



ଅନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ମହିଳା ଦିବସ ଅବସରରେ
 ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ
 ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀଙ୍କ
 କରକମଳରେ



ସୁଭଦ୍ରା ଚତୁର୍ଥ କିସ୍ତ

୧ କୋଟିରୁ ଊର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ହିତାଧିକାରୀଙ୍କୁ
 ୫ ହଜାର କୋଟିରୁ ଊର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ
 ଟଙ୍କାର ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା ପ୍ରଦାନ



ଗରିମାମୟ ଉପସ୍ଥିତି

- ଶ୍ରୀ କନକ ବର୍ଦ୍ଧନ ସିଂହ ଦେଓ
ଉପ-ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା
- ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ପ୍ରଭାତୀ ପରିଡ଼ା
ଉପ-ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା
- ଶ୍ରୀ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦ ପାତ୍ର
ସାଂସଦ, ପୁରୀ
- ଶ୍ରୀ ବିଭୁପ୍ରସାଦ ତରାଇ
ସାଂସଦ, ଜଗତସିଂହପୁର

- ଶ୍ରୀ ଦୁଷାରକାନ୍ତି ବେହେରା
ବିଧାୟକ, କାକଟପୁର
- ଶ୍ରୀ ସୁନୀଲ କୁମାର ମହାନ୍ତି
ବିଧାୟକ, ପୁରୀ
- ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଉପାସନା ମହାପାତ୍ର
ବିଧାୟିକା, ବ୍ରହ୍ମଗିରି
- ଶ୍ରୀ ଓମ୍ ପ୍ରକାଶ ମିଶ୍ର
ବିଧାୟକ, ସତ୍ୟବାଦୀ
- ଶ୍ରୀ ଆଶ୍ରିତ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ
ବିଧାୟକ, ପିପିଲି

୮ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୨୦୨୬, ପୁରୀ

... ସଶକ୍ତ ନାରୀ, ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ...

- ପୁଲିସ୍ ହେଲ୍ପଲାଇନ୍ ୧୧୨
- ଚାଲକ୍ସ ହେଲ୍ପଲାଇନ୍ ୧୦୩୮
- ମହିଳା ହେଲ୍ପଲାଇନ୍ ୧୮୧
- ସୁଭଦ୍ରା ହେଲ୍ପଲାଇନ୍ ୧୪୭୭୮

ମହିଳା ଓ ଶିଶୁ ବିକାଶ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

leisure



RADCLIFFE DOESN'T WANT HIS SON TO BE AN ACTOR

Actor Daniel Radcliffe is not really in favour of his son stepping into his shoes. The actor has said that he would prefer his son not to go into acting, despite being a former child star himself.

JAMIE HAS NO TIME FOR TOXIC PEOPLE

Hollywood star Jamie Lee Curtis says she that her attitude towards relationships has evolved during the course of her career in showbiz and that she has no time to waste on toxic people.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Someone new in your life is going to make you smile; remember, however, that it doesn't always have to be fun and diamonds. A song sung straight from the heart makes a greater impact, says Ganesh. Today's the right time to go out and do things which will make you proud later.

TAURUS
Spontaneity yet sincerity will be the ruling emotions of the day. Keep your eyes and ears open, advises Ganesh. As trouble might be headed your way, make it a point to read the print well before you sign any legal contract today. Prevention is better than cure, reminds Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will be able to put forward your proposal and explain your feelings to someone dear to you, and can expect a positive response from them. You will come across as honest and sincere and hence will be accepted. An auspicious and joy-filled day awaits, says Ganesh.

CANCER
People will be stunned at the swift pace of your work. All your pending tasks and projects will fructify. But Ganesh advises you not to do anything haphazardly or in any careless manner. Ganesh thinks you as an extraordinary orator.

LEO
Long forgotten relationships may be renewed today. Old acquaintances, room partners, hostel mates and the like may bump into you today. You will be in a happy mood as a result. Marital life will be blissful, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Business and pleasure will be well balanced. Ganesh says you will enjoy the party which will seem endless today. Your monetary outflow will be in direct proportion to the time you spend just lazing around. However, Ganesh advises you to spend sensibly and not to worry about it.

LIBRA
Ganesh says those of you in the field of business will find this to be a good time for them. In any work that you undertake your vision and ability will be showcased. You will have to spend more time at your workplace. Ganesh says you should try and maintain a balance between your work and your family.

SCORPIO
Relationships are the crux of life. It's very important how you make your near and dear ones feel when you are around. Make someone feel special today. Try to sort out misunderstandings if any. Don't dominate your friends or family members, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
A tiring day is in store for you today. Find yourself labouring worse than Hercules. The positive outcome would be that you would lose a few extra calories. But late in the day, a nice quiet time with family and friends would relieve you of all the stress.

CAPRICORN
Everything you do today will be driven by the desire to meet the expectations of your family members, says Ganesh. For those of you pursuing studies, pending projects will finally get completed, and you will look forward to taking up new assignments. Giving free rein to your imagination will help you excel in areas of your interest, but don't go overboard or else you may lose touch with reality.

AQUARIUS
Today will not be your day. You will find it difficult to create a peaceful environment in your home and adding to the woes will your children who will be making things even more difficult for you to handle. There may be some family disputes also, and green-eyed neighbours will try to add fuel to the fire.

PISCES
You will work hard to organize you day to day routine but due to the ill alignment of the planets you will not be able to sort things out successfully today. Ganesh advises you to be patient and let things be as they are but also to hold on to the sentiments of change. You may feel like giving up on things but ensure that you don't give up on your rights.

Bebo questions violence trend

Mumbai: As conversations around representation and storytelling grow on the occasion of International Women's Day, actor Kareena Kapoor Khan, also known as Bebo to fans, recently shared her thoughts on toxic masculinity and rising violence in films.

During a discussion with *The Hollywood Reporter*, the *Refugee* actor was asked about the growing popularity of hypermasculine cinema and also about the increasing use of violence in mainstream storytelling.

Kareena said, she believes that the shift toward intense and violent storytelling cannot be attributed to masculinity alone. According to the actor, audience preferences play a major role in shaping the direction of cinema.

Sharing her thoughts, she went on to add, "I don't know if it's the masculinity aspect. I believe the audience directs where cinema is going, not producers sitting behind a desk."

Kareena also noted that the box-office performance of such films often encourages filmmakers to repeat similar formulas.

"Right now, this trend, and I call this a trend because I don't think it is going to last," she emphasises, "It is what's [considered] practical, and every scene has to be sensational or shocking. You can show spectacle with violence, and people think that's what's selling cinema. It still scares me a little, but I believe it's a trend."



INT'L WOMEN'S DAY



Priyanka talks film cultures

Mumbai: Global head-turner Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who has tasted success in both Hollywood and Bollywood, has discussed the differences between the two industries, noting that the pace of production varies across the world.

The 43-year-old star, who made her Bollywood debut in 2003 with the spy thriller *The Hero: Love Story of a Spy* and stepped into Hollywood with the 2015 thriller series *Quantico*, shared that America is specific about when and how to shoot.

"In America, we are very specific about when we shoot what and how. You have to make the day on most productions, and you have a shot breakdown of how many shots you have to take. So there's a lot more stress in making sure that you make the day," Priyanka told *The Hollywood Reporter*.

She said that when it comes to Indian films, the pace tends to be a bit more relaxed.

"On Indian films, it's a little bit more languid. If we don't make the day, it's fine. We'll get it tomorrow. We'll also shoot one set piece, and then we'll take a break for 10 or 20 days. Then we'll come back for the next set piece, and that is why we can do multiple movies at the same time," shared the actress.

WINNING 'THE 50'

Ridhi reveals her strategy

Mumbai: Actress Ridhi Dogra has opened up about her approach to the game in the reality show *The 50*, saying that staying authentic is the only strategy she believes in while navigating a house full of players.

Ridhi took to Instagram to share her thoughts about being part of the show, hinting at the intense dynamics inside the house. The actress said that instead of playing by a set formula, she is relying purely on her instincts.

She shared a string of images from the show and captioned the post: "In a house full of players, being authentic is my only strategy. No scripts. Just instincts. #keepingit-simple #the50."

Talking about the actress, before Ridhi entered the television industry, she was a dancer in the Shiamak Dawar Dance Institute. Her first job in the industry was



Women-led films battle shrinking theatre space

Mumbai: Despite women-led films repeatedly proving their mettle at the box office, their presence in the 2026 theatrical release calendar has dwindled to a trickle - with only Rani Mukerji's *Mardaani 3*, Taapsee Pannu's *Assi*, and Alia Bhatt's *Alpha* headlining the year. The paradox is hard to ignore.

According to trade website Sacnilk, women-led films have shown considerable box-office resilience between 2024 and 2026, with *Crew*, *Article 370*, *Stree 2* and *Lokah Chapter One* performing well at the ticket window. However, leading actors admitted encountering difficulty in getting meaningful roles and hoped things will change soon.

Pannu, who has anchored

women-centric dramas like *Thappad*, *Mulk* and *Pink* has sounded the alarm bluntly. "We are on the verge of becoming an extinct species, we mean films like *Assi*. There is a certain template that our so-called commercial cinema abides by, we don't conventionally fall in that template of sorts," she told this agency.

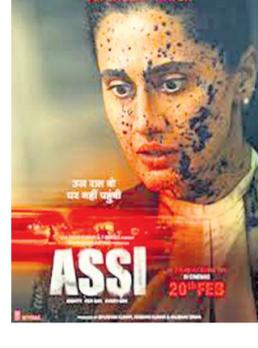
She described the process of making and releasing such films today as a 'battle'.

Konkona Sensharma echoed Pannu's dilemma. "It is true that very few offers come for theatrical nowadays to me. By and large I've to say that these (offers) are usually web series," she said.

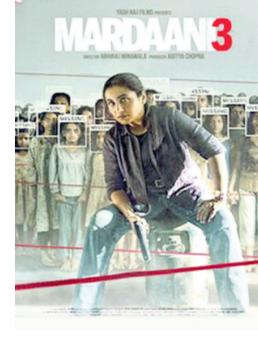
"Why should we only watch epic action-based or war films?



I would've loved to watch all kinds of films in theatres like how it used to be. Unfortunately, that is not the trend right now. I hope things will



change," she added. Industry voices, however, push back on the idea that audience appetite is at fault. Kamal Gianchandani, CEO



of PVR INOX Pictures, argues that viewer taste remains broad. "I don't think the audience goes by whether the film is

big or small or who is in it. If something excites them, they go to cinemas. Audiences have diverse taste, we've seen varied kind of films working like Saiyaara, Mahavatar Narismha. So, any film that's well-made will do well in theatres," he explained.

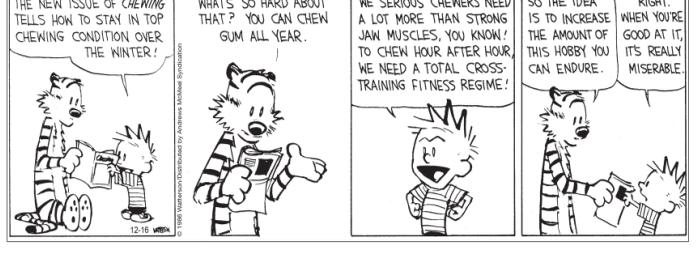
Dipti Jindal, CEO & Associate Producer at Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, said even though the theatrical ecosystem has undergone major shift after the pandemic audience is open to watching anything that excites them.

"Large-scale action films and spectacles are having a theatrical moment, but that doesn't necessarily mean other narratives have disappeared," added Jindal.

PEANUTS



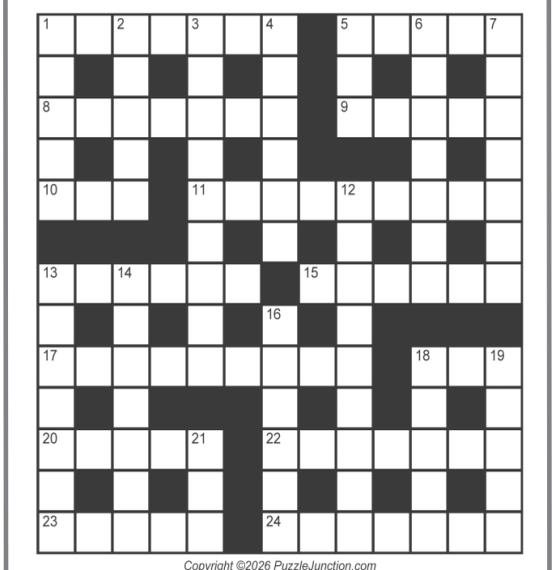
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



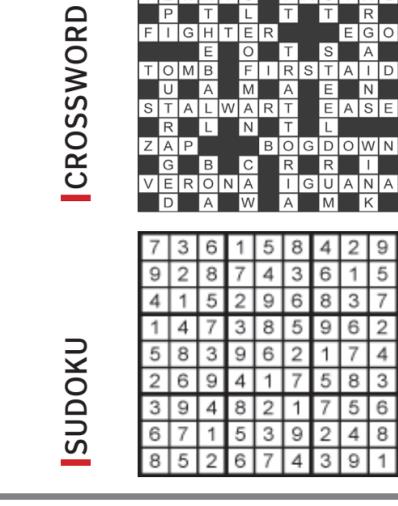
- Across**
- 1 Wasp's defense
 - 5 Noble writer
 - 8 Novice
 - 9 Arena sound
 - 10 Flock member
 - 11 Infamous
 - 13 Off the mark
 - 15 Moved on
 - 17 Type of steak
 - 18 Vatican vestment
 - 20 Marsh growth
 - 22 Effusively emotional
 - 23 Oranjestad's island
 - 24 Shake with fear
 - 5 Pendulum's path
 - 6 Try to find (4,3)
 - 7 Examined
 - 12 Saloon
 - 13 Salzburg site
 - 14 Walden author
 - 16 Fate
 - 18 Off-the-cuff remark (2-3)
 - 19 Pig out
 - 21 Jacuzzi
- Down**
- 1 Ophidian
 - 2 Nonsensical
 - 3 Thule locale
 - 4 Blue moon, e.g.

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

PC's observations

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas discusses the difference between Indian and American film industries

LEISURE | PAGE

Landslide victory

RSP's Balendra Shah defeats four-time PM KP Sharma Oli by a huge margin and is set to form the next government in Nepal

INTERNATIONAL | P8

Oil shoots up

Oil prices surpass \$90 a barrel, with American crude settling at \$90.90, up 36% from a week ago, and Brent climbing 27% over the week

BUSINESS | P9

Braveheart Lakshya

Lakshya Sen enters final of the All England Open, moving within one win of ending India's 25-year wait for the prestigious title

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

INDIA-NZ CLASH IN T20 WC FINAL TODAY

INDIA vs NEW ZEALAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, March 7: An insanely talented and incredibly consistent Indian cricket team will carry the weight of a nation's hopes in its pursuit of history when it goes up against a tenacious New Zealand in a classic David versus Goliath final of the T20 World Cup here on Sunday. On November 19, 2023, the expansive amphitheatre called the Narendra Modi Stadium witnessed a teary-eyed and emotionally spent Rohit Sharma drag himself up the dressing-room stairs after Australia had silenced India in the ODI World Cup final. The distraught home side and a silent stadium, with 93,000 people, have carried the cross ever since even though the T20 team somewhat made amends for that heartbreak by winning the 2024 world title under Rohit. **BACK PAGE**



SECURING SPACES: Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) women personnel keep vigil at the Taj Mahal in Agra, Saturday

2 girls among 5 schoolkids drown in state

Koraput/Baripada, March 7: Five school students, including two girls, drowned in separate incidents in Koraput and Mayurbhanj districts Saturday, police said. Three Class 10 students drowned in the backwaters of Kolab reservoir near their school in Koraput district in the afternoon. They had completed their Class 10 board examinations and were waiting for their parents to come and take them home. To express the joy of completing their exams, they went to play in the water but drowned, a police officer said. Locals rescued the students and rushed them to Saheed Laxman Nayak Medical College and Hospital in Koraput, where doctors declared them dead. "The students were hostel boarders, and the incident is suspected to have taken place between 3 pm and 3.30 pm. Further investigation is underway," Koraput Sub-divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Sanjay Mandal said. The deceased have been identified as Lingaraj Khil (16), Swastik (15) and Om Prakash (16), all class 10 students of the school, police said. While school authorities were not immediately available for a comment, family members of the deceased have alleged

Indians are good actors

The language used by the United States, describing India as a "good actor" and saying it has given "permission" to buy Russian oil, casts New Delhi in a diplomatically tight spot. Such phrasing implies a hierarchical relationship in which India appears to be seeking approval from Washington for decisions related to its own energy security. This framing by the Trump administration appears to reduce a complex commercial and geopolitical decision to one of compliance with US expectations. Even if the arrangement is pragmatic amid the West Asia conflict, the optics risk portraying India less as an independent power and more as a subordinate partner responding to the dictates of the Trump administration.

around the world amid the West Asia conflict. "The world is very well supplied in oil. Yesterday, the Treasury (Department) agreed to let our allies in India start buying Russian oil that was already on the water," US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in an interview to Fox Business. "The Indians had been very good actors. We had asked them to stop buying sanctioned Russian oil this fall. They did. They were going to substitute it with US oil. But to ease the temporary gap of oil around the world, we have given them permission to accept the Russian oil. We may unsanction other Russian oil," he said. Bessent added that there are hundreds of millions of sanctioned barrels of sanctioned crude on the water, and in essence, "by unsanctioning them, Treasury can create supply. And we are looking at that. We are going to keep a cadence of announcing measures to bring relief to the market during this conflict."



