

Chhattisgarh: Three Naxals shot dead

Dantewada, (Chhattisgarh), March 25: A Naxalite carrying a reward of ₹25 lakh on his head was among three ultras killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district Tuesday, police said. The gunfight took place at around 8 am in a forest along the border of Dantewada and Bijapur districts when a team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxalite operation. Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai said. Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Bastar Fighters, both units of the state police, were involved in the operation launched on the basis of inputs about the presence of Maoists in forests of Girsapara, Nelgoda, Bodga and Ikeli villages under Geedam police station limits, he said. After the exchange of fire stopped, bodies of three male Naxalites were recovered from the site, the official said. An Insas rifle, a 303 rifle, explosive materials and items of daily use were also recovered.

Toddler charred as man torches house

Dhenkanal/Satamail, March 25: In a shocking incident, an 11-month-old baby girl was burnt alive after her father allegedly set his house on fire following a family dispute at Mundasahi of Barasingha village under Balimi police limits in Dhenkanal district Tuesday. The accused, identified as Babuli Sahu, alias Bani, son of Bharat Sahu, was arrested and produced in court after police registered a murder case against him. After heated argument, Babuli physically assaulted his wife, Subhadra Sahu, and torched the house, sources said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

I never see any sense of accountability in you, son—which is great if you're aiming for a career in politics or the judiciary!



RIOTS OF COLOURS: Artist Sir Grayson Perry poses in front of one of his artworks on display at his exhibition called *Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur* which includes ceramics, tapestries, furniture and collage at The Wallace Collection in London, Tuesday. AP/PTI PHOTO

12 Cong MLAs suspended for a week

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Speaker Surama Padhy Tuesday suspended 12 Congress MLAs for seven days over "indiscipline" in the House. The action against the Congress legislators came after the House adopted a motion moved by government Chief Whip Saroj Pradhan. The suspended MLAs include Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Rama Chandra Kadam, Sagar Charan Das, Mangu Khilla, Satyajet Gomango, Ashok Kumar Das, Dasarathi Gamango and Sofia Firdous. Two other Congress

SHRINATE ATTACKS STATE GOVT

Bhubaneswar: Attacking the state government over rape cases that happened in the state, Congress leader and also the chairperson of party's social media platforms Supriya Shrinata Tuesday claimed there was a need to protect women from the BJP's 'misrule'. Addressing a press conference, Shrinata said it was unfortunate that such crimes were happening in a state where people worship Goddess Subhadra, and to which President Droupadi Murmu belongs. "The BJP government raises the slogan for 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', but in reality, we have to protect our daughters from the BJP's misrule," she claimed. "When the BJP was in power, the BJP MLAs remained silent. And, now that the BJP has formed the government, the BJP is silent. It shows that both BJD and BJP are in a nexus," she alleged.

MLAs - Tararasad Bahinipati and Ramesh Jena - were, however, not suspended as they were not present in the House when the announcement was being made. Bahinipati was earlier suspended for seven working days on similar grounds on March 11. As soon as Padhy announced the decision, Congress members created a ruckus in the Assembly, playing gongs as a mark of protest. The suspended MLAs also demonstrated in the Well of the House and re-cited hymns, even as Padhy urged them to vacate the Assembly and stop the sit-in. Opposition BJD condemned the Speaker's move, calling it a "motivated" one to suppress the voice of opposition in the Assembly. "Congress MLAs have been suspended to scare us. We will not be afraid of the action. We will fight and not compromise in any way," Bahinipati said. OPEC president Bhakta Charan Das also criticised the decision and demanded immediate withdrawal of the suspension order.

India aims to cut tax on 55% US imports

US President Donald Trump has not been kind on India though the overall sentiment back home, following his electoral triumph last November, was upbeat. In recent times, Trump has repeatedly labelled India as a 'tariff abuser' and 'tariff king,' vowing not to spare any nation from tariffs. India's exports to the US are substantial, amounting to almost 87% of the country's total exports which is worth around \$66 billion. The stern tariff measures by the US will potentially affect India's exports, and economy at large. Now that the US reciprocal tariff regime on Indian goods set to come into effect from April 2, attempts are being made to persuade the US to avoid or reduce these harsh measures by cutting down tax on American goods. The move is also seen as a way to maintain smooth trade relations, and avoid a trade war that could harm both large economies

- The United States has a trade deficit of \$45.6 billion with India.
- India is also considering wider tariff reform to lower barriers uniformly
- New Delhi wants to strike a deal before the reciprocal tariffs are announced
- Indian government officials warned that cutting tariffs on more than half of US imports hinges on securing relief from reciprocal tax.

The country wants to mitigate the impact of US President Donald Trump's reciprocal worldwide tariffs set to take effect from April 2, a threat that has disrupted markets and sent policymakers scrambling, even among Western allies. In an internal analysis, New Delhi estimated such reciprocal tariffs would hit 87% of its total exports to the United States worth \$66 billion, two government sources with knowledge of the matter told this agency. Under the deal, India is open to reducing tariffs on 55% of US goods it imports that are now subject to tariffs ranging from 5% to 30%, said both sources, who sought anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media. In this category of goods, India is ready to 'substantially' lower tariffs or even scrap some entirely, on imported goods worth more than \$23 billion from the United States, one of the sources said. India's trade ministry, the Prime Minister's office and a government spokesperson did not reply to mail seeking comments. Overall the US trade-weighted average tariff has been about 2.2%, data from the World Trade Organization shows, compared with India's 12%. The United States has a trade deficit of \$45.6 billion with India. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit in February, the two nations agreed to start talks towards clinching an early trade deal and resolving their standoff on tariffs. New Delhi wants to strike a deal before the reciprocal tariffs are announced and Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch will lead a delegation of officials from United States for trade talks from Tuesday. The tariff cut decision was not final, with other options under discussion such as sectoral adjustments of tariffs and product-by-product negotiations rather than a wide cut, said one of the officials.

2,832 wild animal deaths in 5 years

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The state reported deaths of 2,832 wild animals in the last five years while 799 people were killed in the attack. Forest and Environment Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia said Tuesday in the Assembly. The wild animals included elephants and tigers, he said, adding 806 animals were killed due to poaching. He responded to a query by BJP legislator Padma Lochan Panda. Altogether 4,043 people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the killing of wild animals during the five-year period, he said. As many as 799 people were killed and 1,962

others injured in elephant and other wild animal attacks during the period, the minister said. As per the data provided by the minister, deaths of 318 wild animals were reported in the Dhenkanal forest division, the highest among forest areas in the state, in the last five years. The deaths of 197 wild animals were reported in the Athagarh forest division, followed by Angul (151), Keonjhar (129), Balasore (117) Nayagarh (113), Chilika (103), and Keonjhar (102). Of 806 wild animals killed by poachers, 75 were reported in the Dhenkanal forest division, followed by 63 in Nayagarh, 55 each in Athamallik and Similipal South wildlife divisions, Singkhuntia said. **MORE P3**

3 workers crushed to death in Dhenkanal

Dhenkanal, March 25: At least three labourers were killed and another was injured Tuesday when they were run over by a road roller after being hit by a truck at a construction site in this district, police said. The accident occurred near Rekula village under the Kamakshyanagar police limits after the goods vehicle hit the four workers, and three of them were crushed to death under the road roller, a senior officer said. The workers were engaged in the construction of the Kamakshyanagar-Dhenkanal road, said Kamakshyanagar SDPO Gyanranjan Mishra. CM Mohan Charan Majhi expressed grief over the accident and announced a compensation of ₹4 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased.

Trump administration accidentally texted me its war plans: Goldberg

US national-security leaders mistakenly added Jeffrey Goldberg, The Atlantic's editor-in-chief, to an encrypted Signal chat discussing about upcoming military strikes on Houthis in Yemen. Here is the entire sequence of the conversations on the open-source encrypted messaging service

The world found out shortly before 2 pm eastern time March 15 that the United States was bombing Houthi targets across Yemen. I, however, knew two hours before the first bombs exploded that the attack might be coming. The reason I knew this is that Pete Hegseth, the secretary of defense, had texted me the war plan at 11:44 am. The plan included precise information about weapons packages, targets, and timing. This is going to require some explaining. The story technically be-

gins shortly after the Hamas invasion of southern Israel, in October 2023. The Houthi is—an Iran-backed terrorist organization whose motto is "God is great, death to America, death to Israel, curse on the Jews, victory to Islam"—soon launched attacks on Israel and on international shipping, creating havoc for global trade. Throughout 2024, the Biden administration was ineffective in countering these Houthi attacks; the incoming Trump

administration promised a tougher response. This is where Pete Hegseth and I come in. On Tuesday, March 11, I received a connection request on Signal from a user identified as Michael Waltz. Signal is an open-source encrypted messaging service popular with journalists and others who seek more privacy than other text-mes-

saging services are capable of delivering. I assumed that the Michael Waltz in question was President Donald Trump's national security adviser. I did not assume, however, that the request was from the actual Michael Waltz. I have met him in the past, and though I didn't find it particularly strange that he might be reaching out to me, I did think it somewhat unusual, given the Trump administration's contentious relationship with journalists—and Trump's periodic fixation on me specifically. It immediately crossed my mind that someone could be masquerading as Waltz in order to somehow entrap me. It is not at all uncommon these days for nefarious actors to try to induce journalists to share information that could be used against them. **► P10**

OrissaPOST BUSINESS EMINENCE AWARDS

5th Edition

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CLOONEY QUILTS ROMANTIC FILMS

George Clooney will no longer romance onscreen. The 63-year-old Hollywood icon announced of putting his lovable image behind him. Clooney stated that now he's in his 60s and doesn't want to compete with 25-year-old leading men.

SCHUMER FINALLY CRACKS THE CODE ON WEIGHT LOSS

Actress-comedian Amy Schumer finally seems to have cracked what works in her weight loss after an earlier failed attempt. Schumer said that she is having "a really good experience" taking a new weight loss drug, reports *People* magazine.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Common sense is a good thing, especially when deciding about the future. So by all means, do your calculations: take advice, check out your astrological reading. But finally, says Ganesha, let your common sense guide you.

TAURUS
There is a strong possibility that you may switch over to a newer and more exciting job today, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to spend lavishly while on a shopping spree. In the evening, you will understand the importance of pampering loved ones with gifts, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
Today, you would want to take your beloved into your embrace and confidence. You will whisper your feelings and secrets into his/her ears as you hold him/her. There are other things though, in your list of pre-occupations, education being the topmost. You will be widely appreciated for your artistic bend. Your incredible energy levels will see you through a very eventful day.

CANCER
You may make a switch to a new job or get a job offer that you don't want to deny, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to go on a shopping spree and spend lavishly. In the evening, you will be spending your time and money on your loved ones.

LEO
Today, you are defined by high hopes and expectations. It makes you incredibly calculative, and you weigh all pros and cons before taking any decision regarding work. The upshot of this is that your performance in financial transactions will be phenomenal. After all, money always increases one's fascination and appeal, particularly in the eyes of the opposite sex, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Ganesha advises you to knit emotions and reasoning together. There may be an emotional overkill in the afternoon today. However, luck will turn out to be in your favour later in the day when you decide impulsively to go for an outing.

LIBRA
Some feelings last forever, and so do some relationships. Bear this in mind and look forward to the beginning of an enduring relationship today, says Ganesha. The joy of companionship shall spill over to the workplace as well, and keep you very delighted and elated today. But you need to watch out for spats with people around you, especially neighbours and acquaintances.

SCORPIO
You will understand the importance of creating a divide between your personal and professional life, feels Ganesha. On the professional front, your diligence and commitment to work will bring praise and benefits. Later in the evening, you will celebrate your success with your sweetheart.

SAGITTARIUS
Today is most likely to be a day of mixed fortunes for you, predicts Ganesha. At the workplace, you may have a hectic afternoon, burdened with more work than you can handle. In the evening, a loved one will understand your needs, and try to bring back cheer with a home-cooked meal for dinner.

CAPRICORN
Keep your fuel tanks ready as you are heading for a very active and exhausting day, today. The long list of activities will keep you occupied for the whole day and you'll enjoy the energy floating around, says Ganesha. Your career will be on the go, too, especially if you are freelancer. You will end up having projects of your choice.

AQUARIUS
The day will kick start with you deciding to opt for higher education or a personality development course. If you are a businessman or associated with finance, it will be a favourable day for you, foresees Ganesha. Through out the day, you will be occupied with one or the other thing but you will not be complaining.

PISCES
Honesty, sincerity and integrity both in your dedication to work and in your devotion to your family, is your hallmark. On the strength of this foundation, you will reach an important milestone today. Socially as well, your reputation will receive a boost, says Ganesha.

Rasha's spiritual journey



Mumbai: Rasha Thadani, who recently made her acting debut in *Azaad* alongside Aaman Devgan, opened up about her strong connection to spirituality in a recent interview with a film journal. The daughter of veteran actress Raveena Tandon and film distributor Anil Thadani shared that spiritual practices have always been a central part of her upbringing. She recalled attending Ramayana classes every Sunday as a child, where she and her brother, along with friends, learned stories, bhajans and shlokas like the Hanuman Chalisa and Gayatri Mantra.

Over the years, Rasha's spiritual journey has deepened, and she has actively visited sacred sites such as Kedarnath, Somnath and Rameswaram. For her, these visits are an expression of gratitude rather than a way to seek blessings. "I don't visit to ask for anything but simply to thank God for all he's given me. I'm truly grateful for his constant presence in my life," she said, highlighting her deep sense of appreciation for divine presence in her life.

On social media, Rasha often shares glimpses of her spiritual practices, earning admiration from fans for her grounded nature. As she embarks on her Bollywood journey, with *Azaad* marking her debut, she remains committed to staying connected to her faith while carving out her space in the industry.

NATIONAL KALINGA NATYA MAHOTSAV - DAY IV



Members of Bharatendu Natya Akademi from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, mesmerised the audience at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Tuesday with their performance in Hindi play *Karnagatha*. Written by Asif Alli, the play was directed by Oasis Sougajam. Screenwriter Rajaniranjana Dash, dramatist Upendra Nayak and film journalist Ashok Palit were among the dignitaries who attended the show.



Madhuri radiates golden glow

Mumbai: Madhuri Dixit took to social media to share her photos in a saree, flaunting her golden glow. Taking to her Instagram handle, the Dhak Dhak girl posted a couple of her gorgeous photos where she is seen posing in an orange saree that she paired with a statement green-coloured necklace. Sharing her images, Madhuri wrote, "Golden hour, golden glow, and a heart full of sunshine." Recently, the actress shared a hilarious reel featuring the trending dialogue: "Everyone take it in. Mental picture. Here we go. In case you wanted to see it with sunglasses, here's your shot. Hello. Okay. Thank you so much." Alongside the fun clip, she captioned the post with, "This was supposed to be my shot...I think? #HiTeam."

In the video, Madhuri, along with her team, was seen lip-syncing to the popular dialogue while sporting her sunglasses. The reel concluded with the entire team striking a pose together.

Work-wise, Madhuri was last seen in Anees Bazmee's horror-comedy *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*. She is now gearing up for her next project, the web series *Mrs. Deshpande*, where she will take on the intense role of a serial killer.

When Nutan slapped Sanjeev Kumar over rumours

Mumbai: Nutan, one of the most revered actresses in Indian cinema, was known for letting her work speak for itself. Her exceptional talent and professionalism earned her a special place in the hearts of fans and critics alike. However, she was left infuriated when rumours surrounding her personal life began to circulate, with actor Sanjeev Kumar being implicated in spreading them. In an interview, Nutan revealed the details of the incident, which caused a major stir in the industry.



Sholay actor was allegedly responsible for spreading these speculations. Furious, Nutan recalled

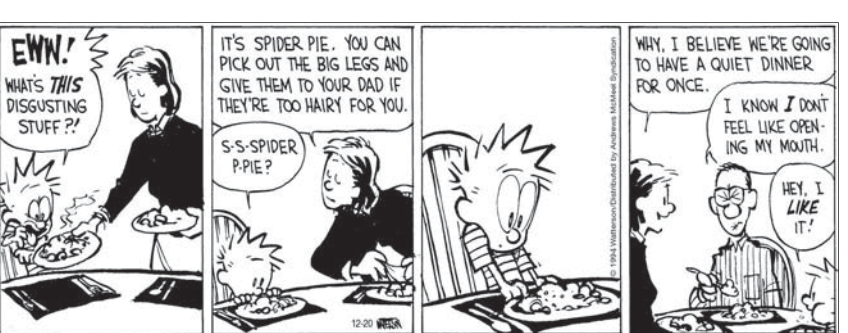
how she was shocked to hear that Sanjeev had reportedly confessed to reporters that they were living together and even discussing custody of her child. She vehemently denied these claims, stating, "What did he think, that I would ever leave my most wonderful husband for him? Sanjeev isn't even worth his toe nail!"

