



THOROUGH PROFESSIONAL
Actor Priyanka Chopra says she doesn't carry the baggage of success when she goes from one country to another
LEISURE | P2



POLICE PULL OUT
Pakistan court orders police to stop their operation outside former PM Imran Khan's residence in Lahore to arrest him
INTERNATIONAL | P10



SINDHU FALTERS AGAIN
PV Sindhu bows out of All England Championships losing to Zhang Yi Man of China in straight games
SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

Sextortionist Archana's husband gets HC bail

Cuttack: The Orissa High Court granted Wednesday conditional bail to Jagabandhu Chand, husband of sextortion case main accused Archana Nag. Chand got the bail regarding the complaint filed by Shradhanjali Behera at the Khandagiri police station. However, certain conditions have been put by the court while granting bail to Chand. He has been told by the court not to leave the state, not to influence witnesses and cooperate with the police who are investigating the case.

Relief for Lalu, wife in land-for-jobs case

New Delhi: Former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi and their daughter Misa Bharti were granted bail Wednesday by a CBI court in the land-for-jobs scam case. The court has fixed the next date for hearing March 29. Lalu arrived in a wheelchair in his first court appearance after a kidney transplant in Singapore three months ago. Lalu and Rabri are both former Chief Ministers of Bihar. He and some of his family members including son and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, have been accused of buying land at dirt-cheap price in exchange for jobs during the former's stint as Railway Minister. **P9**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



After Oscars, I have a feeling I can beat all those Kumars and Khans but I don't want to live in a concrete jungle

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	57555.90 ↓ 344.29
NIFTY	16972.15 ↓ 71.15
DOLLAR	82.14 ↑ ₹0.13
EURO	87.25 ↓ ₹1.01
GOLD	₹58,190 ↑ ₹707
SILVER	₹67,640 ↑ ₹684

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	28.0°C	28.4°C
TEMP MIN	21.2°C	22.5°C
Humidity	85%	80%
Rainfall	Nil	Light rain likely

Drivers' protest hits normal life

People stranded on many routes due to lack of buses while commercial vehicles stopped by protesters at many places in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, March 15: Normal life in many places across Odisha was hit hard Wednesday as a large number of drivers took to the streets across the state paralysing public and commercial transport. To press for their 10-point charter of demands, thousands of drivers of public and commercial vehicles launched an indefinite 'quit steering' protest. More than five lakh drivers are taking part in the agitation, officials said. The agitating drivers have been demanding pension after 60 years of age, death benefits, life insurance, social security, parking and toilet facilities all across Odisha. The drivers resorted to road blocks on most of the national highways, major roads and picketed at different places across the state including capital city Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bargarh, Deogarh, Koraput, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Angul and Dhenkanal.



IN AGGRESSIVE MOOD: Protesting drivers stop a commercial vehicle on NH-16 near Tamando in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

It should however, be stated that the strike called by the 'Odisha Driver Mahasangha' was not supported by private bus and truck owners, auto-rickshaw drivers and online cabs. However, very rarely was a bus or any other mode of public transport seen on the roads in the state capital. The protesters were also seen stopping commercial vehicles on National Highway-16 at Tamando, near here forcibly even though the association had earlier said that the agitation will be peaceful. Due to the protests, many passengers were stranded at bus stands in this city, Cuttack, Angul,

Balasure, Puri, Berhampur, Rourkela, Sambalpur and other district headquarters since early morning. "I arrived in Bhubaneswar this (Wednesday) morning and am waiting for a bus to go to my village Betanati in Mayurbhanj district. I do not know when bus services will resume," said a passenger at the Baramunda bus stand. A student planning to travel to Dhenkanal had a similar tale to tell at the Badambadi bus terminus in Cuttack. Representatives of the drivers' association said that they had no

option but to resort to strike as the Odisha government was not paying any heed to their demands despite repeated reminders. "To put pressure on the government over our long-pending demands, we have launched this peaceful protest. We are allowing all emergency service vehicles and schoolchildren and other people who are driving their own vehicles to move around freely," said Prasant Menduli, president of 'Odisha Driver Mahasangha'. "The state government had assured us that it will form a

committee to consider our demands when we were on strike the last time. But no action was taken. We will continue the strike till our demands are met," he said. Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu said, "A high-level committee will be set up to look into the demands of the drivers. The state government will certainly take positive steps to end the strike. We again appeal to the drivers to call off the strike as the Class-X examination is on." Meanwhile, the government has asked all district administrations

to prepare a contingency plan to prevent inconvenience to the public if the strike continues. In a separate development, the issue of drivers' strike came up in the Assembly too with the BJP and Congress MLAs expressing concern over the disruption of road transport services. Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Narasingha Mishra and Opposition (BJP) Chief Whip, Mohan Maji urged the government to resolve the matter and ensure the commencement of public transport at the earliest. **MORE P3**

2nd 'spy' pigeon caught in state

Astarang, March 15: A pigeon with rings and other materials tied to its legs was rescued from Nanpur village under Astarang police limits here Wednesday. Sources said that it could be another 'spy' pigeon which has been caught in the state. Sources informed that Rupan Pati spotted the pigeon on his terrace around 5.00pm and informed the police. "The pigeon has rings, brass and plastic pieces on its legs. While 'Ready VSP DN' has been embossed on one of the rings, another has '31' mentioned on it," said Astarang IIC Panchanan Parida. "We have asked Pati to keep the bird with him till Thursday afternoon, when a special team of Puri police will reach his place and carry out a probe to check if the rings carry some 'special messages,'" Parida informed.

Under-construction bridge collapses

Kendrapara, March 15: Labourers engaged in construction of a bridge on Gobari river at Tinimuhani Square in this district, had a close shave after an under-construction bridge collapsed Wednesday morning. Those that were working in the vicinity of the bridge ran for their lives as large portions of cement slabs suddenly came off. Sources said, the bridge is being constructed over the southern part of the Gobari river. Once completed it will serve as a second by-pass road and connect the new Kendrapara bus terminal with the Chati bridge at Tinimuhani. Currently traffic snarls have become a headache for commuters for which the decision to construct a new bridge was taken. The construction of the bridge is being done by ARSS Infrastructures Ltd under the supervision of the public works



department (PWD). Sources said that fault in construction led to the collapse of the bridge. They informed that within 14 hours of the girder being placed on the pillars, the bridge collapsed. The sources also said that usually 50-60 labourers are present at the construction site. Luckily that was not the case Wednesday otherwise there would have been major loss of lives. District Collector, Amrit Rituraj ruled out any injuries or casualties in the mishap. He asserted that the main structure of the bridge did not suffer any damage. "A technical team will visit the spot and conduct an inquiry. Action will be taken against those responsible for lapses, if any," Rituraj said.

BCI opens doors for foreign lawyers, firms

Global companies like Latham & Watkins and DLA Piper will now be able to set up offices in India under the new rules

New Delhi, March 15: The Bar Council of India (BCI) has agreed to permit foreign lawyers and law firms to practice in the country in a restricted, well-controlled and regulated manner on the principle of reciprocity, which would be mutually beneficial for lawyers from India. The BCI has also come out with the Bar Council of India Rules for Registration and Regulation of Foreign Lawyers and Foreign Law Firms in India, 2022 to enable international lawyers and arbitration practitioners to ply their trade in the country. As per the rules, foreign lawyers and law firms will be entitled to practice only in non-litigious matters. The three broad areas which have been opened up for them include foreign law, arbitration matters, and international legal issues. According to BCI, opening up of law practice in India to foreign lawyers in the field of practice of foreign law; diverse international legal issues in non-litigious matters and in international arbitration cases would go a long way in helping legal profession/domain grow in India to the benefit of lawyers from the country. "It is noteworthy that the standards of Indian lawyers in proficiency in law is comparable with the international standards and the legal fraternity in India will not be at a disadvantage" **BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA**



well controlled and regulated manner on the principle of reciprocity as it would be mutually beneficial for lawyers from India and abroad," the BCI said in a statement. Foreign lawyers or firms however, would not be able to practice in India without registration with the BCI. The BCI said registration fee for a foreign lawyer is \$25,000, and for a law firm it is \$50,000. "The registration done under Rule 7 shall be valid for a period of 5 (five) years only and the foreign lawyer and/or Law Firm would be required to renew it by filing an application for renewal in Form B within six months before the date on which such validity expires," the BCI informed. The BCI also said that foreign lawyers would be allowed to practice on transactional work/corporate work such as joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, intellectual property matters, drafting of contracts and other related matters on reciprocal basis. Foreign lawyers or foreign law firms can also open up offices in India and enter into a partnership with one or more foreign lawyers or foreign law firms registered in India.

Burning midnight oil not helpful for students

LACK OF REQUISITE AMOUNT OF SLEEP OFTEN CREATES ANXIETY AND STRESS AND THAT MAY HAMPER A STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 15: Exams are a period of acute stress. In fact if one takes into account the life of a student in the 21st century, it can safely be said that they are always at stress. Remember the movie 3 Idiots and how students react to stress! From Class-VIII till graduation and even after that, a student's life is all about examinations and doing well in those. Some students get extremely stressed and some are able to cope well, remain healthy and perform well in their academics and career. So what is it that actually helps the student to reach that potential?



According to researchers, students who sleep properly before the exams usually do well than their compatriots who study burning the midnight oil. Researchers point out that most students do not count sleep as part of health. In fact, it comes way down in the list of priorities and most students pride themselves for not sleeping during the exams. A large chunk of this idea has

been created by a false belief system which states that the student must revise the exam portion the previous day as part of last minute preparations. For whatever may be the reason, a good night sleep not only the day before the exam, but also one month prior to exam is essential, according to the researchers. But why is sleep so essential for students and why do researchers assert that on average a good eight-nine hours of restful sleep helps students? This is because that amount of sleep is required for optimal functioning of the body and mind. Good sleep stabilises various facets of the body like blood sugar, insulin level, cholesterol, leptin,

ghrelin and cortisol levels. These hormones are essential for proper functioning of the body. However, lack of sleep affects all these issues and weakens both the mind and body of students appearing for the exams. The students lose their retentive powers and hence they cannot do well in the exams, the scientists said in their report. Increase in cortisol level also interferes with cognition and memory leading to poor recall, confusion and forgetfulness. These create anxiety, nervousness, stress and fear in the mind of the student. And with an anxious mind, it is impossible for a student to perform well in the exams, the researchers said.

leisure



PARIS SHARES 'TERRIBLE SECRET' IN HER RECENTLY RELEASED MEMOIR

Socialite Paris Hilton, in her book *Paris: The Memoir*, has opened up about the 'terrible secret' of younger days. Sharing the same she recalled, "I saw a late-model SUV idling at the top of the driveway. I climbed into the passenger seat. The teacher pulled me into his arms and kissed me."

LINDSAY LOHAN IS EXPECTING HER FIRST CHILD WITH BADER

American actress and singer Lindsay Lohan will soon experience 'Labour Pains' as the Hollywood star has revealed she is expecting her first baby with her husband financial advisor Bader Shammam. After taking to social media to share the news, the mum-to-be was quickly flooded with messages of support reports *Mirror.co.uk*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will pay attention to the voice of your inner self today. This will help you implement all your plans perfectly. You will not only be jovial, but you will also not let disappointments cow you down. Ganesh says not only today, but you can summon this quality whenever you like.

TAURUS
The competitive streak in you might relent today as you look for a lifestyle that is more relaxed and laid-back. The rat race is tiring and you will feel the urge to get away, far from the maddening crowd and the never-ending routine. Matters pertaining to your home may also occupy some of your time today, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
Along with your house, family and business matters, you will also be busy with your social obligations today. You will be afforded the co-operation of those around you. New ways of thinking will flourish within you. Make full use of the opportunities you get today, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Ganesh says that this will be a unique and auspicious day for you. You will get clue and hints of this from morning itself. A religious ceremony in the house, and thereby invitation to guests is indicated.

LEO
Few and rare are the days when creativity takes flight. After all, even Picasso couldn't make a masterpiece every day. So make the most of this auspicious day, urges Ganesh, during which your imagination peaks and touches new heights. Especially those in the media shall hit upon a new level in their imaginative capabilities.

VIRGO
Today is a mixed bag of values and pragmatism, says Ganesh, and if there were to be a competition for the most humanitarian person, you would be likely to win hands down. You would do well to make plans to increase your productivity.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today you will wish to spend more time with your beloved instead of your friends. This is a good day to express your innermost feelings and get varied opportunities. This is a good time to propose to your beloved and give them a happy surprise.

SCORPIO
It seems, the book, 'How to win friends and influence people' has left a great impact on your mind, bringing about a lot of change in your practical life too. As you switch to a new business venture, your efforts will be appreciated. In short, you are a personality that every one would take a note of.

SAGITTARIUS
The pressing needs of your loved ones call for extra attention today. A small party at home may see a group of friends and relatives dine together. This may find you in a chatty mood. Ganesh says an intimate tête-à-tête with your better half would fare you well.

CAPRICORN
Unless you be calm and patient, your tendency to act impulsively will get you into hot water, warns Ganesh. Your image on the minds of your colleagues and bosses will remain intact, though. You will keep on climbing up the ladder and come closer to success, but don't get too excited if everything is turning out as per the plan.

AQUARIUS
It is time to make addition in your possessions. Book your dream house or buy a vehicle, as today is a favourable day to do so. You, however, need to consider your financial resources before deciding anything because it will take a major chunk out of your savings, warns Ganesh.

PISCES
You will have frequent mood swings today but you will still manage to fix a work related goal. Your mood will be better if you focus on work. You might feel stressed about some personal matter, but Ganesh says it is not a matter to worry.

PRIYANKA RESPONDS TO SRK'S HOLLYWOOD COMMENT

'Comfortable is boring to me'



Mumbai: Priyanka Chopra Jonas has been able to achieve something that no Hindi film star has been able to – to make a name globally and become one of the first Indian-American stars.

Her global stardom has prompted many actors and actresses to address the topic of entering the American entertainment industry and recently something similar was asked to superstar Shah Rukh Khan.

While the latter maintained that he is 'comfortable' with Indian films, Priyanka Chopra Jonas reacted to it, adding that she is looking for some-

thing that is more than 'just comfort'. "Comfortable is boring to me. I am not arrogant, I am self-assured. I know what I am doing when I walk onto a set. I don't need the validation of executives. I am willing to take auditions, I am willing to work. I do not carry the baggage of my success in one country when I walk into another country," *The Matrix Resurrections* actress responded.

She further maintained how it is professionalism that matters to her more than anything else, when it comes to her work. "I am very professional and I take pride in it. My father was in the military and he taught me not to take the value of what you have been given for granted," she added.

AGENCIES

Taapsee shares chilling details of 1984 riots

Mumbai: It has been close to 40 years since the 1984 riots rocked Delhi but the sad event continues to haunt people. One among them is actress Taapsee Pannu, whose family went through an ordeal when the riots broke out. Although the actress was born in 1987, she heard about her Sikh family's struggle during the riots when they were attacked by the majority community.

Sharing the incident Taapsee said, "My parents weren't married then. My mother used to live in East Delhi. My father used to live in Shakti Nagar. Everything I know about that time, I've heard from them."

Going into some chilling details, the *Pink* actress added, "When people came with swords, and petrol bombs, they spotted our Jonga

parked in front of our house. They knew that we were the only Sikh family in the neighbourhood. Our family turned off all the lights and hid as

there was no point running. The house where we used to stay at, four families lived on rent. The others were all Hindus. They protected us when the rioters came." Taapsee added, "Our neighbours told them that we'd left town. They burned the car down. But we survived, because the neighbours protected us."

AGENCIES

PANCHAMVEDA'S DRAMA FEST: DAY III



A scene from Odia play *Punashcha Abolkara* staged on the third evening of a four-day 19th state level theatre festival being organised by Panchamveda at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar. Written by Sitesh Tripathy and directed by Darpanarayan Sehi, the drama was presented by Odisha Natya Sangh, a confederation of over 150 theatre troupes of Odisha.

OP PHOTO

Rekha calls Rani 'Bengal Tigress'

Mumbai: Veteran actress Rekha was in awe of Rani Mukerji's power-packed performance in *Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway*. The veteran star said that Rani has outdone herself in the role of the 'eternal mother' and has depicted all the 'faces of Durga Maa.'

She said: "*Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway*, was both exhilarating and heart-wrenching, was sitting at the edge of my seat from the word go. It was an absolute delight to watch the dynamic performance of this Bengal Tigress, of a mother fight tooth and nail for her kids. This film is for the world to see what Mother India is all about!"

The *Umrao Jaan* actress added: "This time around Rani has outdone herself in the role of the Eternal mother depicting all the faces of Durga Maa 'the ultimate Mother', an intense performance worth watching countless times! She walks through fire, straight into our hearts! What a pleasure to see the actor and character melt into each other!"

Directed by Ashima Chibber the movie, slated to release March 17, talks about the life of an immigrant mother that fights against all odds to win back the custody of her children.

