

Idea of love
Actor Tamannaah Bhatia shares her views on love and relationships amid speculation about breakup with Vijay Varma
LEISURE | P2

Relief for Yoon
A South Korean court cancels impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol's arrest warrant Friday, potentially paving the way for his release from jail
INTERNATIONAL | P10

Markets end flat
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surrender early gains to close almost flat in a volatile trade Friday
BUSINESS | P11

Blow for Black Caps
New Zealand pacer Matt Henry has been rendered doubtful for the Champions Trophy final against India owing to a shoulder niggle
SPORTS | P12

CM: Suspension on refusal to file FIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Police officers will be suspended if they refuse to file FIRs, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi warned, Friday. Majhi said he was himself a victim of 'police mistreatment' when he was an Opposition MLA.

"The police officer concerned will be suspended immediately if there is an allegation of refusal of filing FIR," he said.

The CM made the statement while inaugurating a new building of Nayapalli police station here. He also virtually inaugurated 13 other police stations across the state. The police stations were built at a cost of ₹42 crore.

Sharing his experience during his days in the Opposition, Majhi said, "Even I was told to get out of the police station, made to sit on the ground and the officer in-charge did not receive my FIR. I have two experiences of being mistreated at the police station in Keonjhar district."

He urged the police to treat people with respect.



CLOSING GENDER GAP: Women workers transplating paddy saplings in a farm land on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, Friday

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

3 trains to originate from Bhubaneswar New Station

BHUBANESWAR: East Coast Railway (ECoR) has planned to announce the originating and terminating of three important trains from/at Bhubaneswar New Station.

According to ECoR officials, Bhubaneswar-Mumbai Konark Express, Bhubaneswar-Secunderabad Visakha Express and Bhubaneswar-Visakhapatnam Intercity Express will arrive and depart from Bhubaneswar New Station. The date of implementation for these changes will be announced shortly.

The introduction of these originating trains will provide immense benefits to passengers from the northern parts of Bhubaneswar and adjacent areas.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Keep working hard, son. One day, the CM might just acknowledge it in the Assembly!

Elephant-dragon ballet only right choice: China

As tensions between China and the United States escalate after the US doubled tariffs on Chinese imports to 20 per cent, Beijing has started singing a different tune so far as the Sino-Indian ties are concerned. Whether it is border standoffs at Doklam or Galwan valley clash in eastern Ladakh, the neighbouring nation's hostile approach is universal. China also irked India on multiple occasions by blocking the entities and individuals India suggested for listing under the United Nations Security Council's list of terrorists affiliated to the Al Qaeda and ISIS. However, in the face of a trade war with the US, the world's second largest economy appears to have softened its stance towards India suggesting to support each other rather than undermine or undercut each other. Now, it remains to be seen how joining up of the dragon and the elephant counterbalances Uncle Sam's global hegemony.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, March 7: A ballet between the elephant and the dragon contributing to each other's success is the "only right choice" for India-China rela-

tions, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Friday as he acknowledged positive strides in bilateral ties after the end of the military standoff in eastern Ladakh.

There is every reason for the two countries to support each other rather than undermine or undercut each other, Wang, who is also a member of the powerful political bureau of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), said at his annual press conference here.

A "cooperative pas de deux" between the dragon and the elephant is the "only right choice for both sides," Wang said while replying to a question on how Beijing views the course of bilateral ties after the two countries ended the four-year stalemate in the ties.

Bilateral relations between the two Asian giants froze after the Galwan valley clash in eastern Ladakh in June 2020. The four year military standoff ended last year.

China-India relations have made positive strides over the past year after last year's breakthrough, he said.

The successful meeting between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kazan last October provided

strategic guidance for the improvement and development of the bilateral ties, he said.

As two ancient civilisations, India and China have enough wisdom and capability to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas pending a fair and reasonable solution to the boundary issue, said Wang.

"We should never allow bilateral relations to be defined by the boundary question or specific differences to affect the overall picture of our bilateral ties," he said in his widely televised press conference held on the sidelines of China's annual parliament session currently underway.

As important members of the Global South, China and India have the responsibility to take a lead in opposing hegemonism and power politics, he said in an apparent reference to the United States.

The two countries must not only safeguard legitimate rights and interests of respective countries but also uphold the basic norms governing international relations, he said.

"If China and India join hands, the prospect of greater democracy in international affairs and the stronger Global South will improve greatly," he said.

26 SC-ST boarders of govt hostels died in 8 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 7: As many 26 SC and ST boarders died in the Odisha government-run hostels since July 1, 2024, of whom six were suicide victims, the Assembly was informed Friday.

While replying to a question of senior BJD member Ranendra Pratap Swain, Minister for ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare (ST & SC Development, M&BCW), Nityananda Gond said 26 SC/ST students died in various hostels in the past eight months.

Six of them died by suicide in the hostels while the remaining 20 lost their lives while undergoing treatment in various hospitals, he said. As per the minister's reply, the deaths were reported in 14 districts of the state.

Rayagada district reported the maximum number of deaths at seven, while three such cases came to be known from Koraput and Malkangiri districts each.

The districts of Sundargarh and Bargarh accounted for two such deaths during the period. Besides, Bolangir, Ganjam, Jharsuguda, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh, Nuapada and Subarnapur districts reported one such death case each, Gond said.

Over 400 govt services on WhatsApp in state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 7: People in Odisha will now be able to access over 400 government services, including birth and death certificates and driving licenses, on WhatsApp, officials said.

An agreement regarding this was signed between the Centre for Modernising Government Initiative (CMGI) and Meta India here on Friday. A total of 429 government services will be available on a single WhatsApp number, officials said.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja said, "The government of Odisha is committed to delivering seamless public services, ensuring that every citizen experiences convenience and efficiency at the last mile. This commitment is underscored by our investment in technology and training, aiming to eliminate bureaucratic hurdles and enhance overall accessibility."

Development Commissioner Anu Garg said she was confident that the Unified WhatsApp Bot will empower people.

CGMI's Executive Director Vineet Bharadwaj said ease of

access to public services is still a challenge in Odisha.

"Currently, there are four modes of accessing any public service in the state -- visiting the office concerned, accessing the web portal of the department concerned, accessing the specific mobile app of that particular service, or through assisted service (by visiting a Common Service Center)," he said.

"Recognising the need for a more user-friendly and accessible mode for public service delivery, we believe that WhatsApp will enable citizens to avail the desired services on a single platform through a single number," he added.

Bharadwaj said the state government was aiming to deliver all public services notified under the Odisha Right to Public Services Act through WhatsApp by the end of this year.

Meta India's director of business messaging Ravi Garg said "We are thrilled to partner with the government of Odisha and bring the power and reach of WhatsApp to millions of people in the state"



Officials after signing of MoU between the state govt and Meta India, Friday

CHANDRAYAAN-3 REPORT

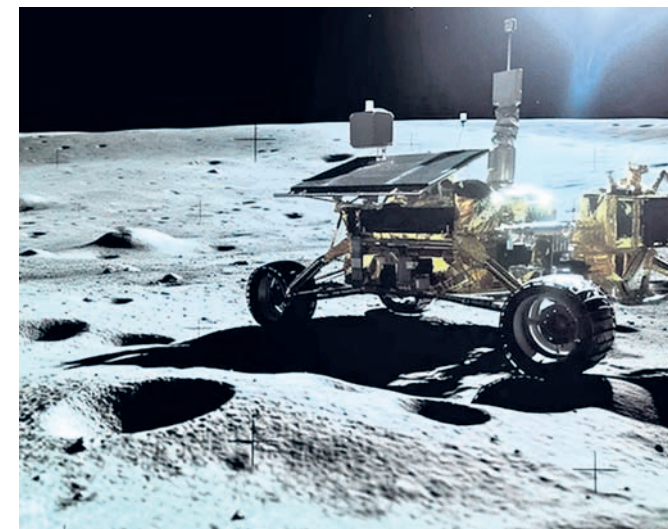
Ice may exist on Moon at more locations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: Ice could be present at more locations right beneath the Moon's surface at the poles than previously thought, a study of data collected by the Chandrayaan-3 mission has suggested.

Large, yet highly local, changes in surface temperatures can directly affect the forming of ice, and looking into these ice particles can reveal 'different stories about their origin and history', lead author, Durga Prasad Karanam, Faculty, Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad told this agency.

The Chandrayaan-3, launched by the ISRO, achieved a soft landing near



the Moon's south pole August 23, 2023. The lander touched down at the edge of the Moon's

south pole region, about 69 degrees south latitude. At this landing site - "a

Sun-facing slope angled at six degrees" -- the authors found that temperatures peaked at about 82 degrees Celsius and dropped to -170 degrees Celsius in the night. However, barely a metre away from the landing point temperatures peaked at about 60 degrees Celsius.

Further, the team developed a model of how slope angle can affect surface temperature at a high lunar latitude, such as the latitude of the landing site.

The model indicated that, for slopes facing away from the Sun and towards the Moon's nearest pole, a slope inclined at an angle greater than 14 degrees may be cool enough for ice to accumulate close to the surface.

The slope conditions suggested by the model were found to be similar to those of

landing points, proposed for NASA's manned mission to the Moon's south pole.

The authors, therefore, suggested that potentially, there could be multiple places on the Moon where ice can form and be accessed more easily than previously thought.

In response to a question on the chances of ice turning into water on the Moon, Karanam said, "Water in liquid form cannot exist on the lunar surface because of (an) ultra-high vacuum. Therefore, ice cannot transform into liquid, but would rather sublimate to vapour form."

However, ice is a potential resource for future on-site exploration and habitability of the Moon, and that more measurements are needed to gain a comprehensive picture, he added.

KIIT: Govt forms professors' panel to ensure academic environment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Days after the death of a Nepalese student on the KIIT University campus here, the state government has set up a professors' committee to safeguard the interest of students and ensure proper academic environment at the private institute, Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said in the Assembly.

Government also summoned six more officials of the private institute to record their statements on the death of the undergraduate woman and the subsequent attack on Nepalese students of the institute.

The minister was replying to a written question of Congress

member Taraprasad Bahinipati. The lawmaker asked what measures the state government has taken following the death of 20-year-old Nepalese student Prakriti Lamsal and the subsequent unrest on the KIIT campus.

"To safeguard students' academic interests and resume classes smoothly, the Higher Education Department has constituted a special committee, comprising two senior professors from Utkal University and two from Rama Devi Women's University. This committee members will visit KIIT every 15 days for the next three months to monitor the academic environment and later visit the campus every month," the minister said.

leisure



JAZZ ICON ROY AYERS PASSES AWAY

Jazz legend Roy Ayers, renowned for his hit *Everybody Loves the Sunshine*, has passed away at 84. Ayers' music influenced generations, blending jazz, funk, R&B and electronic sounds. His seminal 1976 track continues to be widely sampled in hip-hop and R&B.

BRODY COULD JOIN DiCAPRIO IN EVEL KNEIVEL BIOPIC

Academy Award winner Adrien Brody is in discussions to join Leonardo DiCaprio in Damien Chazelle's *Evel Knievel* on Tour. The collaboration is contingent on DiCaprio's involvement, with both actors expected to bring significant star power to this anticipated biopic.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You are creative, and today you will prove to be resourceful and thereby successful! Okay, you are ambitious, says Ganesha, but don't bite off more than you can chew. Be confident of your abilities, work hard and have faith in providence.

TAURUS
You will feel the burden of financial responsibilities on your shoulders today, says Ganesha. Do not let expenses bother you. Money will come to you from unexpected sources later in the day. If you can maintain an impartial judgement, then you will yield wonderful results on the financial front, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI
You are extremely competitive. And it doesn't matter how far behind the competition is. So today, you will continue your usual quest for getting better. You won't have it any other way as you despise mediocrity. You will find yourself in the company of like-minded people who will inspire you to study new subjects.

CANCER
Your business acquaintances will come forward in the manner that may seem nothing short of some divine intervention. This means that they will virtually save your neck from the guillotine, predicts Ganesha. You will grow wiser in your spending ways, as you will know what to buy and what not to buy.

LEO
Che Guevara may not hold the beacon any more, and the best of the Beatles are long gone. But your desire to revolutionise the world is as strong as ever, sees Ganesha. The best ideas are the ones that come suddenly and subconsciously.

VIRGO
Professionalism will be overshadowed by personal preoccupations. Drill your way out of problems today by meeting them head-on. Don't get stuck up on the emotional front, especially in the evening, cautions Ganesha.

LIBRA
Trivialities should be the least of your concerns today. Do not let the small things faze you out. Remember that it is the overall picture that matters, and not one small stroke of the brush. Bear this in mind, since you may come under some pressure from subordinates at your workplace. Just remember to consider all possibilities before making any decisions.

SCORPIO
Work pressure will keep on mounting today, predicts Ganesha. But you shall handle it with great style, all thanks to your patience. But keep a watch on the radar and learn how to spot stress early and then act on it as quickly as you can.

SAGITTARIUS
Look before you leap, says Ganesha. Cupid has strung his bow and aimed an arrow at you. Love's labour will easily aid you to woo a young, tender heart. But don't be swept away by easy prospects and guard your reputation at all costs.

CAPRICORN
You will starve for some free time, but will find it difficult to steal even a minute from your busy schedule, even if it is for unwinding your overworked soul, says Ganesha. In times like these, one can hardly think straight, let alone be innovative. You will, however, work your way out by prioritising matters. By the end of the day, your efforts may get paid off, leaving you with the thought that it was all worthwhile after all!

AQUARIUS
Your ideas are bang on target today! Everything you touch turns into gold. You have it in you to make it big, and the time is now. When the going gets tough, the tough get going — you've heard this before, now it's time for some action, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Stabbing with a pen is so much more satisfying than slicing with a sword. With these lofty ideals in mind, you will launch an assault upon your unsuspecting prey with your lethal presentation skills, eliciting cries of sheer ecstasy and tremendous applause.

Tamannaah's idea of love

Mumbai: Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma were quite open about their relationship, often discussing each other in interviews. However, recent rumours of their breakup have taken everyone by surprise. Gossip mills went abuzz as reports of Tamannaah and Vijay calling it quits made it to the headlines, though the actors have yet to address these speculations. It is believed that they have decided to remain friends.

In the midst of these rumours, the *Baahubali* actress shared her thoughts on love during a recent podcast. She explained that love must be unconditional, emphasising that people often confuse love with relationships. She stated, "I think people confuse between what love is and what a relationship is. The moment it is conditional, I feel it ceases to be love. Love can only be unconditional; it can only be ek tarafah (one-sided). Love is an inside job, it's how you feel for someone. The moment you have expectations, you want people to do what you want them to be doing, then that's just a business transaction. I've realised if I have to love someone, I need to let them free, to be who they are."

The actress also expressed that she feels happiest in a relationship, enjoying the companionship, but also noted that it's important to choose wisely who you allow to influence your life.

AGENCIES



Parineeti faces backlash

Mumbai: Parineeti Chopra is facing backlash after a comment made during a recent interview sparked outrage. The controversy began when she appeared on a chat with host Rannvijay Singha for *Mashable Middle East*, where they discussed their early job experiences. When Rannvijay shared that he worked as a construction worker in New York during his student days, Parineeti responded, "Oh fab... mine is not so embarrassing," a remark that quickly went viral and attracted sharp criticism.

The clip, posted online 7 March 2025, led many fans and social media users to label her as "classist." shows Rannvijay asking Parineeti if she ever took up part-time gigs while studying. After he mentioned his construction job, her reply caught attention, and his follow-up was firm: "Well, mine isn't embarrassing either." The exchange fueled a debate, with netizens condemning Parineeti's apparent elitism. Critics pointed out that construction work is a common and dignified job, especially for Indian immigrants, and called her response out of touch with the realities of working-class struggles.

Many expressed disappointment, highlighting the importance of respecting all types of labor. One user noted that any job that helps support one's family is never embarrassing. On the professional front, Parineeti was last seen in *Amar Singh Chamkila*, directed by Imtiaz Ali, alongside Diljit Dosanjh.

AGENCIES



Special film festival to celebrate Amir's legacy

Mumbai: Amir Khan will be honored with a special film festival in recognition of his remarkable contribution to Indian cinema on the occasion of his 60th birthday.

The festival will showcase his iconic films, celebrating his legacy and impactful journey in the industry. PVR INOX will present *Amir Khan: Cinema Ka Jadugar*, a special film festival celebrating Amir Khan's monumental contribution to Indian cinema.

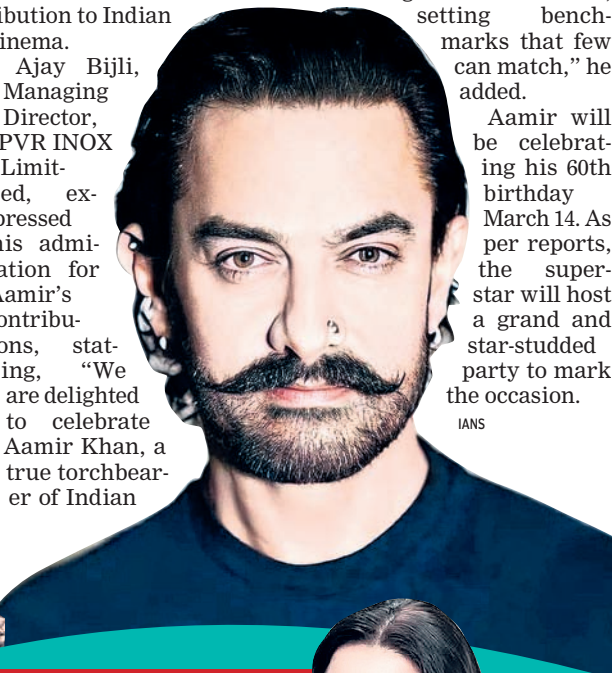
Ajay Bijli, Managing Director, PVR INOX Limited, expressed his admiration for Amir's contributions, stating, "We are delighted to celebrate Amir Khan, a true torchbearer of Indian

cinema. He has never shied away from courageous scripts and has played a pivotal role in shaping the film industry as we know it today.

