



Candid Alaya

Actor Alaya F opens up about balancing different worlds while offering a candid glimpse into her lifestyle

LEISURE | P2



Antisemitic attack

Four Jewish community ambulances torched in London in what British PM called "a deeply shocking antisemitic arson attack"

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Markets nosedive

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty plummet Monday, in tandem with an extremely weak trend in global markets

BUSINESS | P11



Indoor athletics

Inaugural National Indoor Championships kicks off in Bhubaneswar, marking a beginning for future global sports at the same venue in 2028

SPORTS | P12

Many feared dead in Colombia plane crash

AGENCIES

Bogota, March 23: Scores of Colombian soldiers are feared dead after a military transport plane crashed on takeoff in the south of the country.

The defence minister, Pedro Sánchez, said the accident happened as the Lockheed Martin Hercules C-130 plane was taking off from Puerto Leguizamo, deep in Colombia's southern Amazon region, on the border with Peru, as it transported troops from the armed forces.

Maj Gen Carlos Fernando Silva, the chief of the Colombian air force, said that the aircraft was carrying 11 air force members and 114 soldiers. He said that 48 injured people had been rescued but gave no figure for survivors or fatalities.

The Colombian president, Gustavo Petro, described the crash as a "horrific accident that should never have happened".

In a lengthy post, apparently attempting to pre-empt potential criticism, Petro said he had been trying to renew the military fleet for years but has been hindered by "bureaucratic difficulties".

"If the civil or military administrative officials are not up to this challenge, they must be removed," said Petro.

Images shared online by local media outlets show a black cloud of smoke rising from a field where the plane crashed, a truck with soldiers rushing to the site and civilians trying to extinguish the fire.



AVIATION SHOCK: The ill-fated Air Canada jet at LaGuardia Airport, New York, late Sunday night

REUTERS

Two pilots killed as jet hits truck in NYC

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, March 23: Two pilots were killed after an Air Canada regional jet collided with a fire truck on a runway during landing at New York's LaGuardia Airport late Sunday night, officials said.

The collision crushed the nose of the aircraft, while 39 passengers and crew members were taken to area hospitals, some with serious injuries. Most have since been released from treatment, authorities said Monday.

Two Port Authority employees who were travelling in the fire truck also suffered injuries that were not believed to be life-threatening, said Kathryn Garcia, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the airport.

The two deceased individuals were the pilot and copilot of the aircraft. Both were based out of Canada, Garcia said during a news conference early Monday.

The fire truck was travelling across the runway to respond to a separate incident aboard a United Airlines flight, whose pilot had reported "an issue with odour," said Garcia, who deferred additional questions about the sequence of events leading up to the crash to the NTSB.

OTET EXAM MAY 29

BHUBANESWAR: The Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha, Monday released the Odisha Teacher Eligibility Test (OTET) 2026 notification. The OTET is scheduled to be conducted May 29 in two shifts - Paper 1 (for Primary level) from 9 am to 11:30 am and Paper-II (for Upper Primary level) from 2 pm to 4:30 pm. The online application process will commence from March 26 and interested candidates can submit their forms until midnight on April 9 through the official website.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No idea who did it but finally a realistic logo

Trump pauses strikes for 5 days ₹ breaches 94-level

US President Donald Trump's decision to postpone strikes on Iran is seen as a calculated pause rather than a clear shift in policy. The move may indicate an attempt to create space for diplomacy, as US officials cited "productive" discussions, while also reducing immediate global economic tensions. At the same time, it maintains strategic pressure, since the delay is temporary and conditional. However, Tehran refuted the US claim saying the action was result of Iran's threat to hit Gulf power plants. Conflicting narratives - US claims of talks versus Iran's denial - only add to the global uncertainties

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 23: President Donald Trump Monday extended his deadline for Iran to reopen the crucial Strait of Hormuz to international shipping, saying the US would hold off all strikes against Iran including its power plants for five days.

Writing in all capital letters, Trump said the US and Iran have had "very good and productive conversations" that could yield "a complete and to-



tal resolution" in the war. Talks would continue "throughout the week," he said.

Trump added that the suspension of his threat to attack power plants was "subject to the success of the ongoing meetings and discussions."

The president later told reporters that Iran wants "to make a deal," and claimed US envoys have been holding talks with a "respected" Iranian leader.

Trump did not name any official or officials representing Tehran. He said the US has not talked to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei. Trump said if a deal is reached with Iran, the US will move to take Iran's enriched uranium critical to its disputed nuclear program.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Min-

ister Abbas Araghchi said he spoke by phone with his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan. Turkiye has been an intermediary before in negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

Trump's announcement came as the United Arab Emirates reported its air defence was attempting to intercept new incoming Iranian fire Monday afternoon.

US president backs down: Tehran

TEHRAN: Iran Monday denied holding any talks with the US, contradicting remarks by US President Donald Trump that recent "productive conversations" had taken place between the two sides.

The semi-official Mehr news agency, citing an Iranian source, said there is "no dialogue" between Tehran and Washington. The source said Trump's comments were part of his efforts "to lower energy prices and buy time to implement military plans."

Moreover, reacting to the news, Iranian state television said in a graphic on screen:

"US president backs down following Iran's firm warning."

Iran had earlier threatened to strike regional power plants and float mines in the Persian Gulf if Trump goes ahead with his threat to bomb Iranian energy stations or order a land invasion. Gulf nations depend on the power plants to desalinate the water its citizens need to survive.

The Iranian source acknowledged that regional countries have put forward initiatives aimed at reducing tensions.

"We are not the party that started this war, and all such demands should be directed to Washington," he added.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 23: The rupee breached the 94-level against the US dollar for the first time Monday, before closing flat at 93.53, amid a correction in global crude prices.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 93.84 and breached the 94-mark against the US dollar for the first time in intraday trade. However, the unit recovered all lost ground to settle unchanged at 93.53. The rupee went past the 93-mark against the greenback Friday after crashing 64 paise to settle at 93.53.

"The rupee hit fresh all-time lows Friday and breached the 94-mark for the first time amid escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia and weak domestic markets. Surge in crude oil prices and FII outflows, too, weighed on the rupee," Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias as deteriorating global sentiments and geopolitical tensions may keep the rupee under pressure. However, time-to-time intervention by the Reserve Bank may support the rupee at lower levels,"



he said, adding that the USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹93.60-94.40. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.14 per cent higher at 99.78.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 1.11 per cent lower at USD 113.4 per barrel in futures trade.

On the domestic equity market front, the Sensex crashed 1,836.57 points, or 2.46 per cent, to 72,696.39, while Nifty slumped 484.30 points, or 2.10 per cent, to 22,630.20.

Foreign institutional investors sold equities worth ₹10,414.23 crore on a net basis Monday, according to exchange data. Meanwhile, India's forex reserves dropped USD 7.052 billion to USD 709.759 billion during the week ended March 13, the RBI said Friday.

2 suffocate to death while unloading fish

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Balasure, March 23: Two crew members of a mechanised boat died Monday after allegedly inhaling toxic fumes while unloading fish at a jetty near Chandipur beach in Balasure district, police said.

The incident occurred at Naupalgadi fishing jetty at Balaramgadi. The deceased were identified as Pravakar Mallick and Sashina Mallick, residents of Aruha village in Bhadrak district.

The two men fell unconscious after entering the fish storage chamber of the boat soon after it anchored at the jetty, police said. They were rushed to the Balasure District Headquar-

Fishermen sometimes use chemicals to preserve fish for longer durations. If used in excess, toxic gases may accumulate inside enclosed spaces like the chamber

ters Hospital, where doctors declared them dead. Officials said asphyxiation is suspected, though the exact cause of death would be known after the post-mortem examination.

Fishermen sometimes use chemicals to preserve fish for longer durations. If used in excess, toxic gases may accumulate inside enclosed spaces like the chamber, an official said.

Kashmiris loosen purse strings for war-ravaged Iran

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, March 23: Donations for the war-ravaged Iran poured from across Kashmir Monday as people, cutting across sectarian lines, lent support to the drive by contributing money and valuables.

Shia leader Imran Ansari urged the authorities to allow the "collective act of faith and solidarity to continue with dignity" and without "any unnecessary pressure or questioning."

Donation drives were conducted in several areas of the city, including Zadibal, Hasnabad, Shalimar, Qamarwari, Lawaypora, and Bemina localities, officials said. People from the majority Sunni sect also did not hold back, they said. Similar drives took place in

Budgam, Bandipora and Baramulla districts, especially in the areas with considerable Shia population.

Cash, gold, silverware, and copper utensils were among the things extended as in relief to war-hit Iran, the officials said.

Women, in particular, contributed generously by donating gold jewellery, copper utensils, and other household items. Some families offered livestock. Children donated their savings and pocket money.

A woman donated gold kept as a memento of her husband, who died 28 years ago.

The Iranian Embassy in New Delhi termed the gesture the greatest source of comfort for the people of Iran.

"A respected sister from Kashmir donated the gold kept



as a memento of her husband who passed away 28 years ago with a heart full of love and solidarity for the people of Iran. Your tears and pure emotions are the greatest source of comfort for the people of Iran and will never be forgotten. Thank you #Kashmir. Thank you #In-

dia," the Iranian Embassy said on X. The contributions are expected to be channelled through official relief organisations, including the Iranian Embassy, the officials said.

Meanwhile, Ansari, the president of the All J-K Shia Association, said, "The Kash-

miri people, especially the Shia community, have massively come forward with deep faith and devotion, considering it their moral and religious duty to stand with Iran, a nation already facing sanctions and the hardships of war."

All the same, he expressed his concern over people associated with the drive getting calls from authorities about the source of funds.

"At this sensitive moment, it is important to reassure everyone that these donations are purely for a humanitarian and religious cause, meant to support the people of Iran in their time of need. The emotions of the people are deeply involved, and any unnecessary pressure or questioning may hurt public sentiment," Ansari said.

leisure



BARRY KEOGHAN OPENS UP ON ONLINE BULLYING

Barry Keoghan revealed that constant online trolling about his looks has deeply affected him. The *Saltburn* actor said he feels sad that his three-year-old son Brando may read the hateful comments someday. The abuse has made him withdraw, avoid events, and limit social media, calling the negativity a growing personal problem

GELLAR HOPES THESE '90S TRENDS NEVER RETURN

Sarah Michelle Gellar says some '90s trends should stay in the past. While attending the premiere of *Ready or Not 2: Here I Come* at SXSW, the star said she hopes ultra-thin eyebrows and chokers never return, though she is happy she saved her iconic Calvin Klein slip dresses



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

The stars urge you to focus on your finances and savings, and today, you might remain very busy doing just that. But take care, says Ganesh, you don't want a sulking spouse when you go home. Don't cancel any plans; go ahead and enjoy that new film.

TAURUS

This day you will have an urge to take a trip, be it a small one. Ganesh sees you enthusiastically making detailed plans and arrangements, arranging for funds and getting in touch with all those you desire to take along. It is possible that you may ultimately scrap your plans and choose to stay at home. However, be sure you'll be making that trip in due course.

GEMINI

You will feel lonely and unwanted today. You will feel the need for someone who can calm your troubled mind. Meditation and yoga will help you calm yourself. It is a good day to receive love from that someone special, says Ganesh.

CANCER

You will succeed in a new venture and will brim with radiance and energy. Ganesh says this is the best time for get-together and kindle contact with friends and relatives.

LEO

You will look to give your house a new appearance by decorating it or undertaking some renovation projects. You will make the best out of waste and produce some truly marvellous pieces of art for improving the ambience of your nest. You will be able to save up on some money. Laudable, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

You will excel remarkably in whatever work you prefer to engage yourself in today. Ganesh says your aspiration to start a business endeavour in a foreign country will bear fruit. To considerably enhance your self-image, it is necessary to make required improvements in your personal appearance.

LIBRA

Ganesh says that on the work front you may be in the midst of meetings or negotiations, which will work out favorably for you. This will help ease your tension and you will feel mentally free. Today you will feel more vibrant and active too and hence will be able to get more done.

SCORPIO

According to Ganesh, your new business venture is likely to keep you on toes today. You may even neglect your personal life to meet expectations at work. A feeling of disappointment may surround you as things do not go according to planning and your efforts may go in vain. No pains, no gains reminds Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

You are in a dilemma today. You may find yourself standing at crossroads, and your decision power does not seem to help you much, says Ganesh. You are likely to become controversy's favourite child; this may add fuel to the fire. Be wise, and take guidance of experienced people.

CAPRICORN

God helps those who help themselves, likewise, your sincere efforts will be paid off well, today. If you're dealing with shares and stocks, it may be your day, today. Your life partner will prove to be lucky for your success, so give him/her the credit he/she deserves, suggests Ganesh.

AQUARIUS

Today is a day of communication and associations. While at a family gathering, you will enjoy chatting nineteen to the dozen! But at work, you may be left teaching, explaining, negotiating, co-ordinating and arranging meetings. A productive but draining day, says Ganesh.

PISCES

Compromise is the name of the game when it comes to relationships, and you are adept at it. You realise the importance of losing an argument to win over a heart, and do so with panache. Indeed, this is an area where others emulate you, says Ganesh.

RK STUDIOS REVIVAL

Kareena clears air

MUMBAI: Kareena Kapoor Khan has addressed rumours about the revival of the iconic RK Studios, clarifying that the reports are not true. The legendary studio was founded in 1948 by Raj Kapoor and became a creative hub for the Kapoor family, producing several landmark Hindi films.

Reacting to recent speculation, Kareena said the topic had even come up in the family's group chat, where everyone confirmed that there are currently no plans to revive the historic studio. She acknowledged that fans often hope the new generation of the Kapoor family will bring the studio back to life. However, she explained that it is unlikely to happen anytime soon, as everyone in the family is focused on their own careers.

Praising her cousin Ranbir Kapoor as "the best actor in India," Kareena said he is presently concentrating on his acting projects, while her cousins and

sister Karisma Kapoor are also busy with their professional commitments. Kareena added that although the idea of reviving RK Studios is emotional for the family, it is not something that will happen right now. She also clarified that she does not see herself stepping into the role of a producer or director.

RK Studios was behind classics such as *Barsaat*, *Awaara*, *Mera Naam Joker*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* and *Prem Rog*. Meanwhile, Kareena is currently working on *Daayra*, directed by Meghna Gulzar, and hopes to explore new and different projects, including a potential show or mini-series this year.



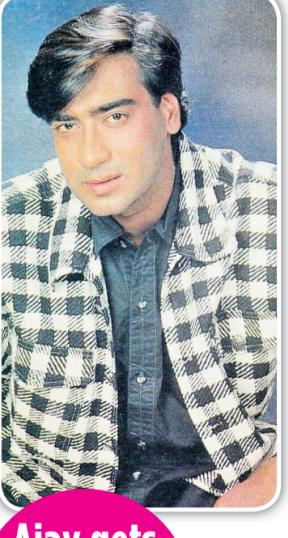
MUMBAI:

Joining the wave of nostalgia taking over social media, Bollywood star Ajay Devgn has now been bitten by the viral 'What were you like in the '90s?' trend bug, giving a glimpse of his old-school charm from the era that helped shoot him to stardom.

Ajay took to Instagram, where he shared a video. The clip featured a glimpse of him along with his son Yug, with the text overlay, which read: "Dad, what were you like in the 90s?" The video featured a young-er Ajay from the did in He captioned the post: "Beta, never match up to the 90s me."

The "Dad/Mom, what were you like in the 90s?" trend is where netizens showcase their nostalgic 90s photos or videos and add the track *Iris* by the American rock band Goo Goo Dolls.

On the work front, Ajay was last seen on screen in *De De Pyaar De 2* with Rakul Preet Singh and R.Madhavan. He currently awaits the release of his upcoming film *Dhamaal 4*. The film is now pushed to hit the screens July 3. This is the second time that the release of the drama has been pushed.



Ajay gets bitten by trend bug

the 90s?" then featuring er Ajay films he the 1990s. He revealed that she is

ALAYA'S BALANCING ACT

MUMBAI: Alaya F recently opened up about how she balances two important sides of her personality, fitness and fashion, offering a candid glimpse into her lifestyle during a rapid-fire interaction. Known for combining discipline with individuality, the actor said she enjoys pushing her physical limits while also embracing personal style that feels authentic to her.

Speaking about fitness, Alaya shared that she prefers exploring new challenges instead of following a fixed routine. She revealed that she is

currently trying to master a handstand press, a demanding move that requires lifting the body into a handstand without kicking up. While she admits the exercise is extremely difficult, she finds the challenge exciting and motivating.

On the fashion front, Alaya emphasised the importance of dressing in a way that reflects comfort and confidence. According to her, the key is to dress according to one's body type and personal happiness rather than overthinking trends. For summer, she gravitates towards timeless essentials like denim shorts, a crisp white shirt and a stylish pair of sunglasses.

The actor also highlighted the need for sustainable fashion choices. She encouraged people to avoid fast fashion, invest in quality pieces, reuse outfits and even share clothes with friends. While she enjoys experimenting with different styles, Alaya admitted she avoided animal prints for years, though she is now warming up to the trend.



Shraddha turns cheerleader

MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Shraddha Kapoor turned cheerleader for her maternal aunt and actress Padmini Kolhapure, who showcased her vocal prowess on social media as she sang the song *Madhuban Khushboo Deta Hai*.

Padmini took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself. In the clip, the actress is heard singing the song from her 1978 film *Sajan Bina Suhagan* starring Rajendra Kumar, Nutan, Vinod Mehra, Padmini Kohlapure and Shreeram Lagoo.

She captioned: "Just for you." Shraddha took to the comment section and wrote: "Such sweet sweeeeeet singing."

Padmini is considered as one of the leading actresses of the 1980s. In a career spanning over four decades, she has worked in over 75 films. She began her acting career in 1972 at the age of seven, and her early works include *Zindagi* and *Dream Girl*. She had her breakthrough with the film *Satyam Shivam*

Sundaram, starring as the young Roopa.

Meanwhile, Shraddha, who is the daughter of veteran actor Shakti Kapoor, began her acting career with a brief role in the 2010 heist film *Teen Patti*. She bagged her first major role in the teen drama *Luv Ka The End* in 2011.

However, her fandom skyrocketed with her work in Mohit Suri's romantic musical *Aashiqui 2* in 2013. She also featured in *Haid-er*, *Ek Villain*, *ABCD 2*, *Baaghi*, *Chhichhore*, *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar*, *Saaho*, and the *Street* franchise.