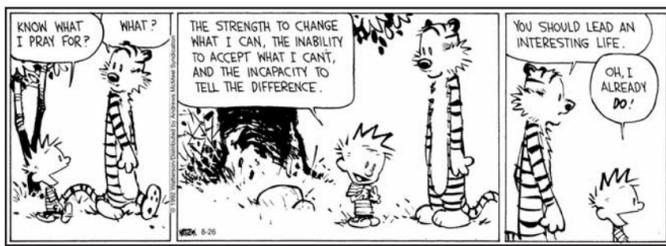
IANIS



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

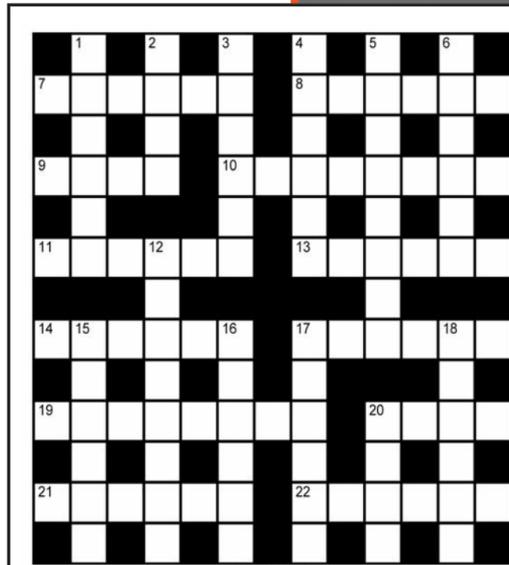


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

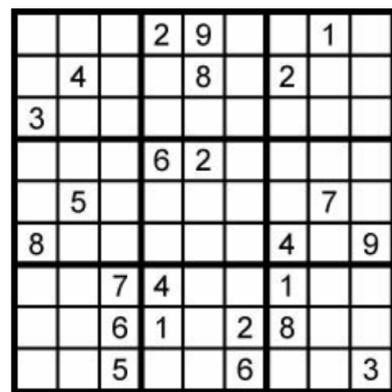


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- Across**
- 7 Tourist equipment
 - 8 Go along with
 - 9 Groundless
 - 10 Hideous
 - 11 Laid-back
 - 13 Drifted rhythmically
 - 14 Neckwear
 - 17 Simple and provincial
 - 19 African anteater
 - 20 Irritate
 - 21 Carom
 - 22 Fish group
 - 5 Mythical Greek hero
 - 6 Extolment
 - 12 Spouse, usually (5,3)
 - 15 Justification
 - 16 Take a cruise
 - 17 Devil-may-care
 - 18 Eskimo domiciles
 - 20 Rhine tributary
- Down**
- 1 Table-tennis bat
 - 2 Yield
 - 3 Edible nut
 - 4 Auto need

SUDOKU

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

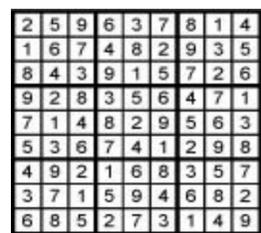


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

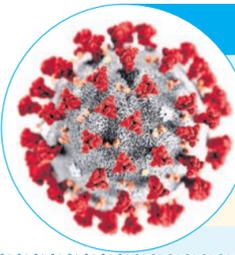


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



AWARENESS IS KEY
Dignitaries during the state-level World Consumer Rights Day celebration by Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER			
	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,18,27,072	65,49,08,854	68,13,670
India	4,46,91,956	4,41,56,970	5,30,789
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



BERHAMPUR



CUTTACK



BHUBANESWAR



SAMBALPUR

DRIVERS ON WARPATH: Vehicle drivers under the banner of Odisha Driver Ekata Mahamancha, Wednesday, staged statewide agitation demanding fulfilment of their 10-point charter of demands. The agitators were seen stopping commercial vehicles at various places

MLAs pitch for salary hike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 15: Amid rising prices of commodities, MLAs cutting across party lines Wednesday urged Speaker BK Arukha to give a ruling to the government to introduce a Bill in the House for raising the salary and pension of sitting members and ex-MLAs.

The issue was raised during Zero Hour by Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Narasingha Mishra which was supported by Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Majhi of the BJP and two BJD members – Amar Prasad Satpathy and Padmanabha Behera.

A committee headed by Satpathy has already submitted a report on a proposal to hike the salary and pension of MLAs and ex-legislators, Mishra said, adding that the state government should consider it and table a Bill so that the House can pass it.

He cited the high inflation rate, particularly the increasing price of petrol and diesel, which added to the "hardships of members to perform their responsibilities".

The travelling allowance of the members should also be raised in view of the price rise of fuel, Mishra said.

According to the existing salary structure, only ₹5,000 is being provided to appoint an assistant, which is grossly inadequate, he claimed.

"On behalf of all the members, I urge the Speaker to give a ruling to the government to table a Bill in this regard," Mishra said.

Congress whip Taraprasad Bahinipati also made a similar demand.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Majhi supported the proposal to introduce a Bill at the earliest as the members and ex-MLAs face difficulties for their day-to-day expenses.

Satpathy said, "I have submitted the report and the Parliamentary Affairs



IN THE HOUSE

A committee headed by BJD legislator Amar Satpathy has submitted a report on a proposal to hike the salary and pension of MLAs and ex-legislators

Minister will take a call on the issue as members feel that an increase in salaries is needed."

The Odisha government had raised the salaries of MLAs and ministers by over 50 per cent in 2017.

Meanwhile, sources said the committee has sent a proposal to the Speaker recommending that an MLAs salary should be hiked from ₹1 lakh a month to ₹2.5 lakh.

Currently, each MLA gets a package of ₹1 lakh, which includes ₹35,000 as salary and ₹65,000 as allowances.

This excludes a daily allowance of ₹1,500 per day while the House is in session, besides the travel reimbursement

for attending the sessions. Notably, retail inflation dipped marginally to 6.44 per cent in February, mainly on account of a slight easing in prices of food and fuel items though it remained above the Reserve Bank's comfort level of 6 per cent for the second month in a row.

As per the government data released Monday, the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation was at 6.52 per cent in January and 6.07 per cent in February 2022.

2,823 schools shut for poor enrolment

Bhubaneswar: The state government has shut down 2,823 schools having enrolment of 20 or less than 20 students, School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Sameer Ranjan Dash said in the Assembly, Wednesday. Replying to a question of Gajapati MLA K Narayan Rao (BJP), the minister said the government has approved consolidation of 4,757 schools having enrolment of 20 or less than 20 students. So far, as per the policy of rationalisation and consolidation of schools, 2,823 satellite schools have been merged with the nearby lead schools, he said. The highest number of 214 schools were consolidated in Ganjam district, followed by Cuttack (180) Kandhamal (173), Koraput (164) Mayurbhanj (157) Jagatsinghpur (144), Jajpur (134) Bargarh (133) Sundargarh (125), Sambalpur (115), Kendrapara (109) and Dhenkanal (105). Though 193 such schools have been identified, not a single school has been consolidated in Puri district, the minister said. After merger, the teachers have been engaged in the lead schools and special emphasis is given for study of the students of the closed schools, he added.

CENTRE NOD FOR 14 BRIDGES

NEW DELHI: The Rural Development Ministry has approved construction of 14 bridges in Nuapada and Kalahandi, BJP MP Basanta Panda said. He said the ministry has approved ₹42.63 lakh for construction of a bridge in Komana block of Nuapada. Panda further said ₹341.05 lakh has been approved for construction of 13 bridges at Bhawanipatna, Dharmagarh, Golamunda, Jaipatna, Karlamunda, Kesinga, M Rampur, Naria and Thuamul Rampur in Kalahandi district. The ministry has approved construction of 57 bridges in the state, Panda said.

LOCAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION MEETING
PROJECT: "LEADING LIGHTS WHERE GRIDS END"
Agenda: Discuss Project Design, Impacts and Benefits of the Proposed
An initiative by SDG13 Ventures that aims to reduce electricity consumption in the rural households of India by introducing more energy efficient LED Lamps to replace incandescent light bulbs. SDG13 Ventures will register the Project in the Verra VCS Registry.
Venue: Avichal Ventures, Plot No. 111, Rudrapur, Pahala, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
Date: 21st March 2023 Time: 11 A.M. to 12.30 P.M.
Kindly RSVP at: sdg13ventures@gmail.com

CM for top rank in fish production



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 15: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday called upon the newly-recruited assistant fisheries officers (AFOs) to work in a mission mode to help the state catapult to number one from fourth position in fish production. He said this at an orienta-

tion programme of 115 newly-recruited AFOs held at state convention centre of Lok Seva Bhawan here Wednesday. Speaking to the newly-recruited officers virtually, Patnaik said, "Assistant Fisheries Officers should act as facilitators and encourage people to take up fisheries to boost their incomes." Stating that Odisha is currently at

fourth position in the country in fish production, Naveen called upon the new recruits to work in a mission mode to help the state reach number one position in fish production. Speaking extensively on 5T initiative, he said, "The mandate of 5T provides for transformational changes in the state following the elements of teamwork, technology, transparency and time. It allows you to work smart by using technology to reach out to people faster and provide better solutions in a transparent manner."

"We have to aspire for transformational changes if we want to bring our state to a pivotal position," he added. Speaking on the growth of

fisheries in the state, he said, "Aquaculture is a leading sector in upgrading the socio-economic life of people in rural areas by contributing to food and nutritional security, enhanced income and livelihood opportunities. In the last two decades, Odisha has witnessed substantial growth in fisheries sector, with almost four-fold increase in fish production. The state has produced nearly 10 lakh tonne fish in last financial year."

The state has also seen 12-fold rise in seafood export during the same period, he added. He congratulated all the new officers and wished them success in their professional life. Speaking on the occasion, Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Fisheries and Animal Research Development Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain said, "This sector has huge potential to multiply farmers' income. The joining of new officers will make the department more vibrant."

'ବାଲ୍ ଆଧାର'

ଶିଶୁ ଜନ୍ମ ପରେ ପରେ ପଞ୍ଜିକରଣ ସହ ଆଧାର କାର୍ଡ

୧୬ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୨୦୨୩ ଠାରୁ ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ

BAAL AADHAAR

To Locate Nearest Aadhaar Centre SCAN

AADHAAR CARD FOR MINORS

ଜନ୍ମ ପଞ୍ଜିକରଣ ଓ ଜନ୍ମ ସାଂଘିକ କାର୍ଡ ପ୍ରଥମ ଅଧିକାର

ଆଧାର କାର୍ଡ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସରକାରୀ ସେବା ପାଇବା ସହଜ ହୁଏ

ଆଧାର ପଞ୍ଜିକରଣ ପାଇଁ ମା' କିମ୍ବା ବାପା କୌଣସି ଜଣକର ମୋବାଇଲ୍ ନମ୍ବର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ

ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଶିଶୁର ବାୟୋମେଟ୍ରିକ୍ ଅନିବାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ, ମା' ବାପା କୌଣସି ଜଣକ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଧାର ଥିବା ଜରୁରୀ

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ଆଧାର ସଂଯୁକ୍ତ ଜନ୍ମ ପ୍ରମାଣପତ୍ର ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ପାଇଁ ଶିଶୁ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଥିବା ଚିକିତ୍ସାଳୟର ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ସହ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ।

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

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Over 2,000 RLBs lack internet connectivity

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 15: At least 2,486 Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) in the state of Odisha are without internet connectivity, the Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj noted and requested the Union government to take concrete steps for providing internet connectivity in all RLBs.



The Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj noted that there are 6,794 Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) in Odisha and out of them 4,308 have internet connectivity

The committee in its report noted that there are 6794 RLBs in Odisha and out of them 4308 RLBs have internet connectivity. The committee observed that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj aims at 'Digitization of Gram Panchayats' by providing broadband connectivity to more than 2.55 lakh GPs of the country in collaboration.

bodies have active internet connection as on January 21 out of 2,71,102 rural local bodies even though 1.92 lakh Gram Panchayats have been made service ready," the committee noted.

It requested the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to take steps to make all the 1.92 lakh RLBs service ready to have active internet connection during 2023-24 and to connect all GPs with BroadBand connectivity by 2024-25.

Raj has informed the committee that it is working with the Ministries of Telecom and IT to provide internet connectivity to RLBs and the target date to reach to all the panchayats is 2024-25. The ministry also informed that in the hilly areas, Northeast areas, and in J&K it will take around 2025 to reach through BharatNet.

"We hope that in the next six months we will make substantial progress in this regard," the ministry informed.

The ministry of Panchayati



UP IN ARMS: Members of Nikhila Odisha Asha Karmi Sangha staged a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, seeking fulfilment of their various demands, Wednesday

165 students awarded scholarship by XIM Univ

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 15: The XIM University, under its scholarship programme for the meritorious and academically outstanding students, awarded scholarship to 165 students for the undergraduate programme Wednesday. The University spent around ₹1.57 crore for this cause this year. The students were selected from among thousand students across eight schools having ten undergraduate courses.

with the academic deans, faculty and staff members of the university.

Welcoming the guests, faculty, and staff members along with the students, PK Mohanty, Academic Dean, School of Commerce, XIM University, congratulated the awardees for their academic distinction.

The chief guest Sarangi applauded the University's commendable initiative to promote education and congratulated the student awardees.

XIM University's UG degree has a globally aligned curriculum with a wide variety of courses and lays a strong foundational base for students to accomplish their career aspirations.

The university, through its scholarship programme, offers a platform for the deserving students to continue their education without any financial constraints. Scholarships help empower students with financial resources to excel in their life.

Govt claims 98% of forest fires doused, task force constituted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 15: Opposition BJP Wednesday staged a walkout from the Assembly as Odisha Forest minister claimed that the state government has doused 98 per cent of fire incidents in forests and is committed to ensure protection of flora and fauna in different jungles.

The state government's claim was made by Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister PK Amat who was participating in a debate on admissibility of an adjournment motion notice on the forest fire issue. The minister said that the state government has set up a special technical cell and constituted a task force as part of efforts to extinguish the forest fires. As per their recommendation, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been issued by the government to control forest fires in

different areas, he said. Amat said 339 teams deployed for extinguishing forest fires have been provided with vehicles, fire blowers and safety equipment.

Stating that as many as 22,787 hectares of land including forest were hit by forest fire by March 13, 2023, the minister said the forest officials have been able to douse jungle blaze in 98 per cent of places. He said of the 22,787 hectares of land, 4,563 hectares was not forest area which is 20 per cent of the total area affected by forest fire.

Amat said that there was no rainfall since October last year and forest fire was mostly "man-made."

The minister blamed the BJP for deducting funds under Forest

Fire Prevention and Management Scheme. While the state should receive ₹72 crore between 2018 and 2023, it received only 26.3 crore. "Despite fund cuts, we have been able to douse 98 per cent of forest fire," Amat claimed which irked the BJP members.

BJP members Mohan Majhi and Bhaskar Madehi and Mukesh Mahaling accused the state of telling lies in the House. "Had the state doused 98 per cent of fire, how the fire incidents take place almost on daily basis," Mahaling said. Congress MLA Suresh Routray alleged that there is no effort from the state to douse the forest fire which is evident from the Forest Survey of India data.

Nabard's initiatives in SHGs promotion laudable: Sujata



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 15: Mission Shakti is socially emancipating through lending of ₹50,000 crore loan by 2025 to boost the livelihood activities of rural women. Department of Mission Shakti Commissioner-Cum-Secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan said while addressing an event organised by Nabard regional office to celebrate International Women's Day at a City hotel recently. The theme of the event was 'Embrace Equity'.

entrepreneurs participated from 21 districts who transformed themselves into 'Change Agents' and contributed for the overall development of the society. 21 participants including six lady bank officers were felicitated for their outstanding work in the field of micro enterprise development and livelihood promotion.

Nabard Regional Office Chief General Manager C Udayabhaskar shared in detail various support schemes for empowerment of rural women through MEDPs, LEDPs, SHGs, JLGs, FPOs, OFPOs and Wadi among others. He stressed on the need to triple the dosage of credit to women entrepreneurs and farmers.

Namrita Chahal, Chairperson, The FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) stressed upon current status of branding and marketing of SHG products and exploration of various routes for marketing opportunities for better returns. Nibedita Pani, Director, PGIMER & Capital Hospital, underlined the need for women health, nutrition, maternal mortality, disparity in wages and engage in unpaid activities.

In the event, 100 women micro-

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AFFIDAVIT

I, Smt. Golap Mohanty, W/o Kailash Chandra Mohanty of Village / P.O.- Ichhapur, P.S. - Badamba, Dist.- Cuttack that my registered sale deed on dtd. 22.05.2010 bearing RSD No. 10421000783 in SRO, Baramba was missing somewhere, which I couldn't find it out. It is a information for any Govt. or competent authority.

I, Sekh Noorallam, S/o SK Irfan, At- Nabipur, P.O./P.S.- Kakatpur, Dist.- Puri, 752108 declare by this Affidavit No. 46, dated 3.3.2023 that now onwards I shall be known as SK Noorallam for all future purposes.

LOST

I, Prasanta Kumar Patra have lost the land patta of Madhapur Mouza, Dist.- Boudh vide Plot No.347/764, 347/762 and Khata No.40/81, 40/77 while I was travelling to HDFC Bank, Boudh Branch. If somebody found please contact : 9777845146.

AIIMS Bhub observes World Glaucoma Week

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 15: AIIMS Bhubaneswar Ophthalmology department organised a programme here Wednesday, as part of its World Glaucoma Week observance, to create awareness about Glaucoma - a blinding disease.

Eminent doctors of the organisation participated in the awareness discussions and informed about the facilities for the treatment of glaucoma available at AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

Speaking on the occasion, AIIMS Bhubaneswar executive director Ashutosh Biswas said, "Of the 78 million Glaucoma patients world-



wide, 16 million reside in India. At least four to five cases of glaucoma are detected in every 100 patients visiting the eye outpatient department of AIIMS Bhubaneswar and the disease is mostly at its final stage during the time of de-

tection." People over 40 years of age having family history of glaucoma or those with problems of diabetes and hypertension are at maximum risk getting this chronic disease, Biswas informed.

Energy transition plan discussed

Bhubaneswar: A meeting of the State Level Steering Committee on Energy Transition was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Pradeep Jena Wednesday to discuss the plan for energy transition. Additional Chief Secretary, Energy department Nikunja Bihari Dhal outlined the agendas for discussion. During the presentation, Dhal said that a holistic plan is being prepared covering all the forms of energy like electricity, petrol, diesel, gas and other sources. The plan will cover the aspects of increasing the share of clean energy in the energy supply mix. The plan will provide actionable inputs for energy transition in various departments to achieve overall energy transition. This plan covers energy supply and demand across various sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, industries, transport, urban development, tourism and others. The Chief Secretary directed all the departments to prepare comprehensive plans and their vision statements with regard to energy transition within a month. He further suggested for creation of a dedicated team to support various departments in this exercise as clean energy is the need of the hour.

20 Swabhiman ALCs launched

Bhubaneswar: Fakir Mohan University, in association with Rotary Club of Balasore, Tuesday, launched 20 Swabhiman Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) in Balasore and Bhadrak districts. The project is being implemented as part of the Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) which aims at eradicating illiteracy completely from India. The event was graced by the presence of the Vice-Chancellor of Fakir Mohan University Santosh Kumar Tripathy, who was the chief guest and addressed the gathering comprising teachers, people from surrounding villages, NSS volunteers, and Rotarians from all across India. In his address, Tripathy emphasised the importance of education in transforming lives and communities. He praised the initiative taken by the Rotary Club of Balasore and FM University to launch the Swabhiman Adult Learning Centres.

Mild fever helps clear infections: Study

It may be better to let a mild fever run its course instead of automatically reaching for medication, new research suggests.



