



NOTE TO SELF

Sara believes self-acceptance and appreciating yourself are the ultimate attire you can wear

LEISURE P2



CHINA FUMES

China hits out at Japan after its Prime Minister Fumio Kishida makes a surprise visit to Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL P10



SERIES DECIDER TODAY

Focus on Indian top order as they lock horns with Australia in the third and final ODI in Chennai

SPORTS P12

Significant human rights abuses in India: US report

REUTERS

Washington, March 21: The annual US report on human rights practices listed 'significant human rights issues' and abuses in India, including reported targeting of religious minorities, dissidents and journalists, the US State Department said.

The findings, released Monday, come nearly a year after Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the US was monitoring what he described as a rise in human rights abuses in India by some government, police and prison officials, in a rare direct rebuke by Washington of the Asian nation's rights record.

US criticism of India is rare due to close economic ties between the countries and India's increasing importance for Washington to counter China in the region.

Significant human rights issues in India have included credible reports of the government or its agents conducting extrajudicial killings; torture or cruel, inhuman

or degrading treatment or punishment by police and prison officials; political prisoners or detainees; and unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists, it added.

Advocacy groups have raised concerns over what they see as a deteriorating human rights situation in India in recent years under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Human Rights Watch has said the Indian government's policies and actions target Muslims while critics of Modi say his ruling party has fostered religious polarization since coming to power in 2014.

Critics point to a 2019 citizenship law that the United Nations human rights office described as 'fundamentally discriminatory' by excluding Muslim migrants from neighboring countries; anti-conversion legislation that challenged the constitutionally protected right to freedom of belief; and revoking Muslim-majority Kashmir's special status in 2019.

US criticism of India is rare due to close economic ties between the countries and India's increasing importance for Washington to counter China in the region

Contd...4



FISH PARADISE: A man feeds lemon shark and other fish inside the Aquatic Gallery of Science City in Ahmedabad, Tuesday

NABA DAS MURDER

Chargesheet will be filed in time: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 21: The chargesheet in minister Naba Das murder case will be filed within prescribed timeframe, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday.

Replying to the debate on grants for the General Administration and Public Grievances department in the Assembly, Patnaik said the only statement made so far is by him in front of the House. No police officer or any other authority has briefed anyone including the media on the sensitive case so far.

The probe, Patnaik said, is still under progress and within the time frame given by law for the filing of chargesheet and the same would be done. The CM said, "In this case, we have two objectives — unveil the truth behind this murder and ensure conviction of those involved." He said, "We have followed all scientific procedures involving agencies, including those from other states and Centre." Despite that, the Opposition is accusing the government of hiding something in the investigation which is deplorable and smacks of political opportunism, he said.

SC upholds OAT abolition

Top court dismisses petition of OAT Bar Association against Orissa High Court's 2021 order that upheld Centre's August 2, 2019 notification on tribunal's abolition

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

New Delhi, March 21: The Supreme Court Tuesday held that the abolition of Odisha Administrative Tribunal (OAT) by the Union government was constitutionally valid.

Observing that the Union government has the power to abolish state administrative tribunals (SATs), a two-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, dismissed the petition filed by OAT Bar Association against Orissa High Court's 2021 order that upheld the notification issued by the Centre's Department of Personnel and Training August 2, 2019, which abolished OAT.

"We hold that abolition of OAT was constitutionally valid. Article 323A (dealing with administrative tribunals) does not preclude the Union of India to abolish SATs. The decision to abolish the tribunal is not violative of Article 14 of the Constitution," the bench said.

The Bench, also comprising Justice Hima Kohli, ruled that the abolition of OAT is not violative of the fundamental right of access to justice as the Orissa HC has been hearing cases which were pending before the OAT prior to its abolition.



Article 323A (dealing with administrative tribunals) does not preclude the Union of India to abolish SATs. The decision to abolish the tribunal is not violative of Article 14 of the Constitution

SC BENCH LED BY CHIEF JUSTICE BY CHANDRACHUD

The SC observed that the Centre issued the August 2019 notification in a valid exercise of its powers under Section 21 of the General Clauses Act. "The failure to conduct a judicial impact assessment does not vitiate its decision to abolish the OAT," the court ruled.

The Bench, however, directed the Ministry of Law to conduct judicial impact assessment.

Rejecting the argument that principles of natural justice were being violated, the Bench held that public at large did not have a right to be heard before the policy decision was taken. The Bench also

noted that the state government did not consider any irrelevant or extraneous factors while arriving at the decision to request the Centre to abolish OAT.

The top court had reserved the judgement in the matter September 20, 2022.

Advocate Sibho Sankar Mishra, appearing for Orissa HC, had informed the SC that eight judges of the HC have been assigned to hear the transferred cases and fresh service matters.

Mishra also informed the SC that 49,817 cases were transferred to HC after OAT's abolition and

over 38,000 cases were disposed of.

The Centre had established OAT July 4, 1986 following the request of the state government to hear grievances of its employees.

In 2015, the Chief Secretary had requested the Centre to issue a notification under the Administrative Tribunals Act to abolish the OAT.

The state government was of the view that the tribunal was unable to serve its original objectives, particularly after the SC gave the judgement in L Chandra Kumar case of 1997.

As a result of this judgment, the very purpose of OAT for speedy redressal of grievances of the state government employees is not fulfilled as any way the aggrieved parties have to approach the HC before approaching the SC for a final verdict, the state government had stated in its letter to the Union government.

In 2019, the appellants filed a writ petition before the Orissa HC for quashing the August 2, 2019 notification and also against the decision taken by the state government. After considering the submissions, the Orissa HC had dismissed the petitions by its common judgment of June 7, 2021.

Only 93 of 1,776 DQ allotments cancelled

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 21: The state government has cancelled only 93 houses, plots or flats in the last eight years out of 1,776 allotted under Discretionary Quota (DQ), Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Usha Devi told the Assembly, Tuesday.



The minister said the state government has accepted the Tara Dutt Task Force report in the Cabinet in December 2014 and issued necessary instructions in January 2015 which stipulates that BDA, CDA and OSHB should cancel all allotments of plot/house/flat under DQ made after January 1, 1995.

The plots/houses or flats should be resumed to the concerned authorities. Accordingly, action has been taken at the level of developmental authorities and OSHB, she said.

The Task Force report also suggested that cancellation may not be done in respect of the allottee getting only one plot/house/flat through fair means and by following the prescribed procedure and provisions for such transfer.

As a result, many single allottees under DQ took shelter of the court of law for their right, title and interest over the allotted land patch. The Orissa High Court has pronounced judgment in favour of the single allottees.

ments under DQ, only 35 were cancelled and 29 criminal cases registered following Vigilance probe.

Similarly, the OSHB has distributed 52 houses, plots and flats under the DQ, of which, only 10 allotments were cancelled so far. The OSHB has registered 26 criminal cases against the allotments.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Record sales these days! But, why is everyone buying only platform ticket?

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	58074.68 ↑ 445.73
NIFTY	17107.50 ↑ 119.10
DOLLAR	82.65 ↑ ₹0.02
EURO	89.05 ↑ ₹0.60
GOLD	₹58,730 ↓ ₹776
SILVER	₹68,382 ↓ ₹456

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	34.6°C	32.6°C
MIN	20.0°C	20.6°C
Humidity	81%	85%
Rainfall	4.6mm	0.0mm
Forecast	Light rain very likely	

Mamata in Odisha, to meet Naveen tomorrow

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 21: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee arrived here Tuesday on a three-day trip to Odisha during which she is scheduled to meet CM Naveen Patnaik March 23, officials said.

Banerjee was received at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here by Odisha's Minister of State for Home TK Behera.

"Naveen Patnaik ji is a senior leader, and I have a programme to meet him Thursday," she told reporters after her arrival in Puri from Bhubaneswar.

Banerjee will stay at Nirman Nivas in the Pilgrim Town for two nights. "Adequate arrangements have been made for her stay in

Puri," SP KV Singh said.

The Bengal CM is likely to have an hour-long discussion with Puri district officials at 3pm Wednesday, and visit Srimandir to offer prayers at 4pm, the officials said.

On Thursday, Banerjee will reach Bhubaneswar around 4.30pm and meet Patnaik at his residence before leaving for Kolkata, they said.

Meanwhile, sources in West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress said the two non-BJP CMs may hold discussions on strategies for next year's Lok Sabha polls.

Banerjee had also met Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav.

Meanwhile, when asked whether any discussion on forming a 'third front' is on cards with Banerjee, CM Naveen Patnaik said, "Nothing has been discussed as yet."

PATNAIK SAID NOTHING HAS BEEN DISCUSSED AS YET ON FORMING AN OPPOSITION FRONT AHEAD OF THE 2024 POLLS

Mouse that inspired Steve Jobs auctioned for ₹1.48cr

AGENCIES

Boston, March 21: A computer mouse that inspired Steve Jobs to create Apple's first mice has clicked with bidders at a \$178,936 (around ₹1.48 crore) auction, the Daily Mail reported.

The early mouse and coding keyset was created by computing legend Douglas Engelbart, a pioneer of the controller system.

The lot sold for approximately 12 times its estimate of \$14,640 in a sale by Boston-based RR Auction recently.

The rare, early three-button computer mouse designed by Engelbart utilises two metal discs which correspond to the X-axis and Y-axis on the bottom to locate the position of the cursor, rather than a ball or optical light that came to be used later.

The coding keyset features five keys, permitting 31 key-press combinations, for typing and entering commands.



The pair of early input devices are like those used in Engelbart's iconic 1968 'Mother of All Demos.' The live demonstration featured the introduction of a complete computer hardware and software system.

It demonstrated for the first time many of the fundamental el-

ements of modern personal computing.

The 'Mother of All Demos' would prove to be massively influential, though it took well over a decade for Engelbart's ideas to become mainstream, partly thanks to Steve Jobs' adoption of some of the concepts.

action. Impressed by their user-friendliness, he aimed to simplify and incorporate these intuitive features into Apple's computers.

The Xerox mice cost \$300 apiece, didn't roll around smoothly, and had three buttons.

Jobs wanted a simple, single-button model that cost \$15.

Apple licensed Engelbart's mouse patent from SRI for around \$40,000, and Jobs hired the design firm IDEO to bring the mouse to the masses.

Apple's mouse—which used a rollerball mechanism—was introduced with the expensive Lisa computer in 1983, but achieved fame and popularity when the more affordable Macintosh was released in 1984.

"Engelbart's invention would, in part, change the course of modern life," said Bobby Livingston, Executive VP at RR Auction.

"This device played a crucial role in the evolution of computer history!"

In the early 1970s, much of Engelbart's original team ended up at Xerox PARC, where they continued their research in human-computer interaction and kept improving upon the mouse.

While touring the research facility in 1979, Steve Jobs witnessed the concepts of the mouse and the graphical user interface (GUI) in

THE RARE EARLY THREE-BUTTON COMPUTER MOUSE DESIGNED BY ENGELBART UTILISES TWO METAL DISCS WHICH CORRESPOND TO THE X-AXIS AND Y-AXIS ON THE BOTTOM TO LOCATE THE POSITION OF THE CURSOR RATHER THAN A BALL OR OPTICAL LIGHT THAT CAME TO BE USED LATER

THE CODING KEYS SET FEATURES FIVE KEYS, PERMITTING 31 KEY-PRESS COMBINATIONS, FOR TYPING AND ENTERING COMMANDS

leisure



ZENDAYA HAS TOM'S INITIALS ON HER RING

Zendaya Coleman appears to give a nod to her boyfriend Tom Holland with one of her accessories, a gold ring. The 26-year-old singer-actress wears a gold signet adorned with the initials of her boyfriend, Tom, in an elegant cursive font. The duo confirmed their romantic relationship in November 2021.

BYNES PUT IN PSYCHIATRIC CARE AFTER FOUND ROAMING NAKED

Actress Amanda Bynes has reportedly been placed on psychiatric hold after she was found walking the streets naked. The actress, who was in a conservatorship from August 2013 to March 2022, was seen walking naked and alone in Los Angeles.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Your day is packed full. There are negotiations, commitments, plans and decisions to wade through. You may feel low on energy and swamped due to lack of information and inputs from others. But clarity will return gradually as matters conclude, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Armed with ingenuity and lateral thinking, you are all set to take on today with practised ease, feels Ganesh. The toughest of problems will crumble like a house of cards before your intellect. A promotion or salary hike is also likely today. Money lenders and brokers will have a profitable day, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, you will do an amazing job in dividing your time between work and family. Despite your preoccupation with work, you will take time off for your family, and even plan out a small outing, leaving them pleasantly surprised. Also, your dreams are about to come true.

CANCER
You will spend your day reflecting on your past and thinking what went wrong, predicts Ganesh. But keep in mind that your mistakes won't lead to the end of the world, unless you are a nuclear scientist. So get your act together, and stop brooding over your mistakes.

LEO
On some days, the sun doesn't seem to have risen from the east, and neither does it seem you have gotten up on the right side of the bed. You start your day in a tensed atmosphere in the morning, caused by some annoyance on the part of one of your family members. But the day is not as bad as it seems.

VIRGO
Razor-sharp and aesthetic to the last cell in your body, entertain and enthrall people with your guile, especially at a social do, says Ganesh. But conserve that zest and save the time to pay due attention to matters of supreme importance, warns Ganesh.

LIBRA
Monotonous is the word to describe the way things have been till now, but no more, says Ganesh. It might be a very good idea for you to take a break from things around you and go on a small trip. Invigorate yourself with a small picnic with family and friends. It shall go a long way in boosting your energy and enhancing your awareness and wisdom in the coming future.

SCORPIO
You are in a mood of introspection and analysis, says Ganesh. This is likely to give you a clear vision in the days to come. Your systematic approach towards work will provide you room to think out of the box. Your innovative ideas may bag applause from superiors and bosses.

SAGITTARIUS
Begin your day with a renewed zest. Consider a jump case of lucrative offer. Cracking a telephonic interview may prove to be a milestone in your career path. Your dedication and determination towards your work and goals makes you a deserving employee, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You will find the day to be taxing, mostly because of the amount of work delegated to you, says Ganesh. But it will take trouble quite an effort to dampen your spirit. You will be in the fray in the latter part of the day, but will leave your rivals trailing behind in terms of business strategies. Success will be yours if you ensure to be mindful of your moves.

AQUARIUS
You may huff and puff, but today is not the day when you'll finish what you started. Don't lose heart, the future is promising. Take a break, says Ganesh, you've worked enough. The results are on the way.

PISCES
An important day today, you can expect to reach a much-awaited milestone either on the domestic front or at the workplace, says Ganesh. Expect your professional status and your social standing to receive a boost.

Sara speaks on self-acceptance

Mumbai: Sara Ali Khan, who is quite active on social media, recently spoke about getting criticised by people for her 'etiquette'. While speaking to a news portal, she also said that people wanted to send her to 'finishing school'.

In the interview, she revealed how her raw personality was looked down upon by some people. The actress said, "People wanted to send me to finishing school. They were like, 'She doesn't know how to sit or how to speak; she blabbers about anything; she stays like a hippie'".

She said that she puts on a 'facade' all the time. She said, "I am putting on a facade all the time. I keep forgetting that from time to time, but I am actually a really cool girl. And I really like to be me sometimes. I am not supposed to be somebody else all the time. I was given a lot of acceptance for being who I am. So when you are accepted for being who you are, why would you be anyone else?"

Meanwhile, Sara's upcoming film, *Gaslight*, which also stars Vikrant Massey and Chitrangada Singh, is receiving praise on the internet.

AGENCIES



Mrunal: It's okay to be naive and vulnerable

Mumbai: The *Jersey* actress Mrunal Thakur, who is currently busy promoting her film, *Gumraah*, with Aditya Roy Kapur, took to social media Tuesday afternoon and shared a crying picture of herself. She revealed that she was 'naive' and 'vulnerable'. She also posted a video later and said that she was doing fine now.

The actress shared a picture of herself crying on her Instagram story. Along with the picture, she wrote, "Yesterday was tough. But today I'm stronger, wiser, and happier! Everybody has pages in their stories they don't read out loud, but I'm choosing to read mine out loud because maybe someone out there needs to learn the lesson I learnt. It's ok to be naive and vulnerable." She later shared a happy video and assured everyone that she was doing fine.

Fans were seen reacting to her picture, uplifting the spirit of the actress through their messages.

On the work front, Mrunal was recently seen making a special appearance in Akshay Kumar and Emraan Hashmi's *Selfie*. Next, she will be seen in *Pippa* with Ishaan Khatter.

IANS



DHWANI-SPECIAL FILM FEST 2023

Festival kicks off with theme of inclusivity for differently-abled

Bhubaneswar: The 9th edition of the two-day DHWANI-Disability Film Festival, organised by Aaina, an Odisha-based voluntary organization in collaboration with FICCI FLO, Bhubaneswar, begins here at the Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra Odissi Research Center Tuesday. The festival emphasizes the theme of 'celebrating diversity and inclusion'.

Chief Secretary Pradeep Jena attended the festival and suggested that the films be showcased in all districts and blocks by the SSPED department and asked for help from all the stakeholders involved in the state government's aim to ensure the educational, economic, and administrative inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Film Fest Chairperson and disability rights activist, Jeetendra Biswal, spoke about the special film festival and the significance of March 21 as Down Syndrome Day.



Film festival inaugurated in the presence of Chief Secretary Pradeep Jena

Namrita Chahal, Chairperson of FICCI FLO, opined, "We should know disabled people for their abilities and not for their disabilities."

Noted theatre personality Anant Mohapatra said in his speech at the Dhvani-FLO special film festival that films with accurate and

interesting representations of disability shown at this festival counter negative stereotypes.

The day concluded with a vote of thanks from Sneha Mishra, Aaina's secretary, and the screening of 25 films in the 1 minute, 5 minute, and 30 minute categories.

PNN

Odia film Manaska is all set for big release

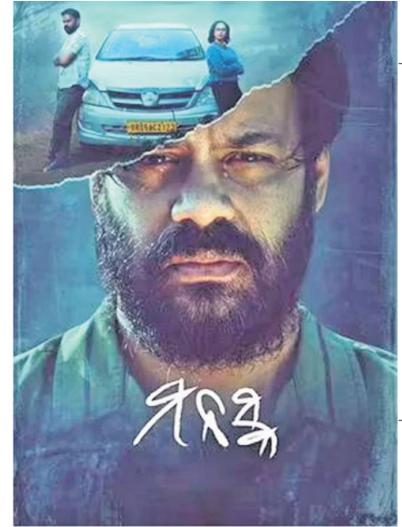
Bhubaneswar: The Manas Sahoo-directed movie, *Manaska*, will soon hit the silver screen March 24. The director believes that the never-before-told story will definitely be appreciated by the Odia audience.

