



GOING DESI

Actor Priyanka Chopra has launched her own restaurant 'Sona' in New York, which offers Indian cuisine

LEISURE P2



COVID RELIEF BILL PASSED

The evenly split US Senate narrowly passed a \$1.9tn Covid-19 relief Bill after a marathon overnight session

INTERNATIONAL P10



DEMORALISING DEFEAT

PV Sindhu goes down tamely to Carolina Marin in the final of the Swiss Open

SPORTS P12

Wildfires still raging in Similipal

DESPITE THE CLAIMS OF THE PCCF THAT THE FOREST FIRE IN SIMILIPAL HAS BEEN CONTAINED, SATELLITE IMAGES SHOWED THAT MANY AREAS ARE STILL ENGULFED BY THE INFERNO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kaptipada/Balasore, March 7: Notwithstanding the claims of the authorities that the wild fire raging inside the Simlipal sanctuary in Mayurbhanj district since the past eight days, satellite images showed that the fire has not been contained fully, a report said.

DEVASTATION

The fire is still raging in 272.35 acres of the hill. It is suspected that fire has already decimated scores of wildlife

People in 10 panchayats at the foothill of the sanctuary have been facing the heat from the raging forest fires amid the rise in mercury across the state

In fact, Forest officials and fire-fighters have been struggling to douse fires, though the PCCF earlier claimed that the fire has been brought under control.

The truth is that people in 10 panchayats at the foothill of the sanctuary have been facing the heat from the raging forest fires amid the rise in temperature across the state. "Life has been



ALL ENGULFING BLAZE: Forest fire continues to rage in the Similipal Sanctuary, Sunday

OP PHOTO

very difficult amid rising temperatures in the area," said Markand Hembram, former sarpanch of Ranipokhari.

Kaptipada ranger Maheswar Singh said that a 10-member team has been formed to contain fires in Podadiha, Nato, Badakhman and Manikpur area. Help of local people and fire-fighters is being taken in the exercise.

Reports from Balasore said that forest fire has destroyed thousands of valuable trees at Nandari hill near Balianala of Kuladiha sanctuary. The

fire is still raging in 272.35 acres of hill. It is suspected that fire has decimated scores of wildlife, the report said.

Though three days have passed since fire broke out in Kuldiha, the Forest department has not been able to bring it under control. It is said, that fire is spreading from one hill to another with the passing of each day.

Over 100 Forest officials led by Kuladiha ranger Bijay Mohapatra have been struggling to contain fire. Meanwhile, a team of Congress

workers visited Tinikosia area and its peripheral area where fire has destroyed flora and fauna.

"The PCCF has claimed to have tamed the fire in Kuladiha, but in reality, the fire has not been contained," Congress leader Sudarshan Das said.

The fire is the handiwork of some miscreants who have set the hilly terrain afire. The blaze has posed a grave threat not only to the greenery, but also the wild animals inhabiting these forests. Many valuable trees have been

Fires threaten Kutra forests

KUTRA/JODA: Despite the best efforts of the Forest department, fires have been raging in the forests in Badagaon range in Sundargarh district for the past one week. According to a report, valuable trees, plants and herbal and wildlife have perished. As the fires continue to spread, wildlife such as elephants, boars, hares, jackals have been cornered. Scared and unable to tolerate the heat, they are seen running out of the forests and straying into human habitations. It was reported that before collecting mahul flower from under trees, some people set the forest floor afire, leading to forest fires to spread. Reports from Joda in Keonjhar district said, a part of Baitarani reserve forest has been reduced to ashes. Notably, this forest plays host to a number of elephants. Meanwhile, the forest department has engaged a six-member squad to keep vigil on the elephants.

reduced to ashes, he added. Forest officials and villagers joined hands to douse the flames.

JSW Cement
Start Strong. Grow Stronger.
1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

Naveen among 6 from state in central panel

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and five other dignitaries from state have been included in the central committee constituted to commemorate 75 years of India's independence.

They are Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan, Jharkhand Governor Draupadi Murmu, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, PM's Principal Secretary Pramod Kumar Mishra and eminent sculptor Sudarshan Sahoo.

The panel, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, comprises 259 members including former

75th I-Day celebrations

President Pratibha Patil, Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, 28 Chief Ministers, Union ministers, several Governors, artistes like Lata Mangeshkar, AR Rahman, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, senior BJP leader LK Advani and eminent citizens from several walks of life. Opposition leaders, including Congress president Sonia Gandhi, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, NCP leader Sharad Pawar, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mayawati, are also part of the committee.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You can use such language against your opponent from tomorrow, sir. You see, today is Women's Day!

SHORT TAKES

Varavara Rao released on bail

Mumbai: Telugu poet and activist Varavara Rao, an accused in the Elgar Parishad case being probed by the National Investigating Agency (NIA), was discharged from Nanavati Hospital in Mumbai late Saturday night, sources said. Rao, 82, was initially arrested by the Pune Police under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for having connections with banned Maoist groups. He was granted bail on medical grounds for six months.

Budget Session Part II from today

New Delhi: The month-long second part of the Budget session of Parliament begins Monday in the middle of a high octane campaign for Assembly elections in four states and one UT. The main focus of the government in the second part of the session is to get the various demands for grants for the year 2021-22 passed along with the Finance Bill which carries various tax proposals. The government has listed various Bills for passage in the session which concludes April 8.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	38.4°C	37.6°C
MIN	21.6°C	17.6°C
Humidity	60%	42%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dry weather likely

INDIA ENDS EXPERIMENT WITH DUAL CITIZENSHIP

A NOTIFICATION ISSUED BY CENTRE MARCH 4 IMPOSES SEVERAL RESTRICTIONS ON OCIS AND CURBS THEIR RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES IN INDIA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 7: The Ministry of Home Affairs issued a notification March 4 this year that ended the country's experimentation with dual citizenship, aside from altering the short and sweet relationship with Overseas Citizens of India (OCI).

The latest notification, issued under Section 7B of the Citizenship Act, 1955, superseded three earlier notifications issued by the government April 11, 2005, January 5, 2007 and January 5, 2009. All these notifications set down the rights of the OCIs.

The latest notification not only humiliated the OCIs by categorizing them as "foreign nationals, but also introduced several new restrictions that curtailed the rights and liberties on the OCIs. The new notification has made it mandatory for the OCIs to obtain special permits for undertaking any "research," "journalistic activities," or for visits to any area that has been notified as "prohibited," "protected,"



or "restricted."

These aside, the notification classifies OCIs as "foreign nationals" vis-à-vis "all economic, financial and educational" activities in India wherein the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 2003 will be effective. As a result of the new notification, the status of the OCIs has been dramatically reversed. For the past 16 years, they were enjoying the same rights as the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), but henceforth they would be treated as "foreign nationals."

According to a report, the new restrictions imposed on OCIs are probably owing to the defeats suf-

fered by the government in several cases filed by Overseas Citizens of India in the court of law. For instance, now it is mandatory for the OCIs to obtain special permit before undertaking any missionary activities. It is presumed that this new restriction has been imposed keeping in view the judgement of the Delhi High Court favouring an American-Indian physician. The government had cancelled his OCI card on the ground that the doctor was engaged in "evangelical and subversive activities" as he offered free medical services to the poor and needy in Bihar.

It is worth mentioning here that the government earlier located the OCIs in the Citizenship Act, 1955, which governs the activities of Indian citizens, with a view to grant them dual citizenship. If this was not the case, the OCIs could have been included in the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 2003, which exclusively deal with foreigners and their rights in India.



NOTHING TO CHEER ABOUT

Women labourers work at a brick kiln on the eve of International Women's Day in Patna, Sunday
PTI PHOTO

PM Modi scalds Mamata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday launched a blistering attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, accusing her of "betraying and insulting" the people of the state who trusted she will bring about a change after the Left rule.

He also accused her of nepotism by choosing to play the limited role of "bua" (aunt) to her "bhatija"

(nephew) instead of becoming "Didi" (elder sister) to the people.

Addressing a massive BJP rally at the Brigade Parade Grounds, his first in West Bengal after the announcement of Assembly polls, Modi hit out at his detractors who accuse him of favouring a handful of his businessmen friends.

"You have betrayed and insulted the people of Bengal who trusted that you will be the harbinger of change after the end of the Left rule. You

smashed to smithereens (chakna-choor) their hopes and dreams," he said, excoriating the TMC supremo. He alleged Banerjee promoted nepotism while neglecting the people who fondly called her 'Didi'.

"Bengal chose you in role of 'Didi' but you preferred being 'bua' to your 'bhatija'," he said. The BJP has been accusing Banerjee of trying to install her nephew and Diamond Harbour MP Abhishek as the next Chief Minister. **More P9**

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Away from their families, they served humanity

Risks of infection and extra hours of work aside, women healthcare professionals were pained to be away from their families, especially children

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The COVID-19 pandemic was a grueling test for the healthcare professionals, especially women doctors and nurses, many of whom served in extremely vulnerable sites.

Aside from the risks of infection and extra hours of toil, they were pained to remain away from their families, especially children. This often resulted in trauma for both—the healthcare professionals as well as their worried families.

Dr Diptimayee Mallik, an anesthesiologist at SUM Hospital, is a case in point. She worked at the COVID Hospital when the common people were confined to their homes fearing exposure to the deadly virus and due to lockdown compulsions.



Dr Gita Devi



Dr Diptimayee Mallik



Dr Subhasmita Rout



Lekha Aminakutty

"I have a three-year-old son and he bolstered my confidence when I was deputed at the COVID Hospital. He told me, 'Mama return only after eradicating the monster (COVID-19)'. Initially he cooperated and understood the situation, but slowly I saw him breaking down

and it also disturbed me emotionally," Mallik said.

Many women doctors and para medical staff who worked in such highly exposed environment faced similar incidents. They were compelled to keep themselves away from their kids and families when

the fear of morbidity as well as mortality was at its peak.

"Several families were reluctant to send their daughters and daughter-in-laws to work as health professionals in COVID Hospitals. Their fears were not unfounded as a number of health professionals were in-

fectured while on duty. To keep their families safe, several doctors and nurses kept themselves in isolation for almost a month. And many of them suffered mental break-downs," said Lekha Aminakutty, Nursing Superintendent, Utkal Hospital.

Meanwhile, the Odisha government also framed protocols of 14-day service in such environments and mandatory isolation periods to stop the spread of the disease from the health workers to their families and others.

Most of the doctors claimed that in the initial phase they were overloaded with hyper anxious patients.

Dr Subhasmita Rout, a city-based doctor who served in a COVID Hospital, said, "Working in a COVID ward was a different experience. Here the patients hardly knew who

is attending them and even it was tough for them to differentiate a doctor from a nurse as all of us were wearing PPE kits. However, after getting well, most of them thanked us and for being able to return to their near and dear ones."

The above issues notwithstanding, working throughout the day wearing PPE kits, gloves, masks and respirators increased the health workers' woes. Dr Gita Devi, who worked in a COVID ward at the Central Railway Hospital, Mancheswar, told **Orissa POST**, "It was a strenuous task. Wearing PPE kits and other safety gears during the humid summer in the City made it all the more difficult to carry out our duties. However, we tried our best to meet all requirements even in such testing times."

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com™
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES

Today, you may want to wear your power suit, says Ganesha. If you notice people bending and bowing a bit, understand that your hard work has paid off! If not, then you need to get more organised. Either way, there's work to be done.

TAURUS

The competitive streak in you might relent today as you look for a lifestyle that is more relaxed and laid-back. The rat race is tiring and you will feel the urge to get away, far from the maddening crowd and the never-ending routine.

GEMINI

Today, you will realise that close relationships need care and concern to grow, predicts Ganesha. You will have new responsibilities and achieve huge profits in all your dealings. Pay special attention to your personal health.

CANCER

You will be quite sharp at work, and equally penetrating in the matters of the heart. Though, you may temporarily lose focus, your mind will bring you back to the real world. You will work at a break-neck speed, only to be able to spend as much time as possible with your sweetheart.

LEO

Get ready to bask in applause. Well, not literally, but Ganesha does foresee you getting that long due recognition today for all the hard work you've put at your workplace. This goes hand-in-hand with the support of your colleagues and the good wishes of your seniors, especially if it is some new project that you are undertaking.

VIRGO

If being humanitarian needed a definite physical form, you are most likely to be nominated. Such is the mix of values and practicality today, says Ganesha. Devise strategies to achieve more productivity. See the bigger picture, says Ganesha.

LIBRA

All things passionate seem to engulf you today. It is one of those moments when chance dictates every possibility of a new romantic love episode in your life. The last time a moment like this came by, Romeo met Juliet. Ganesha expects you to try hard to please your sweetheart. Also, you may want to spruce up and pay special attention to your looks.

SCORPIO

A happening day where a lot may happen today, suggests Ganesha. Grey hairs will teach valuable lessons, so keep your ears open to bosses and elders. Seniors will extend their best possible cooperation to you. Stay clear of courtrooms, warns Ganesha, lest the legalities sink you deep.

SAGITTARIUS

A paradigm shift in your temperament and your looks is on the cards today. Your personality will get better as you don some chic attire, jewellery and a rather loud perfume today.

CAPRICORN

Money will flow in from various quarters today, but it will also find its way out of your pockets. Keep a tab on your income and more on your expenses, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

You are ambitious, and quite unapologetic about the way you pursue your goals! You will work hard and push your way through if you have to. Not just that, you will see to it that you have all the skills and competency required to make it big.

PISCES

A good day for those looking for romantic liaisons, says Ganesha. You will seek the company of your sweetheart to fight feelings of solitude and boredom today. Those who are single ought to strike gold, considering how Lady Luck will be grinning at the efforts you make to win over your love.



GYLLENHAAL REMEMBERS
BEING 'IN AWE' OF LEDGER

American Hollywood actor Jake Gyllenhaal loves learning from his co actors and one such actor who left a lasting impression on him was late Heath Ledger. During an appearance on a podcast with Marc Maron, the 40-year-old recalled being 'in awe' of Ledger's process of preparing for a role.

WAS SNUBBED BY FRIENDS
AFTER DIVORCE: REDKNAPP

Singer-songwriter Louise Redknapp said that many of her friends stopped talking to her after her split with English football star Jamie Redknapp. She says comedian Jimmy Carr was the only friend who stood by her.



PC to open Indian
restaurant
'SONA' in NYC

Los Angeles: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has announced her own restaurant in New York, which offers Indian cuisine for foodies.

The actress says she poured her love for Indian food into this restaurant and has named it Sona. The restaurant will be inaugurated later this month.

"I'm thrilled to present to you SONA, a new restaurant in NYC that I poured my love for Indian food into. SONA is the very embodiment of timeless India and the flavours I grew up with. The kitchen will take you on a food journey through my amazing country. SONA is opening later this month, and I can't wait to see you there!" Priyanka tweeted.

The actress also shared a few photographs where she can be seen performing a puja together with husband Nick Jonas.

On the work front, Priyanka features in the recently released digital film *The White Tiger*. The Ramin Bahrani directorial features the actress alongside Rajkumar Rao and Adarsh Gourav.



Yami gives tutorial
on how to get
clicked for picture

Mumbai: Actress Yami Gautam has shared steps on how to get the perfect picture on her social media platform.

Yami posted a throwback picture from her recent film release *Ginny Weds Sunny*. She is seen dressed in a stunning embellished lehenga and smiling at the camera.

"Smile check aaaaand click #ginnywedssunny #happymemories," she wrote as the picture's caption.

The film which released digitally also features Vikrant Massey and is directed by Puneet Khanna.

Yami would next be seen in the spooky adventure comedy *Bhoot Police* which also stars actors Saif Ali Khan and Arjun Kapoor. The horror comedy would be directed by Pawan Kripalani, who has helmed thrillers like *Phobia* and *Ragini MMS* in the past.



Alaya's quirky spin
to *Romeo and Juliet*

Mumbai: Actress Alaya F has a quirky spin to *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare in her latest post on social media.

Alaya posted a picture on Instagram, where she is seen standing on a balcony dressed in a lavender bralette paired with denims.

She captioned it: "O Romeo, where is my sun-tan lotion?"

Alaya is an avid user of social media. She keeps her fans entertained with stunning pictures and videos.

Daughter of actress Pooja Bedi, Alaya made her Hindi film debut with *Jawaani Jaaneman* earlier this year. She has a three-film deal with producer Jay Shewakramani.

During lockdown, she dedicated her time to honing and improving her skills as an actor. She had also been reading scripts, taking master classes and workshops too.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Breaking the
glass ceilings



The campaign titled #NotJustAnotHER entails a theme-based photoshoot with five incredibly inspiring women whose fearless stories will be featured across social media handles

New Delhi: A prominent shopping mall of South Delhi Sunday launched a campaign titled

#NotJustAnotHER to celebrate every woman and cherish her inspiring story. The aim is to create a safe platform wherein stories of courage and determination are told and shared.

The campaign entails a theme-based photo shoot with five incredibly inspiring women who broke the glass ceiling by being true to themselves. The idea is to celebrate womanhood fearlessly.

The photo shoot with their fearless stories will be featured on company's social media handles to inspire other women.

The campaign features, Sapna Dutta, a 64-year-old cancer survivor who has always lived on her own terms. Her idea of living a fulfilling life has always been to fight and never give up, taking up acting and modelling at the age of 55.

The other one is Prabsharan Kaur, who wishes to shatter the stereotypes of women being the weaker gender. A Krav Maga learner and teacher for the past 8 years, she now runs a foundation by the name

of Nirbhau Naari Suraksha Foundation for training women in self-defence.

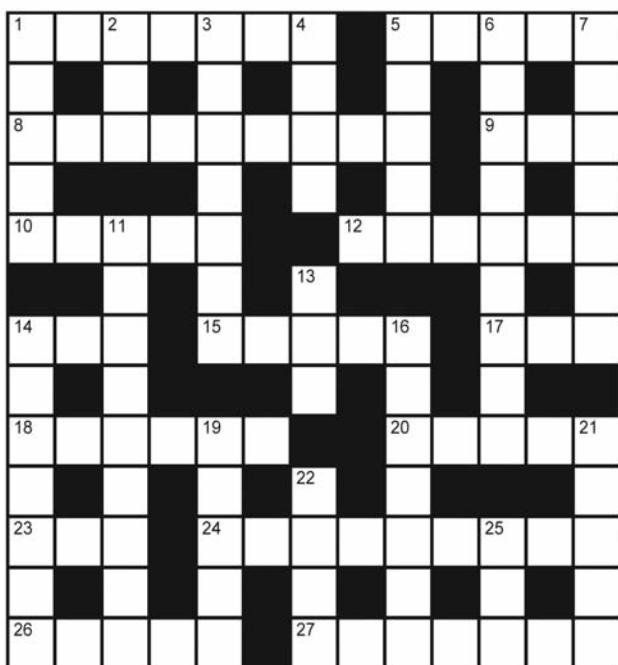
Sonal is the third inspiring woman, who urges people to love themselves enough and then some more. All her life she had felt insecure about her size and wished to stay behind the camera, but it was when she molded her courage into confidence that she felt the immense joy in being who she is.