The research showed that natural fever offers "an integrative response that not only activates defences against infection, but also helps control it"

DANIEL BARREDA | IMMUNOLOGIST

Researchers from the University of Alberta found that untreated moderate fever helped fish clear their bodies of infection rapidly, controlled inflammation and repaired damaged tissue. The research showed that natural fever offers "an integrative response that not only activates defences against infection, but also helps control it", said lead author immunologist Daniel Barreda from the varsity. The study, published in the journal eLife, found that fever helped to clear the fish of infection in about seven days - half the time it took for those animals not allowed to exert fever. The health advantages of nat-

Fever also helped to shut down inflammation and repair tissues that had been injured. "We let nature do what nature does, and in this case it was very much a positive thing," Barreda said. Moderate fever is self-resolving, meaning that the body can both induce it and shut it down naturally without medication, he explained. "NSAIDs take away the dis-

comfort felt with fever, but you're also likely giving away some of the benefits of this natural response." The study helps shed light on the mechanisms that contribute to the benefits of moderate fever, which "has been evolutionarily conserved across the animal kingdom for 550 million years", Barreda said. "Every animal examined has this biological response to infection." Some species, such as fish, reptiles and insects, will even risk predation and decrease their reproductive success to move to temperatures in their environments that bring on natural fever. "So the big question is, if animals will go to these great lengths, why do we take medication at the first signs of a fever?"

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One more jumbo carcass found in North Ghumusar

2ND SUCH DEATH IN 2 DAYS; 7 ELEPHANTS HAVE DIED IN 7 MONTHS UNDER THIS FOREST DIVISION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhanjanagar, March 15: Two days after the death of a tusker, forest officials have found another decomposed carcass of a female elephant in a forest of Mujagarh range under North Ghumusar forest division here in Ganjam district, Wednesday.

It is difficult to ascertain the reason behind the animal's death as the carcass has decomposed to a great extent. The elephant bore several injury marks and it was found to have bled and defecated before its death. Forest officials suspect that the animal may have died due to a fight among the herd members.

Death of the pachyderm has sparked concern as at least eight elephants have died in Ganjam district in the last eight months, including seven in North Ghumusar division due to different reasons.

Sources said that the carcass of a tusker was recovered near the Jhilimili minor irrigation project under Mujagarh forest range, Monday. The tusker was suspected to have died due to poisoning. Forest officials collected its viscera and



were preparing to send it to OUART in Bhubaneswar when they were informed about the death of another female elephant.

The female elephant was found dead at Tiliki forest on the Ganjam-Kandhamal district border in North Ghumusar forest division, an official said.

Forest officials rushed to the spot and launched an investigation after seizing the carcass of the deceased female elephant. CCF (Wildlife) Manoj V Nayyar, regional chief conservator of forests (RCCF) Prasant Kumar Mishra, DFO Sudarshan Behera, his counterpart in RCCF office RR Pattnaik, ACF Bikram Dev Pattanik, Mujagarh forest ranger Bimbadhar

Sahu, Jagannathprasad ranger Umakant Das, honorary wildlife warden Shulapani Satpathy, former wildlife warden Suresh Swain and Anupam Banerjee reached the spot and took stock of the jumbo death.

The age of the animal was assumed to be around 30 years, and the cause of its death could be ascertained only after post-mortem examination, said divisional forest officer (DFO) Sudarshan Behera. Later, they held a review meeting, while a joint task force team from Bhubaneswar visited the spot and conducted a probe. Later, a post-mortem was conducted and the carcass was buried at the spot.

Exams cancelled as miscreants ransack pvt school premises

POST NEWS NETWORK

Beguniapada, March 15: Authorities of a private school had to cancel their annual examination, Wednesday after miscreants strayed into the school premises at Kodala in Ganjam district and ransacked its building, late Tuesday night.

The incident has been reported from Prima Public School at Kodala in Ganjam district, Wednesday. The miscreants strayed into the school premises and broke the glass pane of windows and the amusement materials of the students. The incident has spread shockwaves in the area and drawn flak from various quarters.

The matter came to light after the school opened for examinations, Wednesday. Shocked over the development, principal Amiya Kumar Das lodged a complaint at the Kodala police station, Wednesday. He also cancelled the annual examinations of the students studying from Class-I to VIII.



All the materials of the school were found lying scattered with the glass pane of all the windows broken. However, the equipment inside were found safe and untouched as the miscreants failed to break open the lock. Locals have called for immediate arrest of the miscreants and stringent action against them.

'Customer service is paramount'

Growing up in a business atmosphere, he developed a knack for the profession. Joining the family business after higher studies came as a great coincidence for the meritorious commerce student. Having grown his business overcoming many obstacles, he has achieved a lot in his new ventures as well. Despite a busy work life, he is also realising his thoughts to do something for the society. In conversation with

Orissa POST, successful businessman and Managing Director of SGBL Automobiles Pvt Ltd Sunil Gupta shares his thoughts...



Where and how did you spend your childhood?

I was born at Cuttack's Nimchouri. I joined the Ravenshaw College for higher education after finishing my schooling from Stewart School in Cuttack. Eventually, I successfully completed my graduation with distinction in Commerce from Ravenshaw. My childhood and schooling was spent in Cuttack where I grew up with family and friends.

How did you begin your professional life?

We had a well-established family business in Cuttack as my father Srinivas Gupta had a business in Cuttack Malgudown. With time, I developed an interest in business and subsequently after studies, I joined my father. I had much experience and public rapport so I started my profession as a supplier of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment in Cuttack. That business is still running till date. Gradually, we expanded to real estate, Titan watches and Honda automobiles. We also have a C&F business with known electrical company Havells.

How did you get associated with automobile business?

My business experience of over 3 decades and a challenging opportunity propelled me to step into the two-wheelers business. Especially in 2011, when I saw an advertisement put up by Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India Pvt Ltd in Cuttack for dealers, I got really interested. I had dreamt of becoming popular by doing business with a multinational company like

Honda. So, I communicated with them, and after some arrangements I got selected as a dealer of the company. Finally a modern showroom and service centre were established in 2012 near Sati Chaura of Cuttack, which is now recognised as the best showroom in Odisha. Even the showroom SGBL Honda has bagged the star performer of the year award twice in a row.

What is the post-Covid status of your business?

Business was stagnant and in a way stopped during the Covid pandemic and lockdown. Then, we managed to open our showroom with much difficulty following all the government guidelines. We were able to provide quick services to customers even after going through so many difficulties. The hard work and perseverance of our employees made it possible. Especially, trust among the customers, support from the company, employees' dedication and love have propelled our business. I am hopeful that automobile market will bounce back in no time.

How do you like to spend your leisure?

With my busy business schedule, I don't even get a chance to realise how time flies. But in case I get some leisure, I spend it with my family. Also, I love to spend time caring for cows and travelling with friends. With fam-

ily, I prefer spending time in a spiritual environment and we observe Vaishno Devi Jagran along with Bhagvat Katha during leisure time.

What are your future plans? Do you have any other venture in your mind?

We have to think a hundred times when we want to do anything new in a competitive market. Despite that fact, we are planning to open jewellery showrooms of a reputed company in and outside the state. Also because of the dedication towards cows, we have plans to create a cow shelter and a veterinary hospital for bovines. For the same, we are running Geeta Charitable Trust in my mother's name.



RISKY PROPOSITION: Two women try to cross an uncovered drain due to long line of commuters on the road at a traffic post opposite the district Collectorate in Keonjhar

Woman bludgeoned to death by husband

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara/Patkura, March 15: A man bludgeoned his wife to death after she allegedly made him eat more during dinner at Madhusudanpur village under Marshaghai block and Patkura police limits in Kendrapara district, late Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Kamala Ojha, 54, wife of the accused Ajay Ojha of the village. On being informed, police detained Ajay in the police station and interrogated him in this connection. A case was registered in this connection and



the body was sent for post-mortem.

Locals alleged that the accused was mentally unstable for last five years, for which his wife always used to keep a close watch on him and would hardly leave him outside. They alleged that the murder took place after the dinner.

Police constable found dead in official quarters

Phulbani: A police constable was found dead in his official quarter in Kandhamal district, Monday. The deceased was identified as Srinivas Ghatala, 42, a constable posted at the Tikabali police station, they said. His body was found hanging at his official quarter situated within the premises of the police station campus. Police said an investigation into the case was underway to ascertain the cause behind Ghatala's death. The body has been sent for post-mortem and the report will clarify the real reason behind the demise of the constable. Meanwhile Ghatala's family alleged Tuesday that he under severe stress due to his job. They said that Ghatala had applied for leave repeatedly, but it had not been sanctioned.

Camera traps capture rare wild animals in Atei forest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 15: Various rare wild animals have been captured by the camera trap installed inside Atei reserve forest under Patana and Ghatagaon forest ranges in Keonjhar forest division and district.

The camera traps have captured a few schedule-I species which are on the verge of extinction like Indian gaur, Indian grey wolf, four-horned antelope, rattle, common palm civet, small Indian civet, ruddy mongoose, grey mongoose, jackal, Indian fox, jungle cat, sloth bear as well as big cats in the jungle.

Apart from these, 21 species of wild animals like spotted deer,

barking deer, porcupine, pangolin, Indian hare, wild pig, rhesus macaque were also seen though their numbers are yet to be verified, divisional forest officer (DFO) Dhanraj HD said.

Sources said that Atei reserve forest spread over 1,600 sq km has turned into a safe haven for wildlife. Wild animals feel free to move in the jungle as it is densely surrounded by Similipal, Hadgarh, Satkosia, Revana wildlife sanctuaries and other reserve forests.

However, National Highway-20 and other highways passing through this jungle prove to be deterrent in the free movement of animals. Round the clock movement of iron ore laden



trucks and passenger buses often pose risks for the wild animals. Animal fatalities due to road mishaps while crossing the highway are very usual. Environmentalist Harekrushna

Mohanta said that there is need for regular patrolling to keep the animals safe from poachers and other threats. However, it is not easy to monitor the whole jungle due to its enormity. The Forest department should carry out awareness programmes in the area and nab the poachers with the involvement of villagers living on the fringes of the jungle.

Moreover, with summer season drawing near, forest officials should see that wildfires do not spread in the jungle which will only endanger the lives of the wild animals. They should also make sure that the animals do not stray into human habitats facing food and water scarcity in the jungle during summer.

Sundargarh tribal women make eco-friendly leaf plates

Over 2,700 tribal women have been empowered through the initiative

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, March 15: Tribal women in Sundargarh have found a new avenue for livelihood assistance through 'Khali Patra' or eco-friendly leaf plate making. There is a rise in demand for the leaf plate prepared from Sal and Siali leaves by these women using modern machines. As a result, over 2,700 women from Sundargarh have engaged in leaf plate making and become self dependent.

The eco-friendly product is being made as part of Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram (VDVK) under Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Sundargarh. ITDA further provides necessary training and support to these women, which helps them secure a fair price for their product in the market.

"Earlier, tribal women used to prepare leaf plates by hand and sold it locally which did not earn them a proper price. Keeping this in mind, under VDVK, Women SHG members have been roped in to train them to

prepare eco-friendly leaf plates using modern machines. Market linkage for the same is also being extended by ITDA. In the coming days, the aim is to augment the women's workplace and convert the cottage trade into a Small & Micro Enterprise" informs Project Administrator, ITDA Sundargarh, Ramkrishna Gond.

A total of 18 VDVK units currently function under ITDA Sundargarh. Women SHG members under 9 VDVK units at Balisankra, Tangarpali, Subdega, Lephripara and Hemgir blocks are currently engaged in eco-friendly leaf plate making. Stitching machine, Press and Weighting machine are provided to the women towards the same. ITDA Sundargarh also gives necessary training to the women to operate these machines.

"We have 300 members in our VDVK unit. We do everything from collecting the leaves to developing the finished product. We have got machines for making these eco-friendly leaf plates through ITDA Sundargarh so we can sell the prod-



The eco-friendly product is being made as part of Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram (VDVK) under Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Sundargarh

uct in the market and earn a livelihood," says Secretary of Subdega VDVK unit, Sabita Majhi. Women of the VDVK unit collect Sal and Siali leaves from the nearby jungles and dry it under the sun to prepare it for stitching. The leaves are first stitched by hand before going through machine stitching. Then, the leaves are put in the press to flatten those and make plates and bowls out of them. Using advanced machines has led to increased efficiency

and now, each VDVK unit produces over 1,500 plates and bowls per day. "There is a demand for the leaf plates being produced by us. We sell the same in the local market as well as take those to various fairs and festivals. People have

shown a keen interest in purchasing our product. This has also led to an increase in our income," says VDVK unit member Pinky Meher. Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram (VDVK) has been initiated to provide new avenues of livelihood for tribal men and women using their traditional knowledge and skills. To strengthen the livelihood of tribal women, they are being engaged in new trades outside the traditional work.

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ENGAGEMENT OF HONORARY VISITING SPECIALISTS (HVS) AT CENTRAL HOSPITAL, EAST COAST RAILWAY, MANCHESWAR, BHUBANESWAR-751017 IN THE FOLLOWING DISCIPLINE:
POST - OPHTHALMOLOGY - SPECIALIST
Interested Doctors can submit their Willingness, BIODATA, age proof School Certificate, Degree Certificate, Higher Qualification Certificate, Registration Certificate along with their professional work experience and contact details addressed to **Medical Director, Central Hospital, East Coast Railway, Mancheswar, Bhubaneswar - 751017** within 15 days of the publication of the Advertisement.
For Educational Qualification/Experience, Age, Tenure of Work, Number of visits / Number of hours, Honorarium & other detailed terms and conditions, please refer to website : www.eastcoastrail.in **Recruitment info -> Walk-in-Interview/Notification.** Medical Director, Central Hospital ECoR, Bhubaneswar
PR-1077/N/22-23

RECONSTITUTION OF DEED OF PARTNERSHIP
The Partnership Firm under name and style 'S R Construction' has been entered in the register of firm vide SI. No. 1820220200785 has now been reconstituted vide the Deed of Reconstitution of Partnership No. 414 Dated; 27.02.2023 between the followings: Sri Mrs. Amin Switben Jaykumar, W/o. Mr. Amin Jaykumar, aged about 33 years, resident of Plot No. 48, Sahalija Greens, Radhanpur Roads, Mahesena, Gujarat - 384002 (PAN No. CFGPP7608A), hereinafter called the Party of the "First Part", the Continuing Partner.
AND
Sri Ugrajit Khuntia, S/o. Mr. Rohita Khuntia, Alasahi, Puri, Odisha - 752109, (PAN - CYPK5555B). Hereinafter called the Party of the "Second Part", the Retiring Partner.
AND
Mr. Jay Sanjaybhai Amin, S/o. Sanjaybhai Gordhanbhai Amin, Plot No. 48, Sahalija Greens, Radhanpur Roads, Mahesena, Gujarat - 384002, aged about 34 years. Hereinafter called the party of the "Third Part" the New Joining Partner.
That the Terms and Conditions incorporated in this Partnership Deed dated 27.02.2023 shall be abided by all the Partners here for all the Projects undertaken/to be undertaken by the firm S R Construction.

FOCUS HYDRO-DIPLOMACY

TEESTA'S TROUBLED WATERS



Bangladesh, in general, believes that it has not received its due share of water in spite of being a downstream country and keeping good neighbourly relations

PM Sheikh Hasina's visit to Delhi in 2022 could not augur any progress on resolving the Teesta impasse. India maintains that a just sharing of Teesta water, which is acceptable to all parties and protects interests of all parties concerned, will be agreed upon.

Meanwhile, both sides are engaged in advancing some kind of understanding in other transboundary rivers such as Dharla, Dudhkumar, Feni, Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Jaldhaka and Torsa. Both countries have established various joint mechanisms to address the water sharing aspects of all the transboundary rivers. The urgency for a mechanism to address the water sharing was so much that the two countries signed the Statute of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint River Commission (JRC) on November 24, 1972 immediately after signing the friendship treaty in 1971. The JRC is headed by the respective Ministers of Water Resources and functions as a liaison between the two countries. While emphasising on flood control, the JRC's role involves making recommendations, formulating proposals and studying projects, rather than taking decisions and implementing them.

Despite existing bilateral cooperative water mechanisms, both countries have been unable to resolve the downstream trepidations. If freshwater is the 'national asset' for India, it is the 'central to the way of life' in Bangladesh. Water is a highly volatile and emotive issue in Bangladesh.

As India has been harnessing the Teesta in Sikkim with multiple hydel projects, Bangladesh seems edgy by hobnobbing with Chinese 'basket full of aids' to dredge and embank the river, or perhaps, building storages at the border to ward off flash floods. India has conveyed its displeasure. While Sheikh Hasina is facing national elections this year, West Bengal is preparing for panchayat election and Modi faces 2024 general elections. Teesta has to be a flash point between India and Bangladesh.

The writer is principal scientist at Peri-urbanisation and Climate-Environment Change, IIT-Madras.

India's recent notice to Pakistan on the Indus Water Treaty has ignited measured discussions in Bangladesh over shared rivers, especially on a potential Teesta river agreement. Furthermore, as the Daily Star, the leading English daily in Bangladesh, reported the proposed two canals to divert water from Teesta Barrage for irrigation in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts by the West Bengal government have raised concerns in Bangladesh. While the authorities in Bangladesh have maintained restraint in commenting, the public has notably perceived India's monopoly to use waters against the aspirations of downstream farm communities. Can India and Bangladesh resolve substantially and sustainably the long pending issues of sharing of common rivers?

Both South Asian countries are facing the twin problems of too much and too little water as the age-old saying in Odia goes due their geographical locations and climatic conditions. Moreover, as we know the Indian sub-continent formed due to geophysical violence (plate tectonic movement) and political violence (war) that had transformed the status of rivers into trans-boundary water bodies. Consequently, the management of shared rivers has become complicated with competing and conflicting demands by multiple users from wet season to lean season. When India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers, only a long-term treaty on Sharing Ganges Water at Farakka (1996) and two MoUs—on Fenni River (2019) and on Kushiyara River (2022) have been concluded so far. Bangladesh, in general, believes that it has not received its due share of water in spite of being a downstream country and keeping a good neighbourly relation.

