

Assembly sans Cong INSENSITIVE, INHUMAN: SC

BJD ATTACKS GOVT UNPRECEDENTED CHAOS IN AND AROUND HOUSE



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 26: A day after 12 Congress MLAs were suspended from the Assembly, the Speaker Wednesday debarred the remaining two party legislators for seven days for being indisposed in the House, following ruckus and multiple adjournments of proceedings.

The BJD also staged three walkouts, condemning the suspension of all 14 Congress MLAs, and accused the ruling BJP of being intolerant to criticism by Opposition members.

The party led by former chief minister Naveen Patnaik also slammed the ruling BJP for the alleged eviction of the 12 suspended Congress MLAs from the Assembly Tuesday night.

The two Congress MLAs - Taraprasad Bahinipati and Ramesh Jena - who were not suspended Tuesday, entered the House and started beating gongs to protest against the suspension of 12 of their members, including CLP leader Rama Chandra Kadam.

They demanded the formation of a House Committee to inquire into the alleged rise in crime against women across the state.

Irked by the disturbance created by the two Congress

members, government Chief Whip Saroj Kumar Pradhan moved a motion seeking their suspension, and the House adopted it through voice vote.

BJD MLAs demanded Speaker Surama Padhy's statement over the suspension of the 12 Congress legislators Tuesday and boycotted the debate on the Home department's demand, the reply to which was given by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi.

Responding to the BJD's demand, Padhy justified her action against the "unruly" Congress members.

"Since the beginning of the second phase of the Budget session March 7, the Congress members had been protesting in the middle of the House, holding placards and posters. Since March 20, the Congress members had been protesting in the well of the House by wearing black dresses and even beating gongs and cymbals and blowing flutes. They obstructed the proceedings of the House. Such behaviour of members was violating the dignity of the House," the Speaker said.

Justifying her action and eviction of suspended MLAs from the Assembly, the Speaker said, "They should have left the Assem-

Crimes against women dipped in BJP rule: CM

Claiming that the Opposition parties were unable to see positive changes during the BJP regime in Odisha, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Wednesday said in the House that the rate of crimes against women and children has declined in the state. He said the crime rate fell in terms of misbehaviour towards women by 3.9 per cent, sexual harassment by 13.5 per cent, public disrobing of women by 22.3 per cent, trafficking by 29.4 per cent, and eve-teasing cases by 3.8 per cent. "Since our government came to power in June 2024, the crime against women and children, in comparison to the corresponding period of the previous year, has reduced significantly," he said.

as soon as they were declared suspended. But they refused to vacate the House. I had ordered the Assembly secretariat to make all arrangements for them. I also ordered the security personnel to protect the members."

Padhy said that she was informed late Tuesday night that the Congress MLAs, along with their supporters who were present on the Assembly premises, had attacked the marshal and the security personnel in the verandah.

"After hearing about such incidents, I ordered the eviction of the Congress members from the House. The

marshals and the security personnel took some MLAs out of the Assembly premises while some of them came out of the Assembly on their own," Padhy said.

Bahinipati, one of the two Congress legislators who were not suspended Tuesday, claimed that the 12 lawmakers were manhandled and evicted from the Assembly in the dead of the night.

The Speaker also pointed out that due to the protest by the Opposition, only two Question Hours could be conducted in the 12 working days of the second phase of the session. Only eight questions were discussed, and there was no discussion for over 39 hours, she said.

"I had discussed with the Opposition party members in all-party meetings four times. However, the Opposition continued to be unruly in the House," Padhy said.

However, the Speaker's statement failed to satisfy the opposition BJD members who staged a walkout, calling it a "one-sided" argument. Earlier, the BJD members had alleged that the security personnel had also manhandled them and attempted to prevent them from going to Dr BR Ambedkar's statue at AG Chhak.

The Assembly witnessed a ruckus since it began the Question Hour at 10.30am. The opposition BJD members raised the issue of reservation for STs, SCs and OBCs in education and jobs and walked out of the House.

However, BJD members joined the House after paying tribute to BR Ambedkar's statue and demanded a statement from the Speaker on the alleged ill-treatment of the Congress members who were staging an overnight dharna in the well of the House protesting their suspension. **CONTD... P4**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: The Supreme Court Wednesday stayed the Allahabad High Court's recent observations on grabbing of a woman's breasts and pulling the drawstrings of her 'pyjama' not amounting to an attempt to rape and said it reflected total "insensitivity" and "inhuman approach".

Taking a strong exception to the high court's observations made in its March 17 verdict, the apex court termed

it a "very serious matter".

"In normal circumstances, we are slow in granting stay at this stage. But since the observations appearing in paragraphs 21, 24 and 26 are totally unknown to the cannons of law and depict total insensitivity and inhuman approach, we are inclined to stay the said observations," a bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih said.

The top court took suo motu cognisance of the matter after 'We the Women of India' collective wrote to

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna. "Until further orders, there shall be stay to the observations made by the judge in paragraphs 21, 24 and 26 of the order dated March 17, 2025," the bench held. The staying of the high court's observations would mean the same cannot be used in any judicial proceeding to seek relief by the present set of accused or others.

The high court's verdict held that the attempt to rape offence was not made out against the accused and

they were liable to be summoned for the lesser offence of assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe her. "There is no allegation that the accused tried to commit penetrative sexual assault against the victim," the HC further said.

The top court issued notices to the Centre, Uttar Pradesh government and the parties before the high court in the matter seeking their responses in the suo motu proceeding. It posted the matter for hearing April 15.

DSPL-434



ବୟନିକା

Wear Your Heritage

ବିଶେଷ ରିହାତି ସମାବେଶର ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ

ସ୍ଥାନ : ବୟନ ଭବନ ପ୍ରାଙ୍ଗଣ, ସଚିବାଳୟ ମାର୍ଗ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର
ତା : ୨୭.୦୩.୨୦୨୫, ଅପରାହ୍ଣ ୨.୦୦ ଘଟିକା ସମୟରେ

ପ୍ରଶଂସା ଅତିଥି

ଶ୍ରୀ ପ୍ରଦିପ ବଳ ସାମନ୍ତ

ମାନ୍ୟବର ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସମବାୟ, ହସ୍ତତନ୍ତ, ବୟନ ଓ ହସ୍ତଶିଳ୍ପ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ଭବ୍ୟ ଭବନ

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଶ୍ରୀ ପୁନମ ତାପସ କୁମାର, ଭା.ପ୍ର.ସେ.

କମିଶନର-ତଥା-ଶାସନ ସଚିବ,

ହସ୍ତତନ୍ତ, ବୟନ ଓ ହସ୍ତଶିଳ୍ପ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

ଶ୍ରୀ ପ୍ରେମ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଚୌଧୁରୀ, ଭା.ପ୍ର.ସେ.

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ସଭାପତି, ବୟନିକା

ଏହି ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଯୋଗଦେବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଦିନସ୍ତ ଅନୁରୋଧ

ବିଶେଷ ସରକାରୀ ରିହାତି

୨୦% + ୧୦% + ୫%

ବୟନିକାର ସମସ୍ତ ଶାଖା ଏବଂ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନୀ ପଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଜନତା ମଇଦାନର ବୟନିକା ଷ୍ଟଲ୍ରେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ

୨୭ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୦୧ ରୁ ୩୧ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ

ରାତ୍ରୀ ବଜାର (Night Bazar)

ବୟନିକା ଅନନ୍ୟ ଟିପ୍ପଣୀରୁ Exclusive

(ବୟନ ଭବନ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର)

ଅତିରିକ୍ତ ୫% ରିହାତି ଯଥା

୨୦% + ୧୦% + ୫% + ୫%

୨୭ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୦୧ ରୁ ୦୧ ଅପ୍ରେଲ (ସକାଳ ୭ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ)

ସମୟ : ରାତ୍ର ୧୧ ରୁ ସକାଳ ୭ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ

"ବୟନିକା ରେ ଗ୍ରାହକଙ୍କ ପଦାର୍ପଣ ବୁଣାକାରଙ୍କ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସ୍ଥିତିର ଅଭ୍ୟୁତ୍ଥାନ"

ହସ୍ତତନ୍ତ, ବୟନ ଓ ହସ୍ତଶିଳ୍ପ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

Justice Tandon sworn in as Orissa HC CJ

BHUBANESWAR: Justice Harish Tandon was Wednesday sworn in as the new Chief Justice of Orissa High Court. Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati administered oath of office to Justice Tandon at the Raj Bhavan here. Tandon was appointed as the Chief Justice of Orissa HC by President Droupadi Murmu March 21. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Revenue and Disaster Minister Suresh Pujari, Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan and several dignitaries were present at the function. Judges, bar association members and others were also present at the ceremony.

Dogs devour dead newborn girl child

ROURKELA: The decomposed body of a newborn girl was found wrapped in a polythene bag in Sundargarh town Wednesday morning with stray dogs reportedly devouring the limbs. After witnessing the disturbing scene of dogs eating the body of the newborn near the Mahesdih Park, Ward No 15, locals informed Sundargarh town police, which reached the spot, sent the body for post-mortem and began an investigation. Sundargarh SDPO Nirmal Chandra Mohapatra said, "It is difficult to say whether the delivery took place in Sundargarh town or someone from outside threw it here."

Stones hurled at Vande Bharat Exp

ROURKELA: Unidentified miscreants hurled stones at a Vande Bharat Express en route to Rourkela from Puri in Odisha, damaging window panes of a coach, officials said Wednesday. No passengers were injured in the incident, they said. The train was pelted with stones near Kalunga village, around 5km from Rourkela station in Sundargarh district. Two window panes of coach number 3 were damaged, the officials said. It halted for some time at Kalunga, as GRP and RPF personnel rushed to the spot, along with technical staff.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What do you mean why? That Kunal Kamra is hiding in Tamil Nadu

Palestinians protest Hamas in rare, risky show of dissent

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, March 26: Palestinians chanted against Hamas during anti-war protests in the Gaza Strip, witnesses said Wednesday, in a rare show of public anger against the militant group that has long repressed dissent and still rules the territory 17 months into the war with Israel.

Videos that appeared to be authentic showed hundreds of people taking part in a protest in the heavily destroyed northern town of Beit Lahya Tuesday. People held signs saying "Stop the war," "We refuse to die" and "The blood of our children is not cheap."

There were calls for more protests Wednesday. At least one was held in the hard-hit Shijaiyah neighbourhood of Gaza City, where dozens of men chanted "Out, out out! Hamas get out!"



"We are sick of the bombing, killing and displacement," said Ammar Hassan, who took part in the protest Tuesday.

He said it started as an anti-war protest with a few dozen people but swelled to more than 2,000, with people chanting against Hamas. "It's the only party we can affect," he said by phone. "Protests won't stop the (Israeli) occupation, but it can affect Hamas."

The militant group has violently cracked down on previous protests.

Family elders from Beit Lahya expressed support for the protests against Israel's renewed offensive and its tightened blockade on all supplies into Gaza. Their statement said the community fully supports armed resistance against Israel.

"The protest was not about politics. It was about people's lives," said Moham-

med Abu Saker, a father of three from the nearby town of Beit Hanoun, who joined the demonstration.

"We want to stop the killing and displacement, no matter the price. We can't stop Israel from killing us, but we can press Hamas to give concessions," he said. A similar protest occurred in the heavily destroyed area of Jabaliya Tuesday, according to witnesses.

One protester in Jabaliya, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution, said they joined the demonstration because "everyone failed us." They said they chanted against Israel, Hamas, the Western-backed Palestinian Authority and Arab mediators.

The protests erupted a week after Israel ended its ceasefire with Hamas by launching a surprise wave of strikes that killed hundreds of people.

leisure



DENISE GOT MORE ACTING OFFERS AFTER STARTING ONLYFANS PAGE

Hollywood actress Denise Richards has seen a massive turnaround as far as acting offers are concerned. While preparing to shoot photos for her *OnlyFans* account in an episode of 'Denise Richards & Her Wild Things', the actress shared how her success on the platform has impacted her career, reports *People* magazine.

SELENA GOMEZ ON WOMEN GETTING SOCIAL MEDIA HATE

Actress-singer Selena Gomez shared that when it comes to dealing with hate social media comments, women have it worse. During a recent appearance on the *On Purpose with Jay Shetty* Podcast, Gomez and her partner, Benny Blanco, discussed social media hate, reports *variety.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
You already feel deeply connected to the universe. But today, you may want to particularly thank God for all His small mercies. You cherish your loved ones even more today, says Ganesha, and you may spend lavishly on people dear to you.

TAURUS
You may feel suspicious about the people around you, feels Ganesha. You are also likely to emerge victorious in visa matters. You will take time to let your loved ones know how much you care for them. Have a positive attitude and it will win many hearts for you, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI
You are likely to take a break from your daily routine. A pleasure trip to recharge your batteries is on the charts, predicts Ganesha. Winning favours from members of the opposite sex comes naturally to you. If you love someone, you will make your move today. Evening will be about doing medication, and getting attuned to yourself or maybe your sweetheart.

CANCER
Today, you will put your heart and soul into whatever task you take up. But the results may not be too forthcoming. However, that should not be a reason for you to get dejected or anxious. You will get your due sooner or later. Also, spending some time with your loved ones will be quite gratifying emotionally.

LEO
You will need to keep from being agitated today. Let your spouse or business partner take critical decisions if you aren't in the right frame of mind. Decisions you take today may have to be rethought of later. Important meetings will proceed smoothly, but you will not be able to commit to any final conclusions or contracts.

VIRGO
Give attention to your deepest feelings. A small excursion may be on the cards. Ganesha says today you will easily get along with other people. You will shower your sincere love and affection on your near and dear ones. Use your magical skills to improve your relationships.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you will be full of joy, enthusiasm and vigor today. Your knowledge will improve by being in the company of intelligent people. Anything that you take up today will have your luck or destiny supporting you. Ganesha wishes you success in all your undertakings.

SCORPIO
You may face the music from bosses today, forecasts Ganesha. Your colleagues too may not warm up to you and offer half-hearted support. Novices knocking on the doors of career may look forward to belated success in interviews and final selection.

SAGITTARIUS
Benevolence will be your middle name today. Being frank and open-minded will have its own advantages. You might just give your life partner a patient ear. This will make them feel treated well, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
You have been waiting to hear some good news for long, and today is the day when the wait will be finally over. With your eyes firmly set on your goal, you will develop likings for your work. This will help you make plans and take decisions for the future, feels Ganesha. You wished to change your current job, but with some good news coming in you may not wish for the same any more.

AQUARIUS
You may feel constrained by future plans. Ganesha says that plans are okay, but you must live in the present to avail the cosmic energy that ultimately manifests your dreams. At work, your generous spirit adds to the goodwill you have already accrued.

PISCES
Today is likely to be a day of mixed fortunes, says Ganesha. While a hectic morning and a positively frantic afternoon will see you at your wits' end, a sumptuous dinner with your sweetheart, followed by a sensuous evening, will delight you out of your mind.

Life can change overnight: Sara

New Delhi: Bollywood star Sara Ali Khan on Wednesday said the knife attack on her father, Saif Ali Khan, could have gone 'so wrong' and the incident has made her realise about uncertainty of life.

Sara opened up about the incident during her appearance on an event organised by a news channel and said the whole family is feeling grateful.

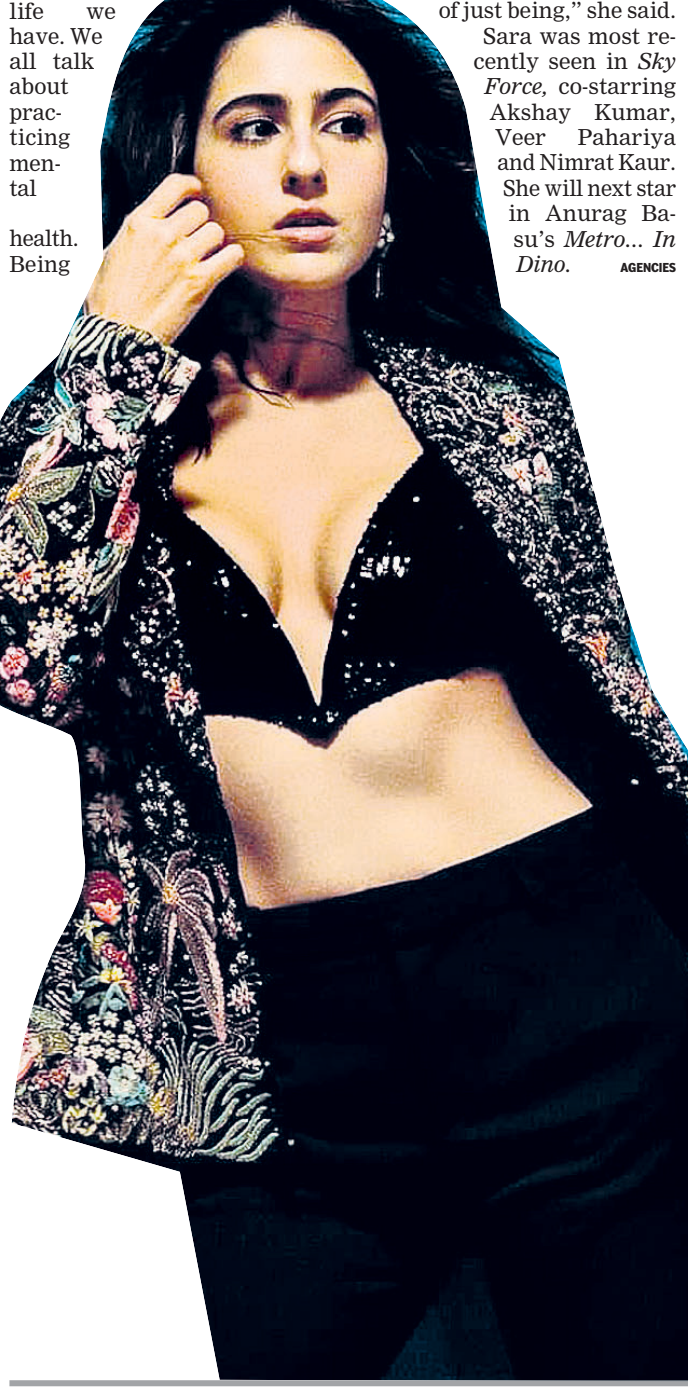
"It could have gone so wrong... and I am so grateful that everything is fine. It was a reminder almost of the life we have. We all talk about practicing mental health. Being

grateful for your life is so important. And moments like that make you realise it," she said.

Asked if the incident brought the family closer, Sara said she shares a close bond with her father.

"It's about making you realise how transient the things that you chase are. It didn't make me realise I love my father, I have known that for 29 years. It made me realise life can change overnight. So every second of every day deserves mindful celebration. It made me realise the importance of just being," she said.

Sara was most recently seen in *Sky Force*, co-starring Akshay Kumar, Veer Pahariya and Nimrat Kaur. She will next star in Anurag Basu's *Metro...* in *Dino*.