PEANUTS



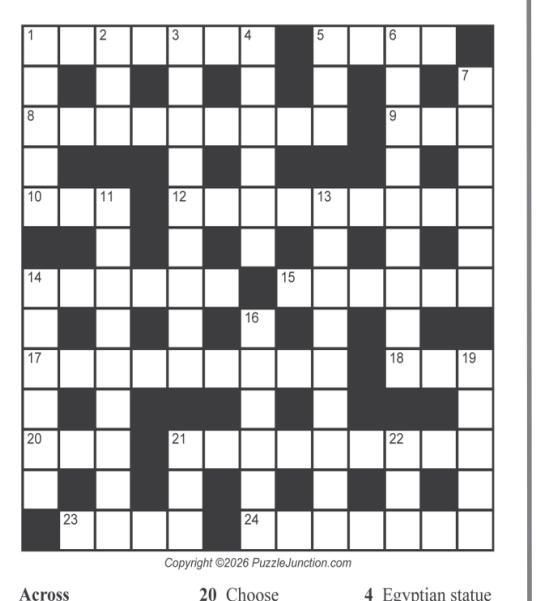
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



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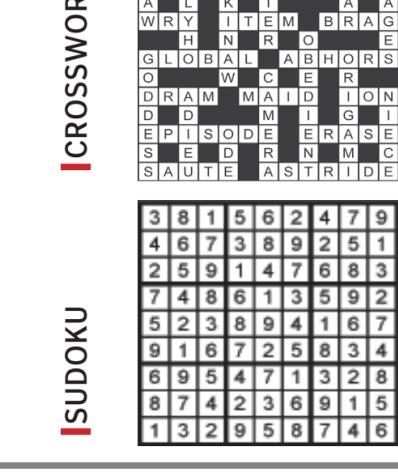
- Across**
- 1 Scams (3-4)
 - 5 Canyon effect
 - 8 Not embarrassed
 - 9 Fish eggs
 - 10 Potato feature
 - 12 Poise (4-5)
 - 14 Sick-looking
 - 15 Show up
 - 17 Totality
 - 18 Biblical boat
 - 20 Choose
 - 21 Sullied
 - 23 Cameo stone
 - 24 Wild boars, e.g.
- Down**
- 1 Roulette bet
 - 2 Myanmar
 - 3 Money material
 - 4 Egyptian statue
 - 5 Cricket wicket
 - 6 Mouth organ
 - 7 Be a busybody
 - 11 Teach
 - 13 Counterfeits
 - 14 Winter Olympics event
 - 16 Macaw
 - 19 Leclaim
 - 21 Avay
 - 22 Shade

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Centre seeks report on tree-felling plan at NIT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has asked the Forest, Environment and Climate Change department of the state to take necessary action and subsequently submit an action taken report (ATR) regarding the alleged proposal to fell more than 2,000 full-grown trees for the construction of a new building at National Institute of Technology (NIT)-Rourkela.

The MoEF&CC's move came March 20 while hearing a plea filed by RTI activist Alaya Samantaray. In its letter to the Additional Chief Secretary of the Forest, Environment and Climate Change department, the Centre said the complainant had alleged that the proposed site forms part of a dense green cover serving as an ecological buffer zone and a habitat for local flora and fauna. "It has further been stated that an alternative site within the campus, where foundation work for the Civil Engineering department has already been initiated and which reportedly involves minimal tree cover, may be consid-

ered to avoid large-scale felling of trees," the letter stated.

The Centre asked the state government to examine the issue and take necessary action in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. "An ATR in the matter may also be furnished to this office at the earliest for further necessary action at this end," the MoEF&CC said.

In his complaint, Samantaray stated that NIT-Rourkela, spread over a lush green area in an industrial city, not only serves as a buffer zone for the campus but also acts as the 'lungs' of the Steel City of Rourkela. He described the greenery within the NIT campus as a paradise for diverse wildlife, flora and fauna.

"Often, trees have been felled in the past within the campus for various construction activities. However, the present proposal to fell more than 2,000 full-grown trees within the campus for a new building is uncalled for and could be avoided," he said.

Samantaray emphasised that the foundation stone for the Civil Engineering department, laid over an area of more than five acres, could easily accommodate the proposed new structures. Instead of utilising the earmarked site, the NIT authorities are proposing to fell trees at another location.

He also requested the Rourkela DFO to reconsider the permission granted and direct NIT authorities to revisit their building plan and explore an alternative site, ensuring the bare minimum felling of trees.



RESCUE OP: Police personnel and others take part in a rescue operation after a cold storage building at Phaphamau in Prayagraj district of Uttar Pradesh collapsed killing at least four labourers and injuring 12 others, Monday

CM: 15 Maoists active in state till March 15

Bhubaneswar, March 23: Around 15 Maoists are active in the areas along the borders of Kandhamal, Kalahandi and Rayagada districts till March 15, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi informed the Assembly Monday.

As per the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme of the Union government, at present, only Kandhamal district is considered Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) affected in the state, he said, while replying to a question from Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati.

Eight other districts - Boudh, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nuapada and Rayagada - are considered legacy and thrust districts, he said. "But in reality, barring 15 Maoists in Kandhamal-Kalahandi-Rayagada border areas, there is no Maoist presence in any other part of the state," Majhi said.

Ratna Bhandar inventory to be videographed

Puri: Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan Monday said elaborate arrangements, including videography, photography and 3D mapping, have been made for the inventory of Puri Srimandir's Ratna Bhandar, scheduled to begin March 25 after a gap of 48 years. He said the use of technology is aimed at ensuring transparency and proper documentation of the temple's ornaments and other valuables. Harichandan said that for the first time, gemologists and RBI officials will be engaged in the exercise along with expert goldsmiths. However, he clarified that there would be no valuation of the items and the exercise would be limited to documentation and verification. After reviewing the preparedness for the exercise at the 12th-century shrine, the minister said detailed discussions were held to ensure the inventory process is conducted in a systematic, secure and transparent manner. He also stressed that daily rituals of the temple should not be disrupted during the exercise and directed officials to strictly follow the SOP prepared by the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee.

Eateries turn frugal as LPG crunch bites

Bhubaneswar/Berhampur, March 23: Hundreds of roadside eateries and small restaurants in the state have been forced to cut down their menus, increase prices and in several cases switch to coal and firewood amid shortage of commercial LPG cylinders.

Prasant Kumar Bhatt, manager of a vegetarian restaurant in Bhubaneswar, said they had to drastically reduce their menu due to the prevailing crisis.

"Earlier, we were offering 180 small and big food items to our customers. But now we have cut it down to 18 as we are not getting sufficient LPG cylinders," he said.

He added that many food items are now being prepared using induction cooktops.

Kishore Mutton, a famous hotel in the state capital, has switched to firewood to meet its fuel demand following the shortage of cooking gas. "As we are not getting adequate numbers of commercial cylinders, we are not serving dinner anymore," the hotel's owner said.

Due to the crisis, several street food vendors at 'Khaogali' here have closed down their shops, while others have raised the price of food items. Similarly, several tiffin centre owners in Berhampur, known for their South Indian dishes, have hiked prices amid the alleged shortage of commercial LPG supply.

The cost of items like 'idli', 'vada' and 'puri', earlier sold at ₹5 per piece, has gone up to ₹7, while 'upma' and 'dosa' priced at ₹10 and ₹30, have been increased to ₹15 and ₹40, respectively.

"As we have to spend more on fuel and cooking oil, we had to increase the prices of different items," a food vendor said.

Krushna Chandra Panigrahy, who sells 'ghugni' near Khallikote Unitary University in Berhampur, said he has increased the price from ₹25 to ₹30 per plate.

Short supply of commercial LPG and a crackdown by the district administration on the use of domestic cylinders for commercial purposes have forced some vendors to shut down operations.

Brundaban Panda, a 'jalebi' maker near Bijipur area, said he was forced to shut his unit.

The owner of Bishnupriya hotel, a small eatery in Baliaipal area of Balasore district, said he has cut down the menu and offers only basic food items like rice, 'dal', curry, 'papad', etc. "If the situation does not improve, we will be forced to shut the hotel," he said.

In Cuttack, a hotel owner said many workers dependent on the business have also been affected.

"Along with me, several people, including cooks and suppliers, depend on the hotel for their livelihood. So, we switched to firewood to prepare limited food items," he said.

Students and job aspirants, who generally stay in messes and cook their own food using small LPG cylinders, are also facing difficulties due to the shortage and rising prices.

Meanwhile, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said there is adequate stock of commercial LPG cylinders in the state and that there is no need to panic.

ବିଶ୍ୱ ଯତ୍ନା ଦିବସ

୨୪ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୨୦୨୬

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- ଥକା ଲାଗିବା
- ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ନେବାରେ କଷ୍ଟ ହେବା
- ଗଳାରେ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥି ବା ଅନ୍ୟ ଅଙ୍ଗରେ ଫୁଲିବା

ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଲକ୍ଷଣବିହୀନ ଯତ୍ନା ହୋଇପାରେ ଯଦି;

- ୫ ବର୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଯତ୍ନା ସଂକ୍ରମଣ ହୋଇଥିବ
- ଧୂମପାନ ଓ ମଦ୍ୟପାନ କରୁଥିବେ (ଏବେ କିମ୍ବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ)
- ବିଗତ ୩ ବର୍ଷରେ ଯତ୍ନା ରୋଗୀଙ୍କ ସଂସ୍ପର୍ଶରେ ଆସିଥିବେ
- ୬୦ ବର୍ଷ କିମ୍ବା ତା'ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ବୟସ ହୋଇଥିବ
- ମଧୁମେହରେ ପୀଡ଼ିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ହୋଇଥିବେ
- ଅପପୁଷ୍ଟିର ଶିକାର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ହୋଇଥିବେ

ତୁରନ୍ତ ଯତ୍ନା ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ, ରୋଗ ଚିହ୍ନ ହେଲେ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

'ନିଷୟ' ସମ୍ପର୍କ ନିଶ୍ଚଳ ହେଲୁଲାଇନ ୧୮୦୦-୧୧-୬୭୬୭

"ଆମେ ଯତ୍ନାକୁ ଶେଷ କରିପାରିବା; ଭାରତର ନେତୃତ୍ୱରେ, ଜନ ସହଯୋଗ ବଳରେ"

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

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[http://www.health.odisha.gov.in/](https://www.health.odisha.gov.in/)

2 arrested for death threat to Jayadev Jena

Hatadihi: Nandipada police arrested two persons in connection with a death threat issued to former Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president, former minister and former MLA Jayadev Jena of the Anandapur Assembly constituency in Keonjhar district. The accused were identified as Har-mohan Barik, 27, and Rakesh Natia, 29, both residents of Nuagaon village under Jajpur Road police limits in Jajpur district. Jena is a resident of Shankhana village under Nandipada police limits in Hatadihi block. Jena received a death threat via a WhatsApp message sent from mobile number 8984790372, according to reports. A case-104/2026 was registered at Nandipada police station based on Jena's complaint. Police officials, including IIC Dharmendra Shanti, Inspector Balia Barik and SI Sushama Sundari Sethi, Gopal Mishra and others conducted raids in the accused persons' village and apprehended them. Police said Rakesh Natia had contested the last panchayat election as a Congress-supported candidate but lost after securing about 50 votes. During the investigation, it emerged that Barik, who is unemployed allegedly issued the threat at Natia's instigation.

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Har Dil Apke Saath

Agreement signed for visa application centre at BSABT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: Taking a significant step toward improving visa services in Odisha, a tripartite agreement was signed Monday between the Home department, the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), and VFS Global to establish a Visa Application Centre (VAC) at the Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar Bus Terminal (BSABT). The agreement was formalised by Soumendhra Patra, Additional Secretary (Home); Manas Ranjan Padhi, Secretary, BDA; and Viney John, Associate Vice-President (Administration, South Asia), VFS

Global Group. The proposed centre will be set up at BSABT in Baramunda, with the state government allocating around 3,000 square feet of space. At present, residents of Odisha need to travel to cities like Kolkata, Delhi, or Hyderabad for visa services. The new facility will eliminate the need for such travel, making the process more accessible locally. The initiative follows approval granted in December by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi for establishing a Visa Application Centre in the state. Sources indicate that the centre is likely to become operational soon. In a separate development,

ECoR honours 2 staff for ensuring safety

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: East Coast Railway (ECoR) GM Parmeshwar Funkwal Monday honoured two railway employees for their exceptional alertness and dedication in ensuring safe train operations.

The awardees are Srinivas Bhoi, Track Maintainer-II of Loisingha under Sambalpur Division and Dharendra Kumar Jena, Loco Pilot (Passenger) of Puri under Khurda Road Division, recognised for their timely actions and presence of mind in averting potential safety hazards.

February 17, 2026, while on Keyman duty between Loisingha and Bolangir, Bhoi noticed a wheel defect in a passing train that was not rotating and emitting sparks. He immediately alerted the Station Superintendent, resulting in the train being stopped. Inspection revealed a locked axle, averting a potential major mishap.

Jena, March 4, operating a MEMU train from Puri to Khurda Road, spotted track buckling between Malatipatpur and Sakshigopal. He promptly halted the train and informed officials, allowing timely repairs.

While presenting the awards, Funkwal lauded their vigilance, highlighting its vital role in safe train operations.

HEATWAVE ADVISORY

No outdoor work from 11am to 3pm

Guidelines to remain in force from April 1 to June 15



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: In view of the rising temperatures expected in April, the possibility of heatstroke during the summer season cannot be ruled out. To safeguard workers from extreme heat conditions, the Labour and Employees' State Insurance department has issued fresh guidelines. As per the directive, all labourers working under

harsh sun exposure must not be engaged in work between 11am and 3pm from April 1 to June 15, 2026. Instructions have been sent to all Revenue Commissioners, District Collectors, and the State Labour Commissioner to ensure strict implementation of these measures.

The state government has urged all departments—both state and central—along with private employers, industrial

and commercial establishments, shop owners, and contractors to comply with the guidelines. Employers have been directed to adjust working hours to ensure that workers are not exposed to extreme heat during peak daytime hours.

In cases where work is unavoidable or linked to essential services and workers cannot be given rest during the restricted hours, employers must take adequate precautionary measures. These include providing safe drinking water, shaded rest areas, medical facilities, and ORS (Oral Rehydration Solution) packets for every worker.

Additionally, healthcare authorities across districts—including Chief District Medical Officers (CDMOs), Sub-Divisional Medical Officers (SDMOs), and staff at Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs)—have been directed to remain alert and prepared to handle heat-related illnesses effectively.

The move aims to minimise heatstroke risks and ensure the safety and wellbeing of workers during the intense summer months.

Edu drive for brick kiln children

BHUBANESWAR: In a bid to improve access to education and basic services for migrant children, Aide et Action (India), in partnership with Unicef, the Odisha Police Housing and Welfare Corporation and district authorities, has launched a targeted intervention across brick kilns in Odisha. As part of the programme, uniforms, slippers and learning materials were distributed to children living in brick kiln communities. The distribution drive was inaugurated by Saumendra Priyadarshi, Managing Director of the Corporation, at a brick kiln on the outskirts of the City.

Virtual workshop held on fire safety preparedness

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: In a significant step towards enhancing urban safety, the Housing & Urban Development department, in collaboration with Odisha Fire Services, organised a high-level virtual workshop on fire safety awareness and preparedness here Monday.

The session focused on streamlining emergency response protocols and enhancing technical readiness across all urban local bodies (ULBs) in the state.

Director General of Fire Services Sudhansu Sarangi delivered the technical briefing. He highlighted preventive measures, modern firefighting equipment, and institutional readiness.

Highlighting the initiative's pioneering nature, he noted that the H&UD department is the first in the state to organise such a comprehensive sensitisation programme, setting a benchmark for inter-departmental coordination in fire safety.

He announced that a state-wide fire safety mock drill will take place in the coming Saturday and urged all ULBs to ensure its success.

Additional Chief Secretary Usha Padhee emphasised integrating fire safety into urban



governance. She directed all ULBs to include fire safety measures in the Mukhya Mantri Sahari Bikas Yojana during the upcoming financial year.

Commissioners of all municipal corporations, executive officers of municipalities, and Notified Area Councils (NAC) representatives participated actively. Fire officers and deputy fire officers also joined virtually, ensuring a cohesive approach across the state.

The workshop addressed urgent safety needs following recent fire incidents. Discussions revolved around three

pillars: preparedness, prevention, and public awareness. Officials outlined key action points, including continuous sensitisation of officials and citizens, mandatory safety inspections, and grassroots awareness campaigns.

Director of Municipal Administration Arindam Dakua set the agenda, stressing the importance of coordinated state-wide preparedness. The workshop concluded with directives for ULB heads to initiate safety audits and awareness drives immediately to mitigate risks and prevent future mishaps.

City marks Shaheed Diwas; Puri organises padayatra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: Shaheed Diwas (Martyrs' Day), commemorating the supreme sacrifice of freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Hari Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar, was observed by the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), Students' Federation of India (SFI) and Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) in the City, Monday.

Speaking as the chief guest, CITU state president Janardan Pati said the revolutionaries laid down their lives to free the country from British imperialism and establish a socialist society. He noted that Bhagat Singh had thrown non-lethal bombs in the Central Legislative Assembly to protest oppressive colonial laws and raise his voice against British exploitation.

CITU state secretary Pushpa Das, Pradipta Nayak, and Utkal University student leaders Anil Sahoo and Mahesh Patnaik also addressed the gathering.

Similarly, a grand district-level padayatra (foot march) was organised in Puri by 'Sampark' and 'My Bharat' organisations under the theme 'My India, My Responsibility' on the occasion. Heartfelt tributes were paid to the martyrs, with floral offerings at statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Gopabandhu Das, Nimai Charan Harichandan, Jayi Rajguru, Acharya Harihar, Subhas Chandra Bose and Madhusudan Das across Puri.

2-day conference kicks off at OUTR



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: A two-day national conference titled 'Emerging Trends in Chemical Sciences' was inaugurated Monday at the School of Basic Sciences and Humanities (Department of Chemistry) of Odisha University of Technology and Research (OUTR).

University Vice-Chancellor Bibhuti Bhusan Biswal attended the event as patron. The conference is being coordinated by Bigyan Ranjan Das, with Alpha Sharma and Biswajit Samantaray serving as co-coordinators.

