



DISHA DOES HER MAKE-UP

Actor Disha Patani is over the moon after doing her make-up for a professional shoot

LEISURE P2



NCB CHARGESHEET

NCB in its 11,700-page chargesheet says actor Rhea Chakraborty was instrumental in procuring and financing drugs

NATIONAL P8



PANT RESCUES INDIA

Rishabh Pant's century puts India in command in the 4th Test against England at Ahmedabad

SPORTS P12

Boost to state's skill ecosystem

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: On the occasion of the 105th birth anniversary of Biju Patnaik, also celebrated as the Panchayati Raj & Lok Seva Diwas, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday inaugurated the much-talked about World Skill Centre (WSC) at Mancheswar here.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister described it as an important milestone adding a new chapter to the skill ecosystem of Odisha. The WSC will be a premier institute to impart advanced skills and create globally employable youths in the state.

The project has been developed in partnership with the ITE Education Services (ITES) Singapore as knowledge partner and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Built over an area of 450,000 square feet, it is the tallest building in the state which will provide skills to 3000 students in eight trades for now.

Stating that skill development has been a priority for his government, Patnaik said, "Our aim is to meet the aspirations of the youths as well as create a pool of increased opportunities for them. Lots of emphasis is being accorded by my government to short term, long term and advanced skill training through industry collaborations and certifications."

The government is intensely investing in the future of youths by creating infrastructure and mechanism for making them future ready, he said.

The Chief Minister said a gold



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik visits a facility after inaugurating the World Skill Centre, Friday; (R) an aerial view of the World Skill Centre at Mancheswar in Bhubaneswar.



IMPORTANT MILESTONE

- The state-of-the-art centre is being set up with a budget of ₹1342 crore
- It would provide advanced skills training to ITI and polytechnic pass-out students
- Under the project, 1,51,000 youths will be trained/impacted
- Built over an area of 450,000 square feet, it's now the tallest building in the state

medal win at World Skill Competition and innovations demonstrated by state skill institutes during the pandemic have set standards worth emulating.

"Our ITIs are amongst the best in the country. The WSC will further support our endeavor by providing advanced skill training to our youths and prepare them for competing at the global level," Patnaik said.

Patnaik emphatically said the WSC

will take a lead in taking a giant leap of transformation from present to future for all polytechnics and ITIs in Odisha. He lauded the Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) and the Skill Development & Technical Education (SD&TE) department for making efforts to improve the skill ecosystem of the state. He also thanked the ADB and the ITEES Singapore for collaborating with Odisha.

Remembering Biju Babu on his birth anniversary, Patnaik said "Biju Babu always dreamt of an Odisha where youths acquire world class skills. On his 105th birth anniversary, I am happy to dedicate the World Skill Centre to the people of Odisha."

He hoped that with support from all stakeholders, the WSC and Odisha will set new standards in technical education and vocational training.

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NAVEEN OPENS 3,000 'MO SEBA KENDRAS'

BHUBANESWAR: As part of the 5T initiative, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday inaugurated 3,000 'Mo Seba Kendras' across the state to provide online services to the people.

On the occasion of the 105th birth anniversary of Biju Patnaik, the CM rolled out the 'Odisha One' unified citizen portal to provide about 400 public services.

Stating that service and respect are the keys to his government, Patnaik said people are the master in a democracy. Empowering people and providing them services with dignity and changing the system is the goal of the state government. Keeping this in view, 5T initiative and Mo Sarkar programme have been taken up, he said.

The state government is now focusing on how people will get access to public services in an easier way.

Highlighting Biju Babu's thoughts on the use of technology, the CM said Biju Babu wanted the benefits of technology to reach every village and people should get the benefits of science to improve their quality of life. Mo Seba Kendra is a strong step in this direction, Patnaik said.

With the inauguration of the service centres, he said, people can avail government services at their doorsteps and will not need to visit offices frequently.

The CM announced that one Mo Seba Kendra would be opened in every panchayat of the state. This will provide employment opportunities for 8,000 youths. The CM also took feedback from the beneficiaries from Konark, Hinjili, Attabira, Nabarangpur, Bhadrak and Gajapati who availed service at Mo Seba Kendra.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Can we trust OPINION polls? We keep changing opinion all the time!

Mamata to contest only from Nandigram, take BJP head on

AGENCIES

Kolkata, March 5: After announcing Trinamool Congress' list of 291 candidates for the high octane Assembly polls beginning this month, party supremo Mamata Banerjee made her intention clear Friday that she will only contest from Nandigram in East Midnapore district, considered a stronghold of newly-inducted BJP leader and once close aide to the Chief Minister, Suwendu Adhikari.

"I will only contest from Nandigram," Banerjee's message was unambiguous and loud, hinting that the popular leader never shies away from a challenge and loves a head-on confrontation.

When Banerjee took everyone by surprise by declaring her intent to contest from Nandigram during a rally there two months ago, a battery of BJP leaders had ridiculed the proposed move.

Some said she would contest from both her traditional constituency of Bhowanipore and Nandigram, just in case she loses the conflict-scarred East Midnapore seat. Others like former lieutenant turned BJP national vice-president Mukul Roy had predicted that



I AM NOT AFRAID OF A FIGHT, I NEVER RUN AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

Banerjee will 'quietly slip back' to her comfort zone in Bhowanipore.

Suwendu, once confidante turned BJP leader, has challenged Banerjee to fight from Nandigram "only if she was prepared to lose by a margin of at least 50,000 votes." Banerjee has now accepted the challenge, proving Roy wrong by fielding another trusted lieutenant Sovandeb Chatterjee from Bhowanipore.

Why did she take such a risk? "I

am not afraid of a fight, I never run away from the battlefield," she said. Analysts dismissed suggestions that Banerjee's move is hasty, taken on the spur-of-the-moment.

"This is a calculated move. Her margin in Bhowanipore has come down as the large non-Bengali electorate has increasingly turned to BJP. By fighting from Nandigram, she wants to revive the memory of the epic land struggle and deny that legacy to the Adhikari clan. That may swing East and West Midnapore towards TMC and limit the damage caused by Adhikari's defection," said political commentator Sukhoranjan Dasgupta.

NEW OTT RULES LACK TEETH: SC

Top court bench grants protection from arrest to Amazon Prime Video India head over 'Tandav'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: The Supreme Court Friday said the government's new rules for OTT platforms have "no teeth, as there is no provision for prosecution of those who do not abide by these rules."

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said: "These rules are only guidelines... no mechanism to control (the content on OTT platforms)." "Without legislation cannot control it."

The observation was made by the top court during the anticipatory bail plea hearing of Amazon Prime Video India head Aparna

Purohit against the Allahabad High Court order, which declined to entertain her anticipatory bail in connection with the FIRs lodged against her over web series 'Tandav'.

The bench stressed that a law should be framed to put in place a mechanism to control the content on these online platforms.

The bench also granted protection from arrest to Purohit, who moved the top court apprehending arrest. However, the top court asked her to co-operate in the ongoing investigation in the matter.

The court also asked the Centre to consider bringing in a law instead of mere guidelines.



Top court shifts Anubhav-Varsha case to family court in Cuttack



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 5: The Supreme Court Friday transferred the divorce case filed by BJD MP Anubhav Mohanty at Patiala House court here to Cuttack family court.

A single-judge bench of Justice Surya Kant heard the transfer petition filed by Varsha Priyadarshini and an application moved by Mohanty pleading early disposal of the case. The court observed during the hearing that the divorce case of Varsha and Anubhav should be heard expeditiously.

On October 16, 2020, a bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy had asked the couple to appear before the SC's mediation centre here. The bench had observed that the couple are high profile personalities of Odia cinema and asked them to explore possibilities of an amicable settlement. Despite several rounds of talks, the mediation for an amicable settlement between Anubhav and Varsha remained inconclusive.

Significantly, Anubhav had moved an application in the apex court praying that the divorce petition be heard expeditiously as he and his parents are unwell. He stated that his father is on dialysis and is subjected to extreme stress. Mohanty also contended that his family members are subjected to undue media glare and also alleged that "Varsha has been intentionally tarnishing his reputation by washing dirty linen in public."

Earlier, Varsha had filed a transfer petition in the apex court seeking transfer of the divorce petition filed by Anubhav in Patiala House court to Cuttack family court. She cited in the transfer plea that it is difficult for her to travel a long distance to attend hearing of the case.

At \$209bn, China's defence budget 3 times that of India

AGENCIES

Beijing, March 5: China Friday hiked its defence budget for the first time to more than USD 200 billion, over three times higher than that of India, maintaining a single-digit growth for the sixth consecutive year with a 6.8 per cent increase in 2021.

The hike in defence spending was announced by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on the opening day of the National People's Congress, China's Parliament, amidst a military standoff with India in eastern Ladakh and growing political and military tensions with the United States.

This year's planned defence spending will be about 1.35 trillion yuan (about USD 209 billion), state-run Xinhua news agency reported, adding that the annual defence

budget maintains a single-digit growth for a sixth consecutive year.

Friday's increase is over three times higher than India's defence budget of about USD 65.7 billion (including pensions).

Last year, China allocated 1.268 trillion yuan (about USD 196.44 billion), according to the state-run Global Times.

In his 35-page work report outlining China's achievements in 2020 and tasks for 2021, premier Li described last year as a "major success" for the armed forces without mentioning China moving over 60,000 well-armed troops who were mobilised for annual exercises, to contentious areas like Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh, prompting India to match the PLA's mobilisation which led to an over eight-month long standoff.



After lengthy rounds of talks, the two sides simultaneously withdrew troops from Pangong Tso area while talks are on for the withdrawal of troops from the rest of the areas.

Last year, a key conclave of the

CPC had finalised plans to build a fully modern military on par with the United States by 2027, which is also the centenary year of the PLA.

The PLA this year has also announced a 40 per cent increase in salaries to attract more talent.

DRAGON'S DEFENCE

■ The hike in defence spending was announced by Premier Li Keqiang amidst a military standoff with India in eastern Ladakh

■ China has gone for massive expansion of military hardware, including building of more aircraft carriers amidst increasing tensions with the US over Taiwan and the South China Sea besides growing discord over Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong

■ China's defence budget is about one quarter of the US figure, which is USD 740.5 billion for the 2021 fiscal year, while it is over three times higher than India's defence budget of about USD 65.7 billion

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	50405.32 ↓ 440.76
NIFTY	14938.10 ↓ 142.70
DOLLAR	73.70 ↑ ₹0.31
EURO	87.63 ↑ ₹0.36
GOLD	₹44,533 ↓ ₹8
SILVER	₹65,650 ↓ ₹271

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	38.8°C	37.4°C
MIN	21.2°C	20.0°C
Humidity	82%	80%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Fog or mist in the morning



LOUISE FELT 'UNIMPORTANT' DURING MARRIAGE

Singer Louise Redknapp has revealed in her recently released book *You've Got This* that she felt unimportant during the last few months of her marriage with former English football star Jamie Redknapp.

A QUIET PLACE PART II TO RELEASE MAY 31

Actor-filmmaker John Krasinski took to Twitter to announce that the sequel to his 2018 hit, *A Quiet Place*, will release May 31. The film stars Krasinski's wife Emily Blunt, and also brings back the actor-director in flashback sequences.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
The stars are sending out a warning today, and it will prevent you from getting cheated. Even though you manage to remain a step ahead of people, you are likely to make a few enemies along the way. Ganesh says today is not auspicious for buying a house or a vehicle.

TAURUS
You will find yourself at the crossroads and each turn and twist will come with its share of pros and cons, says Ganesh. Your sentiments may have an ill-effect on your health. You may spend quality time with family members and friends, hoping to shed the burden thrust upon your soul.

GEMINI
Today, you are likely to focus on self-improvement, predicts Ganesh. Self-employed people may expect huge profits in their businesses. You may end up spending more time at work and less time with family. You need to strike a balance between work and family.

CANCER
What good is life if it doesn't involve great fun and merrymaking. Keeping this in mind, you will set about planning your day. There may be no stopping you as you go about your day having a blast at every possible moment.

LEO
Your passionate and emotional nature contributes in a big way to your sudden outbursts of emotions, says Ganesh. Today, your anger may erupt abruptly. This makes it very likely for you to get carried away irrespective of your surroundings and circumstances, both at work and at home.

VIRGO
Stay clear of a coalition when it comes to business ventures, warns Ganesh. Alone, you can manage an entire stampede. By your own you are, by far, the best administrator of your department. Today, find yourself being the general and uniting people under your banner to achieve greater success, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
You may not have been crowned 'Employee Of The Month', but do not let that distract you from the fact that today, you are the brightest star in office. Be prepared to get some special treatment at work, as your bosses shower praise on you.

SCORPIO
Ganesh warns you of a long, dreary day today. Though not completely at a loss, you may feel lost and desire to spend some time alone with yourself. The empty nest syndrome is likely to invade and hold your mental peace at ransom, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
The day is bright and the seas are calm today. For a change, you shall spend time with your life partner and help them in household chores. Even routine jobs like cooking and cleaning will weave an intricate bond between you two.

CAPRICORN
Your exuberance and self-confidence will become the talk of the day for those around you. But it's not for nothing that you will attract so much attention. You will derive pleasure in accomplishing herculean tasks today, and Ganesh says you will do justice to work too. At home, everything will go smooth and you will enjoy and share the peace in your life with your wife.

AQUARIUS
Team work and cooperation bring out the best in you, so you must make the most of a chance to work in a group. It could be brainstorming, or campaigning for an environmental cause or even playing beach ball! A game of cards in the evening, and consider your day well spent, says Ganesh.

PISCES
The workaholic in your bursts to the fore with a vengeance, and today will see you tackle pending projects with the zeal of a Holy Templar crusader. Your energy levels will be unflagging, and your enthusiasm to wipe your slate clean admirable. Make the most of it, says Ganesh.

Amit's ad-film *Pooja Didi* wins at Spikes Asia

Mumbai: Filmmaker Amit Sharma, who is currently shooting for the upcoming Ajay Devgn-starrer *Maidaan*, has won two awards at the renowned Spikes Asia creative awards. The National Award-winning filmmaker of *Badhaai Ho* won for an ad-film titled *Pooja Didi* for Facebook's More Together campaign. The advertisement shows the power of social media and how it helped people during lockdown.

Sharma won Gold for Direction in the Film Craft category. The advertisement, written by creatives at Taproot Dentsu, won Bronze in the Best Script category.

Expressing that he was 'deeply humbled', Sharma said: "The purpose of this ad-film was to give hope and bring happiness to people's hearts and I think it did that. The virtue of service and unconditional love with no expectation in return is as old as human existence. When I was approached by Taproot Dentsu, I knew I had to be part of this experience. I am glad I was." IANS



Fatima to star in Hindi remake of *Aruvi*

Mumbai: Actress Fatima Sana Shaikh has been roped in to star in the Hindi remake of Tamil hit film *Aruvi*. The remake will be directed by E. Niwas, who has called the shots on films like *Shool*, *Dum*, and *Love Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega* in the past.

The 2017 Tamil film starred actress Aditi Balan in the

lead role. Balan's protagonist *Aruvi* was deemed a progressive, post-modern symbol of feminism by most viewers.

"I look forward to dive deep into the skin of the character. I am really excited to embark on this journey," said Fatima.

Director Niwas added: "*Aruvi* is not just a story of a hero. It's a triumph over the labyrinths of life. It's totally euphoric, and a privilege to explore one of the most beautiful cinematic characters I have come across." IANS

DISHA

does her make-up for first time



Mumbai: Bollywood actress and fitness enthusiast Disha Patani did her make-up for a professional shoot recently, and she is over the moon with the experience.

Disha posted a clip on Instagram where she sits in front of a dressing table, applying make-up in a white robe.

"My first time doing my own Makeup at a brand shoot," she wrote as the caption, without mentioning what she was shooting for.

The actress currently awaits the release of the Salman Khan-starrer *Radhe*. Salman and Disha have previously worked together in the film *Bharat*.

Radhe also has Ranveer Singh in the cast and is directed by Prabhudheva.

That apart, she is also looking forward to reuniting with filmmaker Mohit Suri in *Ek Villain 2*. The actress collaborated with Suri in their 2020 film *Malang*.

Disha will also be seen in *KTina*, produced by Ekta Kapoor. The film also features Akshay Oberoi and Sunny Singh. IANS

NATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL CONCLUDES

Suraj Ka Satwan Ghoda a commentary on moral aberrations in Indian society

POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: Purba Ranga, a five-day National Theatre Festival concluded here at Rabindra Mandap, Friday.

The event was organised by the Department of Culture, Government of Odisha, in collaboration with Odisha Natya Sangh, a confederation of hundreds of theatre troupes of the state and Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre, Kolkata.

Unicorn Actors' Studio, a Delhi-based theatre troupe, staged Hindi play *Suraj Ka Satwan Ghoda* on the concluding day of the festival.

Dramatised, designed and directed by Happy Ranjit, the play was based on Dharmveer Bharati's highly acclaimed short novel of the same name.



A scene from Hindi play *Suraj Ka Satwan Ghoda* staged at Rabindra Mandap, Friday.

Ranjit was born and brought up in Odisha and is now posted as a faculty at National School of Drama, New Delhi.

The play was an amalgamation of seven small stories of different emotions and flavours. As the play progressed,

the characters and the situations of these stories intersected and overlapped each other. The border of all stories merged and finally became one. All humours and funny incidents of the play are a commentary on the prevailing moral distortions in the Indian society. The plot is about Manik Mullah and his three lovers Jamuna, Lilly and Satti. They tell the truth about the social evils in Indian society and its people.

The dignitaries who attended the closing ceremony include eminent theatre director Manoj Patnaik, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi President Ramakrushna Sahoo and Secretary Prabodh Kumar Rath. A short meeting was conducted by ONS Secretary Lala Biren Roy.

