ZIGLAR**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1798: Napoleon invaded Switzerland and occupied Bern, ending the ancient ruling system of that country, the Confederation of the Thirteen Cantons.
- 1770: Harassed by a mob, British troops on this day in 1770 opened fire, killing Crispus Attucks and four others in the Boston Massacre, an event that galvanized anti-British feelings in the lead-up to the American Revolution.
- 1979: The US space probe Voyager 1 flew by Io, the innermost of Jupiter’s satellites, and observed nine active volcanoes on its surface.

WHEN GOVERNMENT’S GONE

FOCUS BUREAUCRACY



A leader who constantly suspects his own officials of disloyalty may begin to see enemies where none exist – as with Trump’s perception of threats emanating from the “deep state”



Sami Mahroum

A GOVERNMENT THAT DISMISSES TOO MANY SEASONED OFFICIALS MAY SOON FIND ITSELF WITHOUT THE GLUE THAT HELD EVERYTHING TOGETHER

In Hermann Hesse’s novel *The Journey to the East*, a group of pilgrims sets out on a spiritual quest, guided by Leo, a seemingly humble servant who tends to their needs and keeps them organized. But midway through the journey, Leo suddenly disappears, and the pilgrimage collapses into chaos. The travellers, who believed themselves to be the journey’s true leaders, are lost without Leo’s quiet but essential presence.

The same risk follows from the loss of seasoned government professionals – the career civil servants, administrators, and experts who keep the modern state running smoothly, usually far from the spotlight. When they are abruptly defenestrated – as is happening at key US agencies like USAID, the FBI, the CIA, the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Institutes of Health – governance does not simply continue as usual under new leadership. Rather, fragmentation, inefficiency, and dysfunction prevail – just like among Hesse’s pilgrims. Though he is just one man in Hesse’s story, Leo represents all the anonymous bureaucrats and civil servants who keep the ship of the state afloat.

At the heart of this issue is the principal-agent dilemma, a concept introduced by economists Stephen Ross, Michael Jensen, and William H. Meckling in the 1970s to describe a problem that can arise when one party acts on behalf of another. In government, political leaders (the principals) rely on bureaucrats or officials (agents) to translate their decisions into action. While political leaders naturally want their directives to be followed precisely, bureaucrats are guided by their own specialized knowledge, ethics, and imperatives to prioritize long-term stability over short-term outcomes. To overcome this mismatch,

the principals in the second Trump administration are seeking to replace or simply eliminate the agents. But such purges usually backfire, because once a paranoid leader has sidelined his own agents, he no longer possesses the means to govern effectively.

Paranoia is a dangerous mindset in governance. A leader who constantly suspects his own officials of disloyalty may begin to see enemies where none exist – as with Trump’s perception of threats emanating from the “deep state.” The result is a vicious cycle: as more officials are dismissed or sidelined, institutional knowledge is lost, governance becomes less effective, and the leader’s fears are reinforced by the very dysfunction he has created. Instead of a smooth-running administration, the government becomes reactive, chaotic, and incapable of long-term planning.

This can play out in multiple ways. For agencies like the FBI and CIA, forced retirements and buyouts inevitably eliminate expertise needed to monitor threats to national security, reduce morale, and discourage prospective employees. Moreover, replacing seasoned professionals with political loyalists risks compromising the collection, analysis, and sharing of intelligence (some US allies will be reluctant to share sensitive in-

formation in fear that it may fall in the hands of Elon Musk or Tulsi Gabbard), leading to poor decision-making at the highest levels of government.

Similarly, US foreign policy will suffer now that, with the destruction of USAID, it has lost its long-standing connections with local communities around the world, weakening America’s diplomatic reach and influence, and making it harder to advance US strategic interests. And the loss of experienced professionals from agencies like the NSF will impede research, delay technological innovation, and weaken America’s ability to respond to emerging challenges and risks, such as those stemming from artificial intelligence, climate change, or public-health crises.

The German sociologist Max Weber, who laid the foundations of modern administrative theory, showed that a professional bureaucracy is necessary for effective governance. Career civil servants understand the complex processes behind budgeting, law enforcement, disaster relief, and infrastructure projects. Without rule-based, merit-driven systems that keep government functioning beyond the whims of political leadership, governance breaks down.

Equally dangerous is the attempt to run public administration like a private company,

where success and failure are measured only in accounting terms: efficiency, cost savings, and profit. While fiscal responsibility is important, applying corporate-style financial controls without an understanding of public-sector purposes can lead to disastrous consequences. A financial controller or accountant borrowed from Tesla may identify potential government savings that look rational on a balance sheet, but that will lead to much greater long-term costs.

Treating governments as if they were businesses can undermine their core functions. A well-run administration requires not just financial oversight but institutional knowledge, strategic foresight, and a deep understanding of the unique demands of governance. Prioritizing short-term savings over long-term stability weakens state capacity, renders public services unreliable, and opens the door to corruption, inefficiency, and systemic failure.

By aggressively shrinking key agencies and viewing career officials as adversaries rather than experts, the Trump administration is shifting from the traditional principal-agent dilemma – where bureaucrats resist leadership – to a “paranoid principal dilemma,” where the leader, in a desperate attempt to assert dominance, ends up alone, unable to trust anyone, and incapable of governing effectively.

As in *The Journey to the East*, where the pilgrims find themselves lost without Leo, a government that dismisses too many seasoned officials may soon find itself without the glue that held everything together. But a leader who is also paranoid – who sees his own agents as potential enemies – risks isolating himself within an administration that is both ineffective and deeply unstable.

