



Showbiz reality
Actor Nargis Fakhri reveals how the film industry talks about equality on one hand while objectifying women on the other

LEISURE | P2



Trump speaks
A triumphant President Donald Trump tells Congress that "America is back" after he reshaped US foreign policy

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Services sector growth
Services sector activity sees a sharp uptick in February boosted by improving domestic and international demand

BUSINESS | P11



India to face NZ
New Zealand hammers South Africa by 50 runs in a high-scoring semifinal to set up a summit clash with India in the Champions Trophy

SPORTS | P12

Orange is the colour for school buildings

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Five months after issuing a notification regarding change in the school uniform colour, the state government has decided to introduce a new colour code for all government-run school buildings, including those in PM-SHRI Schools. Odsiha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) has issued a directive to all the government school authorities asking them ensure that the buildings are painted in shades of 'Orange Frost' with 'Orange Tan' borders.

In a letter to all District Collectors, state project director of OSEPA Ananya Das directed them to adopt uniform colour code for all government schools.

The letter said, "It is to state that the Govt has been pleased to approve new colour code. It is requested to issue suitable instruction to concerned field functionaries for adoption of the approved colour code in all Govt schools, including PM SHRI Schools during construction, repair, renovation works. This order would be in supersession of all previous instructions related to colour code of school buildings."

In October last year, the state government had announced new colour scheme for the uniforms of students in Classes IX and X. According to the official directive, the updated uniforms will incorporate a combination of light brown, chocolate, and clay-baked yellow. The changes in colour code were carried out under Mukhyamantri Chhatra Chhatra Paridhan Yojana.



RESCUE OPS: People gather after a suspension motor bridge connecting Chamoli's Govindghat and Hemkund Sahib collapsed due to a landslide at Govindghat in Uttarakhand, Wednesday. The bridge broke after being hit by huge boulders falling from a hill, resulting in the death of a motorcyclist

₹14.62cr gold seized from Kannada actress

Bangalore, March 5: Gold bars worth ₹12.56 crore were seized from Kannada actress Ranya Rao at Kempegowda International Airport, following which searches were conducted at her residence and gold jewellery worth ₹2.06 crore and ₹2.67 crore in cash were also recovered, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) said Wednesday.

Rao is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra Rao, the Chairman and Managing Director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd, a senior police official told PTI.

The total seizure in the case stood at ₹17.29 crore, including assets worth ₹4.73 crore, marking a significant blow to organised gold smuggling networks.

According to DRI officials, the 14.2 kg haul is one of the largest gold seizures at Bangalore airport in recent times.

China flexes muscles

The ongoing trade conflicts between US and its global trading partners took a curious turn Wednesday when China declared it is "ready to fight till the end in any type of war the US wants". This statement came in response to US President Donald Trump's imposition of reciprocal tariffs. The announcement coincided with China's decision to hike its Defence Budget by 7.2% for this year, part of its ongoing efforts to modernise its military. Trump criticised China, pointing out that its average tariff on US goods is double what US charges Chinese products, and accused Beijing of failing to stop the trafficking of fentanyl and other dangerous opioids into its territory. However, China dismissed the fentanyl issue as a flimsy excuse for US to raise tariffs on its imports



US TARIFFS ON INDIA FROM APRIL 2: TRUMP

New York: US President Donald Trump criticised the high tariffs charged by India and other countries, terming them as "very unfair" and announced reciprocal tariffs from April 2 on nations that impose levies on American goods. "If you don't make your product in America, however, under the Trump administration, you will pay a tariff and in some cases, a rather large one," Trump said. "Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades and now it's our turn to start using them against those other countries. On average, the European Union, China, Brazil, India, Mexico and Canada — have you heard of them? And countless other nations charge us tremendously higher tariffs than we charge them," Trump said. The US President said, "It's very unfair. India charges us auto tariffs higher than 100 per cent." Trump made these remarks in an address to the Joint Session of the Congress Tuesday.

tariff war, a trade war or any other type of war, we're ready to fight till the end."

It is some of the strongest rhetoric so far from China since Trump became president and comes as the country's top leaders gathered in Beijing for the opening of the annual National People's Congress.

Wednesday, China's Premier Li Qiang announced that China would again boost its defence spending by 7.2 per cent this year and warned that "changes unseen in a century were unfolding across the world at a faster pace". This increase was expected and matches the figure announced last year.

Leaders in Beijing are trying to send a message to people in China that they are confident the country's economy can

Govt to table missing key report in Cabinet

Cuttack, March 5: The state government Wednesday informed the Orissa High Court that the report of Justice Raghubir Dash Commission of Inquiry into the missing keys of Srimandir Ratna Bhandar will be tabled in a Cabinet meeting, while urging the state's apex court to allow some time for the purpose.

A division bench of Chief Justice Arindam Sinha and Justice Mruganka Sekhar Sahoo posted the next hearing to March 12.

The court had sought a clarification from the government after a petitioner contended that lakhs of devotees of Lord Jagannath would want to know the circumstances under which Ratna Bhandar keys went missing and later found. The petitioner further insisted that the inquiry report should be made public.

It was in April 2018 when the disappearance of the keys to the inner chamber of the temple vault came to light after Puri district administration said that it could not locate them.

Following a direction from the HC, an attempt was made April 4, 2018, to open the inner

chamber for an inspection of its structural condition by an ASI expert team.

Their attempt did not succeed owing to the unavailability of keys. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had then stated that since there was no permission to enter the inner chamber by Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJT-A), the committee could only examine it from the outside through an iron grill.

Two months later, the then district magistrate Aravind Agarwal reported that a duplicate key of Ratna Bhandar was found in the district record room adding fuel to the lingering controversy over the treasure trove.

It was in a sealed envelope carrying a tag of a 'duplicate keys of Bhitara Bhandar', with a seal of the temple administrator of 1985.

This led to an outrage prompting the then Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janta Dal government to appoint an inquiry commission under retired Orissa HC judge Dash to investigate the missing keys issue.

The commission submitted a 324-page report in November 2018, but the Naveen government did not table it in the Assembly.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Raising my finger could cause a riot... he's from the majority, and I'm the minority!

Sunita, Butch to return soon

Cape Canaveral, March 5: After nine months in space, NASA's two stuck astronauts are just a few weeks away from finally returning to Earth, according to reports.

Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams have to wait until their replacements arrive at the International Space Station (ISS) next week before they can check out later this month. They'll be joined on their SpaceX ride home by two astronauts who launched by themselves in September alongside two empty seats.

During an online presser Tuesday, Wilmore said that while politics is part of life, it did not play into his and Williams' return, moved up a couple weeks thanks to a change in SpaceX capsules. President Donald Trump and SpaceX's Elon Musk said at the end of January that they wanted to accelerate the astronauts' return, blaming the previous administration.

But Williams, in response to a question, did take issue with Musk's recent call to dump the space station in two years, rather than waiting until NASA's projected deorbit in 2031. She noted all the scientific research being performed at the orbiting lab.

NEPHEWS KILL NAIB SARPANCH'S HUBBY

Khallikote, March 5: Rabintra Das, 38, husband of Tulasi panchayat's naib sarpanch Minati Kumari Das, was hacked to death allegedly by his nephews and their associates over family disputes at Hariipur village under this police limits in Ganjam district Wednesday morning.

Reports said Rabintra was engaged in illegal liquor trade which led to a business rivalry with his nephews. He was jailed in November last year for hurling bombs at his nephews. The deceased was released on bail, three months back and living with his wife at Kanchana village.

Rabintra and his wife had visited Kamalpadar village to attend a feast but stayed

back at Hariipur. When Rabintra stepped out of his house, Wednesday morning, two of his nephews and their two associates attacked him with swords and hacked him to death. Chhatrapur SDPO Chandan Ghadei, Khallikote inspector-in-charge (IIC) Ramesh Kumar Pradhan and police officials reached the spot and started an investigation.

The exact reason behind the murder could be ascertained only after the probe is completed, the IIC added.

The deceased had several cases pending at Khallikote police station. Police sent the body for post-mortem and started an investigation.

A scientific team also reached the spot and collected blood samples and other evidence related to the crime.

Scientists create 'woolly mouse' in project to revive mammoths

Washington, March 5: Scientists have announced that their plan to revive the mammoth is progressing, following the creation of a new species: the woolly mouse. Researchers at US biotech company Colossal Biosciences aim to "de-extinct" woolly mammoths by genetically altering Asian elephants to incorporate mammoth traits. They are hopeful that the first calf will be born by the end of 2028.

Colossal Biosciences co-founder and chief executive Ben Lamm said the team had been studying ancient mammoth genomes and comparing them with those of Asian elephants to understand how they differ and had already begun genome-editing cells of the latter,



a report by 'The Guardian' said. The team said they have fresh support for their approach after creating healthy, genetically modified mice that have traits geared towards cold tolerance, including woolly hair. "It does not accelerate

anything but it's a massive validating point," Lamm said.

In the research, which has not yet been peer-reviewed, the team used a number of genome editing techniques to either genetically modify fertilised mouse eggs or modify embry-

onic mouse stem cells and inject them into mouse embryos, before implanting them into surrogates.

The team focused on disrupting nine genes associated with hair colour, texture, length or pattern or hair follicles. Most of these genes were selected because they were already known to influence the coats of mice, with the induced disruptions expected to produce physical traits similar to those seen in mammoths, such as golden hair.

However, two of the genes targeted in the mice were also found in mammoths, where they are thought to have contributed to a woolly coat, with the changes introduced by the researchers designed to make the mouse genes more mammoth-like.

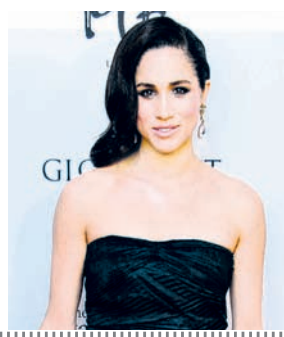


TURNING TO BOOZE WORSENEPALTROW'S MENOPAUSE SIGNS

Iron Man star Gwyneth Paltrow has candidly revealed how her menopause symptoms were impacted by the LA wildfires.

MEGHAN MARKLE REVEALS HER BREAKFAST ROUTINE

Meghan, Duchess of Sussex has spilled on what she cooks Prince Harry and their two children for breakfast.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES You may find yourself in a precarious position today, says Ganesha.

TAURUS Almost as if crafted by Cervantes himself, you might wake up today feeling passionate and quixotic.

GEMINI Even though it is for your own benefit, you will spend the day safeguarding the sentiments of others.

CANCER The workaholic Bull will have more on their plate than they can chew.

LEO When it comes to maintaining a balance in any relationship, you set an example for others to follow.

VIRGO Take up the gauntlet that promises to test your business acumen, especially those related to capital and finances.

LIBRA Everyone has a dream, but only few have the fortune to realise them.

SCORPIO Ganesha predicts that you shall work towards building a better future.

SAGITTARIUS Problems will push you in a corner today. But try resolving them as soon as possible.

CAPRICORN You may have sweated your guts out for an opportunity to pursue higher studies abroad.

AQUARIUS Work, work, work! That is what will pay rich dividends.

PISCES Arguments lead nowhere, and why argue when, at the end of the day, you can step back and watch them end up with egg on their faces.

Nargis exposes showbiz duality



Mumbai: Ahead of Women's Day, actress Nargis Fakhri has opened up about how the entertainment industry talks about equality on one hand while objectifying women on the other.

"In the entertainment industry, there is often a delicate balance between celebrating beauty and, unfortunately, objectifying individuals. Cinema, at its best, has the power to showcase diverse stories, talents, and experiences, while also portraying beauty in many forms."

Personally, Nargis navigates this by focusing on the work itself. "I understand that part of the entertainment business involves showcasing attractive individuals, but I always maintain clear boundaries for myself."

Don 3: Kiara opts out

Mumbai: Actress Kiara Advani, known for her versatility and charm, recently announced that she and her husband, actor Sidharth Malhotra, are expecting their first child.

The post soon received immense love and blessings from their well-wishers. Following the announcement, Kiara made her first public appearance, where she graciously accepted congratulations from fans and paparazzi.

According to a report, Kiara has decided to focus on her personal life, leading to her amicable exit from Farhan Akhtar's Don 3. The filmmakers are now searching for a new lead actress.

Furthermore, adding to the excitement surrounding Kiara, speculations are abuzz about her possible involvement in two major upcoming films, Shakti Shalini and Dhoom 4.