SABYARCHITA BACK



Newly-wed actors Sabyasachi Mishra and Archita Sahu are all smiles as they return to Bhubaneswar, Friday after their marriage in a private ceremony at Jodhpur, Rajasthan. OP PHOTO

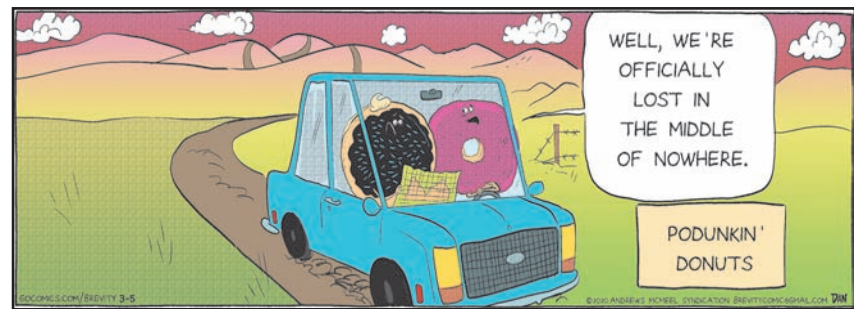
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

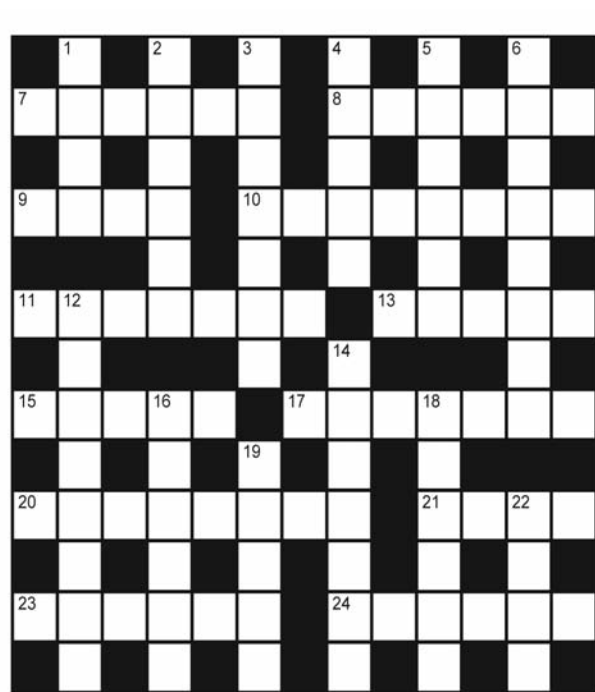


BREVITY



FUN post

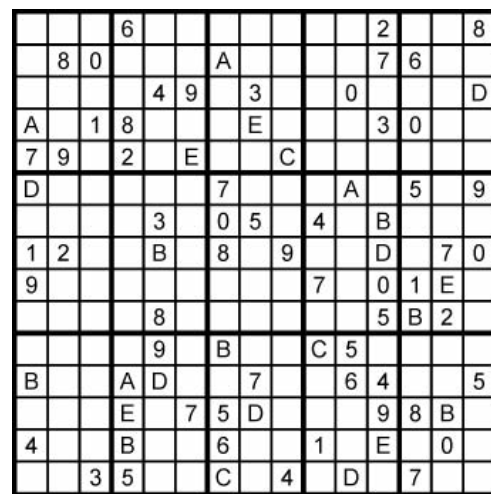
CROSSWORD



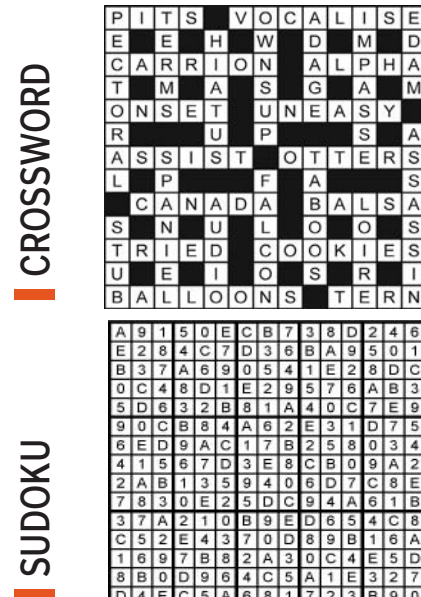
- Across**
- 7 "Romeo and Juliet" setting
 - 8 Reddish brown dyes
 - 9 Ember
 - 10 Draw near
 - 11 Bollywood hopeful
 - 13 Beguile
 - 15 Train stop
 - 17 Fate
 - 20 Claps
 - 21 Domestic
 - 23 Lingo
 - 24 Gofer's job
 - 3 Chewy candy
 - 4 Fellows
 - 5 Earnings
 - 6 Cooking utensil
 - 12 Actor
 - 14 Crowded
 - 16 Accommodate
 - 18 Sound quality
 - 19 Mirthful
 - 22 Getaway spots
- Down**
- 1 Floor model
 - 2 South American
 - monkey

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

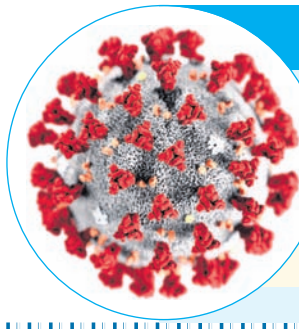


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



RICH TRIBUTE

Anand Bhawan Museum and Learning Centre in Cuttack all decked up to mark the 105th birth anniversary of former CM Biju Patnaik, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	11,63,50,464	9,19,89,595	25,83,807
India	1,11,73,761	1,08,39,894	1,57,548
Odisha	3,37,620	3,34,902	1,917

STATE REMEMBERS BIJU

THE FORMER CM'S BIRTHDAY IS ALSO OBSERVED AS 'PANCHAYATI RAJ DAY' AS THE TALL MAN WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN DECENTRALISING POWER TO THE GRASSROOT LEVEL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Odisha Friday paid rich tribute to legendary leader Biju Patnaik as his five-time Chief Minister son Naveen Patnaik called upon people to keep alive the ideologies of "service and self-esteem" followed by the veteran politician all through his life.

The Chief Minister said this while addressing a function marking the celebration of the freedom fighter's 105th birth anniversary. Biju Patnaik was Chief Minister of Odisha twice in mid-60s and first half of 90s.

The state government also observed the day as "Panchayati Raj Day" as Biju Patnaik was instru-

mental in decentralising power to the grassroot level. As part of Biju Patnaik's efforts towards women empowerment, he for the first time in the country, reserved 33 per cent seats for females in the three-tier panchayat elections during his tenure as the CM between 1990 and 1995.

Naveen Patnaik, his younger son, subsequently enhanced the women quota to 50 per cent in the panchayats and urban local bodies polls. Going further, Naveen Patnaik is now advocating for implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in the State Assemblies and Lok Sabha polls.

Stating that Biju Patnaik was epit-

ome of Odia pride, Naveen Patnaik said he all along dedicated his life to the service of people while marinating Odia "Swabhimana" (self-esteem). He said the state has made progress basing its policies on Biju Patnaik's ideologies. Odisha government's department of sports and youth services organised a mini marathon at Kalinga Stadium here marking the Biju Patnaik's birth anniversary.

Sports minister TK Behera flagged off the marathon race in presence of hockey legend Dilip Tirkey. The ruling BJD's youth and students wing also took out a mass cycle rally from Biju Patnaik's birth place of Cuttack to Bhubaneswar. The rally

starting from Anand Bhawan in Cuttack culminated near Bhubaneswar Airport.

Meanwhile, tribute poured in from across India on the occasion. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Odisha Governor Gabneshi Lal and many Union ministers took to twitter to pay tribute to Biju Patnaik. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik tweeted, "Humble tributes to the visionary leader, great statesman, freedom fighter and the architect of modern #Odisha, #BijuBabu on his birth anniversary."

"He always dreamt of an empowered and prosperous #Odisha and will continue to be a guiding force for all of us," he said.



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pays tribute to his father and former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik on the legendary leader's 105th birth anniversary in Bhubaneswar, Friday

Modi pays tribute to Biju babu

Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday paid tribute to the legendary leader and former Odisha Chief Minister Biju Patnaik on his birth anniversary. Talking to Twitter Modi said, "Tributes to Biju Babu on his birth anniversary. His futuristic vision for India, emphasis on human empowerment as well as social justice inspires us all. The nation is proud of his efforts for Odisha's progress", the Prime Minister said. The birth anniversary of Biju Babu, a household name in Odisha, is being organized by the Odisha government as "Panchayat Raj divas and Lokseva divas" across the state. The state government has been observing the day as an official holiday as a mark of tribute to the great leader. Biju Babu was a daredevil pilot who played a key role during Indonesia's freedom struggle (1947) and also the Kashmir War ferrying freedom fighters from one place to another place.



BJD leaders and people from various walks of life participate in a cycle rally from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar organised by the Biju Chhatra Janata Dal to mark the occasion



Dignitaries including Science & Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda and Information & Public Relations Minister Raghunandan Das inaugurating the state-level birth anniversary celebration of Biju Babu at Sookhana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar



BJD General Secretary (organisation) Pranab Prakash Das and former MP Prasanna Patasani inaugurate a programme to observe former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik's birth anniversary at BJD office in Bhubaneswar

Let's fight for state's self-esteem: Naveen

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: On the occasion of the 105th birth anniversary of Biju Patnaik, BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday appealed to his party workers to take a pledge to continue fight for self-esteem of Odisha.

Paying rich tribute to the freedom fighter and former Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen said the main aim of Biju Babu's life was to bring back the glory of the past and bring Odisha to the pinnacle of development. Service for the people and self-esteem of the state were his

ideology and millions of BJD workers, brothers and sisters continue to work on this ideology, he said.

"Today, when the families who saw their kutchha houses reconstructed to pucca ones with piped water supply and her house is shining in the light of electricity, she is smiling. This is the biggest award for all of us," said Chief Minister.

He further said Odisha's future looks bright when women in panchayats are leading the village development plans, and school pass-outs in the state are very elated over the prospects of more medical/engineering institution in the state.



BJD workers participating in an event at the party office in Bhubaneswar

BIZ HAS SEEN UPTURN SINCE DEC: SHIBA PRASAD



Panda Enterprises, now 'Panda Travel Mart', running near the old bus stand since 1976, has been able to create customers all over India. The outlet started by late Gatikrushna Panda has now established itself as a well-known showroom in the city. The entity has seen many ups and downs over last 44 years. Yet, it has turned its dream of becoming a renowned seller into reality through hard work and will-power.

- **How has the enterprise fared over last 44 years? Who would you give the credit for this?**
- The outlet, which started as a small shop, is doing business today from a three-storied building boasting 12,000 sq metres. It has also two more branches at major places in the city. Behind this, there is hard work, trust and faith of employees and love and relationship of customers. The most important thing is that we take customer service and customers' trust and reliability as our mantra.
- **How do you see the business in the current**

- **financial year and how has Covid-19 pandemic impacted the business?**
- The business in the current financial year has gone down compared to last year. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected our business. From April to August this year, the sale was low but business has gradually recovered since September. With gradual improvement in the Covid situation, the market had started stabilizing and the business has also improved from October. The business has seen an upturn since the end of December. The government has opened the schools and colleges amid Covid restrictions. Tourism and foreign travel has also normalised gradually; yet, business in the current year

will see a big drop compared to the business we had at the same time last year.

- **What are the plans for this financial year and what will the customers get?**
- For the last sales of the year, there were many offers and discounts by the mart.

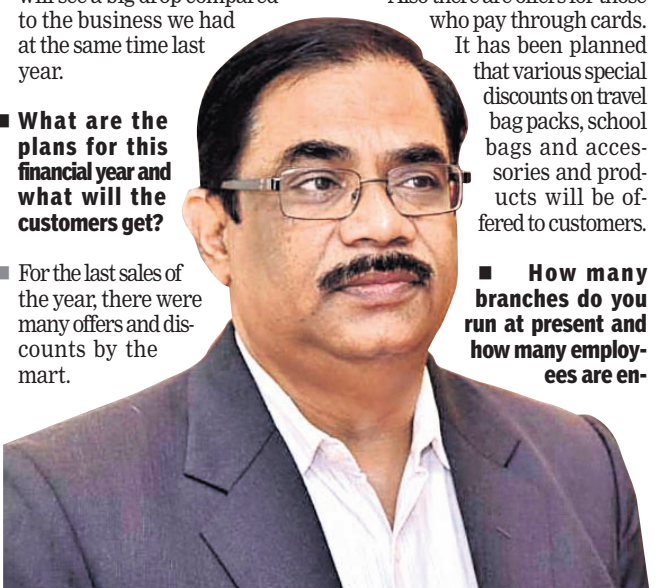
Also there are offers for those who pay through cards. It has been planned that various special discounts on travel bagpacks, school bags and accessories and products will be offered to customers.

- **How many branches do you run at present and how many employees are en-**

gaged? What has been the effect on them by the pandemic?

■ The enterprise has three branches in total. In these three branches more than 110 employees of all types have been engaged. Although the showroom was running with hopes and apprehensions during the pandemic, our employees have not faced big problems or salary cuts. As they have been working with us for so many years, I continued to provide all the convenience to my employees like before. I was also in touch with them during the pandemic. Thus they have not been affected as much; just the business was running through a slump.

Shiba Prasad Panda is the MD of Panda Travel Mart, Ashok Nagar



Justice Chandrachud frowns on cut 'n' paste orders by HCs

The Supreme Court sets aside the order passed by the Orissa High Court and observes that the HC failed to apply its mind independently

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 5: Expressing exasperation over an order passed by the Orissa High Court in a case, Supreme Court judge Justice DY Chandrachud quipped that the biggest problem of 'computer age' is cut and paste orders passed by high courts.

Justice Chandrachud's remark came during the hearing of a petition filed by Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) challenging the order of Orissa High Court wherein the HC refused to interfere with the order passed by CAT, Cuttack directing UPSC to consider the promotion of an Odisha civil service officer to IAS cadre.

Justice Chandrachud observed that one of the gravest problems of computer age is 'cut and paste



Orissa High Court building

order".
"I hate seeing High Court orders only doing cut and paste. If you are upholding something you have to give reasons," Justice Chandrachud said.

I hate seeing High Court orders only doing cut and paste. If you are upholding something you have to give reasons

JUSTICE BY CHANDRACHUD



Significantly, in around 17-page judgement, the Orissa High Court had recorded the judgement of the tribunal in the matter and refused to interfere with it saying that it has elaborately dealt with the question of law in the issue.

"We have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the materials including the impugned order. The learned tribunal has elaborately dealt with the contentions of learned counsel for the parties with reference to the materials available on the record. In our considered opinion, the tribunal has not committed any jurisdictional error. No interference is called for," the High Court had said in judgement.

Justice Chandrachud held that cutting and pasting from tribunal judgement may add to volume of pages but does not address the core issue of the appeal.

The SC bench also comprising Justice MR Shah set aside the order passed by the Orissa High Court and observed that the high court had failed to apply its mind independently to the case.

"The High Court order is set aside accordingly. Letter patent appeal stands restored in High Court. Respondent has retired and decision will affect his pension. Hence the case to proceed on that note," the bench said.

ITI students create Biju's 3D graphics

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, March 5: Marking the 105th birth anniversary of legendary leader Biju Patnaik, students of ITI, Berhampur in Ganjam district have made a 3D sculpture of the former Chief Minister.

This is the first time that a Chief Minister's 3D picture has been made with the help of software technology by the students.

RK Panigrahy, Principal, ITI, Berhampur said, "This 3D installation shows a new era of skill development with computer graphics, welding, grinding, cutting and painting skills all put together. In the coming days, such '3D graphics sculpture fabrication art' will help political parties to attract people to meeting places and create employment as well."



TRADE FAIR: Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra inaugurates the Odisha MSME Trade Fair and Entrepreneurship Week at Idco Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Friday. Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra and other dignitaries are also seen

ANJANA GANGRAPE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Bibekanda Biswal alias Biban, the prime accused in 1999 Anjana Mishra gangrape case, Friday narrated before the CBI sleuths how he along with his associates had committed the heinous crime 22 years back.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials Friday produced Biban in the court after end of his two-day remand. Biban was later sent to judicial custody by the special CBI court Friday afternoon. Biban was taken to the crime

Crime scene recreated at Barang



spot near Barang early morning. He was seen showing the spot where they intercepted the car of Mishra, the victim. The CBI and Barang police officials took Biban to the

spot where they sexually abused the victim before her journalist friend and driver.

Meanwhile, sources claimed that during interrogation by CBI Biban revealed about his hideout in Barang after committing the crime January 9, 1999. Later, he reportedly sneaked out the state to Madhya Pradesh by train. Following a short stay in Madhya Pradesh, he again moved to Maharashtra.

CBI legal advisor Kalichandra Mishra claimed that the central agency has enough evidences against all the accused in the case.

He also said that the CBI sleuths have also elicited vital information during the remand of Biban.

Similarly the victim Friday again urged the CBI to unravel the 'conspiracy angle' before the heinous crime was committed to her. She requested the sleuths to find out how Biban succeeded in fleeing the state and who helped him in securing fake documents.

Notably, the Commissionerate Police with the help of its Maharashtra counterpart nabbed Biban from Aamby Valley in Lonavala area of Maharashtra last month.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

- Odisha Women's League, Kalinga Stadium and Capital Ground, 3.30pm
- 9th edition of Aarya Awards by Parichay Foundation, hotel Crown, 6pm
- Press meet by Kera Odia Jagannath Mandali, Hotel Hindustan International, 4pm
- Book release, Rotary Bhawan, Unit-IX, 4.30pm

Programmes/announcements for wassup today may be sent to downtown@orissapost.com for record, it must also carry the sender's mobile number for our verification, but not for publication.

Maintenance work at Gopalpur level crossing

Bhubaneswar: Traffic near Gopalpur-Balikuda in Cuttack-Barang Railway Section will be partially affected during night between March 8 and 13 owing to maintenance work at the level crossing. In view of the above circumstances, Limited Height Subway may be used for road traffic movement during the period instead of level crossing. Two-wheeler and 4-wheeler users are requested to use the Limited Height Subways. Heavy vehicles have been advised to use substitute nearby roads.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Chandikhole, I Ratna Manjari Nayak, W/o. Srinibas Nayak, Village- Anaka, PO. Krushnapur Sasan, Dist. - Jajpur declare that my actual name is Ratna Manjari Nayak, my son's actual name is Debabrata Nayak and my daughter's actual name is Subhradeepa Nayak. But in my husband's service record my name wrongly mentioned as Ratna Manjari, my son's name as Mr. Debabrata Nayak and my daughter's name as Kumari Subhradwipa. That Ratna Manjari and Ratna Manjari Nayak, Mr. Debabrata Nayak and Debabrata Nayak, Kumari Subhradwipa and Subhradeepa Nayak all are one and only persons.

BMC's holding tax adds burden on citizens: BJP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Criticizing the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation's (BMC) move of an unprecedented hike in holding tax rates in the state capital, the BJP here termed the civic authority's action as unjust and overburdening the common man.

