



AT RECEIVING END

Actor Nushratt Bharucha gets brutally trolled for her 'over-acting' during a promotional event at Mumbai

LEISURE P2



RISING TENSION

Russia unleashes a massive rocket attack that hits critical infrastructure and residential buildings in 10 regions of Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL P10



AUSSIES IN COMMAND

Usman Khawaja's unbeaten century helps Australia take control of the fourth and final Test against India

SPORTS P12

PURI COMPLEX BLAZE TAMED AFTER 24 HRS

OVER 140 PEOPLE INCLUDING TOURISTS FROM MAHARASHTRA SAFELY RESCUED

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, March 9: The devastating blaze that broke out at a market complex near the Srimandir here was brought under control in a 24-hour-long fire-fighting operation Thursday, while about 140 people were rescued, official sources said.

The fire gutted almost all the 43 shops, a bank and a hotel that the Laxmi Market Complex consisted of. However, there was no casualty.

"The fire is now under control though smoke was billowing from certain parts of the market complex," said DG, Fire Service, SK Upadhyaya, who visited the site earlier in the day.

Three Fire department personnel and three tourists were hospitalised due to exposure to flame and smoke, an officer said.

It was a tough job for the fire-fighters as there was only one exit and entry point to the three-storied building.

Garments, toys and leather products kept in shops functioned as fuel to the fire and that took a long time to douse the blaze, the officer said.

Besides 12 fire tenders, 90 fire service personnel, local police and members of the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), the administration



Firefighters attempt to douse a fire that broke out at Laxmi Market Complex in Puri, Thursday

OP PHOTO

also engaged a team from the National Fire Service College to fight the inferno.

The college team members were undergoing training at the Odisha Fire and Disaster Response Academy in Bhubaneswar for the last few days. They were rushed to Puri to assist the state fire brigade personnel.

The official said the blaze was first spotted at a garment store on the first floor of Laxmi Market Complex on Grand Road around 9pm Wednesday. Though the fire was doused Wednesday night, it reappeared at about 2am.

Altogether 106 tourists from Nashik in Maharashtra were rescued from the hotel in the building and taken to a temporary shelter. Around 30 other people were also brought out from there, he said.

The reason behind the incident is yet to be ascertained, said Minister of State for Home, Tusharkanti Behera, who rushed to oversee the fire-fighting operation. He said the shop owners will be compensated following due procedure.

Meanwhile, local BJP MLA Jayant Sarangi claimed that the district administration has failed to ensure the installation of fire safety systems at hotels and other establishments in the sea-side town.

SATISH KAUSHIK PASSES AWAY



AGENCIES

Mumbai, March 9: Veteran Bollywood actor-writer-director Satish Kaushik - remembered as 'Calendar' in the film Mr India - passed away at 67 late Wednesday.

His friend and another legendary actor Anupam Kher shared the news in a tweet early Thursday. Born in Haryana, Kaushik was an alumnus of the NSD and the FTIL, and started his film career in the early 1980s.

He penned the dialogues for the 1983 classic 'Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron', which acquired a cult following over the years. He is known for his comic roles as 'Calendar' in Mr India, 'Pappu Pager' in Deewana Mastana among many others.

Kaushik also gave sterling performances in other films like Ram Lakhan and Saajan Chale Sasural. Taking to twitter, Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled his death. "Pained by the untimely demise of noted film personality Shri Satish Kaushik ji. He was a creative genius who won hearts thanks to his wonderful acting and direction. His works will continue to entertain audiences. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti," he said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I steal stuff from hotels on my foreign trips, but I never say anything which can damage my country's image

'Confrontation with Pak more likely under Modi'

This analysis forms part of the annual threat assessment of the US intelligence community that was submitted to the US Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, March 9: The American intelligence community Wednesday told lawmakers that it apprehends increased tension between India and Pakistan and India and China with the possibility of a conflict between them.

It also noted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is more likely than in the past to respond with military force to Pakistani provocations.

This analysis forms part of the annual threat assessment of the US intelligence community that was submitted to the US Congress by the Office of Director of National Intelligence during a Congressional hearing.

While India and China have engaged in bilateral border talks and resolved border points, relations will remain strained in the wake of the countries' lethal clash in 2020, the most serious in decades, said the report.

The expanded military postures by both India and China along the disputed border elevate the risk of armed confrontation between two nuclear powers that might involve direct threats to US persons and interests, and calls for US intervention. Previous standoffs



- A US intelligence report has warned that the violent unrest in Kashmir or a militant attack in India could be potential flashpoints between the two nations
- On Indo-China relations, the report adds that the expanded military postures by both India and China along the disputed border elevate the risk of armed confrontation

have demonstrated that persistent low-level friction on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has the potential to escalate swiftly, it said.

According to the report, the crises between India and Pakistan are of particular concern because of the risk of an escalatory cycle between two nuclear-armed states. New Delhi and Islamabad probably are inclined to re-

inforce the current calm in their relationship following both sides' renewal of a ceasefire along the Line of Control in early 2021.

"However, Pakistan has a long history of supporting anti-India militant groups, and under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is more likely than in the past to respond with military force to perceived or real Pakistani provocations. Each side's perception of heightened tensions raises the risk of conflict, with violent unrest in Kashmir or a militant attack in India being potential flashpoints," it said.

The report went on to say that the on-going war in Ukraine has demonstrated how inter-state conflict affects not only the parties directly involved, but can have broader cascading security, economic, and humanitarian implications on a regional, and even global, scale.

Responding to a question, the State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said US-Pakistan counter-terrorism dialogue provides an "opportunity for the United States to convey our willingness to work with Pakistan" to address terrorist threats and counter violent extremism, the threats that are in the region, the threats that have the potential to transcend the region as well.

Contd...P4

SHORT TAKES

Poudel named Nepal Prez

Kathmandu: Ram Chandra Poudel of Nepali Congress was Thursday elected as the new president of Nepal, amid increasing political instability in the country ruled by a fragile coalition headed by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'. Poudel, a common candidate of the eight-party alliance that included Nepali Congress and Prime Minister 'Prachanda'-led CPN (Maolist Center), received the vote of 214 lawmakers of parliament and 352 provincial assembly members. This is the third presidential election in Nepal since the country became a republic in 2008.



P10

5 MEET WATERY GRAVE ON HOLI

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 9: Five people drowned while taking bath in ponds and rivers in different parts of the state after celebrating Holi Wednesday, police said.

Two brothers drowned while taking bath in Brahmani river in Kendrapada district. They got caught in the river current at Musadhia in Pattamundai police station area. A boy drowned in Chitrotapala river in the Salipur area of Cuttack while bathing, police said. A girl drowned in a pond in Soro area of Balasore district. Similarly, a man drowned while bathing in the village pond in Kandhapalli in Sadar police area of Bolangir. A man went missing while taking bath in Mahanadi near Choudwar in Cuttack. A search is on to rescue him, officials said.

BSE Matric SA II starts today

Bhubaneswar: The Board of Secondary Education (BSE) Odisha is all set to conduct the Matric summative assessment II starting Friday as it has completed all the necessary preparations for the same. BSE President Ramashish Hazra informed Thursday that as many as 5,41,247 students will be appearing for the matriculation or the Class X High School Certificate Examination in 3,218 examination centres across the state. The examination will conclude March 20, 2023. BSE officials said that this time special measures have been undertaken for the protection of question papers and other confidential documents which will be kept at 316 nodal centres.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	CHANGE	DIFFERENCE
SENSEX	59806.28	↓	541.81
NIFTY	17589.60	↓	164.80
DOLLAR	81.89	↑	₹0.18
EURO	86.82	↑	₹0.41
GOLD	₹55,364	↑	₹453
SILVER	₹62,320	↑	₹503

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	33.6°C	33.2°C
TEMP. MIN	21.0°C	21.0°C
Humidity	45%	60%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dry weather likely

Suspected spy pigeon caught off Odisha coast

PNN & AGENCIES

Paradip, March 9: A pigeon fitted with devices, which appear to be a camera and a microchip, was caught from a fishing boat off the Paradip coast of Jagatsinghpur district, with the police suspecting that the bird was being used for spying.

Some fishermen found the pigeon perched on their trawler named 'Sarathi' at Ramchandi in Konark area of Puri district a few days ago. The bird was captured and handed over to the marine police here Wednesday. The winged agent was found to be fitted with a tiny spy camera and a mi-

crochip what appeared to be a GPS tracking system.

"Our veterinarians will examine the bird. We will seek help of the State Forensic Science Laboratory (SFSL) for examining the devices attached to its legs. It appears that the devices are a camera and a mi-



crochip," Jagatsinghpur Superintendent of Police Rahul PR said. It also seems like something has been scribbled on the wings of the bird in a language unknown to the local police.

WINGED AGENT



According to reports, Paradip marine police took the bird to Cuttack Dog and Pigeon Squad Thursday for further investigation. The squad will try to decode the secret and the coded message written in a foreign language in blue and red on the feathers of the pigeon. Pitambar Behera, an employee of the fishing trawler 'Sarathi', said he saw the pigeon perched on the boat.

"Suddenly I noticed that some instruments were attached to the bird's legs. I also found that something is written on its wings. I could not understand it as it was not in Odia," Behera said adding that he caught the bird as it came closer.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181

ARIES

You will be quite circumspect throughout the day, predicts Ganesh. Your spirits will soar high as you will be invited to join parties and socialise a bit. You will find the correct balance between work and having fun.

TAURUS

It is about time that you stopped running from your problems and stand up and face them, suggests Ganesh. Your loved ones will back in your material generosity today. You will be magnanimous with the wallet to impress members of the opposite sex. Don't forget that time is also money, advises Ganesh.

GEMINI

You will be afforded full co-operation by your relatives and friends. You will also be able to provide a solution to their problems by utilising your practical thinking. You will be influenced by your emotions while choosing between multiple alternatives. You need to carefully weigh the pros and cons of any decision you make today, says Ganesh.

CANCER

You have always been quite prudent when it comes to spending your hard-earned moolah, yet today you may feel stingier. And, you will rightly be so, for there may be unnecessary burdens and demands made on you by your near and dear ones.

LEO

You will attempt to reschedule your daily routine to be able to make the most of your day. While it is easy to make plans, implementing them and sticking to them depends on your own discipline and determination. You will become more aware about health issues and pay closer attention to your diet.

VIRGO

A heady mixture of work and partying is on the cards today. The parties may go on well into the night. You will make the right decisions today which will prove to be vital in putting you on the road to success. Ganesh says people will profit by engaging you in their work.

LIBRA

Ganesh says the higher officials in your work place may be displeased with you and you will face issues with them. Due to this you will feel mentally depressed and down but towards the afternoon you will be able to please them with your impressive work ability. Ganesh says that today is not a good day to try out any new business ventures.

SCORPIO

Do not get carried away by sentiments and act like an emotional fool, tips Ganesh. Today, you will be in a dilemma as you have to choose between two best things. But, as they say, right choices are always tough to make. Be practical and take the right decision.

SAGITTARIUS

A fresh and renewed you, today all your focus is on your kith and kins. This includes sneaking some time off for your beloved as well! Romantic conversations and intimacy will add some spark to the day. After family, friends too come to take their share. An exciting evening in store for you!

CAPRICORN

It's time to prove your extraordinary skills as a professional, says Ganesh. You will go out of your way, and even double your efforts to accomplish set goals, and chances are that you might succeed. Family and friends will be glad that could take out time to spend some happy hours with them.

AQUARIUS

You will aim for the bull's eye today. Whatever you'll do today, will be done with your focus set firmly on your target, says Ganesh. You will not waste your resource on something unfruitful, and such an attitude will make your journey smoother and faster. By the end of the day, you will surprise everyone around with your spectacular performance.

PISCES

You are likely to find yourself as part of a team involved in tackling a difficult project or task today. The role you will play in this Endeavour will be noteworthy. Your efforts will yield excellent results. Everything you touch will turn to gold today, says Ganesh. Make the most of it.



ZENDAYA TOPS LIST OF MOST GOOGLED BLACK WOMEN

Actress Zendaya Coleman has topped the list of most Googled black women in 2022, leaving behind the likes of Serena Williams and Meghan Markle. The 26-year-old actress led the ranking released by lifestyle website *ThatSister* with 2.71 million average monthly Google searches in 2022, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

SHARON LOST CUSTODY OF HER CHILD DUE TO BASIC INSTINCT

Actress Sharon Stone revealed on the *Table for Two* podcast that she lost custody of her son, Roan, after her divorce from Phil Bronstein because of *Basic Instinct* and all the controversy the 1992 drama ignited over her infamous nude scene, reports *Variety*.



Industry in shock over Satish's sudden exit

Mumbai: Condolence messages poured in throughout the day as the news of actor-writer-director Satish Kaushik's death spread on social media. Popular for his iconic role 'Calender' in *Mr India*, Kaushik passed at 67 late Wednesday. Here're what some of the top actors had to say about the loss.

Anupam Kher: I know 'death is the ultimate truth of this world!' But I never thought in my dreams that I would write this thing about my best friend #SatishKaushik while alive.

Anil Kapoor: I have lost my younger brother, gone too soon. I love you Satish.

Neena Gupta: It was scary and sad. Goodbye Kaushikan

Salman Khan: Will always remember him for the man that he was.

Kangana Ranaut: He was my biggest cheerleader, a very successful actor and director #SatishKaushik ji.

Madhur Bhandarkar: I am so shocked to hear the demise of actor-director Satish Kaushik ji,

who was always vibrant, energetic and full of life.

Abhishek Bachchan: Rest in peace dear-est Satish uncle. We will all miss you.

Raja Sen: Satish Kaushik has tragically left us, but his work will live on and on.

Kareena Kapoor: Extremely heartbroken Satish ji. Rest in laughter and peace.

Akshay Kumar: Chanda Mama is gone. Deeply saddened to hear about Satish Kaushik ji's demise.

Javed Akhtar: Satish a man full of warmth love and humour.

Govinda: It feels very, very sad. Pappu Pager of *Deewana Mastana* is no more.



Nushratt gets trolled for 'over-acting'

Mumbai: Actress Nushratt Bharucha gets brutally trolled for being 'too excited' while promoting *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar* at the film's Mumbai screening recently.

The actress' cameo in the film *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar* (*TJMM*) has become the talk of the town. The film showed a crossover of *Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA* with Kartik Aaryan and Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweets with Nushratt. She was recently spotted by the paparazzi at the screening of *TJMM*, where she was seen promoting the film.

However, she was brutally trolled by netizens for her 'over-acting'.

In the video shared by paparazzi on Instagram, the actress can be seen requesting media photographers to watch *TJMM*. She asked them to watch the film instead of clicking on her photos. For the event, she was seen dolled up in a black thigh-high slit dress, which featured a plunging neckline. She teamed up her look with subtle makeup and a perfect hairdo. As soon as the video circulated on social media, netizens called her out for 'over-acting'.

The *Dream Girl* actress was last seen in *Selfie*, starring Akshay Kumar. She will be next seen in *Chhorri 2*.



'My parents are private people'

Mumbai: Saba Azad, who hails from a family of academics and artists, recently opened up about how her family reacts seeing her get popular.

In an interview with a news portal, Saba revealed that her parents are private people and they don't really have an opinion on her growing fame. According to her, they let her do her work and aren't nosy parents at all. They are happy if she feels fulfilled in her life. They are not intrusive and they never question what she does and why she does it. All they tell her is to 'be happy; make sure it's fruitful and it's expanding your mind in some way'. They tell her to do whatever she does with conviction and that's really a big contribution from their side.

On the work front, Saba is currently awaiting the release of *Rocket Boys Season 2*. She will reprise her role of lawyer Parvana Irani. It will start streaming on an OTT platform from March 16 onwards.

On the personal front, she often hit headlines because of her relationship with Hrithik Roshan.



42!!! And I'm beautiful: Kavita Kaushik

Mumbai: Kavita Kaushik, who made her TV debut with Ekta Kapoor's show *Kutumb* and was later seen in the sitcom *F.I.R.*, responded to a Twitter user who called her 'Ugly', saying that even at the age of 42, she is 'beautiful' and 'hot'.

One of the social media users had trollingly called her 'Ugly 41-year-old lady'. To which the actress retaliated, "42!!! And I'm beautiful AF! And I am so hot. Sorry, your family members put you in a cradle and forgot! Big hug to you; I'm sure you are nice, just unloved."

The actress, who had also participated in dance reality shows like *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa 8*, *Nach Baliye 3*, and also entered *Bigg Boss 14* as a wild card contestant, took to her Twitter handle to reply to this comment, and many of her fans also supported her.

Articulating her thoughts on the age 42, she said that it is actually the age to begin life with positivity, youthful appearance, making fun, dreaming about the future, and fantasies.

On the work front, the actress was recently seen in the popular sitcom *Maddam Sir* in a guest appearance.



PEANUTS



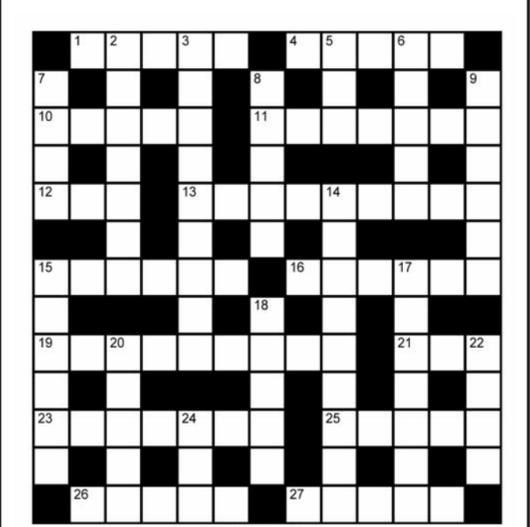
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



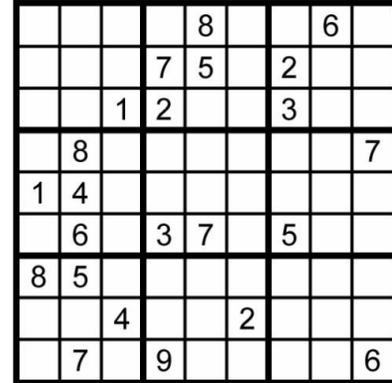
FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Picture support
 - 4 Fidgety
 - 10 Metric weight unit
 - 11 16th century vessel
 - 12 Cleaning cloth
 - 13 Doubting
 - 15 Current
 - 16 Balloon filler
 - 19 Lying down
 - 21 Farm female
 - 23 Chess move
 - 25 Computer keyboard key
 - 26 Precious stone
 - 27 Barn material
- Down**
- 2 Went back on
 - 3 Vortex
 - 5 High rocky hill
 - 6 Mayhem
 - 7 Recipe direction
 - 8 Musical group, at times
 - 9 Ski race
 - 14 Medical procedure
 - 15 Leave stranded
 - 17 Maintained state of rest or inactivity
 - 18 Relinquish (3,2)
 - 20 French pancake
 - 22 Beige
 - 24 Hockey foundation

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

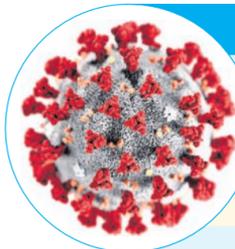


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



CELEBRATING MUSIC

Governor Ganeshi Lal along with renowned flautist Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia inaugurated the Vrindaban Mahotsav at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,11,43,521	65,40,80,124	68,08,754
India	4,46,89,072	4,41,55,119	5,30,776
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Lookout circular against Dubai-based operator

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, March 9: Bureau of Immigration (BoI) has issued a lookout circular (LOC) against Md Saif, an accused in the online football betting racket, which was operated by cyber scammers from China and Dubai, police said Thursday.

