



### POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Actor Pooja Hegde hopes that she can inspire women by performing certain characters on screen

LEISURE P2



### RUSSIA TO SCALE DOWN OPS

Russia promised at peace talks to scale down its military operations around Kyiv and northern Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL P10



### RCB TAKE ON KKR

Royal Challengers Bangalore look for their first win of this season when they face Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL

SPORTS P12

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**OIL PRICES UP AGAIN; 7TH HIKE IN 8 DAYS**

**CITY FUEL PRICES**  
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Bhubaneswar: In what seems to be the new normal, fuel prices were increased again for the seventh time in the last eight days, Tuesday. Petrol price was hiked by 80 paise a litre and diesel by 70 paise, taking the total increase in rates to around ₹4.80 per litre. Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending upon the incidence of local taxation. In the first four occasions, prices were increased by 80 paise a litre - the steepest single-day rise since the daily price revision was introduced in June 2017. On Sunday, petrol price went up by 50 paise a litre and diesel by 55 paise. The fuel prices were hiked by 30 paise Monday.

**INDIA BUYS RUSSIAN SUNOIL AT RECORD PRICE**

Mumbai: India has contracted 45,000 tonne of Russian sunflower oil at a record high price for shipments in April as edible oil prices in the local market surged after supplies from rival Ukraine stopped, industry officials said Tuesday. Sunflower oil from Russia could help the world's biggest edible oil importer in easing the shortfall at a time when availability of vegetable oils is stretched because of Indonesia's decision to restrict palm oil supplies and lower soybean crop in South America. Refiners bought crude sunflower oil at a record price of \$2,150 a tonne, including cost, insurance and freight (CIF), in India for April shipments, compared with \$1,630 before Russia invaded Ukraine, dealers said.

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Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik shares a light moment with Biju Janata Dal MPs at Parliament House in New Delhi, Tuesday

## Haven't given a thought: Naveen on Prez election

**New Delhi, March 29:** There has been no discussion on presidential election and neither the government nor the opposition has approached the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) over it, said the party's supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Naveen visited Parliament Tuesday and held a meeting with his party MPs from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. He was welcomed by all BJD MPs at the entrance of the Parliament.

Patnaik said he only came to Parliament to meet BJD MPs and to follow up on various programmes and welfare schemes for Odisha, underlining that he is not scheduled to meet the Prime Minister or the Union Home minister.

Asked whether there should be a consensus between the government and opposition over a presidential candidate, Patnaik said, "I haven't given a thought to it. There is time for presidential election and no one has approached us so far."

There was speculation that Patnaik may meet the PM during his three-day trip to Delhi beginning Monday and that the BJD might seek the BJD's support for its candidate.

Patnaik last visited Delhi in September 2021 to attend a meeting of chief ministers of Maoist-hit states convened by the Home minister.

In 2017, BJD supported the BJP-led national coalition's candidate Ram Nath Kovind over the Opposition's Meira Kumar after PM Narendra Modi spoke to the Odisha CM.

## Ruckus in House over Puri heritage corridor

**Bhubaneswar, March 29:** The state Assembly Tuesday witnessed a pandemonium as opposition MLAs raised questions over the impact of construction work undertaken by the government to develop a heritage corridor near Srimandir in Puri.

BJP's Puri MLA Jayanta Sarangi alleged that the constructions were being carried out for the Srimandir Heritage Corridor Project without the permission of the National Monument Authority and the Archaeological Survey of India. Deep pits are being dug close to the temple, which may create cracks on the walls of the temple that may threaten the structure, he said.

Supporting him, Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra demanded the formation of a House panel so that the members can inspect the construction works being carried out within the 75-metre of the shrine.

As Speaker SN Patro remained silent over the demand, the BJP MLAs trooped into the Well of the House and raised slogans against the state.

Unable to run the House, Patro adjourned the proceeding till 4:21pm.

On Opposition's demand, Parliamentary Affairs Minister BK Arukha said that the government is prepared to constitute a committee when various panels of the Assembly will be formed March 31.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

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## Per capita income up 16.8% in '21-22

**Bhubaneswar, March 29:** The per capita income of Odisha rose from ₹1,09,071 in 2020-21 to ₹1,27,383 in 2021-22 FY, registering a growth of about 16.8 per cent, according to the Odisha Economic Survey Report 2021-22 circulated in the Assembly here Tuesday.

The average growth of Odisha's per capita income over the last 10 years (2012-13 to 2021-22) is 10.3 per cent against the national average of 9.15 per cent.

Odisha's per capita income of ₹48,499 in 2011-12 reached ₹1,27,383 in 2021-22. While in absolute terms, it is lower than India's per capita income, the rate at which it is growing implies that it would soon exceed the national level, the report said.

The per capita income, which was 76 per cent of the per capita income of India in 2011-12, now stands at 84.7 per cent.

The state economy registered a sharp recovery and the real Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has grown at a rate of 10.1 per cent in the financial year 2021-22.

"Odisha is one of the fastest growing states in the country and registered a growth rate much higher than India's GDP growth rate of 8.8 per cent as per the first advance estimate," it said. The GSDP may grow in real terms by 9.0 to 9.5 per cent in 2022-23. However, the Russia and Ukraine conflict has brought in further uncertainty, it said.

Beating agriculture & allied activities, industries and service sectors have become the lead sectors and the new driver

**ODISHA ECONOMIC SURVEY**

- The industry sector grew at 14.5% followed by the service sector with 7.9% growth rate in 2021-22
- The agriculture and allied sectors registered a contraction of 3.4% in 2021-22
- The health expenditure as percentage of GDP in the state has increased from 1.19% in 2019-20 to 1.59% in 2021-22
- The real Gross State Domestic Product has grown at 10.1% in 2021-22

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	57943.65	↑ 350.16
NIFTY	17325.30	↑ 103.30
DOLLAR	76.57	↓ ₹0.14
EURO	83.55	↓ ₹0.15
GOLD	₹50,812	↓ ₹759
SILVER	₹66,750	↓ ₹1355

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	36.5°C	36.5°C
TEMP MIN	26.5°C	25.5°C
Humidity	75%	81%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dry weather very likely

## 20K sleep in offices to beat lockdown

**Shanghai, March 29:** More than 20,000 bankers, traders and other workers are bedding down in office towers in Shanghai's Lujiazui district as they bid to keep China's giant financial hub ticking over through a Covid-19 lockdown, according to local administration officials.

Brokerages, asset managers and financial exchanges in Lujiazui - China's answer to Wall Street - rushed to summon key personnel to offices ahead of Monday's lockdown in Shanghai, and prepared sleeping bags and basic supplies for overnight stays.

### COVID IN SHANGHAI

**Shanghai, home to 26 million people, started a lockdown Monday by dividing the city roughly along the Huangpu River, to allow staggered testing**

**Shanghai houses China's biggest markets for stock, bond, foreign exchange and derivative trading**

Some have also adopted two-team rotation shifts, and initiated disaster recovery centres in a financial hub that processed more than 2,500 trillion yuan (\$292 trillion) of financial transactions last year.

The 20,000 people working at 285 office towers in Pudong's Lujiazui Financial City, east of the Huangpu River, include white collar workers and some service staff, according to the administration bureau of the district, also home to some non-financial institutions.

Shanghai, home to 26 million people, started a lockdown

Monday by dividing the city roughly along the Huangpu River, to allow for staggered testing. Shanghai houses China's biggest markets for stock, bond, foreign exchange and derivative trading.

Among others, Haitong Securities Co (600837.SS) said Chairman Zhou Jie arranged emergency on-site duty shifts at its subsidiaries in Pudong Sunday night, and led more than 150 key staff to work in offices starting Monday.

The Shanghai Stock Exchange said it kept minimum teams of staff in key positions within the bourse while others work from home while ensuring safety of trading.

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  - Bachelor of Design (Fashion/Textile) (4 Yrs)
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  - Bachelor of Film & Television Production (3 Yrs)
  - BBA (3 Yrs)
  - BCA (3 Yrs)
  - B.Sc. Computer Science (3 Yrs)
  - B.Sc. Nursing (4 Yrs)
  - BA (Hons) in English / Economics / Sociology / Psychology (3 Yrs)
  - B.Com. (Hons) (3 Yrs)
- Masters Programmes**
  - M.Sc. Biotechnology (2 Yrs)
  - M.Sc. Applied Microbiology (2 Yrs)
  - M.Sc. in Computer Science (2 Yrs)
  - M.Sc. Nursing (2 Yrs)
  - Integrated M.Sc. & Ph.D (Phy/Chem/Math) (5 Yrs)
  - M.Sc. By Research - S&T Translation (2 Yrs)
  - M.Com. (2 Yrs)
  - MCA (2 Yrs)
  - MBA (2 Yrs)
  - MBA in Business Analytics (2 Yrs)
  - MBA in Supply Chain Management (2 Yrs)
  - MBA in Healthcare Management (2 Yrs)
  - MBA in Construction Management (2 Yrs)
  - MBA in Rural Management (2 Yrs)
  - MBA in Agribusiness Management (2 Yrs)
  - B.Tech & M.Tech - Biotechnology (Dual Degree) (5 Yrs)
  - M.Tech. (2 Yrs)
  - M.Tech. in Defence Technology (2 Yrs)
  - Integrated M.Tech & PhD (5 Yrs)
  - M.Arch (2 Yrs)
  - M.A in English/Economics/Sociology/Psychology (2 Yrs)
  - M.A in Spiritualism (2 Yrs)
  - M.A in Yoga Therapy (2 Yrs)
  - M.A in Public Policy (2 Yrs)
  - M.A in Leadership (2 Yrs)
  - M.A in Anthropology (2 Yrs)
  - Master of Public Health (2 Yrs)
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  - Master of Mass Communication (Integrated) (5 Yrs)
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KIIT (Deemed to be University) has only one permanent campus in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It has no other campus / off campus anywhere else in the country and globe.

# leisure



## MILEY CALLS MARRIAGE WITH LIAM A 'DISASTER'

Pop singer Miley Cyrus, who was married to actor Liam Hemsworth, during her performance at Lollapalooza festival in Brazil briefly mentioned the matter while helping a couple get engaged at her concert. "Honey, I hope your marriage goes better than mine which was a disaster," Miley, congratulating the pair, said.

## LASHANA LYNCH UNFAZED BY JAMES BOND BACKLASH

Actress Lashana Lynch, who played the first-ever female 007 in *No Time To Die*, says she's actually grateful to internet trolls. "I'm so grateful to everyone who sent a bad message because it encouraged me," said Lynch.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today you will feel like going green, and Ganesh approves. You could plant a sapling, or organise some dustbins to keep the neighbourhood clean. If you wish to make the world a better place to live in, do it but take it step by step.

**TAURUS**  
Today, passionate and possessive are the two words that will define your relationship with the people you love, predicts Ganesh. 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 Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
You will be busy organising some religious function today or in visiting a place of religious significance. You will encounter expenses in religious and charitable work. However, you should guard against ignoring your daily work in pursuit of all these matters, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will labour more to finish pending tasks. You will give priority to career compared to personal chores. So you will be caught up in your career and business riddles. By evening, however, you will have cheerful moments as Ganesh sees you having cherishing time with your beloved.

