



Rashmika defines love

Actor Rashmika Mandanna shares her thoughts on finding love, saying true love should feel freeing and uplifting

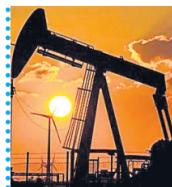
LEISURE | P2



Regional anger grows

Saudi Arabia lashes out at Iran following a thwarted drone attack on its massive Shaybah oil field

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Oil skyrockets

Oil prices spiked to about \$120 a barrel before falling back Monday as the Iran war intensified, threatening production and shipping

BUSINESS | P11



India on top

Indian women play out a hard-fought 2-2 draw against Scotland and continue to lead Pool B of the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

SPORTS | P12

Oppn to move motion for CEC's removal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: In a first, Opposition parties are set to bring a notice to move a motion seeking removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, sources said Monday.

The draft of the notice is ready and likely to be submitted this week, according to the sources.

A senior Trinamool Congress (TMC) Parliamentarian, who has been involved with the process of drafting the notice for moving the impeachment motion, said it was a "100 per cent team effort."

"The drafting and planning has truly been a team effort by all like-minded parties. The execution in both Houses will also be full teamwork," the TMC leader told this agency.

"The chief election commissioner (CEC) has totally degraded the great seat he occupies," the TMC leader said.

Sources from the main Opposition party Congress said they would support the notice. Other INDIA bloc parties are also on board, and the notice has been drafted collectively, another source said.



RISING UNPOPULARITY: People raise "go back" slogans and show black flags during a demonstration as Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar visits the Kalighat Kali Temple in Kolkata, Monday

India says no to IEA on oil reserve release

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: India will not join the International Energy Agency (IEA) initiative to release strategic oil reserves as part of an effort to cool oil prices, top government sources said. India, the world's third-largest oil-importing and consuming nation, has 5.33 million tonnes of underground strategic reserves. But they are only 80 per cent filled currently. G7 nations are due to discuss the possible release of oil reserves to calm markets that have seen crude prices jump to close to USD 120 per barrel, the highest in four years, on the widening West Asia conflict.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Why suspend TRP just to warn news channels? Why not send the message on the usual WhatsApp group?

RUPEEE AT NEW LOW OF 92.21

The Indian rupee weakened further as global crude oil prices surged to nearly \$120 a barrel, driven by the geopolitical shock stemming from the escalating Middle East crisis. The conflict has pushed oil prices higher and strengthened the US dollar. Since India imports nearly 85% of its crude oil, rising prices significantly increase the country's import bill and fuel demand for dollars, putting additional pressure on the rupee. Meanwhile, Tehran's naming of hard-liner Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei to succeed his late father as supreme leader has dampened hopes of a swift resolution to hostilities, further unsettling markets. The combined impact of expensive oil, a stronger dollar and heightened global volatility has pushed the rupee to record lows

MARKETS NOSEDIVE

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty fell nearly 2 per cent Monday as soaring crude oil prices and weak global trends due to the worsening situation in West Asia triggered a sharp sell-off in the stock market. Besides, unabated foreign fund exodus and the weakness in the rupee against the US dollar weighed heavily on investors' sentiment, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,352.74 points, or 1.71 per cent, to settle at 77,566.16, registering its second day of decline. During the day, the benchmark crashed 2,494.35 points, or 3.16 per cent, to 76,424.55. On similar lines, the 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 422.40 points, or 1.73 per cent, to end at 24,028.05. Intra-day, it tumbled 752.65 points, or 3.07 per cent, to 23,697.80.

Mumbai, March 9: The rupee crashed to its all-time closing low of 92.21 against the US dollar Monday, losing 39 paise during the session, as global

crude oil prices saw a sharp spike, and the greenback lost ground amid worsening conflict in the Middle East. Forex traders said height-

Road mishaps claim 7 lives

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jamankira/Keonjhar/Jatni/Rajgangpur, March 9: As many as seven persons including a toddler were killed in separate incidents of road mishap in Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Khurda and Sundargarh districts Monday.

In the first incident, three youths were killed after a truck collided head-on with their motorcycle near Dimerimunda Chhak under Badrama panchayat on NH 53 in Sambalpur district Monday.

The deceased were identified as Ranbrit Singh, 21, of Bishal-pali village under Badrama panchayat, and Bulu Rana, 20, and Sujit Langa, 17, both from Kulundi panchayat.

In the second case, a man and his 3-year-old son were killed while his wife sustained critical injuries after their motorcycle rammed into the rear of a parked truck on National Highway 49 near Tentuli village under Sadar police limits in Keonjhar district Monday afternoon.

The deceased were Noor Salim, 35, his son Md Sama, 3, both residents of Tentuli village. Salim's wife, Akbari Begum, sustained critical injuries.

According to reports, Salim was traveling with his wife and



son on a motorcycle to visit relatives in Deogarh. Shortly after leaving home, the bike reportedly lost balance and crashed into the rear of a truck parked along the roadside. Salim and his son died on the spot. A woman was killed and four others sustained critical injuries after a car crashed into an auto rickshaw near National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) on National Highway-16 in Jatni of Khurda district Monday afternoon. The deceased was identified as Sanju Behera of Banki area in Cuttack district. A biker was killed and his friend on the pillion sustained critical injuries after the motorcycle rammed into a divider on State Highway-10 near Jhagar-pur in Rajgangpur of Sundargarh district. The deceased was identified as Lara Minz, 22, of Tileimal area in Rajgangpur.

54 riots, 7 lynchings in 20 months: CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 9: Fifty-four communal riots and seven mob lynching incidents were reported in the state between June 2024 and February 2026, as per a written statement by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in the Assembly Monday.

Replying to a written question of BJD legislator Goutam Buddha Das, the CM submitted details of the communal riots and mob lynching cases registered in different police stations of the state during June 2024 to February 2026.

The BJP government assumed office in the state on June 12, 2024. As per the CM's reply, 54 communal riot incidents were reported in five districts (Bhadrak, Malkangiri, Balasore, Koraput and Khurda) while seven mob lynching incidents were registered in four districts (Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Balasore and Rayagada). The Odisha police have arrested 298 people allegedly involved in the riot incidents and 61 others for their alleged involvement in the mob lynching cases during the 20 months.

He said that strict legal action is being taken against lawbreakers, which includes registration of case and arrest.

Legal action is also being taken against persons involved in mob lynching incidents over witchcraft suspicion.

MOJTABA'S APPOINTMENT SIGNALS NO LETUP IN WAR

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 9: Iran named the hard-line Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei to succeed his late father as supreme leader Monday, signalling no letup in the war launched by the United States and Israel. Oil prices surged as Iran attacked regional energy infrastructure and the US and Israel bombed targets across Iran.

With Iran's theocracy under assault for more than a week, the country's Assembly of Experts chose the secretive, 56-year-old cleric with close ties to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard as the new supreme leader.

The appointment marked a new sign of defiance by Iran's embattled leadership after more than a week of heavy



US and Israeli bombardment, suggesting that Tehran is not close to giving up on what it considers a fight for the country's existence. World markets plummeted following the news, and Brent crude oil, the international standard, surged to nearly USD 120 a barrel Monday, about 65 per cent higher than when the war started, before retreating. P10

Pak filmmaker plans movie on Tagore's 'Shasti'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, March 9: Pakistani producer Abid Merchant has launched an international co-production film based on Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's 1893 short story 'Shasti' (Punishment).

The ambitious project, which would involve industry professionals from Pakistan, Bangladesh, United States, UK, Hong Kong and Australia, will be helmed by Bangladeshi filmmaker Leesa Gazi, known for her critically-acclaimed 2025 title 'A House Named Shahana'.

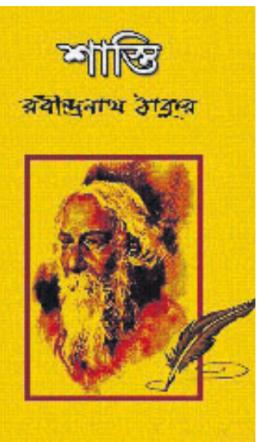
"We have chosen Leesa Gazi, a filmmaker from Bangladesh, to direct the film," Merchant, who will produce the movie through his banner Sanat Initiative, said. The film's main cast includes two of Bangladesh's biggest

stars -- Pori Moni and Chanchal Chauwdhry -- alongside co-writer Aanon Siddiqua and Australian-Bengali actor Arka Das.

Merchant said the movie is a reimagining of Tagore's short story which revolved around two brothers and their wives and is a murder mystery and courtroom drama.

"It's not an art-house project. It is a commercial venture but one that we want to release internationally in several languages," he said.

Asked about the absence of Pakistani actors from the cast, the producer said, "It is rooted in Bangladesh's cultural context, so authenticity is crucial. The script has completed its first and second drafts and is currently being polished, with dialogue writing underway. Budget discussions are also in



their final stages," he said. According to Variety, the film will draw from Tagore's source material.

"The film follows the mysterious death of influencer Lucky, allegedly at the hands of her sister-in-law Meera, which triggers a media frenzy. As a rigged trial unfolds, the narrative explores themes of family secrets, betrayal and manipulation within a city hungry for punishment," the report stated.

Pre-production is scheduled to begin in September, with filming planned for October and November in Dhaka.

Merchant's previous production venture 'Wakhri' received international attention and had a theatrical run, but remains limited in terms of global streaming exposure.

Another of his productions, the 2020 drama 'I'll Meet You There,' starring Faran Tahir and Qavi Khan, was banned in Pakistan. "It was labelled anti-Islam," Merchant said.

LPG booking period increased to 25 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The government has increased the minimum waiting period for booking a domestic LPG cylinder refill from 21 days to 25 days to prevent hoarding, as there were signs of panic buying taking place in the market amid the uncertainties due to the Iran war.

Officials said that there is a sufficient supply of LPG available in the country, and the booking time for LPG cylinders has been increased as a measure to manage inventory effectively. The step has been taken as there was a surge in demand of 15 to 20 per cent due to panic booking, due to fears that supply would be disrupted because of the escalating war in the Middle East.

leisure



KATIE LEUNG REFLECTS ON EARLY HARRY POTTER FAME

Katie Leung, best known for playing Cho Chang in the *Harry Potter* film series, recently reflected on her early years in the franchise, saying she wouldn't want to relive that time. The actor admitted she was very young then and easily influenced by public opinions while still figuring out her own identity

TIMOTHEE CHALAMET'S OSCAR HOPE CRASHES!

Timothee Chalamet's popularity took a beating this past week after distasteful comments about ballet and opera went viral on social media. Amidst the uproar by celebrities, artists and fans alike, it seems that the actor's prospects to win the Best Actor trophy at the upcoming Oscars, also dipped considerably



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ARIES
You will remain undecided today, which is quite unlike you, says Ganesh. This will lead to speculation, which is not a bad thing by itself, unless you put all your money into the bargain. Also, be careful not to take wild guesses in love and relationships.

TAURUS
People around you will be surprised to witness the considerate and compassionate side of you today, says Ganesh. Problems may come knocking but you, along with support from your loved ones, will handle them with brilliant tact. Enjoy the company of near and dear ones and let your presence be felt in social outings, suggests Ganesh.

GEMINI
Your sensitive and emotional nature will prove to be a problem for you. Hence you need to control your emotions. Tread carefully when it comes to personal relationships. You need to wait for a better time before you think of proposing to that special someone, says Ganesh.

CANCER
New positive turn in life of lovers. It may lead to marriage. You will play role in bonding all members of the joint family and will meet with success, you will respect tradition and custom. Adopt a careful approach, counsels Ganesh.

LEO
Talk of being busy! It seems like today, you shall take the cake, and perhaps, be the icing on it as well, says Ganesh. It is likely that the day is going to be very hectic for you in terms of work and business. You may be engaged in official conversations and dealings. Also, don't be surprised to find yourself in meetings as you attempt to take stock of your business situation.

VIRGO
You will spend most of today in the company of family and friends, says Ganesh. Students may focus on upcoming examinations and will learn to balance study and leisure time, in equal measure. It is a good day to buy real estate. Overall, a day to lie low and let your mind run free in its pursuit of pleasure.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today you will get the opportunity to lay bare your thoughts and feelings and exchange ideas with others. Your mind will be at ease and more relieved when you have opened up. Your business acumen will be praiseworthy today. Towards evening you will reap the benefits of all those good deeds that you may have done in the near past.

SCORPIO
It may have been on the cards for long and finally, you may end up buying a state-of-the-art motor vehicle or a palatial house of your dreams today. In addition, your generous mood may also egg you on to buy an expensive gift for your life partner. If you do not let the generosity burn a hole through your pocket, you may have an overall satisfying day, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
You feel highly balanced today, says Ganesh. Being a family person, you dedicate your time equally at home and carry out responsibilities towards family. When it comes to work, you are at ease today. Enjoy the serenity of nature in the evening.

CAPRICORN
The day calls for making amends and undoing the damage done to relationships, so you will most likely focus on improving rapport with relatives and peers, says Ganesh. But despite your affable approach, family feud may occur. Keeping obnoxious neighbours at bay will save you some trouble.

AQUARIUS
You may fall in love today! If single, romance colours your day with a rainbow. If married, you may enjoy a quiet but romantic evening with your spouse. Ganesh says that if nothing else, it's a good time to pour over your photo albums and float in nostalgia.

PISCES
You will be treading new ground at work. Exciting as that sounds, it merely means you will have to do a lot of travelling today. You will also find yourself swamped with drafting new business proposals, holding meetings, or otherwise networking over the phone. On the brighter side, your travels are unlikely to involve the cramps of flying economy class, says Ganesh.

Rashmika on finding love



Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna, who has stepped into her happily ever after, turned emotional after reading a heartfelt note written about her affection for actor Vijay Deverakonda, saying that love should be something that liberates a person.

A user on X wrote an article about "romantic optimism in a cynical age" referencing Rashmika and Vijay's relationship. The user shared a note reflecting on admiration as a quiet but powerful expression of love.

Reacting to the post on social media, Rashmika shared that she had not felt so emotional reading something written about her in a long time.

"I have never become so emotional reading something written about me this much in a long long time.. There is so much I want to say but so little I can say," Rashmika wrote.

"I am finding my own room and that's a journey I am so grateful for.. Thankyou for recognising it.. About love all I can say is - Find a love that liberates you," Rashmika added.

It was February 26, when Rashmika and Vijay got married. In a social media post, she introduced her 'husband' Vijay Deverakonda.

Rashmika revealed that Vijay has a significant role in shaping the woman she has become today.

Mumbai: Navya Naveli Nanda believes true empowerment comes from making independent choices and staying aligned with one's own aspirations. In a recent interview, she spoke about the pressures young women often face and why defining success on personal terms is essential.

Navya shared that societal expectations frequently shape how women are perceived and how they feel they must behave. From appearance and career



Navya defines true empowerment

choices to the roles they play within families and society, young women often experience pressure to meet multiple standards. She noted that balancing professional ambitions with personal responsibilities can become overwhelming when people constantly measure themselves against what others expect.

Reflecting on the issue, Navya recalled an important lesson from her grandmother, veteran actor Jaya Bachchan. According to Navya, her grandmother once told her that focusing too much on what others expect can make people forget what they truly want for themselves.

For Navya, that advice perfectly captures the essence of empowerment. She believes real freedom lies in making choices independently and understanding that it is not always possible to fulfil every role equally at all times.

The granddaughter of Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan, Navya has built her own identity as a podcaster, entrepreneur, and student, often encouraging young women to embrace authenticity rather than compare themselves with others.

Saif explains pay disparity

Mumbai: Pay disparity has long been a debated issue in the Indian film industry, with discussions often centring on the difference in earnings between male and female actors. Recently, Saif Ali Khan shared his perspective, stating that remuneration in the industry is largely influenced by an actor's box-office draw and ability to attract audiences.

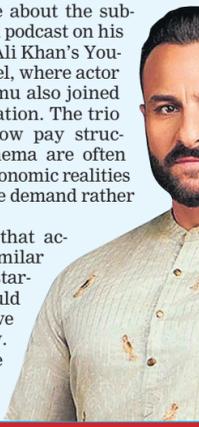
Saif spoke about the subject during a podcast on his sister Soha Ali Khan's YouTube channel, where actor Kunal Kemmu also joined the conversation. The trio discussed how pay structures in cinema are often shaped by economic realities and audience demand rather than gender.

Saif said that actors with similar levels of stardom should ideally receive equal pay. However, he emphasised

that the industry functions on a business model where those who bring more people to theatres naturally command higher remuneration. According to him, the system reflects market value rather than bias.

Kunal added that there is a "mathematics" behind how actors' salaries are determined. Distributors often estimate a film's potential recovery based on the star power associated with the project, which influences the amount producers are willing to invest.

On the work front, Saif will next appear in the Netflix period drama *Hum Hindustani*, directed by Rahul Dholakia and co-starring Pratik Gandhi. He also has *Haiwaan*, directed by Priyadarshan and featuring Akshay Kumar, awaiting release. AGENCIES



Daisy claps back at trolls

Mumbai: Actress Daisy Shah strongly responded to a social media troll who attempted to target her after a video of the actress cooking iftaari.