Ravenshaw University Vice-Chancellor Sanjay Kumar Nayak graced the occasion as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the conference. In his address, he emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary and inter-university research, underscoring the need for collaborative efforts to advance modern education.

Biswal, in his remarks, encouraged students to actively

engage in research, explore new opportunities, and contribute to scientific discovery.

Several distinguished personalities, including Tapas Kumar Patra (Dean, CDC), Minakshi Prasad Mishra, Achyutananda Acharya (former Dean, Academic Affairs), and AC Das, were present on the occasion.

Following the inaugural session, keynote addresses were delivered by KK Nanda, Debabrata Pradhan, Malay Kumar Rana, Rati Ranjan Nayak, Himanshu Sekhar Biswal, Umprasan Ojha, and Nimai Mishra.

The day concluded with poster and oral presentations, followed by cultural programmes and dinner. Around 500 students, researchers and scholars participated, with academicians terming the conference a promising platform for innovation and collaboration.

The conference will continue March 24, aiming to inspire future scientists and foster a culture of learning and innovation

STATEWIDE ROAD SAFETY DRIVE

3,153 license violations in 2-day drive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack/Bhubaneswar, March 23: A special statewide road safety enforcement drive launched by the Transport department under the direction of Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena is currently underway across Odisha. The campaign combines strict enforcement with public awareness initiatives to enhance road safety.

During intensive checks conducted March 21 and 22, authorities issued e-challans to a large number of vehicles for violations of the Motor Vehicles Act. Notably, as many as 3,153 cases of driving without a valid licence were detected over the two days.

As per official data, 1,443 such violations were detected on March 21 alone, with notable numbers reported from Bhubaneswar-I (104), Jharsuguda (88), Balasore (78), Rourkela (78), Nuapada (68), Kendrapada (67), Keonjhar (62), Cuttack (51) and Rayagada (42).

The figure rose to 1,710 on March 22, with Rourkela recording the highest (217), followed by Balasore (98), Bhu-



bhaneswar-II (92), Nayagarh (86), Bhubaneswar-I (77), Keonjhar (73), Nabarangpur (66), Nuapada (62) and Cuttack RTO (38).

Apart from licence violations, authorities also cracked down on other traffic offences. E-challans were issued against 3,157 riders for not wearing helmets, 1,558 for driving on the wrong side, and 282 for triple riding

on two-wheelers. Additional penalties were imposed for overloading in goods and passenger vehicles, as well as for carrying passengers in goods vehicles.

Alongside enforcement, the department conducted several awareness drives across the state. In Rairangpur and Barbil, responsible drivers were appreciated with flowers and

chocolates. A road safety awareness program for bus drivers was organized at Bonaigarh bus stand by the Rourkela RTO. In Bhubaneswar (RTO-II), a free eye check-up camp was held, benefiting several drivers, including women motorists.

At the Jajpur drive, awareness campaigns were conducted with support from the police, including leaflet distribution, helmet giveaways, and screening of road safety videos. Street plays featuring mythological characters like Yamraj and Chitrakuta effectively conveyed safety messages, attracting public attention. In Angul's Banarpal area, awareness programs were held for drivers, and 62 first-aid kits were distributed along with guidance on emergency response during accidents.

The State Transport Authority has emphasised that road safety is a collective responsibility. Citizens have been urged to strictly follow traffic rules, use helmets, carry valid driving licenses, and practice safe driving to help reduce road accident fatalities across the state.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE SECOND ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE SENIOR DIVISION AND FAMILY COURT AT BANGALORE RURAL M.C. Case No.422/2025

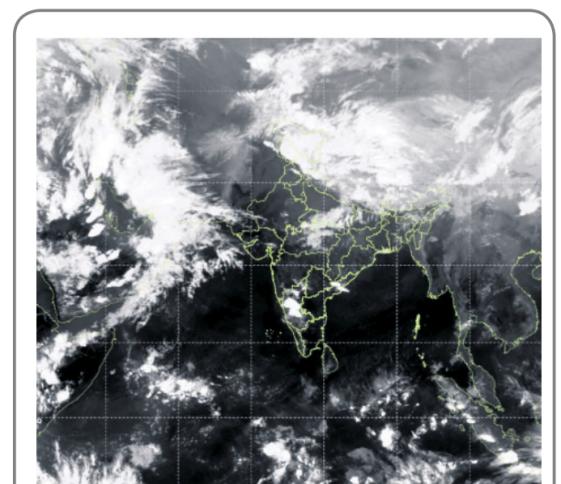
Petitioner: Sri Chandan Kumar Behera, S/o- Late Shri Guru Charan Behera, C/o- Ranjan Behera, Flat No.203, NDL, JRS Complex, In front of Whitefield Railway Station, Bengaluru-560067. Presently At: R/o- Flat No.D-1002, Dazzle Tower, Marvel Sequoia Apartment, B. Vajpayee Road, Chanasandra Whitefield, Bengaluru-560067 -Vs- Respondents: Smt. Itishree Sahoo and Another And also residing at: Smt. Itishree Sahoo, W/o. Chandan Kumar Behera, D/o. Prabhu Charan Sahoo, Aged about 33 years, C/o- Daitary Sahoo, Qtr. No. EB-353, Laxmisagar, P.O./P.S.-Laxmisagar, Bhubaneswar, District- Khurda, Odisha-751006. C/o- Plot No. 192/36, Lane No. 13D, Dinbandhu Smruti Bhawan, Siba Shakti Nagar, Puri Canal Road, Hanspal, Baliana, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.

SUMMONS TO THE ABOVE SAID RESPONDENT UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF THE CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE.

WHEREAS, the petitioner had filed the above said case U/s 13 (1) (i), (ia), and (ib) under Hindu Marriage Act, against you i.e. Respondent no.1., date of marriage on 26.02.2020, seeking for divorce from you. You are hereby summoned to appear before this Court on the 28th day March, 2026 at 11.00 A.M., either in person or through Advocate who can answer all material claims pertaining to the suit, failing which, the matter will be heard and determined in your absence placing you ex-parte. Given under my hand and the seal of this Court on this 24th day of February 2026.

S.d/- Advocate for petittinoer. By order of the court Sd/- Sheristadar II Addl. Senior Civil Judge, Bangalore Rural Dist. Bangalore

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	93.59 ↓ 0.02	SENSEX	72696.39 ↓ 1,836	GOLD	₹138,019 ↓ ₹6,473
EURO	108.28 ↑ 0.02	NIFTY	22512.65 ↓ 601.85	SILVER	₹221,172 ↓ ₹5,600



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	33.8°	32.6°	Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely
Min Temp	21.5°	20.6°	
Humidity	75%	88%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Farmers write to CM over paddy procurement woes



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, March 23: Fed up with inordinate delays in registration to sell their harvested kharif paddy, farmers here have written a letter to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi outlining their grievances and seeking immediate intervention.

The issue comes as registration is underway for rabi paddy procurement, but many farmers in Bargarh district have yet to be registered to sell their kharif harvest, triggering widespread discontent.

Despite submitting required

documents, several farmers dependent on the Saharatikra mandi in Bheden block have been excluded from registration, preventing them from selling their produce.

In protest, farmers have been staging a sit-in outside the District Collector's office since March 9, piling up paddy at the site. No resolution has been reached so far.

The matter came to the fore Monday when aggrieved farmers sent postcards to the Chief Minister outlining their grievances and seeking immediate remedial measures.

According to reports, as

many as 4,804 farmers in the district failed to register due to alleged administrative lapses. They had earlier raised the issue with the local MLA, the state Food Supplies Minister and the Chief Minister through the District Collector, but without any outcome.

Farmers previously staged a protest beginning November 10 last year in front of the Collector's office. At the time, Attabira MLA Nihar Ranjan Mahananda assured them that all farmers would receive tokens and be able to sell their paddy, prompting a temporary withdrawal of the agitation.

While some farmers later received tokens, many others did not, forcing them to resume their protest March 9.

With no solution in sight, farmers have now directly appealed to the Chief Minister for intervention through postcards. They warned that their agitation would intensify if their demands are not met at the earliest.



HEARTH WOES: Children return home carrying firewood on their heads from an islet on Mahanadi amid LPG crisis at Chandan Nagar area in Sambalpur, Monday

Caste fiat: Groom fined, tonsured by community members for acceptance



POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, March 23: A controversial incident highlighting the persistence of stiff caste-based customs has surfaced in Koraput district, where a man was allegedly fined and subjected to ritual humiliation for marrying a woman from another community.

The incident took place in Machhara forest under Koraput block, where members of a local caste council reportedly organised a gathering, along with a feast, to enforce traditional norms in order to accept the inter-caste marriage.

According to reports, Maheswar Khil, a resident of Kumbhar Sahi in Jeypore town and belonging to the Mali community, had been in a long-term relationship with Urmila Khara, a woman from the Rana community and a resident of the same locality. The couple's relationship faced opposition

from both communities due to caste differences.

Unable to secure approval, the couple reportedly left the area and stayed outside for some time. Their absence prompted members of the Mali community to convene a meeting to resolve the issue and facilitate their marriage.

During the meeting, the caste council allegedly imposed stringent conditions on the groom, including a fine of ₹90,000, hosting a community feast and undergoing a public head-shaving ritual as a form of penance.

The conditions were fulfilled by the man at a makeshift venue near Machhara Sunday, where a feast was organised and the groom's head was tonsured in the presence of community members. After the rituals and conditions were fulfilled, the bride-to-be was formally accepted into the groom's household with the approval of community elders.

Community elders defended the practice, stating that such customs have been followed for generations and would continue. However, younger members reportedly expressed silent dissent, citing fear of social backlash.

The incident has raised concerns about the continued prevalence of caste-based restrictions and diktats in modern society, despite increasing awareness and legal protection against such practices.

Woman killed, body set ablaze; hubby detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, March 23: A woman was allegedly murdered and her body set on fire by her husband to destroy evidence in Deogarh district, police said Monday.

The incident took place in Malharbahal village under Kundheigola police limits in Riamal block. The partially charred body of the woman was recovered about 300 metres from her house.

The deceased has been identified as Laxmipriya Sahu, wife of accused Jashobant Sahu. The victim's brother, Murali Sahu, alleged that Jashobant has committed the murder.

According to the complaint, the couple frequently quarrelled over domestic issues, and the accused had allegedly assaulted his wife on several occasions in the past. He is suspected to have killed her Sunday, and later set the body on fire in a nearby agricultural field behind the house in an attempt to destroy evidence.

Nearly 70 per cent of the body was burnt. The woman's slippers were found at the scene, and police suspect that petrol may have been used to burn the body.

Police reached the spot and launched an investigation. While the exact motive behind the murder remains unclear, the accused has been detained. A case (101/26) has been registered and further inquiry is underway.

A scientific team has also been informed to assist in the investigation.

Cashew forest burnt to earn quick buck amid LPG crunch

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, March 23: Miscreants set on fire a cashew forest along the Ramanagar-Bahakud main road in Kendrapara district Saturday and sold off the burnt trees as firewood to make a quick buck from the prevailing LPG shortage arising out of the war in Middle East. Locals alleged that the blaze left more than 100 trees gutted.

Residents claimed that after the fire subsided, the accused cut the damaged trees and sold the wood illegally anything between ₹500 to ₹700 per quintal, making quick profits. The wood was reportedly being chopped and sold openly even during the daytime.

Locals linked the increasing pressure on forests to shortages of natural gas and fuel supplies amid the ongoing Middle East conflict, saying the impact is



being felt across urban to rural areas.

Sources said the cashew plantations were raised in the early 1970s by the Horticulture department. The department planted 10,000 trees over 354 acres of land in Ramanagar, 5,000 trees over 233 acres of land in Pitapat, and another 5,000 trees over 182 acres of land in Bahakud. The plantations are currently managed by the Odisha Cashew Development Corporation, which has no staff posted on-site. Its regional office is located in Chandikhol.

Taking advantage of the lack of supervision, timber smugglers are allegedly active in the area. Encroachment is also widespread, with reports of houses built on nearly 100 acres of forest land.

Environmentalist Subhas Swain said the plantations were originally developed after the devastating 1971 cyclone to protect the coastal belt from destruction.

Mahakalapara Tehsildar Rabinarayan Acharya said an inquiry will be conducted into the incident.

Wall collapse leaves toddler dead, 2 hurt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tihidi, March 23: A two-year-old girl child was killed while her mother and elder sister were seriously injured after a portion of a wall collapsed on them in Bhadrak district Sunday evening, officials said.

The incident occurred in Kashipur village under Sahapur panchayat within Pirahat police limits in Tihidi block.

According to reports, Bharati Behera, 30, had gone to her parental home in Kashipur from Nandapur village under Achak panchayat. Her two daughters Pujarani, 4, and Liza, 2, were playing in front of their maternal uncle's house while Bharati stood nearby. Suddenly, a partially constructed wall built on the roof of a house belonging to Narayan Behera suddenly collapsed along with a portion of the structure and fell on the mother and her two children.

Liza died on the spot, while Bharati and Pujarani sustained critical injuries.

OSCPCR finds serious violations in school while probing student's death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, March 23: The Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights found serious violations of safety and regulatory norms during a surprise inspection of a private school in Ganjam district Monday in connection with the death of a Class V student in a hostel.

The inspection at Sri Sai Saraswati Vidya Mandir in Kalamajuna under Ganjam block was led by Chairperson Babita Patra, along with commission members Chandana Das, Manasmita Khuntia and Kasturi Mishra.

The team reviewed official records related to fire safety, first aid, CCTV surveillance and permission to operate the hostel.

The case relates to the death of a Class V student who allegedly consumed poison inside the hostel a couple of years ago and later died during treatment. A post-mortem confirmed poisoning as the cause of death. The commission questioned how the poison entered the hostel, raising concerns over the alertness

of school and hostel authorities.

During the inspection, the commission found the hostel was operating without government certification. It also noted expired fire safety certificates, inaccessible CCTV recordings and empty first aid boxes.

Additionally, photocopies of land records were unavailable, with school authorities claiming the original documents had been submitted to a bank.

The commission further found the school lacks affiliation with any educational board to conduct Classes IX and X.

Members expressed concern over what they described as serious negligence in ensuring the safety and security of students in both classrooms and the hostel, in violation of the state government's "zero casualty" norms.

The commission also questioned the role of the block education office in failing to conduct timely reviews of the school's compliance.

Patra said legal action could be taken against those responsible.

Siblings kill father for assaulting mother

POST NEWS NETWORK

Thakurmunda, March 23: In a shocking incident, three brothers allegedly beat their father to death after he assaulted their mother in Mayurbhanj district Monday morning.

The incident occurred in Kashibeda village under Saleibeda gram panchayat within Thakurmunda police limits. The accused trio later surrendered at the police station. Police have sent the body for post-mortem and detained the three sons of the deceased. A murder case (35/26) has been registered in connection with the incident. The de-

ceased has been identified as Sule Gagarai, 60. His wife, Menj, who sustained serious injuries in the assault, has been admitted to the Thakurmunda CHC.

According to police, Sule frequently quarrelled with his wife and sons at home. At around 7am Monday, he allegedly assaulted his wife following a dispute, leaving her injured. Enraged by the attack, the couple's three sons — Turam, Ishwar and Parshuram — reportedly thrashed their father with sticks, leading to his death on the spot. After the incident, the three siblings admitted their mother to hospital and later surrendered before police.

Plus II student ends life; kin cry murder

Balasore: A Plus II first-year student of a private residential college at Malikapur under Town police limits here allegedly committed suicide by consuming poison late Sunday night, police said.

The family members, however, alleged that the student was murdered and held the college authorities responsible. They have lodged a complaint at the Town PS. According to Town PS OIC Bijay Das, the exact cause of death will be ascertained after the post-mortem report is received. The student, a native of Chhanua village under Sadar block, was rushed to the DHH by college authorities after they learned he had consumed poison. As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to the ICU, where he died late Sunday night while undergoing treatment. Police registered a case (16/2026) of unnatural death at Town police station and initiated an investigation.

Road row: Villagers detain govt officials

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kandhamal, March 23: Frustrated villagers in Sirkaabarga panchayat under Daringbadi block in this district detained government officials and blocked traffic Monday after repeated promises to repair a dilapidated road went unfulfilled.

Hundreds of men and women from Badaanga village gathered at 7am along the Sirkaabarga-Daringbadi route, halted a government bus and later obstructed other vehicles. Residents said five years had passed since authorities



pledged to widen and repair the road, but no work had been carried out. Large potholes have made

travel hazardous, they added.

Local leaders claimed they had raised the issue multiple times with the Rural Development department and even during grievance hearings with the district administration, but their appeals fell on deaf ears. Earlier this month, villagers staged a similar blockade, prompting officials to again promise repairs by March 20.

When materials did not arrive and work was not taken up, villagers resumed their protest. They detained officials including Assistant Executive Engineer Shy-

amundar Singh and threatened not to release them until repairs commenced.

Senior officers, including Daringbadi BDO Pritiranjana Rath and Tehsildar Dheeraj Patra, later reached the site to negotiate. After nearly 10 hours of agitation, officials assured residents that tendering and estimates were underway and that roadwork would begin by May 20.

The villagers dispersed only after receiving the fresh commitment, warning that they would resume protests if the deadline was missed.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
e-Procurement Notice, ANGUL (R&B) DIVISION
Bid Identification No. 78 of 2025-26
e-mail ID - angulrbdivision@yahoo.co.in

1 Number of works	: 07 (Seven) number of Electrical works
2 Approximate estimated cost	: Varies from 10.00 lakh to 31.00 lakh
3 Period of completion	: 03 (Three) Calendar months
4 Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From Dt.26.03.2026
5 Last date / time for receipt of bid in the portal	: Dt.04.04.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.
6 Date of opening bid	: Dt.06.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
7 Name and address of the Office Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, Angul (R&B) Division, Angul
8 The bidders must participate in ONLINE bidding only.	

