



Rashmika's thoughts

Rashmika Mandanna, basking in *Chhaava's* success, reflects on making choices and navigating competition in the industry

LEISURE | P2



Iran rejects talks

Iranian Prez Masoud Pezeshkian rules out direct negotiations with Trump administration over the country's nuclear programme

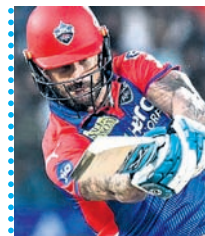
INTERNATIONAL | P10



FPIs infuse ₹31k-cr

Foreign portfolio investors have infused nearly ₹31,000cr in Indian equity markets in the last six trading sessions of the month

BUSINESS | P11



DC defeat SRH

Faf Du Plessis' excellent fifty, and Mitchell Starc's five-wicket haul boost Delhi Capitals to 7-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad

SPORTS | P12

1 killed, 3 injured as 11 coaches of Bengaluru-Kamakhya AC SF Express derail

Why always Odisha? Antyodaya Gruha Jojana launched



PIC: RAJESHORE MOHANTY

Cuttack, March 30: One person was killed and three others were injured as an express train derailed in Cuttack district Sunday, officials said. Eleven coaches of the SMVT Bengaluru-Kamakhya AC Superfast Express derailed at Nirgundi near Manguli at 11.54am, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of the East Coast Railway Ashok Kumar Mishra said. The deceased was identified as 22-year-old Suvankar Roy of Alipurwad in West Bengal, he said, adding that the youth jumped from the train after derailed and died. Cuttack District Collector Datatraya Bhausahab Shinde, who oversaw the rescue operation, had earlier said that one person died and seven others were injured in the accident, but the Railways claimed the number of injured persons was three. A senior official said the four other persons shifted to hospital did not get injuries due to derailed. Rather, these people were patients returning home after treatment in Bengaluru. The Cuttack Collector said some passengers became ill as they suddenly came out of the air-conditioned bogies and were exposed to gruelling heat in the area. "We haven't received a drop of drinking water yet. Why do train accidents always happen in Odisha? Every year, two major mishaps take place in the state," said an outraged passenger hailing from West Bengal, calling out the authorities' late response and apathy. Hundreds of passengers, stranded in the hot mid-day sun, faced a harrowing time as they searched for shade and water. However, the Collector said passengers were supplied with sufficient drinking water, adding that all the injured persons were admitted to the state-run SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCB MCH) in Cuttack. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed concern over the accident, and said, "Authorities are on-site, ensuring assistance and restoring normalcy at the earliest. Helpline activated for support." A special train has started its journey to Kamakhya with the stranded passengers from the accident site. Meanwhile, the Railways has announced ex-gratia for the deceased passenger and injured persons. "Ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh has been announced for the next of kin of the deceased. Similarly, ₹2.5 lakh for grievous and ₹50,000 for simple injuries," an official statement said.

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Bhawanipatna, March 30: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday launched Antyodaya Gruha Jojana (AGJ), a flagship housing scheme of the state government, at Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district. Under the scheme, all eligible households left out from the ongoing housing schemes, victims of natural/man-made calamities, households displaced due to development projects, Person with Disabilities (PwD) who is the main earning member of the family and FRA (Forest Rights Act) beneficiaries will be sanctioned pucca houses. Majhi distributed work orders to 10 beneficiaries on the stage while a total of 60,000 work orders were issued across the state on the launching day of the scheme. The CM also launched developmental projects worth ₹617.51 crore for Kalahandi district. Projects worth ₹223.66 crore were inaugurated and the foundation stone of projects worth ₹393.85 crore were laid. "Since the 1970s till today, poor people have been struggling to get a house. Now, everyone will have their pucca house," Majhi said while addressing the event. The government will provide houses to the poorest and most helpless people under the new scheme, he said. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced in 2018 to provide pucca houses to every needy person and launched the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) for rural and urban areas, which is being implemented. "To further accelerate this mission, we have started the Antyodaya Gruha Jojana in Odisha. Through this, a pucca house for everyone can be ensured," Majhi said. He further said that the poor and most helpless people in the society will benefit from the scheme. The families of persons with disabilities, widows, those who are suffering from serious diseases like cancer, families of martyrs, homeless persons, and those who lost their homes in natural disasters and elephant attacks will be given priority under the scheme. Forest Rights Act (FRA) beneficiaries along with national and international level sportspersons can also avail benefit from this scheme, he said. In order to provide houses to more people, the definition of 'family' and 'pucca ghar' has also been simplified for the scheme. The definition of a family has also been simplified, Majhi stated. **Contd... P4**

PNN & AGENCIES

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Accept our best wishes for a Happy Eid or else...

PG STUDENT FOUND DEAD AT UU HOSTEL

Bhubaneswar: The body of a post graduate student was found lying in a pool of blood inside the hostel complex of the Utkal University (UU) in Bhubaneswar Sunday morning, police said. Tapas Ranjan Nayak, a second-year student in the Philosophy department, is suspected to have fallen from the roof of the hostel, they said. The incident happened at the Madhusudan Chhatrabas of the varsity. After getting information about the incident, officers of the Sahid Nagar police station went to the spot and sent the body to the Capital Hospital for post-mortem examination, police said. An investigation is underway to ascertain the reason behind his death, they said. Whether he slipped from the roof or some foul play is involved will be known after the investigation, a police officer said.

BJP WORKER SHOT DEAD BY MISCREANTS

Kabisuryanagar: Miscreants shot dead a BJP worker on the main road of Pathrapalli village under this police limits in Ganjam district Sunday morning over unknown reasons. The victim was identified as Lakshmi Narayan Paikaray alias Kuna, a contractor by profession from Athagarhapatna village. He was an active BJP worker and a close confidante of Kabisuryanagar MLA Pratap Chandra Nayak. Nayak alleged the involvement of opposition BJD workers in his murder while the Additional SP said that the reason behind the murder is unclear and yet to be ascertained. This is the second murder in the Kabisuryanagar Assembly constituency during last three days. Paikaray had several cases registered in this name at various police stations in and outside the district and returned two years back after being jailed in a case. **P5**

Ghibli art frenzy spurs ChatGPT outage

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 30: ChatGPT, the popular AI chatbot developed by OpenAI, was down for several users Sunday with its servers overwhelmed by a surge in demand for its new Studio Ghibli-style image generation feature.

However, the developer soon updated saying all impacted services have been "fully recovered".

Reports of the outage began surfacing Saturday evening, leaving several users unable to access the service for a considerable period, but escalated Sunday around 4pm, with users flocking to social media to express their frustration. "We are sorry, an error occurred. Please retry after a few minutes." "It seems this application has become very popular, and its available rate limit has been reached. Please retry after a few minutes," users saw this popup when trying to access the platform. OpenAI acknowledged the server crash, and later updated that services have been restored. It showed that the ChatGPT web was the most affected.

"We have identified that users are experiencing elevated errors for the impacted services. We are working on implementing a mitigation," OpenAI acknowledged.

Downdetector, a website that monitors online service disruptions, showed a massive spike in reported problems with OpenAI, starting around 4.19pm Sunday, with 219 reports. "All impacted services have now fully recovered. The detailed Root Cause Analysis (RCA) will be published in the next 5 business days," OpenAI said in an update.



can yall [sic] please chill on generating images this is insane our team needs sleep

SAM ALTMAN | CEO, OPEN AI

was significantly influenced by the release of a new feature that allowed users to generate images in the style of Studio Ghibli, a renowned Japanese animation studio. This feature quickly gained immense popularity, prompting a surge in user activity as people flocked to experiment with the tool.

"can yall [sic] please chill on generating images this is insane our team needs sleep," OpenAI CEO Sam Altman wrote on X.

The outage affected users globally, preventing them from accessing ChatGPT for various tasks, ranging from content creation to coding assistance.

What is Studio Ghibli?

Studio Ghibli is a world-renowned Japanese animation studio, celebrated for its breathtaking hand-drawn animation and deeply emotional storytelling. Founded in 1985 by legendary filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, the studio has become a cornerstone of the global animation industry. Ghibli's films, including *Spirited Away*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Princess Mononoke*, and *Howl's Moving Castle*, are known for their rich narratives, dreamlike landscapes, and profound themes of nature, resilience, and human connection. The studio's dedication to traditional animation techniques, with meticulous frame-by-frame artistry, has set a gold standard for the industry.



Hayao Miyazaki

DSPL-439

सत्यमेव जयते

MESSAGE OF HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF ODISHA ON THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASION OF EID-UL-FITR-2025

On the auspicious occasion of Eid-Ul-Fitr, I convey my greetings and good wishes to all brothers and sisters of Muslim community of our State. On this festival of joy, friendship and peace, I call upon all to participate in this festival and work collectively towards the overall development of Muslim brothers and sisters.

(Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati)

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leisure

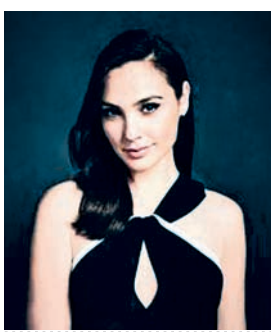


MIRREN CALLS OUT JAMES BOND FRANCHISE FOR PROFOUND SEXISM

Veteran Hollywood star Helen Mirren, 79, expressed her dislike for *James Bond* films, calling the concept deeply rooted in sexism. The Oscar-winning actress, set to star in *MobLand* alongside Pierce Brosnan, revealed she's never been a fan of the 007 franchise based on Ian Fleming's character.

GAL GADOT'S PERFORMANCE IN SNOW WHITE RECEIVES FLAK

Gal Gadot faces criticism for her portrayal of the Evil Queen in Disney's live-action *Snow White*. Viewers compare her performance to exaggerated acting in *Scooby-Doo*, expressing disappointment and even calling for a boycott. The film also faces backlash for deviating from the original story.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
 You will exhibit your worth in ample measure today. You will probably chalk out great plans and ideas at work, and this will be very beneficial. But despite this, Ganesh says, if you don't get the deserved recognition, don't lose heart.

TAURUS
 Today Ganesh sees you overdoing your aggression, domination bit and urges you to keep your assertiveness in check. This day is not a favourable one for new ventures and undertakings. Don't therefore attempt anything new. Talk pleasantly. Harshness, roughness in your tone is only going to antagonize and alienate valuable friends.

GEMINI
 A crucial social event at home is on the anvil, and it will demand most of your attention. Intense business negotiations, which were going on for a long time, will come to a logical conclusion. The results are likely to be stacked in your favour. This, coupled with after-office parties, will ease out the stress. You are likely to remain buoyant and energetic.

CANCER
 Today, you are likely to achieve something that you have badly wanted for a long time. It is very likely that you will get very emotional in the moment of victory today, predicts Ganesh. Your arrogance and overconfidence can throw you off track. You had better keep your emotional balance once you are through the victory lap.

LEO
 You will be very emotional and sentimental today. Your ego prevents you from expressing your true feelings at times. You need to keep this in mind when attempting to communicate with your beloved. It is a good day for romance, and for those seeking love, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
 Ganesh predicts that you will be rewarded today for all the good work done earlier. You will prefer to manage things in your own way, rather than taking orders from others. However, Ganesh advises you not to throw your weight around, but to stay calm and composed.

LIBRA
 Nothing comes for free — keep this in mind as you may have to pay your dues for the success you desire today, especially if it is a new project that you have undertaken. Be prepared to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in your endeavours. Spare money can be used to purchase new assets that may pay dividends in the future.

SCORPIO
 Your energy levels are high as you gear up for new events. However, there are chances that these events may not meet your expectations. But, don't lose hope and get disappointed. Keep your spirits high. Implement the first lesson learnt in school: try & try till you succeed!

SAGITTARIUS
 Expect yourself to be hit with religious fervour. You may find yourself in the spotlight for an event or inauguration. Ganesh indicates travelling, so pack your bags for a long-distance business trip.

CAPRICORN
 Success never comes easy, but in your case, it will make an exception, says Ganesh. You will meet with success in social as well as professional life, and this will also make heavy your treasure box. At work, prepare to get loaded with new assignments and simultaneously deal with existing work pressure.

AQUARIUS
 Get ready for a gala evening as you will party at the smallest excuse! You may toast a friend's success, or may be ecstatic about finding your lost pet. Otherwise it's the usual, says Ganesh. You plan a bit and march ahead successfully in your business or profession.

PISCES
 The apple of your eye is what you will have your sights set on today. It is likely that you will find yourself attending a Parent-Teacher meet, says Ganesh. However, fortunately, it is likely only to receive news about how proud your children are making you. Buy them something to make them happy, or take them out on a picnic.

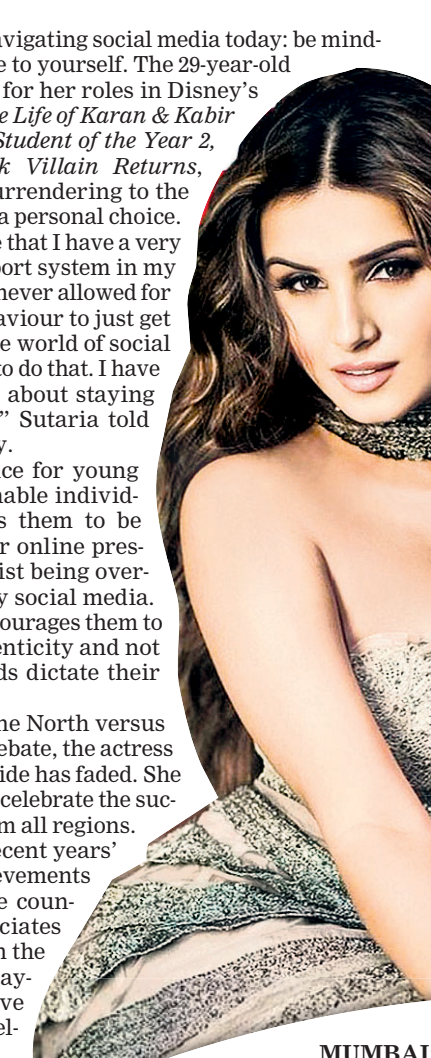
Stay true to yourself: Tara

MUMBAI: Tara Sutaria, who began her acting journey as a teenager, has an insightful message for young people navigating social media today: be mindful and stay true to yourself. The 29-year-old actress, known for her roles in Disney's sitcom *The Suite Life of Karan & Kabir* and films like *Student of the Year 2*, *Tadap*, and *Ek Villain Returns*, believes that surrendering to the digital world is a personal choice.

"I'm fortunate that I have a very grounding support system in my family that has never allowed for that sort of behaviour to just get consumed in the world of social media. It's easy to do that. I have been conscious about staying true to myself," Sutaria told the news agency.

Sharing advice for young and impressionable individuals, she urges them to be mindful of their online presence and to resist being overly influenced by social media. Instead, she encourages them to maintain authenticity and not let digital trends dictate their identity.

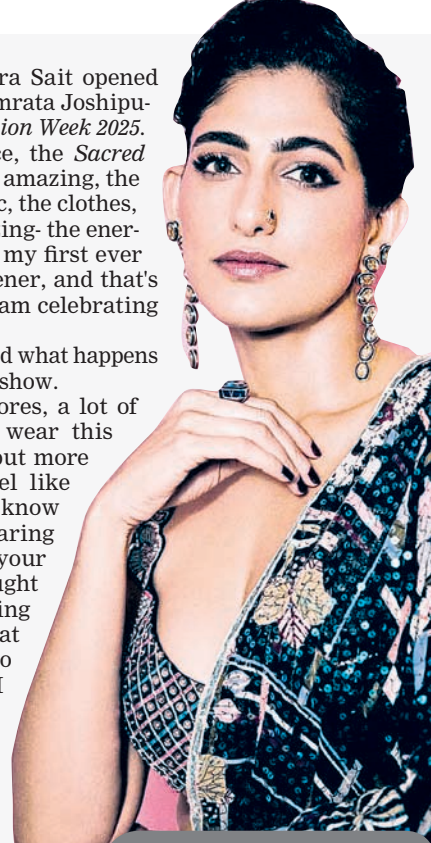
Addressing the North versus South cinema debate, the actress believes the divide has faded. She feels it's time to celebrate the success of films from all regions. Highlighting recent years' cinematic achievements from across the country, she appreciates the unity within the film industry, saying it's a positive change worth celebrating.



MUMBAI: Actress Kubbra Sait opened the show for designer Namrata Joshipura during the *Lakmé Fashion Week 2025*. Sharing her experience, the *Sacred Games* actress said, "It is amazing, the light, the sound, the music, the clothes, everything was just amazing—the energy was superb. This was my first ever ramp walk as a show opener, and that's really big— it's massive, I am celebrating right now."

Kubbra further revealed what happens to a collection after the show. "It goes to great stores, a lot of great people get to wear this great collection - but more importantly I feel like it's important to know what we are wearing - you putting your mind and thought into picking garments that you choose to wear and I am very happy to say that every single garment made in this collection by Namrata Joshipura, which is an athleisure collection has been made by recycling pet bottles— so, it's sustainable, it's amazing, it's good on your skin, it's good on your heart, it's good on your consciousness," she disclosed.

Talking about her work, Kubbra will be a part of the highly awaited sequel of the popular web series, *The Trial Season 2*. She will be seen sharing the screen with Kajol in the drama.



KUBBRA SPILLS THE BEANS

Roy wrote, "Best". Additionally, actor Rahul Dev commented, "Deadliiii", accompanied by a red heart emoji. *Baaghi 2* talks about an Indian Army Officer named Ronnie who goes in search of his ex-girlfriend's child who has been mysteriously kidnapped. A remake of the 2016 Telugu film *Kshanam*, the project starred Disha Patani, Manoj Bajpayee, Darshan Kumar, Prateik Babbar, Randeep Hooda, Deepak Dobriyal and Arravya Sharma in key roles.

At the moment, Tiger is working on the latest installment in the franchise, *Baaghi 4*. Made under the direction of A. Harsha, the sequel is being presented by Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment.

MUMBAI: Tiger Shroff captivated the audience as Ronnie in the second installment of the popular *Baaghi* franchise.

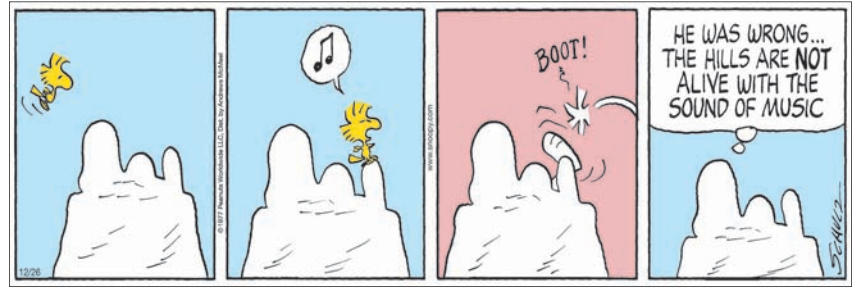
As *Baaghi 2* completed seven years of release, Tiger took to his Instagram handle and dropped some high-octane action sequences from the Ahmed Khan's directorial.

