

DSPL-816



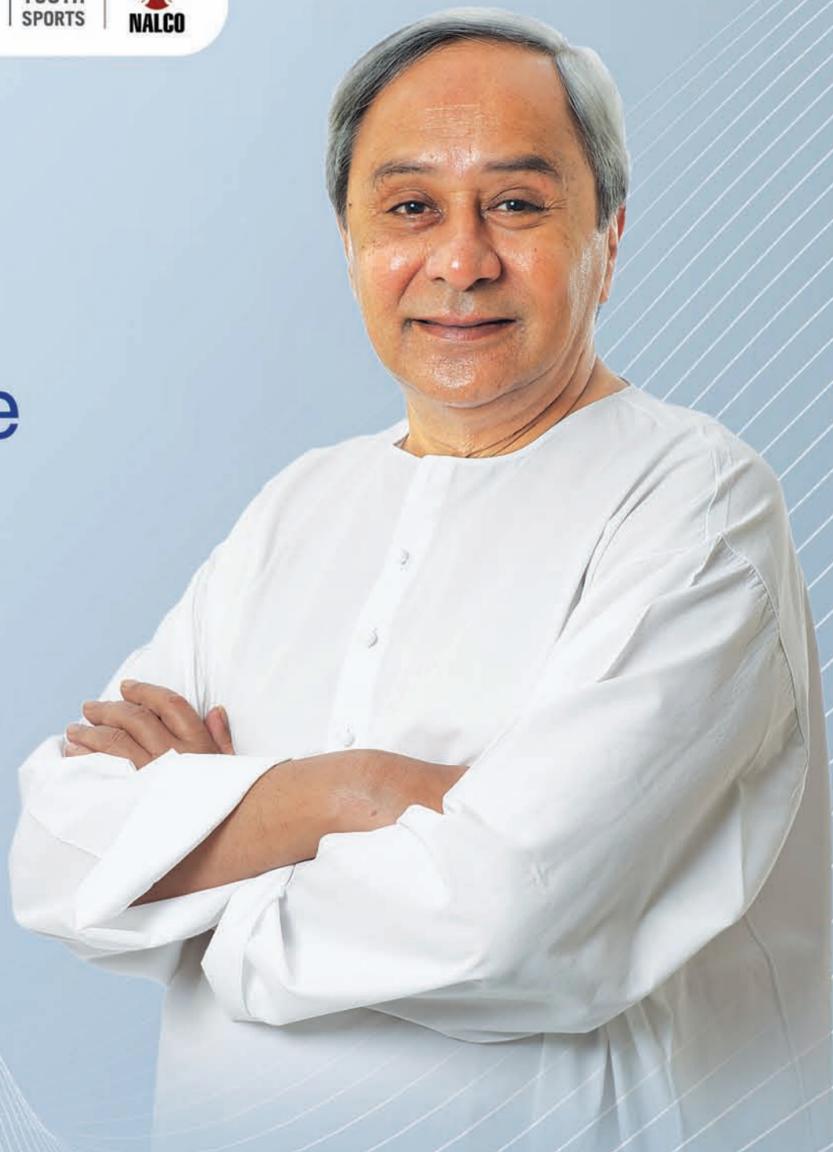
## Launching of **India's First** Indoor Athletics Centre & Aquatics Centre and Indoor Diving Centre

By

**Sj. Naveen Patnaik**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

9 March, 2024

Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar



“Sports for Youth  
Youth for Future”

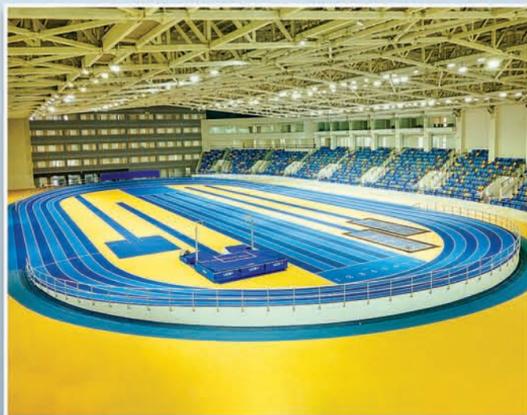
AQUATICS CENTRE



INDOOR ATHLETICS CENTRE



INDOOR DIVING CENTRE  
FOUNDATION STONE LAYING





## KRISTEN STEWART THINKS MOST SEX SCENES ARE TOO UNREALISTIC

Kristen Stewart says she is sick of seeing unrealistic sex scenes in movies and thinks her intimate moments in *Love Lies Bleeding* are much more genuine.

## MURDOCH, 92, ENGAGED TO SCIENTIST 25 YEARS HIS JUNIOR

Media patriarch Rupert Murdoch, 92, announced he is planning to get hitched to scientist Elena Zhukova, a retired 67-year-old who he met through his third wife Wendi Deng, 55. His team confirmed the news Thursday.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
Are you a science and technology geek? Well, today you may have a chance to use your knowledge and zoom ahead of everyone! Ganesh says even students will excel in their studies. Housewives, try your own new recipe, the oven will not blast!

**TAURUS**  
You may feel suspicious about the people around you, feels Ganesh. You are also likely to emerge victorious in visa matters. You will take time to let your loved ones know how much you care for them. Have a positive attitude and it will win many hearts for you, advises Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
You are likely to take a break from daily routine. A pleasure trip to recharge your batteries is on the charts, predicts Ganesh. Winning favours from members of the opposite sex comes naturally to you. If you love someone, you will make your move today.

**CANCER**  
Ganesh portends that you will remain invincible and unbeatable throughout the day. However, today will be as boring and uneventful as it gets. It will be just another day at office, and an equally simple day at home.

**LEO**  
Love, respect and quality time together – this might just be the perfect recipe for a happy family life, says Ganesh. So on this day, make it a point to spend time with your loved ones, and show them just how much you care for them and what they mean to you.

**VIRGO**  
Pay due attention to your innate feelings. A small tour may be in the offing. You will get along famously with people today, says Ganesh. Your loved ones will receive your sincere feelings and emotions. Work your magic to improve relationships more.

**LIBRA**  
All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy! You don't want to be Jack, now, do you? It's high time you took a break from your busy work schedule. Go on a vacation to recharge your batteries. There are chances that evening could bring with it some hurtful remarks from loves ones.

**SCORPIO**  
You are likely to get overboard with your ambitions and be loud-mouthed, says Ganesh. But do not be too forceful or severe lest you end up tarnishing your image. It is best to stay clear of conflicts in the larger scheme of things, advises Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Wisdom in words and hero in deeds – this may well be your avatar today. Expect good news at work, especially related to a thicker pay package or an increase in office floor area. Accountants and franchisees – expect to crunch good numbers today!

**CAPRICORN**  
The wait for some good news may have been too long, but it will surely find its way to you today, says Ganesh. Your focus will remain fixed on work, and you may feel like you are finally starting to like your job. This, in turn, will lead you to take some well-informed decisions about your future. And if the good news comes at the right time, you will probably be saved the effort of finding a new job.

**AQUARIUS**  
You may find your schedules running haywire today! Your workload may be daunting, especially if you're an administrator. However, Ganesh says your diligence and commitment will tide you through. And you are still ready to party in the evening. What energy!

**PISCES**  
Your business associates will marvel at your business acumen, and will respect the insights you provide for them to work with. Meanwhile, you will be busy spending quality time with your family and showing them how much they mean to you today, says Ganesh.

## Adah defines 'girl power'

**New Delhi:** The Kerala Story actress Adah Sharma says she considers herself fortunate to be a woman in the film industry because women are being given 'such powerful roles'.

Talking exclusively to IANS on the occasion of International Women's Day, Adah said: "I feel very fortunate to be a woman in this day and age." "At a time when women are landing powerful roles, I got *The Kerala Story*, followed by *Bastar: The Naxal Story*, and *Sunflower Season 2* was also released," Adah said, looking back at a creatively satisfying year. What does girl power mean to her? "For me, girl power is not putting another woman down, not speaking ill of another woman, and propping other women up."

Continuing on the theme, she added: "Also, as a woman, I wouldn't like to diminish another woman's credibility just because she looks glamorous." Adah went on to compare her generation of actresses with her predecessors, saying that it is not just now that women are taken seriously in showbiz. "Actresses in the past too have had stronger roles," she noted. "Women in the industry in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were very glamorous and talented too," concluded the 31-year-old, adding, the problem, though, was that they did not have an ideal workplace. IANS



## Dragon Ball creator Akira Toriyama dies

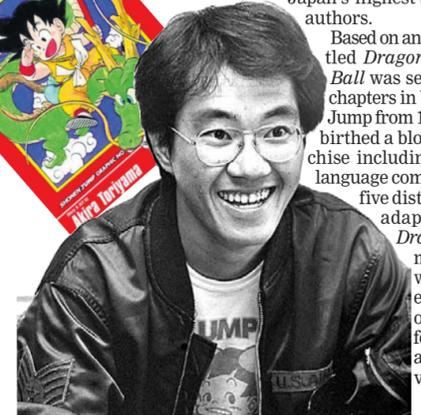
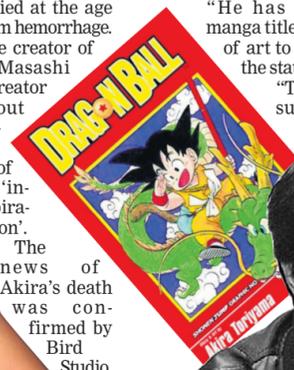
'Dragon Ball' was serialised in 519 chapters in *Weekly Shonen Jump* from 1984 to 1995 and birthed a blockbuster franchise including an English-language comic book series, five distinct TV adaptations, over 20 different films and a vast array of video games

**Mumbai:** *Dragon Ball* manga artist and anime creator, Akira Toriyama, has died at the age of 68 suffering from hemorrhage.

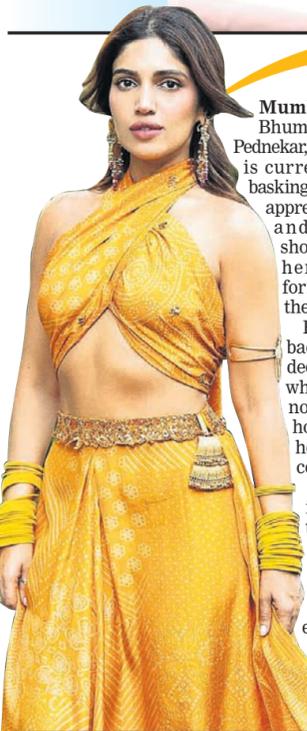
Eiichiro Oda, the creator of *One Piece*, and Masashi Kishimoto, the creator of *Naruto*, put out heartfelt statements, mourning the loss of their 'inspiration'. The news of Akira's death was confirmed by Bird Studio, the manga company that Toriyama founded in 1983. "He has left many manga titles and works of art to this world," the statement read. "Thanks to the support of so many people around the world, he has been able to continue his creative activities for over 45 years."

In 1984, Akira created *Dragon Ball*, the property that would bring him international recognition and make him one of Japan's highest-selling manga authors.

Based on an earlier work titled *Dragon Boy*, *Dragon Ball* was serialised in 519 chapters in *Weekly Shonen Jump* from 1984 to 1995 and birthed a blockbuster franchise including an English-language comic book series, five distinct television adaptations – with *Dragon Ball Z* the most familiar to western audiences – and spin-offs, over 20 different films and a vast array of video games.



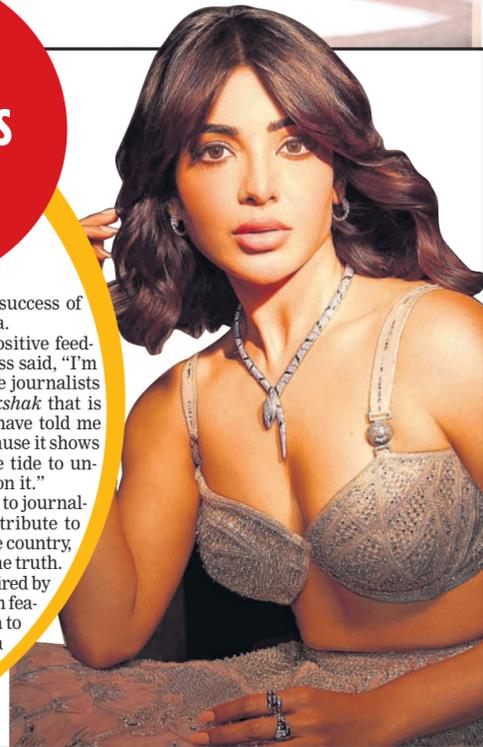
## Bhumi dedicates Bhakshak's success to journo



**Mumbai:** Bhumi Pednekar, who is currently basking in the appreciation and love showered upon her for her performance in *Bhakshak*, dedicated the success of the film to the media fraternity of India.

Expressing gratitude towards the positive feedback on the film, the *Badhaai Do* actress said, "I'm deeply grateful to the media and all the journalists who have given so much love to *Bhakshak* that is now a global hit." She added, "They have told me how they feel proud to see the film because it shows how a reporter can swim against the tide to uncover the truth as if her life depends on it."

Bhumi went on to dedicate the film to journalists and shared, "Bhakshak is my tribute to these unsung heroes living across the country, sacrificing everything to bring out the truth. It is not easy being in the media. Inspired by the Muzaffarpur shelter case, the film features a journalist who is on a mission to expose the dark secret of abuse at a shelter home. Directed by Pulkit, it is currently streaming on Netflix."



## Sam: It's failure that defines an individual

**Mumbai:** Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has been transparent regarding her struggle with myositis.

In a recent interview with *Femina India*, Samantha candidly talked about the hiatus she took from her professional commitments due to her health condition, reflecting on the impact it had on her.