According to the director, the real meaning of 'Manaska' is a centralised mind. If the mind starts leaning towards negativity, then it weighs heavily on life. In such a state of mind, the protagonist, 'Tanis', carries the burden of life on his shoulders. This is both a psychological and philosophical story that continues to develop in the form of horror.

Sharing the excitement of its release, Manas said, "The movie is a genuine effort by like-minded people to bring out an Odia movie with good content. We are hopeful that people will visit theatres and watch it."

An alumnus of the FTIL, Manas Sahoo is a State Film Award recipient known for his experimentation with pictorial language.

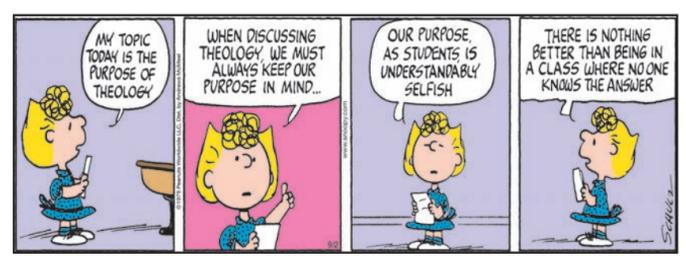
Bhabani Prasad



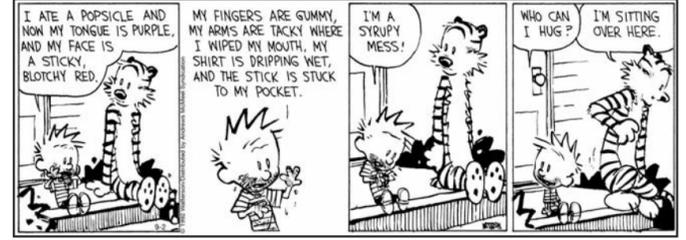
Majhi is the producer of the movie. The film stars many actors from the Odia film industry, such as Ashwin Ray Mohapatra, Madhumita Barik, and Choudhury Bikash Das.

PNN

PEANUTS



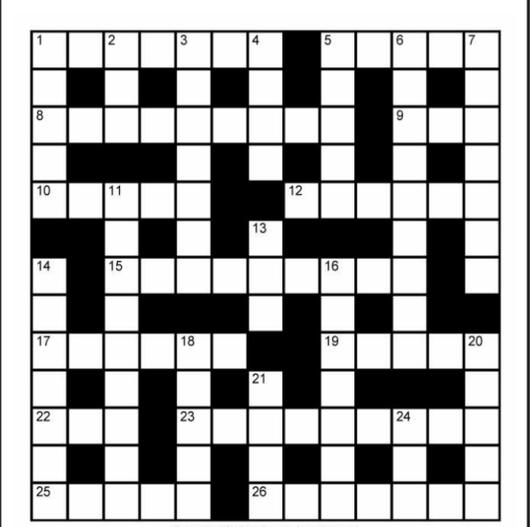
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY

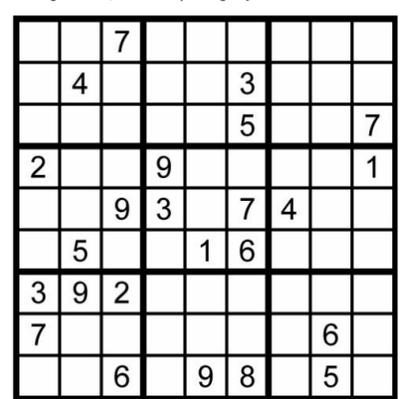


FUN post CROSSWORD

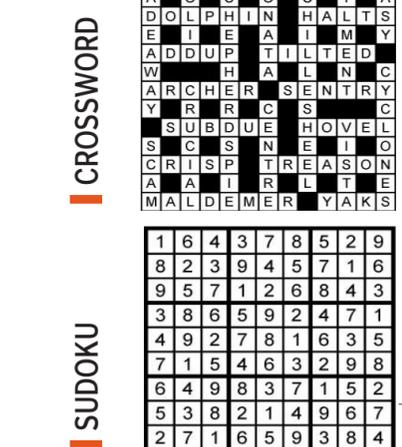


- Across**
- 1 Ceremonial staff
 - 5 Theatre employee
 - 8 Athletically inclined
 - 9 Dyad
 - 10 Superior planet
 - 12 Countries of Asia
 - 15 Devoted
 - 17 Silvery metallic element
 - 19 Pose
 - 22 Peculiar
 - 23 Trunk item (5,4)
 - 25 African antelope
 - 26 Strength
 - 7 Farm fowl
 - 11 On the fence, so to speak
 - 13 Drink additive
 - 14 Venetian transport
 - 16 Can be found in a teapot?
 - 18 County in SE England
 - 20 Suspicious
 - 21 Stringed instrument
 - 24 Japanese money
- Down**
- 1 Slough
 - 2 Stumble
 - 3 Newspaper type
 - 4 Tritons
 - 5 Peptic lesion
 - 6 Short-tempered

SUDOKU



SOLUTIONS



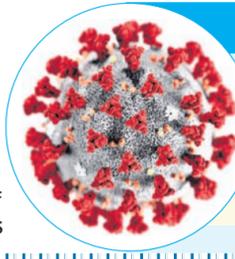
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



ARTISTES' DEMO

Rajya Prachina Kala O' Sanskruti Punarudhara Parishada members staged an agitation at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, to press for fulfilment of their 17-point charter of demands



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,25,67,355	65,54,88,717	68,19,943
India	4,46,96,338	4,41,59,182	5,30,806
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Din in House over MLA's remark on bureaucrat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 21: The Assembly Tuesday witnessed pandemonium with the Opposition BJP raising the issue of a BJD MLA's remark during a bureaucrat's recent visit to Nabarangpur and the ruling BJD coming down heavily on the Centre's decision to discontinue Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY). The issue of the 5T Secretary's visit was raised during Zero Hour when Leader of Opposition Jayanarayan Mishra criticised the remark of a BJD lawmaker who had described the visit as "CMO has come to



IN THE HOUSE

Nabarangpur on a visit". Taking a jibe at the BJD MLA for describing the 5T Secretary as the CMO, Mishra asked, "The 5T Secretary can be private secretary to the Chief Minister, but how can he be the CMO (Chief Minister's Office)?" "As we know 5T is being called as team work, technology, transparency, transformation and time limit. Earlier, the BJD leaders claimed that 5T is a concept or a vision of Chief Minister, but now they are claiming that it is CMO," the senior BJP leader said. Referring to the BJD MLA's remark that he would not hesitate to "become a slave in order to serve the people", the LoP said, "The honourable member needs to uphold

Treasury bench members created ruckus over the slashing of 5kg rice by the Centre with the discontinuation of the PMGKAY

the dignity of MLAs. The way he described himself as a slave is uncalled for." Congress legislator Santosh Singh Saluja also said that the dignity of MLAs has been defamed by one BJD member's announcement that he will not hesitate to be a "slave for doing service to the people". When Mishra was speaking on 5T, all the treasury bench members created a ruckus over the slashing of 5kg rice by the Centre

with the discontinuation of the PMGKAY. They showed posters in the House alleging Central negligence. Targeting the BJD members, Mishra said: "Earlier, the Odisha government took credit by claiming that it was providing rice at ₹1 and we do not mind if they distribute it for free after the PMGKAY is stopped." Pointing out that the cereal was being distributed free of cost due to Covid-19 outbreak, he said, the relief has been stopped as the pandemic is over. The state government is free to distribute free of cost rice among the people, Mishra said. Unable to run the proceedings, the Speaker adjourned the House twice till 12 noon and a discussion was later held on the Home department's demand.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



SC adjourns hearing on Odisha Univ Act

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 21: The Supreme Court Tuesday adjourned the hearing on a petition challenging Odisha University (Amendment) Act 2020 after the University Grants Commission (UGC) sought time to file response on the state government's affidavit. A two-judge bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Manoj Misra posted the next hearing to April 25. During the hearing, solicitor general Tushar Mehta's office sought time to go through the affidavit filed by Odisha government and to file its response. Earlier, the Supreme Court had stayed the Odisha Universities (Amendment) Act, 2020 for three

months in May 2022. The apex court in October 2022 extended the stay until further order. The petitions have been filed in the apex court against the Orissa High Court order of January 2022 wherein the HC had upheld the validity of the impugned act. The HC had observed that the changes made in the procedure of recruitment of VCs and teachers for universities were not unconstitutional. The UGC had contended that the act is in conflict with the UGC Regulations, 2018, issued under University Grants Commission Act, 1956. The regulations govern the minimum qualification of teachers, manner of appointment of VCs and other service conditions of teaching and non-teaching staff.

DJ Azex died by suicidal hanging: Autopsy report

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 21: Commissionerate Police Tuesday received the post-mortem report of popular DJ Azex aka Akshaya Maharana which confirmed that Azex died of asphyxiation caused by suicidal hanging. "I talked to the medical officer who carried out the autopsy and also personally went through the post-mortem report of DJ Azex. As per the report, it was a case of suicide and the injuries found in his body are ante-mortem in nature. There are ligature marks on his body indicating suicidal hanging and asphyxiation which was the pri-



mary cause of death," said Capital Hospital director Laxmidhar Sahoo. Meanwhile, investigating officials probing the matter Tuesday interrogated the girlfriend of Azex at her Info Valley residence here. The questioning continued for more than an hour in which police tried to elicit vital clues regarding her strained relationship with the deceased. The family members of Azex

accused his girlfriend and her new boyfriend of blackmailing him. The couple was allegedly threatening to make viral some videos of Azex on social media. Meanwhile, police also received the call detail records of Azex, his girlfriend and the male accused. However, sources in Kharavel Nagar police revealed that the investigating officials are yet to get any conclusive evidence regarding abatement of suicide. Notably, the body of Azex was found hanging in his room at Kharavel Nagar late Saturday evening. The 29-year-old was taken to Capital Hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

Petrol bunk attacker a history-sheeter: Cops

Bhubaneswar: Commissionerate Police Tuesday slapped Section 110 of CrPc against the 24-year-old Bikram Das who, along with two others, was nabbed for assaulting employees of a petrol pump at Kalpana Square under Badagada police station, Monday. Police sources revealed that Bikram is involved in five robbery cases and several other cases in Jagatsinghpur and Bhubaneswar. Bikram and his aides - Manas Barik and Chinmaya Khuntia - were Tuesday produced before the court that sent them to jail. "Manas had come to the Petrol pump and asked the staffers to fuel his bike Monday. Without asking the quantity of fuel, one of the staffers filled petrol worth ₹233," a police official said. After an argument, the staffers emptied the fuel tank while an annoyed Manas left the place leaving his bike there. He turned up there along with his aides armed with weapons and launched an attack.

Centre: State got ₹9K cr disaster grant in 4 yrs

New Delhi: Evading a direct response to demand for special focus state status to Odisha, the Union Ministry of Finance Tuesday said that the Centre has released over ₹9,000 crore to Odisha in last four years as disaster grants. The Union Finance Ministry, in response to a question asked by BJD MP Sasmit Patra regarding the special focus state status to Odisha, said ₹9,312.10 crore has been released to Odisha from 2019-20 to 2022-23. Similarly, ₹5,018 crore has been released as Central share of State Disaster Risk Management Fund while ₹4,294.10 crore released as additional central assistance from National Disaster Response Fund. In 2019-20, ₹3,294.10 crore was released as additional central assistance from NDRF, it said.

"Technology is becoming an enabler and it helps us create a seamless, integrated world where geographical distance no longer remains a barrier in collaborating for a better future"

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

India to drive innovation at ITU

Inauguration of Area Office & Innovation Centre of International Telecommunication Union at New Delhi

Boost knowledge sharing for Academia, Start-ups and SMEs for use of ICT applications
Only Area office of ITU embedded with Innovation Centre, fully funded by India

Unveiling of 6G Vision Document

To empower every Indian with Technology
Strengthen India's Digital Economy

Launch of 6G Testbed Project

R&D Platform for Start-ups
Rollout newer technologies in rural and remote areas

Launch of 'Call Before u Dig' (CBuD) Mobile App

Synergy with PM GatiShakti to reduce inconvenience to citizens
Will protect national underground assets from damage and ensure unhindered services

by

Shri Narendra Modi

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

22nd March 2023 | 12:30 PM | Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

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MAHANADI WATER DISPUTE

Centre extends tenure of tribunal

State, in its petition, claimed that Chhattisgarh has constructed several barrages on the river obstructing the water flow to Odisha



Tribunal has not passed any significant order in the matter till now. The tribunal had in February 2019 reserved its order on the interim application filed by Odisha demanding a specific flow of Mahanadi water to the state during non-monsoon months, November to May, and stay on construction and operation of barrages constructed by Chhattisgarh on the river.

During the last hearing February 13, the tribunal had said that it will undertake the site visit before commencing trial of the Mahanadi water dispute and cross-examination as well as tendering of witnesses. It had asked the counsels of both states to sit with assessors and draw a schedule for the visit.

It is to be mentioned here that Odisha and Chhattisgarh have filed petitions in the Mahanadi water dispute tribunal in respect to sharing of Mahanadi river water. Odisha in its petition claimed that the state of Chhattisgarh has constructed several barrages on the river obstructing the water flow to Odisha. Odisha has sought stay on the construction and operation of barrages being built on the Mahanadi river and also for maintaining specific flow of water during the non-monsoon months, November to May.

was ended March 11. The Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal was constituted by the Union government March 11, 2018 for the period of three years following the directions of the Supreme Court to adjudicate dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over the sharing of Mahanadi river water. The Centre in 2021 had further extended the tenure of the tribunal by two years till March 11, 2023 as the tribunal could not deliver verdict in the matter. Significantly, the Mahanadi



RAIN WOES: People waded through water at Badambadi Main Road in Cuttack following heavy rainfall that submerged most parts of city, Tuesday OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK
New Delhi, March 21: The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti has extended the tenure of Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal, constituted to adjudicate inter-state river water dispute, up to December 2024 as the tribunal could not deliver verdict on the issue within the stipulated time, official sources said Tuesday.

Chief Secretary feted at Vani Vihar alumni meet

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 21: Enthusiasm and pride went up as friends of 1986-batch of Vani Vihar students met here to felicitate their batchmate Pardeep Kumar Jena,



now the Chief Secretary of Odisha. Many of the alumni of the premier university have achieved excellence in different fields like administration, education, industry, scientific research, social work, information technology, corporation and democratic polity. Each one of them exuded confidence that Jena, by virtue of his proven sincerity, integrity and commitment from his student days, would def-

initely make trend-setting contributions towards transforming Odisha.

Jena, urging his batchmates to do their best in their respective fields said, "Sincerity and hard work bear fruits sooner or later".

On the occasion, KIIT & KISS founder, and Kandhamal MP Achyuta Samanta along with the Chief Secretary jointly opened Indian Sub-Continent affordable edition of the book Voluntary Organisations (VOs) and Rural Development in South Asia authored by Umakanta Mohapatra, who also belonged to this batch. The main content of the book was also made available to the students/researchers free of cost through Google Books. Anybody could access to the free pages by typing name of the book and the author in books.google.co.in.

More than 100 alumni of 1986 batch from various disciplines joined this get-together event.

Vig directed to seize assets of former BDO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 21: A special court here Tuesday directed the Superintendent of Police (Vigilance) of Bhubaneswar division to confiscate assets worth ₹26.56 lakh belonging to former BDO of Khandapada block in Nayagarh district Sanatan Sethi, OAS-I, in connection with a disproportionate assets (DA) case.

"Today (Tuesday) the learned Authorized Officer, Special Court, Bhubaneswar has passed final order for the confiscation of the immovable and movable assets worth ₹26,56,971 of Sanatan Sethi, OAS-I (retired), Ex-BDO, Khandapada block, dist-Nayagarh in Confiscation Case No 09/2015 which includes immovable assets i.e. triple storeyed building and boundary wall over plot No 315/3954 and plot No 315/3955 in Mouza Sinduria, Nayagarh and movable assets (Bank & Postal deposits)," revealed a Vigilance notification.

The vigilance sleuths had carried out raids at different places including the office and residence of Sethi May 9, 2008, on allegations of amassing wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income.

State's 1st e-reading corner opened at Rama Devi Univ

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 21: Mo College Abhijan Chairperson Akash Dasnayak inaugurated the state's first E-Reading room for visually challenged girl students titled 'Binodini Mohapatra reading corner', Tuesday at Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar.

Addressing the gathering, chief guest Dasnayak said, "Mo College Abhijan is dedicated to making every college and university across the state progress holistically. In fact, Mo College ignites the enthusiasm in the life of every student."

He thanked Registrar Shyamali Mohapatra who has donated a handsome amount for the construction of the E-Reading corner on behalf of her mother Binodini Mohapatra. He further said that if people are focused on their goals then nothing is impossible to achieve in this world. The Reading corner is equipped with advanced jaws software through which students can



access the audio books.

A visually challenged +3 Final year student of Political Science department Jhilli Pradhan said, "It's a great day that we received a digital library all thanks to our beloved VC Aparajita Chowdhury, faculties and Mo College Abhijan. It was our wish to study with the best of the facility and today our dreams have come true."

Aparajita Chowdhury while addressing the student said, "Our University has Computer literacy for each student and for these visually challenged students we are also planning to update all our fa-

ilities at the E-learning centre where special software will be added and special training for these students will be available."

Registrar Shyamali Mohapatra said, "My mother Binodini Mohapatra has always encouraged me and my siblings to progress in life like a flowing river. I am glad that today as Alumni of this University I donated to the Reading corner which is a reality today, all thanks to the outstanding efforts of Mo College Abhijan."

Around 100 visually challenged girl students were present during the event.

INDUSTRY-READY INFRA AT TOP OF AGENDA: DEB

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 21: To accelerate the industrial development of the state, the Industries department has been provided ₹710.20 crore in the State Budget 2023-24, with ₹556 crore being allocated for development of industry-ready infrastructure, an amount about 25 per cent higher than the previous year's allocation, said Industries minister Pratap Keshari Deb here Tuesday.

Addressing the media on the highlights of Budget 2023-24, the minister said that development of world-class industrial infrastructure is one of the major agenda of the state government for which IDCO has already developed various sector-specific industrial parks including the Plastic Park at Paradeep, Aluminium Park at Angul, Seafood Park at Deras and Electronics Park at Bhubaneswar. "All these projects have been completed and functional. With state of the art infrastructure and attractive land price, these projects are attracting investors to invest in Odisha. In the Seafood Park and Plastic Park, more than half of the leasable area has already been

allotted. In the EMC Park, RBI has started construction of hyper-data centre and other such projects are in pipeline," he added.