Addressing a presser here, BJP leader Babu Singh alleged a high tax rate is a conspiracy by the BMC to force additional financial burden on the residents. Targeting the BJD government's 5T initiative, Singh remarked that technology and transparency 'seems missing' in 5T when it comes to a sudden rise in holding tax rates in the capital city.

"We strongly condemn the tax system and demand its immediate withdrawal. As per the new rates people are forced to pay 40 times higher rates than earlier. The BMC is not even considering people who have lost jobs in COVID and are left almost nothing. A committee should be formed and revaluation should be done justifiably," Singh said.

He also added that there remains a lack of clarity of the reasons for new rates with residents struggling to have access either with



the government websites or with the BMC. Citing Odisha Municipal Act, 2003, Singh said the residents should be assessed for new holding tax rates taking into account the depreciation value of the property.

Responding to the allegations, BMC Deputy Commissioner, Revenue, Srimanta Mishra said the BMC has initiated a month-long holding tax mela in all its ward offices where citizens can get clarity on the tax rates.

"The revaluation of the benchmark value of lands is a natural process which has not been done in past 20 years. The revaluation has also been done on basis of mouza and plot rates. This varies as per different areas. The new rates have been applied before COVID in 2019. Citizens are also allowed to pay half the amount and rest in quarterly or half-yearly installments," Mishra stated.

91 new Covid-19 cases take tally to 3,37,620

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Odisha's Covid-19 tally mounted to 3,37,620 Friday as 91 more people tested positive for the infection, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

Of the fresh cases, 53 were reported from quarantine centres and 38 detected during contact tracing.

Sambalpur district recorded the maximum number of new cases at 14, followed by Sundargarh (13) and Balasore (12).

The death toll remained at 1,917 as no new fatality due to the infection has been reported in the state since Wednesday.

Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have also died in the state due to comorbidities. Odisha now has 812 active cases, while 3,34,838 people have recovered so far.

The state has conducted over 84.27 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 22,132 Thursday, and the positivity rate stands at 4.01 per cent.

The government has planned to vaccinate prisoners above 60 years of age and jail inmates over 45 years with comorbidities, the official added. Meanwhile, about 140 retired railway employees have been vaccinated against Covid-19 at the Railway Central Hospital here, Friday.

PILGRIM CITY DEVELOPMENT

Pradhan urges Puri king to lead fund collection drive

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 5: Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Friday requested Puri Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb to lead a massive fund collection drive for the development of Puri.

In a letter to the Puri king, the Union Minister said the drive should be transformed into a mass movement.

Pradhan said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been expressing his respect and devotion to Lord Jagannath. The PM is keen to provide all sorts of legal, administrative and other assistance for the initiative.

The Union Minister said the Gajapati, as the President of the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee, should act as a bridge and coordinate between the state and the Centre for the noble purpose.

Pradhan said all Hindus, particularly of Odisha, irrespective of their caste should be given an opportunity to donate their labour and money for the development of



The PM is keen to provide all sorts of legal, administrative and other assistance for the initiative, said Pradhan

the dham.
The Union government, he said, will provide all sorts of assistance including income tax exemption to the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee for the purpose.
The initiative will help innumerable devotees of Lord Jagannath across the globe an opportunity to serve the Supreme solace.

GIVING WAY



An excavator pulls down a structure near Srimandir to make way for the ambitious heritage corridor in Puri, Friday OP PHOTO

NGT asks SPCB to act against illegal brick kilns in Jaleswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 5: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the State Pollution Control (SPCB) to look into the allegations of illegal brick kiln units at Jaleswar in Balasore district.

Acting upon a petition filed before the Eastern Bench on the issue, the tribunal also ordered constitution of a panel to oversee the allegations and submit a report to the tribunal within two months.

"Let the OSPCB look into the matter and take remedial action following due process of law. We also direct a joint committee comprising State PCB, SEIAA, Odisha and District Magistrate, Balasore to file a status report on the matter within two months by email," the written order of the NGT said.

The state PCB will be the nodal agency for compliance in the case. Earlier, petitioner Radhashyam

It was alleged that the brick kilns were operating too closed to human habitations, Anganwadi centre, and farm lands

Sahoo had alleged that two brick kilns operating in the Mahammadanagar Patna under Jaleswar tehsil in Balasore had been operating by blatantly flouting the environmental laws. The next hearing of the case is likely to take place in May this year.

It was alleged that the kilns were too closed to human habitations, Anganwadi centre, and farm lands. It was also said that the consent to establish from the SPCB was not achieved from the operators against the established norms. The applicant also furnished the state government order of 2015 of the laying

down the norms which talked about the location of brick kilns beyond prescribed distance from railway lines, National and State Highways, High Tide Line, places of worship, educational institutions, hospitals, and health care centres, flood embankments, river bank and periphery of a town.

The petitioner had sought NGT's intervention to declare such units as illegal, direct the operators to restore the land to its original condition and fix accountability on the public authorities for their inaction. The petitioner had said that despite repeated communications with the local authorities no action was taken against the erring parties. "Such brick kiln owners are earning huge profit and in turn the government is losing its revenue. The offenders are freely doing their business by violating the statutory norms and notifications prescribed for the same," the petition before the NGT read.

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LOWER INDRA IRRIGATION PROJECT

Resolve rehab, damages issues first, say oustees

Admin prepares for project inauguration March 10

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, March 5: Preparations are in full swing for the inauguration of the long awaited Lower Indra project in Nuapada district. The district administration has been on its toes to complete all necessary arrangements well before March 10 when it will be commissioned.

According to reports, many issues of the people displaced and affected by the project have not been resolved till date. Meanwhile, the administration has started talks with displaced and affected people about their problems. The administration held talks with project-affected people Thursday in the presence of Collector Swadha Dev Singh.

The displaced and the project-affected people, however, made it clear to the district administration and people's representatives that their problems and demands should be resolved before any step is taken for the inauguration of the irrigation project.

Nuapada MLA Rajendra Dholakia, Khariar MLA Adhiraj Panigrahy, chief engineer of the Lower Indra Irrigation project Bibhuti Bhusan Das were at the meeting and heard their multiple issues related to compensation and rehabilitation.

At the meeting, the Collector observed, "The administration and the government should be given ample time to sort out all issues of the project affected people. All should have faith in the administration and let the project be inaugurated."



All issues of the oustees and the affected people will be definitely resolved." It was learnt that 2937 families have been displaced by the project. "The government has announced compensation of Rs 50,000 for each family. Before inaugurating the project, the government should think of paying Rs 2 lakh as compensation. The water resources department should assess total land affected by the project and pay compensation accordingly," they added.

They also said that the norms or facilities being applied for the complete submergence-prone villages should be applied for partially submergence-prone villages.

Besides, the government should put in place all basic facilities at the relocated villages well before the inauguration of the project, they stated. "If the government hurriedly goes in for inaugurating the project, we will be bound to agitate against it," oustees warned.

The project-affected people and oustees have been pressing for their

various demands under the banner of Lower Indra Jana Sachetan Manch and Bistapita Sahayata Samiti.

The affected people were accompanied by their leaders like Nilakanth Pradhan, Kishore Chndra Kathar, Nityananda Pradhan, Jadumani Panigrahi and Amaresh Patnaik

Notably, the Lower Indra Irrigation project assumes much importance for the people of Nuapada, a drought-prone district. As agriculture is affected by lack of irrigation, the district has been witnessing labour migrations.

To ward off frequent drought situation, the government has constructed Lower Indra dam.

This irrigation facility will provide irrigation to 29,900 hectares in Khariar and Boden blocks of Nuapada district and Bangomunda, Muribahal and Titlagarh blocks of Balangir district.

Its construction began in 1997 and was completed in 2019 due to slowpace of work.

DRDO flight tests solid fuel ducted Ramjet

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, March 5: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully carried out a flight demonstration based on Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast in Balasure at around 10.30 am Friday.

All the subsystems, including the booster motor and nozzle-less motor, performed as expected. During the test, many new technologies were proven, including solid fuel based ducted ramjet technology. Successful demonstration of solid fuel based ducted ramjet technology has provided DRDO with a technological advantage which will enable it to develop long range air-to-air missiles.

During the test, air launch scenario was simulated using a booster motor. Subsequently, the nozzle-less booster accelerated it to the required mach number for ramjet operation.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



Women of various SHGs selling handloom sarees and handicraft items at a local exhibition organised at Tapaswini Hall in Sambalpur on the occasion of Panchayatiraj Divas

OP PHOTO

Poachers set forests afire

OFFICIALS ARESTED THREE IN KEONJHAR, TWO IN GANJAM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Telkoi, March 5: Amid reports of forest fires raging in some forests of Champua range, most of the cases are induced by humans in Keonjhar. The forest department has detected such a case in which three poachers were trying to set Jharabeda reserve forest on fire in an attempt to hunt down animals. The three were arrested, Friday.

The accused have been identified as Jugal Juang, Ranjan Juang and Gobardhan Juang of Namakani village under Telkoi police limits of Keonjhar district.

They had set the forest on fire Thursday evening and were waiting to hunt down animals with bows and arrows. At this time, a patrol party of Bimala forest beat



Forest fire raging in Udala aresa of Mayurbhanj district OP PHOTO

was there and found it.

As forest officials tried to nab the accused, the latter retaliated, leading to a confrontation between the two sides. One forest guard was injured in the attack but the poachers were finally arrested. The three were produced in a court.

Forest fires destroy palm oil plantation, house

UDALA/BUGUDA: While forest fires are yet to be fully controlled in various parts of Similipal sanctuary, fires are spreading fast at Kutuli reserve forest under Udala block of Mayurbhanj district. Forest fire has perished palm plantation and cashew nut trees over acres of land near Kutuli forest. A house burnt to ashes after the fire spread from Kutling forest

Due to strong wind, fire is spread-

ing in Urmal, Kutuli, Godhimara and Bahubandh areas. Two small forests in the same area have vanished. Forest officials and firefighters have been struggling to bring the blaze under control. Reports from Buguda in Ganjam said that two poachers had tried to hunt animals by setting fire to a forest in Buguda area Thursday. Forest officials arrested the two and registered a case against them.

After spending ₹78K from dad's A/C, minor fakes own kidnapping

POST NEWS NETWORK

Derabish, March 5: A minor boy in Kendrapada district orchestrated his own kidnapping to avoid his parents' ire as he had spent Rs 78,000 from his father's account.

Umakant Nayak, IIC of Derabish police station in Kendrapada district, received a call at about 8:30 pm Wednesday. The caller informed him that his minor son had been kidnapped. Nayak along with a team reached the caller's house. They searched for him in nearby areas but could not find him.

IIC Nayak then contacted SP Madkar Sandeep Sampad to decide on the future course of action.

Following the direction of the SP, the mobile phone the minor had with him was tracked. The police came to know that the phone was in Bhakud area under Balichandrapur police limits in Jajpur district.

Five police officials led by IIC Nayak reached Bhakud. There after seeing the police van, the minor started running but was caught. He told the police that a miscreant was forcibly taking him in a Bolero and he threw him out of the van at Bhakud square and fled towards Chandikhole.

The police searched for the Bolero but failed to trace it. During interaction, the police suspected the boy. Later, the minor boy admitted to have orchestrated the kidnap drama to save himself from his parents' anger.

Lawyer submits forged court order at PS, held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 5: A lawyer was arrested by Jujumura police in Sambalpur district and forwarded to court Friday in connection with the use of a fake court order to release a seized vehicle from a police station. The arrested lawyer was identified as Braja Mohan Pradhan.

According to sources, a road accident had taken place under Jujumura police limits in the district February 19. The lawyer submitted a forged court order for the release of a truck which was seized

by the local police. The truck was seized following a head-on collision between the vehicle and an ill-fated scooter on NH-53 in which the rider was killed, Jujumura police station sources stated.

Pradhan allegedly submitted a forged order of the SDJM court. The Jujumura police suspected his modus operandi and preferred to verify it from the court. Subsequently, it was ascertained that the release order of the truck had been forged by the arrested lawyer under Sections 466 and 420 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Bolangir family gets 300 days work

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, March 5: Members of a family in this district have created an all time record by working for complete 300 days in the MGNREGS poverty alleviation scheme being implemented under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme Act (MGNREGA), a report said.

They were identified as Bhubaneswar Chhura and his family of Ghantasagada village under Adabahal panchayat of Titlagarh block in Bolangir district.

The family has shown others how migrating to other states for livelihood could be avoided if work is available near home. The whole family has now decided to work under MGNREGS that fetched them more than Rs 90,000 in this fiscal.

The achievement has been wel-



STATE'S FIRST SUCH FEAT IN MGNREGS

comed by the state panchayatiraj secretary DK Singh, special project director Arindam Dakua. The two have praised Collector Chanchal Rana, PD Maheswar Swain and his team for achieving this feat.

Eareir, Chhura and four members of his family used to migrate to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra in search of livelihood.

However, they failed to earn livelihood from the employers and were rather subjected to physical and

mental torture. Most of the time, they had to go hungry after being held hostage by the owners.

Meanwhile, MGNREGS opened up Bhubaneswar's eyes. "We had never earned this much of sum in our life. We had earlier never heard of MGNREGS. But, now we will never think of migrating elsewhere in search of employment," said Chhura. Reports said the district administration ensured 100-days works after the MGNREGS was first implemented

in the district in 2006. Significantly, Bolangir district in Odisha is infamous for migration of labourers.

Later, the state government decided to provide 200 days of work with daily wage of Rs 208 for 20 blocks of four migration prone districts of Bolangir, Bargarh, Kalahandi and Nuapada districts. However, the district administration has been able to provide 300 days work with daily wage of Rs 308 in six migration prone blocks of Khaprakhol, Belpada, Turekela, Bangomunda, Muribahal and Titlagarh blocks.

When contacted, Maheswar Swain, PD, DRDA said over 33,237 families in the district have been able to get work for 100 days. Moreover, the district administration has provided 200 days of work to 2561 families while 1.13 crore workdays have been created in the district under the scheme.

Youth works as truck helper to buy laptop

Munu Rana, a youth of Bolangir, is pursuing his MA from Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai

POST NEWS NETWORK

Loisingha, March 5: Munu Rana, a resident of Kumbharpada slum under Loisingha block in Bolangir district, is a meritorious student.

He is presently pursuing his MA from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) at Deonar in Mumbai.

Munu is now working as a helper on a truck so that he can buy a laptop and continue his education online seamlessly. He was Thursday spotted working as a helper by some people who were staging a dharna at the block office.

After coming to know about him, an OrissaPOST correspondent met him and he narrated his story.

Munu has a younger brother. It was when he was in Class X in 2009, their father Chakradhar Rana died. The family's burden fell on their mother Banita. She had to work at a



local sattu farm to educate her two children. In order to help his mother financially, Munu would work as a sweeper at a computer training in-

stitute. He would also find time to work at a water kiosk. Whatever he would earn, he would help his mother meet family expenses and fund his ed-

ucation cost.

With much difficulty, he completed his Plus III. He has done B.Ed from Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya in Maharashtra. He enrolled for MA at Tata Institute of Social Sciences in 2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he had to return home in April last year. Now he is continuing his study online with the help of his mobile phone.

As he is facing problems to study through a mobile phone, he has requested the district administration and the local MLA to provide him a laptop. Meanwhile several weeks have passed and his request has not been met by the district administration and the MLA.

Eventually, he decided to work as a helper and buy a laptop from whatever money he makes from the profession.

NOTICE

I, Ashok Kumar Naik, S/o Late Sana Naik resident of Badpada, Bhawanipatna, PO- Bhawanipatna, PS- Bhawanipatna Town, Dist.- Kalahandi. Occupation- Retd. Govt. Servant bring to the notice of the General Public that I have purchased a plot of mouza- Purnapada, PS- Bhawanipatna No.-144 vide Khata No.-11, Plot No.-333, Kissam- Bahalmamuli area Ac.0.05dec vide Regd. Sale Deed No.-2466/97, Book No.-1, Vol No.-312, Page-269 to 284 of DSR, Bhawanipatna and the said original Sale Deed has been lost somewhere in between Collectorate to Tahasil Office on dt.25.02.2021 and to this effect I have also lodged a report vide GDE No. 011/02.03.2021 at Town PS, Bhawanipatna and now I intends to create a charge such as Equitable mortgage of aforesaid property on the basis of Certified Copy of of Regd. Sale Deed No.-2466/97 for availing Housing loan facility from State Bank of India, Bhawanipatna Branch, Code No.-039. Further in case any party has any claim towards the said relevant property, the same should be lodged with the intending party and also with the above stated Branch of State Bank of India, within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Ashok Kumar Naik
Badpada, Bhawanipatna

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank CIRCLE OFFICE, Plot No.-1556(P) & 1561(P)
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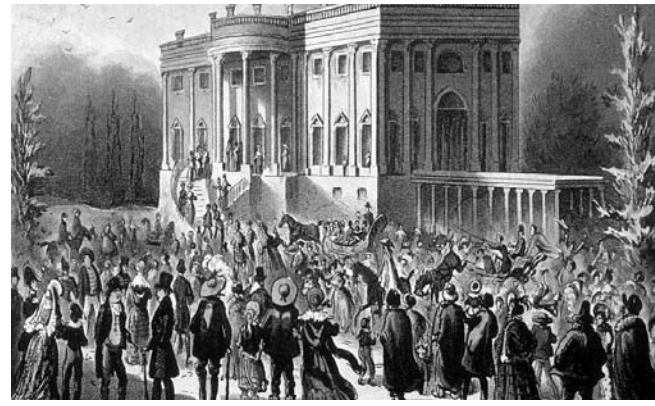
PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information of all our customers and public in general that our Karanjia Branch-I (Dp Code-3521) is going to be merged shortly with our Karanjia Branch II (Dp Code-17277) situated at Plot No.-182 1866, Suruchi Bhawan, Infront of Electric Office, Ward No.-4, Post- Karanjia, Odisha-757037. Our operation will continue from the above mentioned address shortly.

Circle Head
Bhubaneswar

FOCUS AMERICAN SOCIETY

THE SECOND JACKSONIAN AGE



The Jacksonian era, like our own, was a time of extreme democratisation and rampant anti-elitism. The Jacksonians insisted that anyone (by which they meant any white adult male) could serve in any political office. No longer would education, social status, and respectability matter

Like today's elites and mainstream media, the nineteenth-century college-educated and traditionally-minded gentry protested in vain against this democratisation of truth. Having come to believe that "the unalienable right of private judgment involves the liberty of thinking as we please on every subject," most ordinary people in Jacksonian America were no longer willing to defer to the knowledge and judgments of those who had once been their superiors. Although plain people perhaps lacked the education, travel, and manners of their aristocratic neighbors, their spokesmen were quick to point out that they had eyes and ears, and thus knew their own truth better than some "commanding genius" or "learned sage." Why should they trust what such gentlemen told them?

