


Candid Vidya

Actor Vidya Balan opens up about an incident which taught her a very important life lesson


LEISURE | P2



Peace initiative

US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin discuss moves to end the Ukraine war


INTERNATIONAL | P10



Market upbeat

Sensex reclaims the 75,000 level, tracking a bullish trend in global equities and intense buying in market majors

BUSINESS | P11



Chhetri impact

The return of Sunil Chhetri from retirement is set to boost the team morale as India face Maldives in an exhibition match

SPORTS | P12



3 KILLED, AS MANY HURT IN GROUP CLASH

Dharakote, March 18: Three people were killed, and three others sustained critical injuries in a violent clash between two groups over alleged sorcery and witchcraft practices at Kharipalli village under the Baharpur panchayat in this block of Ganjam district, Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Khadala Behera, 65, his son Ratnakar Behera, 40, who died on the spot. Another victim, Ramesh Behera, 45, of the other group succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

The injured persons were - Arun Behera, 30, Bikhari Behera, 18, and Jaga Dehera, 18. The three first were admitted to a local health centre before being shifted to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur for advanced care.

According to reports, the dispute between the two groups stemmed from accusations of sorcery and had been ongoing for five years.

The situation escalated Tuesday evening when members of both groups encountered each other near a village pond. A verbal altercation quickly turned violent, resulting in a deadly confrontation.

MORE P5



LOSS OF PROPERTIES: People stand near charred remains of a car near Chitnis Park amid curfew after violence erupted Monday night in Nagpur, Tuesday

Curfew in Nagpur over Aurangzeb tomb row

Nagpur, March 18: More than 50 persons have been taken into custody and curfew imposed in parts of Nagpur, a day after protests against Aurangzeb's tomb triggered violence in the city, which Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis claimed was premeditated.

Speaking in the legislative assembly Tuesday, Fadnavis said the Vicky Kaushal-starrer film Chhaava, based on the life of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, reignited people's emotions against the Mughal emperor and brought before them the true history of the Maratha king. Five FIRs have been registered in connection with the violence, Nagpur police commissioner Ravinder Kumar Singal said Tuesday.

Violence erupted in central Nagpur's Chitnis Park in Mahal area Monday around 7.30 pm, with stones hurled at police amid rumours that the holy book of a community was burnt during an agitation by a right-wing body for the removal of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's tomb in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district, officials said.

As many as 34 police personnel were reportedly injured in the violence.

P9

PRICE COLLUSION

Raids on ad giants, broadcasters' body

New Delhi, March 18: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has raided the offices of many global advertising giants, including GroupM, Dentsu and Interpublic Group, and a broadcasters' industry group over alleged price collusion, people with direct knowledge told Reuters on Tuesday.

Officers of the Indian anti-trust body searched around 10 locations after it initiated a case against the agencies and top broadcasters over allegedly fixing ad rates and discounts, said one of the sources.

The raids were being carried out in Mumbai, New Delhi and Gurugram, the first source said. Three other sources with direct knowledge confirmed the names of the entities being raided.

The first source said the CCI was investigating how ad agencies allegedly colluded with certain broadcasters to fix ad prices while selling them to clients, and discussed discounts.

The raids come as the ad landscape in India is seeing major shifts following the \$8.5 billion merger between Walt Disney and Reliance's India media assets, which Jefferies analysts say will have a 40% share of the ad market in TV and streaming segments.

Reuters was first to report the enforcement action and details of the antitrust case involving the media agencies.

They also follow Omnicom Group's \$13.25 billion all-stock deal in December to buy rival Interpublic Group, creating the world's largest ad agency.

The IBDF represents top domestic broadcasters, including billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance-Disney joint venture and Sony and Zee Entertainment. IBDF did not respond to Reuters' queries.

SC: India not a police state

The Supreme Court always emphasises that the grant of bail in a fair and timely manner is a crucial aspect of individual liberty. However, trial courts continue to reject bail pleas in minor cases even after investigations are completed. Expressing concern over the issue, the apex court highlighted that a democratic nation like India should not function as a police state, with arbitrary detentions. Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan Monday noted that bail pleas in such cases should not reach the SC, as it overburdens the system. The top court observed that about two decades ago, bail applications in minor cases rarely reached the high courts, let alone the Supreme Court. During a recent hearing, the bench granted bail to an accused, who had been in custody for over two years in a cheating case, despite the investigation being completed and a chargesheet filed



very serious cases' despite the completion of investigations.

A bench comprising justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan Monday said a democratic country must not function like a police state, where law enforcement agencies exercise arbitrary powers to detain individuals without genuine necessity.

It observed that two decades ago, bail pleas in smaller cases rarely reached the high courts, let alone the top court.

"It is shocking that the Supreme Court is adjudicating bail pleas in cases that should be disposed of at the trial court level. The system is being bur-

dened unnecessarily," Justice Oka said while hearing a bail plea.

This is not the first time the top court has flagged this issue. It has repeatedly urged trial courts and high courts to adopt a more liberal stance in granting bail, particularly in cases involving minor infractions.

The apex court had previously expressed its anguish over what it termed 'intellectual dishonesty' by lower courts in denying bail, despite multiple directives emphasising the importance of protecting individual liberty when custodial detention is not required.

During the hearing, the bench granted bail to an accused who had been in custody for over two years in a cheating case. The accused's bail plea was rejected by both the trial court and the Gujarat High Court, despite the investigation being completed and a chargesheet filed.

"It is unfortunate that bail matters in cases triable by magistrates are being brought before the Supreme Court. We are sorry to say that people are not getting bail when they should," Justice Oka said.

'Modi was Shivaji in his previous birth'

New Delhi, March 18: BJP MP Pradeep Purohit from Odisha courted a controversy Tuesday comparing Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, which has sparked uproar in the Parliament. The lawmaker from Bargarh claimed that Narendra Modi was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in his previous birth.

"A saint named Girija Baba told me that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in his previous birth. That is why he is working towards nation-building," Purohit said.

Following the remark, the Deputy Chairman ordered that his statement be expunged from the proceedings of the House.

His statement has drawn sharp criticism, especially from the Opposition. Congress MP Varsha Eknath Gaikwad shared

a video of Purohit's remarks on social media, accusing the BJP of deliberately insulting Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

"A well-planned conspiracy is being carried out by the BJP leadership to repeatedly insult Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and hurt the sentiments of Shiv lovers in Maharashtra and across the world. They have already disrespected him by placing his honorary cap on Narendra Modi's head. Now, listen to this disgusting statement by a BJP MP," Gaikwad said.

Gaikwad further demanded an apology from Narendra Modi and called for Purohit's suspension. At a time when debates about Mughal emperor Aurangzeb are intensifying across the country, discussions around Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the Maratha Empire have also gained momentum, with sharp criticism of the Mughal rule.

Over 400 killed in Israeli strikes

Deir Al-Balah: Israel launched a wave of airstrikes across the Gaza Strip early Tuesday, saying it was hitting Hamas targets in its heaviest assault in the territory since a ceasefire took effect in January. The strikes have killed more than 400 people and wounded over 500, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which says more than half of the dead are women and children. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he ordered the strikes because of a lack of progress in talks to extend the ceasefire. Officials said the operation was open-ended and was expected to expand. The White House said it had been consulted and voiced support for Israel's actions. Hamas warned that Israel's new airstrikes breached their ceasefire and put the fate of hostages in jeopardy.

MORE P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Finally, all our hard work has paid off. Riots have started!

CB reopens Naba Das murder case

Bhubaneswar, March 18: The Crime Branch (CB) of Odisha Police Tuesday began a fresh investigation into the killing of former minister Naba Kishore Das, a senior minister said in the Assembly.

While replying to a debate in the House, Law minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said that a two-member team of the CB has already reached the residence of the Das at Jharsuguda and recording the state-

ments of his family members.

"The Crime Branch will probe into different angles of the murder case, the investigation of which was misled during the previous BJD government. CBI could have done the investigation, but we considered that the Crime Branch was not less talented given the freedom," the minister said. The announcement came after the slain minister's wife Minati Das sought an appointment with the CM Mohan Charan Majhi to demand a CBI probe into the murder.

P3

Sunita, Butch on homeward voyage

Cape Canaveral (US), March 18: NASA's two stuck astronauts headed back to Earth with SpaceX Tuesday to close out a dramatic marathon mission that began with a bungled Boeing test flight more than nine months ago.

Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams bid farewell to the International Space Station — their home since last spring — departing aboard a SpaceX capsule alongside two other astronauts. The capsule undocked in the wee hours and aimed for a splashdown off the

Florida coast by early evening, weather permitting.

The two expected to be gone just a week or so after launching on Boeing's new Starliner crew capsule on June 5. So many problems cropped up on the way to the space station that NASA eventually sent Starliner back

empty and transferred the test pilots to SpaceX, pushing their homecoming into February. Then SpaceX capsule issues added another month's delay.

Sunday's arrival of their relief crew meant Wilmore and Williams could finally leave. NASA cut them loose a little early, given the iffy weather forecast later this week. They checked out with NASA's Nick Hague and Russia's Alex-

ander Gorbunov, who arrived in their own SpaceX capsule last fall with two empty seats reserved for the Starliner duo.

"We'll miss you, but have a great journey home," NASA's Anne McClain called out from the space station as the capsule pulled away 260 miles (418 kilometers) above the Pacific.

Their plight captured the world's attention, giving new meaning to the phrase "stuck at work." While other astronauts had logged longer spaceflights over the decades, none had to deal with so much uncertainty or see the length of their mission expand by so much.



leisure



DENNINGS ON PICKING HER STAGE NAME

Actress Kat Dennings knew her real name "wasn't going to work" for her acting career hence she picked her stage name when she was just nine-year-old. The actress, who made her official on screen debut in a 2000 episode of *Sex in the City*, was born as Katherine Litwack.

SALMA HAYEK REVEALS WHY SHE AVOIDS TECHNOLOGY

Hollywood star Salma Hayek says she stays away from technology as much as possible. She prefers to write by hand. She doesn't own a computer, rarely uses a phone, and avoids online shopping. She believes staying offline helps her escape AI-driven algorithms and maintain a low profile on the Internet.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

The ruling emotion today will be passion. You will feel like chatting with your beloved the whole day. However, you will incur expenses and Ganesh advises you to remain balanced. But if you have decided already to go the whole hog, make fully sure you are in the right trappings.

TAURUS

The fates smile on you this day, assures Ganesh. You have a great chance of going for a new car, may be an SUV and go for a long spin. If that, for some reason doesn't materialize, you are sure to board a luxury bus and take a tour. Financial gains are strongly indicated.

GEMINI

You will neglect your daily routine and indulge in fun and frolic with your family members today. Friends and family will probably accompany you to lunch or dinner to your favourite restaurant. You will feel at ease and will feel the stress slipping out of your system. Wait for a couple of days before proposing to that special someone, says Ganesh.

CANCER

Some days require you to slow down, and assess your relationships. Today may be one of such, says Ganesh. You will earnestly wish to spend time with your spouse or an intimate relation to discuss certain key issues. This need will be magnified with the ardent affection you receive from your loved one.

LEO

You may meet people whom you haven't met in a long time, or will attempt to. New relations and acquaintances may also be formed. You will try to keep yourself busy in one task after the other. You will be able to finish all your work as per deadline, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

As per indications you will be able to effect all the changes in your office space that you had desired. Monetary inflows will be immense, and your near and dear ones will love it. Ganesh says you will charm yourself into the hearts of the members of the opposite gender.

LIBRA

Ganesh says you will take up a task and complete it by hook or crook. The higher officials and colleagues in your office will be highly impressed by your working capacity and capability. This is reflect when you will be either given a promotion in the office or there may be a rise in your pay scale to the effect.

SCORPIO

You wake up to a new ray of hope, flaunting your sunny side up, predicts Ganesh. You leave no stone unturned to fulfil your desires. With boundless optimism, you are all set to win the world. Push your limits to know your strengths.

SAGITTARIUS

Good and bad; highs and lows is what the day has to offer you. According to Ganesh, you may come across unexpected monetary gains, but you plan to spend the extra income on renovating your home. All in all, a tedious day at home as well as office.

CAPRICORN

There is a creative side to your personality which will come to the fore now. With your unusual wit and intelligence you will guide others on their paths. Many will come to you for guidance and you will be able to spread a harmonious environment around. You don't look down upon people because of their problems which will earn you great respect in the society.

AQUARIUS

It may seem that all of your plans are going haywire. It is not too late; you can still have things under control. All you need to do is focus on your work rather than helping everyone around. Because, you end up having no time for your goals, feels Ganesh. Later on the day, you will understand that in order to be helpful, you need to take care of your interests as well.

PISCES

Everyone knows your nature, but today you will feel uncomfortable by someone's progress. Ganesh knows this is unusual but you need to think about this. Anger never gives results so it is better to focus on your good qualities and hard work to achieve your goals.

VIDYA ON POWER OF WORDS

Mumbai: Vidya Balan, one of Indian cinema's most celebrated actresses, has delivered some of the most iconic female-led films, from *The Dirty Picture* to *Kahaani* and *Shakuntala Devi*. Recently, she achieved the biggest hit of her career with *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, where she reprised her role as Manjulika after 17 years.

However, her journey in the industry was far from easy. At one point, she was labeled as "bad luck" and was repeatedly re-

placed in films. In a recent interview, Vidya opened up about an incident that left a deep impact on her. She recalled working on a Tamil film, only to be abruptly replaced after a few days of shooting. Determined to understand why, she traveled to Chennai with her parents to meet the filmmaker. In his office, he casually dismissed her, saying, "Kaha se heroine lag rahi hai? She doesn't know how to act, she doesn't know how to dance."

That moment shattered her confidence—so much that she couldn't look at herself in the mirror for six months. She felt ugly and unworthy. Reflecting on the experience, she emphasised the power of words, stating that while people have the right to replace someone, kindness is essential. That painful incident became a lifelong lesson in empathy, shaping her into the compassionate person she is today.



LABANYA NATYA MAHOTSAV - DAY II



Bhubaneswar-based Labanya Theatre, the host troupe of the three-day event, presented Odia play *Ghara* on the second evening at Bhanjakala Mandap, Tuesday. Written by Bidhu Bhusan Panda, the play was directed by Satya Jena (Tunu). PHOTO: MANORANJAN MISHRA

Mrunal's workout motivation

Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur has shared the secret behind her workout motivation, and it's not what you might expect.

The actress revealed that simple food plays a key role in fueling her fitness routine. In her latest Instagram post, the *Jersey* actress revealed that Indian breakfast Po-ha keeps her energised and ready to take on her workouts. Sharing her video of working out in the gym, Mrunal wrote, "I work-out because I really love POHA #backatitagain."

In the clip, the actress can be seen sitting with her back to the camera, performing arm and back exercises with focus and precision. Mrunal also added the song *Ek Daffa* (Chinnamma) by Arjun Kanungo to the video.

Yesterday, the *Sita Ramam* actress posted a series of stunning pictures of herself in a lavender-hued chikan-kari lehenga, paired with sparkling diamond accents. She kept her look simple and chic, opting for minimal makeup to highlight her natural beauty. In the caption, she wrote, "Classic charm with a desi twist."

On the professional front, Mrunal is currently shooting for her next project, *Dacoit*, where she will star opposite Adivi Sesh in a romantic role. The highly anticipated pan-India film also features Anurag Kashyap in a pivotal role.

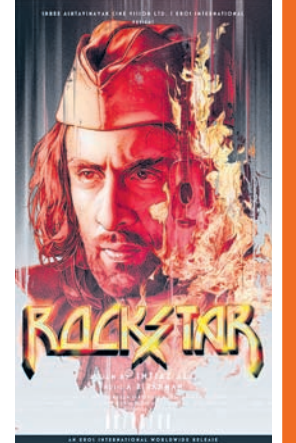


Imtiaz drops hint on Rockstar sequel

Mumbai: Filmmaker Imtiaz Ali has dropped a hint about the possibility of a *Rockstar* sequel. During his recent interview, the director expressed his openness to the idea, leaving fans hopeful for another cinematic masterpiece.

Imtiaz stated, "Never say never. It is possible that an idea might come to me, and I feel that this story, as *Rockstar* Part 2 or a *Rockstar* thought, might be nice. Sometimes, a wild thought about *Rockstar* might come up."

