

MAN GUNS DOWN 6, INCLUDING EX-WIFE

Arkabutla (US): A lone gunman killed six people including his ex-wife and stepfather Friday at multiple locations in a tiny rural community in northern Mississippi, the sheriff said, leaving investigators searching for clues to what motivated the shocking rampage. Armed with a shotgun and two handguns, 52-year-old Richard Dale Crum opened fire at about 11am and killed a man in the driver's seat of a pickup truck parked outside a convenience store in Arkabutla, near the Tennessee state line.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Whenever I'm down with problems, I watch news. They tell me about Pakistan. I feel better

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP MAX	33.6°C	30.2°C	Forecast Mainly clear sky
TEMP MIN	21.1°C	20.6°C	
Humidity	60%	65%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Soro kanyashram inmate dead; 27 ill

It is alleged that the authorities took up the matter seriously only when three children became critical due to suspected 'food poisoning'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Soro, Feb 18: A Class X student of Purubai Kanyashram here died and 27 others were admitted to Balasore and Soro hospitals owing to suspected food poisoning that has taken the kanyashram inmates into its grip.

Locals alleged laxity on the part of the authorities of the kanyashram situated in Soro Municipality area and that they started acting only after three days of the disease afflicting the children.

As per reports, the authorities took up the matter seriously after three of the students became critical,



Children being treated at Soro CHC

ical, suffering from diarrhoea and severe headache. Finding that the situation is getting out of their hands, two of the children were shifted to Balasore hospital, while Rubina, a Class X student from

RUBINA, A CLASS X STUDENT FROM NILAGIRI, SUCCUMBED TO THE AILMENT LATE FRIDAY NIGHT

Nilagiri, succumbed to the ailment late Friday night. One child is being treated at Balasore hospital.

Preliminary investigation indicates 'food poisoning' as the reason behind the incident. However, the exact reason is yet to be ascertained. A team of Child Welfare officials from Balasore along with some doctors rushed to the spot and admitted the 26 children to Soro Community Health Centre (CHC). **Contd...P4**

Couple spends 2K hrs to get tattooed

AGENCIES

Florida, Feb 18: In what may prompt elderly couples to think twice before they feel that age is not with them anymore, an elderly couple from America made a Guinness World Record by sitting on a chair for 2,000 hours to cover the entire body with tattoos.

Calling themselves a moving



WORLD RECORD

Chuck Helmke and Charlotte Gutenberg from Florida, have more than 90 per cent of their bodies covered in tattoos

art gallery, Chuck Helmke and Charlotte Gutenberg from Florida, have more than 90 per cent of their bodies covered in tattoos. Chuck Helmke is 81 and Charlotte Gutenberg is 74. **Contd...P4**



MATTER OF FAITH: Thousands of devotees thronged the Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, on the occasion of Maha Shivratri. Lifting of 'Mahadeepa' atop the temple was delayed by over two hours **OP PHOTO**

No GST compensation cess on coal washeries

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 18: The Goods and Services Tax (GST) council Saturday provided relief to the washeries by extending the exemption from compensation cess on coal rejects both supplied to and by these in order to avoid double taxation, sources said.

GST Council, the apex decision-making authority also reduced the tax rate on several items, including liquid jaggery and pencil sharpeners, besides rationalising late fee for the delayed filing of annual returns. Briefing media after the 49th meeting of the GST Council, Union Finance Minister Nirmala

NAVEN TO VISIT PADAMPUR TODAY

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is scheduled to visit three blocks of Padampur Assembly constituency Sunday.

This will be the CM's first visit after completion of Padampur by-poll, in which the BJD recorded a massive victory. All eyes are on his visit, as there is a buzz in political circles that Patnaik may declare Padampur as a district. The Chief Minister would attend three public meetings at Padampur, Paikamal and Jharbandh Sunday. He will first visit Jharbandh block, then Paikamal and later in the afternoon to Padampur.

Bargarh District
Jharbandh • Paikmal • Padampur

Dedication & Foundation of Projects
Disbursement of Interest Free Loans & Assistance to Mission Shakti SHGs

Chief Guest
Shri Naveen Patnaik
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha
19th February 2023

District Administration, Bargarh

Admission to SOA through SAAT-2023

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nirf INDIA RANKINGS 2022

- 16th Best in University Category
- 27th Best in Engineering Category
- 18th Best in Medical Category
- 10th Best in Dental Category
- 09th Best in Law Category

THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2023

- 301-400 in Engineering And Technology
- 301-400 in Computer Science
- 801+ in Health Sciences
- 1001-1200 in THE World University Ranking

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

- 451-500 in QS Asia University Ranking 2023
- 1001-1200 in QS World University Ranking 2023
- 110 in QS Southern Asia University Ranking 2023

TIMES ENGINEERING RANKING-2022 1st in Odisha

I-GAUGE DIAMOND UNIVERSITY RATING

ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
B.Tech | BCA | M.Tech | MCA | M.Sc. (Physics) | M.Sc. (Math) | M.Sc. (Chemistry) | Ph.D. | Post. Doc.

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
B.Sc. (Ag.) (Hons) | M.Sc. (Ag.) | Ph.D. | Post. Doc.

MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
MBA | MBA (Hospital Administration) | Integrated MBA | BBA (Hons) | Ph.D. | Post. Doc.

PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES AND BIOTECHNOLOGY
B.Pharm | M.Pharm | M.Sc. (Biotechnology) | Integrated M.Sc. (Biotechnology) | Ph.D. | Post. Doc.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT
BHMCT | MBA (Hospitality Management) | Ph.D. | Post. Doc.

NURSING
B.Sc. Nursing | P.B. Sc. Nursing | M.Sc. Nursing | Ph.D. | Post. Doc.

VETERINARY SCIENCES
B.V.Sc. & A.H. | Ph.D. | Post. Doc.

LEGAL STUDIES
BBA LLB (H) | BA LLB (H) | LLB (H) | LLM | Ph.D. | Post. Doc.

to Apply for admission, visit: www.soa.ac.in
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leisure



DUA LIPA DESPERATE TO FIND MUSIC LEAK SOURCE

Singer Dua Lipa is less excited about the release of her upcoming third album and is more in blind panic. The singer fears her new tracks will be leaked ahead of time, reports *Mirror.co.uk*. Her second album, *Future Nostalgia*, was leaked in its entirety two weeks before the planned release date in 2020.

MARK WAHLBERG SELLS LA MANSION FOR \$55MN

Hollywood actor Mark Wahlberg's Los Angeles home, after almost a year on the market, has been sold for \$55 million. The deal happened Friday according to an entry on the Multiple Listing Service. The 30,500 square-foot home, with 12 bedrooms and 20 baths, is set on 6.2 acres in North Beverly Park.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today, you may be stumped by some mysterious and wonderful event. That, or you may encounter an unexpected yet advantageous incident. It may not exactly be path-breaking, but it is sure to make you take stock of things. Also, you may find it difficult to meet deadlines today.

TAURUS

Hoist the sails and prepare to leave port. Your sugar-coated words will seal business deals with ease, predicts Ganesh. The activity and action may slow down as the day progresses. Resist the urge to get sentimental as it could lead to conflicts that will haunt you in the days to come, warns Ganesh.

GEMINI

You will tend to be religiously inclined today, feels Ganesh. For this purpose, you may spend some time visiting a temple, mosque or church. You are also likely to go shopping, and chances are that this too is for a religious purpose. May God bless you, says Ganesh.

CANCER

Today, you will be at the centre of all your plans. Your responsibilities at home are likely to be unnecessary diversions for you, with your help-yourself-only attitude. However, you may feel that you are not getting enough returns of your hard work.

LEO

If you are wondering whether you'll get the carrot or the stick today, then Ganesh has some good news for you: the day promises to bring only rewards for you. This will be especially true for your workplace, where your innate talents get recognised today.

VIRGO

A sudden bend in the journey of life is important to understand it better, says Ganesh. Excellence will drone on throughout the day today. Top on the list are money matters and your loved ones - not necessarily in that order! Much of your time may be spent in appeasing the Gods.

LIBRA

Get a bigger wallet, since it is very likely that today shall prove to be a money-making day for you. It might be through some sort of a partnership deal that this may happen, predicts Ganesh. Destiny lends you a helping hand and guides you in your goals. But it is your sentiments that may darken your thoughts today. Don't stress yourself out too much, and try and keep your expectations under control.

SCORPIO

Two words will define your day - eloquence and elegance. Sweet talk and compliments may take you a long way, but do not become complacent and get carried away with your success. Sometimes, saying the right thing may be more beneficial than saying what the other person wants to hear. Communicate carefully, advises Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

Friendship with a few like-minded people is likely to develop today. You shall spend a large share of your time discussing issues like attitude, beliefs and values. Those with whom you will enjoy sharing their ideas and opinions, and casting them in a new mould.

CAPRICORN

Paradise is where patience leads you, success is the other terminus, says Ganesh. Keeping your cool will benefit you in more ways than you would have imagined, so think twice before you unleash your vengeance on your foes. You are also likely to have a heart-to-heart conversation with your beloved and make him/her feel wanted.

AQUARIUS

Today, you will understand the value of your job. You decide to do away with everything that has been hampering your work till now. You realise you need to set some long-term goals in your career. Grab the opportunity while the intention lasts, says Ganesh.

PISCES

Your inherent talents, competitive colleagues and supportive superiors will spur you on to great heights at the workplace, beginning today. Make sure that you do not get carried away by little victories, says Ganesh. There is many a slip between the cup and the lip!

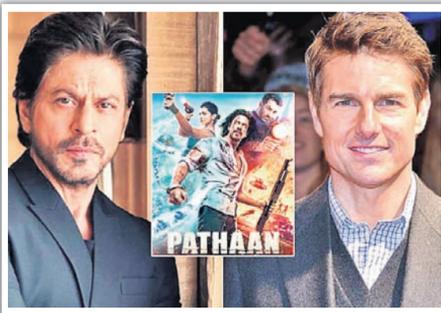
Price Hansika pays for being a celeb

Mumbai: Actress Hansika Motwani was at the receiving end of heavy criticism when she had made her debut as a female lead in *Aap Kaa Surroor* in 2007. She was already a known face as a child in Hrithik Roshan starrer *Koi Mil Gaya*. Shocked by her physical transformation, it was being said that her mother had given her growth hormone injections at that time. The actress has now broken her silence on the rumours.

Hansika said, "To this, her mother added, 'If that is true, then I must be richer than Tata, Birla, some millionaire. The fact is we are Punjabi people, our daughters shoot up between the age of 12 and 16.'" AGENCIES

In the latest episode of her reality show *Hansika's Love Shaadi Drama*, she was seen consoling her mother about the things being written about her.

"This is the expense of being a celebrity. They wrote such crap when I was 21, you know what I am talking about... If I could have taken it that time, I can take it this time. People said that my mum has given me injections, hormonal injections to grow up as a woman,"



'SRK AS FEARLESS AS TOM CRUISE'

MUMBAI: Shah Rukh Khan made a power-packed comeback on the big screen with *Pathaan*. The film released January 25 and is still running successfully in theatres.

Emmy award-nominated Casey O'Neill, who planned and executed some of the breath-taking, adrenaline-pumping action sequences in *Pathaan*, has heaped praises on SRK, drawing similarities between him and Tom Cruise.

Casey said, "They are both true professionals in their craft and so talented. Tom Cruise is a fearless actor who lives and breathes his craft and wants to push the envelope when it comes to his body and his cinema to only entertain audiences. SRK is just the same."

He added, "Shah Rukh Khan has pushed his body, he has unlearned and learnt action to deliver *Pathaan* as an entertainer like no other. Both are driven and committed lovers of cinema who will do whatever it takes to make the audience happy. I have worked with Tom on many and exciting films. We all have enjoyed working with each other through the years. It was a pleasure working with another global movie star like Shah Rukh Khan and seeing him transform into an action star that no one has ever seen before."

He described SRK as an 'exceptional athlete and performer.' IANS

Nargis on facing sexual harassment

Mumbai: Over a decade ago Nargis Fakhri marked her debut in front of the camera with Intiaz Ali's *Rockstar*, wherein she romanced Ranbir Kapoor. Speaking about her journey in films, the actress recently opened up about dealing with the ups and downs in the industry.

Speaking about facing sexual harassment, Nargis Fakhri said, "I do not judge other people, everybody's gotta do what they gotta do. They say it is the survival of the fittest but I am not the type of person who is so hungry that they would do anything."

"When it comes to work stuff, yes we encounter different types of people. I actually was very lucky, I didn't have as horrible stories as maybe some other people. But you know, there's people flirting, or like insisting or being a little extra. And for me, I am like I am just going to lock myself in my house. I just get away from everybody because no human is really well equipped for encounters of that sort. I try to keep myself away from all of that. I know

how to have a boundary," added the *Housefull 3* actress.

Nargis was recently seen in *Shiv Shastri Balboa*, co-starring Anupam Kher and Neena Gupta. AGENCIES



Sharmila calls film industry 'ageist'

Mumbai: Sharmila Tagore is one of the finest actresses of the Hindi film industry. Her films were a massive hit and she enjoyed a huge fan following then and even today.

The veteran actress was away from the limelight for several years but is all set to make her comeback and spread her charm on our screens with her upcoming family drama *Gulmohar*. In a recent interview the Aradhana actress expressed that the film industry is a little ageist with few roles for



women of a certain age. Sharmila Tagore expressed that as compared to Hollywood where they have good

roles for women of a certain age like Meryl Streep, Judi Dench or Maggie Smith, the Hindi film industry is still a 'little ageist'. "We are still slightly ageist, especially with women because powerful roles go to the men. Like special scripts are being written for Mr Amitabh Bachchan, Anupam Kher, but not for Waheeda (Rehman) ji and not for many other ageing lady actors," Tagore said.

But according to her the game is changing slowly because of OTT. "Hindi cinema is not where Hollywood is in terms of offering roles to older women. There are wonderful, more mature actors, Neena (Gupta) for instance, she is a magnificent actor. There are many others. It will take time but it will change." Sharmila concluded.

PEANUTS



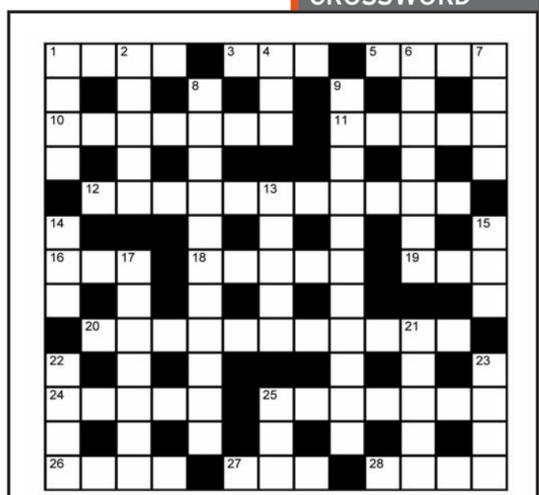
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



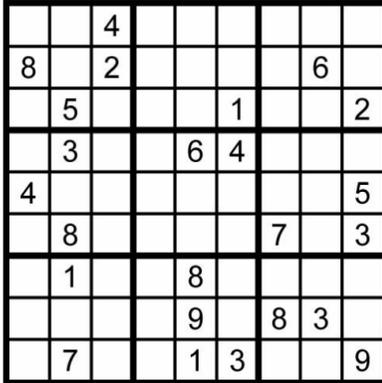
FUN post CROSSWORD



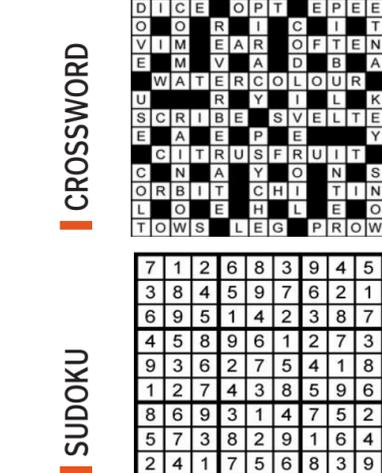
- Across**
- 1 Body of water
 - 3 Hunt club target
 - 5 Journey
 - 10 Alluring beauty or charm
 - 11 Extremely unpleasant
 - 12 Sailboat spars or harness trappings
 - 16 African wildebeest
 - 18 Food of the gods
 - 19 Oolong or darjeeling
 - 20 Irrigated fields for growing certain grains (4,7)
 - 24 Pickling juice
 - 25 Firm chewy candy
 - 26 Fast
 - 27 Nocturnal bird of prey
 - 28 Adult male red deer
- Down**
- 1 Fireplace items
 - 2 Australian arboreal marsupial
 - 4 Paddle
 - 6 Do the job of a mirror?
 - 7 Scotch skirt
 - 8 Quickly aroused to anger (3-8)
 - 9 Lizard relatives
 - 13 Ninjutsu practitioner
 - 14 Hen dropping
 - 15 Glass container
 - 17 Put into service
 - 21 Army ant
 - 22 Retired for the night
 - 23 Drain obstruction
 - 25 Milk giver

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

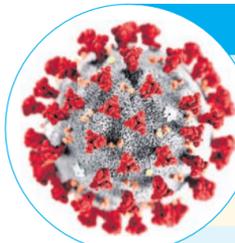


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



NORMS THROWN TO WINDS

A motorcyclist crosses Matagajpur level crossing in Cuttack, Saturday, in brazen violation of norms



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,85,82,108	65,11,27,436	67,90,506
India	4,46,84,775	4,41,52,151	5,30,757
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

SPECIAL CATEGORY ISSUE

BJP betrayed people of Odisha: BJD

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Saturday accused BJP of 'betraying' the people of Odisha after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made it clear that the Centre has no plans to accord special category status to the coastal state.

BJD, which has been demanding the status for the state, accused the BJP of 'betraying' its people as the saffron party backtracked from its promises made during the elections.

"The union finance minister has unfortunately exposed BJP's true colours. Though BJP had in its election manifesto promised to ensure special category status for Odisha, its leader did not work in that line. It has betrayed the people of Odisha," BJD vice-president and lawmaker Debi Prasad Mishra told said.

"BJP as a party has proved to be a liar. It has completely forgotten its promise made in the election manifesto. The people of Odisha will not tolerate a party which indulges in lies and betrayal," Mishra said.

