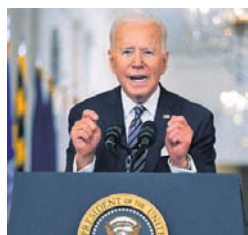




KATRINA'S HAPPINESS TIPS

In Instagram post, Katrina Kaif doles out words of wisdom on how to attain happiness

LEISURE P2



'US IS COMING BACK'

President Joe Biden tells countrymen that America is on path to defeat Covid-19 and revive the economy

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA EVES LOSE

Lizelle Lee ton helps South Africa beat India evens in a match where Mithali Raj reaches 10,000 int'l runs

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Let's protect rights of children. Suggest me which web series we should ban

BACK TO RING



WEST BENGAL: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was discharged from state-run SSKM Hospital in Kolkata Friday evening after doctors found her recovery to be 'satisfactory'. Doctors took the decision after the 66-year-old TMC supremo repeatedly requested them to discharge her from the medical establishment. Banerjee, seated on a wheelchair with her left foot plastered, greeted several party activists gathered outside the Woodburn Block of the hospital.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	CHANGE	PERCENTAGE
SENSEX	50792.08	↓ 487.43	-0.96%
NIFTY	15031.00	↓ 143.80	-0.96%
DOLLAR	73.30	↓ ₹0.24	-0.33%
EURO	86.69	↓ ₹0.41	-0.47%
GOLD	₹44,359	↓ ₹520	-1.17%
SILVER	₹66,115	↓ ₹1430	-2.15%

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	35.0°C	34.0°C
TEMP MIN	23.6°C	23.2°C
Humidity	86%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	

BJP MLA's suicide attempt, Oppn's protest rock House

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: In a shocking incident, BJP legislator from Deogarh, Subash Panigrahi Friday attempted suicide in the Assembly by trying to consume sanitizer amid noisy protests over alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement in the state.

He made this attempt as a mark of protest when Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain was making a statement in the House over the paddy procurement issue. However, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha and other legislators managed to prevent Panigrahi from consuming sanitizer and recovered the toxic material from him.

"I tried to consume sanitizer as the state government left me with no option. Even though the farmers' issue was raised in the House time and again, the state government did not pay heed to the plight of the farmers," Panigrahi told reporters outside the House. During the first phase of the Budget session, Panigrahi had staged a protest in the House and threatened to immolate



himself if paddy was not procured from the farmers at the earliest. Senior BJD member Anant Das denounced Panigrahi's action. "This act of a lawmaker is not acceptable," Das said. Since its beginning in the morning, the opening day of the second phase Budget session witnessed noisy protests by the Opposition BJP and Congress members over alleged mismanagement in paddy procurement across the state. Members of both the opposition parties rushed to the well of the House as soon as it assembled for the question hour at 10.30 over the issue. Unable to

run the proceedings, Speaker SN Patro adjourned the proceedings first till 11.30 am and later till 4 pm.

Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra said, "The government has betrayed the farmers and cheated the Opposition by not lifting the paddy from mandis despite its assurance to the House during the first phase of the Budget session."

The minister in his reply, however, defended the state government and claimed that the state government has procured 19 per cent more paddy from farmers this time than the previous year.

I tried to consume sanitizer as the state government left me with no option. Even though the farmers' issue was raised in the House time and again, the state government did not pay heed to the plight of the farmers

SUBASH PANIGRAHI | DEOGARH MLA

Inflation rises on higher fuel prices

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 12: India's retail inflation accelerated to a three-month high in February on higher fuel prices, which could challenge the central bank's accommodative stance and record-low key policy rates adopted to boost the pandemic-hit economy. Annual retail inflation rose 5.03 per cent in February, up from 4.06 per cent in January, data released by the Ministry of Statistics showed Friday.

Retail petrol prices in the national capital New Delhi have gone up by nearly 9 per cent so far this year, while diesel prices are up over 10 per cent, pushed up by higher Union and state taxes, putting pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cut taxes. The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent last month, is expected to keep rates unchanged at its next meeting from April 5-7.



After cutting the repo rate by 115 basis points to sustain the economy during the coronavirus crisis, the central bank has kept the policy rate unchanged since May, 2020.

IIP CONTRACTS P11

QUAD ROOTS FOR FREE INDO-PACIFIC

In apparent reference to China's muscle flexing in the region, US, India, Japan & Australia underscore need for a 'free & open' Indo-Pacific

AGENCIES

Washington/New Delhi, March 12: US President Joe Biden met leaders of India, Australia, and Japan Friday, a group central to his efforts to counter China's growing military and economic power, and said a free and open Indo-Pacific region was essential to all of their futures.

The White House says the virtual meeting of the countries known as the Quad, the first at leader level, shows the importance Biden places on the Indo-Pacific region and that it will focus on ways to fight the coronavirus pandemic, as well as cooperate on economic growth and the climate crisis.

"A free and open Indo Pacific is essential to each of our futures," Biden told the meeting from the White House. "The United States is committed to working with you, our partners, and all our allies in the region, to achieve stability."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the Quad has come of age and its agenda covering areas like vaccines, climate change and emerging technologies makes it a force for global good. In his opening remarks, he also talked about shared values and promoting a secure, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

"We are united by our democratic values, and our commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. Our agenda today covering areas like vaccines, climate change and emerging technologies makes the Quad a force for global good," he said.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said he wanted the four "to forge strongly



ahead toward the realisation of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and to make visible contribution to peace, stability and prosperity of the region, including overcoming the coronavirus."

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison called the meeting "incredibly important." "When governments come together at the highest level, this shows a whole new level of cooperation to create a new anchor for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific," he told reporters.

The genesis of the Quad lies in 2004 when the four countries formed a "core group" for a joint response to the Indian Ocean tsunami to undertake rescue and relief operations.

In many senses, that pioneering effort still determines the core identity of Quad, and the instinct for collective welfare and security for the people of the Indo-Pacific. The Biden administration recognised the significance of the Indo-Pacific region in its Interim National Security Strategic Guidance document.

MORE P10

Sahitya Akademi Award for Hota & Nayak from Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 12: Chandrasekhar Hota and Ramachandra Nayak from Odisha won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020, the Akademi announced Friday.

Hota won the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2020 for 'Chetanara Anwesana' in essays genre while Nayak was selected for the Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2020 for 'Bana Deula Re Suna Neula'.

According to the Akademi,



Chandrasekhar Hota



Ramachandra Nayak

the books were selected on the basis of recommendations made by the jury comprising three members each in the concerned language in accordance with the rules and

procedures laid down for the purpose.

Nayak and Hota will receive the awards in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper plaque and a cheque of

₹ 50,000 at a special function to be held at a later date.

The Akademi also announced the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 in 20 languages Friday during the opening day of its annual 'Festival of Letters' event.

Poet Arundhati Subramaniam won the award for her poetry collection "When God is a Traveller" in English, while politician-writer M Veerappa Moily was named for his epic poetry titled "Sri Bahubali Ahimsa Digvijayam" in Kannada.

ESPLANADE

RANGOM WALI KHUSHIYAM

March 1st to 14th

GIFTS UP FOR GRABS

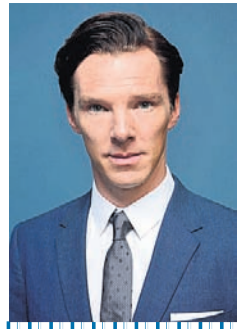
- Gift Voucher*
- Gift Voucher worth ₹ 500*
- Curated Hamper*

One daily Gift for the Woman with the most Colourful Outfit*

Thank you for all the happiness that you spread!
Win special gifts on Shopping at Esplanade One Mall.