On the request of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), BoI has issued the LOC against Saif, a native of Bihar who was operating from Dubai, the police added.

LOC was issued to inform immigration checkpoints at airports and seaports to alert the law enforcement agency, if the wanted person tried to leave the country or arrived in the country from abroad.

An EOW official said, "The online betting company (www.18football.com) is suspected to have cheated thousands of people of more than ₹1,000 crore in the country, including Odisha. As of now, Odisha police has been able to trace out transactions worth ₹300 crore."

The officials said that 18football.com, registered in Hong Kong, is a hybrid model of fraud where a ponzi scheme (multi-level marketing) is run online in the name of football betting/gaming app.

Earlier, two persons were arrested in this case, which was registered based on the complaints of nearly 800 duped investors of Ganjam district.



18football.com, registered in Hong Kong, is a hybrid model of fraud where a ponzi scheme is run online in the name of football betting/gaming app

According to the modus operandi, investors were promised lucrative benefits like three per cent daily compound return on investment, recharge bonus, referral bonus, extra bonus on the earnings of the downline members, salary bonus, daily withdrawal option etc.

The fraud company was also provided a foreign "mentor" to assist the investors in betting. These mentors used to communicate through Telegram or apps only and extra commission was offered for introducing new members in the app. The scammers used multiple

The online betting company is suspected to have cheated thousands of people of more than ₹1,000 crore in the country, including Odisha

shell companies and their directors to route the ill-gotten money. They also used mule accounts for multi-layering of money transactions to confuse the law enforcement agencies. The two accused persons were directors of a Kolkata-based shell company, Hakim & Rustam Fabrics Pvt. Ltd, who operated under the direction of the accused Saif from Dubai.

The EOW has announced a reward to the informer: The information can be given on the mobile No. 8249600495 and the name/details of the informer will be kept secret, the official said.

Man held for molesting girl on pretext of lift

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: Commissionerate Police has arrested a youth on charges of sexually abusing a girl on the pretext of offering her lift Tuesday evening. The accused was identified as Satyanarayan Sahoo, 31 of Gadakana under Mancheswar police limits.

The victim, a hotel management student, works in a restaurant at Gajapati Nagar area. She along with some of her colleagues has been staying at a rental accommodation near Sainik School. Sources revealed that she left for home alone after her duty ended early Tuesday evening.

However, she forgot to bring the room keys from her friend. The victim called her roommate who asked her to wait at the spot (near Sainik School) as she would send the keys by someone.

Meanwhile, the bike-borne accused offered her lift which she initially denied. However, Sahoo convinced her saying that it was unsafe to stay at the spot for long as anti-socials frequent the place during night. Subsequently, she acquiesced and went with the accused informing her roommate to come home fast. Sahoo took her to an isolated place near the Sainik School and sexually abused her. When the girl screamed for help, some locals present at the spot rushed to spot. The locals rescued the girl and thrashed the youth black and blue.

Later, Sahoo was handed over to Maitri Vihar police that arrested the accused after registering a case (73/23) under Sections 341, 376 and 511 of the IPC. Sahoo was Wednesday produced in the court that sent him to judicial custody.

Small-scale industry key to prosperity: Mohanty

Agriculture and industry are the mainstays of economic development as these sectors play a crucial role in generating employment opportunities. The state government these days is nurturing micro, small and medium industries. However, pollution remains a critical issue that needs to be tackled effectively. This was rightly understood by young industrialist and managing director of Nexus Engineering Piyush Mohanty, who had a roller coaster ride before tasting the fruits of success. Speaking to **Orissa POST**, Mohanty shared his experience of initiating a small-scale industry of preparing brick laying machines...



Tell us about your childhood first.

I was born at Cuttack Tulasipur and did my schooling in Tulasipur High School before I joined Christ College and pursued higher secondary education in Arts. My father Rabindra Kumar Mohanty was an interpreter and publisher at a missionary organisation. I enjoyed my childhood in a happy and cheerful family.

How was the journey after academic life?

On completion of my Plus II exams, I had visited Mumbai where my elder brother was working. Since I liked the city very much I had developed a weakness of working there. Soon, I got an opportunity in a courier company there. Within a few days, the company nominated my name for a managerial post but I couldn't avail the opportunity as my qualifications didn't match the requirements. This prompted me to pursue higher education and I successfully completed my graduation.

What prompted you to become an industrialist?

After returning to Odisha, I was searching for a job and eventually I was selected for a marketing job in a Bhubaneswar-based company. Within a few days of my appointment, I started handling different segments of the business like purchasing, marketing, supervising and production, thanks to my efficiency. This enabled me in thoroughly studying all the aspects of being an industrialist.

After sometime, I thought of investing my savings and starting my own business.

Why did you pick brick laying machine as your business venture?

Cuttack was getting polluted by the smoke released from clay brick kilns dotting the outskirts of the Silver city. This was troubling me. So, I planned to set up a brick laying machine and started working towards it with the capital and experience I had. An old workshop in Jagatpur served as my first workplace. My experience helped me a lot in starting the venture.

What are the upcoming plans of Nexus?

There is good demand and business for Nexus products in the state. We have now been able to supply machines to other states. We have even exported machines abroad and achieved success beyond our expectations. Soon,

we will come up with another initiative of paver block manufacturing machines which will provide livelihood opportunities to the youth. This will help in strengthening the economic standards of the state by providing employment to many. This will help address the migrant issue.

Tell us in brief about the goal of your life.

I want to work relentlessly on making Odisha a green, pollution-free and beautiful state and simultaneously providing employment opportunities to the youths. I will provide necessary assistance to youths who aspire to be entrepreneurs by establishing their own businesses that will help build Odisha as a progressive state.



FEST OF COLOURS

Soaked in colours, youths celebrated Holi on streets near the Balu Bazar area in Cuttack

CM flags off vaccine, blood collection vans



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday flagged off new blood collection and vaccine vans for service at different regions of the state.

These vans will enhance the state's capacity to serve in remote areas, the Chief Minister said after the vans were rolled out.

Five new mobile blood collection vans were rolled out for four districts. While two vans set out for Keonjhar, one each sent to Angul, Jharsuguda and Kandhamal

Currently, there are 56 blood banks and 14 mobile blood collection vans in the state including these five rolled out today

Five new mobile blood collection vans were rolled out for 4 districts. While two vans set out for Keonjhar, one each sent to Angul, Jharsuguda and Kandhamal

Currently, there are 56 blood banks and 14 mobile blood collection vans in the state including these five rolled out today

Five new mobile blood collection vans were rolled out for four districts. While two vans set out for Keonjhar, one each was sent to Angul, Jharsuguda and Kandhamal.

The five fully fabricated mobile blood collection vans were procured by the state government at a cost of ₹2.70 crore (₹54,02,800 per van)

Currently, there are 56 blood banks and 14 mobile blood collection vans in the state including these five rolled out Thursday. More mobile collection vans will be added to existing fleet, sources said.

As a part of life saving measures and in order to promote voluntary blood collection in remote areas, blood collection vans are being supplied to different health facilities. In November 2019, a total of nine

DROUPADI MURMU, PRESIDENT OF INDIA

On Constitution Day last year, I was delivering the valedictory address at the celebrations organised by the Supreme Court of India. Talking of justice, I thought of the undertrial prisoners and then could not resist speaking at length about their plight. I spoke from the heart, and it made an impact. Today, on International Women's Day, I want to share some thoughts with you in the same spirit – straight from the heart.

Right from my childhood I have remained perplexed about the status of women in society. On one hand, a girl child receives so much love from all around her and is even worshipped on auspicious days. On the other hand, she learns very soon that the possibilities open before her in life are fewer than those available to boys of her age. On one hand, a woman is respected for her innate wisdom, even appreciated as the central figure of the family who takes care of everybody. On the other hand, she has a limited role, if at all, in nearly all significant decisions about the family or even herself.

Over the years, as I stepped out of home, first as a student, then as a teacher and later in social service, I could not help but wonder about such paradoxical attitudes. Sometimes I felt that as individuals, a majority of us recognise men and women as equal. However, at a collective level, the same people impose limits on a half of us. During my lifetime, I have seen

most individuals progressing towards the notion of equality. At the social level, however, old customs and traditions, like old habits, linger on.

This is the story of all women around the world. Every other human being on earth begins life with a kind of hindrance. In the twenty-first century, when we have achieved unimaginable progress all around, many nations are yet to have a woman as the head of the state or head of the government. At the other end of the spectrum, unfortunately, there are places in the world where even today women are considered lesser human beings; where even going to school can be a question of life and death for a girl!

This was not always so. In India, there were times when women were decision-makers. Our scriptures and our history speak of women known for their valour, scholarship or administrative skills. Today, again, countless women are of course contributing to the nation-building in their chosen fields. They are heading corporate firms and even serving in the armed forces. The only difference is that they have to prove their worth in two domains: they have to excel in their careers and also at their homes. They do not complain but all they expect from society is that it reposes confidence in them.

This leads to a curious situation. We do have a healthy representation of women at the grassroots level in various decision-making structures. But as we go up in the hierarchy, we see fewer and fewer women. This is



as true for political bodies as for the bureaucracy, the judiciary and the corporate world. What is noticeable is that even states with higher literacy rates display the same trend. It shows that education alone does not guarantee financial and political autonomy for women.

Therefore, I firmly believe that the social mindset needs to change. The deeply ingrained gender prejudices must be identified and purged to create a peaceful and prosperous society. Conscious efforts have been made to promote social justice and equality. But these steps have not proved adequate to ensure gender representation. In education and jobs, for example, women lag far behind men more because of social conditioning than any design.

In a number of convocations I have attended in different parts of the country, I have noticed that women, if given a chance, often outperform men in academia. It is this indomitable spirit of Indian women that gives me confidence about India emerging as the torchbearer of gen-

der justice in the world.

It is certainly not the case that one half of humanity has had any head-start by keeping the other half behind. The fact is that this mismatch is hurting the whole of humanity, because the two wheels of its cart are unequal. Not only economic progress, but climate action too would speed up if women are included in decision-making. I am sure that the world will be a lot better place if women are made equal stakeholders in the progress of humanity.

I am, indeed, hopeful that the future is bright. I have seen in my life that people change, attitudes change. That is indeed the story of our race; otherwise we would still be living in caves. The story of women's emancipation has proceeded slowly, often painfully slowly, but it has proceeded only in one direction and has never made a u-turn. That is what gives me confidence to believe, as I have often stated, that the coming Amrit Kaal up to the centenary of India's independence be-

longs to young women.

What makes me hopeful is the fact that we as a nation began with a sound foundation of gender justice. About a century ago Mahatma Gandhi's campaigns during the freedom struggle encouraged women to cross the threshold and step out into the world. From those days, our society as a whole, and women in particular, have aspired to build a better future. Prejudices and customs not favourable to women are being done away with either through legislation or through awareness. This seemed to have positive impact as Parliament today has the highest number of women representatives. Needless to say, my election as the President of world's largest democracy is a part of this saga of women's empowerment. I believe the spirit of "innate leadership in motherhood" needs to be invoked to promote gender justice. A slew of government programmes to directly empower women, such as 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', are steps in the right direction.

We should also appreciate the fact that societies take time to match step with the best of progressive ideas. But societies are composed of human beings – half of them women – and it is up to us, each of us, to hasten the progress. Thus, today, I wish to urge each of you to commit yourself to one change, in your family, neighbourhood or workplace – any change that would bring a smile on a girl's face, any change that would improve her chances of moving ahead in life. That is one request, as I said before, straight from the heart.

Virtual courts in all tehasils by April 2023



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: As part of 5T initiative, the state government has asked all district administrations to start virtual courts in all tehasils by April 2023.

Virtual courts have been started in 80 tehasils since November 2022 & more than 3,000 cases have been disposed of after hearing through virtual platforms, said Revenue Minister Pramila Mallick during post-budget press conference here Thursday.

During 2022, approximately, two lakh RoRs have been corrected & sent to citizens either through speed post or Rajaswa Rath. Department provides an array of services, which are completely online except in cases of statutory requirement, said Mallick.

Similarly, she said, in certificate services, the timeline under the

been completed in Deogarh district and it is being expedited in Sonepur & Sundargarh district.

In land revenue administration a total amount of ₹1586.72 crore has been provisioned in the budget, of which ₹1164.71 crore has been made for administrative expenditure & ₹422.01 crore for programme expenditure, Sahu said.

For effective disaster management and risk reduction, ₹3700 crore has been earmarked in the budget for the year 2023-24. This includes funds required for relief & response, recovery & reconstruction, as well as construction of disaster resilient infrastructure, said Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Nikunja Dhal.

He said ₹235.80 crore has been provided in the budget for capacity building of disaster response forces, planning and preparedness activities and capacity building of various stakeholders.

Besides, there is a provision of ₹471.60 crore for taking up structural and non-structural projects like flood resilient roads, flood mitigation measures, strengthening of lifeline roads, disaster proofing of buildings, cyclone resilient power infrastructure and drought proofing measures.

ORTPS Act has been reduced. For example, in case of resident & income certificate timeline has been reduced from 15 days to 10 days.

Approximately, 50 lakhs resident & income certificates have been delivered on the basis of self-declaration after introduction of 5T charter in the last three years, added Mallick.

There has been a budget outlay of ₹250 crore to strengthen infrastructure of revenue offices. To strengthen IT infrastructure of revenue offices, ₹59.73 crore has been provisioned and furniture & fixtures in record rooms ₹5 crore has been provisioned, she said.

Regarding hi-tech survey, additional chief secretary (revenue) Satyabrata Sahu said that the department is expediting the hi-tech survey for speedy & accurate land record services. The survey has

City hospitals observe World Kidney Day

VARIOUS PROGRAMMES WERE ORGANISED IN SUM, APOLLO AND KIMS HOSPITALS THURSDAY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES RELATED TO KIDNEY AILMENTS



SUM hosp soon to have kidney transplant facility

Eighty persons out of every one lakh population suffer from kidney related ailments while the number of such patients in the world is estimated to be around 800 million, according to Biswaranjan Mohanty, Head of the department of Nephrology at the Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital here.

"Around 50 per cent of kidney patients come for treatment rather late in the day which makes the situation difficult," Mohanty said while addressing a programme organised in the hospital to mark the World Kidney Day Thursday.

Debabrata Sabat, Professor at department of urology, said there was a need to drink at least two glasses of water in empty stomach early in the morning. A person must consume two and half to three litres of water every day, reduce the salt intake and avoid junk food altogether to stay healthy, he said.

Pushparaj Samantashinhar, medical superintendent of the hospital, said dialysis was done in both SUM Hospital and SUM Covid Hospital round the clock for patients during the battle against the pandemic. He said that steps were being taken to undertake kidney transplantation in the hospital.

The programme, conducted by Biswajit Mishra, Assistant Professor in the Department of Nephrology, was attended by Suren Das, Head of Department of Urology, Tapas Ranjan Behera, Deba Prasad Kar,

Professors of Nephrology Department, Priyadarshini Dehuri, Associate Professor of the Department, Debasmitha Rath, Professor in the Pediatric ICU, Samir Samal, Associate Professor in Critical Care, Minati Mishra, Nursing Superintendent and Sobharani Samal, Additional Nursing Superintendent.

An awareness rally was taken out from the hospital in the morning on the occasion.

Apollo holds walkathon for kidney awareness

Apollo Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, in a bid to create awareness among people on kidney health and care organized a Walkathon Thursday to mark World Kidney Day.

moved through sainik School chowk, press chowk, nalco Square, and concluded at Apollo Hospitals. More than 100 participants joined in this awareness activity.

Smarak Panda and Purina Chandra Kar, consultants of the nephrology department, were present on the occasion. Addressing on the occasion, Nisith Mohanty advised to take care of Kidney by controlling blood sugar and blood pressure.

Kidney patients should have emergency plan: KIMS experts

Nephrologists at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), a con-

stitute of KIIT-DU, have made a strong plea for bringing kidney-related

life. KIMS Nephrology Department organised a walkathon in the morning, with the participation of students from KIMS, KINS and KISS.

A Continuing Medical Education (CME) was also organised in the afternoon, addressed by professor emeritus and renowned nephrologist SC Dash, Nephrology KIMS S B Rout, advisor and senior consultant nephrology KIMS AP Pattanaik, HOD Nephrology, AIIMS Bhubaneswar Sandip Panda, HOD Nephrology SCBMCH, Cuttack Aruna Acharya and HOD Nephrology, KIMS, Nikunj Kishore Rout.

"We urge the disaster and health-



care management authorities in the government to include the non-communicable disease, especially kidney disease and renal transplant groups as vulnerable groups during disasters. Secondly, the healthcare system needs to be adaptive, robust and resilient, incorporating the essential public health emergency preparedness elements to function, optimally in and out of an emergency / disaster," said Nikunj Kishore Rout, HOD Nephrology.

Conventionally, the health emergency plan did not include kidney or non-communicable disease care. During the Covid pandemic, people living with non-communicable diseases faced worse outcomes than those without. It was because these patients needed sophisticated care, equipment and trained medical staff. Hence during an emergency, were the most vulnerable groups.



The walkathon was flagged off jointly by Alok Srivastava, COO&DMS of Apollo Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, and Nisith Kumar Mohanty, senior consultant department of nephrology, Apollo Hospitals, Bhubaneswar.

The walkathon started from the premises of Apollo Hospitals and

ailments under the ambit of health emergency plans because of recurring natural disasters and other events like the recent pandemic.

The appeal came on a day when people the world over are celebrating World Kidney Day to sensitize the masses about the role of the kidney in maintaining a healthy

SOG jawan injured in accidental firing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: A security personnel suffered bullet injuries in accidental firing during a training session at the Special Operation Group (SOG) camp in Chandaka area here on the outskirts of the City Thursday afternoon. The injured jawan was identified as Havildar Umakant Mallick who is undergoing treatment at a City hospital.

Sources revealed that Mallick's condition was stable when the last report came in.