"Watching *3 Idiots* made us realise the importance of chasing excellence over success—something that has always been at the core of Amir's philosophy. Amir Khan's films have conveyed powerful messages while simultaneously breaking box office records, setting benchmarks that few can match," he added.

Amir will be celebrating his 60th birthday March 14. As per reports, the superstar will host a grand and star-studded party to mark the occasion.

IAN S



Vidya on women's financial independence

Mumbai: In a recent conversation about the importance of financial independence, actress Vidya Balan shared her perspective on why it is essential for women to take charge of their finances.

Balan, who was recently announced as the brand ambassador of a bank, emphasised how understanding that "money is power" was a turning point in her life. Speaking about the importance of financial independence, the actress shared, "I realised years ago that money is power. It's not just about earning—it's about being in charge of your finances. You need to decide how to spend, save, invest, and grow your money because financial control gives you the strength to take on life unapologetically and fearlessly. Too often, especially for women, financial dependence keeps them stuck in situations—whether an unhappy marriage or a job that stifles their passion. Many are unable to chase their dreams simply because they haven't

taken charge of their finances. I believe financial independence is empowering and essential for everyone, but even more so for women." When asked about the significance of money, *The Dirty Picture* actress explained, "What I love about it—besides the obvious—is the purchasing power it provides. Not just for material things or security, but for the freedom to live life on your terms. Money isn't the key to happiness, but financial stability allows you to experience life fully."

IAN S



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

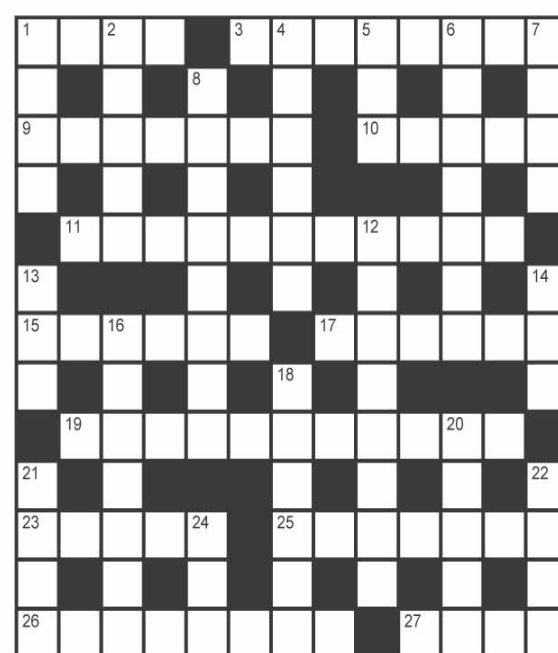


BREVITY



FUN POST

CROSSWORD



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- Across**
- 1 Ivory source
 - 3 Atypical
 - 9 Refrain
 - 10 Pig out
 - 11 Cartes du jour (5,2,4)
 - 15 Graduates
 - 17 Middle
 - 19 Scraps (4,3,4)
 - 23 Combat zone
 - 25 Belief
 - 26 Catastrophe
 - 27 Hamburg's river
 - 8 Laurel wreaths
 - 12 Excessively agitated
 - 13 Chap
 - 14 Condensation
 - 16 Disrobe
 - 18 Catch some Z's
 - 20 Carpenter's tool
 - 21 Musical group
 - 22 Wager
 - 24 Workout target

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.

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| 3 | | 6 | | | | | 2 | |
| 9 | | | | | 5 | 4 | 6 | |

SOLUTIONS

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| P | O | R | T | A | L |
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| S | H | O | C | K | I |
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| G | Y | N | O | S | P |

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
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| 8 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| 7 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 9 |
| 6 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 3 |
| 9 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| 2 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 1 |
| 4 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| 3 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| 5 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 2 |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Bhubaneswar: Distinguished Odia translator and journalist Suvash Satapathy has been awarded the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award for translation for 2024, official sources said Friday.

downtown

SUBHADRA: GATEWAY TO TRANSFORMATIVE WOMEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN ODISHA



Pravati Parida

Deputy Chief Minister, Odisha

1. Women in Odisha have long been central to the state's socio-economic development, contributing significantly across both formal and informal sectors, particularly in agriculture, small enterprises, and the often unmeasured but significantly crucial activities of homemaking.

2. As soon as the new government was formed, not a single day was wasted and in its first meeting dated 17th June 2024, the cabinet decided to roll out SUBHADRA - the largest women empowerment initiative in the history of Odisha.

3. Being the Minister-in-Charge of the Department of Women and Child Development, which was mandated to roll out the scheme, it was incumbent on the entire team of the Department to develop the scheme with all its details like detailed guidelines, SOP, financial budgeting, execution plans etc.

4. In formulating the guidelines, several women empowerment schemes of the country as well as different countries of the world were studied in great detail. We held thorough discussions at the beginning to define the basic contours of the scheme and became clear that unless we listened to the target group's needs, the scheme would remain another official government document having no connect with the ground.

5. To this effect, stakeholder consultations were organised in 10 districts of the State soliciting the opinions of the women themselves regarding their needs and expectations from

the Government. I take this opportunity to thank all those women who helped shape the core vision of the scheme - the target age group and the idea of transferring the scheme benefit directly to the beneficiaries in their single-holder bank accounts.

6. The suggested target age group was 21 to 60 under the Scheme as it is the most economically productive age group since a majority of the women workforce belonged to this age group. Recognizing its importance, we made this the first pillar of the scheme. The second key suggestion was transferring the scheme benefits directly to the beneficiaries in their single-holder bank accounts which made DBT the obvious choice for implementation.

7. With the basic framework in place, an estimation was carried out to arrive at the number of potential beneficiaries based on the available census data and the electoral database pertaining to the scheme age group. The estimated number of beneficiaries was slightly over one crore based on the rigorous exercise done by the Department and all and all stakeholders were directed to factor this into their budget planning.

8. SUBHADRA is an excellent example of how technology can be leveraged to ensure that the entire process - starting from beneficiary selection until the benefit transfer can be made hassle-free for the applicant, ensuring transparency, and promoting progressive desirable traits among citizens, benefiting both society and the state, while making the process error-free.

9. The most vulnerable sections of the population have, for years, been covered under NFSA, with states often supplementing it through their own initiatives. Naturally, SUBHADRA prioritized identifying beneficiaries from this pool first. And in attestation of our vision, most of the scheme beneficiaries were identified from this. The scheme also ex-

tends benefits to those outside the NFSA/SFSS framework with detailed provisions ensuring their inclusion under SUBHADRA - truly a scheme designed to encompass all. Civil society members working in the field of women empowerment have been co-opted as members of different committees constituted under the SUBHADRA Guidelines to ensure that the voice of people is heard and reflected in the decision-making process for the inclusion of an applicant or otherwise.

10. Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) under the Electronics & Information Technology Department has been our partner in the IT Implementation part of SUBHADRA and played a crucial role in designing a robust portal to manage the entire 1 crore plus estimated women and has served the implementation of SUBHADRA magnificently. The registration process through CSKs/MSKs has been remarkable with over 60 lakh registrations completed within the first few days of rolling out the scheme. The collective involvement of all stakeholders - Department Officials, District Administration, and other Departments - in reaching out to people and educating them on scheme guidelines through SUBHADRA Sachetana Raths, SUBHADRA Swagat Padayatra and other awareness activities has shown the way to how a truly participative scheme is to be rolled out redefining the role of all stakeholders. With over 1.08 Crore registrations SUBHADRA is a testament to how rural populations can effectively use technology when it is made accessible in the correct manner.

11. The Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS) was selected as the preferred DBT platform and NPCI (National Payment Corporation of India) has played a crucial role in ensuring seamless transactions despite the involvement of multiple stakeholders.

12. Similar to the implementation of any such large-scale initiative, we faced tremendous challenges but strong teamwork from everyone involved, and a clear vision of our objectives helped us overcome them. It is important to acknowledge the crucial role played by the field functionaries comprising Anganwadi Workers, Anganwadi Helper, ASHA Workers, Women SHG Members, Community Resource Persons etc. as they have been particularly instrumental in ensuring that every applicant facing difficulties was reached and supported.

13. With disbursements made to over 98 lakh bene-

ficiaries thereby ensuring their financial inclusion in a span of six months of our Government's formation, the scheme stands out as a resounding success in terms of implementation. As the first scheme in India to adopt the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) effectively for benefit disbursement directly into digital wallets and promoting digital financial transactions by incentivising digital transactions, SUBHADRA has set the benchmark for the entire country in realising the dream of Digital India Initiative of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji.

14. We are all set to release the second instalment under the scheme on 8th March. By that time, we are almost certain to reach over 1 crore SUBHADRA beneficiaries. Setting Rakhi Purnima and International Women's Day for benefit disbursement reflects the government's commitment to a women-led development agenda.

15. It has been well-established that financial assistance made available to women initiates a significant multiplier effect on the economy. As per the Odisha Economic Survey 2024-25, the implementation of the Odisha government's flagship scheme, SUBHADRA, could lead to gross output impact in the range of Rs 1 lakh crore to Rs 1.5 lakh crore over a five-year period.

16. To gain deeper insights into the scheme's impact, the Department has signed an MoU with IIM Sambalpur for undertaking concurrent evaluation of the scheme.

17. SUBHADRA has been designed to reach every woman in need of support across the state providing unconditional support to address the unmet needs of women while also fostering entrepreneurship dreams by enabling many women to become micro-entrepreneurs. KUHA SUBHADRA and SUNA SUBHADRA have been institutionalised as two dedicated response centres where the scheme-related information is disseminated and the aspirations of our women are heard. MoU has been signed with the World Skill Centre for the upgradation of the skillsets of women who decide to embark on the journey of entrepreneurship. Several initiatives are underway to nurture this vision and I am confident that, just as the scheme has been successfully rolled out, the women of Odisha will succeed in their entrepreneurial journey. For Odisha's women, their Path to Transformation has just begun.....



NEW BEGINNING: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi inaugurates the new building of Nayapalli police station in Bhubaneswar, Friday. Ekamra-Bhubaneswar MLA Babu Singh and DGP Yogesh Bahadur Khurania are seen on PHOTO

No supply cut for non-payment of electricity bills in summer

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The state government Friday instructed the Energy department not to cut power supply of consumers during the oncoming summer months in the event they failed to pay their bills.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said the decision has been taken keeping in mind the inconveniences it will cause during the scorching season. "We have issued instructions to the energy department to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the summer season. We have also directed them that if anyone is not able to pay electricity bills must not suffer any power cut during this hot weather," Pujari said.

Addressing a press conference Pujari said that keeping in mind the heatwave likely this year, all departments have been directed to take appropriate action. He said according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast, there is no possibility of heatwave in the state at present. "However, we are monitoring the situation on a daily basis," he said.

Pujari instructed the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water and the Housing & Urban Development departments to identify water-stressed areas in various villages, padas and wards and ensure drinking water supply. He also instructed them to provide water through tankers, open drinking water service



centres and water tanks at marketplaces, bus stands and other crowded places, repair old tube wells, expedite piped water supply system, make arrangements for providing daytime shelter to the homeless and needy in shelter homes and community centres in rural and urban areas.

The Water Resources department has been instructed to provide required water to the canals from reservoirs. The Fisheries and Animal Resources Development department has been instructed to make arrangements for drinking water for roaming animals and cattle.

Schools, colleges and technical educational institutions have been asked to ensure repair of defunct tube wells and keep sufficient ORS available. Outdoor activities have been banned in schools and colleges during hot weather.

The departments of School and Mass Education, Higher Education, Skill Development and Technical Education have been directed to change the school timings as per the advance information on heatwave. Similarly, the Women &

Child Development department has been directed to provide drinking water facilities and sufficient ORS packets to ASHA and Anganwadi workers. Anganwadi centres also have to be kept open only in the morning hours, the minister said.

The Health and Family Welfare department and OSDMA have been instructed to arrange for treatment of heatstroke patients in PHCs, CHCs and district headquarters hospitals, along with making life-saving medicines, saline and ORS available.

Arrangements for sunstroke awareness among the public, training of district level and other medical officers on sunstroke management in health centres will be provided by OSDMA. "Funds will be provided for this," he said.

The Information and Public Relations department and OSDMA have been directed to create awareness among the public regarding summer season by publishing posters, leaflets and dos and don'ts for the protection of human and animal resources.

2,966 Agniveers, 227 Naviks graduate from INS Chilka

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 7: A total of 2,966 Agniveers, including 402 women, of the Indian Navy passed out from INS Chilka, the Navy's premier training establishment in Odisha, Friday.

Additionally, 288 senior secondary recruits (medical assistants) and 227 Naviks also graduated on the occasion.

The passing-out parade (POP) marked the culmination of 16 weeks of rigorous naval training, and was held in a unique post-sunset ceremony.

The parade was reviewed by Vice Admiral V Srinivas, while Commanding Officer of INS Chilka was the conducting officer with Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Southern Naval Command, Commodore B Deepak Aneel also in attendance. The event was witnessed by the family members of the graduates.

The POP not only signifies the successful completion of initial training but also marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Indian Navy, according to an official statement. The Indian Navy emphasises

on a gender neutral environment to transform these men and women into a combat ready, credible, cohesive, and future-ready force, it said.

During his address, Commanding-in-Chief of the Southern Naval Command congratulated the trainees for the successful completion of the course exemplifying hard work, discipline and commitment.

He impressed upon the Agniveers to hone their skills and be technologically aware, while imbuing the Navy's core values of duty, honour and courage.

He urged them to uphold the honour of the nation while charting their course with courage and determination.

The chief guest awarded medals and trophies to meritorious Agniveers.

Devraj Singh Rathore and Pramodh Singh received the chief of the Naval Staff Rolling Trophy and Gold Medal for best Agniveer in the MR and SSR categories, respectively.

Mansa Gulivindhala was awarded with the Gen Bipin Rawat Rolling Trophy for Best Woman Agniveer in the overall order of merit.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Call for shift to sustainable menstruation practices

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 7: With India generating an estimated 113,000 tons of menstrual waste annually from 12.3 billion discarded disposable pads, experts and advocates on 'International Women's Day' called for a shift to sustainable menstruation practices in the country.

This is in the backdrop of findings that most of these pads contain up to 90 per cent plastic which will take 500 to 800 years to decompose, and often end up in landfills, water bodies, or are incinerated, releasing harmful toxins.

"The widespread use of disposable pads is creating a severe waste crisis," said Surabhi Jain, Director of Ecosustain Forums and Joint Secretary, Orissa Environmental Society.

"An average user generates 125-150 kg of menstrual waste in a lifetime. We need to shift to biodegradable alternatives like organic cotton pads, which decompose in six months to a year, or menstrual



cups, which are reusable for up to 10 years," said Jain who is also an environmental expert.

Sustainable menstrual products, including cloth pads, biodegradable pads, menstrual cups, and period panties, are gaining traction these days. However, hygiene concerns remain a challenge.

To deal with the issue, Sarojini Sadangi, gynecologist and former professor at SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH), stressed the need for spread of awareness.

"There is more focus on menstrual hygiene now, but many adolescents lack proper knowledge. Reusable pads can be beneficial if maintained properly. Personally, I wouldn't recommend menstrual cups, as many women find them difficult to use and clean," she said.

However, despite such concerns, many women are making the switch. Rosalin Sahu, a college student, shared her experience: "I started using a menstrual cup for economic reasons—one purchase lasts for years. Awareness programs helped me realise how harmful disposable pads are to the environment. As women, we must take responsibility for our health and the planet."

Proper disposal of menstrual waste is another pressing issue. While some institutions have installed incinerators, many lack adequate facilities. Advocates urged women to lead in responsible disposal methods and called for improved waste management infrastructure.

Advertisement for Ganesh Silks, Bangalore, featuring exhibition sale, attractive discount, and national level handloom expo.

Embrace selfless service for inclusive society: Guv



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Youth is the future of our nation, and by choosing the path of selfless service, they can contribute to building a progressive and inclusive society, said Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati while speaking at the state level Youth Red Cross (YRC) and Junior Red Cross (JRC) award giving ceremony at the New Abhishek Hall at Raj Bhawan here Friday.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi's words, "Be the change you want to see in the world," the Governor encouraged young volunteers to take initiative,

inspire others, and create a lasting impact through the act of kindness and service.

The ceremony recognised the contributions of YRC and JRC volunteers, counselors, and units for their humanitarian work from 2019-20 to 2023-24.

Kambhampati praised their dedication, calling them essential in promoting compassion, volunteerism and leadership among young people.

"Youth Red Cross and Junior Red Cross provide a platform for students to engage in social welfare, health awareness, disaster response, and voluntary service," the governor said, adding that their

efforts significantly contribute to building a resilient and compassionate society.

Highlighting the challenges of the modern world—ranging from natural disasters to public health crises—the Governor described Red Cross volunteers as beacons of hope. "Their work not only saves lives but also inspires others to contribute towards a better society," he noted.

Congratulating the awardees, he expressed pride in Odisha's strong Red Cross network. He said that the JRC units actively function in all schools across the state, with over 10 lakh volunteers, while YRC units operate in more than 3,000 colleges, involving one lakh active volunteers.

He also commended the Odisha State Red Cross for its dedication to strengthening the YRC movement and fostering a culture of social responsibility.

Indian Red Cross Society, Odisha State Branch secretary Ganesh Chandra Patra delivered the welcome address, while principal secretary to the Governor NBS Rajput also spoke on the occasion. A total of 79 YRC volunteers and 24 JRC volunteers were honoured with awards during the event.

Vijaya Lakshmi Mohanty appointed advisor to President



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Vijaya Lakshmi Mohanty has been appointed as the advisor to President Droupadi Murmu recently. A native of Rairangpur and the director of the Human Resources Development Centre (HRDC) at Sri Sri University (SSU) in Cuttack, Mohanty became the first woman from Mayurbhanj as well as from the state to hold the prestigious position.