It began after a user shared the clip and wrote: "Meet Daisy Shah. She has a problem with firecrackers but she visits Iftaar parties and cooks there as well," attempting to question the actress's stance. Several others trolled her by commenting "All this to make Salman happy!!!" and "Who exactly is Daisy Shah? She must be a caterer for that party" among many other remarks.

Reacting to the post, Daisy took to X, formerly called Twitter and dismissed the comparison and called out the attempt to spread hatred in the name of religion.

"Fire Crackers and cooking food are completely different from each other. Good luck with spreading hate in the name of religion. I hope you get well soon," Daisy wrote.

Regarding the actress, Daisy first worked as an assistant to choreographer Ganesh Acharya on films like *Zameen* and *Khakee*, and later started modelling, appearing in photo shoots and print ads.

Kannada director Harsha approached her to star in the film *Chingari*. She also did an item song in the Hindi film *Khuda Kasam*, starring Sunny Deol and Tabu. The actress made her film debut with the 2011 Kannada film *Bhadra*. AGENCIES



PEANUTS



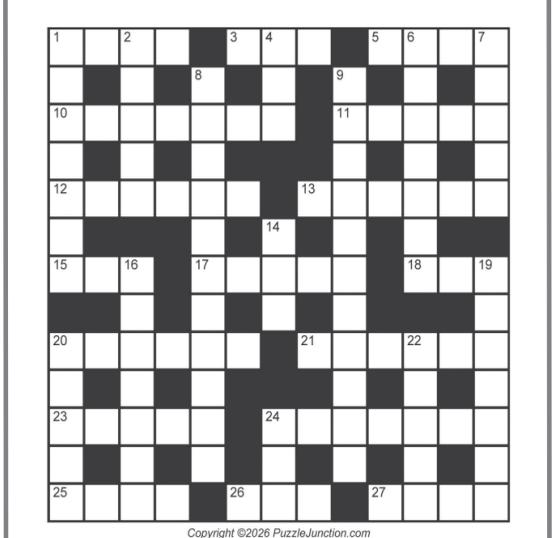
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Havana's home
 - 3 Delivery vehicle
 - 5 Guitar relative
 - 10 Bravery
 - 11 Intense
 - 12 Charge with a crime
 - 13 Glamour
 - 15 Shoot the breeze
 - 17 Destitute
 - 18 Topper
 - 20 Heir's concern
 - 21 Songs of yesteryear
 - 23 Fiend
 - 24 Italian rice
 - 25 Litter member
 - 26 Overmodest
 - 27 Blubbers
 - Down**
 - 1 The sport of pedal pushers?
 - 2 Tied up
 - 4 Epoch
 - 6 Out of the ordinary
 - 7 Hostile force
 - 8 Grabbing one's interest
 - 9 A windshield has it (6,5)
 - 14 Gusto
 - 16 Cricket player
 - 19 Tyrants
 - 20 Pillow filler
 - 22 Preface, briefly
 - 24 Brazilian city, familiarly

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

S	I	M	P	L	E	A	S	I	A
E	O	O	W	S	P	Y			
T	W	I	S	T	E	R	O	D	E
T	R	A	T	A	E	O	A		
M	E	R	E	T	H	R	I	F	T
R	H	E							
B	R	A	Y	S	L	A	U	D	S
M	E	U	T						
A	R	G	Y	L	E	S	T	A	S
R	A	O	H	R	I	T	M		
I	N	T	E	R	C	L	S		
A	L	A	S		S	T	I	T	C

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT: LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, LoP in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, Samajwadi Party MP Akhilesh Yadav and other Opposition leaders stage a demonstration over the West Asia crisis on the first day of the second part of Budget Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Monday

State's IMR higher than nat'l average

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: The infant mortality rate (IMR) in Odisha stands at 30 per 1,000 live births, higher than the national average of 25, Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) Minister Mukesh Mahaling informed the Assembly Monday.

"According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) survey, the national IMR is 25, while the figure stands at 30 in Odisha. While the national IMR has declined by 15 points over the last decade, Odisha has recorded a sharper improvement with a 21-point reduction during the same period," Mahaling said while replying to a question by Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati.

The minister outlined several measures taken by the government over the past one and a half years to reduce neonatal and infant deaths in the state.

He said Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND) programmes are conducted every month at the village level by trained health workers to ensure regular health check-ups of pregnant women and to identify high-risk pregnancies. Such cases are

Speaker seeks info on K'para farmer's death

Speaker Surama Padhy Monday asked the state government to inform the House about the details of the death of a farmer in Kendrapara allegedly due to harassment during the ongoing paddy procurement season. In a ruling, Padhy said that the minister concerned will inform the House about the death of the farmer and the findings of the subsequent inquiry into the matter, before the session ends. The Speaker's ruling came after the issue was raised during Zero Hour by Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik. The BJD leader said, "Trilochan Nayak of Junagadi in Kendrapara died due to harassment during the paddy procurement."

the state are equipped with neonatal care facilities, while critically ill newborns are treated in Newborn Stabilisation Units (NBSUs) and specialised neonatal intensive care units. Over the last 18 months, the government has established one Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) and 15 NBSUs to strengthen newborn treatment services, he said.

Mahaling also stated that 10,888 low birth weight babies (weighing less than 1,800 grams) were successfully treated and recovered at specialised newborn care centres last year. In addition, 28 Lactation Management Units (LMUs) have been set up to ensure the availability of breast milk for sick infants.

Under the Home-Based Newborn Care (HBNC) programme, ASHAs visit newborns at home six to seven times within the first 42 days of birth to monitor their health and guide families on proper care, the minister added.

The minister added that 2,753 new female health workers joined the health workforce last year, which is expected to further accelerate maternal and child health programmes across the state.

referred to First Referral Units (FRUs) where trained doctors and nurses provide specialised care.

"To support expectant mothers from remote areas, the state has also established 'Maa Gruhas', where pregnant women can stay closer to health facilities ahead of delivery," he said.

The minister further informed the House that 10 Midwifery-Led Care Units (MLCUs) have been set up in district headquarters hospitals and medical colleges to facilitate safe deliveries. Currently, 109 specially trained nurses have been deployed in these units.

All maternity hospitals in

Migrant worker dies in Qatar 1 DEAD, 3 HURT IN GANJAM FACTORY BLAST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, March 9: Family members of a migrant worker from Odisha, who died in his workplace in Qatar, appealed to the government to bring his body back to his village in Ganjam district.

The Arab country has been affected by the West Asia conflict.

An officer of Ganjam district said Monday that a preliminary inquiry into his death was conducted following the request of the family, and a decision will be taken after examining the probe report.

The deceased was identified as Kuna Khuntia, 25, a native of Naikanipalli in Khallikote block. The sole earning member of the family was working as a labourer in a private construction company in Doha for the last five months.

After returning from his duty Friday night, he went to sleep and did not wake up, said a family member. His messmates took him to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead, one of his friends told his family members, said Jaya Khuntia, father of the deceased.

"We don't know how he died. We requested the government to bring his body to the village to perform his last rites," he said.

District Labour Officer Barsarani Jena said they have conducted a preliminary inquiry Monday about his death.

THE DECEASED WAS ATTEMPTING TO REPAIR A COMPRESSOR AT THE FACTORY WHEN THE BLAST OCCURRED

Berhampur, March 9: A man was killed and three others were injured in a blast at an ice-cream making unit in Ganjam district Monday, police said.

The incident took place at Talapatna village with in Dharakote police station limits.

The deceased was identified as Bideshi Pradhan, 56, of Kushapalli under Jagannath Prasad police station.

The injured include the owner of the unit, his son and wife.

They have been admitted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital here, and their condition was stated to be stable, police said.

A case was registered based on the complaint of the deceased's son Muna Pradhan, and an investigation launched, said Dharakote police station inspector-in charge Chandrika Swain.

She said that after conducting a postmortem at MKCG, they handed over the body to the family members.

The small ice-cream unit, set up by Ramesh Chandra Mohapatra in the entrance room of his residence, had experienced a production disruption due to a defective compressor. The deceased was reportedly attempting to repair it when the blast occurred, injuring family members who were present in the room.

AIRSTRIKES ON OIL DEPOTS

'Acid rain' in parts of Iran

AGENCIES

Tehran, March 9: Tehran Monday woke up to black rain falling over parts of Iran in the hours after US-Israeli airstrikes on oil depots on the weekend, with some outlets describing it as "acid rain".

Iranian residents have reported headaches, difficulty in breathing, and oil-contaminated rain settling on buildings and cars. "The Independent" reported Monday. Iran's Red Crescent Society warned rainfall following the strikes could be "highly dangerous and acidic".

As an atmospheric chemist and chemical engineer who researches air pollution, these reports are very worrying, and indicate much more than just acid rain. The report said this rain



would include acids, but also likely a host of other pollutants that are harmful to humans and the environment in the short and long term. It may even be worse than the term "acid rain" conveys.

More broadly, the thick clouds of toxic smoke over densely populated areas in Iran are also a major problem for anyone breathing this air right now.

Researchers said one of the primary ways air pollutants are removed from the atmosphere is through rain.

When you have significant levels of pollutants in air they will be collected by falling water droplets and "rain out" of the atmosphere.

That's why there are reports of black rain falling from the sky after the oil depots were struck - evidence of just how contaminated the local air must be.

This rain indicates toxic pollutants such as hydrocarbons, ultrafine particles known as PM2.5, and carcinogenic compounds called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) have made their way into the rain, they added.

On top of this, there would be a mix of other unknown chemicals, likely including heavy metals and inorganic compounds from the building materials and everything else caught up in the initial explosions and the ensuing fires.

Couple wins barrel of ale in annual 'wife-carrying' race

AGENCIES

London, March 9: Teemu Touvinen and Jatta Leinonen of Finland won an unusual wife-carrying race in southern England, beating about two dozen competing couples who tested their balance and teamwork on a grassy hillside. However, the Finnish pair had to settle for a barrel of local ale.

Wives and girlfriends clung on for dear life as their partners carried them up and down a hillside for the UK Wife Carrying Race, one of the country's quirkier annual sports events, according to an Associated Press report.

Touvinen and Leinonen from Finland were crowned the winners at 1 minute and 45 seconds Sunday.

The awkward footrace in Dorking, Surrey is said to have drawn inspiration from a 19th-century Finn-



ish legend about a gang that pillages villages and steals women.

These days the emphasis is on lighthearted fun. Silly costumes are encouraged, and racers can be males or females carrying anyone over 18 and weighing at least 50 kg (110 pounds.) Those under that weight need to wear a rucksack filled with flour or water to bring them

to the minimum weight. "You do not have to carry your own wife. It could be someone else's. Or a mate, girlfriend, boyfriend, sister or brother," organisers said. "They should ideally weigh less than you do."

Couples can choose their carrying technique, though most contestants favoured the traditional "Estonian Hold", where

the "wife" hangs upside-down on the carrier's back with their legs crossed in front of his face.

Contestants raced up a gently sloping hillside and back down, clearing obstacles like low rows of hay bales and having buckets of water thrown at them for good measure. The course is 380 metres (416 yards) long - "a long way under the circumstances," organisers noted.

While still niche, the Scandinavian sport has a following in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Poland and other countries. The race in England first started in 2008.

The fastest British couple, Edward Nash and Kathryn Knight, who came just four seconds behind the winners, will represent the UK at the World Wife Carrying Championships in Finland in July.



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Govt orders speedy probe against OAS, ORS officials

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: The state government has directed officials to expedite pending disciplinary inquiries against officers of the Odisha Administrative Service (Junior Branch) and the Odisha Revenue Service. The Revenue and Disaster Management department has asked authorities to submit all pending investigation reports by March 31.



- Revenue and Disaster Management dept sets March 31 deadline for submission of pending inquiry reports
- ACS Arabinda Kumar Padhee asks officials in four districts and two RDC offices to prioritise completion of disciplinary inquiries
- Govt warns of action if inquiry officers show negligence or fail to comply with the directive
- District Collectors asked to regularly review inquiry cases and ensure strict compliance with instructions

along with the secretaries of the Revenue Divisional Commissioners (RDCs) of Cuttack and Sambalpur.

Earlier, the state government had directed inquiry officers to submit their reports within 90 days of their appointment. However, delays in several cases have slowed disciplinary proceedings against the officials concerned.

To address this, the department has instructed that all pending cases be taken up on priority and completed within a month, ensuring that the reports reach the government before the March 31 deadline.

The government has also warned that if inquiry officers show negligence or fail to comply with the directive, the matter will be brought to its notice and appropriate action will be taken against them.

Additionally, all District Collectors have been advised to regularly review the progress of these cases and ensure strict compliance with the government's instructions.

Moquim to launch new party April 8

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 9: Former Congress MLA Mohammed Moquim announced that his new party will be named 'Odisha Janata Congress', and it will be formally launched April 8.

Moquim was expelled from the Congress in December last year after questioning party president Mallikarjun Kharge's leadership because of his age. Moquim, who represented the Barabati-Cuttack Assembly segment, said he decided to launch the new party after receiving a "positive response" from people to fight corruption.

"Both the BJD and Congress have lost their relevance, which is evident from their newfound bonhomie during the Rajya Sabha polls. Though the BJD ruled the state for 24 years, it has done nothing substantial for youths," he claimed.

Moquim said the new party's flag is almost ready, with three colours. "We are working on the symbol, and I have applied for the party's registration with the Election Commission," he said.

"People from across the state would join the programme at the Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, from where the new party would be launched. It will be a youth-centric party," he added.

After his expulsion from the Congress, Moquim held a youth convention in Bhubaneswar. It was attended by his daughter, Sofia Firdous, who is the incumbent Congress MLA from Barabati-Cuttack constituency.

'Craftsperson of the Week' launched to promote artisans



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: The Crafts Council of Odisha (CCO) Monday launched its unique initiative, 'Craftsperson of the Week,' at Ekamra Haat to promote traditional handicrafts and provide artisans with greater market exposure.

The programme was inaugurated by Guha Poonam Tapas Kumar, Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the department of Handloom, Textiles and Handicrafts. The event was attended by Santosh Kumar Mohapatra, Chairman of the Crafts Council of Odisha, along with several craft enthusiasts and distinguished guests.

Under the initiative, an eminent craftsperson will be featured every week from Monday to Sunday. The selected artisan will be provided with an air-conditioned showroom at Ekamra Haat to display and sell their products. The council will also facilitate publicity and enable interactions with

buyers, designers and craft lovers to help artisans reach wider markets.

The programme for the first month has been sponsored by SNM Group of Companies. Its Chairman Pradipta Mohanty and Diptee Mohanty were present at the launch.

The first craftsperson to participate in the programme was Kalpataru Moharana, a National Merit and Shilpi Guru award-winning stone carver from Lalitagiri.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohapatra said, "The initiative aligns with the vision of the World Crafts Council (WCC) to preserve and promote traditional crafts." He appreciated the effort and urged the public and craft lovers to visit the exhibition and encourage artisans.

CCO, a non-government organisation of craft enthusiasts, works towards preserving and promoting the state's rich handicraft heritage. It is affiliated with the Crafts Council of India, which in turn is linked to the WCC.

12 entrepreneurs receive aid at O-Hub

Strong startups will lead to a prosperous Odisha, says MSME Minister Gokulananda Mallik

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: A startup conference was organised at O-Hub in Bhubaneswar Monday, where the Odisha government reiterated its commitment to supporting young entrepreneurs and strengthening the startup ecosystem in the state.

Addressing the gathering, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Minister Gokulananda Mallik said the state government is ready to help turn the dreams and aspirations of startup entrepreneurs into reality. He emphasised that a stronger startup ecosystem would contribute significantly to the prosperity and economic growth of Odisha.

2 held with 22 gram brown sugar in City

Bhubaneswar: Police arrested two persons and seized 22 grams brown sugar from their possession near Canal Road at Kancei Khana under Laxmisagar police limits in City, the police said Monday. The accused have been identified as Somanath Sutar (26) and Sk. Amiruddin (43), both resident of Khordha district. As per reports, a team from Laxmisagar police station conducted a raid near Canal Road at Kancei Khana Sunday. During the operation, the police intercepted the duo while they were transporting the contraband on a scooter. During search, police recovered around 22 grams of brown sugar from the possession of Sutar. The accused reportedly confessed during questioning that the seized substance was brown sugar and that they intended to sell it illegally. Police also seized a scooter, two mobile phones and ₹3,800 in cash from their possession. Based on the seizure, Laxmisagar police booked the duo under Section 21(b) of the NDPS Act and further investigation was initiated.



Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the MSME department Rashmita Panda delivered the welcome address and presented details about the various financial incentives and support mechanisms offered by the department. She said the government is providing multiple forms of assistance to startups, including monthly stipends, product development grants, marketing support and need-based financial aid.

During the conference, the minister distributed financial assistance to 12 startup entrepreneurs. Startups such as Dirakai, Eagle AI, Jayadev Natural Foods, Eco Sath

Green India, Retrode and Sherlock Studio received support for product development and marketing. Meanwhile, Astronext Technologies, Test Quest E-Learning, NC Square EdTech, Retrik Designs, DMN EdTech and TDB Rootlaunch Startup were provided need-based financial assistance.