Tiger's 'life-changing' movie

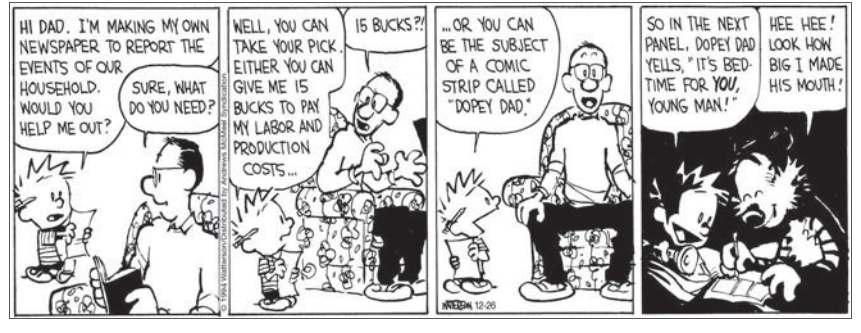


Terming the film as life-changing, Tiger penned a heartfelt note on his IG that read, "A film that changed my team's, family's and my life. Thank you to the audience for making every drop of blood count. #7years #baaghi2." Reacting to the post, actress Mouni

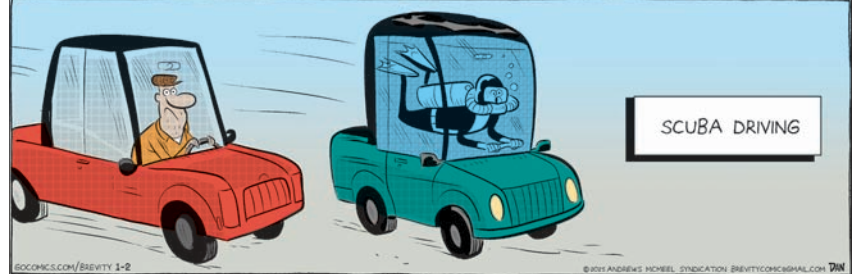
PEANUTS



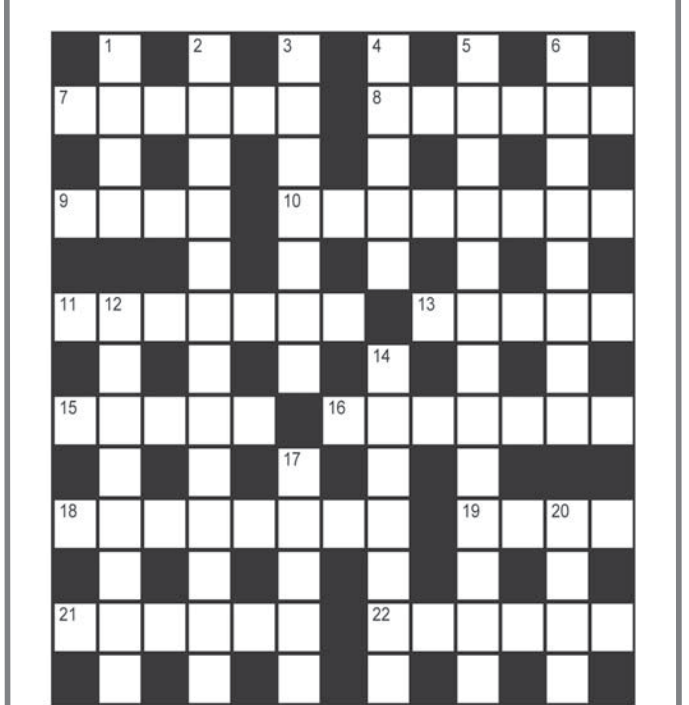
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 No-show
 - 8 Large Old World tropical snake
 - 9 Opaque gem
 - 10 Naive
 - 11 Hide
 - 13 Track event
 - 15 Express a thought
 - 16 Immunising agent
 - 18 Launch
 - 19 Man Friday
 - 21 Burger toppers
 - 22 Lemnos locale
 - Down**
 - 1 Snare
 - 2 Seeing what's not there
 - 3 Honorable
 - 4 Gumption
 - 5 Money pit? (5,8)
 - 6 Garden sight, at times
 - 12 Antagonist
 - 14 Troglodyte (4,3)
 - 17 Model material
 - 20 Bargain

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | A | F | E | L | I | K | E | A | B | L | E |
| T | A | E | N | N | E | A | | | | | |
| A | L | U | M | N | U | S | V | E | N | U | S |
| N | N | R | O | O | E | E | | | | | |
| D | R | A | M | A | L | A | I | O | F | F | |
| O | G | E | I | S | | | | | | | |
| F | A | B | L | E | D | S | E | T | T | E | R |
| F | R | P | X | I | | | | | | | |
| M | E | T | E | O | R | C | R | E | E | L | |
| T | W | J | I | U | L | A | | | | | |
| A | R | E | T | M | I | S | S | I | O | N | |
| L | R | C | A | E | T | K | | | | | |
| C | R | Y | S | T | A | L | S | B | E | T | A |

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Qadam-E-Rasool at Dargha Bazaar in Cuttack, Sunday, decked up with colourful lights on the eve of Eid al-Fitr



downtown

KAMAKHYA EXP DERAILS



CRS TO CONDUCT THOROUGH PROBE

Cuttack, March 30: Hours after 11 coaches of the SMVT Bengaluru-Kamakhya AC Express derailed at Nirgundi station near Manguli Sunday, the Railways said that Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), South Eastern Circle, Kolkata under the Ministry of Civil Aviation Brijesh Mishra will inspect the derailment site near Cuttack.

It said any member of the public having knowledge relating to the derailment and matter connected therewith and desiring to give evidence may do so at the office of the DRM Khurda Road Division, Jatni (Khurda Road) April 1 and 2.

Public may write to the Commissioner of Railway Safety, South Eastern Circle, 14, Strand Road, 12th Floor, Koilaghat, Kolkata-700001 on the matter.

The train was heading to Kamakhya station in Assam's Guwahati from Bangalore and the accident happened on the down line of the How-

rah-Chennai route, affecting train services, officials said.

While mail express trains are running in the Howrah-Vishakhapatnam up line, as many as 21 down line trains were diverted via Barang-Naraj-Kapilas Road instead of the usual Barang-Cuttack-Nirgundi route. Efforts are underway to restore normalcy to the affected routes as soon as possible.

The Railways has also issued helplines - 8455885999 and 8991124238.

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said two persons from his state were injured in the accident and are undergoing treatment. Both are out of danger, he said in a post on X.

Sarma said his office was in touch with the Odisha government and the railways.

"We will reach out to each and every person who is affected," he said.

One of the woman passengers of a derailed coach said: "I was sleeping on the upper berth and fell down due to derailment... All the belongings kept on the upper berths also fell down."



PHOTOS: RAJKISHORE MOHANTY

Min: State logs 2.17L excise arrests in 5 yrs; 2.4% in jail

Cough syrup abuse among youth a growing threat, Excise Minister Prithviraj Harichandan tells Assembly

Bhubaneswar, March 30: Even though the state recorded a staggering 2.17 lakh arrests under excise-related offences between 2019 and 2024, only 2.4 per cent—around 5,210 individuals—have been sent behind the bars so far, Excise Minister Prithviraj

Harichandan informed the Assembly recently. The minister was replying to a query by BJP MLA Tankadhar Tripathy from Jharsuguda.

Harichandan revealed that Khurda district tops the list with 11,057 arrests, accounting for 5 per cent of the total arrests in the state. However, this number is likely to increase, as the data only covers the period from 2021 to the present. Sundargarh and Cuttack districts followed with 10,948 and 10,751 cases, respectively, while Balasore recorded 10,606 ar-

rests. He also noted that Khurda has the highest number of 2,569 people currently in jail.

Regarding gender-specific arrests, Harichandan revealed that women accounted for nearly 23 per cent of the total arrests over the past five years, amounting to 49,598 women. Among the districts with the fewest female arrests were Nuapada and Jagatsinghpur.

The minister also shed light on Odisha's ongoing battle with drugs, noting a sharp increase in drug-related

cases over the years. He said that 32.82 kg of heroin was seized in 2022-23, a figure that rose to 34.42 kg in 2023-24. By February 2025, excise officials had already seized 26.73 kg of heroin.

In addition to this, Harichandan highlighted a concerning rise in cough syrup abuse among the state's youth. He pointed out that in 2021-22, excise officials seized 610 bottles of cough syrup. This number surged to 1,042 bottles in 2022-23 and 1,603 bottles in 2023-24, signaling a growing addiction issue among young people in Odisha.

Shaadi, Utsav ya Tyohar... Lijjat Papad Ho Harbar...

Karram Kurram... Kurram Karram... Lijjat PAPAD

Website : www.lijjat.com Email : enquiry@lijjat.com

Lone dietician at SCB leaves patients in lurch



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, March 30: While the state government has implemented a slew of measures to strengthen the public healthcare system, challenges persist at SCB Medical College and Hospital, where a single dietician has been managing the nutritional needs of over 2,000 inpatients for nearly three decades.

Reports indicate growing concern among patients and their attendants about the lack of concern of SCB authorities, despite recommendations from the Diet Management Committee in this regard.

For the past 29 years, a lone dietician, along with a call operator (CO), has been responsible for providing dietary services at the hospital, which is work-

ing towards becoming a world-class healthcare facility. SCB currently has 2,100 beds, and each inpatient is supposed to receive timely advice on their food intake, including a comprehensive weekly list of recommended meals. However, the shortage of dieticians has significantly impacted the ability to provide balanced dietary advice.

The Union Health Ministry mandates that a hospital with more than 750 beds must have a team of at least nine dieticians, including a chief dietician, senior dietician, dietician, six assistant dieticians, and additional staff like supervisors and store keepers. However, SCB is in clear violation of this directive, with only one dietician tasked with serving 2,100 patients.

A letter addressing the issue was sent to the DMET in 2014, during the tenure of Shyama Kungo as the superintendent of SCB. Despite this, no significant action has been taken to remedy the situation.

Attempts to reach SCB administrative officer Subash Chandra Ray for comment were unsuccessful.

BJD, CONGRESS FIGHT OVER STATE FOUNDATION DAY

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 30: An unusual 'Odia Asmita' fight has broken out between the two Opposition parties in the state over the celebration of the state's foundation day Sunday. The fight is primarily over nomenclature of the event.

While the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) announced that it would celebrate 89th foundation day of the state - April 1 - as 'Odisha Dibasa', the Congress stuck to its position of observing the day as 'Utkal Divas'. However, the ruling BJP was conspicuous by its silence.

The BJD's statement came during a press conference addressed by party leaders Debi Prasad Mishra and Atanu Sabayasachi Nayak here.

"Odisha is formed April 1, 1936. Odisha's rich history of its trade and culture was extended to east African continent. Besides, many small territories united and great leaders fought to form Odisha. To commemorate this, we will celebrate 'Odisha Dibasa'. We have been celebrating April 1 as 'Odisha Dibasa' since Naveen Patnaik

Culture Min: State to celebrate 'Odia Paksha'

BHUBANESWAR: The Mohan Charan Majhi government Sunday announced several programmes to celebrate 'Utkal Divas' in a grand manner. Utkal Divas is celebrated April 1 every year to commemorate the formation of the state of Odisha. Addressing a presser here, Odia Language, Literature and Culture Minister Suryavansi Suraj said: "This year, for the first time, 'Odia Paksha' will be celebrated with great pomp from Odisha Day April 1 to the Odia New Year on April 14." To celebrate Utkal Divas, various programmes will be organised by different government departments from the block level to the state level, Suraj said, adding that 'Odia Paksha' will be celebrated with the aim of making Odia culture, customs, and our traditions known to the world. The minister said different days from April 1 to April 14 will be celebrated to highlight Odisha's language, culture, tradition, festivals, dress and other aspects representing Odia 'Asmita' (pride). PTI

was our Chief Minister. Many government and private sectors also celebrate the day as 'Odisha Dibasa'. With the instructions from our party president, BJD will honour and remember the great leaders who dedicated their lives to formation of 'Odisha Pradesh'. Our party will also celebrate this day at Sankha Bhawan," said Mishra.

The state Congress, however, stressed on celebrating the day as 'Utkal Divas', not 'Odisha Dibasa'.

State Congress spokesperson Prashant Satpathy said, "A separate Utkal Pradesh was formed April 1, 1936. The national anthem also mentions 'Dravida-Utkala-Banga',

not 'Odisha.' Even the title 'Utkalmani' was given to Gopabandhu Das. Similarly, the title 'Utkal Gourav' was given to Madhusudan Das. The Utkal Sammilani fought hard to unite all Odia-speaking regions of India into a single province."

Stating that Bihar and Orissa were split into separate provinces April 1, 1936, Satpathy said, the new province of Orissa came into existence on a linguistic basis during the British rule, with Sir John Austen Hubback as the first governor. "Since then, we have been celebrating this day as 'Utkal Divas'. The Congress wants this day to be celebrated as 'Utkal Divas', not Odisha Dibasa," he concluded.

Delhi HC bins Centre's order cancelling Swain's OCI card

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 30: The Delhi High Court has set aside the order of the Union government cancelling the overseas citizenship of India (OCI) card of India-born Swedish academician Ashok Swain.

Justice Sachin Datta held, "The order dated July 30, 2023 is set aside. The authorities are at liberty to issue a fresh show cause notice."

The court's verdict came on a plea by Swain challenging the July 30, 2023 order.

Swain, who said a non-speaking order was passed, argued his 78-year-old mother who lived in India was unwell and he was the only son and hadn't been able to visit India in the past three years.

"Although it is the alleged case of the respondent (Centre) that the petitioner (Swain) was blacklisted for anti-India activities for allegedly spreading detrimental propaganda through his writings and speeches in various public fora, the impugned order is bereft of any particular incidence/tweet/writing or reason which remotely demonstrates the

contention of the respondent number 3 (Embassy of India to Sweden and Latvia)," the plea said. The July 30, 2023 order, the plea said, did not pass the muster of a well-reasoned order for it failed to disclose material justifying the cancellation of the petitioner's OCI card.

Swain said being an academician, he analysed and criticised certain policies of the present government and couldn't be made to suffer for his views on the policies of the government.

"Criticism of certain policies of the government would not amount to being an inflammatory speech or an anti-India activity," the petition said.

Swain, Professor and head of department at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University in Sweden, had earlier moved the High Court challenging the cancellation of his OCI card through the February 8, 2022 order of the Central government.

The court, July 10, 2023, set aside the Centre's order. It had directed the Centre to pass a detailed order within three weeks giving reasons for exercising its powers under the Citizenship Act, 1955.

OUHS FOUNDATION DAY

Guv calls for accessible & equitable healthcare



Governor Kambhampati calls for collective action to bridge healthcare gaps, ensuring medical services reach even the most remote communities in Odisha

responsive healthcare system becomes increasingly crucial. I speak not only as your Governor but also as someone who has personally witnessed the selfless service and dedication of healthcare professionals," Kambhampati remarked.

As the chief guest, he called on healthcare professionals, policymakers, and academicians to work together to bridge the gaps in healthcare accessibility.

He stressed that quality healthcare should not be a privilege confined to urban hospitals but a fundamental right for every citizen, including those in rural and underserved areas.

"Together, we aspire to build a Viksit Odisha—an advanced state distinguished by excellence in healthcare—and a Viksit Bharat, a nation that is healthy, inclusive, and progressive. This vision is both an opportunity and a challenge, calling on every student, faculty member, and healthcare professional to contribute their best toward transforming our society," he added.

Governor Kambhampati praised OUHS for emerging as a leading institution in health sciences, describing it as "a centre of academic distinction and

Governor praised OUHS for its contributions to medical education and research, calling it a beacon of hope for the healthcare sector

He emphasised the role of students in shaping the future of medicine, calling on them to uphold knowledge, compassion, and ethical responsibility in their careers

a beacon of hope for the healthcare sector." He highlighted the university's efforts in integrating interdisciplinary learning, promoting medical research, and enhancing healthcare services.

Addressing students, he stressed their responsibility in shaping the future of healthcare. "Students are the true representatives of this university. They must be prepared to navigate the challenges of their academic and professional journeys with knowledge, compassion, and ethical responsibility," he said.

The event featured a keynote address by Padma Shri award-winning Professor Ashok Mohapatra. Other dignitaries included the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda Sciences director general Professor Rabinarayan Acharya, and Madhusudan Law University vice-chancellor Professor Kamal Jeet Singh. OUHS vice-chancellor Manas Ranjan Sahoo delivered the welcome address.

Governor Kambhampati also inaugurated the university's journal, magazine, e-journal, and e-magazine.

BMC sets up heat-relief sheds at junctions

BMC's initiative aims to provide relief to commuters, with plans for permanent shelters if the pilot project proves successful



provide relief from the scorching sun.

These sheds, made of polythene canopies supported by bamboo poles, have already been set up at key locations such as Patia Square, Xavier Square, KIIT Square, and several other intersections. The

initiative aims to shield motorists and pedestrians from direct heat while they wait for traffic signals.

Commuters have welcomed the move, calling it a much-needed relief during the peak summer season. "It's a great step by BMC. These sheds

help us avoid direct exposure to the sun," said a biker. Another commuter, Biswaranjan Panda, urged the civic body to expand the initiative across all major squares.

BMC Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil said the corporation is working to install sheds at all major junctions as soon as possible. Additionally, a permanent fabricated shelter is planned for AG Square. "We will install this on a pilot basis and if successful, we will extend it to other locations," he added.

With summer intensifying, the initiative is expected to provide much-needed comfort to daily commuters navigating the city's busy roads.

BOUDH HOTTEST AT 41.8°C

Bhubaneswar and Cuttack record slightly lower temperatures at 37.1°C and 37.2°C, respectively



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 30: Heatwave conditions continued to grip Odisha Sunday, with eight towns recording temperatures above 40°C. Boudh was the hottest at 41.8°C, followed by Jharsuguda at 41.6°C and Sambalpur at 41.2°C, according to the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre.