Thursday evening, some SOG jawans were attending a training session on the campus when a participant accidentally shot a bullet which hit the leg of Mallick. He was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Notably, in April 2020, a jawan identified as havildar Prakash Sahoo died while two others, Sergeant Barsha Hansdah and Sergeant Subhakar Sahu, sustained serious injuries when a hand grenade accidentally went off during a training session at the SOG camp.

Noted scientist PK Jena dies

Bhubaneswar: Noted scientist from Odisha and former director general of CSIR Prafulla Kumar Jena passed away at his residence here, his family said. He was 92. "Jena breathed his last Tuesday at his residence," one of his family members said. Jena, a Padma Shree awardee, had established the science foundation in Odisha. He was the first Odia to become the DG of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, and also played a leading role in establishing several institutions in the state. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik consoled his death and described Jena as a genius who inspired scientific research in Odisha.

Ban on firecracker shows during Holi

Bhubaneswar: Following death of five persons in a firecracker explosion two days ago, the Khurda district administration has decided to prohibit any firecracker shows on the occasion of Dola Utsav being held during Holi. At a review meeting on the situation and to find ways to curb the menace of illegal firecracker manufacture and display in the district, Collector K Sudarshan Chakraborty said that investigation is on to trace the source of the raw materials procured for making crackers.

ECoR GM reviews redevtpt projects



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 9: East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Manoj Sharma Thursday took stock of the redevelopment projects of railway stations under ECoR jurisdiction at Rail Sadan in Chandrasekharpur.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw is giving priority to the development of railway infrastructure of the region along with various project works going in Odisha and also is monitoring the developmental works regularly.

"Sharma reviewed the progress of redevelopment projects at Bhubaneswar railway station, Bhubaneswar New railway station, Cuttack railway station and Puri railway stations," said an ECoR official.

Sharma advised the concerned

officials to speed up the process for tendering, emphasise on architectural planning to improve the overall aesthetic look of the stations and ensure swift completion of projects, the official added.

Sharma further advised officials to work in coordination with all the agencies from the grassroots to sort-out issues raised during construction of public centric projects.

"Foundation work for redevelopment of Puri station has begun. Shops and enquiry counter Bhubaneswar station have been relocated to initiate the redevelopment work. Soil investigation is going on at Cuttack railway station for construction activities under redevelopment programme. The plan for redevelopment of Bhubaneswar New Station is under finalization," the official said.

OSDMA to get award for cyclone mgmt

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 9: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday will felicitate Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) with the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2023.

The Prime Minister will inaugurate the third session of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDR) at Vigyan Bhawan here Friday. According to the Prime Minister's office, PM Modi will felicitate awardees of the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar during the event. The winners of the 2023 Puraskar are Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) and the Lunglei Fire Station, Mizoram.

The OSDMA was selected by the Centre in the institutional category for the prestigious Subhash



Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2023 for its excellent work in disaster management.

The Union government has instituted Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar to recognise and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management.

The award is announced every

year January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash prize of ₹51 lakh and a certificate in case of an institution and ₹5 lakh and a certificate in case of an individual.

Established in the aftermath of the Super Cyclone of 1999, OSDMA embarked on multiple initiatives including raising of the Odisha Disaster Response Action Force (ODRAF), Multi-Hazard Early Warning Service (MHEWS) framework, and a cutting-edge technology-enabled web/smartphone-based platform 'SATARK' (System for Assessing, Tracking, and Alerting Disaster Risk Information based on Dynamic Risk Knowledge).

The premier agency provided effective response during various cyclones like Hudhud (2014), Fani (2019), Amphan (2020) and floods (2020).

Continued from P1

'Confrontation...

"We have a shared interest in combating threats to regional security. The goal of a stable and secure South and Central Asia free from terrorism depends on the strength of in large part our partnership with Pakistan. The dialogue is a testament to our shared commitment to a resilient security relationship and an opportunity for candid discussion on steps we can take together to counter all terrorist groups that threaten regional and global stability," he said.

"The United States seeks to expand our partnership to address these challenges. Any group that threatens regional and global stability of course is a concern to us. It is something that we discussed in the context of this counter-terrorism dialogue," Price said.

CITY CELEBRATES INT'L WOMEN'S DAY WITH FERVOUR

The Capital city witnessed a host of programmes Wednesday aimed at highlighting the role of women in society

Odisha FC connects with local community

To celebrating the achievements of women footballers and encourage women to participate in sports, Odisha FC organised a Futsal match at the Z1 society in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. As AFC Women's Football day coincided with the International Women's Day an event aiming at promotion of football.

OFC Women player and former captain of the Indian Women's National team, Ngangom Bala Devi, along with OFCW players Deepa Nayak, Bannya Kabiraj, Susmita Tanti, Arifa Zaheer, Sonali Chemate, Grace Hauhnar, Sradhanjali Panda, Malati Munda and Sasmitha Parida

were present at the event to interact with the participants and guests. Fans were thrilled to meet and



greet their favorite players, and took the opportunity to learn about football.

The event was sponsored by the Club's prominent sponsors, Property Brand, KTM, Story Lab, and J&T Jewellery. Odisha FC is committed to working towards the

development of football at the grassroots level and looks forward to organizing more such events in the future.

ICAR-CIFA celebrates Int'l Women's Day
To celebrate International Women's day 2023, ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar and Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Khurda organised a workshop Thursday on "Empowering Women through Aqua-preneurship: A Way Forward for Sustainable Livelihood".

Sr Consultant and Master Trainer Binodini Mishra presented in the workshop on "Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship in Agriculture and Fisheries". "Women beneficiaries should participate in the social and economic development of the society for empowerment and bringing equity. Involvement of women

in organic farming, forest development and kitchen garden is required" she said.

ICAR-CIFA director Pramoda Kumar Sahoo spoke about the various livelihood development programmes organised by the institute for the empowerment of women farmers through various projects



and central sector schemes.

Former Principal Scientist of the institute Kanta Das Mahapatra said, "Urban and rural women can strengthen their economic status by adopting aquaculture." He gave a presentation on "Quality fish

seed production as a viable livelihood option for women entrepreneurs".

ECoR recognises inspiring women of railways

International Women's Day 2023 was celebrated by East Coast Railway (ECoR) Thursday at railway auditorium in association with East Coast Railway Women's Welfare Organization (ECoRWWO).

ECoR general manager Manoj Sharma congratulated the railway women for their sincerity and dedication while performing their duties. Sharma said, "Our women loco pilots, assistant loco pilots, guards, trackmen including women employees from signal & telecom, women staff of Railway Health Sector and Railway Protection Force (RPF) are working tirelessly for the safety and security for our

valuable passengers.

Addressing the audience on the eve of International Women's Day, ECoRWWO president Divya Sharma said, "Women play pivotal role in the growth of the nation. Women em-



powerment leads nations to grow and civilisations to progress."

Manoj and Divya felicitated 50 railway women for their sincerity and dedication in work while performing their duties and outstanding performances in various competitions organised to mark International Women's Day.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Jumbo found dead in Karlapat forest

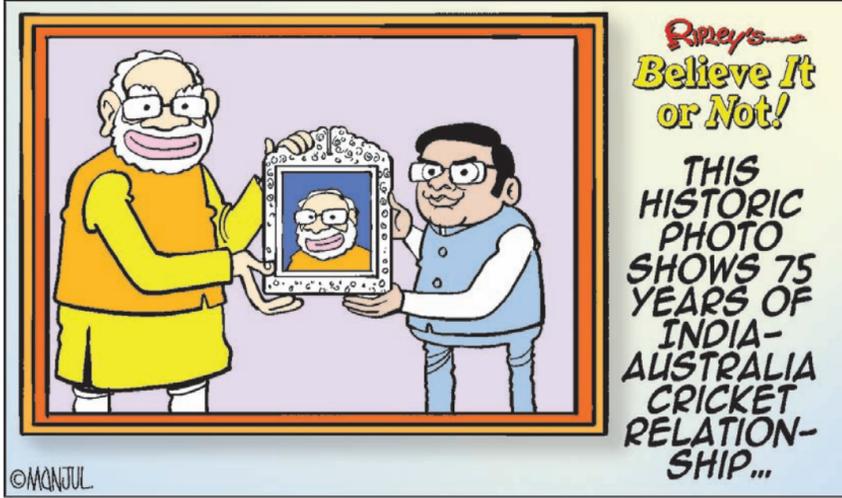
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, March 9: A tusker was found dead at Karlapat wildlife sanctuary under South forest division in Kalahandi district, Wednesday.

The carcass of the tusker was recovered from Semijharan at Kukurghati inside the wildlife sanctuary. Forest officials recovered the carcass and buried it inside the jungle after conducting a post-mortem. Locals alleged that incident occurred March 4 but forest officials tried to suppress the death of the tusker by conducting its post-mortem and burying the carcass without informing the local mediapersons.

A forest official confirmed the death of the elephant but failed to cite the reason behind it. Last year, six elephants had perished inside the Karlapat wildlife sanctuary.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Wildfire rages in 142 spots

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 9: With rain eluding the state since October, forest fires are raging in 142 places in various districts, which is the highest in the country as on Tuesday, a senior official said.

According to the Forest Survey of India (FSI) data, 391 active fire incidents were reported from across the country by 12 noon during the day.

Odisha tops the chart with 142 active fire points, followed by 58 in Chhattisgarh, 48 in Andhra Pradesh, 37 in Telangana, 32 each in Jharkhand and Karnataka and 15 in Maharashtra. Forest fire incidents were also reported in several other states but they are fewer in number.

Forest fires may start from natural causes such as lightning strikes or when dry tree branches rub against each other during high wind. They can also be man-made when burnt stubs of cigarettes and bidis are thrown away on dry leaves.

Mayurbhanj district which has Similipal National Park reported the maximum number of forest fires. Such incidents have also been reported from the districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Sundargarh, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Ganjam, Khurda, Keonjhar and Cuttack.

The Forest department has



Odisha tops the chart with 142 active fire points, followed by 58 in Chhattisgarh, 48 in Andhra Pradesh and 37 in Telangana

awareness and check the fires which are mostly man-made," Biswal said. "It is the beginning of the summer and there are large number of forest fires in the state. We are praying for rain as things can get worse from here on. It has been a long dry spell with no rain since October," he said.

Large forest fires were reported from Similipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district, Champua forests in Keonjhar district, Baliguda and Tumudibandh in Kandhamal district, Chandaka in Khurda district, Sunabeda in Nuapada district, Narayanpatna in Koraput district, Mohana in Gajapati district, Jharigaon in Nabarangpur district, Ghumsar in Ganjam and Soro in Balasore district.

been working hard to douse the fire at so many places, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Debidutta Biswal told reporters. "As many as 3,000 forest personnel, 16,000 Vana Surakhya Samitis (forest protection committees) and 280 special squads have been engaged to deal with forest inferno in the state. The members of women self-help groups have also been roped in to create

ILLEGAL QUARRYING IN RAYAGADA

Nagavali slowly changing course

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, March 9: Nagavali river, which is one of the major rivers of South Odisha and North Andhra Pradesh, is slowly changing its course due to alleged illegal mining and smuggling of black stones from near Dhumaguda village - about 2 km from the district Collectorate at Rayagada, a report said.

The miscreants are using explosives and smuggling stones from the quarry near Dhumaguda village as a consequence of which the river is reportedly changing its course. Environmentalists alleged that the river has changed its course from its upstream at Chekaguda bridge to its downstream due to regular blasting and quarrying activities. Pictures show seepage of water under the ground which may assume bigger proportions.

It is alleged that a non-Odia person is mining large amount of stones from the quarry through blasting without having necessary approval.

Rayagada tehsildar Tapas Rout visited the spot after being apprised about the illegal mining March 3, 2023. Later, he also lodged a complaint at Seshkhal police station. However, police are yet to take any action in this regard.

Notably, large-scale quarrying is being conducted on plot no-171, khata number-27 in Dhumaguda mouza under Rayagada tehsil. The stone quarry is spread over 12 kms and is mentioned as a hill in the revenue records of state government's 'Bhulekh' portal.



It is alleged that stones have been extracted from over 3 out of 12 acre of land of this large hill since 2021. Sources said the district police is a mute spectator to illegal supply of the smuggled stones to neighbouring Andhra Pradesh through Rayagada town.

The rampant quarrying has also posed grave threat to Dhumaguda, adjoining Mariguda and Chekaguda slum in Rayagada town.

Earlier, the river was flowing straight but continuous and excessive blasting has made a deep impact underneath, thereby forcing the river to change its course, said the locals and environmentalists.

The illegal and continuous use of explosives has forced the locals of Dhumaguda, Mariguda, Baisingh and Chekaguda slum to live in a state of perpetual fear and panic.

An environmentalist-cum-social activist Ajay Kumar Kashyap stated that change in river course has also impacted the water retaining ca-

The miscreants are using explosives and smuggling stones from the quarry near Dhumaguda village as a consequence of which the river is reportedly changing its course

It is alleged that a non-Odia person is mining large amount of stones from the quarry through blasting without having necessary approval

Rayagada superintendent of police Vivekanand Sharma said that police have not permitted anyone to use explosives in the area. He assured to conduct a probe into the use of explosives in Dhumaguda quarry



capacity of the river which in turn will result in natural calamity and harm the agriculture too.

On the other hand, the residents alleged that the illegal blasting has directly impacted three viewpoints which are on the top of the quarry. People have stopped visiting the viewpoints as they apprehend that the illegal blasting might endanger their lives.

When contacted, Rayagada superintendent of police Vivekanand Sharma said that police have not permitted anyone to use explosives in the area. He assured to conduct a probe into the use of explosives in Dhumaguda quarry. He also said that action will be taken against the guilty after conducting a probe into the complaint of the tehsildar.

VSSUT STUDENT DEATH

Chinmayee's mom warns of moving HC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, March 9: Deceased VSSUT student Chinmayee Priyadarshini Sahoo's mother Labang Sahoo, Thursday, said that she would move Orissa High Court soon as Burla police is delaying the probe into the death of her daughter.

A three-member team of Burla police Thursday visited the residence of deceased VSSUT student Chinmayee Priyadarshini Sahoo again and conducted a probe into her mysterious death.

The police team in mufti visited her residence at Bikram Square in the town and interrogated the deceased's mother Labang Sahoo and her younger sister regarding the incident. Later, the police team asked them to submit Chinmayee's original degree certificate which she had received from VSSUT during the convocation.



A three-member team of Burla police visited the residence of deceased Chinmayee Sahoo again and conducted a probe

However, family members gave them only a photo copy of the certificate as the original certificate has been given to an advocate pleading their case. Later, the police team asked them a few other questions before returning to Burla. Meanwhile, the po-

lice team dodged the questions of mediapersons, who were waiting outside.

On the other hand, Labang told the mediapersons that her daughter was murdered and attempts are being made to give it a shape of suicide. She said, "The comment of Sambalpur SP that Chinmayee has committed suicide is not at all acceptable and I do not know at whose pressure he is making such a comment."

She alleged that police have failed to reveal under what circumstance Chinmayee went to the PC bridge at night and the circumstances that led to recovery of her body from the power channel. She also alleged that police are not disclosing as to how the mobile phone of Chinmayee was recovered from the possession of Preetiman Dey. She warned that she will make all efforts for justice and will move Orissa High Court very soon.

CT scan service at Jagatsinghpur DHH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, March 9: The much-awaited CT scan service started at the district headquarters hospital (DHH) here recently, as per a report. Jagatsinghpur MP Rajashree Mallick and government chief whip-cum-Jagatsinghpur MLA Prasanna Muduli inaugurated the service during a programme held at the DHH, Monday. The service is being provided in public-private-partnership (PPP) mode by National Health Mission with the support of state Health and Family Welfare department.

District Collector (in-charge) Sachidananda Sahu, Jagatsinghpur Municipality chairperson Archana Singh, Zilla Parishad president Manoj Bhoi, chief district medical officer Khetrabasi Dash, ADMO (Medical), Nimain Charan Nayak, hospital manager Sasmita Sahu, deputy manager Sukanta Pradhan attended the function.

Man killed by in-laws

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, March 9: In a shocking incident, a man was allegedly beaten to death by his in-laws at Chabripali village under Khaprakhol police limits in Bolangir district following a heated brawl late Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Rudra Meher, 38, of Gadabhati village under Padampur police limits in Bargarh district. Acting on a complaint lodged by the deceased's brother Khageswar Meher, police registered a case and arrested four of his in-laws' family including his wife. The accused were identified as father-in-law Uddhab Meher, 55, mother-in-law Banalata Meher, 50, wife Sarojini Meher, 32, and brother-in-law Sunil Kumar Meher, 19.

According to reports, Rudra had married Sarojini Meher of Chabripali 10 years back while a family dispute was pre-



Deceased Rudra Meher (File photo)

The accused packed Rudra's body in a sack and were taking it in a van for disposal when the villagers informed the police

there. The deceased is survived by two minor children.

Rudra had come to his in-laws' house to take Sarojini with him but an argument ensued between him and his in-laws last night. The matter turned ugly as his in-laws beat him to death.

The accused packed the body in a sack and were taking it in a van for disposal when villagers intercepted the vehicle and informed the police.

Searching the van, police found the body. The body was handed over to the deceased family members after a post-mortem. Further investigations are on.

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, KORUKONDA
At/P.O.: Korukondam Dist.: Malkangiri, PIN - 764082 (Odisha)
Ph. No.: 06861-238211, E-mail: ori-korukonda@nic.in
No. 549/VI-136/2023 Date: 06.03.2023

TENDER CALL NOTICE No. 05/2022-23
The Block Development Officer, Korukonda invites sealed tenders on behalf of Governor of Odisha from original equipment manufacturers (OEM) / Authorized Dealers / reputed firms / companies / agencies for the following items to be supplied in conformity with the Detailed Tender Call Notice.

Sl. No.	Name of the Block	Name of the Work	Cost of Tender Paper (In. Rs.)	E.M.D. (In Rs.) (1%)	Delivery Period
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Korukonda	Supply and Installation & Commissioning of Integrated Display Panel for 5T High Schools	6000/-	In lieu of Bid Security Declaration	15 (Fifteen) Days

Sale of Tender Paper: The tender documents can be seen from the Govt. website: www.malkangiri.nic.in only from 09.03.2023 to 18.03.2023 (upto 05.00 P.M.). No tender paper will be sold by the Block Office, Korukonda or any other office. Interested bidders will download the bid documents from the same website only i.e. www.malkangiri.nic.in.

Place and date of receipt of Tender Paper: Panchayat Samiti, Korukonda, from 09.03.2023 to 18.03.2023 through Registered/Speed Post under Govt. of India only (office hour from 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. Except Sunday and Public Holiday). Tender received through Private Courier Service shall be rejected.

Place and date of opening of Tender Paper: Panchayat Samiti, Korukonda on Dt.20.03.2023 at 11.00 A.M.