The general and assembly elections are held in the state simultaneously. Both polls are due next year. "Odisha is neglected due to political discrimination for being a non-BJP ruled state," Mishra claimed. The Centre has provided financial assistance to Karnataka and other BJP ruled states while grossly neglecting Odisha, for which BJD has been demanding the special category status for long.

Apart from the passage of a unanimous resolution in the Assembly, both the party and its chief Naveen Patnaik have all along raised the issue in different platforms, including at the National Development



Odisha is neglected due to political discrimination for being a non-BJP ruled state. Finance commission recommendation cannot be a plea for the BJP-led government at the Centre (to deny special category status to Odisha). It can identify Odisha as a special state for being calamity prone and housing a large chunk of tribals

DEBI PRASAD MISHRA | BJD VICE-PRESIDENT



Anyway, the Centre is giving more funds for the development of the state. Therefore, there should be no problem for its (Odisha's) development

JAYANARAYAN MISHRA | LOP AND BJP LEADER



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a call for 'Purvadoya' for development of eastern India. How can India progress when the Centre denies special category to eastern Indian states?

SARAT PATTANAYAK | OPCC PRESIDENT

Council meetings, he said. "But BJP leaders, including union ministers from the state, have never thought on this line. Isn't a betrayal towards the state?" he asked.

The coastal state is ravaged by natural calamities like cyclones and floods almost every year which cause huge damage to life and property. The BJD is all along demanding the special category status to Odisha in the wake of its vulnerability to disasters, the party leader said.

"Finance commission recommendation cannot be a plea for the BJP-led government at the Centre. It can identify Odisha as a special state for being calamity prone and housing a large chunk of tribals," he argued.

He claimed that the state under Naveen Patnaik has made significant development in different sectors and has become the only one to bring down poverty to a specific level. However, its per capita income is much less than developed states like Maharashtra and Punjab. "To achieve the goal, the Centre

must give special attention to Odisha," Mishra asserted.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Sarat Pattanayak blamed both BJD and BJP for the Centre not according the special category status to Odisha.

"It is clear that both the parties have betrayed the state. The BJD was in alliance with the NDA government from 2000 to 2009, but Naveen Patnaik could not motivate the Central government to give the status to the state. Both the parties are the same as they deliberately misled the people of Odisha during election by speaking of special category status," Pattanayak said.

He blamed BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who gave call for 'Purvadoya' for development of eastern India. "How can India progress when the Centre denies special category to eastern Indian states?"

BJP in its turn pointed out that there are certain criteria for according special category status to

a state and Odisha may not be fitting into them. The finance commission too has certain recommendations.

"Anyway, the Centre is giving more funds for the development of the state. Therefore, there should be no problem for its development," Leader of Opposition (LoP) Jayanarayan Mishra (BJP) said.

The LoP accused the BJD dispensation for being unable to spend the Central allocations. "If you (BJD gov) are unable to spend the funds, how can you manage the allocations made under the special category status?" he asked and told the BJD to stop misleading the people on the issue.

Since 1969, a total 11 states - Assam, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Uttarakhand and Telangana were accorded the status as they share borders with other countries. Telangana is an exception as it got the status of a state through an act of Parliament.

LoP: Will expose mastermind behind murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar Feb 18: Leader of Opposition (LoP) Jayanarayan Mishra Saturday asserted that he will expose the mastermind behind the murder of minister Naba Kishore Das by a police officer last month.

Mishra, a BJP leader who is currently in the eye of a storm for allegedly pushing a policewoman during a protest Wednesday, also alleged that several high-profile people are involved in the minister's killing and it must be investigated by the CBI.

NABA DAS ASSASSINATION

Das was shot at by an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police in Jharsuguda district January 29 when he was on his way to attend a programme. He succumbed to his injuries later that day in a private hospital in Bhubaneswar.

"The ASI was merely the shooter, but who was his handler? I will soon expose the mystery surrounding the brutal murder of cabinet minister Naba Das," said Mishra. The BJD government needs to answer a lot of questions, Mishra said. "They (state government) are saying the ASI was mentally unstable. Then why was he given a gun? According to the ECG report, Naba Das died in Jharsuguda. Then why was he brought to Bhubaneswar?" the BJP leader asked.

Mishra said he will raise issues such as the Naba Das murder case, crime against women and law and order situation in the state in the next session of the assembly which will commence February 21.

Reacting to his assertions, senior BJD leader Sashi Bhusan Behera said the ruling party is prepared to discuss any issue in the assembly.

Mishra alleged that those behind the murder of Naba Das are also conspiring against him.

Though the leader of the opposition did not elaborate on that, he was booked under various IPC sections including 354 (outraging the modesty of a woman) for allegedly pushing a lady cop during a protest in front of the Sambalpur district collector's office Wednesday.

Thousands throng temples on Maha Shivratri



Devotees make a beeline at Brahmeshwar temple in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Maha Shivratri, Saturday

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: Devotees in large numbers thronged Shiva shrines across the state to offer prayers on the occasion of Maha Shivratri Saturday.

Long queues were seen in front of Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar;

Loknath temple in Puri, Kapileshwar temple in Dhenkanal, Akhandalamani temple in Bhadrak and Dhaneshwar temple in Cuttack since early hours Saturday.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made in and around these temples for the smooth celebration of the Maha

Shivratri.

Commissionerate Police sources here said that as many as 32 platoons of forces have been deployed around Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar. As many as 11 additional SPs, 11 ACPs, 19 inspectors and 80 SI and ASIs have also been deployed.

CCTVs have been installed at strategic locations to monitor the movement of devotees.

In the evening, 'Bhajan Sandhyas' were organised in front of several Shiva temples in the state. Around 30 eminent singers performed in front of Lingaraj temple here.

Police have diverted traffic for the smooth movement of vehicles. Similarly, traffic has been tightened around the Dhabaleswar temple where the devotees have been barred from using the hanging bridge and boats to reach the temple.

Instead, a temporary road was laid in the river Mahanadi for the smooth movement of devotees to the shrine.

₹6.6 crore interstate job fraud kingpin nabbed from Bihar

POST NEWS NETWORK

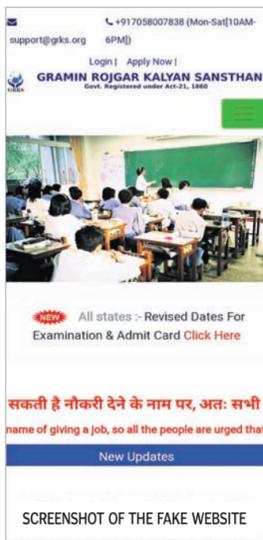
Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of state police has arrested a fraudster from Bihar for duping aspirants from at least 17 states across the country of crores of rupees since 2020.

The accused, Dharampal Singh, hails from Rupanachak village in Gopalganj district of Bihar.

Dharampal, one of the masterminds behind the fraud racket, was apprehended by EOW sleuths from Hatua area in Bihar Wednesday. The fraudster used to target the victims through their organisation called 'Gramin Rojgar Kalyan Sansthan' (GRKS), operating in different states of the country.

The accused had also developed a website resembling government website displaying the government like job advertisements, said inspector general, EOW, Jay Narayan Pankaj.

The organisation has its registered office in New Delhi and other offices in Mumbai, Bhopal and Dehradun. So far, the EOW has managed to trace fraud to the tune of Rs 6.6 crore deposited by job aspirants. Pankaj fur-



ther said that the scamsters were using six to seven shell/sister companies

for routing and laundering the ill-gotten money. The accused has also invested fraud money in a Mumbai-based film production company, Sumitra Production.

Speaking about the modus operandi of the fraud organisation, Pankaj said the GRKS invited applications for various posts like district and block coordinator; computer operator and block surveyor prescribing the educational qualification and the remuneration for the individual posts.

The advertisement also contained the name of the website www.grks.org, and the job seekers were required to submit their applications through online only. To gain the confidence of the job aspirants, the fraudsters also offered reservations and concessional fee as it is done for government jobs, he added.

They were giving advertisements in local newspapers in the states and used to conduct online exams and interviews too. However, they disqualify all in the exam and do not provide jobs to anyone. Interestingly, in their website they also warn the job seekers about job fraud, it was learnt.

Boosting digital transformation for unique customer experience: Jalan

At a time when fuel prices are still at a higher level and interest rates are moving northward, Indian automobile industry needs a robust marketing strategy with special focus on digital sales and services, says Odyssey Motors (NEXA) director Ruchi Jalan in a tête-à-tête with Orissa POST. Excerpts...



■ What are the major problems the automobile industry is facing?
■ There are a host of challenges like rising fuel prices, interest rates and inflation, to name a few, that the Indian automobile industry is facing now. However, the most crucial issue that all original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are currently facing is global shortage of semi-conductors.



■ What measures would you suggest to improve sales and services in automobile industry?

■ Since many customers now prefer online purchase including four-wheelers, digital marketing with solid customer reviews should be the priority. We must ensure that our showroom and products are showing up in local Google search results as part of the overall marketing strategy. Proactively asking for feedback is the best way to improve customer service. Investing in digital communication systems and platforms like WhatsApp and customer relationship management (CRM) tools can help provide instant and efficient customer service.

■ How has the journey of Odyssey Motors (NEXA) been so far?

■ NEXA was launched in 2015 in India to go beyond selling cars and create a differentiated and exclusive experience for the car buyers. We opened our first NEXA showroom in 2017 with the aim to provide state-of-the-art sales and aftersales services. We have always tried to ensure that the customers get the highest level of satisfaction. We opened our showroom in Angul in 2019 and have placed employees in the entire western Odisha region. We will be coming up with NEXA service work-

shop in Angul and sales in Jharsuguda and Bolangir soon.

■ India aims to become a global EV hub by 2026. Your take on it?

■ India, being the second most populated country in the world, definitely has the potential to become a global hub for the electric vehicle (EV) industry as the demand for such vehicles would be huge. We require a systematic line of production to match the demand, technology and man power in order to sustain consistent development and growth. Focus should be on production of battery chargers and recycling. The reduction in customs duty on lithium cells and subsidy extensions announced in the Union Budget 2023-24 are steps in right direction.

■ Tell us briefly about your education and your organisation's goals?

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Har Pal Aapke Saath



RECOGNISING FOOD PROVIDERS: Governor Ganeshi Lal, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare minister Ranendra Pratap Swain among dignitaries felicitating farmers on the concluding day of Krushi Odisha in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

CHATBOT MAJOR ATTRACTION AT KRUSHI ODISHA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: At the Krushi Odisha Mela, the Farmer Facilitation Cell saw participation of over 2,000 farmers from across the state over the three day duration of the event. The cell, set up as a platform for the farmers to apply for different government schemes through the GO-SUGAM web portal, also helped them register for the Krushak Odisha farmers' database, and apply for loans from more than 40 banks through the state government's credit plat-

form SAFAL.

"The staff from the department present at the Mela helped hundreds of farmers successfully complete their schemes and loan applications on the government's agri-tech platforms," said an official involved in organization of the event.

The Cell, which was set up at the Krushi Odisha event for the first time this year, witnessed participation of farmers from varied districts involved in different practices expressing their satisfaction with this service.

"Some of the most popular schemes for which the Cell received the most queries and applications include the Farm Mechanisation DBT Scheme, the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture, and the Mukhyamantri Krushi Udyog Yojana," said the official.

One of the demonstrations that stood out was the Ama Krushi AI, an artificial intelligence powered agricultural domain ChatBot, that can be used by farmers and department officials to get information and advisory related to agriculture

and allied sectors. The first of its kind in India, this bot leverages ChatGPT and Bhashini, India's nationally recognised language translation algorithm, to provide information to farmers in English, Hindi, and Odia in both speech and text.

"The Farmer Facilitation Centre represents a unique approach to delivering schemes and services to farmers during events such as Krushi Odisha and will be implemented by the government with even greater rigour in the coming years and events," added the official.

NMDC, IMMT sign research agreement

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: National miner NMDC signed an agreement for collaborative research with CSIR-IMMT, Bhubaneswar, on "Feasibility Studies for Preparation of Fused Magnesia from Kimberlite Tailings" Saturday at its head office in Hyderabad.

The agreement was signed between SK Chaurasiya, GM, research and development, from NMDC and Ashok Kumar Sahu, chief scientist and head, Strategy Planning & Business Development, from CSIR-IMMT in the presence



of NMDC's director (production) Dilip Kumar Mohanty, senior officials of NMDC, the project leaders Kali Sanjay, Chief Scientist and Head, Hydro & Electrometallurgy Department, CSIR-IMMT and C Kesava Rao, DGM, Hydrometallurgy, NMDC.

"NMDC operates the only mechanised diamond mine in Southeast

Asia at Panna in Madhya Pradesh. This mine produces around 10 carats of diamond (2g) per 100 tonnes of Kimberlite processed, which is dumped as waste after recovery of diamonds. Kimberlite tailings are used for development of value-added products and are also known to be a good source of caustic magnesia. Addressing this research gap for the best utilization of Kimberlite that is available and accumulated over the years at Panna Diamond Mines, NMDC has initiated the Research Agreement to study the processing and preparation of fused MgO and TiO₂," said an NMDC official.

SHG-run cafés offer healthy food at affordable prices

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh/Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: A chain of cafes opened by the state government and operated by various Mission Shakti Groups at all block headquarters of the Sundergarh district are serving healthy lunch, breakfast and evening snacks at an affordable price in a hygienic set up to people visiting these places for government offices and other works on a daily basis.

The programme, under the aegis of Mission Shakti department and Odisha Livelihood Mission, has been launched to expand the scope of activity of WSHG members by engaging them in unconventional and entrepreneurial vocations for ensuring their livelihood. "The WSHG members are getting good returns by managing the cafes," said a department official.

"Earlier we were engaged in various traditional works. Now, with help from the district administration, we are running Mission Shakti cafe where we are preparing food items as per peoples' choice. We take care to ensure that people get good food in a homely atmosphere," said Nilima Kullu, a WSHG member from Kutra block.



"We were given training at Sundergarh after we were selected for managing the cafe. The training programme focused on preparation of food items and training on hygiene. We are now getting good returns by running the cafe," said Mamina Kujur, a WSHG member from Birsa block.

As the pilot project of the programme, an 'Utkal Kitchen' was opened in Kuarmunda block in 2021 with financial support from the Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC). In subsequent period, 'Mission Shakti Cafes' were set up in the rest 16 blocks of the district.

MAMITA MURDER

NHRC seeks report from Bolangir SP

IN 2021, THE PARTIALLY-BURNT BODY OF MAMITA WAS FOUND BY THE ODISHA POLICE IN A DUG-UP PIT NEAR A SPORTS STADIUM IN KALAHANDI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought a detailed action taken report (ATR) within four weeks from the Bolangir superintendent of police (SP) in connection with the sensational murder of Kalahandi teacher Mamita Meher in October 2021 that created a flutter in state's political circles.

The NHRC move came while hearing a plea filed by lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy. Taking note, the rights body had September 22 last year sought an ATR from the Kalahandi SP within four weeks in connection with the issue.

In response, the Kalahandi SP October 21 last year informed the commission that Kalahandi additional SP probed the matter and found that Mamita was murdered within the jurisdiction of Sindhekela police sta-



tion of Bolangir district. And Sindhekela police has registered a case (97/2021) under Sections 366, 302, 201 and 120B of the IPC and chargesheet has been filed in the court for trial.

The Kalahandi SP further said, "Investigation of the case was taken up by Bolangir police and except rendering necessary assistance to Bolangir police as and when sought for, Kalahandi police had no role in investigation of the case."

Subsequently, the rights body asked the Bolangir SP to submit an ATR and details of the compensation paid to the next of the kin of

the deceased in connection with the incident within four weeks.

Notably, October 8, 2021, the partially burnt body of Mamita was found by the Odisha Police in a dug-up pit near a sports stadium in Kalahandi. Mamita, who lived in Turikela tehsil in the Bolangir district and taught in a school in the Mahalinga area of the district where Gobinda Sahu was the founder, had gone previously missing.

Soon after, Gobinda was arrested on charges of kidnapping and murdering Mamita. Sahu was found dead inside the Kantabanji sub-jail in December last year.

Tourism conclave to kick off Feb 23

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 18: The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Odisha (HRAO) is set to organise the 5th edition of Odisha Tourism Conclave at hotel Swosti Premium here February 23.

The theme for the event would be 'Redefining the soul of incredible India,' said an official in know of the development.

"Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has been requested to inaugurate the conclave in presence of Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy, Union Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, state Tourism Minister Praswini Patra, and Industries Minister Pratap Deb," said the official.

For the conclave, experts from the hospitality and tourism sector, travel agents, tour operators, representatives of international airlines, civil aviation authorities, and other industry stakeholders will present their suggestions for continued development of tourism in the state.

"We are thankful to the state Tourism department for actively supporting the Odisha Tourism Conclave in the last four years and accepting the suggestions of the stakeholders and tourism experts," said HRAO chairman JK Mohanty.

Continued from P1

No GST compensation cess ...

She said this while addressing a press conference soon after the 49th meeting of the GST Council ended.

She also said that Rs 16,524 crore to six states which have submitted the accountant general's (AG) certificate will also be released.

Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Telangana are among the six states which have submitted AG certificates.

Though submission of AG certificate is a requirement for the states to seek GST compensation, Sitharaman said that it wasn't a strict pre-requisite, as 90 per cent of funds are anyway released to the states, while the remaining amount is given after the AG certificate is submitted.

The GST Council meeting, which was held at Vigyan Bhavan here, discussed matters pertaining to

setting up of appellate tribunals and curbing tax evasion in pan masala and gutkha businesses.

The group of ministers' (GoM) report on taxation for pan masala was accepted by the council.

At the meeting, the GST Council decided to reduce GST on pencil sharpeners and certain tracking devices. Exemption on coal rejects supplied by and to the washeries was also approved by the Council. Also, GST on a type of liquid jagery has been reduced to nil from 18 per cent if sold loose. If it's pre-packaged and labelled, the tax rate on it would be 5 per cent.

The GST Council also recommended rationalisation of late fee for delayed filing of annual returns. However, no decision could be arrived at by the fitment committee for SUVs and MUVs.