Similarly, Sabika, a poet and a mental health advocate who was once diagnosed with codependency at the peak of her career runs her own support group to help people talk about mental health. Her journey is no less than of a superwoman who made her way from self-exploring thoughts to help make life easier for herself and others.

Last but certainly not the least Taksh, an LGBTQ icon and equal rights supporter is an absolute brave-heart who finds power in her femininity, and channels that power to fight redundant stereotypes. She has embraced her true self even when her loved ones did not accept her reality.

FUN
post

CROSSWORD

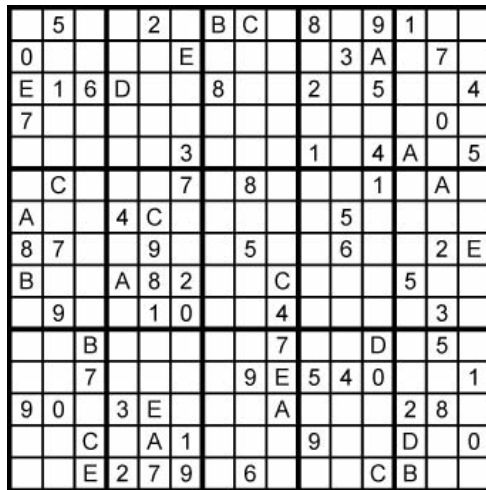


- Across
- 1 Museum display
 - 5 Amalgam
 - 8 Cabin cruiser
 - 9 Fiddle stick
 - 10 It's a no-no
 - 12 Bounce back
 - 14 Dove's sound
 - 15 Coffee order
 - 17 Clunker
 - 18 Jot down
 - 20 Less typical
- Down
- 23 Commercial
 - 24 Medical condition
 - 26 Kind of spray
 - 27 Fishermen
 - 5 Clean up
 - 6 Decorate with needlework
 - 7 Wasted time
 - 11 Library items
 - 13 Chowd down
 - 14 Theatre item
 - 16 Noise reducer
 - 19 Ward off
 - 21 Tricks
 - 22 Bailiwick
 - 25 Behold

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

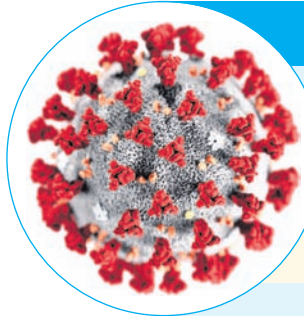


downtown



DISPLAYING TALENT

Youths participate in a swimming competition at Akhandalamani pool in Puri, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	11,72,00,151	9,27,48,491	26,01,783
India	1,10,63,140	1,08,68,520	1,57,756
Odisha	3,37,744	3,35,080	1,917

Five held for attacking CRP killers, PCR staff

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The Commissionerate Police Sunday arrested five persons for attacking the siblings who hacked Tukuna Das, 26, of Salia Sahi at VIP Colony under Nayapalli police limits here Saturday.

The accused were identified as Prasant Das, 48, Kantabada under Chandania police limits, Akshaya Kumar Das, 49, Badal kumar Kanhar, 20, of Tikabali in Kandhamal, Srikant Das, 28, of Patkura in Kendrapara and Prakash Naik, 24, of Khandapada in Nayagarh. All the accused are the residents of Rental Colony.

The five persons have been charged with rioting, assault, causing injuries, trying to lynch the killers-Sudhir and Sagar Prusty. The police also accused them of trying to deter the PCR-18 staff and other police personnel from discharging their duties Saturday.

Sources claimed that the locals present at the crime scene rushed towards the pick-up van after hearing the screams of the victim who was begging for help. Later, they chased and collared both the killers who were trying to flee. Upon receipt of information, the PCR-18 staff reached the spot.

Subsequently, the accused were

The five have been charged with rioting, assault, causing injuries, trying to lynch the killers—Sudhir and Sagar

handed over to the PCR staff. Police claimed the accused Prasant Das intercepted the PCR van and took out the vehicle's keys forcefully while the cops were taking the siblings to police station.

Soon, the five along with several others dragged the accused out of the PCR van and started beating them mercilessly with plastic pipes and whatever means they found nearby. The PCR staff faced the mob's wrath. The police vehicle was damaged by the infuriated mob. Speaking to media persons, DCP Umashankar Dash Sunday said the accused also attacked the lady police staff.

DCP Dash said, "A case has been registered in this regard. We detained the accused Saturday night after collecting all the details from the PCR staff, video footage and locals present at the spot. The five were Sunday arrested and produced before court."

DCP also urged the public not

to take law into their hands. Only the courts are empowered to award punishments in any act of crime. Neither the police nor the public have the right to punish anyone.

The police have till now identified 15 persons involved in the lynching bid.

On the other hand, the siblings were Sunday produced before the court that sent them to judicial custody. Meanwhile, police are yet to trace the absconding driver of the pickup van.

The DCP also informed the media that the accused persons killed Tukuna in self defense. The police claimed that Sagar and Sudhir met the deceased at Maila tanki sahi where the trio engaged in a heated argument over a fight they had yesterday night.

Soon, Tukuna started attacking the siblings who managed to grab him. The brothers with an intention to hand over Tukuna to police forcefully made him sit in their pick up van. They tried to take Tukuna to police station via VIP Colony fearing retaliation by Tukuna's aides midway.

However, Tukuna attacked the duo with a big knife concealed in his dress. The duo in a fit of rage snatched away the knife from his hand and started stabbing Tukuna on his neck and chest.

'Harishchandra' norms thrown to the wind at Swargadwar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, March 7: Several irregularities in the implementation of Harishchandra Sahayata Yojana at Swargadwar cremation ground here have come to the fore.

About 90 per cent of people, who cremate the bodies of their near and dear ones at Swargadwar cremation ground, are reportedly availing benefits of the scheme, which was launched to provide financial assistance to poor and destitute for conducting the last rites of their family members and for the cremation of unclaimed bodies.

As per the guidelines, people who do not own a vehicle and having no government employee in their families can avail benefits of the Harishchandra scheme. Moreover, the beneficiaries must not have landed properties exceeding 5 acre. This apart, no tax payer can be included in the scheme.

"About 90 per cent people, who perform the last rites of their relatives at Swargadwar, are getting financial assistance under Harishchandra scheme. Many people are getting the benefits even without producing the BPL cards and other documents," said a social activist.

It is learnt that the municipal authorities of the city are quite aware of the violation of Harishchandra scheme guidelines at Swargadwar. The municipal executive officer has raised the issue with the state government through the district administration.

Interestingly, the state government has reduced the amount of the assistance to Rs 2,000 from Rs 3,000 for the beneficiaries at Swargadwar. But, it is yet to take any step to weed out the ineligible people. At present, the beneficiaries are getting woods and other goods worth Rs 2,000 at Swargadwar, sources said.

"Some people are getting the assistance under the scheme at their panchayat level and at Swargadwar simultaneously," said a source.

Municipal executive officer Bijay Kumar Dash said that they are implementing Harishchandra scheme as per the guidelines laid by the state government. "We are reading out the guidelines to the beneficiaries and telling them that submission of fake data for the scheme will invite notice from the administration," he added.

BHUB IS MOST SECURE PLACE IN INDIA TO DO BIZ: MITESH KHMJI

Khimji Jewellers is known for its finest jewellery that is exclusively designed, catering for both classical and modern tastes of its customers. It is an 84-year-old jewellery brand and Odisha's oldest jewellery chain. The pandemic was a challenging situation for the company. However, despite difficulties, the brand stood strong and never compromised its services of the customers. During an interaction with Orissa POST, Khimji Group Director Mitesh Khimji shared several glimpses of his company's journey.



How was the buying trend of jewellery in Odisha during the pandemic?

Every sector has been affected by the pandemic and jewellery industry is no exception. The market was very bad due to lockdowns. However, we have registered some growth in post lockdown. Odisha is mainly a marriage market. Those marriages which were postponed are now being gradually held. So, the sale is increasing.

Did you see any change in consumer behaviour?

See, we have a saving mentality in our country but the pandemic has changed the mindset. After the lockdowns, people have increased their spending ticket sizes. Now people are focusing on enjoying their life rather savings. In this case, gold gives very good returns. Physical gold became

rescuer during the pandemic.

How did Khimji stand with the employees during the crisis?

Everyone has suffered. Nine months was a challenge as we have taken care of our employees. However, we didn't go for the salary cuts. We offered early salary to our employees considering the dire emergency. They need money. We are here because of our employees.

Gold price is increasing day by day. Where do you see the future of jewellery industry?

Yes, gold price was on a peak but now it has come down. You know, gold price is always affected by everything happening in our surroundings. The price has come down because the vaccine has arrived. We are also expecting little bit of correction.

Do you think online selling is now a convenient mode for business?

Online selling is very low in jewellery market because the buyers believe in touch-and-feel factor. But we all are present in online platform. The value of gold is very high so customers prefer to go to a store and touch and feel it before buying. We are not seeing that much success in selling compared to other goods sold in the online platform. But it is still evolving.

Any comment on the Budget

We have been urging the government to reduce custom duty for last five years. It has been now reduced and it will surely boost demand and one kind of relief to all stakeholders. But the new custom duty rate will be applied only to new stocks or consignments. The available stock will not be under new custom duty policy.

Future plans in Odisha

We are coming up with new showroom in Jharsuguda. We had delayed this due to the pandemic but it is coming up now. The new showroom will be 10,000 sq ft and it will be the largest showroom in western Odisha. Over 80 people we get direct employment. All products will be available under one roof with Khimji guarantee. We have also lined up some more showrooms in the state.

Is Bhubaneswar a friendly environment to do business?

Yes, of course. Bhubaneswar is most secure and safest place in India to do business. The state government has been very supportive. What the jewellery industry requires most from the state government is safety and security to do business. Police personnel here are very active.

Any suggestion to the government

The state government should encourage youths' skill development in jewellery making. New generations do not pay much interest to get into jewellery manufacturing. The youth has to be attracted.



BMC's tax hike against law, says Congress



Congress leaders brief media in Bhubaneswar, Sunday OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The Congress party in the state Sunday blamed the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) for illegally imposing higher tax regime in the state capital allegedly in gross violation of its own rules.

Odisha Congress leader and former Finance Minister Panchanan Kanungo Sunday held a press conference and blamed the civic body for overburdening the middle class. He urged the state government to conduct the local polls sooner "The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has been over burdening the middle class and the poor in the city by increasing the

taxes on them multi-folds. We had been raising our voice and concerns on the issue. We also announced that if they did not consider our request to reduce the taxes, we would organise intense protests against such anti-people move," he said.

He said the BMC has violated the BMC Act of 2003. "As per norms, there should be five stages for such actions. There should be a valuation committee for such actions. But such panels have not been formed. They have not taken into consideration the unit cost but used the benchmark price to increase their taxes," he said.

Kanungo said that notification of the evaluation finds place in the law but not in re-

Congress leader and former Finance minister Panchanan Kanungo blamed the civic body for overburdening the middleclass

ality. He said, "There should be a notification of such panels and ought to take objections from the people which has not been done by the civic body. The move to take appeals from people has been ignored by the BMC when increasing their taxes"

"The district committees of our party have decided to protest against the move. There are around 54 types of taxes people of Odisha are paying to the governments. This includes tolls, water tax, parking fees and many others. At this crucial time of people recovering from pandemic losses, the price of fuels, electricity as well as taxes are rising," he said.

He also raked up the need for urgent elections in BMC. He said, "This is why we demand that the officer Raj should end and the elections of urban local bodies should be undertaken at the earliest. I want to demand that the BMC should answer the media and the people of Odisha on the issue."

Fog likely in parts of state for next two days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Sunday predicted fog at different parts of the state over next two days.

The department said while dry weather is likely to prevail in several districts of Odisha, moderate

fog could also be seen Monday. However, there is no warning of dense fog for the next few days.

"Shallow to moderate fog is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Bhadrak, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Khurda, Nayagarh and Kendrapara,"

said the evening weather report of IMD. The department predicted similar condition for Tuesday. "Shallow to moderate fog is also likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Khurda and Nayagarh," it said.

The department, however, did not predict fog condition

for the next three days post Tuesday. The IMD has forecast a rise in temperatures above the normal in the coming days.

Angul and Sambalpur reported the maximum temperature of 38.7 degrees Sunday while Phulbani reported the lowest temperature of 10.5 degrees.

Sabse Pehle
Life Insurance

KUCH CHEEZEIN SAATH KARNE SE AUR BHI BEHTAR HO JAATI HAI.

ISILIYE APNE KAL KI TAYYARI BHI MILKAR KEEJIYE.

INTRODUCING

AADHAAR STAMBH
SPECIALLY FOR MEN

AADHAAR SHILA
SPECIALLY FOR WOMEN

• Age Eligibility: 8 years to 55 years • Policy Term: 10 to 20 years

• Sum Assured: ₹ 75,000 to ₹ 3,00,000 • Risk Cover

• Loan Facility available • Accident Benefit Rider available

• Maturity Benefit with Loyalty Additions, if any

☒ **AUTO COVER: RISK CONTINUES FOR 6 MONTHS OR 2 YEARS***

☒ **10% EXTRA RISK COVER UNDER AADHAAR SHILA**

☒ **AVAILABLE ONLY UNDER NON-MEDICAL SCHEME**

Contact your Agent / Branch or visit our website www.licindia.in or SMS 'YOUR CITY NAME' to 56767474 (e.g. 'Mumbai')

Follow us: [f](#) [You Tube](#) [t](#) LIC India Forever

Beware of Spurious Phone Calls and Fictitious/Fraudulent offers. IRDIA is not involved in activities like selling insurance policies, announcing bonus or investment of premiums. Public receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint.

For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure of each plan carefully before concluding a sale. IRDIA Reg. No. 512

LIC
भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

Zindagi ke saath bhi, Zindagi ke baad bhi

Rickety market complex in Cuttack cries for attention

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, March 7: A market complex, set up and managed by the Cuttack Development Authority (CDA), at Bajrakabati Road in the Silver City here has been facing a myriad of problems for last several years.

Poor maintenance, unhygienic atmosphere and vacant rooms have become hallmarks of the market complex set up in 1979.

The two-storey market complex has altogether 55 rooms for commercial use. At present, only 42 rooms have been rented out to shopkeepers while the remaining 13 are lying vacant, sources said.

The CDA is charging a rent of Rs 35 per square foot for underground shops at the market complex while the rent for shops at the ground floor has been fixed at Rs 25 per square foot, sources added.

The ceilings of many shops at



Damaged ceilings; vacant shops at the market complex at Bajrakabati Road in Cuttack

OP PHOTOS

the market complex have suffered extensive damage due to poor maintenance. Moreover, toilet and drinking water facilities of the complex have been lying unutilised for last several days.

“The market complex is in a state of dilapidation. The authorities concerned have taken no step to repair the shops at the complex.

The entire place had been filled with garbage some days ago. We had undertaken a cleanliness drive at the complex recently. In the absence of CCTVs, some antisocial elements are using the place for consumption of liquor,” said locals Sanjay Kumar Pradhan and Dharendra Kumar Pradhan.

The locals are of the view that the

CDA has not taken any measure to upgrade facilities at the market complex that can attract shopkeepers to the vacant rooms.

“There was information that the civic body would demolish the market complex. The structure may collapse at any moment. Some people are running shops at the complex under unsafe condition,” said

The ceilings of many shops at the market complex have suffered extensive damage due to poor maintenance

Moreover, toilet and drinking water facilities of the complex have been lying unutilised for last several days	The authorities concerned have taken no step to repair the shops at the complex, it is alleged
--	--

Laxmidhar Swain, another local.

CDA sources, meanwhile, claimed that traders are not interested to take underground rooms at the complex. Moreover, many occupants are not paying the rents regularly.

“We have huge pending dues on some shopkeepers. We will discuss all these issues and take appropriate steps. The local police would be informed to check the movement of antisocial elements near the market complex,” said Priyanka Mallick, an official of CDA.

With 70 new cases, state's Covid-19 tally at 3,37,744

PNN & AGENCIES

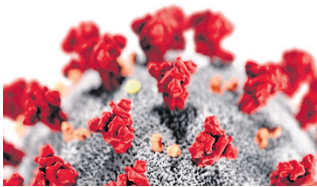
Bhubaneswar, March 7: State's Covid-19 tally mounted to 3,37,744 Sunday as 70 more people tested positive for the infection, a senior Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) official said.

As many as 41 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 29 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing, said the official.

Khurda district, of which capital city Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest number of new cases at 14, followed by Sundargarh (12) and Angul (11).

The coastal state's coronavirus death toll remained unchanged at 1,917 as no fresh fatality was reported.

As many as 53 other coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities so far, the H&FW department official pointed out.



ODISHA'S CORONAVIRUS DEATH TOLL REMAINED UNCHANGED AT 1,917 AS NO FRESH FATALITY WAS REPORTED

THE STATE HAS SO FAR TESTED OVER 84.72 LAKH SAMPLES FOR COVID-19, INCLUDING 20,834 SATURDAY

Odisha now has 784 active cases, while 3,34,990 patients have recovered from the disease so far.

The state has so far tested over 84.72 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 20,834 Saturday.

WASSUP TODAY

- BHUBANESWAR**
- Press meet on 'Gastritis', Sai Institute of Gastroenterology & Liver Sciences, Sahid Nagar, 4pm
 - Mini marathon by Ajaswi Foundation, Utkal University, 7.40am
 - International Women's Day by Annapurna Foundation, hotel Swosti Premium, 10am onwards
 - International Women's Day celebrations by Prasanna Foundation, Barpita School premises, near Deras dam, 11am
 - International Women's Day by Forum Against Inequality, Lohia Academy, 11am
 - Stage play by Bidyakanak, Rabindra Mandap, 7pm
 - International Women's Day by Manabadhikaar Mancha, Adruta Sishu Sadan, 6pm
- BALIANITA**
- International Women's Day, Benupur Panchayat Kalyan Mandap, 11 am
 - Inauguration and foundation laying ceremony of developmental projects, Panchayat office, Kenduli, 11 am
- KANTAPADA**
- International Women's Day, Badbil, 4 pm
- NIMAPARA**
- International Women's Day, Devi Mandap Ground, 10 am
- KONARK**
- International Women's Day, Arkashri Shilpi Vatika, 3 pm
- Programmes/announcements for **wassup** today may be sent to downtown@orissapost.com for record, it must also carry the sender's mobile number for our verification, but not for publication.

Address climate change more responsibly: OES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: A seminar on the theme 'Individual and collective roles to combat climate change' was organised by Odisha Environmental Society where the experts expressed that massive use of fossil fuels such as coal, petroleum and natural gas in the aftermath of the industrial revolution has the disastrous sequel of releasing colossal amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

In the seminar, experts also discussed Similipal fire incident. They said Similipal forest fire is a human-induced tragedy that has far-reaching consequences for the ecosystems and the animals, plants and microbes inhabiting them. The local communities, mostly tribals, whose lives and livelihoods are deeply intertwined with the forest, are bound to suffer as a sequel to the disaster. In the scenario of global warming and climate change, the frequent forest fires will cause havoc for all the stakeholders. The need is to have a network of the forest officials, VSSs, NGOs and local people for effective awareness generation to reduce such happenings and extinguish the fire.

