



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

SAMBALPUR • THURSDAY • MARCH 26, 2026 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 14 • CITY EDITION

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURGI

BILL IN HOUSE TO TIGHTEN OVERSIGHT OVER NGOs

The government on Wednesday introduced the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha

The proposed amendment introduces a new Chapter IIIA to the FCRA Act, which provides for the creation of a powerful new authority that can seize and manage the assets of non-profits that lose their licences. The new authority would have provisional or permanent control over the assets

The Opposition has criticised it as a **dangerous** step that could allow the government to exert excessive control over non-profits

16,000 associations are registered under the FCRA Act and receive around **₹22,000 cr**

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai responded to the Opposition's charge, saying it is **indeed dangerous** for those involved in forced religious conversions using foreign funds

READ SHARE FOLLOW

newindianexpress.com

facebook.com/newindianexpress

twitter.com/newindianexpress

instagram.com/newindianexpress

India can't act like Pakistan, govt tells Opposition at all-party meet

US using Pak since 1981, says Jaishankar; Govt's response unsatisfactory, says Opposition



Defence minister Rajnath Singh, Congress MPs Mukul Wasnik and Tariq Anwar, Samajwadi Party MP Dharmendra Yadav and others leave after the meeting | PPT

PREETHA NAIR & RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE government on Wednesday told an all-party meeting that India can't go after every country and act as a broker in reference to the reported mediation of Pakistan in the ongoing West Asia conflict.

The meeting convened at the Parliament complex was attended by key Union ministers and several Opposition members, barring those from the Trinamool Congress, which boycotted the meeting.

Chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the all-party meet began with a primary briefing on the energy crisis and the measures being taken by India. Members were told about India's preparedness to address the challenges as well as diplomatic efforts to protect the interest of the nation.

Responding to the Opposi-

tion's charge that Pakistan has been performing the mediator's role while India remains a mute spectator, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that Pakistan has been 'used' by the US since 1981, and there is nothing new in its mediation efforts in the matter, said sources. "We are not a broker nation," Jaishankar told the meeting.

On the Opposition's queries on the phone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, Jaishankar said the PM has conveyed that the war in West Asia must end soon, as it is hurting everyone.

The Opposition, however, said the government's answers were "unsatisfactory". Lashing out at the government, Congress's Tariq Anwar told this paper there should be a debate on the situation in the Lok Sabha under Rule 193 and in the Rajya Sabha under Rule 176.

Attendees

Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, S Jaishankar, JP Nadda, Nirmala Sitharaman & Kiren Rijiju, and Oppn leaders Tariq Anwar, Mukul Wasnik, Dharmendra Yadav & Sasmit Patra attended

US talking to itself, war is on, says Iran

AGENCIES @ Dubai

IRAN on Wednesday dismissed an American plan to pause the war in West Asia, issuing its own counterproposal instead, as it launched more attacks on Israel and Arab countries.

Two officials from Pakistan described the 15-point US proposal broadly, saying it addressed sanctions relief, a rollback of Iran's nuclear programme, limits on missiles and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped.

Iran issued its own counter-plan via state TV, which includes a halt to killings of its officials, means to make sure no other war is waged against it, reparations for the war, the end of hostilities and Iran's "exercise of sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz."

"Iran will end the war when it decides to do so and when its own conditions are met," Iran's Press TV quoted the official as saying.

To the earlier white flag of the US, the official said the "US is talking to itself".

The death toll from the war has risen to more than 1,500 in Iran, nearly 1,100 in Lebanon, 16 in Israel and 13 US military members, as well as a number of civilians on land and sea in the Gulf region. Analysts, however, pointed out that the arrival of more US troops in the Gulf and fresh missile strikes between Iran and Israel suggested chances of escalation remained. On Day 26 of the conflict, Iran fired cruise missiles at the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, warning of further launches if US advances anywhere near it.



Odisha govt fast-tracks CGD network amid West Asia crisis

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

WITH the Centre pushing forward piped natural gas (PNG) network amidst the West Asia crisis, the Odisha government has rolled out a series of measures to accelerate city gas distribution (CGD) across urban areas of the state to counter the emerging LPG supply constraints.

Acting on directives from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the state government issued an order to facilitate faster rollout of piped natural gas (PNG) connections by putting place critical enabling measures which would remain in effect time June 30.

Under the new guidelines, all pending applications for laying CGD pipelines with urban local bodies, Works department, Water Resources department and other authorities concerned will be deemed approved, subject to compliance with safety and technical norms, said the order issued by additional chief secretary to Housing and Urban Development department Usha Padhee.

All fresh applications must be processed within 24 hours, significantly cutting bureaucratic delays. To ensure uninterrupted execution, CGD entities have been permitted round-the-clock (24x7) pipeline laying operations, with restrictions on working seasons also relaxed.

CONTINUED ON P5

MODIFIED UDAN SCHEME

REGIONAL AIR CONNECTIVITY GETS ₹28,840 CRORE PUSH

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved measures to expand regional air connectivity and modernise the country's immigration system with a combined outlay of ₹30,640 crore.

The Cabinet cleared the modified UDAN scheme with a total outlay of ₹28,840 crore for a 10-year period from April 1 to expand regional air connectivity.

Under the new scheme, around 100 new airports would be built in challenge mode with a budgetary support of ₹12,159 crore. Besides, the Centre will provide 80-90% viability gap funding to airlines for operating UDAN routes at an estimated cost of ₹10,043 crore over the ten-year period.

Other measures include the construction of 200 modern helipads at a cost of ₹3,661 crore. Helicopter services are expected to enhance connectivity in the Himalayan region, North-East, island territories and aspirational

New climate targets approved

The Cabinet approved India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the period 2031 to 2035

India has committed to reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 47% by 2035 from the 2005 level

Will aim to achieve 60% cumulative installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2035

Will create a carbon sink of 3.5 to 4 billion tonnes through forest cover

districts, the government said. The current UDAN scheme ends this year.

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

EVICITION NOTICE CONGRESS TOLD TO VACATE ITS OFFICES

The Congress has received notices from the Directorate of Estates to vacate its 4, Akbar Road headquarters and 5, Raisina Road office of Indian Youth Congress by March 28

HDFC
MUTUAL FUND
BHAROSA APNO KA

TUNE YOUR EQUITY-DEBT MIX TO MARKET CONDITIONS

BALANCED ADVANTAGE FUNDS

SIP for life

Benefits of Balanced Advantage Funds

Investment across equity and debt instruments

Dynamic Asset Allocation based on market conditions

Aims to manage volatility over time

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

An Investor Education and Awareness Initiative

SIP - Systematic Investment Plan | Visit <https://www.hdfcfund.com/information/key-know-how> to know more about the process to complete a one-time Know Your Customer (KYC) requirement to invest in Mutual Funds. Investors should only deal with registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website (www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html). For any queries, complaints & grievance redressal, investors may reach out to the AMC's and / or Investor Relations Officers. Additionally, investors may also lodge complaints directly with the AMC's. If they are not satisfied with the resolutions given by AMC's, they may raise complaint through the SCORES portal on <https://scores.sebi.gov.in/>. SCORES portal facilitates investors to lodge complaint online with SEBI and subsequently view its status. In case the investor is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaints raised directly with the AMC's or through the SCORES portal, they may file any complaint on the Smart ODR on <https://smartodr.in/login>. Balanced Advantage Funds - an open ended balanced scheme investing in equity and debt instruments.

For more information contact MFD/RIA | Learn about SIPs: hdfcfund.com/sip

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

epaper.newindianexpress.com

NGT seeks govt response on illegal mining

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Cuttack

THE east zone bench of the NGT has issued notices to multiple state authorities seeking their response by April 22 on a petition alleging large-scale environmental violations in a sand mining project in Odisha's Ganjam district.

The petition was filed by Rajani Kanta Padhy, a resident of Ganjam, who raised concerns over the Kharida Sand Bed Mining Project located at the confluence of the Rushikulya and Ghorahara rivers in Hinjilicut tehsil. The 13-acre project, operated by a private lessee, has allegedly been functioning in violation of environmental norms.

Observing that the matter raises substantial environmental questions under laws listed in NGT Act, the NGT bench comprising Judicial Member Arun Kumar Tyagi and Expert Member Dr A Senthil Vel, directed issuance of notices to key officials, including the chief secretary of Odisha, Ganjam collector and representatives from mining, forest, irrigation, and pollution control departments.

Advocates Sankar Prasad Pani and Ashutosh Padhy represented the petitioner. The respondents have been given four weeks to file their replies. The matter is scheduled for further hearing on April 22. As per the plea, mining operations are being carried out in violation of EC conditions, CTO norms, and national sand mining guidelines. The plea also pointed to alleged inaction and complicity of local authorities, including in failing to enforce regulations.

WB man arrested in ₹12 cr online investment fraud

The victim, a Cuttack-based businessman was duped of over ₹12.33 crore in the scam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Cuttack

THE Cyber Crime unit of Crime Branch has arrested a 36-year-old West Bengal native for his alleged involvement in duping a Cuttack-based businessman of over ₹12.33 crore through an online investment scam.

The accused, Rahul Jaiswal of Kakurgachi in Kolkata, is an MBA graduate. He was arrested on Tuesday and brought on transit remand to Cuttack on Wednesday.

The Cyber police had registered a case on September 6 last year basing on the complaint of a 60-year-old businessman from Jagatpur that he had been duped of over ₹12.33 crore by some fraudsters.

As per the complainant, some unknown men posing as stock market consultants had contacted him through WhatsApp on July 31, 2025 and lured him to join a group.

The complainant alleged the fraudsters gained his confidence by sharing fake investment tips and fabricated testimonials. Subsequently, they persuaded him to install a fraudulent trading application and invest funds. Cyber police said as instructed by the fraudsters, the complainant transferred a total of

₹12,33,50,000 from his Axis Bank account to nine different accounts through 52 transactions between August 12 and September 2. However, when he attempted to withdraw the invested amount, the 'risk control team' of the fake platform denied the request on various pretexts.

Realising that he had been cheated, the victim then lodged an FIR at the Cyber Crime police station. During investigation, a team led by inspector Tapan Kumar Pradhan analysed the transaction trails and digital evidence. Based on technical intelligence and field verification, a raid was conducted in Kolkata, leading to the identification and arrest

Jaiswal. Investigation revealed the complainant had transferred over ₹4.15 crore to Jaiswal's bank account. Mobile phones, SIM cards and other digital devices were seized from the accused's possession, said a senior CB official.

Jaiswal has been brought on transit remand and will be produced in JMFC-III, Cuttack. "Further probe is on to identify and arrest the others involved in the scam," the police officer added.



Accused Rahul Jaiswal

Five loot luxury car on test drive pretext

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bhubaneswar

AT least five persons looted a Land Rover Defender worth ₹1.35 crore from a showroom's staff on the pretext of taking a test drive of the luxury SUV. The five accused are currently on the run.

The incident occurred on Tuesday evening. As per police, the accused contacted the staff of Land Rover Empro Prestige and requested for a test drive of Defender 2.0L automatic.

The showroom's product specialist Santosh Nayak, a lady colleague and the driver visit-

ed Bharatpur as per the address shared by the miscreants.

Nayak told TNIE that four persons arrived in a Sedan and asked them to accompany them to their house. "On reaching the spot, they requested me to go upstairs with them and said they would take a test drive later," he said.

"A fifth person was already present there and they kept me hostage on the second floor at gunpoint. They assaulted and took away ₹6,000 cash from me. They even attempted to transfer money online from

my phone but failed due to some server issues," Nayak alleged.

Asper Nayak, the five claimed that they had been arrested for rape and murder and had recently walked out of a jail in New Delhi. "They forced me to call my lady colleague and the driver upstairs. After the two arrived, they threatened them too, but could not find any valuables from them," he said.

Police said the accused then contacted the showroom's general manager Gautam Sinha and demanded ransom for the staff's release. When Sinha arrived, they forcibly transferred

₹1.5 lakh from his phone and fled with the SUV.

On receiving a complaint, Bharatpur police registered a case and launched an investigation into the matter. Preliminary probe suggests the miscreants had booked the house through Airbnb.

"The stolen SUV was found abandoned at Godipada in Khurda district later in the evening. Efforts are on to identify and nab the miscreants involved in the crime," said zone III ACP, Prashant Sahu.

The vehicle was, meanwhile, recovered from Khallikote area in Berhampur within three hours of the robbery.



'Tech Excellence in GovTech' award for CSM Technologies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bhubaneswar

CSM Technologies has received the 'Tech Excellence in GovTech' award at the 4th edition of Nasscom SME Inspire Awards-2026 in Mumbai.

Lagna Panda, director and chief human resources officer of CSM Technologies, received the award at a function in Mumbai on Tuesday.

The Nasscom SME Inspire Awards-2026 recognises micro, small and medium enterprises for their exceptional leadership, innovation, delivery excellence and best-in-class workplace and business practices.

"The recognition is not just an award; it is a responsibility we inherit. At CSM, every line of code carries a citizen's expectation and every platform a promise of fairness. We are not just digitising governance; we are humanising it at scale," said Panda.

She said, over 1,000 digital platforms created by CSM are operating across continents, touching the lives of over 400 million people. "Classrooms, mining corridors, agricultural fields to healthcare systems, our work is powered by AI, GIS, IoT and cloud, yet grounded in a simple idea - governance should feel seamless," she added.

The company's flagship platform Integrated Mines and Minerals Management System (i3MS) was a e-governance model across the country. Its Student Academic Management System (SAMS) helps over a million admissions each year in Odisha with exact precision.



CSM Technologies director Lagna Panda receiving the award | EXPRESS

Century Mattresses launches flagship store in Bhubaneswar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bhubaneswar

CENTURY Mattresses and Sofas on Wednesday unveiled a flagship store in Patia-Raghubanapur area of Bhubaneswar as part of its planned expansion in the state.

The store is located at a strategic place witnessing rapid urban growth with consequent demand for premium home solutions. Popular Odia film actor Sivani Sangita was a special guest of the event.

Executive director of Century Mattresses Uttam Malani said it was the company's first company-owned-company-operated (COCO) store outside Hy-

derabad and marked a significant milestone.

"This reflects our continued focus on strengthening our presence in East India. Odisha plays an important role in our growth journey, supported by our strong manufacturing capabilities in the state where we employ around 500 people and produce up to 20,000 mattresses every month," he said. Malani said the company sees a strong long-term potential and over the next year, plans to expand further with four COCO stores in the region.

As part of the launch, customers can avail special offers, including up to 50 pc off on sofas, 20 pc off on mattresses as well as buy-one-get-one-free offers.



Century Mattresses executive director Uttam Malani in talks with actor Sivani Sangita

LPG cylinder hoarding, black marketing continues unabated in Cuttack district as enforcement falters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Cuttack

THE alleged lack of proper enforcement has fuelled illegal hoarding and black marketing of domestic LPG cylinders in Cuttack, leaving consumers distressed and forcing them to burn a hole in their pockets to purchase the cooking gas.

This, despite the state government's claims that there is no LPG shortage in the state. Long queues for LPG cylinders can be seen outside various gas agencies operating the 14 blocks across the district, exposing the gap between the government claims and the ground reality.

Some consumers even alleged that despite having booked for LPG refill months ago, they are yet to receive their delivery. Left with no other option, they claimed they are being compelled to buy the cooking gas from the black market at hefty prices.

"I had booked an LPG cylinder on February 24. However, despite over 20 days having passed, the gas agency in



Empty cylinders lying queued up at a gas agency in Banki's Similipur | EXPRESS

108 illegally stored LPG cylinders seized

Bhubaneswar: The enforcement squad of the Civil Supplies department led by CSO Khurda, Gyanindriya Mishra, along with additional CSO and ACSO of BMC conducted a raid at Ganesh Bazar in Jharpada area on Wednesday and seized one illegal LPG storage unit. Probe revealed LPG cylinders were illegally stored in the residential area in an unauthorised and unsafe manner. A total of 108 LPG cylinders, comprising 95 domestic and 13 commercial, were seized from the spot. Police had assisted in the raid.

Nischantakoili are telling me that there is no gas available. I have no other option than to buy it from the black market. While the price of a domestic LPG cylinder is ₹950, its cost in black market ranges in between ₹1,500 and ₹1,800 or even more," said a consumer from Ranipada.

Some other consumers from Banki area said despite waiting at the gas agency at Similipur for several hours on Tuesday, they had to return empty-handed as the staff said cylinders had not yet arrived from Cuttack.

The consumers blamed the district administration for failing to carry out proper enforcement in this connection. "The Central government has directed to prioritise domestic LPG production for household consumers. The state government too claims to have sufficient stock. Then why are we having to avail the cylinders from the black market? some residents questioned. They alleged that the gas agencies in connivance with some unscrupulous black

marketers were creating the shortage.

The residents further opined that the district collector must review the LPG supply arrangements to prevent black marketing and streamline the supply to consumers. Effort to elicit response from chief district civil supplies officer Chandra Shekhar Patra on the issue proved futile.

Meanwhile on Wednesday, Bidanasi police arrested a 45-year-old man for his alleged involvement in unauthorised refilling and sale of LPG cylinders. The accused was identified as Dhruva Charan Behera of Keutasahi in Alishabazar, under Lalbag police station.

Bidanasi IIC Asit Kumar Balantray said Behera used unsafe methods for refilling like heating domestic cylinders and transferring gas through pipes and other equipment without any authorisation from oil marketing companies. The accused was also found illegally sealing cylinders. "When interrogated, he failed to provide valid licence," the police officer said.

Horoscopes By Holiday

HOLIDAY MATHS

26th March: A Gift from Jupiter Today's aspects present a good reason to question inherited work ethics. That reflex that says effort equals virtue will be challenged. The lunar position to Jupiter suggests that sometimes the easy way is also the best way. A bit of "laziness" serves you well indeed because it shows you where you've been working unnecessarily. When you stop equating difficulty with value, you start to notice smarter options.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Your sweetness is noticed. A dog lingers by you. A bird holds its perch. Even the wind seems to hug you. There's a wordless welcome from the living world - proof that gentleness is a language spoken fluently by every creature with a pulse.

TAURUS (Apr 20 - May 20)

For most of Earth's history, pond scum ruled. At times you feel convinced it still does. Try not to get discouraged by the messes you'll sort out today. Evolution favors persistence, not slime.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 21)

Grandiosity is big thinking without the structure to make it happen. It's performance without a story. It's a rising balloon, easily popped. Take heart: Your aim is not grandiosity, but it is a grand vision you will build, revise and stress test.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)

Today features less self-awareness and a quieter inner narration - no self-judgment loops. The experience of self is more immediate, less story-driven. Even so, it still benefits you to get acknowledgment and a sense of belonging.

LEO (July 23 - Aug 22)

There's truth underneath a disagreement - something you both agree on. For instance, your methods may clash, but you can recognize how you both have good intentions. Return to those and you can keep the relationship between you strong.

VIRGO (Aug 23 - Sept 22)

Tie up the loose ends. It's even more important today, like tying off the end of a balloon. The effort it took to blow it up and give it shape can be undone in a matter of seconds without that one little knot.

LIBRA (Sept 23 - Oct 23)

You already know what works, and it's pretty basic: sleep, water, exercise, sunlight and nutrition. In the spirit of reciprocity, you will nudge others toward the often overlooked but simple staples that have helped you.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 21)

Big challenges activate you and don't give you a chance to get all up in your head. There's instinctive wisdom in your body. Reflexes will protect you and progress your interests, too. It's playing out faster than intellectual processing or planning.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Think of what you're playing at today as a team sport. It would be bad sportsmanship to try to play every position or try to make every point yourself. Sometimes it's better to set others up for the win than to take it home yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Work politics get tricky; the these isn't worth the trap. While others whisper, posture and tally invisible points, you'll be busy doing actual work. Funny thing? The scoreboard favors the one who doesn't appear to be playing.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

When you feel overloaded and responsible for too much for too long, inner alarms go off: productivity alarm, paperwork alarm, relationship alarm, existential meaning alarm... these things are not equally urgent. Get calm. That's the most important thing.

PISCES (Feb 19 - Mar 20)

You could insist on your way. You could draft a memo, build a case, hold the line. Or... you could smile and let this one go. The impact is harmless, the energy saved is real, and the kindness will go a long way.

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9.

Sudoku puzzle solution grid with numbers 1-9.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-23.

Crossword puzzle solution grid with numbers 1-23.

Word search puzzle grid with numbers 1-20.

Word search puzzle solution grid with numbers 1-20.

Jumble puzzle grid with words ARYNO, AEEVL, CCOSHR, LAKIAL.

Jumble puzzle solution grid with words DRESS, INEPT, MISHAP, SMOOTH.

Conviction in crimes against women highest: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

CHIEF Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday asserted that the state's law and order situation has remained 'largely peaceful' and under control and he credited proactive policing and intelligence network for preventing major disturbances.

Replying to the debate on the demand for grants for the Home department in the Assembly, the Chief Minister said maintaining public safety and ensuring security of life and property remain the government's top priority.

Highlighting the fight against left wing extremism (LWE), Majhi said Odisha is on the verge of becoming Maoist-free, with the number of extremists reduced to single dig-

its. Between 2025 and March 24, 2026, security forces neutralised 27 hardcore Maoists, including two central committee members, while 77 cadres surrendered. The state is likely to be removed from the Union Home Ministry's list of Maoist-affected regions soon, he said.

On crime against women, he reiterated a zero-tolerance policy, stating that even a single incident is unacceptable. While total cases remained largely stable at around 48,700 over comparable 18-month periods, several categories showed a decline. Rape cases dropped by 3.5 per cent, molestation by 2.2 pc, acid attacks by 73.3 pc and dowry deaths by 26.1 pc.

Highlighting the significance of conviction rates in crimes against women, which Majhi said rose sharply during his government's tenure. From 6.7



CM Mohan Charan Majhi during his reply on demand grants for Home dept

pc in 2023, the conviction rate jumped to 41 pc in early 2025, touching 62 pc in June 2025.

"This conviction rate is probably the highest in the country and reflects my government's stern stand against such criminals who deserve to be in the

CC This conviction rate is probably the highest in the country and reflects my government's stern stand against such criminals who deserve to be in the jails - Mohan Charan Majhi, Chief Minister

jails," he said. Majhi said the government has prioritised speedy justice, with several cases being investigated and disposed of within weeks. In one instance, a case in Mayurbhanj district was resolved within 19 days, while others saw convictions within 37 to 40 days.

Addressing emerging challenges, the CM flagged cyber-crime as a major concern. Under Operation Cyber Kavach conducted between February 13 and March 12, police verified over 39,700 suspicious bank accounts, registered 1,422 cases, and arrested 379 accused. Authorities also issued notices to more than 7,500 individuals linked to fraudulent activities.

He said the state has also intensified its crackdown on narcotics. In 2025, illegal cannabis cultivation over 29,493 acres was destroyed, with an estimated value exceeding ₹800 crore.

The Chief Minister also lauded the Fire Services wing for its role in relief and rescue during man-made and natural disasters. During April 2025 and February 2026, the fire fighters saved over 8,000 human and 16,000 animal lives. Over ₹5,000 crore worth of property could be saved from fire mishaps, he informed. To strengthen policing, he said, the government has created over 17,700 posts and recruited nearly 5,800 personnel since July 2024.

State reported 122 incidents of communal discord in 2025

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

A total of 122 incidents of discord involving Hindus, Muslims and Christians were recorded across different parts of the state in 2025, stated the White Paper tabled by the Home department in the Assembly on Wednesday.

These include 106 incidents involving Hindus and Muslims and 16 incidents related to discord between Hindus and Christians. The White Paper said 146 and 19 criminal cases respectively were registered in this regard.

The government has constituted a state-level coordination committee to strengthen communal harmony between different religious communities, it said and added that a manual

containing SOP to contain communal incidents has also been released.

As per the White Paper, overall communal situation in the state was peaceful. Festivals of different religions were observed in a disciplined and coordinated manner during the period, it said and added the state was comparatively free from Hindu-Muslim and Hindu-Christian discords during the period.

In its White Paper released for 2024, the state government had informed that 84 incidents of disorder involving Hindus, Muslims and Christians had been reported.

Referring to the communal tension in Cuttack during the last Dussehra, the White Paper said it was successfully tackled by coordinated intelligence inputs and police deployment.

State saw drop in rape cases; murders rose in 2025, says White Paper

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

ODISHA has witnessed a 3.65 per cent rise in murder cases and a 1.97 per cent decline in rape cases in 2025 compared to the previous year, the Home department informed the Assembly on Wednesday.

As per the white paper tabled by the department, the total number of cognisable cases recorded in the state increased by 7.36 pc from 2,14,113 in 2024 to 2,29,881 in 2025. While the number of rape cases declined to 2,994 in 2025 from 3,054 in 2024, murder cases increased from 1,258 in 2024 to 1,304 in 2025.

The white paper further informed that out of over 2.29 lakh cognisable offences registered in the state, over 2.22 lakh were based on true incidents. Charge sheets were filed in over 1.55 lakh cases by the end of 2025, it said adding, the final reports were filed in 11,398 cases. The white paper, however, did not furnish district-wise data on different crimes.

Out of the 2,994 rape cases registered during the year, 2,929 were based on true incidents and by the end of 2025, charge sheets had been filed in 1,930 cases. Similarly, out of the 971 cases which are under investigation, there is possibility of filing of charge sheets in 839 cases.

However, Opposition BJD and Congress accused the government of hiding information in the white paper. BJD member Ganeswar Behera alleged that the white paper does not have any information as government has suppressed facts. "Rape and other crimes against women have increased," he alleged. CLP leader Ramachandra Kadam also criticised the government for suppressing facts in the white paper.

Opposition MLAs wear black T-shirts, demand Mahaling's resignation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

OPPOSITION BJD and Congress MLAs on Wednesday wore black T-shirts and continued their protest in the State Assembly, demanding the resignation of health minister Mukesh Mahaling over the death of 12 patients in the SCB Medical College and Hospital fire mishap.

Continuing for the last one week, the demonstration by the Opposition washed out the Question Hour on the day.

At the start of Question Hour at 10.30 am, members of the BJD and Congress entered the well wearing black T-shirts, with 'Weak Chief Minister' written on the front and 'Strong Health Minister' on the back.

Stating that Mahaling is responsible for the deaths at the trauma care ICU of SCB Medical College and Hospital on March 16, the Opposition MLAs demanded his immediate resignation. Despite repeated appeals by Speaker Surama Padhy, the demonstration continued.

Criticising the Opposition MLAs for continuously disrupting proceedings, the BJP members showed placards from their seats. As the Speaker failed to pacify the two sides, the House was adjourned till 11.30 am.

