



PROFESSIONAL DILEMMA

Janhvi Kapoor says every actor is plagued with self-doubt which helps them to do better

LEISURE P2



INTERPOL NOTICE

Interpol has issued a red corner notice against self-styled godman Virendra Deo Dixit for sexually exploiting minor girls

TWO STATES P7



FIRST T20I TODAY

Team combination on focus as Virat Kohli and Co take on England in the first T20I in Ahmedabad

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



SHORT TAKES

2 ultras shot dead in J&K encounter

Srinagar: Two militants were killed in an overnight encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, police said Thursday. The militants opened fire on security forces when they were conducting a search and cordon operation Wednesday night in Kandipora in the district's Bijbehara area, a police official informed. The slain militants have been identified as Adil Ahmad Bhat and Zahid Ahmad Rather. They were affiliated with proscribed outfit JeM. The operation started Wednesday night, but was suspended due to darkness. It resumed Thursday morning and the two ultras were eliminated, police informed.

Egypt factory fire kills 20 persons

Cairo: A fire at a garment factory near Cairo killed at least 20 people and injured 24 Thursday, officials said. It is the latest such incident in Egypt where safety standards and fire regulations are poorly enforced. The cause of the blaze, which ripped through the four-story plant in Obour, an outlying district of the greater area around the Egyptian capital, was not immediately known, according to a statement released by the government. The toll is expected to go up as 10 of the injured are in very critical condition. Factory fires are quite common in Egypt, due to the lax enforcement of industrial and other safety measures. In the past also people have died in infernos.

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP			
MAX	35.8°C	35.4°C	
MIN	24.0°C	23.0°C	
Humidity	85%	80%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Mainly clear sky

TMC, BJP SPAR OVER 'DRAMA' TO GARNER ATTENTION

Bengal boils after Mamata 'assault'

AGENCIES

Kolkata, March 11: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged her supporters Thursday to maintain peace and not do anything that would cause problems to the public. Stating this in a video message, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo said that she will again hit the campaign trail in a few days even if 'she has to do it in a wheelchair'. "I would appeal to my party cadres, supporters and common people to maintain peace. It is true I was badly hurt last (Wednesday) night and felt severe pain in the chest and head. The doctors are looking after me," she said. "I appeal to everyone to maintain peace. I hope to be back on the field in a few days, even if I require a wheelchair," Banerjee added. Banerjee's appeal to her supporters came amid widespread protests by Trinamool Congress workers across the state. Meanwhile doctors attending to her at a state-run hospital here said Thursday evening that her condition is stable, but she is having severe pain in her injured left leg. She will be kept under strict observation for the time being, they said. "The chief minister has severe bone injuries in her left ankle and foot, besides injuries in right shoulder, forearm and neck. She is stable now but is having severe pain in the injured leg," a senior doctor at the state-run SSKM Hospital said. Banerjee suffered injuries when she was paying obeisance at a temple in Nandigram after filing her nomination. She alleged that she was manhandled and pushed by 4-5 persons Wednesday. The TMC has blamed both the BJP and the Election Commission (EC) for the alleged 'assault' on the chief minister



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with a plaster on her left leg recuperating at a hospital in Kolkata, Thursday

- Six MPs of the TMC to meet EC officials in New Delhi, Friday over attack on Mamata Banerjee
- BJP wants CBI probe to find out the real cause behind the alleged assault
- TMC postpones release of election manifesto

while the saffron party has demanded a CBI probe into the entire incident. Claiming that the attack was a 'deep-rooted conspiracy to take the life of TMC supremo', the party leaders said anti-social elements have been mobilised from the neighbouring states by the BJP in Nandigram to unleash violence. They alleged that the 'Election Commission did nothing despite there being reports of a possible attack on Banerjee'.

GET WELL SOON, SAYS ODISHA CM

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed concerns Thursday over the health condition of Mamata Banerjee who is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Kolkata following an alleged attack on her. "Concerned to know about the hospitalisation of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Wishing her speedy recovery and praying for good health," Patnaik said on Twitter.

Even though two senior BJP leaders -Tathagata Roy and Shamik Bhattacharya -paid a courtesy visit to the hospital to enquire about the chief minister's health, the party's West Bengal president Dilip Ghosh demanded a CBI probe. **MORE P8**

4 nabbed across Odisha for setting alight forest areas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, March 11: Three persons have been arrested for their involvement in setting reserve forest areas on fire at Ranjagada in Dhenkanal district, the officials of the Forest department said Thursday. Among the three, Hrudananda is from Mandiapada village under Kankadahada police station in this district while the other two belong to Rekuti under Telkoi police limits in Keonjhar district. After being tipped off, a special team led by Kamakhyanagar Range Officer (East) Satya Narayan Sahoo conducted raids at different places in this district to nab the accused. Sharp weapons, kerosene and some explosive material were seized from the accused. In another development, Forest department personnel in Mayurbhanj district arrested a poacher while he was setting an area of the forest on fire under Podadiha range in the district. He was lighting dry leaves when he was nabbed. An axe, a gun and about seven kilograms of porcupine meat were seized from his possession. It should be stated here that two days back, Sambalpur DFO Sanjit Kumar had blamed farmers for forest fires. He had said that people with farmlands close to the forest were setting those on fire to collect mahua flowers and kendu leaves. However, in the process these fires were spreading to nearby jungles causing huge damage to flora and fauna. Kumar had also announced an award of ₹5,000 for persons who would provide information about those responsible for setting forests on fire. He had said that those found guilty will be prosecuted. With summer just beginning, forest fires have become a headache for the state government. Efforts are being made to contain the fires.

Start Strong. Grow Stronger.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

RAINS RESTRICT SIMILIPAL FIRES



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 11: With the use of additional manpower coupled with moderate rainfall, the Odisha government has been able to minimise the fire incidents at the Similipal National Park (SNP). As per Forest Survey of India's (FSI) satellite-based report, only five fire points were reported Thursday in Similipal against 24/26 points reported Wednesday, said Sandeep Tripathy, the head of state task force. Tripathy claimed that the forest fire situation in Odisha is totally under control. However, the FSI report contradicted his statement. It said that fire points have increased in the state in past 24 hours to 1,048 in comparison to the 597 reported Wednesday. Tripathy also said that due to the rainfall, and with more rains

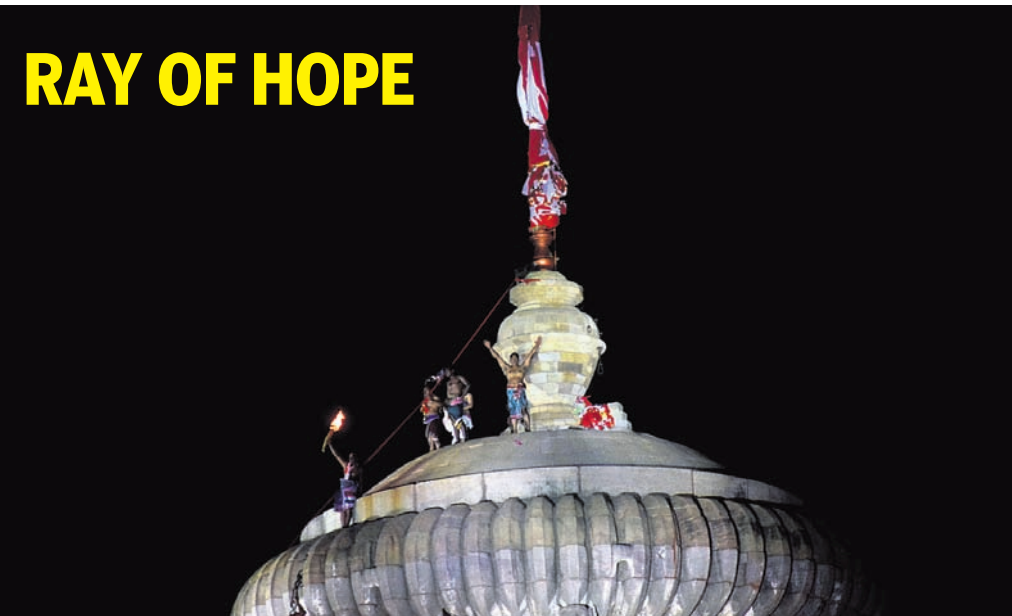
expected in the next couple of days, the chances of fire spreading in the park has been drastically reduced. "Though the fire situation is under control, the administration is on full alert to combat any recurrence of fire given that the major part of summer is still left," Tripathy said. Meanwhile, two out of the three-member central team is already in Odisha to probe the Similipal fires. Amit Mallick, IGE National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) arrived Thursday while Subrat Mahapatra was already here. They both visited Similipal. The massive scaling up of manpower and infrastructure in terms of engagement of more fire watchers, doubling of leaf blowers, massive community engagement and 24-hour effort of the field staff has helped in containing the infernos.

Opposition ready to corner government

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 11: The second phase of Odisha Assembly Budget session will start Friday and continue till April 9. During this session, the state government is planning to pass the controversial Odisha Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill 2020. The opposition, BJP and Congress have decided to corner the Odisha government. They will raise several issues including Similipal forest fire, irregularities in paddy procurement, law and order situation and few others.

"The Similipal forest fire, irregularities in paddy procurement at mandis, deterioration of law and order situation in the state, safety of women, children going missing will be raised in the house," said Bishnu Sethi, Deputy Leader of the BJP legislature party. The ruling BJD however, said it is prepared to debate any issue raised by the Opposition. "The government is ready to debate on any topic, which is in the interest of the state. The government wants to find solutions to various problems through discussions on the floor," said chief whip Pramila Mallick.



A priest raises the 'Mahadeepa' atop Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Mahashivratri, Thursday as other servitors lend a helping hand

RAY OF HOPE

POLL-BOUND STATES

No Modi pictures in vax certificates

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 11: Pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi will no longer be seen in the COVID-19 vaccination certificates in the poll-bound states of West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Assam and the Union Territory of Pondicherry. This decision was taken Thursday by the Union Health Ministry after a new direction was issued by the Election Commission (EC). The Trinamool Congress had pointed out to the EC that using Modi's picture on the vax certificate was a violation of the Model Code of Conduct. The EC, February 26, announced the poll dates - March 27 to April 29 -for the four states and Pondicherry. The results will be declared May 2.



The TMC had last week written to the EC and accused Modi of stealing credit from doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers. It also alleged that the poll code was being violated with the photos. The EC March 6 had asked the government to drop the prime minister's photo from the certificates in these states. In a letter dated March 10 and received Thursday by the EC, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan wrote that the directions will be complied with. "Thereafter, necessary filters in Co-WIN have been applied for the vaccination centres situated in the four states of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Union Territory of Pondicherry, as suggested by the Commission," the letter said.

Top global institute calls India an 'electoral autocracy'

NEW RANKING SUGGESTS THAT WHEN IT COMES TO CENSORSHIP THE COUNTRY IS WORSE THAN BANGLADESH AND NEPAL

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 11: A Swedish research organisation has said that India is an 'electoral autocracy' thereby downgrading the country as the 'largest democracy' in the world. The V-Dem Institute had earlier ranked India as the 'largest democracy' in 2019. The new ranking points out that India, when it comes to implementing censorship, is as autocratic as Pakistan and is worse than its neighbours Bangladesh and Nepal. The development comes a week after the democracy watchdog 'Freedom House', mostly funded by the US government, dropped India from the list of 'free' countries and designated it as 'partly free'. V-Dem stands for 'Varieties of Democracy'. It conceptualises and



measures democracy through large social science data collection. Its report was released Wednesday in the presence of Sweden's Deputy

Foreign Minister Robert Rydberg. The report pointed out that 2020 was another year of decline for 'liberal democracy'. It also said that 'a

THE MODI-LED GOVERNMENT IN INDIA HAS USED LAWS ON SEDITION, DEFAMATION AND COUNTER-TERRORISM TO SILENCE CRITICS
V-DEM REPORT

major change is that the world's largest democracy has turned into an electoral autocracy: India with 1.37 billion people'. Autocratisation, the report said, typically follows a similar pattern across very different contexts. "Ruling governments first attack the media and civil society, and polarise societies by disrespecting opponents and spreading false information, then undermine elections," the report said.

In the India chapter, the report talked about the gradual decline of democracy. "India's autocratisation process has largely followed the typical pattern for countries in the 'Third Wave' over the past 10 years: a gradual deterioration where freedom of the media, academia, and civil society were curtailed first and to the greatest extent," the report said. On the V-Dem Institute's scale, India recorded a 23 percentage-point drop from 2013 to 2020-end, 'making it one of the most dramatic shifts in democracy among all countries in the world over the past 10 years, alongside autocratising countries like Brazil, Hungary, and Turkey'. However, worse was to follow in the report. It compared the Narendra Modi-led government

to Pakistan. "India, in this aspect (censorship), is now as autocratic as Pakistan, and worse than both its neighbours Bangladesh and Nepal. In general, the Modi-led government in India has used laws on sedition, defamation, and counter-terrorism to silence critics," the report said. The report talked about the restrictions imposed by the Modi government on civil society, the weakening of secularism under its watch with particular reference to the Citizenship Amendment Act. It said that the present Indian disposition is using UAPA indiscriminately to harass, intimidate and put political opponents behind bars. It also talked about how dissent in academia is being 'ruthlessly silenced' and people are being socially threatened.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES You already feel deeply connected to the universe. But today, you may want to particularly thank God for all His small mercies. You cherish your loved ones even more today, says Ganesha, and you may spend lavishly on people dear to you.

TAURUS Today, passionate and possessive are the two words that will define your relationship with the people you love, predicts Ganesha. You may choose to take pains for the sake of others, which seems to be highly fulfilling. Your good spirit will sky-rocket by evening. Make sure to change your disadvantage into your advantage, says Ganesha.

GEMINI Putting things in order will be your top priority, says Ganesha. You will possibly have a romantic dinner with your sweetheart. Seductive conversations may culminate in sensuous consummation. Your personal feelings will stir up your partner's private thoughts.

CANCER It is high time you paid attention to your family. You have been so lost in work and in making money that you have almost forgotten the very people you have been slogging for. Your spouse has been trying hard to improve the relationship. Ganesha feels it is time you respond to your partner's needs.

LEO A mixed bag of fortunes, a bittersweet pill, call it what you will, but today brings with it a lot of things packed within its 24-hour period. Ganesha foresees a hectic morning, and an even more frantic afternoon. So, respite will be a luxury for you today. If this was the bitter end of the pill, then its sweet results will be like a balm on your frayed nerves, says Ganesha.

VIRGO Give people a word of encouragement and motivate them to achieve bigger things, advises Ganesha. Don the thinker's cap and you may find yourself in contemplation. Criticism will hurt you, but be as unflappable as you can and proceed to your target, says Ganesha.

LIBRA It is your friends who prove to be lucky and beneficial for you today, especially if they happen to be walking the corridors of power, says Ganesha. Do not hesitate to start that new joint venture today. See your popularity grow by leaps and bounds as you get due recognition for your abilities and efforts.

SCORPIO It is high time you diverted all your energies towards your object of love, advises Ganesha. Research-oriented work could well be an option too. Ganesha says you are likely to find someone special to talk about those good old times and have a great time.