She said, "I've had my fair share of self-loathing and really low confidence, but I've always strived to grow as a person." With that growth came a deeper understanding of my insecurities and self-loathing." She went on to add, "I was able to heal by addressing them – not by trying to fix them from the outside, but by fixing the inner trauma that needed more healing than any external quick fix."

She also said, "People might think that success defines you, but it is failure and loss that truly define an individual, and introduce him/her to the best version of yourself." The *Family Man 2* actress concluded by stating, "These lows and these losses have made me a person I am truly proud of."

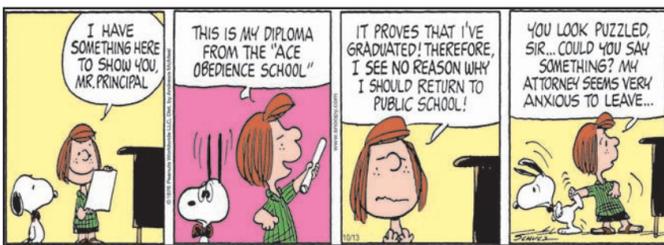
## CLASSIFIED

### LOST

I, Bibhisanda Saraf, S/o. Harihara Saraf, aged 50 years, residence of At/P.O.: Biripali, P.S.: Bangomunda, Dist.: Bolangir, Odisha declared that I have lost my Original Sale Deed No. 366/2008 bearing Khata No. 147/200, Plot No. 242/1005, Area of 0.12 Decimal under Mouza Biripali during travelling from Biripali to Bangomunda. I have already filed GD No. 015 Dt.30.06.2022 at Bangomunda Police Station regarding the same. I have applied a housing loan at SBI Khariar, Azad Chowk, Main Branch where mortgage needs to be created on the certified copy of the lost Sale Deed No. 366/2008 bearing Khata No. 147/200, Plot No. 242/1005, Area of 0.12 Decimal under Mouza - Biripali.

## FUN post

### PEANUTS



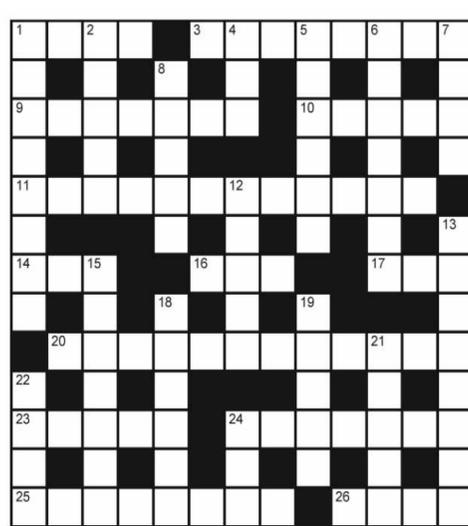
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



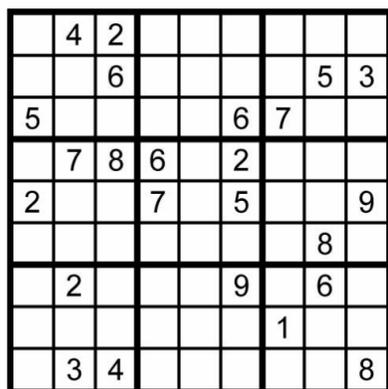
### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Caddie's offering
  - 3 Tangible
  - 9 Old ladies' weapons?
  - 10 The vanquished
  - 11 1948 European Recovery Program (8,4)
  - 14 Cashew, e.g.
  - 16 Stratego piece
  - 17 East Indian tree
  - 20 Bible class (6,6)
  - 23 Garden-variety
  - 24 Feeling sorry for
  - 25 Age of Reptiles
  - 26 Heroic deed
  - 7 Garner
  - 8 Town in central France
  - 12 Impertinent
  - 13 Roof window
  - 15 Destructive sea wave
  - 18 Beloved of Aphrodite
  - 19 Intense
  - 21 Nitrous \_\_\_ (laughing gas)
  - 22 Roasting rod
  - 24 Samoan staple

### 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

#### CROSSWORD

STUDIO OSPREY  
UTINOCPEEA  
PITIFUL OFFER  
PEARVA ALLEGRO  
L M R  
UNDERHANDED  
A U E O S  
FUCHSIA XEBEC  
FLA D T A O  
IDEAL EGOTRIP  
M O R T A L A I S I E I S

#### SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**SOAKED IN DEVOTION:** Devotees stand in queues for darshan at Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Mahashivratri, Friday. PIC: MAUSAM NANDA

## Tax blow to Congress

In a decision that may financially cripple the principal Opposition party in the country, the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal has rejected the Congress' plea against imposition of penalties of ₹210 crore by the Income Tax department for discrepancies in tax returns for previous years. The party had earlier alleged that the I-T department has 'undemocratically withdrawn' ₹65 crore from its accounts in different banks and claimed that it has also freed another ₹205 crore of its funds, a development the grand old party termed as 'tax terrorism'. The country's probe agencies are already facing criticism from various quarters for allegedly working at the behest of the party in power. A string of actions against Opposition leaders and parties by the ED, I-T and CBI in the run-up to the general elections lends credence to such allegations.

**PNN & AGENCIES**  
**New Delhi, March 8:** The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal Friday dismissed the Congress' appeal against imposition of penalties of ₹210 crore by the Income Tax department.  
 Congress treasurer Ajay Maken said the party is exploring all legal options and would move the High Court 'very soon'.  
 "The BJP government has deliberately chosen the timing of this to coincide with national elections," Maken said. He said the I-T tribunal order freezing Congress' funds is 'an attack on democracy' as it has come just ahead of national elections. "How can one expect fair elections in such a situation when funds to the tune of ₹270 crore have been frozen or taken away by the Income Tax authorities from

Congress party's accounts," he asked.  
 Confirming the order, Congress' legal cell head Vivek Tankha said the Tribunal has not even followed its own past precedents in this regard and the party will be approaching the High Court soon. "We are disappointed with the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal order. We will be moving the High Court very soon. They have not followed their own past precedents in granting relief on payment of 20 per cent penalty and that too to a national party which is now on the verge of contesting national elections, which is going to be notified soon," Tankha said. He appeared before the Tribunal on behalf of the party appealing against the I-T department order imposing penalty worth ₹210 crore for alleged discrepancies in I-T returns for previous years.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



**Why does the govt keep insulting us? We're willing to pay ₹5,000 but it has reduced ₹100 on LPG cylinders!**

## STATE BJP HINTS AT GOING ALONE

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**Bhubaneswar, March 8:** The Odisha BJP has said it may field candidates in all the 147 Assembly and 21 Lok Sabha constituencies of the state apparently after its pre-poll alliance and seat sharing talks with the BJD in Delhi remained inconclusive.  
 BJP state president Manmohan Samal, who along with other senior leaders of the party returned to Bhubaneswar from the national capital Friday evening said, "There was no talk

on alliance and we (BJP) will go to polls alone."  
 Samal said, "We had gone to Delhi to hold discussions with the central leaders on our preparations for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state. No talks on alliance or seat-sharing with any party were held during the meeting."  
 BJD leaders Kartik Pandian and Pranab Prakash Das, who had rushed to Delhi in a chartered flight Thursday evening to discuss pre-poll alliance issues with BJP central leaders,

also returned to Bhubaneswar. Upon their return, they maintained silence regarding the outcome of their discussions.  
 Sources, however, said the alliance talks between Odisha's ruling BJD and Opposition BJP hit hurdles over seat sharing.  
 Though both the parties have mutually agreed for a pre-poll alliance, there was difference over seat sharing. While the BJD sought to contest from over 100 seats in the 147-member Odisha Assembly, it was not acceptable to the BJP, sources in the saf-

ron camp claimed.  
 In the outgoing Assembly, the BJD has 114 members and, initially, it demanded 112 seats during talks with the BJP.  
 "The BJD is demanding about 75 per cent of the Assembly seats which is not acceptable to us," a senior BJP leader said, adding such a situation would adversely affect the prospect of the safe-fron party in the state.  
 The BJP, on the other hand, sought 14 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats in Odisha which has been rejected by the BJD.

### SHORT TAKES

**Sudha goes to RS**  
**NEW DELHI:** Philanthropist and author Sudha Murthy was nominated to the Rajya Sabha Friday, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauding her contribution in diverse fields. Modi asserted in a post on X that her presence in the Upper House is a powerful testament to 'Nari Shakti' (women power), exemplifying the strength and potential of women in shaping the nation's destiny. Murthy, wife of Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy, is also chairperson of the Murthy Trust.

**Croc kills farmer**  
**Kendrapara:** A saltwater crocodile Friday dragged a farmer into the deep waters of river Hansua and killed him right in front of his wife. The incident took place when the farmer entered the river with a bucket to draw water for his farmland with the help of his wife. Villagers and family members rushed to the river but failed to trace the victim Rabintra Malik. Later, the local fire tender personnel and forest personnel launched a search and retrieved the mutilated body of the farmer.

DSPL-813




**We are committed to fulfill the housing dream of the people.**





Inauguration of  
**NILAMADHAB NIWAS**  
 (Affordable Housing Project)  
 under Odisha Urban Housing Mission.  
 by  
**Shri Naveen Patnaik**  
 Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha  
 on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024 | Saturday  
 Bhubaneswar



Bhubaneswar Development Authority

Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha

OIPR-13033/13/07/19/2324



The Indian idea of the world, of Nature and of existence is not physical but psychological and spiritual

SRI AUROBINDO



## Lateral Entry Push

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's preferred lateral entry, introduced with much fanfare in 2018, received a lukewarm response and soon got passed over and forgotten. But Modi never dropped the ball. Now, lateral entry has made a formidable comeback as Modi's second term comes to a close. In a recent development, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Modi has greenlit the appointment of three joint secretaries and 22 directors/deputy secretaries across various Central government departments.

Traditionally, these positions have been occupied by officers from all-India services such as the IAS, IPS, IFoS and other Group A services. But the latest wave of appointments marks a departure from convention, as it embraces the lateral entry mode – introducing private sector specialists into government departments – to infuse fresh energy and perspectives.

The lateral entry scheme is for recruiting at the joint secretary, director and deputy secretary levels, where these officers wield significant influence on policymaking. Initially, when the scheme was launched, the Personnel Ministry recruited for 10 joint secretary positions, with the hiring being overseen by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). In 2021, the UPSC recommended 31 candidates for appointment as joint secretaries, directors and deputy secretaries across various departments. As of date, 33 private sector specialists, including eight joint secretaries, 16 directors and nine deputy secretaries, have joined the government. Notably, two joint secretaries have completed their three-year tenures.

Under the scheme, recruitments are made to posts requiring domain specialization and draw candidates from the private sector, state government, autonomous bodies and public sector undertakings alike.

Obviously, with India on the verge of general elections, any headway in this new round of lateral hiring will have to wait for the new government to be sworn in. But with Modi exuding confidence that the third term is a shoo-in, he is looking far ahead, including getting his cabinet colleagues and senior babus to chalk out a 100-day action plan for after the elections.

### Concerns over stalled ITAT appointments

Despite the Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) signing off on the appointment of 18 judicial members and 22 accountant members within the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), these individuals find themselves in limbo, awaiting the issuance of formal orders from the Ministry of Law & Justice for the past two months.

The inordinate delay in issuing formal orders is being compared with the swift actions seen in the appointments to other tribunals like NCLT, CESAT and CAT, where members received their formal orders within a mere two weeks of the ACC notification in November last year. But the situation for ITAT members seems markedly different, leaving them in a state of uncertainty.

While some speculate that the delay may stem from the need to finalize appointment letters for the 40 senior officials, others view such prolonged waiting periods with some scepticism. The 40 appointees will have a four-year term or until they reach the age of 67.

The delay not only raises eyebrows but also invites scrutiny. Moreover, it prompts the question of the efficiency of Law Ministry babus. Perhaps they are dealing with more urgent matters than ensuring the routine functioning of an institution like ITAT.

### Controversy and continuity in Rajasthan IAS reshuffle

The recent transfers of divisional commissioners and collectors in Rajasthan have sparked interest due to several noteworthy facts. Despite a change in government, most divisional commissioners appointed by the previous Ashok Gehlot government remain in their positions across various divisions, with only one new appointment in Ajmer with Mahesh Chand Sharma appointed as divisional commissioner.

Notably, only in the three divisions – Kota, Pali and Bikaner – have there been shuffles among the commissioners. The reasons behind the transfers of specific commissioners like Pratibha Singh, Vandana Singh and Urmila Rajoria are unclear. Why were only these three DCs shortlisted when there was talk of bringing Arushi Maik from Jaipur and Neeraj K Pawan from Bhanwara into the mainstream and efforts were also made towards this end? Only these two divisional commissioners are directly recruited IAS officers and are senior IAS officers of the 2003 and 2005 batches respectively, whereas the remaining seven DCs are promotee IAS.

Similarly, the Bhajan Lal Sharma government has reshuffled collectors in almost all districts except for Jaipur, Udaipur and Ajmer. Notably, these districts also serve as divisional headquarters. The decision to retain collectors like Prakash Rajpurohit, Arvind Poswal and Bharti Dixit, despite changes elsewhere, seems to be based on their experience and performance. Overall these transfers highlight both continuity and change, leaving certain choices open to speculation.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherman@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherman). Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

- Everything comes to us that belongs to us if we create the capacity to receive it. **RABINDRA NATH TAGORE**
- Rob the average man of his illusion and you rob him of his happiness at one stroke. **HENRIK IBSEN**
- There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1734:** Francisco Bayeu, who was considered by his contemporaries to be the finest Spanish painter of their period and was greatly influenced by Anton Raphael Mengs and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, was born.
- 1796:** Napoleon Bonaparte, future emperor of France, married Joséphine; he had the marriage annulled in 1810. Napoleon was a French emperor and military commander who rose to prominence during the French Revolution and led successful campaigns during the Revolutionary Wars.
- 1934:** Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man to travel in space (1961), was born. Travelling on Vostok 1, Gagarin completed one orbit of Earth on 12 April 1961, with his flight taking 108 minutes. By achieving this major milestone for the Soviet Union amidst the Space Race, he became an international celebrity and was awarded many medals and titles, including the nation's highest distinction: Hero of the Soviet Union.
- 1945:** The U.S. Army Air Forces bombed Tokyo with napalm, causing fires that destroyed a quarter of the city and killed some 80,000 civilians.