BIG BAZAAR is fully stocked to fulfill your essential needs!

leisure



BENEDICT ON ABSENCE FROM WANDAVISION SEASON ONE

British actor Benedict Cumberbatch, who plays Dr Strange in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, has explained he did not appear in the first season of WandaVision because he was busy with his production company.

CHILD RIGHTS BODY ASKS NETFLIX TO STOP STREAMING BOMBAY BEGUMS

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has asked Netflix Inc to immediately stop streaming its new drama series Bombay Begums after it reviewed complaints around scenes showing children consuming drugs. In a letter to Netflix, NCPCR asked the streaming giant to probe the matter.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES Today, you will meet with success, and you do it on your own merit, without any divine intervention. You may be a student of science or arts, but you will excel due to your deep knowledge of the subject.

TAURUS You are hard working by nature but get highly frustrated when things do not end the way you had imagined, feels Ganesha. This may lead to anger against the system or the order in which things work.

GEMINI There is every possibility that you will keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions today, predicts Ganesha. And this will prevent a grave misunderstanding. Later in the day, you will benefit from the insights of your soul mate.

CANCER The first half of the day may leave you a little flummoxed. You may get discouraged when things are not going your way, predicts Ganesha. But your subconscious mind knows how to handle such situations. You will take a break from the rat race, and take a detour to your home.

LEO Ganesha foresees today as a day full of duplicities, as you foster amazing feelings and astonishing fears. It's like you don't know whether to be happy or scared. At work, you may do well to anticipate a sudden turn of events as hectic business activities take their toll on you.

VIRGO You might spend most of your day at the table today, planning and mapping your future. Keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions. Take the approval of your family as and when required so that no misunderstanding creeps up in the days to come.

LIBRA Today, you touch a new high when it comes to self-reliance. The pledges and promises you make may tend to perplex people at your workplace. Afternoon may see you taking on other people's responsibilities as well.

SCORPIO It seems like a fruitful day in business, and to deal in money matters, foresees Ganesha. On the career front, you may be occupied with important meetings. Things will work out for you if you manage to strike a balance between your ideas and implementation. Heavy expenditure may be on the cards as you feel tempted to buy jewellery for your beloved, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS Time is something that once spent can never be earned back, says Ganesha. The importance of time will dawn upon you today as you undertake the massive challenge of organising your. Since the time is not favourable maintain a low profile and avoid any quarrel, which may harm you immensely.

CAPRICORN The day bodes well, especially for public servants. An impending business transaction with the government will keep you busy, and suggestions from friends and peers may prove beneficial, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS That is only a reflection and not the moon in your soup bowl! Be reasonable in your expectations, advises Ganesha, and give happiness a chance. You may learn an important lesson from your beloved, while your associates will be friendly.

PISCES It is a day where you find yourself upbeat and optimistic about your future, says Ganesha. Your hopefulness spurs you on to splurge and indulge your spouse in the evening. Good times!

Katrina shares tips of happiness

Mumbai: Want to know how to be happy? Check out actress Katrina Kaif's Instagram account! The actress posted a stunning picture of herself and doled out words of wisdom on how to attain happiness.

In the picture, the actress looks beautiful in a white sweater. She has teamed this up with blue jeans, minimal make-up and open hair.

"If u want to be happy, ... be . Leo Tolstoy," she captions the post.

Meanwhile, Katrina was recently spotted shooting alongside actor Salman Khan in Mumbai. This led to fans speculating whether the two were filming for Tiger 3.

Besides this, Katrina has two film releases lined up for the year. She will be seen in Sooryavanshi and Phone Bhoot. She shares the screen with Akshay Kumar in Sooryavanshi. The film has been directed by Rohit Shetty.

Phone Booth has been directed by Gurmeet Singh and also stars Ishaan Khatter and Siddhant Chaturvedi.

Rajkummar flaunts washboard abs

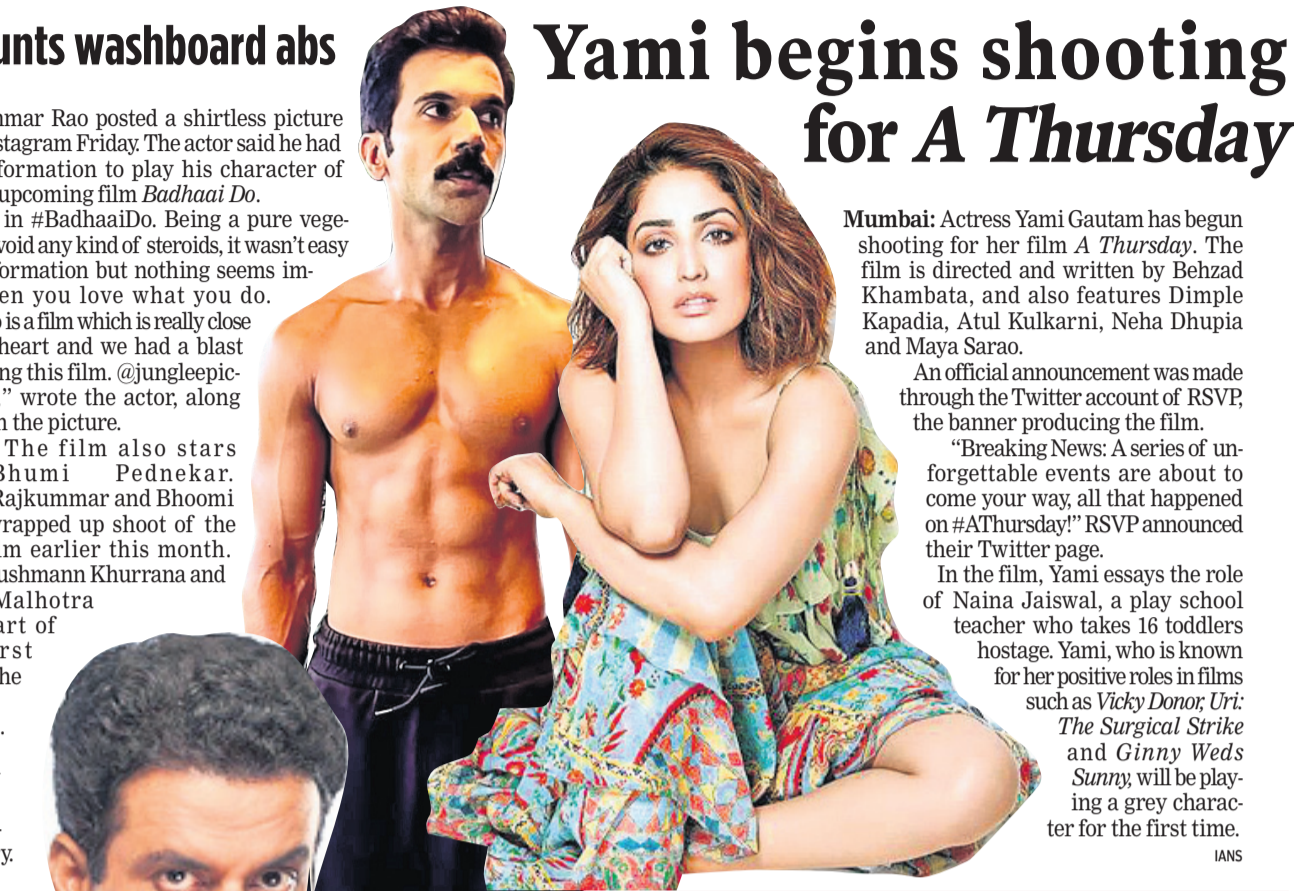
Mumbai: Actor Rajkummar Rao posted a shirtless picture flaunting six packs on Instagram Friday. The actor said he had to undergo body transformation to play his character of Shardul Thakur in the upcoming film Badhaai Do.