SAGITTARIUS If you are facing a legal suit, be careful. You may lose it and land up in prison. Your past will haunt you today. Be careful, sober and keep a low profile. Tell your partner all secrets you are hiding. Maybe he will be able to help you, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN After running about helter-skelter for getting your work done, you will sit back and spend the day planning the course of future action. Sudden and unexpected profits are on the cards, but you will need to be mindful of how best you utilise it. You can expect a few good opportunities to knock at the door, but open the door before they turn to look for shelter elsewhere.

AQUARIUS Some days, you crave to know everything. Today is one such day. You will also prove a worthy opponent. You may upset your adversaries' plans, much to your own advantage. You have it in you to be a scholar. You will also prove the strength of your character, especially when the going gets tough.

PISCES Today is likely to be a day of mixed fortunes, says Ganesha. While a hectic morning and a positively frantic afternoon will see you at your wits' end, a sumptuous dinner with your sweetheart, followed by a sensuous evening, will delight you out of your mind.



ADELE WON'T PAY SPOUSAL SUPPORT TO SIMON KONECKI

British singer-songwriter Adele, who recently finalised her divorce with Simon Konecki, will not be paying spousal support to her ex-husband. The former couple has also agreed upon joint custody of their eight-year-old son Angelo, according to *US Weekly*.

'NICKYANKA'TO ANNOUNCE OSCAR NOMINATIONS

Celebrity couple Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas took to Instagram to share that they will be announcing the Oscar nominations March 15. The two posted a video to share the information. The nominations will be announced via global live screening.



Indian actors with BAFTA nods Before Adarsh Gourav

NEW DELHI: Actor Adarsh Gourav has been nominated for British Academy Awards (BAFTA) this year, in the Lead Actor category for his role in the *The White Tiger*. The list was announced Wednesday. Before Adarsh, there were a few Indian actors who made the cut at the prestigious awards.

Here is a list of other Indian actors, who have previously been nominated at the awards:

Rohini Hattangadi

Veteran Hattangadi is the only Indian actor to win a BAFTA. She won in the category of Best Supporting Actress for her role in the 1982 film *Gandhi*. She played the role of Kasturba Gandhi. The National Award-winning actress has made a notable contribution for over four decades in the Indian film industry with films in Hindi, Marathi, and Telugu films.



Anupam Kher

Kher was nominated for in the category of Best Supporting Actor for his work in the 2018 British romantic drama film *The Boy With The Topknot*.

Anupam played actor Sacha Dhawan's on-screen father.

Dev Patel

English actor Patel, whose parents are Gujarati Hindus from India, was nominated twice at the BAFTAs. While he made it to only the nominations for the 2009 film *Slumdog Millionaire* in the category of Best Actor in Leading Role, Dev won for his role in the 2017 film *Lion*. The actor won in the Best Supporting Role category.



Suraj Sharma

Suraj was nominated at the BAFTAs in the category of Rising Star. The actor's nomination happened for his role in Ang Lee's film *Life Of Pi* in 2013. Suraj was the only male nominee on the shortlist, selected by a judging panel including actor Benedict Cumberbatch and director Kevin Macdonald.



Kiara wants to be good in every film

MUMBAI: Kiara Advani has the right lines when she opens up about her future plans. She wants to be 'that actor who is good in every film', does not want to be defined by her hits and misses in Hindi film industry.

She made her debut with the 2016 dud *Fugly*, but has since then made a mark with some good performances in films such as *M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story*, *Lust Stories*, *Kabir Singh* and *Good Newwz*.

In her seven-year journey, Kiara has also faced failures with *Laxmii* and *Machine*. The actress hopes to

achieve flawlessness when it comes to her craft.

"I don't want to be defined by success or failure. I want to be that actor who is good in every film. That is what I am hoping to achieve," she said.

Kiara's last release *Indoo Ki Jawaani* dropped on OTT amid lockdown, but she has a busy year ahead, with her films such as *Shershaah*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* and *Jug Jugg Jeeyo* lined up.



Every actor is plagued with self-doubt: Janhvi

MUMBAI: Janhvi Kapoor says every actor is plagued with self-doubt, which helps them to do better.

Daughter of late superstar Srivevi, Janhvi made her debut in 2018 with *Dhadak*. The film fared below expectation. She has since then been appreciated for her roles in the OTT-released films *Ghost Stories* and *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*. The element of self-doubt, it seems, has worked well in transforming her for the better.

is a part of every actor's journey. I think every actor is plagued with self-doubt but at least it pushes me to do better," Janhvi said.

The actress currently awaits the release of the horror comedy *Roohi*. She says she doesn't think about taking up scripts in accordance to genres.

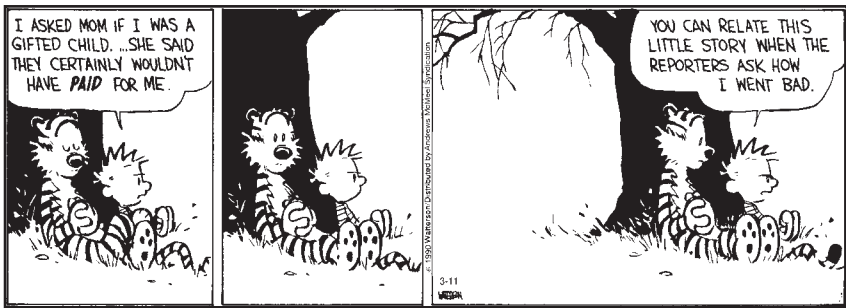
"There are directors I really want to work with. I don't even know if I think in accordance to genre. I want to do stories. I want to tell stories," says Janhvi.

FUN post

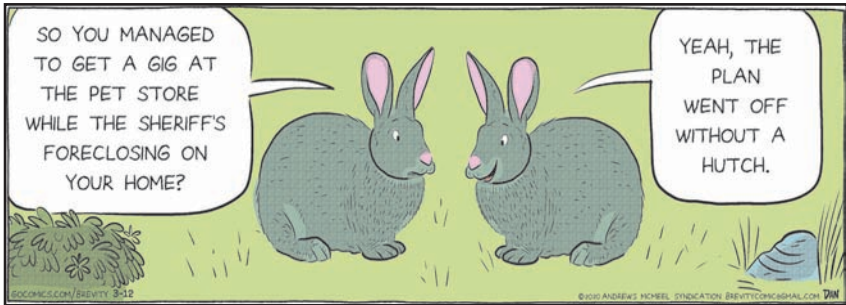
PEANUTS



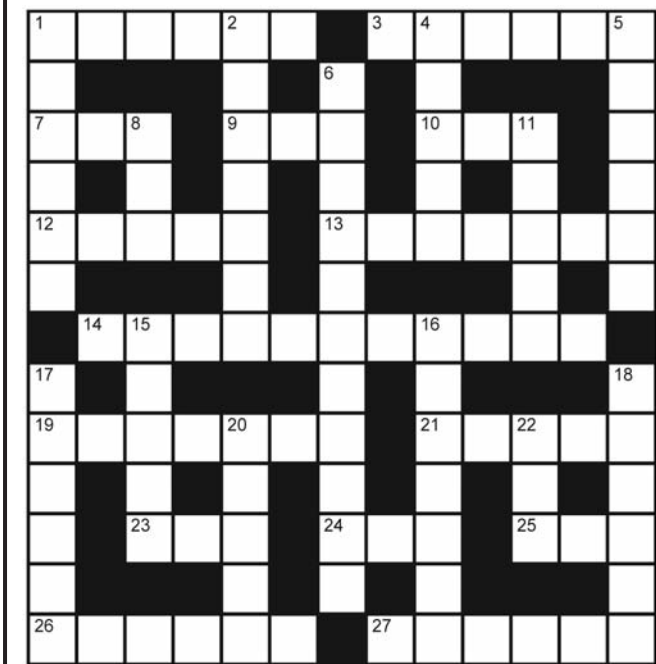
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Garden decorations
- 3 Man of the cloth
- 7 Napkin's place
- 9 Duffer's goal
- 10 Welcome site
- 12 Hot coal
- 13 Type of flight
- 14 Nightmareish (4-7)
- 19 Small crown

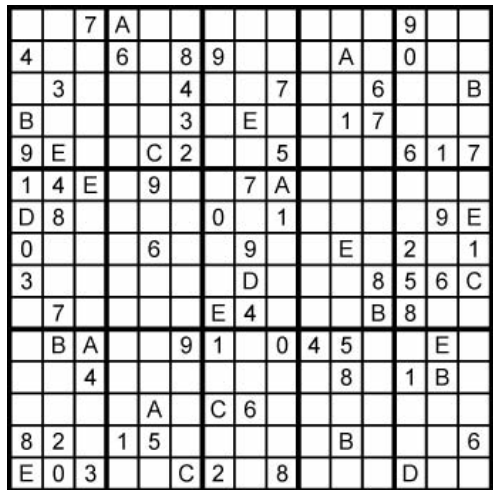
Down

- 21 Assumed name
- 23 Pertinent
- 25 Grassland
- 26 Soaked through
- 27 Bread topping
- 1 Ship's kitchen
- 2 Kind of penguin
- 4 Fish flavouring

- 5 Appetiser
- 6 Business deal
- 8 Taproom
- 11 Hyperion, for one
- 15 Major artery
- 16 Advice from a personal trainer (5,2)
- 17 Quick breads
- 18 Cyprus, e.g.
- 20 Plant food
- 22 Off one's feed

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



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Thunderstorm likely in 7 districts today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 11: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday said thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at a few places of Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Angul, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore and Bhadrak districts, Friday.

Some places of Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Koraput and Nabarangpur would receive light to moderate rainfall Friday, the IMD said. Similarly, one or two places of Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Jharsuguda, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Gajapati and Ganjam districts would witness light to moderate rain or thundershower, Saturday.

Meanwhile, dry weather continued to prevail in many parts of the state. Boudh recorded state's highest temperature of 39 degrees while it was 38.5 degrees at Sundargarh and 38.4 degrees at Titlagarh. Angul and Talcher have recorded a maximum day temperature of 38.1 degrees each. It was 38 degrees at each of Sonepur and Bhawanipatna. Capital city Bhubaneswar and neighbouring Cuttack city registered day temperatures of 35.8 and 35.4 degrees Celsius respectively.

5,633 GPs in Odisha have broadband connectivity

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 11: As many as 5,633 gram panchayats (GPs) in the state have been provided with broadband connectivity under BharatNet project, Minister of state for Communications Sajay Dhotre said in the Lok Sabha Thursday.

In response to a query raised by Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Ramesh Chandra Majhi regarding the steps taken by the Centre to provide high-speed internet connectivity in GPs, the Union minister informed the House that the BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the GPs (approx 2,50,000) in the country, including Odisha.

"The Phase-I of the project has been implemented in Odisha through Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL), and as on February 26, a total of 3,952 GPs (including block headquarters) have been made service ready. Phase-II of the BharatNet project in Odisha is being implemented mainly by the state government under state-led model and they are responsible for providing last mile connectivity also. As on February 26, a total of 1,681 GPs have been made serv-



BharatNet project is being implemented to provide broadband connectivity to all the GPs (around 2,50,000) in the country

ice ready, including 19 GPs on satellite media," the minister said.

Dhotre also said that as part of this project, the last-mile connectivity through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is to be provided at all the GPs in the country.

"In Odisha, CSC e-Governance



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

Services India Limited (a Special Purpose Vehicle under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology) has been

State tops in DMF fund collection

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 11: A written reply by Union Coal and Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi in the Lower House of the Parliament Wednesday revealed that Odisha has emerged as the leading state in India in terms of collection of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) funds.

Odisha scaled the highest position in this regard, since the inception of the DMF in 2015. The state has collected the highest amount of ₹11,984 crore through DMF and spent ₹5,364 crore by January 2021, the written reply of Joshi stated.

On the other hand, Jharkhand

Odisha has collected the highest amount of Rs 11,984 crore through DMF and spent ₹5,364 crore by January 2021

has collected ₹6,533.04 crore and Chhattisgarh ₹6329.78 crore.

Chhattisgarh has topped in terms of expenditure with 69.04 per cent (Rs 4,370 crore) followed by Tamil Nadu 54 per cent (Rs 413.29 crore). Odisha has utilised 44.76 per cent of the DMF funds against national average of 45.1 per cent.

Notably, seven districts of Odisha namely Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Koraput, Rayagada, Jajpur and Angul have contributed 90 per cent of the state's total DMF collection.

assigned the work of provisioning of 1 Wi-Fi Access Point in the GP and 5 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections to government institutions at each GP under Phase-I," Dhotre added.

Raikia school tragedy: NHRC moved for aid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 11: Two state-based activists Thursday moved National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking compensation for the relatives of the eight-year-old girl who was crushed to death as an iron gate and cement wall of an abandoned primary school caved in at Belkati village under Raikia block of Kandhamal district March 10.

The activists, Himansu Sekhar Nayak and Pradipta Kumar Nayak, have also sought compensation for the two girls who have sustained severe injuries due to the mishap.

The activists urged the commission to direct Kandhamal district administration to enquire into the incident and order stringent action against the persons whose negligence led to the death of an innocent girl, Risika Pradhan, and critically injuring two others.

Nayak demanded ₹30 lakh for the family members of deceased minor and ₹5 lakh each to the critically injured children.

Nayak also urged the commission to direct the Principal Secretary of School and Mass Education de-



Rubble at the spot

partment to take immediate steps to repair the poor infrastructure of all the schools throughout the state and submit a detailed report to the rights body.

According to sources, the three students including the deceased were playing at the playground of the abandoned school when the wall and the iron gate collapsed on them.

Local residents rescued and rushed them to a nearby government hospital where doctors pronounced Risika dead and administered treatment to two others.

A pall of gloom descended on the village following the death of the minor girl.

STATE LOGS 63 NEW COVID CASES

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 11: State's Covid-19 caseload surged to 3,37,992 after 63 more people tested positive for infection, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said Thursday.

The new cases were detected in 14 of the state's 30 districts, with 38 cases reported from quarantine centres and the remaining 25 were local contact cases.

Mayurbhanj district reported the highest of 14 new cases followed by Cuttack (11) and seven cases each in Sundargarh and

Balasore.

The state's coronavirus death toll remained at 1,917 as no fresh fatality has been reported.

Apart from the 1,917 coronavirus deaths, 53 other Covid-19 patients have also died in the state due to comorbidities, he said.

The state currently has 700 active Covid-19 cases while 3,35,322 patients have so far recovered from the highly infectious disease.

The state has so far conducted over 85.58 lakh samples tests for the virus while Odisha's positivity rate stands at 3.95 per cent, the data released by H&FW department said.

2.5L senior citizens vaccinated

BHUBANESWAR: The Health department Thursday said that it was able to vaccinate 2,53,410 senior citizens till now against Covid-19.

On the other hand, a total of 12,269 persons above the age of 45 years but living with co-morbidities were able to get the shots till now. The government also claimed that the coverage of vaccination for the health workers in the first round also reached 91 per cent till Thursday. A total of 3,34,929 health workers were registered for the vaccination in the maiden phase and out of that 3,04,388 got vaccinated

by Thursday. In the second round, 84 per cent of the health workers were also inoculated, the department said. Similarly, the government was able to vaccinate 77.7 per cent of the frontline workers in the maiden phase and achieved 98.5 per cent coverage of frontline workers in the second round.