## FOCUS UNITED NATIONS

# REPUTATION AT STAKE



Investigations concerning United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in terrorism-related activities in Gaza should begin at the UN level. At a minimum, greater scrutiny of UNRWA is essential

There is growing evidence that some employees of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have been involved in terrorism-related activities in Gaza. If true, and if the problem turns out to be more widespread than is currently known, the implications would be profound. An official UN body being complicit in war crimes would be one of the greatest scandals in the organization's history.



Noëlle Lenoir

PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES ARE GRANTED TO OFFICIALS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND NOT FOR THE PERSONAL BENEFIT OF THE INDIVIDUALS THEMSELVES, ACCORDING TO A UN CONVENTION

According to an Israeli intelligence document, a dozen UNRWA employees were involved in Hamas's attack on October 7, when 1,200 people were murdered and more than 200 taken hostage. "We were shocked, we took this seriously because these were very serious allegations," UNRWA Director of Communications Juliette Touma told France24. As soon as the revelations were made known, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini summarily dismissed the employees in question. Such a hasty move may suggest that the UNRWA had been turning a blind eye to the problem.

Earlier accusations of the UNRWA tolerating, if not supporting, the dissemination of textbooks encouraging Gazan children to take revenge against Jews seem almost trivial compared to the crimes that its employees are now alleged to have committed. Given the role that the UN will almost certainly play in Gaza's reconstruction, an independent investigation of the allegations against UNRWA front-line staffers, as well as of top agency leaders in New York, is urgently needed.

National governments have a clear role to play here. For example, since at least 42 victims of the Hamas attack were French citizens, France has standing to pursue justice through its criminal courts. On October 11, the French National Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor's Office (PNAT) launched its own in-

vestigation into the "murder, kidnapping, and hostage-taking by an organized group and against minors under 15 years of age, in connection with a terrorist enterprise." In addition, 25 families of French victims have lodged a complaint with PNAT, alleging "crimes against humanity." Similarly, on November 16, the French-Israeli editor of Israel magazine filed a complaint against Hamas at the Paris Judicial Court for crimes against humanity.

In this case, the UNRWA, as the main administrator of foreign aid to Gaza, could be indicted for complicity in crimes against humanity and financing terrorism, as could UN leaders who supervise the agency. Since the agency's creation in 1949, it has administered tens of billions of dollars of aid – including more than \$1 billion in 2022. Yet we know that Hamas has had the means to build a sprawling network of tunnels and military infrastructure beneath the enclave. Of course, Hamas receives substantial subsidies from friendly states such as Iran. But critics of the UNRWA argue that it has failed to police how the funds it disburses

are used; the question, then, is whether any such failure amounts to criminality, insofar as Hamas has been listed as a terrorist organization by the European Council since 2003.

One could even imagine the prosecution of individual UN officials, judging by the case law of the French Court of Cassation in the judgments against the wartime Nazi collaborator Maurice Papon and the French cement maker Lafarge.

In its January 1997 ruling, the court concluded that Papon, while serving as a senior official in the collaborationist Vichy regime, had aided and abetted the "unlawful arrest, false imprisonment, murder and attempted murder amounting to crimes against humanity" against Jews, thus participating in "a concerted plan carried out on behalf of Nazi Germany."

In the Lafarge case, which is ongoing, the court has already noted that the French Criminal Code does not require that an accomplice (whether an individual or a legal entity) in a crime against humanity belong to an organization guilty of such crimes, nor that it adhere to its concerted plan against civil-

ians, nor that it approve of the crimes committed. "It is sufficient," the court ruled on September 7, 2021, "that [the accomplice] is aware that the principal perpetrators are committing or will commit such a crime against humanity and that his aid or assistance facilitates its preparation or commission."

Specifically, the company allegedly maintained business relations with jihadist groups in Syria after war erupted in 2011, despite France having designated them terrorist organizations. The case has not yet gone to trial, and the procedural ruling is in no way a verdict on guilt. It is worth noting, however, that the company continued to pay (via its Syrian subsidiary) more than €5 million (\$5.4 million) to jihadist groups to keep its cement plant in Syria operational. The court could have limited itself to qualifying this act as a terrorist-financing offense. In its ruling on the admissibility of legal action against the company, the court concluded that maintaining commercial relations with the Islamic State would constitute both terrorist financing and complicity in crimes against humanity.

Based on this case law, any official at the UN or elsewhere who is proven to have known that funding was going to Hamas would not be immune from criminal proceedings in France.

Of course, the question of diplomatic immunity for UN officials could come up. But section 20 of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations suggests that this protection can be circumvented when necessary.

Investigations concerning UNRWA should begin at the UN level, but will also come before French courts. At a minimum, greater scrutiny of UNRWA is essential.

The writer, a former French minister for Europe, is an honorary justice of the French Constitutional Court.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

## SPECTRUM SOCIETY

# Women's health remains undervalued

An interesting trend in many board results in several states is that of girls outshining boys. We are also witness to women increasingly showing their mettle in board rooms, entrepreneurship, bureaucracy, industry, research organisations and more recently in the military, which has so far been considered the male preserve. But for male chauvinism or denying them opportunity, we would have been in a far better, envious position today. We lost much by perpetuating the concept of man for the field and woman for the hearth ... man to command and women to obey. The sad reality is that they remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination, exploitation, and health issues.



Harish Barthwal

AS PER ONE ESTIMATE, WOMEN SPEND AROUND THREE TIMES MORE TIME ON 'UNPAID' CARE WORK THAN DO MEN

Ever marked, the absence of lady toilets in streets, markets, and common places? Mind that curbing the call of nature can lead to critical health issues. Gynaecological problems and issues related to bleeding & discharge, menstruation apart, women are more susceptible to specific diseases: cancers of the breast, cervical and urinary tract issues related to menopause, and pregnancy.

The importance of women as equal partners has been enshrined in Indian scriptures where no religious duties are deemed to fructify unless both the partners together contribute to it. Shiva i.e. Shakti without Parvati is incomplete. We forget, it is the complementarity of man & woman that keeps the world going the way it should.

Investing in women's health is not only a moral imperative but also an economic one. Research indicates that closing the gender gap in health could significantly benefit the global economy, potentially adding one trillion dollars by 2040. Despite these hard facts, women's health remains underfunded and undervalued.

Today, the world is facing several multi-pronged crises from geopolitical conflicts to glaring poverty levels and the deleterious impacts of climate change. These challenges can be addressed by solutions that make women as inclusive component by empowering them. By investing in women, we can trigger positive change and acceleration the transition towards a healthier, safer, sustainable and more equitable world for all. It is found that if current trends

continue, over 342 million women may be cursed to be living in extreme poverty by 2030. As such, nations must prioritise gender-responsive funding and increase public spending on essential services and social protection for women.

Policymakers must also value, recognize, and account for the vital contribution women make to economies worldwide through paid and unpaid care work. As per one estimate, women spend around three times more time on 'unpaid' care work than do men. Unfortunately, their chores are not assigned a monetary value.

A word about the woman activists. It turns out that the brunt of champions of women's liberation is not on empowering women but on a buttressing vote bank. By raising voice against they play with the sentiments of women, instigating them to take up cudgels against men folks. Interestingly, the leaders of most women movements have ulterior agendas. The message served is not to hone up women's skills and concretely help them take up income generation activities but to imbue in women that they have never been victimised and need not suffer any

longer. They are here to derive the benefits, irrespective of the duties they have ever performed. In this process, the task of strengthening the family as a basic unit for the appropriate growth and overall development of children is compromised.

In formal spheres, we need to work towards forging a more inclusive world for women. In a committee or business negotiation, we must ask, "Are there women, if not, why not?" This can be facilitated by recruiting, retaining and developing diverse talent, supporting women and girls in leadership roles of decision-making, creating necessary infrastructure that addresses the specific needs of women and girls, involving women and girls in sustainable agriculture and food security, providing quality education and training for women & girls, promoting creative, social and artistic talent of women & girls.

For we all to grow, there is no other go but investing in women and championing gender equality, to build a future where everyone in society is free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination, a world that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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

### Divine splendour

Sir, The most frequently used terms these days are Yoga and Yogi. Many people are under the impression that yoga is merely a technique for maintaining good health by doing exercises and controlling breath. Yoga does not want people to turn away from life, it only demands spiritualisation of life. True yoga needs intense personal discipline coupled with deep thinking, under the guidance of an able teacher. Its foundation is self control. An aspirant of Yoga should submit himself to moral laws and be religious. Yoga's main purpose is the elimination of the forces harmful to the soul. The steps mentioned in the Yoga-Sutra will promote co-existence and peace.

CK Subramaniam,  
NAVI MUMBAI

### In driver's seat

Sir, Spin wizards Kuldeep Yadav, Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja bamboozled England on the opening day of the final Test at Dharamsala. The Indian spinners showcased their brilliance on a batting track, while the batters, led by centurions Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill, then inflicted more misery on the English bowlers. India's dominant display has put them in the driver's seat.

NJ Ravi Chander,  
BANGALORE

### AI & Elections

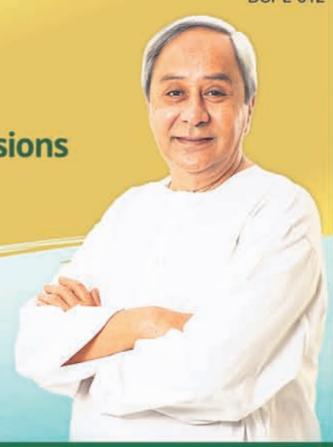
Sir, More than 60 countries will have elections this year including India. Some countries have already concluded when some major global powers will go to the polls shortly. New technologies have always played an important role in the electoral process. The brand new technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is going to influence the elections happening around the globe. AI will be helpful for the administration in counting ballots, conducting surveys, disseminating messages, and stopping fake messages. It will make the work of the party leaders easy, political outfits will adopt an aggressive way of campaigning with the help of this technology. Reaching out to more people with less time will be possible. On the other side of it fake news, disinformation, and unethical stuff such as distorted multimedia content will be created in no time. These will be spread to achieve vested interests. The emergence of multiple AI programmes that can produce realistic images, videos, and voices within seconds can be dangerous.

Deba Prasad Nayak, DHENKANAL





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OIPR-15001/13/0717/2324

## Rahul to contest from Wayanad again

**AGENCIES**  
New Delhi, March 8: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will contest the Lok Sabha polls from Kerala's Wayanad again, the party announced Friday as it released its first list of 39 candidates. Congress general secretary KC Venugopal will contest from Alappuzha, former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel from Rajnandgaon, Jyotsna Mahant from Korba, Tamradhwaj Sahu from Mahasamund and Shashi Tharoor from Kerala capital Thiruvananthapuram. Venugopal said the list has 15



general category candidates while 24 are from the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. Congress treasurer Ajay Maken said the list has a good mix of youth and experience. The announcement came a

day after the Congress' Central Election Committee (CEC) finalised the names for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections after having a discussion on over 60 Lok Sabha seats from 11 states and Union Territories. The CEC meeting was chaired by party president Mallikarjun Kharge. Discussions were held on Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Sikkim, Tripura, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Lakshwadeep. "We are in election mode and on an aggressive path of campaigning with Rahul Gandhi un-

dertaking the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra which is in Gujarat," Venugopal said. The Nyay Yatra will end March 17 in Mumbai with a mammoth rally planned and Congress president Kharge is writing to all INDIA bloc partners to attend that rally, he said. There is speculation that Rahul may also contest from Amethi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Rae Bareilly, a seat previously held by Sonia Gandhi. Both seats are considered bastions of the Gandhi family and local units of Congress have demanded that the two scions should contest from these seats.

## Weeks before elections, LPG price cut by ₹100

**AGENCIES**  
New Delhi, March 8: Weeks before general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday announced a ₹100 per cylinder cut in cooking gas LPG price to ease financial burden on households. Non-subsidised cooking gas price will be cut to ₹803 per 14.2-kg cylinder in the national capital with effect from midnight of Friday/Saturday, official sources said. Prices vary from state to state depending on the incidence on local taxes. The reduction has been made

possible because of easing of international oil and gas prices, against which domestic fuel rates are benchmarked. However, no change in petrol and diesel prices was announced. Petrol and diesel prices continue to be on freeze for a record 23 months now. "Today, on Women's Day, our Government has decided to reduce LPG cylinder prices by ₹100. This will significantly ease the financial burden on millions of households across the country, especially benefiting our Nari Shakti," Modi said in a post on X.

## Delhi policeman suspended for kicking 'namazis'

**AGENCIES**  
New Delhi, March 8: The Delhi Police Friday suspended a sub-inspector for allegedly kicking a few people offering namaz on a road in north Delhi's Inderlok area Friday, police said. The incident happened during the 'jume ki namaz' (Friday prayers) around 2 pm near Inderlok Metro Station. Locals in response blocked the road and demanded action against the policeman, which led to stepping up of security in the area to maintain law and order situation.