OES president Sundara Narayan Patro said India is one of the five countries most affected by the adverse effects of climate change, and our state Odisha is one among the three most affected states of the country. With the long coastline of 482 kms on the east coast of India, Odisha has been hit hardest by the effects of climate change.

Adverse impacts are felt in sectors like agriculture, health and water availability; rise in the number and intensity of natural disasters like floods, cyclones, droughts and heat waves as well as the increase in coastal erosion, seawater intrusion and sea level rise. Though the effects of climate change are far-reaching, it is particularly affecting the livelihoods of people struggling with poverty, hunger and diseases, enhancing further their vulnerability.

Aditya Pundir, Director, India and South Asia at The Climate Reality Project India highlighted the various climate-related disasters occurring globally and described how the ecosystems and diverse species inhabiting them, including humanity, are increasingly affected by these happenings. He emphasised that it was imperative for the government to limit the use of fossil fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prioritise alternative energy sources such as solar energy. On the other hand, the people of Odisha must prepare and empower themselves to cope with the adverse effects of climate change as well as to make their own contribution to combat the most pressing challenge of time.

OES secretary Jaya Krushna Panigrahi acknowledged the seriousness of climate change and said it is the moral responsibility of everyone, from an individual to the globe, to make their own contribution for mitigating the impacts.

Similipal forest fire is a human-induced tragedy that has far-reaching consequences for the ecosystems and the animals, plants and microbes inhabiting them, said experts

Parents' body warns of hunger strike March 18

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, March 7: The Odisha Abhibhabak Mahasangha (OAM), a state-level outfit of parents, Sunday threatened to sit on a hunger strike March 18 over 'arbitrary' change in the course curriculum of SCB Medical Public School here.

The meeting discussed issues like enforcement of the HC order on school fee waiver

“It's tough for a student of Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) board to get acquainted with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) pattern all of a sudden. As per the district Collector's instruction, parents had cast their vote on changing SCB Medical Public School's curriculum to CBSE from ICSE. Around 1,265 of the 1,600 parents in the city took part in the voting. It's totally unjust to change the curriculum without even opening the vote box,” OAM chief Basudev Bhatt said at a meeting held on the premises of Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir at College Square here.

More than 200 parents of different schools in the Silver City attended the meeting that brainstormed several issues including enforcement of the Orissa High Court's order on school fee waiver during the pandemic.

While urging the district Collector to address the issue at the earliest, Bhatt threatened to sit on a hunger strike March 18 if the authorities give cold shoulder to their 'legitimate' demand.



BJP leaders, including Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Pratap Chandra Sarangi, at the inauguration of party's state executive meeting in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Kashmir houseboat owners refresh bond with state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: Buoyant by the encouraging rush of tourists during the winter months, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism department has kick-started extensive spring and summer tourism promotional campaigns across major cities of the country to pull in the massive domestic tourist market available that is keen to move out and spend holidays with their loved ones after the pandemic forced people to remain indoors for months together.

As part of the promotional drive, J&K tourism is organising tourism roadshows in cities spread across all corners of the country with active involvement of the various tour and travel associations of the J&K.

As part of the tourism promotional outreach, a grand roadshow was organised in the eastern city

As part of the promotional drive, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism is hosting roadshows in cities across the country

of Bhubaneswar recently.

The tourism promotional show was held in collaboration with the Kashmir Houseboat Owners' Association (KHBOA) with Ideel Saleem, deputy director (Publicity), J&K Tourism and Ashwani Gupta, deputy general manager, J&K Tourism Development Corporation representing the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism department. The KHBOA was led by its chairman, Hamid Wagnoo.

Ideel Saleem said, “We want to communicate the message to the

people of the country including people of Odisha that J&K is ready to welcome and host you for a memorable time there with our renowned hospitality and of course the best measures in place to ensure your health safety. The revival efforts have borne fruit as domestic tourists have shown keen interest in J&K and have visited during winters and enjoyed snow in Gulmarg, Srinagar, Pahalgam, Patnitop, Sanasar, Natha Top, Sonmarg and Doodhpathri in encouraging numbers.”

Chairman, Kashmir Houseboat Owners' Association, Hamid Wagnoo speaking on the occasion said that the core aim and objective of the Road Show is to invite the people of Odisha to Kashmir, to enjoy a plethora of beautiful destinations and tourism products of J&K including the heritage and iconic houseboats.

CAPTIVATING AUDIENCE



Artistes performing Odissi at Guru Debaprasad Das Samman Utsav organised by Nrutyarchana at Bhanjakala Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Car rally organised on the eve of Int'l Women's Day

AN ALL-WOMEN BIKE RALLY AND SEVERAL OTHER EVENTS WILL BE ORGANISED IN THE CITY TO MARK THE OCCASION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 7: A women's car rally was organised by Seva Prayas foundation in the city here on the eve of International Women's Day.

The theme of International women's Day-2021 is 'Choose To Challenge'. “A challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change. So, let's all choose challenge. Collectively, each one of us can help create a gender equal world. We can actively choose to challenge stereotypes, fight bias, broaden perceptions, improve situations and celebrate women's achievements,” said Linkan Subudhi, founder of Seva Prayas Foundation.

Namrata Chadha, director of



Seva Prayas Foundation, said this rally is also a fund-raising event for project 'SPF eShiksha' to set up a digital classroom for the students of two villages of Nayagarh district. These students do not have mobile phones and laptops for online studies, she added.

The 15-km rally started from Janata Maidan and passed through Jaydev Vihar, Acharya Vihar, Vani Vihar and Rasulgarh, before culminating near Utkal Kanika Galleria at Kalpana Square.

On the occasion, seven women personalities were awarded with 'Kalinga Biraangana' awards in

seven different categories.

Similarly, a walkathon was also organised by Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar and Odisha Trekkers' Club for the cause of women's empowerment and positive health on the eve of International Women's day. Moreover, a host of events will be organised in the Capital City Monday to mark the occasion. A bike rally, titled #Ride For Women's Pride, will be organised by city women bikers' group, WE -The Road Queens, in association with the Commissionerate Police of Bhubaneswar.

The all-women bike rally will

highlight the contribution of women during Covid- 19 pandemic. “The bike rally will make people remember the exemplary role played by women health workers and women staff during the pandemic. Women doctors, health professionals, journalists and teachers have contributed a lot to our fight against the deadly virus,” said Sangeeta Sahoo of We-The Road queens.

Similarly, an event would be organised at Master Canteen Square in the city to observe the International Women's Day. The event would highlight issues related to gender violence, sources said.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-DayalAgency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9760656507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

WILL CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON MEETING CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS: ALISHAN



■ What has been the impact of Covid-19 on garments business?
The garment business has witnessed a slump in 2020-21 as compared to that in 2019-20. The Covid-induced lockdowns, shutdowns, restrictions and the obvious fear for life dealt a severe blow to the business. The business was not up to the mark from April to September. However, with the changing market scenario, there was a slight improvement in business by December. The situation is expected to improve further by the end of the current financial year.

■ Your business development plan for 2021-22?
There's no specific plan for this year, but our focus will be on meeting customers' expectations. We'll further develop

The Covid-19 triggered lockdowns and shutdowns in the country dealt a severe blow to all genres of businesses. Restrictions on public gatherings and the mandate to adhere to social distancing made marriages and other social events low-key. These limitations hit the garments business. Marriages were either postponed or celebrated in a stripped-down manner. However, with its strengths of customer relationship and employee friendliness, city-based Alishan came out of the pandemic unscathed. The showroom continues to train its focus on customers' satisfaction and has planned to develop the showroom by introducing more brands and newer collections. In an exclusive interview with **Orissa POST**, Jugal Agrawal, proprietor of Alishan, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar talks about his future plans and programmes. Excerpts

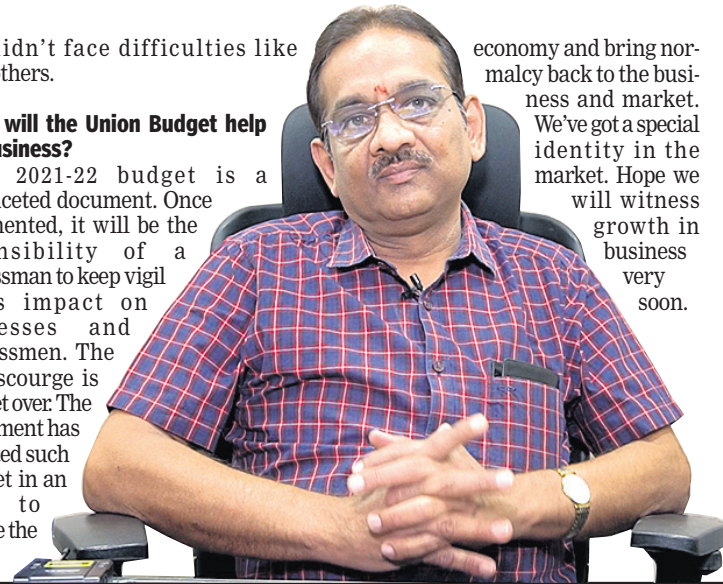
the showroom and introduce more brands as well as new collections. There's a lot of love and affection of customers towards the showroom. And we'll try to retain it. As usual, we'll provide discounts and a host of attractive offers on the items to serve the customers.

■ How many employees do you have in the showroom? How were they affected by the pandemic?
Currently, we have 30-40 employees. Although we suffered a lot owing to the pandemic, we ensured our employees didn't get into trouble. A business runs with customers and employees. As an owner and a human being, I continued facilitating the staff with all that I could at the hour of crisis as they have been working with me for a long time. Hence,

they didn't face difficulties like many others.

■ How will the Union Budget help your business?
The 2021-22 budget is a multifaceted document. Once implemented, it will be the responsibility of a businessman to keep vigil on its impact on businesses and businessmen. The Covid scourge is yet to get over. The government has presented such a budget in an effort to stabilise the

economy and bring normalcy back to the business and market. We've got a special identity in the market. Hope we will witness growth in business very soon.



40 women earning lakhs from chandua-making



Balasore, March 7: International Women's Day will be observed Monday that is March 8. It is a day when woman empowerment is highlighted. There are numerous tales of how women have become successful by the dint of their efforts and determination. One such example is an SHG of Srirampur under Baliapal block in Balasore. About 40 women in the group have become financially empowered by taking up the vocation of 'chandua' making. They are also making various other decorative items like jhumar, jhaleri, letter box, khadi bags, laptop and shopping bags. These items have good demand in local markets and even outside Odisha. The SHG named as 'Laxmi Home Works' was formed in 2009 with 40 women as members. All had deposited Rs 200 each. They were imparted training on chandua making by the DIC. Later, 28 of them took a loan of Rs 28 lakh from the DIC and started making chandua. They get orders from local markets, temples and private institutions. These items are sold in Digha, Kolkata, Kharagpur and Sagardeep in West Bengal and Pipili and Puri in Odisha. A chandua is sold for Rs 200 to Rs 2000 according to its size and decoration works. The SHG is earning Rs 2,00,000 to Rs 3,00,000 per month. SHG's president Chandrakanti Jena said that the loan taken from the DIC has been paid off. "The women have become self sufficient due to their hard work. The items are being sold at fairs and exhibitions organised by ORMAS and Mission Shakti," she informed.

Unused fly ash gives pollution headaches

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, March 7: Unused fly ash produced from the coal-based thermal power plants of various industrial firms has allegedly contributed to serious atmospheric pollution in Odisha. Reports said that the Odisha Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukh while replying in the State Assembly has said that the coal based power plants have produced over 22,82,38,135 metric tonne (MT) of fly ash during from 2012-13 till 2019-20. The minister was replying to a question posed by MLA Naba Charan Majhi in the State Assembly. Out of the total fly-ash produced 16,05,98,673 MT have been utilised in road construction, heightening of embankments and in manufacturing of bricks while 6,76,39,462 MT have remained unutilised. The huge volume of fly-ash remaining unutilised has contributed to atmospheric pollution in the state. However, the Odisha government has no detailed knowledge where the unutilised fly ash has been dumped. It has sparked fear on the industrial waste contributing polluting the atmosphere. Reports of farmlands in Sambalpur and Jharsuguda district getting damaged due to breach of embankment of fly ash pond is not new. This is indicative that



the industrial firms are not implementing the guidelines of Centre regarding use of fly ash. The minister however, admitted that rules are being followed in Kalinganagar industrial area. It is alleged that air pollution has assumed an alarming proportions due to fly ash produced from various factories in Odisha. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a notification February 15, 2019 in this regard. The notification directs not to establish clay brick kilns within 300 km radius of the thermal power plants but instead to establish fly ash brick kiln for proper use of the waste produced. It was also said that these power plants will supply raw materials as per the requirement of fly ash brick kilns functioning within their periphery. Accordingly flyash produced by the thermal power plants has been in use in manufacturing of fly ash bricks from 2012-13. Similarly, the thermal power plant of Jindal Stainless Steel has produced 5,98,355 MT of fly ash while 68,275 MT was produced by Visa Steel. The fly ash produced has been used in road construction, manufacturing of fly-ash bricks, cement and in levelling of fallow land. The plants where fly ash is stored is being utilised in phases, Arukh said in his reply in the State Assembly. The state government has relaxed rules for the fly-ash manufacturing units functioning in the interior areas of Odisha. The state government has said that these units do not require any consent letter of ten state pollution control board to operate. However, many kiln owners complained of not getting fly ash for manufacturing of bricks. When contacted, Pramod Kumar Behera, regional officer of SPCB said that industrial houses in Kalinganagar are providing fly ash on the basis of rules framed by the Union government.

2 days after Covid-19 positive report, doctor tests negative

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 7: A contractual doctor working as Assistant Surgeon at the Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) had recently tested positive for COVID-19 after receiving the 2nd dose of COVID-19 seventeen days back. However, his swab sample was retested again two days later and his report came out to be negative. Informing about the development, official sources Sunday said the 71-year-old doctor has tested negative for the virus in an RT-PCR test conducted at Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) in Bhubaneswar.

Group clash in Jajpur: 13 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur March 7: Balichandrapur police here detained 13 villagers in connection with torching of two police vehicles during a group clash that broke out at Panasudha village in Jajpur district late Saturday night. The clash between the two groups erupted over rights of a pindi (altar) for performance of Astaprahari rituals. A police team intervened to stop the clash, but some irate villagers set the police vehicles afire. The two police vehicles were reduced to ashes by the time firefighters reached the village.

Innovative farming: Youth scripts success story in Nabarangpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, March 7: While scores of educated youths in Nabarangpur district are jobless and frustrated, 26 year-old Ajit Kumar Nayak has become self sufficient by taking up farming. Most youths after the completion of their education, are reluctant to take up farming as a profession. However, Ajit has proved to be an exception to the rule. Now he is earning sufficiently to run his family. "Nabarangpur district is an agrarian region, where farmers eke out their living by farming paddy, maize and sugarcane. Farming needs a lot of labour and investment. The Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) has shown new ways and technology, making farming easy and cost effective," Ajit said.



He added that CIMAP has been conducting multidisciplinary high quality research in biological and chemical sciences and extending technologies and consultancy services to the farmers and entrepreneurs of medicinal and aromatic plants. Ajit also informed that the district administration is extending a helping hand to youths interested in farming. Ajit after completing B. Pharma has opened a medicine

port of the soap is provided, they are packed and sold in the market," informed Ajit. With help of CIMAP, he has cultivated bena chera (vetiver roots) on three acre of land and mentha in another three acre. Vetiver roots are known as 'khus khus' in India. It is an aromatic tall grass that boasts of medicinal benefits in traditional healing system. Initially, Ajit had cultivated the roots in five decimal of land and later expanded it. He has managed to extract two litres of oil from vetiver roots. "A litre of vetiver roots oil is sold for Rs 25,000. This farming is more profitable than paddy farming. Scientist of CIMAP Prashant Kumar Rout has been providing me all necessary technical consultancies in this matter," informed Ajit.



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा
Bank of Baroda

ZONAL STRESSED ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH, CUTTACK
Plot No.: CM-2B, 1st Floor, Sector-7, Near Market Nagar Police Station, CDA, Cuttack-753014, Odisha, India
Tel-0671-2361377, Mob.: 7077271333, E-mail: armcut@bankofbaroda.com

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
"APPENDIX-IV-A [See proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6)]
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 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), Mortgagor(s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged / charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Bank of Baroda**, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned accounts. The details of Borrowers / Mortgagors / Guarantors / Secured Assets / Dues / Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, Emd and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below -