**LEO**  
You will be able to meet all challenges and obstacles successfully. Your ultimate goal is to come out victorious from any situations. There is a possibility that you will have to face severe competition in business or trade. Personal life will proceed without any hiccups though, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Your renewed enthusiasm for life will bring about a radical change in you. Ganesh says today is a good time to let others see how important and how brilliant you can be. Your intelligence will become very evident as you demonstrate how things should be done.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says you will try to gain knowledge in new topics today. You will feel enthusiasm and a feeling of positivity today. You will show more interest when talking with friends and this will make you come closer to them. There will be benefits to you from your life partner. You will be happy to be in the company of a close relative today. Ganesh says he will be with you always.

**SCORPIO**  
The ground beneath you seems a bit shaky; watch your steps. A time would come when your confidence would be shattered, however, don't let set-backs and failures affect you. Adapt the attitude of 'this too shall pass' and the rest would fall in place, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Benevolence will be your middle name today. Being frank and open-minded will have its own advantages. You might just give your life partner a patient ear. This will make them feel treated well, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
You are a die-hard romantic and with every plan to please your sweetheart, you are taking him/her closer to the cloud nine. But, don't live in fantasy world, warns Ganesh, as problems are going to follow you everywhere. If you are a businessman, your rivals may give you a hard time. Take proper care of your health, advises Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will remember this day for the rest of life as today you will make some important decisions and give a new direction to your life. You are in for a windfall and cherry on the cake will be all the recognition and rewards you get for your sincerity and hard work, predicts Ganesh. These positive vibes will help you make sure that you are on the right track.

**PISCES**  
You will finally realize the worth of your resources today. You will take a decision to increase your savings and clamp down on unnecessary expenses. Your expenses are likely to increase temporarily. It is a good idea to invest in debt schemes today, says Ganesh.



## DHOOM GIRL RIMI MAKES A COMEBACK

MUMBAI: Rimi Sen, who had virtually disappeared, has surfaced to make a comeback. Sen, who made a sensational splash in Yash Raj Films' *Dhoom*, will be seen in a music video. This venture will be directed by Prerna Arora.

The *Hungama* actress says, "I have been away from the movies and film industry and the sole reason behind that is - I tried so many things, different kinds of movies, but I never could achieve that creative satisfaction which I was looking for all this while." Elaborating further, she said, "I then realised, in order to get creative satisfaction, you don't have to always act, you can direct, you can be a producer as well. Now, things have opened up for everyone with the emergence of OTT platforms. So, I thought of being a producer. I made a film called *Budhiya Singh Won't Run* which fetched us National Award in 2015. I was quite happy behind the camera. But when we (Rimi and Prerna) spoke about this music video, I really loved it and told her, let's do it." Meanwhile, Prerna is equally excited about this collaboration. "Rimi and I connected. We gelled very well. She is an extremely beautiful and talented girl. I can't wait for the shoot to start." IANS

## 'We've always wanted to be represented well'



MUMBAI: With just three months into 2022, Pooja Hegde has already had a pan-India theatrical release - Prabhas-starrer *Radhe Shyam*. The Hindi-Telugu bilingual will soon make its way to an OTT platform, too.

While foraying into cinema across languages, Pooja has also trained her mind to look for screenplays that lean more on the female protagonist. Talking about what she now wishes to include in her line-up of films to make her repertoire more comprehensive, Pooja says, "I hope I can inspire women by performing certain characters on screen. We don't tell enough stories with women at the core. We've always wanted to be represented well." The *Mohejo Daro* actress adds: "When I watch *Seeta Aur Geeta*, and I see Hema Malini throwing kicks and punches, a voice in my heart says, 'You go girl! You don't need someone to save you...you can do it by yourself!' That's inspiring to watch and that's what we all need to believe in as women. Gal Gadot's work in *Wonder Woman* is just as inspiring. Alia Bhatt's part in *Raazi* is another such space that I want to inhabit at some point. These are the kinds of stories that we need to tell more often." AGENCIES

### OSCAR SLAP

## Smith's unconditional apology

Los Angeles: Hollywood star Will Smith has issued an apology after slapping comedian Chris Rock on the Oscars stage. "Violence in all of its forms is poisonous and destructive. My behaviour at last night's Academy Awards was unacceptable and inexcusable. Jokes at my expense are part of the job, but a joke about Jada's medical condition was too much for me to bear and I reacted emotionally," Smith wrote. "I would like to publicly apologise to you, Chris. I was out of line and I was wrong. I am embarrassed and my actions were not indicative of the man I want to be. There is no place for violence in a world of love and kindness."

The post continued, "I deeply regret that my behavior has stained what has been an otherwise gorgeous journey for all of us. I am a work in progress." The altercation happened when Rock took the stage to present the best documentary award and made a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith being in a sequel to *G.I. Jane*. IANS



## City comics condemn Smith's unsavoury act

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

BHUBANESWAR: What could have been a wonderful and memorable day for actor Will Smith, will now be a day he will remember for all the wrong reasons. While so many things have been told and heard about Smith's slap at Oscars, a couple of local stand-up comedians Tuesday shared with *Orissa POST* their anguish on the issue.

Humourist Alokesh Sinha said, "It has certainly sent the wrong message. After all, it is a matter of safety of a performer. If Smith is not held accountable, we may see similar incidents in future too when comedians are assaulted in clubs and cafes for their skills." Sinha went on to add that comics have often found themselves at the receiving end in India.



"It is very unfortunate that Smith's fans are celebrating his display of 'masculinity'. It has set a wrong precedent, liking giving a license for violence. We shouldn't be surprised if we see this kind of celebrations in India too if a comedian is beaten up for showing his comic skills," he added.

Satyabrat Mohapatra, another comedian, said, "If Smith's action is not condemned, it can open the flood gates for others to justify their unacceptable behaviours towards the stand-up comedians."

He appreciated Chris Rock for handling the situation well and not pressing a charge against Smith. Meanwhile, actor Partha Sarthi Ray also didn't like Smith's act. He said, "At times, actors get emotional, which is not the right thing to do at public places. I think Smith got carried away by his wife's reaction to Chris' jokes on her physical disorder. Since Smith has already tendered an unconditional apology, we should move on instead of blowing up the matter further." He added that violence has no place in any civilised society and it shouldn't be encouraged at no cost.

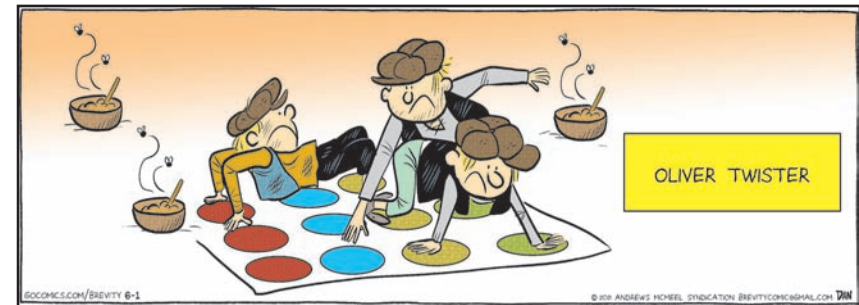
### PEANUTS



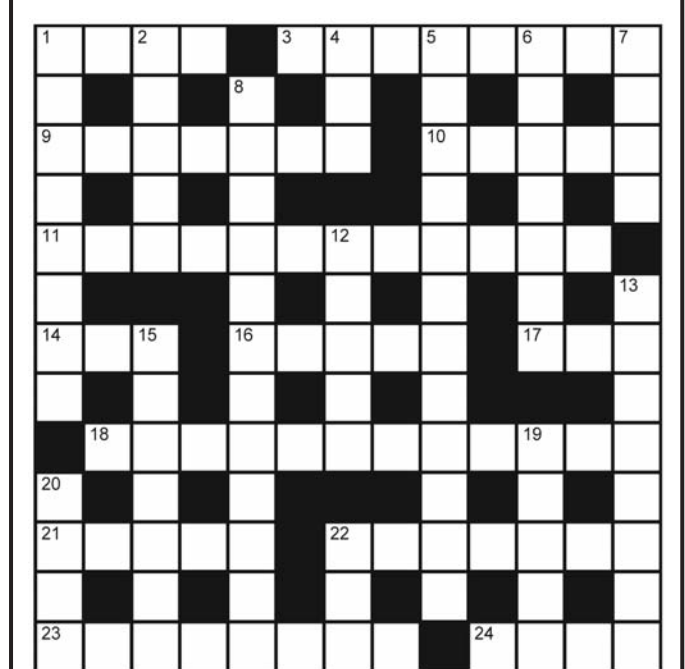
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



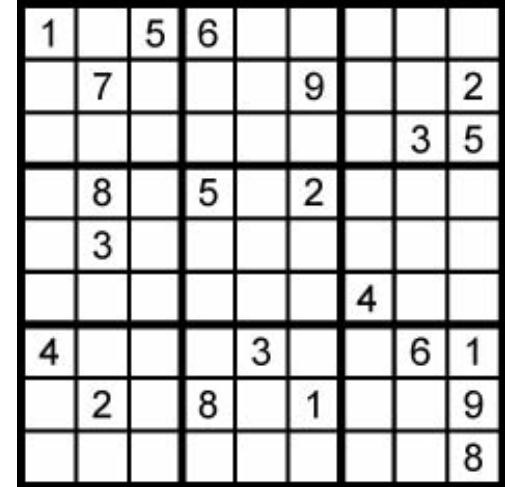
### FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 After-dinner drink
  - 3 Fair-skinned feature, at times
  - 9 Sinus problem
  - 10 Slice
  - 11 Pugilist's wear (6,6)
  - 14 Fellow
  - 16 Pick-me-up
  - 17 Formal vote
  - 18 Gustave Flaubert novel (6,6)
  - 21 Scent
  - 22 Middle Eastern pastry
  - 23 Tweak (4-4)
  - 24 Lab item
  - Down**
  - 1 Theatre handout
  - 2 Kick back and take it easy
  - 4 Bit of sunshine
  - 5 Swiss exports (6,6)
  - 6 It's a crime
  - 7 Lawn starter
  - 8 Get stuck (5,2,1,4)
  - 12 Writing style
  - 13 South American rodent
  - 15 Former European cavalryman
  - 19 At a distance from one another
  - 20 Young seal
  - 22 Embargo

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

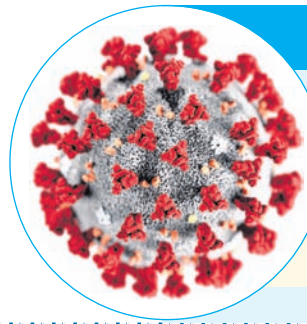


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



THEATRE TREAT A scene from the play Kandamastre, staged on the 2nd day of a state-level theatre festival organised by Panchamveda at Biju Natya Kendra in the Capital, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

Table with 4 columns: Region, Infected, Recovered, Dead. Rows: World, India, Odisha.

'Recognition comes when you put your heart into the work'

A government servant by profession, his love for local handloom and the art and craft of Odisha propelled him to master the skills of weaving mesmerising garments. In the 80s, when the Central government was scouting individuals learned and skilled in indigenous textile production, the founder of Vayan Vihar, a handloom factory and research and training centre, joined the weavers' service centre under the Union Ministry of Textiles. Years of research and commitment led to the inception of Meher's, a dedicated handloom store in Bhubaneswar, in 2001. Recipient of accolades like 'Shilp Guri' and the prestigious 'Padma Shree' by the Government of India, Dr. Chaturbhuja Meher speaks to Orissa POST about his journey so far as well as the craft's way forward...