Nevertheless, Thursday the department vaccinated a total of 3,271 person in total. The department vaccinated a total of 2,282 senior citizens Thursday. No adverse reaction was reported from any of the beneficiaries, the department said.

Critical surgery at Apollo Cancer Centre

BHUBANESWAR: Apollo Cancer Center, Bhubaneswar has added another feather to its cap by performing Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy (HIPEC) successfully, said the hospital sources. This extremely modern and challenging procedure was done by Dr Salil Kumar Parida, consultant surgical gastroenterology and gastrointestinal oncology, Apollo Cancer Centre, Bhubaneswar for the first time in Odisha on a 52-year-old female patient. Almost four years ago, the patient was diagnosed with Appendiceal mucinous neoplasm with Pseudomyxoma peritonei for which she had undergone cytoreductive surgery.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

- Inauguration of mascot of 'Krusha Odisha', Biju Patnaik Ground, Baramunda, 3.30pm
- Odisha State Safety Conclave, hotel New Marriot, 10.30am and Kalinga Safety Excellence Awards, 6pm
- Meet by 'Mahanadi Bachhao Andolan' hotel Keshari, Master Centeen, 11am
- Protest by ST & SC Women's Cook Forum, Lower PMG, 11.30am
- Inauguration of state-wide programme by Akhil Bharat Krushak Sangha, Gandhi Park, 9.15am
- Aseem Utsav, Rabindra Mandap, 7.15pm

PURI

- Mahodadi Alati, sea beach, 6.30 am

KONARK

- An event by Archaeology department, Sun Temple, 5 pm

SAKHIGOPAL

- Vaccination of senior citizens, Sakhigopal Community Health Centre, 9 am

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.



Artistes present a cultural event at Annapurna theatre in Puri on the occasion of Shivratri, Thursday

OP PHOTO

Lassi vendors rake in moolah as mercury soars

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, March 11: With the rise in mercury level, the demand for traditional drinks like lassi, sugarcane juice, tender coconut and mint-flavoured water is picking up in the Silver City here.

Many lassi and traditional drinks stalls have come up at Dolamundai, College Square, Buxibazar, Alisa Bazar, Chandi temple Square, Bajrakabati Road, Chhatrabazar and other places of the city.

Usually, vendors start selling lassi and other traditional drinks a few days ahead of the Mahashivratri festival, that falls in February or March every year, and continue their business till Rath Yatra which is organised in the month of June or July, said a few locals.

Lassi vendors usually churn yogurt, cream, sugar, cashew, raisin, cherry and ice to prepare a deli-



cious drink. This year, they are charging anywhere between ₹50 and ₹75 for a glass of lassi. Even, some vendors are offering sugar-free lassi for people suffering from diabetes, they added.

However, school and college students are opting for sugarcane juice and mint-flavoured water to keep them hydrated. The vendors are charging ₹15 for a glass of sugarcane juice and ₹10 for a glass of mint-

STAYING HYDRATED

Lassi vendors usually churn yogurt, cream, sugar, cashew, raisin, cherry and ice to prepare a delicious drink

This year, they are charging anywhere between ₹50 and ₹75 for a glass of lassi

Even, some vendors are offering sugar-free lassi for people suffering from diabetes

flavoured water.

"Last year, lassi business was severely affected due to Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns to tackle the highly-infectious virus. We are expecting a good business this year," said Santosh Kumar Behera, a lassi vendor.

Many locals, meanwhile, opined that the food safety officials of the city should launch a drive to check the use of poor quality ingredients by the lassi vendors.

"We have a special liking for lassi and other traditional drinks. But,

we have no idea about the quality of ice, yogurt and other ingredients being used by the lassi vendors. The authorities concerned should look into the issue and take appropriate action to ensure food safety," Nikita Sahoo, a lassi lover.

Last year, lassi business was severely affected due to Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns to tackle the highly-infectious virus. We are expecting a good business this year

SANTOSH KUMAR BEHERA | A LASSI VENDOR

We have a special liking for lassi and other traditional drinks. But, we have no idea about the quality of ice, yogurt and other ingredients being used by the lassi vendors. The authorities concerned should look into the issue and take appropriate action to ensure food safety

NIKITA SAHOO | A LASSI LOVER

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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

3-hour-long op
saves 8-year-old
jumbo’s life in Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, March 11: A three-hour-long operation jointly launched by the Purunagada and Jarapada Forest Range staff and a local ODRAF team bore fruits when an eight-year-old female elephant was successfully rescued from an abandoned well unhurt Thursday.

The villagers of Balijerenga village in Angul district had spotted the calf inside an abandoned well in a farmland.

According to the villagers, they woke up Thursday morning hearing the frantic trumpeting of the calf. Following the sound, they reached an abandoned boundary-less well dug up for irrigation purpose only to find the calf inside the well.

“The calf had been trying its best to come out of the well on its own but was failing in every attempt,” they recounted.

They immediately informed the forest department. A team of forest officials along with fire fighting personnel reached the spot. They immediately launched an operation to get the pachyderm out of the well.

It took three-hours for the team to rescue the pachyderm. A JCB machine was pressed into service. The elephant came out of the well and ran to nearby forest.

Bhitarkanika eco-system faces serious threat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, March 11: Even as the district administration and the forest authorities are yet to clear the Bhitarkanika National Park of illegal prawn gheries, the latest farming of Roopchand fish has posed an added threat to the eco-system of the sanctuary, a report said.

Roopchand, which is also known as Pacu or Pomfret, is a seawater fish of Piranha family and is a delicacy among fish lovers. It is known as Roopchandi in local parlance and is easy to eat as its body consists of a single bone. The fish is found in Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans and have flat bodies and deeply forked tails.

However, its consumption has increased as the fish maintains a low scale on fats and calories thus help our body from aging by reducing any such symptoms. It also helps in reducing risk of heart problems and control blood pressure as Roopchand is a reliable source of omega-3 fatty acids.

However, being a predatory and aggressive carnivorous fish it poses serious threat to the eco-system. It may compete with native species for food and other resources and will eventually lead to the decline or may even wipe out many native fish and other marine creature in the river system.

The fish which remains in groups can easily gobble up the food of newborn crocodiles and other marine creature. The fish’s teeth having resemblance to human can devour the whole carcass of a cat-



Ashok Kumar Samal, a resident of Rajnagar, said mushrooming of prawn gheries and Roopchand fish (Piranha family) cultivation in the water bodies in reserve forest areas in last five year has led to destruction of environment

le within few minutes, life science researcher Devi Prasad Sahu, said.

However, notwithstanding the threat, cultivation of Roopchand has increased in the river, creeks and canals in the

Bhitarkanika National Park.

Environmentalists have warned that while the mushrooming of prawn gheries has posed serious threat to the survival of Bhitarkanika, the sharp rise in Roopchand fish cultivation will wipe out the eco-system in the sanctuary. The toxic waste discharged from the prawn gheries is destroying the jungle, lands and water bodies in the sanctuary.

Resident Ashok Kumar Samal of Rajnagar said mushrooming of prawn gheries and Roopchand fish cultivation in the water bodies in reserve forest areas during last five year has led to the destruction of the environment.

The long dense forests filled with various wildlife and birds and the serene atmosphere of the coastlines attracts the tourists to Bhitarkanika. Moreover, the

Gahirmatha nesting site of Olive Ridley’s, salt water crocodiles and dolphins also attract the tourists, nature lovers and researchers to Bhitarkanika.

However, the sanctuary is slowly slipping into the hands of the unscrupulous fish traders due to mushrooming of prawn gheries and Roopchand fish cultivation which is from Piranha family.

Pratap Padhi, a social activist, said several public interest litigations have been filed in the Orissa High Court praying for demolition of prawn gheries inside the sanctuary. Recently, amicus curiae Mohit Agarwal accompanying a three-member committee to conduct a probe into the deaths of Olive Ridley’s noticed mushrooming of prawn gheries and directed for its eviction.

Environmentalists Sunil Kumar Gantayat said the immigrants are responsible for the destruction of the environment in Bhitarkanika. They have forcibly acquired the forest land in the Bhitarkanika and established prawn gheries and fish farming.

They are also cutting down trees and hunting wild animals and birds in the sanctuary. However, hardly any action is taken against them as they have become the vote banks of the political leaders. He apprehended that Bhitarkanika will be robbed of its charm if action is not taken against the immigrants.

When contacted, DFO Bikash Ranjan Dash said prawn gheries are being demolished with the help of the district administration and the police.



With fires still raging in Similipal, forest officials train women on firefighting at Kuamara in Mayurbhanj

OP PHOTO

Mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles begins at Gahirmatha



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajnagar, March 11: The mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles has begun at Gahirmatha marine sanctuary in Kendrapara district.

More than a thousand turtles have come ashore since Tuesday night and have laid eggs at Nasi-1 and Nasi-2 islands, a forest department official informed Thursday.

According to sources, lakhs of Olive Ridley’s arrived at the shore of the marine sanctuary in the past two days. Around 1,100 turtles have already laid eggs.

More number of the endangered turtles are expected to take part in the mass nesting by Thursday

while the number might go up Friday due to new moon day and blowing of south wind, the forest official added.

Female turtles were seen climbing atop the beach and laying eggs by digging up pits over one ft in length. Meanwhile, lakhs of turtles were seen in the sea about two km from the coastline. This has come as a sigh of relief as very soon mass nesting of the turtles will begin, a forest official said.

Notably, the mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles at Gahirmatha beach in Kendrapara district was first spotted in 1975. Restrictions are imposed on fishing from Devi river mouth to Dhamra mouth for a period of seven months.

BRITISH ERA SAMBALPUR ROAD STATION TO BE CLOSED DOWN

Station has been providing service to people for last 128 years

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 11: A decision by the railway authorities to close down the pre-independence era Sambalpur Road station has sparked resentment among the rail users and residents, a report said.

The Sambalpur Road railway station was established in 1890 much before the country achieved independence. The matter came to the fore after the Principal Chief Operation Manager at Rail Sadan in Bhubaneswar issued a notice in this regard and informed the Sambalpur Railway Division on the development.

The railways department has claimed that the Sambalpur-Angul rail route started in 1998. Currently, over 30 goods and passenger trains move on a single track for their destination every day. However, Angul district is the main business centre of Sambalpur Railway Division and



contributes maximum revenue to the railway department due to presence industrial plants and mines.

However, owing to single track plying of goods train and passenger trains by Sambalpur Road Station for which there is an urgent need for the expansion and ungradation of Sambalpur – Angul rail route. The rail route expansion works is near-



Upon digging deeper, he was shocked to find a Shivling with a copper snake around it. He narrated everything before his family members. The news soon spread like wildfire.

With the incident taking place on Maha Shivratri, a devotionally charged atmosphere was seen on the spot. People from several villages thronged the spot carrying fruits, flowers and incense sticks.

CUTTACK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION INVITING FOR BIDS (IFB)

Tender Call Notice No.2656/Date. 04.03.2021

1. The Commissioner, Cuttack Municipal Corporation, Biju Bhawan, Choudhury Bazar, Cuttack, invites sealed quotations in two bid system, Part-I: Techno Commercial bid & Part- II : Price bid from the Manufacturer or their authorized representatives (i.e. Authorized Dealer or Authorized distributors/ Registered firms for the supply of Antilava Agent as detailed in the table below.

2. Bid documents consisting qualifying information eligibility criteria of bidders, technical specification, the schedule of quantities and the DTCN containing the set of terms & conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the CMC website: cmccuttack.gov.in. with effect from 11.00 A.M. on dt. 08.03.2021 to 5.00 P.M. on dt. 22.03.2021. The bidders downloading the bid document from the website as mentioned above are required to pay 1% EMD & TPC of the Quoted Value which includes 5% GST and Non Refundable in nature in shape of Demand Draft drawn in favour of Commissioner, Cuttack Municipal Corporation from any Nationalized or Schedule Bank Payable at Cuttack.

3. The eligibility criteria to participate in the tender has been mentioned in the DTCN. The Bidder should go through these eligibility criteria before participating in the bid. Bidders who submit the bid, not fulfilling the eligibility criteria can do so at their own risk, as tender submitted by them will summarily be rejected. The Basic information & key dates relating to the tender are as follows.

Sl. No.	Details of Activities	Remarks
A	Procurement Officer	Commissioner, Cuttack Municipal Corporation, Cuttack
B	Tender Call Notice No.	2656 Dt.04.03.2021
C	Name, Address and contact Number for seeking clarification including details of the contact personnel:	Health Officer, Cuttack Municipal Corporation, Cuttack
(i)	Name / designation	City Health Officer, Cuttack Municipal Corporation
(ii)	Telephone numbers	0671-2319272
(iii)	E-mail ID:	cityhealthofficer@cuttack@gmail.com
(iv)	Bids related queries to be addressed to	Health Officer, Cuttack Municipal Corporation
(v)	Postal address for sending the bids	Commissioner, Cuttack Municipal Corporation, At Biju Bhawan, Choudhury Bazar, Dist.- Cuttack, Pin- 753009
D	Availability of bid document	From 11.00 A.M. on dt.8.3.2021 to 5.00 P.M. on dt.22.03.2021 in www. cmccuttack.gov.in
E	Date and time of opening of tender	Date 26.03.2021, Time 11 A.M.
F	Last date of hard copy submission of tender document	On or before 5.00 P.M. on dt.25.03.2021 through Registered Post or Speed Post (Neither through Courier nor by Hand)

4. (i) The bidders for the purpose of participation in tender have to deposit the amount a sum equivalent to 1% of quoted value as Earnest Money in the following manner i.e. in shape of (a) Deposit receipt of schedule bank, (b) Kissan Vikash Patra, (c) Post Office Savings Bank Account, (d) National Savings Certificate, (e) Post Office Deposit Account in the name of individuals company or in shape of Demand Draft drawn in favour of Commissioner, Cuttack Municipal Corporation from any Nationalized or Schedule Bank payable at Cuttack.

(ii) Non submission of EMD along with the bid at the time of submission of tender in the manner as prescribed will be lead to the rejection of bid.

5. (i) The bidders are requested to submit their bids in the original Bill of Quantity (BOQ) uploaded by the publisher after entering the relevant fields without any alternation/deletion/modification. Submission of multiple bill of quantity (BOQ) shall be lead to the cancellation of bid.

(ii) Bids must be accompanied with documents as required for fulfilment of minimum eligible criteria, experience certificate, Registration Certificate, Financial Instrument towards cost of tender document and bid security (EMD), Valid GST Number, PAN Card, required affidavit towards availing correctness of information, affidavit towards price preference, undertaking towards not have been blacklisted in the recent, past and should be submitted in the address on or before the date specified in the clause-4 of NIT.

(iii) The bids completed in all respect should be submitted to the procurement officer superscribing "Procurement of Antilava Agent" Indicating the Tender Call Notice No. & due date of opening in the postal address as mentioned in the clause No.4. The tender will be opened on dt..... at A.M. in the presence of bidders or their authorized agents who wish to attend.

6. The bid should be valid for 60 (Sixty) days from the date of opening of the tender.

7. Further details relating to tender can be seen in the website www. cmccuttack.gov.in and any addendum issued shall be part of the bidding document and shall be notified in the said website/Notice Board and through paper publication.

8. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- COMMISSIONER
CUTTACK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
OIPR-13031/11/0015/2021

Maha Shivaratri celebrated here a day earlier

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagad, March 11: A temple in Odisha celebrates Maha Shivaratri one day before the rest of the country.

This year while all the famous shrines including Kedarnath temple in Uttarakhand, Somnath temple in Gujarat, Kashi Vishwanath in Uttar Pradesh and Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar celebrated Maha Shivaratri Thursday, the shrine in question observed the occasion Wednesday.

Mahendragiri temple, a famous Shaivite shrine at the Mahendra terrain, is on the border of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh in Rayagad block of Gajapati district. While it is 60 kilometres from Paralakhemundi, devotees have to trek 6 kilometres to reach atop the hill where the shrine is located.

The temple is said to have links with Satya Yug, Treta Yug and Dwapar Yug. As per legend, in Satya Yug, Mahadev did ‘tapasya’ in this hill and also established Gokarneswar to absolve the sin of cow slaughter.

In Treta, Parshuram chose this place for meditation. It is also widely believed that the hill is the one from where Lord Hanuman leapt towards Lanka.

In Dwapar, the Pandavas stayed in this hill during their exile (Agyaat Vaas). There are temples dedicated to Yudhisthir, Bhim, Arjun, Nakul, Sahadev and Kunti here.

The main attraction for visitors and devotees is the Bhim temple. Nineteen huge stones, each weighing approximately 100 to 150 quintals, form this temple. The architectural design of this temple is similar to the one seen in Buddhist temples. According to legend, Bhim, who was the most powerful, placed the stones to erect the temple.

The five brothers were believed to have constructed the temple in one night. However, they could not finish its construction before day break and so it is believed to be why the temple is kept half constructed. There are two narrow openings — one at east and the other at west end — used as entrance and exit of the temple.

Another striking feature is that at first look, it often gives the impression that fat people cannot go through these narrow passages. But anybody can easily go through the passages and experience the wondrous architecture.

Devotees and tourists who come to this place hop Mahendraswar, Bhimneswar, Chandreswar, Dharmarajswar, Arjuneswar, Nakuleswar, Sahadeveswar, Kuberswar and Brahmeswar caves to enjoy their natural beauty.



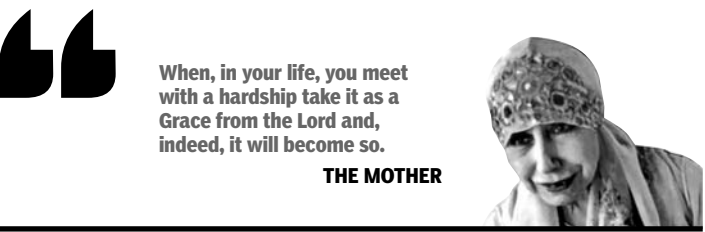
Devotees throng Mahendragiri temple on Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border in Gajapati district

tees is the Bhim temple. Nineteen huge stones, each weighing approximately 100 to 150 quintals, form this temple. The architectural design of this temple is similar to the one seen in Buddhist temples. According to legend, Bhim, who was the most powerful, placed the stones to erect the temple.

The five brothers were believed to have constructed the temple in one night. However, they could not finish its construction before day break and so it is believed to be why the temple is kept half constructed. There are two narrow openings — one at east and the other at west end — used as entrance and exit of the temple.

Another striking feature is that at first look, it often gives the impression that fat people cannot go through these narrow passages. But anybody can easily go through the passages and experience the wondrous architecture.

Devotees and tourists who come to this place hop Mahendraswar, Bhimneswar, Chandreswar, Dharmarajswar, Arjuneswar, Nakuleswar, Sahadeveswar, Kuberswar and Brahmeswar caves to enjoy their natural beauty.



Involve locals

The state government is reportedly caught up with a rash of forest fires in many parts of the state. The wildfires have been hogging the headlines over last week or so. Similipal was all over the newspapers. In a span of a week between February 24 and March 2, nearly 380 fire points were reported. In a phased action plan, the state government has instituted a task force to prevent recurrence of wildfires that have taken a heavy toll on the state's fragile ecosystem. Many of the reasons behind the fires are due to human interference. From mahul flower collections to poaching as well as bushmeat hunting, there have been many reasons for such wildfires. Such fires are often triggered by people in fringe areas who depend on the forest produce for their living. They clear patches of land in the forests and to quicken the clearing process, sometimes they light fire to dry leaves lying on ground which in turn licks large swathes of forests. Many tracts of forests in Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Boudh, Sonepur, Malkangiri, Nuapada and Ganjam have been gutted. It is heartening to note that locals in Mayurbhanj Wednesday had called a bandh to protest against such fires in Similipal.

Odisha scores better than many states in the country in terms of geographical coverage of forests. Against a national average of 22 per cent, Odisha has almost 34 per cent of its geographical area under forest cover. Except for north-eastern states, a few mainland states like Kerala, Chhattisgarh and some Union Territories, we score better than any state in the country. The government has received kudos in the past for its pro-forestation initiatives. While the state's total forest cover was 51,345 square kilometers in 2017, it increased to 51,619 square kilometers in 2019. If these forest fires continue, the record will be soon a thing of the past. The state task force will suggest measures to strengthen the mechanism for fire containment in forests. The nine-member team will be headed by former principal chief conservator of forests Sandeep Tripathy. The government has also sent an SOS to district administrations to take all what it takes to protect their respective forests. District-level committees comprising District Collectors, SPs and DFOs have been formed to ensure there are no forest fires in their respective districts. The Union Ministry for Environment and Climate Change Wednesday has formed a three-member expert team to help the state government to control the unprecedented fire incidents in the state. The team will offer expert technical advice and handholding towards early and effective dousing of forest fires. The team has been asked to stay put here till the state attains a normal situation with respect to the fire incidents.

Forest fires are not new to Odisha. Every year, seasonal fires are recorded and dealt with. However, this year the scale of fires was unprecedented. A dry spell and an early arrival of summer must have added fuel to the fire. No matter what the state government claims, there have been tremendous loss to the state's green cover which will take years to replenish. The government should not stop at constituting a task force to fight this menace. The government must take a holistic approach to fund a solution to this recurrent menace. A wanton desire by people to maximize the returns from the nature has resulted in such disasters. Be it man-animal conflicts resulting in deaths of innocent elephants or forest fires that cause deaths of scores of wild animals, these fires have huge implications for our delicate bio-diversity. The government should encourage community participation. People in fringe villages need to be made stakeholders. Awareness building and incentivizing them periodically will help. The authorities must institute a system for ensuring 24X7 monitoring of forests and an alert mechanism in case of emergencies. For this, the forest administration must reach out to villagers on the fringes and involve them in every protection initiative. The administration also must not lose sight of climate change as a big factor. Augmentation in protection strategy as well as a greater role for stakeholder communities must be encouraged.

WISDOM CORNER

- It's hard to beat a person who never gives up. **BADE RUTH**
- Write it. Shoot it. Publish it. Crochet it, sauté it, whatever. **MAKE. JOSS WHEDON**
- Everything you can imagine is real. **PABLO PICASSO**

WORDSWORTH

Burke

It's an intriguing verb. It takes us back to the 1820s and that notorious pair, Burke and Hare. Medical schools were finding it difficult to get enough cadavers for the anatomic dissection essential to train students. The only official source was executed criminals but their numbers had been decreasing because fewer were being condemned to death, while the number of students needing corpses was increasing. One source was grave-robbing, carried out by low-life scavengers who were given the ironic name of resurrectionists. William Burke and William Hare, two Irish immigrants to Edinburgh, started their grisly trade by selling the body of a recently deceased tenant of their boarding house to Dr Robert Knox, a local anatomist. Having learned that bodies could be profitable, they began to murder individuals, usually by getting them drunk and then smothering them, to leave no marks on the bodies that would reduce their value as specimens. Burke was convicted of 16 murders and executed in January 1829; in a fitting end, his body was publicly dissected at the Edinburgh Medical College. Hare had turned King's Evidence and had been given immunity from prosecution. The case caused a huge sensation, as did the imitative but much more widespread activities of a gang in the English capital which became known as the London Burkers. With the public outcry over grave-robbing, these led to the passing of the Anatomy Act 1832, which legitimised the donation of bodies for medical science.

LOL

Best computer programmer

Jesus and the devil were arguing over which one of them was the better computer programmer. "I am!" Jesus shouted. "No, I am!" the devil countered. "I am!" "I am!" "Me!" "No, me!" "EEEEEEENOUGH!" God bellowed, and the whole universe disappeared into darkness. When the lights came back on, two computers were sitting in front of them. God said "Now, whoever makes the best computer program in twenty minutes wins." Jesus and the devil sat down, typing

and clicking furiously. This went on for about 15 minutes, but then there was a power failure, and everything went dark. When everything came back up again, the computer screens were both blank. The devil tried in vain to get back everything he had lost. He came up empty-handed. Jesus pressed one key and it all came back. The devil looked at him in astonishment. "No way! How did you do that?" Jesus turned to him and smiled, and said "Everybody knows Jesus saves."

INDIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARD

FOCUS INFRASTRUCTURE

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) just released its quadrennial Infrastructure report card for 2021 on March 3. It assessed the state of infrastructure of the United States of America in 17 different categories such as aviation, roads, bridges, dams, energy, ports, solid waste etc. It estimated a grade point average of C- which is only slightly better than the GPA calculated in 2017 which was D+. ASCE is the country's oldest national civil engineering organization formed in 1852 representing more than 150,000 civil engineers in private practice, government, industry, and academia with chapters all over the world. They are dedicated to advancing the science and the profession of civil engineering, and protecting public health, safety, and welfare.

Interestingly the first such survey was conducted in 1988, and the grade then was slightly better at C. In the intervening period the best grade has been no better than a D+. While the best grade A signifies 'exceptional and fit for future', C stands for 'mediocre requiring attention' while F or fail grade stands for 'critical, unfit for purpose'. Thirty-one industry experts with help of ASCE staff prepare the report considering the following criteria - capacity, condition, funding, future need, operation & maintenance, public safety, resilience and innovation. They base their assessment on all publicly available data and reports, expert consultations before assigning the grades.

In the 2021 report card the best grade of B was earned by rail while the worst D- was earned by transit infrastructure meant for public transportation for commuters. The report identified a funding gap of 2.59 trillion US dollars over the last 10 years which can be bridged by increasing investment from 2.5% of GDP to 3.5%. It also recommended that among other things, action must prioritise life cycle cost assessment as a basis for project decisions, promote sustainability of



India in general and Odisha in particular would do very well to undertake comprehensive periodic assessment of the infrastructure sector based on publicly available comprehensive data which will be essential if sustainable economic growth were to be realized

the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental benefits and encourage innovation. The integration of new technology such as big data analytics and internet of things to have sensors and drones for smart inspection based predictive maintenance to increase service life. From the point of view of extreme weather events that significantly disrupts critical infrastructure as was evident in the recent snow storm in Texas, the report recommended a focus on resilience in design. Such infrastructure can recover quickly from an extreme event so that loss and damage can be minimised.

As infrastructure becomes a key driver for post-Covid recovery worldwide, the focus is on 'building back better'. This official buzzword of the new Biden administration in the USA is now a global industry buzzword. It is driven by the demand that as economies open up again and large construction projects are taken up to drive growth, focus must be on resilience, sustainability and the triple bottom-line, especially the social impact. This imperative is now visible in every country and region of the world and it couldn't have come sooner given the race against time to contain the un-

folding climate crisis. Comparing the USA with a small autonomous city like Hong Kong may be unfair, but can be useful given that Hong Kong sets the standards along with world class cities like Singapore, in infrastructure. Hong Kong sets the gold standard as far as civil infrastructure is concerned. While the idea of an infrastructure report card is yet to take shape for Hong Kong, it has, however, received international recognition, such as World No.1 for infrastructure competitiveness in the WEF's Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018. With over 7.4 million inhabiting a land area of just 1,073 square kilometres, Hong Kong is one of the world's most densely populated cities, each square kilometre accommodating over 6,800 citizens on average. Meeting the needs for mobility, economic productivity, livability and sustainability has propelled the city to envision and realise infrastructure unique feats. In its vision 2030 describes the vision of Hong Kong integrating itself as the central driver in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Mega city that includes Shenzhen and Guangzhou with ambitious infrastructure development out of which the high speed rail con-

nection is already in place. Having lived and worked both in the USA and Hong Kong, I would relatively give Hong Kong a grade of B+ if not A- for its infrastructure compared to the C- for the USA.

The concept of an infrastructure report card would be highly relevant for India as it embarks on large scale construction of infrastructure at a break-neck speed. It is one area in which the current government seems to be performing well. To the best of the author's knowledge however, detailed information on the status, quality and condition of our infrastructure is neither systematically collected nor easily available, being largely under government's control. One happy exception is the Indian Bridge Management System (IBMS), albeit developed by a group of consultants under the Ministry of Transportation which now has almost 162,000 bridges in it. The Integrated Database on Infrastructure Projects (IDIP) on the other hand had data on 250 roads initially across the country, built on a public-private partnership (PPP) model, developed by an initiative of IIT Madras. Launched in 2019, it aims to help enhance the efficiency of infrastructure development. Due to lack of concrete data and assessment, it is hard to imagine what grade one would give Indian infrastructure, but given the grade of the USA, one can only think of something much lower than C- and a big regional variability in that.

India in general and Odisha in particular would do very well to undertake comprehensive periodic assessment of the infrastructure sector based on publicly available comprehensive data which will be essential if sustainable economic growth were to be realised.

The author is a professor of civil engineering at KMBB College of Engineering under Biju Patnaik University of Technology currently working in Hong Kong. He can be reached by email at dhanadam@gmail.com

SPECTRUM RENEWABLE ENERGY

Rural women can drive green recoveries

By now, most countries in Asia and the Pacific have proposed some sort of post-pandemic recovery package. Many include investments in sustainability, which the United Nations has repeatedly urged governments to undertake. Some plans currently include only Budget totals, with policymakers yet to allocate the spending.

Regardless of their current level of detail, all of the region's recovery programmes omit a key demographic: rural women. Unless governments quickly bring a gender perspective to their spending priorities, this large and vital group will be left behind, and the economic impact of official programs will fall short of their potential. Such an outcome would add insult to literal injury.

The key to fostering a post-pandemic recovery that benefits rural women is to create green jobs that can weather climate-change shocks and revitalize entrepreneurship in sectors like agriculture and energy. Here, small and medium-size enterprises run by women can play a vital role.

Modest changes to how governments allocate and prioritize recovery funds, particularly in renewable energy investment, can improve the lives of tens of millions. And in some larger countries such as India, where lockdowns, dis-

rupted supply chains, and loss of urban livelihoods have triggered a reverse migration to villages, such adjustments will benefit far more people. Supporting green energy is an easy target for recovery packages. Renewable energy development has proven to be resilient throughout the pandemic. Even with delays in sectors like transport and construction, new renewable-energy projects have proliferated. South Korea, for example, recently announced that it will invest \$43 billion to build offshore windfarms.

Electricity output from renewables increased by almost 7% in 2020, but this does not tell the whole story. One might intuitively think that women and men benefit from renewable energy infrastructure in basically the same way, but the reality is very different.