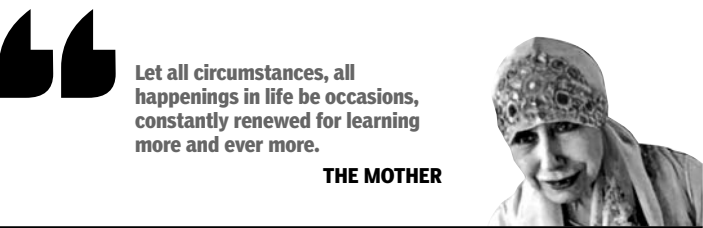
Sl. No.	Name & Address of Borrowers / Guarantors and Mortgagors	Description of Secured Assets with Boundaries	Total Dues (as per Demand Notice)	Date & Time of E-auction	Reserve Price EMD of the Property Bid Increment	Status of Possession (Constructive/ Physical)	Property Inspection Date
1.	Borrower: M/s. Jai balaji Industrial Alloy , Plot No.: 53, Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Proprietor: Mr. Ugrasen Sahu, Guarantors: (1) Mrs. Bina Sahu, W/o: Mr. Ugrasen Sahu, (2) Mr. Biswajit Sahu, S/o: Late Saroj Kumar Sahu, Corporate Guarantor: M/s Jagat Janani Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd. , all are At.: HIG Duplex B/13, Anand Vihar, Pokhripur, Bhubaneswar- 751020, Odisha.	Part of land admeasuring area 9302 sq.ft. out of Total area of 20081 sq.ft. (Ac.0.461 dec) situated at Khata No.: 184/265, Plot No.: 201/1144, Area: Ac. 0.100 dec, Plot No.: 199/1143, Area: Ac. 0.106 dec, Plot No.: 197/1142, Area: Ac. 0.094 dec, Plot No.: 198, Area: Ac. 0.020 dec, Plot No.: 195/1141, Area: Ac. 0.136 dec and Plot No.: 200, Area: Ac. 0.005 dec, at Mouza: Bhubaneswar Sahar, Unit No. 18, Paika Nagar, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Dist: Khurda standing in the name of M/s Jagat Janani Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd.	Rs.2,29,13,243/- + Interest + Other Charges	23.03.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.2,86,00,000/- Rs.28,60,000/- Rs.10,000/-	Symbolic	19.03.2021 & 20.03.2021
2.	Borrower: Mr. Dilip Kumar Nayak, Address-1: Plot No. 274, Atala, Ballianta, Bhubaneswar-752101, Address-2: Plot No. 270-A, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007, Guarantors: (1) Mr. Bidyadhar Nayak , Plot No. 270-A, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007, (2) Mr. Suresh Kumar Swain , 95/ A, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar- 751007.	Property -1: Land at Girigaput, P.S.: Chandaka, Dist: Khurda having Khata No.:145, Plot No.: 288, Area: Ac. 0.85 dec, Plot No.: 289, Area: Ac. 0.155 dec, Plot No.: 290, Area: Ac. 0.85 dec, Plot No.: 291, Area: Ac. 0.035 dec, Khata No.: 85, Plot No.: 287, Area: Ac. 0.270 dec, Plot No.: 276, Area: Ac. 0.55 dec, in the name of Bidyadhar Nayak . Property-2: Land at Sukutijhara, Tahasil: Dharamshala, Dist.: Jajpur, having Khata No.: 68, Plot No.: 259, Area: Ac. 3.00 dec. in the name of Bidyadhar Nayak .	Rs.6,49,60,065.58 + Interest + Other Charges	13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.2,54,64,000/- Rs.25,46,400/- Rs.10,000/-	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021
	Property-3: Land at Atala, Bhubaneswar having Khata No.: 356, Plot No.: 266, Area: Ac. 0.480 dec, Khata No.: 359/195, Plot No.: 267, Area: Ac. 0.610 dec. in the name of Bidyadhar Nayak .			13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.1,70,92,000/- Rs.17,09,200/- Rs.10,000/-	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021
	Property-4: Land at Atala, Bhubaneswar having Khata No.: 359/127, Plot No.: 273, Area: Ac 0.200 dec in the name of Bidyadhar Nayak .			13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.43,12,000/- Rs.4,31,200/- Rs.10,000/-	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021
	Property-5: Residential 3 BHK Flat with Flat No.: A-301, 3rd Floor, Indus Valley Apartment, Raghunathpur, P.S.: Chandrashekharpur, Bhubaneswar in the name of Bidyadhar Nayak .			13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.54,58,000/- Rs.5,45,800/- Rs.10,000/-	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021
3.	Borrower: M/s Rohit Sales & Services, Proprietor: Sri Rajendra Kumar Gupta , S/o: Sri Kanhaiyalal Gupta, Address-1: At.: Niliabag, Vivekananda Marg, Balasore- 756001, Address-2: Flat No.: 112, Ashok Nagar, Vinaydeep Apartment, Unit No.-2, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751009, Guarantor: Mrs. Ranjita Gupta , W/o: Sri Rajendra Kumar Gupta, At.: Niliabag, Vivekananda Marg, Balasore- 756001.	E qu i t a b l e Mortgage of land and building situated at : Plot No.: 811/2702/ 2857, Khata No.: 416/215, Area: Ac. 0.090 dec., Plot No.: 811/2694, Khata No.: 416/191, Area: Ac. 0.005 dec. & Plot No.: 811/2215, Khata No.: 329/1115, Area: Ac. 0.050 dec., having Total Area of Ac. 0.145 Dec, Mouza: Srikanthapur Unit No.13, PA: Balasore Town, District: Balasore in the name of Sri Rajendra Kumar Gupta .	Rs.5,23,81,418/- + Interest + Other Charges	13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.4,31,18,000/- Rs.43,11,800/- Rs.10,000	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021
4.	Borrower: M/s Sai Cold Storage , At: Plot No.: 260/981, Paikarapur, AU/PO: Paikarapur, Dist: Khurda-752054, Partners and Guarantors: (1) Mr. Suresh Ranjan Sahu , S/o: Mr. Sasadhar Sahu, (2) Mrs. Gitanjali Sahu , W/o: Mr. Suresh Ranjan Sahu, (3) Ms. Aishwarya Sahu , D/o: Mr. Suresh Ranjan Sahu, all are at: Plot No.2 (L-139), Lane No.1, Jagannath Vihar, Baramunda Housing Board Colony, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha.	Property-1: All that part and parcel of property in the name of Mrs Gitanjali Sahu over Plot No.: 261/1152, Area: Ac. 1.00 dec., Khata No.: 276/1263, Corresponding to previous Khata No. 276/259, Kissam: Bagayat-II, Mouza: Nuagaon, P.S.: Chandaka, Tahsil: Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar, Dist: Khurda and land & building in the name of M/s Sai Cold Storage (Lessor Mrs Gitanjali Sahu) at Plot No.: 260/981, Area: Ac.1.00 dec. over Khata No.: 276/408, corresponding to Previous Khata No. 276/70, Mouza: Nuagaon, SRO: Khandagiri, Thana No.: 51, Bhubaneswar, Dist- Khurda including plant & machinery.	Rs.8,08,25,395/- + Interest + Other Charges	13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.5,40,01,000/- Rs.54,00,100/- Rs.10,000	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021
	Property-2: EM of Land & Building in the name of Smt Gitanjali Sahu at Plot No.: 1606/2424, Area: Ac.0.090 dec., Khata No.: 456/144, Mouza: Paikarapur, SRO: Khandagiri, Kissam-Gharabari, Thana-No. 54, Bhubaneswar, Dist: Khurda.			13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.36,45,000/- Rs.3,64,500/- Rs.10,000	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021
5.	Borrower: M/s Satyajit International Pvt. Ltd. , Plot No.: 3817, Jayadev Nagar, Near Pantha Niwas, Bhubaneswar- 751002 / Managing Director: Mr. Satyajit Pattnaik , HIG-13, Phase- 2, AnantVihar, P.O.: Pakhariput, P.S.: Airfield, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha- 751020 / Director: Mr Tara Prasad Pattnaik , Plot No- MB- 91, Baragada Brit Colony, Baragada, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha- 751018.	Property -1: Land & Building in the name of S a t y a j i t International Pvt. Ltd. , at Plot No.: 5134/6160(P), Khata No.: 1478/185, Vill- Srikona, PS: Balasore Sadar No. 104, corresponding to IDCO Plot No.6, at IDCO's Ind Complex, Srikona, Balasore, Area: A 1.50 dec.	Rs.5,38,17,752/- + Interest + Other Charges	13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.61,05,000/- Rs.6,10,500/- Rs.10,000	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021
	Property-2: Land & Building in the name of Eastern Builders and Developers Pvt. Ltd. at Sabik Khata No.: 575/08, Sabaka Plot No.: 55/1877, Mouza: Patrapada, corresponding to Hal khata No.: 508, Hal Plot No.: 296, PS: Bhubaneswar No.8, Dist: Khurda, Area: Ac. 0.069 dec.			13.04.2021 02:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Rs.1,04,03,000/- Rs.10,40,300/- Rs.10,000	Symbolic	07.04.2021 & 08.04.2021

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.bankofbaroda.com/e-auction.htm> and <https://ibapi.in>

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE OF 15/30 DAYS AS APPLICABLE TO THE BORROWER/ GUARANTOR/ MORTGAGOR FOR SUBSEQUENT SALE UNDER RULE 8(5), 8(6) AND 9(1) AS PER AMENDED SARFAESI ACT 2002.

Date: 06.03.2021 Place: Cuttack

Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda



THE MOTHER

Long Road Ahead

There was widespread celebration as Kamala Harris became the first female US Vice President. But beyond the borders of the US, other countries, especially “developing” nations, were long past this milestone. Well before 1966, when Indira Gandhi became India’s Prime Minister, the country already had the first woman governing a State. Sarojini Naidu was Governor of Uttar Pradesh for two years from August 1947. Most of India’s South Asian neighbours – Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar have been or are led by a woman. When India had a woman Chief Minister of a State in 1963, Supreme Court judge in 1989, President in 2007 and Defence Minister in 2017, there was much to cheer. Yet these milestones have not solved the problems of Indian women, bettered their situations or advanced their positions at every level of society. Corporate India is an example.

An increasing number of women are heading companies, corporate groups, banks, financial enterprises, and public sector undertakings. If you look carefully, a token few, may be found in corporate board rooms. However, it is largely still talk: talk about the improving gender diversity in corporate India, and talk about bringing more women into leadership positions. While there is some improvement, or ostensibly at least the feeling that there is some improvement, the data indicates otherwise. According to figures from the database management company, Prime Database, the percentage of women CEOs in March 2019 was about 3.9% vs. 3.2% in March 2014. This shows that the percentage of women CEOs has remained almost stagnant over a five-year period.

Let us take a step back and ask ourselves why has the percentage of women on corporate boards not increased in proportion to the number of women entering the workforce? If I don my scientist’s hat, I would explain it as being “due to disproportionately high-altitude rarefaction effects.” This means that as one progresses higher up the corporate ladder there is a disproportionate decrease in the density of women compared to men. While there are many reasons for this anomaly, the primary one is that the road from the lower levels of the organisation to the C-suite has significantly more barriers for women than for men. These barriers broadly fall into two categories-societal and organisational.

In India, many of the societal barriers that women face have roots in patriarchal oppression. In a patriarchal system, sons are groomed to run the business. The daughters are conditioned to think that a woman’s place is at home. Such practices are hopelessly outdated in current times and have gradually eroded the confidence and enthusiasm of women. However, despite this thinking, women have shown that they are capable of taking care of the family and work, and being exceptional at both. Many of India’s large businesses are family owned and operated. While some family businesses have kept pace with changing times, and have accepted daughters into the business, others remain steadfastly rooted in the past and have shut their doors to daughters. If gender bias is pervasive at the promoter level, it will obviously percolate down through all levels of the organisation.

Organisational barriers such as pre-conceived notions and stereotyping of women are products of social conditioning. Creativity, decisiveness, collaboration and transparency are among the qualities that define truly great leadership. But they aren’t always recognised or appreciated in women. For example, research shows that when men and women display identical levels of creativity, men are evaluated as being more innovative and considered more deserving of praise and reward. Women’s creativity just isn’t seen for what it is or touted to the same extent as men’s creativity. Although decisiveness is appreciated and lauded in men, projecting authoritativeness through decisive actions is often perceived as arrogance when women engage in it. There is little doubt that all of these qualities, which research shows can be critical for success, are embodied in today’s female leaders. However, they are perceived through the lens of outdated social conditioning. Women are overlooked, for a variety of reasons, when it comes to promotions despite being competent and qualified. Some of the primary reasons are centered around life events such as marriage and childbearing and the responsibilities that come along with them. Managers often have unfounded concerns that such life events will negatively impact a woman’s performance at work. The few women that are able to overcome these headwinds, soon find out that the headwinds only get stronger; and that they have to fight harder as they progress up the ladder to the boardroom. Only the strongest and the most resilient make it.

It is only when the road to the boardroom is cleared of these unfair barriers, and women have equal access as men to mentorship, training and development can true gender parity be achieved in corporate boardrooms. The onus lies squarely on the occupants of the boardroom. It is not enough to have women on the board as a token, or to check a box for regulatory compliance. It should be because the leadership recognises the unique benefits that qualified and competent women can bring to the business.

Research shows that combining people of different backgrounds results in “cognitive diversity,” which enhances collective problem-solving. McKinsey and Credit Suisse have each produced research showing that companies serious about gender diversity and inclusion achieve superior financial results. Gender diversity creates positive benefits when society believes in its intrinsic value, and not just as a mere obligation. Professor Letian Zhang of Harvard Business School in his research on 1,069 leading firms across 35 countries and 24 industries found that gender diversity relates to more productive companies, as measured by market value and revenue, only in contexts where it is viewed as “normatively” accepted. Normative acceptance means a widespread cultural belief that gender diversity is important. There were positive effects of diversity in societies with normative acceptance of working women, but not in societies with only regulatory support. We all know that without biodiversity our planet will be in peril, similarly, without gender diversity global economies will be in peril. The time to act is now.

On the occasion of International Women Day, let us be inspired by the words of the late astronaut Kalpana Chawla: “The path from dreams to success does exist. May you have the vision to find it, the courage to get on it and the perseverance to follow it.”

The writer has a doctorate in nuclear engineering and is a technology consultant with 23 years of work experience in Fortune 500 companies. She is leading the fight against gender bias in the Murugappa group, her family’s ₹37,000 crore industrial conglomerate.

©THE BILLION PRESS

WISDOM CORNER

- Find ecstasy in life; the mere sense of living is joy enough. EMILY DICKINSON
- Elegance is inferior to virtue. MARY SHELLEY
- Try to be a rainbow in someone’s cloud. MAYA ANGELOU



Shivaji Sarkar

THE BENEFIT OF LOWEST CRUDE PRICES OF \$19 A BARREL DURING 2020 LOCKDOWN WAS NEVER PASSED ON TO THE CONSUMERS



Valli Arunachalam

Women are overlooked, for a variety of reasons, when it comes to promotions despite being competent and qualified. Some of the primary reasons are centered around life events such as marriage and childbearing and the responsibilities that come along with them



Ian Buruma

THE PROTESTERS’ HOPE FOR A US INTERVENTION SHOWS THAT AMERICA’S IMAGE AS THE CHAMPION OF GLOBAL FREEDOM IS NOT YET DEAD

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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

FOCUS PRICE RISE

SILENT KILLER OF ECONOMY



The spiraling prices across the board are impacting production and costs of different commodities, though the producers are aware that each hike has an impact on consumption in an economy that has gone into recession with high job losses

Despite crude prices rising since the opening of the lockdown, the prices are far lower than some years ago when the absolute peak occurred in June 2008 at \$148.93 a barrel or near \$120 in 2012-13. In February 2021, the OPEC basket stood at \$59.58 and Brent crude at \$57.97. Brent crude reached \$50 in December 2020.

Ideally, the benefits should have been passed on to the recession-hit, job-losing consumers. This could have been a sign of relief. The high taxes on the fuel have hit every individual, business and agriculture. Diesel prices in India were kept low for its low production cost as also because it is bellwether for the economy. The concept was to keep inflation low and help people in every aspect of life grow without any subsidy. The present pricing policy needs to be changed for a faster growth and ease of life.

As per an RBI report of February 2021, every \$10 a barrel increase in crude prices leads to an additional \$12.5 billion deficit, roughly 43 basis points of Indian GDP. So expecting the government to pass on the entire benefit of low prices may not be rationale. But what is being dumped on the consumers is far more than they can

bear. A policy standard for linking the consumer prices to the bulk crude prices is required to stop bleeding of the entire economy, including its base agriculture.

Fiscal deficit is rising and is likely to touch \$18.48 lakh crore for a total 2021-22 budget of ₹34.83 lakh crore or 9.5 per cent of the GDP. In reality, it would be a borrower’s economy. The fiscal deficit had breached the annual target in July 2020. It had soared to a seven-year high of 4.6 per cent of GDP in 2019-20.

This calls for national deliberation. It has become a politically scoring point but no discussion takes place on how the nation could bridge the expenditure and revenue earning gap. The high development expenses on roads, hydel or thermal power projects or race for arms industry are not trickling down.

The discussion is needed also for the reason that eight core industries’ output could rise by a mere 0.1 per cent in January 2021. Except for fertilizer, steel and electricity the rest – coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products and cement recorded negative growth. The core sectors had expanded by 2.2 per cent in January 2020. The

anaemic growth in core also reflects that physical production has declined by 8.8 per cent for the year.

There is a linkage to the core sector growth and prices. Inflationary pressures reduce the purchasing capacity of the people causing severe demand slump. It calls for prudent economic measures right from reducing fuel price burden on the consumers to resorting back to low diesel prices, often being opposed by ecologists supported by global petro giants for boosting their sales.

They want to do away with diesel so that a country like India increases its oil purchase by three times. The nation cannot afford such a luxury. India has to set its own ‘Swadeshi Atmanirbhar’ course for helping its economy boom. It also has to make its electioneering affordable for an average person. Unwise decisions are making electioneering an expensive proposition, particularly for smaller parties even though larger parties supposedly flushed with cash get the jitters too. Why not? Every party ferries crowds to meetings of their top leaders and transportation costs have shot up. Truck rentals have gone up 10-12 per cent, as fuel consists 45 per cent of its operational cost. The cost of raw material and packaging is increasing.

The food and vegetable transportation cost rises by Re 1 a kg, jet fuel prices, 40 per cent of airlines’ costs, have surged by about 50 per cent per kl in seven months to January. Even online food aggregators Swiggy and Zomato are hiking payments to absorb the increased cost of fuel. After the spectrum sale at ₹77,147 crore, phone connectivity will also be expensive adding to the prices in every segment.

Prices are a priority issue. The rupee has been hit too. A review of the policies is needed to lead the country towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s goal of a \$5 trillion economy. But a high cost economy could be a hiccup.

INFA

SPECTRUM WORLD ORDER

Asian demonstrators & the American dream

One month ago, in Myanmar, protesters against the military coup gathered around the United States embassy in Yangon. They called on President Joe Biden to make the generals go back to their barracks and free Aung San Suu Kyi from detention. Her party, the National League for Democracy, won a big victory in the 2020 general election, which is why the generals, afraid of losing their privileges, seized power.

But is the US embassy the best place to protest? Can the US president do anything substantial apart from expressing disapproval of the coup? The protesters’ hope for a US intervention shows that America’s image as the champion of global freedom is not yet dead, even after four years of Donald Trump’s ‘America First’ isolationism.

Demonstrators in Hong Kong last year, protesting against China’s harsh crackdown on the territory’s autonomy, even regarded Trump as an ally. He was erratically hostile to China, so the protesters waved the stars and stripes, hoping that America would help to keep them free from Chinese communist authoritarianism.

America’s self-appointed mission to spread freedom around the world has a long history. Many foolish wars were fought as a result. But US democratic idealism has been an inspiration to many as well. America long saw itself, in John F.

Kennedy’s words, as a country “engaged in a world-wide struggle in which we bear a heavy burden to preserve and promote the ideals that we share with all mankind.”

As Hungarians found out when they rose up against the Soviet Union in 1956, words often prove to be empty. The Hungarian Revolution, encouraged by the US, was crushed after 17 days; the US did nothing to help those it had egged on.

Sometimes, however, freedom has been gained with American help, and not just against Hitler’s tyranny in Western Europe. During the 1980s, people in the Philippines and South Korea rebelled against dictatorships in huge demonstrations, not unlike those in Hong Kong, Thailand, and Myanmar in the last two years. So, of course, did people in the People’s Republic of China, where a ten-meter tall “Goddess of Democracy,” modeled on the Statue of Liberty was erected on Tiananmen Square in 1989.

The Chinese demonstrations ended in a bloody disaster, but pro-democracy forces toppled Ferdinand Marcos’ dictatorship in the Philippines and South Korea’s military regime. Support from the US was an important factor. In Taiwan, too, authoritarianism was replaced by democracy, again with some US assistance. But what worked in the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan is unlikely to work in Thailand, Hong Kong, or Myanmar.

The main reason is that the former three countries were what leftists called “client states” during the Cold War. Their dictators were “our dictators,” protected by the US as anti-communist allies.

Propped up by American money and military largesse, they could continue to oppress their people, so long as the US saw communism as a global threat. Once China opened for business and Soviet power waned, they suddenly became vulnerable.