Hirakud, Bolangir, and Titlagarh also registered a maximum temperature of 41°C each, while Sundargarh recorded 40.3°C and Bhawanipatna 40.8°C. Meanwhile, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack reported slightly lower temperatures at 37.1°C and 37.2°C, respectively.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted no major change in day and night temperatures across Odisha over the next five days. However, relief is expected from April 2, when light rain or thundershowers are likely in several districts, continuing for three to four days.

IMD has issued a Yellow Warning for thunderstorms with lightning, gusty winds (50-60 kmph), and possible hailstorms in Keonjhar, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Nawa-

rangapur, Gajapati, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Boudh, Angul, Deogarh, Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, and Dhenkanal on Monday.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are also expected at one or two places in these districts, while the remaining parts of Odisha are likely to experience dry weather. Residents have been advised to take precautions against heatwave conditions and possible thunderstorms in the coming days.

FROM PAGE 1...

Antyodaya Gruha Jojana launched

The state government has set a target to build more than 5 lakh houses in the next 3 years under the housing scheme. This financial year, a budget of ₹2,600 crore has been allocated for the scheme, while ₹7,550 crore will be spent in the next three years.

Under the new scheme, each beneficiary will be given ₹1.20 lakh and various auxiliary facilities will be provided to the beneficiaries in convergence with other schemes.

Giving information about the progress made in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), the Chief Minister said that more than 23 lakh houses have been constructed in the state under the Central scheme while another 4 lakh houses are under construction.

Besides, a survey has started from January 24 this year and more than 26 lakh people have been listed for providing houses under the scheme so far, he said.

Another arrest in Cong protest clash

Bhubaneswar: One more person was arrested in connection with the attack on police personnel during the Congress Vidhan Sabha gherao programme, an officer said Sunday. The arrested person was identified as Chandan Sahu, 24, a resident of Haripur under Jatni police station but he was staying in Khavelanagar area of Bhubaneswar, police said. Earlier, Mirza Islam Baig, a resident of Hariidhampur in Pahala area, was arrested. Both were charged with rioting, criminal intimidation and several other offences, a senior officer said.

'Save Birds Campaign' amid rising heat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 30: With temperatures soaring, the Bhubaneswar chapter of the nationwide volunteering movement Youth for Seva (YFS) has launched the Save Birds Campaign at Forest Park to provide relief to birds struggling in the summer heat.

Sunday, more than 63 volunteers placed water containers at 43 locations across Forest Park and Ganganagar. The initiative, which will continue for the next two months, aims to offer a reliable water source for birds to help them survive the scorching summer. YSF coordinator Gyana Ranjan Dash highlighted the challenges birds face due to rising temperatures, including dehydration and heat stress. He noted that, in earlier times, people planted trees around their homes, creating natural habitats for birds. However, rapid urbanisation in cities



like Bhubaneswar has led to the loss of greenery and wetlands, making survival difficult for local wildlife.

"The City has gradually lost its greenery, and birds are struggling to find water on hot days. Their survival now depends on human intervention," Dash said.

The campaign not only provides water but also aims to raise public awareness about the plight of birds during summer. According to experts, extreme temperatures can severely affect birds, causing dehydration and changes in their behaviour. Common symptoms include weakness, panting, inactivity, sunken eyes, loss of skin elasticity, and thick mucus deposits near the beak.

Environmentalists stress that placing water bowls on balconies, terraces, and open spaces can significantly help birds during peak summer months.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heatwave conditions and high humidity in several districts of Odisha till March 31.

With temperatures expected to rise further, initiatives like the Save Birds Campaign are crucial in mitigating the effects of extreme weather on urban wildlife.

Odisha Crime Branch busts cyberfraud gang, nabs 7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 30: The Odisha Police Crime Branch busted an inter-state cyber fraud gang and arrested seven of its members for cheating a man of ₹1.4 crore, an officer said Sunday.

Out of the seven arrested accused persons, four are from Karnataka and three others belong to Tamil Nadu, the officer said. The accused and their associates posed as trade analysts, deceiving the complainant under the pretext of investments with promises of high returns in IPOs (initial public offerings), shares, and OTC (over-the-counter) trading, he said.

During the investigation, the cybercrime unit of the Crime Branch found that the accused persons fraudulently obtained a sum of ₹1.40 crore from the complainant between November

ber 13, 2024 and January 1, 2025, he said.

"After thoroughly analysing transaction details and examining digital evidence, we successfully cracked the case. The accused persons have been apprehended from various locations across Karnataka and Tamil Nadu," the officer said.

After producing the accused persons in the local courts in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the Odisha crime branch brought them here on transit remand Sunday. The investigating team has seized mobile phones, SIM cards, WhatsApp chat screenshots, Aadhaar cards, PAN cards, bank passbooks, chequebooks, and debit cards from the accused persons.

The Crime Branch officials have recovered ₹4 lakh and frozen ₹15 lakh in the bank accounts of the accused persons, sources said.

UCCC hails HC verdict

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 30: The Utkal Cine Chamber of Commerce (UCCC) has welcomed the Orissa High Court's recent verdict, which upheld its original 1993 registration and rejected an appeal for re-registration. The court ruled that the attempt to re-register violated statutory provisions, as the original certificate remained valid.

Addressing a press conference here Sunday, UCCC Secretary Jubuli Sundar criticised certain producers for attempting to create confusion by forming a parallel organisation under the same name. He praised the High Court's decision and called for strict action against those trying to disrupt the Odia film industry

WEATHER BBSR CTC Max Temp 37.1° 37.2° Min Temp 26.4° 25.6° Humidity 82% 62% Rainfall Nil Nil FORECAST Mainly Clear Sky

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I Pranaya Subhendu Narayan @ P. Subhendu Narayan, S/o. Binay Luhar @ Binay Kumar Luhar, R/o. Village-Banjari, PO.-Madhupur, PS.-Sohela, Dist.-Bargarh, Odisha declare by this affidavit C.F No.01 dated 29.03.2025 that in Aadhaar card bearing No.xxxx xxxx 2483 my name has been mentioned as Pranaya Subhendu Narayan, S/o. Binay Luhar. Whereas in academic certificates my name has been mentioned as P. Subhendu Narayan, S/o. Binay Kumar Luhar. That both the names is one and same person.

Everyday discrimination tied to anxiety, depression

People who frequently experience everyday discrimination—subtle slights and unfair treatment—are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression. This finding holds true regardless of factors like age, income, education, appearance, language, or location.

A recent study published in JAMA Network Open examined how discrimination affects mental health. Everyday discrimination includes being treated with less respect, waiting longer for service, having ideas dismissed, or hearing offensive remarks. While marginalised groups face it more often, the study found it is a widespread issue affecting diverse populations.

Researchers analysed data from a large health survey, representing a broad adult pop-

ulation. Participants reported discrimination experiences and completed clinical screenings for depression and anxiety.

Results showed that nearly 56 per cent experienced at least occasional discrimination, with 3.6 per cent reporting high levels—meaning frequent experiences at least monthly. Certain racial and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, immigrants, and individuals facing food insecurity reported higher levels.

Compared to those reporting no discrimination, participants experiencing high levels were five times more likely to screen positive for anxiety or depression and nearly nine times more likely for both. The impact varied across racial and ethnic groups, with some communities possibly having developed coping mechanisms



over time. Why it matters

Unfair treatment based on personal traits affects nearly everyone at some point. However, discrimination isn't just unpleasant—it has real health

consequences. Chronic exposure contributes to long-term stress, increasing risks for high blood pressure, heart disease, cognitive decline, and early mortality.

For some, discrimination

Nearly 56% of surveyed adults reported experiencing everyday discrimination, with 3.6% facing it frequently (at least monthly or weekly)

Those experiencing high levels of discrimination had five times higher odds of screening positive for anxiety or depression and nearly nine times higher odds for both

may arise later in life, such as with aging or illness. For others, it is a constant reality, particularly for marginalised communities, people with disabilities, and those facing economic struggles.

Ongoing research Multiracial individuals often navigate multiple identities, leading to social isolation and mental health risks. Lower-in-

come and working-class individuals also face discrimination, even in groups not traditionally considered vulnerable. People of Asian descent have been particularly affected by harmful stereotypes, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

When factors like financial insecurity, immigration status, and racial bias combine, mental and physical health risks intensify.

The next step Recognising how discrimination impacts mental health can lead to better policies addressing mental health disparities. Discrimination isn't just a social issue—it's a public health crisis affecting people across backgrounds. Acknowledging its harm is the first step toward meaningful change.

(THE CONVERSATION)

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Vigilance probe sought into ₹500 cr sugarcane loan scam



Allegations of misuse exceeding ₹500 crore in loans issued under the guise of sugarcane cultivation surface

Nayagarh, March 30: Cooperative leaders have demanded a Vigilance inquiry into an alleged scandal of ₹500 crore involving sugarcane farm loan in the district which surfaced recently. The demand for inquiry, and allegations about the scam were raised by cooperative leader Sanyasi Pradhan during the district-level Cooperative Festival held at the Zilla Parishad Conference Hall Saturday. According to a report from the District Agriculture Department, no sugarcane cultivation has taken place in the area. However, the Cooperative Department has allegedly disbursed loans exceeding ₹500 crore on the pretext of sugarcane farming. Pradhan expressed concern

that subsidies were being misappropriated through fraudulent paperwork by claiming loans for sugarcane cultivation. He said a preliminary investigation into these loans revealed that over ₹20 crore worth of subsidies might have been misappropriated, casting doubt on the role of the Cooperative Department. Sugarcane cultivation in Nayagarh district has been declining since the closure of sugar mills. Apart from areas like Kridashpur and Jemadepurpatna, sugarcane farming has largely ceased. A handful of farmers continue to cultivate sugarcane to keep the tradition and crop alive, particularly to preserve the popularity of local jaggery. Though most sugarcane farmers did not reportedly avail loans for raising the crop, the Cooperative Department claims to have disbursed loans exceeding ₹500 crore to farmers for the 2024-25 fiscal year. Investigations suggest that reports of sugarcane cultivation are being fabricated to siphon off subsidies. Farmer leader Ranjit Dal-

abehera stated that sugarcane farming has effectively disappeared from Nayagarh district. He alleged that funds intended for sugarcane cultivation subsidies are being diverted for other purposes. According to an RTI finding, while the Cooperative Department claims to have issued loans for sugarcane farming, the Agriculture Department maintains that no such cultivation is taking place in the district. "This discrepancy indicates a potential scam requiring thorough investigation," Pradhan said. Sources said the loans were disbursed through nine branches of the Nayagarh Central Cooperative Bank during the 2024-25 fiscal year: Sharanakul, Odagaon, Itamati, Nayagarh, Gania, Mahipur, Daspalla, Khandapada, and Bhapur. Pradhan stated, "There needs to be an investigation to determine which farmers have taken these loans and whether they are genuinely engaged in sugarcane farming. Only a proper inquiry will reveal the truth." The conflicting reports from the Agriculture and Cooperative departments highlight a significant irregularity. The investigation is necessary to establish the truth and hold those responsible accountable, he added. Pradhan wondered how cooperative banks and farmers are going to benefit if such corrupt practices prevail in the absence of adequate checks. "This systemic corruption within the system has to be exposed," he said.

Two youths drown in Koel



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 30: Two youths died by drowning while bathing in Koel river under Bisra police limits near here Sunday. The deceased were identified as Pradip Tarai, 19, of B-block, house no-177 in Sector-17, and Ashirbad Barik, 19, of C-block in Sector-8 in Steel City. However, no reports were filed in connection with the incident at the local police station by evening, when reports last came in. Sources said both of them worked for a tent house and DJ firm in Rourkela. On Sunday, they went to take bath at Karkata ghat of the river along with two friends. While bathing, they slipped and went deep into the water. Locals rescued Ashirbad immediately, but Pradip was rescued in evening after a hectic search. They were rushed to the Ispat General Hospital where doctors pronounced them dead. Police and fire personnel were also pressed into the rescue operation.

No shortcuts in business: Kar

Bikalananda Kar's Rasagola from Salepur is a household favourite confectionary outlet in Odisha. Decades ago, Bikalananda Kar had started this sweets business under a banyan tree, selling rasagolas and bara dalma. He would travel to fairs and festivals, using his skills to attract customers. Inspired by his entrepreneurial spirit, his family has carried the business forward across generations. Today, nearly a century later, his granddaughters Sai Sibani Kar and Saipriya Kar continue his legacy. In an exclusive interview with Orissa POST, she shares insights about the business and its expansion. Excerpts...



Sai Sibani Kar

Can you tell us about your early life and what led you to enter the confectionery industry?
This business was started by my late grandfather in 1924-25 in Salepur, Odisha. He started in a small hut, making Rasagola by hand, along with a few other traditional sweets like Chhena Gaja and Gulab Jamun. Over time, the business was passed down to the second generation—my father and his brothers—who introduced mechanisation and proper packaging to expand our reach. Growing up, my father always involved me in discussions about the business—its challenges, decisions, and future prospects. Those conversations sparked my interest in this venture. Even during my college days, I knew I would eventually join the family business. After completing my B.Com and an MBA in Hospitality Management, I officially stepped in around 7-8 years ago. My education has helped me understand modern business dynamics while staying true to our brand's legacy. My younger sister Saipriya and I have decided to take the family business to new heights.

With the growing market base in this business, what is your unique selling point?
Our philosophy has always been simple: Deliver the best quality food at a nominal price. We never compromise on quality, and we ensure that every customer who walks in gets exactly what they need. Whether it's traditional sweets or new-age fusion desserts, we focus on taste, affordability, and variety under one roof.

Our philosophy has always been simple: Deliver the best quality food at a nominal price. We never compromise on quality, and we ensure that every customer who walks in gets exactly what they need. Whether it's traditional sweets or new-age fusion desserts, we focus on taste, affordability, and variety under one roof.

How do you keep up with the surging competition in this industry?
The food industry is highly competitive, with numerous brands offering sweets, snacks, baked goods, and more. The approach has always been to evolve with time while maintaining the authenticity of our products. We also recognised the health-conscious shift in consumer preferences. That's why we became the first brand in Odisha to launch Stevia Rasagola, a sugar-free version that has been well-received by diabetic and health-conscious consumers. This ability to innovate while staying true to our core product has helped us stay ahead in the market.

What impact has online delivery had on your sales?
Online delivery has been a game changer for us. Earlier, Rasagola was mostly a local delight, but now we can ship it across the country and even internationally. E-commerce platforms have helped us reach customers who otherwise wouldn't have access to our products. It has also pushed us to improve our packaging and shelf-life techniques to ensure freshness upon delivery.

What makes Bikalananda Kar's Rasagola so special?
Our Rasagola is unique because it follows a traditional Odia recipe passed down through generations. The texture, flavour, and method of preparation make it different from any other variant in the market. But beyond the taste, it's also about authenticity. We are the only brand with the official GI tag for Odisha's Rasagola, proving our product's originality and historical significance. Moreover, every sweet we make carries the blessings of Lord Jagannath. For us, Rasagola isn't just a dessert—it's a cultural and spiritual heritage of Odisha. That's what makes it truly special.

How has your journey been so far? Do you have any expansion plans?
The journey has been both challenging and rewarding. Transitioning from a small-scale business to a nationally recognised brand was not easy. At present, our packed Rasagola is exported globally, and we are continuously working on increasing shelf life without compromising on its taste. We have also expanded into bakery, chocolates, ice creams, and namkeen, ensuring we cater to every segment of the market.

With decades of experience, what advice would you give to the newcomers in this business?
Food industry is one of the most challenging and risky sectors because you are directly responsible for something people consume. Maintaining hygiene, quality, and consistency is non-negotiable. Many brands emerge every year, but only those who prioritise quality and customer trust can sustain in the long run. Shortcuts might give quick profits, but they don't create lasting brands. One lesson I've learnt from my father is that there are no shortcuts in business. Hard work, patience, and continuous improvement are the only ways to build a brand that lasts for generations.

Man beating elephant in viral video identified

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 30: The Forest Department claimed to have identified the person who was seen beating an elephant with sticks in a viral video in Keonjhar district, recently. The department launched a hunt after the purported video of the incident went viral. Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Dhanraj HD identified the accused as Sipun Behera of Kantiapada village under the Patana forest range. The Forest department has also released a photo of the accused. Behera is said to have been



identified by some foresters and forest guards from Champua and Patana ranges after they came across the video. However, the miscreant has not yet returned to the village and is currently absconding. "The accused will be arrested under the Wildlife Protection Act," Dhanraj said.

However, the Forest sleuths are yet to identify the exact location where the incident took place which has raised questions about the department's investigative skills. Elephant-related incidents are common in Keonjhar district. Herds of elephants often react aggressively when provoked by people. In the past, there have been instances of locals throwing fireballs at elephants, pelting them with stones, and beating them with sticks to drive them away. Many individuals have also taken selfies, or recorded videos of these acts to share on social media, drawing wide-

spread condemnation from animal welfare advocates. While the Forest department employs technologies and personnel to monitor elephant movements, concerns are being raised about the effectiveness of these measures in preventing such incidents. Notably, some individuals are reportedly profiting by sharing images and videos of animals on social media. Despite the existence of over 10 such accounts, the Forest department has yet to take action, contributing to the rise of similar incidents, said former wildlife warden Subhendu Mallik.

NMO organises blood donation camp at VIMSAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 30: In a noble initiative to celebrate the Hindu New Year, and address the perennial requirement for the 'fluid of life', the National Medicos Organisation (NMO) and the Indian Public Health Association-Odisha organised a blood donation camp at Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla in Sambalpur district, Sunday. Students, doctors, and local volunteers, significantly contributed following which 50 units of blood were collected during the camp. The collected blood will aid accident victims, sickle cell and thalassemia patients, and those undergoing surgeries, said Dr Sanjeeb Ku-

The collected blood will aid accident victims, sickle cell and thalassemia patients

mar Mishra, assistant professor and organisational secretary, NMO-Odisha Paschim. VIMSAR Superintendent Prof Lal Mohan Nayak inaugurated the camp alongside Prof Subrat Pradhan, vice president of IPHA Odisha; Lilarani Swain, Nursing College tutor and other dignitaries like Shankar Panda. Prof Nayak lauded the effort, emphasising the importance of such camps in ensuring a steady supply of blood. Dr Mishra expressed gratitude to all donors and participants.

BJP worker shot dead in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kabisuryanagar, March 30: Unidentified miscreants shot dead a BJP worker on the main road of Pathrapalli village, under this police limits, in Ganjam district over unknown reasons Sunday morning, police said. The victim was identified as Lakshmi Narayan Paikaray, 55, alias Kuna, a contractor by profession, of Athagarhpatna village. He was an active BJP worker and a close confidante of Kabisuryanagar MLA Pratap Chandra Nayak.