Speaking on new initiatives of the department, Deb said that in the coming years, the department has a target for construction of workers' hostel at 13 places having a combined capacity of 26,000 across the state. "Workers' hostel will be a value proposition as a basic infrastructure for MSME and large industries coming to set up units inside government-developed industrial estates. Similarly, government has a target to incur expenditure about ₹200 crore for land bank for procurement of government and private land, making it ready for investors," he said.

For availability of 'plug n play infrastructure' in the state, IDCO has completed modern IT Incubation Centre cum OHUB spreading over 3.57 acre of land and total built up area of 4 lakh square feet. With the infrastructure, other resources to help startups like guidance, tech support, access to investors, and networking have been made available for them to survive and scale. Similarly, IDCO has set up commercial space



at strategic locations at Dhenkanal Tower (close to NH 55) of built-up area of 1.5 lakh square feet and at Jharsuguda Tower (close to SH 10 along Biju Expressway) of built up area 2.5 lakh, informed the minister.

Briefing about several initiatives taken by the government, Department Principal Secretary Hemant Sharma said that more than 5,000 acres of land along the Biju Expressway has been identified for development of some 25 clusters of 10 districts, starting from Rourkela (Sundargarh) to Motu (Malkangiri); special provi-

sion of incentives has been made for units to be set up along Biju expressway in the notified industrial areas; steps have been taken for development of large area industrial estates from surrendered land by PSUs.

MSME sector second largest in providing employment

Similarly, Deb, who is also the MSME Minister, told the media that to further strengthen the status of small and medium industries in the state, the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) department has been allocated ₹570.35 crore in the 2023-24 State Budget,

an increase of almost 6 times compared to the ₹96.80 crore allocated in 2017-18.

The minister informed that a new scheme has been introduced in FY 2023-24 whereby interest on working capital loan, availed from banks by manufacturing MSE's and manufacturing exporters, where cash credit (pre-shipment and packing credit in case of exports) limit is up to ₹10 lakh, shall be fully reimbursed by the state government. And in cases where the cash credit limit exceeds 10 lakh and runs upto 3 crore, the interest on working capital shall be reimbursed to the extent of 25 per cent.

"The reimbursement amount will be credited to the bank account of the beneficiary industrial units directly through the direct benefit transfer (DBT) mode half yearly. The tentative expenditure under this scheme will be ₹150-200 crore in FY 2023-24. There is a provision of ₹10 crore in the B.E of the FY 2023-24 and the requirement of the balance funds will be met in the Supplementary Budget," added the minister.

Saying that MSME is the second largest sector after agriculture in providing employment

opportunities in the state, Deb informed that under Odisha MSME Policy, in the current fiscal year about 98 micro and small enterprises have been sanctioned CIS worth ₹20.00 crore as against Budget provision of ₹20.00 crore. Under this scheme, in the fiscal 2023-24, there is a Budget provision of ₹25 crore.

Further Deb added that under Odisha Food Processing Policy (OFPP) 2013 & OFPP 2016, in FY 2022-23 CIS amounting to ₹19.03 crore has been disbursed to sixty-nine food processing enterprises against Budget Provision of ₹20.00 crore. Moreover in FY 2023-24, there is a Budget provision of ₹20 crore under this scheme. In the FY 2022-23, subsidies amounting to ₹9.09 crore has been disbursed to 272 eligible enterprises towards Interest subsidy on term loan, reimbursement of net SGST, employment cost subsidy and quality assistance under provisions of industrial policy resolution.

With an outlay of ₹70 crore, decision has been taken for establishment of MSME Park in 30 districts. ₹100 crore has been released to IDCO for establishment of MSME Parks at several places of the state.

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Ex-DFO, ACF sent to jail

MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR PLANTATION PROGRAMME

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, March 21: Two senior forest personnel including a former divisional forest officer (DFO) and an assistant conservator of forest (ACF) in Kalahandi district have been sent to prison over their alleged involvement in irregularities in a plantation programme in Narla range under North forest division of Kalahandi district in FY 2015-16 and 2016-17, officials said Tuesday.

The accused have been identified as former Kalahandi North DFO Lalitendu Jena and present ACF Susant Samantaray. They had surrendered in court Tuesday. However, they were remanded to judicial custody after Special Vigilance judge Srikant Mishra rejected their bail applications. There are five more accused in the case. However, they are yet to surrender and are currently absconding, police said.

Sources said that a plantation programme was launched on 1,450 hectares of land in Kherabondi,



DFO Lalitendu Jena



ACF Susant Samantaray

Narla and Sargiguda forest beats under the 'Ama Jungle CAMPA Yojana' during the two fiscals mentioned above.

A complaint was filed before the Lokayukta that the forest officials had misappropriated ₹23,63,940 meant for the programme. Orissa POST had then published a report in this regard. Later, the Lokayukta directed the

state Vigilance department to conduct a probe into the charges.

Vigilance sleuths investigated the matter and registered cases against Jena, Samantaray, former rangers Antaryami Das and Nruttyaraj Majhi, forester Sampad Kumar, forest guards Manas Ranjan Sahu and Madhu Patel. All were charged for misappropriating over ₹23 lakh.



FOR A POLLUTION FREE WORLD: Members of 2nd Light Youth Association at Bantala in Angul district took out a cycle rally, Tuesday to create awareness on pollution and adoption of a healthy lifestyle on the occasion of 'International Day of Forests'

Woman fakes pregnancy to get govt benefits

THE LADY HAD UNDERGONE TUBAL LIGATION IN 2017 TO STOP GIVING BIRTH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, March 21: In a surprising incident, a woman allegedly staged a fake pregnancy drama for months together in a bid to avail all the government benefits meant for pregnant women, officials said here Tuesday.

The matter came to the fore after reports about the theft of an unborn baby from her mother's womb at the Mathili community health centre turned out to be false after an investigation by the police.

The woman identified as Kaushalya Bhuyan of Birenepalli village under Mathili block in Malkangiri district claimed that she was pregnant a few months back and registered her name with the local auxiliary nursing midwife (ANM) to get all the government benefits. She said Monday that she was experiencing labour pain and visited the Mathili com-



community health centre.

There a doctor conducted check-up and found out that she was not pregnant. However, Kaushalya and her family members refused to believe the doctor and alleged that the 'unborn' child had been stolen from her womb.

Later, the hospital authorities lodged a complaint at the Mathili police station. Police launched a

probe and took the woman for another check up to the district headquarters hospital. There also the doctor verified the findings of his counterpart at Mathili and certified that the woman was not pregnant.

When questioned by the police, Kaushalya finally confessed to her wrongdoing. She said she lied all the while only to avail of the government benefits meant for

pregnant women

Sources said that Kaushalya even lied to her husband that she was pregnant. She used to visit the ANM worker every month and avail of all the items supplied by the government under its welfare scheme, sources added.

However, Kaushalya's concocted story got exposed when she was admitted to the hospital for childbirth, Monday. What is more surprising to note is that she had undergone tubal ligation in 2017, a surgery to prevent childbirth.

Meanwhile, Malkangiri's chief district medical officer (CDMO) Prafulla Kumar Nanda said Tuesday that an investigation into the matter will be carried out and necessary disciplinary action will be taken against Kaushalya. He added that if any ANM member is found guilty of aiding Kaushalya, then action will also be taken against her also.

FARMERS STARE AT BLEAK FUTURE

Unseasonal thunderstorms destroy maize cultivation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Umerkote, March 21: Severe unseasonal thunderstorms that ensued under the influence of the westerly winds has destroyed swathes of maize cultivation here in Nabarangpur district just ahead of its harvest.

The crop loss has dealt a major blow to the farmers as they were expecting good returns by selling maize. This has pushed the farmers into distress as they ponder how to repay the loans they had taken to raise the crops and manage family expenses.

Fed up over the crop loss, farmers have warned to commit suicide if the state government does not come to their rescue and provide them financial assistance. They now stare at a bleak future as they do not have any other means of livelihood except cultivation.

Sources said that Umerkote block received 64.20 mm rainfall as well as hailstorms during the unseasonal rainfall in last two days. With the wind blowing heavily during the thunderstorms, the entire maize harvest was destroyed. Houses and properties in Umerkote block also suffered damages.

Farmers in Murtuma,



Chilkalpadar, Beheda, Khadka, Silati and Benra areas had grown maize on their farmlands. However, the thunderstorm razed the maize cultivation to dust. The calamity came at a time when fruits had just started appearing on the plants and the farmers were preparing to harvest their crops after a month. However, the thunderstorm destroyed all their hopes and drove them to the streets, they alleged.

A farmer alleged that they had to spend around ₹22,000 to ₹25,000 to raise the maize crops on farmlands having irrigation facilities during this season. They had borrowed the amount but the calamity destroyed all their hopes. They alleged that not a single official from Agriculture and Revenue

department has met them to make an assessment of crop loss while they are yet to get any financial assistance for last year's crop loss. They warned they will die by mass suicides if they are meted out with similar treatment this year.

When contacted, chief district agriculture officer Bijay Kumar Pattnaik confirmed the development stating that crop loss has occurred in four blocks of the district. He said that the department officials have rushed to the affected areas to make an assessment of the losses suffered by farmers. He said he will recommend the Odisha government for providing financial assistance as per norms after receiving the reports on crop loss in the affected blocks.

Sex racket busted in Balasore, 13 held

PNN & AGENCIES

Balasore, March 21: Balasore police busted Tuesday a sex racket in this town. A total of 13 people including traffickers and pimps were arrested in this connection, officials informed. The police also rescued six women including two Bangladeshi nationals following raids at different places.

All the accused persons were booked under Sections 366B, 368, 370, 34 of the IPC and 5 & 6 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, Balasore SP Sagarika Nath told mediapersons here Tuesday. She informed that the racket was exposed after they initiated an investigation based on information from a West Bengal-based NGO which alleged that women from their area were trafficked to Odisha for immoral purposes.

Nath said that after getting information from the NGO, teams were formed and they initially

zeroed in on a house at Basta. However, they could only manage to apprehend a couple residing in the house under fictitious names. The SP added that based on information received from the couple further raids were conducted in Singla and Khurda and six victims were rescued.

The SP said the victims had been brought into the sex racket by the accused with the promise of better quality of life. Two separate cases have been registered under Basta and Singla police stations in connection with the incident, Nath added.

Nath also informed that investigation is still continuing as those arrested have provided leads to certain other places inside Odisha and in West Bengal. She added that Balasore police have contacted their counterparts in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal to follow up on the information.

Patient killed as ambulance hits divider in Nuapada

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, March 21: A patient, who had just been released from a private hospital died in the wee hours of Tuesday after the ambulance he was travelling in crashed against a divider in Boden block of Nuapada district. Three others travelling in the same vehicle suffered serious injuries in the accident.

The deceased was identified as Janak Manahira of Dharanimala village in Boden block. He was returning in the ambulance along with two others after treatment at a hospital.

Police officials said Janak was returning to his village after being discharged from a private hospital in Raipur. However, fate had conspired otherwise as the ambulance crashed against the divider after the driver lost control of the vehicle. The accident took place at Bireskela locality within Boden police limits.

While Janak died on the spot, the three others, including the



driver, were critically injured. Locals rushed them to the community health centre at Boden where they are currently undergoing treatment.

Police reached the spot and started an investigation as to how the accident occurred. Locals said that ambulance was travelling at a high speed and in the dense fog the driver could not see the divider and crashed into it.

The body of the deceased has been sent for post-mortem. Police said that once the report arrives, the body of the victim will be handed over to the family members for the last rites.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
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Tender Notice No. PC/MW/EP/2022-23/83
Date: 16.03.2023

SL. NO. 01: TENDER NO. 04225162, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: COPPER CONTACT WIRE 150 SQ MM, QUANTITY: AS PERTS.

SL. NO. 02: TENDER NO. 05235075, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: RAILWAY SIGNALLING CABLE SIZE 30 CORE, QUANTITY: AS PERTS.

SL. NO. 03: TENDER NO. 05235055, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: 06 QUAD JELLY FILLED CABLE, QUANTITY: AS PERTS.

SL. NO. 04: TENDER NO. 05235056, SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ITEM: RAILWAY SIGNALLING CABLE 24 CORE, QUANTITY: AS PERTS.

Tender Opening Date: For Sl. No. 01, 02 & 04 dt. 10.04.2023, Sl. No. 03 dt. 17.04.2023.

Regarding detailed notice, EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.iraps.gov.in and www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in.
Principal Chief Materials Manager/
PR-1099/N/22-23
Bhubaneswar

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
BOLANGIR (R&B) DIVISION: BOLANGIR
Mail ID: - eepwd.bgr@rediffmail.com, eepwd.bgr@gmail.com
Ph. No. 06652-232374

e - Procurement Notice
BID IDENTIFICATION No: BGR R&B/37/2022-23
No.1180/Dtd.14.03.23

No.B-1370:1. The Executive Engineer, Bolangir (R&B) Division, Bolangir on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in single cover system in ONLINE MODE for construction of Building work and Electrical work detailed in the table below from eligible contractors.

- Nature of work : Building Work, Electrical work
- No. of tender : 1 No. Building Work
1 No. Electrical Work
- Tender cost : Rs. 6,000/- (Tender paper cost)
- Class of contractor : "C" and "B" (Registered with CDMS) (Building work), HT (for Electrical work)
- Date & time of sale & Receipt of Bids : From Dt. 22.03.23 11.00 A.M
Dt. 03.04.2023 up to 5.00 P.M
- Date of opening bid : Dt. 04.04.2023 at 11.30 A.M
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Sd./- Executive Engineer
Bolangir (R&B) Division
OIPR-34028/11/0029/2223

Where herbal medicines are a way of life

Researcher informs about the medicinal value of plants found in the Mali hill range

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, March 21: Hari Pangri, a traditional healer and researcher from Koraput district narrated Tuesday the efficacy of medicinal plants growing on Iswaramali, Deomali and Hatimali hills that form a part of the Malaybant or Mali hill range. Pangri is the director of 'Sri Guptheshwar Herbal Medicine and Traditional Technology Research Institute' which he had founded in 2000 along with nine other healers.

Sources said that the Mali hill range is the elixir of life for the people of 45 picturesque villages nestled in it. The hills, belonging to the state Forest department provide many medicinal plants that residents of the villages



use to cure their ailments. Incidentally the villages are located just five kilometres from Semiliguda town in this district. So many patients from Semiliguda visit Pangri's institute for treating their ailments.

Pangri spoke on the utility of medicinal plants while attending the 'International Visitors Leadership Training

Programme' held recently at the University of Oregon in the USA.

At the meeting Pangri spoke elaborately on the harsh heat effects and how climate change is affecting the rich biodiversity and medicinal plants growing on the Mali hill range. He also spoke on the herbs and medicinal plants and their utility in protecting

people in rural areas from various diseases.

Pangri was the only person from Odisha who was invited to attend this international conference. He drew appreciation after he spoke on the utilities of traditional medicinal plants like Bisalyakarani, Gangasiuli and Kochila and using traditional knowledge to treat thousands of people visiting him from various parts of Odisha.

Pangri said that the 'disharis' (workers in his institute) collect herbs, leaves, roots and flowers from the Mali hill range and use them for making traditional medicines. He added that some of these medicines can be preserved for a substantial period of time if stored in a proper manner and at a specific temperature.

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DEMAND NOTICE

Notice under Section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 for Enforcement of Security Interest

The Bank has granted following various credit facilities to the under mentioned Borrower & the amount outstanding dues mentioned below has not been paid in time. Therefore Demand Notice under Sec. 13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 was issued by the Authorized Officer against the following Borrower/Guarantor of the Bank of India, Nayagarh Branch but the same could not be served on the below mentioned party. Therefore, the contents of the same including the amount outstanding, Loan amount and details to the secured assets are herein furnished below.

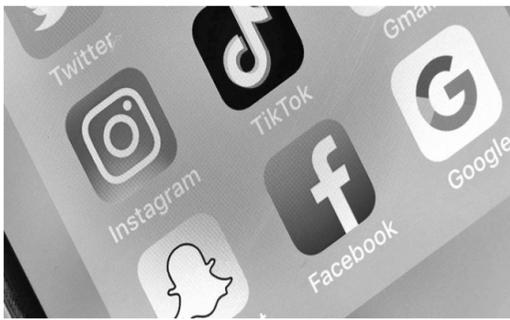
NAYAGARH BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower / Guarantor	Nature / Limit	Date of NPA / Date of Demand Notice	Amount as per Notice under SARFAESI Act	Description of mortgaged Property
Borrower: Mr. Bijaya Kumar Sahoo, S/o- Jagannath Sahoo / Guarantor: Mrs. Bull Sahoo, W/o- Bijaya Kumar Sahoo, Both are At: Deulli, PO: Mali Sahi, Dist.: Nayagarh, PIN-752070	Housing Loan / ₹15,00,000/-	28.02.2023 / 04.03.2023	₹13,98,116/- + interest & expenses thereon	All the part and parcel of land/ land & building situated over Khata No.: 369/355, Plot No.: 471, Area: Ac.0.03dec. and Plot No.: 471/1429, Area: Ac.0.03dec., Kissam: Gharabari at Mouza: Deulli, PS: Nayagarh, DSRO: Nayagarh, Tehsil: Nuagaon, Dist.: Nayagarh, standing in the name of Mr. Bijaya Kumar Sahoo.

As the above mentioned Borrower/Guarantor of the Nayagarh Branch have defaulted in repayment of the principal loan/ facility in installments/ interest/ both, the account has been classified as NPA, in accordance with the directions or guidelines issued by the RBI. In spite of our repeated demands you (borrower/guarantor) have not paid any amount towards the amount outstanding in your account, you have not discharged your liabilities. Hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of Demand Notice, required u/s 13(2) of the said Act and Rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are hereby called upon to pay the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, incidental Expenses, Charges etc. within a period of 60 days from the date of Notice, failing which we will take necessary action under the provisions of sec 13(4) of the said Act, against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking necessary action under the provisions of sec 13(4) of the said Act, against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of your secured assets and sale them. If the dues are not fully recovered in the course of these actions against secured assets, then the Bank reserves the right to take action by filing recovery action against you before DRT/Court for recovery of the same. It may be noted that under the provisions of section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, right of redemption is available to you, by paying the dues of the Bank together with all cost, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank at any time, before the date of publication of notice for public auction or inviting quotations or tender from public or private treaty for transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale of the secured assets. Please take note that as per sub section (13) of the aforesaid Act, after receipt of this notice, you are restrained from transferring or creating any encumbrances on the aforesaid secured assets whether by way of sale, lease, license, gift, mortgage or otherwise. This notice is issued without prejudice to the rights of the Bank available under any other law.