After the Partition in 1947, there had been no talks on sharing of eastern Himalayan river waters between India and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) as the Indus water between India and Pakistan. The dispute over Ganges erupted suddenly as a result of India's decision to construct a barrage in West Bengal in 1951, known as the Farakka Barrage, about 10 miles

from the borders with the then East Pakistan. However, the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, which will be open for review after completion of 30 years in 2026, stipulates the release of water at Farakka during lean period (1 January to 31 May). Despite Bangladesh demanding for a guaranteed minimum flow, without mentioning the term 'minimum guarantee', India agreed to various measures within the treaty that provide water security to Bangladesh.

After more than two decades of Ganges Treaty both countries signed an MoU in 2019 on Fenni river that originates in south Tripura and forms the international border river and allows withdrawal of 1.82 cusec of water by India for drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town, Tripura. Another MoU was signed in 2022 on withdrawal of up to 153 cusecs of water each by India and Bangladesh from the common border river Kushiyara during the dry season. India shares flood forecasting data on Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna basins with Bangladesh to enable authorities to protect millions of lives and livelihoods.

Since the 1980s, both countries have been trying to resolve Teesta water sharing issues. The Teesta is a tributary of the Brahmaputra and flows through Sikkim and West Bengal before entering Bangladesh. Over the time, shar-

ing of Teesta water has become politically explosive within both countries and diplomatically a hotspot and a blot. The Teesta Water Sharing Agreement was proposed to be signed during the then Indian PM Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka in September 2011. Yet, due to West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's strong reservations, the agreement is still in a stalemate. In the draft agreement India was willing to share 37.5% of Teesta water while retaining 42.5% during the lean season between December and March. However, Banerjee refused to sign as she was not consulted and the draft treaty was not in the interests of Bengal's farmers. Teesta's flow drastically reduces during the lean period and is vital for irrigating 1.20 lakh hectares in the region where the CM's party is not popular. The CM has been reasoning with various pre-conditions from time to time by avoiding and delaying talks on Teesta. Once, the CM has raised cleaning of the pollution of Mathabanga river (a tributary of Padma/Ganges) as a pre-condition on resumption of Teesta talks in 2018.

Subsequently, India has been engaged in multilayer and multi stakeholder discussions with Bangladesh including Sikkim and West Bengal governments at appropriate level on an early conclusion of agreement on Teesta. Even PM Narendra Modi's visits to Dhaka in 2015 and Bangladesh

Each new dawn brings the possibility of a new progress.

THE MOTHER



Countering Populism

Following a year of halting negotiations, six of Turkey's opposition parties have finally united behind a single presidential candidate in the election this May, with the hope of ending Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's increasingly autocratic and repressive two-decade rule. This month, the so-called Table of Six converged on Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of the social democratic and secularist Republican People's Party (CHP), after having sidelined younger, more charismatic contenders such as the CHP mayor of Istanbul, who had recaptured the city from Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party in 2019.

When an authoritarian populist regime is rigging the democratic game, it is common sense that opposition parties must combine forces to stand any chance of winning elections. But such unity, while necessary, is not sufficient for success; in fact, the hardest part comes after the decision to unite.

Opposition parties that unite to remove a particular leader or party—especially "a populist strongman"—must place that imperative above their other programmatic commitments. After all, populist leaders have a proven track record of undermining democracy, and there is every reason to believe they will do even more damage if re-elected.

For example, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has used the immediate aftermath of unfair elections—when the opposition and civil society were utterly demoralised—to ram through controversial policies and engage in culture-war provocations. Budapest's mendacious memorial to the German occupation, which effectively absolves Hungary of any complicity in the Holocaust, was erected right after the 2014 election.

But, as sensible as this "damage-control" imperative is, it implies that all politics revolves around the strongman. That is exactly what populist leaders want. They excel at using polarisation and personalisation to their own advantage: "It's everyone against me, the only leader who truly represents the people."

Important recent work by political scientists has shown that not everyone who votes for authoritarian populist leaders is ignorant or indifferent to their undermining of democracy (not to mention corruption, another hallmark of populist governments). But when confronted with an us-versus-them logic and an opposition coalition whose ultimate intentions are uncertain, they might still opt for what they perceive as the lesser evil.

Moreover, united opposition parties tend to settle on candidates who look a lot like the figure they are opposing, only more democratic. Last year, Hungary's opposition alliance agreed to back a conservative Catholic provincial mayor in its effort to remove the far-right populist incumbent. Similarly, successive Israeli opposition coalitions have sought to beat Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by putting forward tough center-right figures such as the retired general Benny Gantz. The common assumption seems to be that the restoration of democracy is best overseen by old men. It worked for the Democrats in the United States in 2020, and for Western Europe after World War II, when paternalist figures like Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle dominated German and French politics, respectively.

Yet such strategies often fail, either because they make the opposition look purely reactive, or (less obviously) because they send defeatist signals that the political parameters established by the ruling populists have become the new normal. In Turkey, the Table of Six has so far yielded to nationalist pressure and rebuffed the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). Similarly, the current opposition to Netanyahu's far-right Israeli government still refuses to include Arab representatives. Strong nationalism—and weak attention to minority rights—is taken as a political given.

Even if anti-populists can unite against a common opponent, changing the parameters of politics is a much more difficult task. Rather than simply appealing to shared dislike of the strongman, they must discuss a broader set of issues and return to questions of policy programmes and basic principles. While ideological heterogeneity can be set aside in the name of defeating a populist incumbent, everyone knows that it will return with a vengeance once that task is accomplished, and this common knowledge leaves voters with doubts about how the coalition would actually govern.

To its credit, the Table of Six has outlined structural reforms that would go a long way toward restoring the rule of law and dismantling the hyper-presidential system that has given Erdoğan virtually unlimited powers. Turkey's Radio and Television Supreme Council and the Council of Higher Education—the kinds of institutions populists specialise in capturing (in the name of "the people," of course)—would become autonomous again. And by committing to rely on impersonal institutions instead of sultan-style rule, the opposition promises a departure from Erdoğan's hyper-inflationary ("unorthodox") economic strategies and erratic foreign policy.

But the promise of "institutionalism" is rather abstract, and it can easily be challenged by highlighting high-profile conflicts over policy and (especially) personnel within the heterogeneous opposition alliance. To prevail, opposition leaders will have to demonstrate an underappreciated political skill: framing the terms of the election rather than merely reacting to the other side. They cannot simply assume that corruption will topple the ruling party. They also must stress what has gone wrong and find powerful symbols—not just tortuously negotiated policy papers—that give a sense of what a different future would feel like. For the Turkish opposition, the recent earthquake—and the regime's failures both before and after that catastrophe—will be an obvious reference point in the run-up to the election. But symbolising a different future is a more demanding challenge.

The writer is Professor of Politics at Princeton University.

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Jan-Werner Mueller

When an authoritarian populist regime is rigging the democratic game, it is common sense that opposition parties must combine forces to stand any chance of winning elections



Avilash Roul

IF FRESHWATER IS THE 'NATIONAL ASSET' FOR INDIA, IT IS THE 'CENTRAL TO THE WAY OF LIFE' IN BANGLADESH

SPECTRUM BANKING

The SVB crisis & its impact on India



Sourajeet Pradhani

WITH EVERY RATE HIKE BY THE FEDERAL RESERVE, SVB INCURRED MORE AND MORE LOSS

The recent catastrophic collapse of the US-based Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) has put the entire financial market in dol-drum. The SVB crisis has highlighted certain major issues in the global banking system. To understand the SVB crisis, we must first understand the basics of banking. The balance sheet of any bank or the banking system is basically managed by assets and liabilities. For a bank, the deposits in the savings bank account and the fixed deposits (term deposits) of the depositors are liabilities for the bank since they 'owe' the deposit amount (along with the accumulated interest) to the customers. The bank utilises this deposit amount to lend to individuals as well as institutions. The difference in the deposit rate and the lending rate is the margin that the bank earns.

The SVB crisis is a unique one and carries a lot of learning in it. The SVB is the second largest bank failure in the US history after Washington Mutual Bank. The US regulators have taken control over the deposits of close to USD 175 billion under the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Founded in

1983, the California-based bank was considered to be one of the top banks in the US, having thousands of startups as its customers.

The journey of the SVB started on a promising note since it coincided with the evolution of the 'startup ecosystem' in the US. Most of the startups raised funding and parked their funds in the form of deposits in SVB. The real issue started in the post pandemic phase wherein we witnessed a purple patch for global tech startups. The magnitude of funding raised by these tech startups from venture capitalists (VCs) and other angel investors was something that was unforeseen. The deposit book or in other words, the liability book of SVB ballooned to a different level.

With such a large deposit book, SVB instead of investing in liquid assets, started investing in the US Treasury bonds. Since these bonds are backed by the US government, the risk of default was not there. Hence it was pretty safe to invest in such fixed income products.

By the start of 2022, with the bursting of the 'tech bubble', the startups started facing liquidity crunch. In 2022, when the inflation

rate reached an all-time high level, the Federal Reserve started increasing the interest rates. Since interest rates and bond prices are inversely proportional to each other, the value of the government bonds held by SVB went down.

When the flow of funds stopped coming to these startups, they started withdrawing the deposits parked in SVB. The bank had no option but to provide the funds to these startups. In order to do that, they had to sell their government bonds at a discounted price (at a loss) on a 'mark-to-market' basis. With every rate hike by the Federal Reserve, SVB incurred more and more loss. This chain of events led to the precarious situation of their balance sheet.

In order to mitigate the loss created due to selling of government bonds at a discounted price, SVB started selling its equity. This created panic in the entire financial system. The startups accelerated the withdrawal of deposits from the bank, which further dented their revival process and resulting in 'bank run'. A 'bank run' occurs when a large number of customers or institutions start withdrawing their parked deposits from a bank

in fear of insolvency or bankruptcy.

This led to the plummeting of share price of SVB by 60% and its subsequent collapse. The regulatory authority i.e., the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation took charge of the bank. The SVB crisis was not due to any default or creation of NPAs (Non-Performing Assets). It was also not because of any management issues. The crisis was solely due to the inability of the bank to foresee and envision the timing of repayment of the deposits. These deposits must have been invested in liquid or short-term instruments rather than in long duration fixed income products.

Most financial analysts have opined that the impact of the SVB crisis will be very limited on the Indian banking sector, since the exposure is very limited. But markets are driven by sentiments and perceptions and not by actual numbers. The Indian banking sector constitutes almost 1/3rd of the NIFTY index and the impact will be inevitable. It is not a question of 'whether' but a question of 'how much'.

The writer is an investment banker. Views are personal.

WISDOM CORNER

Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently. HENRY FORD

The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing. WALT DISNEY

The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate. OPRAH WINFREY

WORDSWORTH

Godwottery

On Christmas Eve 1940, The Times presented readers with its usual seasonal set of general knowledge questions. One question asked for a definition and derivation of the word godwottery. This was a bit cheeky on the part of the compilers, as the word had appeared in print for the first time only in 1936 and must have been unknown to most readers. Three days later it offered the definition "Contemptuous term for a type of sentimental writing." As Evelyn Waugh's foreign editor in Scoop would have said, "Up to a point, Lord Copper". One sense of the word does indeed refer to language, but to the employment of deliberately archaic vocabulary. That sense was used—possibly for the first time—by the successful British author Norah Lofts in her book Out of This Nettle of 1938 (published in the US under the title Colin Lowrie). In an author's note she said, "I have written this so-called historical novel in so-called modern language", hoping that her readers "will appreciate this lack of 'God-wottery'."

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

Orissa POST
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Women judges

Sir, Worldwide the presence of women in the judiciary as well as the legal profession is quite low as compared to their male counterparts. In Indian High Courts, the presence of women judges is quite less - 11.5% only. The Supreme Court has three women among the 34 judges. Countrywide, women lawyers constitute a mere 17% of total lawyers. Recently, Justice BV Nagarathna of the Supreme Court battled for more judges at the entry level and in higher judiciary. It is believed that women judges bring with them different approaches, outlook and thought processes towards a case at hand. The confidence of a woman litigant is bound to increase if there are more women judges in a court. Both the government and the judiciary should ensure better representation of women at all levels of judiciary. During elevation, the merit of a woman candidate should be balanced considering all aspects.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Pragmatic move

Sir, The Supreme Court rejecting the Centre's curative plea seeking additional compensation of over ₹7,400 crore for the Bhopal gas tragedy victims from Union Carbide Corp (UCC), which Dow Chemical now owns, is a pragmatic move. A curative petition is the last legal recourse in a case. The court clarified that the Centre should have made such a plea shortly after the tragedy, and entertaining it decades after the settlement would open up a Pandora's Box. The court directed the Centre to use the ₹50 crore held by the RBI for any outstanding claims under the scheme.

NJ Ravi Chandar, BANGALORE

Democracy & disruptions

Sir, Disruptions are now very much a part of established parliamentary practice in India. While trying to wish them away is unrealistic, trying to minimise them is in the best interests of democracy and deliberation. For consecutive days, both Houses of Parliament were disrupted over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks in London that Indian democracy is in peril, with the Treasury Benches demanding an apology from him, and the Opposition hitting back and demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe on the Adani group-Hindenburg issue. As soon as the Lok Sabha assembled, the BJP MPs began raising slogans demanding an apology from Rahul, while the Congress-led opposition waved placards demanding a JPC on Adani issue.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI

national



Rahul Gandhi did not say anything wrong and only spoke about democracy, whereas the Prime Minister spoke at many places in foreign lands and insulted the country

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

AIMING HIGH

ISRO is all set to launch 36 low earth orbit satellites for UK-based OneWeb later this month that will complete its first-generation constellation for providing internet through space across the world.



of the day quote

Rahul Gandhi called upon foreign powers from a country whose history has been to enslave India. While tearing down India's democratic systems and institutions, Rahul expressed his regret that foreign forces do not come and attack India

Now, all work above ₹5 lakh will be through e-tendering. However, work up to ₹5 lakh will be done through quotations, though these work will be audited

The incidence of H3N2 cases was not high in Tamil Nadu and rumours must not be spread

Shiv Sena crisis: SC questions Gov's role



The Supreme Court Wednesday shot a volley of tough questions at Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Maharashtra Governor, while hearing pleas in connection with the political crisis triggered due to rebellion in Shiv Sena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: Calling for a trust vote merely on the ground of differences between MLAs of a ruling party can topple an elected government, the Supreme Court observed Wednesday, adding the governor of a state cannot lend his office to effectuate a particular result.

"It will be a sad spectacle for democracy," a five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said while taking forward the hearing on the events that unfolded during the June 2022 Maharashtra political crisis triggered by a revolt in the then undivided Shiv Sena by MLAs loyal to Eknath Shinde.

The bench made the observations after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Maharashtra governor, narrated the sequence of events and said there were various materials before the governor including a letter signed by 34 Shiv Sena MLAs, a letter from Independent lawmakers withdrawing support to the Uddhav Thackeray government, and another of the Leader of the Opposition that prompted him to order a trust vote.

B S Koshiyari, who was then the governor of Maharashtra, had asked Thackeray to face a floor test to prove his majority. Thackeray, however, resigned in the face of imminent defeat, paving the way for appointment of Shinde as the new chief minister. "Difference of opinion among MLAs within a party can be on any ground like payment of development fund or deviation from party ethos but can that be a sufficient ground for the governor to call for the floor test? Governor cannot lend his office to effectuate a particular result. Calling for a trust vote will lead to toppling of elected government," the bench said.

The bench, also comprising Justices MR Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli

and PS Narasimha said a letter by the leader of opposition does not matter in the instant case because he will always keep on writing that the government has lost majority or MLAs are not happy. The letter from MLAs that there was a threat to their security is also not relevant in this case, it said.

"The only thing is that a resolution of 34 MLAs which said that there was widespread discontent among the party cadres and legislators...Is this sufficient ground to call for trust vote? Although, in the hind-sight we can say that Uddhav Thackeray had lost the mathematical equation. "But the fact is governor cannot enter this domain which would precipitate the matter. People will start ditching the ruling party and governor will end up toppling the ruling party. This will be a sad spectacle for democracy," the court observed. The bench also said the governor should have questioned the (Shiv Sena) MLAs that they were in a "happy marriage" with the Congress and the NCP for three years and then suddenly what happened in a day that they wanted to go out of the alliance.

"Three years you cohabited in an alliance, and one fine day, you decided for divorce. The rebel MLAs became ministers in another dispensation. Governor has to ask these questions to himself. What were you fellows doing for such a long time and now suddenly you want a divorce," the court said.

On March 2, the Shinde faction had told the top court that the pleas related to the June 2022 Maharashtra political crisis fell within the realm of politics and judiciary cannot be asked to adjudicate the issue. On June 29, 2022, at the height of the crisis, the apex court had refused to stay the Maharashtra governor's direction to the 31-month-old MVA government led by Thackeray to take a floor test.

G20 meet begins in Amritsar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amritsar, March 15: A three-day G20 meet on education began here Wednesday with the participants focussing on building bridges across nations for equitable development.

The event brought together delegates from G20 Education Working Group to discuss the future of work and innovation, according to an official statement. On Wednesday, a seminar on 'Strengthening Research and Promoting Innovation through Richer Collaboration' was organised at Khalsa College by IIT Ropar in collaboration with other prominent higher education institutions.

Rajeev Ahuja, Director of IIT Ropar, welcomed the participants and highlighted India's opportunity to establish itself as

Several G20 seminars are scheduled to be held in Amritsar over three days as part of the G20 event. Also, an L20 meeting on labour will take place March 19-20

India assumed the G20 presidency for one year December 1 last year

The G20, or Group of 20, is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies

dependency of domains and interdisciplinary action for solving problems. He highlighted India's frugal innovations, which have the potential to solve problems of the developed world.

B S Murty, Director, IIT Hyderabad, stressed on the need for synergy between government-academia-industry to find solutions to pressing global problems. He highlighted that the National Education Policy 2020 has brought in path-breaking reforms in education in India, and various programmes are helping promote cross-institutional collaboration in the country.

The seminar focused on bridging the gap between government-academia-industry linkages for designing solutions for addressing global challenges, said an official statement.

Delhi govt's old excise policy gets 6-month extension

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: The Delhi government Wednesday extended by six months its old excise policy, which permits only state corporations to retail liquor in the city, officials said.

The existing excise policy, which was set to expire March 31, will now be valid until September 30.

The decision was taken to ensure the continuity of the existing excise regime while the Excise Department formulates a new policy, the officials said, adding the proposal regarding the extension was approved by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Wednesday. The government has directed the Excise Department to formulate a new excise policy at the earliest.