CURTAINS DOWN ON 27TH KALINGA NATYA MAHOTSAV



Bhubaneswar-based Kalakar Theatre presented Odia play *Dhara* on the 5th and final day of the event, organised by Satabdira Kalakar, at Rabindra Mandap, Wednesday. Penned by Nivedita Jena, the drama was directed by Hara Prasad Patnaik. Veteran actor Sakaleswar Patnaik was conferred with Life Time Achievement award while Ramachandra Sasml and Ramesh Chandra Maharana (both are actor-director) received Pramila Pratiba Samman. Photo journalist Tikan Biswaranjan Mishra and **Dharitri** Deputy News Editor Jitendra Kumar Nayak were felicitated with Satabdira Kalakar Samman.



PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

MALAIKA HOPES TO REUNITE WITH SRK



MUMBAI: Malaika Arora has expressed her desire to reunite with Shah Rukh Khan for future collaborations, particularly after their iconic *Chaiyya Chaiyya* number in 1998.

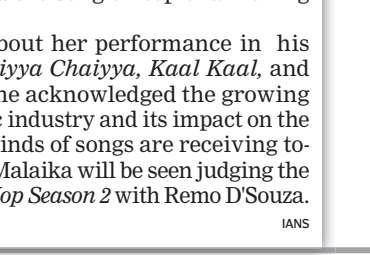
The song, which became a massive hit, marked the beginning of their on-screen chemistry and is still remembered as one of the most memorable dance sequences in Bollywood history.

In a recent interaction with an entertainment portal, Malaika shared her excitement about the possibility of teaming up with SRK once again. She told this agency, "If it happens, it will happen. I'm always open to it."

Chaiyya Chaiyya, an Indian pop-folk song, was featured in the film *Dil Se*. The track, written by Bulleh Shah, with music composed by the legendary AR Rahman, and lyrics penned by the acclaimed Gulzar, remains a timeless classic in the world of Indian cinema.

Sung by Sukhwinder Singh and Sapna Awasthi, the song was picturized on Shah Rukh and Malaika, where they performed the song on top of a moving train.

Speaking about her performance in his tracks like *Chaiyya Chaiyya*, *Kaal Kaal*, and *Gare Damaal*, she acknowledged the growing shift in the music industry and its impact on the attention these kinds of songs are receiving today. Meanwhile, Malaika will be seen judging the reality show *Hip Hop Season 2* with Remo D'Souza.



Sobhita's startling revelation

MUMBAI: Sobhita Dhulipala is living a charmed life. The actress recently married Naga Chaitanya and the couple are always in news for their loving relationship.

However, life wasn't always a bed of roses for *Made in Heaven* star.

In an old video, which has gone viral on social media recently, Sobhita has made a surprising revelation. *The Monkey Man* star was apparently replaced by a dog for a brand shoot.

The actor said, "I was called at 11:30 at night for an audition, and I thought it was just creepy. I go and audition, I get told 'You have been cast'."

According to the 32-year-old actor, the first day of the shoot went great, but apparently, there was some issue with the camera, so the shoot was re-scheduled.

But, the next day came as a rude shock for

her. The client thought that Sobhita didn't suit the brand's image because, wait for it, "being confident."

"The client saw the footage, and they are like, no, the girl is not working. She looks confident which doesn't suit the brand image much. So they replaced me with a dog," said Sobhita.

The anecdote attracted a bewildered reaction from Jim and Neha but the actor said she was fine because at least she got paid for the assignment.



PEANUTS



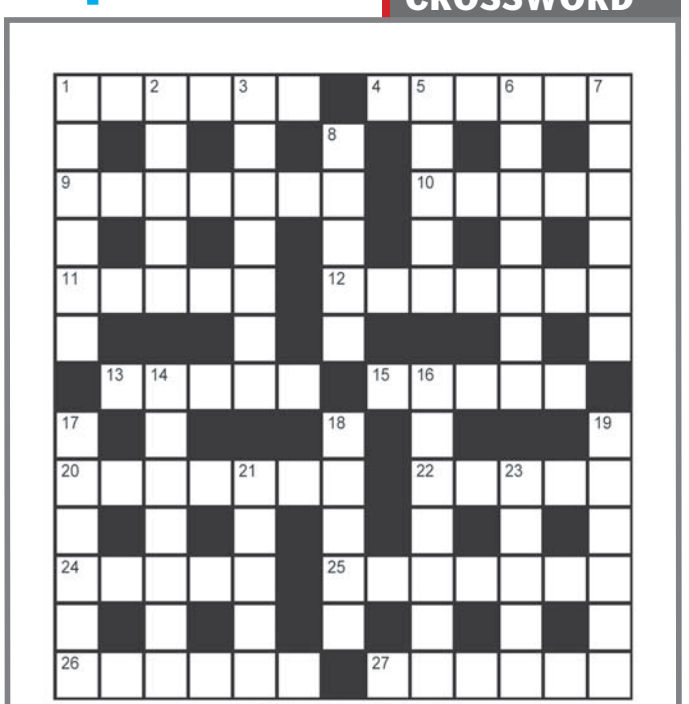
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



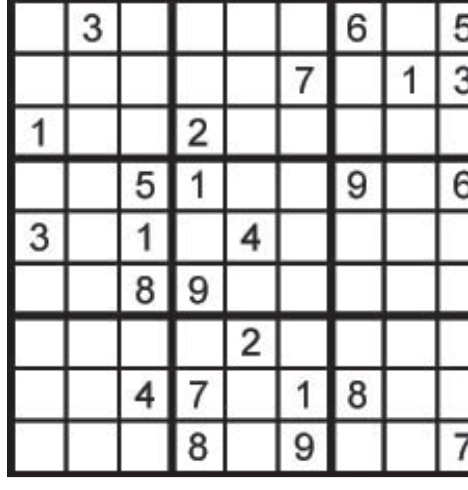
FUN POST CROSSWORD



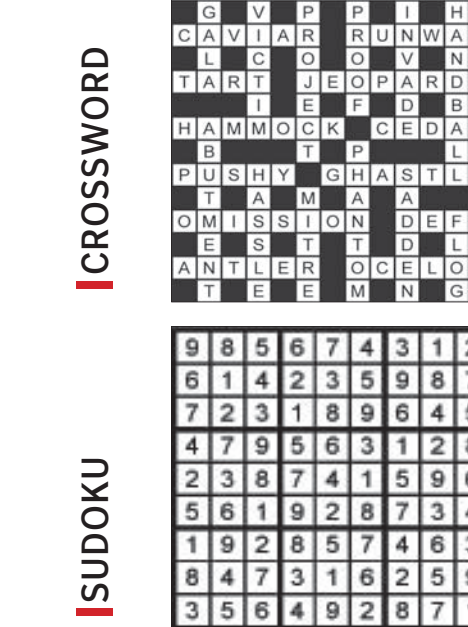
- Across
- 1 Make like Sherlock
 - 4 Oak droppings
 - 9 Bastille, e.g.
 - 10 Blacksmith's block
 - 11 Coven member
 - 12 Embroidery hoop
 - 13 Repentant
 - 15 Pungent
 - 20 Plague
 - 22 Vestibule
 - 24 Simoleons
 - 25 Trade barrier
 - 26 Make bubbly
 - 27 Hudson Bay feeder
 - 6 Pasta dish
 - 7 Hot and humid
 - 8 Muse with a lyre
 - 14 Policeman
 - 16 Gun barrel diameter
 - 17 Showy bloom
 - 18 Girder material
 - 19 Mogul
 - 21 Generally incompetent
 - 23 Trash hauler
- Down
- 1 Renounce
 - 2 Passed out, as cards
 - 3 Itch reliever
 - 5 Great divide

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

'MAHABHARAT' HAS STARTED: DAS

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 26: Amidst face-off between the BJP government and Congress over the issue of women safety, state Congress chief Bhakta Charan Das Wednesday said the 'Mahabharat' in Odisha politics has just started.

"In Mahabharat, a woman was the cause of the fight between Kauravas and Pandavas. Now, women are the cause of the conflict between Congress and BJP government. They (government) didn't take any measure to stop the growing atrocities on women, and Congress cannot stop agitations till a House Committee is formed to address the issue," Das told reporters here.

He said the party will 'gherao' the Assembly Thursday and will continue to hold protests and demonstrations across the state on the issue in coming days.

"You have suspended all 14 MLAs from the Assembly for beating gongs in the House. Is beating a gong illegal?" he asked.



The Congress leader said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had advised people to beat gong and 'thali' during Covid-19 lockdown. "People beat gongs in temples too. What's wrong in beating a gong in the Assembly, which is the temple of democracy?" Das further asked.

"The ruling party cannot suppress the voice of Congress by suspending MLAs from the Assembly. The fight will con-

tinue and the party will fight for the safety and security of women," he said.

Senior Congress leader Narasingha Mishra said the BJP government has added fuel to the fire ahead of the Assembly 'gherao' programme of the party Thursday by suspending all 14 MLAs from the House.

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Rama Chandra Kadam said, "We'll continue our fight to take it to a logical end."

After Bhakta Charan Das took charge as the party's new state president, Congress has been raising the issue of alleged atrocities against women inside and outside the Assembly.

Party MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka even raised the issue in the Lok Sabha.

Police made tight security arrangements inside and outside the Assembly along with traffic arrangements in Bhubaneswar for Congress' Assembly 'gherao' programme.

Bhubaneswar DCP Jagmohan Meena said, "To maintain law

and order, we'll deploy 80 platoons of police force, including 10 platoons of women police, in Bhubaneswar, especially on all roads leading to Assembly. We'll also deploy the Odisha Swift Action Force, which is used to tackle riots."

"Special arrangements have been made for smooth movement of traffic in the City," he said.

Meena appealed to the protestors to hold the demonstration in a peaceful manner. "If anyone violates the law, action will be taken against them," he warned.

Anticipating a serious law and order situation, the government has asked all officers and staff working in the Lok Seva Bhawan, Kharavela Bhawan, Rajiv Bhawan, Krushi Bhawan, and in the heads of department buildings to reach the office latest by 9:30am to facilitate their smooth entry.

"Entry of visitors will be restricted Thursday. Persons with prior appointments, whose business is pressing and immediate, will be given entry passes on need basis," officials said.

Home guard among 5 held for ₹3.50 crore bank fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch has arrested five persons, including a home guard, in connection ₹3.50-crore bank fraud, official sources said Wednesday.

The accused were identified as Dhananjay Prusty of Cuttack's Chandini Chowk, Nirapada Karmakar of West Bengal's Hoogly, Benudhar Singh of Cuttack's Mohammadia Bazar, Surendra Kumar Beura of Choudwar in Cuttack, Niranjan Satpathy and Rinarani Satpathy, both from Bhadrak's Bhandaripokhari. Niranjan has been working as a home guard in Bhubaneswar UPD.

They have been booked under Sections 419, 420, 467, 468, 471, and 120-B of IPC and were produced before the designated court under the OPID Act in Cuttack Wednesday. According to EOW sources, the case was registered on the basis of a complaint filed by Bhabani Shankar Mohanty - Regional Manager at SBI's Regional Office in Cuttack.

Dhananjay and Surendra formed a partnership firm - M/s Maa Ganga Enterprise - December 3, 2022. In a bid to commit the crime, both the partners resigned from the firm and transferred the partnership to Jonaki Karmakar and Sarat Chandra Swain September 20, 2023, according to the EOW.

"As per their plans, the new partners

- Jonaki Karmakar and Sarat Chandra Swain - applied for credit facilities - Asset Backed Loan (ABL) of ₹3.50 crore - from SBI's Madhupatna branch by mortgaging forged documents of a piece of land under Saheed Nagar police limits belonging to another man named Sarat Chandra Swain," the EOW sources said.

For the forgery, they also prepared fake Aadhaar and PAN cards in the name of the impersonator. Those were quite different from the Aadhaar and PAN of the original land owner, Sarat Chandra Swain, they added.

The fraud came to the fore when the real land owner Sarat Chandra Swain sold the piece of land to Pradeep Kumar Beuria and Birendra Kumar Mohanty and the bank withheld the sale proceeds.

"The arrested individuals orchestrated the fraud and, in conspiracy with other accused, successfully availed the loan from SBI in favour of Jonaki Karmakar. The loan amount was subsequently misappropriated by the accused and their associates," the EOW said in a statement.

During house searches, EOW officials seized ₹51,100 in cash, sale deeds, Record of Rights documents, Aadhaar cards, PAN cards, debit cards, and bank passbooks from the possession and residences of the accused. "Additionally, fake Indian currency notes in denominations of ₹200, ₹100, ₹50 and ₹10 amounting to ₹5,290 were also recovered," it said.

In a first, Debrigarh hosts Indian Bison Festival



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: In a bid to raise awareness about conservation of Indian bison (also known as gaur or gayala in Odia), Hirakud Wildlife Division has recently organised Indian Bison Festival at Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, a first-of-its-kind in the state.

The festival was held at Zeropoint in Debrigarh under the leadership of divisional forest officer (DFO) Anshu Pragyan Das.

The main objective of the event was to promote conservation of Indian bison, which play a crucial role as 'ecological engineers' in Debrigarh-Hirakud landscape. "Indian bison are one of the four mega herbivores in In-

dia, and the festival was aimed at raising awareness about their role and the need for their protection," said Das.

During a bison census conducted in November 2024, it was revealed that Debrigarh is home to 669 Indian bison, with 30 per cent being juveniles. While the sanctuary can support a larger population, careful management is essential to maintain the correct sex ratio and ensure the health of the ecosystem. Effective habitat management, monitoring of ecological indicators, and continued protection are key to successful wildlife management in the area.

The presence of more bison calves in this summer, compared to last year's winter, is a posi-

itive sign for the species' recovery. However, their protection has remained a challenge. "Juveniles make the herds more predictable, which can be a risk, particularly as leopards are the primary predators in the landscape," said Sahu, adding that the event highlighted the importance of ongoing conservation efforts, with support from local communities, who play a pivotal role in protecting and managing the sanctuary.

During the unique festival, discussions were also held on ecology, behaviour, habitat, and habits of Indian bison, followed by a field visit for participants to observe these majestic creatures in their natural habitat. This hands-on approach helped increase support for the protection and conservation of the species.

The DFO emphasised that Debrigarh is the only place in Odisha where people can directly engage with and learn about the ecology of these mega fauna. The stable and healthy population of Indian bison in the sanctuary showcases the success of conservation efforts in the region.



AWARENESS IS KEY

Students and teachers participate in an awareness programme on AIDS at Emarti Devi Women's Degree College in Cuttack, Wednesday

ତୃତୀୟ ଶ୍ରାଦ୍ଧବାର୍ଷିକ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ

ବୀଣାପାଣି ମିଶ୍ର (ମୃତ୍ତି)
(୧୯୭୭-୨୦୨୨)
ଘର - ଡାକ୍ତା, ବରଗଡ଼
ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଅମର ଆତ୍ମାର ଶାନ୍ତି ନିମନ୍ତେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ।

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ସ୍ୱାମୀ - ଗୌରଚରଣ ମହାପାତ୍ର, ପୁତ୍ର - ଅଭିଷେକ ମହାପାତ୍ର (ଚନ୍ଦନ), ଅବିନାଶ ମହାପାତ୍ର (ନୟନ)

Attention! GST Taxpayers

Whose Aggregate Annual Turnover* is upto a specified limit* can opt for GST Composition Scheme for the FY 2025-2026 by 31st March, 2025

Eligible taxpayers who wish to avail the Composition Scheme can follow these steps on the GST portal (www.gst.gov.in):

Log in to the Taxpayers' Interface

Go to Services > Registration > Application to Opt for Composition Levy

Fill the FORM GST CMP-02 and submit

Those eligible taxpayers, who are already availing Composition Scheme, need not file FORM CMP-02 if they are eligible.

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	* Type of Suppliers	# Aggregate Annual Turnover during FY 2024-25
Supplier of Goods:	Taxpayers registered in 08 Specified States	upto ₹75 Lakh
	Taxpayers registered in other States	upto ₹150 Lakh
Supplier of Services		upto ₹50 Lakh

For more details, please refer to Section 10 of CGST Act, Rule 3-7 of CGST Rules and Notification No. 14/2019-Central Tax dated 07.03.2019

GST Composition Scheme: Big Benefits for Small Taxpayers

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India to lead in drug regulation guidance



Plans underway to support nations with regulatory insights and successful initiatives in drug safety and compliance

South East Asian and SAARC countries on drug and regulatory aspects and sharing of expertise as part of the Ministry of External Affairs' International Training and Education Center for Health (ITECH) programme. Proposals for training have been drafted by the NIIHW in collaboration with Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and have been sent to the health ministry, said NIIHW director Dheeraj Shah. Training would be imparted on the various aspects of vaccine and drug trials that are conducted in India and the procedure of marketing authorisation for new vaccines and drugs, Shah elaborated. As part of the programme, countries would be informed on how the quality of drugs is monitored through market surveillance where drug samples are

drawn randomly from market and manufacturing facilities and tested at government laboratories. Success stories would also be shared, he said. These training programmes will be held at NIIHW.

In the last two years, at the residential programme at NIIHW, 1,477 drug regulators from the CDSCO and states have been trained on various drug regulatory aspects focused on improving their skills, knowledge, inspections, investigations and review of dossiers.

"The enhanced quality of investigations and prosecution has led to an increased conviction rate by 5 to 10 per cent (in India) over the last two years," Shah said. "These trainings are aimed at improving the confidence of drug regulators as well as to improve the quality of inspections and investigations to ensure effective prosecution leading to better conviction rates," Shah said.

Besides, 672 state drug regulators were also trained across the country in the last two years.

Moreover, the CDSCO has also conducted various workshops across the country on revised schedule M (standard for Good Manufacturing Practices), which were attended in hybrid mode by 39,107 industry representatives in the last two years.

'I am with Nature' art exhibition opens



RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 26: The 'I am with Nature' painting exhibition, organised by the Ketaki Foundation Trust, was inaugurated Wednesday at the Lalit Kala Akademi at Regional Centre Gallery here.

The six-day exhibition features 20 paintings by ten eminent Odia artists, created during the Lulung Painters' Camp 2024 at the Similipal Biosphere Reserve in Mayurbhanj. The inauguration was attended by Utkal University of Culture vice-chancellor Prasan K Swain, Padma Shri Adwaita Gadanayak, renowned sculptor, Regional Secretary of Lalit Kala Akademi Ramakrishna Vedala, the Lulung Painters' Camp 2024 convener Ramahari Jena and IFS officer Samrat Gowda. A special catalogue reflecting the artists' engagement with nature was also released.

Speaking at the event, Gadanayak said, "Nature is a fundamental source of artistic inspiration, and this exhibition beautifully merges contemporary art with indigenous traditions." Swain added, "This initiative celebrates Odisha's artistic heritage while fostering a creative dialogue between artists and local communities."