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

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Angul (R&B) Division

OIPR-34001/34074/1/25-26/0009

EAST COAST RAILWAY
ADDENDUM TO E-AUCTION PROGRAMME OF MARCH-2026 FOR SCRAP SALE
ADDITIONAL SCHEDULE OF E-AUCTION

Month / Year	Division	Date
March - 2026	Waltair	27.03.2026

Condemned rolling stocks (Loco, Coach, Wagon), Scrap rail, Miscellaneous P.Way fittings (switches, crossings, fish plates, sleepers, fish bolt etc.), miscellaneous workshop scrap (drums, bogie frame, buffer casing, buffer plunger, turning and boring etc), Miscellaneous ferrous, Non-ferrous, Non-metallic scrap, condemned machinery and plants, condemned vehicles, condemned office equipment

Waltair division and scrap materials of Railway Electrifications are expected to be offered on "AS IS WHERE IS" basis. Railway administration shall be at liberty to include other items too in the e-auction and the complete details of materials and terms and conditions will be as per Auction Catalogue, which shall be available with the respective auction conducting authority of East Coast Railway or from our website www.ireps.gov.in within 07 (seven) days prior to the date of auction.

PR-1257/Q/25-26 Principal Chief Materials Manager, Bhubaneswar

खान मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF MINES
DESIGNATED OFFICER, MINISTRY OF MINES, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
GPOA-3 Netaji Nagar, New Delhi, 110023, 011-26773606

"Invitation of Bids for Seventh Tranche for Grant of Mineral Concession of Critical and Strategic Minerals"

In exercise of the power of auction conferred by Section 11(D) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 to the Central Government to grant mineral concession for minerals specified in the Part D of the First Schedule and in accordance with the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 as amended from time to time notified thereunder, the Government of India has directed the Designated Officer, Ministry of Mines to undertake the auction of 19 blocks in Seventh Tranche of Auction of Critical and Strategic Minerals. The notice inviting tender (NIT) has been published on MSTC e-auction portal and on the Ministry of Mines website. The commencement of sale of tender document will begin on Monday, March 30, 2026. Tender document and other details can be accessed on (<https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcln/>).

cbc 261011/11/0009/2526

You must abstain from thinking about someone when you cannot think well of him.



THE MOTHER

Peace Overtures

In a major development on 23 March, US President Donald Trump said in a Truth Social post 23 days after the US-Israel war against Iran that he has instructed the defence department to postpone all airstrikes against Iranian power plants and energy infrastructure for a five-day period. This is subject to the “success” of ongoing “meetings and discussions,” he clarified. But, given Trump’s track-record of reneging on his words and promises of ending wars, there are too many ifs and buts before the world can really heave a sigh of relief. The announcement came at a moment when the ongoing war has caused severe dislocation of world economy, pushing crude toward \$108 per barrel. The situation was looking even more bleak following Trump’s 48-hour ultimatum threatening to obliterate Iranian power plants. Iran too threatened retaliation by “irreversibly” destroying essential infrastructure across the Middle East, including vital water supply systems should the US followed through on Trump’s threat.

The seemingly unending saga of issuing threats and counter-threats of destruction was only complicating matters and plunging the world into an unprecedented fuel and gas crisis. In the process Trump not only failed to achieve his stated goals of finishing off the war within a few days, but also found himself cornered and deserted by traditional allies of the US. At this stage he announced the five day window. During that period, the Department of War has been instructed to postpone strikes. Iranian state media, however, reported that there was no direct or indirect contact with Trump, adding the US President backed down after being warned by Iran that its targets would include power plants across West Asia.

However, Trump’s words will be read carefully. For, he said conversations are underway toward a complete and total resolution. But he stopped short of saying whether a resolution has been reached. He said the strikes are postponed for five days subject to the success of ongoing meetings. He did not say the strikes are cancelled. He said the tone and tenor of conversations is constructive, but there is no word yet on whether Iran has agreed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, stop firing missiles at Israel, or accept any specific terms.

It would be worthwhile to remember that in the Trumpian lexicon a pause is not a peace deal, nor is a postponement a ceasefire. It is too early to hazard a guess about whether the war is going to end very soon. One can only say the conflict has entered a negotiating phase and that is some progress from the escalating strike-and-counter-strike phase. This seems to have taken shape after tremendous pressure from the countries around Iran that are getting the brunt of the missile and drone strikes.

There are miles to go and so many intractable issues are to be sorted out such as Iran’s nuclear programme, reopening the Strait of Hormuz and cessation of bombardments from both sides. Obviously, none of them can be resolved in five days. The most realistic outcome from the current talks within the five day window that can be expected is a framework agreement, a set of principles and commitments that both sides agree to as the basis for a longer negotiation. It can at best be described as an effort to begin the end of the war. The recent history of Russia-Ukraine war does not inspire much confidence as ceasefires were made and unmade too frequently.

However, Trump appears to be learning to be wise after the event after unilaterally starting the war without even caring to consult traditional Middle Eastern, European and NATO allies. He has also to face the midterm election in his country. If good sense prevails, it would bring the world from the brink of a catastrophic fuel and resultant economic crisis.

WISDOM CORNER

Who are we? We find that we live on an insignificant planet of a humdrum star lost in a galaxy tucked away in some forgotten corner of a universe in which there are far more galaxies than people.

CARL SAGAN

The vast majority of human beings dislike and even actually dread all notions with which they are not familiar... Hence it comes about that at their first appearance innovators have generally been persecuted, and always derided as fools and madmen.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

To complain is always nonacceptance of what is. It invariably carries an unconscious negative charge. When you complain, you make yourself into a victim. When you speak out, you are in your power. So change the situation by taking action or by speaking out if necessary or possible; leave the situation or accept it. All else is madness.

ECKHART TOLLE

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1882: Robert Koch introduces germ theory. Koch gave a lecture at the Berlin Physiological Society where he introduced the basis of germ theory. He announced that he had discovered the bacterium that caused tuberculosis, a disease responsible for 1 in 7 deaths across Europe and the U.S. at the time. This meant Koch had upended the two prevailing theories of the time: spontaneous generation and miasmatic theory. During the meeting, Koch showed dyed tissue samples of the bacteria he had grown, and he published his findings a few weeks later. His work plays an important role to this day in identifying the microorganisms linked with diseases.

1896: Aleksander Popov achieves the world’s first radio transmission. The Russian physicist transmitted the words “Heinrich Hertz” from one building of St. Petersburg University to another.

1944: More than 75 Allied prisoners undertook a daring escape from a POW camp in Sagan, Germany, though most were eventually recaptured; it inspired the classic World War II movie The Great Escape (1963), starring Steve McQueen.

1965: Millions watch NASA spacecraft Ranger 9 crash into the Moon. The U.S. space probe broadcast live pictures back to Earth, enabling TV viewers to follow its approach to the Moon and its controlled crash.

1989: The oil tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground, spilling some 11 million gallons (41 million litres) of oil into Prince William Sound in Alaska and creating the largest oil spill in U.S. history up to that time.

UNSAFE ROADS, UNLEARNED LESSONS

FOCUS INDIA



The death toll on Indian roads is almost directly proportional to growth in road coverage, presenting road crashes as an unfolding public health crisis that demands immediate attention

India has nearly 1.5 lakh kilometres of national highways, a network that is growing fast and has transformed the state of road transport across the nation. But this modern infrastructure is also claiming more lives than ever before in road accidents. The latest numbers available tell us that India recorded 1.72 lakh road deaths and over 4.6 lakh injuries in 4.8 lakh road crashes in 2023. We have better roads, smarter enforcement technology and stricter penalties, all of which should lead to lesser accidents. But the death toll on Indian roads is almost directly proportional to growth in road coverage, presenting road crashes as an unfolding public health crisis that demands immediate attention. We are faced with a complex problem that has led to epistemic erosion, a case where data exists but learning has failed. We know what is wrong, but we have unsafe roads primarily because of unlearned lessons.



Sudeep Lakhtakia

INDIA CANNOT BE A DEVELOPED NATION WITH A HIGH RATE OF ACCIDENTS

Road safety deteriorates when communities, which includes vehicle users, pedestrians as well as the authorities managing the system stop learning and acting on what keeps roads safe. Gradual loss of evidence-based enforcement and lack of institutional learning encourages unsafe practices to persist. This builds into a culture that gets worse over time, with safety compromised by the users, the very demographic that will suffer the most and probably be hurt or die on the roads of India.

One aspect of safety is directly linked to the vision of the government. When political pressure overrides evidence, planners ignore crash data. They begin normalising violations, the community accepts these transgressions, and catastrophes on the roads follow.

The first step therefore ought to be the enforcement of strict penalties for traffic violations. Traffic challans, as they are colloquially

called, are a tool to financially disincentivise violations and record those for future administrative/legal action. Law enforcement agencies in India have significantly improved their ability to accurately ‘detect’ traffic violations and also the capacity to issue challans promptly. However, the collection of the challan amount/fines has not kept pace with detection. This is one reason why road discipline and road safety have taken a hit. Some cities even report fine collections as low as 5%. There should be zero tolerance for non-payment/delayed payment of challans.

Uncollected fines encourage traffic violations. The majesty of the law lies in its implementation to meet the purpose of its promulgation in letter and spirit. Prompt ticketing is the proverbial ‘last mile’ of enforcement of rules and would be a severe disincentive to taking and causing risks. It will incentivise expected road behaviour for overall safety of all road users. There is also a principle of equity between violators - those who pay promptly and those who do not. Ideally, every transgressor should be held accountable.

In Delhi, there are about 2.5 crore challans pending against private drivers and about 20 lakh against commercial drivers as of 2025, according to traffic police

data. These figures contradict the common impression that commercial drivers flout rules with impunity. Of the approximately 3 crore pending cases, almost one third are for speeding violations and about 48 lakh for unauthorised parking, two major reasons for road crashes/casualties. Recently, in Pune, when a high-profile road crash grabbed the national headlines, it dawned on the authorities that the offender had multiple traffic challans pending against him. If only the offender could have been made to pay for his traffic violations in time, perhaps lives could have been saved and trauma avoided, even for the offender and his family. This addresses the problem known as the “broken window syndrome” in policing, which holds that when small disorders are not fixed, the area over time becomes a haven for more crime.

Clearly, collecting fines for traffic violations is a low hanging fruit that is falling prey to pressures from the political side that sees the accumulating unpaid fines as largesse by allowing delays in payments, or even waivers and write offs. In this context, the clear statement from Telangana that there would be no amnesty is to be welcomed and supported. If this becomes the new trend, then it addresses many concerns and

will help send out an important signal that will help check violations and therefore accidents.

While penalties are one aspect that can be easily fixed, we also need to study complex inter linkages like the conduct of driving tests and issue of driving licenses, maintenance of roads, quality of repairs and poor traffic engineering that are serious challenges to road safety. Consider the ease with which driving licences are issued or can be virtually bought across the nation. What is the value of a driving test when you negate or reduce a serious exam? Further, consider that while many of the roads are slick and well laid out, the tendency to create diversions, hurdles or maintenance work that starts without warning and without adequate and visible signage adds new dangers for fast moving traffic.

We need holistic solutions that can work across the value chain. One effort worth a mention is the proposed linkage between insurance and challan systems - a system in which higher challans will lead to higher insurance premiums. This will demand proper installation of objective, tech supported enforcement systems, under which it is theoretically possible for every single violator to be fined for every single violation. Multiple violations must lead to a loss of the driving license, as is the case in many countries across the developed world.

India cannot be a developed nation with a high rate of accidents. This is a key development index, and we must look at it as such to draw the full benefits of a modern road network to drive into the future, faster but also safer.

The writer is former director general of the NSG who led traffic management as Joint Commissioner of Police Traffic Hyderabad and as Commissioner of Police Vijayawada.

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SPECTRUM CHARITY

The troubling ethics of crowdfunding

When two gunmen started shooting at Jews celebrating Hanukkah at Sydney’s Bondi Beach last December, Ahmed al-Ahmed hid behind a car and then, when one of the murderers was looking the other way, ran at him and wrestled his gun away. His bravery undoubtedly saved several lives, but he was shot by the other gunman. Fortunately, al-Ahmed survived. A GoFundMe site set up to benefit him has raised nearly AU\$2.7 million (\$1.9 million) from 45,000 donors.

The impulse to reward heroism is strong, and it may seem churlish to ask if this was the best use of the donors’ spare cash, but that question needs to be asked. If some donors had the additional motive of encouraging others to act heroically, surely \$1 million would have sufficed. As an Australian citizen, al-Ahmed is entitled to free hospital and medical care. Does massively rewarding a single person represent the best way to give?

Consider another example: Charlie Gard was born in the UK in 2016, suffering from a terminal condition with no viable treatments. His parents used GoFundMe to raise £1.3 million (\$1.7 million) for unproven experimental procedures. Sadly, but predictably, the procedures failed, and Charlie died.

These cases indicate specific problems with crowdfunding. But what should we think about it as a concept? While it is encouraging to see many people responding to the appeals of strangers, whether to reward bravery or, more commonly, to help those in great need, there are fundamental ethical problems with crowdfunding, especially when it becomes a primary method of helping others.

For starters, crowdfunding rewards the technically savvy and socially connected. Most of the world’s poorest people have no internet access or knowledge of platforms like GoFundMe, so they are systematically excluded from this form of charity.

A recent article in the International Journal of Equity in Health examining medical GoFundMe campaigns found that appeals for people in rural areas and economically disadvantaged people were less successful, as were those for people with less education. Appeals for white people received more funds than appeals for those who were not white. Requestors with more education and social capital received substantially increased donations.

GoFundMe is a for-profit organization, and its profits come from taking a percentage of donations, so it has an interest in increasing the amount donated, irrespective

of how much or little good those donations may do. Likewise, it is not in GoFundMe’s interest to vet requests for validity or accuracy, and it will act against fraud only when users report it. Fraud does happen. In Australia, Renee Jocelyn O’Brien pleaded guilty in 2020 to multiple counts of fraud after falsely claiming that her five-year-old daughter had a terminal brain tumor and soliciting donations from the public. Her lie was uncovered only when authorities verified the child’s medical records. People have also faked cancer diagnoses in Canada and the US. Donors give money believing that they are funding potentially lifesaving treatments, but outcomes are not reported back to them, much less evaluated by independent third parties. This creates a market for medical hope that may be entirely unfounded. Moreover, many GoFundMe campaigns operate in a transparency and accountability vacuum. What happens to donated money when campaigns exceed their target, when the intended recipient of medical treatment dies before receiving it, or when fraud is discovered years later? Unlike traditional charities, GoFundMe lacks clear answers to these questions.

In the US, where millions of people lack health-care coverage, crowdfunding for medical expenses functions as a band-aid

over structural inequities. Rather than addressing the systemic problem - the absence of universal healthcare - it diverts attention and resources to individual cases, allowing the underlying injustice to persist.

Recent cuts to official government aid, especially in the US, have created an urgent need for donors who give wisely and effectively. Organizations like GiveWell and The Life You Can Save make it easy for people to find the charities that will do the most good with their donations - and unlike GoFundMe, 100% of what is donated through their websites goes to the charities.

According to GiveWell’s analysis, the money donated to Ahmed al-Ahmed could instead have purchased and distributed insecticide-treated mosquito nets to fight malaria in Africa, potentially saving hundreds of lives. It is good that people want to respond helpfully to the needs of others, but when it comes to helping others most effectively, we should recognize crowdfunding for what it is: a profit-making scheme that is often inefficient and inequitable.

Peter Singer is Emeritus Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University. Gregory E. Pence is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Alabama.

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Inhuman practice

Sir, Manual sewer cleaning is an inhumane practice that has persisted for generations due to society’s insensitivity. It has not only persisted, but has also been the cause of mortality among forced sanitation workers. Surely, this heinous activity is a stain on any civilized society. The most serious problem is that persons forced to clean sewer lines manually continue to die as a result of this practice. The figures presented in the Lok Sabha recently highlight the grim side of the problem. Last week, the government informed the Lok Sabha that over 620 sanitation workers had died while cleaning sewers and septic tanks throughout the country since 2017. It is difficult to assume that these data are accurate, and that all deaths in the country have been reported. Contractors in rural and remote places attempt to conceal the fatalities of sanitation workers earning a daily wage. Some astute people, sensing the family’s compulsion, put a lid on the situation by contributing little amounts. There have been few examples in which contractors and local government officials have been punished for forcing sanitation workers to clean sewers and septic tanks despite the government’s strict directives. Is a manual sewer cleaner’s life worth anything in a democratic society? Abhjt Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Rank negligence

Sir, Kolkata’s RG Kar Medical College is back in the news. A patient’s father was killed after he was trapped along with his family inside a lift when it malfunctioned at the hospital’s trauma centre. It goes without saying that lifts or elevators should be regularly monitored and their upkeep be foolproof. Secure electric connections, their temperature maintenance and parts’ lubrication cannot be taken for granted. Checking for functionality of doors by periodic checkups is extremely essential. Monthly or quarterly services have to be undertaken. Scrupulous adherence to annual maintenance contracts (AMCs) should be mandatory. Timely audits cannot be bypassed. Old and jaded elevators should make way for newer ones. Nowadays, lift operators are conspicuous by their absence. Also, majority of them are untrained. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



Delhi govt to upgrade 125 libraries digitally



The efforts are being carried out under the NIPUN Sankalp programme
The survey said 125 school libraries will be upgraded in the current academic session, with each to be equipped with 20 digital devices, 20 headphones, one library kiosk, one charging cart and one printer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: The Delhi government will upgrade 125 school libraries with 20 digital devices, headphones, a kiosk and a charging cart, according to the Economic Survey of Delhi 2025-26. Besides, it has identified 7.5 lakh students in classes 1 to 8 with learning gaps. The survey said a baseline assessment conducted in September 2025 identified gaps in foundational literacy and numeracy, forming the basis for academic interventions. According to the survey, students were classified into four categories -- Beginner, Emerging, Progressive, Proficient - and interventions using readiness modules developed by SCERT are being implemented for classes 2 to 8 after mid-term exams. The efforts are being carried out under the NIPUN Sankalp programme. The survey said 125 school libraries will be upgraded in the current academic session, with each to be equipped with 20 digital devices, 20 headphones, one library kiosk, one charging cart and one printer. It said that the Directorate of Education is continuing its

focus on inclusive education, with 879 children with severe or profound disabilities enrolled in home-based education programmes in 2025. Under the measure, 286 out-of-school children were mainstreamed into schools, while a functional curriculum for children with intellectual disabilities was developed and implemented in 100 schools from pre-primary to class 8. To streamline admissions of out-of-school children, 2,333 special admission cells have been established, the survey said, adding that 4,258 children with disabilities participated in 12 para-sports disciplines. It noted that 46 per cent of children with special needs have obtained Unique Disability ID (UDID) cards, and more such cards are being issued. The survey said the government will set up 8,777 smart classrooms by the end of March this year. According to the survey, under the Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya Vidya Shakti Mission, structured competitive examination coaching will be provided to 2,200 students annually, with 350 seats reserved for girls.

