



Sonal's concern

Actor Sonal Chauhan rings alarm over the disturbing events taking place across the world

LEISURE | P2



B'desh genocide day

Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman terms the genocide of March 25, 1971 a "pre-planned" massacre

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Markets cheer

With a rebound in the stock market, investors' wealth surges by ₹15.80 lakh crore in two days

BUSINESS | P11



Golden Gurindervir

Ace Punjab sprinter Gurindervir Singh claims the men's 60m gold in a national record time in the inaugural National Indoor Athletics Championships

SPORTS | P12

Ratna Bhandar inventory begins

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, March 25: The inventory of the Ratna Bhandar of Srimandir began Wednesday after a gap of 48 years. Servitors, bank officials, gemologists and RBI representatives took part in the process on the first day. When the exercise will resume will be announced later.

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration's (SJTA) Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee said that the first day of inventory work was wound up after six hours of counting, weighing, videography, photography and 3D mapping of the valuables.

He said authorised personnel entered the temple around 11.30am, dressed in traditional dhoti and gamchha, and the exercise commenced during the designated auspicious window between 12.09pm and 1.45pm. The invento-



Drones spotted; two WB tourists detained

Security personnel detained two tourists from West Bengal Wednesday for allegedly flying drones over the Srimandir in Puri, a designated no-fly zone, while the inventory of Ratna Bhandar was underway. Acting swiftly, police teams tracked down the operators and detained them from the rooftop of a building in Mati Mandap Sahi, located approximately 500 metres from the temple. The accused have been identified as Kalyan Das and Samrat Biswas, residents of West Bengal's Hooghly district.

ry work started exactly at 12.12pm and ended for the day around 6.15pm.

"The entire exercise was carried out in the presence of a magistrate and videographed," he said, adding the exercise did not disrupt

daily rituals at the shrine.

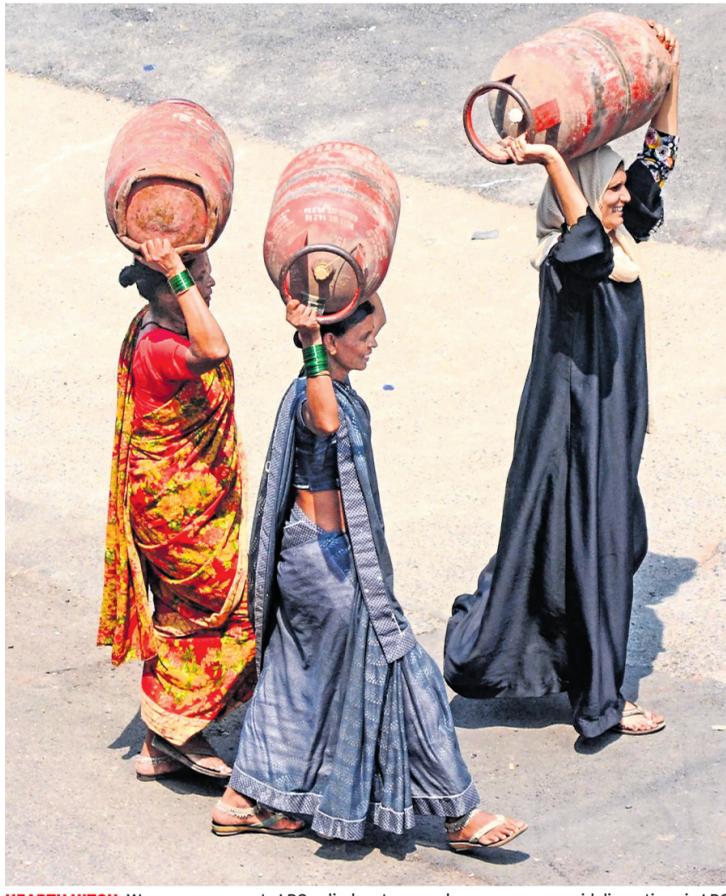
Devotees were allowed darshan from the 'Bahar Katha', while access to the 'Bhitara Katha' remains restricted during the process, Padhee said.

Refusing to divulge details about the items, Padhee said that the exercise was carried out as per the SOP framed by the SJTMC and approved by the state government.

He said all the authorised persons are prohibited from revealing the matters of Ratna Bhandar outside now.

"Today, we have completed the inventory, photography, videography and 3D mapping of the daily use ornaments stored in the Chalanti Ratna Bhandar," Padhee said.

However, the ornaments now being adorned by the deities could not be counted during the day, he said. Notably, the last inventory was conducted between May 13 and July 23 in 1978.



HEARTH HITCH: Women carry empty LPG cylinders to a nearby gas agency, amid disruptions in LPG supplies due to the ongoing West Asia war, at Sanpada, in Navi Mumbai, Wednesday

No LPG if PNG refused: Centre

A March 24 order says LPG supply "shall cease after three months" if a household does not opt for PNG despite availability

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The government has mandated that cooking gas LPG supply to households will be discontinued if consumers fail to switch to piped natural gas (PNG) where such connectivity is available, under a new order aimed at accelerating gas network expansion and reducing reliance on a single fuel.

As India grapples with an LPG shortage due to the war in West Asia disrupting supplies from key sources, the government is pushing households and commercial users to switch to PNG -- a more convenient alternative that is both domestically produced and sourced through diversified supply.

PNP is continuously supplied to kitchen burners through pipelines, eliminating the need to book refills.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has notified the Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution (Through Laying, Building, Operation and Expansion of

STATE MOVES TO AID PNG ROLLOUT

Bhubaneswar: Amid supply constraints of LPG cylinders, the state government has simplified approval processes for early execution of piped natural gas (PNG) distribution projects across cities in the state, officials said.

Pipelines and Other Facilities) Order, 2026, aimed at accelerating pipeline infrastructure, easing approvals and promoting a shift from LPG to PNG to strengthen energy security.

The order issued March 24 states that LPG supply "shall cease after three months" if a household does not opt for PNG despite availability. The provision, however, allows continuation where it is "technically infeasible" to provide a piped connection, subject to a no-objection certificate.

Commenting on the order, Oil Secretary Neeraj Mittal in the post on X said "a crisis (has been) turned into an opportunity" through the ease of doing business reforms.

No sign of turtles yet at Gahirmatha

Kendrapara: Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, known as the world's largest rookery of the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles, is witnessing an unusual delay in its annual mass nesting, causing concern among wildlife lovers and conservationists. So far, there have been no signs of the endangered turtles arriving on the shore to lay eggs. This delay stands in sharp contrast to last year, when more than 6.06 lakh turtles gathered for mass nesting between March 5 and March 10. The absence of such activity this season has left experts and observers anxious.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



NSE, BSE, gold, silver... but no index for Trump's mood

Iran bins US' 15-point plan, issues conditions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 25: Iran Wednesday dismissed an American plan to pause the war in the Middle East and launched more attacks on Israel and Gulf Arab countries, including an assault that sparked a huge fire at Kuwait International Airport.

Iran's defiance came as Israel launched airstrikes on Tehran and Washington deployed paratroopers and more Marines to the region.

Iranian state television's English-language broadcaster, Press TV, quoted an anonymous official as saying Iran rejected America's ceasefire proposal. Press TV's report came after Pakistan transmitted the proposal to Iran.

"Iran will end the war when it decides to do so and when its own conditions are met," Press TV quoted the official as saying. The official added Tehran will continue its heavy blows across the Mideast.

Earlier, two officials from Pakistan described the 15-point US proposal broad-



ly, saying it addressed sanctions relief, a rollback of Iran's nuclear programme, limits on missiles and re-opening the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped.

An Egyptian official involved in the mediation efforts said the proposal also includes restrictions on Iran's support for armed groups. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet released.

Some of those points were nonstarters in negotiations before the war Iran has insisted it won't discuss its ballistic missile programme or its support of regional militias, which it views as key to its security. And its ability to control passage through the Strait of Hormuz represents one of its biggest strategic advantages.

1\$ = ₹93.96

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 25: The rupee slumped 20 paise to close at a fresh record low of 93.96 against the US dollar Wednesday as heavy FII outflows and simmering tensions in West Asia kept investors on the edge.

Even a drop in global crude oil prices, a weaker greenback, and positive sentiments in the domestic equity markets could not provide any respite to the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 93.94 against the US dollar and traded in the range of 93.86-94.13, before settling at an all-time low of 93.96, down 20 paise from its previous close.

The rupee dropped 23 paise to close at 93.76 against the US dollar Tuesday.

"Markets were in risk-on mode, but the rupee was still getting sold against the dollar with the month-end demand keeping the bids high despite the stock markets moving up and the dollar index down."

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 4.33 per cent lower at USD 99.97 per barrel in futures trade.

NavIC setback for India's national security

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: With India's navigation satellite system - Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) - not fully functional, one of the biggest concerns is that the country will be unable to use it for security and strategic purposes, experts say.

The major setback occurred after the last atomic clock on board the Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System-1F (IRNSS-1F) stopped functioning March 10, leaving only three satellites of the constellation capable of providing position, navigation, and timing (PNT) services.



with operational atomic clocks are required for the navigation satellite system to function properly.

Ananya Ray, a former scientist with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), told PTI in an interview, "Systems like NavIC have two signals —

an open signal for common people and a restricted military signal that increases accuracy roughly tenfold."

Armed forces of countries use the navigation satellite system for logistics, mapping and operational planning, and relying on a foreign navigation satellite

system could pose security issues, especially during wars.

"If you are in a war and using someone else's system, they could add errors to the signals or spoof you, making you think you are in the wrong position. Depending on another country's satellites is a dependency out of your control that can prove fatal during war," said Ray.

India began to develop NavIC after the 1999 Kargil War, during which the United States refused to share GPS data.

Atomic clocks are the heart of such navigation satellites, as they provide the high-precision timing necessary for the PNT technology.

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RAP BATTLES ARE REDUNDANT: JAY-Z

Rapper Jay-Z isn't really in favour of rap battles. The 56-year-old rap star had a notoriously bitter rivalry with fellow New Yorker Nas in the early 2000s. However, he believes the genre no longer needs to rely on battling in order to spark public interest in rap, reports *Female First UK*.

CARDI HATES PERFORMING CHOREOGRAPHY ON STAGE

Rapper Cardi B has revealed what she hates on stage, the Grammy-winning rapper, 33, said, "I hate choreography; it's like math to me. I don't have much of a rhythm like that. I could rap all day. But dancing is like, ugh".



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Interactive sessions with people who think like you are on the cards. At last you may have an intimate talk with your beloved and you will get a chance to confide your commitment to the relationship, says Ganesha. You may even express your long-term dreams.

TAURUS

Be careful, says Ganesha. All your calculations and conclusions, plans and moves are likely to go haywire. Time and again, you could fail and, ultimately, get frustrated. Even simple and obvious things are likely to get you worked up. Knowing that you are basically gentle, benign and large hearted, your friends and elders will rally round and provide you the help and advise you need.

GEMINI

You will feel physical and mental excitement and emotions today. You may take part in some competition and will seek to improve your self-esteem by performing physically in it. Your intellectual capacity will be on display in the work that you do, says Ganesha.

CANCER

You know how to make money, and you are even better in putting it to good use. Today, you will have your one eye on the developments in the stock market, and the other on brochures of tourism companies. Yes, you may plan to spend some money on leisure, entertainment and getting closer to your family.

LEO

You want to make your personal relationships conflict free and hence will attempt to resolve the conflicts which are within you. You will need to adopt a compromising attitude in life. It is best to stay away from risky financial investments today. An event which will make you happy will occur at the end of the day, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Take a little break today, and spend some time looking within. At your office there may be some bitter confrontations, so Ganesha advises you to be very careful and try to prevent things from getting too difficult. In matters of love, a new romance may develop.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that any pending legal issues will be sorted out today either in court or through an out of court settlement. Your workload will get eased today and you will be able to find your way out from certain problematic situations. Ganesha showers you with his blessings.

SCORPIO

Your account balance may suffer suddenly as you decide to loosen your purse strings. You are all set to splurge on your loved ones today, according to Ganesha. However, it is important to remember that the value of money is precious, and once spent it never returns; spend wisely.

SAGITTARIUS

You rule your hear today, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to become an expert in reading people's mind. Everything is fair in love and war, is what you believe! Win over your sweetheart and set out on a journey toward destination unknown, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

By and large, your life today will be dull. But, there isn't something unfavourable or negative about it, assures Ganesha, as the planetary movements signal a change, probably a positive one, happening in the near future. So, keep your chin up and get ready for a better tomorrow.

AQUARIUS

You are armed with good communication skills, and like always, it will come to your aide today, too. There is one problem though. You are not clear about your emotions and it may make your arms blunt, foresees Ganesha.

PISCES

For those looking for a promotion at the work-place, now is the time to ask for it. Freelancers could find interesting projects falling into their laps. Businesses are likely to see a surge in profits. No conflicts in personal life are indicated. Overall, a progressive and pleasant day awaits, says Ganesha.

Shweta on her life-altering role

Mumbai: Actor Shweta Tripathi recently opened up about her deep emotional connection with her iconic character Golu Gupta from the widely loved series *Mirzapur*. Having portrayed the character for over eight years, the actor shared that Golu has become far more than just a role. For her, it has been a journey that shaped her both personally and professionally.

Looking back at the journey, Shweta admits the experience still gives her butterflies. The actress says, "It's difficult to explain what Golu means to me because she has been a part of my life for almost eight years. When I first started playing her, she was this reserved, intelligent girl who believed deeply in books and knowledge. Over time we saw her grow, change and become stronger because of everything life threw at her. As an actor, getting the chance to live with a character for so many years is very rare, and I feel extremely grateful for it."

Over the years, *Mirzapur* has built a massive fan following, and Golu Gupta has emerged as one of its most compelling characters.

"*Mirzapur* changed many things for me as an actor. But any-gave and more than thing, it me Golu, that is something I will always cherish," she says.



Sonal's emotional outcry

Mumbai: Actress Sonal Chauhan has expressed her concerns over the disturbing events taking place across the world.

The actress said that all of it reflects the cruelty of the times we live in. Taking to her social media account, the actress shared a note expressing her thoughts and deep emotions.

She wrote, "To everyone asking if I am ok ... By God's grace I am absolutely fine ... but THE WORLD IS NOT !!! I've been deeply disturbed by what has been happening in the world."

"A small child being tortured in front of his father Old parents being abandoned by their own children. WHERE DOES THIS END ??? Will we ever just get up and say - THIS IS IT !!! ??? Everything that could be wrong, is wrong with this world. We are truly living in a VERY CRUEL world... (sic)"

Sonal's concern and post on social media reflects on the grim situation the world currently seems to be in.

A few weeks ago, Sonal had also made headlines after being stranded in Dubai amid escalating war tensions, as the airspace was temporarily shut down back then.

She had made an appeal to the Government of India for assistance and was later safely brought back. IANS

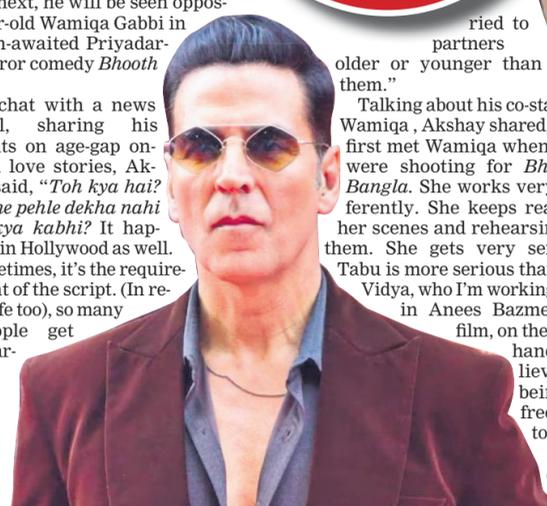
Akshay defends age-gap romance

Mumbai: Lately there has been a lot of debate around the age-gap between two actors romancing onscreen in a film. In a recent interview, while promoting his next film, actor Akshay Kumar, 58, shared his views on the same. Up next, he will be seen opposite 32-year-old Wamiqa Gabbi in the much-awaited Priyadarshan horror comedy *Bhooth Bangla*.

In a chat with a news channel, sharing his thoughts on age-gap onscreen love stories, Akshay said, "Toh kya hai? Humne pehle dekha nahi hai kya kabhi? It happens in Hollywood as well. Sometimes, it's the requirement of the script. (In real life too), so many people get mar-

ried to partners older or younger than them."

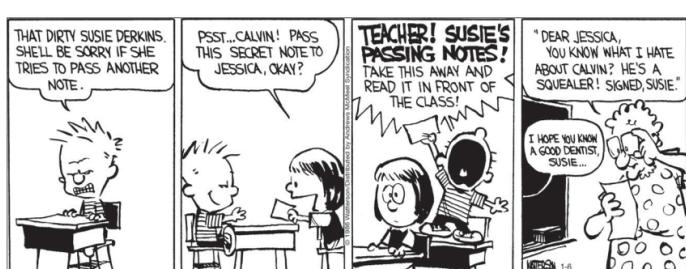
Talking about his co-star Wamiqa, Akshay shared, "I first met Wamiqa when we were shooting for *Bhooth Bangla*. She works very differently. She keeps reading her scenes and rehearsing for them. She gets very serious. Tabu is more serious than her. Vidya, who I'm working with in Anees Bazmee ji's film, on the other hand, believes in being a free actor."



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

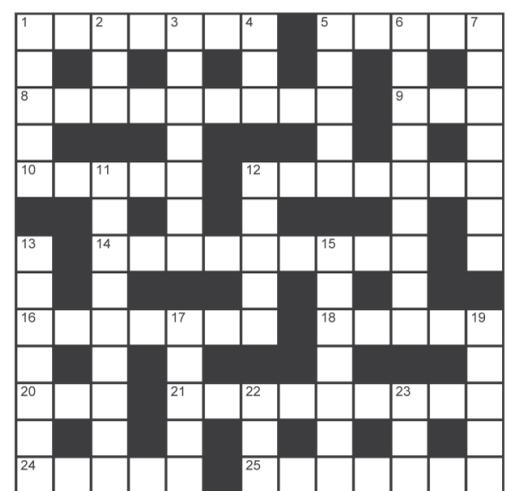


BREVITY



FUN POST

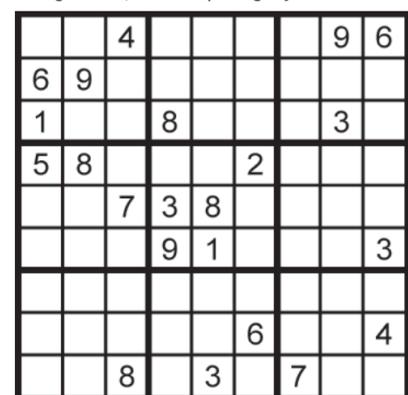
CROSSWORD



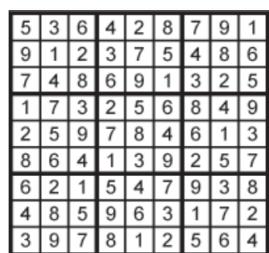
- Across**
- 1 Israeli city (3,4)
 - 5 Stirs up
 - 8 Balls of fire (2-7)
 - 9 Test site
 - 10 Rome's river
 - 12 Make allowances for
 - 14 Skin softener (4,5)
 - 16 Give it a try (4,1,2)
 - 18 Medicinal plant
 - 20 Freudian topic
 - 21 Olympics prize (4,5)
 - 24 Miscue
 - 25 Domestic beasts of burden
 - Down**
 - 1 Like uncomfortable shoes
 - 2 Captain's journal
 - 3 Old hand aid
 - 4 Compete
 - 5 Pine exudation
 - 6 Irish Sea island (4,2,3)
 - 7 Monarchy citizen
 - 11 Department
 - 12 Chocolate source
 - 13 Deliver the goods
 - 15 Photography pioneer
 - 17 Cholera
 - 19 Trip planner's aid
 - 22 Directed
 - 23 Game piece

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



FUN & FROLIC: Tourists enjoy paragliding in the hills near Manali, in Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

White Paper: 122 communal disorder incidents in 2025

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 25: A total of 122 incidents of disorder involving Hindus, Muslims, and Christians were reported in various parts of the state in 2025, according to a White Paper tabled in the Assembly Wednesday.