Mohanty is a multifaceted personality with a remarkable career. She gained recognition for her work in shaping professional lifestyles and fostering public relationships. She also earned widespread acclaim for her biography of President Droupadi Murmu. Under the spiritual guidance of her mentor, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, she was instrumental in establishing the first home-based global university in Cuttack and played a significant leadership role.

In her academic career, Mohanty was awarded a gold medal at the university level and has more than 23 years of experience in the education sector. She currently serves as the head of HRDC and public relation at SSU. She also serves as the director of the Sri Sri Advanced Global Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies.

Along with Mohanty, six other individuals have been appointed to the advisory positions at the President's Secretariat. They include, Rajendra Prasad Mishra as the additional private secretary, Arbinda Kumar Marndi and Sabita Rani Hemrom as the principal private secretaries, Beni Marndi and Balaknath Naik as the assistant private secretaries, and Manoj Biswal as the personal assistant.

Gram-Utthan marks IWD with spiritual awakening

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 7: In order to commemorate the International Women's Day (IWD), under this year's theme 'Accelerating Action: Gender Equality', Gram-Utthan organised an event titled 'Spirituality in Grihastha Jevan' at Buddha Temple premises here Friday.

The event was graced by Swami Brahma Nishatananda Saraswati—founder of the Swami Chidananda World Peace Foundation, along with Marg Advisory Services and Beads marketing director Pragyna Mishra and Team Admark Pvt Ltd managing director Nishikant Mishra.

Addressing the gathering, Nishatananda Saraswati shared insights on spirituality and stated, "Following a religious path does not necessarily make one spiritual. True spirituality comes from regulating desires, uplifting knowledge, and maintaining balance in personal and family life."

Swamiji highlighted how

modern life is becoming increasingly materialistic, drawing people away from fundamental values and urged everyone to practice patience, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness.

Speaking at the event, Pragyna Mishra emphasised that if women recognise their inherent abilities and enhance their capabilities and skills to become self-reliant, they can accelerate both personal and societal growth. Nishikant Mishra highlighted the role of women in the workforce and said, "As more and more women actively participate in the economy, gender equality will become more effective."

The event included a yoga and pranayama session. Over 200 women and their spouses from Gram-Utthan's Workforce Development (WFD) programme attended the event, supported by Sahabha Services Pvt Ltd, Forum for Integrated Development and Research (FIDR), Future Generali, Kotak Life, Aqua Health, and Team Admark Pvt Ltd.



2km radius around Debrigarh Sanctuary declared shock free

THE SANCTUARY AREA IS SURROUNDED BY 68 VILLAGES, WITH POPULATION RANGING FROM 200 TO 1000 INHABITANTS IN EACH VILLAGE. DEPENDENT ON THE FOREST FOR DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES, THEY JOINED HANDS TOGETHER AND AGREED TO MAKE THE SENSITIVE AREA AS SHOCK FREE

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Two kilometer zone around the Debrigarh Sanctuary (DS) has been declared as 'Shock Free Zone' and 'Zero Electrocutation Zone', jointly by eco development committee (EDC) of surrounding villages and forest department.

The sanctuary area is surrounded by 68 villages, with population ranging from 200 to 1000 inhabitants in each village. Dependent on the forest for day to day activities, they joined hands together and agreed to make the sensitive area as shock free.

Several poaching incidents have been marked in the zone due to electrocution in last decade including death Schedule 1 species such as Royal Bengal Tiger and Leopards. The villages are predominantly agriculture oriented and put electric hooks for saving crops from depredation as well as for poaching of Wildboars and Sambar for meat.

Hirakud Wildlife Division (Debrigarh Sanctuary) Divisional Forest Officer Anshu Pragnan Das said, "As there is a regular movement of animals from the sanctuary to outside during dawn and dusk,



making this zone free from electrocution was most essential. Twelve patrolling teams (72 squads) with 6 dedicated

vehicles are engaged with metal detectors and live wire detectors to keep a check."

EDC elections in the 68 villages were conducted during February and new presidents were elected in presence of forest officials with a vision to make the 100km border shock free for animals. Majority of presidents elected are women with good communication skills so that the mission becomes successful in long run with their support.

The western part of the sanctuary is more prone to traps, snares, electric hooks for poaching of wild animals. As long as 500 meter long electric

hooks have been recovered from the sanctuary area and subsequent legal actions have been taken. With the challenge to stop poaching activities, strengthening community support is necessary. The village teams have joined hands with the patrolling units in order to make the 2km border as zero electrocution and shock free zone, Das said.

"When one animal in a herd falls in trap - it also gives stress and shock to other animals the herd. Zero poaching will probably increase the animal population in the sanctuary by 20 to 30 per cent," she added.



DEVOTIONAL ENSEMBLE: Baul Badshah Madhu Sudan from Kashigram performs during 13th annual festival of sufiana and other devotional songs 'Samarpan 2025', organised by Bhubaneswar Music Circle and Odia Language Literature and Culture department at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar Friday

'Govt silent on rising crimes against women'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: The Congress Friday hit out at the BJP over alleged increase in crimes against women in Odisha, claiming that 54 incidents of gang-rape have taken place in the last eight months with the 'double-engine' government remaining silent.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das said the Central government should pay attention to the situation in Odisha and if it is unable to do so, the Supreme Court should order the state government to change its attitude.

"For the last 24 years, the Biju Janata Dal government was in power in Odisha. Meanwhile, the BJP and BJD together ruled Odisha from 2000 to 2009. The BJP government has been in power for the last eight months.



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi himself has stated that 3,420 women and 8,403 children are missing," Das said.

"There have been 54 incidents of gang-rape in the last eight months. Along with this, incidents of rape and murder of minor girls are continuously increasing in Odisha. All this is happening, but the BJP's 'double-engine' government is silent," he claimed.

The government of India should pay attention to the increasing crimes against women in Odisha, because if measures

are not taken to stop the crimes, they will keep increasing, he said.

"If the government is not able to pay attention to them, then the Supreme Court should consider it. A sitting judge should order the government to change its attitude and understand responsibility," he said.

"The rate of crimes against women in Odisha was 9.3 per cent in 2022. But now 31,000 cases have been registered, which shows an increase of eight per cent. Mostly tribal and Dalit women are affected in this," Das said.

He said that until these wom-

en get justice, the Odisha unit of Congress will continue to raise its voice against this 'injustice'. Newly appointed AICC in-charge of Odisha Ajay Lallu said the Congress 'gheraoed the CM's residence' and the issue was raised in the state Assembly under the leadership of CLP leader, but he alleged the government did not listen and the Assembly was adjourned.

"Now March 10, we will surround all the district headquarters. Let us tell you that all the incidents that have happened have happened with the sisters from tribal, backward and Dalit classes. Women are not safe in Odisha," he said, demanding that unregistered cases be registered. The Congress will form a delegation in Odisha and will provide legal aid to all the people in every village whose cases are not registered, he said.

Session on challenging gender stereotypes at RU

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, March 7: On the eve of International Women's Day, departments of Journalism and Mass Communication and Political Science, Ravenshaw University (RU), in collaboration with the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Bhubaneswar, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting organised a special session titled 'Challenging women stereotypes: Women Can Do Anything' here Friday.

The event was graced by Press Information Bureau and CBC, Bhubaneswar additional director general Akhil Kumar Mishra as the chief guest. Other dignitaries included varsity's PG Council chairperson Luna Samant and Sailabala Women's Autonomous College Political Science department head Mousumi Pattnaik.

The session focused on break-



ing gender stereotypes and empowering women to take on leadership roles in different fields.

Addressing the gathering, Mishra highlighted the transformative power of conversation and communication in driving empowerment. He urged young minds to embrace curiosity, seek answers fearlessly, and engage in meaningful discussions with family, friends, and elders. Encouraging women to challenge stereotypes, he emphasised the importance of questioning societal norms. Advocating

for collective well-being, he remarked, "My happiness may not always be my family's happiness, but my family's happiness is my happiness." Dream big, persevere, and turn your aspirations into reality through unwavering determination, he added.

Speaking at the event, Samant highlighted women's contributions across various roles and said, "Women play vital roles as mother, sister, daughter and wife. They have the strength and ability to handle any responsibility."

| WEATHER | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| | BBSR | CTC |
| Max Temp | 33.4° | 31.8° |
| Min Temp | 16.5° | 17.0° |
| Humidity | 74% | 78% |
| Rainfall | Nil | Nil |
| FORECAST Mainly clear sky | | |

| MARKET WATCH | | |
|--------------|----------|-----------|
| INDEX | VALUE | VARIATION |
| SENSEX | 74332.58 | ↓ 7.51 |
| NIFTY | 22552.50 | ↑ 7.80 |
| DOLLAR | 87.08 | ↓ 0.13 |
| EURO | 94.53 | ↑ 0.41 |
| GOLD | ₹86,002 | ↓ ₹32 |
| SILVER | ₹97,040 | ↓ ₹1,101 |

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Sambalpur schools riddled with unresolved land issues



Higher Secondary School. Despite these decisions, the process remains incomplete with no final land allocation made so far.

The situation is far direr for primary schools, where land patta allocation has been slow and dismal. Out of 1,045 primary schools across nine blocks in Sambalpur district, only 133 have received permanent land pattas. As per reports, the status of block-wise distribution of land pattas to the primary schools in the district is as follows: 13 out of 128 schools in Bamra block, 21 out of 161 schools in Dhankauda block, 17 out of 131 schools in Jamankira block, 21 out of 107 schools in Jujomura block, 16 out of 90 schools in Kuchinda block, 17 out of 94 schools in Maneswar block, 19 out of 106 schools in Naktideul block, eight out of 121 schools in Rairakhol block, and only one out of 107 schools in Rengali block.

The slow progress of land patta allocation to primary schools raises serious concerns about the state government's ability to fulfil its commitment.

While most of the higher secondary schools and high schools have resolved their land issues, primary schools in rural areas remain the worst affected. "Many primary schools either lack their own land or do not have proper land ownership documents, making it difficult to issue permanent land pattas," admitted an official from the Education department, who did not want to be named. The ongoing land crisis raises serious concerns about the future of primary education in the district, as uncertainty over land ownership continues to hinder the development of these schools.

ected BJP government in state seems to have forgotten the promise, leaving functioning and development of schools in limbo.

As per the data provided by the District Education Office, all 36 higher secondary schools and 173 out of 193 high schools in the district have so far received permanent land pattas, effectively addressing their land concerns.

Additionally, a decision was also made to separate Gangadhar Meher Higher Secondary School and Government Women's Higher Secondary School from Gangadhar Meher University (GMU) and Government Women's College, respectively.

While land has been identified for both the educational institutions at various locations in Sambalpur city, land pattas have not been officially issued yet.

According to reports, 3 acre land at Professor Colony near Budharaja under Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) and 2.5 acre land owned by Budharaja Temple were designated for the Gangadhar Meher Higher Secondary School. Similarly, decision has been taken to acquire land near Putibandh for the Government Women's

Though land concerns of all higher secondary schools and most high schools have been addressed, only 133 of 1,045 primary schools in the district have land pattas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 7: Most state-run primary schools across Sambalpur district are embroiled in long-standing land issues, which remain unresolved despite government assurances. While most of the high schools and higher secondary schools have been granted permanent land pattas, nearly 90 per cent of primary schools running in the district continue to struggle with land-related uncertainties, affecting their stability and future development.

Regarding the lack of land pattas, state Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari in August, last year had promised that all the educational institutions in the district, which are functioning in uncertainty, will be allotted land pattas by the end of December. However, the newly



FIGHTING FIRE: A forest personnel tries to douse a wildfire at a forest under Mujargarh forest range and North Ghumusar forest division in Bhanjanagar of Ganjam district, Friday

Truck runs over teen in cement factory

Kin allege cover-up bid
POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, March 7: A teenager was killed in a truck accident at the Ramco Cement Factory near Haridaspur in Jajpur district Friday morning at 9:30am, police said Saturday. The deceased, identified as Madhab Das, 17, son of Gopinath Das of Shyamsundarpur village under Jenapur police limits, was run over by an on-site loading truck.

Sources said Madhab had entered the plant with his elder brother's truck and the accident occurred due to unsafe conditions at the loading site. His father alleged that the factory hid the body in a bid to cover up the incident, claiming that the authorities removed the body from the plant premises under the pretext of taking him for treatment.



In response, locals and family members staged a protest at the factory gate Saturday, demanding justice and the return of the body. They also questioned why the minor was allowed inside the factory and suggested the possibility of foul play. Informed, Dharmasala police reached the spot and launched an investigation into the case, while a platoon police force has been deployed

to maintain law and order. Dharmasala police station Officer-In-Charge Ranjan Kumar Majhi confirmed that an investigation is ongoing and legal action will be taken. Despite causing significant pollution, Ramco Cement has been allegedly operating for nearly six years without conducting public hearings with the affected people. The state government has granted all

necessary permissions to the company. Although it was claimed that raw materials and finished products would be transported via rail, the company has been illegally using road transportation instead. This recent accident highlights the ongoing violations. Yet, neither the district administration nor the government has questioned how Ramco Cement continues production with such impunity.

Forester injured in bear attack while dousing fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhanjanagar, March 7: A forester was seriously injured in a bear attack while trying to douse a fire in Tarasingh range of the North Ghumusar forest division late Friday night.

The injured forester, Kala Badan Das, was admitted to Bhanjanagar Hospital in critical condition. As his condition worsened, he was referred to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur for advanced treatment.

The incident occurred Friday night when Kala Badan was engaged in firefighting operations in Brahman Sahi forest under Tarasingh range. A bear, likely fleeing for its life from the fire, attacked him. Other staff members present at the site rescued and rushed him to Bhanjanagar Hospital for treatment.

Upon receiving information, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Himanshu Shekhar Mohanty and Ranger Bimbadhar Sahu rushed to the scene and arranged medical assistance for the injured forester.

RSP logs best performances in major production areas

PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, March 7: Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has delivered an impressive performance in key production areas during the first eleven months of the current financial year 2024-25 (April-February).

Blast Furnace-1 (BF-1) and Blast Furnace-5 (BF-5) produced a record-breaking 9,13,292 tonne and 28,47,561 tonne of hot metal, respectively, marking their best-ever April-February performance.

BF-5 registered a growth of 8.9 per cent over the corresponding period last year (CPLY). The state-of-the-art Hot Strip Mill-2 rolled 19,58,063 tonne of total hot rolled coils, setting a new record for its best April-February performance, with a growth of 8.3 per cent over CPLY.

The Sheet Shearing Line (SSL) also produced 2,39,402 tonne, achieving its best-ever April-February performance. Similarly, the New Plate Mill recorded its best April-February performance by producing 8,43,856 tonne of plates.



Additionally, Sinter Plant-III produced 3,38,26,691 tonne of sinter, surpassing its previous best performance of 33,77,805 tonne achieved in April-February 2022-23.

Several units of the steel plant met their Annual Production Plan (APP) targets in February 2025. BF-5 recorded its best-ever February production, tapping 247,594 tonne of hot metal.

HSM-2 also achieved its best February production, rolling 214,690 tonne of hot rolled coils, while SSL registered its best February performance by producing 28,043 tonne of HR sheets.

3 youths killed in head-on collision between car, bike

POST NEWS NETWORK

G Udayagiri, March 7: Three youths were killed in a tragic road accident Friday at Shreekala Ghat Road near Daramaha under G Udayagiri police jurisdiction in Kandhamal district. A car and a motorcycle collided head-on, resulting in the deaths of the three individuals.

The victims were identified as Shubham Nayak of Kalinga village, and Shankar Pradhan and Shrihari Pradhan of Gadingia village.

According to reports, the three youths were riding a motorcycle from Katingia when they collided with a car travelling from G Udayagiri to Raikia. All three died on the spot.

G Udayagiri Police Station IIC Vijay Kumar Swain responded to the incident and launched an investigation. One of the deceased was found trapped beneath the car, and his body was retrieved with the assistance of fire service personnel.

The car driver and another person have been detained by police for questioning.

Man bludgeons wife to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 7: A drunken man bludgeoned his wife to death in a fit of rage Friday after an argument broke out between the couple near a brick kiln in Kalaitola village under Sundargarh Town police station.

The accused, Manglu Oram, 45, and his wife, Emen Oram, 35, had a strained relationship and often fought over various issues, according to police. On the Thursday night, the couple

attended a wedding ceremony in the locality. Manglu returned home ahead of his wife, but after some time went looking for her as she did not return.

Upon finding her near the brick kiln, they argued again. In a drunken state, Manglu fatally smashed Emen's head with a brick, Sundargarh Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Nirmal Chandra Mohapatra said.

After the incident, Manglu did not return home and instead went to a neighbour's house and slept. His daughter, who had just completed her Class X board examinations two days earlier, noticed her parents were missing and began searching for them. She eventually found her father at the neighbour's house.

When she asked him about her mother, Manglu told her, "She won't return because I have killed her," and then went back to sleep, the SDPO said.

ZSI scientists discover new roundworm species in Keonjhar, name it after head



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 7: The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) said that a group of scientists associated with it discovered a species of soil-dwelling roundworm in Keonjhar district.

The species, *Crassolabium dhritiae*, is named after ZSI Director Dr Dhriti Banerjee in recognition to her outstanding contributions to zoology and taxonomic research.

The ZSI said in a statement that the discovery was made in the 'decan peninsula biogeographic zone' in Keonjhar by a research team led by Dr Debabrata Sen, while Dr GP Mandal and Sampriti Deb Roy were its other members.

These microscopic organisms, though often overlooked, are vital to soil health and play a crucial role in nutrient cycling and organic matter decomposition. Their diverse feed-

ing habits contribute significantly to maintaining a balanced and healthy soil ecosystem, the ZSI director said.