Date: 21.03.2023, Place: Bhubaneswar
Authorized Officer, Bank of India

FOCUS INNOVATION

FIXING PLATFORM ECONOMY



Digital-platform companies could deploy the latest wave of artificial intelligence much more responsibly than they have so far, and two current court cases serve as warnings to those pursuing socially destructive business models. But we also need concerted public-policy action to fix the industry

allow a user's social network to be transferred to a different platform. The same "interoperability" rationale allows you to keep your cell-phone number when you change carriers. Social-media and digital-content consumers should be able to vote with their feet when they don't like what a platform is promoting.

Second, and even more importantly, we need to force an adjustment in the prevailing Big Tech business model, which is based on harvesting vast amounts of user data and monetising it through digital-advertising sales. This business model explains why disinformation, outrage, and insecurity are so prevalent online. Emotional manipulation maximises user engagement, enabling more intrusive data collection and higher profits.

A tax on digital advertising is one of the only practical ways to change this extraordinarily destructive business model. It would reduce platforms' temptation to maximise user engagement through emotional manipulation; and, if coupled with limits on data collection, it would provide incentives to develop alternative approaches, such as subscription-based models.

Another advantage of a digital-advertising tax is that it could be set even higher for content promoted to people under 21. Selling cigarettes or alcohol to minors is a serious criminal offense. While it is not feasible to forbid young people from seeing content that damages their mental health, a high rate of taxation on advertising revenues derived from promoting such material is entirely appropriate. The proceeds could be devoted to strengthening mental-health programmes, not least those for teen suicide prevention. If there is any doubt about which content is hurting young people, we can just ask the AI recommendation algorithm.

Daron Acemoglu is Professor of Economics at MIT. Simon Johnson is a professor at MIT's Sloan School of Management.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Meta (Facebook), Alphabet (Google), Microsoft, Twitter, and a few other tech companies have come to dominate what we see and hear on the internet, shaping hundreds of millions of people's perceptions of the world. In pursuit of advertising revenue, their algorithms are programmed to show us content that will hold our attention - including extremist videos, disinformation, and material designed to stimulate envy, insecurity, and anger. With the rapid development of "large language models" such as ChatGPT and Bard, Big Tech's hold on impressionable minds will only strengthen, with potentially scary consequences.

But other outcomes are possible. Companies could deploy the latest wave of artificial intelligence much more responsibly, and two current court cases serve as warnings to those pursuing socially destructive business models. But we also need public-policy interventions to break up the largest tech companies and to tax digital advertising. These policy levers can help change Big Tech's pernicious business model, thereby preventing the platforms from inflicting so much emotional harm on their users - especially vulnerable young people.

The legal cases include *Gonzales v. Google*, which is currently before the US Supreme Court. At issue is the tech industry's insistence that Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act exempts platform companies from any liability for third-party content that they host. If platforms are acting more like news outlets than mere online repositories when they recommend videos, tweets, or posts, they should be held to the same standard as established media, which, under existing defamation laws, are not allowed to publish what they know to be untrue.

Hence, in a \$1.6 billion lawsuit filed against Fox News, Dominion Voting Systems has uncovered ample evidence that Fox's top on-air hosts and executives were well aware (and told each other) that for

them to monitor. That wealth of data is the source of their profits, and the sheer abundance of content on their platforms is what makes their AIs so potent. While they should enjoy a reasonable degree of protection against liability for what someone else posts on their site, this should apply only to passive content that the platforms do not in any way recommend to other users. Active content that is algorithmically pushed out to millions of people to generate revenue is a different matter. Indeed, it is just like traditional publishing, only much more powerful.

If a daily newspaper publishes a commentary by a terrorist, some readers will probably stop subscribing. But since most individuals do not want to walk away from their existing online social networks, we need government regulation to re-empower consumers. First, the largest platform companies should be broken up to create more intense competition between recommendation algorithms and their trainers. But for this to work in the public's interest, platforms also must be required to

never experienced anything as painful as a period."

Robert: "Of course I have. I've been kicked in the you-know-where."

Anita: "Glad to hear it." Robert: "You're making fun of my pain?" Anita: "I'm sure it hurt, but to compare it to menstrual pain, you need to be kicked every 10 minutes for three days!" Robert: "Ouch!"

Not every woman suffers from unbearable menstrual cramps, but for a significant number, the pain is so severe that they're unable to perform normal activities for several days a month, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. With three women in my household, I've witnessed this firsthand and felt helpless to do anything except open a bottle of pain medicine. But many men have no clue, apparently. That's why I applaud Sandra Sunny, an aspiring lawyer in Kochi, Kerala, for providing a great service to mankind. She designed a simulator that's allowing

digital media company that began offering first-day of period (FOP) leave in 2017.

Some employees may misuse a company's FOP policy, of course, but that's the case with almost any policy. There will always be a few people in every company who try to take advantage of a particular policy, whether it's a sick leave policy, maternity leave policy or FOP leave policy.

Employee: "Sorry, boss, I can't come to work today. FOP!" Boss: "Okay, Sanjay, I understand. See you tomorrow... Wait a minute, you're a man. Why are you having FOP?"

Employee: "Not me, boss. My wife. She has FOP, so I'm taking the day off to take care of her."

Boss: "But our FOP policy only applies to employees. Your wife is not an employee."

Employee: "My wife and I are one. It's called a marriage union. What affects her affects me."

Boss: "Nice try, but it won't work. You'd better get to work soon or we might have our first FOP-related firing."



Daron Acemoglu & Simon Johnson

A TAX ON DIGITAL ADVERTISING IS ONE OF THE ONLY PRACTICAL WAYS TO CHANGE THIS EXTRAORDINARILY DESTRUCTIVE BUSINESS MODEL

No Deal for Rohingya

International attention has, for the past few months, been drawn to the possibility of elections in Myanmar under the watchful eye of the military junta that staged a coup in 2021 to deny an elected government the chance to function. In the process the focus has been shifted from the hapless 1.2 million Rohingya Muslims languishing in squalid, shabby camps in Bangladesh. They, along with about 600,000 others belonging to the ethnic group residing in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, are facing a humanitarian crisis with no solution in sight in the near future. They have virtually become stateless with the Burmese military regime not recognising their citizenship.

On the other hand, neighbouring Bangladesh which has received a bulk of the displaced Rohingya, is unwilling to term them as refugees. The miseries of over a million Rohingya who have gone over to Bangladesh have been compounded by the slashing of their rations in the world's largest refugee camp - Cox's Bazar. Another drastic cut of rations is in the offing. The UN has warned this is a question of life and death. The Rohingya have been staying in Bangladesh since 2017, when the Myanmar military, supported by militias, set fire to their homes and launched a murderous attack to force them to flee Rakhine state.

Conditions in Bangladesh have become so bad that the Rohingya refugees have started crossing the sea to Malaysia or Indonesia. Unofficial figures put the death toll in those risky sea voyages at 350 so far. On top of it, the camps at Cox's Bazar have for some time been witnessing fires, the latest of which early this month rendered over 12,000 people shelterless. The meagre possessions that the refugees still had were also destroyed. Added to this is the menace of armed gangs who are operating freely in the area, attacking the refugees, robbing them, sexually abusing women in the camps and running a drug racket that is part of the notorious golden triangle. The Rohingya complain that Bangladeshi police have failed to tackle the problems created by both some locals and rival insurgency groups including the Arakan Army and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army that are fighting against the military junta.

Bangladesh can hardly be blamed outright for the deteriorating situation. While the country itself needs international funding for sustaining its economy, it has now started seeing the impact of millions of refugees, particularly in the southern part of the country where Rohingya are sheltered in camps. The public sentiment toward the Rohingya is turning from sympathetic to antagonistic.

The Rohingya Muslims are being used by Bangladeshi political parties to serve their respective agenda. The incumbent Awami League government's policies in the initial phase seemed to have been prompted by the prospect of winning international laurels for dealing with one of the worst humanitarian crises. It is now finding the issue a hot potato.

The main opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and other religious parties, are keen on using the Rohingya Muslims' plight in Bangladesh camps to shore up their religious support base. Public opinion is increasingly veering towards repatriation as the ultimate solution.

For this to happen, the military junta in Myanmar has to be forced to create a congenial atmosphere for the return of the Rohingya. This can happen only through international pressure. But, there is little hope that countries such as China, India, Japan or for that matter the US would annoy the junta which serves the interests of these countries in varying degrees. Both China and India have strategic ports and infrastructure connectivity projects in Rakhine state and they can ill afford to alienate the Tatmadaw - the military regime. India provided a free submarine to Myanmar, being the Tatmadaw's third largest arms supplier. About 50 per cent of India's defence sales go to Myanmar.

China constitutes Myanmar's economic lifeline and provides a diplomatic shield from international pressure through its veto power on the UN Security Council. Japan likewise pursues its own business interests.

The Rohingya now find themselves trapped, deserted by the international community and forced to live in hunger, disease, malnutrition and different forms of exploitation.

WISDOM CORNER

Who am I? Not the body, because it is decaying; not the mind, because the brain will decay with the body; not the personality, nor the emotions, for these also will vanish with death. RAMANA MAHARSHI

I have realized that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is. ALAN WATTS

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

WORDSWORTH

Gossipiboma

Ammon Shea, who spent a year reading the Oxford English Dictionary from cover to cover and wrote about it in his book *Reading the OED*, commented on this word - meaning a surgical sponge that has been left in a patient after an operation - in a piece on the OUPBlog. The surgeon who told him about it called it "a memento that we surgeons sometimes accidentally leave behind to commemorate our presence in some poor patient's abdomen." Formally, it is called a retained surgical sponge, an example of the more general class of retained foreign objects. In both subject and appearance, gossipiboma surely fits anybody's definition of a weird word. Online dictionaries have said that it's an amalgam of words from two languages: Latin gossypium, cotton, and Swahili boma, meaning a place of concealment. However, standard Swahili dictionaries say boma is a raised enclosure of some sort, especially for protective or defensive purposes (it's from a Persian or Farsi word for a garrison or a place of safety). This is surely a false etymology. It is much more likely that gossipiboma was created from the Latin word plus the ending -oma that denotes a tumour or other abnormal growth (as in carcinoma or lymphoma), with a b added to separate the vowels. The ending is appropriate, since such growths can develop around alien material left in the body. This derivation is supported by another word for the situation, textiloma (from textile plus -oma), coined in 1996 in a paper in the *Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography* by a German radiologist, Lars Kopka, and four of his colleagues. Since surgical sponges are now usually made of synthetic fabrics it's more appropriate than gossipiboma and is becoming the more frequently used word. The earliest known example of gossipiboma was found by reader David Hocken in the title of an article in the journal *Radiology* in November 1978: Gossipiboma: The problem of the retained surgical sponge.

LOL

TRAVEL ON THE PLANE

For two solid hours, the lady sitting next to a man on an airplane had told him about her grandchildren. She had even produced a plastic-foldout photo album of all nine of the children. She finally realised that she had dominated the entire conversation on her grandchildren.



"Oh, I've done all the talking, and I'm so sorry. I know you certainly have something to say. Please, tell me... what do you think of my grandchildren?"

IN JEST THIS

More men need to feel pain of periods

Spain recently became the first European country to pass a law allowing employees with particularly painful periods to take three days of paid menstrual leave from work. If the menstrual pain is extremely severe, the paid leave can be extended to five days.



Melvin Durai

SEVERAL COMPANIES IN INDIA ARE OFFERING PAID MENSTRUAL LEAVE TO THEIR EMPLOYEES

All that's needed is a doctor's note and Spain's social security system will pay for the paid leave. Needless to say, when this news was discussed on Twitter and other social media, many people were thrilled about it, expressing their support with statements like this: "I love it! Every country should offer menstrual leave. Every planet even." But many others did not like the idea of menstrual leave, their opposition based largely on the fact that menstrual leave does not, in most circumstances, apply to men. A typical conversation on social media went like this:

Anita: "This is great. Wish I could move to Spain." Robert: "You really don't like to work, do you? Just stay at home, watch TV and collect a paycheck."

Anita: "Shut up, troll! I bet you've

never experienced anything as painful as a period."

Robert: "Of course I have. I've been kicked in the you-know-where."

Anita: "Glad to hear it." Robert: "You're making fun of my pain?"

Anita: "I'm sure it hurt, but to compare it to menstrual pain, you need to be kicked every 10 minutes for three days!" Robert: "Ouch!"

Not every woman suffers from unbearable menstrual cramps, but for a significant number, the pain is so severe that they're unable to perform normal activities for several days a month, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. With three women in my household, I've witnessed this firsthand and felt helpless to do anything except open a bottle of pain medicine. But many men have no clue, apparently. That's why I applaud Sandra Sunny, an aspiring lawyer in Kochi, Kerala, for providing a great service to mankind. She designed a simulator that's allowing

Democratic slide

Sir, The ruling BJP took umbrage against Rahul Gandhi for his recent comments in the UK on India's sliding democratic values and demanded an apology from him for his remarks. But the latest report from the V-Dem Institute at Sweden's University of Gothenburg only manifests his statement and has more than proved that his remarks are just proper and correct. It is unsurprising that the 2023 V-Dem report refers to India as "one of the worst autocratic countries in the last 10 years" in a blurb, and places it in the bottom 40-50% countries on its Liberal Democracy Index, at a rank of 97. Do we still need to say that much of the slide in India's democratic credentials has occurred ever since Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party came to power in 2014? Apparently, a political system where billionaires buy politicians, and where private interest lobbyists shape policies, projects and legislations cannot be called 'democracy'. It is rather called 'plutocracy'. And that is what India is today, and the Adani saga is the standing testament. Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

AI teaching & learning

Sir, Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education systems is becoming more and more popular, with the market expected to expand significantly over the coming years. AI has the power to completely alter how we educate and learn using tools like intelligent tutoring systems, learning management systems, and virtual learning environments to offer individualised and adaptable learning experiences. These tools enhance student engagement by providing real-time feedback and customised learning experiences, and they analyse student performance to offer tailored materials for better academic outcomes. The growth of AI in education is driven by several factors, including the ability to provide personalised learning experiences that result in improved engagement and learning outcomes. AI can automate repetitive tasks like grading assignments and quizzes, freeing up teachers' time for other tasks such as lesson planning and providing more individualised attention to students. Ahura, Knewton, and Querium are examples of AI-powered learning platforms that offer personalised and adaptive learning experiences for students. Ahura tracks learning habits through observation, Knewton offers adaptive learning experiences, and Querium provides step-by-step tutoring and personalised lesson plans for math problems. This makes education more affordable and accessible to a wider range of students. Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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



The Delhi government wants to work and not fight. We are tired of fighting and it serves no one. We want to work together with the Prime Minister, we do not want any tussle

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

TRAGIC INCIDENT

Fourteen cows were killed when a private bus rammmed a cattle herd in Telangana's Nalgonda district Tuesday. The accident occurred on Addanki-Narketpally highway near Buggabavigudem village. Six cows were also injured



of the day quote

Rahul Gandhi has come and gone several times (to Karnataka), he has done the Bharat Jodo Yatra also, but it has not made any effect. Monday's announcement was a bogus announcement, there is no impact

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

The state government is monitoring the situation amidst the rise in COVID-19 and influenza cases in the country

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

Severest of severe action is being taken against those conspiring to disturb peace, amity, communal harmony and brotherhood in the state

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

SHORT TAKES

Dalit hacked to death in TN

Chennai: In another instance of a "honour killing", a 28-year-old Dalit man was hacked to death in Tamil Nadu's Dharmapuri district, allegedly by the relatives of an upper-caste girl whom he had married a few days ago, Tuesday, police said.

Mobile phones recovered from jail

New Delhi: Ten mobile phones, data cables and some tobacco were recovered from the Rohini Jail here, officials said Tuesday. The recovery was made from central jail number 10, they said.

Five killed in road accident

Hathras (UP): Five people were killed when a speeding Uttar Pradesh Roadways bus hit an e-rickshaw at the Kapoora crossing in the district's Chandpa area, police said Tuesday. Nine people were injured in the accident.

WB: 3 killed in major fire

Kolkata: Three persons were killed as a major fire broke out at a fireworks unit in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, officials said Tuesday. The fire broke out Monday evening in Putkhali Mondalpara in Mahestala, adjacent to Kolkata, they said.

Centre conspired to stall Delhi Budget, says AAP

The presentation of the 2023-24 Budget, which was scheduled for Tuesday, was put on hold by the ministry as it sought a clarification from the Delhi government on its allocations under different heads



AAP MLAs raise slogans during a protest against Central govt

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 21: The AAP Tuesday alleged that the Centre conspired to stall Delhi's Budget and said March 21 was a "black day" as an elected government was "prevented" from presenting it in assembly on its scheduled day.

It is "sad and unfortunate" that Delhi's Budget was stalled by the Centre, party leader Dilip Pandey said while addressing a press conference, hours after the ministry approved the Budget. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said that an elected government was "prevented" from presenting its Budget in the assembly.

"Its been 10 days, the Delhi Budget was with the Centre. They did not act for the last 10 days. They knew that if they want to stop the budget from being presented, they need to do something

at the 11th hour," Pandey said. Claiming that the Centre instead of sending the file back to the Arvind Kejriwal government, forwarded it to the chief secretary, he said this action has "shaken" the roots of India's democratic systems.

"We claim that India is the biggest democracy in the world... World's most vibrant democratic system. The reason for this claim is that the roots of democratic values are very deep," Pandey said. "The Centre today has tried to dig out the strong roots of democracy. The news is being planted from the Raj Niwas (residence of the Lt Governor). The news is being planted. Useless reasons are being used," he said.

In the assembly Tuesday, Chief Minister Kejriwal said, "The budget had to be presented today. The Centre stopped it. We replied to (Ministry of Home Affairs) MHA's query without making any changes to the budget and they have approved it now. They wanted me to bow down. It's their ego and nothing else." Earlier, AAP national spokesperson and Delhi

J&K Budget passed in LS

New Delhi: Lok Sabha Tuesday passed a ₹1.185 lakh crore budget for the financial year 2023-24 for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, amid ruckus by the Opposition over a demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani issue. As soon as the House met again at 2 pm after an adjournment, Rajendra Agrawal, who was chairing the proceedings, asked BJP's Jugal Kishore Sharma to initiate the discussion on the budget for the Union Territory, which is under central rule at present. Sharma spoke for a minute after which the process to pass the budget was initiated.

Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said it was utterly "shameful" that the Budget had been stopped. "This is making a joke of us in front of the entire world. It is shameful that the Centre is stopping the Budget of a small state," he said in a statement.

Restore Red Notice against Mehul Choksi: CBI to Interpol body



The CBI statement came a day after the media reported the CCF decision causing a huge political uproar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: The CBI has asked an Interpol body to restore the Red Notice against fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi terming its earlier decision to drop his name from the list had "serious shortcomings, procedural violations, overreach of mandate and mistakes".

The Commission for Control of Interpol's Files (CCF) which had removed Choksi's name from the list of fugitives based on his appeal last year is a separate Interpol body which is "not under the control" of the Interpol Secretariat and is mainly staffed by elected lawyers from different countries where people can challenge decisions to declare them fugitives.

Based on repeated appeals from Choksi, who is wanted in the ₹13,000 crore bank fraud in Punjab National Bank and is holed in Antigua and Barbuda after fleeing from India in 2018, the CCF removed his name from the Red Notice list in November 2022, the CBI said.

Red Notice is the highest level of alert by the 195-member strong

International Police cooperation organisation Interpol to locate and provisionally arrest a fugitive pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action. The CCF which had rejected two previous appeals of Choksi - in 2018, to not publish his name on the Red Notice list and in 2020, to remove his name from the list - agreed with his fresh plea in 2022, a year after an alleged abduction attempt from Antigua and Barbuda, the agency said.

Choksi had fled from India in the first week of January 2018, days before ₹13,000 crore was detected in the PNB. At the request of the CBI and Enforcement Directorate, Interpol included his name in the list of most wanted fugitives called Red Notice in December 2018.

The CBI had booked Choksi February 15, 2018, and after the CCF decision came, the agency slapped fresh FIRs against him.

Choksi had disappeared from his sanctuary in Antigua and Barbuda in May 2021 to mysteriously appear in neighbouring Dominica where he was detained for illegal entry.

NAXAL VIOLENCE DOWN BY 77 PC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: The violence perpetrated by Naxals has come down by 77 per cent in just over a decade while casualties of the security forces and civilians have also declined by 90 per cent. Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said the geographical spread of violence has significantly reduced and only 176 police stations of 45 districts reported Left Wing Extremism violence in 2022 as compared to a high of 465 police stations of 96 districts in 2010.



The geographical spread of violence has significantly reduced & only 176 PSS of 45 districts reported Left Wing Extremism violence in 2022

"The number of LWE related violent incidents have come down by 77 per cent in 2022 in comparison to the high of 2010. The number of resultant deaths (security forces and civilians) have also reduced by 90 per cent from an all time high of 1005 in 2010 to 98 in 2022," he said replying to a written question.

The minister said the decline in geographical spread is also reflected in the reduced number of districts covered under Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme. Number of SRE districts reduced from 126 to 90 in April 2018 and further to 70 in July 2021, he added.

Mamata to stage dharna

Banerjee claimed that the Centre has not released funds for the MGNREGA project for the state and other initiatives of its housing and road departments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 21: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday said she would stage a two-day sit-in in Kolkata from March 29 in protest against the BJP-led Union government's alleged discriminatory attitude towards her state.

She claimed that the Centre has not released funds for the MGNREGA project for the state and other initiatives of its housing and road departments.



"West Bengal is the only state which has not received anything from the Centre. It has not given us our due money. Even in this year's Union budget, there was nothing for our state. "Hence, in protest against the Centre's discrimination against West Bengal, I, as the chief minister, will stage a sit-in demonstration under the statue of Dr B R Ambedkar in Kolkata from March 29 and continue it till the evening of March 30," she told reporters at Dum Dum airport. Banerjee, also the Trinamool Congress supremo, said she would also be protesting against the price rise of gas cylinders. After March 30, "we will take this programme from one block (of West Bengal) to another, from district to district", she said. "They have not given our dues. I myself had met the Prime Minister and told him that we are yet to get funds for the 100 days work scheme for six months. I had told Home minister Amit Shah when he had come here for a meeting," she said.

The chief minister said she had written to the central government several times seeking the dues but in vain. Banerjee questioned why West Bengal was not getting its dues even after earning accolades from the Centre alongside UNESCO, United Nations and other countries for its performance in different projects.



EVERY DROP MATTERS: Workers at Nayandahalli lake to collect water, a day before World Water Day in Bangalore, Karnataka

PTI PHOTO

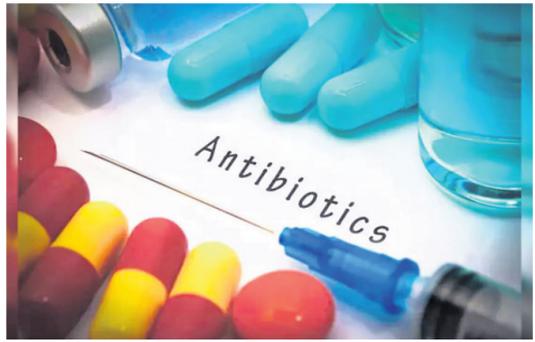
Kids do not need antibiotics: GSVM study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur, March 21: A research to test the efficacy of use of antibiotics for the treatment of malnourished children has proved that kids do not need antibiotics.

Doctors at Kanpur's GSVM Medical College have conducted the research, and as a part of it, they divided 100 malnourished children into a group of two. The first group of 50 children was given regular antibiotics along with a proper diet and IV drips in necessary cases.

Meanwhile, the second group was given the same food and IV drips in necessary cases but none of them were given antibiotics. Sharing the results of the experiment, doctors revealed that both the groups recovered in a similar manner, showing that the use of antibiotics was not actually necessary. In fact, the kids who partic-



ipated in the study -- aged between six and 59 months -- even gained weight and grew in height proportionally. There was no additional benefit of antibiotics.

The research -- conducted by head of paediatrics department Dr Yashwant Rao and his team -- has been published in the Indian journal of paediatrics. The research was funded by the Indian Council for Medical Research.

The Centre recently issued a guideline saying that antibiotics should not be used in Covid cases unless there is clinical suspicion of bacterial infection

"The results have been very encouraging for all of us. We can reduce the use of antibiotics in children," he told reporters.

Dr Rao added that his team would include 400 children in the research in the next phase. A research centre for the same has been established in Kalyanpur.

The Centre had also recently issued a guideline saying that antibiotics should not be used in Covid cases unless there is clinical suspicion of bacterial infection.

Kerala Assembly adjourned sine die

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 21: Amid the Congress-led UDF's relentless agitation against the "arrogant" approach of the LDF government over a number of demands put forth by it, the Kerala assembly was Tuesday adjourned sine die, much ahead of its original schedule of March 30.

Speaker A N Shamseer announced the culmination of the 21-day-long eighth session of the 15th Kerala Assembly, after Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan tabled a resolution in the Assembly in this regard.

The decision was taken after five UDF MLAs launched an indefinite 'Satyagraha' in the well of the House against the CPI(M)-

led government for ignoring its various demands. The Assembly has been witnessing opposition protests since last week against the "restrictions" on moving adjournment motions to discuss certain issues in the House.

When the House assembled in the morning, Leader of Opposition, V D Satheesan announced that five members of the United Democratic Front (UDF) -- Anwar Sadath, Kurukkoli Moideen, AKM Ashraf, T J Vinod and Uma Thomas -- would stage an indefinite satyagraha in the well of the House against the government, accusing it of not taking steps to ensure the proper functioning of the House. Satheesan alleged that the government's "arrogant" approach was the reason for the opposition protest.

UNIQUE INITIATIVE

MIGRANT WORKERS YET TO RETURN

600 'Gajamitras' to protect elephants

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 21: In order to check the rising incidents of human-elephant conflict (HEC), West Bengal has launched a unique human-driven initiative, named 'Gajamitra (Friends of Elephants)'. Under this scheme, the state Forest Department has started the process of appointing 600 local youth from HEC-prone pockets both in north Bengal as well as in south Bengal as these 'Gajamitras'.

According to West Bengal Forest Minister Jyotipriyo Mullick, the recruitment process has already started. "Once the recruitment process is complete, the selected youths will be provided with android sets with the specially developed Gajamitra App installed there," he said.

The selected youths will procure advance information about the movement of elephant herds, alert the forest department and local people, so that preventive measures can be taken for avoiding HEC, the minister added.

It is learnt that 200 such 'Gajamitras' will be deputed in the HEC-prone pockets in South Bengal, while 400 will be for North Bengal. "The number is double in case of North Bengal since numerically the incidents of HEC in North Bengal are much higher than in South Bengal," a senior forest de-



It is learnt that 200 such Gajamitras will be deputed in the HEC-prone pockets in South Bengal, while 400 will be for North Bengal

The districts in South Bengal to be covered under the Gajamitra scheme include West Midnapore, East Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia

THE DISTRICTS IN NORTH BENGAL THAT WILL COME UNDER ITS PURVIEW ARE DARJEELING, JALPAIGURI AND ALIPURDUAR

partment official said. The districts in South Bengal to be covered under the 'Gajamitra' scheme include West Midnapore, East Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia. The districts in North Bengal that will come under its purview are Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar. "Despite lesser number of districts in North Bengal being HEC prone, still incidents on these counts are much higher," the offi-

cial said. Considering that incidents of HEC are higher in North Bengal, the forest department in association with the railways has earmarked another project on this count in the region. The project is installation of a sensitive sensor alarm system along the railway tracks running through the jungles of the Terai and Dooars region in north Bengal to prevent

elephant deaths after colliding with speeding trains.

"This initiative is mooted considering that a vast portion of these railway tracks pass through the forests that have a number of crucial elephant corridors," the official said.

Explaining how this sensor alarm system will work, the official said that upon arrival of elephant herds near the rail tracks, the system will send alerts to the nearest railway station as well as to the nearest forest range office.

"On receiving the alert the nearest railway station will send an alert to the drivers of the trains moving in the region, so that they slow down and prevent collision with the tuskers. On the other hand, on receiving the alarms the forest department personnel posted at the nearby range office will take precautionary measures to ensure the elephant herd safely moves away from the railway tracks," the official said.

As part of the pilot project, the system will be installed covering a distance of approximately 50 km from Diana River Bridge at Nagrakata in Jalpaiguri district to Matharihat in Alipurduar. "This area is especially notorious for HEC," he said. As per the latest statistics, during the last three years 11 elephant deaths due to train accidents have been reported from West Bengal.

TN's MSME sector affected

While there is a general trend of migrant workers delaying their return after Holi vacation, this year several workers have delayed their return due to the fear of the fake news being circulated about the migrant workers being attacked in Tamil Nadu

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 21: The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of the two major industrial hubs of Tamil Nadu - Coimbatore and Tiruppur - are hit as the migrant workers from North India have not returned after vacation.

Several MSME industries in Coimbatore are not able to meet the deadline of orders and this has affected the business. K.M. Guruswamy, owner of KRM industries, Coimbatore which is an MSME outfit taking sub-contract of major companies said, "The MSME sector is facing difficulty in these areas as there is a staff shortage. Most of the migrant workers, who had left home for Holi, have not come back. Many have not returned due to the fear of false news that was spread about the migrant workers being attacked in the state."

However, C. Sivakumar, President of Coimbatore Tiruppur District Micro and Cottage Entrepreneur Association (COTMA) said that this was a regular phenomenon during the Holy holidays. He said that there is around six lakh migrant workforce in Coimbatore and Tiruppur areas and that 35 to 40 per cent of the workforce leaves



for home during the period and they return a bit late.

While there is a general trend of migrant workers delaying their return after Holi vacation, this year several workers have delayed their return due to the fear of the fake news being circulated about the migrant workers being attacked in Tamil Nadu.

The industrial associations of Coimbatore and Tiruppur have requested the railway ministry to operate special trains from North Indian states to bring the workers back to Tamil Nadu. COTMA president, C. Sivakumar in a petition

to the Union Railway Minister, Ashwini Kumar said, "The migrant workers, who have left for their homes in North Indian states due to Holi vacation and their returns are delayed due to trains running full and heavily crowded. Therefore the central government should run special trains and facilitate their returns at the earliest."

Muthuraman, an industrialist in Coimbatore said that the state government must provide training to the local people and persuade them to take up work in MSME units so that the dependence on the migrant workers is less.

Cases of fresh Covid affected negligible in West Bengal



THE WEST BENGAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT HAS STOPPED ISSUING ITS OWN COVID-19 BULLETIN. AS PER RECORDS OF THE STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT, THE LAST 'CORONA BULLETIN' ISSUED BY IT WAS JANUARY 28

NOT A SINGLE DEATH HAS BEEN REPORTED FROM THE STATE SO FAR THIS YEAR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 21: Despite the recent spike in the number of people being affected by Covid-19 virus throughout the country, the effect so far is negligible in West Bengal.

As of Sunday, of the total 5,915 active cases at the national level, West Bengal has 46, which is three

higher compared to what it was in the previous day. Not a single death has been reported from the state so far this year.

However, the West Bengal health department has stopped issuing its own Covid-19 bulletin. As per records of the state health department, the last 'Corona Bulletin' issued by it was January 28.

According to a senior state health

department official, following an advisory issued by the Union ministry of health and family welfare the state government has again started an awareness campaign in a limited way.

"Although no advisory has been issued by the state health department on this count, unofficially the state-run hospitals have been advised to be on alert so that in case there is a major spike in the figure of affected people in the coming days, they should be ready to handle the situation," the state health department official said.

When asked whether there is any possibility of fresh issuing of daily Corona Bulletin, he said that no decision has been reached on this count as yet. "The decision will be taken depending on the evolving situation in the days to come," he added.

Audit of Sunderbans river embankments soon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 21: The state Sunderbans development affairs department and disaster management department will jointly conduct an audit of the embankments to counter the menace of crop damage due to saline water entering farmlands from damaged river embankments in the Sunderbans area of West Bengal.

The decision was taken after the state Sunderbans Development Affairs minister Bankim Hazra and the state disaster management minister Javed Ahmed Khan made a visit to those areas in Sunderbans where the problem of damage of crops due to flow of saline water following damage of river embankments is quite acute.

"Both the ministers agreed that a permanent solution to the damage of river embankments need to be achieved to stop this crop damage. However, in order to find that solution it has to be found out why the river embankments are



getting damaged every year despite repeated repairs. Hence the decision was taken to conduct an audit of the embankments in the region and accordingly take corrective measures," local Trinamool

Congress MLA from the region Subrata Mondal said.

Mondal was a representative in the meeting attended by the two ministers where the decision on embankment audit was taken.

He pointed out that since most of the farmland in the area is single-crop land, once the damage is done because of flow of saline water, the process of reviving that land to farming condition becomes quite a difficult task. "Hence a permanent solution has to be achieved on how to prevent these embankments from getting damaged every year," Mondal added.

It is learnt that a team of specialised engineers from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur might be entrusted with the task of conducting the audit of river embankments. The experts from the state disaster management department will provide the audit team with necessary infrastructure support on this count.

"While a group feels that concrete embankments will be a permanent solution on this count, there are differences of opinion in the matter. Hence the audit team will review all these aspects and give suggestions about corrective measures," Mondal said.

Erode to get wildlife sanctuary soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Erode (TN), March 21: Forest officials and public alike welcomed the announcement of a new wildlife sanctuary in Erode district following a statement made during the presentation of the Tamil Nadu Budget 2023-24.

When the state Budget was presented in the Assembly on Monday, it was declared that a new wildlife sanctuary called 'Thanthai Periyar Animal Sanctuary' will be formed in 2023-2024 and this is the 18th such sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, forest officials said on Tuesday. There are two existing wildlife sanctuaries in the district - Vellode Birds Sanctuary and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR).

The sanctuary will be formed over 80,567 hectares of forest land located in Gobichettipalayam and Anthiyur taluks of the district, but the headquarters of the new sanctuary will be decided by the government.

In the proposed sanctuary, the animal populations would mainly comprise elephants, tigers, leopards, panthers, wild boars, and deer.

Forest officials said there are 21 different mammals, 139 bird species and 118 types of butterflies that would also inhabit the proposed sanctuary, which now exists in Erode District Forest area. The officials added that during last year's animal census, movement of nine tigers was noticed.

Migration of animals from STR and also from neighbouring Karnataka was noticed in Erode District Forest Division. Burgur, Thattakarai, Thamaraiakarai, and Bejelatti are the main forest areas where the tribal population is high.

'Kumki' elephants to trap wild tusker

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 21: The Tamil Nadu forest department has deployed a team of officials along with two 'kumki' elephants to trap and capture a rogue wild tusker - 'Karuppan' - which has destroyed people's properties in Thalavadi, Hasanur and Jeerahalli areas of Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Erode district.

'Kumki' or 'koomkie' is a term used for trained captive Asian elephants used in operations to trap wild tuskers. The forest department has deployed two kumki elephants - 'Bomman' and 'Suja' - to monitor the movement of the wild tusker. It had made two at-

tempts earlier to capture Karuppan and had even fired tranquiliser darts at him but the tusker escaped into the dense forests of the tiger reserve.

However, the tusker has again started invading people's localities, destroying properties and crops.

The crops that are about to be harvested, including sugarcane and paddy, have been destroyed by the elephant and complaints have been lodged with the forest department



by the villagers. While local people have alleged that Karuppan was involved in killing humans also, the forest de-

partment has not confirmed it.

In January, the Tamil Nadu forest department had tried to capture the elephant, but it had mingled with the herd and escaped after darts were fired at him.

A senior forest department official at the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve told IANS that the department is keen to capture the tusker for which two kumki elephants are being deployed from the Madhumalai Tiger Reserve.

The department is finalising the team members and veterinarians who will be part of the team and once the green signal is received from the state forest department, the operation to capture the rogue elephant will commence.

'Kumki' or 'koomkie' is a term used for trained captive Asian elephants used in operations to trap wild tuskers

GOVT TO LAUNCH 5-YEAR TAMIL NADU MILLET MISSION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 21: Tamil Nadu government has decided to provide subsidy to bring cultivation of millets in fallow lands and crop diversification to millets in 50,000 acres under its Tamil Nadu Millet Mission, said the Minister for Agriculture M.R.K. Panneerselvam.

Presenting the state's Agriculture Budget for FY24 in the Assembly on Tuesday, Panneerselvam said with the United Nations declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets, the state government will implement the Tamil Nadu Millet Mission for five years.

"Under this scheme, subsidy will be given for bringing millet cultivation to fallow lands and crop diversification to millets in 50,000 acres. Hundred groups of millet

producers will be formed by bringing together millet farmers and training programmes will be conducted for them," Panneerselvam said.