How did you balance profession and passion?

Everyone in my family and relatives were associated with art. Handloom intrigued me despite not being in demand back then. That interest incited endeavour and I went ahead with the traditional teachings, keeping in mind that no job is inferior and knowledge never goes wasted. Meanwhile, the government presented an opportunity with a job. Although difficult at times, I tried to give equal attention to both profession and passion. That endeavour continues even now.

Your take on success and fame?

To succeed, one should dream. At the same time, one must work accordingly to materialise that dream. Success turns to failure if the job is not satisfactory. Years of learning and experience brought me fame. Recognition comes when one puts his heart into his work. Once recognised, your work brings you fame and fortune. Even in the final days of my life, many social institutions, government and non-government organisations have honoured me. I put success and fame at the same pedestal but have never chased the later. In every stage of my life, my hard work has been rewarded.

How was the leap from 'Vayan Vihar' to Meher's?

My father wanted to establish a handloom training centre to train local youths and interested artists. To fulfil his wish and with the help of his teachings, I began 'Vayan Vihar', a handlooms factory and research and training centre, in Sonepur. As the centre gained impetus, Meher's was inaugurated in Bhubaneswar in 2001, with a hope for something new. Goods produced at 'Vayan Vihar' were traded at Meher's. Similarly, local artistry from districts other than Sonepur too were accommodated and promoted at Meher's.

How did you manage family and business?

To me, family means everyone and everything around me. Even then, I used to compartmentalise family and business and maintain balance between these. I also got adequate cooperation from both the sides. As I've grown old, my son looks after everything along with some people from both the sides. However, I'm still involved and take stock of things regularly.

A few words on Padma Shree felicitation?

Any award or honour, that recognises your work, comes with happiness of a different kind. The best part about this is that Bharat Ratna Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was then the President of India. More

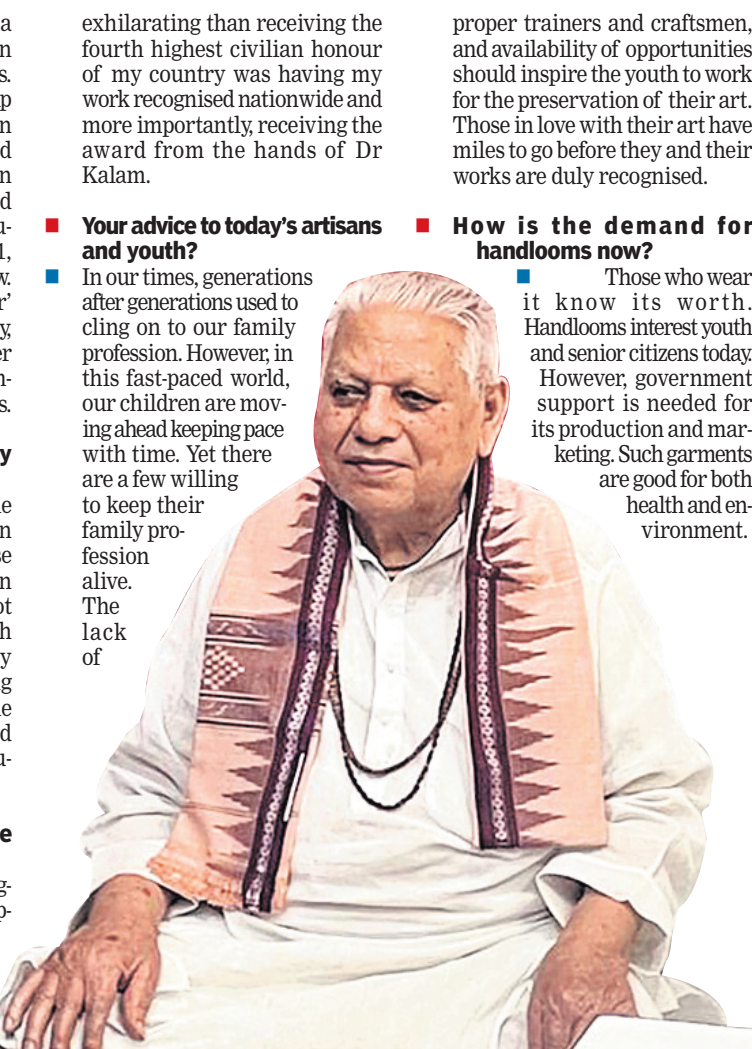
exhilarating than receiving the fourth highest civilian honour of my country was having my work recognised nationwide and more importantly, receiving the award from the hands of Dr Kalam.

Your advice to today's artisans and youth?

In our times, generations after generations used to cling on to our family profession. However, in this fast-paced world, our children are moving ahead keeping pace with time. Yet there are a few willing to keep their family profession alive. The lack of proper trainers and craftsmen, and availability of opportunities should inspire the youth to work for the preservation of their art. Those in love with their art have miles to go before they and their works are duly recognised.

How is the demand for handlooms now?

Those who wear it know its worth. Handlooms interest youth and senior citizens today. However, government support is needed for its production and marketing. Such garments are good for both health and environment.



Four Bills passed in House

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 29: Amid ruckus by Opposition, the state Assembly Tuesday passed four Bills including the Shri Jagannath Temple (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

The Bill has been framed for speedy and efficacious disposal of land alienation cases of the landed properties of the Jagannath Temple Managing Committee in favour of person/persons in long possession.

The main purpose of the Bill is to amend the section 16(2) of the Shri Jagannath Temple Act, 1955 thereby to prescribe delegation of power to grant sanction to sale or otherwise alienate lands belonging to the temple managing committee.

The grant of sanction to sell or alienate lands by the state government which was required invariably in all cases of alienation may not be necessary after framing of Rule in this regard.

Similarly, the House also passed the Odisha Panchayat Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2022 amending certain sections of the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, the Odisha Panchayat Samiti Act, 1959 and the Odisha Zilla Parishad Act, 1991.

The Odisha Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was passed to provide land rights to the slum dwellers. Besides, the Municipal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was passed in the House.

National Highways Authority of India (Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India) Project Implementation Unit, Badadera, Mandua, Keonjhar-758014, Odisha

NHAI/12011/30/22-23/RO/OD/922/2022 Date 25.03.2022

PUBLIC NOTICE The Public is hereby informed that pursuant to approval of revised user fee rates vide letter No. NHAI/12011/30/22-23/RO/OD/922/2022 dated 25.03.2022 of RO, NHAI, Odisha, the revised user fee rates for use of section 0.000 Km. to 163.000 Km. (Design Length of 166.173 Km.) of Panikoiili to Rimuli Section of NH-215 (New NH-20) at Hasanpur Toll Plaza at Km.32.900, Khantagarh Toll Plaza at Km.91.900 & Banajodi Toll Plaza at Km.134.380, for use of section 414.000 Km to 491.710 Km (Design Chainage 414.982 Km to 493.300 Km) of Binjabahal to Telebani section of NH-6 (New NH-49) at Bideibadkudar Toll Plaza at Km. 439.515 and for use of section Km.311.000 to 414.000 Km. (Design Chainage from 310.806 Km. to 414.982 Km.) of Singara to Binjabahal Section of NH-6 (New NH-49) at Jansanpur Toll Plaza at Km. 401.800 & Khireitangiri Toll Plaza at Km.339.500 in the State of Odisha to be applicable w.e.f. 01.04.2022 to 31.03.2023 are as under.

(a) At Km.32.900 near Hasanpur Village in Keonjhar District for 55.700 Km length (completed road length 45.750, Jaipur by pass (6.450 Km) and Anandapur bypass (3.500 Km)). (in Rupees)

Table with 5 columns: Category of Vehicles, Fee for single journey, Fee for return journey within a day, Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month, Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza.

(b) At Km.91.900 near Khantagarh Village in Keonjhar District for 36.550 Km length (completed road length 32.350, and Ghatagaon bypass 4.200 Km). (in Rupees)

Table with 5 columns: Category of Vehicles, Fee for single journey, Fee for return journey within a day, Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month, Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza.

(c) At Km. 134.380 near Banajodi Village in Keonjhar District for 52.873 Km length (road length 34.223 Km, Keonjhar bypass 15.650 km and Junpur bypass 3.000 Km). (in Rupees)

Table with 5 columns: Category of Vehicles, Fee for single journey, Fee for return journey within a day, Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month, Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza.

(d) At Km. 439.515 near Bideibadkudar Village in Deogarh District for 78.246 Km length (road length 71.157 Km, Keonjhar bypass 5.274 km and Structure Length 1.815 Km). (in Rupees)

Table with 5 columns: Category of Vehicles, Fee for single journey, Fee for return journey within a day, Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month, Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza.

(e) At Km. 339.500 near Khireitangiri Village in Keonjhar District for 57.045 Km length (Completed road length 46.293 Km, Keonjhar bypass 10.276 km and Structure Length 0.476 Km). (in Rupees)

Table with 5 columns: Category of Vehicles, Fee for single journey, Fee for return journey within a day, Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month, Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza.

(f) At Km. 401.800 near Jansanpur Village in Keonjhar District for 42.872 Km length (Completed road length 42.793 Km and Structure Length 0.079 Km). (in Rupees)

Table with 5 columns: Category of Vehicles, Fee for single journey, Fee for return journey within a day, Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month, Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza.

2. The rates for monthly pass applicable for local personal vehicle shall be Rs. 315/- for the year 2022-23 at each fee plazas. Sd/- Project Director

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

Suspended home guard arrested for ₹62K fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 29: The Commissionerate Police Tuesday arrested a former home guard for duping a person of Rs 62,000 on the pretext of selling a second-hand motorcycle to the victim. The accused, identified as Bijay Kumar Pandi, 35, is a resident of Chandradeipur under Balanga police limits in Puri, who was previously suspended from service.

The accused reportedly identified himself as the driver of PCR van of the Chandaka Police Station in City to cheat the victim.

Sources said, the complainant, who was planning to buy a used motorcycle through one of his friends, came into contact with Pandi in February. The complainant was later instructed by Pandi to come near Maa Charchika used bike shop at Acharya Vihar. Accordingly, the complainant along with his friends reached at the shop February 18 and selected two used bikes parked at the shop. However, Pandi didn't turn up and sent his photo donning the home guard uniform and standing before the PCR van of Chandaka police.

Subsequently, Pandi called the complainant to pay Rs 5,000 as first installment and later Rs 57,000 through UPI payment system on promise of delivering the bike in time.

However, the accused did not hand over the bike February 28 to the victim as promised and also verbally abused the victim when he called him over phone.

The victim lodged a complaint with the Cyber Crime and Economic Offence Police Station March 21.

Union Bank of India REGIONAL OFFICE: BALASORE MANIKHAMB, OT ROAD, POLICE LINE, BHASKARGANJ, DIST.: BALASORE, PIN-756001, Email: cb8832recovery@unionbankofindia.com, Mob.: 8827539953, 8249176744









## J&K: Only 34 outsiders bought properties since August 2019

After the abrogation of Article 370, the Union government changed the laws for procurement of land and properties in the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh, and new land procurement laws were formed thereafter



**New Delhi, March 29:** A total of 34 people from outside Jammu and Kashmir have bought properties in the union territory after the abrogation of Article 370, said Union Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai Tuesday in the Lok Sabha.

have bought property in the UT after the abrogation of Article 370, the MoS in a written reply said that 34 persons have so far bought properties in the UT. "As per the information provided by the government of Jammu and Kashmir, 34 persons from outside the Jammu and Kashmir have bought properties in UT of J-K after the abrogation of Article 370" said Minister Rai.