As we are discovering again, democracy and elite expertise do not always go well together. Now, too, the democratisation of knowledge and truth can produce an odd mixture of credulity and skepticism among many ordinary Americans. Where everything is believable, everything is doubtful. And when all claims to expert knowledge become suspect, people will tend to mistrust anything that they have not seen, felt, heard, tasted, or smelled.

The problem, of course, is that when people pride themselves on becoming shrewd empiricists, things that they perceive but do not comprehend can easily impress them. A few strange words spoken by a preacher or an anonymous Internet personality can carry great credibility, as can hieroglyphics displayed on a document, or anything written in highfalutin or cryptic language. Joseph Smith, the recipient of the tablets that became the Book of Mormon, knew this all too well.

Such was the popular culture of Jackson's America, a distant democratic world that eerily resembles our own.

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Many people have compared Donald Trump's presidency to that of Andrew Jackson in the first half of the nineteenth century. Trump himself hung a portrait of Jackson in the Oval Office. And though Trump is hardly the military hero that Jackson was, the periods in which their presidencies occurred have some striking similarities.

The Jacksonian era, like our own, was a time of extreme democratisation and rampant anti-elitism. The Jacksonians insisted that anyone (by which they meant any white adult male) could serve in any political office. No longer would education, social status, and respectability matter. Such egalitarian claims alarmed the Harvard- and Yale-educated elites of the 1820s and 1830s, just as they do today.

Moreover, we, too, are living in an era when weakened traditional authorities are being challenged. Following the 2020 presidential election, one Democratic pollster concluded that Trump supporters "don't trust the news media. They don't trust elites. They don't trust scientists. They don't trust academics. They don't trust experts."

In antebellum America, Jackson's supporters were likewise suspicious and distrustful of authority. While the Jacksonians regarded the common man as the ultimate source of all authority, they could only have dreamed of the role that social media has enabled ordinary people to play. The penny press of the 1830s couldn't hold a candle to Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms that enable everyone to participate in the creation of popular opinion.

Nonetheless, the Jacksonian era offers lessons that can help us comprehend our own age. The early nineteenth century is when Americans started increasingly describing their society in non-pejorative terms as a "mass" of "almost innumerable wills." Individuals were weak and blind, the historian George Bancroft observed, but the mass was strong and wise.

From this insight followed a new appreciation of statistics (or "statisticks," as it was spelt in 1803, when it first appeared in

American dictionaries). Taken alone, a fact might not mean much; but once it has been collected together with others, it could reveal a whole world. "In composing a work like the present," wrote the physician James Mease in *The Picture of Philadelphia* (1811), "the author is of opinion that the chief object ought to be the multiplication of facts and the reflections arising out of them should be left to the reader."

Witnessing this push toward mass culture, Charles Nisbet, the Scottish clergyman who became president of Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, feared as early as 1789 that Americans were carrying their reliance on individual judgment to ridiculous extremes. Accordingly, he fully expected to see the publication of books with titles like *Every Man his own Lawyer*, *Every Man his own Physician*, and *Every Man his own Clergyman and Confessor*.

At any rate, the assaults on elite opinion by those championing ordinary judgment resulted in a dispersion of authority and, ultimately, of truth itself. With everyone being told that their ideas about medicine, art, and

government were as valid as those of the so-called "connoisseurs" and college-educated "speculative men," truth and knowledge became elusive and difficult to pin down. Ordinary Americans, confident of their ability to determine the truth for themselves, became deeply mistrustful of anything beyond what the writer George Tucker called "the narrow limits of their own observation." This made them easy prey to hucksters, confidence men, and tricksters, who soon popped up everywhere. Edgar Allan Poe called his time the "epoch of the hoax," a description that echoes clearly in our own age of fake news and alternative facts.

Poe delighted in creating hoaxes and cons – some of them quite elaborate and convincing – in the newspapers. Similarly PT Barnum capitalised on people's confidence in their own judgment by placing ads questioning whether the woman in his museum was really a mermaid, suggesting that they should come see for themselves. Like the sailors of the Pequod in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, "nothing but their own eyes could persuade such ignorance as theirs."



Gordon S. Wood

MANY PEOPLE HAVE COMPARED DONALD TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY TO THAT OF ANDREW JACKSON IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. TRUMP HIMSELF HUNG A PORTRAIT OF JACKSON IN THE OVAL OFFICE

If you want peace upon earth first establish peace in your heart. If you want union in the world, first unify the different parts of your own being. Change yourself and the circumstances will change.



THE MOTHER

A twist in the tale

A coalition alliance government creates its own special dynamics, which affects the bureaucracy uniquely. In Maharashtra, which has a three-party alliance, this was seen when the 1985-batch IAS officer Sitaram Kunte was named the state's new Chief Secretary. Sources say that Kunte was ignored by the previous BJP government during whose tenure he was commissioner of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

His fortunes changed for the better in the Shiv Sena-led government of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. However, while the Chief Minister and the Congress party were said to be keen on his appointment, the National Congress Party's chief Sharad Pawar was reportedly less enthusiastic, initially. However, Kunte managed to make it to the top post, although he snuffed the chance of his batch mate Praveen Prades, who was widely expected to be appointed to succeed Sanjay Kumar.

Pradesh had even returned from the UN in the hope of becoming the new chief secretary. Kunte's elevation has led to the appointment of MK Srivastava, a 1986-batch IAS officer, in his previous office of Additional Chief Secretary for Home.

MIND THE 'S' WORD

A communiqué issued by TM Yanthan, commissioner and secretary to Nagaland Governor RN Ravi, to Chief Secretary J Alam, has directed the state government to warn officials that they could face penal and disciplinary action if they post "seditious or subversive content" on social media. Apparently, it had come to the notice of the Governor's office that "some government servants are indulging in seditious and subversive writings challenging the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country" on social media platforms.

Sources say that a copy of Yanthan's letter has been also marked to Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla. This suggests, they say, that the Governor has kept the Centre in the loop and may even have been directed by Dilli to take action against government officials posting seditious content.

Apparently, this is the second letter from the Governor's office to the state Chief Secretary. Last year, he had directed the state government to prepare a database of state government employees' family members and relatives who were in "underground organizations".

However, ominous though it may sound, some observers feel that Ravi is merely reiterating the conduct rules for government servants and people should not read too much into this. Your thoughts?

TENURE ROW

Who has the authority to take a call on the posting of officers of the Director-General of Police rank in Haryana? This has become a point of contention between Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and his Home Minister Anil Vij. The officer at the centre of it all is DGP Manoj Yadava, a 1988-batch IPS officer, reportedly handpicked by Khattar for the post.

It appears that Vij wants a change of DGP despite Yadava having over four years of service left. The minister recently directed Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Rajeev Arora to send a panel of officers to the UPSC to be considered for the next DGP. According to sources, once the minimum tenure of two years ends, the state government has the option of deciding to continue with the current DGP or replace the officer. In the present case, the government has extended Yadava's tenure beyond February until further orders.

Sources say that Khattar is unlikely to seek a replacement for Yadava, who has done a long 15-year stint at the Intelligence Bureau (IB) before returning to his parent cadre. But Vij, say sources, is sticking to his stance.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

- Very often, a change of self is needed more than a change of scene. A.C. BENSON
- Leaders can let you fail and yet not let you be a failure. STANLEY MCCHRISTAL
- It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it. LOU HOLTZ

WORDSWORTH

Bun fight

PG Wodehouse has been responsible for several things, most notably the best comic writing in English, but we're fairly sure he didn't invent this one. Who did is lost in the anonymity of slang history, but it seems to have first appeared in the late nineteenth century, a bit early for Wodehouse. If it sounds to you like a Victorian children's nursery at teatime, that surely must be the original allusion behind it. Imagine children having tea, inevitably squabbling over the buns, teacakes, muffins and – this being a British expression – crumpets. Two similar expressions are known from the middle of the nineteenth century: crumpet-scramble and muffin-worry; these haven't survived. Interestingly, some of the early uses of bun-fight (these days, also often bunfight) borrowed the idea of afternoon tea in the nursery but left out the fighting: it could refer to the most decorous of engagements, such as those one was invited to by elderly aunts of the Wodehousian persuasion, at which squabbling over food was inconceivable. Then, as now, a bun-fight could more generally be any occasion at which food was served, it often being a sarcastic term describing rather formal ones for which guests had to dress up. In 1994, a newspaper report told of a British MP who turned up improperly dressed (in a lounge suit) at an engagement that was described as the "annual bunfight of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, at which black tie and decorations are de rigueur".

LOL

DISCUSSING N-POWER

A stranger was seated next to Little Johnny on the plane when the stranger turned to the Little Johnny and said, "Let's talk. I've heard that flights will go quicker if you strike up a conversation with your fellow passenger." Little Johnny, who had just opened his book, closed it slowly, and said to the stranger, "What would you like to discuss?" "Oh, I don't know," said the stranger. "How about nuclear power?" "OK," said Little Johnny.



"That could be an interesting topic. But let me ask you a question first." "A horse, a cow, and a deer all eat grass. The same stuff. Yet a deer excretes little pellets, while a cow turns out a flat patty, and a horse produces clumps of dried grass. Why do you suppose that is?" "Jeez," said the stranger. "I have no idea." "Well, then," said Little Johnny, "How is it that you feel qualified to discuss nuclear power when you don't know shit?"

SPECTRUM WOMEN'S PROTECTION

Protecting women with more than words

Margot Wallstrom & Dan Smith

RESOLUTION 1325 BROUGHT WOMEN INTO MAINSTREAM DEBATES ABOUT PEACE AND SECURITY THAT HAD LONG BEEN DOMINATED BY MEN

It has now been 20 years since the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted the Resolution on Women, Peace, and Security (Resolution 1325), challenging the international community to improve the conditions for women and girls, particularly those affected by armed conflict. Specifically, Resolution 1325 established four pillars for global action: conflict prevention, protection of women and girls, women's participation in peacemaking and peace-building, and relief and recovery.

How has the world done? For starters, Resolution 1325 brought women into mainstream debates about peace and security that had long been dominated by men. We now understand much more about the gendered aspects of these issues and have developed a common language to discuss them.

Nonetheless, the progress made in actually improving the position of women and girls has been disappointing. Women and girls are little safer today than they were in 2000. There are more wars being fought, with devastating implications for civilians caught in the crossfire.

Although there has been considerable progress in combating the

use of sexual violence as a weapon and tactic of war, these atrocities continue to happen. New data published last year found record levels of political violence targeting women. And while the number of peace agreements making specific reference to women or gender jumped in the years following the adoption of Resolution 1325, half of such agreements still do not mention them. Resolution 1325's third pillar, participation, is arguably the most critical. Women must have a say in how peace is achieved and maintained, how people are protected, and how societies are rebuilt after a conflict.

This is not a matter of gender equity for its own sake. Women and girls have unique interests and perspectives that must be considered, and they generally have very different experiences of insecurity and conflict compared to men and boys. For example, forced marriages (often of children) are more likely to happen during conflict and in its wake. Accordingly, female peacekeepers are more likely than their male counterparts to be trusted among these cohorts of conflict-affected populations. Moreover, studies of peace processes in the

past 30 years suggest that when women have a say in negotiations, there is a much better chance of reaching a deal and of achieving an enduring settlement.

But progress overall has been underwhelming. Women lead only five of the 19 UN peace operations active as of mid-2020, and none of the 17 missions and operations under the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy. Just 14% of all peace negotiators in 2015-19 were women.

Even if we can improve these headline numbers, real progress will be possible only if we can address underlying gender inequalities, too. These conditions give rise to violent struggles for resources, migration in search of more secure lives, and a widespread sense of desperation that local armed groups can exploit. In these agricultural communities, the structures of work and authority generally imply that women bear the responsibility of identifying and coping with resource shortages.

All told, the 20-year report card for Resolution 1325 shows only limited achievements. How can we ensure that the one for 2030 is better? To borrow a line from the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this must be the decade of delivery. The first, easiest step is for governments, the UN, and the other international organizations that deploy peace operations to set numerical targets for women's participation, and then to ensure that they are met.

The second, bigger step is to make, or renew, action plans for implementing Resolution 1325. To date, only 86 countries well under half of UN member states have made national plans and some of these are over a decade old. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was the result of women's activism for peace and justice. Its ultimate aim is to break the cycles of conflict and insecurity decisively, so that prevention, protection, relief, and recovery are no longer necessary. This remains an inspiring and urgent goal.

Margot Wallstrom is a former UN special representative on sexual violence in conflict, Swedish minister for Foreign Affairs and vice-president of the European Commission. Dan Smith is Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

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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

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Directives for social media

Sir, The invisible battle of the stars on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter is no less than the Mahabharata war. As they influence a large part of the country their words must be important. Whether it's the issue of citizenship, Ram temple or agriculture laws, the stars have been commenting on all. There are other celebrities who just say something, looking at who said what to complete the formalities. They don't care whether their messages have positive or negative impact on people. The government has issued guidelines for social media to curb these. Complaints will be lodged by all service providers, received within 24 hours and have to be resolved within 15 days. If a post is offensive it will be removed within 24 hours, journalism and creative freedom will be maintained, and new guidelines will be implemented within three months. The next turn will be of the print media. The government will also decide how to print and what to print in the newspaper. The rules are welcome, but the question is, will these directives really apply to the culprits?
Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Healthy hearing

Sir, World hearing day was on March 3 and sadly the day just went past silently just like the way the problems of hearing go unheeded! According to WHO, one in four people will suffer from hearing problems by 2050. The world body has struck the alarm bell stating that currently one in five people have hearing problems but most often it is just ignored and uncared for. The same amount of care and attention that we give for various other ailments is sadly not given for matters related to hearing except when we have severe pain in the ear or some other problem. The WHO has called for global action and has asked the nations to take immediate measures to check this 'silent danger' which can put thousands into a state of 'complete silence' if issues related to this health menace is not properly addressed. As our life style has changed, our ignorance to such matters has also risen. WHO says hearing loss may result from genetic causes, complications at birth, certain infectious diseases, chronic ear infections, exposure to loud sounds, use of ototoxic medicines and ageing. Modern medicine with modern technology and implementation of certain safety norms can put an end to such difficulties provided that the governments, health organisations, NGOs and other agencies come forward to mitigate the problem.
M Pradyu, KANNUR



Mamata releases Trinamool candidate list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Mar 5: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Friday confirmed her candidature from Nandigram seat as she released the list of Trinamool Congress candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls for 291 seats with emphasis on youths, minority, women and backward communities.

Three candidates of the Bimal Gurung faction of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), an ally of the TMC, will be contesting from the remaining three seats in Darjeeling.

Affirming her candidature from the high profile Nandigram seat, Banerjee will vacate her traditional Bhowanipore seat in Kolkata, as she threw a challenge to her protegee-turned-rival Suvendu Adhikari, who crossed over to the BJP in December.

"I will contest from Nandigram as I stick to my words. From Bhowanipore constituency, Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay will be contesting in the upcoming Assembly elections," Banerjee said while releasing TMC candidate list for the state polls.

"On March 9 we will release our manifesto. On March 10 I will file my nomination for Nandigram seat," she told reporters.

In January this year, Banerjee had announced that she would contest elections from the Nandigram seat in Purba Medinipur district.

When asked about Adhikari likely to be pitted against her from the Nandigram, she declined to comment on it. This will be for the first time that Banerjee will be in the poll fray from Nandigram constituency represented by Suvendu Adhikari in 2016 and another TMC candidate in 2011.

Though Suvendu Adhikari has time and again expressed his desire to take on his former boss directly in Nandigram, the saffron party leadership is yet to take a decision on it. Banerjee and Adhikari were the prominent figures of the anti-land acquisition movement in



West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee interacts with media during announcement of her party candidate list for upcoming state Assembly elections at Kalighat in Kolkata, Friday

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Friday the list of Trinamool Congress candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls for 291 seats with emphasis on youths, minority, women and backward communities

Three candidates of the Bimal Gurung faction of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), an ally of the TMC, will be contesting from the remaining three seats in Darjeeling

Exuding confidence of returning to power for the third consecutive time, Banerjee termed it as the "easiest" election the TMC has ever faced

Nandigram in 2007 that ultimately catapulted the firebrand Trinamool Congress supremo to power in West Bengal in 2011 ending 34-year-old rule of the Left Front. "This time we have stressed on more youths and women candidates. Around 23-24 sitting MLAs have been dropped and there are names of about 50 women, 42 Muslims, 79 SC and 17 ST candidates in the list," Banerjee said. Exuding confidence of returning to power for the third consecutive time, Banerjee termed it as the "easiest" election the TMC has ever faced. "This would be a smiley election for us. We would win it," she said when asked whether this will be the toughest election ever the party had faced since Trinamool Congress inception in 1998. "After we come to power we will create Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council) to accommodate senior and experienced leaders. We could not accommodate everybody especially those above the age of 80 years," she said. Listing out names of candidates, Banerjee sought the blessings of the people of the state and

How Poonia outplayed Raje in Raj during Nadda's visit

Nadda came to Rajasthan in between his hectic schedule due to the Bengal and other state elections, to show a united face of the saffron party to the people as by-polls for four seats are to be held soon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, March 5: Oscar Wilde once said, "Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much."

This quote seemed to be thoroughly followed by BJP state president Satish Poonia during the recent visit of BJP national president JP Nadda as he left no stone unturned to show a large heart towards former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, highlighting the fact that he holds no grudges against Raje who, in fact, had announced a silent war against him. Raje, since the appointment of Poonia as state BJP president, has maintained a distance from the party office and party meetings and has plans to organise a 'religious yatra' covering Krishna temples in the state from March 8, her birthday, to show her strength. Eventually, it was very much out in the open that the BJP in Rajasthan is being headed by two groups - one by former CM Raje's camp and the second by BJP state president Satish Poonia. While Raje has been a mass leader who has served the state as CM twice, Poonia comes as a choice of the Sangh and is a trusted soldier of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Nadda came to Rajasthan in between his hectic schedule due to the Bengal and other state elections, to show a united face of the saffron party to the people as by-polls for four seats are to be held soon. Before the arrival of Nadda, there were two groups seen standing at the airport - "one led by Raje and the other by Poonia. As Raje was sitting inside the airport with her supporters, Poonia



went to her and said that "Nadda will be coming out from the other side so you all should join us."