Chief Administrative Officer of Startup Odisha, Prafulla Kujur, proposed the vote of thanks at the event. Representatives from Eagle AI and Retrik Designs also shared their experiences and entrepreneurial journeys during the conference.

Officials said that through the Odisha Startup Policy, the state government is empowering entrepreneurs by providing financial support, mentorship, marketing assistance and networking opportunities to help startups grow and succeed.

Ouat to hold 41st convocation today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: The 41st convocation of Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) will be held March 10 at Krushi Sikhsha Sadan on the university campus here, under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor Pravat Kumar Roul.

Mangi Lal Jat, Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Government of India, and Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), will attend the ceremony as the chief guest and deliver the convocation address.

Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav, Commissioner-cum-Secretary



of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha, will grace the occasion as the guest of honour.

During the convocation, a total of 1,426 students who completed their studies in the academic year 2024-25 will be awarded degrees. This includes 819 undergraduate students, 524 postgraduate students, and 83 PhD scholars.

The university will also award 117 gold medals to 66

meritorious students in recognition of their outstanding academic performance. In addition, one Best PhD Thesis Award and six awards for excellence in co-curricular activities will be presented.

On the occasion, honorary doctorate degrees will be conferred upon Mangi Lal Jat for his significant contributions to agricultural science and Sanyaranjan Das, a distinguished rice scientist, for his notable work in rice research.

Odisha Police revives historic pigeon post

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: A glimpse of a centuries-old communication tradition was witnessed in the modern digital era as the Odisha Police showcased its historic pigeon post service during the Nyaya Sanhita Exhibition at the IDCO Exhibition Ground in Unit III, Bhubaneswar Monday.

As part of the demonstration, 18 Belgian Homer pigeons were released in two groups from Bhubaneswar towards Cuttack. Each pigeon carried a small capsule tied to their legs containing messages, recreating the traditional 'pigeon post' system once used for communication.

The Belgian Homer pigeons possess a unique physical feature that enables them to navigate accurately over long distances. A natural iron structure in their beaks helps them detect the Earth's magnetic field, functioning like a natural compass and allowing them

RETURN OF WINGED MESSENGERS



to locate their destination even from miles away.

The Odisha Police pigeon service was established in 1946 after receiving around 200 pigeons from the American army. Initially, the communication system was tested in the hilly areas of Koraput district and later expanded into a large network of more than 700 pigeons.

The service played a crucial role during major disasters in the state. During the Banki floods of 1982 and the devastating super cyclone of 1999, when modern radio and telephone networks collapsed, pigeon post became the only means of communication with the outside world.

An interesting historical anecdote shared at the exhibi-

tion recalled that in April 1948 former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sent a letter from Sambalpur to Cuttack through this system. While Nehru's car took nearly seven hours to reach Cuttack, the winged messenger delivered the message in just five hours. These pigeons can fly at speeds of nearly 55 kilometres per hour.

Even in the era of emails and instant messaging, the Odisha government has preserved this 70-year-old tradition as a living legacy. The pigeons are currently trained at the Police Training Centres in Cuttack and Angul, where the service operates under three categories—static (one-way), boomerang (two-way), and mobile.

The exhibition also paid tribute to 32 pigeons that were awarded medals for bravery during World War II and thousands of pigeons that assisted Odisha during times of crisis, honouring their unique contribution to communication history.

'CHALANTIKA-2026' 'Students must become job creators'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, March 9: "Young students are warriors of the technological world and must equip themselves with confidence and skills to meet the demands of time to build a bright future," said Sampad Chandra Swain, Minister for Industries, Skill Development and Technical Education, while speaking as the chief guest at the annual function "Chalantika-2026" of DRIEMS Polytechnic (Autonomous), which was recently celebrated with great enthusiasm and colourful cultural programmes.

Minister Swain said the government is implementing various schemes to empower youth through knowledge-based skill development and promote technical education. Students should aim not merely to seek jobs but to become job creators, said Swain. He noted that "Chalantika" symbolises change and dynamism, urging students to

embrace this spirit to succeed and bring pride to the state.

Guest of honour Arindam Roy said dreams may not come true immediately, but perseverance helps one overcome obstacles and achieve success.

Presiding over the function, Pramod Chandra Rath, founder chairman of DRIEMS University, thanked the government, particularly the Technical Education department, for its support in the institution's progress. Academic Director Pradipta Ranjan Mohanty said DRIEMS Polytechnic (Autonomous) has carved a distinct identity as one of the state's leading technical institutions after securing NBA, QCI and autonomous status.

Principal Tapaswini Sahu presented the institution's annual report. The annual magazine "Technopulse" was also unveiled, and students excelling in various fields were honoured with trophies and certificates.

Boost for childhood diarrhoea test

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, March 9: The Technology Development Board (TDB) under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, has extended financial support to Cuttack-based startup BabyCue Private Limited for developing and commercialising a rapid diagnostic platform to help tackle childhood diarrhoea.

The project, titled "A Disposable Paper Analytical Platform for Rapid Differentiation of Childhood Diarrhoea," aims to bring to market the DiaCue Diagnostic Kit, an indigenous rapid testing solution designed to quickly determine whether a child's diarrhoea is caused by bacterial or non-bacterial infection.

Childhood diarrhoea remains a major public health concern in India, particularly in rural and resource-constrained areas where timely diagnosis is often difficult. The DiaCue kit is designed as a rapid, non-invasive and cost-effective point-of-care diagnostic tool, enabling healthcare workers to make prompt treatment decisions even in primary health centres and field settings.

The technology is based on lateral flow assay (LFA)



methodology and uses disease-specific fecal biomarkers to detect infections. The platform employs gold nanoparticle-based colorimetric detection, allowing results to be read visually without the need for sophisticated laboratory equipment.

The testing procedure is simple and can be carried out at the point of care. A small stool sample is collected using a swab or sample loop and mixed with an extraction buffer. The liquid sample is then applied to the LFA strip, where it interacts with immobilised reagents. Within minutes, the appearance of coloured lines on the strip indicates whether the infection is bacterial or non-bacterial, helping clinicians decide the appropriate course of treatment.

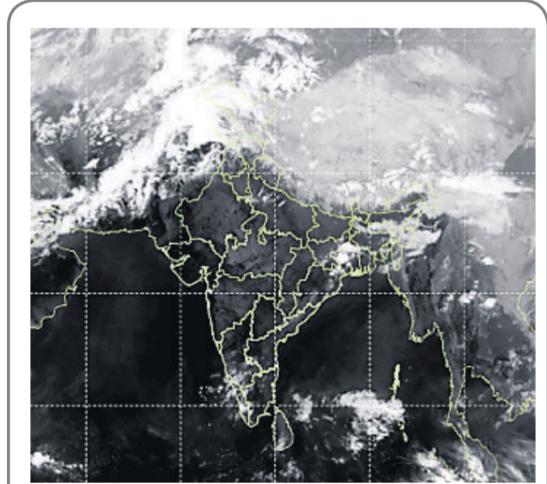
According to officials, the technology can significantly reduce unnecessary antibiotic usage, a major factor contributing to antimicrobial resistance. The platform is also designed

to function effectively in rural healthcare environments where laboratory infrastructure is limited.

The diagnostic technology has been developed in collaboration with the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Hyderabad and has undergone clinical validation at ESIC Hospital Hyderabad. The biomarker-based detection methodology is protected through an international patent filing, paving the way for large-scale commercial deployment.

Speaking on the initiative, Rajesh Kumar Pathak, Secretary of the Technology Development Board, said indigenous innovations in rapid diagnostics are crucial for strengthening primary healthcare and improving clinical decision-making. He noted that TDB's support would help promote affordable and accessible healthcare technologies to address major public health challenges such as childhood diarrhoea.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	92.48 ▲ 0.63	SENSEX	77566.16 ▼ 1,352.74	GOLD	₹160,398 ▼ ₹1,236
EURO	107.04 ▲ 0.49	NIFTY	24028.05 ▼ 422.40	SILVER	₹267,291 ▼ ₹994



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.4°	32.8°	Light to Moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely to occur at one or two places
Min Temp	23.4°	21.8°	
Humidity	80%	87%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

FOCUS **GEOPOLITICS**

DANGEROUS LIAISONS



By getting too cosy with a leadership whose signature call is narcissism and atrocities, India risks long term damage to its standing and will be seen from here on as a legitimate target for all manner of pressure tactics by other players

alist forces for the most part since gaining Independence and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity with a commitment to peace and stability in the world, got entangled with this ogre of imperialism that is spreading havoc around the globe? Consider how quickly events have stacked up to present an unhappy picture for India and the nation's position of "strategic autonomy": The signing of the Indo-US trade deal with its many onerous clauses for India in return for lower US tariffs on India; the ill-timed visit of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Israel and his speech to the Knesset just two days before Israel attacked Iran, with which India has had extraordinarily good relations; Netanyahu's reported claim citing a phone conversation with Modi after the attack on Iran that India stands with Israel though India offered no such statement on record; the US waiver to India allowing the import of Russian crude for a month; a certificate of good conduct implicit in remarks by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent

that Indians have been "good actors"; and the sinking in the Indian Ocean of an Iranian frigate that was a guest of India for the Presidential Review of the naval fleet and not in combat mode. All of these individually and most certainly when taken together paint a picture of an India pushed to the wall, genuflecting to world bullies and unable or unwilling to stand up as a proud nation with an independent voice. While Modi's presence in Israel can be said to have boosted Netanyahu, who is shunned by world leaders given his shameful record of war crimes, India got nothing in return but defence or trade deals that are of questionable value, given that they will likely push India deeper into an Israeli embrace that may well curb India's freedom of choice in upcoming deals and relations. The Netanyahu-Trump axis will not last long. By getting too cosy with a leadership whose signature call is narcissism and atrocities, India risks long term damage to its standing and will be seen from here on

as a legitimate target for all manner of pressure tactics by other players.

That these are short term interests at play and not friendships being built is also clear. Consider remarks like that of US deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau that it would not allow India the economic advantages it gave China and so build a competitor for itself, or a well-circulated clip from a television show in Israel where a commentator boasts that Israel would be busy selling defence systems to the world after the war and that while they have no production lines, "we took over all of India," whose 1.4 billion people will make these systems for Israel to sell!

From an Indian perspective, it should be clear now that these are dangerous liaisons that the nation must quickly exit to reassert its independence and reclaim its standing based not only on policies dictated by realism but by working within the frame of principles and values that will outlast shorter term power equations in a world order that is changing fast.

A former ambassador to the Russian Federation said India must "step on to the world stage and play its part in filling up the strategic and intellectual deficit, as well as the moral deficit." A former principal adviser to the defence ministry said India looks at national interest and the "good of humanity." While the remarks were offered by diplomats and experts in specific contexts, they also point to aspirations for reaching higher ground, of India taking on a larger role based on its ideas of values and principles that lie at the core of the Indian civilizational ethos.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR.
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Jagdish Rattanani

NOTE THAT THE WAR DOES NOT ENJOY WIDESPREAD SUPPORT IN THE US ITSELF, AND PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP WILL LIKELY PAY A HEAVY POLITICAL PRICE FOR IT IN THE MID-TERMS

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel is a much-despised figure in many parts of the world with an arrest warrant against him from the UN-backed International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Since he went to war in response to a Hamas attack on Israel in Oct. 2023, the Israeli war machine has killed over 72,000 people, half of them women, children and the elderly in Gaza. The killing apparatus has taken the life of a child every 52 minutes on average for the last 28 months. The death toll and numbers of injured at over 170,000 are widely accepted globally, including by the perpetrators of these killings, Israel. The "indiscriminate, limitless, cruel and criminal killing of civilians (as) government policy - knowingly, evilly, maliciously, irresponsibly dictated" in the words of a former Israeli Prime Minister from Netanyahu's party, Ehud Olmert, has turned Israel into a pariah state.

A similar playbook is now unfolding in Iran, which has been turned into a killing field with the joint Israeli-US war offensive that has already killed the Iranian leader Ali Khamenei and is now raining more death and destruction as the offensive picks up. Note that the war does not enjoy widespread support in the US itself, and President Donald Trump will likely pay a heavy political price for it in the mid-terms. Many speculate that the war-mongering Netanyahu, who faces charges of corruption domestically, finally got his chance by playing an egotistic Trump who is in the grip of neons and trapped in the Epstein files that are waiting to be unmasked.

How did it come to be that India with its rich history, a clear stance against imperi-

SPECTRUM **SUSTAINABILITY**

Gulf crisis & energy transition



Dhurjati Mukherjee

WHILE BALANCING POWER NEEDS, IT'S VITAL TO ENSURE POLLUTION IN ALL FORMS IS CONTROLLED

In the wake of the Middle East crisis, the need for acceleration of green energy in India assumes great significance more so because the country has committed to net-zero emissions by 2070.

Let's start with current oil crisis. The Strait of Hormuz carries 20% of global oil supply as there is no alternative to compensate for the loss of supplies on this scale. India depends upon nearly 50% of its oil imports on countries in this region. Just a one dollar increase in crude oil price can result in an increase of India's annual crude import bill by Rs 14,000 crore.

Gas is also an area of concern as India imports LNG requirements from Qatar and the UAE which lie inside the Hormuz Strait. Qatar, which accounts for 40% of India's LNG import, has stopped its production and export. This has resulted in the spot price of Asian LNG tripling from \$10.73 to \$35 per MMBtu. Regarding LPG, India imports 60% from West Asia and the longer the war lasts, households are expected to suffer. Right now, it's important to tap other sources like Australia and Canada but, in the long-term, there is a need to scale up biogas production in the country.

A recent Niti Aayog report reiterated that reliable, affordable and progressively cleaner electricity is essential to improve living standards, raise productivity and unlock a low-carbon transition across transport, buildings and industry. With nearly 258GW of renewable energy capacity installed by December 2025, India has emerged as the world's fourth largest renewable energy producer. However, the country's coal consumption could more than double by mid-century before plunging sharply as the country shifts towards cleaner energy, as indicated.

In 2025, India achieved a major milestone with 50% of the installed power generation capacity now coming from non-fossil fuel sources, five years ahead of its 2030 target under the December 2015 Paris Agreement.

The passage of Shanti Act has thrown open doors of nuclear energy to private parties. As is known, nuclear operates continuously, requires minimal land and provides the stable baseload power that modern economies need. The government's target of 100GW of nuclear capacity by 2047 represents roughly 12 times its current capacity, which at present doesn't appear an easy target. While India did not commit to tripling nuclear capacity at COP28 in Dubai, the Shanti Act shows commitment through concrete legislative action.

As India is fast developing, it can't do without fossil fuel, and its effects and those on environment needs to be understood. Doctors opine the most direct impact of such fuel is on the respiratory system. Toxic air pollution directly affects the human body, increasing risk of dangerous infections like pneumonia, cancers and chronic respiratory conditions. Evidence has shown air pollution increases cardiovascular diseases, risk of strokes and dementia

among other neurological conditions. Children are particularly at risk because their organs are still developing and, as they grow, they are exposed to these toxins that generate long-term impacts.

What should government strategy be? While balancing power needs, it's vital to ensure pollution in all forms is controlled to check the looming environmental threat. Industrial fumes, emission-emitting vehicles we see on roads and highways should immediately be banned and other steps taken to ensure that deterioration of air and water is kept at bare minimum.

Meanwhile, though globally efforts are on to shift to renewable energy, the US decision to pull-out from all major climate-linked global bodies, including India headquartered International Solar Alliance and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is a setback. However, most nations are determined to curb emission though stronger initiatives. India must do its bit.

INFA



Peace in the storm, calm in the effort, Joy in the surrender, a luminous Faith, and you will become aware of the Lord's constant Presence.

THE MOTHER



Nepal's Rapper PM

Nepal did what Bangladesh could not. Its Gen Z has transformed its pent-up anger against mainstream political parties and their leaders that exploded on the streets last September, into an unprecedented landslide victory for a fledgling four-year-old party - Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP). The results show Balendra Shah, the 35-year-old rapper turned politician and popular figurehead of the Gen Z revolution, is set to become Nepal's next Prime Minister after his party - the RSP - won by an unprecedented margin securing a rare landslide victory in the first election since the youth-led protests during which dozens were killed and the former government was toppled.

Ecstatic over its success and the decimation of mainstream parties - the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML) - RSP leadership rightly stated their victory is a resounding "endorsement of the Gen Z movement." The NC managed to win 17 seats while the CPN-UML won seven out of a total of 165 seats. On the other hand, the RSP won 122 seats, securing a landslide victory.

In contrast, the Gen Z of Bangladesh had taken the lead in toppling the ruling government through movements on the streets, but they failed to keep the momentum and were trounced in the subsequent elections. Nepal's RSP did not make the mistake Gen Z leaders in Bangladesh made as it declined to join an interim government despite having been invited to do so. Instead, it decided to focus on strengthening the party and contest subsequent elections. Their strategy paid off handsomely. The public frustration and anger at the political old guard are evident in the results, with veteran parties and their leaders losing vast numbers of seats. Balendra's (popularly known as Balen) RSP, which was formed by a former TV executive, was handed a rare outright majority. One of the most dramatic moments of the election was the announcement of victory of RSP's prime ministerial candidate, Balendra, who defeated four-time former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli by a massive margin. In what many observers described as a "David versus Goliath" contest, Balendra secured 68,348 votes against Oli's 18,734 in the eastern Koshi province constituency, long considered a stronghold of the veteran leader Oli.