## J&K govt receives 4,226 proposals worth ₹47,441Cr

**Jammu:** The Jammu and Kashmir government has received 4,226 investment proposals worth ₹47,441 crore for land allotment to set up industrial units in the Union Territory. The Jammu and Kashmir administration in January last year announced a new industrial developmental scheme with an outlay of ₹28,400 crore to encourage new investment and take industrial development to the block level. The new policy, which has been applicable till 2037, also paved the way for foreigners to invest in the region.

and Ganderbal districts." After the abrogation of Article 370, the Union government changed the laws for the procurement of land and properties in J&K and Ladakh and new land procurement laws were formed thereafter.

## Delhi to get 211 forest guards soon

**New Delhi, March 29:** Delhi will soon get 211 forest guards, with the forest department Monday releasing the results of an online test conducted a year ago.

Based on their performance in the computer-based test, 253 candidates have been provisionally shortlisted for physical endurance and physical standard tests, a notice issued by the department said. The coronavirus pandemic and procedural delays in the payment of exam fees amounting to around ₹50 crore had impeded the recruitment of forest guards by the severely short-staffed forest department, according to officials.



## Delhi Assembly passes ₹75,800 crore Budget

The Budget was passed by voice vote. The Demands for Grants for year 2022-23 and Appropriation Bill 2022 were also passed by the House

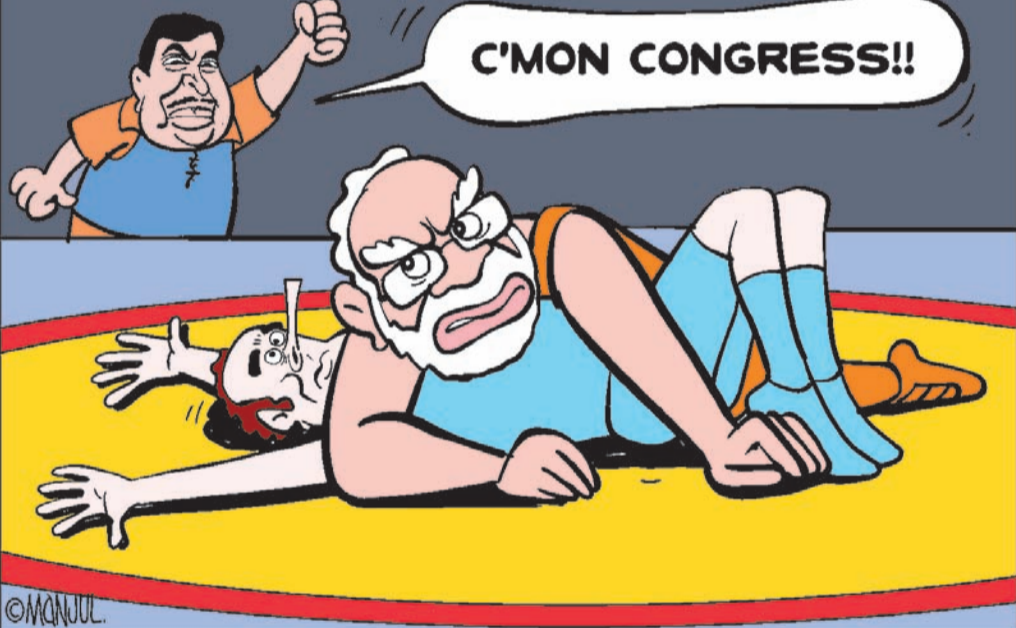
AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 29:** The Delhi government's 'Rozgar' Budget worth ₹75,800 crore for the financial year 2022-23 was passed by the Assembly after a debate Tuesday. The Speaker adjourned the Assembly sine die after conclusion of the Budget session that had started March 23. The Budget presented last Saturday focussed on creating 20 lakh job opportunities in the next five years through boosting retail sector, redevelopment of famous markets and industrial areas in non-conforming zones, startups, tourism and promoting night-time economy.



Participating in the debate on the Budget, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said various measures announced in the Budget reflected Aam Aadmi Party's ideology of "hardcore patriotism, diehard honest and humanitarian". Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the Finance portfolio, said the budget was prepared based on 6,500 suggestions received from the Delhiites.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## J&K'S RAMBAN FACES SHORTAGE OF TEACHING STAFF

**Ramban/Jammu, March 29:** Government-run schools in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district are facing an acute shortage of teaching staff as 586 posts of principals, lecturers, headmasters and teachers are vacant out of sanctioned strength of 2,073. In addition, two school buildings have been declared unsafe, according to official data. Schools in the district reopened last month after a long break due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown and the winter vacation, and there have been frequent protests by parents and students for adequate teaching staff and better infrastructure.

## Child rights body to rehabilitate street kids soon



**New Delhi, March 29:** The Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights and a state government think-tank have launched a project to rehabilitate street children.

eyes with the water and let the river breeze dry them up; to his surprise, his eyes were cured instantly. There is primeval magic in this ancient city, located just 28 km from Jammu. It is believed to be the city of Virat Nagar from Mahabharata where the Pandavas spent their year of Agyatvas on the banks of Chenab, then known as Chandrabhaga. The Pandava Gufa adjacent to Jia Pota stands with inscriptions as its testimony. Lord Krishna visited them in this cave to plan the war strategies. At Jia Pota, the turbulent Chenab is calm and serene. It is said that when the Virat Nagri warriors returned from the battle of Mahabharata, they thrashed the river water to calm it down so they could rest

## 'Parallel system required to support food industry'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 29:** Asserting that opening eateries and food hubs is "not enough" to stimulate the night-time economy of Delhi, restaurant owners have said a parallel system must be devised like allowing offices and cinema halls to remain open till late to ensure customer availability.



of the hospitality sector, including allowing bars in hotels, clubs and restaurants to remain open till late at night under the new excise policy. Karan Srivastava, a worker at a popular food outlet at Connaught Place, said eateries will only re-

main open till late if there is a scope for business. He added that the government must ensure that offices and cinema halls are also allowed to remain open so that customers arrive and food is not wasted. "It will be a good step as it will generate jobs and help businesses flourish. But I feel everything depends on how effectively it is implemented. Earlier, there was business at night as cinema halls and corporate offices used to remain open till late. But that is not the case now. Opening restaurants will not be enough. Other facilities should also be opened," Srivastava said.

## Akhnoor, the treasure trove from Mahabharata to Hindustan

**New Delhi, March 29:** Jammu and Kashmir's Akhnoor sub-division is a historical gamut. Going by history and archaeological findings it is perhaps the most important place in Jammu territory. Quietly sitting on the banks of the river Chenab with the backdrop of Shivaliks, the quaint archaeological site of Akhnoor holds the secrets of ancient India, waiting to be discovered.



peacefully. Jia Pota was selected for these reasons as the foundation of the Dogra Empire by the Punjab Emperor. It gets its name from the Jia Pota tree under which a grand Coronation Ceremony of Raja Gulab Singh was performed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the emperor of Punjab, 200 hundred years ago on 17 June 1822. For the Dogras

with learning and socio-psychological support, it said. DDC Delhi vice-chairperson Jasmine Shah said, "The Delhi government has developed a comprehensive plan aimed at bringing dignity and care into the lives of homeless and street associated children. In this year's budget, we have set aside ₹10 crore to create a residential school that will not only provide education but also emotional and psychological support to vulnerable children. By launching this taskforce, we will be able to deploy focussed efforts to start providing these children with the basic amenities they deserve, including education, financial support and guardianship." Case workers and counsellors will be deployed district-wise and they will work in close collaboration with Child Welfare Committees.



of the day quote

In the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), under the leadership of Uddhav Thackeray, all of us are running the government together. Thackeray's role is important in that. The NCP and Congress are supporting him

Our government is taking proactive steps to bring the economy back on track by creating new employment opportunities. In this direction, the tourism sector will play a major role in generating employment in Delhi

We want to send Union Home Minister Amit Shah a chartered plane and request him to come to Rajasthan to see the law and order-related innovations made in the state and the strict action taken against crimes so that the confusion being spread by his party is cleared

SHORT TAKES

Two die in UP

Rae Bareilly (UP): Two labourers died when they inhaled poisonous gas while cleaning a sewer line in Rae Bareilly Tuesday. The bodies were taken out and have been sent for post mortem. Chief minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed grief over the incident and has directed the district administration to provide relief to the families of the deceased.

Narcotics seized

New Delhi: In two separate operations in Patna and Chennai, a man was arrested and 10 kg narcotic substances seized, the Narcotics Control Bureau said Tuesday. In the first case, a man was held in Patna with 14 kg opium worth Rs one lakh. He was supplying opium through an SUV in Bihar. The NCB got a tip off about the accused and laid a trap following which the culprit was held and opium packed in polythene was recovered from him.

Four arrested

Kushinagar (UP): Four persons have been arrested from Kushinagar district for allegedly killing a Muslim youth, who was celebrating BJP's victory in the recently-concluded state Assembly elections. Gorakhpur Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) J.Ravinder Gaud, who met the family of the deceased Babar Ali, and assured them of police protection, said on Tuesday that: "Four accused have been arrested but the family is naming another accused. We will probe this further and provide protection to the family."

Soldier injured

Srinagar: A soldier was injured Tuesday in accidental fire in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district. Police sources said the soldier belongs to the 34 Rashtriya Rifles. "The soldier was injured when his service rifle went off accidentally during cleaning in Behibagh camp in Kulgam district. "The injured soldier was removed to the Army's 92 base hospital in Srinagar for treatment," sources added.

Six held for fraud

Azamgarh (Uttar Pradesh): The Azamgarh police have busted a gang of frauds involved in duping people in the name of arranging their marriages. Six persons, including three women, were arrested late Monday night.



The BJP-led Central government is "anti-reservation" and selling public undertakings like Railways and Air India so that intended beneficiaries are deprived of quota

BHUPESH BAGHEL | CHHATTISGARH CM

TAWADKAR NEW SPEAKER OF GOA ASSEMBLY

Former Sports Minister Ramesh Tawadkar, 53, was elected as the Speaker of the Goa legislative Assembly Tuesday. Tawadkar defeated his Congress rival Aleixo Sequeira by 24-15 votes



Mamata calls for unity against BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 29: TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee has written to all non-BJP chief ministers and opposition parties, including the Congress which her party had been attacking recently, calling on all "progressive forces" to come together and put up a united fight against the "oppressive BJP regime".

The West Bengal Chief Minister called for a meeting to discuss strategies to take on the saffron party and also commit to the cause of a unified and principled opposition that will make way for the "government that the country deserves".

Slamming the BJP-led Centre's alleged vindictive politics, she said that the democratic fabric of the country was being attacked with the use of agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) to "harass and corner political opponents".

"I urge everyone to come together for a meeting to deliberate on the way forward at a place as per everyone's convenience and suitability. Let us commit to the cause of a unified and principled opposition that will make way for the government that our country deserves," the letter dated March 27 said. It was shared with the media on Tuesday morning.