During the adjournment, the Opposition legislators marched on the Assembly premises, shouting slogans against the Health Minister. After the House resumed, their slogan shouting continued in the well, followed by a walkout.

Minister for Law Prithiviraj Harichandan said proceedings of seven days have been disrupted due to the ruckus by Opposition members. The state government spends ₹68-70 lakh to run the House on a daily basis.

Opposition chief whip Pramila Mallik, however, dared the Chief Minister to sack the Health Minister over the fire mishap. "Let the Chief Minister prove he is strong by sacking the Health Minister," she added.

However, BJP MLA Ashok Mohanty alleged that the Opposition was protesting to divert attention from the Biju-Naveen Inspirational Foundation in New Delhi, claiming that around ₹4,000 crore of BJD funds were diverted to it. He blamed the previous BJD government for neglecting the infrastructure of SCB Medical College and Hospital and stated that the party should take moral responsibility for the tragedy.

CC Proceedings of seven days have been disrupted due to the ruckus by Opposition members. The state government spends ₹68-70 lakh to run the House on a daily basis

Prithiviraj Harichandan, Law Minister

IIIT-H PGEE Admissions
M.Tech Computer Aided Structural Engineering (M.Tech CASE)
Eligibility: B.E/B.Tech in Civil & Mechanical Engineering
Apply now: pgadmissions.iiit.ac.in
Open also for other M.Tech, M.S and Ph.D programmes.
Application Deadline: 31 March 2026
To know about Earthquake Engineering Research Centre (EERC) Scan the code

QuoteExpress
IF YOU'RE GOING THROUGH HELL, KEEP GOING
WILSON CHURCHILL

RGG
Radha Gobind Roy Grandson Jewellers
22 CT GOLD (10 gm)
₹1,34,450.00
Infront of Juma Masjid, Nimchouri, Cuttack - 2, Phone : 7735876989

SADGURU HOSPITALS
(A Unit of Sadguru Medical & Research Centre Pvt. Ltd.)
PUBLIC NOTICE Dt 11/03/2026
CONDEMNATION OF MEDICAL RECORDS
This is for the information of General Public that in accordance with Medical Record Rules, Sadguru Hospitals (A unit of Sadguru Medical & Research Centre Pvt. Ltd.), A/PO- Jagatpur, P.S-Jagatpur, Dist- Cuttack, 754021, Odisha is going to condemn 2125 nos of patient files (Except Death, MLC & Pediatric Files) from 31 January 2020 till 31st December 2020 available in its Medical Record Department. The condemnation process will be done on 25th Apr 2026. Any patient undergone Treatment/Patient Relative/Institution/Authorities seek any information, raise any Complaint/ Grievances/Query with respect to patient files for the above mentioned period may contact Hospital Authority within the stipulated time period i.e. 25th Apr 2026. Any Complaints/Queries/Grievances or regarding availability of the patient files for the above mentioned period after condemnation i.e. 20th Apr 2026 will not be entertained.
SD/ SADGURU HOSPITALS
(A unit of Sadguru Medical & Research Centre Pvt Ltd)
AT /PO /PS- JAGATPUR, CUTTACK, PIN-754021, ODISHA
CONTACT NO: 0671-249626/977772903/9861311845
Mail Id : mrd@sadguruhospitals.com

Recruitment to the post of Assistant Legal Advisor in Level-11 on deputation basis in ESIC - reg.
ESI Corporation (A Statutory Body established under the ESI Act, 1948) has invited applications for 01 (One) vacancy in the cadre of Assistant Legal Advisor in Level 11 (Rs. 67700-208700/-) on deputation (including Short-Term Contract) basis for a period not exceeding 04 (Four) years:

S. No.	Name of the Post	Method of Recruitment	Scale of Pay	No. of Posts
1.	Assistant Legal Advisor	Deputation (including Short-Term Contract) basis	Level-11, pay matrix Rs. 67700 - 208700/- (equivalent to Group- 'A' Non-Ministerial) in Scale of pay (Rs. 10000-325-15200)	01

An advertisement containing full details in this regard has been published in the 28 Feb - 06 March, 2026 issue of the Employment News. Those who are interested may go through the issue for details or can log on to ESIC website www.esic.gov.in/recruitment at Console no. 11800/2026 dated 17-02-2026 for details and downloading the Bio-data / Curriculum Vitae proforma.
(Ratnesh Kumar Gautam) Insurance Commissioner (P&A)

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender No. 66-SBP-TRD-DT-2025-26, Date : 20.03.2026
NAME OF WORK: TRD RELATED WORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF GIRDS OF IMPORTANT BRIDGE NO. 343UP (20 * 30.5M U/S GIRDER, BGML STANDARD) IN TITLAGARH-KESINGA SECTION IN CONNECTION WITH MISSION 30MT UNDER SAMBALPUR DIVISION AND "REPLACEMENT OF GIRDER / REGRIDING OF 05 (FIVE) NOS. OF IMPORTANT BRIDGES (BRIDGE NO. 448UP IN AMBODALA-DAIKALLU SECTION, 2850N IN LAPANGA-RANGALI SECTION, 487UP IN DAIKALLU-MUNIGUDA SECTION, 540UP IN MUNIGUDA-BISAMCUTTACK SECTION) IN CONNECTION WITH MISSION - 3000 MT UNDER SAMBALPUR DIVISION.
Approx. Cost : ₹ 36,64,232.39, EMD : ₹ 73,300/-, Completion Period : 09 Months.
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1530 Hrs. on 13.04.2026.
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), PR-1270/Q/25-26 Sambalpur

BADE SAPNO KA RAKHE KHAYAL LIC KI AMRITBAAL
LIC's AMRITBAAL
UIN: 512N365V02
Plan No. 774
Insurance Plan for Children

Product's Key Features

- Attractive Guaranteed Addition throughout the Policy Term
- Maturity age between 18 - 25 Years
- Option to choose Single / Limited premium payments

Plan is also available online for sale
A Non-Par, Non-Linked, Life, Individual, Savings Plan

Download LIC Mobile App
For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch or SMS YOUR CITY NAME to 5676474
Our WhatsApp No. 8976862090
Follow us : LIC India Forever | IRDAI Regn No: 512

All the news. In just a click.
Log to www.newindianexpress.com

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
@newindianexpress
#TheNewIndianExpress

HON'BLE SUPREME COURT MONITORED HOUSING PROJECTS THROUGH LD. COURT RECEIVER
Executed by NBCC (India) Limited

Bulk Sale of inventory through e-Auction

Aspire Silicon City
Ph-IV, Sec-76, Noida, UP

- 4BHK & Duplex Spacious Apartments with modern amenities.
- Near Spectrum Mall, Noida
- Nearest metro stations are Noida Sec-50 (Aqua Line) & Sec-76 Metro and Anand Vihar ISBT & Railway Station-25 min.

Aspire Leisure Park
Techzone-IV, Greater Noida (W), UP

- Inventory-3BHK & 4BHK spacious apartments with modern amenities.
- Near D-Mart and Anand Vihar ISBT & Railway Station-30 Min.

Aspire Leisure Valley
Techzone-IV, Greater Noida (W), UP

- Inventory-3BHK & 4BHK spacious apartments with modern amenities.
- Near D-Mart and Anand Vihar ISBT & Railway Station-35 min.

Aspire Centurian Park
Techzone-IV, Greater Noida (W), UP

- Inventory-3BHK & 4BHK spacious apartments with modern amenities.
- Near D-Mart and Anand Vihar ISBT & Railway Station-30 min.

Last date of submission of EMD: 27.03.2026
E-auction will be held on: 28.03.2026
EMD Rs.9.70 Cr. to Rs. 20.90 Cr.
6 Packages Ranging from Rs. 485 Cr. to Rs. 1,045 Cr.

For more details, please visit our website: www.nbccindia.in | www.receiveramrapali.in
Or 9772907414

Ratna Bhandar inventory begins after gap of 48 yrs

Two teams take stock of ornaments & jewellery in Chalanti Bhandar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Puri

THE much-awaited inventory of the Ratna Bhandars of Shree Jagannath Temple began on Wednesday after a hiatus of 48 years.

Two teams, accompanied by the camera crew, entered the temple at the pre-determined time of 12.09 pm for documentation of the ornaments and jewellery stored in the 12th century shrine. The process began by taking stock of the Chalanti Bhandar (depository of daily-use ornaments) and concluded at 6 pm after the valuables were tallied with the list made during the inventory conducted in 1978.

The Chalanti Bhandar contains mostly the giant-sized gold tiaras, limbs, hands, earlobes, large-sized necklaces studded with rare precious stones, Chitas (forehead decorations), Kundalas (earrings), insignias used in the Suma Besha of the deities, gold and silver



Team members on way to Srimandir for inventory of Ratna Bhandar | EXPRESS

dish plates used for offerings, among other items.

Each ornament was documented and digitally catalogued with its traditional nomenclature, recording its weight, standard of gold or silver, and quality of the gems. Separate chests were used to store gold, silver and other precious metals. For the inventory, three tables were used, wherein the temple goldsmith and two other empanelled goldsmiths of nationalised banks, a gemmologist, and a metallurgist were

present. As per the 1978 inventory list, the Chalanti Bhandar contained eight gold ornaments weighing 299 Bhari (traditional measure; 1 Bhari equals 12.06 grams), along with 23 types of silver ornaments weighing a total of 2,600 Bhari.

While the inventory was in progress, devotees were allowed to have darshan of the Trinity from Bahar Katha. The daily rituals of the deities were performed as per the normal schedule.

Temple officials said the inventory of Bahar and Bhitratna Ratna Bhandars will be carried out in later phases.

According to the 1978 inventory, the Bahar Ratna Bhandar contained 79 gold ornaments weighing 8,175 Bhari alongside 39 silver ornaments weighing 4,671 Bhari. The Bhitratna Bhandar housed 367 types of gold ornaments weighing 4,364 Bhari, and 231 silver ornaments with a total weight of 14,878 Bhari.

Odisha Police promises Naxal-free state by month end as Maoists give up arms

ASISH MEHTA @Bhubaneswar

A day after surrendering before the Odisha Police, senior Maoist leader Sukru and four other ultras laid down their arms before ADG Anti-Naxal Operations Sanjeeb Panda and other senior officers in Phulbani on Wednesday.

The five surrendered five weapons including an AK-47, one self-loading rifle, two .303 rifles, a single shot-gun and huge quantity of ammunition.

A native of Malkangiri, Sukru was a state committee member of the banned CPI (Maoist) and was carrying a cash reward of ₹55 lakh. Police said the other four, including three women, were party members. Altogether, the five carried a total cash reward of ₹66 lakh.

As per the state government's rehabilitation policy, Maoists carrying a bounty of more than ₹5 lakh are eligible for an additional ₹10 lakh for which Sukru will receive a total financial benefit of ₹65 lakh whereas the



Senior Maoist leader Sukru and four other cadres after surrendering before Sanjeeb Panda and senior police officials at Phulbani in Kandhamal | EXPRESS

The group was part of Kandhamal-Kalahandi-Boudh-Nayagarh (KKBN) division. Sukru joined the outfit in 1997 and was active in Bansadhara-Ghumusar-Nagabali and KKBN divisions since 2007

Sanjeeb Panda, ADG Anti-Naxal Operations

four party members will receive ₹2.75 lakh each. The weapons carried a cash reward of another ₹7 lakh.

The group was part of Kandhamal-Kalahandi-Boudh-Nayagarh (KKBN) division. They were operating in Kandhamal district. Sukru joined the outfit

in 1997 and was active in Bansadhara-Ghumusar-Nagabali (BGN) and KKBN divisions since 2007, said Panda.

After the killing of central committee member Ganesh Uike in Kandhamal in December last year and due to continuous and sustained operations,

the red rebels were demoralised, following which they decided to surrender and join the mainstream, he added.

With the latest surrenders, the number of cadres operating in Odisha has come down to eight to nine and their activity is limited to a few pockets in Kandhamal district only.

The anti-Naxal operations involving SOG, DVF, CRPF and BSF will be intensified in Kandhamal district, said the police.

Panda praised the efforts of IG Operations Deepak Kumar, DIG SIW Akhileshvar Singh and SP Kandhamal Harish BC.

He assured that all surrendered Maoists would get benefits under the government's policy soon to help their reintegration into society with dignity.

So far, Nuapada, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Koraput, Boudh, Bolangir, Rayagada and Kalahandi districts have become completely Naxal-free.

Panda said, Odisha Police is committed to make the state Naxal free by March 31.

Farmer seek procurement of paddy, block highway



Farmers transporting paddy bags to the protest site on a tractor | EXPRESS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Balasore

ALLEGING irregularities in paddy procurement, hundreds of farmers staged road blockade on state highway-19 at Jamuna village in Nilagiri here on Wednesday.

The protest was held near Jamuna paddy procurement centre under Chhatrapur branch of Matiali cooperative society. The agitating farmers placed sacks of paddy on the road and blocked traffic, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded on both sides of the highway for around five hours. The farmers claimed they have received tokens to sell their paddy in the cooperative society on various dates in February and March. However, in absence of procurement targets, their produce is not being purchased by the society officials. Adding to their worries, the Balasore administration has decided to stop procurement in the district from March 26, they said.

The agitators demanded an increase in procurement targets, end to deductions, purchase of paddy in sequence as per tokens, and extension of the procurement deadline.

Later in the day, Nilagiri assistant registrar of cooperative societies Bishnumohan Mallik, assistant civil supplies officer Bidyutlata Nayak, MI Rajalakshmi Panda along with the local police reached the protest site and held discussion with the agitators. The road blockade was lifted after Nayak assured the farmers that all their demands would be addressed.

Delay in Olive Ridley mass nesting triggers concern

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kendrapara

THE annual mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles at Nasi-1, Nasi-2 and Eakakulanasi islands in Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is yet to begin this year, triggering concerns among environmentalists.

While 2,05,293 turtles laid eggs between March 14 and 17 at the Rushikulya beach in Ganjam district, the absence of arribada at Gahirmatha has baffled environmentalists. Last year, a record 6,06,933 turtles nested at Gahirmatha between March 5 and 10. This year, however, the mass nesting has been delayed, reportedly due to untimely rain and other environmental factors. Olive Ridges require dry beaches for nesting.

Forest officials said all necessary arrangements have been made for the arribada. Forest range officer of Gahirmatha Kapilendra Pradhan said, "We are

disappointed as the mass nesting has been delayed due to inclement weather. However, we are hopeful as thousands of turtles have already congregated in the waters of Gahirmatha after mating. The beach has also been cleaned for their arrival."

Pradhan informed that 354 fishermen have been arrested and 39 vessels seized for illegal fishing within the sanctuary since November 1. The government enforces a complete fishing ban in Gahirmatha from November 1 to May 31 every year to protect the endangered Olive Ridges turtles during their nesting season.

Notably, the turtles had skipped mass nesting at Gahirmatha in 1997, 1998 and 2002. Experts attribute the current delay to factors such as unseasonal rain, coastal erosion, illegal fishing, illumination and regular testing activities at the missile test centre on Abdul Kalam Island near the Nasi islands.

Cong bandh affects life

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Malkangiri

NORMAL life came was affected across Malkangiri on Wednesday due to the 12-hour bandh called by the district Congress committee over a four-point charter of demands.

Schools, colleges, offices and business establishments remained closed due to the shutdown while vehicular movement was also severely affected.

A key demand of the Congress included swift purchase of paddy from farmers left out of the procurement process. Party leaders alleged that the government's failure to procure paddy has led to expiry of token validity, causing severe distress among farmers.

They also highlighted the shortage of petrol and LPG cylinders in the district, which has caused considerable inconvenience to the public. They sought immediate steps to ensure adequate supply.

Youth hacked with machete in public view in Bargarh town, four arrested

MAYANK BHUSAN PANI @Bargarh

A 28-year-old youth suffered serious injuries after being hacked with a sharp weapon multiple times in full public view at Hatpada under Bargarh Town police limits on Tuesday evening.

Police said four persons have been arrested for assaulting Amit Mallik of Katakiaipada with a machete over previous enmity. The accused are Md Sanu (29), Afraj Khan (22) and his brother Sindhbaz Khan (29) besides Raju Seikh (24), all residents of Pathanpada. The weapon used in the crime has also been seized.

Sources said the incident took place at around 5 pm on Tuesday. The accused confronted the victim over some issue. The situation turned ugly when Amit was suddenly assaulted from behind with a machete.

The blow caused a deep wound on his left shoulder, leading to heavy bleeding. While the accused fled the spot, Amit collapsed and was rushed to the nearby health centre by

SPURT IN VIOLENT CRIMES

This is the 3rd such incident reported from Bargarh town in less than 2 months

On March 9, a 45-year-old man was stabbed to death near the govt bus stand	On February 7, two youths were killed in a similar attack in front of Bargarh Town police station
--	---

Growing circulation and consumption of intoxicants blamed for rise in violent crimes

locals. The attack sparked tension in Hatpada area, prompting police to rush to the spot and bring the situation under control. Based on the complaint filed by the victim's mother, police registered a case and arrested the four accused on Wednesday morning.

Sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) of Bargarh PB Tripathy said the victim was shifted to

VIMSAR, Burla for better treatment and is stable. Preliminary investigation suggest past animosity to be the motive behind the attack. The accused were produced in court and remanded in judicial custody. Further investigation is underway.

Notably, this is the third such incident reported from Bargarh in less than two months, raising serious concerns among residents over the recurring instances of violent crime especially in public places. Earlier this month, a 45-year-old man was stabbed to death near Bargarh town bus stand. On February 7, two youths were killed in a similar attack in front of Bargarh Town police station near Hatpada. Though six accused including two juveniles were arrested the next day, the incident triggered panic among locals.

Residents alleged that growing circulation and consumption of intoxicants such as cough syrups, narcotic tablets and brown sugar are contributing to the rise in violent crimes in the town.



SUMMER RELISH

A man drinking handia (fermented rice beer) at Aruha in Jaipur district | AKSHYA ROUT

1 kg gold, ₹1.30L cash looted from businessman's house

BERHAMPUR: Unidentified miscreants allegedly looted gold ornaments weighing around one kg and ₹1.30 lakh cash from the house of a 57-year-old businessman in the crowded Prem Nagar area under Bada Bazaar police limits here on Wednesday.

Before decamping with the loot, the robbers reportedly replaced the locks of the house of victim Prayakar Rao with new ones. Sources said Rao was staying alone in his house since the last 10 days as his family members had gone to a relative's place. Like everyday, the businessman left for morning walk after locking his house at 4 am. When he returned home at 10 am, he could not open the locks.

On closer inspection, he found that his locks had been replaced with new ones. Suspecting foul play, he called his neighbours and broke into his house. On entering inside, he found two storage cabinets open with the gold ornaments and cash missing. Rao said the looted gold and cash were valued at over ₹1 crore.

On being informed, police along with a scientific team and sniffer dog reached the crime scene for investigation. Police sources said the miscreants looted only the gold and cash and left behind silver ornaments and other costly household articles. It is suspected that people known to Rao may have committed the crime. ENS

EXPRESS READ

Implementation of govt schemes reviewed

Sambalpur: Additional chief secretary of Energy and Electronics & Information Technology Vishal Dev reviewed the implementation of government welfare schemes on the second day of his visit to Sambalpur on Wednesday. Dev chaired a high-level meeting, assessing the progress of key schemes being implemented across the district. He directed officials to expedite all ongoing projects and ensure their completion within deadlines. The progress of piped drinking water supply under the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation programme was also reviewed. Dev also assessed the status of key initiatives under the Women and Child Development department.

NIT-R's research team gets patent for next-gen intruder detection system

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Rourkela

INNOVATORS at the National Institute of Technology-Rourkela (NIT-R) have secured patent for a fully automated next-generation intelligent surveillance technology to address the challenge of monitoring unauthorised access in large and complex building environments.

Addressing the limitations of the conventional CCTV camera-based surveillance, the new system is fully automated, non-intrusive and can detect, identify and track individuals using integrated thermal imaging technology.

The patented technology ti-

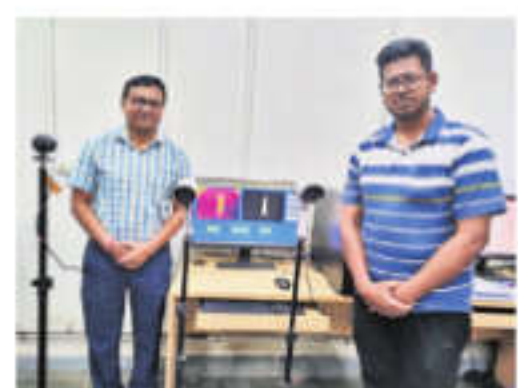
itled 'Unauthorised Person Detection Using Thermal Imaging and Gait Recognition for Intra-Building Security' has been developed by Prof Samit Ari of the Electronics and Communication Engineering department along with research scholar Mohammad Iman Junaid and MTEch graduates Narayan Prasad Sharma and Irshad Ali.

Members of the research team said conventional CCTV camera-based surveillance systems require extensive manual monitoring and analysis, making them prone to human errors. In large setups, tracking individuals across multiple cameras is both difficult and cumbersome, especially under

varying lighting conditions and occlusions. But the new technology is smart, efficient and works on its own requiring minimum human intervention.

The integrated thermal imaging technology helps distinguish humans from the background due to lower infrared noise and enables accurate detection even in inadequate lighting conditions. The research team has used human gait as a biometric identifier. When a person enters a restricted area, the system compares his/her walking pattern with those of authorised individuals. If no match is found, it flags the individual as suspicious and alerts security.

The research team has devel-



Prof Ari and research scholar Junaid with their smart surveillance system

oped a working prototype with three thermal cameras connected to a central server via USB interfaces. The system detects unauthorised individuals at entry, tracks their movement across multiple checkpoints, maintains

a temporary database for unknown individuals, and determines entry and exit patterns based on movement direction. If an individual exits the restricted area, their temporary record is cleared, while historical data remains stored for future reference and forensic use.

The patented system has been developed and designed with grant support of the Science and Engineering Research Board, India.

Prof Ari said, "Developed at an estimated cost of ₹1.90 lakh, the system uses thermal imaging for low-light and night-time operation, along with gait-based identification for non-intrusive biometric recognition. Auto-

mated multi-camera tracking enables seamless monitoring across locations, supported by centralised data processing for logging and database management." The system has wide-ranging surveillance applications across academic institutions, corporate campuses, industrial and research & development facilities. It is equally suitable for defence and high-security setups where reliable identification is critical.

"Designed to perform in challenging conditions such as low visibility and complex environments, it also enhances forensic investigations through the availability of stored gait data for analysis," Prof Ari added

Focus on devpt works in Tulasi mountain region

Malkangiri: The Malkangiri administration has fast-tracked key infrastructure initiatives to accelerate development in the remote Tulasi mountain region bordering Chhattisgarh under Mathili block of the district. Malkangiri collector Prathamesh Arvind Rajeshirke on Wednesday reviewed the progress of various development works in the region and set clear timelines for their completion. He assessed the road project connecting Tulasi-Matiguda-Gugapadar-Daldali, which is crucial for improving connectivity in the region. Emphasising timely execution, the collector directed officials to ensure that there is no negligence in the construction process.

Pubs must serve liquor only after verifying age: HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

EXPRESSING serious concern over breweries and similar establishments in urban spaces that are permitting the entry of minor children and serving liquor to them without verifying their age, the Karnataka High Court directed that managements must initiate rigorous age verification, whether through Aadhaar or other valid identification, at the entry.

Further verification should follow when liquor is ordered by persons who appear youthful or underage, the high court said in a major verdict delivered on Wednesday.

Justice M Nagaprasanna passed the order, refusing to quash proceedings initiated against the petitioner, V Chitti Babu, a partner in Legacy Brewing Company (LBC), who challenged the case registered against him for selling intoxicating liquor to children. A suo motu case was registered by RR Nagar police against the petitioner, after obtaining permis-

sion from the magistrate. CCTV footage showed a 15-year-old deceased boy in the brewery, and a postmortem report revealed the presence of alcohol in his body. The boy died by suicide, jumping from the 7th floor of an apartment complex after consuming liquor at LBC, on January 31. During the probe, the boy's friend informed police that they had consumed liquor and smoked at LBC before the boy ended his life.

Dismissing the petition, the HC stated that breweries or places where alcohol is sold cannot be complacent. Age verification cannot be a perfunctory ritual; it must be a practice with display of conspicuous warnings and insistence of documentary proof. When minors gain entry and order intoxicants, whether served overtly or consumed covertly, managements of such establishments cannot wash their hands of any cases. Protection of youngsters is not merely a statutory mandate, it is a moral imperative. The managements would be held accountable for any lapses, it noted.

AM/NS shift from Odisha to AP sad and shameful: BJD

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

TWO days after foundation stone of ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) was laid for a mega steel plant in Andhra Pradesh, opposition BJD on Wednesday described it as a very sad and shameful development for the state.

Expressing concern over the fate of the proposed project of AM/NS in Kendrapada district of Odisha, BJD MP Sasmitha Patra claimed that the project, which was originally planned for Odisha, is now being shifted to AP. He claimed that Odisha's mineral resources would be sent for the project.

When Naveen Patnaik was the chief minister, he travelled to Japan and signed an MoU with Nippon Steel. Consequently, Nippon Steel set out to build its own steel plant in Odisha, he said. However, the second most critical issue is that Odisha's minerals will be transported to Andhra Pradesh via a slurry pipeline, he claimed.

The BJD MP said if steel plant and industry move out of Odisha, and states' minerals and coal are supplied through such pipelines, nothing will be left for the state. "If Lakshmi Mittal wants to produce steel, he should do so in Odisha rather than taking our minerals to Andhra Pradesh," Patra said.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday laid foundation for ₹1.36 lakh crore AM/NS India steel plant in Nakkapalli mandal of Anakapalli district.



Two, including 19-yr-old, die by suicide

JEYPORE: Two separate cases of suicide by hanging were reported from Koraput district on Wednesday.

A 19-year-old youth, Tapan Balaputia of Duruguda village under Koraput Sadar police limits, was found hanging in a newly-constructed house where he was reportedly staying alone. His relatives found him hanging on Wednesday morning.

Police said further inquiry is on to ascertain the circumstances leading to the incident. Further investigation is on.

In another case, Satpati Muduli (22) was found hanging inside her house at PHD Nua Sahi in Narakaguda area on Tuesday night. The house was locked from the inside. Her husband, Chanda Muduli, was reportedly not at home at the time of the incident. On being informed by neighbours, police recovered the body on Wednesday.

Raghunath Mohanty, Jiban Das return to BJD fold

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

FORMER minister Raghunath Mohanty and ex-MLA Jiban Pradip Das returned to the Biju Janata Dal in the presence of hundreds of party leaders from Balasore district at Sankha Bhawan here on Wednesday.