Several other Trump administration officials have also been saying that the US has now allowed India to buy Russian oil, months after President Donald Trump had imposed 25 per cent punitive tariffs on Delhi for its purchases of oil from Moscow. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said in a post on X Friday that the United States is "allowing our friends in India" to take the Russian oil already on ships around Southern Asia, refine it and move the stocks into the market quickly in order to ensure a flowing supply and ease pressure amid the ongoing US-Israel war against Iran. "We have implemented short

term measures to help keep oil prices down. We are allowing our friends in India to take oil that is already on ships, refine it, and move those barrels into the market quickly. A practical way to get supply flowing and ease pressure," Wright said. In an interview to ABC News Live, Wright said that long-term oil supplies are "abundant" and there are no worries regarding that, but in the short term, there is a need to get oil on the market. "We've reached out to our friends in India and said, 'Buy that oil. Bring it into your refineries'. That pulls stored oil immediately into Indian refineries and releases the pressure on other refineries around the world to buy oil that they're no longer competing with the Indians for in that marketplace," Wright said. "So we have a number of measures like that that are short-term and temporary. This is no change in policy towards Russia. This is a very brief change in policy just to keep oil prices down a little bit better than we could otherwise," he added.

SUBHADRA MONEY FOR 1.02CR TODAY

2,13,198 new beneficiaries will receive financial assistance for the first time, while 36,385 applicants, who had lodged grievances through the scheme's portal, will also receive the benefit Sunday

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The state government is set to disburse over Rs 5,000 crore among more than 1.02 crore beneficiaries of Subhadra Yojana on the occasion of International Women's Day Sunday. Addressing media here, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida said the state government had received 1,12,57,667 applications under the scheme. "Of those, a total of 1,02,12,665 women will receive financial support under the scheme Sunday," said Parida, who also holds the Women and Child Development portfolio. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi is slated to launch the disbursement of the Subhadra instalment at an event to be held at Talabania in Puri Sunday, Parida said, adding, "The amount will be credited directly to the beneficiaries' bank accounts. This

disbursement marks a continuation of our efforts to empower women economically and socially." The Deputy CM said that 2,13,198 new beneficiaries will receive financial assistance for the first time, while 36,385 applicants, who had lodged grievances through the scheme's portal, will also receive the benefit Sunday. In a post on X, the CM said the fourth instalment under Subhadra Yojana will be credited to the beneficiaries' bank accounts Sunday morning. "Under the visionary guidance of esteemed Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji and in sync with the 'Purvodaya' resolve, Odisha's women power is becoming self-reliant. Empowered women power alone will be the cornerstone of a 'Prosperous Odisha' in the coming days," he posted on X. According to the scheme guidelines, each eligible woman is entitled to receive Rs 10,000 annually in two instalments.

New York/Washington, March 7: The US said it has given 'permission' to India to buy Russian oil that is on ships already floating on waterways with a view to easing supplies

Truck hits bike; 3 killed

Bhubaneswar: Three people were killed when their motorcycle was hit by a truck on the outskirts of the state capital Saturday, police said. The incident took place near Anantapur square under Pahala police station area Saturday morning. The three people died on the spot, they said. Police said the trio was proceeding toward Niali from Bhubaneswar when the accident occurred. The police reached the spot and rushed them to a local hospital, where doctors declared them as brought dead.

TEACHER HELD AS GIRL FLEES SCHOOL AFTER MOLESTATION

Basudevpur, March 7: A girl studying in Class VII fled from her hostel premises after she was allegedly molested by her Hindi teacher at the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) at Chandimal under this block in Bhadrak district. Police Saturday arrested the accused teacher. The arrest of the accused, Krishnananda Mishra, followed a dramatic escape by the victim, who reportedly scaled the school's compound wall and fled the premises out of fear in the early hours of Saturday morning. According to Kasia Marine police, Mishra allegedly molested the student Friday and threatened her to remain silent and not disclose the matter before anyone. Terrified, the girl waited until dawn and climbed over the school wall and fled. She sought refuge at an elderly woman's home nearby, pleading for protection. **P5**

Ukraine's Shahed killers draw US, Gulf interest

Kyiv, March 7: As the war in the Middle East strains US missile stocks, Ukraine is hoping it can turn a wartime innovation - low-cost interceptors designed to shoot down Russian attack drones - into geopolitical leverage. Now one of the world's leading producers of interceptors, Ukraine is offering that expertise to the US and its Gulf partners for the war in the Middle East, hoping to receive in return the high-end weaponry it can't manufacture at home. When Russia launched its full-scale invasion four years ago, Ukraine's domestic arms industry was poor. Forced to innovate to survive, it has since built a fast-growing defence sector centered on low-cost drones - some designed specifically to counter Iranian-style Shahed drones of the kind that Russia now launches by the hundreds. The US recently requested "specific support" against Iranian-designed Shaheds in the Middle East, prompting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to order the deployment of Ukrainian equipment and experts, though details remain classified. When the war in Ukraine began in 2022, Kyiv banned weapons exports. But now Ukrainian manufacturers of low-cost interceptor drones say they are receiving interest from the United States and Gulf states. While other countries can build interceptor drones, Ukraine has the only mass-produced system already tested in war, Oleh Katkov, editor-in-chief of Defense Express



said. "There is a huge difference between a mass-produced system proven to work in real combat and something others only promise to develop... It's like selling the house, not just the bricks," he said. If cooperation with partners succeeds, Ukraine could emerge as a new player in modern warfare, though it remains unclear whether its industry can scale up to meet that ambition or expand into global markets without compromising its own defence. The surge in interest from

the Middle East comes as Gulf states burn through their stocks of expensive Patriot missiles, which they have been using to shoot down significantly cheaper Shaheds from Iran. An Iranian-designed Shahed drone costs from roughly \$30,000, while a single interceptor missile for the US-made Patriot air defence system costs millions. Despite Zelenskyy's optimism, some analysts warn that entering the global arms market is not as simple as signing a contract.

"Weapon trading is an incredibly subtle and sensitive issue," said Yevhen Mahda, executive director of the Kyiv-based Institute of World Policy. It's a market where the US is dominant, he said, cautioning that it is "naive" to expect markets to open simply because Ukraine has a compelling story. "It requires a tough, calculated diplomatic game." Ukrainian officials have only recently begun actively discussing a shift from a freeze on wartime weapons exports to a state-regulated market, though it remains unclear when or how such a system would be launched. "We need more than just presidential statements. We need action," Mahda said. "How can we talk about exports if we officially aren't selling anything yet?" The US and Gulf countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, have made repeated requests for Ukraine's domestically produced interceptor drones, according to three Ukrainian weapons producers.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

He is politically ambitious. First stand-up comedy. Now rap lessons. Preparing well for Gen Z vote

Permanent shades at key junctions



School administrations strictly follow the guideline issued by the School and Mass Education department vide 569/SME dt: 10.02.26 of Special Commissioner and S. ME department Letter No. 5105/SME dt: 21.02.2026.

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has planned to construct two permanent shade structures at key traffic junctions in the City at an estimated cost of ₹4 crore as part of its summer preparedness measures. The sheds will come up near Rupali Square and the Power House traffic junction to provide relief to pedestrians and motorists during extreme heat.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, dated - 07.03.2026, I, Purandar Bishwal, permanent resident of At- Lemberi, P.O.-Kalapathara, P.S.-Baideswar, Dist.-Cuttack, Odisha, PIN-754009 declare that I have change my name from Purangam Biswal to Purandar Bishwal. Henceforth, I shall be known as Purandar Bishwal for all purposes. Purandar Bishwal

By virtue of an Affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Banki No. 2711/Dt.27.11.2025 I, Smt. Sandhyarani Rout, D/o-Late Jugal Kishore Samantaray, W/o-Kumar Rout, Vill.-Haliasahi, P.O.-Brahmapura, P.S.-Banki, Dist.-Cuttack declared that my childhood name was Sandhyarani Samantaray, which is recorded in my ROR vide khata No. 582/170, under mouja Kiapalla. So Sandhyarani Rout and Sandhyarani Samantaray is one and same person for all purpose. Sd./- Sandhyarani Rout

LOST

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, dated- 12.02.2026, I, Mihir Kumar Senapati, aged about 55 years, S/o.-Late Kedar Senapati, At/P.O.- Kuha, Airfield, Khurda, PIN- 751002 declare that I have lost my Registered sale deed bearing No. 11122004321 somewhere. If anyone finds kindly contact me 8658019821.

Nyaya Sanhita exhibition draws huge crowd

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The Nyaya Sanhita Exhibition organised by Odisha Police at the IDCO Exhibition Ground here drew an enthusiastic response Saturday, with people from different sections of society visiting the venue to learn about India's newly introduced criminal laws.



Adhiniyam (BSA). One of the key attractions of the exhibition is the comprehensive presentation titled "From Crime Scene to High Court," which explains the entire criminal justice process in an integrated and educational manner.

Ten stalls approved by the Union Home Ministry have been set up at the venue. These stalls demonstrate various aspects of the justice system, including crime scene management, the 112 emergency response system, police station

functioning, hospital coordination, forensic science laboratories, public prosecution, district courts, prisons and the functioning of the High Court.

police modernisation and capacity building, measures to curb crimes against women, the role of the Special Operations Group (SOG) in anti-Maoist operations, and the contribution of the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) during natural disasters.

PREZ VISIT TO WEST BENGAL

Majhi slams TMC govt for 'insensitivity' towards tribals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday expressed deep anguish over the developments surrounding President Droupadi Murmu's visit to West Bengal for the International Santal Conclave, accusing the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government of 'insensitivity' toward tribal communities and the dignity of the highest constitutional office.



Odias and tribal communities nationwide.

In a strongly worded post on X, Majhi described the denial of permission for the conclave in Siliguri and the abrupt venue shift as more than just logistical challenges. He emphasised that the event, meant to celebrate the rich heritage and identity of the Santal community with President Murmu as chief guest, deserved the utmost respect and dignity.

The CM stressed that the President's office transcends political differences and represents the sanctity of the Constitution. He said any perceived undermining of this institution for narrow political motives has no place in India's vibrant democracy. Majhi urged that events celebrating tribal heritage be encouraged rather than obstructed, calling on leaders to accord both institutions and tribal gatherings the respect they deserve.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Women still battle bias, burden in daily life

Call for greater equality in Odisha stressing gender justice must involve both men and women



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 7: As the world observes International Women's Day today (March 8), discussions on gender equality and women's empowerment are gaining momentum across Odisha, with women increasingly making their mark in education, administration, entrepreneurship, sports and public life.

she prioritises her career, she is often labelled selfish and faces taunts," she said. "When a woman climbs the corporate ladder, people sometimes speculate about favours or shortcuts. But when a man achieves the same success, he is simply called talented," she noted, adding that stereotypes such as 'women belong in the kitchen' still persist in everyday life.

Women's activist **Matrumayee Priyadarshini** said, empowerment must go beyond policies. "There may be hundreds of initiatives meant to empower women, but the real question is — why do we still feel the need to prove their empowerment?" she said.

"Even when a woman is a high-performing professional, society expects her to be the 'chief household officer', managing meals, children and the household. This creates a huge mental load that often leads to burnout," Singh Deo noted.

Meanwhile, social activist **Namrata Chadha** stressed that gender equality must involve both men and women. "Women are neither mythical figures like Durga nor weaker beings — they are simply human beings. Equality should be about mutual respect rather than competition," she said, while also warning about the rise of misogynistic comments on social media.

Contractors call off 14-day protest after talks with govt

Three contractors' bodies representing around 70,000 members had been protesting since February 20 over tender norms SoR revision and other policy demands



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The All Odisha Contractors Welfare Association (AOCWA) withdrew its 14-day protest after holding successful discussions with Works, Law and Excise Minister Prithviraj Harichandan at Lok Seva Bhawan here Saturday.

Govt to issue fresh Schedule of Rates notification by April 15; annual revision to follow CPWD price trends

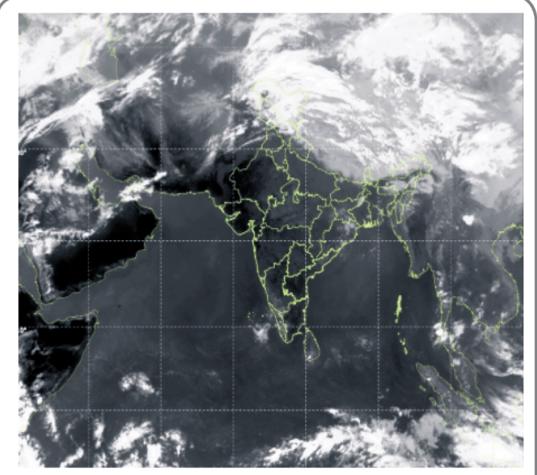
Short tender call notice limit to remain ₹5 lakh despite demand to raise it to ₹10 lakh; uniform bidding document notification in two months

Issues like mineral availability, penalty waiver during extensions, escalation bills (2012-2019) and WAMIS transfer under consideration

Three major organisations representing nearly 70,000 contractors had been staging demonstrations since February 20, demanding fulfilment of an eight-point charter related to tender procedures, revision of the Schedule of Rates (SoR) and other policy issues.

Among the key demands was withdrawal of a Works department circular issued January 3, 2026, regarding tender cost limits. The government also assured that a fresh notification on the Schedule of Rates would be issued by April 15 and updated annually in line with CPWD price trends.

The contractors had also demanded raising the short



WEATHER			FORECAST
Max Temp	BBSR 33.2°	CTC 32.4°	Light to Moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely to occur at one or two places
Min Temp	24.0°	21.4°	
Humidity	83%	89%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Iranian Prez apologises for strikes on Gulf states

More Iranian officials will be targets: Trump



Destruction in the Bekaa valley town of Nabi Sheet, Lebanon, after Israeli strikes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 7: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian apologised Saturday for attacks on regional countries even as its missiles and drones flew toward Gulf Arab states, indicating that Tehran's political leadership could not exercise full command over Iran's armed forces. He also rejected US President Donald Trump's repeated demands for surrender. Pezeshkian, one member of a tripartite leadership council overseeing Iran since a February 28 airstrike started the war and killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, delivered the defiant mes-

sage exactly one week into a conflict that has spread across the region, rattled global markets and air travel and left Iran's own leadership greatly weakened by hundreds of Israeli and American airstrikes. The message, seemingly filmed in a hurry without professional broadcast equipment, again underlined the limited powers being exercised by theocracy's leaders over its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which controls the ballistic missiles targeting Israel and others. It answered only to Khamenei and now appears to be picking its own targets as the conflict widens. Shortly after Pezesh-

kian's message, Trump warned in a social media post Saturday that more Iranian officials would become targets in the war, writing, "Today Iran will be hit very hard!" In his comments on his Truth Social website, Trump noted the apology by Pezeshkian. "Under serious consideration for complete destruction and certain death, because of Iran's bad behaviour, are areas and groups of people that were not considered for targeting up until this moment in time," Trump wrote, without elaborating. While the Iranian President attempted to assuage growing Gulf Arab anger over the attacks, just hours earlier, a wave of missiles and drones had disrupted flights at Dubai International Airport, targeted a major Saudi oil facility and sent people fleeing for cover multiple times in Bahrain. Pezeshkian also kept up his criticism of Trump's call for Iran to unconditionally surrender to America. "That's a dream that they should take to their grave," he said.