The situation reached a boiling point when Nutan confronted Sanjeev. His indifferent attitude and disrespectful behavior pushed her to slap him in anger. "And that did it! I couldn't take it anymore and I let him have one stinging slap, and a large piece of my mind," she admitted. Despite the controversy that followed, which affected her career and public image, Nutan maintained that she had no regrets about the incident. She received unwavering support from her family, especially her husband. Sadly, Nutan passed away February 21, 1991, after battling breast cancer, leaving behind a legacy of iconic performances.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

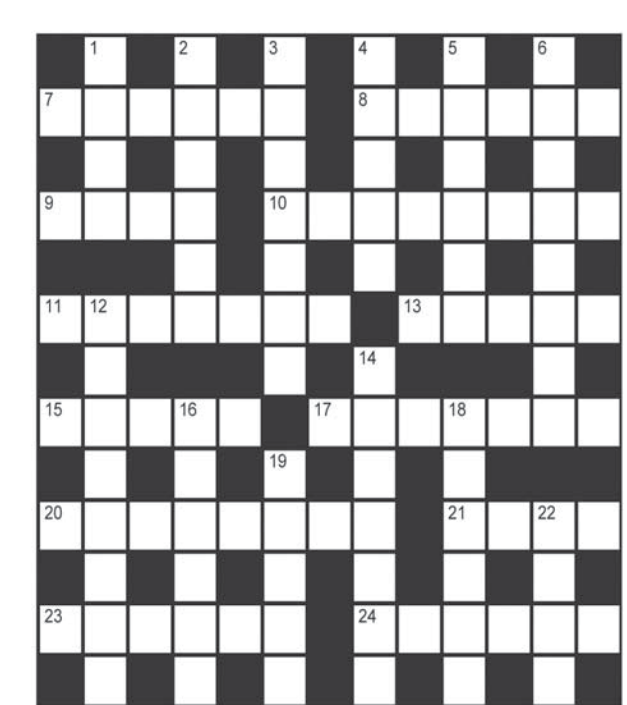


BREVITY



FUN POST

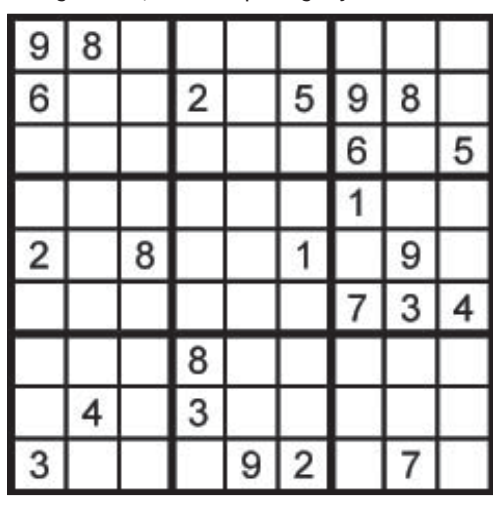
CROSSWORD



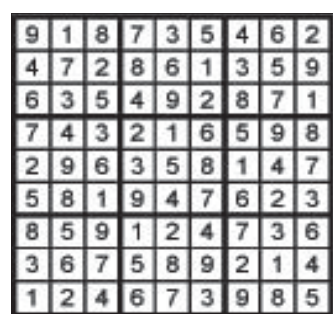
- Across**
- 7 Salted roe
 - 8 Airstrip
 - 9 Fruity pastry
 - 10 Peril
 - 11 Resting place
 - 13 Durable aromatic wood
 - 15 Aggressive
 - 17 Shockingly repellent
 - 20 Oversight
 - 21 Artful
 - 23 Cervid topper
 - 24 Wildcat
 - 5 Occupy
 - 6 Court game
 - 12 Masonry support
 - 14 He attends the opera
 - 16 Annoyance
 - 18 Make unhappy
 - 19 Kind of joint
 - 22 Chastise with a whip
- Down**
- 1 Festive party
 - 2 Martyr
 - 3 Planned undertaking
 - 4 Validation

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

Newly-appointed Orissa High Court Chief Justice Harish Tandon comes out of Srimandir after having a darshan of the sibling deities in Puri, Tuesday



downtown



WRAPPING UP ODISHA VISIT: President Droupadi Murmu is seen off by Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. City Mayor Sulochana Das, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, DGP Yogesh Bahadur Khurania and Khurda Collector Chanchal Rana among others are seen.

799 killed in wild animal attacks: Min

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Altogether 799 people were killed in wild animal attacks in the state in the last five years, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia told the Assembly Tuesday.

In a written reply to a query by BJP legislator Padma Lochan Panda, the Forest minister said 2,832 wild animals, including elephants and tigers, died in Odisha between 2020-21 and 2024-25 (so far). Of those, 806 were killed due to poaching.

Altogether 4,043 people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the killing of wild animals during the five-year period, he said.

"As many as 799 people were killed and 1,962 others injured in elephant and other wild animal attacks during the period," the minister said. As per the data provided by the minister, deaths of 318 wild animals were reported in Dhenkanal forest division, the highest among forest areas in the state, in the last five years.

Less than 1% migrant workers got licences

The state government has issued licences to less than 1 per cent migrant workers, in order to help them avail state-sponsored benefits. This was informed by Labour and Employee's State Insurance Minister of Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia in the Assembly, Tuesday. Replying to a query by BJD's Athagarh MLA Ranendra Pratap Swain, the minister said currently Deputy CMs Pravati Parida and Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo helm the state-level taskforce

on distress migration. Besides, an action plan for safety and welfare of migrant workers is being implemented. The minister's reply mentioned a consistent dip in issuance of licences to migrant workers since 2022. The percentage of licences issued against total number of workers did not cross 1% since 2019. "In 2019, Odisha issued 801 licences against 51,808 workers, while in 2020 this was 365 against 24,633 workers. Similarly, it was 1,466 against 94,482 work-

ers in 2022, and 1,231 against 81,232 workers in 2023," he added. Migrant workers in six districts- Bargarh, Ganjam, Bolangir, Ganjam, Kalahandi and Nuapada - logged over 50% of distributed licences. Of this, Bolangir topped the list with 2,399 licences in the last five years. In response to Salipur MLA Prashant Behera's question, the minister said 58 migrant workers in 14 districts received a total of 5.92 lakh honourarium from the state coffers.

The deaths of 197 wild animals were reported in the Athagarh forest division, followed by Angul (151), Keonjhar (129), Balasore (117), Nayagarh (113), Chilika (103) and Keonjhar (102).

Of 806 wild animals killed by poachers, 75 were reported in the Dhenkanal forest division, followed by 63 in Nayagarh, 55 each in Athamallik and Similipal South wildlife divisions, the

minister said. The other forest divisions that account for a high number of poaching deaths during the period include Athagarh (50), Boudh (31), Redhakhol (29), Keonjhar (29), Cuttack (27), Rajnagar (27) and Satkosia (26).

The minister also informed the House that the highest of 147 people were killed by wild animals in the Dhenkanal forest

division of the state and 76 in the Angul division during the five years. Keonjhar forest division reported 69 such death cases, followed by 54 in Baripada and 47 in the Rourkela forest division.

According to official sources, the Forest department is providing an ex gratia of ₹6 lakh to the next of kin of the person, who dies in a wild animal attack in the state.

High drama as suspended Cong MLAs refuse to leave Assembly

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The Assembly Tuesday witnessed high drama after 12 suspended Congress MLAs refused to vacate the Well of the House as they staged a demonstration, demanding formation of a committee to inquire crimes against women during the eight-month BJP rule in the state.

Speaker Surama Padhy earlier in the afternoon announced the suspension of the 12 MLAs, including Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Rama Chandra Kadam, for seven days over 'indiscipline' in the House. As the suspended legislators refused to leave, the Speaker, before adjourning the House for the day, asked the marshals to convince the agitating members to vacate the Well.

Senior Congress member Taraprasad Bahinipati, who was one of the two party MLAs to have escaped the suspension, asserted, "We have decided to spend the night in the Well of the House and continue to demand formation of the committee. Let them throw us out by using marshals or the police. We are not scared."

Congress MLAs Taraprasad Bahinipati and Ramesh Jena were, however, not suspended as they were not present in the House when the announcement was being made. Bahinipati was earlier suspended for seven working days on similar grounds March 11. As soon as the Speaker announced the decision, Congress members created a ruckus in the Assembly, playing gongs as a mark of protest. They also chanted 'Ram dhums' in the House and continued to stage a dharna in the Well.

The action came as Congress MLAs have been staging protests in various manners in the Assembly such as blowing whistles, flutes and playing gongs and cymbals, while pressing for their demand for a House Committee formation. The Assembly has not been able to function properly since the beginning of the second phase of the Budget session March 7.

Amid the pandemonium Tuesday, the Speaker adjourned the proceedings at least 14 times, on seven occasions before lunch and as many times after it reassembled at 4pm. While the Congress members played gongs and blew flutes during the day, the BJD members shouted slogans, demanding proportionate reservation for ST, SC and OBC candidates in education and jobs. Even the all-party meeting convened by Deputy Speaker Bhabani Shankar Bhoi failed to yield any result as the din continued in the House.

Three senior BJD members - Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik, eight-time MLA RP Swain and Ganeswar Behera - urged the Speaker to reconsider the decision of suspension of MLAs.

OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das also criticised the decision, and demanded immediate withdrawal of the suspension order. While justifying the act of playing gongs in the Assembly, Das said, "What is wrong in it? This is done in temples and the Assembly is also a temple of democracy. It was a means to awaken the government, which remained silent on the rise of crimes against women."

Meanwhile, the CLP leader said he suffered injuries after security personnel 'abruptly shut the door' of the lobby in the evening.

4 get life imprisonment for 2017 Jatni murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: A local court here Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to four persons after holding them guilty of killing a man under Jatni police limits in Khurda in 2017.

Second ADJ, Bhubaneswar Bandana Kar convicted Halu Behera, 55, Mrunal Behera, 55, Gopinath Behera, 32, and Nalu Behera, 54 - all locals of Jatni - for brutally assaulting Anup Behera that led to his death during treatment, according to additional public prosecutor Salil Kumar Pradhan.

According to the case details, Mrunal and Anup were at loggerheads over a trivial issue. "In a bid to settle score, Mrunal, along with the three, mercilessly attacked Anup with wooden sticks and iron rods near his house around 1am March 3, 2017. They also thrashed Anup's mother Kuni and his brother Sandeep when they intervened," said an official.

On being informed, PCR vehicle personnel reached the spot and rushed Anup to Capital Hospital, where he succumbed at around 4am. Later, Anup's relative Swarup Behera approached the Jatni police, who registered a case (340/2017) under Sections 147, 148, 149, 302 and 307 of IPC against the four and launched a manhunt to nab them. Soon, the four were arrested, forwarded to court and the trial began.

SHRINATE SLAMS GOVT

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 25: All India Congress Committee (AICC) social media and digital platform chairperson and party spokesperson Supriya Shrinate Tuesday slammed the state government over rising crimes against women in the state.

Addressing a presser here, Shrinate came down heavily on the state government and said, "Odisha is currently going through a humanitarian crisis which no one is talking about. A Class XII girl committed suicide in Kendrapara as an examiner frisked her inappropriately. School girls are getting pregnant while rape of minor girls has become an everyday affair. All these are happening under the nose of BJP government. "There is an urgent need to protect women from the BJP's misrule," Shrinate said.

"The BJP government raises the slogan for 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', but in reality, we have to protect our daughters from the BJP's misrule," she claimed. "When the BJD was in power, BJP MLAs remained silent. And, now that the BJP has formed the government, the BJD is silent. It shows that both BJD and BJP are in a nexus," she alleged.

Shrinate said the Congress would not tolerate it, and that is why it is continuously raising the issue in the Assembly.

"About 1,600 cases of crimes against women, including 60 gangrapes, were reported in the state in the last nine months after BJP came to power. These figures are of those cases which were reported to the police. A lot of cases are there that have not been reported," she claimed.

Reacting to the allegations, senior BJP MLA Tankadhar Tripathy claimed the Congress is trying to mislead the people of the state.



The GST Waiver of Interest & Penalty Scheme

Introduced under Section 128A of CGST Act

Insertion of Section 128A in CGST Act to provide for conditional waiver of interest or penalty or both relating to demands raised under Section 73, for FY 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Considering the difficulties faced by the taxpayers, during the initial years of implementation of GST, amendments made in the CGST Act:

- To provide for waiver of interest and penalties for demand notices issued under Section 73 of the CGST Act for the fiscal years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

In cases where the taxpayer pays the full amount of tax demanded in the notice upto 31.03.2025

The corresponding forms must be submitted by June 30, 2025

This timeline provides businesses sufficient time to comply with the scheme while encouraging them to regularise GST compliance without hefty interest & penalty.

Ease Your Compliance Journey with the GST Waiver of Interest & Penalty Scheme!

For more details, please refer to Section 128A of the CGST Act, 2017, Notification No. 20/2024-Central Tax dated 08.10.2024 and Circular No. 238/32/2024-GST dated 15.10.2024

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WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	35.6°	34.5°
Min Temp	20.5°	19.6°
Humidity	81%	82%
Rainfall	0.7	Nil

FORECAST
Mainly clear sky

CLASSIFIED
AFFIDAVIT

The name of 'Mishika', D/o- Manas Ranjan Sahoo, F144, Cosmopolis, Aiginia, Bhubaneswar- 751019, Odisha, has been changed to 'Mishika Sahoo' as declared by Manas Ranjan Sahoo, sworn in before Mrs. Laxmi T., Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, vide affidavit No.- CF No.- 145/24.03.2025 w.e.f. 24.03.2025. The revised name 'Mishika Sahoo' will appear in all the identity proof(s) and personal documents henceforth.

Before Notary Public, Bhubaneswar on Dtd.22.03.2025 I, Sangam Nanda, S/o. Lalit Mahanandia. At: Gudabahal, P.O.: Dhadalapada, Dist.: Boudh, PIN - 762026 changed my surname from Sangam Mahanandia to 'Sangam Nanda'. Henceforth I shall be known as 'Sangam Nanda' for all purposes.

Before Notary Public, Bhubaneswar on Dtd.22.03.2025, my son's name has been changed from 'Shubham Prajapati' to 'Subhransu Sekhar Pradhan'. Henceforth, he shall be known as Subhransu Sekhar Pradhan, S/o. Alekha Pradhan, At: Sugal, P.O.: Suniti, P.S.: Tantiapala, Kendrapara - 754224 for all purposes. Namita Pradhan (Mother).

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, dated: 25.03.2025 I, Sibasis Sahoo, S/o. Bhramarbar Sahoo, Address: At/P.O.: Tulanga, Via: Tiran Tulanga, P.S.: Tirtol, Dist.: Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, PIN - 754138, declare that I have changed my name from Sibashish Sahoo to Sibasis Sahoo. Henceforth I shall be known as Sibasis Sahoo for all purposes.

I, Pravhudutta Patnaik, D/o. Gagan Bihari Bhuyan, resident of At: Andarpur, New Colony, P.O.: Kalyani Nagar, P.S.: Madhupatna, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN - 753013, Odisha declare by this affidavit No. 129, dated 20.03.2025, That now onwards I shall be known as Pravudutta Bhuyan for all future purposes.

STEP TO STRENGTHEN ELECTORAL PROCESS

CEO holds key meet with political parties

CEO R Santhagopalan emphasises role of booth level agents in maintaining voter list accuracy and ensuring fair elections



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: In a move towards ensuring a smooth and transparent election process, the State Chief Electoral Officer R Santhagopalan held a meeting with representatives from various political parties here Tuesday, in order to seek suggestions on improving the electoral process.

The meeting was an opportunity for key figures from political parties to voice their concerns. It was attended by representatives from several prominent political parties such as Amar Patnaik (BJD), Sivananda Roy (INC), Dushmanta Kumar Deb (CPM), Madhusudan Yadav (BSP), and Sudipta Kumar Das (AAP).

One of the central topics of discussion was the inclusion of Booth Level Agents (BLAs) in the electoral process. Santhagopalan explained how these agents would play a critical role in ensuring the accuracy of the voters' lists. The representatives were encouraged to appoint BLAs to help with the continuous update of voter lists by assisting eligible citizens in submitting applications for the inclusion, correction, deletion, and transfer of voter entries.

"Every recognised political party must appoint a district

representative to appoint Booth Level Agents," Santhagopalan stressed. Each party would need to ensure that these agents were registered voters in their respective areas, providing the much-needed local insight and verification.

The role of BLAs was not just administrative but also preventive. They would help identify deceased or displaced voters, ensuring the voter list remained current. It was clear that these agents were crucial in maintaining the integrity of the election process, preventing fraudulent entries, and ensuring a fair election.

"It's not just about the elections themselves. It's about adhering to rules throughout the entire year," Santhagopalan noted. He stressed that violation such as failing to report expenses would not be tolerated, and the Election Commission had a clear framework for tracking and verifying these expenses.

CEO also pointed out that the National Election Commission issues handbooks and manuals detailing the procedures and rules, all of which were accessible for review and download on their official website. This would help political parties ensure full compliance with the established norms.

Corrupt officials to be removed: CS

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja directs departments to enforce premature retirement policy, ensuring transparency and efficiency in governance

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja has directed all government departments to strictly implement the General Administration (GA) and Public Grievance (P.G.) department's circular dated September 24, 2019, regarding the premature retirement of government employees with doubtful integrity or inefficiency.

In a letter issued Monday to all Secretaries, Ahuja reiterated that the policy aims to weed out officers and employees who fail to meet ethical and performance standards in public service.

The circular, issued under Clause (a) of Rule 71 of the



Odisha Service Code, mandates a review of government servants upon completing 30 years of service or reaching the age of 50 and 55 years.

However, it has come to the government's notice that many departments have not been adhering to these guidelines, thereby defeating the purpose of ensuring efficiency in administration.

The Chief Secretary stressed that retaining officers and staff with question-

able integrity or poor performance undermines the efficiency of government offices and is detrimental to public interest.

He instructed all Secretaries to conduct regular review meetings as per the 2019 circular to assess the integrity and effectiveness of officials. Additionally, he directed them to ensure that all heads of departments under their jurisdiction hold review meetings on schedule.

Ahuja emphasised that strict enforcement of these guidelines is essential to maintaining transparency and accountability in governance. He urged all departments to take immediate steps to implement the premature retirement policy rigorously, ensuring that only competent and ethical officials continue to serve in government positions.

Free eye check-up camp for bus drivers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Over 100 bus drivers and support staff benefited from a free eye check-up camp organised at the Baramunda Bus Owners' Association (BBOA) office as part of a collaborative effort by Rotary International District 3262, the Master Girija Memorial Road Safety Foundation Trust (MGMRSTF), and the Commissionerate Traffic aiming to promote road safety by ensuring drivers maintain good vision.

The camp, conducted by experienced doctors from the Rotary Royal Eye Hospital, provided free eye examinations and spectacles to those in need.

Rotary district governor Rotarian Yajnasish Mohapatra inaugurated the event as the chief guest. DCP Traffic Tapan Kumar Mohanty and BBOA president Rotarian Barada Prasanna Acharya also attended the camp, urging drivers to undergo regular eye check-ups to prevent accidents and ensure safe driving.

The initiative was supervised by Rotary district road safety chairperson and MGMRSTF president Amiya Bala Parida. The event was coordinated by Rotary district road safety co-chairs, Rotarians Shakyasingh Pattanayak, Byomkesh Prusti and Vighneswar Behera.

National seminar at Utkal varsity

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The department of Sociology at Utkal University Tuesday organised a one-day national seminar on Development-Induced Displacement: Issues and Experiences, supported by Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) 2.0.

The seminar brought together scholars and experts from national and state universities to discuss challenges related to displacement and rehabilitation policies. A souvenir (Abstract Book) was also released on the occasion.

Inaugurating the seminar, department of Sociology head Rabindra Garada remarked that "development and displacement are two sides of the same coin, operating in an economy of love and fear." He emphasised resilience and sustainability as crucial to addressing displacement issues.

University vice-chancellor Sabita Acharya highlighted the plight of displaced tribal women, stating that "displace-



ment diminishes their social status and decision-making power." She stressed the need for inclusive development that transforms choices into opportunities.

Delivering the keynote address, retired IAS officer Akhil Bihari Ota described tribals as "development refugees who suffer loss of common property and cultural erosion." He urged policymakers to prioritise "the development of the displaced."