The writer is Director of Government and Public Institutions at Oliver Wyman.

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IN JEST THIS

For a long marriage, set your expectations low



Melvin Durai

WITH DIVORCE RATES INCREASING AROUND THE WORLD, IT NEVER HURTS TO GET SOME TIPS FROM PEOPLE WHO’VE BEEN MARRIED A LONG TIME

My wife, Malathi, and I have been married for more than 24 years, but that’s nothing compared to Manoel Angelino and Maria de Sousa Dino. The Brazilian couple have been married for more than 84 years and recently set a Guinness World Record for the longest marriage for a living couple.

To set such a record, you have to live a long time, so it shouldn’t surprise you to learn that both Manoel and Maria are centenarians. He’s 105 and she’s 101. They got married in 1940, seven years before India’s Independence and 18 years before Brazil won its first World Cup.

Manoel was 21 and Maria only 17 when they got married, which means that for at least 80 per cent of their lives, they’ve had someone by their side to love, comfort and help pay the rent.

They didn’t just have each other, of course. They also had 13 children, just enough for

a full football team with two substitutes. Their children gave them 55 grandchildren, 54 great-grandchildren, and 12 great-great-grandchildren, all of whom can visit Manoel and Maria for some marriage advice.

With divorce rates increasing around the world, it never hurts to get some tips from people who’ve been married a long time. I haven’t been married for that long (relatively speaking), but I’d nevertheless like to offer a few marriage tips:

1. Have low expectations. This is very important. Give your partner a low bar that they can easily clear, unless you are marrying an Olympic pole vaulter. You may have set your standards very high before marriage, hoping to check all the boxes, but once you are married, you need to hide some of those boxes. Expecting too much from your spouse is a recipe for disappointment. And disappointment often leads to another D-word: divorce.

2. Spend quality time apart. It’s important to spend quality time together, but it’s just as important to spend quality time apart. My wife sometimes goes on vacation with our children, while I stay at home with our dog, Lulu. This is really good for our relationship: Lulu’s and mine. It brings us closer. And it also gives my wife a healthy break from me (and vice versa).

Spending quality time apart doesn’t require a vacation – it could also mean leaving your spouse at home and hanging out with your friends once a week, or going to the gym by yourself, or watching a movie with a friend. If your spouse loves watching football and you don’t, just give him his space.

3. Be a loser. I don’t mean a loser in life, but a loser in arguments you have with your spouse. Don’t insist on being right all the time and winning every argument. Being an argument-winner may only make you a bigger loser,

especially if your spouse kicks you out of bed.

4. Be forgetful. Try to forget all your arguments and any mistakes your spouse makes. Remember the positives, forget the negatives (within reason). This works both ways, of course. A wife remembers that her husband complimented her slim figure (she’s been exercising) and forgets that he didn’t notice her new gym outfit. A husband remembers that his wife complimented his big biceps tattoo and forgets that she didn’t notice his big biceps (he’s been exercising too).

5. Twist the truth. Being too truthful isn’t good for a relationship. When I ask my wife if I’m losing hair, she’ll say, “No, Melvin, you’re just gaining scalp.” When I ask her if she liked the meal I cooked, she’ll say, “It’s like nothing I’ve ever tasted before.” When I ask her if she wishes she had married someone else, she’ll say, “No, I just wish you had married someone else.”

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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

Explosive encounter

Sir, This refers to “Dangerous & Fatal,” *Orissa POST*, March 3. The explosive encounter between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the White House is unprecedented. None of the three, including US Vice President JD Vance, have come out smelling of roses. Yet, as occupant of the world’s most powerful office, it is Trump who has taken the worst beating, with many berating him as a boor and bully. With diplomacy trampled by Trump and Vance at the ‘meeting’, the unmistakable message of the treatment meted out to Zelenskyy is that the US will not countenance any opposition to the way it wants to end the war and claim Ukraine’s minerals and rare earths. In the last three years, Europe and the US pumped up Zelenskyy. He failed to note that the new dispensation in the White House was different, with little regard for diplomatic niceties. He should have known that when Trump says he wants something done, he has no choice. Trump has to be anticipated, appeased, obeyed and shown more than due deference. Anything short of that could turn out to be disastrous, as Zelenskyy discovered. Whether and how Europe adapts to the demands and diktats implicit in the manner Trump and his team handled Zelenskyy could set the stage for the next such show.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Regulatory transparency

Sir, With a special court directing the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to file FIR against former SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch for alleged stock market fraud and regulatory violations, the case will likely have far-reaching implications for regulatory governance in India’s financial markets. Whether this probe will uncover deeper systemic failures or simply remain a high-profile legal battle remains to be seen. However, the controversy surrounding SEBI’s regulatory actions has already sparked concerns among investors and market participants. Analysts believe that such legal battles could impact investor confidence, especially among foreign institutional investors who rely on SEBI’s oversight for market transparency. As the case unfolds, it remains to be seen how the investigation will impact SEBI’s credibility and its approach to future regulatory enforcement.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI



After Independence, the Congress did not form a democratically elected government. The government was self-imposed. In 1951, a year ahead of the first general elections, our ideological forefathers formed the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The idea was to ensure that power does not become unbridled

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | UNION MINISTER

PM MEETS BELGIUM'S PRINCESS ASTRID

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday met Princess Astrid of Belgium and said he looks forward to "unlocking limitless opportunities" for the people of the two countries through new partnerships in trade, technology, defence and agriculture



JAMIA PROTEST Delhi High Court stays students' suspension

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 4: While staying the suspension of Jamia Millia Islamia students barred from the university campus, the Delhi High Court Tuesday said participation in such peaceful protests were the part of the "training to inculcate the basic principles and norms of civil society".

Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma also found the manner in which the university handled the protest worrisome. "Without going into the veracity of the submissions of either of the parties, the perusal of the record itself made the court worry about the way the protest, being undertaken by the students, is handled by the university. The court is not looking at the reason for the protest at the moment but the documents as shown by the petitioners prima facie show that it was a peaceful protest," the court said.

The high court ordered the constitution of a "peace" committee of university officials under the supervision of the vice-chancellor to resolve the issue and calm the situation down, and said they should also involve student representatives in the discussions. The suspensions were stayed till April 2 on four separate pleas of seven students who were suspended and barred from the campus by a February 12 order of the proctor.

The university was directed to file a report in the matter within a week. All students, who were of tender age, went to the university to "certainly make an endeavour" to raise their voice within the framework of the law, the court said. The judge added, "Rather, participation in such peaceful protests are the part of the training to inculcate the basic principles and norms of civil society."

"The court is fully confident that the administration of the university -- the vice-chancellor, dean and proctor -- shall immediately take remedial steps so as to assuage and calm down the situation." The students through their counsel argued it was a peaceful protest and they had obtained the requisite permission. Jamia's counsel Amit Sahni and Kisleey Mishra said not only the students had no permission to hold the protests but they also damaged university property.

Calling someone 'Pakistani' not offence: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 4: The Supreme Court has held using terms such as "miyani-tiyan" and "Pakistani" was not an offence of hurting religious sentiments though made in poor taste.

A bench of Justices B V Nagraathna and Satish Chandra Sharma therefore discharged a man in a criminal case filed by an Urdu translator and acting clerk Right to Information (RTI) in the sub-divisional office, Chas in Jharkhand. The

February 11 court order said, "The appellant is accused of hurting the religious feelings of the informant by calling him 'miyani-tiyan' and 'Pakistani'. Undoubtedly, the statements made are poor taste. However, it does not amount to hurting the religious sentiments of the informant. Hence, we are of the opinion that the appellant shall also be discharged under Section 298 IPC." Section 298 of IPC deals with words or gestures made with a deliberate intent to wound religious feel-



ings. It came on record that accused, Hari Nandan Singh, sought information under the RTI Act from additional collec-

tor-cum-first appellate authority, Bokaro, and the information was dispatched to him. However, he filed an appeal before the appellate authority, allegedly after manipulating the documents sent to him by the office through the registered post and making false allegations of manipulation in the documents.

The appellate authority directed the translator to personally serve the information to the appellant. On November 18, 2020, the informant, accompanied by the messenger of

the sub-divisional office, Chas, went to the accused's home to hand over the information.

The accused initially refused to accept the documents but upon insistence by the informant, accepted it. The matter prompted the translator to an FIR registered against the accused. Following an investigation, the trial court ordered framing of charges against the accused also under Sections 353 (assault or criminal force on a public servant) and 504 (intentional insult) of IPC.

of the day uote

Before we came to power in 2005, the law and order situation was so pathetic that people feared going out of their homes after dusk. Bad roads also made commutes difficult

NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

Law and order situation in the state has been deteriorating since the last three years. If the government is not dismissed, who will come to Maharashtra for investment, how will citizens be safe?

AADITYA THACKERAY | SENA (UBT) LEADER

India will become the third largest economy soon

G KISHAN REDDY | UNION COAL & MINES MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

3 of family found dead

Kolkata: Three members of a family, including a child, were found dead in their residence in Kolkata's Kasba area Tuesday, police said. The deceased were identified as Somnath Roy (40), his wife Sumitra (35), and their two-and-a-half-year-old son Rudranil, a senior officer said. A note allegedly written by Roy, was recovered from the house but its content is yet to be disclosed, he said. Roy and his wife were found hanging, while the body of the minor was found tied to his father, the officer said.

Teenage girl abducted, raped

Hoshiarpur (Punjab): A 13-year-old daughter of a migrant labourer was allegedly kidnapped and raped by a man in a village here, police said Tuesday. The girl and her family, originally from Uttar Pradesh, have been living in a rented house in the district for the past seven years. According to police, she was alone at home February 10 when the accused, a resident of the same village, allegedly abducted her and took her to his house, where he raped her.

Three Indians held in Nepal

Kathmandu: Three Indians were arrested in southern Nepal on charges of smuggling narcotic drugs, police said. Gautam Kushwaha (35), Ranjan Kumar Singh (30), and Sanjiv Kumar Ram (40), all residents of Bihar, were arrested Monday from Jitpur Simara Municipality along with 170 grams of brown sugar, according to police. The suspects were arrested following a police raid on a hotel. The police have taken the trio into custody and launched an investigation.

2 Naxalites killed in faction feud

Chaibasa: Two Naxalites were allegedly killed in a factional feud in Jharkhand, police said Tuesday. The deceased were members of the People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI), and the incident happened in the Bandgaon police station area at the border of West Singhbhum and Khunti districts, they said. The dispute stemmed from the deceased persons' plan to break away from the PLFI and create a separate organisation, SP of West Singhbhum Ashutosh Shekhar said. The incident is suspected to have taken place Sunday night and the bodies were recovered by the police Monday, he said.