Balendra's victory symbolises the wider collapse of entrenched political dominance as voters rallied behind the newcomer promising generational change. Among the three former PMs, who contested the polls, only Pushpa Kamal Dahal known as 'Prachanda' managed to retain his seat. The 71-year-old Maoist leader won from Rukum East, a traditional stronghold of the former Maoist movement. Another former PM, Madhav Kumar Nepal lost to RSP candidate Rajesh Kumar Chaudhari. The electoral upset extended beyond individual leaders. Data from the Election Commission showed at least 11 office-bearers of the CPN-UML were defeated by RSP candidates, while several senior leaders of the NC also lost their seats.

Nepal's Gen Z constitutes 40 per cent of the population and the youth were smouldering with anger at the established parties under whose rule corruption, unemployment and mismanagement of the country's economy became the norm. They were also tired of the change and rotation of aged PMs representing mainstream parties. A strong anti-establishment mood, particularly among younger voters frustrated with corruption and political instability, led to the victory of the RSP which campaigned for ending corruption through clean electoral politics. It seems it has caught people's imagination. Campaign issues such as good governance, anti-corruption measures, an end to nepotism and a generational shift in leadership dominated the political discourse.

It goes to the credit of Balendra Shah who set an example of clean politics as Kathmandu Mayor. A civil engineer by training, he rose to fame as a rapper whose tracks took aim at poverty, unemployment and corruption. In 2022, he won the mayoral election as an independent candidate. After winning a strong majority, he began the mammoth task of cleaning up the city, including removing unauthorised buildings and sorting out rubbish. But it was the youth uprising in September last year that elevated Shah to national prominence. After protests suddenly erupted, sparked by a ban on social media but driven by a larger frustration at lack of opportunities, the government hit back with force and 19 protesters were killed. The uprising spiralled into wider unrest and arson attacks that left 70 dead.

With the new government to be installed in the next few days, Nepal has embarked on a new political experiment in which the power of the youth, which stood against corruption and nepotism, plays a crucial role. The Kathmandu Mayor, poised to be the PM, will have to lead such a government by his own example.

WISDOM CORNER

As many an architect will tell you, human behavior changes according to the environment.

PETER GABRIEL

A man can be himself only so long as he is alone, and if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom, for it is only when he is alone that he is really free.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

The only true measure of success is the ratio between what we might have done and what we might have been on the one hand, and the thing we have made and the things we have made of ourselves on the other.

HG WELLS

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1876: Alexander Graham Bell's "liquid" transmitter design permitted the first transmission of speech by Bell to his assistant, Thomas Watson.

1933: The first Nazi concentration camp is opened. On this day in 1933, soon after Adolf Hitler became chancellor, the first concentration camp in Germany opened at Dachau, where at least 32,000 people would die from disease, malnutrition, physical oppression, and execution.

1952: Fulgencio Batista assumes power in Cuba after a coup. The dictator was overthrown by rebels under the command of Che Guevara in 1959.

1959: A revolt erupts in Lhasa, sparking the Tibetan uprising. Fearing the Dalai Lama's abduction by China, 300,000 Tibetans surrounded his palace.

1969: James Earl Ray pled guilty to murdering American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., and was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

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

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B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Emphatic win

Sir, India's historic win over New Zealand in the final of the T20 World Cup 2026 marks a significant milestone, making them the first team to win three T20 WC titles and the first to successfully defend it. For the Men-in-Blue, who rode on the masterclass batting of Sanju Samson through the tournament, the win isn't just yet another ICC title triumph, but an emphatic statement that they rein the world in white ball cricket. Meanwhile, one cannot go without mentioning about the peerless Bumrah who effectively clipped the wings of the Kiwis with a match-winning haul of 4 for 15. With the triumph in Ahmedabad, India capped a tournament in which their batting firepower and disciplined bowling proved decisive on the big stage. As celebrations erupted across the country, India's dominant campaign in the T20 WC will be remembered as one of the most comprehensive performances in the history of the tournament.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

China's booming exports

Sir, China's recent move to lower its GDP growth target to 4.5-5% attracted global attention, but the change is largely symbolic. The deeper issue is that China's growth ambitions remain politically driven rather than economically grounded. Beijing's target reflects its strategic aim to overtake the United States and achieve developed-economy status by 2035. To sustain high growth, China has relied heavily on investment for years, producing far more goods than its domestic market can absorb. As a result, it has increasingly pushed excess output abroad. Unlike earlier decades when export growth was supported by rising prices, China has cut export prices by nearly 20% this decade, triggering a 40% surge in export volumes. This strategy has dramatically expanded China's trade surplus. In 2025, the surplus jumped 20% to a record \$1.2 trillion. Measured against the size of the global economy, no country has ever maintained a trade surplus as large as China's today, not even Japan during its export boom in the 1980s.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

35-YEAR LONG WAIT

Fresh push for Mizo language recognition



The state government believes a fresh, unified resolution will create the necessary political voice to stand out among competing regional demands

VANLALTHANA |
SCHOOL EDUCATION MINISTER, MIZORAM

literary expansion as the Mizo language would receive dedicated support from the National Translation Mission and the National Book Trust, facilitating the translation of Mizo literature into other Indian languages, he said.

Vanlalthana said that inclusion would unlock specialised resources and research initiatives from the Sahitya Akademi and the Central Institute of Indian Languages, he said.

The minister further said that the requirement for Mizo translators and interpreters in the Parliament would generate significant employment opportunities.

Furthermore, state broadcasters like All India Radio and Doordarshan would be empowered to expand their Mizo-language programming, he said.

According to the minister, several larger ethnic groups have submitted applications for their languages to be included in the Eighth Schedule, and currently, there are 38 languages across the country vying for a spot in the Eighth Schedule.

The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Assembly after a deliberation by one member each from ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) and opposition parties -- the Mizo National Front, Congress and the BJP.

Chief Minister Lalduhoma and Leader of the Opposition Lalchandama Ralte took part in the discussion.

The Mizo language was declared the official language of Mizoram in 1974

First resolution for the recognition of the language was adopted March 23, 1991

Young Mizo Association (YMA), which passed its own supportive resolution in 1996, and various ethnic Mizo organisations in the state, remained steadfast in their backing, he said.

The move has also received strong support from Chakma and Bru organisations, signalling a rare moment of total ethnic unity on the linguistic front, Vanlalthana said.

"Members of Parliament from Mizoram would be permitted to speak in their mother tongue on the floor of the House, allowing more precise and impactful representation of state issues," he said.

The minister said that Mizo students would be eligible to appear for premier Central Service examinations, including the IAS, IPS, and IES, using the Mizo language.

The inclusion will also boost

Aizawl, March 9: The Mizoram Assembly Monday unanimously adopted a fresh resolution seeking the inclusion of the Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, more than three decades after the first legislative move was taken in this regard.

Moving the resolution, School Education Minister Vanlalthana said the demand for its recognition has garnered widespread consensus across the state's socio-political spectrum.

He said that the Mizo language, if included in the Eighth Schedule, would provide several transformative advantages. The fresh move is considered a stepped-up effort to include the Mizo language, which is the "lingua franca" of various Mizo tribes, in the 8th Schedule, consisting of 22 languages.

The minister clarified that this latest step does not discard the previous resolution but serves to amplify the state's voice, ensuring the demand reaches the Central government with renewed urgency.

Major NGOs, including



A woman covers her head with a cloth while crossing Kartavya Path on a hot afternoon, in New Delhi, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Yamuna still highly polluted in Delhi

DPCC reports show elevated faecal coliform levels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The Delhi Pollution Control Committee's (DPCC) latest data on the water quality of the Yamuna River raises concerns about high faecal coliform levels, indicating significant untreated sewage entering the river.

The reports for January and February, uploaded after much speculation around the delay, also show high levels of Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), which is a measure of the amount of dissolved oxygen that microorganisms need.

While the January analysis shows a considerable increase from December 2025 levels, the pollution indicators remained lower than those of January 2025.

The water quality testing by DPCC involves collecting water samples across eight locations along the course of the Yamuna river through Delhi, measuring several parameters such as Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), dissolved oxygen, chemical



oxygen demand, pH, and faecal coliform, to determine the pollution level.

The eight locations include major points like Palla, Wazirabad, ISBT Bridge, ITO Bridge, Nizamudin Bridge, Hindon Cut, 7 Okhla Barrage and River Yamuna at Asgarpur (Kidwaly, Haryana).

The January report reveals faecal coliform levels as high as 350,000 Most Probable Number (MPN) per 100 millilitres at Asgarpur, which far exceeds the permissible limit of 2,500 and the desirable level of 500. The levels at various sites

ranged from 3,300 MPN/100 ml to 220,000 MPN/100 ml, with Palla being the only site that remained within the permissible limit, recording 2,700.

BOD levels for January also showed alarming readings, ranging from 2.5 to 52 milligrams per litre (mg/l), while the water quality criteria specify a maximum of 3 mg/l.

This increase is notable compared to December 2025, when faecal coliform levels peaked at 92,000 units per 100 ml, a significant rise from 24,000 units per 100 ml in November 2025 and 8,000 units per 100 ml in Octo-

ber 2025. However, the latest figures remain considerably lower than those from January 2025, when levels peaked at 7,900,000 units per 100 ml.

The DPCC's February water quality report indicates further improvement but still highlights serious exceedances of permissible limits. Faecal coliform levels ranged from 1,200 to 110,000 units per 100 ml, while BOD peaked at 36 mg/l at the ISBT Bridge.

The DPCC has also uploaded the data for Delhi's sewage treatment plants (STPs), common effluent treatment plants (CETPs) and drains.

While the analysis of these are supposed to be uploaded at least once every month, recent delays in the January and February reports have attracted concerns from activists, who stressed that regular assessment of pollution levels of the river was most crucial, especially post-monsoon, when the river flow reduces, leading to a spike in pollution.

₹350cr aid for violence-hit women

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, March 9: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khecham Singh Sunday announced that a budgetary provision of ₹350 crore would be earmarked in the upcoming state budget to assist women affected by the recent ethnic violence in the state.

He said that the provision is expected to benefit around 3.5 lakh violence-hit women across Manipur.

The Chief Minister made the announcement while attending the International Women's Day 2026 celebration held at the City Convention Centre in Imphal under the theme "Rights, Justice, Action for All Women and Girls."

Addressing the gathering, Singh prayed to the Almighty that from Sunday onwards, people displaced by the unprecedented crisis in Manipur would finally be able to return



to their homes.

Lauding the courage and resilience of Manipuri women, the Chief Minister said that at different phases of the state's history, women have played crucial roles in Manipur's economy as well as in various political and social movements.

He noted that many widowed mothers have raised and educated their children to become successful individuals despite severe hardships, often by selling vegetables in markets or engaging in traditional handloom activities. "We are their sons and daughters," Singh said, acknowledging the immense sacrifices made by women in society.

Delhi modifies tree transplantation norms

The govt mandates geo-tagged photos on e-Forest portal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The forest and wildlife department in the national capital has modified the procedure for tree transplantation on the DPTA e-Forest portal, strengthening documentation and monitoring requirements under the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act.

According to an official document, under the modified format, geo-tagged photographs, images embedded with the exact geographic coordinates of where they were taken, must be uploaded on the portal so that officials can verify the precise location of transplanted trees.

"These changes significantly tighten monitoring and compliance requirements for tree transplantation under the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act (DPTA) and will help authorities



track transplanted trees more effectively," an officer said.

The revised system requires user agencies, individuals, and the government to upload detailed stage-wise information and photographic evidence of

the transplantation process on the portal, the document said.

The photographs must be taken from at least three different angles, and a maximum of three images can be uploaded for each stage of the transplantation activity.

These images are required to be submitted at different stages of the process, including before transplantation, during root ball preparation, when the tree is being transported, and immediately after transplantation.

The portal also requires periodic monitoring updates to track the survival and condition of transplanted trees over a longer period.

Agencies are also required to submit geo-tagged photographic updates at regular three-month intervals after transplantation, continuing up to 36 months, it said.

NEC releases ₹5.73cr for key development projects in Mizoram



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shillong/Aizawl, March 9: The North Eastern Council (NEC), under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), has released ₹5.73 crore for Mizoram in February 2026 to support several key development initiatives aimed at strengthening infrastructure, agriculture and public service delivery in the state.

The fund is part of a larger allocation of ₹67.41 crore released across the Northeastern region during February to promote balanced regional development, according to an official statement issued by the DoNER Ministry.

In Mizoram, one of the major projects supported under the allocation is the construction of a market building at West Phaileng in Mamit district. The project is expected to improve marketing infrastructure and create better opportunities for local farmers and traders.

The NEC is also supporting the development of a potato seed farm in the state using tissue culture and apical rooted cuttings (ARC) technology. The initiative

aims to ensure the availability of high-quality planting materials, strengthen agricultural value chains and improve productivity among farmers.

Another significant project includes the establishment of a central medical warehouse in Aizawl, which will help strengthen medical logistics by improving the storage and distribution of essential medicines and medical supplies across the state.

Additionally, the NEC is supporting the establishment of a State Veterinary Information and Resource Centre, which is expected to enhance veterinary services and support livestock development through improved technical resources and effective dissemination of information.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is the Chairman of the NEC, while Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya Scindia serves as its Vice-Chairman.

The Governors and Chief Ministers of all eight North-eastern states are members of the council, which functions as a regional planning body for the Northeast.

Delhi Metro enthusiast continues first-ride tradition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: From being a passenger in the inaugural Delhi Metro in 2002 to his latest ride in new corridors this year, Anil Marwah has kept the tradition of taking the first ride on new routes alive for more than two decades now.

For most people, a new metro line means a faster commute, but for the 65-year-old, it means another page in a carefully preserved album, an album not of photos but metro smart cards.

As the two new metro routes connecting Majlis Park to Maujpur and Majlis Park to Deepali Chowk were inaugurated on Sunday, the metro enthusiast was once again present with his albums, continuing his 24-year-old tradition and becoming one of the first passengers on the new corridors.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) commenced train services at 3 pm on the



two newly inaugurated corridors after they were flagged off earlier in the day by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Marwah, proudly displaying his collection, said that his album consisted of every first-day Delhi Metro smart card issued for the newly opened corridors.

His carefully preserved collection includes the cards,

photographs from inaugural rides before entering the metro, newspaper clippings and even recognition from the Limca Book of World Records, all neatly stored in albums he carries to metro inaugurations.

"My story with Delhi Metro started on December 25, 2002. Earlier, I had lived in Japan for a year from 1988 to 1989, and

I was very fascinated that the metro trains then ran through the colonies. I used to wonder when something like that would start in Delhi," Marwah told PTI.

He recalled that when the metro finally started, he was living in Rajender Nagar and went with his son to Shahdara so that they could take the first ride.

"We couldn't get a ticket, so we bought a card for the first trip. After that, as new extensions kept getting added, I kept trying to get the cards and travel on them as the first passenger. I have managed to maintain the passion all until today," he said.

Speaking about the newly opened routes, Marwah said the inauguration marked the addition of his 41st and 42nd cards.

"This card has been issued at Deepali Chowk, making it my 42nd card, and I hope that I can continue this trend until

the 25th anniversary of the Delhi Metro," he said.

The prime minister also laid the foundation stone for three additional metro lines aimed at further improving connectivity across the national capital.

The two new corridors include a 12.3 km stretch of the Pink Line between Majlis Park and Maujpur Babarpur and a 9.9 km section of the Magenta Line connecting Deepali Chowk to Majlis Park.

According to DMRC, the corridors are expected to benefit residents in several areas, including Burari, Jagatpur-Wazirabad, Khajuri Khas, Bhajanpura, Yamuna Vihar, Madhuban Chowk, Haiderpur Badli Mor, Bhalaswa and Majlis Park. For Marwah, however, every new corridor carries a personal meaning, another card for the album and another memory in a journey that has now lasted nearly a quarter of a century.



Traditional parties used to talk about religion and caste in their manifestos, but AAP's national convener Arvind Kejriwal made a historic initiative by including quality health and education for the common people in the manifesto

INDIA PRODUCES 14 LAKH MT E-WASTE IN 2025-26: GOVT

Over 14 lakh metric tonnes (MT) e-waste was generated in the country during 2025-26 out of which over 9.79 lakh metric tonnes has been recycled, the Lok Sabha was informed Monday. The information was shared by Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Kirti Vardhan Singh in response to a written question in Lok Sabha



of the day quote

Farmers are angry with the BJP (for atrocities at Haddad village last year), and want to take revenge in the election. They will teach the BJP a lesson across Gujarat (in the 2027 Assembly polls)



ARVIND KEJRIWAL | AAP NATIONAL CONVENER

Peace is essential for the safety of humanity. I pray that may 'amrit' of peace emerge from this 'sea of crisis'



MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | SENIOR BJP LEADER

A large number of Indians are stuck in Gulf countries. Journalists who had accompanied the prime minister during his visit to Israel as political journalists have now become war journalists. How will they return?



AKHLESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

CEC threatened WB officers: Mamata

The sharp exchange underscores the intensifying political battle in West Bengal ahead of the Assembly polls, with the revision of electoral rolls emerging as a major flashpoint between the ruling Trinamool Congress and the BJP, while the Election Commission has increasingly come under attack from the state government



Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi during a review meeting on preparedness for the West Bengal Assembly elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 9: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday accused CEC Gyanesh Kumar of threatening state officials during a meeting with the administration and warned that "false bravado" by constitutional authorities was not acceptable, stepping up the confrontation between the state government and the poll panel ahead of the assembly elections.

Speaking from the site of her dharna, now in its fourth day, in central Kolkata against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Banerjee alleged that the chief election commissioner had adopted a threatening tone towards

the state bureaucracy.

"The CEC threatened our officers today at the meeting. I want to tell the CEC that having courage is good, but false bravado is not so," she said. Her remarks came against the backdrop of the Election Commission's full bench meeting with senior state administrative and police officials earlier in the day to review preparedness for the assembly elections likely to be held in April.

According to officials present at the meeting, Kumar warned that any lapse in maintaining law and order ahead of the elections would not be tolerated, and strict action would follow if responsibilities were not discharged properly.

The chief election commissioner also questioned the absence of a Narcotics Advisory

Committee in the state and asked officials to strengthen monitoring mechanisms ahead of the polls, they said.

Escalating her attack on the poll panel, Banerjee alleged that the ongoing SIR exercise was being used to deprive people of their voting rights.

"We have only one point: everyone must be given the right to vote. Our only issue is to ensure voting rights for all," the TMC supremo said.

She alleged that intimidation and deletion of names from electoral rolls were being used as political tools. "If you think you can capture power by attacking people, intimidating them and removing names from the voters' list, that will not happen," the chief minister asserted, alluding to the alleged BJP-EC nexus.

Govt may not allow West Asia debate after EAM's reply



ING, OIL SHOCK. INDIANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The government is unlikely to accede to the demand of the Opposition for a discussion in Parliament on the present crisis in West Asia as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has already briefed both the Houses.

Sources said the government is keen to have the discussion on the no-confidence motion moved against Speaker Om Birla which is now likely to be taken up Tuesday as protests by the Opposition demanding a discussion on West Asia disrupted the proceedings throughout the day Monday.

There will be no discussion on the situation in West Asia in Parliament as the external affairs minister has already briefed both the Houses, the sources said.

Lok Sabha proceedings were repeatedly adjourned on Monday amid noisy protests over demands for a debate on the situation in West Asia, with the government accusing the Opposition benches of not following basic ethics of the House.

As soon as External Affairs Minister Jaishankar rose to make a statement in the Lok Sabha on the "situation in West Asia", Opposition members started raising slogans against the government and demanded a full-fledged discussion on the ongoing crisis in West Asia.

Jagadambika Pal, who was chairing the proceedings, said the questions being raised by the Opposition through their placards were being elaborately answered by the government.

He said while a resolution to remove Birla as the Lok Sabha speaker is already on the agenda, the opposition was pushing for a notice for adjournment of the proceedings to discuss West Asia. Pal wondered how the opposition wants to discuss the two issues on the same day.

The Opposition is demanding a full-fledged discussion on the West Asia crisis, citing concerns about India's energy security and the need for a contingency plan

Opposition parties, led by Congress, are protesting the government's 'silence' on critical issues related to the West Asia conflict and demanding a detailed contingency plan.

The government accuses the opposition of disrupting parliamentary proceedings and not following House ethics

After Jaishankar completed his statement, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju accused the Opposition of not following ethics of the House.

Rijiju said their notice to remove Birla from office had already been accepted and the government was willing to discuss it but the Opposition was disrupting the proceedings.

In the Rajya Sabha, Congress president and Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge demanded a short-duration discussion in the Upper House on the emerging challenges to India's energy security amid the West Asia conflict.

Kharge made the submission just before the external affairs minister made a suo motu statement on the evolving situation in West Asia.

The Congress and other Opposition parties protested against him making the statement, saying a short-duration discussion should precede such a move.

They shouted slogans during Jaishankar's statement before staging a walkout at the fag end of the statement.

Outside the House, Opposition MPs, including Congress president Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, protested demanding a discussion on the West Asia conflict and slamming the government for its 'silence' on critical issues related to it.

SHORT TAKES

Karur stampede: CBI summons Vijay

New Delhi: The CBI has summoned actor and TVK chief Vijay Tuesday for a fresh round of questioning in connection with the Karur stampede case, officials said. The actor was earlier questioned by the agency at its headquarters January 12 and 19. During the probe, the CBI has gathered material that needs further questioning and clarifications from the actor, the officials said. A new notice has been served to him.

Sharjeel Imam gets 10-day interim bail

New Delhi: A Delhi court Monday granted 10-day interim bail on several conditions to activist Sharjeel Imam, an accused in the 2020 Delhi riots case, to attend a family event. Imam has been asked not to meet anyone except his friends, relatives or family members, or visit places except those mentioned in his plea. He has also been prohibited from using social media. Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Bajpai was hearing the interim bail application filed by Imam, seeking relief for six weeks -- to attend his brother's wedding scheduled this month and spend time with family during the Eid festival.

Body of man abducted near B'lore found in TN

Bangalore: The body of a real estate businessman was found with severe injuries in neighbouring Tamil Nadu Monday, a day after he was allegedly kidnapped by a gang near here, police said. The victim, identified as Gopal alias Gopi, a resident of Honnakalaspura village in Anekal taluk on the outskirts of Bengaluru City, was in his late 30's. He is engaged in real estate and financial business, they said. The police have arrested Mohan Babu, alleged to be the mastermind behind the crime, even as efforts are being made to nab his two associates who kidnapped Gopal.

Teen beaten to death

Hajipur (Bihar): A teenager was beaten to death by a friend while watching the ICC T20 World Cup final in Bihar's Vaishali district, police officials said Monday. The incident took place at Jakkopur village within the Mahkopur police station area Sunday evening. The deceased has been identified as Kundan Kumar (17), while his friend Kishan Kumar has been named as the accused, police said.

MAHA CANCELS BIKE TAXI LICENCES FOR UBER, OLA, RAPIDO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 9: The Maharashtra government Monday revoked the provisional licence issued to some motorbike aggregators as they did not fulfil certain requirements, state transport minister Pratap Sarnaik said.

Speaking in the legislative council, Sarnaik said the e-bike policy was to give employment to the sons of soils, adding that in states like Goa, tourist prefer bikes because it is cheaper for a single person rather than taking an autorickshaw or taxi.

He said in August 2024, the cabinet permitted plying of e-bikes in cities with a population of more than a lakh. According to the Maharashtra E-bike Taxi Rules 2024, it was mandatory that the vehicles should be electric. Also, the aggregators were asked to fulfil certain requirements within 30 days.

"Rapido, Ola and Uber were given permission for just a month and they were to submit certain documents. I took a meeting with RTO officials Monday. (I have told officials that) and if they haven't furnished documents then their temporary licence must be revoked. We are cancelling the temporary licences so that illegal bikes will not hit the road," Sarnaik said.



School students attend a morning assembly after educational institutions reopened following a week-long closure due to protests over the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and winter vacations, in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir

SNIPPETS Nishant plans tour of all 38 Bihar districts

Patna/Bhahua: A day after formally joining the JD(U), Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Monday said he will embark on a statewide tour of all 38 districts of the state in the coming days. Speaking to reporters after garlanding the statue of his mother Manju Sinha, at a park named after her here, Nishant said he would soon decide on the proposed tour. Nishant was inducted into the party Sunday, days after Nitish Kumar filed his nomination papers for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections. Asked about Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav wishing him after his induction into the party, Nishant said, "That is a good thing. I accept that."

CBSE postpones Class XII exams in Middle East

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Monday postponed the Class XII board exams till March 16 in the Middle East amid the Iran-Israel conflict, officials said. The fresh dates were not immediately announced. "After a critical review of the current situation in parts of the Middle East -- Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE -- mental agony of the students and the prevailing uncertainties, the board has decided to postpone (Class) XII exams scheduled from March 12 to 16," said CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj. The new dates will be announced later, and for further exams, the situation will be reviewed March 14, he said.

India emerges as world's 2nd largest arms importer: SIPRI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: India was the world's second largest importer of arms and military hardware from 2021 to 2025 and the largest chunk of the imports came from Russia, Swedish think tank SIPRI said in a new report Monday.

Ukraine which received 9.7 per cent of all arms transfers in 2021-25 was the world's largest arms importer in that period, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said.

China dropped out of the top 10 arms importers for the first time since 1991-1995 due to expanded domestic production of its own designs, the think tank noted in its report, 'Trends in International Arms Transfers'.

The United States supplied 42 per cent of all international arms transfers during 2021-25,

up from 36 per cent in 2016-20, it said.

Four states in Asia and Oceania -- India, Pakistan, Japan and Australia -- ranked among the 10 largest arms importers globally in 2021-25.

The main supplier to the region in 2021-25 was the US, which accounted for 35 per cent of regional arms imports. Russia accounted for another 17 per cent and China for 14 per cent.

"India was the world's second largest arms importer. Its imports decreased marginally (4 per cent) between 2016-20 and 2021-25," the SIPRI said.

"The largest share of Indian arms imports came from Russia, at 40 per cent -- a significantly smaller share than in 2016-20 (51 per cent) and almost half that in 2011-15 (70 per cent)," it said.

India is increasingly turning to Western suppliers, it said.



The report noted that Russia has remained India's main supplier for military hardware. At the same time, it said India has been buying arms from France and Israel as well.

"Arms imports by Pakistan grew by 66 per cent between 2016-20 and 2021-25. China supplied 80 per cent of Pakistan's arms imports in 2021-25, up

from 73 per cent in 2016-20," the report noted.

The US has further cemented its dominance as an arms supplier, even in an increasingly multipolar world, said Pieter Wezeman, Senior Researcher with the SIPRI Arms Transfers Programme.

For importers, US arms offer advanced capabilities and a way

Four states in Asia and Oceania -- India, Pakistan, Japan and Australia -- ranked among the 10 largest arms importers globally in 2021-25

of fostering good relations, he said. "While tensions and conflicts in Asia and Oceania and the Middle East continue to drive large-scale arms imports, the sharp increase in arms flows to European states pushed global arms transfers up almost 10 per cent," said Mathew George, Director of the SIPRI Arms Transfers Programme.

Overall, the report said the volume of major arms transferred between states increased by 9.2 per cent between 2016-2020 and 2021-2025.

5 cheetah cubs born at Kuno National Park

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: Namibian cheetah Jwala Monday gave birth to five cubs at Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park, taking the country's total cheetah population to 53, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav has announced.

The development comes days after cheetah Gamini gave birth to four cubs at the same park.

"A moment of great pride for Project Cheetah as Jwala, the Namibian Cheetah and a successful third-time mother, gave birth to five cubs today at Kuno National Park. With this birth, the number of Indian-born thriving cubs has risen to 33, marking the 10th successful cheetah litter on Indian soil -- another important milestone in India's cheetah conservation journey," Yadav said in a post on X.

The minister said the achievement reflected the dedicated efforts, skill, and commitment of the veterinarians, field staff and all involved who continue to work tirelessly on the ground.



national

of the day quote

When I go to hold programmes in Punjab, my event is shifted to three venues. It is democracy? They should not do so. In one of my programmes, the tent was uprooted, and the land there was dug so that the tent could not be set up there again. These are the situations they create

NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

Today, all the big cities are suffering from one or other issue due to encroachment. Those cities are suffering, except Hyderabad, which is the safest city

A REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CM

If the great actor of Malayalam cinema has felt hurt or distressed due to such a campaign, especially if it is believed that any persons associated with the CPI(M) were involved, I publicly apologise to him

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

POST OF THE DAY

When unemployment rises, we discover two kinds of politicians—those who call policymakers to develop new policies, & those who call statisticians to develop new statistics.

@kaushikcbasu

SHORT TAKES

MP HC nullifies Cong MLA's win

Gwalior: The Madhya Pradesh High Court Monday declared the election of Congress MLA, Mukesh Malhotra, from Vijaypur constituency as "null and void" for not disclosing pending criminal cases during the 2024 bypoll. The Gwalior bench of HC declared BJP candidate Ramniwas Rawat, who had secured the second-highest number of votes, as "elected MLA" from the seat. The single bench of Justice GS Ahluwalia has declared the election of Congress MLA Mukesh Malhotra from the Vijaypur assembly constituency in Sheopur district as "null and void" and declared the second-placed BJP candidate, Ramniwas Rawat, as the MLA, the order stated.

Student tansured for having long hair

Hyderabad: A teacher of a private school here have allegedly got a student tansured for having long hair, leading to a protest by his parents at the institution Monday. Speaking to reporters, the 6th standard student alleged that the teacher forcibly got him tansured against his will two days ago. His mother said her son had long hair as part of a religious vow. Taking exception to the teacher getting her son's hair removed without her knowledge, she said the school should hand over the removed hair to them, as it was meant to fulfil a religious vow.

Soldier goes missing

Jammu: An army soldier went missing during a river crossing exercise in Sunderbani sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district Monday, prompting the launch of a joint rescue operation to trace him, officials said. They said the incident occurred in Manawar river in Khour area and a team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) joined Army and police in the operation to trace him.

LS fails to take up resolution on Birla's removal as Speaker

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9 (PTI) The Lok Sabha Monday could not take up a notice seeking to move a resolution to remove Speaker Om Birla from office amid disruptions as opposition members demanded a debate on the West Asia situation.

The Opposition's resolution is now likely to be taken up Tuesday, at noon, soon after the Question Hour.

While the Constitution gives the Speaker the right to defend himself or herself in the House, it is learnt that Union Home Minister Amit Shah would respond to the debate on the resolution against Birla.

The Opposition has alleged that Birla acted in a "blatantly partisan" manner while conducting the proceedings of the House.

The government, meanwhile, is unlikely to accede to the Opposition's demand for a discussion in Parliament on the present crisis in West Asia as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has already briefed both the Houses Monday.

In the Lok Sabha, the government and the Chair accused the opposition of holding the House proceedings "hostage" to its demands.

The House was adjourned for the day shortly after it re-assembled at 3 pm, following an earlier adjournment due to relentless protests by Opposition members.

As proceedings resumed, Opposition MPs continued raising slogans. Jagadambika Pal, who was chairing the proceedings, urged them to maintain decorum and allow the House to take up the resolution against Birla.



If Anil Ambani opens his mouth, it will spell trouble for Modi ji. In such a situation, Narendra Modi is very troubled -- he is surrounded by Trump, Hardeep Puri, Anil Ambani, Epstein, Netanyahu

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER



Opposition protests stalled a resolution seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla

Government and Chair accuse the opposition of holding the House 'hostage'

Opposition's actions criticised as 'immature and irresponsible', wasting taxpayers' money

The Speaker was not presiding over the House until the no-confidence motion against him was settled

Pal reminded the Opposition that the no-confidence resolution against the Speaker was already on the House agenda, and their adjournment notice seeking debate on the West Asia crisis could not be taken up. He accused the opposition of wasting taxpayers' money -- about Rs 9 crore per day -- by holding the House "hostage" to its demands. Pal described the Opposition behaviour as "immature and irresponsible".

Around 12 noon, as soon as Jaishankar rose to make a statement in the lower house on the "situation in West Asia", opposition members started raising slogans against the government and demanded a full-fledged discussion on the ongoing crisis in West Asia.

Pal, chairing the proceedings, said the questions being raised by the Opposition through their placards were being elaborately answered by the government.

He said that while a resolution to remove Birla as the Lok Sabha Speaker is already on the agenda, the Opposition was pushing for a notice for adjournment of the proceedings to discuss West Asia.

Pal wondered how the Opposition wanted to discuss the two issues on the same day.

After Jaishankar completed his statement, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju accused the Opposition of not following the ethics of the House.

Rijju said their notice to remove Birla from office has already been accepted, and the government is willing to discuss it, but the Opposition was disrupting the proceedings.

Outside the House, Opposition MPs, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, staged a protest demanding a discussion on the West Asia conflict and slamming the government for its "silence" on critical issues related to it.

INDIGO FACES AIRSPACE CURB WOES

A Manchester-bound IndiGo flight, operated with a leased Boeing 787 aircraft, returned to the national capital Monday due to certain restrictions when the plane was to enter the Eritrea airspace, according to sources. Also, an IndiGo flight from London Heathrow to Mumbai was diverted to Cairo following issues related to entering Eritrea airspace, they added



EXCISE CASE

ED moves Delhi HC seeking to expunge trial court remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The Enforcement Directorate has approached the Delhi High Court to expunge observations made by a trial court on its money laundering investigation against former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and others linked to the CBI's excise policy case.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) said the February 27 order was a "clear case of judicial overreach" because the court neither examined the agency's evidence nor heard it while passing strictures against it. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) chargesheet relates to alleged irregularities in the 2021 Delhi excise policy introduced by the then Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government. The CBI and the ED investigated the case independently.