Days after former Balasore MP Rabindra Jena switched to BJP from the BJD and suspension of his MLA wife Subasini Jena for cross-voting in the Rajya Sabha elections, the return of the two leaders to the regional outfit holds significance.

Mohanty had quit BJD and joined BJP ahead of the 2019 elections after he was not given a ticket by the regional outfit. He was expelled from the BJD in 2014 following his arrest in a dowry case filed against him by his daughter-in-law. Though he was re-admitted to the party in 2018, he resigned and contested from Basta Assembly constitu-

ency unsuccessfully in 2019 election. He had resigned from the BJP in 2024.

On the other hand, Dash resigned from primary membership of BJP on March 13 just two days after switching sides from BJD. He was elected from Balasore Sadar Assembly seat on a BJP ticket in 2000. Later on he joined the ruling BJD and won the seat twice in 2009 and 2014 Assembly elections. He, however, lost the 2019 Assembly election to BJP's Madan Mohan Dutta. He was suspended from BJD in 2020 for anti-party activities.

Political sources said induction of the two leaders will be helpful for rebuilding the BJD in Balasore district after the exit of former MP Jena and suspension of his wife from the party. BJD president Naveen Patnaik welcomed the two leaders at Naveen Niwas.

Mohanty said that he would work to strengthen BJD in Balasore district. Das also expressed his happiness.



OMC inks pact with TEXMiN -IIT (ISM) for mining research



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhubaneswar

STATE-owned entity Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd (OMC) has signed an MoU with TEXMiN - IIT (ISM) Dhanbad, a technology translation research park supported by the DST, Government of India, to collaborate on capacity building, academic partnership, research and innovation and the advancement of safe, sustainable and digitally enabled mining practices.

The pact was signed by OMC director (HR) Alok Kumar Pal and IIT (ISM) Dhanbad deputy director-cum-TEXMiN Foundation project director Prof Dheeraj Kumar recently. OMC officials said it is a significant step towards strengthening institutional capabilities, enhancing managerial and technical competencies.

They said the collaboration will support structured training programmes, policy-oriented learning and innovation-led engagement to build a more efficient, future-ready and sustainable mining ecosystem in the state.

The MoU also lays the foundation for a broad-based collaboration focused on capacity building of employees through academic partnership and knowledge exchange, OMC officials said.

The key areas of engagement include managerial capability enhancement, development of a continuous learning ecosystem, research and innovation collaboration, policy and compliance training, and collaborative projects and case studies.

The partnership will also include management development programmes (MDPs), short-term specialised courses and technical guidance for digital transformation, productivity improvement and safe and sustainable mining operations.

Depts told to extend full cooperation to gas agencies

FROM P1...

Departments have been directed to extend full cooperation to gas distribution companies, the order said.

The government clarified that road cutting, restoration and permission charges will continue to be levied as per existing Works department rates aligned with central guidelines, pending further directions from the Centre. The CGD entities will also be responsible for restoring public assets at their own cost, failing which legal action may be initiated.

To streamline coordination, the director of municipal administration has been designated as the state nodal officer to oversee implementation across departments and ensure adherence to timelines.

The Works, Water Resources and Energy departments and ULBs have been directed to take immediate steps to operationalise the measures and extend full cooperation to the CGD entities.

FORM NO. 3
[See Regulation-15(1)(a)]
IN DEBTS RECOVERY APPELLATE TRIBUNAL AT KOLKATA
9, Old Post Office Street, 7th Floor, Kolkata-700001
Misc Appeal No. 11 of 2026
(Arising out of SA/184/2025 in DRT-Cuttack)
The Authorised Officer, Canara Bank & Ors.Appellant
Vs.
Mr. Ashok Kumar Panigrahi & Anr.Respondent
To,
1) Mr. Manoranjan Behera, Son of Muktikanta Behera, Residing at Ward No. 4, Prabodhapur, Basudevpur, Mandari, Bhadrak, Odisha-756125. (Respondent No. 2)
SUMMONS
1. WHEREAS the appellant has filed a Regular appeal U/s 18 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, against the order passed by the Ld. Presiding Officer, DRT, Cuttack and other reliefs. You are hereby summoned to appear and file written statement before this Tribunal at 10.30 a.m. or at such time immediately thereafter according to the convenience of Tribunal on 21.04.2026 to answer the claim.
2. If you intend to file any documents, you may file the same with a list along with the written statement.
3. You should file your registered address and a memo of appearance when you enter appearance before the Tribunal either in person or by a pleader/Advocate duly instructed.
4. Take notice that, in default of, your appearance on the day mentioned herein before, the proceeding will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this 23rd day of March, 2026.
Sd/- Registrar
Debts Recovery Appellate Tribunal, Kolkata

Student dies after falling from moving train in TN

TIRUPPUR: An 18-year-old college student who sustained injuries while attempting to board a moving train at the Tiruppur railway station on Tuesday succumbed to his injuries on Wednesday. The deceased was V Vedharajan of Kumarananthapuram in Tiruppur. Sources said Vedharajan used to travel to college from Tiruppur to Coimbatore by train every day. On Tuesday morning, the student allegedly tried to board the Erode-Palakkad passenger train even before it halted but he slipped and fell and got stuck between the train and the platform. The police and the public rescued the student, who sustained severe injuries in the incident, and sent him to hospital, where he died on Wednesday morning.

Federal Bank
LCRD/Kolkata Division,
1, R N Mukherjee Road, Martin Burn House, Kolkata 700001.
Phone number 033-22654334, email id: kollcrd@federalbank.co.in, Website: www.federalbank.co.in, CIN: L65191KL1931PLC000368

NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSET(S)
E- Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Asset(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s), Co-obligant(s), Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Federal Bank Ltd (Secured Creditor), the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of The Federal Bank Ltd (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder:
(DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any.	Amount Outstanding (Rs.)	Reserve Price (Rs.) Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.)	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date and Time of E-auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1	Mr Pramod Kumar Sahoo S/o Duryodhana Sahoo Plot no 1321 Sub 2 Shivam Greens K B Lane, Old Town, Bhubaneswar -751002, Odisha (2) Mrs Namita Sahoo W/o Pramod Kumar Sahoo Plot no 1321, sub 2 Shivam Greens K B Lane, Old Town, Bhubaneswar Loan Account no. 1513550000689	All the piece and parcel of the residential Flat admeasuring 1214 sq ft Bearing Flat No A 206 Situated at Block A on the Second Floor of multistoried building namely Gopinath Complex and one car parking in the still Floor together with proportionate undivided share in the landed property admeasuring Acre 0.0112 out of Total area of acre 0.351 comprised in plot no 173 Khata no 60 situated at Mouza-Khua, Tahsil : Jatni, Ps Bhubaneswar, Thana 51 Hal Ps : Airfield and Dist : Khurda	₹ 2,89,86,153.08/ as on 11.05.2021	Reserve Price 40,00,000/- EMD: 4,00,000/-	29.04.2026 From 11.00 AM to 3.00 PM	02.05.2026 From 11.00 AM

The online auction will be conducted on the website (URL Link- https://federalbank.auctioning.net) of our auction agency M/s. e-Procurement Technologies Ltd. The Mortgagee/Noticees are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest by 30th April 2026 before 5.00PM, else the secured asset(s) will be sold as per schedule. The prospective bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amount (Refer Column E) along with duly filled Tender Form at The Federal Bank Ltd. LCRD/Kolkata Division, 1, R. N. Mukherjee Road, Martin Burn House, 1st Floor, Kolkata - 700001 on or before 30.04.2026 before 5.00 P.M.
For any further clarifications in terms of inspection, Terms and Conditions of the E-Auction or submission of tenders, contact Federal Bank Employee phone no. 7576851954 Please note that the Authorized Officer reserve the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reason.
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in the website of The Federal Bank Ltd i.e. https://www.federalbank.co.in/web/guest/tender-notice
Place: Kolkata Date: 25-03-2026
Sd/- (Authorised officer under SARFAESI Act)

SBI STATE BANK OF INDIA
HOME LOAN CENTRE, BHUBANESWAR
4th Floor, SBI Main Branch Building, Unit-1, Bhubaneswar-751001

POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable Properties) [Rule 8 (1)]

Publication of Notice regarding possession of property/ies u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act, 2002
Notice is hereby given under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No.3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, a Demand Notice under section 13(2) was issued on the dates mentioned against below accounts and stated herein after calling upon the Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice with interest within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Act on the date mentioned against below accounts. The Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the STATE BANK OF INDIA for an amount stated below with interest, incidental expenses, costs etc. thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

BRANCH / Name of Account / Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / A/c. No.	Description of the Property/ies mortgaged/charged	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Dues Amount
PURI MAIN BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Balunkeswar Mohapatra, S/o- Late Hatakishore Mohapatra, At: Tulasi Vihar, Balighat, Dist.: Puri, Odisha, PIN-752002 / A/c. No.: 31114225381 (HTL)	All that part and parcel of the property Land & Building situated at Mouza: Puri Town, Unit No. 32, Kumbharpada, PS: Kumbharpada, Tahasil: Puri Sadar, Dist.: Puri, Khata No.: 200/566, Plot No.: 209/1000, Area: Ac.0.023dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, standing in the name of Mr. Balunkeswar Mohapatra, Bounded by- East: Basti Plot No. 53, West: Basti Plot No. 55, North: Road, South: Basti Plot No. 47.	16.01.2026	23.03.2026	₹ 11,59,242.00 as on 23.03.2026 + further interest & incidental expenses, costs etc. thereon
NAYAGARH BRANCH / Borrower: Hadubandhu Sahoo (Since Deceased), Legal Heirs of Deceased Borrower: 1) Mrs. Sumitra Kumari Sathua (Wife), W/o- Late Hadubandhu Sahoo, 2) Mr. Mrutyunjay Sahoo (Son), S/o- Late Hadubandhu Sahoo, 3) Mrs. Smiti Snigdha Sahu (Married Daughter), D/o- Late Hadubandhu Sahoo, 4) Miss Smrutika Sahoo (Daughter), D/o- Late Hadubandhu Sahoo, All are At/PO: Sunamuhin, PS: Odagaon, Dist.: Nayagarh, Odisha / A/c. No.: 36923219938 (HTL)	All that part and parcel of the property Land & Building situated at Mouza: Sunamuhin, PS/Tahasil: Odagaon, Dist.: Nayagarh, Khata No.: 739/471, Plot No.: 803, Area: Ac.0.03 dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, standing in the name of Hadubandhu Sahoo. Bounded by- East: Road, West: Road, North: Dutikrushna Maharana, South: Sri Sri Dahibaman Jew.	16.01.2026	24.03.2026	₹ 7,20,545.00 as on 23.03.2026 + further interest & incidental expenses, costs etc. thereon
RAJSUNAKHALA BRANCH / Borrower: Jahanara Begum, W/o- Kamaludin Tarafdar, D/o- Mahamad Khan, At: Kauripatna Sahi, PO: Rajasunakhala, PS: Bolagarh, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha, PIN-752065 / A/c. No.: 40065558621 (HTL) & 40065612104 (Surakhsha)	All that part and parcel of the property Land & Building situated at Mouza: Kauripatna, PS/Tahasil: Bolgarh, Dist.: Khurda, Khata No.: 187/20, (1) Plot No.: 34/336, Area: Ac.0.007dec., (2) Plot No.: 34/338, Area: Ac.0.001dec. & (3) Plot No.: 34/337, Area: Ac.0.005dec., Total Area: Ac.0.013dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, standing in the name of Jahanara Begum. Bounded by- East: Gopinatha Maharana & Others, West: Road, North: Dasrathi Maharana, South: Kasinatha Maharana.	16.01.2026	24.03.2026	₹ 9,35,890.00 as on 23.03.2026 + further interest & incidental expenses, costs etc. thereon

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 25.03.2026 Sd/- Authorised Officer, State Bank of India, Home Loan Centre, Bhubaneswar

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक pnb punjab national bank
Together for the better

MEGA E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

CIRCLE OFFICE : SAMBALPUR
Balaji Midtown, 1st Floor, Deheripali, P.O.: Budharaja, Sambalpur-768004
E-mail Id: cosbpsamd@pnb.bank.in, Authorised Officer, Contact Number- 7428207666

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues + further interest & expenses thereon of the Bank / Secured Creditor from the respective borrower(s) and guarantor(s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION : 28.04.2026, 11:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.
LAST DATE & TIME OF EMD SUBMISSION: 27.04.2026 upto 5:00 P.M.
PROPERTY INSPECTION DATE & TIME: 24.04.2026 FROM 11:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

Sl. No.	Name of the Branch	Name of the Account	Name & Addresses of the Borrowers / Guarantors in the Account	Description of Immovable / Movable Properties Mortgaged / Owner's Name (Mortgagors of property/ies)	A) Date of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 B) Outstanding Amount as on specified Date + further interest & expenses thereon C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 D) Nature of Possession: Symbolic/ Physical/Constructive	A) Reserve Price B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount	Date & Time of E-auction
1.	JHARSUGUDA BRANCH (221800) / Borrowers: 1) Shri Sukanta Chakrabarty, S/o- Anit Chakrabarty, 2) Smt. Priya Chakrabarty, W/o- Sukanta Chakrabarty, Both are At: MO-68, Mahabir Nagar, P.O.: Brajarajnagar, Dist.: Jharsuguda, PIN-768216			All the part and parcel of Land & Building situated at Khata No.: 1212/7694, Plot No.: 1043/13239 & 1043/13246, Area: Ac.0.037 dec., Mouza: Jharsuguda Town No.-05, Tehsil/ Dist.: Jharsuguda, recorded in the name of Shri Sukanta Chakrabarty, S/o- Anit Chakrabarty.	A) 04.12.2025 B) ₹ 45,12,704.15 as on 29.11.2025 + further interest & expenses thereon C) 13.02.2026 D) Symbolic	A) ₹ 45,06,000/- B) ₹ 4,50,600/- C) ₹ 25,000/-	28.04.2026 at 11:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
2.	NUAPADA BRANCH (677500) / Borrower: Shri Kunja Rout, S/o- Shri Bahadur Rout, Address: At/PO: Komna, Dist.: Nuapada, PIN-766106.			All that part and parcel of property situated over Khata No.: 107, Plot No.: 763, Area: Ac.0.040 dec., Mouza: Komna, Tehsil/Dist.: Nuapada, recorded in the name of Shri Kunja Rout, S/o- Bahadur Rout & Smt. Satyanjanari Rout, W/o- Kunja Rout, Bounded by- East: Panigrahi Plot, West: Road, North: Jubna Mohanty (Open Plot), South: Self.	A) 18.07.2025 B) ₹ 16,85,863.70 as on 05.07.2025 + further interest & expenses thereon C) 24.10.2025 D) Symbolic	A) ₹ 24,85,000/- B) ₹ 2,48,500/- C) ₹ 25,000/-	28.04.2026 at 11:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

DETAILS OF ENCUMBRANCES KNOWN TO THE SECURED CREDITORS FOR ALL ABOVE PROPERTIES : Not Known
TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions: 1. The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS". 2. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the schedule here-in above have been taken to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation. 3. The Authorised Officer reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids, if not found acceptable or to postpone/cancel/adjourn/discontinue or vary the terms of the auction at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever and his decision in this regard shall be final. 4. The sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website https://banknet.com on 28.04.2026 at the time mentioned in above proclamation table. 5. Applicable GST extra. 6. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer https://banknet.com & www.pnbindia.in 30 DAYS STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002
Place: Sambalpur, Date: 25.03.2026 Sd/- Authorised Officer, Punjab National Bank

BHUBANESWAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
AKASH SHOYA BUILDING,
SACHIVALAYA MARG, BHUBANESWAR - 751001
Visit us at: <http://www.bda.gov.in/>

13001/786/2526 Invitation for Bids
Bid Identification No. 167/EM -BDA/BDD/2025-26 Date. 23.03.2026
C.E.-cum-Engineer Member, BDA on behalf of Bhubaneswar Development Authority, Bhubaneswar invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for civil & Electrical works as mentioned below:

- Nature of works : Civil & Electrical Work (CONSTRUCTION OF 45M. COP ROAD CONNECTING FROM GURU KELU CHARAN PARK TO PATIA RAILWAY STATION.)
- Total No. of works : 01 (One) No.
- Amount put to tender : Rs. 17.70 Crore
- Class of Contractor : Super Class
- Period of Completion : 18 (Eighteen) Calendar Months.
- Cost of Bid Documents : Rs. 10,000.00 + 18% GST (Online transfer by the last date & time for receipt of bids)
- Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) : 1% of estimated cost put to tender. (Online transfer by the last date & time for receipt of bids)
- Availability of Tender : From 30.03.2026 to 5.30 PM of 20.04.2026 <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.
- Date of opening of Tender : Dt. 21.04.2026 at 11.30 AM
- Place of opening of Tender : O/o- C.E.-cum-Engineer Member, BDA, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/- C.E.-cum-Engineer Member, BDA, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-13001/13033/1/25-26/0054

DIRECTORATE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT-CUM-EMPLOYMENT, ODISHA
NIYOJAN BHAWAN, KHARAVEL NAGAR,
UNIT- III, BHUBANESWAR.

INVITATION OF BIDS FOR SUPPLY OF MAN POWER ON OUTSOURCING BASIS.

44001/24/2526: Sealed bids are invited from eligible bidders for supply of Manpower on outsourcing basis for supply of manpower on outsourcing basis for Housekeeping & sanitation service in the Office of Directorate of Skill Development-cum-Employment & its sub-ordinate Offices in the state.

The offer must reach in this Directorate on or before 31.03.2026 at 04.00 PM through Registered Post/ Speed Post only and Technical Bid will be opened 06.04.2026 at 12.00 Noon in this office of Directorate of Skill Development-cum-Employment, Bhubaneswar.

Sd/- Dy.DSDE (Admin)
Directorate of Skill Development-cum-Employment, Odisha, Bhubaneswar.

OIPR-44001/44023/1/25-26/0001

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of India Undertaking)

CORRIGENDUM

Dy Chief Engineer (Works), Konkkan Railway Corporation Limited, Ratnagiri, had invited Open Tender for Name of work: Providing of window Grills, Grating, Fencing, Roof cover and other miscellaneous works at Rolling Stock Component Factory, Lote MIDC in Ratnagiri region of Konkkan railway in the state of Maharashtra, published in newspaper on 05/03/2026. Tender Notice No.: KR-RN-DYCEW-RSCF-50-2025 Dated: 20/02/2026. In that notice Bidding start date & Closing date should be read as follow: Bidding start date: 16.03.2026. Closing Date/Time: 30.03.2026 upto 15:00 Hrs for submission of on line offers/bids. Other terms and condition remain unchanged.

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମତ୍ସ୍ୟ ଅଧିକାରକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଅନୁଗୋଳ
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT FISHERIES OFFICER, ANGUL
6001/43/2526 Email Id: dfoangul123@gmail.com
Letter No. 985 Corrigendum Date 23.03.2026
Corrigendum is issued to Tender Notice No 873, dated 11.03.2026 regarding terms & conditions of bid for installation of Floating Jetty in Rengaili Dam. The details of corrigendum are available in Website www.angul.odisha.gov.in.

OIPR-6001/6064/1/25-26/0004 Sd/- District Fisheries Officer, Angul

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
E-mail Id: cebuidings_orissa@yahoo.co.in, cebuidings@rediffmail.com, Tel. -(0674)- 2391523

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
File No-B-IV-H(H&D)-133/2023 Lr. No.- 9467 / Bhubaneswar 19th Mar., 2026
Invitation for Bids

34001/249/2526 Bid Identification No. CE-Bldg-II-59/2025-26

- The Chief Engineer, Buildings-II (C), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites bids from reputed Indian firms/ Contractor registered with the State Government and bidders of equivalent Grade / Class registered with Central Government / MES / Railways for the infrastructure works detailed in the table below on turnkey basis (i.e. Architectural planning with detailed design, setting & execution).
- Nature of work : 1. Construction of Dharmshala-cum-Guest House and Skill Centre for Hon'ble Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, Jatni, Khordha on Turnkey Basis. 2. Construction of District Court Complex (B+G+4) at Dhenkanal on Turnkey Basis.
- No. of work : 02 Nos.
- Bid Cost : 10,000/-
- Class of contractor : Super Class
- Availability of Bid Documents in the website : From dt.30.03.2026 to 05.30 PM of dt.20.04.2026
- Pre-bid meeting : Dt.08.04.2026 at 11.30 AM
- Last date of online submission of bid : Dt.20.04.2026 up to 5:30 PM
- Last date of Submission of hardcopy (Cover All) : Dt.24.04.2026 up to 5:30 PM
- Date of Opening of Bid : Dt.27.04.2026 at 11:30 AM
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, Buildings-II (C), Odisha, Bhubaneswar
OIPR- 34001/34117/1/25-26/0043

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

Divisional Railway Manager/ENGG/Chakradharpur acting for & on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders against Open Tender. Sl. No.; Name of work; Tender Notice No.; Tender value & EMD respectively: (1); CKP-Central-25-26-69; Balance work for Engagement of Consultant for carrying out Mutation of Railway land existing in South Eastern Railway Boundaries under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Settlement, ADEN/West/Chakradharpur & ADEN/Bondamunda of Chakradharpur Division under South Eastern Railway (3rd call); ₹ 1,89,88,803.20; ₹ 3,79,800.00; (2); CKP-WEST-25-26-45; Construction of shed for creation of advanced maintenance facility at ELS/Bondamunda; ₹ 2,91,79,595.24; ₹ 5,83,600.00; (3); CKP-EAST-25-26-56; Balance work for Engagement of Consultant for carrying out Mutation of Railway land existing in South Eastern Railway Boundaries under the jurisdiction of ADEN/TATA and ADEN/TATA of Chakradharpur Division under South Eastern Railway (2nd Call); ₹ 2,47,31,920.49; ₹ 4,94,700.00; (4); CKP-EAST-25-26-36; (1) Renovation/Replacement of 2 Nos. (Water Treatment Plant) WTP at Tatanagar under Sr.DEN/East/Chakradharpur and (ii) Repairs and overhauling of water treatment plant of new old filter house at Tatanagar for 03 years; ₹ 2,81,62,379.54; ₹ 5,63,300.00; (5); CKP-EAST-25-26-67; Repairs of Railway hospital at TATANAGAR; ₹ 1,87,52,637.93; ₹ 3,75,100.00; (6); CKP-SOUTH-25-26-35; Balance work for Engagement of Consultant for carrying out Mutation of Railway land existing in South Eastern Railway Boundaries under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Chabassa & ADEN/Dangooposi of Chakradharpur Division under- South Eastern Railway (2nd Call); ₹ 2,09,87,271.89; ₹ 4,19,800.00; (7); CKP-SOUTH-25-26-36; Construction of boundary wall, improvement of pathway, floor, wall and other miscellaneous works under ADEN/Dangooposi; ₹ 92,61,265.20; ₹ 1,85,200.00; (8); CKP-SOUTH-25-26-37; Construction of drain for improvement of drainage system in Banspani yard under jurisdiction of ADEN/Dangooposi; ₹ 2,16,83,902.65; ₹ 4,33,700.00; (9); CKP-SOUTH-25-26-38; Through Turnout Renewal (TWR) for total 269 sets in different yards of Rajkharasana-Pada Pahar, Pada Pahar-Nayagarh, Pada Pahar-Bolanikhadan & Bara Jamda - Gua section under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN (South) Chakradharpur. (3rd Call); ₹ 2,14,78,912.46; ₹ 4,29,600.00. Cost of tender forms: ₹ 0.00 (for Sl. No. 2) & 16.04.2026 (for Sl. No. 5). The tender can be viewed at Website <http://www.irops.gov.in>. The tenders/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered under an IREPS Portal. Only registered tender/bidder can participate on e-tendering. All relevant paper must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-tendering. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Note: e-Tender Forms shall be issued free of cost to all tenderers. (Authority Rty. Bd.'s letter No 2020/CE-1/CT/3/GCC/Policy dtd. 16.07.2020).

(PR-1345)

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD
O/o Chief General Manager (Engg), Transmission Circle, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-04.

'e'-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION

e-Tender No. & Date	Name of Work	Ranking (approx.)	Bid document download start date
EP.No. 177/CGME/TC/T3TD-III/2025-26 Dtd: 25.03.2026.	Manufacturing, supply, delivery and fixing of GI chainlink mesh, Galvanized steel, barbed wire, RCC poles and RCC boundary structures for providing safety to the boundary of the 2375/2200mm dia vms pumping mains & gravity mains of kdWSP Phase-I, II & III Detour pipeline alignment land near Konda Maliepally, Godekonda and Ibrahimnagar under Sub Division-I of Transmission Div-III, Saheb Nagar.	Rs. 298.25 Lakhs	26.03.2026 @ 4.00 PM

The Tenderers are requested to upload the information on the Zip format preferably. Further details can be seen on www.eprocurement.gov.in

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Engg), Transmission Circle, Khairatabad, Hyderabad-04.

ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD
OFFICE OF THE SENIOR GENERAL MANAGER (ELECTRICAL)
UPPER KOLAB H.E. PROJECT: AT/PO: BARINIPUT DISTRICT: KORAPUT, PIN- 764 006.
PHONE: 06854 242001 FAX: 06854 242038
REGD OFFICE: ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD, JANPATI, BHIMNAGAR, BHUBANESWAR- 751002
TELEPHONE: 0674 - 2542802, 2542826, 2545536, FAX: 0674 2542102
CIN: U40101OR1998GCO03963

4001/95/2526

NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO. 56/25-26 DATED 20.03.2026

Sealed tenders in duplicate Single Bid (Technical & Price Bid) are invited from Govt. registered Contractors / Agencies for the job mentioned below by Unskilled Workmen on Job Contract basis for a Calendar year (12 Months).

Sl No	Description of work	Cost of tender paper in Rs.	EMD in Rs.
1	Upkeep sanitation of Bariniputi Colony and Power House Colony, UKHEP, Bariniputi for a period of 12 months.	7080/- (Non-refundable) (Rs.6000/-+18% GST)	Rs 14,700/-

The sale of Tender Paper will be from: 10:00hrs of Dt.30.03.2026 to 12:00 Hrs of Dt.14.04.2026
The last date & time of receipt of Tender : Up to 12:00 Hrs of Dt.15.04.2026
The date and time of opening of Tender : At 12:30 Hrs of Dt.15.04.2026
For details of tender documents, Terms & conditions, Eligibility criteria and downloading, please refer our website www.odhpcil.com

Unit Head,
Upper Kolab H.E. Project
Bariniputi
4001/4002/1/25-26/0012

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DIVISION
TENDER NOTICE NO. SR-TVCOSnT(TENDY)/3/2026/03
Dated: 24.03.2026

For and on behalf of The President of India, The Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Southern Railway, Thiruvananthapuram - 14 invites e-tenders for the following works.