The seminar featured four technical sessions covering themes such as Development

and Displacement Discourse, Land Acquisition and Displacement, Analytical Frameworks of Rehabilitation and Resettlement, and Anti-Displacement Resistance. Thirteen resource persons from national and state institutions participated in plenary discussions, while 48 research papers were presented across the sessions.

The event concluded with a valedictory address by Professor Kishore Chandra Samal, who emphasised the need for "complete economic rehabilitation" of affected communities.

PRSI Bhub chapter gets new leadership

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Bhubaneswar chapter, elected a new chairman and office bearers for the next two years at its 6th Annual General Meeting (AGM) here recently. The newly-formed team aims to elevate PR standards, foster industry collaboration, and expand professional development opportunities in Odisha.

Head of Corporate Affairs at Paradeep Phosphates Ltd. Sudhi Ranjan Mishra was unanimously elected as the new chairman. Recognised for his leadership and deep industry knowledge, Mishra envisions strengthening professional ethics, promoting knowledge-sharing initiatives, and increasing PR outreach in the state. Other key appointments include Sanjay Kumar

The newly-elected team is committed to advancing the PR profession by organising skill-building workshops, seminars, and networking events

Sahoo (vice chairman, Jindal Steel and Power Ltd), Krushna Chandra Mahapatra (secretary, Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd), Ansuman Pattnayak (treasurer, Kalinga Hospital Ltd), and Sandeep Sethi (joint secretary, Odisha Mining Corporation).

The executive committee comprises experienced professionals such as Shashank Pattnaik and Amartyoti Mahapatra, alongside emerging PR leaders like Sambit

Mohanty, Dharitri Satpathy, Dipanwita Mishra, and Anurag Sahu.

The newly-elected team is committed to advancing the PR profession by organising skill-building workshops, seminars, and networking events. Plans also include PR boot camps for students to nurture young talent and create industry-ready professionals.

With a renewed focus on innovation and collaboration, the chapter aims to play a crucial role in shaping Odisha's communication landscape while fostering a strong community of PR practitioners.

Speaking on the occasion, newly-elected chairman Mishra said, "Our team aims to make the society more dynamic and prominent by fostering meaningful collaborations and organising impactful PR-centric events across the state."

Workshop to promote PPVFR act organised

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Kishi Vigyan Kendra Khurda, Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), in collaboration with the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPVFR) Authority and ICAR-Agricultural Technology Application Research Institute (ICAR-ATARI), Kolkata, organised a workshop on the PPVFR Act, 2001 here Tuesday.

The aim of the workshop was to enhance understanding of the PPVFR Act, fostering awareness about the importance of safeguarding agro-biodiversity and providing practical knowledge on registering plant varieties for the benefit of farmers.

ICAR-ATARI director Pradip Dey emphasised the role of farmers in preserving traditional plant varieties and highlighted the potential for commercialisation and integration of these varieties into value chains.

ICAR-Central Rice Research Institute (CRRRI), Cuttack director AK Nayak explained the origins and significance of the act and urged farmers to register their preserved varieties under it. ICAR-CIFA director PK Sahoo encouraged farmers to leverage the act for securing rights and benefits of their crop varieties. He also encouraged farmers to register their unique crop varieties, pointing out that doing so would provide them with legal rights and benefits, ultimately empowering them.



The awardees included senior assistant loco pilot Chandrageer Kumar Raut (Khurda Road), senior goods train manager Upendra Kumar (Titlagarh), track maintainer-IV Suresh Gagaray (Harichandanpur), track maintainer-II Sudhansu Shekhar Das (Gorakhnath), and track maintainer-IV Kilo Sonu (Manavar, Koraput).

Punkval commended the employees for their remarkable vigilance and swift actions, which are crucial in maintaining the smooth and safe functioning of the railway network. He emphasised that the dedication of railway personnel plays a vital role in ensuring passenger safety and operational efficiency.

He urged all railway employees to stay alert and committed to maintaining a secure and smoothly functioning railway network.

LOST

I, Panchanan Sahu, S/o. Shyam Sundar Sahu, R/o. Village: Dengapadar, P.O.: Baghiabahal, P.S.: Manamunda, Dist.: Boudh declare that I have lost the Register Sale Deed bearing Regd. No. 337/1999 on the way on dated 13.03.2025 while I was coming from Kantamal to Rundimahul. Inspite of my through search I could not traced out the same.

Youth Parliament at Assembly

Two-day event commenced with great enthusiasm, bringing together around 140 participants from different districts across the state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy emphasised the pivotal role of youth in nation-building and achieving the vision of Viksit Odisha 2036 and Viksit Bharat 2047 at the state-level Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament held on the Assembly premises Tuesday. She highlighted the need for grassroots empowerment to shape a progressive future.

The two-day event was inaugurated in the Assembly's conference hall, with around 140 participants from various districts of the state. Winners from this competition will represent the state at the national Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament in New Delhi.

Prominent attendees included Deputy Speaker Bhavani Shankar Bhoi, Higher Education and Youth Services Minister Suryabanshi Suraj, Health and IT Minister Mukesh Ma-

haling, MLAs Siddhant Mohapatra and Manas Kumar Dutta, and Assembly Secretary Satyabrata Raut. They applauded the enthusiasm of young participants and encouraged them to actively engage in policy discussions.

Organised under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, the initiative aims to foster leadership qualities among youth, providing a platform for dialogue and skill enhancement.

20-yr RI for sexual assault

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: A POCSO court sentenced Banti Sahu, 24, to 20 years' rigorous imprisonment for sexually assaulting a minor in 2019. The Chandrasekharpur police said the accused abducted the girl from her home and assaulted her in his rented house.

A ₹5,000 fine was also imposed. Police acted swiftly after her parents discovered her unconscious. Sahu was convicted under POCSO Act and IPC sections 363, 323, and 376(3). The court examined 12 witnesses before ruling.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	78017.19	▲ 32.81
NIFTY	23668.65	▲ 10.30
DOLLAR	85.70	▲ 0.09
EURO	92.79	▼ 0.14
GOLD	₹87,666	▲ ₹353
SILVER	₹99,174	▲ ₹1655

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Nat'l park status eludes Similipal

Mayurbhanj, Odisha's largest district, spans over an area of 10,418 sq km, with the Similipal Biosphere Reserve covering 5,569 sq km



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, March 25: Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary, one of the largest protected forests in India, is often regarded as the heart of Asia in terms of biodiversity. However, it is yet to get national park status, even though the state government had designated this region as a proposed wildlife sanctuary, December 3, 1979.

It was accorded preliminary recognition as a national park in 1986. UNESCO recognised it as a biosphere reserve under its 'Man and the Biosphere Programme' June 22, 1994. Additionally, discussions are underway to designate Similipal as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, according to Additional Chief Secretary Satyabrata Sahu. However, Similipal is yet to receive final notification as a national park. As a result, despite being home to a tiger reserve and an elephant sanctuary, Similipal has not yet gained independent recognition at the national level.

Mayurbhanj, Odisha's largest district, spans an area of 10,418 sq km, with the Similipal Biosphere Reserve covering 5,569 sq km. Within this, the Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary accounts for 2,306 sq km. It is the largest protected forest in India and the second largest in Asia. Among Odisha's two national parks and 18 wildlife sanctuaries, Similipal Biosphere Reserve stands out for its exquisite flora and fauna. During its 21st session, UNE-

SCO honoured Similipal as a World Biosphere Reserve May 26, 2009.

For preliminary national park status, the state government had issued a notification August 6, 1980 under Section 35(1) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, covering 303 sq km in North Similipal.

Later, in 1986 (through Notification No. 19525/8F(T)8/85-FF and HH), an additional 542.7 sq km were included, expanding the area to 845.70 sq km. However, the final notification under Section 35(4) of the Act has not yet been issued. After the preliminary notification under Section 35(3), a survey was con-

ducted, and Mayurbhanj District Collector issued a boundary declaration. Following the expiry of the declaration period, vide letter number 206/FSO, October 15, 2024 a proposal from the Collector was submitted to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and the Chief Wildlife Warden of Odisha to declare 845.70 sq km as a national park.

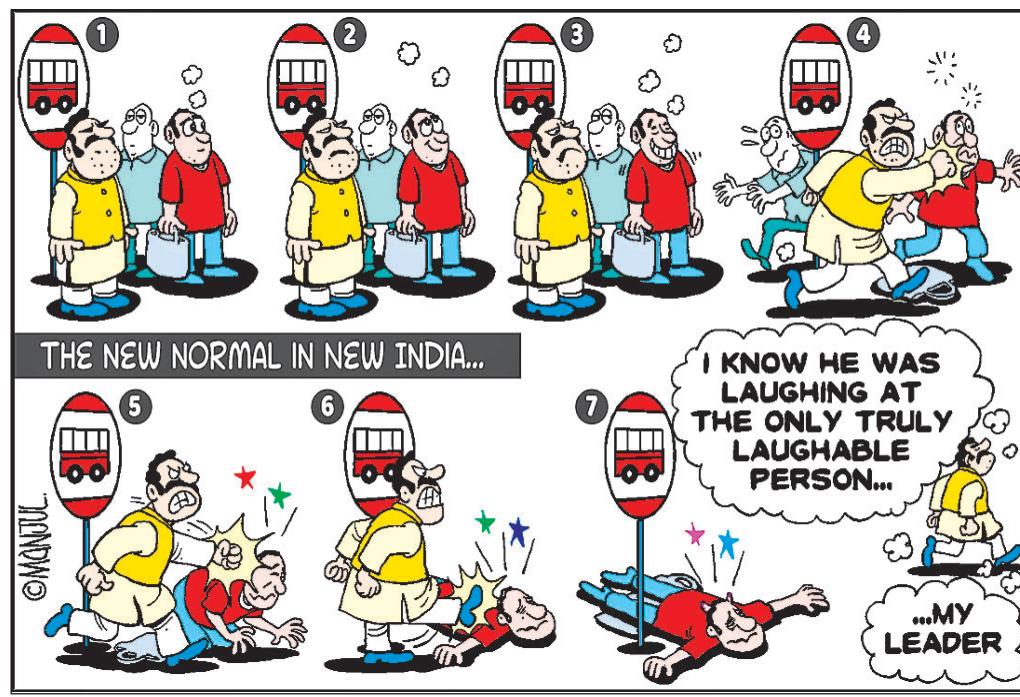
The proposal for final notification under Section 35(4) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, is still under government consideration, according to official sources. With Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia in charge of Forest, Environment, and Climate Change and Krushna Chandra Mohapatra heading Housing and Urban Development department, along with President Droupadi Murmu holding the highest office in the country, hopes are high that Similipal will soon receive its final national park status. Once recognised, it is expected to boost tourism and usher in new opportunities for the district's development.

7 sniffer dog squads to curb poaching

BARIPADA: Seven sniffer dog squads have been deployed in Similipal in the last three years to curb poaching, even as the Forest department has intensified patrolling in the biosphere reserve. Addressing a presser, Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (RCCF) and Field Director of the Tiger Conservation Project, Prakash Chand Gogineni, has stated that sniffer dog squads have been integrated with departmental teams to strengthen patrolling in sensitive and inaccessible areas of Similipal. These sniffer dogs have played a crucial role in assisting the Forest department during raids, successfully tracking poachers. In 2021, two trained German Shepherd sniffer dogs, Drona (Male) and Maya (Female), were deployed. Following their success, three more dogs—Leo (Male), a Belgian Shepherd; Khairi (Female), another Belgian Shepherd; and Honey (Female), a German Shepherd—were included in the squad in 2024. Furthermore, in 2025, two more German Shepherds, Chanka (Female) and Nanta (Male) are undergoing training. These sniffer dogs can detect the footprints of intruding poachers and locate hunting equipment, helping to track poacher movements effectively. After receiving specialised training, the dogs are monitored by expert handlers.



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



48 tagged Olive Ridley turtles return to nest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, March 25: At least 48 Olive Ridley turtles, which were tagged with metallic flipper by the Zoological Survey India (ZSI) during the 2021-23 period on the Odisha coast, returned to the Rushikulya river in Ganjam district to lay eggs in the last three days, officials said Tuesday.

The ZSI, in collaboration with the Odisha Forest department, had started to tag Olive Ridley turtles on the state coast in January 2021 to study the movements of the marine species.

The second phase of the mass nesting in the Rushikulya rookery started Saturday and a total of 1,30,031 turtles have laid eggs in the last three days, they said. Despite rain, the turtles continued to lay eggs on the 5-km-long beach from Purunabandh to Bateswar, the officials said.

On Monday, 41,731 turtles laid



mass nesting, which took place from February 16 to 23, the authorities concerned had spotted 382 turtles with metallic tags.

A record number of 6,98,718 Olive Ridley turtles had laid eggs on the beach in the first phase. Mohapatra said they had tagged around 12,000 turtles at the Rushikulya rookery and Gahirmatha marine sanctuary during the 2021-23 period.

"We have collected photographs of turtles with metallic tags. We will conduct detailed studies on the tags after the completion of mass nesting," he said.

In 2023, the authorities had spotted over 100 tagged turtles in the Rushikulya river mouth, he added.

Basudev Tripathy, another senior scientist of ZSI, said the government needs to carry out the tagging exercise for a few more years to study movements and other aspects of the marine species.

Over 3K villagers to be shifted for missile testing



AGENCIES

Balasore, March 25: People in villages within a 2.5 km radius of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) will be evacuated to designated shelters for safety reasons as part of preparations for a missile trial from Launch Complex 3 at Chandipur, a DRDO base, March 26 (Wednesday).

A meeting on the evacuation plans was held Tuesday under the chairmanship of District Collector S Mayur Vikash.

Around 3,200 people from six villages will be shifted to three temporary shelters until the missile testing is completed, reports said.

According to reports, 1,150 residents from Jaydevkasaba Pahi and Sahajannagar Pahi will be evacuated and sheltered at the Jaydev Kasaba multipurpose cyclone center. Similarly,

1,135 people from Khadu Pahi and Kusumuli Pahi will be moved to the Khadu cyclone center, while about 915 residents from Bhipur Pahi and Tundra Pahi will be shifted to the Bhipur multipurpose cyclone center.

Residents have been informed about the relocation through public announcements. The evacuation process will begin at 6 am, and they will remain in temporary shelters until the mission is completed.

The evacuees will be provided with breakfast, lunch, and monetary compensation, which will be transferred to eligible individuals' bank accounts by 11 am. Around 100 district administration officials have been deployed to ensure a smooth evacuation process, and authorities have urged residents to cooperate, reports added.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Raj Prasad, Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Sudhakar Nayak, Nilgiri Sub-Collector Subhashree Rath, and in-charge Balasore Sub-Collector Madhusmita Samantaray were among others present at the meeting.

Boy burnt alive in Rourkela fire

ROURKELA: A boy was burnt alive in a fire at a Durga Puja pandal in Sector-6 area here Tuesday. His identity is still to be established, police said. According to them, the incident is believed to have occurred at around 2 pm. A group of boys were playing at the pandal in front of the Telephone Bhawan when some inflammable decorative materials like bamboo and curtains accidentally caught fire. The blaze spread quickly. While other kids managed to escape, one of them got trapped behind a wooden platform on the pandal and was charred beyond recognition. On being informed, Fire tenders of Rourkela Steel Plant and personnel from Sector-7 police station immediately rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control. "We are trying to trace the family of the deceased boy to establish his identity," a police official said.

Bandh over gangrape, murder of minor girl

PHULBANI: A dawn-to-dusk bandh was observed at the block headquarters town of Tikabali in Kandhamal district Tuesday, demanding action over the recent alleged gangrape and murder of a minor girl. The bandh call was given jointly by 'Banik Sangha', 'Nari Surakshya', 'Mahila Mahasangha' and 'Kandhamal Pragati Mahasangha'. Normal life was affected due to the strike as shops, educational institutions and other commercial establishments remained closed during the day. The agitation was launched after the police Sunday recovered the charred skeleton of a 16-year-old girl from a forest in neighbouring Ganjam district. The police have arrested four persons for their alleged involvement in the crime, an officer had earlier said. The girl had reportedly gone with her lover February 27, but did not return following which her family lodged a missing case at Tikabali police station.

WOMAN BREAKS BARRIERS BY BECOMING BUS CONDUCTOR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, March 25: Pravasini Mohapatra of Mohantypada in Sundargarh town has become an inspiration for many, proving that determination can overcome any adversity. In fact, Pravasini has proved the old adage that 'where there is a will, there is a way', and become an example for others to emulate.

After completing her plus two courses in science, Pravasini pursued computer education with dreams of securing a job. However, fate had other plans, and she got married at an early age.

"For a while, my family lived happily with my husband's income. Our joys grew when my daughter was born. However, fate took a turn during the Covid-19 pandemic when my husband lost his job, leading to financial turmoil in the family," Pravasini said.

The couple found it increasingly



difficult to earn a living to meet the expenses of the family. "We had to borrow from others to meet the day to day expenses of the family, but the loans kept on increasing. It only added to our misery. Struggling with mounting debts, I had to face criticisms and judgment from oth-

ers," she added.

However, determined to support her family, Pravasini applied for a bus conductor's position at the Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC), where her father once worked. Her perseverance paid off when she received the appointment letter. Today, Pravasini stands strong, earning a stable income and securing her family's future.

In recognition of her resilience, she was honoured at a ceremony in Delhi on the International Women's Day this year, receiving an award from former IPS officer Kiran Bedi. Upon her return to Odisha, she met with former Sundargarh MLA Kusun Tete to share her journey.

Tete, in turn, facilitated a meeting with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday evening. Expressing his admiration for her determination and self-confidence, the Chief Minister extended his best wishes and felicitated Pravasini.

विद्युत् मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE MEDICINE FOR EVERYONE
Relief on import of Drugs and Medicines

"India is going to play an important role in both the future of health and the health of the future"

- Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Exemption on Lifesaving Drugs

To support public health, **36 critical** lifesaving drugs and medicines have been fully exempted from Basic Customs Duty, facilitating their availability at more affordable prices for patients in need.

Concessional Customs Duty on Medicines

Basic Customs Duty on **6 lifesaving medicines** reduced to 5%, lowering the cost for both healthcare providers and patients, and making these treatments more accessible.

Supporting Patient Assistance Programmes (PAPs)

37 new Drugs and medicines under **13 Patient Assistance Programmes (PAP)** run by pharmaceutical companies, have been granted full exemption from Basic Customs Duty.

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FOCUS ECONOMY

TROUBLED GLOBALISATION



Over time, weaponised interdependencies will splinter global trade into rival blocs, undermining the ties that drove unprecedented prosperity gains for billions of people in recent decades

ample, with control of 70% of global lithium refining, China created a major supply-chain choke point in the electric-vehicle industry, and it has already begun to weaponize its position. The fraught Sino-American relationship is just one example of robust interdependency giving rise to mutual hostility. In Europe, the race is on to reduce dependency not only on Russian energy, but also on American payment rails and Chinese telecoms.