GRABBING THE BULL BY THE TAIL: Cowboys take part in bull-tailing, or coleo, in San Fernando de Apure, Venezuela, Saturday

Man booked for calling PM 'traitor'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kannur (Kerala), March 7: A case has been registered against a man for allegedly calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi a traitor on a social media post at Sreekandapuram here, police said Saturday. According to police, the case was registered against Rajan C Kottoor, a native of Kottoor, Friday following a complaint lodged by a BJP activist. As per the FIR, the accused made the comment on a Facebook post March 3, calling PM Modi a traitor. The FIR alleged that the accused defamed the Prime Minister and indulged in a provocative act with the intention of causing a riot. The case has been registered under section 192 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for wantonly giving provocation with intent

Kidnapped 7-yr-old boy found murdered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bissamkatak: A seven-year-old boy who was allegedly kidnapped was found murdered with his throat slit in Rayagada late Friday night. Rishi Gantayat, son of Purushottam Gantayat of Old Station Sahi in Chatikana under Bissamkatak block of Rayagada, was allegedly kidnapped by an unidentified person Friday morning. Later, one of Purushottam's relatives received a message from an unknown number demanding Rs 4.5 lakh as ransom for the child's release. Family members searched for the boy throughout the day but failed to trace him. Late at night, Rishi's body was found tied inside a sack and dumped behind the family's house.

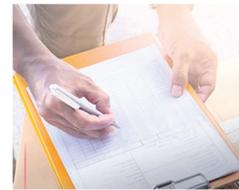
LPG PRICE HIKED BY ₹60

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: Domestic cooking gas LPG price was hiked Saturday by a steep ₹60 per cylinder, the second increase in rate in less than a year, as the spike in global energy rates following the West Asia crisis weighed on the world's third largest energy consumer. Top government sources, however, were quick to state that an increase in petrol and diesel prices is not in the offing as state-owned oil firms have enough financial muscle to absorb the warranted increase. Non-subsidised LPG -- the one that common

households use in kitchens -- will now cost ₹913 per 14.2-kg cylinder in Delhi as against ₹853 previously, according to the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) website. Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries -- the poor who have got free LPG connections since 2016 -- will also have to bear the same amount of price increase. They will now pay ₹613 per 14.2 kg cylinder after accounting for a subsidy of ₹300 per bottle they get for up to 12 refills in a year. Top government sources

said the increase was necessitated because of a spike in global energy prices. The LPG price rise of Saturday is the second increase in rate in 11 months. The price was last hiked by ₹50 in April last year. Officials said the increase follows a steep rise in global energy prices since the US and Israel attack on Iran last weekend triggered a wider military conflict in the oil and gas-rich Middle East. The conflict has led to a near halt in tanker movement through the Strait of Hormuz -- the narrow but critical sea lane between Iran and Oman used by Middle Eastern producers to export oil and gas to global markets.



to cause a riot and section 120(o) of the Kerala Police Act for causing nuisance. Police said the investigation began Friday evening after the complaint was received. The accused will be interrogated and the electronic device used to post the comment will be traced as part of the investigation, police added.

No. 10001/106/2526

ସୁସ୍ଥ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିକଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ଅନ୍ତରା : ଏମ୍ପିଏ ଗର୍ଭନିରୋଧକ ଇଞ୍ଜେକ୍ସନ୍

ହିତାଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସୂଚନା

- ନିରାପଦ, ଦୀର୍ଘକାଳୀନ ତଥା ପ୍ରଭାବଶାଳୀ ଗର୍ଭନିରୋଧକ
- ୪ ସପ୍ତାହର ଗ୍ରେସ୍ ପିରିୟଡ୍ ସହିତ ୩ ମାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ଷମ
- ବ୍ୟବହାର ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପେଲଭିକ୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ନାହିଁ
- ସ୍ତନ୍ୟପାନ କରାଉଥିବା ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ (ପ୍ରସବର ୬ ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ)
- ସ୍ତନ୍ୟପାନକୁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରେନାହିଁ
- ସୁବିଧାଜନକ ଏବଂ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାକୁ ସହଜ

ଯଦି, ଅନ୍ତରା : ଏମ୍ପିଏ ଗର୍ଭନିରୋଧକ ଗ୍ରହଣକରିଥିବା ମହିଳାଙ୍କ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଅନିୟମିତ ରକ୍ତସ୍ରାବ କିମ୍ବା ଆମେନୋରିଆ (ରତ୍ନସ୍ରାବ ବନ୍ଦ), ଅସ୍ୱଭାବିକ ଓଜନ ବୃଦ୍ଧି, ଅଧିକ ମୁଣ୍ଡବିନ୍ଧା କିମ୍ବା ଚିଡ଼ିଚିଡ଼ା ଭାବ ଦେଖାଦିଏ ତେବେ ତାତ୍କାଳିନୀ ସହିତ ପରାମର୍ଶ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଗର୍ଭନିରୋଧକ ପଦ୍ଧତି

ଇଞ୍ଜେକ୍ସନ୍ ଏମ୍.ପି.ଏ.	ଜରୁରୀକାଳୀନ ଗର୍ଭନିରୋଧକ ବଟିକା	ଗର୍ଭନିରୋଧକ ବଟିକା	କପରଟି ଆଇ.ୟୁ.ସି.ଟି ୩୭୫ ଆଇ.ୟୁ.ସି.ଟି ୩୮୦	କଣ୍ଠୋମ	ପୁରୁଷ ବନ୍ଧ୍ୟାକରଣ	ମହିଳା ବନ୍ଧ୍ୟାକରଣ

ସରକାରୀ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ବିନାମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ

ଏହି ସେବା ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଆଶା କିମ୍ବା ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକର୍ମୀଙ୍କ ସହ ପରାମର୍ଶ କରନ୍ତୁ

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

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India Tea – Born of Nature, Nurtured by the Hands That Fill Our Lives with Goodness and Warmth

Our Tribute to the Women Who Care for Our Heritage

Happy International Women's Day

8 March, 2026

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FOCUS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

EQUALITY POWERS ECONOMIES

The flame of the aspiration must be so straight and so ardent that no obstacle can dissolve it.



THE MOTHER

Quiet Submission

I have no problem with the reality that as a nation we cannot always or even mostly get what we want. No nation is truly sovereign in the sense that it can impose itself and its willfully on the world. This is true of even the most powerful nations in history. If it were not true, America would not have fled the field in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, and would not now find itself about to face defeat in Iran. America wants to bring the Irani nation to heel through violence and that is not going to happen.

We are not a powerful nation and so must cut our coat according to our cloth. This is merely accepting the facts as they are and there is no shame in looking into the mirror to observe what is on display. The image that stares back is of a population that is poor, with the greater part of it forced to queue up monthly for free grain. We Indians are many in number, yes, but the power of that detail is unrealised. It lies in future potential, not the present reality.

And so, no, I have no problem with accepting that we are not strong and therefore lacking in capacity, and less sovereign than stronger nations.

I do however have a problem, let us say it is a minor problem, with how this limited sovereignty we possess is deployed. The hard nationalism that we show is reserved for weaker nations and usually our neighbours. Great powers, I mean really great ones and not regional bullies, do not expend energy on blocking IPL teams from picking players from Bangladesh as we do. They do not sulk and refuse to shake hands with opponents on the sporting field. That is what India does, because that is what we can do.

Where the question of real national interests arises, where resistance is difficult and compliance easy we often and perhaps usually fold. Don't buy Russian oil. Yes sir. Buy Russian oil. Okay sir. No Irani oil. Yes sir. America does not have to tell us what to even say or not say any longer. We know in our heart that speaking the truth on this stupid Iran war will anger Trump and so we look the other way because if we look him in the eye the bully will straighten us out.

It is cruel to put it this directly but we have to try and see ourselves in the mirror even if only occasionally. A 30-day waiver is like a furlough that our convicted godmen seem to always be on. We will submit ourselves to incarceration again in April and we must recognise that.

Does anyone think that China, which is as dependent on external energy sources as India is, could be spoken to in this fashion? Not on your life. Trump would quake at the thought of saying it to the hard and never-giggly, non-hugging Xi.

We have decided that we will not comment on, leave alone condemn, the assassination of a head of state, a cleric whom millions of Indians considered their religious leader. That we will not mourn the mass slaughter of little schoolgirls. We have decided to stare at the floor when unarmed sailors who were our honoured guests hours earlier are blown up in the dark without the declaration of war.

All of this, once again, is to my mind only a minor problem even if I do not agree with any of the things we have done, because I find it understandable that we have chosen to be meek as a nation that is weak.

I do have a serious issue however, with our bluster and bombast. This humbug may be aimed at domestic consumption but the world can observe it. When we tell ourselves that we are the vishwaguru and the ordained head of the G20 and other fantasies, one hopes that we are doing this only in the conviction that Indians are simple-minded and ignorant and believe such drivel. It would be quite scary if we do it because the government actually believes it, but happily we know for a fact that the government and this prime minister do not believe it. We know this because the pusillanimity in on display when it comes to dealing with great powers. Our actions with others speak louder than our words to ourselves.

Being among those Indians who do not buy the fib that is plastered on hoardings and television about our greatness, I find it irritating that we do this. But I also find it problematic and that is why it is a major problem in my opinion. Democratic governments are expected to be honest with their constituents not only for the obvious reasons of ethics and morality but also because it makes the job of government easier.

The Bharatiya Janata Party would not have to put itself through contortions to explain why our submission is not really submission and why receiving a 30-day waiver is actually a diplomatic triumph if it explained what the compulsions were.

And our friends, to the extent we still have friends, around the world including Iran, would know that we have abandoned them not because we agree with what is being done to them, which we do not, but because we lack courage. Lastly it would spare crores of us the cruelty and hurt of self-realisation, as is happening now, when our image of global colossus crumbles at one American poke.

Across the Global South, painful austerity measures such as benefit caps, pay freezes, and subsidy cuts have followed donor governments' recent cuts to foreign aid. The policy pivot has had an especially dramatic impact on women – costing them jobs, services, and protections – and is causing widespread economic hardship in many developing countries.

Against this backdrop of short-sightedness, "Give to gain," the theme of this year's International Women's Day, reminds us that investing in women yields outsize returns. As former World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick once put it, "Gender equality is the right thing to do. And it is also smart economics."

Budgets are never neutral: Policy choices, from supporting extractive industries to weakening health systems, can erode women's livelihoods, augment the burden of unpaid care work, and increase poverty rates. Today, 708 million women are outside the labor force because of care responsibilities, reflecting policymakers' failure to recognize or value such work.

Moreover, the International Monetary Fund has found that gender-responsive budgeting improves resource allocation and transparency by shifting financing away from harmful policies and toward priority areas such as income support for survivors, childcare, and workplace safety. If national budgets do not account for women's rights, fiscal frameworks will continue to create vulnerabilities.

Women's rights begin with physical security. In 2016, United Nations Women estimates that gender-based violence cost roughly \$1.5 trillion per year, or around 2% of global GDP at the time. Intimate partner violence alone can drain 1.2-3.7% of GDP – more than many countries spend on education. And workplace harassment and violence against women causes \$6 trillion in global losses each year.

With the right strategies, policymakers can stem these losses



The International Monetary Fund has found that gender-responsive budgeting improves resource allocation and transparency by shifting financing away from harmful policies and toward priority areas such as income support for survivors, childcare, and workplace safety

autonomy is particularly important, given their critical role in safeguarding biodiversity and protecting land for future generations.

To this end, donors should condition their headline pledges on allocating certain percentages to core funding, Global South-led groups, and programs focused on delivering care, safety, and access to support. Frameworks for measuring the impact of gender-responsive budgeting should feature indicators that can show improved outcomes for gender-based violence, such as survivors' uptake of income support and enforcement of safe workplaces.

Policymakers, for their part, must focus on institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting. All ministries should adopt budget markers that show how spending advances gender equality; review the impact of government spending, with the results made public; and allocate a meaningful share of tax revenue, and public spending more broadly, toward closing the care gap and expanding women's access to assets. That means expanding benefits for survivors of domestic violence – such as income assistance, childcare, and safe transport – and categorizing them as essential services. Lastly, they should collaborate with feminist organizations to co-design policy and track outcomes.

The economic case for boosting investment in women's rights organizations, and for ensuring that financing and budget decisions strengthen women's safety and autonomy, has long been settled. According to the World Bank, every dollar spent on empowering adolescent girls in Africa could generate a tenfold return in terms of growth. Investing in women's rights is not charity; it is a form of giving that generates outsize gains for all.

Anisha Chugh is Executive Director of the Women's Fund Asia while Teresa Zapeta Mendoza is Executive Director of the International Indigenous Women's Forum

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Anisha Chugh & Teresa Zapeta Mendoza

INVESTING IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS IS NOT CHARITY; IT IS A FORM OF GIVING THAT GENERATES OUTSIZE GAINS FOR ALL



Aakar Patel

Our friends, to the extent we still have friends, around the world including Iran, would know that we have abandoned them not because we agree with what is being done to them, which we do not, but because we lack courage

SPECTRUM GENDER DISPARITY

Women deserve rights, justice & action

As the world observes International Women's Day each year, celebration must be accompanied by reflection. Have the lives of women truly become safer, freer, and more dignified? Or are our commemorations louder than our commitment?

According to the World Health Organization, nearly one-third of the world's women – around 840 million – have experienced gender-based violence. Of them, 316 million have suffered abuse at the hands of husbands or intimate partners and their relatives. Violence against women is not episodic; it is structural, embedded in homes, institutions, and attitudes.

The situation in India is deeply distressing. Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (Report 2023, released December 2025) indicates that crimes against women continue to rise. Cases increased by nearly 33 per cent – from 3.37 lakh in 2014 to 4.48 lakh in 2024. The crime rate has climbed from 56.3 per lakh women in 2014 to 66.2 in 2023. This translates into 51 women becoming victims of crime every single hour.

A 2020 UN report indicated that India accounted for 45.8

million (4.58 crore) "missing" females over the past 50 years, primarily due to gender-biased sex selection, prenatal sex determination, and, to a lesser extent, post-natal neglect. NCRB data tabled in Parliament revealed that over 13.13 lakh (1.3 million) women and girls were reported missing in India between 2019 and 2021. This demographic distortion is not merely a statistic; it reflects a civilizational crisis.

In Odisha alone, the gravity of the situation is alarming. According to a written reply by the Chief Minister in the Assembly, 37,611 cases of crimes against women were registered in just 15 months, including over 4,000 rape cases. The capital city, Bhubaneswar, reflects a disturbing urban paradox – development without safety.

The economic dimension of inequality is equally stark. The World Inequality Report 2026, prepared by the World Inequality Lab under scholars such as Thomas Piketty, underlines that women work longer hours than men when unpaid domestic and care work are included – 53 hours per week compared to men's 43. Yet women earn only 61 per cent of men's hourly wag-

es for paid work; when unpaid labour is factored in, their earnings effectively shrink to just 32 percent. In India, the female labour force participation rate remains extremely low (roughly 15.7 percent), and women receive only 18 percent of total labour income.

This invisible labour – cooking, cleaning, caregiving – sustains economies but remains unaccounted for in GDP calculations. Women in India shoulder a massive share of unpaid care work, valued at an estimated 15 to 17 percent of GDP – often exceeding key sectors like manufacturing or trade. The system extracts women's labour while denying them recognition and remuneration. Such inequity restricts women's career mobility, political participation, and financial independence. Women are often the last to be hired and the first to be fired. In education and healthcare too, girls frequently receive lower priority.