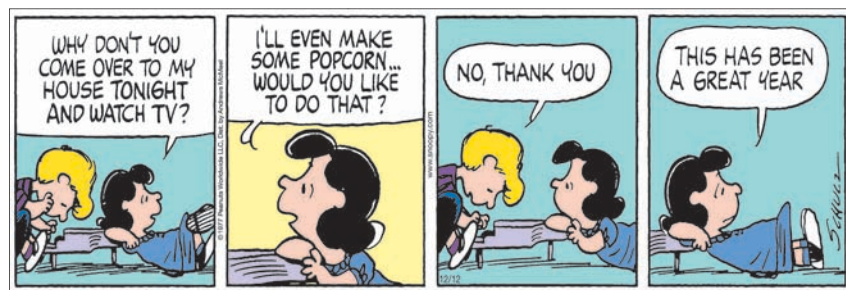
Rockstar, the 2011 musical romantic drama, was written and directed by Imtiaz Ali. It features Ranbir Kapoor and Nargis Fakhri in the lead roles, with supporting performances by Aditi Rao Hydari, Piyush Mishra, Shernaz Patel, Kumud Mishra, Sanjana Sanghi, and Shammi Kapoor. *Rockstar* also marked the posthumous appearance of veteran actor Shammi Kapoor, who passed away August 14, 2011. The musical drama



was released worldwide in theaters November 11, 2011, and quickly became one of the highest-grossing films of that year. Over time, the movie has garnered a devoted cult following, with its soundtrack often hailed as one of the best music albums of the decade.

Due to overwhelming demand, *Rockstar* was re-released in select theaters across India in May 2024. The film captivated audiences for weeks, eventually becoming one of the highest-grossing re-releases of the year.

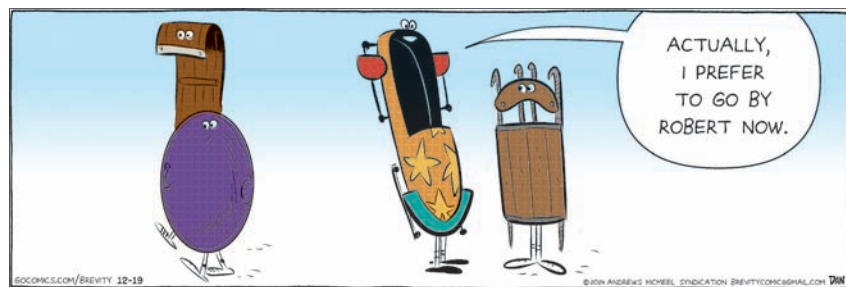
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

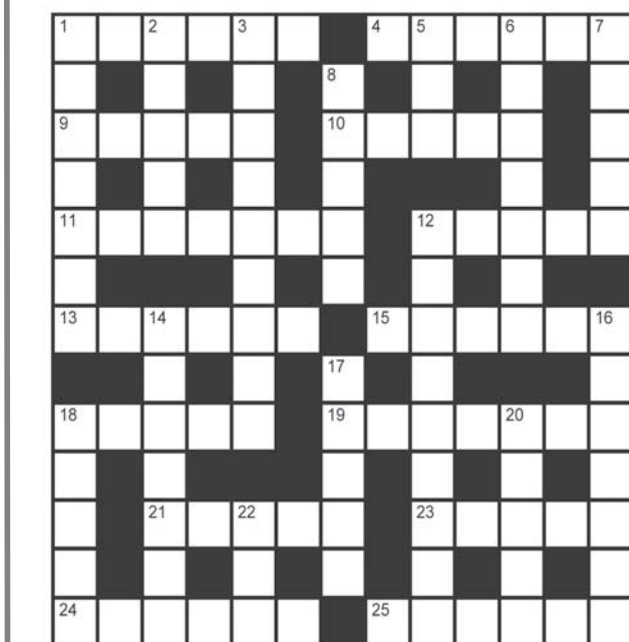


BREVITY



FUN POST

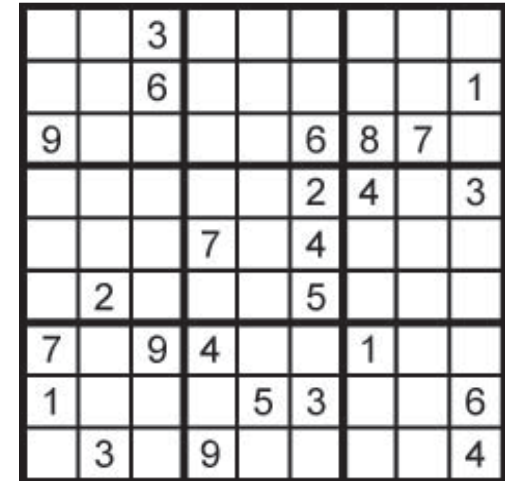
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Cluttered
 - 4 Dover's are white
 - 9 Young hooter
 - 10 Mayhem
 - 11 Contributes
 - 12 They go with fish
 - 13 Italian tourist centre
 - 15 Anise flavoured liqueur (name)
 - 18 Spread
 - 19 Xylophone kin
 - 21 Transparent gem
 - 23 Mother-of-pearl
 - 24 Stoot
 - 25 Flower parts
 - Down**
 - 1 Perfect in every way
 - 2 Garden bulb
 - 3 Laundry need
 - 5 Actress Ullmann
 - 6 Library section
 - 7 Novi Sad residents
 - 8 Kind of board
 - 12 Department store event
 - 14 Spectre
 - 16 Knickers
 - 17 Astonish
 - 18 Part of a healthy diet
 - 20 Coffee shop order
 - 22 Go for the gold?

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Bhubaneswar: In view of the rising temperatures, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday directed Energy department to ensure no power cut from 11am to 5pm and 9pm to 6am. While attending a meet at Lok Seva Bhawan here to review the preparations for tackling heatwave, Majhi asked officials to make sure Anganwadi centres function only between 7am and 9am. He also asked officials to release SOP for morning classes in schools. Majhi directed district Collectors to ensure that adequate tube wells are installed and defunct ones repaired within a week. Officials of all departments attended the review meet.



downtown

Fresh CB probe starts into Naba Das murder

Stating that CB would carry out the probe thoroughly and professionally to unearth all angles and motives behind the murder, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan ridiculed the previous BJD government for not being able to provide justice to the family members of then Health minister Naba Kishore Das

ments of his family members. "The CB will probe into different angles of the murder case, the investigation of which was misled during the previous BJD government. The government decided to reopen the case and engage CB to make a fresh probe. CBI could have done the investigation, but we considered that the CB was not less talented given the freedom," the Law minister said. The Law minister's announcement in this regard came after the slain minister's wife Minati Das sought an appointment with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi to demand a CBI probe into the murder. Earlier, Das's son and daughter had also through media appealed for a CBI probe into the matter.

Stating that the CB would carry out the probe thoroughly and professionally to unearth all angles and motives behind the murder, the Law minister ridiculed the previous BJD government for not being able to provide justice to the family members of the then Cabinet minister. The CB, which has conducted the probe into the murder case during the BJD regime, has submitted the charge-sheet in a trial court at Jharsuguda against Gopal Krishna Das, the prime accused in the case. The investigating agency had examined several witnesses. The investigation, however, overlooked crucial angles like whether some other people were involved or the persons behind the murder case. Many people do not believe that only Gopal is the masterminded and he executed the crime, a senior lawyer said. Sources said a two-member CB team of ASP Vijay Mallick and DSP Diptimayee Mallick visited Das's residence at Sarbahal in Jharsuguda and recorded the statements. They have so far recorded the statements of Deepali Das and Bishal Das, the daughter and son of the then Cabinet minister. Naba Kishore Das, then Health minister, was shot at by a policeman at Brajarajnar in Jharsuguda district January 29, 2023. Later in the day, he was declared dead at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar.



JOB FAIR: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi hands over an appointment letter to a newly-recruited government employee during 'Nijukti Mela 2025' organised at Krushi Sikhya Sadan in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. Steel & Mines Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena and Health & Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling are seen. On the occasion, appointment letters were given to a total of 812 new recruits under five departments of the state government

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 18: The Crime Branch (CB) of Odisha Police Tuesday began a fresh investigation into the killing of former minister Naba Kishore Das, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan told the Assembly. While replying to a debate in the Assembly, Harichandan said that a two-member team of the CB has already reached the residence of the Das at Jharsuguda and recording the state-

Criminal-free state in 5 yrs: Law Min

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 18: Amid protests by Opposition BJD and Congress over the law and order situation, the BJD government Tuesday said it was recruiting more personnel in the police force and developing the required infrastructure, and after five years, criminals would not be found in the state. Speaking in the Assembly, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said the Opposition was making false allegations against the government over the law and order situation in the state. "It is a fact that crimes against women have taken place during the nine months of the BJD government in the state, but the police have taken prompt action against the accused," he said. "Though six murders happened on Holi, police arrested the accused persons within 24 hours. This is possible because of the high morale of the police," he said. Harichandan was addressing the Assembly on behalf of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who holds the Home portfolio,

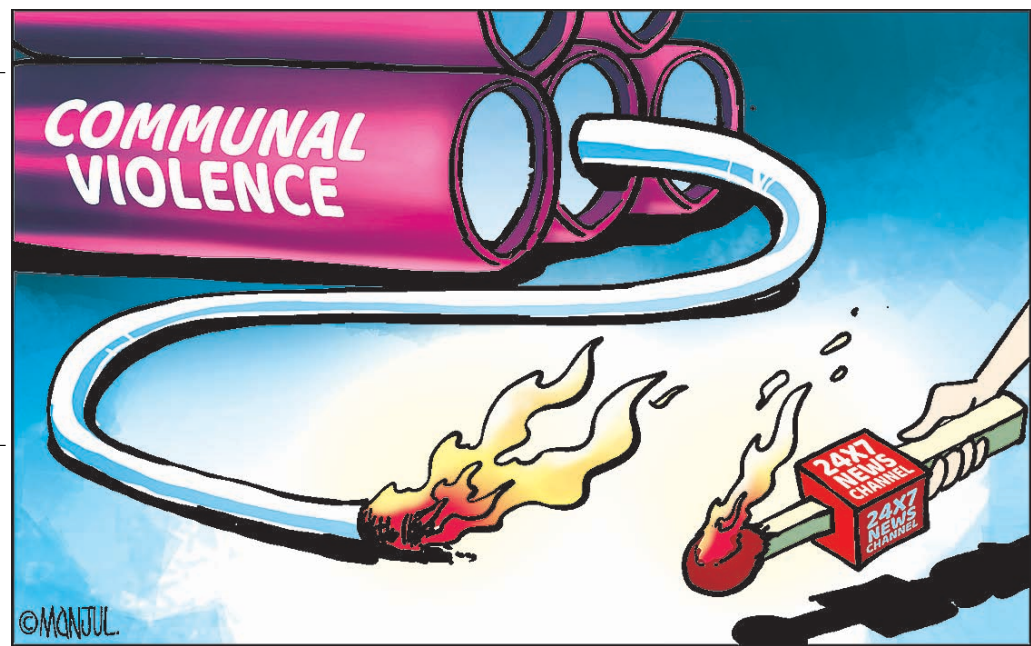
during a discussion on the admissibility of an adjournment motion moved by the Congress on rising crimes against women in the state. He claimed that conviction rates have started improving after remaining very low during the BJD government. "Wait for five years, you will see that criminals are nowhere in Odisha," he said, adding that the state government has started recruiting more personnel in the police force and developing the required infrastructure. Initiating the discussion, Congress MLA Ashok Das alleged the government was in slumber, with 54 cases of gangrape being reported in only eight months. This apart, more than 1,600 cases related to crimes against women have been registered in different police stations, he claimed. Congress MLA Sofia Firdous said that this government has the habit of shifting responsibilities and blaming the previous regime for all wrong things. "If the state government is so worried about the safety of the women in Odisha, it should announce a House Committee



employee in July last year." BJP MLAs Tankadhar Tripathy, Saroj Padhy, Sanatan Bijuli and Amar Nayak defended the government during the discussion and claimed that the rate of crimes against women was lesser now as compared to the tenure of the previous BJD government. At last, Harichandan spoke on the issue, representing the views of the government. Expressing dissatisfaction over the minister's reply, the BJD and Congress MLAs staged a walkout. Following the discussions, the adjournment motion was not admitted by Speaker Surama Padhy. Demonstrations by Opposition MLAs in the Assembly over the law and order situation in the state have rocked the session, which is witnessing frequent adjournments. During the Question Hour earlier in the day, Congress MLAs were seen standing near their seats with placards in their hands and mouths covered with black bands, demanding a House Committee to investigate cases of crimes against women.

to probe all such cases that took place since June last year," she said, demanding justice for the five-year-old girl who was allegedly raped and murdered in Angul last week. Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik of the BJD alleged that criminals were getting political protection, which was encouraging them to repeat their offences. BJD MLA Goutam Buddha Das alleged, "The morale of the police is down and that of the criminals is up because the state government did not take any action against the son of the former Governor, who physically assaulted a government

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Two RBTs, 12 leopards killed in 3 years

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 18: Poachers killed two Royal Bengal Tigers (RBTs) and a dozen leopards in forest areas of the state in the past three years, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia informed the Assembly Tuesday. In response to a query of BJP legislator (Baliguda) Chakramani Kanhar in the Assembly, the minister said the skin of six RBTs and 63 leopards were seized during the period. As per the elephant census conducted in 2024, 2,103 jumbos are present in 38 forest di-

visions of the state, of which the highest of 291 elephants were found in Dhenkanal, said the minister. The maximum number of elephant deaths (41) was also reported from Dhenkanal forest division during the three years, he said. According to the tiger census of 2023-24, 30 big cats were found in Odisha, of which 27 were in Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR), he said. Singkhuntia said the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had conducted the last leopard census in Odisha in 2022, during which 568 leopards were found in the eastern state. He also said for the protec-

tion of wild animals, the state government has taken several steps including establishment of anti-poaching camps, forest patrolling, tracking movement using technology and raising fodder plantations. The minister said that between 2022-23 and 2024-25 (till now), a total of 103 wildlife crime cases have been registered in the STR, 255 poachers arrested and 57 illegal guns seized. The state government is taking special measures to protect the rich biodiversity and wildlife of Similipal, which has been included in the conservation initiative Project Tiger since 1973, he said.

The state government has set up 214 anti-poaching camps and temporary platforms in Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary for prevention of poaching and other illegal encroachments, the minister in a statement to the House. He said AI-enabled, infrared and trap cameras have been installed to monitor poachers and wildlife while a Similipal Special Tiger Protection Force (SSTPF) has been deployed to protect the flora and fauna. Modern weapons like INSAS, X-caliber rifles and automatic pistols have been provided to the forest officials to enhance security, the minister told the House.

Metro rail to reach Cuttack: Min

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 18: The route of proposed metro train service in the Capital City will be extended to make it a viable project, Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said here Tuesday. The previous BJD government had planned to take up the phase-I metro project of the 26-km-long stretch between Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar to Trisulia in Cuttack at an investment of Rs 6,225 crore. Speaking to mediapersons here, Mahapatra said, "I want to make it clear that our gov-

ernment wants to execute the metro project. We are neither against the project nor going to scrap it," he said. The metro train service was proposed from Bhubaneswar airport to Trisulia near Cuttack. But what will someone do visiting Trisulia?, he asked. "So, we have formed an expert committee to study and recommend a proper route to make the metro project viable," Mahapatra said. He said that a revised detailed project report (DPR) will be prepared soon to expand the project till Cuttack city and other areas. It was also planned to construct an elevated corridor on

the busy Jayadev Vihar-Nandankanan Road in Bhubaneswar. The first layer of the elevated corridor will be made for vehicular movement while the upper level will be dedicated to the upcoming metro project, he said. In a written statement to the Assembly Tuesday, the minister said the metro rail project work was started November 20, 2023 and target was set to complete it by 2027. While Rs 210 crore has been allocated for the project in the year 2023-24, another Rs 1,000 sanctioned during the current financial year, of which Rs 393 crore has been spent so far, he said.

Man held for lifting bike

Bhubaneswar: Tamando police Tuesday arrested a 25-year-old man for allegedly stealing a motorcycle from the parking lot of DN Regalia mall here last week. The accused was identified as Chinmay Samantray, a native of Sandha Sahi in Jatni, said Tamando police station IIC Basant Kumar Dalai. He also said Chinmay is a history-sheeter and has been booked five times earlier. Pranab Barik had lodged a complaint with Tamando police alleging he had parked his bike at the parking lot of the mall and went inside for shopping March 14, 2025. However, when he stepped out of the mall and reached the parking lot a few hours later, he found his bike missing. The mall's CCTV footage showed Chinmay's act of stealing the bike. The accused was arrested and the bike was seized from his possession. During interrogation, Chinmay revealed that he used duplicate keys to unlock the bike. Bharatpur police has booked Chinmay under Sections 303 (2) of BNS, and produced him before a local court.