"It is trite law that a court cannot overlook the basic and vitally essential tenet of the Rule of Law that no one should be condemned unheard, and that when there is no relevance to the subject matter of adjudication, it is certainly not desirable for courts to make comments or observations reflecting on the bona fides or credibility of any person or authority," the ED said in its petition filed March 7.

The petition is listed for hearing before Justice Swarasa Kanta Sharma Tuesday.

PTI accessed the over 960-page petition in which the anti-money laundering agency said that if the trial court's observations stand, it will cause "irreparable injury" to the agency in discharging its statutory mandate.

'BJP trying to replicate Bihar formula in TN'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu), March 9: Ruling DMK president and Chief Minister MK Stalin Monday alleged that the BJP won Bihar polls by showcasing JD (U) chief Nitish Kumar and it has now sidelined him to bring its own nominee as the CM there.

Similarly, by using the AIADMK as a "mask" it was now trying to repeat its Bihar trick in Tamil Nadu and "swallow" the state, he alleged.

Addressing the DMK's 12th state conference here, Stalin alleged that AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami, out of selfishness and in order to become CM, turned BJP's "slave" and mortgaged the party in Delhi. Using Palaniswami, BJP was trying to destroy the entire AIADMK, he alleged.

A 'Saffron crowd,' an obvious reference to the BJP, wants to "swallow Tamil Nadu". DMK will not allow it to happen

"The entire country is witnessing what is happening in Bihar, where BJP never had a chief minister. They won polls there by showcasing Nitish Kumar. Now, after winning polls, they are going to bring BJP CM after sidelining Nitish. They are trying to do it in Tamil Nadu too. I am throwing a challenge. BJP can never rule TN till such time I am around and till such time the DMK lasts," Stalin said.

To win over the state, BJP was gradually "swallowing" AIADMK, he alleged. Playing the AIADMK, Stalin said that party was not in a position to name its own alliance nor had it anything to claim as its achievements. But unlike the NDA alliance, the DMK delivered upon its promises and



MK STALIN | TN CM

sought a second term in office based on its achievements.

"The people are happy because we fulfilled our promises made in 2021," he said. He claimed that it will be "no entry" for the NDA in Tamil Nadu and asserted that he would continue to rule the state so long as the DMK government's welfare initiatives lasted.

"It will always be no-entry for NDA in Tamil Nadu, no-entry to NDA's dabba (dysfunctional) engine in the state... as long as the welfare schemes we brought are in place, Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin will rule Tamil Nadu," he said. The upcoming Assembly election will see the DMK exposing the BJP by "tearing the AIADMK mask" being worn by it.

"Can people not identify the BJP if AIADMK mask is used," the CM asked and hit back at rivals TVK and AIADMK over his 'TN vs NDA and TN vs Delhi' slogan for the Assembly polls. Listing out the numerous initiatives of his government, he said 5.40 lakh male students were provided with a monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 under the 'Tamil Puthalvan Thittam' while a similar aid was being extended to 6.95 lakh women student beneficiaries of 'Puthumai Penn Thittam'.

SC allows Unnao survivor to join CBI plea against Sengar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The Supreme Court Monday permitted Unnao rape survivor to be a party in the petition filed by the CBI challenging suspension of life imprisonment of former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, saying that the victim has a right to be heard in the proceedings.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joyymalya Bagchi permitted the survivor to be made a party to the case, saying that victims are entitled to participate in proceedings affecting their interests, in line with the apex court's earlier judgement in the Lakhimpur Kheri case.

"We are of the view that the victim has the right to be heard," the CJI said and granted two weeks to file her affidavit against the suspension of life sentence of the convict.

The bench, however, rejected an intervention application filed by a relative of the rape survivor alleging threat to his life and liberty. The CJI said he can pursue an independent remedy instead of intervening in the CBI's petition and move the high court for protection. The bench then disposed of his application.

The bench did not take up the CBI's petition against the suspension of sentence as Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the probe agency, was unavailable Monday.

Senior advocate N Hariharan, representing, said he requested that the matter be listed for hearing at the earliest, arguing that the liberty granted to his client by the Delhi High Court had been curtailed.

Delhi: Manipuri woman assaulted by group of men

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: A Manipuri woman has alleged that she was beaten with a belt and attacked with a knife after she objected to sexual and racial remarks by a group of boys in a south Delhi park.

The police have apprehended four juveniles in connection with the incident that took Sunday evening in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar near the Saket District Court Complex. The woman and her friend had gone to the park for a walk and were taking pictures when around six to seven boys started teasing them with sexual slurs, the police said.

"When we objected and asked them to stop, the group allegedly became aggressive and called us 'prostitutes' while making racist remarks and using abusive Hindi slang," the woman said in the complaint. She alleged that the situation quickly escalated into violence. "They became aggressive and started physically assault-

ing me. They did not stop even after beating me."

She alleged that one of the attackers took out a knife and attempted to stab her, forcing her to run away from the spot. "When I fell running, they took an iron belt and hit me on the back of my head, causing bleeding in my right ear," she said.

The woman alleged that she and her friend begged the attackers to stop, but the assault continued. "We were begging them not to beat us anymore. While we were running, we called for help, but nobody tried to stop the assault and harassment on us," she said.

The woman said she had never seen the attackers before. "For me, it was shocking: I do not know them. I saw them for the first time, how could they attack me in daylight!" she said, according to the complaint. The local SHO and other staff rushed to the spot and met the injured woman after a distress call, the police said.

2 killed after speeding DTC bus hits vehicles

New Delhi: Two men were killed and a woman sustained injuries after a speeding DTC bus rammed into multiple vehicles in Delhi's Nihal Vihar Monday, police said.

The incident triggered protests during which an angry mob vandalised the bus involved in the accident and set another DTC bus on fire, police said, adding that the driver has been apprehended. The deceased have been identified as Ravikant, 33, and Kamaljeet, 39, a senior police officer said. Police said they received a call at 9.45 am reporting that a DTC bus coming from the Najafgarh side had hit a scooter, a motorcycle, a hand-rickshaw and some pedestrians on the Najafgarh-Nangloi Road. Around 500 people gathered at the spot soon after the incident and began protesting. They damaged the bus involved in the accident and torched another DTC bus coming from the Nangloi side, the officer said.

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

Tender Notice No. : e-Tender/2026/09, dated 06.03.2026. e-Tenders are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), S.E.Railway, Kharagpur-721301 for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works before 15.00 hrs. on the date mentioned against items and will be opened at 15.30 hrs. : Sl. No. & Tender No.; Description of work; Tender Value; Earnest Money : (1) E-KGP-South-06-2026; Construction of new 3.0 Mtr. wide Foot Over Bridge in lieu of existing old Foot Over Bridge at Haldipada, Ranital, Basta, Benapur & Lakshannath Road and extension of existing 3.0 Mtr. wide Foot Over Bridge to connect Platform No. 3/4 at Bakhrabad station under the jurisdiction of Sr. Divisional Engineer (South)/Kharagpur; ₹ 23,45,67,795.28; ₹ 13,22,800/- (2) E-KGP-WEST-07-2026; Kharagpur: Improvement & standardization of overrun line, dead end & sand hump under Assistant Divisional Engineer/West/Kharagpur. (4th call); ₹ 1,37,02,424.13; ₹ 2,18,500/- (3) E-KGP-South-07-2026; Execution of the work of : (i) Cess repair & strengthening of bank under Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/Hijli and construction of central drain in between Belda-Nekurseni under Sr. Section Engineer/P/Way/Dantan, (ii) Augmentation facilities in RGM siding at Hijli & Dantan under Assistant Divisional Engineer (South)/Kharagpur. (2nd Call); ₹ 2,94,81,164.17; ₹ 2,97,400/- Tender Document Cost : 0.00 for each. Date of opening : 19.03.2026 for Sl. No. 1, 27.03.2026 for sl. no. 2 and 02.04.2026 for Sl. No. 3. Completion period of the work: 18 Months for sl. no. 1 & 3 and 12 Months for Sl. No. 2. Bidding start Date : From 05.03.2026 and upto 15.00 hrs. on 19.03.2026 for Sl. No. 1; From 13.03.2026 and upto 15.00 hrs. on 27.03.2026 for Sl. No.2 and From 19.03.2026 and upto 15.00 hrs. on 02.04.2026 for Sl. No.3. Interested Tenderers may visit website www.ireps.gov.in for full details/descriptions/specifications of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these works will be accepted. N.B. Prospective bidders may regularly visit "www.ireps.gov.in" to participate in all tenders. (PR-1276)

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER DHENKANAL (R&B) DIVISION, DHENKANAL. INVITATION FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement Invitation for Bids 1st Corrigendum Bid Identification No. SE DKL (R&B). 40/2025-26 Name of the Work- 03 Nos. Electrical Works. The following changes have been made in Bid Identification No. SE DKL (R&B). 40/2025-26

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, NUAPADA. "e"-Procurement Notice Bid Reference No.NPDE/O/03/2025-26 Tender Call Notice No.474 DT.02.03.2026 Bid Documents consisting of specification, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the Govt. Website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES Office of the Superintending Engineer, Mechanical Division, Ambaguda. e-Procurement Notice - Bid Identification No. - SE/MDA-08/2025-26

EAST COAST RAILWAY Tender No. MCSV-HPAC-25-26-30. NAME OF WORK: SCRAPPING, CLEANING, APPLICATION AND SUPPLY OF HIGH PERFORMANCE ANTI-CORROSION PRIMER IN UNDER FRAMES OF ICF AND LHB BG COACHES AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR.

GOVT. OF ODISHA No.25001/317/2526 OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION, ANANDAPUR. NOTICE INVITING TENDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE Online-18/EE/RW/AND/2025-26



“I have to push back on that premise... It's a 30-day pause to allow the millions and millions of barrels of oil that are sitting out on ships to go to Indian refineries”
MIKE WALTZ |
US AMBASSADOR TO UN

ANTHROPIC SUES TRUMP ADMIN

Anthropic is suing the Trump administration, asking federal courts to reverse the Pentagon's decision designating the artificial intelligence company a "supply chain risk" over its refusal to allow unrestricted military use of its technology.



of the day quote

Ukraine's priority is clear: the Iranian regime must not gain any advantage over those defending lives, and everyone must work together to achieve tangible stabilization both in the region and in global markets
VOLODYMYR ZELENKYY | UKRAINE PRESIDENT

The explosion in front of the Liege synagogue was a despicable antisemitic act that directly targeted the Jewish community of Belgium
BERNARD QUINTIN | BELGIAN INTERIOR MINISTER

The EU must review and suspend all sanctions on Russian energy across Europe
VIKTOR ORBAN | HUNGARY PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

WFH, 4-day work week in Pak amid Iran war

Islamabad: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday announced a slew of measures to offset the impact of the war on Iran, including work from home and a four-day working week. Addressing the nation on the state-run PTV and other private channels, the prime minister said that he was speaking to the nation when the entire region was facing the threat of war. He said the impact of war goes beyond the borders and impinges on other nations, adding that Pakistan's economy is dependent on the oil supplies from the Gulf, and the country is facing troubles due to the rise in oil prices. The development comes as the US and Israel's war with Iran continues, disrupting supply chains as ships' passage through the Strait of Hormuz remains paralysed. The Strait was effectively closed following several attacks on ships by Iran in retaliation for joint US-Israel strikes.

At least 14 migrants drowned off Turkiye

Ankara: At least 14 migrants drowned Monday after a boat carrying them collided with a coast guard boat off Turkiye's Mediterranean coast during a chase, officials said. The incident occurred near the coast of Demre, in Antalya province, as the vessel carrying Afghans ignored calls to stop and attempted manoeuvres at high speed to escape the coast guard boats, the state-run Anadolu Agency quoted Gov. Hulusi Sahin as saying. Seven people were rescued from the sea by coast guard teams and given immediate medical care, Sahin said. Fourteen others who reached the shore were detained by gendarmerie units. Search and rescue operations were continuing by land, sea and air to locate any remaining people who may still be missing. Authorities have launched both a judicial and an administrative investigation into the incident, Anadolu said.

National Assembly members take oath

Kathmandu: Nepal's newly elected members of the National Assembly took the oath of office Monday. National Assembly (NA) Chairman Narayan Prasad Dahal administered the oath of office and secrecy to 17 out of 18 NA members at a ceremony in the Parliament building. They were elected to the National Assembly on January 25 this year. In the 59-seat NA, the members have six year's term. However, one-third of them get their terms expired every two years as per the constitution.

Regional anger grows as energy infra hit

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 9: Saudi Arabia lashed out at Iran following a thwarted drone attack on its massive Shaybah oil field, saying Tehran would be the "biggest loser" if it continues to attack Arab states.

In the UAE, authorities said two people were wounded by shrapnel from the interception of Iranian missiles over the capital, Abu Dhabi.

Iran also attacked Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, where it hit a residential area, wounding 32 people, including several children, according to authorities. Another attack appeared to have started a fire at Bahrain's only oil refinery, sending thick plumes of smoke into the air.

Bahrain has also accused Iran of damaging one of its desalination plants, though its electricity and water authority said supplies remained online. Desalination plants supply water to millions of residents in the region, raising new fears of catastrophic risks in parched desert nations.

On Monday, Bahrain's state oil company declared force majeure for its oil shipments, the state-run Bahrain News Agency reported, a legal manoeuvre releasing a company of its contractual obligations because of extraordinary circumstances. It insisted that local demand could still be met.

In Iraq, air defences downed a drone as it attacked a US military compound inside the Baghdad International Airport, a security source told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the press. No injuries or damage were reported. It was not immediately clear who was behind the attack, but Iran-backed militias have previously targeted the base.

Elsewhere, the US military said a service member died of injuries from an Iranian attack on troops in Saudi Arabia on March 1. Seven US soldiers



Israel accused of using white phosphorus in Lebanese town

BEIRUT: The human rights group Human Rights Watch said in a report Monday that the Israeli military "unlawfully" hit a village in southern Lebanon with shells containing white phosphorus, a controversial incendiary munition. Through geolocating and verifying seven images, Human Rights Watch said Israel fired white phosphorus using artillery at residential areas in the southern Lebanese village of Yohmor. It happened hours after the Israeli military warned the residents of the village and dozens of others in southern Lebanon to evacuate. Human Rights Watch said it couldn't independently identify if any residents were still in the area or if anyone was harmed. Human rights advocates say the use of white phosphorus is illegal under international law when the white-hot chemical substance is fired into populated areas. It can set buildings on fire and burn human flesh down to the bone. Survivors are at risk of infections and organ or respiratory failure, even if their burns are small. "The Israeli military's unlawful use of white phosphorus over residential areas is extremely alarming and will have dire consequences for civilians," said Ramzi Kaiss, Lebanon researcher at Human Rights Watch.

have now been killed. The US State Department early Monday ordered nonessential personnel and families of all staff to leave Saudi Arabia following the escalation in attacks. Eight other US diplomat

US struck Iranian school, killing 165: Report

JERUSALEM: The investigative group Bellingcat says the newly released video "appears to contradict" US President Donald Trump's claim that Iran was responsible for an explosion at an Iranian school that killed over 165 people at the start of the war raging in the Mideast. It comes as mounting evidence points to US culpability for the Feb. 28 strike, which hit a school adjacent to a Revolutionary Guard base in Minab, Iran, in the country's southern Hormozgan Province. Experts interviewed by The Associated Press, citing satellite image analysis, say the school was likely struck amid a quick succession of bombs dropped on the compound. The video shared by Bellingcat is a three-second clip of a video taken the day the school was struck and circulated Sunday by Iran's semi-official Mehr news agency. The video shows a munition falling on a building, sending a dark plume into the air that mingles with smoke that likely came from earlier strikes on the compound. Trevor Ball, a Bellingcat researcher, geolocated the video to a site near the school, something also done by the AP. Ball identified the munition as a Tomahawk cruise missile, which only the US is known to possess in this war. It's the first evidence of a munition used in the strike. US Central Command has acknowledged using Tomahawk missiles in this war and even released a photo of the USS Spruance, part of the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier group located within range of the school, firing a Tomahawk missile on Feb. 28. Complicating any assessment of the incident is the lack of images of bomb fragments from the blast. No independent agency has reached the site during the war to investigate. When asked by a reporter on Saturday whether the US was responsible for the blast, which killed mostly children, Trump responded, without providing evidence: "No, in my opinion, based on what I've seen, that was done by Iran." Trump added that Iran is "very inaccurate" with their munitions. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth quickly chimed in to say the US was investigating.

ic missions have ordered all but key staff to leave: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the consulates in Karachi, Pakistan, and Adana, Turkiye.