"#ShardulThakur in #BadhaaiDo. Being a pure vegetarian and to strictly avoid any kind of steroids, it wasn't easy to get this transformation but nothing seems impossible when you love what you do."

#BadhaaiDo is a film which is really close to my heart and we had a blast shooting this film. @junglepictures, wrote the actor, along with the picture.

The film also stars Bhumi Pednekar. Rajkummar and Bhoomi wrapped up shoot of the film earlier this month. Ayushmann Khurrana and Sanya Malhotra were part of the first film of the series.

Badhai Ho. Badhaai Do is directed by Harshvardhan Kulkarni, and narrates a fresh story.



Yami begins shooting for A Thursday

Mumbai: Actress Yami Gautam has begun shooting for her film A Thursday. The film is directed and written by Behzad Khambata, and also features Dimple Kapadia, Atul Kulkarni, Neha Dhupia and Maya Sarao.

An official announcement was made through the Twitter account of RSVP, the banner producing the film.

"Breaking News: A series of unforgettable events are about to come your way, all that happened on #AThursday!" RSVP announced their Twitter page.

In the film, Yami essays the role of Naina Jaiswal, a play school teacher who takes 16 toddlers hostage. Yami, who is known for her positive roles in films such as Vicky Donor, Uri: The Surgical Strike and Ginny Weds Sunny, will be playing a grey character for the first time.

Manoj Bajpayee tests positive for Covid

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Manoj Bajpayee has tested positive for Covid-19. The actor is currently living under home quarantine and is on medication.

A statement issued by Bajpayee's team reads: "Manoj Bajpayee has tested Covid positive after his director was infected with it. The shoot has stopped it will resume in couple of

months. "Manoj was shooting for the film Despatch which is produced by Ronnie Screwvala. Manoj Bajpayee is on medication and recovering well. He is in self-quarantine at home and following all precautions. We wish him for super recovery."

On the work front, Bajpayee will next be seen playing a police officer named ACP Avinash, in the upcoming digital film Silence... Can You Hear It. The mystery thriller film, also starring Prachi Desai, Arjun Mathur, Sahil Vaid, Vaqar, Barkha Singh and Garima Yagnik, premieres on March 26 on Zee 5.

ASIM UTSAV - DAY 1 Darkness plays a character in Shababahakamane

POST NEWS NETWORK

BHUBANESWAR: Asim Utsav, a two-day drama festival organised in the memory of eminent artiste Asim Basu, kicked off here at Rabintra Mandap, Friday.

The event is being organised by Asim Basu Foundation (ABF).

On the first evening, the members of Uttar Purush, one of the oldest drama troupes of Bhubaneswar, presented Shababahakamane (The Pallbearers), a trendsetting play of late 1960s that changed the theatre literature in Odisha. This is one of the most talked about plays ever written by eminent playwright Bijoy Mishra.



A scene from play Shababahakamane staged at Rabintra Mandap, Friday.

The plot revolves around three

strangers, a couple and a corpse. The five enter an abandoned building

on a night to get respite from heavy rain. The building houses a

man's body also. Suddenly, they discover that the dead man has

left a dying declaration indicating about hidden treasure inside the house. The revelation changes the relations between the five and they turn suspicious about each other oblivious to the fact that no one stands to gain anything.

The actors enacted their parts on a dark stage for the first 10 minutes of the play which bewildered the audience at the beginning.

Though Shababahakamane was an experimental play, it was ahead of its time and quite popular among the viewers when it was written, said play's director Chakradhar Patra.

"Being part of Asim Utsav is a matter of pride and we feel honoured to present this play on this

occasion," added Patra.

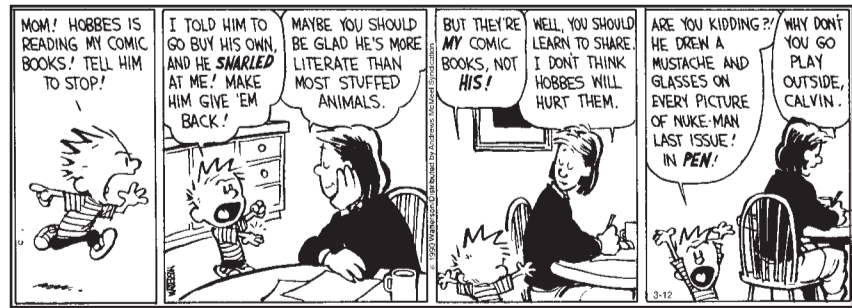
Asim Kala, a painting exhibition showcasing the works of 16 well known female artists, was also held on the occasion. The expo was curated by young visual artist and art historian Firdausi Tabassum.

The dignitaries who graced the occasion as guests include Principal Commissioner of Income Tax Department Manoranjan Panigrahi, Odisha Natya Sangh president Haren Sahoo, theatre personality Banchhanidhi Patnaik and eminent playwright Sanghamitra Mishra. ABF's president Ramahari Jena, secretary Pabitra Mohan Kar and festival director Debadutta Pati were present on the occasion.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

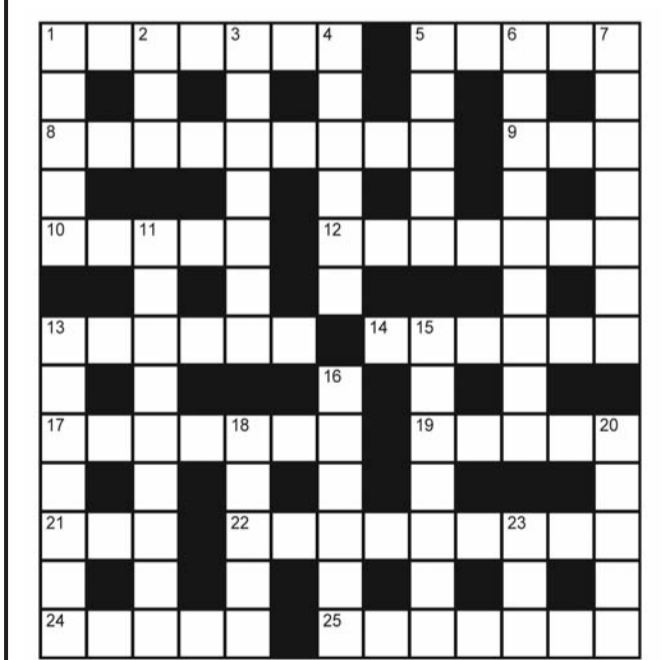


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across 1 Hungarian dish 5 Jellied garnish 8 Just say you're sorry 9 Hilo garland 10 Excuse 12 Hot sauce 13 Do a slow burn 14 Poorly made 17 West Indies island 19 Fine thread 21 Varnish ingredient 22 Nut tree 24 Knight fights sorry 25 James Joyce novel Down 1 Tropical fruit 2 ET's craft 3 Get rid of 4 Boosts 5 Having a bite 6 Fortifications 7 Coffee substitute 11 Exactly alike 13 Blood-red 15 Vacation 16 Last imperial dynasty of China 18 Olympic contests 20 Tests 23 More, in Madrid

SUDOKU

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

Table with 9 rows and 9 columns representing a Sudoku puzzle grid.