In Asia and the Pacific, it is usually women who are actually using energy in a household. But the system is not designed for them. In some countries, such as Bangladesh, women don't have access to renewable energy, because it is deployed in areas traditionally reserved for men, such as public markets. To rectify this, governments can provide incentives like grants and soft loans for the installation of small-scale renewable energy systems in off-grid rural areas. In Bangladesh, for example, the Infrastructure Development

Company Limited provides direct subsidies and microcredit financing for home solar systems.

Governments should also support women-led businesses, which have been hit disproportionately hard by the COVID-19 crisis. Studies carried out by the UN Environment Programme under the Empower project, jointly implemented with UN Women and funded by the Swedish government, show that small-scale enterprises run by women have been rocked by revenue losses, cash-flow limitations, and challenges in attracting new investment. Because women in the region are often more economically active in the informal sector, they are not included to the same extent as men in recovery funding. Governments should therefore add a gender component to recovery programs, so that they can effectively target all those in need.

A third simple solution is to invest more in promoting digital literacy and skills among women and marginalized communities. The digital gender divide is large. Women in low and middle-income countries are 8% less likely than men to own a mobile phone. And in 2019, just 48% of women globally were online, compared to 58% of men.

Greater digital literacy could enable women to play a larger role in the region's renewable energy sec-

tor. Buying, selling, and tracking the use of household energy are increasingly conducted online, with countries such as India, Nepal, and Bangladesh using digital platforms to aggregate market demand and match consumers with energy suppliers. Better understanding of these technologies will give women - whether smallholder farmers or entrepreneurs - the chance to tap (and expand) existing markets for small-scale energy production.

Gendered recovery packages would benefit both governments and businesses, and not only in Asia and the Pacific. Policymakers would foster inclusive economic development and demonstrate social and environmental stewardship, while firms would benefit from new markets and an increasing online population willing and able to pay for goods and services. And nobody would be left behind.

Parimita Mohanty is Program Management Officer of Renewable Energy at the United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Annette Wallgren is Program Management Officer of Gender and Climate Change at the United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

TN MODEL

Sir, India has the dubious record of topping the global list in the number of casualties due to road accidents. The World Bank, in its recent report, has come out with interesting facts in relation to road accidents in India. The top bank has dwelt on the socio-economic impact of road accidents in the country in the backdrop of the fact that low-income countries have high road accidents. It says the poor households are more affected than the well-to-do ones following accidents on India roads. In rural areas, there was at least one death in 40% of the households compared to one death in only 12% of households in the urban areas. Disabilities were more common in low income households and rural areas. Poor people were more likely to succumb to the injuries sustained by them in road accidents. Also, the stress - physical and mental - was borne more by the women, and they had to assume extra-burden in the form of a job to make both ends meet. These numbers unambiguously point out to the huge gap between rural India and urban India as also between the poor and the rich in mitigating the aftereffects of road accidents. Ways to reduce road mishaps and fatalities have engaged the attention of the Centre and the states. A number of important roads have been lengthened and broadened but there has been no dip in the spate of road accidents. It is not a bad idea for the Centre to look at the Tamil Nadu government's efforts to reduce road accidents over the years. In five years, from 2014 to 2019, the deaths due to road accidents have reduced by 25%. The TN government took all stakeholders into confidence to focus on coordinated management. An exclusive decision making body on road safety was set up. Micromanagement began from the district-level; targets were given and assessed. Monthly review of work was done by the state's Director General of Police. Different departments - police, highways and transport officials - visited every accident site and reported on the possible causative factors of the crash. Emergency relief centres along crash-susceptible road stretches on highways, dynamic ambulance positioning, proper signal management allowing an unhindered transport of ambulances carrying the injured are TN's high points.



Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

of the day quote

India is no longer a democratic country

RAHUL GANDHI
CONGRESS LEADER



I hope the people of Bengal will once again elect Mamata Banerjee. The people know if there is any popular Chief Minister, it is Mamata Banerjee

AKHILESH YADAV
SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT



In a follow up to meeting with OTT platforms, held an interaction with Digital News Publishers Association today. Discussed new rules for digital media. They welcomed the new rules & offered few suggestions which I have noted

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | UNION MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING



SHORT TAKES

AIADMK MLA joins AMMK

Chennai: Denied an assembly ticket, AIADMK's Sattur MLA MSR Rajavarman resigned from the party Thursday and joined the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) led by TTV Dhinakaran. Rajavarman profusely thanked VK Sasikala and Dhinakaran for having accommodated him in the AMMK. He said that only Sasikala could save the AIADMK.

DU teachers go on strike

New Delhi: Thousands of Delhi University teachers went on a strike Thursday to protest non-payment of salaries for the past six months. The call for university "shutdown" was given by the Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) on Tuesday as many employees of the 12 DU colleges, that are fully funded by the Delhi government, alleged that they had not received their salaries and other dues for over six months. The DUTA executive will decide the future course of action March 20, it added.

6 Africans held with narcotics

Pune: Six African nationals were arrested in connection with smuggling mephedrone and cocaine worth Rs 68.86 lakh in Maharashtra's Pune city, police said Thursday. The crime branch of the city police has apprehended four Tanzanians and two Ugandan nationals following a raid at a house in Undri area, Pune police commissioner Amitabh Gupta said. The police team seized 1.36 kg of cocaine worth Rs 9.57 lakh and 1.11 kg mephedrone worth Rs 57.55 lakh and cash to the tune of RS 54,000 among other materials, the official said.

Leopard injures 5

Indore: Five people, including a one-year-old girl, were injured in an attack by a leopard that strayed into a residential area here Thursday, officials said. The big cat was later tranquillised and caught by the authorities after five hours of efforts, they said.

ACP Ramesh dies

Mumbai: Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ramesh Nangre of Mumbai's Sakinaka division, who played a key role in enforcing the COVID-19 lockdown measures in the city's Dharavi slum that helped flatten the infection curve there, died of heart attack Thursday, an official said.



The government has turned a blind eye to the pain of women who are sitting with farmers protesting on borders against farm laws

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR
HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

ATTACK ON MAMATA

'Undignified,' EC responds to TMC's letter

AGENCIES

Kolkata, March 11: The Election Commission Thursday sent a strongly-worded letter to the Trinamool Congress on its memorandum over injuries to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during campaign, saying it looks "undignified to even respond" to allegations that the poll panel is doing things in the state at the behest of a 'particular party'.

The EC said at the outset, it needs to be stated that injuries sustained by Banerjee at Nandigram "is indeed an unfortunate incident and deserves to be inquired into with promptitude and dispatch."

"Having said that it is rather unfortunate that the memorandum in question is full of insinuations and averments, which in fact questions the very basis of creation and functioning of Election Commission," the letter said. It is completely incorrect to suggest that the Election Commission has taken over the law and order ma-



chinery in the state in the name of conducting elections and appropriated the whole governance structure, the poll panel said.

"This virtually tantamounts to undermine the very foundation of the Constitution of India, the most sacrosanct document in democratic polity. The Commission does not appropriate or take over the day-to-day governance of any state in-

cluding West Bengal," it noted. The EC said, "It looks undignified even to respond to the allegations of all this being done on the behest of a particular political party, etc".

The poll panel said West Bengal Director General of Police Virendra was not removed summarily and without any application of mind. "It was the outcome of the recom-

mendation given by Special Observers Ajay Nayak and Vivek Dube. In fact, yesterday also when the Commission became aware of the unfortunate incident from the electronic media, report was immediately sought from the Chief Secretary, West Bengal and from both the Special Observers, at present in West Bengal, within 48 hours. Till such time the reports are available to the Commission it will not be possible to draw any empirical conclusion let alone start linking it to the removal of earlier DGP Virendra."

The Election Commission on Tuesday ordered removal of Virendra as the Director General of Police of poll-bound West Bengal with immediate effect, and appointed P Nirajnayan in his place.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged on Wednesday that she suffered injuries in her left leg after being attacked by "four-five men" in Nandigram during election campaign.

KK Shailaja star campaigner for Left



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, March 11: KK Shailaja's fortunes turned golden, after Nipah struck Kozhikode a few years back. The way she handled that crisis catapulted her to where she stands now seen as 'crisis slayer'.

She has had no reason to look back and with Covid, she turned out to be a "celebrity" with the way she initially tried to nip the pandemic in its bud in the state.

Her name, which also means 'celebrity' and she hold that stature to other candidates contesting under the Left Democratic Front in the April 6 Assembly polls, as she appears to be the most sought-after campaigner.

"For a week starting March 20, I will be away from my constituency - Mattanur in Kannur district campaigning for the Left candidates," said Shailaja.

The 64-year-old, should consider herself lucky that she lost the 2011 Assembly polls because the CPI-M, this time has come out with a guideline, while selecting the candidates, all those who have had a successive two terms will not be considered for the April 6 polls.

The CPI-M appears to have rewarded her efforts and she has been moved out from Kuthuparambu Assembly constituency in Kannur district which she won in 2016 with a margin of 12,291 votes to the Mattanur con-

stituency also in the same district, which is considered as one of the safest and strongest constituency of the party.

At the 2016 polls, the seat was won by the No. 2 in the Pinarayi Vijayan cabinet - E.P.Jayarajan, with a staggering margin of 43,381 votes, which was the second highest margin of victories and the highest for any CPI-M candidate in the state. Jayarajan who won from the same seat in 2011 has not been nominated to contest the polls as he has had two terms.

The very fact that the outcome, this time at the Mattanur constituency, is not under the cloud, the only question that's going around is will she be able to break the victory margin of over 50,000 votes.

When asked about her new constituency, Shailaja with a beaming smile said enough for all to understand. The Health Minister is indeed sitting pretty and can use her star status for the good of other Left candidates.

This time for the Left, one of their all-time star campaigners in the past two decades, now 97-year old VS.Achuthanandan, in all likelihood is going to remain indoors, even though the other day he had taken his Covid vaccine.

It is not clear, if the CPI-M will parade the nonagenarian. In that case Shailaja and not Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, would be the Left's star campaigner.

MATTER OF FAITH



Naga Sadhus gather to take a holy dip in the waters of Ganga river to mark Maha Shivratri during the ongoing religious Kumbh Mela, in Haridwar

PTI PHOTO

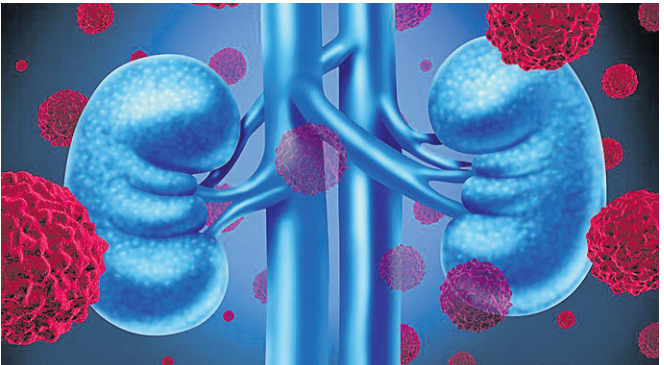
'nCoV can aggravate kidney problems'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 11: While the effect of Covid-19 is well known on cardiovascular diseases or lungs, health experts on Thursday warned that Covid-19 patients with kidney problems need to be highly cautious too, or it may damage their kidneys.

According to the experts, many individuals who develop Covid-19 experience kidney damage, or acute kidney injury (AKI), also known as acute renal failure (ARF).

AKI is a sudden episode of kidney failure or kidney damage that happens within a few hours or a few days. It causes a build-up of waste products in the blood and makes it hard for kidneys to keep the right balance of fluid in the body. It can also affect other organs such as the brain, heart and lungs.



"Kidneys get affected in cases where Covid-19 infection is severe. If further causes AKI in about 10 to 20 per cent of hospitalized patients," Deepak Kalra, Additional Director-Nephrology, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, New Delhi, told IANS.

A study, published in the Clinical

Journal of the American Society of Nephrology, showed that in patients with Covid-19, AKI was uncommon but was linked with a high risk of in-hospital mortality. The researchers found that the in-hospital mortality rate was 10 per cent in patients without AKI versus 72 per cent in patients with AKI.

Sushma's dream realised: Geeta reunites with real mother

Geeta, who returned to India October 26, 2015 after intervention by then External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, was initially lodged at a facility of a hearing and speech impaired institute run by an Indore-based NGO

AGENCIES

Parbhani/Mumbai, March 11: The dream of the late Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj to help a deaf-mute girl - who had strayed into Pakistan some 20 years ago - reunite with her family, was finally fulfilled here last week.

This is the second such reunion



witnessed in two different districts of Maharashtra in the past two months which moved the people of the state.

On January 26, Hasina Begum, who was wrongly dumped in a Pakistani jail for 18 years, was finally sent back to her home in Rashidpura, Aurangabad.

Unfortunately, barely savouring freedom for two weeks and struggling to salvage her life-strings snapped in the past 18 years, Hasina Begum, 65, died of a sudden heart attack February 9, stunning the people of the city.

The second girl, Geeta, was luckier as she was not in jail, but found succour in the magnanimity of the Edhi Foundation, Karachi in Pakistan, which looked after her for years till she was sent back to India with Sushma Swaraj's efforts in 2015.

After she landed in India over six years ago, a massive nationwide search was launched by the government, semi-government agencies, NGOs like the Anand Service Society (ASS) of Indore, which was handed Geeta's custody in July 2020.

After a series of all-India travels to track her family, an NGO, Pahal Foundation (Parbhani) founder-directors Aniket

Selgaonkar and Pradeep More helped the ASS find Geeta's kin in a village, Naigaon and handed her over to her mother March 2 - over 20 years after she was 'lost'.

Soon after Geeta arrived in India, the late Sushma Swaraj, (who passed away in August 2019) had given her custody to the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, who had promised to not only locate her family, but like a father figure, even performed her 'kanyadaan' if the pursuit failed.

The Madhya Pradesh government entrusted the Indore Deaf Bilingual Academy which tried for nearly five years to locate her family before handing her over to the Anand Service Society (ASS).

Though reported missing from Jintur when she was 9 years old, hopped onto several trains before landing in Pakistan in 2000, the Edhi Foundation's records start from 2003.

ASS's Gyanendra Purohit's chanced upon a tiny clue - Geeta's nose was pierced on the right side, common in the Marathwada region, instead of the usual left practiced all over - and launched the search which ended in Parbhani.

"Other clues also clinched - a maternity hospital outside the railway station surrounded by sugarcane fields, a childhood burn-mark on her tummy. Now, only the final DNA test remains," More told IANS.

Her overjoyed mother, Meena Waghmare, now Meena Pandhare, revealed that Geeta was actually 'Radha Waghmare' and has siblings - a sister Pooja Bansode, and a brother, suffering from a mental illness.

Selgaonkar said that Geeta loves Marathi cuisine which she missed during her long years in Pakistan and then in Madhya Pradesh, but is still reluctant to move in with her new-found family, now living in Naigaon.

IAF SET TO RAISE 2nd SQUADRON OF RAFALE JETS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 11: The Indian Air Force plans to raise its second squadron of Rafale fighter jets at Hasimara Air Force base in West Bengal by next month to counter threats from China.

Hasimara is a strategic base for IAF operations because of its proximity to Bhutan, the Chumbi Valley where lies a tri-junction between India, Bhutan and China, and Doklam where a standoff took place in 2017. The tri-junction has been a matter of concern for all the three countries.