The Home department, in the White Paper, stated that 106 Hindu-Muslim and 16 Hindu-Christian incidents of disorder were reported during the period, against which 165 criminal cases were registered.

Additionally, 1,095 riot cases were registered at various police stations across the state in 2025. "Chargesheets have already been filed in 498 cases," it stated. "The communal tension that erupted in Cuttack city during last year's Dussehra was successfully managed through coordinated intelligence inputs and police deployment," it added. During last year's Rath Yatra in Puri, a stampede-like situation occurred due to huge crowds near the Gundicha Temple. However, the situation was brought under control due

WHAT GOVT SAYS



The communal tension that erupted in Cuttack city during last year's Dussehra was successfully managed through coordinated intelligence inputs and police deployment

1,095 RIOT CASES WERE REGISTERED AT VARIOUS POLICE STATIONS ACROSS THE STATE IN 2025
IN 2025, THE STATE POLICE REGISTERED A TOTAL OF 2,29,881 CASES OF COGNIZABLE OFFENCES

to the prompt action of the state government and the police, according to the White Paper.

"In order to maintain communal harmony in Odisha, the government has constituted a state-level communal coordination committee. It reviews the situation from time to time and takes appropriate steps," the Home department said in the report.

In addition, a manual with detailed guidelines on controlling communal violence and promoting harmony has been issued to all authorities engaged in maintaining law and order,

it said. The state government also claimed that significant improvement was observed in the overall Left Wing Extremism (LWE) situation during 2025.

"Minor Maoist activities were reported in nine police districts, including Kandhamal, Boudh, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Nuapada, Bolangir, Malkangiri, and Koraput, during the period," it added.

In 2025, the state police registered a total of 2,29,881 cases of cognizable offences, including 1,304 murder cases and 2,994 rape cases. A total of 2,803 cybercrimes were reported during the period.

WB man held for ₹12.33cr cyber fraud in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The Odisha Crime Branch (CB) has arrested a 36-year-old man from West Bengal (WB) in connection with a Rs 12.33-crore online investment fraud involving a fake trading platform, official sources said Wednesday.

According to CB sources, the complainant was contacted by unidentified cyber fraudsters via WhatsApp July 31, 2025. They lured him into joining a group that posed as stock market consultants. The victim was persuaded to install a fraudulent trading application and invest substantial funds. "Between August 12 and September 2, 2025, he transferred a total of Rs 12,33,50,000 from his account into nine different accounts through 52 transactions, all under the instructions of the fraudsters," CB sources said.

When the victim tried to withdraw his investment, the team of the fake platform denied his requests.

Realising that he had been duped, the victim lodged a complaint at the Cyber Crime police station.

A team led by inspector TK Pradhan conducted a raid in Maniktala, Kolkata, West Bengal. This led to the arrest of Rahul Jaiswal from the locality.

INDIA IS NOT A DALAAL NATION: GOVT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has conveyed to US President Donald Trump that the war in West Asia must end soon as it is hurting everyone, the government told an up-in-arms Opposition at an all-party meeting Wednesday and rubbished Pakistan's reported mediation in the conflict, saying India is not a "dalaal" (broker) nation.

There is nothing new in Pakistan's mediation efforts in the matter as that country has been "used" by the US since 1981, sources quoted External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as saying. "We are not a dalaal nation," Jaishankar is said to have told the attendees of the meeting convened at the Parliament complex to discuss the West Asia crisis. The sources added that the government refuted the Opposition's charge

that New Delhi was silent on the situation, asserting that "we are commenting and responding".

When the Iran embassy was opened, the Foreign Secretary visited immediately and signed the con-

ference book, the government told the parties in response to the Opposition's charge that India displayed moral weakness in not condoning the death of the Iranian Supreme Leader sooner.

The government is also said to have informed the parties that its prime concern is ensuring the security of the Indian diaspora living in the Gulf region and fulfilling domestic energy needs. On that count, the government said it has

been successful so far.

The Opposition, however, said the answers provided at the meeting by the government were "unsatisfactory" and demanded that a debate be held on the West Asia situation in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Lashing out at the government, Congress's Tariq Anwar said Pakistan is performing the mediator's role while "we are still mute spectators".

Mahadev app: Now, ED attaches ₹1,700cr assets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Wednesday said it attached fresh immovable assets worth about Rs 1,700 crore, majorly located in Dubai including in the iconic Burj Khalifa, belonging to one of the main promoters of the Mahadev app, Sourabh Chandrakar, as part of its probe.

An order was issued by the Raipur zonal office of ED

under the PMLA Wednesday to attach 18 'high-value' luxury villas and apartments in Dubai Hills Estate. It added that multiple 'high-end' apartments in Business Bay and SLS Hotel & Residences, apart from apartments in Burj Khalifa, have also been attached. Two immovable properties in Delhi have been attached. All these assets have a fair market value of about Rs 1,700 crore, it said.

CCPA warns eateries against levying 'LPG charges'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) Wednesday directed hotels and restaurants not to levy additional charges, such as 'LPG charges' and 'fuel cost recovery', on consumers, as these tantamount to unfair trade practices and strict action will be taken in case of violation.

The authority made it clear that only applicable taxes can be added to the price mentioned in the menu of restaurants and hotels. All input costs should be factored into the prices displayed in the menu.

The CCPA said it is closely monitoring such practices across the country, and



any violation will be dealt with appropriately, and necessary action will be taken to safeguard the interests of consumers.

According to an official statement, "The CCPA has taken serious note of hotels and restaurants levying additional charges, such as 'LPG charges', 'gas surcharge' and 'fuel cost recovery' in consumer bills,

termining the practice an unfair trade practice under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019."

The CCPA observed that such charges are being imposed to circumvent existing guidelines on service charges.

The authority has issued a fresh advisory, under Section 10 of the Act, directing that no such charges should be levied automatically, and warned that violations may invite strict action.

"The CCPA has observed, based on grievances received on the National Consumer Helpline (NCH), and media reports, that certain hotels and restaurants are levying such charges in the consumer bill by default, over and above the

price of food and beverages displayed in the menu and applicable taxes," the statement said. Such practices result in unjustified costs to consumers.

The CCPA clarified that input costs, such as fuel, LPG, electricity, and other operational expenses, are part of the cost of running a business and must be factored into the pricing of menu items. Hence, the recovery of such costs from consumers through separate mandatory charges constitutes an unfair trade practice, the authority said.

The CCPA has advised that no hotel or restaurant shall levy 'LPG charges', 'gas charges', or similar charges by default or automatically in the bill.

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

4 IITs, JNU, BITS Pilani among world's top 50 institutes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Four Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Birla Institute of Technology (BITS), Pilani are among the world's top 50 institutions for different subjects, according to the latest QS World University Rankings announced Wednesday.

London-based QS Quacquarelli Symonds, known for the university rankings, has published the 16th annual edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject.

The rankings benchmark more than 21,000 academic programmes across 1,900



universities in over 100 countries, spanning 55 disciplines and five broad faculty areas.

According to the rankings, India records 27 top 50 positions across sub-

jects and broad faculty areas - more than double the 12 recorded in 2024 - earned by 12 institutions.

Leading the individual charge is the Indian School of Mines University, Dhan-

bad, ranked 21st globally in Mineral and Mining Engineering, and IIM Ahmedabad, which ranks 21st in both Business and Management Studies and Marketing. The latter is a subject debut - India has never before appeared in Marketing's global rankings.

Among the top 50 are IIT Bombay, Kharagpur and Madras; JNU and BITS Pilani. "India's rise this year is not just about scale: it's about momentum in quality and global competitiveness. The breadth of improvement across engineering, technology and business signals a system that is accelerating with intent. The next phase will be defined by how effec-

tively institutions deepen research strength, build global partnerships, and sharpen their distinctiveness on the world stage," said Jessica Turner, CEO, QS Quacquarelli Symonds.

IIT Delhi has delivered the edition's most complete single-institution performance. It records six top-50 entries, leads India in four subjects - Chemical Engineering (48th, its first top-50 appearance), Electrical and Electronic Engineering (36th), Mechanical, Aeronautical and Manufacturing Engineering (44th, best in over a decade), and the Engineering and Technology broad area (36th) - and ranks second in Computer Science at 45th.

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LIC/RI/2024-25/17/ENG

ENERGY CRISIS Govt push for PNG Minister reviews hospital fire safety

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 25: In a major push to strengthen clean energy infrastructure across urban Odisha, the state government has issued a fresh directive to simplify and fast-track approvals for City Gas Distribution (CGD) projects.

Officials said the move will help accelerate the rollout of piped natural gas (PNG) networks across cities, ensuring quicker access to cleaner and more efficient fuel for households, commercial establishments, and industries. By easing procedural bottlenecks and streamlining clearances, the initiative is expected to attract greater investment in the sector and speed up project execution.

Housing & Urban Development department Additional Chief Secretary and IDCO Chairperson Usha Padhee said the order underscores the government's commitment to promoting a gas-based economy and expanding access to clean fuel across urban areas.

As per the directive, urban local bodies (ULBs) will waive permission fees for laying underground pipelines and related CGD infrastructure. It also clarifies that no fresh approvals will be required for ongoing or previously sanctioned projects, thereby removing procedural hurdles and ensuring seamless execution. To further accelerate implementation, the state government has emphasised time-bound approvals, directing all authorities to process applications promptly.



WHAT DIRECTIVE SAYS

Urban local bodies (ULBs) to waive permission fees for underground pipelines and CGD infrastructure; no fresh approvals needed for ongoing or previously approved projects

Time-bound approvals mandated, with all authorities directed to process applications promptly

Restrictions on road-cutting for CGD projects relaxed during certain periods to avoid delays and ensure smooth execution

Measures effective until June 30, 2026, or until further orders

"Restrictions on road-cutting during certain periods have also been relaxed for CGD projects to avoid disruptions and maintain steady implementation," the H&UD department said in a statement.

While facilitating ease of execution, the directive also

ensures accountability. "Now, the CGD entities will be responsible for the restoration of roads and infrastructure at their own cost, in accordance with prescribed standards," an official said.

The Director of Municipal Administration has been designated as the nodal authority to coordinate and monitor CGD-related works across the state, ensuring effective oversight and timely progress.

Departments including Works, Water Resources, Energy, and Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water have been directed to extend full cooperation to ensure smooth implementation at the ground level.

The measures will remain in force until June 30, 2026, or until further orders.

The initiative is expected to significantly accelerate the rollout of PNG connections, promote the use of cleaner fuels, and strengthen urban infrastructure, supporting Odisha's transition towards a more sustainable and energy-efficient future.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: In a bid to strengthen fire safety systems in healthcare institutions, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling Wednesday held a high-level review meeting with all district Collectors via virtual mode at Lok Seva Bhavan here.

During the meeting, the minister stressed the urgent need to bolster fire safety infrastructure in hospitals across the state. He directed Collectors to carry out comprehensive inspections, prepare necessary estimates, and ensure timely completion of safety upgrades.

The review was held in line with the directives of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Ma-



jhi, who has called for strict enforcement of fire prevention and firefighting systems in hospitals. Authorities have been asked to form special task forces, conduct mock drills, carry out regular inspections, and expedite ongoing fire safety projects.

Emphasising patient safety, the minister directed that all medical colleges, district headquarters hospitals, and other healthcare facilities undergo regular fire safety checks. He stressed that firefighting equipment must remain functional at all times and mandated pe-

riodic safety audits along with mock drills.

Additionally, officials were directed to coordinate closely with the Fire services and Works departments to ensure effective implementation of safety measures.

The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Works department Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh, Special Relief Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, Health department Secretary Aswathy S, and Agriculture department Secretary Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav. District Collectors, chief medical officers, fire officers, and authorities from medical colleges across Odisha also participated in the virtual meeting.

Common PG entrance examination from May 5

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The Common PG Entrance Test (CPET) 2026 is set to commence from May 5, as per the notification issued by the Higher Education department Wednesday. The entrance examination will continue till May 18.



For the academic session 2026-27, a total of 58,708 candidates have applied for admission to 31,915 postgraduate seats across various institutions in the state.

It is noteworthy that the application process was carried out through SAMS portal from February 27 to March 22. The data of the applicants will be handed over to State Selection Board (SSB) March 26.

Admit cards for the entrance examination will be made available April 30. Candidates can download their admit cards from the official SSB website.

Selection of candidates for postgraduate courses will be based on their marks secured in the examination.

The department has also set a target to commence PG classes in all universities and colleges by July 10.

MUSHROOM CONCLAVE 2026

'Odisha accounts for 11% of India's mushroom output'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Odisha is among the leading states in mushroom production, contributing nearly 11 per cent to the country's total output, Deputy Chief Minister and Agriculture Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo said while addressing the Mushroom Conclave 2026 here Wednesday.

"Mushrooms are called super food as it is rich in nutrients, fat free and low in cholesterol. Its cultivation is organic and sustainable for the environment. The state government is promoting mushroom cultivation, providing subsidies under MKUY and developing the roadmap for its market linkage, while providing robust logistic support," the deputy CM said.

The conclave was organised by Agricultural Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (APICOL), a corporation under the department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment (DA&FE) to promote mushroom cultivation as a sustainable livelihood opportunity.

The event featured technical sessions on advanced production techniques, post-harvest management, value addition, and market linkages in the



mushroom sector. On the occasion, deputy CM launched APICOL's new website and distributed 'Go-Ahead' letters to mushroom producers for setting up their production and spawn units.

Apart from the ceremonial session, nine expert speakers shared valuable insights on various technical aspects of mushroom cultivation and its value chain. The conclave witnessed active participation from over 170 participants across the state, including members of Mushroom Federation, reflecting strong interest from the farming and entrepreneurial community.

Soil Conservation and Watershed Development Director Subrat Kumar Panda, Horticulture Director Kalunge

is already benefiting a large number of farmers across the five districts by ensuring assured market access and fair pricing.

By reducing reliance on intermediaries, the programme is expected to enhance farmers' incomes while strengthening the rural economy.

108 LPG cylinders seized in City raid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The Civil Supplies Enforcement Squad, in coordination with Laxmisagar police, Wednesday evening busted an illegal LPG storage unit during a raid at Ganesh Bazar in the Jharpada area under Jharpada police limits and seized 108 cylinders.

The enforcement drive was led by Khurda Civil Supply Officer (CSO) Gyanindriya Mishra, along with the Additional CSO, ACSO, and Marketing Inspectors of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), in the presence of local police personnel.



During the raid, officials detected an unauthorised LPG storage unit operating in a residential locality, with cylinders stored in a highly unsafe manner, posing a serious threat to public safety. A total of 108 LPG cylinders were seized from the spot, including 95 domestic and 13 commercial cylinders.

Officials said the illegal storage violated safety norms and could have led to a major mishap. Necessary legal action has been initiated against those involved as per due procedure.

OUAT meet focuses on AI, NEP reforms



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The 13th Educational Council Meeting was held at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) Wednesday, focusing on integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into agricultural education and aligning curricula with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The theme of the meeting was "Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Innovation in Agricultural Education: Aligning Curricula with NEP 2020."

ICAR-Indian Institute of Water Management Director A Sarangi attended as the chief guest. In his address, he highlighted the growing importance of AI in education and stressed the

need to build robust databases and strengthen analytical capabilities to make teaching and research more data-driven. He noted that AI applications have simplified publication processes and enhanced academic productivity.

Presiding over the meeting, VC Pravat Kumar Roul highlighted the learner-centric and market-oriented approach of NEP 2020, noting that it enables students to acquire diverse skills and competencies. He said the integration of skill development, vocational education, internships, and entrepreneurship is boosting employability and preparing students for future challenges. Roul also emphasised the importance of emerging fields such as AI, data science, and digital technologies in driving intellectual growth and innovation.

The meeting featured three technical sessions focusing on various aspects of curriculum development and implementation under NEP 2020, with active participation from deans, faculty members, researchers, and students.

ORMAS boosts market linkages, collects 128.3 MT tomatoes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: The Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) has created direct market linkages to support farmers by eliminating middlemen.

Under the initiative, tomatoes

are being procured through self-help groups (SHGs) and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) from Ganjam, Cuttack, Angul, Jharsuguda and Jagatsinghpur districts.

As of March 24, a total of 128.30 metric tonnes of tomatoes have been collected, including 53 MT from Cuttack,

33.80 MT from Ganjam, 20 MT from Angul, 18 MT from Jharsuguda, and 3.50 MT from Jagatsinghpur.

All the produce has either been procured or dispatched to Bharat Masala under the direct market linkage mechanism.

Officials said the initiative

Auto of hope: One man's lifeline on wheels

55-year-old auto driver Pravat Kumar Pradhan becomes a beacon of hope, offering free ambulance service to those in need

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 25: A 55-year-old auto driver from Apuja village in Cuttack's Niali area is no ordinary man. His dedication and selfless service stand as a shining example of how one individual can bring hope to people in times of need.

Pravat Kumar Pradhan not only carries passengers but also delivers hope through his three-wheeler, offering free ambulance services. He never charges a single penny and is ready to reach people's doorsteps at any hour in emergencies. "It has been 30 years since I started driving this auto. Since childhood, I always wanted to serve my country, but I never got the opportunity.



Pradhan not only carries passengers but also delivers hope through his three-wheeler, reaching people's doorsteps at any hour during emergencies without charging a penny

Driven by compassion since childhood, he earlier helped persons with disabilities by transporting them on his bicycle

So, I chose to contribute in my own way by providing free auto services to those in need. I offer free ambulance services to accident victims and people facing medical emergencies. That is how I believe I am serving my country," said Pravat. Driven by a deep humani-

tarian spirit, Pravat has been helping others since his childhood, when he would often assist persons with disabilities by carrying them on his bicycle.

"Before becoming an auto driver, I had a bicycle and would give lifts to persons with disabilities, taking them to hospitals and helping with their needs. Since childhood, I have been engaged in help-

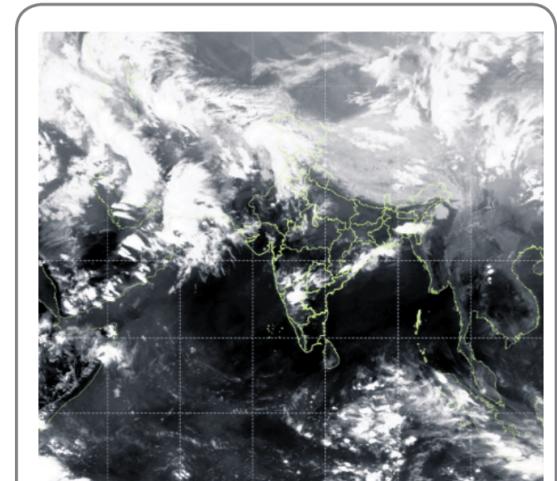
ing others. After I became an auto driver, I dedicated myself even more to this humanitarian journey," said Pravat.