The government has also announced that five dry days will be observed in the national capital in the next three months. These dry days will take place on account of Mahavir Jayanti April 4, Good Friday (April 7), Eid-ul-Fitr (April 22), Buddha Purnima (May 5), and Eid-ul-Zuha June 29.

During the dry days, the sale of liquor will be prohibited to maintain the solemnity and sanctity of these occasions, the officials said.

SCO MEET

India invites Pak defence minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: India has invited Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif for a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) next month along with his counterparts from other member nations of the grouping, people familiar with the development said Wednesday.

The invite to Asif for the April 28 meeting was sent by India in its capacity as current chair of the eight-nation SCO, weeks after a similar communication was sent to Islamabad inviting Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for a foreign ministerial conclave of the grouping that is scheduled to be held in May.

They said Pakistan defence minister Asif was sent an invitation through the Indian high commission in Islamabad for the defence ministerial meeting. India is also set to send separate invites to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin for the annual SCO summit later this year.

The SCO member countries are India, Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan. While the SCO defence ministers' meeting is scheduled to be held in Delhi, the foreign ministerial conclave is set to take place in Goa in early May. India has already invited Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang for the meeting.

The defence ministers' meeting is set to delve into various issues relating to regional security including the threat of terrorism and the situation in



Afghanistan. The meeting will be chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, they said.

There was no indication yet from Pakistan on whether Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Asif will attend the respective meetings. If Asif decides to attend the defence ministerial meeting in person, it will be the first such visit from Islamabad to India since 2011. The then Pakistan foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar had visited India that year. Khar is currently serving as the minister of state for foreign affairs. There has been speculation that Pakistan may send Khar for the SCO foreign ministerial meeting. The ties between India and Pakistan came under severe strain after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack. The relations further deteriorated after India in August 2019 scrapped the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two union territories.

SUICIDE BY MARRIED MALES

Plea in apex court seeks National Commission for Men

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking guidelines to deal with suicide by married males subjected to domestic violence and a 'National Commission for Men'.

The plea filed by advocate Mahesh Kumar Tiwari cited the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data published in 2021 on accidental deaths in India which claimed 1,64,033 people died by suicide across the country that year.



Out of these, 81,063 people who ended their lives were married men, while 28,680 were married women, the petition said.

"Around 33.2 per cent men ended their lives because of family problems and 4.8 per cent due to marriage related issues in the year 2021. In this year total 1,18,979 men have committed suicides which are about (72 per cent) and total 45,026 women have committed suicides which are about 27 per cent," the plea said while referring to data provided by the NCRB.

Bank of India GOLD AUCTION NOTICE. It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, persons engaged in business of gold ornaments and general public that in spite of repeated notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues. Notice is hereby published that if they fail to deposit all their dues in their respective gold loan accounts (including Up-to-date interest and all costs, charges /expenses) by Dt.24.03.2023, then from 11.00 AM of Dt.27.03.2023 their pledged gold ornaments will be sold in public auction at Respective Branch Premises given below and/or Sriram Automall India Ltd. (SAMIL), Cuttack, At: Sriram Automall Yard, Nuapatana, NH-42, Choudwar-Angul Road, Cuttack-754007, Contact Person: Mr. Prabhat Kumar (Mob-8658738320), Mr. Debashish Subudhi (Mob-9861342494). For this Bank shall not be held responsible for any inconvenience or damage caused to the concerned borrowers and no allegations or representations will be entertained from any borrowers in this regard. Bank reserves the right to cancel the auction without assigning any reasons in case, the bidding price so arrived at is observed to be low or inadequate. Further, if need be, Bank reserves the right to change the date, time and place of the above scheduled auction or cancel the same without assigning any reasons thereon. The purity & net weight & the reserve price of the gold ornaments / coins etc. will be made available to the intending bidders on the date and at the site of auction / auction portal.

UP to have 'State Capital Region' on lines of NCR

The proposed SCR is to be formed by connecting Lucknow and adjoining districts with the objective of expanding the potential of Lucknow as a capital for a balanced development of the adjoining places



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 15: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Wednesday directed to prepare a detailed plan for developing a 'State Capital Region' (SCR) on the lines of the National Capital Region within two weeks, officials said.

The chief minister gave the directions while reviewing various development projects being implemented in Ayodhya and Varanasi with ministers concerned and senior officials here.

The proposed SCR is to be formed by connecting Lucknow and adjoining districts with the objective of expanding the potential of

Lucknow as a capital for a balanced development of the adjoining places, the officials said.

"Lucknow is being equipped with state-of-the-art urban facilities in the form of a metropolitan city today. People from different cities want to come here and make their permanent residence. Population pressure is also increasing in the surrounding districts while complaints of unplanned development are also being received. In such situation, the formation of SCR will be useful from the point of view of coordinated development," Adityanath said while asking officials to prepare and present a de-

tailed action plan for it in two weeks.

He also directed to contact each and every investor who participated in the recently held Global Investors Summit, know their needs and expectations and provide them benefits of the new policies and rules.

"It should be ensured that no file relating to investors remains unnecessarily pending. Weekly department-wise review of MoUs should be done at the industrial development commissioner level. If there is any problem, inform the chief secretary and find a solution immediately," the CM said.

BSP supremo slams BJP, SP, Congress as 'extremely casteist'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, March 15: BSP president Mayawati Wednesday accused the BJP, Congress and the SP of being 'extremely casteist' and 'anti-reservation' and called upon people to give a befitting reply to the detractors of party founder Kanshi Ram by obtaining the 'master key' of electoral success.

Coming down heavily on the Samajwadi Party (SP), she said that merely levelling malicious allegations will not serve any purpose as the people of Uttar Pradesh as well as the country are seeing as to who has been the 'B' team of which party and is still active in that form. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) attack was a riposte to the SP accusing it of colluding with the saffron party.

Paying tributes to party founder Kanshi Ram on his birth anniversary, she called for giving a befitting reply to his detractors by obtaining the 'master key' of electoral success. The BSP supremo paid floral tributes at a statue of Kanshi Ram at the party office early morning and charged that the party founder and his followers have been subjected to contempt.

In a statement issued by the party later, Mayawati termed the BJP, Congress and the SP 'extremely casteist' and alleged that they were anti-reservation. "The country is still in the grip of a casteist government and similar elements and can get rid of this curse only when the oppressed people, through their constitutional right to vote, get in control of power in the state and the country. This is for which BSP has been established," she said.

The people of the country, especially Uttar Pradesh, have seen the BJP, Congress and SP and their 'extreme casteist and anti-reservation' attitude as well as the game of 'depriving' the SC, ST, OBC, Muslim and religious minorities of their legal rights, she alleged.

In a series of tweets in Hindi, Mayawati said, "Tributes to honourable Kanshi Ram who gave strength and momentum to the self-respect movement of the most revered Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar by making the deprived and exploited 'bahujan samaj' a po-

The country is still in the grip of a casteist government and similar elements and can get rid of this curse only when the oppressed people, through their constitutional right to vote, get in control of power in the state and the country. This is for which BSP has been established

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

litical force." The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said the "bahujan" movement was strengthened by him on the ground. Under the party-led governments in Uttar Pradesh, crores of people were given benefits leading to their social transformation and economic emancipation. However, the process of 'neglect, contempt and conspiracy' against the followers of Kanshi Ram by his opponents continues even today and a proper answer to it needs to be given by getting the master key of electoral success and power, the BSP president added.

The SP and the BSP had buried their past enmity and jointly fought against the BJP in the last parliamentary elections and had won 15 seats out of a total of 80 in Uttar Pradesh. But, their bonhomie ended soon after the polls and the two major opposition parties of Uttar Pradesh had charted a separate course in the crucial state elections last year.

The opposition disunity had worked in favour of the BJP which returned to power in the politically significant state. The SP managed to increase its tally in the 403-member Assembly after the 2022 polls but failed to prevent the return of the saffron party to power. The BSP had fared extremely badly managing just one seat in the state polls.

Targeting the BJP government of the state, the BSP leader said, "In this vast state, people are suffering from rising inflation, poverty, unemployment and insecurity about life and property etc due to the wrong policies of the government and activities full of malice and partiality. Dalits and backwards are specially sad and distressed under this government," she said.



Yogi set to become longest serving UP CM March 25

EARLIER, DR SAMPURNANAND OF THE CONGRESS REMAINED THE CHIEF MINISTER OF THE STATE FOR FIVE YEARS AND 345 DAYS FROM 1954 TO 1960

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 15: When Yogi Adityanath completes six years in office March 25 and becomes the longest serving Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh with an unbroken tenure, the state government will get into a mega celebration mode.

According to a state government spokesman, as soon as Yogi completes first year of his second term, he will hold the record of remaining on the post of chief minister for six consecutive years and six days. This is the longest period in a stretch so far in the state for any Chief Minister.

Earlier, Dr Sampurnanand of the Congress remained the Chief Minister of the state for five years and 345 days from 1954 to 1960.

The BJP-led state government will kick off the celebrations by holding a press conference in Lucknow, where Yogi, Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, the party's state president Bhubendra Singh Chaudhary, state general secretary (organisation) Dharampal Singh and other party officials will be present.

The Chief Minister will present the achievements of six years of his government and about the changes that have taken place in the state in the past six years.



He will also speak about the investment-friendly environment created in the state due to the improved law and order and the opportunities for employment and self-employment.

Similar press conferences will be held in districts by ministers in charge.

Local MPs, MLAs, district pan-

chayat president and Legislative Council members will be present at these press conferences.

The BJP came to power for the second time in the state by winning 255 seats in the state legislative assembly in 2022.

The state unit of the party will also celebrate the occasion with various functions.

It's raining freebies on voters in K'taka

Leaders, attached to the BJP, Congress and JD(S) are distributing sarees, silver and gold articles, pressure cookers, mixer grinders, television sets, mobile phones to lure voters



night conducted a raid at the residence of BJP MLC R. Shankar in Beereshwaranagar in Haveri district and seized ₹30 to 40 lakh worth house articles with his name and pictures on them.

The officers said that they have seized 6,000 sarees, 9,000 school bags, steel plates and glasses. The supporters of MLC R. Shankar gathered at the residence and raised slogans against the government and authorities.

Sources said that the leaders are also arranging trips to Goa, other Hindu pilgrimage centers such as Dharmasthala, Kolhapur, Shirdi and other places. Many voters revealed that they were made to pledge before Gods that they will cast their votes to their leader without fail.

In a major embarrassment to the ruling BJP, the incident of voters burning down sarees allegedly distributed by the National General Secretary and BJP MLA C.T. Ravi and demanding answers from him on development was reported.

In yet another incident, Atalati villagers threw away sarees and utensils allegedly distributed by senior Congress leader M.B. Patil in Babaleswar constituency.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, March 15: As the Karnataka Assembly polls near, the leaders of all political parties are raining gifts on voters before the Election Commission invokes the model code of conduct.

The EC is likely to invoke the conduct by the end of this month.

The political party leaders, attached to the BJP, Congress and JD(S) are distributing sarees, silver, gold articles, pressure cookers, mixer grinders, television sets, mobiles to lure voters, without any hesitation.

The leaders are even offering exchange gifts to gain the upper hand. The video showing voters being asked to come with a cooker that is being distributed by one leader and another leader throwing them down and distributing superior quality cookers with his name on it has gone viral.

The sleuths of Department of Commercial Tax have Tuesday late

Karnataka BJP infighting out in open

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore/New Delhi, March 15: The infighting within Karnataka's ruling BJP came out in open as Housing Minister V. Somanna, who is reportedly miffed with former CM BS Yediyurappa and his son BY Vijayendra for meddling, reached New Delhi Wednesday to meet senior party leaders.

The minister, who is in-charge for Chamarajanagar, remained absent from the 'Vijay Sankalp Yatra' in the district attended by BJP national President JP Nadra and also kept distance from the party activities. His son Arun Somanna, without taking his name, attacked Vijayendra on a public platform.



Somanna is likely to meet Union Minister for Mine, Coal and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi and other senior leaders. Sources said that he is going to seek clarity on his position and seek a stop to interference by Yediyurappa and his son Vijayendra.

A Lingayat leader and brought to the BJP by Yediyurappa, Somanna did not back Yediyurappa when he left the BJP to form his Karnataka Janata Party (KJP) and since then both leaders are at loggerheads.

"Straight talk will land you in trouble. I am not here to plead before anyone. I know how to behave appropriately and I can't giggle simply. I have practised direct pol-

itics. The truth is bitter under present circumstances. Yediyurappa is a big leader. I won't talk about him. You ask him how the situation was 15 years ago? He should also notice who is contributing to the party," Somanna told media persons.

Asked if he is in New Delhi to complain on Vijayendra, Somanna said that Vijayendra is just the son of Yediyurappa. "What is his age to compare him with me? There are many leaders of his age with me. Yediyurappa has not spoken to me. If he wants to talk, I will go to him. I don't hate Yediyurappa," he said.

Sources claim that Somanna is all set to join the Congress as the BJP is not giving concrete promises about his future. The Congress has, on the other hand, given him the offer of a prominent post for him and his son Arun Somanna if he quits the BJP. The Congress is thinking of gaining upper hand in at least 10 assembly constituencies in Bengaluru if it manages to lure him to its side.

Yediyurappa has stated that he would talk to him and ensure that Somanna remains in BJP. But, after Somanna's statement, he has not made any attempt to talk to him, sources said.

400-year-old stone with inscriptions found in Udupi



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mangalore, March 15: A 'Linga Mudra' stone with inscriptions of the Sun, Moon, a Shivalinga and a Nandi has been found in Udupi district of Karnataka, officials said.

The stone, estimated to be around 400-years-old, was found while levelling work of the proposed Ashoka Park in Basrur gram panchayat of Kundapur taluk was going on with the help of local people.

The matter was brought to the notice of a historian. The message on the stone appears to suggest that the empire of the ruling king lives till the Sun and Moon are intact, history researcher Prof T Murugeshi said in a statement.

He said it was common for Shaivites to venerate Lord Shiva, Vaishnavites to Lord Vishnu and Jains to the Thirthankaras. Shaivites used to install Linga Mudra stones on their land borders while Vaishnavas used to put Vamanamudra stones and Jains used Mukkode stones.

It was their way of identifying the borders of their land. In accordance to this, the Linga Mudra stones found at Basrur were put to identify the borders, he said.

"The cooperation and support of the public is required to preserve the stone inscriptions, war memorials and border stones of history. The record should be mentioned in the history of our land," Murugeshi said.

of the day quote

History is replete with acts of discrimination & persecution of minorities that remain a blot on humankind. On International Day to Combat Islamophobia, let's resolve to fight the systemic oppression of minorities & protect their rights in line with constitutional values

M K STALIN | TAMIL NADU CM

The online mode of learning came to the rescue of students during the pandemic-induced lockdown when education systems across the world were paralysed

ATISHI MARLENA | DELHI EDUCATION MINISTER

I appeal to all the three parties to unite and work together irrespective of whether you get a ticket to contest elections to local bodies, state Assembly or Lok Sabha. If we don't unite at the grassroots, 2024 will be the last election and we will go towards dictatorship

UDDHAV THACKERAY | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

SHORT TAKES

LeT terrorist associate held

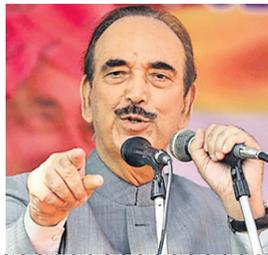
Srinagar: A terrorist associate linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT was arrested in J&K's Baramulla Wednesday and incriminating materials and ammunition recovered from his possession, police said.

Killer woman held

Mumbai: In a grisly act, a 24-year-old woman allegedly killed her widowed mother, chopped up her body, and kept the parts in plastic bags that were hidden in the cupboard for nearly three months, a police official said Wednesday.

YouTuber booked

Sambhal (UP): A YouTuber was booked and taken into custody here after being accused of creating a ruckus during a state minister's visit to his village, where he had questioned her on pending development projects.



My party aims to get rid of poverty and unemployment by providing employment opportunities to the youth

GHULAM NABI AZAD | FORMER CHIEF MINISTER OF J&K

LAWRENCE THREATENS SALMAN

Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi who is currently lodged in Punjab's Bathinda Jail has issued a fresh threat to Bollywood actor Salman Khan, saying if the movie star does not apologise over the Chinkara hunting episode, "his ego will be smashed"



Slugfest between Cong, BJP intensifies

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 15: The proceedings in Parliament were disrupted for the third straight day Wednesday as the political slugfest between the BJP and the Congress over Rahul Gandhi's democracy remarks and the Adani issue intensified and the opposition parties took to the streets.

The BJP stepped up the ante against Gandhi, saying India's democracy is not in peril but the Congress party has been brought to "political perish" by the people while the opposition party escalated its offensive, accusing the government of "undermining and weakening" democracy in the country by stalling Parliament to save a businessman.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the police did not allow the opposition MPs of around 18 parties to march in protest and present their case for a detailed investigation into the Adani issue. Later, opposition leaders emailed a letter to ED Director S K Mishra. The parties told the probe agency that "it cannot turn around and abdicate its jurisdiction".

The letter was signed by leaders of the Congress, CPI, CPI(M), JDU, SS (UBT), RJD, DMK, JMM, AAP, IUML, VCK, Kerala Congress and others.

The logjam continued in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Wednesday. In Lok Sabha, opposition members stormed into the Well of the House, raising placards and slogans, demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Adani matter while the BJP slammed Rahul,



The Congress along with several other opposition parties also took out a protest march. However, they were stopped by the police at Vijay Chowk

accusing him of insulting India and cast aspersions against the Speaker of the House

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla repeatedly urged the members to return to their seats and allow the house to run.

"This house is meant for holding discussions and dialogues. Let's talk about policy and have a good discussion on issues related to public welfare. If we want people's welfare and consider this house a temple of democracy, I will request that at least don't comment on this house," Birla said. "It is not right to comment, either inside (the house) or outside. Talk about issues and policy here. It is not right to bring placards like this here. I am warning you. This is wrong," he said.

Rajya Sabha proceedings were also disrupted amid uproar over the BJP's demand for Gandhi's apology for his "democracy under attack"

remark made in London. Both houses have failed to transact business so far in the second leg of the Budget session of Parliament that began Monday, Gandhi, during his recent UK visit, had alleged that the structures of Indian democracy were under "brutal attack" and there was a full-scale assault on the country's institutions.

His remarks triggered a massive political row, with the BJP accusing him of maligning India on foreign soil and seeking foreign interventions and the Congress hitting back, citing instances of Prime Minister Narendra Modi raising internal politics abroad.