Similarly, when South Korean students, supported by much of the middle-class, poured into the streets, angry not only with their military government, but with its US backer, America finally came down on the side of democracy. Dependent on American military protection, the generals had to listen when the US urged them to step aside.

The generals in Thailand and Myanmar have no reason to do likewise. Biden can threaten sanctions and voice his outrage. But with China willing to step in as Myanmar’s patron, the junta has no reason to worry very much.

Thailand’s rulers, too, benefit from Chinese influence, and the country has a long history of playing one great power against another. And because Hong Kong is officially part of China, there is little any outside power can do to protect its freedoms, no matter how many American flags people

wave in the streets.

Dependence on the US in Europe and Asia, and the clout that Americans held as a result, was sustained by the Cold War. Now, a new cold war is looming, this time with China. But US power has been greatly diminished since its zenith in the twentieth century. Trust in American democracy has been eroded by the election of an ignorant narcissist who bullied traditional allies, and China is a more formidable power than the Soviet Union ever was. It is also vastly richer.

Countries in East and Southeast Asia still need US support for their security. As long as Japan is hindered from playing a leading military role, because of a tainted past and a pacifist constitution, the US will continue to be the main counterweight to China’s increasing dominance. But as Thailand’s debt balancing of powers demonstrates, US allies are unlikely to become “client states” in the way some were before. Even the South Koreans are careful not to upset their relations with China. The US is far; China is near.

Being a “client state” can be humiliating. Yet, the day may come when some people, somewhere, might miss Pax Americana, when the US was powerful enough to push out the unwanted rascals.

The author is a writer and editor.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Attitudinal shift for a gender-just world

Sir, As the theme for this year’s International Women’s Day goes – Let us “Choose to Challenge”- for with challenge comes a chance to break the barriers of gender discrimination. Women’s rights around the world are an important indicator to understand global well-being. Impossible as it may sound, it is indeed a challenge to achieve a gender-just world, but the task is laid out for us to firmly make concerted efforts at local and national levels to bring women to parity with men. An attitudinal shift is also essential to break the glass-ceiling. It is indeed sad that even after a decade of implementation of the National Rural Health Mission which is aimed at eradicating persistent inequalities in maternal health-care, the health outcomes of both mother and child are yet to reach the targets set by international conventions. The Covid-19 pandemic has unveiled a number of discrepancies in utilising such services. Pregnant women and newborns are losing lives for want of admission to hospitals and also due to lack of medical attention because of diversion of the health machinery to concentrate on Covid cases. There is therefore an urgent need to apply a human rights-based approach to reduce maternal mortality and it is the duty of health agencies and fore-runners of health departments to ensure that transparency and accountability are maintained in such a crucial issue as health. Women have become victims of various forms of violence and discrimination. There are innumerable forms of sexual violence that are reported every day in the news, not to speak of those that remain untold. In addition to all this, new barriers have emerged with the pandemic. Across the world women are facing increased domestic violence, unpaid care duties, unemployment and poverty. Women make up a majority of front-line workers, but there is inadequate representation of women in national and global policy spaces. Indeed, it is a violation of human rights when babies are denied food, or drowned or suffocated or their spines broken, simply because they are born girls. It is violation of human rights when women and girls are sold in the slavery of prostitution. It is a violation of human rights when women are doused with gasoline, set on fire and burned to death because their marriage dowries seem too small. It is a violation of human rights when women are victims of rape. It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families and enjoy their reproductive rights. It is a violation of human rights when women in rural areas are denied access to sustainable livelihoods in poor economies.

K Ravi, BHUBANESWAR

‘Sticky bombs’: Public asked not to leave vehicles unattended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, March 7: Suspecting that ‘sticky bombs’ may have entered the valley, security forces are redrawing their standard operating procedures and also advising general public not to leave their vehicles unattended, officials said Sunday.

In the middle of last month, the Jammu and Kashmir police recovered an arms consignment consisting of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) with an in-built magnet which could be placed on any vehicle and exploded with the help of a timer or a remote.

The magnetic IEDs, known as ‘sticky bombs’, have found their maximum use in war-ravaged Afghanistan where Taliban used them against US-led allied forces and in Iraq and Syria where IS terrorists have triggered them against the government forces.

The ‘sticky bombs’, dropped by terrorists sitting across the border in Pakistan using drones, were recovered in Samba sector of Jammu region along the International Border on February 14.

Immediately after their recovery, a video originated from across the border on social media which gave step by step instructions about its usage and triggering mechanism, a development which took the security agencies back to the drawing board for redrawing its Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) for their movement. The video issued in the name of People’s Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), believed to be a shadow outfit of the banned Lashker-e-Taiba terror group, explained about magnetic bombs and its damage capabilities.

The video, originally used in Afghanistan training modules, has been given a voice over in Kashmiri language explaining how to use this bomb for more and effective damage of the target, the officials said.



SOPS REDRAWN

- ▶ The magnetic IEDs, known as ‘sticky bombs’, have found their maximum use in war-ravaged Afghanistan where Taliban used them against US-led allied forces and in Iraq and Syria where IS terrorists have triggered them against government forces
- ▶ The ‘sticky bombs’, dropped by terrorists sitting across the border in Pakistan using drones, were recovered in Samba sector of Jammu region along the International Border February 14
- ▶ Suspecting that ‘sticky bombs’ may have entered the valley, security forces are redrawing their standard operating procedures

ism, a development which took the security agencies back to the drawing board for redrawing its Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) for their movement. The video issued in the name of People’s Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF), believed to be a shadow outfit of the banned Lashker-e-Taiba terror group, explained about magnetic bombs and its damage capabilities.

The video, originally used in Afghanistan training modules, has been given a voice over in Kashmiri language explaining how to use this bomb for more and effective damage of the target, the officials said.

plained about magnetic bombs and its damage capabilities.

The video, originally used in Afghanistan training modules, has been given a voice over in Kashmiri language explaining how to use this bomb for more and effective damage of the target, the officials said.

Rohingyas living in Jammu fear deportation

More than 13,700 foreigners, including Rohingya Muslims and Bangladeshi nationals, are settled in Jammu and Samba districts, where their population has increased by over 6,000 between 2008 and 2016, according to government data

REUTERS

Srinagar, March 7: Indian police have detained more than 150 Rohingya refugees found living illegally in the northern region of Jammu and Kashmir and a process has begun to deport them back to Myanmar, two officials said Sunday.

Dozens of Rohingyas are in a makeshift “holding centre” at Jammu’s Hira Nagar jail after local authorities conducted biometric and other tests on hundreds of people to verify their identities.

“The drive is part of an exercise to trace foreigners living in Jammu without valid documents,” said one of the two officials, who declined to be named as they are not authorised to speak to the media.

“We have started the process of deportation of these refugees,” the official added. The Union government scrapped Jammu and



Rohingya Muslims leave their settlement for a centre following a police verification drive, in Jammu, Sunday. PTI PHOTO

Kashmir’s special status in August 2019 and now administers the region from New Delhi.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas were forced to flee their Buddhist-majority homeland after a crackdown by Myanmar’s military in 2017. Most are in ramshackle camps on the border with Bangladesh. Myanmar denies accusations of genocide and says the army was fighting a legitimate counter-insurgency campaign.

Rohingyas living in Jammu said they were concerned about the weekend’s detentions and the threat of deportation.

“We will go back when peace returns to our country,” said Sufeera, 28, who said her uncle and brother had been sent to the holding centre, leaving her alone with her children. Another refugee, 48-year-old Sadiq, said members of his family had also been detained.

“We have been told that we will

be deported,” he said. “They took mother and father ... Who will take care of them?”

India rejects a United Nations position that deporting the Rohingyas violates the principle of ‘refoulement’ – sending refugees back to a place where they face danger.

Rohingyas staying in India have said conditions are not conducive for them to return to Myanmar after fleeing violence and persecution over the years.

Rawat told to go strict on ‘resentment’ in party

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dehradun, March 7: The BJP high command has asked Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat to take “serious action” in the face of the simmering resentment within a section of the state party MLAs and MPs who are opposed to his style of functioning, top party sources said here Sunday.

The high command’s decision to send former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh to hold an unscheduled meeting of the core committee Saturday in Dehradun when the Assembly session was discussing the state budget at Gairsain has raised many eyebrows both in the Chief Minister’s camp as well as that of his opponents.

“Something is going on. Just wait

and watch,” said a top party leader on the condition of anonymity. A reshuffle as well as the expansion in the state cabinet is also on the cards, the sources said.

The Chief Minister along with the party MLAs was asked to fly to Dehradun by helicopter in the afternoon on Saturday soon after the budget session of the state assembly was adjourned sine die in a hasty way.

“There was something very serious indeed when the party high command suddenly decided to send Raman ji to Dehradun without any prior information to the CM’s office,” a source close to the Chief Minister said. However, the party observers here claim that the party high command is not in favour of a change of guard for the time being. The party high command is likely to



summon CM Rawat to New Delhi shortly.

“We believe Rawat is likely to travel to New Delhi to hold further discussions with the party high com-

mand before they take any future decision,” a senior party leader said. In this context, the leader pointed out that Raman Singh was sent to Dehradun as an independent ob-

server which itself was a surprise element in the core committee meeting. “In normal circumstances Dushyant Kumar Gautam, who is the in-charge of the party affairs in the state is himself a competent to hold such meetings. But the high command by sending Raman Singh has made it a point that it was very serious on the political affairs in the state,” the leader said.

State BJP President Bansidhar Bhagat when contacted stated that the core committee meeting did not discuss anything related to the change of guard in the state. “I have made it clear earlier also that there was no discussion on change of guard,” he said. On March 18, CM Rawat will complete four years in office, an event which will be celebrated in a big way in the state, Bhagat said.

Copper craftsmen hope for better times ahead



REUTERS

Srinagar, March 7: The end of lockdown brought some relief for Kashmir’s traditional copper utensil makers, renowned for their immaculate craftsmanship, but their industry is under threat and their earnings low.

Copperware, locally known as “Traam”, is deep-rooted in Kashmiri culture and is famous for intricate calligraphic engraving that requires extensive time and labour.

Feeling the ever-increasing competition from modern gadgets and home appliances, artisans and sellers were dealt a severe jolt last year by a months-long lockdown imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“The lockdown troubled us; we didn’t get to do any work. There is a slowdown in the market,” said a shopkeeper, Mushtaq Ahmed, in downtown Srinagar.

Artisans, mainly based in the old quarters of Jammu and Kashmir’s summer capital Srinagar, engrave the traditional samovar used for boiling water; cutlery sets

We have been labouring for the past 40 years but there has been barely any change in our compensation, it’s almost the same as we used to get about 20 years back

GURMOHAMMAD SHEIKH | ARTISAN

and other utensils considered a part of every Kashmiri family’s heirlooms.

However, their numbers are dwindling as they turn to other ventures to make ends meet.

Artisan Gurmohammad Sheikh said copper had become very expensive while their profits had remained the same.

“We have been labouring for the past 40 years but there has been barely any change in our compensation, it’s almost the same as we used to get about 20 years back,” he said.

Country’s first forest healing centre comes up in U’khand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, March 7: The country’s first forest healing centre based on the concept of making people healthy by bringing them into direct contact with nature was opened to the public Sunday at Kalika near Ranikhet, an official said.

Signboards on either side of its sloppy entrance advise visitors to hug trees, walk barefoot on the grass, lie on their back and gaze at the swaying trees or the ever changing sky above to soothe their senses.

Cute little wooden structures called tree platforms have been built for the purpose of providing visitors a perfectly natural ambience to meditate.

Drawing inspiration from the Japanese technique of forest bathing (shinrin - yoku), the healing centre has been developed by the research wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department after a detailed study of the revitalising impact of forests on human health, Chief Conservator of Forest Sanjiv Chaturvedi said.

Spread over an area of around 13 acres, the centre was inaugurated by noted environmentalist from Ranikhet Joginder Bisht.

The visitors can indulge in several activities at the centre including forest walking, tree hugging, forest meditation and sky gazing.

It has been found that because of typical molecular vibration patterns of trees, tree hugging has a very beneficial impact on increasing the level of feel good hormones in the body like oxytocin, serotonin and dopamine, Chaturvedi said.

The healing centre has been established in a pine dominated forest as it has been found in various studies that conifers like pine trees emit certain oil compounds to safeguard themselves from various microbes & pathogens, which are called phytoncides, he said.



Drawing inspiration from the Japanese technique of forest bathing (shinrin - yoku), the healing centre has been developed by the research wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department after a detailed study of the revitalising impact of forests on human health

SANJIV CHATURVEDI | CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FOREST

It has been found in various researches that these compounds help to multiply natural killer cells in our blood, which help in fighting infections and cancerous growth and enhance overall immunity, he said. It has also been found in various

researches that these compounds have a very positive impact on decreasing level of stress hormones and have a relaxing effect, he said. The forest healing centre maintains a register in which visitors can share their experiences.

The signboards also advise visitors to leave behind phones, cameras or any other distractions to feel the sensations a direct contact with nature sends to the brain, Chaturvedi said.

‘Mass movements still occurring in Himalayan state’



HIMALAYAN BLUNDER

According to a report released by the Ministry of Earth Sciences last year, the Hindu Kush Himalayas experienced a temperature rise of about 1.3 degrees Celsius during 1951-2014

The increase in temperature has led to micro climatic changes and faster glacial retreat in Uttarakhand, thereby triggering frequent and recurrent flash floods

A recent independent analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CCEW) says more than 85 per cent of districts in Uttarakhand, home to over nine crore people, are hotspots for extreme floods and its associated events

Studies say the Indian government aims to construct 292 dams throughout the Himalayas, doubling current hydropower capacity and contributing approximately six per cent to projected national energy needs by 2030

If all dams are constructed as proposed, in 28 of 32 major river valleys, the Himalayas would have one of the highest average dam densities in the world, with one dam for every 32 km of river channel

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 7: High resolution satellite imagery indicates that mass movement activities are still occurring where the rock and ice collapsed that led to a disaster in Uttarakhand last month, as per latest observations of national and international scientists.

In case of another slope failure and avalanche, this can be critical for people and infrastructure downstream, close to the riverbed.

On the another disaster in the making, scientists working under the Glacier and Permafrost Hazards in Mountains (Gaphaz) -- a standing group of the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences and the International Permafrost Association -- believe large volumes of material have been eroded and deposited along the river channel. In combination with water from rivers, snow melt, heavy (monsoon) rainfall or overflow of temporary lakes, debris flows can be triggered from these depositions.

They say erosion by the flood probably has undercut some slopes, and this instability could affect roads, villages and other infrastructure located far above the riverbed. Scientists and environmental organisations are still researching the cause of floods in Chamoli district. Early findings reveal that a major rock or ice avalanche detached itself at an elevation of about 5,600 m above sea level from a north facing slope northeast of Trisul Peak in the

Nanda Devi mountain. This caused the massive floods in the Rishiganga and Dhauliganga rivers that left 204 people missing out of which 72 bodies have been recovered so far.

Analysis of satellite imagery from the area shows this event occurred due to failure deep within the bedrock of the mountain, and the glacier ice was most probably entrained with the collapsing block of bedrock.

The falling mass covered an area of around 0.2 km. They explained to IANS the depth of the failure plane is more than 100 metre below surface, where no seasonal temperature variations are expected.

The zone is in permafrost conditions, meaning ground temperatures are perennially below zero. Speculations are that heat fluxes from the warmer south face of the mountain to the colder north face, where the avalanche detached, could have warmed the frozen bedrock, leading to the avalanche.

Furthermore, liquid water from snow and ice melting could have infiltrated the bedrock in cleft systems and destabilised the rock through freeze-thaw processes.

Historical imagery also indicates that a similar event has occurred in the neighbouring glacier just east of the current in September 2016. However, the initiation of the failure as well as the eventual trigger of the avalanche remains unclear. Unstable geological configuration and steep topography can, on its own, be a sufficient driver of large slope failures.

of the day quote

You (PM Modi) have made many empty promises. People will not accept your falsehood every day. We demand you make LPG cylinder affordable for every citizen of the country. You have made LPG cylinders inaccessible for the common man

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

I say to them (people), why do you come to me for such small things. MPs, MLAs, village mukhiyas, DMs, SDMs, BDOs. These are all under obligation to serve the people. If they do not listen to you, pick up a bamboo stick with both hands and give a crushing blow on their head

GIRIRAJ SINGH | UNION MINISTER

For over 100 days, farmers are sitting on the borders of Delhi, but the government is not concerned. The government, in fact, is being run by the friends of the Prime Minister

PRIVANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

Yedi to present K'taka Budget today

Bangalore: Amid the Covid pandemic and its year-long fallout, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa is set to present the state Budget for ensuing fiscal year 2021-22 in the Assembly Monday, an official said Sunday. Since Yediyurappa took over the reins of the southern state as Chief Minister for the fourth time July 26, 2019, he tabled in the House the state Budget then JD-S chief minister HD Kumaraswamy presented February 8, 2019 for fiscal 2019-20 and got it passed by voice-vote July 29, 2019 to ensure continuity.

2 dead in Maha road mishap

Jalna: Two people were killed and two injured after a truck rammed into their hut in the early hours of Sunday in Nidhodna area of Jalna, police said. All four are labourers from Madhya Pradesh working at a site of the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Corridor, and the deceased have been identified as Dhanikram Bhumiya (24) and his kin Mukesh Bhumiya (23), a Chandanjhira police station official said.

Four Naxals held in Dantewada

Raipur: Four Naxals, one of them carrying a reward of ₹1 lakh on his head, were arrested from two places in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district Sunday, police said. While three of them were apprehended from a forest between Etepal and Jhakotta villages under Kuakonda police station limits, a Maoist commander was held near Medpal village under Arampur police station area, they said. Separate teams of District Reserve Guard (DRG), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and District Force were involved in these actions, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava.

Tiger dies

Bhopal: A 20-year-old tiger died Sunday while being treated for a variety of ailments in Bhopal's Van Vihar National Park, an official said. The tiger, called Munna, was brought from Mandla in October, 2019 and both his legs were paralysed, he said. "It stopped eating from March 2 and the big cat's condition deteriorated further. It was 20 years old and died of old age-related ailments," he added.



In India too, women have made their mark in every sphere of life. With their distinguished role in all walks of life, they have contributed significantly to the progress of the nation

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

DAY TO CELEBRATE

The Telangana government has declared a holiday for all women employees in the state on Monday on the occasion of International Women's Day

International Women's Day



China talks peace, prosperity with India

“CHINA, INDIA ARE EACH OTHER’S FRIENDS AND PARTNERS NOT THREATS AND RIVALS,” CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI SAID

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Beijing, March 7: China Sunday talked peace, partnership and prosperity with India, insisting that it is committed to settling the boundary dispute with New Delhi through dialogue and consultations.

After troops of both countries disengaged along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh last month, New Delhi had warned Beijing over a week ago that it was not in the interest of either side to prolong the remaining boundary issues.

At his annual press meet, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Sunday said that the right and wrong of what happened in the border area last year are clear, so are the stakes involved. "It again proves initiating confrontation will not solve the problem. Returning to peaceful negotiation is the right way forward,"



he said. China's position, he said, is very clear. "We are committed to settling the boundary dispute through dialogue and consultations," he said, adding that at the same time the Xi Jinping regime has resolved to safeguard its sovereign

rights and interest.