During the Covid pandemic, when life came to a standstill and many were afraid to step out or assist even their unwell neighbours due to fear of infection, Pravat stepped forward and helped patients reach hospitals.

"During the Covid pandemic, I transported many patients to hospitals. My family was under immense stress and even warned me not to step out due to the fear of infection, but I wanted to be a source of hope for those who had no one to turn to. I continued to provide free services and helped patients reach medical care," said Pravat.

When asked how offering such services has not affected his livelihood, despite having a wife and two sons to support, he said, "Service to mankind is service to God. While many think only about themselves, I want to be that one person who serves others. Through such service, we can contribute to the wellbeing of our country," he added.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	93.78 ↓ 0.22	SENSEX	75273.45 ↑ 1205.00	GOLD	₹143,920 ↑ ₹5097
EURO	109.36 ↑ 0.96	NIFTY	23306.45 ↑ 394.05	SILVER	₹234,700 ↑ ₹10,759



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	35.6°	34.4°	Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely
Min Temp	23.3°	22.4°	
Humidity	79%	80%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Dawn-to-dusk bandh hits life in Malkangiri

PNN & AGENCIES

Malkangiri, March 25: Normal life was affected in Malkangiri district Wednesday due to a 12-hour bandh called by the Congress over various issues, including those pertaining to paddy procurement and LPG supply constraint.

Commercial establishments, educational institutions and many offices remained closed due to the bandh, which commenced at 6am.

Vehicular movement was also disrupted in the southern Odisha district as the Congress workers staged road blockades at multiple locations, including a state highway. However, emergency services were permitted to operate, police said.

The Congress members demanded immediate procurement of paddy from farmers at the mandis.

“As the government has almost stopped procuring paddy from the farmers, they are facing hardship at the mandis,” Congress leader Gobind Patra said.

Due to unseasonal rainfall, harvested paddy has suffered damage. So, the government should provide them with compensation, he said.

Padma Ranjan Pangri, another Congress leader of the district, said the people of Malkangiri are facing shortages of LPG cylinders, petrol and diesel.

The government should ensure an adequate supply of petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders, he said.

“If the government fails to procure paddy from farmers by this month-end, we will stage a protest before the office of the District Collector here,” a protesting Congress leader said.

NIT-R patents gait-based intruder detection system

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 25: Researchers at National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela has secured a patent for a fully automated system which recognises intruders based on their walking pattern to detect unauthorised access in large and complex building environments, according to officials.

The unauthorised person detection using thermal imaging and gait recognition for intra-building security system introduces a next-generation solution to address the challenge of monitoring unauthorised access in large and complex building environments, they said.

According to Samit Ari, Professor, Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, conventional CCTV camera-based surveillance systems require extensive manual monitoring and analysis, making them ineffective and prone to human errors.

In large setups, tracking individuals across multiple cameras is difficult, particularly under varying lighting conditions and occlusions. “To address these limitations, we developed a fully automated, non-intrusive system that can detect, identify, and track individuals using thermal imaging technology,” Ari said.

The innovation is designed to monitor suspicious activities. The integrated thermal imaging technology helps distinguish humans from the background due to lower infrared noise and enables accurate detection even in inadequate lighting conditions, he added.



To achieve this, the research team used human gait as a biometric identifier, which recognises individuals based on their unique walking pattern, thus reducing the need for manual monitoring.

When a person enters a restricted area, the system compares their walking pattern with those of authorised individuals. If no match is found, it flags the individual as suspicious and alerts security. We developed a working prototype with three thermal cameras connected to a central server via USB interfaces.

“The system detects unauthorised individuals at entry, tracks their movement across multiple checkpoints, maintains a temporary database for unknown individuals, and determines entry and exit patterns based on movement direction. If an individual exits the restricted area, their temporary record is cleared, while historical data remains stored for future reference and forensic use,” Ari said.

Developed at an estimated cost of ₹1.90 lakh, the system uses thermal imaging for low-light and night-time operation, along with gait-based identification for non-intrusive

biometric recognition. Automated multi-camera tracking enables seamless monitoring across locations, supported by centralised data processing for logging and database management.

The system has wide-ranging applications across academic institutions and corporate campuses, as well as in defence and high-security setups where reliable identification is critical. It is also suited for deployment in industrial and research and development facilities to enhance monitoring and safety. Additionally, its capability to operate effectively in night-time and low-visibility conditions makes it ideal for surveillance operations in challenging environments.

The developed system can be utilised to minimise dependence on manual surveillance, thereby improving operational efficiency. It supports faster and more accurate threat detection, allowing timely responses to potential risks. Designed to perform reliably in challenging conditions such as low visibility and complex environments, it also enhances forensic investigations through the availability of stored gait data for analysis and identification, he said.

Raghunath, Jiban back in BJD fold

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Former minister Raghunath Mohanty and ex-MLA Jiban Pradeep Dash Wednesday returned to the BJD after delinking their membership with the ruling BJP.

BJD president Naveen Patnaik welcomed the two leaders at his residence after they formally joined the regional outfit at ‘Sankha Bhawan’, the party’s state headquarters. Mohanty, who has served as a panchayati raj and law minister under the Naveen Patnaik government, said that he would work as a disciplined worker of the party.

Das said he is extremely happy to return to the party after being outside BJD for five years. He added that under the guidance of Patnaik, he would work as a disciplined member to strengthen and organise BJD in Balasore district.

Death of woman in mishap sparks tension

Paralakhemundi: A 70-year-old woman died after being hit by a motorcycle at Adagaon under Gurandi police limits in Gajapati district Wednesday, with locals blaming a delay in ambulance services resulting in her death. Reports said the accident occurred when Chandrama Behera of the village was returning home from the village square and a motorcycle (OD 20A-7514) hit her. Locals made repeated calls to an ambulance but to no avail. She was later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital in a police van where she succumbed during treatment.irate locals staged a protest at the spot. Gurandi police registered a case, began an investigation.

Nalco R&R draft policy triggers stir



POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, March 25: A day ahead of a scheduled meeting over rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) policy pertaining to the brownfield expansion project of National Aluminium Company Limited (Nalco), affected villagers staged a protest by burning copies of the draft policy Wednesday.

Residents of Kangula, Gopinathpur and Kulad mouzas, whose land parcels are set to be acquired for the project, united in protest against the draft policy. Alleging that the policy fails to safeguard their interests, they set ablaze the papers as a mark of dissent. The affected villagers claimed that despite the draft policy being prepared by Nalco and the district administration, it does not ensure permanent employment for any displaced person.

They further alleged that during earlier tripartite meet-

ings involving villagers, Nalco and the administration, the company had assured permanent jobs to each displaced family. Following this assurance, residents of the three villages had cooperated with preliminary survey work. However, despite multiple surveys conducted since then, no policy favouring the affected people has been finalised, they said. The villagers also alleged that the draft policy was shared with them only a few hours before the scheduled R&R meeting, leaving little scope for discussion or objection.

In protest, the affected families have decided to collectively boycott Thursday’s meeting. They have also submitted a memorandum to the District Collector, the Additional Collector and the special land acquisition officer of Nalco. Angul Collector Abdaal Muhammad Akhtar urged the affected people to attend the meeting and raise their concerns.

Gahirmatha: Delayed arrival of Olive Ridley's raises concern



AGENCIES

sibly due to an extended winter that lasted until February.

He also noted that the lack of northern winds could be discouraging the turtles from approaching the coast. Despite this, he expressed hope that the turtles may still arrive around the upcoming full moon or within the next fortnight.

Rajnagar Mangrove and Wildlife Division DFO Vardaraj Ganonkar cautioned that there is a possibility the turtles might skip nesting this year.

Such behaviour is not entirely unusual, as the species is known to follow a cyclical pattern, occasionally skipping mass nesting every 8 to 10 years.

The delay has intensified anticipation for the phenomenon known as Arribada, during which thousands of turtles come ashore simultaneously to lay eggs. Conservationists are eagerly waiting, hoping the beaches will soon witness this rare and remarkable natural event.

As a crucial breeding ground, the situation at Gahirmatha has also raised broader concerns about environmental changes, including the possible impact of climate change.

For now, officials and wildlife enthusiasts continue to wait with hope that the shores will soon come alive with the arrival of the Olive Ridley turtles.

Prawn gherry action: Women warn of suicide

Rajnagar: Several women Wednesday opposed a Forest department drive to remove illegal prawn gherries in Bhitarkanika National Park region of Kendrapara district, warning they would consume poison if their enclosures are demolished. Protests erupted in Pataparua under Rajnagar block when the officials arrived to dismantle the structures. Women gathered at the site said no one could evict them or demolish their enclosures, reiterating their threat of suicide if the drive continues. As tensions rose, prawn farmers, financiers and local leaders assembled nearby in support. Facing organised resistance, the forest team withdrew without carrying out demolitions. Illegal prawn gherries have been blamed for harming Bhitarkanika’s biodiversity. Under Coastal Regulation Zone norms, such structures are prohibited within 500 metres of tidal water bodies. Authorities say they violate multiple laws, including those governing protected areas. The Orissa High Court has also ordered their removal.

Man found dead in Ghodahada River

Patapur/Digapahandi: The body of a 35-year-old man was recovered from Ghodahada River near Patapur under Sanakhemundi block in Ganjam district Wednesday morning. The deceased was identified as Narayan Singh of Ganesh Nagar near Patapur bus stand. According to sources, Singh had gone to the river for a bath Tuesday evening but did not return home till late at night. His family members launched a search but could not trace him. Some villagers who had gone to the river spotted a body floating in the river Wednesday morning, and alerted authorities. Fire Services personnel reached the spot and fished out a lifeless Singh, who was later taken to Digapahandi community health centre, where doctors declared him dead. Patapur police have registered an unnatural death case (6/26) and sent the body to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur for postmortem. The body was later handed over to the family members after the autopsy was conducted. It is suspected that Singh might have drowned after falling off a pillar constructed for a bridge on the river. Further investigation is underway.

CHORUS GROWS FOR PEACOCK SANCTUARY IN GANJAM DIST

DWARKA PRASAD PATNAIK, OP

Chhatrapur, March 25: Environmentalists, wildlife enthusiasts and locals have called for opening a peacock sanctuary in Berhampur Forest Division for the protection of the national bird whose population is witnessing a consistent rise in recent days.

According to reports, threat of poaching looms large for these winged wonders that are seen roaming around human habitats in the region.

Although Beguniapada, Ganjam and Purushottampur forest areas under Khallikote range of the forest division have the most number of peacocks and peahens, there is no official record of it.

According to the wildlife enthusiasts, the government conducts census of migratory birds, black-



bucks, dolphins, tigers and Olive Ridley turtles, but the national bird has been kept out of the ambit of an official counting.

These birds with colourful feathers are seen mostly in open farm lands feeding on insects and reptiles. This, however, poses a grave risk of poaching, with no such definite place for hiding themselves.

Peacock is protected under Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Any kind of violation to this act

could lead to a minimum three years to a maximum seven years of imprisonment besides attracting penalties.

Admitting that there is a significant rise in the peacock population, Khallikote Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Dibya Ranjan Behera said a formal request has been made to the higher authorities for conservation as well as conduct of census of these birds.

Many volunteers, environmentalists, wildlife enthusiasts and locals believe that there is an urgent need for establishment of a ‘Sanctuary of National Bird’ in Ganjam district that would not only provide a protected environment for the national bird, but also ensure the ecological balance. This will also boost the tourism sector by attracting more visitors and raising the revenue.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. CAOCRSPBBS-07-2026
NAME OF WORK (1) CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) 1 X 36.00 M COMPOSITE GIRDER AND PROPOSED SPAN OF 9 X 25.04 M RCC GIRDER ON KANCHILO SIDE & 10 X 25.04 M RCC GIRDER ON BHOGAPUR SIDE IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 213 AT KM. 47+17.19 BETWEEN TAPANGA-NIRAKARPUR STATIONS ON HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

(2) CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) 1 X 60 M CAMEL BACK TYPE TRUSS GIRDER IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 221 AND PROPOSED SPAN OF 8 X 25.04 M RCC GIRDER ON HARIPUR SIDE & 9 X 25.04 M RCC GIRDER ON MORMORSINGH SIDE, AT RAILWAY KM. 485+25-27 IN BETWEEN STATIONS NIRAKARPUR & BHUSANDPUR ON HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

(3) CONSTRUCTION OF A ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) 1 X 60 M CAMEL BACK TYPE TRUSS GIRDER AND 1 X 24.0 M COMPOSITE GIRDERS FOR THE RAILWAY PORTION IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 223 AND 6 X 25.04 M RCC T-BEAM GIRDERS ON THE HARIPUR SIDE AND 12 X 25.04 M RCC T-BEAM GIRDERS ON THE KUSUMI SIDE FOR THE APPROACH PORTION AT RAILWAY KM. 487+23-25, BETWEEN NIRAKARPUR AND BHUSANDPUR STATIONS ON THE HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Advertised Value : ₹ 168,14,13,076.76, **EMD :** ₹ 85,57,100/-, **Period of Completion :** 24 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 01.04.2026

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 12:00 Hrs. of 15.04.2026.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg./Sambalpur) Dy. Chief Engineer / CON / PR-321/C/125-26 RSP / Bhubaneswar

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. 72/ET/SBP/ENGG/2025-26, Dated : 19.03.2026

e-Tender No. 14-eT-SETT-SBP-25

NAME OF WORK : UPKEEPING AND MAINTENANCE OF OFFICERS' REST HOUSE (ORH), OFFICERS' RAIL CLUB (ORC) & BADMINTON HALL AT RAILNAGAR, OFFICERS' REST HOUSE AT STATION BUILDING, AND SUBORDINATE REST HOUSE (SRH) AT SECTOR-A IN SAMBALPUR FOR A PERIOD OF 24 MONTHS.

Approximate Cost of the Work : ₹ 1,26,32,499.72, **Bid Security :** ₹ 2,13,200/-, **Cost of tender form :** ₹ 5,900/-, **Completion Period for the Work :** 24 (Twenty-Four) Months.

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 15:00 Hrs. of 10.04.2026.

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg./Sambalpur) Dy. Chief Engineer / CON / PR-1265/Q/25-26

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, REDHAKHOL DIVISION

Mobile No.: 06644-299949, E-mail ID - df.o.redhakhhol@odisha.gov.in
BID IDENTIFICATION No. F&E/RKL/05(Online)/2025-26

E-Tender Notice

No. 05 Dated: 23.03.2026

No. 8001/179/2526: The Divisional Forest Officer, Redhakhhol Forest Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Lumsum bids in Single Cover System in ONLINE MODE.

- Nature of Service : E-Tender for Hiring 18 Nos. of Vehicle
- Tender Cost : NIL
- Class of Supplier : Any Travel Agency/Tour Operator/Private Individual
- Availability of bid document in : 11.00 hours of 24.03.2026 to 13.30 hours of 15.04.2026
- Date of Opening of Tenders : 15.30 hours on Dt.15.04.2026
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in in only. Any Corrigendum/Addendum/Cancellation of tender will be displayed in the website said only.

Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer Redhakhhol Forest Division

OIPR-8001/8146/1/25-26/0003

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RAYAGADA (R&B) DIVISION NO.-I, RAYAGADA

No. 34001/250/2526 E-mail ID: sepwdrgda1@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. RC (RANDB) RGD 24/2025-2026 (Single Cover - Online Tender)

File No. E-II-C8-28/2025 No. 1757 Date: 18.03.2026

- No. of the Works : 14 (Fourteen) Nos. Building & 12 (Twelve) Nos. Electrical Works only
- Estimated Cost : Rs. 5.0 Lakhs to 42.1 Lakhs
- Cost of Document : Rs. 6,000/- to Rs. 42,100/-
- Class of Contractor : C&D / MV/HT/MSME / C&B / B / MV / above
- The bid documents will be available in the website : www.tendersodisha.gov.in from 11.00 hrs. of dated 30.03.2026 to 17.00 hrs. of dated 13.04.2026 for online bidding.
- Last date/time for receipt of : Up to 17.00 hrs. of Dated: 13.04.2026 bids in the portal.
- Bids received "Online" shall be opened at 11.30 hours on 13.04.2026 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Division No. I.
- Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal: www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Any Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer Rayagada (R&B) Division No.-I

OIPR:34001/34040/1/25-26/0002

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BARGARH (R&B) DIVISION, BARGARH

E-mail: eeppwdbgh@gmail.com, Phone/Fax: 06646-234819

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (I.F.B.)

No. 34001/270/2526 e-Procurement Notice

IDENTIFICATION No. IFB-SE PWD BGH No. 29 of 2025-26

No. 1738 Dated: 24.03.2026

- The Superintending Engineer, Bargarh (R&B) Division, Bargarh on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage Rate bid in Single & Double Cover System in ONLINE MODE for the Civil & Electrical Works as detailed in the Detailed Tender Call Notice (D.T.C.N.) from the eligible class of contractors
- No. of Civil & Electrical Work : 02 Nos.
- Cost of Tender Paper : Rs. 6,000/- & Rs. 10,000/-
- Class of Contractor : "B" Class Contractor & "HT" Electrical Contractor
- Date & time of available in website : 11.00 Hrs. of 26.03.2026 to 17.00 Hrs. & receipt of Bids : 06.04.2026
- Date of Opening of Technical Bid : 07.04.2026 at 11.30 Hrs.
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the State Govt. Portal website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.
- Any corrigendum/addendum will be displayed in the website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> only.

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

OIPR-34001/34039/1/25-26/0003

S.E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Tender Notice No.: e-Tender/2026/10, Date: 24.03.2026. For and on behalf of President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur-721301 invites e-tender for the following works before 15.00 hrs. on the date mentioned against items and will be opened at 15.30 hrs. SI.No. 1. Tender No.: E-KGP-SOUTH-08-2026. Description of work: Standardisation of different type of Engineering Board on track in Kharagpur-Bhadrak, Rupsa Jn-Bangripuri & Balasore-Gopinathpur Nilgiri section under Sr.DEN (South)/Kharagpur. Tender Value: ₹ 2,43,63,061.24. Earnest Money: ₹ 2,71,800. SI.No. 2. Tender No.: E-KGP-South-09-2026. Description of work: River Bed Mapping of Bridge No. 215 UP & DN and Br. No. 263 UP & DN in Kharagpur-Bhadrak section under Sr. DEN (South)/Kharagpur. (3rd call). Tender Value: ₹ 1,22,20,482.40. Earnest Money: ₹ 24,400. SI.No. 3. Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-10-2026. Description of work: Execution of works of (1) Construction of Office of ADSTE/PKU at Panskura, 2) Panskura- Construction of Type IV Quarter of ASTE at Panskura under the jurisdiction of DEN/EAST/Kharagpur under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/East/Kharagpur. Tender Value: ₹ 1,43,21,549.65. Earnest Money: ₹ 2,21,620. SI.No. 4. Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-13-2026. Description of work: Improvement & Standardization of Over Run Line, Dead End (9 Nos) and Sand Hump (10 Nos) under ADEN/Shalimar. Tender Value: ₹ 1,56,74,669.33. Earnest Money: ₹ 2,28,400. SI.No. 5. Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-14-2026. Description of work: Construction of Precast Central drain between main lines under the jurisdiction of DEN/East/Kharagpur. Tender Value: ₹ 2,36,70,661.60. Earnest Money: ₹ 2,68,400. SI.No. 6. Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-16-2026. Description of work: Conversion of DANSI(PH) into Block station having 2 loop lines. under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/EAST/Kharagpur. Tender Value: ₹ 9,01,91,240.40. Earnest Money: ₹ 6,01,000. Tender document Cost: ₹ 0 (for SI.No. 1, 3, 4 & 5 each). Date of opening: 02.04.2026 (for SI.No. 1), 09.04.2026 (for SI.No. 2, 3, 4 & 5 each) and 14.04.2026 (for SI.No. 6). Completion Period of the work: 12 months for each. Bidding start date: For SI. No. 1 : From 19.03.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 02.04.2026. For SI. No. 2, 3, 4 & 5 : From 26.03.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 09.04.2026. For SI. No. 6: From 31.03.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 14.04.2026. Interested tenderers may visit website www.ireps.gov.in for full details/description/specifications of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these works will be accepted. N.B.: Prospective bidders may regularly visit www.ireps.gov.in to participate in all tenders.