Lifetime Achievement Award for veteran aviator BS Singh Deo

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 18: Wing Commander (Retd) BS Singh Deo, a towering figure in Indian and global aviation, was felicitated with the prestigious 'Lifetime Achievement Award' by Vertical Aviation International (VAI), the world's leading professional society for helicopters and drones, March 10. The award ceremony, held in Dallas, USA, celebrated his extraordinary 56-year long career marked by unparalleled contributions to helicopter operations, flight safety, and aviation innovation across military and civilian domains. Singh Deo's journey in aviation began in his childhood, crafting and flying aeromodels in Dhenkanal and Cuttack. This early passion took flight when he joined Indian Air Force (IAF) in 1968. Graduating

from IAF Helicopter Training School, he earned the Best Pilot Trophy and the Chief of the Air Staff Medal, setting the tone for a career defined by excellence. His service in the 1971 Indo-Pak War, alongside accolades as a Flying Instructor and Production Test Pilot, solidified his reputation as a prodigious talent. As an Air Force Examiner, he played a pivotal role in standardising helicopter pilot training for the IAF and Indian Army. After retiring from IAF, Singh Deo transitioned to civil aviation, taking on leadership roles at Pawan Hans Ltd., where he operationalised 21 Westland-30 helicopters and introduced Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations in India. His efforts brought air connectivity to remote regions, transforming lives in areas previously untouched



by aviation. Later, at Malaysian Helicopter Services, he flew offshore missions in the South China Sea while championing safety initiatives. With over 8,200 flight hours across five airplane types and 14 helicopter types,

Singh Deo's versatility shines through his roles in Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS), Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), VIP flights, and flight testing. His dedication earned him the 'Vayu Sena

Medal' from the President of India. In 1997, Singh Deo joined Bell Helicopter as head of operations for India and five South Asian countries, a role he held for 21 years. John L Garrison, president & CEO of Bell Helicopter, praised him, saying, "Purpose, Passion, and Integrity. This is what makes him a pioneer in the industry. Yes, he brought Bell's vision to India." During his tenure, he fostered growth for helicopter operators while advocating for safety through seminars and trade shows, including the Rotary Wing Society of India's (RWSI) annual Heli Power Seminar. A founding member and vice president of RWSI since 1998, Singh Deo has elevated its global stature. His work with the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST)

since 2006 and the Vertical Aviation Safety Team (VAST) underscores his commitment to reducing helicopter accidents worldwide. His 'Safety Through Education' initiative with RWSI has markedly improved India's helicopter safety record, earning recognition from the IAF, Indian Army, and the United Nations World Food Program, for whom he conducted a workshop in Kathmandu in August 2024. Singh Deo's relentless pursuit of knowledge—evident in courses like the "Managing Technological Change" program in UK, where he earned a "Belt & Braces" certificate, and his Six Sigma Green Belt certification—has kept him at the forefront of aviation innovation. His integrity, leadership, and professionalism have made him a respected voice in the industry.

SORCERY CHARGE 3 killed, as many hurt in Ganjam group clash



POST NEWS NETWORK

Dharakote, March 18: Three people were killed, while an equal number of others sustained critical injuries, when a violent clash broke out between two groups over alleged sorcery and witchcraft practice at Kharipalli village under the Baharpur panchayat in Dharakote block of Ganjam district Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Khadala Behera, 65, his son Ratnakar Behera, 40, both died on the spot. Another victim, Ramesh Behera, 45, of the rival group succumbed to his injuries while receiving treatment at the Dharakote hospital, police said.

The injured, identified as Arun Behera, 30, Bikhari Behera, 18, and Jaga Dehera, 18, were initially admitted to the Dharakote hospital before being shifted to the MKCG Med-

ical College and Hospital in Berhampur for advanced care.

According to reports, the dispute between the two groups stemmed from accusations of sorcery which has been going on since the past five years. Matters reached a flash point Tuesday evening when members of both the groups encountered each other near a village pond. A verbal altercation quickly turned violent, resulting in a deadly confrontation.

Following the incident, Sub-Divisional Police Officer Santosh Kumar Jena, along

with officers from Badagada, Sheregada, and Dharakote police stations, rushed to the spot to maintain order and launch an investigation.

Notably, the police had previously intervened to halt the alleged practice of sorcery in the village and provided temporary protection to the families of Khadala Behera and Banabasa Behera for a month. However, despite the temporary breather, tensions between the two groups continued to simmer.

In a separate incident two months ago, unidentified miscreants set fire to two motorcycles and three bicycles in Kharipalli, further intensifying the animosity, sources said.

Authorities are continuing their investigation to determine the cause of the latest violence and ensure peace in the village, Dharakote police station IIC Chandrika Swain said.



STAY SAFE: Fire Services personnel conduct a mock drill on ways to douse accidental fire in LPG cylinders during an awareness programme held at Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir at Buguda in Ganjam district Tuesday

OP PHOTO

2 minors arrested for gangrape of 12-yr old

POST NEWS NETWORK

Umerkote, March 18: Police arrested two minor boys on charge of sedating a 12-year old girl and gangraping her under this police limits in Nabarangpur district late Monday night.

The accused minors were questioned in this connection after their arrest. The survivor and the accused minors were taken for a medical examination to Umerkote health centre Tuesday. Later, the accused minors were produced before the Juvenile Justice Board which remanded them to a probation home.

According to police, the incident occurred when the minor girl was playing near her house in the afternoon hours on Holi (March 15, Saturday). The two accused allegedly

trampled her and called her to a nearby ground. There they sedated her and gangraped her despite her resistance, police said.

The shocked girl remained mum that night, before narrating her ordeal to her mother the next day. Her mother then lodged a complaint at the Umerkote police station while the accused fled from the village.

The police rounded them up later while further investigations, under the direct supervision of Nabarangpur SP and DSP, is on.

JALESWAR-CHANDANESWAR-DIGHA RAILWAY PROJECTS

Locals caught between hope and despair

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhograi, March 18: With the fate of the long-pending Jaleswar-Digha broad gauge rail route still hanging in balance, people living along the Odisha-West Bengal border appear skeptical about the proposed Jaleswar-Chandaneswar new rail route ever becoming a reality.

According to reports, despite receiving approval 14 years ago with an estimated cost of ₹352.65 crore, work on the 41-km Jaleswar-Digha railway project is yet to begin. In that backdrop, discussions on the new Jaleswar-Chandaneswar rail route have evoked lukewarm response from the border residents in both the states.

The skepticism stems from the ground that in the interim Budget, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had announced allocations of ₹10,599 crore for Odisha, and ₹13,955 crore for West Bengal. However, there was no clarity on the specific funds allocated for these two railway projects.

According to sources, both Odisha and West Bengal governments are focused on boosting tourism, boosting exports, and regional development. The construction of Subarnarekha-Choumukh ports in Subarnarekha estuary under



Baliapal block of Balasore district, and at Tajpur under Ramnagar block in West Bengal is expected to drive economic growth. As a result, both the rail routes are seen as critical infrastructure for these initiatives.

Border residents believe the railway projects will improve connectivity with northern and southern states while facilitating cost-effective transportation of local produce such as betel leaves, paddy, coconut, groundnuts, and marine fish to other states.

The Jaleswar-Digha railway project was first proposed to the Central Railway Board by the then Odisha government in

1994-95 fiscal to meet the needs of border residents. During the tenure of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in Centre, former minister Srikanth Jena presented the railway project in the Parliament.

In 2005, former minister and MLA late Ananta Das launched efforts for realisation of the project. As a result, the state Assembly's standing committee met the then railway minister Mamata Banerjee in the UPA government to push for the project's swift implementation.

A Detailed Project Report (DPR) was prepared by October 2009, and an initial token allocation of ₹65 lakh was approved in

2009-10. Later, a budget of ₹150 crore was sanctioned for the project in 2010-11.

Land acquisition in Jaleswar and Bhograi blocks for 34-km stretch of the 41-km railway line from Jaleswar in Odisha to Digha in West Bengal is in final stage while land in the remaining 7-km stretch in West Bengal has not yet been acquired, the railway minister informed. Due to this delay, the fate of the railway project has been pushed into uncertainty, reports said.

In March 2023, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw visited Bhograi block in Balasore district and offered prayers at the Chandaneswar temple. During his visit, he pledged to connect the 34-km Jaleswar-Chandaneswar route with a new railway line. Following this announcement, Balasore MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi recently confirmed that the South Eastern Railway Board has initiated a techno-economic feasibility survey for the railway project. While this news revived hopes among locals in Odisha, it left West Bengal residents concerned regarding its impact.

In the meantime, a fresh political controversy has erupted after Balasore MP announced in meetings that ₹1,000 crore has been sanctioned for the Ja-

leswar-Chandaneswar rail line. Meanwhile, Opposition parties slammed the Central government for neglecting passenger safety, railway accidents, availability of quality food and drinking water, and railway staff security in its Budget. They argue that while the long-pending Jaleswar-Digha rail project remains in limbo due to a lack of commitment and efficiency, the proposed new Jaleswar-Chandaneswar rail line is merely a false promise to Balasore residents.

Former minister Srikanth Jena alleged that the Union government has consistently ignored Odisha and West Bengal in railway Budget allocations, hindering progress on the Jaleswar-Digha line. He claimed that the new rail project between Jaleswar-Chandaneswar is nothing more than a political gimmick for electoral gains. Former MP Rabindra Jena echoed this sentiment, calling the BJP's move a poll plank.

Congress leader Satyashiva Das accused the BJP of misleading the people with "double-engine governance" that delivers "double betrayal". Meanwhile, Bhograi MLA Gautam Buddha Das questioned the legitimacy of the ₹1,000 crore allocation, claiming there is no official confirmation of the funds.

Tribals protest bauxite mining in Koraput

KORAPUT: Thousands of tribal residents protested Tuesday in Koraput district against a proposed bauxite mining project in Nageswari Reserve Forest. Under the Community Forest Resource Management Committees banner, people from 13 gram sabhas in Nandapur block opposed the project, citing environmental and livelihood threats. They submitted a memorandum to Nandapur tehsildar Prabhati Jhodia, urging President Droupadi Murmu to intervene, alleging violations of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), PESA Act, and Fifth Schedule rules. "The lease violates FRA which requires gram sabha consent. We were neither consulted nor did we approve it," it read. A public hearing was held March 6. "The memorandum will be sent to the state government," Jhodia said.

22.76 gm brown sugar seized in Boudh; 3 held



POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, March 18: The police in Boudh confiscated 22.67 gm brown sugar and arrested three persons in connection with the peddling of the narcotics during a raid at a hideout in the district.

Addressing a press conference at the district police headquarters Tuesday, Superintendent of Police (SP) Rahul Goel said the drug seizure and arrests were made Monday. He identified the arrestees as Prabhakar Parida alias Pintu, 20, from Bagicha Sahi, Shibnanda Gahir alias Shiba, 20, from Podapoda and Pritam Dehuri alias Bhalu, 21, from Irrigation Colony of the town.

He said apart from the narcotics, officers seized ₹15,920 cash, three mobile phones, a wrist-watch, a motorcycle, a bus ticket, and other items from the accused persons. The estimated street value of the confiscated drugs is approximately ₹2.2 lakh.

Giving details about the drug

bust, Goel said it followed on the receipt of a tip-off about narcotics trafficking near Ramjangi Nala, between Raithani Bypass and Butupali Road. "Acting on the information, a police team conducted a raid at around 4:04 pm Monday which resulted in the arrest of the trio and recovery of the contraband, and other articles," Goel added.

Preliminary probe has revealed that the accused procured the narcotics from a place in Jaleswar of Balasore district, not far from the Odisha-West Bengal border.

Goel said a case (number 159/25) has been registered at Boudh police station against the accused who were produced before a court for remand. Boudh police Station Officer Ranjit Kumar Muni was present at the press conference.

Nevertheless, this is for the first time that brown sugar has been seized in Boudh, sparking discussion among residents about the arrival of synthetic drugs in the quaint township.

Girl dies, cousin critically injured in wall collapse

POST NEWS NETWORK

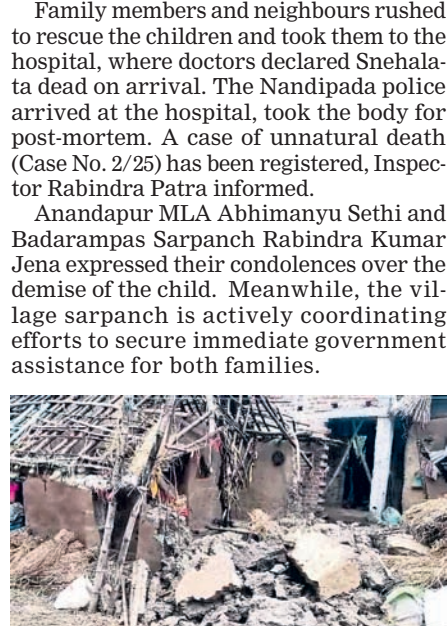
Hatadihi/Chhenapadi, March 18: An eight-year-old girl was killed while her five-year-old cousin was critically injured when portion of a mud wall collapsed and fell on the kids at Badarampas village under Hatadihi block in Keonjhar district, Tuesday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Snehalata Sahu, 8, niece of Maheshwar Sahu. Her cousin and Maheshwar's son, Saiprasad, 5, is currently undergoing treatment at the Anandapur Sub-Divisional Hospital.

According to sources, Snehalata had been living with her maternal family following her father's death. She was preparing to leave for school to appear in an examination while Saiprasad was sitting near her. At around 6:30 am, while she was taking breakfast, a section of the mud wall collapsed on the children.

Family members and neighbours rushed to rescue the children and took them to the hospital, where doctors declared Snehalata dead on arrival. The Nandipada police arrived at the hospital, took the body for post-mortem. A case of unnatural death (Case No. 2/25) has been registered, Inspector Rabindra Patra informed.

Anandapur MLA Abhimanyu Sethi and Badarampas Sarpanch Rabindra Kumar Jena expressed their condolences over the demise of the child. Meanwhile, the village sarpanch is actively coordinating efforts to secure immediate government assistance for both families.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BALASORE
E-mail ID: serw_balasore@yahoo.in; Ph. No.: 06782/260318, Balia, Balasore

e-Procurement Notice for Road Work | Identification No. Online Tender-Road N.C.B. No. 25 for 2024-25
Letter No. 784/ Date: 17.03.25

1. Name of the work :- Periodical Maintenance of PMGSY Road. 2. Total No. of work :- 01 Nos. of work. 3. Estimated Cost :- Rs.85.42 lakhs (Approximately). 4. Eligible Class of Contractor :- 'B' & 'A' (of Odisha P.W.D.) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities (As per annexure). 5. Period of Completion :- From 03 Calendar months for the work. 6. Other Details:-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/S.E.R.W. Circle, Balasore	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore	N.C.B. No. 25	24.03.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	08.04.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.	07.04.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.	09.04.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

* Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd./- Chief Construction Engineer, R.W. Circle, Balasore
OIPR-25105/11/0030/2425

EAST COAST RAILWAY

(1) Notice No.: e-Tender-Elect-G-62-24
DESCRIPTION OF WORK: PROVISION OF RENEWABLE SOLAR LIGHTING FACILITIES IN PLATFORMS AND CIRCULATING AREA AT 33 NOS. F CLASS STATIONS OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.
Approx. Cost of Work: ₹ 5,57,54,160.00, EMD: ₹ 4,28,800/-

(2) Notice No.: e-Tender-Elect-G-63-24
DESCRIPTION OF WORK: BALANCE WORK IN CONNECTION WITH PROVISION OF 41 NOS. 20 PASSENGER LIFTS ALONG WITH POWER SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT AT 14 STATIONS OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION UNDER AMRIT BHARAT SCHEME.
Approx. Cost of Work: ₹ 3,60,80,274.95, EMD: ₹ 3,30,400/-

(3) Notice No.: e-Tender-Elect-G-64-24
DESCRIPTION OF WORK: PROVISION OF TEMPORARY LIGHTING, FAN, MOBILE CHARGING POINTS, AIR CONDITIONER, PUMPING, ALTERNATE POWER SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT & DECORATION AT IMPORTANT SERVICE BUILDINGS AND STATIONS DURING RATH YATRA-2025 AT PURI FOR ONE MONTH.
Approx. Cost of Work: ₹ 81,05,276.20, EMD: ₹ 1,62,100/-

Completion Period: 06 Months (for Sl. No. 1), 10 Months (for Sl. No. 2) & 01 Months (for Sl. No. 3).
Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1500 hrs. of 07.04.2025 (for all the tenders).
No manual offers sent by Post/ Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: www.ireps.gov.in
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website ten (10) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/ corrigendum issued for this tender. The tenderers / bidders must have Class-II Digital Signature Certificate and be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer(s)/ bidder(s) can participate on e-tendering.
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G)/ PR-1098/P/24-25
Khurda Road

BANK OF BARODA, REGIONAL OFFICE, SAMBALPUR, 1st Floor, At: Christianpada, G.M. College Chowk, Dist.: Sambalpur, Odisha, PIN-768001

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property/ies)

[As per Appendix-IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the BANK OF BARODA under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice on the date mentioned below, calling upon the borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned below. The borrower(s)/ guarantor(s)/mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF BARODA for an amount stated herein below plus further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment. The Borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

ROURKELA MAIN BRANCH/ Name & Address of Borrower(s)	Description of the immovable property/ies	Demand/Possession Notice Date	Amount Outstanding
Borrower: M/s Konark Elektronik, Prop.: Mr. Vikash Malhotra, At: 2, NAC Guest House Market Complex, Near Railway Station, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundergarh, Odisha, PIN-769001.	(1) (A) Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building having Khata No.: 567/1150, Plot No.: 224/5189, Major Settlement Khata No.: 567/44, Gharbari-Railway Station, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundergarh, Odisha, PIN-769001, situated at Sambalpur Town, Unit No. 13, Baraipalli, Dist./Tahasil/PS: Sambalpur, in the name of Mr. Vikash Malhotra, S/o- Baldebraj Malhotra, Resident of Rourkela, Odisha. Boundary of the Land-North: NH-6, South: Plot No. 225 and 226, East: Plot No. 226, West: Plot No. 224(P) & Road. (B) Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building having Khata No.: 567/1095, Plot No.: 225, Gharbari, Area: Ac.0.065dec., situated at Sambalpur Town, Unit No. 13, Baraipalli, Dist./Tahasil/PS: Sambalpur, in the name of Mr. Vikash Malhotra, S/o- Baldebraj Malhotra, Resident of Rourkela, Odisha. Boundary of the Land (For Plot No. 225)- North: Plot No. 224, South: Plot No. 212, East: Plot No. 226, West: Plot No. 220. (C) Equitable Mortgage of Land & Building having Khata No.: 567/1095, Plot No.: 220/5130, Gharbari-1, Area: Ac.0.035dec., situated at Sambalpur Town, Unit No. 13, Baraipalli, Dist./Tahasil/PS: Sambalpur, in the name of Mr. Vikash Malhotra, S/o- Baldebraj Malhotra, Resident of Rourkela, Odisha. Boundary of the Land (For Plot No. 220/5130)- North: Plot No. 224, South: Plot No. 219, East: Plot No. 225, West: Plot No. 220(P), Road. (2) Equitable Mortgage of Land situated at Mouza: Sajoire, Tahasil/Thana: Rajgangpur, Dist.: Sundargarh bearing Khata No.: 149/294, Sabik Khata No.: 127, Plot No.: 1035/2180, Gharbari-1, Area: Ac.1.090dec., in the name of Mr. Vikash Malhotra, S/o- Baldebraj Malhotra, Boundary of the Land- North: Plot No. 1212, 1213, 1214, South: Plot No. 1034, East: Plot No. 1028, Common Road, West: Plot No. 1211.	01.01.2025 / 17.03.2025	₹3,15,66,335.92 as on 30.11.2024 plus further interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges & expenses till date of payment

Date: 18.03.2025
Place: Sambalpur

Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda



Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down.