Outside the Parliament also, the BJP kept the heat on Rahul Gandhi with Union minister Smriti Irani saying India's democracy is not in peril but the Congress party has been brought to "political perish" by the people for the kind of behaviour its leader (Rahul Gandhi) exhibited overseas.

Gandhi's grudge with Prime Minister Modi has taken the shape

Adani Group exercised 'improper influence'

New Delhi: The Opposition in its complaint to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against the Adani Group Wednesday claimed that the group has exercised "improper influence to obtain concessions and contracts from governments and regulated entities which they are unqualified for".

of a grudge with India, she charged, demanding that the Wayanad MP of the Congress apologise to Parliament for his remarks.

Addressing a press conference, Irani alleged that "at the feet of India's colonial past" Gandhi lamented the "lack of foreign intervention" in India's democracy. This is to bring to a halt India's resilient growth story under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, she said. She said the "lies that became a foundation of the Congress leader's conversation in England" were many.

Scare as 2 succumb to H3N2 virus in Maha



AGENCIES

Mumbai, Mar 15: Maharashtra has reported two fatalities suspected to be caused by influenza. One of them, a 74-year-old man, died of the H3N2 sub-type while the other victim was infected by coronavirus as well as the influenza virus, state Health Minister Tanaji Sawant told the Assembly Wednesday.

An official said one of the two deceased, a 23-year-old MBBS student, died due to a mixed infection caused by coronavirus and H3N2.

Sawant said state health machinery has been put on alert with 361 cases of influenza infections being reported in the state, and guidelines will be issued in the next two days. The minister also advised the use of masks in crowded places and social distancing.

"Two persons have died due to influenza, including a 23-year-old first-year student of MBBS in Ahmednagar. He tested positive for Covid-19 as well as H1N1 and H3N2 viruses. Another victim is a 74-year-old man from Nagpur who died of H3N2," Sawant said.

Influenza is caused by two types of viruses, H1N1 and H3N2, he

said, adding that guidelines will be issued in the next two days after a detailed discussion with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

"Influenza has been detected in Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Aurangabad, Thane, Sangli, and Kolhapur. There are 303 cases of H1N2 and 58 patients of H3N2," Sawant said. The minister said all district and rural health centres have been activated and put on alert along with oxygen projects. The preparedness will be reviewed every three hours, he added.

Sawant said the symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, and pneumonia. "Fever can subside in 48 to 72 hours if Tamiflu is taken with medical advice. Fever and body pains should be treated early," he said and appealed to people to use masks and follow social distancing norms besides maintaining personal hygiene including washing hands etc.

Meanwhile, Ahmednagar district officials have appealed to people not to panic in view of the death of the 23-year-old MBBS student.

Assam reports its first case

Guwahati (Assam): The first case of H3N2 influenza virus from Assam has been confirmed Wednesday. However, the Health Department official of Assam also said that Department is keeping a close watch on the evolving Seasonal Influenza situation across the state through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network on real-time basis.

AI URINATION CASE

Shankar Mishra moves Delhi HC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 15: Air passenger Shankar Mishra, who is accused of urinating on an elderly female co-passenger on a New York-Delhi Air India flight, has moved the Delhi High Court seeking constitution of an appellate committee to hear his appeal against his designation as an "unruly passenger" and banning him from flying for four months.

As a single-judge bench of Justice Prathiba M. Singh took up the matter, counsel for the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) stated that the committee is already in place.

The court then asked the DGCA counsel to place the constitution of the appellate committee before the court within a week's time and listed the case for the next hearing March 23. Mishra, who was arrested by the Delhi Police from Bengaluru January 7 for allegedly urinating on a 70-year-old woman while in a drunken state on a flight last November, was granted bail January 31 by national capital's Patiala House Court.

Additional Sessions Judge Harjot Singh Bhalla had granted bail on the bail bond of Rs 1 lakh, holding that what Mishra has allegedly done is disgusting but the court is bound to follow the law.

Mishra has claimed in his plea where the DGCA, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Air India have been made respondents, that on December 20, 2022, the complainant woman filed a complaint against him on the Airsewa grievance portal. Air India established an internal inquiry committee in response to the accusation. The committee issued an order January 18, 2023, identifying him as a "unruly passenger" and banning him from flying for four months.

Delhi court grants bail to Lalu, family

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 15: Delhi's Rouse Avenue court granted bail to RJD leader and former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad, his wife and former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi and their daughter Misa Bharti in connection with a case related to the alleged land-for-job scam.

The family appeared before Special Judge Geetanjali Goel around 11 a.m. The 74-year-old former railway minister reached the court on a wheelchair around 10 a.m. A huge number of RJD supporters gathered outside the court as Lalu appeared in the land-for-job scam case.

During the hearing, the Judge Goel noted that the CBI had filed its charge sheet without arrest. The court, however, granted bail and directed every accused to furnish Rs 50,000 personal bail bond. The bail plea was not opposed by the CBI. More details are awaited.

The court had February 27 issued summons to them in the case which concerns alleged appointments made in the Railways in exchange for land parcels given or sold to

Lalu Prasad's family while he served as the Union Railway Minister from 2004 to 2009. In its charge sheet, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said that irregular appointments had been made in the Railways, in violation of the standards and guidelines established by the Indian Railways for hiring.

It is alleged that the candidates gave Lalu Prasad's family members land at extremely reduced prices - up to one-fifth of the going market rates - directly or through their close relatives and family members. The CBI had filed the charge sheet in the case on October 10, 2022, against 16 persons including Lalu Prasad's wife Rabri Devi and daughter and sanction was then obtained to prosecute them.

Special Judge Geetanjali Goel of Rouse Avenue Courts had February 27 observed that, prima facie, the on-record report shows that offences have been committed under different sections of the IPC and the Prevention of Corruption Act. Taking cognisance of the said offences, the judge then summoned the accused persons.



Construction work underway for a 111 feet-tall statue of saint reformer Basavanna at the Bangalore-Mysore Road in Bangalore

Din in J'khand Assembly over employment policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, March 15: The Jharkhand Assembly witnessed stormy scenes for the third consecutive day Wednesday with the opposition BJP MLAs demanding that Chief Minister Hemant Soren should clarify provisions of the state's new employment policy.

Amid the ruckus by the BJP MLAs sporting saffron T-shirts that displayed '60-40 nai chalto' (60-40 will not be acceptable) and '1932 ke khatiyani ka kya hua' (What happened to the 1932 land records based policy), the House was adjourned multiple times by Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahato.

As soon as the House assembled for the day at around 11 am, legislators belonging to the saffron party trooped into the Well of the House raising slogans demanding clarification from the chief minister on the new policy which was objected to by the Speaker, saying that he cannot force the leader of the House to give a statement on the issue. Amid uproarious scenes,

the Speaker directed the authorities to stop the live telecast of the proceedings on Vidhan Sabha TV for some time during the Question Hour: Amid the chaos, AJSU Party's Sudesh Mahto remarked whether the Chair was favouring the ruling party which was objected to by the Speaker strongly before he adjourned the House till 12.30 pm. BJP MLA Amar Kumar Bauri said the government "failed" to implement the 1932 Khatiyani-based local policy as promised in its election manifesto.

RAILWAYS TO LAUNCH 18-DAY 'SHRI RAMAYANA YATRA'

The train will start its journey from Delhi's Safdarjung Railway Station April 7 and cover prominent places associated with the life of Lord Rama

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: Indian Railways will launch an 18-day "Shri Ramayana Yatra" through a Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist train to promote pilgrimage tourism, officials said Wednesday. The proposed train tour is going

to be operated in Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC tourist train having modern amenities, the officials said. So far, 26 Bharat Gaurav trains have been launched in the country.

The deluxe AC tourist train has a host of amazing features including two fine dining restaurants, a modern kitchen, shower cubicles in coaches, sensor-based washroom functions and foot massagers, the officials said.

The fully air-conditioned train provides two types of accommodation, viz 1st AC and 2nd AC. The train has enhanced security features of CCTV cameras and security guards for each coach, they said.

The tour will be completed in 18 days. The first halt of this train



will be Ayodhya where tourists will visit the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple, Hanuman temple and Saryuarti, the officials said. The subsequent destination will be Sitamarhi in Bihar from where tourists will be visit-

ing Sita's birthplace and Ram Janki Temple in Janakpur (Nepal) which will be covered by road.

Post Sitamarhi, the train will proceed for Buxar where the sightseeing would include Ramrekha, Rameshwarnath temple followed

by a dip into the Ganga. The next destination will be Varanasi where the tourists will visit the Kashi Vishwanath temple and the corridor, Tulsi Mandir and Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir. On completion, the passengers will be taken to Prayagraj, Shringverpur and Chitrakoot by road. Night stay will be provided at Varanasi, Prayagraj and Chitrakoot, they said.

Further, the next halt of the train will be Nasik wherein visit of Trimbakeshwar temple and Panchvati will be covered. The next destination after Nashik will be Hampi, the ancient Krishkindha city.

Rameshwaram will be the next destination of this train tour. Ramanathaswamy temple and

Dhanuskodi are a part of the visit. Next halt is at Bhadrachalam where Sita Ram temple will be a part of the tour. The last stop is Nagpur before the train starts back on its return journey.

Ramtek Fort and temple, where Lord Rama is believed to have stopped over for resting while in exile, is the sightseeing site at Nagpur. The train returns back to Delhi on the 18th day of its journey. Guests will be travelling roughly 7,500 km in this entire tour, the officials said. This special tourist train to promote domestic tourism will come at a price of Rs 1,14,065 per person for 2AC and Rs 1,46,545 for 1AC class cabin and Rs 1,68,950 for 1AC coupe.



international



The only way the Chinese could threaten Australia or attack it is on land. That is, they bring an armada of troop ships with a massive army to occupy us. This is not possible for the Chinese to do

PAUL KEATING | FORMER PM, AUSTRALIA

RECORD DIVE

David Vencel emerged from the depths of Switzerland's Lake Sils on Tuesday after a record dive beneath the ice to a depth of more than 50 meters without a wetsuit. The 40-year-old Czech diver's record vertical plunge to 52.1 meters in a single breath follows his entry into the Guinness World Records book for swimming the length of a frozen Czech lake in 2021



of the day quote

Do something. Do something big. I'm determined to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines



JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

We cannot afford to waste time while leaving strained Korea-Japan relations unattended. I believe we must end the vicious cycle of mutual hostility and work together to seek our two countries' common interests



YOON SUK YEOL | PRESIDENT, SOUTH KOREA

The IMF's toughest conditions have been met and we will sign the staff-level agreement within a few days



SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

China, Russia, Iran hold naval drills

Beijing: Naval forces from China, Iran and Russia — countries at odds with the United States — are staging joint drills in the Gulf of Oman this week, China's Defence Ministry said Tuesday. Other countries are also taking part in the "Security Bond-2023" exercises, the ministry said without giving details. Iran, Pakistan, Oman and the United Arab Emirates all have coastline along the waterbody lying at the mouth of the strategic Persian Gulf. "This exercise will help deepen practical cooperation between the participating countries' navies ... And inject positive energy into regional peace and stability," the ministry statement said.

Iran's fire festival kills 11; 3,500 hurt

Tehran: Eleven people were killed and more than 3,500 injured during celebrations for Iran's traditional fire festival ahead of the Persian New Year, state media reported Wednesday. The fire festival, called Chaharshanbe Suri in Farsi, is celebrated every year on the night of the last Tuesday of the Iranian calendar year, which ends March 20. "Since February 20, 26 people have died in incidents related to Chaharshanbe Suri," including at least 11 on the day of the event along with more than 3,550 injured, emergency services chief Jafar Miadfar told state television.

SHELLING, CLASHES, PROTEST

Khan escapes jail

Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan's Opposition party has been in the crosshairs for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana and selling them for profit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, March 15: In a temporary relief for Imran Khan, a Pakistani court Wednesday ordered the police to stop its operation outside the former prime minister's residence in Lahore to arrest him in a corruption case, amidst clashes between the security personnel and his supporters.

The Zaman Park in Lahore where Khan lives remained under siege for the last two days and the government sent the elite Rangers to aid police teams who struggled Tuesday to muscle their way through a ring of enraged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters to arrest party chairman Khan.

The police, with their riot gear on, closed in on Khan's home to comply with the court orders to arrest the 70-year-old cricket-turned-politician in the Toshakhana case. However, the police withdrew from the area after the Lahore High Court (LHC) ordered them to stop their operation at Zaman Park till 10 am Thursday.

The LHC summoned the Punjab inspector-general, chief secretary and Islamabad police (operations) head on a petition filed by PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry seeking order for the government to stop the police action at Khan's residence.

Khan's party Tuesday challenged the police operation in the Lahore High Court, requesting it to direct the government to end its bid to arrest the party chief.

"IGP Punjab Dr Usman Anwar



Clearly arrest claim was mere drama because the real intent is to abduct & assassinate. From tear gas & water cannons, they have now resorted to firing. I signed a surety bond last evening, but the DIG refused to even entertain it. There is no doubt of their mala fide intent

IMRAN KHAN | EX-PM, PAKISTAN

appeared before the court and told it that police had to launch the operation as Islamabad police had brought an arrest warrant for Imran Khan in the Toshakhana gifts case. We had to implement this order under the law. He said some 59 policemen have been injured during the clashes with the PTI workers," a court official told PTI.

"The PTI advocate told the court that the sessions court Islamabad had issued the order to ensure the

presence of Khan in the court on March 18 in the Toshakhana gifts case... Why police operation was launched to arrest him four days before, requesting it intervenes to save human lives," the official said.

The district and sessions court in Islamabad February 28 issued non-bailable arrest orders against Khan in the Toshakhana case about the concealment of the proceeds from the sale of state gifts. The Islamabad High Court Wednesday heard the petition by Khan against

DRONE CRASH INCIDENT

Moscow warns US aircraft away from its air space

WASHINGTON HAS SAID NEITHER IT NOR THE RUSSIANS HAD RECOVERED THE WRECKED DRONE

REUTERS



Washington, March 15: Moscow told Washington Wednesday to keep well away from its air space after a US drone intercepted by Russian jets crashed into the Black Sea, the first known direct confrontation between the superpowers since Russia invaded Ukraine.

The US military said the incident was caused by a mid-air collision after two Russian Su-27 fighter planes approached one of its MQ-9 Reaper drones on a reconnaissance mission over international waters.

The fighters harassed the drone and poured fuel on it, before one clipped the drone's propeller, causing it to crash into the sea, Washington said.

"This incident demonstrates a lack of competence in addition to being unsafe and unprofessional," said James B Hecker, commander of US air forces in Europe. White House spokesman John Kirby said US officials had told Russia's ambassador Anatoly Antonov that Moscow should be more careful in international air space.

Moscow denied the aircraft had

collided and said the drone had crashed after "sharp manoeuvres". It said the drone had "deliberately and provocatively" flown close to Russian air space with its transponders off, and Moscow had scrambled fighters to identify it.

"The unacceptable activity of the US military in the close proximity to our borders is a cause for concern," Antonov, the ambassador, said in a statement, accusing Washington of using drones to "gather intelligence which is subsequently used by the Kyiv regime to strike at our armed forces and territory".

"Let us ask a rhetorical question: if, for example, a Russian strike drone appeared near New York or San Francisco, how would the US Air Force and Navy react?" he said, calling on Washington to "stop making sorties near the Russian borders".

The Kremlin said there had been no high-level contacts with Washington over the incident. Bilateral relations were "in a very lamentable state" but "Russia has never refused constructive dialogue, and is not refusing now," said spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

Freddy toll rises above 270



REUTERS

least 21 people had died as of Tuesday, according to the disaster agency.

The overall death toll since Freddy first made landfall in February is now estimated at more than 270 in Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar.

Malawi's army, police, the local Red Cross and other aid agencies were conducting search and rescue operations, with commercial hub Blantyre one of the areas hardest-hit. Severe flooding and mudslides have swept away homes, broken bridges and destroyed roads. Heavy rain has continued to batter the Mozambican port of Quelimane and surrounding areas.

"Our priority now, as we take stock to what really occurred, is to search and rescue people in most devastated areas. We've rescued thousands but thousands more are still unreachable," said disaster agency spokesperson Paulo Tomas by telephone from Quelimane.

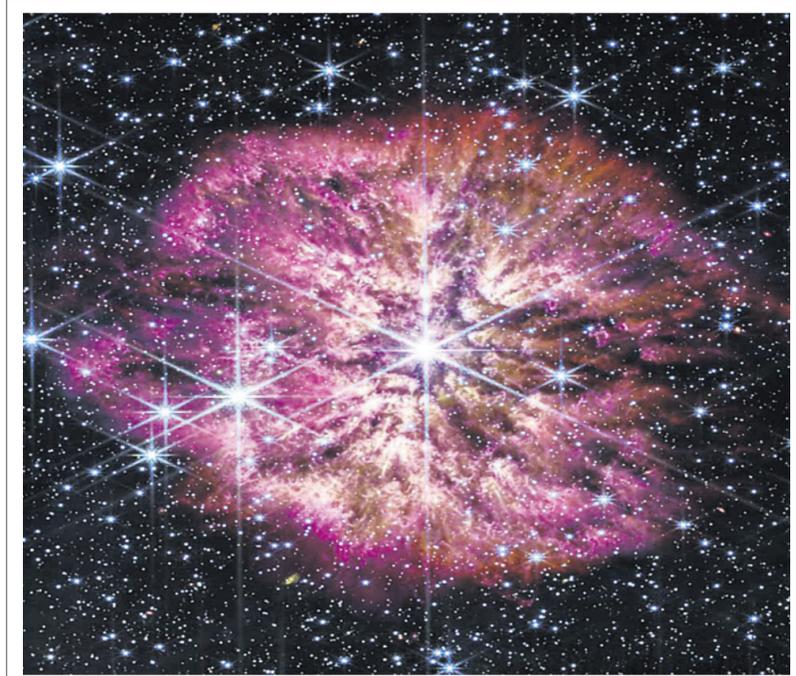
Power supplies in Malawi have been severely disrupted by the storm after the national electricity generation company had to shut down major hydroelectric power stations.

Blantyre, March 15: Malawi and Mozambique were racing to rescue survivors from Tropical Cyclone Freddy on Wednesday as the death toll rose above 270 from one of the most powerful storms recorded in the southern hemisphere.