T' gana tunnel mishap: Rescue ops underway



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagarkurnool (Telangana), March 4: The conveyor belt at the partially collapsed SL-BC tunnel, under which eight persons are trapped for the past 11 days, was repaired and made operational Tuesday. It will now make it easier for rescue personnel to shift muck and debris out, officials said.

The conveyor belt was damaged following the accident February 22, they said. The rescue operation was going on at a rapid pace on the 11th day of the accident Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a team of South Central Railway (SCR) comprising metal cutting experts cut the platform of the damaged Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) inside the tunnel, a SCR official said Tuesday. There was no breakthrough in the efforts to locate the eight trapped persons and rescuers are working in three shifts every day, an official told PTI. The process of removing debris and dewatering

was going on, he said. Nagarkurnool district Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Gaikwad said Monday evening that the government is exploring the option of deploying robots in the rescue operation to prevent any threat to the rescue personnel. Large quantities of slush and water inside the tunnel posed a challenge to the teams involved in the rescue operation.

Eight persons -- engineers and labourers -- have been trapped in the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) project tunnel since February 22 and experts from the NDRF, Indian Army, Navy and other agencies are making relentless efforts to pull them out to safety.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who visited the tunnel Sunday, suggested to the officials leading the rescue operation to use robots inside the tunnel if necessary, to avoid any danger to the rescue personnel.

The conveyor belt was damaged following the accident February 22. The rescue operation was going on at a rapid pace on the 11th day of the accident Tuesday.

EXAM PAPER LEAK CBI arrests 26 railway officials

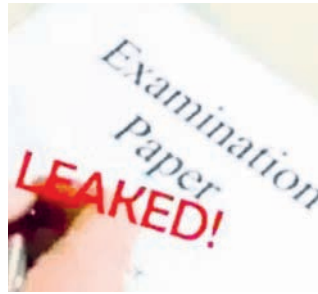
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 4: The CBI Tuesday said it has arrested 26 railway officials including a senior divisional electrical engineer of East Central Railway for allegedly leaking papers of a departmental examination and seized ₹1.17 crore cash during its raids.

The railway officials were arrested Monday night for allegedly leaking papers of examination for the elevation to posts of chief loco pilot at Mughal Sarai, the agency said, adding the exam was to be conducted Tuesday. Sources in the agency said that the examination has now been cancelled.

"During the checks conducted by CBI, at three spots on the intervening night (March 3-4) at Mughal Sarai, a total of 17 candidates were found with photocopies of hand-written question papers," a CBI spokesperson said. All 17 departmental candidates who are presently working as loco pilots had allegedly paid money for the question paper and were caught red-handed with the copies during the raid, he said.

"Overall, 26 railway officials (including the 17 aspirants) have been arrested in this case so far," the spokesperson said in a statement. The agency has registered the FIR against a senior divisional electrical



engineer (operations) who was given the responsibility for setting and preparing the question paper for the said examination. "He himself had written the questions in English and allegedly gave it to one loco pilot who in turn translated it into Hindi and further gave

it to another official. The said official allegedly gave it to the candidates through few other railway employees," the spokesperson said. Accused senior divisional electrical engineer (operations) is among the arrested officials, he said. "Searches were conducted at eight locations which resulted in recovery of ₹1.17 crore in cash. The amount was reportedly collected from the candidates for leaking the question papers. "The hand-written question papers along with their photocopies were seized. These question papers have been tallied with the original question paper and were found to have matched," the spokesperson said.



In India, the numbers were over nearly 180 million -- 81 million men and 98 million women

India may have over 440mn overweight people by '50: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 4: By 2050, India could have over 440 million obese and overweight people, a global analysis published in The Lancet journal has estimated.

Number of overweight and obese adults by mid-century in India (218 million men and 231 million women) could be the second highest in the world, after China, with the US, Brazil and Nigeria expected to rank third, fourth and fifth, respectively, the findings by an international team of researchers reveal.

These researchers, including those from the Indian Council of Medical Research, collaborated

of Disease (GBD) Study 2021. As per the study, already almost half the world's adults -- a billion men and over a billion women aged 25 years and above -- were overweight and obese in 2021. In India, the numbers were over nearly 180 million -- 81 million men and 98 million women.

However, by 2050, this number globally could rise to nearly 3.8 billion -- 1.8 billion men and 1.9 billion women -- "over half of the likely global adult population at that time", the authors said.

The researchers also estimated that about 16 million boys and over 14 million girls in India, aged 5-14 years, could be overweight and obese by

These researchers, including those from the Indian Council of Medical Research, collaborated for the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2021

As per the study, already almost half the world's adults -- a billion men and over a billion women aged 25 years and above -- were overweight and obese in 2021

2050, making it world's second highest after China. However, in the 15-24 age group, the world's highest burden could come from India, with over 22 million men and nearly 17 million women in the country suffering from this health crisis in 2050. Lead author Emmanuela Gakidou, Institute for

Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington, US, which coordinates the GBD study, said, "The unprecedented global epidemic of overweight and obesity is a profound tragedy and a monumental societal failure."

The study, the "most comprehensive global analysis to

date", could help governments and the public health community "identify priority populations experiencing the greatest burdens of obesity who require immediate intervention and treatment, and those that remain predominantly overweight and should be primarily targeted with prevention strategies", Gakidou said.

The latest estimates come against the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi making a strong pitch for combating obesity in his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' radiocast February 23.

Obesity will have to be dealt with to be a fit and healthy nation, he said. Obesity, a body mass index (BMI) of over 30, is

known to have wide-ranging effects, including raising one's risk of metabolic and heart disease.