Amitabh's superstitions

Mumbai: Amitabh Bachchan is known to be a huge sports fan, apart from being one of the best actors India has ever seen.

He revealed that there are times when he wonders if he should even watch the match as there have been times when he has not seen the match and India has won.

The Don actor added while appreciating the Men in Blue and their seamless win, "Get up to go .. walk a bit when the ads .. begin or stay put .. the variations kept tempting the mind and system, until the final victory ...In the finals now ..."

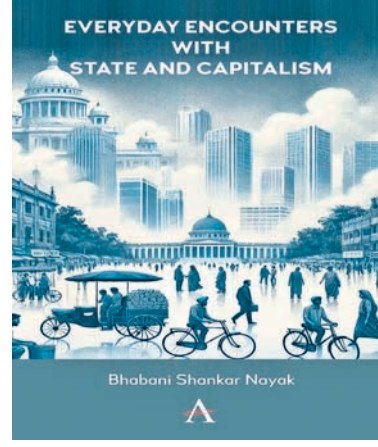
TWO BOOKS BUT ONE MESSAGE

State, capitalism, Hindutva, and imperialism are no longer merely academic debates confined to seminar halls or distant wars and conflicts affecting unknown faces and destroying homes and habitats.

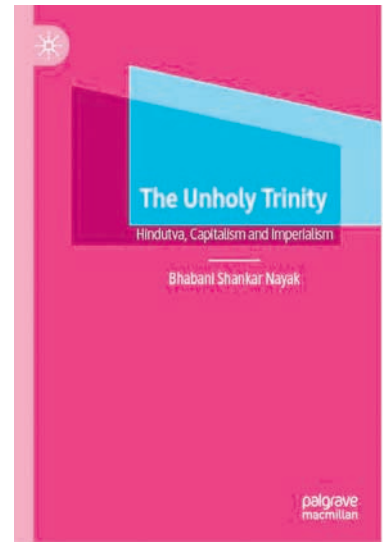
The book Everyday Encounters with State and Capitalism by Bhabani Shankar Nayak, published by Anthem, London, illustrates how different forces shape ideas, knowledge traditions, policies, processes, institutions and everyday lives to domesticate both people and the planet in pursuit of profit.

maintain the status quo by ensuring that attention and resources are consistently focused on the accumulation of wealth and prosperity for a few, thereby preventing widespread consideration of alternative and egalitarian systems and processes for mass welfare.

The Unholy Trinity: Hindutva, Capitalism and Imperialism by the same author, published by Palgrave, New York offers critical commentary and passionate analysis on the implications of Hindutva, capitalism, and imperialism for the everyday lives of working people and the planet.



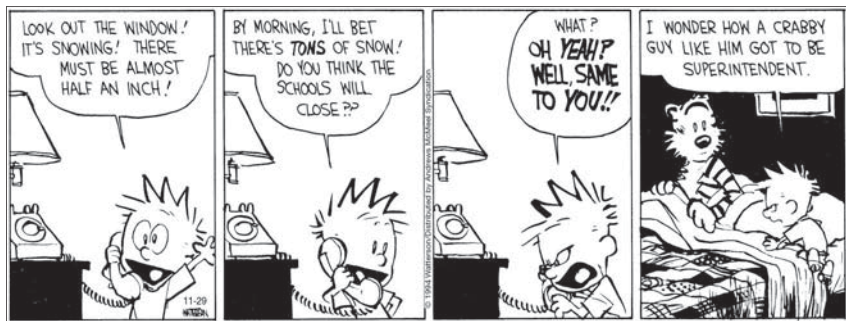
uals, families, communities, democratic praxis, societal structures and nature. The book portrays power structures that are skewed in a manner that marginalises many while upholding the interests of a few.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

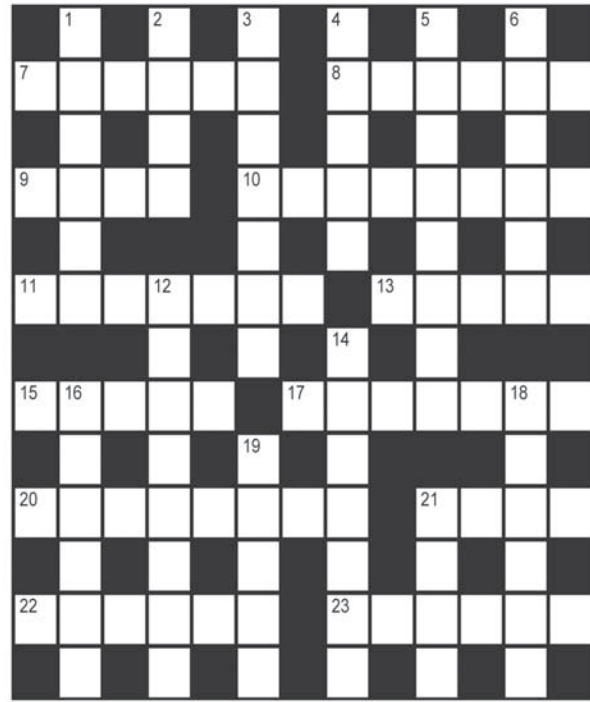


BREVITY



FUN POST

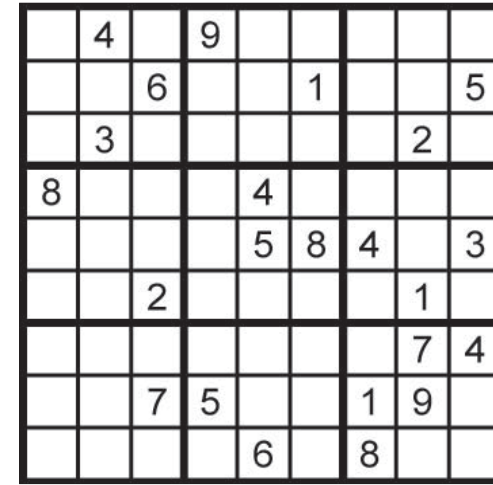
CROSSWORD



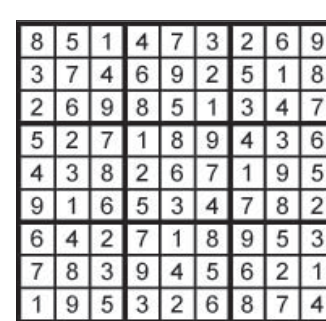
- Across 7 Garment worker 8 Young cow 9 Border on 10 Nonconformist 11 List 13 Workwear 15 Sundae topper 17 Big-mouth bird? 20 Tyre problem 21 Easy marks 22 Ankle injury 23 Ill-tempered person 1 Chess move 2 Oversupply 3 Guaratee 4 Rudely push 5 British P.M. before Gladstone 6 Guiding light 12 Prestidigitator 14 Reprisal 16 Seizes by force 18 Guanaco kin 19 Comical 21 Demonstrate

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

FRESH START

IPS officer Jagmohan Meena takes charge as Bhubaneswar DCP in presence of twin city Commissioner of Police S Dev Datta Singh in the Capital city, Wednesday



downtown

Preventive detention draconian: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: The Supreme Court Wednesday said preventive detention was a 'draconian measure' and quashed the detention orders against a duo held in a drugs case for want of prescribed safeguards.



and psychotropic substances," the court said. The verdict also found it 'needless' to state that as preventive detention deprived a person of their individual liberties by detaining them for a length of time without a criminal trial or conviction, the prescribed safeguards 'must be strictly observed to ensure due compliance' with constitutional and statutory norms.

the case under the NDPS Act after being arrested April 12, 2024 while seeking their preventive detention. The bench said it was only November 28, 2024 that they were granted default bail owing to the failure of the prosecution to do the needful within the prescribed time.

"Therefore, the edicts of this court would squarely apply as there was no material for the detaining authority to have formed an opinion that there was a likelihood of either Choudhary or Chawang being released on bail," it said.

The bench observed the duo was also not informed the grounds of their detention in the language known to them by the investigating officer.

The material placed on record, therefore, reflected to the court that the detaining authority -- special secretary, Nagaland government home department -- did not even make separate grounds of detention and only acted upon the proposals for detention forwarded to her by the additional director general of police (Administration) of Nagaland.

"The cryptic orders of detention passed by her on May 30, 2024 merely recorded that she was satisfied, on careful examination of such proposals and other supporting documents, that sufficient grounds were made out for the detention of Ashraf Hussain Choudhary and Adaliu Chawang. This is not in keeping with the statutory scheme, inasmuch as Section 6 of the Act of 1988 specifically refers to the order of detention 'being made' on separate grounds," it said.

"Preventive detention is a draconian measure whereby a person who has not been tried and convicted under a penal law can be detained and confined for a determinate period of time so as to curtail that person's anticipated criminal activities," the bench said. Preventive detention was, however, sanctioned by Article 22(3)(b) of the Constitution but Article 22 also provides stringent norms to be adhered to while effecting preventive detention.

Article 22, the bench said, spoke of Parliament making a law to prescribe conditions and modalities relating to preventive detention.

"The Act of 1988 is one such law which was promulgated by Parliament authorising preventive detention so as to curb illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs



RICH TRIBUTES: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy CMs KV Singh Deo and Pravati Parida, BJD leader Prafulla Ghadai, Ekamra-Bhubaneswar MLA Babu Singh and I&PR department Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh during the state-level birth anniversary celebration of former CM Biju Patnaik at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



LoP Naveen Patnaik pays floral tributes to his father at Biju Patnaik Park in Bhubaneswar

PM, CM, Naveen pay tributes to Biju Babu

Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Leader of Opposition (LoP) Naveen Patnaik were among those who paid tributes to former CM Biju Patnaik on his birth anniversary, Wednesday. "Remembering Biju Babu on his birth anniversary. We fondly recall his contribution towards Odisha's development and empowering people. He was also staunchly committed to democratic ideals, strongly opposing the Emergency," Modi said in a post on X. Paying tributes to the legendary leader, Majhi said his contribution to the welfare of the people and giving a new direction to the development of the state is always inspiring. He will be remembered forever as a politician, freedom fighter and nationalist leader. Naveen, former CM and his son, said, "He (Biju Patnaik) dedicated his life for an empowered and prosperous Odisha. He lived in the people's heart and his rich legacy will continue to inspire us for years to come."

Door-to-door 'Subhadra' survey after March 31

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: The state government will conduct a door-to-door survey to identify left out beneficiaries under Subhadra Yojana after March 31, the last date for submitting applications under the scheme in 2024-25, official sources said Wednesday.



ment has received 1.85 lakh applications under the scheme and the first instalment of ₹5,000 has so far been disbursed to around 98 lakh women in four phases. "We will cross one crore-mark Thursday when the first instalment of the money will be transferred to the accounts

of the beneficiaries in the fifth phase," Parida, who also holds the Women and Child Development portfolio, said.

The second instalment of money under the scheme will be released March 8, International Women's Day, she said, adding, "While disbursing the third instalment, those left out of the women empowerment scheme will receive three-phase money -- ₹15,000 -- at one go on Rakhi Purnima this year."

Meanwhile, thousands of women and girls participated in 'Subhadra Rallies' at 6,794 places across the state to spread public awareness about the financial assistance scheme.

30-year-old man held for attack in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: The twin city Commissionerate Police Wednesday arrested a 30-year-old man on charges of attacking a few people during a wedding procession and vandalising vehicles over a petty issue here February 21.

custody Bapina Parida of Marichia village on the basis of a complaint lodged by Soumya Ranjan Sahoo.

The IIC said Parida and his associates intercepted Soumya and others in the wedding procession at Marichia market February 21 and hurled abuses over a trivial issue. They later pelted stones at the procession, leaving a few people injured. Parida and his associates al-

so vandalised the vehicles in the procession, the IIC said.

About the crackdown, the IIC said Parida was nabbed near Saifun Square in morning. "Efforts are on to arrest the remaining accused involved in the attack," Mishra said.

Parida has been booked under Sections 296, 115(2), 118(2), 109(1) and 324(4) of the BNS and was produced before a local court later in the day.

Congress workers protest selection of 'blacklisted' firm to conduct job exams



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Protesting selection of a 'blacklisted' company to conduct examinations to recruit police personnel and staff in the state pollution control board, youth and student members of the Congress Wednesday tried to gherao Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's official residence here.

the police personnel and Congress workers after they tried to march ahead by breaking barricades.