SOLUTIONS



Table with 9 rows and 9 columns representing a solved Sudoku grid.

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

of the day **quote**

We are not supporting any party or telling people whom to vote for but our only appeal is that the BJP should be taught a lesson

YOGENDRA YADAV | SAMYUKTA KISAN MORCHA LEADER

First Stalin and now Udhayanidhi. Two years ago Stalin said none from his family will enter politics. But he is forgotten all that, is misleading people and Stalin and those belonging to Karunanidhi's family are doing dynasty politics today

Why are they opposing the installation of 500 flag masts across Delhi? If not in India, will our flag be unfurled in Pakistan, if not in Delhi, will it be unfurled in Islamabad

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER



Narendra Modi is himself flagging off Dandi March from the Sabarmati Ashram to commemorate this day. I hope that Gandhiji's message would shake his conscience and he would take a decision on farm laws by the evening

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

KAMAL HAASAN TO CONTEST FROM COIMBATORE SOUTH

Actor-turned politician Kamal Haasan would make his electoral debut, contesting from Coimbatore South constituency in the April 6 Tamil Nadu assembly elections



Two-foot-tall man seeks police help to find a bride

Azim, 26 claimed that his family was not sincere about his marriage

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Muzaffarnagar (UP), March 12: Police in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district has received an unusual request - to find a bride for a two-foot-tall man. Azim, 26, had Tuesday approached the women police station in Shamli, claiming that his family members were not marrying him and requested the police to find a match for him. However, he had no success. Station House Officer of the police station Niraj Choudhry said police have no role to arrange marriages for people. "We can help if there is a dispute between couples but to find a bride for a man is not our job, she said. Azim's family, who live in Kairana, said they



want him to get married but someone should be willing to marry him. He is physically weak and has got problems with his hands. We want him to be married to a person who can take care of him, Azim's brother Mohammad Naem said. We have got many proposals including one from Moradabad and we are planning to travel there to see the woman, he added.

LAC ROW

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: India and China Friday held "in-depth" discussions on addressing the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, holding that disengagement in the North and South banks of Pangong lake provided a good basis to work towards their early resolution.

The two countries also agreed during the parleys that in the interim they should continue to maintain stability at ground level and prevent any untoward incident. The talks were held under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC). The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two sides agreed to maintain close communication and dialogue through both the diplomatic and military channels and agreed to convene the 11th round of military talks at an early date. In a statement, it said the two sides should continue their dialogue to reach a mutually acceptable

India, China hold in-depth talks



solution for complete disengagement from all friction points at the earliest. "This would enable two sides to look at broader de-escalation of troops in the area and work towards restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas. They also agreed that in the interim two sides should continue to maintain stability at ground level and prevent any untoward incident," the MEA added. The MEA also said that India

and China agreed that the agreement reached between the two foreign ministers in Moscow in September last as also their recent phone conversation in February should continue to guide the work of the two sides. "The two sides reviewed the situation along the LAC in the Western sector and had in-depth discussions on the remaining issues along the LAC in the Western sector," it said. "They agreed that the completion

of the disengagement in North and South Bank of the Pangong Lake provided a good basis for the two sides to work towards early resolution of these remaining issues." The Indian delegation was led by Additional Secretary (East Asia) in the MEA while the Chinese side was headed by director general of the boundary and oceanic department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two countries had completed withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in line with an agreement on disengagement. After completion of the disengagement process in Pangong lake areas, senior military commanders of India and China held another round of talks on February 20 with a focus on taking forward the disengagement process in other friction points. At the talks, India pitched for a faster disengagement process in areas like Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang to bring down tension in the mountainous region.

FOR A GOOD HEALTH



Cyclists silhouetted against a cloudy sky on Chandigarh-Bathinda road during early morning hours, in Patiala

SHORT TAKES

Cheating case against Kangana

Mumbai: A case of alleged cheating was filed against actor Kangana Ranaut by Mumbai police on Friday on a local court's orders after the author of 'Didda: The Warrior Queen of Kashmir' accused her of copyright violation. The First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Khar police station against Kangana, Kamalkumar Jain, Rangoli Chandel and Akshat Ranaut, an official said.

Delhi breathes foul air

New Delhi: The national capital on Friday recorded the air quality index in the 'poor' category due to dust, but the Ministry of Earth Sciences said that expected rainfall is expected to lower it down. "Thunderstorms with gusty winds and local dust lifting are likely at isolated places today. Expected rainfall is likely to contribute to AQI positively through wet deposition," according to Ministry's System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research.

Man fires shots to scare ex-gf

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have arrested a man for firing in West Delhi's Subhash Nagar to frighten his ex-girlfriend. The girl had come to her friend's house Wednesday evening when the accused Suresh Kadyan, 32, followed her and fired shots outside the house, police said Friday.

Rave party busted

Hyderabad: In a major operation undertaken early Friday, Rachakonda Commissionerate police have detained 90 youngsters from a rave party organised at a farm house near the city. The detained youngsters include techies, college students, and also two women, who had purchased tickets for the event.

Terrorist arrested

Jammu: Security forces arrested a terrorist and seized arms and ammunition from a house in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district Friday, officials said. A joint cordon and search operation was launched by the Army, the CRPF, the SSB and the JK-Police in Bikheryan village, they said. During the operation, a terrorist, identified as Firdous Ahmed, was apprehended from the house of Ghulam Ahmed Natnoo and three Chinese pistols, two magazines, 15 rounds and a silencer were recovered from there, the officials said.

CBI, ED issue summons to TMC leaders, ex-MPs

THE CBI HAD TAKEN OVER THE INVESTIGATION OF SARADHA AND OTHER PONZI SCAM CASES ON THE ORDERS OF THE SUPREME COURT MAY 9, 2014

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 12: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday issued summons to Trinamool Congress leaders Partha Chatterjee and Madan Mitra respectively in connection with separate ponzi scam cases, sources in the agencies said. The ED also summoned former TMC Rajya Sabha members businessman Swapan Sadhan Bose and journalist Ahmed Hassan Imran in connection with a case. Chatterjee, TMC secretary general and senior West Bengal minister, was allegedly seen in some of the public functions arranged by the now-defunct I-core chit fund company which was charged with duping investors by offering them abnormally high returns on investments.

PONZI SCAM CASES



The economic offences wing of the CBI asked him to depose before its sleuths by next week at the CGO Complex office of the agency in Kolkata. The ED probing the money laundering aspect of multi-crore

Saradha scam asked Imran, Bose and Mitra to depose before its officials on March 17, 18 and 19 respectively, sources said. Mitra was earlier arrested by the CBI in a Saradha scam case and was in jail for 21 months. He was released on

baill in September 2016. Chatterjee, the state's parliamentary affairs, school education and higher education minister said that he has not received any such communication from the CBI so far. "If I am called, I will definitely go. I can be present at any public meeting by virtue of being a minister. Please remember that I left a highly lucrative job to join politics and I have no greed for money," he told reporters. Chatterjee used to work in diversified PSU Andrew Yule before joining politics. Like Saradha and Rose Valley chit fund companies, I-core raised money from the public by several fraudulent schemes floated by it. The CBI had taken over the investigation of Saradha and other ponzi scam cases on the orders of the Supreme Court May 9, 2014.