Crassolabium dhritiae is characterised by its medium-sized, slender body, rounded lip region, long pharynx and certain specific features in its female reproductive system and a distinct tail shape.

"This discovery is a significant addition to our understanding of nematode biodiversity. *Crassolabium dhritiae* brings the total number of known *Crassolabium* species worldwide to 39, with nine now recorded in India. This highlights the importance of continued research in these understudied ecosystems," Sen said.

Banerjee congratulated the researchers for the discovery and emphasised the importance of soil nematodes.

The news of the finding was published in the online journal *Acta Zoologica Bulgarica*.

UCO BANK

Zonal Office, UCO Bank Building,
2nd Floor, C-2, Ashok Nagar,
Bhubaneswar-751009, Tel: 0674-2620423

POSSESSION NOTICE
For Immovable Property

(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the UCO Bank, Concerned Branches under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the Borrower/Partners/Guarantor to repay the amount with interest at the contractual rate together with incidental expenses and costs within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Partners/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **POSSESSION** of the properties described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The Borrower/Partners/Guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **UCO Bank, Concerned Branches** for an amount plus interest, incidental expenses & charges thereon.

| BRANCH / Name and Address of the Borrower/Partners/Guarantor | Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date | Date of Demand / Possession Notice | Description of the Immovable Properties |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| CUTTACK MAIN BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. Gyaneswari Associates, Prop.: Mr. Y. Satish Kumar / Guarantor: Mr. Y. Srinibas Rao, S/o.: Mr. Y. Rama Rao, Both are At: Baunshagali, P.O.: Buxi Bazar, Dist.: Cuttack-753001 | ₹5,98,972.29 as on 04.03.2025 + further interest & other charges thereon | 13.11.2024 / 06.03.2025 | An Area of Land admeasuring Area: Ac.0.040 Dec., situated in Mouza: Tarolia, Thana: Tangi, Thana No.: 72, Tahasil: Tangi-Choudwar, Tahasil No.: 166, Dist.: Cuttack, bearing Mutation Khata No.: 620/370, Plot No.: 2049/3963, Kissan: Gharabari, Property in the name of Mr. Y. Srinibas Rao, S/o.: Mr. Y. Rama Rao, Total Area : 1742 square feet, Bounded by North: Road, East : Own, South: Plot No.: 2097, West: Mr. Bansidhar Sahoo |
| BAJRAKBATI BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. Sai Krupa Fuels, Partners: 1) Mr. Ranjit Mohapatra, S/o.: Mr. Debendra Mohapatra, 2) Mrs. Sunita Mohapatra, W/o.: Mr. Ranjit Mohapatra, Both are at Flat No.: 303, Block-B, Metro Greenwoods, Trisulia, Dist.: Cuttack-754005 | ₹1,00,59,234.76 as on 13.12.2024 + further interest & other charges thereon | 26.12.2024 / 03.03.2025 | All that part and parcels of Flat No.: 204 at 2 nd Floor of "Harshpriya Retreat" at Mouza: Andilo, Thana: Baliaanta No.: 14, Tahasil: Baliaanta, Plot No.: 328, under Mutation Khata No.: 623/195, Dist.: Khurda measuring an area of Ac.0.220 Dec., The Interest transferred is impartible undivided Interest extent Area: Ac.0.012 Dec. i.e. 522.72 Sqft with Super Built up Area 1151 Sqft., Recorded in the name of Mr. Ranjit Mohapatra and Mrs. Sunita Mohapatra, Bounded by North: Open Space, East: Open Space, South: Open Space, West: Corridor & Flat No.: 203 |

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 07.03.2025

Authorised Officer, UCO Bank

FOCUS DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

THE SINKING AID SHIP



Foreign aid has become an easy target in high-income countries that face growing fiscal deficits, cost-of-living crises, and new security concerns

assistance as inefficient and ineffective. In 2024, seven national governments and the European Union announced \$17.2 billion in cuts to ODA to be implemented sometime between 2025 and 2029. Now, the Trump administration has slashed some \$60 billion in foreign assistance, while the UK will shrink its aid budget by roughly £6 billion (\$7.6 billion) per year.

ful and friendly relations among nations." The US was the foremost champion of these goals: in his 1949 inaugural address, President Harry Truman called for a "bold new program" for sending technology and capital to help nations afflicted by poverty, disease, and misery.

question remains relevant today. Even before Trump set his sights on US foreign aid, the rationale for such assistance had become increasingly tenuous. In recent years, Global North countries have directed their aid budgets toward a range of foreign-policy priorities, many of which follow the letter but not the spirit of ODA, as defined by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. This includes directing development assistance to Ukraine, a middle-income country which in 2023 became the largest-ever recipient of foreign aid, while the share of aid reaching the poorest countries had declined, and hosting refugees at home, which now consumes at least one-quarter of the aid budget in seven countries.

America's abrupt inward turn underscores the need to reimagine a global aid system built for a world order that no longer exists. One way to do this is to commission an independent, high-level review of the global aid regime that can articulate a new paradigm that does not rely on the benevolence of any single donor. A Pearson Commission 2.0 could outline several new rationales for international transfers, present alternative financial and policy frameworks, and explore new global institutional arrangements to minimize aid dependency and reduce fragmentation, while still providing for the most vulnerable and helping future generations prosper.

As these massive aid cuts take effect, the risk of contagion is real. Unless the international community undertakes a systematic effort to understand the root causes of the current crisis and explore plausible solutions, countries still investing in ODA may start to worry that they are just rearranging the deck chairs on a sinking aid ship.

The writer is Principal Research Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Nilima Gulrajani

AMERICA'S ABRUPT INWARD TURN UNDERSCORES THE NEED TO REIMAGINE A GLOBAL AID SYSTEM BUILT FOR A WORLD ORDER THAT NO LONGER EXISTS

Foreign aid is being slashed across the Global North, nowhere more so than in the US. Within his first month back in the White House, President Donald Trump dismantled the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and froze foreign aid, calling it wasteful and fraudulent. The UK recently followed suit, trading off its international-aid budget for higher defense spending. Advocates of official development assistance (ODA) rightly argue that it saves lives and serves national interests. But that does not change the fact that the system has been hemorrhaging credibility and resources for years and lacks a convincing narrative.

The upcoming United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, set for mid-2025 in Seville, Spain, will likely reiterate the long-held but rarely met target for high-income countries to spend 0.7% of their gross national income on ODA. What is really needed, however, is an independent commission on the future of the international aid system that can forge a new political consensus on the rationales for foreign aid, while also articulating a vision for the post-aid world many are now demanding. Without an effort to recalibrate and reset foreign aid, the system will face death by a thousand cuts. Its ambition of catalyzing sustainable development will be left unrealized, and an eighty-year international cooperation regime will likely collapse with no robust alternative in its place.

The modern global aid regime has looked brittle since the 2008 financial crisis. But America's withdrawal is a massive blow to a system whose purpose is laid out in Article 55 of the UN Charter: "the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peace-

SPECTRUM INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The need for a nurturing ecosystem

International Women's Day, celebrated on 8 March, is a day dedicated to honoring the achievements of women and serves as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle faced by women around the world. This year the International Women's Day is being celebrated under the theme "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment," calls for action to unlock equal rights, power, and opportunities for all and a feminist future where no one is left behind.

commonalities and differences across the communities. We must understand that, equality cannot be achieved through a singular approach. Women from various backgrounds, cultures, and socio-economic strata face unique challenges that ought to be addressed through tailored strategies in each region. While thinking of women empowerment and equality we must also understand that women across the countries are not homogeneous as a community. Their social, economic, political, religious, cultural and regional aspects divide the women folk into different strata and groups. By recognising and accommodating these differences, we can create a more inclusive and enabling environment for equality and women empowerment.

women entrepreneurs compared to the national average. Even then, the number game should not be considered as a testimony to effective participation of women in business and entrepreneurship. In Odisha, women entrepreneurs face the same conventional challenge of accessing funding, market linkage, training, exposure, and institutional support. We must understand that more than 95% of startups are either a micro or a mini unit. Over a vast majority of them are running their business from home on a self-financing mode, without any institutional or government support. Another interesting feature of women entrepreneurship in Odisha is that, Millennials and GenZ entrepreneurs are dominating the startup space. A majority of them are first generation entrepreneurs mostly from low or middle income families, struggling to scale-up their business due to a lack of support and sponsorship.

By promoting mentorship programmes, skill training, and institutional & financial support, we can add further value to the much needed ecosystem.

While women entrepreneurs of Odisha have been making significant progress in their entrepreneurial journey, there needs to be done a lot more. The state government has made significant efforts in promoting women entrepreneurs with the help of organizations like MSME Department, Startup Odisha, Odisha Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises, World Trade Centre, Bharatiya Stree Shakti, Strong Women Association for Reformation, WEneuers, GBG Bhubaneswar, FLO-FICCI, CII, to name a few. Now time has come to pull our resources and institutions together and customise our approach to address the varied needs of the women entrepreneurs of the state.

Hope never dies. Women have already broken the glass ceiling and are now on the path of making things happen in every field be it entrepreneurship, entertainment or education.

The writer is a social entrepreneur from Odisha and the founder of Ecodarsini.



Priyadarsini Das

EMPOWERMENT SHOULD GO BEYOND MERE REPRESENTATION OR TOKEN GESTURES

After more than a century of celebration of this day under different themes, women in the world are still struggling for their rights and equality in various forms and at different levels. Even though significant progress has been made in reducing gender disparity, the gap is widely visible in every sphere. Time has come to translate the themes into action; else it would continue to remain as a mere slogan, like all other preceding years. Achieving the thematic goals require more than just one-size-fits-all solutions. Rather, we should create multiple approaches and build customised ecosystems that would address the diverse needs of women while recognising their

When we talk about equal opportunities in business and entrepreneurship, India has a significant gender gap in the startup ecosystem, with only around 18% of startups being led by women. However, some states like Odisha have made remarkable progress in the last couple of years. Odisha stands out with a considerably higher proportion at 43% of share in startups, indicating a relatively positive trend for

Empowerment should go beyond mere representation or token gestures. It involves amplifying women's voices, promoting leadership opportunities, and fostering a supportive environment where women can thrive and succeed on their own terms.



Witness and stand back from Nature that is the first step to the soul's freedom.

SRI AUROBINDO

Old Case, New Queries

Well, here's a financial thriller twist no one saw coming—a Mumbai court has ordered an FIR against former SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch over alleged regulatory lapses in a case that dates back to 1994! Talk about digging deep.

But this isn't just about an old IPO listing. Buch has been in the limelight recently for all the wrong reasons. First, Hindenburg Research alleged that she and her husband held stakes in offshore entities linked to the Adani Group—raising questions about whether SEBI's investigations into the conglomerate were truly independent. She called the allegations baseless.

Then came fresh political heat. The Congress claimed Buch earned rental income from a company under SEBI's scrutiny while still benefiting from ICICI Bank stock options long after leaving the bank. ICICI quickly denied making any payments beyond standard retirement benefits.

And even inside SEBI, things weren't exactly smooth sailing. Reports suggest that towards the end of her tenure, employees staged protests over "unfair work practices," and when she left, there was no farewell—just the door.

So, is this FIR a long-overdue reckoning or a convenient distraction? Why unearth a 30-year-old case now? And how much of this is about regulatory lapses versus the bigger power struggles at play?

Delhi's power shift

Delhi's corridors of power just got a fresh dynamic—Chief Minister Rekha Gupta now has IAS officer Madhu Rani Teotia as her Secretary. With two women in key leadership roles, does this signal a shift in governance style? Or will the city's political and bureaucratic machinery continue business as usual?



BABUDOM BYTES Dilip Cherian

Strong leadership is key for a city as complex as Delhi, where governance has often been a battleground between the state and the Centre. That may not be an issue now with a BJP "double-engine" sarkar. Also, Rekha Gupta, known for her sharp political instincts, now has an experienced bureaucrat by her side. Teotia's track record in public administration, particularly in health policy, could bring a more hands-on, policy-driven approach to governance. But will that translate into real change?

Historically, the presence of women in leadership has been linked to better policy outcomes in areas like healthcare, education, and social welfare. Will this duo prioritize these issues, or will the daily tug-of-war of Delhi politics dilute any potential impact? Also, will their leadership style differ from their predecessors? Women in power are often expected to bring a collaborative, inclusive approach, but politics doesn't always reward that.

Another question looms: will having two women in charge challenge entrenched bureaucratic and political hierarchies, or will it reinforce them? Leadership in Delhi is as much about navigating power struggles as it is about policy. Gupta and Teotia may set a new precedent—or they may find themselves playing the same old game, just with new players. For now, Delhi watches.

What's PMO's game plan?

The appointment of former RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das as Principal Secretary-2 (PS-2) to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alongside Dr. PK Mishra as Principal Secretary-1 (PS-1), has set babu circles abuzz. Seasoned babus are wondering whether this signals a gradual transition, with Das eventually stepping into Mishra's shoes, or if it simply reinforces Mishra's position as the key figure in personnel affairs, with Das as a trusted lieutenant.

Despite its opacity, so-called pundits believe the move strengthens the PMO by bringing in a macroeconomic expert with a solid track record in finance and administration. Das' linguistic versatility may also help navigate the complex power dynamics at the top. While some speculate that this could dilute the Finance Ministry's influence, others suggest that with Das and Cabinet Secretary Dr. TV Somanathan—both from the Tamil Nadu cadre—working in tandem, coordination between the PMO and the bureaucracy may only improve.

As for the PMO's advisers, their role is unlikely to be diminished, though there may be a realignment of responsibilities. In the larger scheme of things, this development appears to be part of the Modi government's ongoing efforts to streamline and consolidate governance within the PMO, ensuring that efficiency takes precedence over individual positioning.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers. KAHLIL GIBRAN

Sometimes I think we're alone in the universe, and sometimes I think we're not. In either case the idea is quite staggering. ARTHUR C. CLARKE

The highest and most beautiful things in life are not to be heard about, nor read about, nor seen but, if one will, are to be lived. SOREN KIERKEGAARD

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1817: The New York Stock Exchange was formally created; it became one of the world's largest marketplaces for securities and other exchange-traded investments.
1917: Rioting in Petrograd (St. Petersburg) marked the beginning of the February Revolution and the first stage of the Russian Revolution.
1942: Japanese troops captured Rangoon, Burma (Yangon, Myanmar) during World War II.
1971: American boxer Joe Frazier retained his world heavyweight championship by winning a 15-round decision over former champion Muhammad Ali at Madison Square Garden in New York City.
1978: The first episode of the radio comedy The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is broadcast. Douglas Adams' radio play was a major success with BBC Radio 4 listeners.
1979: The compact disc is presented to the public. The CD was developed by Philips and Sony. The companies later collaborated to produce a standard format and CD players.

Oafish behaviour

Sir, It is comforting to note that global political leaders have strongly condemned the ill-treatment of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy by Donald Trump and his deputy JD Vance recently at the White House. The tongue-lashing of the two US top leaders, which unfolded in front of cameras, have sparked accusations of political blackmail and deepened concerns over Ukraine's security amid Russia's ongoing war. The behaviour of Trump and Vance towards Zelenskyy is shocking, disrespectful, and un-American, and needs to be condemned sternly. It is all the more deplorable that Trump's oafish behaviour has become normalised and his wrecking ball is already having seismic global effects, mere weeks after he took office. Ukraine is defending its sovereignty against an aggressive adversary, and America must stand with Ukraine against Putin's illegal invasion. It is regrettable that the US is now siding with dictators and not standing up for freedom, democracy, and global stability. Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Calculated distraction

Sir, As Tamil Nadu heads into elections within a year from now, the rise of anti-Hindi rhetoric signals a familiar political strategy. Now, CM MK Stalin has brought delimitation into focus—despite it not being an immediate issue. The timing raises questions: why now? The DMK government faces strong anti-incumbency, with corruption charges against ministers and growing public dissatisfaction. Adding to Stalin's worries is the entry of actor Vijay's TVK, which shares the Dravidian ideology but threatens to split the voter base. With governance issues piling up, raising delimitation seems like a calculated distraction. Tamil Nadu fears losing parliamentary seats post-2026, as delimitation would favour population-heavy northern states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The state argues it followed population control policies post-1971, unlike the North, and demands a freeze on seat allocation. However, this puts Stalin's INDIA bloc allies in a dilemma—will they back Tamil Nadu or larger vote banks in the North? While Tamil Nadu's concerns about fair representation are valid, the sudden push for this debate seems more about diverting attention from corruption, anti-incumbency, and political challengers. Gopalaswamy J, 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



Holi till 2:30 pm, jumma namaz thereafter

The new directive comes a day after a circle officer (CO) kicked up a row by saying that Holi is a festival that occurs once a year whereas Jumma namaz takes place 52 times a year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambhal (UP), March 7: Hindus would play Holi till 2.30 pm March 14 while Muslims would offer Jumma namaz after 2.30 pm here in the communally sensitive city of Uttar Pradesh, a senior police official Friday said, adding seven companies of Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) have been deployed ahead of the festival.

The new directive comes a day after a circle officer (CO) kicked up a row by saying that Holi is a festival that occurs once a year whereas Jumma namaz takes place 52 times a year. He said anyone who feels uncomfortable with the colours of Holi should stay indoors on that day.

Sambhal Superintendent of Police (SP) Krishan Kumar Friday told reporters that in view of Holi and the second Friday of Ramzan falling on the same day, seven companies of PAC have been deployed in the city. Complete peace prevails in the district and peace committee

meetings are being organised at the mohalla level, he said.

Asked about the discussions that took place in the meeting of the peace committee, the SP said, "Talks were held with key people from both sides in the district-level peace committee meeting and it was decided that the Jumma namaz will be held after 2.30 pm and people of the Hindu community will play Holi till 2.30 pm and go to their homes."

He said the Sambhal district police are keeping a strict vigil on social media and people should not believe any kind of rumour.