The police detained several Congress supporters following the scuffle.

Speaking to media, youth Congress state president Ranjit Patra alleged that the state government has engaged a blacklisted company for conducting the examinations for recruitment of SI of police and some posts in the state pollution control board. The recruitment examinations will be held soon, he said.

"We demand that the state government remove the company concerned from the job and engage another firm in its place to conduct the recruitment tests transparently," Patra said. Yashir Nawaz, another

The government has engaged a Gujarat-based company to conduct two important examinations. The firm's top officer has been sent to six months in jail for manipulating an online entrance examination of BITS Pilani in 2019. Again, he was jailed for nine months for malpractice in conducting Gujarat Public Service Selection Board (GPSSB) in 2022

youth Congress leader, said. "The government has engaged a Gujarat-based company to conduct two important examinations. The firm's top officer has been sent to six months in jail for manipulating an online entrance examination of BITS Pilani in 2019. Again, he was jailed for nine months for malpractice in conducting Gujarat Public Service Selection Board (GPSSB) in 2022," Nawaz alleged.

Five months ago, the same company was responsible for leaking the question paper of an examination in New Delhi, he alleged.

"Why did the Odisha government engage such a company for the recruitment tests? It seems the government has opened shops to sell government jobs by depriving talented and meritorious students of their rights," Nawaz alleged.

HC extends protection for IAS officer, family

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, March 5: The Orissa High Court has extended its interim order preventing any coercive action against senior IAS officer Bishnupada Sethi and his family by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) until March 18 in a bribery case.

The court passed the order during a hearing Tuesday after the CBI submitted a reply affidavit, prompting the court to allow the petitioners to file a rejoinder and defer further proceedings.

The case pertains to Sethi's alleged connection with a senior officer of a Central PSU, who was arrested in December last year on the charge of accepting ₹10 lakh bribe. Following a CBI raid at his residence February 18, Sethi, along with his wife and daughter, approached the High Court February 24, alleging mental harassment by the investigating agency officials. On February 25, Justice SK Panigrahi granted interim protection to Sethi after the CBI sought time to respond to his plea. During the latest hearing Tuesday, Justice Panigrahi extended the family's protection and said the matter would be heard again March 18.

Sethi has denied any involvement with the CPSU, Bridge and Roof Company (India) Limited, which has been working with the state government for over a decade.

He stated that despite not being named in the FIR, the CBI conducted a search at his residence, seized his daughter's laptop, and froze his wife's bank account. The bribery case, which led to the arrest of Chanchal Mukherjee, a senior official of the CPSU, brought Sethi under the scanner after Mukherjee allegedly named him during interrogation.

The CBI had earlier issued a notice to Sethi, citing his possible knowledge of crucial facts related to the case.

LIC's Bima Sakhi advertisement with details on stipendiary scheme and contact information.

Gahirmatha turning turtle graveyard Two students fall to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, March 5: Despite a fishing ban, turtles continue to die intermittently at Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary (GMS), world's largest nesting beach for rare Olive Ridley sea turtles...



Nayak said that the Gahirmatha marine zone has been under a fishing ban from November 2024 to May 2025 to protect the nesting of Olive Ridley turtles. During this period, the forest department, marine police, and the Coast Guard are expected to enforce strict surveillance to ensure marine conservation.

powered and in poor condition, alleged Nayak. Previously, impounded boats and trawlers were not released until the end of the restricted fishing period. However, now, seized vessels are being promptly released by the courts, allowing their owners to resume fishing activities, he further said.

so far, he claimed. Environmentalist Hemant Kumar Rout noted that Olive Ridley turtles used to nest along the Chandrabhaga and Ramachandi coasts. However, due to habitat destruction and illegal fishing activities in trawlers, mass nesting of these turtles has not occurred in the region since 2012. Given that only one in 1,000 eggs typically survives to adulthood, their protection is crucial.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, March 5: Two students were killed after the biker lost control, hit a tree, and plunged into a canal at Pandiajholi under Kukudakhandi block in Ganjam district Tuesday night. The deceased were identified as Kshyamaprasad Gouda, 15, son of Rabindra Gouda, and Pritam Sethi, 14, son of Sushant Sethi, of Pandiajholi village under Rohigan panchayat.



The duo was cremated at the village crematorium Wednesday. According to reports, Kshyamaprasad had returned home after his Tuesday examination. Around 9 p.m., he borrowed a bike from his cousin and took Pritam along for a ride. Two other minors followed them from

behind on another bike. As they crossed the main canal bridge of the Rushikulya river, which lacked a guard wall, the motorcycle crashed into a tree, sending them plunging nearly 25 feet down into the canal. Villagers rushed to the spot and pulled Kshyamaprasad and Pritam out in critical condition and rushed them to MKCC Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur. However, doctors at the hospital pronounced both dead on arrival.

Vet attacked by jumbo herd during treatment of female elephant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasore, March 5: A veterinary doctor was attacked and injured by a herd of jumbos while he was treating an ailing elephant in a forested area in Balasore district, an officer said Wednesday. The veterinarian was hospitalized after the incident, he said. The incident happened in the Kuldaha Reserve Forest Tuesday when a team of forest officials and the doctor went to the forest to rescue and treat an ailing female elephant...

Man bludgeoned to death over suspicion of sorcery



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rana's family were arrested and interrogated in connection with the incident. They were identified as Sarat Rana, Tripura Rana, Sushil Rana, Balgopal Rana, and Ranjan Rana. Bolangir SP Abhilash G visited Atagaon village Wednesday to oversee the police investigation. Sources indicate that a long-standing dispute existed between the Bags and Ranas in the village. The situation escalated Tuesday night when members of the Rana family accused the Bags of practicing witchcraft...

Anger over frequent transfers of officials



POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, March 5: The Chhatrapur Block Chairman and panchayat members have alleged that Junior Engineers and panchayat-level workers are being frequently transferred due to undue political pressure. They claim these transfers are causing significant delays in daily government affairs and fueling public resentment. Chhatrapur was recognized as the best block in the country during a national event last year, as declared by the Central government...

EAST COAST RAILWAY PUBLIC NOTICE. Tender Notice No. 31-SBP-TRD-OT-2024-25. Tender Closing Date and Time At 1530 Hrs. on 24.03.2025. 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...

ODISHA CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LTD. (A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking) Central Workshop, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010 (Odisha), Tel - 0674 : 2580107. "e" - Procurement Notice No. 56/OCC/L/2024-25 (on-line). Type of work : Supply of casting items (Aluminium Bronze bushes) for 130T Rope Drum Hoist for Spillway...

Steel strength: Women closing gender gap at RSP



RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, March 5: Women across industries are breaking barriers, stepping into roles once considered beyond their reach, and proving their mettle in high-risk zones, according to a report. From construction sites to factory floors, they are challenging stereotypes and excelling in fields that demand both physical and mental strength.

ish my shift and rush home to take care of my baby, barely catching my breath. But I love what I do." The toughest days came during Covid-19 when only one person was allowed inside the control room at a time. "I was alone, handling everything. Sometimes up to 60 plates a day," Rojni recalls. "It was exhausting, but we didn't let the work stop." Their job extends beyond leveling plates. They conduct inspections, prepare reports, manually paint and punch plates, oversee grinding inspections, and even operate the plate turnover device. The work is demanding and requires precision.

women—Mamata Patra and Rojni Kindo, both operator-cum-technicians (OCTs), and Pritilata Karar, an operator in the new plate mill at Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP)—are proving that steel is not just forged in furnaces but built with resilience and spirit. Mamata and Rojni have been part of the pulpit since its commissioning, ensuring wavy plates are leveled to perfection. Pritilata joined in 2019, already a trailblazer as the first woman crane operator at the plate mill. For these women, every day presents a challenge, but they embrace it with pride.

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FOCUS PHARMA SECTOR

TARIFFS WON'T HIT TOO HARD



With a 10-12% growth rate, India's pharmaceutical sector is expected to reach \$100 billion by 2025, fuelled by its robust domestic manufacturing base

About 8 out of 20 global generic companies are from India and over 55% of the exports from the country are to highly regulated markets. In fact, India is the biggest vaccine exporter, about 65-70% of the World Health Organisation (WHO) vaccine requirements being sourced from India.

India's share of pharmaceuticals and drugs in the global market is a little over 5.71%. Formulations and biologics constituted the major portion of India's exports with a share of 72.54% followed by drug intermediates and bulk drugs. In FY25 (until June 2024), the exports of drugs and pharmaceuticals stood at \$7.20 billion, which may exceed \$15 billion this fiscal.

Pharmaceutical exports of India extend to both developed and developing countries and with enhanced research and development efforts, the industry is poised to usher in a new era of drug manufacturing and testing. India ranks third in the world in production of drugs and pharmaceuticals by volume and exports to approximately 200 countries and territories. The top five destinations for these exports are the USA, Belgium, South Africa, the UK, and Brazil. With a 10-12% growth rate, India's pharmaceutical sector is expected to reach \$100 billion by 2025, fuelled by its robust domestic manufacturing base. India majorly exports drug formulations and these products contribute to about 75% of the total pharmaceutical exports out of India.

Also, India's biotechnology sector increased 13-fold over the past decade, from \$10 billion in 2014 to over \$130 billion in 2024. It is projected to reach \$300 billion by 2030.

It goes without saying that India needs to focus on the pharma sector and ensure its unstinted growth in the coming years. Though definite initiatives have been taken by the government, more help, if necessary, may be extended while diversifying export destinations. **INFA**

Way back in 2020, McKinsey Global Institute estimated that by 2020 India needs to create at least 90 million new non-farm jobs to accommodate fresh migrants into the labour force as also workers who move from agriculture to non-agricultural jobs. If the manufacturing sector is boosted in a big way this would help revive the economy but would make the job creation challenge substantially bigger. The traditional view that high-profile software industry can fill up the gap may not be fully correct. One may mention here the case of the pharma sector which has grown by leaps and bounds in the country.

India has emerged as the largest maker of antibiotics, anti-malarial, anti-TB, paracetamol and other medicines. There is a need for rapid expansion of the pharma sector, both for domestic production and exports. In this connection, there is a necessity for creating 50 large pharma parks with pre-approved environment clearances. Also, investment in creating global standards strain for developing active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) has to be considered. Poor quality strains have affected the sector, and the companies have to be quality-conscious. Added to all this, strengthening R&D at all levels is necessary to support firms and expand the patent portfolio.

India's pharmaceutical industry has gained international recognition as the "Pharmacy of the World," particularly for its imperative role in supplying vaccines, essential medicines, and medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. During the pandemic, the country demonstrated its ability to be a consistent and reliable pharma supplier to the world even during times of crisis.

The sector has showcased its innovative capabilities and established itself as a crucial global pharmaceutical val-

ue chain member. With the help of various schemes and reforms, India's pharmaceutical exports increased from \$2.13 billion in July 2023 to \$2.31 billion in July 2024.

Collaboration between public and private research institutions and increased funding and government support are essential for driving further growth and innovation. Further, initiatives such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and the Bulk Drug Park, in alignment with the "Make in India" campaign, foster an environment conducive to investment, innovation, and business development in the pharmaceutical sector. Through the PLI scheme, the government hopes to increase investment and production. The scheme is expected to generate incremental sales of \$37.09 billion in six years from FY23.

Growth in the Indian pharmaceutical industry is driven by metropolitan cities, tier-I cities, and rural markets, each accounting for approximately 30% of the market share. It is heartening to note that the domestic pharma industry may not be significantly impacted by potential US retaliatory tariffs as most exports to the US include low-cost, price inelastic generics that are in constant demand. Indian pharma exports to the US, valued nearly \$10 billion,

mainly include oral formulations and it is understood that any additional cost burden due to tariffs would likely be shared between consumers, healthcare providers and domestic companies. The US accounts for nearly a third of India's pharma exports, mainly cheaper versions of popular drugs with sales jumping 16% to about \$9 billion last fiscal.

India has been a major supplier to the US, providing over 45% of its generic medicines, driven by an ageing population and demand for cost-effective healthcare. As the Indian pharmaceutical industry has been playing a vital role in ensuring affordable and quality-assured medicines, not only in the US but in many Western countries, the demand has been constantly increasing.

Though reciprocal tariffs have been suggested, most experts believe that Indian generics are in great demand because of the cost factor and this is expected to continue in the coming days, irrespective of tariffs. Some analysts have stated that the effect will be more on innovators than generics as the latter are low in value. If tariffs are imposed, some of these will be passed on or absorbed by the seller.

