



Bhumi's boundaries
Actor Bhumi Pednekar opens up about the professional demands she would never feel comfortable agreeing to
LEISURE | P2



Nepal votes
Tens of thousands of people vote in Nepal's first general elections since violent Gen Z protests
INTERNATIONAL | P10



Shares bounce back
Shares rise Thursday, snapping a three-session losing run, led by gains in Reliance and metal stocks
BUSINESS | P11



Arsenal on top
Arsenal move seven points ahead of Manchester City at the top of the Premier League after scraping a 1-0 win at Brighton
SPORTS | P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Operation Venezuela in Bihar is a success



INDIA ENTER FINAL
India's Sanju Samson plays a shot during ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 second semifinal cricket match between India and England, at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, Thursday. The 'Men in Blue' defeat England by seven runs to storm into the summit clash scheduled for March 8
REPORT P12

Iran: US will bitterly regret sinking 'Indian Navy guest'

AP & AGENCIES

Dubai, March 5: Iran launched a new wave of attacks against Israel, US bases, and other countries across the region Thursday, and warned that Washington would "bitterly regret" sinking IRIS Dena—which it described as "a guest of India's Navy"—in international waters earlier in the week, while a religious leader called for "Trump's blood".

Tehran's expanding retaliatory strikes and increasing shows of defiance came even as Israel and US hammered Iran for the sixth day. The war has escalated each day, affecting an additional 14 countries across Middle East and beyond. On Thursday, Azerbaijan accused Iran of attacking it with drones - though Tehran denied that. A day earlier, US said it sank an Iranian frigate off Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Thursday allowed a second Iranian ship to dock at the port of Trincomalee and evacuated all 208 personnel on board.

All the while, US and Israel have battered Iran with nationwide strikes, targeting their military capabilities leadership and nuclear programme. Iran's attacks have targeted their Arab neighbours, disrupted oil supplies and snarled global air travel. The war has killed at least 1,230 people in Iran, over 70 in Lebanon and around a dozen in Israel. Six US troops have been killed.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi accused the US Navy of committing an "atrocity at sea" for sinking IRIS Dena in the Indian Ocean earlier in the week, killing at least 87 people. "The U.S. has perpetrated an atrocity at sea, 2,000 miles away from Iran's shores. Frigate Dena, a guest of India's Navy carrying almost 130 sailors, was struck in international waters without warning. Mark my words: The U.S. will come to bitterly regret precedent it has set," he wrote on X. Dena was returning to Iran after taking part in a naval exercise in India from February 16 to 26, held off Visakhapatnam.

Ayatollah Abdollah Javadi Amoli, an Iranian cleric, called on state television for the shedding of both Israeli and "Trump's blood". Israel announced multiple incoming missile attacks and air sirens sounded in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, while Gulf countries also reported coming under fire.

Qatar evacuated residents near US Embassy in Doha as a precaution and later reported a missile attack on the city. Saudi Arabia said it destroyed a drone in its province bordering Jordan.

The Israeli military also said a wave of strikes on Iran hit long-range ballistic missile launch sites and other targets.

A tanker apparently came under attack off the coast of Kuwait early Thursday. Bahrain said an Iranian missile hit a state-run oil refinery.

Israel issued an evacuation notice calling for all residents of Beirut's southern suburbs to "save your lives and evacuate your homes immediately", apparently signalling plans for heavy bombardment of the area.

Trump said he wants to be involved in choosing of Iran's next leader and called Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's son an "unacceptable" potential pick. **P8 & 10**

RAJYA SABHA: 4 SEATS, 5 MEN



Bhubaneswar, March 5: Five male candidates filed their nomination papers for four Rajya Sabha (RS) seats from Odisha Thursday.

Two official BJP candidates—the party's state unit chief, Manmohan Samal, and sitting RS MP Sujeet Kumar—



submitted their nominations, along with former Union minister Dilip Ray, who is contesting as an Independent but has the support of the ruling BJP.

BJD nominee Santrupt Misra and its 'common candidate' Dr. Datteswar Hota, supported by Congress and CPI(M), also filed their papers. "Five candidates have filed their papers for four

The BJP and BJD are expected to comfortably win two and one seats, respectively. The contest is likely for the fourth seat - between Ray and Hota.

Accompanied by CM Mohan Charan Majhi, ministers, and other leaders, Samal and Kumar filed their nomination papers. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Mahaling said that Ray also submitted his papers at the same time.

Around an hour earlier, Misra and Hota had submitted their nominations in the presence of BJD president Naveen Patnaik, state Congress chief Bhakta Charan Das, CPI(M) state secretary Suresh Panigrahy, and others. **P4**



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Hon'ble Prime Minister



Shri Amit Shah
Hon'ble Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation



Shri Mohan Charan Majhi
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha



Shri Dharmendra Pradhan
Hon'ble Union Education Minister

Chief Guest

Shri Amit Shah

Hon'ble Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation

Dedicates

Sulphuric Acid Plant-III at IFFCO Paradeep Unit, Odisha & Cooperative Development Conference

Distinguished Guest

Shri Mohan Charan Majhi
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan
Hon'ble Union Education Minister

Dignified Presence

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Tarai
Hon'ble MP (Lok Sabha), Jagatsinghpour (Odisha)

Shri Sampad Chandra Swain
Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Industries, Skill Development and Technical Education, Government of Odisha

Shri Pradeep Bal Samanta
Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Cooperation, Handlooms and Textiles, Government of Odisha

Shri Amarendra Das
Hon'ble MLA, Jagatsinghpour (Odisha)

Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani
Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India

Shri Dilip Sanghani
Chairman, IFFCO

Shri K. J. Patel
Managing Director, IFFCO

Friday, March 6, 2026 | Paradeep (Odisha)

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leisure



EMMA SPARKS DATING RUMOURS

Harry Potter star, Emma Watson has found love again, this time with Mexican businessman Gonzalo Hevia Bailleres. The actress and her rumoured beau were photographed by Mexican media, on a romantic holiday in Punta Mita

HILARY DUFF OPENS UP ON CHILD STAR LIFE

Actress-singer Hilary Duff says she spent much of her child and teenage years on film and TV sets rather than in school and hence she received "zero education." In a new interview, Duff opened up about not getting a traditional education as a young entertainer



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may feel empty, and completely down-and-out today. Ganesha says that this may make you feel a bit more inclined to spirituality. Meditation and prayer will engage more of your attention. You will also make considerable material progress.

TAURUS
In all probability, you will discuss certain sacred issues with your beloved today, predicts Ganesha. In the evening, you will be possibly visiting holy places. You had better make up for the lost time to finish pending work in the afternoon. Think twice before you act, warns Ganesha.

GEMINI
A long and hectic day awaits you. You will be in the mood to finish off long-pending projects at work or at home. There is a chance that your personal life may get affected due to the extra attention you pay towards work. You need to guard against hurting the feelings of your family members, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You have always been quite prudent when it comes to spending your hard-earned moolah, yet today you may feel stingier. And, you will rightly be so, for there may be unnecessary burdens and demands made on you by your near and dear ones. Although you will be aware of this, you will still be able to keep them happy, affirms Ganesha.

LEO
You will not be able to reap the rewards of your hard work fully today. You will take all matters very seriously today. You will feel a sense of responsibility and will try to find lasting solutions to problems today. It is a good day to put to rest some worries that have been haunting you for some time now, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
A heady mixture of work and partying is on the cards today. The parties may go on well into the night. You will make the right decisions today which will prove to be vital in putting you on the road to success. Ganesha says people will profit by engaging you in their work.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that for people you may appear to be a miser but when it comes to your closed ones you will never hold back or hesitate to spend. Today is a good day to take your loved ones shopping. You may overspend your budget but the spending will give you a feeling of happiness and contentment.

SCORPIO
Don't run from your troubles, learn to face the challenges and try to solve your problems. This piece of Ganesha's advice is going to help you today. And you very well know why. Take all the tips that come to you sportingly and try to implement it in your practical life.

SAGITTARIUS
A fresh and renewed you, today all your focus is on your kith and kins. This includes sneaking some time off for your beloved as well! Romantic conversations and intimacy will add some spark to the day. After family, friends too come to take their share. An exciting evening in store for you!

CAPRICORN
Singles, you may meet the one of your dreams today and plan about a future together. You will feel and enjoy the exciting feeling of meeting your life partner and letting your heart open in front of somebody, says Ganesha. All of this will not be one sided. Your sweetheart will also shower love and affection upon you unconditionally.

AQUARIUS
You will aim for the bull's eye today. Whatever you'll do today, will be done with your focus set firmly on your target, says Ganesha. You will not waste your resource on something unfruitful, and such an attitude will make your journey smoother and faster. By the end of the day, you will surprise everyone around with your spectacular performance.

PISCES
You are likely to find yourself as part of a team involved in tackling a difficult project or task today. The role you will play in this Endeavour will be noteworthy. Your efforts will yield excellent results. Everything you touch will turn to gold today, says Ganesha. Make the most of it.

Ayesha bares darker side of fame

Mumbai: Actress Ayesha Khan, who gained widespread attention after the viral *Sharrat* track from blockbuster *Dhurandhar*, has opened up about the disturbing realities that often accompany public life. Speaking candidly at a recent event, the actor revealed that beyond online trolling, she has faced deeply traumatic experiences, including an attempted rape in her life.

Khan said the constant sexualisation she encounters on social media takes a heavy emotional toll. She shared that she is "almost everyday sexualised" for her body on Instagram, where even wearing a simple top or skirt attracts inappropriate comments. According to her, having to think twice before wearing something normal is an upsetting reality.

Her account grew more unsettling when she spoke about the attempted rape she had faced in the past. Khan explained that while the incident happened earlier in her life, certain reminders, including threatening messages, continue to trigger painful memories and emotional distress.

She also described a troubling experience on a film set, when she received disturbing voice notes on Instagram. Later, she realised the messages had been sent by a spot boy from the production. The incident prompted her father to intervene, after which the production team reportedly took action.

Her revelations have reignited conversations about on-set safety and online harassment in the entertainment industry today.

Bhumi's boundaries

Mumbai: Actress Bhumi Pednekar, who was recently seen in the streaming show *Dadda*, has spoken up about the kind of demands of her job that she would never feel comfortable to fulfill. At a recent event, the actress shared instances from her childhood, the time she informed her mother about her aspiration to be an actor at the age of 12 to experiencing grand success in the industry with her intense on-screen performances.

She also recalled a moment from her school days which scared her due to bullying. The actress said, "I remember this incident very well when I went back into my class and there was like a piece of paper that had 'BBB' written on it and I tried to decipher it, it stood for big boobs Bhumi. You know when you're young these things really impact you".

Speaking on roles she might not do or aspects she might not comprise on, the actress said, "What I would not comprise on is that I would not do a character where there is disre-

spect to my gender. I wouldn't do that. But I still probably have lesser to do and I just don't enjoy that because I think that's not something the audience expects out of me. I have worked very hard into creating a space for myself which is led by performance".



'Sensationalism is a very easy reward'

Mumbai: National Award-winning actress Konkona Sen Sharma, who is receiving a lot of positive response for her work in the recently released streaming movie *Accused*, has called sensationalism, a very easy reward. The actress spoke with this news agency during the promotions of the film, and said that *Accused* stays away from sensationalism. *Accused* follows the story of a woman, who has been alleged to have sexually harassed a victim. It stars Konkona Sen Sharma and Pratibha Ranta in the lead.

The actress told, "Sensationalism is a very easy reward. It's a very quick and easy re-

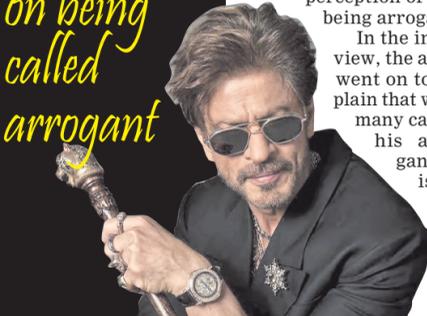
ward and it's a very quick new cycle. And we're not looking at that, actually. We're looking at this as a film with a great deal of nuance and depth and it's staying away from easy answers".

She further mentioned, "So it's really more an exploration of power and exploration of human relationships. What happens to a relationship when it is affected by an accusation like this? How does it unravel? How does it come together? And what were the pre-existing biases that are positive or negative that we have towards a woman in power,

towards a queer couple? And how does that affect our judgment of them? So it's actually a completely different ballgame altogether".



SRK on being called arrogant



Mumbai: In a throwback interview, Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan once addressed the perception of him being arrogant.

In the interview, the actor went on to explain that what many call as his arrogance is ac-

tual-ly him standing up for his self-respect and professionalism.

Speaking about the perception around him, SRK said, "I don't know if people call self-respect arrogance, then 100 percent I am arrogant. Now what happens in film magazines is that when I say this line, they cut the first part and say, 'Yes, I am arrogant.' So maybe that's why.

The actor also spoke about his working style in the film industry, revealing that he has always insisted on wanting a proper script with dia-

logues while narration of a movie.

According to him, this approach, earlier during his struggling drew criticism from some filmmakers, but later his same behaviour began to be seen as his dedication and passion for work once he became successful.

In the same interview, SRK was seen talking candidly about carving his own space in the industry despite the presence of established stars like Salman Khan and Aamir Khan when he started out in the industry.

PEANUTS



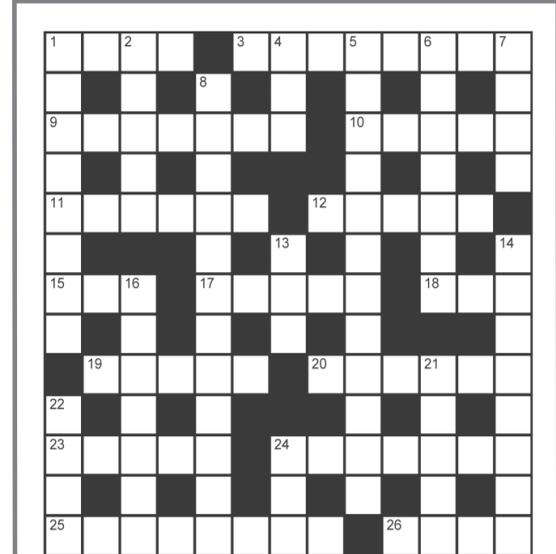
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



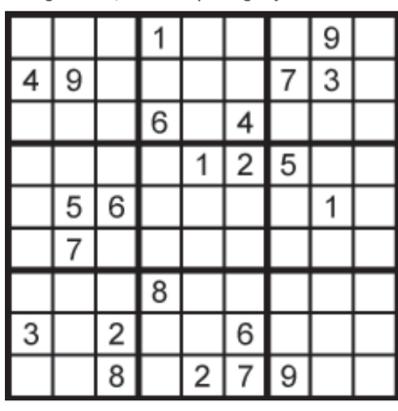
FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Stocking stuffers
 - 3 Happy-go-lucky
 - 9 Heavy lifter
 - 10 Patriarch
 - 11 Eye adornments
 - 12 Bloodhound's clue
 - 15 Hit head-on
 - 17 Duties
 - 18 Lady's man
 - 19 Queen topper
 - 20 Acquire
 - 23 Cousin of a giraffe
 - 24 Airport action
 - 25 Chao Phraya locale
 - 26 Quartz variety
 - 5 Gym peddler (8,4)
 - 6 Chinchillas
 - 7 Neutral color
 - 8 Attempt (4,2,1,5)
 - 13 Bring to bear
 - 14 Spellbind
 - 16 Sweet Italian wine
 - 21 Squirrel's stash
 - 22 Bearded animal
 - 24 Crayola color
- Down**
- 1 Little tykes
 - 2 Noblemen
 - 4 Arctic bird

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

45-year-old man hacked to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhanjanagar, March 5: A 45-year-old man was hacked to death in broad daylight in front of local court here in Ganjam district Thursday afternoon, sending shockwaves across the town.

The deceased was identified as Ashok Swain of Buduli village. Police said the murder was the result of a long-standing enmity. Locals present at the spot overpowered the accused, Dillip Jena, and handed him over to the Bhanjanagar police, who launched an investigation.

According to reports, Ashok had a dispute with Dillip, 50, of Dihapadhal village. Following a complaint by Dillip, police then arrested Ashok and remanded him to the judicial custody over a court order. Later, he was released on bail a few months ago.

The incident occurred when Ashok had come to appear in the court of ADJ in the same case in the afternoon. He arrived on a motorcycle with another youth from his village. As he was getting down from the bike near the court premises, Dillip, who was reportedly waiting there allegedly chased and attacked him with an axe. He died during treatment at Bhanjanagar hospital.



ANNUAL FEST: Rituals in progress for the commencement of Lord Lingaraj's Rukuna Rath construction near the shrine at Old Town in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

Polls ahead, Bengal Governor steps down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 5: In a sudden move days before the Assembly elections in West Bengal are scheduled to be announced, Governor CV Ananda Bose resigned from his chair in New Delhi Thursday evening.

A "shocked" West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that Tamil Nadu Governor and ex-deputy NSA, RN Ravi, will hold additional charge of West Bengal following Bose's exit.

Bose, who was appointed Bengal Governor November 17, 2022, told PTI, "Yes, I have resigned. I have been the Governor of Bengal for three-and-a-half years; it's enough for me."

He, however, did not disclose the grounds of his sudden resignation and whether there was any political pressure that may have prompted his decision.

"I have learnt from Union Home Minister (Amit Shah) that RN Ravi will replace CV Ananda Bose as Bengal governor," Banerjee wrote on her social media handle.

Meanwhile, President Droupadi Murmu appointed TN Governor RN Ravi as West Bengal Governor and Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (ret'd) as the Bihar Governor.

ADR: BJP earns 85% of national parties' income

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: The ruling BJP declared an income of Rs 6,769.14 crore in FY 2024-25, the highest among national parties, while the Congress was a distant second, declaring an income of around Rs 918.28 crore, said a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

According to the report analysing the declarations made by political parties to the Election Commission (EC), six national parties (BJP, INC, CPI(M), AAP, BSP and NPEP) declared a total income of Rs 7,960.09 crore in 2024-25, and the BJP accounted for 85.03 per cent of it.

The saffron party spent around 55.76 per cent of its income, amounting to Rs 3,774.58 crore, while the Congress spent around 1,111.94 crore, which is 21.09 per cent (Rs 193.66 crore) more than its total income.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) reported a total income of Rs 172.60 crore during the year, while its total expenditure amounted to Rs 173.86 crore, Rs 1.26 cr (0.73 per cent) less than its income.

The BSP's total income was Rs 58.58 crore, while its expenditure for the year was Rs 106.30 crore. The party's expenditure for that year exceeded its total income by Rs 47.71 crore (81.45 per cent).