UN Women's theme for International Women's Day 2026 – "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls" – focuses on bridging the gap between legal rights and real-world im-

plementation, aligning with the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The campaign theme "Give To Gain" of internationalwomensday.com advocates that investing time, resources, and advocacy in women's advancement is not a loss but a powerful, multiplicative act benefiting everyone. UN Women Australia has announced "Balance the Scales" as the official theme for International Women's Day 2026, highlighting the urgent need for fair, inclusive, and accessible justice for every woman and girl. All three themes reinforce a powerful truth: investing in women multiplies social prosperity.

Yet slogans are insufficient. Laws without enforcement become empty promises; policies without funding remain decorative documents.

International Women's Day must not be confined to celebration alone. It must become a day of moral reckoning. Rights must be protected. Justice must be delivered. Action must be relentless. Only then can equality move from rhetoric to reality.

The author is an Odisha-based columnist.



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

WOMEN ARE OFTEN THE LAST TO BE HIRED AND THE FIRST TO BE FIRED

Nitish's intent

Sir, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been 'sent' to the Upper House notwithstanding his assertion that the decision was his own. Without a mutual understanding between the BJP and the JD(U) before the Assembly polls, this decision would be unthinkable. But Nitish has had his days in the sun, and his son is all set to baptise into politics. The 75-year-old Nitish tried his best to deliver a clean, transparent, efficient and development-oriented government although it was clear that abject misrule of the previous regime made Nitish's job easy. Prohibition policy of his was a masterpiece; though it appeared fragile, with several elements exploiting the loopholes in the system, his intentions could never be doubted. As Bihar prepares for another political transition, Kumar's long innings will be judged not only by his policies but also by the stability he attempted to restore to a state once synonymous with disorder and stagnation.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Welcome move

Sir, The decision by the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to consider restricting social media access for children below 16 is a constructive step to protect young minds from its harmful effects. Childhood is a critical stage of physical, emotional, and social development. Excessive use of mobile phones and social media during these formative years often leads to addiction, reduced physical activity, and weakened interpersonal skills. Instead of engaging in outdoor play, sports, and direct interaction with friends and family, many children become absorbed in artificial digital communication. More concerning is their exposure to online content that may be misleading, violent, or inappropriate for their age, which can influence behaviour and shape distorted or unrealistic perceptions of the world. Allowing access to social media only at an appropriate age ensures that children are mature enough to judge content responsibly. The message is clear: childhood should grow through real friendships, real play, and real experiences—not through screens.

RS Narula, PATIALA

WISDOM CORNER

You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

There is much pleasure to be gained from useless knowledge. BERTRAND RUSSELL

All the evolution we know of proceeds from the vague to the definite. CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1702: Anne became the last Stuart monarch of Great Britain, having earlier acquiesced to the Act of Settlement of 1701, which designated the Hanoverian descendants of King James I as her successors.

1817: The New York Stock Exchange was formally created; it became one of the world's largest marketplaces for securities and other exchange-traded investments.

1855: One of the heaviest trains in the world crossed a new bridge that had been built 200 feet above the Niagara River. Despite widespread skepticism about the safety of suspension bridges, John Roebling ambitiously aimed to build a double-decker one that would carry pedestrian traffic under a railway.

1942: Japanese troops captured Rangoon, Burma (now Yangon, Myanmar) during World War II.

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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

9 ARRESTED FOR ARMED ROBBERY

Jharsuguda/Laikera: Police arrested nine persons in connection with an armed dacoity at Talmunda village under Laikera police station in Jharsuguda district and forwarded them to court Saturday. All the accused are from Sambalpur district. Police seized several gold chains, mangalsutras, rings, bangles, silver ornaments, ₹1,43,803 in cash, eight mobile phones, antique silver coins, a knife, a baseball bat and a Bolero (OR15-S-3543) allegedly used in the crime. According to police, the robbery took place late Monday night when a group of masked men broke into the house of Prakash Nayak and his wife Jhili Nayak while they were asleep. The miscreants allegedly threatened the couple with weapons, tied their hands and legs and looted about ₹7 lakh along with gold ornaments from an almirah and the jewellery worn by Jhili before fleeing. Jharsuguda SP Gundala Reddy Raghavendra said a special team identified and arrested the accused with the help of CCTV footage and cyber cell inputs. Further investigation is underway to ascertain the involvement of others.



KANAK VARDHAN SINGH DEO

This year's International Women's Day is unparalleled and unique. It coincides with the recognition of 2026 as International Year of the Woman Farmer. On this special day, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all the incredible women agri-entrepreneurs, and annadatis who work tirelessly to nourish our families and communities. The Day renews the need for rights and justice and calls for action to recognise the critical role of women farmers in agriculture, food security and rural development. Together these observances call on governments and institutions to ensure gender inclusion in policy so that women farmers have equal access to land, technology, finance,

markets so that rights translate into real opportunities that fructify into action for shaping India's sustainable and inclusive growth.

Odisha has been among the early adopters of gender budgeting, reflecting the State's commitment to ensuring that public policies address the needs and aspirations of women. However, gender-responsive governance goes far beyond earmarking funds for women-focused schemes. In this spirit, the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment (DAFE) in Odisha established a Gender Responsive Cell (GRC) in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute in November 2025. This initiative represents an important step towards strengthening gender-sensitive policymaking in the agrifood sector. The GRC will support evidence-based analysis, build institutional capacity, and ensure that gender considerations are systematically integrated into agricultural policies and programmes.

A key pillar of the vision for Samrudha Odisha is empowering women in agriculture and rural enterprises. This approach aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of women-led development in a Vikshit

Bharat. National initiatives such as the Namu Drone Didi scheme, which introduces women to technology-driven agriculture; the Krishi Sakhi Convergence Programme, which trains women from Self-Help Groups as community agricultural advisors; and the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana under DAY-NRLM are expanding the role of women farmers across agricultural value chains.

Women Self-Help Groups that are mostly collectives of women farmers in rural areas have become powerful engines of grassroots transformation. Across Odisha, women are increasingly participating in agricultural enterprises, producer organisations, and market-linked activities. Today we have more than 100 Farmer Producer Organisations with entirely women shareholders, along with 89 additional FPOs where women constitute the majority of members. Women also play a central role in traditional sectors such as handloom and handicrafts, where government initiatives focused on training, quality improvement, and market access are opening new economic opportunities.

Gender-responsive policymaking must also account for the broader

impact of development initiatives on women's livelihoods. As a matter of fact, Odisha has made an SOP for the manufacturing of women-friendly agricultural equipment. Investments in infrastructure, market connectivity, and agrifood systems can significantly enhance women's economic participation. Emerging sectors such as mineral processing, research, and manufacturing—supported by initiatives like rare earth corridor development—can create new employment opportunities for women.

Recent labour trends highlight the growing importance of women in agriculture. Today, nearly half of the agricultural workforce comprises women, and the sector has witnessed a significant rise in women's participation in recent years. This shift underscores the need for policies that ensure women farmers have access to technology, credit, markets, and institutional support.

The principle of gender equality is firmly enshrined in the Indian Constitution—in the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, and Fundamental Duties. Gender budgeting and gender-responsive policies therefore represent im-

portant instruments of accountable and inclusive governance.

Institutions such as the Gender Responsive Cell can help translate these constitutional ideals into policy practice. By strengthening research, policy evaluation, and global engagement on food systems and gender equity, they can ensure that gender considerations remain integral to development planning.

Ensuring equal rights and justice for women requires more than intent and goes far beyond allocating funds for women-focused schemes. It requires policies that consciously recognise and address gender realities. Gender must be embedded across the entire spectrum of governance—from policy design and budgeting to implementation and evaluation.

On this International Women's Day, Odisha reaffirms its commitment to building policies that empower women not merely as beneficiaries of development, but as leaders in shaping the future of our agrifood systems and our economy.

The writer is Deputy Chief Minister, Odisha (Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment and Energy).

NALCO's red mud pond turns villagers' sorrow

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput/Sunabeda, March 7: The red mud pond of the NALCO plant at Damanjodi has allegedly become a major source of suffering for residents of Dengajaniguda village, with locals claiming that the toxic industrial waste is contaminating their water sources and farmland.

Villagers allege that wastewater containing caustic soda from the plant is flowing into their agricultural fields and also being used for drinking and other daily needs, posing serious health risks.

Dengajaniguda, located under Mujang panchayat in Dasmantpur block of Koraput district, is home to around 600 people from nearly 130 families, with most belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC and ST) categories. Despite the plant being operational for more than four decades, residents claim the village has remained neglected and deprived of even the basic minimum.

According to locals, while 13 villages were displaced during the establishment of the NALCO facility, Dengajaniguda was left out and continues to face



severe infrastructure deficits. The village lacks proper roads and safe drinking water facilities, forcing residents to struggle for basic amenities.

Villagers also complain that contaminated water has been causing various skin diseases and other health issues. During summer, dry red mud from the pond reportedly turns into dust and spreads through the air, while in the monsoon the situation becomes even worse.

Residents including Tankahar Bishoi, Munda Muduli, Madhu Bhoi, Dhana Muduli and Balab Mudulia said livestock such as cows, goats and

sheep frequently fall ill and die prematurely after consuming the polluted water.

Some villagers also alleged that the poor water quality has created social problems. They claim people from neighbouring villages are reluctant to marry their daughters into Dengajaniguda due to fears over the contaminated water.

Locals further alleged that prolonged use of chemically contaminated water has caused health complications, including vision problems and swelling of limbs among elderly residents.



Despite the plant being operational for more than four decades, residents claim the village has remained neglected and deprived of basic amenities

Villagers claim people from neighbouring villages are reluctant to marry their daughters into Dengajaniguda due to fears over the contaminated water

Despite repeated complaints to the district administration and company authorities, villagers say no permanent solution has been provided so far. Though three tube wells have been installed in the village, residents claim even those supply contaminated water.

As a result, villagers have to travel nearly 8 km to a hill

stream in Mujang panchayat to collect safe drinking water.

Koraput MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka said he would take up the matter with the NALCO chairman and the Union minister of mines and would also raise the issue in the Parliament.

Mujang Sarpanch Kunu Bhoi alleged that despite the hardships faced by people affected by the NALCO project, the company has failed to provide even basic facilities such as drinking water, healthcare and education. He warned that villagers may launch a protest if the issues remain unresolved.

Koraput Collector Manoj Satyawan Mahajan said discussions had been held between NALCO officials and the villagers after the matter was brought to his attention. He added that the Dasmantpur BDO has been directed to address the various issues faced by the village.

Meanwhile, NALCO General Manager (HR) CM Mahanta of the Damanjodi unit said the company would soon resolve basic problems such as electricity, drinking water and roads in Dengajaniguda village through funds from the District Mineral Foundation (DMF).

LBSNAA Dir visits Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, March 7: Director of Mussoorie-based Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) and senior IAS Officer Sriram Tarantikanti reviewed various central and state level projects during his visit to Ganjam district Saturday.

Tarantikanti reviewed implementation of several administrative projects undertaken by various departments.

Additionally, the senior IAS officer was briefed by Ganjam Collector V Keerthi Vasani about the state and district level programmes such as training provided to the UPSC aspirants, periodic grievance hearings, 'A promise to protect nature' undertaken to conserve environment, among others.

Applauding the initiatives, Tarantikanti provided vital guidance on the work ethics and development of skills among the officials. Apart from the above mentioned officers, ADM Dr Pramod Kumar Prusty and Debadatta Panda, Berhampur Sub-Collector Avinash Kumar, BeMC Commissioner Prathamesh Arvind Rajshirke, Berhampur DFO Sunny Khokhar and others were present.

Teacher held as girl flees school after molestation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Basudevpur, March 7: A girl studying in Class VII fled from her hostel premises after she was allegedly molested by her Hindi teacher at the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) at Chandimal under this block in Bhadrak district, police said. Police Saturday arrested the accused teacher.

The arrest of the accused, identified as Krishnananda Mishra, followed a dramatic escape by the victim, who reportedly scaled the school's compound wall and fled the premises out of fear in the early hours of Saturday morning.

According to Kasia Marine police, Mishra allegedly molested the student Friday and threatened her to remain silent and not disclose the matter before anyone. Terrified, the girl waited until dawn Saturday and climbed over the school wall and fled. She sought refuge at an elderly woman's home nearby, pleading for protection.

Police said the girl, visibly shaken, recounted the incident to the woman, who informed other villagers and contacted the girl's father.

She sustained bruises on her hands and legs while scaling the wall, locals said, demanding stringent action against the accused teacher who lives on the same campus. Local residents provided initial assistance to the girl and alerted the police authorities. Police arrived shortly after to take the student into protective custody.

"Based on the written complaint filed by the victim's family and the student's initial statement, we registered a case (36/26) and took the accused into custody Saturday," Kasia Marine police station IIC Kuni Besra said.

The victim is a resident of Agarpada area in Bhadrak district. Her family arrived at the station to press charges after being notified of the incident.

Mishra, a resident of Uttar Pradesh, has denied the allegations, claiming the charges against him are baseless. Police confirmed that a thorough investigation into the matter is underway.

The incident has sparked renewed concerns among locals regarding the safety of female students in residential schools and the rising instances of misconduct by teachers.

Vedanta Aluminium empowers rural women



Kashipur: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, has completed the first mushroom cultivation cycle under its community livelihood programme in Dumerpadar and Porlong villages of Sunger gram panchayat in Kashipur block of Rayagada district. Seventy women received training in scientific mushroom cultivation, including bed preparation, hygiene practices and maintaining suitable growing conditions. Each participant received two mushroom beds to begin cultivation. The first cycle progressed from germination to harvest, with yields of about 1-1.2 kg per bed per cycle. With an input cost of ₹25 per bed and an average selling price of ₹150 per kg, the activity offers potential as a low-investment income source. Each participant is expected to produce nearly 2 kg per cycle, providing supplementary income for households. Of the 140 beds distributed, nearly 100 are currently in active production. Vedanta Aluminium plans to scale the initiative to about 10,000 beds within a year, supported by training, input supply, spawn distribution and market linkages. Beneficiary Jasoda Naik from Dumerpadar village said the training has helped women cultivate mushrooms at home and earn additional income. Hiramani Naik from Porlong village said the programme has enabled women to manage cultivation and participate in livelihood activities together. Vedanta Aluminium says it has supported more than 16,000 women in Odisha and Chhattisgarh through livelihood and skill development initiatives aimed at strengthening household incomes.

New amphipod species found along state coast

Berhampur: Researchers from the Department of Marine Sciences at Berhampur University have identified a new species of amphipod, a small shrimp-like crustacean, along the Odisha coast. The discovery was made in October last year when researchers Sriraj Nahak, Geetanjali Bhoi and Suman Patra visited Aryapalli beach as part of a research project. During the field study, they collected the amphipod from a rocky area along the shoreline. The specimen was later brought to the department's laboratory, where detailed examination and tests were conducted under the supervision of Assistant Professor Seshadev Patra. Earlier, a similar species had been identified in Malaysia and was named *Stenothoe lori*. The species has now been recorded for the first time along the Indian coast. According to researchers, amphipods of this species typically inhabit rocky environments and moist areas that alternate between land and water. They feed on algae and decomposed organic matter, while small fish, crabs, birds and other marine organisms prey on them. The research findings have been published in the Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the University of Cambridge. Patra said the research was supported by funding from the Odisha State Higher Education Council under the Mukhyamantri Research and Innovation Fellowship Program (MRIP). He added that since the species appears to have distinct characteristics, further research will be conducted to gather more scientific data.