India has the highest number of United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) compliant companies with plants outside of the USA.



Dhurjati Mukherjee

STRENGTHENING R&D AT ALL LEVELS IS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT FIRMS AND EXPAND THE PATENT PORTFOLIO



Ian Buruma

Just as European and Asian democracies must confront a hostile coalition of autocracies - Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea - their protector threatens to withdraw its backing, leaving little time to rebuild a solid defense



The great are strongest when they stand alone, A God-given might of being is their force."

SRI AUROBINDO



Pax Americana Ends

The end of Pax Americana is clearly in sight. While this has long been the goal of many leftists battling "American imperialism," it is not really all that strange that a US government of right-wing zealots ultimately took a wrecking ball to the world order. America's far right was always more isolationist than its liberal establishment. The question is how America's main allies in Europe and East Asia, dependent on the United States for their security, will react.

European leaders have hastily convened meetings where many brave words were spoken. Kaja Kallas, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, wrote on X that the "free world needs a new leader," and that "it's up to us, Europeans, to take this challenge." British Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke of a "once-in-a-generation moment," and promised to work with France, the only other European country with nuclear weapons, to help reach a just ceasefire for Ukraine. Most remarkable of all was the statement by Friedrich Merz, Germany's presumptive chancellor and formerly a staunch Atlanticist, that Europe needed "to achieve independence from the US."

The best we can hope for is that US President Donald Trump's betrayal of America's traditional allies, humiliation of Ukraine, encouragement of right-wing extremism, and embrace of belligerent autocrats will push European and East Asian democracies to form new defense alliances. The need for a new order is indisputable. But so, too, are the hurdles.

The EU is not a military power, and it is doubtful that a "coalition of the willing" led by the United Kingdom and France can make up for the withdrawal of US security guarantees. Even if European countries find a way to build a military alliance capable of replacing the US-led NATO, doing so will take years. And this won't succeed without the leadership of Germany, the bloc's largest economy.

In 2011, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski told a German audience in Berlin that he feared "German power less than German inaction." Many Europeans in countries that once suffered a brutal Nazi occupation would probably agree with that sentiment. But it might not be shared by enough Germans, who are still nervous about reviving a military disposition that ruined much of Europe - including Germany itself - not so long ago. Others in the country have embraced a pro-Russia stance. In Germany's recent federal election, the far-right Alternative für Deutschland, which is sympathetic to Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and opposed to supporting Ukraine, finished second.

In East and Southeast Asia, the situation is even more fraught. Unlike Britain and France, none of America's Asian allies has nuclear weapons. And there is no equivalent of NATO to protect against China's increasing dominance. America's richest ally, Japan, is utterly dependent on US security guarantees, as is South Korea, which is under constant threat from the nuclear-armed dictatorship in North Korea. America's backing is also crucial for Southeast Asian countries seeking to shield themselves from Chinese aggression.

And then there is Taiwan, which has no formal security pact with the US at all. If Trump is prepared to sacrifice Ukraine to make a deal with Putin, he might be just as inclined to barter away Taiwan's democracy to do business with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

If Pax Americana were to end in East and Southeast Asia, the only way to stop China from turning its neighbors into vassals would be to create an Asian NATO. This would include democracies such as South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, but also some semi-democracies (Singapore and Thailand) and perhaps even some autocracies (Vietnam).

But this organisation would encounter a problem similar to the one facing a European alliance. Japan is the only country powerful enough to lead such a disparate coalition. But many in Asia are wary of giving such a large role to a country long governed by a conservative party whose leaders have been reluctant to acknowledge their forebears' horrific actions in World War II. And most Japanese - like many Germans - are not quite ready to trust themselves.

Pax Americana in Asia and Europe had to end at some point. An arrangement whereby many wealthy countries depend wholly on one superpower for their security was never a healthy long-term arrangement. But the timing and manner of its demise could not be worse. Just as European and Asian democracies must confront a hostile coalition of autocracies - Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea - their protector threatens to withdraw its backing, leaving little time to rebuild a solid defense.

What might happen instead, despite all the fine sentiments, is that America's forsaken allies will panic and run for cover, pleading for protection from one the great powers. The South Koreans and Southeast Asians might look to China. The British could lean into their "special relationship" with the US, whereas the Germans - and perhaps even the French, if Marine Le Pen wins the next presidential election - might appeal to Russia. And Japan, left high and dry, could overcome its post-Hiroshima allergy to nuclear armament.

None of this is a given. Perhaps the Europeans will get their act together. Perhaps Trump's bark is worse than his bite. Perhaps the Americans won't withdraw from Asia. But no one should count on any of this happening. The major democracies in Europe and Asia are now the only bulwark against authoritarianism. And the onus of defending political freedom will be placed largely on the two countries, Germany and Japan, that once did so much to destroy them.

The writer is the author, most recently, of *Spinoza: Freedom's Messiah* (Yale University Press, 2024). ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

God could not be everywhere, and therefore he made mothers. RUDYARD KIPLING

In the long run, the sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit. ANNE FRANK

Tradition becomes our security, and when the mind is secure it is in decay. JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

The building of a colossal dam



Chander Gupta

THERE IS A WELL-ENTRENCHED ECOSYSTEM WHOSE OBJECTIVE IS TO DEFAME AND EVENTUALLY ERASE NEHRU'S LEGACY

Jawaharlal Nehru was indisputably the architect of modern India. Nehru had a deep understanding of the Indian civilisation as evidenced by the iconic book 'Discovery of India' authored by him. Heads and shoulders above his contemporaries, Nehru was handed over the reins of a newly decolonised, impoverished, feudalist, orthodox, dogmatic, riots-torn, and partitioned society. He transformed new-born enfeebled India into a secular, modern, institutions-based, forward-looking, thriving democratic nation within a span of less than two decades during which he was the Prime Minister.

Nehru created Indian Institutes of Technologies (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), AIIMS, PGI - all of which produced eminent engineers, business management stalwarts, and world-class doctors. Pass-outs from IITs, IIMs, AIIMS are ruling the roost globally. Due to Nehru's visionary initiatives, India had

firmly established a thriving media, assertive judiciary, an independent election commission, vibrant legislatures, in the very first 50 years of Independence. India had earned prestige and influence on the world forum under Nehru's stewardship.

Instead of erecting statues and idols, Nehru preferred to build sustainable infrastructure. In the 1950s, Bhakra Dam was built over the Satluj River. It was the biggest hydro-electric plant at that time. It was a multi-purpose project. The water collected in the dam's reservoir - Gobind Sagar - is used for generating hydroelectric power. The water falling from the high-altitude Gobind Sagar moves the heavy-duty turbines below with its sheer force to generate electricity. The water passing through turbines is subsequently channelled in canals. The water flowing in canals is ultimately used for irrigation.

The Bhakra Dam was envisaged to cater to the needs of undivided Punjab (now Punjab and Haryana) for both

power and irrigation requirements. When inaugurating the Bhakra Dam, Nehru said such projects were temples of modern India. Incidentally, Nehru is also the creator of the beautiful city of Chandigarh which is now the joint capital of both Punjab and Haryana.

It is unfortunate that false narratives to denigrate Nehru are being spread day and night by ignorant adherents of antithetical ideology. There is a well-entrenched ecosystem whose objective is to defame and eventually erase Nehru's legacy. Nehru passed away in 1964. The followers of the ideology which is at odds with secular ethos and socialist outlook tend to malign Nehru and spread innuendos against him even 60 years after his demise. To camouflage their own sectarian mindset, biased followers of a different worldview deliberately tarnish the image of Nehru and his progeny who succeeded him.

The ecosystem to blame and propagate against Nehru has been working since Inde-

pendence. It has become much louder and more widespread in the past decades with the advent of social media. The same mindset tried to discredit Nehru regarding Bhakra Dam, temple of modern India, also.

It was insinuated that the water flowing to irrigation canals after passing through the turbines had been made worthless for irrigation as electricity had been sucked out of it. The gullible people fell into the trap of propaganda deliberately designed to spread misinformation against the Bhakra Dam.

The Bhakra Dam has already served the Punjab belt for more than 60 years now by providing cheap electricity and water for irrigation. Moreover, the Dam protected the Punjab plains from the havoc of floods. Nehru had never tried to hog limelight for building such a colossal dam, that too in 1950s.

The writer is a retired banker. Views are personal.

Ranji glory

Sir, Vidarbha has won the Ranji Trophy for the third time by beating Kerala in the finals Sunday at Nagpur. It had earlier lifted the trophy in 2017-18 and 2018-19. Besides, the team had reached the finals last year only to lose to Mumbai. Hyderabad, Tamil Nadu and even the mighty Mumbai fell by the wayside unable to match Vidarbha's prowess. Batsmen Karun Nair, Danish Malewar, bowlers Darshan Nalkande, Harsh Dube and Parth Rekhade excelled for the team in the final. Vidarbha's Ranji Trophy wins have come following detailed planning, an eye for talent and the coaching staff's painstaking effort to spur the team on. Generally, after Kapil Dev's Haryana defeated Mumbai in 1990-91 to lift the crown, Ranji Trophy has ceased to remain the exclusive domain of teams like Mumbai, Karnataka and Delhi.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Long rope

Sir, It is really shocking that the Bombay High Court has stayed a Mumbai special court order for four weeks that directed the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) to register an FIR against the former Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and five other SEBI and Bombay Stock Exchange officials in an alleged stock market fraud, regulatory violations, and corruption linked to the listing of a company in 1994! While the Opposition has raised serious charges against Buch for her alleged indulgence in various other irregularities and she was summoned by the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that was enquiring into serious allegations against her and she had the audacity to refuse to appear before the PAC, it has come as a rude shock that the honourable Bombay High Court has also allowed her a longer rope instead of taking up her case immediately in the interest of millions of stakeholders. That despite all this, Buch has been allowed to retire without any problem by the government at the Centre is also a case in point.

Tharcus S. Fernando, CHENNAI

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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UTTARAKHAND AVALANCHE

Activists blame 'administrative negligence' for workers' death

The weather office in Dehradun issued a yellow alert for February 27, two days in advance, predicting isolated heavy rain and snowfall in locations situated at 3,500 metres and above. However, the State Emergency Operations Centre here alerted the district magistrates concerned February 28 when the avalanche had already hit the camp



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gopeshwar, March 5: Social activists have blamed the death of eight workers in an avalanche that hit a BRO camp at Mana in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district last week on "administrative negligence" and said the lives could have been saved had the authorities paid heed to a snowslide warning. They also blame "reckless construction" works in avalanche-prone areas for the rise in snowslide incidents. The Chandigarh-based Defence Geoinformatics Research Establishment (DGRE) issued an avalanche warning for a 24-hour period at 5 pm February 27 for places located above the height of 2,400 metres such as Chamoli, Uttarkashi, Rudrapur, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar districts of Uttarakhand. The avalanche hit the Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

camp in Chamoli between 5.30 am and 6 am February 28, trapping 54 workers. While 46 of them were rescued alive, eight were found dead. Atul Sati, a social worker and the convener of Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti said "administrative negligence" led to the death of the eight workers. "There was an avalanche warning and authorities should have acted on time," he said. Following the incident, the Uttarakhand government issued an advisory for tourists staying in skiing destination Auli which has no history of avalanches, Sati said and alleged that it looks like an attempt to divert people's attention from the state's failure. "When there was a warning and the authorities were aware that such a large number of workers were in Mana, why weren't they advised to move to safety?" asked another social

activist. The weather office in Dehradun issued a yellow alert for February 27, two days in advance, predicting isolated heavy rain and snowfall in locations situated at 3,500 metres and above. However, the State Emergency Operations Centre here alerted the district magistrates concerned on February 28 when the avalanche had already hit the camp. Over the last four years, two dwelling units of BRO workers have been destroyed by avalanches in the Chamoli district alone. An avalanche in April 2021 destroyed a settlement of workers in Niti Valley adjoining the Indo-Tibet border, killing as many labourers. Experts feel that the snowslides are a result of reckless construction being carried out in avalanche-prone areas. Renowned geologist MPS Bisht, an expert on weather movements in the Kedar Valley, said the entire area is vulnerable to avalanches that keep coming from the Nar Parvat. Construction activities are being carried out recklessly even in areas identified for vulnerability without thinking over the consequences, he said. "Disasters are the result of this." Avalanches occur more during winters in the valleys of the upper Himalayan region where Badrinath and Mana are situated, but they can occur in any season in the snow-clad mountains. Surveyors or mountaineers visiting these areas stay alert about such disasters. It is also true of the army and paramilitary forces. Winter defence posts are built at such places where the danger of avalanches is less, Kothiyal said.