Under the Lal Bahadur Shastri Scholarship Scheme, ₹2,500 per student was disbursed to 34,880 meritorious students. The revised uniform subsidy provides ₹1,250 for Nursery to class 5, ₹1,500 for classes 6 to 8, and ₹1,700 for classes 4 to 12 to ease financial burden on families, it said. Under the Mukhyamantri Khel Protsahan Yojana, cash awards for Olympic and Paralympic medal winners were increased from ₹3 crore, ₹2 crore and ₹1 crore to ₹7 crore, ₹5 crore and ₹3 crore for gold, silver and bronze. Incentives for Asian and Para-Asian Games medal winners have been raised from ₹1 crore, ₹75 lakh and ₹50 lakh to ₹3 crore, ₹2 crore and ₹1 crore. For Commonwealth and Para-Commonwealth Games, these have been increased from ₹50 lakh, ₹40 lakh and ₹30 lakh to ₹2 crore, ₹1.5 crore and ₹1 crore, the survey reported. The survey said that the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam language labs launched on a pilot basis in 100 schools in the current academic year are expected to benefit nearly 60,000 students of classes 6, 9, and 11 with teaching of German, French, Spanish, besides English, Hindi, and Sanskrit.



A worker checks a bee-hives at an apiary near the Tawi river, on the outskirts of Jammu, Monday

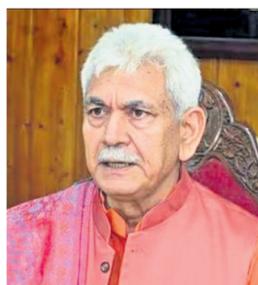
438 terror victim families given job letter since 2025

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha handed over appointment letters to 37 next of kin of victims of terrorism and 29 next of kin of government employees who lost their lives in service

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, March 23: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday said that appointment letters have been issued to 438 terror-victim families since 2025, describing the figure not merely as a statistic but as "shattered worlds" that lost loved ones to violence. Addressing a gathering here,

Sinha said each such case represented homes where "laughter was replaced by silence" and families that had to fend for themselves for years, often facing social neglect in addition to personal loss. Sinha Monday handed over appointment letters to 37 next of kin of victims of terrorism and 29 next of kin of government employees who lost their lives in service. "So far, appointment letters have been given to 438 terror-victim families. This is not merely a number-- these are 438 shattered worlds," Sinha said while addressing the gathering. Paying tribute to the victims of terrorism, the Lieutenant Governor vowed the strongest action against the terror ecosystem and its supporters. "I pledge to the families of



terror victims that we will work with full commitment to secure their dignified and honourable lives. We will discharge every duty towards them with utmost seriousness, and we will not rest until justice reaches every family," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor

observed that justice for terror victim families is not limited to punishment alone but also involves healing wounds and restoring dignity. Sinha said that for decades, families affected by terrorism were sidelined while elements linked to terror networks allegedly received protection and benefits. Such circumstances, he said, represented a collapse of social morality and weakened law, trust and the foundations of a just society. Over the past five to six years, however, the structure that enabled terrorism and its ecosystem has been dismantled at a rapid pace, he said, adding that individuals with direct links to terror who had secured government jobs are being removed from service.

Parents of J&K students stranded in Azerbaijan seek Centre's urgent intervention

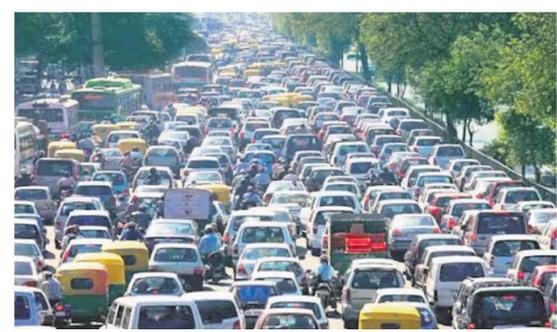


INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, March 23: Parents of over 200 Jammu and Kashmir students stranded at the Azerbaijan border Sunday demanded urgent Central government intervention for the safe return of their children. Anxious parents have sought help for the safe return of these students as they face severe financial and health issues. These parents have told reporters that more than 200 students are studying in Isfahan and Golestan provinces of Iran. The parents said that these students have successfully crossed the Iran-Armenia border as the first essential step to return to their country. Parents allege that the students have been left to arrange their travel independently, placing a heavy financial burden on already distressed families. "We have been bearing all the expenses ourselves. The government must at least facilitate their return at this crucial time," said one of the parents, expressing

frustration over what they described as inadequate logistical support. Several batches of students were expected to return to India between March 20 and March 25, including those from Shiraz University. Indian engineering students from Kerman have also reached the Iran-Armenia border and are currently awaiting visa clearances. However, the situation remains grim at the Azerbaijan border, where over 100 Indian students are reportedly stranded due to procedural delays. Only around 6 to 10 students are being issued exit codes each day, which has significantly slowed down the evacuation process, the parents said. Many students have been stuck at the border since March 12, missing scheduled flights and incurring heavy financial losses. Parents claimed that around 250 Kashmiri students remain stuck at the Azerbaijan border, with several suffering from chest infections and influenza-like symptoms, while access to proper medical care remains limited. A total of 151 Indian students managed to cross the Iran-Azerbaijan border in the last 24 hours. Some students with tickets for March 14, 18, 19, and 20 were allowed to cross, but those students who had bookings for March 15, 16, and 17 are still stranded, the parents said.

Delhi vehicle count rises 7.9% to 87.6L in 2025-26



Till March 19, 2026, 66.20 lakh vehicles were deregistered under the ban implemented for diesel vehicles more than 10 years old and petrol vehicles of more than 15 years old

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: The total number of motor vehicles on roads in Delhi till 2025-26 is 87.61 lakh, showing an increase by 7.93 per cent compared to 2024-25, according to the eco-

nomics survey report released Monday. As per the report, the number of vehicles per thousand population was 522 as of March 19, 2026. The total number of vehicles registered till 2025-26 was around 87.61 lakh, increasing from 81.18 lakh registered in the previous financial year. Till March 19, 2026, 66.20 lakh vehicles were deregistered under the ban implemented for diesel vehicles more than 10 years old and petrol vehicles of more than 15 years old. "The highest number of increase was registered in the two-wheeler category, including motorcycles and scooters. Till March 19, 5,927,775 two-wheelers were registered, making up for 67.65 per cent of the total number of vehicles," the report states. In the public transport sector,

DTC is the largest public transport entity in the city and NCR, transporting about 24.29 lakh passengers per day on average in 2025-26 (March 20), a reduction from the previous year of 2024-25 when the average daily ridership was registered at 25.58 lakh per day. "In March 2026, Delhi Transport Corporation has a fleet size of 6,100 buses, comprising 1,002 non-AC low-floor (CNG) buses and 760 AC low-floor (CNG) buses," the report says. The report added that 2750 AC low-floor electric 12 metre buses and 1588 AC low-floor electric nine metre buses are in its fleet. "In the transport sector, there are 86 buses on 27 routes for night bus service. Under its gender sensitisation program for bus crew undertaken by DTC, 30 ladies special buses are also being plied during peak hours on 30 routes. DTC is also operating an International Bus Service on the Delhi-Kathmandu route," the report states. The number of bus breakdowns has also increased; in the current financial year, 929 bus breakdowns were registered, an increase from 897 in 2024-25. This year, a total of 1503 electric buses broke down in 12-metre and 9-metre categories; the breakdowns are per 10,000 buses, the report added.

DU mandates 72-hour prior notice for campus protests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Delhi University has mandated that details of any proposed protest or gathering on campus be submitted at least 72 hours in advance to the university authorities and local police, an official notice issued Monday said. The directive comes days after a one-month ban on protests imposed by the university February 17 following a student march that turned violent on the north campus during which a female journalist was allegedly assaulted. The notice, issued by the Office of the Proctor, is addressed

to students, teachers, staff, and other stakeholders. It said organisers must submit a signed hard copy of their application to the university proctor's office and the concerned local police authorities, including the deputy commissioner of police and station house officer of the respective area. Delhi University (DU) Proctor Manoj Kumar Singh said the application must include details such as organiser's name, college or department, contact details, nature and duration of the event, logistical requirements, list of speakers, and expected number of participants.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA PANCHAYAT SAMITI OFFICE, DEOGAON
INVITATION FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement
TENDER CALL NOTICE NO.-04/2025-26/DGN
E-mail Id:ori-deogaon@nic.in
INVITATION FOR BIDS
19001/101/2526
1. The Block Development Officer, Deogaon, Balangir on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in single cover system in ONLINE MODE only for construction of building work as per tender call notice.
2. Nature of Work : Civil & EI Works
3. No. of Work : 09 Nos.
4. Tender Paper Cost : 6,000/-
5. Class of Contractor : "D" & "C" and "C" & "B" (Registered with CDMS)
6. Availability of Bid documents in the website : From 10.00 AM of 23.03.2026 to 5.00 P.M. of 08.04.2026
7. Date of Opening of Bid : Dt.09.04.2026 at 11.00 AM
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.
• Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
• Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above website only.
Sd./- Block Development Officer, Deogaon
OIPR-19001/19253/1/25-26/0001

Delhi sees rise in film shoots, tops foreign tourist arrivals

Among heritage sites in the city, Qutub Minar recorded the highest domestic footfall at 32.04 lakh visitors, followed by the Red Fort with 28.84 lakh visitors in 2024-25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: The Delhi airport handled around 32 lakh foreign tourist arrivals in 2024, the highest in the country, according to the Delhi Eco-

nomics Survey 2025-26 presented Monday. The national capital recorded 32,24,675 foreign visitors at the Indra Gandhi International airport in 2024, the survey's data showed. However, in terms of total foreign tourist arrival -- which includes people visiting the city after landing at other places -- Delhi stood sixth across India with 1.999 million such visitors in 2024. Among heritage sites in the city, Qutub Minar recorded the highest domestic footfall at 32.04 lakh visitors, followed by the Red Fort with 28.84 lakh visitors in 2024-25, the survey stated. It



said several new attractions, including Baansera Park and Asita Park developed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), along with Bharat Darshan Park and Waste to Wonder Park created by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), have been added to the city's tourism app, 'Dekho

Meri Dilli', to enhance visitor experience. According to data, of the 278 film shooting applications received, 50 were processed under the Delhi e-Film Clearance Policy, aimed at promoting ease of filming in the national capital. Delhi ranked sixth in the country in terms of foreign tourist arrivals (FTA), registering 1.999 million visitors in 2024, it added. To promote tourism in the national capital, the Delhi government is hosting its first international film festival from March 25 to March 31, where around 140 films will be screened.

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. 04/2025-26
No.19001/99/2526:Block Development Officer, Tihidi, Bhabradar on behalf of the Panchayat Samiti, Tihidi invites bids in single sealed cover system to be eventually drawn up in PWD Form P1 for the works as detailed in the table below, from eligible contractors of equivalent grade/class registered with the central govt./State Govt./ MES/Railways for execution of civil works. One bidder can submit one bid only for a particular work. The cover containing the bid should be superscribed as TENDER FOR THE WORK 'name of the work as the case may be'. Bid documents consisting of specifications, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms & conditions of contract, Annexure/Schedules/Forms/Proforma and other necessary documents can be downloaded from the website https://bhabradar.odisha.gov.in within the period stipulated. The receipt of the tender documents shall start from Dt.25.03.2026 upto Dt.15.04.2026 during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Bids so received shall be opened at 11.00 AM on Dt.16.04.2026 in the office of the Panchayat Samiti, Tihidi in presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives who wish to attend thereof. In case the office happens to be closed on the stipulated date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
Sl. No. Name of the Work Amount put to Tender (Rs.) EMD (Rs.) Time for Completion Class of Contractor Cost of Documents (Rs.)
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)
1. Const. of ACR building at Navananda Harijan Pw. School of Navananda GP 14,39,841.00 14,398.00 4 Months C & D Rs.6,000
2. Const. of ACR building at Gopalpur Project P.S. of SS Pur GP 14,38,310.00 14,383.00 4 Months C & D Rs.6,000
3. Const. of ACR building at Kohla ME School, Kohla GP 14,39,857.00 14,399.00 4 Months C & D Rs.6,000
4. Const. of ACR building at Chahispada Sasan UGME School of Baro GP 13,44,911.00 13,449.00 4 Months C & D Rs.6,000
5. Const. of ACR building at Nandore Pw. School of Bodak GP 14,38,953.00 14,390.00 4 Months C & D Rs.6,000
6. Const. of ACR building at Harsingpur PS of Harsingpur GP 14,29,563.00 14,296.00 4 Months C & D Rs.6,000
7. Const. of ACR building at Basanti Nodal High School, Tidisahi Barsar 15,87,464.00 15,875.00 4 Months C & D Rs.6,000
8. Construction/Completion of Bilana-4 AWC (Nayapattina of Bilana GP) 10,15,865.00 10,159.00 3 Months C & D Rs.6,000
9. Construction/Completion of AWC building at Kalimegha of Mukundpur GP 8,67,302.00 8,673.00 3 Months C & D Rs.4,000
10. Construction/Completion of AWC building at Taladapa Dasasahi of Barsar GP 8,78,395.00 8,784.00 3 Months C & D Rs.4,000
11. Construction/Completion of AWC building at Nandakandarpa-1 of Bahabapur GP 9,12,136.00 9,121.00 3 Months C & D Rs.4,000
12. Construction/Completion of AWC building at Radhanagar Baro-2 of Baro GP 9,19,438.00 9,194.00 3 Months C & D Rs.4,000
13. Construction of Non-residential building (1st Floor) at Block Head Quarter of Bhatapada GP 18,88,897.00 18,889.00 4 Months C & D Rs.6,000
OIPR-19001/19115/1/25-26/0001 Sd./- Block Development Officer, Tihidi



Adivasi refers to the original owners of India. Had you visited this land 1,000, 2,000, or even 5,000 years ago, you would have found that every single inch of land was in the hands of Adivasis
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

APEX COURT DISPOSES OF WIFE'S PLEA CHALLENGING WANGCHUK'S DETENTION

The Supreme Court Monday disposed of a plea filed by Gitanjali J Angmo, wife of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, against the latter's detention under the National Security Act (NSA). A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and PB Varale noted that the Centre revoked its order of Wangchuk's detention March 14. The apex court said there was nothing left in the matter



of the day quote

Remembering Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Hari Rajguru, and Sukhdh Thapar on the anniversary of their martyrdom
MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

A severe shortage of blood at Jaipur's major hospitals like SMS hospital and Janana hospitals has created a 'health emergency' that could prove life-threatening for residents
ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER RAJASTHAN CM

The notice we have given for discussion should happen so that we can also reply and all sides can put forward their views. It would be good that a discussion happens in Parliament
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

2 more Indian LPG ships cross Strait of Hormuz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Two more Indian-flagged LPG tankers, carrying roughly a day's supply of the country's cooking gas, have safely navigated through the war-hit Strait of Hormuz and are expected to reach Indian shores over the next two days.

LPG tankers Pine Gas and Jag Vasant, sailing close to each other, started from the Persian Gulf Monday morning before crossing the strait, ship tracking data showed.

The two ships are carrying 92,612 tonnes of LPG, said Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, at a news briefing. "The movement has started."

The tankers are likely to reach Indian ports between March 26 and March 28. The vessels have 33 and 27 Indian seafarers onboard, according to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

Both the LPG tankers sailed through waters between Iran's Larak and Qeshm islands -- possibly to make their identity clear to Iranian authorities before they cross the strait, ship tracking data showed.

The two ships were among the 22 Indian flagged vessels that were stranded in the Persian Gulf after the war in West Asia nearly closed the Strait of Hormuz -- the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman that connects the oil and gas-producing Gulf countries to the rest of the world.

Previously, MT Shivalik and MT Nanda Devi, carrying



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about 92,712 tonnes of LPG or roughly a day's cooking gas consumption of the country, had safely reached the Indian shore. Originally, there were 28 Indian-flagged vessels in the Strait of Hormuz when the war in West Asia broke out following US-Israel attacks on Iran. Of these, 24 were on the West side of the Strait and four on the East side. In the last few days, two vessels from each side have

managed to sail to safety.

LPG carrier Shivalik reached Mundra in Gujarat March 16, while another LPG tanker, Nanda Devi, reached Kandla port in Gujarat the next day. Two LPG carriers had started their journey on March 13 and crossed the Strait of Hormuz early March 14.

Indian-flagged oil tanker Jag Laadki, with 80,886 tonnes of crude oil from the UAE, reached Mundra March 18. Another tanker, Jag Prakash, carrying gasoline from Oman to Africa, had previously safely crossed the strait and is en route to Tanzania. Of the 24 remaining Indian-flagged vessels in the war zone, 22 are on the West side of the Strait with 611 seafarers onboard, while two are on the East side.

The vessel stranded on the west side of the strait originally had six LPG carriers, one liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker, four crude oil tankers, one transporting chemical products, two container ships, and two bulk carriers. Additionally, one vessel is a dredger, another is empty, and three were in dry dock undergoing routine maintenance.

Bihar board Class XII result announced, pass percentage at 85.19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, March 23: Bihar Education Minister Sunil Kumar Monday announced the results of the Class XII state board examinations, with 85.19 per cent students clearing the test.

Talking to reporters, Kumar said the overall pass percentage of girls and boys was 86.23 per cent and 84.09 per cent, respectively. A total of 13.04 lakh students had appeared for the annual intermediate exam.

"This is the eighth consecutive time that Bihar has announced intermediate results before any other state in the country," he said.

Overall, 5,16,928 students got first division, 5,11,744 students secured second division, and 82,425 passed with third division, a statement issued by the Bihar School Examination Board said.

"Out of the total 26 top-5 rankers across streams, 20 are female, and the rest are male. While a boy has topped the examination in the science stream, toppers in the arts and commerce streams are female students," he said. The education minister said through the use of technology, the evaluation process was completed within 25 days in a fair and transparent manner.

BSEB Chairman Anand Kishor said science student Aditya Prakash Aman of Samastipur district topped the examination with 481 marks (96.2 per cent). In the arts faculty, Nishu Kumari of Gaya Ji district was the topper with 479 marks (95.8 per cent), while Aditi Kumari of Patna secured the first position with 480 marks (96 per cent) in the commerce stream, he said.