The BJP, however, claimed that the TMC's national ambitions have fallen flat, while the Congress said the ruling party in West Bengal lacks credibility in fighting the



The BJP, however, claimed that the TMC's national ambitions have fallen flat, while the Congress said the ruling party in West Bengal lacks credibility in fighting the saffron party

saffron party. In her letter, Banerjee also alleged that the Delhi Special Police (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and the CVC (Amendment) Bill, 2021 were passed in the Parliament during the winter session amidst walk out by the opposition.

"These laws enable the Centre to extend the tenure of the directors of ED and CBI up to five years in blatant violation of a previous Supreme Court judgment," she said. Alleging that the central agencies "jolt to action" whenever elections are around the corner, she urged the parties to resist the BJP's intention to misuse the agencies to suppress the opposition.

"It is amply clear that the opposition is being targeted, and the BJP-ruled states get a free pass from these agencies so that a rosy

picture of their hollow governance can be painted," the letter stated. Seeking transparency and accountability in governance, she said that the opposition leaders should not tolerate the vindictive politics of the BJP that has led to political witch-hunting becoming a norm.

Banerjee also alleged that the BJP is attempting to influence the judiciary. "Time and again, the BJP is trying to attack the federal structure of the country by attempting to influence a certain section of the judiciary," she said.

Mamata Banerjee's reaching out to opposition leaders comes at a time when her party is braving a political firestorm over Birbhumi killings in various other cases.

Rhino population rises in Kaziranga

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, March 29: The population of one-horned rhinos or Indian rhinoceros in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve has increased by 8.28 per cent in four years, officials said on Tuesday, citing the latest census conducted on March 25-28.

Kaziranga Director Jatindra Sarma said that in the 14th rhino population estimation/census, conducted on March 25 to 28, it is estimated that a total of 2,613 rhinos living in the Unesco world heritage site against 2,413 rhinos enumerated in the previous census in 2018.

The senior Indian Forest Service officer said that of the total of 2,613 rhinos, 1,823 are adult (above six years), out of which 903 are female, 750 are male, and 170 are unspecified.

In the latest census, there are 365 sub-adults (3 to 6 years), 279 juvenile (one to three years) and 146 rhino calves (up to one year old) found in the national park.

Sarma said that before the actual rhino census, a training cum briefing was imparted to the enumerators by experts on March 25 and a sample survey was conducted on March 28 in 26 numbers of compartments randomly selected.

All together 64 enumerators, 12 independent observers, and 49 media observers participated in the entire exercise, while 50 elephants were deployed to cover all 84 compartments, the Director said. Further, 252 frontline staff were directly involved in the four-day exercise.

Sulli Deals, Bulli Bai app creators get bail

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 29: The alleged masterminds behind the derogatory "Sulli Deals" and "Bulli Bai" apps were granted bail by a local court in the national capital on Monday, an official said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police K.P.S. Malhotra told IANS that the main grounds for granting the bail to the accused persons - Sulli Deal app creator Aumkareshwar Thakur and Niraj Bishnoi for Bulli Bai app - was that the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) results and replies from Intermediaries were still awaited.

"The trial court had relied upon the evidence against the accused persons and no shortcoming in the investigation was pointed out," Malhotra said.

He said that the court has granted bail on humanitarian grounds and considered that the alleged persons were first-time offenders and continued incarceration would be detrimental to the alleged overall wellbeing.

Thakur, 25, a resident of Madhya Pradesh's Indore, was apprehended by the Delhi Police on January 8. The derogatory app had surfaced in July 2021, where photos of Muslim women were maliciously displayed for "auction".

The Delhi Police's Cyber Crime Unit had registered an FIR under section 354-A (Sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code on July 8.

Meanwhile, "Bulli Bai" came to light in January 2022 after a Delhi-based woman journalist lodged a police complaint stating that she was being targeted by some unidentified group of people on a mobile application. The app was hosted on Github.



TMC activists staged a protest over hike in petrol, diesel and LPG cylinder prices in Malda district

PTI PHOTO

Farmers hold govt officials hostage in Lambi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 29: A group of farmers demanding relief for crop damage allegedly held 12 government officials hostage for several hours inside a sub-tehsil office in Muktsar district's Lambi.

The officials, including a naib-tehsildar and patwaris, were freed by police late in the night Monday as the protesters refused to let them go, according to an official. The farmers have been demanding relief for damage to their cotton crop by pink bollworm.

Revenue officials Tuesday went on strike against the incident in the state. Police said a group of over 100 farmers under the banner of a farm union held a protest outside the sub-tehsil in Lambi on Monday. The protesters entered the office building in the evening and held the officials hostage till midnight, police added.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sandeep Kumar Malik said 12 government officials were held hostage. The SSP said senior police officers and the subdivisional magistrate there tried to placate



them and assured a meeting with higher officials to address their concerns.

"But they were adamant and the officials were held hostage until late in the night," Malik said over

the phone on Tuesday. He said keeping in view the safety of those taken hostage, the administration directed police to take them out safely.

Malik denied reports that police had used force against farmers to free the officials. "We freed the officials in a restrained and peaceful manner. No force was used. Before moving to free the officials, we requested them (farmers) many times that they can hold their dharna but the government officials performing their duty cannot be taken captive," he said.

NO JOY IN THE 'CITY OF JOY'

Horses continue to be maltreated in Kolkata: Report

USING INJURED AND MALNOURISHED HORSES FOR CARRIAGE RIDES VIOLATES THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT, 1960

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Kolkata, March 29: Cruel practices such as forcing emaciated and injured horses to work and injuries to horses caused by being hit by cars and other vehicles, often leading to slow, painful deaths, are part of a new report about the horse-drawn carriage industry in Kolkata.

For 20-odd horses, after a since similar assessment done last year, there has been no change in the

practices, which include horses with a fracture or multiple fractures; a horse that collapsed on the road; horses with open festering wounds; a partially blind horse, and a horse that died from suspected rabies -- the report by PETA India describing the dire conditions of horses as assessed between November 2021 and March 2022 said.

Most of the horses were found to be severely emaciated and chronically malnourished, indicating



that the majority of Kolkata's horses have been starving for a long time

and are routinely denied basic nutrition, the report said, as it pointed

out that the horses are also denied proper farriery (services for hoofs) and other veterinary services.

Using injured and malnourished horses for carriage rides violates The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

"The animals' faeces strewn around the city also creates a tetanus risk and other health hazards for humans," the report submitted to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the Home Department, the Animal

Resource Development Department as well as the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Commissioner of Police, said.

"There is no joy for horses in the City of Joy," said PETA India Advocacy Officer, Samit Roy. PETA India is calling on the authorities to replace horses with eco-friendly electric carriages to spare them suffering from fractures and festering wounds caused by traffic accidents and other cruelty, he added.

# international

## of the day quote

We consider the position of the West, which supplies lethal weapons to Ukraine, to be irresponsible

**SERGEI SHOIQU** | RUSSIAN DEFENCE MINISTER

The aspirations of Sudanese women and men for a prosperous, civilised, democratic future are at risk. Unless the current trajectory is corrected, the country will head toward an economic and security collapse, and significant humanitarian suffering

**VOLKER PERTHES** | HEAD OF THE UNITAMS

Time for giving Prime Minister Imran Khan the final push towards his defeat has come

**MARYAM NAWAZ** | VICE PRESIDENT OF THE OPPOSITION PML-N

## SHORT TAKES

### Seoul: N Korea fired old ICBM

**Seoul:** South Korea Tuesday dismissed North Korea's claim to have launched a newly developed intercontinental ballistic missile last week, accusing the country of firing a less-powerful existing weapon and fabricating data following an earlier failed launch. North Korea said it launched a Hwasong-17 missile, its longest-range developmental ICBM, last Thursday in its biggest weapons test in years. Its state media called the launch "a historical event" and released a stylized Hollywood-style video showing leader Kim Jong Un, in sunglasses and leather jacket, supervising the launch. But South Korea's Defense Ministry said Tuesday it has determined that what North Korea fired wasn't a Hwasong-17 but a Hwasong-15, another ICBM that it successfully tested in 2017.

### SL Navy arrests 4 Indian fishermen

**Chennai:** The Sri Lankan Navy has apprehended four Indian fishermen in the wee hours of Tuesday near Katchatheevu for allegedly violating the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). Fishermen organisations of Tamil Nadu alleged that the Sri Lankan navy also seized one mechanised boat used by the fishermen. Since January, 87 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu were arrested by the Sri Lankan navy. While 42 fishermen were released after the Government of India's intervention, the rest are still languishing in jails at Jaffna in Sri Lanka.

### Slovenia reopens embassy in Ukraine

**Ljubljana:** Slovenia has reopened its embassy in Kiev, after it evacuated all its diplomats from Ukraine February 26 two days after Russia launched its full scale invasion. The Embassy was reopened Monday by temporary charge d'affaires Bostjan Lesjak, while Slovenian Ambassador to Ukraine Tomaz Mencin continues to work from the Polish city of Rzeszow which lies close to the Ukrainian border, the Foreign Ministry in Ljubljana said.

### Malta's PM sworn in

**Valletta:** Malta's Prime Minister Robert Abela was sworn in after his Labour Party won the March 26 general election. He was administered the oath of office Monday during a ceremony at the Palace in Valletta presided by President George Vella, reports Xinhua news agency. The Labour Party won the general election with 55.1 per cent of the vote, against the Nationalist Party's (PN) 41.7 per cent.



I've been in very close contact with our Turkish friends, with Qatar, with Israel, with India, France & Germany. It is my belief that all these efforts are essential in order to create the conditions to allow for finally this Russian invasion of Ukraine to come to an end

**ANTONIO GUTERRES** | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

### QUEEN PAYS TRIBUTE TO HER LATE HUSBAND

Britain's Queen Elizabeth made her first public appearance in five months Tuesday when she joined the royal family and other dignitaries at a memorial service to her "remarkable" husband Prince Philip, who died last year



# Russia vows to scale down ops

AGENCIES

**Istanbul/Kyiv Outskirts/Mariupol, Ukraine, March 29:** Russia promised Tuesday to scale down military operations around Kyiv and northern Ukraine as a confidence-building step, in the most tangible sign yet of progress towards negotiating an end to the war.

During talks at a palace in Istanbul, Ukraine for its part proposed adopting neutral status in the most detailed formula yet for a potential settlement to the five-week conflict.

Moscow's February 24 invasion has been halted on most fronts by strong resistance, with Ukrainians recapturing territory even as civilians are trapped in besieged cities.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan addresses Russian and Ukrainian negotiators before their face-to-face talks in Istanbul, Turkey

Moscow's pledge comes at peace talks with Ukraine	Russia's invasion has been halted on most fronts
Kyiv proposes neutral status with guarantees	Traumatized Ukrainians scavenge in besieged cities

Some analysts noted that Russia's promise to reduce fighting mostly covered areas where it has been losing ground.

"Does we'll drastically reduce military operations around Kyiv" = "we're getting our ass kicked, transitioned to a hasty defense?" tweeted Mark Hertling, a retired U.S. lieutenant general and former commander of U.S. forces in Europe.

#### PEACE IN SIGHT?

Ukrainian negotiators said that under their proposals, Kyiv would agree not to join alliances or host bases of foreign troops, but would have security guaranteed in terms similar to "Article 5", the collective defence clause of the transatlantic NATO military alliance.