THE MOTHER

ICC's Prestige

At a time when the strength and credibility of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is under question, the arrest of former President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte on a warrant issued by the ICC is a proof that the international body is needed to bring high profile politicians who have committed crimes against humanity, to book. It also becomes clear that the ICC can become effective only when there is political will in the ruling dispensation of a nation executing its arrest warrant. For, though the ICC had made a tight case for Duterte through its painstaking efforts, the arrest, as in many other cases, would not have taken place had the government of Philippines not shown the resolve to hand him over for trial and flown to The Hague for the purpose. The warrant was executed by the government headed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., and the decision appears to be a fallout of his serious differences with Vice-President Sara Duterte, Rodrigo Duterte's daughter who is now facing impeachment proceedings.

While the recent developments may appear swift, the case against Duterte has been meticulously constructed over seven years. In 2018, the ICC initiated a preliminary inquiry into allegations of crimes against humanity committed by Duterte. This led to a full criminal investigation in 2021. To save himself, Duterte withdrew the Philippines from the ICC believing that through that action he would be able to keep himself out of the purview of the court.

His arrest has a highly symbolic value for the embattled court because it has been able to demonstrate that it can continue its work and fulfil its mandate while it is under significant pressure from various directions. An evidence of such pressure is the aggressive economic sanctions US President Donald Trump has imposed on the ICC and travel bans on its staff, while the chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, is himself facing an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct, which he obviously denies.

Khan, despite issuing high-profile arrest warrants against Benjamin Netanyahu, Vladimir Putin, and the Taliban's supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, has not yet tasted success in securing their arrests. There is pressure on Khan to deliver and the Duterte case may help. However, this process began under his predecessor and there is a team of people which has been putting its best efforts for years. As such the case is not his personal victory.

For the victims of Duterte's actions, this is a defining moment. The former president's brazen admissions of various crimes in his so-called war against drugs created the impression that he was untouchable - but now, he is in The Hague, awaiting trial. This also helps make the court appear effective enough though it has to rely on respective countries where the perpetrators reside for arresting them and setting in motion the trial process. It is a good sign that within days of securing the arrest warrant it acted effectively and quickly. Duterte's arrest should serve as a warning to other leaders. They need to comprehend that their fortunes can change and they too could find themselves being flown to The Hague. However, it proves, as the Duterte case shows, that justice hinges only on the political will of a ruling party leader seizing an opportunity to take down a rival.

The remarkable development in the Philippines makes it clear that arrest warrants for figures such as Putin or Netanyahu may testify to the court's resolve, but they also lay bare its limitations and impotence since there is no chance of either leader being detained in the near future. Still, Duterte's arrest is a rare moment for the court to heave a sigh of relief and get legitimacy of its work to make perpetrators of crimes against humanity accountable. This is no mean achievement in the present day and time.

WISDOM CORNER

Ask yourself whether the dream of heaven and greatness should be waiting for us in our graves - or whether it should be ours here and now and on this earth. **AYN RAND**

The most intense conflicts, if overcome, leave behind a sense of security and calm that is not easily disturbed. It is just these intense conflicts and their conflagration which are needed to produce valuable and lasting results. **CARL JUNG**

Let others lead small lives, but not you. Let others argue over small things, but not you. Let others cry over small hurts, but not you. Let others leave their future in someone else's hands, but not you. **JIM ROHN**

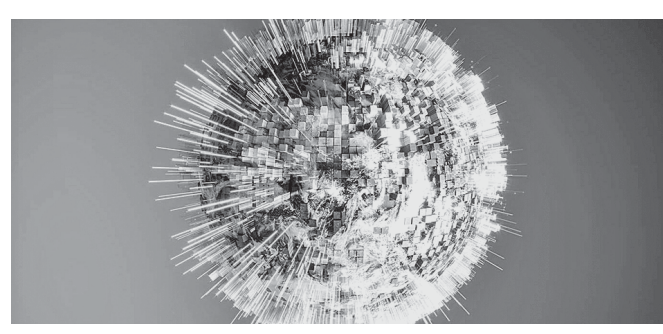
THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1895:** The Lumière brothers record their first footage. *Sortie des Usines Lumière à Lyon* showed workers leaving their factory in Lyon. The film is about 50 seconds long. Auguste and Louis Lumière were the earliest filmmakers in history.
- 1911:** The first International Women's Day is observed by over 1 million people in several European countries. German socialists Clara Zetkin and Luise Zietz initiated the observance, which has become an annual global event.
- 1931:** Nevada legalized gambling, which paved the way for casinos in the state, most notably in Las Vegas.
- 1945:** Adolf Hitler orders the destruction of all industries in Germany. The Nero Decree was issued in the light of Germany's imminent defeat in World War II. It was never fully executed.
- 1962:** Bob Dylan releases his first album. Dylan is one of the world's most influential music artists. His songs "Blowin' in the Wind" and "The Times They Are a-Changin'" became anthems for the anti-war movement.
- 1982:** Argentine forces mobilized after a dispute between Argentine workers and British scientists on British-controlled South Georgia island, leading to Argentina's invasion of the Falklands two weeks later.

LOL
WATERMELONS
A farmer in the country has a watermelon patch and upon inspection he discovers that some of the local kids have been helping themselves to a feast. The farmer thinks of ways to discourage this profit-eating situation. So he puts up a sign that reads: "WARNING! ONE OF THESE WATERMELONS CONTAINS CYANIDE!"
He smiled as he watched the kids run off the next night without eating any of his melons. The farmer returns to the watermelon patch a week later to discover that none of the watermelons have been eaten, but finds another sign that reads: "NOW THERE ARE TWO!"

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

RISKS OF GREENHUSHING



Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss are not distant threats; they are here, and they are compounding geopolitical tensions

As the world becomes increasingly unstable, with the security that many people took for granted called into question, climate change, once viewed as the defining challenge of our time, has been sidelined by geopolitics, which has brought issues such as rearmament and the race for AI supremacy to the fore. But rising seas, protracted heatwaves, and devastating storms are not just risks; they are realities. The threat posed by climate change is obviously growing, but many corporations and even climate innovators have gone silent.



Bertrand Badré & Thomas Crampton

AMID NEW GEOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS AND ECONOMIC PRESSURES, SOME ARGUE THAT SUSTAINABILITY HAS BECOME AN UNAFFORDABLE LUXURY

The rise of "greenhushing" - when companies downplay environmental goals for financial or political reasons - reflects not just changing communications strategies, but rising tensions between competing priorities. Amid new geopolitical conflicts and economic pressures, some argue that sustainability has become an unaffordable luxury. But one should not assume a trade-off between sustainability and security. On the contrary, if we frame climate change, security risks, and economic needs as competing priorities, we risk losing on all fronts.

To be sure, competition over resources, territory, and technology appears to be monopolising financial and intellectual resources at the expense of efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Yet these issues are deeply intertwined. The scramble for rare-earth minerals, the expansion of data infrastructure, and the need for energy-efficient AI all show that geopolitics and climate policy are part of the same equation.

Faced with limited capital and constraints on cross-border financial flows, many businesses and governments feel paralyzed. For decades, we have missed opportunities to invest in long-term resilience - even after the threat of climate change was fully known. But wallowing in regret will not help now. Instead, we should acknowledge our short-sightedness and act

immediately to change course. The era of "peace dividends" and low interest rates is behind us. The task now is to adapt to an era of capital scarcity and geopolitical fragmentation. We can no longer ask whether climate action is important, but how it can be integrated into a rapidly changing global landscape. That means abandoning outdated approaches and forging a cohesive strategy that combines security, innovation, and sustainability.

In today's political climate, many will see greenhushing as a reasonable strategy. Like US corporate managers' back-pedaling on DEI and other issues that have been consumed by the culture war, keeping a low profile on environmental matters might seem pragmatic. But, by creating the illusion that sustainability is less urgent or feasible than it really is, greenhushing carries significant risks.

For starters, de-emphasizing sustainability threatens to slow green innovation just when it is needed most. Greenhushing could erode consumer trust and sap momentum in industries that have already started to build a carbon-neutral future. In time, this will prove far costlier - both economically and environmentally - than any risks associated with remaining committed to mitigation and adaptation.

Worse, there could be a "lemming" effect across in-

dustries. If everyone assumes that sustainability is being abandoned, then everyone will abandon sustainability. The peer pressure that has been driving private-sector progress on this issue will vanish.

Despite these hurdles, there is still hope. The shift toward a more sustainable economy has begun, even in the United States. While the pace of progress may slow, the direction of travel need not change. In adjusting to new realities, the ultimate goal should be to stay the course.

Sustainability is a strategic imperative. Many companies - large and small, across every continent - already recognise this, and have developed business models that combine profitability and environmental responsibility. Their success shows that adapting to this new era does not mean abandoning long-term goals. Instead, it means identifying new sources of value, investing in eco-efficient infrastructure, and aligning sustainability measures with cost-savings and resilience.

But public-private cooperation is also essential. Markets alone cannot deliver when priorities are constantly and abruptly shifting (say, from sustainability to AI to defence). Governments must step in to help stabilise expectations, and they can do so through public-private initiatives that tie sustainability to national security. For example, publicly

supported investments in clean energy and resilient supply chains can reduce reliance on fossil fuels, which in turn will strengthen economic resilience and diminish the importance of geopolitical competition.

While a coordinated, global approach would be ideal, regional, local, and sector-specific initiatives are probably more likely to succeed in today's fragmented political landscape. The key is to align financial incentives with sustainability goals to ensure that climate action is not sidelined in favour of short-term gains.

The collective project that all countries embarked on ten years ago - with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris climate agreement - must remain our North Star, even if pragmatism demands strategic tacking along the way. This is no time for cynicism or despair. Any blame that should be assigned would be best directed toward those who are cynically exploiting the situation to reap short-term gains. Any company making a good-faith effort to recalibrate its strategy deserves support.

We must remain pragmatic yet resolute. We had a chance to act when times were easier, but that window has closed. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss are not distant threats; they are here, and they are compounding geopolitical tensions. Greenhushing may feel like a convenient response to today's challenges, but it is not a sustainable one. Silence will not save us.

We need the opposite of greenhushing: bold, united action that weaves climate priorities into our economic and geopolitical strategies. Business leaders who do not speak up now will later regret it.

Bertrand Badré is Chair of the Project Syndicate Advisory Board. Thomas Crampton is CEO of Crampton Blackie Partners.

IN JEST THIS

Don't blame the unqualified jobseeker



Melvin Durai

IT'S EASY TO GET 'RADIOGRAPHER' AND 'RECEPTIONIST' MIXED UP. BOTH ARE 12-LETTER WORDS BEGINNING WITH 'R'

It's not unusual for job-seekers to apply for positions that they're unqualified for. They may lack the proper training or experience or both. It's up to the recruiter or human resources director to determine whether an applicant is qualified for a particular position.

Recruiter: "How much flying experience do you have? We require a minimum of five years to be a pilot for South Asian Airlines."

Applicant: "I have seven years of flying experience so far."

Recruiter: "Excellent. Can you tell what you've flown?"

Applicant: "Mostly drones. None of them have crashed. Very smooth landing every time."

Recruiter: "Very good. We will keep your application on file, just in case we cannot find someone who has flown ... you know ... an actual plane."

Hiring unqualified people for certain positions can jeopardize public health and safety. But it nevertheless happens

from time to time. Just look at Donald Trump's Cabinet. The US president has appointed several unqualified people to cabinet positions, most notably Robert F. Kennedy Jr., an anti-vaccine activist, as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Jobseekers are inclined to exaggerate their qualifications, hoping they will not only land good jobs but manage to hang onto them, perhaps by learning on the job. That's what an Indian woman named Smitha Johny apparently attempted to do when she applied to be a radiographer in Britain. According to news reports, Johny claimed to have 23 years of experience as a radiographer (also known as a radiology technician) in India, but her health experience consisted almost entirely of being a hospital receptionist. But it's easy to get "radiographer" and "receptionist" mixed up. Both are 12-letter words beginning with 'R.'

Johny was hired to work at North Downs Hospital in Ca-

terham, Surrey, in January 2023, and it was immediately apparent that her radiography skills were seriously lacking. According to a report in the Daily Mail, a colleague was assigned to help her, but that didn't seem to be enough.

Johny's manager, Fernando Pinto (no relation to Freida), told a tribunal last week that he noticed her following incorrect procedures with patients and gave her a performance review after three months on the job. She told him she had used a CT scanner in India, but not an x-ray machine. Testing her knowledge, Pinto pretended to be a patient and asked her to take a hip x-ray. Instead, she pointed the machine at his leg.

Pinto determined that she was clueless about the x-ray machine; she could not perform even a basic foot x-ray. She also had trouble with basic anatomy. When he asked her to point to a particular bone in her wrist, she pointed to the wrong one.

At the end of the review, Pinto asked Johny if she was

really a radiographer and she admitted that she had been "more like a manager" in her previous job, checking in patients at a reception desk. The Surrey hospital released her from her job and reported her to the Health and Care Professionals Council, which suspended her for six months.

The council determined that Johny had not been dishonest, but naive. She had previously worked in a remote part of India and had received some radiography training, but nowhere close to what was needed to be a radiographer in Britain.

She should never have applied to be a radiographer, but she should never have been hired either. Someone else dropped the ball - the person responsible for making sure that a receptionist doesn't get hired to be a radiographer. Then again, if an anti-vaccine activist can be Secretary of Health and Human Services in America, perhaps Johny just went to the wrong country.

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



War against drug

Sir, The world is facing a serious challenge of growing drug menace. India is no exception and drug addiction and abuse among people, especially among youngsters, is a matter of serious concern. The latest moves in the drug war by the Union and some state governments are appreciative. However, it is hard to eradicate drug menace completely as it is deep-rooted in the socio-cultural and politico-economic systems. The Punjab government has adopted some good strategies to deter people from drug abuse. However, sustained effort needs to be invested to get rid of the danger completely. That most of the drugs have their origin in foreign countries adds to the responsibilities of the Union government. India is affected by the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle drug supply. Apart from this, unholy nexus between some politicians, drug smugglers and police officers is also a strong force behind the menace. Unless the root causes behind widespread drug abuse are diagnosed and addressed, the fight against it cannot yield desired results. Strategies to break the supply and demand chains must be adopted. Unemployment and underemployment are two main reasons for drug addiction among the youth. So governments need to create more job opportunities.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

Woes of migrants

Sir, The images of construction or migrant workers foot-slogged to their natives during the time of COVID-19 pandemic are still fresh in our memory. And painfully enough, the pandemic cost their livelihoods in the process. The transition to a formalised economy must be seen in the context of India's deep-rooted social inequality, resulting in widespread indigence. Migrant labourers are among the most vulnerable parts of the informal sector, which makes up a sizable volume of India's workforce. India's infrastructure is built on the backs of these workers. They construct malls, multi-plexes, hospitals, hotels, and what not? A huge population of these workers migrate from rural areas to cities in search of work due to lack of alternate livelihoods and skill development. But more often than not, they are exploited and forced to work in conditions where their rights are not protected.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Lahaul, Spiti most vulnerable to avalanches, research says

An increase in avalanches in the Indian Western Himalayas in recent years has been attributed to the combined effects of multiple factors, including climate change, complex terrain and increasing human activities



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, March 18: 'Lahaul and Spiti' is the most vulnerable to avalanches in Himachal Pradesh, while Chamoli the most vulnerable in Uttarakhand, according to an analysis of 11 districts in the two Himalayan states.