Smoke billowed over Beirut after Israel carried out airstrikes on its southern suburbs on Monday. Ahead of the strikes, the Israeli army said it would operate against targets associated with

France mulls Hormuz mission: Macron

PAPHOS: France is deploying about a dozen naval vessels, including its aircraft carrier strike group, to the Mediterranean, Red Sea and potentially the Strait of Hormuz as part of defensive support to allies threatened by the conflict in the Middle East. Speaking in Cyprus before visiting the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, which arrived this weekend in the eastern Mediterranean, President Emmanuel Macron sought to reassure his Cypriot counterpart after drones were intercepted heading towards the island last week. "When Cyprus is attacked, then Europe is attacked," Macron said after meeting with President Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Paphos. European states have been largely sidelined as the conflict between the United States, Israel and Iran has escalated, hitting Gulf Arab states and dragging Lebanon into the line of fire after Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah attacked Israel. But with shipping lanes in the Middle East impacted and the price of oil heading well above \$100 a barrel, European powers are grappling with the issue of how to defend their interests. "Our objective is to maintain a strictly defensive stance, standing alongside all countries attacked by Iran in its retaliation, to ensure our credibility, and to contribute to regional de-escalation. Ultimately, we aim to guarantee freedom of navigation and maritime security," Macron said. "We are in the process of setting up a purely defensive, purely escort mission, which must be prepared together with both European and non-European states, and whose purpose is to enable, as soon as possible after the most intense phase of the conflict has ended, the escort of container ships and tankers to gradually reopen the Strait of Hormuz," Macron said, without elaborating.

ported its first soldier deaths on Sunday, saying two were killed in southern Lebanon, where it is fighting Hezbollah.

Iran war puts Trump's Gaza plan on hold

REUTERS

Jerusalem/Cairo, March 9: Talks to advance President Donald Trump's plan to end the Gaza war have been on hold since last week when the U.S. and Israel jointly attacked Iran, sparking a broader Middle East war, three sources with direct knowledge of the negotiations said.

The pause threatens to stall implementation of Trump's flagship Middle East peace initiative, which he has cast as a major foreign policy objective. It comes less than a month after he secured billions of dollars in pledges for Gaza from Gulf Arab states - countries that are now facing Iranian attacks as the conflict widens.

Trump's Gaza plan has hinged in part on whether Hamas militants would lay



down their arms in exchange for amnesty, a step intended to pave the way for reconstruction and further Israeli military withdrawals. White House mediators have been backchanneling between Israel and Hamas on the disarmament question. Negotiations on this and other issues were paused when the Iran war began on February 28, the three sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive talks. The pause in disarmament talks has not been previously reported. Zaha Hassan, of the Washington-based Carnegie Endowment

for International Peace, said countries including the United Arab Emirates and Qatar which pledged funds for Trump's Board of Peace mission may be questioning if this is "really money well spent now that they are dodging rocket fire."

One of the sources, who has direct knowledge of work by Trump's Board of Peace mission, described the pause as a brief, minor delay caused by flight disruptions preventing mediators and representatives from travelling around the region. Talks have frequently been held in Cairo.

Over the longer term, the Board of Peace believes the war could accelerate a resolution of the disarmament issue by removing Iranian influence, which has long supported Hamas financially, the source said.



Presidential candidate Keiko Fujimori, of the Popular Force party, waves to supporters during a campaign rally in the San Juan de Lurigancho neighborhood of Lima, Peru

Would Mojtaba bring change or more brutal suppression?

THE CONVERSATION

Sydney, March 9: The death of Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, during the holy month of Ramadan marks one of the most consequential turning points in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

His successor, his son Mojtaba Khamenei, represents both continuity and contradiction in the revolutionary system established after the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

At stake is not only who leads Iran, but what the Islamic Republic has become, nearly half a century after the revolution that promised an end to dynastic rule.

Mojtaba Khamenei is a cleric who has spent most of his career outside public office but close to power, working within the Office of the Supreme Leader. He was often seen as a gatekeeper and powerbroker rather than a public political

figure with a formal portfolio. At 17, he briefly served in the Iran-Iraq war. He only began attracting public attention in the late 1990s, by which time his father's authority as supreme leader was firmly established.

Over time, his reputation has centred on two key features. The first is a close relationship with Iran's security establishment, particularly the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and its hardline networks.

The second is a strong opposition to reformist politics and Western engagement.

Critics have linked him to the suppression of protests following the disputed 2009 presidential election. He is also believed to have wielded influence over Iran's state broadcasting organisation, giving him indirect control over parts of the country's information landscape and state narrative.

In 2019, the first Trump ad-



ministration sanctioned Mojtaba, accusing him of acting in an official capacity on behalf of the supreme leader despite holding no formal government position.

Iran's constitution dictates that the Assembly of Experts (an 88-member clerical body) selects the supreme leader.

The assembly lists the religious, political and leadership qualifications of possible candidates. But in practice, it is

not a neutral electoral body. Candidates for the assembly itself are vetted through institutions ultimately shaped by the supreme leader's orbit, and its deliberations are opaque.

This creates a familiar Iranian scenario: the constitution supplies the choreography, while the security-clerical establishment supplies the music. That matters when assessing why Mojtaba is seen as a viable

supreme leader amid critiques that he lacks the senior religious standing traditionally associated with the office.

A mid-ranking cleric, he was only given the title *ayatollah* in 2022. The title is necessary to become the supreme leader, so the promotion signalled he was being groomed to take over from his ageing and ill father.

The revolution's founding myth was clearly anti-dynastic. After toppling the shah, the revolution's leaders rejected hereditary rule.

To many Iranians, a son following his father as supreme leader looks like an ideological backslide. The regime appears more like a theocratic monarchy, less the famous "guardianship of the jurist".

Yet, it is also important to be precise. Mojtaba cannot inherit the position by bloodline alone. The assembly must select him. Still, political systems can

Japan to deploy first home-made long-range missile

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, March 9: Japan is preparing to deploy its first batch of domestically developed long-range missiles, with their launchers arriving at an army camp Monday as the country accelerates its offensive capability in response to rising challenges in the region.

The upgraded Type-12 land-to-ship missiles will be deployed at Camp Kengun in Japan's southwestern prefecture of Kumamoto by the end of March, completing the process of deployment, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said.

Army vehicles carrying their launchers and other equipment arrived early in the morning in a highly secretive mission criticized by local residents who protested outside the camp.

Opponents have complained about the lack of transparency and said the deployment would instead escalate tension and make the missiles the target of attacks.

The Defence Ministry last year moved up the schedule of the missiles' deployment by one year as Japan accelerates a military buildup in the southwestern region as China escalates tension around Taiwan, the self-governing island Beijing claims as its own.

The upgraded Type-12 missile, developed and produced by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, has a range of about 1,000 km and can reach mainland China, a significant extension from the 200-km range of the original.

It will be deployed next at Camp Fuji in Shizuoka, west of Tokyo, later this year.

Japan considers China a growing security threat and has pushed a military buildup on southwestern islands near the East China Sea. It has deployed PAC-3 interceptors and midrange surface-to-air missiles on many of the islands, including Okinawa, Ishigaki and Miyako.



Between the end of February and until March 2, 2026, the Crude Oil FOB Price (Indian Basket) rose from USD 69.01/barrel to USD 80.16/barrel. Given that India's inflation is near the lower bound, the impact on inflation is not estimated to be substantial at this point

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

IPO PREP: FLIPKART SHIFTS BASE TO INDIA

Walmart's Indian e-commerce firm Flipkart has shifted its holding company to India from Singapore, the company said on Monday, paving the way for its planned stock market listing in the country. The firm joins dozens of Indian startups that once chose to be based abroad for better access to capital and smaller tax bills but are now queuing to return home from financial hubs such as Singapore due to better IPO prospects in the country



of the day **QUOTE**

Sebi would be passing a speaking order giving an exit to CSE from stock exchange business after taking a view on exclusively listed companies of CSE, its assets and liabilities, and relaxation from any regulations in order to facilitate exit

PANKAJ CHAUDHARY | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

India is a strategic market, and a lot has been happening on the global front out of India in our industry, and we definitely see India being at the forefront of it for the foreseeable future

AKIS EVANGELIDIS | CO-FOUNDER AND INDIA PRESIDENT, NOTHING

This investment in India is an important part of our strategy to support infrastructure build-out and growth in one of our fastest growing markets

MORTEN WIEROOD | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ABB

MIDDLE EAST MELTDOWN

CRUDE OIL ON BOIL

As the conflict in West Asia entered the tenth day, world markets plummeted, and Brent crude oil soars to levels not seen in years

Chicago, March 9: Oil prices spiked near \$120 per barrel Monday as the Iran war intensified, threatening production and shipping in the Middle East and pummeling financial markets.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, surged to \$119.50 per barrel early in the day but later was trading above \$101 per barrel, up 9%.

West Texas Intermediate, the light, sweet crude oil produced in the United States, also soared above \$119.48 per barrel but fell back closer to \$100.

Prices eased after French President Emmanuel Macron said the Group of Seven major industrialized powers could dip into their emergency oil stockpiles in response to soaring prices. But later Monday, the G7 said it had decided against using their strategic reserves, at least for now.

"We're not there yet," French Finance Minister Roland Lescure said after chairing a meeting of his G7 counterparts. Still, he told reporters in Brussels that the group was "ready to take necessary and coordinated steps in order to stabilize markets, such as strategic stockpiling."

On Saturday, President Donald Trump also downplayed the idea of turning to America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, maintaining US supplies were ample and prices would soon fall.

Oil depots in Tehran smol-



The recent rise in crude to about \$120 per barrel from \$66 could lead to an additional foreign currency outflow of \$7-8 billion per month, widening the current account deficit and increasing import-related inflationary pressures. This can lead to potentially higher logistics costs, manufacturing costs, food, and commodity prices

ANUJ SETHI | SENIOR DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

India holds 74-day fuel reserves

India currently has a total capacity for storage of crude oil and petroleum products for 74 days, which can help to tide over disruptions in case of adverse situations such as geopolitical conflicts, the Parliament was informed Monday. "The government has established Strategic Petroleum Reserves facilities with a total capacity of 5.33 million metric tonnes (MMT), which can act as a buffer for short-term supply shocks such as geopolitical conflicts. This is meant to provide for about 9.5 days of crude oil requirement. In addition, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in the country have storage facilities for crude oil and petroleum products for 64.5 days. Hence, the current total national capacity for storage of crude oil and petroleum products is 74 days," Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply.

dered following overnight strikes by Israel.

Oil prices have surged as the war, now in its second week, ensnares countries and places that are critical to the production and movement of oil and gas from the Persian Gulf.

Roughly 15 million barrels of crude oil - about 20% of the world's oil - typically are shipped every day through the Strait of Hormuz, according to independent research firm Rystad Energy. The threat of Iranian missile and drone attacks has all but stopped tankers carrying oil and gas from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Iran from traveling through the strait, which is bordered in the north by Iran.

Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE have cut oil production as storage tanks fill due to the reduced ability to export crude. Iran, Israel and the United States also have attacked oil and gas facilities since the war

started, worsening supply concerns.

The surge in costs for oil and natural gas is pushing fuel prices higher, cascading through other industries and jolting Asian economies that are especially vulnerable due to the region's heavy reliance on imports from the Middle East.

Iran exports roughly 1.6 million barrels of oil a day, mostly to China, which has called for an immediate end to the fighting. Beijing may need to look elsewhere for supply if Iran's exports are disrupted, another factor that could increase energy prices.

Across Southeast Asia, the spike in prices has led to long lines outside filling stations.

"Higher oil and gas prices will affect everyone and our economy," said Le Van Tu, who was waiting outside a gas station in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi. "All activities, including those using petrol based transportation will be affected."

South Korea's Kospi tumbled 6% to 5,251.87.

The last time Brent and US crude futures traded near the current level was in 2022, after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Higher energy costs push inflation higher, straining household budgets and denting the consumer spending that is a main driver of many big economies. Those worries have spilled into financial markets, pulling share prices sharply lower.

In the US, the average price of a gallon of regular gasoline rose to \$3.48 as of early Monday, up nearly 50 cents from a week earlier, according to AAA motor club. Diesel, used heavily in shipping, sold for about \$4.66 a gallon, a weekly increase of more than 80 cents.

The price of natural gas in the US also has climbed during the war, though not by as much as oil. It was selling for about \$3.34 per 1,000 cubic feet early Monday.

War shock: Investors poorer by ₹22L-crore



India stocks drop to almost 1-year lows as Iran war sends oil soaring

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: Equity investors became poorer by ₹22.40 lakh crore since the beginning of the conflict involving the US, Israel and Iran, which has rattled stock markets, driving the BSE Sensex lower by 4.6 per cent.

Since February 27, the 30-share BSE Sensex has tanked 3,721.03 points or 4.57 per cent. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped sharply by ₹22,40,408.82 crore to ₹4,41,10,262.45 crore (\$4.78 trillion) during this time.

"Indian equity markets ended the session sharply lower after opening with a steep gap-down of nearly 3 per cent, as weak global cues and the deepening conflict in the Middle East weighed heavily on investor sentiment. The escalation in geopolitical risks pushed crude oil prices above the USD 100 per barrel mark and drove the Indian rupee to a record low against the US dollar, amplifying concerns around inflation and external balances," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

On Monday, the Sensex

tanked 1,352.74 points or 1.71 per cent to settle at 77,566.16, registering its second day of decline. During the day, the benchmark crashed 2,494.35 points or 3.16 per cent to 76,424.55.

"Selling intensified as the Middle East conflict entered its second week with no signs of de-escalation," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

UltraTech Cement was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, tumbling 5.09 per cent, followed by Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, InterGlobe Aviation, and Adani Ports, which were among the major laggards.

In contrast, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma, Infosys, Tech Mahindra and HCL Tech were the gainers.

The BSE smallcap select index dived 2.11 per cent and the midcap select index tanked 2.08 per cent.

All BSE sectoral indices ended lower. The BSE mid-small private banks quality tilt tumbled 4.50 per cent, PSU Bank (3.92 per cent), auto (3.89 per cent), services (3.37 per cent), Bankex (3.16 per cent), oil & gas (3.11 per cent) and Private Banks index (2.89 per cent).

A total of 3,379 stocks declined, while 972 advanced and 185 remained unchanged on the BSE.

SHORT TAKES

RBI boosts liquidity with ₹50,000cr

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monday injected ₹50,000 crore into the banking system through Open Market Operation (OMO) purchases of government securities, according to a release. The Central bank purchased 6.33 per cent GS (Government Security) 2035 bonds worth ₹13,507 crore, 6.01 per cent GS 2030 worth ₹13,494 crore, 6.10 per cent GS 2031 of ₹8,157 crore, 7.30 per cent GS 2053 of ₹6,955 crore, 7.18 per cent GS 2033 worth ₹4,479 crore, 6.92 per cent GS 2039 of ₹2,304 crore, and 6.19 per cent GS 2034 of ₹1,104 crore, it said. The liquidity in the banking system, currently, is estimated to be in surplus of around ₹2.41 lakh crore. The OMO purchase auction was announced ahead of expected heavy outflows from the banking system due to advance tax and Goods and Services Tax (GST) payments scheduled later this month. This comes even as liquidity conditions in the banking system currently remain in a significant surplus of ₹3.02 lakh crore. As per RBI data, it has infused ₹2.50 lakh crore through OMO purchases of government securities so far since the start of this calendar year.

Finished steel exports up 36.6%

New Delhi: India's finished steel exports climbed 36.6% year-on-year to 6.02 million metric tons in the first 11 months of the financial year, according to provisional government data reviewed by Reuters Monday. India, the world's second-biggest crude steel producer, imported 5.6 million metric tons of finished steel during April-February, down 37.4% year-on-year, the data showed. India's crude steel production increased 11.2% year-on-year to 153.61 million metric tons over the same period. Finished steel consumption rose 7.2% to 147.7 million metric tons during the period, the data showed. The government will detail country-wise trade later in the month.

Tech Mahindra junks layoff reports

New Delhi: IT services company Tech Mahindra Monday strongly denied market speculations around a possible significant reduction in headcount. Given the speculation, Tech Mahindra said it finds it necessary to clarify that no such proposal is under consideration. The company cited calls and certain social media posts regarding a "market rumour" of a potential significant reduction in headcount.

More small ships to W Asia as freight rates jump 300%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: With exporters facing a surge in sea freight of up to 300 per cent due to the West Asia crisis, it has been decided to increase the number of small vessels operating between India and Gulf countries from April 15 to help clear consignments, FIEO director general Ajay Sahai said Monday.

In a meeting with the DG (Shipping), exporters flagged issues they are facing due to the crisis, triggered by the US and Israel joint attack on Iran, Sahai said.

About 400 exporters participated in the meeting, as the crisis is impacting the movement of containers.

"It has been decided to increase the number of Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers (NVOCCs) from April 15 between India and the Middle East countries," the director



general of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said.

He said that the war has led to a significant jump in freight due to an additional contingency surcharge being imposed by foreign shippers.

"The surcharge ranges between \$1,500 and \$4,000. There is an increase of 300 per cent in sea freight. Air fares too have increased. For example, between Kolkata and the Middle East, the charges have increased from ₹190 per kg to 430 per kg," he added.

India's exports to the West Asian economies stood at \$58.8 billion in 2024-25.

Silver slides ₹3,400, gold flat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: Silver prices declined by ₹3,400 to ₹2.68 lakh per kilogram, and gold traded almost flat at ₹1,64,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday as a firm US dollar dampened the precious metals' demand amid volatile global markets.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal extended its losses for the third straight day by plunging ₹3,400, or nearly 1.3 per cent, to ₹2,68,300 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Friday's closing level of ₹2,71,700 per kg.

"Silver extended last week's decline as a sharp rise in crude oil prices raised concerns that inflationary pressures could intensify again," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities.