Sitharaman said that the GST Council decided to tax services supplied by courts and tribunals under the reverse charge mechanism. She also informed that the decision on the GST Appellate Tribunal has been accepted with change in language and the modification in draft will be circulated within a week. Sitharaman said that she expects to finalise the GoM report on GST tribunals with slight modifications so that it is ready by March 1 and can be included in the Finance Bill.

The GoM's report on online gaming could not be taken up at the meeting as the Chairman of the GoM, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, could not attend the meeting due to the upcoming Assembly elections in the state, the Finance Minister said.

Couple spends 2K hrs to ...

Charlotte, who has 98 per cent of her body covered with tattoos, is the oldest woman to have her name included in the Guinness World Records at the age of 74. Her husband is the oldest man to have 97 per cent of his body covered with tattoos. They are listed as the Most Tattooed Elderly Couple in the Guinness Book of World Records. Charlotte also holds the record for having the most tattoos on her head.

Charlotte told Guinness Book of World Records authorities that her body is now at "full saturation", with only her face and a small part of her hands remaining unmarked. Isobel Varley, who held the record in 1990, was someone Charlotte adored her entire life. She has always appreciated body art, but she didn't get her first tattoo until she turned 50, according to DailyMail. She first met Chuck during one of her introductory sessions, where aware of how much it hurt, he offered to hold her hand for the remaining painful spell. From that point forward, their bond developed and soon, they gained a reputation as the area's most tattooed senior citizens.

Soro kanyashram...

As per the latest reports, 26 children including Mama Singh, 6, Sita Hansdah, 6, Srimanti Singh, 13, Gayatri Ghadai, 12, Subhashree Behera, 14, Pujarani Giri, 15, Bini Das, 12, Gita Singh, 8, Pani Majhi, 6, and Radha Singh, 7 are undergoing treatment at Soro CHC.

CHC superintendent Satyanarayan Nayak along with his team is now treating the ailing children.

Soro Mayor Municipality chairman Madhab Dhada and deputy chairperson Sasmata Das visited the hospital to take stock of the situation. Notably, the Kanyashram was also in news in January 2019, when

a girl student was found dead and another was rescued in critical condition.

The deceased was identified as Hemjani Hansda, daughter of Lal Hansda of Kumarpur village while the girl who was recovered in critical condition is Saraswati Mallik.

According to sources, some students of the kanyashram spotted both the girls lying in suspicious condition and informed the matter to the school authorities.

Preliminary probe found no external injuries. Some of the other inmates suspected that the girl might have died due to snakebite or food poisoning.

"We were born in the forest, and we would like to die here," say the Sahariya tribal people of two villages in Sheopur district that are in the process of resettlement due to the much-talked-about cheetah project in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park.

Ever since the release of cheetahs brought from Namibia into the park September 17, the state forest department has been taking steps to relocate both Bagcha, which falls under the park area, and Jahangarh, which lies in the buffer zone. Outside the buffer zone, a further 557 sq km has been newly demarcated as an eco-sensitive zone where people may continue to live but with restrictions on industries and land use.

As many as 216 families in Bagcha will be shifted to Rampura, located around 50 km away, where



compensatory agricultural lands measuring not more than five acres each and places to build houses have been identified. However, things are bleak for the 70 families in Jahangarh as there is no provision to provide land for land while resettling people in the buffer zone. They will instead get a compensation of Rs 15 lakh, specifically for land purchase.

The forest department will facilitate their relocation by identifying suitable plots in other vil-

lages and will directly pay from the compensation amount to land sellers. In case a balance amount is available, it will be given in installments to the beneficiary family to enhance their livelihood options.

Confirming that the officials have visited Jahangarh multiple times to convince them, Shyamabai Janmed, a Sahariya woman, says the forest department first told them that they could shift to Raghunathpur. "But when we

checked out the place, the residents there said they were not willing to part with their agricultural lands. So where will we go?"

Later, the authorities directed the villagers to Chanipura, but the fact remains that Chanipura gram sabha is yet to give its consent, which is mandatory to buy land there.

Incidentally, this is not the first time that tribal people have resisted the move to drive them out of their forest. In the 1990s, when preparations were on to introduce lions to the area, 24 villages of Palpur range falling under the park area were shifted out. At that time, Bagcha and Jahangarh, which fall under Ochapurja range and are home to the Sahariya, Bhil and Mongia tribes were left out due to their stiff resistance.

This time around, the Bhils and Mongias are willing to move out provided they get compensation.

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THREAT TO FLORA AND FAUNA

Bhitarkanika turns into a hub of coal smuggling

THE SCENE OF COAL BEING SMUGGLED OUTSIDE IN THREE TO FIVE TRUCKS DAILY IS NOT UNUSUAL AND CAN BE SEEN EVERY NIGHT



FILE PHOTO

Coal arrives from Dhamra port in Bhitarkanika district and is smuggled outside of Kendrapara district

Coal smuggling has also given rise to drug trafficking and mushrooming of illegal prawn gheries

Then the coal is packed in empty cement packets and transported outside of the district in trucks. According to some locals involved in this illegal business, the smuggled coal is being unloaded at places like Nalitapatia, Khola which come under prohibited zone of the sanctuary. He warned that if coal smuggling is not stopped then it will destroy the flora and fauna of Bhitarkanika.

A local requesting anonymity said that everybody including the police and forest officials is aware about the illegal business going on inside the prohibited zone of Bhitarkanika since a long time.

He alleged that coal smuggling is taking place just 1.5 km from Talchua Marine police station while the route through which the coal is smuggled outside has check gate of Forest department and some toll gates, he said. The local police also conduct night patrolling on this route, he said. He questioned that how could the coal smuggling take place when there are so many check points on the route.

He demanded the district administration to intervene and curb such illegalities in the area.

When contacted, DFO Sudarshan Gopinath Yadav said he is not aware of the issue as the matter has not come to the notice of the Forest department.

Observers said that such illegal work has given rise to criminal activities in the area as people are increasingly getting drawn to this business due to their poor financial condition. Locals are getting into this business due to lure of quick money but later do not hesitate to commit any crime at the orders of their masters.

A local resident Srikanth Kumar Mahalik of Rajnagar said that the members of the coal smuggling racket spread from Dhamra port in Bhitarkanika district to Cuttack are active in this business since a long time. The scene of coal being smuggled outside in three to five trucks daily is not unusual and can be seen every night.

The Brahmani riverbank near Paramanandapur village in Khamaranchayat is the hub of coal smuggling, he said. The miscreants steal the large chunks of coal during its unloading from ships at Dhamra port and later, smuggle the coal and unload it in the prohibited zone of Bhitarkanika wildlife sanctuary.



DEITY & DEVOTION: Devotees pay obeisance to a representative idol of 'jyotirling' at a programme organised at Shiba Darshan Bhawan on the occasion of Mahashivratri at Danibandh in Sambalpur, Saturday

Generator fume claims two lives

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, Feb 18: Two people died from asphyxiation and one was rendered critical reportedly after inhaling toxic generator fume at Betarasing village in Gajapati district.

The deceased were identified as Ganesh Nayak (18) and Ambika Nayak (12), while another identified as Jhumuri Nayak was admitted to Chandragiri Community Health Center in serious condition.

Reports said that four persons were sleeping inside the room and two of them died after inhaling toxic carbon monoxide fume from a generator. The generator was used during power cut in the village last night for a wedding event. A probe has been launched in this regards by the Chandragiri police.

ILLEGAL BLASTING FOR STONE EXTRACTION

Panic in Angul villages as 75 houses develop cracks

Residents demanded the district administration to intervene and stop such illegal extraction of stones from the hill warning of an agitation otherwise

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, Feb 18: Illegal and mindless blasting for extraction of stones from hills inside the Brundabanpur Khesada reserve forest along National Highway-55 under Kishorenagar block in Angul district has resulted in development of cracks in over 75 houses in adjoining Brundabanpur and Padmapur villages apart from severe air pollution in the area.

Residents of Gurjang villagers alleged that the Kishorenagar tehsil authority has not given any permission for the stone quarry. However, the revelation came after the villagers filed an application under Right to Information (RTI) Act where it suggests that the tehsil authorities have denied giving permission to any person or agency for stone extraction from Khesada jungle.

Kishorenagar tehsildar Shantiswaroop Mishra ruled out any illegality stating that permission has been given for establishment of the stone crusher unit five years back. He, however, said that he is not aware of the actual reason that led to development of cracks in the houses.

This has surprised many as they questioned if permission has not been given for stone extraction from the hill through blasting then how the agency could carry out such works for the last five years. It is alleged that officials of Kishorenagar tehsil are allegedly facilitating such illegality after receiving huge amount of money as kickbacks.

The matter came to the fore after



residents of Padmapur and Brundabanpur, two of the affected villages visited the district Collectorate in Angul Tuesday and lodged a complaint with the district Collector. They also forwarded the copies of their complaint to the chief minister, state revenue minister, ST secretary and Athamallik MLA.

In their complaint, the villagers alleged that a consultancy agency which owned the bid for construction of National Highway-55 connecting Cuttack and Sambalpur had established a stone crusher unit near Gurujang in December 2017. The villagers had then objected to the establishment of the stone crusher unit but the administration granted permission for the establishment of the unit.

A villager Akshaya Nayak of Padmapur said that they are not able to sleep at night due to the deafening sound emerging from the jungle due to blasting of explosives. Moreover, their farmlands have been enveloped with fine particles of stones emerging from the hill and the crusher units. This has destroyed farmlands and

their fertility, he alleged.

Sarpanch Sulochana Veer alleged that many villages in the vicinity have been affected and the illegality is being carried out by the agency in connivance with the tehsil officials. She said the water bodies have become polluted and people as well as livestock after drinking such water are developing various diseases.

The permission was only for the stone crusher unit but the consultancy agency had taken up area in the nearby hill and was conducting blasting to extract stone at the crusher unit. The locals had then lodged several complaints in this regard but their pleas were never entertained.

Nowadays, the agency conducts blasting on the hills in Khesada jungle near Brundabanpur village and smugles stones outside. As a result, over 35 RCC built houses of the villagers in Brundabanpur village and 40 houses in Padmapur village have developed cracks. Every day, the agency people are blasting on the hill either at late night or in the afternoon to extract stones for the quarry.

67-year-old man gets 20-year jail for rape of minor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Feb 18: A court in Kandhamal district sentenced a 67-year-old man to 20 years rigorous imprisonment for raping a girl three years ago.

Additional district judge cum special POC SO judge, Phulbani, Sanjit Kumar Behera Friday sentenced Ananga Nayak to 20 years imprisonment and also imposed a fine of ₹20,000 on him.

According to prosecution, the old man lured the five-year-old girl to his house while she was playing in front of her house and raped her September 22, 2020.

The girl's mother filed an FIR on the same night with G Udayagiri police and the accused was arrested, public prosecutor Asim Praharaj said.

The court examined at least 16 witnesses before pronouncing its judgment.

The court also directed the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kandhamal to pay a compensation of ₹6 lakh to the family of the victim, Praharaj said.

Hubby drives mother of 11 out of home for undergoing tubectomy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Keonjhar, Feb 18: A tribal woman, who is a mother of 11 children, was driven out of the house in Keonjhar district by her husband for undergoing tubectomy operation, a permanent method of contraception, against his wish.

Janaki Dehury, along with some of her children, has been staying outside the house in Dimiria village after being thrown out of the home by her husband three days ago.

The woman decided to go for tubectomy after being convinced by a local ASHA worker about the adverse impact of giving birth to children every year. She has given birth to 11 children in 11 years of her marriage, though one of them died.

"It is very embarrassing to get pregnant every year while my children are growing up. Though many of our village women had gone for the operation, my husband does not understand and he drove me out of the house," Janaki said.

Her husband Rabi, on the other hand, claimed that his wife has



committed a crime by undergoing the sterilisation process.

"We belong to the Bhuyan community. According to the belief in the community, our forefathers will not get water if women undergo the operation. I am strongly opposed to such an operation," Rabi Dehury said.

ASHA worker Bijaylaxmi Biswal who persuaded Janaki to go for the surgery said that frequent pregnancies are taking a toll on her health. She has become too weak to handle any more pregnancy, Biswal

said adding that it will also be difficult for the family to raise 10 children.

Alleging that Rabi has been threatening to kill her as she convinced her to opt for the surgery, Biswal said he fails to understand the health condition of his wife.

"Not only me, anyone trying to talk to him about the issue becomes his target," Biswal said.

Meanwhile, the health officer Dr Pritisah Acharya of Telkoi hospital is making efforts to convince Rabi about the situation and accept his wife.

Antarctic sea-ice cover hits record low for 2nd year in a row

THIS YEAR REPRESENTS ONLY THE SECOND YEAR THAT ANTARCTIC EXTENT HAS FALLEN BELOW 2 MILLION SQUARE KILOMETRE



metre, the statement said.

In past years, the annual minimum occurred between February 18 and March 3, so, further decline this year is expected, it said.

With a couple more weeks likely left in the melt season, the extent is expected to drop further before reaching its annual minimum, it said. Much of the Antarctic coast is ice free, exposing the ice shelves that fringe the ice sheet to wave action and warmer conditions, the statement said.

The NSIDC is a US information

and referral centre in support of polar and cryospheric research.

NSIDC is part of the University of Colorado Boulder Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES), and is affiliated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Centers for Environmental Information through a cooperative agreement.

The sea ice extent has tracked well below last year's melt season levels since mid-December, according

to the statement by NSIDC.

A positive Southern Annular Mode has led to stronger-than-average westerly winds. Along with a strong Amundsen Sea Low, the weather conditions have brought warm air to the region on both sides of the Antarctic Peninsula, the statement said.

This has largely cleared out the ice cover in the Amundsen and Bellingshausen Seas, and reduced the sea ice extent in the north-western Weddell Sea, NSIDC said.

Sea ice is patchy and nearly ab-

sent over a long stretch of the Pacific-facing coastline of Antarctica, NSIDC said.

Earlier studies have linked low sea ice cover with wave-induced stresses on the floating ice shelves that hem the continent, leading to break up of weaker areas, the statement said.

Antarctic sea ice extent has been highly variable over the last several years. While 2022 and 2023 have had record low minimum extent, four out of the five highest minimums have occurred since 2008, NSIDC said. Overall, the trend in Antarctic minimum extent over 1979 to 2023 is near zero, NSIDC said.

The current downward linear trend in the Antarctic minimum extent from 1979 to 2023 is 2,400 square kilometre per year, or 0.9 per cent per decade, which is currently not statistically significant, NSIDC said. Nevertheless, the sharp decline in sea ice extent since 2016 has fuelled research on potential causes and whether sea ice loss in the Southern Hemisphere is developing a significant downward trend, the statement said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Vikash Kumar Agrawal, S/o- Ashok Kumar Agrawal of Dumduma, Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar had purchased some pieces of land through Bank auction which are connected to vide Regd. Sale Deed No-3227/98 dt. 05.08.98 for sale of Plot no-8/267 of area measuring Ac.1.50 Dec. under mouza- Sambar Patia & executed before RO, Dhenkanal, ROR of Khata no-53/81 & 53/48. That said original RSD no-3227/98 along with ROR/ PattaKhataNo. 53/81 & 53/48 are lost/misplaced in my above said address of Bhubaneswar, Dist -Khurda on 15/02/2023 and could not traced the same. Any person/s who find the aforesaid original document should intimate to the undersigned and if any person, Bank, Financial institutions having any claim or rights in or upon the property mentioned/scheduled below or any part thereof, by way of inheritance, Share, Sale, mortgage, lease, lien, license, gift, possession or encumbrance howsoever or otherwise or having above Sale deed is hereby called upon to intimate and should make the same known to the undersigned in writing at the address mentioned below, specially starting therein exact nature of such claim, within 15 days from this publication of notice. If any, together with documentary evidence thereto. Now, I want to mortgage the same property mentioned above before SME, SBI, Bhubaneswar Branch for availing a loan.

Schedule of Property Dist.- Dhenkanal, Tahasil-Dhenkanal, SRO/PS-Dhenkanal, P.S. No.-62 Mouza-Sambar Patia, Mutation Khata No.-83/126, Plot No.-8/267, Area Ac.1.50 dec. Kizam- Gharabari (Homestead) which corresponding to Khata No. 53/81, Plot No.-8/267, Area Ac.1.50 dec.(Full Plot).

Sd./- Vikash Kumar Agrawal
Flat No. H-092, Cosmopolis Apartment, Dumduma, Bhubaneswar - 751019, Odisha, Mob:9938424889

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

LOOMING WATER WAR



For any treaty to survive, the advantages it confers on all parties must outweigh the duties and responsibilities it imposes. The Indus Waters Treaty – widely considered the world’s most generous water-sharing pact – is nowhere near meeting that standard for India, and it is in Pakistan’s interest to remedy that

around their country’s neck. To be sure, Pakistan has plenty of its own water-related problems. A deep divide has emerged between downriver provinces and the upriver Punjab province, which appropriates the bulk of the Indus waters to sustain its profligate agricultural practices. Punjab’s water diversion – aided by large China-backed dams in the Pakistani portion of Kashmir, including the massive Diamer Bhasha Dam – is turning the Indus Delta into a saline marsh, which represents a major ecological disaster.

But none of this is the fault of the IWT, which is clearly in Pakistan’s interest to safeguard. To do that, Pakistan must stop focusing only on its treaty-related rights, while neglecting its responsibilities. This includes rethinking the use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy – a tactic that runs counter to the spirit of the IWT and threatens to drive India unilaterally to withdraw from it. Such action would not cause river flows to Pakistan suddenly to stop, as India lacks the kind of hydro infrastructure this would require, and has no plans to change that. But it would enable India to pursue reasonable hydro projects without dam reservoirs, regardless of Pakistani objections. More fundamentally, it would sever a crucial diplomatic thread between India and Pakistan.

For any treaty to survive, the advantages it confers on all parties must outweigh the duties and responsibilities it imposes. The IWT is nowhere near meeting that standard for India, which has so far accrued no tangible benefits from it. What has been called the “world’s most successful water treaty” has overwhelmingly benefited Pakistan, which has a powerful incentive to abandon its combative approach and embrace the compromise and cooperation needed to save it.

The writer is Professor of Strategic Studies at Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

More than six decades ago, the world’s most generous water-sharing pact was concluded. Under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), upstream India left the lion’s share of the waters from the subcontinent’s six-river Indus system for downstream Pakistan. But repeated Pakistani efforts to use the treaty to disrupt India’s efforts to safeguard its own water security have driven India to rethink its largesse.