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) re-



ported a total income of Rs 39.28 crore and a total expenditure of Rs 36.46 crore, meaning the party spent 92.83 per cent of its total income. The National People's Party (NPEP) declared a total income of Rs 2.18 crore and a total expenditure of Rs 1.19 crore, indicating the party spent 54.72 per cent of its total income.

The six national parties have declared a total income of Rs 7,960.09 crore, collected from all over India. The Congress was second with an income of Rs 918.28 crore, which forms 11.53 per cent of the total income of national parties, while the NPEP declared the least income of Rs 2.18 crore, which forms 0.02 per cent of the total.

Between 2023-24 and 2024-25, BJP's income increased by 55.95 per cent (Rs 2,428.67 crore), while CPI(M) registered a marginal rise of 2.96 per cent (Rs 4.96 crore).

During the same period, the income of Congress declined by

25.05 per cent (Rs 306.83 crore), and the BSP's income decreased by 9.56 per cent (Rs 6.19 crore).

However, AAP's income witnessed a significant growth of 73.20 per cent (Rs 16.60 crore).

In FY 2024-25, national parties declared a total income of Rs 7,960.09 crore, of which 85.08 per cent (Rs 6,772.53 crore) came from donations/contributions and 14.92 per cent (Rs 1,187.56 crore) from other sources.

The BJP derived 90.48 per cent of its total income from donations amounting to Rs 6,124.85 crore, while AAP received 99.85 per cent (Rs 39.22 crore) and NPEP received 97.74 per cent (Rs 2.14 crore) of their total income through contributions.

In contrast, the BSP reported 100 per cent of its income (Rs 58.58 crore) from other sources with no donations, whereas INC received 56.86 per cent (Rs 522.13 crore) from donations and 43.14 per cent (Rs 396.15 crore) from other sources, and CPI(M) received 48.77 per cent (Rs 84.17 crore) from donations and 51.23 per cent (Rs 88.42 crore) from other sources.

National parties that received the highest income from donations/contributions include the BJP (Rs 6,124.85 crore), Congress (Rs 522.13 crore), CPI(M) (Rs 84.17 crore), AAP (Rs 39.22 crore) and NPEP (Rs 2.14 crore).

NITISH SET TO ENTER PARLIAMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, March 5: JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar Thursday filed nomination papers for Rajya Sabha elections, marking a turning point in Bihar politics and virtually bringing the curtain down on his tenure as the state's longest-serving chief minister, paving the way for a new government in the Hindi heartland state, likely to be headed by the BJP.

Kumar, who turned 75 last week, may well go down in history as an astute politician who headed the state government a record 10 times since 2005, despite his JD(U) never winning a majority in the state Assembly.

The JD(U) supremo announced his intention to return to Parliament through an X post, stunning party workers. JD(U) workers vandalised the party office, alleging that the BJP hatched a 'conspiracy' to elbow out their trusted leader, with the help of 'moles like Lalan Singh and Sanjay Jha', two of his most trusted aides. Singh and Jha didn't react to these charges.

Expressing gratitude to the people of the state, Kumar said, "For more than two decades, you have consistently placed your trust and support in me, and it is on the strength of that trust that we have served Bihar and all of you with complete dedication. It is the power of



your trust and support that has enabled Bihar today to present a new dimension of development and dignity."

Kumar said that from the very beginning of his parliamentary journey, he wanted to become a member of both Houses of the Bihar legislature as well as both Houses

of Parliament. "In keeping with this aspiration, I seek to become a member of the Rajya Sabha in the elections being held this time," he said.

"I want to assure you with complete honesty that my relationship with you will continue in the future as well, and my resolve to work together with you to build a developed Bihar will remain steadfast. The new government that will be formed will have my full cooperation and guidance," he added.

Kumar was accompanied, among others, by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who flew down from the national capital, during the nomination process. **P9**

Shah to launch sulphuric acid plant at Paradip

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, March 5: Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah will dedicate IFFCO's sulphuric acid plant at Paradip to the nation and launch a series of cooperative and dairy sector initiatives in Bhubaneswar Friday, according to a statement.

The Home Minister will also inaugurate a three-day exhibition on the new criminal laws, organised by the Odisha Police here, Director General of Police (DGP) YB Khurana said.

The 'Nyaya Sanhita Exhibition', to be inaugurated in presence of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, aims to create awareness about India's reforms in criminal laws and

the transformation of the criminal justice system, the DGP told reporters.

Shah will first visit Paradip to formally dedicate to the nation the third sulphuric acid plant (SAP-III) installed at IFFCO's facility there, before proceeding to the IDCO Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar's Unit-III for a string of programme launches.

At Bhubaneswar, the minister will release Odisha's State Cooperative Policy and pre-emptively over the signing of MoUs for a school under Tribhuvan Cooperative University and the revival of Badamba Sugar Industries, the statement said.

Shah will also dedicate 1,567 Common Service Centres operated by Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)

and Large-sized Agricultural Multi-Purpose Societies (LAMPS), and virtually inaugurate need-based infrastructure for 141 PACS.

On digital front, he will launch the RCS office portal, the Direct-to-Consumer portal of National Cooperative Organics Ltd, "Coop Marque" by National Cooperative Exports Ltd, and 'Savidya', described as an AI-enabled multilingual learning platform.

Initiatives related to the state dairy body OMFED will also feature in the programme.

In all, 69 projects worth Rs 1,159.03 crore will be inaugurated, and foundation stones of 130 projects worth Rs 2,116.06 crore will be laid during Shah's visit.

Begging racket: 5 held for using kids

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, March 5: Odisha Police Thursday arrested five persons, including four women, for allegedly forcing children to beg in Berhampur city and rescued nine minors, an officer said.

The rescued children, including three girls, are aged between four months and 12 years, police said.

The accused have been identified as Mani Sindhe, 65, Ajaya Kajri Sindhe, 30, Rani Sindhe, 30, Puja Pawar, 20, and Sita Pawar, 40. All the accused reside near Berhampur Railway station within Gosani Nuagaon police station limits. Verification of their identities was going on, police said.

The rescued children were produced before the district child welfare committee for their proper rehabilitation.

Police launched the operation after receiving information about a group allegedly using children for begging.

A team comprising police personnel, officials of the District Child Protection Unit and members of the CWC began an investigation Tuesday.

During surveillance, police found that the group would arrive in an autorickshaw with children in the morning and drop them near traffic signals and crowded areas to beg.

"The adults accompanying the children would remain at a distance on the roadside and keep watch while the children begged at traffic signals," a police officer said.

The children were also left at different busy locations across the city and allegedly forced to beg, he added, claiming the practice had been continuing for several months.

Everyday items, hidden dangers: 5 microplastics questions answered

Microplastics are everywhere — in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and even in the food we eat. These tiny plastic particles have been detected in the heart, brain, and other organs, making it nearly impossible to avoid them entirely. While the long-term effects of microplastics on human health remain largely unknown, the growing evidence has sparked understandable concern about our daily exposures. In a recent column for The Washington Post, Trisha Pasricha, a physician and scientist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, tackled five of the most commonly asked questions about microplastics.

What can we do about microplastics already in our bodies? Honestly, there is no proven

way to remove them yet. Research on elimination is still in its early stages. Microplastics have been detected in blood, lungs, liver, placenta, breast milk, and even the brain. While some findings may overestimate levels, overall evidence suggests accumulation. A 2024 study in New England Journal of Medicine linked microplastics in arterial plaque to higher risks of heart attack and stroke, though it didn't prove causation, Pasricha said. The body likely clears larger particles in waste, but smaller ones may accumulate. For now, the focus is reducing new exposure, she added.

Microwaving food in plastic can release more microplastics. But what about storing frozen food in plastic bags?

Heating plastic increases microplastic leaching, though some release can also occur

slowly in the fridge. You'd assume freezing is safer — but a 2022 study from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre found that ultrapure water frozen and thawed in plastic bags contained particles consistent with the bag material. "Room-temperature storage released fewer particles. Why? It's unclear, but extreme cold may make plastics brittle and more prone to shedding," she said.

"If you pick one bottle, avoid heating food in plastic. I still buy frozen veggies — I just don't heat them in the bag. And if the alternative is eating fewer vegetables, eat the veggies," she added. **Should you stop using your plastic filtered pitcher?**

According to Pasricha, it's not a simple yes or no. Two issues matter: how well the filter removes microplastics, and whether the plastic pitcher



sheds them afterward.

Most pitchers use granular activated carbon filters. Testing has shown mixed results — some removed all detectable microplastics, others as little as 36 per cent, and one even increased particle counts (a reminder to replace filters regularly). Some NSF-certified models reduce at least 85 per cent.

"The pitcher itself, often made of polypropylene, can degrade and shed particles over time. To reduce risk, transfer filtered water to glass or stain-

less steel, or consider reverse osmosis," she said. **Which foods have a lot of microplastics?**

Ultra-processed foods are the biggest source of microplastics, often from packaging or hidden industrial processing — another reason to favour whole foods. Surprising sources include: nylon tea bags, which can release billions of particles; instant rice, containing up to four times more plastic than regular rice (washing can cut it 40 per cent); breaded prepackaged nuggets, which may have hundreds of microplastics per serving; and pink Himalayan salt, which may contain more microplastics than sea salt, Pasricha said.

"Choosing loose-leaf tea, whole protein cuts, and carefully rinsed grains can reduce exposure," she added.

What about Invisalign or other plastic retainers and toothbrushes?

Yes, these release microplastics. A 2023 study found aligners shed particles after seven days of artificial saliva exposure due to friction. Most were 5–20 microns; only a few brands, including Invisalign, released particles under 5 microns. Invisalign did not respond to requests for comment, she said.

Retainers are worn for years, creating cumulative exposure. Still, orthodontic benefits are real, and no proven harm exists. "Clean gently (no hot water) and avoid hot drinks while wearing," she added. Plastic toothbrush bristles shed fragments daily. Alternatives exist but have trade-offs. Oral hygiene matters more; reducing ultra-processed foods and plastic bottles likely has greater impact, Pasricha pointed out. **AGENCIES**

LONG-DUE FISH MARKET SOON IN PARADIP: MIN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Industry, Skill Development, and Vocational Education Minister and Paradip MLA Sampad Chandra Swain has urged Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Minister Gokulananda Mallik to intervene and ensure immediate allocation of resources for setting up a state-of-the-art, hygienic fish market in Paradip constituency to benefit local fishermen and consumers.

Paradip, located on the coast of Bay of Bengal and traversed by several rivers, has abundant marine fish availability. A large section of local population depends on fishing and related businesses for their livelihood.

However, the current fish markets in Paradip are in poor condition, lacking proper sanitation and basic infrastructure. The absence of adequate storage and hygiene measures has been affecting the quality of fish, creating problems for both sellers and consumers.

Paradip, located on the coast of Bay of Bengal and traversed by several rivers, has abundant marine fish availability. A large section of local population depends on fishing and related businesses for their livelihood

The proposed modern fish market will feature advanced hygiene systems, ice-based preservation, improved infrastructure, and cold storage facilities. The establishment of such market is expected to reduce environmental contamination while ensuring fresh fish and high safety standards. The project could bring significant transformation to the fish trade in the Paradip region, benefiting not only traders but also customers, who will gain access to high-quality, healthy fish.

Long-demanded by local residents, the project is now being fast-tracked, with Swain writing to Mallik to make the proposal operational without delay.

5 held for assaulting cops, damaging PCR van in City



Police personnel were deployed near Jhumka Dam to manage Holi crowds and check drunken driving | **Several vehicles were seized during the drive for allegedly being driven under the influence of alcohol** | **Villagers from Kantabada and Bhagabatipur gathered at the spot and allegedly opposed the police action, restraining the PCR-41 vehicle**

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Five persons were arrested for allegedly assaulting police personnel and vandalising a PCR van during Holi patrolling near Jhumka Dam under the jurisdiction of Chandaka police station, police said Thursday.

The accused were identified as Jyoti Shankar Biswal (47), Rabindra Bhoi (31), Gobinda

Behera (36), Bijay Purti (26) and Basant Chatar (21).

According to police, the incident took place around 11:50 am when personnel from Chandaka police station were deployed near Jhumka Dam to regulate the crowd and conduct checks against drunken driving amid heavy Holi gatherings. During the enforcement drive, several vehicles were seized for allegedly being driven under the influ-

ence of alcohol. However, later, a group of villagers from Kantabada and Bhagabatipur assembled at the spot and allegedly protested the police action.

Police said some of them wrongfully restrained the PCR-41 vehicle and demanded the release of the seized vehicles. The mob allegedly assaulted police personnel and damaged the PCR van by pelting stones and empty beer bottles and using bamboo sticks and wooden logs, leaving several officers injured.

During the violence, Home Guard Sujit Pratap Singh of PCR-41 was allegedly abducted and assaulted by the mob. He was later rescued by police and shifted to hospital for treatment. Police said the mob obstructed government officials from discharging their lawful duties and attacked them during the incident.

During the investigation, five persons were identified as members of the unlawful assembly and arrested. They have been forwarded to court. A motorcycle was also seized in connection with the case. Further investigation is underway, police added.

Biju Babu was architect of modern Odisha: CM



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Addressing a programme at Soochana Bhawan here to mark the state-level birth anniversary of legendary leader Biju Patnaik, the Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Biju Babu was not merely a historical figure but the architect of modern Odisha and a lasting source of inspiration for every Odia.

The event was organised by the Information and Public Relations (I&PR) department Thursday.

Majhi described Biju Patnaik as a symbol of Odia pride who dedicated his life to Odisha's development beyond political lines. "Whatever Biju Babu undertook turned into success. He was not only a hero of the past but the architect of modern Odisha," the Chief Minister said.

Paying tributes, Majhi added that Biju Patnaik embodied an institution and a strong

ideology, marked by courage, foresight and patriotism.

The Chief Minister said Biju Patnaik had envisioned a prosperous Odisha driven by industrial growth, employment for the poor, robust infrastructure, women's empowerment and a strong Panchayati Raj system to strengthen rural development. Fulfilling these goals collectively, he said, reflects the broader vision of a developed state.

"Our government is committed to realising Biju Babu's dream by building a prosperous Odisha," the Chief Minister added. Emphasising industrial growth, the Chief Minister said Biju Patnaik had long envisioned transforming Odisha into an industrially advanced state. He noted that the present government is prioritising infrastructure development to fast-track industrialisation.

BOOSTING TOURISM

Dy CM Parida launches 'Go-Homestay Portal'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida inaugurated the 'Go-Homestay Portal' here Thursday, marking a significant milestone in strengthening community-led tourism across the state. The launch coincided with state-level workshop on Odisha Homestays Establishment Scheme 2025, aimed at sensitising stakeholders on the scheme's provisions and implementation modalities.



Portal to promote transparency, accessibility, and ease of doing business for aspiring homestay owners

Addressing the gathering, Parida emphasised that homestays are not merely accommodation facilities but gateways to Odisha's rich culture, traditions, and warm hospitality. "The portal will promote transparency, accessibility, and ease of doing business for aspiring homestay owners, she noted, further highlighting that the initiative aligns with the state government's vision of inclusive growth by empowering rural households, women, and local entrepreneurs through tourism-led development.

The workshop featured detailed presentations on the operational guidelines of the scheme, a portal walkthrough by the technical team, and expert sessions by representatives from 'Homestays of India' and 'Svanir Wilderness Homestay'. The programme also included panel discussions with experienced homestay owners who shared best practices and success stories.

The event concluded with deliberations on the way forward, outlining the action plan and district-level responsibilities, followed by closing remarks and a vote of thanks.

Int'l Women's Day: BMC mega celebrations March 8



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: In a bid to promote the message of cleanliness, hundreds of women will take part in the International Women's Day celebrations to be organised by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) March 8.

A preparatory meeting for the event was held Thursday at the BMC headquarters in Ekamra Hall. The meeting was chaired by Mayor Sulochana Das and attended by Commissioner Chanchal Rana, Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo, Cultural Standing Committee Chair Ramchandra Ransingh and Zonal Commissioner Ashani L, along with other senior officials.

Several corporators and officers from various BMC line departments were also present.

As part of the International Women's Day 'Sampoorna' programme, the BMC will host a major event Sunday (March 8). The celebrations will commence at 6am with a women's

mass run from Master Canteen Square to the BMC headquarters, drawing participation from women across different sections of society.

In the evening, a felicitation ceremony and cultural extravaganza titled 'Sampoorna' will be held at Utkal Mandap. The Mayor and Commissioner have reviewed the preparations, which are in the final stages. Duties have been assigned to ensure the programme is conducted smoothly and in an engaging manner.

Women who have made notable contributions in various fields will be felicitated during the event, while the winners of the women's run — first, second and third place — will also be honoured. The cultural programme will feature dance performances, with the main attraction being renowned vocalist Asima Panda.

Additional Commissioner Kailash Chandra Das briefed the meeting on the schedule and preparations for the day-long programme.

BJD, Cong, CPI(M) unite to block BJP in RS polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Odisha saw a rare political shift Thursday as the BJD broke from its NDA alignment to jointly back a common candidate with the Congress and CPI(M) for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections, seeking to block the BJP from winning an additional seat in the Upper House.

While BJD leaders described the alliance as an understanding to prevent horse-trading in the RS elections, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Bhakta Charan Das called it "historic". "For the first time in recent Odisha political history, like-minded parties have come together to support a common candidate. Naveen Patnaik's BJD, Congress, and CPI(M) share a commitment to secularism," Das said.

He added that the Congress high command immediately approved the understanding

RARE POLITICAL SHIFT



following Patnaik's proposal. "This is not a small incident; it marks a new chapter in Odisha's political history," he said.

Das was the first to propose the idea of a united opposition candidate to Patnaik for the Rajya Sabha to prevent horse trading in the polls. He sought an appointment with Patnaik and held a discussion to field a common candidate, which was later accepted by the CPI(M) too.

CPI(M) state general secretary Suresh Panigrahy termed

the alliance "historic", pointing to a broader national trend of secular forces uniting to protect the Constitution.

"One candidate is backed by BJP, the other by BJD, Congress, and CPI(M). This signals a new political direction," he said. Patnaik, who has repeatedly emphasised his secular credentials, refrained from commenting directly on a possible new political alignment but remarked, "Time will tell the future history."

NATIONAL DENTIST'S DAY TODAY

Dental health in Odisha a silent crisis

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 5: National Dentist's Day is being observed today (March 6) to honour dental professionals and underscore the importance of oral health in overall well-being. The day highlights the crucial role dentists play in preventing diseases and promoting hygiene.