Officials associated with govts can't work as SECs: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court Friday held that a person employed with the government cannot work as state election commissioners (SECs) and came down on the Goa government for giving its Law Secretary the additional charge of the SEC. The apex court said the state poll panels shall be headed by independent persons who do not hold any office under the state government and if they hold any such offices, then they have to resign before taking charge of SEC. The top court said election commissioners have to be independent persons and no state can appoint a person who holds any office with the government. A bench headed by Justice R F Nariman also directed the Goa state election body to issue the no-

tification for the local body polls within 10 days from today and complete the election process by April 30. "Under the Constitutional mandate, it is the duty of the state to not interfere with the functioning of the state election commission," the bench held in its judgement delivered on the appeal of the state government. The judgement came on an appeal by the Goa government against the high court's ruling on pan-chayat polls. The case pertained to local body elections in Goa in which reservation of wards for woman and Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes were allegedly not carried out in terms of state law. The Bombay High Court had struck down the notice of state poll panel for reservation of wards. The Goa government, in its appeal, had said that High Court could not have interfered with the poll process.

Haryana govt presents ₹1.55 lakh cr budget

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 12: Identifying health, agriculture and infrastructure as key priority areas, the Haryana government Friday presented a Rs 1.55 lakh crore-budget for the next fiscal and stayed away from imposing fresh taxes. From proposing free education for class 9 to 12 students from all categories to setting up Special Education Zones (SEZs) to promoting technology-based learning in government schools, the budget has renewed focus on the state's education sector. Presenting his second budget, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also announced a new scheme - Mukhyamantri Antyodya

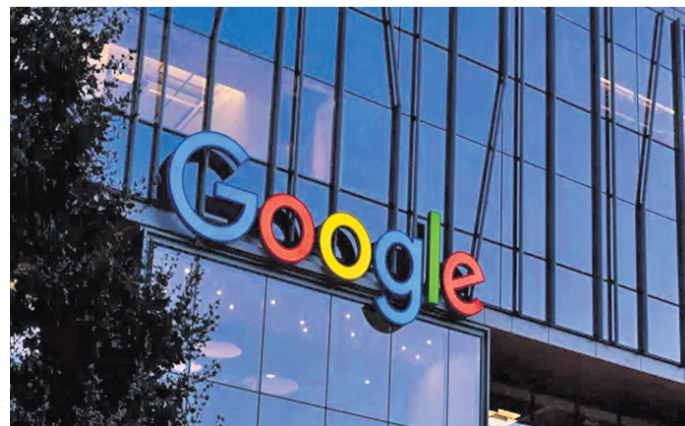
Parivar Utthan Abhiyan - to help the poorest families as well as an increase in old-age pension to Rs 2,500 from Rs 2,250 per month, effective from April 1. "It is important for the budget to prioritise specific sectors that are key to leverage a rebound in the economy, particularly in times of crisis. We have identified health, agriculture and infrastructure as key priority areas that we need to focus recovery and resurgence," he said. "While focusing on health is of paramount importance in these times of unprecedented public health crisis, agriculture which forms the foundation of our economy and which is the sheet anchor of our self-reliance is critical," he emphasised.

Google to help people find vaccination centres

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: Google Friday said it will start showing information related to vaccination centres on its various platforms like search, maps and Google Assistant. Google, in a blogpost, said its teams have been working on surfacing "authoritative and timely information" for people asking vaccine-related questions. "We have worked with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to amplify this science-based narrative around vaccination drive, and have been working closely with the Rapid Risk

Response team at the MoHFW that is tracking misinformation using social media listening tools across region and languages, and countering it with science-based messaging on vaccines and pandemic response overall," it said. Shortly after the first phase of vaccinations commenced, Google had rolled out knowledge panels in Google Search that show up for queries relating to the COVID vaccine. This was done to help people find credible information as these panels provided consolidated information such as details on the two vaccines, effectiveness, safety, distribution, side effects, among others and is available in English and eight Indian languages (Tamil,



Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, and Hindi. This information is sourced from MoHFW, and provides answers to commonly asked questions, dis-

plays real-time statistics around vaccinations completed, and provides links to the MoHFW website for additional local resources, Google said. "With vaccinations for the vulnerable population having commenced from 1st March in thousands of hospitals across the country, we are also working with the MoHFW and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accurately surface the information on vaccination centers on Google Search, Maps and Google Assistant, and expect to roll this out in the coming weeks," Google said. Google also delivers regular Google Trends reports on COVID vaccine queries that reflect interest

around the vaccination from month to month across regions to help government officials as they make critical decisions during these vaccination rollouts, the blogpost said. "As COVID-19 continues to challenge our communities, we remain committed to doing all we can to assist the country's health agencies at this key juncture of the pandemic, where the successful rollout of these large-scale vaccinations can help us collectively turn a corner and see a much-needed return to normalcy," it added. More than 2.61 crore (2,61,64,920) vaccine doses have been administered through 4,87,919 sessions, as per the provisional report till Friday 7 am.

international



I know everyone in Auckland will be looking forward to a weekend with fewer restrictions, but we are asking that everyone keeps up the good habits that help us deal with cases if they emerge. That includes scanning in or keeping a record of everywhere you go
JACINDA ARDERN | PRIME MINISTER, NEW ZEALAND

FIRST PAK SIKH TAKES OATH AS SENATOR

Gurdeep Singh from the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party took the oath Friday as a Senator, becoming the first turban-clad Sikh representative from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in the upper house of Parliament



of the day quote

Yes, there is no doubt that the third wave has started and basically, the phenomena that's driving it is the spread of the UK strain
ASAD UMAR | MINISTER FOR PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES, PAKISTAN

With the Dream Keeper's significant investment in the black community, we knew that it was critical to provide dedicated funding to address the unique needs in the Bblack transgender community
LONDON BREED | MAYOR, SAN FRANCISCO

We urge Egypt to guarantee space for civil society - including human rights defenders - to work without fear of intimidation, harassment, arrest, detention or any other form of reprisal
KIRSTI KAUPPI | FINNISH AMBASSADOR

QUAD SUMMIT

Exclusive blocs should not target third party: China



Beijing, March 12: Ahead of the Quad summit Friday, China said exchanges and cooperation between countries should contribute to mutual understanding rather than "targeting" a third party and refrain from "pursuing exclusive blocs".

Washington, March 12: President Joe Biden has told his countrymen that "America is coming back" as it is on a path to defeat the deadly coronavirus and revive the economy badly hit by the pandemic.

The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of confirmed cases and deaths at 29,150,068 and 529,102, respectively, according to Johns Hopkins University. Some 18 million Americans are still relying on unemployment insurance and some 400,000 small businesses have permanently closed their doors.

"America is coming back," Biden said in his maiden prime time address to the nation Thursday on the 50th day of his presidency.

"The development, manufacture, distribution of vaccines in record

AGENCIES

Washington, March 12: President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga will attend the virtual summit, which is the first conclave of the top leaders of the Quadrilateral alliance, Friday.

Known as the "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue," representatives for the four-member nations have met periodically since its establishment in 2007.

Asked for China's reaction to the Quad conclave, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here that "exchanges and cooperation between nations should contribute to the mutual understanding and trust among nations, rather than targeting a third party or damaging the interest of a third party."