Kumar said the police outposts are being inspected, an antenna has been installed at the Satyavrat police outpost and a district control room is being built on it because it is located at a height.

"If there is any rumour then inform the police so that it can be refuted in time. I would also appeal to everyone not to believe any kind of rumour," he said.



In view of Holi and the second Friday of Ramzan falling on the same day, seven companies of PAC have been deployed in the city

Sambhal District Magistrate (DM) Rajender Pensiya told reporters that the city has been divided into six zones and 29 sectors.

Magistrates have been deployed in all sectors. Peace committee meetings have been held at the police station level and the district level.

Asked whether tarpaulin cover will be put on mosques due to Holi, he said, "There is no such plan from our side. If the parties decide on their own, they can cover them. Both the parties have said they will celebrate both festivals with great harmony, coordination and peace."

A peace committee meet-

ing was held Thursday at the Sambhal Kotwali police station given the upcoming Holi festival, which coincides with Friday prayers during the ongoing holy month of Ramzan.

"Holi is a festival that comes once a year, whereas Friday prayers take place 52 times in a year. If anyone feels uncomfortable with the colours of Holi, they should stay indoors on that day. Those who step out should have a broad mindset, as festivals are meant to be celebrated together," Sambhal Circle Officer (CO) Anuj Chaudhary

told reporters Thursday after the meeting. He emphasised the need for communal harmony and strict vigilance to maintain law and order. He said peace committee meetings had been going on for a month at various levels to ensure smooth celebrations. Chaudhary urged both communities to respect each other's sentiments and also appealed to people to avoid forcibly applying colours on those who do not wish to participate. "Just as Muslims eagerly await Eid, Hindus look forward to Holi. People celebrate by applying colours, sharing sweets and spreading joy. Similarly, on Eid, people prepare special dishes and embrace each other in celebration. The essence of both the festivals is togetherness and mutual respect," he had said.



Women work at a brick kiln, seen on the eve of the International Women's Day, in Nagpur, Friday

Siddharthnagar setting example in TB elimination

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gorakhpur, March 7: In the Centre's drive to eliminate tuberculosis from India, Uttar Pradesh's Siddharthnagar, bordering Nepal, has become a role model for other districts in the state with the local administration ramping up efforts for early detection and treatment, the key to combating the dreaded disease.

As part of the pan-India 100-day Intensified TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, the Siddharthnagar district administration has set up war rooms to keep a sharp eye on the implementation of various interventions deployed to expedite patient identification and follow-up on their treatment regimen.

A new strategy was designed for early identification of tuberculosis by offering X-rays as a screening tool for the population at higher risk of developing the disease.

For this, ultraportable hand-held X-ray devices are being deployed to intensify door-to-door screening efforts, particularly in congregate settings, among high-risk groups such as diabetics, smokers, alcoholics, people living with HIV, individuals with a history of TB, the elderly, and household contacts of TB patients.

Both asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals are screened using X-ray devices. Those showing abnormalities undergo Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAAT), leading to the detection of several asymptomatic tuberculosis patients.

Raja Ganapati R, the district magistrate of Siddharthnagar, told PTI that of the 32.1 lakh population in the district, around 12.92 lakh vulnerable people have been screened. Of them, 2,343 new tuberculosis patients were identified at the early stage of the disease.

"Over the past year, 216 gram panchayats in the district have been declared TB-free. Also, the 2,343 people who have been diagnosed are being provided Ni-kshay Poshan kits by Ni-kshay Mitras who have adopted them."

"We are keeping a constant tab on the implementation of various interventions for early detection, early treatment, early nutrition and early prevention. Jan Bhagidari is a major aspect of the campaign and efforts are being made to make it a people's movement," he said.

The district magistrate said 21,165 people also have been put on TB preventive treatment since January. He said, "We are making all efforts for a time-bound elimination of TB from Siddharthnagar."

The 100-day Intensified TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan is a top priority of the Uttar Pradesh government and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had decided to expand it from 15 districts initially to all 75 in the state.

Mathura, March 7: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath kickstarted 'Rangotsav 2025' in Barsana, Mathura, during his one-day visit Friday, where he said that after the development activities in Ayodhya and Prayagraj, it is now the turn of Mathura and Vrindavan, and the state government would spare no effort to develop the region.

"This time, we have made a special provision in the budget. You can be assured - keep blessing us... Now it is the turn of 'Brajbhoomi,'" he said in a post on X.

During the event, CM Yogi offered prayers at the Shri Ladli Ji Maharaj Temple before offi-

CM Adityanath kicks off 'Rangotsav' in Barsana

The grand celebrations of 'Rangotsav 2025' in Barsana are the start of Holi, the festival of colours, joy, and devotion



Sri Radha Rani and Leeladhari Lord Krishna are present in every dust and particle of Brajbhoomi, which has been infusing India's eternal culture with new energy for the last 5,000 years

YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER, UTTAR PRADESH

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

cially commencing the Rangotsav celebrations with flowers and Laddu Mar Holi. Highlighting the spiritual and cultural significance of Braj, he said, "Sri Radha Rani and Leeladhari Lord Krishna are present in every dust and particle of Brajbhoomi, which has been infusing India's eternal culture with new energy for the last 5,000 years."

The grand celebrations of 'Rangotsav 2025' in Barsana are the start of Holi, the festival of colours, joy, and devotion.

"Best wishes to all the people of the state and the country on the holy festival of Holi! Jai Shri Radhe!" CM Yogi said.

He further described the divine essence of Brajbhoomi, stating, "Barsana symbolises

Lord Brahma, Nandgaon represents Lord Shiva Shankar, and Govardhan is Lord Vishnu himself. The confluence of these three makes our 'Brajbhoomi' sacred."

Referring to the ongoing transformation under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, CM Yogi remarked, "The new tradition of 'virasat' (heritage) and 'vikas' (development) that Honorable Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji has introduced since 2014 is evident here in Barsana, in Brajbhoomi."

Expressing his spiritual experience, he added, "Victory to Sri Vrishbhanu Dulari Sri Kirtida Kumari! Today, I was blessed to witness and worship the divine form of Shri Radha Rani Ji in Barsana, Mathura, the holy land of Leeladhari Lord Shri Krishna. Playing Holi with flowers alongside devotees was a moment of immense joy. May the blessings of Shri Ladli Ji Maharaj be upon all."

The spirit of Holi has engulfed the city of Lord Krishna, Mathura, with Laddu Mar Holi being celebrated in Barsana Friday. CM Yogi actively participated in the festivities.

Along with local residents, devotees from across India and abroad gathered in Barsana to partake in the vibrant celebrations. Many praised the arrangements and the joyous atmosphere of the festival.

IIT Bombay develops sensor to detect toxic metals in water

The sensor can detect heavy metal ions like lead, cadmium and mercury in water samples, even when only a few atoms per millilitre are present



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 7: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay Friday said that its researchers, in collaboration with an Australian university, have developed a sensor to detect toxic metals in water cost-effectively and efficiently.

In a bid to address heavy metal pollution, researchers from IIT Bombay and Monash University, Australia, with funding support from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), have developed a sensor using a copper-based metal-organic framework (MOF) to detect toxic metals in water, the institute said in a statement.

Heavy metals in water pose significant environmental and health concerns due to their potential toxicity, persistence, and bio-accumulative (ability to accumulate within living organisms) nature.

Ingesting these metals can cause serious health problems, including damage to skin, bones, brain and other organs, especially in children. Efficient detection of these metals in water is crucial to ensure environmental safety and public health.

According to the statement, researchers fabricated a MOF with copper-forming metal nodes connected by the organic compound tetrakis porphyrin to make copper-tetra carboxyphenyl porphyrin (Cu-TCPP), which is more efficient at picking up heavy metal ions than conventional 3D materials.

The sensor can detect heavy metal ions like lead, cadmium and mercury in water samples, even when only a few atoms per millilitre are present.

"This MOF involves two

HEAVY METALS IN WATER POSE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH CONCERNS DUE TO THEIR POTENTIAL TOXICITY, PERSISTENCE, AND BIO-ACCUMULATIVE (ABILITY TO ACCUMULATE WITHIN LIVING ORGANISMS) NATURE

INGESTING THESE METALS CAN CAUSE SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS, INCLUDING DAMAGE TO SKIN, BONES, BRAIN AND OTHER ORGANS, ESPECIALLY IN CHILDREN

EFFICIENT DETECTION OF THESE METALS IN WATER IS CRUCIAL TO ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

copper atoms binding to each carboxyphenyl arm of the TCPP molecule, forming the characteristic paddle-wheel structure. This means that other metal ions with similar configurations can replace copper in the structure and maintain the overall order without causing structural collapse. Other metal ions, especially heavy metal ions, can also accumulate on the MOF lattice," said Prashanth Kannan, the IIT Bombay-Monash Research Academy student and first author of the paper.

Researchers tested the sensor on water samples from taps and lakes and accurately detected lead, cadmium and mercury, even in trace amounts.

They also compared their device with the state-of-the-art sensors available in the market and found that it performed comparably, if not better, in most cases.

"Our device has the least complexity and comparable sensing limits to the best of the current DNA-based sensors (the gold standard for sensing devices)," Kannan said.

Women drive garbage vehicles, earn tag of 'swachhata tai'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Latur, March 7: A group of women, who once found it hard to make ends meet due to the challenges their lives threw at them, have overcome the odds and become messengers of cleanliness by learning to drive garbage collection vehicles in Maharashtra's Latur city.

These women once stared at an uncertain future as some of them lost their husbands, while some others were abandoned by their families. They faced challenges like raising their children, building a shelter for themselves and keeping the wheel of their life moving.

But amid the darkness came a glimmer of hope as a social activist encouraged them to become independent.

Sanjay Kamble, who runs a non-government organisation called Janadhar Sev-



abhavi Sanstha, gave them the much-needed support and asked them to begin

their lives afresh. He suggested these women learn to drive "ghanta gadi"

operated by the Latur Municipal Corporation to collect garbage.



In this new India, there is no discrimination against anyone. Security and prosperity are for all, opportunities for growth are for all, but there will be no appeasement of anyone
YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

2 IAF AIRCRAFT INCIDENTS IN A DAY

In two incidents on a single day involving Indian Air Force's aircraft, a Jaguar fighter jet crashed shortly after taking off from the Ambala airbase in Haryana, while an AN-32 transport plane crash-landed in West Bengal's Bagdogra. In both incidents, the air crew ejected safely, according to officials



of the day quote

It is proposed to make suitable amendments to the Professional Tax Act to increase the professional tax payable by salary and wages earners from ₹200 to ₹300 for the month of February to align with the maximum limit permissible of ₹2,500 per annum
SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

It is commendable that organisations dedicated to the interests of the 'Bahujan Samaj' have strongly condemned and opposed the baseless comments of a boastful and arrogant Congress leader against the BSP and its iron-willed leadership. People should remain cautious of such elements
MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

The Ladki Bahin Yojana will not be scrapped. The state government is working to ensure the financial aid brings gainful benefits to beneficiaries. The scheme will be implemented effectively
DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

Shah targets Stalin on language issue



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Shah's comments targeted at Stalin come in the wake of an intense language row in the state, where the ruling DMK has been claiming the imposition of Hindi through the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), a charge which the Centre has denied

The state government has maintained it will only follow the 2-language policy, i.e. Tamil and English

Further, praising Tamil Nadu, Shah said the southern state's culture played a vital role in strengthening India's cultural stream

Ranipet (Tamil Nadu), March 7: Amid the language row in Tamil Nadu involving the ruling DMK and the BJP-led Centre, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Friday asked Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to impart engineering and medical education in Tamil in the state and also paid rich tributes to the Tamil language. Targeting the Chief Minister on the language issue, especially given Stalin's Opposition to the 'imposition' of Hindi, Shah said the Narendra Modi government has effected changes and now ensured that the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) aspirants could write the exam in their respective regional languages. He further said, "I appeal to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister to start the engineering and medical education in Tamil in the state for the benefit of students."

Shah's comments targeted at the CM come in the wake of an intense language row in the state, where the ruling DMK has been claiming the imposition of Hindi through the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), a charge which the Centre has denied. The state government has maintained it will only follow

India cautiously reacts to Trump's reciprocal tariff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: In a cautious reaction to American President Donald Trump's announcement on reciprocal tariffs on its trading partners, India Friday said it is looking at deepening trade ties with the US including by reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers under a bilateral trade agreement.

In line with his "America First" policy, Trump this week announced reciprocal tariffs from April 2 on its partners and other nations that impose higher levies on imports from the US.

The US president's policy on tariff has stoked fears of a global trade war with many countries already announcing counter-measures to deal with it. In its first reaction, New Delhi indicated that it expects an amicable resolution to the issue.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US last month, both sides announced plans to negotiate a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal was in the US and met his counterparts and the two governments are in the process of advancing discussions on a multi-sector bilateral trade pact, he said.

"Our objective through the BTA is to strengthen and deepen India-US two-way trade across the goods and services sector, increase market access, reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, and deepen supply chain integration between the two countries," Jaiswal added.



In line with his "America First" policy, Trump this week announced reciprocal tariffs from April 2 on its partners and other nations that impose higher levies on imports from the US

In his latest salvo, the US president while addressing a joint session of the Congress Tuesday mentioned India alongside the European Union, China and Canada for charging higher tariffs on American products.

Trump said other countries have used tariffs against the US for decades, and now it's "our turn" to start using them against those nations.

Modi held talks with Trump February 13 talks in Washington DC. In the meeting, the two sides agreed to negotiate a mega trade deal by the end of this year and set an ambitious target of \$500 billion in annual trade by 2030 to narrow the trade deficit.

"Recognising that this level of ambition would require new, fair-trade terms, the leaders announced plans to negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial,

multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by fall of 2025," a joint statement on Modi-Trump talks said.

There is an expectation in New Delhi that it may escape the reciprocal tariffs being imposed by the Trump administration February 2.

Since assuming office January 20, Trump on multiple occasions criticised India for higher tariffs and even described the country as a "tariff king" and 'tariff abuser'.

The decisions were seen as an attempt to send a signal to the Trump administration that New Delhi is open to bring down tariffs in specific sectors. Washington is also pushing New Delhi to buy more American oil, gas and military platforms to bring down the trade deficit that stands at around \$45 billion in India's favour.

Duplicate voter I card numbers issue to be addressed in 3 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: Amid allegations of a cover-up over duplicate voter identity card numbers, the Election Commission (EC) Friday said it will address the 'decades-long' matter in the next three months.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) flagged the issue of duplicate voter identity card numbers in different states and accused the EC of a cover-up. TMC MP Saket Gokhale said the Election Commission has finally admitted and accepted their guilt that duplicate Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers have been allotted to multiple people.

"This is a scam and answers must be given," he posted on X. "As regards the issue of duplicate Electoral Photo Identity Card numbers, the Commission has already taken cognisance of the matter. Irrespective of an EPIC number, an elector who is linked to the electoral roll of a particular polling station can cast his vote at that polling station only and nowhere else," the poll body asserted.

Patanjali's mega food park in Nagpur to help boost farmer's income

AGENCIES

Nagpur (Maharashtra) March 7: Patanjali's mega food cum herbal Park at Mihan, Nagpur will be Asia's largest orange processing plant, announced Acharya Balkrishna, Managing Director of Patanjali Ayurveda Ltd.

Acharya Balkrishna, who gave this information at a press conference at Mihan, Nagpur, Friday, said the new agricultural revolution of Patanjali will bring prosperity to farmers. He further said that this is a single point of plant food processing and the largest unit in Asia. "We feel proud to have established it," the managing director said, as per a statement.

"Although there were many obstacles in starting this plant, there was also the Corona period in between, but finally the day came for which the farmers of the area were waiting for years," he said at the press conference. He informed the reporters that the formal inauguration of the Mihan plant will be performed this Sunday by Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Acharya said that the plant has a processing capacity of 800 tonnes per day. "Today, almost every farmer of every village of this area is in our contact.. Our priority is to provide employment to the local people and make the local farmers prosperous," he added.

He said that based on the availability of raw materials, juice of orange, lime, amla, pomegranate, guava, grapes, gourd, carrot, pulp of mango and orange and paste of onion and tomato will also be produced at the Mihan plant.

SHORT TAKES

PIO jailed for 9 years in London

London: An Indian-origin man who was found guilty of raping two teenage girls he met online has been sentenced to nine years behind bars and added to the sex offender register for life by a London court. Himanshu Makwana, 42, carried out the two offences four years apart with striking similarities, Harrow Crown Court heard as he was sentenced Thursday. The Metropolitan Police said Makwana was arrested following an investigation by its specialist detectives who discovered that he preyed on teenage girls on social media.

SC grants interim bail to Abbas Ansari

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday granted six weeks' interim bail to Uttar Pradesh MLA Abbas Ansari in a case under the state's Gangsters Act. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kottiswar Singh directed Ansari, son of late gangster Mukhtar Ansari, to stay in his official accommodation in Lucknow and seek prior permission from authorities before visiting his constituency in Mau. The bail reprieve from the top court paves way for Ansari's release from Kasganj Jail for he is on bail in all other criminal cases against him.

5 killed as lorry collides with bus

Chennai: At least five passengers of a state government bus were feared killed when a tipper lorry collided with it in Tiruttani in neighbouring Tiruvallur district, police said Friday. A portion of the bus has been razed by the speeding tipper, the police official said. Several passengers who were injured in the accident were rushed to the Tiruttani Government Hospital for treatment.

PM to visit Mauritius

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a two-day state visit to Mauritius beginning March 11 to attend the island nation's national day celebrations as the chief guest. A contingent of Indian defence forces will also participate in celebrations, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Friday.

'INDIA'S GOT LATENT' ROW Allahbadia appears before Assam Police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, March 7: The Guwahati Police Friday questioned YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia in connection with the case lodged following the outrage over his offensive remarks on 'India's Got Latent' show.

Allahbadia, who reached the city Thursday night, appeared before the Crime Branch, which interrogated him for several hours. He was accompanied by his advocate.