He further said that a subsidy will be provided to install a sprinkler irrigation system for 12,500 acres. Subsidy assistance will be provided to farmer producer groups to set up Millets Processing Centres for selling value added millets. In order to create awareness about the goodness of millets, the government will celebrate 'Millet Festivals'.

According to him, to increase the production and consumption of millets, Finger millet and pearl millet will be directly procured and availability of millets will be ensured in fair price shops. Millet-based food will be included



Millet-based food will be included in Government institutions and hostels of educational institutions, Panneerselvam said

To make millets available to people, steps are being taken to distribute two kilograms of Ragi to family card holders in Nilgiris and Dharmapuri districts on a pilot basis

in Government institutions and hostels of educational institutions, Panneerselvam said. In the coming year, the scheme will be implemented with the financial assistance of the Union and state governments at an estimated cost of Rs 82 crore, he said.

Further, in order to revive millets in Tamil Nadu and to increase

the area under its cultivation, production and consumption of millets, the government has decided to declare five more districts - Namakkal, Tirupur, Coimbatore, Erode and Pudukottai - a millet zones. In the last year's Agriculture Budget, two millet zones encompassing 20 districts were declared.

To make millets available to people, steps are being taken to distribute two kilograms of Ragi to family card holders in Nilgiris and Dharmapuri districts on a pilot basis.

Also, to facilitate the farmers in getting fair price, processed minor millets are procured through cooperative societies and distributed through Amutham, Chinthamani and Kamadhenu Cooperative sales outlets in Chennai and Coimbatore cities, Panneerselvam said.

of the day quote

The country is run by only a few people. Banks are totally penniless and the Centre is not giving money for the 100 days' work scheme (MGNREGA). But these people (Adani and Choksi) have collected lots of funds

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

As a Parliamentarian, it was Rahul Gandhi's responsibility to inform police about such incidents. When he can ride in a convoy to Hathras, why is he running scared now? What is the compulsion? Does he not want women to get justice

ANURAG THAKUR | UNION MINISTER

I have returned to J&K as the situation became worse here after Article 370 was removed illegally and the historic & beautiful state was bifurcated (in August 2019) by this (BJP-led) government after 75 years (of its accession to India), destroying our identity

GHULAM NABI AZAD | FORMER CM OF J&K

SHORT TAKES

Raj Assembly passes Right to Health Bill

Jaipur: The Right to Health Bill was passed in the Rajasthan Assembly Tuesday amidst a hue and cry by the opposition BJP. Rajasthan has become the first state in the country where the Right to Health Bill has been passed. Earlier, there was a fierce debate between the ruling Congress and the opposition regarding the passing of this bill.

Mukroh part of Meghalaya: CM

Shillong: Dismissing his Assam counterpart's claim, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma Tuesday asserted in the assembly that Mukroh village on the disputed inter-state border, where a violent clash claimed six lives last year, is a part of the hill state. He said residents of Mukroh are beneficiaries of various schemes of his government. Sangma's statement comes weeks after Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said in the assembly that Mukroh is a part of his state.

MHA panel to hold talks with Naga body

Kohima: The Union Home Ministry-appointed panel is likely to hold talks with the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO), which has been demanding a separate 'Frontier Nagaland' state, Wednesday. Top officials said that both the state and Central governments would not agree to the separate state demand and instead, various financial and administrative autonomy measures are likely to be accorded.

Three-day-old baby found abandoned

New Delhi: A three-day-old baby was found abandoned in a dump yard in outer Delhi's Nangloi Tuesday, the Delhi Commission for Women said. The DCW received information on its 181 Women Helpline from a person about the child. The DCW immediately informed the Delhi Police, helped in recovering the child and got the child hospitalised.

ABVP stages protest near KCR's residence

Hyderabad: Tension prevailed at Pragati Bhavan, the official residence of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababtu Naidu here Tuesday as ABVP markers tried to lay siege to the complex to protest over Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) question paper leak.



May these festivals (Gudi Padwa, Cheti Chand) bind different communities of India in bonds of love, harmony and affection and bring happiness and prosperity for all

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

4.27 LAKH UNDERTRIAL PRISONERS IN COUNTRY

As many as 4.27 lakh undertrial prisoners were lodged in jails across the country as December 31, 2021, Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra said the number of undertrial prisoners has increased over the years from 2,82,879 December 31, 2014 to 4,27,167 December 31, 2021



Four held for helping Amritpal escape: Cops

THE SELF-STYLED SIKH PREACHER MANAGED TO GIVE POLICE A SLIP AFTER CHANGING HIS VEHICLE SATURDAY WHEN POLICE HAD LAUNCHED A CRACKDOWN AGAINST HIM AND HIS OUTFIT 'WARIS PUNJAB DE'

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, March 21: Punjab Police arrested four people Tuesday for allegedly helping radical preacher Amritpal Singh escape their net and released seven photographs of the Khalistan sympathiser, including some in which he is not wearing a turban, to seek public help to nab the fugitive.

He was initially in his Mercedes vehicle but later switched to Brezza sports utility vehicle during police action against him Saturday. In a new photo that appeared on social media, Amritpal Singh could be seen riding pillion on a bike wearing a pink turban and black goggles, suggesting that he tried to change his appearance to get away from the eyes of police. In a CCTV footage, he could be seen sitting on the bike. In another CCTV footage of the Jalandhar toll plaza, which appeared on social media on Tuesday, showed Amritpal Singh escaping in the Brezza SUV.

Addressing the media here, Inspector General of Police (Headquarters) Sukhchain Singh Gill said the four arrested persons helped the fugitive escape in a sports utility vehicle. During their questioning, it came to the fore that Amritpal Singh went to a gurdwara in Nangal Ambian village in Jalandhar, police said. "There he changed his clothes, and wore a shirt and pant, and escaped along with three others on two bikes," said Gill.

Manpreet Singh alias Manna, Gurdeep Singh alias Deepa,



How is everyone arrested, except Amritpal, asks HC

Chandigarh: The Punjab and Haryana High Court Tuesday asked the state government that "how is everyone arrested, except Amritpal Singh", adding that "if he has escaped, this is an intelligence failure". The High Court continued hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by the legal advisor of Waris Punjab De, requesting the court to direct the respondents to produce the fugitive self-styled Sikh preacher before it.

Harpreet Singh alias Happy and Gurbhej Singh alias Bheja have been apprehended for helping Amritpal Singh escape, Gill said. The SUV has been seized from Manna, he said, adding that a .315

bore rifle, some swords and a walkie-talkie set were found in it.

Releasing seven pictures of Amritpal Singh in different attire, police appealed to people to help them in tracing him. The radical preacher has remained untraceable ever since he managed to dodge police personnel who were chasing him during a crackdown operation against elements of his outfit 'Waris Punjab De' Saturday. The IG said efforts are on to nab him and 154 people have been arrested so far in this connection.

He said the National Security Act has been invoked against Amritpal Singh and a non-bailable warrant has been issued against him. Gill said Amritpal Singh's uncle Harjit Singh and driver Harpreet Singh have been booked in a separate case for taking shelter at the residence of Manpreet Singh, the sarpanch of Uddowal village in Jalandhar, at gunpoint.

Kavitha submits phones to ED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: BRS leader K Kavitha Tuesday was quizzed for about 10 hours on the third day of her deposition before the Enforcement Directorate even as she submitted some mobile phones used by her to the agency in connection with the Delhi excise policy linked money laundering case.

The MLC daughter of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababtu Naidu reached the ED office in central Delhi from the Tughlaq Road official residence of her father around 11:30 am and left shortly after 9:40 pm. Before she entered the agency's office here, Kavitha flashed some mobile phones kept in a transparent sheet, and said she was going to submit them to the ED. The agency took the phones on record. However, sources indicated that they were "wiped clean".

In a letter written to the investigating officer of the case, the 44-year-old leader of the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) said: "These phones are submitted without prejudice to my right and contentions and larger contentions whether a woman's phone can be intruded, in the teeth of her right to privacy."

Referring to the agency's allegation in its first charge sheet filed in this case last year that she was using at least two mobile numbers whose IMEI changed 10 times, Kavitha said, "It is baffling to note as to how, why and under what such circumstances the agency made such allegations when I was not even summoned or asked any questions whatsoever."



Sisodia seeks bail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: Former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Tuesday sought bail from a city court, saying he was neither a flight risk nor the CBI has found anything incriminating against him in its probe into the alleged irregularities relating to the excise policy which, he added, was formulated "purely in the normal course."

Special Judge M K Nagpal, who deferred the hearing on Sisodia's bail plea till March 24 for clarification and submissions, meanwhile issued a notice to the Enforcement Directorate and sought its response by March 25. The money-laundering case being probed by ED is an offshoot of the main case registered by the CBI.

During the hearing, which continued for more than an hour, the lawyers for the senior AAP leader said there was no documentary evidence of him receiving "kickbacks" and the allegation that the accused destroyed documentary evidence was "vague". Senior advocates Dayan Krishnan and Mohit Mathur, appearing for Sisodia, said the accused cooperated in the probe and none of the searches led to the seizure of any incriminatory evidence and moreover, there was no further need for his custodial in-

terrogation by the CBI.

The CBI, so far, has quizzed Sisodia in its custody for seven days. The senior lawyers said Sisodia was not a flight risk and regarding the allegations that the accused manipulated the excise policy, there was no documentary evidence of receiving kickbacks.

They said changes in the excise policy were made "purely in the normal course" and that it was a government policy, which was approved by the Delhi lieutenant governor and the law secretary.

The lawyers also said that Sisodia's wife was suffering from an incurable disease, for which the medical treatment could only slow the degenerative condition, and that he was the only person to take care of his wife.

Opposing the bail plea, CBI's special public prosecutor D P Singh said though Sisodia was not a flight risk, he was "definitely" in a position to influence witnesses and destroy evidence. If he is given the relief, "the investigation will be compromised", Singh said. "We have only 36 days left to file the chargesheet. Till that time he (Sisodia) being released on bail will scuttle our investigation," the SPP said.

On March 17, the court extended the ED custody of the AAP leader by five days till March 22

Strong tremors jolt parts of north India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: Strong tremors jolted parts of north India, including Delhi-NCR, Tuesday night as an earthquake of magnitude 6.6 struck the Hindu Kush region in Afghanistan.

Panic-stricken people rushed out of buildings as the earthquake struck around 10.20 pm and was also felt in Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan.

There was disruption in mobile services in some parts of the Jammu region immediately after the earthquake, an official said. There was no immediate report of any loss of life or property. According to an automated report generated by the National Centre for Seismology, the 6.6 magnitude quake struck 133 km southeast of Fayzabad in Afghanistan.

The earthquake was at a depth of 156 km. A Noida resident said he first noticed the dining table shaking.

"Soon after we saw that the fans were also shaking. The earth-

quake was strong in terms of intensity and stayed for a longer period," the resident of Hyde Park society in Noida said.

A cab owner in Delhi said he felt the earthquake while he was waiting for passengers.

"I was waiting for passengers and suddenly my car started shaking. I immediately shouted and told my friends about it," said cab owner Ramesh Pawar, who was near Connaught Place in central Delhi. Jyoti, a resident of Lajpat Nagar in south Delhi, said she was watching television when she suddenly saw the TV and sofa were shaking.

Initially, she ignored it but when her husband alerted her, she and her family members rushed out of their home.

"I ignored it initially but as soon as my husband alerted, I felt the earthquake too. This time it was strong and the sofa I was sitting on started shaking a bit. We rushed outside our home. Thankfully, we are on the ground floor, so in such situations, we have an easy escape," she said.



RAIN WOES: Commuters ply on a road amid rainfall in Mumbai, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

SC asks Centre to consider less painful method

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 21: The Supreme Court Tuesday said it is open to set up a panel of experts, while asking the Centre to initiate a discussion and collect relevant information to examine if there is a less painful method alternative to hanging by the neck to execute the death penalty.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said one of the aspects could be to look at the matter from the point of view of science and technology.

The Chief Justice queried if there was a method which is consistent with human dignity and socially acceptable, based on today's knowledge of technology and science.

"Do we have any data either in India or overseas relating to the circumstances as they transpired in

the execution of sentence of death with alternate methods?"

The bench, also comprising Justice PS Narasimha, said: "alternatively, do we constitute a committee, thinking it aloud, not passing an order now. Committee to reflect on it. We can have two national law universities to be on the committee, experts dealing in execution of the sentence of death... We can also have people drawn from medical sciences, maybe one or two professors or doctors from AIIMS. We can have other distinguished people from the country."

The top court allowed Attorney General (AG) R. Venkataramani time till May to ascertain if any study has been conducted to find a more humane method of execution.

The apex court was hearing a writ petition by advocate Rishi Malhotra seeking a direction for quashing of the provision con-



tained under Section 354(5) of the Criminal Procedure Code as ultra vires the Constitution and especially Article 21 being discriminatory and also in contravention of the constitution bench judgment in Gian Kaur's case. Malhotra contended that he is

challenging the method of execution of death sentence in India i.e. by hanging by the neck till the prisoner is dead.

The plea, citing Kaur's judgment, said: "The Right to Life including the Right to Live with human dignity would mean the

existence of such a right up to the end of natural life. This also includes the right to a dignified life up to the point of death including a dignified procedure of death. In other words, this may include the right of a dying man to also die with dignity when his life is ebbing out."

In October 2017, the apex court had issued notice to the Centre noting the contention of the petitioner that the convict whose life has to end because of the conviction and the sentence should not be compelled to suffer the pain of hanging.

Top court commutes death penalty of minor's murderer

The Supreme Court Tuesday commuted the death sentence of a man, convicted for kidnapping and killing a seven-year-old boy in Tamil Nadu in 2009, to 20-year imprisonment without remission. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and comprising justices Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha said: "We are of the view that even though the crime committed by the petitioner is unquestionably grave and unpardonable, it is not appropriate to affirm the death sentence that was awarded to him. As we have discussed, the 'rarest of rare' doctrine requires that the death sentence not be imposed only by taking into account the grave nature of crime but only if there is no possibility of reformation in a criminal."

international



We're very much careful about taking loans - mostly we take loans from institutions like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. From China, our loan is very low. It is not like Sri Lanka or anybody
SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PM

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The IMF has approved a \$3 billion bailout programme to help debt-ridden Sri Lanka overcome its economic crisis



of the day quote

I intend to establish national monuments in Nevada and Texas and create a marine sanctuary in US Waters near the Pacific Remote Islands southwest of Hawaii
JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

We condemn the acts of violence against the Indian Consulate in San Francisco. We are committed to the safety and security of these facilities and the diplomats who work within them
JAKE SULLIVAN | US NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Mexico's economy is 'solid' and able to withstand external shocks such as the crisis rolling several banks in the US
ANDRES MANUEL LOPEZ OBRADOR | MEXICO PRESIDENT

Imran gets protective bail from Lahore HC



A two-judge bench comprising Justice Shehbaz Rizvi and Justice Farooq Haider granted protective bail to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief in the terrorism cases till March 27

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, March 21: Pakistan's ousted premier Imran Khan Tuesday secured protective bail from the Lahore High Court in three cases, including two related to terrorism, registered against him over the violence that took place outside the judicial complex in Islamabad last week.

A two-judge bench comprising Justice Shehbaz Rizvi and Justice Farooq Haider granted protective bail to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief in the terrorism cases till March 27.

The former premier also appeared before the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Justice Baqir Naqvi in the NAB investigation in Toshakhana case. The court granted him protective bail till next Tuesday.

"Mr Khan told the court today that he came to the court 'secretly' as a heavy contingent of police was deployed near to his house to stop him from reaching the court," a court official said after the hearing.

ing. Khan, 70, said he has no issue to appear in any case but during his appearance in court the government should make sure no chaos is created.

The number of cases registered against the PTI chief in the last 11 months of the PMLN-led government has swelled to around 100. Unlike his recent appearances in courts, Khan on Tuesday was not accompanied by party workers to the LHC from his Zaman Park residence here.

The PTI appears to have changed its strategy on Tuesday regarding sending a huge number of its workers along with the party chairman to the LHC apparently after the law enforcement agencies intensified crackdown on them.

The Punjab and Islamabad police have arrested over 500 PTI workers from different parts of the province. Police said the arrested PTI workers were wanted in the recent incidents of violence in Lahore and Islamabad.

Khan appeared before the LHC in two terrorism cases registered against him by the Islamabad police after intense clashes erupted outside the Islamabad Judicial Complex on Saturday when he arrived in the capital from Lahore to attend the hearing in the Toshakhana case.

The PTI chief also appeared before LHC's Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh in a petition seeking details of all the cases registered against him in Punjab province.

Israel repeals 2005 act

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, March 21: Israeli lawmakers Tuesday repealed a 2005 act that saw four Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank dismantled at the same time as Israeli forces withdrew from the Gaza Strip.

The development could pave the way for an official return to the abandoned West Bank areas in another setback to Palestinian hopes for statehood.

It was the latest move by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government, which is dominated by settler leaders and allies, to promote settlement activity in the territory.

The international community, including Israel's closest ally, the United States, considers settlements illegal and opposes construction on occupied territories claimed by the Palestinians for a future independent state.

Israel evacuated the four settlements and unilaterally pulled out of Gaza under the 2005 legislation.

Trump failed to disclose gifts worth \$250,000

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, March 21: Former US President Donald Trump failed to disclose gifts worth \$250,000 given to the First Family by foreign leaders which included \$47,000 worth of gifts by Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the then President Ram Nath Kovind and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a partisan democratic Congressional committee have alleged in a report.

The report is titled "Saudi Swords, Indian Jewelry, and a Larger-than-Life Salvadoran Portrait of Donald Trump: The Trump administration's Failure to Disclose Major Foreign Gifts."

The report presents preliminary findings from Committee Democrats' ongoing investigation into former President Trump's failure to disclose gifts from foreign government officials while in office, as required by the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act. Trump, a Republican, served as the 45th president of the United States from 2017 to 2021.



THE REPORT ALLEGES THAT TRUMP, 76, AND THE FIRST FAMILY FAILED TO REPORT MORE THAN 100 FOREIGN GIFTS WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF OVER A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS

ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE DOCUMENTS REVEALED THAT THE TRUMP FAMILY RECEIVED 17 UNREPORTED GIFTS FROM INDIA WITH A TOTAL ESTIMATED VALUE OF MORE THAN \$47,000

States from 2017 to 2021. "Committee Democrats are committed to determining the final whereabouts of these missing big-ticket gifts — such as golf clubs, the larger-than-life custom portrait of Donald Trump from El Salvador, and other potential unreported items — and whether they may have been used to influence the president in his conduct of US foreign policy," said Congressman Jamie Raskin,

Ranking Member of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

The report alleges that Trump, 76, and the First Family failed to report more than 100 foreign gifts with a total value of over a quarter of a million dollars. In November 2021, the State Department's Office of the Inspector General issued a report on significant problems at the Office of the Chief of Protocol during the Trump administration, including "missing items of a significant value."