Nayak alleged the involvement of Opposition BJD workers in the murder, while the Additional SP (ASP) said that the reason behind the killing is unclear and is yet to be ascertained. This is the second murder in the Kabisuryanagar Assembly constituency area during last three days. Police said Paikaray had several criminal cases registered against him at various police stations in and outside the district. He had returned home two years ago after remaining behind bar in connection with a case. Paikaray was supervising the construction of a culvert on the main road of Pathrapalli village when three unidentified miscreants arrived at the spot and started video recordings the works, Sunday morning. Later, they asked the workers

to summon the contractor to the site. One of the labourers informed Paikaray over phone and called him to the site. As soon as Paikaray got down from his bike, one of the miscreants shot him on his head and fled. Paikaray collapsed on the ground. The labourers rushed him to a nearby hospital where doctors pronounced him dead. BJP MLA Nayak, Kodala block chairman Suryanarayan Nayak, BJP leaders Sitaram Choudhury, Meera Deo, Ram Prasad Moharana and several others were present at the hospital. A team led by the ASP Priyaranjan Prusty, and Purusottampur SDPO Deepak Kumar Mishra rushed to the spot and launched an investigation after sending the body for post-mortem. Prusty said that all those involved in the murder will be arrested soon.

Ex block vice-chairperson scripts success story

POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi, March 30: Bilasini Nayak of Greenbadi village under Daringbadi block in Kandhamal district has established herself as a successful woman farmer and brought a turnaround in her fortune by cultivating maize and tomatoes on her farmland, a report said. Bilasini was elected as a Samiti member from 2007 to 2012, and later served as the block vice chairperson following her nomination to the post. She was re-elected as a Samiti member

for a second term from 2012 to 2017. During this period she dedicated her tenure to public service. Additionally, she led several agitations and movements in her region for alcohol prohibition, and served as the state secretary of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC). She also contested for the Kandhamal MP seat, but was unsuccessful in her endeavour. However, despite her active involvement in social service and local issues, Bilasini has placed significant emphasis on



agriculture. This season, she cultivated maize and tomatoes on her two acres of land, generating more than ₹2.5 lakh earn-

ings from the harvest. Encouraged by her success, she now plans to expand her farming operations further. "My husband, Jyoti Nayak, has been a constant support in my agricultural ventures," Bilasini said. "This year I have also ventured into cultivating American sweet corn, which has gained considerable demand in the local markets of late," she added. Confident in her farming endeavors, she is optimistic about further growth and contributing to the agricultural economy.

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ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ବାର୍ତ୍ତା

ପବିତ୍ର ଲବ୍ଧ-ଉଲ୍-ଫିତର ଅବସରରେ ଜିଲ୍ଲା, ରାଜ୍ୟ ତଥା ଦେଶର ସମସ୍ତ ମୁସଲମାନ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଏବଂ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି । ଶାନ୍ତି-ନୈତ୍ରୀ-ହର୍ଷୋଲ୍ଲାସର ଏହି ପବ୍ଲିକ ସମସ୍ତେ ସାମିଲ ହେବା ସହ ମୁସଲମାନ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କ ସୁଖ, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି କାମନା କରୁଅଛନ୍ତି ।

ସନାତନ ମହାକୁଡ଼
ବିଧାୟକ, ବସ୍ତା, କେନ୍ଦୁଝର



Change yourself if you wish to change the world.
THE MOTHER

Business & Politics

The consequences of mixing business with politics could be devastating. And none should realize this better than Elon Musk, the world's richest man, whose Tesla electric cars and showrooms are at the receiving end of violent protests from ordinary Americans these days. Their ire is all because of the influence he wields on the US administration and the manner in which the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is functioning. The protests termed "Tesla Takedown" have also spread to Canada and several European cities, where Musk is seen by some as a Far-Right figure. The campaign was initiated by a group of dissatisfied Tesla owners, along with celebrities such as actor John Cusack and Democratic lawmaker Jasmine Crockett. Some people have gone to the extent of setting Tesla vehicles on fire and engaging in other forms of vandalism.

Protesters aimed to intensify the movement against Tesla dealerships and vehicles in response to Musk's leadership of the newly established DOGE in Donald Trump's second presidency. In this role, Musk has gained access to sensitive information and closed down entire agencies in his efforts to reduce government spending.

It is interesting to note that a significant part of Musk's estimated \$340 billion fortune comes from his stock in the electric vehicle company, which he continues to operate while collaborating with Trump. Following earlier, somewhat sporadic demonstrations, Saturday 29 March saw the first concerted effort to encircle all 277 of the automaker's showrooms and service centres across the US. Activists assembled at Tesla locations across New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Minnesota, and Texas, the company's home state. Outside a showroom in Dublin, California, they chanted slogans such as, "Hey, hey! Ho! Ho! Elon Musk has got to go!" This campaign, primarily headed by sacked federal government employees, aimed to further exacerbate a recent downturn in the company's sales.

While Musk has downplayed these protests, the decline in Tesla sales has raised concerns among its investors. Many are now questioning the extent of Musk's political connections and their impact on his business decisions. Following Trump's election last November, investors initially viewed Musk's partnership with the PoTUS as a beneficial move for Tesla and its ongoing efforts to establish a self-driving car network. This optimism contributed to a whopping 70 per cent gain in Tesla's stock from the election to Trump's inauguration on 20 January, resulting in an additional \$560 billion in shareholder wealth. However, nearly all of those gains have since disappeared due to investor concerns about potential backlash, declining sales in the US, Europe, and China, as well as Musk's focus on overseeing DOGE. All the while, BYD, the Chinese electric vehicle leader billed as the "Tesla killer," has surpassed Tesla in annual sales.

In these extraordinary times, in India too, politics remains a primary concern for many individuals, with passionate disagreements arising even among family members and close friends. However, it should be considered crucial for businesses to remain neutral as equations can change overnight in political matters. The impact of social media has made it easier than ever before for companies to become entangled in political debates, often resulting in disastrous consequences. A recent report highlights a striking statistic: between 25 per cent and 41 per cent of American consumers may choose to stop doing business with a company if they disagree with its political stance. Additionally, a notable 59 per cent of those who leave do not return. These numbers underscore the serious repercussions of intertwining business and politics.

In India too, the nexus between business and politics is widely prevalent and known. However, unlike in the US where businesses have made numerous innovations, in India all of the big corporate groups, barring none, know only how to grow their businesses by manipulating the country's banking system, exploiting the nation's resources and receiving the benefits of cronyism facilitated by every successive government. It would be healthy if the Indian political class starts to harden its attitude towards businesses in a similar manner that it ought to do towards bureaucracy. That would bring about a more balanced bureaucracy and an equitable growth in business atmosphere and the riches of the land would get distributed amongst a larger number of people instead of a select few who have managed to stick on and reap super normal profits at the cost of the average Indian.

WISDOM CORNER

Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them - that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.

LAO TZU

To practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness.

CONFUCIUS

All religions try to benefit people, with the same basic message of the need for love and compassion, for justice and honesty, for contentment.

DALAI LAMA

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1596: French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher René Descartes, widely considered the father of modern philosophy and perhaps best known for the famous phrase "I think, therefore I am," was born.

1889: Eiffel Tower inaugurated. The 984-foot (300-metre) Eiffel Tower, a wrought iron technological masterpiece created by Gustave Eiffel to commemorate the centenary of the French Revolution, was officially inaugurated in Paris this day in 1889.

1918: The United States switch to DST for the first time. Most areas in the U.S. change the clocks twice a year. Exceptions include Hawaii and most of Arizona. The first country to ever use DST was Germany in 1916.

1964: Following a coup d'etat, a military dictatorship takes charge in Brazil. The regime under Humberto Castelo Branco suppressed the left-wing opposition, leading to widespread social unrest and strike action, especially in 1968.

1992: The USS Missouri—site of the Japanese surrender in 1945, formally ending World War II—was decommissioned for a second and final time; it was the last U.S. battleship still in service.

1999: The film The Matrix is released. The science fiction story about the adventures of computer programmer, Neo, was not only a commercial success but also left a lasting impression on action film-making through its creative use of slow-motion and spinning cameras.

FOCUS SECURITY

A STRATEGIC BLUNDER

A blunder caused while preparing the member list for a top-secret chat assembly named the "Houthi PC Small Group" among senior American security leaders in the Donald Trump administration through a commercial messaging platform "Signal" has embarrassed the new administration. It has also cast doubts among US allies on the level of security existing in Washington DC with which they share intelligence.

On 24 March Jeffrey Goldberg published an article in The Atlantic titled "The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plan" about the "upcoming military strikes in Yemen. I didn't think it could be real. Then the bombs started falling." He claimed that he knew about this "two hours before the first bombs exploded that the attack might be coming."

On 25 March Trump admitted that his National Security Adviser Mike Waltz who had set up the communication chain "had learnt a lesson" by wrongly including Jeffrey Goldberg, editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, a non-authorised person. He added that Waltz is a "good man", and that the incident was the only glitch in two months following his presidency, "and it turned out not to be a serious one." The White House claimed on 26 March that the information shared through Signal was "not classified."

Initially Goldberg thought that he was being lured into an "entrapment operation" to part with information or that it was a disinformation campaign by a foreign intelligence service. When he came to know that the chat group was real, he removed himself from the group. However, no one noticed his presence or his departure.

Goldberg wrote to Mike Waltz and others on 24 March that he was wrongly included in the group. He added that they should have used the "sensitive compartmented information facility, or SCIF." Subsequent reports suggested that Jeffrey Goldberg (JG) might have been added after being mistaken for US Trade Representative Jamieson L. Greer.

History tells us that such



This is a disaster that has raised questions about security, intelligence gathering, efficacy, governance and capability of the Trump administration

costly mistakes always result in serious damage to national security. When the US National Security Council system was introduced in 1947 it was meant to be a three-tier body to recommend policy options to the president, distilled through three levels, for integration of domestic, foreign and military policies.

The first level was the "Inter-Agency Group" consisting of the undersecretary level, the next the "Senior Inter-agency Group" with the Deputy Secretary status officers while the highest would be the "Principals' Group" of cabinet officers like the Secretary of State, Defence and CIA chief.

Each President used to issue National Security Decision Directives (NSDD) on this. For example, President Ronald Reagan's NSDD No: 2 of 12 January 1982 said that the fulcrum of this body would be the "Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs", popularly known as NSA who would set the agenda, issue briefs, convene meetings, disseminate the President's decisions to the concerned for execution and receive compliance of such operations. In those days procedural and document security were ensured through meetings in person.

However, 9/11 attacks on America introduced a new dimension to the need for speedier communications to disseminate intelligence, opinions and decisions. This was when electronic means came to be adopted, often without security precautions. Like in all democratic bureaucracies, the pendulum swung in the opposite direction:

22 October 2022 that her main motivation for leaking was because she felt that the military was misleading the American public about the Iraq War.

Similarly, Edward Snowden took advantage of the NSA's system of allowing access to 1,000 "System Administrators," most of them contractors. As an intelligence official cited by ABC News said then: "It's 2013 and the NSA is stuck in 2003 technology." In that outdated system, Snowden, then working for an NSA contractor in Honolulu, had direct access to NSA's Fort Meade server.

Reality Leigh Winner, aged 25 years, who was working for an NSA intelligence contractor in Georgia, leaked official secrets out of a wrong sense of "patriotism" by posting it on The Intercept when she saw an NSA document on Russian interference in the 2016 US Presidential elections. It stated that the Russian Chief Intelligence Office had executed a cyber-attack on US voting software and sent "spear phishing" emails to more than 100 election officials just before the 2016 November elections. Out of "patriotic" considerations, she sent the document anonymously before the NSA verified its authenticity, according to rules.

However, this "Houthi PC Small Group" can be classified as the first official blunder. By not using the SCIF system, merely for the sake of speedy dissemination, it has proved a disaster that the establishment can't gloss over. Trump saying it is not a "serious" glitch and top officials who were part of the blunder trying to downplay the sensitivity of the information and the risks of this kind of dissemination, are just trying to weather the political storm. But this is a disaster that has raised questions about security, intelligence gathering, efficacy, governance and capability of the Trump administration. Questions that will need much more than statements and glib talk to answer.

The writer is a former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat. He is a national security intelligence specialist and author of Intelligence Over Centuries.

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SPECTRUM FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Reaching the last billion

At its most basic level, the goal of economic development is to eradicate poverty. By that metric, significant progress has been made: the number of people living in extreme poverty fell from 1.9 billion in 1990 to an estimated 615 million today, largely owing to supercharged economic growth in the world's most populous countries in Asia.

But just as the last miles of a marathon are said to be the hardest, the progress made so far is insufficient to carry anti-poverty efforts across the finish line. Now that the fastest population growth is occurring in countries where poverty remains entrenched, and the globalisation engine is no longer as powerful as it once was, growth alone is unlikely to be enough. Moreover, escaping poverty is just one step toward true prosperity. To extend the ladder of opportunity to all and integrate the poor into dynamic economic activities, we need alterna-

and complementary approaches.

Here, bolstering financial inclusion would help, because poverty is not just about how much a person earns. It is about what their earnings can buy them. Lowering the cost of goods and services, and thereby making them more accessible to those who have little, can thus reduce poverty. While advanced-economy governments often provide basic services, that is not the case in the Global South, where benefits are limited in scope. In many Global South countries, basic goods and services are sometimes more expensive for the poor, and it is often costlier to reach this segment of society because they purchase only small quantities of products.

Financial firms have been particularly effective in overcoming these barriers. By lowering the costs of services and expanding access to them, they have demonstrated how inclusion can drive broader devel-

opment. To explore the thresholds where individuals gain access to financial services, World Data Lab, supported by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, combined its consumption models with the World Bank's Findex database.

Our research finds that increasing financial inclusion, which ranges from basic mobile money wallets to full-fledged banking services, disproportionately benefits the poor. We focused on the world's six billion adults - people aged 15 and older, who are more likely to be economically active - and split them into six buckets of one billion each, according to consumption level.

The poorest billion people, who spend less than \$5 per day, used to be excluded from financial services - their economic lives were built solely on cash payments. But over the last decade, a silent revolution in mobile money and digital payments has taken place, particularly in India

and African countries. As a result, more than one-third of the world's poorest billion adults now have access to financial services.

These gains have been propelled by the interplay of the income-growth effect, whereby more people have crossed income thresholds that make them "bankable," and the price effect, whereby the cost of delivering financial services to the un-banked has fallen.

The progress made over the past decade proves that financial inclusion can be achieved with the right mix of innovation, investment, and collaboration. Now, as we approach the last mile in the poverty battle, we must focus on bringing the most marginalised communities into the financial fold.

The writer, a former lead economist at the World Bank, is CEO of World Data Lab.

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Wolfgang Fengler

BOLSTERING FINANCIAL INCLUSION WOULD HELP, BECAUSE POVERTY IS NOT JUST ABOUT HOW MUCH A PERSON EARNS

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



Geopolitical shift

Sir, This refers to "China, B'desh expand ties," OrissaPOST, March 29. Bangladesh leader Muhammad Yunus' visit to China this week marks a critical moment in South Asian geopolitics. The interim leader is signalling a potential shift away from India's traditional influence in Dhaka. China, quick to seize strategic opportunities, is rolling out the red carpet. The stakes are high, not just for Bangladesh but for the entire region. China's deepening ties with Bangladesh is not new. However, the current political upheaval offers Beijing a fresh opening. By positioning itself as Bangladesh's go-to partner, China can further entrench its influence in the Bay of Bengal, a crucial maritime region where India, the US, and Japan have strategic interests. For China, the benefits are two-fold. First, a pro-China Bangladeshi leadership could dilute India's strategic depth in the neighbourhood. Secondly, by strengthening security ties, Beijing can gain access to ports and logistical hubs, boosting its regional presence. Bangladesh, with its geostrategic location, is a vital piece in China's Indo-Pacific puzzle. Also, Bangladesh's economic realities play a role. The Dhaka-Beijing equation is evolving, and New Delhi must be prepared to recalibrate its own playbook accordingly.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Women's safety

Sir, Recent incidents of a woman jumping off a running train to escape an assaulter and a pregnant woman, who was pushed out of a train following an attempted rape and suffering a miscarriage in the process, are clear indicators that women's safety still remains a serious concern in our country. Women in India are becoming the most vulnerable section as far as their safety and security are concerned. The increasing crimes against women are a jolt to their confidence, to our society, and to our judicial system as a whole. Reforms in our legal system are the need of the hour, with stringent punishments meted out to the offenders in such a manner that the crimes are treated as non-bailable offenses. If we truly want to end crimes against women, we need to focus on changing the mindset of society.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

Navratri, Eid bring vibrancy to markets

Tight security arrangements have been made to maintain peace and order in the state, which has seen communal confrontations in the recent past

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambhal/Varanasi/Ayodhya/Mirzapur/Mathura, March 30: Devotees on the first day of Navratri Sunday thronged temples in Sambhal, Varanasi, and Ayodhya, while markets were abuzz ahead of Eid, which is coming after a month-long run-up.

Tight security arrangements have been made to maintain peace and order in the state, which has seen communal confrontations in the recent past.

In Sambhal, devotees thronged the Chamunda Devi temple and the Durga temple at Rambagh Dham in Chandausi to offer prayers.

Chanchal Sunny Gupta, a municipal member from Ward 18, said, "There is enthusiasm among devotees in Sambhal. All temples have been cleaned, and the police have made excellent security arrangements."

Bal Mukund Gupta, a devotee at Chamunda temple, said "It took me an hour to get darshan because of the heavy crowd." With Eid just a day away, markets are a hive of business activities, with shoppers thronging readymade clothing and footwear stores.

"Markets are bustling with people due to Eid. Business is thriving, and sales have been excellent," Ehtesham Ahmad, president of the All India Industry and Trade Board in



Sambhal, said. Cloth merchant Aslam concurred, "This Eid has brought great business. Sales have been very good." In Varanasi, people made a beeline from the early hours at the temple gates.

Prominent temples, including Shailputri Temple, Durga Kund Temple, and Vishalakshi Devi Temple, have been decked up.

Sonu Jha, the priest of Durga Mata Temple at Durga Kund, said temple doors had been thrown open at dawn to let in the stream of devotees.

The deity was given a ceremonial 'Panch Gavya' bath in the morning, followed by an adorning with flowers and jewels.

Officials managing the Shailputri Temple said that in line with tradition, a visit to the Shailputri Goddess on the first day of Navratri holds special significance in Kashi.

Varanasi Assistant Commissioner of Police Vidush Saxena said that force has been deployed around temples for Navratri.

Officers are patrolling their areas, and additional forces, including PAC units, have been stationed at sensitive locations and those that are prone to crowding.