Eventually, as Nadda came, Raje was very much in place among a huge queue of senior leaders, with Poonia being in front and Raje in second position.

Soon after reaching the venue, when Nadda was going up in an elevator with Arun Singh and a security man, he invited Poonia but Poonia requested Raje to go up in the lift and preferred to use the stairs. Next, even during his address, he had words of praise for Raje and said how her policies helped in developing Rajasthan when she was the CM. During lunch, when all the leaders were taking their seats and were about to start eating, Poonia again took the lead and started serving food to them.

He also went to Raje and served her Ras Malai and asked if she needed anything else which did raise the eyebrows of many leaders. While BJP leaders are admiring the deft moves of Poonia, there are whispers about Nadda's ad-

dress also who openly asked leaders to do self-analysis about their contribution to the organisation and asked them to work and take everyone along. Addressing a state executive committee meeting here, Nadda said that leaders in the party enjoying a long tenure tend to stop doing self-analysis. "Knowingly or unknowingly, we all assume that we know everything. However, this is the beginning of stagnation... the truth is that our productivity decreases..." he said. "I request everyone here to do self-analysis. What is your commitment, your relevance? Politics is a place where you have to be relevant." "Relevance means how much are you contributing to the party... how much are you acceptable. As a leader, you will have to develop the quality of taking along everyone which will increase your acceptance," he said in a candid address. Now, there is speculation about whom Nadda's message was directed at - Raje or Poonia - and who will emerge as the dark horse in the long run.

62-yr-old BJP MLA pursues BA on daughters' demand

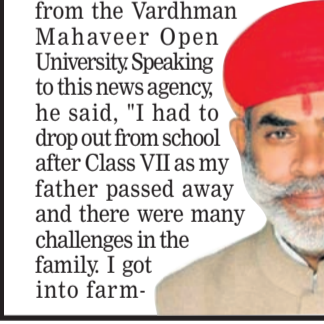
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, March 5: Pushed by his daughters to pursue education, Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Phool Singh Meena, now 62, will finally accomplish his dream to be a BA pass MLA.

Initially, a school dropout, he had to take up farming after his father's death. Officially, he was seventh pass but he somehow managed all his day to day chores in personal and professional life.

However, his life changed when his five daughters made him realise the worth of education and inspired him to continue, explaining to him the fact that education has no age limit. Abiding by their call, Meena Tuesday took his first exam of BA final in political science stream in Udaipur from the Vardhman Mahaveer Open University Speaking to this news agency, he said, "I had to drop out from school after Class VII as my father passed away and there were many challenges in getting into farm-

ing to earn livelihood for my family. "When I saw, it was not earning me significant returns; I went to Udaipur and started working in supplying labour to private factories. Then I entered politics and there was no looking back," he says. "One fine day, my daughters, five in number, gheraoed me and asked me about my qualification. "I asked them what was the reason for this question and they said they wanted to hear the right answer from my mouth. As I said I am seventh class pass, they said, 'Aren't you ashamed of it? How do you carry yourself amongst people, students and senior leaders?' "Their words were a real inspiration for me. Soon they brought me an application form and insisted me to fill it to crack the Class 10 exam. The form was submitted and I appeared for the exam in 2013. It was election time and I got the ticket so I could not clear two exams which I re-appeared and cleared in 2015. They gave me points so that I can learn from my chapters well," he added.



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POLL GRAFFITI



A TMC supporter paints a wall to campaign for the party ahead of Assembly polls in Howrah, Friday

Raje's 'power yatra' now becomes religious yatra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, March 5: The much-talked about 'power yatra' to be taken out by former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje from March 8, which falls on her birthday, has now been limited to a religious yatra only.

As per the latest schedule, Raje shall leave for Bharatpur from Jaipur March 7 in the morning from where she will go to Jatipura

Giriraj Mandir via road and then to Aadi Badri Mandir. She shall stay in the same temple and offer prayers here March 8 on her birthday. She will visit other temples too and then will leave to Dholpur via Helicopter from Bharatpur. A staunch Raje loyalist, Pratap Singh Singhi, on his social media post said: "A religious programme is being organised on the occasion of 69th birthday of Raje to pray for her

health and long life. In this process, Raje will tour the temples of the said region and offer her prayers. Her followers shall extend greetings to her during this programme." BJP sources have confirmed that the much-proposed political yatra of Raje has been limited to religious yatra owing to the recent visit of BJP National president JP Nadda who openly asked leaders to do self-analysis.

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Bengal BJP concerned over internecine strifes

With Assembly polls just three weeks away, the BJP, amid an all-out effort to oust Mamata Banerjee from power in Bengal, is also struggling to keep its house in order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 5: With Assembly polls just three weeks away, the BJP, amid an all-out effort to oust Mamata Banerjee from power in Bengal, is also struggling to keep its house in order, as old-timers and new entrants engage in feud over multiple issues, including ticket distribution. The saffron party, which had witnessed unprecedented growth in terms of vote share and mass base over the last few years, left its doors wide open for leaders from other parties, as part of its poll strategy; but that did not go down well with many senior leaders, who had once locked horns with the newbies from rival camps, sources in the BJP said.

According to a senior BJP leader, the strategy had initially reaped dividends for the saffron camp, which labelled the TMC as a "sinking ship", but it eventually led to infighting within the organisation and diluted the party's "fight against corruption".

The party recently did a course correction, and stopped the mass induction, but the damage by then was done, with the leadership now having to face the "herculean task" of identifying suitable candidates from 8,000 aspirants for 294 constituencies

ing to face the "herculean task" of identifying suitable candidates from 8,000 aspirants for the state's 294 constituencies, the senior leader said. "We never thought that induction of leaders from other parties could lead to such a situation. Every day we hear reports of infighting between the old-timers and newcomers. We apprehend that post announcement of names (of contenders), discontentment within the camp will grow further," the BJP leader noted.

State BJP chief Dilip Ghosh, however, insisted that expanding the party's base was necessary at this juncture. "The BJP is a big family. When your family grows, such incidents do take place. If we don't take people from other outfits, how will we grow? That said, everyone has to abide by the rules and regulations of the party. No one is above the party," Ghosh said. According to the saffron camp sources, many state leaders and the RSS - the BJP's ideological parent - have aired their displeasure over induction of certain leaders from other parties. "Thousands of activists from rival parties joined the saffron camp in the last few months during the 'Jogdan mela' (joining programme).

What makes Adityanath a superstar campaigner in Bengal

When Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath lays out the tenets of his party's "cultural nationalism", his thoughts connect with centuries old 'Nath' sect which has its roots in Kamrup (Assam) and Bengal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

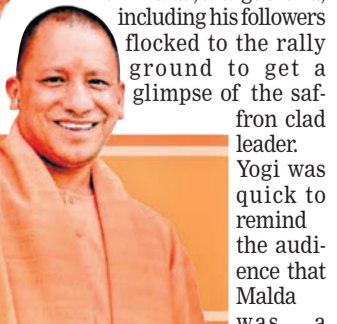
New Delhi, March 5: In the poll-bound state of West Bengal, when Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath lays out the tenets of his party's "cultural nationalism", his thoughts connect with centuries old 'Nath' sect which has its roots in Kamrup (Assam) and Bengal. The 48-year-old Yogi Adityanath, who is also the head priest of sacred Gorakhnath math seat of the Nath sect, has lakhs of followers spread across different parts of Bengal and Assam. The Nath sect or rather Nath tradition of Hinduism was founded

by Yogi Matsenydranath, one of the greatest yogis and gurus of Gorakhnath, who perfected Yoga in Kamrup. "There are several references in history which connect Gorakhpur with Bengal and Kamrup. There is a Gorakhnath temple in Kolkata too, and other places in Bengal. In a way Yogiji (Adityanath) represents centuries-old culture and spirit of a Hindu tradition... a reason why people of Bengal, especially in the rural areas connect with him," says Swami Mithilesh Nandini

Sharan Maharaj of Lakshman Kila Temple in Ayodhya. On Tuesday, when Yogi Adityanath launched his campaign in Bengal from Malda, a large crowd, including his followers flocked to the rally ground to get a glimpse of the saffron clad leader. Yogi was quick to remind the audience that Malda was a

'pavitra bhoomi' and a land of 'sanatan sanskriti' (eternal culture). Top sources at BJP headquarters in Delhi said that Yogi's Malda rally was a huge success and the firebrand Chief Minister would be addressing over a dozen rallies in the eight-phase Assembly polls in Bengal. Obviously Yogi's connection in Bengal makes him a superstar campaigner. The Gorakhnath math headed by Yogi Adityanath has its following across the nation. "But Assam and Bengal have been a traditional hub as sect's founder Matsenydranath emerged from this part of the country," said Professor

Sadanand Shahi of Banaras Hindu University, a scholar known for his writings on Nath tradition. "The Nath sect had such a great impact on Indian medieval culture that Gorakhnath was seen as the greatest spiritual leader after Buddha and Shankaracharya," Professor Shahi told IANS while clarifying that he would not speak on the political aspects or influence of Gorakhnath math. Elaborating on Gorakhnath math's Bengal connection, Swami Mithilesh Nandani Sharan mentions the name of Akshay Kumar Banerji who was a revered disciple of Yogi Gambhirnath.



national

of the day quote

Senior MLAs won't be allowed to ask counter-questions either during this period. It will raise the self-confidence of the new MLAs and, in the process, they will also learn about House proceedings

GIRISH GAUTAM | SPEAKER, MP ASSEMBLY

Vaccination is necessary to protect ourselves from coronavirus pandemic. I urge MLAs above the age of 60 to get themselves vaccinated. You can contact Nitin Patel or his department in case you need any assistance

VIJAY RUPANI | CM, GUJARAT

AAP has never been truly concerned about protecting the farmers or their interests, and its leadership again proved itself to be an agent of the BJP

AMARINDER SINGH | CM, PUNJAB

SHORT TAKES

BJP's first list for Assam out

New Delhi: The BJP Friday announced the first list of 70 candidates for the Assembly elections in Assam. The 126-member Assam Assembly will go to the polls in three phases March 27, April 1 and April 6. The results will be declared May 2. The list includes the names of Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, senior minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the party's state unit chief Ranjeet Kumar Dass.

101-yr-old takes Covax shot

New Delhi: Boosting the morale of those who are still sceptical about getting the vaccine shot against Covid-19, a 101-year-old woman Friday received her first vaccine dose at a municipal hospital here, officials told IANS. The woman, Sumitra Dhandia, received the Covid job at New Delhi Municipal Council's (NDMC) Charak Palika Hospital in the Motibagh area.

Priyanka's LS entry

Chennai: Karti Chidambaram, a Lok Sabha Congress member of Parliament from Sivaganga, has requested the TN Congress Committee to field Congress General Secy Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from the Kanyakumari LS seat, which would be going to the polls along with the state Assembly elections April 6. Karti said Priyanka will be a good choice for the Kanyakumari constituency.



It should be studied why people living in rural areas of the country largely remain unaffected by coronavirus. I believe that the hard work they do and open places they live in has a lot to do with it

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

ITBP JAWAN KILLED IN IED BLAST IN CH'GARH

A jawan of the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was killed in a blast of a pressure improvised explosive device (IED), planted by Naxals, in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh Friday, police said



We are going 'strong': Farmer leaders

To mark the completion of hundred days, March 6 will be observed as 'Black Day' as part of which the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal expressway will be blocked for five hours

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: As the farmer agitation against the Centre's three farm laws entered its hundredth day Saturday, union leaders asserted that their movement is far from over and they are 'going strong'.

The marathon movement has sent out a message of unity, made 'farmers visible once again' and brought them back on the political landscape of the country, they said Friday.

For over three months, the three Delhi border points at Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur have transformed into townships occupied by thousands of farmers from different parts of the country, mainly Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh.

To mark the completion of hundred days, March 6 will be observed as 'Black Day' as part of which the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) expressway will be blocked for five hours, according to a statement from the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a coalition of protesting farmer unions.

Rakesh Tikait of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) said they are prepared to continue the protest as long as it is required.

Despite several rounds of talks between the government and the farmer unions, the two sides have



Farmers raise slogans as they prepare to march towards the Delhi border to join the sit-in protest against the new agriculture laws, in Amritsar, Friday

We are completely prepared. Unless and until the government listens to us and meets our demands, we will not move from here

RAKESH TIKAIT | BHARATIYA KISAN UNION

People used to take farmers for granted but this movement has shown that getting into a confrontation with farmers is costly business

YOGENDRA YADAV | LEADER, SWARAJ INDIA

failed to reach an agreement, and the farmers have refused to budge until the three laws are repealed.

Enacted in September, the three farm laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

The protesting farmers, on the

other hand, have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and do away with the 'mandi' (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

While a resolution was reached on two of the four demands - roll-back of rise in power tariff and

Rajnath discusses creation of integrated theatre commands

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: Going forward with the modernisation process of the armed forces, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Friday discussed the creation of integrated theatre commands and infusion of modern technology at the Combined Commanders Conference in Gujarat.

The three-day Combined Commanders Conference 2021 started Thursday at Kevadia. It is a key brain-storming event of the Military Commanders from all three services - army, navy, and air force.

The conference has the combined apex-level military leadership of the country reviewing the security situation and defence preparedness, and deliberating pertinent organisational issues for evolving a joint military vision for the future. The Defence Minister took off some time to visit the Statue of Unity to pay his homage to Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai

Patel, after he arrived Friday.

Delivering the inaugural address, Singh dwelled on a wide spectrum of issues affecting the defence and security of the nation. He spoke at length on the emerging nature of military threats, the critical role of the Armed Forces in meeting these threats and the anticipated changes in the nature of warfare in future.

He expressed his heartfelt appreciation and respect to the selfless courage displayed by the soldiers during the Eastern Ladakh stand-off with People's Liberation Army Secretaries of Department of Defence, Defence Production, Department of Research and Development and Financial Advisor Defence Services also shared their thoughts on various relevant aspects with the Combined Commanders.

There were two 'Vivechana Sessions' held over the day in the presence of the Defence Minister, some part of them were held behind closed doors.

These deliberations addressed the ongoing modernisation of Armed Forces especially focussing on creation of integrated theatre commands and infusion of modern technology.

Issues like morale and motivation and promotion of spirit of innovation in the Armed Forces witnessed enthusiastic participation with useful feedback and suggestions from the soldiers and younger officers of the three Services.

In a major change from the past, the scope of the conference this year has been expanded to make it a multi-layered, interactive, informal and informed event with the added participation of about 30 officers and soldiers of various ranks from the three Services.

The conference in 2014 was held at Delhi. Since then it has been moved out to different venues across the country. The conference was held on board INS Vikramaditya in 2015 and in 2017 at the Indian Military Academy at Dehradun.

The last edition of CCC was held in 2018 over a period of two days at Air Force Station, Jodhpur. There have been several major developments in the Higher Defence Organisation since, including appointment of first ever Chief of Defence Staff and setting up of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA), and several important & multifarious issues affecting modernisation & transformation of the Armed Forces are currently under active consideration/ implementation, according to the Indian Army.



READY TO FIGHT



NCC cadets perform physical exercises during an annual training camp, at Nagrota on outskirts of Jammu, Friday

SC Collegium nod to elevation of judicial officer as Kerala HC judge

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: The Supreme Court Collegium has approved the proposal for elevation of judicial officer A Badharudeen as Judge of the Kerala High Court.

The Collegium also reiterated its earlier recommendations for elevation of five advocates as Judges in different High Courts. The advocates whose names have been recommended are - Vivek Sharan, Nidhi Patankar, Pranav Verma for Madhya Pradesh High Court, Vikas Bahl for Punjab and Haryana High Court and Rahul Bharti for Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

Pradesh High Court.

The Collegium headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde in a meeting held March 2, on reconsideration, resolved to reiterate its earlier recommendations.

In another decision, the Collegium also approved the proposal for elevation of five advocates as Judges in different High Courts. The advocates whose names have been recommended are - Vivek Sharan, Nidhi Patankar, Pranav Verma for Madhya Pradesh High Court, Vikas Bahl for Punjab and Haryana High Court and Rahul Bharti for Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

Azad to campaign for Cong party in poll-bound states

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: Amid strife in the Congress, Ghulam Nabi Azad, an important leader of the G-23 group of dissenting leaders, said Friday that he'll campaign for the party wherever he is called since the assembly elections are important for the party.

Azad, whose Rajya Sabha term ended recently, said, "We will campaign wherever the party or individual will call for it because the victory of the party is most important for us."

The Congress is yet to release the list of its star campaigners for the assembly polls in which Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra are likely to be included.

Now all eyes are on the names of the leaders led by Azad. If leaders such as Manish Tewari, Anand Sharma, Kapil Sibal, Bhupinder Singh Hooda make it to the list of the Congress's star campaigners, it would imply that the party has tried to make peace with the group of dissenters.

The Congress has asked the dissenting leaders to join hands with the party to combat the BJP. Abhishek Manu Singhvi, senior spokesperson of the party, had said on March 2: "I think the whole idea of this front is to fight the vitiating politics of BJP. Therefore I would say each one of our senior and respected colleagues should join wholeheartedly and unconditionally in that fight to combat this false propaganda of the BJP."

India steps up border patrols along Myanmar

The move follows the defection over the border of some low-ranking Myanmar police officers who were unwilling to obey orders to suppress demonstrations against the junta

AGENCIES

ior government official in Mizoram state's Champhai district, told Reuters by telephone.

The move follows the defection over the border of some low-ranking Myanmar police officers who were unwilling to obey orders to suppress demonstrations against the junta.

Myanmar's military overthrew a democratically elected government on Feb. 1, setting off nationwide protests that have left more than 50 people dead. A spokesman for the military has not commented on the police defectors.

Indian soldiers and police were patrolling the frontier on Friday, Zauli said.

In neighbouring Serchhip district, senior official Kumar Abhishek said eight people, including a woman and a child, had crossed the border and were being taken care of.

"We are anticipating that some more may come," he said.



Authorities were making preparations to house between 30 and 40 people, he said.

Asked about the crossing over of Myanmar police, Anurag Srivastava, spokesman for India's foreign ministry, told reporters at a briefing in New Delhi that it was ascertaining the facts.

In all, about 30 Myanmar police and their family members had crossed over into India in recent days, a senior police official in Mizoram said, including some who

had come overnight.