The latest avalanche has once again brought into focus the failure of authorities to learn from past experiences
MANGALA KOTHIYAL | SOCIAL ACTIVIST



Members of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee stage a protest against Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann in Amritsar, Wednesday

Uttarakhand fares better than HP in last 2 decades

New Delhi: Uttarakhand performed better than Himachal Pradesh over the last two decades as it opted for planned industrialization in designated Industrial Estates as compared to its neighbour which asked the companies to buy land directly from farmers, an EAC-PM Working Paper said Wednesday. The Paper titled 'The Great Convergence: A Case Study of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (2000 to 2020)' also said that the growth in the manufacturing sector had a multiplier effect on the overall economy of Uttarakhand, and its tax base. Co-authored by Shamika Ravi (Member, EAC-PM) and Alok Kumar (Principal Secretary, Industrial Development & MSME, Government of UP), the paper compares the growth and economic transformation of Uttarakhand (UK) to that of HP over a period of two decades, examining the impact of Union Government's Concessional Industrial Package (CIP) for Hill States announced in 2003. With identical industrial policies but distinct and different land policies - the trajectories for economic growth of UK & HP resulted in different long-term outcomes. UK better leveraged the benefits of CIP, it said. The paper said that both the hilly states announced near identical industrial policies in response to the central government's offer, except one critical difference - town planning and land policy - where the two states adopted two entirely distinct approaches.

KEJRIWAL'S VIPASSANA RETREAT

Row over AAP chief's 'lavish convoy, VIP culture' in Punjab



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, March 5: The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) Wednesday condemned a curfew-like situation for farmers, who were not being allowed to come to the state capital to register protest, even as a red carpet welcome was being accorded to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal with more than 100 vehicles escorting him for a Vipassana session from here to Hoshiarpur. Asking Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to explain this state of affairs, senior Akali Dal leader Daljit Singh Cheema said, "The chief minister should tell why Kejriwal was being accorded a welcome reserved for heads of states when he did not have any constitutional authority and had no relation with Punjab." Kejriwal faced intense criticism from all parties for taking a big cavalcade, with BJP leader Tarun Chugh saying, "Arvind Kejriwal has come

with his group to Punjab with the ill-intention of looting the state...In what capacity is a cavalcade of 100 vehicles accompanying Kejriwal? How is he holding a meeting of government officials and how is he giving them direction? He can give directions to AAP workers, but Kejriwal, who is out on bail, is giving directions to government officials." AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal equated Kejriwal's cavalcade with US President Donald Trump's security. "Kejriwal, who criticises the whole world for VIP culture, is today roaming around with a security cover bigger than Donald Trump," she wrote in a post on X. Former Delhi chief minister Kejriwal and his wife are in

Punjab's Hoshiarpur to attend the meditation course at the Dhamma Dhaja Vipassana Centre, which began Wednesday. The couple will be attending the course for 10 days. Responding to the visit, the second time since December 2023, Akali Dal former minister Cheema said the Chief Minister should also tell Punjabis why he had invited farmers for talks and then insulted them by walking out of the meeting in a huff when reminded about the promises made by him and his boss Kejriwal to the farmers over their demands. Cheema said even as the rights of farmers were being violated, neighbouring states like Rajasthan had announced a bonus of ₹150 per quintal on the wheat crop. "Punjab farmers have not received the promised minimum support price on moong and maize and have also not been given compensation for repeated crop losses." He also castigated the Chief Minister for trying to divert attention from the demands of farmers by trying to launch a supposed campaign against corruption and drugs. "The truth is that corruption has been institutionalised under the AAP government even as the political nexus in drug trade has resulted in a sharp increase in drug addiction and overdose-related deaths."

The chief minister should tell why Kejriwal was being accorded a welcome reserved for heads of states when he did not have any constitutional authority and had no relation with Punjab
DALJIT SINGH CHEEMA | SENIOR AKALI DAL LEADER

Kedarnath, Hemkund Sahib Ji ropeway plans get nod

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: The government Wednesday approved two ropeway projects in Uttarakhand - Sonprayag to Kedarnath and Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib Ji - at a total cost of ₹6,811 crore to help significantly reduce the travel time to the pilgrimage sites and boost tourism. The construction of these two ambitious projects is likely to be completed in 4-6 years. The two ropeways will be constructed under the National Ropeways Development Programme - Parvatalma Pari-



yojana.

The decisions of the Cabinet Committee on Economic

Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, were announced by In-

formation and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The Sonprayag to Kedarnath ropeway is planned to be developed in public-private partnership and will be based on the most advanced Tri-cable Detachable Gondola (3S) technology having the capacity to carry 1,800 passengers per hour per direction (PPHPD), which could ferry 18,000 passengers per day. Vaishnaw informed that the 12.4-km ropeway project from Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib Ji too will be developed on DBFOT mode at a total capital cost of ₹2,730.13 crore.

Anti-drone tech to check drug inflow from Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 5: The Punjab government will take the help of anti-drone technology to check smuggling of narcotics and arms from across the border, Cabinet minister Harpal Singh Cheema said Tuesday. Cheema, who is leading a Cabinet sub-committee to monitor action against the drug menace, and his Cabinet colleague Aman Arora witnessed a demonstration of the anti-drone technology by three companies in Mohali. Speaking to reporters, Arora said drugs, arms and ammunition are coming from Pakistan as he stressed upon the use of anti-drone technology to check the inflow from across the border. "It is the primary responsibility of the government of India and the BSF to check smuggling of narcotics and arms and ammunition from across the border," Arora said, adding the Border Security Force (BSF) has 50 km of jurisdiction.

"But we have been seeing over the past many years that the BSF is not getting 100 per cent success (in checking smuggling from across the border)," he claimed. Referring to the demonstration of the anti-drone technology, Arora said the aim of this initiative is to further strengthen the state's second line of defence to effectively counter the nefarious designs of cross-border terrorism, particularly narco-terrorism. Cheema said, "We want to make Punjab a drug-free state. We are ready to adopt any technique for this. To use the anti-drone technique, we invited certain companies here." The deployment of anti-drone technology will help the state government's anti-drugs campaign in a big way, Cheema added. "We will adopt the anti-drone technology to curb the smuggling of drugs from Pakistan," he said, adding, "We will soon deploy this technology with the Punjab Police." To a question, Cheema said



To protect people from drugs, the state government is ready to go to any extent. We keep hearing that drugs and explosives are coming from across the border. But I want to assure people that with this initiative (roping in anti-drone technology), such incidents will be checked in a big way
HARPAL SINGH CHEEMA | CABINET MINISTER, PUNJAB

the Punjab Police will coordinate with central government agencies for the deployment of the anti-drone technology to check smuggling of drugs. Cheema further said all the three companies demonstrated their cutting-edge technology designed to counter cross-border smuggling of narcotics, arms, and explosives through

drones from Pakistan. He said the anti-drone technologies showcased included portable, mobile, and stationary solutions, each capable of intercepting drones at varying distances. He said these technologies are designed to disrupt drone movement thus breaking the cross-border drug supply chain.

Police inspect 164 pharmacies

The Punjab Police Tuesday inspected 164 pharmacies to ensure that they were adhering to the prescribed norms regarding the sale of medicines and not selling intoxicant tablets or any other habit-forming drugs. The simultaneous inspections in Hoshiarpur, SBS Nagar, Jalandhar Rural, Jalandhar Commissionerate, Kapurthala and Rupnagar district was part of the state government's anti-drugs drive and conducted on the directions of Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav. Police teams also continued cordon and search operations against drugs and conducted raids at 524 locations, leading to the arrest of 69 smugglers after the registration of 53 FIRs. The number of total drugs smugglers arrested has reached 472 in four days. The raids resulted in the recovery of 1.5 kilogrammes of heroin, 100 grams of opium, 7,610 intoxicant tablets or injections and ₹1.33 lakh in cash from the arrested smugglers. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann last week set a deadline of three months to make the state drug-free. The state government also constituted the five-member cabinet sub-committee to monitor action against the scourge of drugs.

NEW EXCISE POLICY Liquor shops near religious places to be shut down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, March 5: The Uttarakhand government has approved a new excise policy for 2025-26 under which all liquor shops located near religious places in the state will be shut down. Officials said licences granted earlier to liquor shops will be reviewed in the light of the new excise policy. The state cabinet approved the new excise policy at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami Monday. It has been decided to cancel the liquor licences of shops near religious places and exercise more control on the sale of liquor, according to paramount importance to public sensitivities, Secretary (home) Shailesh Bagauli said. The new policy makes the process for allotment of liquor shops more transparent and beneficial for local people by giving them

self-employment opportunities in the sector, he said. An effort has also been made in the new policy to provide local farmers with an additional platform to sell their produce to the distilleries. Sub-shops and metro liquor sales system have been abolished in the new excise policy which also makes a provision for cancelling the licences of liquor shops that sell liquor at a price higher than the Maximum Retail Price. MRP will also be applicable in departmental stores, which will protect the interests of consumers, he said.





When you observe Naidu's budgets (for FY25 and FY26), it is clear how he cheated people in all ways...What about the promises during the polls? What are they saying about them now? That Super Six and Super Seven

Y S JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | YSRCP CHIEF

34.23 LAKH HOUSES GOT TAP WATER CONNECTIONS IN J'KHAND

A total of 34.23 lakh households have been provided with tap water connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission in Jharkhand, Excise Minister Yogendra Prasad said Wednesday



of the day uote

To enhance tourism infrastructure, the State Government is developing multiple ropeways, expanding Kangra Airport, constructing new four lanes and heliports to improve connectivity to the visitors which would make Himachal a favourite destination for investment

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HP CM

Allow your life to go like a river and not like a canal...there was a time when a child was born and parents used to decide what career their child has to choose

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

In 2023-24, India's GDP grew at a rate of 9.6 per cent, while Uttar Pradesh's GSDP increased by 11.6 per cent

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

Nitish may switch sides: Kishor

BIHAR POLLS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bettiah (Bihar), March 5: Election strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor Wednesday claimed that JD(U) president Nitish Kumar will contest the upcoming Assembly polls in Bihar in alliance with the BJP but may switch sides later, with hopes for another term as the Chief Minister.

The Jan Suraj Party founder, who was addressing a press conference in West Champaran district, however, also asserted that the 74-year-old leader had grown too unpopular to enjoy a fifth consecutive term in office "no matter which alliance he becomes a part of".

"Anybody can become the chief minister in November, after the Assembly elections are over, except Nitish Kumar. You can take it from me in writing. If I am proven wrong then I will give up my own political campaign," Kishor said

He also maintained that Kumar had "brought disrepute to Bihar by touching the feet of Modi last year, in the presence of many other chief ministers, when the new Union government was being sworn in."

"If he has so much of reverence for the PM, he could have touched the latter's feet in private. But he is resorting to sycophancy merely to keep himself in the chair. Why does he not use his clout with the BJP, which is now dependent on JD(U)'s support to survive in power at the Centre, to revive the moribund sugar industry in Bihar?" Kishor asked. He said the Jan Suraj Party will enter the fray in a bid to pull Bihar "out of the political rut which has been held hostage for decades by Kumar and his arch-rival Lalu Prasad, the RJD president".

Er Rashid seeks custody parole to attend Parl Mar 7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: Jailed Jammu and Kashmir MP Engineer Rashid Wednesday sought custody parole to attend the upcoming Parliament session, claiming he was not a security threat.

Rashid's counsel made the submission before additional sessions judge Chanderjit Singh, who reserved the verdict for March 7 after hearing arguments on the plea. The plea seeking Rashid's interim bail or custody parole was filed by advocate Vikhyat Oberoi February 27, following which the court sought the National Investigation Agency's (NIAs) response March 3. The counsel previously argued that Rashid was seeking custody parole being a parliamentarian and needed to attend the upcoming session to fulfil his public duty. Custody parole entails a prisoner being escorted by armed police personnel to the place of visit. Oberoi said the Delhi High Court had granted custody parole for two days enabling Rashid to attend the parliamentary sessions.

be so dismal that he would not get the top job, no matter which formation he joins," Kishor predicted.