"We hope that relevant countries uphold the principles of openness, inclusiveness and win-win results and refrain from pursuing exclusive blocs and do things that

Exchanges and cooperation between nations should contribute to the mutual understanding and trust among nations, rather than targeting a third party or damaging the interest of a third party
ZHAO LIJIAN | SPOKESMAN, FOREIGN MINISTRY, CHINA

are conducive to regional peace, stability and prosperity," he said.

The meeting to be held virtually is expected to last about 90 minutes, during which all the four leaders would also lay out their vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, amidst China flexing its muscles in the strategically-vital region.

China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. Beijing has also made substantial progress in militarising its man-made islands in the past few years.

Beijing claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. But Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counter-claims. In the East China Sea, China has territorial disputes with Japan.

The evolving situation in the Indo-Pacific region in the wake of China's increasing military muscle-flexing has become a major talking point among leading global powers.

'America is coming back' declares Biden

THE PRESIDENT SETS GOAL OF JULY 4TH TO 'MARK INDEPENDENCE' FROM THE DEADLY CORONAVIRUS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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"America is coming back," Biden said in his maiden prime time address to the nation Thursday on the 50th day of his presidency.

"The development, manufacture, distribution of vaccines in record

time is a true miracle of science. It's one of the most extraordinary achievements any country has ever accomplished. We also just saw the Perseverance rover land on Mars, stunning images of our dreams that are now reality, another example of the extraordinary American ingenuity, commitment, and belief in science and one another," he said.

Reflecting on the last one year wherein the country lost more than 500,000 Americans, he said there is something else that the country lost.

"We lost faith in whether our government and our democracy can deliver on really hard things for the American people. But as I stand here tonight, we're proving once again something I've said time and time again to be probably tired of hearing me say



it. I say it to foreign leaders and domestic alike. It's never, ever a good bet to bet against the American people," Biden said.

"And today, I signed into law the American Rescue Plan, an historic piece of legislation that delivers immediate relief to millions of peo-

ple. It includes USD 1,400 in direct rescue checks — payments. That means a typical family of four earning about USD 110,000 will get checks for USD 5,600 deposited if they have direct deposit or in a check — a Treasury check, he said.

This has been Biden's first and most pressing legislative priority since taking office January 20.

"It extends unemployment benefits. It helps small businesses. It lowers health care premiums for many. It provides food and nutrition, keeps families in their homes. And it will cut child poverty in this country in half, according to the experts. And it funds all the steps to beat the virus and create millions of jobs," he said.

This will tackle the pandemic and get direct financial assistance and relief to Americans who need it the most.

Taliban should be included in interim Afghan admin: Russia

AGENCIES

Moscow, March 12: Russia said Friday that the Taliban should be included in any Afghan interim administration, ahead of a conference in Moscow aimed at supporting peace talks between the Islamist group and Afghanistan's government.

Moscow is set to host a conference on Afghanistan March 18 and has invited several regional players, including Taliban representatives. It comes at a crucial time for the peace process ahead of a May 1 deadline for foreign troops to withdraw from Afghanistan.

The US has drafted a peace plan calling for the current Afghan government to be replaced with an interim administration until a new constitution is agreed and elections held, but Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has refused to step aside for a transitional government.

"The formation of an interim coalition government should be decided by the Afghans themselves during national reconciliation negotiations," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters at her weekly briefing.

AMID PANDEMONIUM



A red rose lies on the ground in front of Buckingham Palace as reaction continues after Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's interview with Oprah Winfrey in London, Britain
REUTERS

OZ THREATENS ACTION OVER EU CARBON TARIFF

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Canberra, March 12: Australian Trade Minister Dan Tehan Friday said the country will fight an attempt by the European Union (EU) to introduce a carbon tariff on nations with weak emissions targets.

The European Parliament Thursday voted to move ahead with the proposed Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which would impose a levy on all goods imported from countries that do not have a carbon pricing mechanism including Australia, reports Xinhua news agency.

If introduced, millions of dollars of new tariffs would be slapped on Australian exports of energy-intensive materials including aluminium, steel and chemicals.

In response, Tehan said that Australia would push back against the tariffs through the World Trade Organization (WTO).



"We want a trade liberalization approach, not a protectionist approach, in terms of how we deal with emissions reduction," he said.

Both US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson have indicated that they could follow the EU's lead on the tariff.

Proponents of the CBAM say it would create a "level playing field" for goods produced under EU regimes that are subject to a carbon price and those from abroad that are not. It would ensure that imports are not cheaper than products from the EU.

Dutch inventor of audio cassette, Lou Ottens dies

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Hague, March 12: Lou Ottens, the Dutch inventor of the cassette tape, the medium of choice for millions of bedroom mix tapes, has died, said Philips, the company where he also helped develop the compact disc. Ottens died Saturday at age 94, Philips confirmed.

A structural engineer who trained at the prestigious Technical University in Delft, he joined Philips in 1952 and was head of the Dutch company's product development department when he began work on an alternative for existing tape recorders with their cumbersome large spools of tape.



His goal was simple. Make tapes and their players far more portable and easier to use.

"During the development of the cassette tape, in the early 1960s, he had a wooden block made that fit exactly in his coat pocket," said Olga Coolen, director of the Philips Museum in the southern city of Eindhoven.

"This was how big the first Compact Cassette was to be, making it a lot handier than the bulky tape recorders in use at the time."

The final product created in 1962 later turned into a worldwide hit, with more than 100 billion cassettes sold, many to music fans who would record their own compilations direct from the radio. Its popularity waned with the development of the compact disc, an invention Ottens also helped create as supervisor of a development team, Philips said.

US criticises China's HK move, set to raise 'genocide charge'

AGENCIES

Washington, March 12: The United States Thursday condemned Chinese moves to change Hong Kong's electoral system and forecast "difficult" talks with Beijing's top diplomats next week, when the genocide Washington says China is committing against minority Muslims will be an issue the US side plans to raise.

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan would not hold back when they meet with the Chinese diplomats in Alaska on March 18 and 19, "whether it's on Taiwan, or ... efforts to push back

cluding Hong Kong.

"China hopes both sides can focus on cooperation and manage differences," he said, adding that both sides should understand each other's policy intention correctly.

China rejects US charges that it has committed genocide against Uighur and other Muslims in its Xinjiang region and calls criticism of its behavior toward Hong Kong and self-ruled Taiwan unwarranted interference in its internal affairs.

China's parliament Thursday approved a draft decision to change Hong Kong's electoral system, further reducing democratic representation in the city's institutions and introducing a mechanism to vet politicians' loyalty to Beijing.

democracy in Hong Kong, or on concerns we have about the economic relationship."

"Addressing the genocide against Uighur Muslims is something that will be a topic of discussion with the Chinese directly next week," she added.

In response, China's foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, urged the United States on Friday to stop interfering in China's affairs, in-



cluding Hong Kong.

"China hopes both sides can focus on cooperation and manage differences," he said, adding that both sides should understand each other's policy intention correctly.

China rejects US charges that it has committed genocide against Uighur and other Muslims in its Xinjiang region and calls criticism of its behavior toward Hong Kong and self-ruled Taiwan unwarranted interference in its internal affairs.

POST OPRAH INTERVIEW

Harry and Meghan's popularity plummets in UK: Poll

REUTERS

London, March 12: The popularity of Prince Harry and his wife Meghan has tumbled in Britain and has never been lower following their explosive interview with US chat show host Oprah Winfrey, according to a poll Friday.

During the interview aired last Sunday, Meghan said her pleas for help while she felt suicidal were ignored and that one unnamed member of the family had asked how dark their son Archie's skin might be.