They named Israel and NATO members Canada, Poland and Turkey as countries that may give such guarantees. Russia, the United States, Britain, Germany and Italy

could also be involved. The proposals mentioned a 15-year consultation period on the status of Russian-annexed Crimea, and could come into force only in the event of a complete ceasefire, the negotiators said.

The fate of the southeastern Donbas region, which Russia demands Ukraine cede to separatists, would be discussed by the Ukrainian and Russian leaders, they added.

Any peace deal would require a referendum in Ukraine. The Russian delegation said it would study and present the proposals to President Vladimir Putin. The Ukrainian negotiators called for a meeting between Putin and President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, with top Russian negotiator Vladimir Medinsky saying that could take place when foreign ministers were prepared to initial an agreement.

### SCAVENGING IN RUINS

More than a month into the biggest attack on a European nation since World War Two, more than 3.9 million people have fled abroad, thousands have been killed and injured, and Russia's economy has been pummeled by sanctions. In Mariupol, besieged by Russian forces, nearly 5,000 people have been killed, according to figures from the mayor which cannot be verified. In parts now held by Russian troops, the few visible residents appeared ghostlike among charred and bombed apartment blocks. One little girl in a pink puffy coat and yellow knitted hat was playing with a stick in the ruins as explosions cracked in the distance. Two youths scavenged through rubble with a wheelbarrow.

## SHOWERING LOVE



A Palestinian man feeds cats at the beach of Gaza City

## Gulf states plan Yemen talks without Houthi rebels

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Dubai (United Arab Emirates), March 29:** Gulf Arab states were to gather for a summit Tuesday about the years-long war in Yemen, which the country's Houthi rebels were boycotting because it is taking place in Saudi Arabia, their adversary in the conflict.

The decision by the Iran-backed Houthis to skip the summit, called

by the Saudi-based Gulf Cooperation Council, immediately called into question the effectiveness of such a gathering.

The United Nations, diplomats and others have been pushing for another potential cease-fire to mark the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, similar to efforts for a truce over the past years.

Ramadan is likely to start this weekend, depending on the sight-

ing of the new crescent moon.

The GCC—a six-nation club including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE—was to hold closed-door talks in Riyadh. On Monday, the GCC's Secretary-General Nayef al-Hajraf held talks with British Ambassador to Yemen Richard Oppenheim and Yemeni officials allied with its internationally recognised but exiled government.

## Jaishankar offers assistance to Lankan hospital

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Colombo, March 29:** Visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Jaishankar Tuesday offered assistance to a Sri Lankan government hospital which had to halt all surgeries due to lack of medicines.

Disturbed over the news that the Peradeniya Teaching Hospital in Kandy has halted all surgeries, Jaishankar directed the Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Gopal Baglay to find out how New Delhi could assist in resolving the issue. Subsequently Indian envoy contacted senior medical officials attached to the hospital and had inquired about the required medicines that are needed to continue regular surgeries.



## Voting on no-trust motion against Imran on April 3

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Islamabad, March 29:** Pakistan Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed announced Tuesday that voting on the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan will take place April 3, Geo News reported.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he revealed the much-awaited date, adding that debate on the motion, tabled by Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif Monday, will begin Tuesday.

Rasheed said that the final decision would be taken at the last hour, adding that PM Imran Khan will "play" till the last ball.

Reiterating his support for the PTI-led government, he stated: "I stand with Imran Khan" and hoped that voting will be held peacefully April 3. He also said that the official notification will be issued after the PM accepts the resignation of Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar: "In politics, some people win even after losing," he said.

#### PM DIRECTS PARTY LAWMAKERS TO ABSTAIN FROM



**VOTING:** Imran Khan Tuesday strictly directed his party lawmakers to either abstain or not attend the National Assembly session on the day of voting on the no-confidence motion against him.

In a letter to the PTI lawmakers, Prime Minister Khan, who is the party's chairman, said: "All the members of the (PTI) in the National Assembly shall abstain from voting/not attend the meeting of the National Assembly on the date when the said resolution is set out on the agenda," Geo News reported.

# Biden proposes \$1.8bn for Indo-Pacific Strategy

The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military manoeuvring in the region

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, March 29:** US President Joe Biden has proposed \$1.8 billion to support his Indo-Pacific Strategy along with another \$400 million to counter China's aggressive behaviour in the strategically vital region.

"In the Indo-Pacific, America is strengthening its role and expanding its cooperation with long-time allies and partners, including new diplomatic, defence and security, critical and emerging technology and supply chain, and climate and global health initiatives, while supporting stronger ties between our European and Indo Pacific allies," Biden said Monday.

The President has prioritised strategic competition with China and worked with allies and partners to resist coercion and deter aggression from Beijing and Moscow, and has ended America's 20-year war in Afghanistan while removing all US troops, the White House said.

Both the proposals for the Indo-Pacific are part of the \$773 billion annual defence budget of the US for the year 2023, which was submitted by the White House to Congress as part of its annual budgetary proposals.

The Budget, the White House said, promotes integrated deterrence in the Indo-Pacific and globally. To sustain and strengthen deterrence, the budget prioritises China as the Department's pacing challenge. China claims nearly all of the disputed South



China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. Resource-rich Indo-Pacific region is the lifeline and also the highway for trade and prosperity.

To support American leadership in defending democracy, freedom, and security worldwide, the budget includes nearly \$1.8 billion to support a free and open, connected, secure, and resilient Indo-Pacific Region and the Indo-Pacific Strategy, and \$400 million for the Chinese Malig Influence Fund.

In addition, the budget provides \$682 million for Ukraine, an increase of \$219 million above the 2021 enacted level, to counter Russian

malign influence and to meet emerging needs related to security, energy, cybersecurity issues, disinformation, macro-economic stabilisation, and civil society resilience.

According to the White House, the Department Of Defence's 2023 Pacific Deterrence Initiative highlights some of the key investments the Department is making that are focused on strengthening deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Department is building the concepts, capabilities, and posture necessary to meet these challenges, working in concert with the interagency and US allies and partners to ensure US deterrence is integrated across domains, theatres, and the spectrum of conflict, it said.

# With war next door, EU is warned on cyber security gaps

CYBER ATTACKS AGAINST EU BODIES ARE INCREASING 'SHARPLY,' WITH MAJOR INCIDENTS JUMPING MORE THAN TENFOLD BETWEEN 2018 AND 2021, ACCORDING TO THE LUXEMBOURG-BASED ECA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Brussels, March 29:** As Russia's invasion of Ukraine accelerates European Union defense cooperation, a watchdog said Tuesday that EU institutions face vulnerabilities on another front: cyber security.

The warning by the European Court of Auditors covers the wide range of EU bodies—from the executive arm based in Brussels to specialist agencies located across Europe—that run the 27-nation bloc's day-to-day business.

"The EU must step up its efforts to protect its own organisations," Bettina Jakobsen, a member of the ECA, said in a statement accompanying a special report on cyber threats.

"Such attacks can have significant political implications."

Cyber security has jumped up the political agenda in Europe following attacks in recent years that targeted EU nations such as Germany and other industrialised countries including the United States, Britain and Australia.

In 2020, the EU imposed cyber sanctions for the first time, blacklisting a number of Russian, Chinese and North Korean hackers. Nonetheless, the European auditors said Tuesday that EU organisations were failing to enact some "essential" cybersecurity controls and underspending in this area. The auditors also alleged a lack of "systematic" cybersecurity training and information sharing.



EU entities as a whole handle political, diplomatic, financial, economic and regulatory matters.

The spectrum of activities underpins the bloc's status as a geopolitical force, a global setter of industrial rules and the world's most lucrative single market.

The sensitive information processed by EU bodies makes them attractive targets for hackers, according to the report, which said the risks have grown as a result of remote working prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"This has considerably in-

creased the number of potential access points for attackers," the ECA said. It said a "particularly concerning trend is the dramatic increase in significant incidents," which are described as attacks that involve the use of new methods and technologies and that can take weeks or even months to investigate and resolve.

One example cited is a high-profile cyberattack on the European Medicines Agency in late 2020, when the EU was pushing to authorize the first Covid-19 vaccines. "Sensitive data was leaked and manipulated in a way designed to undermine trust in vaccines," the ECA said.

Because the EU's organisations are strongly interconnected, a vulnerability anywhere could have a

casading effect, it said. "A weakness in one can expose others to security threats," said the ECA. It recommended the EU draw up legislation that would set common binding rules on cybersecurity for all the bloc's institutions.

The auditors also urged more resources to support the Computer Emergency Response Team of EU bodies, or CERT-EU, saying "its effectiveness is compromised by an increasing workload, unstable funding and staffing, and insufficient cooperation from some" of the bloc's organisations.

In sum, according to the ECA, the network of EU institutions "has not achieved a level of cyber-preparedness commensurate with the threats."

**business**

**of the day quote**

It is important to ensure that financial institutions are board-driven and do not end up being dominated by individuals. Experience has shown that this leads to undesirable consequences

**MK JAIN** | RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Any hike in material cost will have an impact on cost structures. Material costs have been pushed higher due to Covid restrictions and mines being closed in Russia and South Africa besides others

**SHASHANK SRIVASTAVA** | MARUTI SUZUKI SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The unparalleled quality of our 'Made in India' cars, immaculate efficiency and fast turnaround time are key strengths of the (Chennai) plant that have contributed towards building a fine product offensive strategy and sales success

**VIKRAM PAWAH** | BMW GROUP INDIA, PRESIDENT



**Taxpayers of today are paying for subsidy dished out to consumers more than a decade ago in the name of oil bonds. And they will continue to pay for the next five years as the redemption of bonds continues till 2026**

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN** | FINANCE MINISTER

**TRIUMPH DRIVES IN TIGER SPORT 660**

British premium motorcycle maker Triumph Motorcycles Tuesday said it has launched an all-new Tiger Sport 660 in India, priced at ₹8.95 lakh (ex-showroom). The company said it has entered the premium middleweight adventure category with Tiger Sport 660, designed to deliver significant advantages.



**Govt to sell up to 1.5% in ONGC to raise ₹3,000 crore**

*The government owns a 60.41 per cent stake in ONGC which produces half of India's oil and gas*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 29:** The government will this week sell up to 1.5 per cent of its stake in the country's top oil and gas producer ONGC to raise about ₹3,000 crore. The Offer For Sale (OFS) by the government will be open March 30 and 31, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) said in a stock exchange filing Tuesday.

"The promoter (the government) proposes to sell up to 94,352,094 equity shares of the company, representing 0.75 per cent of the total paid-up equity share capital of the company) on March 30, 2022 (to non-retail investors) and on March 31, 2022 (to retail investors) with an option to additionally sell 94,352,094 equity shares (in case of over-subscription)," it said.

The floor price for the OFS has been set at ₹159 per share. This price is at a 7 per cent discount to the ₹171.05 stock closing price of ONGC on the BSE Tuesday.

The government owns a 60.41 per cent stake in ONGC which produces half of India's oil and gas. In the OFS, a minimum of 25 per cent of the shares are reserved for mutual funds and insurance companies while 10 per cent earmarked for retail investors.

Retail investors are defined as an individual investor who bids for not more than 2 lakh shares. ONGC employees can apply for equity shares worth up to ₹5 lakh each, the filing said, adding that 0.075 per cent of equity shares sold in the OFS would be offered to eligible employees at the cut-off price.