Mode of receipt of Tender Paper: Registered/Speed Post only (Indian Post).
Name of the Scheme: Mo School, 5T High School Transformation Programme Govt. of Odisha for the year 2021-22 & 2022-23.

The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tender without assigning any reasons thereof. The detailed information/corrigendum on tender call notice can be available in the district website: <http://www.malkangiri.nic.in> only.

N.B.: All should go through the terms and conditions of Tender Call Notice and Detailed Tender Call Notice before submission of tender papers.

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Korukonda

Bank of India
Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015
POSSESSION NOTICE
[Rule-8(1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer** of the **Bank of India, Tamando Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the Borrower in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of India, Tamando Branch** for an amount mentioned below with interest & expenses thereon. **Amount paid if any after issuance of Demand Notice under SARFAESI Act, would be reckoned for ascertaining the dues payable at the time of realization/settlement. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

TAMANDO BRANCH/ Name & Address of Borrower	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Property
Borrower: Mr. Hema Chandra Rajhans, Address-1: At: Plot No.: 2297, Nua Sahi, P.O./P.S.: Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Address-2: House No.: MIG-1-43/2, OSHB, Chandrasekharpur, Phase-1, Bhubaneswar-751016	₹ 6,68,774/- + interest & expenses thereon	21.10.2022 / 04.03.2023	All that part and parcel of Land and Building consisting of House No.: MIG-1-43/2, OSHB's Composite Housing Scheme, Khata No.: 472, Plot No.: 241(P), Area: 385 sq.ft., Kissam: Gharabari at Mouza: Chandrasekharpur, P.S.: Nayapalli, SRO: Khandagiri, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Standing in the name of Mr. Hema Chandra Rajhans , Bounded by North: 20ft Road, South: Open Space, East: House No.: MIG-1-43/1, West: House No.: MIG-1-44/1

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 10.03.2023

Authorised Officer, Bank of India

FOCUS DATA COLLECTION

EVIDENCE FOR EQUITY



Even in an age of big data, policymakers often lack accurate, consistent, timely, and representative information. As a result, they are working with an incomplete picture of socioeconomic conditions

Engagement by civil-society and multilateral organisations can also make a big difference. As part of its Strengthening Gender Statistics project, the World Bank – with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – is already providing technical assistance to 12 International Development Association countries, in order to improve the scope and quality of their gender-related statistics. Replicating and expanding this initiative can go a long way toward enabling governments to make evidence-based policy decisions that improve the lives and livelihoods of their citizens.

To be sure, data collection and analysis are just the beginning. Improved dissemination and uptake of gender-related data for policy-making is also needed. Defining useful and consistent indicators is crucial, because it enables comparison across regions and assessment of progress over time.

Finally, the role of data in bolstering accountability and improving governance must not be overlooked. Just as high-quality, timely, and comprehensive data enable us to devise targeted policies and allocate resources more efficiently, they also enable us to measure those policies' impact – and the government's performance.

Improving data collection will require some investment. But, by enabling more efficient, better-tailored, and more cost-effective policies, that investment will ultimately ease the strain on government budgets. And, as countries make progress toward gender equality, the social, economic, and development benefits will continue to multiply.

This writer, a Salzburg Global Fellow, is a former senior manager of the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

“What gets measured gets done.” It is a well-worn maxim, attributed to everyone from management guru Peter Drucker to physicist Lord Kelvin. Regardless of who said it first, the point is a crucial one: if there are no data illustrating a problem or imbalance, it is unlikely to be a consideration, let alone a priority, for those in a position to address it. And solutions, if they are attempted, are unlikely to be well targeted or efficient. This is certainly the case for gender equality.

One might assume that, in today's world of information overload, policymakers have ample data with which to diagnose problems, devise innovative solutions, monitor implementation, and adjust policies to maximise their impact. But even in an age of big data, policymakers often lack accurate, consistent, timely, and representative information. As a result, they are working with an incomplete picture of socioeconomic conditions.

For example, data show that female labour-force participation in India has been declining since 2005. Reversing this trend, and achieving gender equality, could add \$70 billion to India's GDP by 2025, according to McKinsey Global Institute. But effective solutions would need to be informed by comprehensive data that capture the complex relationship between women's labour-force participation and various social, political, and economic forces, and they would need to link gender equality to broader development outcomes.

In any effort to boost gender equality, both sex-disaggregated data and reporting on issues that primarily affect women and girls are crucial. Consider gender-based violence: according to the World Bank, one in three girls or women aged 15-49 has experienced physical and/or sexual violence.

As Data2x has documented, the collection of data on violence against boys and girls in Tanzania led to effective government interventions, which brought about long-term, multisectoral change. Similarly, the World Bank reports that Vietnam used data from demographic and health surveys to boost protections for women and girls, such as by adopting legislation banning domestic violence.

Beyond informing policy, the data sparked debate in Vietnam about gender-based violence, leading to the creation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality. Women facing violence in their homes now have greater access to counseling, health, legal, and shelter services.

But producing comprehensive data is no easy feat. Any tiny statistical error or hint of measurement bias, at any stage of collection and production, can render data unrepresentative, as can prejudice by respondents, who are often primarily men.

Before the COVID-19 crisis, the world broadly adopted the most representative method for collecting household data: surveys. But the pandemic forced a shift to-

ward phone-based surveys, which are less likely to represent women and other groups with reduced access to mobile phones. Weak leadership, a lack of political will, and poor resource allocation have been mentioned as crucial impediments to the collection of sex-disaggregated statistics.

One way to overcome these constraints is to improve the integration of data at the national, regional, and international levels. Moreover, more effort must be devoted to enhancing the capacity of women to contribute and use data. Increased female leadership within open-data organisations can help spur progress toward new, more inclusive approaches to data collection.

Such efforts should, of course, be guided by existing best practices. Norway, for example, has been publishing national gender-equality indicators – including gender distribution in total income, the workforce, business, the public sector, education, and leadership – since 2008. Sweden, for its part, requires that all public agencies present sex-disaggregated statistics in their annual reports. These are models worth emulating.



Atiya Anis

IN ANY EFFORT TO BOOST GENDER EQUALITY, BOTH SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA AND REPORTING ON ISSUES THAT PRIMARILY AFFECT WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE CRUCIAL



Robert Muggah & Gabriella Seiler

In the global rush to develop and deploy new predictive AI tools, harm prevention frameworks are essential to ensure a secure, prosperous, sustainable, and human-centered future

AI & Global South

A hero fears nothing, complains of nothing and never gives away.

THE MOTHER



Recent months may well be remembered as the moment when predictive artificial intelligence went mainstream. While prediction algorithms have been in use for decades, the release of applications such as OpenAI's ChatGPT3 – and its rapid integration with Microsoft's Bing search engine – may have unleashed the floodgates when it comes to user-friendly AI. Within weeks of ChatGPT3's release, it had already attracted 100 million monthly users, many of whom have doubtless already experienced its dark side – from insults and threats to disinformation and a demonstrated ability to write malicious code.

The chatbots that are generating headlines are just the tip of the iceberg. AI for creating text, speech, art, and video are progressing rapidly, with far-reaching implications for governance, commerce, and civic life. Not surprisingly, capital is flooding into the sector, with governments and companies alike investing in startups to develop and deploy the latest machine-learning tools. These new applications will combine historical data with machine learning, natural language processing, and deep learning to determine the probability of future events.

Crucially, adoption of the new natural language processing and generative AIs will not be confined to the wealthy countries and companies such as Google, Meta, and Microsoft that spearheaded their creation. These technologies are already spreading across low- and middle-income settings, where predictive analytics for everything from reducing urban inequality to addressing food security hold tremendous promise for cash-strapped governments, firms, and NGOs seeking to improve efficiency and unlock social and economic benefits.

The problem, however, is that there has been insufficient attention on the potential negative externalities and unintended effects of these technologies. The most obvious risk is that unprecedentedly powerful predictive tools will strengthen authoritarian regimes' surveillance capacity.

One widely cited example is China's "social-credit system," which uses credit histories, criminal convictions, online behaviour, and other data to assign a score to every person in the country. Those scores can then determine whether someone can secure a loan, access a good school, travel by rail or air, and so forth. Though China's system is billed as a tool to improve transparency, it doubles as an instrument of social control.

Yet even when used by ostensibly well-intentioned democratic governments, companies focused on social impact, and progressive nonprofits, predictive tools can generate sub-optimal outcomes. Design flaws in the underlying algorithms and biased data sets can lead to privacy breaches and identity-based discrimination. This has already become a glaring issue in criminal justice, where predictive analytics routinely perpetuate racial and socio-economic disparities. For example, an AI system built to help US judges assess the likelihood of recidivism erroneously determined that Black defendants are at far greater risk of re-offending than white ones.

Concerns about how AI could deepen inequalities in the workplace are also growing. So far, predictive algorithms have been increasing efficiency and profits in ways that benefit managers and shareholders at the expense of rank-and-file workers (especially in the gig economy).

In all these examples, AI systems are holding up a funhouse mirror to society, reflecting and magnifying our biases and inequities. As technology researcher Nanjira Sambuli notes, digitisation tends to exacerbate, rather than ameliorate, pre-existing political, social, and economic problems.

The enthusiasm to adopt predictive tools must be balanced against informed and ethical consideration of their intended and unintended effects. Where the effects of powerful algorithms are disputed or unknown, the precautionary principle would counsel against deploying them.

We must not let AI become another domain where decision-makers ask for forgiveness rather than permission. That is why the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and others have called for moratoriums on the adoption of AI systems until ethical and human-rights frameworks have been updated to account for their potential harms.

Crafting the appropriate frameworks will require forging a consensus on the basic principles that should inform the design and use of predictive AI tools. Fortunately, the race for AI has led to a parallel flurry of research, initiatives, institutes, and networks on ethics. And while civil society has taken the lead, intergovernmental entities such as the OECD and UNESCO have also gotten involved.

The UN has been working on building universal standards for ethical AI since at least 2021. Moreover, the European Union has proposed an AI Act – the first such effort by a major regulator – which would block certain uses (such as those resembling China's social-credit system) and subject other high-risk applications to specific requirements and oversight.

To date, this debate has been concentrated overwhelmingly in North America and Western Europe. But lower- and middle-income countries have their own baseline needs, concerns, and social inequities to consider. There is ample research showing that technologies developed by and for markets in advanced economies are often inappropriate for less-developed economies.

If the new AI tools are simply imported and put into wide use before the necessary governance structures are in place, they could easily do more harm than good. All these issues must be considered if we are going to devise truly universal principles for AI governance.

Recognising these gaps, the Igarapé Institute and New America recently launched a new Global Task Force on Predictive Analytics for Security and Development. The task force will convene digital-rights advocates, public-sector partners, tech entrepreneurs, and social scientists from the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe, with the goal of defining first principles for the use of predictive technologies in public safety and sustainable development in the Global South.

Formulating these principles and standards is just the first step. The bigger challenge will be to marshal the international, national, and sub-national collaboration and coordination needed to implement them in law and practice. In the global rush to develop and deploy new predictive AI tools, harm-prevention frameworks are essential to ensure a secure, prosperous, sustainable, and human-centered future.

Robert Muggah is a co-founder of the Igarapé Institute and the SecDev Group. Gabriella Seiler is a consultant at the Igarapé Institute and a partner and director at Kunumi.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

- “Try as you will, you cannot annihilate that eternal relic of the human heart, love.” **VICTOR HUGO**
- “You must trust and believe in people or life becomes impossible.” **ANTON CHEKHOV**
- “Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.” **FRANZ KAFKA**

SPECTRUM DEFORESTATION

In the name of development

The encroachment of land and forests in the country is not just physical and bluntly visible but matched by statistics. Millions of hectares of forests, grassland and game sanctuaries are encroached upon by either the local population or due to excessive tourism and commerce. The latter goes in the name of development, but without much concern about repercussions, including land subsidence wherein recent developments in Joshimath, Uttarakhand, are a testimony. The damage inflicted is so pervasive and complete that, in many cases, it is irreversible and may take many decades to repair. Besides small-scale efforts of some groups, there is no institutional policy or active manpower push to contain the destruction and reverse it.

For over four decades, around one-fifth of India has remained consistently under green cover on government records. Successive governments have not made public the granular data of the country's forest cover. In August last year, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav stated nearly 7,400 sq km of India's forest land has been encroached. In reply to a question in Parliament, he revealed that half of the total encroached forest land was in Assam alone. Nearly 377,500 odd hectares of the state's forest land has so far been encroached i.e. around 13% of its forest area. While the BJP government has taken it seriously and

led an anti-encroachment drive to evict “encroachers” from nearly 1,900 hectares of forest and revenue land in areas, the exercise has got mired in controversy with groups saying that a certain community was being targeted.

The ministry wrote to state governments/UT administrations to remove encroachment as per existing Acts/Rules and to ensure that no further encroachment takes place. In all, 740,973 hectares of forest land has been encroached upon in the country. The north-eastern states alone make up 60% of the total (with 460,000 hectares being encroached upon). Another data found that Uttarakhand lost 70% forest land which comes to around 50,000 hectares of its forests for so-called developmental activities in past two decades. And the result of such activities has been manifest, with huge land subsidence, destruction of habitats and displacement of people.

Coming to highways and roads that are constructed and expanded, this may seem like a major advance, but these benefit the upper echelons of society while the poor, whose lands are taken for such expansion, are at the receiving end. A few decades back, there was no compensation worth the name, while in recent years such compensation is far below market costs. Moreover, the money given to the illiterate and half educated is, in most cases, not judiciously used. Such a development strategy is neither economically sound nor

ecologically tenable. Land is being swiftly cleared for roads, bridges, highways, rail connectivity, housing and private construction without taking into consideration what happens to the land losers.

The government's approach of compensatory development works on the premise that everything – slum land, forests, tribal homes, villages – is available at a price. The past three decades have seen a steady destruction of regional plantations and the government is not quite active on this front. Keeping in view the vagaries of climate change, it is necessary to ensure strict monitoring of conversion of land for infrastructural development. No doubt such development is necessary, but it is equally necessary to ensure that the land losers are assured of alternative livelihood. Added to this, the ecological perspective must be kept in mind.

Reports of house collapse are common and only a few days ago it was reported that dozens of houses collapsed in two villages, in Jammu and Kashmir due to land subsidence and mud slides that residents have linked to two high profile road and railway projects. Even in Joshimath, land subsidence has increased substantially in past few weeks since its impact became visible, according to the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology. The main reason for this is the construction of a tunnel just below it by NTPC to draw water from Alaknanda and Dhaultiganga.

Thus, huge infrastructure projects need to be carefully planned and executed after discussions and concurrence from engineers, geophysicists and environmentalists.

In forest and rural areas, wild animals need to be nurtured as they have been grossly neglected. And finally, there is a necessity of promoting deliberate underdevelopment in ecologically sensitive regions. Though it may seem outlandish, the rebuilding of India must be closely tied to de-populating certain overburdened areas. A clear policy on what areas should be available to tourism, what with limited tourism and no-go areas is essential.

Land is vital not just for agricultural production but for the economy. We cannot afford to lose land, especially in a country like India, where the density of population is quite high compared to most other countries. But with climate change, land will be affected in various ways, primarily due to desertification and deforestation as also land subsidence but this cannot be allowed to continue as the rural economy will greatly suffer and affect the poorer sections of the population for whom land is the only resource for survival. Thus, environmentalists need to come forward to evolve an effective strategy to save land and forests to optimise this valuable resource.

The writer is Sr. Consultant & Guest Faculty at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kolkata. @INFA



Dhurjati Mukherjee

THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH OF COMPENSATORY DEVELOPMENT WORKS ON THE PREMISE THAT EVERYTHING – SLUM LAND, FORESTS, TRIBAL HOMES, VILLAGES – IS AVAILABLE AT A PRICE

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, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Prevent infection

Sir, A surge in flu cases with COVID-like symptoms across India has sent alarm bells ringing. The nasty infection, accompanied by fever, cough, sore throat, trouble breathing, headache, muscle pain, cold, body chill and fatigue, has not spared even the medical fraternity, with many doctors affected. As the cases pile up, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) advised against the indiscriminate use of antibiotics. People should also keep a distance from those affected to prevent infection.

NJ Ravi Chander,
BANGALORE

Revisit liquor policy

Sir, This refers to “Drunk flyer pees on fellow passenger.” This has happened when the November 26 New York-New Delhi Air India ‘peeing’ incident is still fresh in memory. The only difference being the person involved this time is a ‘student’ and he is said to have urinated in his seat while asleep in an inebriated condition. The back-to-back urination incidents have underlined the fact that the global airlines have to revisit their liquor policy. Obviously, if a drunk passenger boards the plane the airline cannot do much. But how much is too much alcohol on board is a very pertinent question that no airlines can afford to sidetrack. No passenger should be allowed to consume alcohol other than that served by the airlines. Alcohol served by the airlines should not severely intoxicate the flier. The airline should politely, and firmly if needed, refuse drinks to a passenger based on the judgement of the crew.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Nation's image

Sir, This refers to “Indian Democracy under attack: Rahul.” Rahul Gandhi's attack on Indian democracy at Cambridge is unwarranted, uncalled for, and unacceptable. Dissent is the essence of democracy. A constructive Opposition is the pillar of a robust democratic set-up. It is not necessary that the Opposition parties agree with the government in all aspects. They have a right to have a different opinion. But denigrating India on foreign soil is unbefitting on the part of a person aspiring to be the future Prime Minister of India. After all it is the image of a nation that matters most. It is well within the rights to criticise someone within the geographical boundary of a country, but on foreign soil – “NO”. In a democracy there may be difference of opinion but national interest precedes every other thing. Nationalism is not a subject of negotiation.

Pratap Nayak, BHUBANESWAR

national

of the day quote

Rahul's misleading and negative propaganda against India to defame all Indians speaks of bankruptcy in the Congress and it's thinking

TARUN CHUGH | BJP NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY

Great pleasure to meet US Secretary of Commerce

Conversation covered strategic trade, resilient and reliable supply chains and trust and transparency in the digital domain

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

The Supreme Court observed that the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution had supported the CWC's stand while the Ministry of Commerce and Industry had aided Adani's bid to take control of two major CWC warehouses near Mundra port by not supporting the denotification of the warehouses as part of the Adani SEZ

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY



The world is applauding our historic accomplishments and functional, vibrant democracy. Some amongst us, including parliamentarians, in overdrive are engaged in thoughtless, unfair denigration of our well nurtured democratic values

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

HEATWAVE ALERT

Taking a serious note of a heatwave alert by India Meteorological Department, the Goa Education department has decided to shut the schools before noon for Thursday and Friday



After CBI, ED now arrests Sisodia

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 9: The Enforcement Directorate Thursday arrested AAP leader and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on money laundering charges in connection with alleged irregularities in the Delhi excise policy, official sources said. The 51-year-old was placed under arrest under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) following his second round of questioning at the Tihar jail, they said.