Freddy tore through southern Africa for the second time in a month over the weekend and was still causing heavy rain on Wednesday, hampering relief efforts.

Malawi's disaster management department said in a statement that the death toll from the second hit stood at 225, up from 190 Tuesday, with 707 people injured and 41 missing.

In neighbouring Mozambique at



DYING STAR: The Webb Space Telescope has captured the rare and fleeting phase of a star on the cusp of death. NASA released the picture Tuesday at the South by Southwest conference in Austin, Texas

Eric Garcetti set to be confirmed as US Ambassador to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, March 15: President Joe Biden's close aide Eric Garcetti is set to be confirmed as US Ambassador to India after the Senate Wednesday voted on the cloture motion limiting debate on his nomination, reflecting that the ruling Democratic Party has enough votes for his selection for the key post.

The former Los Angeles mayor's nomination was pending before the US Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated for the prestigious diplomatic posting by Biden. The position has remained vacant for more than two years.

A cloture motion is a procedural motion that limits further debate on the matter at hand. It allows the majority to defeat efforts by the minority to delay or obstruct proceedings on a matter by showing the matter has the support of a super-majority.

The cloture motion on his nomination was passed 52 to 42 votes.

Garcetti's nomination was pending before the US Congress since July 2021 when he was nominated for the prestigious diplomatic posting by Biden. The position has remained vacant for over two years

The US-India relationship is an important relationship, said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. A final Senate vote is scheduled for later in the day.

Garcetti's nomination was not brought to the Senate floor for a vote during the last Congress as the ruling Democratic Party did not have enough support to get the 52-year-old close aide of Biden through.

Garcetti was not confirmed by the Senate in President Biden's first two years in office amid concerns by some lawmakers that the then-mayor had not adequately handled allegations against a former senior adviser of sexual assault and harassment.

President Biden renominated Garcetti to the same position in January this year.

Kenneth Juster, the last occupant of the ambassadorial residence of the US in New Delhi, stepped down in January 2021 after the change of government in America.

TIME, MONEY FOR LOVE

CHINA BRAINSTORMS WAYS TO BOOST BIRTH RATE

CHINA DUG ITSELF INTO A DEMOGRAPHIC HOLE LARGELY THROUGH ITS ONE-CHILD POLICY IMPOSED BETWEEN 1980 AND 2015. AUTHORITIES RAISED THE LIMIT TO THREE IN 2021, BUT EVEN DURING THE STAY AT HOME COVID TIMES COUPLES HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO HAVE BABIES

REUTERS

Hong Kong, March 15: Concerned by China's shrinking population, political advisors to the government have come up with more than 20 recommendations to boost birth rates, though experts say the best they can do is to slow the population's decline.

China dug itself into a demographic hole largely through its one-child policy imposed between 1980 and 2015. Authorities raised the limit to three in 2021, but even during the stay at home Covid times couples have been reluctant to have babies.

Young people cite high child-care and education costs, low in-

comes, a feeble social safety net and gender inequalities, as discouraging factors.

The proposals to boost the birth rate, made at the annual meeting of China's People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) this month, range from subsidies for families raising their first child, rather than just the second and third, to expanding free public education and improving access to fertility treatments.

Experts took the sheer number of proposals as a positive sign that China was treating its ageing and declining demographics with urgency, after data showed the population shrinking for the first time in six decades last year.



Demographers warn China will get old before it gets rich, as its workforce shrinks and indebted local governments spend more on their elderly population

"You cannot change the declining trend," said Xiuqian Peng, senior research fellow at the Centre of Policy Studies at Victoria University in Australia. "But without any fertility encouragement policy then fertility will decline even further."

A motion by CPPCC member Jiang Shengnan that young people work only eight hours per day so

they have time to "fall in love, get married and have children," was critical to ensure women are not overworked, Peng said.

Giving incentives to have a first child could encourage couples to have at least one child, she said. Many provinces currently only subsidize second and third children. To help alleviate the pressure

China needs a paradigm revolution of its entire economy, society, politics and diplomacy to boost fertility

YI FUXIAN | DEMOGRAPHER

on young families, the National Health Commission (NHC) issued draft rules Wednesday that would allow qualified individuals to run day care operations for a maximum of five children up to three-years old.

China's birth rate last year fell to 6.77 births per 1,000 people, from 7.52 births in 2021, the lowest on record.

Demographers warn China will get old before it gets rich, as its workforce shrinks and indebted local governments spend more on their elderly population.

China's birth rate last year fell to 6.77 births per 1,000 people, from 7.52 births in 2021, the lowest on record

Experts also praised a proposal to scrap all family planning measures, including the three children limit and the requirement for women to be legally married to register their children.

Arjan Gjonca, associate professor at London School of Economics, said financial incentives were not enough and policies focusing on gender equality and better employment rights for women would be likely to have more impact.

CPPCC proposals such as maternity leave paid by the government rather than the employer would help reduce discrimination against women, while increasing paternity leave removes a barrier for fathers in taking more parenting responsibilities, experts said.

business

of the day quote

The government is expected to release the new five-year foreign trade policy (FTP) by the end of this month, with a view to promoting the country's outbound shipments of goods and services

SUNIL BARTHAL | COMMERCE SECRETARY

This is the sixth upward revision this year. With positive feedback from depositors, we have been able to generate gross mobilisation of over ₹430 crore this year

LAKSHMINARAYANAN DURAISWAMY | MD, SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE

Shine 100 is Honda's next big leap to make mobility more accessible and affordable for people across India. We continue to prioritise the needs and aspirations of our customers

ATSUSHI OGATA | MD, PRESIDENT AND CEO, HONDA MOTORCYCLE AND SCOOTER INDIA

SHORT TAKES

12 companies garner ₹478cr through IPO

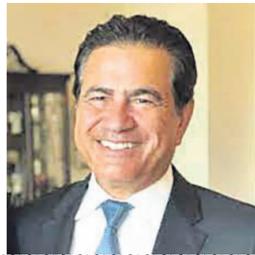
New Delhi: The primary market seems to be muted, with companies raising only ₹478 crore through 12 initial public offerings (IPOs) in January. Of the 12 IPOs, only two were of the main board that garnered ₹323 crore, while 10 small and medium enterprises (SME) mobilised ₹155 crore through the initial share-sales, according to the latest data with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed. In comparison, companies mopped-up funds to the tune of ₹5,120 crore through IPOs in December. Overall, a total of 38 companies collected over ₹57,000 crore in 2022, way lower than the ₹1.2 lakh crore raised by 63 companies in 2021, which was the best IPO year in two decades.

RBI, UAE central bank sign pact

Mumbai: The RBI and the UAE central bank Wednesday signed an agreement to enhance cooperation in various areas, including exploring interoperability of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC). Under the MoU (memorandum of understanding), the two central banks will collaborate on various emerging areas of FinTech, especially Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) and explore interoperability between the CBDCs of CBUAE and RBI, the Indian central bank said in a statement. According to the statement, the CBUAE and RBI will jointly conduct proof-of-concept (POC) and pilot(s) of the bilateral CBDC bridge to facilitate cross-border transactions of remittances and trade. This bilateral engagement of testing cross-border use cases of CBDCs is expected to reduce costs, increase the efficiency of cross-border transactions and further the economic ties between India and UAE, it added.

Edible oil imports rise 12% in Feb

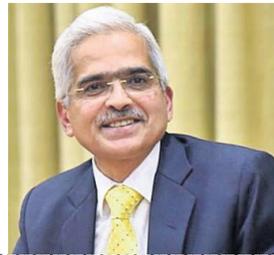
New Delhi: India's edible oil imports rose 12 per cent year-on-year in February to 10.98 lakh tonne on higher imports of crude palm oil, according to industry body SEA. In a statement, the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) Wednesday said that edible oil imports rose to 10,98,475 tonne in February from 9,83,608 tonne in the year-ago period. Imports of non-edible oil fell to 16,006 tonne in February from 36,389 tonne in the same month last year. Total imports of vegetable oils (edible oils and non-edible oils) went up 9 per cent to 11,14,481 tonne in February this year from 10,19,997 tonne a year ago.



India needs to remove impediments to the ease of doing business
MUKESH AGNI | PRESIDENT, USISPF

DAS WINS 'GOVERNOR OF THE YEAR' AWARD

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das Wednesday awarded the 'Governor of the Year' award for 2023 by the international publication Central Banking for captaining the financial markets through the turbulent periods of the pandemic and the crippling impact of the Ukraine war. Former governor Raghuram Rajan was the first to be conferred the title back in 2015 from the country



SVB FALLOUT GROWS

Credit Suisse leads Europe bank rout

Europe's bank index has seen more than 120 billion euros evaporate (\$127 billion) in value since Silicon Valley Bank's collapse

REUTERS

Britain, March 15: European bank stocks slumped Wednesday, with embattled Credit Suisse tumbling as much as 30% to another record low, on renewed investor concerns about stresses within the sector triggered by Silicon Valley Bank's sudden collapse.

Regulators and financial executives around the world have sought to assuage contagion fears after tech-focused lender SVB and another US bank failed last week, but worries persist. The drop in Credit Suisse shares led a 7% fall in the European banking index, while five-year credit default swaps for the flagship Swiss bank hit a new record high, highlighting increasing investor concerns.

Europe's bank index has seen more than 120 billion euros evaporate (\$127 billion) in value since March 8.

The Swiss National Bank declined to comment on Switzerland's second-largest bank, after its largest investor said it could not provide Credit Suisse with more financial assistance because of regulatory constraints.

Germany's financial supervisory authority (BaFin) said it saw no direct risk of contagion and the German banking system appeared robust and capable of digesting higher interest rates.

"Our main focus is currently on some smaller banks with little



CREDIT SUISSE SLIDES 30% TO RECORD LOW
THE DROP LED A 7% FALL IN THE EUROPEAN BANKING INDEX

Markets are wild. We move from the problems of American banks to those of European banks, first of all Credit Suisse

CARLO FRANCHINI | HEAD OF INSTITUTIONAL CLIENTS, BANCA IFIGEST

surplus capital and increased interest rate risks - we are closely monitoring these institutions," a BaFin spokesperson said in a statement.

In the United States, regional banks also fell, with First Republic Bank down 16%, Western Alliance Bancorp down 8% and PacWest Bancorp off around 24%.

Big US banks such as JPMorgan Chase & Co, Citigroup and Bank of America Corp slid by between 3.5% and 5.5%.

BlackRock Chief Executive Laurence Fink warned Wednesday that the US regional banking sector remained at risk, and predicted further high inflation and

SVB AFTERMATH

In the United States, the focus is shifting to the possibility of tighter regulation of banks, particularly mid-tier ones like SVB and New York-based Signature Bank, whose collapses triggered the market tumult. Moody's Investors Service Tuesday revised its outlook on the US banking system to "negative" from "stable", citing heightened risks for the sector. SVB's shutdown prompted President Joe Biden's assurances that the US financial system is safe and emergency steps giving banks access to more funding. In Britain, HSBC's top bosses have called on employees at SVB's rescued UK arm to assure clients "their deposits are safe and loans are supported" as the process of integration following its takeover begins, a memo from the bank showed. And in an attempt to avert a similar crisis down the line, the US Federal Reserve is considering tougher rules and oversight for midsize banks similar in size to SVB. Earlier, the Tokyo Stock Exchange banks index jumped more than 4%, after three straight days of heavy selling. Investors had been particularly concerned about the huge bond holdings of Japan's lenders, but Japanese finance minister Shunichi Suzuki said differences in the structure of deposits, meant local banks would not face incidents similar to SVB.

actions have helped stave off contagion risks. But markets remain on edge."

Rapid rises in interest rates have made it harder for some businesses to pay back or service loans, increasing the chances of losses for lenders who are also worried about a recession.

However, European Central Bank policymakers are still leaning towards a half-percentage-point rate hike Thursday, a source told Reuters, as they expect inflation will remain high.

Investors had begun to doubt the ECB's commitment to another big rate hike as SVB's collapse rattled markets. But the source said the central bank was unlikely to di-

verge from its plan to raise rates by 50 basis points Thursday because doing so would damage its credibility.

Unease sparked by SVB's demise has prompted depositors to seek out new homes for their cash.

Ralph Hamers, CEO of Credit Suisse rival UBS said it has benefited from market turmoil and seen money inflows.

"In the last couple of days as you might expect we've seen inflows," Hamers said. "It is clearly a flight to safety from that perspective, but I think three days don't make a trend."

Deutsche Bank Christian Sewing said that the German lender has also seen incoming deposits.

Banks from 18 nations open 30 special vostro accounts for trade in ₹

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: Several banks, including HDFC Bank and UCO Bank, have opened as many as 30 special vostro accounts as of date to facilitate overseas trade in the rupee, a top government official said Wednesday.

Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said as of date, some 18 countries have already opened special vostro accounts with Indian banks.

"About 30 banks from overseas countries have signed up with 30 banks on our side, so 30 accounts...The transaction has started in bits and pieces," he told reporters here. Sberbank and VTB Bank - the largest and second-largest banks of Russia, respectively - are the first foreign lenders to receive the approval after the RBI announced the guidelines on overseas trade in the rupee in July last year.

Another Russian bank Gazprom, which does not have its unit in India, has also opened this account with Kolkata-based UCO Bank.

The move to open the special vostro account clears the deck for settlement of payments in rupee for trade between India and Russia, enabling cross-border trade in the Indian currency, which the RBI is keen to promote.

The RBI has allowed the special vostro accounts to invest the surplus balance in Indian government securities to help popularise the new arrangement.

FOREIGN CAPITAL DRAIN

SENSEX FALLS FOR 5TH DAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 15: Benchmark BSE Sensex pared its early gains to close down by 344 points at a five-month low while Nifty slid below the 17,000 level Wednesday due to selling in banking, financial and telecom stocks.

Persistent foreign capital drain from the domestic market and lingering concerns over banks' health and high inflation dented market sentiment, traders said.

Falling for the fifth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed lower by 344.29 points or 0.59 per cent at 57,555.90 with 21 of its stocks ending in the red. After a gap up opening, the index surged over 570 points to touch a high of 58,473.63 amid positive Asian markets in early trade.

The stock markets, however, lost steam after a weak opening of European stocks which retreated on fears that the European Central Bank may hike rates by 25 basis points.

The Sensex tanked more than 1,000 points from the day's high to hit a low of 57,455.67. Marking its fifth straight day of losses, the broader NSE Nifty declined 71.15 points or 0.42 per cent to end at 16,972.15, with 28 of its stocks ending with losses.

Meanwhile, the rupee declined 25 paise to close at 82.62 against the US dollar Wednesday. International oil benchmark Brent crude gained 0.72 per cent to \$78.01 per barrel. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) offloaded shares worth ₹3,086.96 crore Tuesday, according to exchange data.

EXPORTS DIP FOR 3RD MONTH IN A ROW

Trade deficit narrows to \$17.43bn



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

EXPORTS DECLINED BY 8.8% TO \$33.88 BILLION
IMPORTS DECLINED BY 8.21% TO \$51.31 BILLION

New Delhi, March 15: Contracting for the third month in a row, India's exports declined by 8.8 per cent to \$33.88 billion in February due to slowdown in global demand, even as the trade deficit touched about a year low of \$17.43 billion during the month, according to official data released Wednesday.

Imports also declined by 8.21 per cent to \$51.31 billion as against \$55.9 billion recorded in the corresponding month last year.

Cumulatively, however during April-February this fiscal, the country's overall merchandise exports rose by 7.5 per cent to \$405.94 billion. Imports during the period increased by 18.82 per cent to \$653.47 billion.

The merchandise trade deficit for the April-February this fiscal stood at about \$247.53 billion.

The country's exports had contracted by 6.58 per cent to \$32.91 billion in December 2022. In February 2022, the trade deficit was \$18.75 billion. Last time, it was in January 2022 when the trade deficit touched \$17.42 billion.

Commerce secretary Sunil

Barthwal said that going by the trend, India's goods and services exports will cross \$750 billion in 2022-23. "We have kept the momentum despite the global headwinds. Exporters have kept the momentum. Services exports are doing extremely well. Trade deficit has really come down. Hopefully we will be doing better," Barthwal told reporters here. He added that the ministry has started exercise to fix the target for the next fiscal also. Export sectors that recorded negative growth during the 11-month period of this fiscal included engineering goods, gems and jewellery, cotton yarn/fabrics/made-ups, and plastic and linoleum.

Engineering exports dipped to \$98.86 billion during April-February 2022-23 from \$101.15 billion in the same period last fiscal. In the same period, gems and jewellery shipments declined to \$35.21 billion from \$35.32 billion during April-February 2022-23. Sectors which recorded positive growth included petroleum

India's imports from Russia rise five times

India's imports from Russia jumped about five times to \$41.56 billion during the April-February period of this fiscal due to increasing inbound shipments of crude oil from that country, according to the commerce ministry data. In 2021-22, Russia was India's 18th largest import partner, accounting for \$9.86 billion of imports. From just 0.2 per cent of all oil imported by India, Russia supplied 28 per cent of the total oil imported in January, Russia has become India's fourth largest import source in the first 11 months of the current fiscal. From a market share of less than 1 per cent in India's import basket before the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia's share of India's oil imports rose to 1.27 million barrels per day in January, taking the share to 28 per cent, according to energy cargo tracker Vortexa.

products, chemicals, pharma, electronic goods, rice, ready-made garments of textiles.

Gold imports during April-February this fiscal contracted to \$31.72, as against \$45.12 billion in the same period last year.

In the 11 months of the current fiscal, crude oil imports rose to \$193.47 billion as against \$140.67 billion in the same period of 2021-22. Similarly, imports of coal, coke and briquettes rose to \$46.28 billion during April-February 2022-23 as against \$27.12 billion in the year-ago period.

Jio launches True 5G in Sundargarh, Bhawanipatna, Jatni and Khurda

Bhubaneswar: Reliance Jio today announced the launch of its True 5G services in Sundargarh, Bhawanipatna, Janti and Khurda towns of Odisha, taking the benefits of True 5G to 17 cities across Odisha. Jio had previously launched True 5G services in the cities of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela, Brahmapur, Sambalpur, Balasore, Baripada, Bhubaneswar, Jharsuguda, Puri, Balangir, Nalco-Angul and Talcher, in the state. In most of these cities Jio has been the first and the only operator to launch 5G services. Nationally, Jio today announced the launch of its True 5G services in 34 additional cities in 10 States/Union Territories, including four in Odisha. Jio is working towards India's digital transformation by becoming the first telecom operator to extend futuristic and pioneering True 5G services to most of these cities. Starting today, the technological advantages of high-speed, low-latency, stand-alone True 5G services shall be made available to the people and businesses of these cities, opening new growth opportunities in the areas of tourism, manufacturing, SMEs, e-governance, education, healthcare, agriculture, automation, artificial intelligence, gaming, and IT.