It can also impact one's bone health and fertility and increase cancer risk. However, experts recently called for a more nuanced approach to measuring obesity.

In January, authors of a Lancet Commission report urged an overhaul of how obesity is diagnosed and called for a new method that looked at aspects such as waist circumference or waist-to-hip ratio, in addition to BMI.

BMI is not an honest measure of health or disease and can thus result in a wrong diagnosis, they said.



Our goal is to present a budget that drives prosperity for everybody in the state

DEEP-SEA MINERAL MINING

The Kerala Assembly Tuesday passed a resolution urging the central government to withdraw its decision to allow deep-sea mineral mining off the state's coast...



of the day quote

As the future caregivers of humanity, you hold the power to heal and transform lives. We wish you the best health and a sound mind...

Achieving 100 GW of nuclear power will require a focused and determined approach...

Not a single case of harassment, kidnapping, robbery, or murder was reported. Sixty-six crore people arrived, participated and left happily...

SARPANCH MURDER

Dhananjay Munde resigns

The pressure on Munde, who held the food, civil supplies and consumer protection portfolios in the BJP-led Mahayuti government, to resign mounted after gory photos and videos of Deshmukh surfaced...

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 4: Beleaguered Maharashtra minister Dhananjay Munde resigned from the cabinet Tuesday...



Fadnavis told reporters at the Vidhan Bhavan complex in south Mumbai.

The NCP strongman from Beed district, where the murder took place in December, had been fending off allegations around the brutal killing of Massajog village sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh...

The resignation was later accepted by the Governor, the Raj Bhavan said. Munde, on his part, maintained he resigned after listening to his "conscience" and also for medical reasons...

discuss the issue.

Munde's unceremonious exit caps the nearly three month-long demand by the Opposition and even by a section of MLAs of the BJP and his own party NCP for his resignation...

The Opposition targeted CM Fadnavis over the delay in seeking Munde's resignation. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray demanded dismissal of the Fadnavis government...

NCP (SP) state president Jayant Patil and Congress leader Nana Patole said the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will move a breach of privilege notice against the CM...

State Congress chief Harshvardhan Sapkal said Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar have lost moral right to stay in office and Maharashtra has to "hang its head in shame" because of them...

Delhi DRM replaced weeks after stampede

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 4: Four senior railway officials, including the Delhi Divisional Railway Manager and Additional DRM, were transferred Tuesday...

"Though they have been transferred through administrative orders without mentioning any immediate reasons, the timings of transfer apparently establishes a link with the stampede," a railway official said.

Their new postings have not been announced. While Sukhwinder Singh and Vikram Singh Rana were transferred through an order by the Railway Board...

The Ministry of Railways has with the approval of the President decided that Shri Pushpesh R Tripathi, NFHAG (non-functional higher administrative grade)/IRSEE (Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers)/North Central Railway should be transferred and posted as DRM/Delhi/Northern Railway vice Shri Sukhwinder Singh, IRSEE, orders for whom will follow...

Money laundering case: ED arrests SDPI's Faizy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 4: The Enforcement Directorate has arrested SDPI national president M K Faizy in a money laundering case linked to the banned terrorist organisation PFI as the central agency claimed there existed an "organic" relation between the two outfits...



A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court sent him to ED custody for six days after he was produced by the agency Tuesday.

Officials told PTI that the ED has found evidence that PFI funds to the tune of ₹ 4.07 crore were utilised by SDPI.

The federal probe agency, according to the officials, would soon inform the Election Commission about these "illicit funds" of the PFI being routed to the SDPI which was a "recipient, beneficiary and user of the proceeds of crime"...

but the "political front" of PFI and was "funded and controlled" by the former. It claimed that it had evidence to state that there was a "deep-rooted" nexus between the two organisations as there was "overlapping" membership of their cadres...

POST OF THE DAY

Share Market : BLEEDING Unemployment : HIGHEST Money savings : LOWEST School Fees :

SKYROCKETED Air Pollution : THREATENING Railways : MISMANAGED But please keep targeting Congress because its spokie commented against Rohit Sharma and give free passes to BJP

SP MLA Azmi's Aurangzeb remarks rock legislature

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 4: The issue of Samajwadi Party MLA Abu Asim Azmi's remarks eulogising Mughal emperor Aurangzeb rocked both Houses of the Maharashtra legislature Tuesday...

ing action against Azmi, who is SP's state president.

They claimed Azmi was a descendant of Aurangzeb, who tortured Maratha king Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and brutally killed him. Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena head Eknath Shinde led the attack on Azmi both in the legislative council and Assembly...

"Abu Azmi is purposely insulting Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and (his son) Chhatrapati Sambhaji. Sambhaji's Maharaj's bravery and Aurangzeb's cruelty will give goosebumps to people," Shinde said in the council. Aurangzeb tortured Sambhaji Maharaj in an inhuman way...



A believer touches a brass inscription during the holy month of Ramzan, at the Dastgeer Sahib shrine in Srinagar

Bombay HC stays order directing FIR against Buch, 5 others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 4: The Bombay High Court Tuesday stayed for four weeks a special court's order directing FIR against former Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and five other officials for alleged stock market fraud and regulatory violations...

A single bench of Justice Shivkumar Dige said the special court order of March 1 also did not attribute any specific role to the accused in the matter. "After hearing all the parties concerned and after going through the order of the special court, it appears that the order is passed mechanically without going into details and without attributing any specific role to the applicants (Buch and others)..."