Drones have been deployed for air surveillance at key spots.

In Ayodhya, major temples, including Badi Devkali, the Kuldevi (family deity) of Lord Ram, and Chhoti Devkali, the Kuldevi of Goddess Sita, witnessed an overwhelming influx of devotees.

Chants of "Jai Mata Di" echoed throughout the sacred city as devotees commenced the nine-day festival by performing Kalash Staphana (sacred urn installation) in their homes, marking the arrival of the Goddess.

At Badi Devkali Temple, devotees waited for hours to seek the blessings of Lord Ram's Kuldevi, while at Chhoti Devkali Temple, the devotion towards Goddess Sita's Kuldevi was evident in the overwhelming

turnout.

On the occasion of Nav Samvatsar 2082 (Chaitra Shukla Pratipada), devotees offered 'arghya' (water oblation) to the rising sun in the sacred Sarayu River, praying for peace and prosperity in Ayodhya and to mark the beginning of the new Hindu year.

After offering prayers at the Devi temples, devotees visited Ram Mandir and Hanuman Garhi, where large crowds continued to gather.

Since it was a Sunday, the Janmabhoomi Path was packed, and so were major locations like Lata Chowk and Ram Ki Paidi.

A teeming crowd descended at Mata Mari Temple at Guptar Ghat, Pateshwari Mata Temple in Cantt, and Sheela Mata Temple near Makbara.

A strong police presence, including a special deployment of women officers, was seen in the entire city.

Barricades and queue management systems were erected to regulate the crowd.

Officials anticipate a record-breaking number of visitors this year.

Ayodhya Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rajkaran Nayyar said extensive security arrangements have been made in and around the temples.

The Uttar Pradesh government has banned illegal slaughterhouses and meat sales near religious sites till April 6.

The Uttar Pradesh government has banned illegal slaughterhouses and meat sales near religious sites till April 6

The government had Saturday, citing similar bans in 2014 and 2017, issued strict orders to shut down illegal slaughterhouses and the sale of meat within a 500-metre radius of religious sites.

Animal slaughter and meat sales will be banned on the occasion of Ram Navami on April 6. Under the UP Municipal Corporation Act, 1959, and Food Safety Acts of 2006 & 2011, the state government has directed officials to take strict action against violators.

In Mathura-Vrindavan, a major religious city and the supposed place of birth of Lord Krishna, a huge crowd gathered at the Durga temple.

A cleanliness drive was launched by the Municipal Corporation ahead of the day.

In the early morning, all roads leading to the temples were cleaned and sprinkled with lime water.

Kargil War aircraft, chopper to be installed in Lucknow museum



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 30: The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department has initiated preparations to further enhance the Shaurya Vatika Open-Air Museum here by bringing in the TU-148 aircraft and SK43B helicopter which played a crucial part in India's successful campaign during the Kargil War.

According to the tourism department's plan, these decommissioned aircraft will be dismantled at INS Rajali Airbase near Chennai and then transported to Lucknow. "Once relocated, the aircraft and helicopter will be reassembled, recalibrated, and equipped with modern air-conditioning systems," according to a statement issued here Friday.

Additionally, the government is expediting the completion of various projects at the Shaurya Vatika, including a battle simulation zone, a gallantry award wall, exhibits detailing historic battles, and Navy history displays. The Shaurya Vatika Open-Air Museum, a key part of the Navy Shaurya Museum, will serve as a tribute to the Indian Armed Forces, preserving the legacy of TU-148 and SK43B while offering visitors an immersive

experience into India's military history, it stated.

The Indian Navy operated eight Soviet-made TU-142MKE aircraft from 1988 to 2017 after which they were replaced by Poseidon aircraft. The TU-142MKE is a 53.08-meter-long aircraft with a 50-meter wingspan and a height of 12.12 meters. Weighing 90,000 kg, it could take off with a maximum weight of 185,000 kg, according to the statement. Similarly, the Westland Sea King MK42B helicopter played a key role in combat and relief operations, including during the Kargil War. This helicopter is 17.02 meters long, 5.3 meters high, and can take off with a maximum load of 9,707 kg. Both aircraft will be dismantled at the INS Rajali Airbase near Chennai and transported to Lucknow, it added.

A special team is being formed to ensure the smooth execution of this project, the statement said. Visitors to the Shaurya Vatika Open-Air Museum will have the unique opportunity to sit inside the TU-148 aircraft and SK43B helicopter. They will be able to take an interior tour of these aircraft, learning about their design, operations, significance, and role in combat and rescue missions.

ASHA workers to cut their hair to intensify agitation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 30: The ASHA workers protesting outside the Secretariat here have announced that they will intensify their agitation by staging a 'hair cutting demonstration' Monday as their stir enters 50th day.

As the government has not made any favourable decision, a section of protesters launched an indefinite hunger strike at the protest venue here last week.

Mini S, one of the leaders of the protesting ASHA workers, criticised Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Sunday for remaining silent about their agitation and said they would not back-track from the stir until the government accepts their demands. "The CM is concerned even about animals, birds and other creatures in the wake of the heat



wave warning in the state. But, he has not uttered any word on these ASHA workers who have been protesting under scorching sun for the last 50 days," she told reporters here.

She said she had cut her hair several times before but it is for the first time that she is doing it as part of a protest.

"Not just me, ASHA workers who arrive here from several districts will cut their hair as part of the protest. It will become a significant episode in the agitation," the leader added.

A section of ASHA workers have been protesting outside

the Secretariat here for the last several weeks raising various demands including post-retirement benefits and an increase in honorarium.

The Left government in the state made it clear that such a steep hike in honorarium is not practically possible and said it was the responsibility of the Centre to address the demands of the ASHA workers.

According to the government, it has not received any cash grant from the central government under the National Health Mission (NHM) for 2023-24 for payment towards various Centrally sponsored schemes, including ASHA.

The central government has, however, rejected the state's claims and contended that it has given what was due, but the utilisation certificate did not come from Kerala.



A worker prepares vermicelli ahead of Eid ul-Fitr festival, in Varanasi, Sunday

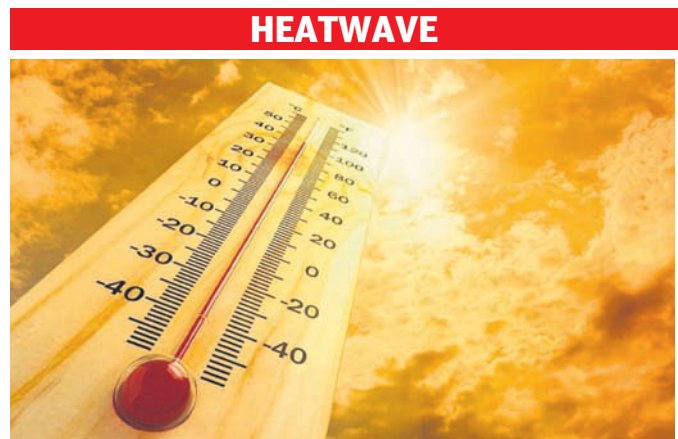
Kerala CM asks depts to be vigilant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 30: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has instructed various departments to take coordinated action in view of the possible heatwave in the state as temperatures continue to rise every day.

He was addressing a meeting convened here to discuss matters related to the ongoing heatwave situation, pre-monsoon cleaning, health alertness and epidemic prevention measures, an official release said here Saturday. He said there should not be lack of vigilance on the part of departments, though temperatures come down in the evenings with frequent summer rains.

Instructions and warning messages regarding the heat wave should be given at the local self-government level as a precautionary measure. Local self-governments should ensure provision of clean drinking water in public places in cooperation with various organisations and institutions, he said. Rest



Instructions and warning messages regarding the heat wave should be given at the local self-government level as a precautionary measure

areas and clean drinking water should be provided to auto and taxi drivers, online food delivery workers, and the security staff in front of hotels and restaurants. Employers should revise schedule for workers who are toiling in the sun and ensure necessary rest and drinking water to them. Steps should also

be taken to convey heat wave warnings among tourists, the Chief Minister said.

Treatment facilities have already been set up at taluk-level hospitals for addressing health problems caused by the heatwave. Areas prone to fire should be identified in advance and necessary steps taken as

a precautionary measure. The Chief Minister also instructed the departments to clean water reservoirs in order to store water from the summer rains as much as possible.

He said wandering animals should also be protected from the heat by providing clean water. To minimize human-wildlife conflict, the availability of water within the forest and the protection of water reservoirs should be properly ensured.

Street vendors and traders should also be alerted about the heat wave and directed to nearby hotels to ensure they have access to drinking water.

The CM also said a surveillance team of ASHA workers should be formed to give special attention to elderly people and bedridden patients inside homes.

The meeting was attended by ministers K Rajan, K N Balagopal, V Sivankutty, Vee-na George, A K Saseendran, J Chinjurani and R Bindu, chief secretary Saradha Murala-haran, and heads of various departments.

UP govt seeks expansion of ITI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow/New Delhi, March 30: Representatives of the Uttar Pradesh government held a meeting with Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary to discuss ITI expansion, skill development and the effective implementation of central schemes in the state.

Kapil Dev Agarwal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship, Government of UP, met with Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, at Kaushal Bhan, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.

During the meeting, several key proposals aimed at boosting skill development in the state were presented, according to an official statement issued in Lucknow. Dr Hariom, Principal Secretary to the UP Government, delivered a detailed presentation on expanding and enhancing Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the state.

Project Alankar: UP govt to modernise Sanskrit schools

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 30: The Uttar Pradesh government Friday said it has taken a significant step toward upgrading non-government-aided secondary Sanskrit schools under Project Alankar.

"This project aims to provide students with a better educational environment while promoting Sanskrit education and preserving India's rich knowledge traditions. The Yogi government remains committed to reviving and strengthening Sanskrit learning through continuous development efforts in the education sector," the government said in a statement.

"Notably, the Yogi government has allocated a ₹100-crore budget for the modernisation of non-government-aided Sanskrit schools in the 2024-25 financial year. Under Project Alankar, several Sanskrit schools meeting the required minimum

enrolment of 100 students will undergo new classroom construction, boundary wall development and improved sanitation facilities. A government order has already been issued to implement these improvements," it added.

In Deoria, Durgee Ji Sanskrit Higher Secondary School, Ahilyapur, Barhaj will receive new



classrooms, boundary walls and proper sanitation facilities. In Ayodhya, Shri Raghurvar Sanskrit Higher Secondary School, Swargadwar, will have two new classrooms, while Shri Balwant Adarsh Sanskrit Higher Secondary School, Dugwa, Devgarh, will undergo renovation of five classrooms and the construction of one new classroom, the government said.

PRESS NOTIFICATION
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAY SAFETY

SHRI BRIJESH KUMAR MISHRA, COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAY SAFETY, SOUTH EASTERN CIRCLE, KOLKATA UNDER THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION WILL HOLD A STATUTORY INQUIRY COMMENCING FROM 10.00 HRS OF 01.04.2025 & 02.04.2025 AT THE OFFICE OF DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER/KHURDA ROAD IN CONNECTION WITH "DERAILMENT OF 11 NUMBER OF COACHES & 01 PANTRY CAR OF 12551 (SMVB, BENGALURU-KAMAKHYA AC SUPERFAST) EXPRESS AT KM 401/2-14, BG, ELECTRIFIED DOUBLE LINE AUTO SIGNALLING SECTION BETWEEN KENDRAPARA ROAD-NERGUINDI OF CUTTACK-BHADRAK SECTION IN KHURDA ROAD DIVISION ON 30.03.2025 AT ABOUT 11:54 HRS".

ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC HAVING KNOWLEDGE RELATING TO THIS ACCIDENT AND MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH AND DESIRING TO GIVE EVIDENCE MAY DO SO AT ABOVE PLACES ON THE DATE OF INQUIRY OR WRITE TO "THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAY SAFETY, SOUTH EASTERN CIRCLE, 14- STRAND ROAD, 12TH FLOOR, KOILAGHAT STREET, KOLKATA-700001, EMAIL: crssec@er.railnet.gov.in.

By
PR-1143/P/24-25 Divisional Railway Manager, Khurda Road
EAST COAST RAILWAY



Eid-ul-Fitr marks the end of fasting and prayer during the holy month of Ramadan. This festival strengthens the spirit of brotherhood, cooperation and compassion

SECURITY BEEFED UP ACROSS JHARKHAND

Security was beefed up across Jharkhand in view of Eid, Sarhul and Ram Navami, an official said Sunday. CCTV cameras, drones, and personnel equipped with video cameras are being deployed at key locations to monitor gatherings



of the day quote

Many good wishes on Rajasthan Day to all my brothers and sisters of Rajasthan, a state symbolizing amazing courage and valor

There was no health-care in Bihar worth the name. No good educational facilities. We came to power in November 2005 and things started to look up

The NDA governments, both at the Centre and in Bihar, have been working for the overall development of Bihar. Those who had eaten up fodder meant for cattle cannot think about the welfare of the people of the state

AFSPA extended in Manipur, parts of Nagaland, Arunachal

The AFSPA, under which a particular state or some areas are declared "disturbed", has also been extended to eight districts in Nagaland and 21 police station areas in five other districts of the state for six months



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 30: The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, which gives armed forces operating in disturbed areas sweeping powers and immunity from prosecution unless approved by the Centre, was Sunday extended for six months in entire Manipur, except the jurisdictions of 13 police stations, in view of the law and order situation there.

falling under the jurisdiction of the following 13 (thirteen) police stations of 5 districts, as 'disturbed area' for a period of six months with effect from 01.04.2025, unless withdrawn earlier," the notification related to Manipur read.

The law was also extended to Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and three police station areas in Namsai district in the state for six months beginning April 1 after a review of the law and order situation in these northeastern states.

The areas in Nagaland declared as 'disturbed area' under AFSPA for six months fall "with in the jurisdiction of i) Khuzama, Kohima North, Kohima South, Zubza and Kezocha police stations in Kohima District; ii) Mangkolemba, Mokokchung-I, Longtho, Tuli, Longchem and Anaki 'C' police stations in Mokokchung District; iii) Yanglok police station in Longleng District; iv) Bhandari, Champang and Ralan police stations in Wokha District; and v) Ghatashi, Pughoboto, Satakha, Suruhuto, Zunheboto and Aghunato police stations in Zunheboto District", according to the notification.



Muslim women show their traditional Mehendi (henna) designs on the eve of Eid al-Fitr in Bengaluru, Karnataka

Clashes in Malda: BJP leaders blocked from visiting Mothabari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata/Malda, March 30: A BJP delegation, led by Union minister Sukanta Majumdar, which was going to visit the communal clash affected Mothabari in West Bengal's Malda district, was Sunday stopped by the police at English Bazar, around 3 kilometres from its destination.

Mohanlal apologises over 'Empuraan' row



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 30: Malayalam superstar Mohanlal Sunday expressed regret over the raging row surrounding his recently released film 'L2: Empuraan' and assured that the controversial portions would be removed from the movie.

rests with all of us who worked on the film. With this realisation, we have collectively decided to remove such elements from the movie," the actor said.

SHORT TAKES

Woman doctor commits suicide

Gwalior: A 31-year-old woman doctor allegedly committed suicide in the hostel of the government-run Gajra Raja Medical College (GRMC) in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior, police said Sunday.

Two killed in car accident in Delhi

New Delhi: Two persons were killed and two others sustained serious injuries after a car crashed into a tree in west Delhi's Naraina in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

Tunnel mishap: Search op on

Nagarkurnool (Telangana): The process of dewatering and removal of soil was underway continuously as part of the search operation to locate six persons who remained untraced in the partially collapsed SLBC project tunnel here, officials said Sunday.

Journalist goes missing

Port Blair: A 38-year-old journalist went missing from Diglipur in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, police said Sunday. The missing journalist has been identified as Shahdeb Dey, the owner of a local news channel known as 'Republic Andaman' and he has been missing since Saturday evening.

Gelatin sticks trigger blast at Beed mosque

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 30: Gelatin sticks kept allegedly by a man at a mosque triggered a blast in Maharashtra's Beed district early Sunday, police said.

The police have arrested two persons in connection with the explosion that occurred around 2.30 am at the mosque in Ardhha Masla village in Georai tehsil, an official said. According to the police, one of the arrested accused had earlier shot a reel with the explosives and a cigarette in his hand before placing them inside the mosque.

The police have arrested Vijay Rama Gavhane (22) and Sriram Ashok Sagde (24), both residents of Ardhha Masla village, an official said. "Gavhane is involved in digging wells. He shot a reel earlier while smoking a cigarette and playing with a bundle of gelatin sticks. He might have obtained the sticks from a licensed seller," he said.

The local crime branch is probing into the incident, it was stated. The incident led to tension in the village. An official said heavy security was deployed in the village to prevent law and order issues. The accused entered the mosque from the back and allegedly kept some gelatin sticks there, which triggered a blast, as per officials. The village head alerted the Talawada police around 4 am. The internal portion of the mosque was damaged in the blast, an official said.

SNIPPETS

Six killed as tree falls on vehicles after landslide

Shimla: Six people died after a huge tree fell on several vehicles following a landslide near Gurudwara Manikarn Sahib in Himachal's Kullu district Sunday, officials said. A tree on the mountain opposite the gurudwara got uprooted following a storm and landslide. It fell on some vehicles parked on the road, killing six and injuring three others, they said.

Moon sighted, Eid to be celebrated in India today

New Delhi: Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the culmination of the fasting month of Ramzan, will be celebrated in the country Monday as the moon was sighted this evening. Fatehpuri Masjid Imam Mufti Mukarram Ahmad told PTI that the Ruet-e-Hilal Committee of the mosque contacted many places and was informed that the moon was sighted at several places.

NIA cracks down on human trafficking

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Sunday arrested a key accused allegedly involved in sending a man illegally to the US via the infamous "dunki" route. The term "dunki", believed to have originated from the word "donkey", refers to an illegal pathway that immigrants take to enter countries like the United States without proper documentation.

WHEELIE STUNTS B'lore cops ride Ghibli trend to warn commuters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 30: Chances are, your social media is being flooded with 'Spirited Away' or 'Howl's Movie Castle' inspired photos and videos, the latest obsession of Gen Z/Millennials. AI tools like Midjourney and CapCut let them turn scenes from their mundane life into a Studio Ghibli film.

But Sunday, Bengaluru Traffic Police too drew inspiration from the 'Ghibli' rage for its social media campaign against wheelies. A wheelie is a manoeuvre where a rider lifts the vehicle's front wheel off the ground and continues moving only on the rear wheel. Youngsters often indulge in it in groups, pumped by the instant adrenaline rush it offers.