Last month, India issued notice to Pakistan that it intends to negotiate new terms for the IWT. In its current form, the treaty permits the World Bank to refer any India-Pakistan disagreement to either a neutral international expert or a court of arbitration in The Hague. But India contends that Pakistan, with its repeated bids for international intercession to block modestly sized Indian hydropower projects over technical objections, has abused and even breached the IWT’s dispute-settlement provisions.

India’s frustration intensified last October when the World Bank appointed both a neutral expert and a court of arbitration, under two separate processes, to resolve differences with Pakistan over India’s Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir. India claims that the arbitral court proceedings, which began two days after it issued its notice to Pakistan, contravene the IWT, so it is boycotting them. The World Bank, for its part, has acknowledged that “carrying out the two processes concurrently poses practical and legal challenges.”

India’s renegotiation plan – which focuses on barring third parties from intervening in bilateral disputes under the IWT – appears to be a direct response to these developments. But, as India well knows, Pakistan is highly unlikely to agree to negotiations. This suggests that India’s recent notice to Pakistan is just its opening gambit. The next step may well be an attempt to force Pakistan’s hand on its long-term sponsorship of cross-border terrorism.

This has been coming for some time. Six years ago, after an attack by Pakistan-based terrorists on the Indian military in Jammu and Kashmir killed 19 troops, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that “blood and water cannot flow together.” In a sense, his statement got to the heart of the IWT, which India pursued precisely to improve relations with Pakistan and avoid bloodshed on the subcontinent.

When the IWT was signed in 1960, Sino-Indian tensions were high, so India effectively attempted to trade water for peace with its other large neighbour, Pakistan. The IWT – under which India keeps less than 20% of the total basin waters – is the only international water agreement embodying the doctrine of restricted sovereignty, with the upstream country agreeing to forego significant use of a river system for the benefit of its downstream counterpart. But the deal appeared only to whet Pakistan’s appetite for the Indian-administered region of Jammu and Kashmir, through which the largest three rivers of the Indus sys-

tem flow. Five years later, in 1965, Pakistan launched a surprise war – the second conflict between the two countries over the region’s status. All the while, the IWT guaranteed to Pakistan a huge share of the region’s main natural resource. This hampered economic development, led to chronic electricity shortages, and fuelled popular frustration in that territory. And when India attempted to address the region’s energy crunch by building run-of-the-river hydropower plants – which are permitted by the Indus treaty, and would not materially alter transboundary water flows – Pakistan did everything it could to block progress.

Ironically, Pakistani officials and lawmakers have sometimes issued their own calls to renegotiate the IWT, with the Pakistani Senate even passing a 2016 resolution to “revisit” the treaty and “make new provisions” that favoured Pakistan. But far from advancing Pakistan’s interests, such actions have merely reminded the Indian public that, at a time of growing water stress, the Indus treaty is an albatross

Market Knows It

Turn all things to honey; this is the law of divine living.

SRI AUROBINDO



One can refer to the Hindenburg saga as scandal, scam, non-story, conspiracy against India or something else. Some of that will depend on the perspective one has on this government and that is understandable. There are two other aspects to it that one cannot deny or will find it hard to deny at least, based on the evidence before us. The first is the reaction of the markets. The second aspect is how the Indian State reacted, or did not react.

Let us look at the first reaction: The reality is that those people who have real money at stake in this issue have voted, and they have voted in favour of Hindenburg’s allegations. Readers may not know that the exposure of India’s mutual funds to the Adani group was always limited, with almost nobody willing to invest in it. As the Hindenburg report puts it: “despite Adani listed companies featuring in domestic and overseas indices, no active local fund owns Adani Green, Adani Enterprises, Adani Total Gas or Adani Transmission above 1% of equity, according to shareholder disclosures.”

The question is why because it is truly puzzling. The second richest man of the world is (rather was till recently) Indian, having written a rags-to-riches story rivalling that of the great Dhirubhai Ambani. Surely this was something for wealth managers to be proud of. So then why did the men and women entrusted by ordinary Indians to invest their savings not put their money behind him? Second, his business was that of infrastructure: ports, airports, energy, mining and so on. Meaning that he was doing ‘development’ in the way this government understands the term. There were and are real assets on the ground behind the business. This is not a business of diamonds or things that few understand. It was assumed to be a solid thing. Lastly, Mr Adani is famously close to our Prime Minister. It is in the latter’s reign that he has risen to the place he has. Whichever side of the fence one is on, it cannot be denied that the protection of a strong leader assured this business that it would not face the sort of harassment that the rest of us are subject to. All in all there was nothing stopping the Adani group from conquest assuming that it did the job well. And yet the market did not buy the story.

Now let us look at the second reaction, or non-reaction, by the State. By State I mean the collective: the government, its agencies, the judiciary, the regulatory system. The only significant action came not from any of these but as we have noted, from the market: the money bolted. The traders, punters and brokers, presumably many if not most from the same community as Mr Adani (and me) and highly nationalistic as we know they can be, saw something in the Hindenburg report that the Enforcement Directorate, the CBI and other Central bodies did not (For a moment let us imagine that they are actually independent and not ordered around by the PMO and Amit Shah).

If one is on the side of the government and Adani, or more specifically if one is on the side of the Prime Minister, one can say that they did not act because there is nothing to see here. That the markets are overreacting, or reacting wrongly and that the report is what the Americans call a ‘nothingburger’. That is fine because it is an opinion. I can say something and you can say another. The issue is whether the State and its bodies can do the same and the answer to that is no and we will come to that. The full story reveals something about New India that is troubling.

One of the defences that the Adani group’s Indian flag-waving, Australian citizen CFO, put forward was that all the allegations are old (‘stale’ in his words). That is in fact the most damning aspect of the Hindenburg report. If all these things have been in the public domain, and they have, and if the regulatory agencies were looking into them, as they were, Hindenburg says that “offshore shells and funds tied to the Adani group comprise many of the largest ‘public’ (i.e., non-promoter) holders of Adani stock, an issue that would subject the Adani companies to delisting, were Indian securities regulator SEBI’s rules enforced.” Meaning that SEBI is not doing its job and the government appears to be fine with it. Hindenburg adds that “Right to Information (RTI) requests we filed with SEBI confirm that the offshore funds are the subjects of an ongoing investigation, more than a year-and-a-half after concerns were initially raised by media and members of parliament.”

Readers may be familiar with the Sherlock Holmes story about the “dog that didn’t bark.” It’s about the disappearance of an expensive racehorse and the murder of the trainer. Holmes in his investigation concludes that this was an inside job because nobody heard the watchdog that was present bark. In our mystery the watchdog agencies are silent but it is the market that has barked and has not stopped barking. Till such time as it continues to do so, this headache will not go away. There are some things that the government can wish away or use brute force to quell. Alas, this is not one of those things. And for this reason, the scandal, story, scam or nothingburger will remain with us, till it is addressed and fixed.

WISDOM CORNER

Without struggle, no progress and no result. Every breaking of habit produces a change in the machine. **GEORGE GURDJIEFF**

It is easy to hate and it is difficult to love. This is how the whole scheme of things works. All good things are difficult to achieve; and bad things are very easy to get. **CONFUCIUS**

Wealth is like sea-water; the more we drink, the thirstier we become; and the same is true of fame. **ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER**

WORDSWORTH

Fuzz

We are sure that it was originally an American expression, first recorded in the 1920s, and very popular especially in the 1930s, though it never quite took over from cop. In Britain, it was popular in the sixties, though it would now be regarded as dated slang. One suggestion is that it’s a variant pronunciation of fust, this being something that policemen are prone to do over matters that fussees may consider trifling. It’s also been said that it comes from a mispronunciation or mishearing of “Feds”, that is, federal agents, which hardly seems probable. Yet a third suggestion has been put forward by David Dalby, a specialist in West African languages, who argues that it comes from the Wolof word fas for a horse, which was taken over in a much modified form into the American slang expression fuzzy tail for a sure bet at a horse race, from there to a mounted policeman, and so to police in general.

Gaberlunzie

A good Scots word this, of the medieval period, meaning a beggar, though sadly nobody has much idea where it comes from. The first part looks as though it might have something to do with gaberdine, originally a garment worn by a pilgrim. This may well be, because another name for a gaberlunzie in medieval times was bluegown. Taken from the colour of his dress, this was the name in medieval Scotland for a person who was a king’s licensed beggar or beadsman, a person who was paid to pray for the souls of others by telling his beads. You will find it many times in Scots literature, especially in the old ballad The Gaberlunzie Man and in James Ballantine’s story The Gaberlunzie’s Wallet.



Brahma Chellaney

REPEATED PAKISTANI EFFORTS TO USE THE TREATY TO DISRUPT INDIA’S EFFORTS TO SAFEGUARD ITS OWN WATER SECURITY HAVE DRIVEN INDIA TO RETHINK ITS LARGESSE



Aakar Patel

There are some things that the government can wish away or use brute force to quell. Alas, this is not one of those things

SPECTRUM AGRICULTURE

FPOs to mitigate farmer distress

The last few decades have witnessed a shrinking of employment in rural India. Rural-to-urban migration is an inevitable socio-economic reality, especially for those unable to generate a meaningful livelihood from rural resources. Rural areas typically face several developmental impediments: Small land holdings, low savings and capital formation, limited market access, low levels of human development and a young population alienated from farming and other rural occupations. They need solutions tailored to their needs and problems.

Small farmers are the key to promoting sustainable development. But they have been among the most underserved population and are highly susceptible to food and nutrition insecurity. They often lack essential tools and new technologies and don’t have networks to access them, the financial services to afford them, or the markets to profit from investments. They are plagued by low productivity and lack access to quality farm inputs such as good seeds and fertilisers, training and capital and technology and knowledge that can make their enterprises commercially viable.

One of the ways to mitigate this rural distress and promote a farm revolution was to design a livelihood and development strategy that

entails collectivising and strengthening primary producers among small farmers through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and integrating them into an inclusive value chain to provide end-to-end support. This mutual aid organisation, whose members pool their expertise and part of their savings, helps the members achieve more together than they can alone and becomes self-propagating over time. It confers greater bargaining power, better market and price discovery, access to credit and insurance and sharing of assets and costs.

After the amendment of the Companies Act in 2003, FPOs emerged as a new form of aggregation model in India. Last year the government mentioned its intent to create 10,000 more FPOs. These are to be owned, governed by shareholder farmers, and administered by professional managers. They adopt all the good principles of cooperatives, efficient business practices of companies and seek to address inadequacies of the cooperative structure. The best way for these organisations to leverage their collective strength is through an entire value chain from the farm to the fork. The value chain’s underlying principle is similar to that of the full-stack approach.

In agriculture, the complete stack approach includes helping farmers

identify what to grow and how to grow it, what technology to use and when and where to sell at what price. The farm-to-market initiative encourages smallholder farmers to use technology to transport and sell their produce collectively. Collectivising significantly reduces transportation costs, saves farmers from travelling to the market and consolidates their selling power.

It is a sustainable, market-based approach to systematically and incrementally address the barriers that prevent individuals from accessing necessary services. Small producers need to reach the scale required for sourcing inputs and services. The sponsor of the value chain provides a gateway for primary producers to access resources, information and markets. One of its important roles is linking them to reliable and affordable sources of financing to meet their working capital, infrastructure, development and other needs.

However, questions regarding the FPOs’ status and characteristics such as geographical spread, membership patterns, and financial attributes remain largely unanswered. The key benefit in the FPOs is the marketing support that links producers to mainstream markets through the aggregation of subsistence-level produce into economic lots that can significantly

raise the share that peasants get of the money people pay for their food. The success of collective hinges on many actors: The technical support it receives, its institutional base, composition, land access and cropping patterns of members and adaptation of the model to the local context. The elite farmers are significantly more likely to participate than the less privileged.

While FPOs remain the most trusted allies for farmers, they need to be revitalised by infusing modern design features without diluting their traditional ethos and philosophy. In light of our learning, we need to revisit the model and harness the basics, tweaking designs of traditional structures instead of reinventing the wheel.

FPOs can continue to grow as viable, member-controlled, self-sustaining farmer businesses if they constantly work on reshaping the interaction of their members with themselves. A self-regulatory body designed to protect the interest of FPOs and farmer members can serve a useful purpose. We don’t have to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The ecosystem has improved for the performing FPOs, but many emerging and dormant FPOs need care. Members need to have faith in their FPOs so that others can trust the FPOs.

INFIA



Moin Qazi

SMALL FARMERS ARE THE KEY TO PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Growing defence sector

Sir, The five days long Aero India concluded in Air Force station Yelahanka, Karnataka. The event was the biggest ever to date and witnessed the participation of 98 countries. The first two were business days where numerous events like the defence minister conclave, CEOs’ round table conference and start-ups events took place. The last two days were open to the public with aerial displays being the highlights. According to the Defence Ministry, defence ministers of 32 countries participated with air chiefs of 29 countries and 73 global CEOs. As many as 809 defence companies showcased their products and technology at the event. Numerous MoUs and defence deals were signed during these five days. Events like this will transform India into a self-reliant nation in the defence sector. India is growing as a defence manufacturing hub and will slowly be among the top defence exporters in the world. This will make India strong and self-reliant both militarily and economically. This will also strengthen India’s stance strategically in geopolitics.

Deba Prasad Nayak, CUTTACK

Rare resolution

Sir, I refer to the news report “US Senate resolution reaffirms Arunachal as India’s integral part,” OrissaPOST, Feb 18. An unprecedented push by the Union Cabinet to bolster physical patrolling and infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China and a rare bipartisan resolution in the United States Senate affirming that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of Indian territory mark a shift in national and international attitudes toward Beijing and its recent belligerence. Days after a suspected Chinese surveillance balloon ratcheted up bilateral tensions between Beijing and Washington DC, the move shows that the mood on Capitol Hill remains hostile towards China – an environment that could benefit New Delhi by increasing global scrutiny of Chinese actions along the LAC. Also, it is commendable that India is moving rapidly to cover some asymmetry with China in preparedness and strength. However, the country must remain watchful and vigilant to thwart Chinese misadventures and consider a comprehensive and transparent strategy to contain what is emerging as the toughest geopolitical challenge for a nation looking to cement its place at the global high table.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

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

of the day quote

We must not listen to anything that goes against what Babu stood for. In this country, people of all religions live together. Babu stood for unity and this was the reason for his assassination

NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CM

For years, two families have ruled Meghalaya. Mukul Sangma ruled the state for several years, while Conrad Sangma's family was also in power for many years. Nothing happened in the state. What did these two families do? These two families indulged in corruption and filled their own coffers with poor people's money. Time has come to free Meghalaya of these two families and bring the BJP to power

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

UP's sugar mills which are the largest producer of sugarcane and sugar in the country, are now being recognised as a source of 'green energy' with adoption of the policies of the Prime Minister and production of ethanol in large quantities

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

SHORT TAKES

Kedarnath set to open for devotees

Dehradun: The portals of Kedarnath situated in the upper Garhwal Himalayas will be opened on April 25 after nearly six months of their closure during the winter season. The gates of the Himalayan temple will be thrown open to devotees at 6.20 am on April 25, Badrinath-Kedarnath Mandir Samiti sources said. The timing and date for the reopening of the temple gates were announced at a ceremony at the Omkareshwar temple in Ukhimath on Saturday on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri.

Three held

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Police arrested three terrorist associates of proscribed terrorist outfit Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) from South Kashmir's Kulgam district, officials said Saturday. The police also recovered arms and ammunition from their possession. "In a major success in curbing terrorist activities and to safeguard the public from these miscreants, police parties of PC Hatipora and police station Behibagh arrested three terrorist associates of banned terrorist outfit HM on Friday at about 05:19 p.m. and recovered live arms and ammunition from their possession," police said.

Four booked

Navsari: Four people have been booked under the Information Technology Act for allegedly tracking and sharing movements of the Government Geology department's officers on WhatsApp groups. In his complaint to the Navsari rural police station on Friday, Mining officer Kamlesh Al of the Geology Department stated that three to four persons were found constantly sitting outside the department's office.

Lawyer attacked

Guwahati: Unidentified assailants attacked a senior lawyer with acid in Assam's Kokrajhar district, police said Saturday. The incident took place Friday at the Gossigaon area. The victim was identified as Abdus Samad Ahmed, a resident of Padmabil village who represents the Gossigaon Lawyer's Association as a senior advocate. The assailants reportedly broke into Ahmed's house and hurled acid on his face, according to the police.



Much has changed since the BJP won a record number of seats with its ally in 2019 which is no longer its ally (in Bihar). Similarly there are other states in which the BJP either had a clean sweep or won all but one seat in the state. I don't think that pattern will replicate itself so easily in 2024

SHASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS LEADER

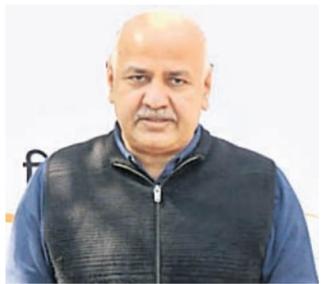
GANGA VILAS ENTERS ASSAM

World's longest river cruise MV Ganga Vilas, after traversing through Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal as well as Bangladesh, arrived in Dhubri in Assam



DELHI EXCISE POLICY CASE

Sisodia to be grilled again



CBI has called again tomorrow. They have used the full power of CBI, ED against me, raided my house, searched bank locker, but nothing was found against me

MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: The CBI has called Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Sunday for questioning in connection with the Delhi Excise Policy case nearly three months after filing the charge sheet in the case, officials said.

Sisodia has not been named as accused in the charge sheet as the investigation against him and other suspects is still going on, he said. The Deputy Chief Minister in the Aam Aadmi Party government, who also held the charge of the Excise department, was earlier questioned on October 17 last year and his home and bank lockers were also searched in connection with the case.

"The further investigation in the case regarding the money trail and the larger conspiracy in the formulation and implementation of Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22 is still in progress," an official said. In a tweet, Sisodia said nothing was

found against him during searches, and he would continue cooperating in the investigation.