## EXPANDING ODISHA'S GLOBAL REACH THROUGH AIR CONNECTIVITY

**Odisha now boasts of direct air links to Global destinations including Dubai, Singapore and Bangkok**





IMPACT OF DIRECT INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS:

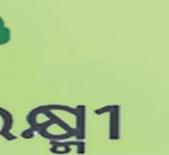
▶ Odisha is witnessing immense potential for capital investment

▶ IT and Manufacturing sectors are gaining a boost

▶ A new chapter is being added to the tourism sector

Information & Public Relations Department

OIPR-15001/13/0716/2324



# LACMI: SAMBALPUR ROUTE CHART

## SAMBALPUR - BAMRA - ROUTE 1

ROUND TRIP - 1			ROUND TRIP - 2			ROUND TRIP - 3		
Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period
Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop
Bamra	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM	Bamra	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM	Bamra	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM
O.A.V. Bamra	6:07:00 AM	6:08:00 AM	O.A.V. Bamra	6:07:00 AM	6:08:00 AM	O.A.V. Bamra	6:07:00 AM	6:08:00 AM
Dumtermunada	6:13:00 AM	6:13:00 AM	Dumtermunada	6:13:00 AM	6:13:00 AM	Dumtermunada	6:13:00 AM	6:13:00 AM
Rangaitikra Bus Stand	6:23:00 AM	6:24:00 AM	Rangaitikra Bus Stand	6:23:00 AM	6:24:00 AM	Rangaitikra Bus Stand	6:23:00 AM	6:24:00 AM
Naudhi	6:39:00 AM	6:40:00 AM	Naudhi	6:39:00 AM	6:40:00 AM	Naudhi	6:39:00 AM	6:40:00 AM
Jarabaga	6:43:48 AM	6:45:48 AM	Jarabaga	6:43:48 AM	6:45:48 AM	Jarabaga	6:43:48 AM	6:45:48 AM
Salohi	6:55:48 AM	6:56:48 AM	Salohi	6:55:48 AM	6:56:48 AM	Salohi	6:55:48 AM	6:56:48 AM
Kesalbahal	7:01:48 AM	7:03:48 AM	Kesalbahal	7:01:48 AM	7:03:48 AM	Kesalbahal	7:01:48 AM	7:03:48 AM
Karibahal	7:08:48 AM	7:09:48 AM	Karibahal	7:08:48 AM	7:09:48 AM	Karibahal	7:08:48 AM	7:09:48 AM
Mahulpali	7:15:18 AM	7:15:18 AM	Mahulpali	7:15:18 AM	7:15:18 AM	Mahulpali	7:15:18 AM	7:15:18 AM
	7:20:00 AM	7:30:00 AM		7:20:00 AM	7:30:00 AM		7:20:00 AM	7:30:00 AM



February 19, 2024 will be a memorable day for Sambalpur when Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched Lacmi bus service in the district. A fleet of 36 buses (29 non-AC and 7 AC) are presently enhancing connectivity in 97 gram panchayats of the district, benefitting over 7 lakh people. Lacmi buses will make the lives of rural people easier and bring them prosperity, the CM had said

## SAMBALPUR - BAMRA - ROUTE 2

ROUND TRIP - 1			ROUND TRIP - 2		
Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period
Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start
Bamra	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM	Bamra	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM
Kechhupani	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM	Kechhupani	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM
Bileighati	6:13:00 AM	6:14:00 AM	Bileighati	6:13:00 AM	6:14:00 AM
Pindha Pathar	6:27:00 AM	6:28:00 AM	Pindha Pathar	6:27:00 AM	6:28:00 AM
Garposh	6:40:00 AM	6:41:00 AM	Garposh	6:40:00 AM	6:41:00 AM
Kinabaga	6:49:00 AM	6:51:00 AM	Kinabaga	6:49:00 AM	6:51:00 AM
Rahaga	7:05:00 AM	7:06:00 AM	Rahaga	7:05:00 AM	7:06:00 AM
Kinabaga	7:24:00 AM	7:26:00 AM	Kinabaga	7:24:00 AM	7:26:00 AM
Garposh	7:34:00 AM	7:36:00 AM	Garposh	7:34:00 AM	7:36:00 AM
Pindha Pathar	7:58:00 AM	7:59:00 AM	Pindha Pathar	7:58:00 AM	7:59:00 AM
Bileighati	8:11:00 AM	8:12:00 AM	Bileighati	8:11:00 AM	8:12:00 AM
Kechhupani	8:16:00 AM	8:17:00 AM	Kechhupani	8:16:00 AM	8:17:00 AM
Bamra	8:24:00 AM	8:25:00 AM	Bamra	8:24:00 AM	8:25:00 AM
Rangaitikra	9:25:00 AM	9:26:00 AM	Rangaitikra	9:25:00 AM	9:26:00 AM
Larajipi	9:47:00 AM	9:48:00 AM	Larajipi	9:47:00 AM	9:48:00 AM
Rangaitikra	10:07:00 AM	10:08:00 AM	Rangaitikra	10:07:00 AM	10:08:00 AM
Bamra	10:22:00 AM	10:23:00 AM	Bamra	10:22:00 AM	10:23:00 AM
	10:30:00 AM	11:00:00 AM		10:30:00 AM	11:00:00 AM

## SAMBALPUR - BAMRA - ROUTE 3

ROUND TRIP - 1			ROUND TRIP - 2			ROUND TRIP - 3			ROUND TRIP - 4		
Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period
Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start
Bamra	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM									
Govindpur	6:01:00 AM	6:03:00 AM									
Dumtermunada	6:07:00 AM	6:08:00 AM									
Katarnal	6:11:00 AM	6:12:00 AM									
Bileighati	6:17:00 AM	6:18:00 AM									
Barab	6:23:00 AM	6:24:00 AM									
Pindha Pathar Market	6:24:00 AM	6:26:00 AM	Pindha Pathar Market	6:24:00 AM	6:26:00 AM	Pindha Pathar Market	6:24:00 AM	6:26:00 AM	Pindha Pathar Market	6:24:00 AM	6:26:00 AM
Garpos	6:53:00 AM	6:54:00 AM									
	7:00:00 AM	7:10:00 AM									

## SAMBALPUR - DHANKAUDA - ROUTE 1

ROUND TRIP - 1			ROUND TRIP - 2		
Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period
Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start
Dhankauda	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM	Dhankauda	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM
Ambhapal Chowk	6:06:00 AM	6:08:00 AM	Ambhapal Chowk	6:06:00 AM	6:08:00 AM
P. C. Bridge, Baria	6:30:00 AM	6:31:00 AM	P. C. Bridge, Baria	6:30:00 AM	6:31:00 AM
Kumbhanga, Satapali	6:46:00 AM	6:47:00 AM	Kumbhanga, Satapali	6:46:00 AM	6:47:00 AM
Tejapara	7:12:00 AM	7:13:00 AM	Tejapara	7:12:00 AM	7:13:00 AM
Kud. Andolpur	7:21:00 AM	7:22:00 AM	Kud. Andolpur	7:21:00 AM	7:22:00 AM
Narabali	7:33:00 AM	7:34:00 AM	Narabali	7:33:00 AM	7:34:00 AM
Kardola	7:40:00 AM	7:41:00 AM	Kardola	7:40:00 AM	7:41:00 AM
	7:50:00 AM	8:00:00 AM		7:50:00 AM	8:00:00 AM

## SAMBALPUR - DHANKAUDA - ROUTE 2

ROUND TRIP - 1			ROUND TRIP - 2			ROUND TRIP - 3			ROUND TRIP - 4			ROUND TRIP - 5		
Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period
Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop
Dhankauda	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM												
Sunapal Patka Chhak, Sakhipara	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sunapal Patka Chhak, Sakhipara	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sunapal Patka Chhak, Sakhipara	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sunapal Patka Chhak, Sakhipara	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sunapal Patka Chhak, Sakhipara	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM
Bisakhahinda	6:07:00 AM	6:09:00 AM												
Medhapada	6:15:00 AM	6:16:00 AM												
Ambhapal	6:24:00 AM	6:25:00 AM												
Bhagapat	6:36:00 AM	6:37:00 AM												
Sason	6:45:00 AM	6:46:00 AM												
Kankhinda	6:50:00 AM	6:51:00 AM												
	7:00:00 AM	7:10:00 AM												

## SAMBALPUR - DHANKAUDA - ROUTE 3

ROUND TRIP - 1			ROUND TRIP - 2			ROUND TRIP - 3			ROUND TRIP - 4			ROUND TRIP - 5		
Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period
Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop
Dhankauda	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM												
Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM
Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM	Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM	Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM	Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM	Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM
Bhagapat	6:20:00 AM	6:21:00 AM												
Bhahubal	6:26:00 AM	6:27:00 AM												
Kankhinda	6:36:00 AM	6:37:00 AM												
Khasana	6:41:00 AM	6:43:00 AM												
	7:00:00 AM	7:10:00 AM												

## OSAMBALPUR - DHANKAUDA - ROUTE 3

ROUND TRIP - 1			ROUND TRIP - 2			ROUND TRIP - 3			ROUND TRIP - 4		
Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period	Bus Stop Location	Running Time Period	Running Time Period
Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start	Stop	Start
Dhankauda	6:00:00 AM	6:00:00 AM									
Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM	Sakhipara Chhak	6:03:00 AM	6:04:00 AM
Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM	Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM	Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM	Ambhapal Chowk	6:08:00 AM	6:09:00 AM
Bhagapat	6:20:00 AM	6:21:00 AM									
Bhahubal	6:26:00 AM	6:27:00 AM									
Kankhinda	6:36:00 AM	6:37:00 AM									
Khasana											



# Pottangi gears up for triangular battle

Padhi may not have a cakewalk as constituency likely to witness tripartite polls



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sunabeda/Semiliguda, March 8:** Congress is banking on Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra to win the elections as the Pottangi Assembly segment in Koraput district is likely to witness a triangular fight.

Various political parties and independent candidates have gone into a huddle to finalise their poll strategy as the elections are round the corner. Many who are likely to contest as independents, in case they do not get a ticket, are hopeful of winning the seat even as the constituency is likely to witness a triangular contest.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) candidate Pitam Padhi won Pottangi seat in 2019 by defeating his nearest rival Congress' Rama Chandra Kadam by 4,255 votes. This Assembly seat, which was once a citadel of Congress, was captured by BJD in 2009. However, this time around the opposition parties are trying to ex-

pand their base and wrest the seat from the ruling party.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which had secured 25,956 votes in 2019 election, is banking on the developmental programmes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. BJP's probable candidate Rama Chandra Pangi has started the preparations in full swing to win the election.

Similarly, Congress election Rama Chandra Kadam is also not lagging behind. He is preparing hard to wrest back the seat for his party as he came second in the 2019 elections by securing 46,989 votes. Kadam is banking on Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra to win the election.

Likewise, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) candidate Muralidhar Guntha received 4,153 votes, independent candidates Nandibali Chaitanya received 8,238 votes and Krushna Chandra Jani received 3,517 votes in 2019 elections.

On the other hand, the voters here seem to be less enthusias-

tic about the elections this time. They alleged that elections come and go but their basic problems have remained unresolved.

The problem of teachers' crunch in a village school under the constituency is yet to be resolved and it often remains closed. Although the local leaders had given an assurance during the 2019 elections that the issue of teacher shortage would be addressed, it is yet to be resolved and studies of the children are badly hit, said Basant Nayak, a villager.

Similarly, non-availability of drinking water is another problem here. The state sponsored Basudha Yojana has remained a non-starter in the area. A woman Dalimba Khila alleged that women have to walk for miles together to fetch water.

She alleged that leaders only visit them during the elections and give them false promises to fulfill their demands. They never think of visiting the area once the elections get over.

A villager Shyamsundar Hantal said that they have been waiting for the day when their demands will get fulfilled.

A girl Usha Bagh said that that government has launched talent hunt programmes in schools and colleges by organising song, dance and various competitions among the students. However, organising such programmes by cancelling classes and examinations are not good for the future of the students, she added.



WIELDING POWER: BJD women wing members celebrate International Women's Day at Sankha Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OP PHOTO

# Question mark on Bijoy's ability

On Thursday, Arabinda Mohapatra, son of one of BJD's founding members and senior BJP leader Bjoy Mohapatra, joined BJD in the presence of party president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Naveen blessed Arabinda telling him to look after Kendrapara district and convey his regards to his father. It happened on the same day when the discussion about BJD-BJP alliance had reached new heights.

In the evening, ST and Nabin Odisha Chairman Kartik Pandian and BJD's organisational secretary Pranab Prakash Das (Bobby) flew down to New Delhi where they reportedly held deliberations with BJP's



central leadership about Naveen's final decisions on seat sharing.

This is a reminder of the alliance between the two parties in 1990s when the alliance was cemented following discussions between Bijoy Mohapatra and the Late senior BJP leader Shri Pramod Mahajan. The alliance had won maximum seats in the 1998, 1999 and 2004 Lok Sabha elections while it put up a good show in 2000 and 2004 state Assembly elections.

Now, discussions are doing the rounds that Pandian will get an opportunity to utilise Bijoy Mohapatra's 1998 experience in forging an alliance with BJP.

Significantly, Bijoy has expressed his gratitude to the Chief Minister after getting the mes-

sage of the latter from his son. However, according to political analysts, the problem is the experience about the state which Mohapatra had in 1998 has certainly diminished in the last 25 years. That is because his political career has eclipsed over the years. It is to be seen how his acumen will help Pandian in protecting BJD's interest in future.

Meanwhile, after returning from New Delhi, BJP state president Manmohan Samal said there was no discussion over alliance and that his party will go solo in the upcoming elections.

Only time will tell what is going to happen in coming days.

SAMARESH PATNAIK

## state/downtown

# LaccMI Exp Shuttle Service launched

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 8:** A crucial link between IIM Sambalpur and NIT Rourkela via Jharsuguda Airport was established Friday as the state Transport department launched the LaccMI Express shuttle service, signifying a crucial milestone in the transport sector, as per a release issued by the department.