But showing off on motorcycles has become a huge menace for the safety of road users. On March 27, Bengaluru Traffic Police booked nearly 60 cases of



Bengaluru Traffic Police Sunday too drew inspiration from the 'Ghibli' rage for its social media campaign against wheelies

A wheelie is a manoeuvre where a rider lifts the vehicle's front wheel off the ground and continues moving only on the rear wheel

Youngsters often indulge in it in groups, pumped by the instant adrenaline rush it offers

wheelie offenders, arresting 45 of them. So, taking advantage of the trend, traffic police have cloaked their 'wheelie mantra' -- "stay grounded, stay safe" -- in Studio Ghibli's pastoral charm to hook the younger crowd.

the AI-generated Ghibli-esque 15-second video, driving home the point how uncool a wheelie is. Considering that police data pegs the age group of 21-30 as the most susceptible for wheelies, Bengaluru Traffic Police is clearly tapping into the pop culture to get the message across to the Gen Zs and Millennials.

stand with the arrested in front of the police station -- does look whimsical enough to catch the attention. "We're using every creative tool at our disposal, like Ghibli-inspired visuals, to get across our message," agreed an official working closely with the Social Media Wing of the Bengaluru Traffic Police.

Incidentally, in 2022, right after Argentina won the World Cup, the Social Media Wing again tapped into the historically significant moment and released a meme. "Argentina took 36 long years to regain the Football World Cup... As road users, can't we wait for a few seconds to get the green signal at Traffic signal junction?" read the meme posted December 26, 2022, garnering more than 80,000 views.



The civil society has to take up the cudgels to fight all these onslaughts on hard-earned rights of people

82 PC PWDs LACK INSURANCE: SURVEY

A nationwide survey by rights groups has revealed that 82 per cent of persons with disabilities lack any form of insurance while 42 per cent are unaware of the government's flagship health scheme, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)



Modi unveils ₹33,700cr projects in Chhattisgarh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bilaspur, March 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone Sunday and inaugurated multiple development projects of more than ₹33,700 crore related to various sectors in Chhattisgarh.

Modi inaugurated projects, laid foundation stones, and commenced various works during a function held in Mohbbhattha village in the Bilaspur district. It was his first visit to the state after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

He flagged off the Main-line Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) train service in the Abhanpur-Raipur section via Mandir Hasaud and handed over the keys (replica) of houses to three beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G). Modi laid the foundation stone of NTPC's Sipat Super Thermal Power Project Stage-III (1x800MW) of over ₹9,790 crore located in Bilaspur district.

This pit head project is based on the latest state-of-the-art Ultra-Supercritical Technology with high power generation efficiency.

He also initiated the commissioning of the First Super Critical Thermal Power Project (2X660MW) of Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company Limited (CSPGCL) of ₹15,800 crore. Modi dedicated to the nation three power transmission projects of more than ₹560 crore of POWER GRID under the Western Region Expansion Scheme (WRES).

He laid the foundation stone of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd's City Gas Distribution (CGD) project for Korea, Surguja, Balrampur and Surguja districts.

Income Tax dept slaps ₹944 crore penalty on IndiGo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 30: The Income Tax Department has slapped a penalty of ₹944.20 crore on IndiGo, which said it will contest the order that is "erroneous and frivolous".

The order was received by InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo, Saturday.

In a regulatory filing on Sunday, IndiGo said the assessment unit of the Income Tax Department (Income Tax Authority) has passed an order imposing ₹944.20 crore penalty for assessment year 2021-22.

"The order has been passed on the basis of an erroneous understanding that appeal filed by the company before the Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals) (CIT(A)) against the assessment order under Section 143(3) has been dismissed, whereas the same is still alive and pending adjudication," it said.

According to the filing, the company strongly believes that the order passed by Income Tax Authority is not in accordance with law and is erroneous and frivolous.

Shah sounds poll bugle in Bihar rally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gopalganj (Bihar), March 30: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Sunday sounded the bugle for Bihar assembly polls due later this year, urging the people to strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi by voting the BJP-led NDA back to power.

Addressing a rally in Gopalganj, a stronghold of the RJD, Shah also charged the opposition party's president Lalu Prasad and his wife Rabri Devi, both of whom had together ruled the state for 15 years, with running a "jungle raj", alleging that murders, kidnappings and dacoities became an industry in the state while they were in power. It was the first public meeting addressed by Shah, regarded as the BJP's principal strategist, in Bihar since last year's Lok Sabha polls.

"Major businessmen fled the state, worried about their own safety. Lalu also made Bihar infamous the world over because of his involvement in the fodder scam," Shah claimed. The Union minister said things began to improve when the BJP, in alliance with JD(U) headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, formed a government in the state.



If the NDA returns to power later this year, Bihar's decades-old problem of annual floods will become a thing of the past, he said. "The people of Bihar have a choice to make between the Lalu-Rabri duo, representing the jungle raj, and development under Modi and Nitish," said the former BJP president.

"I hope you all will press the lotus button, in the assembly polls later this year and vote for the BJP-led NDA. The people of Bihar have always shown their affection for Modi. I am sure you will strengthen his hands

further," he said. Shah had interacted with senior party leaders in the state capital late Saturday night when he is said to have remarked that a victory in Bihar has a far-reaching impact and "we must strive to win the assembly polls".

Shah pulled no punches in lambasting the RJD supremo for alleged nepotism, accusing him of making his wife the chief minister, getting his daughter elected to Parliament and "now both his sons want to become the CM". Shah made no explicit mention of Prasad's younger son and heir apparent

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar assured Union Home Minister Amit Shah that he would "never again" ditch the BJP, having done so "twice by mistake"

Tejashwi Yadav, in line with the BJP's strategy of treating the 35-year-old as a man of little consequence, but for his father.

The strategy first became apparent through a "leaked" video of state BJP leaders a few months ago in which they were seen discussing the need to train their guns only at Lalu, in contrast with the stance adopted till Lok Sabha polls which saw repeated "jungle raj ke yuvraaj" (Prince of the jungle raj) jibes from the Prime Minister himself. In his speech at Gopalganj, Shah tore into the "messiah of the downtrodden" image that Prasad has crafted for himself over decades, saying: "One who eats up fodder meant for cattle can do nothing for the poor". The ailing septuagenarian was also attacked by Shah for his alleged failure to secure for Bihar what was its

due during the 10-year-long Congress-led UPA government headed by Manmohan Singh, despite being a key ally. The Union home minister also charged the RJD supremo with "setting up a record of scams" and read out a list of alleged financial scandals involving Prasad, from his stint as the CM in the 1990s to his tenure as the railway minister in the UPA1 government.

Shah also spoke of the Centre's intent to build "a grand temple" at the birthplace of Goddess Sita in Bihar, on the lines of the Ram Jannabhoomi at Ayodhya in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. The rally at Gopalganj was preceded by a function at Patna, earlier in the day, when Shah shared the stage with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to launch central and state projects worth over ₹8,000 crore. His two-day tour of Bihar will conclude with a meeting of NDA leaders at the residence of Kumar.

Besides BJP and JD(U), the NDA in Bihar includes Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and Hindustani Awam Morcha, headed by Union ministers Chirag Paswan and Jitan Ram Manjhi respectively, besides Rashtriya Lok Morcha of Rajya Sabha MP Upendra Kushwaha.

EARTHQUAKE IN MYANMAR

India delivers relief materials



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

India mounted its relief mission -- named 'Operation Brahma' as a swift response to the devastation caused by the earthquake that hit Myanmar as well as Thailand Friday

New Delhi dispatched relief materials, medicines, an 80-member search and rescue team from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and military field hospitals to Myanmar in three C-130J and two C-17 Globemaster aircraft

New Delhi, March 30: India has sent relief materials, rescue teams and medical equipment in five military aircraft to Myanmar to help victims of the 7.7-magnitude earthquake that killed over 1,600 people and injured nearly 3,000.

India mounted its relief mission -- named 'Operation Brahma' as a swift response to the devastation caused by the earthquake that hit Myanmar as well as Thailand Friday.

New Delhi dispatched relief materials, medicines, an 80-member search and rescue team from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and military field hospitals to Myanmar in three C-130J and two C-17 Globemaster aircraft.

A specialised rescue team from Indian Army's 50 (I) Para Brigade has also been swiftly deployed to Myanmar, officials said.

The team, comprising 118 personnel, including medical and communication units, landed at Myanmar's capital Nay Pyi Taw Saturday night. The team will primarily

focus on rescue operations in Mandalay, the officials said. "Two C-17 aircraft with 118 member Indian Army Field Hospital Unit, including Women & Child Care services and 60 tonnes of relief material have landed in Myanmar. With these, five relief flights from India have landed in Myanmar today," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on 'X' late Saturday night.

In a reflection of New Delhi's strong commitment to extend help, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Myanmar's Senior General Min Aung Hlaing Saturday and conveyed that India stands in solidarity with the people of that country.

"Conveyed our deep condolences at the loss of lives in the devastating earthquake. As a close friend and neighbour, India stands in solidarity with the people of Myanmar in this difficult hour," the prime minister said on 'X'.



Young women dressed in traditional attire take part in a procession on the occasion of 'Gudi Padwa' festival, the beginning of the Hindu New Year, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh

50 NAXALITES SURRENDER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bijapur, March 30: Fifty Naxalites, including 14 with a cumulative reward of ₹68 lakh on their heads, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Sunday, a police official said.

The Naxalites, 10 of whom are women, turned themselves in before senior officials of the state police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), he added. "The cadres surrendered citing the hollow and inhuman Maoist ideology, exploitation of tribals by senior cadres of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) as well as

differences brewing within the movement. They are also impressed by security forces setting up camps and the 'Niya Nellanar' (your good village) scheme under which forces and the administration are providing basic amenities in remote areas," Bijapur Senior Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav said.

Of the 50 who surrendered, Ravindra Karam (19), Roni Par-sik (22), Rakesh Katti (30), Kope Lekam (24), Shanti Tati (22) and Sonu Hemla (22) were in crucial positions in different Maoist formations including PLGA (People's Liberation Guerrilla

Army) number 1 and carried cash rewards of ₹8 lakh each, he said. "Three surrendered ultras have bounties of ₹5 lakh each, while five have rewards of ₹1 lakh each on their heads. The District Reserve Guard (DRG), Bastar Fighters, Special Task Force (STF), CRPF and its elite unit CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) played a key role in their surrender," Yadav said. All the surrendered Naxalites were provided assistance of ₹25,000 each, said the SP, who urged Naxalites to take advantage of the government's rehabilitation policy and join the mainstream of society.

Long stays in postings breed corruption: Par panel to govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 30: Long stays of officers in postings breed corruption and remedial measures should be taken to ensure that they do not stay beyond the prescribed time limit in any ministry, a parliamentary panel has said.

There has been a rotational policy for all officers but it is not being implemented in toto, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law

and Justice said in its 145th report, tabled in Parliament March 27, on the Demands for Grants (2025-26) pertaining to

the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

There are officers who are posted in potentially favourable ministries or places for over 8-9 years, especially in economic and sensitive ministries, and are continuing their stay despite heads of organisations being replaced four-five times. This trend should be assessed, it said.

Instances have come to notice where officers have "manoeuvred their postings in such a way that their whole career has been in the same ministry and hence such lacuna needs to be plugged without any delay", the report stated. The committee's observation came while



reviewing the working of the Central Secretariat Services (CSS) and Central Secretariat Stenographers' Services (CSSS) -- the mainstay of central secre-

tariat functioning.

"It has been brought to the notice of the Committee that especially in CSS & CSSS, all gazetted officers are rotated

The Ministry of Finance has departments which have been categorised as economic and non-economic

It has come to the notice of the committee that there are instances where officers have manoeuvred their postings in such a way that their whole career has been in the same ministry

on the basis of sensitive and non-sensitive postings and at sensitive places, officers are replaced after (a) tenure of 3 years. Similarly, ministries have also been categorised as economic and non-economic," the report said.

The panel said long stays at particular seats or places breed corruption and remedial measures need to be taken immediately. All transfers should be made immediately as per policy and no officer should stay beyond the prescribed time limit in any ministry.

The Ministry of Finance has departments which have been categorised as economic and non-economic. It has come to the notice of the committee that there are instances where officers have manoeuvred their postings in such a way that their whole career has been in the same ministry. Such lacuna needs to be plugged without any delay, the report said.

of the day quote

New cities need to come up in the country. There is no existing model for developing new cities. That's why we want to set an example and develop a model city by establishing Future City

A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

The NCC is much more than a youth organisation—it is a movement that shapes character, instils patriotism, and grooms the future leaders of our great nation

LA GANESAN | NAGALAND GOVERNOR

Eid is a time when people come together to celebrate the blessings of Ramadan, strengthening the bonds of community and reinforcing the values of mutual respect and brotherhood. It is a time to share happiness, extend kindness and support those in need

OMAR ABDULLAH | J&K CM

POST OF THE DAY

Credit Card Spends in India Dropped To 7-Month Low of ₹1.67 Lakh Crore in Feb 2025 This Was ₹1.84 Lakh Crore in January 2025 New Credit Card Issuance is Also Slowing India's Household Debt Seem To Be Rising

@Ravisutanjani

SHORT TAKES

Woman doctor commits suicide

Gwalior: A 31-year-old woman doctor allegedly committed suicide in the hostel of the government-run Gajra Raja Medical College (GRMC) in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior, police said Sunday. Dr Rekha Raghuvanshi, who was pursuing a Doctorate in Medicine (DM) in Neurology, was found hanging in her room at the hostel Saturday night, said Rudra Patha, station house officer of Kampoo police station. No suicide note was recovered at the scene, he told reporters here. "We were notified by the facility late Saturday night that a woman doctor had committed suicide in the hostel. The police team found Dr Raghuvanshi's body hanging in the room," the official said.

Mentally ill man kills neighbour, lynched

Agartala: A 40-year-old mentally ill person was lynched by angry locals after he bludgeoned a neighbour to death in a village in South Tripura district Sunday, a police officer said. Asish Debnath of Kalacherra village under Manubazar police station is a known mental patient who has gone berserk Sunday morning. Two locals went there to pacify him.

Tribals protest

Ranchi: A large number of tribal people Sunday demonstrated against the construction of a flyover close to a sacred 'Sarna Sthal', officials said. The protesters demanded that a ramp of the flyover being constructed in Siram Toli area be removed as it obstructs access to the religious site and could disturb its sanctity due to traffic movement. The agitators from various places gathered at the ramp site by breaking barricades put up by the police to stop them.

international



Japan is our indispensable partner in deterring Communist Chinese military aggression
PETE HEGSETH | DEFENSE SECRETARY, US

VERY ANGRY AT PUTIN: TRUMP

US President Donald Trump said Sunday he will impose secondary tariffs of 25% to 50% on all Russian oil if he feels Moscow is blocking his efforts to end the war in Ukraine, and they could start within a month if there is no ceasefire. Trump told that he was angry and "pissed off" when Russian President Vladimir Putin criticised the credibility of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's leadership



of the day quote

It is devastating that the relationship between the charity's trustees and the chair of the board broke down beyond repair, creating an untenable situation
PRINCE HARRY | THE CHAIRPERSON OF AN AFRICAN CHARITY

There is no need for laws that originate from the West. We will create our own laws
HIBATULLAH AKHUNDZADA | TALIBAN LEADER

In hosting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the UNP calls upon all stakeholders to reaffirm their dedication to this bilateral vision
RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | FORMER PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA

Smell of death permeates Myanmar cities

The 7.7 magnitude quake hit midday Friday with an epicentre near Mandalay, killing more than 1,600 people and leaving countless others buried

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mandalay (Myanmar), March 30: The smell of decaying bodies permeated the streets of Myanmar's second-largest city Sunday as people worked frantically by hand to clear rubble in the hope of finding someone still alive, two days after a massive earthquake struck that killed more than 1,600 people and left countless others buried.

The 7.7 magnitude quake hit midday Friday with an epicentre near Mandalay, bringing down scores of buildings and damaging other infrastructure like the city's airport.

Relief efforts have been hampered by buckled roads, downed bridges, spotty communications and the challenges of operating in a country in the midst of a civil war.

The search for survivors has been primarily conducted by the local residents without the aid of heavy equipment, moving rubble by hand and with shovels in 41-degree Celsius (106 Fahrenheit) heat, with only the occasional tracked excavator to be seen. A 5.1 magnitude aftershock Sunday afternoon prompted screams from those in the streets, and then the work continued.

Many of Mandalay's 1.5 million people spent the night sleeping on the streets, either



left homeless by the quake, which also shook neighbouring Thailand and killed at least 18 people there, or worried that the continuing aftershocks might cause structures left unstable to collapse.

MANY AREAS STILL HAVE NOT BEEN REACHED

So far 1,644 people have been reported killed in Myanmar and 3,408 injured, but many areas have not yet been reached, and many rescue efforts so far have been undertaken by people working by hand to try and clear rubble, said Cara Bragg, the Yangon-based manager of Catholic Relief Services in Myanmar.

"It's mainly been local volunteers, local people who are just trying to find their loved ones," Bragg said after being briefed by her colleague in Mandalay.

"I've also seen reports that now some countries are sending

Tsunami warning lifted after 7.1 earthquake near Tonga

Tokyo: A strong 7.1 magnitude earthquake hit near Tonga, prompting an initial tsunami warning that was later lifted for the Pacific island country. The US Geological Survey said the quake hit about 100 kilometres northeast of the main island in the early morning hours of Monday local time. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii issued an alert saying hazardous waves could be possible but later said there was no longer a tsunami threat. Tsunami sirens could be heard after the 1:18 am quake urging residents to move inland, according to the Talanoa o Tonga news site. There were no initial reports of damage. Residents in the Ha'apai island group had calmly moved to higher ground, the report said.

search and rescue teams up to Mandalay to support the efforts, but hospitals are really struggling to cope with the influx of injured people, there's a shortage of medical supplies, and people are struggling to find food and clean water," Bragg added.

The organisation was sending a team by road Sunday to assess peoples' most pressing needs so that it could target its own response. With the Man-

dalay airport damaged and the control tower toppled in the capital Naypitaw's airport, all commercial flights into the cities have been shut down.

Official relief efforts in Naypitaw were prioritising government offices and staff housing, leaving locals and aid groups to dig through the rubble by hand in residential areas, the hot sun beating down and the smell of death in the air.

Myanmar's civil war complicates quake relief efforts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, March 30: Myanmar, formerly Burma, has faced decades of conflict and natural disasters since gaining independence in 1948. The recent 7.7 magnitude earthquake adds to the country's challenges, particularly as the military government has been in power since seizing control from Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in February 2021. This military takeover sparked a civil war, with pro-democracy fighters and ethnic groups seeking autonomy, often battling the well-armed military forces.