Sl. No.	Tender No	Name of the works
1	TVC-SNT-SIG-25-26-36	Provision of Aspiration type smoke detector at selected stations in TVC Division
2	TVC-SNT-SIG-25-26-37	Provision of Interlocking arrangements including EOLB with SLB at EIGHT numbers of Non-Interlocked LC gates in Thiruvananthapuram Division

Sl. No.	Cash Value (Approx.) (₹ Ps)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Last Date for Receipt of Tender	Completion Period
1	14423924.63	222100.00	1704.2026 up to 15.00 Hrs	06 months
2	80174669.33	550900.00	1704.2026 up to 15.00 Hrs	10 months

Complete details & tender document will be available at www.irops.gov.in
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/ Thiruvananthapuram

GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY
Amruta Vihar, Sambalpur, Odisha-768001

Advt. No. 1377/ GMU, Date 25.03.2026

Invitation of Expression of Interest for engagement of PMC for construction of different buildings at G.M. University, Sambalpur

Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur invites Expression of Interest (Eoi) from reputed public sector organization such as State PSU/ Central PSU for engagement as Project Management Consultant (PMC) for Construction and minor repair of different buildings at the G.M. University, Sambalpur. Interested agencies are requested to visit the official website www.gmuniversity.ac.in for details. The last date of receiving of Eoi is 09.04.2026 by 4.00 PM.

- Authority reserves the right to reject all or any of the Proposals without assigning any reasons whatsoever.
- Hereafter, any corrigendum/amendment shall be published only on the University Website i.e. www.gmuniversity.ac.in.

Sd/-Registrar

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, SCB MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL, CUTTACK
No. 8943 // Date 24.03.2026

TENDER CALL NOTICE

10001/146/2526: Sealed Tenders are invited from the interested Manufacturers/ Registered Agency/ firm to undertake ACMC of Manifold Room, Medical Gas Equipment and Central Medical Gas Pipeline System installed in different department of SCB Medical College Hospital, Cuttack. The details of tender papers along with terms and conditions can be obtained from Central Store Section, Office of the Superintendent SCB Medical College Hospital, Cuttack during office hours from 11 A.M. to 4P.M. on all working days on payment of Rs.1,000/- (Rupees One thousand) only in the Accounts Section and also can be downloaded from the website i.e. <http://www.scbmch.in> from 26.03.2026 to 16.04.2026. The bidders are requested to inspect the aforesaid medical gas pipeline systems prior to participation in the tender for needful. The tender paper should be reached to the office of the undersigned through Govt. Speed post / courier only. The authority reserves the right to cancel of rejects any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Medical Superintendent
OIPR- 10001/10186/1/25-26/0015 SCB Medical College Hospital, Cuttack

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

AFFIDAVIT
Before the Executive Magistrate, Rairangpur, I, Madhab Sainya S/o Late Birsing Sainya R/o Village Batduma, PO. Raihari, P.S. Rairangpur (R), Dist. Mayurbhanj, declare that, I have married with SABITRI SAINYA. In my Service Book, my wife's name wrongly written as Sabitri Purty. Purpose of this affidavit is that my wife's name Sabitri Sainya, for necessary correction of her name in my Service Book.

CHANGE OF NAME (Minor)
By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Simulua, I Umakanta Barik, S/o-Raghnath Barik, permanent resident of Vill-Rasidpur, P.o.-Khirkona, P.s.-Simulua, Dist-Balasore, Pin-756168, Odisha, do hereby solemnly affirm that I have changed my son name from Parthapratim Uddipt Barik to Partha Barik vide affidavit no-81AA 804769. Henceforth from today onwards my son name shall be known as Partha Barik for all government and official purposes. Sd/- Umakanta Barik

AFFIDAVIT
I Arati Nanda, wife of Niranjani Misra resident of "Shanti Nilaya", Bachhera Colony, PO-Jatni, PS-Jatni, Dist-Khurda, Odisha, have changed my name from Arati Nanda to Arati Misra vide affidavit dated -19-03-2026 in the office of the Notary, Jatni, Dist-Khurda, Odisha

CHANGE OF NAME
I, GUDLA CHANDRA MOULI, S/o G.Ch.Guruvulu, Resident of Vill./Town IOB Bank, New Colony, Ward No. 7, Rayagada, P.O./P.S./ Dist. Rayagada, ODISHA, have changed my name from GUDLA CHANDRA MAULI (Old Name) to GUDLA CHANDRA MOULI (New Name). Henceforth be known as GUDLA CHANDRA MOULI. This is for kind information to all concerned.
GUDLA CHANDRA MOULI

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT JUDGE, KENDRAPARA
ADVERTISEMENT NO. 01 DATED 25.03.2026

Pursuant to the instructions of the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa, Cuttack imparted in their Letter No. 4492 (60) dated 16.03.2026, applications are invited from the desirous candidates having requisite qualification and experience along with supporting documents as required under Rule-5 and 6 of the Family Courts (Orissa) Rules, 1990 for appointment to one vacant post of Counsellor in the Court of the Judge, Family Court, Kendrapara. The Counsellor shall be appointed by the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa, Cuttack.

LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION - 15th April, 2026.

Applications received after the last date of submission shall not be entertained and summarily rejected.

The details of advertisement and application format may also be available in the District Court website:

- Website URL: <https://kendrapara.deourts.gov.in>
- <https://kendrapara.courts.gov.in/notice-courts/recruitments/>

Sd/- District Judge, Kendrapara

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, KENDU LEAVES, ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR,
PLOT NO. GD 21/2, 5th FLOOR, ARANYA BHAWAN, CHANDRASEKHARPUR, BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA, PIN- 751023, PHONE NO. 0674 - 2300915 / 2300916, E-mail ID - pccfkldak@gmail.com

ABRIDGED TENDER CALL NOTICE
File No.3KL(WFA) 01/2026
No.3// Dated:25th, March, 2026

PROCUREMENT OF HESSIAN CLOTH (SUPERIOR) AND HESSIAN TWINE.

Sealed Tenders in prescribed format are invited from Companies/Firms/Manufacturers/Traders of Hessian Material for supply about 463 Bales of Hessian Cloth (Superior) and 12.00 MT of Hessian Twine for 2025 KL, Crop year. The Tender Document along with terms & conditions can be obtained from the O/o- the PCFC (KL), Odisha on submitting the proof of payment of Rs.10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand) only towards cost of Tender paper (Non-refundable) in the (Account No. 32269698772 (State Bank of India, Fortune Towers Branch, IFSC Code. SBIN0004414. The tender document can also be downloaded from Kendu Leaf Organization web portal: <https://kendu-leaves.odisha.gov.in>

SCHEDULE OF TENDER

Sale of Tender Documents	On all working days from 25.03.2026 to 09.04.2026
Cost of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)	Rs. 10,000/-
Last Date of Submission of Tender	09.04.2026 (5.00 P.M.)
Opening of Technical Bid and Evaluation	10.04.2026 (11.00 A.M.)
Opening of Financial Bid	10.04.2026 (4.00 P.M.)

Sd/- ACCF (Kendu Leaves)

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମତ୍ସ୍ୟ ଅଧିକାରକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଅନୁଗୋଳ
ODISHA PISCICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha undertaking)
No.550 Date: 25.03.2026

TENDER CALL NOTICE

PROCUREMENT OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT (LIFE JACKET) FOR THE FISHERMEN OF BALIMELA RESERVOIR OF MALKANGIRI DISTRICT UNDER SETU PROGRAMME

6001/42/2526 : OPDCL invites sealed bids under two-bid system from registered Manufacturer/ Authorized dealer/ Suppliers for supply of Safety Equipment (Life Jacket) for the Fishermen of Balimela reservoir of Malkangiri District under Setu Programme. Bidders fulfilling the prescribed eligibility criteria of the tender can access and download the complete Tender Document in www.fisheries.odisha.gov.in / opdc.odisha.gov.in. The bid calendars under the end to end process are:

Sl.	List of Key Events	Critical Dates
1	Date of Issue of Tender Call Notice	25.03.2026
2	Last Date for Submission of Bid	17.04.2026 at 1.00 PM
3	Date of Opening of Technical Bid & financial Bid	17.04.2026 at 2.30 PM

The bid complete in all respects must reach the undersigned by Speed Post/Registered Post/Drop in the Tender Box only latest by 17.04.2026 at 1.00 PM in a sealed envelope clearly mentioning on the top of it 'Supply of Safety Equipment (Life Jacket) for the Fishermen of Balimela reservoir of Malkangiri District under Setu Programme.

The proposals received beyond the last date and time will be rejected. The authority reserves the right to reject any/ all proposals without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Managing Director
CC: To the Notice Board of OPDC And webhosting of the same in Directorate of Fisheries and OPDCL website for wide publicity.
OIPR-6001/6020/1/25-26/0001

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender No. CACCRSPBBS-07-2026

NAME OF WORK: (1) CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) 1 X 36.00 M COMPOSITE GIRDER AND PROPOSED SPAN OF 9 X 25.04 M RCC GIRDER ON KANCHLO SIDE & 10 X 25.04 M RCC GIRDER ON BHOGAPUR SIDE IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 213 AT KM. 474/17-19 IN BETWEEN TAPANGA-NIRAKARPUR STATIONS ON HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. (2) CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) 1 X 60 M CAMEL BACK TYPE TRUSS GIRDER IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 221 AND PROPOSED SPAN OF 9 X 25.04 M RCC GIRDER ON HARIPUR SIDE & 9 X 25.04 M RCC GIRDER ON MORMORSINGH SIDE, AT RAILWAY KM. 485/25-27 IN BETWEEN STATIONS NIRAKARPUR & BHUSANDPUR ON HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. (3) CONSTRUCTION OF A ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) 1 X 60 M CAMEL BACK TYPE TRUSS GIRDER AND 1 X 24.0 M COMPOSITE GIRDERS FOR THE RAILWAY PROTION IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 223 AND 6 X 25.04 M RCC T-BEAM GIRDERS ON THE HARIPUR SIDE AND 12 X 25.04 M RCC T-BEAM GIRDERS ON THE KUSUMI SIDE FOR THE APPROACH PORTION AT RAILWAY KM. 487/23-25, BETWEEN NIRAKARPUR AND BHUSANDPUR STATIONS ON THE HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Advised Value ₹ 168,14,13,069.76, EMD : ₹ 85,57,100/-, Period of Completion: 24 Months.
Bidding Start Date: 01.04.2026
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 12:00 Hrs of 15.04.2026.

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

Dy. Chief Engineer / CON / PR-321/C/25-26 RSP / Bhubaneswar

YOU CAN'T WAIT FOR INSPIRATION. YOU HAVE TO GO AFTER IT WITH A CLUB JACK LONDON

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ANANDAPUR BARRAGE DIVISION, SALAPADA
(E-mail id: eeabd.anandapur@gmail.com/loabp-eciw.od@nic.in)

32001/259/2526 e-Procurement Notice No. SEABD- 08 of 2025-26

e-Procurement office	Name of the work	Bid of No.	Tender cost (Approx.)	EMD (Online)	Cost of Bid Document (Online)	Class of contractor	Period of completion	Availability of tender online for bidding	Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-I)
Superintending Engineer, Anandapur Barrage Division, Salapada	Hiring of private vehicle for official use by Assistant Executive Engineer, Anandapur Barrage Sub-Division No. 1, Salapada for the year 2025-26 (from 01.04.2025 to 31.03.2026).	ABP-ABD-08/01 of 2025-26	Rs. 37200/- per month	Rs. 9,000/-	Nil	Travel Agencies/ Tour Operators or private individuals	12 (Twelve) Calendar Months	26.03.2026 11:00 AM to 30.03.2026 03:00 PM	30.03.2026 03:00 PM
	Engagement of hired vehicle used by the Superintending Engineer, Anandapur Barrage Division, Salapada for the year 2025-26.	ABP-ABD-09/01 of 2025-26	Rs. 37200/- per month	Rs. 9,000/-	Nil	Travel Agencies/ Tour Operators or private individuals	12 (Twelve) Calendar Months	26.03.2026 11:00 AM to 30.03.2026 03:00 PM	30.03.2026 03:00 PM
	Engagement of hired vehicle used by the Chief Construction Engineer, Anandapur Barrage Project, Salapada for the year 2025-26.	ABP-ABD-10/01 of 2025-26	Rs. 44,400/- per month	Rs. 10,700/-	Nil	Travel Agencies/ Tour Operators or private individuals	12 (Twelve) Calendar Months	26.03.2026 11:00 AM to 30.03.2026 03:00 PM	30.03.2026 03:00 PM

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersodisha.gov.in / www.dowdrish.gov.in
Addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation if any required will be published in Govt. website only.

Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Anandapur Barrage Division, Salapada.

Government of Odisha
Higher Education Department

11001/68/2526

Timeline for e-Admission into P.G. Courses under SAMS in the State Public Universities and Colleges for the Academic Session: 2026-27

The revised timeline for e-Admission into P.G. Courses for the session 2026-27 in the State Public Universities and Colleges participating in project 'Student Academic Management System (SAMS)' is given below. Any changes in the timeline will be published in the newspapers as well as in the website www.samsodisha.gov.in. The Common Prospectus (CP) for the said course is available on the SAMS Portal. Kindly refer the CP for the below mentioned activities.

Sl#	Activities	Timeline
1	Submission of applicant's data to the State selection Board(SSB), Odisha by OCAC	26-Mar-2026
2	Availability of Hall Ticket on the website of SSB, Odisha (https://ssbodisha.ac.in/) for downloading the Admit card.	30-April-2026 (11.00 AM onwards)
3	Tentative Date of Entrance Examination (CPET-2026) (Subject wise Date wise sitting wise examination schedule will be published on the official portal of SSB, Odisha alongwith SAMS P.G Portal)	05-May-2026 to 18-May-2026
4	Hosting of Provisional Answer Keys by SSB, Odisha on its official Portal: https://ssbodisha.ac.in/	19-May-2026 (11.00 AM)
5	Receiving objections to the Provisional Answer Keys by the Candidates on their Student's Login on SAMS Portal: https://www.samsodisha.gov.in/ by paying a non-refundable processing fee of Rs. 200/- for each question challenged (Payment will be collected in Online Mode)	20-May-2026 (11:00 AM) to 22-May-2026 (11:45 PM)
6	Submission of objections to the Provisional Answer Keys data to SSB, Odisha by OCAC	26-May-2026 (11:00 AM)
7	Hosting of Revised Answer Keys by SSB, Odisha on its official Portal, Handling over the entrance marks to OCAC by SSB, Odisha, Publication of subject-wise and State-wide merit list, Updation of Graduation /Equivalent marks, Choice filling of HEs by the eligible applicants and Publication of Provisional Allotment of Seats for different Rounds	Dates will be notified by the Higher Education Department Later

For more details please contact: e-Admission Helpline (Toll Free) Number 155335 / 1800-345-6770
OIPR-11001/11001/1/25-26/0023 Sd/- Officer on Special Duty, PTC Section

खेल निदेशालय, उत्तर प्रदेश खेल भवन, लखनऊ
संख्या 2693/सगदन/अनारोपि विभा/प्रशिक्षक/2025-26 दिनांक 25 मार्च 2026

जिज्ञासित
शसनदेश संख्या 2274/ब्यालिस्-2021-01 (पौषण) / 2021 दिनांक 30 दिसम्बर, 2021 के क्रम में वर्ष 2026-27 में 15 खेलों क्रमशः (हॉकी पुरुष / महिला, तैक्वोंडो पुरुष / महिला, वालीबाल पुरुष / महिला, जिम्नास्टिक पुरुष/महिला, एथलेटिक्स पुरुष/महिला, क्रिकेट पुरुष, फुटबाल पुरुष, बैडमिंटन पुरुष / महिला, टेबल टेनिस पुरुष/महिला, बालेस्टबाल पुरुष/महिला, कबड्डी पुरुष/महिला, कुश्ती पुरुष / महिला, बॉक्सिंग पुरुष, हेडबाल महिला, जूडो पुरुष के छात्रावासों में उच्च प्रशिक्षण की आवश्यकता के प्रतिष्ठान 41 अनारोपि विद्यालयों को मान्यता को 1.50 लाख प्रतिमाह पर प्रशिक्षण हेतु आवक किये जाने हेतु निर्धारित प्रारूप पत्र पर आवेदन आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं।

आवेदन करने वाले अनारोपि विद्यालयों को खेल एवं शैक्षिक योग्यता निम्नवाट निर्धारित है:-

- अनारोपि विद्यालय/प्रशिक्षकों को मान्यता प्राप्त विद्यालय/संस्थान स्नातक उत्तीर्ण होना आवश्यक होगा अथवा अनारोपि विद्यालय/प्रशिक्षकों के अनिवार्य / अधिमान्य अर्हताओं में छूट अथवा शिथिलीकरण किये जाने के सम्बन्ध में प्रश्न-1 पर बर्निट सविष्टि द्वारा विचार कर निर्णय लिया जायेगा।
- अनारोपि खेलों तथा ओलिम्पिक गैम्स, कामनवेल्थ गैम्स, एशियन गैम्स एवं वर्ल्ड कप / वर्ल्ड चैम्पियनशिप (प्रत्येक वर्ष वर्ष में आयोजित होने वाली) में प्रशिक्षण किया हो, अर्ह माना जायेगा तथा उपरोक्त प्रतियोगिताओं में पदक विजेता खिलाड़ियों को वर्षेवार हो जायेगी अथवा प

8-18/2002-FC(vol)

I/82877/2024

Government of IndiaMinistry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj
New Delhi - 110003.
Dated: 24-09-2024To
The Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests),
Government of Odisha,
Bhubaneswar.**Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section-2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 26.416 ha (originally proposed area is 20.383 ha) of forest land in favour of the Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. for continuation of mining operation at Bhubaneswari expansion OCP within Mining Lease area over 658.724 ha under Angul Forest Division in Angul District, Odisha regarding. (Online proposal no. FP/OR/MIN/155017/2022).**

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Odisha's letter FE-DIV-FLD-0020-2022-8408/FE&CC dated 24.04.2023 and additional information submitted by the State Govt. vide letter 13760/9F (MG)-377/2022 dated 12.07.2024 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and to say that the proposal has been examined by the Advisory Committee constituted by the Central Government under Section-3 of the aforesaid Adhiniyam.

After careful examination of the proposal of the State Government and on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, and approval of the same by the competent authority of the MoEF&CC, New Delhi, the Central Government hereby accords 'in-principle' approval under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 26.416 ha (originally proposed area is 20.383 ha) of forest land in favour of the Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. for continuation of mining operation at Bhubaneswari expansion OCP within Mining Lease area over 658.724 ha under Angul Forest Division in Angul District, Odisha, subject to fulfillment of the following conditions:

- Legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged;
- Compensatory Afforestation:**
 - The Compensatory afforestation, over non-forest land, equal in extent to the forest land being diverted, shall be raised by the State Forest Department at the project cost;
 - The User Agency shall transfer the cost of raising and maintaining the compensatory afforestation as per the approved CA Scheme at the current wage rate in consultation with State Forest Department in the account of CAMPAs of the concerned State through online portal;
 - The exact area involved in the proposal shall be verified after taking into account the already diverted area for Ananta OCP and the Stage-2/Final approval shall be accordingly issued. The state shall ensure that the safety zone is maintained within the diverted area only and keeping in view the revised area the modifications in the mining plan as appropriate shall be made by the state/UA
 - The suitable non-forest land equivalent to the area proposed for diversion shall be identified and provided for raising compensatory afforestation. The area identified shall be transferred and mutated in favour of the State Forest Department and shall also be notified as RF/PF under IFA, 1927 or any state/local act before granting the Stage-II approval;
 - All details (i.e. KML file, SOI topo sheet, DGPS map, approved CA Scheme, site suitability certificate etc.) of non-forest land equal in extent to the forest land being proposed for diversion shall be submitted by the State Government along with the compliance report of the Stage-1 approval.
 - The Nodal Officer shall report compliance in this regard along with a copy of the original notification declaring the non-forest land as RF/PF, along with compliance of 'in-principle' approval.
 - The cost of survey, demarcation and erection of permanent pillars, if required on the identified CA land, shall be deposited in advance with the Forest Department by the user agency.
- Net Present Value:**
 - User Agency shall transfer the funds towards the cost of Net Present Value (NPV) of the forest land being diverted under this proposal from the User Agency, as per the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dated 28.03.2008, 24.04.2008 and 09.05.2008 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 202/1995 and the guidelines given under para 3 of the Chapter 3 of the Consolidate Guidelines and Clarifications issued under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 published by the Ministry on 29.12.2023, through e-payment module on PARIVESH portal, into the account of CAMPAs of the State concerned, managed by the National Authority (CAMPAs);
 - At the time of payment of the Net Present Value (NPV) at the present rate, the user agency shall furnish an undertaking to pay the additional amount of NPV, if so determined, as per the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India;
- Compensatory levies to be realized from the User Agency under the project shall be transferred/ deposited, through e-payment module on PARIVESH portal (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>), into the account of CAMPAs of the State concerned, managed by the National Authority (CAMPAs);
- The KML files of diverted area, the CA areas, the proposed SMC treatment area and the WLMF area shall be uploaded on the e-Green watch portal with all requisite details prior to 'final' approval;
- Following activities, as per approved plan / schemes, shall be undertaken in the lease area by the User Agency under the supervision of the State Forest Department. Approved scheme/plan shall be submitted to the Ministry along with compliance of 'in-principle' approval:
 - Mitigation measures, to minimize soil erosion and choking of stream, shall be implemented within a period of two years with effect from the date of issue of order of diversion of forest land, in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department;
 - Planting of adequate drought hardy plant species and sowing of seeds, in the appropriate area within the mining lease to arrest soil erosion in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - Construction of check dams, retention /toe walls to arrest sliding down of the excavated material along the contour in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - Stabilize the overburden dumps by appropriate grading/benching, in accordance with the approved scheme, so as to ensure that angles of repose at any given place is less than 28°; and
 - No damage shall be caused to the top-soil and the user agency will follow the top soil management plan;
- User agency either himself or through the State Forest Department shall undertake gap planting and soil and moisture conservation activities to restock and rejuvenate the degraded open forests (having crown density less than 0.40), if any, located in the area within 100 meter from outer perimeter of the mining lease. The plan for plantation and SMC activities will be prepared and submitted to MoEF&CC along with the compliance of 'in-principle' approval;
- The User Agency shall prepare a list of existing village tanks and other water bodies with GPS co-ordinates located within five km from the mine lease boundary. This list is to be duly verified by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer. The User Agency shall regularly undertake desilting of these village tanks and other water bodies so as to mitigate the impact of siltation of such tanks/water bodies. A detailed approved plan for desilting of identified ponds and water bodies to be prepared in consultation with forest department and shall be submitted to MoEF&CC along with the compliance of 'in-principle' approval;
- Safety Zone Management:** Following activities, at project cost, shall be undertaken by the user agency for the management of safety zone as per relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry's guidelines:
 - User agency shall ensure demarcation of safety zone (7.5 meter strip all along the inner boundary of the mining lease area), and its fencing, protection and regeneration by erecting adequate number of 6 feet high RCC boundary pillars inscribed with DGPS coordinates with barbed, wire fencing and deploying adequate number of watchers under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - Boundary of the safety zone of the mining lease, adjacent to habitation/roads, should be properly fenced by the user agency;
 - Safety zone shall be maintained as green belt around mining lease and to ensure dense canopy in the area, regeneration shall be taken up in this area by the user agency at project cost under the supervision of the State Forest Department; and
 - The State Government and the user agency shall ensure that safety zone is maintained as per the prescribed norms;
- The cost of felling of trees shall be deposited by the User Agency with the State Forest Department;
- Trees should be felled in a phased manner as per the requirement in the approved Mining Plan with prior permission of the concerned DFO;
- The user agency shall explore the possibility of translocation of the maximum number of trees identified to be felled and shall ensure that any tree felling shall be done only when it is unavoidable and that too under strict supervision of the State Forest Department;
- The User Agency shall undertake mining in a phased manner after taking due care for reclamation of the mined over area. The concurrent reclamation plan as per the approved mining plan shall be executed by the User Agency from the very first year, and an annual report on implementation thereof shall be submitted to the Nodal Officer, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, in the concerned State Government and the concerned Regional Office of the Ministry. If it is found from the annual report that the activities indicated in the concurrent reclamation plan are not being executed by the User Agency, the Nodal Officer or the concerned Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Central) may direct that the mining activities shall remain suspended till such time, such reclamation activities are satisfactorily executed;
- The User Agency shall comply with the Hon'ble Supreme Court order on re-grassing, and re-grass the mining area and any other areas which may have been disturbed due to mining to restore them to a condition which is fit for growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc. in a timely manner;
- Period of diversion of the said forest land under this approval shall be for a period co-terminus with the period of the mining lease proposed to be granted under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, as amended and the Rules framed there-under;
- The User Agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required;
- No labour camp shall be established on the forest land and the User Agency shall provide fuels preferably alternate fuels to the labourers and the staff working at the site so as to avoid any damage and pressure on the nearby forest areas;
- The boundary of the diverted forest land, mining lease and safety zone, as applicable, shall be demarcated on ground at the project cost, by erecting four feet high reinforced cement concrete pillars, each inscribed with its serial number, distance from pillar to pillar and GPS coordinates;
- The layout plan of the mining plan/ proposal shall not be changed without the prior approval of the Central Government and the forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the proposal;
- The forest land proposed to be diverted shall under no circumstances be transferred to any other agency, department or person without prior approval of the Central Government;
- No damage to the flora and fauna of the adjoining area shall be caused;
- Any other condition that the concerned Regional Office of this Ministry may stipulate with the approval of competent authority in the interest of conservation, protection and development of forests & wildlife;
- The user agency shall comply all the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, relevant Hon'ble Court Order (S) and NGT Order (S), if any, or the time being in force, including compliance of the Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2006 as applicable to the project;
- Violation of any of these conditions will amount to violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and action would be taken as prescribed in para 1.16 of Chapter 1 of the Consolidated Guidelines And Clarifications Issued Under Forest (Conservation and Development) Act, 1980 and Forest (Conservation and Development) Rules, 2023 issued by this Ministry's letter No. 5-2/2017-FC dated 29.12.2023;
- The User Agency shall submit the annual self-compliance report in respect of the above stated conditions to the State Government, concerned Regional Office and to this Ministry by the end of March every year regularly;
- The compliance report shall be uploaded on e-portal (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>).