The 47-year-old politician also alleged that the septuagenarian CM was "physically tired and mentally retired", claiming, "Not me, but the late BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi had stated that Nitish Kumar suffers from a serious mental illness. I have been challenging him for long to spell out the names of ministers in his own cabinet, without looking at a piece of paper. He cannot tell the name of the district he is touring unless prompted by officials. It is unfortunate that with such a state of mind, he is ruling Bihar."

Kumar as the chief ministerial candidate of the NDA because of his declining popularity.

"I challenge Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to declare that Nitish Kumar will be the Chief Minister for a full five-year term after the elections (if the NDA comes to power). If they do so, the BJP will find it hard to win seats," Kishor said. The former JD(U) national vice president, who was expelled from the party in 2020 following a spat with Kumar, also claimed that the ruling party was "going to do very badly" (in the polls).

"Nitish Kumar may try switching sides after it becomes clear to him that the BJP was not going to back him for another term in office. But the number of seats won by JD(U) would

Oppn parties seek Jaykumar Gore's resignation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 5: Opposition parties in Maharashtra Wednesday demanded the resignation of BJP minister Jaykumar Gore over allegations of harassing a woman and sending objectionable photos to her, while he dismissed the charges and asserted that he was already acquitted by the court.

Amid the allegations against him, Gore warned of moving a notice of breach of privilege against those who raised the issue again, and said he would also file a defamation complaint against them.

The demand for his resignation came a day after NCP leader Dhananjay Munde stepped down as a minister in the wake of the arrest of his close aide Walmik Karad in an extortion case linked to the murder of sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh in Beed in December last year. Opposition parties targeted Gore over the allegations and sought his resignation.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut claimed, "A very serious issue of Jaykumar Gore has come to the fore. What happened in Swargate (incident



Gore, who represents the Man Assembly constituency in western Maharashtra's Satara district, is Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

Gore was earlier with the Congress and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2019

In January 2017, he had been arrested for sending lewd messages and his own objectionable photos to a woman in Satara

of rape inside a bus in Pune), a similar case has come to the fore with regards to Devendra Fadnavis's dear minister Jaykumar Gore." "A woman from Maratha general Hambirrao Mohite's family has sexually harassed her. The woman will sit on a fast outside the Vidhan Bhavan premises," he added.

Hambirrao Mohite was the chief commander of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's army. "The details about Gore are shocking and bringing a bad name to the state...Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis should check the credentials of his ministers," Raut said. 'Saamana', the mouthpiece of the Uddhav Thackeray-led party, also published a news item claiming that Gore sent



A robot elephant is carried on a van in Kochi. Elephants are important part of many Hindu ceremonies and life-size mechanical replicas are rolled out to replace the endangered animals in various Hindu temples

T'GANA TUNNEL COLLAPSE

Team exploring deployment of robots

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagarkurnool (Telangana), March 5: Representatives of a robotics company went inside the partially collapsed SLBC tunnel, where eight people have been trapped for the last 12 days, as the state government is exploring the possibility of using robots in the rescue operation, officials said Wednesday.

The scientists of the National Centre of Seismology, Delhi, have also gone inside the tunnel, along with rescue teams, to carry out seismic related studies, they said.

The team from the Hyderabad-based robotics company examined whether a robo can go deep inside the tunnel and whether it can work there as humidity is high, a senior official told PTI. Secondly, robots



can conduct the initial reconnaissance when project-related work in the tunnel resumes in the future, to ensure structural stability of rocks, he said. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who visited the tunnel March 2, 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 rescue operation continued at a brisk pace Wednesday, with excavation being carried out at locations suggested by scientists to look for human presence. The drilling is being carried out at other locations based on inputs from scientists at the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) in Hyderabad, who used Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to detect human presence, officials said.

However, tough conditions inside the tunnel, including muck and water, have posed challenges for the rescue personnel.

Earlier inspections at other locations identified by the scientists did not reveal any signs of human presence.

The services of a sniffer dog of NDRF have also been used for selecting the area to be taken up for digging.

SHORT TAKES

2 workers killed as slab collapses

Bhandara: Two workers were killed and one was injured after a slab collapsed in the Chikhla mines of state-owned Manganese Ore (India) Limited in Maharashtra's Bhandara district Wednesday, an official said. The incident occurred around 9 am during the first shift at a depth of 100 metres in the mines of the public sector undertaking, the Bhandara Disaster Management Office said in a release. Three workers, all permanent employees, were buried under the debris and two of them died at the scene, the release said.

Car runs over four; two dead

Lucknow: A car ran over four people sleeping on a road divider in the Hasanganj police station area here early Wednesday, killing two of them and injuring the others, police said. Witnesses told police that the SUV's tyres suddenly burst, leading to the driver losing control of the vehicle which ran over the sleeping people before hitting an iron pole. The four persons were taken to King George's Medical University's Trauma Centre where two of them were declared dead, police said, adding the victims have not been identified yet.

Landslide damages motor bridge

Gopeshwar: A landslide Wednesday damaged the motor bridge connecting Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib Gurudwara and the Valley of Flowers National Park in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, officials said. The landslide occurred around 10 am, damaging the motor bridge built on the Badrinath National Highway for the four-kilometre road leading from Govindghat to Pulna village, beyond which one has to walk to reach the Sikh shrine of Hemkund Sahib and the Valley of Flowers National Park, they added.

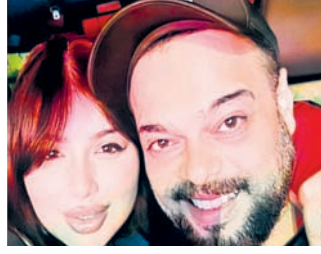
Another FIR lodged against Ansal Group

Ghaziabad (UP): Another FIR was lodged against the Ansal Group in this Uttar Pradesh district Wednesday on a number of charges, including cheating and forgery, police said. Assistant Engineer, Ghaziabad Development Authority, Gyan Prakash Dwivedi, who is attached to enforcement zone 5, got the FIR lodged against Ansal Properties and Infrastructure Limited (APIL) at the Crossing Republic police station, they added.

Ayesha Takia's husband booked over scuffle in Goa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, March 5: Hatred for Maharashtra has reached unbelievable heights in Goa, former actor Ayesha Takia has said after her husband Abu Farhan Azmi was booked for an altercation at a supermarket in Candolim in north Goa. She said her husband and son were "brutally bullied".



On Tuesday, police in Goa filed a case against Farhan Azmi, the son of Maharashtra SP MLA Abu Azmi who is in the proverbial eye of a storm following his comments praising Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. The MLA was suspended Wednesday from the Assembly till the end of the ongoing Budget session.

Osteoarthritis cases, related disability up by over 130%: Study

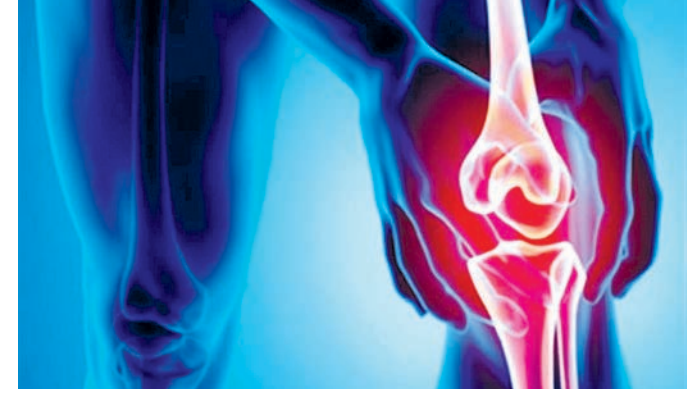
The findings show that an excess weight or body mass index accounted for about a fifth of the duration lived with disability resulting from the condition that steadily deteriorates joints

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: Globally, cases of osteoarthritis and the resulting disability among menopausal women have increased by over 130 per cent in the last three decades, according to a study.

The findings, published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Global Health, show that an excess weight or body mass index accounted for about a fifth of the duration lived with disability resulting from the condition that steadily deteriorates joints.

The researchers, including



those from Hangzhou Medical College, China, said declining oestrogen levels in menopause affect skeletal health and are directly related to functioning and stability of joints. Osteoarthritis affecting knee joints were found to be the most common type, associated with the highest loss of healthy living, followed by that affecting hands.

The countries in East Asia and high-income Asia Pacific experienced the fastest increase in burden of the chronic condition, the study found. While the most rapid rise in new cases of knee osteoarthritis was seen in Southeast Asia, the most rapid rise in prevalence was seen in East Asia.

The trends noted in East Asia "may be linked to rapid population ageing, (an) increased

workforce participation and a surge in obesity rates due to urbanisation and changing lifestyles," the authors wrote. However, "the high burden observed in high-income Asia Pacific could be attributed to advanced healthcare systems with better diagnostic capabilities, facilitating comprehensive identification and reporting of (osteoarthritis) cases", they wrote.

The findings highlighted the escalating burden of osteoarthritis among menopausal women and stressed on proactive measures, especially those promoting lifestyle adjustments for controlling BMI, the authors said.

Osteoarthritis was estimated to affect almost 600 million people in 2020, making up nearly eight per cent of the world's population and nearly a billion could be living with it in 2050, according to a 2023 study published in The Lancet Rheumatology journal.

For this analysis, the researchers looked at The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2021 study, which collected data from 204 countries and territories for the prevalence, severity and deaths attributable to 371 diseases between 1990 and 2021.

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Detailed dialogue was held with various women's organisations for the expectations and suggestions of the developed Delhi Budget 2025-26. During this, important topics related to women's empowerment and welfare were discussed

ANJU RATHI RANA APPOINTED FIRST EVER WOMAN LAW SECRETARY

Anju Rathi Rana, an Indian Legal Service officer, was Wednesday appointed the new union law secretary. She is the first woman to be appointed secretary, legal affairs, who is also called the law secretary. Rana joined the law ministry as a joint secretary in 2017. Prior to that, she was a public prosecutor in the Delhi government for 18 years



of the day quote

This year, under the guidance of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the draw of lots was organised in the presence of parents and media to ensure fairness and the registration limit of 2.5 lakh was increased to five lakh

The government is committed to taking the state to new heights by connecting youth with employment

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the state is getting support from the Central government in every field

India's tech renaissance: Fueling the journey of Viksit Bharat



In Baramati, Maharashtra, a small farmer is rewriting the rules of agriculture with Artificial Intelligence (AI). We are witnessing something extraordinary here - reduction in usage of fertilizer, better water use efficiency and higher yields, all enabled by AI. This is just a glimpse into India's AI-powered revolution, where technology and innovation are no longer limited to labs but are transforming the lives of ordinary citizens. In many ways, this farmer's story is a microcosm of a much larger transformation - our march towards Viksit Bharat by 2047. Writing the Digital Destiny India is shaping its digital future with a strong focus on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), AI, semiconductor and electronics manufacturing. For

decades, India has been a global leader in software but now it is making big strides in hardware manufacturing also. Five semiconductor plants are under construction, strengthening India's role in the global electronics sector. Today, electronics products rank among our top three exports and soon we will reach a major milestone—the launch of India's first "Make in India" chip this year. Building AI: Compute, Data, and Innovation Semiconductors and electronics form the backbone, while DPI serves as the driving force propelling India's tech revolution. India is democratizing AI by making it accessible to all through one of its kind AI framework. A key initiative in this regard is India's Common Compute facility with 18,000+ Graphics Processing Units (GPUs). Available at a subsidized cost under 100/hour, this initiative will ensure that cutting-edge research is accessible to researchers, startups, academia, and other stakeholders. This initiative will enable easy access of GPUs for developing AI-based systems, including

the foundational models, and applications. India is also developing large-scale non-personal anonymised datasets to train AI models on diverse & high-quality data. This initiative will help reduce biases and improve accuracy, making AI systems more reliable and inclusive. These datasets will power AI-driven solutions across various sectors such as agriculture, weather forecasting & traffic management. The government is facilitating the development of India's own foundational models, including Large Language Models (LLMs) and problem-specific AI solutions tailored to Indian needs. To foster AI research, multiple Centers of Excellence have also been set up. India's DPI, a blueprint for digital innovation India's pioneering work in DPI has significantly shaped the global digital landscape. Unlike corporate or state-controlled models, India's ingenious public-private approach uses public funds to build platforms like Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker. Private players further innovate and