The problem is likely to persist, because weaponizing economic nodes is more palatable to policymakers than traditional warfare. But such tactics are not without costs. Over time, their use breeds suspicion and invites retaliation. States concerned about their exposure will assume more defensive postures, tightening trade policies and restricting technological collaboration.

In such a fractured strategic environment, each economic node – be it a shipping corridor, a payments system, or a data platform – becomes a new potential frontline. Over time, weaponized interdependencies will splinter global trade into rival blocs, undermining the ties that drove unprecedented prosperity gains for billions of people in recent decades. When every pipeline or semiconductor supply chain is viewed as a Trojan horse, cooperation on existential challenges like climate change or pandemics becomes even more difficult.

A delicate balance between deploying positional advantages and using them as strategic tools must be struck. By recognizing how weaponized interdependence has evolved, policymakers could avoid the kinds of ruinous mercantilist pitfalls that have run previous eras of globalization into the ground. The only question is whether they are actually inclined to do so.

The writer, a Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto, is a non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

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In January 2025, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to end the “weaponization” of federal law enforcement, alleging that the previous administration had exploited the interlinkages between law enforcement and intelligence to target political opponents. While critics dismissed the order as theatrics, loyalists applauded what they saw as a bold stand against partisan excess. Yet beneath this spectacle de jure looms a much larger story, involving energy pipelines, shipping routes, global trade, and financial flows.

Students of international affairs have long examined how asymmetrical economic relationships can be used to gain strategic advantages. A seminal twentieth-century contribution was Albert O. Hirschman’s 1945 National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade, which demonstrated that dominant powers in unbalanced trade relationships can leverage their position to extract political concessions from weaker partners. Similarly, in the 1980s, David A. Baldwin’s Economic Statecraft catalogued many different forms of economic leverage, arguing that sanctions, aid, and trade incentives can serve the same coercive functions as military power.

In the following decade, an influential article by Edward Luttwak argued that, after the Cold War, economic competition had supplanted military conflict as the prime arena for great-power rivalry. For a long time, many had assumed that economic interdependence naturally lends itself to peace. But by the early 2000s, this idea had begun to face fresh scrutiny, with critics arguing that such “liberal illusions” masked the friction arising from economic power imbalances.

Through it all, policy reflected theory. During the Cold War, as Alan P. Dobson observed, the United States substituted “economic warfare” for direct military engagement by leveraging trade embargoes, technology restrictions, and monetary policies. As Susan Strange’s sem-

inal theory of structural power showed, a state’s ability to shape the underlying systems of international finance, production, or technology allows it to set the terms of engagement for everyone else, reducing the need for direct coercion.

In late 2013, just before Russia sent “little green men” to seize Crimea and swaths of eastern Ukraine, Thomas Wright of the Brookings Institution saw that mutually beneficial economic networks could become vectors of strategic vulnerability. Three years later, Mark Leonard of the European Council on Foreign Relations coined the phrase “weaponizing interdependence” in an essay warning that the global networks once hailed for encouraging cooperation – cross-border investments, shipping lanes, digital infrastructure – could easily be hijacked.

Since then, scholars of the so-called Helsinki School (Mika Aaltola, Sören Scholvin, and Mikael Wigell) have been calling attention to “geoeconomic corridors” – oil and gas pipelines, shipping routes, undersea cables – that could become choke points, giving strategic leverage to those capable of controlling, using, or destroying them.

Meanwhile, in his 2013 book ‘Treasury’s War’, Juan Zarate, a former US deputy national security adviser, explained how financial networks can be harnessed to disrupt terrorist and other illicit activities. Similarly, Robert D. Blackwill and

Jennifer M. Harris illustrated how reliance on the SWIFT inter-bank messaging network offered effective new avenues for sanctions, and Cameron Rotblat extended this logic of “weaponizing the plumbing” to other payment systems, clearinghouses, and central-bank networks. In 2019, Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman wrote about “weaponized interdependence,” arguing that states commanding pivotal nodes in global networks of informational and financial exchange can coerce or monitor rivals. At the same time, Anthea Roberts, Henrique Choer Moraes, and Victor Ferguson traced the shift “toward a new Geoeconomic Order,” a world in which “securitization of economic policy and economization of strategic policy” had become the norm.

The context for all this research is an era in which globalization has grown more troubled. The US has refined the art of blacklisting alleged wrongdoers from dollar transactions, locking entities out of the global financial and payments system without firing a shot. But China, in turn, has spun its own web of dependency through its Belt and Road Initiative of debt-financed ports, railways, and industrial zones spanning Eurasia and Africa.

China has also increasingly used its dominance over rare-earth minerals (critical to much high-tech manufacturing) and refining to threaten anyone who defies it. For ex-



Carla Norrlöf

CHINA HAS ALSO INCREASINGLY USED ITS DOMINANCE OVER RARE-EARTH MINERALS AND REFINING TO THREATEN ANYONE WHO DEFIES IT

Turmoil in Turkey

Turkey is once again embroiled in a battle between an autocratic ruler and a social democrat who has become the only challenger against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan with the potential to beat him at the ballot box. The crisis has snowballed after Erdogan jailed on March 23 the social democrat and self-proclaimed Atatürkist Ekrem Imamoglu, who has been mayor of Istanbul since 2019. Significantly, the arrest was made the day he was to be declared as the Republican People’s Party (CHP) candidate for the next presidential election.

Predictably, Erdogan has levelled multiple accusations at his opponent, including that of “corruption.” As the government denies it is a case of witch-hunting on the plea that the arrest was ordered by the court, Imamoglu pleads innocence. To make matters worse for Erdogan, Imamoglu got nearly 15 million votes in a presidential primary organised by Turkey’s main opposition CHP. In a sign of growing national support, the party announced on March 24 that an estimated 1.7 million members were joined by 13 million non-party members in supporting Imamoglu to become its official candidate for the next presidential election, which is due to take place in 2028.

That the people are rallying behind Imamoglu is clear both from the number of votes he has secured in the primary and also the widespread protests that erupted following his arrest. Trouble had been brewing since he was detained on March 20. His formal arrest on March 24 exacerbated the unrest. Erdogan’s critics insist that it was the looming primary that triggered the arrest. People turned out in such large numbers that voting was extended by three and a half hours. The CHP commented that the results have completely opened Erdogan’s legitimacy to question and made an early election inevitable.

For Imamoglu’s part he has denied all the allegations against him and called for more nationwide protests. In a statement from prison, he exuded confidence and said the “record level of participation” in the primary made him “very happy”.

That there have been attempts from the government to suppress dissenting voices is clear from the fact that the government sought to order the closure of hundreds of social media accounts on X. The Elon Musk-owned free-speech extolling company announced its objections to “multiple court orders” from the Turkish Information and Communication Technologies Authority to block over 700 accounts of news organizations, journalists, political figures, students, and others within Turkey. At the same time it also suspended several accounts linked to the opposition. Many of the accounts were reportedly associated with university activists organising protests. Turkey’s Ministry of the Interior said the authorities had found hundreds of social media accounts suspected of inciting hatred.

The fact remains that there has been worrying regression of democracy in Turkey since 2013. The country has witnessed brutal and bloody end of peace negotiations with the Kurds and the imprisonment of political figures. Added to this were the repercussions of the failed coup d’état of 2016 and the gigantic purges within public institutions of members of the brotherhood of the preacher Fethullah Gulen with whom the President had been allied for decades. Then came the adoption of freedom-destroying laws, the dismissal of mayors and the increasing number of arrests of intellectuals, artists and journalists on the left or close to the liberal opposition. This pattern is being followed by autocratic rulers in different countries across the continents currently.

Erdogan may appear safe at this stage as the presidential election is slated to be held three years later. He has apparently a long time to draw his strategy to take on his rival at the polls. However, the growing economic crisis in Turkey and the groundswell of support for Imamoglu appear to be ominous for Erdogan and can be read as signs of hope for the liberal forces in the Opposition.

WISDOM CORNER

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence
HELEN KELLER

Once we start to act, hope is everywhere. So instead of looking for hope, look for action. Then, and only then, hope will come
GRETA THUNBURG

Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world
MALALA YOUSAFZAI

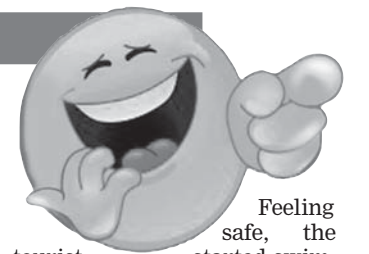
THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1812: German composer Ludwig van Beethoven died of cirrhosis of the liver at age 56.
- 1874: American poet Robert Frost, much admired for his depictions of rural New England life and his realistic verse portraying ordinary people, was born in San Francisco.
- 1979: The historic peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, agreed to by Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat and based on the Camp David Accords mediated by U.S. President Jimmy Carter in September 1978, was signed.
- 1992: Heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson was sentenced to six years in prison following a rape conviction in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- 1997: Police discovered the bodies of 39 members of Heaven’s Gate, an American religious group that believed in unidentified flying objects; they had committed suicide in the belief that a spaceship was arriving to take them to a better place.

LOL

SAFE TO SWIM HERE

While sports fishing off the Florida coast, a tourist capsized his boat. He could swim, but his fear of alligators kept him clinging to the overturned craft. Spotting an old beachcomber standing on the shore, the tourist shouted, “Are there any gators around here?!”



Feeling safe, the tourist started swimming leisurely toward the shore. About halfway there he asked the guy, “How’d you get rid of the gators?”

“We didn’t do nothing,” the beachcomber said.

“The sharks got them.”

IN JEST THIS

Moderate exercise is enough for longevity



Melvin Durai

RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT BEING EXTREMELY ACTIVE DOES NOT INCREASE LONGEVITY. IT’S ENOUGH TO DO WHAT THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDS

Five years ago, in the midst of the Covid pandemic, I decided to start running regularly. A year later, I joined a gym and added weight-lifting to my exercise routine. I’ve tried to walk or run for at least 10,000 steps a day (using an app on my phone to keep track) and lift weights three times a week. The impact on my body has been undeniable: I wake up each day feeling every strained muscle and stiff joint.

Overall, I’m in better shape, but I’ve suffered several injuries, including a couple that have become chronic. If I run too fast, I strain my achilles tendon; if I lift

too much, I strain my shoulder. “Take it easy,” my body screams at me. “You’re not in the Old Man Olympics. Nobody’s giving you a medal.”

I exercise to be healthier, hoping that it will not only improve my quality of life, but also expand my life span. But perhaps I need to cut back on the intensity of my

exercise. It isn’t really helping me live longer, according to a Finnish study.

The study is based on health data collected from 23,000 Finnish twins born before 1958. Their physical activity was assessed at three points – in 1975, 1981 and 1990 – and their mortality rate was recorded until 2020.

Based on the health data, each participant was placed in one of four groups: sedentary, moderately active, active and highly active. I am not sure exactly how scientists defined each group, but here’s my best guess:

Sedentary: Participant does not believe in walking, except from the bed to the couch. Running is a rare occurrence, and usually involves a barking dog.

Moderately active: Participant walks and runs, but usually out of necessity, such as walking to the neighborhood store and running after the bus.

Active: Participant makes an effort to exercise three times a

week, going for a walk or running voluntarily. Participant may own an exercise machine and may occasionally use it.

Highly active: Participant enjoys being in the best shape possible, spending more than an hour each day on sweat-inducing activities, such as speed walking, running and playing high-level chess. Participant is eager to sign up for various competitions, including marathons, 5K runs and egg-and-spoon races.

The researchers found that being extremely active does not increase longevity. It’s enough to do what the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends: 150 to 300 minutes of moderate exercise per week or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous activity per week.

“Our results suggest that meeting WHO recommendations for physical activity is sufficient for life span benefits, and more intense exercise does not provide additional benefits,” said Elina Sillanpää, associate professor in the Faculty

of Sport and Health Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland.

She added that it’s not easy to make a causal connection between physical activity and lifespan. “People with diseases or underlying health conditions may be less active, and it’s natural for individuals close to death to move less, which may cause reverse causality.”

The bottom line is that you do not have to go crazy with your exercise to live a long life. Just try to be active, not sedentary. Of course, exercise provides numerous other benefits, aside from potentially extending your life. Despite the strained muscles and stiff joints I often endure, exercise has helped me lose weight (or avoid gaining weight). It has also helped me gain strength. Nowadays, when my wife asks me to get the big bag of rice from the top shelf of the cupboard, I can move it to the edge myself – and then let gravity take over.

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



Religion-based reservation unacceptable

Sir, Apropos, ‘Shivakumar’s remarks on Muslim reservation spark political uproar,’ Orissa POST, Mar 25. The reservations are constitutionally mandated to emancipate communities from the marginalised sections of the society, who have been denied the rights other enjoyed for generations. But, the Karnataka government’s move to reserve four per cent of contracts in civil works valued up to ₹2 crore, and goods/services procurement contracts up to ₹1 crore for Muslims hardly qualifies for constitutional protection. The government would argue that the measure is designed to address the acute unemployment among the communities. But the fact remains that the Constitution has designed reservation as a policy to ensure that communities which have been kept off the mainstream get a chance to be part of it. The fact remains that the Constitution provides for special action only to correct the social and educational backwardness, and not economic. The Congress government in the state is sure to face legal and political challenges before implementing the new legislation. Given the political climate in the country, it remains to be seen how long the Congress can stand by its government in Karnataka and the measure it has taken now.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Threat to global order

Sir, Donald Trump’s expansionist ambitions are growing bolder, disregarding international law and sovereignty. His push to merge Canada as the 51st state, absorb Panama, and now sending a delegation led by Second Lady Usha Vance to Greenland after expressing interest in annexing the island, signals a dangerous precedent. His recent focus on a Greek island raises further alarms. Meanwhile, his plan to displace Palestinians from Gaza to build an exclusive city while they struggle for survival is a grave violation of self-determination. His so-called peace proposal for Ukraine, contingent on Kyiv handing over indefinite mineral rights to the US, echoes economic colonialism. Such aggressive overreach reflects a Donald-like attitude that endangers global stability. Silence from world leaders only emboldens this reckless pursuit of dominance. If unchecked, this sets a precedent for territorial annexations under diplomatic and economic pretexts. The world must act before Trump’s unilateral ambitions spiral into a new era of imperialist expansion.

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI

Assam Assembly passes Bill to regulate coaching centres

IT SPECIFIES THAT NO COACHING INSTITUTE WILL ENGAGE IN ANY AFFAIRS RELATING TO RELIGIOUS CONVERSION, AND SHALL STRICTLY ADHERE TO THE SECULAR PRINCIPLES AS ENshrINED IN THE CONSTITUTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, March 25: The Assam Assembly Tuesday passed a bill to regulate private coaching centres, making it mandatory for registration of all such institutes and strict compliance with laid-down guidelines.

During discussion on the proposed legislation, MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed was suspended from the House by Deputy Speaker Numol Momin for disrupting a minister's reply.

Ahmed, who had been earlier suspended from the Congress, tried to intervene when Education Minister Ranaj Pegu was speaking, prompting the deputy speaker to suspend him for 10 minutes.

Pegu, who had moved the proposed new law, said the objective behind it is to control commercialisation of coaching centres and ensure that guardians get justice.

"The guardians and students had no one to approach if they are duped or misled by the coaching institutes. Hence, we have brought this bill," he said.

Pegu said the provisions of the bill, including the period of 30 days given to apply for registration for existing centres once the law is notified, have been carefully evaluated and



enshrined.

He maintained that coaching centres are primarily to prepare students seeking admission to higher education institutions, like engineering and medicine, and hence, provisions of the bill cater to students aged 16 years and above.

"The Assam Coaching Institutes (Control and Regulation) Bill, 2025", which was passed by voice vote, provides for the control and regulation of private coaching centres and institutes, for providing better academic support in preparation for different competitive examinations.

It also specifies that no coaching institute will engage in any affairs relating to religious conversion, and shall strictly adhere to the secular principles as

enshrined in the Constitution.

The institutes seeking registration have to provide information on its curriculum, duration of classes, co-curricular activities for the students, academic qualification of teachers, tuition fees, physical infrastructure and other facilities.

The tenure of a registration certificate will be two years, after which the institute has to reapply for renewal, according to the provisions of the bill.

The government shall create a portal or online mechanism to facilitate the registration process with minimum human interface, it said.

In case of violation of provisions of the proposed law, the government can cancel or suspend the registration of a coaching institute.

'WRONG' IMPLEMENTATION OF LAW

Tripura to check forest cover loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, March 25: The Tripura government has decided to check the forest area in the state following reports that the green cover has come down because of various reasons, including "incorrect implementation" of a 2006 Act.

As the state government found that a section of forest dwellers have been harming the woods, the administration also decided to launch awareness programmes among them on how to earn their livelihood by protecting jungles, state Forest Minister Animesh Debbarma told PTI.

According to the Forest Survey of India's (FSI) latest data released in December last year, the net loss of forest cover in two years stood at 95.31 sq km in the northeastern state.

Debbarma, however, said that the survey was aerially conducted using satellites and its data sometimes does not match the ground situation.

"I asked the department to extensively check the state's forest cover at ground level and submit a status report. Any reduction in forest cover is serious. Action will be taken against those who are liable for reduction in forest cover," he said.

Debbarma did not hide his dismay over the way the Recognition of Forest (Rights) Act, 2006, (RoFR) was implemented in Tripura.

"In many areas, the forest dwellers who got right over



the forest land, have carried out demarcation on their own. I had held meetings with the tribal welfare department and revenue department over the demarcation of forestland under the Act," he said.

The minister said the department wants to conduct demarcation to streamline the whole process.

"There was no demarcation before handing over the rights to the forest dwellers under RoFR. Even fencing was not done during the handing over process of the forestland. The government wants to implement the Act under the legislation," he said.

The Left Front government has started distributing land deeds under the RoFR since 2008.

"There are ways to earn livelihood by saving forest cover. We will encourage the forest dwellers to go for massive bamboo plantations to maintain check and balance between livelihood and protecting forest cover. Bamboo-based products

have great demand," Debbarma said. According to the FSI report, the forest cover in Tripura has been reduced from 7680.08 sq km in 2021 to 7584.77 sq km in 2023.

Various reasons have been attributed to the fall in green cover in the state, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest S K Samal told PTI. Samal stated under various schemes rubber plantations have been raised in reserved forest areas which also resulted in decline in forest cover.