The foreign minister said, "China and India are each other's friends and partners and not threats and rivals. Both need to help each other succeed instead of undercutting each other; we should intensify co-

operation instead of harboring suspicion over each other."

The boundary dispute, an issue left from history, is not the whole story of the China-India relationship, he said. "It is important that the two sides manage the dispute properly and at the same time expand and enhance cooperation to create enabling conditions for settlement of the issue."

Following the disengagement along the LAC in Pangong Tso area, there has been no progress over other disputes in Gogra-Hot Springs area, Demchok and Depsang plains.

However, Sunday, Wang said it falls on both sides to solidify existing consensus, strengthen dialogue and communication and improve the various management mechanisms to jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

In the year ahead, he said, Beijing hoped that India will work with

China to truly deliver on important common understanding of the leaders of the two countries that India and China are not threats to each other but opportunities to each other's development.

Together, the Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi governments can bring greater benefit to the people of China and India, and make greater contribution to efforts for an Asian century, the Chinese Foreign Minister said.

The China-India relationship, he argued, is essentially about how the world's two largest developing countries get along and pursue development and rejuvenation together, he said that. "As two ancient civilisations next door, and two major emerging economies each with over one billion people, China and India have broad common interests and tremendous potential for cooperation," Wang pointed out.

Another farmer commits suicide near Tikri border



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 7: A 49-year-old farmer from Haryana's Hisar district on Sunday allegedly hanged himself from a tree, about seven kilometers from the Tikri border protest site, police said.

The farmer, who supported the agitation against Centre's new farm laws, has purportedly left a suicide note, they said. "The victim, Rajbir, hailed from a village in Hisar district. He was found hanging from a tree," Bahadurgarh City police station SHO, Vijay Kumar said over phone.

His body was found hanging by some farmers who informed the police. In the suicide note purportedly left behind by Rajbir, it is mentioned that the three farm laws were responsible for him to take the extreme step. He also said that the Centre should fulfil his last wish by repealing the legislations, police said. Last month, a farmer from Jind in Haryana who was also supporting the agitation against the Centre's farm laws had allegedly hanged himself from a tree, merely two kilometres from the Tikri border protest site. Earlier, another farmer from Haryana had allegedly consumed a poisonous substance at the Tikri border. He had died during treatment at a Delhi hospital later.

In December last, a lawyer from Punjab had allegedly killed himself by consuming poison a few kilometres away from the protest site at the Tikri border: Thousands of farmers have been protesting since November last year at Delhi borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, demanding a rollback of the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

Delhi among top 3 states with most contaminated sites

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: The national capital stands third on the list of states and Union territories with most contaminated sites, according to the Central Pollution Control Board data.

There are 112 sites in India contaminated by toxic and hazardous substances. Besides, there are 168 sites that may be contaminated

but require investigation and confirmation, as per the CPCB.

Odisha tops the list with 23 contaminated sites, followed by Uttar Pradesh (21) and Delhi (11). Bhalswa and Ghazipur landfill sites, industrial areas at Jhilmil, Wazirpur, New Friends Colony, Dilshad Garden and Lawrence Road are among the 11 contaminated sites in Delhi.

Also, there are 12 "probably contaminated sites" in the na-

tional capital. According to the Union Environment Ministry, 'Contaminated Sites' are delineated areas in which the "constituents and characteristics of the toxic and hazardous substances, caused by humans, exist at levels and in conditions which pose ex-

isting or imminent threats to human health and the environment". Contaminated sites may include production areas, landfills, dumps, waste storage and treatment sites, mine tailings sites, spill sites, chemical waste handler and storage sites located in various land uses.

Remediation work has been started to clean up 14 contaminated sites in 7 states on the directions of the National Green Tribunal. These states include Gujarat, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.



A flock of Egret birds on a pond, on the outskirts of Amritsar

PTI PHOTO

Cong, DMK finalise seat sharing for TN polls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 7: Congress and the DMK Sunday finalised a seat sharing deal for the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls.

The seat sharing deal was signed between DMK President MK Stalin and Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) President KS Alagiri. Congress will get a total of 25 seats. The party will contest from the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha seat where by-election will take place following the death of H.Vasanthakumar, the sitting MP.

Former Union Minister and senior BJP leader Pon Radhakrishnan is the BJP candidate from the seat. In the 2019 general elections, Vasanthakumar had defeated Radhakrishnan by a margin of more than 3 lakh votes. The Congress wanted 45 seats, but the DMK was adamant to offer a maximum of 21. Highly placed sources in the Congress told IANS that a late night call by Rahul Gandhi to MK Stalin contributed towards clinching the deal, with the Congress getting 25 Assembly seats and a possible Rajya Sabha seat. The Congress has also been in direct talks with Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNMM) for a third front initiative after the DMK was not willing to budge.

While speaking to IANS, AICC General Secretary (Organization) KC Venugopal said: "We were certain that the Congress-DMK seat sharing will end smoothly as we are into a political alliance for the past several years." Meanwhile, TNCC President Alagiri told IANS: "The seat sharing between the Congress and DMK has went off smoothly. We are old allies and we have settled the matter. Of course during seat sharing, there will be certain issues and there was nothing more than that.

‘Ready to take up any responsibility’

The ‘Metroman’, who is all set to contest the assembly polls on a BJP ticket, had recently resigned from the post of DMRC’s Principal Advisor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 7: 'Metroman' E Sreedharan Sunday said he was ready to take up any responsibility given to him by the BJP, which he had recently joined.

Speaking at a rally attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, at nearby Shangumugham, Sreedharan said he wanted to utilise his energy for the state of Kerala. "For the last 67 years I was a government servant. Many people have asked me why I ventured into politics after these many years. For 67 years, I worked as part of many projects for this country."

"I am still energetic and want to utilise my energy for the state of Kerala. Whatever responsibility is given to me I will take it up with all courage and energy," he said at the rally marking the culmination of the



Vijay Yatra taken out by BJP state president K Surendran from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram, ahead of the April 6 assembly polls. Days ago, Sreedharan had said his main aim was to help the BJP to come to power and hewasopen to chief ministership, to which the party isyet to respond.

In the 2016 elections, the saffron party, had won only one seat in the 140-member assembly. Shah also wrapped a shawl around Sreedharan

welcoming him into the BJP.

Speaking at the rally, Shah was all praise for the 88-year old former technocrat, who was part of various development projects in the country. "I would like to say a few words about Sreedharan ji. An engineer and a teacher, who was part of various developmental projects. He is known as Metroman because he constructed the first Metro in the country. But we cannot ignore his engineering marvel- the Konkan Railway- which connected southern India to the rest of the country in a rapid manner," Shah said. "I am already 56. Many times, I have felt that it's time to stop. But even at his age, Sreedharan ji is energetic and ready to work for this country. I would like to salute him. The infrastructure developer, Metroman has decided to join BJP for the nation building," Shah added.

UP farmers face days-long line just to get sugarcane weighed

FARMERS ALSO CLAIM THAT SUGAR MILLS ARE PROCURING SUGARCANE AT ₹325 PER QUINTAL, LOWER THAN THE GOVERNMENT-FIXED MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE OF ₹385

AGENCIES

Muzaffarnagar (UP), March 7: As thousands of farmers lay siege to Delhi borders for over 100 days demanding the repeal of three contentious farm laws, those staying back in Western Uttar Pradesh have to endure a different kind of long wait - at times for multiple days just to get weighed quintals of sugarcane lying in tractor-trolleys on their way from farms to mills.

Some pass their time chit-chatting about the ongoing protests, others while smoking bidis or cigarettes, but all of them sound worried about loads of sugarcane drying under a scorching sun, while Punjabi and

Haryanvi songs continue to blare out loudly, either from their mobiles or small speakers fitted in their vehicles. Also, problems for them are much more beyond the three laws that have been in limelight due to the protests at the national capital borders. Almost a hundred tractor-trolleys, each loaded with 300 quintals of sugarcane on an average, can be seen parked in a barren field near the Bhopada weighing scale in Budhana tehsil here, barely two kilometres from the Dhampur sugar mill - the final destination of the load and their carriers after days-long 'weighing' halt. Some drivers, many of them farmers with small landholdings, even have



Representative image

arrangements made for sleeping on cots fitted under their 'trollys' (customised and bigger trolleys used to transport sugarcane).

"It has been two days since I am waiting at this weighing scale and looks like it will take me another two

days for my work to be done so that I can take my stock to the sugar mill," Rohit Balyan, who hails from Kutba village, told PTI.

"The exhausting long wait at weighing scales hurts farmers because the sugarcane load starts

drying up under the sun and by the time one's turn comes for measurement, the weight comes down a bit," the 21-year-old Balyan said while lighting up a cigarette borrowed from a friend waiting next in the queue. However, mill owners put the blame for the delay in weighing the crop on farmers growing sugarcane way beyond the daily intake capacity of the mills and also on lack of weighing facilities in the region.

They also claim that sugar production from the region is often in surplus vis-a-vis the market demand and therefore they do not have enough incentives to further enhance their processing facilities.

of the day quote

The people of India will not accept this. The people of Bengal have made up their minds that those who are with Lord Ram, they will be with them

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

The Jawans succeeded due to good strategy and use of force and had dealt a body blow to Naxals in their Abujhmad stronghold, and this would reduce the activities of the ultras in the region in a big way

ANIL DESHMUKH | MAHARASHTRA HOME MINISTER

Received a call from US Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad @US4AfghanPeace. Discussed latest developments pertaining to peace talks. We will remain in touch

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

UP to get 16 new ITIs soon

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued directives to set up 16 new Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) based on a PPP model, across the state. The move is a part of the initiative to make the youth efficient and skilled and to provide them decent job opportunities. According to the government spokesman, the admission process to the 16 new ITIs at various districts in the state will begin from August 2021.

Cong MLA gets death threat

Betul: A Congress MLA from Madhya Pradesh has alleged that he has received a death threat and lodged a police complaint into the matter, an official said Sunday. Nilay Daga, the legislator from Betul, in his complaint said he received a phone call from an unidentified person Saturday evening.

Narcotics seized

Thiruvananthapuram: Three Sri Lankan fishing boats, carrying unauthorized communication equipment and narcotics, were seized by the Indian Coast Guard off Minicoy, following which a joint and detailed probe has been launched by concerned agencies. The three boats-- Akash Duwa, Chathu Rani 03 and Chathu Rani 08, with totally 19 men on board, were intercepted by the coast guard ship 'Varaha' in the Indian territorial waters about seven nautical miles off Minicoy March 5, for moving in a suspicious manner.

Woman raped

Muzaffarnagar (UP): A 28-year-old woman was allegedly raped by a man in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district, police said. The victim had gone to relieve herself in the fields when she was sexually assaulted, they said. The incident took place in a village under the Thana Bhavan police station area Saturday, police said.

4 shops gutted

Thane: Four shops were gutted in a fire in a shopping complex in Maharashtra's Thane city early Sunday morning, a civic official said. No casualty was reported, he said. The fire broke out in the shopping complex located in Noopur building at Lokpuram in Pawar Nagar area around 5 am, Thane Municipal Corporation's Regional Disaster Management Cell (RDMC) chief Santosh Kadam said.



I salute the entire medical fraternity from doctors to nurses, para-medical staff and sanitary workers, technicians and ASHA workers in villages, who, as Team India came together as one to fight the pandemic

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

6 states reporting high daily COVID-19 cases



AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 7: Six states including Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab and Gujarat are reporting high daily COVID-19 cases, accounting for 84.71 per cent of the 18,711 new cases, the Union Health Ministry said Sunday. Maharashtra continues to report the highest daily new cases at 10,187. It is followed by Kerala with 2,791 while Punjab reported 1,159 new cases. The Centre is continuously engaging with the states and UTs reporting higher caseload of active cases and those showing a rise in the daily new COVID cases, the ministry said.

It has deputed high-level teams to Maharashtra and Punjab, that are showing steep increase in the daily new cases. The other states reporting high daily COVID-19 cases are Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Eight states are displaying an upward trajectory in daily new cases, the ministry highlighted. India's total COVID-19 active cases increased to 1.84 lakh (1,84,523) which now consists of 1.65 per cent of the total infections.

According to the data, 100 deaths were reported in a span of 24 hours. Six states account for 87 per cent of the new deaths. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (47). Kerala follows with 16 daily deaths. Punjab reported 12 deaths.

In the past two weeks, 10 states have not reported any COVID-19 deaths while 12 states reported between 1 and 10 deaths. Nineteen states and UTs have not reported any COVID-19 deaths in a span of 24 hours. These are Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand,

'Indian Covid vax rescued the world'

HOUSTON: The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines by India in collaboration with leading global institutions has "rescued the world" from the deadly coronavirus and the contributions by the country must not be underestimated, a top American scientist has said. The country is one of the world's biggest drug-makers and an increasing number of countries have already approached it for procuring coronavirus vaccines. Dr Peter Hotez, Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) in Houston during a recent webinar said that the two mRNA vaccines may not impact the world's low and middle income countries, but India's vaccines, made in collaboration with universities across the world such as BCM and the Oxford University, have "rescued the world" and its contributions must not be underestimated.

Sikkim, Lakshadweep, Ladakh (UT), Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Tripura, Mizoram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Arunachal Pradesh.

As on Day-50 of the vaccination drive (6th March), more than 14 lakh vaccine doses were given.

India orders Assam Rifles to prevent influx from Myanmar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 7: The Union Home Ministry has asked the paramilitary Assam Rifles to prevent any Myanmar national from crossing into Indian territory and push back any found attempting to cross over. The Assam Rifles guards the India-Myanmar border in the northeast, while the BSF guards the border with Bangladesh.

Top sources in the paramilitary force said that the "instructions from the top" was clear and unambiguous - no Myanmar national should be allowed to enter India without valid visa or travel permit.

The India-Myanmar border has a Free Movement Regime (FMR) which allows tribes living along the border to travel 16 km across either side without visa restrictions and on a simple permit issued by

local authorities.

There are over 250 villages with over 300,000 people living within 10 km of the border who frequently cross through 150 small and large formal and informal crossings.

The order follows the considerable embarrassment now faced by New Delhi after Myanmar officially asked for immediate return of eight policemen who had crossed over and sought shelter in the northeastern state of Mizoram.

The policemen told state authorities that they were hounded down by the army after they refused to open fire on peaceful demonstrators in the Chin state. One Indian intelligence official said the Myanmar people are perhaps not yet aware of all those who have fled the country and had confirmed information about only eight policemen whose repatriation has been sought.



Mithun joins BJP



AGENCIES

Kolkata, March 7: Veteran actor Mithun Chakraborty Sunday joined the BJP at Brigade Parade Ground here ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mega rally.

Chakraborty was welcomed into the fold by BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya and state president Dilip Ghosh among others. The National Award-winning actor, after being handed the saffron party flag by Ghosh, said he had always wanted to work for the underprivileged, and the saffron camp has given him a platform to fulfil his aspiration.

He also asserted that he was proud to be a Bengali.

"I always wanted to do something big in life, but had never dreamt of being a part of such a huge rally which is to be addressed by world's most popular leader Narendra Modi. I wished to work for the poorer sections of our society, and that wish will now be fulfilled," he said.

Amid huge cheers from supporters, Chakraborty, borrowing a dialogue from one of his films, said, "Ami joldhorao noi, bele borao noi... Ami ekta cobra, ek chobol-ei chobi (Don't mistake me for a harmless snake, I am a cobra, can kill people in one bite)," he said. Vijayvargiya,

PRISONS RECEIVE VAX

The Delhi Prisons Department said that around 85 per cent jail staff and over 58 per cent security personnel deployed in three jails under it have received COVID-19 vaccine shots



Dengue, malaria danger grips Bhopal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, March 7: Amid the increasing number of Covid-19 patients, the threat of dengue and malaria has started looming large in Bhopal. This is the reason that check-up campaigns are being run in various areas in the state capital.

It has been reported that in various areas of the city, extra-sensitive areas, slum areas and other settlements, there is a possibility of increasing dengue larvae, malaria, and spread of coronavirus. Hence, the campaign is being run at a broader level under which rapid tests and blood slide collection are being done.



A total of 29 teams have been constituted in the city to check dengue larvae

District Malaria Officer Akhilesh Dubey said that a campaign is being run for the prevention of malaria by appointing teams in different areas. Nearly 799 people have been tested so far for malaria in Bhopal through rapid tests.

Children are at the most risk of get infected by the malaria. Therefore, the District Malaria Officer has suggested people to make children wear full sleeves clothes and use mosquito nets. People can also smoulder neem leaves. If someone has fever at the home, get him tested at the nearest hospital at earliest.

The teams have so far surveyed 1,015 houses out of which 20 have been found with larvae. Around 8,000 utensils have also been checked at various places and dengue larvae was found in 20 of them. Dengue larvae were destroyed by spraying Temephos.

3 fishermen die after consuming liquor like liquid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagapattinam/Rameswaram, (TN) March 7: Three fishermen died after they consumed a liquid found in a container floating in the sea, mistaking it to be foreign liquor, fisheries department officials said Sunday.

A 38-year old fishermen died onboard the boat itself, another aged 40 was declared brought dead at a hospital in Nagapattinam and a 26-year old man succumbed while undergoing treatment Sunday, they said.

They were among a group of six fishermen from the Rameswaram region that ventured into the sea from nearby Kodiakarai March 1.

Their bodies were brought to Rameswaram late Sunday and buried. According to the three others who accompanied, the fishermen had spotted the container Saturday. They opened it and drank the liquor like substance inside. All three fainted some time later.

CHEERFUL MOOD



Indian Army officers during a media interaction, a day before International Women's Day, at South Block lawn in New Delhi

Free entry for women visitors to all ASI monuments

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 7: As the International Women's Day is observed on March 8 every year to salute the struggles of women, the Central government has announced a major gift to the women across the country. On March 8, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has decided to allow free entry to women visiting protected monuments across the country.

This order has been issued by the ASI Joint Director General (monuments), M. Nambirajan. According

WOMEN'S DAY GIFT



to this order, Indian and foreign women tourists would be given free entry on International Women's Day across all protected monuments and archaeological sites.

There are 3,691 monuments protected by the Central government

under the ASI. On Monday, there would be free entry for women to monuments like Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Qutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb, Sun Temple, Ellora caves, Khajuraho and Ajanta caves.

The main purpose of International Women's Day is to make people aware of the honour and rights of women. Women are also honoured on this day in offices, schools, government institutions, etc. so that they could feel special on this day. Several programmes are also organised at various places across the country.



PILS. This is the Lutyens Delhi culture that Modi talked about in 2014 when he came to Delhi as PM. Since then, Modi has been tightening screws and Babus have become nameless & faceless class. The Lutyens' Delhi knew Nripendra Mishra, PM's Principal Secretary. But no one even recognizes when the new Principal Secretary PK Mishra walks in the mornings in the Lodhi Gardens. Modi wants to end Babus direct interaction with the businessmen completely and doggedly pursuing the 'faceless' resolution of grievances. But the babus never got the bashing in public. But they were crestfallen when Modi had a dig at them in the Lok Sabha the other day saying 'babus are not experts that they should run airlines, chemical factories, steel and everything. They cannot run each and every facet of the country.' The government has been failing to attract buyers for PSUs and Modi

feels babus are to be blamed for it and gave them public bashing.