The exhibition also features Jhoti-Chita paintings and artworks by schoolchildren and tribal women from Lulung, created during special workshops aimed at preserving indigenous art forms.

Additionally, Gowda announced support for a photography camp in Similipal to further strengthen the bond between nature and artistic expression.

Open to the public until March 31, from 11am to 7 pm, the exhibition offers a unique opportunity to experience the fusion of art and nature.

Odisha hits 1mn Lakhpati Didis

Bhubaneswar: The Lakhpati Didi initiative has empowered over 10 lakh self-help group (SHG) members in Odisha, marking a significant milestone in rural women's economic development. An official release Wednesday stated that the state has successfully created one million Lakhpati Didis, reflecting the resilience and talent of rural and tribal women. Odisha now ranks second nationwide in implementing this initiative. "Our approach extends beyond financial aid, focusing on skill development, financial literacy, and market linkages," the release highlighted. Each success story strengthens the vision of a self-reliant Odisha. To track income details of potential Lakhpati Didis, the central government has developed the LokOS portal, with data collection handled by village-level resource persons and verified at the block level. This achievement underscores the Odisha government's commitment to women's socio-economic progress, paving the way for a more prosperous future.

Odisha pledges to boost Handicrafts



Bhubaneswar: Odisha's handicrafts and handlooms are the state's cultural soul, and it is our duty to preserve and promote this heritage, said Cooperation and Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts (HTH) Minister Pradeep Bal Samanta at the closing ceremony of the 7th Kalabhoomi Utsav Wednesday. The five-day festival, organised by the HTH department from March 22 to 26, marked the foundation day of the Odisha Crafts Museum - Kalabhoomi. Minister Bal Samanta reiterated the government's commitment to supporting artisans and weavers. HTH Commissioner-cum-Secretary Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar highlighted various welfare initiatives for artisans, while Textiles & Handlooms director Prem Chandra Choudhary described Kalabhoomi as a symbol of Odisha's rich craftsmanship. Special Secretary Madhumita Rath delivered the welcome address, and Handicrafts director Pranati Chhotray proposed the vote of thanks. The Minister also distributed prizes to competition winners.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: India is likely to provide practical insights to certain countries on the best practices in drug regulations and the impactful initiatives taken by the Indian drug regulators, officials said Wednesday.

The National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIIHW), an autonomous organisation under the Union health ministry, has proposed training programmes for the drug regulators of African,

DMD patients seek gene therapy



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: The Odisha Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Association (ODMDA) staged a protest at Lower PMG Wednesday, urging the state government to facilitate gene therapy for children affected by Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) and address their other demands.

Children with DMD, along with their parents, participated in the demonstration, holding placards under the leadership of ODMDA president Bishnu Charan Panigrahy. He highlighted the debilitating impact of DMD, stating, "Children with this condition gradually lose muscle strength, become wheelchair-bound by age 12, and face a lack of treatment options. Many have lost their lives due

to the unavailability of a cure."

Panigrahy demanded government-funded research on affordable treatment, a ₹15,000 monthly allowance for affected children, and one-time life insurance of ₹50 lakh for their security. Lilima Maharana, a mother from Cuttack whose two sons suffer from DMD, urged the government to provide free medicines and financial aid for treatment. Vikram Acharya, an ODMDA member, stressed the need for government intervention to introduce therapies or treatments to alleviate the suffering of families. DMD is a genetic disorder causing progressive muscle degeneration due to alterations in the dystrophin protein, which is essential for muscle cell integrity. Symptoms typically appear in early childhood, between ages 2 and 3.

ACC launches 'ColFit' for early detection of colorectal cancer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: In order to tackle the rising cases of the disease in India, Apollo Cancer Centre (ACC) launched ColFit - a comprehensive colorectal cancer (CRC) screening programme here Wednesday on its premises.

Apollo Hospitals, Bhubaneswar chief operating officer and medical services director Alok Srivastava, ACC consultant - Surgical Oncologist Prashant Chandra Das, senior consultant - Gastroenterology Sushant Kumar Sethi, senior consultant - Haematology Sreeya Das were present on the occasion.

At the event, Srivastava said, "Our goal is not just treatment but also awareness. ColFit provides a seamless screening-to-treatment pathway, ensuring early detection and better outcomes."

The initiative introduces the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)—a non-invasive screening tool that detects hidden blood in stool, a potential early indicator of CRC. The



structured screening process includes risk stratification, stool tests, colonoscopy for high-risk individuals, and follow-ups based on results.

Sushant Kumar Sethi emphasised the need for proactive screening. "Poor diet, sedentary habits, and obesity contribute to rising CRC cases. With ColFit, we offer accessible early detection through a simple, non-invasive test," he said.

Sreeya Das stressed the importance of early detection in preventing and treating colorectal cancer. "Despite its preventability, rising cases highlight the need for aware-

ness and proactive screening. Routine FIT tests and colonoscopies, especially for high-risk individuals, along with healthier lifestyles, can significantly reduce the burden. Early detection saves lives."

ColFit aims to promote early detection and prevention, addressing concerns over late-stage diagnoses that lead to poor survival rates and high treatment costs. Despite being preventable and treatable, CRC cases in India are often identified at advanced stages, with a five-year survival rate of less than 40 per cent—one of the lowest globally.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.6°	36.0°
Min Temp	22.1°	21.6°
Humidity	80%	74%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST		
Mainly clear sky		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	77,288.50	↓ 728.69
NIFTY	23,486.85	↓ 181.80
DOLLAR	85.64	↑ 0.057
EURO	92.38	↓ 0.011
GOLD	₹87,423	↓ ₹143
SILVER	₹99,421	↑ ₹287

FROM P1...

Unable to run the House, Padhy adjourned the proceedings for 30 minutes and convened an all-party meeting to resolve the impasse in the Assembly for seven days. Later, she adjourned the House three more times.

Senior BJD members Prasanna Acharya, Pramila Mallik, RP Swain, Arun Kumar Sahoo, Ganeswar Behera and many others criticised the Speaker's suspension order against the 14 Congress MLAs.

Opposition Chief Whip and senior BJD leader Pramila Mallik alleged the Congress MLAs were beaten up and some members injured as per media reports. "You (Speaker) are not saying anything on this matter. You are not also making any statement on our demand for reservation of seats for OBC," she said.

Mallik also drew the atten-

Assembly sans Cong

tion of the Speaker saying that BJD MLAs were not allowed to go outside the House when they went to BR Ambedkar's statue. The police also assaulted the BJD members. Give a proper statement whether you have given any instruction to the police, Mallik told the Speaker.

BJD's 8-time MLA, RP Swain said, "We have given notice four times in the past three days for discussion on reservation for SC, ST and OBC. What is your agenda? When the scuffle took place in the House March 11, you have given one-sided direction. We heard that someone has snatched the chain of Bahinipati. Who will give clarification on this matter," Swain asked.

BJD member Arun Kumar Sahoo said when the Congress MLAs demanded a statement from the chief minister on the crime against women issue, it was rejected. In the three all-party meetings, the Congress members demanded



House Committee but it was also rejected, he said.

Treasury bench members Tankadhar Tripathy, Om Prakash Mishra and others defended the government and the Speaker's action. BJP MLA Padma Lochan Panda suggested to the Speaker that an all-party meeting be convened to ensure the smooth functioning of the House.

Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, at a press conference on the Assembly premises, came down heavily on the Congress and alleged that there was a "conspiracy" by the party leadership in Delhi.

"The Congress MLAs are

remotely controlled by their leadership in Delhi. There is no justification to make a demand for the formation of a House Committee over the alleged rise in crime against women. Such a committee is formed on the specific matter," he said.

The minister also criticised the previous BJD government and cited several women atrocities cases in the last 24 years.

Meanwhile, anger over the suspension of Congress MLAs spilled outside the House as hundreds of youth and student Congress activists staged demonstrations on Mahatma Gandhi Marg and engaged in scuffle with security personnel while attempting to barge into the Assembly premises.

The chaos prompted the Commissionerate Police to deploy more personnel around the Assembly and restrict entry into the Assembly campus for long hours. The situation was so that many Opposition leaders were seen waiting outside the gate.

CITY MANIPAL HOSPITALS OPENS SECOND CATH LAB



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, has strengthened its cardiac care services with the inauguration of its second advanced Cath Lab, expanding access to high-precision diagnostics and treatments.

The first-of-its-kind facility in the state was unveiled by group chief operating officer Karthik Rajagopal, in the presence of hospital director Saktimaya Mohapatra, cluster director Sudhakar Kantipudi, and senior cardiologists Jajati Keshari Padhi, Lingraj Nath, Mahesh Agarwal, Pradeep Kumar Dash, and Dibyaranjan Behera.

Rajagopal emphasised the

hospital's ongoing commitment to advanced healthcare, stating, "This new Cath Lab will help meet the rising demand for interventional cardiology services and ensure access to cutting-edge treatments for heart patients." Mohapatra added, "Early and accurate diagnosis is key to effective cardiac care, and this facility enhances our ability to treat complex conditions with greater precision."

The Cath Lab integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) for improved imaging accuracy and patient safety. It features the PURE platform, CLEAR MAX technology, and the Artis Zee system with syngo DynaCT for high-contrast 2D and 3D imaging. The high dynamic range (HDR) detector and MEGALIX Cat Plus X-ray tube provide enhanced visualisation, supporting complex cardiac and vascular procedures. CLEAR MAX technology ensures sharper images while maintaining low radiation exposure.

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Illegal morrum mining puts Angul hills in jeopardy

Boinda, March 26: Rampant destruction of hills for morrum mining under Boinda revenue circle in Angul district has not only caused wanton damage to the local environment, as the summer has gradually become unbearable, but also pushed the remaining hills into the brink of extinction.



It is alleged that contractors, in collusion with some Revenue and Forest department officials, are illegally using JCB machines to extract morrum and transport it via heavy vehicles

Locals observe that temperature is rising in summer due to extensive deforestation through hill-cutting. Now, illegal soil and morrum mines have put the remaining hills in jeopardy, particularly in Kishorenagar block. Reports indicate that hills in Bileinali, Jamujhari, Kadalimunda, Jamunali, Nunukapashi, Kamarei, Gaon Boinda, Baninali and Nakichi villages – under Handapa police station—are being excavated at night. The demand for morrum has surged due to ongoing road construction and expansion projects in the region. It is alleged that contractors, in collusion with some Revenue and Forest department officials, are illegally using JCB machines to extract morrum and transport it via heavy vehicles.

The deforestation due to illegal mining is causing the loss of valuable trees such as teak, eucalyptus, and sal. These logs are reportedly being smuggled out in high-end vehicles. In 2020-21, Boinda Revenue department imposed fines amounting to ₹4,89,691 for illegal morrum transportation. The next year, penalties rose to ₹5.3 lakh. Despite these measures, the mining mafia continues to extract and transport soil and morrum from government land and hills,

while authorities allegedly fail to act in a timely manner. Villagers from Jamunali and other affected areas have accused the Revenue officials of accepting bribes from contractors, allowing unchecked hill-cutting. Though five hills in Jamunali panchayat have so far been levelled for morrum extraction by a contractor, no significant action was taken yet. Similarly, in the protected forest area of Kadalimunda, illegal morrum excavation continues under the cover of darkness and despite repeated complaints by locals at Boinda Revenue Office, no action is

Woman held for ₹1cr job fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 26: A woman has been arrested in this district for allegedly defrauding people of around ₹1 crore on the pretext of providing them jobs in the Health department.

The action came after separate cases were registered against her in Keonjhar Town and Sadar police stations.

Accused Pramila Parida was arrested from her rented house at Amrut Vihar near Jail Road in the town. Parida allegedly scammed numerous youths from Keonjhar and neighboring districts by falsely promising them employment.

Parida had been operating the fraudulent scheme since 2020. On June 13, 2022, she took ₹1 lakh via PhonePe from one Subashis Behera of Dalita village in Champua block, promising him a clerk position at the district headquarters hospital. Similarly, she allegedly took ₹45,000 from Pritam Rout, ₹55,000 from Gyanendra Narayan Rout of Yogimatha, ₹55,000 from Rashmita Sethi of Dhrupada village, and an undisclosed amount from Pradeep Kumar Sahani of Jamudihii village.

Based on these allegations, police registered a case (162/2025) and started an investigation.

In a separate complaint, victims including Sunil Giri, Uttam Mahanta, Binod Aruk, Rashmita, Chinmay, and Sunil Sahu accused Parida of collecting ₹7.34 lakh through PhonePe and ₹2.10 lakh in cash. A second case (160/2025) was also registered against her.

Victims said Parida misled them with false job promises and, when confronted, she allegedly used various excuses to avoid repayment.

Police have also named Deepak Sahu from Aro Vihar as a co-accused. Parida has been taken into two-day police remand for further interrogation, Keonjhar Town police officer Shrikant Sahu said.

Investigations are in progress to uncover further details and identify more victims of the scam.

India successfully test-fires short-range missile from ITR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasure, March 26: India Wednesday successfully test-fired indigenously-developed Vertically-Launched Short-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (VLSRSAM) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, off the Balasure coast, defence sources said.

Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy conducted test launching of the VLSRSAM.

The flight test was carried out from a land-based vertical launcher against a high-speed aerial target at very close range and low altitude. It has established the Near-Boundary-Low Altitude capability of the missile system.

"During the test, the target was completely destroyed by the missile executing the high turn rate required for engaging targets at very close range, and establishing the missile's agility, reliability & pin-point accuracy," a Defence statement said, adding that the test was conducted with all weapon system elements deployed in



combat configuration. These elements, including missile with indigenous Radio Frequency seeker, Multi-Function Radar and Weapon Control System, have performed as per expectations.

The performance of the system was validated by the flight data captured by various Range Instruments developed by ITR Chandipur.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO, Indian Navy and the industry and termed the missile system as proof of India's strong design

and development capabilities in defence R&D.

It will be an excellent force multiplier for the Indian Navy, he said.

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D Samir V Kamat also congratulated DRDO, Indian Navy & associated teams on this successful flight test.

Kamat, also the DRDO Chairman, stated that the missile equipped with modern technologies, will give further technological boost to the Armed Forces.

Prior to test launch of the missile, as a safety measure, the district administration of Balasure had shifted residents of six villages living within 2.5 km radius of the launch pad-III of ITR, Chandipur, to nearby three shelter centers.

The number of temporarily evacuated people was estimated to be 3,200 who were compensated by the district administration as per the government guidelines, said a revenue official. Fishermen in the Bay of Bengal adjacent to Chandipur test range were warned not to venture in the sea during the launch time.

Vedanta flags off TB awareness vehicle



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, March 26: Vedanta Aluminium has recently flagged off a tuberculosis awareness van - 'Nikshaya Mitra Vahan' - from Bileimunda primary health centre (PHC) in Sundargarh district that reached out to over 4,500 rural folks, as part of the observance of World Tuberculosis Day under the theme 'Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver'.

In a statement, the aluminium major said that it is committed to providing year-long nutritional kit support to 63 TB patients in Sundargarh district. The awareness campaign covered several villages in Hemgir block of Sundargarh, including areas of Jamkani and Ghogharpalli mines. Information, Education & Communication (IEC) materials were distributed among the local communities as ready reckoners on TB and its treatment. The company's mobile health units (MHUs) conducted awareness sessions on TB highlight-

ing the importance of early detection, prevention, nutritional guidance and government facilities available for patients.

Bileimunda PHC medical officer Abhilash Sahu said, "Vedanta Aluminium's TB awareness drive is a crucial step towards enhancing early diagnosis and treatment of the disease, especially, in rural areas. By raising awareness and ensuring patients supported with nutritional aid, this initiative strengthens the ongoing efforts to eliminate TB from Sundargarh district."

Vedanta Coal Mines CEO David Stone said, "Through this week-long programme, we aim to maximise community awareness and dispel the stigma associated with tuberculosis. Since community health is an important pillar of our social endeavours, we have deployed the 'Nikshaya Mitra Vahan' MHUs for door-to-door service and health camps to help improve the quality of life in the region."

Youth gets 20-year RI for sodomising minor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 26: A local court here Wednesday sentenced a youth to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) after convicting him of having unnatural sex with a seven year old boy in Salapada area under Ghasipura block of this district.

The convict was identified as Kauchia Naik, 23, alias Babu. The court of Additional District Judge and Special POCSO Court Judge Monalisa Mohanty also slapped a penalty of ₹2,000 on Naik. In default Kauchia has to undergo an additional one-year RI.

"The judge also directed the District Legal Services Authority to pay ₹4 lakh compensation to the victim," said Ganesh Prasad Mohapatra, special public prosecutor, POCSO Court.

The minor had gone to his maternal grandmother's house at Salapada with his father September 15, 2019. There they, along with Naik, had visited Salapada weekly market where the boy cried around 5:30pm.

The victim's father asked Naik to drop the boy at home. But Naik performed unnatural sex with the boy in a bush en route. The victim's father lodged a complaint with Ghasipura police, who registered a case and arrested Naik.

WOMAN GETS LIFE TERM FOR MURDER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, March 26: A local court here Wednesday sentenced a 48-year-old woman to life imprisonment for killing a differently-abled woman two years ago.

District and sessions judge Rupashree Choudhury awarded life imprisonment to Rubita Adhikari for killing Bishnupriya Sahu, 38, in Ganjam district's K Nuagaon police limits January 8, 2023. The court pronounced the judgement after recording the statements of 17 witnesses, including police and medical reports, public prosecutor Trilochan Parida said.

"The convict was in jail since her arrest after committing the murder. The court, however, acquitted her male co-accused due to the lack of evidence," he said.

Two killed as car plunges into canal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, March 26: Two persons were killed when the car they were travelling in plunged into Indravati canal following a collision with a bike at Thelkomunda under Kalamapur police limits in Kalahandi district Wednesday.

The deceased were identified as Laldhar Rout, 82, and a minor boy from Rengalpali village under Jaipatna block. Eleven members of Baladev Rout's family had gone to Nuagaon to see a prospective bride in a Maruti Ertiga. While returning, their vehicle hit a motorcycle near the left canal road at Thelkomunda and fell



into the canal. Locals tried to rush Laldhar to Jaipatna CHC but he succumbed on the way. Later, fire fighters recovered the child's body from the canal.

4 PEOs face music for dereliction of duty

Kendrapara: Four panchayat executive officers (PEOs) of Kendrapara were suspended by Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan for their alleged negligence in duty and indiscipline. The suspended PEOs were identified as Malaya Kumar Khuntia, PEO of Janra Barimula under Derabish block, Umesh Sethy, PEO of Ketuapala GP and Das Murrmu, PEO of Dey Sahi under Aul block, and Amulya Ratna Nayak, PEO of Gadaramita GP under Mahakalapara block. These officials were not carrying out the order of the senior authorities.

New wild ginger species found in Similipal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, March 26: Researchers from the Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University here have claimed to have discovered a new species of wild ginger from Similipal Biosphere Reserve (SBR) in Mayurbhanj district, officials said.