After receipt of a satisfactory report on the compliance of conditions stipulated in the extant 'in-principle' approval letter, as mentioned above, from the State Government, the proposal shall be considered for grant of 'final' approval under section 2 (1) (ii) of the Forest (Conservation and Development) Act, 1980. Transfer of forest land shall not be affected by the State Government till the 'final' approval, to the extant proposal, is granted by the Central Government.

Yours faithfully,

Signed by
Dheeraj Mittal
Date: 24-09-2024 15:24:36Sd/-
(Dr. Dheeraj Mittal)
Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

- PCCF (HoFF), Department of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
- Dy. DGF (Central), Regional Office of the MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar.
- Nodal Officer (FCA), Department of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
- User Agency
- Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi for uploading on PARIVESH portal.

8-18/2002-FC(vol)

I/113241/2025

Government of IndiaMinistry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj
New Delhi - 110003.
Dated: 30-05-2025To
The Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests),
Government of Odisha,
Bhubaneswar.**Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section-2 (1) (ii) of the Forest (Conservation and Management) Act, 1980 for diversion of 25.072 ha (originally proposed area is 20.383 ha) of forest operation at Bhubaneswari expansion OCP within Mining Lease area over 658.724 ha under Angul Forest Division in Angul District, Odisha (Online proposal no. FP/OR/MIN/155017/2022)-reg.**

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Odisha's letter No. FE-DIV-FLD-0020-2022-8408/FE&CC dated 24.04.2023 on the above mentioned subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. After careful examination of the proposal by the Advisory Committee, constituted under Section-3 of the said Act, 'in-principle' approval to the proposal under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 was granted vide this Ministry's letter of even number dated 24.09.2024 subject to fulfillment of certain conditions prescribed therein. The State Government has furnished compliance report in respect of the conditions stipulated in the 'in-principle' approval and has requested the Central Government to grant final approval.

In this connection, I am directed to say that on the basis of the compliance report furnished by the State Government vide letter No. 10876/9F (MG)-377/2022 dated 17.05.2025, 'final approval of the Central Government is hereby granted under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 25.072 ha (originally proposed area is 20.383 ha) of forest operation at Bhubaneswari expansion OCP within Mining Lease area over 658.724 ha under Angul Forest Division in Angul District, Odisha subject to fulfillment of the following conditions:

- Legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged;
- The State Government shall ensure that compensatory afforestation over 62.725 ha of degraded Revenue Forest land which has already been notified as "Karanpur Protected Forest", vide Notification No. FE-DIV-FLLD-0020-2022 10F-(Cons)-66/2017-7514/FE&CC dated 27.03.2025, under Section 33 of Odisha Forest Act, 1972 shall be raised and afforestation works shall start within two years from the date of issue of final approval. As far as possible, a mixture of local indigenous species shall be planted and monoculture of any species may be avoided. The compensatory afforestation scheme, as approved, shall be implemented by the State Forest Department. The CA will be maintained at least for 10 years;
- The State Government shall ensure that the safety zone is maintained within the diverted area only;
- The user agency shall pay the additional amount of NPV, if so determined, as per the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.
- Following activities, as per approved plan / schemes, shall be undertaken in the lease area by the User Agency under the supervision of the State Forest Department:
 - Mitigation measures to minimize soil erosion and choking of stream, shall be implemented within a period of two years with effect from the date of issue of order of diversion of forest land, in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department;
 - Planting of adequate drought hardy plant species and sowing of seeds, in the appropriate area within the mining lease to arrest soil erosion in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - Construction of check dams, retention /toe walls to arrest sliding down of the excavated material along the contour in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - Stabilize the overburden dumps by appropriate grading/benching, in accordance with the approved scheme, so as to ensure that angles of repose at any given place is less than 28°.
- The State Government shall ensure that no damage shall be caused to the top-soil and the user agency will follow the top soil management plan;
- The User Agency shall regularly undertake desilting of village tanks and other water bodies, located within five km from the mine lease boundary, as per plan submitted along with the compliance of 'in-principle' approval, so as to mitigate the impact of project on such tanks/water bodies.
- Safety Zone Management:** Following activities, at project cost, shall be undertaken by the user agency for the management of safety zone as per relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry's guidelines:
 - User agency shall ensure demarcation of safety zone (7.5 meter strip all along the inner boundary of the mining lease area), and its fencing, protection and regeneration by erecting adequate number of 6 feet high RCC boundary pillars inscribed with DGPS coordinates with barbed wire fencing and deploying adequate number of watchers under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - Boundary of the safety zone of the mining lease, adjacent to habitation/roads, should be properly fenced by the user agency;
 - Safety zone shall be maintained as green belt around mining lease and to ensure dense canopy in the area, regeneration shall be taken up in this area by the user agency at project cost under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - The State Government and the user agency shall ensure that safety zone is maintained as per the prescribed norms.
- The cost of felling of trees shall be deposited by the User Agency with the State Forest Department;
- The State Government shall ensure that trees should be felled in phased manner as per the requirement in the approved Mining Plan with prior permission of concerned DFO;
- The State Government shall ensure that user agency shall explore the possibility of translocation of maximum number of trees identified to be felled and shall ensure that any tree felling shall be done only when it is unavoidable and that too under strict supervision of the State Forest Department
- The State Government shall ensure that the User Agency shall carry out mining in a phased manner after taking due care for reclamation of the mined over area. The concurrent reclamation plan as per the approved mining plan shall be executed by the User Agency from the very first year, and an annual report on implementation thereof shall be submitted to the Nodal Officer, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, in the concerned State Government and the concerned Regional Office of the Ministry. If it is found from the annual report that the activities indicated in the concurrent reclamation plan are not being executed by the User Agency, the Nodal Officer or the concerned Addl. Principle Chief Conservator of Forests (Central) may direct that the mining activities shall remain suspended till such time, such reclamation activities area satisfactorily executed;
- The State Government shall comply with the Hon'ble Supreme Court order on re-grassing, and re-grass the mining area and any other areas which may have been disturbed due to mining to restore them to a condition which is fit for growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc. in a timely manner;
- The State Government shall ensure that the period of diversion of the said forest land under this approval shall be for a period co-terminus with the period of the mining lease proposed to be granted under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, as amended and the Rules framed there-under;
- The User Agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required;
- The State Government shall ensure that no labour camp shall be established on the forest land and the User Agency shall provide fuels preferably alternate fuels to the labourers and the staff working at the site so as to avoid any damage and pressure on the nearby forest areas;
- The State Government shall ensure that the boundary of the diverted forest land, mining lease and safety zone, as applicable, shall be demarcated on ground at the project cost, by erecting four feet high reinforced cement concrete pillars, each inscribed with its serial number, distance from pillar to pillar and GPS coordinates;
- The State Government shall ensure that the layout plan of the mining plan/proposal shall not be changed without the prior approval of the Central Government and the forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the proposal;
- The State Government shall ensure that the forest land proposed to be diverted shall under no circumstances be transferred to any other agency, department or person without prior approval of the Central Government;
- No damage to the flora and fauna of the adjoining area shall be caused;
- The User Agency shall submit the annual self-compliance report in respect of the above stated conditions to the State Government, concerned Regional Office and to this Ministry by the end of March every year regularly;
- Any other condition that the concerned Regional Office of this Ministry may stipulate with the approval of competent authority in the interest of conservation, protection and development of forests & wildlife;
- The State Government shall ensure that the user agency shall comply all the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, Hon'ble Court Order (s) and NGT Order (s) pertaining to this project, if any, for the time being in force, as applicable to the project;
- Violation of any of these conditions will amount to violation of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and action would be taken as prescribed in para 1.16 of Chapter 1 of the Consolidated Guidelines and Clarifications on Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 as issued by this Ministry's letter dated 29.12.2023;
- The State Government and user agency shall ensure compliance to all conditions stipulated in the 'in-principle' approval letter dated 24.09.2024 for which undertakings have been obtained from the user agency and also the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines, relevant Hon'ble Court Order (S) and NGT Order (S), if any, for the time being in force, including compliance of the Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2006, before issuing the order for diversion;
- The monitoring report shall be uploaded on e-portal (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>) regularly.

Yours faithfully,

Digitally signed by
Suneet Bhardwaj
Date: 30-05-2025
15:52:57Sd/-
(Suneet Bhardwaj)
Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

- The PCCF (HoFF), Department of Forest, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
- The DDGF (Central), Regional Office of MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar.
- PCCF cum Nodal Officer, Department of Forest, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
- User Agency
- Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi for uploading on PARIVESH portal.



We have two kinds of morality side by side: one which we preach but do not practise, and another which we practise but seldom preach

Bertrand Russell

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Rammath Goenka

CONTINUING FOREIGN INVESTMENT OUTFLOW A CAUSE FOR CONCERN

INDIA'S endeavour to promote itself as a hub for long-term foreign investment and an alternative to other magnets like China has been taking a knock. The inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) has been lower than the outflows, keeping net FDI in the red for 5 months in a row. The net outflow for January widened to \$1.39 billion, compared to \$492 million in the previous month. While the inflows in January remained stable at \$5.67 billion, repatriation of profits and disinvestment by foreign firms grew sharply to \$4.92 billion. Outbound investments of \$2.14 billion by Indian companies added to the exit stream. For the 10 months from April 2025 to January 2026, net FDI fell by almost a quarter to \$1.65 billion from the same period in the previous year.

The expanding war has made foreign investors even more risk-averse, slowing investments in emerging markets like India. It also speaks volumes that wealthy Indians are finding opportunities abroad more attractive than putting money in expanding their businesses or investing at home. The higher US bond rates and stronger dollar are aiding this flow in the other direction.

It's not just FDI, which is seen as a longer-term investment, that is suffering. The more fickle foreign portfolio investments (FPIs), too, recorded a net outflow of \$3.2 billion in January, though it was lower than December's net outflow of \$4.2 billion. If the negative net FPI till January reflected the investor perception that our stocks are overvalued, the Gulf war widened the net outflow, with the cumulative number for the year till March 25 shooting up to \$12.5 billion.

One of the biggest challenges it's posing is the pressure on the rupee, which closed at yet another historic low of 94.05 against the dollar on Wednesday. The fast-rising oil and gas import bill is not helping either. While turning around the FDI outlook depends on longer-term improvements in tax competitiveness, policy predictability and business environment, there are those in the market now looking for near-term solutions. The sentiment is turning from one expecting interest rate continuity to looking for rate increases by a quantum sufficient enough to attract capital. The tools in hand are few, but the need to use them is being felt more acutely as the war makes a worrying situation grimmer.

MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY NEEDS REALITY CHECKS

THE Supreme Court's recent observation that a mandatory nationwide menstrual leave could go against women by reinforcing stereotypes and affecting their work opportunities has stirred debate once again. A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant maintained that such a move would reiterate gender discrimination and the idea of women as the 'weaker sex', cast a shadow on their capability and harm careers. While the observation may appear regressive, the judges have taken a more realistic view that legislation on the subject would be more prudent than judicial orders.

Karnataka is the first state to have introduced a comprehensive policy mandating 12 days of menstrual leave a year for the public and private sectors. Odisha and Bihar give government employees two days a month, Sikkim offers leave based on medical recommendation and Kerala allows some relaxation for students. Yet, implementation in most places is more in the breach, with several organisations yet to fully adopt the policy. The court has encouraged consultation to find a way forward.

Granting 12 extra days of leave to women would require a liberal and compassionate work atmosphere, or the policy could end up upsetting team dynamics. A series of reality checks is in order. Is India Inc ready to grant period leave to women across grades and sectors? Can women claim special treatment without expecting it to affect their careers? Can organisations with small teams afford such leave? Can domestic, daily wage and gig workers claim it?

Women have fought long and hard for equality at the workplace, pay parity and fair promotions—and most are yet to achieve it. They have broken glass ceilings, blazed trails and taken their place as leaders and decision makers unaided by the comforts of menstrual leave. Former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi famously said that women "cannot have it all" unless they have help. It is also often assumed that women with young children are a liability, though that mindset is slowly changing. In such a scenario, whether mandatory menstrual leave works for or against a woman professional is moot. There is also a section of women which is against this form of entitlement, claiming it would put them on the back foot. Instead of imposing menstrual leave policy on all sectors, a middle path of optional leaves, remote work and flexible timings could be a more workable solution.

QUICK TAKE

JOINING DOTS SMARTER

NEW research is trying to answer why some kids find maths more difficult than others. A study published in the *Journal of Neuroscience* has shown that the difference in the abilities of those two groups of children disappeared when asked to identify numbers through dots rather than the symbols used in various scripts. More than that basic observation, the researchers pointed to the subtler differences like slowing down after errors to find causes of learning difficulties. Cognitive neuroscientists looking at the MRI data of the pre-teen kids saw the differences in brain activity involved in detecting errors falling between the two groups when the signifiers were changed. Organisations and authorities across India must look at the research closely and incorporate any new method that can train children better in maths.

THIS essay began in a conversation with a friend, a literary critic who found himself angry and speechless at the bombing of Iran. He made a distinction between civics and international relations. Civics carries the intensity of nearness, touch and neighbourhood. International relations implies the metaphysics of distance, alienation and abstractness. My friend felt there was a new attempt at storytelling to create an ethics of international relations. There were even the rudiments of a new social science and fragments of epic poetry.

He cited the example of conversations around the Gaza Strip. Everyone implied that there was a Gaza Strip in all of us—a map that erased all forms of territory. It was a paradigm of death and desire which eliminated of all forms of hope and belonging. Gaza Strip was a triage that was banalised into a ration card of death. Tens of thousands of children have died, many from bombing and starvation. This enactment of war was horrific and needed a new text in response.

My friend pointed out that there was a barrenness to groups working on Palestine. He contrasted it to the earlier struggles that centred around the Vietnam war. The Russell-Sartre Tribunal of 1967 had turned Vietnam into an international forum for ethical choices. The Bengali slogan "*Amar naam, tomar naam Vietnam*" (My name, your name is Vietnam) captured the essence of this ethical solidarity.

He added that one has to look at the bombing of Iran in this context. The campaign has three obvious characteristics. Donald Trump described it as act of 'culling' of Iran's more aggressive leadership, including counter-intelligence experts. It was also a 'whittling down', a softening of Iranian policy towards uranium enrichment. For Trump and Bibi Netanyahu, the bombing of Iran was also like a behavioural exercise—an attempt to teach Iran and parts of the Arab world how to behave. What was central was that the other was treated as a subject of erasure.

This has to be seen within the framework of the Zionist classic *I and Thou* by Martin Buber. The Israeli philosopher wrote about a way of looking at the other, as an object of classification and genocide. One can think of the relation between the modern and the primitive, the capitalist and the worker. Buber tries to encompass the other in the cosmic and the sacred. He tries to create a

The West Asian conflicts need to trigger a global ethical response like what followed the Vietnam war. They need to be treated as metaphors for a new set of moral choices

CHALLENGING THE BANALITY OF GENOCIDE



SHIV VISVANATHAN

Social scientist associated with the Compost Heap, a group researching alternative imaginations



SOURAV ROY

dialogicity that creates a deep sense of friendship based on difference.

Netanyahu must have been aware of Buber. And yet he follows Trump in a new banalisation of evil. In American philosopher Hannah Arendt's book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, the concentration camp is seen as just another clerical organisation with rules and orders of a standard bureaucracy. Arendt warned us that evil need not be monstrous; it can be banal, bureaucratic, procedural.

Today, that banality acquires a new form. Violence is no longer only administered—it is preceded by a deeper act: erasure. Entire peoples are rendered abstract before they are rendered expendable. Trump goes further than Eichmann in banalising genocide by creating the object itself as an act of

erasure. When one mentions Palestinian or Iranian, one has already erased them out of existence. The bombing as culling is a prelude to such a banality. The presence of Trump cannot be concealed in the silence of statecraft. Silence might be diplomacy, but it is bad ethics. One has to confront the event. Retell the story if necessary. Only then can ethics be a possibility.

One has to visualise another set of questions around the bombing. What if the current Iranian or Palestinian leadership had all been under age 40? Would the memories and paradigms have been the same? Would their sense of the nuclear have been determined by the Second World War? After all, this generation of leadership—from Vladimir Putin and Trump to Netanyahu—has

HARMING THOSE IT SEEKS TO PROTECT

THE Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 recently passed by Parliament makes several sharp changes to the 2019 Act. It narrows the definition of a transgender person to only specific socio-cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta or eunuch, or biologically defined intersex variations, or persons compelled into such an identity through a procedure. It explicitly excludes persons with different sexual orientations and non-heteronormative, gender-fluid identities.

Intersex is a natural biological spectrum—chromosomal, hormonal, anatomical variations present at birth—affecting 1-2 percent of the global population. Transgender identity is a psychological and social construct. Conflating them under one label violates Article 21 rights to bodily integrity and privacy. It leaves intersex infants without a specific ban on forced 'normalising' surgeries and ignores repeated calls for separate intersex legislation.

The Bill removes the right to 'self-perceived gender identity' from Section 4(2), replaces the simple process of certification by the district magistrate with a medical board headed by a chief medical officer, mandates hospitals to report every transgender gender-change surgery to the magistrate, and substitutes Section 18 with far harsher penalties up to rigorous imprisonment for life for forcing anyone into transgender 'presentation'.

While the government claims these amendments fix the vagueness and implementation failures of the 2019 Act, they actually perpetuate and worsen the structural problems that have plagued Indian policy for years.

The Bill's definition also directly contradicts established international standards. The UN and WHO clearly define intersex as innate variations in sex characteristics that do not fit typical male or female binaries, requiring distinct legal recognition and explicit protections against non-consensual interventions. So, the Bill erodes a human rights framework India has committed to uphold.

The amendment leaves outdated titles of the National Council for Transgender Persons and state welfare boards unchanged. It ignores the longstanding proposal to rebrand them as a National GIESC Welfare Council and state GIESC welfare boards (where GIESC stands for gender identity/expression and sex characteristics). This keeps the



GOPI SHANKAR MADURAI

Special Monitor for SOGIESC Rights, National Human Rights Commission

entire policy architecture trapped under the problematic 'transgender' umbrella instead of creating a scientific-ly accurate, inclusive framework.

This hetero-normative bill erases the reality that transgender persons can and do have diverse sexual orientations like trans-gay, trans-lesbian, trans-bisexual or queer. It reduces transgender existence to a narrow, culturally-scripted role that fits neatly into a heterosexual societal framework, reinforcing the very stigma the original Act was meant to combat.



The amendment to the Transgender Rights Act unscientifically conflates definitions and leaves the exploitative colonial-era hijra jamaats untouched. By remaining silent on the rights of diverse identities to marry, adopt or inherit, it reinforces the "omissive discrimination" highlighted by the Supreme Court

At the same time, the Bill does nothing to regulate or dismantle the colonial hijra jamaat gharana system. Under this, hijra nayaks control their chelas' earnings from begging and prostitution, trapping abandoned, gender-nonconforming children in bonded labour. The new offences target individuals, but leave the hierarchical community structures untouched. No reform, rehabilitation or special protection for minors trapped in these systems is provided.

This goes against ancient Indic narratives and erases the early spiritual roots that once accommodated diverse

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Beyond symbolism

Ref: *New era of nari shakti* (Mar 25). Though the intentions are laudable, implementation in letter and spirit is crucial. The timing of the Bill hints at political expediency in view of the state elections. This should not just be symbolic empowerment. It is time for women to adorn policy-making roles.

Rajarao Kumar, Bengaluru

Substantive roles

The proposal to add 273 reserved seats rather than displace sitting MPs is politically astute and warrants genuine consensus. The real test, however, will come after 2029—whether women elected through reservation receive substantive committee roles, ministerial positions and institutional support to govern effectively or remain numerically present but structurally peripheral.

SM Jeeva, Chennai

Pathologising identity

Ref: *Transgender Bill passed* (Mar 25). The passage of the Bill represents a regressive pivot. By replacing self-identification with a mandatory medical board examination, the State effectively pathologises identity, turning a fundamental human right into a clinical diagnosis. While proponents cite the prevention of infiltrators, data suggests otherwise. According to the 2011 Census, India has roughly 4.88 lakh transgender persons, yet only a fraction have accessed formal benefits due to existing bureaucratic hurdles. Forcing a community with a 92 percent exclusion rate from the mainstream economy to undergo invasive medical scrutiny only deepens their marginalisation.

Dr Vijaykumar H K, Raichur

Expanded bias

Ref: *SC status ends with conversion* (Mar 25). The status is meant to protect people from long-standing social discrimination, not to depend on religion. In reality, caste-based bias does not disappear just because someone changes their faith. What matters is whether a person still faces discrimination. Protections should focus on social reality, not just religious identity.

Aaditya Kamble, Kalaburagi

Trump's outbursts

Ref: *Don dials Modi* (Mar 25). A megalomaniac does things in a spur of the moment and chickens out when caught in the middle of nowhere. That is Trump 2.0 exemplified. His outbursts against Venezuela, Greenland, Canada and India were the recent instances globally witnessed. Anyway, the signs of regional stability in West Asia are welcome.

Venkat Desikan, Chennai



Pawan Kherra @Pawankherra
The government's priority is clear - to divert the country's attention from headline management and to hatch a conspiracy to silence the Opposition



Akhilesh Yadav @yadavakhilesh
The kind of things these people say to their followers would make even a civilized, decent person feel ashamed to put into writing.



Yogi Adityanath @myogiadityanath
People who divided society in the name of caste used to give shelter to rioters; a silence would descend before festivals and celebrations...

Bill proposes to create a body to manage assets of NGOs that lose FCRA licences • The bill will ensure transgender persons continue to receive legal protection

'Designated authority' to look into foreign funding

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi



THE government on Wednesday introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), which will significantly tighten the government oversight on foreign-funded organisations in the country. The bill proposes to create of a powerful new authority to seize and manage the assets of an NGO that lose its FCRA licence.

The FCRA Bill, 2026, moved by Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, sought a comprehensive statutory framework for vesting, supervision, management, and disposal of foreign contributions and assets through a "designated authority", including provisional and permanent vesting.

At present, approximately 16,000 NGOs are registered under the Act and receive around ₹22,000 crore annually, the government said.

According to the statement of objects and reasons, the proposed law seeks to provide timelines for receipt and utilization of foreign funds under prior permission. It provides for the cessation of the certificate to receive funds, regulating the handling of assets during suspension, and rationalising penalties in the case of violations. It also mandates prior approval of the Central government for the initiation of investigation.

Responding to Opposition's

Bill also aims to...

The bill also seeks to tackle the multiplicity of investigations, inconsistency in penalties, absence of timelines for utilisation, lack of express provision for cessation of registration, and ambiguity regarding treatment of assets during suspension.

charges that the bill is "dangerous", Rai asserted that it is "indeed dangerous" for those who engage in forced religious conversion using foreign contributions, as well as for individuals who abuse foreign funding for personal gain.

Opposing the bill, Congress MP Manish Tewari said that it suffers from excessive delegation of essential legislative functions. "Core aspects—such as the manner of vesting, management, disposal of assets, timelines, exemptions, and even appellate structures—are left to be prescribed by the Central government through rules.

This effectively reduces Parliament to enacting a skeletal framework, contrary to the settled constitutional principle that essential legislative policy must be determined by the legislature itself," he said.

Under the proposed law, the government has introduced a new Chapter IIIA to establish a "designated authority" to take provisional or permanent control of assets created from foreign contributions in cases where foreign contribution certificates have been cancelled, surrendered, or ceased.

In the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), Section 15 provides for vesting of assets, but the absence of a comprehensive framework for supervision, management, and disposal of such assets has led to administrative uncertainty and scope for misuse.

The bill states: "The foreign contribution and the assets created out of foreign contribution of any person—whose certificate has been cancelled under Section 14; or who has surrendered the certificate under section 14A; or whose certificate has ceased under section 14B or any rules made under this Act—shall, from the date of such cancellation, surrender or cessation, vest provisionally in the Designated authority in such manner as may be prescribed." The bill also seeks to tackle the multiplicity of investigations, inconsistency in penalties among others.

POWER CORRIDOR

CENTRE TO CONNECT ALL GOVT SCHOOLS

The Centre has allocated funds to connect all government schools to the internet, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan told the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. He said efforts are underway to link classrooms to global digital networks, underlining technology's growing role in education and the need to bridge learning gaps. The government is also expanding Atal Tinkering Labs to boost innovation in schools. Pradhan said 50,000 labs will be set up over next 5 years, and around 10,000 are already operational.

CAPF BILL INTRODUCED IN RAJYA SABHA

The government on Wednesday introduced the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha, passing its introduction by voice vote despite Opposition objections. Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said the Bill seeks a unified legal framework for CAPFs while retaining their existing powers. Union Minister Kiren Rijji defended Parliament's authority to legislate, rejecting concerns based on SC rulings. Proceedings saw Opposition protests.



CONG SLAMS GOVT OVER WOMEN QUOTA LAW

Taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress on Wednesday claimed that the "U-turn Ustad" now wants to implement the women's reservation law without completing the delimitation and census exercises by passing amendments at a "special two-day session" of Parliament in the next fortnight. The opposition party alleged that this was a "weapon of mass diversion" to change the narrative from the government's "foreign policy failures and setbacks and from the LPG and energy crisis facing the country". Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jai Ram Ramesh, said the Modi government is also planning to increase the size of the Houses by 50%, which also needs careful deliberation. When the Nari Vandan Adhinyam, 2023 was being debated, the Indian National Congress had demanded its immediate implementation from the 2024 Lok Sabha elections itself, he pointed out.

Transgender bill clears House hurdle, govt says all sections taken along

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi



PARLIAMENT on Wednesday passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, with the Rajya Sabha approving the legislation a day after it cleared the Lok Sabha, triggering protests from Opposition members. The bill was passed in the Upper House by voice vote, with all Opposition amendments rejected and demands for scrutiny by a select committee turned down.

Replying to the debate, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar defended the legislation, calling it an attempt to "take along all segments of society." He said the amendment focuses on protecting those who face discrimination due to biological factors. "The bill aims to ensure that transgender persons continue to receive legal recognition and protection," Kumar said. "We are committed to safeguarding those affected due to biological reasons and integrating them into mainstream society so they do not live in isolation or distress."

However, Opposition leaders across parties condemned the bill as exclusionary and regressive, arguing that it dilutes the spirit of the original law.

Rajya Sabha MP Swati Malwal raised concerns over a provision criminalising the act of "alluring" someone into presenting as transgender, calling

Welfare boards in place

Kumar added that transgender welfare boards have already been established in more than 30 states and that the amendment would bring "administrative clarity" while strengthening protections.

it vague and potentially dangerous. "It is risky because it may target families, doctors and support systems of the transgender community," she said. "Instead of protection, we may create outright fear... dignity delayed is dignity denied."