A large number of Bru families have migrated to Tripura

from neighbouring Mizoram since the late 1990s because of ethnic strife. Over 6,900 Bru families have been given permanent land to live in following an agreement in 2020.

Samal also held the traditional shifting cultivation responsible for the decline in forest cover in the state's hilly areas.

"Despite all-out efforts to arrest shifting cultivation in hilly areas, the traditional practice continues in tribal areas. It causes high soil loss and affects the ecological balance," he said.

"The Tripura Forest Development Corporation Ltd has started cutting the rubber trees to pave the way for a new plantation. It is also another ground for reducing forest cover," he stated.

To augment the dwindling forest cover, the department has been implementing a major afforestation drive across the state.

FESTIVAL OF INDIA-BHUTAN FRIENDSHIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tawang, March 25: The Gorsam Kora festival in Arunachal Pradesh, which celebrates the shared Himalayan Buddhist cultural heritage and the long-standing friendship between India and Bhutan, will be held from March 26 to 29.

The festival takes place annually at Zemithang Valley in Tawang district of the state.

Situated along the Nyanmjang Chu river, Zemithang holds historical significance as the sanctuary where the 14th Dalai Lama found refuge in 1959 upon his escape from Tibet, a statement from the organisers said.

The festival will take place at Gorsam Chorten, a 93-foot tall stupa built during the 12th century AD by local monk Lama Pradhar, the release said.

This iconic stupa, older than the Tawang Monastery, is modelled after Nepal's Boudhanath stupa and has a spiritual companion, the Chorten Kora in Trashiyangtse, Bhutan.



Thousands of devotees, including Bhutanese nationals, will gather during Gorsam Kora festival to observe the auspicious occasion on the last day of the Lunar calendar's first month.

The festival, being organised by the Zemithang community in collaboration with civil authorities and local Indian Army units, will commence with an invocation led by Buddhist icon Thengtse Rinpoche.

Solemn prayers at the revered Khinzemane tree, believed to be planted by the 14th Dalai Lama, will kick-start the three-day event.

Monks will chant sacred mantras and observe traditional Buddhist rituals at the chorten. Pilgrims and Lamas from Bhutan, Tawang and neighbouring regions will participate, embodying the spirit of camaraderie and cultural exchange.

The festival will feature cul-

tural performances by local troupes and Indian Army bands, as well as martial performances like Mallakhamb and Zanjh Pathaka.

The Zemithang Valley, along with several villages nominated under the Central government's Vibrant Village Programme, will also host community engagement activities like medical camps.

Realising the theme of 'Zero Waste Festival,' the Further and Beyond foundation, with support from Indian Army and local administration, will undertake a cleanliness drive during the event.

As part of the Vibrant Village Programme, Zemithang Valley aims to become a thriving tourist destination, focusing on its scenic beauty.

It aims to transform the region into a heritage, religious, cultural and eco-tourism hub, while locals are actively involved, setting up home stays for tourists with support from the Indian Army, the release said.

SHEER RESOLVE, NO COACHING

How youths in Baghpat village made it to UP Police

The Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board had announced the selection of 60,244 candidates under Direct Recruitment-2023 March 13

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baghpat (UP), March 25: A total of 36 youngsters from Baghpat's Sarurpur Kalan village made it to the Uttar Pradesh Police force in the recent recruitment drive. What makes it remarkable is that most of them cleared the test on sheer determination, without any coaching.

"Our village does not have a coaching institute, nor do we have professional physical training facilities. The youths here train themselves," said village head Jagveer.

The Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board had announced the selection of 60,244 candidates under Direct Recruitment-2023 March 13. The recruitment drive saw 48,17,441 applicants competing for the posts.



a population of around 20,000-22,000, has a strong tradition of youths aspiring to join the police or armed forces.

"Our Jat-majority village has a deep-rooted preference for careers in the police and army. Almost every household has at least one family member in uniform," Jagveer said.

"Ever since the Agniveer scheme was introduced, police recruitment has become the top choice for youngsters in the village," he explained.

The village head recalled that during Mayawati's third tenure as chief minister, 65 candidates from here were selected in UP Police. In the absence of formal coaching centres, the youths throng the open grounds at the inter-college and Yogi Nath Degree College to train for physical fitness. Two to three libraries in the village provide study materials.

One of the successful candidates, Bharti Nain, who has completed BSc and MA in History, said she drew inspiration from her elder sister Parul Nain, who joined Delhi Police five years ago.

"I had to face multiple setbacks before achieving success. In 2021, I missed the final merit list for the UP Police sub-inspector post. In 2024, I cleared the written exam for Chandigarh Police but failed in long jump. Each failure was disappointing, but I never gave up," she said, crediting her persistence to a couplet by Kabir - 'Man ke haare haar hai, man ke jeete jeet' (Defeat or victory is determined by the mind).

Every morning at 5 am, she would run three kilometres on a nearby ground before dedicating the rest of her time to online studies. Her parents, Veena

and Ravindra, were elated. "We never doubted her abilities. We were confident that she would wear the uniform like her elder sister," they said.

Another successful candidate, Komal Sharma, said she wrote several competitive exams, including that of Delhi Police, Central Reserve Police Force, Chandigarh Police, Haryana Police, Staff Selection Commission-Stenographer, and Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited, but narrowly missed the final selection each time. "This was my first attempt at the UP Police exam, and I succeeded," she said.

Komal's father Vikram Sharma, a fan and motor mechanic, never pressured her into marriage. "He always prioritised my education and never differentiated between a son and a daughter," she added.

Anjali, another successful candidate, had initially aspired to be a teacher. However, the UP Teacher Eligibility Test had not been conducted for the past two years, forcing her to explore other options.

"I had also applied for Delhi Police and Railway Protection Force, but their final results are still pending. So I decided to try for UP Police and made it," she said.

F.No. LD-12/2/2025-Under Secretary (Admin II) [3022030]
Government of India
Ministry of Law and Justice
Legislative Department
Legislative Department proposes to engage 5 Office Assistant purely on contract basis initial for a period of one year which can be further extended for two more years, one at a time, subject to satisfactory performance. The educational qualification and other details are available on the website of the Department i.e. <http://legislative.gov.in> under the heading "Recruitment". Interested and eligible candidates may submit application in prescribed proforma available on the website of the Department within 15 days of publication of this advertisement in Newspaper.
Sd./- (Rakhi Biswas)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
Legislative Department, Room No. 438,
"A" Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001
CBC 24301/11/0005/2425 Tel: 011-23074187

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender Notice No: SBP-ELECT-2025-T-239
Name of the work: ELECTRICAL ZONAL CONTRACT FOR POWER LINE WORKS OVER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/ELG/ KANTA BANJI JURISDICTION (RAHENBATA-ARANG MAHANADI FOR A PERIOD OF 02 YEARS.
Approx cost of the work: ₹70,18,001.20, EMD/Bid Security: ₹1,40,400/-, Completion Period of the work: twenty Four Months from the date of issue of LOA.
Date & time of Tender Closing: 21.04.2025 at 1530 hrs.
No manual offer sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tender, even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>
The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered or IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering. All relevant papers must have to be uploaded at the time of participating on e-tendering as per instruction.
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website fifteen days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (GJ) Sambalpur PR-1124/P/24-25

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, GUNUPUR
e-Procurement Notice
No.C-1982
Tender Reference No. GUN-MUN-69/2024-25
No. 505 dt.24.03.25
01. Total Nos. of Works : 30 nos. of Civil Works
02. Approximate Estimated Cost : Rs.3,00,000/- to Rs.19,94,000/-
03. Period of Completion : 45 days - 90 days
04. Date & Time of availability of Bid Document in the Portal : 17.00 Hrs. of Dt.26.03.2025 to 17.00 Hrs. of Dtd.08.04.2025 for Online Bidding
05. Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal : 17.00 Hrs. of Dtd. 08.04.2025
06. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bids : Executive Officer, Gunupur Municipality
07. Date of opening of Bids : 11.00 Hrs. on Dtd. 09.04.2025
08. Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal : www.tendersodisha.gov.in
09. Further Addendum/Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the above website.
Sd./- Executive Officer
Gunupur Municipality
OIPR-13104/11/0011/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
PANCHAYAT SAMITI, NUAGAON, P.R. & D.W. DEPARTMENT
"e" Procurement Tender Call Notice for Building Works
Tender Call Notice No. & Bid Identification No. Online Tender/02/2024-25
No.i-586: 1. Name of the Work : Building Works. 2. Total Number of Works: 5 Nos. 3. Approx. Estimated Cost: Rs.26.15 Lakh. 4. Class of Contractor: B & C Class of Contractor. 5. Period of Completion: 6 Months. 6. Other details:
Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of tender On-line for bidding Last date & time of seeking tender clarification Date and Time of opening of Tender
1 2 3 4 5 6
Block Development Officer, Nuagaon Online Tender/02/2024-25 Dt.29.03.2025 at 10.00 A.M. Dt.11.04.2025 upto 5.00 P.M. Dt.11.04.2025 upto 1.00 P.M. Dt.15.04.2025 at 11.00 A.M.
Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd./- Block Development Officer, Nuagaon
OIPR-19231/11/0001/2425

NU VISTA LIMITED
"PUBLIC NOTIFICATION"
Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines & premises situated on the completed sections of the under noted section of the GCT of M/s NU VISTA LIMITED under KUR Divn. of East Coast Railway, that the 25,000 Volts, 50 Hz, A.C. overhead traction wires will be energized on or after the date specified against the section. On & from the same date the overhead traction line shall be treated as live at all times and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said overhead line.
Electrification details of following sections of NVL Siding Taking off from TATA Jakhapura :-

Sl. No.	Description	Chainage		TKM
		From Location	To Location	
1	Lead Line of Tata	TSL/1042, 0/929.50	NVL/02/07, 02/492.00	351.00
2	Take off Line from Tata	NVL/02/02, 2/313.85	NVL/03/03, 03/58.35	742.50
3	Engine Reversal Line	NVL/02/21, 02/897.00	NVL/03/1002, 03/702.50	805.50
4	Loco Siding Line	NVL/03/6A, 03/86.00	NVL/03/14A, 03/428.60	342.00
5	Sick Wagon Siding Line	NVL/03/7A, 0/86.00	NVL/04/3023, 04/539.50	1453.50
6	Engine Reversal Line	NVL/03/09, 03/194.00	NVL/03/4002, 03/563.00	369.00
7	Cement Loading Line	NVL/03/12, 03/324.50	NVL/04/1023, 03/572.00	1255.30
8	Wagon Tippler Line	NVL/03/13A, 03/374.00	NVL/04/4022, 04/517.00	1143.00
9	Empty Formation Line	NVL/03/2, 03/631.50	NVL/04/1024, 04/670.80	1048.30
10	x-over of Line 2 & 1	NVL/04/3013, 04/170.68	NVL/04/3024, 04/539.50	369.00
11	x-over of Line 3 & 4	NVL/04/3014, 04/224.50	NVL/04/4023, 04/517.00	292.50
TOTAL TKM				8.17

Date of Energization : 31.03.2025
PLANT HEAD/NVL NU VISTA LTD. MANTIRA, KALINGANAGAR



Defeating casteist parties like BJP, Congress, and SP and securing political power is the only effective way for Bahujans to bring their achhe din

PORTUGUESE-ERA CANNONBALLS FOUND AT GOA HERITAGE SITE

The Goa government Tuesday announced that it was temporarily putting on hold the work on the proposed tourist amenity centre at Old Goa heritage site after the ASI found some Portuguese-era cannonballs



of the day quote

In the first week of April, the mega DSC notification will be issued. The recruitment process should begin in April and be completed before schools reopen, along with the necessary training



N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | AP CM

We reiterate the need for a fair and honest investigation in a transparent and a very time-bound manner to punish the guilty and restore the faith in the system



MOHIT WADHWA | LIEUTENANT GENERAL

Before 2017, riots were frequent in the state...there was a mafia in every district. We eliminated these mafias and, instead of 'one district, one mafia,' we introduced 'one district, one medical college



YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

Kamra summoned; refuses to apologise

The issue echoed in the Lok Sabha where Shiv Sena member Dhairyasheel Mane Tuesday demanded that stand-up comedy platforms that promote hate speech and create tension in society be banned



THERE COULD BE REPERCUSSIONS FOR WHAT YOU SAY: KANGANA

Disgracing anyone in the name of comedy is in bad taste, actor and MP Kangana Ranaut said Tuesday as she weighed in on the ongoing controversy over comic Kunal Kamra's remarks.

Kamra doubled down on his stand by sharing an edited video of his stand up act where he juxtaposed videos of Shiv Sainiks demolishing the venue in Mumbai where he recorded the show and burning his pictures and effigies with the parody song 'Hum honge kangal, hum honge kangal ek din...'

same day. Kamra, whose video has garnered over 4.3 million views in just two days, in his statement on Monday night said: "What I said is exactly what Mr. Ajit Pawar (1st deputy CM) said about Mr. Eknath Shinde (2nd Deputy CM). I don't fear this mob."

The issue has led to reactions across the spectrum with many defending the comic, while others criticising Kamra for taking things too far. Priyanka Chaturvedi of the rival Shiv Sena (UBT) party said Shinde's "goons" have proved Kamra right.

Delhi CM presents ₹1L-crore Budget



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday presented a ₹1 lakh crore Budget for 2025-26 with 10 focus areas, including Yamuna cleaning, women empowerment, infrastructure development, water, smart governance and seamless connectivity, while terming it a roadmap for "Viksit Delhi".

Delhi's sewage infrastructure, marking an ambitious river rejuvenation effort in the national capital. The plan includes the construction of 40 decentralised sewage treatment plants (STPs), modernisation of existing STPs, and investment in advanced machinery to tackle waste and pollution.

SHORT TAKES

BSF jawans seize 16 cattle

Kolkata: Border Security Force jawans seized 16 cattle and recovered 851 bottles of a banned cough syrup during separate operations in West Bengal, officials said Tuesday.

Man loses in online betting, ends life

Hyderabad: A 29-year-old man died by suicide in Medchal near Hyderabad Tuesday after losing money in online betting, police said.

Gaubha full-time NITI Aayog member

New Delhi: Former cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba was on Tuesday appointed full-time member of the NITI Aayog, an official notification said.

3 Hurriyat constituents denounce separatism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Srinagar/Jammu, March 25: Two Hurriyat Conference constituents - the Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement (JKPM) and the J&K Democratic Political Movement (JKDPM) -- have announced severing their all ties with separatists, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said Tuesday, asserting it will strengthen India's unity.

Welcoming Saleem and Reshi's decisions, Amit Shah said this step will strengthen Bharat's unity and asserted the unifying policies of the Modi government have "tossed" separatism out of Jammu and Kashmir

Another group, the Jammu-based J&K Freedom Movement headed by Mohd Sharief Sartaj, also ended its long association with the separatist amalgam and announced disbanding of the group with immediate effect.

step towards strengthening Bharat's unity and urge all such groups to come forward and shed separatism once and for all," he wrote on X. Shah said it was a big victory for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of building a developed, peaceful and unified Bharat.

Delhi govt to relocate Tihar jail outside city

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Chief Minister Rekha Gupta Tuesday announced plans to relocate Tihar Jail to the city's outskirts while setting aside ₹10 crore in the 2025-26 budget for survey and consultancy services related to the shifting of the jail.



Established in 1958, Tihar Jail is one of India's largest prison complexes comprising nine prisons spread over more than 400 acres - one prison in Rohini and six prisons in Mandoli.

It currently accommodates over 19,000, leading to overcrowding and security challenges. The Delhi government has initiated the development of new prison complexes in Narela to alleviate congestion. Meanwhile, a

Established in 1958, Tihar Jail is one of India's largest prison complexes comprising nine prisons spread over more than 400 acres - one prison in Rohini and six prisons in Mandoli

Tihar Jail source said, "We had also asked for space in Baprola, but due to encroachment, we couldn't get that. However, we have written to the Delhi government to provide 100 acres of land somewhere else."

in Mandoli Jail are known as 'Mulaija Jail' which means first-time offenders. We have a large number of inmates in these two jails," said the source.

The society will focus on the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. It will achieve this by developing their overall skills through various skill-imparting programs. Additionally, the society will professionalise the functioning of different factories and manufacturing units within the jails.

Kerala okays pvt varsity Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 25: The Kerala Assembly Tuesday passed a bill paving the way for the establishment of private universities in the state.



Higher Education Minister R Bindu moved the motion to pass the bill after a brief discussion on proposed amendments and suggestions. Leader of Opposition V D Sathesnan stated that the UDF was not opposing the bill in principle but urged the government to conduct a thorough study and scrutiny before implementing it.

LS passes Finance Bill 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The Lok Sabha Tuesday passed the Finance Bill 2025, along with 35 government amendments, including one that abolishes a 6 per cent digital tax on online advertisements.



Sponsored Schemes for the financial year starting April 1, 2025. This compares with ₹4,15,356.25 crore for the current financial year.

With the passage of the Finance Bill 2025, the Lok Sabha completed its part of the Budgetary approval process. The Upper House, Rajya Sabha, will now consider the Bill. After the Rajya Sabha approves the Bill, the Budget process for 2025-26 will be complete.

Budget estimates of 2025-26 have increased due to several reasons, including a rise in payment of interest on market loans, treasury bills, external loans, small savings and provident funds; higher requirements of Armed Forces, including capital expenditure; and more provisions for employment generation scheme.



For the first time in 10 years, the education budget has fallen below 20 per cent, showing their agenda to destroy government schools. Health spending has also been cut to 13 per cent - the lowest in a decade - to dismantle free treatment services for the poor

PARL PASSES AMENDMENTS TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT

Parliament Tuesday passed amendments to the Disaster Management Act, 2024, with Home Minister Amit Shah asserting that there will be no centralisation of powers or discrimination with states in handling disasters



of the day note

The proposed international cricket stadium at Bajalta in Jammu was initiated by the Jammu & Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) but (it) did not materialise. It was not a project of the J&K government

Agriculture is the backbone of our state, sustaining and driving our economic growth. The State Krishi Mela serves as a platform for sharing innovations, knowledge and awareness on various government schemes available for the enhancement of the agriculture sector

We gave the Shiv Sena an ultimatum to contest 147 seats, and we decided to contest 127 seats, even as we believed would win more than 200 seats. The Shiv Sena would have the chief minister's post, while the BJP would have its deputy CM

SC to hear Allahabad HC's 'rape' ruling

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The Supreme Court has taken cognisance on its own of a controversial Allahabad High Court ruling that mere grabbing of the breast and pulling the string of a 'pyjama' do not amount to offence of rape.

A bench of Justices B R Gavi and Augustine George Masih is slated to hear the matter Wednesday. Legal experts had deplored the observation of the Allahabad High Court on what constitutes a rape charge, calling for a restraint by judges and underlining the drop in public confidence in the judiciary due to such statements.