Two LaccMI Express shuttles will effectively bridge the gap between the major educational institutions and vital healthcare facilities such as Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR). The service route encompasses prominent establishments including Sambalpur University, VIMSAR, Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT), Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Sambalpur, and National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela, providing seamless access to Jharsuguda Airport.

The LaccMI Express shuttle service provides a convenient and efficient transportation option, spanning a distance of 212 km. Departing from IIM Sambalpur at 9am, the bus arrives at NIT Rourkela by 1:45 pm. The return journey from NIT Rourkela to IIM Sambalpur



**L**accMI Express Shuttle Service integrates IIM Sambalpur, NIT Rourkela and Jharsuguda Airport, enhancing connectivity

**I**t covers 212 km in 4 hours and 22 minutes

**T**imings are synchronised with flights arriving at and departing from Jharsuguda Airport

**N**ominal fares of Re 1 per km for women and ₹2 per km for men

**L**accMI Express strengthens access to education, healthcare, tourist places and regional development

Sambalpur to NIT Rourkela starts at 1:45pm and ends at 6:11pm.

These timings ensure timely and reliable service for passengers, the release mentioned.

It also claimed that these timings have been meticulously planned to align with the flight schedules at Jharsuguda Airport, facilitating hassle-free travel for passengers.

Fares for LaccMI Express shuttle service have been set at a nominal rate to ensure accessibility for all, said an official. Female passengers will be charged at a rate of Re 1 per km, whereas their male counterparts will incur a charge of ₹2 per km, he added.

The introduction of this service will facilitate seamless travel experience, promoting regional development, and improving access to essential services.

# Pledge to create more women leaders: CM

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

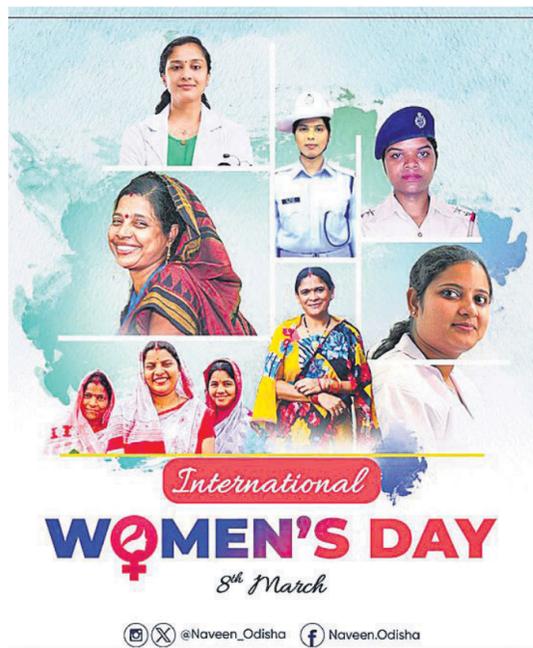
**Bhubaneswar, March 8:** On the International Women's Day here Friday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urged people of the state to work towards women empowerment by taking a pledge to create more women leaders and ensure that they play a greater role at the highest level of decision making.

"Odisha is a pioneer in championing the cause of women through initiatives like Mission Shakti, Mamata and Gender Budget. On Women's Day, let's work towards empowering them further and ensure greater role in highest decision making bodies," said the Chief Minister. "Let's celebrate women's leadership in taking Odisha to the forefront in every sphere and pledge to create more women leaders in society," he added.

On the occasion, various City-based institutions organised several events to celebrate women at home and the workplace.

ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), Bhubaneswar and KVK, Khurda jointly organized a workshop with the theme 'women empowerment through aquaculture.' More than 50 farm women from six self-help groups (SHGs) from Guapur and Majhihara villages of Balipatna block of Khurda district attended the workshop.

Bijayini Singh, deputy superintendent of police, joined the workshop as the chief guest. Singh encouraged women to participate in social and economic



development of the society and help to bring equality.

Similarly, FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO), Bhubaneswar chapter, hosted the FLO Odisha 4th Women's Award, 2023-24 to celebrate outstanding women leaders of the state from different fields.

This event honored these women for their resilience and remarkable contributions to domains including startups,

MSMEs, social impact, sports, environment, media, entertainment, politics, and CSR, highlighting their significant influence across these sectors.

Congratulating the awardees, development commissioner-cum-additional chief secretary Anu Garg said, "It's inspiring to see progress in women's empowerment in Odisha. Each woman contributes uniquely, be it as an entrepreneur, politician, home-

maker, or professional. Let's embrace our roles as role models and continue to inspire the next generation."

Recognising efforts of the women officers, Odisha Police issued a special message on the occasion: "Women have always been strong. We honor and salute all the women police personnel, who tirelessly overcome every roadblock in the way and continue to inspire us every day."

On the other hand, at IIM Sambalpur, the women's day celebrations were organised with the theme 'Invest in Women: Accelerate progress.' Guests at the event discussed how collective efforts can be taken towards creating a more equitable, inclusive and prosperous world for women.

In his address, Mahadeo Jaiswal, director of the institute, highlighted the institution's commitment to gender equality, with both students and faculty comprising an equal gender ratio, and said, "IIM Sambalpur has taken a positive step in improving gender equality on its campus, where both students and faculty comprise 50 per cent male and 50 per cent female. As a management institute, it is our responsibility to bring this gender equality subject to the national agenda."

Jaiswal also underscored the significance of promoting gender equality at a national level, citing the potential economic benefits highlighted in the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Gender Inequality Index (GI) report.

# STF seizes 10.5 kg opium, nabs 2 interstate smugglers

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 8:** In one of the biggest seizures of opium in Odisha, the STF has confiscated 10.5 kg of opium from two interstate drug traffickers.

Sources from the STF of the Odisha Police reported Friday that, based on intelligence input and with the assistance of Rourkela Police, a raid was conducted by a team of STF

Thursday at Panposh in Sundargarh district.

During the search operation, the STF team apprehended two suspects identified as Bitu Singh Munda and Rohit Munda, both belonging to Jharkhand. The STF team recovered 10 kg 508 grams of opium and other incriminating materials from their possession.

The two drug traffickers were arrested and are being forwarded to the court of the Additional

District and Sessions Judge cum Special Judge in Rourkela, as they could not produce any document or authority for the possession of such contraband opium. During the investigation and interrogation, STF sources mentioned that the accused persons and their associates, who are yet to be arrested, used to deliver contraband opium to the drug peddlers of Sundargarh, Rourkela, and Jharkhand after procuring the

same from Rajasthan.

This is by far the biggest opium seizure in Odisha, as claimed by the STF of the Odisha Police.

It is suspected that the seized opium is illegally diverted from the legal cultivation farms of Madhya Pradesh. The STF will contact the Madhya Pradesh Police and the Central Bureau of Narcotics, Gwalior, in this regard to ascertain the source of procurement.

# Truck mows down man

**Bhubaneswar:** A man was crushed to death by a truck while he was crossing the road near Palasuni bridge under Mancheswar police limits here, Friday. The deceased was identified as Yudhishir Sahoo, 75, a resident of Palasuni area. Yudhishir was going to attend Mahashivratri celebrations at Lingaraj Temple when the incident occurred. Mancheswar police said the accused driver, who had fled the spot after the incident, was nabbed within a few minutes from a police check-post.

# Women's Day celebrated at EPFO City office

**Bhubaneswar:** International Women's Day 2024 was celebrated in the regional office of EPFO at Bhubaneswar Friday. Chief guest Uma Mandal, Additional Central Provident Fund Commissioner, Odisha Zone, the first woman head of Odisha Zone, in her address to the women officials underlined the need for each one of them to inspire and motivate other women and girl children who come in contact with them. She further stressed on the fact that women should be there for each other in

times of need. She advised all present to focus on the theme 'Inspire Inclusion' for the growth and development of women. Earlier in the programme, Maushumi Lata Padhi, the first Odia woman Enforcement Officer and first Odia woman Assistant PF Commissioner and officer in charge, Women Cell said women officials of RO Bhubaneswar are role models for every woman. The learning of the Women Cell since 2002 should be shared to uplift and empower other women, she said.

# business



**We can actually sign a free trade agreement before the Indian election. I suspect that that is not necessarily going to be the case because I don't want to use any election as a deadline**  
KEMI BADENOCH | SECRETARY OF STATE FOR BUSINESS AND TRADE, UK

## VEG FOOD THALI TURNS DEARER

A vegetarian thali became dearer by 7 per cent in February primarily on the upsurge in onion and tomato prices, according to rating agency Crisil. A cool down in poultry prices led to non-veg thali becoming cheaper by 9 per cent, Crisil Market Intelligence and Analysis said in its monthly "Roti Rice Rate" report released Friday



# Keep the never give up attitude: Sahoo

**EASTERN FOODS PRIVATE LIMITED (FAVO), a food processing plant, is catering to the growing demand of packaged goods in the state for decades. Based in Cuttack, the brand is known for its quality products and their nutrient value as the PLC controlled and fully automated plant, requires no human intervention till packaging. Born in a business family, Subhrajee Sahoo, managing director of EASTERN FOODS PRIVATE LIMITED, always had a vision to do something by himself in business. With this aim, Sahoo started his venture from the small town of Kendrapara and took this homegrown brand to new heights. In a conversation with Orissa POST, Sahoo shares his entrepreneurial experience. Excerpts...**



- FAVO or EASTERN FOODS PRIVATE LIMITED has such a diverse product portfolio. How do you see the demand of your products?**
- FAVO is one of the leading producers of pasta, vermicelli, chakki atta, sooji, soya chunks and a variety of products with around 44 stock keeping units. Apart from FMCG, we are also into business to business. We are supplying our products to Britannia, Parle G, Top Ramen and many others. There has been a constant increase in the consumption of the items we are manufacturing. We are also adopting new technologies and adding more capacity to cater to the market demand.**
- You have a growing popularity in the households. How are your products different from others available in the market?**
- As a company, we stand out from others in fulfilling our commitment towards our consumers and that is to deliver healthy and nutritious packaged food items. Our ingredients are completely free from any kind of artificial flavouring or preservatives.**
- As inflation is on the rise, do you see this affecting your business? What other challenges do you face in this competitive business?**
- We are into food processing and our main ingredient is grain. Prices of our products are hiked only when there is a rise in grain prices. I personally feel good when the grain prices surge as the benefits mostly go to farmers, who are an important part of the society. In regards to its affect on our costs, we adjust the price as per the fluctuation of raw material cost. One of the biggest challenges we face is finding knowledgeable and hard working people. Many are highly qualified and certified but lack understanding and basic common sense. We had to train them to understand our business model. Business is all about correct decision making applied with good presence of mind.**
- This brand was started from a small town of Kendrapara in 1988. Where do you see your organisation in the future? Are there any new products in the pipeline?**
- We are aiming to become a national level company operating all over India. There are many products in the pipeline which will be brought to your notice shortly.**
- As the director of this food processing firm, what advice do you have for the entrepreneurs venturing into this field?**
- In a business, vision, resilience and innovation are three key attributes that make one successful. Keep the never give up attitude, don't take anything personally and don't go against your principles. Be patient and keep moving as there is no shortcut to success.**



# MFs inflow nears 2-yr high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 8:** Equity mutual funds continued their positive momentum with inflow of ₹26,866 crore in February, making it the highest monthly infusion in 23 months, driven by massive interest for thematic funds and launch of new fund offerings (NFOs).

Also, the latest flow was about 23 per cent higher than inflows of ₹21,780 crore in January.

Moreover, monthly Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) contributions reached a fresh high of ₹19,186 crore, surpassing January's ₹18,838 crore, according to the data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) Friday.

Overall, the mutual fund industry witnessed an inflow of ₹1.2 lakh crore in February, almost similar to the one seen in the preceding month.

The huge inflow was driven by contributions from debt-oriented schemes at ₹63,809 crore, equity schemes at ₹26,866 crore and hybrid schemes at ₹18,105 crore.

The strong inflow has pushed the net assets under management to ₹54.54 lakh crore at February-end from ₹52.74 lakh crore in the preceding month.

The flow in February this year was the highest since March 2022, when equity-oriented mutual funds witnessed an inflow



- Inflows of ₹26,866cr on strong NFO push
- SIP contributions at fresh high of ₹19,186cr

of ₹28,463 crore. Also, the latest flow marks the 36th consecutive month of net inflows in equity funds.

The equity segment was also aided by eight new fund launches during the month which cumulatively garnered ₹8,692 crore, Melvyn Santarita, Analyst, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Anand Vardarajan, Business Head, Banking, Institutional Clients, Alternate Products and Product Strategy, Tata Asset Management said that equity inflows continue to soar largely led by some NFOs. Notably thematic/sectoral have seen massive interest.

Barring focused funds, which saw an outflow of ₹533 crore, all categories experienced inflow in equity segments.

The sectoral or thematic funds category saw the highest inflows to the tune of ₹11,263 crore. This was followed by large & midcap

**As we delve into the Feb 2024 data, we observe that there is a surge in SIP accounts, totalling 8.20 crore with 49.79 lakh new SIP registrations. This underscores investors' unwavering commitment to disciplined wealth accumulation**

VENKAT CHALASANI | CHIEF EXECUTIVE, AMFI

category with a net attraction of ₹3,157 crore, small cap (₹2,922 crore) and mid cap (₹1,808 crore).

However, inflows in small cap and mid-cap dropped by 10 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively in the preceding month possibly due to investors opting to book profits on the back of a sharp uptick in the performance of these categories.

Interestingly, the large cap category saw its third highest flows in 20 months to ₹921 crore in February.

Apart from equities, debt-focused funds attracted net inflows totalling ₹63,809 crore in February, marking the second consecutive month of positive inflows. In January, these funds experienced a surge of ₹76,469 crore.

Liquid funds recorded net inflows of ₹83,642 crore and Corporate Bond funds saw net inflows of ₹3,029 crore.