An increase in avalanches in the Indian Western Himalayas in recent years has been attributed to the combined effects of multiple factors, including climate change, complex terrain and increasing human activities.

Researchers Akshay Singhal, M Kavya and Sanjeev K Jha, from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal, proposed an analytical framework for developing a 'CAVI' score, or 'combined avalanche vulnerability index'. "The CAVI shows that all the

Meteorological factors, such as rainfall, snow depth and temperature, contribute towards a district's 'exposure' to avalanches, while slope and population are among those affecting 'sensitivity'

Socio-economic factors, such as literacy, hospitals, forests, and houses with concrete walls, help determine the capacity of a district's population to adapt towards an increased avalanche risk

highly vulnerable districts are located in Himachal Pradesh, while most of the districts of Uttarakhand are moderately vulnerable," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Environment, Development and Sustainability.

"The district 'Lahaul and Spiti' is the most vulnerable district, while Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) and Pauri Garhwal (Uttarakhand) are the least vulnerable," they wrote.

They added, "The most vulnerable district in Uttarakhand is Chamoli."

Earlier this month, an avalanche hit a Border Roads Organisation camp in the village of Mana, located in Chamoli, killing eight workers.

The team also assessed each of the 11 district's avalanche risk based on exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity.

Meteorological factors, such as rainfall, snow depth and temperature, contribute towards a district's 'exposure' to avalanches, while slope and population are among those affecting 'sensitivity', the authors explained.

Socio-economic factors, such as literacy, hospitals, forests, and houses with concrete walls, help determine the capacity of a district's population to adapt towards an increased avalanche risk.

Lahaul and Spiti was the most exposed district, Shimla the most sensitive, while Uttarakhand's Rudrapur was assessed to be the least adaptive to avalanches. Estimated to cause about 30-40 deaths each year, impacts of an avalanche are often disruptive, from blocking critical transport routes to damaging infrastructure.

While largely attributed to weather and climate conditions and terrain, avalanche risk has increased also due to human activities, including a rapid construction of roads, dams, and tunnels, and regular movement of heavy vehicles, the authors said.



A worker prepares vermicelli during the month of 'Ramzan', in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

LOUDSPEAKER BAN

Sambhal goes human-mode for sehri calls, azaan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambhal (UP), March 18: It is 3 am and the only figure visible in Sambhal city's dark-lit bylanes is a lonesome man, walking down lazily with a kafan loosely draped around his neck and a green 'saafa' covering his head.

Ever since the beginning of Ramzan, Mohammad Suhail has been giving a wake-up call to the 'rozedaars' (people observing fast during Ramzan) to begin their 'sehri' (the meal before the fast).

With a drum hanging around his neck, Suhail shouts, "Uth jao bhayi, sehri kaa time ho chuka hai..." He repeats his message twice and then beats



the drum.

Muslims have been forced to return to the rather primitive practice due to the Uttar Pradesh government's banning loudspeakers at religious places in 2022. "Now, it is 3 am. It is the time for sehri. Loudspeakers

are not allowed, so people who are sleeping are unable to get up. For them, I beat the drum, so that the 'rozedaars' can wake up, and perform their 'sehri' and then observe the fast," Suhail told PTI Videos.

Suhail is not alone made to

strain his vocal cords. With the loudspeakers gone, muezzins too are now giving 'azaan' - a call for prayer - shouting from the mosques' rooftops.

Several loudspeakers, apparently taken off mosques, lay before policemen when PTI visited a local police station.

An Imam was fined Rs 2 lakh for allegedly using a loudspeaker for azaan beyond the permissible decibel limits December 13 last year.

Sambhal shot to front-page headlines after riots broke out there last November following a survey of the Mughal-era Shahi Jama Masjid. Four people were killed and several, including police personnel, were injured in the clashes.

Asia's high-altitude snow run in Himachal March 23

The event is a key part of India's global representation in high-altitude snow marathons for attracting top endurance athletes and adventure enthusiasts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, March 18: The fourth edition of the Snow Marathon Lahaul, Asia's only and the world's highest snow marathon at an altitude of 11,000 feet, will take place March 23.

It will be held in Sissu in Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, announced officials Monday.

This unique event challenges long-distance and ultra-runners in extreme conditions. This year's marathon will see the participation by over 300



participants across the country, competing in four categories - 42 km (Full Marathon), 21 km (Half Marathon), 10 km, and 5 km.

The event is a key part of India's global representation in high-altitude snow marathons for attracting top endurance athletes and adventure enthusiasts.

The event has seen strong participation from the Indian Army and the Indian Navy in previous editions. This year, the Indian Air Force Adventure Team with 20 runners are

taking this challenge.

The Indian Army is sending 25 elite runners, including athletes from the Ladakh Scouts, Dogra and Kumaon Regiments.

Additionally, paramilitary forces like the ITBP and the SSB would compete alongside elite runners and outdoor athletes. Speaking about the run, Col (retd) Arun Natrajan, event organizer, highlighted the environmental significance of the event.

"Lahaul's winter landscape offers a thrilling experience

for runners and adventurers. However, the melting glaciers and diminishing snowfall are urgent concerns. We hope this event raises awareness about the need for immediate action to protect our fragile environment," Col Natarajan said here.

High-altitude trainer Sachin Sharma described the race as a one-of-a-kind experience for outdoor and endurance runners. "It's the only race in India that offers a challenging run in snow while allowing participants to engage with the region's rich culture and traditions," he said.

Event founder Gaurav Schimar emphasized the marathon's environmental message. "While the race is designed for extreme outdoor sports enthusiasts, its core purpose is to highlight the ecological challenges faced by the Himalayas and the Trans-Himalayan region."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hamirpur (HP), March 18: A full-grown leopard was sighted again at the under-construction Dhaulasidh Power Project site in Hamirpur district, triggering panic among workers and residents, officials said Tuesday.

The leopard was spotted in the project area over the past two days. An eyewitness told PTI that the animal was seen lurking at the site in Sujapur area Monday but retreated into the forest after a truck approached.

Labourers present at the site captured a video of the leopard, which has since surfaced on social media. The sighting has left workers and employees fearful, especially as a leopard



was previously spotted in the same area January 28.

The 70 megawatt power project site, located on the Sujapur-Nadaun road and surrounded by dense forests, has around 900 workers deployed. With continuous movement of labourers and vehicles, the risk of human-wildlife conflict remains high, according to officials.

They said that following a request from the project man-

agement, the forest department has installed a cage to capture the leopard.

Vinod Kumar, Divisional Manager of Ritwik Company, which is executing the project, confirmed that leopards are frequently seen in the area and said that the forest department has installed a cage to catch the big cat.

Similar sightings have been reported in other parts of Hamirpur district, including a leopard seen roaming inside the hospital premises of Nagar Panchayat Bhotia in Barsar sub-division and another entering the courtyard of a house in Saheli village. A forest department spokesperson said the project management has been advised to restrict workers movement after sunset to ensure their safety.

IFTAR, NAMAZ AND SHIV AARTI

Lucknow locality becomes model of 'Ganga Jamuna tehzeeb'

BOTH HINDUS AND MUSLIMS PARTICIPATED IN THE BACK TO BACK EVENTS SUNDAY EVENING AT THE SHIV VATIKA PARK IN FRONT OF THE BABA AVDHESHWAR NATH TEMPLE IN AVADHPURAM COLONY MAKES IT EVEN MORE SPECIAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 18: With a roza-iftar followed by namaz and then a Shiv aarti, a small neighbourhood in this Uttar Pradesh capital has become exemplar of the famed 'Ganga Jamuna tehzeeb' that blends communities into syncretic oneness.

That both Hindus and Muslims participated in the back to back events Sunday evening at the Shiv Vatika park in front of the Baba Avdheshwar Nath Temple in Avadhpuram Colony makes it even more special.

In fact, the name Shiv Vatika was given by a Muslim resident of the locality and the community also contributed to the construction of the temple, said Rajesh Tiwari, president of the Avadhpuram Welfare Society.

"In today's era, organising a roza-iftaar in Shiv Vatika may surprise many people but we all have to remember that Avadhpuram has been living the Ganga Jamuna tehzeeb of Avadh and



will continue to do so in future," added Arif Ali Siddiqui, secretary of the society. According to residents of the area, the Shiv temple and the park in front of it have been constructed with their own resources.

And so it was that Sunday evening, elaborate arrangements were made in the park for the iftar meal for devout Muslims observing roza during the holy month of Ramzan and those offering namaz after that. When

all that was over, the daily Shiv aarti was performed with people from the Muslim community also participating.

"Many Hindu-Muslim brothers of the colony participated and presented a great example of brotherhood," said Tiwari.

The concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world is one family, is a basic mantra of Sanatan Dharma and respecting the faith of every religion has always been the identity of In-

dian culture, he said.

"Avadhpuram colony imbibes the culture of Avadh... people from the Muslim community stood shoulder to shoulder with us in facing every difficulty in the construction of the temple. The name Shiv Vatika has also been given by a Muslim brother here."

"Muslim brothers of the colony participate enthusiastically in events like Bada Mangal Bhandara, Dussehra and Mata Rani's Jagran held here. This brotherhood has been the beauty of our country for centuries," Tiwari said.

Siddiqui echoed him, saying Avadhpuram and its residents are living embodiment that religion does not teach us enmity. "After the roza iftar and namaz in Shiv Vatika, the aarti was conducted in the temple by Pandit Umesh Mishra in which members of the Muslim community also attended. This entire incident gives us the comfort that the brotherhood ingrained in our blood still flows with the same sentiment," he said.

The iftar and aarti in the locality took place two days after a tense Holi that fell Friday. This was particularly in towns like Sambhal where political leaders and others had asked the Muslim community to offer their 'jumma' prayers after the festivities were over.

The festival went off peacefully with security personnel in Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere on alert for any signs of trouble.

It is against this fragile peace that Avadhpuram made its statement of amity and harmony - the Ganga Jamuna tehzeeb embodies the composite culture of the people living in the northern plains through which the two rivers flow.

Avadhpuram Welfare Society executive member Shivkumar Singh said all men and women on earth are children of the same supreme god even if their method of worship is different.

"The victory of humanity lies in the fact that we all respect each other's religious beliefs," he said. The residents of his locality proved it again Sunday.

BERHAMPUR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, GANJAM INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

No.4027 III.E6.6/25 Date:18.03.25

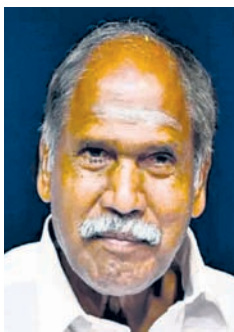
No.C-1908: INVITATION FOR BIDS

Bid Identification No.BMC (BAM) 303/2024-25

No.	Description	Remarks
1	The Municipal Commissioner, Berhampur, invites percentage rate bids in ONLINE MODE only, as per annexure "A"	
2	Nature of Work	Electrical Works
3	No. of Work	Electrical Wiring to 1st Floor Conference Hall of BeMC
4	Bid Cost	The bidders shall remit online the cost of bid document as mentioned in the process as mentioned in the DTCN as per Annexure "A".
5	E.M.D.	The bidder shall remit online the Earnest Money Deposit/ Bid Security at the rate of 1% of the estimated cost put to tender as mentioned under DTCN. Bidders desirous to hire machineries or equipments from outside the State or owned but deployed outside the State are required to remit online 2% of the amount put to tender as Bid security. Exemption from EMD is permissible as per codal provisions of Govt. of Odisha as per Annexure "A".
6	Class of Contractor	As per the Annexure "A"
7	Availability of Bid documents in the website	From 15.00 hrs. of Dt.19.03.25 to 17.00 hrs. of 29.03.2025.
8	Date of Opening of Bid	11.30 Hrs. onwards on Dt.02.04.25
9	Mode of submission of tender	Tender should submitted Online in www.tendersorissa.gov.in

The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

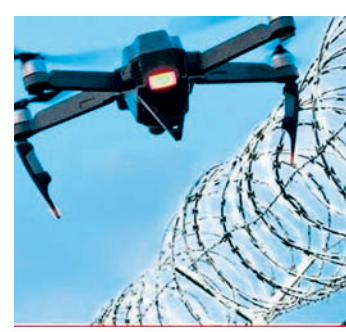
Sd./- Commissioner
Berhampur Municipal Corporation,
Berhampur, Odisha
OIPR-13035/11/0036/2425



Strict instructions will be issued through the circular, ensuring that shop owners display Tamil versions of their establishment names on signboards

BSF SEIZED 294 DRONES IN PUNJAB IN 2024: GOVT

The BSF seized 294 drones in Punjab in 2024, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in the Lok Sabha Tuesday.



of the day uote

Delighted to meet the young and dynamic Defence Minister of Netherlands, Mr. Ruben Berkemans in New Delhi. We reviewed the full range of India-Netherlands defence cooperation.



Prime Minister Modi's speech is a damage-control speech. He is in damage-control mode in the international scenario ... He wants his MPs to do 'tareef (praise)' but Trump has imposed tariffs



I wanted to support what he was saying. Kumbh is our tradition, history and culture. There was also a complaint that he did not pay homage to those who lost their lives (in the stampede in the Mahakumbh)



EC to explore linking voter cards with Aadhaar

New Delhi, March 18: The Election Commission Tuesday decided to explore linking voter cards with Aadhaar and said technical consultations between its experts and UIDAI for the exercise would "begin soon".

home secretary, legislative secretary (in the law ministry), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) secretary and the UIDAI CEO on the issue of voter card-Aadhaar seeding.



while voting rights could only be granted to a citizen of India, according to Article 326 of the Constitution, Aadhaar estab-

lishes a person's identity and not citizenship or right to get enrolled as a voter. "Therefore, it was decided that the linking of elector photo to identity card (EPIC) with Aadhaar will be done only as per the provisions of Article 326 of the Constitution, sections 23(4), 23(5) and 23(6) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and in line with the Supreme Court judgment (of 2023)," it said.

UP: Forty yrs on, 3 get death for killing 24 Dalits

Mainpuri (UP), March 18: A special court in UP's Mainpuri district Tuesday sentenced three persons to death in the 1981 Dehuli massacre which saw 24 Dalits, including women and two children, being killed.

SC to examine Lokpal's jurisdiction over judges

New Delhi, March 18: The Supreme Court Tuesday said it would examine the issue over the jurisdiction of anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal in entertaining complaints against sitting high court judges.



A three-judge special bench comprising Justices B R Gavai, Surya Kant and Abhay S Oka was dealing with a suo motu proceeding initiated over the Lokpal's January 27 order on the issue. While posting the hearing April 15, the bench asked senior advocate Ranjit Kumar to assist it as an amicus curiae in the matter.

order". There was already a mechanism in place to deal with complaints against judges, the bench observed. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who is also assisting the court, said, "The fundamental issue will be, can a complaint be ever filed outside the remit of the constitutional authority."

The top court February 20 stayed the Lokpal's order, saying it was "something very, very disturbing" and concerned the independence of the judiciary

verdict, Mehta said it was held that a high court judge occupied a unique position and held a constitutional office. The Lokpal order had said judges of the apex court were not amenable to Lokpal's jurisdiction since the Supreme Court was established by Article 124 of the Constitution and not under an Act of Parliament. A high court judge, he said, couldn't come within the purview of the 2013 Act. The high court judge was alleged to have influenced a judge of the subordinate judiciary and a judge of the same high court set to deal with a suit filed against the complainant by a private company, which was to be favoured.

PM'S MAHAKUMBH REMARKS

LS adjourned amid protests

New Delhi, March 18: The Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day Tuesday amid noisy protests by Opposition members seeking to ask questions on the statement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Mahakumbh.



The proceedings were earlier adjourned till 1 pm, shortly after Modi made his statement and the Opposition members rose in their seats in protest, with Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi apparently urging Speaker Om Birla to allow the Opposition members to speak. They also demanded the inclusion of the stampede deaths in the statement. Members of the Congress, TMC and other Opposition parties then stormed the Well, raising slogans, while Samajwadi Party members staged a walkout in protest.