**India buys Russian sunoil at record price**

REUTERS

**Mumbai, March 29:** India has contracted 45,000 tonnes of Russian sunflower oil at a record high price for shipments in April as edible oil prices in the local market surged after supplies from rival Ukraine stopped, five industry officials told Reuters.

Sunflower oil from Russia could help the world's biggest edible oil importer in easing the shortfall at a time when availability of vegetable oils is stretched because of Indonesia's decision to restrict palm oil supplies and lower soybean crop in South America.

"As vessel loading is not possible in Ukraine, buyers are trying to secure supplies from Russia," said Pradeep Chowdhry, managing director of Gemini Edibles & Fats India Pvt. Ltd, which contracted 12,000 tonnes of Russian sunflower oil for April shipments.

Refiners bought crude sunflower oil at a record price of \$2,150 a tonne, including cost, insurance and freight (CIF), in India for April shipments, compared with \$1,630



before Russia invaded Ukraine, dealers said.

Sunflower oil was cheaper than rival palm oil and soyoil before the conflict, but as supplies from top exporter Ukraine stopped, buyers have to pay hefty premium, Chowdhry said.

The Black Sea accounts for 60% of world sunoil output and 76% of exports. Indian buyers were not making purchases of Russian sunflower oil for nearly a month, but now they are placing orders as

banks are opening letters of credit (LC) for the imports, said a New Delhi-based dealer with a global trading firm.

"Indian buyers are paying in dollars. Indian insurance companies are providing cover to vessels bringing sunoil from Russia," the dealer said. Shipments of more than 300,000 tonnes of sunflower oil from Ukraine to India are stuck as loading at Ukrainian ports is suspended, said a Mumbai-based dealer.

India imports sunoil mainly from Russia and Ukraine. It imports palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia, whereas the bulk of soyoil is sourced from Argentina and Brazil.

India has now been trying to increase imports of sunflower oil from Argentina, said Sandeep Bajoria, chief executive of Sunvin Group, a vegetable oil brokerage and consultancy firm.

"Even after the imports from Russia and Argentina, there would be shortfall of sunoil. Nobody can replace Ukraine's shipments," Bajoria said.

India consumes around 200,000 tonnes of sunflower oil but currently refiners can import around 80,000 tonnes only, the New Delhi-based dealer said.

Consumers are forced to switch to soyoil, rapeseed oil and groundnut oil as sunflower oil supplies are limited, the dealer said.

"Sunflower oil is very expensive. This is forcing price sensitive buyers to shift to other oils," Bajoria said.

**Gross NPAs down to ₹7.73 lakh crore: FM**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 29:** Gross NPAs have reduced to ₹7.73 lakh crore as of December 31, 2021, against ₹10.36 lakh crore as of March 31, 2018, due to transparent recognition of stressed assets, the government informed the Rajya Sabha Tuesday.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said as per inputs received from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the country-wide ratio of non-performing loans to total gross loans is available on the website of the International Monetary Fund under its Finance Sound Indicator database.

"It is observed that the said ratio for India compared adversely with those of US, UK and China, and information in respect of Japan is not available," the minister said.

"Primarily as a result of transparent recognition of stressed assets, gross NPAs of SCBs peaked at ₹10,36,187 crore (gross NPA ratio of 11.8 per cent) as on March 31, 2018, from ₹3,23,464 crore (Gross NPA ratio of 4.28 per cent) as on March 31, 2015, and as a result of government's strategy of recognition, reformation, recapitalisation and reforms, have since declined to ₹8,35,061 crore (Gross NPA ratio of 7.33 per cent) as on March 31, 2021, and further to ₹7,73,470 crore (Gross NPA ratio of 6.39 per cent) as on December 31, 2021," Sitharaman said in her



written reply.

She also disclosed that as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, aggregate gross advances of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) increased from ₹25,03,431 crore as of March 31, 2008, to ₹68,75,748 crore as on March 31, 2014. As per RBI inputs, aggressive lending practices during this period along with wilful default/loan frauds/corruption in some cases, economic slowdown etc were observed to be primary reasons for the spurt in the stressed assets of SCBs and Asset Quality Review (AQR) initiated in 2015 for clean and fully provisional bank balance-sheets revealed high incidence of non-performing assets (NPAs), she said.

As a result of AQR and subsequent transparent recognition by banks, stressed accounts were reclassified as NPAs and expected losses on stressed loans, not provided for earlier under flexibility given to restructured loans, were provided for, the minister also said.

**Indices rally for 2nd day on weak crude**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, March 29:** Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rallied for a second straight session Tuesday after gains in index majors HDFC twins, Bharti Airtel and Infosys as global shares advanced ahead of peace talks between Ukraine and Russia.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 350.16 points or 0.61 per cent to settle at 57,943.65 with 20 of its constituents closing higher. During the day, the index rallied 408.04 points or 0.70 per cent to 58,001.53.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 103.30 points or 0.60 per cent to settle at 17,325.30 as its 32 components closed in green.

"Reports of peace talks between Russia and Ukraine along with weakening crude prices helped the global markets trade firm," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Among Sensex stocks, HDFC was the biggest gainer on value-buying after recent losses. The housing finance major spurred 3.06 per cent. Bharti Airtel rallied 2.89 per cent after reports said that the telco may consider a tariff hike and continue with 'premiumisation' to boost its ARPU to ₹300.

Among major index movers, HDFC Bank rose by 1.4 per cent, Ultratech Cement by 2.7 per cent,



**Oldest stock exchange also on CEO search**

*The move comes at a time when its bigger rival NSE, which controls a large part of trade volumes in the country, has also initiated a similar process for its chief*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, March 29:** The country's oldest stock exchange BSE has also embarked on a search for a chief executive and managing director ahead of incumbent Ashish Kumar Chauhan's term ending in November.



The move comes at a time when its bigger rival NSE, which controls a large part of trade volumes in the country, has also initiated a similar process for its chief.

Interestingly, some reports mention that Chauhan is in the race to take over the corner office at NSE.

In an advertisement posted Tuesday, the 1875-established BSE said it is looking for a results-oriented leader having an experience of 20 years, with the "highest ethical standards".

Stock exchanges have frequently faced troubles over integrity - witnessed through the emergence of scandals.

NSE, which is passing through a scandal involving an ex-chief, is also stressing on governance aspect in its search for a new head.

Understanding of the financial markets, technology and operations are the desired qualities in the candidate, the advertisement said.

**SHORT TAKES**

**Hero MotoCorp to hike prices**

**New Delhi:** Hero MotoCorp Tuesday said it will increase prices of its motorcycles and scooters by up to ₹2,000 from April 5. The price revision has been necessitated to partially offset the impact of increasing commodity prices, the country's largest two-wheeler maker said in a statement.

The company will make an upward revision in the ex-showroom prices of its entire product range. The price revision will be up to ₹2,000, and the exact quantum of increase will be subject to specific model and the market. Various companies, including Toyota Kirloskar Motor, Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz, have already made the announcement to increase the product prices from the next month, owing to a rise in input costs.

**Ruchi Soya shares rally nearly 16 pc**

**New Delhi:** Shares of Ruchi Soya Industries Tuesday rallied nearly 16 per cent, halting its four-day decline amid value buying. The stock jumped 15.94 per cent to settle at ₹94.95 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it surged 19.99 per cent to ₹97.85. On the NSE, it zoomed 15.19 per cent to settle at ₹93.8. In the past four days, the stock had declined 10.73 per cent. The rally also came a day after the company's ₹4,300 crore Follow-on Public Offer (FPO) ended Monday. Capital market regulator Sebi Monday asked bankers of Ruchi Soya to give an option to investors in its FPO to withdraw their bids while also cautioning them about "circulation of unsolicited SMS" regarding the share sale.

**Samsung revamps Galaxy A Series**

**Chennai:** Korean electronic major Samsung Tuesday unveiled slew of smartphones under the Galaxy A Series as part of revamping exercise, according to a company official. The company launched Galaxy A13, A23, A33 5G, A53 5G, A73 5G aimed at offering a complete package of the latest Galaxy range of smartphones at an affordable price making awesome technology. "The Galaxy A series epitomises that belief by making flagship like features accessible at an affordable price point. The five new models we are launching are curated to inspire consumers with style, power and versatility," company Director and Head of Retail and Marketing operations - India, Mahesh Alanthat said.

**BIZ BUZZ**

**JSW Paints' 'any colour one price' campaign**

**BHUBANESWAR:** JSW Paints, India's new age paints company and part of US\$ 13 billion JSW Group, released its new marketing campaign "Sawalia" with Alia Bhatt to coincide with IPL 2022. The new TV campaign features Alia Bhatt in a unique double role. In the new ad campaign, Alia Bhatt plays the quintessential Indian consumer as well as an alter ego - Sawalia. The alter ego, Sawalia prods the consumers to ask questions before making their choice of paints. Sawalia is a contextually important marketing campaign considering that all other paint companies in the Indian industry charge extra for colour and a different price for every colour. The deeper the colour higher is the cost. This not only increases the cost of the paints but also takes away the consumers' freedom to choose their favourite colour'. According to Anuradha Bose, Chief Marketing Officer of JSW Paints, "JSW Paints is on a mission to give the freedom of choosing colours to consumers with its 'Any Colour One Price' offering. However, surprisingly, consumers are not even aware that they have been paying extra for decades and that they no longer have to. For this to change, the first step is to encourage our consumers to question why they are charged extra for colour and make them conscious that when they don't question, they pay the price."



**HDFC Bank opens 166th branch near Sum Hospital**

**Bhubaneswar:** HDFC Bank today opened its 166th branch in the state near Sum Hospital, Bhubaneswar. The new branch will offer the full range of world class banking solutions to meet the needs of the local population. The new branch was inaugurated by Prof (Dr.) Manojranjan Nayak, Founder & President of SOA University as Chief Guest and Upasana Nayak as Guest of Honour. The new branch will offer services mostly to SUM Hospital and its employees, and the residents of Shampur, Kalinga Nagar, Gotha Patana, Malipada, Andharua, Bharatpur, Daspur, kateni, Mendhasala, Ghatikia of Chandaka tehsil covering a population of approximately 70,000 with the flexibility to carry out their banking transaction hassle-free.



**India to invest in exploring lithium, cobalt mines in Aus**

**THE MOVE COMES AT A TIME WHEN INDIA IS OFFERING \$2.4 BILLION OF INCENTIVES FOR COMPANIES TO BUILD BATTERY CELLS LOCALLY FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES**

REUTERS

**New Delhi, March 29:** India has committed to jointly invest \$6 million with the Australian government to explore lithium and cobalt mines in Australia over the next six months, in a bid to firm up supplies of key minerals needed to further its electric vehicle plans.

India's KABIL, a mining joint venture between state-run firms National Aluminium Co, Hindustan Copper Ltd and Mineral Exploration Corp Ltd, has signed a preliminary agree-



ment with Australia's Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO), the Indian government said Tuesday.

The move comes at a time when India is offering \$2.4 billion of incentives for companies to build battery cells locally for electric vehicles. Lithium, whose price has surged in the recent days, is a key raw material used to make electric vehicle batteries.

CMFO and KABIL will carry out "joint due diligence of select greenfield and brownfield projects to identify Lithium and Cobalt mineral assets for final joint in-

vestment decisions and acquisition," the Indian government said in a statement.