Echoing similar concerns, John Brittas termed the bill "a black day" and "a tragic step backward." He argued that the legislation runs contrary to global trends of inclusion. "At this juncture, we are going a century backward with exclusionary restrictive measures," he said.

Despite the uproar, the government held its ground, pushing the bill through without referral to a parliamentary panel.

Chouhan sets up 'spl cell', will meet states for agri stability amid Iran war

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi



Preparedness in focus

During the meeting, Chouhan stressed the need for accessible fertilisers and emphasised preventing stockpiling. He also highlighted the importance of strategic preparedness.

dia's AgriStack initiative. It aims to create a unified digital registry linking farmers to their land records, facilitating transparent and direct delivery of subsidies (such as PM-Kisan) and services.

Chouhan announced plans to convene a meeting with chief ministers and agriculture ministers from various states to

discuss these initiatives further. The government has directed the officials to take strong action against the black marketing and hoarding of fertilisers and seeds.

State governments will be encouraged to enforce stringent measures to prevent traders from exploiting supply disruptions caused by the ongoing global crisis, he said.

The minister stated that the Indian farmers are likely to feel the heat through a sharp rise in pesticide prices. Industry estimates suggest that prices could increase by 25 to 30% starting April, just ahead of the crucial Kharif sowing season.

Additionally, the Ministry reviewed the availability of agrochemicals and essential gases required for the seed-drying process, underscoring the importance of maintaining uninterrupted production cycles. Officials have been asked to ensure adequate supply of packaging materials, particularly for milk and other products.

Lone-wolf attack on Jews likely: Reports

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi



Robust security arrangements at different locations

In response, authorities have issued directives to ensure robust security arrangements at a wide range of locations. These include synagogues, Chabad houses, Jewish community centres, educational institutions, museums, kosher restaurants, and business establishments frequented by Israeli nationals. Additional precautions are also being taken.

has also warned of the possibility of "lone-wolf" attacks, which are carried out by individuals or loosely affiliated actors without direct organisational backing. Such attackers, the sources said, may be inspired by the ongoing conflict and motivated to strike targets perceived as Israeli or Jewish.

"Individuals acting independently, but influenced by

the current geopolitical situation, could attempt to target symbolic or soft locations," a source said on condition of anonymity. While the threat is considered global, regions with significant Shia populations as well as countries neighbouring Iran and Israel have been identified as facing higher risk.

The report further cautioned that recent battlefield develop-

ments could act as a trigger for anti-Israel elements worldwide, potentially increasing both the intent and frequency of attacks. These could take place either as direct acts of violence or under the cover of protests and public demonstrations, according to the report.

In response, authorities have issued directives to ensure robust security arrangements at a wide range of locations. These include synagogues, Chabad houses, Jewish community centres, educational institutions, museums, kosher restaurants, and business establishments frequented by Israeli nationals. Additional precautions are also being taken for Israeli tourists, business delegations and expatriates residing in India, said officials of security agencies.

Security presence has been visibly enhanced around identified sites, with increased patrolling and deployment of personnel. Security officials on the ground have been instructed to remain on high alert, conduct regular checks.

CJI pulls up man for calling brother on order

UDAYAN KISHORE @ New Delhi

CHIEF Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on Wednesday took strong exception to the conduct of litigants whose father called CJI's brother and questioned an order passed by the top court. During a hearing on a medical admission case, the CJI mentioned the incident.

"He dares to call my brother and asks him how the CJI has passed this order. Will he dictate terms to me? You must verify this—and as counsel, you should first withdraw," the Chief Justice said.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Kant and Justice Jyotsna Singh was hearing a matter related to a petition seeking benefits under the Buddhist minority quota for admission to a postgraduate course in a Buddhist minority institution in Meerut, recognised by the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI).

Siblings Nikhil Kumar Punia and Ekta Punia had approached the SC, claiming they were eligible for minority benefits after converting to Buddhism, de-

ALSO IN TOP COURT

SC rejects plea on singing national song

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to entertain a plea against a home ministry circular on singing of Vande Mataram at official events and schools, saying the directive was not mandatory. A bench headed by CJI Surya Kant noted that there was no penal consequence for not singing the song.

spite previously appearing as general-category candidates.

When the matter was taken up for hearing on Wednesday, the Chief Justice asked the petitioner's lawyer, "Now you tell us why we should not initiate criminal contempt against the father of your client?"

Replying to the court's query, the counsel said that he was unaware of any such incident, to which the lawyer replied that he was unaware of the inci-

'Payouts for land can't be diluted'

Stating that constitutional guarantee of compensation can't be diluted, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said solatium and interest in a land acquisition matter cannot be contingent on magnitude of the financial burden. A bench headed by CJI Surya Kant made the observation while disposing of an NHAI petition.

dent. The CJI then asked the counsel to verify the matter.

"This is sheer misconduct. Even if he is outside India, I know how to deal with such people... Nobody dares to do this. And you think I will transfer the case because of this? I have dealt with such elements for the last 23 years," the Chief Justice said.

The Chief Justice said the petitioners were trying to manipulate the matters.

The court then adjourned the matter after noting that the state of Haryana is yet to file its compliance report pursuant to the earlier order by the bench.

The bench said that if the state failed to submit the report, "the Chief Secretary of the state of Haryana shall remain personally present in court on the next date."

On the last date of hearing, the top court bench had also questioned administrative accountability and asked how such certificates were issued. "How did the sub-divisional officer of Hissar grant these certificates?" it had asked.

The top had then ordered the chief secretary of Haryana to provide the guidelines for issuing minority certificates.

The court had also questioned if it was permissible for upper-class candidates—especially those above the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) threshold who previously declared themselves as 'general'—to be granted Buddhist minority status for admission purposes.

The case will be heard again next week.

Cong gets eviction notice, told to move out of 24 Akbar Road HQ

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE Congress has been served a legal notice directing it to vacate its long-time headquarters at the iconic 24, Akbar Road by March 28, according to party sources. The Directorate of Estates issued the eviction notice just days ago, asking the party to leave the historic Lutyens' bungalow after its relocation to the new headquarters, Indira Bhawan, on January 15 last year. A party functionary familiar with the developments said an initial intimation had been received around 25 days ago. The notice also covers the Indian Youth Congress office at 5, Raisina Road.

Sources indicated that the party is considering legal options and is likely to seek a stay on the eviction order. A team led by Rajya Sabha MP and senior Supreme Court lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi is currently examining the matter.

Although various Congress front organisations, including the Mahila Congress, Youth



Congress, and NSUI, as well as several party departments, were expected to shift to the new premises after the inauguration of Indira Bhawan at 9A, Kotla Marg. However, many continue to operate from the old offices.

As per the rules by the Directorate of Estates under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, political parties cannot retain multiple government-allocated properties in the Lutyens' Bungalow Zone. Once allotted a permanent office or land, they are required

to vacate any earlier or temporary accommodation, says the rules.

The 24, Akbar Road bungalow in Lutyens' Delhi was converted into the AICC headquarters after the party's defeat in the 1977 Lok Sabha elections. Historically, the property also housed Sir Reginald Maxwell, a member in charge of Home in Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's Executive Council. According to sources, the grandson of British officer Alan Braithwaite had once visited the residence from the UK.

Humayun Kabir, Owaisi join forces to fight elections together • Gaurav Gogoi says people have seen through CM's lies and deceit about him

Battle for Muslim vote intensifies in Bengal

SUBHENDU MAITI @ Kolkata

A new alliance marks a potential realignment in West Bengal's Muslim vote bank ahead of the Assembly elections next month. Humayun Kabir, chief of the newly formed Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP) and expelled Trinamool Congress MLA from the Bharatpur constituency, has announced an electoral tie-up with Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM.

At a star hotel here on Wednesday, Kabir and Owaisi jointly addressed reporters to declare the partnership. Kabir said, "Mere bada bhai Asaduddin Owaisi aayehain. Our two parties will fight the elections together. We will soon announce a joint list of candidates." Owaisi, standing alongside him, added, "Both parties will contest the elections in Bengal together."

The alliance plans to nominate candidates for 190 of the 294 seats. Both leaders are expected to launch their campaign from Murshidabad, a district with the state's highest Muslim population—over 70%—beginning April 1.

Kabir, expelled from Trinamool after announcing plans to build a Babri Masjid-model mosque in Beldanga, Murshidabad, last December, formed AJUP following allegations of anti-party activities.

"Our main agenda in this election is about no development for minority Muslims in Bengal. Only 7% of 30% Muslims get government jobs in this state. A large number of Muslims could not even go to college. And Chief Minister



AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi and AJUP chief Humayun Kabir release their alliance symbol during a press conference in Kolkata on Wednesday | PTI

Mamata Banerjee has been using the minorities only for votes, but they don't get any benefits," Owaisi alleged.

The announcement has drawn sharp criticism from the ruling Trinamool Congress. Veteran MP Saugata Roy called the alliance a "bad development" and suggested it could "isolate Muslim masses". "Owaisi's outfit is actually helping the BJP, but it will not have any impact. They don't have strength and will not get votes," Roy said.

Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool has remained in power in Bengal for 15 consecutive years since 2011, largely due to its consolidated Muslim vote share. This election, the party is again making a concerted effort to retain minority support. Around 90 assembly seats across Malda, North Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Nadia, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, and Howrah are considered critical, with minority votes often deciding outcomes.

For the first time in over a decade, multiple parties are vying

for a share of the roughly 30% Muslim vote, particularly in minority-dominated constituencies. Analysts note that the emergence of new players, such as the Indian Secular Front (ISF) led by Nawsad Siddique and its ally, CPM-led Left Front, AJUP aligning with AIMIM, and revived Congress activity in Murshidabad and Malda, has introduced a fresh layer of uncertainty into Bengal's electoral landscape. The ISF, for instance, has targeted young Muslim voters disillusioned with mainstream parties.

"Earlier, minority voters consolidated traditionally behind the Trinamool since the party came to power in Bengal, ending the Left rule of 34 years. But the emergence of new platforms and local grievances has created micro-level fissures that could hurt the ruling party in a tightly contested election," political analyst Biswanath Chakraborty said.

He added, "The Kabir-Owaisi alliance might affect Trinamool in North Dinajpur, Malda, and Murshidabad, but it can hardly damage the party's Muslim vote bank in most of the other districts."

'CONG WILL OUST CORRUPT HIMANTA-LED ASSAM GOVT'

Hit by defections, Congress heads into elections, with Assam chief Gaurav Gogoi the only leader being left in the party with statewide reach. He tells Prasanta Mazumdar that he is confident the people of Assam see the Congress alliance as being in a position to fulfil their aspirations and respecting the various communities. Excerpts:

How optimistic are you about the success of the six-party Opposition alliance and why?

I am very optimistic about the alliance because its effects are evident on the ground. The alliance is not just on paper or between the leaders of the parties, but among all party workers and the entire cadre as they prepare themselves to oust the corrupt Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government. It is one of the biggest and most significant political alliances that Assam, and particularly Upper Assam, has seen in recent times. Each one of us tried our best to forge this alliance to respect people's wishes.

There has been a major demand for development and decentralisation in Assam to move development beyond Guwahati and address the needs and aspirations of other regions. People in Assam today see our alliance as fulfilling that in a true sense, while respecting each community and their specific needs.

The demand for ST status by six communities (Chutia, Koch-Rajbongshi, Matak, Moran, Tai Ahom, and Tea Tribes) is a big issue. What are your views? They have agitated for decades.



Multiple committees and a GoM were formed under the BJP-led governments, but in vain. Uncertainty and mistrust persist among the communities and existing Scheduled Tribes. Assam recently saw widespread protests by various groups, but the CM unilaterally decided that ST recognition cannot be conferred before elections. But only the Centre can take the decision through transparent engagement, hence the communities have rejected the government's authoritarian mandate. The need of the hour is an institutional mechanism with representatives from all affected groups, legal experts and demographers to finalise recommendations that can stand judicial scrutiny and secure Parliament's approval.

Eviction has been a central issue in Assam. While the incumbent CM has used eviction drives as a populist strategy to polarise, people now know it has been done only for optics. The government records themselves show that there have been far more evictions, deportations, and border fencing during the previous Congress government than during the current dispensation, but all were legal measures. A former BJP office-bearer, who recently resigned, exposed how the government has been evicting people for optics without due process. Hence, Congress believes that this polarisation effort will not work this time as we try to build a new "Bor" (greater/unified) Assam.

What could be the impact of eviction drives and apparent polarisation on the Congress this time?

Eviction has been a central issue in Assam. While the incumbent CM has used eviction drives as a populist strategy to polarise, people now know it has been done only for optics. The government records them-

Some of your leaders have joined BJP. In other states, such leaders have not been rejected by the people. What do you think will happen in Assam?

I believe people will decide their fate. At present, the political parties are undergoing a restructuring. Sarma and his former Congress colleagues, whose corruption and misdeeds have been a major reason people have rejected the Congress in the past, have all joined BJP, while BJP veterans have been sidelined or denied tickets. So, the popular saying goes that the BJP is already ousted, and it is only the Sarma-led Congress with a saffron label that is left of it. The fight is between the Congress faction led by Sarma and his affiliates, and the real Congress, based on the ideals of the late Tarun Gogoi.

Do you think the BJP's accusations against you over your Pakistan visit resonated with the voters?

The people have seen through Sarma's lies and deceit. It is false propaganda and has been discussed enough for people to understand that. People have rejected such false claims.



PATNA DIARY
RAMASHANKAR
Our correspondent in Bihar
ramashankar@newindianexpress.com

Bihar minister in the avatar of asst prof

Bihar Rural Works Minister Ashok Choudhary appeared in a new avatar on Wednesday. Having been selected for the post of Assistant Professor by the Bihar State University Service Commission, he arrived at Patna's prestigious AN College, where he conducted a class for students of political science. A particularly noteworthy aspect of the occasion was that he had personally overseen the construction of the college building during his tenure as a minister. Speaking to the media prior to the class, Choudhary remarked that such instances are rare where an individual, while holding ministerial office, steps into the midst of students as a professor.



A special meaning in Nitish's move to Delhi

Although Bihar CM Nitish Kumar is not new to Delhi and national politics, his unopposed election to JD(U) president and his decision to move to Rajya Sabha have special meaning. There is a strong reason for it, as he has ruled Bihar for more than 20 years. Now, there is a rumour that Nitish one day asked his colleagues why he is going to Delhi, leaving his close aides amused. Although Nitish talks simple and straight, he is known for hitting googlies whenever he gets the right ball (political situation). He is apparently waiting for that moment. RJD MP Misa Bharti congratulated Nitish on being elected as JD(U) president unopposed.

'Time of day' tariff of Bihar power consumers

Electricity consumers in Bihar will have to pay more in the evening, as the state government has decided to implement a 'time of day' (ToD) tariff system from April. This will help power distribution companies keep pace with power purchase price fluctuations and initiatives to streamline the energy sector, but it will financially burden the people. The decision comes after the Bihar Energy Regulatory Commission approved the demand by North Bihar Power Distribution Company Limited and South Bihar Power Distribution Company Limited. The government has already started providing 125 units of electricity free to domestic users.

Zubeen Garg accidentally drowned: Singapore court

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

OVER six months after music icon Zubeen Garg died mysteriously while swimming in the sea in Singapore, a coroner's inquiry in the country ruled that he drowned accidentally.

In a March 25 judgment, State Coroner Adam Nakhoda said there was no reason to disagree with the Police Coast Guard's findings. Earlier, the Singapore General Hospital had also cited drowning as the cause of death.

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, who in November last year stated Garg (52) was murdered, on Wednesday said that the judgment by the Singapore court and the chargesheet filed by the Assam Special Investigation Team had similar findings.

"Investigations by Singapore authorities and Assam Police

revealed that he consumed liquor from the previous night and that 380 ml liquor was found. The only other thing he had stated was that he was made to drink alcohol by (singer) Amritprabha Mahanta as part of a conspiracy," Sarma said.

Sarma felt that the Singapore court order would make the Assam Police case stronger. "The judgment has proven that we did a good job," the chief minister claimed.

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi, however, saw it differently. Stating that the Indian and Singapore governments discussed the issue and the Assam government sent a police team to Singapore to probe, he said, "The chief minister told the Assembly that he (Garg) was murdered," Gogoi said.



'Patel tried to take over NCP after Ajit'

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THERE are rumblings in Maharashtra politics as it has been alleged that Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) working president Praful Patel wrote to the Election Commission (EC) after party national president Ajit Pawar's death, informing it that in the absence of Pawar, Patel would take all important decisions in the party.

However, Deputy Chief Minister and NCP national president Sunetra Pawar has told the EC now that she being the national president of the party is not bound by Patel's letter. She said that any correspondence between the election body and any other leaders of the party should not be considered as official correspondence of the party retrospectively.

NCP (Sharad Pawar) MLA Rohit Pawar has alleged that Patel wanted to hijack the NCP after Ajit's demise. He said that Patel, along with NCP state



Not bound by Patel's letter, Sunetra tells EC

NCP working president Praful Patel allegedly wrote to the EC after Ajit Pawar's death, informing it that in the absence of him, Patel would take all important decisions in the party. But Sunetra Pawar has told the EC she being the party's national president is not bound by Patel's letter.

president Sunil Tatkare, wrote to the EC on February 16, saying that in the absence of Ajit, Patel would be the principal authority in the party. Rohit added 35 NCP MLAs raised their voice against this move and

elect Sunetra as the party's national president. He added that while writing the letter to the EC, Patel and Tatkare did not consult either Sunetra, her children Parth and Jay, nor a majority of the NCP MLAs.

"Praful Patel falsely claimed that the constitution of the NCP had been amended to allow the working president of the party to function as its national president. This is not true, and it has got exposed by Sunetra Pawar's letter to the EC now," Rohit claimed. He said that Sunetra's letter states from January 28, 2026, till her appointment as the president of NCP on February 28, 2026, any retrospective correspondence by any leaders should be considered null and void.

Rohit quoted Union minister and BJP leader Piyush Goel's statement to support his claim. Goel had stated that Patel was appointed as the national president of the NCP.

The zero FIR that Karnataka police registered in Ajit's death in an aircraft crash has been transferred to Maharashtra for detailed probe. Rohit said that people tried to lodge the FIR in Maharashtra, but the state police refused to register it.

CAG exposes GST lapses, ₹1.2K crore not verified due to missing records

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

A Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report tabled in the Gujarat Assembly exposes gaps in Goods and Services Tax (GST) enforcement, flagging ₹2,606.62 crore in deviations, ₹266.63 crore in unanswered mismatches, and ₹1,234.71 crore that auditors could not verify due to missing records.

The report for the year 2024-25 begins with red flags in compliance and deepens into data inconsistencies. At the outset, the audit zeroes in on structural lapses, observing deviations from provisions of the GST Act and official instructions, particularly in cancellation of registration, revocation of cancellations, and delays in recovery of dues across 10 selected units. The MIS-generated report on revocation applications throws up discrepancies

EVIDENT GAPS

- ₹2,606.62 crore GST deviations flagged in Gujarat
- GST Act, rules, and procedures violated
- Irregularities in registration cancellation under scanner
- ₹1,234.71 crore not verified due to missing records

raising questions about reliability of backend monitoring mechanisms.

Building on this, the audit flags 738 inconsistencies among the top deviations. Even as red flags mount, the response mechanism appears sluggish because initial replies were not received in five key cases involving ₹266.63 crore mismatch. The audit identifies deviations in 291 cases involving ₹2,606.62 crore that ac-

counts for 39.70% of the inconsistencies where responses were furnished. The highest concentration of discrepancies emerges in core GST filings mismatch in tax liability between GSTR-3B and E-Way Bills, inconsistencies between GSTR-01 and GSTR-09, and ITC mismatches between GSTR-2A and GSTR-3B areas that form the backbone of tax compliance.

Out of the responses examined, 340 cases were accepted by the audit. Within this subset, 45 cases were attributed to taxpayer data entry errors, while the department demonstrated corrective action in 87 cases. Auditors requested granular financial records including statements, ledgers, invoices, audit reports, and debit-credit notes for 65 sampled taxpayers. But the department failed to produce records in 63 out of these 65 cases.

Kashmir handicrafts, carpets in disarray over war

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

THE carpets and handicrafts sector in Kashmir has been severely hit by the Iran war, with business crashing suddenly. Traders say they have stopped getting queries from prospective buyers and warn that if the situation persists, there may be massive job cuts in the handicrafts sector that sustains nearly three lakh livelihoods.

Former Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief and member of the Carpet Export Promotion Council, Sheikh Ashiq, told this newspaper that the crisis has acquired an unprecedented scale. "The carpet and handicrafts sector in the valley has gone in silent mode since the start of the Iran war. Even buyers from the US and Europe are not making any business queries," he said, underlining the global ripple effects of the Iran conflict.

Kashmir's carpets, known for their intricate craftsmanship and heritage value, are exported to around 25 countries,

CRISIS PUTS NEEDS OVER LUXURY

Carpets and handicrafts industry not getting business, fear of massive job cuts looms large

AT LEAST 3 LAKH PEOPLE DEPENDENT ON THIS SECTOR FOR LIVELIHOOD

Hand-knotted carpets, papier-mâché, Pashmina shawls, Kani weaves, Sozni embroidery, Khatamband woodwork, and walnut wood carvings form backbone of valley's export economy



CARPETS, HANDICRAFTS INDUSTRY GENERATES ANNUAL EXPORTS WORTH ₹600-700 CR

with West Asia serving as a key market. Alongside hand-knotted carpets, traditional handicrafts, such as papier-mâché, Pashmina shawls, Kani weaves, Sozni embroidery, Khatamband woodwork, and walnut wood carvings, form the backbone of the valley's export economy.

According to him, any war impacts Kashmir's business community badly, as they trade in high-end and luxury products. "Whenever a war happens, we are the first victims of it, as people shift their priorities from luxury spending to basic survival," he said.

Prominent carpet dealer Fayaz Ahmad Shah, who is overseeing creation of the world's second largest silk carpet, measuring 30 feet by 72 feet and covering an area of 2,160 square feet, also expressed serious concern about the situation. While a group of 17 master artisans are working on the ambitious project since February 2015, Shah warned that prolonged instability could force him to halt the project. "Right now, the dealers are managing to keep the looms running, but if the situation persists, it will become impossible," Shah said.

The Kashmir carpets and handicrafts sector exports goods worth ₹600 crore to ₹700 crore annually, which is a significant sum for the state's economy. Ashiq cautions that the global market is unlikely to stabilise in the near term. "Everything has been disturbed. If the war continues, it could lead to massive job cuts, and thousands of families dependent on this sector may lose their only source of income," he said.

China protests for probe after knife-intrusion at embassy

BEIJING/TOKYO

CHINA has protested to Japan and called for a thorough probe and punishment of a member of the Japanese self-defence force who entered the Chinese embassy in Tokyo, allegedly with a knife, deepening the rift between the two countries.

A 23-year-old second lieutenant in Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of unlawfully entering the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo, Japanese police said.

Kodai Murata, a member of the GSDF's Camp Ebino in Miyazaki Prefecture, was initially detained by embassy staff. He is believed to have been carrying a knife found near the scene, but no one was injured, the Metropolitan Police Department said, Japanese news agency Kyodo reported.

The Chinese government said the intruder threatened to kill Chinese diplomats, and that it had lodged a strong protest with the Japanese government. The police quoted Murata as saying to investigators, "I tried to convey my opinions to the ambassador," and that if his thoughts were rejected, "I was planning to surprise them by taking my own life."

The Japanese government on Wednesday said it regretted the incident and vowed to take measures to prevent such incidents from occurring again. Reacting to the incident, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian on Wednesday called on Japan to conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the incident, punish the perpetrator, and provide a full account of the incident. PTI

Hezbollah rejects Israel talks, says negotiation under fire is 'surrender'

Chief urges people to embrace 'national unity', seeks reversal of ban



A plume of smoke and a fragment of concrete rise from the site of an Israeli airstrike on outskirts of Tyre in Lebanon | AFP

BEIRUT

HEZBOLLAH chief Naim Qassem said Wednesday that negotiating with Israel under fire would amount to "surrender" for Lebanon, and urged the government to reverse its ban on the party's military activities. "When negotiations with the Israeli enemy are proposed under fire, this is an imposition of surrender," Qassem said, rejecting the Lebanese president's initiative to start direct negotiations "with an enemy that occupies our land and carries out daily attacks".

Qassem called on the Lebanese people to embrace "national unity," saying this could be achieved by the government reversing its March 2 decision to ban Hezbollah's military activities. Meanwhile, Israel launched strikes on south Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburbs on Wednesday, Lebanese state media said, as Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah said it kept up its attacks on Israeli

troops. Lebanon was pulled into the West Asia war when Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel on March 2 to avenge the killing of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Israel, which occupied southern Lebanon for around two decades until 2000, has intensified strikes across Lebanon and sent ground troops into the country's south since the latest bout of fighting began. On Tuesday, it said its military would take control of the border area up to the Litani River, around 30 kilometres (20 miles) from the frontier. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported Israeli strikes and artillery shelling in several locations in the south on Wednesday. It also said that "enemy warplanes... launched a strike" on Beirut's southern suburbs, after Israel's military late Tuesday renewed an evacuation warning for several districts in the Hezbollah stronghold.

An AFP correspondent saw a street covered in debris including shattered cement and warped metal after the early morning strike, while an apartment building's upper floors appeared damaged.

The area has been targeted multiple times during the conflict and is largely empty of residents, who have fled.

Israel's military said it struck Hezbollah targets across Lebanon overnight "including a command centre" in Beirut's southern suburbs.

It also said it attacked petrol stations belonging to the Al-Amana fuel company, which it says is controlled by Hezbollah and finances the group. Lebanon's health ministry said on Wednesday that two paramedics were killed when an Israeli strike "targeted their motorbike as they headed to carry out a rescue mission in the city of Nabatiyeh" in the south on Tuesday. AFP



UK, France lead coalition talks to reopen Hormuz

LONDON: Britain and France will chair military talks this week with about 30 nations to form a coalition to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a UK defence official said. Around 30 countries have backed efforts to ensure safe passage, with further military-level meetings expected. Britain's defence chief Richard Knighton is coordinating with France's Fabien Mandon, while the UK may host a summit. Iran has largely closed the vital route after the February 28 war, disrupting global energy flows.

Russia evacuates staff from Bushehr plant after strike

Moscow: Russia has evacuated more personnel from Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant after a reported strike near the facility, officials said. A projectile landed inside the compound Tuesday but caused no damage, Iran said, blaming the United States and Israel. Rosatom chief Alexey Likhachev said 163 staff left for Armenia, while about 300 remain, with a smaller team to oversee operations. Russia had earlier withdrawn 150 workers. The plant, partly built by Moscow, is expanding with two reactors. The UN nuclear watchdog urged "maximum restraint" to avoid safety risks.