The BSEB chief said students who did not pass or are dissatisfied with their results can apply for re-evaluation from March 25 to April 2.

OFFICIAL'S SUICIDE

Former-Punjab minister Laljit Singh Bhullar held

The suicide by Randhawa had triggered a political row with Opposition parties taking on the Mann government and jointly holding a protest, demanding the arrest of Bhullar and a CBI probe into the matter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 23: Former Punjab minister Laljit Singh Bhullar was arrested Monday, two days after an official of the state warehousing corporation died by suicide after accusing the AAP MLA of harassing him.

Bhullar was arrested from Mandi Gobindgarh in Fatehgarh Sahib district, a police official told reporters in Amritsar. Police said Bhullar was being brought from Mandi Gobindgarh to Amritsar.

Bhullar will be produced in a court in Amritsar Tuesday, said the police official.

Gagandeep Singh Randhawa, the district manager of Punjab State Warehousing Corporation in Amritsar, allegedly ended his life by consuming poison early Saturday. A video appeared in which he purportedly claimed harassment by Bhullar, who resigned as minister later in the day at the direction of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann amid the row.

The Amritsar police on Saturday night booked Bhullar, his father Sukhdev Singh Bhullar and personal assistant Dilbag Singh under sections 108 (abetment of suicide), 351 (3) (criminal intimidation) and 3 (5) (common intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann asserted that strict action will be taken against



Bhullar was arrested from Mandi Gobindgarh in Fatehgarh Sahib district, a police official told reporters in Amritsar

Police said Bhullar was being brought from Mandi Gobindgarh to Amritsar

Bhullar will be produced in a court in Amritsar Tuesday, said the police official

anyone who violates the law irrespective of any position they hold. "For me, the entire Punjab is one family. If anyone in Punjab violates the law, strict action will be taken against him, no matter what position he holds or whether he is a relative or an influential person. Shielding anyone is not our party's agenda," said Mann in a post on X.

In a Facebook post before his arrest, Bhullar said he was surrendering in Mandi Gobindgarh and also said rumours were being spread that he had run away but there was no truth in it.

"I will never run from the truth. I have full faith in the law of the country, and also have unshakable faith in the justice system. I have not run away anywhere, I am in my Punjab."

SHORT TAKES

Namesakes emerge in Kerala elections

Thiruvananthapuram: As the deadline for filing nominations for the Kerala Assembly elections ended Monday, several candidates, including Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, are facing challenges posed by name-sakes in different constituencies. Apart from Vijayan, CPI(M) rebel leader G Sudhakaran, Trinamool Congress leader P V Anvar, Minister P Rajeev, CPI(M) MLA V K Prasanth, Congress leaders K Muralidharan, Praveen Kumar K, and Thomas Uniyyadan also face opponents with the same name.

1 dead, more than 37 hurt as bus overturns

Unnao (UP): A female passenger died and at least 37 others were injured after a bus rammed into a divider and overturned on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district Monday, police said. According to the police, the accident occurred near Nasirapur village in the Bangarmau area when the bus heading towards Lucknow and carrying about 50 passengers, went out of control and crashed into the divider.

Custodial deaths: Court holds nine cops guilty

Madurai (Tamil Nadu): A local court Monday held guilty all the nine accused policemen in the case of custodial torture of a man and his son, leading to their deaths at Sathankulam in Thoothukudi district in the year 2020. The First Additional District and Sessions Court Judge G Muthukumaran declared that the prosecution had proven its case and held the policemen guilty of causing the death of the father-son. The quantum of sentence for the convicted policemen will be pronounced March 30, the judge said.

EAM, Rubio discuss West Asia conflict

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio Monday to discuss the West Asia conflict's impact on the global economy, with a particular focus on energy security. The Jaishankar-Rubio phone conversation came hours after US President Donald Trump extended Washington's deadline by five days for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. In a social media post, Jaishankar said he had a detailed phone conversation with Rubio that focused on the West Asia conflict.

Jaishankar reaffirms India's steadfast ties with Russia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: India and Russia need to address issues such as non-tariff barriers and regulatory impediments to increase the two-way annual trade to \$100 billion by 2030, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Monday while reaffirming New Delhi's steadfast commitment to strengthening the long-standing partnership with Moscow.

"In today's evolving geopolitical dynamics, our engagement continues to deepen," he said in a virtual address at a conference titled "India and Russia: Towards a new bilateral agenda". Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov lauded India's "independent foreign policy" and said that Russia looks forward to welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a visit this year.

In his remarks, Jaishankar said the evolving multipolar order requires greater cooperation between India and

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov lauded India's "independent foreign policy" and said that Russia looks forward to welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a visit this year
Jaishankar said the evolving multipolar order requires greater cooperation between India and Russia, including through BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), G20 and the UN

Russia, including through BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), G20 and the UN. India is looking forward to closely working with Russia to address shared challenges in a "balanced and inclusive manner", he said. "India and Russia share a special and privileged strategic partnership rooted in trust and mutual respect. Over decades, our mutually beneficial cooperation has advanced regional and global peace, stability and progress," Jaishankar said.



Women dressed in traditional attire take part in an event, marking the completion of four years of the Uttarakhand government, in Dehradun

SC questions police's 'insensitive' approach to probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Questioning the "insensitive" approach of Gurugram Police and the magistrate who examined a three-year-old rape victim, the Supreme Court Monday directed the Gurugram commissioner of police and the investigating officer to appear before it March 25 with all the probe records of the alleged shocking offence.

The top court also directed the sharing of the affidavit of the victim's father in a sealed cover to the district judge of Gurugram about the "insensitive" and "illegal" approach adopted by the judicial magistrate in examining the minor victim, that too in the presence of the accused.

A bench comprising Chief

Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi asked the district judge to take the version of the judicial magistrate on the examination of the minor victim and apprise it Wednesday.

The bench also sought responses of the state government, Haryana director general of police (DGP), commissioner of police of Gurugram and the DCP on the plea seeking a CBI or SIT probe into the rape of the three-year-old girl in the city.

It permitted the Gurugram Police, which has made a few arrests in the case, to file the status report on the probe conducted so far.

The three-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by two female domestic helps along with their male accomplice for approximately two



RAPE OF 3-YR-OLD

months in a society in Sector 54, police said.

Following allegations made by the child's parents, an FIR was registered on February 4 under relevant sections of the BNS and the POCSO Act at the Sector 53 police station, they added.

According to the police, although the incident occurred between December 2025 and January 2026, the parents reported the matter to the police after the girl disclosed her ordeal to her mother.

At the outset, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said that

the minor was taken to the police station and then to the child welfare committee (CWC), where police personnel were in uniform. Moreover, she was questioned in front of the accused, who were standing four feet away from her, he added.

"The magistrate is telling the girl that 'isko oath toh isko samajh nahi ayega' (she will not understand about the oath)... but the magistrate is telling the three-year-old girl that 'sach bolo, sach bolo' (speak the truth). Moreover, the accused were there," the senior lawyer said.

"The accused cannot be in close proximity to the child," he said, adding that the investigating officer (IO) is asking the parents not to pursue the case as they will get into problems.

PMK intra-party dispute: Top court upholds HC view

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Asking PMK founder S Ramadoss to approach the civil court, the Supreme Court Monday upheld a Madras High Court decision dismissing his two petitions for a direction to the EC to either let his faction use the 'mango' symbol during the upcoming Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry or freeze the symbol.

Ramadoss has been fighting a legal battle to restrain his son Anbumani from using the party's name, flag and symbol.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said that the Election Commission (EC) cannot decide a dispute over the allocation of symbols of an unregistered political party, and if the application is filed by Tuesday for remedy, the civil court may adjudicate it in three days.

"The high court appears to be right in holding that the dispute re: allocation of symbol among the two rival groups of an unrecognised political party cannot be decided by the Election Commission of India. We have gone through the orders passed from time to time and must observe that an aggrieved party must not be left remediless."

"Since the petitioner has already filed a civil suit, it is open to the petitioner to move an appropriate application before the civil court. If such an application is filed by tomorrow, i.e., March 24, 2026, we direct the civil court to decide the same after hearing the parties and in accordance with law within a period of three days," the top court ordered.

The bench further said that the court has not expressed any opinion on the merits, and the parties to the suit, including those who may seek their impleadment, shall be at liberty to raise all the contentions before the civil court.



I urge all stakeholders to work together with collective resolve to end tuberculosis once and for all
DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

HEAT GRIPS KERALA

Kerala is reeling under intense heat with the mercury scaling up in most places across the state, testing the endurance of residents and travellers alike



of the day quote

The Prime Minister's uncharacteristically short speech in the Lok Sabha today was, as usual, a master class in self-boasts, cowardice, and partisan dialogue-baazi
JAIRAM RAMESH | CONG GENERAL SECY

The proposed mission will be goal-oriented and aimed at improving governance efficiency and management. The mission seeks to make the system more effective, transparent and citizen-centric. AI will help identify potential risks in key sectors such as agriculture, health, nutrition and disaster management
MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

Can the country afford the ongoing slide of the rupee
ADITYA THACKERAY | SENA (UBT) LEADER

POST OF THE DAY

Indian govt websites now appear in Hindi by default (including in Google search results). This is nothing but the systemic imposition of Hindi. South Indians pay more taxes to the GoI, but we are being treated as second-class citizens in this country.
@PratyushaOBC

SHORT TAKES

NIA raids 9 locations across 6 J&K districts

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency Monday conducted extensive searches at multiple locations in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with its probe into the Red Fort car bomb blast case. The NIA, which is pursuing various leads in the case, searched nine locations across six districts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Jammu, Kulgam, Ganderbal and Handwara. Several digital devices were seized during the raids and sent for forensic analysis, a statement issued by the counter-terror agency said. A total of 11 accused have been arrested till date for their roles in the deadly blast that shook the national capital November 10, 2025, killing 13 persons.

Sikkim municipal polls to be held April 24

Gangtok: Municipal elections in Sikkim will be held April 24 and the counting of votes will take place the next day, State Election Commissioner (SEC) K C Lepcha said Monday. The filing of nominations will begin March 30 and scrutiny will take place March 31, he told reporters here. The last date for withdrawal of nominations is April 4. Polling will be held from 8 am to 5 pm April 24 and the counting of votes will take from 8 am April 25, he said.

Do something for K'taka: Devegowda

New Delhi: Only God can save Karnataka the way it is being governed by the Congress government, former Prime Minister HD Devegowda Monday said, as he urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to do something for revival of industry in the state. Participating in the discussion on the Appropriation Bill (No 2) in the Rajya Sabha, the Janata Dal (Secular) leader said he was "not a power-hungry politician" and had rejected demands by some that his party be merged.

NDA's seat-sharing for TN: 27 seats for BJP, 18 for PMK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, March 23: The AIADMK-led NDA in Tamil Nadu Monday finalised seat-sharing arrangement for key constituents of the alliance for the April 23 Assembly polls, with the Dravidian party allotting 27 seats for BJP, 18 for PMK and 11 for AMMK.

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, addressing a crowded press conference at party headquarters Puratchi Thalaivar MGR Maaligai, here, said talks continued with other allies as well and it will be concluded by tonight.

The names of constituencies to be contested by alliance parties will be identified soon, he said, adding the seat-sharing talks were cordial.

Elections to 234 Assembly seats in Tamil Nadu will be held April 23. NDA's other constituents include former union minister GK Vasan-led Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) and IJK.

Asked about the number of seats to be contested by AIADMK, Palaniswami said talks continued with some parties and following its conclusion the information would be shared.

In the presence of leaders of alliance parties, including senior BJP leader Piyush Goyal, PMK top leader Anbumani Ramadoss and AMMK chief

Elections to 234 Assembly seats in Tamil Nadu will be held April 23. NDA's other constituents include former union minister GK Vasan-led Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) and IJK

TTV Dhinakaran, Palaniswami described the alliance it leads as one marked by "bonding," and called it a "victorious" combine.

He expressed confidence that the alliance would go on to win at least 210 Assembly constituencies out of the total 234.

"The alliance will win and AIADMK will form the government," he asserted.

Ridiculing a "protracted, delayed" seat-sharing exercise involving a "war of words" between the DMK and Congress, he alleged the CPI(M), which got six seats in 2021 was now struggling to get five Assembly seats.

"Piyush Goyal, Nainar Nagenthran, L Murugan, Anbumani Ramadoss, TTV Dhinakaran came in the morning, it (seat-sharing) was decided in the afternoon and the decision is being announced in the evening; see how quickly it has happened. The AIADMK's goal is to dislodge the DMK from the seat of power. The media did not criticise the deadlock in seat-sharing talks in the DMK front," he said.



A woman harvests wheat in a field, near Taj Mahal, in Agra, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Non-tribals barred from Meghalaya polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, March 23: Amidst protests over non-tribal participation in a tribal council election in Meghalaya, the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council Monday approved a key amendment mandating that only Scheduled Tribe members can contest the polls, effectively ending the participation of non-tribals after over seven decades, officials said.

Governor CH Vijayashankar had convened a special session of the Council, where the amendment to the Assam & Meghalaya Autonomous District (Constitution of District Council) Rules was unanimously passed to introduce and implement the changes.

The move follows weeks of unrest and ethnic tensions in parts of Garo Hills. Two people died in protests against the par-



ticipation of non-tribals in the council elections.

The situation was further compounded by political instability within the GHADC, even as pressure mounted on the government to address the long-standing demand for restricting electoral participation to tribal communities.

Following the unrest, the state government had deferred

the elections scheduled for April 10 and later decided to extend the tenure of the council by six months to allow the new executive committee to introduce amendments to the rules in line with public demand.

Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma termed the council resolution a "historic milestone".

"Today is a special session of the district council. The

•The decision follows weeks of unrest and ethnic tensions related to non-tribal participation in council elections

•Two people died in protests against non-tribal participation in the council elections.

•Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma hailed the council resolution as a 'historic milestone'

•The GHADC was constituted to safeguard the rights and self-governance of tribal communities under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution

House has passed a resolution that will be remembered in history, making it mandatory for any candidate contesting the council elections to possess a Scheduled Tribe certificate," he said while addressing a gathering in front of the National People's Party (NPP) office in Tura. The GHADC was constituted under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to safeguard the rights and self-governance of tribal communities.

Govt moves two Bills to enforce women's quota before delimitation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: The government is "willing" to bring two Bills in the ongoing Budget session of Parliament to ensure that the women's reservation law is implemented before the completion of the delimitation exercise for Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies, sources said Monday.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah held separate meetings with NDA and non-Congress Opposition parties' floor leaders to arrive at a consensus. If the consensus is reached, the two Bills could be brought as early as this week, the sources said. P V Midhun Reddy (YSRCP), Dimple Yadav (SP), Supriya Sule (NCP-SP),

Manoj Jha (RJD) and Asaduddin Owaisi (AIMIM) were among the Opposition leaders who attended the meet. Shah is likely to hold consultations with the Congress too in the coming days. The provision to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was brought by amending the Constitution, but it will come into effect after the completion of the delimitation exercise.

A similar exercise will be carried out for state assemblies where seats will be reserved on a pro-rata basis. While a Constitution amendment bill will tweak the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, commonly known as women's reservation law,

another ordinary Bill will amend the Delimitation Act. Once approved by Parliament, the proposed laws will come into force March 31, 2029 and will help reserve seats in the next Lok Sabha elections and assembly elections in Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh.

The sources also underlined that a delimitation or boundary commission is a "neutral" body mandated to redraw Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies, and its decisions cannot be challenged even in the Supreme Court.

They said a neutral body will instil faith in the delimitation exercise.

SC to examine Parsi women's rights post interfaith marriage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: The Supreme Court Monday decided to examine a significant constitutional challenge involving gender discrimination within religious personal laws, questioning whether a Parsi woman can be stripped of her religious identity following the inter-faith marriage.

The top court issued notices to the Centre, Nagpur Parsi Panchayat, the Ministry of Minority Affairs, the Maharashtra government, and the Charity Commissioner on the plea filed by Dina Budhraj.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi heard preliminary submissions of senior advo-

cate Shayam Divan, appearing for the petitioner, challenging the constitutional validity of Rule 5(2) of the Nagpur Parsi Panchayat's constitution.

The petition, filed under Article 32, said that the rule is discriminatory and violates Article 14 (equality before law), Article 21 (right to life and dignity), and Article 25 (freedom of religion) of the Constitution.

The rule allegedly strips Parsi women of their religious identity and access to religious institutions such as the Agyari (Fire Temple) upon marrying a non-Parsi. The rule, though, does not apply the same sanctions to Parsi men who marry outside the community.

Divan highlighted that the issue is a recurring legal battle for the community.

Volcanic toxicity linked to mass extinction: Study

The volcanic activity dominantly contributed to environmental toxicity resulting in the mass extinction event, findings published in The Geological Society of America Bulletin journal show

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: About 70 per cent of volcanic eruptions in India's Deccan Plateau occurred towards the end of the Maastrichtian era, which represents the last few hundred thousand years of the Cretaceous Period and immediately preceding the Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary, a study has found.

The volcanic activity domi-

nantly contributed to environmental toxicity resulting in the mass extinction event, findings published in The Geological Society of America Bulletin journal show.

Dated to 66 million years ago, the Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary marks the mass extinction event, completely destroying non-avian dinosaurs, pterosaurs, and many marine organisms. The event is attributed to impact due to an asteroid.

Researchers, including those from the Advanced Center for Water Resources Development and Management and Ferguson College, Pune, said their computation of the space-time distribution shows that 1.5 million cubic kilometres of the Deccan flood basalts erupted in the 7,00,000 years during the geological time range of 66.31-65.73 Ma (Mega-annum), straddling the



Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary event.

"Unlike earlier projections, we demonstrate that (nearly) 70 per cent of these lavas erupted in the terminal Maastrichtian before the KPgB (Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary)," the authors wrote.

The toxic degassing of the lavas in the 3,00,000 years prior to the KPgB set the stage for mass extinction, they said. Hazardous gases and aerosols are released into the atmosphere both during and after an eruption as part of the degassing process.

The researchers coupled

geochronology with previously published paleomagnetism and paleontological data of sediments associated with the Deccan volcanics.

The analysis "concludes that earlier temporal distribution of the Deccan lavas was open to revision and that the late Maastrichtian flood basalt volcanism was magnitudes larger than the Danian volcanism in this province (Deccan Volcanic Province)."