Joint Commissioner Ankur Jain led the police team in questioning Allahbadia, whose comments on the YouTube show triggered an outrage on the internet.

"He reached the Crime Branch office around 12.30 pm and interrogation continued for over four hours. He has



cooperated with the police and answered all our questions," Jain told reporters after the interrogation. He has assured the police to extend his cooperation in future too and will come to Guwahati whenever he is called for the case, the officer said.

"This is an ongoing investigation and four more people are yet to come. The three participants of the show, who have not appeared before us, have sent

us mails that they are out of the country. We will send them notices again and will take action accordingly," he said.

Along with the five YouTubers, the owner of the place where the shooting of the show took place has been named in the FIR, he added. Several cases were lodged against Allahbadia, popularly known as BeerBiceps, across the country for his comments on parents and sex. Though the Supreme Court granted him interim protection from arrest, it termed his remarks "vulgar" and said he had a "dirty mind" that shamed society.

Guwahati Police quizzed another YouTuber Ashish Chanchlani February 27 in connection with the case. The Gauhati High Court had February 18 granted interim bail to Chanchlani.

International Women's Day: Changing dreams into reality

Women must dare to dream big to realise their full potential. Too often, societal expectations and responsibilities hold them back. But every woman deserves the right to chase her ambitions, whether in medicine, science, business, leadership, or any field she chooses.

Success does not depend on where one starts but how determined one is to reach the finish line. Courage allows women to take that first step, resilience helps them fight through obstacles, and hope keeps them moving forward even in the face of setbacks.

Balancing career and family is essential for a woman to feel fulfilled in both personal and professional aspects. She plays multiple roles—a professional, a mother, a wife, a daughter,

and a leader. Managing all these responsibilities can be challenging, but with the right mindset and support system, it is possible to excel in both career and family life.

Women often juggle multiple roles, balancing career, family, and personal aspirations, making time management a constant challenge.

The pressure to meet professional deadlines while fulfilling household responsibilities can lead to stress and exhaustion. Prioritisation, delegation, and self-care are essential strategies to help women manage their time effectively and achieve a harmonious balance.

A strong support system at home makes a significant difference, allowing women to pursue their dreams without guilt or limitations. Workplaces have also created opportunities

for women by implementing flexible policies, providing mentorship, and ensuring that leadership positions are accessible to women, which is a laudable step.

Society as a whole benefits when women succeed because they bring diverse perspectives, innovation, and compassion to every field.

Every woman has the power to shape her own destiny, to rise above challenges, and to make a lasting impact.

Dreaming big is not just an option—it is a necessity. With courage, resilience, and the right support, every woman can break barriers, balance her career and family, and truly achieve the life she envisions.

I would like to share my short story too. I was a quiet girl in school, with few friends but a fierce dream—to excel in

life. From an early age, I knew I wanted to be a doctor, yet deep inside, I also felt I had the makings of a great administrator. The most ecstatic moment of my life was clearing the MBBS entrance, a dream I had nurtured for years. But reality struck soon after—marriage at an early age, responsibilities of two families, and a child before even completing MBBS. My journey was far from easy, but I carried on, determined to balance my dreams and duties.

I was determined to pursue my clinical knowledge but also strengthen my administrative skills, research acumen, and academic expertise.

The decision to stay away from my husband and infant son, to complete my studies, was heart-wrenching, but

I knew that sacrifices were necessary for growth. Every challenge that came my way, I converted into an opportunity. My biggest strength was my ability to turn even the smallest tasks into significant milestones, completing them with utmost perfection. Throughout my journey, I found immense support in my family, my colleagues, and in my workplace.

The institution became more than just a workplace—it was a second home, a place where I evolved both personally and professionally. Surrounded by inspiring bosses, mentors and dedicated peers, I honed my skills, deepened my knowledge, and shaped my vision.

Years of hard work, sacrifice, and resilience eventually brought me to where I had always dreamt of being as a child. Success may seem ef-

fortless from afar, but behind it lies quiet perseverance, unseen struggles, and unwavering dedication. From a silent girl with big ambitions to a doctor, an academician, and an administrator, my journey was one of relentless pursuit and unwavering faith. Every struggle only made me stronger, and today, as I reflect on my path, I feel nothing but gratitude for the experiences that shaped me into who I am. "A woman's strength lies in turning challenges into victories and dreams into reality."

Dr Lisa Sarangi
Professor and Head of the Department
Community Medicine
Vice Principal
Hi-Tech Medical College
and Hospital
Bhubaneswar

national



Disorders linked to our lifestyle are posing a huge risk to our health today. Obesity is one of them because it is the root cause of many diseases. According to a recent report, nearly 44 crore people in India may be obese by 2050. This figure is huge and it is equally scary

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

K'ATAKA CM PRESENTS RECORD 16TH BUDGET

In his record 16th budget with an outlay of over ₹4 lakh crore, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah Friday strongly defended his government's five guarantee schemes, laid stress on 'Brand Bengaluru' and targeted the union government for the state's fiscal challenges



of the day quote

Don't they have any success story of their own in the Maha Kumbh? Has the government itself failed that it is telling the story of criminals? If it has to tell, then the government should tell its true story, but the truth is that the government has no story of its own

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

We want to achieve zero unemployment in Goa. There are job opportunities in the state, and youngsters should grab them

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

If any problem remains unaddressed, it goes to the knowledge of the chief minister and chief secretary for taking necessary steps

MANIK SAHA | TRIPURA CM

India expresses concern over Dhaka releasing 'extremists'

Randhir Jaiswal acknowledged that the prevailing security situation in Bangladesh and long-standing local issues have affected the pace of implementation of some of the India-assisted projects in that country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: India Friday voiced concern over Bangladesh releasing certain "violent extremists" and underlined that it is the responsibility of the interim government in Dhaka to protect Hindus and other minorities as well as their religious institutions.

New Delhi said it supports a "stable, peaceful, inclusive and progressive Bangladesh" in which all issues are resolved through democratic means and by holding inclusive and participatory elections.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal acknowledged that the prevailing security situation in Bangladesh and long-standing local issues have affected the pace of implementation of some of the India-assisted projects in that country. "We remain concerned about the deteriorating law and order situation, further exacerbated by the release of violent extremists, who were sentenced for serious crimes," he said.

India has repeatedly underlined that it is the responsibility of the interim government to protect the Hindus and other minorities, as well as their properties and religious institutions, he said. "However, only 1254 incidents out of over 2374 incidents reported from August 5, 2024 to February 16, 2025 have been verified by the police. Fur-



ther, 98 per cent of these 1254 incidents were deemed 'political in nature,' Jaiswal said.

"We expect Bangladesh to thoroughly investigate and bring all perpetrators of killings, arson and violence to justice without making such distinctions," he added. There has been a sharp downturn in India-Bangladesh relations after deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled Dhaka in August in the face of a massive anti-government protest.

The relations nosedived dramatically after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus failed to contain attacks on minorities, especially Hindus, in that country. To a question, Jaiswal said development cooperation is a priority area for India in the context of its relations with the people of Bangladesh. "The recent security situation and long-standing local issues have affected the pace of implementation of some of these projects," he said. "The

official discussions therefore focused on rationalising the project portfolio and executing mutually agreed projects in a time bound manner," he said.

"Subject to obtaining the committed support and pending clearances from the Bangladesh side, we plan to take these projects forward," Jaiswal added. He also said that the 86th meeting of the joint committee constituted to oversee the implementation of the Ganga Water Treaty between India and Bangladesh was held March 6 in Kolkata.

"This routine technical meeting, which is scheduled thrice annually, is part of an institutional structured mechanism associated with the implementation of the Treaty signed in 1996," he said.

"At the meeting, the two sides discussed technical issues pertaining to the Ganga Water Treaty, measurement of water flows and other issues of mutual interest," he noted.

Top court refuses to stay Dharavi project

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: Mumbai's Dharavi redevelopment project will continue to go on after the Supreme Court refused to stay it Friday.

A bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar sought responses from the Maharashtra government and Adani Properties Pvt Ltd, which was awarded the tender for the project, on a petition challenging a December 20, 2024 verdict of the Bombay High Court.

The high court had cleared the decks for redevelopment of the slums in Dharavi and upheld the tender awarded to the Adani Group for the project, ruling there was no "arbitrariness, unreasonableness or perversity" in the decision.

The high court in the process dismissed the plea of UAE-based Seclink Technologies Corporation challenging the state government's decision to award the mega redevelopment project to Adani Properties Pvt Ltd, which had made a ₹ 5,069-crore offer.

Seclink Technologies Corporation emerged as the highest bidder for the project first in 2018 with its ₹7,200-crore offer, but the tender was later scrapped by the government.

The Adani Group had emerged as the highest bidder for the 259-hectare Dharavi redevelopment project in the heart of Mumbai and bagged it with its ₹5,069-crore offer in the 2022 tender process. Seclink Technologies Corporation has moved the apex court against the high court decision.



While issuing notice on its plea, the top court directed Adani Properties Pvt Ltd to make payments for the project through a single bank account. After the bench issued notice on the plea, senior advocate C Aryama Sundaram appearing for Seclink Technologies Corporation urged the court to order a status quo. The CJI, however, said, "No."

Sundaram informed the bench that the petitioner company offered ₹7,200 crore in the first tender. The matter would come in the week of May 25. The bench, however, clarified no special equities would be claimed by either sides.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Adani Properties Pvt Ltd, said the project work had already commenced. Mehta said some railway quarters were demolished aside from new constructions taking place.

While dismissing Seclink Technologies Corporation's plea, the high court had also rejected its contention that the tender was "tailor made" to suit a particular firm of the private conglomerate, noting three bidders had participated in the process.

IFS officer ends life by jumping from building

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: A 2011 batch Indian Foreign Services officer ended his life by jumping from the fourth floor of a building in the Chanakyapuri area here Friday and no foul play is suspected, a police officer said.

According to the police, the officer was a director at the Overseas Employments and Protectorate General of Emigrants in the Ministry of External Affairs.

Sources said the officer was undergoing treatment for depression, and his 70-year-old mother was staying with him on the first floor of the MEA Residential Complex in the Chanakyapuri area.

"The deceased has been identified as Jitendra Rawat (42). He was staying on the first floor but went to the fourth floor of the building and jumped. We have not recovered any suicide note from the spot," the officer said.

The Ministry of External Affairs said one of its officers, who was working at its headquarters in Delhi, "passed away" Friday morning but did not reveal his name.

Police received a PCR call about the incident at 6.20 am from the security guard of the residential complex.

The officer was taken to a hospital, where he was declared dead. "His wife and children are staying in Dehradun. They have been informed about the incident and the family members are on their way to Delhi," said the source, adding that the family were living in Dehradun because his children were studying there.

POST OF THE DAY

New Discovery from Chandrayaan-2! A recent study reveals a surprisingly high electron density of ~23,000 electrons/cm³ in the lunar environment when the Moon enters Earth's geomagnetic tail.

@isro

SHORT TAKES

Pegasus row: SC to hear pleas for probe April 22

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday said it would hear April 22 pleas seeking a probe into the alleged unauthorised use of Pegasus spyware for surveillance of journalists among others. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh deferred the hearing after solicitor general Tushar Mehta, seeking an adjournment, said the matter had come up after a long time. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioners, said only two petitions were listed Friday and there were other connected petitions, which required a hearing.

Court adjourns Er Rashid's plea

New Delhi: A Delhi court Friday deferred for a week the plea of jailed Jammu and Kashmir MP Engineer Rashid for custody parole to attend the upcoming Parliament session. Rashid's lawyer Vikhyat Oberoi said the court would pass the order March 10. Additional sessions judge Chander Jit Singh had reserved the order on Rashid's plea March 5. The application, filed February 27, sought the relief on the grounds that Rashid was a parliamentarian and needed to attend the upcoming session to fulfil his public duty.

Misri holds talks with Russian counterpart

New Delhi: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri Friday held talks with his Russian counterpart, Andrey Rudenko, focusing on various aspects of bilateral cooperation. It is understood that the conflict in Ukraine also figured in the talks. "Foreign Secretary @VikramMisri held Foreign Office Consultations with his Russian counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Andrey Rudenko in Moscow," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on X. In January, India said 12 Indian nationals have been killed while serving in the Russian military and another 16 have been listed by Russia as missing.

Rlys to build waiting areas at 60 stations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: The Ministry of Railways has decided to create permanent outside waiting areas at 60 major stations across the country, according to a statement.

The decision comes close to a month after 18 people were killed in a stampede at the New Delhi Railway Station due to alleged overcrowding at platforms. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw held a meeting with senior officials at Rail Bhawan here on Friday and discussed crowd control measures to be implemented across major stations in the country that periodically face heavy footfall. "During the 2024 festival season, waiting

areas created outside the Surat, Udhna, Patna and New Delhi railway stations were able to hold large crowds. Passengers were allowed on the platform only when the train arrived," the statement said.

Similar arrangements made at nine stations in Prayagraj during Maha Kumbh proved to be effective too. The permanent outside waiting areas will be modelled based on these experiences. According to the statement, pilot projects have started at New Delhi, Anand Vihar, Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Patna stations.

The ministry will enforce access control at these 60 stations. Passengers with confirmed tickets will be given direct access to the platforms.



Indian Navy ships during the 2025 edition of the Navy's capstone Theatre Level Operational Exercise (TROPEX), which was conducted over a period of three months from January to early March, 2025!

PTI PHOTO

EAM'S SECURITY BREACH

India demands action against culprits

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal suggested that the sincerity of the British authorities over the incident would be measured on the action they take against the culprits involved

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: India Friday pressed the UK to take action against the pro-Khalistan elements involved in the breach of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's security in London and said the incident showed the "licence" accorded to such forces as well as "indifference" to their "intimidation and threats".

A pro-Khalistani protester attempted to break barricades while some others were shouting anti-India slogans as Jaishankar was leaving the Chatham House after concluding an interactive session at the institute Wednesday evening.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal suggested that the sincerity of the British authorities over the incident would be measured on the action they take against the culprits involved. "We have conveyed our deep concern to the UK authorities about the



breach of security arrangements by UK-based separatist and extremist elements during the external affairs minister's visit," he said.

"There is a larger context to the incident. It brings out both the licence accorded to such forces, as well as indifference to their intimidation, threats, and other actions aimed at imped-

ing our legitimate diplomatic activities in the UK," he said.

While India has noted the statement issued by the UK Foreign Office on the matter, our view of its sincerity would depend on the action taken against culprits on this and previous occasions, Jaiswal added. The Foreign Office condemned the incident.

ABDULLAH PRESENTS J&K'S 1ST UT BUDGET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, March 7: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday presented the first budget of the Union Territory with an outlay of ₹1.12 lakh crore, and proposed a series of welfare and development initiatives for 2025-26, reflecting people's aspirations.

He said J&K is at the threshold of a new era of peace and prosperity, with a semblance of normalcy returning after over three-and-a-half decades of turmoil. Presenting the budget in the legislative assembly here, Abdullah, who also holds the finance portfolio, praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman for their support in various sectors.

Abdullah, dressed in a traditional kashmiri suit with a blue blazer and a skull cap, started his over one-and-a-half-hour speech in English with the Persian couplet, "Tan Hama Daag Daag Shud - Pumbba Kuja Kuja Neham..." (my entire body is covered with bruises where should I apply the balm), amid



thumping of benches by his party legislators. This is the first budget of the National Conference-led government after it came to power in October last year, ending six years of central rule. The last budget session took place in 2018 under the then PDP-BJP government in the erstwhile state of J&K, which was accorded the status of Union Territory after Ladakh was carved out as a separate UT following the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019.

He said the improved environment is contributing to economic progress, with J&K's economy expanding from ₹1,64,103 crore in 2019-20 to ₹2,45,022 crore in 2023-24.



I'll give you the example of Bangladesh last year. During July, August, you know, there were massive demonstrations of students. They had enough of the previous government under Sheikh Hasina

100 PEOPLE DIED OF CHOLERA IN SUDAN

Nearly 100 people died of cholera in two weeks since the waterborne disease outbreak began in Sudan's White Nile State, said Doctors Without Borders.



international

of the day quote

South Africa's G20 Presidency has placed Ubuntu at the heart of its four agricultural priorities for 2025, reinforcing that only through unity can sustainable solutions be achieved

JOHN STEENHUIS | MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, SOUTH AFRICA

There's also a humility and a grace that these trans athletes are more likely to commit suicide, having anxiety and depression, and the way that people talk down to vulnerable communities is an issue that I have a hard time with, as well

GAVIN NEWSOM | GOV, CALIFORNIA

We are pleased by the rapid compliance across the Department with the directive removing DEI content from all platforms. In the rare cases that content is removed that is out of the clearly outlined scope of the directive, we instruct components accordingly

JOHN ULLYOT | PENTAGON SPOKESMAN

SK court paves way for Yoon's release from jail

REUTERS

Seoul, March 7: A South Korean court cancelled impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol's arrest warrant Friday, potentially paving the way for his release from jail while he faces trial on insurrection charges over a brief imposition of martial law.

The Seoul Central District Court said in a statement that its ruling was based on the timing of the indictment that came after the initial detention period had expired, and noted "questions about the legality" of the investigation process that involved two separate agencies.

The ruling did not dismiss the criminal charges that led to Yoon's arrest January 15, and the case is separate from his impeachment, which is still pending before the Constitutional Court.

Both were triggered by his December 3 martial law declaration that also led to the impeachment of the prime minister, who had taken over as acting president.

South Korea's Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok is now acting head of state, and has sought to calm economic markets and reassure international partners amid chaos in government leadership.

Yoon's lawyers and his presidential office welcomed the district court decision, saying it showed the case against Yoon had been pursued for political purposes with no legal justification.



- District court rules Yoon's arrest was procedurally flawed
Lawyers for embattled president call for immediate release
Yoon still faces criminal insurrection charges
Constitutional Court to rule separately on his impeachment

gathered in Seoul following the court decision.