GOVT. OF ODISHA No.25001/296/2526
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, RAIRANGPUR
e-mail ID : genrairangpur@yahoo.com
"e" Procurement Notice for Building Works
Bid Identification No. - RWRDRP-34 of 2025-26
1. Name of the work : Construction of block public health unit Building, 2. Estimated Cost : Rs.67.47 to Rs.67.69 lakhs (approximately),
3. Class of Contractor : "B" Class or relevant of works license, 4. Period of Completion : 09 (Nine) calendar months, 5. Tender Paper Cost : Rs.10,000/-
The details are as follows :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of Seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/O Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Rairangpur	
		From	To		Technical bid	Financial bid
S.E.R.W Division, Rairangpur	RWRDRP-34/2025-26	06.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	16.03.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.	14.03.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.	17.03.2026 at 11.30 A.M.	Will be intimated later

Further details can be seen from the website : www.tendersodisha.gov.in Sd/- Er. Sanjeet Naik
OIPR-25001/25107/1/25-26/0006 Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Rairangpur

UCO Bank Zonal Office, UCO Bank Building, 2nd Floor, C-2, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751009 **GOLD AUCTION NOTICE**

The following persons, who have availed loans against pledge of gold ornaments, from **CONCERNED BRANCHES** of UCO Bank, have not repaid the amount in spite of our demand notice. Therefore, please take notice that if the principal, interest and other charges are not paid on or before **Dt.23.03.2026**, the pledge ornaments will be publicly auctioned on **Dt.24.03.2026 at 12.00 Noon** at the **Respective Branch premises**. The Bank reserves the right to cancel/postpone the auction to any other convenient date without assigning any reasons.

Sl. No.	Name & Address of Borrowers / A/c. No.	Balance Outstanding	Weight in (Grams)
JAMUKOLI BRANCH, At: Jamukoli, Panchagaon, Dist.: Khurda-752050, Name of the Manager: Mr. Pramod Sahoo, Mob.: 8328874327			
1.	Niruta Das, At: Ashrayapur, PO.: Panchagaon, Dist.: Khurda, PIN - 752050 / 33120610025666	₹ 1,55,000/- + Interest and Charges	33.70
BALIGUDA BRANCH, At: Baliguda, PO.: Patakhandra, Dist.: Kandhamal-762103, Name of the Manager: Mr. Biswamohan Panigrahi, Mob.: 8280409134			
1.	Gupna Mallick, At: Mahaguda, PO.: Baliguda, Dist.: Kandhamal, PIN-762103 / 29470610016183	₹ 20,000/- + Interest and Charges	8.89
2.	Jubraj Mallick, At/P.O.: Dimisinghia, Dist.: Kandhamal, PIN-762103 / 29470610016268	₹ 15,000/- + Interest and Charges	8.5
BADAKHOLI BRANCH, AT/PO.: Badakholi, Aska, Dist.: Ganjam-761116, Name of the Manager: Mr. Alok Ranjan Nayak, Mob.: 9124882489			
1.	Tutu Swain, At/PO.: Badakholi, Dist.: Ganjam/11600610062517	₹ 60,000/- + Interest and Charges	20.00

The intending bidders may participate in the auction by fulfilling the following terms:

- The Bank does not guarantee the weight or purity of the jewellery/coins, either of its gold contents or otherwise.
- The jewel is available for inspection by the intending bidders during business hours on any working day in the bank.
- The intending bidders have to contact the Respective Branch Head for the Reserve Price of each account.
- The intending purchaser shall make an earnest money deposit of 25% of Reserve Price (to be computed as per the balance outstanding).
- The jewel to be handed over to the highest bidder on payment of the balance amount within 24 hours or on the next working day of the bank during its business hours.
- If the successful bidder fails to pay the amount, the earnest money will be forfeited and the jewel may be resold within 30 days from the date of auction.
- The unsuccessful bidder shall be entitled for the refund of the earnest money immediately after the auction is over.
- It shall be lawful for the Bank to stop the auction at any stage without assigning any reason thereto in which case the earnest money shall be returned to whoever makes the deposit.

N.B.: For further details please contact Zonal Office Co-ordinator, Mob: 7873016821
Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 07.03.2026 Authorised Officer, UCO Bank



Advanced manufacturing is becoming the new mantra of this era and manufacturing is getting into the next scale with precision, innovation sustainability, automation. AI based technologies are changing the manufacturing sector in a big way
DEVENDRA FADNIS | CHIEF MINISTER, MAHARASHTRA

DUBAI-KOLKATA EMIRATES FLIGHT RESUMES OPERATIONS

After a few days of disruptions linked to the West Asia conflict, Dubai-based airline Emirates resumed services to Kolkata airport Saturday evening, with the first aircraft from the Gulf nation expected to land late at night. An Airports Authority of India (AAI) spokesperson said Emirates flight EK 572, operating from Dubai (DXB) to Kolkata (CCU), took off from Dubai at 7:43 pm IST



of the day quote

My government is also in the process of initiating the fourth Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) to auction more blocks and the second phase of e-auction for mining dumps
PRAMOD SAWANT | CHIEF MINISTER, GOA

The BJP is trying to defame the Samajwadi Party. A song has been launched to malign the party, and we will lodge an FIR against it
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY SUPREMO

We are not dependent. The tragedy is I do not know why they are making us dependent. It is a question of the independence of this country
FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE (NC) PRESIDENT

Murmu's remarks on tribals spark sharp Mamata retort

PM accuses TMC of 'insulting' President Droupadi Murmu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata/New Delhi, March 7: A fierce political slugfest erupted in poll-bound West Bengal Saturday, after President Droupadi Murmu flagged lack of development among tribals in north Bengal, drawing an angry retort from Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the TMC of insulting the President.

The exchange quickly escalated into a three-cornered political controversy involving the President, Banerjee and the PM, injecting fresh heat into the tribal outreach battle between the ruling TMC and the BJP ahead of the Assembly polls.

Addressing the 9th International Santal Conference near Bagdogra, Murmu expressed concern that Santals and other adivasi communities in north Bengal were yet to fully benefit from development despite their contribution to the nation, triggering a sharp reaction from the TMC.

Banerjee accused the President of speaking "on the advice of the BJP", and questioned her silence on alleged atrocities against tribals in states such as Manipur and Chhattisgarh.

Wading into the controversy, the PM accused the West Bengal government of insulting the President during her visit, calling the episode "shameful and unprecedented", and alleging that the TMC dispensation had "truly crossed all limits".



In her address, Murmu said, "I do not think that Santals and other adivasi in this area are fully progressing. The benefits of development have not reached you as they should."

Later, while speaking to reporters at Phasidewa where the programme was scheduled to be held, Murmu voiced dissatisfaction over the low turnout at the event. She questioned the decision to shift the venue from Bidhannagar near Siliguri to a location close to Bagdogra airport, suggesting the move made it difficult for tribal participants to attend. Murmu also noted the absence of Banerjee and state ministers during her visit.

"Generally, when the President is coming, the CM should be welcoming her and other ministers should be present. But, she did not come," Murmu said, adding that Banerjee was like her "younger sister" and that she herself was "a daughter of Bengal". The remarks prompted a sharp political response from Banerjee, who accused the BJP of using the President's office to attack the state government ahead of elections.

Escalating her confrontation

with constitutional authorities, Banerjee said politics was being played "using the Hon'ble President on the advice of the BJP" and by alleging that "no work has been done for tribals".

"I feel ashamed to even say this. We respect the Hon'ble President. But she too, has been sent to play politics. I am sorry, Madam. I have great regard for you, but you are being guided by BJP's policies and instructions," she said, addressing an anti-SIR dharna in Kolkata.

The controversy drew a strong reaction from the PM, who said that the office of the President is above politics and its sanctity should always be respected. He expressed hope that better sense will prevail among the West Bengal government and the ruling TMC. "This is shameful and unprecedented. Everyone who believes in democracy and the empowerment of tribal communities is disheartened," Modi said in a post on X.

He said that the pain and anguish expressed by the President, who herself hails from a tribal community, has caused immense sadness in the minds of the people of India.

Decision taken to make Nishant Bihar's deputy CM, MLC: Nitish aide



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, March 7: JD(U) MLA Hari Narayan Singh, a close aide of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Saturday claimed that a "unanimous" decision has been taken to make the party supremo's son Nishant the deputy CM in the new government to be formed upon his father's resignation.

Singh, the MLA from Harnaut, in Nalanda district that Kumar himself had represented in the 1980s, also claimed that Nishant, who is entering politics in his late 40s, will be elected to the state legislative council next month.

"At the legislature party meeting held at the chief min-

ister's residence yesterday, a unanimous decision was taken to make Nishant the deputy CM in the new government," Singh told a private news channel here, a day after the JD(U) president briefed his colleagues about his decision to give up the post and move to the Rajya Sabha.

The JD(U) MLA added, "It was also decided that Nishant shall formally join the JD(U). Since he must become a member of the legislature to hold a constitutional post, he would be elected to the legislative council in April when biennial elections to nine seats are scheduled. He need not necessarily contest from the seat that falls vacant upon his father's resignation."

To a pointed query, Singh said, "It is not clear whether Nishant will become the deputy CM as soon as a new government is in place or after some time. That is a decision to be taken by the top leadership in due course."

Himachal cabinet redefines destitute women status

Under the revised provisions, women abandoned by their husbands, and without independent income, will be eligible for benefits meant for destitute women under various state government schemes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, March 7: Women abandoned by their husbands, and without independent source of income, will be considered destitute women, the Himachal Pradesh cabinet held Saturday as it approved amendments to the social security pension rules.

The amendments to Social Security Pension Rules, 2010, redefined the term 'destitute' and simplified the certification process for availing benefits.

Under the revised provisions, women abandoned by their husbands, and without independent income, will be

eligible for benefits meant for destitute women under various state government schemes.

The cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu also decided to invite objections and suggestions from the public on proposed amendments to Rules 28, 87, 88 and 89 of the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj (Elections) Rules, 1994, a statement issued here said.

The proposed amendments provide that panchayats which have remained reserved for two consecutive terms since the base year 2010 will not be reserved in the upcoming panchayat polls, slated for May 31.

BADSHAH SONG CONTROVERSY

Haryana Police in process of issuing lookout notice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 7: Police have initiated the process to issue a Look Out Circular against rapper-musician Badshah to prevent him from leaving the country, a day after he was booked over alleged objectionable lyrics and visuals in his recently released Haryanvi music video, 'Tateeree'.

Meanwhile, Badshah uploaded a video on his official Instagram handle, apologising if anyone's sentiments were hurt by his latest song.

Panchkula police has issued a formal notice directing Badshah to appear before the police immediately. Several police teams have been constituted to ensure his arrest and are conducting continuous raids at various possible locations, the Haryana Police said in a statement Saturday.

Considering the possibility of the accused attempting to leave the country, the process to issue a Look Out Circular (LOC) against him has been initiated, it said. Police Friday registered an FIR under various provisions of law based on a complaint lodged by a Panchkula resident, alleging the use of objectionable lyrics and visuals in Badshah's recently released music video.

Sections 3 and 4 of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, and BNS Section 296 (obscene acts and songs) have been slapped against the rapper. "Taking a strict stance against the spread of objectionable content on social media and in songs, Haryana Police has initiated major action against singer Aditya Prateek Singh Sisodia, popularly known as Badshah," the police statement said.

Indian data resources handed over to US through deal: Rahul

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha also sought for a debate on freebies, wondering why such largesse to the poor was seen as wrong but it was not the case with 'Adani, Ambani'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 7: Top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday alleged that the country's data resources have been essentially handed over to the US post its trade deal with India, and said issues such as this were being not discussed while the debate surrounded on what one eats and drinks.

In a free-wheeling chat with the Information Technology (IT) Fraternity at Technopark here, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha also sought for a debate on freebies, wondering why such largesse to the poor was seen as wrong but it was not the case with "Adani, Ambani."

Fielding queries on data protection, he touched upon the Indo-US trade deal, of which he has been critical.

He said that if India had said that its data was the most valuable in the world, there would have been no taxes on agriculture or on small and medium businesses.

"I mean, if in that deal, India turned around and said, listen, this is all fine, but our data is the most valuable data in the world, I can guarantee



you there will be no taxes on agriculture. There would be no taxes on small and medium business. There would be none of that."

He said that when going into a negotiation, one has to know what one has.

"We have a huge diversity. So, we can understand many different things from many different angles. We have the largest pile of data on this planet. We have the best engineering talent. We have the best medical talent. We have the best medical talent."

He said that if Russia hands over its entire oil reserves to the US, there will be a lot of hue and cry there.

But, there was "not a peep" in India when its data was "handed over" to the US as part of the deal signed by the government, he claimed.

He said that one of the central questions that politics of India need to discuss is how to utilise data that is the country's biggest resource, what is its nature, who has access to it and at what cost.



An artisan dyes 'Kalawa', a sacred orange-yellow thread used in Hindu rituals, in Lalgopalganj village, near Prayagraj, Saturday, March 7, 2026. The generations-old craft continues as artisans prepare orders ahead of the upcoming Navratri festival

PTI PHOTO

EASIER ACCESS TO BENEFITS



The cabinet also decided to extend 40 per cent of the Local Area Development Fund under the Swaran Jayanti Energy Policy to provide financial assistance to 'children of the state'.

It also gave its nod to cancel 15 hydroelectric projects that failed to be commissioned despite availing the benefit of the one-time amnesty scheme.

The cabinet decided to allot the 10-MW Small Hydro Electric Project at Pandoh to the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) subject to the BBMB returning the unused land to the state government.

The government will receive 13 per cent free power and another five per cent of the generated power as its share from BBMB.

Approval was also given to fill 111 posts under various categories in the technical education, cooperation, education, and public relation departments.

The cabinet approved the constitution of the Regional Cooperative Milk Producers Union Limited at Dhagwar in Kangra district comprising milk producers from Kangra, Hamirpur, Chamba and Una districts. Additionally, the National Dairy Development Board will be engaged as the administrator for management and operation of the Dhagwar Milk Processing Plant.

The cabinet also sanctioned enhancement of heli-taxi services on the Chandigarh-Shim-

la-Chandigarh route from three sorties to twelve sorties per week, with flights to be operated twice daily for six days a week. The state will provide viability gap funding to support the operation.

Decision to release salary of outsourced employees engaged under the Jal Jeevan Mission in Jal Shakti department from state resources was taken as the Centre has not released funds under Jal Jeevan Mission, the statement said.

The cabinet also gave its consent to grant an 80-year lease in favour of the Himachal Pradesh Housing and Urban Development Authority (HIMUDA) by amending Rule 7 of the Himachal Pradesh Lease Rules, 2013, which earlier provided that the state government shall not grant lease of land for a period exceeding 40 years.



When we speak today about the rise of countries, the rise of countries is determined by the countries. The rise of India will be determined by India

SPECIAL TRAIN TONIGHT FOR T20 WC FINALS

Northern Railway will operate a special train from New Delhi to Ahmedabad Saturday at 11.45 pm for cricket enthusiasts who wish to watch the T20 World Cup final.



of the day quote

In Assam, every species thrives. In Rani Reserve Forest, a black bear was spotted recently in a non-captive environment, signifying the robustness of our wildlife conservation efforts

The youth of the Northeast must look beyond seeking employment and instead focus on creating it

Over the last eight years, our journey has been filled with challenges and difficulties. At times, it has been painful and it has certainly not been easy. But with blessings from above, the love of the people and the support of our citizens, we have been able to overcome most of these challenges

India exploring new energy options

Australia, Canada offer additional gas supply

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: With India exploring alternative sources to further strengthen its energy security, countries like Australia, Canada and several others have offered additional gas supplies, official sources said Saturday.

Citing the ongoing US-Israel conflict with Iran leading to the closure of the key shipping route through the Strait of Hormuz, sources said the passage is not the only route for India's crude imports and asserted that the days of dependence on a single maritime chokepoint are long over.

They noted that supplies from Russia, West Africa, the Americas, Central Asia, and non-Gulf Middle Eastern routes have ensured that disruption in any single corridor results in a managed sourcing adjustment, rather than a supply emergency.

Only around 40 per cent of India's crude imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz, while about 60 per cent are routed through other supply routes that remain unaffected, they said.

This has ensured that there has been no shortage of energy for Indian consumers even



during global turmoil or the pandemic, sources said.

Several countries, including Australia and Canada, have also offered additional gas supplies, and India continues to explore alternative sources to further strengthen energy security, they said.

India has also recently entered into new energy supply arrangements with partners such as the United States and the United Arab Emirates to ensure stable long-term supplies.

Over the last decade, India's strategic oil diplomacy has ex-

panded its supplier base from 27 to 40 countries across six continents. The days when India's energy security rose and fell with conditions in a single maritime chokepoint are over, sources said.