create user-friendly, application-specific solutions on top of DPI. This model is now being supercharged with AI, as financial and governance platforms like UPI, and DigiLocker, integrate intelligent solutions. The global interest in India's DPI framework was evident at the G20 Summit, where various countries had expressed desire to replicate the model. Japan has granted a patent to India's UPI payment system, a testament to its scalability. Mahakumbh, a sangam of tradition and tech India leveraged its DPI and AI-driven management for seamless operations of Mahakumbh 2025, the largest human gathering ever. AI-powered tools monitored the railway passenger movement in real time to optimize the crowd dispersal across railway stations in Prayagraj. Bhashini, integrated into the Kumbh Sah'AI'yak Chatbot, enabled voice-based lost & found facility, real-time translation, and multilingual assistance for all. Its collaboration with various departments such as Indian Railways & UP Police stream-

lined communication for quick issue resolution. By leveraging DPI, Mahakumbh 2025 has set a global benchmark for tech-enabled management, making it more inclusive, efficient, and secure. Building a future-ready workforce India's workforce is at the heart of its digital revolution. The country is adding one Global Capability Center (GCC) every week, reinforcing its status as a preferred destination for global R&D and technological development. However, sustaining this growth will require continuous investment in education and skill development. The government is addressing this challenge by revamping university curricula to include AI, 5G, and semiconductor design, as per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This will ensure that graduates enter the workforce with job-ready skills, reducing the transition time between education and employment. Pragmatic approach towards regulating AI As India builds a future-ready workforce, its AI regulatory framework must

foster innovation while ensuring responsible deployment. Unlike the 'heavy-handed' regulatory framework, which risks stifling innovation, or the 'market-driven governance' which often concentrates power in the hands of a few, India is following a pragmatic, techno-legal approach. Rather than relying solely on legislation to address AI-related risks, the government is investing in technological safeguards. The government is financing AI-driven projects at top universities and IITs for developing tools to tackle deep fakes, privacy concerns, and cybersecurity threats. As AI continues to reshape global industries, India's vision is clear - leverage technology for inclusive growth while maintaining a regulatory framework that fosters innovation. But beyond policies and infrastructure, this transformation is about our people. The author is Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Railways and Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

POST OF THE DAY

Breaking : 5th father of Modi Bhakts, Donald Trump announced high tariffs on India from April 2nd. No word from Modi, no response from MEA. He just wants just to see the chair pulling video to hide his weakness in front of Trump.

Police thwart farmers' attempt to go to C'garh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 5: Punjab Police thwarted farmers' attempt to go to Chandigarh on the Samyukta Kisan Morcha's call for a week-long dharna beginning Wednesday, as multiple checkpoints were set up across the state and security stepped up at all entry points of the Union Territory. The SKM, a conglomerate of more than 30 farmer bodies, had given the call for the sit-in in Chandigarh in support of farmers' various demands including purchase of six crops at minimum support price by the state government. Farmers, who left for Chandigarh in tractor-trolleys and other vehicles Wednesday morning, were stopped by the Punjab Police at many places on the highways and other roads. The SKM strongly condemned the AAP government for preventing farmers from going to the UT for raising their voice in support of their demands. SKM leaders claimed many farmers were detained by police when they were on their way to Chandigarh while several others started holding protests



The SKM, a conglomerate of more than 30 farmer bodies, had given the call for the sit-in in Chandigarh in support of farmers' various demands including purchase of six crops at minimum support price by the state government

Farmers, who left for Chandigarh in tractor-trolleys and other vehicles Wednesday morning, were stopped by the Punjab Police at many places on the highways and other roads

where they were stopped. Deputy Inspector General of Police (Ropar Range) Harchan Singh Bhullar said the protesting farmers would not be allowed to reach Chandigarh at any cost. He said the situation in Punjab is totally peaceful. The DIG said some farmers have been rounded up, adding that there was good coordination between Punjab

Police and Chandigarh Police. According to farmers, SKM leader Joginder Singh Ugrahar was detained in Sangrur. In Sangrur's Gharachon area, heavy police personnel were deployed to prevent farmers from heading to Chandigarh. Barricades were put up and sand laden trucks were also parked to stop farmers from going to Chandigarh.

JU protests enter 3rd day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 5: Protests at Jadavpur University continued for the third consecutive day Wednesday, as students demanded action against alleged assaults on their peers. The agitating students had set a 4 pm deadline for interim vice-chancellor Bhaskar Gupta to address their grievances. However, Gupta did not appear, as he was admitted to a private hospital in the morning and is currently under medical observation, officials said. His wife claimed that his blood pressure had elevated and that he was unwell. Despite this, students vowed to continue their protest, accusing the VC of showing no responsibility or urgency since the incident occurred. "The VC showed no sympathy despite a student fighting for his life, nor any urgency to resolve the pending issues to defuse the crisis. He also did not show any courtesy or urgency to meet us. We gave a 4 PM deadline, but now he is admitted to the hospital for reasons best known to him," a protesting student from a left-backed organisation said. "We will continue to maintain the pressure so that he comes for talks with us after he returns from the hospital," he added. Throughout the day, members of the All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) and several ultra-left student groups, including the



Democratic Students' Federation (DSF), staged demonstrations. The state Congress held a protest at Jadavpur University gate against alleged atrocities against the protesting students. The students' demands include registering a hit-and-run case against education minister Bratya Basu, whose car allegedly hit Indranuj Roy, a student currently undergoing treatment. They also called for the withdrawal of police cases against students and the release of those arrested. According to the protesters, seven cases have been registered in connection with the incident, including four against Roy. Additionally, the agitators demanded that the university bear the full cost of treatment for the injured student. The SFI reiterated its demand for Basu's resignation, accusing the ruling Trinamool Congress's student wing TMCP and the ABVP of instigating violence on campus. Amit Roy, father of the injured Indranuj, acknowledged Basu's outreach amidst the ongoing turmoil. He also took part in the protests along with AIDSO and DSF students.

SHORT TAKES

Assam Assembly turns spotlight on 'D' voter

Guwahati: Highlighting the plight of the 'D' (Doubtful) voters, the opposition Wednesday demanded closure of Assam's sole detention centre, now called a transit camp, and tabling of the NRC report in the Assembly. During a discussion on the contentious issue, AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam claimed that lakhs of people were declared 'D' voters without officials visiting their homes and proper verification. "There are thousands of cases when only one person in a family is declared 'D' voter but his siblings and parents are still Indian citizens. This has ruined so many families and shattered the dreams of thousands of youths," he added. Islam demanded formation of an all-party team by the Speaker to study the conditions of the 'D' voters and living in the detention centre.

Mamata may visit London this month

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is likely to visit London later this month to deliver a lecture at the University of Oxford, a well-placed official said Wednesday. Banerjee is likely to leave for London March 21, he said. She was invited to deliver the lecture by the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University Jonathan Michie, during the Bengal Global Business Summit in November 2023.

3 CRPF jawans hurt in IED blast

Chaibasa/Ranchi: At least three CRPF jawans were injured in an IED blast in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district Wednesday, police said. The injured were airlifted to Ranchi for treatment, they added. The incident took place at Baliwa in Saranda forests under Manoharpur police station limits when personnel of CRPF 197 battalion went there for a search operation, Kolhan DIG Manoj Ratan Chothe said. "An IED exploded during the search operations and three jawans were injured. They were airlifted to Ranchi," he added.

PM meets Japanese business delegation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday met a Japanese business delegation and said he is looking forward to deepening economic collaboration with Japan, India's special strategic and global partner. During the meeting, discussions focused on areas of high-quality, low-cost manufacturing in India and expanding manufacturing for global markets with a special emphasis on Africa. A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said the delegation from the Japan-India Business Co-operation Committee (JIBCC) comprising 17 members and led by its Chairman Tatsuo Yasunaga called on Prime Minister Modi. After talks with the Japanese delegation, PM Modi said he was encouraged by their expansion plans in India and steadfast commitment to 'Make in India, Make for the World'. The delegation included senior

leaders from leading Japanese corporate houses across key sectors such as manufacturing, banking, airlines, pharma sector, plant engineering and logistics. "Pleased to meet the Japanese business delegation led by Mr Tatsuo Yasunaga today. Encouraged by their expansion plans in India and steadfast commitment to 'Make in India, Make for the World,'" Modi said in a post on X. "Looking forward to deepening economic collaboration with Japan, our special strategic and global partner," the prime minister said. The discussions covered key areas, including high-quality, low-cost manufacturing in India, expanding manufacturing for global markets with a special focus on Africa, and enhancing human resource development and exchanges, the statement said. Prime Minister Modi expressed his appreciation for Japanese businesses' expansion plans in India and their steadfast commitment to 'Make in India, Make for the World'.

Kannada actress held with gold at B'lore airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 5: Gold bars worth ₹12.56 crore were seized from Kannada actress Ranya Rao at Kempegowda International Airport, following which searches were conducted at her residence and gold jewellery worth ₹2.06 crore and Indian currency amounting to ₹2.67 crore were also recovered, DRI said Wednesday. Rao is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra Rao, a senior police official told PTI. The DGP-rank officer is currently serving as the Chairman and Managing Director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd, he added. The total seizure in the case stood at ₹17.29 crore, including assets worth ₹4.73 crore, marking a significant blow to organised gold smuggling networks. According to DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence) officials, the 14.2 kg haul is one of the largest gold seizures at Bengaluru airport in recent times. In a statement, the Ministry of Finance said the DRI successfully intercepted a pas-



senger carrying foreign-origin gold bars worth ₹12.56 crore at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru. "Acting on specific intelligence, DRI officers intercepted an Indian woman, aged around 33, who had arrived from Dubai to Bengaluru on an Emirates flight on March 3. Upon examination, gold bars weighing 14.2 kg were found ingeniously concealed on her person," the statement read. The DRI operates under the Ministry of Finance. According to the Ministry, the contraband, valued at ₹12.56 crore, was seized under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962. "Following the inter-

ception, DRI officers searched her residence on Lavelle Road, Bengaluru, where she lives with her husband. The search led to the seizure of gold jewellery worth ₹2.06 crore and Indian currency amounting to ₹2.67 crore," the statement added. The Ministry further stated that the woman had been arrested under the relevant provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, and remanded to judicial custody. Meanwhile, Karnataka Home Minister G Parmeshwara said that he cannot comment on the case of gold smuggling by the Kannada actress until the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence completes

Rao is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra Rao, a senior police official told PTI

The DGP-rank officer is currently serving as the Chairman and Managing Director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd

the investigation. "The investigation is ongoing. The DRI is handling the case, and until they provide definite information, I cannot comment. Let them complete their inquiry first. Internally, I have asked our department to look into it, and they will gather some information," he told reporters. Distancing himself from the actress, her stepfather, Rao, told reporters here that the law would take its course. According to him, Ranya got married just four months ago and has not visited them since. Stating that he was unaware of Ranya and her husband's business dealings, he said the news came as a "huge shock and disappointment."

international



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is still legally prohibited from negotiating with the Russian side

1ST INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL IN MONTANA

In a first, an Indian film festival was organised in the western US state of Montana, showcasing India's cultural diversity through cinema to a diverse gathering of students participating in an annual conference that also included presentations on the recently concluded Maha Kumbh



of the day quote

We thank US President Donald Trump for acknowledging and appreciating Pakistan's role and support in counter terrorism efforts across the region, in the context of Pakistan Security Forces' recent apprehension of ISKP's top tier operational commander Shareefullah, who is an Afghanistan national

In view of the increasing threat situation, it is clear to us that Europe — and with Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany — must now very quickly make very big efforts, very quickly, to strengthen the defense capability of our country and the European continent

Ideology is stronger than weapons, and this has been proved by the Maoists, who adopted peaceful politics by laying down their arms in the end

SHORT TAKES

New Israeli military chief takes charge

Jerusalem: Israel swore in a new commander of its military Wednesday as a standoff over the fragile ceasefire in Gaza increased the risk of a resumption of fighting without an agreement to bring home the rest of the hostages still held by Hamas. Eyal Zamir, a former tank commander who had retired after 28 years with the rank of Major General before being called back into service, was promoted to Lieutenant General, before formally assuming command from General Herzl Halevi, who stepped down over the security disaster of October 7, 2023. "The mission is not yet complete," he said in an address as he assumed command, saying that Hamas had not yet been defeated. "We will not forgive, we will not forget. This is an existential war. We will persist in our campaign to bring our hostages home and to defeat our enemies," he said.