# Interest rates on small savings schemes remain unchanged for Q1FY25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 8:** The government Friday left the interest rates unchanged on various small savings schemes for the first quarter of the next fiscal, beginning April 1, 2024.

A notification in this regard has been issued by the finance ministry.

"The rates of interest on various small savings schemes for the first quarter of FY 2024-25, starting from April 1, 2024, and ending on June 30, 2024, shall remain unchanged from those notified for the fourth quarter (January 1, 2024, to March 31, 2024) of FY 2023-24," the notification said.

The deposit under the Sukanya Samridhi scheme will attract an interest rate of 8.2 per cent, while the rate on a three-year term deposit remains at 7.1 per cent.

The interest rates for popular PPF and savings deposits too have been retained at 7.1 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively.

The interest rate on the Kisan Vikas Patra will be 7.5 per cent, and the investments will mature in 115 months.

The interest rate on the National Savings Certificate (NSC) will remain at 7.7 per cent for the April 1-June 30, 2024, period. Like the current quarter, the interest rate for the Monthly Income Scheme will earn 7.4 per cent for investors.

# FOREX KITTY JUMPS TO \$625.63BN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, March 8:** India's forex reserves jumped \$6.55 billion to \$625.626 billion for the week ended March 1, the Reserve Bank of India said Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had risen by \$2.975 billion to \$619.072 billion.

It can be noted that in October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year.

For the week ended March 1, the foreign currency assets, a

major component of the reserves, increased by \$6.043 billion to \$554.231 billion, the data said.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by \$569 million to \$48.417 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by \$17 million to \$18.18 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was also down by \$41 million to \$4.798 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

# UPI goes live in Nepal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, March 8:** The NPCI Friday announced that Unified Payment Interface (UPI) is now live in neighbouring Nepal.

UPI users can scan QR codes to make payments to Nepalese merchants, an official statement said.

This follows a tie-up between the National Payments Corporation of India International Payments (NIPI) and Nepal's largest payment network Fonepay Payment Service in September last year.

In its first phase, the partnership will enable Indian consumers to make instant, secure, and convenient UPI payments across various business stores in Nepal by using UPI-enabled apps, the statement said.

Merchants acquired by the participating members of Fonepay Network can accept UPI payments from Indian customers, it specified.

It called the integration a "revolutionary shift" in cross-border transactions between citi-



zens of both countries.

"This initiative not only signifies our commitment to innovating the digital payments space but also reflects our dedication to creating new avenues for trade, strengthening the bond between the two nations," NIPI's chief executive Ritesh Shukla said.

"I am confident that this cross-border payment solution will significantly improve economic ties, commerce, and tourism between the two nations, eventually promoting economic prosperity and progress," Fonepay's chief executive Diwas Kumar said.

# Sita Kantha feted with Biju Ratna Award

**Bhubaneswar:** "State Business Leadership Award 2024" has been organised by The Interview Times with the aim of encouraging the efforts of established entrepreneurs of the state. The program was inaugurated by Padma Vibhushan Sudarshan Sahu and Sulata Deo (MP, Rajyasabha). After the initial session, a special round table conference was held on the progress and growth of Odisha in which Bodhisattva Sanghapriya (Founder & CEO-IG Drone), Brahmananda Meher (MD, Arundhati Group), Pravat Kumar Roul (Vice Chancellor, OUAT), Subhendra Kumar Nayak (Special Secretary, Industries Dept), Pradipta Mohanty (Chairman, SNM Group), Jayanta Kumar Panda (PG Dept Of Medicine, SCB Medical College) shared their opinion. After the discussion roundtable, Sita Kantha Dash (Chairman, Kalinga Hospital), BK Das (DG (ECS), DRDO), Madhabananda Kar (Director & CEO AIIMS, MANGALAGIRI), Kartikeswar Patra (Chairman, GCMLPL), Siba Prasad Mohanty (MD, HURL) were feted with prestigious Biju Ratna Award where as Sunil Kayal (MD & President, ROURKELA CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY), SB Gupta (MD, RB CONSTRUCTION) were feted with lifetime achievement award 2024.



# Coal India output hits record high

**New Delhi:** Production of Coal India Ltd hit a record 703.91 million tonne (MT) in this fiscal until March 7, surpassing the last fiscal's output of 703.20 MT, the Coal Ministry said Friday. Highlighting that several key measures were implemented to enhance production, the ministry said Coal India maintains an ample stock of 72.70 MT as of 7th March 2024. "Coal India Limited (CIL) has achieved a record production of 703.91 million tonne of coal up to 7th March 2024 during the current fiscal, surpassing last financial year's production of 703.20 MT by an impressive margin of 26 days," the ministry said in a release.

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Bid Reference No.: PIPILI-NAC-3(1) / 2024-25  
Bid Identification No.: 2024\_ORULB\_100472

- Type of works: Civil work as mentioned in DTCN
- Total No. of works: 1
- Bid value: As per DTCN
- Period of completion: 2 months
- Date and time schedule:  
Submission Start: From 12 hours of 11.03.2024  
Submission End- 17 hrs. of 22.03.2024
- Opening of bid in online: From 11.00 A.M. of 27.03.2024 onwards.

Further details and necessary documents can be seen from the procurement portal i.e. [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in) & [www.piplinac.in](http://www.piplinac.in)  
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# More women stepping into entrepreneurship

**GAINING INVESTOR CONFIDENCE REMAINS KEY CHALLENGE**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 8:** Women in India are increasingly stepping into the realm of entrepreneurship as they strive for financial independence and empowerment.

While there has been a surge in the number of women entrepreneurs making their mark in various industries, a significant challenge persists. Despite their entrepreneurial drive and innovative ideas, many women face obstacles in securing investor confidence and funding support.

This disparity highlights the need for greater support systems and initiatives to bridge the gap and empower women entrepreneurs to thrive in the competitive business landscape.

"The upward trajectory in the representation of women in the Best Workplaces, soaring from 21 per cent in 2021 to a commendable 26 per cent in 2023,



speaks volumes about the transformative journey towards gender inclusivity," said Yeshasvini Ramaswamy, CEO of Great Place To Work, India.

Ramaswamy said that while India has made significant progress in fostering diverse workplaces, it needs to actively listen beyond socio-economic barriers, address the needs of our female employees (across age brackets), and create an environment where they are genuinely empowered.

"Investing in female leadership development needs building inclusive cultures, and celebrating diverse voices are not just buzzwords but essential steps

toward unlocking our collective promise," she said.

Organisations recognised for their efforts in building positive work environments for women see a demonstrably happier and more engaged workforce, she noted.

Co-founder of YesMadam, Akanksha Vishnoi said it is essential to acknowledge and address these obstacles, creating a supportive environment where women can thrive.

"By championing diversity, fostering inclusion, and implementing supportive policies, companies should endeavour to create an ecosystem where women can balance their caregiving re-

**In order to bring change, we need to have more female investors and decision-makers who support and resource female entrepreneurs in addition to encouraging more women to seek entrepreneurship**

APARNA ACHAREKAR | CO-FOUNDER, COTO

sponsibilities with their professional aspirations," Vishnoi said.

Women entrepreneurs face significant challenges when it comes to raising funds. Research indicates that gender bias is prevalent during the funding process, with 62 per cent of women entrepreneurs experiencing some form of bias. This bias often manifests as sexism, hindering women from securing investor confidence and funding support.

"The decline from \$2.4 billion-plus to \$480 million-plus in funding raised by women-led startups between 2022 and 2023 reinforces the systemic hurdles that women continue to encounter in securing investment for their ventures," Kajal Malik, co-founder and CBO of PickMyWork, said.

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भौतिकी संस्थान, भुवनेश्वर, भारत सरकार, परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग के प्रशासनिक नियंत्रण के तहत एक स्वायत्त अनुसंधान प्राप्त संस्थान है जो देश में प्रमुख अनुसंधान केंद्रों में से एक है, जो उच्च ऊर्जा, संश्लेषित पदार्थ, परमाणु और नाभिकीय भौतिकी के अग्रणी क्षेत्रों में अनुसंधान कार्यक्रम चलाता है। संस्थान अपने प्रशासन का नेतृत्व करने के लिए एक दायनमिक और नवोन्मुखी रजिस्ट्रार की तलाश कर रहा है। आवेदन पर संस्थान की वेबसाइट ([www.iopb.res.in](http://www.iopb.res.in)) पर उपलब्ध है। निर्धारित आवेदन पत्र में आवेदन पत्र (दो प्रतियों में) जिस पर प्रतिनिधित्व या सीधे भर्ती पर रजिस्ट्रार पद के लिए आवेदन लिखा है, अप्रोहस्ताक्षरी को 20/04/2024 से पहले या भेजा जा सकता है। जो अभ्यर्थी राज्य सरकार और केंद्र सरकार के कार्यालयों/अर्ध-सरकारी कार्यालय/अर्ध सरकारी संस्थानों / सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उपक्रमों में कार्यरत हैं, वे उचित माध्यम से आवेदन करना चाहिए। / Institute of Physics, an autonomous grant-in-aid institution under the administrative control of the Department of Atomic Energy, Govt. of India, is one of the premier Research Centres in the country, carrying out research programmes in the frontline areas of high energy, condensed matter, atomic and nuclear physics. The Institute is looking for a dynamic and innovative REGISTRAR to Head the Administration. Application forms are available in the Institute's Website ([www.iopb.res.in](http://www.iopb.res.in)). Applications (in duplicate) in the prescribed application form superscripted "Application for the post of Registrar on Deputation/Direct Recruitment" may be sent to the undersigned so as to reach on or before 20/04/2024. Those employed in State and Central Govt. Offices/Semi-Government offices/Semi Govt. Institutions/Public Sector Undertakings should apply through Proper Channel.

निदेशक / Director

## China says more Indian troops at border won't ease tensions

REUTERS

**Beijing, March 8:** China believes that India's move to add more troops at their disputed border is "not conducive to easing tensions", a foreign ministry spokesperson said Friday.

India has freed up a contingent of 10,000 soldiers, previously deployed at its western border, to strengthen its disputed border with China, according to several media reports.

The two countries have previously agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels, and recently held a constructive meeting on resolving border issues in the western section of the China-India border.

India has deployed 10,000 soldiers from its western border to guard its 532 km (331 mile) border with China in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, bordering the Himalayas, according to Indian media.

"China is committed to working with India to safeguard the peace and stability of the border areas," Mao Ning, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, said. "We believe that India's practice is not conducive to safeguarding peace and is not conducive to easing tensions."

Mao added that "India's increase in military deployments in border areas does not help to calm the situation in the border areas or to safeguard peace and safety in these areas."

India and China share a 3,800-km frontier, much of it poorly demarcated. At least 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese troops were killed in clashes in the area in mid-2020.

Both militaries have fortified positions and deployed troops and equipment there in the last few years.

## Ghosh awarded Erasmus Prize

**London:** Indian author Amitav Ghosh has been awarded the prestigious Erasmus Prize 2024 for his passionate contribution to the theme 'imagining the unthinkable' for bringing forth the global crisis of climate change through the written word. Author of the bestsellers such as *The Nutmeg's Curse*, *The Hungry Tide*, and *The Great Derangement* among others, Ghosh, 67, was awarded the prize by the Netherland's Praemium Erasmianum Foundation.

## 16 kids suffer burns in Kota

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kota (Rajasthan) March 8:** Sixteen children and two others participating in 'Shiv Barat' on the occasion of Mahashivratri here sustained burn injuries after getting electrocuted Friday noon, officials said.

The children, aged 10-16 years, were electrocuted from a high-tension power line passing overhead in the Sakatpura area under the Kunhari police station, they said. A boy holding the iron rod that came in contact with the power line received 100 per cent burn injuries, while four others sustained around 40-50 per cent burn injuries, officials said.

All of them were referred to SMS Hospital in Jaipur after being initially treated at Kota's MBS Hospital. Eleven other boys and a man and a woman also sustained injuries and were under treatment in MBS Hospital, they said.

Kota city SP Amrita Duhan said that local women with water

pots on their heads and children, some of them holding flags attached to iron rods, were part of the 'Shiv Barat' for Kathaat temple in Kalibasti. One of the boys in the procession was holding a 22-foot-high iron flagpole, which came in contact with a high-tension line passing overhead around noon, the SP said.

A local present at the site said when the flagpole came in contact with the power line, he was electrocuted and flung into the air. Others, in an attempt to rescue the boy, tried to pull the rod away from him but also received electric shocks, the local said.

The women carrying the pots dropped them, spilling water on the ground, leading to commotion at the spot, the local added.

At least 16 children and a 28-year-old man and a 38-year-old woman with burn injuries were admitted to the emergency and burn wards of MBS Hospital Friday noon, Superintendent Dr Dharmraj Meena said.



An elephant cools off at Vindhyaachal Dham in Mirzapur, Friday

PT PHOTO

## Man held for killing son a day before his wedding

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 8:** It was constant humiliation that led the father of a gym trainer to kill his son in a brutal fashion, stabbing him several times, an evening before his wedding.

The Delhi Police late Thursday night arrested Ranglal Singhal, who, according to his confession, stabbed his son Gaurav in his house while the preparations for his wedding were in full swing.

Gaurav Singhal, 29, was stabbed 15 times in his face and chest at his home in south Delhi's Devli Extension early Thursday, hours before he was supposed to get married.

Ranglal Singhal, who was nabbed from Rajasthan's Jaipur, had planned the killing carefully so as to not draw anyone's attention, police said.

"He deliberately chose a time around 10:30 to 11 pm when it was noisy due to dhol-nagara near his house and the deceased had chosen another room to talk to his would-be wife," an officer privy to the investigation said.

Ranglal Singhal showed no remorse for killing his son, police said.