However, experts note that dental care is still widely neglected, with many people seeking treatment only at advanced stages — a concern particularly evident in Odisha.

Subasish Behera, a noted dentist and public health expert, emphasised that oral hygiene is closely intertwined with overall health. "Neglecting dental care can have consequences far beyond the mouth. Gum disease can make it difficult to control blood sugar in people with diabetes, while elevated sugar levels further ag-



gravate oral problems. Harmful bacteria from the mouth can enter the bloodstream and affect the heart, increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease. Pathogens may also be inhaled into the lungs, leading to pneumonia. Moreover, poor oral health has been linked to conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, cognitive decline, rheumatoid arthritis and pregnancy complications, including low birth weight," he said.

Despite these risks, Behera pointed to a worrying trend. "Even in developed districts like Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, awareness about proper oral care remains low. Nearly 70

per cent of Odisha's population does not prioritise oral hygiene. Many still prefer tooth extraction over preventive procedures such as fillings or root canal treatment," he said.

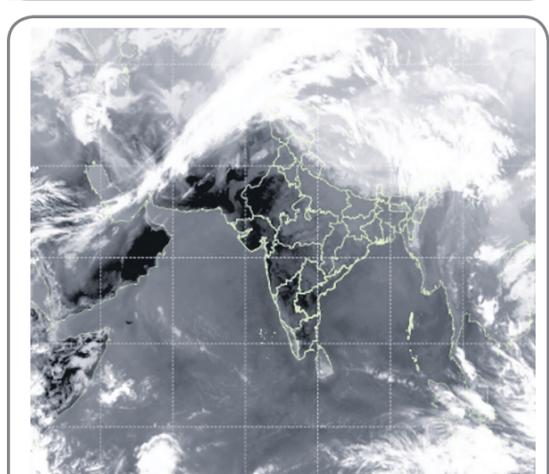
City-based dentist **Luvlyn Mohanty** echoed similar concerns, stating that most people tend to neglect dental care until the pain becomes unbearable. "Many rely on painkillers for temporary relief

instead of treating the root cause of the problem. There is an urgent need for sustained awareness campaigns that reach every corner of the state," she said.

Harsh Mohan Pathak, HoD of Dental Medicine at Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, underscored the systemic importance of oral health. "The mouth is a mirror to the body. Poor oral hygiene allows harmful bacteria to enter the bloodstream, leading to chronic inflammation and raising the risk of serious illnesses. In Odisha, nearly one in four people suffers from dental problems, with cavities being one of the most common concerns," he said.

Experts recommend simple preventive measures such as brushing twice a day, using a soft-bristle toothbrush, visiting a dentist regularly and opting for professional cleaning and scaling at advised intervals.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	91.74 ↓ 0.46	SENSEX	80015.90 ↑ 899.71	GOLD	₹159,700 ↓ ₹1825
EURO	106.65 ↓ 0.85	NIFTY	24765.90 ↑ 285.40	SILVER	₹261,797 ↑ ₹3763



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	36.8°	34.8°	Dry weather very likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha
Min Temp	21.6°	19.0°	
Humidity	85%	90%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

6 interstate women chain snatchers held

THE GANG HAD BEEN ACTIVE FOR NEARLY 12 YEARS IN ODISHA AS WELL AS WEST BENGAL, CHHATTISGARH AND JHARKHAND



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 5: Six members of an interstate gang of women chain snatchers have been arrested, Khetrarpur police here said during a presser held Thursday. The gang allegedly targeted women at religious places and gatherings as well as crowded public places in Sambalpur town to snatch their gold chains and necklaces, police said.

The accused were identified as G Bhanumati, 52, alias Gayatri Naik alias Kabita having fake address at Patanapada in Balasore Sadar, Priya Das, 45, alias Sangeeta having fake address at Charampa in Bhadrak district, S Thara, 40, and Pooja Singh, 38; all originally from West Bengal. The others were Deepa Das, 57, a native of the Jatni railway station area in Khurda district having fake address at Patiasahi in Bhubaneswar, and Kalyani Das, 39, originally

from a slum near Cuttack railway station with fake address at Jajpur Road. Police said the accused had been using fake addresses in different districts to avoid detection.

During the operation, police seized about 52 grams of melted gold plates, ₹62,400 in cash, three mobile phones, a cutter used for cutting gold chains, a fake voter identity card and other materials from their possession. A case (16/26) has been registered at Khetrarpur police station.

Addressing a press conference at the district police headquarters, Sambalpur Superintendent of Police Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo said the accused will be taken on a three-day remand for further interrogation as part of the ongoing investigation.

Bhamoo said that the interstate women's gang had been targeting major religious festivals across the state to carry out chain snatching. The gang used to target large gatherings such

as Bali Jatra, Dhanu Jatra, Sital Sasthi and temple consecration festivals. Posing as vendors selling imitation stones and ornament, the gang members mingled with crowds to snatch gold chains from women.

To conceal their identities, the accused used fake names and addresses. During a religious event at the Samaleswari Temple under Khetrarpur police limits January 22, the gang allegedly snatched five gold chains weighing about 80 grams.

Police launched an investigation and examined CCTV footage from multiple locations while using technical surveillance to trace the suspects. Six members of the gang were arrested and the stolen items were recovered from them.

Police said the gang had been active for nearly 12 years in Odisha as well as West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. The accused used to dress in local attire and blend with devotees, making identification difficult. They also used fake identity cards to mislead police.

A diary seized from the women snatchers contained detailed notes about upcoming festivals and gatherings where large numbers of women were expected. During interrogation, the accused admitted to committing similar thefts at large religious festivals such as Cuttack Bali Jatra, Bargah Dhanu Jatra and other events across the state including Magha Panchami, Dola Purnima and Sital Sasthi as well as temple consecration programmes.

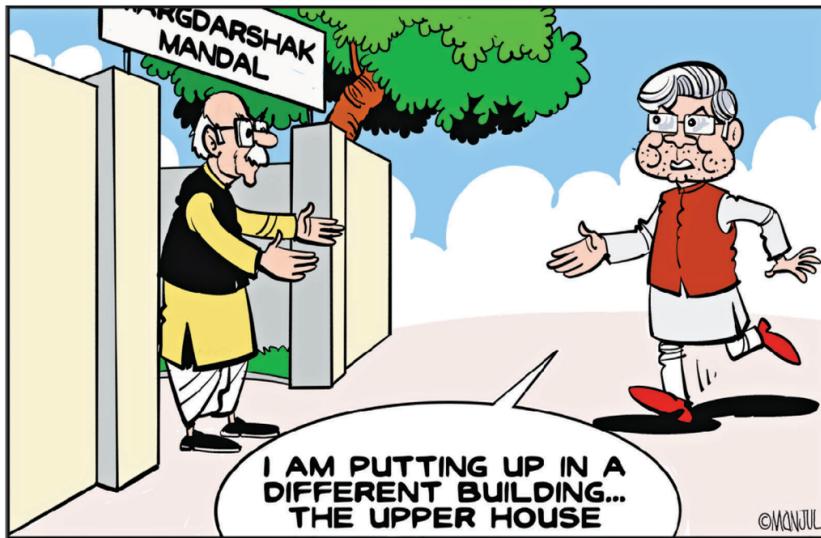
Irregular southern winds delay Arribada

Chhatrapur: The much-awaited mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles near the Rushikulya estuary has been delayed due to unsuitable weather conditions, Forest department sources said Thursday. The turtles require favourable environmental conditions, including cooler night temperatures and steady southern winds, to assemble in large numbers along the shore to lay eggs. Although sporadic nesting has been reported on islands off the Ganjam coast, officials said a large number of Olive Ridley turtles are already present in the waters near the shoreline, waiting for suitable conditions to begin mass nesting. Locals and forest officials believe the turtles could arrive in large numbers soon, especially as the recent full moon phase has concluded. The Forest department and district administration have made necessary arrangements in preparation for the turtles' arrival. The coastal region remains under strict surveillance by Marine police and forest personnel.

Child, 3 others killed after 2 bikes collide

Phulbani: Four people, including a three-year-old child, died and another was seriously injured in a collision between two motorcycles in Kandhamal district Wednesday, police said. The accident occurred at Banduli village, around 40 km from here, under the Gochhapada police station limits, when the two motorcycles collided, a senior officer said. According to locals, the collision took place when two persons were on a motorcycle and travelling from Upparshi village to Gochhapada town, while another two-wheeler with a rider and two pillion riders was coming from the opposite side. Five people, including the child, were taken to the Gochhapada hospital, where the doctors declared four of them dead, the officer said. The deceased child was identified as Kartik Kanhar, and the identities of the three others are yet to be ascertained, he said. The injured person, identified as Banita Kanhar, was referred to the district headquarters hospital, Gochhapada police station Officer-in-Charge Sanjit Behera said. Her condition was stated to be stable, he said. The investigation into the accident is underway, the officer added.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Woman gangraped; 2 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, March 5: A woman was allegedly gangraped by two persons on the pretext of dropping her and children at home in Bileipada area under Joda police limits in Keonjhar district during the recently concluded Maghe festival. The matter came to the fore after police arrested two persons in this connection Tuesday.

The suspects have been identified as Sukalal Munda of Bileipada and Basudev Gagrai of Sialjoda area, Barbil SDPO Debendra Nath Pingua said at a presser held here Tuesday.

Police said that the survivor visited the Maghe festival at Bhagalpur village in Bileipada



under Joda police limits with her children February 20. Around 9pm, Basudev offered to drop her home and took the woman and her children on a motorcycle.

He stopped near a Mahua tree by the road in Gobardhanpur village where he allegedly raped her. Later, Sukalal also

arrived at the spot and raped the woman. The suspects threatened to kill her if she revealed the incident to anyone. Fearing for her life, the woman returned home and remained silent.

A few days later, the victim's husband noticed some injury marks on her cheek and questioned her repeatedly about the injury. She then narrated her ordeal. The survivor and her husband filed a written complaint at the Joda police station March 3. Based on the complaint, police registered a case (78/26) and arrested the suspects. Later, the accused persons were produced in the court and remanded to judicial custody, the SDPO added.

From classroom to control room: Vedanta Aluminium empowers women in Lanjigarh



LANJIGARH/BHAWANIPATNA: Empowerment is most meaningful when it begins at the grassroots with access to education, confidence and the opportunity to build a career close to home. In Lanjigarh, Vedanta Aluminium is strengthening local communities by investing in education and creating employment pathways for young women. Priyanka Mahakud's journey reflects this transformation. Born and raised in Lanjigarh, she studied from UKG to Class XII at Vedanta DAV International School, the region's first English-medium school. At a time when structured English-medium education was limited locally, the school provided broader academic exposure and opportunities for personal growth. Over the years, the institution has expanded significantly and become an important centre for quality education in the region. Priyanka was the first in her family to attend an English-medium school, reinforcing the importance of education at home. Today, her sister is pursuing law in Cuttack, while her brother studies engineering in Bhubaneswar. After completing a bachelor's degree in zoology from Maharishi College of Natural Law in Bhubaneswar, Priyanka continued her studies and is currently pursuing a postgraduate degree in biotechnology through distance learning while working full time. She now serves as a control room operator at Vedanta's alumina refinery, working in the Distributed Control System — the nerve centre of plant operations. In this role, she monitors critical parameters such as temperature, pressure, flow and levels through real-time digital systems and responds quickly to maintain safe and efficient operations. Her journey reflects a broader shift as more women from local communities step into the male-dominated technical roles in the industrial sector.

Teacher arrested for raping minor

Phulbani: In a shocking incident, a teacher was arrested for allegedly raping a Class VIII girl student multiple times under Gochhapada police limits in Kandhamal district. The accused was identified as Kunu Bhoi, a teacher posted in a primary school under Katringia panchayat, has been forwarded to court, police said Thursday. He was also in charge of its hostel, sources said. As per reports, Bhoi took the minor student to a science exhibition held at Phulbani Girls' High School November 21 last year. While returning, Bhoi allegedly raped the girl taking advantage of the darkness. Bhoi further threatened her not to disclose the matter and dropped her at her home. However, Bhoi did not stop there. He reportedly took advantage of his position as the hostel in-charge and allegedly raped the girl at least six times between November 21, 2025 and March 18 this year. While the victim's friends at the hostel informed Headmaster Raja Kumar Behera about the incident, he allegedly did not take any step. The students then reportedly approached another teacher who in turn informed the parents of the girl. They subsequently filed a complaint at Gochhapada police station against Bhoi after the girl narrated her ordeal. "We have arrested teacher Kunu Bhoi after registering a case (35/26) and forwarded him to court. The victim has been sent to her home following her appearance before the Child Welfare Committee."

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. 34001/137/2526
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
PARALAKHEMUNDI (R&B) DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI
Tel. Ph. No.: 06815-222542, E-mail ID: eerbarpara@yahoo.com
e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. S.E., PKD. R&B DIVN.-24/2025-26
No. 1557 Date: 27.02.2026

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Superintending Engineer, Paralakhemundi (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate bid in Double Cover system to be received in on ONLINE MODE only for the construction of works as detailed in the table below:

1. Nature of works	Building Works
2. No. of Works	15 (Fifteen) Nos. of works
3. Estimated Cost (Approximately)	Rs. 88 lakhs to Rs. 58.13 lakhs
4. Bid Cost	Rs. 10,000/-
5. Class of Contractor	"B" Class
6. Availability of Bid Documents in the website	10.00 hrs. of Dt. 09.03.2026 to 17.00 hrs. of Dt. 30.03.2026
7. Date of opening of the Bid	12.00 hrs. of Dt. 31.03.2026
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website http://tendersorissa.gov.in .	
9. Any Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.	

Sd/- Superintending Engineer
Paralakhemundi (R&B) Division
OIPR-34001/34186/1/25-26/0002

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

For & on behalf of President of India, Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical), Chakradharpur, S.E. Railway invites E-Tender under two packet system for the under mentioned work : **Tender Notice Number: MECHCKP-25-26-33; Name of Work :** Onboard cleaning and hygiene service (OBHS) in nominated trains of TATA coaching depot of Chakradharpur Division, S.E. Railway for 02 years; **Tender Value :** ₹ 10,54,59,684.00; **Bid security :** ₹ 6,77,300.00; **Cost of tender form:** ₹10,000.00; **Place of opening of tender:** Office of the Sr. DME/CKP, S.E. Railway; **Date and time of closing of tender:** 15:00 hrs. of 25.03.2026; **Tender can be viewed at website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.** Manual offers are not allowed against the tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. The tenderer/bidder must have Class-III digital signature certificate & must be registered under IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering. All relevant paper must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-tendering. (PR-1263)

EAST COAST RAILWAY 'E' PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS

Tender Notice No. Sr.DMM/KUR/EP/2025-26/19, Dtd : 27.02.2026

The following tenders have been uploaded on website www.ireps.gov.in

SL. NO. 01 : TENDER NO. 81265278, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: ADDITIONAL WATER FILLING ARRANGEMENT FOR UNDER SLUNG WATER TANK IN LHB COACHES AS PER ANNEXURE-1, QUANTITY : 100 SET.

ADDITIONAL WATER FILLING ARRANGEMENT FOR UNDER SLUNG WATER TANK IN LHB COACHES AS PER ANNEXURE-1, QUANTITY : 626 SET.

SL. NO. 02 : TENDER NO. 81265260, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF RADIATOR ASSEMBLY SUITABLE FOR CUMMINS DIESEL ENGINE MODEL NO. KTA-19 G10 WITH ACCESSORIES, QUANTITY: 04 NOS.

SL. NO. 03 : TENDER NO. 81265274, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS: SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND GROUING OF THREE SEATER PUBLIC SEATING CHAIRS OF HIGH DENSITY, SELF SKIN POLYURETHANE FOAM, QUANTITY: 202 NOS.

Tender Closing Date & Time : At 1500 hrs. of 19.03.2026 (for Sl. No. 1) and at 1500 hrs. of 23.03.2026 (for Sl. No. 2&3).

Sr. Divisional Materials Manager/
Khurda Road

WORKS DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
MAYURBHANJ (R&B) DIVISION, BARIPADA
e-mail : bpd_eerb@rediffmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. - S.E.-81/2025-26

1. Number of works	: Road & Electrical works
2. Approximate estimated cost	: 73.47 lakh to 3.71 lakh
3. Period of completion	: 01 (One) & 02 (Two) Calendar months
4. Date & Time of availability of bid documents in the portal	: Dt.07.03.2026 to 17.03.2026
5. Last Date / Time of receipt of bid in the portal	: Dt.17.03.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.
6. Date of Opening of bid	: Dt.18.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
7. Name & address of the Office inviting bid	: Superintending Engineer, Mayurbhanj (R&B) Division, Baripada

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>

Sd/- R.G. Ray
Superintending Engineer
Mayurbhanj (R&B) Division
OIPR-34001/34025/1/25-26/0004

The Koraput Malkangiri Nabarangpur Rayagada Regional Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Ltd., Jeypore.
At/Po:- Jeypore Milk Chilling Plant Campus, near LIC Office, NH-26, Jeypore- 76004, Dist.:- Koraput, Odisha.
E.mail- omfedkmnrml@yahoo.com
ENGAGEMENT ON CONTRACT BASIS
KMNR Milk Union invites application for the following contractual posts for one year.

1. EXTENSION WORKER (ONLY FOR MALE CANDIDATE)
No. of Posts : 04 No.
Qualification : Bachelor Degree with 55% Marks and computer Knowledge (PGDCA)
Preference will be given to the candidate having experience in Extension work/SHG/Milk Union & Dairy Sector.

2. REFRIGERATION MACHANIC
No. of Posts : 01 nos
Qualification : I.T.I./Diploma/Degree in refrigeration from any recognized institution.
Preference will be given to the candidate having experience in Milk Union and Dairy sector.

For both the posts, upper age limit is 32 years as on 01.01.2026 and emolument Rs.15000/- per month consolidated.
Interested candidates fulfilling the above criteria may send their complete Bio- data with Xerox copies of certificates with email ID and recent pass portsize photograph in the above address so as to reach within dt:- 20.03.2026. The contractual post applied for should be superscribed on the top of the envelope. Applications received after due date shall be summarily be rejected. General Manager reserves right to postpone/cancel the appointment notice without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- General Manager,
KMNR Milk Union.