The HC's judgement came on petitions filed by Buch, three current whole-time Sebi directors Ashwani Bhatia, Ananth Narayan G and Kamlesh Chandra Varshney, Bombay Stock Exchange's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Sundararaman Ramamurthy and its former chairman and public interest director Pramod Agarwal. The pleas sought quashing of the order passed by the special court directing the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to register an FIR against them...

Govt targets restoring degraded ecosystems

According to the detailed action plan for Aravalli restoration, the government is likely to spend an estimated ₹16,053 crore in the first phase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 4: The Centre plans to restore degraded ecosystems and land across more than eight lakh hectares of recorded forest area in the first phase of its ambitious Aravalli Green Wall project...

as a natural barrier against desertification, preventing the expansion of the Thar desert and protecting cities such as Delhi, Jaipur and Gurugram.

The Aravallis, India's oldest mountain range, are the source of important rivers such as the Chambal, Sabarmati and the Luni. Its forests, grasslands and wetlands support endangered plant and animal species. However, deforestation, mining, livestock grazing and human encroachment are worsening desertification...

To tackle these issues, the government launched the Aravalli Green Wall initiative in March 2023. The project aims to establish a five-kilometre-wide green belt buffer, covering 6.45 million hectares across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi. Within this buffer zone,



about 42 per cent (2.70 million hectares) of land is degraded. Of the total degraded area, 81 per cent is in Rajasthan, 15.8 per cent in Gujarat, 1.7 per cent in Haryana and 1.6 per cent in Delhi, according to the action plan. Rajasthan's Udaipur district has the highest degraded area within the buffer zone (0.675 million hectares), which is more than the combined degraded area of Haryana, Delhi and Gujarat (0.568 million hectares)...

for this phase is ₹16,053 crore. The second phase will focus on areas adjacent to the recorded forest area, with interventions covering treatment of degraded scrub land, grassland management outside the recorded forest area and soil moisture conservation work to improve water regime.

Agricultural land will be prioritised for agroforestry systems and catchment areas of waterbodies targeted for plantation work in the second phase, according to the action plan. The third and final phase will involve expansion of activities in all land-uses within the landscape. According to the government, this initiative would be crucial in meeting India's climate goal of creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.

international



Aotearoa is regularly used as a name of New Zealand. It appears on our passports and it appears on our currency
GERRY BROWNLEE | SPEAKER, NEW ZEALAND

US DESIGNATES HOUTHI 'TERRORIST ORGANISATION'

The US State Department Tuesday said it was designating Yemen's Houthi movement, known formally as Ansar Allah, as a "foreign terrorist organization," after US President Donald Trump's call for the move earlier this year



Palestinian President welcomes Egyptian plan to rebuild Gaza

Cairo, March 4: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said Tuesday he welcomed an Egyptian plan to rebuild the Gaza Strip and urged US President Donald Trump to support such a plan that would not involve displacing Palestinian residents of the enclave. Speaking at an Arab League summit that aims to counter Trump's 'Gaza Riviera' plan, Abbas also said he was ready to hold presidential and parliamentary elections if circumstances allow, adding his Palestinian Authority was the only legitimate governing and military force in the Palestinian Territories. Israel has meanwhile embraced what it says is an alternative US proposal for the ceasefire itself and the release of hostages taken in Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. It has blocked the entry of food, fuel, medicine and other supplies to Gaza to try to get Hamas to accept the new proposal and has warned of additional consequences, raising fears of a return to war. The suspension of aid drew widespread criticism, with human rights groups saying it violated Israel's obligations as an occupying power under international law. The new plan would require Hamas to release half its remaining hostages — the militant group's main bargaining chip — in exchange for a ceasefire extension and a promise to negotiate a lasting truce. Israel made no mention of releasing more Palestinian prisoners — a key component of the first phase.

Infants as young as one raped in Sudan: UNICEF

Geneva/Cairo, March 4: Children under five, including babies, are among victims of sexual violence in the war between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), according to findings shared Tuesday by UN children's agency UNICEF. The UN agency cited a database compiled by Sudan-based groups helping survivors of sexual violence which showed that of 221 cases involving children registered since last year, 16 were under five years old, including four one-year-olds. About one-third of victims were male, it said. The database includes cases from across the country, but aid workers and rights groups



think it represents just a fraction of the cases because stigma, fear of reprisals and lack of access to medical facilities limit reporting. Some of the survivors cited by UNICEF say they fell pregnant as a result of the assaults, and takes her to another room. I could hear the little girl crying and screaming." "They only release these girls at dawn, and they return almost unconscious." UNICEF did not say who was responsible for the child rapes, calling on both sides to respect international law. Neither the RSF nor the army immediately responded to requests for comment. "Children as young as one being raped by armed men should shock anyone to

UN says sexual violence used as weapon of war
Latest findings highlight child victims
About one-third of reported victims are male

their core and compel immediate action," UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said in a statement sent to journalists. War erupted in April 2023 from a power struggle between the army and the RSF ahead of a planned transition to civilian rule, triggering huge displacement and hunger crises. A UN fact-finding mission has described levels of sexual abuse as "staggering". The majority of known cases were perpetrated by the RSF and its allies, the mission said, noting it was more difficult to report in army-controlled territories. Reuters has reported on women who said they were gang raped in ethnically targeted attacks by the RSF and allied Arab militiamen.

of the day quote

At the same time, in coordination with national security and foreign policy, the military will continue to deepen cooperation with the United States and other allied nations, expanding multilateral military exchanges to jointly uphold regional peace and stability
WELLINGTON KOO | DEFENCE MINISTER, TAIWAN