They highlighted that India's energy procurement decisions are governed by one principle -- national interest.

"We source crude from wherever supplies are available, competitively priced, and deliverable, and we will continue to do so. This has been our consistent position

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent Friday announced a 30-day waiver permitting Indian refiners to continue purchases of Russian oil, describing India as an essential partner

across administrations and across geopolitical cycles," a senior government official said, adding that the recent US statements are meant for the country's domestic audience.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent Friday announced a 30-day waiver permitting Indian refiners to continue purchases of Russian oil, describing India as an essential partner.

India has complied with all 18 rounds of G7 price cap rules since they were introduced.

The waiver removes a friction that was never in anyone's interest to sustain and recognises the stabilising role India's refining and procurement capacity has played in

global energy markets.

India remains in close touch with major global crude oil and gas suppliers as well as international energy institutions such as the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), sources said.

"India acted within international law throughout. Every transaction used compliant shipping, audited channels, and legal traders. India did not break the rules. India stabilised markets and the record of global crude prices during a period when India was actively procuring is the clearest evidence of that," the official added.

Sources said every decision taken by the government in the petroleum sector is guided by three criteria -- affordability, availability, and sustainability. These are not aspirations; they are operational commitments with auditable outcomes, sources said.

On fuel prices, the sources noted that petrol prices rose by about 55 per cent in Pakistan, 22 per cent in Germany, 19 per cent in France, and 11.54 per cent in the US during the same period, while India's petrol prices increased by less than 1 per cent.

Patanjali Divya Yog Mandir Trust drives health awareness



AGENCIES

Dehradun, March 7: Under the ambitious 'Tribal Adi Gram Project' by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, comprehensive programs are being run in 64 selected villages of Uttarakhand to improve health, education, self-reliance, and social empowerment of tribal communities. The project is being implemented by Patanjali Divya Yog Mandir Trust, Haridwar.

As part of this initiative, a large free yoga camp was organized in the village of Banas Kheda with the support of the Women's Patanjali Yoga Committee. Many members of the local tribal community especially women, youth, and senior citizens participated with great enthusiasm.

During the camp, participants practiced various yoga asanas, pranayama, meditation, natural health techniques. They were encouraged to adopt healthy and balanced lifestyle. Yoga instructors explained that yoga is not just way to prevent or cure diseases, but a powerful path to live disciplined, balanced, energetic life.

On this occasion, Ramdev said, "Yoga is India's ancient and divine way of life, which strengthens a person physically, mentally, and spiritually. Patanjali's mission is to spread the light of yoga to every person in the country."

Acharya Balkrishna added, "The tribal community is an important part of our rich cultural heritage. This yoga camp in Banas Kheda is an important step toward bringing positive change and promoting a healthy lifestyle in tribal society."

Under the project, regular free yoga camps, health awareness programs, natural medicine consultations, lifestyle improvement campaigns are being held in villages, directly benefiting the tribal communities.

Delhi court grants 2-week interim bail to Al-Falah chairman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: A Delhi court Saturday granted two weeks interim bail to Al-Falah group chairman Jawed Siddiqui in a money laundering case to allow him to take care of his wife who is undergoing treatment for stage 4 ovarian cancer.

Additional Sessions Judge Sheetal Chaudhary Pradhan granted the relief to Siddiqui, noting that his wife was undergoing chemotherapy and required support during the treatment.

"After considering all the present facts and circumstances, I am of the considered view that applicant/ accused deserves to be enlarged on interim bail as the wife of applicant/ accused is unwell," the court said in its order. It noted that Siddiqui's wife was undergoing chemotherapy at a Delhi hospital and that the medical documents placed on record were not disputed by the Enforcement Directorate.

It also observed that the couple's three children were studying in the UAE and were unable to travel to India, leaving the family without immediate family support.

"The wife of accused/ applicant requires care and support, cannot be ignored and it is also a fact that she does not have her family or children besides her and it is only the accused/ applicant being her husband who is required to give her support," the court said.

2002 JOURNALIST MURDER CASE

Dera Sacha Sauda chief acquitted



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 7: The Punjab and Haryana High Court Saturday acquitted Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in the 2002 murder case of a journalist, seven years after he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in the case by a special CBI court.

The 58-year-old Dera chief is currently lodged in Rohtak's Sunaria jail, where he is serving a 20-year jail term given in 2017 for the rape of two of his disciples. In May 2024, the High Court had overturned another special CBI court order and acquitted Ram Rahim and four others in the 2002 murder of the sect's former manager, Ranjit Singh.

Journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati was shot outside his house in October 2002 in Haryana's Sirsa after his newspaper 'Poora Sach' published an anonymous letter narrating the alleged sexual exploitation of women follow-

ers at the Dera headquarters in Sirsa.

The journalist later succumbed to injuries, and a case was registered in which Ram Rahim was named as a conspirator. The case was handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2006. Ram Rahim and three others were convicted by a special CBI court in Panchkula in January 2019. He had challenged the conviction before the high court.

"The high court division bench headed by Chief Justice Sheel Nagu Saturday acquitted him (Ram Rahim) in the murder case of journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati. The bench, however, has upheld the conviction of three others in the case," sect head's lawyer Jitender Khurana said.

A detailed order is awaited. The journalist's son, Anshul Chhatrapati, described the HC verdict as a "setback" for his family, which has been fighting a long legal battle, and said they will challenge it in the Supreme Court.

"Whatever legal remedies we have, we will use them. We will challenge this verdict in the Supreme Court. We expect that the investigating agency, CBI, would also challenge the high court verdict," he said.



Volunteers from Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha Birmingham UK, take part in 'kar sewa', voluntary service, at the Golden Temple, in Amritsar, Saturday

130 Maoists surrender in Hyderabad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, March 7: Ahead of March 31 deadline set by the Centre, as many as 130 Maoists surrendered before Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy here Saturday.

As part of the surrender process, the cadres handed over 124 firearms, including AK-47 Rifles and over 5,200 live ammunition of various calibre, the highest in recent times in the country with respect to the quality and numbers of arms surrendered

by the PLGA (People's Liberation Guerrilla Army).

Of the 130 surrendered ultras, 125 belong to Chattisgarh, four are from Telangana, and one from Andhra Pradesh, DGP B Shivadhar Reddy said.

"Now there is no Telangana state committee of Maoists. It had completely vanished," the DGP told reporters. The surrender of weapons has significantly weakened the operational and combat capability of the CPI (Maoist) in the region and put an end to prolonged insurgency

in the Central Regional Bureau (CRB) area, the DGP said.

The surrendered Maoists symbolically handed over their weapons to the chief minister.

The surrendered Maoists belonged to the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA), which has now completely lost its existence, the DGP said.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, appealing to underground Maoists to join the mainstream, said as many as 721 Maoists have surrendered in Telangana since January 2024.

MERCURY RISES ACROSS NORTH

DELHI'S HOTTEST START TO MARCH IN 50 YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: Several north Indian states have been witnessing a steady rise in mercury, with Delhi Saturday recording a maximum temperature of 35.7 degrees Celsius, the highest reading logged in the first week of the month in the past 50 years, an IMD official told PTI.

According to weather data from the past 50 years, earlier the highest maximum temperature reading during the first seven days of March at Safdarjung, the city's base weather station, was 34.8 degrees Celsius logged March 5, 1999.

With the mercury touching 35.7 degrees Celsius Saturday, it is now the hottest day in the first week of March during the 50-year period, the IMD official said.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) data 2011 onwards shows that the second-highest temperature reading during the first week of March was recorded in 2016, when the mercury settled at 33.6 degrees Celsius March 4.

Safdarjung, the city's primary weather station, recorded a maximum temperature of 35.7 degrees Celsius Saturday, 7.3 degrees above normal, and a minimum of 17.4 degrees Celsius, 3.4 notches above normal.

In neighbouring Haryana, the average maximum temperature was markedly above normal by 6.2 degrees Celsius. The highest temperature in the state was 36.3 degrees Celsius at Hisar.

In Uttarakhand, temperatures have been rising steadily in Dehradun and other parts of the state for the past few days. According



to official data, the minimum temperature in Dehradun rose sharply over the past two to three days, from 12 degrees Celsius to 17.8 degrees Celsius Saturday, six degrees Celsius above normal.

Maximum temperatures have hovered around 30-31 degrees Celsius for the past two to three days. The maximum

temperature Saturday was 31.5 degrees Celsius, five degrees Celsius above normal.

According to the Meteorological Centre in Dehradun, maximum temperatures in both the plains and hilly areas of Uttarakhand have been significantly above normal in the past 24 hours.

Most parts of Jammu and Kashmir continued to reel under above-normal temperatures Saturday, though there was an appreciable drop in day temperatures compared to the previous day, an official of the Meteorological department said.

However, the conditions are likely to change in the coming days with the meteorological department predicting a spell of wet weather from March 10 to 12 under the influence of an approaching western disturbance.

Jammu recorded a maximum of 30 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 19.1 degrees Celsius, which was 4.6 and 5.6 notches above normal during this part of the season, respectively. Jammu had recorded a high of 31.8 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 19.1 degrees Celsius the previous day.

POST OF THE DAY

The Indian leadership playbook seems simple: say whatever sounds good today, promise outcomes in some distant future (like 2047), and hope no one is around to verify the results. In this game, the bigger the promise, the louder the applause - as if the honest people of India won't notice.

SHORT TAKES

6 wagons of coal-laden goods train derail in MP

Katni (MP): Six wagons of a coal-laden goods train derailed in Madhya Pradesh's Katni district Saturday, severely disrupting rail traffic on the busy route and forcing the diversion of multiple trains, officials said. Work is underway on war-footing to restore the line on the New Katni Junction (NKJ) section, the West Central Railway's chief public relations officer Harshit Shrivastava told PTI. A team from Jabalpur was at the spot overseeing the repair work, he said. The derailment occurred around 10.30 am near the A Cabin in the NKJ area, affecting rail operations on routes linked to Bilaspur in neighbouring Chhattisgarh. Katni Area Manager Rohit Singh told reporters that the freight train laden with coal was heading to West Baroda from Bilaspur when six of its wagons derailed.

4 women killed as blaze erupts in factory

Chandigarh: Four women workers were killed while at least 11 others sustained injuries after a fire broke at a 'gula' (powdered colour) manufacturing unit in Haryana's Jind district Saturday, police said. The fire allegedly erupted at the entry point of the factory -- located in a residential area of Bhaat Colony in Safidon -- and thereafter smoke spread inside the factory, they said. A couple of workers even jumped from the roof of the factory to save themselves, police said. Police and fire department personnel arrived at the scene, and with the support of the locals, broke a boundary wall to rescue workers from the blazing factory, they added. Several fire brigades were pressed to douse the fire while ambulances were rushed to the site to transport victims to hospitals, police said. However, the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.



The stakes could not be higher. All the unlawful attacks in the Middle East and beyond are causing tremendous suffering and harm to civilians throughout the region and pose a grave risk to the global economy

MASS EXODUS

Pakistani and Afghan troops exchanged fire at dozens of points along their border as the UN said their week-old conflict has forced the displacement of more than 100,000 people.



of the day quote

There is no place for corruption to hide. The fight against corruption must move forward

The job market is struggling in the face of so many headwinds. Companies are going to be even more reluctant to hire this spring until the war ends and they can see consumers still spending.

If a government attacks its own people, silences journalists, and curtails freedom, there are consequences. The people of Georgia have our full support but there is no place for those representing repression in our union

Israel hammers Beirut, Tehran

Death toll continued to rise Saturday with at least 1,230 people killed in Iran, more than 200 in Lebanon and around a dozen in Israel



An explosion on Beirut's southern suburbs after an Israeli strike, following an escalation between Hezbollah and Israel amid the US-Israeli conflict with Iran and Lebanon Saturday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 7: Iran's president rejected a demand by the United States for an unconditional surrender Saturday and apologised for Iran's attacks on regional countries, as Israel and the United States kept up their airstrikes targeting the Islamic Republic.

Gulf countries say they have intercepted more ballistic missiles and drones launched from Iran. Saudi Arabia said it stopped four drones attacking the country's massive Shaybah oil field, the second attack within hours.

and the alert sounded. Meanwhile, Israeli warplanes hammered Beirut and Tehran. Death toll continued to rise Saturday with at least 1,230 people killed in Iran, more than 200 in Lebanon and around a dozen in Israel, according to officials.

US President Donald Trump's administration approved a new \$151 million arms sale to Israel after Trump said he would not negotiate with Iran without its "unconditional surrender."

Israel launched an operation in Lebanon to find information on a missing pilot

The Israeli military says its special forces conducted an operation deep inside Lebanon in an attempt to gather informa-

tion about an Israeli navigator who has been missing for nearly 40 years. The Israeli army's Arabic spokesman posted on X that no evidence was found related to Israeli pilot Ron Arad, who was captured alive after his fighter jet crashed over southern Lebanon in 1986.

According to Lebanon's state media, Israeli forces landed in the eastern Lebanese town of Nabi Chit late Friday and were intercepted by members of the militant Hezbollah group, triggering a gunfight that lasted until the early hours of Saturday.

Ron Arad was believed to have been held in Nabi Chit until 1988, when he went missing.

An Iranian cleric warns that Khamenei's successor should be

SHORT TAKES

Russian drone swarm kills 10 in Ukraine

Kharkiv: Russia launched a barrage of drones and missiles at Ukraine overnight on Saturday, damaging infrastructure and killing at least 10 people, including two children, in the northeast city of Kharkiv, Ukrainian officials said.

US grants license for Venezuelan gold

Washington: The US issued a license Friday that authorizes dealings with Minerven, Venezuela's state-owned gold mining company, in the latest sign of the Trump administration's intent to exercise more control over that country's natural resources.

IS militants abduct over 300 in Nigeria

Abuja: Islamic militants attacked a town in northeastern Nigeria Friday, abducting more than 300 people, including women and children, local officials said.

LANDSLIDE VICTORY

Rookie Balendra defeats four-time Nepal PM Oli; RSP to form next govt

Rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah is Nepal's rising star in politics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 7: RSP's Balendra Shah Saturday defeated four-time PM K P Sharma Oli by a huge margin and set to form the next government in Nepal, decimating traditional political parties in the first general elections since last year's violent Gen Z protests demanding generational change and corruption-free regime.

Rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah 'Balen,' the prime ministerial candidate of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) defeated Oli, the chair of Nepal's legacy party, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) -- CPN-UML -- by a huge margin of about 50,000 votes in Jhapa-5 constituency.

The RSP, which was formed in 2022 by Ravi Lamichhane, has won 70 seats out of the 87 seats for which results have been declared by 8:30 pm, according to the Election Commission (EC).

RSP's seats include a clean sweep in all 10 constituencies of Kathmandu district even as it is leading in 52 seats across the country, the EC data showed.

Legacy parties were far behind in convincing voters for whom the major issues included fighting corruption and an end to nepotism apart from a generational change in political leadership of the Himalayan nation.

The Nepali Congress (NC) won ten and was leading in nine seats; the CPN-UML won just three seats and is leading



in eight; the Nepali Communist Party (NCP) won two seats and is leading in five, the Shram Shakti Party (SSP) was leading in three seats, and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) won one seat, the EC data showed. Among the winners is one independent.

Nepal witnessed about 60 per cent voter turnout during the March 5 elections to the House of Representatives. The counting of votes started late Thursday night and as of 5 pm Saturday, counting was in progress in 162 constituencies, the Election Commission said.

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday congratulated the people and government of Nepal for the successful conduct of elections.

"It is heartening to see my Nepali sisters and brothers ex-

ercise their democratic rights so vibrantly. This historic milestone is a proud moment in Nepal's democratic journey," Modi said in a post on X.

Modi also said that as a close friend and neighbour, India remains steadfast in its commitment to working closely with the people of Nepal and its new government to scale new heights of shared peace, progress and prosperity.

"Balen babu, congratulations for the victory," Oli wrote in his social media post.

Oli, who too was projected as the PM face of the CPN-UML, wished Balen for a full five year tenure for his government in the Himalayan nation that has seen 14 governments in the last 18 years.