The official, who requested anonymity, said people were slipping in despite intensive patrolling by Indian soldiers along a border that hugs the Tiau river flowing between forested hills.

"People are coming from different routes," the official said, "The border is porous, you can't prevent it."

A federal Indian security official said that police crossing over had said they did not wish to carry

out orders from the military to quell the protests.

"They alleged that there are human rights violations and they were asked to shoot at civilians," the official said, also requesting anonymity.

The influx of such refugee-seekers, particularly police, puts India in a quandary because of New Delhi's close ties with the Myanmar military, known as the Tatmadaw.

Over the last two years the Tatmadaw has mounted operations at India's request to flush out insurgents along the northeastern border India, on its part, gifted Myanmar its first submarine last year.

"It's a little difficult situation for India because diplomatic balance is crucial," the official said.

The India-Myanmar barrier is a border barrier that India is constructing to seal its 1,624-kilometre (1,009 mi)-long border with Myanmar. India hopes to curtail

cross-border crime, including goods, arms and counterfeit currency smuggling, drug trafficking, and insurgency. The United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) also warned that the region could become a significant transit point for illicit drugs because of the poor state of border security facilities.

Indian security forces blamed the porous border for the deaths of 200 security personnel and civilians in militancy-related violence in the region in 2001-2003. Four Northeast Indian states share the border with Myanmar: Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Manipur. Both national governments agreed to conduct a joint survey before erecting the fence. The Indian Home Ministry and its Myanmar counterpart completed the study within six months and, in March 2003 began erecting a fence along the border.

of the day quote

Centre's decision to allow private healthcare centres to charge Rs 250 for administering the vaccine will adversely impact the efforts to ensure immunity to everyone and contain the spread



SIDDARAMAIAH | LOP, KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY

It is also significant that these path-breaking R&D activities are taking place when the country has successfully rolled out one of history's largest vaccine outreach



Sugarcane growers have contributed immensely to the development of the state and their problems should be solved on priority



QAZI NIZAMUDDIN | CONGRESS MLA, U'KHAND

SHORT TAKES

SC denies bail to Sivasankar

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday sought response from M. Sivasankar, suspended principal secretary to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, on an appeal filed by the Enforcement Directorate challenging a High Court order granting the IAS officer bail in the gold smuggling case. January 25, the Kerala High Court granted bail to Sivasankar, who was arrested by ED October 28.

No Question Hour in Budget Session

New Delhi: The Delhi Assembly Budget session for 2021-22 scheduled to commence from Monday, will not have its usual Question Hour due to the Covid-19 pandemic, sources told IANS. The Budget session of the 7th Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi will begin with Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal's address at 11 a.m. March 8. The session will end March 16.

HC dismisses plea

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court Friday dismissed a petition challenging the appointment of Najma Akhtar as the Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia. Justice V. Kameswar Rao junked the plea filed by Jamia alumnus M. Ehtesham-ul-Haque against the appointment of Akhtar.

SII 'warns' of supply hit from US raw materials export ban

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: A temporary U.S. ban on exports of critical raw materials could limit the production of coronavirus vaccines by companies such as the Serum Institute of India (SII), its chief executive said in a World Bank panel discussion here Thursday. SII, the world's biggest vaccine maker, has licensed the AstraZeneca/Oxford University product and will soon start bulk-manufacturing the Novavax shot. "There are a lot of bags, filters and critical items that manufacturers need," Adar Poonawalla said. "The Novavax vaccine, which we are a major manufacturer of, needs these items from the U.S." He said the recent invocation of the U.S. Defence Production Act



to preserve vaccine raw materials for its own companies went against the global goal of sharing vaccines equitably. The White House said this week it had used the act to help drugmaker Merck & Co produce Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine. "This really needs to be looked at because if they are talking about building capacity all over the world, the sharing of these critical raw materials, which just can't be replaced in a matter of six months or a year, is going to become a critical limiting factor," Poonawalla said. India's Biological E has tied up with J&J to potentially contract manufacture up to 600 million doses of its vaccine per year. They have signed an initial deal but production volumes have not been agreed upon.

What I said yesterday was the people of Kerala and the BJP workers want a leader like E Sreedharan to lead them. There is no doubt in it. Kerala and its people want the leadership of Sreedharan



K SURESH KUMAR | KERALA BJP CHIEF

KERALA LOGS 2.7K FRESH INFECTIONS, 16 DEATHS

Kerala recorded 2,776 fresh COVID-19 cases, including 10 health workers and 16 related deaths Friday, taking the caseload to 10,72,785 and the toll to 4,271



Judge recuses self from Farooq's case

The former CM has challenged the attachment of his properties by the ED in connection with a money laundering case in which officials of the JKCA were implicated

AGENCIES

Srinagar, March 5: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah's plea against an ED order attaching his properties in a case of alleged money laundering came up before the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Friday but was posted for hearing on March 8 after the judge recused himself.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister had challenged the Enforcement Directorate's December 2020 order before the high court Wednesday. The case will now be heard Monday before a new judge.

Justice Ali Mohammed Magrey recused himself saying that he has declined hearing similar matters in the past.

The ED has alleged that Abdullah "misused" his position as president of the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) from 2001-2011 and made appointments in the sports body so Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) sponsored funds could be laundered.

Abdullah said the list of properties - worth almost Rs 12 crore - attached by the ED in Kashmir and in Jammu were unrelated to the alleged criminal activity mentioned in the Final Report/FIR and termed it a "continuing violation of his fundamental rights".

According to party MP Hasnain Masoodi, the properties were either ancestral or acquired before the al-



leged offence took place and were therefore not involved in any money-laundering or related criminal activity.

Abdullah has raised the validity of the ED in the case. He said in his petition that on the date of the registration of the ECIR (Enforcement Commission Information Report) and the initiation of investigation, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was governed by the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, 1956, and had special status under Article 370 of the Constitution of India.

He said the ED registered the case on December 28, 2018, under the Ranbir Penal Code (the Indian Penal

The case came up for hearing before Justice Ali Mohammed Magrey who recused himself saying that he has declined hearing identical matters in the past

The case was posted for March 8 for being put up before a new judge

Code's substitute in the erstwhile state) without ascertaining whether it had any jurisdiction to do so.

December 19, 2020 the ED issued a provisional order attaching the properties under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). An appeal could be filed before the adjudicating authority of the PMLA

within a six-month period.

According to an ED statement, the attached properties include three residential houses - at Gupkar Road in Srinagar, Katipora Tehsil in Tammarg and Bhatindi in Sunjwan village of Jammu. "A commercial building at posh Residency Road in Srinagar has also been attached besides lands at four different places in JK," the agency had said.

While the book value of the attached properties is Rs 11.86 crore, their market value is estimated to be about Rs 60-70 crore, officials said. The 84-year-old NC patron has been questioned by the ED in the case several times, the last in October 2020 at Srinagar.

CONG LEADERS DOWNPLAY G-23

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: Senior Congress leader Veerappa Moily has rejected any group called G-23, saying the party is united under Sonia Gandhi's leadership.

"The Congress is one," he said when asked about the G-23, a group of dissenters in the party who had sought a complete revamp of Congress in a letter to interim party president Sonia Gandhi in August last year. Incidentally, former Karnataka Chief Minister Moily was one of the signatories of the letter written to Sonia Gandhi. Speaking to reporters, Moily said, "There is no such thing called G-23. The Congress is united under Sonia Gandhi who always listens to people's grievances."

The Congress is facing a difficult time as the party seems to be divided after some prominent leaders wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi demanding sweeping reforms in the party.

Another Congress leader, Sandeep Dikshit, said, "There is no group in the party and I am not in touch with the leaders who had assembled in Jammu recently."

Many Congress leaders have said that their only motive is to strengthen the party in the country. The Congress,

There is no such thing called G-23. The Congress is united under Sonia Gandhi who always listens to people's grievances
VEERAPPA MOILY | CONG LEADER

There is no group in the party and I am not in touch with the leaders who had assembled in Jammu recently
SANDEEP DIKSHIT | CONG LEADER

which is gearing up to face elections in five states/UT, have advised these leaders to join hands to defeat the BJP and now all eyes are on the soon to be announced list of star campaigners of the party.

Many of the Congress leaders who had signed the letter in August last year have either been adjusted in the party or have been assigned some important task, such as Pritviraj Chavan getting appointed as screening committee chairman for Assam or Moily getting appointed as election management in-charge for Tamil Nadu.



DISSENT CRUSHED



Security personnel prepare to fire tear gas after clashes erupted between police and protestors, during a demonstration against house arrest of chief clerk and Chairman of Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, at Nowhatta Chowk in Srinagar, Friday

Illicit liquor warehouse in Bihar made police station

AGENCIES

Patna, March 5: The Liquor Prohibition Department of the Bihar police has shifted the Bypass police station here to a warehouse, which was once used for storage of illicit liquor, in violation of the prohibition laws.

The LPD seized a huge cache of liquor worth Rs 2 crore from the warehouse situated on the Patna bypass road, a fortnight ago. Since then, it has been confiscated and is in the department's possession.

The Bihar government on February 5, decided to confiscate and auction properties, which were being used for liquor storage in the state.

Sanjay Kumar Agarwal,

Divisional Commissioner of Patna, had directed all the District Magistrates, Senior Superintendent of Police, Superintendent of Police and Deputy Superintendent of Police to take action against the liquor mafias and seal those properties used for illicit liquor trade, which will go under the hammer soon.

"We have taken the decision to shift the Bypass police station to this warehouse following an order. For a common man, possession of properties could be a difficult task, despite cancellations and registry followed by auction of properties. Keeping this in mind, we have moved the police station to this warehouse to give a strong message to the mafias," Agarwal said.

AMARAVATI LAND SCAM Let there be court monitored CBI probe, AP tells SC



AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: The Andhra Pradesh government Friday told the Supreme Court that it is agreeable for court monitored CBI probe into alleged irregularities in land transactions during shifting of the state capital to Amaravati.

It urged the court to lift the stay granted by Andhra Pradesh High Court on the probe by the Special Investigating Team (SIT) into the alleged scam and allow the investigation to go on in the case.

The YS Jagan Mohan Reddy government had earlier constituted the 10-member SIT, headed by a Deputy Inspector General of Police-rank IPS officer, to conduct a comprehensive investigation into various alleged irregularities, particularly the land deals in the Amaravati Capital Region, during the previous Chandrababu Naidu regime.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R S Reddy was told by senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, appearing for Andhra Pradesh government, that they are agreeable to some of the prayers sought by state's former advocate general Dammalapati Srinivas before the High Court.

"We are agreeable to some of the prayers sought by petitioner before the High Court (Dammalapati Srinivas). First, we are agreeable that no coercive action will be taken against him. Secondly we are agreeable that court monitored probe should be there but it should be by the CBI, as we have earlier requested for the CBI probe but it didn't happen", Dhavan said in the brief hearing.

He said that the State only urge the court that investigation by the SIT should be allowed to continue till the time probe is given to the CBI.

UP to link farmers with food processing units

THE STATE GOVT HAS ALREADY PRESENTED ITS STRATEGY TO MAKE THE FARMERS AND THE YOUTH IN THE VILLAGES SELF-RELIANT BY LINKING THEM TO THE 62,122 FOOD PROCESSING UNITS BEFORE THE NITI AAYOG

AGENCIES

Lucknow, March 5: The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is all set to create employment opportunities through the food processing units in the villages.

This is a part of its commitment to empower the farmers and youth residing in the rural areas.

The state government has already presented its strategy to make the farmers and the youth in the villages self-reliant by linking them to the 62,122 food processing units before the NITI Aayog.

According to the government spokesman, Uttar Pradesh's food ecosystem offers huge opportunities for investments with stimulating growth in the food retail sector.

"The government's multi-dimensional rural centric approach will not only provide employment benefits to the rural populace by connecting them directly to the food processing units, but will also drive the rural economy by installing new units in addition to the existing ones," the spokesman said.

The diverse basket of agricultural raw material base and agro-climatic attributes of Uttar Pradesh



provide the requisite platform for the state to develop a vibrant food processing industry.

Acknowledging the food processing potential in Uttar Pradesh, the government has planned a strategy to directly link the farmers to food processing units in order to enhance the agricultural trade.

The state government also made a budgetary provision of Rs 40 crore for the implementation of the Uttar Pradesh Food Processing Industry Policy, 2017.

The policy provides capital investment subsidy and interest sub-

vention at present. Moreover, the government will also take adequate measures to equip the food processing sector with the best facilities in order to create more employment possibilities.

The government is aiming at providing jobs to over three lakh people by bringing in investment of more than Rs 20,000 crore in the coming months in this sector.

To create better and more employment opportunities in the rural areas, on the Chief Minister's directions, the government will identify vacant and unused land

The state govt also made a budgetary provision of Rs 40 crore for the implementation of the Uttar Pradesh Food Processing Industry Policy, 2017

The govt is aiming at providing jobs to over three lakh people by bringing in investment of more than Rs 20,000 crore in the coming months in this sector

of huge 'mandis' to set up food processing units at a cost of Rs five crore in the state. The units will not only give employment to the youth in rural regions but will also successfully strengthen the agricultural sector by making the farmers self-sufficient.

In order to encourage these units, the government also exempted the mandi duty for a span of five years.

In order to increase employment and self-employment in the remote regions, the units will be set up in accordance with the area-wise agricultural production. In the western and central Uttar Pradesh, the government is focusing on setting up maize based food processing units.

international

of the day quote

We condemn terrorists who seek to infiltrate across the Line of Control. When it comes to how we will support that, we continue to support direct dialogue between India and Pakistan in Kashmir and other areas of concern



NED PRICE | US STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON

I will do everything we can to prevent a rebound of the infections and another state of emergency



YOSHIIHIDE SUGA | PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

I will never, even if 50 million people can march every day for the next 10 years, for me to retract or apologise for what I say, I will not do it



MOGOENGI MOGOENGI | CHIEF JUSTICE, SOUTH AFRICA

SHORT TAKES

Earthquake hits Indonesia

Jakarta: A 5.8 magnitude quake jolted Indonesia's West Sumatra province Friday, the meteorology and geophysics agency said. The quake struck at 2.32 pm with the epicentre at 54 km northwest Mentawai islands, reports Xinhua news agency. The intensity of the quake was felt at III to IV MMI (Modified Mercalli Intensity) in the provincial capital of Padang, Painan town and Pariaman district, II to III MMI in Agam district, Bukit Tinggi city and Padang Panjang city. The quake did not trigger a potential tsunami.

14 dead in avalanche

Kabul: At least 14 people were killed following a major avalanche in Afghanistan's Badakhshan province, officials said Friday. The avalanche took place in Zarandab village, Raghistan district, Thursday, reports TOLO News. A provincial spokesperson said that five more people were wounded. He said that although the area is under Taliban control, efforts were underway to help those trapped. A series of avalanches that struck villages on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border between February 4 and 6, 2017, killed more than 100 people.

Pak approves Sinopharm vax

Islamabad: Pakistan Friday approved the emergency use of the Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine for people over 60 years of age, a statement by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said. The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan allowed all registered healthcare workers with the national institute of medical sciences who are above 60 years old to get themselves vaccinated from designated vaccine centres, an NCOC statement read. It is phase two of the vaccination process in Pakistan, Xinhua news agency reported.

Iran airplane hijacking foiled

Tehran: Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard Friday said authorities disrupted the attempted hijacking of a passenger plane in flight the night before, though it offered few details on what happened. The purported hijacking targeted an Iran Air Fokker 100 regional commercial jet heading from the southwestern city of Ahvaz to the northwestern city of Mashhad.



To be able to call touchdown safely, to see those first images come back from Mars, to see the place where we have never been able to go to on Mars before and go there - reach there for the express purpose of seeking out new life just made it feel like I was living in a dream

SWATI MOHAN | AEROSPACE ENGINEER, NASA

POPE'S 1ST-EVER IRAQ VISIT

Crowds waving Iraqi and Vatican flags gathered along Baghdad's airport road to greet the pontiff on the first-ever papal visit to the country. Francis' trip comes 22 years after Pope John Paul II cancelled a visit in 1999



WOMEN'S WEAPONS



A Sahrawi woman soldier, with henna dyed patterns on her hands, carries a weapon during a parade at the Awserd refugee camp in Tindouf, Algeria

China sets growth target 'over 6%'

China became the only major economy to grow last year, eking out a multi-decade-low 2.3% expansion after shutting down industries to fight the virus



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, March 5: China's No 2 leader set a healthy economic growth target Friday and vowed to make the nation self-reliant in technology amid tension with the US and Europe over trade and human rights. Another official announced plans to tighten control over Hong Kong by reducing the public's role in government.

The ruling Communist Party aims for growth of "over 6%" as the world's second-largest economy rebounds from the coronavirus, Premier Li Keqiang said in a speech to the National People's Congress, China's ceremonial legislature. About 3,000 delegates gathered for its annual meeting, the year's highest-profile political event, under intense security and anti-virus controls. It has been shortened from two weeks to one because of the pandemic.

The party is shifting back to its longer-term goal of becoming a global competitor in telecoms, electric cars and other profitable technology. That is inflaming trade tension with Washington and Europe,

which complain Beijing's tactics violate its market-opening commitments and hurt foreign competitors.

Li promised progress in reining in climate-changing carbon emissions, a step toward keeping President Xi Jinping's pledge last year to become carbon-neutral by 2060. But he avoided aggressive targets that might weigh on economic growth.

The NPC meeting focuses on domestic issues but is overshadowed by geopolitics as Xi's government pursues more assertive trade and strategic policies and faces criticism over its treatment of Hong Kong and ethnic minorities. The ruling party has doubled down on crushing dissent as Xi tries to cement his image as a history-making leader reclaiming China's rightful place as a global power.

An NPC deputy chairman, Wang Chen, said a Hong Kong Election Committee dominated by businesspeople and other pro-Beijing figures will be given a bigger role in choosing the territory's legislature. Wang said the Election Committee would choose a "relatively large" share of the now 70-member Legislative Council.

NEPAL POLICE KILL INDIAN ALONG INDO-NEPAL BORDER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 5: An Indian national has been killed by Nepal Police in an exchange of fire with a group of four Indians, allegedly involved in smuggling drugs and counterfeit currency along the Indo-Nepal border, an official statement said here Friday.

The deceased has been identified as Govinda Singh, 20, a resident of Pilibhit district in Uttar Pradesh, the Nepal Police said in a statement.

A five-member police team was deployed at the Nepal-India border area after receiving a specific tipoff that a fake currency printing machine and drugs were being smuggled into Nepal.