Russia says it downed 389 Ukrainian drones over regions, Crimea

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN air defenses downed 389 incoming Ukrainian drones, Russia's Defense Ministry said Wednesday, in what was the largest reported overnight attack on Russian regions and Crimea since Moscow's forces invaded Ukraine more than four years ago.

The drones were stopped over 13 Russian regions as well as the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014. The attack underlined the growing capability of Ukraine's domestically developed and manufactured long-range drones.

It came a day after Russia fired almost 1,000 drones and 34 missiles at civilian areas of Ukraine in the space of 24 hours, extending its usual nighttime barrage into daylight hours in one of its biggest aerial attacks of the war. At least six people were killed and around 50 people were injured, Ukrainian authorities said.

The United Nations cultural organization UNESCO on Wednesday said it was "deeply

alarmed" by Russia hitting a World Heritage site in the western Ukraine city of Lviv during that bombardment.

The escalation in aerial attacks comes amid a pause in U.S.-mediated talks between delegations from Moscow and Kyiv, as Washington's attention is diverted by the Iran war and as Ukraine anticipates a spring offensive by Russia's bigger army. Alexander Drozdenko, governor of the Leningrad region north of Moscow, said 56 drones were shot down there, and a fire broke out in the Baltic Sea port of Ust-Luga as the result of Ukraine's attack.

Ukrainian forces also carried out a missile strike on the Belgorod region on the border with Ukraine overnight, damaging energy infrastructure, its Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said. Power, water and heating supplies were disrupted, he said.

In Ukraine on Wednesday, Russian drones smashed into residential areas of the second-largest city, Kharkiv, during the afternoon, injuring at least nine people, according to mayor Ihor Terekhov. AP



Rescue workers try to put out a fire caused by the fragments of a Russian drone that hit a private house during air attack in Kharkiv, Ukraine | AP

EXPRESS READ

Ex-Google executive Matt Brittin named BBC chief

LONDON: Former Google executive Matt Brittin has been appointed director-general of the BBC, taking charge as the broadcaster faces funding uncertainty and a \$10 billion lawsuit from US President Donald Trump. Brittin, 57, will begin on May 18, succeeding Tim Davie, who resigned over a controversial edit of Trump's Jan. 6 speech. The BBC has apologised for the edit but denies defamation and is seeking dismissal of the case. The broadcaster is also navigating debates over its licence fee model as the UK government considers future funding reforms. Brittin said the BBC faces "real risk" but also opportunity, stressing the need to adapt to changing audiences and digital platforms globally.

Mullally takes office as first woman Archbishop

LONDON: Former nurse-turned-priest Sarah Mullally was formally installed as Archbishop of Canterbury, becoming the first woman to lead the Church of England and the global Anglican Communion. The ceremony at Canterbury Cathedral marked the start of her public ministry. Mullally, 63, takes charge amid divisions over women's roles, LGBTQ+ issues and abuse scandals. She succeeds Justin Welby, who resigned in 2024. Leaders including Prince William and Prime Minister Keir Starmer attended. Mullally called for hope and unity, pledging to make the church more transparent and responsive to survivors, while addressing internal divisions.

Trump showed classified map, held sensitive files, says top House democrat

WASHINGTON

US president Donald Trump showed off a classified map on a 2022 flight to his New Jersey golf club and held onto a record from his first term that was so sensitive only six people would have had access to it, according to a letter released on Wednesday by a top House Democrat.

The letter from Rep Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, adds to the public understanding of the investigation into Trump's retention of classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida. It quotes from a newly disclosed Department of Justice memo from January 2023 in which prosecutors cited evidence they said they had accumulated as they moved toward a felony indictment of Trump that would be filed months later.

The memo recounts a June 2022 flight to Trump's golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, on which the Republican apparently took classified documents, and it says that prosecutors "identified a classified map that we believe Trump may have shown to individuals on board," according to Raskin's letter. Prosecutors said in their memo that their investigation indicated that Susie Wiles, Trump's future chief of staff at the White House, was on the plane



Donald Trump speaks during the swearing in for Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin | AP

and witnessed the episode, Raskin said. The memo from prosecutors also said that the FBI had determined that Trump appeared to have retained classified documents "pertinent to his business interests," according to Raskin's letter.

The classified documents investigation led by special counsel Jack Smith, which was long seen as the most perilous of the four criminal inquiries Trump faced during his second year for office, resulted in felony charges that accused him of hoarding top-secret records and obstructing FBI efforts to get them back.

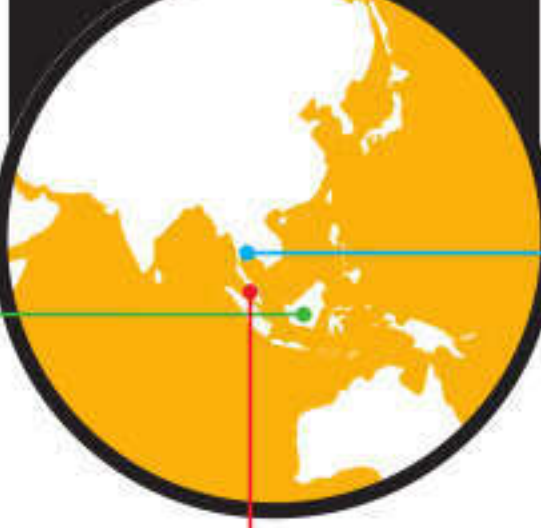
The indictment included allegations that Trump at his Bedminster club in 2021 showed off a classified map related to a military operation and on another occasion cavalierly boasted of having held onto a Pentagon "plan of attack" that was prepared for him. AP

INDONESIA

POLICE HUNT TWO IN DUTCH MAN'S KILLING

Police are searching for two suspects in the fatal stabbing of a 49-year-old Dutch national in North Kuta. Investigators have identified physical profiles based on forensics and witness accounts but are yet to confirm identities or motives. Five witnesses have been questioned, with CCTV footage under review. No link between the victim and attackers has been established. The victim, a businessman, had lived locally since 2024. Authorities are probing whether the suspects fled and if disguises, including ride-hailing jackets, were used. The victim died after being attacked near a villa.

ASIA MATTERS



MALAYSIA PERMIT NEEDED FOR FUEL IN CONTAINERS

A special permit is required to buy petrol or diesel in containers, authorities said, after viral reports of drum-filling. Purchases above 20 litres are allowed only with approval under the Supply Control Act. The rule aims to curb misuse of subsidised fuel and regulate storage. Applications can be made online, with permits issued free to eligible sectors and users.

THAILAND

TRANSPORT READY; NO FUEL SHORTAGE

Deputy PM Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said fuel supplies will remain sufficient during the Songkran holiday despite West Asia tensions, with public transport operators prepared and fares unchanged. Officials forecast 18.58 million passenger trips and a shift towards public transport as fuel prices rise. Travel is expected to favour shorter trips over long-distance journeys. High traffic volumes are projected on highways and expressways, while demand for buses and intercity travel is set to increase. Fuel supply has been coordinated at key terminals, and free travel will be offered.

UN to vote on slave trade as 'crime against humanity'

UNITED NATIONS

THE UN General Assembly will vote Wednesday on a resolution designating the transatlantic African slave trade as "the gravest crime against humanity," in a move advocates say is a step towards healing and justice. Ghana's President John Mahama, one of the African Union's most vocal supporters of slavery reparations, visited the United Nations headquarters to promote the "historic" gesture.

The resolution, he told the UN on Tuesday, "allows us as a global community to collectively bear witness to the plight of more than 12.5 million men, women and children, whose homes, communities, names, families, hopes, dreams, futures and lives were stolen from them over the course of 400 years."

Calling it "a safeguard against forgetting," Mahama took aim at recent political moves in the United States to ban books on the subject in order to "stop teaching students about the truth of...slavery, segregation and racism."

The draft resolution "declares the trafficking of enslaved Africans and racialized chattel enslavement of Africans as the gravest crime against humanity."

The text also highlights the legacy of slavery via "the persistence of racial discrimination and neo-colonialism" in today's society.

Amma Adomaa Twum-Amoah, the African Union's Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Development, said that "to name these atrocities clearly is to remove the last veils of ambiguity from the historical record."

"It is to say that what was done to Africans was not a tragic accident of history, but the result of deliberate policies whose legacies structure today's inequalities," she continued. "Justice begins with calling things by their proper names." AFP

Denmark vote inconclusive, PM uncertain

COPENHAGEN

DENMARK'S election Tuesday ended in an inconclusive result that left the prime minister's future unclear, after a campaign that focused on bread-and-butter issues rather than her handling of the crisis over Donald Trump's ambitions toward Greenland.

Official results showed that Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen's center-left Social Democrats lost ground compared

with the last election in 2022, as did her two partners in the outgoing government.

Neither left-leaning nor right-leaning blocs won a majority in parliament. That left experienced Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, a former prime minister, in the role of kingmaker.

His centrist Moderate party, with 14 lawmakers in the 179-seat parliament, is in a position to determine whether Freder-

iksen can serve a third term at the helm of the European Union and NATO country.

Frederiksen said that she is ready to stay on as prime minister. "The world is unsettled. There are strong winds around us," she said. "Denmark needs a stable government, a competent government. We are ready to take the lead." Løkke Rasmussen urges rivals to soften stance, 'come and play with us'. AP

Food safety pioneer Huub Lelieveld wins World Food Prize for global impact

DES MOINES

A scientist who pioneered the modern food processing safety standards used around the world was awarded this year's World Food Prize, the organization announced Wednesday, crediting his work for averting millions of cases of foodborne illness and reducing food waste.

Huub Lelieveld of the Netherlands earned the award after six decades spent advancing ways to improve food safety and advocating for trade regulations that allow safe food to get around the world more easily. "I just did what I thought was right," Lelieveld said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I want everybody to have enough food but ... it should also be safe."

Lelieveld began his career as a food researcher at Unilever at a time when mechanisms for manufacturing safe food products were, to him, "illogical," he said. Food was often sterilized or chemically preserved after production, and equipment needed to be shut off once or twice each day to be cleaned, which was both difficult and time consuming. The processed

food also required heavy use of preservatives, salt, sugar and acids to reduce the risk of contamination, which detracted from flavor and nutrition. "I realised very soon that they did things in the wrong way, in my view," Lelieveld said. "From the beginning, I've been working on ... convincing people that you should do it in a different way." Lelieveld worked with colleagues to develop hygienic production methods and equipment, making food manufacturing more efficient and less reliant on chemicals. After scaling the processes at Unilever, Lelieveld said the company allowed him to publish the research for global use.



Huub Lelieveld | AP

The agricultural science honor includes a \$500,000 award. AP



Finance Bill caps surcharge on buybacks at 12%

Higher tax outgo on capital gains from share buyback for those with up to ₹1 cr taxable income, Bill removes recovery officers' power to arrest

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

THE Finance Bill, 2026, passed by the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, has proposed a flat 12% surcharge on income from share buybacks, resulting in a higher effective tax rate for those with up to ₹1 crore taxable income. Currently, surcharge on capital gains is linked to income levels of individuals, with no surcharge up to ₹50 lakh and 10% between ₹50 lakh and ₹1 crore.

The proposed flat 12% levy would override this structure, leading to a higher effective tax rate for a wide base of individual shareholders. "Imposing a flat 12% surcharge on capital gains from buybacks for individual shareholders would significantly raise their effective tax cost, especially since earlier a lower surcharge structure applied no surcharge on taxable income up to ₹50 lakh," said Sandeep Jhunjhunwala, M&A Tax Partner at Nangia Global Advisors.

Moving to a 12% surcharge means higher tax outgo across these brackets, making buybacks a costlier route for cash extraction compared to alternatives such as dividends.

The Bill removes the power of arrest and detention by tax recovery officers. As per the earlier provisions, one of the modes available to the TRO to recover revenue is arrest of the assessee



Imposing flat 12% surcharge on capital gains from buybacks for shareholders would raise their effective tax cost, since earlier a lower surcharge structure applied no surcharge on taxable income up to ₹50 lakh—Sandeep Jhunjhunwala, M&A Tax Partner, Nangia Global

and his detention in prison.

Other key changes include providing a minimum period for furnishing of return. The taxpayers will now get a minimum 30 days to respond to reassessment notices, addressing concerns over inadequate response time. "At present, there is no minimum time period prescribed for filing of return in response to such notice. To address concerns of taxpayers, it is proposed to provide a minimum period of 30 days for filing return," said officials from the Revenue Department.

The amendments aim to address legal gaps in reassessment cases where tax department succeeds in courts. If the department wins a case in court,

they can reopen assessments and issue notice within 3 months of receiving the court order.

The turnover threshold for start-ups claiming tax benefits has been raised from ₹100 crore to ₹300 crore as commerce ministry has revised turnover limit for an entity to be recognised as a start-up to ₹200 crore.

"This alignment ensures that fast-growing, innovation-driven companies no longer lose tax benefits merely because they scale rapidly. The synchronized policy shift by both DPIIT and the Income-tax Act creates a unified, growth-supportive regime," said Amit Maheshwari, Managing Partner, AKM Global, a tax and consulting firm.

FM says 100% of cess funds sent to states, flags concerns over utilisation

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

DEFENDING the Centre's right to levy cesses and surcharges, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said the government is exercising a legitimately provided provision and has fully transferred these funds to states. However, she flagged concerns over the utilisation of these funds by several states.

She stated that in the past six years (2019-20 to 2024-25), cumulative utilisation of cesses has exceeded collections. While the Centre collected ₹15.14 lakh crore, it sent ₹15.97 lakh crore to states under various schemes

She added that under health and education cess, an additional ₹74,000 crore has been spent over and above the amount collected. ₹7.03 lakh crore was collected between 2014-15 and 2026-27, while total utilisation stood at ₹7.77 lakh crore. So, more than what is collected under cesses and surcharges is being spent," she noted.

She said schemes such as Samagra Shiksha and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, implemented

Sitharaman says cumulative utilisation of cesses has exceeded collections

While the Centre collected ₹15.14L cr, it sent ₹15.97 lakh cr to states under various schemes

UNDER HEALTH AND EDUCATION CESS, ADDITIONAL ₹74,000 CR HAS BEEN SPENT OVER AND ABOVE THE AMOUNT COLLECTED, SAYS FM

UTILISATION OF CESS

Schemes such as Samagra Shiksha, Mid-Day Meal are financed through health, education cess, she says

through state governments, are financed through health and education cess. "Even in recent Supplementary Demand for Grants, passed in this House a few days ago, ₹11,627 crore was transferred to PM Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi to meet NHM expenditure. So, resources from many cesses are 100% transferred to states," she said.

The minister was responding to the debate on the Finance Bill, 2026 in the Lok Sabha. She criticised the West Bengal gov-

ernment for underutilisation or non-utilisation of funds under several central schemes like Pradhan Mantri Cha Shramik Protsahan Yojana, PM-KISAN Yojana, and Ayushman Bharat.

Addressing broader fiscal concerns, Sitharaman said debt should be assessed relative to GDP, noting the Centre's target to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio to around 50% by 2030-31. However, she emphasised that the onus lies equally on states to bring down debt.

WAR ON PRICE RISE

Centre retains inflation target at 4% for 5 years

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

THE government has retained the decade-old flexible inflation targeting framework, leaving the targeted price index at 4% with a 2% margin either way. The decision was taken after the second review of the framework held in the national capital on Wednesday.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by section 45ZA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the government, in consultation with the RBI, hereby notifies the inflation target for the period beginning April 1, 2026 and ending on March 31, 2031, with a inflation target of 4%; upper tolerance level at 6% and lower tolerance level at 2%," Aparna Sinha, economic adviser to the finance ministry, said in a gazette notification, on Wednesday.

Last August, the RBI had come up with a discussion paper on the forthcoming review of its flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework seeking to examine the past nine years of inflation targeting experience, considering global experiences and emerging economic risks. The flexible inflation targeting framework mandates the RBI-led monetary policy panel to keep consumer prices based inflation under check at 4%.

LPG disruption pushes PNG adoption, 2.5L new connections in 25 days

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

THE government on Wednesday said that ever since the war started in West Asia, nearly 2.5 lakh new piped natural gas (PNG) connections have been provided to consumers. At an inter-ministerial briefing, Sujata Sharma, joint secretary at the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said 2.5 lakh new applications or registrations have also been received. The move comes after the supply of LPG cylinders has been impacted due to the ongoing war in West Asia, which has choked the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 90% of India's LPG imports pass through.

"In the last 25 days, 2.5 lakh new PNG connections have been given. Additionally, nearly 2.20 lakh consumers have shifted from LPG to PNG. About 2.5 lakh new applications or registrations have also been received," said Sharma.

As the supply of cooking gas cylinders has been impacted in the country, the government is asking consumers, including commercial users, to shift to PNG, as it continues to have a seamless supply and has not been affected like LPG. Sharma said unlike LPG, for which India is highly dependent on imports, LNG/PNG supply remains smooth as the country is less dependent on imports.

To fast-track the adoption of PNG, the government on Tuesday introduced an order to speed up approvals for new PNG connection requests. Under the new framework, entities authorised by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) or the government will be allowed to lay, operate and expand pipelines across public, private and residential areas.

A key highlight of the order is that housing societies, resident welfare associations (RWAs), and other entities controlling access to residential premises are required to grant the right of way within three working days of receiving an application. In case of delays or denial, LPG supply to the concerned households may be discontinued after three months.

Market logs healthy gain for second straight session

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

DOMESTIC equity market logged a healthy gain for the second straight session on Wednesday, driven by a decline in crude oil prices and positive cues from Asian markets, as optimism around a potential de-escalation in the West Asia conflict lifted overall sentiment and risk appetite. At close, Sensex surged 1,205 points or 1.63% to 75,273.45, while Nifty advanced 394.05 points or 1.72% to settle at 23,306.45, marking a solid up move for the day.

The two indices had logged gains on Tuesday, recovering over 4% from the lows of Monday (March 23). Equities and currency have come under severe pressure since the start of March as escalating tensions in West Asia have pushed Brent crude and natural gas prices to elevated levels. Rupee weakened by 20 paise to 93.97 against dollar on Wednesday due to foreign fund outflows that kept investors cautious.

The fresh recovery in equities comes amid reports that the US vice president JD Vance is set to meet Iranian officials in Pakistan as part of back-channel diplomacy between the United States and Iran. Earlier, President Donald Trump said



Early signs of normalisation in maritime movement via Strait of Hormuz likely to support investor confidence

Vinod Nair, research head, Geojit Investments

on Monday that he would order the military to postpone any strikes against Iranian power plants and energy infrastructure for 5 days.

"Potential diplomatic progress between the US and Iran—despite mixed geopolitical commentary—led to easing crude oil prices below \$100, which was welcomed by the market. Early signs of normalisation in maritime movement through the Strait of Hormuz are likely to further support investor confidence, although it may be early to comment," said Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Investments.

Rupee closes at new low of 94.05

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

IN spite of the continuing rally in the stock markets and respite in crude prices, the rupee continued to fall on Wednesday, slumping 29 paise to close at record low of 94.05.

Heavy foreign fund outflows and the simmering Iran war make investors jittery. At the interbank foreign exchange market, rupee opened at 93.94 against the dollar and traded in the range of 93.86-94.08, before settling at an all-time low of 94.05 (provisional), down 29 paise from its previous close.

The rupee dropped 23 paise to close at 93.76 against dollar on Tuesday. On Monday, the local currency had for the first time breached the 94 mark.

Even a considerable fall in crude prices, weaker dollar, and positive sentiments in the domestic equity markets could not provide respite to the rupee that has lost more than 5.5% this year, forex traders said. While SBI, Goldman Sachs and Moody's Analytics have pegged rupee at 96 if the war lasts for another month earlier, brokerage Bernstein warned that rupee could breach 98 shortly.

TAKEOVER BID

Abu Dhabi-based IHC gets RBI approval to acquire 67% in Samman Capital

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

LEADING non-bank lender Sammaan Capital, formerly Indiabulls Housing Finance, has said the Reserve Bank has approved the acquisition of its 66.65% stake by Avenir Investment RSC, a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi-based International Holding Company (IHC) for \$1 billion. The report sent its stock price soaring 11% to ₹155.52.

The company further said the RBI has also cleared the appointment of IHC nominee Alwyn Dinesh Crasta as a director on the board for a period of up to five years. Sammaan said Avenir plans to invest ₹8,850 crore via a preferential issue. Post-allotment, Avenir is likely to hold about 41.23% stake, which may go up to 63.36% after preferential issue and open offer.

In October, Sammaan had announced that IHC was investing \$1 billion to acquire an initial stake of over 43% through a preferential allotment of equity shares and convertible warrants at ₹139 per share. This would follow an open offer for an additional 26%, making IHC the the promoter of the company owning over 66.6%.



The capital infusion is designed to help Sammaan expand into affordable housing and scale up AI-driven lending solutions, with a goal of achieving ₹1 trillion in assets under management by FY27.

The IHC deal is the second-largest primary capital infusion by a single investor into a domestic NBFC, after the MUFG Bank's \$4.4 billion investment in Shriram Finance for a 20% equity. "On completion of the preferential issue, the acquirer shall hold 41.23% of the paid up equity share capital of the company. On completion of the preferential issue and open offer, and assuming full uptake in open offer, the acquirer shall hold 63.36% of the paid up equity share capital," said Sammaan Capital in an exchange filing.

'Bachpana Shouldn't Retire': A national call to redefine aging with joy

Marking his first visit to Meril's global headquarter at Vapi, former Indian cricket captain MS Dhoni engaged in an inspiring conversation around "Bachpana Shouldn't Retire." "Bachpana Shouldn't Retire" builds on Meril's nationwide public health movement, "Treatment Zaroori Hai", launched to strengthen awareness around timely diagnosis and access to advanced medical therapies. As a focused extension of this movement, it introduces a senior citizen health initiative under the Treatment Zaroori Hai umbrella. The campaign reinforces that early detection, preventive screenings and access to innovative treatment options can improve outcomes in cardiac, orthopedic and other age-related conditions — ultimately preserving independence and quality of life in the golden years. The campaign champions a simple yet powerful belief — while age may progress, spirit of playfulness, curiosity and joy should never fade.

Business & Beyond



Mahatransco's digital stall draws maximum footfall at India Electricity Expo in New Delhi

New Delhi: The Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Limited (Mahatransco) received an overwhelming response for its innovative and eco-friendly digital stall at the India Electricity Expo in the national capital. Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister of State for Power Shripad Naik, and Maharashtra's Minister of State for Energy Meghna Bordikar-Sakore visited the stall and appreciated Mahatransco's initiatives.

Commemoration of International Women's Day at Paradip Port

Working Women Cell of Paradip Port Authority commemorated International Women's Day with a programme held at the Officers' Club, centered on the theme "Give to Gain." P L Haranadh, chairman, PPA, graced the occasion and addressed the gathering. He stated that the port has crossed 150 MMT cargo throughput in current fiscal & acknowledged the significant contribution of women employees to this achievement. He emphasised the importance of quality education for young girls for societal upliftment and appreciated the active role of the Working Women Cell in addressing women-related issues. He stressed the importance of women's health and encouraged participation in special cancer screening camps and the use of the Mobile Medical Unit. He reiterated PPA's commitment to providing a supportive work environment with improved facilities and continued welfare initiatives for women employees.

After IDFC First, ₹160 crore FD fraud hits Kotak Bank in Haryana

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

A month after a ₹590 crore scam came to light at a Chandigarh branch of IDFC First Bank, the Panchkula Municipal Corporation has uncovered discrepancies in its fixed deposit receipts with Kotak Mahindra Bank totalling nearly ₹160 crore.

The State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau, Haryana, has registered an FIR in connection with the Kotak Mahindra Bank scam.

The bank on Wednesday, without quantifying the missing amount admitted that the money is missing and said it is doing the reconciliation of fixed deposits and linked accounts and has also filed an FIR with the Panchkula police.

In a statement, it also claimed that the affected accounts and transactions were handled according to the due process and regulatory requirements.

"Following instructions from



the Municipal Corporation, we initiated a detailed reconciliation of fixed deposits and linked bank accounts maintained by the corporation. As part of this exercise, we have confirmed, based on records examined so far, that all account opening processes, KYC documentation, authorised signatories and instructions received from the corporation were in order, and that the accounts and transactions were handled in strict adherence to due process and applicable banking norms.

"A major portion of the amounts under review has al-

ready been reconciled with the corporation, and the reconciliation process is continuing in an orderly manner. To ensure that the matter is examined independently and comprehensively, we have filed a formal complaint with the Panchkula Police," the bank said. "Some of the FDs were with the bank for a long time in the Panchkula branch. Discrepancy was found when the bank was asked to transfer the funds on maturity of one of the FDs," news agency PTI reported quoting Panchkula Municipal Commissioner Vinay Kumar as saying.

In the previous case of fraud at IDFC First Bank, the lender had on February 23 said that a Rs 590-crore fraud by four its employees and a few Haryana government staff siphoned off a Chandigarh branch accounts of the fiancé department. In a similar fraud, AU Small Finance Bank had also found ₹47 crore of fraudulent transaction.



Skippers from various IPL teams during the Captains' Meeting held in Mumbai on Wednesday ahead of the tournament | BCCI

Fame to obscurity: KC Cariappa's story

Once bought for ₹2.4 cr, mystery spinner failed to find place in state side

CHANDRA PRABHU @Chennai

FORMER Karnataka mystery spinner KC Cariappa had all the ingredients in becoming Varun Chakravarty before Chakravarty even entered public consciousness. From the high of the IPL auction in 2015 to the low of being dropped by his state, Cariappa's eventful life now enters a new chapter. Earlier this year, Cariappa announced his retirement from BCCI cricket. "My last tournament was the 25/26 Vijay Hazare Trophy (for Mizoram). After that, I appeared for a few IPL selection trials (he did not receive any call-ups). I was thinking about whether to continue playing in the BCCI's domestic circuit or look out for opportunities elsewhere," he said.

As he is playing his trade for Mildenhall CC — an East Anglian Premier League side in the UK — Cariappa felt it was time to give his full attention there.

Unforgettable year

A lean 19-year-old, Cariappa, a shade below 6 ft, entered the 2014 Karnataka Premier League with little to no experience of senior cricket. But he made his mark as he emerged as the third highest wicket-taker (11 in six games). "KPL was my main platform. I played well in the tournament. A lot of IPL selectors were present, and from there KKR team saw me. Then, there was a Champions League CLT20 camp in Hyderabad. They gave me a chance to play a practice match. There I



was confident that I would be picked. "Money wise, it was a miracle," he said.