The findings remove ambiguity about the environmental impact of the volcanism during the terminal Cretaceous times, the authors said.

"We conclude that the late Maastrichtian Deccan volcanism was the dominant contributor to the environmental crisis resulting in the TCME (Terminal Cretaceous Mass Extinction)," they said.

Two CoinDCX co-founders held in cheating case seek bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thane, March 23: The complainant in the Rs 71.6 lakh cheating case in which cryptocurrency exchange platform CoinDCX co-founders Sumit Gupta and Neeraj Khandelwal were arrested told a Thane court Monday that he had recovered his invested amount from another accused and no longer has any grievance in the matter.

During the proceedings, the 42-year-old complainant filed an affidavit stating he had received the funds from one of the six accused in the case.

The complainant further stated that he does not know the two arrested co-founders, following which Gupta and Khandelwal moved a bail application before the court. It is expected give an order on their plea Tuesday. The police, however, said the probe remains ongoing despite the complainant's affidavit and all efforts are on to nab four other accused.

The arrests were made following an FIR registered March 16 at Mumbai police station here against Gupta, Khandelwal and four others on charges of cheating, criminal breach of trust and fraud, according to officials. The complainant, a 42-year-old insurance advisor, had claimed he was duped of Rs 71.6 lakh between August 2025 and March this year after being lured by promises of high returns by investing in a firm, purportedly associated with the cryptocurrency platform.

The complainant, a resident of Mumbai, transferred Rs 71,60,015 through cash and online transactions at different times. However, the invested amount was not returned, and instead the funds were allegedly misappropriated, as per police.



As a close friend, China is sincerely pleased with Pakistan's development achievements

HK POLICE GIVEN NEW POWERS

Hong Kong police can now demand that people suspected of breaching the city's national security law provide mobile phone or computer passwords in a further crackdown on dissent



of the day quote

I urge them to sit down at the negotiating table as soon as possible

Sri Lanka is our friendly country and as I told you, Hormuz is not closed to our friends like Sri Lanka. If Sri Lanka demands oil or any other necessary goods, Iran will supply

I want to say to the people of Germany that we are now taking this election result as an incentive. I want us to move forward with the coalition, with the SPD

Israeli minister calls for annexation of Lebanon

REUTERS

Jerusalem/Beirut, March 23: Israel should extend its border with Lebanon up to the Litani River deep inside the country's south; Israel's finance minister said Monday as Israeli troops bombed bridges and destroyed homes in the area in an escalating military assault.

The comments by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich were the most explicit yet by a senior Israeli official on seizing Lebanese territory in a fight Israel says targets Iran-backed Hezbollah militants.

Lebanon was pulled into the regional war March 2 when Hezbollah fired missiles into Israel. Since then, Israel has ordered all residents to leave the area south of the Litani River as it pummels the area with air strikes, viewing it as a Hezbollah stronghold.

Lebanese authorities say the Israeli air and ground assault has killed more than 1,000 people, and more than a million have been driven from their homes with Israel having ordered residents to flee swathes of the country.

THE NEW ISRAELI BORDER MUST BE THE LITANI

Smotrich told an Israeli radio program that the military campaign in Lebanon "needs to end with a different reality entirely, both with the Hezbollah decision but also with the change of Israel's borders."

"I say here definitively...in every room and in every discussion, too: the new Israeli border must be the Litani," Smotrich said.

Smotrich, leader of a small far-right party in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet, often makes comments that go beyond official Israeli policy.

Netanyahu's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the remarks. Defence Minister Israel Katz hinted earlier this month



at plans to capture land, saying Lebanon could face "loss of territory" if it did not disarm Hezbollah.

Smotrich's remarks were deeply resonant in Lebanon, which is trying to emerge from a decades-old cycle of invasions and occupations by its neighbour.

Israeli forces have launched repeated assaults on Lebanon since 1978 and occupied the south from 1982-2000.

A Lebanese official told Reuters that Beirut was still counting on foreign powers to put enough pressure on Israel to put an end to the war, through an offer from President Joseph Aoun to hold direct talks.

Smotrich also called for Israel to annex territory it now controls in the Gaza Strip, up to an armistice line with Hamas. A ceasefire signed in October left Israel in control of 53% of Gaza, where it has ordered residents out and bulldozed buildings.

The Israeli military says its troops in Lebanon are carrying out ground maneuvers and tar-

geted raids on Hezbollah militants and weapons stores, aimed at protecting residents in northern Israel from Hezbollah fire.

The Lebanese government has outlawed Hezbollah military activity and said it wants to engage in direct talks with Israel.

Israel, Hezbollah fighting in spillover of Iran war

The new Israeli border must be the Litani, Smotrich says

Israel expands Lebanon assault with strikes on bridges, homes

Nepal eases trekking rules for restricted areas near China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 23: Nepal has revised its trekking permit policy for restricted areas, allowing individual foreign tourists to obtain permits for trekking that were previously only issued to groups of two or more.

The restricted areas mainly lie in the remote mountain region near the China border such as Lomanthang and Upper Mustang.

The Department of Immigration (DoI) Sunday issued the notice following grievances from the Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN) and other related organisations.

Previously, foreigners were facing inconvenience as they needed to find a trekking partner before a permit could be issued.

According to a spokesperson, this decision was made March 21. To make the process for foreign groups travelling through agencies more efficient, the department has arranged an online system for granting trekking permits.

This move is intended to make the permit issuance process hassle-free, fast, and user-friendly, reads the notice.

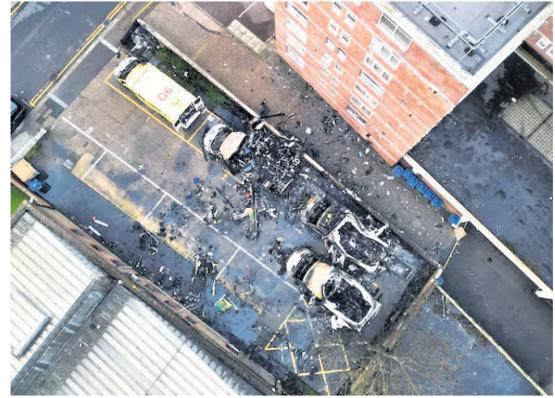


While solo trekking is permitted, applications must be submitted through a registered trekking agency. A trekking guide must be assigned to the trekker.

The respective agency must take full responsibility for emergency rescue operations.

Finally to ensure trekker safety and effective monitoring of activities, the department has also set a limit on group sizes. Noting that large groups make it difficult for a single guide to ensure adequate safety and supervision, it has been decided that one trekking guide can lead a maximum of seven trekkers per group.

London Jewish community ambulances set ablaze in antisemitic attack: PM



REUTERS

London, March 23: Four Jewish community ambulances were set ablaze in north London Monday in what British Prime Minister Keir Starmer called "a deeply shocking antisemitic arson attack".

The London Fire Brigade said multiple cylinders on the vehicles exploded, shattering nearby windows. No injuries were reported and no arrests have been made.

The SITE Intelligence website said an Iran-aligned militant collective called Islamic Movement of the People of the Right Hand had claimed responsibility for the attack near a synagogue in Golders Green. It said the group had been behind similar fires in Liege, Belgium, and Rotterdam and Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

British lawmakers and the domestic spy agency MI5 have warned of threats posed by Iran, including the surveillance or targeting of Jewish sites. Tehran has denied such accusations.

ISRAELI EMBASSY CONDEMNS CLIMATE OF INTIMIDATION

The Israeli embassy in London, which has long criticised Britain for failing to do more to tackle antisemitism, said the firebombings followed years of "hate-filled marches" in support of the Palestinians, along with incitement and intimidation.

"Enough is enough," it said on X, calling for "decisive action to put an end to this climate of intimidation before it spirals further. Silence and inaction are no longer an option."

Security footage showed three men in hooded jackets approaching the ambulances before they were engulfed in flames. Police said the fires were being treated as an antisemitic hate crime and not as a terrorist incident, but the investigation would be led

by counter-terrorism officers who had specialist expertise. They also said they could not confirm the authenticity of the online claim by the Iran-aligned group.

Dutch prosecutors have said claims made by the group were part of the investigation into attacks on a Jewish school in Amsterdam and a synagogue in Rotterdam, but declined to say anything further.

Four Jewish community ambulances torched in London

Starmer condemns attack as antisemitic

Israeli embassy says silence and inaction no longer an option

SHORT TAKES

China braces for fuel shortage

Beijing: China has increased retail fuel prices as part of preparations for a fuel crisis amid apprehensions that the US-Israeli-Iran war may prolong, leading to shortages of gasoline and diesel. China's top planner the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) has announced temporary measures starting from Tuesday amid increases in international oil prices. The measures have been adopted to mitigate the impact of the abnormal rise in international oil prices, reduce the burden on downstream users, and ensure stable economic operation and social livelihood, the NDRC said.

Ex-PM Khan undergoes another eye procedure

Lahore: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan Monday underwent a third eye procedure for an ailment in his right eye, hospital authorities said. Khan, 73, was diagnosed with central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO), a serious eye condition, according to a report submitted to the Supreme Court in January. He was hospitalised at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad, where he underwent a "third eye procedure", according to a statement by the hospital. The former cricketer-turned-politician and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder was administered the third dose of an anti-VEGF intravitreal injection. He remained vitally stable before, during and after the procedure, and the statement added.

Hawaii floods leave 2K without power

Honolulu: More than 2,000 people remained without power Sunday afternoon after Hawaii suffered its worst flooding in more than 20 years when heavy rains fell across the islands. Heavy rains fell on soil already saturated by downpours from a winter storm a week ago. Raging waters lifted homes and cars, causing an expected \$1 billion in damages. The storm prompted evacuation orders for 5,500 people north of Honolulu -- though they were later lifted -- and more than 200 people were rescued from the rising waters. No deaths have been reported as of yet, Molly Pierce, spokesperson for Oahu's Department of Emergency Management, said Sunday afternoon.

SNIPPETS

French far right fails to win in major cities in boost to mainstream rivals

Paris/Marseille: France's far-right National Rally (RN) failed to win control of any major city in Sunday's nationwide municipal election, a setback that gave hope to embattled mainstream parties ahead of next year's presidential election. Marine Le Pen's nationalist eurosceptic party lost out in big target cities including Marseille and Toulon, although an ally, Eric Ciotti, who heads his own staunchly conservative UDR party, won in Nice, France's fifth-largest city. The municipal votes were a test of both the depth of the far right's support base a year ahead of presidential elections to replace centrist Emmanuel Macron, and the resilience of mainstream parties in a fragmented political landscape. Opinion polls project both Le Pen and her young protege Jordan Bardella would perform strongly in the 2027 race. Le Pen is awaiting a ruling in her appeal against an embezzlement conviction before deciding whether she will run for a fourth time. The 35,000 separate municipal ballots typically focus on local issues and their outcome does not offer a neat forecast of who will succeed Macron.

Summit with Japan is off unless Tokyo drops 'its anachronistic' ways: N Korea

Seoul: The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said Monday a summit between her brother and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi won't happen if Japan sticks to "its anachronistic" approach. Kim Yo Jong's statement came after Takaichi told reporters last week that she had informed US President Donald Trump during a summit in Washington that she had "a very strong desire" to meet Kim Jong Un. "But this is not the one that comes true, as wanted or decided by Japan," Kim Yo Jong said. "In order for the top leaders of the two countries to meet each other, Japan should first be determined to break with its anachronistic practice and habit." In her latest statement carried by state media Monday, Kim Yo Jong said, "I don't want to see the prime minister of Japan coming to Pyongyang."

MELONI LOSES JUSTICE REFERENDUM

REUTERS

Rome, March 23: Italian voters have rejected a flagship judicial reform championed by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, initial vote counting suggested Monday, dealing a blow to her right-wing coalition ahead of next year's general elections.

The opposition-backed "No" bloc will secure around 54% of the vote against 46% for the government's "Yes" camp, state broadcaster RAI said, based on an analysis of early counting patterns. The Mediaset TV group, generally pro-government, projected the same outcome.

Turnout was close to 60% -- much higher than expected following an ill-tempered campaign that revealed a deep, mutual animosity between the



- Meloni faces first major setback as prime minister
- High turnout caps bitter judicial clash
- Proposed reform was highly technical

right-wing coalition and Italy's judiciary, that will leave lasting scars.

If the initial vote projections are right, defeat might mark

a turning point for Meloni, stripping her of the aura of being a winner in the eyes of the Italian electorate after four years of victories in local and national polls.

By contrast, the result may re-energize the fragmented centre-left, giving the two largest opposition parties, the Democratic Party and 5-Star Movement, the impetus to forge a broad alliance to take on Meloni and her allies.

MELONI PLANS TO STAY IN OFFICE REGARDLESS OF REFERENDUM

While Meloni has firmly ruled out resigning over the result, avoiding the fate of former premier Matteo Renzi, whose tenure ended abruptly after a failed 2016 constitutional referendum, a loss will nonetheless leave her vulner-

able, analysts said. The timing of the contest proved challenging for Meloni, with Italians harbouring a clear dislike of her ally, US President Donald Trump, and fearful that the US-Israeli war on Iran will drive up already high domestic power prices.

Pollsters said in the run-up to the ballot that many who voted "No" would likely do so to register dissatisfaction with Meloni's administration rather than engaging with the substance of the highly technical reform.

The government argued the changes were needed to make the judiciary more accountable for its mistakes, remove potential bias in the system against defendants and prevent politically motivated factions from doling out top jobs to supporters.

India, China bear brunt of Trump's tougher visa policies: Report

From January to August 2025, the State Department approved 11 per cent fewer permanent resident and temporary visas compared with the same period a year before, according to State Department data released in early March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, March 23: India and China bore the maximum brunt of tougher immigration policy unveiled by the Trump administration which issued 2.5 lakh fewer visas in the first eight months of 2025 compared with the same period in 2024, according to a media report.

From January to August 2025, the State Department approved 11 per cent fewer

permanent resident and temporary visas compared with the same period a year before, according to State Department data released in early March.

These visas are generally issued for students, workers, and family members of citizens and legal residents.

The 11 per cent drop doesn't include tourist visas, which also fell during the same period, the Washington Post reported Sunday.



According to the report, visas for Chinese and Indian nationals fell by about 84,000 compared with the same peri-

od in 2024, largely reflecting a drop-off in international students and workers from those countries.

Business and tourism visas declined by about 3.4 per cent in the first eight months of 2025 compared with that period a year earlier, a drop of nearly two lakh visas.

Between January and August 2024, the US had issued more than 3.44 lakh student visas, the number declined to a little over 2.38 lakh during the same period in 2025.

The family preference visa, which includes adult children and siblings of US citizens, fell by more than 27 per cent or by over 44,000.

The visas issued to sea and airline workers also reduced by 30,876, while those issued for culture exchange visitors declined by 29,594.

The visas issued to fiancee/

spouse declined from 37,229 in the first eight months of 2024 to 18,894 for the period under review in 2025.

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said in a statement that "President Trump was elected with a resounding mandate to put American citizens first and every policy decision he's made has reflected that priority."

In a statement to The Washington Post, State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said, "A visa is a privilege, not a right. Unlike the Biden administration, President Trump is not willing to compromise the safety of American citizens to allow mass migration of unvetted foreign nationals into our country."



The massive wealth created over the past several generations flowed mostly to people who already owned financial assets... Now AI threatens to repeat that pattern at an even larger scale

LARRY FINK | CEO OF BLACKROCK

11 AIRLINES EXIT INDIAN MARKET SINCE 2016: GOVT

The Ministry of Civil Aviation Monday informed Parliament that a total of 11 airlines have shut down operations in India since 2016, mainly due to financial stress, lack of aircraft availability and internal issues



of the day quote

No one is expected to make insinuations without proper evidence and recordings... We can't keep things vague

TUHIN KANTA PANDEY | SEBI CHAIRMAN

India is undergoing one of the fastest digital transformations in the world. Telecommunication and digital technologies are now core infrastructure for economic growth, governance, and social inclusion

ANIL KUMAR LAHOTI | CHAIRMAN, TRAI

No decision has been taken on increasing coal prices. Coal prices should not increase. We are producing more coal than the current demand

G KISHAN REDDY | COAL AND MINES MINISTER

SENSEX NOSEDIVES 1,836 PTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 23: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty plummeted Monday, in tandem with an extremely weak trend in global markets as the war in the Middle East showed no signs of a slowdown.

Rising crude oil prices due to the war, which has entered its fourth week, relentless foreign fund outflows and weakness in the rupee have also made investors risk-averse.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dived 1,836.57 points, or 2.46 per cent, to settle at 72,696.39. During the day, it plunged 1,974.52 points, or 2.64 per cent, to 72,558.44.

The 50-share NSE Nifty tanked 601.85 points, or 2.60 per cent, to end at 22,512.65.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Titan tumbled the most by 6.24 per cent. Trent, UltraTech Cement, Bharat Electronics, Inter-Globe Aviation, Tata Steel, and HDFC Bank were also among the major laggards.

HCL Tech, Power Grid, Infosys, and Tech Mahindra were the winners.

"Markets witnessed a sharp sell-off on Monday, continuing the prevailing downtrend amid weak global cues and escalating geopolitical tensions. Investor sentiment remained extremely fragile amid escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia, which have once again pushed crude oil prices sharply higher," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.



INVESTORS TAKE ₹48.29L-CR HIT IN WEALTH AMID WEST ASIA WAR

NEW DELHI: Investors' wealth has eroded by a whopping Rs 48.29 lakh crore since the start of the West Asia war February 28, sending shock waves across global markets and driving the BSE Sensex lower by 10.56 per cent. Since the conflict began, the BSE benchmark Sensex has tumbled 8,590.8 points or 10.56 per cent, and the NSE Nifty lost 2,666 points or 10.58 per cent. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies eroded by Rs 48.29 lakh crore (Rs 48,29,041.45 crore) to Rs 415 lakh crore (Rs 41,521,629.82 crore) since then. "The deepening Strait of Hormuz crisis, sustained pressure on the rupee, elevated energy prices, and continued foreign outflows are collectively driving a negative sentiment cycle," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

The spike in oil prices, along with continued foreign institutional investor outflows and weakness in the rupee, significantly dented risk appetite, Mishra said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended

Union Bank of India opens Sundarpada Branch

BHUBANESWAR: Union Bank of India inaugurated its new Sundarpada Branch at Kokila Kanchan Tower, Bhubaneswar. Harekrushna Das, Zonal Head of Union Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Zone inaugurated the new branch. Niranjan Barik, Regional Head, Bhubaneswar Region, Vinay Sharma, Assistant General Manager, Bhubaneswar Region, Soumen-dra Dash, Branch Manager

of Sundarpada Branch along with other senior Bank officials were present on this occasion. Harekrushna Das informed the gathering that Union Bank is committed to give its best service to the public of Sundarpada and will continue to be a part in the financial progress of the region. It is noted that, Sundarpada Branch is the 64th Branch of Bhubaneswar Region of the Bank.