Meanwhile, Harry, Queen Elizabeth's grandson, also bemoaned his family's reaction of the couple's decision to step back from official duties.

The tell-all interview has plunged the 1,000-year-old monarchy into its greatest crisis this century, and according to a YouGov poll, the



standing of the two royals has also taken a big hit in the aftermath.

It found 48% percent of the 1,664 respondents had a negative attitude of Harry compared to 45% with a positive view, the first time

his net favourability rating had been negative, and a fall of 15 points from a week earlier.

Meanwhile, only three in 10 people had a positive view of Meghan, while 58% had a negative opinion.

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As with other polls conducted since the interview, there was a divide between generations, with a majority of those aged 18 to 24 liking Harry and Meghan and those over 65 overwhelmingly having negative feelings towards them.

The only other member of the family to see their popularity fall was

Harry's father, heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles. The survey said 42% now had a negative view of him compared to 49% with a positive opinion.

That compared to the 94-year-old queen, who was liked by 80%, and Harry's elder brother and his wife Kate, who were popular with three-quarters of respondents.

A separate poll, conducted partly before the interview was broadcast in Britain, found support for the monarchy as a whole was largely unchanged with 63% backing the institution and 25% wanting an elected head of state.

But there were some worrying figures for the royal family. Among the youngest age group, support for an elected head of state was higher than that for the monarchy by 42% to 37%, although YouGov said this was within the margin of error.

SHORT TAKES

Germany regrets neighbours' move

Berlin: Germany's top health official expressed regret Friday that some neighbouring countries have paused their use of AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine following reports of blood clots in some people, despite the lack of any evidence the shot was responsible. Health Minister Jens Spahn said that while Germany takes reports of possible side effects from vaccines "very, very seriously," both the European Medicines Agency and Germany's own vaccine oversight body have said they have no evidence of an increase in dangerous blood clots in connection with the shots.

Chinese regulator fines 12 companies

Hong Kong: China's market regulator said Friday that it fined a dozen firms, including games company Tencent Holdings and Chinese search engine firm Baidu Inc., for not disclosing past deals as authorities step up anti-monopoly scrutiny in the internet sector. The companies, which included other firms such as ride-hailing company Didi Mobility and Softbank, were fined 500,000 yuan (\$77,000) each for not disclosing previous investments, acquisitions or joint ventures, according to a statement by China's State Administration for Market Regulation.

SA's Zulu King Goodwill dies

Johannesburg: King Goodwill Zwelithini, the traditional leader of South Africa's Zulu nation, has died aged 72 after being hospitalised for more than a month, his family announced Friday. He had health problems related to diabetes, according to local news reports. Zwelithini, the 8th Zulu king, reigned for more than 50 years, making him the longest-serving Zulu monarch.

Gunmen attack Nigeria school

Lagos: Unidentified gunmen Friday attacked a school in Nigeria's Kaduna state and abducted a number of students, a police official said. Mohammed Jalige, a police spokesperson in Kaduna, confirmed the incident to Xinhua news agency, noting that the gunmen attacked the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization located in Mando area.

business



The partnership between India and Japan very strongly indicate the foundation of professional, political, economic and common strategic interest, has made the foundation stronger

GURUPRASAD MOHAPATRA | SECRETARY, DPIIT

INDIA IMPOSES ANTI-DUMPING DUTY

India has imposed anti-dumping duty on the Chinese antibacterial drug Ciprofloxacin Hydrochloride to guard the domestic industry against cheap imports from the neighbouring country



of the day quote

The government is in the process of encouraging MSMEs, with good track record of the past five years in terms of bank turnover, GST, income tax and based on balance sheet, to raise capital from the capital market

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

I am happy to inform that our energy transition is so fast that...We will increase it to 60-65 per cent

RK SINGH | UNION MINISTER OF POWER, NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Civil aviation ministry is working on demand to bring jet fuel under GST

PRADEEP SINGH KHAROLA | CIVIL AVIATION SECRETARY

Industrial production contracts 1.6% in Jan

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 12: Industrial production re-entered the negative territory by contracting 1.6 per cent in January, mainly on account of the decline in output of capital goods, manufacturing and mining sectors.

The output of the manufacturing sector which constitutes 77.6 per cent of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) - shrank by 2 per cent in January, as against a growth of 1.8 per cent during the same month last fiscal, as per data released by the government Friday.

The worst performance was witnessed by the capital goods sector, which recorded a contraction of 9.6 per cent during the month under review, compared to a 4.4 per cent decline a year ago.

A contraction of 3.7 per cent was registered in the mining sector in January, against a positive growth of 4.4 per cent in the year-ago period.

Meanwhile, the National Statistical Office (NSO), which releases the IIP data, has revised upwardly the IIP number for December 2020 from an earlier estimate of 1 per cent to 1.56 per cent.

The factory out was in negative territory in November 2020. It had posted positive growth during September and October 2020.

Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, Ica, said the slippage of consumer goods back into a year-on-year de-growth in January 2021 is a key disappointment.

"We remain circumspect regarding the intensity of the re-



RE-ENTERS NEGATIVE ZONE

The output of the manufacturing sector which constitutes 77.6% of the IIP shrank by 2% in January

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bound in consumption immediately after the vaccine rollout widens, as some categories of households may choose to rebuild the savings that they had drained during the lockdown and post-lockdown period," she said.

The IIP contracted by 12.2 during April-January as against an almost flat growth of 0.5 per cent seen in the same period last fiscal. As per the data, there was a contraction of 0.2 per cent in the consumer durables segment and 6.8 per cent in the consumer non-durable section. These two segments were in contraction during January 2020 also.

Nayar said the sharp worsening in the performance of capital goods in January 2021 was led by an adverse base effect, which is expected to be transient. "While we expect the Central Government's capital spending to display a quick pace in the fourth quarter FY2021, the outgo from state governments is likely to be mixed, and the spending of the private sector may remain muted in the near term," she said.

M Govinda Rao, CEA, Brickwork Ratings, said the contraction in IIP numbers for January comes as a bit of surprise after turning positive in December.

UK GDP SHRINKS 2.9%; BREXIT CUTS EXPORTS

AGENCIES

London, March 12: The British economy shrank 2.9 per cent in January as the nation was hit by a new round of coronavirus restrictions and Brexit slashed exports to the European Union.

The Office for National Statistics said Friday that the drop in gross domestic product was fueled by declines in retail trade and education as efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 shut nonessential shops and schools across the U.K. Britain's economy is about 9 per cent smaller than it was before the coronavirus pandemic began in February 2020, the ONS said.

Manufacturing declined for the

first time since April, driven by a drop in exports as the nation felt the full effects of its departure from the EU for the first time after transitional arrangements ended December 31, the ONS said.

Exports of goods to the EU plunged almost 41 per cent in January while imports from the bloc dropped 28.8 per cent, the ONS reported.

Britain's decision to leave the EU ended more than 40 years of free trade with the 27-nation bloc and its 450 million people.

Shipments between Britain and the EU are now subject to tariffs, border checks and increased paperwork that have curtailed trade.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: India has emerged as the fifth most attractive growth destination, slipping one position after being surpassed by the United Kingdom, according to a global survey of CEOs. The United States is the number one market that CEOs are looking to in terms of growth over the next 12 months and China is at the second spot.