NTPC Darlipali bags award in Environment Excellence

Bhubaneswar: NTPC Darlipali Super Thermal Power Station (2 x 800 MW) has been awarded with "Gold award" under Apex India Green Leaf Awards 2022 for Environment Excellence in Thermal Power Sector, March 14. The prestigious award will be handed over to NTPC Darlipali April 11 at Apex India Conference on SH&E and Expo 2022, wherein eminent speakers from India as well as other countries will participate and discuss on various topics like Environment management, safety management & waste management etc.



Global CEOs see India as a bright spot, leader in 5G rollout

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 15: Global CEOs of Nokia and Ericsson see India taking lead over the rest of the world in the digital infrastructure with the fastest 5G rollout, making it a bright spot for future economic growth.

While speaking at the CII Partnership Summit, Nokia Corporation President and CEO Pekka Lundmark said that India will be one of the key winners based on the developments happening around the world.

"What I believe is really impressive is the way India has been systematically building the digital ecosystem. Now the most ambitious and the fastest by a big margin 5G rollout in the world, these are our building blocks for the future economic growth in any country and India is really tak-

ing a lead in this respect," Lundmark said.

He said that India is now the second biggest market for Nokia and the company is exporting 5G base stations from here to other parts of the world.

"The next big thing in India will be industrial digitalization, manufacturing industry 4.0 and the opportunity to use this platform that you've been building to attract more and more manufacturing, and also very importantly R&D to the country," Lundmark said.

Ericsson, President and CEO, Borje Ekholm said 4G helped build digital companies in the US and China like Facebook, Tencent etc and with rapid 5G rollout India will have the most modern digital infrastructure.

"We saw all the big consumer applications developing over the



last few years. We have seen them develop in the two countries that built out the first 4G networks in the world. That happened to be the United States and it happened to be China. Almost all jobs in the consumer sector or digitalized in the consumer were created there. With 5G, we're going to

digitize society and those jobs will be created in the country where the digital infrastructure is built first," Ekholm said.

Both Ericsson and Nokia pitched for the world to follow a global standard to keep the cost of technology lower otherwise it will hurt economies of scale, dig-

With the pace India is building out 5G, it will have the most modern digital infrastructure in the world

BORJE EKHOLM | PRESIDENT AND CEO, ERICSSON

ital inclusion of rural masses and global economy.

General Atlantic (India), Managing Director, Sandeep Naik said that India is a top-growing economy and foreign direct investment worth \$100 billion is estimated to flow in India over the next 10 years.

"In terms of private capital entering India, we did around \$40 billion in 2021, I see that easily going over \$100 billion in the next five years. I think that is a

conservative number in terms of private capital coming into the country. As General Atlantic, we will have a fair share of that market," Naik said.

Nestle India, Chairman and Managing Director, Suresh Narayanan said that the spectre of inflation, especially food inflation is still there.

"We cannot wish it away and we cannot assume that it is not going to be haunting us for a while. This clearly has implications in terms of price values, cost, incomes, expenditures and all of that. The fact that we are a consumption driven economy, gives us a lot of hedge in terms of some of the global volatilities that we have. I think an important issue for us is to use the opportunity to digitally transform our businesses across the value chain," Narayanan said.

INDIA SHOOT DOWN OZ

Sindhu crashes out, Srikanth advances



ENTERTAINING ENCOUNTER: India and Australia players in action during their FIH Pro League match at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, Wednesday

Rourkela, March 15: India beat Australia for the second time in three days as the home side emerged victorious in the sudden deaths of the penalty shootout in the second leg match of the FIH Pro League here Wednesday. The two teams were locked 2-2 during regulation time. Veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh started in the shootout which India won 4-3 to notch up their fourth win on the trot at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium. The win cemented India's top position in the standings which they had achieved Monday. Vivek Sagar Prasad (second minute) and Sukhjeet Singh (47th) scored for India in the regulation time, while Nathan Ephraums (37th and 52nd) struck twice for Australia. In the shootout, captain Harmanpreet Singh, Dilpreet Singh and Sukhjeet scored before Vivek and Hardik Singh failed to find the nets. Harmanpreet struck again

in his second attempt, which turned out to be the winner as India ended their home campaign in style. For the visitors, Jack Welch and Ephraums failed to score before Welch scored in his second attempt. Craig Marais and Jack Harvie then levelled the scores in the shootout before Jake Whetton's miss in the sudden death sealed the deal for the home team. India had won both the double-legged matches against World Champions Germany 3-2 and 6-3 while they had beaten world number four Australia 5-4 in the first leg match Sunday. India got off to a rollicking start, earning a penalty corner in the second minute. Captain Harmanpreet's powerful drag-flick was padded away by Australian keeper Johan Durst. But the rebound was picked up brilliantly by Vivek Sagar Prasad who took a successful shot on goal from the top of the circle. Vivek was

playing his 100th match for India. Pushing Australia on the back foot, India created a couple of more PCs in the following minutes of the first quarter but could not make much of the opportunity. After a goalless second quarter, Australia finally made a breakthrough in the 37th minute when Nathan Ephraums converted a penalty stroke. It took India another ten minutes to regain the lead when Sukhjeet converted a field goal in the 47th minute. An unintended foul by an Indian defender in the 52nd minute, however, gave away a crucial penalty corner to Australia which was converted with a clever execution. Anand Gupte faking a drag-flick, the stopper passed the ball to Tim Howard who put the ball in between the posts. With scores levelled at 2-2 at the end of regulation time, both teams went into a tense shootout. Experienced goalkeeper Sreejesh once again proved just why he is a class apart as he not only made some fine saves but also took a crucial referral that saved the day for India and even won the extra point for his team. India will resume their Pro League matches in May when they travel to Europe to take on Belgium, Great Britain, Netherlands and Argentina.

more agility and attacking intent. Sindhu led 6-5 and then made it 16-13. But the Chinese shuttler won seven straight points to lead 20-16 before taking the first game in 21 minutes. In the second game, the two players were tied 5-5 but Sindhu committed a few unforced errors and was soon down 5-10. Sindhu recovered a bit to trail 7-11 but was soon down 9-16 before losing the second game and the match. Earlier during the day, India's women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand Pulella stunned seventh seeded Thailand duo of Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai 21-18, 21-14. The Indian duo will meet the Japanese pair of Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota in the pre-quarterfinals. In the men's doubles, sixth seeded India pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty beat compatriots Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala 21-13, 21-13. Satwik and Chirag will now face Chinese pair of Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang in the pre-quarterfinals.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, March 15: There seemed to be no end to PV Sindhu's wretched form as the star Indian shuttler made a first round exit from the All England Championships after losing to Zhang Yi Man of China in straight games here Wednesday. The World No.9 Sindhu lost 17-21, 11-21 in the 39-minute women's singles contest. This is the third time that Sindhu has lost her first round match this year. She had lost to Carolina Marin of Spain in Malaysia Open in January before exiting the Indian Open at the same stage in the same month. In the men's singles, top Indian Kidambi Srikanth beat Toma Junior Popov of France 19-21, 21-14, 21-5 in the first round match that lasted one hour three minutes. Srikanth is now up against seventh seed Kodai Naraoka of Japan in the pre-quarterfinals. Sindhu, who had recently parted ways with her coach Park Tae-sang of Korea, was rusty and subdued throughout the match with her World No.17 opponent showing

more agility and attacking intent. Sindhu led 6-5 and then made it 16-13. But the Chinese shuttler won seven straight points to lead 20-16 before taking the first game in 21 minutes. In the second game, the two players were tied 5-5 but Sindhu committed a few unforced errors and was soon down 5-10. Sindhu recovered a bit to trail 7-11 but was soon down 9-16 before losing the second game and the match. Earlier during the day, India's women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand Pulella stunned seventh seeded Thailand duo of Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai 21-18, 21-14. The Indian duo will meet the Japanese pair of Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota in the pre-quarterfinals. In the men's doubles, sixth seeded India pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty beat compatriots Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala 21-13, 21-13. Satwik and Chirag will now face Chinese pair of Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang in the pre-quarterfinals.

Chhetri may be playing his last season, feels head coach Stimac



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 15: Talismanic striker Sunil Chhetri "may be playing the last season" of his illustrious career, feels Indian football team head coach Igor Stimac, who is hoping that his star player would be saving his best for the last in the coming months. India's next big assignment is the AFC Asian Cup in Qatar from January 12 to February 10 next year. The 38-year-old Chhetri is set to play in his third continental showpiece, the most by an Indian, after playing a pivotal role in the qualification tournament here last year. "At his age, this will probably be his farewell from football.

Obviously, Sunil may be playing his last season, and definitely his last Asian Cup," Stimac said. "I'm quite sure that the upcoming months will be the best for Sunil Chhetri," he was quoted as saying in the official All India Football Federation (AIFF) website. The national team is currently having a five-day camp here ahead of the Tri-Nation Football Tournament in Imphal from March 22. Chhetri, the third most prolific international goal scorer among active players with 84 strikes behind Cristiano Ronaldo (118) and Lionel Messi (98), was part of the Indian teams that featured in the 2011 and 2019 Asian Cup. The 38-year-old Chhetri, who

made his international debut in 2005, played a key role in Bengaluru FC making to Indian Super League final to be played on Saturday. "Sunil Chhetri was nowhere to be seen this season. He was on the bench, waiting, preparing himself, working to take his weight down a few kilos, which is very difficult to handle at this age," said Stimac who has been given the target of reaching Asian Cup quarterfinals if he wants to continue at the helm beyond that tournament. "But when it was most needed, he was there for his club, helping them, and taking them to the finals. He scored the most decisive goals." With 10 months to go for the Asian Cup, the 106-ranked Blue Tigers will play their first international match since September when they take on higher ranked Kyrgyz Republic (94) and Myanmar (159) in the international tournament in Imphal. India drew 1-1 against Singapore and capped a 0-3 loss to Vietnam in their last international matches. Along with Chhetri, the Indian team has also ageing stars in central-defender Sandesh Jhingan and goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, and Stimac is well aware of the likely change in the core group of players in the near future. "We need to understand that some of them are of a certain age now. It's difficult to say, but good-byes need to come sometime," the 1998 World Cup bronze medallist Croatian said.

IYER RULED OUT OF ODI SERIES vs AUSTRALIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 15: India fielding coach T Dilip, Wednesday officially confirmed that middle-order batsman Shreyas Iyer has been ruled out of the upcoming three-match ODI series against Australia, starting Friday, due to recurrence of lower-back injury. That Iyer has been ruled out of ODIs, was first reported by PTI March 11. It is learnt that there is almost negligible chance of the Mumbaikar taking any part in IPL for KKR. He is currently back in NCA for extensive rehabilitation but it couldn't be confirmed whether he would also require surgery like Jasprit Bumrah and Prasidh Krishna. "Injuries are a part and parcel of the game. We have the best medical facilities and they are well-equipped... We are in co-ordination (with NCA). Shreyas ruled out of this series. (We will be able to provide) further update as and when we know," told India's fielding coach T Dilip told media in his debut press conference. The right-handed Iyer, who had made a comeback into the Indian side recently during the four-Test series against Australia after recovering from a back injury, complained of experiencing similar troubles during the fourth and final Test in Ahmedabad. The injury is expected to keep Iyer out of action for at least the first half of the 2023 IPL, which begins March 31.

Haaland spells doom for Leipzig

REUTERS

Manchester, March 15: Erling Haaland became the third player in Champions League history to score five goals in a game as he led Manchester City to an unrelenting 7-0 rout of RB Leipzig in the second leg of their last-16 tie Tuesday. Lionel Messi and Luiz Adriano are the only other players to have scored five goals in a match in European club football's elite competition. The victory, which equalled City's biggest European win, sent Pep Guardiola's side into the quarterfinals 8-1 on aggregate, with Ilkay Gundogan and Kevin De Bruyne also on target for City in a devastating display at the Etihad Stadium. It was a record-breaking night for the 22-year-old Haaland, who became Manchester City's top goalscorer in a season as he took his tally for the campaign to 39 goals, vaulting him past Tommy Johnson's mark from 1928-29. He also became the youngest player to reach 30 Champions League goals as he moved on to 33, hitting that mark in 25 games, the fewest ever. At 22 years, 236 days old, he is also the youngest player to reach that landmark, surpassing Kylian Mbappé, who was 22 years, 352 days when he scored his 30th Champions League goal. Haaland hinted he was in for a big night with a quick-fire brace, slotting home a penalty in the 22nd minute after Benjamin Henrichs was adjudged to have handled in the box following a VAR review, with



A NIGHT TO REMEMBER: Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring his fifth goal of the night against RB Leipzig at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, Tuesday

the Norwegian celebrating with a knee slide and salute. Haaland pressured Leipzig's keeper into a poor clearance that fell to De Bruyne. The Belgian's shot came back off the crossbar and bounced up for Haaland to head home. His fifth hat-trick in all competitions this season arrived in first-half stoppage time when Ruben Dias's header bobbed along the line and Haaland rushed in to force it into the net. Gundogan made it 4-0 in the 49th, driving a low finish into the bottom corner from the edge of the area, before Haaland capped his history-making night with two more from close range in the 53rd and 57th minutes. Guardiola substituted the Norwegian in the 62nd minute,

perhaps sparing Leipzig further humiliation, but denying Haaland the opportunity to score a record-breaking sixth in a single Champions League game. De Bruyne curled in a stunning seventh goal for good measure seconds before the final whistle. **Inter advance** Heroic defending and the woodwork helped Inter Milan reach the Champions League quarterfinals for the first time in more than a decade. Inter managed a 0-0 draw at Porto Tuesday to progress 1-0 on aggregate and join city rival AC Milan in the final eight. Napoli could become the third Italian team in the quarterfinals when it plays Eintracht Frankfurt Wednesday.

Ashwin regains top spot in Test rankings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, March 15: Senior India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's superlative show in the fourth Test against Australia has helped him regain the top spot among bowlers in the latest ICC Rankings issued Wednesday. Ashwin, who was the leading wicket-taker in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with 25 scalps, is 10 rating points ahead of England seamer James Anderson. Axar Patel climbed six places to 28 among bowlers. He also rose to the fourth spot in the all-rounder's list led by Ashwin and Jadeja. While pacer Jasprit Bumrah dropped to No.7 among bowlers. Virat Kohli moved seven places to 13th, while Shubham Gill jumped 17 places to 46th. Rishabh Pant (9th) and Rohit Sharma (10th) are the Indian batters in the top 10.

RCB finally end their winless run in WPL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, March 15: Buoyed by Virat Kohli's pep talk, Royal Challengers Bangalore continued to fight for another day as they notched their maiden five-wicket victory over UP Warriorz after five consecutive defeats in the Women's Premier League here, Wednesday. After a collective show from RCB bowlers led by Ellyse Perry (3/16), UPW were bowled out for a 135. RCB sailed past the target with 20-year-old Kanika Ahuja playing the match-winning knock of 46 (30b, 8x4, 1x6). She put on a 60-run stand with India keeper Richa Ghosh (31 n o, 32b, 3x4, 1x6) who played the second fiddle to perfection. Ahuja and Ghosh had joined forces at a stage when RCB were struggling at 60/4 in nine overs. But the two young batters played with a lot



Ellyse Perry (C) celebrates with teammates after taking a wicket, Wednesday

of conviction and command, not allowing UP Warriorz any opportunity to make further inroads until they had ensured a win for their side. RCB had a poor start, losing the in-form Sophie Devine (14) after early aggression and captain Smriti Mandhana (0), who had to endure yet another flop show with the bat.

The RCB captain was cleaned up by Deepti Sharma (2/26) off the third ball she faced. Devika Vaidya got the key breakthrough in the seventh over getting Perry (10) and in the ninth, Deepti removed the dangerous Heather Knight (24). In the first half of the game, Perry (3/16) was magnificent with

the ball for RCB despite being introduced late. The right-arm seamer halted UP Warriorz's charge when the pair of Grace Harris (46, 32b, 5x4, 2x6) and Deepti (22) threatened to take the game away from RCB, and also accounted for Shweta Sehrawat (6). Harris and Deepti led the recovery for UP Warriorz - tottering at one stage at 31/5 - with a brisk 69-run stand that took them past the 100-run mark. Earlier before the start of the contest, the former RCB captain Virat Kohli met the team and also had a talk with Mandhana, whose torrid run with the bat continued. **BRIEF SCORES:** UPW Women 135 (Grace Harris 46; Ellyse Perry 3/16, Sophie Devine 2/23, Sobhana Asha 2/27) lost to RCB Women 136/5 (Kanika Ahuja 46, Richa Ghosh 31 n o; Deepti Sharma 2/26) by 5 wickets.

Gauff, Fritz advance to Indian Wells quarters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indian Wells, March 15: Coco Gauff rallied from a break down in the third set to beat Swedish qualifier Rebecca Peterson, 6-3, 1-6, 6-4 and reach the quarterfinals of the BNP Paribas Open. Down 2-4, Gauff fought her way back and saved three break points while serving at 4-all before closing out the match in the next game. Four years ago, Peterson routed a then-14-year-old Gauff at a Challenger tournament in Michigan. "She whopped me really bad," Gauff said on court. "I think today was really a mental thing, just staying in the match. I wasn't play-

ing my best in some moments and I wasn't serving as well as I'd like to, but I think that my mentality kept me in." The sixth-seeded American next plays No.2 seed Aryna Sabalenka, who beat 16th-seeded Barbora Krejickova, 6-3, 2-6, 6-4. In their fourth-round matches, No.7 Maria Sakkari beat 17th-seeded Karolina Pliskova, 6-4, 5-7, 6-3. On the men's side, defending champion Taylor Fritz moved into the quarters with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Marton Fucsovics. No.5 Daniil Medvedev outlasted 12th-seeded Alexander Zverev, 6-7(5-7), 7-6(7-5), 7-5. No.10 Cameron Norrie beat sixth-seeded Andrey Rublev, 6-2, 6-4.