The main resistance, the National Unity Government (NUG), operates underground and leads the People's Defence Force (PDF), which comprises poorly armed local groups but benefits from local knowledge and some ethnic minority allies with experience and homemade weapons. In light of the earthquake, the NUG announced a two-week ceasefire to facilitate humanitarian aid, while still retaining the right to self-defense. The resistance has offered to collaborate with international aid organizations to ensure relief reaches those in need.

The ceasefire is symbolic, highlighting the resistance's moral stance and putting pressure on the military government to allow aid to reach affected areas. The military's history of restricting aid—seen after disasters like Cyclone Nargis in 2008—has raised concerns about the effective distribution of aid. The NUG's move to pause military operations and offer collaboration with international bodies aims to ensure that aid reaches those in need, challenging the military's control over humanitarian efforts.

SHORT TAKES

Turkiye arrests Swedish journalist

Istanbul: Turkish authorities said Sunday they arrested a Swedish journalist dispatched to cover ongoing nationwide protests on charges of terrorism and insulting the president. Joakim Medin of the daily Dagens ETC was detained as he arrived at Istanbul airport Thursday and placed under arrest Friday on charges of "membership in a terrorist organisation" and "insulting the president". The Counter Disinformation Centre, part of the Turkish Presidency's Communications Department, said in a statement that Medin's arrest was "not over his journalism activities".

2 killed in Russian attack on Kharkiv

Kyiv: Russian drones hit a military hospital, shopping centre, apartment blocks and other buildings in Kharkiv late Saturday, killing two people and wounding 35 others, Ukrainian officials said. Regional Gov Oleh Syniehubov said that a 67-year-old man and a 70-year-old woman were killed in the attack on Ukraine's second-largest city. Ukraine's General Staff denounced the "deliberate, targeted shelling" of the military hospital. Among the casualties were "servicemen who were undergoing treatment," it said. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russia fired 111 exploding drones and decoys in the latest wave of attacks overnight into Sunday.

9 people, including Indian, held for looting

Kathmandu: At least nine people, including an Indian national, were arrested for their involvement in looting various items from a departmental store during the pro-monarchy protest, police said. Ravi Ranjan Kumar, a resident of Patna in Bihar, was among those arrested for looting the Bhatbhateni Departmental Store during Friday's protest and vandalism. The arrested people looted bottles of whiskey, fruits, beer, and make-up items from the store, a police official said.

12 terrorists, 9 civilian killed in drone strikes

Peshawar: Twelve terrorists have been killed while nine civilians lost their lives when security forces conducted drone attacks on militant hideouts in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The "counter-terrorism operation" Saturday morning targeted terrorists' hideouts in the remote hilltop area of Katlang in the Mardan district, a provincial government statement said.

Balochistan bans night travel on key highways

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, March 30: The government in Pakistan's Balochistan province has banned night-time travel across several key national highways amid a worsening law and order situation in the area where multiple terrorist attacks occurred on vehicles in recent weeks.

The volatile province faced several targeted attacks on vehicles when gunmen stopped the traffic on highways and killed passengers after checking their identities. The ethnic Punjabis have been the target of such attacks.

District commissioners of Kachhi, Zhob, Gwadar, Nushki and Musakhail districts issued a notification Friday to prohibit travel on key national highways from 6 pm to 6 am.

The ban covers several highways, including the Quetta-Taftan Road, Loralai-Dera Ghazi Khan Road, Sibi Road, Coastal Highway, and Zhob-Dera Ismail Khan Road.

For about two decades, Balochistan has been in the grip of violence by ethnic Baloch extremists who attack the armed forces dominated by the Punjabis.

SNIPPETS

Security team of Nepal's ex-king downsized

Kathmandu: The Nepal government has downsized the security team deployed for former king Gyanendra Shah, a day after pro-monarchy protests in parts of the Nepalese capital turned violent. The number of security personnel at the Nirmal Niwas, the private residence of the ex-king, has been reduced from 25 to 16 after Friday's protests, during which protesters pelted stones, attacked the office of a political party, set vehicles on fire and looted shops. Two persons, including a TV cameraman, were killed and 110 others injured in the clashes between security personnel and pro-monarchy protesters, who were demanding the reinstatement of a Hindu monarch. The government has also reshuffled the team of security personnel deployed for the ex-monarch, Home Ministry sources said.



Protesters against Musk's purge of US govt swarm Tesla showrooms

San Francisco: Crowds protesting billionaire Elon Musk's purge of the US government under President Donald Trump began amassing outside Tesla dealerships throughout the US and in some cities in Europe Saturday in the latest attempt to dent the fortune of the world's richest man. The protesters are trying to escalate a movement targeting Tesla dealerships and vehicles in opposition to Musk's role as the head of the newly created Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, where he has gained access to sensitive data and shuttered entire agencies as he attempts to slash government spending. The biggest portion of Musk's estimated \$340 billion fortune consists of his stock in the electric vehicle company, which continues to run while also working alongside Trump. After earlier demonstrations that were somewhat sporadic, Saturday marked the first attempt to surround all 277 of the automaker's showrooms and service centres in the US in hopes of deepening a recent decline in the company's sales.



IRAN REJECTS DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 30: Iran's president said Sunday that the Islamic Republic rejected direct negotiations with the United States over its rapidly advancing nuclear programme, offering Tehran's first response to a letter President Donald Trump sent to the country's supreme leader.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran's response, delivered via the sultanate of Oman, left open the possibility of indirect negotiations with Washington.

However, such talks have made no progress since Trump in his first term unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018.

In the years since, regional tensions have boiled over into attacks at sea and on land. Then came the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, which saw Israel target militant group leaders across Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance".

Now, as the US conducts intense airstrikes targeting the



Iranian-backed Houthi rebels of Yemen, the risk of military action targeting Iran's nuclear program remains on the table.

"We don't avoid talks; it's the breach of promises that has caused issues for us so far," Pezeshkian said in televised remarks during a Cabinet meeting. "They must prove that they can build trust."

The White House, the State Department and other officials offered no immediate reaction to the announcement.

Iran's position hardens after Trump's letter

Having Pezeshkian announced the decision shows

just how much has changed in Iran since his election half a year ago after he campaigned on a promise to re-engage with the West.

Since Trump's election and the resumption of his "maximum pressure" campaign of Tehran, Iran's rial currency has gone into a freefall. Pezeshkian had left open talks up until Iran's 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei came down hard on Trump in February and warned talks "are not intelligent, wise or honourable" with his administration. The Iranian president then immediately toughened his own remarks on the US.

Palestinians mark Muslim holiday with scarce food, no end to war

It's supposed to be a joyous occasion, when families gather for feasts and purchase new clothes for children — but most of Gaza's 2 million Palestinians are just trying to survive

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip), March 30: Palestinians in the Gaza Strip had little to celebrate Sunday as they began marking a normally festive Muslim holiday with rapidly dwindling food supplies and no end in sight to the Isra-

el-Hamas war.

Many held prayers outside demolished mosques on the Eid al-Fitr holiday marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. It's supposed to be a joyous occasion, when families gather for feasts and purchase new clothes for children — but most of Gaza's 2 million Palestinians are just trying to survive.

"It's the Eid of Sadness," Adel al-Shaer said after attending outdoor prayers in the central town of Deir al-Balah. "We lost our loved ones, our children, our lives, and our futures. We lost our students, our schools, and our institutions. We lost everything."

Twenty members of his extended family have been killed in Israeli strikes, including four young nephews just a few days ago, he said as

'EID OF SADNESS'



he broke into tears. Israel ended the ceasefire with Hamas and resumed the

war earlier this month when the militant group refused to accept changes to the agree-

■ Israel ended the ceasefire with Hamas and resumed the war earlier this month when the militant group refused to accept changes to the agreement reached in January

■ Israeli strikes have killed hundreds of Palestinians, and Israel has allowed no food, fuel or humanitarian aid to enter for four weeks

ment reached in January. Israeli strikes have killed hundreds of Palestinians, and Israel has allowed no food, fuel or humanitarian aid to enter for four weeks.

"There is killing, displacement, hunger, and a siege," said Saed al-Kourid, another worshipper. "We go out to perform God's rituals in order to make the children happy, but as for the joy of

Eid? There is no Eid."

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel Oct 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking 251 hostages. Hamas is still holding 59 captives — 24 of whom are believed to be alive — after most of the rest were released in ceasefires or other agreements.

Israel's offensive has killed over 50,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its tally. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Israel's bombardment and ground operations have destroyed vast areas of Gaza and at their height displaced around 90% of the population.

Business



U
 We expect 15 per cent credit growth for FY26 if the GDP grows at 6.5 per cent. Usually, loan growth is more than 2 times of the GDP. Higher the GDP growth, higher is the demand for loan
UMESH G REVANKAR | SHRIRAM FINANCE EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN

COAL IMPORT RISES MARGINALLY IN JAN

The country's coal import rose marginally by 1.23 per cent to 21.37 million tonne (MT) in January. The coal import was 21.11 MT in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal.



of the day note

In 2014, the production of solar cells and wafers did not exist, but today, India has 25 GW of cells and 2 GW of wafers
PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION MINISTER OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

The criticality of copper as an integral part of the country's decarbonisation strategy is not lost to India Inc. Hence, it is making investments in this mineral, not just to bridge the demand-supply gap but also align its policies with those of the government
ARUNA SHARMA | FORMER STEEL SECRETARY

Our vehicles are designed with focus on quality, reliability, ruggedness, and performance, aligning perfectly with the operational needs of our defence personnel
PRASAN FIRODIA | FORCE MOTORS MD

SHORT TAKES

Mcap of 8 of top 10 firms up

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most-valued firms climbed Rs 88,085.89 crore last week, with HDFC Bank leading the pack of gainers, in line with an optimistic trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge climbed 509.41 points, or 0.66 per cent. From the top-10 pack, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, and ITC were the gainers, while Reliance Industries and Infosys faced erosion from their market valuation. The implication of April 2 reciprocal tariffs on global trade, trends in overseas markets and trading activity of foreign investors would dictate equity investors' sentiment in a holiday-shortened week ahead, according to analysts. Stock markets would remain closed Monday for Eid-ul-Fitr.

Merchandise exports may fall

New Delhi: The country's merchandise exports, which have been contracting since October last year, are expected to decline slightly by the end of this fiscal year and fall below USD 435 billion, think tank GTRI said Sunday. Exports dipped 10.85 per cent in February to USD 36.91 billion due to volatility in petroleum prices and global uncertainties. "At this rate, India's total merchandise exports for FY2025 are expected to be below USD 435 billion, slightly lower than USD 437.1 billion in FY2024," Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Founder Ajay Srivastava said. During April-February 2024-25, the exports stood at USD 395.63 billion as against USD 395.38 billion in the corresponding period of 2023-24.

FPIs pour ₹31k-cr in equities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 30: Foreign investors have infused nearly Rs 31,000 crore in the Indian equity markets in the last six trading sessions of the month primarily due to attractive valuations, appreciation in the rupee and improvement in macroeconomic indicators.

The re-emergence of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) as buyers contributed to a smart recovery of about 6 per cent in benchmark index Nifty, reflecting renewed confidence in the market. This latest infusion has also helped reduce the overall outflow for March to Rs 3,973 crore, according to data from the depositories.

In comparison to previous months, this marks a significant improvement, as FPIs had pulled out Rs 34,574 crore in February and Rs 78,027 crore in January.

Going forward, the trend in FPI flows will depend mainly on the Trump's reciprocal tariffs expected April 2. If the tariffs are not severe, the rally may continue, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments, said.

According to the data, FPIs have pulled out Rs 3,973 crore from Indian equities in March. However, in the last six trading sessions (from March 21 to March 28), they put in Rs 30,927 crore. The shift from sustained selling to modest buying indicates a change in FPIs' strategy, influenced by factors such as attractive valuations after a 16 per cent correction from the September 2024 peak, the recent



appreciation of the rupee, and favourable macroeconomic indicators like GDP growth, industrial production (IIP), and CPI inflation, according to Vijayakumar.

Additionally, one of the key announcements made by markets regulator Sebi in its board meeting with respect to the FPI community has encouraged them to invest, Manoj Purohit, Partner & Leader, FS Tax, Tax & Regulatory Services, BDO India, said.

Based on the reaction of a few large banks on restricting the P-Notes trading volume, Sebi decided to increase existing threshold from Rs 25,000 crore to Rs 50,000 crore for granular beneficial ownership disclosures, he added.

While the recent inflows have boosted market sentiment, the broader picture for India's equity markets in financial year 2024-25 reflects significant fluctuations in FPI flows.

Initially, FPIs were net buyers, drawn by India's robust economic growth and favourable market conditions. How-

ever, starting October 2024, a pronounced shift occurred, with FPIs withdrawing significant investments from the Indian equity markets, which stood at approximately USD 15 billion (between Apr 1, 2024 and Mar 27, 2025), marking the highest-ever recorded outflow.

This exodus contributed to a significant decline in the Indian equity markets from its late-September peak.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment highlighted several factors that influenced these FPIs movement. The initial inflows were driven by India's strong economic performance and investor confidence.

The subsequent outflows were prompted by concerns over slowing corporate earnings, with growth decelerating due to weakening urban demand and modest income increases. Additionally, global trade tensions and uncertainties surrounding US economic policies led investors to reallocate capital to perceived safer assets, he added.

India records robust growth in metal production

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 30: The production of key minerals such as iron ore, manganese ore, bauxite and lead in the country have recorded a robust growth in financial year 2024-25 after reaching record production levels in FY 2023-24, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Mines Sunday.

The output of iron ore which accounts for 70 per cent of the total mineral production by value increased to 263 million metric tonnes (MMT) during April-February of FY 2024-25 from 252 MMT in the same period of FY 2023-24, which represents a growth of 4.4 per cent, official figures showed.

The production for the full financial year 2023-24 was 274 million metric tonnes

(MMT). The production of manganese ore jumped by 12.8 per cent to 3.4 MMT in FY 2024-25 (April-February) from 3.0 MMT during the corresponding period of the previous year while the production of bauxite has also risen by 3.6 per cent to 22.7 MMT during these 11 months of the current financial year from 21.9 MMT in the same period of FY 2023-24.

Similarly, the production of Lead Concentrate has also risen by 3.5 per cent to 3,52,000 tonnes during this period in FY 2024-25 from 3,40,000 tonnes in FY 2023-24.

In the non-ferrous metal sector, primary aluminium production in the 11 months of FY 2024-25 posted a growth of 0.9 per cent over the corresponding period last year, increasing to 38.36 lakh

tonnes (LT) from 38.00 LT in FY 2023-24. During the same comparative period, refined copper production has grown by 7.1 per cent from 4.64 LT to 4.97 LT.

India is the second largest Aluminium producer in the world, among the top-10 producers of refined copper and the fourth largest iron ore producer in the world. Continued growth in production of iron ore in the current financial year reflects the robust demand conditions in steel, which is the user industry for these metals.

Coupled with growth in aluminium and copper, these growth trends point towards continued strong economic activity in user sectors such as energy, infrastructure, construction, automotive and machinery, the statement added.

Markets to track reciprocal tariffs, global trends

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 30: The implication of April 2 reciprocal tariffs on global trade, trends in overseas markets and trading activity of foreign investors would dictate equity investors' sentiment in a holiday-shortened week ahead, according to analysts.

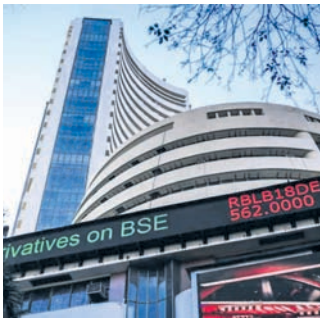
Stock markets would remain closed Monday for Eid-ul-Fitr. The US has threatened to impose reciprocal tariffs on its key trading partners, including India, April 2.

"All eyes are now on Trump's April 2 tariff announcement,"

Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Among macroeconomic data announcements this week, PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) data for manufacturing and services sectors would also be tracked by investors.

"With the upcoming holiday-shortened week, market participants will turn their attention to global developments in the absence of major domestic triggers. The implementation of reciprocal tariffs from April 2 and its broader implications on global trade will be



closely monitored," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

"Going forward, the trend in FII flows will depend main-

ly on Trump's reciprocal tariffs expected on April 2nd. If the tariffs are not severe, the rally may continue," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said. The change in FII (Foreign Institutional Investors) strategy from sustained selling to modest buying which was visible in the week ending March 21 continued with increased intensity for the week ending March 28, he added.

Investors would also be tracking the rupee-dollar trend and movement of global oil benchmark Brent crude.

"This week is expected to offer greater clarity on tariff developments, enabling investors to assess their impact on the global economy. Key economic indicators to watch include US job opening data and India's PMI, both of which will provide insights into economic momentum in their respective regions. Meanwhile, investor focus is shifting toward quarterly earnings reports, which are anticipated to provide a clearer picture of earnings recovery," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

India Inc raises record ₹1.33L-cr via QIPs in FY25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Companies leveraged buoyant equity markets to strengthen balance sheets and fund expansion, a key driver of the surge in QIP fundraising, analysts said.

As per the data, 85 companies have tapped the capital markets with QIP issues in this financial year as compared with just 64 companies during the last financial year.

"FY25 witnessed the highest-ever QIP fundraising in the history of Indian capital markets, both in terms of volume and value," Neha Agarwal, MD

& Head of Equity Capital Markets at JM Financial, told PTI. Agarwal attributed the surge in QIPs to a broader trend of corporates strengthening their balance sheets through deleveraging, driven by buoyant capital markets.

ities, automobiles, metals, and PSU banks. Major contributors to the record-breaking QIP fundraising include conglomerate Vedanta Group and food delivery major Zomato, which raised as much as Rs 8,500 crore each. They were followed by Adani Energy Solutions and Varun Beverages, which raised Rs 8,373 crore and Rs 7,500 crore, respectively.

Other significant QIP transactions during FY25 include Samvardhana Motherhood International at Rs 6,438 crore,

Haldiram enters into pact with Temasek

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 30: Haldiram has entered into an agreement with Temasek as part of which the Singapore-headquartered global investment firm will "acquire an equity stake from the existing shareholders" of India's largest packed snack and sweets company and restaurant operator, according to a statement issued Sunday.

It did not disclose details of the deal or the valuation at which Temasek acquired the equity stake, but this is the first official confirmation of the deal from Haldiram.

According to industry sources, Temasek is acquiring a minority 10 per cent stake in Haldiram Snacks Food at a valuation of USD 10 billion (around Rs 85,000 crore), which is considered to be the largest for the Indian packed food industry.