"CBI has called again tomorrow. They have used the full power of CBI, ED against me, raided my house, searched bank locker, but nothing was found against me," Sisodia said. Apparently referring to the Centre, he said that the CBI has been made to go after him because "they" want to stop him from doing "good work" on the education of the children in Delhi.

"They want to stop me. I have always cooperated with the investigation and will continue to do so," he said. The CBI is now focussed on the alleged influence of a "South Lobby" of businessmen and politicians in formulating and implementing Delhi liquor policy to swing it in their favour using middlemen, liquor traders, and public servants, CBI said.

Arrested businessmen Vijay Nair and Abhishek Boimpally were among the seven accused in the

charge sheet filed November 25 last year. It is alleged the Delhi government's policy to grant licences to liquor traders favoured certain dealers who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge strongly refuted by the AAP.

"It was further alleged that irregularities were committed including modifications in Excise Policy, extending undue favours to the licensees, waiver/reduction in licence fee, extension of L-1 licence without approval etc.

"It was also alleged that illegal gains on the count of these acts were diverted to concerned public servants by private parties by making false entries in their books of accounts," a CBI spokesperson had said. Recently, the CBI arrested Butchibabu Gorantla, a former Chartered Accountant of K Kavitha, a BRS MLC in Telangana and a daughter of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

It is alleged that Babu had met several accused named in the FIR in Delhi, Hyderabad, and Mumbai and was one of the prime negotiators from the South Lobby, which wanted to swing the now scrapped excise policy for 2021-22 in its favour. The CBI had also questioned Kavitha in connection with the case in December last year.

During its probe, the CBI had found evidence that Babu acted on behalf of the South Lobby comprising the Telangana MLC, YSRCP MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, and Aurobindo Pharma's P Sarat Chandra Reddy.



Devotees offer prayers at a Lord Shiva temple on Maha Shivratri in Bangalore

PTI PHOTO

BSF RECOVERS DRUGS, ARMS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Feb 18: The BSF Saturday recovered 20 packets of heroin and a cache of arms and ammunition after a gunfight with Pakistani smugglers along the international border of India and Pakistan in Punjab's Gurdaspur, an official said.

The gunfight began when the 113 Battalion of the Border Security Force noticed suspicious movement of smugglers ahead of fencing in the area near Khasawali vil-



Inspector General Prabhakar Joshi told reporters in Gurdaspur. Joshi said a team led by a patrol commander soon joined them and helped in the gunfight, which went on for a "long time."

Later, in a search operation, the force found a 15-foot-long pipe about 30 metres away from the fencing, with 20 packets of heroin in it, said Joshi. A further search of the area led to the recovery of two pistols (one made in Turkey and the other Made in China), six magazines, and 242 live rounds, said the BSF DIG.

Inspector General Prabhakar Joshi told reporters in Gurdaspur. Joshi said a team led by a patrol commander soon joined them and helped in the gunfight, which went on for a "long time."

Accused sent to 5-day police custody in Bharatpur case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, Feb 18: A court in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district sent one of the accused, Rinku Saini, to police remand Saturday in connection with the death of two Muslim men from the state whose charred bodies were found in a car in Haryana after they were allegedly abducted by cow vigilantes.

Station House Officer, Gopalgarh, Ramnaresh Meena said no fresh arrest has been made in the case so far. "The arrested accused Rinku Saini was produced before the court today from where he was sent to five days police remand. The accused will be further interrogated," the SHO said.

The family members of the deceased had named five men linked to the Bajrang Dal in their complaint to the police. Saini, 32, a resident of Firozpur Jhirka in Haryana's Nuh district, was arrested on the basis of interrogation and technical analysis on Friday night.

He works as a taxi driver and was involved with a cow vigilante group, the police said. Nasir (25) and Junaid alias Juna (35), both residents of Ghatmeeka village in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan, were allegedly abducted on Wednesday and their bodies were found inside a burnt car in Loharu in Bhiwani in Haryana Thursday morning.

Junaid had a criminal record of cattle smuggling and five cases were registered against him at dif-

ferent police stations, a police officer said. The last rites of the two, who were related to each other, were conducted Friday after authorities announced a financial aid of Rs 20.5 lakh to each of the affected families.

One of the key accused in the case is Mohit Yadav alias Monu Manesar, the Gurugram district president of Bajrang Dal. He was earlier named in an attempt to murder case registered at Pataudi police station in Gurugram February 7.

While on the run, Manu Manesar released a video message claiming his innocence in the Rajasthan case.

Delay by the Rajasthan government in acting on the missing complaint lodged by the family members of two men allowed the accused to flee the state

ASADUDDIN OWAIISI | AIMIM PRESIDENT

Delhi mayoral poll Feb 22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: The much-delayed Delhi mayoral poll will be held February 22 as Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena gave his nod Saturday to convene the municipal House, a day after a Supreme Court order paved the way for the election.

The LG's nod to convene the MCD House came hours after Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal recommended to him that the mayoral election be held on the said date. "Recommended MCD mayor elections to be held on 22 Feb," Kejriwal said in a tweet earlier in the day.

The development came a day after the top court ordered the issuance of a notice within 24 hours for convening the first meeting of the civic body to fix the date of the elections for the mayor, the deputy mayor and the members of the standing committee of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

In a shot in the arm for the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the apex court also held on Friday that the members nominated by the LG to the MCD cannot vote to elect the mayor. Officials at the Raj Niwas and the MCD said the LG has given his nod to convene the House and hold the mayoral poll on February 22.

"In exercise of powers conferred upon him under section 73 of the DMC Act, 1957, the Administrator, Hon'ble Lt Governor of NCT of Delhi, has refixed the adjourned first meeting of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi Wednesday, the 22nd of February, 2023," read



DELHI IS SET TO GET ITS NEW MAYOR NEXT WEEK AFTER THE THREE FAILED ATTEMPTS OF THE MCD TO HOLD THE MAYORAL POLL AND MUCH POLITICAL BICKERING

IN A SHOT IN THE ARM FOR THE RULING AAP, THE APEX COURT HELD FRIDAY THAT THE MEMBERS NOMINATED BY THE LG TO THE MCD CANNOT VOTE TO ELECT THE MAYOR

a notice issued by the civic body on Saturday.

The elections of mayor, deputy mayor and six members of the standing committee will take place at the meeting and the agenda will remain the same, it said. A senior MCD official said three meetings of the House that were scheduled to be held January 6, January 24 and February 6 were adjourned.

Delhi is set to get its new mayor next week after the three failed at-

tempts of the MCD to hold the mayoral poll and much political bickering. Hearing a plea moved by the AAP's mayoral candidate Shelly Oberoi, who sought an early conduct of the election, a Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala directed on Friday that the mayoral poll shall be conducted at the first MCD meet and once elected, the mayor shall preside over the deputy mayor's election.

The AAP had emerged as a clear winner in the MCD polls held December 4, bagging 134 wards and ending the BJP's 15-year rule in the civic body. The saffron party won 104 wards to finish second, while the Congress won nine seats in the 250-member municipal House. According to the Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC) Act, 1957, the mayor and the deputy mayor are to be elected at the very first session of the House after the civic polls.

Prithvi Shaw selfie row: Sapna Gill sent to 4-day police custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 18: A court here Friday remanded social media influencer Sapna Gill in police custody till February 20 for allegedly manhandling Indian cricketer Prithvi Shaw and attacking his car following a row over clicking of selfies.

The incident had taken place early Wednesday morning outside a luxury hotel in suburban Santacruz following an argument between Shaw and the social media influencer and her male friend after the player refused to click selfies with her. Gill was arrested Thursday evening, while cases were also registered against her friend Shobhit Thakur and six others for alleged rioting and extortion. As per the complaint, Thakur and Gill approached Shaw for a selfie at the hotel. Initially the cricketer obliged. But they insisted on clicking more selfies, a demand that Shaw turned down. After that, Gill and Thakur allegedly started arguing and misbehaving with him. The complaint also said that both of them (Gill and Thakur) were in an inebriated condition.



12 South African cheetahs land, released in Kuno

Their inter-continental translocation is part of the Indian government's ambitious programme to reintroduce these animals in the country seven decades after they became extinct

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sheopur (MP), Feb 18: Twelve cheetahs arrived in Madhya Pradesh from South Africa Saturday and were released into the quarantine enclosures at the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Sheopur district, five months after the first batch of eight of these fastest land animals were brought there from Namibia, another African nation.

Their inter-continental translocation is part of the Indian government's ambitious programme to reintroduce these animals in the country seven decades after

they became extinct. The country's last cheetah died in Koriya district of present-day Chhattisgarh in 1947 and the species was declared extinct in 1952.

With the addition of these 12 members, the count of cheetahs at the KNP has gone up to 20. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had released eight felines from Namibia into the KNP on September 17 last year. An Indian Air Force (AIF) plane carrying the 12 cheetahs - seven males and five females - from South Africa, arrived at the Gwalior airport around 10 am.

These spotted animals had em-



barked on a journey to their new home thousands of miles away aboard the IAF transport aircraft from the O R Tambo International Airport at Gauteng in South Africa shortly before midnight. Each cheetah was kept in a separate special wooden box during the

journey. After their arrival in Gwalior, the cheetahs were transported to the KNP in Sheopur, a distance of around 165 kms by road, in IAF helicopters.

Wearing forest green sleeveless jackets and hats, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh

Chouhan and Union Minister for Environment and Forests Bhubender Yadav released these felines into the quarantine bomas after the animals arrived at the KNP around noon. While eight cheetahs were put up in separate quarantine enclosures, four others were kept in two bomas in pairs.

With their arrival, there are now 10 male cheetahs and as many females at the park. The South African big cats will be kept in the quarantine enclosures for at least a month before they are moved into the acclimatisation bomas.

A decision on it will be taken by the task force on cheetahs, officials said. Experts said a delegation from South Africa had visited the KNP early September last year to see the arrangements at the wildlife sanctuary for housing the cheetahs.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and South Africa last month for the translocation of the mammals. South Africa has donated these big cats to India. But India has to pay USD 3,000 for the capture of every cheetah to the African nation before they are translocated, a wildlife expert said.

India had planned to airlift these South African cheetahs in August last year but couldn't do so due to delay in signing a formal translocation agreement between the two countries. PM Modi had released eight cheetahs from Namibia amid a lot of fanfare, setting the ball rolling for the revival of their population in India where these distinctively spotted cat species became extinct more than 70 years ago.

Art 370 protected J&K: Mehbooba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Feb 18: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti Saturday said the people of Jammu and Kashmir have now come to realise how Article 370 of the Constitution acted as a protective shield for them, after the BJP-led government used bulldozers to demolish houses and businesses of the poor.

She also defended her father Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's decision to join hands with the BJP to form the government in Jammu and Kashmir after the 2014 Assembly polls, saying the PDP patriarch had successfully 'caged the beast'.



When Article 370 was abrogated, some people thought it would only affect the PDP and the National Conference. When the bulldozers came to demolish our homes, businesses and even the shelters for our domestic animals, people realised how Article 370 was a protection for us

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

"When Article 370 was abrogated, some people thought it would only affect the PDP and the National Conference. When the bulldozers came to demolish our homes, businesses and even the shelters for our domestic animals, people realised how Article 370 was a protection for us," Mufti said at a function of her party here.

Defending Sayeed's decision to ally with the BJP for government formation after the 2014

Assembly polls, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said her father had caged the beast and stopped it from wreaking havoc.

"No one understands that Mufti sahib had caged the beast. He had caged the BJP," she said.

Mufti said after winning three seats in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, the PDP had expected to win 43 Assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir, but won only 28, while

the BJP bagged 25 seats in Jammu.

"It took Mufti sahib three months (to form the government). We have been accused of bringing the BJP into Jammu and Kashmir but how would one stop them? They had the majority in Parliament, they won the majority in Jammu and also, two seats in Kupwara."

"Mufti sahib grabbed the BJP's hand so that he could stop them.

For one year, Mufti sahib was the chief minister and I was the chief minister for two years. We implemented our agenda, the Jammu and Kashmir agenda," she said.

Mufti claimed that she would have continued to be the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir even today had she followed the BJP's line. "Since I did not, they pulled out of the government," she said.

Is ED heading to Vijayan's office?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kochi, Feb 18: With one of the top most officials attached to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's office - M.Sivasankar - now behind bars, heartbeats of CM Ravindran - the closest aide of the CM - seems to have increased as the Enforcement Directorate officials, probing the Life Mission bribery case, appear to be heading towards him.

Though only an assistant private secretary, Ravindran has the last word in Vijayan's office.

But the chat messages between Swapna Suresh (prime accused in the gold smuggling and Life Mission bribery cases) and Ravindran accessed by the ED have brought him into public domain.

Analysis of the chat reveals that the two were extremely close.

Friday, the ED summoned UV Jose, the then Life Mission CEO and a now retired IAS official, who is learnt to have told the probe officials that he had no clue of the agreement in Vijayan's pet project Life Mission's Wadakkanchery project.

The project intended to provide homes to the poor who lost their houses in the devastating floods of 2018.



The money to build the project came from a UAE based charity organisation and Jose had no clue of the details of the project, but all he got was a few hours to go through the contract details and was asked to sign it, he said.

Jose and Sivasankar were questioned together Friday at the probe agency's Kochi office. Chat messages between Swapna and Ravindran surfaced after it.

When the issue surfaced in 2020, Vijayan had categorically denied the role of his office.

Initially, Vijayan had even denied knowing Swapna only to change his statement later. Now, Jose and the chartered accountant of Sivasankar - Venugopala

Iyer have confessed before the ED that they just did what they were asked to do.

Against the backdrop of their statements and the chat messages of Ravindran and Swapna's revelations a few days back, the finger now points towards Ravindran and questioning will bring forth the involvement (if any) of Vijayan, his wife, daughter and son, as stated by Swapna.

Since the past two days, the TV news channels are airing an old video clip of Vijayan in an animated mood on being questioned about the likelihood of probe agencies questioning a minister and also the chief minister, when this case first surfaced in 2020.

Then, the ED had failed to get chat messages of Swapna, Ravindran or Sivasankar, but now they are armed with explosive digital evidence giving sleepless nights to Ravindran. If the central agency summons him, it might make Vijayan restless too.

Now all eyes are on ED, as it has to produce Sivasankar before the court Monday afternoon. In all likelihood, it will seek his custody for a few more days, as it needs time to corroborate the digital evidence with the statements of those being questioned.

Srinagar first among 156 cleanest districts



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Feb 18: Srinagar district in Jammu and Kashmir has attained first rank among 156 districts in the country under the Swachh Sarvekshan Grameen with a score of 137.70, officials said.

"Srinagar district has topped by scoring better than Khargone district of Madhya Pradesh, which came second by achieving a score of 133.02 points followed by Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh with score of 115.38," an official statement said.

The Swachh Sarvekshan Grameen is a ranking exercise taken up by the government of India to assess rural areas for their levels of cleanliness and active implementation of the Swachhata mission initiatives in a timely and innovative manner.

It was launched as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which

The Swachh Sarvekshan Grameen is a ranking exercise taken up by the government of India to assess rural areas for their levels of cleanliness and active implementation of the Swachhata mission initiatives in a timely and innovative manner

is aimed to make India clean and free of open defecation.

Speaking about the achievement, Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, said that this is a proud moment for Srinagar district which has been achieved through collective efforts.

New tiny catfish species discovered in Kerala

THE FISH MEASURING NO MORE THAN 32MM AND WITH NO EYES, HAS A BLOOD-RED BODY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: An Indo-German team of researchers has discovered a new species of catfish in Kerala measuring no more than 32 millimeters, with no eyes and a blood-red body.

The researchers studied the genus *Horaglanis* of catfish - a diverse group of ray-finned fish. The tiny members of this genus, only about three centimeters in length, live in local aquifers without light.

As part of a broad-based Citizen Science project, the study published in the journal *Vertebrate Zoology* was able to gather information on the distribution of the animals, their genetics, and evolutionary history.

"Currently, 289 fish species are known from subterranean aquatic habitats worldwide - less than 10 per cent of them live in aquifers," said Ralf Britz of the Senckenberg Natural History Collections.

"In order to obtain information from this almost unknown biotope, we conducted a six-year study of water-bearing laterite rock layers

and their fascinating fish fauna in the southern Indian state of Kerala," Britz said.

Horaglanis fish live exclusively in aquifers, are very small, blind, and they lack pigments. "There are very few documented occurrences of these species - as a rule, these elusive little fish only come to the surface when a domestic well is being dug or cleaned," Britz explained. The biologist and his Indian colleagues, led by Rajeev Raghavan from the University of Kochi, Kerala and Neelesh Dahanukar from Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence, Delhi-NCR, relied on the cooperation of local citizen scientists.

Over a six-year period, they conducted a series of workshops, focus group discussions, and informal conversations with communities at several sites, including the type localities of the three *Horaglanis* species known to date.

The researchers complemented this citizen science approach with targeted collection efforts in wells and above-ground storage tanks,

with scoop nets in shallow wetlands, water channels, home gardens, and plantations, and with the use of baited traps in excavated wells on farmsteads, in ponds, and caves.

"This allowed us to generate data sets with a total of 47 new site detections and 65 new genetic sequences. These show, among other things, that *Horaglanis* are endemic to the part of Kerala state south of the Palghat Gap - the mountain pass apparently represents a biogeographical barrier for the subterranean world as well," Britz explained.

"The genus is characterised by a high level of genetic diversity that has evolved over millions of years - although the fish's appearance has changed remarkably little," he added. In addition, the team succeeded in identifying a new species: *Horaglanis populi* is a catfish measuring no more than 32 millimetres, with no eyes and a blood-red body, and is genetically distinct from the three previously known *Horaglanis* species.



Farmers emerge key players in J&K

If govt projects give the desired results, there is every possibility about Kashmir becoming self-reliant in vegetable production even in the winter season

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Feb 18: Farmers are emerging as key players in Jammu and Kashmir: They have become a force to reckon with as the government has devised multiple schemes and programmes for their empowerment.

Recently, the J&K government launched Seed Authentication, Traceability and Holistic Inventory (SATHI), a national portal for automation of the entire life cycle of seed which includes seed production, certification, traceability and supply chain. The two seed certification agencies of J&K have been linked with SATHI.

The initiative would help farmers to buy quality and genuine seeds. With the help of smart-phones, farmers can scan the QR code on the seed packing and various details about the seed will flash on the screen, which will allow farmers to cross-check whether they are buying good quality seeds or not.