Starting at a base price of ₹10 lakh in the 2015 auction, the Knight Riders and the Delhi Daredevils (now Capitals) had a bidding war, which went all the way to ₹2.4 crore. "That was very good money for our family. My thought process was to do well, so when I joined the team ahead of the season, I was completely into it," he said.

His purchase came at a time where West-Indian mystery spinner Sunil Narine was reported for a suspect action during the season. Cariappa's moment had come, and it came against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in front of over 60,000 people at the Eden Gardens. He could not have seized the moment any better. In the two overs he was given, he got the prized scalp of AB de Villiers. However, that ended up being the only match he played for KKR that season. "Narine was cleared to return and then I didn't get to play. I was hoping that I will get more chances but unfortunately I didn't get any, but I was focused on my training."

The following season, the Kings XI Punjab (now Punjab Kings) acquired his services for ₹80 lakh.

In his first run of games, he would only go on to get three wickets, including both Virat Kohli and KL Rahul. He was retained in 2017, and still kept getting high-profile wickets (Ravindra Jadeja & Sanju Samson). His

other statistics however, did not help his cause, despite efforts. Cariappa was then released by Punjab, and went unsold in 2018.

Depression

The spinner was part of the Karnataka team that won their first Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in 2019, where he took 10 wickets in 11 games. That earned him the attention of KKR as an injury replacement for Shivam Mavi. But again, chances never came. He only played one match that season, where he went wicketless against Hyderabad.

"Then, I got dropped from the Karnataka team as well. I had a complete breakdown. I felt really bad," he said. Cariappa put on weight, and lost motivation. Once a happy-go-lucky Bengaluru teen, Cariappa's life descended into darkness. But he did not give up. "I did really well again in KPL (and in SMAT 2021, where he took 12 wickets). Then, Rajasthan Royals came calling and Zubin Bharucha, one of the coaches, had assured me a spot in the team given I work on my weight," he said. Apart from working his way back, Cariappa had a confidante who guided him through this process. "I kept talking to AR Srikanth, who was the video analyst in KKR and in Bihar Bulls of the KPL. He was helpful in motivating me. Another person I keep in touch even to this day is Robin Uthappa, since we both hail from Coorg. I asked him about how to deal with certain situations in cricket. They helped me remain in the professional circuit," he said.

He is now set to travel back to the UK in April to play for Mildenhall for six months.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

WHAT THEY DID IN THE AUCTION: They entered the auction with the largest purse & made Cameron Green the most expensive overseas player in the IPL history. Together with Green, who was bought for ₹25.20 cr, they bought Matheesha Pathirana and Mustafizur Rahman for ₹18 cr & ₹9.20 cr. However, the latter will be missing from the roster while there's still some doubts about Pathirana's fitness.



CAPTAIN'S WATCH: Veteran Ajinkya Rahane was once again announced as the captain albeit only a few days before the start of the tournament. He was the team's leading scorer last season with 390 runs from 12 innings. Only two games shy of 200 IPL matches, the 37-year-old Mumbai batter, however, has to play more game-changing innings this season to keep the team in hunt.

WHAT THEY DID LAST YEAR: Despite being the defending champions, they finished a lowly-eighth winning only five of their 14 group matches. A lot of decisions went wrong even as the team remained rigid with its batting order that only added to their woes as it delayed the entry of big hitters like Andre Russell and Rinku Singh.

● 2nd (2021) ● 7th (2022) ● 7th (2023) ● 1st (2024) ● 8th (2025)

Mar 29 vs MI @ Mumbai	Apr 2 vs SRH @ Kolkata	Apr 6 vs PBKS @ Kolkata	FIRST THREE MATCHES	Mar 31 vs GT @ New Chandigarh	Apr 3 vs CSK @ Chennai	Apr 6 vs KKR @ Kolkata
-----------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------

EYES ON KOLKATA, PUNJAB

AFTER A DIFFICULT LAST SEASON, KOLKATA WILL EYE A COMEBACK WHILE PUNJAB WILL LOOK TO CARRY THE MOMENTUM FORWARD. A LOOK AT TWO MORE TEAMS...



RECENT RECORD

PUNJAB KINGS

WHAT THEY DID IN THE AUCTION: With 21 players from the previous season retained, the Punjab franchise hardly lifted the paddle during the auction. They added only four new players buying all-rounders Ben Dwarshuis and Cooper Connolly for ₹4.40 cr and ₹3 cr respectively. Legbreak bowlers Vishal Nishad and Praveen Dubey were bought at their base price of ₹30 lakh each.



CAPTAIN'S WATCH: Shreyas Iyer is the only captain in the tournament's history to guide three different teams into the final (Delhi in 2020, Kolkata in 2024 and Punjab in 2025). He was the team's leading scorer in 2025, accumulating 604 runs from 17 innings. Once again, onus will be on him to not only lead the team with his tactical brilliance but also score heavily.

WHAT THEY DID LAST YEAR: They topped the points table after the league stage and lost twice to eventual champions Bengaluru in the play-offs to finish as runners-up. The final was a close affair as they finished six runs short while chasing 191 and with reinforced squad at his disposal, Iyer will hope to go one better this time around.

● 6th (2021) ● 6th (2022) ● 8th (2023) ● 9th (2024) ● 2nd (2025)

Indoor nat'l's to be part of calendar: AFI

INDRANEEL DAS @Bhubaneswar

THERE is a small anecdote that led to hosting the first Indoor Athletics Championships of the country. Some top officials of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) had visited the facility to watch not athletics but an international table tennis event. The beautiful Athletics Indoor hall was turned into a TT hall. The middle lanes were converted into a playing arena last October.

The venue was inaugurated in March 2024, but no athletics competition of repute was conducted here. The officials realised that the venue has to keep hosting events for its upkeep otherwise such a centre might go waste. The idea of the first National Indoor Championships was borne out of necessity. The next would be to host international events. The AFI bid for Asian and World Indoor Championships as well. "The idea is to keep the tracks alive and kicking," said one official. The World Athletics (WA) awarded the World Indoors to India during a meeting in Poland last week.

Some of the top athletics federation officials were witnessing the first national indoors from a makeshift platform. WA vice president and AFI spokesperson Adille Sumariwalla was among them. He just got back from Poland and said that hosting the World Indoors will mark a new era in indoor athletics.

The national indoors is just a beginning, and Sumariwalla felt that this would lead to a shift in perspective for Indian coaches as well. The attendance is not thin by numbers but stars are missing. There could be a 'misconception' of pre-season that could have led some of the big names to stay away from the competition. But national indoors is here to stay. It will be part of the national

RESULTS: Men: 60m: Gurindervir Singh (Reliance) 6.60sec. Lalu Prasad Bhoi (Odisha) 6.65s. Nuzrat (Haryana) 6.71s; U20 60m: Kshitij Sunil (Maharashtra) 6.78s, Rushiraj Singh (Gujarat) 6.87s, Abhay Singh (Reliance) 6.88s; 400m: Mohammed Sinan (Reliance) 48.27s, Muhammed Badusha (BSF) 49.83s, Aryan Ekka (Odisha) 49.86s; U20: 400m: Umesh Sahani (UP) 49.14s, Bapi Hansda (Odisha) 49.27s, Pradeep Mane (Maharashtra) 51.66s; 1500m: Vinod Singh (MP) 3:46.13 seconds, Jagdish (Air Force) 3:50.11 seconds, Sunil Yadav (Rajasthan) 3:50.56 seconds; U20: 3,000m: Dolamani Chirgun (Odisha) 8:39.13s, Bitto Joseph (Kerala) 8:40.32 s, Ajay (UP) 8:41.02; Triple jump: Vimal Mukesh (Navy) 15.41m, Robinson S (TN) 14.67m, Naresh Rohidas (Odisha) 13.92m; Pole vault: Reegan G (TN) 5.30m, Rameer Singh (Army) 4.85m, Bineesh Jacob (Railway) 4.55m; High jump: Swadhin Kumar Majhi (Odisha) 2.18m, Sarvesh Anil Kushare (Maharashtra) 2.15m, Dhairysnil D (Maharashtra) 2.15m; U20: High jump: Basant (Rajasthan) 2.16m, Sagar Roy (West Bengal) 2.05m, Ankit Kumar (Rajasthan) 1.90m; **Women:** 60m: Harita Bhandra (Maharashtra) 7.32s, Unnathi Bolland (Karnataka) 7.46s, Trisha Nair (Maharashtra) 7.62s; U20: 60m: Kajal Hirabhai Vaja (Gujarat) 7.50s, Mansi Rajak (MP) 7.55s, Heeral Johri (MP) 7.75s; 400m: Kumari Saloni Nagar (UP) 55.73s, Sukhi Baskay (Odisha) 55.67s, Unnathi Bolland (Karnataka) 56.45s; U20: 400m: Sai Chinthana Senthil (TN) 59.96s, Arpita (Odisha) 1:00.48 seconds; 1500m: Priyanka C (Karnataka) 4:34.31s; Triple Jump: Mallala Anusha (JSW) 13.20m, Nimisha Dayma (JSW) 12.93m, Bhairabi Roy (West Bengal) 12.81m; High jump: Payal Jarmod (Gujarat) 1.71m, Kevinna Ashwinie (TN) 1.71m, Pramilla Raigar (West Bengal) 1.68m; U20: High jump: Arpita Sarkar (West Bengal) 1.68m, Juin Mantusa (West Bengal) 1.60m, Anrisha Klein (Meghalaya) 1.60m.



Gurindervir Singh shattered the men's 60m national record | DEBADATTA MALLICK

and coaches also must understand that there is no pre-season or we have to peak here and there. "That time is over. It is a figment of our imagination. This is part of athletics and should not be considered part of the season."

Sumariwalla said that the national indoors will be in line with the Asian and World Indoors. "It will be conducted keeping in mind these two international competitions because it will help our athletes to compete abroad," he said.

For AFI, indoor facilities will create an environment in which the effect of extreme weather can be nullified. There are times when training in India is not possible because of extreme heat or rain or even cold. "The indoor facilities will help athletes to train throughout the year in a controlled environment," he said.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

False starts a big theme on concluding day

INDRANEEL DAS @Bhubaneswar

FALSE starts and crash board (made of foam) finish made for a heady mix on the second day. From start to finish, literally, 60m seemed to throw up surprises. From the stands, the 60m track looks short and sweet; flat, straight and enticing. But for the runners, especially for those running for the first time indoors, it can be perilous too. There have been occasions when a few athletes stumbled and fell over the inclined bend after crossing the finish line through a small gap, about a foot, below the crash board.

There is an art to completing a 60m dash in what the athletes say. For the uninitiated, this could be tricky. Since the course is short, the momentum would carry the athlete a few more yards. In outdoor meets, there is ample space, but indoors, it is a premium. By the time the final races were held, this anomaly of falling between the track and board dwindled. But another remained — false starts.

By the ultimate race of the day — the 60m final — there were numerous false starts during the heats and the semifinals. But one that topped was in the final race. When national 100m national record holder Animesh Kujur walked out, the entire stadium erupted. He walked to lane 4 and planted his feet on the starting block. Next to him on the third lane was Gurindervir Singh. Yet, the course of false start blighted the race. Three to be precise and finally, Kujur too defaulted. Singh won it with a national record of 6.60 seconds.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

EXPRESS READ

Indian archers claim 2 bronze, reach two finals

BANGKOK: Indian archers bagged two bronze and also stormed into the finals of the men's recurve and women's compound team events on the Day 2 of the Asia Cup World Ranking Tournament Stage 1. The women's compound team comprising Chikitha Taniparthi, Raj Kaur and Tejal Salve beat Kanyavee Maneesombatkul, Kanoknapus Kaewchomphu and Chaniddapa Thanaratpitinan 229-226 in the semifinal.

UTT: Patriots' franchise agreement terminated

CHENNAI: IISports Pvt. Ltd., the owner and rights holder of the Ultimate Table Tennis league, has formally terminated its franchise agreement with World Of Krida, the entity operating the Jaipur Patriots franchise, with immediate effect. The action follows repeated non-compliance with the terms of the executed franchise agreement and persistent payment defaults.

Esterhuizen blasts SA to 33-run win vs NZ

CHRISTCHURCH: Connor Esterhuizen blasted a career-best 75 from 33 balls to propel South Africa to a 33-run win over New Zealand in the fifth Twenty20 on Wednesday and a 3-2 win in the five-match series. Esterhuizen's second consecutive fifty after his previous best of 57 in the fourth match on Sunday saw South Africa make 187-4 after being sent in. New Zealand managed only 154-8 in reply.

Salah's long goodbye brings curtain down on golden era

AGENCIES @Liverpool

MOHAMED Salah's long goodbye from Liverpool signals the end of a glorious era and leaves the Premier League giants facing another expensive rebuild. The Egyptian superstar announced on Tuesday that he would be leaving Anfield at the end of the season

after a glittering nine-year spell at the club.

An emotional Salah, 33, expressed his love for Liverpool, where he stands alongside the all-time greats. "Liverpool is not just a football club. It's a passion, it's a history, it's a spirit. I can't explain in words to anyone not part of this club," he said in a video.

European play-offs

Path A

Italy vs Northern Ireland

It still feels a bit weird that Italy haven't featured in the World Cup since 2014. They have got a soft bracket but the team has remained devoid of inspiration and ideas in recent years. And what Northern Ireland lack in talent and artistry, they make up in bloody-mindedness and the capacity to make it very tight and edgy.

Wales vs Bosnia and Herzegovina

This should be super tight and may well be decided by the odd goal. Both teams have a sprinkling of talent, including Wales' Harry Wilson, who has enjoyed a fine goalscoring season with Fulham in the PL. Winner of this bracket will qualify from Path A.



Harry Wilson

NOW OR NEVER FOR ITALY, SWEDEN

TWENTY-TWO TEAMS WILL BATTLE IT FOR THE REMAINING SIX SPOTS AT THE UPCOMING FIFA WORLD CUP. A LOOK AT THE PLAY-OFFS WHERE THE LIKES OF ITALY HOPE TO BREAK A LONG DUCK...

Path B

Ukraine vs Sweden

Sweden do have a fine forward but most of them are injured at the moment including Liverpool's Aleksander Isak. A lot may depend on Viktor Gyokeres. But Sweden were winless in qualifying and Ukraine will fancy their chances of advancing. They have a raft of eye-catching talents including Georgy Sudakov.

Poland vs Albania

Poland, regulars at the WC, know they will start as favourites. For Albania, who featured in the 2024 Euros, 180 minutes stands between them a debut appearance at football's showpiece. Winner will qualify from Path B.

Path C

Slovakia vs Kosovo

Slovakia have a lot of shared history with Czechoslovakia but they have only made it to one finals since 1998. Post the retirement of Marek Hamsik they are still searching for a talisman figure. For Kosovo, who only won independence in 2008, this is a great chance to create a flutter.

Turkey vs Romania

For all of Turkey's European pedigree, they do not generally make the finals. But with a flurry of young attackers, this could be their chance. Romania will look to absorb pressure before breaking forward with pace. Winner of this bracket will qualify from Path C.

Path D

Czech Republic vs Republic of Ireland

Republic of Ireland only got to this stage thanks to a stoppage time winner in the last qualifier. The likes of Troy Parrott will know destiny is within reach. This is a Czech team that doesn't have a lot of stars if you remove Patrik Schick. This could be another of those ultra tight matches.

Denmark vs North Macedonia

Denmark should have wrapped up qualification but crumbled to a big defeat to Scotland in the last game but they should still have lots in the tank for North Macedonia. They don't score a lot of goals and will depend a lot on their backline. Winner of this bracket will qualify from Path D.

Inter-continental play-offs

New Caledonia vs Jamaica (Pathway 1)

Jamaica should have too much for New Caledonia, who breezed through qualifying before predictably going down to New Zealand. The winner between these two will face DR Congo a few days later.

Suriname vs Bolivia (P'way 2)

Away from their lofty venues, Bolivia remain a work in progress. But they will have Miguel Terceiros in their ranks and he could be a handful against Suriname, who are aiming to reach the finals for the first time ever. The winner will face Iraq a few days later.

Spend this summer vacation discovering the delights of these unexploited coastal gems in Daman and Diu...

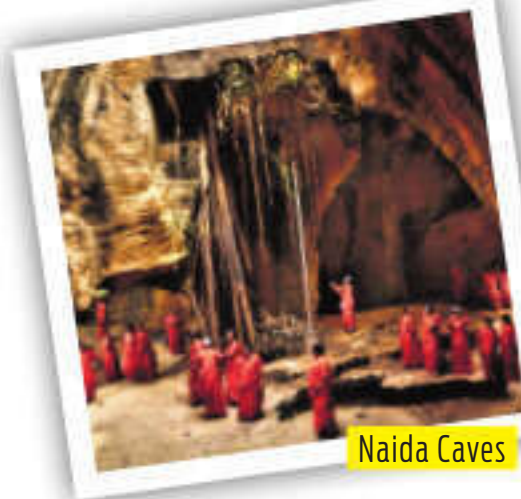
'VIRGIN' ISLE



Devka Beach, Daman



impressive maritime forts in Asia. It is surrounded by the sea on three sides and still houses massive iron cannons and a lighthouse.



Naida Caves

Naida Caves, located just outside Diu Fort, is a labyrinth of interconnected caves formed by the Portuguese hacking out rocks for construction. The way sunlight filters through its jagged openings makes it a photographer's dream. Moti Daman & Nani Daman are twin forts that face each other across the Daman Ganga River. Inside Moti Daman, the Church of Bom Jesus features stunning gold-carved altars that rival any church in Europe.

The culture here is a fascinating hybrid. You'll hear a mix of Portuguese, Gujarati and Hindi. Among the older generation in the Catholic quarters, you might still hear Damaneese Portuguese, a creole language that is a fascinating linguistic treat. It is one of the few places where you can enjoy a traditional Gujarati *thali* for lunch and Portuguese-style Fish *Recheado* or Prawn *Balchão* for dinner. O'Coqueiro in Diu is a small, family-run garden restaurant that serves some of the best Portuguese-style seafood in the region.

People here celebrate the *Festa de Diu*, one of Asia's longest beach festivals, which turns the island into a vibrant hub of music and art without the chaotic scale of mainstream festivals. In the older quarters of Moti Daman and the Firangiwada area of Diu, you'll see beautiful blue-and-white or multi-colored ceramic tiles on the façades of houses and near doorways. The houses follow the strict old colonial rule of being painted in bright, distinct colours (blues, yellows and ochres) with crisp white borders. In some of the older chapels and houses, you can still find windows made of polished translucent oyster shells instead of glass — a classic Indo-Portuguese technique used to filter the harsh tropical sun into a soft, pearly glow.



Prawn Balchão

If you dislike the rows of loud shacks and jet-ski noise, the beaches of these two destinations are for you. Nagoa Beach in Diu is a perfect horseshoe-shaped beach with calm waters, ideal for a quiet swim. Jampore Beach in Daman is known for its dark sand and massive expanse during low tide. It's also famous for being one of the safest and most peaceful beaches for long walks.

Devka Beach is another popular spot for its dark sand and scenic evening views of the prominent, historic Portuguese Nani Daman Fort overlooking the Daman Ganga River. Most notably, the Ganeshwar Mahadev Temple here houses five Shiva *lingas* right on the seashore, where the waves of the Arabian Sea naturally perform *abhisheka* over them.

If you choose to go snorkeling at Nagoa or Jalandhar or on a boat expedition, try to spot Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphins, Green Sea Turtles, Olive Ridley Sea Turtles, Blacktip Reef Shark, Spadenose Shark, Indian Mackerel and Ribbonfish. One can also spot Mudskippers on the exposed mudflats of the Daman Ganga mangroves during low tide if your eyes allow.

Best Time: October to March

Nearest Railroad: Vapi is located 12-13 km away from Daman. Delvada is 9 km away from Diu, although Veraval, which is 90 km away has better connectivity.

Nearest Airport: Diu has its own airport and Daman is closer to Mumbai



Oyster Shells



Hoka Palm

SRUSHTI KULKARNI

DAMAN and Diu are often overshadowed by their famous neighbour, Goa, but that is exactly why they remain unexploited. While Goa has become an easy global choice, Daman and Diu — of the merged union territory now known as Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu — have preserved a much quieter, old-world charm where Portuguese history, Gujarati culture and the Arabian Sea blend seamlessly. The most immediate appeal is the tranquility. You get the same colonial architecture, Mediterranean-style churches and golden beaches, but without the tourist-trap feel.

Diu is an island where you can rent a scooter and explore empty coastal roads lined with hoka trees (a rare branching palm native to Africa, brought by the Portuguese). This happens to be the only place in India where you will



Nani Daman Fort

find the hoka palm. Daman offers a laid-back weekend escape with a slower pace of life that is increasingly hard to find in India's major coastal spots. Unlike many places where history is confined to a museum, here it is built into the landscape. Diu Fort is one of the most



Church of Bom Jesus

PURPLE DAY

For raising awareness & reducing stigma for those with epilepsy

Research for Better Medicines

CELEBRATING 2 YEARS WITH US

Advertorial

Prevalence of Depression and Anxiety in Epilepsy

Dr. Abhishek Nanda
Neurologist,
Rourkela, Odisha

Epilepsy patients face a disproportionately high prevalence of depression and anxiety, significantly impairing quality of life and seizure control. Systematic reviews on PubMed show that 30-50% of people with epilepsy experience major depressive disorder, far exceeding the general population rate of about 7%. Anxiety disorders affect 20-40%, with generalized anxiety and panic attacks common, particularly in temporal lobe epilepsy. These comorbidities arise from shared neurobiological pathways, including hippocampal sclerosis and GABA-glutamate imbalance, and are amplified by stigma, unemployment, and suicide risk. Longitudinal studies demonstrate that untreated mood disorders predict pharmacoresistance, with odds ratios reported up to 5.5. Routine screening using tools such as NDDI-E and GAD-7 is therefore essential in epilepsy clinics. Early intervention with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors or cognitive behavioral therapy improves seizure outcomes and increases seizure freedom by 25-30%. Neurologists must integrate psychiatric assessment into routine care, as bidirectional effects perpetuate a vicious cycle. Recent 2025 meta-analyses confirm these associations persist despite newer anti-seizure medications. Comprehensive care models including telepsychiatry are recommended.

Depression Worsens QOL in Epilepsy

Dr. Chittaranjan Barik
Neurologist, Burla, Odisha

Depression is one of the most common and damaging comorbidities in epilepsy, affecting over half of patients and reducing quality of life more than seizure frequency itself. Research shows depression is the strongest predictor of poor outcomes, even in controlled epilepsy, with severe symptoms including suicidal thoughts in nearly one in five individuals. Despite this burden, depression remains widely underdiagnosed and under-treated. Routine screening is essential. Warning signs include persistent sadness, hopelessness, irritability, sleep or appetite changes, fatigue, and loss of interest. Effective treatments are available. Cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness-based approaches, and behavioral activation help prevent relapse and rebuild motivation through small, achievable goals. Antidepressants such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors are generally safe when prescribed with neurological guidance. Self-care also matters. Regular physical activity, structured routines, social connection, and meaningful hobbies strengthen resilience. Epilepsy care teams offer psychoeducation and peer support groups. Evidence consistently shows that treating depression improves emotional health, cognition, social functioning, and overall quality of life. Mental health care is essential.

Seizure Worry in Everyday Life

Dr. Dipti Ranjan Tripathy
Neurologist,
Rourkela, Odisha

Seizure worry profoundly disrupts daily functioning, as demonstrated by Malaysian tertiary referral data involving 164 patients with epilepsy. Analysis using the QOLIE-31 scale identified seizure-related worry as the strongest contributor to impaired quality of life, showing the highest beta coefficient and exceeding the negative impact of anti-seizure medication effects. Moderate seizure frequency correlated significantly with several quality-of-life domains, including emotional well-being, social functioning, and overall health perception, while cognitive functioning was relatively spared. Patients with focal aware seizures reported particularly high levels of worry, likely due to preserved consciousness and vivid recall of peri-ictal distress. Everyday consequences of persistent seizure worry include driving restrictions, reduced employment opportunities, fear of public embarrassment, and progressive social withdrawal. Supporting evidence from PubMed-indexed studies confirms that anticipatory anxiety can rival, or even exceed, actual seizure burden in its detrimental effect on quality of life. Cognitive-behavioral interventions and structured psychoeducation reduce maladaptive worry, enhance coping, and improve adjustment. Clinicians should therefore routinely assess and address psychological sequelae beyond seizure control.

Depression, Anxiety and Seizure Outcomes: A Bi-Directional Relationship

Dr. Fakira Mohan Sahu
Neurosurgeon
Sambalpur, Odisha

Depression and anxiety have a clear bi-directional relationship with epilepsy, each influencing seizure frequency, severity, and long-term prognosis. Prospective clinical studies show that pre-existing mood disorders significantly increase the risk of developing drug-resistant epilepsy, with odds ratios around 3.1, while persistent uncontrolled seizures nearly double the incidence of depression over time. Shared biological mechanisms include limbic system dysregulation, chronic neuroinflammation, altered monoamine signaling, and kindling effects that sensitize neural networks. Treatment of comorbid depression is not merely supportive; meta-analyses demonstrate that selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors improve seizure control in nearly 35% of patients. Anxiety further worsens outcomes by intensifying peri-ictal fear and activating the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, thereby lowering seizure thresholds. Large longitudinal cohorts of over 5,000 people with epilepsy show baseline generalized anxiety predicts refractoriness at two years.

Women, Hormones, and Epilepsy: A Guide for All Ages

Dr. Rajesh Meher
Neurologist,
Burla, Odisha

Hormonal fluctuations can worsen seizures in many women with epilepsy, but careful management helps maintain good control across life stages. Some women experience catamenial patterns, where seizures increase around certain phases of the menstrual cycle due to hormonal shifts. Tracking cycles helps doctors anticipate breakthrough seizures and adjust care plans. During perimenopause, seizure frequency may rise as protective hormones decline, while pregnancy outcomes often improve when seizure medicines are carefully adjusted and monitored. Recent 2025 studies support the use of digital apps to track menstrual cycles and seizure patterns, showing reductions in seizure events of about 30 percent when care is individualized. Choosing hormone based contraception that does not interfere with seizure medicines helps maintain stable treatment levels. Breastfeeding is safe when infants are monitored and maternal treatment is supervised. Women with epilepsy have higher rates of hormonal conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome, which benefit from lifestyle measures. After menopause, hormone replacement requires close observation. Indian guidelines emphasize joint care between neurologists and gynecologists.

--- A Public Awareness Initiative ---

Seize the **Epilepsy DRAGON**

#TalkEpilepsyFightEpilepsy

Research for Better Medicines