No central data on casualties, says Govt

New Delhi: Inquiry into the Maha kumbh stampede was conducted by the Uttar Pradesh government and no data on casualties and injured victims is maintained with the central government, the Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai shared the information while replying to a question by Congress MP KC Venugopal and Kirsan Namdeo on the number of people killed and injured in the stampede and the steps taken by the authorities to investigate the causes.

Parliamentary sources said the opposition parties demanded a discussion on the Maha kumbh so that their members could share their views on the subject. They had demanded a discussion on the Mahakumbh at a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee of the House. As many as 30 pilgrims were killed and 60 injured in a stampede at the Mahakumbh January 29.

When the House reassembled, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw responded to a debate on demands for grants of his ministry. When the House took up the debate on demands for grants for the Jal Shakti ministry, the opposition members continued protesting in the Well, forcing the chair to adjourn the proceedings for the day. The discussion on demands for grants was postponed to Wednesday by the chair.



Volunteers from Birmingham's Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha in Britain clean the gold-plated surfaces at the Golden Temple, as part of their sewa, in Amritsar, Punjab

SHORT TAKES

4-month-old baby found dead in well

Kannur (Kerala): A 12-year-old girl was arrested Tuesday for killing her four-month-old cousin sister, who was found dead in a well near their residence at Pappinisseri in Kannur city, after she confessed to committing the crime, police said.

Rains lash several parts of Karnataka

Bangalore: While a heat wave is being predicted for north and south interior Karnataka till March 20, rains lashed several parts of Karnataka Tuesday, the Met department said. In a statement issued by the Meteorological Centre, Bangalore, isolated places in Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu, Chikkamagaluru and Chamaraajanagar districts are experiencing light to moderate rain and thundershowers.

Mild earthquake strikes Sikkim

Gangtok: A 2.9 magnitude earthquake struck Sikkim and its neighbouring areas Tuesday afternoon, officials said. There were no reports of any injury or damage to property in the quake that occurred around 12:40 pm, they said. The epicentre of the earthquake was at a distance of nearly 44 km from Tadong in Gangtok, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The Himalayan state has been jolted by a number of quakes in the past month of magnitudes 2 to 5.1, the officials added.

30 shanties, two factories gutted

New Delhi: At least 30 shanties, two factories and some shops were gutted in a massive fire that broke out in the Dwarka Mor area here in the early hours of Tuesday, Delhi Fire Services (DFS) officials said. No one was injured in the incident. "We received a call about the fire at 2:07 am, and 11 fire tenders were dispatched immediately,"

Ready to discuss uploading booth-wise voter data: EC to SC

Last year May 17 the top court had sought a response from the poll panel on the pleas following which the ECI opposed the NGO's demand contending it would "vitiate" the electoral space and cause "chaos" in the poll machinery in the midst of the general elections

New Delhi, March 18: The Supreme Court Tuesday considered the Election Commission of India's stand to deliberate on the demand for uploading polling booth-wise voter turnout data on its website and asked the petitioners to make representations before the poll panel in 10 days.

Viswanathan was hearing two PILs filed by TMC MP Mahua Moitra and NGO Association for Democratic Reforms in 2019, respectively. The PILs sought a direction to the poll panel to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of conclusion of polling in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. Senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for the poll panel, said Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh

Kumar wanted to meet and discuss the grievance. "Here is a new chief election commissioner now. The petitioners can meet him and it may be addressed," he said. The CJ then said, "In the meanwhile, the counsel for Election Commission states that the petitioners (the NGO and the MP) may file a representation with the Election Commission and the EC will give them a hearing and inform them in advance. Let the representation be made in 10 days." During the hearing, advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the NGO, said there were huge discrepancies on the EVM count and the number of persons coming to cast vote at the polling stations. "How did it end of the



day polling of 10 become 50 next morning needs to be explained. There is a discrepancy in the final list published and the ones who visit the polling station," argued senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Moitra. The court

adjourned the hearing in the July 28 week. The top court May 17 sought within a week the Election Commission's response on the NGO's plea. In its affidavit, the poll panel opposed the NGO's demand contending it will "vitiate" the electoral space and cause "chaos" in the poll machinery in the midst of the general elections. The ADR filed an interim application in its 2019 PIL seeking directions to the poll panel that "scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded)" of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls. "Direct the Election Commission to provide tabulated polling station-wise data in absolute figures of the number of votes polled as recorded

in Form 17C Part-I after each phase of polling in the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha elections and also a tabulation of constituency-wise figures of voter turnout in absolute numbers in the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha elections," the NGO had said. The plea claimed that the voter turnout data for the first two phases of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections published by ECI April 30 was published 11 days after the first phase of polling April 19 and four days after second phase of polling April 26. "The data, as published by the ECI in its press release dated April 30, 2024 shows a sharp increase (by about 5-6 per cent) as compared to the initial percentages announced by ECI as of 7 pm on the day of polling," it added.



We've declared a war on drugs. You can see this war unfolding over the past 20 days as the homes of major drug smugglers are being demolished by bulldozers. Huge quantities of drugs worth crores have been seized. For the first time, a government has dared to confront these smugglers head-on

PM MEETS ILAIYARAJA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday met renowned musician and composer Ilaiyaraaja and said he made history by presenting his first-ever Western classical symphony, Valiant, in London a few days ago



of the day note

India has achieved the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 target of MMR 100 per lakh live births by 2020 and is aligned towards achieving the SDG target of MMR 70 per lakh live births by 2030

All of those principles had been violated by one party and we should have condemned it. Well, three years later it does look like I am the one with the egg on my face because clearly, the policy has meant that India has actually a prime minister who can hug both the president of Ukraine and the president in Moscow two weeks apart and be accepted in both places

Raze Aurangzeb's tomb immediately, but do call Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu when that happens

Vacate Indian territory: India to Pak

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the world knows that the real issue in Jammu and Kashmir is Pakistan's "active promotion and sponsorship" of cross-border terrorism

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 18: India Tuesday slammed Pakistan for "spreading lies" on Kashmir and said that the country which continues to actively promote cross-border terrorism should "vacate" the Indian territory held under its illegal and forcible occupation. "We note that Pakistan has once again made some comments about the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The world knows that the real issue is Pakistan's active promotion and sponsorship of cross-border terrorism. In fact, this is the biggest roadblock to peace and security in the region. Instead of spreading lies, Pakistan should vacate Indian territory under its illegal and forcible occupation," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement.



as "misleading and one-sided". In a wide-ranging interview with the US-based podcaster Lex Fridman, PM Modi said that Pakistan has become the epicentre of terror, causing immense suffering not just to India, but to the entire world. "Wherever terror strikes in the world, the trail somehow leads to Pakistan. Let's take the September 11 attacks, for example. The main mastermind behind it, Osama bin Laden, where did he eventually emerge from? He had taken refuge in Pakistan. The world has recognised that in a way terrorism and the terrorist mindset are deeply rooted in Pakistan. Today, it stands as an epicentre of terror, not just for India but for the world," PM Modi pointed out.

Oppn blames BJP for Nagpur violence



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: Opposition MPs Tuesday blamed the BJP-led Maharashtra government for the Nagpur violence, while Union minister Ramdas Athawale said the movie 'Chhaava' stoked people's sentiments against 17th century Mughal king Aurangzeb.

Curfew has been imposed in several areas of Nagpur city after a protest against Aurangzeb's tomb Monday triggered violence during which several houses and vehicles were vandalised. "Demands are being raised about Aurangzeb's grave, a movement is going on. The grave has been there for 500 years, but after watching the Chhaava movie, the way he murdered Sambhaji Maharaj, that has made people angry," Athawale told reporters outside Parliament.

"That is why protests are happening. We appeal to the protesters that they should agitate peacefully. There should be no violence," he added. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh said the violence in Nagpur was part of a planned conspiracy. "BJP had been trying to spread hatred in Nagpur and the whole of Maharashtra for a long time. As long as the BJP is there, there cannot be peace in India. Ahead of Holi, they tried to disrupt peace in Uttar Pradesh, what is the reason behind it? It is so that people can't talk about the crashing share market, economic disparity is at its highest in hundred years, there is unemployment," he said. "Ye chilla rahe hai Aurangzeb, Aurangzeb, janta kah

rahi hai kat gayi jeb...(They are shouting Aurangzeb, people are saying their pockets are being picked)," he said.

Congress leader Karti Chidambaram said it was unfortunate that in 21st-century India, people are agitating over the history of the 17th and 18th centuries. "It is most unfortunate this kind of violence has broken, the state and Union government must take steps to quell it. I am baffled why this violence happened," he told the media outside Parliament. Azad Samaj Party MP Chandra Shekhar said the government was trying to distract attention from issues of unemployment and poverty.

"Riots, whether in Nagpur, Manipur, or Uttar Pradesh, are not good. There should be strict action against those who are behind the violence, whether they are BJP leaders or Congress leaders..." Chandra Shekhar said. "Centre should demand an explanation from the state government which is fuelling this communal polarisation.

The world is talking about going to space, we want to go two feet under the ground, how is that going to help us become a developed country? Everyone knows which party's agenda this is..." he told the media outside Parliament.

TMC MP Sagarika Ghose said the confrontation in Nagpur exposed the Centre's 'Viksit Bharat' slogan as hollow. "At a time when the focus should be on employment, farmer suicide, rising prices, what is BJP doing? It is creating yet another weapon of mass distraction," she said.

Christian Michel not convicted, can't get remission, says Tihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: The Tihar jail authorities Tuesday informed a Delhi court that Christian Michel James, an alleged middleman in the Agustawestland case, was not entitled for any remission as he was not convicted yet.

The jail superintendent also informed special judge Sanjeev Aggarwal that no punishment was recorded during the custody of James, saying his conduct during the incarceration was "satisfactory". The judge also sought a report in response to James' plea seeking six months of remission. James, a British national, was extradited from Dubai, where he had spent four months in custody, December 4, 2018. Probe agencies reported irregularities in the purchase of 12 VVIP helicopters from Italian manufacturing company Agustawestland. James, March 7, offered to "finish his sentence" and leave India instead of walking out on bail owing to "security risks".

Following the reprieve in the CBI and ED cases against him, the special court imposed the necessary bail conditions for releasing him on bail. While the Delhi High Court March 4 granted him bail in the ED case and directed for saddling Michel with the necessary bail riders, the Supreme Court on February 18 granted the relief in the CBI case subject to the trial court's conditions.



School students celebrate with colours at the end of their last West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHE) exam, in Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal

POST OF THE DAY

Today, Parliament would not have been adjourned if the Opposition parties were allowed to speak on the Kumbh. But the government and the parliamentary affairs minister were adamant

SHORT TAKES

Rajesh Kumar new Bihar Cong chief

New Delhi/Patna: In a significant move ahead of the Bihar Assembly polls due later this year, the Congress Tuesday named Dalit leader Rajesh Kumar as the new president of its state unit. Fifty-six-year-old Kumar, a second-term MLA from Kutumba in Aurangabad district, replaces Rajya Sabha MP and former Union minister Akhilesh Prasad Singh. "Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge appointed Rajesh Kumar as the president of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect", statement said. The change in strategy was also felt in the appointment, last month of Krishna Allavaru, a young, aggressive technocrat, as the new AICC in charge of Bihar.

UP: Man, woman sentenced to death

Mainpuri: A local court here Tuesday sentenced two persons including a woman to death in connection with a 10-month-old murder case in Nanmai village under Karhal police station limits. The court also imposed a fine of ₹1 lakh on each convict, while acquitting an accused for lack of sufficient evidence, government counsel Rakesh Gupta said. Gupta said he presented witness testimonies and documentary evidence before Additional District and Sessions Judge Jahendra Pal Singh.

Fire at Indian Oil depot premises

Deoghar: A fire broke out at the premises of an Indian Oil depot in Jharkhand's Deoghar district Tuesday, officials said. The fire broke out in the parking area of the depot, adjacent to Badladih village in Jasidih, they said. Fire engines were immediately deployed to extinguish the blaze, Deputy Commissioner Giridih Vishal Sagar said. All oil tankers were shifted to a safe place, he said in a statement.

FEMA VIOLATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 18: The Enforcement Directorate conducted searches in Bangalore Tuesday as part of an alleged foreign exchange violation case against US billionaire George Soros-founded 'private funding agency' OSF and its investment arm EDF, official sources said. Eight premises of some of the beneficiaries of Open Society Foundations (OSF) and Economic Development Fund

ED searches Soros' funding agency

(EDF), including those linked to some international human rights bodies, and a company named Aspada Investments Pvt. Ltd. were searched under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), the sources said. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) sources called Aspada Investments as the investment adviser or fund manager of Soros EDF (SEDF) in India and as a "wholly-owned subsidiary" of a Mauritius entity. The SEDF is the "impact investment arm

of the Open Society Foundations (OSF)", the sources said. The investigation pertains to alleged foreign direct investment (FDI) being sourced by the two Soros entities and the utilisation of these funds by certain beneficiaries in alleged contravention of FEMA guidelines. The ED sources said the initial probe found that OSF was put under the "prior reference category" by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in 2016,

thereby "restricting" it from giving "unregulated" donations to NGOs in India.

In order to "bypass" this restriction, OSF had subsidiaries in India and brought in funds in the form of FDI and consultancy fees, and these funds have been used to fund activities of the NGOs which is a FEMA "contravention", they said. The agency, the sources said, is "examining" the end use of other FDI funds brought in by Soros EDF and OSF.

Rabri Devi, Tej Pratap appear before ED in land-for-jobs case



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, March 18: Former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi and her MLA son Tej Pratap Yadav Tuesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate, which has also summoned her husband and RJD president Lalu Prasad for questioning in the land-for-jobs money laundering case, official sources said.

Devi, 66, reached the ED office on Bank Road here along with her eldest daughter and Patliputra MP Misa Bharti. Hundreds of RJD workers also reached the ED office and raised slogans hailing the mother-daughter duo.

Tej Pratap Yadav, 36, too appeared before the investigators. Prasad, 76, has been asked to deposit before the federal probe agency in Patna Wednesday, the sources said. They suggested that the fresh round of questioning was necessitated due to some "additional facts" emerging in the case.

DEATHS INSIDE MANHOLES

NGOs call for stricter adherence to ban, scrutiny on contractors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: Despite a nationwide ban on manual scavenging, workers continue to be hired for cleaning sewers often at great risk to their lives, the NGOs working for such workers' rehabilitation said.

In a tragic incident earlier Sunday, a 43-year-old worker died and two others were injured while cleaning a sewer in southeast Delhi's New Friends Colony. The victim, Panth Lal Chandra, was working on a Delhi Jal Board (DJB) sewer around 5.45 pm Sunday when the accident occurred, police said in a statement earlier. Yogendra Jha, secretary of the NGO Centre for Social Security Action and Research (CSSAR), called for strict action against those hiring labourers for manual scavenging. "Manual scavenging is banned in



India, yet people continue to do this work without proper protective equipment, risking their lives just to support their families," he said. Jha said the government departments often outsource sanitation work to contractors, who, in turn, employ daily wage workers for sewer cleaning.

"The government must establish a dedicated committee to monitor such incidents and take necessary action to prevent further loss of life," he added. Centre for Holistic Development (CHD) Executive Director Sunil Kumar Aledia stressed the need for better enforcement of the ban.

In a tragic incident earlier Sunday, a 43-year-old worker died and two others were injured while cleaning a sewer in southeast Delhi's New Friends Colony

"There are machines available for cleaning sewers, yet workers are still being sent into manholes to cut costs. Constant monitoring is essential because manual scavenging continues in the open despite the law," he said in a statement. Manual scavenging is banned and mandates rehabilitation for those engaged in the practice, according to the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and

Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. Emergency response teams, including the fire brigade and local police, pulled out the three workers from a manhole in an unconscious state Sunday. Chandra was declared dead at the hospital.

The police have registered a case under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Sections 7 and 9 of the Manual Scavenging Act. There was no immediate response from the Delhi Jal Board regarding the incident. According to a Rajya Sabha data, approximately 377 people died in various states and Union Territories between 2019 and 2023 due to hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. A report by the Press Information Bureau states that around 22 manual scavengers lost their lives in Delhi between 2019 and 2022.



The Nationals Archives delivered the Declaration of Independence to the White House at the President's request. It is displayed in the Oval Office where it will be carefully protected and preserved

FLASH FLOODS IN SOUTHERN SPAIN

Flash floods unleashed by heavy rains promoted officials in southern Spain to evacuate over 350 homes, shut down roads and cancel classes Tuesday. Regional officials ordered the evacuation of 365 homes in the village of Campanillas near Malaga city late Monday after a nearby river burst its banks



of the day quote

(The) government urges foreign governments to provide a fair and just environment for enterprises. We oppose the abusive use of coercion or bullying tactics in international economic and trade relations

Human fragility has the power to make us more lucid about what endures and what passes, what brings life and what kills

For sustainable development, all elements of national power will have to work in harmony

CEASEFIRE ON BRINK

Israeli strikes kill over 400 in Gaza

Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas each accused the other of breaching the truce, which had broadly held since January, offering respite from war for the 2 million inhabitants of Gaza, where most buildings have been reduced to rubble



REUTERS

Jerusalem/Cairo, March 18: Israeli airstrikes pounded Gaza and killed more than 400 people, Palestinian health authorities said Tuesday, ending weeks of relative calm after talks to secure a permanent ceasefire stalled.

mediators to negotiate a permanent deal to end the fighting, but the group made no threat of retaliation. Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he ordered strikes because Hamas had rejected proposals to secure a ceasefire extension during faltering talks.