(PR-1343)

Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd. REGISTERED OFFICE: The Ruby, 10th Floor, 29 Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar (W), Mumbai-400028. Tel: 022-66581300www.arcl.co.in CIN-U65999MH2002PLC134884. Website: www.arcl.co.in

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the Authorised Officer of Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited hereinafter referred to as "Arcl" is a securitization and Reconstruction company incorporated under the companies Act, 1956 and registered with the Reserve Bank of India under section 3 of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") and whereas the Borrower/Co-Borrowers as mentioned of the below chart obtained loans from Vistara Financial Services Pvt Ltd (VFSPL), and whereas Arcl has acquired the financial assets relating to the loan accounts mentioned of the below chart and Whereas Arcl, being the secured creditor under the Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest(Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers as to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reason.

Account No	Name of the Borrowers and Co-Borrowers	Total Loan Outstanding (in INR) / as on	Demand NoticeDate
0207SBML01401	1. NESAR KHAN	Rs. 17,42,209.99/-	16-01-2026
0207SBML01424	2. ISHRATA NESAR KHAN	Rs. 1,05,079.14/-	16-01-2026

Description of the Secured Asset: All that piece and parcel of land and building (if any) measuring an extent of A0.080 decimal, Kisama – Homestead, bearing Plot no 3812/5948, Khata No. 1345/2552 in Mouja- Ere, Tahasil – Bhadrak, P.S- Bhadrak, Bhadrak(Rural) District, State – Odisha and land being bounded on Boundaries(as per deed); North By: Plot No. 3833, South By: Private Road, East By: Plot No. 3813, West By: Rest Land

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers, calling upon them to make payment of the aggregate amount against the respective Borrower/Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notices the said amount is found payable in relation to the respective Loan account as on the date. It is made clear that the aggregate amount together with further interest and other amounts which may become payable till the date of payment, is not paid, Arcl shall be constrained to take appropriate action for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described. Steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder

Place: Bhadrak Date: 26-03-2026

Sd/- Authorized Officer Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited. Arcl - 2026 - 011-Trust

FOCUS AI 171 CRASH PROBE

TRUTH MUST COME OUT



The world is watching to see whether India is able to safeguard its own interest and secure justice for its citizens – as Ethiopia did for the Boeing 737 Max crash

to Ahmedabad on the fateful day due to a sensor fault. The AAIB preliminary report notes that the aircraft flew with four active faults, including core network degradation. Capt. Amit Singh of Safety Matters Foundation, the petitioner in the Supreme Court, revealed in his PIL that 15 minutes before take-off, both Bus Power Control Units reported faults – suggesting instability in the aircraft's electrical system. Yet the aircraft was cleared to fly.

Independent analyses by pilots, engineers, and investigators – working from the preliminary report, CCTV footage, fault and maintenance logs – have converged on the same conclusion: the pilot action theory does not fit the observed sequence of events. A cascading systemic failure does.

The continued opacity on all sides suggests that there is a negotiation underway over the truth. After all, the stakes are enormous. For Boeing, still struggling to recover from the 737 Max crisis, another finding of systemic failure could be devastating – perhaps existential. For America, Boeing is not just a company; it is strategic. Its decline would open space for China's COMAC. Air India faces exposure regardless of the outcome, whether systemic and maintenance failures caused the crash or one of its pilots did.

Geopolitically, a finding against Boeing could strain India-US relations at an already delicate moment. New Delhi has to reckon with Donald Trump, who calls himself Boeing's best salesman and has used his trade deal negotiations to force countries to buy Boeing. PM Modi will be cognizant of the fact that the crash occurred in Ahmedabad. People will come to their own conclusions as to whether they saw Modi standing up to American pressure or give in.

The world is watching to see whether India is able to safeguard its own interest and secure justice for its citizens – as Ethiopia did for the Boeing 737 Max crash. In the AI171 case, therefore, the truth is in India's national interest. It should not be negotiated away. India owes it to the 260 people who died to their families.

The writer is a senior journalist and researcher based in Bangalore.

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A petition seeking an independent, court-monitored investigation into the AI171 crash in Ahmedabad last June was stalled yet again on Tuesday with the Solicitor General of India seeking another week's time to submit a progress report on the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Board (AAIB) probe. On 11 February, he had promised to submit the same at the next hearing, which the court had set for March 24. Interestingly, a day before the SG's assurance, an intriguing report by Leonard Berberri, a journalist specialising in aviation, had appeared in Milan-based newspaper Corriere della Sera. Since the crash, Berberri has run a stream of stories, citing unnamed "Western sources", pushing a single line: the crash was the result of deliberate pilot action.

Berberri's 10 February report claimed that the AAIB had been forced to come around to the same view – "the desired turning point" as per his sources – under pressure and "Western" threats of a re-evaluation of the level of safety of India's airlines. Berberri's sources told him that the conclusion would be subject to a "political evaluation" at the highest levels in India. AAIB officials had reportedly even discussed with American counterparts how to write the final report without triggering "national controversies".

Taken together with earlier leak-driven reporting in the Wall Street Journal, even as the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and Boeing officials publicly maintain silence, citing ICAO rules, it is clear that this investigation was never just about finding out what happened to AI171. It has become part of a geopolitical power play between India and the US.

The AAIB's preliminary report of July 2025 carried the imprint of this tension. It laid out a sequence of the AI171 crash: three seconds after take-off, both fuel switches transitioned from "run" to "cut-off" within a second of each other, starving the engines, leading to the crash. Then it put out a tantalising paraphrased piece of conversation in which one pilot asks the other "why did he cut off" and the other replies he "did not do so." It also referred to a

2018 FAA advisory regarding the fuel switches, to suggest that there was a known, unresolved problem with them. The effect, intended or not, was to focus everybody's attention on the fuel switches and pilot actions, while inserting enough doubt to ensure that a conclusion could not be reached. Yet, there is a far more coherent explanation: that AI171 was brought down by a systemic failure in the Boeing 787 – one shaped by technology design choices, compounded by manufacturing defects, and triggered by proximate maintenance failures.

The 787 is a "more electric" and software-driven aircraft, with algorithmic decision-making systems written to override pilot controls based on sensor inputs – the FADEC (Full Authority Digital Engine Control) and TCMA (Thrust Control Malfunction Accommodation). Older aircraft distributed risk across multiple, largely independent systems. The 787 centralises it. At the heart of this architecture is the Common Core System (CCS) – comprising a Common Computing Resource, a Common Data Network, and Remote Data Concentrators. It reduces weight and complexity. But it also creates multiple pathways to failure.

An electrical transient, a software glitch or reboot, packet loss in data transmission, a bad sensor input misinforming FADEC or TCMA, a momentary loss of power routing or data synchronisation – any of these, especially during take-off, the most unforgiving phase of flight, can cascade into a catastrophe. And then there is the 787's lithium-ion battery and its thermal runaway problem.

Boeing's recent history is a case study in how such systems can fail. The 737 Max crashes

were ultimately traced to the MCAS (Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System) software acting on flawed sensor inputs. Boeing and American regulators tried hard to place the blame on pilots, but Ethiopian accident investigators forced the truth out into the open. The 787's TCMA is also an algorithmic correction mechanism. If it receives bad data from a faulty Weight-on-Wheels sensor, it can make the wrong decision.

Multiple Boeing whistleblowers have revealed, in Congressional testimonies and court filings, several manufacturing defects in the 787s, especially the early batches from which the VT-ANB, the AI171 aircraft, came to Air India: structural gaps, force-fit assembly practices, and water leakage from toilets into electrical bays.

Then there's the history of 787 incidents: battery fires, control failures, electrical faults, fuel leaks, un-commanded RAT (Ram Air Turbine) deployments, spurious system activations – including TCMA – and even fuel switch issues. Consider the aircraft that crashed. In January, Ed Pierson, a former Boeing manager and founder of the Foundation for Aviation Safety, submitted a study on the VT-ANB's fault logs and maintenance history to a US Senate committee showing that the aircraft has had troubles from day one: electronics and software faults, circuit breaker trips, wiring damage, short circuits, power fluctuations, overheating. In 2022, a fire destroyed one of its power distribution panels mid-flight. Journalist Rachel Chitra's investigative reporting uncovered that the aircraft had reported multiple faults in the 72 hours before the crash, including hard landing in-



S Raghotham

GEOLOGICALLY, A FINDING AGAINST BOEING COULD STRAIN INDIA-US RELATIONS AT AN ALREADY DELICATE MOMENT



Dani Rodrik

PEOPLE ARE BOTH CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS. WE DERIVE MEANING, SOCIAL RECOGNITION, AND LIFE SATISFACTION AS MUCH FROM THE WORK THAT WE DO AS FROM THE GOODS AND SERVICES WE CONSUME – IF NOT MORE SO. OUR JOBS PROVIDE US WITH COMMUNITY, DIGNITY, AND IDENTITY

SPECTRUM INDIA

Do temples ring true as industries

In 1978, the Supreme Court did something that raised eyebrows and chuckles in equal measure – it declared that temples could be classified as "industries." The ruling, in Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa, broadened the definition of "industry" to include any systematic activity involving employer-employee relationships, profit motive or not. Suddenly, priests, cooks, flower sellers, and even the man who rings the temple bell were part of what the law could recognise as an industrial workforce.

At first glance, this sounds absurd. Temples are places of worship, not factories. Yet, scratch beneath the surface and you'll find that India's temples are not just spiritual sanctuaries – they are sprawling economic ecosystems.

India has over 2 million temples, ranging from humble roadside shrines to mega-complexes like Tirupati, Shirdi, and Vaishno Devi. Collectively, they generate an estimated Rs 3.02 lakh crore annually – a figure comparable to India's IT sector.

Studies suggest millions of Indians are directly or indirectly engaged in temple-linked activities. Take Tirupati as an example. The temple employs over 14,000 people directly, while supporting tens of thousands more through tourism, hospitality, and ancillary services. The ripple effect is immense: from the farmer growing coconuts to the jeweller crafting gold ornaments, the temple economy sustains livelihoods across sectors.

If temples are industries, then their supply chains look remarkably like those of modern corporations. In short, temples are not isolated spiritual centres – they are hubs around which entire micro-economies orbit.

Think about your own life. Buying flowers for puja? You're part of the temple economy. Booking a train or a flight ticket to Puri? Railways and airlines thrive on pilgrim traffic. Attending a wedding with temple rituals? Priests, jewellers, and caterers are all part of the chain. Even the Pakodawala outside the temple is a stakeholder in this "industry."

Humorously put, when my mother insists on buying "two extra coconuts for good luck," she's technically boosting India's GDP. India is not alone in this. Globally, religious economies are massive: Saudi Arabia's Hajj economy generates \$12 billion annually, supporting airlines, hotels, and retail; Vatican City sustains thousands of jobs through tourism linked to St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museums; Japan's Shinto shrines host festivals like Gion Matsuri in Kyoto, attracting millions and blending faith with commerce. Worldwide, religious tourism is projected to reach much over \$260 billion by 2027.

The Supreme Court's 1978 ruling was not without controversy. Critics argued that temples lack a profit motive and should not be treated as industries. Proponents countered that the sheer scale of employment and economic activity justified the classification. The ruling also had practical implications: temple employees could claim protections under labour laws. Priests and workers

were no longer just custodians of faith – they were recognised as part of an industrial workforce.

Past forward to today, and the debate continues. Should temples be taxed like industries? Should priests be treated as employees with formal benefits? The answers are complex, balancing faith, law, and economics. Temples are about devotion and livelihoods. They sustain millions, generate billions, and shape India's cultural and economic landscape. Recognising them as industries may sound odd, but it forces us to acknowledge their real-world impact.

Whether or not we legally classify them as industries, temples undeniably shape India's economy and culture. They are reminders that faith and finance are not as separate as we might think. And perhaps, the next time you buy a garland or drop a coin in the donation box, you'll smile at the thought that you're participating in one of India's most unusual – and most powerful – industries.

The writer is an author.



Charudutta Panigrahi

STUDIES SUGGEST MILLIONS OF INDIANS ARE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY ENGAGED IN TEMPLE-LINKED ACTIVITIES

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
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Beyond seizures

Sir, Epilepsy is a neurological condition that affects over fifty million people worldwide, yet it continues to be surrounded by fear, misunderstanding, and social stigma. It is not a single disease but a group of disorders characterized by recurrent seizures caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain. These seizures may appear in different forms – ranging from brief lapses in awareness to sudden convulsions – depending on the part of the brain involved. While effective treatments are available and many individuals can live seizure-free with proper medication, awareness about the condition and appropriate responses during a seizure remain limited. Purple Day, observed annually on 26 March, is a global initiative aimed at increasing awareness about epilepsy and promoting support for those affected. Founded in 2008 by Cassidy Megan, the movement encourages people to wear purple and organize events to educate communities, dispel myths, and reduce stigma. By fostering understanding and empathy, such efforts help build a more inclusive society where individuals with epilepsy can live with dignity and confidence.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Unhealthy lifestyle

Sir, Excessive smartphone use is increasingly linked to unhealthy eating patterns among young people. Studies covering over 52,000 adolescents (average age 17) show that those spending around 7 hours daily on screens are more likely to eat when not hungry, driven by stress, anxiety, and constant exposure to food-related content. Social media comparisons also lower self-esteem, creating body image pressure and triggering strong cravings or uncontrolled eating. These behaviours can lead to serious side effects such as obesity, eating disorders, poor sleep, reduced concentration, and long-term mental health issues. The habit of mindless snacking further weakens natural hunger cues. Mitigation requires setting daily screen-time limits closer to the recommended 2.5 hours, encouraging physical activity, and promoting mindful eating habits. Parents and schools must create awareness, while digital platforms should promote healthier content. Balanced routines and emotional support can help restore both mental and physical well-being in the new generation.

RS Narula, PATIALA

The happiness you give makes you happier than the happiness you receive.

THE MOTHER



Consumers or Workers

What is an economy for? Since Adam Smith, economists have given a straightforward answer to this question: the economy increases our consumption possibilities. A well-functioning economy is one that provides a widening array of ever-more affordable goods and services, from food and consumer items to housing and transportation. A poorly-functioning economy is one of scarcity, where the goods and services consumers seek are either unavailable or too expensive.

This consumer-based view has traditionally been closely associated with academic economists and technocrats. But today it also pervades current thinking in progressive circles.

In the United States, the Democratic Party's opposition to President Donald Trump has coalesced around the theme of "affordability" – a clearly consumerist perspective. Similarly, the "abundance" agenda popularized by journalists Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson prioritizes expanding the availability of goods and services, albeit across a broader spectrum than consumer goods, one that includes housing, transportation, and renewable energy.

But there is an alternative perspective on the economy that emphasizes a different side of human nature and human needs. People are both consumers and producers. We derive meaning, social recognition, and life satisfaction as much from the work that we do as from the goods and services we consume – if not more so. Our jobs provide us with community, dignity, and identity.

That is why job loss is associated with declines in individual well-being that are multiples of the income drop generated by unemployment. It is also why so much of our current social and political polarization, and the associated rise in authoritarian populism, can be traced to the scarring of labour markets in left-behind regions caused by de-industrialization, austerity, and globalization. When decent jobs disappear permanently, the consequences extend significantly beyond the immediate losses in income and consumption.

These views of the economy – consumption versus jobs – imply very different policy frameworks and remedies. Consider long-term care, a large and growing industry that in the US today employs several times as many workers as the automotive industry. Much of the current discussion about this sector is framed in terms of the challenge of "a shortage of workers." That is a consumerist perspective: policy analysis focuses on the availability of cheap care services to seniors.

The jobs-focused perspective states the challenge differently: as one of creating good work in long-term care services. The prospect of better jobs would attract more workers to the sector and increase supply alongside job quality.

Or turn to the renewables industry, such as solar panels and wind turbines. The cheapest way to expand deployment of renewables and accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels is to rely on imports from China, the world leader in the sector. A jobs-oriented perspective, by contrast, would advocate a more balanced approach that seeks opportunities to generate domestic employment as well. Spain pursues this strategy – and leads Europe in both utility-scale domestic production of renewable power and the reduction of energy prices.

Finally, consider housing. Productivity in housing construction has stagnated in recent years in the US, in part because of safety regulations and union rules. A consumerist perspective, as in the abundance agenda, would focus on reducing the red tape.

Yet many of the regulations that slow down construction also reduce workplace injuries. Fatalities and non-fatal injuries in construction have fallen dramatically in the US since the 1970s, thanks to workplace-safety rules. How do we trade off the improvement in worker well-being these rules have enabled against the loss in housing availability to the population at large? A good-jobs focus should make us more sympathetic to rules and regulations that sacrifice some efficiency if the outcome is better, safer, less precarious work.

To improve living standards and personal dignity, policymakers must adopt both perspectives. The two approaches often offer conflicting remedies, but an economic strategy that promotes worker-friendly productivity enhancements can kill two birds with one stone.

In principle, organizational and technological innovations that increase productivity both improve working conditions and enhance the availability of goods and services. But in too many cases, workers reap only a small share of the benefits. Digital platforms and automated warehouses have increased labour productivity significantly, but the bulk of the benefits have gone to companies such as Uber and Amazon.

As a new paper by MIT economists Daron Acemoglu, David Autor, and Simon Johnson argues, companies often face distorted incentives when they decide which technologies to adopt and deploy. They might prefer hierarchical, efficiency-focused systems that maintain tight control over workers and intensify the division of labour. But AI and other new technologies can also be used to enhance workers' autonomy, give them more responsibilities, and allow them to perform a wider range of more sophisticated tasks. For example, in long-term care, decentralized, team-based service provision can enhance job quality while increasing productivity through reduced turnover and hospital expenses.

Policymakers need not make a stark choice between an economy that serves consumers and one that serves workers. Productivist policies that enhance workers' voice but also empower them through organizational and technological innovations can achieve progress on both fronts. But such policies do require a different mindset, one that balances the consumerist perspective with adequate attention to the importance of good jobs.

The writer is Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School.