Central Bank of India **POSSESSION NOTICE**
Regional Office: Plot No.: 108-B, 1st Floor, Unit - VII, Surya Nagar, Near Gopabandhu Square, Bhubaneswar-751003
(For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of the Central Bank of India** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the following Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notices. The Borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned below. The Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **Central Bank of India** for an amount stated and interest thereon. **The Borrower's/ Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

BRANCH / Name of the Account / Borrowers & Address	Name and Address of Mortgagor	Amount demanded in Securitisation Notice	Date of Securitisation Notice/Date of Possession	Description of Mortgaged / Charged Properties
CHANDRASEKHARPUR BRANCH / Borrowers: 1) Mr. Bijaya Kumar Mallick, S/o.: Mr. Surendra Mallick, 2) Mrs. Kausalya Mallick, W/o.: Mr. Bijaya Kumar Mallick, Both are At: Ratanpur, PO.: Madhaba, P.S.: Niali, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-754004	Mortgagor: Mr. Bijaya Kumar Mallick, S/o.: Mr. Surendra Mallick, At/PO.: Tulasiapur, P.S.: Nimapara, Dist.: Puri, PIN-753113	₹45,99,151/- as on 14.10.2025 + interest thereon & other expenses etc.	15.10.2025 / 03.03.2026	All that part & parcel of the Immovable property situated at Mouza: Nuahat, Tahasil: Cuttack-273, P.S.: Cuttack Sadar-45, Dist.: Cuttack, 1) Mutation Khata No.: 498/ Mutation Khata No.: 498/ Mutation Khata No.: 498/749, Plot No.: 1243/2271, Area: Ac.0.03 Dec, Standing in the name of Mr. Bijaya Kumar Mallick , Bounded by East: Rev Plot No.: 1237, West: Proposed Road, North: Rest Part of Sold Plot, South: Rest Part of Original Sold Plot, Sale Deed Document No.: 10392002142 executed on 05.06.2020.
NIMAPARA BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Bijaya Kumar Mallick, S/o.: Mr. Surendra Mallick, At: Ratanpur, PO.: Madhaba, P.S.: Niali, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-754004	Mortgagor: Mr. Bijaya Kumar Mallick, S/o.: Mr. Surendra Mallick, At: Ratanpur, PO.: Madhaba, P.S.: Niali, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN-754004	₹9,78,860/- as on 12.10.2025 + interest thereon & other expenses etc.	13.10.2025 / 02.03.2026	All that part & parcel of the Immovable property situated at Mouza: Ratanpur, Tahasil: Niali, P.S.: Govindpur-192, Dist.: Cuttack, Khata No.: 746/163, Plot No.: 1752/3603, Area: Ac. 0.07 Dec, Standing in the name of Mr. Bijaya Kumar Mallick , Bounded by East: Surendra Malik, West: Village Road, North: Charan Behera, South: Rabindra Malik, Sale Deed Document No.: 10461100840 executed on 18.05.2011
PURI BRANCH / Borrowers: 1) Mr. Duryodhan Sahoo, S/o: Late Girdhari Sahoo, At: Sahoo Lane, Dutta Tota, Dist.: Puri, PIN - 752001, Odisha, 2) Mrs. Reena Sahoo, W/o: Mr. Bibhuti Bhusan Sahoo, At: Biswanath Vihar, Gopinathpur, Dist.: Puri, PIN - 752002, Odisha	Mortgagor: Mrs. Reena Sahoo, W/o: Mr. Bibhuti Bhusan Sahoo, At: Biswanath Vihar, Gopinathpur, Dist.: Puri, PIN - 752002, Odisha	₹6,48,421/- as on 18.05.2025 + interest thereon & other expenses etc.	19.05.2025 / 05.03.2026	All that part & parcel of the Immovable property situated at Mouza: Gopinathpur, Tahasil: Puri Sadar, P.S.: Puri Sadar, Dist.: Puri, Khata No.: 165/604, Plot No.: 103/1331, Area: Ac. 0.0460 Dec, Standing in the name of Mrs. Reena Sahoo , Bounded by East: Basti Plot No.: 107, West: Gopinathpur Kotha, North: Gopinathpur Kotha, South: Road, Sale Deed Document No.: 2127 executed on 05.06.1999
CDA CUTTACK BRANCH / Borrowers: 1) Mr. Pramod Kumar Samal, S/o: Late Lokanath Samal, 2) Mrs. Urmila Samal, W/o: Mr. Pramod Kumar Samal, Both are at Plot No.: 2F/239, Sector-8, CDA, Cuttack, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN - 753014	Mortgagor: Mr. Pramod Kumar Samal, S/o: Late Lokanath Samal, At: Aruha, PO: Kanikapara, PS: Mangalpur, Dist.: Jajpur, PIN - 755011	₹12,70,765/- as on 19.11.2025 + interest thereon & other expenses etc.	19.11.2025 / 02.03.2026	All that part & parcel of the Immovable property situated at Mouza: CDA Sector-8, Tahasil: Cuttack City, P.S.: Market Nagar, Dist.: Cuttack, Plot No.: 8-2F/239, Area: 518.5 sqft., Standing in the name of Mr. Pramod Kumar Samal , Bounded by East: 30ft wide Road, West: Plot No.: 8-2F/238, North: Plot No.: 8-2F/218, South: Plot No.: 8-2F/240

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 05.03.2026
Authorised Officer, Central Bank of India

UCO BANK **RASULGARH BRANCH**
Plot No.: 318/1294, GGP Colony, Unit-37, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar

DEMAND NOTICE (GOLD LOAN)

We have to inform the below mentioned Borrower that the following Gold Loan facilities has been sanctioned to you by **UCO Bank, Rasulgarh Branch**. Despite our repeated requests, you have not yet repaid the amount due. Therefore, due to non-payment of installment/interest/Principal debt, the account(s) have been classified as NPA as per the RBI Guidelines. Demand Notice was issued by the **Branch Manager** against the following Borrower of **UCO Bank, Rasulgarh Branch**. The said Demand Notice could not be served by the below mentioned parties. The details are given below:

SI No.	Name & Address of the Borrower	Loan Amount / Outstanding Amount	Date of NPA / Date of Demand Notice	Details of Gold
1.	Borrower: Narmada Parida, S/o: Jatadhari Parida, At: Plot No.: 757, GGP Colony, Near Post Office, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar, PIN - 751025	₹ 1,01,000/- / ₹ 1,20,748/- + future interest	28.02.2025 / 05.03.2025	Gross Wt.: 33.720 gm, Net Wt.: 30.5 gm

That the Bank in exercise of powers conferred under the agreement/s executed by you in Bank's favour, hereby calls upon you to repay the full amount mentioned above plus interest & other charges within **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which the bank shall be entitled to Auction the above gold ornaments to recover Bank's dues as per the terms of Loan Agreement executed by you besides exercising other rights available to the Bank. We hope, you will avoid such situation and deposit the amount immediately.

Place: Bhubaneswar
Date: 05.03.2026
Authorised Officer
UCO Bank

FOCUS MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

TRUMP'S IRAN CONUNDRUM



The Council on Foreign Relations, which did a survey on 28 February itself found it nearly impossible for the US and Israel to topple the theocratic regime even if Iran is heavily debilitated after the war

able? CFR, which did a survey on 28 February itself found it nearly impossible for the US and Israel to topple the theocratic regime even if Iran is heavily debilitated after the war. The reason is the very structure of the Islamic Republic which is "an ideological system with a multi-layered elite and base of support". It is not a "One-man Show". Although all decisions were taken in the name of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, experts like Vali Nazr, author of "Iran's Grand Strategy: A Political History" believe that the Iranian theocracy and defence establishment are "multi-nodal" where decisions are taken at different levels. He refers to a complex decision-making process involving the Assembly of Experts who determine succession and advise the Supreme Leader, the Revolutionary Guards and Clerical Councils.

The system of decentralisation might have shrunk during the strains of the past few years, "but it still provides the regime with a cadre prepared to use force to maintain power". Ray Takeyh, senior fellow for Middle East studies at the CFR believes that the West could have got much better dividends without this war. He says that Araghchi had tabled proposals that called for the suspension of uranium enrichment for several years before allowing it to then resume at low levels.

Linda Robinson, CFR's senior fellow also feels that there will be mass American casualties if special forces are deployed. Already Arab States are upset with these joint operations with Israel. The consensus among CFR experts is that Trump's ambitious objectives cannot be achieved merely with joint assaults by air or sea.

And finally, contrary to what Trump said about Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that he was "unable to avoid American intelligence", there are indications that Khamenei, in the true spirit of "martyrdom," chose to remain outside his bunker.

The writer is a former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat. Views are personal.

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and Araghchi maintained that "a deal is preferable". Was this leaked by Oman, to prevent the war, which it did not want?

This was because most of the US allies, who are being targeted by Iran now (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, The Emirates and Bahrain) had changed their assessments on the threats emanating from Iran.

Chatham House, the London-based international affairs think tank, in their assessment on 19 February, said that the Middle Eastern governments like Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt had changed their stance. These governments who were once urging America to deal with Iran and the "Axis of Resistance", were now advocating negotiations as they considered that the "greatest risks are now an expansionist and aggressive Israel, and the chaos of a potentially collapsed Iranian State".

They were also worried that any step like a change of regime in Iran as in the case of what America did in Iraq, would give rise to the Islamic State (IS) that had emerged in "No-Man's Land" after the collapse of Iraq.

The final riddle is: Why didn't Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei move into safe bunker when public pronouncements by President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were clear that he would be targeted?

The February 28 Trump-Netanyahu joint decision to launch "Operation Epic Fury"

compares implausibly with the White House announcement on February 12 after the Israeli Prime Minister's visit, that no "definitive" agreement was reached between US and Israel on "how to move forward with Iran". But President Trump had "insisted negotiations with Tehran would continue to see if a deal can be achieved".

Nor did Trump give any hint to this possibility in his State of The Union address on February 24. According to the Carnegie Endowment assessment, Trump referred to his determination to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and added that he dropped from his speech "much of the threatening language about the massive military buildup in the region".

The only clue as to why this decision was changed is possibly BBC's interpretation of the Mar-a-Lago statement that Trump and Netanyahu viewed "the Iranian leadership as at its weakest point domestically for years with its allied militias in the region decimated after the Gaza war". Did Trump believe that this would be as easy as the Venezuela-Maduro operation? Or was this decision made only to benefit Netanyahu?

On March 3 Trump laid out his objectives for the Iran war: destroying Iran's missile capabilities, annihilating its navy, ending its nuclear ambitions and preventing the arming of terrorists; and also, to try to force a regime change in Iran.

Are these objectives achieved?

There are several enigmas surrounding the present US-Israel war against Iran, answers of which are still not clear.

Is it, as economist and public policy analyst Jeffrey Sachs says, in a video now viral, an American attempt "to continue or maintain, or sustain its global hegemony"? Sachs describes the attack on Iran as "a war for control of the Middle East... a war for control of the oil of the Middle East."

Does this explain why President Donald Trump suddenly escalated his policy on February 28 from Mar-a-Lago when three rounds of talks were already held in Geneva between his team of special representatives (Steve Witkoff / Jared Kushner) and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi? At the same time, he continued to assemble the largest American armada around Iran?

Why was February 28 chosen to start the joint US-Israel "Operation Epic Fury"? There was a report from Elliott Abrams, senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) that the Trump-Netanyahu decision to attack Iran might have been made during Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington on February 11.

There have been questions about links to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Israel visit two days earlier. The operation which followed Modi's visit to Israel on February 25-26, had no connection to his trip according to the Israeli Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar. He described it as an "operational opportunity" that arose after Modi left Israel and was granted final approval from Israel's security cabinet on the morning of February 28.

This "operational opportunity" runs contrary to the discussion, negotiation and mediation that was going on. CFR, the New York-based think tank, in their Daily News Brief on February 26 had quoted Oman's mediator as saying that both Iran and America were demonstrating "unprecedented openness to new and creative ideas and solutions" during the Witkoff-Araghchi talks and that both Trump



Vappala Balachandran

MIDDLE EAST EXPERTS SAY THAT THE THEOCRACY WILL LIKELY SURVIVE THE LATEST BOMBING—BATTERED AND BRUISED BUT STANDING



Daron Acemoglu

Trump has arguably achieved Mugabe-level absurdity with his military attack on Iran and legal attack on Anthropic. A president who came to power promising no new foreign entanglements, especially in the Middle East, has launched a potentially riskier one than the Iraq War a generation ago—and with even flimsier justification

Authoritarian Drift

Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's former dictator, won the big prize in the country's national lottery in 2000. And he won for a simple reason: because he could. Once you destroy institutions constraining your power, as Mugabe did during his 37-year reign, you can rule for personal enrichment, personal aggrandizement, or simply personal entertainment. What better way to demonstrate unconstrained power than showing that the existing system of rules is a farce? The damage such behavior can do to norms and institutions is part of the design.

Mugabe's lottery echoes through two recent decisions taken by US President Donald Trump's administration, both of which advance an agenda that seeks to remove all constraints on Trump and his allies' future behavior.

The first decision was to launch a joint US-Israeli attack on Iran and kill the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Leaving aside the loss of life and the immediate chaos, it should be obvious that the attack will trigger a long period of instability in the Middle East.

To be sure, the Iranian regime was repressive, murderous, and bad for Iranians' economic and social well-being. Khamenei, leading elites, and the feared Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had blood on their hands, including the killing and arrest of tens of thousands of protesters just since the beginning of the year.

But none of this justifies initiating a new war in the Middle East that lacks support from international allies or any kind of domestic buy-in. The US is still considered a democracy where people's views should in principle matter, but with Trump risking region-wide carnage, the democratic veneer appearsthinner by the day.

No matter how awful Khamenei's track record was, he was no Nicolás Maduro, who had only a few diehard supporters even in Venezuela's military by the time Trump intervened to capture him in January. There will be no puppet regime in Iran, where state institutions and nationalist feeling are strong. When the Shah's regime collapsed in the face of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the state apparatus remained largely intact and transferred its allegiance to the new Islamic Republic.

That state apparatus now will defend Iranian interests and seek to use the country's proxies to destabilize other countries. This may even give a new lease on life to proxies such as Hezbollah and Hamas, both of which have been gravely weakened since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack against Israel.

Moreover, by virtue of his religious role, Khamenei enjoyed respect and authority among Shia Muslims at home, where they constitute a huge majority of the population, and abroad. For many, his killing makes him a martyr – the last thing Iran or the region needs.

Trump's other dangerous and destabilizing decision, which immediately preceded the first, was to designate the AI company Anthropic as a supply-chain risk. That designation, typically reserved for companies from foreign adversaries, such as China's Huawei, bars federal contractors from using Anthropic's models and heralds major restrictions on what the company can do in the future. "Effective immediately," announced Secretary of War" (Defense) Pete Hegseth, "no contractor, supplier, or partner that does business with the United States military may conduct any commercial activity with Anthropic."

The reason? Anthropic wanted safeguards against its models being used for mass surveillance of Americans and autonomous weapon systems. Neither provision would have placed meaningful restrictions on the defense department in practice. Indeed, mass surveillance of US citizens is illegal under US law and autonomous weapon systems are not a near-term possibility. Butfor Trump and Hegseth, it is the showdown and intimidation of Anthropic that matter. They must demonstrate that they can do as they please, just like Mugabe.

But unlike Zimbabwe's rigged lottery, the Anthropic decision will have major consequences, perhaps more far-reaching than the attack on Iran. Regardless of what one thinks of current AI capabilities, there is little doubt that who controls AI in the future will have momentous implications for democracy, business, communication, and privacy. Many in the industry may interpret the Anthropic ban to mean that the US government, not the private sector, will control AI.

Winner-take-all dynamics (whether real or perceived) had already driven the competition between OpenAI, Anthropic, and Google to fever pitch. Within hours of the Anthropic announcement, Sam Altman, the head of OpenAI, rushed to cut a deal with the defense department—a deal signaling that this competition is about to reach dangerous new heights. Altman is willing to give Hegseth everything Anthropic refused, including capabilities to violate US law and willingness to work on autonomous weapon systems. The implications of the action against Anthropic could be even more far-reaching. This administration, and perhaps future administrations, can now impose hugely disproportionate penalties on any contractor they disagree with. The security of private property rights is now looking much shakier. Meanwhile, the Pentagon has signaled to the world that it is intent on mass surveillance and the development of autonomous weapon systems (why else bother about these two ineffective provisions in the contract?).

Trump has arguably achieved Mugabe-level absurdity with his military attack on Iran and legal attack on Anthropic. A president who came to power promising no new foreign entanglements, especially in the Middle East, has launched a potentially riskier one than the Iraq War a generation ago—and with even flimsier justification. A president who rails against "socialism" and "far-left Democrats" uses the state to crush a private company.

But in both cases, the absurdity is the point—as it was for Mugabe. The shock value and trampling of norms embody Trump's personal and political credo: Rules are for suckers.

The writer, a 2024 Nobel laureate in economics, is Institute Professor of Economics at MIT.

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WISDOM CORNER

Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing. MOTHER TERESA

Only when the tide goes out do you discover who's been swimming naked. WARREN BUFFETT

My characters are based on people I know, but not in a direct way. MACKENZIE SCOTT

IN JEST THIS

Learning idioms is not rocket science



Melvin Durai

ISAAC BOGA, AN IMMIGRANT FROM IVORY COAST SAID, "SO IF I SAY 'DON'T BREAK A LEG!' I AM WISHING THEM BAD LUCK?"

The seven adults in the Intermediate Level English class at the Newcomer Center in Minneapolis, US, had just taken their seats when the instructor, Raj Parambola, wrote a single word on the blackboard: IDIOM.

"Today we are going to talk about idioms," said Raj, an immigrant who was teaching the class for the first time. "As you may already know, idioms are phrases or expressions that have figurative meanings. For example, if you are going to perform in a play and someone says 'Break a leg,' they do not mean that you should actually break your leg. What do they mean?"

Meshack Muleka, an immigrant from Congo, raised his hand. "When I go for MMA and my coach say 'Break a leg!' he is not talking about my leg." Raj laughed. "That would be literal, not figurative. In most cases, when someone says 'Break a leg,' it is a way of wish-

ing you good luck."

Isaac Boga, an immigrant from Ivory Coast, shook his head. "So if I say 'Don't break a leg!' I am wishing them bad luck?"

"No, but they might not understand you," Raj said. "Idioms are only useful if people understand them. Has anyone come across any other idioms that they didn't understand?"

Isaac raised his hand: "I was with a friend of mine, Bob. We were taking a walk in the park and see a long snake. I shout and run but my friend, he picks up the snake. And he says to me, 'It's just a common snake. You need to grow a pair.' What it means to grow a pair?"

Raj had never heard of the idiom, but decided to give it his best guess. "It means that you need to grow a pair of horns. With horns, you can be like a bull and not be afraid of anything. Are there any other idioms that you've come across?"

Yulia Stasenka, an immigrant from Ukraine, raised her hand. "What it means to be under the weather?"

"It means that you are not feeling well. You are sick."

Yulia smiled. "I am definitely over the weather today."