"It will move the hearts of the public. Our president has suffered so much," Lee Yoon-nam, a 44-year-old pro-Yoon protester, told Reuters.

Yoo Seong-min, a 31-year-old anti-Yoon protester, said he came out to protest because "anger shot through" his head.

Yoon's defence team had argued that a warrant issued January 19 that extended Yoon's detention was invalid because the request filed by prosecutors was procedurally flawed.

It has also claimed that the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, which conducted the first stage of the criminal investigation against Yoon, had no legal authority to do so on insurrection charges.

"The court's decision to cancel the arrest showed this country's rule of law is still alive," Yoon's lawyers said in a statement.

Yoon's lawyers called for his immediate release, though conceded he may not be immediately freed because prosecutors could appeal. The prosecutors' office did not immediately comment on the ruling.

Protesters, both in support of and against Yoon, soon

Clashes between govt forces, Assad loyalists kill more than 70

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Latakia (Syria), March 7: Clashes between Syrian security forces and gunman loyal to former President Bashar Assad in the country's coastal region have left more than 70 people dead and an area outside government control, a war monitor said Friday.

Government forces sent major reinforcements overnight to the cities of Latakia and Tartus as well as nearby towns and villages that are the heartland of the minority Alawite sect and a base of support for Assad, to try to get the situation under control, state media reported.

The clashes are the worst since Assad was removed from power in early December by insurgent groups led by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS. Since Assad's fall, there have been some sectarian attacks against members of his minority Alawite sect. These incidents have occurred despite the fact that officially the new authorities have said they are against collective punishment or sectarian vengeance.

Large numbers of troops were deployed in Latakia Friday morning and no civilians were seen in the street as a curfew that was imposed in the city and other coastal areas remains in force.

Members of the security force said there were some clashes in one of the city's neighbourhoods but most of the city was calm and under government control.

Russia launches major Ukraine missile attack



REUTERS

Kyiv, March 7: Russian forces damaged Ukrainian energy and gas infrastructure overnight in their first major missile attack since the US paused intelligence sharing with Ukraine, piling pressure on Kyiv as President Donald Trump seeks a swift end to the war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, seeking to shore up Western support for his country after Trump's diplomatic pivot towards Moscow, called for a truce covering air and sea, though not ground troops - an idea first mooted by France.

"The first steps to establishing real peace should be forcing the sole source of this war, Russia, to stop such attacks," Zelenskyy said on the Telegram messaging app, responding to the overnight missile attack.

Ukraine's air force said Russia had fired a salvo of 67 missiles and 194 drones in the overnight attack, adding that it had shot down 34 of the missiles and 100 of the drones.

Regional officials from the northeastern city of Kharkiv to the western city of Ternopil reported damage to energy and

- Russia launches 67 missiles, almost 200 drones at Ukraine
Air assault comes as US cuts aid, intelligence sharing
Zelenskyy to visit Saudi Arabia before US-Ukraine talks

other infrastructure. Eight people were injured in Kharkiv and two more, including a child, were hurt in Poltava, officials said.

"Russia continues its energy terror," Energy Minister German Galuschenko said. "Again energy and gas infrastructure in various regions of Ukraine has come under massive missile and drone fire."

Russia targets Ukrainian cities and towns far from the front lines every night with drones, but Friday's attack was the first large-scale assault since the suspension of the US military aid and intelligence this week.

In a further sign of re-engagement with the US, Zelenskyy said late Thursday he would travel to Saudi Arabia next Monday for a meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman ahead of talks there later in the week between US and Ukrainian officials.

SpaceX's test flight ends with another explosion

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brownsville (US), March 7: Nearly two months after an explosion sent flaming debris raining down on the Turks and Caicos, SpaceX launched another mammoth Starship rocket Thursday, but lost contact minutes into the test flight as the spacecraft came tumbling down and broke apart.

This time, wreckage from the latest explosion was seen streaming from the skies over Florida. It was not immediately known whether the spacecraft's self-destruct system had kicked in to blow it up.

The 403-foot (123-meter) rocket blasted off from Texas. SpaceX caught the first-stage booster back at the pad with giant mechanical arms, but engines on the spacecraft on top started shutting down as it streaked eastward for what was supposed to be a controlled entry over the Indian Ocean, half a world away. Contact was lost as the spacecraft went into an out-of-control spin.

Starship reached nearly 90 miles (150 kilometers) in altitude before trouble struck and before four mock satel-



lites could be deployed. It was not immediately clear where it came down, but images of flaming debris were captured from Florida, including near Cape Canaveral, and posted online.

The space-skimming flight was supposed to last an hour.

"Unfortunately this happened last time too, so we have some practice at this now," SpaceX flight commentator Dan Huot said from the launch site.

Trump asks Musk to bring back stranded astronauts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York/Washington, March 7: US President Donald Trump had some words of appreciation for NASA's Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams' hair as he told a pair of stranded astronauts aboard the International Space Station that "we're coming up to get you."

Trump, 78, mused Thursday about the possibility of personally launching a rescue team into orbit to help bring astronauts Butch Wilmore and Williams back to Earth — and blasted former President Joe Biden for their eight-day mission stretching to nine months and counting.

"Biden left them up there," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. "We have two astronauts that are stuck in space. I have asked Elon (Musk), I said, 'Do me a favour. Can you get them out?'" He said, "Yes." He is preparing to go up, I think in two weeks."

He added that Musk is "right now preparing a ship to go up" and get them.

"And I see the woman with the wild hair, good, solid head of hair she's got. There's no kidding, there's no games with her hair"



DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US



you. And you shouldn't have been up there so long."

Describing Biden as the "most incompetent president in our history", Trump said he "allowed that to happen to you, but this president won't let it happen."

"We're going to get them out. We're coming up to get you," Trump said, lifting his head and looking up, as if sending the message to the astronauts.

Williams, 59, and Wilmore went on what was meant to be an eight-day mission to the ISS aboard Boeing's Starliner in June 2024. However, technical issues including helium leaks and thruster malfunctions meant that the Starliner was unsafe for their return.

How a dying anglerfish became a social media sensation

AGENCIES

Sydney, March 7: In February, researchers from conservation organisation Condrik Tenerife were about two kilometres off the coast of Tenerife Island, looking for sharks, when they caught sight of something much stranger.

Photographer David Jara Boguna filmed a humpback anglerfish (Melanocetus johnsonii, a species of black seadevil) swimming near the surface in sunlit waters. These fish have never before been seen alive in daylight, as they normally dwell in the "twilight zone" at depths from 200m to 600m.

The video has provoked an enormously empathetic response on social media, with some seeing the fish as a feminist icon or an Icarus-like figure who swam too close to the Sun.

The reaction shows our views of the deep sea - long ignored or seen as a realm of monsters - may at last be changing.

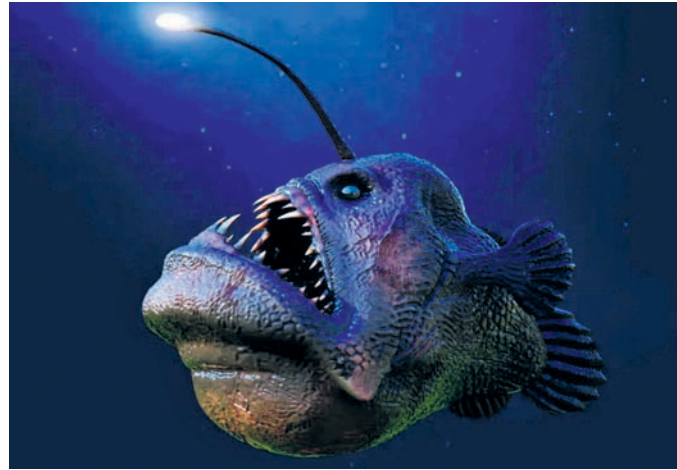
THE STRANGE LIVES OF ANGLERFISH

Anglerfish are much smaller than you probably think they are. The specimen Boguna filmed was a female, which typically grow up to 15cm long.

The creatures are named for their bioluminescent lure (or esca). This modified dorsal fin ray can produce a glow used to fish (or angle) for prey in the dim depths of the sea. The bioluminescence is produced by symbiotic bacteria that live inside the bulbous head of the esca.

Male anglerfish lack the iconic lure and are much smaller, usually reaching a length of only 3cm.

'ICARUS OF THE DEEP'



A male anglerfish spends the first part of his life searching for a female to whom he will then attach himself. He will eventually fuse his circulatory

system with hers, depending on her entirely for nutrients, and live out his life as a parasite or "living testicle".

It is unknown why this fish

was swimming vertically near the surface. Researchers have speculated that the behaviour may have been related to changes in water temperature, or that the fish was simply at the end of her life.

Watchers observed the fish for several hours, until it died. Its body was preserved and taken to the Museum of Nature and Archaeology in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, where it will be further studied.

SYMPATHY FOR THE SEADEVIL

The video quickly went viral, inspiring countless reaction videos, artworks, memes, a Pixar-style animation and a poem titled Icarus is the Anglerfish.

One person described the fish as her "feminist Roman Empire", in the sense of an inspirational obsession that filled the same role for her that the

Roman Empire supposedly does for many men.

Boguna and Condrik Tenerife have since commented on the public reaction.

FROM HORRORS TO HEROES

The outpouring of empathy for the anglerfish is unexpected. With their glowing lures and fang-filled mouths, the creatures have long been archetypal horrors of the abyss.

As I have written elsewhere, the anglerfish's extreme sexual dimorphism and parasitism, along with its unsettling anatomy, have made it the "iconic ambassador of the deep sea". Anglerfish or angler-inspired aliens have appeared as antagonists in films such as Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace (1999), Finding Nemo (2003), The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie (2004) and Luca (2021).



I think we need to be more transparent on various other measures, including, for example, on the conflict of interest of the board and so on. And we will be coming forward with our own plan to further transparently, you know, reveal these conflict of interest, etc. to the public

TUHIN KANTA PANDEY | NEW CHAIRMAN, SEBI

SWIGGY EXPANDS RAILWAY DELIVERIES

Swiggy Friday said it has expanded its food delivery service, in partnership with IRCTC, to 100 railway stations across 20 states in India. In the coming months, the food and grocery delivery platform will continue to expand its reach to more stations across the length and breadth of the country, Swiggy said



of the day quote

India remains one of the most important markets for Malaysia palm oil, and fostering greater awareness through science-backed initiatives is key to reinforcing its acceptance

BEVINDER SRON | CEO, MPOC

Overall, we estimate that the supply chain related market worldwide is going to increase to \$420 billion by 2030 and if we aspire about 10 per cent share that means we are looking at a possible opportunity of \$40 billion

ASHOK CHANDAK | PRESIDENT, IESA

As India's burgeoning commercial & industrial market continues to grow at a rapid pace, our expertise in wind project execution, backed by a robust product and servicing excellence, continues to place it as a partner of choice for large renewable project developers

KAILASH TARACHANDANI | GROUP CEO, INOX WIND

Market rebound loses steam

SENSEX, NIFTY END FLAT ON GLOBAL TRADE WAR WORRIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 7: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surrendered early gains to close almost flat in a volatile trade Friday as uncertainties over the global trade war sapped investors' risk appetite.

Besides, a bearish trend in global markets and persistent foreign fund outflows also hit investor sentiments, traders said.

Snapping its two-day winning streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex slipped 7.51 points to end at 74,332.58. During the mid-session, it climbed 246.34 points or 0.33 per cent to hit an intraday high of 74,586.43.

However, the broader Nifty of NSE edged up 7.80 points to close at 22,552.50. During the day, the 50-share barometer rose 89 points or 0.39 per cent to hit a high of 22,633.80.

During the week, the BSE Sensex climbed 1,134.48 points or 1.55 per cent high, and the NSE Nifty rose 427.8 points or 1.93 per cent.

"The global market is experiencing a heightened uncertainty due to US tariff impositions and counter threats from its peers. This ambiguity has led to increased risk aversion and diminished appeal of equities. EMs have been particularly affected, experiencing significant outflows.

"Lately, the S&P 500 index is showing signs of a deeper correction, reflecting concerns about the potential impact of tariffs on the US economy.



The key equity benchmarks ended sideways on Friday as market sentiment remained cautious, with concerns over US tariffs and fluctuating trade policies unsettling global financial markets

DEVARSH VAKIL | HEAD OF PRIME RESEARCH, HDFC SECURITIES

As many as 2,512 stocks advanced while 1,468 declined and 134 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The BSE smallcap gauge rose 0.75 per cent, while the midcap index slipped 0.30 per cent.

Among the BSE sectoral indices, Consumer Durables, Utilities, Focussed IT, Realty,

Forex reserves dip to \$638.698 billion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 7: India's forex reserves dropped by \$1.781 billion to \$638.698 billion in the week ended February 28, the RBI said Friday.

The overall forex kitty had jumped by \$4.758 billion to \$640.479 billion in the previous reporting week.

At the end of September 2024, the forex reserves touched an all-time high of \$704.885 billion.

For the week ended February 28, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$493 million to \$543.35 billion, the data released Friday showed.

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

Gold reserves decreased by \$1.304 billion to \$73.272 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by \$27 million to \$17.998 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF fell by \$12 million to \$4.078 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

178th SLBC meeting organised

BHUBANESWAR: The 178th State Level Bankers' Committee Meeting of Odisha convened at Crystal Hall, Mayfair Convention, Jayadev Vihar, Thursday.

The Executive Director of UCO Bank cum Chairman SLBC Odisha Vijaykumar Nirvriti Kamble welcomed all the participants and highlighted the achievement under Annual Credit Plan, CD ratio, Financial Inclusion and Social Security Schemes. He also suggested for improvement towards education loan, housing loan, investment credit to agriculture, export credit, development of different clusters etc. He also informed that the Government of Odisha has rolled out a financial assistance scheme to support the establishment of cold storages across the state. Under this initiative, at least one cold storage will be set up in each of the 58 sub-divisions, which will significantly boost infrastructure and modernise the agricultural supply chain. As of 31st December 2024, all banks in Odisha had achieved Rs 1,45,172.65 crore which is 68.95% of the Annual Credit Plan target of Rs 2,10,546.35 crore comprising 75.38% under agriculture and 73.48% under MSME. The CD ratio stands at 75.44% as of 31st December 2024. Banks in Odisha also have fully achieved targets under PMJDY, PMJBY, PMSBY and 98.09% under APY target as of 19th February 2025. The Regional Director, RBI, Bhubaneswar Dr Sarada Prasan Mohanty informed a 25 basis points reduction in the Policy Repo Rate in February 2025 and RBI's study on inflation in Odisha. He highlighted the state's Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio, observance of Financial Literacy & Women Prosperity Week 2025, and awareness initiatives on UPI, CBDC, cyber security, and digital fraud prevention, emphasis on preventing Money Mule Accounts, resolving KYC issues and ensuring prompt customer grievance redressal by banks.



SHORT TAKES

New HPCL chairman

New Delhi: The government has appointed private sector consultant Vikas Kaushal as the chairman and managing director of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) for a period of 5 years, according to an official order. Kaushal, 53, previously served as the global leader for energy and process industries at Kearney, a management consultancy. He also served as managing director and country head for Kearney India. This is the first time that a private sector consultant has been appointed head of a bluechip public sector company. The appointment comes amidst the government's struggle to find suitable heads from within the organisations.

SEBI warns Nestle

New Delhi: Nestle India said Friday it received a warning from the country's markets regulator for a breach of insider trading regulations "by a designated person of the company". The Indian arm of Swiss food giant Nestle said its compliance officer received an administrative warning letter from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Thursday. However, the firm stopped short of revealing details from the letter or about the person. Nestle India "would like to categorically assert that this information has no impact on the financial and operational capabilities," the Maggi instant noodles maker told Reuters, without specifying details.

RBI fines 4 entities

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank Friday said it has imposed Rs 76.6 lakh penalty on four non-banking financial companies for non-compliance with certain provisions of its directions related to 'peer-to-peer lending platform'. A penalty of Rs 40 lakh has been imposed on Fairassets Technologies India and Rs 10 lakh each has been imposed on Bridge Fintech Solutions and Rang De P2P Financial Services non-compliance with certain provisions of the 'Non-Banking Financial Company - Peer-to-Peer Lending Platform (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2017'. RBI also said the penalty of Rs 16.6 lakh has been imposed on Visionary Financepeer.

Over 89mn urban women out of labour market in 2023-24

The report warned of pressing challenges, including the underutilisation of educated women's skills and the looming risk of a diversity backlash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: More than 89 million urban women remained out of the labour market in 2023-2024 despite a 10 per cent jump in their employment in the previous six years, according to a new report.

The report titled 'India's Gender Employment Paradox' by the Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai, highlighting the evolving landscape of women's unemployment in

urban India, was launched on International Women's Day.

It also warned of pressing challenges, including the underutilisation of educated women's skills and the looming risk of a diversity backlash.

The report is based on analysis of secondary data from the Periodic Labour Surveys, National Family Health Surveys, and Time Use Survey.

"India is failing to utilise the skills of over 19 million graduate-educated urban women due to personal choices or constraints from social norms -- highlighting a critical waste of educational investment.

"Factors such as caregiving responsibilities, lack of flexible work arrangements and commuting challenges continue to prevent many highly qualified women from fully participating in the economy. Meanwhile,



young male unemployment in urban India outpaces women's (10 per cent vs 7.5 per cent for ages 20-24 years) in a concerning trend," the report said.

It also pointed out that gender gaps persist even in highly educated households. Even



segment, though witnessed a decline of 8.05 per cent, maintained a significant market share at 5.6 per cent, underscoring the sustained demand for affordable EV mobility solutions," Vigneshwar stated.