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WISDOM CORNER

Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others. *MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO*

The promise given was a necessity of the past: the word broken is a necessity of the present. *NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI*

Take time to deliberate, but when the time for action has arrived, stop thinking and go in. *NAPOLEON BONAPARTE*

515 ABW signs MoUs to produce indigenous drones



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 25: The 515 ABW here, one of the eight Army Base Workshops of the Indian Army, Wednesday said it signed multiple strategic MoUs to strengthen indigenous drone manufacturing and ecosystem resilience.

The 515 Army Base Workshop (ABW) signed three significant MoUs on behalf of the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence (Army), Directorate General of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (DG EME), and HQ Base Workshop Group.

These new strategic partnerships built upon earlier successful collaborations with premier institutions and startups, mark an important step toward modernisation and Atmanirbhar Bharat in the field of unmanned systems, an official release from the PIB's Defence Wing said.

To strengthen indigenous drone manufacturing capabilities, the 515 ABW signed an MoU with Nautical Wings Aerospace, a Bengaluru-based startup specialising in advanced electric propulsion systems, vertical lift solutions, Brushless Direct Current (BLDC) motors and composite structures for UAVs, it said.

Under this framework, Nautical Wings will provide technical expertise and hand-holding of 515 ABW technicians in integrated propulsion systems, BLDC motor integration, propeller optimisation and composite fabrication techniques on a required basis, it added.

Additionally, the 515 ABW signed an MoU with Yaanendriya Private Limited, a deep-tech startup incubated at ART-PARK, IISc Bengaluru.

This collaboration focuses on enhancing capabilities in AI-enabled Flight Control Systems (FCS), Ground Control Stations (GCS), Electronic Speed Con-

trollers (ESC), and GNSS-based navigation systems, aiming to reduce dependence on foreign technology in autonomous platforms, it said.

To ensure the security and resilience of these emerging technologies, a third MoU was signed with the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), Gandhinagar.

This partnership establishes a structured framework for technical cooperation in drone forensics, cyber and hardware security assessment and vulnerability analysis, it said, adding that, "NFSU will contribute its expertise to help develop robust analytical frameworks required for addressing evolving threats related to hostile drone usage, cyber compromise and hardware security risks."

Collectively, these MoUs reinforce the commitment to support national security through indigenous capability development and civil-military integration, according to the official release.

"By fostering industry hand-holding and inter-institutional cooperation, these initiatives will enable the 515 ABW to function as a prime technical incubator for innovation projects. Ultimately, this will support the operational preparedness of the Indian Army, ensure pace with fast-evolving technologies and align with the Government of India's vision of strengthening technological self-reliance and enhancing Defence innovation ecosystems," it added.



Women sit on empty LPG cylinders as they wait in a queue outside a gas agency to avail the refilled ones amid ongoing supply disruptions, in Ranchi, Wednesday

J'khand raises power tariff by 6.12%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, March 25: The Jharkhand State Electricity Regulatory Commission Wednesday announced a 6.12 per cent rise in power tariff, which will be effective from the beginning of the next financial year.

Under the new rates, domestic consumers in rural areas will have to pay ₹7.20 per unit, up from ₹6.70, while those in urban areas will be charged ₹7.40 per unit, up from ₹6.85.

The revised tariff will come into effect from April 1, JSERC chairman Justice (Retd) Navneet Kumar said.

The tariff in rural areas has been increased by 50 paise and 55 paise in urban localities, he



said. "Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited (JBVNL) had proposed a 59 per cent tariff hike. After careful consideration, the commission approved a 6.12 per cent increase," he said.

For the commercial category, the tariff was increased by 50 paise for rural and 60 paise

for urban consumers.

There has been no increase in the power tariff for agriculture consumers.

The commission has approved the JBVNL's tariff for public electric vehicle charging stations, which includes ₹7 per unit for solar hours (9 am to 4 pm) and ₹8.70 per unit for

non-solar hours (remaining period). A two per cent rebate has been proposed for the bills paid within five days of the generation of invoices, and a three per cent rebate on energy charges for consumers switching to pre-paid smart meters.

The commission has kept tariffs unchanged for rooftop solar PV projects at ₹4.16 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for gross metering and ₹3.80/kWh for net metering, the official said.

The JSERC has approved a distribution loss of 13 per cent, as against the distribution losses of 28.19 per cent, 27.23 per cent, and 25.60 per cent proposed by JBVNL for the financial year 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27, respectively.

Vice Prez to visit J'khand for IIM Ranchi convocation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, March 25: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan will visit Jharkhand March 28 to attend the 15th convocation of IIM Ranchi, an official said Wednesday. The Vice President will confer medals to seven outstanding students of the institution, she said.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar and Chief Minister Hemant Soren will also attend the event.

IIM Ranchi Dean (academics), Professor Tanusree Dutta, in a press conference, said the event will be conducted in two sessions and the first session will begin at 3 pm, which will be attended by the Vice President as the chief guest.

"The Vice President will confer medals to seven outstanding students, including toppers from five programmes - MBA, MBA-BA, MBA HRM, MBA Executive (Summer) and MBA Executive (Winter). Additionally, two special awards will be presented for overall excellence - the Student Citizenship Award and the Professor Ashish Hajela Award," she said. A total of 558 degrees will be awarded during the event, which include 26 PhD degrees and 11 PhD (executive) degrees.

K'taka govt: Ignore rumours on petrol, diesel shortage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 25: The Karnataka government Wednesday urged people not to pay heed to rumours about petrol and diesel shortage or resort to panic buying amid reports of people queuing up at fuel stations in some parts of the state.

In a statement, the government said the Centre has clarified that there is ample stock of fuel available at retail outlets across the country.

"It has come to the attention of the government through various media reports that in certain parts of the state, people are queuing at petrol pumps with containers such as bottles and cans. This behaviour is driven by false rumours suggesting an impending shortage of petrol and diesel," it said.

The government strongly advised the public against transporting or storing fuel in loose or unsuitable containers, citing serious safety risks and fire hazards.

It has instructed retail outlets to supply fuel only directly into vehicle tanks and strictly prohibited petrol pumps from dispensing fuel in bottles, cans or any external containers.



Under existing laws, storage of fuel in bulk or in unauthorised containers is illegal, it said.

The government also assured that the fuel supply chain remains robust and there is no cause for concern, according to a press note.

Meanwhile, Hubballi Dharwad Police Commissioner N Sashikumar warned of strict legal action against those spreading rumours about fuel shortage in the city limits, assuring that there is sufficient supply.

The warning followed misinformation circulated on social media that triggered panic buying and long queues at fuel stations across the Hubballi-Dharwad police commissionerate limits March 24.

"There was miscommunication and misrepresentation of facts by anonymous social media users, which led to confusion among the public and prompted many to purchase fuel in unusually large quantities," he told reporters here Wednesday.

He said discussions were held with fuel companies, including Indian Oil Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, as well as local authorities, confirming that there is no shortage of petrol or diesel in the region.

"Whatever is being spread on social media is false. There is sufficient supply of petrol and diesel in the city limits," he said, urging people not to panic.

According to him, due to excessive demand Tuesday, several fuel stations had temporarily exhausted their stocks after catering to a large number of vehicles.

To ensure smooth replenishment, police have relaxed time restrictions on the movement of petroleum transport vehicles, which were earlier imposed during specific hours for traffic and safety reasons. The relaxation will continue until further orders, he said.

He said large crowds, including hundreds of two-wheelers and several cars and heavy vehicles, were seen outside fuel stations following the rumours.

Sashikumar cautioned that storing fuel outside vehicle tanks at homes or other locations is illegal and poses serious fire hazards.

Karnataka constitutes palliative care tech advisory committee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 25: The Karnataka government has constituted a state-level technical advisory committee to guide the planning, implementation and monitoring of palliative care services in the state, officials said Wednesday.

The move follows a proposal noting that palliative care aims to improve the quality of life of patients and their families facing serious and life-limiting illnesses, they said.

The committee, chaired by retired IAS officer Raj Kumar Khatri, comprises members from government health departments, leading Bangalore-based medical institutions, and a representative from NGOs working in palliative care, officials said.

According to an official order dated March 23, the committee that will act as the main technical advisory body for palliative care in Karnataka would advise the government on preparation, implementation and review of the State Palliative Care Policy and guidelines. It would be responsible to recommend standards, treatment protocols and service delivery models for providing palliative care services at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Army defuses 2 'WWII-era' bombs



The explosives were dumped in a 25-30 feet trench and covered with sand bags to minimise any damage during the exercise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jamshedpur, March 25: Personnel of the Indian Army Wednesday defused two active bombs, suspected to be from the World War II era, in Jharkhand's East Singhbhum district, a senior official said.

The explosives stuffed in metallic cylinder-shaped containers were defused within a gap of 30 minutes from one another, amid tight security arrangements, Deputy Commissioner Karn Satyarthi told PTI.

One of the bombs, weighing around 200 kg, was unearthed during sand excavation along the Panipada-Nagudisai stretch in Baharagora area last week, around 90 km from Jamshedpur, officials said.

The second bomb of a similar shape was discovered in a villager's house during inspection of the spot Monday, they

said. No damage to property or injury has been reported in the operation, but people were advised not to venture near the spot for the next 24 hours as a precautionary measure, the DC said. "We sealed a one-km area around the spot for security reasons when the 23rd infantry division of Indian Army, in coordination with the Jharkhand Police, began the operation to detonate the explosives today morning," Satyarthi said.

The explosives were dumped in a 25-30 feet trench that was dug close to the spot, and covered with sand bags to minimise any damage during the exercise, he said. Asked about the origin of the bomb, the DC said experts from the Army will have to investigate into it.

"We will try to ensure that a complete investigation is held to confirm whether more such explosives exist in that area. If any more explosives of this nature are found near the spot, the administration will take those under its custody and initiate necessary action for deactivation," he said.

The Jharkhand Police had earlier sought assistance from the Indian Army to defuse the bombs.

NIMHANS launches CALM-Brain database

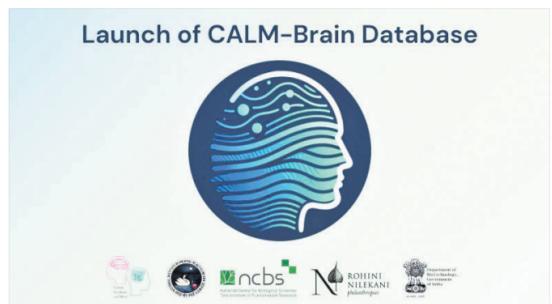
INDIA'S FIRST REPOSITORY OF DATA ON MAJOR PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 25: India's first repository of data on major psychiatric disorders, CALM-Brain, was launched here Wednesday, marking a significant step in the country's efforts to gather and systematically document details of patients with major forms of mental illness, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) said.

Developed by neuroscientists in Bangalore, CALM-Brain is a digital repository of data on brain structure and function from a range of psychiatric disorders, it said, in a statement.

According to the Institute, the initiative is the result of collaborative efforts of research-



ers at the Rohini Nilekani Centre for Brain and Mind (CBM), which is a partnership between NIMHANS and the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) - TIFR.

It was launched by Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson of the Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, which funds CBM, at

ing biological changes leading to disease symptoms," NIMHANS said in the statement.

These findings have immense potential to transform the understanding of mental disorders, and in turn, provide better diagnosis and plan personalised treatments for patients, it said. "CALM-Brain is India's first-of-its-kind repository of clinical, neuro-imaging, behavioural, genetic and other datasets on five disorders: addiction, bipolar disorder, dementia, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and schizophrenia. This longitudinal data incorporates multiple modes of studying brain function in neuropsychiatric diseases," NIMHANS said.

The Institute said that the dataset is also linked to a biorepository of stem cells, which can be used to perform biolog-

ical research in psychiatry to understand the origins of such severe mental illnesses.

On the importance of CALM-Brain, NCBS Director L S Shashidhara said, "Large data sets being made available on both affected and unaffected individuals in a family would help us to accelerate discovery and develop more effective preventive and therapeutic interventions."

According to NIMHANS, Phase-wise patient data gathering for the CALM-Brain was initiated in 2016 by this group of researchers from NIMHANS and NCBS, as part of the Accelerator programme for discovery in brain disorders using stem cells jointly funded by the Department of Biotechnology and the Pratishtha Trust.

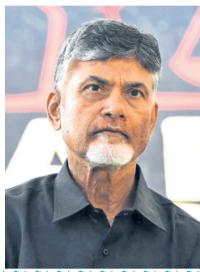
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, SUNABEDA
No. 1653 Date: 20.03.26

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

No. 13001/799/2526: Sealed tenders in conformity with the Detailed Tender Call Notice in two bid system are invited from the intending registered firms/entrepreneur/NGOs/Private companies/contractor for the execution of providing cleaning & sanitation work from Ward No. 01 to 09 and 12, 15 (part) (Package-I, Sunabeda) & 18 to 25 (Package-II, Semiiguda) of Sunabeda Municipality so as to reach the Executive Officer, Sunabeda Municipality through Registered Post/Speed Post or Courier only upto 5.00 P.M. of Dt.07.04.2026. The technical bid of the two bid tender will be opened at Sunabeda Municipality Office on 08.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M. The technically qualified bidders of Financial bid will be opened on 09.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M. The financial qualified bidder will be given their presentation at Municipality Meeting Hall through office projector at 3.00 P.M. The details of works, bid document, scope of work, eligibility criteria & submission of tender can be downloaded from the website www.sunabedamunicipality.in from Dt.24.03.2026 to 07.04.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.

Sd./- Executive Officer
Sunabeda Municipality

OIPR-13001/13076/1/25-26/0007



Expedite the projects approved by SIPB. The goal of building 50,000 hotel rooms by 2029 should be met

N CHANDRABABUNAIIDU | CHIEF MINISTER, ANDHRA PRADESH

WEST ASIA CRISIS

Amid the West Asia conflict, a total of 1,043 Indian nationals, including 717 students, have crossed out of Iran with the assistance of the mission in Tehran, the Ministry of External Affairs said Wednesday. The overall flight situation continues to improve, and that around 4.26 lakh passengers have returned from the region to India since February 28



of the day uote

Approximately 1.12 lakh Indira houses in the state are expected to be completed by March 31 and housewarming ceremonies will be conducted. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, another one lakh houses will be completed by June

P SRINIVAS REDDY | TELANGANA HOUSING MINISTER



The Congress president (Mallikarjun Kharge) and Rahul Gandhi categorically said that the priority is to win the election, and that the chief ministership will be decided later

RAMESH CHENNIHALA | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER



The nation cannot truly progress if any caste, community, or section within society remains weak. The nation will advance only through inclusive development

YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER, UTTAR PRADESH



'Umbrella law' for CAPFs

The government on Wednesday introduced the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha, brushing aside Opposition notices on its introduction through a voice vote



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: An "umbrella law" introduced by the Union government Wednesday for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) will regulate recruitment, deputation, promotion, and other conditions of service for their officers.

All CAPFs, CRPF, CISF, BSF, ITBP and SSB - are governed by their respective Acts.

The rules under these Acts govern the recruitment and conditions of service for Group A General Duty Officers and other officers and members in the CAPFs.

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai Wednesday introduced the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026, in the Rajya Sabha.

The bill provides that to appoint officers from the Indian Police Service in CAPFs, 50 per cent of the posts will be filled by deputation in the rank of inspector general and a minimum of 67 per cent of the posts by deputation in the rank of ad-

ditional director general.

Posts in the ranks of special director general and director general shall be filled by deputation only, it says.

The proposed legislation comes after the Supreme Court, in October last year, dismissed the Centre's plea seeking a review of its 2025 verdict that directed that IPS officers' deputation in the CAPFs up to the level of Senior Administrative Grade (SAG) should be "progressively reduced" and asked for a cadre review to be carried out in six months.

"The number of posts earmarked for deputation in the cadres of the CAPFs up to the level of Senior Administrative Grade (SAG) should be progressively reduced over a period of time, say within an outer limit of two years," the apex court had said.

According to the bill's statement of objects and reasons, the expanding functional and operational requirements have led to the distinct organisational structure of these forces.

"In recent years, due to the

absence of an umbrella law, regulatory provisions have evolved in a fragmented manner, resulting in several litigation on service-related matters, leading to some functional and administrative difficulties," it reads.

A group of retired CAPF officers has approached the Supreme Court with a contempt plea against Home Secretary Govind Mohan for not implementing its October order in this regard.

The bill states that under Article 312 of the Constitution, the IPS is an All-India Service and its officers are posted in the Union and the States.

"Historically, Indian Police Service officers are an integral and important part of the Central Armed Police Forces, who have been serving on deputation along with officers and members of these Forces," the objectives of the bill state.

The CAPFs perform functions relating to national security and anti-terrorism in close coordination with the state authorities, it said.

CJI fumes over litigant's father calling his brother

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant Wednesday took umbrage at the conduct of a litigant whose father made a phone call to the CJI's brother objecting to a judicial order regarding minority reservation for a medical post-graduate course.

The matter pertains to one Nikhil Kumar Punia, born in Haryana's JaatPuniya community, seeking a minority reservation after converting to Buddhism in Uttar Pradesh's Subharti Medical College.

The Supreme Court, while observing that the plea was a "new type of fraud", had directed an inquiry into the petitioner's minority certificates January 28.

The CJI was infuriated while referring to the "shocking" incident Wednesday and said, "Nobody dares to do this. And you think I will transfer the case because of this? I have dealt with such elements for the last 23 years."

He went on and said, "Now you tell us why we should not initiate criminal contempt against the father of your client. What he (father) has done, should I disclose in open court? He calls up my brother and asks him how the Chief Justice of India has passed this order. Will he dictate to me?"

Slamming the conduct, he told the advocate, "You verify it (the conduct). As counsel, you should first consider withdrawing. This is sheer misconduct. Even if he is outside India, I know how to deal with such people."

Parliament passes Transgender Persons Amendment Bill



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Parliament Wednesday passed a bill to amend a law on protection and rights of transgender persons that proposes excluding social orientations from the ambit of the statute, with Rajya Sabha giving its nod, even as Opposition members pressed for sending it to a select committee.

The bill, which seeks to amend Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act 2019, also provides for graded punishment based on the gravity of harm inflicted on such people. The bill was passed in Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

Replying to the debate on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, in the Upper House, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar said the proposed legislation is an effort to take along all segments of the society together.

He said that the bill aims to provide protection to only those who face discrimination due to biological issues. The minister asserted that the amendment will ensure that transgender persons continue to get legal recognition and protection.

The Modi government is committed to protecting all those people who are suffering due to biological reasons, he said adding that their rights will be protected.

The minister opined that such persons should be brought into the mainstream so that they should not live in dejection.

Highlighting the steps taken by the government for the welfare of the community, the minister said that transgender

welfare boards have been set up in over 30 states. This bill will bring administrative clarity and protect rights of the transgender persons.

The minister said that the legislation will help end discrimination of transgender persons saying the bill is clear resolve of the Modi government which believes in Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas.

The government is working towards emancipation and empowerment of every person and the proposed legislation is an effort to take all segments of society together, he stated.

The Modi government is committed to protecting all those people who are suffering due to biological reasons.

The bill was passed by a voice vote in the Rajya Sabha after rejecting amendments moved by the Opposition. The House did not approve the demands by Opposition for sending the bill to select committee.

The bill seeks to give a precise definition of the term "transgender" and exclude "different sexual orientations and self-perceived sexual identities" from the proposed law's ambit. It was introduced in Lok Sabha earlier this month.

The minister said that efforts have been made to recognise the specific needs of the transgender persons who face serious social challenges and to help create a framework for their protection.