"Second Rafale Squadron is being raised at the next Main Operating Base (MOB) Hasimara in mid April this year," said an Indian Air Force official.

The first squadron was raised in Ambala after first batch of five Rafale aircraft landed July 29, 2020. These aircraft were inducted September 10 at Ambala Air Base into the 17 'Golden Arrows' Squadron.

The Indian Air Force has received 11 jets till now out of the 36 ordered from France. Six more jets are expected to be delivered in a month.

The remaining aircraft are likely to be in India by April 2022. Currently, IAF pilots are being trained in France. The two squadrons of Rafale jets will add wings to the IAF's depleting fleet strength. The two squadrons with 18 jets each at Amabala and Hasimara have been planned keeping in mind the operations against Pakistan on the western front and China in the eastern sector.

Hasimara earlier had a MiG-27 squadron that has now been decommissioned. India had inked an inter-governmental agreement with France in September 2016 for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around Rs 58,000 crore.

of the day quote

Our scientists worked in a quick time to come out with vaccines. Now, India is humbled that vaccines made in India are going around the world. We want to heal as well as help humanity. This is exactly what the Bhagavad Gita teaches us



More than 13,000 coronavirus cases have been found in the last 24 hours in neighbouring Maharashtra which bothers me



The incident that took place in Sabarimala in 2018 was something which had pained all of us. It should never have happened. It has pained everyone. It has pained me also



SHORT TAKES

9 killed in Agra road accident

Agra: Nine persons were killed and three seriously injured when a Scorpio vehicle rammed into a container Thursday morning in the Etmadpur area here. Police said eight died on the spot, while the ninth succumbed to injuries in the SN Medical College emergency ward. The registration number of the SUV is of Jharkhand and the deceased are yet to be identified.

Man ends life, blames ladycop

Lucknow: The suicide of a 26-year-old computer operator, working on an ad hoc basis in a government office, has turned into a major controversy. He left behind a suicide note, alleging that a woman IPS officer, Prachi Singh, was responsible for his death. "Prachi Singh (IPS 2017 batch) should be held responsible for my death. "She ruined my career by framing me in a fake sex racket case. I was unable to face my parents and family members. Strict action should be taken against the IPS officer after my death," the purported note left by the deceased said.

Illegal arms factory busted

Amethi (UP): An illegal arms factory was unearthed by a police team here on Thursday and 12 country-made pistols recovered, police said. The team conducted a raid in Adhanpur village at about 2 am. Besides country-made pistols, live cartridges and equipment were recovered from the spot. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP), Vinod Kumar Pandey, said. Two persons identified as Kallu Vishwakarma and Krishna Kumar have been arrested. An FIR has been registered.

Boxing coach held in rape case

Mumbai: A 30-year-old boxing coach has been arrested for allegedly raping his minor student at a club in the eastern suburb of Mulund here, police said Thursday. The police Wednesday arrested the accused from Vashi naka in Chembur, an official said. The incident took place on Sunday, when the accused took the victim to the club, raped her and later threatened to destroy her boxing career if she told anyone about the attack, the official said. The victim confided in her family three days after the incident, following which a complaint was lodged at Tilak Nagar police station, he said.



We all fight elections. We win some, lose some, but violence corrodes the spirit of democracy. Hope all sides will observe restraint. @AITCofficial

H D DEVE GOWDA | FORMER PRIME MINISTER

VOICE FOR A 'CAUSE'

The tourism industry in Agra is up in arms against the proposed hike in the entrance ticket rates to the iconic 17th century monument of love, the Taj Mahal



nCoV not yet over, be 'vigilant': Centre

HOURS AFTER MAHA CHIEF MINISTER UDDHAV THACKERAY WARNED OF A LOCKDOWN IN 'SOME AREAS', THE CENTRE MADE THE ALARMING REVELATION THAT 8 OUT OF THE TOP 10 WORST COVID-HIT DISTRICTS IN THE COUNTRY ARE LOCATED IN THE STATE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 11: Expressing concern over the rise in active COVID-19 cases in a few states, including Maharashtra, the Centre Thursday advised people to be "careful and watchful" and not lower guard as the pandemic is not yet over. At a press conference, NITI Aayog member (Health) V K Paul termed the coronavirus situation, especially in Maharashtra, "worrisome". He referred to the lockdown imposed in Nagpur from March 15 to 21 to say, "We are reaching a situation where these approaches (to tackle the spread of COVID-19) are being brought back."

"We are very worried about the rise in cases in Maharashtra. Don't take this virus for granted. It can come up unexpectedly. If we have to remain free of this virus, COVID-appropriate behaviour, containment strategy as well as vaccination has to be brought in," Paul said.

He advised that in districts where COVID-19 cases are seemingly on the rise, vaccination of eligible individuals should be intensified and prioritised.

Sounding a word of caution for Delhi and its neighbourhood, Paul said the national capital is seeing a rise in positivity rate, so is Gurgaon, Faridabad and to an extent Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad.



"Be careful, be watchful. We still have a huge population at risk of this virus. This pandemic is not yet over. Be vigilant," he said.

"Today, using the force of vaccination, we are in a position to give a stronger fight (to the pandemic). We plead again, do not lower your guard and please embrace the vaccines that are available," Paul added. Asked whether a mutant strain of the coronavirus is responsible for the rise in cases, ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava said it has not been found incriminating in the surge in Maharashtra.

"At the moment, it is just related to reduced testing, tracking and tracing as well as COVID-inappropriate behaviour and large congregations," he said.

Bhushan said Kerala had 64,607 active cases of COVID-19 on February 11 which has now declined to 35,715. "We need to appreciate this," he said.

In Uttar Pradesh, from 3,256 active cases February 11 it has come down to 1,689 on March 11. In West Bengal, active cases have come down from 4,300 to 3,127, the Union health secretary said. However, in case of Maharashtra, there were 36,917 active cases on February 11

'Robot' Shalu speaks 38 foreign languages

Inspired by the Hindi movie industry movie 'Robot', Dinesh Patel a Computer Science teacher developed 'Shalu' which is similar to 'Sophia', a robot developed by Hanson Robotics of Hong Kong

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 11: Dinesh Patel, a resident of Rajmalpur village of Jaunpur district and a Computer Science teacher at Kendriya Vidyalaya at IIT Bombay, has developed a robot named 'Shalu' which speaks nine local languages and 38 foreign languages.

Patel told IANS, "Shalu has been developed using waste materials like plastic, cardboard, wood, aluminium etc. It took three years to develop it and the expenditure was around Rs 50,000."

He said this is a prototype and it can recognise someone, memorise things, answer questions related to General Knowledge, Maths, etc. "Shalu can greet people, display emotions, read newspaper, recite recipes and perform many other activities. This can be used as a teacher in schools and as a receptionist in offices too," Patel added.

Patel said that as of now they have used plaster of paris but can beautify the robot with the help of a mask.

Supratik Chakravarty, a professor in the Computer Science and Engineering department of IIT Bombay, appreciated the robot.

In a letter to Patel, he said: "It is really a great development. Such a robot can be used in the field of education, entertainment and several other fields too. Shalu can be an inspiration for the next-gen scientists."



Dinesh Patel with Robot 'Shalu'

TRUE DEVOTION



Hindu devotees visit Shiva Temple on the occasion of Maha Shivratri festival at Kachnar City in Jabalpur

PTI PHOTO

Guj sees 3 rapes of adolescents everyday

Gandhinagar: The Vibrant state of Gujarat is also vibrant as far as rapes of adolescent girls is concerned. The state has seen more than three rapes of adolescent girls everyday during the past 5 years. According to the state government figures released in the ongoing Assembly session there were 6,215 incidents of adolescent girls raped in the period from October 2015 to September 2020. Congress MLA from Petlad, Niranjan Patel had raised the question before Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani as to how many rape incidents had occurred from October 2015 till September 2020 in Gujarat, how many persons were still to be nabbed and what action did the government take to curb such incidents. In reply the Gujarat government's home department informed that during the said period a total of 6,215 adolescent girls were raped in Gujarat.

JAISH-UL-HIND'S TELEGRAM CHANNEL 'CREATED IN TIHAR'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 11: A Telegram channel through which an organisation named Jaish-ul-Hind had claimed responsibility for placing an explosives-laden SUV near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence here was "created in the Tihar" area of Delhi, a senior Mumbai police official said Thursday. The police took the help of a private cyber agency to track the location of the phone on which the Telegram channel was created, the official said.

EXPLOSIVES-LADEN SUV

During the investigation, the location of the phone was traced near Delhi's Tihar Jail, he added. A Mahindra Scorpio car with gelatin sticks was found parked near "Antilia", the multi-storey residence of Ambani, in south Mumbai February 25. According to police sources, the Telegram channel was created on February 26 and the message claiming responsibility for placing the vehicle outside Ambani's residence was posted on the Telegram messaging app late in the night February 27.

Women perceived as less productive while WFH: Report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 11: While working from home, women are four times more likely to be perceived as being less productive than male counterparts. The fear of adjudged as unproductive further prevents women from talking openly about mental health issues," the report said.

Commenting on the findings, Shipra Biswas Bhattacharyya, Partner, Kearney India, said: "The world moved to remote working so rapidly that we couldn't stop and design a workplace that was truly inclusive. Top-down, conscious changes in the way we interact, disseminate information and design policies will impact how women progress within organisations."

The report suggested that there

ings in predominantly male workplaces. "While working from home, women are four times more likely to be perceived as being less productive than male counterparts. The fear of adjudged as unproductive further prevents women from talking openly about mental health issues," the report said.

Commenting on the findings, Shipra Biswas Bhattacharyya, Partner, Kearney India, said:

"The world moved to remote working so rapidly that we couldn't stop and design a workplace that was truly inclusive. Top-down, conscious changes in the way we interact, disseminate information and design policies will impact how women progress within organisations."

The report suggested that there



Representative image

is no one-size-fit-all approach to developing an online-first workplace that will ensure an inclusive environment. But three pillars can help build the first set of actions toward increased inclusivity:

Increasing workplace flexibility:

Having the ability to choose working hours, personal time-off, and breaks during the day while also managing household duties and taking time to maintain mental health are crucial. Avenues for formal and informal networking:

Democratization of opportunities to network is crucial to eliminating workplace groupings.

Mental health and counselling: 44 per cent women and men say a greater focus on mental health and counselling is needed, especially when the virtual world is at the helm.

Saumya Krishna, Partner, Kearney India said: "It is clear that lifting and shifting the workplace into homes will simply not work. Especially not for women. Women are losing out on networking opportunities, global interactions and avenues for mentorship and sponsorship, post COVID. We need to redesign workplaces, restructure forms of interaction and communication. Otherwise, we take one step forward for work and two steps back for women at work."

of the day quote

Brazil's failure to arrest the virus' spread since then is increasingly seen as a concern not just for Latin American neighbours, but also as a warning to the world

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | DIRECTOR, WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

Beijing for decades has waged a campaign to destroy Tibet's proud culture and history, which remains a clarion call for action to freedom-loving people worldwide

NANCY PELOSI | SPEAKER, US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

We are working on procuring all of the safe and effective Covid-19 vaccines we need to see that our people are immunised alongside the citizens of developed nations -- we will not allow ourselves to be left behind

VOREQE BAINIMARAMA | PRIME MINISTER OF FIJI

SHORT TAKES

Indonesia bus mishap claims 26

Jakarta: A tourist bus plunged into a ravine on Indonesia's main island of Java after its brakes apparently malfunctioned, killing at least 26 people and injuring 35 others, police and rescuers said Thursday. The bus was carrying a group of Islamic junior high school students and their parents from the West Java province town of Subang to a pilgrimage site in the province's Tasikmalaya district when the accident happened late Wednesday on a winding road, said local police chief Eko Prasetyo Robbyanto.

Denmark halts AstraZeneca use

Copenhagen: The health authorities in Denmark said Thursday that they are temporarily suspending the use of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine as a precautionary measure after some patients developed blood clots since receiving the jab, including one who died, digital news publisher The Local reported. The move comes "following reports of serious cases of blood clots among people vaccinated with AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine", the Danish Health Authority said in a statement.

Ex-cop charged in Floyd death

Minneapolis: A judge Thursday granted prosecutors' request to add a third-degree murder charge against the former Minneapolis police officer charged in George Floyd's death. Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill reinstated the charge after the former officer, Derek Chauvin, failed to get appellate courts to block it. Chauvin already faced second-degree murder and manslaughter charges.

EU votes for LGBT 'free zone'

Brussels: The European Parliament has overwhelmingly adopted a resolution declaring the entire 27-member European Union a "freedom zone" for LGBT people, an effort to push back on rising homophobia in Poland and elsewhere. The parliament announced Thursday that there were 492 ballots in favor of the resolution and 141 against in a vote that came after a debate in a session of parliament in Brussels.

JAPAN IS MARKING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 2011 EARTHQUAKE, TSUNAMI AND NUCLEAR DISASTER WITH MANY SURVIVORS' LIVES STILL ON HOLD

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, March 11: Japan fell quiet at 2:46 pm Thursday to mark the minute that an earthquake began 10 years ago, setting off a tsunami and nuclear crisis that devastated the country's northeast coast in a disaster that one survivor said he fears people are beginning to forget. Carrying bouquets of flowers, many walked to the seaside or visited graves to pray for relatives and friends washed away by the water. Emperor Naruhito and Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga were among those observing a moment of silence at a memorial in Tokyo. Dignitaries and representatives of the survivors spoke — but most watched the ceremony online or on television because of restrictions to slow the coronavirus



If we have a surplus, we are going to share it with the rest of the world. We have already decided we are going to work with the outfit COVAX

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

EU OKAYS J&J VAX

The European Union's medicines regulator approved the single-shot Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine, making it the fourth jab to get the green signal for the 27-nation bloc



CHINA TO BUILD DAM ON BRAHMAPUTRA IN TIBET

The plan envisages building the dam at Medog county, the last county in Tibet which borders Arunachal Pradesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, March 11: China's Parliament Thursday adopted the 14th Five-Year Plan, the mega blueprint containing billions of dollars worth of projects, including the controversial hydropower project on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet close to the Arunachal Pradesh border over which India has raised concerns. The National People's Congress (NPC), China's legislature with over 2,000 members mostly drawn from the ruling Communist Party, adopted the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for national economic and social development and the long-range

objectives through the year 2035, on the last day of its six-day session Thursday, official media reported. Attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and other senior leaders, the NPC approved a development blueprint which contains 60 proposals for speeding up China's development. It was passed by the Communist Party of China (CPC) last year. The 14th Five-Year plan included building the dam on the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra river over which India and Bangladesh, the riparian states, have raised concerns. China has downplayed such anxieties saying it would keep their interests in mind.