- Strikes widest in scale since January ceasefire
'It was a night of hell' says Gaza City resident
Israeli military says campaign will expand
Egyptian mediators say they are working to salvage truce

Egypt and Qatar, mediators in the ceasefire deal along with the US, condemned the Israeli assault. Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani called for immediate international action to compel Israel to abide by the ceasefire agreement and return to negotiations.

of Israeli strikes, a statement said, strengthening Netanyahu's government. Witnesses contacted by Reuters said Israeli tanks shelled areas in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. Bewildered children sat next to bagged-up belongings, ready to flee north again having returned to Rafah with the ceasefire.

Macron speeds up Rafale warplane orders



REUTERS

Luxeuil-Les-Bains, France, March 18: President Emmanuel Macron said France would order additional Rafale warplanes in the coming years and invest nearly 1.5 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) into one of its air bases to equip its squadrons with the latest nuclear missile technology.

SHORT TAKES

18 killed in airstrike on market in Mali

Bamako (Mali): At least 18 people have been killed in an airstrike in northern Mali, a separatist group said. The army said it had mounted an attack targeting armed militants. The Collective for the Defence of the Rights of the Azawad People, which is part of a Tuareg separatist coalition, said Monday the Malian army bombed a market 50 km north of Lerneb, in the Timbuktu region. Seven people were also injured in the strike Sunday, the group said in a statement, denouncing a "barbaric act from another age" and a "flagrant human rights violation."

China lost \$7bn from SL debt restructuring

Colombo: China has suffered a loss of \$7 billion from Sri Lanka's external debt restructuring, a media report said Tuesday. The state-owned Daily News quoted Chinese Ambassador to Colombo Qi Zhenhong as saying that China was Sri Lanka's first bilateral creditor to enter a restructuring agreement in October 2023.

PTI boycotts national security meeting

Islamabad: Pakistan's leading Opposition party founded by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan Tuesday boycotted the key security meeting to discuss the prevailing security situation in the country. National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq chaired the in-camera meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security after the March 11 hijack of a train by terrorists belonging to the banned Baloch Liberation Army (BLA).

NEW ASSAULT ON LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Orban, who faces an unprecedented challenge from a new surging Opposition party ahead of 2026 elections, has criticised the LGBTQ+ community and pledged to crack down on foreign funding of independent media and NGOs in Hungary in recent weeks

REUTERS

Budapest, March 18: Hungary's parliament passed a law Tuesday to ban the Pride march by LGBTQ+ communities and backed a resolution opposing joint EU borrowing for defence spending as Prime

SNIPPETS

Dhaka court orders to freeze 31 bank accounts related to Hasina, family

Dhaka: A Dhaka court Tuesday ordered the freezing of 31 bank accounts linked to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her family members and their associates over corruption allegations against them, according to media reports. According to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), these bank accounts belonging to Hasina, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, daughter Saima Wazed Putul, sister Sheikh Rehana, nephew Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby and their related organisations hold a total of Tk 394.6 crore (INR 281.2 crore approximately), reports Prothom Alo. The organisations whose bank accounts have been ordered frozen include Bangladesh Awami League and Jatir Janak Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Trust, according to The Daily Star newspaper. Judge Md Zakir Hossain passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Md Monirul Islam, who is leading the inquiry team, submitted an application in this regard. In the application, the ACC said Hasina and others are trying to transfer the money from these accounts. So, an order is needed to prevent them from doing so.

Netanyahu coalition jeopardised over ultra-Orthodox exemption from army

Bnei Brak, Israel: One of Israel's most divisive domestic issues has reared itself again to challenge Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after a group in the ruling coalition said it would bring the government down unless it exempts ultra-Orthodox Jews from army service. Some members of United Torah Judaism, one of two ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties in the coalition, said in a letter that they would vote against the budget if the government did not pass a new law formalising exemptions for religious students. "If this matter is once again sidelined or delayed for any reason, we will not be able to continue as partners in the coalition," said the March 6 letter signed by Housing Minister and party chairman Yitzhak Goldknopf and two others. The government must pass the budget by the end of the month or call snap elections. United Torah Judaism holds seven seats in the Knesset, Israel's parliament. It is too early to predict the consequences. Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, is a proven master at smoothing over disagreements in his coalitions. An ultra-nationalist group that quit the government over the ceasefire in Gaza in January announced on Tuesday it was returning.

German parliament approves Merz's historic spending surge

REUTERS

Berlin, March 18: Germany's parliament approved plans for a massive spending surge Tuesday, throwing off decades of fiscal conservatism in hopes of reviving economic growth and scaling up military spending for a new era of European collective defence. The approval in the Bundestag hands conservative leader Friedrich Merz a huge boost, giving the chancellor-in-waiting a windfall of hundreds of billions of euros to ramp up investment after two years of contraction in Europe's largest economy. Germany and other European nations have been under pressure to shore up their defences in the face of hostile Russia and shifts in US policy under President Donald Trump, which European leaders fear could leave the continent exposed. Merz's conservatives and Social Democrats (SPD), who are in talks to form a centrist coalition after last month's election, want to create a 500 billion euro (\$546 billion) fund for infrastructure and to ease constitutionally enshrined borrowing rules to allow higher spending on defence.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE CEASEFIRE

Trump, Putin agree to seek 30-day halt

REUTERS

Washington, March 18: Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump agreed Tuesday to seek a limited 30-day ceasefire against energy and infrastructure targets in Ukraine, while talks aimed at advancing toward a broader peace plan will begin "immediately," the White House said. Putin stopped short of accepting a broader US-backed 30-day ceasefire that Ukraine has said it is ready to accept. The Russian president raised "significant points" about preventing such a truce from being used by Ukraine to mobilize more soldiers and rearm itself, the Kremlin said in a statement following a lengthy phone call between the two leaders. Putin also emphasized that the "complete cessation of foreign military assistance and the provision of intelligence information to Kyiv" is a condition for any permanent peace deal. In a statement, the White House said negotiations on a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, as well as other potential areas of concern, would commence immediately in the Middle East. "The leaders agreed that the movement to peace will begin



with an energy and infrastructure ceasefire, as well as technical negotiations on implementation of a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, full ceasefire and permanent peace," the White House readout said. Trump had been pressuring Putin to agree to a 30-day ceasefire that he hopes would move one step closer to ending Europe's biggest conflict since World War Two. The war has killed or wounded hundreds of thousands of people, displaced millions and reduced entire towns to rubble. Ukraine and its Western allies have long described Russia's invasion of Ukraine as an imperialist land grab, and Ukrainian President Volody-

myr Zelenskyy has accused Putin of deliberately prolonging the war. Zelenskyy, who arrived in Finland Tuesday to discuss the NATO state's support for Ukraine, says Ukraine's sovereignty is not negotiable and Russia must surrender the territory it has seized. He says Moscow's ambitions will not stop at Ukraine if it is allowed to keep the territory it has seized. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned Tuesday that Russia had massively expanded its military-industrial production capacity in preparation for "future confrontation with European democracies."

Hungary passes law banning Pride events



Minister Viktor Orban gears up for a summit in Brussels later this week. Orban's Fidesz party, which holds a commanding parliamentary majority, submitted a bill Monday that would ban the annual Pride march on the grounds that it could be considered harmful to children, and approved it in an expedited process Tuesday. Orban, who faces an unprecedented challenge from a new surging Opposition party ahead of 2026 elections,

Parliament also passed a resolution opposing joint European borrowing for defence

has criticised the LGBTQ+ community and pledged to crack down on foreign funding of independent media and NGOs in Hungary in recent weeks. The legislation was criticised by Budapest's liberal mayor while lawmakers from the small Opposition party Momentum lit up smoke flares and scattered in the assembly hall manipulated photos depicting Orban and Russian President Vladimir Putin kissing hall as the voting progressed.

Organizers said they planned to hold this year's Pride march despite the ban. Parliament also passed a resolution opposing joint European borrowing for defence, after Orban said last week that Hungary should take part in common European defence policy and contribute funds to it, but should not agree to joint borrowing. The European Commission proposed earlier this month to borrow up to 150 billion euros (\$163.67 billion) to lend to EU governments under a rearmament plan. For approval, the proposal requires a qualified majority, or the backing of at least 15 of the EU's 27 countries, representing at least 65% of the bloc's population. Hungary alone cannot block the plan.

China conducts air, sea drills near Taiwan

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taipei, March 18: An unusually large number of Chinese military ships, planes and drones entered airspace and waters surrounding Taiwan between Sunday and Monday, the self-governing island's Defence Ministry said. China said the drills were a response to recent statements and actions by the United States and Taiwan. Beijing launches such missions on a daily basis, seeking to wear down Taiwanese defences and morale, although the vast majority of the island's 23 million people reject its claim of sovereignty over Taiwan. Taiwanese Defence Minister

Wellington Koo told legislators the drills were further evidence China was a "troublemaker" endangering peace in the region. The ministry Tuesday published on social media images of Chinese drones and ships. It said 43 out of 59 entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone but that no confrontations were reported. Taiwan monitored the situation and deployed aircraft, navy ships and coastal anti-ship missile defences in response, the ministry said. It's unclear what prompted the large Chinese deployment. Daily figures often vary widely based on statements by the Taiwanese authorities or their US partners.

Business



International air travel in India probably for quite a long time was very much taken care of by non Indian airlines... there is a great opportunity to address that market (long haul) with our planes
PIETER ELBERS | INDIGO CHIEF

RBI, BANK OF MAURITIUS TO USE LOCAL CURRENCIES FOR BILATERAL TRADE
Reserve Bank of India and the Bank of Mauritius (BOM) have signed a pact for establishing a framework to promote the use of the Indian Rupee and the Mauritian Rupee (MUR) for cross-border transactions. The MoU was signed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra and BOM Governor Rama Krishna Sithanen GCSK, the central bank said in a statement Tuesday.



of the day quote

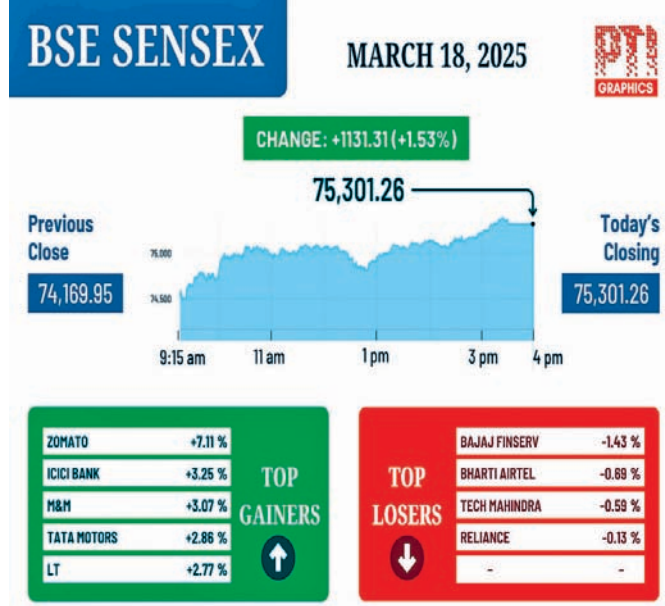
Make in India has actually given us good results. We took step after step, after step, to strengthen the manufacturing of this country
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

We are doing lots of innovation in India and intend to heavily invest and grow our R&D base here...in terms of our long-term planning towards 2030, we intend to double the number of people in India
ANDREAS URSCHITZ | INFINEON TECHNOLOGIES CMO

India's economic potential continues to present attractive opportunities for Barclays to grow its business
JAIDEEP KHANNA | BARCLAYS BANK COUNTRY CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR INDIA

Sensex reclaims 75k-mark

Two-day market rally swells investors wealth by ₹8.67 lakh-cr



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 18: The BSE benchmark index Sensex jumped 1,131 points to revisit the 75,000 level Tuesday, and the NSE Nifty surged 1.45 per cent, tracking a bullish trend in global equities and intense buying in market majors ICICI Bank, L&T and M&M counters.

Besides, lower crude oil prices in the international markets and a weak dollar against major currencies overseas also bolstered sentiment, traders said. Rising for the second day on the trot, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,131.31 points or 1.53 per cent to settle at 75,301.26. During the day, it soared 1,215.81 points or 1.63 per cent to 75,385.76.

As many as 2,815 stocks advanced while 1,221 declined and 123 remained unchanged on the BSE. The NSE Nifty surged 325.55 points or 1.45 per cent to 22,834.30. "Buoyancy across global equities boosted the confidence of local investors, which translated into value buying across the sectors. As markets were in a bearish mode over the past few weeks and valuations had become a bit attractive, investors seized opportunity in the beaten-down sectors. But the recovery would be difficult to hold on due to global challenges and fears of slowing domestic growth due to Trump's threat to impose tariffs on key economies including India," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In the Sensex pack, Zomato emerged as the biggest gainer with over 7 per cent jump, followed by ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro, Asian Paints, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank and State Bank of India were among the gainers. In contrast, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, Tech Mahindra and Reliance Industries were the laggards.

Shares of Bajaj Finserv declined over 1 per cent after the financial services firm signed share purchase agreements to acquire a 26 per cent stake owned by Allianz SE of Germany in its insurance businesses Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company.

The BSE small-cap gauge soared 2.73 per cent, and the midcap index jumped 2.10 per cent. "Broad-based buying across

established a modern automatic production line with best machinery from across the world which gives us an advantage of consistent high-quality output at reduced processing cost. We have innovative packaging solutions with different pack sizes as per consumer requirements to cater to a wide range of customers. In a short span of time, we have established a dedicated distribution channel.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.48 per cent to USD 72.12 a barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹4,488.45 crore Monday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DII) bought worth ₹6,000.60 crore, according to exchange data. The Sensex climbed 341.04 points or 0.46 per cent to settle at 74,169.95 on Monday, snapping its five-day losing run. The Nifty rose by 111.55 points or 0.50 per cent to 22,508.75.

Kia India to hike vehicle prices
New Delhi: Kia India Tuesday said it will hike vehicle prices up to 3 per cent from April in order to offset the impact of rising input costs. The price hike, effective from April 1, 2025, is primarily due to rising commodity prices and escalating supply chain-related costs, the automaker said in a statement. "As a brand committed to providing exceptional value and quality to our customers, we have always strived to offer the best vehicles at competitive prices," Kia India Senior Vice President (Sales and Marketing) Hardeep Singh Brar said. However, due to the rising costs of commodities and input materials, the automaker will be increasing up to 3 per cent price across all models, effective from April 1, he added.



'Majority of Indians long-term investors'
New Delhi: Majority of Indians are long-term investors as only 2 per cent actively trade in derivatives out of the 110 million market participants, National Stock Exchange (NSE) MD and CEO Ashish Kumar Chauhan has said. This suggests the growing culture of disciplined, sustainable investment in the country. "Out of 110 million market participants, only 2 per cent actively trade in derivatives. The majority are committed to long-term investing," he stated. At a recent panel discussion in Singapore, he dispelled the notion that India's stock market is driven primarily by speculative trading.

San Francisco, March 18: Alphabet said Tuesday it would buy Wiz for about \$32 billion in its biggest deal as the Google parent doubles down on cybersecurity to sharpen its edge in the cloud-computing race against Amazon.com and Microsoft. The all-cash buyout comes after Wiz rejected a \$23 billion bid from Alphabet last year due to concerns about antitrust approvals and its aim to focus on an initial public offering. Acquiring Wiz will help Google bolster its cloud business with AI-powered cybersecurity solutions that companies use to remove critical risks, helping it compete better in an industry benefiting from the rise of generative AI services like ChatGPT. "Cloud is more important than ever, and attackers are not slowing down. They are already using the most innovative technologies to move faster," said Wiz CEO and co-founder Assaf Rappaport, who had called Google's previous offer 'humbling'. While a tough regulatory climate in 2024 had hampered such large-scale deals, Wall Street is optimistic that a shift in antitrust policies under US President Donald Trump could reignite deal-making momentum.