Indian nat'l jailed for molesting woman

Singapore: An Indian national was sentenced to seven months jail Wednesday after pleading guilty to one count of molestation, with one count of housebreaking taken into consideration for his sentencing. Erakkodan Abinraj, 26, climbed into his neighbour's condominium unit and molested a 36-year-old woman who cannot be named due to a gag order. She was asleep in the master bedroom with her husband, and her daughter was in another room, when Abinraj, who entered the house through the balcony around 4.50 am September 22 last year, entered her room and proceeded to touch the victim's underwear as she saw her asleep. For molestation, Abinraj could have been jailed for up to three years, fined and caned.

'AMERICA IS BACK'

Trump draws catcalls from Dems

The new president sets record for longest annual address to Congress, took credit for swift action in reorienting US economy, immigration

Washington, March 5: A triumphant President Donald Trump told Congress Tuesday that "America is back" after he reshaped US foreign policy, ignited a trade war and ousted tens of thousands of government workers in six tumultuous weeks since returning to power, drawing jeers from some Democrats who walked out in protest.



The primetime speech, his first to Congress since taking office January 20, followed a second day of market turmoil after he imposed sweeping new tariffs against Mexico, Canada and China.

At 100 minutes, the speech was the longest presidential address to Congress in modern US history, according to The American Presidency Project. World leaders were watching Trump's speech closely, a day after he paused all military aid to Ukraine in a stark reversal of US policy. The suspension followed an Oval Office blow-up in which Trump angrily upbraided Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in front of TV cameras.

minutes of his speech to foreign policy. He signaled a willingness to press ahead with a minerals deal with Ukraine that was set aside after last week's disastrous White House meeting.

"Simultaneously, we've had serious discussions with Russia and have received strong signals that they are ready for peace," Trump said. "Wouldn't that be beautiful?" And he repeated his promises - though without adding detail - to bring peace to the Middle East and expand the Abraham Accords, deals signed during his first term that established relations between Israel and some of its Arab neighbors. While Trump has appeared to fault Ukraine for starting

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the war, a new Reuters/Ipsos poll found 70% of Americans - including two-thirds of Republicans - say Russia was more to blame. Trump vowed to balance the federal budget, even as he urged lawmakers to enact a sweeping tax cut agenda that analysts say could add more than \$5 trillion to the federal government's \$36 trillion debt load. Congress needs to raise the nation's debt ceiling later this year or risk a devastating default.

The speech shared some of the hallmarks of Trump's campaign rallies. Trump repeatedly assailed his Democratic predecessor Joe Biden, attacked immigrant criminals as "savages" and promised to ban what he called "transgender ideology," all while peppering his remarks with exaggerated or false claims. **DEMOCRATIC PROTESTS** "To my fellow citizens, America is back," Trump began to a standing ovation from fellow Republicans. "Our country is on the verge of a comeback the likes of which the world has never witnessed, and perhaps will never witness again." Democrats held up signs with messages like "No King!" and "This Is NOT Normal," and

about half the Democrats had walked out by the end of the speech. One Texas congressman, Al Green, was ordered removed after he refused to sit down. Trump, a political brawler by nature, reveled in the disagreements. "I look at the Democrats in front of me, and I realize there is absolutely nothing I can say to make them happy or to make them stand or smile or applaud," he said after Green's ejection. The speech took place in the House of Representatives, where lawmakers huddled in fear for their lives four years ago while a mob of Trump supporters ransacked the Capitol in an unsuccessful effort to overturn Biden's 2020 victory over the then-incumbent Trump. The Democrats chose to give their rebuttal speech to moderate US Senator Elissa Slotkin who invoked an iconic Republican president in criticizing Trump. "As a Cold War kid, I'm thankful it was Reagan and not Trump in office in the 1980s. Trump would have lost us the Cold War," Slotkin, a former CIA analyst who won election in Michigan in November even as Trump carried her state, said, referring to President Ronald Reagan. "Donald Trump's actions suggest that, in his heart, he doesn't believe we are an exceptional nation."

In major blow to Ukraine, US halts intelligence-sharing

Washington, March 5: The US has cut off intelligence-sharing with Kyiv, said CIA Director John Ratcliffe Wednesday, in a move that could seriously hamper the Ukrainian military's ability to target Russian forces. The decision to cut off intelligence-sharing and military aid to Ukraine starkly illustrates the Trump administration's willingness to play hardball with an ally to force it to the negotiating table. US President Donald Trump said Tuesday he received a letter from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in which the Ukrainian leader expressed willingness to come to the negotiating table over the Russia-Ukraine war. "I think on the military front and the intelligence front, the pause (that prompted Ukraine's president to respond) I think will go away," Ratcliffe said. "I think we'll work shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine as we have to push back on the aggression that's there, but to put the world in a better place for these peace negotiations to move forward," he said. Three sources familiar with the situation also confirmed that US intelligence-sharing had stopped. It was not immediately clear to what extent the US had cut back on the sharing. Since the start of the war in 2022, the US has provided Ukraine with significant intelligence.

Indian-origin nurse attacked by patient, could lose eyesight



HATE CRIME

Houston, March 5: A 67-year-old Indian-origin nurse was repeatedly punched in the face by a patient at a Florida hospital in a possible hate crime that could lead to her losing her eyesight, local media has reported. Nurse Leela Lal, also known as Leelamma Lal, was assaulted and "every bone of her face broken" by Stephen Eric Scantlebury, a 33-year-old patient she was tending to in the psychiatric ward at the Palms West Hospital in West Palm Beach, Florida on February 18, police said. In a local court, a police officer testified that a video clip showed Scantlebury saying, "Indians are bad" and "I just beat the (expletive) out of an Indian doctor," news channel WPTV.com said. Scantlebury faces a charge of attempted second-degree murder in the attack and also faces a hate crime enhancement, which could result in harsher penalties if he is convicted, the media said.

WPTV.com reported after the incident that HCA Florida HealthCare, which runs the Palm West Hospital, said the attack occurred "within a matter of seconds" and was "witnessed by multiple people" and added that Lal was taken by helicopter to St Mary's Medical Centre in West Palm Beach. WPTV said it received a video from a viewer that showed the suspect walking shirtless on a nearby prominent road with what looked to be ECG leads still attached to his chest, and it also showed hospital staff and law enforcement following the man onto the busy highway before the deputies took him into custody. The probable cause affidavit filed by law enforcement described Lal's injury as "critical" and said, "Essentially every bone in the victim's face is broken and the victim is likely to lose the use of both eyes." Because of the extent of the victim's injuries, she was unable to provide a statement to investigators, the WPTV said.

ESCALATING TRADE WAR

China ramps up stimulus to guard economy

Growth target set at about 5%; debt, deficit to rise

Beijing, March 5: China unlocked more fiscal stimulus Wednesday, promising greater efforts to support consumption and cushion the impact of an escalating trade war with the United States on an economy that Beijing is determined to grow by another 5% or-so this year. Premier Li Qiang, in a speech at the opening of the annual meeting of China's parliament, warned that "changes unseen in a century are unfolding across the world at a faster pace." "An increasingly complex and severe external environment may exert a greater impact on China in areas such as trade, science, and technology," Li said.



Changes unseen in a century are unfolding across the world at a faster pace

The trade war with US President Donald Trump's administration is threatening China's economic jewel, its sprawling industrial complex, at a time when persistently sluggish household demand and the unravelling of the debt-laden property sector are leaving the economy increasingly vulnerable. Trump has also dangled tariffs at a long list of countries,

disrupting a decades-old global trade order that Beijing has built its economic model around. Pressure has been building on Chinese officials for consumer-focused stimulus to fend off deflationary pressures and reduce the world's second-largest economy's reliance on exports and investment for growth. The term "consumption" was mentioned 31 times in

Li's report, up from 21 times last year, while "technology" received 28 mentions, slightly up from 26 in 2024, according to Guotai Junan analysts. "For the first time, boosting consumption has been elevated to the top priority among 2025's major tasks, displacing technology from its usual leading position," said Tilly Zhang, technology analyst at Gavekal Dragonomics. "It's not a pivot from the previous industrial policy, but pursuing a more balanced" macroeconomic framework, Zhang said. However, China said more than a decade ago that it wants to shift to a more consumer-driven growth model, without making significant progress towards that goal, and investors aren't placing bets on this change in tone.

Gaza ceasefire deal looks doomed

Jerusalem, March 5: Israel's cutoff of food, fuel, medicine and other supplies to Gaza's 2 million people has sent prices soaring and humanitarian groups into overdrive trying to distribute dwindling stocks to the most vulnerable.



and many need shelter. Fuel is needed to keep hospitals, water pumps, bakeries and telecommunications — as well as trucks delivering aid — operating.

The aid freeze has imperiled the tenuous progress aid workers say they have made to stave off famine over the past six weeks during Phase 1 of the ceasefire deal Israel and Hamas agreed to in January. After more than 16 months of war, Gaza's population is entirely dependent on trucked-in food and other aid. Most are displaced from their homes,

Israel says the siege aims at pressuring Hamas to accept its spinoff ceasefire proposal. Israel has delayed moving to the second phase of the deal it reached with Hamas, during which the flow of aid was supposed to continue. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that he is prepared to raise the pressure and would not rule out cutting off all electricity to Gaza if Hamas doesn't budge. Rights groups have called the cutoff a "starvation policy." There's no major stockpile of tents in Gaza for Palestinians to rely on during the aid freeze, said Shaina Low, communications adviser for the Norwegian Refugee Council.

HASINA'S EXTRADITION

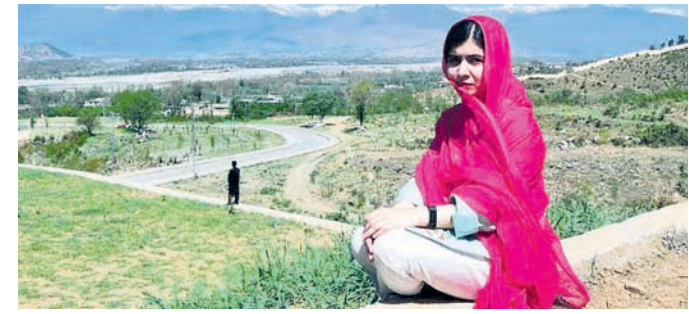
'No official response' from India: Yunus

Dhaka, March 5: Bangladesh interim government's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has said that Dhaka had sent "formal letters" to India seeking deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's extradition but received "no official response" from New Delhi. In an interview with UK-based Sky News, Yunus said Hasina will stand trial for "crimes against humanity", the state-run BSS news agency reported. Hasina, 77, has been living in India since August 5 last year, when she fled Bangladesh following a massive student-led protest that toppled her Awami League's 16-year regime. Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has issued arrest warrants for Hasina and several former Cabinet ministers, advisers, and military and civil officials for "crimes against humanity and genocide." "A trial will be taking place. Not only against her, but also all the people associated with her - her family members, her clients or associates," Yunus said. Bangladesh has issued two arrest warrants for her.

Malala visits hometown first time after being shot by Taliban

Islamabad, March 5: Pakistan's first Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai Wednesday visited her hometown in the troubled northwest of the country for the first time after being shot by the Taliban and met her family members. She flew by helicopter to Barkana in Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where she met with her uncle, Ramazan, who recently

underwent surgery in Islamabad after suffering from heart problems, and also visited the ancestral graveyard, The Dawn newspaper reported. Local Karora Station House Officer (SHO) Amjad Alam Khan told Dawn.com that Malala was accompanied by her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, and her husband, Aseer Malik, who she married in 2021. SHO Khan said she also visited the school and college she had established in Barkana in



2018 to provide free education for approximately one thousand girls in the district, which previously had no functional government college for girls.

"Malala met students, inspected classes and spoke to students while urging them to study and make their future brighter," the SHO said, adding that the Malala Fund would ensure a high standard of education at the college free of charge. Malala also visited the home of her maternal family. Also present was education activist Shahzad Roy, who runs the Shangla Girls School and College under Zindagi Trust.

He briefed her about the facilities provided by the college. She returned to Islamabad after her short visit. Malala's first visit to Pakistan since being shot was in 2018. Following that, she visited Pakistan in 2022 to travel to areas devastated by unprecedented monsoon flooding and met its victims. She also visited in January this year to attend the International Conference on Girls' Education in Muslim Communities held in Islamabad.