"I wish your five year tenure be trouble free, successful and hearty congratulations," Oli said as he attached a 2022 photo showing him gifting a tabla to Balen after the rapper-turned-politician won Kathmandu mayor's election as an independent.

Pak raises petrol, diesel prices by PKR 55/L, highest-ever hike

Islamabad: In the first post-Iran war economic shock, Pakistan government in an overnight decision has increased petrol and high-speed diesel prices by PKR 55 per litre each, the highest-ever hike.

Sri Lanka will repatriate bodies of Iranian sailors killed in US attack

Colombo: Sri Lanka will repatriate the bodies of the Iranian sailors who were killed on IRIS Dena, the first Iranian ship that was torpedoed by the US, the Deputy Defence Minister said Saturday.

Israel says it struck Hezbollah targets in southern and eastern Lebanon

The latest wave of Israeli airstrikes included targets in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley, the Israeli military said. The Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah said its fighters clashed with an Israeli force that landed there late Friday.

The military also said its Saturday strikes hit rocket launchers, weapons storage facilities and two command centres of Hezbollah's Radwan Force in southern Lebanon.

Bahrain's military intercepted two missiles and a drone Saturday, the Defence Ministry said. That brought the total to 86 missiles and 148 drones that have been intercepted over Bahrain since the US and Israel launched a war against Iran last weekend.

Qatar Airways operates limited flights to Doha

Qatar Airways says it will operate six flights into Doha Sunday through a "safe corridor," as the country's airspace remains closed. The state-owned airline said the flights will come from five European cities as well as Bangkok.

Flash floods in Nairobi kill 23

REUTERS

Nairobi, March 7: Aid workers pulled bodies from floodwaters across Nairobi on Saturday after flash floods that began overnight killed at least 23 people, swept away dozens of cars and disrupted flights at East Africa's biggest airport, authorities said.

Kenyan President William Ruto said he had deployed a team of emergency responders, including soldiers, to coordinate rescue efforts, while offering condolences to the affected communities.

"I have also ordered that relief food from our national strategic reserves be immediately released and distributed to families affected by the floods," he said in a statement on social media.

In the industrial neighbourhood of Grogan, security guard John Lomayan, 34, looked at the body of an elderly man he recognised - a roadside egg seller - trapped beneath a car that had been washed away when the Nairobi River burst its banks.

Scientists say global warming is worsening floods and droughts across East Africa by concentrating rainfall into shorter, more intense bursts.

Trump hosts Latin American leaders with China in focus

REUTERS

Washington, March 7: President Donald Trump will host Latin American leaders in Florida Saturday as his administration seeks to counter China's growing influence in the region, a diplomatic show just days after US strikes on Iran opened a new front in the Middle East.



The summit comes as Trump prepares for talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing at the end of March. The Trump administration hopes to pull Latin America closer to Washington after years of growing Chinese trade, lending and infrastructure investment in the region.

Saturday's gathering, dubbed the "Shield of the Americas," also gives Trump a chance to project strength closer to home even as the conflict in the Middle East leads to consequences he may not fully control, such as rising prices for oil and gas.

- Trump hosts Latin American leaders to counter China's influence
Summit focuses on security, migration, and economic ties
China's trade with Latin America hits record \$518 billion in 2024

Kristi Noem will be special envoy for the "Shield of the Americas", Trump posted Thursday. Noem was Homeland Security secretary until Trump removed her from that post this week after mounting criticism of her from Congress.

The summit brings together conservative leaders aligned with Trump on security, migration and economics, reflecting a broader rightward shift in parts of Latin America.

Among those expected to attend are Argentine President Javier Milei, Chile's president-elect Jose Antonio Kast and Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, whose gang crackdown, criticized by human rights groups, has become a model for parts of Latin America's right.

Politicians from across the region have toured Bukele's sprawling "mega-prison," where the United States last year deported more than 200 Venezuelans without trial.

47 Imran Khan supporters get 10 yrs in jail

ISLAMABAD

Islamabad, March 7: An anti-terrorism court on Saturday sentenced 47 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders and supporters to 10 years imprisonment and a PKR 5,00,000 fine each in absentia for vandalism and violence during the May 9, 2023, protest.

The nationwide protest was launched by workers and leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) following the arrest of former premier and party founder Imran Khan in Islamabad. A group of protesters also tried to storm the General Headquarters, the seat of the army chief, in Rawalpindi, resulting in vandalism of the properties.

Hamza Camp, the Army Museum, and Sixth Road Metro Station.

The anti-terrorism court (ATC) Rawalpindi judge, Amjad Ali Shah, issued the verdict against the 47 who had already been declared as proclaimed offenders.

The court found them guilty and sentenced each of them to 10 years imprisonment, along with a fine of PKR 5,00,000 per convict and the confiscation of their movable and immovable properties.



This is an emergency situation. There is something (affect) here and there. But in the power sector we are moving ahead in a way that there will be no disturbance (in supplies). Peak power demand will be 270GW this time (summer) and will not go beyond that

SRIPAD YESSO NAIK | MINISTER OF STATE FOR POWER

SBI LAUNCHES \$500MN SOCIAL LOAN TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Country's leading lender SBI Saturday announced the launch of a \$500 million syndicated social term loan facility, focused exclusively on women empowerment with a greenshoe option, on the eve of International Women's Day. This syndicated transaction is a milestone for SBI and the global ESG financing landscape, for the noble cause of women empowerment, the bank said in a statement



of the day quote

Good news for exporters. The current 50 per cent RoDTEP rates are applicable only up to 31st March 2026. The full restoration of RoDTEP rates will take effect from 1st April 2026, which should provide much-needed support to the exporting community

SC RALHAN | PRESIDENT, FIEO

India's growth ambitions require the full participation of its talent pool. At Vedanta, women today represent 23 per cent of our workforce but this is only the beginning. Our ambition is to grow to 35 per cent and ultimately to 50 per cent

PRIYA AGARWAL HEBBAR | NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VEDANTA LTD AND CHAIRPERSON, HINDUSTAN ZINC LIMITED

Collaborations (are possible) in biotechnology, clean energy, fishery, geo-thermal and innovations, they (Iceland firms) could use the Indian market to scale up. There is a huge potential for investments,

R RAVINDRA | INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO ICELAND

SHORT TAKES

Wheat procurement target fixed at 30.3MT

New Delhi: The government has fixed the wheat procurement target at 30.3 million tonne for the 2025-26 Rabi Marketing Season (RMS), as per an official statement. The target was finalised at a meeting of State Food Secretaries chaired by the Secretary in Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD), here Friday. Much of the wheat procurement is undertaken between April and June, while other crops through the season till March. Paddy procurement for 2025-26 (Rabi crop) has been estimated at 7.6 million tonne in rice equivalent, while around 7.79,000 tonne of coarse grains including millets (Shri Anna) has also been estimated for procurement by states. Wheat output is expected to surpass last year's record 117.94 million tonne, potentially touching 120 million tonne, on the back of record sowing across 33.41 million hectares and favourable weather conditions. The Food Corporation of India's (FCI) wheat stocks are projected at around 18.2 million tonne as of April 1, 2026, ensuring adequate supply for domestic requirements. India in February lifted a four-year ban on wheat and wheat product exports, approving an initial shipment allowance of 2.5 million tonne of wheat and 5,00,000 tonne of wheat products.

IRB Infrastructure toll revenue jumps in Feb

New Delhi: IRB Infrastructure Saturday said its toll revenue in February 2026 rose 22 per cent year-on-year to Rs 746 crore. The toll revenue in February 2025 was at Rs 614 crore, IRB said in an exchange filing. The toll revenue includes earning of IRB InvIT Fund (Public InvIT) and IRB Infrastructure Trust (Private InvIT). The newly added IRB Harihara Tollways (TOT 17) in Uttar Pradesh contributed its full month toll revenue of February 2026 at Rs 52.8 crore. Of the total 24 toll assets, IRB MP Expressway in Maharashtra contributed the major share of Rs 148.2 crore to the total revenue collection in February 2026, up from Rs 140.9 crore a year ago. Contribution of IRB Ahmedabad Vadodara Super Express Tollway rose to Rs 79.7 crore in February 2026 from Rs 63.9 crore a year ago, which is the second largest in the total toll collection.

MIDDLE EAST UNCERTAINTY

War fuels global oil spike

Oil prices surpassed \$90 a barrel Friday, with American crude settling at \$90.90, up 36% from a week ago, and Brent, the international standard, climbing 27% over the course of the week to land at \$92.69

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, March 7: The price of oil surged higher and showed no signs of halting its rapid climb a week after the US and Israel launched major attacks on Iran that escalated into a war in the Middle East. The conflict, in which nearly every country in the Middle East has sustained damage from missiles or drone strikes, has left ships that carry roughly 20 million barrels of oil a day stranded in the Persian Gulf, unable to safely pass through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Gulf that is bordered on its north side by Iran. The disruption and damage to key oil and gas facilities in the Middle East has led to an interruption in the supply of oil and gas. Oil prices surpassed \$90 a barrel Friday, with American crude settling at \$90.90, up 36% from a week ago, and Brent, the international standard, climbing 27% over the course



of the week to land at \$92.69. The fallout is ratcheting up what consumers and business will pay for gasoline, diesel and jet fuel, with some drivers already feeling it at the pump. "It's crazy. It's not needed, especially at a time when people are already struggling, but not unexpected from all this turmoil that's going on," said Mark Doran, who was pumping gas in Middlebury, Vermont Friday. "I don't think there's been an end in sight to any Middle East conflict that's been started by us, so the fact that they say that there's going to be an end that quickly is not believable, and the Middle East is, you know, a place that the US is not going to solve." On Monday, President Donald Trump said that the US expected its military operations against Iran to last four to five weeks but has "the capability to go far longer." And on Friday, Trump appeared to rule out talks with Iran absent its "unconditional surrender."

"The more news we get, the more it seems like this is going to last a really long time," said Al Salazar, head of macro oil and gas research at Enverus. In the US, a gallon of regular gasoline rose to \$3.32 Friday, up 11% from a week ago, according to AAA motor club. Diesel was selling for \$4.33 a gallon Friday, up 15% from a week ago. The price shocks were felt even more heavily in Europe and Asia, markets that rely more heavily on energy supplies from the Middle East. Diesel prices doubled in Europe, and jet fuel prices rose by close to 200% in Asia, according to Claudio Galimberti, chief economist at Rystad Energy. Energy prices climbed throughout the week as Iran launched a series of retaliatory attacks, including a drone strike on the US Embassy in Saudi Arabia, and the conflict widened. Iran also hit a major refinery in Saudi Arabia and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility in Qatar, halting flows of refined products and taking about 20% of the world's LNG supply offline. "We keep seeing news of vessels being hit or refineries or pipelines, so the list is very long," Galimberti said. As a result, roughly 9 million barrels of oil per day are off the market because of facilities being hit or producers taking precautionary measures, he said. "Right now, with all of this shut in, we are in a situation of extreme deficit." The US is a net exporter of oil, but that does not mean it is immune to increases in the price of oil or gasoline, or that its producers can just make up the difference. Oil is traded on global markets, so even the oil produced in the US has risen in price based on what's happening in the Middle East. In addition, the US can't simply turn all of its crude oil into gasoline. That's because most of the oil produced in the US is light, sweet crude, and refineries on the East and West coasts are primarily designed to process heavier, sour crude. As a result, the US exports some of its crude oil and imports some refined products such as gasoline. Trump issued a plan Friday to insure losses up to approximately \$20 billion in the Gulf region, aiming to restore confidence in maritime trade, help stabilize international commerce and support American and allied businesses operating in the Middle East.

West Asia crisis putting \$11.8 bn worth of India's farm exports at risk

In 2025 alone, India exported nearly \$11.8bn worth of agricultural and food products to the region, accounting for more than one-fifth of the country's total agri export

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: India's agri and food products exports worth \$11.8 billion to West Asia are at risk as the conflict in the region is disrupting shipping routes, raising insurance costs and creating uncertainty in logistics, think tank GTRI said Saturday. In 2025, India exported about \$11.8 billion of agricultural and food products such as cereals, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and spices to West Asia, accounting for 21.8 per cent of India's total exports in this sector. "The Gulf region's geographic proximity and large expatriate Indian population have historically made it a natural market for India's food exports. However, the conflict in the region is disrupting shipping routes, raising insurance costs and creating uncertainty in logistics," the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said. India exported \$7.48 billion of cereals, fruits, vegetables and spices to West Asia in 2025, with the region accounting for 29.2 per cent of India's global exports in this category. Key shipments include rice, bananas, onions and vegetables, pulses, nuts, coffee, tea and a wide range of spices. The country exported bananas worth \$396.5 million and onions and garlic worth \$111 million last year to that region, which includes the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Bahrain, among others. The other major products that India exported to the region last year include nutmeg, mace and cardamom (\$295.5 million), spice seeds such as cumin and coriander (\$163 million), ginger and turmeric (\$173 million), coffee (\$240.7 million), tea (\$410.1 million), processed food, sugar and cocoa preparations (\$1.35 billion), and fish, meat, frozen and processed products (\$1.81 billion). Further, the think tank said that India exported \$281.1 million of dairy products to West



Rice faces the largest potential impact. India exported \$4.43 billion of rice to West Asia, accounting for 36.7 per cent of its global rice exports, making Gulf markets crucial for producers in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

Asia in 2025, accounting for 28.9 per cent of India's total dairy exports. Similarly, the country shipped \$197.5 million worth of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages to West Asia in 2025, and these shipments accounted for 43.3 per cent of India's exports in this category. India's agricultural exports have developed a deep dependence on West Asian markets over the past decade, particularly for products such as rice, bananas, spices, meat and dairy products. The Gulf has been a natural destination due to its geographic proximity and large Indian diaspora. "But the ongoing conflict in West Asia, along with disruptions to shipping routes and rising insurance costs, is now creating uncertainty for exporters and could directly affect farmers and food processors across several Indian states," exporters said.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launches Artistry Show

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest gold and diamond retail chains in the country, launched the 'Artistry Show' at its Soubhagyanagar showroom. The exclusive exhibition, beginning March 6 and running until March 9, will showcase the artistic finesse of handcrafted jewellery, featuring a wide range of traditional and contemporary designs. The Artistry Show was launched by Lopamudra Pradhan, entrepreneur, leading makeup artist, beauty and hospitality business owner in the presence of all the management team of Malabar Gold and Diamonds. Each piece of jewellery on display at the show is unique and a testament to the art and skilled craft of Indian design. The collection features designs crafted with utmost

perfection and a wide variety of pieces from the exclusive brands of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, such as Mine diamond jewellery, Era uncut diamonds, Precia gemstone jewellery, Ethnic handcrafted jewellery, Viraz Royal Polki jewellery, and more. On this occasion, Malabar also launched The Big Brilliant Sale where customer will get up to 40% off on making charges of gold, uncut and gemstone jewellery and up to 30% off on diamond value. "We are delighted to launch the Artistry Show in Soubhagyanagar showroom and introduce exquisite designs that celebrate the excellence of our jewellery craftsmanship. Jewellery buyers in the city can enjoy our products with the assurance of the highest quality, purity, and fair prices," said MP Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group.



GOVT PROVIDES CERTAIN RELAXATIONS TO EXPORTERS TO MEET OBLIGATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: The government has granted certain relaxations to exporters in fulfilling their export obligations, as the trading community is facing difficulties in the movement of goods due to the ongoing West Asia crisis, according to a notification. "In view of the prevailing geo-political developments affecting international shipping routes and global supply chains, and with a view to facilitating exporters, the export obligation (EO) period/block wise EO period in respect of specified advance authorisations and

EPCG authorisations expiring between March 1, 2026 and May 31, 2026 has been automatically extended up to August 31, 2026 without payment of composition fee," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has said in a public notice. Under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme, domestic firms are allowed to import duty-free machines but they have to meet certain export obligations against that. This relaxation is in addition to the existing facility already available under foreign trade policy upon payment of composition fees, it said.