The report determined that a "lack of accurate recordkeeping and appropriate physical security controls contributed to the loss of the gifts." According to the report, the documents revealed that the Trump family received 17 unreported gifts from India with a total estimated value of more than \$47,000. Among these gifts was a \$8,500 vase by Yogi Adityanath, a \$4,600 model of the Taj Mahal, a \$6,600 Indian rug by former President Kovind, \$1,900 cufflinks by Prime Minister Modi.

Trump from El Salvador, and other potential unreported items — and whether they may have been used to influence the president in his conduct of US foreign policy," said Congressman Jamie Raskin,

Months after Pak floods, millions lack safe water: UN

GRIM SITUATION

SHARIF'S GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO PROVIDE FOOD AND CASH ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD SURVIVORS AS THE ISLAMIC FASTING MONTH OF RAMADAN STARTS THIS WEEK, ADDING MORE FINANCIAL BURDENS TO THE POOREST OF THE POPULATION

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Islamabad, March 21: The United Nations children's agency Tuesday warned that after last summer's devastating floods, 10 million people in Pakistan, including children, still live in flood-affected areas without access to safe drinking water.

The statement from UNICEF underscored the dire situation in impoverished Pakistan, a country with a population of 220 million that months later is still struggling with the consequences of the flooding, as well as a spiraling economic crisis. The floods, which experts attribute in part to climate change, killed 1,739 people, including 647 children and 353 women.

So far, less than half of UNICEF's

funding appeal for Pakistan — 45 per cent of USD 173.5 million — has been met. According to the agency, before the floods struck last June, water from only 36 per cent of Pakistan's water system was considered safe for human consumption.

The floods damaged most of the water pipelines systems in affected areas, forcing more than 5.4 million people, including 2.5 million children, to rely solely on contaminated water from ponds and wells, UNICEF said.

"Safe drinking water is not a privilege, it is a basic human right," said Abdullah Fadil, the UNICEF representative in Pakistan. "Yet, every day, millions of girls and boys in Pakistan are fighting a losing battle against preventable wa-

terborne diseases and the consequential malnutrition."

"We need the continued support of our donors to provide safe water, build toilets and deliver vital sanitation services to these children and families who need them the most," Fadil added. Amid the crisis, Pakistan faces uncertainty about a bailout from the International Monetary Fund. Analysts say the revival of the USD 6 IMF bailout, which was signed in 2019, would help Pakistan. If the global lender released a key installment of the package, it would encourage other international financial institutions to help the country, they say.

At a U.N.-backed conference in Geneva in January, dozens of countries and international institutions



pledged more than USD 9 billion to help Pakistan recover and rebuild from the floods. But most of the pledges were in form of project loans, and the projects are still in the planning stages.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's government is also facing a surge in militant attacks and political instability as his predecessor, Imran Khan, is campaigning for early elections. Sharif has rejected the

Japan PM's Ukraine visit upsets China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, March 21: China Tuesday hit out at Japan after its Prime Minister Fumio Kishida made a surprise visit to Ukraine and overshadowed Chinese President Xi Jinping's meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Moscow, saying Tokyo should do more to de-escalate the situation rather than aggravating it.

Beijing was caught by surprise as Kishida, who was on an official visit to New Delhi from March 19-21, entered Poland from India using a secretly chartered plane instead of the standard government aircraft, Japanese TV channel NHK reported.

The chartered plane left Tokyo's Haneda Airport at around 8 pm on Sunday, about three hours before a government plane carrying Kishida departed for India.

After wrapping up his scheduled events in India, the Prime Minister secretly boarded the waiting plane in the early morning hours of Tuesday, the Japan Times daily quoted an NHK report.

Kishida's visit to Ukraine and his scheduled meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv stole the limelight of Xi's Moscow visit aimed at projecting



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida lays flowers at a church in Bucha, a town outside Kyiv that became a symbol of Russian atrocities against civilians, in Ukraine

Beijing was caught by surprise as Kishida, who was on an official visit to New Delhi from March 19-21, entered Poland from India using a secretly chartered plane instead of the standard government aircraft

Asked about Kishida's visit, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the international community "should keep to the right direction to promote the peace talks and create conditions for a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis"

A Chinese peace plan could provide a basis for a settlement of the fighting in Ukraine when the West is ready for it

VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

himself as a global peacemaker after Beijing successfully brokered a peace deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia to end their hostilities.

In a statement on Kishida's visit to Ukraine, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said he will express to President Zelenskyy his respect

for the courage and perseverance of the Ukrainian people standing up to defend their homeland under Zelenskyy's leadership.

"At a summit meeting with President Zelenskyy, Prime Minister Kishida will resolutely reject Russia's aggression against Ukraine and unilateral changing of the status quo by force, and reconfirm his determination to uphold the international order based on the rule of law," it said.

Kishida will "directly convey our solidarity and unwavering support for Ukraine" as Prime Minister of Japan and the current chair of G7 countries, it said.

Asked about Kishida's visit, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the international community "should keep to the right direction to promote the peace talks and create conditions for a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis"

"We hope the Japanese side will do more to de-escalate the situation instead of the opposite," he told a media briefing here. "China's position boils down to promoting peace talks and China will continue to uphold an objective, just position and work with the world to play a constructive role in the political settlement," he said.

'Partygate' untruths were honest mistake, says Boris Johnson

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, March 21: Former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledged Tuesday that he misled Parliament about rule-breaking government parties during the coronavirus pandemic — but insisted he never intentionally lied.

Britain's boisterous former leader is set to be grilled by lawmakers on Wednesday over whether he lied when he denied there had been parties in his Downing Street offices in violation of COVID-19 lockdown rules. If found to have lied deliberately, he could be suspended or even lose his seat in Parliament.

In a dossier of written evidence to the House of Commons Committee of Privileges, Johnson acknowledged that "my statements to Parliament that the Rules and



Guidance had been followed at all times did not turn out to be correct."

But he said his statements "were made in good faith and on the basis of what I honestly knew and believed at the time. I did not intentionally or recklessly mislead the House." The committee will quiz Johnson in person on Wednesday afternoon about "partygate," the scandal over gatherings in government offices in 2020 and 2021 that breached the government's pandemic restrictions.

Police eventually issued 126 fines over the late-night soirees, boozy parties and "wine time Fridays," including one to Johnson, and the scandal helped hasten the end of his three years in office.

SHORT TAKES

Saudi Arabia frees American

Washington: Saudi Arabia Monday freed a 72-year-old American citizen it had imprisoned for more than a year over old tweets critical of the kingdom's crown prince, his son said. Neither Saudi nor US officials immediately confirmed the release of Saad Almadhi, a dual US-Saudi citizen and, until his imprisonment in Saudi Arabia, a longtime retiree in Florida. There had been word since last week of progress toward Almadhi's release. Almadhi Monday night was at home with family members who live in Riyadh, said his son, Ibrahim Almadhi, in the United States.

3 Nepalese youths arrested in Nepal

Kathmandu: Nepal Police arrested three youths Tuesday for allegedly chanting anti-government slogans against Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' when he was en route to attend a public programme here. The three youths tried approaching Prachanda, saying they wanted to submit their grievances against the government to him. The prime minister was on his way to attend a programme organised for the 58th International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Google suspends Chinese app

Hong Kong: Google has suspended the Chinese shopping app Pinduoduo on its app store after malware was discovered in versions of the app from other sources. Google said in a statement Tuesday that it suspended the Pinduoduo app on the Google Play app store out of "security concerns" and that it was investigating the matter. The suspension of the Pinduoduo app — mainly used in China — comes amid heightened US-China tensions over Chinese-owned apps such as TikTok, which some US lawmakers say could be a national security threat.

Six missing

Montreal: Montreal's mayor vowed Monday to tighten regulation of Airbnb as a search continued for six people missing after a fire swept through a building that included Airbnb units in a historic city section where they are banned. Firefighters initially thought there was one person missing in the blaze Thursday in the eastern Canadian city.

business

of the day quote

Tyre industry had undergone a bit of a rough patch in the last couple of years back when the auto industry was in a bit of a slowdown due to Covid and all that... Now with the economic activity improving the tyre industry is coming back on full swing

RAGHUPATI SINGHANIA | JK TYRE CMD

Globally, there has been a trend towards the SUV body style. India has also witnessed the same. Despite a strong pull towards the SUVs, a latent demand still remains for sedans and that is why we have seen volumes grow in the segment

TARUN GARG | HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA COO

Railways being one of the key focus areas by the Indian Government, we are glad that we are contributing towards the growth and development of the railway's infrastructure in India

B THIAGARAJAN | BLUE STAR MANAGING DIRECTOR



India is going to need over 31,000 pilots and 26,000 mechanics over the next 20 years to take care of the aircraft coming in

SALIL GUPTA | BOEING INDIA PRESIDENT

\$968MN INVESTMENT FROM FOXCONN UNIT

Karnataka has approved a ₹80 billion (\$967.91 million) investment in the state by a unit of Taiwan's Foxconn. The investment will lead to the creation of 50,000 jobs, the government said in a statement.



GLOBAL BANKING COLLAPSE

Indian banks can endure turmoil: S&P

According to the global rating agency, Indian banks have sufficient buffers to withstand losses on their sizable government securities portfolio due to rising interest rates

REUTERS

Mumbai, March 21: Indian lenders are capable of enduring any potential contagion effects emanating from the US banking turmoil and UBS' recent takeover of embattled Swiss lender Credit Suisse given their manageable exposures to their global counterparts, S&P Global Ratings said Tuesday. "Strong funding profiles, a high savings rate, and government support are among the factors that bolster the financial institutions we rate," the rating agency said. S&P also said Indian banks had sufficient buffers to withstand losses on their sizable government securities portfolio due



to rising interest rates.

The Reserve Bank of India has increased the policy repo rate by 250 basis points since May last year.

Analysts have said that Indian banks are now in a better position to withstand stress given their current capital levels and healthy asset quality.

Stress tests conducted by the central bank and released as part of the Financial Stability Report (FSR) in December have also shown

that banks would be able to comply with minimum capital requirements even under adverse scenarios.

S&P said that only a significant escalation of the current crisis would force it to change its view.

However, the decision to write down Credit Suisse' additional tier-1 bonds to zero after the lender's takeover by UBS may contribute to a higher cost of capital for domestic banks, S&P said.

RBI sees no big hit

MUMBAI: India's economy is gathering steady pace and is unlikely to face major repercussions from the recent global financial turmoil, the Reserve Bank of India said in its bulletin released Tuesday. "Unlike the global economy, India would not slow down - it would maintain the pace of expansion achieved in 2022-23," the RBI said in its State of the Economy article in the bulletin. "We remain optimistic about India," it added. The central bank's nowcast of real GDP growth for the fourth quarter of the current 2022/23 year stands at 5.3%, it said. RBI said, while the direct impact of the recent bank collapses in the United States on economic activity could be limited, markets are bracing for tighter financial conditions which could present a trade-off between financial stability concerns and monetary policy. "Yield curves are in deep inversion and the future looks darker than it did just a few weeks ago in early February," the RBI wrote, referring to the overall global context.

Shares rebound nearly 1% on firm global trends

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 21: Benchmark Sensex and Nifty rebounded nearly 1 per cent Tuesday amid firm trends in global equities and buying in index major Reliance Industries and banking stocks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 445.73 points or 0.77 per cent to settle at 58,074.68. During the day, it rallied 504.38 points or 0.87 per cent to 58,133.33. The broader NSE Nifty advanced 119.10 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 17,107.50. The US FOMC meeting Wednesday on interest rate decision would be keenly eyed as any hike surpassing street expectations could unsettle investors, he said, adding that falling crude oil prices at a faster pace is raising concerns over the weakening global economic health.

Among the Sensex stocks, Reliance Industries climbed the most by 3.11 per cent, ending its eight-day slide. Bajaj Finance, Titan, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cement, Larsen & Toubro, HDFC Bank, HDFC and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the other major winners.

Power Grid, Hindustan Unilever, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Asian Paints



were among the biggest laggards. In the broader market, BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.66 per cent and smallcap index gained 0.50 per cent. Among indices, consumer durables jumped 1.57 per cent, energy zoomed 0.99 per cent, power rallied 0.74 per cent, commodities jumped 0.71 per cent and telecommunication (0.63 per cent). FMCG, IT, realty and tech were the laggards.

In Asia, Seoul, Hong Kong and Shanghai markets ended higher. Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.65 per cent to USD 74.27 per barrel.

Foreign Portfolio Investors of flooded equities worth ₹2,545.87 crore Monday, according to exchange data.

SHORT TAKES

Accenture to acquire Flutura

New Delhi: IT services and consulting firm Accenture Tuesday said it will acquire Bangalore-based industrial artificial intelligence company Flutura. The deal size was not disclosed. Flutura has approximately 110 professionals who specialize in industrial data science services for manufacturers and other asset-intensive companies. "Flutura will strengthen Accenture's industrial AI services to increase the performance of plants, refineries, and supply chains while also enabling clients to accomplish their net-zero goals faster," Accenture said in a statement. Ireland-based Accenture plans to bring Flutura's capabilities to clients in the energy, chemicals, metals, mining, and pharmaceutical industries. Last year, Accenture acquired data science company ALBERT in Japan.

Tata Motors hikes CV prices by 5%

Mumbai: Tata Motors Tuesday announced increasing the prices of commercial vehicles by up to 5 per cent from April 1. The price increase comes in the wake of the implementation of the more stringent BS-VI phase II emission norms from next month, it said. The price increase will be applicable across the entire range of commercial vehicles, with the exact amount varying according to the individual model and variant, the company said in a statement. "Tata Motors will be implementing a price increase of up to 5 per cent on its commercial vehicles, starting from April," the company said. Tata Motors said it is upgrading its entire vehicle portfolio to conform to the stricter emission norms, which are set to come into force from April 1.

Windfall tax on diesel export up

New Delhi: The government has hiked the windfall profit tax on export of diesel to Re 1 per litre while the levy on domestically produced crude oil has been cut by a fifth, according to an official order. The levy on crude oil produced by companies such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has been reduced to ₹3,500 per tonne from ₹4,400 per tonne, the order dated March 20 said. The government raised the tax on export of diesel to Re 1 per litre from ₹0.50, and the same on overseas shipments of ATF remains at nil. The new tax rates come into effect from March 21, the order said.

AM/NS India celebrates 52nd National Safety Week

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 21: The 52nd National Safety week has been observed across all locations of ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) in Odisha with active participation of senior leadership, employees and shop floor workers. The aim of observing the National Safety Week was to create awareness on health and safety among the employees and workers, directly or indirectly engaged in the plant operations, projects and mines. The goal for the year was captured with the theme "Our Aim-Zero Harm".

The weeklong celebration at Paradeep Pellet Plant commenced with hoisting of the safety flag by Suresha G, Executive Director, Odisha Operations, AM/NS India.

For greater participation of em-



ployees and workers in the campaign, various activities were carried out by Health and Safety (H&S) department across all locations. A short marathon named "DASH-ATHLON" was organised at Paradeep beach road which aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle and physical wellbeing. More than 170 employees and business associates participated in the event to mark the beginning of National Safety Week 2023.

India resists UAE calls for more air access

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 21: India is not looking at increasing air traffic rights for the United Arab Emirates, despite calls by Gulf carriers, and wants its domestic airlines to offer non-stop long haul flights, civil aviation minister told Reuters in an interview Tuesday.

The UAE has urged India to increase the maximum number of seats between the two countries by 50,000 a week from about 65,000 a week today, but Jyotiraditya Scindia said: "at this point we're not looking at increasing it."

India is one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets where demand for air travel is outstripping the supply of planes. But the bulk of India's international air traffic is currently carried by Gulf airlines such as Emirates and Qatar Airways, powered by efficient hubs like Dubai and Doha. The Indian government wants to recapture



traffic lost to foreign carriers and is pushing airlines to order more widebody planes to meet demand.

Air India last month placed a record order for 470 jets and is making an aggressive push in the international market by offering fliers, especially the Indian diaspora, non-stop flights to long haul destinations in the United States.

Scindia said Air India's widebody plane order and IndiGo's plans to fly twin-aisle planes were signs the 'transition' has begun.

"The minute you give direct connectivity to international locations directly from Delhi, any passenger is going to prefer a direct connect, rather than going through another country's hub," he said at his New Delhi office.

India is mobilising to handle the transportation needs of its population of 1.3 billion by building new airports in the country's remotest parts, while also expanding capacity at metro hub airports like Delhi and Mumbai.

BSNL expected to become profitable by FY27, says DoT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: The Department of Telecom has sought ₹33,111 crore for payment of adjusted gross revenue dues of state-run BSNL which is likely to be made in the upcoming April-June quarter, according to a Parliamentary panel report.

In a submission to the Standing Committee of Communications and Information Technology, the Department of Telecom shared that against the proposal of ₹39,725.07 crore for 2023-24, ₹66,691.82 crore has been allocated to it in the budget.

"The increased amount is towards the payment of AGR Dues to BSNL, which is a part of its revival package. The Department had proposed an amount of ₹33,111.00 crore for the AGR Dues. The payment will be made once BSNL claims the amount and is most likely to happen in the first quarter of FY 2023-24," the DoT informed in a written reply to the panel.

The Finance Ministry has allocated a total of ₹1,08,153.25 crore under Budget Estimates for 2023-24 to the DoT comprising ₹41,461.43 crore under revenue section and ₹66,691.82 crore for capital section accounts. The government had allocated ₹44,720 crore for capital infusion in the state-run BSNL and MTNL for the current fiscal which was revised to ₹33,269.01 crore and out of the total allocated fund ₹23,873.44 crore have been spent till December 2022.

The DoT has informed the panel that the techno-commercial bids of TCS and ITI were opened by BSNL on November 23 and financial bids of January 13 for procurement of 4G equipment and as per the cabinet approval Group of Ministers will approve the process of procurement.

BITCOIN PASSES THE BANK STRESS TEST

THE INFAMOUSLY VOLATILE CRYPTOCURRENCY SEEMS POSITIVELY HALE AND HEARTY, JUST AS A BANKING MELTDOWN DRIVES MARKETS INTO THE ARMS OF A RECESSION

REUTERS

Tokyo, March 21: As crisis stalks the traditional world of stocks and bonds, bitcoin is suddenly looking like a safe haven.