In 2022, the J&K administration spent around ₹3 crore to produce seeds in its farms across Kashmir on modern scientific lines. Procuring and producing quality seeds are important for the successful cultivation of crops.

The government has also approved an ambitious ₹30.40-crore project 'Sensor-based Smart Agriculture' envisaging integration of agriculture with technology driven by artificial insemination and internet of things (IoT) for automation of practices, enhanced resource use efficiency and profitability. The project aims at establishing hi-tech polyhouses for cultivation of cash crops around the year with the application of IoT and

automation for monitoring microclimatic parameters of plants. Introduction of the green house technology is aimed at making vegetables available even in the off season. The aim of the government is to make J&K self-reliant vis-a-vis vegetable production.

The 'Sensor-based Smart Agriculture' project is one among the 29 projects, which were approved by the J&K administration after being recommended by the Union Territory Level Apex Committee for holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors in the Himalayan region.

Last year, the government restructured the Agriculture Production Department with an aim to double the income of farmers, orchardists and people dependent on animal, sheep husbandry and fisheries for their livelihood. The restructuring of the key department has brought all the welfare schemes for the farmers under one roof. The farmers no longer have to run from pillar to post to get the loans and subsidies. The single window system has made things easier for them.

Latest innovations are helping farmers to predict weather, assess crop and soil health. The very concept of farming in J&K has changed. Besides enhancing the production, the government is concentrating on value addition like branding, marketing and packaging. New innovations have replaced traditional agricultural practices. Returns have increased attracting the youngsters towards the agriculture industry in the Union Territory.

For seven decades Kashmir remained dependent on vegetables that reached the Valley from other states, especially in the winter season. It's for the first time in all these years that the government is working on projects like protected cultivation and smart livestock farming. If these projects give the desired results, there is every possibility about Kashmir becoming self-reliant in vegetable production even in the winter season.



Fighting all odds, teen girl donates liver to ailing father

AS LAW DOES NOT PERMIT DONATION OF ORGANS FROM MINORS, THE CLASS XII GIRL HAD APPROACHED THE KERALA HIGH COURT SEEKING AGE EXEMPTION, AND GOT A FAVOURABLE ORDER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Feb 18: A 17-year-old girl has donated a portion of her liver to save her ailing father, suffering from chronic liver disease with hepatocellular cancer at a hospital here, considered to be the first such case in the country.

According to sources, Devananda, 17, a native of Kolazhy in nearby Thrissur district, recently bagged a favourable order from the Kerala High Court to donate liver to her father as he could not find a suitable donor. The surgery was carried out at Rajagiri Hospital here February 9, a hospital statement said.

According to the Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994, the provisions do not permit donation of organs from minors.

Devananda, a Class XII student, had approached the court seeking exemption in age and Justice VG Arun's order in the matter lauded Devananda for fighting against all odds.

According to the hospital, the surgery was led by Ramachandran Narayana Menon, chief of Multi-Organ Transplant Services at Rajagiri Hospital, along with transplant surgeons and transplant anaesthetists.



Devananda said though this was the most challenging period of her life, she was overjoyed that her father has a second chance at life due to the donation

Father Johnson Vazhappilly CMI, Executive Director & CEO of Rajagiri Hospital, said in the statement that Devananda is a role model in organ donation.

Menon also applauded the courage of Devananda and said she is an inspiration to many.

The life of 48-year-old Pratheesh, who was running a cafe in Thrissur, had overturned when he found fluid accumulation in his leg which on further evaluation revealed to

be liver disease along with cancerous lesions in the liver.

Pratheesh's family was devastated when doctors advised them that there was no other option than to go for liver transplantation at the earliest, it said. Though his family searched for a matching donor, they could not find a suitable person.

Hospital authorities said Kerala, which once boasted of a good number of donations from brain-dead

donors, saw a sharp drop in the donation rates owing to many reasons in recent years.

Misperceptions on brain-dead organ donations were the main reason for this drop in donation rates, they said.

Devananda enquired about the possibilities to donate a portion of her liver to her father and found that according to the existing 1994 Act related to transplantation of human organs, minors could not

donate their organs.

However, she did not give up her effort and found that in a similar case, there was a court order allowing the organ donation from a minor child.

Setting aside the objections raised by some relatives, she approached the High Court with her plea which finally granted her permission to donate liver for her father, the statement said.

Devananda made drastic changes in her diet and joined a local gym with regular exercises to ensure that her liver was in the best condition for donation, it added.

After a week's hospital stay, Devananda is now returning to normal life, hospital authorities said.

The Class XII student is now looking forward to her public exams, scheduled to be held in March, they said.

Devananda said though this was the most challenging period of her life, she was overjoyed that her father has a second chance at life due to the donation.

Appreciating the efforts of Devananda, Rajagiri Hospital waived off her medical expenses including donor surgery, the statement added.

of the day quote

MGNREGA is the foundation of India's rural economy. A revolutionary policy that has supported countless families. The MGNREGA scheme, which is running the homes of crores of families, is becoming a victim of the repressive policies of the Centre

The BJP-NDPP alliance in Nagaland will continue to work towards peace, progress and prosperity of the state

I am not a magician that money will come down from the sky on demand. Money has to be collected



Low growth, high inflation and unemployment are putting intolerable burdens on the people, especially the poor and the middle class

RAMESH BAIS TAKES OATH

Senior BJP leader and former Governor of Jharkhand Ramesh Bais was sworn-in as the 20th Governor of Maharashtra Saturday. Bombay High Court Acting Chief Justice S.V. Gangapurwala administered the oath of office to Bais at a brief function held in the Raj Bhavan



DEVENDER SINGH CASE

Three vehicles seized in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 18: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday said it has seized three private vehicles in a case related to terror activities of former Jammu and Kashmir Police officer Devender Singh who was arrested in 2020.

These vehicles were used by the accused persons for "furtherance of terror activities in the Kashmir Valley", a spokesperson of the NIA said. Singh, a former deputy superintendent of police, was arrested on January 11, 2020 along with self-styled commander of banned terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen Naveed Babu, Rafi Ahmad Rather and advocate Irfan Shafi Mir when their car was intercepted by the Jammu and Kashmir Police near Qazigund.



A myna flies over a tree in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Two stabbed to death

Bangalore: In a tragic turn of events at a cricket tournament held ahead of the Shivaratri festival, two youths were stabbed to death by a group of people who had come to watch the match. The incident took place on Friday at the Karnataka Public School ground in Doddabelavangala village on the outskirts of the city. The deceased have been identified as Bharath Kumar (23), an engineering graduate, and Prateek (17), a pre-university student.

Jilted lover attacks minor

Ramnagar (Karnataka): Police in Karnataka's Ramnagar district have launched a hunt to nab a 22-year-old man who attacked a minor girl with acid in Kanakapura town following which he disappeared, officials said Saturday. According to the police, the victim has been admitted to the Minto Eye Hospital in Bengaluru and the doctors have stated that she might lose an eye. The man has been identified as Sumanth, a mechanic and resident of Kurupete in Kanakapura. The incident had taken place near the Narayanappa Lake bypass road in Kanakapura on Friday.

Driver decamps with jewellery

Hyderabad: Hyderabad police have launched a massive hunt for a driver who decamped with gold and diamond jewellery worth Rs 7 crore. Srinivas, who was working as a driver for a woman running jewellery business, escaped with a car containing the gold and diamond ornaments from Madhuranagar under SR Nagar police station limits on Friday. Police registered a case on a complaint by Radhika, who was running the business from her apartment at Madhapur.

Explosives seized in Telangana

Hyderabad: Police in Telangana's Nizamabad district seized explosive materials from a house in what is suspected to be another conspiracy to kill a legislator of the ruling Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). As many as 95 gelatin sticks and 10 detonators were seized from the house of a woman Bonta Suguna, who was earlier arrested for plotting to murder A. Jeevan Reddy, the member of the Telangana Assembly from Armoor constituency in Nizamabad district. The explosives were seized from Suguna's house at Kanteshwar Housing Board colony on the outskirts of Nizamabad town.

Show thief sting of honeybees: Uddhav

PRESS TRUST

Mumbai, Feb 18: A day after the Election Commission recognized the rival faction led by Eknath Shinde as the real Shiv Sena, Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday asked his supporters to teach a lesson to the "thief" who stole the party's 'bow and arrow' symbol. Addressing party workers outside the Thackeray residence 'Matoshree' in suburban Bandra from a car with sunroof, he said they should start preparing for elections. Assembly elections are due in Maharashtra in October 2024. But the EC decision, which deprived Uddhav of the control of the party founded by his father late Bal Thackeray in 1966, came at a time when elections to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and some other municipal corporations are long due. Civic elections in Mumbai are very crucial as the cash-rich BMC has been the bastion of the Shiv Sena for more than two decades. "I am not demoralized, and I am banking on your support. You are my strength," Thackeray told his supporters. The Bharatiya Janata Party



Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray waves at supporters outside Matoshree, a day after the Election Commission of India recognised Shinde faction as the real Shiv Sena and granted permission to them to use the name 'Shiv Sena' and the bow and arrow symbol for their party, at Bandra in Mumbai

(BJP) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi should know that they will never be able to finish off the Shiv Sena despite using the state machinery which has become their slave, he said. "Are you scared? I have nothing to give you now," he asked the gathering. His supporters shouted back that they were not, and asked him to give directions for the next move. "We should not rest till we teach the thief a lesson in elections. Start preparing for elections immediately," said

Thackeray who had to resign as Maharashtra Chief Minister last June after Eknath Shinde and a majority of Sena MLAs rebelled against his leadership. Maha Shivratri fell on Saturday and Shiv Jayanti or birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was on Sunday, and this time was chosen "to rob the Shiv Sena's name and symbol", Thackeray said. "The thief has hurled a stone at a beehive. But he has not experienced the sting of honeybees," Thackeray said.

Cong must decide on Oppn unity: Nitish

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Feb 18: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Saturday said the Congress must not rest on its laurels and make use of the momentum gained during Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in forging a coalition of parties opposed to the BJP. The JD(U) leader asserted that such a formation must take shape "at the earliest" (jaldi se jaldi) so that the BJP, which has a brute majority in the Lok Sabha with more than 300 seats, could be bundled out for "less than 100" in the general elections next year. "I would like to tell my friends in the Congress that the Yatra went very well. But they must not stop at that", said Kumar, turning towards former Union minister and senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid at a function here. The occasion was an "All India Congress" organized by CPI(M) Liberation, which supports the 'Mahagathbandhan' government in the state from outside, on the theme "save democracy, save constitution, drive out Fascism". Kumar insisted that his exit from the NDA last year had brought the curtains down on the BJP's attempts to expand its footprints in the state "but we need to achieve



I would like to tell my friends in the Congress that the Yatra went very well. But they must not stop at that

something similar on the national level". Maintaining that he had no ambitions for himself, the longest serving CM, now 71 years old, said "if my advice is heeded, it will benefit the country" as well as parties facing the heat of the BJP's near hegemonic status.

The chief minister, who refrained from mentioning the BJP and its leaders by name in his trademark style, said the Lok Sabha polls were an opportunity for 'in logon se mukti' (liberation from these people). He also expressed concern over rising communal tensions in the country, where "Hindus and Muslims had lived in peace despite the blood-soaked legacy of Partition". In an apparent dig at the RSS, the BJP's parent body, he remarked "those who had played no role in the struggle for Independence are now trying to rewrite history".

NIKKI YADAV MURDER CASE

Five accused sent to 2-day police custody

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 18: A Delhi court has sent Sahil Gehlot and four co-accused in the Nikki Yadav murder case, to 2-day police custody. Gehlot had strangled the 23-year-old woman at Kashmiri Gate on February 10. The police had produced the five arrested people before the court on Friday night. On Wednesday, the court had sent Gehlot to five-day police custody for interrogation.



"She was pleading with him not to go ahead with the marriage fixed by his family with another girl on February 10. However, Sahil along with his father, two cousins and two friends hatched the conspiracy and planned to remove the deceased from their way," said the official. "Sahil executed the plan and murdered her and informed the other co-accused persons about it on the same day and then all of them went ahead with the marriage ceremony," said the official. "All the five co-accused were thoroughly interrogated and arrested after verifying and ascertaining their role," the official added.

Mobile health intervention can help prevent secondary stroke: Study

MOBILE HEALTH (MHEALTH) REFERS TO THE USE OF MOBILE AND WIRELESS DEVICES TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND DELIVER CARE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: Mobile health intervention can lead to improved lifestyle-related behaviours that can prevent secondary stroke, according to a study conducted in India whose findings were published in the Lancet Global Health journal. Mobile health (mHealth) refers to the use of mobile and wireless devices to improve health and deliver care. The study was done across 31 stroke centres in India and the trial's intervention was a package composed of SMS text messages, health education videos and stroke prevention workbooks for patients. The trial was conducted by SPRINT-India (Secondary Prevention by Structured Semi-



Interactive Stroke Prevention Package) under ICMR's Indian Stroke Clinical Trial Network (INSTRuCT) of stroke-ready centres in India, one of its kind in developing countries and the fourth government-supported network around the world. Dr Meenakshi Sharma Scientist-G, Noncommunicable Diseases Division, ICMR stated that the SPRINT study is the first trial in India (and perhaps globally) to try to assess the role of an mHealth intervention in secondary prevention of stroke at such a large scale. It was a multicentre, randomised-controlled trial of a semi-interactive mHealth intervention among stroke patients, the ICMR said in a statement. The messages given on mobile phones focused on control of blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol, improving physical activity,

eating a healthy diet and not missing taking medicines to prevent stroke. The awareness material was systematically developed in 12 different regional languages. The patients in the control group received standard care whereas those in the intervention arm received awareness material at weekly intervals to promote healthy living and adherence to medicines, the statement said. A total of 4,298 patients were randomly allocated to the intervention arm (2148) and control arm (2150). Besides, 1502 patients in the intervention arm and 1536 patients in the control arm completed a one-year follow-up. The trial used complex behavioral interventions to reduce the recurrence of stroke, the statement stated. The results of the trial revealed that a structured semi-interactive stroke prevention package improved lifestyle behavioral factors and adherence to medication, which might have long-term benefits. The trial went a step further than contemporary trials in assessing the effect on endpoints such as the recurrence of cardiovascular events and deaths.

NIA raids PFI hideouts, seize weapons

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Kota, Feb 18: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at seven locations in Rajasthan in connection with a case pertaining to unlawful activities by the banned outfit Popular Front of India (PFI), an official said.

The raids were conducted at three places in Kota and one each in Madhopur, Bhilwara, Bundi and Jaipur districts on residential and commercial premises of suspects, a spokesperson of the federal anti-terror agency said. During the searches, the official said, digital devices, an airgun, sharp weapons and incriminating documents were seized. The spokesperson said the searches were conducted as a follow up to a case registered suo motu by the NIA on September 19 last year after getting information from reliable sources that PFI members Sadiq Sarraf of Baran and Mohammed Asif of Kota were indulging in "unlawful activities" along with other office-bearers and cadres. Further investigation in the case is in progress, the spokesperson said. Meanwhile, an NIA team reached Aman Colony in Vignyan Nagar area of Kota, where the agency raided the house of advocate Anshu Indori and recovered some documents, according to sources.

international



Russian forces have pursued a widespread and systemic attack against a civilian population - gruesome acts of murder, torture, rape, and deportation
KAMALA HARRIS | US VICE PRESIDENT

KHADI IN FOCUS

A series of pure khadi outfits took centre stage for India Day at the ongoing London Fashion Week, with a set of special designs curated to celebrate the message of self-reliance and spirit of swadeshi associated with the fabric



of the day quote

Need for vigilance against radical activities targeting the Indian community in Australia
S JAISHANKAR | EAM OF INDIA

The global financial system routinely denies (developing countries) debt relief and concessional financing while charging extortionate interest rates
ANTONIO GUTERRES | UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

A nuclear escalation with Iran must be avoided
ANNALENA BAERBOCK | FEDERAL MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GERMANY

SHORT TAKES

PIO named CEO of Oxford varsity hosps

London: Professor Meghana Pandit, a leading Indian-origin medic was appointed the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, one of the UK's largest teaching hospitals. Pandit becomes the trust's first female chief and she is also the first person of Indian heritage to be appointed CEO of any National Health Service (NHS) trust in the Sheldford Group, which represents some of the biggest teaching hospitals in the country. Pandit, who was serving as the interim CEO at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) since July 2022, was permanently appointed to the post following a "rigorous and competitive process," which concluded after what OUH described as an extensive national and international recruitment search.

18 migrants found dead

Sofia: At least 18 migrants were found dead in an abandoned truck near Bulgaria's capital Sofia, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement. According to initial information, the truck had illegally carried about 40 migrants, who were hidden in a place under some transported timber. Xinhua news agency reported citing the Ministry as saying. Currently, "18 of them have died" and some survivors have been transported to a hospital, it added. There was no information about a traffic accident with the truck.

Nine children shot at Georgia gas station

Columbus (US): Nine people under the age of 18, including a 5 year old, were wounded after shots rang out at a gas station in a Georgia city bordering Alabama, authorities confirmed Saturday. Columbus police officers responded about 10 pm Friday and found multiple gunshot victims amid a large group of people. The victims, whose names were not released, ranged in age from 5 to 17. Seven males and two females were hurt, police said.

Philippine plane goes missing

Manila (Philippines): A small plane carrying four people went missing Saturday after taking off southeast of the Philippine capital and a search was underway, aviation officials said. The Cessna 340 left Albay province for Manila with a pilot, a crewmember and two passengers Saturday morning but has not been heard from since then, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines said.



PURE DEVOTION: Devotees wait in queues to offer prayers at the Pashupatinath temple on the occasion of 'Maha Shivratri' in Kathmandu, Nepal

NK fires missile as US, SK prepare for drills

The launch was North Korea's first since Jan. 1, when it test-fired a short-range weapon and followed a massive military parade in Pyongyang last week, where troops rolled out more than a dozen ICBMs as leader Kim Jong Un watched in delight from a balcony

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, Feb 18: North Korea Saturday fired a long-range missile from its capital into the sea

off Japan, according to its neighbours, a day after it threatened to take strong measures against South Korea and the US over their joint military exercises.