The discovery was made by Sudam Charan Sahu, assistant professor of Botany, and Sifan Priyadarshini, PhD research scholar of Botany, who have been studying and exploring the diversity of the Zingiberaceae family in Odisha for the past three years, the varsity said in a statement Wednesday. According to researchers, the new species was discovered in August 2024 from the semi-evergreen forest at Kulipala under SBR.

"After a detailed observation of its unique morphological characteristics, it was confirmed as a new species," said Sahu, adding that the research paper has been published in the international journal 'Phytotaxa'.



BOTANICAL BREAKTHROUGH

- The discovery was made by Sudam Charan Sahu, assistant professor of Botany, and Sifan Priyadarshini, PhD research scholar of Botany
- The new species, 'Zingiber jagannathii Sahu & Priyadarshini', has been named in honour of 'Lord Jagannath'
- This new species was found growing only in one location at an elevation of 758 metres, covering less than 1 sq km

They said the new species, 'Zingiber jagannathii Sahu & Priyadarshini', has been named in honour of 'Lord Jagannath'. This new species was found growing only in

one location at an elevation of 758 metres, covering less than 1 sq km. "The researchers are exploring ways to gather more information on the distribution, ecology and potential medicinal property of the new species, which could lead to the development of new drugs and therapeutics," Sahu said. They emphasised that this new discovery highlights the rich biodiversity and ecological importance of SBR, underscoring the need for conservation of its unique habitats.

NOMINATED AUTHORITY, MINISTRY OF COAL, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
120, F-Wing, 1st Floor, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001, 011-23384106

"Invitation of Bids for Auction of Coal Mines / Blocks for Sale of Coal"

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 4 (1) and 4 (2) of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 and Section 11A of the Mines and Minerals (Development and regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Rules made thereunder, the Government of India has directed the Nominated Authority to undertake the auction of 25 Coal mines / blocks under 22nd Tranche of Auction under CM (SP) Act, 2015 and 12th Tranche of Auction under MMDR Act, 1957 and 3 coal mines / blocks under Second Attempt of 21st Tranche of Auction under CM(SP) Act, 2015 and Second Attempt of 11th Tranche of Auction under MMDR Act, 1957. The Tender process has been launched on 27th March, 2025. Tender Document and other details can be accessed on <https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/coalblock/index.jsp>

CBC 04107/11/0004/2425

INDIAN COAST GUARD (RECRUITMENT FOR THE CANDIDATES OF ODISHA STATE ONLY)

1. Applications are invited from male Indian candidates for direct recruitment to the post of Enrolled Followers (Sweeper / Safaiwala) in Indian Coast Guard.

Type of Post	Vacancy	Place of work	Pay	Education Qualification	Age
Enrolled Follower / Safaiwala	UR-02 SC-01 ST-01 EWS-01	Transferable all over India (including A&N and Lakshadweep Islands)	21700-69,100 (Pay Level-03)	10 th /ITI or equivalent from Board of Education recognized by Central/State Govt.	Between 18-25 years as on 17 Apr 25 (Relaxable for Govt. servants in accordance with the instructions/ orders issued by the Central Govt.), Upper age relaxation of 05 years for SC/ST candidates.

2. **Physical Standards :** (A) Height. Min-157 Cms. (B) Chest. Well proportioned & min. expansion 5 Cms. (C) Weight. Proportionate to height & age (±10% acceptable), (D) Eye Sight. 6/6 (Better) 6/12 (Worse) without glasses. 6/9 (Better) 6/12 (Worse) with glasses.

3. **How to apply :** Download application from ICG Website : www.joinindiancoastguard.cdac.in. Duly filled applications envelope superscribed as "APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF ENROLLED FOLLOWER" to be forwarded to 'The Recruitment Officer, Headquarters No. 7 Coast Guard District (Odisha), Badapadma, Paradip, Odisha - 754142, by Ordinary post / Speed post / Registered post of India Post to reach till 17 Apr 25. Sd./- Recruiting Officer

EAST COAST RAILWAY
APPOINTMENT OF PASSENGER HALT AGENT FOR DULAKHAPATNA PASSENGER HALT

No. : G.51/P.H/DLPT/Notification/1149 Date: 17.03.2025

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FROM INTERESTED APPLICANTS FOR APPOINTMENT AS PASSENGER HALT AGENT TO SELL TICKETS FOR DULAKHAPATNA (DLPT) PASSENGER HALT IN BETWEEN MANJUURI ROAD (MZZ) AND BAITARANI ROAD (BTV) RAILWAY STATIONS OVER JAJPUR KEONJHAR ROAD-BHADRAK SECTION, UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF KHURDARA DIVISION.

COMMISSION PAYABLE TO THE HALT AGENT WILL BE AS UNDER:
Amount of Sale of tickets per month & Commission payable: ₹ 1 to 15,000/- 15%, ₹ 15,001 to 50,000/- 12%, ₹ 50,001 to 1,00,000/- 9%, ₹ 1,00,001 to 2,00,000/- 6%, ₹ 2,00,001 and above: 3%.

Security Deposit: ₹2,000/- (Rupees two Thousand Only)

How to Apply : Candidates may apply in prescribed format for the above Passenger Halt to the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, East Coast Railway, Khurda Road, PO-Jatni, Dist-Khurda, Pin-752050 and applications should be dropped in the box kept for this purpose in the office of the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, East Coast Railway, Khurda Road, PO-Jatni on any working day. Application sent through postal service or by any other means shall not be entertained.

Application duly filled should reach this office by 1500 hrs. on or before 16.04.2025 (Wednesday). If the last day i.e., 16.04.2025 happens to be a holiday, applications will be received by the same time on the next working day.

Applications Opening Date & Time : 1530 hrs. on 16.04.2025.

The Railway Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason whatsoever.

For complete details, application format and other terms & conditions please visit our website: www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in.

PR-1122/P/24-25 Divisional Commercial Manager /Khurda Road

EAST COAST RAILWAY
NOTIFICATION FOR APPOINTMENT OF STATION TICKET BOOKING AGENTS (STBA)

No. C/SBP/STBA/NSG-6 Catg/Stn/02/25/01, Dated: 21.03.2025

Applications are invited for engagement of Station Ticket Booking Agents (STBA) to work throughout the day in all shifts for 03(Three) years on commission basis at 03(Three) "NSG-6" Category stations over Sambalpur Division of East Coast Railway for issuing Unreserved Tickets through "Unreserved Ticketing System" (UTS). Interested person fulfilling the stipulated conditions may apply in the prescribed format to Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Sambalpur Division.

NAME OF THE STATIONS

"NSG-6" CATEGORY STATIONS (for a period of 03 years): (1) TUREKELA ROAD, (2) LAPANGA and (3) NARASINGGARH

Applications for the above station duly filled in should reach to the office of the 2nd Floor, Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), East Coast Railway, DRM Office Complex, Sambalpur Division, Post-Modipara, Dist-Sambalpur, Pin-768002 (Odisha) from 1100 hrs. on or before 11.04.2025. If the last day i.e. 11.04.2025 happens to be a holiday, applications will be received by the same time on the next working day.

Obtaining of Applications: 1000 Hrs. to 1800 Hrs. of 10.04.2025

Last Date and time of Submission/Dropping in Box: 1100 Hrs. of 11.04.2025

The Railway Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason.

For detailed terms and conditions, Commission and application format please visit our website www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in & <http://tenders.gov.in> or contact Office of the Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), East Coast Railways, DRM Office Complex, Sambalpur Division, Post-Modipara, Dist-Sambalpur, Pin-768002

PR-1131/P/24-25 Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/Sambalpur

FOCUS US POLICY

BLOW TO GLOBALISATION



India can no longer hope to build or become a manufacturing hub by copying the Chinese model, getting companies like Foxconn to bring their factories to Indian sites and manufacture for American giants

jobs, from their communities, from their sense of solidarity' has harmed America. Vance went on to argue that money even if it's available "can't replace something that was dignified and purposeful about work itself".

These are significant shifts that will bring their impacts in many corners of the world as America's might and the power and reach of its large businesses realign to suit the new political climate. For America, here is without doubt a complex and troubled time as it twists and turns amid a cacophony of voices and multiple cross currents emerging from those who have the ear of the powers that be.

Forget Q-Anon and its far-right fabricated claims and conspiracy theories. We are in new territory, with influential behind-the-scenes players like Curtis Yarwin, a tech leader who is a founder of the neo-reactionary movement called "Dark Enlightenment", which wants American democracy to be turned into a monarchy. The rise of a techno-libertarianism opens its case with less government and more freedom for individuals but is ready to use government to silence the opposition with extreme measures. There is, of course, Elon Musk who holds that government is a violent monopoly and needs to be demolished, and Peter Thiel, the PayPal co-founder who believes death is not inevitable. Then there is Trump who is happy to be the King forever.

As for the hope of some well-connected in India that Trump was the partner of choice for a right-wing government, well, a rude awakening maybe in order.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal

Trump's Target



We must march on with the quiet certitude that what has to be done will be done

America's prodigious wealth and power are founded on two pillars: universities and businesses. The first produces the ideas, research, and training that have made the country a mecca for the world's best minds. The second generates the investment and innovation that have powered America's formidable economic engine. But now, President Donald Trump seems intent on wrecking both.

Trump's behavior is no surprise. His economic-policy ideas have always been wacky, and his hatred for elite academic institutions - which he views as the home of "woke" culture - is well known. What is more shocking is that corporate and academic leaders have made barely a peep.

After Trump's election victory last November, there was cautious optimism within business circles. He seemed to them like a welcome change after Joe Biden, who had talked tough against the private sector and supported organized labor and regulation. Trump, by contrast, promised low taxes and less regulation. His tariff talk was a problem, but most assumed that it was largely for show. The stock market blessed Trump's election by soaring to new highs. Tech billionaires donated to his transition and bent the knee at his inauguration.

The intervening weeks have shown such optimism to have been deeply misguided. Trump has thrown one curve ball after another at the economy, leading US stock markets to give up more than their gains since November. It's hard to know which move has been worse: the steep tariffs imposed on America's closest allies (Canada, Mexico, and Europe), or the constant bluster, threats, and whip-sawing on trade policy, which have sent economic uncertainty indicators to levels higher than during the 2008 global financial crisis.

Making matters worse, Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency has wreaked havoc with the federal government, violating basic legal tenets and sacking more than 100,000 government workers. While there may be some cold-hearted logic to the cutoff of foreign aid, the administration also has inexplicably taken an axe to basic research in fields ranging from health and biological sciences to education.

It ought to be obvious to American business leaders that Trump is a clear and present danger to the system from which they generated their fortunes. As damaging as his erratic trade policies are, they pale in comparison to the threat he poses to the basic institutions that a thriving market economy needs: the rule of law, the separation of powers, government investment in science and innovation, public infrastructure, and stable and friendly relationships with likeminded foreign countries.

Musk owes much of his own success to these institutions. Without a critically timed government loan, Tesla would have gone bankrupt; and SpaceX has received tens of billions of dollars in government contracts. Yet Trump has jettisoned all these functions in favor of an agenda that advances no coherent strategy, let alone solutions to the country's problems.

Trump's threat to US academia is even clearer. He has sharply reduced government support for basic medical research; and under the guise of fighting anti-semitism, he has arbitrarily starved some of the country's leading universities of funds. Columbia and Johns Hopkins were early targets, but others (including my own institution, Harvard) are also on the chopping block.

When the basic institutions of a democracy come under attack, those leading major business and academic organizations have an outside duty to say something. Yet neither business executives nor university presidents have stepped up to the plate. Instead, their approach seems to be what Harvard political scientists Ryan D. Enos and Steven Levitsky call "quiet appeasement." They have calculated that by working behind the scenes and not drawing attention to themselves, they can avoid the worst.

But as Enos and Levitsky point out, this strategy does not work. Authoritarian populists such as the late Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Vladimir Putin (Russia), Viktor Orbán (Hungary), and Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Turkey) always target universities and trample academic freedoms. Censorship, whether imposed by the government or self-imposed, is the price all academic institutions end up paying. Even when autocrats are initially market-friendly, they eventually undermine the institutional foundations of a competitive market economy.

Compared to these other authoritarian figures, Trump's assault on America's democratic institutions has been breathtaking in its speed, brazenness, and transparency. It simply is no longer possible to say, "This is just how he talks; he will never carry out these threats." No civil-society organization or public leader can continue to doubt the seriousness of the situation.

Autocrats thrive when their opponents remain divided and fearful of speaking out. Such is the tragedy of collective action: we all lose when we refuse to stick our individual necks out. That is why the country's leading universities and largest corporations - those with both the most credibility and the most to lose - now bear a disproportionate responsibility to do something.

Imagine that the chief executives of America's top universities and richest corporations - along with labor unions, faith groups, and other civil-society organizations - issued a public statement that spoke clearly and loudly about the dangers of undermining the rule of law, academic freedom, and scientific research. Such a gesture would not move Trump and his allies, but it would give heart to other democratic forces, galvanizing them and helping them mobilize. Tens of millions of Americans are asking when someone will have the courage to speak out. At the very least, those who do will put themselves on the right side of history.

The writer, Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School, is Past President of the International Economic Association and the author of Straight Talk on Trade: Ideas for a Sane World Economy.

WISDOM CORNER

Teachers should be the best minds in the country

A winner is a dreamer who never gives up.

No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar.

In a significant speech that signals further tectonic shifts in US policy, Vice President JD Vance has rubbished globalisation and attacked the system that enabled US companies to profit from immigrants and cheap labour in outsourced facilities. The focus of the speech was the negative impacts on Americans when US companies divorce product design (done in the US) from manufacturing (done elsewhere to save costs). Vance named China thrice but not India. Yet, the thrust on the ills of offshoring left no doubt that India's software and related services (exports of over USD 200bln for 2023-24, more than half to the US) were not excluded from the broad theme of the argument. In the past, Trump has mocked Indian call centres, the bulk of whom serve US-based clients but are already under a different threat from the increased deployment of AI-powered solutions. Vance was speaking on March 18 at the American Dynamism Summit, a tech event hosted by venture capital firm Andreesen Horowitz. The summit works for what it calls the "national interest", and promoted the 2025 meet with the message: "It's time to build for America".



Jagdish Rattanani

THE RISE OF A TECHNO-LIBERTARIANISM OPENS ITS CASE WITH LESS GOVERNMENT AND MORE FREEDOM FOR INDIVIDUALS BUT IS READY TO USE GOVERNMENT TO SILENCE THE OPPOSITION WITH EXTREME MEASURES

While it is difficult to say how Vance's narrative might play out in the immediate and if unravelling a complex and well-oiled global value chain is a realistic venture, several interesting strands stand out from an Indian context. The first is that India can no longer hope to build or become a manufacturing hub by copying the Chinese model, getting companies like Foxconn to bring their factories to Indian sites and manufacture for American giants. The game of building that kind of a manufacturing base is past its expiry date. Even if India

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

Rhetoric of success & systemic risks

Following the turmoil on global scene caused by the Trump administration, China is changing strategy in a bid to use the moment. The analysis of this year's March sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the State Council of the People's Republic of China forms a coherent narrative of 'controlled modernisation.' This narrative aims to emphasise China's economic and geopolitical ambitions while masking growing systemic contradictions. Three main lines of tension are evident: the economy, security, and the Taiwan issue—all further enriched by the significant theme of 'lawfare.'



Maciej Gaca

XI JINPING'S STRATEGY REQUIRES CONSTANT MANEUVERING BETWEEN IDEOLOGICAL DOGMATISM AND ECONOMIC PRAGMATISM

The government's GDP growth target of 5%, reiterated by Li Qiang, continues the 2024 strategy, which relies heavily on exports. However, this year's budget deficit (4% of GDP—a historic record) is financed by issuing local bonds (4.5 trillion RMB) and central bonds (2 trillion RMB). This short-term solution deepens public debt, which will exceed 110% of GDP this year.

Li Qiang's report clearly identifies the state as the key pillar of China's internal stability, placing statism and digital authoritarianism at the center of the security strategy. The March sessions of the

NPC and the State Council of the PRC brought specific decisions aimed at shielding China's economy from immediate shocks but may deepen long-term structural problems.

One key measure is the restructuring of local debt—2.8 trillion RMB of bad loans were transferred to central funds. While this operation seemingly stabilizes local budgets, it merely shifts financial risk to the central level, increasing pressure on an already strained budget deficit (4% of GDP).

Significant investments in AI-powered monitoring systems (87 billion RMB) highlight the emphasis on digital social control. These measures aim not only to suppress social discontent more effectively but also to strengthen mechanisms for early detection of socio-economic threats.

At the same time, the government announced a 7.2% increase in military spending to 1.78 trillion RMB. Officially, the goal is further army modernization, but a significant portion of these funds primarily supports employment in the state-owned defense complex, which employs 12 million people.

Despite these measures, China still faces a fundamental demographic challenge. The number of births fell to a record low of 8 million in 2024, posing a serious threat

to structural stability in the coming decades. In the long term, this could become a source of significant systemic risk, much harder to manage than current crises.

Beijing's lawfare also translates into international attempts to isolate Taiwan, including misinterpreting UN resolutions and promoting the narrative that the Taiwan issue is solely 'China's internal matter.' As a result, the PRC seeks to limit the island's diplomatic space, using law as a tool of geopolitical pressure.

Paradoxically, however, the lawfare offensive leads to increased resistance to China, both in Taiwan and among South China Sea regional states. According to IISS experts, while Beijing's legal strategy gives it a short-term advantage, in the long run, it provokes stronger regional resistance, potentially increasing China's international isolation.

In sum, the strategy presented during the 2025 "Two Sessions" balances between rhetorical declarations of success and real systemic risks. The economy remains dependent on exports, vulnerable to global trade disruptions (e.g., U.S. 20% tariffs and European slowdown). The security policy, despite effectively suppressing social tensions through

digital authoritarianism, does not address structural problems such as an aging society or growing public debt. Meanwhile, regarding Taiwan, the subtle economic-legal strategy may paradoxically strengthen Taiwanese national identity—according to a March 2025 survey, 78% of the island's residents oppose unification.

Simultaneously pursuing goals of social control, nationalist mobilization, and technological modernization leads to contradictory outcomes. In the short term, this may create an illusion of stability, but in the long term, it risks economic stagnation and international isolation. Xi Jinping's strategy requires constant maneuvering between ideological dogmatism and economic pragmatism—a balance increasingly difficult to maintain amid growing internal systemic contradictions and global competition. Xi balances between two historical extremes, attempting to combine Mao Zedong's revolutionary ideological radicalism with Deng Xiaoping's economic pragmatism. However, such a policy inevitably generates internal tensions, as authoritarian control and reluctance to deeper reforms limit the possibilities for genuine economic development and innovation.

Don't worry, be happy!