Business & border inter-linked

Modi has made two major changes while dealing with China and Pakistan; one is that Business bonhomie and Border confrontation can't go together and two; External Affairs Ministry will not be allowed to dominate decisions of the Defense forces on the ground/borders. The new policy is a departure from the past by the successive Congress governments or even the Vajpayee government. In simple terms, it meant that whenever there was a report of anything untoward incident happening on the borders with Pakistan and China, an officer of the Ministry of External Affairs will rush to the strategic committee of the Defence Ministry. This officer

will hold the writ and give the go-ahead to retaliate by the forces in provocative situations. This tied the hands of the forces to every extent. The previous government and even Modi kept the border issues pending and went about doing business with China and Pakistan.

No relief for Chinese companies

Prime Minister Modi continues to be tough with the Chinese despite some gestures shown by retreating from the Pongon Tso areas in Galwan Valley. The Modi government has refused to relax conditions relating to its Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from across the border and strict conditions imposed in April 2020. As many as 150 proposals of investment amounting to \$2 billion in Indian companies from China are pending for clearance since April 2020.

Even the trade between the two countries has come down \$85.5 billion in 2019 to \$77.7 billion during 2020. This is more than Rs 50,000 crore in a single year. This is the biggest fall in trade between the two countries. Earlier, any FDI investment from China was through an automatic route. But the rules were tightened April, 17, 2020 and it was stipulated that no country sharing borders with India or any of its citizens or companies can automatically invest in India. Such entities and persons will have to seek prior approval of the government. The amended rules bar automatic investments from other neighboring countries like Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and other countries too. In all, Chinese companies have made 2,474 investments in Indian companies and ventures. PM Modi had banned hundreds of Chinese apps and had slowed approvals for investments from the neighbour.

Uneasiness in Sangh Parivar too

If there is a problem in the Congress, there are signs of uneasiness in the Sangh Parivar too though reasons are entirely different. Needless to say, the RSS leadership has been extremely happy with the Modi government for many feats; abolition of Article 370, building of Ram Temple, CAA, triple talaq, placement of RSS workers in key positions etc. But it is upset over Sardar Patel Stadium being named after Narendra Modi. The RSS has always been opposed to the 'Vyakati Pooja' (individual worship). No one in the RSS is willing to comment about it. But privately many in the Sangh Parivar ideologues feel that it did not set a good example particularly when Modi is a true disciple of the RSS philosophy and culture.

of the day quote

The US is urging Iraq to quickly investigate the incident at the base located in western Anbar province and determine who was responsible. US officials have said the incident fit the profile of a strike by Iran-backed militia



LLOYD AUSTIN | DEFENSE SECRETARY, US

High levels of inequality are associated with economic instability, corruption, financial crises, increased crime and poor physical and mental health. Crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law have a key role in renewing the social contract between states and their populations



ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL, UN

China will not change the course of promoting friendship and cooperation (with Myanmar), no matter how the situation evolves. Instead, Beijing will try to bring about reconciliation by engaging with all relevant parties



WANG YI | FOREIGN MINISTER, CHINA

SHORT TAKES

Saudi-led coalition strikes

Cairo: The Saudi-led coalition fighting Iran-backed rebels in Yemen said Sunday that it had launched a new air campaign on the country's capital and other provinces, in retaliation for missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia. "The targeting of civilians and civilian facilities is a red line," Col. Turki al-Maliki, a spokesman for the coalition, was quoting as saying by the official Saudi Press Agency. He was referring to the missile and drone strikes on Saudi cities in recent weeks that the Iranian-backed rebels, known as Houthis, had claimed.

S African Hindus host prayer meet

Johannesburg: Three South African Hindu organisations hosted a prayer meeting here Sunday for global peace, amidst the coronavirus outbreak. Besides a yajnya (fire ceremony), priests and individuals from Malaysia, Singapore, Kenya, Germany, the US, Indonesia, Mauritius, Nigeria and India delivered discourses. Groups from the participating countries rendered devotional songs and dances in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi and Sanskrit.

Oli receives Covid vax jab

Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli took the Covishield coronavirus vaccine Sunday, as the Himalayan nation gears up to start phase II of its immunisation drive in which all persons above 65 years will be inoculated. Oli and wife Radhika Shakya received the Covishield jabs at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital Sunday morning.

Explosion on Gaza kills three

Gaza City: Three Palestinian fishermen were killed Sunday after a blast ripped through their boat off the Gaza shore, union officials said. Nezar Ayyash, of the fishermen syndicate, said the anglers — two brothers and a cousin — were plying their trade off the coast of the city of Khan Younis in southern Gaza Strip when the explosion happened. The cause of the blast was not immediately clear.



I think this is one of those issues we were always bound to have in the early stages of our new relationship with our friends in the EU and the various technical issues that we are going to iron out

BORIS JOHNSON | PRIME MINISTER, BRITAIN

NEPAL SC ANNULS UNIFICATION

Nepal's SC annulled the unification of the ruling NCP's factions and paved the way for them to be divided into two separate parties. The SC ruled that the original NCP is headed by Kattel and not PM KP Sharma Oli or the faction led by 'Prachanda'



US Senate passes \$1.9tn Covid relief Bill

After a session that lasted more than 24 hours, the upper chamber Saturday approved the Bill, called the 'American Rescue Plan', by a vote of 50 to 49

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, March 7: The evenly split US Senate has narrowly passed a \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 relief bill after a marathon overnight session, with lawmakers voting along party lines.

After a session that lasted more than 24 hours, the upper chamber Saturday approved the bill, called the 'American Rescue Plan', by a vote of 50 to 49, with Senator Dan Sullivan, a Republican from Alaska, missing the vote, reports Xinhua news agency.

The so-called "vote-a-rama", a long series of amendments votes, initially began Friday morning, and was delayed for hours as Democrats struggled to convince Senator Joe Manchin from West Virginia, a moderate, to support their provision on unemployment benefits. After a lengthy negotiation, Manchin and Senate Democrats fi-



nally reached a deal, allowing the "vote-a-rama" to resume shortly before midnight. A motion to adjourn until Saturday morning proposed by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell narrowly failed.

The amended bill includes a \$300 weekly federal unemployment benefit through September; instead of the \$400 in the House-approved package. It also added a provision to make the first \$10,200 of unem-

ployment payments tax-free for households with incomes of less than \$150,000.

The \$1.9-trillion measure, a major legislation for President Joe Biden, also includes a new round of up to \$1,400 of direct payments for Americans, \$350 billion for state and local governments, support for hard-hit small businesses, as well as funding to directly combat the pandemic.

Senators voted through the night



Streams of red hot lava shoot into the night sky during an eruption of the Pacaya volcano, as seen from Los Rios, Guatemala

REUTERS

Iranian-British national ends 5-yr sentence in spy case

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tehran, March 7: A British-Iranian woman held in an Iranian prison for five years on widely refuted spying charges ended her sentence Sunday, her lawyer said, although it remains unclear when she can leave the country.



Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was able to remove her ankle bracelet for the first time since she was released from prison on furlough last March because of the surging coronavirus pandemic, the lawyer said. She has been under house arrest at her parent's home in Tehran since.

Beijing, March 7: China will operate bullet trains in Tibet, close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh before July this year, marking the opening of high-speed train services to all Chinese mainland provincial-level regions, a senior official has said.

A 435-km rail link to the regional capital of Lhasa will run Fuxing high-speed trains powered by both internal-combustion and electricity, Lu Dongfu, board chairman of China State Railway Group Company Limited, told state-run Xinhua news agency Saturday. Construction started in 2014 on the railway line connecting Lhasa with Nyingchi in eastern Tibet. It is the first electrified railroad in Tibet and is slated to begin operations in June 2021.

The track-laying work was completed by the end of 2020, the report said. The railway has a designed speed of 160 km per hour, according to Tibet Railway Construction Company Limited, a subsidiary of

China State Railway Group. China aims to extend the total length in operation of its high-speed train network to around 50,000 km by 2025, up from 37,900 km by the end of 2020, Lu said.

The high-speed railway network will cover 98 per cent of cities with over 500,000 residents, he said.

China's self-developed Fuxing trains now operate at a speed range of 160 kmph to 350 kmph, Lu said. China is ramping up the train network in the country's south-east Tibet Autonomous Region connecting its remote parts with the Chinese mainland. Last December, the track-laying work was completed for a railway line linking the cities of Lhasa and Nyingchi in Tibet close to Arunachal Pradesh.

The Sichuan-Tibet Railway will be the second railway into Tibet after the Qinghai-Tibet Railway. It will go through the southeast of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, one of the world's most geologically active areas.

China aims to extend the total length in operation of its high-speed train network to around 50,000 km by 2025, up from 37,900 km by the end of 2020

Myanmar protests: Suu Kyi party official dies in custody

REUTERS

Yangon, March 7: An official from the party of deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi died overnight in police custody, associates said, while security forces cracked down on demonstrators staging some of the most widespread protests against last month's coup.

The cause of Khin Maung Latt's



death was not known, but Reuters saw a photograph of his body with a bloodstained cloth around the head. Sithu Maung, a member of the dissolved parliament, said in a Facebook post that Khin Maung Latt was his campaign manager and was arrested on Saturday night in the Pabedan district of Yangon. Police in Pabedan declined to comment.

Pak seeks economic re-engagement with US

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, March 7: The Pakistan government is looking to explore economic avenues to re-engage with the new US administration under President Joe Biden, with a possibility of exploring investment under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The government has formed an apex committee to work on finding avenues of economic ventures to put forward to the new Biden administration.

The committee comprises a 14-member ministerial team, which will meet next week to contemplate on different ranges and domains of economic and commercial proposals, aimed at re-aligning relations with the US.

However, matters related to national security and defence cooperation are not to be tabled during the committee's meeting.

As per the agenda, the Imran Khan-led government aims to revive economic ties with Washington. This comes at the backdrop of slow progress on the CPEC during the tenure of the ruling Pakistan



Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi is the Chairman of the apex committee.

"The government wants to re-engage the Joe Biden administration in areas of trade, investment, energy and economic cooperation, which had also remained the common grounds for discussion during former President Barack Obama's term," said a government official.

It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan is also seeking the US' support to options of availing financial lines with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund open.

The US administration came in Pakistan's support to bail it out by the IMF the last time, using its influence to waive core conditions of the programme.

Swiss vote on proposal to ban face coverings in public

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, March 7: Swiss voters delivered their verdict Sunday on a proposal to ban face coverings, both the niqabs and burqas worn by a few Muslim women in the country and the ski masks and bandannas used by protesters. A projection after polls closed pointed to a very close result.

The measure would outlaw covering one's face in public places like restaurants, sports stadiums, public transport or simply walking in the street.

There would be exceptions at religious sites and for security or health reasons, such as the face masks people are wearing now to protect against COVID-19, as well as for traditional Carnival celebrations. Authorities would have two years to draw up detailed legislation.

The Swiss government opposes the measure and says that people covering their faces is a "marginal" issue. It argues the measure could harm tourism — most Muslim women who wear such veils in



Switzerland are visitors from well-heeled Persian Gulf states, who are often drawn to Swiss lakeside cities. And it says that it wouldn't help the women affected.

It backs instead requiring people to show their faces if requested to do so by authorities.

Supporters of the proposal, which is coming to a vote five years after it was launched and has come to be known colloquially as the "burqa ban," argue that the full-face coverings symbolise the re-

pression of women and say the measure is needed to uphold a basic principle that faces should be shown in a free society like Switzerland's.

A projection for national public broadcaster SRG after polls closed put support for the proposal at 51%, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Pre-referendum polls had suggested that backing had eroded over recent weeks, and a close result was expected.

'Covid negatively affected women's income, health, security'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, March 7: The Covid-19 pandemic has negatively affected women's income, health and security, and now there is a "magnified problem" of the impact of care burden that is precluding them from re-joining the workforce, top Indian-origin official at the UN Women Anita Bhatia has said ahead of the International Women's Day.

Bhatia, the Assistant-Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of New York-based UN Women, a United Nations entity working for the empowerment of women, stressed on the need for women-focussed policies as nations strive to build back better.

"One year into the pandemic, we



are seeing the real impact of all this playing out. But one thing has become crystal clear through the pandemic which wasn't so clear at the beginning, is the impact of the care burden that women have," she told PTI in an interview Saturday.

Ahead of the International Women's Day which is on March 8, Bhatia said that the impact of the pandemic on women has been disproportionate relative to the impact on men, with women's income, health and security begin nega-

One year into the pandemic, we are seeing the real impact of all this playing out. But one thing has become crystal clear through the pandemic which wasn't so clear at the beginning, is the impact of the care burden that women have

ANITA BHATIA, ASST SECRETARY GENERAL & DEPUTY EXEC DIR, UN WOMEN

tively affected due to the global health crisis. She said that women were doing three times as much unpaid care as men before the pandemic and this number has "exponentially increased" because the care burden has fallen dispro-

portionately on women, who are doing housework, helping children with homework, ensure there is food on the table. "The new problem that we are seeing now, one year into the pandemic, is not only that women lost jobs. It's that even as economies open up, you are not finding women going back to their jobs in the same numbers," Bhatia said.

As the pandemic hit, there was an already declining labour force participation of women around the world. "When you add to that, the huge impact of the care burden, what you see is a magnified new problem, which is the impact of the care burden on women, and how that is precluding them from going back to work in the same way as before," she said. Bhatia cau-

tioned that if this continues to play out the way it is, countries will see a decline in productivity because half the population is not working.

Declines in productivity will be followed by a fall in GDP because the pie is getting smaller. "It is absolutely imperative that as governments think about building back better, they think very explicitly about what does this mean for women. How do we make sure that women are at the center of the response.

And that we are doing everything we can to make sure that we are growing our economies and not shrinking them," she said.

Bhatia emphasised that the issue of care burden on women is not a family or an individual issue but a public policy one.

business

of the day quote

We now plan to go into interior parts of the country as we have already established our sales network in the big cities. The company needs to bolster its presence in smaller cities, towns and rural areas as the demand for Glanza and Urban Cruiser is much stronger in such areas

NAVEEN SONI | SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, TKM

We are launching the e-tron in India. Not just one model, we are going to launch two models: the e-tron and the e-tron Sportback. We are going to launch in the next 2-3 months. Right now we are in the process of planning this

BALBIR SINGH DHILLON | INDIA HEAD, AUDI

There was a general trend of people moving from broadcast television to more OTT but that got accelerated during Covid. We understand that people subscribe to multiple OTT services and want to make it easier to access these and so, we are bundling multiple OTT services with our package

VIVEK RAINA | CEO, EXCITE

SHORT TAKES

Ambani launches 'Her Circle'

New Delhi: Reliance Foundation chairperson Nita Mukesh Ambani Sunday launched a social media platform 'Her Circle' aimed at empowering women. Her Circle is envisioned to be a one-stop destination to provide women-related content that is engaging and uplifting-oriented even as it connects women through a social platform. "I am delighted that we can create such a circle of support and solidarity for millions of women through HerCircle.

MFs selling spree continues

New Delhi: Mutual funds pulled out Rs 16,306 crore from equities in February, making it the ninth consecutive monthly outflow as small investors booked profit amid a rally in stock markets. Gopal Kavalireddi, head of research at FYERS, said this trend of redemptions could continue till the time stock market rally slows down and consolidates, giving investors the opportunity to deploy their profits into longer time frame instruments like mutual funds.

PVR eyes 1,000 screens by FY'23

New Delhi: Multiplex major PVR plans to invest Rs 150 crore to open up to 40 screens across the country in the next fiscal. The company's target of having 1,000 operational screens has been pushed by a year due to the Covid outbreak, to the end of fiscal 2022-23, a top company official said. "We had to push back our plan by exactly a year because of the pandemic. By the end of 2022-23, we should be able to reach 1,000 screens," Sanjeev Kumar Bijli, Joint MD, PVR Ltd said.

Jungo TV launches Jungo Plus app

New Delhi: The US-based streaming media company Jungo TV is betting big on the Indian market and has launched its Jungo Plus app that will deliver free live TV and video-on-demand content. The app will house content from Hollywood blockbusters to passion-centric content verticals like combat sports, LGBTQ, K-pop, international and Indian traditional music among other categories.



The onset of the pandemic has given a boost to welcome digital and API based banking in India with most salaried respondents already being highly comfortable with digital banking

SANDEEP SONPATKI | PARTNER, DELOITTE INDIA

GOVT PROPOSES TO RAISE LIC'S AUTHORISED CAPITAL

The government has proposed to significantly increase the authorised capital of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) to Rs 25,000 crore to facilitate its listing slated for the next fiscal. Currently, the paid-up capital of the life insurance firm with over 29 crore policies is Rs 100 crore



India Inc's biz confidence highest in decade: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: FICCI's Overall Business Confidence Index has witnessed a decadal high of 74.2 in the current round on account of improvement in present conditions as well as expectations, the industry body said Sunday.

The Index had stood at 70.9 in the previous survey and 59 a year ago, noted the survey. It revealed recovery of demand conditions, improved capacity utilisation and a promising outlook on various operational parameters.

With regard to the constraining factors for business, the demand situation has improved on back of the release of the pent-up demand build up during the lockdown.

However, rising raw material costs is emerging as a bothersome factor for members of India Inc. The rise in fuel and other commodity prices is beginning to exert pressure on the input costs of com-



panies, FICCI stated on the survey.

Companies participating in the survey cited high input costs including man power costs, weak demand conditions and lack of availability of affordable credit as their top-most concerns for the year 2021.

A near-unanimity was observed as far as input costs were concerned. This along with high interest costs

on loans, higher inward and outward transport and logistics costs, greater compliance burden on the back of frequently changing statutory compliances and increased manpower costs are further pushing the cost of doing business in India, FICCI stated.

This does not bode well in the current environment wherein a

IMPROVEMENT IN CONDITIONS AS WELL AS EXPECTATIONS HAS PULLED THE OVERALL BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX VALUE TO A DECADAL HIGH IN THE CURRENT SURVEY

OUTLOOK ON EMPLOYMENT AND EXPORTS REPORTED A VISIBLE IMPROVEMENT, AS ABOUT 35% RESPONDENTS WERE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BETTER HIRING PROSPECTS OVER THE NEXT TWO QUARTERS

shift in global supply chains is being witnessed, it added.

"In this context, respondents also added that leaving trade policy issues unaddressed will create an even bigger challenge with China as well as other countries including Vietnam regaining market share to become global suppliers.

"Lack of adequate export incentives is also making it difficult for Indian entrepreneurs to compete

globally," the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) stated.

Improvement in conditions as well as expectations have pulled the Overall Business Confidence Index value to a decadal high in the current survey, FICCI said.

The Union Budget 2021-22 has been forward looking, said FICCI.