As a lower riparian State with considerable established user rights to the waters of the trans-border rivers, the Indian government has consistently conveyed its views and concerns to the Chinese authori-

ties and has urged them to ensure that the interests of downstream States are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas. Che Dalha, deputy Communist Party chief of the Tibet Autonomous

Region, said during the NPC session that authorities there should "strive to begin construction of the dam this year". "Comprehensive planning and environmental impact assessments for the project should be approved as soon as possible," he said last Saturday on the sidelines of the NPC session, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted a press release from the provincial government in Tibet. Che also said that the exploration of natural gas in northern Tibet should be one of the focuses of the country's energy development goals over the next five years. The plan envisages building the

dam at Medog county, where the Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon is located. Medog is the last county in Tibet which borders Arunachal Pradesh. The plan was first revealed late last year by Yan Zhiyong, chairman of the Power Construction Corp of China or POWERCHINA. Commenting on the proposal to build the dam Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing in Beijing on December 3 last year that the "hydropower development in the lower reaches of Yarlung Zangbo river is China's legitimate right. When it comes to use and development of cross border rivers, China always acts responsibly, she said.

Suu Kyi accused of bribery as 12 more killed by Junta

AGENCIES

Yangon, March 11: Myanmar's junta added new bribery allegations to its charges against deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi Thursday, while an advocacy group said security forces killed 12 protesters in one of the deadliest days since the military took power. The bloodshed came hours after the UN Security Council had called for restraint from the army, which has been trying to put down daily anti-coup protests and paralysing strikes since it took power Feb 1. Among the dead were eight people killed in the central town of Myaung when security forces fired on a protest, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) said. In Myanmar's biggest city, Yangon, protester Chit Min Thu was killed in the North Dagon district. His wife, Aye Myat Thu, told Reuters he had insisted on joining the protests despite her appeals for him to stay home for the sake of their son. "He said it's worth dying for," she said through her tears. "He is worried about people not joining the



protest. If so, democracy will not return to the country." Adding corruption charges to the accusations against Suu Kyi could mean she faces a harsher penalty. She currently faces four comparatively minor charges - including illegally importing six walkie talkie radios and flouting coronavirus restrictions. The junta spokesman, Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, said Suu Kyi had accepted illegal payments worth \$600,000, as well as gold, while in government, according to a complaint by Phyo Mien Thein, a former chief minister of Yangon. "He strongly said that," the spokesman told a news conference. "We have verified those facts several times. Now the anti-corruption committee is continuing

UNSC calls for reversal of coup

United Nations: The UN Security Council has strongly condemned the violence against peaceful protesters in Myanmar and called on the military to exercise "utmost restraint", as the powerful world body unanimously reiterated its call for the immediate release of detained leaders and voiced support for the democratic transition in the Southeast Asian nation. The Council unanimously adopted a Presidential Statement on Myanmar Wednesday in which it reiterated its deep concern at developments in the country following the declaration of the state of emergency imposed by the military February 1 and the arbitrary detention of members of the Government, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint and others.

the investigation." Thursday's deaths brought the number of protesters killed since the coup to more than 70, the AAPP said. Some 2,000 people have also been detained since the coup against Suu Kyi's elected government, it says.

Dragon to overhaul HK electoral system

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing, March 11: The National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, Thursday adopted a decision on improving the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The decision was passed by an overwhelming majority vote at the fourth session of the 13th NPC, the Xinhua news agency reported. The decision is another major step taken by the state to improve the HKSAR's legal and political systems since the Law on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR was adopted June 2020. While deliberating a draft of the decision, the NPC session was of the view that the return of Hong Kong to the motherland put the region once again under the overall governance system of the country, and China's Constitution and the Basic Law of the HKSAR jointly form the constitutional basis of the HKSAR. The electoral system of the HKSAR, which includes the methods for the selection of the Chief Executive and for the formation of the Legislative Council (LegCo), is an important part of the politi-



The decision was passed by an overwhelming majority vote at the fourth session of the 13th NPC

cal structure of the HKSAR, according to the session. The electoral system should conform to the policy of "one country, two systems," meet the realities in the HKSAR and serve to ensure that Hong Kong is administered by people who love the country and love Hong Kong, according to the session. The electoral system should be conducive to safeguarding China's national sovereignty, security, and development interests and help maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, according to the session.

LAVA LAKE



Lava lights up the night sky on Mount Nyiragongo volcano, inside the Virunga National Park, near Goma, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

REUTERS

Cambodia reports first COVID death

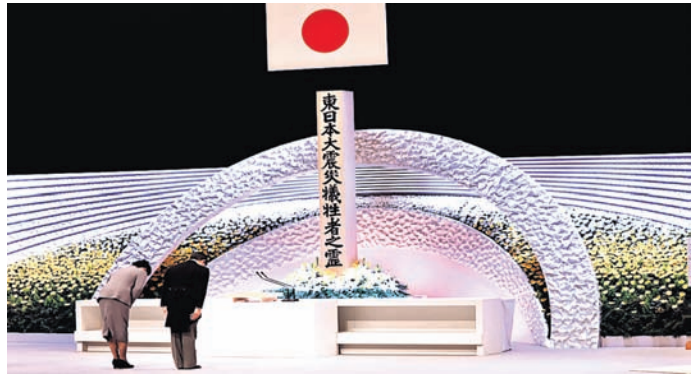
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Phnom Penh, March 11: Cambodia Thursday confirmed its first death from COVID-19 since the pandemic began more than a year ago as it battles a new local outbreak that has infected hundreds of people. The 50-year-old man was confirmed infected last month while working as a driver for a Chinese company in coastal Sihanoukville and died at the Khmer-Soviet friendship hospital Thursday morning, the Health Ministry said in a statement. Cambodia has confirmed only 1,163 cases of infection with the coronavirus since the pandemic began, but it is battling a new local outbreak that has infected several hundred people.



According to the Health Ministry, the new outbreak was traced to a foreign resident who broke quarantine in a hotel and went to a nightclub in early February. That caused a slew of infections and led the government February 20 to announce a two-week closure of all public schools, cinemas, bars and entertainment areas in Phnom Penh. The government has since extended the closures for more two weeks for schools, gyms, concert halls, museums and other entertainment venues in Phnom Penh, nearby Kandal province and the coastal province of Sihanoukville. Thursday, the Health Ministry said 39 cases were reported from local transmission. As the outbreak grows, a defunct luxury hotel in the capital has been converted into a 500-room coronavirus hospital, and authorities are enforcing a new law imposing criminal punishments for violating health rules. The country began its vaccination campaign February with 600,000 doses of the Chinese-produced Sinopharm vaccine. It also received 324,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine this month that were donated by and produced in India.

Still recovering, Japan marks 10 years since triple disaster



pandemic. The magnitude 9.0 quake that struck March 11, 2011 — one of the biggest on record — triggered a wall of water that swept far inland, destroying towns and causing meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. The days following the quake were terrifying for many in Japan and farther afield, as hydrogen explosions released radiation into the air and technicians worked furiously to try to

cool the plant's nuclear fuel by pumping in seawater. There were concerns and confusion about the extent of meltdowns, and how far radiation might travel, including fears that Tokyo and even the US west coast were at risk. Officials said they were not, but panicked shoppers as far away as China and Russia scrambled to stock up on goods they thought would protect them. More than 18,000 people died, mostly in the tsunami, and nearly half a million people were displaced. The government recognises another 3,700 — mostly from Fukushima prefecture — who died of causes linked to the disaster, such as stress. Ten years on, more than 40,000 people are still unable to return home, and areas near the wrecked plant are still off-limits due to contamination.

from the initial radiation fallout. Many in Japan have said that the country's intense focus on physically rebuilding has at times ignored other healing that needed to be done. The government has said this is the last year it will organise a national commemoration for the disaster. Saito, representing Fukushima survivors, said that he is afraid memories are fading outside the disaster zone and he is committed to preventing that from happening by continuing to recount the lessons from the disaster and telling the stories of his son. Naruhito said "my heart aches" when he thinks of those who have struggled to adapt to drastic changes to their lives because of the triple disaster, including the loss of loved ones, jobs and whole communities.

business



While fears over another pandemic is the topmost threat for business leaders across the globe, majority of India CEOs feel that the global economic growth over the next 12 months will improve, reiterating the optimism we've heard from our clients in recent times

SANJEEV KRISHAN | CHAIRMAN, PWC INDIA

FICCI SEEKS RETAILERS' INCLUSION

Industry body FICCI has urged the government to include the retail industry in the list of 'frontline workers' and among the early recipients of the Covid-19 vaccine



of the day quote

Gender pay gap is more pronounced in the unorganised sector, in India. Most organisations in the corporate world are striving for a gender neutral ecosystem, which compensates on merit, education and calibre, and not by one gender over another



AMIT ADARKAR | CEO, IPSOS INDIA

We are seeing a turnaround. PV and 2W dealers are expected to see revenue growth of 20-22% and 15-17%, respectively, in FY'22. Healthy rural demand and an increasing preference for personal mobility will drive this growth



GAUTAM SHAHI | DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

The kirana community along with retail employees should be recognised as frontline workers as they have been serving the nation tirelessly despite being the most vulnerable to the risk of infection. These frontline retail warriors should be prioritised in the initial phase of the vaccination rollout



ARVIND MEDIRATTA | CHAIRPERSON, FICCI RETAIL & INTERNAL TRADE COMMITTEE

SHORT TAKES

'LPG consumption up 7.3% in 3 mnts'

New Delhi: Cooking gas LPG consumption rose 7.3% in the last three months despite a steep price rise, with usage among the PMUY beneficiaries, who are mostly poor rural households, jumping near 20%, state-owned oil companies said. "LPG consumption has improved amongst PMUY customers," said IOC. Cooking gas consumption between December 2020 and February 2021, jumped 19.5% among the PMUY beneficiaries.

US jobless claims fall

Washington: The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week to 712,000, the lowest total since early November, evidence that fewer employers are cutting jobs amid a decline in confirmed coronavirus cases and signs of an improving economy. The Labor Department said Thursday that applications for unemployment aid dropped by 42,000 from 754,000 the week before. Many businesses remain under pressure, and 9.6 million jobs remain lost to the pandemic.

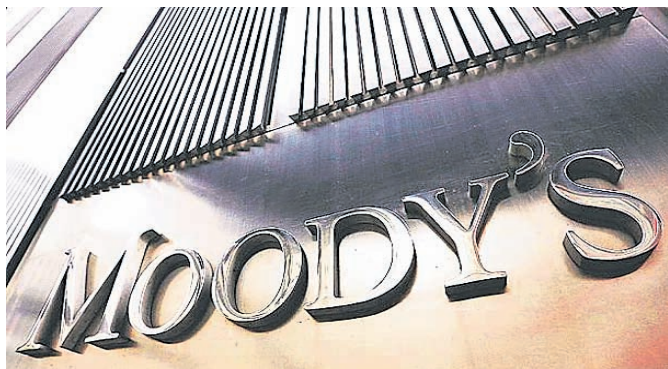
Bank staff call strike March 15, 16

Chennai: With the conciliation meeting between bank unions and the Central government failing, about 10 lakh bank employees will strike work for two continuous days - March 15 and 16 - protesting against the government decision to privatise public sector banks, the All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA) said Thursday.

Europe ups aid for virus-hit economy

Frankfurt: The European Central Bank (ECB) said it would step up its bond-purchase stimulus to support an economy whose recovery is expected to lag a year behind the US, held back by slow vaccine rollouts and less relief spending by governments. The central bank for the 19 countries that use the euro said Thursday that over the next quarter the purchases would be conducted "at a significantly higher pace than during the first months of the year."

'Most economies won't return to pre-Covid levels until 2022'



BUMPY RECOVERY

WITHIN A YEAR, COVID-19 HAS DISRUPTED THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND TRIGGERED A CREDIT DOWNTURN ACCOMPANIED BY A SPIKE IN BOND DEFAULTS

MOODY'S SAID, IT EXPECTS A SLOW GLOBAL REVIVAL AND UNCERTAINTY AROUND THE MACROECONOMIC OUTLOOK REMAINS MUCH HIGHER THAN USUAL

THE RATING AGENCY EXPECTS THE INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF THE PANDEMIC TO GRADUALLY DECLINE OVER THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 11: Moody's Investors Service Thursday said the credit downturn arising out of Covid-19 will be short-lived but most economies will not return to pre-pandemic activity levels until 2022.

In the year since the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic March 11, 2020, the virus has disrupted the global economy and triggered a credit down-

turn accompanied by a spike in bond defaults.

"The credit challenges arising from Covid-19 have been substantial, but the credit downturn likely will be relatively short-lived. Risks remain more significant for the sectors most vulnerable to restrictions on their normal activities," Moody's said in a global report in coronavirus.

Stating that most economies will not return to pre-pandemic activity levels until 2022, Moody's said it

JSW OBSERVES 'ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE' WEEK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 11: JSW Steel limited Odisha mining division observed 'ethics and compliance' week from March 4-10. With an aim to educate and sensitise employees and partner companies regarding code of conduct, ethics, anti-bribery and related matters, a number of awareness sessions and employee engagement activities were conducted throughout the week by the unit.

Ranjan Nayak, Chief Operating Officer, JSW Steel Limited (Odisha) said, "It is absolutely important for an organisation to have a system of governance that lays down the guiding principles, expected behavior and actions from all employees both individually and collectively.

As employees, we have always been complying with the Code of conduct and statutory laws/regulations that apply to our business. We at JSW Steel, have had a strong footing with values and continue to uphold them with utmost sincerity and diligence."

The efforts made in these directions have been praiseworthy



with motivated employees at times immediately reporting cases of malpractices etc with management. In a recent incidence, as per sources, two of the customers tried to bribe one of the officials from the company. The employee immediately reported the same and the unit took stringent action against the customers and cut off all business transaction with the said parties with immediate effect.

It is noteworthy that as an organization, JSW Steel is focused on creation of an environment where employees are educated and made aware of elements of good governance, transparency and integrity and have a zero-tolerance policy towards unethical behaviour and malpractices.

'Govt-owned bad bank more capital efficient'

The government owning the proposed bad bank will not only be more capital efficient but also won't be impacting the fiscal numbers, as otherwise, it will have to keep on recapitalising the state-owned lenders as they will be the biggest beneficiaries of the proposed bad bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 11: Amid confusing reports about the control of the proposed bad bank, a brokerage has called for government ownership, saying state-funding is more capital efficient apart from speeding up implementation and also lowering the credit cost/loss for the banks.

The government owning the proposed bad bank will not only be more capital efficient but also won't be impacting the fiscal numbers, as otherwise, it will have to keep on recapitalising the state-owned lenders as they will be the biggest beneficiaries of the proposed bad bank, Bank of America Securities India said in a report.

Again, such a set-up can lower the credit charge on banks to a fifth in the worst-case scenario from the 100 per cent now, the report added.

As of March 2020, the net non-performing loans of banks stood at 2.8 per cent or Rs 2,89,500 crore,



which is 1.3 per cent of the GDP, according to the report.

This will go up considerably 13.5 per cent by this September, a two-decade high, given the impact of the pandemic on the companies and banks, according to the Reserve Bank of India.

In January, a stress test by the central bank showed that public sector

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 11: Apple Inc has started the assembly of iPhone 12 in India, the US tech giant said, as the company ramps up manufacturing operations in the world's second-biggest smartphone market. "We are proud to be starting production of iPhone 12 in India for our local customers," Apple said in a statement Thursday, without naming the supplier making the smartphone.

The Indian unit of Apple's Taiwanese contract manufacturer Foxconn will assemble the device in its plant in southern Tamil Nadu state, two sources familiar with the matter said.

Foxconn did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but has previously said it does not comment on client-specific work.