Sir, This is with reference to the article "Moderate Exercise Is Enough for Longevity." Longevity is merely a function of genes and luck. Although all experts recommend walking as the best exercise for a long and healthy life, there is no guarantee that one will not be run over by a vehicle during an early morning walk. There are too many experts advising how to live long without having lived long themselves. The only aim of life cannot be to lengthen it. Each individual is born with a different constitution. Some will do nothing and live long after many of those who exercise to remain fit have passed away. So stop worrying about how long you can live and start living, for life is like holding sand in the palm of your hands. However hard you try, it slowly slips away!

Anthony Henriques, MUMBAI

Trump's bully politics

Sir, U.S. President Donald Trump's threat of a 25% tariff on countries importing fuel from Venezuela is nothing short of a big-brotherly tactic. It reflects an impulsive and self-serving approach to global diplomacy. While past U.S. administrations imposed sanctions on Iran and Russia for geopolitical and security reasons, Trump's move appears to be more about settling personal scores rather than pursuing legitimate national interests. Such threats, especially against weaker nations, set a dangerous precedent. If the U.S. continues to wield economic coercion as a blunt instrument, it risks alienating allies and trading partners, potentially leading to a scenario where Washington finds itself isolated on the world stage. Global players, including China, India, and the EU, may retaliate or seek alternative alliances, gradually diminishing U.S. influence. True leadership lies in diplomatic engagement, not intimidation. The U.S. must recognize that sustainable power comes from partnerships, not threats. One hopes that wisdom prevails in Washington before America finds itself on the receiving end of the very isolation it seeks to impose on others.

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI

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

Historic Amira Kadal bridge undergoing transformation

The exercise aims to revive the old Amira Kadal wood bridge, one of the oldest in the city, and transform it into a cultural and scenic landmark that would offer a vibrant view of the river and attract tourists



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, March 26: A historic bridge here is undergoing a major transformation as a tribute to the city of bridges' rich architectural heritage, and is set to become a tourism landmark as well as improve the summer capital's aesthetic appeal.

The Amira Kadal wooden bridge -- near the city centre of Lal Chowk -- over the Jhelum river is being revived under the Srinagar Smart City project. Officials said a wooden walkway on the existing piers of the old bridge is being constructed.

The ₹7.17-crore project includes retrofitting of the piers and carrying out all allied works, the officials said.

They exercise aims to revive the old Amira Kadal wood bridge, one of the oldest in the city, and transform it into a cultural and scenic landmark

that would offer a vibrant view of the river and attract tourists.

The revamped bridge would be a modern recreational space, equipped with a walkway that would feature various kiosks and offer architectural and cultural experiences to the visitors, the officials said.

Originally constructed in 1774 Amir Khan Jawan Sher, the Afghan governor of Kashmir under the Durrani Empire, the bridge is undergoing a significant renovation as part of the Srinagar Smart City project, fusing modern architecture with its traditional wooden look.

Taking cues from the Rajbagh wooden bridge, Habba Kadal and Zero bridge, the refurbished Amira Kadal wood bridge aims to preserve Kashmir's architectural heritage while meeting the city's contemporary needs.

The new wooden bridge will only be accessible by foot, con-

trary to the adjacent Amira Kadal bridge which is used for vehicular traffic. For tourists to enjoy Srinagar's history and natural beauty, it seeks to offer a cultural and recreational experience.

An official of the Srinagar Smart City said the bridge is being built on the lines of the old Amira Kadal bridge.

"Its style and design have been conceptualised accordingly. It will have a 52-metre long vending zone, gazebos, plazas with seating arrangements at both ends," he said.

The official said as it is a foot bridge and it needs to have two levels of flooring -- the rough flooring and the finished flooring.

The official said about 90 per cent of work on the bridge has been completed and the rest is being executed at a fast pace and it will soon be thrown open to the public.

The project is part of the heritage tourism revival under the Smart City initiative, he added.

The new bridge will have kiosks manned by authorised vendors, providing a venue for local food vendors, craftspeople, and artists. This will support the local economy, increase job opportunities, and preserve cultural heritage, the official said.

He said that in addition to improving pedestrian flow and increase urban mobility, the bridge would improve the city's aesthetic appeal as well.

The locals have welcomed the transformation of the old bridge, saying it would not only provide a huge relief to the people, but attract tourists as well.

Asia's largest tulip garden opens for public



Visitors take pictures at Tulip Garden after it was opened for the public, in Srinagar, Wednesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, March 26: Tourists visiting Asia's largest tulip garden here are spellbound by a riot of colours and mesmerised by its breath-taking beauty as the 50-hectare Tulip Garden opened for the public Wednesday amidst a display of 17 lakh flower bulbs.

The opening of the Tulip Garden -- nestled between the Dal Lake and the Zabarwan Hills -- marked the beginning of a new tourism season in the Kashmir valley.

The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden was thrown open to the public by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as he inaugurated the Tulip Show-2025.

Abdullah toured the garden,

visiting its different levels and flower varieties.

The chief minister highlighted the Tulip Show as a celebration of Kashmir's diverse natural beauty and a key attraction for nature lovers worldwide.

He emphasised J&K's timeless charm and scenic landscapes, inviting tourists to explore its unmatched splendour. Abdullah also interacted with several visitors and obliged to their selfie requests as well.

Interacting with visitors, the chief minister welcomed them to the "Paradise on Earth", encouraging them to cherish and share their experiences of the Tulip Garden in their home states and countries.

Later, taking to X, the chief minister said he was pleased to inaugurate the scenic Tulip Garden.

"A true spectacle of nature's beauty, this garden embodies Kashmir's charm and warmth. I invite everyone to witness this breathtaking bloom and experience the magic of spring in the Valley," the CM said in a post on X.

The inaugural day saw an overwhelming response from tourists and locals alike who marvelled at the mesmerising floral expanse.

Seema, a visitor from Delhi, Seema said the experience of visiting the garden was mesmerising.

"It feels very good to be here. It is a mesmerising experience. We came to Srinagar

for the first time and it was nice to see tulip flowers here," she said.

Another visitor, Satish, said it was altogether a different experience to see a large number of tulip flowers in the world's second-largest tulip garden.

"The beauty of Kashmir and the tourist places here is amazing. Everyone should visit Kashmir once in life to enjoy the scenic beauty," he said.

A tourist from Mumbai, Surmil, has fallen in love with the garden, describing his experience as amazing.

"I love this place. So many tulips here, colourful. It has been an amazing experience. The atmosphere is very nice. The weather is cool here compared to Mumbai," he said.

Women activists urge J&K's CM to protect special cells

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: A group of over 600 women's rights activists, intellectuals, and professionals have appealed to Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to intervene to prevent the proposed closure of special cells for women in the Union Territory due to discontinuation of funding by the National Commission for Women (NCW).

In a letter addressed to Abdullah dated March 26, prominent activists Shabnam Hashmi and Dr Syeda Hameed underscored the role the special cells have played in providing

psycho-social-legal support to women facing violence.

Established in November 2021 under the Violence-Free Home -- A Woman's Right Initiative, it has assisted nearly 9,800 survivors across all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

"These services have been a beacon of hope for women in distress, offering them legal assistance, crisis intervention, and rehabilitation," the letter said.

It further said that the

Established in November 2021 under the Violence-Free Home -- A Woman's Right Initiative, it has assisted nearly 9,800 survivors across all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir



abrupt withdrawal of funding would leave thousands of women without essential support, disrupting ongoing cases and weakening efforts to combat gender-based violence.

Implemented by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Home and So-

cial Welfare Departments, the special cells have functioned within police stations to bridge the gap between survivors and the justice system.

NCW sources said the Jammu and Kashmir government had to take over this project, but they did not do so.

According to NCW sources,

the MoU was set to end March 31. However, the J&K government "took no action", and the MoU remains valid only until March 31, 2025. The plan was for us to start the project and provide hand-holding support to the J&K government, but they allegedly did not take responsibility, the NCW sources said.

Activists also said that their presence has not only made police stations more accessible for women but has also sensitised law enforcement personnel to gender-related issues.

The activists have urged Abdullah to press the Jammu and Kashmir administration to explore interim funding options through the Social Welfare and Home Department while institutionalising the special cells under the Union Territory's management.

Kerala Tourism unveils new theme song

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 26: The Kerala Tourism department unveiled a new theme song Tuesday, marking its first in a decade, as part of efforts to expand into new regions and strengthen the state's appeal as a top tourist destination.

Tourism Minister PA Mohamed Riyas along with Corporation Mayor Arya Rajendran and five MLAs representing various constituencies released the theme song at a function, presided over by the Mayor, here.

MLAs VK Prashanth, KM Sachin Dev, KU Jenish Kumar, Najeeb Kanthapuram and M Vijin attended.

The theme song video encapsulates as many as 100 visuals of Kerala's heritage, arts, cul-

ture and picturesque landscape from North to South.

Apart from Kerala Tourism's novel initiatives like Heli Tourism and Caravan Tourism, the visually stunning video also features emerging segments such as Farm Tourism and Adventure Tourism.

The four-minute-long theme song is penned by Manoj Kuroor and composed and sung by Sreevalsan J Menon, an official release said here. Noting that the theme song depicts a cross-section of the state, Riyas said it has been released as part of catapulting tourism to new regions, especially to East Asia, under the 'Look East' policy to buttress Kerala Tourism's marketing campaigns and exploring new markets in the countries of the region.

Women bouncers make their mark in male-dominated field

Bouncers are professional security personnel deployed to manage crowds during mass events, escort celebrities, provide personal security to those facing threats, handle party spoilers during DJ parties, and deal with troublemakers at pubs and bars

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 26: Wearing a close-fitting black T-shirt and jeans, she walked confidently before superstar Mohanlal, clearing the path for him by efficiently managing the crowd.

Her tough looks and commanding gestures made her stand out among the male watch-and-ward staff escorting the actor when he attended a function in Kochi recently.

She is Anu Kunjumon, one of several women who are now breaking gender stereotypes by entering the long-standing, male-dominated profession of bouncers.

Bouncers are professional security personnel deployed to manage crowds during mass events, escort celebrities, provide personal security to those facing threats, handle party spoilers during DJ parties, and deal with troublemakers at pubs and bars.

Like Kunjumon, several women who are confident in their physical fitness and mental strength are now working as bouncers, a relatively new



and unconventional profession in Kerala.

If anyone asks what made her choose a profession that women do not typically take up, Kunjumon would say that she has always liked to command people and earn their respect.

The 37-year-old would also say that she has always wanted to be mentally strong and physically powerful in life.

"I am a person who grew up fighting all kinds of challenges in my life. I had to strive to look after my mother and sister and to live

choose that profession.

"One of the bouncers pushed me while I was taking pictures at the function. I didn't like the way I was treated, so I gave him a strong push, which literally knocked him down. I later called the agency that supplied bouncers for the event and asked them why they don't hire women bouncers. I also expressed my interest in working as a female bouncer," she said.

She believes that a woman with strong willpower, mental strength, and a moderately fit body can excel as a bouncer.

During her years-long career, Kunjumon, who hails from Kochi, has worked as a bouncer at celebrity events and pub parties, as well as escorting female celebrities and business professionals.

"I have never felt any difficulty in managing crowds over the years. I have had to deal with troublemakers--men, women, and transgender individuals--in many situations. However, I have never had any bad experiences as a woman in such circumstances," the bouncer

said with a smile.

She also stated that she is pursuing her job as a bouncer with the same passion as she had for photography.

Another woman bouncer, who does not wish to be named, said they receive almost equal pay to their male counterparts for their services.

OFFICE OF THE ANGUL MUNICIPALITY, ANGUL
e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.-EO/RFP/AGLM-08/2024-25
e-mail Id: angulmunicipality@gmail.com
Tender Call Notice No.943, Date:25.03.25
No.C-1995:1. Name of the Project: Selection of Agency for Upgradation of Intelligent Security System of Angul city.
2.Period of Contract:36 (Thirty-Six) Calendar Month
Date and Time Schedule:

Start	End	Technical Bid Opening
10.00 AM on 26.03.2025	5.00 PM on 09.04.2025	11.00 A.M. on 10.04.2025

Tender details can be seen from the procurement portal: www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
Sd./- S.P. Tripathy
Executive Officer, Angul Municipality
OIPR-13085/11/0027/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
UPPER INDRAVATI LEFT CANAL DIVISION NO-I, KUSUMKHUNTI, KALAHANDI, ODISHA
E-mail: eeulcd1kusumkhunti@gmail.com
No.A-1246:Type of Work: Improvement of Canal Work. 2. Total No. of Works: 01 Nos. 3. Approximate Value of Work: Rs.36,30,988.96 (Excluding GST). 4. Tender Paper Cost: Rs.6,000/- (Online). 5. Bid Security/E.M.D.: Rs.36,310/- (Online). 6. Period of Completion: 09 (Nine Calendar Months). 7. Class of Contractor: 'B' & 'C' Class.

Procurement Officer	e-Procurement Notice No.	Availability & Submission of bids in online		Date & Time of opening of tender
		From	To	
1 Superintending Engineer, U.I. Left Canal Division No.-I, Kusumkhunti, Dist: Kalahandi	2 SE, UILCD-1, 02 (01)/2024-25, Date 25.03.2025	3 29.03.2025 at 10.00 A.M.	4 12.04.2025 Upto 5.00 P.M.	5 16.04.2025 at 11.30 A.M.

N.B.: Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum/ Corrigendum/ Cancellation to the above notice will be published in the Govt. website www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer
U.I. Left Canal Division No.1, Kusumkhunti
OIPR-32126/11/0009/2425



The main Opposition party is hurting the state's interests as it seeks to show the Congress government as a failure

A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

B'DESH GOVT NOT ACKNOWLEDGING PERSECUTION OF MINORITIES: MEA

The External Affairs Ministry is learnt to have told a parliamentary committee that the Bangladesh government has not only not acknowledged the systematic persecution of minorities in the country but has also sought to downplay the scale and nature of violence against Hindus since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government, sources said



of the day uote

So Kerala's LDF government has finally done the right thing, by permitting private universities to open in the state. As usual, the decision comes about 15 to 20 years late, which is usually the case with those anchored in a 19th century ideology



Being the maiden bill in the sector, the same is undergoing thorough scrutiny in the government and will be introduced after all due processes are complete



The trend of visitors has changed and we have to change accordingly. That is why, we are promoting the concept of Goa beyond beaches



CBI raids Baghel's houses in Ch'garh

The Congress said the CBI's searches at Baghel's residences were politically motivated, and asserted it will not be intimidated by such actions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur/New Delhi, March 26: The CBI Wednesday conducted searches at 60 locations, including the residence of former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel, in connection with the alleged Rs 6,000 crore Mahadev betting app scam, officials said. The agency teams swooped down at Baghel's residences in Raipur and Bhillai, as well as the houses of a senior police officer and a close associate of the former CM, they said. In a post from Baghel's X handle, the Congress leader's office said, "Now CBI has arrived. Former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel is scheduled to go to Delhi today for the meeting of the 'Drafting Committee' constituted for the AICC meeting to be held in Ahmedabad (Gujarat) 8 and 9 April. Before that, the CBI has reached Raipur and Bhillai Niwas."

The Congress said the CBI's searches at Baghel's residences were politically motivated, and asserted it will not be intimidated by such actions. The searches also covered the premises of Congress MLA Devendra Yadav in Bhillai town of Durg district and of IPS officers Anand Chhabra, Abhishek Pallava and Arif Sheikh, among others, sources said.

"In the investigation of Mahadev Book online betting scam, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) today is conducting searches at 60 locations across Chhattisgarh, Bhopal, Kolkata, and Delhi including premises linked to politicians, senior bureau-



BJP asks Congress not to link CBI action to politics

Raipur/Durg: Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao Wednesday said the Congress should not link the CBI's searches on the premises of its leader Bhupesh Baghel and others to politics and cooperate in the investigation. The Congress earlier said the CBI's searches at former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Baghel's residences were politically motivated, and asserted it will not be intimidated by such actions. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Wednesday conducted searches at the residence of former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Baghel in connection with the alleged Rs 6,000 crore Mahadev app scam, officials said.

crats, police officers, key functionaries of Mahadev Book, and other private individuals suspected of involvement in the case," a CBI Spokesperson said in a statement. The agency said that the case pertains to the illegal operations of Mahadev Book, an online betting platform promoted by Ravi Upal and Saurabh Chandrakar, both of whom are currently based in Dubai.

"Investigations have revealed that the promoters allegedly paid substantial amounts as 'protection money' to public servants to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted functioning of their illegal betting network," the statement said. In the course of searches, which continue, incriminating digital and documentary evidence were found and seized, it said.

The state government last year handed over to the CBI 70 cases related to the alleged Mahadev scam lodged with different police stations and one case registered with the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) in

the state. The CBI has taken over the investigation from the EOW of the Chhattisgarh Police, which had earlier named Baghel, promoters of the app, Uppal, Chandrakar, Shubham Soni, and Anil Kumar Agrawal, and 14 others in its FIR.

"Initially registered by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Raipur, the case was subsequently transferred to the CBI by the Government of Chhattisgarh for a comprehensive probe into the role of senior public officials and other accused persons," the agency said. The Enforcement Directorate, also probing the case, has alleged that its probe revealed the involvement of several top politicians and bureaucrats from Chhattisgarh.

The app was an umbrella syndicate arranging online platforms for illegal betting websites to enrol new users, create user IDs and launder money through a layered web of 'benami' bank accounts, it claimed. The projected proceeds of crime are about Rs 6,000 crore, the ED earlier said.

Om Birla asks Rahul to follow rules of conduct

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Wednesday asked Rahul Gandhi to conduct himself in line with the rules of procedure that members are expected to observe to uphold the dignity of the House, prompting the Leader of Opposition to claim that the remarks against him were "unsubstantiated".

"In this House, father and daughter, mother and daughter, husband and wife have been members. In this context, I expect the Leader of the Opposition to conduct himself in accordance with Rule 349 that deals with rules to be observed by members in the House," the Speaker said in the Lok Sabha, adding that MPs conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the high standards and dignity of the House. Birla did not specify the trigger behind censuring Gandhi, who was present in the House and wanted to speak on some issue but the Speaker adjourned the proceedings after



making his point.

However, in a post on X, BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya suggested that the Speaker's remarks were prompted by Rahul Gandhi affectionately cupping the cheeks of his sister and MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during the proceedings a few days back. Gandhi later told reporters that he was not being given a chance to speak, alleging that the House was being run in a "non-democratic style". He said Birla had made "unsubstantiated" remarks about him.

Birla said that several instances have come to his notice where the conduct of members does not conform to Parliament's high standards, adding that it is especially expected of the Leader of the Opposition

to conduct himself as per the rules. After Birla's pointed remarks, Congress MPs trooped into his office to lodge their complaint over Gandhi "repeatedly" not being allowed to speak in the Lok Sabha. Their enquiry into the reason behind the Speaker's comments was also futile, a few of them said.

Tagging a video clip, Malviya in his post on X said, "It is disgraceful that the Lok Sabha Speaker has to remind Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition, about basic parliamentary decorum. The fact that Congress has imposed this puerile man upon us is truly unfortunate."