"Haldiram, the renowned Indian multinational snacks and sweets company, has entered an agreement with Singapore-headquartered global investment firm Temasek. The agreement will see Temasek acquire an equity stake from the existing shareholders of Haldiram," the statement said.

This transaction "is subject to customary regulatory approvals, (and) is expected to close soon", it said.



Patience biggest challenge for youth, says Sonthalia

From a modest beginning to building a business empire of ₹120 crore, **Shyam Sundar Sonthalia**, Managing Director of S Square Marketing, has carved a niche in the garment industry. With ambitious expansion plans on the horizon, Sonthalia's journey serves as an inspiration for budding entrepreneurs looking to make a mark in the retail sector. S Square Marketing continues to set benchmarks in the garment industry, blending tradition with modern business strategies. In an exclusive interview with **Orissa POST**, he shares insights on his entrepreneurial journey, the evolving garment industry, and advice for aspiring business owners. Excerpts...



Can you tell us about your early life and what led you to enter the retail garment business?

I was born in Birmaharajpur, Odisha, but received my early education in Rajasthan, where my maternal family lived. Later, I moved to Kolkata and began my career in the textile industry in 1976, earning just Rs 100. Initially, I had no grand ambitions; I simply worked hard and took one step at a time. My surroundings were closely connected to the textiles and clothing business, and I was naturally drawn into the industry. Eventually, in 1993, I officially ventured into the garment sector, and since then, I have been dedicated to expanding our reach.

How do you see the Odisha market in garment segment? Is it growing or facing challenges?

The garment industry is evolving rapidly, especially with the rise of online

shopping, exclusive brand outlets, and multi-brand stores. While the market is growing, traditional businesses like ours face stiff competition from e-commerce platforms. Online shopping has particularly gained traction in ethnic wear and sarees. However, we counter this challenge by maintaining a strong offline presence and ensuring superior quality to retain customer loyalty.

What is the unique selling proposition of your business?

We specialise in men's apparel, which constitutes 90 per cent of our business, while women's wear makes up the remaining 10 per cent. We carefully curate the brands we associate with, ensuring they align with market demand. Currently, we are collaborating with ten national brands known for their quality.

How do you manage the growing competition in the garment industry?

In this business, relationships, service quality, and a strong team network are crucial. While there are many distributors in the market, we focus on building a cohesive team, which has been a key factor in our success. Today, we have 120 employees, and our transparency in operations has helped us maintain strong business relationships and trust in the market.

Do you have any plans to try your hands in online retail?

The digital market is growing, and we recognise its importance. While

we continue to strengthen our offline franchise model, we are also exploring opportunities in online retail. The industry is evolving, and adapting to these changes is essential to staying ahead.

How has your journey been so far? Do you have any expansion plans?

My journey has been built on hard work, persistence, and patience. When I started, I had no idea the business would scale to this level. From earning Rs 100 in my first textile job to now leading a Rs 120 crore company, it has been a long and fulfilling journey. Today, we operate 180 franchise stores and 15 company-owned outlets in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. Looking ahead, we plan to expand further into women's and kid's apparels, as the lion's share of our current business is focused on men's wear. Diversifying into these segments will help us tap into a larger market and strengthen our brand presence.

What advice do you have for aspiring entrepreneurs in this business?

One of the biggest challenges for today's youth is patience. Many want quick success, but building a large-scale business takes time. My advice is to stay focused, work hard, and remain consistent. Trends will change, markets will shift, but if you maintain quality and customer trust, success will follow.

RR'S SIX-RUN THUMP OVER CSK DC trounce SRH by 7-wickets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, March 30: Nitish Rana smashed a blistering 36-ball 81, while leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga starred with a four-wicket haul as Rajasthan Royals (RR) opened their account with a hard-fought six-run victory over Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the IPL here Sunday.

Promoted to number 3, left-handed Rana dominated the CSK bowlers, hitting 10 boundaries and 5 sixes en route his scintillating knock but Royals struggled towards back-end just about manage a par-score of 182 for 9.

CSK, who had never successfully chased a target over 180 since 2019, faltered again, managing 176 for six in the allotted overs. The chase was built around skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's 63, but it wasn't enough as CSK succumbed to their second consecutive loss.

The legend of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's last over finishes in IPL is fast becoming a story of yesterday as he failed to muscle Maheesh Theekshana and Sandeep Sharma.

Chasing 183, CSK found themselves at 5/1 in the first three overs, with Jofra Archer starting with a maiden wicket over, dismissing Rachin Ravindra (0).

A few lusty blows from Rahul Tripathi (23) and Gaikwad (63) helped CSK reach 42/1 in the powerplay.

Hasaranga made an immediate impact, removing Tripathi, who was caught by Shimron Hetmyer, while Shivam Dube (18) looked dangerous, hammering two sixes off the Sri Lankan spinner. However, a moment of brilliance from stand-in captain Riyan Parag proved to be a game-changer.

Parag, playing in front of his home crowd, dived to his right



from cover to take a stunning catch to dismiss Dube.

Despite Gaikwad's resistance, CSK continued to lose wickets, with Hasaranga dismissing Vijay Shankar (9) after a big six. Gaikwad reached his fifty off 37 balls, but soon fell to Hasaranga, becoming his fourth victim, as CSK slumped to 129 for 5.

With CSK needing 39 off 12 balls, MS Dhoni (16), cheered by the crowd, hit a boundary over short third and a towering six over long-on off a profligate Tushar Deshpande. Ravindra Jadeja (32) also joined in, sweeping the bowler for a huge six over deep backward square leg.

Sandeep Sharma was tasked with the final over, and he struck the crucial blow by removing Dhoni, with Shimron Hetmyer taking a stunning

catch to eventually defend 20 runs in the last six balls.

Earlier, Royals suffered an early setback when opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, after hitting a boundary on the first ball, was dismissed by Khaleel but it was Nitish's show from thereon, as he added 82 runs off 42 balls with Sanju Samson (20) to lay a solid foundation for Rajasthan.

Nitish read the length of the ball perfectly, playing exquisite strokes to provide early momentum. He flicked, pulled, and even ramped the pacers for sixes, while using the slog sweep behind square to get two sixes off Ravichandran Ashwin.

The southpaw reached his fifty in just 21 balls as RR raced to 79/1 in the powerplay, their third-highest total in IPL history.

Noor broke the 82-run second wicket stand with Samson

holing out to Rachin Ravindra at long-off. At 99/2 in the 10th over, Nitish continued his assault, flicking Matheesha Pathirana for a six, while also slog sweeping and reverse slog sweeping Ashwin for a six and a four, respectively.

However, Ashwin had the last laugh, as he deliberately bowled a wide delivery out of Nitish's hitting arc and Mahendra Singh Dhoni did the needful behind the stumps.

Noor then claimed the wicket of Jurel with a wrong 'un, while Ravindra Jadeja dismissed Wanindu Hasaranga (4) as CSK made a comeback, reducing RR to 140/5 in the 15th over.

In the 17th over, Riyan Parag (37) launched Noor for a four and a six before being cleaned up by Pathirana. Shimron Hetmyer (19) hit a four and a six as RR managed to cross the 180-mark.

Du Plessis' fifty, Starc's maiden five wrecks havoc, guide DC to win over Sunrisers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, March 30: Faf Du Plessis' excellent fifty and Mitchell Starc's five-wicket haul were the lead acts in Delhi Capitals' comprehensive seven-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL match here Sunday.

Du Plessis (50, 27b, 3x4, 3x6) added 81 runs with his opening partner Jake Fraser-McGurk (38, 32b) as the Capitals overhauled Hyderabad's inadequate 163 all out in 16 overs, for their second win on the trot.

Once DC openers made a quick start off the block, the result was never in doubt, but their approach was vastly different.

Du Plessis wound the clock back with some stunning shots, such as a straight six off Pat Cummins.

But at other end, McGurk was struggling for his timing, partly because of his exaggerated back-lift and partly because of his desire to hit all the ball out of the park.

However, his senior partner was willing to do the heavy-lifting and brought up his fifty in 26 balls.

The South African thus became the third 40-plus batter to score a 50 in the IPL after Adam Gilchrist and Chris Gayle.

But the alliance was snapped when debutant leg-spinner Zeeshan Ansari (3/42) dismissed Du Plessis, who departed after Wiaan Mulder took a brilliant running catch to the join the list of stunning catchers in the evening.



The impressive 25-year-old Ansari, who once was a part of India Under-19 World Cup squad which also had Rishabh Pant, Ishan Kishan and Washington Sundar back in the day, soon got rid of McGurk and KL Rahul in quick succession to reduce DC to 115 for three in the 12th over but that was not even enough to create artificial excitement.

Abhishek Porel (34 not out, 18 balls) and Tristan Stubbs (21 not out, 14 balls) joined for a 51-run stand for the fourth wicket to push SRH to their second successive defeat in this IPL.

Earlier, Aniket Verma made a free-flowing 74 off 41 balls (5x4, 6x6) but their excessive aggression and five-wicket man Starc forced Sunrisers Hyderabad to settle for a woefully sub-par 163 all out.

Aniket showed how to capitalise a smooth pitch with a wisely accelerated innings but there were not many takers for that route in the Sunrisers camp. The Hyderabad side's beginning itself was flawed, losing four wickets in the Power Play that earned them 58 runs.

Abhishek Sharma barely heeded to Travis Head's call for a single and started late, only to see Vipraj Nigam's underarm throw rattling the stumps before he crossed the crease.

Head himself did not last too long. The left-hander wanted to steer his Australian teammate Mitchell Starc (5/34) over the wicketkeeper's head but the feeble edge nestled in the hands of Rahul.

It was the sixth time Starc dismissed Head across all approved competitions.

SHORT TAKES

Newcastle celebrates English League Cup title

Newcastle: Thousands of fans turned out in Newcastle Saturday for a mass celebration of the team's English League Cup triumph this month. It was estimated that more than 150,000 joined the party as Newcastle held an open-top bus parade through the streets of the city. Eddie Howe's team ended the Premier League club's 70-year wait for a domestic trophy after beating Liverpool 2-1 in the Wembley final. But supporters had another wait for the official celebration, almost two weeks later. The parade route ran from St James' Park, through the city center and ended at the Town Moor, an open space where a stage was erected for an hour-long event that included a trophy lift.

Arsenal hires Andrea Berta

London: Arsenal confirmed the appointment of Andrea Berta as the club's new sporting director Sunday, with the Italian having established a strong reputation after spending 12 years at Atletico Madrid in a similar role. The 53-year-old Berta succeeds Edu — a former midfielder for Arsenal and Brazil — in a position that has been vacant since November. Berta, who has a background in banking, held roles with Italian teams Parma and Genoa before joining Atletico in 2013, initially as technical director. He left in January.

Sabalenka clinches maiden Miami Open title

Miami Gardens: Aryna Sabalenka entered the Miami Open final against Jessica Pegula with 18 career titles on her elite resume. The Miami Open crown had proved elusive until Saturday. The No 1 seed from Belarus knocked off fourth-seeded American Jessica Pegula 7-5, 6-2 for her first Miami Open title in a rematch of the 2024 US Open final. Sabalenka fired up her lethal forehand in posting 24 winners on that wing to win the \$1.1 million first prize. Sabalenka hit a backhand passing shot on match point after which she raised both hands to the air, looked up to the sky and blew a kiss.

Jun-Sung, Harimoto emerge champions

Chennai: Eighteen-year-old Oh Jun-Sung of Korea and Japan's Miwa Harimoto, 16, won the men's and women's singles titles respectively at the WTT Star Contender Chennai 2025 here Sunday.

HERO INDIAN OPEN

Chacarra clinches title; Indian trio manages top-20 finish



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gurugram, March 30: Indian trio of Veer Ahlawat, Gaganjeet Bhullar, and Om Prakash Chouhan finished in the top-20 as Eugenio Chacarra made history by becoming the first Spanish golfer to clinch the Hero Indian Open title with a one-under 71 on the final day here Sunday.

Ahlawat (75), last year's runner-up, along with Chouhan (71) and Bhullar (73), who bogeyed and double-bogeyed the last three holes, finished tied for 17th, slipping from T-10.

It was a memorable week for overnight leader Chacarra as he secured his first win on the DP World Tour with a total score of 4-under 284 at the DLF Golf and Country Club.

The 25-year-old, who entered the tournament on a special

invite from Hero MotoCorp, began the final day with a double bogey and closed with a bogey-par finish to win by two shots over defending champion Keita Nakajima of Japan (72).

Among the other Indians, Ajeetesh Sandhu (78) finished T-31, Shubhankar Sharma (75) was placed T-43, Shaurya Bhat-tacharya (79) T-54, and Shiv Kapur (83) was Tied-60 with Kshitij Naveed Kaul.

Sachin Baisoya (82) finished 64th, Jairaj Singh Sandhu (81) was 65th, Saptak Talwar (88) was 66th, and Aman Raj (85) placed 67th.

Chacarra's remarkable victory began with his win in the Hero Pro-Am earlier in the week. He shot rounds of 70-70-71 to take home a winner's cheque of USD 382,500, while Nakajima earned USD 247,500 for his runner-up finish.

ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Punia, Udit settle for silver, bronze for Dinesh

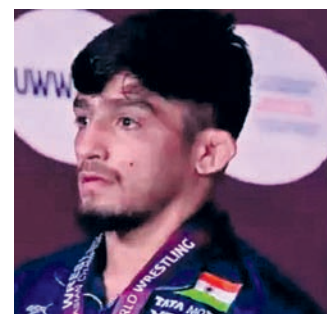
AGENCIES

Amman (Jordan), March 30: Deepak Punia won his third silver medal at the Asian Championship and fifth overall while Udit settled for his second successive runner-up finish at the continental event on the concluding day of the event, here Sunday.

The 25-year-old Punia, who could not qualify for the Paris Olympics, began his comeback with a hard-fought contest against Bekzat Rakhimov in 92kg category. He faced stiff resistance from his Kyrgyzstan rival but prevailed 12-7 in a high-scoring quarterfinal.

Japan's Takashi Ishiguro was supposed to be a tough rival but Deepak outplayed him to comfortably win 8-1. In the gold medal bout against Iran's world number one Amirhossein B Firouzpourbandpei, Deepak lost the first point for stepping out. He hardly made a move in the first two minutes of the opening period, conceding two more points on takedown. Deepak had won silver medal at the Asian championships in 2021 (Almaty) and 2022 (Ulaanbaatar) apart from bagging bronze in 2019 and 2020.

Udit (61kg) blanked China's Wanhao Zou 2-0 after prevailing



9-6 against Bekbolot Myrzanazar Uulu from Kyrgyzstan.

In a pacy start to the gold medal bout, world number one Takara Suda began with a single leg attack, pushing Udit off to open the scoring in a jiffy. Suda again attacked the right leg of Udit and converted that into a two-point take down.

Udit also attempted a leg attack but Suda got him into a headlock. In the second period, Udit went on an offensive targeting Suda's legs twice and also got Sada's right ankle in his hands but the Japanese was superb in his defence, never allowing the Indian to convert those moves into points. He did not miss his chance to get another two-pointer for a 5-1 lead.

With just 11 second to go, Suda had lost steam completely



but Udit could only get three points, losing 4-6 eventually.

Udit had settled for a silver medal last year also. Competing in heavyweight 125kg class, Dinesh outclassed China's Buheerdun to win by technical superiority in the quarterfinals but Mongolian Lkhagvagerel Munkhtur beat him in the semifinals 5-1.

In the bronze play-off against Turkmenistan's Saparov Zyyamuhammet, Dinesh waged a superb battle in the second period after being down 0-6 in the first.

His rival, who suffered bleeding from his nose throughout, didn't have the endurance. If not for multiple stoppages due to bleeding, he would have fizzled out early. Dinesh won 14-12.

India ended with 10 medals from the championship.

Son of a vegetable vendor Jhandu Kumar eyes 2028 Paralympics

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 30: Penury fuels hunger for success. This phrase comes to life in para powerlifter Jhandu Kumar's sporting career. Jhandu, son of a vegetable vendor from Harnaut, won gold medal at the recently concluded Khelo India Para Games (KIPG).

The powerlifter broke his own national record March 23 at the weightlifting hall of the iconic Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium to top the podium in men's 72kg category with a lift of 206kg.

Previously, Jhandu had broken Sudhir Kumar's national record of 192kg with a lift of 205kg at the Para National Championship held in Noida March 17-18.

The 28-year-old has had polo-affected legs since birth. His para sports journey began in

2017. Initially, he competed in shot put and discus throw. At that time, he was unaware of para powerlifting. In the F-55 category, Jhandu participated in several shot put and discus throw events and achieved success, but his destination lay elsewhere, so fate led him in that direction.

After an interesting but struggle-filled journey, he reached the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) in Gandhinagar. He began showcasing his talent under the guidance of famous para coach Rajinder Singh Rahelu. In December 2023, he won silver in the powerlifting discipline during the inaugural edition of KIPG.

"I participated in shot put and discus throw at the district and state levels. I won gold medals every time. I had been interest-



ed in gym workouts from the beginning, and this helped me build my muscles. During a state-level championship held at Pataliputra Sports Complex in Patna, someone suggested I try powerlifting. After that, I

also participated in able-bodied powerlifting events. I won a gold medal at an able-bodied event in 2022," Jhandu told SAI Media.

He added, "Until then, I didn't know about para powerlifting. Then, on the suggestion of my

childhood coach Gautam Singh (who runs The Rockstar Gym in Harnaut), I competed in my first para powerlifting event in Kolkata in 2022. There, I won a silver medal in the 65kg category with a lift of 135kg."

After Kolkata, Jhandu completely dedicated himself to para powerlifting. "After that event, I didn't think about any other sport. That same year, I participated in the National Championship held in New Delhi, but none of my lifts were successful. It started at 160kg, and I couldn't win a medal. This was the event where Rahelu Sir saw me and said he would soon call me to Gandhinagar."

Rahelu, who won a bronze medal for India in para powerlifting at the 2004 Athens Paralympics, kept his promise and called him to Gandhinagar

within 15 days. Recalling his first experience upon reaching Gandhinagar, Jhandu said, "I felt like it was a completely different world. For a few days, I thought I wouldn't be able to manage, but gradually I adapted to it." Jhandu's dream is to win a medal for the country at the Paralympics. Through the Noida Nationals, he has already qualified for the World Championship to be held in Egypt in October (which is considered a gateway for the 2028 Paralympics), and now his complete focus is on qualifying for the Paralympics.

"I still have to compete in the World Championship and then in the Paralympics. I will work very hard for this. I will go to Harnaut to be with my family for a few days and then return to Gandhinagar to continue my hard work," said Jhandu.