The arrest of the AAP politician, a former journalist, by the federal probe agency comes a day before his bail plea will come up for hearing on March 10 before a CBI court. However, his judicial custody is till March 20.

The ED alleged that Sisodia was "evasive" in his replies and was "not cooperating in the probe" and hence was arrested.

The agency is expected to obtain a production warrant from a special PMLA court and then produce him before it Friday seeking his custody for interrogation.

Sisodia is currently lodged in judicial custody after the CBI arrested him February 26 in connection with alleged corruption in the formulation and implementation of the now-scrapped Delhi liquor or excise policy for



2021-22. The first round of Sisodia's questioning by the ED took place March 7 by a three-member team that obtained court's permission to question Sisodia during his judicial custody period. If the ED gets his custody, he will be taken to the

agency's headquarters in central Delhi for questioning and further recording of his statement and confrontation with other accused, even if he gets bail in the CBI case Friday. The agency is understood to

Atishi, Saurabh Bharadwaj sworn-in as Delhi ministers

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party's Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj were Thursday sworn-in as ministers of the Delhi government. Lt Governor VK Saxena administered the oath to ministers in the presence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at a swearing-in ceremony held at Raj Niwas. President Droupadi Murmu



had accepted their appointments Tuesday. The new ministers have

been inducted after Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Health Minister Satyendar Jain resigned last week. Atishi has been allotted the portfolios of Education, PWD, Power and Tourism, while Bharadwaj has been assigned the responsibility of Health, Water and Industries and Urban Development.

have questioned him in jail about the alleged change and destruction of cellphones that were in his possession and the policy decisions and the timeline followed by him as the then excise minister of Delhi. These charges were made by it in its charge sheets filed before the court. The ED, according to sources, posed a specific query as to how the excise policy draft was allegedly available with liquor traders and purported cartels even before it was officially published by the excise department of the Delhi government.

BJP targets leaders during polls: Kavitha

Kavitha -- daughter of Telangana Chief Minister M K Chandrasekhar Rao -- has been summoned by the ED in connection with a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the excise policy

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Hyderabad, March 9: Ahead of her appearance before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the Delhi excise policy scam case, BRS leader K Kavitha Thursday said she has done nothing wrong and alleged that targeting leaders using probe agencies has been the BJP's modus operandi at the time of elections.

She was summoned by the ED to depose before it Thursday, but the agency agreed to her request to appear March 11 as she has announced a hunger strike March 10 in support for the women's reservation bill.

Addressing a press conference here, Kavitha attacked the BJP government at the Centre, alleging it of using the investigation agencies to target political parties and leaders who do not subscribe to its ideology.

Since last June, the central government has been constantly sending agencies such as the ED to Telangana, Kavitha Kalvakuntla (44), a Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLC, said. It has conducted Income Tax raids on more than 500 businesses, NIA raids on 500 to 600 people, ED raids in 200 places and CBI raids in 100 places, Kavitha alleged.

Asked why her father and brother KT Rama Rao are silent on the ED notice to her, she said, "Why should my father and brother speak about the ED issue. The entire party, 15-16 MLAs and small leaders have been targeted. That has been the attitude of the BJP unfortunately in every state. If we speak about it and make a big issue, the media will say we got scared."

There is a need to expose the "diversion tactics of the BJP" today by all political parties, she said and added "that is what we are trying to do". Kavitha said she could have appeared before the ED on Thursday and cancelled her demonstration. "I want to prove a point that your diversion tactics will not work," she said attacking the BJP. The BJP first sets up a "narrative" and then looks for "characters" to target. This has been its agenda against political parties, leaders or businessmen who do



not subscribe to its ideology, the BRS leader claimed.

Resultant, investigations are opened in cases in states where elections are due, she alleged and claimed that there is no ED probe in friendly states or against friendly leaders and businessmen. Heads of agencies and organisations such as the ED, the SEBI and the LIC are also given extensions to get the BJP's work done, Kavitha alleged.

BJP national general secretary Santhosh is named by the Telangana Police as a suspect in a case of alleged attempt to poach four BRS MLAs and he is "filing case after case and taking stay after stay", she said. On her request to the ED to defer the date of her appearance, Kavitha said she suggested to the agency to hold the "interrogation" at her house.

This option is provided to women in the law, she said and cited several court judgments. However, the ED rejected it, the BRS leader claimed.

Kavitha said an option to appear through video conferencing should be provided for women, an issue, she said, she will take up in the future.

On hunger strike to be held on March 10 in the national capital, she said this is being done in support of the women's reservation Bill and urged President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Modi to ensure the passage of the bill before 2024.

All political parties, including the Congress, have been invited to take part in the demonstration. About 18 political parties such as the CPI-M and the Shiv Sena have already confirmed their participation, she added.

SHORT TAKES

Cop, woman charred to death

Coimbatore: A police official and a woman were charred to death in a fire that engulfed their house in Nallur village near Pollachi in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore district Thursday, officials said. The deceased have been identified as Shabarinath, an inspector working in Chennai, and Shanthy, police said.

BIMSTEC holds virtual meeting

New Delhi: The next summit of the BIMSTEC grouping is set to seal an agreement on maritime transport cooperation which is expected to boost trade among the member states. A ministerial meeting hosted virtually by BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) chair Thailand Thursday approved the agreement that was initiated by India, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Tiger kills man

Khargone (MP): A 35-year-old man died when a tiger attacked him at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district after moving out of a wildlife sanctuary in North Maharashtra, officials said Thursday. The man, Santosh Bhaskare, suffered serious injuries after the tiger attacked him when he tried to scare away the wild animal using a stick in Khushiyali village Wednesday evening, they said. He was initially admitted to a hospital in Pandhana tehsil and later shifted to Khandwa district. The 35-year-old was then referred to Indore for further treatment, but he succumbed to injuries en route near Barwah town.

Conrad K Sangma allocates portfolios

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, March 9: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma retained the key departments for his NPP, and gave the lesser politically significant ones to alliance partners BJP, HSPDP and UDP as he allocated portfolios Thursday.

Sangma kept Finance, Forest, Political, Personnel, IT, and Mining and Geology departments for himself, according to a notification issued by Chief Secretary DP Wahlang.

Prestone Tynsong, one of the two deputy CMs, was allocated Home, PWD, District Council Affairs, and Parliamentary Affairs departments. Sniawbhalang Dhar, the other deputy CM, was given the charge of Urban Affairs, Transport, Industries, and Prison and Correctional Services.



M Ampareen Lyngdoh, the only woman in the state cabinet, was allocated Health and Family Welfare, Law, Information and Public Relations, and Agriculture departments.

BJP minister AL Hek was given Veterinary, Fisheries, Printing and Stationery, and the Secretariat Administration departments.

UDP's Paul Lyngdoh was given the charge of Social Welfare, Tourism, Arts and Culture departments, while his party colleague Kyrmen Shylla was allocated Excise, Revenue and Legal Metrology departments.

HSPDP's Shakliar Warjri was handed Sports and Youth Affairs, Labour, Registration and Stamps departments, the order stated. The portfolios were announced after Sangma chaired the first cabinet meeting of the new government. Meanwhile, UDP president Metbah Lyngdoh was appointed chairman of the state planning board.



PROTEST TURNS UGLY: Police personnel use water cannons to disperse BJP workers during their protest in Chandigarh, Punjab

Australia to host Exercise Malabar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 9: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced Thursday that his country will host Exercise Malabar; a naval drill involving Australia, India, the US and Japan. Speaking onboard indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant here, he also said that India will for the first time participate in Australia's multinational 'Talisman Sabre' exercise.

In a major step forward in the bilateral relationship, India and Australia undertook Maritime Patrol Aircraft deployments to each other's territories for the first time, he said.

Albanese was received onboard Vikrant by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar with a Guard of Honour. The Australian prime minister said his visit re-



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese onboard INS Vikrant off the Mumbai coast

flected his government's commitment to place India at the heart of Australia's approach to the Indo-Pacific and beyond. "But arguably,

what lifts defence relationships to new levels is the resolve and foresight of those who see the relationship not only for what it is, but what it could be. Prime Minister Modi is one such person," he said. Strategic importance of the India-Australia partnership is increasing and there has never been a point in both countries' histories where they have had such a strong strategic alignment, Albanese said.

There has never been a busier or more productive time in the bilateral defence and security partnership and 2023 will be "busier than ever" in this area, he added. Both countries depend on free and open access to sea lanes in the

Indo-Pacific for trade and economic well-being, Albanese noted, adding that India and Australia share an unwavering commitment to upholding the rules-based international order and ensuring the Indo-Pacific is open, inclusive and prosperous. Notably the Indo-Pacific region has been witnessing an increasing Chinese assertiveness. Meanwhile, speaking about the Australia-India General Rawat Defence Officer Exchange Programme, Albanese said this initiative by Prime Minister Modi will ensure the defence personnel of the two countries develop familiarity and trust that underpins a close and long-lasting relationship.

Last year, India and Australia conducted more exercises, operations and dialogues than ever before

Melbourne varsity to collaborate with 3 Indian institutions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 9: The University of Melbourne in Australia Thursday announced collaborations with three educational institutions -- the University of Madras, Savitribai Phule University in Pune, and the Gandhi Institute of Technology & Management in Hyderabad.

The partnership offers a new undergraduate dual degree in science to the students of these universities. Under this, Indian students who enrol in the new dual degree will be able to complete it in India and abroad, spending the first two years studying in the country, followed by two years on campus in Melbourne, the Australian institute said here.



In addition, the students can study up to six masters subjects in their final year so they can fast-track a masters degree from a suite of disciplines, including science, engineering, public health and data science, University of Melbourne vice-chancellor Duncan Maskell said. The agreements were signed in the presence of Dayananda Siddavattam, vice-chancellor of the Gandhi Institute of Technology & Management, S Gowri, vice-chancellor of the University of Madras, and Karbhari Vishwanath Kale, vice-chancellor of Savitribai Phule of Pune.

Lifestyle changes help to prevent kidney diseases: Experts

PATIENTS WITH DIABETES AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE WOULD BE AT HIGHEST RISK OF KIDNEY DISEASE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 9: By making changes in lifestyle, kidney diseases cannot only be prevented but also controlled in their early stages, said experts.

On the occasion of World Kidney Day, which falls March 9, a virtual programme was organised with participation of experts of allopathy and ayurveda from across the country to discuss the causes of kidney diseases with emphasis laid on preventive measures, espe-

cially lifestyle changes.

Himanshu Verma, Head of the Department of Nephrology at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital, said in his presentation that the process from kidney disease to kidney failure happens in five stages.

"But it is possible to completely overcome the disease in the first and second stages. For this, first of all, it is necessary to have awareness among the patients so that the disease can be identified in the initial stage itself." According to him, keep-



WORLD KIDNEY DAY

ing the body mass index (BMI) between 20-25, walking 30 minutes in a day and at least five days in a week, changing lifestyle, reducing the consumption of

pain-relieving medicines, among other precautions, are effective in controlling the disease in the initial stage. Patients with diabetes and

high blood pressure would be at highest risk of kidney disease. "This risk can be much higher for people over 60 years of age with any of these diseases."

The experts also talked about on alternative treatment methods of ayurveda like Neeri KFT, a traditional ayurvedic poly-herbal formulation that has been found to be effective in regulating functions of at least six genes variants causing kidney dysfunction.

In concluding remarks, Sanchit Sharma, Executive Director,

AIMIL Pharma, said the nine-day long programme experts discussed extensively on how to avoid kidney diseases and how to manage them.

"This discussion shows that no standards can be fixed to prevent the disease but a dynamic approach needs to be adopted," he said.

Studies have warned that the prevalence of chronic kidney disease in India is on rise among those dealing with chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

BOGTUI MASSACRE

Cenotaph being set up



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 9: A Bogtui violence victim family in West Bengal is in the process of setting up a cenotaph in memory of the nine victims of the massive carnage.

The carnage that took place at Bogtui village under Rampurhat sub-division in Birbhum district during the wee hours of March 21 last year, was presumed to be a revenge-killing following the murder of local Trinamool Congress leader Vadu Sheikh on the streets the same evening.

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) sleuths are probing the matter following an order of the Calcutta High Court.

The cenotaph is being set up at the courtyard of the residence of local villager and member of one of the victim families Mihilal Sheikh. According to him, the members from all the victim families in that massacre will be assembling in front of the cenotaph on March 21 this year and pay homage to the deceased souls.

"Our doors will remain open for all throughout the day and anyone willing to come pay homage to the deceased souls are welcome," said Sheikh.

However, political mudslinging has already started over the development as the district leadership of the ruling Trinamool Congress has alleged that the entire initiative has been masterminded by

the district-unit of BJP to gain political mileage before the forthcoming elections for the three-tier panchayat system in the state.

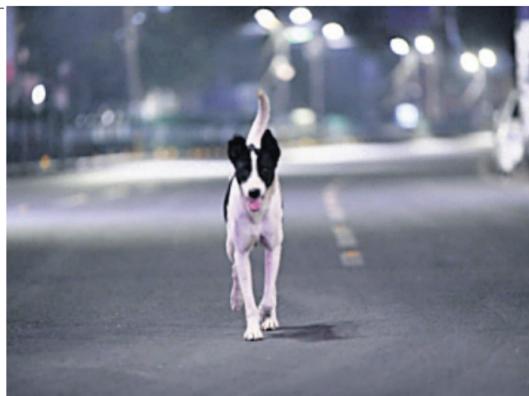
"This is a game plan of BJP, otherwise a thoroughgoing communal force, to fish in muddy water. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee herself went to Bogtui to distribute compensation cheques. The state government has provided jobs to one member of each of the victim families. This is nothing but an attempt to create tension over the tragedy before the rural civic body polls," said district Trinamool Congress leader.

Although denying direct involvement of the party behind the initiative, BJP's Birbhum district president Dhruvo Saha said that the party's moral support is behind this initiative.

"In the massacre both the killers and victims had affiliations towards the ruling Trinamool Congress. However, the ruling party's organisational strength in the area has eroded substantially after the massacre. So, they are trying to give this initiative a political colour," he added.

He also informed that on March 21 this year, the district unit of BJP will also observe the one-year completion of the tragedy in its own way. "The leader of the opposition Suwendu Adhikari is supposed to arrive at Bogtui on that day and pay homage to the deceased souls in the carnage," he said.

Sterilisation, vaccination key to end dog menace: Experts



At times, people shout at stray dogs, kick or beat them with sticks, throw stones at them and abuse them in other ways that make them feel severely threatened

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, March 9: There have been many reports of stray dogs attacking humans, but why does the most human-friendly animal turn ferocious?

Basically it is because they are left hungry and thirsty on the streets; there are no caretakers or very few people who care for them, animal experts said. Speaking with reference to an incident reported on February 28 in which a month-old baby boy was mauled to death by stray dogs in a district hospital in Sirohi district of Rajasthan, the experts said that the incident needs to be studied in depth.

Why are there no water vessels being kept on the streets? Why is there no food available for them? Why are they not being vaccinated and why do drivers continue to drive at top speed even when they see these dogs roaming on the roads? The cruelty being shown by humans towards these mute animals makes them ferocious.

Arjun Gothwal, manager of a dog rescue centre called Help in Suffering, said, "We generally get 60-70 complaints daily of dog men-

ace from different societies in Jaipur, we bring them to our centre, feed them, treat them and vaccinate them."

"We have analysed that most of the times, when they come to our centre, they are hungry and thirsty and hence become ferocious unable to bear the hunger pangs. So humans need to care for these animals."

In the Sirohi incident the infant was picked up when he was reportedly sleeping next to his mother. His body was found outside the hospital ward. CCTV footage showed that two dogs went inside the TB ward of the hospital and one of them returned with the infant.

Animal rights experts said the only long-term solution to the issue is sterilisation and vaccination of stray dogs. Gothwal said that the incidents of dog attacks are very sad and tragic. Dogs are friendly, social animals who would not normally attack a human. We have hundreds of dogs at our centre and they are all very friendly and have never attacked us, he added.

However, at times, people shout at stray dogs, kick or beat them with sticks, throw stones at them and abuse them in other ways that make them feel severely threatened.

Radhika Suryavanshi, campaigns manager, PETA India said, "An effective sterilisation program can help prevent this as stray dogs are surgically neutered and then located in their own area. They can also be vaccinated against rabies. Since territories are not left vacant, new dogs cannot enter."

ADENOVIRUS SCARE

NCPCR team to review situation

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 9: As the figure of deaths of children getting admitted to hospitals with Adenovirus-type syndromes is increasing, a team from the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has arrived in West Bengal to review the situation.

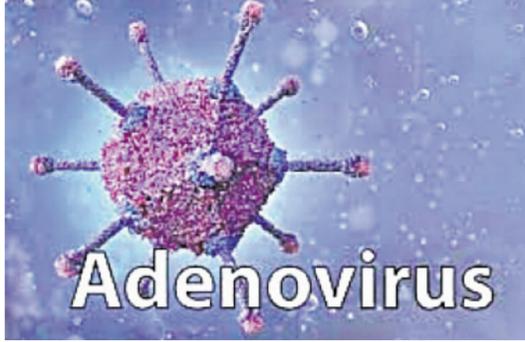
The central team is expected to hold meetings with the top officials of the state health department and also expected to make a visit to the hospitals from where the deaths of children with related symptoms have been reported.

The visit of the central teams is happening a day after the chairperson of West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBCPCR) Sudeshna Roy and the commission's advisor Ananya Chakraborty Chatterjee visited two hospitals in Kolkata reporting child deaths and reviewed the situation.

After reviewing the situation both expressed satisfaction over the treatment and the infrastructure facilities at the pediatric division of the hospitals where they made surprise visits. Both of them claimed that the rate of admission with severe symptoms has declined during the last few days. The two state-run hospitals where they made the surprise visits were Calcutta Medical College & Hospital and BC Roy Children's Hospital.

Incidentally, the maximum reports of child deaths have been reported from the Kolkata-based hospitals. According to the state health department sources this is due to the increased instances of referring children with symptoms by the district hospitals.

The department has already issued an advisory for doctors, especially paediatricians, to take special care of children being admitted with flu-like symptoms, especially those aged two years or below since they are most vulnerable to being affected by adenovirus.



The central team is expected to hold meetings with the top officials of the state health department and also expected to make a visit to the hospitals from where the deaths of children with related symptoms have been reported. Incidentally, the maximum reports of child deaths have been reported from the Kolkata-based hospitals. According to the state health department sources this is due to the increased instances of referring children with symptoms by the district hospitals.

ports of child deaths have been reported from the Kolkata-based hospitals. According to the state health department sources this is due to the increased instances of referring children with symptoms by the district hospitals.