TPCODL celebrates Lineman Diwas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Tata Power Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL) Corporate Office celebrated Lineman Diwas, honouring the dedication, courage and service of its frontline workforce Friday. On the occasion, linemen were felicitated for their exemplary service and dedication to keeping the power flowing across Central Odisha. Lineman Diwas was more than just a celebration; it was a recognition of the men who form the backbone of the power distribution network. Their work often goes unnoticed, but their contribution touches every life that benefits from



reliable electricity. Through storms, outages and emergencies, these linemen respond with professionalism, ensuring that communities remain connected and safe. Speaking on the occasion, the honoured linemen shared their experiences and appreciation for the organisation's support. Niranjan Parida, who has

spent years working in the field, highlighted the importance of safety in daily operations. "Working on power lines demands constant alertness and discipline. What gives us confidence in the field is that TPCODL places safety above everything else. The company continuously reminds us that no work is more important than

our safety. From safety drills to strict protocols, the emphasis on safety culture helps us perform our duties responsibly while protecting ourselves and our teammates." For Sanyasi Behera, continuous skill development has been a defining part of his journey as a lineman. "The training opportunities provided by TPCODL have helped us grow professionally. Through regular workshops and practical sessions, we learn about new techniques, safety practices and modern equipment. These trainings not only improve our knowledge but also boost our confidence while handling challenging field situations."

Over 67% women say pay parity exists at workplaces: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 7: More than 67 per cent of women in India across sectors believe that pay parity exists at workplaces, while 33 per cent feel there is pay gap, a report by Naukri.com said Saturday. The report 'What Women Professionals Want' is based on a survey involving 50,000 women across more than 50 industries in the country. According to the report, 67 per cent of respondents said pay parity exists in their workplaces, while 33 per cent felt there is no pay parity which is strongly believed by professionals in real estate (42 per cent) followed

by FMCG (38 per cent), pharmaceutical and life sciences (38 per cent), and automobiles (37 per cent). Respondents from retail (35 per cent), hotels and restaurants (35 per cent), IT Services and Consulting (34 per cent), Telecom/ISP (34 per cent), Medical Services/Hospital (33 per cent), and Oil & Gas (33 per cent) also believed that non pay parity or pay gaps exists, the report added. The report, released on the eve of International Women's Day, also highlighted a growing demand for equal pay audits and menstrual leave, with the demand being strongest among professionals in higher



pay brackets. Demand for equal pay audits and menstrual leave rose to 27 per cent from 19 per cent in the previous year, with the demand highest among high-earners (48 per cent), indicating that "the closer women get to the top, the more they can see the gap," it added.

Further, the report revealed that nearly 50 per cent of respondents hid their personal plans, such as marriage or maternity plans, fearing bias. One in two women (50 per cent) hesitate to share marriage or maternity plans in interviews due to fear of bias (34 per cent), the report said. This hesitation intensifies with experience, rising from

29 per cent among freshers to 40 per cent for those with 10-15 years of experience. Nearly 42 per cent of respondents said that bias in hiring and promotions is the biggest challenge faced by diverse women at the workplace, which grew by 7 basis points year-on-year, and this trend is similar across major metro cities like Chennai (44 per cent) and Delhi/NCR (43 per cent), the report stated. However, the report said that amid challenges, 83 per cent of the respondents feel encouraged to pursue leadership roles, up from 66 per cent, especially those in the southern cities.

India's date with history

SHORT TAKES

Eves eye WC berth

Hyderabad: Under a new but familiar coach in Sjoerd Marjine, India will aim to secure a coveted berth at the upcoming FIH Women's Hockey World Cup when they open their campaign against Uruguay in the Qualifiers here Sunday. The tournament will feature eight teams -- hosts India, England, Scotland, Korea, Italy, Uruguay, Wales and Austria -- competing for three coveted qualification spots for the global showcase. At stake will be three direct World Cup berths, with the teams finishing first, second and third in the tournament earning direct qualification for the 2026 edition to be hosted jointly by Belgium and the Netherlands from August 14 to 30 alongside the men's event. It will be Marjine's first assignment back as head coach, as the Dutchman returns for the second time since leaving the position after the team's historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021. India are currently ranked ninth in the world and are the second-highest ranked team in the tournament behind England, who are ranked seventh globally. Going by world rankings, India start as favourites against Uruguay and if not for a bad day in office, they are certain to win. After Uruguay, India will take on Scotland and Wales March 9 and 11 respectively.

Oz corner India

Perth: Ace all-rounder Annabel Sutherland added two wickets to her hundred of rare quality to hand Australia firm control over India on Day 2 of the women's one-off day-night Test here Saturday. Sutherland smashed her fourth century (129 off 171 balls) in the last seven innings, third in a row, to guide Australia to 323 for an innings lead of 125 runs, and the hosts then reduced India to 105 for six at stumps. Pratika Rawal (43) and Sneha Rana (14) were batting at the close. India still trail by 20 runs, as pacer Sutherland claimed the crucial wickets of skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Jemimah Rodrigues. But Sutherland first pegged India back with the bat, getting a hundred in 133 balls through a swipe off pacer Kranti Gaud's short-pitched ball that flew over stumper Richa Ghosh for a four.

Ahmedabad set to witness a landmark battle as Men in Blue are chasing a third T20 title in front of their home crowd, while New Zealand look to break their long-standing WC hoodoo

T20 WORLD CUP SUMMIT SHOWDOWN



History of heartbreaks against NZ

- T20 WC 2007:** NZ won by 10 runs in Johannesburg (QFs)
At the first edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, New Zealand defeated India by 10 runs. Daniel Vettori played a key role with an impressive bowling spell of 4/20.
- T20 WC 2016:** NZ beat India by 47 runs in Nagpur
New Zealand won by 47 runs. Mitchell Santner starred with the ball, taking 4/11, while India were bowled out for 79 which is their lowest total against New Zealand in the T20 World Cup.
- T20 WC 2021:** NZ beat India by 8 wickets in Dubai
New Zealand again came out on top, beating India by 8 wickets. Ish Sodhi was among the standout performers in the match.

coming the first Indian to score 200 runs and take 10 wickets in a single T20 World Cup edition. His all-round brilliance could prove vital in this high-stakes final. Sanju Samson has been on a roll, delivering match-winning performances against the West Indies and England. With back-to-back Player of the Match awards, he's played a key role in India's run to the final. However, New Zealand's

land may look to bring back Ish Sodhi, who has been a key figure in their T20 success against India, with 30 wickets to his name. India have never beaten New Zealand in T20 World Cups, and the recent history of ICC events in Ahmedabad hasn't been kind to the Men in Blue. Can India become the first team to win back-to-back titles? Can they make history by lifting the T20 World Cup on home soil? Or will the BlackCaps end their long wait for a T20 title? The stage is set for a thrilling final, and Ahmedabad braces for a showdown that promises to be one for the ages.

Matt Henry will be hoping to stop India's in-form No 9 with his deadly bowling. Suryakumar Yadav, India's captain, is one win away from defending the title he helped secure in 2024. With 526 runs at an average of 58.44, he has been India's standout batter against New Zealand, and he'll be keen to deliver one more big innings against the team he relishes facing. On the other hand, New Zealand

HEAD-TO-HEAD RECORD

- Matches played: 30
- India won: 18 (2 in Super Over)
- New Zealand won: 11
- No result: 1

IN T20 WORLD CUP

- Matches played: 3
- India won: 0
- New Zealand won: 3

Players to Watch

INDIA	NEW ZEALAND
<p>Sanju Samson (Wicket-keeper/Batter): A crucial anchor and aggressor, coming off consecutive major scores (97* and 89) to guide India to the final.</p>	<p>Finn Allen (Batter): A destructive opener who recently scored a rapid century in the semifinals and averages over 200 strike rate.</p>
<p>Jasprit Bumrah (Bowler): The premier fast bowler, cited as a potential game-changer who excels in high-pressure scenarios.</p>	<p>Rachin Ravindra (All-rounder): A key, in-form performer capable of providing magical spells and steady batting.</p>
<p>Ishan Kishan (Batter): Expected to provide explosive power at the top of the order.</p>	<p>Matt Henry (Bowler): A skilled seamer who could trouble Indian batters with his variations and accurate lines.</p>
<p>Hardik Pandya (All-rounder): A key player for his ability to contribute with both bat and ball.</p>	<p>Mitchell Santner (Captain/Spinner): The experienced captain and key spin bowler who controls the middle overs.</p>
<p>Kuldeep Yadav (Spinner): Likely to be brought back into the side for his consistent wicket-taking ability (95 wickets in 54 T20Is).</p>	<p>Daryl Mitchell (Batter): A reliable, in-form middle-order batter known for handling high-pressure situations.</p>

- KEY BATTLES**
- **Abhishek Sharma/Ishan Kishan vs Matt Henry/Lockie Ferguson:** Early powerplay dominance.
 - **Finn Allen vs Jasprit Bumrah:** A crucial battle between NZ's top scorer and India's top bowler.
 - **Sanju Samson vs NZ spinners:** Managing the spin-heavy middle overs.

India suffer 0-11 rout against Japan in Women's Asian Cup

Perth, March 7: A hapless India were Saturday taught a football lesson by former champions Japan in a 0-11 rout in their second group match of the AFC Women's Asian Cup here. There was no doubt whatsoever before the match that former FIFA World Cup champions and currently world No 8 Japan would be the clear favourites and it was a matter of margin. But the manner in which the Japanese toyed with their opponents showed the gulf in class between the two teams, and how much catching up the Indian team needs to compete against top class rivals. Japan enjoyed overwhelming possession and for most part of the match played in the Indian half. The Indians, who had gone into the continental showpiece without any international game time in the last four months resembled a club side the whole match.



Yuzuki Yamamoto (4th minute), Yui Hasegawa (13th), Hinata Miyazawa (20th, 35th, 81th), Kiko Seike (45+5th, 55th), Riko Ueki (47th, 50th, 65th) and Maya Hijikata (62th) found the target as Japan attacked and scored almost at will. After the humiliating loss, India are currently at the bottom of Group C with zero points and minus 12 goal difference. However, the result is not a killer blow for India, as a victory against Chinese Taipei by a two-goal margin in their final group match Tuesday may see India finish second in the group and progress to the quarter-finals.

FIVB BEACH PRO TOUR CHALLENGE

Clash of champions awaits

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The FIVB Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour Challenge 2026 at KIIT Deemed to be University witnessed another exciting day of international beach volleyball action Saturday, as the tournament moved into the knockout stages at the Dutee Chand Athletic Stadium in Bhubaneswar. After a thrilling men's Round of 16 battles took place in the sunny skies, eight teams advanced after competitive matches, setting up an exciting quarterfinal lineup. The quarterfinals produced thrilling contests as Sepka/Dzavoronok extended their strong run by defeating Rumsevicius/Palubinskas. Elazar/Cuzmiciov edged past Norway's Ringoen/Aas, while Brinck/Houmann recorded a convincing win over Czech pair Semerad/Stocek. Belgium's Vercauteren/Van Langendonck completed the



semifinal lineup with a victory against Cory/Bradford. The semifinals will see Sepka/Dzavoronok face Elazar/Cuzmiciov, while Brinck/Houmann take on Vercauteren/Van Langendonck for a place in the final. In the women's quarterfinals, Shiba/Reika, Myszkowski/Kan, Durish/Koenig, and Hughes/Batenhorst advanced to the semifinals after winning their respective matches. Japan's Shiba/Reika beat Myszkowski/Kan in straight sets in the semifinals continuing their dominating run to

set up the summit showdown against Durish/Koenig who edged past Hughes/Batenhorst in a closely fought all American battle. In context to sharing their experience in playing in India, Japan women's team said, "We love India. Playing at this venue along with our accommodation is amazing. We love Indian food, especially butter-chicken masala. Maybe the only difficult thing is the weather, the heat, in which we are pushing our bodies." The FIVB Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour Challenge 2026 will conclude March 8.

ALL ENGLAND OPEN

Braveheart Lakshya smashes into finals

The star shuttler is just one win away from ending India's 25-year wait for the prestigious title

Birmingham, March 7: Battling painful blisters on his foot and severe cramps, a gritty Lakshya Sen overcame Canada's Victor Lai to storm into the final of the All England Open here Saturday, moving within one win of ending India's 25-year wait for the prestigious title. It turned out to be one of the finest matches of his career as Lakshya fought for one hour and 37 minutes before sealing a 21-16, 18-21, 21-15 win over the 21-year-old Lai, who had claimed a surprise bronze at last year's World Championships in Paris. It will be Lakshya's second



appearance in the All England final after finishing runner up at the 2022 edition. The 24-year old from Almora will now chase history when he takes on world No 11 Lin Chunyi of Chinese Taipei in the summit clash Sunday. Prakash Padukone (1980) and Pullela Gopichand (2001) are the only Indians to have won the All England title. Apart from them, only Prakash Nath (1947) and Saina Nehwal (2015 runner up) came close with runner up finishes.

Iran footballers labelled 'wartime traitors'

THE PLAYERS WERE CRITICISED FOR ANTHEM SILENCE AMID CONFLICT

Australia, March 7: An Iranian state television presenter has labelled the women's national soccer team as "wartime traitors" after the players did not sing their national anthem before the Asian Cup game against South Korea in Australia. Iran are playing in the continental tournament even as a military conflict escalates back home after the US and Israel launched air strikes over the weekend, killing the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Their players stood in silence when Iran's anthem was played before their 3-0 loss to South Korea Monday, though they sang and saluted before a 4-0 defeat by hosts Australia three days later. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting presenter Mohammad Reza Shahbazi said in a video that the players showed a lack of patriotism and their ac-



tions amounted to the "pinnacle of dishonour" in footage circulating widely on social media. "Let me just say one thing: traitors during wartime must be dealt with more severely," Shahbazi said. "Anyone who takes a step against the country under war conditions must be dealt

with more severely. Like this matter of our women's football team not singing the national anthem ... these people must be dealt with more severely." Reuters has contacted the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), the Iran Football Federation and the team at the Asian Cup for comment.

FIFPRO SOUND ALARM
Players union FIFPRO called on the AFC and FIFA to uphold their human rights obligations and undertake all necessary steps to ensure the safety of Iran's squad after Shahbazi's comments. "These statements significantly heighten concerns for the players' safety should they return to Iran after the tournament," FIFPRO Asia/Oceania said. "We call on the AFC and FIFA to urgently engage with the Iranian Football Association, the Australian Government and all other relevant authorities to ensure that every effort is made to protect the safety of the players." Ahead of their game against Australia, Iran forward Sara Didar fought back tears and spoke about the war while coach Marziyeh Jafari said her players were doing their best to focus on the tournament despite concern for their families back home.

Bombay Gymkhana, KISS enter semis

National Rugby 15s Championship Division 1 begins in Bhubaneswar with a bang

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The National Rugby 15s Championship 2026 - Division 1 got underway at the Kalinga Stadium with an action-packed opening day that saw home favourite KISS and Bombay Gymkhana among the four teams secure their place in the next round of India's premier club rugby competition. In the pre-quarterfinals, Bangalore Rugby Club delivered a strong performance to defeat Odisha RC 24-0, advancing comfortably to the quarterfinal stage. In the second pre-quarterfinal clash, the Sergeant Instituteshowsed discipline and tactical strength to overcome Delhi Lions Rugby Club 21-5. The Kolkata outfit, backed by the legacy and values of the Kolkata Police fraternity, has built a reputation for structured training and competitive



performances across national rugby competitions. The quarterfinal stage began with a closely contested encounter between Rebels Rugby Club and KISS Rugby Club. The two sides were locked at 14-14 at half-time, but KISS, backed by the home support, pulled away in the second half to secure a 30-14 victory. In the final match of the day, the historic Bombay Gymkhana Rugby side produced a dominant performance to defeat Calcutta Cricket and Football Club (CC&FC) 46-0. With these results, Bangalore Rugby Club, Sergeant Institute, KISS Rugby Club, and Bombay

Gymkhana progress further in the tournament. The losing teams will now compete in the Plate competition, where teams will battle for positions 5-10. The next round of matches for men's clubs take to the field with Future Hope Harlequins and Delhi Hurricanes enter the competition to play against Sergeant Institute and Bangalore RC respectively. Sunday's action will see the women's clubs take to the field with Future Hope Harlequins taking on Chandigarh United at 4 pm followed by CC&FC facing Rugby Warriors - Kerala at 5:45 pm.