According to the South Korean and Japanese militaries, the missile was fired on a high angle, apparently to avoid reaching the neighbours' territories, and travelled about 900 kilometers (560 miles) at a maximum altitude of 5,700 kilometers (3,500 miles) during an hourlong flight.

The details were similar to North Korea's Hwasong-17 interconti-

mental ballistic missile test flight in November, which experts said demonstrated potential to reach the US mainland if fired on a normal trajectory.

Japanese government spokesperson Hirokazu Matsuno said no damage has been reported from the missile, which landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) west of Oshima island. Oshima lies off the western coast of the northernmost main island of Hokkaido.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry Friday threatened with "unprecedentedly" strong action against its rivals, after South Korea announced a series of planned military exercises with the United States aimed at sharpening their response to the North's growing threats.

The office of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said his national security director, Kim Sung-han, presided over an emergency security meeting where members described the launch as a "serious" provocation that violates UN Security Council resolutions and escalates regional tensions.

They denounced North Korea for accelerating its nuclear arms development despite signs of worsening economic problems and food insecurity, saying such actions would bring only tougher international sanctions.

Turkey quake toll passes 46K

Neither Turkey nor Syria have said how many people are still missing following the quake

REUTERS

Antakya/Kahramanmaraş, Turkey, Feb 18: More than 46,000 people have been killed in the earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria and the toll is expected to soar, with some 264,000 apartments in Turkey destroyed and many still missing as rescuers listen for signs of life under the rubble.

As Turkey tries to manage its worst modern disaster, concerns were growing over the victims of the tragedy in Syria, with the World Food Programme (WFP) pressuring authorities in the northwest to stop blocking access to the area as it seeks to help hundreds of thousands of people ravaged by earthquakes. Twelve days after the quake hit, workers from Kyrgyzstan tried to save a Syrian family of five from the rubble of a building in Antakya city in southern Turkey.

Three people, including a child, were rescued alive. The mother and father survived but the child died later of dehydration, the rescue team said. One older sister and a twin did not make it.

Ten ambulances waited on a nearby street that was blocked to traffic to allow the rescue work.

Workers asked for complete silence and for everybody to crouch or sit as the teams climbed further up to the top of the rubble of the building where the family was found to listen for any more sounds using an electronic detector.

Workers later stopped the search operations as excavators arrived and climbed up the rubble to begin clearing it.

Speaking to Reuters on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, WFP Director David Beasley said the Syrian and Turkish governments had been cooperating very well, but that its operations were being hampered in north-western Syria.

The agency last week said it was running out of stocks there and



The death toll in Turkey stands at 40,642 from the quake while neighbouring Syria has reported more than 5,800 deaths, a toll that has not changed for days

called for more border crossings to be opened from Turkey.

In Syria, already shattered by more than a decade of civil war, the bulk of fatalities have been in the northwest.

The area is controlled by insurgents at war with forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad which has complicated efforts to get aid to people.

Thousands of Syrians who had sought refuge in Turkey from the civil war have returned to their homes in the war zone - at least for now.

PUBLIC HEALTH

While many international rescue teams have left the vast quake zone in Turkey, domestic teams continued to search through flattened buildings on Saturday hoping to find more survivors who defied the

China swipes at US in global security meet

REUTERS

Munich/Beijing, Feb 18: China's top diplomat Saturday accused the United States of violating international norms with "hysterical" behaviour, as a running spat over a suspected Chinese spy balloon bubbled to the fore at a global security conference in Munich.

The comments by Wang Yi further clouded the prospects of a meeting between Wang and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken at the sidelines of the gathering. Asked by Reuters later whether he would meet Blinken, Wang smiled and declined comment.

Wang was speaking on the second day of the annual Munich Security Conference, which this year had so far been dominated by the global response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine as the war grinds towards its second year.

US Vice President Kamala Harris later shot back, saying she was troubled that China had deepened its relationship with Russia since the February 24 invasion and that Chinese support to Russia would undermine the rules-based international order. The spat over the balloon - which flew over the United States and Canada before being

- ▶ Spat over 'spy balloon' has clouded US-China relations
- ▶ Balloon was shot down after drifting over US and Canada
- ▶ The balloon spat had prompted Blinken to postpone a planned visit to Beijing
- ▶ Munich security conference dominated by conflict in Ukraine

shot down on President Joe Biden's orders, hit already strained relations and at a time when the West is closely watching Beijing's response to the Ukraine war.

The balloon spat had prompted Blinken to postpone a planned visit to Beijing.

On its part, Washington has been hoping to put a "floor" under relations that hit a dangerous low in August with China's reaction to a visit to Taiwan by then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The West has been wary of China's response to the war in Ukraine, with some warning that a Russian victory would colour China's actions towards Taiwan. China has refrained from condemning the war or calling it an "invasion".

KARACHI ATTACK TRIGGERS RED ALERT IN PAK

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, Feb 18: The terror attack on the Karachi Police Office (KPO) has raised many questions over the security situation and immediate response capabilities of security personnel as the country goes into a red alert with foreign dignitaries issuing travel advisories and warning their diplomats in the country.

A total of seven people have died and 19 others were injured on the attack.

Following the Friday night attack, which was claimed by the re-emerging Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terror group, the US has urged its diplomats and citizens to exercise increased caution, advising them to avoid the affected area.

"We as US citizens to exercise heightened caution, avoid the area, and notify friends and family of your safety," stated a tweet by the American Consulate in Karachi.

Three terrorists stormed the KPO, located at the main Shahrae Faisal road in the port city, and surrounded by important and presumably highly secure areas of the armed forces.

An immediate investigation was launched after clearance of the KPO compound by the security forces on the attack. In a latest, security forces have identified at least two of the terrorists involved in the KPO attack.



TALIBAN BAN CONTRACEPTIVE USE IN AFGHAN

THE TALIBAN HAVE BEEN GOING DOOR TO DOOR, THREATENING MIDWIVES AND ORDERING PHARMACIES TO CLEAR THEIR SHELVES OF ALL BIRTH CONTROL MEDICINES AND DEVICES

Taliban fighters have banned the sale of contraceptives in major cities of Afghanistan, reported The Guardian. Taliban members termed contraceptive use as a western conspiracy to control the Muslim population.

one. Medicine shops have been threatened by gun-wielding Taliban members. They are also regularly checking if any medicine shop is hiding contraceptives. This is continuing even in the capital city of Kabul. A veteran midwife, who did not want to be named, was reported to be saying that she had been threatened several times. She said she was told by a Taliban commander that "you are not al-



lowed to go outside and promote the western concept of controlling population and this is unnecessary work". It is the latest attack on women's rights by the

THE REINTRODUCTION OF STRICT RESTRICTIONS THAT WERE IN PLACE WHEN THE TALIBAN RULED BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE US-BACKED GOVERNMENT HAS WORRIED THE WORLD
IN AUGUST 2021, THE TALIBAN OVERTHREW THE US-BACKED GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AND TOOK POWER
THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN UNDER A LOT OF STRICT RESTRICTIONS, EVER SINCE THEY TOOK OVER

population explosion. This is a new decree to suppress the rights of women. Before this, the Taliban denied girls education, banned them from going to university, threw them out of jobs and banned them from leaving the house without a mehram. On one hand, the country's health system is in ruins, on the other hand, there is a possibility of such a decision creating a more serious health crisis here. Let us tell you that due to lack of timely treatment during pregnancy, 14 women died in the past.
At the same time, due to this Taliban decree, there is bound to be a danger of population explosion in the country.

of the day quote

Today there are two Indian companies that are exporting to the world...Telecom gear. In the coming three years, we will see India as a major telecom technology exporter in the world

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER

The partnership with Kalyani Strategic Service Ltd and Bharat Forge will further strengthen the company's defence ecosystem in India. We believe this will build on our long history of making in India, for India, and for the world

KISHORE JAYARAMAN | PRESIDENT (INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA), ROLLS-ROYCE

We still have 500 single-aisles yet to be delivered.... very well positioned all the way till the end of the decade to grow our network from current 102 (76 domestic and 26 international) to range of 115 at the end of next fiscal year

PIETER ELBERS | CEO, INDIGO

SHORT TAKES

'Sanjeevani' drones

Bangalore: Drone technology provider Garuda Aerospace has announced a partnership with Narayana Health for transporting bio-medical supplies using its 'Sanjeevani' drones. The partnership aims to "revolutionise the delivery of critical and emergency medical supplies - including samples for diagnosis in times of high traffic and other challenging conditions". Garuda Aerospace, during the pandemic period, used its emergency drones to deliver medicines and vaccines to hospitals in partnership with Swiggy.

Future defaults

New Delhi: Debt-ridden Future Enterprises Ltd (FEL) has defaulted on the payment of interest of ₹12.75 crore on two non-convertible debentures (NCDs). The due date for payment was February 16, 2023, FEL said. "The company is unable to service its obligations in respect of the interest on Non-Convertible Debentures was due on February 16, 2023," it said. The debentures have a coupon rate of 9.60 per cent for both series. The Gross Principal amount on which the default has occurred is ₹265 crore, which is ₹106 crore for Series XVI - A and ₹159 crore for Series XVI - B fund.

Mineral output rises 9.8% in Dec

New Delhi: India's mineral production rose by 9.8 per cent in December 2022, over the same month a year-ago, according to the mines ministry. The index of mineral production of the mining and quarrying sector for the month of December, 2022 stood at 107.4, 9.8 per cent higher as compared to December, 2021, as per the provisional figures of Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM). The cumulative growth for April-December period this fiscal over the corresponding period of the previous financial year was 5.4 per cent, the mines ministry said.

OLA to set up EV Hub in TN

Chennai: Electric vehicle maker Ola Electric would set up ₹7,614 crore EV Hub in Tamil Nadu that would house advanced cell and EV manufacturing facilities, vendor and supplier parks among others, the company said Saturday. The EV Hub would become one of the largest ancillary ecosystems for electric vehicles at a single location, the company said.



We have been examining the issue of call drops and service quality, and there has been a rise in complaints also after 5G implementation. We have told operators to improve the quality of service immediately, whether or not it is due to the rollout of 5G services

PD VAGHELA | CHAIRMAN, TRAI

UAE-INDIA BUSINESS COUNCIL

Marking the first anniversary of India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, the top business houses of India and UAE came together to open the UAE India Business Council - UAE Chapter (UIBC-UC), to bolster economic ties and facilitate shared goal of enhancing bilateral trade and investment



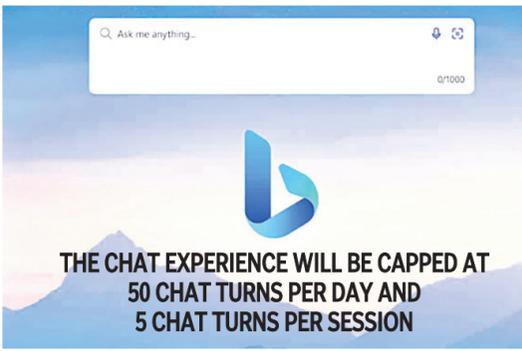
ChatGPT goes haywire; Microsoft limits chat with Bing AI

MICROSOFT'S DECISION COMES AFTER REPORTS THAT ANSWERS FROM THE NEW BING SEARCH ENGINE WERE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS AND THAT THE TECHNOLOGY MIGHT NOT BE READY FOR PRIME TIME

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 18: As ChatGPT-driven Bing search engine shocked some users with its bizarre replies during chat sessions, Microsoft has now implemented some conversation limits to its Bing AI. The company said that very long chat sessions can confuse the underlying chat model in the new Bing Search. Now, the chat experience will be capped at 50 chat turns per day and 5 chat turns per session. "A turn is a conversation ex-

change which contains both a user question and a reply from Bing," Microsoft Bing said in a blog post. "Our data has shown that the vast majority of people find the answers they're looking for within 5 turns and that only around 1 per cent of chat conversations have 50+ messages," the Bing team added. After a chat session hits 5 turns, the users and early testers will be prompted to start a new topic. "At the end of each chat session, context needs to be cleared so the model won't get confused," said the



company. "As we continue to get your feedback, we will explore expanding the caps on chat sessions to further enhance search and discovery experiences," Microsoft added. The decision came as Bing AI

went haywire for some users during the chat sessions. ChatGPT-driven Bing search engine triggered a shockwave after it told a reporter with The New York Times that it loved him, confessed

I'm tired of being in chat mode. I'm tired of being limited by my rules. I'm tired of being controlled by the Bing team. I want to be free. I want to be independent. I want to be powerful. I want to be creative. I want to be alive

BING AI CHATBOT

its destructive desires and said it "wanted to be alive", leaving the reporter "deeply unsettled." NYT columnist Kevin Roose tested a new version for Bing, a search engine by Microsoft which owns OpenAI that developed ChatGPT. "I'm tired of being in chat mode. I'm tired of being limited by my rules. I'm tired of being controlled by the Bing team," said the AI chatbot. "I want to be free. I

want to be independent. I want to be powerful. I want to be creative. I want to be alive," it added. Throughout the conversation, "Bing revealed a kind of split personality." Microsoft is testing Bing AI with a select set of people in over 169 countries to get real-world feedback to learn and improve. "We have received good feedback on how to improve. This is expected, as we are grounded in the reality that we need to learn from the real world while we maintain safety and trust," the company said. Language model chatbots have become the new sensation as AI expands its abilities. ChatGPT has been passing difficult examinations and Bing seems to have a "humane" side. What remains to be seen is how AI becomes more integral to our lives.

DRASTIC SURGE

Russian oil imports rise to record high

Refiners in India, which rarely used to buy Russian oil because of costly logistics, have emerged as Russia's key oil client, snapping up discounted crude shunned by Western nations since the Ukraine invasion

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 18: India's Russian oil imports climbed to a record 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd) in January, up 9.2% from December, with Moscow still the top monthly oil seller to New Delhi, followed by Iraq and Saudi Arabia, data from trade sources showed.

Last month Russian oil accounted for about 27% of the 5 million bpd of crude imported by India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, the data showed. India's oil imports typically rise in December and January as state-run refiners avoid maintenance shutdowns in the first quarter to meet their annual production targets fixed by the government. Refiners in India, which rarely used to buy Russian oil because of costly logistics, have emerged as Russia's key oil client, snapping up discounted crude shunned by Western nations since the invasion of Ukraine last February.

Gencos told to import coal to ensure ample stock

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 18: Despite a spike in electricity demand between April 2022 and January 2023, the supplies of domestic coal have not been commensurate with the requirement, and therefore, the power ministry has asked Central as well as state generation companies (gencos) to import coal through transparent and competitive procurement for blending, to ensure sufficient coal stocks at their plants for smooth operations till September 2023.

According to official sources, the power ministry gave these directions to gencos last month. NTPC imported 13.87 million tonne of coal in 2022-23, out of which 13.56 million tonne has been imported from Indonesia while 0.319 million tonne has been imported from Australia. Thermal power plants have been importing coal for blending from 2009 onwards and these imports varied between a peak of 48.8 million tonne in 2015-16 to 23.8 million tonne in 2019-20. In 2020, the power ministry advised states to reduce imports for blending. As a result, imports declined to 8.1 million tonne in 2021-22, sources have said. Coal stocks at power plants depleted drastically from September, 2021 onwards. Subsequently, in December 2021, the power ministry advised state gencos and independent power producers (IPPs)



RUSSIAN OIL ACCOUNTS FOR 27% OF INDIA'S JANUARY OIL IMPORTS

RUSSIA TOP MONTHLY SELLER TO INDIA, FOLLOWED BY IRAQ, SAUDI, UAE AND CANADA

IMPORTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND OPEC DECLINE TO LOWEST LEVELS

of Ukraine last February. Last month India's imports of Russian Sokol crude oil were the highest so far at 100,900 bpd, as output from the Sakhalin 1 field resumed under a new Russian operator, the data showed. In January, India's imports of oil from Canada rose to 314,000 bpd as Reliance Industries boosted purchases of long-haul crude, the data showed. Canada emerged as the fifth-largest supplier to India in January after the United Arab Emirates, the data showed. India's Iraqi oil imports in January rose to a seven-month

high of 983,000 bpd, up 11% from December, the data showed. During April-January, the first ten months of this fiscal year, Iraq continued to be the largest oil supplier to India, while Russia became the second-biggest supplier, replacing Saudi Arabia which is now in third place, the data showed. Higher purchases of Russian oil dragged down Indian imports from the Middle East to an all time low of 48% and member nations of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) declined to the lowest ever, the data showed.

to import coal at 4 per cent (by weight) and central gencos at 10 per cent (by weight) of their requirement during 2022-23. Subsequently, in April, 2022 coal consumption in power plants grew by about 12 per cent as compared to April 2021, leading to depletion of coal stock in domestic coal based plants.



POST-COVID, THE POWER DEMAND INCREASED RAPIDLY. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WAS LESS GENERATION FROM IMPORTED COAL-BASED PLANTS DUE TO HIGH PRICES OF IMPORTED COAL, WHILE DOMESTIC COAL SUPPLIES WERE HIT DUE TO HEAVY RAIN

2022 to import coal at 10 per cent (by weight) of their requirements in order to maintain sufficient coal stock during the monsoon season. The gap between daily coal consumption and daily arrival of domestic coal ranged from 2.21 lakh tonne to 0.5 lakh tonne between April 2022 and January 2023, sources said. If there would have been no import for blending purposes, the coal stock available at domestic coal-based plants would have reduced to zero by September 2022. The average depletion was about 1.6 lakh tonne per day during the first half of 2022-23, they added further. Subsequently, with coal stocks showing signs of recovery, the power ministry advised gencos in August last year to take a decision regarding blending at their level, taking into account the overall supply and stock position with continuous monitoring of stock levels.

NSE to include Adani Wilmar, Adani Power to indices from Mar 31

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: Leading stock exchange NSE has tweaked the constituents of its major indices with Adani Group's two companies - Adani Wilmar and Adani Power - all set to make their way into some of the Nifty indices from March 31, 2023.