The department has already issued an advisory for doctors, especially paediatricians, to take special care of children being admitted with flu-like symptoms, especially those aged two years or below since they are most vulnerable to being affected by adenovirus.

In wake of the alarming situation, the Health Department has cancelled all the leaves of staff for an indefinite period.

Special outdoor units have been opened at state-run hospitals with special paediatric units, so that such cases do not have to wait at the general outdoor units. Three days ago, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that 19 deaths had been reported. Contrary to her statement, sources from hospitals said that the death figure was much higher.

Pulwama war widows seek written assurance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The widows of the three CRPF jawans from Rajasthan, who were killed in the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, Thursday demanded a written assurance from the Ashok Gehlot government that their demands, including jobs to their relatives on compassionate grounds, will be met to end their protest.

The widows have been protesting since February 28 and launched an indefinite hunger strike five days ago. They have been camping outside former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot's residence here since Monday. A medical team on Thursday checked their vitals. The widows demand change in rules so that their relatives and not just children can get government jobs on compassionate grounds.

Reacting to the demand, Gehlot asked on Twitter if it would be "appropriate" to give jobs to other relatives of the martyred jawans instead of their children. "How can

we justify giving job to any other relative by trampling upon the rights of the children of the martyr? What will happen to the children of the martyr when they grow up? Is it appropriate to trample upon their rights?" he asked.

He also shared a screenshot of a statement in which he said one of the widows is demanding a job for her husband's brother (devar). He said if the job is given to the brother of the killed CRPF jawan then the family members and relatives of all the widows "may exert inappropriate" pressure to give job to other relatives while depriving the children of the martyr of their right to job.

Gehlot also accused state BJP leaders of "using the widows of the martyrs for their narrow political interests and thus dishonouring them". "BJP leaders had misbriefed Defence Minister Sh. Rajnath Singh. I have shared the facts with Defence Minister Sh. Rajnath Singh ji and Congress president Sh. Mallikarjun Kharge ji," he said in another tweet.



UNESCO's edu outfit seeks partnership with WB

Political observers feel that the proposal from UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning to partner with the education department will also provide the Trinamool Congress with a tool to counter the opposition's criticism of the state's education sector

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 9: At a time when the education sector in West Bengal is daily hitting the national headlines for negative reasons after being saddled by the multi-crore teachers' recruitment scam, a proposal from an education outfit under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has come as a breather for the state education department.

It is learnt that UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, one of the six educational institutes of UNESCO, has forwarded a proposal to

West Bengal government with the intention of partnering with the state education department for the development of the education sector in West Bengal.

"The state government has acknowledged and welcomed the proposal and written to the institute accepting the same. "Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee herself sent the acknowledgement reply," said a senior official in the education department.

The official also said that a representative team from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning is scheduled to visit the state shortly and hold a meeting with the Chief



Minister, Education Minister Bratya Basu and the top officials of the education department.

"A memorandum of understanding might be signed between the institute and the state government following the meeting," the official said.

In 2021, Kolkata's Durga Puja made its place in the list of "Intangible Cultural Heritage of

Humanity" of UNESCO. It was the first Asian festival to receive the prestigious recognition.

Political observers feel that the proposal from UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning to partner with the education department will also provide the Trinamool Congress with a tool to counter the opposition's criticism of the state's education sector.

Man blackmails woman judge with morphed pictures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, March 9: A man allegedly blackmailed a woman judge with her morphed photographs and demanded ₹20 lakh in return for not making them public, police said.

The man has been identified and efforts are being made to nab him, they said. The judge's photographs were downloaded from her social media account, edited and sent to her chambers at a court in Jaipur as well as her house by the accused, they said.

A case in this regard was registered on February 28. No arrest has been made so far, police said. In the FIR, the judge complained that on February 7, her stenographer brought a parcel delivered by a man who claimed that it was from her children's school. When the stenographer asked his name, he left.



The parcel contained some sweets, morphed obscene photographs of the judge and a letter in which, the blackmailer threatened to make the photographs public if she did not pay ₹20 lakh, the FIR said.

"Be ready with ₹20 lakh, otherwise will spoil you and your family. Time and place will be informed soon," the letter read. Another parcel containing similar items was sent to the judge's residence 20 days later. That's when she lodged an FIR, police said.

Trinamool to corner Centre in Parliament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The TMC will raise in Parliament issues such as LIC and SBI's risk exposure, price rise of essential commodities, unemployment and "misuse" of central agencies during the second phase of the Budget Session, its Rajya Sabha floor leader Derek O'Brien has said.

He said West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and the party's all-India general secretary Abhishek Banerjee decided on the floor strategy in a meeting also attended by the party's floor leaders of the two Houses.

Sudip Bandyopadhyay is the TMC's Lok Sabha floor leader. O'Brien said LIC's risk exposure and



price rise affect the lives of the common man and their savings and should be highlighted.

The Trinamool Congress will also raise the issue of "political

vendetta" against non-BJP ruled states in Parliament and also question the Union government on "holding back of funds for schemes such as MNREGA", O'Brien said.

He said a consultation with other opposition parties will be held soon before the session begins. LIC and SBI's exposure to the Adani group were raised by various opposition parties in the first leg of Parliament's Budget Session which saw multiple disruptions.

While the Congress continues to demand a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the allegations related to the Adani group, others like the Samajwadi Party, the Left parties and the DMK have lodged their strong protests against the alleged attack on the federal structure and

the misuse of institutions.

Recently, Adani group stocks had taken a beating on the bourses after the US-based short seller Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations, including fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation, against the business conglomerate whose chairman is Gautam Adani. The group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements.

The TMC, the second largest opposition outfit in Parliament, has also revived its demand for the introduction of the women's reservation bill. The bill for a 33 per cent quota in Lok Sabha and state assemblies was passed in Rajya Sabha in 2010 but lapsed as Lok Sabha didn't take it up.

Woman sarpanch creates 'Suraksha Sakhi' in this village

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, March 9: Known as Hockey Wali Sarpanch' Jhunjhunu's Lambi Ahir Village Sarpanch, Neeru Yadav has taken another step towards empowering women in her village.

Yadav has set the stage to train women to create a 'Suraksha Sakhi' team in her village. The training will be provided by Jaipur's Nirbhaya Squad team under the leadership of Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Nodal Officer Nirbhaya Squad, Sunita Meena.

Neeru Yadav said, "We are in talks with the key officials of Nirbhaya Squad and soon the village level training will be kicked off. The training will include various fitness and safety techniques to address women safety. The 'Suraksha



Sakhi' team will be found among the civil dressed community and not necessarily in the police dress. We are stepping towards creating a

■ Sarpanch Neeru Yadav keeps motivating the village women by taking various initiatives. Recently she donated her salary to train the village girls for hockey and created a state-level team

■ In her recent initiative, she has started a unique campaign in her village called 'Garbage Free Marriage Functions' and provides free steel utensils for cooking and serving for any marriage functions in her village

squad, Sunita Meena said that it is necessary for every woman to learn the tricks of self-defence for her self protection and for the safety of her family. Taking forward the link of that, we will move away from the city and now even inside the village, by giving training through a fearless squad.

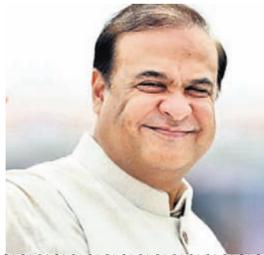
"We will make security friends and we want every woman to be able to protect herself. For this, we will train them about the qualities of self-defence and good touch, bad touch and about their rights, and how they can take help from the police."

Sarpanch Neeru Yadav keeps motivating the village women by taking various initiatives. Recently she donated her salary to train the village girls for hockey and created a state-level team. She suc-

cessfully trained 10 girls under the PMKVY Scheme and helped to get placed all the girls in MNCs. Following this successful project, around 15 more girls have joined Neeru Yadav for skill development training and soon a new batch will start.

In her recent initiative, she has started a unique campaign in her village called 'Garbage Free Marriage Functions' and provides free steel utensils for cooking and serving for any marriage functions in her village. In addition, a team deputed collects the food waste and converts it into manure for selling on piecemeal rates to farmers.

"The purpose is to reduce the garbage of disposables, plastics, bottles for keeping the village clean and utilize the natural resources at its best by recycling the food waste," she said.



All parties contesting polls in the northeast must understand that they will have to eventually support the BJP
HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

NEW RECORD

A compilation of over 42 lakh essays on valiant Ahom general Lachit Borphukan has been recognised by Guinness World Records as "largest online photo album of handwritten notes"



of the day quote

Yet, Kerala was able to create certain socio-economic conditions which enabled the vast majority of its citizens to enjoy a superior standard of living and human dignity
PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

The previous Left Front government denied payments of DA arrears year-after-year. After we came to power, we increased the DA payment manifold. How much more do you want? What else will satisfy you? If you do not like me, you can behead me
MAMATA BANERJEE | BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

How can we justify giving job to any other relative by trampling upon the rights of the children of the martyr? What will happen to the children of the martyr when they grow up? Is it appropriate to trample upon their rights?
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

Over 10mn older adults may have dementia: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: More than 10 million older adults aged 60 or over in India may have dementia, comparable to the prevalence rates for countries such as the US and the UK, according to a first-of-its-kind study.

According to a study published in the journal Nature Public Health Emergency Collection, by 2050 people over 60 years of age are predicted to constitute 19.1 per cent of the total population in India.

This ageing of the population is expected to be accompanied by a dramatic increase in the prevalence of dementia, a syndrome not taken very seriously in the country.

The latest research, published in the journal Neuroepidemiology, used an artificial intelligence (AI) technique known as semi-supervised machine learning to analyse data from 31,477 older adults.

The international team of researchers found that the prevalence rate of dementia in adults aged 60 or over in India could be 8.44 per cent -- equating to 10.08 million older adults in the country.

This compares to prevalence rates recorded in similar age groups of 8.8 per cent in the US, 9 per cent in the UK and between 8.5 and 9 per cent in Germany and France, they said. The prevalence of dementia was greater for those who were older, were females, received no education, and lived in rural areas, the researchers found. "Our re-

'Stroke kills 1 Indian every four minutes'

New Delhi: Stroke, which is the second commonest cause of death in India, kills one person in India every 4 minutes, Prof. M. V. Padma Srivastava, a neurologist at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) said Thursday. "About 1,85,000 strokes occur every year in India with nearly one stroke happening every 40 seconds," the Padma Shri recipient said at an event held at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. According to Global Burden of Diseases (GBD), India has 68.6 per cent incidence of stroke, 70.9 per cent stroke deaths and 77.7 disability adjusted life years (DALYs) lost.

search was based on the first and only nationally representative aging study in India with more than 30,000 participating older adults in the country," said Haomiao Jin, co-author of the study and Lecturer in Health Data Sciences at the University of Surrey, UK. "AI has a unique strength in interpreting large and complex data like this, and our research found that the prevalence of dementia may be higher than prior estimates from local samples," Jin said in a statement.

The research team from the University of Surrey, University of Southern California, University of Michigan, both in the US, and All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi developed an AI learning model.

Dementia leads to impairment of mental processes, such as memory, thinking, reasoning and judgement, and thus seriously impairs an individual's ability to perform daily functions



Morbi bridge mishap: Oveva yet to pay first instalment to victims

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ahmedabad, March 9: Oveva Group is yet to release the first instalment of compensation to victims of the Morbi Bridge suspension bridge collapse, the Gujarat High Court, which has initiated a suo motu case in the tragedy, was told Thursday.

A suspension bridge over the Machchu River collapsed October 30, killing 135 people, including 35 children. As Oveva Group Director Jaysukh Patel's counsel told the court that as he is in jail, the company could not release the compensation amount, the High Court orally asked the company to see that the first instalment is paid to victims' families by March 22 and posted the matter for further hearing March 27.

The state government has filed an affidavit in the court informing it about the precautionary measures it has planned to take for other bridges and cross-drainage works.



Navy's largest war game culminates in Arabian Sea

The Indian Navy's biggest-ever biennial exercise 'Tropex' witnessed participation of around 70 ships, six submarines and more than 75 aircraft covering over 21 million square nautical miles, officials said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: The Indian Navy's biggest-ever biennial exercise 'Tropex' witnessed participation of around 70 ships, six submarines and more than 75 aircraft and it covered over 21 million square nautical miles, Navy officials said Thursday.

A series of complex drills and manoeuvres featuring almost all assets

of the Navy was a major highlight of the 'Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise' (Tropex) that culminated this week in the Arabian Sea, they said. The exercise, which began in November last, also witnessed significant participation from the Indian Army, the Indian Air Force and the Coast Guard.

The overall exercise construct included coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil' and the Amphibious ex-



ercise 'AMPHEX'. "Set in the Indian Ocean including the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the theatre of operations for the exercise extended approximately 4,300 nautical miles (nm) from North to South up to 35 degree South Latitude

Pedestrians involved in 22% road crash cases in HP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, March 9: Road accidents in Himachal Pradesh have claimed 6,530 lives and left 26,600 people injured in the past six years, with pedestrians being hit in 22 per cent cases and accounting for 15 per cent deaths, according to police data.

In the latest accident Tuesday, a car ploughed into a group of migrant labourers in Solan district, killing five and injuring four. Road accidents per 10,000 vehicles in the hill state was 17.1 per cent as compared to the national average of 15.1 per cent in 2019, while the number of accidental deaths per 10,000 vehicles was seven per cent compared to 5.1 per cent at the national level, the police data stated.



MAJORITY OF ACCIDENTS INVOLVING PEDESTRIANS OCCUR AT NIGHT DUE TO POOR VISIBILITY, ACCORDING TO POLICE

Kangra district topped in pedestrian deaths in road accidents followed by Una and Baddi, and over-

speeding, rash and negligent driving and drunk driving, mainly in plain areas, were responsible for

More than 80 per cent of accidents were reported in rural areas, according to an analysis of the police data for the last six years

The highest number of accidents and fatalities occurred on national highways followed by link roads and state highways, and over 200 people were killed in hit-and-run incidents

pedestrian deaths, according to an analysis of the data.

Areas under the police jurisdiction of Baddi, Una, Paonta Sahib, Nalagarh, Kullu, Amb, Nurpur, Sadar Hamirpur, Balh and Kangra reported majority of the accidents involving pedestrians. Ten police stations with maximum number of accidents have been identified and superintendents of police have been directed to take steps in co-ordination with departments concerned to reduce accidents, Director General of Police (DGP) Sanjay Kundu said in a tweet following the Tuesday accident

Besides over-speeding, blind bends, lack of crash barriers, drunken driving was the cause of many accidents. "We are serious about tackling the menace of

drunken driving as this can also land other drivers and passersby in trouble. At present, over 65 alcohol-sensors are available with the police (at least five each in every district) to deal with people driving under the influence of alcohol." Additional Superintendent of Police (Traffic) P Narvir Singh Rathore told PTI. More alcohol-sensors would be procured to keep a check on drunken driving. Effective challan for traffic violation is also being ensured, he added.

The number of vehicles is growing at nine percent (about 1.4 lakh) annually and the total number of vehicles registered in the state is over 20 lakhs and over 20,000 vehicles enter the state daily during peak tourist season, officials said.

Women & farmers in focus in Shinde govt's 1st Budget

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 9: The Eknath Shinde-led Maharashtra government Thursday presented its maiden Budget for 2023-24, in which it proposed rupee 6,000 assistance to farmers and Re 1 crop insurance scheme while also offering relief in professional tax to working women, 50 per cent discount on ticket fares in state-run buses to women and a new scheme for the girl child.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, who is also the state Finance Minister, presented a revenue deficit Budget of rupee 16,222 crore in the Legislative Assembly with a total outlay of rupee 1,72,000 crore. Fadnis, who read out the budgetary provisions from an iPad instead of a conventional paper document, said the state's tax revenue is expected to be rupee 2,98,181 crore. The Budget proposed the 'Namo Shetkari Mahasnan Nidhi' scheme, under which every farmer in the state will get rupee 6,000 in addition to the rupee 6,000 given under the central scheme



(PM Kisan Samman Nidhi) every year. Announcing a Re 1 crop insurance scheme for farmers, the deputy CM said the government will bear the financial burden of rupee 3,312 crore.

Women will be given a 50 per cent discount on ticket fares in Maharashtra State Transport Corporation (MSRTC) buses, Fadnis said. He announced a waiver in professional tax for women with a monthly salary of up to ₹25,000. Earlier, women with a salary of more than ₹10,000 had to pay professional tax. He also announced 'Shakti Sadan', a new scheme to provide shelter to women in distress, who faced sexual ex-

ploitation or are facing domestic violence, will be launched with the assistance of the central government by combining the Swadhar, Ujjwala schemes. The survivors will get shelter, legal aid, medical care and counselling, he said, adding that 50 Shakti Sadans will be started under this scheme.

A woman buyer currently gets one per cent concession in the stamp duty registration for the purchase of a residential unit, but she cannot sell that unit to a male buyer for 15 years. Now, this condition has been relaxed, he said. 'Divyang' (specially-abled) people will also get a waiver in professional tax.

The definition of 'divyang' will be revised by amending the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, he said. The budget reduced the Value Added Tax (VAT) on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) from 25 per cent to 18 per cent in Mumbai, Pune and Raigad.

In its discourse, the BJP describes the period between the country's 75th Independence year to the 100th as "amrit kaal".

Two die, 6 injured after SUV rams into cars, vending carts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: Two people, including a teenager, were killed and six sustained injuries after a speeding SUV allegedly rammed into two cars and three vending carts in southwest Delhi's Vasant Vihar area, police said Thursday.

The incident took place Wednesday, they said, adding that two persons have been apprehended

The incident took place Wednesday. Vasant Vihar police station received a call at 7.30 pm. After reaching the spot, a Mahindra Thar SUV, two other vehicles and three vending carts were found damaged

in connection with the incident. Vasant Vihar police station received a call at 7.30 pm. After reaching the spot, a Mahindra Thar SUV, two other vehicles and three vending carts were found damaged, a senior police officer said.

During inquiry, it was found that the accident was caused by the driver of the Thar. Eight people, including children, got injured and were taken to the AIIMS Trauma Centre, Deputy Commissioner of Police (south-west) Manoj C said.

The injured are residents of Shiva Camp, Vasant Vihar, Ekta Vihar, and RK Puram. Two of the injured -- Munna and Sameer -- succumbed to injuries during treatment in the hospital, the DCP said. Following the incident, the driver of the Thar fled from the spot, police said.

Preliminary investigation has revealed that the accused was an employee of the owner of the car. He had access to the vehicle as the owner was not in Delhi, police said.