Mexico will respond to 25% tariffs imposed by the United States with its own retaliatory tariffs on US goods
CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM | PRESIDENT, MEXICO

I don't like anything to be named after me. So the stadium's name should be reverted to the original
IMRAN KHAN | JAILED EX-PM, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

9 dead in suicide attack in Pakistan
Peshawar: At least nine persons were killed and 16 injured as two explosive-laden vehicles rammed into the boundary wall of the main cantonment in Bannu in northwest Pakistan Tuesday while the army personnel neutralised at least six terrorists. The suicide bombers hit the wall of Bannu Cantonment, about 200 kms south-west of Peshawar, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in the evening around sunset time, police said. Hafiz Gul Bahadur-affiliated little known Jaish Al Fursan, in a statement, claimed the attack in Bannu. The group is one of the several factions of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

Indian-origin jailed for money laundering
London: Four British men, including two of South Asian heritage who ran jewellery businesses, were Tuesday convicted in one of the UK's largest money laundering prosecutions worth an estimated GBP 266 million following a complex eight-year investigation. Arjun Babber, 32, and Haroon Rashid, 53, were found guilty alongside Gregory Frankel and Daniel Rawson, both 46, at Leeds Cloth Hall Nightingale Crown Court in northern England over large amounts of unexplained cash passing through their businesses. Babber ran Goldsteel Limited and is said to have started laundering cash for others through Fowler Oldfield Limited in 2015.

Philippine fighter jet goes missing
Manila: A Philippine air force fighter jet with two pilots on board has gone missing during a night combat assault in support of ground forces who were battling insurgents in a southern province, and an extensive search is underway, officials said Tuesday. The FA-50 jet lost communication during the tactical mission with other air force aircraft around midnight Monday before reaching a target area. The other aircraft were able to return safely to an air base in central Cebu province.

Pope Francis suffers new breathing crises
Rome: Pope Francis suffered two new acute respiratory crises Monday and was put back on noninvasive mechanical ventilation, in another setback to his battle to fight pneumonia, the Vatican said. Doctors extracted "copious" amounts of mucus from his lungs during two bronchoscopies, in which a camera-tipped tube was sent down into his airways with a sucker at the tip to suction out fluid.

Zelenskyy calls Trump clash regrettable

Kyiv, March 4: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday he regretted last week's extraordinary Oval Office clash with Donald Trump and wanted to "make things right", adding that Kyiv was ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible. In a fulsome statement issued a day after Trump halted military aid to Ukraine, Zelenskyy said he was ready to sign a deal giving the United States access to Ukrainian minerals, which he had left on the table when he abandoned a visit to Washington after an Oval Office argument with Trump Friday. "None of us wants an endless war. Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer. Nobody wants peace more than Ukrainians," Zelenskyy said in his statement on X. "My team and I stand ready to work under President Trump's strong leadership to get a peace that lasts." The statement made no mention of the pause in US military supplies, the latest move by Trump to upend US policy on Ukraine and adopt a more conciliatory stance towards Russia. But the statement was clearly aimed at stressing Kyiv's gratitude amid the fallout from the explosive confrontation at the White House Friday, during which Trump and Vice President JD Vance upbraided Zelenskyy for being insufficiently appreciative of US backing and their efforts to end the war. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had said afterwards that Zelenskyy should apologise. "We do really value how much America has done to help Ukraine maintain its sovereignty and independence," Zelenskyy wrote. "Our meeting in Washington, at the White House Friday, did not go the



- Ukraine says military still has ability to supply front lines
- Trump has 'kicked door open' for Putin aggression, say Democrats
- Zelenskyy silent on aid pause
- France says Europe must defend front line in Ukraine

way it was supposed to be. It is regrettable that it happened this way. It is time to make things right." Zelenskyy outlined a path towards a peace agreement, which he said could begin with a release of prisoners and a halt to air and sea attacks, if Russia did the same. "Then we want to move very fast through all next stages and to work with the US to agree a strong final deal." **TRUMP TO ADDRESS CONGRESS** The Kremlin, for its part, said cutting off military aid to Ukraine was the best possible step towards peace, although it was still waiting to confirm Trump's move. Trump is expected to further outline his plans for Ukraine and Russia in a major speech to Congress later Tuesday. His abrupt pivot towards Russia may be the most dramatic US geopolitical shift in gener-

ations. Defending Europe from a hostile Kremlin has been the lodestar of US foreign and defence policy under both parties since the 1940s. Trump's moves have appalled Democrats, but have so far drawn little or no pushback from Republican leaders in Congress, including many who were once strong, vocal backers of Ukraine. "By freezing military aid to Ukraine, President Trump has kicked the door wide open for Putin to escalate his violent aggression against innocent Ukrainians," said Senator Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Kyiv has relied on US and European military aid to hold off a bigger and better-armed foe throughout three years of warfare that has killed and injured hundreds of thousands of soldiers on both sides. **PRESSURE ON EUROPE** The pause puts more pressure on European allies who have publicly embraced Zelenskyy since the Oval Office blow-up, led by Britain and France whose leaders both visited the White House last week and have offered troops to help guard a potential ceasefire. Europeans are racing to boost their own military spending.