"The smugglers fired at the patrol team immediately upon seeing them," Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Amar Bahadur Thapa said.

As soon as the police started inspecting their bags, the gang suddenly opened fire at them in Belauri Municipality-8 in Kanchanpur district of Western Nepal Thursday night.

Singh received bullet injury after Nepal Police Constable Bir Bahadur Saud opened counter fire with his pistol, the statement said.



Singh, who sustained severe injuries on the chest, died while undergoing treatment at Ishan Memorial Hospital, Belauri.

"His body will be handed over to his relatives after postmortem," DSP Thapa said.

Meanwhile, a senior police official in Pilibhit said the Indian national along with two others had gone to attend a fair in Nepal's Kanchanpur.

China reveals its Arctic ambition 'Polar Silk Road'

Connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the Transpolar Sea Route (TSR) will cut across the centre of the Arctic Ocean, passing close to the North Pole

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, March 5: As the ice-covered parts of the Arctic Ocean melt due to climate change, China has flagged its interest to take part in building Polar Silk Road, raising prospects for the emergence of a new sea route.

China will participate in the pragmatic cooperation on the Arctic and the building of a Polar Silk Road, the state-run Xinhua news agency quoted the draft outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for national economic and social development and the long-range objectives to the year 2035.



Both the plans were submitted to China's National People's Congress (NPC), the country's Parliament which began its annual session here Friday.

Connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the Transpolar Sea Route (TSR) will cut across the centre of the Arctic Ocean, passing close to the North Pole.

While it could significantly reduce distances for global trade, it remains frozen over for most of the year, making it much harder to traverse than the two Arctic shipping routes currently available - the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post

quoted a research paper earlier. "To the best of our knowledge, China is the only country to have led official expeditions of all three Arctic shipping passages, including the TSR," the research team, led by Dr Mia Bennett from the University of Hong Kong, wrote in the paper.

China has made clear its intention to expand in the Arctic region and published a white paper on this early 2018 calling for its transformation into a 'Polar Silk Road' and highlighting its plans to integrate with its multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

China unveiled the BRI in 2013 with an aim to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.

India has been severely critical of the BRI, the pet project of Chinese President Xi Jinping, as the USD 60 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is part of the BRI, passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

YouTube removes junta's channels; UNSC to meet on Myanmar crisis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Yangon, March 5: YouTube removed five channels run by Myanmar's military for violating its guidelines, it announced Friday, as demonstrators defied growing violence by security forces and staged more anti-coup protests ahead of a special UN Security Council meeting on the country's political crisis.

YouTube said it is watching for any further content that might violate its rules. It earlier pulled dozens of channels as part of an investigation into content uploaded in a coordinated influence campaign. The decision by YouTube followed Facebook's earlier announcement that it has removed all Myanmar military-linked pages from its site and from Instagram, which it also owns.

The escalation of violence by security forces has put pressure on the world community to act to restrain the junta, which seized power February 1 by ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Large protests against military rule have occurred daily in many cities and towns. Security forces escalated their crackdown this week with greater use of lethal force and mass arrests. At least 18 protesters were shot dead on Sunday and 38 on Wednesday, according to the UN Human Rights Office. More than 1,000 people have been arrested, the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said.

Protests continued in the country's biggest cities, Yangon and Mandalay, and elsewhere Friday, and were again met by force from police. Many cases of targeted bru-

tality have been captured in photos and videos that have circulated widely on social media. Videos have showed security forces shooting people at point-blank range and chasing down and savagely beating demonstrators.

The United States called the images appalling, the UN human rights chief said it was time to "end the military's stranglehold over democracy in Myanmar," and the world body's independent expert on human rights in the country, Tom Andrews, urged Security Council members to watch the videos before their closed-door consultations Friday.

While many abuses are committed by police, there is even greater concern about military forces being deployed in cities across the country.

Imran seeks vote of confidence

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, March 5: After witnessing the shocking defeat of a ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate in this week's Senate polls, Prime Minister Imran Khan has sought a vote of confidence from Parliament Saturday, which is being seen as a symbolic move to ensure his standing as the country's premier.

Addressing the nation Thursday, Khan announced the decision after some of his party members in the Senate voted for Yousaf Raza Gilani, the joint opposition's nominee for Islamabad, over the PTI's Abdul Hafeez Sheikh in a secret balloting.

Gilani's victory came as a shock to Khan, who was quick to join heads to assess and absorb the blow. Opposition parties have said that the PTI candidate's defeat has symbolically proven that the Prime Minister doesn't command confidence of the Upper House anymore.

In his address, the Prime Minister offered to go into opposition if PTI MPs thought he was incompetent. The opposition had a plan to use money in the Gilani-Sheikh contest.



They spared no effort to break away our lawmakers and offered them money. Their plan was to defeat Hafeez Sheikh to prove that Imran Khan has lost majority in Parliament, he said.

I will take a vote of confidence from the National Assembly Saturday and am ready to sit on the opposition benches than giving amnesty to the opposition, he added.

Khan slammed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for failing to hold fair and transparent Senate elections, accusing them for allegedly protecting those who made money by holding Senate elections through secret ballot.

ECP's failure to hold fair and transparent elections had damaged the country's morality and democracy, he said.

'India wastes 68 mn tonnes of food a year'

THE FOOD WASTE INDEX REPORT 2021, FROM THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) AND PARTNER ORGANISATION WRAP, SAID THAT AROUND 931 MILLION TONNES OF FOOD WASTE WAS GENERATED IN 2019

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, March 5: An estimated 931 million tonnes of food were wasted globally in 2019; enough to circle the Earth seven times, according to a UN report which said that household food waste in India is about 68.7 million tonnes a year.

The Food Waste Index Report 2021, from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organisation WRAP, said that around 931 million tonnes of food waste was generated in 2019, sixty-one per cent of which came from households, 26 per cent from food service and 13 per cent from retail. "This suggests that 17 per cent of total global food production may be wasted," it said.

"The weight roughly equals that of 23 million fully loaded 40-tonne trucks - bumper-to-bumper; enough to circle the Earth seven times," the UN agency said.

In India, the household food waste estimate is 50 kg per capita per year, or 68,760,163 tonnes a year. The household food waste estimate in the US is 59 kg per capita per year, or 19,359,951 tonnes a year, while for China these estimates are 64 kg per capita per year or 91,646,213 tonnes a year.

The report looks at food waste that occurs in retail outlets, restaurants and homes - counting both food and inedible parts like bones and shells and presents the most comprehensive food waste data collection, analysis and modeling to date.

It finds that in nearly every country that has measured food waste, it was substantial, regardless of income level. It shows that most of this



waste comes from households, which discard 11 per cent of the total food available at the consumption stage of the supply chain.

Food services and retail outlets waste 5 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. On a global per capita

level, 121 kgs of consumer level food is wasted each year, with 74 kgs of this happening in households, the UNEP said in a statement.

"If we want to get serious about tackling climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution

and waste, businesses, governments and citizens around the world have to do their part to reduce food waste," Executive Director of the UNEP Inger Andersen said.

The report said that food waste has substantial environmental, social and economic impacts. At a time when climate action is still lagging, 8-10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed, when losses before consumer level are taken into account.

"Reducing food waste would cut greenhouse gas emissions, slow the destruction of nature through land conversion and pollution, enhance the availability of food and thus reduce hunger and save money at a time of global recession," Andersen said.

business



The economy could slow by mid-2021 as households that lost incomes during the pandemic to the tune of ₹13 lakh crore could drag consumption with a lag
TANVEE GUPTA JAIN | ECONOMIST, UBS SECURITIES INDIA

MG MOTORS LAUNCH 'WOMENTORSHIP'

Automobile manufacturer MG Motor India has launched a mentorship programme 'Womentorship' to scale up social ventures started by women. Accordingly, the automaker adopted a mentorship approach to create an ecosystem wherein women train, uplift, and support each other



of the day quote

With the pandemic necessitating remote working and more technology-based business operations, organisations have had to ramp up their tech hiring to support this transition

SASHI KUMAR | MD, INDEED

As per our earlier commitment, Reliance will bear full cost of vaccination for our employees and their families, and vaccine eligible aged children. Mukesh (Ambani) and I truly believe that cherishing the health and happiness of our loved ones is what it means to be part of a family-Reliance family

NITA AMBANI | FOUNDER & CHAIRPERSON, RELIANCE FOUNDATION

All too often historically budgets have been associated with tinkering in the tax rates. One of the messages in this budget is the message that tax rates will have stability

BIBEK DEBROY | CHAIRMAN, EAC-PM

RELIEF TO CONSUMERS

Govt may cut excise duty on fuels by ₹8/L

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 5: The government may surprise consumers with a sharp cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel to tame rising prices of auto fuels that have already reached historic high levels. Sources privy to the development said the duty cut may be as high as ₹8 per litre on the two fuels so that consumers are provided immediate relief.

Petrol and diesel prices reached all time high levels last month and since then have been touching new highs every day. In the month of February itself, the pump prices of the two auto fuels have increased 14 times taking up petrol prices by ₹4.22 per litre to ₹91.17 a litre and diesel by ₹4.34 a litre to ₹81.47 a litre in Delhi.

"The revenue projection from the oil sector for FY22 gives the government room to cut excise duty on petrol and diesel sharply to provide immediate relief to consumers. This is being examined and a call may be taken soon," said a government official privy to the development.

According to a report prepared by ICICI Securities, excise duty on auto fuels is estimated at ₹4.35 lakh crore in FY22, if there is no cut in excise duty on the two products as against the budget estimate of ₹3.2 lakh crore.

"Thus, even if excise duty is cut by ₹8.5 per litre on or before April 1, the FY22 budget estimate can be met. We are optimistic of excise duty cut given demand recovery, im-



Petrol and diesel prices reached all time high levels last month and since then have been touching new highs every day

pending privatisation and inflation concerns but expect it to be more modest than ₹8.5 per litre," the brokerage firm said in its report.

Government officials agreed that there is room to cut duty but its quantum may be decided later this month ahead of the start of new financial year.

In view of the economic disruption caused by the pandemic and need to raise resources to meet additional expenditure needs for relief measures, the Centre had raised excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹13 and ₹16 per litre respectively March 2020 and May 2020. This measure itself would have mobilised an additional ₹2,25,000 crore revenue for the Centre in FY21.

With a pickup in demand in various industrial sectors including consumption of fuels, the expectation is that revenue would balance out even if there is a duty cut.

It's my duty to appeal against Cairn award: FM

Where I find arbitration award questioning India's sovereign authority to tax... If there is a question about the sovereign right to tax, I will appeal, it's my duty to appeal

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Friday indicated the government's intent to appeal against an arbitration panel asking India to return USD 1.4 billion to UK's Cairn Energy Plc, saying it is her "duty" to appeal in cases where the nation's sovereign authority to tax is questioned.

Last year, the government lost two high-profile arbitrations over the levy of taxes on British firms, using legislation that gave it the power to levy taxes with retrospective effect.

While the government has already challenged in a Singapore court an international arbitration tribunal verdict that overturned its demand for ₹22,100 crore in back taxes from Vodafone Group Plc, it hasn't yet done so against a December 21 award asking India to return the value of shares seized and sold, dividend confiscated and tax refund stopped to adjust a ₹10,247 crore tax demand on Cairn.

"We have made our position clear on retrospective taxation. We have



repeated it in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, till now. I don't see any lack of clarity," she said, referring to the Modi government's stand of not raising any new tax demand using the 2012 legislation.

"Where I find arbitration award questioning India's sovereign authority to tax... If there is a question about the sovereign right to tax, I will appeal, it's my duty to appeal," she said. "An arbitration award, which questions the authority of government to tax, I will appeal on that." She did not make any direct reference to appealing against the Cairn award.

The statement comes days after her ministry officials held three rounds of talks with Cairn executives, including CEO Simon Thomson to find a solution acceptable to both sides.

The tax department had in January 2014 raised the issue of alleged capital gains Cairn made on

reorganising its India business prior to an IPO in 2006-07.

In March 2015, it slapped a ₹10,247 crore tax demand, levying short-term capital gains tax on the value the firm gained from developing India business that included discovering the nation's biggest on-land oilfield in Rajasthan.

Cairn at that time stated that its internal reorganisation was in compliance with the law and had been approved by various regulatory bodies, including Sebi. It denied evading any taxes prevalent at that time and challenged the tax demand through international arbitration.

An international tribunal had in December unanimously ruled that India violated its obligations under the UK-India Bilateral Investment Treaty in 2014 through the levy of taxes retrospectively. It asked the government to desist from pressing the tax demand.

Forex reserves increase by \$689mn to \$584.55bn



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 5: India's forex reserves increased for the second consecutive week, touching \$584.554 billion as of February 26, up by \$689 million, the Reserve Bank said Friday.

The overall reserves had increased by \$169 million to \$583.865 billion in the previous reporting week. The reserves, which have been steadily increasing over the last few months, had touched an all-time high at \$590.185 billion for the week ended January 29 this year.

For the week ended February 26, the core currency assets - the largest component of the overall reserves - rose by \$509 million to \$542.615 billion, the RBI said.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by \$172 million to \$35.421 billion during the reporting week, the apex bank data showed. The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the IMF rose by \$9 million to \$1.517 billion in the reporting week, it said.

The country's reserve position with the IMF declined marginally to \$5.001 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

SHORT TAKES

Gulati appointed as addl director

Mumbai: Private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank Friday appointed agricultural economist Ashok Gulati as additional independent director on its board. The term of Gulati, a keen backer of the recent farm laws who has also been appointed by the Supreme Court to a four-member panel, is for five years starting from Saturday, an official statement from the bank said.

Ethiad slumps to \$1.7bn loss

Dubai: Abu Dhabi's national carrier Ethiad Thursday reported core operating losses of \$1.7 billion in 2020, reflecting the severe toll of the coronavirus pandemic on the long-troubled airline that has lost billions in recent years. Ethiad reported revenues of \$2.7 billion in 2020 compared to \$5.6 billion the year before, a precipitous decline it attributed to "drastically fewer people travelling" as the surging pandemic crippled air travel.

Gold plunges ₹522, silver falls ₹1,822

New Delhi: Gold prices Friday tumbled by ₹522 to ₹43,887 per 10 grams in the national capital, due to muted trend in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at ₹44,409 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver crashed by ₹1,822 to ₹64,805 per kilogram as compared with the close of ₹66,627 per kg Thursday. In the international market, gold was trading lower at \$1,696 per ounce and silver was down at \$25.20 an ounce.

'PLI scheme likely to boost mfg output by \$520bn'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday said production linked incentive (PLI) scheme, which is aimed at boosting domestic manufacturing and exports, is expected to increase the country's production by \$520 billion in the next five years.

Addressing a webinar on PLI scheme, organised by Department of Industry and International Trade (DPIIT) and NITI Aayog, through video conference, Modi said the government is continuously carrying out reforms to boost domestic manufacturing.

In this year's Budget, about ₹2 lakh crore was earmarked for the PLI scheme for the next five years and "there is an expectation that the scheme would result in increasing the production by about USD 520 billion in the next five years", he said.



He added that there is also an expectation that the current workforce in the sectors, which will avail the benefits of the PLI scheme, will be doubled and job creation will also increase.

The Prime Minister said the government is working to reduce compliance burden, further improve

ease of doing business and cut down logistics costs for the industry.

"An average of 5 per cent of production is given as incentive. This means that PLI schemes will lead to production worth USD 520 billion in India in the next five years," he said.

Modi said that over the past 6-7 years, several successful efforts have been made to encourage "Make in India" at different levels. He stressed on the need to take a big leap, as well as increase the speed and scale to boost manufacturing as it would increase employment generation in the country.

Modi said the government is working at every level to promote the industry through measures like ease of doing business, reducing the compliance burden, creating multi-modal infrastructure to reduce logistics costs, and constructing district-level export hubs.

"Our effort is to reduce over 6,000 compliance burden (for industry)," he said. "The government, he said, believes that its interference in everything creates more problems than solutions and "therefore, self-regulation, self-attesting, self-certification are being emphasised".

APPLE FIRMS UP LEAD IN GLOBAL SMARTWATCH MKT

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 5: Driven by strong response to Watch Series 6 and SE, Apple maintained its top position in the global smartwatch market in 2020 with shipping 33.9 million units, a new report said Friday. Chinese brand Huawei with 11.1 million smartwatch shipments was second while Samsung with 9.1 million units came third, according to Counterpoint Research's 'Global Smartphone Shipments Tracker'.

Overall, Apple saw a 19% growth while Huawei registered 26 per cent growth (despite US sanctions) in the global smartwatch segment last year.

In a year where annual smartwatch growth inched forward at only 1.5%, Apple maintained its number one position and increased its market share by 6% from 2019,

helping shift the overall market closer to the premium segment.

The Apple Watch Series 6 and SE did exceptionally well, shipping 12.9 million units and accounting for 40% market share in the festive quarter (Q4) alone.

"Price band dynamics during Q4 2020 indicate ASPs (average selling prices) are on the rise. The 2019's biggest segment (\$101-\$200) shrank by 7%, while the more premium \$300-plus segments grew by 8%, helped tremendously by Apple, which enjoyed a dominant market share of over 70% in this category," informed senior analyst Sujeong Lim.

The smartwatch market is being driven by 3 premium brands: Apple, Samsung and Huawei



TOP LOSERS			5
50,405.32			MAR
1039.75	IndusInd Bank	-4.79%	
383.80	SBI	-3.03%	
220.30	Power Grid Corp	-2.13%	
4489.40	Dr Reddys Labs	-1.86%	
108.75	NTPC	-1.85%	
609.70	ICICI Bank	-1.80%	
941.30	HCL Tech	-1.77%	
9960.00	Bajaj Finserv	-1.66%	
2543.25	HDFC	-1.55%	
1529.65	HDFC Bank	-1.52%	
POINTS			%
BSE SENSEX			
-440.76			

IT sector sales up 5.2 pc in Q3: RBI data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 5: Information technology (IT) sector remained in the positive terrain throughout the Covid-19 pandemic period and its sales increased by 5.2 per cent year-on-year in the third quarter of 2020-21, according to the RBI data on performance of private sector corporate released Friday.

The data is drawn from abridged quarterly financial results of 2,692 listed non-government non-financial (NGNF) companies.