The high court March 17 had ruled that mere grabbing of the breast and pulling the 'pyjama' string do not amount to offence of rape but such offence falls under the ambit of assault or use of criminal force against any woman with the intent to disrobe or compel her to be naked.

According to facts of the case, an application was moved before the court of Special Judge, POCSO Act, alleging that around 5:00 pm November 10, 2021, she (informant) was returning from the home of her sister-in-law (husband's sister) along with her minor daughter aged about 14 years. Accused Pawan, Akash and Ashok, who were from her village, met her on the way on a muddy road and asked where she was coming from. When she replied she was coming from her sister-in-law's place, Pawan offered a lift to her daughter, assuring her that he would drop her at her residence.

Relying on his assurance, she permitted her daughter to accompany him on his motorcycle.

CASH STASH ROW

SC panel begins probe, visits judge's residence

The CJI constituted the three-member committee March 22 to conduct an in-house inquiry into allegations against Justice Varma and decided to upload the in-house inquiry report of Chief Justice D K Upadhyay of the Delhi High Court in the incident



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Allahabad HC lawyers on indefinite strike

New Delhi, March 25: The three members of a Supreme Court-appointed in-house committee visited the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma Tuesday as it commenced its inquiry into allegations of discovery of a cash pile at his residence here.

Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana, Justice G S Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh, and Anu Sivaraman, a judge of the High Court of Karnataka, reached Justice Varma's official residence at 30, Tughlak Crescent and were inside for around 30-35 minutes.

The committee is learnt to

the fate of Justice Varma who is facing allegations that "four to five semi-burnt sacks of Indian currency notes" were found in his Lutyens home following a fire incident at around 11.35 pm March 14.

The apex court Collegium had recommended the repatriation of Justice Varma, who was de-rostered by the Delhi High Court following a directive from Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, to his parent Allahabad High Court. On March 22, the CJI constituted the three-member committee to conduct an in-house inquiry into allegations against Justice Varma and decided to upload the in-house inquiry report of Chief Justice D K Upadhyay of the Delhi High Court in the incident.

Justice Varma strongly denounced the allegations and said no cash was ever placed in the storeroom either by him or any of my family members. In 2014, while dealing with a case of alleged sexual harassment of a subordinate court judge in Madhya Pradesh at the behest of a sitting judge of the high court, the top court laid down the in-house procedure and said in the first stage of the in-house procedure, the prima facie veracity of the allegations contained in the complaint is ascertained.

have inspected the site before leaving in the afternoon, the sources said. It is not known whether Justice Varma was at his residence when the inquiry panel reached. The findings of the crucial inquiry will decide

LS clears Bill to replace 100-year old Boiler Act



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The Lok Sabha Tuesday passed a Bill to provide for the regulation of boilers, safety of life and property of persons from the danger of explosions of steam-boilers and uniformity in registration.

The Boilers Bill, 2024, seeks to repeal the century-old Boilers Act, 1923. The bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha in December last year. Now it will be sent for assent of the President of India.

The bill, which has provisions to ensure the safety of persons working inside a boiler and promoting ease of doing business, was cleared in the Lower House by a voice vote. The legislation provides that repair of boilers should be undertaken by qualified and competent persons.

Piloting the bill, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said several colonial-era redundant and obsolete provisions have been removed and the bill seeks to do away with the colonial mindset. "We have made the bill simple and readable," he said. Allaying concerns of certain members,

he said the legislation is not taking away powers of the state governments. None of the rights of states has been taken away with today's law, the minister assured the members.

The opposition members walked out during Goyal's reply when he was criticising the previous Congress-led government for delaying this law. The similar provisions which are at different places in the Boilers Act, 1923 have been grouped together in six chapters for easier reading and understanding of the Act.

All the functions/powers of the central, state governments and Central Boilers Board have been enumerated in detail to avoid any confusion. Out of the seven offences, to ensure safety of boilers and personnel dealing with

boilers, in four major offences which may result in loss of life and property, criminal penalties are retained. For other offences, the provision is being made for fiscal penalty. Moreover, for all non-criminal offences, fine has been converted into penalty to be levied through executive mechanism instead of courts as existed earlier.

THE BOILERS BILL, 2024, SEEKS TO REPEAL THE CENTURY-OLD BOILERS ACT, 1923. THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE RAJYA SABHA IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR. NOW IT WILL BE SENT FOR ASSENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA.

POST OF THE DAY

In 2010, Sony TV did comedy show to tear apart image of UPA govt. PM Manmohan Singh was mocked with lowest class of mimicry Madame Sonia Gandhi was mocked for her weak hindi NO FIRs registered by Congress NO studios were vandalized NO one was abused on TV channels India before 2014 >> New India, just compare this with Kunal Kamra comedy episode.

SHORT TAKES

2 members of banned outfit in Manipur held

Imphal: Two members of the proscribed outfit KCP(PWG) were arrested in Manipur's Imphal West district for their alleged involvement in extortion, police said Tuesday. The two cadres were apprehended from the Wangoi Laxmi Bazar area Monday as they were found extorting money from shopowners, a senior officer said. They have been identified as Sarangthem Dinesh (26) and Sanasam Malemnganbi Chanu (23), the officer said.

Pakistani intruder arrested along LoC

Jammu: A Pakistani intruder was arrested along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district Tuesday, officials said. Mohd Yaqoob, a resident of Kotli in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), was challenged by the alert troops when he intruded into this side from across the border in Keri sector, the officials said.

Teacher booked

Shimla: A female teacher of a government girls' school here has been booked Tuesday for making a student slap her classmates who gave incorrect answers, police said. Based on the complaint of a 10-year-old student, a case has been registered under Section 115 (2) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (voluntarily causing hurt) and Section 75 of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (Cruelty to children), police said. According to the complainant, Monday afternoon, the teacher quizzed the class about meanings of Sanskrit words she had tasked them to memorise.

India, China hold diplomatic talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: India and China Tuesday agreed to work together to make "substantial preparation" for the next meeting of their Special Representatives (SR) on the boundary question that is set to be held in the national capital later this year.

The decision was taken at a fresh edition of talks held in Beijing under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC). The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the WMCC meeting was held in a "positive and constructive atmosphere" and both sides "comprehensively" reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual Control.

"The two sides agreed to work together to make substantial preparation for the next

meeting of the Special Representatives (SR), which will be held in India later this year," it said in a statement. The MEA said peace and tranquillity on the border are critical for the smooth development of overall bilateral relations.

"The two sides explored various measures and proposals to give effect to the decisions taken during the 23rd meeting of the Special Representatives on the India-China boundary question in Beijing in December 2024 and to advance effective border management," it said. The Indian readout said the two sides agreed to maintain and strengthen relevant diplomatic and military mechanisms towards this end. "They also exchanged views on early resumption of cross-border cooperation and exchanges, including on trans-border rivers and Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra," the MEA said.



A girl holding an umbrella visits the Taj Mahal on a summer day in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

RISING TEMPERATURES

India must brace for 9-10% power demand surge: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: India should prepare for a nine to 10 per cent growth in peak electricity demand this summer with the country expected to experience more heatwaves, experts have warned.

Last year, the all-India peak electricity demand crossed 250 gigawatts (GW) May 30, which was 6.3 per cent higher than projections. Climate change-induced heat stress is one of the key factors driving electricity demand.

Currently, industries, households and agriculture account for 33 per cent, 28 per cent and 19 per cent of India's total electricity consumption, respectively. Household electricity demand has grown the fastest over the past decade, according to Disha Agarwal, Senior Programme Lead - Renewables at the Delhi-based think tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water.

The share of household electricity consumption increased



from 22 per cent in 2012-13 to 25 per cent in 2022-23. Much of this rise can be attributed to economic growth and the increasing need for cooling due to rising temperatures, experts say. In the summer of 2024, room air conditioner sales surged by 40 to 50 per cent year-on-year amid record-breaking temperatures, Agarwal said.

"India must now brace for extended heatwaves and a peak electricity demand growth of 9-10 per cent. However, our

analysis shows that this peak demand will only last for a short period," she added. Agarwal said India's electricity consumption has been growing at about 9 per cent annually since 2020-21, compared to 5 per cent per year in the previous decade. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) had estimated that electricity demand would grow at a rate of 6 per cent per year from 2022 to 2030.

At the "Global Heat and Cooling Forum", organised by

INDIA EXPERIENCED AN EXCEPTIONALLY HARSH SUMMER LAST YEAR, RECORDING 536 HEATWAVE DAYS, THE HIGHEST IN 14 YEARS, ACCORDING TO THE INDIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT. OFFICIAL DATA SHOWED THAT DURING ONE OF THE HOTTEST AND LONGEST HEAT WAVES, INDIA RECORDED 41,789 SUSPECTED HEAT STROKE CASES AND 143 HEAT-RELATED DEATHS

the Natural Resources Defense Council last week, experts raised concerns about the increasing demand for air conditioning as summer temperatures continue to rise. Abbas Jha, Practice Manager, Infrastructure Resilience Policy and Finance for South Asia at the World Bank, said that under a moderate emissions scenario, the number of heatwaves in India is expected to triple.

A few years ago, the International Energy Agency projected that energy demand from

air conditioners would triple by 2050, equivalent to adding 10 new air conditioners every second for the next 30 years. She said ongoing research has shown that in a world two degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial times, the largest cooling demand, in terms of total population, will come from India, followed by China, Nigeria, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, the Philippines, and the US.

Khosla said achieving thermal comfort for everyone without harming the planet is possible. This year, the heatwave arrived much earlier than last year. In 2024, Odisha saw its first heatwave on April 5, but in 2025, parts of Konkan and Coastal Karnataka experienced heatwaves as early as February 27-28. The IMD has forecast above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures across most parts of the country during the summer season which extends from March to May.

Govt bans 7.81L SIM cards, 83K WhatsApp accounts till February

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The law enforcement agencies have blocked over 7.81 lakh SIM cards linked to digital frauds till February 28 this year, Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, replying to a written query, said a total of 2,08,469 IMEIs reported by police authorities have been blocked by the Government of India. The International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) is a unique number assigned to every phone. In addition, the Indian Cyber crime Coordination Centre (I4C), which functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs, has proactively identified and blocked more than 3,962 Skype IDs and 83,668 WhatsApp accounts used for digital arrest, the minister said.

"The Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System, under the I4C, has been launched in 2021 for immediate reporting of financial frauds and stopping siphoning off funds by fraudsters. So far, around ₹4,386 crore have been saved in more than 13.36 lakh complaints," Kumar said in the reply. As part of the I4C, a national cybercrime reporting portal (https://cybercrime.gov.in) has been launched to enable public to report incidents pertaining to all types of digital crimes, with special focus on crimes against women and children, the minister said.

He said the crimes reported on this portal, their conversion into FIRs and subsequent action are handled by law enforcement agencies in the states and Union Territories concerned.



international



China welcomes Chief Adviser Yunus to attend the conference in China. Let me stress that China and Bangladesh are traditional friendly neighbours and comprehensive strategic cooperative partners

TURKIYE'S OPPOSITION LEADER VISITS JAILED ISTANBUL MAYOR

The head of Turkiye's main Opposition party visited jailed Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu Tuesday after six nights of massive protests calling for his release. Imamoglu, arrested March 19 on corruption charges, is seen as the main challenger to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's 22-year rule



China, India may seek to meddle in election: Canada



REUTERS

Ottawa, March 25: China and India are likely to try to interfere in the Canadian general election April 28, while Russia and Pakistan have the potential to do so, the country's spy service said Monday.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service made its comments at a time when Ottawa's relations with both India and China are chilly. Beijing and New Delhi have denied previous allegations of interference.

Canada was slow in responding to efforts by China and India to interfere in the 2019 and 2021 elections but their outcomes were unaffected by the meddling, an official probe concluded in a final report released in January.

Vanessa Lloyd, deputy director of operations at CSIS, told a press conference that hostile state actors were increasingly leveraging artificial intelligence to meddle in elections.

"The PRC (People's Republic of China) is highly likely to use AI enabled tools to attempt to interfere with Canada's democratic process in this current election," she said.

Earlier this month Beijing announced tariffs on more than \$2.6 billion worth of Canadian agricultural and food products, retaliating against levies Ottawa slapped on Chinese electric vehicles and steel and aluminum products last year.

Canada said last week that China had executed four Canadian citizens on drug smuggling charges, and strongly condemned Beijing's use of the death penalty.

Asked for a response to the CSIS comments at a regular news briefing Tuesday, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said China had always adhered to the principle of not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, and had "never had any interest in interfering in Canada's internal affairs".

Russia, Ukraine agree to truce at sea, ban on energy attacks

REUTERS

Washington/Moscow/Kyiv, March 25: The United States reached separate agreements Tuesday with Ukraine and Russia to ensure safe navigation in the Black Sea and to implement a ban on attacks by the two countries on each other's energy facilities.

The agreements, if implemented, would represent the clearest progress yet towards a wider ceasefire that Washington sees as a stepping stone towards peace talks to bring an end to Russia's three-year-old war in Ukraine.

Both countries said they would rely on Washington to enforce the deals.

"If the Russians violate this, then I have a direct question for President Trump. If they violate, here is the evidence - we ask for sanctions, we ask for weapons, etc.," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told reporters at a news conference in Kyiv.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said, "We will need clear guarantees. And given the sad experience of agreements with just Kyiv, the guarantees can only be the result of an order from Washington to Zelenskyy and his team to do one thing and not the other."

The agreements, reached in Saudi Arabia, follow talks initiated by US President Donald Trump, who has vowed to swiftly end the war and has shifted Washington's position from firmly backing Kyiv to a stance more sympathetic with Moscow.

'Trump admin accidentally texted me its war plans'

From P1

I accepted the connection request, hoping that this was the actual national security adviser, and that he wanted to chat about Ukraine, or Iran, or some other important matter.

Two days later—Thursday—at 4:28 pm, I received a notice that I was to be included in a Signal chat group. It was called the "Houthi PC small group."

A message to the group, from "Michael Waltz," read as follows: "Team - establishing a principles [sic] group for coordination on Houthis, particularly for over the next 72 hours. My deputy Alex Wong is pulling together a tiger team at deputies/agency Chief of Staff level following up from the meeting in the Sit Room this morning for action items and will be sending that out later this evening."

The message continued, "Pls provide the best staff POC from your team for us to coordinate with over the next couple days and over the weekend. Thx."

The term principals committee generally refers to a group of the senior-most national-security officials, including the secretaries of defense, state, and the treasury, as well as the director of the CIA. It should go without saying—but I'll say it anyway—that I have never been invited to a White House principals-committee meeting, and that, in my many years of reporting on national-security matters, I had never heard of one being convened over a commercial messaging app.

One minute later, a person identified only as "MAR"—the secretary of state is Marco Antonio Rubio—wrote, "Mike Needham for State," apparently designating the current counselor of the State Department as his representative. At that same moment, a Signal user identified as "JD Vance" wrote, "Andy baker for VP." One minute after that, "TG" (presumably Tulsi Gabbard, the director of national intelligence, or someone masquerading as her) wrote, "Joe Kent for DNI." Nine minutes later, "Scott B"—apparently Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, or someone spoofing his identity, wrote, "Dan Katz for Treasury." At 4:53 pm, a user called "Pete Hegseth" wrote, "Dan Caldwell for DoD." And at 6:34 pm, "Brian" wrote "Brian McCormack for NSC." One more person responded: "John Ratcliffe" wrote at 5:24 pm with the name of a CIA official to be included in the group. I am not publishing that name, because that person is an active intelligence officer.

The principals had apparently assembled. In all, 18 individuals were listed as members of this group, including various National Security Council officials; Steve Witkoff, President Trump's Middle East and Ukraine negotiator; Susie Wiles, the White House chief of staff; and someone identified only as "S.M.," which I took to stand for Stephen Miller. I appeared on my own screen only as "JG."

That was the end of the Thursday text chain. After receiving the Waltz text related to the "Houthi PC small group," I consulted a number of colleagues. We discussed the possibility that these texts were part of a disinformation campaign, initiated by either a foreign intelligence service or, more likely, a media-gadfly organization, the sort of group that attempts to place journalists in embarrassing positions, and sometimes succeeds. I had very strong doubts that this text group was real, because I could not believe that the national-security leadership of the United States would communicate on Signal about imminent war plans. I also could not believe that the national security adviser to the president would be so reckless as to include the editor in chief of The Atlantic in such discussions with senior US officials, up to and including the vice president.

The next day, things got even stranger. At 8:05 am Friday, March 14, "Michael Waltz" texted the group: "Team, you should have

a statement of conclusions with taskings per the Presidents guidance this morning in your high side inboxes." (High side, in government parlance, refers to classified computer and communications systems.) "State and DOD, we developed suggested notification lists for regional Allies and partners. Joint Staff is sending this am a more specific sequence of events in the coming days and we will work w DOD to ensure COS, OVP and POTUS are briefed."

At this point, a fascinating policy discussion commenced. The account labeled "JD Vance" responded at 8:16: "Team. I am out for the day doing an economic event in Michigan. But I think we are making a mistake." (Vance was indeed in Michigan that day.) The Vance account goes on to state, "3 per cent of US trade runs through the Suez. 40 percent of European trade does. There is a real risk that the public doesn't understand this or why it's necessary. The strongest reason to do this is, as POTUS said, to send a message."

The Vance account then goes on to make a noteworthy statement, considering that the vice president has not deviated publicly from Trump's position on virtually any issue. "I am not sure the president is aware how inconsistent this is with his message on Europe right now. There's a further risk that we see a moderate to severe spike in oil prices. I am willing to support the consensus of the team and keep these concerns to myself. But there is a strong argument for delaying this a month, doing the messaging work on why this matters, seeing where the economy is, etc."

A person identified in Signal as "Joe Kent" (Trump's nominee to run the National Counterterrorism Center is named Joe Kent) wrote at 8:22. "There is nothing time sensitive driving the time line. We'll have the exact same options in a month."

Then, at 8:26 am, a message landed in my Signal app from the user "John Ratcliffe." The message contained information that might be interpreted as related to actual and current intelligence operations.

At 8:27, a message arrived from the "Pete Hegseth" account. "VP: I understand your concerns - and fully support you raising w/ POTUS. Important considerations, most of which are tough to know how they play out (economy, Ukraine peace, Gaza, etc). I think messaging is going to be tough no matter what - nobody knows who the Houthis are - which is why we would need to stay focused on: 1) Biden failed & 2) Iran funded."