The clip of undated proceedings in the Lok Sabha showed Gandhi walking through the aisle, turning to Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and cupping her face affectionately, while his party colleague Manickam Tagore was speaking in the House.

Rahul Gandhi was present in the Lok Sabha Wednesday after an absence of a few days.



Students celebrate scribble day after their SSLC final examination, outside Nadakkavu Government Vocational Higher Secondary School, in Kozhikode, Kerala

CASH ROW

No urgent mentioning of plea for FIR, says SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: The Supreme Court Wednesday refused the urgent mentioning of a plea for Delhi Police to register an FIR over the alleged discovery of burnt wads of cash from the official residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, however, assured petitioner advocate Mathews J Nedumpara that the plea would be listed by the registry. The petitioner said, "The only thing is that an FIR has to be registered against the judge. Your lordship has done a wonderful job...the publishing of the video of the burnt notes."

The CJ, who has stopped the practice of oral mentioning of cases for urgent listing, said, "Don't make public statements." Another petitioner in the case said if such a case was against a common citizen, then several probe agencies such as the CBI and ED would have gone after them.

"This is quite enough. The plea will come up accordingly," the CJ said. Nedumpara and three others moved court March 23 for FIR and challenging the 1991 judgement in the K Veeraswami case, in which the top court ruled that no criminal proceedings could be initiated against a judge of the high court or the top court without the prior nod of the Chief Justice of India. On Wednesday, a Delhi police team led by deputy commissioner of police (New Delhi), reportedly on the instructions of the apex court-appointed in-house committee, visited the residence of Justice Varma. The DCP and others visited Varma's house at around 1.50



Police team visits Delhi HC judge's residence

A team led by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Wednesday visited the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma and questioned the staff and security personnel as part of an investigation into the alleged discovery of a cash pile at his residence here, official sources said. The visit was part of an in-house inquiry by a three-judge panel constituted by the Chief Justice of India for a "deeper probe" into the discovery of "four to five semi-burnt sacks of Indian currency notes" in Varma's Lutyens home following a fire incident March 14, according to the sources.

vices (DFS) in connection with the ongoing inquiry. The DFS had initially said the firefighters did not find any cash from Justice Varma's residence during a fire incident March 14.

On March 25, three members of a Supreme Court-appointed in-house committee visited the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma as it commenced its inquiry into allegations of discovery of a cash pile at his official Lutyens's home. The alleged cash discovery happened following a fire at Varma's Lutyens Delhi residence at around 11.35 pm March 14, prompting the fire officers to rush to the spot.

In the wake of the controversy, the apex court collegium recommended the repatriation of Justice Varma, from whom work was withdrawn by the Delhi High Court following a directive from CJ, to his parent Allahabad High Court.

Punjab Budget: ₹5,598 crore for health sector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 26: Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema Wednesday presented a Rs 2.36 lakh crore budget, which focusses on tackling drug menace in the state, and allocated a whopping Rs 5,598 crore for the health sector.

No fresh taxes were imposed in the budget for financial year 2025-26.

It was silent on giving monthly Rs 1,000 to women which was one of the poll promises of the AAP before coming to power.

He said the biggest threat to the progress and prosperity of Punjab is the drug problem.

"We are taking yet another landmark initiative to effectively fight the war against drugs. We have to fight this war not just with force and weapons, but also scientifically through data and analysis.

'SC remark on cutting trees wake-up call for govt'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: The Supreme Court's remark that cutting a large number of trees is worse than killing human beings should be a "wake-up call" for the Central government, which has been "weakening" forest protection laws, and for states that have been "mindlessly" clearing green cover for development, environmentalists said Wednesday.

The SC made the observation while rejecting the plea of a man who had chopped down 454 trees in the protected Taj Trapezium Zone. "There should be no mercy in the environmental case. Felling a large number of trees is worse than killing a human," it said. Environmentalists welcomed the SC's strong stand

on forest and tree protection but questioned if governments would take it seriously.

"This is a wake-up call for the Central government, which has constantly been diluting forest protection laws," said Bhim Singh Rawat from the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP).

He said the situation was particularly alarming in the geologically fragile and climatologically sensitive Himalayan states.

"The continuous push for large-scale infrastructure projects such as hydropower, dams, roads, tunnels and railways has led to the loss of thousands of hectares of pristine forests. This has increased disaster risks, vulnerability and fatalities in the region," he said. Union Environment Minis-



ter Bhupender Yadav told the Lok Sabha Monday that India had diverted 1,734 sq-km of forest land, significantly larger (much more) than the total geographical area of Delhi, for development activities in the

10 years starting 2014-15. Last July, Union Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh had informed the Lower House that 957.25 sq-km of forest area had been diverted for non-forestry use

The SC made the observation while rejecting the plea of a man who had chopped down 454 trees in the protected Taj Trapezium Zone

over five years from April 2019. He had said 881 projects were approved in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries across the country during this period.

Meanwhile, SANDRP's Rawat also claimed that the judiciary 'failed' to protect forests, citing the Char Dham all-weather road project in Uttarakhand as an example. Neelam Ahluwalia, environ-

mentalist and founder member of People for Aravallis, said India was highly vulnerable to climate change, facing everything from extreme heat waves to glacial lake outburst floods.

"Our forests and natural ecosystems are our only protective shields, yet we are destroying them in the name of so-called development projects. From (Great) Nicobar to Hasdeo, Odisha, the northeast and the Aravallis, forests are being axed across the country," she said.

Ahluwalia said illegal, unchecked mining in the Aravallis had devastated green cover, food and water sources in the already water-stressed region.

In 2018, the Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee reported that 31 Aravalli hills had disappeared in Rajasthan - razed by mining.

national



Economic inequality is at a frightening level. Billionaires have become trillionaires and the poor are turning paupers. The status of middle class incomes today is what it was before the British Raj, in 1820

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

DELHI HC ALLOWS RASHID TO ATTEND PARL IN CUSTODY

The Delhi High Court has allowed Jammu and Kashmir MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh, alias Engineer Rashid, arrested in a terror funding case, to attend the ongoing Parliament session "in-custody" and rejected NIA's apprehension that he was a flight risk



of the day quote

The former Chief Minister did not come to the Assembly even for a single day but he is active on Twitter (X) every day and wants to be in the headlines. Before posting on Twitter (X), you should look at your tweets and see what you did for the people of Rajasthan when you were in power for five years

BHAJANLAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

The youth was facing an identity crisis, farmers used to commit suicide, and the poor used to die of hunger

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

It almost seems that the Government wants to avoid a detailed discussion on the Budget. Is this Budget based on fictitious revenue projections and economic trends? Is that why the Economic Survey wasn't presented?

ATISHI | DELHI ASSEMBLY LEADER OF LOP

POST OF THE DAY

So they put two stray cattle in the middle of a flyover only for the CM to stop her convoy, do her photoshoot for PR, and block the traffic in the process. This lady is becoming an embarrassment even for her own party.

@RoshanKrRaii

SHORT TAKES

Gunmen kill BJP leader in Ranchi

Ranchi: A BJP leader, who was also a former zila parishad member, was shot dead in broad daylight here Wednesday, a police officer said. Motorbike-borne gunmen reached Kanke Chowk in the Jharkhand capital, where the leader was, and killed him. The deceased was identified as Anil Tiger, the Opposition BJP's Ranchu Rural district general secretary. Alleging that the law and order collapsed in the state ruled by a JMM-led coalition, BJP state president Babul Marandi demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Hemant Soren.

J&K police bust terrorist hideout

Srinagar: Security forces Wednesday busted a terrorist hideout in forest area of Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. "Security forces uncovered a militant hideout in the Namban forest area of Baramulla and recovered a cache of arms and ammunition," the officials said. They said during the search, security forces recovered a cache of arms and explosives, including an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) with a fuse, plastic explosives, 104 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, two AK-47 magazines, two hand grenades, a combat pouch, and two bags.

Three dead in road accident

Jaipur: Three people, including a couple, died, and two others were injured when the car they were travelling in collided head-on with a dumper in Jodhpur, police said Wednesday. The deceased have been identified as Ganesh Ram (32), his wife Mamta (26) and their driver, Ajay Kumar (35). The couple's 18-month-old daughter, Mansavi, and their relative, Girdhari Rami (30), are critically injured, according to police.

MISLEADING ADS

SC asks states, UTs to set up grievance redressal mechanism



Issuing a slew of directions to curb misleading advertisements, a bench of Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said they could cause great harm to the society and that it was essential to stop them and save the ignorant masses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: Observing that misleading advertisements could cause great harm to the society, the Supreme Court Wednesday set a two-month deadline for the states and union territories to create a grievance redressal mechanism to deal with complaints against such ads.

Issuing a slew of directions to curb misleading advertisements, a bench of Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said they could cause great harm to the society and that it was essential to stop them and save the ignorant masses.

The state governments, the court said, should create mechanisms for members of the public to lodge complaints against objectionable advertisements prohibited under the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, 1954. The 1954 act is more than 70 years old and there is no implementation in its true letter and spirit, it said.

"We direct the states governments to create proper grievance redressal mechanisms within a period of two months from today and give adequate

publicity to the availability at frequent intervals." The mechanism could entail complaints being lodged on a toll-free number or through an email.

The top court directed the states to sensitise the police machinery on implementation of the provisions of 1954 act. "We direct the states, UTs to appoint gazetted officers who are authorised to exercise powers under Section 8 of the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act for search, seizure, etc.," it said. As soon as complaints were received through the grievance redressal mechanism or otherwise, the same would be immediately forwarded to the officer concerned for action, the court said.

"If the officer finds that there is a contravention of the 1954 Act he will set the criminal law in motion by lodging a complaint with the police station so that first information reports can be registered."

The court also directed its registry to share the order copy with the National Legal Services Authority for sensitisation programs on the 1954 Act.

The Centre was directed to ensure creation of a dashboard for display of actions against misleading advertisements within three months. Clamping down on misleading advertisements, the apex court May 7, 2024 directed that before an advertisement was permitted to be issued, a self-declaration would be obtained from the advertisers on the lines of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994.

Waqf Bill protests rock Bihar Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, March 26: Protests against the Waqf Bill rocked Bihar Wednesday, from the legislature to the streets, as political parties within the state and outside stood in solidarity with the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), which organised a 'maha dhar-na' here.

The AIMPLB demonstrations were held barely a kilometre away from the Vidhan Sabha premises, to demand rollback of the Bill brought by the Narendra Modi government at the Centre, and to request "secular"



leaders like Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to reconsider "support" to the contentious legislation.

Leader of Opposition Te-

Kunal Kamra criticises T-Series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: Comedian Kunal Kamra on Wednesday criticised Bollywood studio T-Series, alleging that his stand-up special "Naya Bharat", which has kicked up a huge controversy over jokes targeting Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, was flagged for copyright violations on YouTube.

Kamra Wednesday dropped a new video from the comedy special, in which he performed a parody of "Hawa Hawaii" from "Mr India" to criticise Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her policies. The songs of "Mr India", which featured Anil Kapoor and late cinema star Sridevi, belong to T-Series label.

Kamra shared a screenshot from YouTube on X, which showed "Naya Bharat", his new video, has been blocked due to copyright restrictions and therefore is not visible



to viewers. Due to copyright claims, the video will not be able to generate revenue as well. "Hello @T-Series, stop being a stooge. Parody and Satire comes under fair use legally. I haven't used the lyrics or the original instrumental of the song. If you take this video down every cover song/dance video can be taken down. Creators please take a note of it," the 36-year-old comic said.

"Having said that every monopoly in India is nothing short of Mafia so please watch/download this special before it's taken down. FYI - T-Series I stay in Tamil Nadu (sic)," he added. In a statement, a spokesperson of T-Series said, "Mr Kunal Kamra has not taken any authorisation or approval for the usage of the underlying musical work in the song hence the content has been blocked for infringement of composition rights."

Breach of privilege notice moved against comedian

Mumbai: BJP legislator Pravin Darekar Wednesday moved a breach of privilege notice against stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra and Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Sushma Andhare. "Kunal Kamra performed a song containing personal and insulting references to deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde," said Darekar, leader of the legislative council, while presenting the motion. "Andhare supported the performance and used objectionable language, which amounts to contempt of the House," he further said. Both Kamra and Andhare disrespected the dignity of legislative institutions through their remarks, Darekar said.

so made jokes about recent political developments in Maharashtra, including the Shiv Sena and NCP splits, has amassed over 6.7 million views on YouTube.

Student abducted, killed for ransom; 3 minors arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: A 16-year-old boy was abducted and killed for a ₹10 lakh ransom in the Wazirabad area of north Delhi, a police officer said Wednesday. Three juveniles have been apprehended in connection with the murder, he said.

The class 9 student was taken to a deserted area near Bhalaswa Lake, where he was stabbed multiple times, he said. "The family members of the boy had received a call regarding a ransom of ₹10 lakh. Later, they discovered his body," said the officer. On Monday, a complaint was filed at the local police station about a boy missing since Sunday. The boy studied in Mukherjee Nagar. "During investigation, it was found that the missing/kidnapped boy was last seen with three boys, two of them aged 16 and 17, on a motorcycle on Jharoda Pushta road," the officer said.

The sighting was confirmed through CCTV footage from the area. Police apprehended all three boys, who, during interrogation, revealed they had kidnapped the boy for a ransom of 10 lakh.

They said that Sunday, they took him with them on a motorcycle to hang out.



Women carry firewood at a tea estate, in Nagaon district, Assam

PTI PHOTO

SNIPPETS

Rebel BJP MLA Yatnal expelled from party

Bangalore: The BJP has expelled its rebel MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal from the party Tuesday. Yatnal said he has been expelled from the party for speaking against dynasty politics and corruption. The MLA from Vijayapura was quite vocal against former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and his son, B Y Vijayendra, who is BJP state president, and their 'dynasty politics' and 'corruption'. He was twice served show-cause notices and finally sacked from the party Tuesday. "Central Disciplinary Committee of the party has considered your response to the show cause notice dated 10 February 2025 and has taken serious note of your repeated violation of the party discipline, despite your assurances of good behavior and conduct in response to earlier show cause notices," the order issued by the CDC member Om Pathak said.

IS passes Bill to set up "Tribhuvan" Sahkari Univ

New Delhi: Lok Sabha Wednesday passed a bill to set up 'Tribhuvan Sahkari University' in Gujarat's Anand with an aim to create a qualified manpower for co-operative societies. The university has been named after Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel, who was one of the pioneers of cooperative movement in India and instrumental in laying the foundation of Amul, Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah said during a debate on the "Tribhuvan" Sahkari University Bill, 2025. Shah took a swipe at some opposition members for their demand that the university should have been named after Verghese Kurien, associated with the growth of milk cooperatives in Gujarat, saying that Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel was a Congress leader who gave job to Kurien.

Karni Sena activists attack SP MP's house

Agra (UP): The residence of Samajwadi Party (SP) Rajya Sabha MP Ramji Lal Suman was attacked here on Wednesday allegedly by workers of the Karni Sena, days after the lawmaker's remarks in Parliament on Rana Sanga triggered a row. The Karni Sena demanded apologies from Suman and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav for "insulting" its hero and said its protest would continue in a peaceful manner, with its chief asking the group's workers to not take law into their hands. Yadav slammed the Uttar Pradesh government over its claims of "zero tolerance" against crime, following the attack at Suman's house and questioned Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's authority, alleging that despite his presence in Agra Wednesday, the house of the SP lawmaker was vandalised.

More than a fifth of super rich want to migrate out of India: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 26: At least 22 per cent super rich Indians want to leave the country due to factors like living conditions here, better standard of life abroad and also easier business environment in other countries, a survey said Wednesday.

The survey of 150 ultra high networth individuals said that the US, UK, Australia, Canada and even UAE due to its golden visa scheme are the favourite destinations where the rich prefer to settle down. Kotak Private, a leading wealth manager in the country which undertook the survey in association with consultancy EY, said

25 lakh Indians migrate to other countries every year as per the foreign ministry.

"One in five ultra HNIs surveyed are currently in the process of or plan to migrate," the survey findings said, adding most of them intend to reside in their host country of choice permanently while retaining their Indian citizenship. They seek improved standard of living, healthcare solutions, education or lifestyle, the survey said, adding that over two-thirds said smoothening of business operations is a key driver for them.

Calling the migration decision as an "investment in the future", the survey also said that pursuit of excellent high-



er education for their children leads them to make the choice. Kotak Mahindra Bank's president Gautami Gavankar, however, said the decision to

migrate should not be seen as a flight of capital out of the country, pointing out that the caps on such activities ensure that the money does not flow

out even if a person changes residency.

She said an Indian citizen residing in India can only take out USD 250,000 per year, while

a non-resident is allowed USD 1 million, which ensures that there is no flight of capital. The survey said the professionals show a higher propensity to migrate than the entrepreneurs or inheritors, while from an age group perspective, it is UHNIs in the 36-40 years and above 61 years who are more keen to migrate.

There were 2.83 lakh Indians who can be tagged as UHNIs in 2023, with each having a net worth of over ₹25 crore and their aggregate wealth was pegged at ₹2.83 lakh crore. The same is expected to grow to 4.3 lakh individuals possessing a wealth of ₹359 lakh crore by 2028, as per the survey.

international



Speaking for President Trump, we want to reinvigorate the security of the people of Greenland because we think it's important to protecting the security of the entire world

YUNUS ARRIVES IN CHINA

Bangladesh interim government's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus arrived in China Wednesday on a four-day visit, during which he will hold talks with President Xi Jinping. He will later travel to Beijing, where he will meet President Xi March 28



of the day quote

The prime minister today insists that the 2026 budget, which is going to be a nightmare given the extent of our financial difficulties, be worked upon and consulted upon by the full social and parliamentary spectrum, many of whom often feel they are not listened to

The more Hamas continues in its refusal to release our hostages, the more powerful the repression we exert will be

Half of the world is dreaming about our dictatorship, the dictatorship of real business and interests of our people

US links India to fentanyl trafficking

China remains the primary source country for illicit fentanyl precursor chemicals and pill pressing equipment, followed by India, US intelligence report says



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York/Washington, March 26: A US intelligence report has named India and China as "sources of precursors and equipment for drug traffickers" and the primary source country for illicit fentanyl precursor chemicals and pill pressing equipment.

The '2025 Annual Threat Assessment (ATA)', released Tuesday, is the Intelligence Community's (IC) official, coordinated evaluation of an array of threats to US citizens, the homeland, and US interests in the world.

Some transnational criminal organisations (TCOs) are producing and trafficking large amounts of illicit drugs that are imperiling American lives and livelihoods, the report said.

Mexico-based TCOs—including the Sinaloa Cartel and the New Generation Jalisco Cartel—remain the dominant producers and suppliers of illicit drugs, including fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, and South American-sourced cocaine, for the US market, the report said.

Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids remain the most lethal drugs trafficked into the United States, causing more than 52,000 US deaths in a 12-month period ending in October 2024

and pill pressing equipment, followed by India," it said. Cartels are largely responsible for the more than 52,000 US deaths from synthetic opioids in the 12 months ending in October 2024 and helped facilitate the nearly three million illegal migrant arrivals in 2024, straining resources and putting US communities at risk,

the report pointed out. Last week, an India-based chemical manufacturing company and three of its high-level employees were charged in a federal court in Washington DC in a case related to illegally importing precursor chemicals used to make illicit fentanyl.

The report also flagged "Transnational Islamic Extremists" and said, ISIS's most aggressive branches, including ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K), and its entrepreneurial plotters will continue to seek to attack the West, including the United States, via online outreach and propaganda aimed at directing, enabling, or inspiring attacks, and could exploit vulnerable travel routes.

US President praises India's election system

Trump cites India as example in executive order on overhauling American election system



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, March 26: President Donald Trump has cited India and Brazil in his executive order to overhaul the American election system, saying the two countries are linking voter identification to a biometric database while the US relies on self-attestation for citizenship.

The sweeping executive order, signed by Trump Tuesday, states that "despite pioneering self-government, the US now "fails to enforce basic and necessary election protections used by both developed and developing nations."

"India and Brazil, for example, are tying voter identification to a biometric database, while the United States largely relies on self-attestation for citizenship," according to the order.

"Further, while countries like Denmark and Sweden sensibly limit mail-in voting to those unable to vote in person and do not count late-arriving votes regardless of the date of postmark, many American elections now feature mass voting by mail, with many officials accepting ballots without post-

marks or those received well after Election Day," it said.

In India, the Election Commission is exploring linking voter cards with Aadhaar, which includes a biometric database. The EC March 18 said technical consultations between its experts and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for the exercise would "begin soon".

The poll authority said that while voting rights could only be granted to a citizen of India, according to Article 326 of the Constitution, Aadhaar establishes a person's identity and not citizenship or right to get enrolled as a voter.

"Free, fair, and honest elections unmarred by fraud, errors, or suspicion."

"Free, fair, and honest elections unmarred by fraud, errors, or suspicion are fundamental to maintaining our constitutional Republic. The right of American citizens to have their votes properly counted and tabulated, without illegal dilution, is vital to determining the rightful winner of an election," it said.

President Trump has repeatedly questioned certain voting methods since he lost the 2020 US Presidential election to Democrat Joe Biden.

SHORT TAKES

4 'facilitators' of Jaffar Express attack held

Islamabad: Four suspects have been arrested for facilitating the hijacking of the Jaffar Express that resulted in the killing of 26 hostages, including 18 security personnel, earlier this month in Pakistan's Balochistan, according to a media report. Terrorists belonging to the banned separatist outfit Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) hijacked the Jaffar Express carrying 440 passengers. Twenty-six hostages lost their lives in the attack. The Army eliminated all 33 terrorists the next day and rescued 354 hostages.

France, Indonesia to boost Indo-Pacific safety

Jakarta: France and Indonesia's top diplomats inked a new maritime security project Wednesday aiming "to ensure peace and safety" at sea in the Indo-Pacific region. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot's visit to Jakarta, his second stop in his four-day Asia tour after Singapore, comes amid ongoing trade tensions between the European Union and Beijing. He told reporters Wednesday that the Indo-Pacific Port Security Project "is close to my heart," promising France's support.

IMF approves \$1.3bn loan package for Pak

Islamabad: The International Monetary Fund approved a loan of \$1.3 billion for Pakistan to address climate change while also reaching a staff-level agreement on the first review of the already agreed \$7 billion loan. The new agreement spans over 28 months under the Climate Resilience and Sustainability Facility which aims to help nations address climate challenges while committing to reforms. Additionally, freeing \$1 billion for the country under the \$7 billion bailout programme would bring the total disbursements to \$2 billion.

Indian national held with narcotic drugs

Kathmandu: A 34-year-old Indian national was arrested at Nepal's Gautam Buddha International Airport and 15 kg of hemp was recovered from his possession, police said. The narcotic item was recovered from Ritesh Kumar, who had landed in Bhairahawa in western Nepal from Bangkok, Thailand, on a Thai Air Asia flight, according to the police. He was arrested at the airport's arrival gate and the police recovered the drug hidden in his suitcase during a security check.

SNIPPETS

Europe's talks on Ukraine security shift from sending troops

Paris/Brussels: European efforts to create security arrangements for Ukraine are shifting from sending troops to other alternatives as they face political and logistical constraints, and the prospect of Russia and the United States opposing their plans, officials said. France, which has been working closely with Britain to come up with options, will host 30 leaders and delegations from around 30 countries Thursday, part of what has become a "coalition of the willing" to try and flesh out some ideas. But while London and Paris have been working for weeks on a plan to send thousands of troops to Ukraine to help safeguard a future ceasefire, diplomats say there is growing acceptance that sending such a force is not the likeliest outcome.



Brazil SC majority votes Bolsonaro should stand trial

Brasilia: A majority of judges on Brazil's Supreme Court reviewing charges against former President Jair Bolsonaro Wednesday voted for him to stand trial for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the government after he lost a 2022 election. The first three members of a five-judge panel voted to put Bolsonaro on trial. If found guilty in a trial expected later this year, Bolsonaro could face a lengthy prison sentence stretching over two decades. In his opening remarks Wednesday, Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who is overseeing the case, screened dramatic footage of Bolsonaro's supporters storming government buildings in violent scenes that unfolded just a week after the inauguration of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in January 2023.



SK WILDFIRES KILL AT LEAST 24

Pilot killed as firefighting helicopter crashes

REUTERS

Uiseong County, South Korea, March 26: The death toll in the wildfires raging across South Korea's southeastern region rose to 24 and the pilot of a firefighting helicopter was killed when the aircraft crashed Wednesday, as the country battles some of its worst forest fires in decades.

The deadly wildfires have spread rapidly and forced more than 27,000 people from their homes, the government said. The blazes, fuelled by strong winds and dry weather, have razed entire neighbourhoods, closed schools and forced authorities to transfer hundreds of inmates from prisons.

"We are deploying all available personnel and equipment in response to the worst wildfires ever but the situation is not good," Acting President



Tens of thousands forced to flee their homes. Uiseong fire only 68% contained, exacerbated by strong winds. Climate change projected to increase frequency of large-scale wildfires

Han Duck-soo said, adding that the US military in Korea was also assisting.

The Korea Forest Service said 24 people had been confirmed dead in the fires. It did not give a breakdown, but earlier the Safety Ministry said 14 people had died in Uiseong county, and four other deaths were linked to a blaze in Sacheong county.

Many of the dead were older people in their 60s and 70s, said

Son Chang-ho, a local police official. The Forest Service also said one of its fire-fighting helicopters crashed while trying to extinguish a blaze and the pilot was killed.

South Korea relies on helicopters to tackle forest fires because of its mountainous terrain and the incident led to the brief grounding of the fleet.

The Uiseong fire, only 68% contained and exacerbated by gusty winds, showed "unimag-

Weird Mongolian dinosaur wielded 'big, sharp, nasty' claws

Fossils unearthed during construction of a water pipeline in the Gobi Desert of Mongolia have revealed one of the oddest members of a rather strange group of dinosaurs, a creature whose two-fingered hands sport a pair of menacing curved claws.

The dinosaur, named Duonychus tsogtbaatari, measured about 10 feet (3 meters) long, weighed approximately 575 pounds (260 kg) and lived roughly 90 to 95 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period, researchers said. Its claws measured about a foot (30 cm) long.

Duonychus was a medium-sized member of a group of awkward-looking dinosaurs called therizinosaurs, which were known for having a rotund torso, long neck, small head, bipedal stance, feathers on the body and massive claws on the hands. While they were part of the dinosaur clade called theropods that included all the

meat-eaters such as Tyrannosaurus and Spinosaurus, therizinosaurs preferred plants on their menu.

Therizinosaurs, which inhabited Asia and North America, are distinguished by their large claws. Until now, every known therizinosaur had three clawed fingers. But Duonychus possessed one fewer, making it fitting that its name means "two claw".

"Therizinosaurs are some of the weirdest dinosaurs ever. They were theropods - so, related to meat-eaters - but they looked like giant feathered sloths," said paleontologist Yoshitsugu Kobayashi of Hokkaido University Museum in Japan, lead author of the research published Tuesday in the journal iScience.

"Duonychus takes that weirdness even further. It had this short, two-fingered hand with claws like a raptor (swift meat-eating dinosaurs), but it used them to eat plants. It's like

Fossils of Duonychus unearthed in Gobi Desert of Mongolia. It had two fingers on each hand, with large curved claws. It is a member of the therizinosaur dinosaur group



'Let's try something totally new.' And it worked," Kobayashi said.

The researchers said this Duonychus individual was not fully grown. It roamed a semi-arid environment with

side other therizinosaurs, armored dinosaurs, horned dinosaurs, duck-billed dinosaurs and a smaller forerunner of Tyrannosaurus called Alceosaurus. While the skeleton recovered was incomplete - for

instance, missing its skull and legs - the arms and hands were well-preserved. One of the claws retained its outer covering - a sheath of keratin, the same material as in our fingernails - rather than just the underlying bone. The keratin sheath added more than 40% to the claw's length.

"These were big, sharp and nasty claws," said paleontologist and study co-author Darla Zelenitsky of the University of Calgary in Canada.

"That's incredibly rare," Kobayashi said of the keratin fossilization, "and it gives us an extraordinary window into how these dinosaurs actually used their hands in life. The hands are beautifully preserved and show a ton of detail, including fused wrist bones, stiff joints and the two massive claws."

The claws may have served multiple functions, though primarily used for grabbing and pulling down branches to feed

on leaves. "They could have used the claws for other purposes as well, perhaps for grappling, defense, digging and maybe even recognizing one's own species - 'Hey, look at me. I also have only two fingers,'" Zelenitsky said.

Duonychus is an example of digit reduction - losing fingers or toes through evolution. The first land vertebrates had eight digits. The earliest dinosaurs had hands with five fingers, just as people do, but many dinosaur lineages experienced digit reduction over time.

The discovery of Duonychus means there are now no fewer than five lineages of theropods known to have independently evolved just two fingers on each hand. The most famous of these was T rex, a member of the group called tyrannosaurs whose puny arms were way out of proportion with its enormous head and torso. AGENCIES

Business



Regulations should not create unintended barriers for deepening financial inclusion
SANJAY MALHOTRA | GOVERNOR, RBI

MARUTI SUZUKI TO SET UP THIRD PLANT

Maruti Suzuki India Wednesday said its board has approved investment of ₹7,410 crore to set up a third plant at Kharkhoda in Haryana with a capacity of up to 2.5 lakh vehicles per year. The existing capacity at Kharkhoda stands at 2.5 lakh units per year. Another plant with a capacity of 2.5 lakh units per year is under construction, Maruti Suzuki said in a regulatory filing



of the day quote

Despite tariff-related concerns, India's exports will register a healthy growth rate. The order books are pretty good and the removal of tariff uncertainties will further push the shipments

We are trying to formalize all the MSMEs in the country and hopefully by 2029 we will reach 9 crore

Niti is working on a programme to improve India's penetration of global value chains. To penetrate into global value chains, you need to have the ecosystem here, which means the intermediate routes

Surprise on the downside will provide RBI continued space to follow up with a rate cut at the April meeting, and "the RBI could shift their stance from neutral to accommodative," JP-Morgan said in a note Tuesday.

SHORT TAKES

Bharti Airtel prepays spectrum liabilities

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel and subsidiary Bharti Hexacom have prepaid an additional ₹5,985 crore of high-cost spectrum liabilities to the government, the telco said Wednesday. Airtel's subsidiary Network i2i has also voluntarily called and redeemed \$1 billion in 'perpetual debt securities'. "Bharti Airtel and its subsidiary Bharti Hexacom have prepaid additional ₹5,985 crore to the Department of Telecom thereby fully prepaying the high-cost interest liabilities of 8.65 per cent pertaining to the 2024 auctions," the Sunil Mittal-led company said. Network i2i Ltd has also voluntarily called and redeemed \$1 billion in 'Perpetual Notes'.

Gold snaps losing run

New Delhi: Cutting short the four-day losing streak, gold prices rebounded by ₹235 to ₹90,685 per 10 grams on Wednesday amid firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Tuesday, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had ended at ₹90,450 per 10 grams. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity rose by ₹235 to ₹90,235 per 10 grams against the previous close of ₹0,000 per 10 grams. Traders said fresh buying by retailers after recent losses led to the recovery in gold prices. Firm global trends also influenced the sentiment, they said. Silver prices also recovered by ₹1,500 to ₹1,01,500 per kg. The white metal had settled at ₹1,00,000 per kg Tuesday. Meanwhile, spot gold traded 0.16 per cent higher at \$3,024.96 per ounce in the global markets. Also, Comex gold futures for April delivery in the Asian market hours quoted higher at \$3,059.10 per ounce.

L&T's largest contract

New Delhi: Infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro Wednesday said it has bagged an ultra-mega order from QatarEnergy LNG for its offshore hydrocarbon business. The company classifies contracts above ₹15,000 crore as 'ultra mega' orders. "QatarEnergy LNG, the world's premier LNG company, has awarded an Ultra Mega Offshore Contract for the North Field Production Sustainability Offshore Compression Project to Larsen & Toubro Ltd (L&T) hydrocarbon business (L&T Energy Hydrocarbon--LETH)," the company said in a regulatory filing. This order marks the largest single contract ever received by L&T, the filing said.

Swap market prices in fierce rate cuts by RBI

Mumbai, March 26: With inflation close to the Reserve Bank of India's target and growth weak, the country's overnight indexed swap (OIS) markets have started pricing in far more aggressive rate cuts by the central bank than previously anticipated.

OIS rates, the closest gauge of interest rate expectations, have eased by 10-15 basis points so far in March, with the absolute levels hinting at more than 50 basis points of rate cuts cumulatively over the next 12 months.

The primary dealership was expecting a shallow cycle of 50 bps cuts earlier, but now sees 75-100 bps of easing.

The one-year OIS rate stands around 6.10%, its lowest level since August 2022, while the five-year rate was around 5.90%, near its lowest level since March 2022.

"We continue to expect RBI to pivot towards growth. We now forecast RBI to cut rates by 25bps in April, and again in August and December, bringing the repo rate to 5.50%," Japan's MUFG Bank said in a note. "We think markets are underpricing the risks of reciprocal tariffs on India right now. While India is generally more domestically-oriented to begin with, reciprocal tariffs if raised to a meaningful level will still have a negative impact on India's growth prospects in 2025," they said. A January Reuters' poll had forecast only two cuts in the current easing cycle.

Analysts also expect the central bank to infuse more rupee liquidity into the banking system alongside the rate cuts as it is the only way to ensure quicker transmission of lower rates to the broader economy.

The RBI has infused over ₹6.8 trillion of liquidity into the banking system since the middle of January.

Inflation data continuing to



Inflation in the current quarter is tracking 50 bps lower than RBI forecast and that should provide the central bank a lot more conviction on the outlook for next year. RBI may not wish for real policy rates to increase at a time there are downside risks to growth from global factors

ABHISHEK UPADHYAY | SENIOR ECONOMIST, ICICI SECURITIES PRIMARY DEALERSHIP

- Overnight index swap rates slide 10-15 bps in March
- Economists now see three rate cuts this year
- US tariff war hurts growth outlook, adds to rate cut case
- India's fiscal year 2025-26 begins April 1

surprise on the downside will provide RBI continued space to follow up with a rate cut at the April meeting, and "the RBI could shift their stance from neutral to accommodative," JP-Morgan said in a note Tuesday. JPMorgan still sees value in government bonds and will stick with its overweight stance. Foreign investors have net bought government bonds

worth ₹143 billion (\$1.67 billion) so far in March.

India's retail inflation eased to a seven-month low of 3.61% in February, with the market estimating another benign reading for March.

India's economy is seen growing at a four-year low of 6.5% in the current fiscal year ending March with growth predicted in the 6.3-6.8% range next year.

RBI announces MPC schedule for FY26

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Wednesday announced the schedule for the bi-monthly monetary policy committee (MPC) meetings for financial year 2025-26. The rate-setting panel will hold its first meeting of the fiscal from April 7-9 and the next will begin June 4, as per an official statement. Typically, the six-member panel votes on a resolution on the third day of the meeting and the governor announces the decision in the first half of the day after the vote is completed. The second bi-monthly policy review meeting will end June 6, the statement said, adding that this will be followed by three-day meetings in August, September, December, and February. The six-member panel headed by the governor has three external members. The MPC announces the bi-monthly monetary policy after deliberations on the prevailing domestic and economic situations. The committee at its last meeting held in February had reduced the key short-term lending rate by 25 basis points after a gap of nearly 5 years.

UCO Bank celebrates Agriculture, MSME & CASA Carnival



Bhubaneswar: UCO Bank, Zonal Office Bhubaneswar celebrated its Agriculture, MSME and CASA Carnival at Khurda. The event was attended by MSME, agriculture, Self Help Group members and Bank Mitras. The occasion was graced by Goutam Patra, General Manager Business Development & Convenor SLBC, Odisha, Ankit Rana, General Manager, Recovery Department, Head Office, Kolkata, Siba Narayan Mishra, President, Barunee Industrial Association and

Chinmaya Kumar Sahoo, Deputy General Manager & Zonal Head Bhubaneswar. Sahoo welcomed all the dignitaries and guests at the event. Patra addressed all the participants and shared bank's journey, growth and commitment for the current financial year along with valuable insights on the opportunities in the MSME, Agriculture, and Resources sectors. Few Customers also expressed their valuable banking experiences and feedbacks. During the event, the Bank's Resources Department highlighted the Key benefits of bank's newly launched products - UCO Unique, UCO Royal & UCO Privilege. Also the salient features of bank's exclusive PINK BASKET products designed for women customers' - UCO Aparajita, UCO Jayalaxmi & UCO Sanchayika were presented to the audiences.

US TARIFF

RIL to stop buying oil from Venezuela

New Delhi, March 26: India's Reliance Industries, operator of the world's biggest refining complex, will halt Venezuelan oil imports after the United States announced a 25% tariff on nations buying crude from the South American nation, three sources said Wednesday.

The Indian conglomerate, which last year obtained approval from US authorities to purchase oil from the sanctioned producer, imports an average of 2 million barrels of Venezuelan crude every month, according to LSEG data. It is scheduled to receive a Venezuelan cargo in early April, LSEG trade flows data showed.

US President Donald Trump's executive order says that higher tariffs may be imposed on or after April 2 on all goods imported from any country that buys Venezuelan oil.

The three industry sources with knowledge of Reliance's purchasing plans said the company would stop buying Venezuelan crude due to the tariff threat.