Electric three-wheeler retail sales rose 5 per cent year-on-year to 53,116 units in February. Electric commercial vehicle sales on the other hand

Electric passenger vehicles recorded a healthy 18.95 per cent year-on-year increase, reflecting growing consumer awareness and adoption of EVs in the personal mobility space, now achieving a market share of 3 per cent," FADA President CS Vigneshwar said in a statement.

The two-wheeler segment witnessed sales of 76,086 units last month, a dip of 8 per cent as compared with 82,745 units in February 2024. Bajaj Auto led the segment last month with retail sales of 21,389 units.

"The electric two-wheeler among dual-income, highly educated couples, gender disparities remain stark. In 62 per cent of such families, husbands earn more despite equal educational qualifications, it noted.

Suresh Ramanathan, Dean at Great Lakes Institute of

RUPEE SWINGS, CHEAPER COSTS

Companies ramp up long-term FX hedges



REUTERS

Mumbai, March 7: A rise in the Indian rupee's volatility, coupled with a decline in the cost of protecting against currency weakness has prompted firms to increase longer-tenor hedges to shield their balance sheets.

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) apparent tolerance for bigger currency swings and uncertainty brought on by US trade policies have led companies to hedge more, bankers said.

Corporate purchases of forward dollars for a tenor of more than a year jumped over two-fold in the November-January period compared to the prior three months, per data from clearing house CCIL. The increase was of a similar magnitude on a year-on-year basis.

An FX salesperson at a Mumbai-based private sector bank said that the number of enquires for hedging longer-tenor dollar liabilities had more than doubled, with most clients securing exposures of up to two years.

The rise in hedging longer-tenor exposures follows a pickup in shorter duration hedges. "We have started to see the trend in companies looking to hedge their longer-tenor euro and GBP (British pound) liabilities as well," the salesperson said, declining to be identified since he is not authorized to speak to the media.

The rupee depreciated to 88 from 84 against the US dollar

in just four months, a significant departure from the narrow trading range that companies were accustomed to.

The dollar-rupee pair's one-month realized volatility is at its highest in two years and is nearly at par with the offshore Chinese yuan.

The realized volatility reflects the extent to how things have changed.

Companies with dollar receivables have accelerated their hedging activity too, albeit at a more measured pace. Forward dollar sales for tenors exceeding one year rose 25% from November to January from the prior three-month period.

For exporters, the "motivation" is to lock in the higher rate (on dollar/rupee) while for companies that have longer-term dollar liabilities, it is about "risk management" and "adjusting to the new reality" on the rupee, an FX salesperson at a different bank said.

FX SWAPS, HEDGING COSTS
The RBI recently conducted dollar-rupee buy/sell FX swaps to bolster rupee liquidity in the banking system. After the \$10 billion three-year swap last week, the central bank announced another similar swap Wednesday.

These measures have reduced the cost of hedging long-term liabilities, making future dollar purchases more affordable for companies. The three-year hedging cost dropped by 25 basis points following the RBI's swap Wednesday.

Electric passenger vehicles recorded a healthy 18.95% year-on-year increase, reflecting growing consumer awareness and adoption of EVs in the personal mobility space, now achieving a market share of 3%

CS VIGNESHWAR | PRESIDENT, FADA

saw an increase of 1 per cent year-on-year to 856 units in February.

The segment crossed the crucial 1 per cent market share threshold, highlighting incremental yet steady progress towards commercial fleet electrification, Vigneshwar said.

A deeply troubling insight from the report reveals that employed women in urban India face a higher risk of spousal violence compared to their non-working counterparts

SURESH RAMANATHAN | DEAN, GREAT LAKES INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT

Management, Chennai, said, "It creates a risk of diversity backlash if quality job creation doesn't accelerate to accommodate both genders."

"The report cautions that if quality job creation remains sluggish, rising female employment alongside male joblessness may trigger societal resistance to workplace diversity since men must earn as per the existing social norm," he said.

"Even more concerning is that employed women are more like-

ly to justify spousal abuse (32 per cent vs 23.5 per cent), potentially due to internalised societal pressures and guilt. This paradox underscores the urgent need for holistic interventions that address gender norms both at home and in the workplace," he added.

The report noted that wives continue to take on the primary responsibility for household work in 41 per cent of homes, compared to just 2 per cent of husbands.

Meanwhile, the balance remains elusive for urban mothers with access to remote work -- 86 per cent reported spending up to three workday hours on childcare while working. Yet only 44 per cent feel they have adequate support. This reinforces the need for stronger workplace policies that acknowledge and address the realities of working mothers.

Chhetri's return not a good sign

Football great Chhetri comes out of retirement at 40 to help India in Asian Cup qualifying

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: Described as "a wise decision" by the sport's national federation, Sunil Chhetri's return from international retirement at 40 is certainly an acknowledgement of his greatness in Indian football but more strikingly, it lays bare the paucity of quality strikers in a country of over 1.4 billion.

No amount of praise is too high for the man who has served the national team with distinction for nearly two decades, eventually ending his glorious career as India's highest-ever goal scorer with 94 strikes to his name.

When he called time on his international career in May last year, Chhetri was the world's third leading scorer among active players, behind Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo and Argentine icon Lionel Messi.

But his long list of achievements in the sport is one thing, and his coming out of retirement within a year is another. The surprise comeback raises a fair number of questions on whether Indian football can ever graduate from being a "Sleeping Giant", as once described by FIFA.

"It's a good decision from the team's point of view. You are asking me that you are calling back a 40-year-old to play for national team, but there have been similar instances in the past.

"We have been trying so hard to find good strikers, but unfortunately, we have not succeeded so far. Most of the top strikers in the ISL are foreigners, so that is how it is," conceded the legendary IM Vijayan in a conversation with PTI, trying to strike a balance between finding the positives and being mindful of reality.

According to the All India Football Federation (AIFF), Chhetri was coaxed out of retirement by national team

BARE CUPBOARD



head coach Manolo Marquez, who urged him to join his old teammates for the crucial final round of the AFC Asian Cup 2027 qualifiers.

People in the top rung of the AIFF are convinced that the right move has been made by head coach, who is also doing duty as FC Goa's gaffer in the ongoing Indian Super League.

Since his retirement, he had continued playing for Bengaluru FC in the ISL. He has so far scored 12 goals from 23 matches this season to become its highest Indian goal-scorer, and it is this performance graph that has driven Marquez to get in touch with Chhetri.

His form in the ISL, in which he has also made two assists

besides finding the back of the net a dozen times, has also impressed AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey.

"Sunil's leadership qualities are unmatched. A player of his stature can motivate the entire team. His form too has been impeccable in the ISL, scoring 12 goals, and India can greatly benefit with a striker like him," Chaubey said.

Like Chaubey, AIFF secretary general Anilkumar P too preferred to look at the positive side of the move, and so did the legendary Vijayan.

"It's a wise decision on part of the head coach to include Sunil Chhetri based on the technical data we received from our experts," Anilkumar told PTI.

"We have some important matches coming up soon. We are fully aligned with the coach's decision and hopefully Chhetri can contribute much more to the national team so that we can move to the next level of the Asian Cup 2027," Anilkumar added.

Chhetri, who made his international debut in 2005 and left the scene as India's most-capped player, has been included in Marquez's list of 26 players for the March FIFA international window.

Vijayan, currently the head of the AIFF's technical committee, sounded excited when asked to share his views on Chhetri's return.

"You look at Roger Milla, who

In the ongoing Indian Super League, Chhetri is performing consistently. His inclusion will definitely strengthen the Indian national team

ANILKUMAR P | SECRETARY GENERAL, AIFF

came out of retirement (at 38) to help Cameroon qualify for the quarterfinals of 1990 World Cup. Age is not a factor, what matters is fitness, and Sunil remains extremely fit and he is also playing very well," he said.

Chhetri's retirement had made headlines with FIFA, world football's global governing body, leading the outpouring of tributes for the Indian talisman.

FIFA had earlier in 2022 released a documentary on the long-serving Indian captain.

Titled 'Captain Fantastic', it had three parts — kick off, mid-game and extra time.

Marquez, who took over the reins after Chhetri's retirement, has not any luck with his strikers as they have not really delivered.

In his first assignment in the Inter-Continental Cup, India were held to a goalless draw by Maldives and suffered a 0-3 defeat to Syria.

In the friendly internationals against Vietnam and Malaysia, India managed two 1-1 stalemates.

Going ahead, the Blue Tigers will play a friendly match against Maldives March 19 in preparation for the opening match of the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 Qualifiers Final Round against Bangladesh March 25.

India have been placed in a qualifying group alongside Bangladesh, Hong Kong, and Singapore for the Asian Cup. In the tournament's previous edition, India had a disappointing run, failing to progress past the group stage after losing all their matches.

Indian juggernaut rolls on

ARAVINDH WINS PRAGUE MASTERS



Grandmaster wins first major title of his career at Prague Masters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prague, March 7: India's dominance in chess continued unabated with Grandmaster Aravindh Chithambaram winning the first major title of his career after finishing ahead of established names including compatriot R Praggnanandhaa at the Prague Masters tournament here Friday.

The 25-year-old Aravindh ended the tournament with six points after settling for a draw with Gurel Ediz of Turkey in the ninth and final round.

World No 8 Praggnanandhaa finished tied second with five points after losing to Dutchman Anish Giri.

Tamil Nadu's Aravindh ended on six points out of a possible nine after his three victories and six draws in the tournament.

Praggnanandhaa concluded his campaign on five points along with Giri and top seed Wei Yi of China.

Aravindh chose the solid Caro Kann to counter Ediz's King pawn and the Turkish youngster went for the Advance variation. Aravindh had to part with a pawn early in the opening but the complications remained as white had a fractured king side and the extra pawn on the other flank was not of much use.

The players repeated several

times during the first time control and Gurel realized that it was not so easy to force matters.

"I have not slept well in the last two days, I was completely fine till the seventh round and then I got this lead and there was pressure," Aravindh said.

The champion also praised his mentor and coach Grandmaster RB Ramesh and singled out his game against Anish Giri as his best effort in the tournament.

Pranav wins World Junior Chess Championship



India's Pranav Venkatesh won the World Junior Chess Championship (Under-20) after settling for a draw against Matic Levrencic of Slovenia in the 11th and final round in Petrovac, Montenegro on Friday. It turned out to be a great day for Indian chess after Aravindh Chithambaram won the Prague Masters ahead of many fancied stars. Venkatesh, who had won the challengers section in the Chennai International last year, continued his great show among juniors in the world, remaining undefeated during the course of the event. The Indian scored a total of seven victories and four draws to end up on nine points out of a possible 11 and when the final round pairings were announced it was clear that a draw will be enough for Venkatesh.

SHORT TAKES

Dissent on decision: Harmanpreet fined

Lucknow: Mumbai Indians captain Harmanpreet Kaur was Friday fined 10 per cent of her match fee for showing dissent at umpire's decision during her team's match against UP Warriorz at the Ekana Cricket Stadium here. The incident occurred at the end of the 19th over of UPW innings when umpire Ajitesh Argal informed Harmanpreet that only three fielders could be outside the circle in the final over due to a slow over rate. Seemingly unhappy with the ruling, she was seen engaged in a brief argument with the umpire, with teammate Amelia Kerr also joining the discussion. "Harmanpreet Kaur admitted to the Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 which relates to showing dissent at an umpire's decision during a match," WPL said in a release. "For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding."

Paid maternity leaves for tennis players

Riyadh: Pregnant players on the women's tennis tour now can receive 12 months of paid maternity leave, and those who become parents via partner pregnancy, surrogacy or adoption can get two months off with pay, under a program sponsored by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia and announced Thursday by the WTA. "Independent contractors and self-employed individuals don't typically have these kinds of maternity benefits provided and available to them. They have to go out and sort of figure out those benefits for themselves," WTA CEO Portia Archer said. "This is really sort of novel and groundbreaking." More than 300 players are eligible for the fund, which is retroactive to January 1. The WTA would not disclose how much money is involved. The program — which the WTA touted as "the first time in women's sports history that comprehensive maternity benefits are available to independent, self-employed athletes" — also provides grants for fertility treatments, including egg freezing and IVF.

NZ pacer Henry doubtful for CT final

Henry leads tournament's top wicket-takers' list with 10 scalps, including a 5/42 against India in their group match

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, March 7: New Zealand pacer Matt Henry has been rendered doubtful for the Champions Trophy final against India owing to a shoulder niggle but coach Gary Stead is hopeful that the in-form bowler will recover in time for the clash Sunday.

Henry leads the tournament's top wicket-takers' list with 10 scalps, including a 5/42 against India in their group match.

The 33-year-old injured himself when he landed on his shoulder during the semifinal against South Africa in Lahore Wednesday. "Matt obviously landed on his shoulder and it was pretty uncomfortable. I guess the positive thing from our perspective

INJURY WOES



is that he got back out there to bowl. We've had some scans done on him," Stead told reporters here Friday. The coach was hopeful that Henry would be ready in time for the final.

"We're going to give him every chance to be playing in this match, so still a little bit unknown at this stage.

"He's obviously pretty sore just from landing on the point of his shoulder, but yeah, hope-

fully he will be okay," he noted.

New Zealand lost only one match during the preliminary engagements, against India. Henry's figures in that game are the best of the tournament so far.

Stead conceded that Varun Chakravarthy will be a "big threat" in the Champions Trophy final, and the Kiwis will put on their "thinking caps" to work on the ways to negate India's mystery spinner.

SNIPPETS

Guntas youngest Indian to make cut at WAAP

Da Nang: Guntas Kaur Sandhu, who took a break from her ninth standard examinations back home, passed a different kind of a test, as she became the youngest Indian to make the cut at the elite Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championships golf tournament here. Guntas, who turned 14 February 2, is making her debut at the WAAP, which began in 2018. Playing in extremely windy conditions on a demanding layout, Guntas was often aggressive and played without fear at the picturesque but challenging Hoiana Shores Golf Club. The tactics paid off for the tall youngster, who is just a month past her 14th birthday, as she shot 73-71 and made the cut comfortably in T-39th place. Three of the six Indians made the weekend. They were led by Mannat Brar (67-76) who survived a disastrous start and a rough finish to be 1-over in Tied-30th. The other two were Guntas (73-71) at 2-over in Tied-39th and Saanvi Somu (72-74), playing her second WAAP, was 4-over and on the cutline at T-50.



CCI Snooker Classic: Ishpreet scripts history

Mumbai: PSPB's Ishpreet Singh Chadha scripted history of sorts by making a maximum 147-break during his 5-0 victory over Railways' Dilip Kumar in a best-of-nine-frame quarter-final match at the CCI Snooker Classic 2025 here Friday. It was Mumbai-based Ishpreet's maiden maximum in an open tournament and is the third Indian after the legendary Geet Sethi (Gujarat) and Aditya Mehta (Mumbai) to construct 147 breaks. Sethi, winner of multiple national titles, had achieved the mark during the 1988 Guntur Nationals. Mehta, a former national champion representing PSPB, constructed a 147 during the Asian Games selection tournament in Bangalore in 2013 and in a tournament in Germany on the pro circuit. The 28-year-old Ishpreet, who participates in the World Snooker Tour, is coached by legendary two-time Asian snooker champion Yasin Merchant at the Khar Gymkhana.



Race for qualification most compelling story left in English football

Runaway leader Liverpool looks certain to win a record-equaling 20th title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, March 7: The race for Champions League qualification may be the most gripping narrative left in the Premier League.

Runaway leader Liverpool looks certain to win a record-equaling 20th title. At the other end of the standings, three from the current bottom four clubs will probably be relegated.

The Champions League places, however, are up for grabs with just six points separating the teams placed from third to 10th. And with the Premier League in pole position to win a bonus fifth spot in the Cham-

pions League next season, the likes of Bournemouth, Brighton and Fulham are in contention.

Forest flying high

It is one of the unlikeliest stories of the season. Nottingham Forest, which finished one place above the relegation zone last season, is third and above four-time defending champion Manchester City, no less.

Forest was deducted points last season for breaching the league's financial rules and avoided the drop by just six points. This term it has faced more sanctions: A near \$1 million fine for an inflammatory social media post and a stadium ban for owner Evangelos Marinakis for misconduct after a controversial defeat.

But none of that has stopped the club's remarkable rise under manager Nuno Espirito Santo, who returned to England after winning the Saudi Pro

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



League with Al-Ittihad.

Espirito Santo's reputation grew after guiding Wolverhampton to promotion to the Premier League and then establishing it as a top flight club. He lasted five months at Tottenham but has worked wonders at Forest, which is also into the FA Cup quarterfinals. Forest hosts City Saturday, with

just one point separating them.

Damage limitation

City's title defense has unraveled and hopes of European glory were ended in defeat to Real Madrid in the Champions League playoffs. Now it's a case of damage limitation for Pep Guardiola.

The prospect of missing

out on the top four remains a possibility, but having played Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea twice, the run-in looks relatively kind for City. Saturday's visit to Forest looks like one of its last major hurdles.

Unlikely contenders

Two years ago, Bournemouth was battling to avoid the drop. Three years ago it was in the second tier.

Now the south coast club, with a stadium that holds just over 11,000 fans, is in contention to rub shoulders with giants like Real Madrid, Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

Bournemouth, coached by Andoni Iraola, is in seventh place and three points behind Chelsea in fifth, and four off fourth-placed City.

Brighton is one place further back on goal difference after an outstanding debut season so far for Texas-born coach Fabi-

an Hurlzeler. The big wins this season include City, Manchester United (twice) and Chelsea.

On Saturday, Brighton plays ninth-placed Fulham, which is just a point behind. Like Forest, it's not just in the league where Bournemouth, Brighton and Fulham are riding high. All three are also through to the quarterfinals of the FA Cup.

Comeback clubs

Chelsea won its second Champions League title in 2021 but hasn't qualified in each of the last two seasons under the turbulent ownership of Americans Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital. Qualification, however, remains a very real target with Enzo Maresca's team fifth and one point behind City.

Newcastle is also aiming to quickly bounce back into the competition having ended a 20-year absence last season only to miss out this term.