With gradual easing of restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic and rebound in demand conditions, sales of 1,685 manufacturing companies expanded by 7.4 per cent (Y-o-Y) in October-December quarter of 2020-21 after recording con-

traction during the preceding six quarters. The recovery was led by iron and steel, automobiles, cement, chemicals and pharmaceuticals companies. "Information technology (IT) sector remained in positive terrain throughout the Covid-19 pandemic period and their sales increased by 5.2 per cent (Y-o-Y) in Q3:2020-21," the RBI said while releasing the data.

Sales of 165 IT companies stood at ₹1,05,724 crore in the third quarter, up 5.2 per cent from ₹1,01,001 crore in the year-ago period.

'Gender inequality has cost world \$70tn since 1990'

THE REPORT NOTES THAT FULL GENDER EQUALITY GLOBALLY CAN INCREASE THE WORLD GDP BY UP TO \$28 TRILLION BY 2025

AGENCIES

Mumbai, March 5: With many reports confirming women and other socially-disadvantaged sections have suffered the most during the pandemic, economists at BofA Securities have tabulated the cost of lack of gender diversity and inclusion, saying it will take 257 years to close the gap at the current rate, and not doing this has cost the world a whopping USD 70 trillion since 1990.

The report also notes that full gender equality globally can increase the world GDP by up to USD 28 trillion by 2025 and the loss of

human capital wealth due to gender inequality alone is estimated at USD 160.2 trillion.

"Not closing the gender inequality gap and a lack of diversity and inclusion has an economic price tag. Not doing the right thing on this count has cost us USD 70 trillion since 1990... It will take us 257 years to close the gender economic gap at today's rate," says the report, adding the pandemic alone, when women suffered the most, has cost women USD 1 trillion in income.

Noting that gender and racial biases lead to persistent labour market disparities and limit the economy, it says closing the gender and



race gaps in education and employment would have generated USD 2.6 trillion more in economic

output in 2019 and the cumulative gains from 1990 would have been USD 70 trillion at the 2019 dollar rate. Closing racial earnings gap resulting from disparities in health, education, incarceration and employment opportunities would boost trend growth by 0.5% per year through 2050, says the report.

Reeling out numbers, the report says in 2020, there were no Black senior executives in any of the FTSE 100 companies.

For the first time in six years in 2020 there were no black chairs, chief executives or finance chiefs in the FTSE 100 companies and just one company in the S&P 500 is run

by a Black female CEO today, and only eight companies have at least 50% female management teams.

As much as 75% of Nasdaq companies do not have at least one woman and one under-represented minority or LGBT+ member on the board, it says, adding continued racial inequality could cost the US economy USD1-1.5 trillion in lost consumption and investment over the next decade.

The LGBTQ+ community is equivalent to the fourth largest economy in the world at USD 3.9 trillion. All in all, S&P 500 companies with above-median gender diversity on their boards see 15% higher

return on equity, and for companies with ethnic and racially diversified workforce this is 8% higher.

And the pandemic has only deepened the gender inequality crisis. As much as 96 million people will slide into extreme poverty in 2021, of which 47 million are women. Women's jobs were 19% more at risk and women took up an even greater share of childcare and unpaid labour during the pandemic.

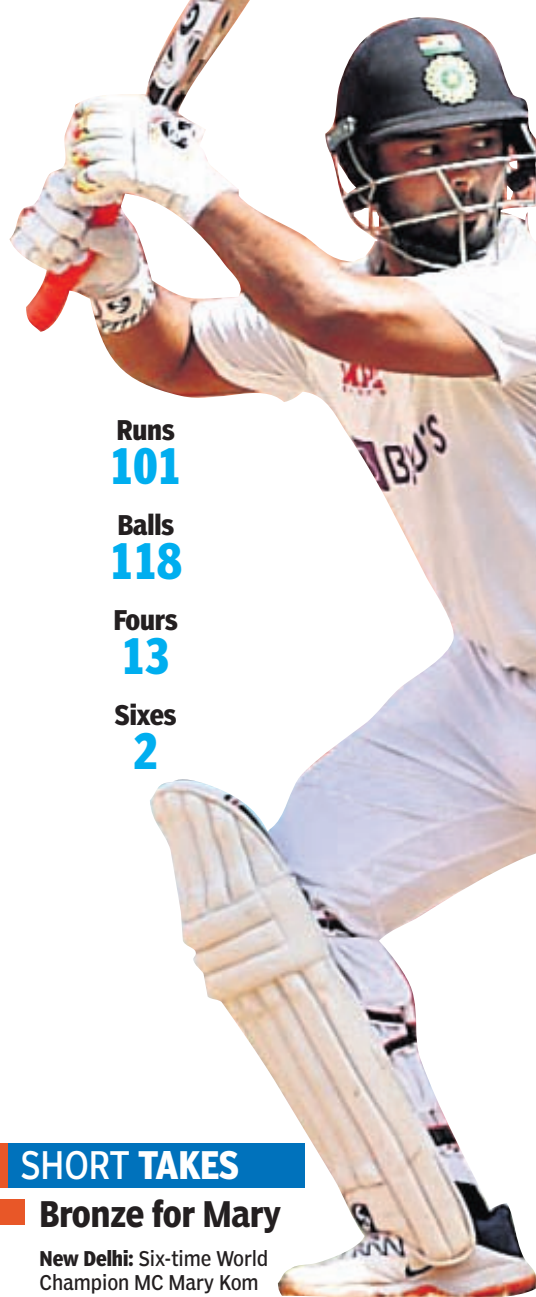
Even before the pandemic, the gender gap was worsening and at the current rate of inclusion, it will take 257 years to reach economic equality, warns the report.

TEST CENTURIES

114	England	Oval
159*	Australia	Sydney
101	England	Ahmedabad

PANT POWER PROPS INDIA

Wicketkeeper-batsman and Sundar rescue hosts with 113-run stand



Runs
101

Balls
118

Fours
13

Sixes
2

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, March 5: Rishabh Pant (101, 118b, 13x4, 2x6) changed his game-plan and in turn India's fortunes with a magnificent century here Friday. Pant's third Test ton helped India gain control in the fourth Test against England being played here. At stumps on day two, India were 294 for seven wickets and they have already grabbed a vital 89-run lead on a pitch that is tending to keep low and low as the game progresses.

England dominated the first two sessions and India looked in all sorts of trouble before Pant suddenly decided to catch the opposition by the scruff of their necks. He effortlessly changed gears in company of Washington Sundar (60, 117b, 8x4). The two put on 113 runs



PRIZED SCALP: England players huddle around Ben Stokes after the all-rounder dismissed India skipper Virat Kohli at Ahmedabad, Friday

for the seventh wicket to take the game away from the visitors. At stumps, Washington was still at the crease with Axar Patel (11 batting).

For someone, who has always been criticised for his lack of game awareness, Pant's innings was revelation. His first 50 came off 82 balls and the next off only 33 with Sundar being the ideal foil.

In Virender Sehwag style, Pant deposited Dom Bess into the 'cow corner' of the stands against the turn, to

SCORECARD

ENGLAND 1ST INNINGS: 205

INDIA 1ST INNINGS: (OVERNIGHT 24/1)

Rohit Sharma lbw Stokes 49, Cheteshwar Pujara lbw b Leach 17, Virat Kohli c Foakes b Stokes 0, Ajinkya Rahane c Stokes b Anderson 27, Rishabh Pant c Root b Anderson 101, Ravi Ashwin c Pope b Leach 13, Washington Sundar batting 60, Axar Patel batting 11, **EXTRAS:** (B-8, LB-5, NB-3) 16, **TOTAL:** (for 7 wickets in 94 overs) 294.

FALL: 1-0, 2-40, 3-41, 4-80, 5-121, 6-146, 7-259.

BOWLING: James Anderson 20-11-40-3, Ben Stokes 22-6-73-2, Jack Leach 23-5-66-2, Dominic Bess 15-1-56-0, Joe Root 14-1-46-0.

complete his third Test hundred and first at home. When he finally got out, Root's frustrated expression was a dead giveaway that the match was now out of hand for England, having conceded as many as 141 runs in a single session. Ben Stokes (2/73) troubled the

AUDACIOUS SHOT-MAKING TON

Rishabh talks about his USP

AHMEDABAD: Rishabh Pant said Friday he has got the license to go for his shots on most occasions but considering the game's situation Friday, he had to bide time before going for the most outlandish of strokes during his sensational innings. The reverse sweep off the great James Anderson was easily the most outrageous shot he played on the day.

Pant was asked about that particular stroke after stumps. "You have to premeditate reverse-flicks, but if luck is going your way you can take the odd chance. I get the license most of the time, but I have to assess the situation and take the game head on. I like to help the team win and if the crowd is entertained by that, I'm happy," added the wicketkeeper-batsman.

Pant came in when India's batsmen had been choked for runs on a

difficult track. The 23-year-old displayed tremendous game sense during his innings. The southpaw said he needed to be cautious considering the match situation.

"If the bowlers are bowling well respect it and take the singles, and that was on my mind. I like to play the situation and I just see the ball and react - that's the USP (unique selling point) of my game," he said. The 23-year-old anchored India's innings. He first had 41 runs partnership with Rohit Sharma, and then forged a 113-run partnership with Washington Sundar for the seventh wicket.

"The plan was just to build a partnership when I joined Rohit. I was thinking I would assess the pitch and then play my shots," Pant said. "The team plan was to get to 206, past the England total, and then get as many runs as possible after that as a batting unit," he signed off.

Indians with reared up deliveries, one of those got skipper Virat Kohli (0), but there was no trouble for Pant, who would gleefully pull the England all-rounder. The audacity with which he came down the track against James Anderson (3/40) took one's breath away.

It was a fascinating day of Test cricket where flamboyant players like Rohit Sharma (49, 144b, 7x4) and Pant traded their natural attacking instincts for a more conservative approach.

Earlier, in the first session, Cheteshwar Pujara (17) and Kohli's dismissals brought England back in the game. Ajinkya Rahane (27) hit a flurry

of boundaries to get the scoreboard moving but Anderson had him caught at second slip with a beautiful delivery that held its line at the stroke of lunch.

The approach taken by Rohit and Pujara during their 40-run stand of 24 overs in the morning session, wasn't a bad one. They saw off Anderson's morning spell with Stokes bending his back at the other end. However, then wickets started falling in a heap and India went to tea at 153 for six... definitely in a whole lot of trouble.

But, then 'Hurricane' Pant hit the Motera and England were left high and dry.

SHORT TAKES

Bronze for Mary

New Delhi: Six-time World Champion MC Mary Kom (51kg) settled for a bronze medal in the 35th Boxam International Boxing tournament in Castellon, Spain after going down to American Virginia Fuchs in an intensely-contested semifinal bout Friday. The 37-year-old Olympic-bound star lost in a split decision after an exhausting contest. Earlier, Olympic-bound male boxers Satish Kumar (+91kg) and Ashish Kumar (75kg) entered the semifinals along with Sumit Sangwan (81kg). Satish defeated Denmark's Givskov Nielsen 5-0 in his last eight bout late Thursday. Ashish got the better of Italy's Remo Salvatti in a split 4-1 verdict to make the medal rounds. Sumit, on the other hand, triumphed 4-1 over Mohor El Ziad of Belgium.

Olympic dreams

New Delhi: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju pitched Friday for hosting the Summer Olympics in the future. He said the Olympic movement is not complete till India hosts an edition of the quadrennial sporting extravaganza. He made his comment during a virtual conference organised by the CII, titled the '6th CII Scorecard'. He said to establish itself as a sporting powerhouse, India has to host the Olympics in future. "India hasn't claimed its rightful place in sports. The Olympics is the biggest event in sports. The Olympic movement is not complete till India hosts an Olympic Games. We are taking this very seriously," the minister said during his keynote address.

Bedi better

New Delhi: Former India captain Bishan Singh Bedi, who underwent a surgery to remove a blood clot in his brain a few days ago, has been shifted to a private room from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and is doing well, a source close to the legendary spinner said. The 74-year-old is admitted at a hospital here. "He (Bedi) has been shifted to a private room yesterday (Thursday). He is fine now. They (doctors) will monitor him for a few more days, before releasing him for home recuperation," the source informed. Bedi is one of the most successful Indian spinners. He played 67 Tests and 10 ODIs between 1967 and 1979, taking 266 and seven wickets respectively. AGENCIES

MY PLAN WAS TO WAIT AND WATCH, ASSESS THE SITUATION AND THEN GO FOR THE SHOTS. I WANTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE TEAM CAUSE
RISHABH PANT

Chopra breaks his own record



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patiala, March 5: Olympic-bound star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra smashed his own national record Friday with a throw of 88.07m, which is also the best of the year so far. Chopra's record-breaking throw came during the third Indian Grand Prix (IGP) meet here Friday.

Competing for the first time in more than a year after the COVID-19 pandemic wiped out the whole of 2020 calendar, Chopra hurled the spear to a distance of 88.07m in his fifth attempt to obliterate his earlier national record of 88.06m. The earlier throw came during a gold-winning show at the 2018

Asian Games.

The 24-year-old Chopra opened the competition with an effort of 83.03m before having two foul throws. After a fourth throw of 83.36m, Chopra sent the javelin to a record distance amid loud cheers from a sizeable audience at the NIS Patiala complex here. His final throw was 82.24m.

"I was prepared and today it was windy. I used my favourite javelin which helped me. Pandemic did affect training and preparation but we managed to hold on," said Chopra who is also the 2018 Commonwealth Games gold medalist. "At the world level I would need to perform even better as current standards are quite high," the athlete added.

Chopra qualified for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics in January last year in an event in South Africa during his training stint in that country. That was also the last competition he had taken part before Friday.

Another Olympic-bound javelin thrower, Shivpal Singh of Uttar Pradesh, was second with a best throw of 81.63m while Sahil Silwal, representing Haryana, was third with a best effort of 80.65m.

ATHLETICS COACH SNESAREV FOUND DEAD IN HOSTEL ROOM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patiala, March 5: India's middle and long distance coach Nikolai Snesev of Belarus was Friday found dead in his hostel room at the National Institute of Sports (NIS) here, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said. The dead body of the 72-year-old Snesev, who returned to India after a gap of two years to be at the helm till the end of September, has been sent to a government hospital for post-mortem.

"Snesev had come to NIS here for the Indian Grand Prix. He however, did not turn up for the meet. The coaches checked for him in the evening and his room was found locked from inside," AFI president Adil Sumariwalla told this agency. "When the door was broken, Snesev was found lying on his bed

We can only know the reason behind his death after the post-mortem reports comes in. He was found dead with his running boots on

ADIL SUMARIWALLA | AFI PRESIDENT

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) doctor at the NIS declared him dead and the ED (team) of SAI has referred the body to the government hospital for post-mortem. We don't know the cause of death. We will know it after the post-mortem report comes," Sumariwalla added.

Snesev was at the NIS running track in the morning with his wards but did not turn up for the meet which started at 2.00pm. "Snesev died with his boots on, having overseen his wards' training this morning," the AFI said in

INSPIRING HOCKEY TALENTS



French Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain visited Friday the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and traded a few shots with trainees of the High Performance Hockey Centre to inspire the youngsters

Mumbai, Goa tie ends in stalemate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Margao, March 5: FC Goa and Mumbai City FC (MFCF) played out a thrilling 2-2 draw in the first leg of the first semifinal of the ISL here Friday. The two teams will again meet March 8 and if the stalemate continues, they will have to bank on penalties to seal a spot in the summit clash round. FC Goa

thus maintained their unbeaten streak in the tournament taking it to 14 successive matches.

It was exciting battle all the way with both sides depending on quick counter-attacks. Goa took the lead twice in the game only to see their opponents comeback with renewed zeal as the match progressed.

Igor Angulo (20th) and Saviour Gama (59th) scored for the Gaurs,

only to see their goals neutralised by Hugo Boumous (38th) and Mouratda Fall (61st).

It was an end-to-end action with both sides creating a number of opportunities. However, MFCF should have won had Boumous not wasted a sitter in added on time.

However, the draw was a fair result opined both the coaches after the game.

Sindhu wins, others lose

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Basel, March 5: Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu advanced to the semifinals of the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament with a straight-game win over Thai Busanan Ongbamrunphan but it turned out to be a dismal day for other Indian shuttlers here Friday.

World Champion Sindhu took a minute less than an hour to see off a fighting Busanan, seeded fifth, 21-16, 23-21 to set up a clash with fourth seed Denmark's fourth seed Mia Blichfeldt.

However, it was a bad day in office for other Indians in fray as none of them could reach the last four stage.

B Sai Praneeth, who reached the final in the last edition, lost 14-21, 17-21 to Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia in 45 minutes. Ajay Jayaram's campaign ended after a demoralising 9-21, 6-21 to eighth-seeded Thai Kunlavut Vitidsarn in another last



eight men's singles match.

Earlier, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa fought hard before going down 17-21, 21-16, 8-21 to fifth seeds Tan Kian Meng and Lai Pei Jing of Malaysia in the quarterfinals of the mixed doubles event.

World No. 10 pair of Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, seeded second, will take on Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi of Malaysia later in the day.

5th successive home defeat for Liverpool

REDS SUFFER HISTORIC LOSS

AGENCIES

London, March 5: Chelsea moved into the Premier League's top four as Mason Mount's superb first half goal earned the side a 1-0 win at champion Liverpool who suffered a club-record fifth straight home league defeat Thursday. Never in their 128 years old history had Liverpool lost five successive league games at the Anfield.

Mount cut in to curl a low shot past Liverpool keeper Alisson in the 42nd minute, after Timo Werner had earlier had a goal disallowed, to give Chelsea a deserved half time lead. Thomas Tuchel's side then showed great defensive discipline to stand firm in the second period as Liverpool improved.

Liverpool, who substituted a disgruntled Mohamed Salah in the second half, struggled to carve out clear chances though, and managed only one effort on target.



Chelsea, unbeaten since Tuchel replaced Frank Lampard in January, has 47 points from 27 games, one more than Everton who had briefly gone fourth by beating West Bromwich Albion.

"It's very tight around the top four and these big games we need to win," Mount said. "Tonight (Thursday) maybe we could have had a couple more goals. We had to be brave and win the ball back high and that's where the goal came from," he added.

Elsewhere Tottenham Hotspurs started the attacking quartet of Harry Kane, Son Heung-min, Gareth Bale and Dele Alli together for the first time this season but relied on an own-goal to secure a 1-0 win at Fulham.

A flicked effort from Alli deflected into the net off the leg of Fulham defender Tosin Adarabioyo in the 19th minute to give three crucial points to Spurs.