Tariff war in full swing

Washington, March 4: US President Donald Trump's new 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada took effect Tuesday, along with a doubling of duties on Chinese goods to 20%, launching new trade conflicts with the top three US trading partners. The tariff actions, which could pend nearly \$2.2 trillion in two-way annual US trade went live at 12:01 am, hours after Trump declared that all three countries had failed to do enough to stem the flow of the deadly fentanyl opioid and its precursor chemicals into the US. China responded immediately, announcing additional tariffs of 10%-15% on certain US imports from March 10 and a series of new export restrictions for designated US entities. Later it said it had raised complaints about the new measures with the World Trade Organization. Canada and Mexico, which have enjoyed a virtually tariff-free trading relationship with the US for three decades, were poised to immediately retaliate. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Ottawa would respond with 25% tariffs on C\$30 billion (\$20.7 billion) worth of US imports, and another C\$125 billion if Trump's tariffs were still in place in 21 days. He said previously that Canada would target American beer, wine, bourbon, home appliances and Florida orange juice. "Tariffs will disrupt an incredibly successful trading relationship," Trudeau said, adding that they would violate the US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement signed by Trump during his first term. Ontario Premier Doug Ford told NBC that he was ready to cut off shipments of nickel and transmission of electricity from his province to the US. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum was expected to announce her response Tuesday, the country's economy ministry said. The European Union's executive Commission said it "deeply regrets" the decision, which risked disrupting global trade.



SUMMARY

- Deadline passes for tariffs on Canadian, Mexican, Chinese goods
- China announces tariffs on US agricultural goods, export curbs
- Canada plans immediate retaliatory tariffs
- Mexico to announce response Tuesday
- Tariffs could lead to economic downturn, businesses warn

Trump has also floated "reciprocal" tariffs on EU goods. **STACKING CHINA TARIFFS** The extra 10% duty on Chinese goods adds to a 10% tariff imposed by Trump February 4 to punish Beijing over the US fentanyl overdose crisis. The cumulative 20% duty comes on top of tariffs of up to 25% imposed by Trump during his first term on some \$370 billion worth of US imports. Some of these products saw US tariffs increase sharply under former president Joe Biden last year, including a doubling of duties on Chinese semiconductors to 50% and a quadrupling of tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles to over 100%. The 20% tariff will apply to several major US consumer electronics imports from China previously untouched, including smartphones, laptops, video game consoles, smartwatches and speakers and Bluetooth devices. China's new tariffs announced Tuesday targeted a wide range of US agricultural products including certain meats, grains, cotton, fruit, vegetables and dairy products. Beijing also placed 25 U.S. firms under export and investment restrictions on national security grounds. Ten of these firms were targeted for selling arms to Taiwan.

Floods in Jakarta displace thousands

Jakarta, March 4: Thousands of people were evacuated in Indonesia's capital Jakarta Tuesday after floods swamped the region, officials said, with heavy rain expected to continue until next week. Torrential rain since Monday has triggered floods of up to 3-metres (yards) in and around Jakarta, the country's disaster agency said in a statement, blocking some roads and submerging over 1,000 houses and many cars. Jakarta Governor Pramono Anung raised the alert level to the second highest of the critical stages, calling on the local government to activate water pumps to extract water from flooded areas and conduct weather modification operations - which typically includes shooting salt flares into clouds to trigger rain before they reach land. Local media reported floodwaters also swamped a hospital in the eastern town of Bekasi, with water entering some wards, forcing the evacuation of patients to other buildings, while other parts of the hospital were hit by power outages.

PROFOUND GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES

Melting Antarctic ice to slow world's strongest ocean current

This disruption could extend to global climate patterns, reducing the ocean's ability to regulate climate change by absorbing excess heat and carbon in the atmosphere

regulates Earth's climate and pumps water, heat and nutrients around the globe. But fresh, cool water from melting Antarctic ice is diluting the salty water of the ocean, potentially disrupting the vital ocean current. Our new research suggests the Antarctic Circumpolar Current will be 20% slower by 2050 as the world warms, with far-reaching consequences for life on Earth. **Why should we care?** The Antarctic Circumpolar Current is like a moat around the icy continent. The current helps to keep warm water at bay, protecting vulnerable ice sheets. It also acts as a barrier to invasive species such as southern bull kelp and



any animals hitching a ride on these rafts, spreading them out as they drift towards the continent. It also plays a big part in regulating Earth's climate. **Understanding the influence of climate change** Ocean currents respond to changes in temperature, salt

levels, wind patterns and sea-ice extent. So the global ocean conveyor belt is vulnerable to climate change on multiple fronts. Previous research suggested one vital part of this conveyor belt could be headed for a catastrophic collapse. Theoretically, warming wa-

ter around Antarctica should speed up the current. This is because density changes and winds around Antarctica dictate the strength of the current. Warm water is less dense (or heavy) and this should be enough to speed up the current. But observations to date indicate the strength of the current has remained relatively stable over recent decades. **Far-reaching consequences** The consequences of a weaker Antarctic Circumpolar Current are profound and far-reaching. As the main current that circulates nutrient-rich waters around Antarctica, it plays a crucial role in the Antarctic ecosystem. Weakening of the current could reduce biodiversity and decrease the productivity of fisheries that many coastal communities rely on. It could also aid the entry of invasive species such as southern bull kelp to Antarctica, disrupting local ecosystems and food webs. A weaker current may also allow more warm water to penetrate southwards, exacerbating the melting of Antarctic ice shelves and contributing to global sea-level rise. Faster ice melting could then lead to further weakening of the current, commencing a vicious spiral of current slowdown. This disruption could extend to global climate patterns, reducing the ocean's ability to regulate climate change by absorbing excess heat and carbon in the atmosphere.