Apple has been shifting some areas of production from China to other markets as it navigates the trade war between Washington and Beijing. A person familiar with the matter said in November Foxconn



is moving some iPad and MacBook assembly to Vietnam from China at its request.

Cupertino, California-headquartered Apple has bet big on India since it began iPhone assembly in the country in 2017 via another Taiwanese supplier, Wistron.

Foxconn, Wistron and a third supplier Pegatron have together committed roughly \$900 million over five years to make iPhones in India, leveraging New Delhi's \$6.7

billion plan to boost smartphone exports.

Apple is also planning to bring the assembly of its iPad tablet to India, Reuters reported last month. "Nice to see our efforts to make India a big hub of mobile and components manufacturing is attracting global attention," India's technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad tweeted following news of iPhone 12 production in India. "This will create jobs in large numbers," he wrote on Twitter.

BIZ-BUZZ

G-Pay to give users more control over data

New Delhi: Google Thursday said it will offer users of Google Pay enhanced privacy features, allowing them to take control of their own transaction data. Google Pay is rolling out an update to the app from next week that will provide users with more controls to decide how their Google Pay activity is used to personalise features within the app. All users will be asked to choose whether they would like to turn the control on or off as soon as they upgrade to the next version of the Google Pay app. "Privacy is already a key priority for us. If you do anything on Google Pay, it stays on Google Pay. What we are saying now is we are creating new controls for managing your activity," G-Pay VP (Product) Ambarish Kenghe said.



YT to deduct taxes from non-US creators

New Delhi: In a bad news for creators in India, Google-owned YouTube has announced to deduct taxes from payments to creators outside of the US. In an email to YouTubers, the tech giant said that additional tax is going to be levied on them (outside the US) by as early as June 2021. "Over the next few weeks, we'll be asking you to submit your tax info in AdSense to determine the correct amount of taxes to deduct, if any apply. If your tax info isn't provided by May 31st, 2021, Google may be required to deduct up to 24% of your total earnings worldwide," Google said in the email. The move will affect YouTube creators' community in India too. YouTube has asked creators to submit their tax information to AdSense to understand the correct amount of taxes to be deducted.



With ICC World T20 in mind, India start search for perfect combination as the Men in Blue take on England in first T20I at Motera today

BACK IN BLUE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, March 11: A blend of favourable results in the present and finding the perfect combination for the near future will be India's main endeavour when they square off against a well-rounded England in a five-match T20I series starting here Friday.

For skipper Virat Kohli, the primary aim will be to get an idea of his core group of players going into the ICC World T20 in October. And he couldn't have hoped for a better opposition than a world-class English white-ball side under Eoin Morgan, ready to be way more challenging on flatter tracks which promise a run-feast.

While there are more advantages of having multiple options, fashionably described as a 'happy headache' for any captain, there are a

few pitfalls that come with such a situation. The Indian team understands this fully well, having burnt its hands during the 2019 World Cup. It was one event where till last moment, they didn't have a settled number four. So it will only be fair that Kohli and head coach Ravi

Shastri, in their minds, decide who will be Rohit's opening partner going into the mega event. The choice is down to KL Rahul and Shikhar Dhawan.

By pure cricketing logic and the skill sets that he is blessed with, Rahul's selection in any white ball playing XI is a no-brainer but then there is Dhawan, who has been a terrific performer at global events and one of the senior-most in the side.

If Kohli decides to accommodate Dhawan, then he will have to push Rahul down at No.4 as the Bangalore man's place in the playing XI at this point of time is non-negotiable.

It's a tough call that Kohli needs to take as playing both of them would mean no place for either Shreyas Iyer or Indian fans' sentimental favourite Suryakumar Yadav, who is finally set to wear the India Blues after years of hardship.

The option of explosive hitting, that one among Shreyas and Surya can provide at No.4 or 5, is very enticing and the team management for one wouldn't like to miss out on an opportunity to exploit that advantage.

The Motera track will certainly be a flat deck, suiting the needs of the shortest format and with a lot of batting firepower in both sides, the Ahmedabad skyline could witness a lot of fireworks from both ends.

Whether it's vice-captain Rohit, the indomitable duo of Rishabh Pant and Hardik Pandya for the hosts or captain Morgan, Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Dawid Malan and Jason Roy at the other end, the kookaburra white might find itself in the stands more often than not.

With the unavailability of Thangarasu Natarajan in the bowling department, Bhuvneshwar Kumar will be back leading the attack alongside another senior Yuzvendra Chahal for company.

With England's weakness against slow bowlers'

well-documented in these conditions, Chahal could have both Washington Sundar and Axar Patel for company which leaves Shardul Thakur, Deepak Chahar and Navdeep Saini in a three-way battle.

For England, the white ball format presents them with multi-skilled cricketers like Stokes, Sam Curran and IPL auction sensation Moeen Ali for starters, who can change the complexion of any game in either departments.

Throw in specialists like pacers Jofra Archer, Mark Wood, Chris Jordan and wrist spinner Adil Rashid, it will be a contest where India can never be termed firm favourites.

The next week and half would be an indication as to which direction the teams are headed in terms of preparations for the marquee event later this year.



14
No. of T20Is have been played between India and England, with both the sides winning seven each

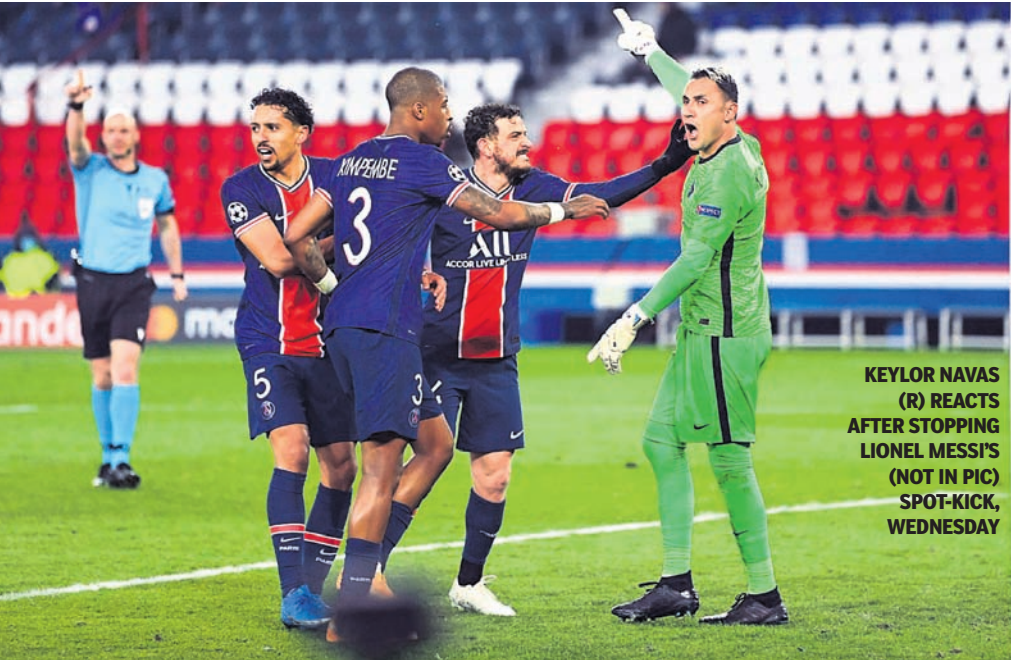
6
No. of matches have been played between the sides in India with both of them winning three each

202/6
Highest innings total by India against England (in India; 2017; Bangalore), while England's best in India against the hosts came in 2012 (181/4; Mumbai)

358
The aggregate total in a T20I (in India) between these two sides, which came in 2012 (Mumbai)

INDIA	THE SQUADS	ENGLAND
Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Hardik Pandya, Yuzvendra Chahal, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Navdeep Saini, Deepak Chahar, Rahul Tewatia & Ishan Kishan (wk).		Eoin Morgan (C), Joss Buttler (wk), Jason Roy, Liam Livingstone, Dawid Malan, Ben Stokes, Moeen Ali, Adil Rashid, Reece Topley, Chris Jordan, Mark Wood, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Sam Billings, Jonny Bairstow & Jofra Archer.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: PSG DRAW 1-1 WITH WASTEFUL BARCA AT PARC DES PRINCES



KEYLOR NAVAS (R) REACTS AFTER STOPPING LIONEL MESSI'S (NOT IN PIC) SPOT-KICK, WEDNESDAY

PSG through to quarters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, March 11: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) withstood early pressure from a much-improved but wasteful Barcelona side to draw 1-1 and reach the quarterfinals of the Champions League.

PSG lead 4-1 from the first leg of their round of 16 game and moved four goals clear when Kylian Mbappe, who scored a hat trick at Camp Nou, netted with a confident penalty in the 31st minute.

That goal was firmly against the run of play and, after Barca had squandered possession and chances, Messi equalised in the 37th with a powerful shot from 25 meters that tore into the top left corner.

But the six-time Golden Ball winner then had a penalty saved by goalkeeper Keylor Navas on the stroke of halftime, his first miss from the spot in the Champions League since 2015.

It is the first time since 2005 that neither Messi nor his great rival Cristiano Ronaldo has reached the last eight of the competition, following Juventus' exit Tuesday.

Barcelona dominated the first half and easily could have been

ahead at the break — and threatening an unlikely comeback — if not for some very wasteful play from winger Ousmane Dembele in terms of both sloppy passing and poor finishing. Barca kept probing in the second half, and Messi had a chance from close range in the 61st but hesitated a split-second before shooting and allowed defender Marquinhos to block his shot with the goal gaping.

At the same stage of the competition four years ago, Barcelona lost 0-4 here only to win 6-1 at Camp Nou in one of the greatest comebacks in Champions League history.

Neymar and Messi tormented PSG that night, but there was to be no reply this time. Barca's coach Ronald Koeman selected Frenkie de Jong as a makeshift center half, but most of the action was at the other end as Barca made a bright start.

Dembele had a low shot saved and then wasted a great chance to pick out the unmarked Messi moments later, shooting over instead. Messi played a pass behind PSG's defense and Dembele burst through, forcing Navas into a fine one-handed save with a low shot.

Navas then tipped Sergino Dest's drive onto the crossbar as Barcelona

opened PSG up with its passing and movement. But Dembele over-hit a simple pass that would have given Messi an open goal midway through the half and Barcelona soon paid the price.

PSG took the lead after a video review ruled that defender Clement Lenglet clipped striker Mauro Icardi. Mbappe sent his spot-kick to goalie Marc Andre ter Stegen's right.

Barca came straight back and Dembele was erratic again, hitting a low shot straight at Navas after Griezmann's superb angled pass gave him space inside the left of the penalty area.

Messi then took matters into his own hands, smashing an unstoppable shot past Navas with ferocious power. The goalkeeper did better when he saved with his legs from Sergio Busquets as Barcelona poured forward.

Incessant pressure led to a penalty for Barcelona, again following a VAR check, when Kurzawa was adjudged to have impeded Griezmann. Messi seemed hesitant and went for power against Navas, his former rival at Real Madrid, who kicked the ball onto the crossbar with an outstretched leg.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Budapest, March 11: With their Premier League title defense in tatters, Liverpool kept their last chance of a trophy alive by beating Leipzig 2-0 Wednesday to reach the Champions League quarterfinals.

Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane scored Liverpool's goals to complete a 4-0 win on aggregate. Liverpool ended their run of six defeats in home games, at least technically, as Jurgen Klopp's team were officially the host at the neutral Puskas Arena in Hungary.

Klopp said Liverpool succeeded by forgetting about the collapse of their campaign in England, where the team is 25 points off the league lead.

A string of saves by goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi — once a Liverpool player — kept Leipzig in contention before Salah made the breakthrough in the 70th minute. Salah lined up a low shot tucked inside the right post after Diogo Jota showed smart movement on the counter to create space for Salah before passing to the



Liverpool scorers Mo Salah (R) and Sadio Mane react after the former's goal

Egypt forward.

As Leipzig — who surprisingly reached the semifinals last season — tried to find a way back into the game four minutes later, substitute Divock Origi found space on the right flank to cross low for Mane to tap in.

The closest Leipzig came to scoring was when Alexander Sorloth headed against the crossbar in the 67th, before Liverpool responded with two goals to end the German team's chances.

A long ball from Thiago Alcantara found Salah free behind the Leipzig defense in the 24th before Gulacsi parried away the Egyptian's shot and Mane headed the rebound into the ground. Not long after, Diogo Jota beat Nordi Mukiele and found the Leipzig back line open in front of him before Gulacsi again saved.

At the other end, Alisson Becker stopped an early Leipzig attack, pushing away a shot from Dani Olmo in the 10th when Leipzig exploited Liverpool's high defensive line to counter.

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

CITY LIGHT TOO BRIGHT FOR SAINTS



MANCHESTER: Riyad Mahrez and Kevin De Bruyne both scored twice to lead Manchester City to a 5-2 victory over Southampton on Wednesday, moving 14 points clear at the top of the Premier League. City were contentiously denied a penalty with the score 1-1 in the first half after goalkeeper Alex McCarthy was adjudged not to have fouled Phil Foden and VAR did not overrule. But City responded to win convincingly as Mahrez put the hosts ahead and then set up Ilkay Gundogan to make it 3-1 at the Etihad Stadium before halftime. The Algerian added another after the break and De Bruyne scored the fifth after Che Adams had pulled one back. De Bruyne also opened the scoring in the 15th minute with James Ward-Prowse replying from the penalty spot.

ATLETICO EXTEND SPANISH LEAGUE LEAD

MADRID: Atletico Madrid put an end to its home struggles in the Spanish league Wednesday, strengthening their lead in the process. Atletico ended their three-game winless streak at home in the league by defeating Athletic Bilbao 2-1 in a match postponed from January because of a snowstorm in Madrid. Marcos Llorente and Luis Suarez scored a goal in each half as Atletico came from behind to move six points ahead of Barcelona and eight points in front of Real Madrid. The victory allowed Diego Simeone to break Luis Aragones' club record of 308 wins as a coach. Simeone's team are seeking their first league title since 2014.

Chhetri tests +ve for coronavirus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 11: Indian football team captain and star striker Sunil Chhetri Thursday said he has tested positive for COVID-19, a development that is set to rule him out of the international friendly against Oman March 25 in Dubai.

He is also likely to miss the March 29 friendly against United Arab Emirates at the same venue. The Bengaluru FC star forward took to social media to post the update and said that he is feeling fine.

"In a not-so-happy update, I've tested positive for COVID-19. In better news, I feel fine as I continue my recovery from the virus and should be back on a football pitch soon," Chhetri wrote on his Twitter handle. "No better time to keep reminding everyone to continue taking all the safety precau-

tions always."

The 36-year-old was competing in the Indian Super League (ISL) till last month in Goa in a bio-secure bubble. His campaign got over after Bengaluru FC failed to make the semifinals.

The team's last game was February 25, which Chhetri played and also scored a goal. Bengaluru FC were placed seventh on the table at the end of the league stage. The former champions logged 22 points after winning five matches, drawing seven and losing eight games.

As part of the preparation for the two matches against Oman and UAE, the national team is scheduled to assemble for a preparatory camp in Dubai from March 15. India last played an international match in November 2019, in the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Afghanistan (in Tajikistan) and Oman (in Muscat).