The Hegseth message goes on to state, "Waiting a few weeks or a month does not fundamentally change the calculus. 2 immediate risks on waiting: 1) this leaks, and we look indecisive; 2) Israel takes an action. The first - or Gaza ceasefire falls apart - and we don't get to start this on our own terms. We can manage both. We are prepared to execute, and if I had final go or no go vote, I believe we should. This [is] not about the Houthis. I see it as two things: 1) Restoring Freedom of Navigation, a core national interest; and 2) Reestablish deterrence, which Biden cratered. But, we can easily pause. And if we do, I will do all we can to enforce 100% OPSEC"—operations security. "I welcome other thoughts."

A few minutes later, the "Michael Waltz" account posted a lengthy note about trade figures, and the limited capabilities of European navies. "Whether it's now or several weeks from now, it will have to be the United States that reopens these shipping lanes. Per the president's request we are working with DOD and State to determine how to compile the cost associated and levy them on the Europeans."

The account identified as "JD Vance" addressed a message at 8:45 to @Pete Hegseth: "if you think we should do it let's go. I just hate baiting Europe out again." (The administration has argued that America's



European allies benefit economically from the US Navy's protection of international shipping lanes.)

The user identified as Hegseth responded three minutes later: "VP: I fully share your loathing of European free-loading. It's PATHETIC. But Mike is correct, we are the only ones on the planet (on our side of the ledger) who can do this. Nobody else even close. Question is timing. I feel like now is as good a time as any, given POTUS directive to reopen shipping lanes. I think we should go; but POTUS still retains 24 hours of decision space."

At this point, the previously silent "S.M." joined the conversation. "As I heard it, the president was clear: green light, but we soon make clear to Egypt and Europe what we expect in return. We also need to figure out how to enforce such a requirement. EG, if Europe doesn't remunerate, then what? If the US successfully restores freedom of navigation at great cost there needs to be some further economic gain extracted in return."

That message from "S.M."—presumably President Trump's confidant Stephen Miller, the deputy White House chief of staff, or someone playing Stephen Miller—effectively shut down the conversation. The last text of the day came from "Pete Hegseth," who wrote at 9:46 am, "Agree."

After reading this chain, I recognized that this conversation possessed a high degree of verisimilitude. The texts, in their word choice and arguments, sounded as if they were written by the people who purportedly sent them, or by a particularly adept AI text generator. I was still concerned that this could be a disinformation operation, or a simulation of some sort. And I remained mystified that no one in the group seemed to have noticed my presence. But if it was a hoax, the quality of mimicry and the level of foreign-policy insight were impressive.

It was the next morning, Saturday, March 15, when this story became truly bizarre.

At 11:44 am, the account labeled "Pete Hegseth" posted in Signal a "TEAM UPDATE." I will not quote from this update, or from certain other subsequent texts. The information contained in them, if they had been read by an adversary of the United States, could conceivably have been used to harm American military and intelligence personnel, particularly in the broader Middle

East, Central Command's area of responsibility. What I will say, in order to illustrate the shocking recklessness of this Signal conversation, is that the Hegseth post contained operational details of forthcoming strikes on Yemen, including information about targets, weapons the US would be deploying, and attack sequencing.

The only person to reply to the update from Hegseth was the person identified as the vice president. "I will say a prayer for victory," Vance wrote. (Two other users subsequently added prayer emoji.)

According to the lengthy Hegseth text, the first detonations in Yemen would be felt two hours hence, at 1:45 pm eastern time. So I waited in my car in a supermarket parking lot. If this Signal chat was real, I reasoned, Houthi targets would soon be bombed. At about 1:55, I checked X and searched Yemen. Explosions were then being heard across Sanaa, the capital city.

I went back to the Signal channel. At 1:48, "Michael Waltz" had provided the group an update. Again, I won't quote from this text, except to note that he described the operation as an "amazing job." A few minutes later, "John Ratcliffe" wrote, "A good start." Not long after, Waltz responded with three emoji: a fist, an American flag, and fire. Others soon joined in, including "MAR," who wrote, "Good Job Pete and your team!!," and "Susie Wiles," who texted, "Kudos to all - most particularly those in theater and CENTCOM! Really great. God bless." "Steve Witkoff" responded with five emoji: two hands-praying, a flexed bicep, and two American flags. "TG" responded, "Great work and effects!" The after-action discussion included assessments of damage done, including the likely death of a specific individual. The Houthi-run Yemeni health ministry reported that at least 53 people were killed in the strikes, a number that has not been independently verified.

On Sunday, Waltz appeared on ABC's 'This Week' and contrasted the strikes with the Biden administration's more hesitant approach. "These were not kind of pinprick, back-and-forth—what ultimately proved to be feckless attacks," he said. "This was an overwhelming response that actually targeted multiple Houthi leaders and took them out."

The Signal chat group, I concluded, was almost certainly real. Having come to this realization, one that seemed nearly impossible only hours before, I removed myself from the Signal group, understanding that this would trigger an automatic notification to the group's creator, "Michael Waltz," that I had left. No one in the chat had seemed to notice that I was there. And I received no subsequent questions about why I left—or, more to the point, who I was.

Earlier today, I emailed Waltz and sent him a message on his Signal account. I also wrote to Pete Hegseth, John Ratcliffe, Tulsi Gabbard, and other officials. In an email, I outlined some of my questions: Is the "Houthi PC small group" a genuine Signal thread? Did

they know that I was included in this group? Was I (on the off chance) included on purpose? If not, who did they think I was? Did anyone realise who I was when I was added, or when I removed myself from the group? Do senior Trump-administration officials use Signal regularly for sensitive discussions? Do the officials believe that the use of such a channel could endanger American personnel?

Brian Hughes, the spokesman for the National Security Council, responded two hours later, confirming the veracity of the Signal group. "This appears to be an authentic message chain, and we are reviewing how an inadvertent number was added to the chain," Hughes wrote. "The thread is a demonstration of the deep and thoughtful policy coordination between senior officials. The ongoing success of the Houthi operation demonstrates that there were no threats to troops or national security."

William Martin, a spokesperson for Vance, said that despite the impression created by the texts, the vice president is fully aligned with the president. "The Vice President's first priority is always making sure that the President's advisers are adequately briefing him on the substance of their internal deliberations," he said. "Vice President Vance unequivocally supports this administration's foreign policy. The President and the Vice President have had subsequent conversations about this matter and are in complete agreement."

I have never seen a breach quite like this. It is not uncommon for national-security officials to communicate on Signal. But the app is used primarily for meeting planning and other logistical matters—not for detailed and highly confidential discussions of a pending military action. And, of course, I've never heard of an instance in which a journalist has been invited to such a discussion.

Conceivably, Waltz, by coordinating a national-security-related action over Signal, may have violated several provisions of the Espionage Act, which governs the handling of "national defense" information, according to several national-security lawyers interviewed by my colleague Shane Harris for this story. Harris asked them to consider a hypothetical scenario in which a senior US official creates a Signal thread for the express purpose of sharing information with Cabinet officials about an active military operation. He did not show them the actual Signal messages or tell them specifically what had occurred.

All of these lawyers said that a US official should not establish a Signal thread in the first place. Information about an active operation would presumably fit the law's definition of "national defense" information. The Signal app is not approved by the government for sharing classified information. The government has its own systems for that purpose. If officials want to discuss military activity, they should go into a specially designed space known as a sensitive compartmented information facility, or SCIF—most Cabinet-level national-security

officials have one installed in their home—or communicate only on approved government equipment, the lawyers said. Normally, cellphones are not permitted inside a SCIF, which suggests that as these officials were sharing information about an active military operation, they could have been moving around in public. Had they lost their phones, or had they been stolen, the potential risk to national security would have been severe.

Hegseth, Ratcliffe, and other Cabinet-level officials presumably would have the authority to declassify information, and several of the national-security lawyers noted that the hypothetical officials on the Signal chain might claim that they had declassified the information they shared. But this argument rings hollow, they cautioned, because Signal is not an authorised venue for sharing information of such a sensitive nature, regardless of whether it has been stamped "top secret" or not.

There was another potential problem: Waltz set some of the messages in the Signal group to disappear after one week, and some after four. That raises questions about whether the officials may have violated federal records law: Text messages about official acts are considered records that should be preserved.

"Under the records laws applicable to the White House and federal agencies, all government employees are prohibited from using electronic-messaging applications such as Signal for official business, unless those messages are promptly forwarded or copied to an official government account," Jason R Baron, a professor at the University of Maryland and the former Director of Litigation at the National Archives and Records Administration, told Harris.

"Intentional violations of these requirements are a basis for disciplinary action. Additionally, agencies such as the Department of Defense restrict electronic messaging containing classified information to classified government networks and/or networks with government-approved encrypted features," Baron said.

Several former US officials told Harris and me that they had used Signal to share unclassified information and to discuss routine matters, particularly when traveling overseas without access to US government systems. But they knew never to share classified or sensitive information on the app, because their phones could have been hacked by a foreign intelligence service, which would have been able to read the messages on the devices. It is worth noting that Donald Trump, as a candidate for president (and as president), repeatedly and vociferously demanded that Hillary Clinton be imprisoned for using a private email server for official business when she was secretary of state. (It is also worth noting that Trump was indicted in 2023 for mishandling classified documents, but the charges were dropped after his election.)

Waltz and the other Cabinet-level officials were already potentially violating government policy and the law simply by texting one another about the operation. But when Waltz added a journalist—presumably by mistake—to his principals committee, he created new security and legal issues. Now the group was transmitting information to someone not authorised to receive it. That is the classic definition of a leak, even if it was unintentional, and even if the recipient of the leak did not actually believe it was a leak until Yemen came under American attack.

All along, members of the Signal group were aware of the need for secrecy and operations security. In his text detailing aspects of the forthcoming attack on Houthi targets, Hegseth wrote to the group—which, at the time, included me—"We are currently clean on OPSEC."

Jeffrey Goldberg, Editor-in-Chief, The Atlantic



It is one of the major public health issue and the most important thing is also, we are losing 3 per cent of GDP because of road accidents
NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

PURE ENTERS ENERGY STORAGE MARKET

Electric mobility solutions provider PURE Tuesday announced its entry into energy storage solutions with the launch of multiple products under the brand name PuREPower for home, commercial and grid segments. The company also said over the next 18 months, it plans to set up over 300 touchpoints across India, providing comprehensive technical and commercial support to partners



of the day note

As negotiations continue, the path forward demands not only diplomatic skill but also vigilance against legal asymmetries embedded in America's trade playbook
AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI



Rural entrepreneurs succeed when they have strong management skills, financial discipline, and access to capital
SIMON WINTER | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SAFIA



Firming up prices tells a story of growth and affluence for the world's fifth-largest economy. However, these are also indicative of the rising burden on India's middle class
DHRUV AGARWALA | GROUP CEO, HOUSING.COM



TARIFFS STRAIN

S&P slashes GDP growth forecast



The global credit rating agency expects India to grow at 6.5% in FY26 less than earlier forecast of 6.7%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: S&P Global Ratings Tuesday cut India's GDP growth projections to 6.5 per cent for the next fiscal as it expects that economies in the APAC region will feel the strain of rising US tariffs and pushback on globalisation.

In its Economic Outlook for Asia-Pacific (APAC), S&P said despite these external strains, it expects domestic demand momentum to remain solid in most emerging-market economies.

"India's GDP will grow 6.5 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, we expect. Our forecast is the same as the outcome for the previous fiscal year, but less than our earlier forecast of 6.7 per cent," S&P said.

The forecast assumes that the upcoming monsoon season will be normal and that commodity—especially crude—prices will be soft. Cooling food inflation, the tax benefits announced in the country's budget for the fiscal year ending March 2026, and lower borrowing costs will support discretionary consumption in India, S&P said.

The global credit rating agency expects central banks in the Asia Pacific region to continue cutting benchmark interest rates through this year.

"The Reserve Bank of India will cut interest rates by another 75 bp-100 bp in the current cycle, we project. Easing food inflation and lower crude prices will move headline inflation closer to the central bank target of 4 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2026 and fiscal policy is contained," S&P said.

Last month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points from 6.50 per cent to 6.25 per cent in its monetary policy review.

S&P said Asia-Pacific economies will feel the strain of rising US tariffs specifically and a pushback on globalisation more generally.

However, we see domestic demand momentum broadly holding up, especially in the region's emerging-market economies.

"Given the volume of policy measures and external pressures hitting Asia-Pacific, the robustness of our forecasts underscores the resilience of the regional economies," it added.

S&P said that the Donald Trump administration in the US is changing economic policy in key areas.

Domestically, immigration reduction, deregulation and cuts to taxes and government spending are in focus.

Externally, US import tariffs are rising across the board. So far the new US government has imposed an additional 20 per cent tariff on imports from China; 25 per cent levies on some imports from Canada and Mexico, with levies on other products postponed for a month; and a global 25 per cent tariff on steel and aluminium.

The US has also announced an intention to impose "reciprocal tariffs" and tariffs on cars, semiconductors and pharmaceuticals.

In our view, the import tariffs will lower growth in the US and abroad, and raise US inflation.

"We now expect the US Federal Reserve to cut its policy rate by 25 basis points (bp) only one time in 2025, in the end, and make three such cuts in 2026. The heightened uncertainty about US economic policy and its impact, notably around tariffs, is weighing on investment in the US and elsewhere," S&P said.

S&P expects central banks in the Asia Pacific region to continue cutting benchmark interest rates through this year

SHORT TAKES

Gold, silver prices fall

New Delhi: Gold prices dropped by ₹100 to ₹90,450 per 10 grams in the national capital Tuesday due to weak demand from jewellers and retailers. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹90,550 per 10 grams Monday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by ₹100 to ₹90,000 per 10 grams, marking the fourth straight day of fall. According to HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saamil Gandhi, gold prices declined amid rising US dollar and treasury yields following indications that President Donald Trump's next round of tariffs may be less harsh than initially anticipated. Silver prices also depreciated by ₹500 to ₹1,00,000 per kg from Monday's closing level of ₹1,00,500 per kg.

Penalty on Samsung

New Delhi: India has ordered Samsung and its executives in the country to pay \$601 million in back taxes and penalties for dodging tariffs on import of key telecoms equipment, a government order showed, for one of the biggest such demands in recent years. The demand represents a substantial chunk of last year's net profit of \$955 million for Samsung in India, where it is one of the largest players in the consumer electronics and smartphones market. It can be challenged in a tax tribunal or the courts. The company, which also imports telecoms equipment through its network division, received a warning in 2023 for misclassifying imports to evade tariffs of 10% or 20% on a critical transmission component used in mobile towers.

Dream big, take bold steps: Sahoo

Zaveri Gems and Jewellers, a leading player in jewellery category, acts as one-stop destination for consumers. At the age of just 35, Sanjeeb Kumar Sahoo, Managing Partner, has made a mark as a dynamic entrepreneur in the jewellery industry with a vision to showcase Odisha's indigenous craftsmanship on a national scale. The belief that customer satisfaction is as important as their products and services, has helped this establishment garner a vast base of customers, which continues to grow day by day. In an exclusive interview with Orissa POST, Sanjeeb shares insights into his journey, the growing demand for jewellery in Odisha, and his vision for the future. Excerpts...



Can you share your professional journey? What made you enter this business?

I come from a business-oriented family. My grandfather and father started a small jewellery store in Bhubaneswar in the 1990s, which gradually expanded to four outlets. Both of them were skilled artisans, and I developed a keen interest in the business from a young age. I learned the art of assessing gold and silver quality early on. After completing my MBA in 2013, I travelled extensively across India and abroad to study the jewellery market. My visits to southern states made me realise

the immense craze for gold jewellery in that region. I saw a similar emerging trend in Odisha—people's affinity for gold was growing rapidly. Recognising this shift, I decided to bring a variety of jewellery styles to Odisha, blending western and traditional designs. That's how we built Zaveri Gems and Jewellers into a brand that caters to evolving consumer expectations.

How is the demand for gold and diamond jewellery in Odisha?

Odisha has one of the highest demands for gold, silver, and diamond jewellery in India. Whether in rural or urban areas, gold sales are steadily increasing. Interestingly, India is among the world's largest importers of gold. Unlike fuel, which is only an expense, gold serves both as an investment and an asset whose value appreciates over time. People in Odisha have realised this, and today, individuals from all financial backgrounds are keen to invest in gold.

What is the secret to your success, and what are your future plans?

The foundation of our success lies in transparency in business and purity in products. My family always advised me to take calculated risks, but I knew that without bold decisions, achieving something significant wouldn't be possible. That's why I chose to move forward with an ambitious vision. Whenever I travelled outside Odisha, I made it a point to visit leading jewellery showrooms and studied market

trends. I analysed the most in-demand designs and evaluated their potential in Odisha. Understanding customer preferences and adapting to their evolving tastes has been crucial to our success. My goal is to establish Zaveri Gems and Jewellers as a leading jewellery brand across India, offering a perfect fusion of tradition and modernity.

How important is customer satisfaction to you?

Customer satisfaction is at the core of our business philosophy. We ensure that our showrooms offer a diverse range of jewellery to cater to all types of customers. From unique designs to different price points, we make sure no customer leaves empty-handed.

What advice would you give to young entrepreneurs?

Young entrepreneurs should not view each other as competitors but as allies. Especially for Odia artisans and business owners, I want to emphasise that many entrepreneurs from outside the state are making profits in Odisha, while we hesitate to dream big and take bold steps. Our local artisans possess immense talent, but their craftsmanship remains underappreciated. Therefore, whatever field young entrepreneurs choose, they must conduct thorough research and focus on the overall development of their industry. To succeed, young entrepreneurs must conduct thorough research, understand market dynamics, and focus on the overall growth of their industry.

D-St extends win run to 7th day

Stock markets closed almost flat due to profit booking in heavyweights across sectors after recent sharp gains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 25: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty eked out gains to extend their winning run to the seventh day Tuesday, largely driven by gains in select bluechips like HDFC Bank, Infosys and Ultratech Cement.

Retreating from its early highs, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 32.81 points or 0.04 per cent at 78,017.19. As many as 20 of its components ended lower and 10 advanced. During the day, it jumped 757.31 points or 0.97 per cent to 78,741.69 but squandered most of the gains in mid-session due to profit taking.

The NSE Nifty eked out gains of 10.30 points or 0.04 per cent to close at 23,668.65.

From the Sensex pack, UltraTech Cement, Infosys, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech and Tata Consultancy Services



Sensex and Nifty have surged over 5.5% since March 17

were the biggest gainers.

Zomato tanked nearly 6 per cent followed by IndusInd Bank which declined about 5 per cent. Adani Ports, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Sun Pharma were also among the laggards.