Higher energy prices tend to feed into broader inflation expectations, which may delay the pace of interest rate cuts by



the Federal Reserve. This scenario supported the US dollar and Treasury yields, which in turn weighed on precious metals, he added.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.9 per cent purity rose marginally by ₹200 to ₹1,64,300 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). The yellow metal had settled at ₹1,64,100 per 10 grams in the previous market session, as per the Association.

Globally, spot gold fell \$65.23, or 1.26 per cent, to trade at \$5,105.89 per ounce, while silver was also trading 0.53 per cent lower at \$83.92 per ounce.

"Gold is trading lower at \$5,097 per ounce level as crude oil prices surged nearly 30 per cent overnight on Middle East supply concerns," Praveen Singh, Head of commodities and currencies at Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

India-NZ T20 WC final draws record 82.1cr viewers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The ICC T20 men's world cup final smashed viewership record on streaming platform JioHotstar, with concurrent viewership touching 74.5 crore when the last New Zealand wicket fell.

On Sunday, India won the trophy for a record third time, also becoming the only country to win the title at home.

When the final New Zealand wicket fell in the 19th over, giving India a 96-run victory, the concurrent viewership was 74.5 crore and reached 82.1 crore by the end of the post-match presentation.

The concurrent viewer-



ship of the final match built up gradually before hitting a crescendo.

Before the final match began, concurrent viewership was at 2.1 crore when singer Ricky Martin performed and crept up to 4.2 crore when the toss was held.

It crossed the last record

of 6.5 crore peak concurrent viewers in India vs England semi-final on JioHotstar platform.

Peak concurrency is the highest number of viewers during a live stream at a time.

Even before the first ball of India's innings was bowled, viewership touched 6.5 crore.

Ola Electric launches fest with ₹10K benefits

Ola Electric Monday announced a three-day nationwide celebration to commemorate India's historic third ICC Men's T20 World Cup victory. As per the #ChampionMahotsav, the company will extend benefits worth ₹10,000 across its vehicle portfolio, enabling more customers to join the celebration. As part of the celebration, customers can avail ₹10,000 in benefits on any Ola scooter or Roadster motorcycle for three days during the #ChampionMahotsav window. "Our Match Mahotsav during the T20 World Cup Final received an incredible response from fans across the country. To celebrate India's historic third T20 World Cup victory, we are extending the celebration for three more days with #ChampionMahotsav, with benefits worth ₹10,000 on any Ola vehicle," an Ola spokesperson said in a statement. Ola Electric currently offers an expansive portfolio of Gen 3 S1 scooters and Roadster X motorcycles.

The number broke the previous record for an ICC tournament final at 5.9 crore peak concurrent viewership, registered during the India vs Australia match in the 50-overs format November 20, 2023.

The Indian team lost that match, which was also hosted

in Ahmedabad.

The last T20 World Cup final match in 2024, which ended India's 13-year wait to lift an ICC trophy, witnessed a peak concurrent viewership of 5.3 crore on the then OTT streaming platform Disney+Hotstar.

Centre buys back ₹6,309cr G-Secs in RBI's switch auction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 9: The government has bought back G-Secs worth ₹6,309 crore from the switch auction conducted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and has issued bonds worth ₹6,431.797 crore, according to a release.

Government securities (G-Secs) are low-risk debt instruments that are issued by the government and offer fixed returns and are backed by a sovereign guarantee.

The securities repurchased by the government were part of the scheduled bonds set to mature in the next financial year.

These included ₹1,684 crore of 7.33 per cent GS 2026, ₹1,035 crore of 5.74 per cent GS 2026, ₹590 crore of 8.15 per cent GS 2026, and ₹3,000 crore of 8.24 per cent GS 2027, the release said.

In exchange, the government issued ₹1,719.236 crore of 6.57 per cent GS 2033, ₹986.526 crore of 7.62 per cent GS 2039, ₹605.609 crore of 6.57 per cent GS 2033, and ₹3,120.426 crore of 7.40 per cent GS 2062, the release added.

This is the fourth switch auction by the RBI since February. In a bond switch, the government replaces bonds maturing in the near-term with long-term instruments.

The switch operation is expected to ease redemption pressure in the next financial year, when government bond maturities worth ₹5.47 lakh crore are due. With gross market borrowing already budgeted at ₹17.2 lakh crore, the move helps in smoothening the maturity profile and managing the repayment obligations more effectively.

Prior to this, RBI had conducted three switch auctions and bought back securities worth ₹98,591.701 crore, RBI data showed.

India hungry for more

After bossing 2026 campaign, Surya and Co want to extend dominance with Olympic gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The on-field celebrations after India's second T20 World Cup title in 18 months were not particularly exuberant to say the least, perhaps they reflected the habit of winning that the shortest format team has normalised.

Yes there were smiles and hugs all around and few of the players even did an impromptu bhanga gig after one of the most emphatic wins in ICC finals. Yet, the players' immediate reactions suggested that deep down they knew only an exceptionally bad day in office could have denied them the trophy.

Rohit Sharma and his team getting over the line in that 2024 final in Barbados ended a prolonged period of heart-break in world events. The victory Sunday night had an air of inevitability to it.

The average age of the current squad is close to 30 and therefore a majority of them should remain at the peak of their powers when another T20 World Cup comes calling in Australia and New Zealand in the second half of 2028.

But before defending the trophy Down Under, the players will get a rare opportunity to win an Olympic gold in Los Angeles when cricket returns to the Summer Games after a gap of 128 years.

Among India's victorious 15, only captain Suryakumar Yadav, 35, is on the wrong side of 30s but he is already backing himself to play those two major events in 2028.

"Throughout the journey till today, it has been very special and collectively as a team what we've achieved, I think it's right in front of you so very happy with that. Definitely the next goal is Olympics, Olympic gold and also the T20 World



We won an ICC Champions Trophy in 2025 (under Rohit Sharma), played a completely different brand of cricket, and now in 2026, we wanted to do something special in front of home crowd right here. So, we want to continue doing that in 2027, 28, 29 and never stop

SURYAKUMAR YADAV | CAPTAIN, INDIA



Cup that year. Don't forget," reminded Suryakumar.

The Indian captain has not been as consistent as he would want to be of late but he does see himself contributing to the next T20 cycle and do his bit to maintain the team's undisputed

Struggle to stardom

I am very grateful for everyone who supported me. Feels like a dream. Very happy and grateful. Out of words, out of emotions - Sanju Samson

India opener Sanju Samson's rise from not being a preferred opener to finishing as the player of the tournament became the campaign's most compelling redemption arc as the hosts retained the men's Twenty20 World Cup title. His performances in the virtual quarter-final, semi-final, and final proved crucial in securing India's victory in the tournament.

Total Runs: 821
Innings: 5
Average: 80.25
Strike Rate: 199.37
Sixes: 24
Fours: 27
HIGHEST SCORE: 97* (vs West Indies)

KEY INNINGS:

89 (Final vs NZ), 97* (Super 8 vs WI), 89 (Semi-final vs ENG)



My individual assessment has always been my strength, and getting Man of the Match at my home ground in a World Cup final, it doesn't get better than that

JASPRIT BUMRAH

dominance. "Five years?" inquired Suryakumar when asked about his motivation to maintain India's superiority in the next four to five years.

After getting a freehand to decide on the timeline, Suryakumar said "let's do it". "Obviously very excited the way things have gone since 2024. The way we've played, we won three ICC trophies in a row (including ODI Champions Trophy).

"I think that drought ended in 2024 after a really long time and from there we never looked back. We knew how we wanted to play going forward. Everything was changed post 2024.

Another senior member of the side, Hardik Pandya, who is 32, feels he still has another 10 years left in him and wants to add half a dozen more world

TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT:

1. Sahibzada Farhan
2. Sanju Samson (wicketkeeper)
3. Ishan Kishan
4. Aiden Markram (captain)
5. Hardik Pandya
6. Will Jacks
7. Jason Holder
8. Jasprit Bumrah
9. Lungi Ngidi
10. Adil Rashid
11. Blessing Muzarabani

titles to his existing tally of three.

"The win had a lot of difficulties, a lot had happened. For me, that was about redemption and make my fifth comeback. This win is something I lived for and played cricket for," said Pandya.

Pandya was probably the most animated in his celebrations out of all the squad members. The humour was not lost on him when he was called a super senior of the team.

"It sounds very good that I am a senior player but I have still got 10 years left. Half of my career is over and half is left. I want to win at least 10 ICC trophies. I have got three. In 10 years, I want to win six-seven at least. That is my goal," added Pandya.

CRICKETING PANTHEON

Fitting firmly with the ethos of team sport, every member of India's playing eleven played a role of substance over the course of the one-month long T20 World Cup, fuelling the team's triumphant campaign

Sanju Samson

After a decade of under-performance and inconsistency, Sanju Samson finally realised his rare potential in this tournament when he got an opportunity in the Super 8 stage of the tournament and he did not look back from thereon. The stylish right-hander produced famous knocks of 97, 89, 89 in India's three must win games in a row, including the final, to leave an indelible mark in tournament history.



Tilak Varma

Moved from number three to five after Samson opened with Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma initially struggled following groin surgery. He found his rhythm later, playing an aggressive middle-order role. His 16-ball 44 against Zimbabwe in the Super 8 and a brisk 21 off seven balls in the semifinal proved crucial contributions.



Hardik Pandya

Hardik Pandya reaffirmed his status as a premier all-rounder with consistent performances throughout the campaign. Trusted by the captain to bowl in all phases, he delivered crucial overs and valuable runs. His quick 27 off 12 balls against England helped India cross the 250-run mark batting first.



Abhishek Sharma

India's biggest match-winner over the past 18 months endured a poor start to the tournament, with a stomach infection affecting his form and fitness. However, the team management backed him. He repaid that faith in the final, smashing a crucial half-century to power India to 92 for no loss in the powerplay against New Zealand.



Axar Patel

Vice-captain Axar Patel was dropped for two games in Ahmedabad, including the Super 8 loss to South Africa, but returned for the must-win clash against West Indies. He made key contributions thereafter, notably two stunning catches in the semifinal and the early wicket of Finn Allen in the final.



Varun Chakaravathy

India's X-factor bowler over the past 18 months, Chakaravathy impressed early in the tournament but lost form in the Super 8 and knockouts, conceding heavily. Despite that, the team management backed him. He dismissed Tim Seifert in the final and remains regarded as a match-winner capable of regaining his best form.



Suryakumar Yadav

Captain Suryakumar Yadav entered the tournament under pressure after a lean run since India's 2024 title win, though three half-centuries against New Zealand restored confidence. He led from the front with an unbeaten 84 against USA in the opener at Wankhede, expertly handling a tricky surface, but managed fewer runs in the Super 8 stage.



Jasprit Bumrah

Regarded as the world's best, Bumrah delivered a string of match-winning spells through the tournament. Batters rarely found a way past him. His brilliance stood out in the semifinal and final with wickets off his first ball. He finished the final with a remarkable 4 for 15, the best figures in a T20 World Cup final.



Shivam Dube

Part of the successful 2024 campaign, Dube has matured significantly over the past six months. Known for dominating spinners, he has also improved against pace. He delivered several key contributions, including 66 against the Netherlands, 43 in the semifinal against England and a quick 26 not out off eight balls in the final.



Arshdeep Singh

Alongside the faultless, Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh formed India's potent pace attack. Like Bumrah himself, Arshdeep was used in all phases of the games and was rewarded for his accuracy and consistency.



BUMRAH THE BEAST

Jasprit Bumrah moved to the top of the wicket-takers list for India in the T20 World Cups after picking up a four-wicket haul in the final of the 2026 edition against New Zealand in Ahmedabad. Bumrah extended his wicket tally to 40 in the competition, going clear of Arshdeep Singh, who has 36 in 22 matches and failed to register a scalp on the day. The 32-year-old's figures of 4/15 in four overs were the best by a pacer in T20 World Cup summit clashes, and the second best overall behind Sri Lanka's Ajantha Mendis (4/12).

CAREER WICKETS BY FORMAT

Format	Matches	Wickets	Best Bowling (BBI)
Test	52	234	6/27
ODI	89	149	6/19
T20I	95	121	4/15
IPL	145	183	5/10

IPL 2026 to start from March 28

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 9: The 19th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) is set to begin from March 28, confirmed broadcasters Star Sports ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup final.

With less than 20 days remaining before the start of the new IPL season, the BCCI is expected to release the schedule for the lucrative event in two parts, with the dates for the first half likely to be announced soon. Teams have started practising and running camps at partial capacities. Additionally, some franchises have revealed their highly-anticipated jerseys.

Because of uncertainty about the home venues for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Rajasthan Royals (RR), along with potential election-related conflicts in certain cities, the BCCI had to postpone the announcement. The venue for the games will be decided based on the election dates across states in India, so that matches don't clash with the electoral process and both events can be carried out smoothly.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), as defending champions, will play the first game at M Chinnaswamy Stadium March 28. Their opponent will be announced once the schedule is released.

India retain top position in FIH Women's WC qualifiers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, March 9: Hyderabad, Mar 9 (PTI) The Indian women's hockey team played out a hard-fought 2-2 draw against Scotland in its second match and continued to lead Pool B of the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers here Monday.

With this result, both India and Scotland sit on four points in the group, though the hosts hold the number one spot due to a superior goal difference.

India scored through Navneet Kaur (18th minute) and Sunelita Toppo (29th minute), while Heather McEwan (6th minute) and Fiona Burnet (33rd) were the goal getters for Scotland.

Scotland kicked off the proceedings, with both teams initially adopting a patient passing

game.

India, starting in a 3-4-3 formation, looked solid early on but temporarily lost their defensive shape to concede a penalty corner in the sixth minute.

Scotland capitalised immediately, with McEwan scoring from the opportunity to hand her side a 1-0 lead. India took control quickly in the second quarter. In the 17th minute, they earned their third penalty corner.

Despite another fumble at the trap, Navneet recovered brilliantly, positioning herself perfectly to smash the ball past Scottish goalkeeper Jessica Buchanan to level the score at 1-1.

India had earlier defeated Uruguay 4-0 in their opener Sunday. The team will next take on Wales Wednesday.



NATIONAL RUGBY 15s CHAMPIONSHIP

Hurricanes, Harlequins enter semis



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: The third day of the National Rugby 15s Championship 2026 - Division 1 at the Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar saw defending champions Delhi Hurricanes and Future Hope Harlequins secure their places in the men's semi-finals after convincing victories in their respective quarter-final clashes.

Hurricanes dominated Quarter-final 3, defeating Bangalore Rugby Club 48-6 to continue their title defence. Shivam Shukla, Abhishek Shukla (two), Pradeep Kumar Tanwar, Neeraj Khatri, Mohit Khatri, Vikas Khatri and Deepak Punia

scored tries, while Aniket added with the boot.

In Quarter-final 4, Future Hope Harlequins beat Sergeant Institute RC 26-0, with Sumit Kumar Roy scoring twice and Rajdeep Saha adding points.

With these results, Delhi Hurricanes and Future Hope Harlequins advance to the semi-finals, where they will face Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Rugby Club and Bombay Gymkhana Rugby Club respectively Wednesday, March 11.

Earlier in the day, Delhi Lions Rugby Club secured a 20-15 victory over Odisha Rugby Club in the placement match to finish ninth in the tournament.

TUESDAY - MARCH 10 FIXTURES - WOMEN

- Semi-final 1 - Odisha Rugby Club vs CC&FC - 4:00 PM
- Semi-final 2 - Delhi Hurricanes vs Future Hope Harlequins - 5:45 PM
- Plate - Chandigarh United vs Rugby Warriors Kerala - 7:15 PM

Odisha RC started strongly and took the early lead, but Delhi Lions roared back with tries from Chanderalpa, Akbar, Monu Yadav, and Nischay Sawhney to seal the win.

Attention now turns to the women's competition Tuesday, which will see the semi-final clashes take place at the Kalinga Stadium.

WAR TURMOIL

Iran exit Asian Cup, uncertain return

Gold Coast (Aus): Iran's football team lost its last group match at the Women's Asian Cup Sunday and had to contemplate returning home to a country embroiled in war. The Iranian women's squad arrived in Australia for the continental championship last month, before the war that began with the US-Israel February 28 strikes on Iran. Teams ousted during the group stage usually leave within days but organisers have not announced details for the departure of the Iran delegation. Australia's national news agency quoted Iran's head coach Marziyeh Jafari saying the squad "want to come back to Iran as soon as we can".

Iraq coach urges playoff delay

Baghdad: Iraq head coach Graham Arnold has issued an urgent plea to soccer's international governing body to delay his team's intercontinental qualifier for the World Cup because of disruptions caused by the escalating Iran war. The Iraq squad faces major logistical issues ahead of a winner-takes-all playoff against either Suriname or Bolivia, scheduled for March 31 in Monterrey, Mexico. With Iraqi airspace closed until April 1 due to the escalating conflict, Arnold's squad - containing predominantly players from the domestic league - is unable to fully gather. Players haven't secured visas for the playoff tournament in Mexico due to foreign embassy closures, and Arnold is stranded in the United Arab Emirates due to the conflict.