Several members participated in the debate including Amar Pal Maurya (BJP), Renuka Chowdhury (Congress), Fauziya Khan (NCP-SP), Manoj Kumar Jha (RJD), Saket Gokhale (TMC) and Tiruchi Siva (DMK).

Some of members pressed for sending the bill to select committee.

India blasts Pak for 'frivolous' narratives on Andrabi sentencing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: India Wednesday categorically rejected Pakistan's condemnation of a life sentence handed to Kashmiri separatist Asiya Andrabi, and said Islamabad should introspect on systematic human rights violations it continues to perpetrate instead of peddling "frivolous" narratives.

A Delhi court Tuesday sentenced Andrabi, the chief of banned Dukhtar-e-Millat, to life imprisonment, and gave 30-year prison terms to her two associates, for conspiring to commit a crime against the State. Pakistan's foreign ministry Wednesday condemned the prison terms given to the three women and described Andrabi as a "vocal advocate for the Kashmir cause".

"We categorically reject the statement issued by Pakistan in support of a banned terrorist organization and its members," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"Pakistan has no locus standi to comment on matters internal to India or its judicial processes. However, one is not surprised that a country, which has long been sponsoring terrorism, has come up with such a statement condoning violence and killing of innocent people," he said.



Senior Maoist commander Papa Rao, second left, a member of the Dandakaranaya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) and in-charge of south Sub Zonal Bureau of Maoists, and his team members hold copies of the Constitution of India after their surrender, in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, Wednesday

IYC to seek more time to vacate Raisina Road office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) will seek an extension of the March 28 deadline to vacate its office at 5, Raisina Road, even as it explores legal options following the receipt of an eviction notice, Congress sources said Wednesday.

According to sources, the youth wing of the Congress was informed of the notice

only Wednesday. They said it would formally request more time to shift operations from the Lutyens' Delhi premises.

They said that both the IYC and the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) have continued to function from the Raisina Road office despite having access to space at Indira Bhavan near ITO.

"Even though the IYC has an office in Indira Bhavan, it is used sparingly and functions



more like a meeting facility," an IYC member said.

The eviction notice is part of a broader development in which both the IYC and the Congress party have been

asked to vacate their respective premises at 5, Raisina Road and 24, Akbar Road by March 28.

The sources said the organisations are assessing their options, including legal recourse, while preparing to seek additional time for relocation.

"The government is making it a pointless issue that there should not be a political programme in the offices," he alleged. Party functionaries indicated that a formal represen-

tation seeking extension of the deadline is likely to be submitted soon. The Congress party has received notices from the Estate Department to vacate its 24, Akbar Road office and 5, Raisina Road premises in Lutyens Delhi by March 28, according to sources.

The party faces eviction of its old party office, which it has held since 1978, as this is the final notice sent by the estate department.

Harish Rana's last rites conducted, family to donate organs

The 31-year-old man passed away Tuesday after slipping into a coma in 2013, following a fall from a fourth-floor balcony while he was a B.Tech student at Panjab University

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ghaziabad (UP), March 25: Don't cry, he is in a happy place now, the parents of Harish Rana, the first person in India to be permitted passive euthanasia, said Wednesday as they bid farewell to their son one last time.

Harish's last rites were conducted at the Green Park cremation ground in South Delhi Wednesday morning, marking a quiet end to his 13-year ordeal. In a final act of generosity, Harish's family consented to donate five of his organs.

The 31-year-old man passed away Tuesday after slipping into a coma in 2013, following a

fall from a fourth-floor balcony while he was a B.Tech student at Panjab University.

During the last rites, Harish's mother bid an emotional farewell to her son with folded hands and met those present, while his father Ashok Rana urged mourners not to cry, a neighbour told PTI over the phone.

Residents who attended the cremation described the atmosphere as deeply emotional. Tejas Chaturvedi, a resident of the Raj Empire Society, noted that many attendees were moved to tears during the ceremony. However, Ashok Rana continued to console others and encouraged them to remain



strong in their moment of grief. "Let no one weep. I am praying that my son may depart in peace. Wherever he is born next, may he receive God's blessings," he said.

Uttar Pradesh Congress chief

Ajai Rai, who visited the cremation ground to pay his respects, told PTI that the family had confirmed donation of five of Harish's organs. "Harish might be gone, but he will continue to live on through the beneficia-

ries of his organ donation. The family has set an example before the entire nation," Rai told PTI over the phone.

Family members, along with representatives of the Brahma Kumaris, a spiritual movement led by women, attended the cremation to offer their prayers for Harish. Residents from the Raj Empire Society in Ghaziabad, where the Rana family lives, also came to show their support, joining a diverse group of NGOs, AIIMS staff, relatives, and friends.

Harish's body was transported to the cremation ground in an ambulance, and the platform was covered in rose petals. Ma-

ny mourners paid their last respects with folded hands, and some placed saffron garlands on the body before it was laid upon the pyre. Ashish Rana, Harish's younger brother, lit the pyre, accompanied by his sister, Bhavna.

Sister Lovely of the Brahma Kumaris, who has been associated with the family and travelled to the cremation ground, said that meditative chants were performed during the last rites. "The body is leaving the mortal world, but the soul is immortal and has begun a new journey," she said.

"The family decided to donate Harish's eyes," Sister Lovely told PTI.



The people should not panic and there is no need to fill the tanks and carry petrol home in cans. The petrol and diesel stocks available in the state are enough for 15 days

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

CABINET EXTENDS IVFRT SCHEME

The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved a five-year extension of the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme, committing ₹1,800 crore to modernise and secure the country's immigration system through March 2031.



of the day quote

Journalism keeps people informed about the daily activities of society, the country, and the world. It highlights problems and offers solutions. It encourages discussion and reflection on new changes and future directions



MANGUBHAI PATEL | GOVERNOR, MADHYA PRADESH

Even if we cannot be physically integrated, we must remain united politically, emotionally, socially and culturally



NEIPHIU RIO | CHIEF MINISTER, NAGALAND

There is a difference between what Sarma is saying and what I am saying against him -- his is a 'wild theory' which exists only in his head, and it relates to something very serious as national security



GAURAV GOGOI | CONGRESS CHIEF, ASSAM

POST OF THE DAY



You think you're drinking Fruit Juice? THINK AGAIN. Big food brands are selling sugar water with shiny 'fresh fruit' pictures on the front. And hiding the truth in tiny fine print at the back of packet which reads 'Pictures for marketing purposes only'. SERIOUSLY? Today in Parliament, I called this out. Because these misleading branding and false advertisement are pushing millions, especially kids, into diabetes and lifestyle diseases. Time to expose the truth behind your juice box.

@raghav_chadha

SHORT TAKES

Sonia to remain under medical observation

New Delhi: Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi will remain under observation at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here for a couple more days, sources said Wednesday. According to hospital authorities, she was admitted at 10.22 pm Tuesday. Sir Ganga Ram Hospital Chairman Dr Ajay Swaroop said Gandhi's condition is stable and a team of doctors is closely monitoring her health. Doctors are conducting further examinations to check for a possible stomach and urinary tract infection.

EC acts against 7 paramilitary personnel

Kolkata: The Election Commission has taken disciplinary action against seven paramilitary personnel deployed on election duty in West Bengal's Murshidabad district for allegedly attending an iftar party in violation of guidelines, a senior official said Wednesday. Two of the personnel have been placed under the custody of the central forces, while the remaining five have been transferred out of the state, he said.

Sleeper bus overturns; two dead, 23 injured

New Delhi: A speeding sleeper bus from Jaipur overturned while talking a sharp turn near Hanuman Mandir in Karol Bagh's Jhandewalan area here early Wednesday, killing two passengers and injuring 23 others, officials said. Around 1 am, Karol Bagh police station received a PCR call informing that several passengers were trapped inside a bus following an accident, a senior police officer said. The Delhi-bound bus from Jaipur had around 30 passengers on board, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Rohit Rajbir Singh in a statement said.

GURUGRAM'S TODDLER RAPE CASE

Shame on you: SC pulls up Haryana Police, CWC

The bench said in order to ensure a fair, dispassionate and independent investigation in the case it was constituting a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising ADGP Kala Ramachandran, SP Dr. Anshu Singla and DyCP Jasleen Kaur



Cordelia cruise probe: SC grants interim relief to Sameer Wankhede

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday granted interim relief to Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Officer Sameer Wankhede in his plea challenging disciplinary proceedings initiated against him in relation to the 2021 Cordelia cruise drug bust case. A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe was hearing Wankhede's plea challenging the recent Delhi High Court order that overturned the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) order quashing all disciplinary proceedings arising out of a chargesheet issued against him in 2025.

Top court rejects plea against MHA's circular on Vande Mataram

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday refused to entertain a plea against a recent home ministry circular on singing of national song Vande Mataram at official events and schools, saying the directive was not mandatory. A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Panchohi noted that there was no penal consequence prescribed for not singing the song and termed the plea as "premature".

It said the manner in which the police authorities, ranging from the Commissioner of Police to the Sub-Inspector, have so far investigated the case discloses a "concerted and unwarranted attempt" to discredit the version of the minor victim and to portray the concerns raised by her parents as exaggerated and unfounded.

The bench said in order to ensure a fair, dispassionate and independent investigation in the case it was constituting a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising ADGP Kala Ramachandran, SP Dr. Anshu Singla and DyCP Jasleen Kaur.

It said, "The matter came to light February 2, 2026, whereupon the trauma, suffering, and distress endured by the child were further aggravated by the insensitive, reckless and wholly irresponsible, investigative methods adopted by the Gurugram police in the course of investigation. The conduct and findings of the CWC, as reflected in its report dated February 5, 2026, have only served to compound such victimisation."

The top court also frowned upon the proceedings before the judicial magistrate, before whom the minor victim was produced February 6.

Govt: No shortage of petrol, diesel

To ease pressure on LPG, the government is accelerating the shift to piped natural gas (PNG), with priority allocation ensuring '100 per cent supply to domestic PNG and CNG transport', while industrial and commercial users are receiving around 80 per cent of their usual supply



affected due to the prevailing geopolitical situation", though no dry-outs have been reported and cylinder deliveries are continuing as normal.

Additional allocations have been made to states, with commercial LPG supply now raised to 50 per cent in phases, prioritising sectors such as restaurants, hotels and community kitchens.

To ease pressure on LPG, the government is accelerating the shift to piped natural gas (PNG), with priority allocation ensuring "100 per cent supply to domestic PNG and CNG transport", while industrial and commercial users are receiving around 80 per cent of their usual supply.

City gas distribution (CGD) companies have been directed to prioritise PNG connections for households and key institutions, with incentives being offered for both domestic and commercial users. The government has also asked states to fast-track approvals for pipeline expansion and simplify right-of-way permissions.

Sharma said in the last 25 days 2.5 lakh new PNG connections have been issued and 2.20 lakh LPG consumers have shifted to PNG.

Additional measures include higher domestic LPG production, extra kerosene allocation of 48,000 kilolitres to states, and promotion of alternative fuels such as PNG, electricity and coal to reduce dependence on LPG.

States have been directed to crack down on hoarding and black marketing, with over 2,700 raids conducted, around 2,000 cylinders seized, more than 650 FIRs registered and 155 arrests made so far.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The government Wednesday said there is no shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG in the country, and urged citizens not to believe rumours circulating on social media or resort to panic buying.

LPG supplies remain affected due to the ongoing disruption in the Strait of Hormuz.

In a media briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said all refineries are operating at high capacity with "adequate crude inventories", while "sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel are being maintained" and retail outlets are functioning normally nationwide.

"Don't believe in rumours. We have adequate fuel stocks and the government is making all efforts to reach them to consumers," she said.

She said "panic buying was reported in some areas due to rumours", leading to unusually high sales and crowding at petrol pumps, even though "adequate stocks of petrol and diesel are available at all petrol pumps".

"There are enough stock of petrol and diesel and there is no shortage of any retail outlet (petrol pump). Oil terminals also have enough stocks," she said. On LPG, the government said supply "continues to be

forcing an "ill-planned SIR". The chief minister demanded that physical copies of the supplementary list published online be immediately made available so that the information on the deletion figure could be verified.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Naxalbari, March 25: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday claimed eight lakh names have been deleted in the first supplementary list from the 27 lakh electors whose voting eligibility was adjudicated as part of the SIR exercise.

Addressing an election rally at Naxalbari in the Siliguri subdivision of Darjeeling district, she slammed the BJP for "causing misery" to the people by en-

Arms smuggling module with links to Pak, Nepal, B'desh busted; 10 held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: The Delhi Police Wednesday said they have busted an arms smuggling module with links to Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh, and arrested 10 people.

A cache of sophisticated foreign-made weapons, including sub-machine guns and automatic pistols, along with 200 live cartridges, has been recovered from the accused, they said.

According to police, a total of 21 firearms were seized during the operation, comprising high-end automatic weapons and pistols sourced from multiple countries.

Among the recovered weapons are a Czech Republic-made sub-machine gun and a range of pistols of different international makes.



The seized arms include PX-5.7 pistols, which are generally used by special forces, Stoeger pistols manufactured in Turkey, PX-3 pistols from China, Shadow CZ pistols from the Czech Republic, as well as Beretta (Italy), Taurus (Brazil) and Walther (Germany) pistols, officials said.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the module was part of a well-organised cross-border network involved in smuggling and supplying illegal arms to criminal elements in India, they said. The accused were allegedly in touch with international handlers and suppliers operating from neighbouring countries, the police said.

The syndicate used covert routes and intermediaries to transport weapons across borders and further distribute them to contacts in different parts of the country, they added.

The police said efforts are underway to trace the backward and forward linkages of the module and identify other associates involved in the network.

Mamata claims EC deleted 8L names

BENGAL SIR



forcing an "ill-planned SIR".

The chief minister demanded that physical copies of the supplementary list published online be immediately made available so that the information on the deletion figure could be verified.

"Though I am not sure, I have heard that eight lakh names of 27 lakh voters under adjudication have been deleted from the first supplementary list. But where is that list? Why have hard copies of that list not yet been put up in government offices so far?" she posed.

"I can only verify the information after that list is displayed," she added.

Stating that the "lack of trans-

Patel, Tatkare tried to take over NCP after Ajit's death: Rohit Pawar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 25: NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar Wednesday alleged a "premeditated" attempt by senior leaders Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare to seize control of the NCP following the sudden death of Ajit Pawar in January by giving sweeping powers to its working president.

Talking to reporters here, Rohit claimed that 18 days after the death of Ajit Pawar January 28, Patel, Tatkare and Brijmohan Srivastava had written to the Election Commission of India that the party constitution had been amended and sought that all powers be handed to the working president. Patel

was the working president at that time.

However, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar subsequently wrote to the poll panel asking it to disregard any such correspondence during the transition period (of her taking charge as NCP president) after her husband's demise, Rohit said at a press conference here.

"Neither Sunetra Pawar nor (her elder son) Parth Pawar was taken into confidence. After becoming national president, Sunetra Pawar appeared to have learnt of this, and wrote to the ECI requesting that any correspondence between January 28 and her assuming charge should not be considered," he



claimed.

He also displayed the letters before the media. Asked for reaction, an NCP leader, who did not wish to be named, claimed that Rohit Pawar was trying to

create confusion.

Ajit Pawar himself had approved the arrangement where Patel, as national working president, was authorised to communicate with the courts and

the Election Commission, said the leader.

Ajit Pawar, the then deputy CM and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) head, died in a plane crash near Baramati airstrip in Pune district January 28. He was heading the faction of the NCP while his uncle and former union minister and state chief minister Sharad Pawar was heading NCP(SP).

Four days after his death, Sunetra Pawar was sworn in as the deputy CM and was elected the new national president of the NCP February 26.

As per Rohit Pawar, Praful Patel, Sunil Tatkare (both NCP MPs) and Brijmohan Srivastava wrote to the ECI

February 16, "claiming falsely" that the party constitution had been amended, and sought that all powers be handed to the working president.

He cited documents dated March 10 and February 26, purportedly submitted to the ECI with signatures of Patel and Tatkare. These documents stated that in the absence of a national president, all authority would vest in the national working president, Rohit claimed.

Demanding a criminal investigation, the legislator asked whether the entire episode -- from the alleged letters to the ECI to attempts to control the party -- was part of a larger conspiracy.



Every bomb that falls in the Middle East hits the wallets of our families. It's not fair that someone sets fire to the world and the rest of us have to swallow the ashes

MULLALLY CREATES CHURCH HISTORY

Sarah Mullally will be enthroned as the Church of England's first female Archbishop of Canterbury and spiritual leader of 85 million Anglicans worldwide in a ceremony mixing tradition with global symbolism at Canterbury Cathedral Wednesday. "I recognise the significance of being the first female Archbishop," she said in an interview before the service, adding the ceremony would feature women's voices



of the day quote

If oil and gas prices continue to rise, the response of firms and workers may be faster than last time

If this conflict continues, it will send shockwaves across the globe, and families who already cannot afford their next meal will be hit the hardest. Without an adequately funded humanitarian response, it could spell catastrophe for millions already on the edge

We have received numerous requests from Asian countries that were receiving supplies, and supply chains that were interrupted, and we are currently actively working on developing contracts for the supply of energy resources from the Russian Federation

SHORT TAKES

China seeks action over Tokyo breach

Beijing: China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wednesday demanded that Japan conduct an investigation into and severely punish an officer from the Self-Defense Forces who was arrested on suspicion of breaking into the Chinese embassy in Tokyo. The suspect, identified by Tokyo's Metropolitan Police Department as 23-year-old Kodai Murata, allegedly scaled the embassy wall carrying an 18cm (7-inch) knife. Minoru Kihara, Japan's top government spokesperson, called the incident "regrettable" and said the government would take measures to prevent it from happening again. "I understand that the police are continuing their investigation to clarify the incident and have already taken necessary security measures, such as increasing the number of police officers assigned to guard the Chinese embassy in Tokyo," Kihara said.

Drone strike disrupts care for millions

Cairo: More than 2 million people in Sudan's Darfur region have been left without proper medical care after a drone strike last week took a major hospital out of service, the World Health Organisation and a senior aid official say. The strike, blamed on the military, killed 70 people and wrecked Al Daein Teaching Hospital, which had served people across the province of East Darfur. Satellite imagery released Wednesday showed extensive damage to the hospital. The army has denied targeting the medical facility, which is in an area controlled by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. The group has been fighting against the Sudanese military since April 2023 in a war that has pushed parts of the country into famine and is marked by widespread atrocities.

Bus plunges into river with 40 onboard

Dhaka: A bus carrying at least 40 people Wednesday plunged into a river in Bangladesh as it attempted to get onboard a transport ferry, with officials saying many passengers suspected missing. The accident happened in southwestern Rajbari at the Dauladia terminal when the bus fell into the Padma River at about 5.15 pm, officials said. "According to our primary information, the Dhaka-bound bus was carrying 40 passengers when it plunged into the river while getting onboard a ferry at the (Dauladia) terminal," a river police official at the scene told reporters.

US-IRAN WAR

Strikes pose 'existential threat', Gulf states to UN

Geneva, March 25: Gulf Arab states told the UN Human Rights Council Wednesday they face an existential threat from Iran as they condemned Iranian attacks on their infrastructure, which the UN rights chief said might constitute war crimes.

The nearly month-long US-Israeli war on Iran has sparked large-scale Iranian retaliation in the form of drone and missile strikes on energy and civilian infrastructure in Gulf countries, killing civilians and driving up oil prices.