At the time of his arrest, he had on him gold ornaments worth ₹50 lakh and ₹15 lakh in cash, which he had fled with from the house, they said.

## Delhi cop suspended for 'kicking' namazis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 8:** A sub-inspector of the Delhi Police shoved and kicked a few people offering namaz on a road in north Delhi's Inderlok area Friday, leading to a protest by hundreds of locals against the force, which suspended the official with immediate effect.

People from various sections of the society, including political leaders, condemned the act of Sub-Inspector Manoj Kumar Tomar after a video of the incident went viral on social media. The incident took place during a Friday prayer around 2 pm near the Inderlok metro station. The act of the policeman was captured on camera and the video has since gone viral on social media platforms.

In the video, Tomar is seen trying to disperse a few men praying on a road near a mosque and in what seems like a sudden burst of rage, he starts shoving and kicking some of them. Locals blocked the road and demanded action against Tomar, a police post in-charge, which led to stepping up of security in the area to maintain law and order.

Tension gripped the area for several hours following the incident that took place just a few days



ahead of the holy month of Ramzan. Paramilitary personnel have also been deployed in the area. Joint Commissioner of Police (Central Range) Parmaditya and Additional Commissioner of Police (Eastern Range) Sagar Singh Kalsi also reached the spot to diffuse the situation.

According to locals, some people were offering namaz on a road near the mosque due to a space crunch. Faraz Khan, a local resident, said that prayer is held inside the mosque every week but Friday, there were some outsiders who were not aware of

the designated place for prayers and thus, started offering namaz on the road.

Another resident said, "We are hurt by the act of the police officer and we want his service to be terminated." In the evening, namaz was offered inside the mosque amid heavy deployment of police personnel.

Following the incident, the Delhi Police suspended Tomar with immediate effect and said disciplinary action has also been initiated against him. Later in the day, Parmaditya said that the situation is completely under control. "The deployment of police personnel will continue," he said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) M K Meena said the roads that were blocked by the locals were subsequently opened for vehicular movement. He said the protesters called off their agitation after they were shown the suspension order of the sub-inspector. "The announcements about the action against the officer were made from the local mosque. The locals are with us and they have helped police ensure peace in the area," the DCP said. Hours after the incident, Northeast district of Delhi, which witnessed communal riots in 2020, was put under a strict vigil.

## ABDUCTED ARMY OFFICER RESCUED

*Though the cause of the abduction is not known, reports suggest that it was an extortion case as his family had received such threats in the past, officials said*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, March 8:** A serving Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) of the Indian Army, who was abducted from his home in Manipur's Thoubal district by anti-social elements Friday morning, was rescued by security forces in the evening, sources said.

The JCO, identified as Konsam Kheda Singh, a resident of Charangpat Mamang Leikai, is currently at Waikhong police station (near Kakching) in Thoubal district. Police are investigating the incident, they added.

According to sources, a coordinated search operation was launched by all security agencies to rescue the JCO which ultimately led to his safe release at 6:30 pm. Singh, who was currently on leave, was abducted around 9am after some people barged into his home and bundled him in a vehicle and fled. Though the cause of the ab-

duction is not known, reports suggest that it was an extortion case as his family had received such threats in the past, officials said.

This was the fourth incident since the commencement of the conflict in Manipur wherein soldiers while on leave, on duty or their relatives have been targeted for nefarious interests by inimical elements.

In September 2023, a former Assam Regiment soldier Serto Thangthang Kom was kidnapped and killed by an unidentified armed group from the valley. He was posted in Manipur's Leimakhong with the Defence Service Corps (DSC). Two months later, an unidentified armed group kidnapped four people while they were travelling in an SUV from the hill district Churachandpur to Leimakhong, and killed them. The four were family members of an Indian Army soldier serving in Jammu and Kashmir.

A fifth passenger, the father of the soldier, who was injured, managed to escape and was later airlifted by the army to Dimapur for treatment.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

# France sets landmark on abortion

**IN A HISTORIC MILESTONE, THE COUNTRY BECOMES FIRST IN THE WORLD TO INSCRIBE THE RIGHT TO ABORTION IN ITS CONSTITUTION**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Paris, March 8:** France inscribed the guaranteed right to abortion in its constitution Friday, a powerful message of support for women's rights on International Women's Day.

Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti used a 19th-century printing press to seal the amendment in France's constitution at a special public ceremony. Applause filled the cobblestoned Place Vendôme as France became the first country to explicitly guarantee abortion rights in its national charter.

The measure was overwhelmingly approved by French lawmakers earlier this week, and Friday's ceremony means it can now enter into force.

While abortion is a deeply divisive issue in the United States, it's legal in nearly all of Europe and overwhelmingly supported in France, where it's seen more as a question of public health rather than politics. French legislators approved the constitutional amendment Monday in a 780-72 vote that was backed by



many far-right lawmakers.

Friday's ceremony in Paris was a key event on a day focused on advancing women's rights globally. Marches, protests and conferences are being held from Jakarta, Indonesia, to Mexico City and beyond.

The French constitutional amendment has been hailed by women's rights advocates around the world, including places where women struggle to access birth control or maternal health care. French President Emmanuel Macron called it a direct result of the US Supreme Court ruling in 2022 rescinding long-held abortion rights.

Macron's critics questioned why he pursued the measure in a country with no obvious threat to abortion rights but where women face a multitude of other problems.

France has a persistently high rate of women killed by their partners and challenges remain in prosecuting sexual abuse against women by powerful celebrities and other men. French

women also see lower pay and pensions — especially women who are not white.

Macron's government said the

## 230 million females circumcised globally

**Cairo:** Over 230 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation, most of whom live in Africa, according to a report issued Friday by the United Nations children's agency. In the last eight years, some 30 million people have undergone the procedure, in which external genitalia are partially or fully removed, UNICEF estimated in the report, which was released on International Women's Day. The percentage of women and girls who experience female genital mutilation is declining, UNICEF said, but it warned that efforts to eradicate the practice are too slow to keep up with fast-growing populations. "The practice of female genital mutilation is declining, but not fast enough," the report said. The practice, incorrectly believed to control women's sexuality, can cause serious bleeding and even death. Girls are subjected to the procedure at ages ranging from infancy to adolescence. Long term, it can lead to urinary tract infections, menstrual problems, pain, decreased sexual satisfaction and childbirth complications, as well as depression, low self-esteem and post-traumatic stress disorder. Some 144 million women and girls have been through female genital mutilation in Africa alone, followed by Asia and the Middle East with 80 million and 6 million respectively, the report said. Somalia tops the list of countries where the practice, also known as female circumcision, is prevalent, with 99% of the female population between the ages of 15 and 49 having been circumcised.

abortion amendment was important to avoid a US-like scenario for women in France, as hard-right groups are gaining ground and seeking to turn back the clock on freedoms around Europe.

Macron will preside over the constitutional ceremony. Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti will use a 100-kilogram (220-pound) press from 1810 to imprint the amendment in France's 1958 constitution.

It will include the phrase, "the freedom of women to have recourse to an abortion, which is guaranteed."

## Haiti extends emergency

**GOVT IMPOSES NIGHTTIME CURFEW TO TRY AND REPEL WIDESPREAD GANG ATTACKS**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Port-Au-Prince, March 8:** Haiti's government said Thursday that it was extending a state of emergency and nighttime curfew to try and curb violent gang attacks that have paralyzed the capital of Port-au-Prince in a fierce battle for political power.

An initial three-day curfew was announced over the weekend, but gangs have continued to attack police stations and other state institutions at night as Haiti's National Police struggles to contain the violence with limited staff and resources.

"The people with the guns are essentially the current arbiter of Haitian politics," said Robert Fatton, a Haitian politics expert at the University of Virginia. "The gangs have won the battle so far."

The attacks began a week ago, shortly after embattled Prime Minister Ariel Henry agreed to hold general elections in mid-2025 while attending a meeting of Caribbean leaders in Guyana. Gangs have burned police stations, shot up the main international airport, which remains closed, and raided Haiti's two biggest prisons, freeing more than 4,000 inmates.

During that time, Henry had traveled to Kenya to push for the deployment of a UN-backed police force from the East African country to help fight gangs in Haiti. But a court in January ruled that the deployment was unconstitutional, and it wasn't



clear if the force would deploy given the worsening violence in Haiti.

Henry is currently in Puerto Rico, where he was forced to land Tuesday after the armed groups laid siege to the international airport, preventing him from returning.

Dozens of people have died in Haiti's recent gang attacks, including several police officers. The violence also has left more than 15,000 people homeless, in addition to some 300,000 Haitians who lost their homes to gang wars in recent years.

In addition, there were reports that gangs Thursday looted shipping containers filled with food at the main port in Port-au-Prince, raising concerns that provisions in the capital and elsewhere would dwindle quickly.

"If we cannot access those containers, Haiti will go hungry soon," said Laurent Uwumuremyi, Haiti director for Mercy Corps.

## Gunmen abduct 287 students in Nigeria

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Abuja, March 8:** Security forces swept through large forests in Nigeria's northwest region Friday in search of nearly 300 children abducted from their school by motorcycle-riding gunmen in the latest mass kidnapping, which analysts and activists blamed on the failure of intelligence and a slow security response.

The abduction of the 287 children in Kaduna state, near the West African nation's capital, is one of the largest school kidnappings in the decade since the kidnapping of schoolgirls in Borno state's Chibok village in 2014 stunned the world.

Analysts and activists say the security lapses that allowed that mass abduction remain.

The victims of the latest attack — among them at least 100 children aged 12 or under — were surrounded and marched into a forest just as they were starting the school day, said locals in Kuriga town, located 55 miles (89 kilometers) from the city of Kaduna. One man was shot dead as he tried to save the students, school authorities said.

As Kaduna Governor Uba Sani and security officials met with aggrieved villagers Thursday, they pleaded with the governor to ensure the release of the students and secure their town — like many in the area, once a bustling agrarian community but now sparsely populated and where roads are often avoided because of rampant kidnappings.

"Please stay and help us, please don't leave us," one woman cried as the governor's convoy sped off.



**₹1,677.42 CRORE**

spent for construction of Gangadhar Meher Lift Irrigation Project, one of India's largest micro-irrigation enabled projects

**25,600 HECTARES**

of land in 129 villages of Bijepur, Sohela and Barpali blocks of Bargarh district and Dunguripali block of Subarnapur district will be irrigated

**35,600 FARMERS**

in four blocks will get assured irrigation both in khariff and rabi seasons

**3,100 KM PIPELINE**

network has been laid for the ambitious project which was completed in 3 years despite challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic

## UNDERGROUND WONDER

February 20, 2024 will go down in the annals of Odisha's history as the day when Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the ₹1,677.42 crore-Gangadhar Meher Lift Irrigation Project, one of India's largest micro-irrigation enabled projects, which will ensure enduring greenery to the parched fields in three blocks of Bargarh district and one block in Subarnapur district.

Built using the best-in-class technology in a record time of three years despite challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic, the first pressurised underground pipeline system will help irrigate over 63,000 acres (25,600 hectares) of land in 129 villages of drought-prone Bijepur, Sohela and Barpali blocks in Bargarh district and Dunguripali block of Subarnapur district. More than 35,600 farmers in these blocks will get assured irrigation both in khariff and rabi seasons.

Being a reservoir-based project, there will be no fear of crop loss for farmers. Water management will be controlled through Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA).



A pipeline network of nearly 3,100km has been laid for the am-

bitious project. The main pipeline has crossed three major rivers

which was a challenging job for the Water Resources department.

Eleven feet diameter pipe has been used for carrying water from HiraKud dam, which is one of the biggest in the country. Three pump houses have been set up at Rengali, Turunga and Kanapali. Water will be lifted to nearly 45 metre high for irrigation.

The project is highly water efficient and farmers can go for cash crops and horticulture crops both in khariff and rabi seasons as the entire project is micro-irrigation enabled.

Around 30 per cent of the project command area (nearly 19,000 acres) has been equipped with micro-irrigation systems. Every field will get water equitably as outlets have been provided in each hectare.



Our state is proud of Bargarh district. Today, Odisha is providing food to the entire country under the Public Distribution System. The farmers of Bargarh have contributed a lot to this. Water supply to agricultural land in the district has started through Gangadhar Meher Lift Irrigation Project. The project will help irrigate over 60,000 acre land in Sohela, Barpali and Bijepur of Bargarh and Dunguripali of Subarnapur. Under the 5T initiative, big irrigation projects in the state are being completed on time. With the cooperation of all, transformation has taken place in Odisha today and the trend will continue

**NAVEEN PATNAIK | HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER, ODISHA**



- Water will be lifted to nearly 45 metre high for irrigation
- 11 feet diameter pipe used to carry water from HiraKud dam
- 30% of the project command area (nearly 19,000 acres) equipped with micro-irrigation systems
- First pressurised underground pipeline system



# Gill, Rohit put India on top

HALF CENTURIES BY DEBUTANT PADIKKAL AND SARFARAZ HELP HOSTS TAKE 255-RUN LEAD IN FIFTH TEST



## DAD DISAGREES WITH SHUBMAN

**Dharamsala:** Shubman Gill's first coach and father, Lakhwinder, said Friday that he doesn't back his son's decision to bat at No. 3. Pressure was mounting on Shubman as he had failed to get a 50 in 12 innings before the Test in Vizag. However, since then he has scored two centuries. Lakhwinder, who continues to train with Shubman whenever he is home in Mohali said his son should have continued to open the innings. "He should have continued to open. It is not right at all I feel. When you sit in dressing room for lengthy periods, the pressure tends to increase. Number 3 is not opening neither it is a middle-order spot," Lakhwinder informed. "When the ball is new you get more loose balls, when you come in after 5-7 overs, the ball is still shiny and the bowler has also settled with his length. So the job is tough," he added.

second wicket partnership that put the hosts in cruise control mode despite losing five wickets for just 97 runs in the final session. However, India got a shot in the arm as Kuldeep Yadav (27 batting, 55b, 2x4) and Jasprit Bumrah (19 batting, 55b, 2x4) put on an unbroken stand of 45 runs for the ninth wicket.