"Me too," Meshack said. "It is too cold."

Isaac found himself staring at Yulia again. She was very pretty, but he had never had the courage to ask her out.

"Any other idioms?" Raj asked.

Ana Tenkov, an immigrant from Serbia, raised her hand. "At work, we have a team meeting. We play a game first. My boss says it is a good way of breaking the ice. Then suddenly he opens a window. He says that someone has broken the wind."

Raj laughed. "That's two different idioms. Breaking the ice means releasing the tension in the room. Breaking the wind means releasing something

else in the room. Any other idioms?"

Mario Santis, an immigrant from Guatemala, raised his hand. "I work as a roofer. Sometimes when we get on a roof, the boss says to us, 'Let's hit the ground running, fellas.' But we are not on the ground. It's not safe to run. It will make more sense for him to say, 'Let's hit the roof walking, fellas.'"

Raj chuckled. "Hit the ground running means to work hard on a new activity or new project."

The students reviewed several more idioms before the class ended. As they were walking out, Isaac held the door open for Yulia.

"I'm Isaac," he said. "You have time for coffee? There is Starbucks next door."

Yulia smiled. "You have grown some horns, I see."

Isaac nodded. "I have big horns. I am a breaker of ice and legs. Come on, let's hit the ground walking."

Women's lives matter

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Sir, International Women's Day is celebrated every year on 8 March. The date was chosen to honour a historic moment in 1917, when women came together to demand better rights, fair treatment and safer working conditions. The relevance of the day is even greater today, when women not only seek equality but also the assurance of good physical health and mental well-being. While governments at the Centre and in the States often highlight their commitment to women's welfare through various schemes and freebies, the first and most meaningful initiative should be to protect women's health. Ensuring access to quality healthcare, early diagnosis and proper treatment must be a priority. It is therefore disturbing to note the findings of a recent study which states that breast cancer has become one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity among women worldwide. India, in particular, has witnessed a worrying trend. Between 1990 and 2023, the country recorded a staggering 477 per cent increase in breast cancer cases and a 352 per cent rise in deaths caused by the disease. These alarming figures underline the urgent need for greater awareness, regular screening and stronger healthcare systems to safeguard women's lives... AP Thiruvadi, CHENNAI

Chips of same block

Sir, Across geographical boundaries, ethnicities, religious and language divides, politicians are the same the world over. They say one thing, mean quite the other, and act differently altogether. Putin, for example, insisted Russia was not planning to invade Ukraine. Back home, many of Modi's flagship promises remain unfulfilled or only partially met. Post the Pahalgalam attack, Modi had promised to make Pakistan pay very heavily for its support to the terrorists who carried out the attacks. But the retaliatory attacks against Pakistan were nowhere near the "unimaginable consequences". Scottish writer Craig Ferguson's line, "I have a deep and profound mistrust of all politicians" resonates with all voting people across the world. Avinash Godbole, DEWAS (MP)

Prayers at any spot not religious right: HC



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 5: Security overrides religion, the Bombay High Court said Thursday while refusing any relief to taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers seeking to offer namaz at the site of a now demolished temporary shed near the city airport during Ramzan.

(CSMIA), where they used to offer prayers, was demolished by authorities last year. The plea sought for them to be allowed to use the same space or be allotted another site in the same area where they could offer namaz.

ty of the airport. The court maintained the petitioners will have to find some other place and noted that there was a madrasa (Islamic school) within 1 kilometre of the spot where they can offer prayers. The petitioners cannot have a prayer area in the vicinity of the airport as safety issues are involved, the HC emphasised.

Mumbai mayor writes to Gujarat CM seeking 2 pairs of Asiatic lions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 5: Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde has written a letter to Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, requesting his government to provide two pairs of Asiatic lions for the city zoo as a goodwill gesture, officials said.

Cricket fever grips Maha legislature

Members 'pitch' for tickets to see India-England match



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 5: As India and England players padded up for their T20 World Cup semi-final clash at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium Thursday night, cricket became a subject of discussion in the Maharashtra legislature with members expressing a wish to watch the match in the arena.

ing for their employees, leading their shortage. When members demand passes, no one pays heed to their request, Ahir claimed. The Opposition MLC said even police and IAS officers get stadium entry tickets, but not public representative and added the government should take a note of this.

Sonowal lays foundation for India's first river lighthouses in Assam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, March 5: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Thursday laid foundation stones for four river lighthouses on the banks of the Brahmaputra, the first such infrastructure on an inland waterway in the country.

minous range of 8-10 nautical miles, powered entirely by solar energy. Alongside navigation infrastructure, every site will feature a museum, amphitheatre, cafeteria, children's play area, souvenir shop and landscaped public spaces, positioning each lighthouse as a tourist landmark as well as a functional maritime asset, the minister said.

a necessity," he added. The commissioning of river lighthouses on NW-2 is a direct response to a 53 per cent surge in cargo movement on the Brahmaputra waterway in the financial year 2024-25, as recorded by Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAD), a senior official said.

Bank of India POSSESSION NOTICE. Includes details of the bank branch in Cuttack, the notice regarding the secured assets, and a table with columns for Name & Address of the Borrower(s), Liabilities due as per Notice, Date of Demand Notice, and Description of Immovable Property/ies.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE CHILIKA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY. Tender Call NOTICE NO. 349/CDA/2026. DT. 23.02.2026. Details regarding the supply of Surface Velocity Radar.

ABRIDGED VERSION OFFICE OF THE PROJECT ENGINEER. Notice Inviting Bids (NIB) through e-Procurement REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) for Supply and Installation of Computer Equipment and Peripherals for OWSSB, Bhubaneswar.

3 Assam Congress MLAs join ruling BJP

GUWAHATI: Three Congress MLAs "Kamalakhya De Purakayastha, Sashikanta Das and Basanta Das" Thursday joined the ruling BJP in Assam, along with two others, ahead of the assembly polls.

आईआरईएल (इंडिया) लिमिटेड / IREL (India) Limited. Tender notice for the engagement of loaders and excavators at IREL, OSCOM.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES. Office of the Addl. Chief Engineer, Mechanical Circle, Bhubaneswar. e-Procurement Notice-Bid Identification No. AC/EM/MD/57/2025-26.

SUNDARAM HOME - Sundaram Finance Group. Regd Office: No. 21, Patullo Road, Chennai - 600002. Corporate Office: Sundaram Towers, No. 46, Whites Road, Chennai-600014.

POSSESSION NOTICE Issued Under Sec 13(4) read with Appendix IV and Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Details regarding the secured assets and the borrower's attention to pay the amount due.

Form No. STK - 6 PUBLIC NOTICE. Pursuant to sub-section (2) and sub-section (4) of section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 7 of the Companies (Removal of Names of Companies from the Register of Companies) Rules, 2016. Reference: ROC/C-PACE/STK-2/248(2)/2025-26/2054.



The Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) was an institution where corruption was institutionalised by the previous Congress government and had ruined many lives. Our government cleaned up the system, ensuring transparent, merit-based and corruption-free recruitment

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

RALLIES, PROTESTS BANNED IN PARTS OF CENTRAL KOLKATA

Kolkata Police has imposed prohibitory orders banning rallies, demonstrations and other forms of assembly in parts of central Kolkata for 60 days to prevent possible disturbances to public tranquillity. According to a notification issued by Kolkata Police commissioner Supratim Sarkar, the order has been enforced under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita



of the day quote

Create a family database with 26 attributes, including family identity, Aadhaar number, rice card identity, educational details, profession, and cell phone number

Some things happen. Time will come. All things are in knowledge; some way, with the blessings of Guru Nanak, will come out

The Samajwadi Party strongly condemns both the attack on Ayatollah Khamenei and one of the deadliest Israeli-American attacks on a school in Meenab, in which 165 school-girls were killed

India turns to US for ME cargo cover

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: India is tapping the United States to secure marine cover for vessels to ferry oil from the Middle East as it looks for continuity in energy supplies beyond its current stockpile, a top oil ministry official said.

The country has stocks in tanks, pipelines and ships in transit to meet 25 days' requirement of crude oil -- the raw material for making fuels like petrol and diesel -- and a similar number of days' stock of finished fuel.

The widening war in West Asia has disrupted tanker movement through the Strait of Hormuz -- the narrow sea lane that carries about one-fifth of the world's oil and large volumes of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

India imports about 88 per cent of its crude oil and around half of its LNG, with 40-50 per cent of crude oil and 50-60 per cent of LNG shipments routed through the corridor, which is roughly 21 nautical miles wide at its narrowest point, with the shipping lanes even narrower -- two 2-mile-wide channels separated by a 2-mile buffer.

"We are in a comfortable position right now," the official said, adding non-Strait barrels continue to flow and India is tapping suppliers in West Africa, Latin America and the US to supplement any volumes lost. The official said the oil ministry is in discussions with



major producers and traders to secure oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

"We are in touch with US authorities for getting a cover from the International Development Finance Corporation for vessels to transit the Strait of Hormuz," he said.

US President Donald Trump has ordered the multilateral financial institution to provide political risk insurance and financial guarantees for maritime trade in the region.

But before IDFC is able to do so, a corpus worth hundreds of millions of dollars has to be set up for it to provide the cover, he said, adding the premium for the insurance will of course be paid by parties contracting the cargo.

The official said India is

looking at buying oil from all sources, including Russia, to replenish crude stock.

The government is in talks with suppliers, including Sonatrach and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, as well as global traders such as TotalEnergies, Vitol, and Trafigura, to secure additional oil and gas supplies.

Besides, imports of oil and cooking gas LPG have increased from the United States, he said.

While the oil stock position is comfortable, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has cut liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies to India. This has resulted in gas supplies being cut to industries.

The official said that to deal with the situation, the government could reprioritise gas allocation to ensure critical sectors

PM, Macron discuss West Asia situation

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron and discussed shared concerns over the evolving situation in West Asia, and the need for a return to dialogue and diplomacy. After his telephonic conversation with Macron, Modi said they will continue to engage closely and coordinate efforts towards the early restoration of peace and stability in the region. "Spoke with my friend President Emmanuel Macron today. We discussed our shared concerns over the evolving situation in West Asia and the need for a return to dialogue and diplomacy."

get fuel they need.

India meets roughly half of its 195 million standard cubic metres per day (mmscmd) of natural gas consumption through imports. The disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and force majeure by India's largest LNG supplier QatarEnergy, has stopped the availability of about 60 mmscmd of gas.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has discussed the evolving oil market situation with the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the official added.

US-ISRAEL-IRAN WAR

Conflict reached backyard: Oppn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: The Opposition Thursday questioned the government's silence on a US submarine sinking an Iranian warship with a torpedo in international waters off Sri Lanka's coast, with Rahul Gandhi saying the conflict has reached "our backyard and while India needs a steady hand at the wheel, it has a "compromised PM".

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Narendra Modi government's "reckless abdication" of India's strategic and national interests is there for all to see. Lashing out at the Congress for wanting India to "blindly side with Iran", the BJP said the country's foreign policy must be guided by national interest and the safety of its citizens, not by the compulsions of the Opposition party's "outdated ideological reflexes".

Several BJP leaders, including Amit Malviya and Pradeep Bhandari, spoke on the issue, calling the Congress "anti-India" and alleging that the main Opposition party pursues divisive politics. It only loves its vote bank, not the country and its people, the ruling party alleged.

Their remarks come a day after a US submarine torpedoed and sank an Iranian warship in international waters off Sri Lan-

India offers condolences over Khamenei's death

New Delhi: India Thursday condoleed the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei with Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri conveying to the Iranian ambassador New Delhi's message of sympathy. Separately, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held a phone conversation with his Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi but it is not immediately known what transpired in the talks.

ka's coast when it was returning after participating in the Milan naval exercise, a multilateral wargame hosted by India.

In a post on X, Kharge said, "An Iranian ship, a guest of India, was returning unarmed from the International Fleet Review 2026, hosted by us, and was torpedoed in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). No statement of concern or condolence. PM Modi remains mute."

Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, also said maybe it should not be surprising since the Modi government has still not broken its silence over the targeted assassinations in Iran.

Indian airlines cancel 281 flights amid ME crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: Indian carriers cancelled 281 international flights Thursday due to the Middle East crisis, and the government is closely monitoring the evolving situation in the region.

The escalating conflict in the Middle East involving the US, Israel and Iran has resulted in airspace closures that have significantly impacted flight operations. The civil aviation ministry Thursday said it continues to closely monitor the evolving situation in West Asia.

"As of 5 March, a total of 281 flights scheduled to operate today by Indian domestic carriers have been cancelled. Passengers are advised to regularly monitor their flight status and remain attentive to updates shared through their registered contact details by their respective airlines," the ministry said in a post on X.

Meanwhile, a Passenger Assistance Control Room (PACR) is operational.

"A total of 1,461 grievances have been addressed during this period through AirSewa, social media platforms, and dedicated helpline calls, in coordination with airlines and other concerned stakeholders. For assistance, passengers may reach out to the Ministry's PACR helpline numbers: 011-24604283 / 011-24632987," the ministry said.

SNIPPETS

Murder accused dies by 'suicide' in police custody

Ranchi: A man, accused of killing a 12-year-old boy, allegedly hanged himself in police custody in Jharkhand's Ranchi district Thursday, officials said. Following the incident, Ranchi SSP suspended five policemen, while departmental proceedings have been recommended against two. The deceased has been identified as Jagai Munda (45), a resident of Saiko in Khunti district. The incident took place at Namkum police station. Munda's body has been sent for post-mortem examination at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS). DSP and Ranchi police spokesperson Amar Pandey said, "A probe committee has been formed to investigate the matter. The deceased was accused of killing a 12-year-old boy." According to police, Munda hanged himself with the help of a blanket cover that had been given to him in view of the mild cold.

Man killed in Holi clash; heavy police deployment

New Delhi: A 26-year-old man was killed in an alleged clash between two families in JJ Colony area in southwest Delhi's Uttam Nagar during Holi celebrations, an official said Thursday. The incident sparked tensions in the area with protests at the local police station seeking swift action against those involved, while a large crowd gathered outside the residence of the accused and allegedly tried to attack the house, prompting police intervention. Preliminary information suggests the dispute was triggered by a stray splash from a balloon filled with coloured water, police said. The deceased, identified as Tarun, succumbed to injuries during treatment at a hospital. According to the police, the incident was reported on Wednesday when a fight broke out between members of two families -- belonging to different communities -- in the locality. Several people from both sides sustained injuries in the clash.

IAF's Su-30 MKI aircraft goes missing in Assam

New Delhi: A Su-30 MKI fighter jet of the Indian Air Force went missing Thursday shortly after taking off from the Jorhat airbase in Assam, officials said. Communication with the Russian-origin aircraft was lost at 7:42 pm, they said, adding a search and rescue operation has been launched to locate the jet. "An IAF Su-30 MKI is reported overdue. The aircraft had taken off from Jorhat, Assam and was last in contact at 7:42 pm," the IAF said on social media. "Further details are being ascertained. Search and Rescue mission has been initiated," it said. Su-30MKI is a two-seater multirole long-range fighter jet developed by Russian aircraft manufacturer Sukhoi. It is now built under licence by HAL for the Indian Air Force (IAF). The IAF operates a fleet of over 260 Su-30MKI jets.

TACKLING DUST POLLUTION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: In a bid to combat air pollution, the Public Works Department (PWD) of Delhi government plans to install water mist spraying systems on 1,000 streetlights across the capital, minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said Thursday.

In the past year, similar projects have been taken up in Narela, Anand Vihar, ITO and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) areas. Now, the PWD plans to expand the project, installing mist sprinklers on 1,000 streetlights citywide, the PWD minister said in a statement detailing the department's achievements during one year

of BJP rule in the capital.

"Dust is one of the major factors of air pollution, and to control it several steps are being taken. So far, 305 mist spray systems have been installed on PWD roads over the past year. Now, we plan to install the systems on 1,000 additional streetlights," Singh said. The existing systems, which spray a mist of RO water, have a capacity of 2,000 litres per hour. The misting systems mostly operate in two shifts 6 am to 2 pm and 2 pm to 10 pm.

Further, plantation is underway at 47 roundabouts, with the PWD also looking to increase green cover along roads and central verges, he added.

"The PWD has undertaken extensive greening and beau-

PM calls for swift end to West Asia, Ukraine conflicts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: With West Asia on the brink of a wider regional war, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday called for a "swift end" to the escalating conflict in the region saying no issue can be resolved through military confrontation.

Modi's remarks following his wide-ranging talks with Finnish President Alexander Stubb came as the United States and Israel's war with Iran entered the sixth day with both sides

launching fresh strikes, significantly heightening tensions across the region.

Stubb strongly backed India's bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council, arguing that it is of "utmost importance" along with larger reform of the global multilateral system to reflect the current geopolitical realities.

In his media statement, Modi said the India-Finland relationship in the digitalisation and sustainability is being given the shape of a strategic partnership that will energise cooper-

ation in many high-technology areas including AI, 6G telecom, clean energy and quantum computing. The two sides also agreed to deepen cooperation in key sectors such as defence, space, semiconductors, and critical minerals. The crisis in West Asia figured prominently in the Modi-Stubb talks.

"India and Finland, both, believe in the rule of law, dialogue, and diplomacy. We are in agreement that no issue can be resolved through military conflict alone," the prime minister said.

Delhi to install mist sprays on 1K streetlights



tification work at 47 major roundabouts in the city to improve the quality and aesthetics

of urban transport infrastructure. Environment-friendly green cover has been developed

In the past year, similar projects have been taken up in Narela, Anand Vihar, ITO and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) areas

Now, the PWD plans to expand the project, installing mist sprinklers on 1,000 streetlights citywide, the PWD minister said in a statement detailing the department's achievements during one year of BJP rule in the capital

at each roundabout to create a pleasant and sustainable landscape," the statement said.

At these, roundabouts, native plants and shrubs suitable to the local climate and soil conditions have been selected, it said, highlighting that green

cover plays a key role in curbing road dust and pollution.

The PWD is appointing specialised horticulture vendors in three zones of Delhi to facilitate greening drives on roadsides and dividers, officials said.

Among other measures, the PWD has also approached companies like Indian Oil Corporation, DIAL, DLF, Godrej under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities to adopt and maintain road stretches and flyovers, the statement said.

Further, to ensure prompt and transparent redressal of citizens' complaints, the PWD Service App has been developed for reporting complaints related to roads, footpaths, streetlights, and other infrastructure, it added.