"We are seeing an existential threat to international and regional security. This aggressive approach is undermining international law and sovereignty," Kuwait's ambassador Naser Abdullah HM Alhayan told the Geneva-based council. Other Gulf states also denounced Iran's actions which they said were designed to spread terror.

Countries at the 47-member council will vote on a motion condemning Iran's strikes, asking Iran for reparation and asking the UN rights chief to monitor the situation.

Iran defended its actions, saying more than 1,500 civilians had been killed in the US-Israeli strikes so far. "We fight on behalf of all of you against an enemy that, if not restrained today, will be beyond containment tomorrow," said Iran's ambassador to the UN in Geneva Ali Bahreini,



Lebanon death toll mounts to 1,094

Israeli strikes have killed 1,094 people in Lebanon since war began, the Lebanese Health Ministry said Wednesday. A total of 22 people had been killed over the past 24 hours. At least 121 children and 81 women were among the dead in Lebanon, the ministry said. It said 153 people were also wounded over the past day, raising the total number of injured to 3,119. Earlier, mourners gathered Wednesday in the coastal city of Tyre in southern Lebanon to bury a paramedic killed in an Israeli airstrike. Ahmed Ibrahim Deeb was a first responder with the civil defence team affiliated with the Amal Movement, a Shiite political party allied with Hezbollah. Lebanon's health ministry said Wednesday that Israeli strikes have killed 42 paramedics since the resurgence of war between Israel and Hezbollah March 2.

We are seeing an existential threat to international and regional security. This aggressive approach is undermining international law and sovereignty

rights official Volker Turk Wednesday urged states to end the Iran conflict, describing the situation as extremely dangerous and unpredictable. "This conflict has an unprecedented power to ensnare countries across borders and around the world," he said. "Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure must end. If they are deliberate, such attacks may constitute war crimes."

Denmark's Frederiksen faces tough coalition talks to stay PM



FREDERIKSEN'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAD WORST RESULT SINCE 1903

PM STILL LEADS BIGGEST PARTY AND IS FAVOURITE FOR THIRD TERM

LEFT- AND RIGHT-WING PARTY BLOCS BOTH SHORT OF A MAJORITY

CENTRIST MODERATES ARE LIKELY KINGMAKERS IN COALITION TALKS

Copenhagen, March 25: Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen handed in her coalition government's resignation Wednesday after suffering a massive election defeat, but could still emerge as leader of a new cabinet in the coming weeks.

Analysts say the result was a voter revolt over broken economic promises of the outgoing centrist government and a sign that the electorate was tired of Frederiksen as a leader after seven years in power.

Frederiksen's Social Democratic Party had its worst election since 1903 Tuesday, winning just 38 seats in the 179-seat parliament - down from 50 four years ago - amid voter concerns over the environment, the cost-of-living crisis and welfare.

Such domestic policy issues overshadowed the support gained from Frederiksen's defiant stance towards US President Donald Trump's repeated ambitions to acquire Denmark's semi-autonomous territory Greenland, analysts said.

"This loss was larger than you could explain just by the cost of ruling," said Rune Stubager, a political scientist at Aarhus University.

B'desh PM calls 1971 genocide as 'pre-planned massacre'

The Pakistani army launched 'Operation Searchlight' March 25, 1971 to suppress the Bengali people's calls for self-determination in erstwhile East Pakistan, killing over 20,000 people in Dhaka alone. Officially, three million people were killed in the subsequent nine-month Liberation War

Dhaka, March 25: Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has termed the genocide of March 25, 1971 as a "pre-planned" massacre and appealed to build a state and society of "equality, human dignity and social justice," in the spirit of the Liberation War.

killing over 20,000 people in Dhaka alone. Officially, three million people were killed in the subsequent nine-month Liberation War. Bangladesh observes Genocide Day to pay homage to the victims.

Rahman's message Tuesday, on the eve of the Genocide Remembrance Day, said: "The genocide of 25 March was a pre-planned massacre. Why this organised killing spree could not be resisted remains a matter of historical research regarding the visible role of the political leadership of that time."

Recalling the events of "that dark night," Rahman said the Pakistani occupation forces carried out one of the most heinous genocides in history against the unarmed people of Bangladesh in the name of 'Operation Searchlight'.

"They indiscriminately opened fire on teachers, intellectuals and innocent civilians at various places, including Dhaka University, Pilkhana and Rajarbagh Police Lines, killing many people," the prime minister described.

Calling it as a "pre-planned massacre," and raising questions as to why the organised killing spree could not be resisted at that time, Rahman further said, "On the night of 25 March, the 8th East Bengal Regiment in Chattogram formally initiated



In this photo released by Belarus' Presidential Press Service, North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un, right, and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, center, walk during official meeting ceremony in Pyongyang, North Korea, Wednesday

N Korea's Kim welcomes Lukashenko with fanfare

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in Pyongyang Wednesday with a white-horse cavalry and 21-gun salute, cementing ties between two close allies of Russia's Vladimir Putin. Kim has provided Moscow with millions of rounds of ammunition for its war in Ukraine and sent troops to help Russia expel Ukrainian forces who invaded its western Kursk region. Lukashenko allowed Belarus to be used as a launchpad for Russia's invasion in February 2022, and subsequently agreed to host Russian tactical nuclear missiles on its territory, which borders three NATO alliance countries. Kim greeted Lukashenko with an embrace and laid on a lavish welcome ceremony with ranks of soldiers, cavalry and the gun salute after flag-waving children had cheered his arrival at the airport. Lukashenko's foreign minister, Maxim Ryzhenkov, told Belarusian state media that the two sides would sign a friendship and cooperation treaty during the two-day visit. North Korea and Belarus have withstood years of external economic pressure: the former is under UN sanctions because of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and the latter is subject to Western sanctions over its human rights record and backing for Putin in Ukraine.

Minority Discrimination: Ahmadi in Pak's Punjab barred from performing religious rites on Eid

Lahore, March 25: Police in several districts of Pakistan's Punjab province barred the Ahmadi minority community from performing their religious rites on Eid, Jamaat Ahmadiyya Pakistan (JAP) said Wednesday.

The JAP, in a statement issued here, cited purported government orders and said Punjab police forcibly evacuated Ahmadi places of worship in different districts Saturday and locked them, directly violating both the Constitution of Pakistan and the Supreme Court jurisprudence.

"The police barred Ahmadis from carrying out religious practices on the occasion of Eid-ul-fitr in Gujranwala, Sialkot, Faisalabad and Sargodha districts of Punjab," JAP spokesman Amir Mahmood said. He said the act of not letting Ahmadis carry out their religious practices within the confines of four walls was a grave violation of the Supreme Court's order.



Let us all strive to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs by establishing in the state and society the spirit of the great Liberation War - equality, human dignity and social justice. Let us work together to build a just, developed, prosperous, self-reliant and democratic Bangladesh

TARIQUE RAHMAN | PRIME MINISTER, BANGLADESH

armed resistance against the genocide by declaring 'We Revolt'. Through this resistance to genocide, the long nine-month armed Liberation War began. "To convey the value and significance of independence to the present and future generations, it is essential to know about the genocide of 25 March as well," he said. The war in 1971 that broke out after the sudden crack-

down at midnight March 25, 1971 by the Pakistani troops, ended December 16. As part of the crackdown in what was then east Pakistan, they also arrested Bangladesh's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and took him to what was then called West Pakistan.

The crackdown prompted Bengali soldiers in the Pakistani army and policemen to revolt while tens of thousands of ordinary people including college and university students and peasants joined the Liberation War, crucially backed by India. Pakistan conceded defeat in December 1971 and unconditionally surrendered in Dhaka to the allied forces comprising the freedom fighters and Indian soldiers. Bangladesh celebrates Independence Day March 26.



India's households and temples together hold an estimated 50,000 tonnes of gold valued at roughly \$10 trillion largely outside the formal financial system

SRIRAM KRISHNAN | CHIEF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, NATIONAL STOCK EXCHANGE

SCAM CRACKDOWN: GOOGLE TO LABEL VERIFIED INVESTMENT APPS

Alphabet's Google will label verified investment apps on its app store in India, a move aimed at helping users spot legitimate trading platforms and avoid scams, a senior official at the country's markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India said Wednesday



of the day quote

In CY 2025, the company set a record by dispatching over 5.85 lakh vehicles through rail-ways. Interestingly, in the past decade, our share of rail mode in outbound logistics has grown exponentially, from 5 per cent in 2016 to 26 per cent in 2025



HISASHI TAKEUCHI | MD & CEO MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA

India's workforce dynamics are increasingly shaped by structural and policy-led shifts rather than cyclical demand



BALASUBRAMANIAN A | SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, TEAMLEASE SERVICES

In 2025, our researchers even found out that attackers are mimicking popular collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams and Google Drive to trick users into downloading malware, ultimately stealing login credentials, banking information, and sensitive personal data



ADRIAN HIA | MD FOR ASIA PACIFIC, KASPERSKY

SHORT TAKES

Jio engages investors for 8% stake sale

Hong Kong/New Delhi: Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio Platforms has held talks with 13 marquee foreign investors to sell down 8% of individual stakes in an upcoming Mumbai listing of the telecoms-to-AI company, sources familiar with the matter said. Ambani's Jio Platforms, which houses the world's second-largest telecom company by users after China Mobile, is set to file for approval of its IPO in Mumbai as early as this week. Big investors on the list include Meta, with a stake of 9.99%, and Google, with 7.73%, followed by Vista Equity Partners and KKR. Three Gulf sovereign funds, the Public Investment Fund, Mubadala and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority are also investors. The stake sale "would be around 8% for everyone," said one of the two sources involved in the IPO process, who spoke on condition of anonymity as the discussions were confidential. While the talks have focused on each investor selling 8% of its holding, the final numbers could still change. In 2020, Jio Platforms raised more than \$20.5 billion from stake sales to foreign investors. In November, investment bank Jefferies estimated Reliance Jio's valuation at \$180 billion. Sources told Reuters in January the IPO could be worth as much as \$4 billion, though final numbers will only be decided later.

Sunil set to retire as Airtel Africa Chairman

New Delhi: Airtel Africa Wednesday said Sunil Bharti Mittal will retire as Chairman of the board at the conclusion of the company's AGM in July 2026. Gopal Vittal has been appointed as the Non-Executive Chairman with effect from the same date while Shravini Bharti Mittal will assume the role of Deputy Chair. Shravini Mittal's taking charge as Deputy Chair will ensure continuity with the founding family and significant shareholder in Airtel Africa, which provides telecommunications and mobile money services in 14 countries across Africa. "Sunil Bharti Mittal has informed the Board of his intention to retire as Chair of the Board at the conclusion of this year's AGM in July 2026," it said in a statement. Mittal has served as Chair since listing in 2019, Airtel Africa said, adding that the "board thanks him for his leadership and contribution during this period". Vittal is an established telecom leader who led Bharti Airtel to a life-time high revenue market share in an intensely competitive market and is the current Board Chair of the GSMA.

US EASES SANCTIONS

India buys first Iran LPG cargo in years

India had shunned energy purchases from Iran in 2019 under pressure from Western sanctions



REUTERS

New Delhi, March 25: India has bought its first cargo of Iranian liquefied petroleum gas in years after the US temporarily removed sanctions on Tehran's oil and refined fuels, LSG trade flows and three industry sources said.

India had shunned energy purchases from Iran in 2019 under pressure from Western sanctions. The tanker was initially bound for China, according to LSEG data.

Sanctioned tanker Aurora carrying Iranian LPG is expected to shortly reach the west coast port of Mangalore, the sources said and LSEG data showed.

The South Asian nation has been hit hard by the disruption of energy shipments via the Strait of Hormuz caused by the US-Israeli war with Iran.

THREE RETAILERS TO SHARE LPG CARGO

The Iranian LPG cargo will be shared among the three fuel retailers, Indian Oil Corp, Bharat Petroleum Corp, and Hindustan Petroleum Corp.

The cargo has been purchased from a trader, and payment will be made in rupees, the sources said, adding India is exploring buying more Ira-

nian LPG cargoes. Still, an official said he was not aware of Iranian cargoes being bought.

"(There are) no loaded cargoes from Iran, we have not heard of that," said Rajesh Kumar Sinha, special secretary in the federal shipping ministry said Wednesday at a press conference. The three companies and India's oil ministry did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comments.

MOST OF IMPORTED LPG FROM MIDDLE EAST

The world's second-largest LPG importer is battling its worst gas crisis in decades with the government cutting supplies for industries to shield households from any shortage of cooking gas.

India consumed 33.15 million metric tons of LPG, or cooking gas, last year, with imports accounting for about 60% of demand. About 90% of those imports came from the Middle East. India is gradually moving out its stranded LPG cargoes from the Strait of Hormuz, with four LPG tankers moved so far—Shivalik, Nanda Devi, Pine Gas, and Jag Vasant. India is also loading LPG on to its empty vessels stranded in the Persian Gulf.

TWO-DAY BOOST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

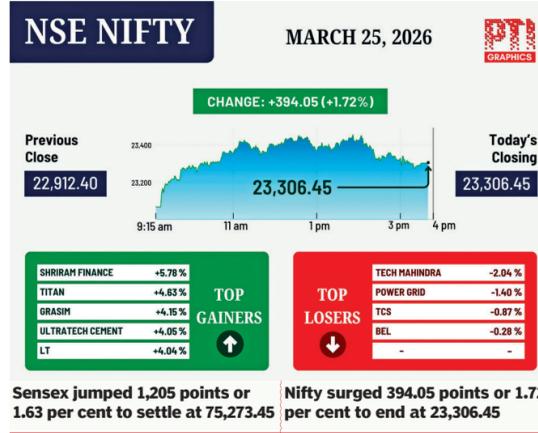
New Delhi, March 25: With a rebound in the stock market, investors' wealth have surged by Rs 15.80 lakh crore in two days following a sharp decline in crude oil prices and hopes of de-escalation in the West Asia war.

Stock markets have been rallying for the past two trading days, with the BSE Sensex climbing 2,577.06 points or 3.54 per cent. On Wednesday, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 1,205 points or 1.63 per cent to settle at 75,273.45.

Thanks to optimism in investors' sentiment, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies climbed Rs 15,80,204.92 crore to Rs 4,31,01,834.74 crore (\$4.59 trillion) in two days.

Indian equities extended their recovery for the second consecutive session, supported by improving global cues and emerging hopes of a potential de-escalation in the ongoing Iran conflict," Siddhartha Khemka - Head of Research, Wealth Manage-

Investors' wealth zooms by ₹15.80L-cr



Sensex jumped 1,205 points or 1.63 per cent to settle at 75,273.45

Nifty surged 394.05 points or 1.72 per cent to end at 23,306.45

ment, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, tanked 6.16 per cent to \$97.79 per barrel.

"Markets continued to build on the previous day's momentum as global risk sentiment improved, with hopes of peace emerging on the radar. Poten-

tial diplomatic progress between the US and Iran-despite mixed geopolitical commentary - led to easing crude oil prices below USD100, which was welcomed by the market," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi, Japan's

Bernstein warns ₹ could breach 98/\$

REUTERS

Washington, March 25: Spillovers from war in the Middle East threaten to push the rupee past 98 per dollar and hurt Indian stocks, according to analysts at Bernstein, highlighting the country's vulnerability to shocks stemming from a sharp rise in energy prices.

The firm's base case is for hostilities in the Middle East to conclude within a month, while its bear case bakes in the war extending for a year.

If the conflict lasts much of 2026, "the repercussions could be catastrophic," Bernstein analysts' Venugopal Garre and Nikhil Arela said in a Wednesday note, citing supply risks, double-digit inflation and economic growth in the 2%-3% range. The base case would leave India's benchmark Nifty 50 at around 26,000 by year-end, a 2% cut from Bernstein's earlier target. The bearish scenario, meanwhile, could push the index below the 20,000 mark and weaken the rupee beyond 110 to the dollar, which would be about 17% weaker than current levels of near 94.

Even if a lengthy conflict is



avoided, the Bernstein analysts see a realistic chance of the rupee breaching 98 per dollar this year, with pressure primarily stemming from India's current account balance, which for the final quarter of fiscal year 2025-26 is expected to be in a deficit.

"One thing looks increasingly possible: if the crude levels sustain even in April, India will see its first real test in (the) last 12-13 years," the note said.

India's Nifty and Sensex have both lost 7% in March, while the rupee has hit successive record lows since the start of the US-Israeli war with Iran, which sent crude oil prices surging

and severely disrupted energy exports from the Middle East.

The worst-case scenario, according to Bernstein, would resemble India's experience after the Great Financial Crisis of 2008 which led to a sharp cut in India's economic growth, sent inflation soaring and sparked a sharp depreciation in the local currency.

"In the end, it all boils down to geopolitics rather than fundamentals, since those start dictating the markets overwhelmingly during times of distress like these, and fundamentals go out the window," the firm's India strategy note said.

RBI rejects all bids at treasury bills auction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 25: The Reserve Bank Wednesday rejected all bids for treasury bills offered at auction, as investors demanded yields that were 0.05-0.10 percentage points higher than those seen in previous auctions amid tight liquidity conditions in the banking system, market participants said.

This is the second time in over 13 months that the RBI has rejected bids. The last time it had rejected bids for 91-day and 182-day treasury bills during an auction February 21, 2025. "Tight liquidity in the bank-

INVESTORS DEMAND HIGH RETURNS

ing system has prompted investors to bid 0.05-0.10 per cent higher cut-off yields at the auction, which the RBI rejected," said Balasubramanian R, head of treasury at Dhanlaxmi Bank.

The Government of India issues treasury bills (T-bills) as money market instruments that function as promissory notes, guaranteeing repayment at a later date.

Typically, banks, primary dealers, retail investors, and institutional investors participate in these auctions.

Treasury bills are short-term borrowing instruments with maturities of up to 364 days and are issued at a discount to their face value, carrying no periodic interest payments. Over the past three weeks,



Tight liquidity in the banking system has prompted investors to bid 0.05-0.10 per cent higher cut-off yields at the auction, which the RBI rejected

BALASUBRAMANIAN R | HEAD OF TREASURY, DHANLAXMI BANK

the cut-off yields on treasury bills have risen by about 0.03 percentage points each for the 91-day and 182-day tenures, and by 0.06 percentage points for the 364-day tenor, reflecting persistent tightness in systemic liquidity.

Liquidity conditions in the banking system have been

strained in recent weeks due to outflows related to advance tax and goods and services tax (GST) payments. In response, the RBI has injected transient liquidity through variable rate repo (VRR) auctions to support the system, which has slipped into deficit.

The central bank has infused a transient liquidity amounting to Rs 2.08 lakh crore into the banking system through VRR auctions of various tenures.

Market participants expect the RBI to conduct additional VRR auctions in the coming days to ease liquidity pressures and stabilise short-term interest rates.

India delays coal flexibility plan as solar power curbs rise

REUTERS

Singapore, March 25: India has pushed back by a year its plan for coal-fired power plants to lower output when solar generation is high, as regulators work out how to compensate for the higher costs of retrofitting entailed, documents reviewed by Reuters show.

Analysts say lack of flexible generation of coal power as India expands renewable capacity threatens to waste green investments, swell compensation costs and boost emissions from greater coal use that could otherwise have been avoided.