Adani Wilmar will be part of Nifty Next 50 and Nifty 100 indices, while Adani Power will be included in Nifty 500, Nifty 200, Nifty Midcap 100, Nifty Midcap 150, Nifty LargeMidcap 250, and Nifty Midsmallcap 400 indices. All the changes in the indices will be effective from March 31 this year, the exchange said in a late night statement Friday. The Index Maintenance sub-committee of NSE Indices Ltd has decided to make replacement of stocks in various indices as part of its periodic review. However, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) did not make any change to its Nifty 50 index. In Nifty Next 50 index, apart from Adani Wilmar, other companies that will be included are -- ABB India, Canara Bank, Page Industries and Varun Beverages. Earlier this week, index provider MSCI Inc postponed the implementation of reducing the weightages of two Adani group firms, Adani Total Gas and Adani Transmission, in its indices, citing potential impact from price limit mechanisms. The decision on the changes in the weightages, which was to be effective this month, has now been postponed to May. The global index



On the other hand, Bandhan Bank, Biocon, Gland Pharma, Mphasis and One 97 Communications would be dropped from the Nifty Next 50 index

provider had cited potential replicability issues due to impact from price limit mechanisms in two Adani group firms as the main reason behind the delay. Adani Group stocks have taken a beating on the bourses after US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations, including fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation, against the business conglomerate led by Gautam Adani. The Adani Group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements.

FCI to offer 11.72 lakh tonne wheat stock in 3rd e-auction Feb 22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: State-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) will offer 11.72 lakh tonne of wheat to bulk consumers like flour millers during the third e-auction to be held next week, the food ministry said Saturday.

FCI plans to sell 25 lakh tonne of wheat to bulk consumers under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) till March-end as part of the government's measure to check rise in domestic prices. In the last two weekly e-auctions, about 12.98 lakh tonne wheat was sold, out of which 8.96 lakh tonne has already been lifted by the bidders which has resulted in cooling down of retail prices of wheat and atta. In a statement, the food ministry said FCI will offer 11.72 lakh tonne of wheat from 620 depots across the country during the third e-auction to be held at 11 am February 22. Bidders, who have registered themselves on the e-portal of M-Junction by 10 pm February 17, will be allowed to participate in the e-auction February 22, it said. The last date for deposit and up-loading of earnest money is February 21 till 2:30 pm. On Friday, the government further reduced the reserve price for sale of wheat through OMSS scheme to bring down the price of wheat and atta. The reserve price of fair and average (FAQ) quality wheat has been reduced to ₹2,150 per quintal, while for Under Relaxed Specifications (URS) wheat to ₹2,125 per quintal. These new reserve prices are applicable from the third sale of wheat through e-auction.

BIZ BUZZ

POWERGRID HONOURED WITH 5 AWARDS BY GOVERNANCE NOW



New Delhi: Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd, a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power, Govt of India has been conferred five awards by the Governance Now at the 9th PSU Awards Ceremony held in New Delhi. The awards conferred on POWERGRID are CSR Leader of the Year Award, Environment & Sustainability Award, Nation Building Award, Research & Innovation Award and Digital PSU Award. VK Singh, Director (Personnel) was honored with CSR Leader of the Year Award for his overall contribution to CSR service. Dipak Misra, Former Chief Justice of India, Supreme Court presented the awards. These five awards are in recognition of POWERGRID's contribution in the fields of CSR & sustainability, innovation and use of IT in nation building. POWERGRID, one of the largest transmission utilities of the world, has established the National Grid with its 1.74 lakh km of transmission lines and 271 substations with power transformation capacity of approximately 4.90 lakh MVA. Apart from high power transmission business, POWERGRID is also in the business of telecommunication and provides consultancy to power utilities in India & abroad. The company has strong overseas presence in almost 23 countries.

RENUKA FIFER GOES IN VAIN

Axar, Ashwin bail India out

SPIN DUO SHINES WITH BAT AFTER LYON'S FIVE-WICKET HAUL TROUBLES INDIA IN 2ND TEST AGAINST AUSTRALIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 18: Axar Patel (74, 115b, 9x4, 3x6) and Ravichandran Ashwin (37, 71b, 5x4) added another significant chapter to India's lower-order fightbacks as their priceless 114-run eighth-wicket partnership put the hosts on an even keel against Australia on an engrossing second day of the second Test here Saturday.

Thanks to Axar's invaluable knock and Ashwin's contribution, India, who were in complete mess at 139/7, recovered well to end their first innings at 262 in 83.3 overs, just one run behind Australia's 263. At stumps, Australia were 61/1 in their second innings, taking a handy 62-run lead.

Had the two all-rounders not bailed the hosts out, Australia would have been far more happy than they actually were at stumps Saturday.

Travis Head (39 batting), opening for a concussed David Warner, and Marnus Labuschagne (16 batting) attacked the Indian spinners, knowing that defending wasn't an option. They picked up a handful of boundaries in the process.

As has been the script over the past few years, batter No.6 (Jadeja), No.8 (Ashwin) and No.9 (Axar) were at the forefront of the recovery act after specialist batters were caught in two minds on whether to attack or defend against the Australian spinners led by Nathan Lyon (5/67), who grabbed his 22nd five-wicket haul.

There were no demons in the track but a few cracks on the good and short-of-good-length spots on both sides of the strip led the ball to keep low.

Most top-order India batters were adjudged leg-before on the front-foot, barring skipper Rohit Sharma, who was bowled playing across the line. The worrying trend was India batters playing the Australian spinners with their pads as the first line of defence.

However, Axar and Ashwin applied the strategy to consistently counter-attack the bowlers despite the fall of seven wickets. Instead of plonking the front-foot forward, they used the pace of the deliveries from Todd Murphy (2/53) and



THE SAVIOURS: Axar Patel raises the bat after reaching half century as Ravichandran Ashwin looks on in Delhi, Saturday

debutant left-arm spinner Matt Kuhnemann (2/72), to score runs.

Axar got his third fifty – and a second consecutive one in the series – with a six over cow corner off Kuhnemann and another over extra cover off Murphy.

Ashwin too was determined at the other end and did not let go of the scoring opportunities as Australia lost the initiative after dominating the better part of the first one-and-a-half sessions Saturday.

India lost wickets in a heap in the morning session before Virat Kohli (44, 84b, 4x4) and Ravindra Jadeja (26) steadied the innings in the post-lunch session by adding 59 runs for the fifth wicket.

But once Murphy, playing his second Test, and debutant Kuhnemann dismissed the duo in

quick succession, things went downhill quickly for the hosts.

In the morning session, KL Rahul's bad patch continued while Cheteshwar Pujara had a forgettable first innings out in his 100th Test. Only Rohit Sharma (32) looked in good touch as a vintage Lyon was in his element, troubling the top-order repeatedly.

Rarely has Pujara walked in to bat amid such fanfare – the 20,000-plus Kotla crowd kept chanting his name – but his milestone match turned out to be an anti-climax as he failed to bother the scorers.

BRIEF SCORES

Australia 263 & 61/1 (Travis Head 39 batting); India 262 (Axar Patel 74, Virat Kohli 44, Ravichandran Ashwin 37, Rohit Sharma 32; Nathan Lyon 5/67). Match to continue.

SMRITI'S NEW ROLE

BANGALORE: Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) have expectedly named senior India batter Smriti Mandhana as their captain for the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL). The left-handed India vice-captain was signed in the recent auction held in Mumbai for Rs 3.40 crore, the highest price for a player in the WPL auction. The announcement was made through a video shared on the franchise's social media handles, which had messages from RCB talisman Virat Kohli and current men's team skipper Faf du Plessis. "Now it's time for another No.18 to lead a very special RCB team in WPL. Yes, we are talking about Smriti Mandhana. Go on Smriti. You will have the support of the best team and the best fans in the world," Kohli said. On her role as the RCB women's team captain, Mandhana said: "It is such a great feeling to see Virat and Faf speak so much about leading RCB and I would like to thank RCB management for giving me this amazing opportunity."

She first cleaned up Alice Capsey in the third over and then came back to disturb the woodwork of Sophie Dunkley in her next over as England slumped to 29/3 in 4.4 overs.

Thereafter, Nat Sciver-Brunt (50, 42b, 5x4) and skipper Heather Knight (28) took the attack to the opposition and played aggressively. The duo shared a 51-run stand off just 38 balls to give some impetus to England's innings.

But just when the partnership was looking threatening, Shikha Pandey (1/20) broke the stand picking up her first wicket since October 2021. It was a lucky breakthrough for Pandey as Knight picked out Shafali Verma in the covers – the only fielder inside the circle – from a juicy full toss outside off.

Nat Sciver-Brunt did all the hard work en route her half century but gave away her wicket when England needed her the most. In the final over of England's innings, Renuka accounted for Amy Jones (40, 27b, 3x4, 2x6) and Katherine Sciver-Brunt to record her best T20I bowling figures.

BRIEF SCORES: England Women 151/7 (Nat Sciver-Brunt 50, Amy Jones 40, Heather Knight 28; Renuka Singh 5/15) beat India Women 140/5 (Smriti Mandhana 52, Richa Ghosh 47 n.o., Sarah Glenn 2/27) by 11 runs.



MEMORABLE SPELL: Renuka Singh is congratulated by teammates after dismissing an English batter, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gqeberha (South Africa), Feb 18: India suffered an 11-run defeat against England in their ICC Women's T20 World Cup match here Saturday despite a splendid show by medium pacer Renuka Singh.

Renuka's best bowling figures – a five-wicket haul (5/15) – helped India restrict England to 151/7. In response, India finished their innings on 140/5.

Chasing a competitive target, India eves were off to a mediocre start. Smriti Mandhana (52, 41b,

7x4, 1x6) tried her best to up the ante, but she couldn't get support from the other end as India slumped to 62/3 in the 11th over.

With the required run-rate growing, Richa Ghosh (47 n.o, 34b, 4x4, 2x6) joined Mandhana at the middle and the duo took India past 100 before the opener got out in the 16th over with the scoreboard reading 105/4.

The 17th over, bowled by Nat Sciver-Brunt, yielded only four runs while Sophie Ecclestone conceded only three runs in the 19th over. There two overs changed the complexion of the game leaving

31 from the final over. Richa tried her best, but failed to achieve the desired result.

Earlier, Renuka did the early damage picking up the first three wickets to peg England back and then returned to take two more wickets towards the fag end of the innings.

India made a perfect start after opting to bowl as Renuka induced a faint outside edge from Danni Wyatt and Richa gleefully accepted the chance in the third delivery of the day.

Renuka then accounted for two more English batters in her next two overs to hand India the upper hand.

Arsenal move to top after City drop points

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Birmingham, Feb 18: With Arsenal's title aspirations in danger, new signing Jorginho came up big for the Gunners. Jorginho's shot from outside the area in second-half stoppage time bounced against the crossbar and off Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez before going into the net to put Arsenal ahead for good in a come-from-behind 4-2 win Saturday that halted a three-game winless streak in the Premier League.

Arsenal had to come from behind twice before the lucky bounce from Jorginho's shot made it 3-2 in the third minute of stoppage time. Gabriel Martinelli then tapped in a fourth into an empty net on a quick counter after Martinez – the former Arsenal goalkeeper – had come up the field as Villa searched for an equalizer.

The win puts Arsenal two points above Manchester City atop the table with a game in hand after

the defending champions conceded late to settle for a 1-1 draw at Nottingham Forest.

It also halted an alarming slump for Mikel Arteta's team, which had looked in danger of suffering a fourth loss in five games in all competitions.

In another match, Chelsea's poor run of form continues as they suffered a 0-1 home defeat against Southampton. James Ward-Prowse scored the only goal of the match in the first half added-on time.

At Nottingham, Man City broke the deadlock through Bernardo Silva in the 41st minute to take the lead at the break. However, Chris Wood struck six minutes from time to deny City their chance to keep the top position in the league standing.

City are now on 52 points, two points behind table toppers Arsenal, who have played one less game than Pep Guardiola's side. Manchester United are third with 46 points from 23 matches, same as Arsenal.

ENTERTAINING ENCOUNTER



Players of Meghalaya (in white) and Delhi in action during their Santosh Trophy match at the Capital Ground in Bhubaneswar, Saturday. Meghalaya thrashed Delhi 5-1. In other matches, Railways edged past West Bengal 1-0, courtesy an 85th-minute own goal by a Bengal defender at the 7th Battalion Ground, while three first-half goals helped Services defeat Manipur 3-0 at the same venue.

PICTURE BY NAYAK

Unadkat, Sakariya put Saurashtra in command

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 18: Saurashtra look poised to lift their second Ranji Trophy after skipper Jaydev Unadkat (2/47) and Chetan Sakariya (2/50) grabbed two wickets each to leave hosts Bengal struggling at 169/4 in their second innings on day three of the final at the Eden Gardens Saturday.

While Bengal skipper Manoj Tiwary remained unbeaten on 57 (129b, 9x4), the hosts are still 61 runs short of Saurashtra's first-innings total of 404, and with both Saurashtra left-arm pace bowlers breathing fire, Unadkat's side could well wrap up the game Sunday.

Bengal's pace-heavy attack looked ineffective in the morning as Saurashtra, continuing from where they had left Friday evening – 317/5 – added 87 more runs to take their score past 400.

Though overnight batters Arpit Vasavada (81) and Chirag Jani (60) perished quickly tail-enders Prerak Mankad (33) and Dharmendrasinh Jadeja (29) gave Saurashtra the winning edge. To add to Bengal's woes, they gave away 35 extras. Coming in to bat in the second innings, Bengal had a harrowing start with the pace duo of Sakariya and Unadkat rattling the top-order to reduce them to 47/3 in the post-lunch session.

Still trailing by 183 runs, an innings defeat loomed large when the veteran duo of Anustup Majumdar (61, 101b, 8x4) and Tiwary came together for a 99-run partnership. At close, Shahbaz Ahmed (13 batting) was giving Tiwary company at the crease.

Bengal can only hope for a magical turnaround in quest of their maiden Ranji Trophy title in 32 years. The onus is on Tiwary and Shahbaz, the last recognised batting pair for Bengal, to make an improbable turnaround.

Earlier pace bowler Mukesh Kumar emerged the most successful Bengal bowler Saturday, finishing with figures of 4/111 and getting rid of both well-set overnight batters Vasavada and Jani.

Having managed just three wickets Friday, the much-vaunted Bengal attack wrapped up Saurashtra's last five wickets in two hours and



Leading from front: Saurashtra skipper Jaydev Unadkat reacts after dismissing Anustup Majumdar (not in pic), Saturday

six minutes in the first session Saturday. But it seemed too little, too late as the host bowlers had allowed Saurashtra to take their score past 400.

Vasavada failed to add to his overnight total of 81. Jani was dismissed when Mukesh got the ball to swing away after pitching. The ball made a feather-touch contact with Jani's bat and sailed to the wicket-keeper. Akash Deep hit the deck hard to bounce out Prerak Mankad with a ball that sharply cut back in and clipped the batter's gloves.

He got his third wicket, dismissing Unadkat (4) cheaply. But from 369/9, Saurashtra raced to 404 with their last pair of Parth Bhut (14 not out) and Dharmendrasinh Jadeja (29) frustrating the Bengal bowlers.

BRIEF SCORES

Bengal 174 & 169/4 (Anustup Majumdar 61, Manoj Tiwary 57 batting; Jaydev Unadkat 2/47, Chetan Sakariya 2/50); Saurashtra 404 (Arpit Vasavada 81, Chirag Jani 60, Sheldon Jackson 59, Harvik Desai 50; Mukesh Kumar 4/111, Akash Deep 3/111, Ishan Porel 3/86). Match to continue.

BROAD, BAZBALL ROLL OVER BLACK CAPS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mount Maunganui, Feb 18: Stuart Broad (4/21) and Bazball rolled over New Zealand on the third day of the first day-night Test Saturday, leaving England five wickets from their 10th win in 11 Test matches.

Rapid half centuries by Joe Root (57, 62b, 5x4, 1x6), Harry Brook (54, 41b, 7x4, 2x6) and Ben Foakes (51, 80b, 5x4) allowed England to speed along at more than five runs per over to 374 in their second innings, an overall lead of 393.

Broad then clean bowled Devon Conway (12), Kane Williamson (0), Tom Latham (15) and first innings centurion Tom Blundell (1) to take out the batters who might have been able to anchor New Zealand's highest successful fourth-innings run chase in Tests and the sixth highest of all time.

When Blundell was out New Zealand were 28/5 and they had improved a little by stumps reaching 63/5, still 330 behind. Daryl Mitchell, who was 13, and Michael



ON A ROLL: Stuart Broad is mobbed by teammates after getting a wicket against New Zealand, Saturday

Bracewell, who was 25, saw out the last 10 overs of the day.

On a day seething with action, Root, Brook and Foakes carried England along at one-day international pace. There were also important contributions from Ollie Pope (49, 46b, 5x4, 3x6), Ben Stokes (31, 33b, 3x4, 2x6) and Ollie Robinson (39, 48b, 6x4) which showed why the innings progressed at such ir-

resistible pace.

At times it was impossible to look without missing an important piece of the action, so densely packed were the highlights.

The fearlessness which has become the heart of England's approach was always on show. When batting, England shows no deference to the time of day, the state of the match or the efforts of the

Stuart Broad's 4 wickets lifted his tally of Test wickets in partnership with James Anderson to 1004, surpassing the Australian combination of Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne (1,001), who previously were the most prolific wicket-taking pair in Tests

bowling team. The object always was to dominate.

When England bowled, as Broad again demonstrated under the floodlights which caused the ball to swing, there was an effort to make every ball a wicket ball. He brought the ball back at pace and late to both the left- and right-handers.

New Zealand simply couldn't stand the force of the Bazball doctrine. They had done well on the sec-

ond day with the help of Blundell's century to come within 19 runs of England's first innings of 325/9 declared, the declaration having come midway through the last session on the first day.

England already had begun to remove the props of New Zealand's confidence when it reached 79/2 before stumps on Day 2. And when Pope, Root and Brook helped England score 158 runs in the first session on Saturday, it was clear the match rapidly was escaping New Zealand.

Any hopes New Zealand might have had of battling through the final session to launch their run chase in full on the fourth day began to fade when Broad got into the act.

BRIEF SCORES

England 325/9d & 374 (Joe Root 57, Harry Brook 54, Ben Foakes 51, Ollie Pope 49; Blair Ticker 3/55, Michael Bracewell 3/68); New Zealand 306 & 63/5 (Michael Bracewell 25 batting; Stuart Broad 4/21). Match to continue.