SHORT TAKES

DCW chief moves HC

New Delhi: Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) Chairperson, Swati Malhi has moved the Delhi High Court challenging trial court's order framing corruption and criminal conspiracy charges against her for allegedly misusing official position and gaining monetary benefits by illegally appointing people, including Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers, in the women rights body. Special Judge Dig Vinay Singh of the Rouse Avenue Courts had framed charges against Malhi and three others -- Promila Gupta, Sarika Chaudhary, and Farheen Malick -- for criminal conspiracy under Section 120B of the Indian Penal Code and for other offences under sections 13(1)(d), 13(1)(2) and 13(2) of Prevention of Corruption Act.

JD(U) dissolves its Nagaland unit

Patna: Janata Dal (United) has dissolved its Nagaland unit after a newly-elected MLA extended unconditional support to BJP Thursday. The Nagaland Assembly election concluded recently where JD(U) contested on 8 seats and managed to win one. The newly-elected MLA Jwenga Seb has given unconditional support to BJP. Abhishek Jha, the official spokesperson of JD(U) said: "Our's is a principled party. We contest every election on the face of Nitish Kumar and voters have faith in him. This is the reason why we are winning elections in other states too," Jha said.

Shopkeeper shot at on Holi, succumbs

New Delhi: A shopkeeper, who was shot at by unidentified assailants in south Delhi's Ayanagar area on Holi, succumbed to his injuries at a hospital Thursday, a police official said. Police said that Wednesday, a police control room (PCR) call was received at 7.58 p.m. stating that a person was injured after five rounds were fired from a pistol near House No. 30, Balka Chowk in Ayanagar.

UP: Minor dies after brutal rape

Hardoi (Uttar Pradesh): A six-year-old girl died after being raped by an unidentified man here, said police Thursday. After the assault, the girl was left in an unconscious condition near her house. The girl was playing outside the house when she went missing. The family members found her profusely bleeding and rushed her to a hospital in Shahjahanpur but she died on the way.

international



It is necessary to strengthen the orientation of defence science, technology and industries to serve the armed forces and win wars
XI JINPING | CHINA PRESIDENT

McCONNELL HOSPITALISED
US Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell has been hospitalised after tripping at a hotel in Washington Wednesday, his spokesperson said in a statement



of the day quote

Lt General (ret'd) Faiz Hameed, the former chief of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), is being investigated for alleged corruption

RANA SANAUULLAH | INTERIOR MINISTER OF PAKISTAN

The US is working with Pakistani partners and, in turn, it is working with international financial institutions, the IMF, to put itself on a sustainable growth path

NED PRICE | US STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON

The government is absolutely committed to completing the current USD 7 billion bailout programme with the IMF

ISHAQ DAR | PAKISTAN'S FINANCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

S Korea, Japan to hold summit

Seoul: The leaders of South Korea and Japan will meet next week for a summit on strengthening ties, both governments said on Thursday, days after South Korea unveiled a step toward resolving strained ties stemming from Tokyo's colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. President Yoon Suk Yeol is to visit Japan on March 16-17 at the invitation of the Japanese government and will meet with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, according to the South Korean and Japanese governments.

Malaysia's former PM arrested

Putrajaya (Malaysia): Malaysia's former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin was arrested Thursday and will be brought to court to face corruption charges, the anti-graft agency said. Muhyiddin, who led Malaysia from March 2020 until August 2021, will be the country's second leader to be indicted after leaving office. Ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak was hit with multiple graft charges after he lost in 2018 general elections and began a 12-year prison term in August after losing his final appeal in the first of several trials.

Three Palestinian militants killed

Jaba (West Bank): Three Palestinian militants were killed in a shootout with Israeli troops on Thursday, the latest deaths in a surge of Israeli arrest raids in the occupied West Bank. Israeli security forces said they raided the village of Jaba in the northern West Bank to arrest suspects wanted for attacks on Israeli soldiers in the area. The suspects opened fire on Israeli troops, who shot back and killed three people, all affiliated with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant group, police said.

North Korea fires ballistic missile

Seoul: South Korea's military said it detected that North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile toward waters off its western coast on Thursday. The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapon was fired at around 6.20 pm from an area around the western coastal city of Nampo. It did not immediately release an assessment of how far the missile flew. The launch came after the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned on Tuesday that her country is ready to take "quick, overwhelming action" against the United States and South Korea as the allies expand their military training to cope with a growing North Korean nuclear threat.

PROTESTERS BLOCK ROAD

Netanyahu airlifted to airport

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tel Aviv, March 9: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had to be airlifted Thursday to the country's main international airport for an official overseas trip, after throngs of cars and protesters prevented him from driving there.

The demonstrations were part of nationwide protests underway for more than two months against Netanyahu and his government's contentious plan to overhaul the judiciary. Demonstrators had made blocking Netanyahu's route to the airport a centerpiece of their intensifying efforts to oppose the legal changes, and the optics of the Israeli leader having to make alternate travel plans were a win for the protest movement.

The helicopter ride, far from the snarling traffic triggered by the protest, was also sure to deepen Netanyahu's reputation as being out of touch with Israelis at a time when the country finds itself torn apart over the government plan and the economy is slowing. Thursday's disruptions also took a toll on visiting US Secretary of State Lloyd Austin, whose schedule was rearranged to keep his engagements close to the airport. The protesters, launching a "day of resistance to dictatorship," descended on the country's main international airport waving Israeli flags, blocking the road leading to the departures area with their cars.

Non-bailable arrest warrant against Imran

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, March 9: A court in southwestern Pakistan Thursday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against former Prime Minister Imran Khan in a case of incitement against state institutions.

Quetta police on Monday registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Khan under Sections 153A, 124A, and 505 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016, on behalf of a citizen Abdul Khalil Kakar, for "spreading hate" against state institutions and their offices following his speech on Sunday.

A judicial magistrate court in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, took up the case and issued the non-bailable arrest warrant. The court directed the authorities to detain 70-year-old Khan and present him before the court.

Khan heavily criticised the state institutions after a botched attempt by police to arrest him from his residence in the Zaman Park area of Lahore on the weekend. The police raid unfolded after a court in Islamabad had issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Khan in the Toshakhana case.



Netanyahu, who was meeting Austin before his departure, arrived to the airport in a police helicopter, circumventing the protesters, Israeli media reported

Thursday's disruptions also took a toll on visiting US Secretary of State Lloyd Austin, whose schedule was rearranged to keep his engagements close to the airport

Critics say the overhaul will upset the country's delicate system of checks and balances and slide Israel toward authoritarianism

scended on the country's main international airport waving Israeli flags, blocking the road leading to the departures area with their cars.

Elsewhere, protesters blocked main intersections and scuffled with police in the seaside metropolises of Tel Aviv and other cities. A small flotilla of paddleboards and kayaks tried to close off a main maritime shipping lane off the northern city of Haifa. Some protesters barricaded the Jerusalem offices of a conservative think tank helping to spearhead the judicial changes.

"Israel is on the verge of becoming an autocratic country," Netanyahu, who took office in late December after a protracted political stalemate, and his allies say the measures aim to rein in a court that has overstepped its authority. Critics say the overhaul will upset the country's delicate system of checks and balances and slide Israel toward authoritarianism.



Women participate in a self-defence class that combines martial arts with simple street fighting techniques, in a street of the Iztapalapa neighbourhood on the outskirts of Mexico City

Ram Chandra Poudel named Nepal President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 9: Ram Chandra Poudel of Nepali Congress was Thursday elected as the new president of Nepal, in a relief to the fragile coalition government headed by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' as his gamble to break ties with the second largest party in Parliament - CPN-UML - seems to have paid off.

Poudel, a common candidate of the eight-party alliance that included Nepali Congress and Prime Minister 'Prachanda'-led CPN (Maotist Center), received the vote of 214 lawmakers of parliament and 352 provincial assembly members.

"Congratulations to my friend Ram Candra Poudel for being elected as the President," Nepali Congress chief Sher Bahadur Deuba tweeted. Later, the election commission officially announced 78-year-old Poudel's victory. Prime Minister 'Prachanda' also congratulated the President-elect and thanked all those who voted in the presidential election. With the support from eight political parties, Poudel's victory was certain. His rival Subas Chandra Nembang had support of former premier KP Sharma Oli-led CPN-UML.



This is the third presidential election in Nepal since the country became a republic in 2008. The tenure of the current president, Bidya Devi Bhandari, will end on March 12.

RISING TENSION

6 killed in rocket attack in Ukraine



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, March 9: Russia unleashed "a massive rocket attack" that hit critical infrastructure and residential buildings in 10 regions of Ukraine, the country's president said Thursday, with officials reporting at least six deaths in the largest such night time attack in three weeks.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the barrage that came while many people slept and knocked out power in cities across the country was an attempt by Moscow "to intimidate Ukrainians again." "The occupiers can only terrorise civilians. That's all they can do," Zelenskyy said in an online statement.

The war has largely ground to a battlefield stalemate over the winter. The Kremlin's forces started targeting Ukraine's power supply last October in an apparent attempt to demoralise the civilian population and compel Kyiv to negotiate peace on Moscow's terms.

The attacks later became less frequent, with analysts speculating Russia may have been running low on ammunition.

The last major bombardment took place on February 16. Overall, Russia launched 81 missiles and eight exploding Shahed drones Thursday, according to Ukraine's chief commander of the armed forces, Valerii Zaluzhnyi. Thirty-four cruise missiles were intercepted, as were four drones, he said.

The Russian defence ministry said the attacks were in retaliation for an alleged incursion into the Bryansk region of western Russia a week earlier by what Moscow claimed were Ukrainian saboteurs. Ukraine denied the claim and warned that Moscow could use the allegations to justify stepping up its own attacks.

The Russian defence ministry said Thursday's "massive retaliation" hit military and industrial targets in Ukraine "as well as the energy facilities that supply them." Private electricity operator DTEK reported that three of its power stations had been hit, causing severe damage and bringing preventive emergency power in the Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk and Odesa regions.

The strikes left almost half of consumers in Kyiv without heating, with temperatures at around 9 C (48 F). Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, was left without running water, heating, trams and trolleybuses after 15 missiles hit the region, mayor Ihor Tereshkov told the Ukrainian public broadcaster. Around 150,000 households were left without power in Ukraine's northwestern Zhytomyr region. In the southern port of Odesa, emergency blackouts occurred due to damaged power lines.

In southern Ukraine, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which is occupied by Russian forces, lost power as a result of the missile attacks, according to nuclear state operator Energoatom.

Harry, Meghan's kids get official royal titles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, March 9: The children of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, were Thursday added to the royal titles list on the official Buckingham Palace website and will be formally known as Prince Archie and Princess Lilibet of Sussex.

The succession list on the royal family website was updated to reflect the change a day after Harry and Meghan first referred to their daughter Lilibet as Princess, following her christening ceremony in the US. Previously, they were listed as Master Archie Mountbatten-Windsor and Miss Lilibet Mountbatten-Windsor. As per the rules for the titles of Britain's royalty, Archie and Lilibet were not automatically made prince and princess at birth because they were then the great-grandchildren of the monarch - the late Queen Elizabeth II. But they gained the automatic right to their titles once their grandfather, King Charles III, acceded to the British throne.

"The children's titles have been a birth right since their grandfather became monarch. This matter has been settled for some time in alignment with Buckingham Palace," a spokesperson for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex has been reported as saying. The rules for royal titles were set out by Britain's King George V, the grandfather of Queen Elizabeth II, in 1917. Under those norms, the Sussexes are also entitled to use the His or Her Royal Highness (HRH) prefixes but Harry and Meghan no longer use these titles after leaving frontline monarchy in 2020.

Japan makes arrests in 'sushi terror' pranks craze

The clip shows one member of the group grabbing a piece of sushi from a plate as it passes, shoving the whole morsel into their mouth and then drinking soy sauce directly from a communal bottle

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Tokyo, March 9: Three people have been arrested in Japan over unhygienic pranks at a conveyor belt sushi restaurant after footage of their antics - dubbed "sushi terrorism" - sparked outrage online. Police accused the young trio of seeking to obstruct business at major restaurant chain Kura Sushi, which was bombarded with customer complaints after the video went viral. The clip shows one member of the group grabbing a piece of sushi from a plate as it passes, shoving the whole morsel

into their mouth and then drinking soy sauce directly from a communal bottle.

Similar videos filmed at different chains surfaced last month on platforms including Twitter and TikTok, with some apparently weeks or even years old.

Other unsavoury pranks included customers touching moving pieces of sushi with a freshly licked finger, or sucking the rim of a teacup before placing it back on a shelf. Local police said Thursday that three people from the central Aichi region had been arrested. A police spokesman said 21-year-old Ryoga Yoshino and an unnamed 15-year-old girl were arrested Wednesday, while the group's third member, a 19-year-old man whose identity was also withheld, was collared last month. The arrests are believed to be the first in the saga which caused an uproar in Japan, a country with



famously high standards of cleanliness. The group's antics forced employees at Kura Sushi to perform emergency cleaning, "making normal business operations difficult," the police spokesman added. While no charges have yet been filed, "forcible obstruction of business" can involve stiff penalties

under Japanese law - including a potential three-year prison term. The company that operates Kura Sushi, which has nearly 500 outlets in Japan, welcomed the arrests in a statement. "We sincerely hope the arrests will spread awareness in society that these pranks, which fundamentally undermine our system based on a relationship of trust with customers, are a crime, and that there will be no copycat acts in future," the firm said.

Among other chains affected by the series of incidents is Shushiro, which saw its stocks plummet last month after a video showed an apparently teenage customer licking the top of a shared soy sauce bottle at one of its shops. "This is sickening," one Japanese Twitter user wrote in response at the time, with another adding: "I can't go to conveyor belt sushi restaurants anymore."

of the day quote

Higher gross sales are likely to generate more profits for the RBI and offset some of the losses in other parts of their portfolio



SAMIRAN CHAKRABORTY | ECONOMIST, CITI BANK

My hope is that the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. My strong belief is that it will prove to be in many ways more economically impactful than an FTA



GINA RAIMONDO | COMMERCE SECRETARY, US

We are confident that with this partnership, we will be able to transform the traditional learning infrastructure and establish a future-ready learning environment



MURALIKRISHNAN B | PRESIDENT, XIAOMI INDIA

SHORT TAKES

More Adani group shares pledged

New Delhi: More shares belonging to companies of the embattled Adani Group have been pledged as security for loans taken by the group's flagship firm, a trustee said. SBI Cap Trustee in notices to stock exchanges said that a further 0.99 per cent shares in Adani Green Energy Ltd were pledged "for the benefits of the lenders" of Adani Enterprises Ltd. An additional 0.76 per cent shares in Adani Transmission Ltd were also pledged to banks, the trustee said. SBI Cap, which is a unit of State Bank of India (SBI), however did not give details of the loans taken by Adani Enterprises for which the pledge was created. With the latest pledge, the total shares in Adani Green Energy Ltd - the group's renewable energy company - that were encumbered with SBI Cap was 2 per cent. In the case of Adani Transmission, this came to 1.32 per cent.

Mercedes-Benz to increase prices

New Delhi: Luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz India Thursday said it will increase prices of its vehicles ranging between ₹2 lakh to ₹12 lakh across different models from April 1, to offset rising input costs especially the adverse impact of foreign exchange. This will be the second time in three months that the company is increasing prices of its vehicles. The showroom price of the company's model range will increase by up to 5 per cent from April 1, 2023, the company said. As a result, from April, prices of the company's A-Class limousine will go up by ₹2 lakh and GLA SUV by ₹7 lakh for the top-end S 350d limousine, while the top-end Mercedes Maybach S 580 will see an increase in price by ₹12 lakh.

₹20L for tips on defaulters: Sebi

New Delhi: With an aim to recover fines from elusive offenders, capital markets regulator Sebi Thursday introduced a reward system for up to ₹20 lakh to informants for sharing information about the assets of defaulters. The reward may be granted in two stages -- interim and final. While the interim reward amount will not exceed two and a half per cent of the reserve price of the asset regarding which tips was provided or ₹5 lakh, whichever is less and the final reward amount will not exceed 10 per cent of the dues recovered or ₹20 lakh, whichever is less. The new guidelines have become effective from March 8, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said.

DARK SUMMER NIGHTS

India faces high risks of nighttime blackouts this summer, following years of neglect in adding new coal and hydropower capacity, needed particularly at night when solar capacity is unavailable

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, March 9: India faces a high risk of nighttime power cuts this summer and in coming years, as delays in adding new coal-fired and hydropower capacity could limit the country's ability to address surging electricity demand when solar energy is not available.

A rapid addition of solar farms has helped India avert daytime supply gaps, but a shortage of coal-fired and hydropower capacity risks exposing millions to widespread outages at night, government data and internal documents reviewed by Reuters show.

India's power availability in "non-solar hours" this April is expected to be 1.7% lower than peak demand - a measure of the maximum electricity requirement over any given time, an internal note by the federal grid regulator reviewed by Reuters showed.

April nighttime peak demand is expected to hit 217 gigawatts (GW), up 6.4% on the highest night-



With the increasing integration of the economy with the rest of the world, more and more entities are likely to, directly or indirectly, get exposed to foreign exchange risks. There are likely to be demands for permitting hedging of economic exposures

M RAJESHWAR RAO | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

PPBL GOES LIVE WITH UPI LITE

Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) has gone live with UPI LITE, a feature enabled by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for multiple small-value UPI transactions, thus empowering its users with lightning fast UPI payments, the firm said Thursday



India at high risks of blackouts



The burden of increased supply will definitely be borne by coal and gas. Achieving it would be a tall order

HETAL GANDHI | DIRECTOR- RESEARCH, CRISIL MARKET INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYTICS

time levels recorded in April last year. "The situation is a little stressed," Grid Controller of India Ltd (Grid-India) said in the note dated February 3.

While Indians looking to beat the heat this summer will want steady power for their air-conditioners, night time outage risks threaten industries that operate around the clock, including auto, electronics, steel bar and fertiliser manufacturing plants.

"If there is a power cut even for one minute, paper pulp gets blocked and messes up the delicate process and causes hundreds of thousands of rupees in losses," said PG Mukundan Nair, former chief of an Indian paper industry body who has been in paper manufacturing for nearly three decades. "Even the smallest interruption in power supply will create havoc," Nair said. The

electricity deficits this summer could be worse than expected, as Grid-India's shortage forecasts were made weeks before India's weather office predicted heat waves between March and May.

EMERGENCY STEPS

Expecting a surge in demand for coal by power plants during the summer, the railways increased its coal transportation by 11.92 per cent in terms of tonnage by the end of February, the national transporter said in a statement Thursday.

It also said keeping in view the rising demand in the next few years, comprehensive planning of an energy corridor has been done with planned investment of ₹1 lakh crore for over around 100 projects.