The move comes at a time when the world's second largest user of coal is curbing so-

lar output for lack of dedicated transmission lines, while coal-fired capacity wrestles with operational constraints.

Solar generators told to cut output as India's coal plants could not ramp down could get compensation of as much as \$76 million for the eight months ended December, energy think-tank Ember estimates, a cost that will be passed on to consumers.

Government officials blamed the delay of a year on the absence of rules to compensate coal plants for higher costs of maintenance and retrofitting needed to cut the minimum use rate to 40% from 55%, the minutes of a January 16 meeting showed.

Plan seeks to cut minimum coal output to 40% from 55%

Regulators yet to agree on coal compensation rules

Delay risks wasted solar investment, higher emissions

Top coal user China has more ambitious plans to cut



Retrofitting coal plants would swell tariffs by as little as Rs 0.28 to Rs 0.60 per kilowatt-hour, versus Rs 5.76 to Rs 6.04 for battery storage, making flexible coal at least 10 times

cheaper, the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) said at the meeting.

India's power ministry did not respond to requests seeking comment.

CHINA'S MORE AMBITIOUS COAL PHASEDOWN

Unveiled in 2023 with its first phase making slow progress, the plan is less ambitious than efforts by China, which last year cut the minimum coal plant utilisation rate to a range of 25% to 40% from 50% to 60% to boost renewables use.

Indian state coal plant operator NTPC warned the January meeting against "accelerated wear and tear of critical equipment" that stems from operating at minimum loads of 40%.

NTPC urged "detailed studies" on ways to cut use to avoid such damage, adding that its new project contracts included

Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended higher. Markets in Europe were trading in the positive territory.

From the 30-Sensex firms, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Titan, Inter Globe Aviation and Trent were the biggest gainers on Wednesday. Tech Mahindra, Power Grid, Tata Consultancy Services and Bharat Electronics were the laggards.

The BSE SmallCap Select index jumped 3.05 per cent and MidCap Select index climbed 2.50 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended higher. BSE MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt surged 3.70 per cent, followed by commodities (2.75 per cent), PSU Bank (2.61 per cent), realty (2.53 per cent), metal (2.51 per cent), industrials (2.49 per cent) and services (2.42 per cent).

A total of 2,959 stocks advanced, while 1,357 declined and 156 remained unchanged on the BSE.

STRONG GLOBAL CUES

Silver surges to 2.41L/kg, gold jumps to 1.49L/10gs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Precious metals rallied by up to 5 per cent, with silver soaring by Rs 11,250 to Rs 2.41 lakh per kilogram, while gold climbed to Rs 1.49 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital Wednesday amid strong global trends.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal surged by Rs 11,250, or 4.89 per cent, to Rs 2,41,250 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Tuesday's closing level of Rs 2,30,000 per kg.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also increased by Rs 4,900, or 3.38 per cent, to Rs 1,49,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). The yellow metal had settled at Rs 1,44,800 per 10 grams in the bullion market.

Gold prices rose in the domestic markets Wednesday marking a strong recovery in recent sessions bolstered by improved geopolitical sentiment that contributed to a decline in oil prices, Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the international market, spot gold gained \$82.17, or nearly 2 per cent, to \$4,556.55 per ounce, while silver was trading 2 per cent higher at \$72.67 per ounce. Spot gold extended gains for the second straight day at around \$4,550 per ounce as investors turned hopeful about a possible Iran ceasefire with the US, which has brought crude oil and dollar down, Praveen Singh, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

the 40% requirement.

But CEA officials responded that other countries' coal plants running at lower levels of output have been shown to operate safely if properly retrofitted.

The federal regulator has yet to approve the higher maintenance costs proposed by CEA, citing lack of operational data, the agency's presentation showed.

Senior officials of the federal power ministry, CEA, the federal regulator, the grid operator, NTPC and industry lobby group Association of Power Producers agreed to study the impact of the plan based on latest cost estimates, the minutes showed.

NATIONAL INDOOR ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Gurindervir, new 60m king

India's fastest man Gurindervir Singh breaks indoor 60m barrier, wins gold in national record time

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 25: Ace Punjab sprinter Gurindervir Singh claimed the men's 60m gold in a national record time after pre-race favourite Animesh Kujur was disqualified in a dramatic final on the concluding day of the inaugural National Indoor Athletics Championships here Wednesday.

In a fitting end to the two-day championships, the men's 60m final race lived up to the expectations, as Gurindervir, who was representing Reliance Foundation and running his maiden indoor race, emerged as the fastest runner of the meet.

The 25-year-old Gurindervir, a former 100m outdoor national record holder, clocked 6.60 seconds to better the earlier national indoor best of 6.67 seconds which has been in the name of Elakiya Dasan of Tamil Nadu since 2018.

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI), however, does not maintain an official list of national indoor records.

The race saw three false starts, with the third leading to local runner Animesh being shown a red card, much to the stunned silence of the sizable crowd at the 17,000-seater, state-of-the-art indoor facility at the Kalinga Stadium complex.

RESULTS

Men

60m: Gurindervir Singh (Reliance) 6.60 seconds, Lalu Prasad Bhoi (Odisha) 6.65 seconds, Nuzrat (Haryana) 6.71 seconds.

400m: Mohammed Sinan (Reliance) 48.27 seconds, Muhammed Badusha (BSF) 49.83 seconds, Aryan Ekka (Odisha) 49.86 seconds.

1500m: Vinod Singh (Madhya Pradesh) 3:46.13 seconds, Jagdish (Air Force) 3:50.11 seconds, Sunil Yadav (Rajasthan) 3:50.56 seconds.

Triple jump: Vimal Mukesh (Navy) 15.41m, Robinson S (Tamil Nadu) 14.67m, Naresh Rohidas (Odisha) 13.92m.

Pole vault: Reegan G (Tamil Nadu) 5.30m, Rameer Singh (Army) 4.85m, Bineesh Jacob (Railway) 4.55m.

High jump: Swadhin Kumar Majhi (Odisha) 2.18m, Sarvesh Anil Kushare (Maharashtra) 2.15m, Dhairysheel D (Maharashtra) 2.15m.

Men U20

60m: Kshitij Sunil (Maharashtra) 6.78 seconds, Rushiraj Singh (Gujrat) 6.87 seconds, Abhay Singh (Reliance) 6.88 seconds.

400m: Umesh Sahani (Uttar Pradesh) 49.14 seconds, Bapi Hansa (Odisha) 49.27 seconds, Pradeep Mane (Maharashtra) 51.66 seconds.

3,000m: Dolamani Chirgun (Odisha) 8:39.13 seconds, Bitto Joseph (Kerala) 8:40.32 seconds, Ajay (Uttar Pradesh) 8:41.02.

High jump: Basant (Rajasthan) 2.16m, Sagar Roy (West Bengal) 2.05m, Ankit Kumar (Rajasthan) 1.90m.

Women

60m: Harita Bhandra (Maharashtra) 7.32 seconds, Unnathi Bollanda (Karnataka) 7.46 seconds, Trisha Nair (Maharashtra) 7.62 seconds.

400m: Kumari Saloni Nagar (Uttar Pradesh) 55.73 seconds, Sukhi Baskey (Odisha) 55.67 seconds, Unnathi Bollanda (Karnataka) 56.45 seconds.

1500m: Priyanka C (Karnataka) 4:34.31 seconds.

Triple Jump: Mallala Anusha (JSW) 13.20m, Nimisha Dayma (JSW) 12.93m, Bhairabi Roy (West Bengal) 12.81m.

High jump: Payal Jamod (Gujrat) 1.71m, Kevinna Ashvine (Tamil Nadu) 1.71m, Pramilla Raigar (West Bengal) 1.68m.

Women U20

60m: Kajal Hirabhai Vaja (Gujrat) 7.50 seconds, Mansi Rajak (Madhya Pradesh) 7.55 seconds, Heeral Johri (Madhya Pradesh) 7.75 seconds.

400m: Sai Chinthana Senthil (Tamil Nadu) 59.96 seconds, Arpita (Odisha) 1:00.48 seconds.

High jump: Arpita Sarkar (West Bengal) 1.68m, Juin Mantusa (West Bengal) 1.60m, Anrisha Klein (Meghalaya) 1.60m.

Animesh, the national 100m and 200m outdoor national record holder, was seen speaking to the race officials before leaving the field of play disappointed.

Lalu Prasad Bhoi of Odisha was second with 6.65 seconds while Nuzrat of Haryana was third with 6.71 seconds.

Besides Animesh, the two others who were disqualified for false starts were Dondapati Mrutyam of Odisha and Nehal Sagar of Karnataka.

Gurindervir said later that he pleaded with the race officials to let Animesh run under protest, a request

which would not have been possible under rules.

"He (Animesh) did a false start. I thought if he runs, I will also run better as there would be tough competition. The crowd was also his. It would have been better if he had run," said Gurindervir.

"So I was saying to the race officials that let him run under protest." Asked if the three disqualifications affected him, he said, "No, my job was to run my race. I was telling myself that it's okay if I even run alone."

He said the 60m race is all about

running fast flat and not about thinking to catch someone later.

"It's a short distance. If someone goes ahead of you, you can't catch him. No one knows who will win. Even a world champion can lose. Start is important in 60m and then just run fast. I have a good block start."

Gurindervir set a 100m national record at the start of season last year but after that he struggled.

Asked if he has any regrets, he said, "Not yet. But sometimes it happens. It was about my appearance. Someone told me something. I will tell you when the time comes. Right now, I am over it. I don't want to say now and will remain a secret (for the time being)."

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu's C Reegan won the gold in the men's pole vault



Last year, I also started with a national record. But later, I got demotivated. I regretted a lot of things. I became very negative. I had such a bad time. But, I am hoping to be a different Gurindervir this time. I want to end the season like this only

GURINDERVIR SINGH

Swadhin takes golden flight

Swadhin Kumar Majhi clinched the Men's High Jump title with a clearance of 2.18m becoming the first national indoor gold medallist from Odisha, edging out Asian Championships silver medallist Sarvesh Anil Kushare, who managed 2.15m. After the achievement, he said, "I

am happy and overwhelmed to have won the gold medal for my state. This is my home turf. It gave me an upper hand as I am well acquainted with the stadium. I had my practice sessions here which helped me a lot. My next targets will be Asian Games and Commonwealth Games."



event with the national indoor best performance of 5.30m. He went for the national record (outdoor and indoor combined) but failed to clear 5.41m in three attempts.

Dev Meena's one-year-old national record of 5.40m remained intact. Competing in his maiden indoor event, the 24-year-old Reegan opened with 4.95m and then 5.10m, before progressing to 5.20m and 5.30m.

The two-day event was marked by a strong push for improving personal bests in the 60m, high jump, and 800m disciplines.

The competition strengthens India's indoor athletics infrastructure and prepares athletes for international events. Notably, Bhubaneswar was announced as the host city for the 2028 World Indoor Athletics Championships.

Majority of IPL captains express reservations on Impact Player rule

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: A majority of IPL captains Wednesday expressed their reservations on the Impact Player rule that has divided opinions since its introduction in 2023.

In 2024, the BCCI had extended the Impact Player in the IPL until at least 2027. Yet, the strategic rule continues to be debated by fans and players alike.

In the IPL Captains Meeting in Mumbai, the topic was discussed at length by the leaders of all 10 franchises.

"Majority of the captains gave their inputs on the Impact Player rule and expressed their reservations even though the BCCI has extended the rule till 2027. They were told it can only be reviewed after the 2027 edition and not before that," an IPL source told PTI.

Earlier this week, Delhi Capitals skipper Axar Patel joined the likes of Rohit Sharma in criticising the Impact Player rule.

"I don't like this rule as I am an all-rounder myself. Earlier we used to pick all-rounders for this role (batting and bowling). Now the team management goes with a particular batter or bowler, they say why do we need an all-rounder?"

"Being an all-rounder myself I don't like it but at the same time rules are rules. We have to follow them. But personally I don't like it," said Axar on Monday in his opening media interaction ahead of IPL 2026.

In 2024, Rohit had said that he was not a fan of the Impact Player concept saying it hampered the development of all-rounders in Indian cricket while the following season, Hardik Pandya said it had become difficult to pick an all-rounder in the side unless he was equally good with both bat and ball.

Even foreign players like Glenn Phillips have said that the rule could adversely impact the future of all-rounders.

The BCCI last season allowed teams a one-ball change after the 10th over of the second innings to counter dew. One captain proposed Wednesday that teams should be allowed to change the ball after the 10th over of the first innings.

ASIA CUP STAGE 1

Archers claim two bronze medals, reach four finals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, March 25: Indian archers bagged two bronze medals and also stormed into the finals of the men's recurve and women's compound team events on the second day of the Asia Cup World Ranking Tournament Stage 1 here Wednesday.

India also confirmed three medals in the individual section, but it came with the embarrassment for the recurve men, where none of the four archers could reach the medal rounds in a sharp fall from the previous edition's top-two finish by Vishnu Choudhary and Rahul.

The women's compound team improved on its bronze from the previous edition by



reaching the final.

The trio of Chikitha Taniparthi, Raj Kaur and Tejal Salve edged past local favourites Kanyavee Maneesombatkul, Kanoknapus Kaewchomphu and Chaniddapa Thanaratpitinan 229-226 in a closely-fought semifinal to set up a summit clash against third-seeded Kazakhstan.

However, there was some disappointment in the men's compound section, where India fielded one of their most experienced combinations.

KHELO INDIA TRIBAL GAMES

Odisha's Anjali sets pool ablaze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, March 25: Powerhouse Karnataka showcased its supremacy in the pool, winning five of the six gold medals on offer, with Dhoneesh N making a splash in the men's 200m freestyle on the opening day of the inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games here Wednesday.

Dhoneesh clocked 2:03.55s, nearly seven seconds faster than state-mate Keerthan Sharat (2:10.99s), who finished second, while Bhaktish Kumre of Maharashtra took bronze with a time of 2:14.73s.

After Day 1 of action, Karnataka led the table with seven medals, including five gold, while Odisha were second with four medals, including one gold. Hosts Chhattisgarh were fourth with two medals.



Anjali Munda of Odisha also set the pool ablaze, clinching the Women's 200m Freestyle gold in 2:39.02s in a near photo finish with Karnataka's Nidhi S, who took silver in 2:39.09s. Sriya Padiami of Odisha (2:49.04s) finished third.

Karnataka dominated virtually every event, with Manikanta L and Mehanjali clinching two gold medals each.

Manikanta won the men's 100m breaststroke gold in 1:07.41s, with Palash Thakur of Maharashtra (1:11.69s) finishing nearly four seconds behind in second place. Nikhil Xalco opened hosts Chhattisgarh's medal tally by taking bronze in 1:11.77s.

Manikanta then returned to claim the 50m butterfly gold in 27.06s, ahead of Firmino Emon Lalung of Assam (27.69s) and

Riyaj Tripura of Tripura (28.48s).

In the women's events, Mehanjali stood head and shoulders above the rest. She clinched the 100m Breaststroke gold in 1:25.81s, with Anushka Bhagat of Chhattisgarh taking silver in 1:29.10s while Odisha's Rinky Murmu settled for a spot in the podium in 1:34.70s, finishing third.

A total of 30 states and Union Territories are participating in the Khelo India Tribal Games, with nearly 3,800 athletes competing across nine disciplines.

LOCAL STARS		
Names	Events	Medals
Anjali Munda	Women's 200m Freestyle	Gold
Sriya Padiami	Women's 200m Freestyle	Bronze
Ritika Minz	50m Butterfly	Bronze
Rinky Murmu	100m Breaststroke	Bronze

'Egyptian King' Salah calls time on Liverpool

The 33-year-old forward is ending his nine-year tenure at Anfield after a record-breaking career

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Liverpool (England), March 25: Liverpool star Mohamed Salah announced that he will leave the English club at the end of the season, marking an earlier-than-planned departure for one of the club's greatest-ever scorers and soccer's biggest names.

The 33-year-old Egypt forward, who has scored 255 goals in 435 appearances for Liverpool, "reached an agreement" to quit the team a year before his contract was due to expire, the Premier League champions said Tuesday.

Salah's form has dipped in his ninth year at Anfield, to such

an extent that he was dropped for a stretch of games late last year - leading to the winger telling reporters in an impromptu interview that the club "has thrown me under the bus."

"Unfortunately the day has come," Salah said in a post on Instagram that was released around the same time as Liverpool published a six-paragraph statement announcing the

imminent departure of a club great.

"I never imagined," he added, "how deeply this club, this city, these people would become part of my life. Liverpool is not just a football club. It's a passion, it's a history, it's a spirit. I can't explain in words to anyone not part of this club."

Liverpool describes Salah as one of its greatest players

It's a slightly acrimonious exit for Salah, who has been the superstar name in Liverpool's greatest team in a generation. He has

A CAREER ETTED IN EXCELLENCE	
4:	The number of Golden Boot awards won by Salah at Liverpool for being the top scorer in the Premier League, tied for the most with Arsenal great Thierry Henry. Salah's came in 2017-18, 2018-19, 2021-22 and 2024-25.
8:	The number of major titles won by Salah at Liverpool: two Premier League, one Champions League, one FA Cup, two League Cups, the Club World Cup and the UEFA Super Cup.
255:	255: The number of goals Salah has scored at Liverpool, putting him third on its all-time list behind Ian Rush (346) and Roger Hunt (285).
435:	435: The number of appearances made by Salah for Liverpool in all competitions.

won two Premier Leagues and a Champions League in a total of eight titles since joining from Roma in 2017, initially forming a devastating front three with Sadio Mane and Roberto Firmino under manager Jurgen Klopp.

Salah is third in Liverpool's all-time scorers' list, behind Ian Rush and Roger Hunt, and has won the Golden Boot - as the Premier League's top scorer - four times.

Liverpool described Salah as "one of the greatest players in Liverpool's history" and said

his time at Anfield had been "remarkable."

"Salah expressed his wish to make this announcement to the supporters at the earliest possible opportunity," Liverpool said, "to provide transparency about his future due to his respect and gratitude for them."

There was no immediate word from Salah on his next club. Leaving as a free agent would mean Liverpool wouldn't collect a transfer fee. Salah was previously the subject of a bid from a Saudi team, reportedly Al-Ittihad, that was turned down in 2023.

Navdeep replaces Rana in KKR squad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 25: Pacer Navdeep Saini Wednesday replaced Harshit Rana in the Kolkata Knight Riders squad for the IPL beginning March 28. Both Saini and Rana have played for India and represent Delhi in domestic cricket.

Rana underwent a knee surgery last month that ruled him out of the T20 World Cup that India won. "Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Gujarat Titans (GT) have picked Navdeep Saini and Kulwant Khejroliya respectively as player replacements for TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026," said the IPL in a statement.

Khejroliya replaces Prithviraj Yarra in the Gujarat Titans squad. Saini has scalped 23 wickets in 32 IPL matches played so far, in addition to 23 wickets in international cricket for India. He will join KKR for Rs 75 Lakh. "Meanwhile, Khejroliya replaces the injured Prithviraj Yarra in GT. The left-arm pacer, who has six IPL wickets to his name, has previously featured for GT, KKR, and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). He will join GT for INR 30 Lakh," added the IPL statement.



I never imagined, how deeply this club, this city, these people would become part of my life. Liverpool is not just a football club. It's a passion, it's a history, it's a spirit. I can't explain in words to anyone not part of this club

MOHAMED SALAH | FORWARD, LIVERPOOL