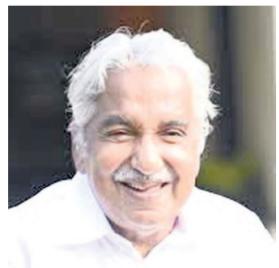
national



Every citizen in a prosperous nation has the right to good healthcare. While the government is making efforts, participation of the private sector is necessary to ensure better medical facilities for everyone

ADS AGAINST CHANDY RULE: CONG SLAMS KERALA GOVT

The Congress in Kerala Thursday slammed the state government's PRD for giving advertisements in leading English and Malayalam dailies about the alleged shortcomings during the Oommen Chandy administration



of the day quote

I hope the ongoing violence ends soon and the loss of lives and property stops. The developments have unfolded very rapidly. India has always maintained neutrality and globally its position has been that of a sensible, serious and mature nation

As an Indian citizen, several extremely serious questions are arising in my mind today. Exactly one month ago, Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi entered into a trade deal with the US

Narendra Modi became a puppet in this entire sequence. America-Israel had some other preparations behind the scenes, and something else was shown through Narendra Modi's visit

CJI meets Bhutan king

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant Thursday met the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, in Thimphu and offered comprehensive support for technical assistance and development of best practices in the digitisation and digitalisation of judicial processes in the Himalayan nation.

The CJI also met Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay Wednesday to discuss judicial cooperation, legal education, technological challenges and bilateral ties between the two countries, officials said.

A press statement issued by the Supreme Court said CJI Kant received an audience with the king and both exchanged views to further enhance and strengthen bilateral ties between India and Bhutan.

"They discussed the deep and long-lasting relationship shared by the two countries and expressed a commitment to taking the cooperation forward in the shape of judicial partnerships," the statement said.

"CJI Kant offered extensive

and comprehensive support for technical assistance and development of best practices in the digitisation and digitalisation of judicial processes in Bhutan," it said.

A separate press release said the discussions between the CJI and Prime Minister Tobgay addressed the emerging challenges posed by cybercrime and digital fraud.

"Both sides acknowledged that rapid technological advancement has enabled transnational criminal activities, often targeting vulnerable populations such as the elderly and economically disadvantaged," it said.

It was emphasised that conventional law-making struggles to keep pace with such developments, and that judicial systems must evolve to interpret and apply existing laws in ways that protect the spirit and intent of the legal framework, the release added.

"Strengthening judicial awareness, cross-border cooperation, and technological capacity were identified as key priorities in this regard," it said.



People offer prayers during a protest against the killing of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in US-Israel joint strikes, in Srinagar. Partial restrictions on movement of people remained in force in Kashmir as a precautionary measure amid the protests

Political opponents slam Nitish's RS move

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna/New Delhi/Ranchi, March 5: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's decision to enter the Rajya Sabha drew sharp criticism from his political opponents Thursday, with the RJD and the Congress leading the charge against what they said was a "betrayal" of the people's mandate orchestrated by the BJP.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, leader of the opposition in the state Assembly, alleged that the BJP had always been opposed to Dalits and OBCs, and with Kumar leaving the CM's post the party would attempt to implement its agenda in the socialist stronghold.

"The BJP has done a Maharashtra in Bihar. We have been saying from the very beginning that the BJP will not let Nitish Kumar remain the chief minister after the elections. This is exactly what has happened. This development is against the mandate of the people and amounts to a betrayal of it," he said.

With Kumar stepping down after leading the ruling NDA to a landslide victory in the 2025 Assembly elections, Bihar is set to get its first BJP chief minister. It is the only Hindi heartland state where the party has not held the office so far.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "What the Indian National Congress had been saying often during the Bihar election campaign has now come to pass."



Singhvi, Reddy set to be elected unopposed to RS from Telangana

HYDERABAD: Ruling Congress candidates Abhishek Singhvi and Vem Narendar Reddy are expected to be elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Telangana as the BRS did not field a candidate in the biennial election to the Upper House of parliament. Singhvi and Narendar Reddy filed their nominations at the Telangana Legislative Assembly here Thursday. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Legislative Affairs Minister D Sridhar Babu and other leaders were present when they filed the nominations. The last date to file the nominations is Thursday and the main opposition, BRS, did not field a candidate. This paves the way for the election of Singhvi and Narendar Reddy unopposed.

Congress leader Sachin Pilot said the decision might have been made under pressure.

He pointed out that Nitish Kumar had a history of frequently changing his political stance. "If Nitish Kumar had announced his intention to join the Rajya Sabha earlier, the results of the Assem-

bly elections could have been different," he added.

Nitish Kumar and BJP president Nitin Nabin were among five NDA candidates who filed their nominations for the Rajya Sabha polls Thursday. The other NDA candidates who filed their nominations included BJP state general secretary in Bihar, Shivesh Kumar, the JD(U)'s Ram Nath Thakur, and the LLM's Upendra Kushwaha.

Rashtriya Janata Dal MP Manoj Jha said the post the JD(U) leader shared on X appeared to be drafted in the "Delhi Durbar", referring to the government at the Centre. Jha, a Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) Rajya Sabha MP, said the people of Bihar would reply to Nitish Kumar's move.

Core supporters of the JD(U) were "feeling hurt" by the move, the RJD leader said.

Jharkhand's lone JD(U) MLA Saryu Roy claimed that Nitish Kumar's foray into the Rajya Sabha was a "planned design" to sideline him from the CM's post.

Indian-origin social media influencer killed in Canada

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 5: A 45-year-old social media influencer of Punjabi origin, Nancy Grewal, was stabbed to death in Canada with her mother in Jalandhar Thursday claiming that she used to receive threats to her life.

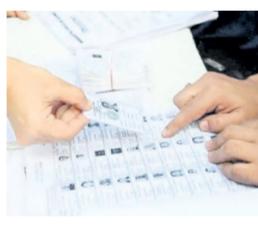
Nancy was murdered in LaSalle in Ontario March 3. On social media, Nancy used to express her opinions on different social and political issues in Punjab. She had spoken against Khalistanis and even made remarks against pro-Khalistan leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

LaSalle Police Service in a post on social media stated, "Shortly before 9:30 pm March 3, 2026, emergency services responded to the 2400 block of Todd Lane for a report of a stabbing. A 45-year-old female was located with injuries. She was transported by Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services to the hospital where she later succumbed to her injuries."

Later, LaSalle Police Service identified the victim as Nancy Grewal, adding that it continues to investigate a homicide that occurred on Todd Lane March 3. "To ease public concern, we are sharing that investigators are viewing this as an isolated incident," it further said.

Nancy was quite active on social media and used to express her opinions on different social and political issues. In recent weeks, she even spoke against Radha Soami Satsang Beas head Gurinder Singh Dhillion after he met Shirromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia in Nabha Jail February 2.

Congress to EC: Delay WB polls till 'doubtful voter' cases cleared



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: The Congress Thursday demanded that the assembly elections in West Bengal should not be announced until all cases currently under adjudication as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls are disposed of.

The Opposition party made the demand after a delegation of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee submitted a memorandum to the Election Commission (EC). Addressing a press conference, Congress general secretary in charge of West Bengal Ghulam Ahmad Mir said, "Our leader Rahul Gandhi ji has shown the country and the world, with data over the past several months, how 'vote chori' is being carried out. Whatever matters are coming to light from West Bengal are also major examples of 'vote theft'."

"In the next few days, elections are going to be announced in the state. But when the voting rights of nearly 60 lakh people in the state are under a judicial review process, how can the announcement of elec-

tion dates be made?" "The Congress' demand is that until the fate of these voters is decided, the election should not be announced. If those applications under review are not given a chance, holding the election will be meaningless. If the Election Commission does not do this, it will clearly be 'vote chori'," he said. The Congress will contest the elections in West Bengal with full strength and capability, Mir asserted. Congress leader Prasenjit Bose said that on behalf of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, a delegation submitted a memorandum to the EC.

"We have made two key demands. First, the election schedule should be announced only after all cases currently under adjudication are disposed of. We believe the Supreme Court and the EC should set a clear deadline for completing this process, and the election process in West Bengal should begin only thereafter," he said.

"On 20 January, after the claims and objections process ended, the CEO reported that about 9.64 lakh Form 6 applications and only 99,000 Form 7 applications had been received," he said.

However, the final press note issued February 28 stated that out of more than 9.5 lakh Form 6 applications, only about 1.8 lakh were accepted, meaning nearly 7.8 lakh applications for voter additions were rejected, he said.

Netanyahu in English: "We want to free Iranians." Netanyahu in Hebrew: "They are 'Amalek' - kill them all, including women and children." This is the real real of Baby Killer, one message for the West, another for his base.

SHORT TAKES

Scaffolding collapses; 2 die

Hyderabad: Two workers died and three others were injured after a scaffolding collapsed during construction work at a building in Tolichowki area here Thursday, police said. The incident happened at around 3.30 pm when the workers were constructing a parapet wall on the sixth floor of the building when the wooden plank collapsed and they accidentally fell down. "The scaffolding collapsed and the workers fell down. Two of them died on the spot and three others were injured," a senior police official told PTI.

Man held for chats with Pak numbers

Bettiah (Bihar): Bihar Police Thursday arrested a man from Majhulia in West Champaran district after discovering WhatsApp chats with some Pakistani phone numbers on his mobile phones, officials said. The arrested person has been identified as Khurshed Alam (25). According to a statement by the district police, "Acting on a tip-off, police nabbed Alam near Majhulia sugar mill and recovered three ATM cards and two mobile phones. Scrutiny of his phones revealed WhatsApp chats with some Pakistani (code +92) phone numbers. Several QR codes were also found in his chat history with Pakistani mobile numbers."

Maha transporters defer strike

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Transport Action Committee (M-TAC) Thursday evening announced it was deferring its indefinite strike, which was set to begin at midnight, after receiving a written assurance from state transport minister Pratap Sarnaik that their issues will be addressed after the Budget session ends.

Andhra mulls ₹25,000 incentive for 2nd child

ADDRESSING THE ASSEMBLY, CHIEF MINISTER N CHANDRABABU NAIDU SAID THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO RAISE THE STATE'S TOTAL FERTILITY RATE (TFR) TO 2.1 FROM THE CURRENT 1.5, WHICH IS BELOW THE REPLACEMENT LEVEL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, March 5: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu Thursday said the state government is considering a ₹25,000 birth incentive for couples having a second child or more to boost the falling birth rate.

Addressing the Assembly, Naidu said the government aims to raise the state's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to 2.1 from the current 1.5, which is below the replacement level.

"We are looking at a novel method. We will give ₹25,000 to parents having a second child or more at the time of delivery itself. This will be a big game-changer. If we can do it, it will be very useful," Naidu said.

Underscoring the importance of population management, the CM noted that several coun-

tries are facing challenges due to ageing populations.

He said the government plans to bring out a policy on population management by the end of March and implement it from April.

Moving away from the earlier population-control approach, he proposed a new population care framework based on five pillars-Matrutva, Shakti, Naipunyam, Kshema and Sanjeevani.

Under the Matrutva pillar, the government plans to reduce sterilisation and remove what Naidu described as a "perverse" incentive structure. It will also extend subsidised in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) support through PPP models to nearly 12 lakh childless couples.



tions and mandatory clinical audits to reduce such procedures, the CM said.

Matrutva will also address teenage pregnancies by aiming to reduce the rate from 8.8 per cent to below 3 per cent through coordinated efforts such as tracking school absenteeism and preventing child marriage.

Under the Shakti pillar, Naidu said women will be empowered through workplace infrastructure, urban housing, parental leave parity and cultural awareness campaigns, while Sanjeevani focuses on

digitisation of health records.

He said Sanjeevani will enable people to access a health app with features such as wellness scores, consent-based data sharing and AI-based risk assessment.

The Kshema pillar will address the challenges of an ageing population by engaging 50,000 retired professionals over the next 10 years in mentoring and flexible employment. It will also include initiatives such as 15 days of leave for preventive health care.

The Naipunyam pillar will focus on skill development to meet future workforce needs and support the talent demand arising from 610 investment deals in the state worth over ₹13 lakh crore.

According to Naidu, Naipunyam will also produce 10,000 certified caretakers annually

under the care economy - including 5,000 child caretakers for industrial creches and 5,000 elderly care assistants.

The CM noted that Japan's TFR has declined to 1.2, South Korea's to 0.7, and Italy's to 1.2. He said an ageing population and declining fertility rates could lead to workforce reduction and economic stagnation. Naidu said the state's TFR declined to 2.2 by 2002 and further to 1.5 in 2021, noting that the situation requires a new policy approach.

He added that Tamil Nadu has a TFR of 1.4 and Kerala 1.6, while Bihar's TFR is three. "If we do not intervene, the population will decline faster," he said, adding that around 6.7 lakh babies are born annually in the state. If the current birth rate continues, Naidu said, nearly 23 per cent of Andhra Pradesh's population will be aged by 2047.

7 Class X students booked for sexually abusing juniors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nashik, March 5: Seven Class X students of a hostel run by the Maharashtra social welfare department in Igatpuri in Nashik have been booked for allegedly sexually abusing some of their juniors, an official said Thursday.

The superintendent of the hostel too has been booked in the case filed under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act at Igatpuri police station March 3, he added.

"A case has been filed against seven Class X students and the hostel superintendent, while an inquiry is being carried out by the Child Welfare Committee," district collector Ayush Prasad said.

As per sources, the seven Class students are accused of giving sedatives to those from Class V-VII staying in the same hostel and then indulging in unnatural acts.

WAR ENTERS DAY SIX

Bombing of Tehran intensifies



Iran strikes out as Russia and China stand aside

REUTERS

Dubai/Jerusalem, March 5: With its supreme leader killed and its war machine under relentless US pressure, Iran now stands largely alone - its long-time partners Russia and China offering nothing more than diplomatic condemnations and expressions of concern.

Tehran has responded to the US and Israeli attacks by widening the conflict beyond the Middle East, firing missiles and drones with an impact that is reverberating through global energy markets, rattling capitals from Washington to Beijing, and paralyzing the shipping that carries 20% of the world's oil supply through the Strait of Hormuz.

Iranian missiles reached as far as Cyprus, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Gulf states, taking the

war to their doorstep by targeting critical businesses, energy infrastructure and US bases. Oil facilities, refineries and key supply routes were hit, causing severe disruption to crude and natural gas supplies.

RESTRAINT REFLECTS 'COLD CALCULATION'

With the Strait of Hormuz already shut, the attacks have sent energy prices soaring, destabilising global markets and forcing major economies to scramble, underscoring the world's exposure to the fallout from Tehran's response to the war.

Russia and China's restraint reflects a cold calculation, analysts say: intervening as Iran faces Israel and the United States would bring high costs, limited gains and unpredictable risks - burdens neither power appears willing to shoulder.

"Putin has other priorities, and chief among them is Ukraine," said Anna Borshevska, a Russia expert at

- IRAN STANDS LARGELY ALONE AFTER KHAMENEI'S DEATH
- RUSSIA AND CHINA STAY ON SIDELINES
- TEHRAN ESCALATES BEYOND MIDDLE EAST, HITTING ENERGY ASSETS
- RUSSIA AND CHINA PRIORITISE OWN STRATEGIC GAINS
- MOSCOW AND BEIJING POSITION AS MEDIATORS

the Washington Institute. "It would be foolish for Russia to go into a direct military confrontation with the United States."

A senior Russian source said "the escalation in and around Iran and the Gulf is already diverting attention from the war in Ukraine. That's just a fact. Everything else is just emotion about a 'fallen ally,'" the source said.

Beijing and Moscow have both helped Iran build military capacity to counter US and Israeli pressure, supplying missiles, air-defence systems and

technology intended to bolster deterrence, complicate US operations and raise the costs of attack. That support, however, now appears capped.

STARK PARADOX

China has spent years embedding itself in Middle Eastern diplomacy, while Russia has cast Iran as a pillar of its anti-Western alignment.

Yet as the conflict flared, both powers were constrained - China by its dependence on Gulf energy and trade and by security priorities in Asia, and Russia by a grinding war in Ukraine that has sapped its capacity to shield partners and sharpened its need to preserve ties with oil-rich Gulf states.

The result is a stark paradox: Iran remains strategically useful to both, but not useful enough to fight for.

With Russia's military, diplomatic bandwidth and economic resources still absorbed by the war in Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin's priority is to avoid escalation with Washington and safeguard Russia's interests in the Middle East, rather than gamble on Iran's battlefield fortunes.

"If Russia had supported Iran directly, it would have alienated the Gulf states and Israel," Borshevska said. "That's not what Putin wants."

Beijing's restrained response reflects a longstanding strategy: avoiding binding security commitments far from its core interests.

CHINA ALLIANCES FOCUS ON TRADE, INVESTMENT

Unlike the United States, whose alliances rest on mutual defence obligations, China prefers partnerships built on trade,

investment and arms sales, ties that stop short of dragging it into costly conflicts beyond East Asia, said Evan A. Feigenbaum from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Beijing, one of the world's largest trading powers and energy buyers, maintains ties with Iran and Gulf Sunni rivals, and in Latin America, never placed all its bets on Venezuela alone.

"If Beijing wanted to do more, it won't redirect strategic attention or military assets from core security," argues Henry Tugendhat at the Washington Institute. "It only cares about its name abroad. It cares about Taiwan, the South China Sea, and perceived threats from the US and Japan."

The conflict may even carry advantages for Beijing. From the sidelines, China can watch as US forces are tied down far from East Asia and military stockpiles are depleted, while gaining a real-time view of American capabilities and operations, insights that could inform its thinking on a future Taiwan scenario.

China's key vulnerability remains energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz, which carries some 45% of its oil imports. But Beijing has built strategic reserves and substantial volumes of Iranian oil already sitting in tankers or storage, experts say.

They say the crisis has allowed Moscow and Beijing to recast themselves as mediators. China said Foreign Minister Wang Yi has spoken with European and Arab ministers to press for dialogue, while Putin has held similar calls with Gulf leaders and Iranian officials.

Israel to attack Iran's underground missile sites



SECOND PHASE OF WAR

REUTERS

Tel Aviv, March 5: Israel's war in Iran is entering a second phase that will see its fighter jets attacking ballistic missile sites buried deep underground, two sources familiar with Israel's military campaign said.

The joint air assault with the US in Iran is nearing the end of its first week after opening salvos killed the country's leaders and set off a regional war with Iranian attacks in Israel, the Gulf and Iraq, and Israeli attacks in Lebanon.

Israel's military says it has hit hundreds of Iranian missile launchers above ground that could target Israeli cities. The second phase will include bunkers storing ballistic missiles and equipment, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

One said Israel aimed to neutralise Iran's ability to launch aerial attacks at Israel by the end of the war, which was also focused on taking out the Islamic Republic's leadership.

A military spokesperson

of the joint US-Israeli attacks Saturday.