As much as 189.2 GW of coal-fired capacity is expected to be available this April, according to

- Summer nighttime peak supply gap estimated at 1.7%
- Peak hydro output seen down 18% in April from year ago
- Govt orders railways to increase coal transportation
- Coal power, hydro capacity addition needs to be expedited

Grid-India's February note. That would be up more than 11% from last year, according to Reuters calculations based on Grid-India data.

Together, coal, nuclear and gas capacity are expected to meet about 83% of peak demand at night.

Hydro power will be crucial not only to meet much of the remaining supply but also as a flexible generator, as coal-fired plants cannot be ramped up and down quickly to address variability in demand.

Widening demand-supply fault lines Hydro power will be crucial as a flexible generator, as coal-fired plants cannot be ramped up and down quickly However Grid-India has forecast peak hydro availability in April this year will be 18% below what it was a year earlier, when output was boosted by favourable weather conditions.

Imported coal-based power plants would be required to crank up output to up to 55% of total potential from 21% in February, while domestic coal-fired units will have to increase output to 75% of potential from 69% in February, Hetal Gandhi, Director - Research at CRISIL Market Intelligence and Analytics said.

MORE CAPACITY NEEDED

The nighttime outage risks are in sharp contrast to daytime. Supply in daylight hours has been bolstered by nearly four-fold growth in solar capacity over the past five years, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Paris climate agreement pledge to curb carbon emissions. As of last April, solar boosted renewables' contribution to as much as 18% of India's generation in the middle of the day.

The strain comes after sundown, as coal-fired capacity has grown only 9% over the last five years.

India needs to expedite coal capacity addition to avert outages Widening demand-supply fault lines highlight the need to expedite coal capacity additions to avert outages in the next few years.

Construction of as many as 26 coal-fired units with a capacity of 16.8 GW has been delayed by more than a year, data from the Central Electricity Authority shows, with some plants facing delays of more than 10 years. Projects under construction are being stalled by local protests over environmental concerns, legal challenges over compensation for land acquisition, and availability of labour and equipment, according to officials at power plants.

Hydro and nuclear power capacity additions face tougher obstacles, as they are hobbled by lack of foreign investment and opposition from critics over safety and environmental issues, boding ill for power supply down the track.

Money laundering rules to apply to crypto trade: Govt

REUTERS

Mumbai, March 9: India's money laundering laws will apply to trade in cryptocurrencies, the federal government said in a notification dated March 7.

The exchange between virtual digital assets and fiat currencies, the exchange between one or more forms of virtual digital assets and the transfer of digital assets will be covered under money laundering laws, the notification said.

The safekeeping or administration of virtual digital assets and the participation in financial services related to the offer and sale of virtual digital assets will also be covered, the notification added.

India is yet to finalise legislation and regulations surrounding cryptocurrencies even as the country's central bank has cautioned against their use multiple times.

The Reserve Bank of India has said that cryptocurrencies should be banned as they are akin to a Ponzi scheme.

Extending India's money laundering rules to cryptocurrencies will give authorities greater authority in monitoring the transfer of these assets beyond the country's borders.

The Narendra Modi-led administration, as part of its leadership of the G-20 forum, has been pushing for a wider global agreement on dealing with the risks brought on by cryptocurrencies.

India vies with China over Russian crude, prices rise

Indian refiners mostly buy Russian oil on a delivered basis, with the seller arranging for insurance, freight and ship

REUTERS

Singapore, March 9: Private Indian refiners are jostling with independents in China for Russian ESPO crude loading in April, pushing prices higher after Moscow lowered exports of its flagship grade Urals, industry sources said.

China, which is set to import record volumes of Russian crude in March, typically sweeps up all of the ESPO crude exported from the Pacific port of Kozminno due to close proximity while sanctions on Russian oil have shrunk the pool of buyers.

However, for April, Indian refiners Reliance Industries Ltd and Nayara Energy have snapped up at least five of the about 33 ESPO crude cargoes due to low prices, four people familiar with the matter said.

That is up from one cargo for March delivery, its first since buying three for November 2022, ship-tracking data compiled by Kpler and Refinitiv showed. One of the sources said prices for April-loading ESPO crude to India were about \$5 a barrel below Dubai quotes on a delivered ex-ship (DES) basis.

While most cargoes are below the price cap imposed by G7 countries and the European Union, prices of Russian low sulphur oil purchased by India have risen above the \$80 a barrel cap due to rising demand. China has also been buying



ESPO at above the price cap level, according to Reuters calculations.

Indian companies are using non-dollar currencies to settle payment for certain niche Russian crudes and are avoiding use of Western services and banks to avoid sanctions.

Competition from India has narrowed discounts for April-loading ESPO shipments to about \$6.80 a barrel against June ICE Brent DES basis to northern China from \$8.50 a barrel last month for March-loading oil, three trading sources said.

Similar quality Murban crude from Abu Dhabi was traded at a premium of around \$3.30 a barrel to Dubai quotes on a free-on-board basis. In comparison, April-loading Murban crude is about \$9 a barrel more expensive than ESPO delivered to China and India, according to Reuters calculations.

Meanwhile, China's buying spree of ESPO continues as the country emerges from its zero-Covid regime, prompting a rebound in fuel demand from industry and the travel sector.

China's seaborne imports of Russian oil are set to hit a record of nearly 43 million barrels this month, including at least 20 million barrels of ESPO.

Sensex snaps 3-day winning run; falls 540 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 9: Equity benchmark Sensex declined nearly 540 points Thursday, pressured by heavy selling in index heavyweights Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finserv and ICICI Bank amid a sluggish trend in the global markets.

Besides, concerns over a sharp interest rate hike by the US Federal Reserve and a weak rupee against major currencies overseas further weighed on sentiment, traders said.

Snapping its three-day gaining streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex opened strong but came under se-

vere selling pressure to close 541.81 points or 0.90 per cent lower at 59,806.28. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty declined 164.80 points or 0.93 per cent to 17,589.60.

M&M was the top loser in the Sensex pack, skidding 3.31 per cent, followed by Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank, Maruti, Tata Motors and Tech Mahindra. On the other hand, Tata Steel, L&T, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank were among the gainers.

The rupee fell 7 paise to close at 82.02 (provisional) against the US dollar Thursday. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude



slipped 0.01 per cent to \$82.65 per barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets Thursday as they sold shares worth ₹561.78 crore. Among sectoral indices, auto

tanked 1.71 per cent, consumer durable went lower by 1.17 per cent, realty (1.08 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.05 per cent), and IT (0.96 per cent). Power, metal, industrial, utilities and capital goods were among the winners.

In the broader markets, the BSE midcap fell 0.55 per cent and the small-cap slipped 0.20 per cent.

Bourses in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Seoul settled in the red while Tokyo closed with gains. Equities in Europe were also trading with significant losses in mid-session deals. Equities on Wall Street closed mixed in the overnight session.

Vedanta launches 'Project Panchhi'

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Refinery, in Lanjigarh (Kalahandi, Odisha) March 8. Project Panchhi is Vedanta's innovative corporate recruitment drive which aims to employ 1000 girls from economically backward communities, across its diverse businesses in metals, mining, oil & gas situated pan-India. The target demography of this drive is to recruit girls from lower income families who are likely to opt out of pursuing further studies and a fulfilling career, owing to financial and social constraints.

Kalahandi: On the occasion of International Women's Day, Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, has launched 'Project Panchhi' at its Alumina

International Women's Day fete at Union Bank



on this occasion. Women employees were awarded for their excellent work in various fields. At the end of the programme, Holi festival was also celebrated. A detailed discussion was held about women employees' participation in the bank. It is worthwhile to mention here that in the 104 years history of Union Bank of India, a woman, A Manimekhalai joined as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the bank.

Bhubaneswar: Union Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Regional Office celebrated International Women's Day with a huge decorum in the bank. Satyaban Behera, Regional Head, Bhubaneswar Region, Ashok Kumar Mishra, Deputy Regional Head, Bhubaneswar Region and a large number of women employees from local branch and offices were present

OHPC celebrates International Women's Day

Bhubaneswar: International Women's Day was celebrated at Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Ltd. Dr Aruna Mohanty, President, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi graced the occasion as the chief guest. Amresh Kumar, Managing Director, PK Mohanty, Director (HR) & Ashish Kumar Mohanty, Director (operation) were present during the inaugural session of the programme and addressed the gathering. Aruna emphasized to celebrate womanhood every day. On the occasion, a one day workshop was organized by Tanvi Consultancy Services Pvt Ltd on the same day at the training centre. Ram K Sharma and Arunima Patra carried out interactive sessions on a variety of topics such as "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality", "Parenting & Counseling guidance for women" & "Celebrating Woman-hood".



Reliance brings back iconic Campa Cola of the 1970's

CAMPA COLA WAS A POPULAR SOFT DRINK BRAND IN THE 1970s AND 1980s BUT FIZZED OUT WITH THE ENTRY OF COCA-COLA AND PEPSICO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 9: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance re-launched the 50-year-old iconic beverage brand Campa Cola in a new contemporised avatar as it looks to ramp up its own consumer goods offering to take on competition from Adani, ITC and Unilever.

In January this year, Reliance Consumer Products Ltd, the fast-moving consumer goods arm of Reliance Retail, acquired a 50 per cent stake in Gujarat-based car-

bonated soft drinks and juice maker Sosyo Hajoori Beverages Pvt Ltd. It had previously acquired the Campa brand from Pure Drinks group for a reported ₹22 crore. And now, it has re-launched the Campa brand of beverages.

"The Campa portfolio will initially include Campa Cola, Campa Lemon and Campa Orange in the sparkling beverage category," the company said in a statement, adding the cold beverage portfolio will initially be available in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and will be



rolled out across the country in stages. Pure Drinks Group was the sole distributor of Coca-Cola in India from 1949 to the 1970s. It

launched its own brand Campa Cola in the 1970s, and soon became the market leader in the soft drinks segment. Later on, it introduced Campa Orange, the orange-flavoured aerated drink.

The firm, which had two bottling plants in Mumbai and Delhi, sold the beverages with the slogan 'The Great Indian Taste' but lost business in the 1990s with the opening up of the economy.

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL), the statement said, is bringing "back 'The Great Indian Taste' with Campa".

The re-launch of Campa is part of Ambani's bid to accelerate penetration into the nation's rapidly growing consumer goods market with Reliance's own versions of products, ranging from soap and

shampoo to cookies and cola.

Reliance Retail runs the country's largest network of brick-and-mortar stores with around 17,225 sites, selling everything from groceries to electronics. It already owns about two dozen consumer goods brands, including the Good Life and Best Farms ranges of staple foods, such as rice and other grains, Snac Tac snacks, Glimmer cosmetics, Yeah! fizzy drinks and fruit juice label Sosyo.

RCPL is the FMCG arm and a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL).

Speaking on the launch, RCPL spokesperson said, "By presenting Campa in its new avatar, we hope to inspire consumers across generations to embrace this truly iconic brand and trigger a new ex-

citement in the beverage segment. While older family members will have fond memories of the original Campa and cherish the nostalgia associated with the brand, younger consumers will love the crisp refreshing taste. With a rapidly evolving Indian market throwing up more consumption occasions, we are truly excited to bring back Campa, which is yet another bold step forward for our expanding FMCG business."

Five thirst-quenching pack sizes will be offered under the Campa range for several consumption occasions: a 200ml immediate consumption pack, 500ml and 600ml on-the-go sharing packs and 1,000ml and 2,000ml home packs. The company, however, did not indicate the pricing of Campa.

Khawaja ton props Australia

Mumbai Indians eves thrash Delhi Capitals

OPENER'S 14TH TEST CENTURY PUTS THE VISITORS IN A COMFORTABLE POSITION AS THEY REACH 255/4 AT STUMPS ON THE OPENING DAY OF THE FOURTH AND FINAL TEST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, March 9: All-round Mumbai Indians asserted their supremacy in the Women's Premier League with an eight-wicket thrashing of Delhi Capitals in a top of the table clash here Thursday.

Saika Ishaque (3/13), Issy Wong (3/10) and Hayley Matthews (3/19) led Mumbai Indians' charge with the ball to bundle out Delhi Capitals for a mere 105 in 18 overs.

With a small target to chase, Mumbai romped home to their third win in a row in 15 overs with captain Harmanpreet Kaur (11 n o) and Nat Sciver-Brunt (23 n o) taking them past the finish line.

Chasing 106, the opening pair of Yastika Bhatia (41, 32b, 8x4) and Hayley Matthews (32) knocked off 47 runs in the powerplay and shared 65 runs for the first wicket to ensure a big win for their team. For Delhi, it was their first loss of the season.

The first meeting between arguably the two best teams in the WPL turned out to be a damp squib. It was a day of collective failure with both bat and ball for the Meg Lanning-led Delhi. Lanning's 43 was the highest individual total of the innings while her deputy Rodrigues' scored 25.

Delhi, who had amassed totals in excess of 200 in both their matches, crumbled against Mumbai bowlers with the bat. Ishaque accounted for Lanning, Shafali Verma (2) and Rodrigues to take her wicket tally to nine in three matches. The only bright spot for Delhi was the 50-run stand for the fourth wicket between Lanning and Rodrigues, but once their resistance was broken, the Capitals slipped further.

BRIEF SCORES: Delhi Capitals Women 105 (Meg Lanning 43, Jemimah Rodrigues 25; Issy Wong 3/10, Saika Ishaque 3/13, Hayley Matthews 3/19) lost to Mumbai Indians Women 109/2 (Yastika Bhatia 41, Hayley Matthews 31; Tara Norris 1/4) by 8 wickets.



SAIKA ISHAQUE

MOONEY RULED OUT

MUMBAI: India all-rounder Sneha Rana was Thursday named captain of Gujarat Giants after Beth Mooney was ruled out of the remainder of the inaugural WPL owing to a calf injury. In Mooney's place, Gujarat Giants drafted in dynamic opener Laura Wolvaardt, who had recently played a key role for South Africa in the 2023 Women's T20 World Cup. Wolvaardt was the top scorer with three half-centuries from six matches as hosts South Africa reached the finals of the T20 World Cup, where they lost to Australia.



WATCHFUL KNOCK: Usman Khawaja celebrates his century in Ahmedabad, Thursday

BRIEF SCORES

AUSTRALIA 255/4
(Usman Khawaja 104 batting, Cameron Green 49 batting, Steve Smith 38, Travis Head 32; Mohammed Shami 2/65) vs India. Match to continue.

work in the first hour by playing an indiscreet shot. He tried to chip Ashwin over mid-on without reaching to the pitch of the delivery.

Ashwin had just altered the length slightly and deceived Head, who offered the easiest of catches to one of the world's best fielders, Jadeja. Head got a reprieve while batting on seven when wicket-keeper KS Bharath dropped a regulation catch off Umesh Yadav's bowling. Yadav, who usually invites criticism for his inconsistency, was once again erratic as he gave a lot of boundary balls.

The end from which Shami bowled, a lot of deliveries kept low and one such ball brought about the downfall of Marnus Labuschagne.

It was an off-cutter and Labuschagne wanted to play the square cut but dragged it back onto the stumps. But then Khawaja took over and made sure Australia had their best opening day of the series.

"I don't think I have ever smiled so much on getting a century, there was emotion in it. I have done two (Test) tours of India before (2013 and 2017). Carried the drinks for eight Test matches before I got a chance here. Throughout the middle of my career I got told I couldn't play spin and that's why I never got an opportunity to play in India. It's just nice to go out there and tick off a hundred in India which was something if you asked me five years ago if you told me that I would think you were crazy"

USMAN KHAWAJA

Ahmedabad, March 9: Usman Khawaja combined patience with grit to raise his 14th Test hundred (104 batting, 251b, 15x4) that guided Australia to a comfortable 255/4 as a keen contest between bat and ball marked the opening day of the fourth and final match, here Thursday.

After dominating the batters in the first three matches of the series, the Indian spinners struggled to trouble the Australians with the Motera track, as anticipated, turning out to be a better wicket.

Khawaja, Australia's best batter on the tour, was determination-personified throughout his six-hour stay. At stumps the Pakistan-born Khawaja had Cameron Green (49 batting, 64b, 8x4) for company.

As a southpaw, neither does Khawaja have the panache of someone like a David Warner nor the brute power of a Matthew Hayden, who was capable of executing slog sweeps fetching deliveries from wide outside the off-stump.

His game maybe pretty low on aesthetics but is highly impactful as he came across as a batter, who wouldn't try anything which is outside his comfort zone. Anything pitched on his legs was punished through the leg-side while the occasional cover drive would come out of the closet.

Otherwise, it was just playing the ball late and rocking on the back-foot, while whipping Ravichandran Ashwin (1/57) and Ravindra Jadeja (1/49) through the square-leg or mid-wicket region.

It was only fitting that an on-drive off Mohammed Shami (2/65), brought up what would be one of his most cherished Test hundreds that he celebrated with his now-customary leap in the air.

For someone, who faced racism

during his early years, with typical Asian stereotype jibes like 'Curry Muncher', life did make Khawaja mentally tough and he has shone through time and again during his second coming - be it Sydney, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Delhi or now in Ahmedabad.

It did help that there was no devil on the Motera track and with no significant help on offer, India's spin troika of Ashwin (1/57), Jadeja (1/49) and Axar Patel weren't as effective compared to first three games.

Save Shami's lethal reverse swing to get Peter Handscombe castled,

none of the other dismissals came off wicket-taking deliveries and could be attributed to lapse of concentration on part of batters.

It was a track where if one even got deceived in the air, the slowness off the surface ensured that playing on backfoot became second line of defence. Run scoring wasn't easy but surviving and slowly building an innings wasn't difficult either as Khawaja showed. Twice Australia lost back-to-back wickets but prior to that and after that, Khawaja remained a constant factor.

He had partnerships of 61 for

the opening stand with Travis Head (32), 79 for the third wicket Steve Smith (38) and another 103 for the fifth wicket with Green, who counter-punched towards the end of the day.

The run-rate of 2.83 would show that scoring wasn't very easy, save the first hour when Head hit Umesh Yadav for a flurry of boundaries. There is nothing in the track and Australia, if they apply themselves well, could post their best total of the series.

Head, in fact, must be feeling horrible as he undid all his good

DSPL-488



FIH HOCKEY PRO LEAGUE 2022/23

10 - 15 MARCH 2023

BIRSA MUNDA HOCKEY STADIUM
ROURKELA

INDIA vs GERMANY

7:00 PM, 10 MARCH

AUSTRALIA vs GERMANY

7:00 PM, 11 MARCH

INDIA vs AUSTRALIA

7:00 PM, 12 MARCH

INDIA vs GERMANY

7:00 PM, 13 MARCH

GERMANY vs AUSTRALIA

7:00 PM, 14 MARCH

INDIA vs AUSTRALIA

7:00 PM, 15 MARCH

WATCH LIVE ON



FANCODE

BOOK TICKETS ON

ticketgenie.in



OIPR-29001/13/0073/2223