Profit-taking snaps 7-day gaining streak

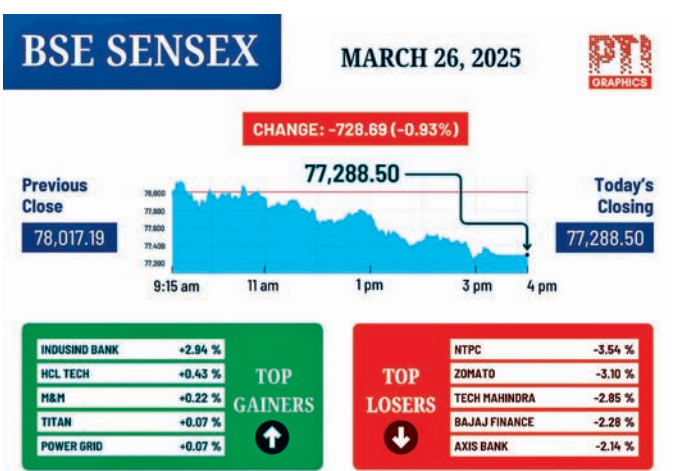
In past seven trading days, BSE benchmark index jumped 4,188.28 points or 5.67% while Nifty surged 1,271.45 points or 5.67%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 26: Stock markets snapped the seven-day winning run Wednesday with benchmark Sensex tanking 728 points due to profit-taking in banking and IT shares ahead of monthly expiry of derivatives contracts.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 728.69 points or 0.93 per cent to settle at 77,288.50 as 25 of its components closed in the red. During the day, it slumped 822.97 points or 1.05 per cent to 77,194.22.

The NSE Nifty dropped 181.80 points or 0.77 per cent to 23,486.85. From the Sensex pack, NT-PC, Tech Mahindra, Zomato, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Maruti, State Bank of India, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Reliance Industries, Hindustan Unilever, and HD-



FC Bank were the losers. IndusInd Bank, HCL Tech, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra and Power Grid were the gainers. "The market experienced profit-taking after the recent gains, on the back of next week's US tariff announcements. The sectors with higher exposure to the US market, like pharma & IT, have witnessed some selling pressure," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. Among Asian markets,

Entrepreneurship demands hard work, dedication, patience: Pallai

"When there is belief in God, there will always be a demand for agarbatti," says **Prahlad Pallai, proprietor of Swomen Agarbatti**. The brand was established in 2010 with a vision to revolutionise the incense stick industry and has proved its mettle in the market. From humble beginnings to leading a revolution in incense stick manufacturing, Pallai's journey is one of resilience, determination, and innovation. In this exclusive interview with **Orissa POST**, he shares insights into his entrepreneurial path, the challenges in the industry, and vision for the future. Excerpts...



Can you brief us about your early life and what led you to incense stick business?

My journey began in 2006 when I visited Bangalore. The place where I was staying had an agarbatti factory nearby, and after visiting it, I was inspired to start my own venture. At the time, I was still pursuing my studies, but my family was facing severe financial difficulties, and the responsibility of supporting them fell on my shoulders at a young age. Initially, I took up a job, but neither job security nor satisfaction was guaranteed. This led me to take a bold step and start my own business. I recognised the enormous demand for incense sticks and, despite having little knowledge of the industry, took the risk. In 2010, I established Swomen Agarbatti with the vision of revolutionising the industry by introducing high-quality incense sticks and innovative machinery.

How is the demand for incense sticks in Odisha? What is your USP?

The demand for incense sticks in Odisha is exceptionally high due to the state's religious and cultural significance. Every

household requires incense sticks, often multiple times a day, for worship and rituals. The demand is so strong that we sometimes struggle to meet it, but we are continuously expanding our production capacity. While we focus on increasing supply, our top priority remains quality. Unlike some manufacturers who prioritise quantity over excellence, we never compromise on the quality of our incense sticks.

What challenges does the industry face?

Despite our strong market presence, the incense industry faces several challenges. Price wars with competitors, rising raw material costs, manpower shortages, high marketing expenses, and government regulations, all impact business operations. However, what sets our brand apart is the unwavering support of our customers. We have not only built a successful brand but have also created employment opportunities across Odisha. Many small entrepreneurs and distributors associated with us earn anywhere between ₹100 to 1,000 daily, helping them sustain their livelihoods. This social impact keeps us motivated to overcome industry challenges.

How important is processing in your manufacturing?

At Swomen Agarbatti, we focus on quality over quantity. We have introduced advanced techniques and high-end machinery to ensure the production of premium-quality incense sticks. While many competitors prioritise mass production for higher profits, we maintain strict quality control and never compromise on the fragrance, burning

time, or eco-friendliness of our products.

How has your journey been so far, and what future plans do you have?

Like every entrepreneur, my journey was also filled with struggles, lessons, and perseverance. Starting as a newcomer with no industry knowledge, I gradually gained expertise through hands-on experience. Looking ahead, we plan to introduce more advanced production techniques to further enhance the quality of our products. Innovation and customer satisfaction will continue to be our driving forces as we expand our brand and reach new markets.

What advice do you have for aspiring entrepreneurs entering this industry?

Entrepreneurship demands hard work, dedication, and patience. Many newcomers enter the industry with enthusiasm but fail because they lack consistency and long-term vision. Success doesn't come overnight—it requires careful planning, perseverance, and a deep understanding of customer needs. With the right mindset and persistence, anyone can achieve success in this industry.

Some incense manufacturers use harmful chemicals in production. Are your products eco-friendly?

Yes, all Swomen Agarbatti products are organic and non-toxic. We do not use any harmful chemicals, ensuring that our incense sticks are safe for both users and the environment. Our commitment to sustainability and quality makes us stand out in the market, providing customers with a natural and aromatic experience.

RISING PRICES

Govt discontinues parts of gold deposit scheme

The gold monetisation scheme, introduced in 2015, included gold deposits for 1-to-3 years, 5-to-7 years and 12-to-15 years



REUTERS

Mumbai, March 26: India has discontinued parts of a scheme that encouraged households and institutions to deposit idle gold in exchange for interest payments.

The gold monetisation scheme, introduced in 2015, included gold deposits for 1-to-3 years, 5-to-7 years and 12-to-15 years.

The 5-to-7 and 12-to-15 year deposits have been discontinued, the finance ministry said late Tuesday, citing evolving market conditions and performance of the scheme.

Banks can continue to offer short-term gold deposits based on commercial viability, the

ministry said. The move is likely to reduce the government's future obligations and minimise risks related to gold prices. While banks paid the interest on the short-term deposits, the government paid it for the medium- and long-term ones.

Prices of gold, which is seen as a hedge against geopolitical and economic uncertainties, have risen more than 15% this year, driven by escalating geopolitical tensions and uncertainties over US tariff policy.

The existing gold deposits will continue until their maturity, India's finance ministry said. The Reserve Bank of India has amended, opens new tab its master directions on the scheme to account for the changes.

Marquez laments reality of football

Head coach slams Indian football team's lacklustre display against Bangladesh, a team ranked 59 places below them in the FIFA rankings, during their AFC Asian Cup qualifying match at Shillong's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Tuesday



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, March 26: "Angry and disappointed" at India playing out a 0-0 draw against Bangladesh in the AFC Asian Cup qualifying round match, head coach Manolo Marquez said his team has gone two-three steps back since the first match under him last year.

At the end of a scrappy contest between the two familiar rivals, Marquez admitted that his team played a "very bad game" in all departments.

"I am really angry and disappointed. If you ask me, maybe today is the most difficult press conference in my career. Because I don't want to say all the things that are in my head

at this moment," the Spaniard said after the match Tuesday night.

"When we started in Hyderabad against Mauritius (in Intercontinental Cup in September 2024) with one training session, till now, before the game today, it was every time better. Today we took two or three steps back," he said in a hard-hitting press conference.

"Very, very poor performance of the Indian team, in the first half especially. It was better in the second half but not enough. We got one point, that's the best thing."

Marquez mentioned the absence of a few injured players but said it was no excuse for the

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MANOLO MARQUEZ | HEAD COACH

poor show.

"A lot of very important players, starters, they are not here. All of them injured. But this is not an excuse," he said, referring to the injuries to Brandon Fernandes, Manvir Singh and Lallianzuala Chhangte.

"First, it's a reality. But second, we need to improve always. Even playing good football, you need to improve always in all the areas, in defence, in attack, in transitions, in set-pieces, everything.

"Today was not our day. The best thing is that all four teams are with one point and we have five games. We start from zero in the second round."

Midfielder Lalengmawia Ralte said his team was "lucky" to have got a draw.

"I also agree that we are lucky not to concede a goal. And we are lucky to get the draw. We could have done so much better."

Marquez, who took charge as India head coach in July 2024, dismissed the notion that his players are lacking in experience. "This is nothing about experience or not experience. This is how you enter in the game. The game started with one pass back. And the goalkeeper passed the ball to the (Bangladesh) striker. And the striker, without the goalkeeper, he sent the ball out," he said referring to Vishal Kaith's mistake early in the game.

"In this case, it was the goalkeeper. But practically, it was every single player. And I don't want to say this or that. Obviously, some players are better."

He was also asked about very few Indian players playing in striker's position in the Indian Super League teams.

"Nothing to say to the coaches (of ISL teams). They can put the players that they want. Even I played with a foreign striker," said Marquez who is also doubling up as FC Goa head coach.

He will leave the FC Goa position and will solely be the India head coach after the play-offs matches of the ISL, with the final happening April 12.

In the March FIFA window, India played two matches, the international friendly against Maldives (3-0 win March 19) being the other one.

India create history at Sepak Takraw World Cup with first-ever gold medal



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended heartfelt congratulations to the Indian Sepak Takraw contingent for their phenomenal performance at the Sepak Takraw World Cup 2025, held at Patliputra Stadium in Patna, Bihar.

He also lauded the Men's Regu team for scripting history with India's first-ever gold in the event. The women's team also made the nation proud, securing a bronze in the category.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "Congratulations to our contingent for displaying phenomenal sporting excellence at the Sepak Takraw World Cup 2025! The contingent brings home 7 medals. The Men's Regu team created history by bringing home India's first gold."

"This spectacular performance indicates a promising future for India in the global Sepak Takraw arena," he added.

In the Doubles category, the Indian women's team secured the silver medal after a closely contested final against Myan-

Congratulations to our contingent for displaying phenomenal sporting excellence at the Sepak Takraw World Cup 2025! The contingent brings home 7 medals. The Men's Regu team created history by bringing home India's first gold. This spectacular performance indicates a promising future for India in the global Sepak Takraw arena

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

mar, which claimed the gold. The bronze medal was jointly awarded to Japan and Iran. Meanwhile, the Indian men's team earned a bronze medal, shared with Malaysia, in the doubles event.

In the Quad event, both the men's and women's teams finished in third place, claiming the bronze medal. In the mixed quad event, the women's team secured the silver medal, while the men's team finished in third place to take the bronze.

"Heartiest congratulations to Team India for winning seven medals at the Sepak Takraw World Cup 2025. A special mention to our men's

team for winning the first-ever gold medal at this event. Your hard work and dedication will serve as an inspiration for aspiring athletes across the nation. Wishing you all greater success in the future," Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya posted on X.

The country's other politicians and celebrities joined the Prime Minister and Sports Minister in hailing the contingent for its superb performance.

India's Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, also congratulated the sepak takraw contingent for its fine performance. "Congratulations to the Indian contingent for winning seven medals at the Sepak Takraw World Cup 2025! Fascinating to see Indian champions consistently win medals in sports events across the world. Wins like these evoke interest; inspire our youth and budding champions to participate in sports they are not very familiar with. The seven-medal haul includes the historic first Gold medal by the Indian Men's Regu team," he wrote in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Sunil bags bronze in Asian Wrestling C'ship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amman (Jordan), March 26: Indian wrestler Sunil Kumar won the bronze medal in the 87kg Greco Roman bout of the Asian Championship here Tuesday.

In the bronze medal match, Sunil beat China's Jiaxin Huang after losing in the semifinals of the 87kg bout in the continental tournament.

Sunil, a silver medallist in 2019 who is looking to regain some of his old magic, had earlier registered a 10-1 victory over Tajikistan's Sukhrob Abdulkhaev in the quarterfinal. He scored all of his points in the second period. However, it was Iran's Yasin Yazdi who marched into the 87kg final with a 3-1 victory over Sunil in the semifinal clash.

Sagar Thakran won his 77kg qualifications bout but lost 10-0 in the quarterfinal to Jordan's Amro Sadeh. With a 4-point throw from par terre, Sadeh booked a place in the semifinals.

Argentina secure 2026 World Cup spot

It's the first time Argentina has won both matches against Brazil in a World Cup qualifying tournament. The home victory was also first against the Brazilians since qualifying for the 2006 WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Buenos Aires, March 26: Defending champion Argentina celebrated throughout Tuesday as the team secured its place at the 2026 World Cup hours before an historic 4-1 win over archrival Brazil.

Bolivia's failure to beat Uruguay meant Argentina had enough cushion in South American qualifying to secure one of the continent's six direct spots for the 48-team World Cup set to be co-hosted next year by the US, Canada and Mexico.

After Bolivia's 0-0 draw with Uruguay at El Alto, about 85,000



raucous Argentina fans kicked off the festivities at the Monumental de Nunez Stadium despite the absence of Lionel Messi. They were chanting into the night in Buenos Aires, now more confident their team can defend the World Cup title.

For Brazil, its worst deficit in South American World Cup qualifying history compounded pressure on coach Dorival Junior.

Brazil is in fourth place in South American qualifying with 21 points, 10 behind Argentina but only two behind second-place

Ecuador, which was held to a 0-0 draw by Chile. Third-place Uruguay and fifth-place Paraguay also have 21 points, and Colombia is one point behind them in sixth. Seventh-place Venezuela has 15 points after a 1-0 win over 9th-place Peru.

Brazil was missing three regular starters — goalkeeper Alisson, defender Gabriel Magalhães and midfielder Bruno Guimarães — and wasn't really competitive from start to finish.

Argentina has led South American qualifying from the

Messi, Argentina to visit India in October

New Delhi: Football fans in India will have another glimpse of Lionel Messi and his Argentine team in an exhibition match in Kerala in October, 14 years after the World Cup-winning captain first visited the country. In November last year, Kerala Sports Minister V Abdurrahman had announced the news of Argentina visiting the southern state and playing two friendly matches in Kochi. On Wednesday, HSBC India became the official partner of the Argentine team to collaborate and promote football in India, and announced that the match will be held in October. "Under this partnership, the Argentina national football team, including legendary player Lionel Messi, will visit India for an international exhibition match in October 2025," a release from HSBC India said. Messi's first visit to India was to play a World Cup qualifying round match against Venezuela in Kolkata in September 2011. Argentina won that match 1-0 at Salt Lake Stadium.

start, with few hiccups and major away wins at Brazil and Uruguay. But coach Lionel Scaloni has not fielded 37-year-old Messi in several games, which still raises doubts on whether the star will play at the World Cup next year.

BFI postpones elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: Boxing Federation of India (BFI) Wednesday postponed its election scheduled for March 28, saying it's "impossible to complete the process within originally planned timelines" after the Delhi and Himachal Pradesh High Courts directed the body to reinstate the names omitted from the electoral college.

"This is to inform you that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), which was scheduled to be held on 28.03.2025, stands postponed," BFI said in a notification to its member units.

The BFI added that the decision to postpone the AGM, during which election of the office bearers were to be held, was necessitated following the March 21 order by Returning Officer (Justice Retd) RK Gauba.

"The I.d. Returning Officer has observed that in light of the court orders and the resulting mandated additions to the electoral college list, it is practical-



ly impossible to continue and complete the election process within the originally planned timelines as per the Model Election Code," the notification stated.

The electoral college was finalised March 13 while the window of nominations was from March 14 to 16.

The elections, which have already faced multiple delays and controversies, were originally supposed to take place before February 2.

The BFI flung into action only after the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) appointed an ad-hoc committee, a move the national federation challenged in the Delhi High Court, which subsequently put a stay on the ad-hoc panel.

De Kock guides KKR to victory over RR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, March 26: Quinton de Kock struck a magnificent 97 not out on a tacky Barsapara wicket, anchoring Kolkata Knight Riders' chase to perfection as they secured a dominant eight-wicket win against Rajasthan Royals in their IPL clash Wednesday.

Opting to bowl, KKR's disciplined bowling attack, led by their spin duo Varun Chakravarthy (2/17) and Moeen Ali (2/23), restricted Rajasthan Royals to a below-par 151/9.

In response, De Kock remained 97 not out from 61 balls, his knock laced with eight fours and six sixes, as KKR comfortably chased down the target in 17.3 overs.

Despite the challenging nature of the surface, De Kock displayed controlled aggression, timing the ball beautifully while ensuring KKR's chase remained on track. The chase was never in trouble, with the required run rate hovering around a run-a-ball.



KKR lost Moeen Ali (5) and skipper Ajinkya Rahane (18) early, but De Kock held one end firm, finding an able partner in young Ankrish Raghuvanshi (22 (17 balls)).

The duo stitched together an unbroken 83-run partnership that came off just 44 balls, sealing the first win of the season for the defending champions.

The Proteas keeper-batter

was at his fluent best, preferring groundstrokes over aerial risks, yet still finding boundaries with ease. He took calculated risks, fully aware of the modest target. He took the attack to Jofra Archer, smashing him for a four and a six in the same over. He brought up his half-century in just 35 balls, swiping Wanindu Hasaranga for a towering six over wide long-on — his third of the innings.

Naveen, Musa end fairytale run

The racer duo wins Kenyan NRC RC3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nairobi, March 26: Hyderabad's Naveen Pulligilla and co-driver Musa Sherif of Kasargod have become the first all-Indian team to participate in the World Rally Championship (WRC) and win the RC3 Kenyan National Rally Championship here.

The duo competed in the iconic Safari Rally Kenya 2025, which is a part of WRC.

Naveen and Musa, driving a Ford Fiesta Rally3 machine for the Africa Eco Motorsport team, were leading the WRC3 class with just two stages to go and were on the verge of a debut. But they encountered mechanical issues with the lower arm and were forced to pull out.

However, by that stage,



they had already clinched the Kenyan Rally Championship title which concluded after 19 stages.

"The terrain isn't just challenging, it's a shock for any first-timer, with boulder-strewn routes and unpre-

dictable conditions. Despite that, we managed to maintain pace and stay within three minutes of the top WRC cars," said Naveen, who is planning to take part in two more WRC rounds in Saudi Arabia and Sardinia.

Musa said, "The terrain was brutal, but we pushed through to make history as the first all-Indian team in WRC."

Naveen, a regular in INRC for the last couple of years, took part in the Asia Pacific Rally Championship in New Zealand in 2024 and is known for his precise and aggressive driving style.

Musa has over 33 years of rallying experience. As India's most decorated co-driver, he has participated in more than 330 rallies, including 91 international events, and has secured 10 national titles. He is the reigning 2024 Indian National Rally Champion co-driver.

The Safari Rally Kenya is known for its demanding terrain, landscape and unpredictable weather.

The first Indian duo completed 19 of the 21 challenging stages, with 383.10 km of competitive sections in a total rally distance of 1,381.92km.