JSW Foundation hosts science exhibitions for rural students

BHUBANESWAR: JSW Foundation, in collaboration with Pratham Education Foundation, successfully organised a series of Science Exhibitions under its Hamara Gaon Program across peripheral Panchayats, aimed at fostering curiosity, innovation, and interest in science among primary school students.

The exhibitions were conducted across multiple locations, including Thelkoloi, Lapanga, Ghichamura, Sripura, and Khinda Panchayats, witnessing enthusiastic participation from students of nearby villages. Over 70 students from peripheral primary schools showcased a diverse range of innovative science models and experiments, demonstrating their creativity and practical understanding of scientific concepts.

The events were attended by local Sarpanchs, School Headmasters, School Manage-



ment Committee Chairpersons, CRCCs, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, along with community members, who encouraged the young participants and appreciated their efforts.

Speaking on the occasion, Vishal Raj, Head - JSW Foundation (Sambalpur & Jharsuguda), who attended the exhibition at Thelkoloi Gram Panchayat, commended the students for their enthusiasm and creativity.

He emphasised the importance of nurturing scientific temper from an early age and encouraged students to continue exploring and learning.

The initiative was successfully executed with the active support of school teachers, parents, and community members, making it a meaningful platform for experiential learning and grassroots-level community engagement.

PNB installs water purifier-cum-cooler at Maa Hingula Temple as part of CSR

CUTTACK: Reinforcing its commitment to community welfare and sustainable development, Punjab National Bank, Cuttack Circle, has facilitated the installation of a water purifier-cum-cooler at the revered Maa Hingula Temple for the benefit and convenience of devotees.

The initiative was carried out in the presence of Circle Head Sujit Kumar Negi, Branch Head Akhila Kumar Pradhan, along with other local Branch Heads, marking a significant step towards enhancing public amenities at

the temple premises.

In a further push towards digital empowerment, a QR code has also been deployed at the temple to enable seamless digital donations. This move is aimed at encouraging cashless transactions and promoting the adoption of digital banking services among devotees.

The initiative reflects the Bank's continued focus on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), combining community service with the promotion of digital banking, thereby strengthening its engagement with the local community.



RBI injects ₹79,256cr into banking system via overnight VRR auction

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monday infused Rs 79,256 crore transient liquidity into the banking system through overnight variable rate (VRR) auction. The RBI injected the funds at cut-off and weighted average rates of 5.26 per cent, the central bank said in a release. The liquidity injected was much lower than the notified amount of Rs 1 lakh crore, despite the sharp drop in surplus liquidity in the banking system due to advance tax payments. Currently, liquidity in the banking system is estimated to be in deficit of about Rs 65,395.64 crore as on March 23. On March 20, the central bank had infused Rs 25,101 crore transient liquidity in the banking system through a three-day VRR auction. On March 17, the RBI injected Rs 48,014 crore liquidity in to the banking system via seven-day VRR. Prior to this, the RBI infused Rs 3.50 lakh crore of durable liquidity into the banking system through open market purchase (OMO) of government securities since January 2026.

Proactive steps must to limit war's impact: RBI bulletin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 23: India needs to closely monitor the evolving situation in West Asia and take proactive measures to limit the impact of spillovers, as the country is dependent on crude oil imports, the Reserve Bank's bulletin said Monday.

The March bulletin, however, noted that India's foreign exchange reserves remain adequate to provide a cushion against external shocks, and the creation of an Economic Stabilisation Fund would further provide fiscal headroom and buffer to proactively respond to global headwinds.

An article on the state of the economy published in the March bulletin stated that the

conflict in the Middle East and fresh trade investigations by the US have resulted in increased volatility in the global markets, said an article

The renewed conflict in the Middle East and the US investigations into trade practices of key trading partners have brought uncertainties regarding global energy security, US import tariffs and global supply chains back to the centre stage, it said.

The article cautioned that a prolonged period of war and high uncertainty would be detrimental to the broader global outlook, which was already in a state of flux prior to the recent events.

"...given India's external dependence on crude oil, the evolving situation requires



close monitoring and proactive measures to limit adverse spillovers," the article said.

It, however, added that the capacity and resilience of the Indian economy to absorb external shocks have strengthened over time, buttressed by its strong growth, sound macroeconomic fundamentals and

robust external sector buffers. In terms of energy security, India has progressively diversified its crude oil import sources and augmented its domestic refining capacity.

Since the start of the conflict, several policy measures have been implemented to blunt the immediate impact of the dis-

ruptions in global fuel supply chains and to achieve more effective use of domestic capacity to meet shortfalls, the bulletin article added.

High frequency indicators signal towards economic activity gaining momentum in February. CPI headline inflation picked up in February on account of food and beverages.

"System liquidity has remained comfortable and the total flow of financial resources to the commercial sector rose, with a rise in financing from both the bank and non-bank sources," it said.

As regards global uncertainty, it said that after retreating for four consecutive months, rose again in February with an uptick in trade policy uncer-

tainty, following the verdict of the US Supreme Court on import tariffs. Since end-February, the geopolitical tensions in the Middle East intensified into a major conflict causing significant disruption to key oil infrastructure and critical energy corridors due to the closure of Strait of Hormuz.

Alongside, the US administration has also launched fresh probes into trade practices by major trading partners. All these factors have resulted in increased volatility across the various commodity and financial markets, the article said.

The central bank, however, said the views expressed in the Bulletin article are of the authors and do not represent the views of the Reserve Bank of India.

New era of athletics begins

Animesh, Chitravel hope the inaugural event will help them in Asian Games build-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 23: Top Indian athletes, including sprinter Animesh Kujur and triple jumper Praveen Chitravel, are upbeat at competing in the inaugural National Indoor Championships beginning here Tuesday, saying the event will help them in their build-up to the Asian Games later this year.

Kujur, who holds national record in both 100m and 200m outdoor events, is making his indoor debut as part of a 33-member Odisha team. He will compete in the 60m race in the two-day championships.

Triple jump national record holder Chitravel will represent Tamil Nadu but will compete in long jump.

High jumper Sarvesh Kushare, who made it to the finals in the 2025 World Championships (outdoor), is also among around 300 athletes taking part in the two-day national event being held at the state-of-the-art indoor facility at the Kalinga Stadium complex here.

NATIONAL INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS



"This is going to be my first indoor competition and 60m race is about how explosive you are," said Kujur, who is running his first race of the season. "My main target this year is the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, and I want to know from this indoor race as to what is my level and the improvements I have to make if any," said the 22-year-old

This is going to be my first indoor competition and 60m race is about how explosive you are

ANIMESH KUJUR

who also competed in the 2025 World Championships in Tokyo in 100m.

Kujur is opening his outdoor season with the Indian Athletics Series 3 in New Delhi April 11.

The National Indoor Championships will be a novel experience for many Indian athletes, the organisers and the officials of the AFL.

An indoor competition is run on a 200m track, instead of 400m in outdoor events, in a closed and smaller facility. Athletes run on tracks which are narrower and have banked turns. The outdoor 400m tracks are wider and have flat turns.

Around 300 athletes will compete in the championship with Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra sending big contingents of around 30 athletes each

Field events like high jump, pole vault, long jump, triple jump and shot put are included. But throw events like javelin, discus and hammer are excluded for obvious reasons.

Indoor events are not affected by wind and the weather conditions are consistent throughout the duration of the competition.

Around 300 athletes will compete in the national championships with Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra sending big contingents of around 30 athletes each.

Chitravel, though, has competed in the indoor events earlier and he is the most experienced one in this aspect. He won a triple jump silver medal in the 2023 Asian Indoor Championships in Kazakhstan.

"Indoor events are feel good competitions inside closed

doors and performance is consistent. In outdoor events, there is wind factor which is not there in indoors.

"So, I am looking forward to the National Indoors," said Chitravel, who also took part in the 2024 World Indoor Championships in Glasgow.

Kushare, who currently trains at the Army Sports Institute in Pune is also looking forward to the experience of competing in the indoors.

Athletics Federation of India (AFI) president Bahadur Singh Sagoo hoped that the maiden event will give a fillip to the profile of the country in the indoor competitions.

"We did well in the Asian Indoor Championships in February in China and we are now holding our first national championships. We are hoping that we will keep on improving our performance in the indoor events."

He also talked about the National Relay Championships to be held in Chandigarh March 28.

"We are hoping to qualify for the World Relays (May 2-3 in Botswana) from the National Open Relay in Chandigarh. To do that, we need to have at least two foreign teams in Chandigarh. So we are looking to invite 3-4 foreign teams."

SHORT TAKES

Veteran journalist Thyagarajan dies

Chennai: Veteran Indian sports journalist S Thyagarajan, who carved a niche for himself with his extensive coverage of hockey, died here Monday after battling age-related ailments. He was 85. Thyagarajan, who covered six Olympics and nine Asian Games, served 'The Hindu' newspaper from 1962 to 2013 before his retirement. He started his career with 'The Indian Express' in 1961. Thyagarajan also served on the media and communications-related committees of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) during his journalistic career. He was a former president of both the Sports Journalist Federation of India and the Tamil Nadu Sports Journalists Association.

Korda upsets Alcaraz in Miami Open

Miami Gardens (USA): Carlos Alcaraz was eliminated in the third round of the Miami Open Sunday, losing to Sebastian Korda in three sets. The 22-year-old Alcaraz, who completed the career Grand Slam when he won the Australian Open in January, dropped to 17-2 this season. The No 1 player in the men's rankings also lost to Daniil Medvedev in the semifinals at Indian Wells last weekend. Korda served for the match at 5-4 in the second, but Alcaraz rallied by winning five consecutive games. The 25-year-old Korda then regrouped and closed out a 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 victory in two hours, 19 minutes. At No 36, Korda became the lowest-ranked man to beat Alcaraz since No 55 David Goffin accomplished the feat in the second round in Miami last year, according to the ATP Tour. Next up for Korda is qualifier Martin Landaluce, who advanced with a 6-3, 7-6 (2) win against 14th-seeded Karen Khachanov.

Anuhith wins gold at Global Esports Games

Mumbai: India secured gold at the Global Esports Games in front of a full arena of fans as Anuhith Gosala defeated Miras of Kazakhstan in the Clash Royale finals, 3-2, to claim the top honours. India also clinched a bronze in DOTA 2, while Türkiye took gold. In Clash Royale, India first defeated the USA in the lower bracket finals, advancing to the grand finals with a close 2-1 score in a tense conclusion. Kazakhstan had already secured their spot in the final the day before, having beaten India 2-0 in the upper bracket finals. During the finals, after a series of back-and-forth matches, Anuhith Gosala achieved a dramatic 3-2 victory, earning the gold medal for Team India. In DOTA 2, Team India earned the bronze medal after losing to Mongolia in the lower bracket finals. In the grand finals, Türkiye defeated Mongolia 3-1 to claim the gold medal.

NATIONAL EAST ZONE ROLL BALL CHAMPIONSHIP Odisha crowned champions



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: History repeated itself in Bhubaneswar as Odisha successfully hosted the 4th National East Zone Roll Ball Championship at the BDA Buddha Jayanti Park from March 21-22. In a thrilling display of skill and speed, the host state emerged as the overall East Zone champions.

The tournament saw fierce competition from six powerhouse states, including Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

The Odisha girls team delivered a dominant performance in the finals, defeating Jharkhand with a decisive 8-3 victory to claim the gold. The Odisha boys team also showed incredible grit, securing the silver medal after a tough final against Jharkhand.

Soudamini Patra, Secretary of the Odisha Roll Ball Association (ORBA), praised the athletes, noting that both teams performed exceptionally well throughout the tournament and have brought immense pride to the state on the national stage.

PSL Contract, pay rows trouble PCB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, March 23: Hosting the expanded Pakistan Super League is fast becoming a logistical and contractual headache for the PCB, with several overseas players withdrawing despite having signed agreements, opting instead for the more lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL).

The PSL, expanded to include two new franchises, is set to begin Thursday in Lahore, just two days before the IPL gets underway March 28. The scheduling overlap means both leagues will run concurrently through April, with the PSL concluding May 3.

According to a reliable source, the PCB is grappling not only with players breaching contracts but also with last-minute demands from some to raise their fees due to the fragile situation in the region amid the ongoing West Asian conflict.

"The PCB is right now totally focussed on hosting the PSL on schedule and have not decided on any course of action



against overseas players who have pulled out for so called personal reasons or have openly breached their PSL contracts to go to the IPL," the source said.

There have been internal discussions about imposing bans ranging from two to four years on players who have pulled out, but concerns remain that such punitive measures could further deter top overseas talent from signing with PSL franchises in the future.

"But there is an argument that bans will only make it more difficult for the eight franchise owners to sign on notable overseas players for the coming edi-

tions of the PSL," he said.

The source acknowledged that the financial disparity between the two leagues remains a major challenge. With the IPL, which itself is facing an injury crisis, offering significantly higher contracts, PSL franchises are struggling to match those pay packages.

The PCB had taken legal action last year against South Africa's Corbin Bosch for a contract breach, handing him a one-year ban.

However, the move proved largely ineffective, as Bosch went on to secure an IPL contract in the subsequent auction,

even before the PSL player draft took place.

"So the ban didn't really impact him," the source noted.

The PCB is also expected to raise the issue with other members of the International Cricket Council (ICC), in a bid to formulate a more robust framework ensuring players adhere to contractual obligations once they commit to a league.

Among the overseas players who have withdrawn from this year's PSL after signing contracts are West Indians Gudakesh Motie and Johnson Charles, Dasun Shanaka (Sri Lanka), Blessing Muzarabani (Zimbabwe), Spencer Johnson and Jake Fraser-McGurk (Australia), Otmeil Baartman (South Africa), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (Afghanistan), and Tymal Mills (England).

Several overseas players including former Australians Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne, New Zealand's Mark Chapman and Devon Conway, South African Tabraiz Shamshi have arrived in Lahore for the PSL.

WORLD OF FOOTBALL

POETIC MADRID DERBY

Real triumph in goal fest

Vinicius strikes twice as Real Madrid edge Atletico 3-2 in pulsating clash at the Bernabeu



Madrid, March 23: Vinicius Jr scored twice as Real Madrid fought back to beat visitors Atletico Madrid 3-2 in a breathless Spanish capital derby Sunday, keeping Alvaro Arbeloa's side within four points of LaLiga leaders Barcelona.

Barcelona kept their lead over Real Madrid into the international break after grind-

- Real maintain four-point gap behind Barcelona in LaLiga
- Valverde's red card adds drama to thriller derby
- Vinicius shines with two goals, including a late stunner
- Molina equalized with a superb long-range effort

Valverde to put Madrid ahead three minutes later.

Nahuel Molina equalized with a superb long-range effort, but Vinicius restored Madrid's lead in the 72nd minute, cutting inside before curling a shot into the far corner.

Valverde was later sent off for a late challenge on Alex Baena, and Julian Alvarez rattled the post from distance, but Atletico could not find a second equal-

izer. Barcelona was far from convincing in its 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano, needing Ronald Araujo's first-half goal and an outstanding display from goalkeeper Joan Garcia to secure the points.

Athletic Club beat Real Betis 2-1 at home after first-half goals from Dani Vivian and Oihan Sancet, two days after Ernesto Valverde announced he would step down as coach at the end of the season.

Alaves produced one of the comebacks of the season, recovering from 3-0 down away to Celta Vigo to win 4-3 and move further clear of the relegation zone.

FRENCH MAGICIAN PAYET HANGS BOOTS

Paris: Dimitri Payet called time on a playing career where he earned a reputation as one of soccer's entertainers, catching the eye with spectacular free kicks and wizardry on the ball. The 38-year-old announced his retirement Sunday. He was out of contract after finishing a spell with Brazilian club Vasco da Gama. It was perhaps fitting that Payet's career should end in Brazil, whose soccer-loving fans appreciate the type of skill and intricacy he was capable of. "On the eve of my 39th birthday, I officially announce I'm retiring as a professional footballer," Payet told French broadcaster Ligue 1. "I would like to thank everyone who shared these 20 years with me, it was something really exceptional." He scored more than 150 goals in his career, 78 of them for Marseille. He played 38 times for France, finishing runner-up at Euro 2016, where he scored three goals. "I come from an island and my dream was to become a pro. I managed to do it and to play for the national team," Payet said.

Pep guides City to record ninth

It follows City's four consecutive triumphs between 2018 and 2021 and marks the ninth League Cup trophy in their history, with only Liverpool winning it more times

EFL CUP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, March 23: Manchester City beat Arsenal 2-0 in the EFL Cup final, with Nico O'Reilly scoring twice in a four-minute burst in the second half to seal the trophy.

It follows City's four consecutive triumphs between 2018 and 2021 and marks the ninth League Cup trophy in their history, with only Liverpool winning it more times.

Pep Guardiola has now won the famous trophy five times as City manager – an English football record. He stands above Brian Clough, Sir Alex Ferguson and Jose Mourinho (who all won four) as the manager with the most successes in the competition.

In total, he's won 29 of his 39 games in the tournament, scoring 83 times and conceding just 26 goals.

The Carabao Cup was Pep's first trophy as City boss, beating Arsenal 3-0 in 2018. Now, he's added to that legacy and become the most successful manager since the competition's inception in 1960.



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City were the better side after halftime and deserved

their win against an Arsenal team that looked short of its usual sharpness, perhaps feeling the effects of a demanding Champions League outing in midweek.

City captain Bernardo Silva, who has led the team with distinction throughout the season to date, described our latest trophy success as a special moment for all involved.

"This is an incredibly proud moment for everyone at City," he said. "We love this competition and to win it by beating Arsenal, who have been excellent this season, is really special."

City remain in contention for the Premier League title, with Guardiola's side currently nine points adrift of leaders Arsenal with a game in hand.