Alphabet to buy Wiz for \$32bn in its biggest deal to boost cloud security
REUTERS

One of the fastest-growing software startups, Wiz was valued at \$12 billion in a funding round last May. It works with cloud providers such as Amazon Web Services, Microsoft's Azure as well as Google Cloud and counts Morgan Stanley, BMW and luxury powerhouse LVMH among its customers. After the deal closes, Wiz will join Google Cloud, business which generated more than \$40 billion in revenue in 2024 and has outpaced growth in the search business in the recent years. Wiz's products will continue to be available across all other major cloud services. Alphabet expects the deal to close in 2026, subject to regulatory approvals. DA Davidson analyst Gil Luria said the higher price is based on another year of exponential growth for Wiz. "For Google to be able to compete with Microsoft Azure for enterprise customers, it needs to be able to offer a deeper suite of services, including security software," he said. This is the not the first time Google has struck a big deal for a cybersecurity company. In 2022, it bought Mandiant for \$5.4 billion, outbidding Microsoft in a high-stakes contest. Interest in the cybersecurity industry has been rising since last year's global CrowdStrike outage roiled operations across industries, prompting companies to spend more on safeguarding their online domains. Google had \$23.47 billion in cash and cash equivalents as of Dec. 31, implying it might have to seek financing for the deal. The company, which has kept aside \$75 billion in capital expenditure for 2025 mostly for AI investments, said Tuesday its capital allocation plans remain unchanged. Shares of Google were down nearly 3% in early trading amid broader market weakness. They had risen about 35% last year, but have lost 13% this year on investor worries over its hefty AI spending against the backdrop of China's lower-cost DeepSeek.

Gold breaches ₹91k level

Gold prices climbed by ₹500 to hit another record high of ₹91,250 per 10 grams in the national capital Tuesday driven by sustained buying by stockists and retailers amid a strong trend overseas, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Monday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity rallied by ₹1,300 to hit a fresh peak of ₹90,750 per 10 grams. The yellow metal of 99.5 per cent purity advanced by ₹450 to hit a lifetime high of ₹90,800 per 10 grams against the previous close of ₹90,350 per 10 grams. "Gold extended gains Tuesday and touched a fresh record high in the international market as well as the domestic market. The precious metal remains an attractive option for safe-haven flows due to uncertainties surrounding US President Donald Trump's policies, fears of a US recession, and geopolitical uncertainty," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. Meanwhile, gold futures jumped by ₹649 or 0.73 per cent to establish a fresh peak of ₹88,672 in the afternoon trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange. On the global front, spot gold increased to hit a fresh high of USD 3,028.49 per ounce. Similarly, Comex gold futures quoted higher to hit a record peak of USD 3,037.26 per ounce.



Maintain quality, focus on customer satisfaction: Neha

Vinayak Cashews, a cashew processing company with modern facilities, is making strides in Odisha with their premium products. The Dhenkanal-based company which was established in 2022 with a vision to take Odisha's cashew to all over India has become one of the most trusted brands in a very short time. The entrepreneur behind this venture Neha Agarwalla, managing partner, who hails from a business family, is on a mission to take this brand to new heights. In a conversation with Orissa POST, Agarwalla shares her journey. Excerpts...



established a modern automatic production line with best machinery from across the world which gives us an advantage of consistent high-quality output at reduced processing cost. We have innovative packaging solutions with different pack sizes as per consumer requirements to cater to a wide range of customers. In a short span of time, we have established a dedicated distribution channel.

- **Can you brief us about your early life and what made you enter the cashew industry?**
My entrepreneurial journey started with a vision to Make in Odisha and provide employment to local youths. Coming from a business-oriented background, I was always keen on exploring opportunities that could have a meaningful impact on society. My research found out that cashew industry provides opportunity for tapping the local produce and establishing a pan-India presence. At the same time, it is aligned with my vision of engaging the local youth, especially rural women.
- **With the growing market base in this business, what is your USP?**
The market for cashews is pan-India and there are even export opportunities. India being a consumer-driven economy there is always demand for food items. Demand for nuts is constantly on the rise with the rise in people's disposable income. We have

- **There are multiple reports of adulterated cashew being sold in the market. What steps have you taken to safeguard the authenticity of your product?**
Adulterated cashews are being sold by some unscrupulous traders who bring bad name to the industry. But we have a rigorous quality inspection section where cashews are thoroughly sorted as per standard before being despatched to channel partners. Moreover, we sell our products in sealed containers and preprinted retail packs.
- **How has your journey been so far? Do you have any expansion plans in pipeline?**
The journey has been rewarding so far. Within two years of starting operations, we have established ourselves as a quality supplier of cashew kernels. We are even able to command premium in the market due to our consistent quality. Yes, we have plans to expand our facility from current 10 MT processing per day to 30 MT processing per day in near future.
- **As an entrepreneur, what advice do you have for newcomers in this business?**
My advice for newcomers will be to do business ethically, maintain quality standards and focus on customer satisfaction. There may be difficulties initially, but it will pay off in the long run.

IPL 2025: The upcoming saga

Pant, Iyer, Gill and Rahul headline the list of players to watch out for

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 18: As with every season of the Indian Premier League (IPL), there are always cricketers who will be the cynosure of everyone's eyes, as the tournament has carved a reputation for being the platform where a player's international career has taken off, as well as set the base for people to make a comeback into their respective national teams.

The mega auction of IPL 2025, held last year in Jeddah, has made things more interesting to keep an eye out on for the tournament starting from March 22. IANS takes a look at the key players to keep an eye on from every team participating in IPL 2025.

Noor Ahmad - Chennai Super Kings
Noor, the left-arm wrist-spinner from Afghanistan and has been a regular figure in franchise T20 leagues, was CSK's costliest signing at last year's mega auction for Rs 10 crore. Such was the quest of CSK acquiring Noor that the five-time champions thwarted attempts from Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Titans, who had the Right to Match (RTM) card.

KL Rahul - Delhi Capitals
Rahul is coming into IPL 2025 on a high after being a vital cog in the wheel for India winning the 2025 Champions Trophy. While there are no doubts on his place in the ODI and Test set-up, Rahul's immediate attention will be on claiming his place back in the India T20I team, especially with a T20 World Cup happening in India next year.

Shubman Gill - Gujarat Titans
When Gill was the leading run-getter in IPL 2023 with 890 runs, he seemed to have locked his place in the India's T20I team. But IPL 2024 saw Gill not living up to those lofty expectations in terms of run-scoring, which coincided with Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli opening for India in their eventual



T20 World Cup winning campaign.

Ajinkya Rahane - Kolkata Knight Riders
When Venkatesh Iyer was brought back by KKR for a whopping INR 23.75 crore in last year's mega auction, many felt that he would be given the reins of the leadership role after Shreyas Iyer was roped in by Punjab Kings. But KKR, the defending champions, named Ajinkya Rahane as their skipper for IPL 2025.

Rishabh Pant - Lucknow Super Giants
When Pant wasn't retained by Delhi Capitals ahead of IPL 2025 retentions, one was certain that he would go for a record-breaking amount in the mega auction, considering the x-factor batting skills and

wicket keeping skill sets, especially after making a successful comeback to the game. Hence, it wasn't a surprise when Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) took him in for a record-breaking INR 27 crore.

Bevon Jacobs - Mumbai Indians
Jacobs has 423 runs from 20 domestic T20 appearances in New Zealand at a strike rate of 148.42. When MI bought him as a surprise overseas pick in last year's mega auction, many wondered what Jacobs brings to the table. Well, for starters, he's a middle-order batter who hits the ball really hard and came under notice of the MI wide scouting network.

Shreyas Iyer - Punjab Kings
It's very rare to see that a

captain who's won an IPL title finds is captaining a new team for the upcoming season. Iyer had led Kolkata Knight Riders to IPL 2024 title, but didn't retain him and despite trying to back him, Punjab Kings got him on board after seeing off competition from his former team Delhi Capitals.

Dhruv Jurel - Rajasthan Royals
Since his entry as an impact player batter in IPL 2023, Dhruv Jurel's stock has risen hugely as a key player in the Rajasthan Royals set-up. With his ability to finish matches and stand up in tough match situations, as seen from 347 runs in 22 innings, Jurel made his way into the India T20I set-up.

Rasikh Salam - Royal Challengers Bengaluru
The fast-bowler from Jammu & Kashmir had made heads turn when Mumbai Indians picked him in IPL 2018. But a two-year ban for age fraud and a back injury threatened to halt his cricketing career. IPL 2024 though saw Rasikh be a vital cog for the Delhi Capitals by picking nine wickets in eight games.

Ishan Kishan - Sunrisers Hyderabad
Since the time he left the tour of South Africa due to personal reasons, Kishan hasn't been seen in Indian team set-up. Despite returning to action by playing for Mumbai Indians in IPL 2024, Kishan didn't have much of a memorable time, especially at the top of the order.

All eyes on Chhetri as India face Maldives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, March 18: The returning Sunil Chhetri will be the cynosure of all eyes as India face Maldives in an international friendly here Wednesday, the match serving as a dress rehearsal for the all-important AFC Asian Cup qualifier against Bangladesh at the same venue in less than a week's time.

The 40-year-old Chhetri came out of his international retirement earlier this month to help the team successfully navigate the qualifiers for the continent's top football tournament, starting with the March 25 clash.

The preparatory match for Manolo Marquez's side marks a historic moment as the Blue Tigers will play in the football-crazy hill town for the first time. It will also be India's all-time top scorer Chhetri's first match since announcing his return to international football.

In the pre-match press conference Tuesday, Marquez said, "I remember when I watched the Durand Cup in Shillong last year, I said, 'Wow, the ground, crowd, atmosphere, everything is nice. I'm not joking, I said it'd be great if one day, the national team could play here.'"

For Marquez, his first competitive match since becoming India's head coach in July 2024 is a week away, and the friendly presents a great opportunity to fine-tune his team before the crucial fixture.

The Indian team, though, remains winless under Marquez with the side ending the year

with a 1-1 stalemate against Malaysia in November in Hyderabad.

"It's a friendly game to prepare for the Asian Cup qualifier. Obviously, we want to win. We knew that the target during the previous FIFA windows was to arrive in the best possible condition for the first competitive match against Bangladesh next Tuesday.

"I don't think we will play with the same team against Bangladesh that will play tomorrow. Obviously, you can't change all 11. Some will repeat on Tuesday. I'm confident in all my players. It has to be a good game and a good preparation for Bangladesh."

Marquez also confirmed Chhetri's involvement in the friendly match that will mark his 152nd cap for India.

"For sure, Sunil will play some minutes. I don't know whether as a starter or from the bench. We can use six substitutions, so 17 players can play, and I think Sunil will be one of them. "He is the Indian player with the most goals this season. It doesn't matter if a player is 20, 40, or my grandfather at 87. If they are in better shape, they will be here. The national team is not about developing players.

"Developed players have to arrive here. The main team needs to win games. And if we need to win games, we need to call players who are in better shape," said Marquez.

Chhetri had earlier hung his boots in June 2024 after a glorious international career after making his India debut in 2005.



It is the first time we are playing here, but I have worked with a lot of coaches and players from here. I knew it's a very nice place
MANOLO MARQUEZ | COACH, INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Pak origin cricketer dies after collapsing

Adelaide: Junail Zafar Khan, a club-level Pakistan-origin cricketer, has died after collapsing on the ground during a local match played in extreme heat at the Concordia College here. In his 40s, Khan was representing Old Concordians Cricket Club in a match against Prince Alfred Old Collegians last Saturday, news.com.au reported. After fielding for 40 overs and batting for seven, Khan collapsed around 4pm Australian Central Daylight Time (ACDT).

Kiwis beat Pak by 5 wickets to take a 2-0 lead in T20

Dunedin: Tim Seifert blasted 45 from 22 balls and Finn Allen hit 38 from 16 as New Zealand cruised to a five-wicket win over Pakistan on Tuesday in a rain-shortened second Twenty20 cricket international. Captain Salman Ali Agha made 46 as Pakistan reached 135-9 in a match reduced to 15 overs per innings after a delay for wet outfield. Shaheen Shah Afridi then bowled a maiden to start New Zealand's innings. But Seifert and Allen hit seven of the next 12 balls for sixes as New Zealand launched an assault which helped them clinch the match and a 2-0 series lead with 11 balls remaining.

WOMEN'S ODI WC

BCCI ban tobacco and crypto sponsors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: The BCCI will form the organising committee of the Women's ODI World Cup besides taking a call on the venues for the ICC event it will be hosting later this year at its Apex Council emergent meeting in Kolkata March 22.

The meeting will take place ahead of the IPL opener between defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Eden Gardens.

The BCCI last hosted a Women's ODI World Cup back in 2013. The exact schedule of the tournament slotted in October is yet to be worked out.

According to the agenda accessed by PTI, there will be a "discussion on formation of LOC for Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 and discussion regarding venues for Women's Cricket World Cup 2025".

India have made two finals of the 50-over event but fell short at the final hurdle. Harmanpreet Kaur's team will be aiming



to end the long ICC trophy wait at home. The Apex Council will also finalise the structure for the 2025-26 domestic season.

As part of the home season, India are scheduled to host West Indies and South Africa and therefore, the members are likely to decide on the venues for the those Test series.

With a new set of office-bearers in place, an approval for change in signatories to the bank accounts operated by BCCI will also be taken.

Following government's directive, BCCI set to ban tobacco sponsorship. Earlier this month, the health ministry instructed the BCCI to ban all forms of tobacco and alcohol promotions, including surrogate advertisements, during the IPL beginning March 22.

Khelo India is umbrella for young athletes: Mandaviya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Tuesday lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Khelo India programme, and said it has become an "umbrella" for young athletes to showcase their talent and win laurels for the country at the international stage.

"Now we are here for the launch ceremony of the Khelo India Para Games. Khelo India has become such an umbrella for the young athletes of the country to excel, get exposure and then go onto represent India at the global stage," Mandaviya said at the launch of logo, anthem and mascot of the Khelo India Para Games 2025 here.

The Khelo India Para Games 2025 will be held from March 20-27 here with over 1300 athletes in six different sporting disciplines.

"It is a very important day for me. The FIT India carnival came to an end today. Over 25000 people came to take part in the carnival. In the coming days FIT India movement will take over India," the minister said.

Paralympic Committee of India president Devendra Jhajharia said it's just the start and hoped that the nation can host major para events in the future.

GLORY OF ODISHA



Para powerlifter, Sabitri Behera on winning bronze medal in the 50 kg category at the 22nd Senior national para powerlifting championship 2024-25 held in Uttar Pradesh



Para Badminton player Deep Ranjan Bisoyee for winning the bronze medal in the Men's doubles (SL3-SL4) category at the Spanish para-badminton international level 1, 2025, held in Toledo, Spain, alongside his partner, Manoj Sarkar



U-21 junior women's team on securing a 1-0 victory over Hockey Bengal in the final phase of the national women's hockey league 2025, held in Ranchi, Jharkhand



Roll ball player, Priti Pritam Jena qualified for the U-17 Indian team Pre-selection camp for the roll ball world cup 2025, set to take place from April 14-22 in Nairobi, Kenya

Time for India to win gold again: Ashok

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: World Cup-winning striker Ashok Kumar, son of the legendary Major Dhyani Chand, on Tuesday said it is high time India reclaimed hockey's top prize to commemorate the golden jubilee of its historic 1975 World Cup victory.

Fifty years ago, March 15, India won their first and only hockey World Cup in Kuala Lumpur under the captaincy of Ajitpal Singh with Kumar scoring the winning goal.

Kumar, 75, feels Indian hockey is back to its best after two back-to-back bronze medal wins in the Olympics (Tokyo and Paris).

"It was different when we

HOCKEY WORLD CUP



on natural grass but now the game is played on astro-turf. So the dynamics have changed but the skill set remains the same," Kumar said during a

book launch function to celebrate 50 years of India's World Cup-winning feat.

"After 1980, our last and eighth gold medal in the Olympics, the game changed drastically when astro-turf was introduced."

Titled 'March to Glory: The Story of India's 1975 World Cup Triumph', the book was co-authored by hockey historian K Arumugam and veteran journalist Errol D'Cruz.

"In 1990s and 2000s we had some very good players who kept the game alive although we continued to adjust to astro-turf. But now we have back-to-back Olympic bronze medals, we are also domination Asian hockey," Kumar said.

Modi meets Olympics World Winter Games contingent

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday met the Special Olympics World Winter Games contingent in Parliament and congratulated the athletes for their historic campaign, where they won 33 medals, including 8 gold, 18 silver, and 7 bronze medals.

"I am immensely proud of our athletes who have brought glory to the nation at the Special Olympics World Winter Games held in Turin, Italy! Our incredible contingent has brought home 33 medals. Met the contingent in Parliament and congratulated them for their accomplishments," PM



Modi posted on X. The Indian contingent, comprising 30 athletes and 19 support staff members, won

the inspiring 33 medals across six sporting disciplines alpine skiing, snowboarding, floorball, snowshoeing, short track speed

skating, and cross-country skiing.

While India recorded 10 medals each in Snowshoeing and Alpine Skiing, 6 medals came in Snowboarding. Short Track Speed Skating, Cross Country Skiing and Floorball brought the country 4, 2, and 1 medal, respectively.

Recognising the achievements of the athletes, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has announced an increase in cash prizes for the medal winners, with the gold medalists in the tournament receiving a cash prize of Rs 20 lakhs, and the silver and bronze medalists being awarded Rs 14 lakhs and Rs 8 lakhs, respectively.