Debutant Devdutt Padikkal (65, 103b, 10x4, 1x6) showed a lot of class in his innings while Sarfaraz Khan (56, 60b, 8x4, 1x6) piled on the agony for England. They ensured that the first two sessions of the day belonged to India with a 97-run partnership for the fourth wicket. Currently India have a first innings lead of 255 runs.

Off-spinner Shoaib Bashir (4/170) was the best bowler for England. He was well-supported by the toiling left-arm spinner Tom Hartley (2/126).

The Indian collapse started when Sarfaraz tried to cut a harmless ball off Bashir and ended up giving an easy catch to Joe Root at first slip. Padikkal got a gem from the England off-spinner that spun away from middle stump to hit the top of the off-stump. Like Sarfaraz, Dhruv Jurel (15) too went for an avoidable shot and perished.

In his debut game, Padikkal's off-side play stood out as he regaled the crowd with exquisite back-foot punches and cover drives. Sarfaraz, on the other hand, started slowly before changing gears both against pace and spin. They ensured runs kept flowing for the home team.

In the morning, Rohit and Gill struck hundreds as India pressed the advantage in the game by reaching 264 for one at lunch. They milked the conditions to take India well past England's first innings total of 218.

Rohit and Gill gave themselves an over each after start of play before going for their strokes. Bashir opened the bowling alongside Anderson and was put under immense pressure by Rohit, who deposited him for a straight six and a four in his second over to set the tone.

Gill, who played some audacious strokes on the opening day, carried on in the same vein as he took two steps forward against the great Anderson for a straight six, which was followed by a square cut.

Rohit completed his 12th Test hundred and second of the series by flicking Hartley for a single. Two balls later, Gill followed him into three digits by slog-sweeping Bashir for a four.

## BRIEF SCORES

**England 218; India 473 for 8** (Shubman Gill 110, Rohit Sharma 103, Devdutt Padikkal 65, Sarfaraz Khan 56, Shoaib Bashir 4/170). Match to continue.

## DEBUTANT TALKS ABOUT HIS FIGHT WITH ILLNESS

# Ill health motivated Devdutt to work hard

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dharamsala, March 8:** Devdutt Padikkal's struggles with health over the past two years did not allow him to be at his best but he said Friday that the phase made him hungrier than ever. After making his India debut in 2021 in a T20I against Sri Lanka, Devdutt's career graph did not go up as expected due to Covid-19 and a stomach-related health complication.

Devidutt overcame the challenges to pile a mountain of runs in domestic cricket and was the leading run-getter for Karnataka in the Ranji Trophy with 556 runs. A hundred against England Lions also helped him seal his maiden berth in India's Test squad. He helped his cause with a classy 65.

"I have believed that discipline is the key to success in anything that you do. Whether your practice or day to day habits or food, I have tried to be disciplined and that was my main goal," Devdutt told reporters here Friday.

"When I was sick, I couldn't do much. However, I still wanted to ensure that I did not lag behind in other areas and continued to work on myself

The love for the game got stronger when Devdutt regained full fitness and of late, he made technical changes in his batting.

"Technically I made a couple of small changes but mentally yes, I made some changes. I wanted to ensure that I enjoy the game a lot more because the last couple of years I couldn't play that often. Missing on games made me realise how much I longed to play the sport," Devdutt pointed out.

An ankle injury to Rajat Patidar on the eve of the game led to Devdutt making his debut. The southpaw knew he would play the night before, but was nat-



**When I was sick, I couldn't do much. However, I still wanted to ensure that I did not lag behind in other areas and continued to work on myself**

DEVUTT PADIKKAL

urally nervous.

"Regardless of when you get to know, there is always going to be nervousness around. That was still there. I got a message the previous night saying that I could be playing. I was nervous, it was a tough night's sleep but it is something you also enjoy at the same time. You live for those days," Devdutt said with a smile.

Among his 10 fours, which one was his favourite? "Every boundary is enjoyable but the first, off the edge, was most enjoyable because those were my first runs in Test cricket," he said with a smile."

Devidutt said it was fun while batting alongside Sarfaraz Khan. "It's always fun to bat with Sarfaraz. He is a great character to have around. It was just some light stuff and nothing too serious in the middle for us," the debutant signed off.

AGENCIES

**Dharamsala, March 8:** Skipper Rohit Sharma (103, 162b, 13x4, 3x6) and Shubman Gill's (110, 150b, 12x4, 5x6) splendid hun-

dreeds gave India complete control of the fifth Test against England despite a late batting collapse that saw the hosts end day two at 473 for eight here Friday. It was their 171-run

## SHORT TAKES

### Chartered flight for footballers

**Kolkata:** In a ground-breaking move, the Indian men's football team are set to travel on a chartered plane to Abha, Saudi Arabia for their 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying Round 2 away match against Afghanistan, scheduled for March 21, the AIFF said Friday. The move comes after India coach Igor Stimac highlighted serious logistical concerns, prompting AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey to take the unprecedented step. Earlier Stimac had raised concerns about the arduous journey that would require them to change flights thrice. "I am very happy and really hope the players will recognise the efforts of the AIFF. I will honour the same on the pitch," Stimac said.

### Nagal bows out

**Indian Wells:** Sumit Nagal was handed Thursday a 3-6, 3-6 defeat by Canada's Milos Raonic in the opening round of the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament here. Nagal had made the main draw as a 'lucky loser' due to Rafael Nadal's pullout. The match lasted 88 minutes. Raonic converted three of the 12 breakpoints he earned during the encounter. Nagal, on the other hand, could not manage to utilise the two breakpoints he got.

### Zadran retires

**New Delhi:** Veteran Afghanistan batter Noor Ali Zadran announced Friday his retirement from international cricket, bringing down curtains on a career spanning more than a decade. The 35-year-old, who starred with a 28-ball 45 in Afghanistan's first-ever ODI against Scotland in 2009, played his final game last week at the Tolerance Oval in the Test against Ireland. One of Zadran's most memorable innings was the half century against India at the 2010 T20 World Cup.

### Anceletti in trouble

**Madrid:** Spanish prosecutors have called for Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti to be jailed for four years and nine months. The prosecutors said Thursday that Ancelotti had failed to declare earnings to the tax office. The Madrid state prosecutor's office accused the 64-year-old Italian of having cost Spain's treasury more than one million euros in undeclared earnings from image rights in 2014 and 2015.

## Sterling show by Odisha golfers



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 8:** Odisha golfers put up a splendid show at the National Minigolf Championship which recently ended in Nagpur winning a total of 22 medals as per a release issued Friday by the state association. The 24-member Odisha contingent (12 men and 12 women) excelled in the various categories. The Odisha team finished with 12 gold, two silver and eight bronze medals. Odisha finished second in the women's category and fourth in the men's segment. By virtue of their splendid show, both the teams qualified for the National Games which will be held at Uttarakhand.

The Odisha men's and women's squad won the gold in the team competitions. The men's team

comprised of Ritwik Anand Mishra, Yash Ray Pattnaik, Vineet Das, Saubhagya Sharan, Abhinav Mohanty and Romit Roshan Pradhan. The women's team were represented by Amrita Das, Adyasha Mishra, Priyadarshini Pradhan, Soumyashree Rath, Aastha Pattnaik and Soundarya Swain.

In the mixed team event, Odisha's Bikash Chandra Patnaik and Abhipsha Panda finished with silver medals. In the individual events, Odisha's Smruti Rekha Patnaik won a bronze in the women's category while Romit Roshan bagged an identical medal in the men's segment.

The Odisha Minigolf Association in the release congratulated the players and coach Bikash for their outstanding performances.

## Ashutosh, Kunal set up final date

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 8:** Ashutosh Padhy will face Kunal Agarwal in the final of the BSAO 1st All Odisha Open 6Red snooker tournament which is currently being played here. In the semifinals played Friday, Kunal beat veteran and many-time state champion Subrat Das 6-5 while Ashutosh overcame a feisty challenge from Dr Rakesh Roshan Pradhan.

The match between Kunal and Subrat was a thrilling affair which witnessed a nail-biting finish. The pendulum of fortune swung from one player to another as they battled it out on the green baize. Ultimately it was Kunal who held his nerves at crucial junctures to emerge victorious. Even the deciding 11th frame was a close affair with both players matching each other shot for shot.

Ashutosh, who has regularly plays at the national level, started firm favourite against Pradhan. However, Pradhan put up a spirited show against Ashutosh, never allowing the latter to completely dominate proceedings. Whenever, Ashutosh threatened to run away with the match, Pradhan stole a frame to keep himself in contention.

## Odisha FC inch towards title

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 8:** Odisha FC secured a convincing 3-0 victory over Hops FC in a match of the Indian Women's League (IWL) played Friday at the Dr Ambedkar Stadium in New Delhi. The goals were scored by Indumathi (20th minute, penalty kick), Pyari Xaxa (46th), and Lynda Kom (90th). However, the Odisha eves should be indebted to their goalkeeper Shreya hooda who made a number of brilliant saves to the thwart the opposition.

The win took Odisha FC to the top of the table with 25 points from 10 games. They can win the title if they win two of their upcoming matches against East Bengal and Kickstart..

Odisha FC dominated proceedings early on and could have scored in the third minute. However, Indu's shot was saved by the rival goalie after Win had provided an excellent through ball down the middle.

The Kalinga team took the lead when the referee awarded a penalty after Karthika's shot struck the hand of a Hops player. Indu calmly converted the penalty, sending the keeper the wrong way to make it 1-0.

Odisha FC started the second



Odisha FC and Hops FC players vie for the ball during the IWL game played Friday at New Delhi

OP PHOTO

half strongly, with Pyari extending their lead in the 46th minute with a clinical finish. In the 52nd minute, Karthika's corner was lobbed into the opposition box by Win. However, the Odisha FC forwards failed to take advantage of the situation. In the 63rd minute, Pyari had another golden chance to increase the lead, but shot straight into the goalkeeper.

Then within three minutes, Shreya made two brilliant saves to help Odisha FC maintain their clean sheet. In the 70th minute, she parried away a shot by Glady and three minutes later made another save from a free-kick.

The game concluded with an emphatic finish from Lynda Kom just second before the final whistle ensuring a good victory for Odisha FC.

## Valiant Sindhu goes down

DOUBLES DUO SATWIK-CHIRAG KEEPS INDIAN FLAG FLYING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Paris, March 8:** PV Sindhu produced a gallant fight before marginally falling short against reigning Olympic champion Chen Yu Fei of China in an epic quarterfinal at the French Open Super 750 badminton tournament here Friday.

On a comeback trail from a four-month-long injury layoff, Sindhu gave ample display of her strokeplay and physical fitness during a marathon one hour and 32-minute battle before settling for a 24-22, 17-21, 18-21 loss to the second seed and defending champion Chen in a riveting last eight battle here. The last time Sindhu had beaten World No. 2 Chen was en route to her 2019 World Championships gold. Since then the Indian has



lost to the Chinese twice.

Meanwhile Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stayed on course for the men's doubles title after reaching the semifinals with a straight-game win. The World No. 1 Indian pair, who had won the title in 2022, cruised into the semifinals with a 21-19, 21-13 victory over Thailand's World No. 32 Supak Jomkoh and Kittinupong Kedren at the Arena Porte de

la Chapelle here.

Playing a top-class opponent after quite some time, Sindhu didn't show any sign off the left knee injury that had pushed her out of the circuit since October last year.

There was nothing to separate the two as Sindhu produced an attacking display and also moved well on the court but a steady Chen managed to keep her nose ahead in the end.

Sindhu and Chen played some excruciating rallies with the Chinese using high tosses and lifts to keep the Indian at the back. Despite winning the first game, Sindhu made some unforced errors in the second and third games at crucial junctures. The mistakes allowed her Chinese opponent to have the last laugh.

## UP WARRIROZ RIDE ON DEEPTI HEROICS

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 8:** Deepti Sharma's all-round heroics steered UP Warriroz to a thrilling one-run win over Delhi Capitals in their Women's Premier League (WPL) match here Friday.

Opting to bat the Warriroz could only manage a below par 138 for eight with Deepti (59, 48b, 7x4) top-scoring for the team. Alyssa Healy (29) and Grace Harris (14) were the others to manage double digit figures for the UP squad.

In reply, skipper Meg Lanning slammed a 46-ball 60 (12x4), her fourth fifty in the ongoing tournament, as DC looked in control to chase down the total, reaching 93 in the 14th over.

But Deepti scalped four wickets for 19 runs in her quota of four overs, including a hat-trick as DC were bundled out for 137.

## Chopra in 'top shape' before Paris Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 8:** World and Tokyo Olympics champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, who will be training in Turkey from this week before returning to outdoor competition for the first time in 2024, said he was in 'top physical shape' and 'has never felt so good before'.

"I want to be in best possible shape before Paris," Chopra, who is on a short break after his training stint in South Africa, was quoted as saying by SAI media Friday. "My training sessions have gone off really well so far. I always lay stress on fitness along with strength and technique. This is the best I have felt in a long time but I must add that training and competi-

**What matters to me is staying 100 per cent fit, being consistent during the season and delivering on the day that matters**

NEERAJ CHOPRA

tion are not the same. When you wear the India jersey, the feeling is different, the josh (energy) is unbelievable," Chopra added.

Chopra said his performance at Tokyo indicated that his preparation for global tournaments was going in the right direction. "I have won medals in two World Championships, threw my personal best (89.94 metres at Stockholm), won a Diamond League title and defended my gold at the Asian Games," Chopra stated.