The infamously volatile cryptocurrency seems positively hale and hearty, just as a banking meltdown drives markets into the arms of a recession.

Bitcoin has risen 21% this month, while a choppy S&P 500 has lost 1.4% and gold has gained 8%.

"If you were going to describe an environment where there were

successive bank runs because central banks are trying to fight inflation with fast rate increases, that is pretty close to a spot-on a thesis for owning bitcoin as you've ever heard," said Stéphane Ouellette, CEO at digital asset investment platform FRNT Financial.

The cryptocurrency has, for now, severed its ties with stocks and bonds and tagged on to a rally in gold, fulfilling at least one part of creator Satoshi Nakamoto's dream - that bitcoin can serve as a refuge for suffering investors.

Bitcoin's 30-day correlation with

the S&P 500 has slid to negative 0.12 over the past week, where a measure of 1 indicates the two assets are moving in lock step.

A selloff in banks has wiped out hundreds of billions of dollars in market value and forced U.S. regulators to launch emergency measures. The past couple of weeks has seen Silicon Valley Bank and crypto lender Silvergate go under, while Credit Suisse has teetered on the brink.

'RETURN TO CORE ETHOS'

Let's not carried get away, though. This is bitcoin.

"The bearish argument would be that these dynamics are temporary, and ultimately this rally is not going to sustain," said Ouellette.

It remains to be seen if bitcoin's bullishness will endure as attention shifts to the Federal Reserve's policy



meeting this week where the U.S. central bank must walk a fine line as it fights inflation and bank stresses.

Furthermore, the cryptocurrency's allure hasn't all been about safety. The rapid price rise has forced some short-sellers to cut their bets and buy coin back. Data from Coinglass shows traders liquidated \$300 million worth of crypto positions on Monday, with most of that total - \$178.5 million - short positions. Nonetheless,

Google's artificially intelligent 'Bard' set for next stage

In Bard's next stage, Google is opening a waitlist to use an AI tool that's similar to the ChatGPT technology Microsoft began deploying in its Bing search engine to much fanfare last month

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, March 21: Google announced Tuesday it's allowing more people to interact with 'Bard,' the artificially intelligent chatbot the company is building to counter Microsoft's early lead in a pivotal battleground of technology.

In Bard's next stage, Google is opening a waitlist to use an AI tool

that's similar to the ChatGPT technology Microsoft began deploying in its Bing search engine to much fanfare last month.

And last week, Microsoft embedded more AI-powered technology in its word processing, spreadsheet and slide presentation programmes with a new feature called Copilot. Until now, Bard had only been available to a small group of "trusted testers" hand-picked by Google.

The Mountain View, California, company, which is owned by Alphabet Inc., isn't saying how many people will be given access to Bard in the next step of the technology's development.

Initial applicants will be limited to the US and the UK. Before Google offers Bard in more countries.

Google is treading carefully with



the rollout of its AI tools, in part because it has more to lose if the technology spits out inaccurate information or takes its users down dark corridors.

That's because Google's dominant search engine has become a de-

facto gateway to the internet for billions of people, raising the risk of a massive backlash that could tarnish its image and undercut its ad-driven business if the technology behaves badly.

Despite the technology's pitfalls,

Bard still offers "incredible benefits" such as "jumpstarting human productivity, creativity and curiosity," Google said in a blog post that two of its vice presidents - Sissie Hsiao and Eli Collins - wrote with assistance from Bard.

As a precautionary measure, Google is limiting the amount of interaction that can occur between Bard and its users - a tactic Microsoft has imposed with ChatGPT after media coverage detailed instances when the technology likened an Associated Press reporter to Hitler and tried to persuade a New York Times reporter to divorce his wife.

Google also is providing access to Bard through a separate site from its search engine, which serves as the foundation for the digital ads that generate most of its profits.

In a tacit acknowledgment that Bard may be prone to straying into manufacturing falsehoods, which are being called "hallucinations" in technology circles, Google is providing a query box connected to its search engine to make it easier for users to check on the accuracy of the information being displayed by the AI.

Bard made an embarrassing blunder shortly after Google unveiled the tool by prominently displaying a wrong answer about a scientific milestone during a presentation that was supposed to show how smart the technology could be.

The gaffe contributed to a nearly 8% drop in Alphabet's stock in a single day, wiping out about \$100 billion in shareholder wealth and underscoring how closely investors are watching how Google handles the transition to AI.

Eyes on Indian top order

Kerr helps MI beat RCB, end losing run

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, March 21: The prima donnas of Indian batting will have to put their best foot forward while tackling the lethal in-dippers from Mitchell Starc when they face Australia in the series-deciding third ODI here Wednesday.

If Starc is giving sleepless nights to the batters, the other 'Mitchell - Mitchell Marsh - has sent the Indian bowlers on a leather hunt by hitting nearly a dozen sixes (11) across two games. Tackling 'Mitchell The Menace' will be top-most on the Indian team's agenda.

The series is locked at 1-1 and the starry quartet of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav will have to bat out of their skins to stop the left-arm pacer, who is gearing up to once again bring the ball back viciously into the right-handers while taking a few away.

A sea change on the technical aspect, as well mental make-up, will be the need of the hour; and Starc has exposed their frailties pretty badly.

The white ball games in India are mostly played on flat decks, where one can get away by hitting through the line, where one doesn't need too much of feet movement. A batter can plonk the front-foot and hit deliveries across the line with a fair degree of success.

But Starc, blessed with better skill sets, changed the questionnaire with deliveries that would either straighten in the off-middle line or cut back sharply towards leg-middle after a fair amount of deviation in the air.

The Indians have known what Starc has done for the longest time but they failed to factor in that conditions in Mumbai and Visakhapatnam would assist his bowling a bit more. In Mumbai, there was help off the surface but in the coastal city of



Skipper Rohit Sharma would hope for a better show by the Indian top order, including him, when they take the field against Australia in the series decider, Wednesday

Visakhapatnam, the ball did more in the air than off the surface. The refurbished Chepauk, with all its stands being open for public viewing, will be hosting an international game after quite some time and the re-laid pitch will attract a lot of attention. Normally, Chepauk produces a

track that is effective for slow bowlers and run-scoring in the middle overs might be difficult.

However, an interesting aspect of this year's pitch preparation will be keeping Chennai Super Kings' strength in mind and one might see some initial nip off the surface for the fast bowlers.

Surya's problems

Suryakumar Yadav in T20s can do no wrong with his aggressive shuffling inside the crease but that exaggerated movement across the crease has led to a couple of identical first-ball dismissals for him in both ODIs.

To play swing and seam, one

For us it is now the different playing XI combinations and just ensuring that we play different combinations at times just to ensure that we are able to do that in the World Cup and we are not surprised by anything in the World Cup

RAHUL DRAVID

needs to maintain perfect balance and play the ball as late as possible. Surya always tries to play late in T20s and hence it is a bit surprising that he is trying to meet the ball early in this format.

With no Shreyas Iyer for some times, this is actually Surya's best time to grab the opportunity and seal an ODI World Cup berth, but he has been far from convincing so far. The next run of ODIs will only be in June-July and there is a possibility that Iyer could be fit by then to reclaim his place and Surya might find it difficult to get his share of chances.

Bowling attack

The Indian bowling attack needs to take its workload management seriously but, truth be told, the bowlers haven't had much work to do as they have bowled a total of 47 overs (36 and 11) across the two games. That is not even half of the 100 allocated overs.

Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj wouldn't mind making first use of the Chepauk surface if Rohit happens to win the toss.

The key question is if Shardul Thakur; or Jaydev Unadkat for his left-arm variation, will be used as third specialist seamer, or both spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel will get another game alongside Ravindra Jadeja.



Amelia Kerr (C) was surrounded by teammates getting a wicket against RCB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, March 21: Mumbai Indians Tuesday reclaimed the top spot in the points table with a four-wicket victory against Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Women's Premier League, riding on Amelia Kerr's all-round heroics (3/22; 31 n o, 27b, 4x4).

Chasing a modest 126 to win here at the DY Patil Stadium, Mumbai Indians stuttered post a fiery start and also failed to knock off the target in 11.3 overs - a condition that would have helped them improve net run rate over Delhi Capitals.

Mumbai Indians eventually finished at 129/6 in 16.3 overs. RCB, however, signed off from the competition with their sixth loss in eight league matches.

Kerr was at top of her game to take Mumbai Indians over the line. Kerr added 47 runs for the fifth wicket with Pooja Vastrakar (19) to revive Mumbai Indians who were rocked twice in quick succession.

Sobhana Asha halted Nat Sciver-Brunnt's charge by dismissing her for 13, while captain Harmanpreet Kaur (2) fell for her first single-digit score in the competition. Kanika Ahuja claimed two wickets in one over to finish as the pick among the bowlers for RCB. At the start, the opening pair of Hayley Matthews

(24) and Yastika Bhatia (30) laid the foundation with a 53-run stand.

Earlier, Mumbai Indians produced a disciplined effort to restrict RCB to 125/9. Kerr validated Kaur's decision to bowl first, taking full advantage of a spin-friendly track, while Hayley Matthews and Saika Ishaque (1/30) were also on the money. Both Kerr and Ishaque joined Sophie Ecclestone of the UP Warriorz for most wickets (13) in WPL.

Mumbai made an early breakthrough when a horrible mix-up between Devine (0) and Smriti Mandhana culminated in the former being run out.

Mandhana continued to drive herself back into form before her innings was ended by Kerr. Ellyse Perry (29) took time to settle down and opened up only in the 10th over. At the halfway stage, RCB were 56/2. Nat Sciver-Brunnt (2/24) dismissed Perry and Shreyanka Patil (4) to mark yet another poor show for RCB with the bat. Isabelle Wong (2/26) also chipped in, removing Richa Ghosh (29) and Disha Kasat in the last over.

Brief scores: RCB Women 125/9 (Richa Ghosh 29, Ellyse Perry 29; Amelia Kerr 3/22, Nat Sciver-Brunnt 2/24, Issy Wong 2/26) lost to MI Women 129/6 (Amelia Kerr 31 n o, Yastika Bhatia 30; Kanika Ahuja 2/5) by 4 wickets.

Nikhat, three others advance

DC qualify directly for WPL final



NIKHAT ZAREEN



NITU GHANGHAS



MANISHA MOUN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: A 'fatigued' Nikhat Zareen continued her winning run to enter the quarter-finals along with two other pugilists at the Women's World Championships here Tuesday. Nikhat saw off Mexico's Patricia Alvarez Herrera 5-0 to notch her third win of the tournament.

Commonwealth Games champion Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) won her bout with a first round against Sumaiya Qosimova of Tajikistan, while last year's bronze medalist Manisha Moun (57kg) got the better of Nur Elif Turhan of Turkey in the third round.

Jaismine (60kg) came from a round down to overpower Mijgona Samadova of Tajikistan. Shashi Chopra (63kg), however bowed out of the tournament after going down 0-4 to Mai Kito of Japan. It was the second RSC win in as many bouts for Nitu in the tournament. Nikhat took a few seconds to de-

cipher her opponents game plan before attacking. She used her nimble feet to duck away from Herrera's counter attacks.

Both the boxers have moved down from the 52kg weight division. Well aware of the Mexican's aggressive style of play, Nikhat used her speed to land accurate jabs and hooks. Herrera, whom she had beaten in the last edition, tried her best to shift the momentum in her favour but Nikhat's relentless attack proved too strong. Nikhat, who has already played three bouts, including one against the top seed, and is still three bouts away from the gold, said she is feeling fatigued.

Earlier, in the opening session of the day, Nitu registered her second RSC win in as many bouts in the tournament. Both Nitu and Qosimova tried to figure out each other's game, but then the Indian connected four straight jabs which forced the referee to give the opponent her first standing count. Nitu continued her onslaught

as she cornered the Tajikistan pugilist and pummeled her with straight jabs. The referee gave Qosimova her second standing count before calling the contest in the Indian's favour much to the disappointment of her opponent, who kept showing the thumbs down gesture when the result was called.

The experienced Manisha used a straight jab followed by a combination of punches to assert her authority. Considerably taller than the Turkish boxer, Manisha used that to her advantage as she unleashed a right and left hook followed by a straight jab.

Turhan looked to attack in the second round after receiving two standing counts in the first three minutes but Manisha continued landing hooks and jabs quite seamlessly.

She kept moving around to dodge her opponent's punches. A flurry of jabs and hooks by Manisha led the referee to stop the contest in favour of the home boxer with only few seconds left for the final bell.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 21: Alice Capsey produced a fabulous all-round display (3/26; 34, 31b, 4x4, 1x6) as Delhi Capitals thrashed UP Warriorz by five wickets to directly qualify for the final of the Women's Premier League here Tuesday.

Chasing 139-run target, built around Tahila McGrath's 32-ball unbeaten 58 (8x4, 2x6), DC romped home scoring 142/5 in 17.5 overs to finish at the top of the table, topping Mumbai Indians on the basis of better net run-rate.

With Delhi grabbing a direct spot in the final, Mumbai Indians and UP Warriorz will now face off in the eliminator for the other final spot.

MI had defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by four wickets earlier in the day, leaving DC with the task of not only winning against UPW but also maintaining a better run-rate to directly book their final spot.

Meg Lanning and Co did just that as they restricted UPW to a modest 138/6 after winning the toss and opting to bowl. Chasing, the opening pair of Lanning and Shafali Verma then went on a boundary hitting spree as they knocked off 56 runs off 29 balls.

Once Shafali was dismissed off Sophie Ecclestone's bowling, Ismail returned to trap Jemimah Rodrigues and then removed Lanning, as suddenly DC slumped to 70/3. UPW tried to tighten the screws but Capsey kept DC in the hunt. DC brought up their 100 in 12 overs.



IMPRESSIVE OUTING: Alice Capsey (L) was delighted after dismissing a UP Warriorz batter, Tuesday

Marizanne Kapp (34 n o, 31b, 4x4, 1x6) held her nerves as DC reached 130/3 in 16 overs. Ecclestone managed to sent back Capsey while a mix-up cost Jess Jonassen's wicket but Kapp kept her cool to hit the winning runs.

Earlier, McGrath played a superb knock after skipper Alyssa Healy (36) provided the platform to push UP Warriorz's total closer to the 140-mark. Capsey scalped three quick wickets conceding just seven runs in her first three overs but McGrath changed her bowling fig-

ures with a 19-run blitz in the final over. For DC, Radha Yadav (2/28) and Jess Jonassen (1/24) were the other wicket takers.

Shweta Sehrawat provided UPW a flying start before being dismissed in the fifth over. Healy then took over, even as new batter Simran Shaikh struggled to find the gaps. Looking to break the shackles, Healy was stumped in the 10th over.

The Delhi bowlers kept a good line and length and soon Simran's struggle was over. McGrath then

slowly built her innings but kept losing partners from the other end. Jess Jonassen then had Kiran Navgire stumped, while Capsey got rid of Deepti Sharma. UPW slipped to 105/8 in 18 overs. However, McGrath guided UPW close to 140-run mark.

BRIEF SCORES: UPW Women 138/6 (Tahila McGrath 58 n o, Alyssa Healy 36; Alice Capsey 3/26, Radha Yadav 2/28) lost to DC Women 142/5 (Meg Lanning 39, Marizanne Kapp 34 n o, Alice Capsey 34; Shanmim Ismail 2/29) by 5 wickets.

LAKSHYA SLUMPS TO 25TH IN BWF RANKINGS

Stadium named after Rani Rampal

Abroad training for Bajrang, Vinesh approved by TOPS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: Commonwealth Games champion Lakshya Sen slipped six places to move out of the world top 20 in the latest men's singles rankings issued by BWF Tuesday. Following his second round exit from the All England Championship, Sen slumped to the 25th spot.

The 21-year-old, who had reached a career-best world No. 6 in November last year, hasn't been

in the best of form, having made early exits from Malaysia Open, India Open and German Open.

Last year, Sen had a rampaging run in the European circuit early in the season, winning the India Open and reaching the finals at Germany and All England.

HS Prannoy continued to remain steady at number ninth spot, while Kidambi Srikanth regained his top 20 spot after climbing two positions. In women's singles, PV Sindhu stayed at the ninth spot, while Saina Nehwal slipped five places to 32nd spot.

Men's pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty continued at the sixth spot, while women's combination of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand lost a rung to be at the 18th position.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: Indian team's star hockey player Rani Rampal has become the first woman in the sport to have a stadium named after her, in Rae Bareilly. The MCF Rae Bareilly has renamed the hockey stadium as 'Rani's Girls Hockey Turf'.

Rani shared photos on her social media handles, where she is seen interacting with the players and inaugurating the stadium alongside other staff members.

"Words seem too less to express my happiness and gratitude as I share that the MCF Raebareilly has renamed the hockey stadium to 'Rani's Girls Hockey Turf' to honour my contribution to hockey," Rani wrote on her Twitter handle.

Expressing her gratitude fur-



ther, she said, "It is a proud and emotional moment for me as I become the first woman hockey player to have a stadium to my name. I dedicate this to the Indian women's hockey team and I hope this inspires the next generation of women hockey players!"

Rani made a comeback to the Indian team during the tour of South Africa earlier this year, when she was included in a 22-member squad.

Rani was returning to the squad after last playing against Belgium in the FIH Women's Hockey Pro League 2021-22, where she won her 250th cap for India.

The 23-year-old had been dealing with an injury since the Tokyo Olympics and was subsequently left out of the World Cup and Commonwealth Games 2022 squads.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 21: The Sports Ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) has approved star wrestlers Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat's request for training stints in Kyrgyzstan and Poland respectively.

While Bajrang requested to train in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan for 16 days, Vinesh wanted to train at the Olympic Preparation Centre in Spala, Poland for 11 days.

The financial assistance will cover athletes' air tickets, camp expenses including the cost of training, boarding, and lodging, and miscellaneous costs such as airport transfer, insurance and internal travel, out of pocket allowance among other expenses, a

press release stated.

TOPS will also cover expenses for Vinesh's sparring partner - Sangeeta Phogat and physiotherapist Ashwini Jeevan Patil and Bajrang's coach Sajeet Maan, physiotherapist Aanand Kumar; and strength and conditioning expert Kaazi Kiron Mustafa Hasan.

Meanwhile, based on the selection trials conducted by the Oversight committee for wrestling, a national coaching camp would also be held for the Indian team for participation in the upcoming Senior Asian Championship 2023.

The national camp would be held at Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Sonapat Regional Centre and would have 108 wrestlers (36 women, 33 Greco roman and 39 freestyle wrestlers) among others.