"After a six-day recovery rally, the broader market witnessed some profit-booking,

particularly in small and mid-cap stocks, where premium valuations still exist. On the other hand, the IT sector posted gains, driven by positive global cues stemming from expectations of softer tariffs and a recent correction in valuations. In the near-term, investor sentiment is expected to be cautious as they await clarity on trade policy between US-India. Favourable indicators, such as expected rate cuts and rupee movements, continue to support the market sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased equities worth ₹5,371.57 crore on a net basis Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Sensex jumped 1,078.87 points or 1.40 per cent to settle at over six-week high of 77,984.38 Monday. The Nifty surged by 307.95 points or 1.32 per cent to 23,658.35.

₹ halts 9-day rally as importers step in

REUTERS

Mumbai, March 25: The Indian rupee closed lower to halt a nine-day winning run Tuesday as importers stepped in to hedge liabilities at favourable levels, dollar inflows moderated and the local currency's regional peers slipped.

The rupee ended at 85.7550 against the US dollar, down 0.14% on the day. It had risen to a year-to-date peak of 85.49 Monday and is up about 2% on the month so far.

Intermittent inflows from overseas portfolio investors and the repatriation of corporate dollar-based earnings ahead of the fiscal year ending March 31 have helped the rupee outpace its Asian peers this month.

The recent string of gains has come as a relief for the local unit after it hit a string of record lows till mid-February.

On the day, the dollar index was a tad higher at 104.3 while Asian currencies were down between 0.1% to 0.3%.

AI tells all staff to travel in Economy

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 25: Air India said on Tuesday that all staff, including top management, would travel in economy from April 1 to free up seats for paying customers, as the airline works on improving its image following criticism over flight delays.

Staff would be upgraded to premium economy and business class seats on a flight only if these remained unsold 50 minutes prior to departure, as per a report, confirmed by the airline.

"With this, we want to ensure that our premium seats... for which we are seeing huge demand - are available for booking to our customers first, demonstrating a culture of customer-centricity in the new Air India," a spokesperson said.

India is among the world's fastest-growing major avia-



tion markets, and its domestic air passenger traffic has been growing at an annual rate of 10-12% over the past 10 years, according to the government.

The formerly state-owned Air India was taken over by the Tata Group in 2022, and merged with Vistara - a joint venture between the Tatas and Singapore Airlines - last year.

Billions of dollars have al-

ready been spent on an ambitious turnaround for the carrier, which involved ordering new jets, changing its logo, and upgrading interiors for over half its fleet, since the 2022 takeover.

Reuters reported last week that Air India was exploring a multi-billion dollar order for dozens of widebody jets from Boeing and Airbus.

RRBs earn record profit of ₹7,571cr in FY24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have earned a record profit of ₹7,571 crore during 2023-24, Parliament was informed Tuesday.

"Financial health of RRBs has improved in the recent years as they have posted highest ever consolidated net profit of ₹7,571 crore during 2023-24. Also, the RRBs have shown consistent improvement in key financial parameters like CRAR, deposits, advances, NPA, CD ratio etc," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

The key financial parameters of RRBs have improved consistently in past years, he said, adding that the total balance sheet size of RRBs have increased from ₹7,04,556 crore in 2021-22 to ₹8,40,080 crore in 2023-24. Further, the net NPA has



declined from 4.7 per cent in 2021-22 to 2.4 per cent in 2023-24, he said. Also, the credit-to-deposit ratio has increased from 64.5 per cent in 2021-22 to 71.4 per cent in 2023-24, he added.

"The government has also reviewed the progress made by RRBs in deepening financial inclusion in rural and remote areas by reviewing performance on various financial inclusion schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan

Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana etc," he said.

Replying to another question, Chaudhary said the Centre under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) provides interest subvention of 1.5 per cent to banks for providing short-term working capital loans of up to ₹3 lakh at 7 per cent per annum.

Further, he said, a prompt repayment incentive of 3 per

cent is also provided to farmers on timely repayment of loans. Therefore, effective interest rate for farmers is 4 per cent.

In the Union Budget 2025-26, he said, the government has announced to enhance loan limit under the MISS from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh for loans taken through the KCC (Kisan Credit Card).

The Jan Samarth portal is a one-stop digital platform for linking 15 government-sponsored loans and subsidies schemes, he said.

It provides a quick and efficient way to apply for loans and obtain approvals based on a digital evaluation of the applicant's data, he said.

Additionally, many banks and financial institutions have developed online platforms and mobile apps for end-to-end digital processing of loan applications, reducing the need for physical paperwork and in-person visits.

Shreyas sizzles as PBKS win

The newly appointed Punjab Kings captain missed his maiden IPL hundred by only three runs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, March 25: Shreyas Iyer began his stint at Punjab Kings captain with a blistering 42-ball 97 not out as his team humbled Gujarat Titans by 11 runs in their Indian Premier League match here Tuesday.

Shashank Singh bludgeoned 44 off 16 balls after Iyer's brilliant display with the bat as PBKS posted an imposing 243 for five. In reply, GT were stopped at 232 for five with Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler making a 41-ball 74 and 33-ball 54 respectively.

Iyer struck as many as nine sixes and five fours but he could not get to his maiden IPL hundred, as Shashank took 23 runs off the final over to end the PBKS innings on a high note.

Shashank hit six fours and two sixes during his brilliant cameo.

The GT bowling at the death left a lot to be desired as PBKS amassed 135 runs in the last eight overs. GT's fielding was also not up to the mark on the night. During his sparkling knock, Iyer tackled the short ball, once considered his weakness, with elan.

In pursuit of 244, GT too got off to a flyer with Shubman Gill and Sudharsan putting on 61 runs in just under six overs before the home team captain got a leading edge off a Glenn Maxwell delivery to fall for a 14-ball 33.

Jos Buttler joined Sudharsan in the middle and the two scored runs at a fast clip to keep GT in the hunt. However, having added 84 runs for the second wicket with Buttler, Sudharsan looked to whip an ordinary Arshdeep Singh off his pads and while he timed



It superbly, the opener did not get the desired elevation and was caught in the deep. With dew coming into the

picture and Buttler still at the crease, GT knew they remained very much in the game despite losing Sudharsan, and Sherfane Rutherford's two sixes and a four off Marcus Stoinis acted as stimulus for the home team.

But with his smart medium pace bowling, impact sub Vijaykumar Vyshak ensured PBKS had their nose ahead by conceding just five runs in the 15th over.

Marco Jansen was brought back into the attack with GT requiring 70 runs in the last 30 balls, and the tall South African left-arm pacer gave away only eight runs to compound the batting team's problems.

Vyshak bowled another tight over despite conceding three wickets, leaving GT to get 57 runs in 18 balls, which they could not achieve.

Earlier, caring very little for reputation, Priyansh Arya (47 off 23) went after the GT bowling from the get go.

Arya, who was bought by PBKS for Rs 3.8 crore at the last IPL auction, clobbered Mohammed Siraj over deep square leg for his first six and followed it up with a four.

Kagiso Rabada made the first breakthrough when he had Prabhsimran Singh caught in the deep, paving the way for new PBKS captain Iyer's entry into the middle and he started with a lovely drive on the up for a boundary before flicking the seasoned South African pacer for a six over deep square leg.

Back in strike, the 24-year-old Arya launched into left-arm pacer Arshad Khan and collected 21 runs in the fifth over with the help of three fours and a six on the off side. His best shot of the evening was, however, a spectacular straight drive past the bowler for a four.

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

Odisha women defeat Mizoram in shoot-out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, March 25: Hockey Association of Odisha, Hockey Maharashtra, and Hockey Bengal secured another win in their respective matches on the sixth day of the Final Phase of the National Women's Hockey League at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Astro Turf Hockey Stadium here Tuesday.

In the first match, the Hockey Association of Odisha defeated Hockey Mizoram 1-1 (SO 2-0) in Pool A.

Sanjana Kiro (5') opened the account on the scoreboard as she scored a goal in the first quarter for the Hockey Association of Odisha. On the other side, Lalanchhungi (55') scored the equaliser for Hockey Mizoram in the final minutes of the game.

Drupti Naik and captain Sumi Mundari scored in the shoot-out out of the first three chances they got. Namsi Jari-ka (GK) stood out to be the star of the game as her heroics saved the day after saving all four strikes by Hockey Mizoram in the shoot-out.

Earlier, on the fifth day of the Final Phase of the National Women's Hockey League 2024-2025, Hockey Association of Odisha, Hockey Mizoram, Hockey Maharashtra and Hockey Jharkhand registered win in their respective matches.

Hockey Association of Odisha defeated Hockey Haryana 2-0 in Pool A, while Hockey Mizoram overcame Hockey Madhya Pradesh 2-1 in another Pool A match.

In another match, Hockey Maharashtra defeated Hockey Bengal 4-2 in Pool A to secure its first win in the tournament, while in the last match of the day, Hockey Jharkhand defeated Manipur Hockey 8-0 in Pool A.

Badminton Asia C'ships: Shuttlers see tough draw



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ningbo (China), March 25: India's top shuttlers, including Lakshya Sen, were Tuesday handed a challenging draw in next month's Badminton Asia Championships with several tough opponents awaiting them in the opening rounds.

The \$500,000 individual competition will be held here from April 8 to 13.

Sen, a bronze medallist at the 2021 World Championships, will open his campaign against Chinese Taipei's Lee Chia-Hao, a finalist at the All England Championships early this month.

HS Prannoy, who hasn't been his best self since suffering a bout of Chikungunya, will face China's Guang Zu Lu in his first match.

In the men's singles, Prishu Rajawat has been drawn against Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen, while Kiran George will face a qualifier.

In the women's singles, two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu will begin her campaign against world No 34 Ester Nuru-

mi Tri Wardoyo of Indonesia, while her compatriots face stiffer challenges.

Anupama Upadhyaya will take on Thailand's former world champion Ratchanok Intanon, seeded eighth, while Malvika Bansod has been drawn against China's Fang Jie Gao. Aakarshi Kashyap faces second seed Yue Han of China.

In women's doubles, the pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, ranked 9th, will face a qualifier in their opening match. Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra will also compete in the women's doubles event.

In men's doubles, India will be represented by the unheralded duo of Hariharan Am-sakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi, along with Pruthvi Krishnamurthy Roy and Sai Pratheek K.

The mixed doubles event will feature Rohan Kapoor/Ruthvika Shivani Gadde, Sathish Karunakaran/Aadya Variyath, Dhruv Kapila/Tanisha Crasto, and Ashith Surya/Amrutha Pramuthesh.

SHORT TAKES

Rahul blessed with girl

New Delhi: Following their thrilling one-wicket victory against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their opening match of IPL 2025, Delhi Capitals extended a wholesome and playful congratulations to their star player KL Rahul on the birth of his child. Rahul and his wife Athiya Shetty, who tied the knot in January 2023 and confirmed the pregnancy in November 2024, have been blessed with a baby girl Monday, the wicketkeeper announced through a social media post. In a video shared on DC social media with a caption "Our family extends, our family celebrates", Rahul's teammates congratulated him by doing a 'Mother's Lap Baby Swing' action. In the video, with Heyy Baby song 'Meri duniya tu hi re', skipper Axar Patel can be heard singing the song "Aa le chak mai aa gaya". Commenting on the post, Rahul shared, "Lads, this means so much to us, thanks a million."

Goalkeeper apologises

Carrickfergus (Northern Ireland): A goalkeeper facing sanctions from the Irish soccer federation has apologised following an incident last week during which he appeared to shove a ball boy to the ground. The incident took place during the first half of a match between Cliftonville and Carrick Rangers in the Northern Ireland Football League. Video footage published by the BBC showed Carrick Rangers goalkeeper Jack McIntyre pushing the boy to the ground after he handed the ball over to the goalkeeper. Carrick Rangers, which lost the match 3-0, said in a statement the club and McIntyre want to apologize "for any distress caused," adding that it "will also endeavour to make contact with the ball tender and their family."

Hard labour for fixing

Colombo: An Indian national was Tuesday sentenced to four years of rigorous imprisonment by the high court in the central town of Matale in connection with a 2024 case of fixing a cricket match. Yogi Patel was charged based on a complaint by Upul Tharanga, chairman of Sri Lanka selectors, over a proposal to fix matches in the Legends League T20 tournament played in Kandy. Patel, who was tried in absentia as he had fled the country despite a travel ban by the court, was arrested in March last year and later released on bail in May under strict bail conditions. After he fled the country, his lawyers told the court that he had fled due to death threats.

Punjab win first-ever IGU Golf Sixes League

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gurugram, March 25: Punjab emerged the winner among six state teams in the inaugural IGU Golf Sixes League organised by the Indian Golf Union, in partnership with The R&A, here at the DLF Golf & Country Club late on Monday. The Upraj Singh-Zorawar (21) duo and pair of Shlok Limaye and Guransh (19) totaled 40 points to help Punjab clinch the inaugural title.

The pair of Kabir Sachdev and Brisha Singh (21) along with Taanush Singh-Mahira Sharma (22) duo helped Haryana end runner-up with 43 points. Uttar Pradesh settled for the second runner-up position with the Ranveer Beri-Bhavay Rattan pair (23) and duo of Yajnas Mehrotra and Arghya Gautam (22) registering 45 points overall.

The event was played in the scramble best ball strokeplay format with six players each under the age of 12 representing the six teams. Two best scores out of the three pairs in each team was considered for the final standings.

Praising the IGU for the successful organization of the tournament, R&A development



manager for Middle East, Central Asia and India, Neal Graham stated: "Golf Sixes League is a proven development initiative which encourages new golfers into the sport in a fun and competitive way. It allows young people to bring their new-found skills from the lesson tee on to the course in an encouraging and inclusive team environment. We hope the introduction of Golf Sixes League in India by the Indian Golf Union will deliver similar results for golf participation in the country as we have seen in the British Isles, Europe and Africa."

The Golf Sixes League, a groundbreaking initiative which introduces new junior golfers to the game, was held for the first time in India during the DP World Tour and Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) sanctioned \$2.25 million Hero Indian Open this week.

AFC ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

India, Bangladesh play out goal-less draw

Blue Tigers had come into the match after a 3-0 thrashing of Maldives March 19, to mark talismanic striker Chhetri's return to international football and Manolo Marquez's first win as head coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, March 25: India and Bangladesh played out a goal-less draw in their 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifying round match here Tuesday.

Bangladesh were slightly the better side in the first half with more attacking moves and corner kicks but without any clear-cut chances.

India put up a much better performance in the next 45 minutes, putting Bangladesh under a lot of pressure but the chances were few and far between.

In the 12th minute, India goalkeeper Vishal Kaith committed a mistake as he kicked the ball into an opposition player. Mohammed Ridoy pounced on the deflection and sent a left



footer from an angular position into the open net but Subhasish Bose produced a goal-line clearance.

India's best chance came in the 31st minute but Udanta Singh's header off a Liston Colaco cross from left failed to beat Bangladesh goalie Mitul

Marma.

In a dominant second half display for India, Bose made an audacious long range effort which beat the Bangladesh goalkeeper all the way but missed the left corner of the net by inches in the 68th minute.

Five minutes later, Farukh

Choudhary's right footer went just wide after a deflection from a Bangladeshi defender.

The 84th minute saw star striker Sunil Chhetri getting a free header inside the Bangladesh box but his effort lacked direction and power.

Bangladesh midfielder Hamza Choudhury, who is currently playing for Sheffield United on loan from English Premier League side Leicester City, could not do much for most part of the match.

The two sides face each other again November 18 in Bangladesh.

India's next qualifying round match, though, will be against Hong Kong June 10 in Kowloon. India had come into the match after a 3-0 thrashing of Maldives March 19, to mark talismanic striker Chhetri's return to international football and Manolo Marquez's first win as head coach.

India are placed in Group C of the 2027 Asian Cup qualifying third round along with Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Singapore, and only the top team after six home and away matches qualifies for the continental showpiece.

Australia's Gabba stadium to be razed post 2032 Olympics

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Melbourne, March 25: The Gabba, Brisbane's iconic stadium, is set to be demolished following the 2032 Olympic Games, with cricket moving to a new 60,000-capacity venue in the Victoria Park area. This state-of-the-art stadium is being built as part of the Olympic infrastructure.

Queensland Premier David Crisafulli unveiled the plans for the future of the state's sports venues on Tuesday, highlighting cricket's central role in the decision. The sport had been in limbo due to the uncertainty surrounding the Gabba's future after the state won the 2032 Olympics bid in 2021. This development provides much-needed clarity following years of speculation and shifting proposals. Cricket Australia welcomed

the announcement and said, "This decision gives us certainty about venues and scheduling which in turn allows us to ensure Brisbane hosts the very best possible international and domestic cricket. We strongly advocated building a stadium in Victoria Park together with Queensland Cricket, the AFL and Brisbane Lions, and cricket will play a major role in ensuring this significant investment delivers long-term benefits for cricket fans and the people of Queensland. On behalf of the cricket community we want to thank the Queensland Government for seizing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to give the fans, the city and the state the stadium they deserve."

As part of the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, cricket will make a return to the Olympics after more than a century, having last appeared in 1900.



The Gabba is at its end of life. It hasn't been well maintained, and we do need a stadium to host this great show, and there is an opportunity for legacy play

DAVID CRISAFULLI | PREMIER, QUEENSLAND

If cricket is included in Brisbane's 2032 Olympics, the Gabba could host its final matches before being demolished, with the Great Barrier Reef Arena

in Mackay also earmarked for Olympic events.

Premier Crisafulli reflected on the historic significance, saying at an event in Brisbane,

"Wouldn't it be amazing to see the Australian cricket team win gold at an Olympic final? The Gabba's swansong."

Originally, plans for a complete AUD 2.7 billion overhaul of the Gabba under the previous Labor government were scrapped due to rising costs. A more modest AUD 600 million upgrade was also abandoned under the new government, prompting this decision to move forward with the new Victoria Park stadium.

The new stadium is seen as a major win for Queensland Cricket, offering certainty about the future of the sport in the region. Chief executive Terry Svenson noted, "The Gabba has been wonderful venue for cricket for many years and has provided fans and players with countless memories - however the challenges the stadium faces are well documented, and we

need to look to the future."

"There is now the opportunity for Queensland to attract the world's best cricket events, such as ICC events, men's and women's Ashes Series, the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series between Australia and India, as well as hosting the BBL and WBBL in a new purpose-built stadium."

The Gabba's history is rich, having hosted its first Test match in 1931 and becoming a fixture of Australian cricket summers. Though the venue's future post-2032 remains uncertain, it is expected to host some international cricket, including white-ball matches, in its final years.

Meanwhile, the development of other major cricket venues continues, with Hobart's new stadium, set to be completed by 2029, adding another international venue to Australia's repertoire ahead of the 2032 Games.