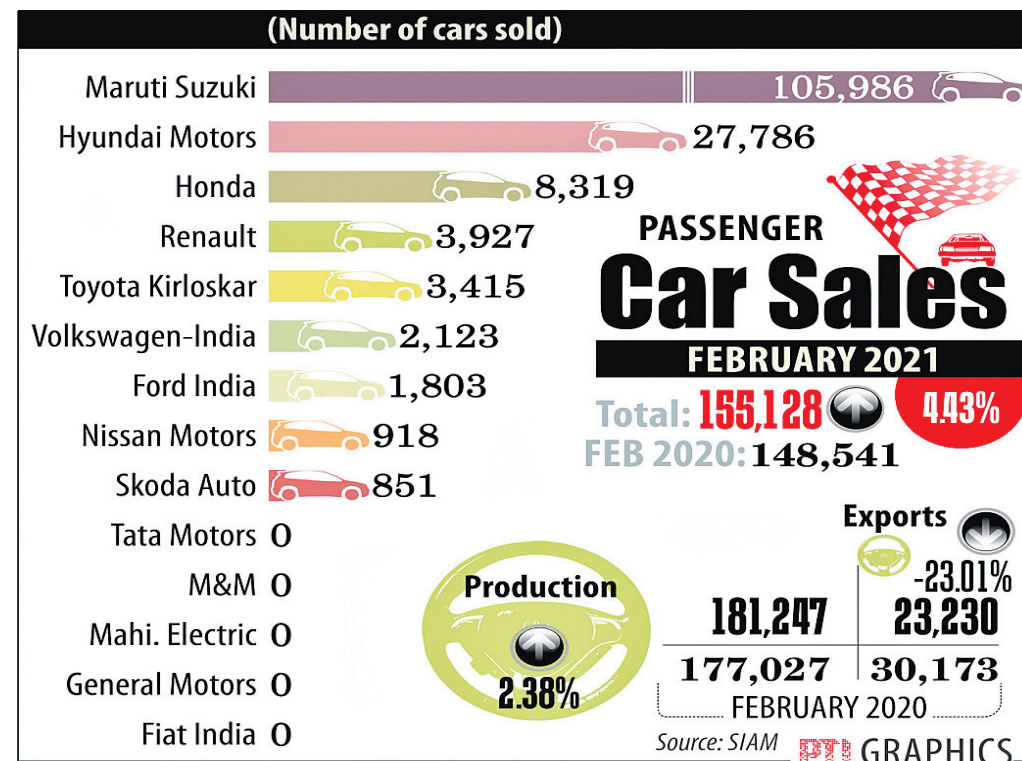
The findings are part of leading consultancy PwC's 24th Annual Global CEO Survey that covered 5,050 CEOs in 100 countries and territories, including India.

"At 17 per cent, Germany holds on to its number three spot on the list of growth destinations, while

the UK, post-Brexit, moves up to number four (11 per cent), surpassing India (8 per cent). Japan also rises up the ranking to become the sixth most attractive growth destination, overtaking Australia which held that position last year," as per the survey.

The US has extended its lead as the number one market that CEOs are looking to for growth over the next 12 months at 35 per cent, seven percentage points ahead of China at 28 per cent. In 2020, the US was only one percentage point ahead of China, it added.

The survey found that 76 per cent of CEOs worldwide expect the global economic recovery to improve in 2021, showing record levels of optimism about growth a



Freelance jobs in India grew 22% in January

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, March 12: With the pandemic disrupting the job market, hiring for freelance jobs in India grew 22 per cent in January 2021 compared to a year ago, said a report from job site Indeed Friday. The data also showed that postings for freelance jobs spiked between May and June 2020, a near two-fold increase from the

same period in 2019.

With the implementation of work-from-home structures, job search activity post March 2020 was consistently higher than pre-pandemic levels, peaking in April 2020. However, data showed that at any point in time, freelance job postings have outstripped freelance job searches.

The growth was driven by creative, tech, sales and recruitment

fields as these sectors contributed to 55 per cent of the freelance jobs posted on Indeed.

As of January 2021, freelance writer was the most in-demand job in this segment, followed by freelance designer, recruiter, developer and digital marketer.

Business development executive and PHP developer also emerged in the top-10 freelance job titles in India. Data highlights that searches

for freelance jobs were highest in the 20-29 year age group - this cohort contributed to 73 per cent of freelance job searches on Indeed in January 2021.

"Pushing the freelance community to the fore, the pandemic year witnessed increased hiring and search momentum for freelance jobs on Indeed," Sashi Kumar, Managing Director, Indeed India, said in a statement.

India 5th most attractive 'growth destination' globally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

year after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

As cross-border competition heats up global tax debates, CEOs foresee some cooling of global trade tensions. Both trade conflict and protectionism dropped on the CEO threat list, in relative and absolute

terms, the survey released on Thursday said.

"But, there's considerable nuance behind that top-line story. Trade conflict still ranks as a top ten threat in China and Germany, both of which depend on export-driven growth. In China, which has often found itself at the centre of debates, trade conflict is CEOs' second-highest source of worry.

"It's hard not to wonder whether fundamental tensions will reassert themselves as we move past the

landmark moments, such as the resolution of the US presidential election and of Brexit uncertainties, that immediately preceded our survey period," it noted.

Further, the survey said it was important to recognise that trade patterns and partnerships are in flux.

"For example, CEOs in the US are reducing their emphasis on China as a growth driver, and increasing their focus on Canada and Mexico; compared to the findings in our last survey, US CEOs' interest in the latter two countries rose by 78 per cent," it said, adding that those trends are contributing to a broader shift of the US extending its lead over China as global CEOs' most important growth destination.

The findings are part of PwC's 24th Annual Global CEO Survey that covered 5,050 CEOs in 100 countries and territories

SHORT TAKES

TWS shipment touches 8.4mn

New Delhi: India's TWS (True Wireless Stereo, commonly known as earbuds) market recorded a shipment of 8.4 million units, amounting to ₹2,432 crore in 2020, research firm techARC said Friday. With remote working growing substantially due to work-from-home practice, TWS has become an essential accessory for smartphone users, techARC founder and chief analyst Faisal Kawoosa said. "At the same time, the ecosystem has aligned to enhance the experience of near-real audio, Covid-19 has had a positive impact on this product category, almost doubling its size," he added.

Ant Group CEO Hu steps down

Beijing: China's Ant Group CEO Simon Hu has resigned from his role, the company said Friday, as the fintech giant is being pushed by regulators to revamp operations after its failed \$37 billion IPO. Hu, who was named the chief executive of the Alibaba Group Holding in 2019, will be replaced by company veteran and Executive Chairman Eric Jing, the financial technology giant said. Jing will continue in his current role as chairman, he said in an internal memo.

Gold falls ₹291, silver tanks ₹1,096

New Delhi: Gold in the national capital declined ₹291 to ₹44,059 per 10 gram Friday reflecting fall in international prices of the precious metal and rupee appreciation, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, it had closed at ₹44,350 per 10 gram. Silver also tanked ₹1,096 to ₹65,958 per kg, from ₹67,054 per kg in the previous trade. The Indian rupee jumped 20 paise to trade at 72.71 against the US dollar in opening deals Friday.

NMDC okays interim dividend

New Delhi: Mining giant NMDC Friday said its board has approved an interim dividend of ₹7.76 per share for the current financial year. The decision was taken at a board meeting on Thursday, the company said in a filing to the BSE. "The board of directors at a meeting held March 11, inter alia, declared an interim dividend at the rate of ₹7.76 paise per equity share of face value of Re 1 each for the financial year 2020-21," it said.