Estimates of Iran's missile stockpile vary widely, from roughly 2,500 before the war, according to Israel's military, to around 6,000 according to other analysts. The extent of what remains could prove critical to how the war develops. Tehran has continued to carry out missile attacks on Israel and across the region.

Douglas Barrie of the UK-based International Institute for Strategic Studies said Wednesday the think tank assesses Iran still possesses some land-attack cruise missiles, precision-guided weapons that fly low to evade radar detection.

SYSTEM MUST BE 'FURTHER AND FURTHER DEGRADED'

Israel's Air Force fighter jets have carried out near-constant sorties since Saturday, accelerating further in pace after Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah militants fired rockets at Israel drawing heavy Israeli airstrikes as far north as Beirut.

In some cases, the same Israeli warplanes have struck both Iran and Lebanon in a single operation: bombing targets in Tehran or western Iran on the way out, and striking Hezbollah sites on the way back, one of the sources familiar with the plans and an Israeli security source said.

Israeli and US officials say ballistic missile and drone launches from Iran have declined since Saturday, a decrease that they attribute in part to US and Israeli strikes on Iranian launch sites and related military infrastructure.

The Israeli military has said that the decrease could also reflect an effort by Tehran to preserve its missile stocks as it prepares for a drawn-out war of attrition.

- FOCUS ON BUNKERS STORING BALLISTIC MISSILES, EQUIPMENT
- ONE UNDERGROUND SITE STRUCK OVERNIGHT, MILITARY SAYS
- ANALYSTS DIFFER ON IRAN'S REMAINING STOCKPILE

Sri Lanka lets second Iranian ship dock in Trincomalee

Colombo: Sri Lanka allowed a second Iranian ship to dock at the eastern port of Trincomalee Thursday and evacuated all 208 personnel on board, President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said, a day after another Iranian frigate was sunk near the island nation. In a televised address, Dissanayake said the vessel, IRINS Bushehr, had sought permission to enter Sri Lankan waters, citing an engine failure. "We wanted to remain neutral while dealing with a humanitarian response," he said, adding that Sri Lanka's role was limited to responding to a request from one party involved in the conflict. "No one deserves to die. Every life is precious," the President said. He also criticised opposition parties for attempting to politicise the situation. "We won't succumb to pressure. We will maintain our neutrality," Dissanayake said. According to the President, the ship had 208 personnel on board, comprising 53 officers, 84 cadets, 48 senior sailors and 23 seamen, all of whom were evacuated after the ship was allowed to dock. The development comes a day after Sri Lanka Wednesday said it had recovered 84 bodies of Iranian sailors killed after a US submarine attack sank the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena off Galle, the island's southern coastal town.



Israel orders residents to leave southern Beirut

Beirut: Israel warned residents to leave Beirut's Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs Thursday, sparking panic as people fled a swathe of the Lebanese capital on the fourth day of full-scale hostilities between the Iran-backed group and Israel. An Israeli military spokesperson, in a post on X, ordered residents of the southern suburbs to move east and north, posting a map showing four sprawling districts of the capital he said they must leave, part of the area is adjacent to Beirut airport. "Save your lives, evacuate your homes immediately," Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee posted, saying that any movement southwards may endanger their lives. Roads out of the suburbs were clogged as people fled by car and on foot, television footage showed. Gunfire was heard in the southern suburbs, warning residents to leave. Israeli bombardment and warnings have already forced tens of thousands of Lebanese to flee homes in the southern suburbs and the south this week.



More tankers come under attack

Fujairah: More tankers came under attack in Gulf waters Thursday as the US-Iran war escalated, and Iranian drones entered Azerbaijan, threatening to spread the crisis to more oil producers in the region. A Bahamas-flagged crude oil tanker was targeted by an Iranian remote-controlled boat laden with explosives while anchored near Iraq's Khor al Zubair port, according to initial assessments. A second tanker at anchor off Kuwait was taking on water and spilling oil after a large explosion on its port side. Nine vessels have come under attack since the conflict broke out between the US, Israel and Iran Saturday. Around 200 ships, including oil and liquefied natural gas tankers as well as cargo ships, remained at anchor in open waters off the coast of major Gulf producers, according to Reuters estimates based on ship-tracking data from the MarineTraffic platform. Hundreds of other vessels remained outside the Strait of Hormuz unable to reach ports, shipping data showed. The waterway is a key artery for around a fifth of the world's oil and LNG supply.



CHINA HIKES DEFENCE BUDGET BY 7 PER CENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, March 5: China Thursday hiked its defence budget to about 1.91 trillion yuan (\$277 billion), an increase of seven per cent from last year in yuan terms, as part of its efforts to ramp up rapid modernisation of armed forces to catch up with the US military.

Flanked by Chinese President Xi Jinping and other top leaders at the opening session of the National People's Congress (NPC), Premier Li Qiang presented his annual work report in which he proposed to hike defence spending to roughly 1.91 trillion yuan (\$276.9 billion in dollar terms) for the 2026 fiscal year, a seven per cent year-on-year increase, state-run China Daily reported.

The other highlight of his proposal was to lower the GDP target for the Chinese economy to 4.5 to five per cent in the face of Trump's trade tariff war, the worsening global crisis following the US-Iran war and headwinds in the domestic economy, owing to property market slump and unemployment crisis.

China, which in the past grew at double digits, has been setting a five per cent target for the GDP in the last three years amid growing domestic and



external economic challenges.

This year, the target was lowered to 4.5 to 5 per cent for the first time which was seen as an acknowledgment that the world's second largest economy faced headwinds relying more on external trade due to stagnating domestic consumption.

On the increasing defence spending, Chinese official media sought to defend it saying that the military spending will maintain single-digit growth for an 11th consecutive year since 2016, and will become the lowest percentage increase since the 2021 fiscal year.

Chinese defence experts point to the US, world's largest spender on military affairs, hiking its defence spending to one trillion US dollars for 2026.

A large proportion of the money would be used against China, state-run China Daily quoted the US' National Defense Authorisation Act for Fiscal Year 2026.

FIRST ELECTION SINCE GEN Z PROTESTS

Voting concludes peacefully in Nepal

The election is being closely watched by India, which hopes for a stable government in the politically fragile Himalayan nation to take forward the developmental partnership between the two sides

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 5: Tens of thousands of people voted Thursday in Nepal's first general elections since violent Gen Z protests toppled the KP Sharma Oli-led coalition government, with corruption and generational change in leadership as the main issues in the politically fragile country.

The election is being closely watched by India, which hopes for a stable government in the politically fragile Himalayan nation to take forward the developmental partnership between the two sides.

"The election to the House

of Representatives has been conducted peacefully and enthusiastically," said acting Chief Election Commissioner Ram Prasad Bhandari.

According to preliminary estimates, 60 per cent turnout was registered during the voting, he said.

The newly formed Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) led by former rapper Balendra Shah, who was also the mayor of Kathmandu, is posing a tough challenge to the two largest political parties - the Nepali Congress party and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist).

The RSP, formed in 2022, has received significant support during the campaign, and Shah is said to be a strong candidate for prime minister. On the other hand, the Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) were part of the government toppled by the Gen Z last year.

Nepali Congress president Gagan Thapa is the prime ministerial candidate of his party, whereas the CPN (UML) has projected Oli as its PM face.

Except for some sporadic minor incidents, the election was largely peaceful, Bhandari said.



Now the ballot boxes are being collected, and as soon as the ballot papers are collected, counting will start, he added.

Nepal's 18.9 million voters were eligible to elect 275 members of the House of Representatives. They will elect 165 HoR members through first past the post (FPTP) or direct voting system, and 110 members through proportionate voting.

Around 3,400 candidates are vying for 165 seats under

direct voting, and 3,135 candidates for 110 seats through proportionate voting.

In Kathmandu, the weather was fine, the sky was clear, and people were enthusiastically queuing up to cast their votes.

Interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki cast her vote from Kathmandu-5 constituency at Dhapasi on the outskirts of Kathmandu Thursday morning.

"I have cast my vote, I am happy that people are casting their votes, participating in the general election," she said.

Nepali Congress president Gagan Thapa cast his vote from Kathmandu-4 constituency in Maitidevi in the morning. "This election was needed to bring the Constitution back on the right track," he said.

Thapa is contesting the election from Dhanusha-4 constituency. RSP president Ravi Lamichhane cast his vote from the Chuchepati area on the outskirts of Kathmandu. Shah cast his vote from Gairegaun, Kathmandu. He is contesting the election from Jhapa-5.

Ousted premier Oli cast his vote from Balkot in Bhaktapur district.

UK sending 4 extra Typhoon jets to Qatar: Starmer

REUTERS

London, March 5: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Thursday that four additional Typhoon fighter jets would be sent to Qatar as the conflict in the Middle East escalates, insisting that the UK has the right plan for defence.

Britain's cautious response to the Iran crisis and a drone attack on its key military base in Cyprus have led to doubts among partners about its military effectiveness.

US President Donald Trump has also criticised Starmer for failing to provide sufficient support for his strikes on Iran.

Starmer told a press conference Britain had the right plan and had already been pre-deploying military equipment across the region before the start of the war.

"My focus is providing calm, level headed leadership in the national interest," Starmer said.

"That means deploying our military and diplomatic strength to protect our people, and it means having the strength to stand firm by our values and our principles, no matter the pressure to do otherwise."



“The breakout of the Middle East conflict poses some immediate-term challenges for the Indian economy by raising oil prices, disrupting exports destined to the region and the potential loss of remittances, besides threatening security of the Indian diaspora in the region
”
NAGESH KUMAR | EXTERNAL MEMBER, RBI MPC

KASPERSKY'S CYBER CHECK

Cybersecurity firm Kaspersky claims to have blocked over 4.7 crore web-based threats that were faced by 24.7 per cent of internet users in India in 2025. Internet users in India, on average, encountered approximately 1,30,209 web threats per day during the year, Kaspersky said. Globally, India was ranked 62nd in terms of users affected by web-borne threats, according to data obtained and processed by Kaspersky Security Network



of the day **QUOTE**

Our exporters cannot absorb abrupt freight, fuel and insurance shocks while shipments are delayed or rolled
DEV GARG | VICE-PRESIDENT, IREF

India's cleantech sector stands at a transformative juncture, poised to become a powerful economic engine that can shape India's next phase of development
ADITYA NARAYAN MISHRA | HR MD AND CEO, CIEL

India's cleantech sector stands at a transformative juncture, poised to become a powerful economic engine that can shape India's next phase of development
ABHISHEK SINGH | PRESIDENT UK & EUROPE, MASTEK

MIDDLE EAST ON BOIL

REFINERS TAP RUSSIAN OIL

India is vulnerable to energy supply shocks, with crude stocks covering only about 25 days of demand

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 5: Refiners in India have started tapping Russian oil aboard vessels floating off the country's coast to make up for the loss of Middle Eastern crude due to the Iran war, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said Thursday.

India is vulnerable to energy supply shocks, with crude stocks covering only about 25 days of demand.

India was the top buyer of Russian seaborne crude after Moscow's 2022 Ukraine invasion, but in January its refiners started to reduce purchases, helping New Delhi avoid 25% tariffs imposed by Washington and clinch an interim trade deal.

On Thursday, the Suezmax tanker Odune carrying about



INDIAN OIL BOUGHT RUSSIAN OIL FLOATING NEAR INDIA **IOC WANTS TO EXPEDITE RUSSIAN OIL PURCHASES, COMPANY SOURCE SAYS** **FLEET WITH 9.5 MLN BARRELS OF RUSSIAN CRUDE NEAR INDIAN WATERS** **OTHER INDIAN REFINERS ARE ALSO CONSIDERING BUYING RUSSIAN OIL**

“About 30 million barrels of Russian oil is available and loaded on vessels in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea region and Singapore Strait, including volumes in floating storage. Some of these vessels have not yet declared their destination ... If Indian refiners won't act, all these can start moving to China in a day or two
”
SUMIT RITOLIA | ANALYST, KPLER

a million barrels of Russian oil berthed at eastern Paradip port for delivery to state refiner Indian Oil Corp, according to a shipping source. The vessel had been floating in Indian waters, the person said.

IOC is also scheduled to receive about 700,000 barrels of Russian oil loaded on the Spring Fortune at Vadinar port in western India Saturday, the source said.

A source at Indian Oil said his company is expediting purchases of Russian oil, including that loaded on vessels floating around India. Indian Oil did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

About 9.5 million barrels of Russian crude is floating near Indian waters and able to arrive within weeks, an industry source with direct knowledge of Russian trade told Reuters.

A source at another Indian refiner said his firm was also considering buying Russian oil floating near India.

"Should Middle Eastern inflows tighten, Indian refiners

could pivot back toward Russian grades relatively quickly," said Sumit Ritolia, analyst at ship-tracking firm Kpler.

FORCED TO SEEK ALTERNATIVE SUPPLY

The disruption has immediate market consequences, with about 40% of India's crude imports moving through the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most vital oil export route, the source said, and the near-closure of the route has compelled the No 3 oil consumer to seek alternatives.

Indian refiners process about 5.6 million barrels per day of crude. The Strait has become inaccessible after vessels were struck by Iranian attacks that followed US and Israeli strikes on Iran-based targets that commenced Saturday.

The industry source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Russia was ready to help India meet up to 40% of its crude needs.

India's imports of Russian

GAIL weighs supply cuts

India's GAIL (India) said Thursday it will assess curbing supplies to natural gas customers after a force majeure notice from long-term supplier Petronet LNG over constraints on vessels as conflict escalates in the Middle East. The US and Israel's war on Iran has disrupted fuel shipments from the Gulf, affecting

India's imports of liquefied natural gas from key supplier Qatar. Fallout from the US-Israeli attacks on Iran and a widening war has brought the transit of oil and LNG through the Strait of Hormuz to a near halt after some vessels in the area were hit. The allocation of LNG from Petronet to GAIL has been reduced to zero with effect from March 4, GAIL said, adding that the potential impact from the force majeure could not be quantified. LNG supplies to GAIL from other sources and suppliers are currently unaffected, the gas marketing company said in a statement to stock exchanges. Petronet LNG, India's top gas importer, Wednesday issued a force majeure notice to its supplier, QatarEnergy, and to local buyers like GAIL and Indian Oil Corp, after its LNG tankers were unable to reach the LNG loading terminal at Ras Laffan, it said in an exchange filing. GAIL and IOC have already reduced gas supplies to industrial customers, Reuters reported Tuesday. India imported 27 million metric tons of LNG in 2024/25, about half of its overall gas consumption, according to government data. The bulk of the LNG comes from Qatar.

Adani-Total Gas triples industrial gas price

Adani Total Gas Ltd, the city gas joint venture of Adani Group and France's TotalEnergies, has nearly tripled gas prices for large industrial consumers after disruptions to LNG supplies triggered by the West Asia conflict halting shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, sources said. The company raised industrial gas prices to about Rs 119 per standard cubic metre from Rs 40, according to a company memo cited by sources, as it tapped costlier alternative supplies following curbs in contracted LNG availability.

MRPL shuts refining units after oil shortage

India's Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals has shut a crude unit and some secondary units at its 300,000-barrel-per-day refinery due to oil shortage, three sources with knowledge of the matter said Thursday. Asian refiners are struggling to secure prompt replacement crude cargoes as Iranian threats to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz have disrupted crude oil flows. The state-run refiner shut from Wednesday evening the 100,000-barrel-per-day crude unit and secondary units, including a hydrocracker, at its complex in the southern state of Karnataka, two sources said.

crude fell to about 1.1 million barrels per day in January, the lowest since November 2022, as New Delhi sought relief from US tariffs, pushing

Moscow's share of overall oil imports down to 21.2%, industry data showed. The source said the share climbed back to around 30% in February.

Rs rebounds from lowest level to settle 41p higher at 91.64

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 5: The rupee rebounded from its lowest level and settled with a gain of 41 paise at 91.64 against the US dollar Thursday on the back of a buying trend in domestic equity markets and suspected RBI intervention.

According to forex analysts, the Reserve Bank seems to have intervened to help the local currency from extreme volatility due to uncertainties on the ongoing war involving the US, Israel and Iran.

However, a firm dollar, rising crude oil prices and withdrawal of foreign funds kept the rupee under pressure, they said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 92.16 and touched an intraday high of 91.30 against the greenback. The currency ended the session at 91.64 against the dollar, registering a gain of 41 paise from the previous closing level.

The Indian currency slumped 56 paise to close at its all-time low of 92.05 against US dollar Wednesday, after logging a steep loss of 41 paise on Monday.

The forex market was closed Tuesday on account of Holi.



"Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have significantly impacted the Indian rupee. Concerns regarding crude supply and elevated oil prices have exerted depreciation pressure on the INR," according to Sameer Karyatt, Executive Director and Head of Trading at DBS Bank India.

Karyatt further noted that this pressure on the INR has been amplified by a shift towards safe-haven assets in the current uncertain environment, leading to an approximate 1.4 per cent depreciation this week.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.31 per cent higher at 99.07.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was up 2.84 per cent at \$83.71 per barrel in futures trade, after escalating threats of disruptions in the flow of crude through the Strait of Hormuz.

According to experts, India faces the risk of a sharp increase in its import bill with the rising crude prices in the international market, as the country's 85 per cent fuel requirement is met through imports.

Foreign institutional investors sold equities worth Rs 8,752.65 crore on a net basis Thursday, according to exchange data.

SHORT TAKES

Volume of electricity trade on IEX jumps

New Delhi: Indian Energy Exchange Thursday said that the volume of electricity trade on the platform grew by 30.4 per cent annually to 12,550 million units (MU) in February. Also, a total of 18.86 lakh renewable energy certificates (RECs) were traded last month, marking a 15.2 per cent year-on-year increase, an IEX statement said. The bourse achieved the monthly trade volume of 12,550 MU in February 2026, which was 30.4 per cent higher than the number recorded in the same month a year ago. It logged a total of 18.86 lakh RECs traded between February 11 and February 25 this year at a price ranging from Rs 333-337 apiece. The clearing price in the Day Ahead Market (DAM) at Rs 3.58/unit last month was 18.3 per cent lower year-on-year, while the price in the Real Time Market (RTM) at Rs 3.59/unit declined 18.7 per cent.

IPO: PhonePe aims \$10.5bn valuation

Mumbai: Walmart-backed Indian fintech firm PhonePe, the country's most used payments platform, is aiming to list at a valuation of between \$9 billion and \$10.5 billion, two people with direct knowledge of the matter said. That suggests the IPO will raise about \$900 million to \$1.05 billion. But even at the top end, the deal would mark a cut from the \$12 billion valuation at which PhonePe last raised \$100 million in private markets in 2023. Walmart will trim its stake in PhonePe by about 12% in the firm's initial public offering, while Tiger Global and Microsoft plan to exit their stakes, according to the firm's IPO filing. The three firms will sell around 50.7 million shares in the offering and PhonePe will not issue any new shares.