This, together with measures announced as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package, has infused optimism among industry members and the same is corroborated in the improved outlook for various operational parameters, it added.

Improved economic conditions and greater pricing power are likely to drive profits of corporate India over the next two quarters. The percentage of participants citing higher profits over next six months increased to 36 per cent in the latest survey from 33 per cent respondents stating likewise in the previous round, the survey showed.

FUND FLUSH

Banks slash home loan rates to decadal lows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 7: Flushed with excess liquidity as general credit demand still way below the desired levels, leading home loan players State Bank of India, HDFC, ICICI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank have slashed their rates to a decadal low, leaving consumers spoilt for choices.

The interest rate war comes as banks are sitting on huge excess liquidity which as of last week was over Rs 6.5 lakh crore, according to Care Ratings. Excess liquidity is a drag on the banks' bottomlines as they have to pay interest to depositors which are as low as 2.5% now, though.

The rate war also comes on the back of continuous prodding by the monetary authority which has slashed the repo rates by a whopping 200 bps since March 2020 to 4 per cent to help revive the economy ravaged by the pandemic, but still credit demand remains under 6%.

According to the RBI data, home loan growth decelerated in FY21 due to the pandemic, though the decline in fact began in March 2020. From 17.5 per cent in January 2020, home loan growth halved to 7.7



per cent in January 2021.

For banks, housing loans are safe bets in the current scenario as the risk of default is minimal with a gross NPA of just 0.67 per cent for SBI which leads the market and for HDFC too this NPA is under 1 per cent.

Banks are hoping that the nascent economic recovery will lead to more home purchases, which has been faltering since last March. With corporates demand still a far cry and down in the dumps from an NPA point of view, for banks the biggest reason to push home loan is its risk-free nature. Unlike personal loans, housing loans involve a collateral. In case of default, banks can seize the asset and auction it off.

At Rs 14.17 lakh crore as of November 2020, live housing loans account for more than half of personal loans for banks.

'Local shops on Amazon' gets over 50K retailers onboard

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 7: e-Commerce major Amazon Sunday said more than 50,000 offline retailers and neighbourhood kirana stores across 450 cities in the country are now part of its Local Shops' programme.

Launched in April this year, 'Local Shops' aims to enable local shopkeepers and kirana store owners to sell online. In October, Amazon India had said the programme had seen participation from over 20,000 retailers in 400 cities.

More than 50,000 offline retailers and neighbourhood stores from 450 cities - from metros to tier II and tier III cities like Sangli, Osmanabad, Jamnagar, Gorakhpur, Jabalpur, Ratlam, Bikaner, Tumkur, Jalpaiguri, Kanchipuram and Dehradun have joined the Local Shops on Amazon programme, a statement said Sunday.

They offer customers in their cities a wide range of products including fresh flowers, home and kitchen products, furniture, electronics, books and toys amongst others, it added.

"What started as a pilot, has now become a pan-India phenomenon enabling local businesses to come online and benefit from technology adoption and e-commerce. The encouraging response to the Local Shops' on Amazon programme reflects in the rapid scale up of the programme to over 50,000 sellers in less than one year of launch," Amazon India Vice President Manish Tiwary said.

It underlines how digital enablement and digital inclusion can help them scale and contribute to a digital economy, he added.

DoT TO ISSUE DEMAND NOTES TO TELECOM COs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) will issue demand notes to telcos next week on an upfront payment for spectrum acquired in the just-concluded auctions, sources said.

The demand note follows auctions raking in winning bids of over Rs 77,800 crore, for 855.6 MHz of spectrum. Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio spent the most in the auction, picking up 488.35 MHz spectrum in bands such as 800 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2300 MHz for Rs 57,122.65 crore.

Bharti Airtel bid about Rs 18,699 crore to acquire 355.45 megahertz



(MHz) out of the total 855.60 MHz of radiofrequency acquired by all telcos, while Vodafone Idea, bought 11.80 MHz of spectrum worth Rs 1,993.40 crore.

DoT sources told PTI that the demand notes will be sent out to the three companies this week, and entails largely the upfront payment for spectrum that is ready to be allocated.

WOMEN'S DAY NTPC announces recruitment drive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: State-run power giant on Sunday announced a special recruitment drive for women executives on the eve of women's day. "On Women's Day, NTPC Ltd, India's largest integrated power company announces plans for recruiting only women executives as a special recruitment drive across its areas of operations," a company statement said.

According to statement this will further strengthen women power in India's largest power generation company. Such recruitment drive will further enhance gender diversity as parameter for NTPC, it said.

'Global trends, oil price to dictate market trend this week'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 7: Stock markets will focus on long term bond yield trends, crude oil prices and macroeconomic data this week as investors look for cues amid volatility, according to analysts.

Besides, investments by FPIs (Foreign Portfolio Investors) as well as domestic investors, movement of rupee against the US dollar and developments on the coronavirus front are likely to be closely watched for cues.

"The US 10 Year G-Sec yields have surpassed 1.5 per cent on a closing basis which is somewhat negative for global equities. The Dollar Index has also moved up from 90 to 92 level, which is seen as a negative for emerging market currencies and also equities.

"In the absence of any major domestic trigger Indian markets could

take a cue from global developments and the US markets," said Rusmik Oza, Executive Vice President, Head of Fundamental Research at Kotak Securities.

The tone of the market seems to be on the downside, for now, Oza added.

March 5, benchmark BSE Sensex tumbled over 440 points and the NSE Nifty cracked below the psychological 15,000-level amid relentless sell-off in global equities as US bond market turmoil continued to rattle investors.

The 30-share Sensex plummeted by 440.76 points or 0.87 per cent to close at 50,405.32, continuing its falling trend for the second day on Friday due to concerns over bond yields. The NSE barometer Nifty ended lower by 142.65 points or 0.95 per cent at 14,938.10.

"In the coming week, the market will be mainly focusing on the



expectations on whether the Fed, in its upcoming meeting, will maintain its accommodative stance in a rising bond yield market. Additionally, Fed's measures to maintain low-in-

terest rate and high liquidity will also provide relief to the market sentiments," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit

In the coming week, the market will be mainly focusing on the expectations on whether the Fed, in its upcoming meeting, will maintain its accommodative stance in a rising bond yield market

VINOD NAIR, HEAD OF RESEARCH |
GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

Financial Services.

On a weekly basis, the Sensex gained 1,305.33 points or 2.65 per cent. Analysts, however, believe the broader market is expected to consolidate or correct further amid a bearish market sentiment.

"On a weekly basis, despite the market closing in the positive territory the market mood was sluggish. A substantial jump in the long term treasury yields and upward activity in the dollar index towards 92, resulted in weakness across the globe," said Shrikant Chouhan,

Executive Vice President, Equity Technical Research at Kotak

Securities.

Further, Chouhan noted that "in the coming week, we could see Nifty/ Sensex touching minimum 14,750/ 50,000 or 14,550/ 49,300 levels. On the higher side, 15,150/ 51,200 and 15,280/ 51,600 would be major hurdles. The focus should be on FMCG and auto companies."

Moreover, investors will also track domestic macroeconomic triggers - CPI, WPI and IIP - for further cues.

Investors will also track movements in Brent crude prices as rising oil prices is another risk for Indian markets. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, is currently hovering around USD 69 per barrel.

Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,014.16 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

'STAYING INSIDE BIO-BUBBLE HAS HELPED PLAYERS BOND BETTER'

Shastri lauds Sundar show

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, March 7: Ravi Shastri was both Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev's 'go to man' with his all-round abilities during the 1980s. The Indian head coach firmly believes that young Washington Sundar could play a similar role in the current Test team. The left-handed specialist batsman, who also bowls mean off-breaks, has scored three half centuries along with six wickets which included the prized scalps of Steve Smith and Joe Root in the four Tests that he has played so far.

Do you see glimpses of you in him? "I think Washy (Sundar) has far more natural ability than I had," said the veteran of 80 Tests who had close to 4,000 runs and 150 plus wickets.

"He has the ability and he belongs at this level and he can go a long way. If he could focus on his bowling (in Tests), India could have a very good No. 6 for overseas conditions. He is someone who can get you those 50s, 60s and 70s and then bowl for you 20 overs and can pick up 2-3 wickets. That was my role overseas (during whole of 1980s) and I think he can do that role easily," the head coach said during a virtual press meet Sunday.

Shastri also said that he would talk to the Tamil Nadu team management so that Sundar can bat at

The bio-bubble has helped players understand each other better. They understand each other's mental state and it has helped them improve a lot as players

RAVI SHASTRI

No. 4 for his state team.

For Shastri, Sundar's innings of 96, coming in at 153 for six was a better effort than his unbeaten 85 in Chennai. "Sundar, this is unreal. He faced some of the toughest bowlers in the world. I would say this innings at Ahmedabad was far better as the WTC final spot was on line," Shastri said.

Shastri is also very satisfied that Rishabh Pant has understood the value he brings into this set-up with his match-winning abilities. "Rishabh, he came in after IPL with a lot of baggage and that showed in his size and he had to lose that (weight) which he did. He worked his backside off. The results are not just for him to see but for world," Shastri pointed out. "A brilliant match-winner, playing to his potential and there is no greater sight than that," he added. Shastri also said he is happy

for Axar Patel who had missed out on a number of opportunities due to injuries. Incidentally, Patel finished with 27 wickets in the three Tests he played against England.

Shastri also said that the bio-bubble has played an important role in the success of the team. "The players are bonding together, spending more and more time together," Shastri stated. "The bonds are getting stronger by the day and a lot of conversation regarding the game is taking place. So there is constant improvement," he added.

Known for not mincing words, Shastri criticised the ICC for changing the qualification criteria for the World Test Championship (WTC) final. He wasn't happy that midway through the tournament ICC changed the criteria from maximum points earned to maximum percentage points earned.

"If you ask me about first cycle, please don't shift the goalposts," Shastri said. "I am sitting at home because of COVID-19 in the month of October with more points than any other team, 360 apparently (having won three series and lost one). A week later without knowing some rule comes that we are going to go (move) into the percentage system and we go (slip) from No. 1 to No.3," Shastri added.



FIRST ODI AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

INDIAN EVES GO DOWN TAMELY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 7: Lizelle Lee (83 n o, 122b, 11x4, 1x6) and Laura Wolvaardt (80, 110b, 12x4) shared their highest opening wicket stand against an under-prepared India to give South Africa an emphatic eight-wicket win in the first ODI of the five-match series here Sunday. The two South African batswomen put on a record 169-run stand as South Africa chased down the target in 40.1 overs

Asked to bat, India never got the momentum it needed and could only manage 177 for nine despite a sedate 50 from skipper Mithali Raj (50, 85b, 4x4, 1x6) and a quick-fire 40 (41b, 6x4) from her deputy Harmanpreet Kaur. The South African opening duo did not look in any sort of trouble against the India pacers as well as their highly-rated spinners. Veteran India pacer Jhulan Goswami (2/38), playing her first game since November 2019, was the most impressive in an otherwise disappointing bowling effort.

Earlier, the 62-run stand between Raj and Kaur steadied the innings after India lost their first three wickets for 40 runs, including star opener Smriti Mandhana (14). Harmanpreet, playing her 100th ODI, looked ominous but played one big shot too many to be caught

Big milestone

Lucknow: Indian batswoman Harmanpreet Kaur achieved Sunday a big milestone when she took the field in the first ODI against South Africa here. She became the fifth Indian woman cricketer to represent India in 100 or more ODIs. She joined Mithali Raj (210), Jhulan Goswami (183), Anjum Chopra (127) and Amita Sharma (116) in the elite list of players who have played 100 or more ODIs. The Indian ODI vice-captain has scored 2,412 runs in 100 matches, with an unbeaten knock of 171 as her highest score. BCCI congratulated Kaur on her achievement.

at long-off.

Raj then shared a 52-run partnership with Deepti Sharma (27) to keep the innings moving. But her dismissal off a full-toss triggered a collapse that saw India reeling at 160 for eight from 154 for four. **Brief Scores:** India: 177 for 9 (Mithali Raj 50, Harmanpreet Kaur 40, Shabnim Ismail 3/28) lost to South Africa 178 for 2 in 40.1 overs (Lizelle Lee 83 n o, Laura Wolvaardt 80, Jhulan Goswami 2/38) by eight wickets.

SHORT TAKES

Sudha, Srinu cruise to easy victories

New Delhi: Srinu Bugatha (2:14:59s) clocked a personal best to comfortably win the sixth edition of the New Delhi Marathon while Asian Games gold medallist Sudha Singh (2:43:41s) bagged the top honours in the women's category, here Sunday. However, both failed to meet the Tokyo Olympics qualifying mark. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, who presided over the prize-distribution ceremony, exhorted both of them to continue to chase their dreams of representing India at the upcoming Olympics. Uttarakhand's Nitendra Singh Rawat (2:18:54s) and Army Sports Institute's Rashpal Singh (2:18:57s) clinched the silver and bronze medal in the men's elite category, while Maharashtra's Jyoti Gawate (2:58:23) and Ladakh's Jigmet Dolma (3:04:52) emulated them among the women.

Dutee may skip selection trials

New Delhi: Double Asian Games silver medallist Dutee Chand is likely to skip the All India University (AIU) selection trials to pick the team for the World University Games to be held in China August 18-29, hinted her coach N Ramesh said Sunday. "Being a defending champion she should get a direct entry in the AIU squad," Ramesh said. Dutee is the defending champion in the 100m dash of the World University Games. The two day trials begin Monday in Bhubaneswar. The official reason that may cited if Dutee skips the trials will be she is preparing for the July-August Tokyo Olympic Games. Incidentally, Dutee is training daily at the Kalinga Stadium where the trials will be held.

Fighting back

Berlin: Bayern Munich shook off a 0-2 deficit and rallied back to crush rivals Borussia Dortmund thanks to Robert Lewandowski's hat-trick in the Bundesliga game played Saturday. The Bavarians were down 0-2 within the first nine minutes with Erling Haaland scoring both the goals. Lewandowski pulled one back for Bayern in the 26th minute before scoring from a penalty to restore parity for his side a minute before the interval. Leon Goretzka put Bayern in the lead midway into the second half before Lewandowski got his 31st goal of the season to complete his hat-trick.

AGENCIES

10 WINS IN LAST 11 LA LIGA GAMES

Barca close in on Atletico

AGENCIES

Barcelona, March 7: Barcelona cranked up the pressure on Sunday's Madrid derby by beating Osasuna 2-0 Saturday night to edge two points behind leaders Atletico Madrid in the La Liga.

Lionel Messi set up both goals in Pamplona as Jordi Alba hammered home in the first half before the 18-year-old Ilaix Moriba came off the bench to curl in an impressive shot late in the second. "Thankfully Leo (Messi) gave me the pass and I don't know how I cut in and shot with my left foot, I'm just glad it went in," Ilaix said after the game. "I will never forget it, I will take that goal to my grave," the youngster added.

Ilaix's strike was his first goal in La Liga and another breakthrough moment for a Barca youngster. Sunday night Atletico will meet Real in the Madrid derby at the Wanda Metropolitano. Barca will certainly want anything, other than a home (Atletico) win.

A few weeks ago, Ronald Koeman's side looked too far adrift in the title race. However, 10 victories out of 11 have shot them back into contention, even if Atletico remain in the driving seat with two games in hand. "Any result is



MOMENT TO CHERISH: Ilaix Moriba is over the moon after scoring his maiden Barcelona goal during the game against Osasuna, Saturday

good for us," said Koeman.

Their success in recent months has owed much to a talented crop of youngsters, with Ilaix - a dynamic but technically gifted midfielder - the latest to emerge.

Messi was in his elements from the start. He shot wide and then set up the opener, drifting in from the right and spotting the scuttling Alba racing in behind on the op-

posite side. Messi clipped a pass through three Osasuna defenders for Alba to collect and he lashed it high and in from the angle.

There was more control about the second half but Barcelona needed a second to make it comfortable and substitute Ilaix seized his moment, shaping to shoot with his right before coolly rolling onto his left and whipping his shot into the corner.

NO HOME GAMES FOR ANY SIDE

RCB face MI in 2021 IPL opener

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 7: The 2021 edition of the IPL will run from April 9 to May 30 across six venues. None of the teams will get to play at home, its governing council announced Sunday.

Despite COVID-19 surge, Mumbai has been named as one of the host cities and the tournament will be held behind closed doors at least in the initial phase of the tournament. The other venues are Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi and Kolkata. The Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad will host the final May 30 as well as the play-offs.

Defending champions Mumbai Indians (MI) will face Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the tournament opener in Chennai, April 9.

Sunday the BCCI released schedule for the first four weeks till May 6 during which 33 matches will be played. Not a single game has been slotted in Kolkata during the phase as there will be eight-phase Assembly elections in Bengal.

Each team will play at four ven-

MATCHES TO BE PLAYED AT MUMBAI, AHMEDABAD, BANGALORE, CHENNAI, KOLKATA, DELHI
NO SPECTATORS ALLOWED DURING THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE TOURNAMENT
FINAL COMES OFF MAY 30 AT THE NARENDRA MODI STADIUM IN AHMEDABAD

ues during the league stage. Out of the 56 league matches, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore will host 10 matches each while Ahmedabad and Delhi will host eight matches each.

"One of the highlights of this edition of the VIVO IPL will be the fact that all matches will be played at neutral venues, no team will play at their home venue. All teams will play at four out of six venues during the league stage," read an IPL statement.

"The VIVO IPL this year at home will be played behind closed doors to begin with and a call on allowing spectators will be taken at a later stage of the tournament," the statement read further:

SWISS OPEN FINAL AGAINST MARIN

SINDHU GOES DOWN TAMELY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Basel, March 7: World Champion PV Sindhu finished a distant second best in the Swiss Open final after being completely routed by Olympic gold medallist Carolina Marin of Spain in a lop-sided women's singles title clash here Sunday. This was the 14th clash between the two arch rivals who are very good friends off court. Marin now leads 9-5 in the head-to-head clash.

The 25-year-old Indian, who had won the coveted World Championship gold medal here in 2019, couldn't match the speed and accuracy of Marin during her 12-21, 5-21 defeat in the final that lasted only 35 minutes.

It was Sindhu's third successive loss to Marin. The latter had won both the Super 1000 events in Thailand in January before finishing runner-up at the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals.

Playing her first final in 18 months, Sindhu, ranked seventh in the world, entered the match having lost her last two matches against the former World No 1. However, Sindhu failed to summon her 'A'



Carolina Marin
came under pressure as Marin came up trumps to claim her third title of the year. Incidentally Sindhu last played in a final in August 2019 when she won the World Championship title.

Sindhu committed too many unforced errors as Marin made her run from one side of the court to the other constantly. In her haste to finish off points quickly, Sindhu also hit the shuttle long on a number of occasions. Overall it was a match which Sindhu would like to forget as quickly as possible.

Marin, the current World No. 3, had also defeated Sindhu in the final of the Rio Olympics in 2016.

Sindhu will next compete at the USD 850,000 All England Championships, a Super 1000 event to be held from March 17 to 21.

Carolina Marin bt PV Sindhu 21-12, 21-5