Markets take a breather

Reliance, metals lift Indian shares after three-session selloff

REUTERS

Mumbai, March 5: Indian shares rose Thursday, snapping a three-session losing run, led by gains in Reliance and metal stocks while tracking a recovery in global risk appetite after a heavy selloff triggered by the Middle East crisis.

The Nifty 50 rose 1.17% to 24,765.90 and the BSE Sensex added 1.14% to 80,015.90.

The benchmarks had fallen about 4% each since Friday, with the decline this week triggered by the US-Israel assault on Iran, which sent oil prices higher and kindled inflation concerns.

MSCI's broadest index for Asia-Pacific stocks outside Japan rose 2.6%, after sliding 8.6% over the past three sessions.

Back home, 15 of the 16 major sectors logged gains. The broader mid-caps and mid-caps added 1.6% and 1.5%, respectively.

Nifty heavyweight Reliance Industries rose 3.3% after los-



“(Today's rise) is more due to attractive valuations after the recent selloff and on easing fears of any immediate squeeze on crude supply after the US President's comments that crude flows will be protected
”
ANITA GANDHI | HEAD OF INSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS, ARIHANT CAPITAL MARKETS

ing about 4.5% over the last three sessions, with brokerages JM Financial and CLSA saying that the recent correction in the stock was overdue.

"Today's market uptick is a temporary bounce, driven largely by Reliance rebound-

ing from its sharp recent slide. As an index heavyweight, its snapback did most of the heavy lifting for the benchmarks," said Anita Gandhi, head of institutional business at Arihant Capital Markets.

Gains in Reliance powered energy and oil and gas indexes 1.9% and 1.6% higher, respectively.

About 2,210 of the 3,336 stocks in the NSE universe advanced, outweighing the decline in 1,039 stocks.

Crude oil prices rose 1.9% to \$82.9 per barrel as of 15:30 IST. Higher oil prices are typically negative for India, the world's third-largest crude importer.

Among individual stocks, Hindalco Industries and National Aluminium jumped 3.6% and 6%, leading the metal index 2.3% higher, on rising aluminium prices due to supply concerns. This was after Aluminium Bahrain halted shipments as the Strait of Hormuz faced a near-total shipping freeze.

PROFIT-BOOKING

Gold dips by ₹7,600, silver tanks ₹27,700



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: Gold prices plunged by Rs 7,600 per 10 grams and silver tanked by Rs 27,700 per kg in the national capital Thursday following profit taking by investors after recent gains.

el-Iran geopolitical tensions was countered by sharp profit-booking at elevated levels," Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk, said. Bullion markets remained closed Tuesday and Wednesday due to Holi.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also slumped by Rs 7,600, or 4.4 per cent, to Rs 1,65,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It settled at Rs 1,72,800 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

Globally, spot silver was trading marginally higher at \$84.11 per ounce, while gold gained \$12.60, or 0.25 per cent, to \$5,153.91 per ounce.

Tax-cut, seasonal demand boost Feb auto retail sales

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 5: India's retail vehicle sales jumped 25.6% in February, as last year's tax cuts and a pick-up in weddings drove demand for two-wheelers and passenger vehicles, the auto dealers' body said Thursday.

Analysts had expected double-digit year-on-year growth in February, supported by price cuts, new model launches and firm rural demand, after India cut taxes on vehicles last September to boost consumption in the wake of steep US tariffs.

Two-wheeler sales jumped 25% from a year ago in February, while passenger vehicle

sales climbed 26.1%, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations said, adding that demand was supported by weddings with enquiries rising across rural and urban markets.

Over two-thirds of dealers surveyed by the association expect retail sales to grow in March, buoyed by festival-driven demand and fiscal year-end purchases. However, dealers have flagged supply constraints for some models.

Passenger vehicle inventory, or the average time a car remained on the showroom floor, fell for a fifth consecutive month to 27-29 days from 32-34 days in January.

Senco Gold & Diamonds unveils Shape of You AI app

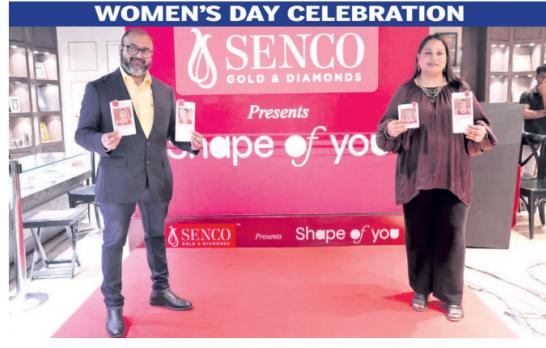
POST NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata, March 5: In a world where words often take centre stage, Senco Gold & Diamonds — one of India's leading pan-India jewellery retailers, with a legacy spanning over eighty-five years of trust — launches the Shape of You AI application in celebration of Women's Day. Built on refined karigari, design integrity, and a deep understanding of Indian aesthetics, Senco's legacy now enters a new era where design intelligence meets personal insight.

Shape of You marks Senco's first expert-led styling initiative, redefining how customers choose jewellery by aligning it

with their unique face shape and natural features. Rooted in the belief that every face is distinct — and so should be the jewellery that adorns it — this innovation seamlessly blends technology with personalised styling. It enables customers to discover designs that genuinely complement their individuality. At its core lies Senco's understanding that jewellery today is not merely an ornament, but an expression of identity and self.

Commenting on the initiative, Suvankar Sen, MD & CEO, Senco Gold & Diamonds, said, "Often, women instinctively know when a piece of jewellery feels right, even if they cannot explain why.



The Shape of You is one of our many technology applications for better customer experience and drive unique service to customers a one of its kind,

and first time in jewellery industry."

This Women's Day Senco Gold & Diamonds also launched some exciting offers across all

showrooms, which includes special flat Rs 3000/- off on per 10 grams of gold jewellery buying along (with up to 15% making charges* discount), up to 15% on diamond value and up to 75% off on making charges on purchase of all diamond jewellery, (special offers for all women, girls, etc), up to 15% off on making charges (or MRP as applicable) of silver items (excluding coins) discount of up to 20% on leather items of Sennes, etc.

Additionally, Senco Gold & Diamonds website will have online exciting offers for the customers which includes up to 100% making charges off on buying of gold, diamond and platinum jewellery, March 8, 2026.

Men in Blue storm into final

SHORT TAKES

Basketball team stranded in Doha

Doha: The Indian men's national basketball team, stranded in Doha due to West Asia turmoil, could return home through an alternate route via Riyadh if airspace restrictions in the Middle East continue, said team manager Sajid Rahman to IANS Thursday. The Indian contingent, currently in Doha after travelling for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian Qualifiers, has been unable to proceed with its schedule or return home due to the closure of regional airspace due to the US-Israeli attack on Iran. The team had originally planned to travel to Lebanon for their next match, but the sudden escalation in the region forced them to remain in their hotel. Rahman added that regular communication has been maintained between the team management, the federation and Indian diplomatic officials in Qatar.

Gukesh held again

Prague: World Champion D Gukesh's hunt for a win continued as Iran's Parham Maghsoodloo held the Indian ace to a draw in the seventh round of the masters section of the Prague International chess festival here. With just two rounds remaining, Gukesh sits on the last spot with two points. The four draws have come alongside three painful defeats and this could well be the time for the youngest ever world champion to look for certain reforms in his game. Meanwhile, the other Indian in the event, defending champion Aravinth Chithambaram, drew with Nodirbek Yakubov of Uzbekistan to remain on a fifty percent score after seven games.

Eves face Aus Test

Perth: Hammered in the ODIs, the Indian women's cricket team would expect the senior players to step up with inspiring performances when it faces Australia in a day-night Test for the first time in nearly five years, starting here Friday.

SAMSON, BUMRAH HELP INDIA TIDE OVER ENGLAND CHALLENGE TO REACH SECOND SUCCESSIVE T20 WC FINAL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, March 5: India clinched a thrilling seven-run victory over England in the second semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the iconic Wankhede Stadium to confirm set up a final date with New Zealand at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The Men in Blue are now just one step away from becoming the first team to defend their T20 World Cup crown and lift the title twice.

Batting first, India posted 253/7 against England, powered by Sanju Samson's explosive 89 off 42 balls. Samson continued his rich form in the tournament, smashing 89 off 42 balls, laced with eight fours and seven sixes. The right-hander dominated the England bowlers from the outset and anchored India's innings with aggressive stroke-play across the ground. After Abhishek Sharma fell early for nine, Samson stitched a crucial 97-run partnership for the second wicket with Ishan Kishan, who made a quickfire 39 off 18 balls. Samson then added another 43 runs for the third wicket alongside Shivam Dube, who contributed a brisk 43 off 25 deliveries.

BRIEF SCORES
India: 253 for seven in 20 overs (Sanju Samson 89, Shivam Dube 43, Ishan Kishan 39; Will Jacks 2/40, Adil Rashid 2/41) beat England: 246 for 7 in 20 overs (Jacob Bethell 105; Jasprit Bumrah 1/33, Hardik Pandya 2/38) by seven runs

T20 WORLD CUP



Men in Blue near historic T20 title defence as they play New Zealand in the final Sunday

Samson brought up his half-century in just 26 balls, his second successive fifty in the tournament, before eventually falling while attempting an expansive shot, caught by Phil Salt off Will Jacks. Late cameos from Hardik Pandya, who scored 27 off 12 balls, and Tilak Varma, who struck 21 off just seven balls, helped India surge past the 250 mark. For England, Will Jacks and Adil Rashid picked up two wickets each but struggled to contain India's aggressive batting display. Coming to the chase, England suffered early setbacks as Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakaravathy picked one

wicket each in the powerplay, but the Englishmen looked unfazed by the blows to take their total to 68/3 at the end of the sixth over. Though the 2022 champions' top-order faltered, middle-order batter Jacob Bethell kept his side in the hunt with a brilliant century, the third fastest for England. He shared crucial partnerships with Jos Buttler and Tom Banton before bringing up a game-changing 77-run stand with Will Jacks and a 50-run stand with Sam Curran, which kept the momentum swiftly hanging in balance. However, Pandya dismissing Curran in the penultimate over mounted pressure on England.

Though Bethell kept going and gave his best, clutch bowling from Bumrah and Pandya in the death meant England needed 30 off the final over. With Dube given charge of bowling

Rejuvenated Sanju pips Rohit, equals Kohli

After his aura-defining, unbeaten knock of 97 runs in 50 balls against the West Indies in Kolkata, Sanju Samson gave further proof of his big-match temperament Thursday with 89 off 42 balls

Sanju Samson's dream run continued in the India vs England T20 World Cup semi-final. Just like his 97* against West Indies in India's last Super 8 match, Samson unleashed carnage at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday. His innings included seven sixes and eight fours. Ultimately, Samson fell on 89, missing out on slamming a ton. However, he equalled Virat Kohli's record for the highest score by an Indian in a T20 World Cup knockout match. Kohli's 89* off 47 balls against West Indies in the second semifinal of the 2016 T20 World Cup is the highest score. Now, Samson has matched that mark. Samson also surpassed Rohit Sharma for most sixes in a single edition of the T20 World Cup.

Most sixes for India in a T20 WC edition			
16	- Sanju Samson in 2026	14	- Ishan Kishan in 2026
15	- Rohit Sharma in 2024	14	- Hardik Pandya in 2026
15	- Shivam Dube in 2026	12	- Yuvraj Singh in 2007



PREMIER LEAGUE

Gunners take a step closer to historic title



Arsenal beat Brighton to move 7 points ahead in title race

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, March 5: Arsenal moved seven points ahead of Manchester City at the top of the Premier League after scraping a 1-0 win at Brighton while its title rival drew 2-2 at home to struggling Nottingham Forest. City almost won it eight minutes into stoppage time when substitute Savinho had a shot cleared near the line Wednesday. Right winger Bukayo Saka's ninth-minute goal was enough for Arsenal, which has played one game more than City. Saka broke down the right and his scuffed strike from the edge of the penalty area went through the legs of goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen. Manchester United's unbeaten run under new coach Michael Carrick ended at seven games following a 2-1 defeat at Newcastle, which had midfielder Jacob Ramsey sent off in first-half stoppage time and scored in the 90th minute through substitute William Osula.

Haaland flops
Erling Haaland returned for City after having sat out the 1-0 win at Leeds on Saturday with a minor injury but was ineffective. City struggled to break Forest down until Rayan Cherki made a fine run down the right and floated over a cross which Antoine Semenyo expertly volleyed in at waist height with his left foot.

But Forest hit the home side in the 52nd with a classic counterattack which went almost the length of the field. It culminated in a brilliant back-heeled finish from midfielder Morgan Gibbs-White after Brazil forward Igor Jesus had nodded down a right-wing cross. Forest's joy was short-lived when former Ballon d'Or winner Rodri rose to head home from a corner six minutes later. Forest stunned City again, however, when midfielder Elliot Anderson curled in a superb shot from just outside the penalty area into the bottom right corner with 13 minutes left.

Chelsea crush Villa
Striker Joao Pedro grabbed a hat trick as Chelsea moved above Liverpool into fifth place with a 4-1 win at Aston Villa. Chelsea is only three points behind fourth-place Villa in the race for Champions League places next season. Villa scored after two minutes when Ollie Watkins let Leon Bailey's cross from right go through his legs and midfielder Douglas Luiz deftly flicked the ball in from close range. Chelsea equalised in the 35th when Pedro turned in Malo Gusto's right-wing cross. After Watkins had a goal ruled out for a narrow offside, Pedro clipped the ball in from close range during first-half stoppage time from Enzo Fernandez's pass. Midfielder Cole Palmer drove in the third goal in the 55th and Pedro tapped in Alejandro Garnacho's cross to complete his hat trick in the 64th.

KIIT hosts historic FIVB Beach Pro Tour Challenge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: In a historic moment for KIIT Deemed to be University, the FIVB Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour Challenge 2026 was formally inaugurated at the Dutee Chand Athletic Stadium Wednesday evening. The city is set to witness a landmark sporting event as the FIVB Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour (Men & Women) makes its Odisha debut at KIIT University from March 4 to 8, 2026. The prestigious international tournament has brought together 83 teams from 52 countries, with more than 300 players and officials participating in the event. The opening ceremony was attended by guests, sports officials and international dele-



gates. The event was inaugurated by Odisha's Minister for Law, Works, and Excise, Prithiviraj Harichandan, with the exhibition match being played by India and Australia. Dr Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT, KISS, welcomed the gathering. Blair Harrison, FIVB Technical Delegate, and Prof (Dr) Saranjit Singh, Vice Chancellor of KIIT University, were among the other dignitaries. In his inaugural address, Chief Guest Prithiviraj Harichandan described the occasion as a proud moment for KIIT, the state of Odisha and the entire country. He noted that for the first time an Indian university is hosting such a prestigious international beach volleyball tournament. The minister congratulated Dr Samanta for his dedication and vision in organising the

championship. "He is a perfectionist with a far-reaching vision not only for sports but also for human development," Harichandan said. Welcoming the athletes and delegates from across the world, Samanta expressed his happiness that players from 52 countries had gathered in Bhubaneswar for the championship. He noted that the tournament was taking place at a time when West Asia is in turmoil, noting that he was grateful that players had still travelled to participate in the event in the spirit of sportsmanship and unity. FIVB Technical Delegate Blair Harrison said that tournaments like the Beach Pro Tour inspire players from around the world to dream bigger and aim higher in their sporting careers. He appreciated the efforts taken by the organisers in hosting a tournament of this scale and expressed confidence that the event would leave a lasting impact on the athletes. Addressing the players, KIIT VC Singh said that by hosting an international tournament of such scale, Odisha has sent a clear message that it is fully prepared to organise world-class sporting events.

From silence to song: Iran women's anthem shift



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gold Coast (Australia), March 5: The Iran women's team sang and saluted as its national anthem was played ahead of the Women's Asian Cup contest against Australia Thursday, a contrast to the silence before its opening game. The silence during the anthem before Monday's loss to South Korea was variously reported as an act of defiance or a show of mourning. The team didn't clarify. But in a news conference on the eve of the game

against Australia, Iran striker Sara Didar choked back tears as she shared the concerns of players and management for their families and loved ones amid the war in the Middle East. The 21-year-old Didar was on the bench when Thursday's match started in pouring rain on the Gold Coast, where Iran is scheduled to play all three of its Group A games. The Iranian women's squad arrived in Australia well before the strikes by Israel and the US on Iran last Saturday. The change in approach with

the anthem between games in Australia seemed to mirror the Iranian men's team at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. The men didn't sing the national anthem before their opening loss against England as turmoil overshadowed the start of their campaign. In their second game against Wales, the men sang along to the anthem and celebrated when they scored. Iran was competing in that World Cup amid a violent crack-down on a major women's protest movement that was spurred by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of the country's morality police. It was another difficult night for Iran in a 4-0 loss to Australia Thursday. After back-to-back losses, Iran needs a big win over the Philippines (0-2) on Sunday to have any chance of advancing to the quarterfinals and qualifying for next year's Women's World Cup in Brazil. The top two teams in each of the three groups advance to the Women's Asian Cup quarterfinals along with the two best third-place teams. Australia and South Korea have already qualified from Group A.

Arjun Tendulkar ties the knot with Saaniya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 5: Cricketer Arjun Tendulkar, son of legend Sachin Tendulkar, married entrepreneur Saaniya Chandhok in a star-studded ceremony at The St Regis Mumbai Thursday. The high-profile event drew a diverse crowd of luminaries from the worlds of sports, entertainment, and politics. Arjun has played for India at the U-19 level and in the Indian Premier League for the Mumbai Indians. He represents Goa in the domestic circuit. Saaniya is a granddaughter of industrialist Ravi Ghai and is an entrepreneur herself in veterinarian field. Public figures included for-

mer BCCI secretary and incumbent ICC chairman Jay Shah, former India captain and coach Rahul Dravid, ex-India cricketers Harbhajan Singh, Venkatesh Prasad and as well as commentator Harsha Bhogle. Also in attendance were former India player and senior men's selection committee chief Ajit Agarkar, selector Pragyan Ojha, Mohammad Kaif, Piyush Chawla, ex-cricketer and TMC MP Yusuf Pathan, and BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla. Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan and wife Jaya, Abhishek Bachchan and wife Aishwarya as well as Shah Rukh Khan and family, Aamir Khan, Asha Bhosle, Sonu Nigam were among those present at the venue.