The agreement also provides for inclusion of any other Indian state-run firm as an investment partner, and envisages the due diligence process will be completed and further investment decisions taken over the next six months.

India has also shortlisted Latin American countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile for exploring mines of strategic minerals abroad, the statement said.

# ROYALS CRUSH SUNRISERS

# RCB eye 1st win, face in-form KKR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, March 29:** A new-look and re-energised Rajasthan Royals attacked from the outset and inflicted on Sunrisers Hyderabad a 61-run hammering to begin their campaign in IPL-15 on a rousing note here Tuesday.

RR got the better of SRH in every department after skipper Sanju Samson led from the front with a scintillating 27-ball 55 (3x4, 5x6) to power his team to an imposing 210/6.

Smarting from the pounding in the first half of their opening fixture, SRH failed to pose any serious threat to RR after a disastrous start to their innings, which saw them slip to 9/3 and then 29/4.

In the end, Kane Williamson's (2) team was stopped at 149/7, with the captain himself enduring a bad day in office.

SRH wouldn't have got even that many had it not been for Aiden Markram's unbeaten 57 (41b, 5x4, 2x6) and Washington Sundar's 14-ball 40 (5x4, 2x6), the latter somewhat making up with the willow after his forgettable outing with the ball.

SRH's top-order batting was in stark contrast to Samson and Devdutt Padikkal (41, 29b, 4x4, 2x6), who added 73 runs for the third wicket off 41 balls, before Shimron



Hetmyer used his brute power to clobber 32 in only 13 deliveries (2x4, 3x6) and take RR past 200.

Samson's six-hitting prowess was on display, sparing no bowler during his entertaining stay in the mid-

dle. Later Hetymar smashed three sixes to pile on SRH's misery. A clinical show by the bowlers, led by leg-

spinner Yuzvendra Chahal (3/22), then completed the task for RR.

Chasing an improbable 211, Sunrisers lost key batter Williamson after a diving catch by Padikkal before Rahul Tripathi (0) became Prasidh Krishna's (2/16) second victim of the day. It became 9/3 as Trent Boult (2/23) trapped Nicolas Pooran (0) in front of the wicket.

To make matters worse, Chahal removed two more batters in Abhishek Sharma and Abdul Samad in quick succession, as Sunrisers lost half their side for 37 runs and stared at a heavy defeat.

But Markram, Romario Shepherd (24) and Sundar, who got 24 runs in the 17th over, delayed the inevitable and reduced the margin of defeat. During the final over, pacer Nathan Coulter-Nile injured himself while landing and was taken off.

Put into bat, Royals opener Jos Buttler got a life on zero courtesy a no ball. Buttler (35) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (20) then gave the side a flying start, adding 58 runs to lay the foundation for a big total.

Buttler was brutal on Umran Malik (2/39), hammering him for two fours and two maximums in the fourth over, as RR collected 21 runs. The two openers then struck a six each off Sundar (0/47) in the next over as RR raced to 52 for no loss in five overs.

Jaiswal however perished in the seventh over, holing out to Markram off Shepherd. While Buttler was dismissed at the start of the ninth over as RR slipped to 75/2.

Showing intent straightaway, Samson took on the SRH attack with gusto. While Samson found the fence at will, Padikkal too got into the groove soon.

SRH removed Padikkal and Samson in quick succession, but a lot of damage had been done by then, before Hetmyer compounded the bowling team's woes with his massive hits as RR scored 123 runs in the back 10.

**BRIEF SCORES:** RR 210/6 (Sanju Samson 55, Devdutt Padikkal 41; Umran Malik 2/39, T Natarajan 2/43) beat SRH 149/7 (Aiden Markram 57 n o, Washington Sundar 40; Yuzvendra Chahal 3/22, Prasidh Krishna 2/16, Trent Boult 2/23) by 61 runs.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Navi Mumbai, March 29:** Seeking to consolidate their position after a winning start, Kolkata Knight Riders will have their task cut out as they take on a determined Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL here Wednesday.

The two outfits head into the game on the back of contrasting results. While the Shreyas Iyer-led KKR humbled defending champions Chennai Super Kings by six wickets, Royal Challengers Bangalore suffered a five-wicket loss to Punjab Kings, despite posting a 200-plus score.

For RCB, skipper Faf Du Plessis is in prime form and would like to continue in the same vein. Opener Anuj Rawat was unable to capitalise on a good start and would be aiming for consistency.

Unburdened by the captaincy pressure, Virat Kohli made a statement and played with more intent against Punjab. He will definitely look to rediscover his glorious touch and continue to torment the opposition bowlers like he did during his prime.

Wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik also played a significant cameo and his role would be crucial once again, if RCB have to set or chase a big total. If these four go all guns blazing, then it would be a daunting task for the varied KKR attack.

While the KKR bowling unit will have to be particularly cautious of the six-hitting prowess of Du Plessis, which was on display Sunday, RCB bowlers would have to quickly forget the hammering they received at the hands of the Punjab batters.

A profligate Mohammed Siraj,

who leaked 59 runs, will have to pull up his socks. Another key bowler is death overs specialist and last edition's Purple Cap holder Harshal Patel. Even the role of Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga, who is capable of spinning a web around the batters, could decide the fate of the match.

For KKR, they ticked all the boxes in their lung-opener against CSK and they would be hoping that they can repeat their performance. The biggest positive for KKR was Ajinkya Rahane finding his mojo and scoring runs.

Although all-rounder Venkatesh Iyer managed only 16 runs in the first game, he is capable of pummelling any attack into submission. Skipper Shreyas Iyer along with Sam Billings and Sheldon Jackson would need to shoulder responsibility in the middle-order.

On the bowling front, Umesh Yadav was sensational at the Wankhede. But others including Shivam Mavi, spinners Varun Chakravarty and Sunil Narine would need to put up an improved show. All-rounder Andre Russell's role with the bat and ball could eventually be the difference between the two sides. KKR are unlikely to tinker with their winning combination. Being an evening game, dew would certainly be a factor and one can expect a high-scoring affair.

TODAY'S MATCH	
RCB	KKR
Time: 07:30 pm	
TELECAST	
Star Sports channels & Hotstar	

## Would be emotional thinking about ABD if we win IPL: Kohli

**MUMBAI:** Virat Kohli feels if Royal Challengers Bangalore were crowned champions for the first time in the coming seasons it would mean a lot to AB de Villiers, who would be the first person on the former captain's mind after the triumph.

One of contemporary cricket's greatest batters, de Villiers retired from all forms of the game in November last year. Since starting his association with RCB in 2011, the South African batting legend enjoyed 11 fruitful seasons with the franchise.

"The other day, it got me thinking, if we manage to win the title in the coming seasons, I would be very emotional thinking about him first," Kohli, who had stepped down



as captain after the 2021 season, said on RCB Bold Diaries.

"Rather than what I would experience after such hard work of so many years, I would actually think of him. It would still mean a lot to him even if he is watching the game from home. He is a special

human being as he has touched everyone, and we all can vouch for that," he added.

Kohli revealed that he had an inkling during the last IPL that De Villiers was going to hang his boots. "It's very strange I mean, I clearly remember when he decided to finally call it a day.

"He sent me a voice note, we were coming back from Dubai after the World Cup. I got a voice note from AB de Villiers while we were driving back home. I kind of had the impression and was guessing it in the last IPL.

"Our rooms were next to each other, and we would walk the same way and disperse, every time we walked to our room and he would

see me outside, he would be like 'I want to see you for coffee, one of these days'.

"I kept getting nervous and was like 'I am not sitting with you because I think there is something coming' to which he always said 'No man there is nothing, I just want to have a chat with you, it's been a while and he never speaks like that because we interact all the time. So, I knew something is brewing up.

"It is a very strange feeling I got very emotional. The voice note was very emotional as well for me when he said, 'Look I don't have it in me anymore.' I have shared so many moments with him, highs and lows, everything we have been through he was right next to me."

## India's Pro League ties vs England postponed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 29:** The upcoming FIH Pro League double-header between the women hockey teams of India and England was postponed Tuesday due to a COVID-19 outbreak in the British camp. The matches were scheduled to be played April 2 and 3 at the iconic Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

Game's governing body - FIH - said the matches have been postponed "due to a high number of COVID cases and injuries affecting the English team."

"FIH, @TheHockeyIndia and @EnglandHockey are monitoring the situation. Further information will be given as soon as available," the FIH tweeted.

"The England Women's Team have had to cancel their travel to India for the double-header FIH Pro League matches on 2nd and 3rd April due to several members of the team testing positive for Covid-19 while some were unavailable due to injuries in the squad," Hockey India said in release.

While the women's matches were deferred, the men's fixtures between India and England will be played as planned this weekend.

Commenting on the rescheduling, Hockey India President Gyanendra Ningombam said, "It is unfortunate that the England Women's Hockey Team had to cancel their India trip for the weekend matches in Bhubaneswar."

"We understand these are challenging times for every team as we all continue to battle the pandemic," he added.

The Indian women's team is currently third in the league standing, having won three games, drawn two and lost one. This is not the first time India's Pro League fixture has been postponed.

Earlier this month, the Indian men's team's matches against Germany were postponed following an outbreak of COVID-19 in the German camp.

## Jayanti, Rashmi sprint to gold at Para Nat'ls



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 29:** Odisha's Jayanti Behera and Rashmi Ranjan Mallick had wonderful outings Tuesday as they secured the gold medal in their respective events of the 20th National Para Athletics Championships at the iconic Kalinga Stadium here.

Jayanti, who made a name for herself with some quality performance in the global arena, bagged the yellow metal in the women's T-47 category of 100m event. She achieved the feat with a timing of 12.92 seconds.

Later on the day, Rashmi extended Odisha's gold count finishing on the top of the podium in



the men's T-44 category of 100m event with a timing of 12.64 seconds.

The day also turned into a special one when visually-impaired cricketer Pankaj Bhu, who has represented India, had won the first medal - a bronze - for the hosts in the T-13 category of the men's 100m event (12.17 seconds).

Prof. Ganesh Lal, Governor of Odisha, graced the occasion with his presence Tuesday and distributed medals.

Earlier Sunday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had honoured Jayanti with a cash award of Rs 15,00,000 for winning as many as three medals in the recently concluded World Para Athletics Championships in Dubai.

## SACHIN HEAPS PRAISE ON WARNE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 29:** Calling Shane Warne a "fierce competitor" against whom he always had to prepare differently, iconic Sachin Tendulkar says as the Australian spin legend was good at playing mind games and gave nothing away with his body language.

One of the all-time greats of the game, Warne died at the age of 52 due to a suspected heart attack in Thailand, March 4. A state memorial service has been scheduled at the MCG Wednesday.

"My first proper series against Shane Warne was in 1998 in India and everyone tagged that series as Tendulkar versus Shane Warne clash. That kind of following is going to put you under pressure," said Tendulkar.

"When you are playing a world class bowler like him, you just can't turn up and hope that things are going to be okay. So I had to prepare properly, not just out being there at the nets but when you're sitting in the room, you have to be a step ahead of him, what he would be thinking because he was ex-



tremely good in putting pressure and playing mind games and trying to plan your dismissal."

Tendulkar had many fierce battles with Warne and the 1998 series

in India will remain a part of crick-eting folklore. "It didn't matter, you looked at his body language. One didn't know whether Warne had picked up four wickets, five

wickets or he was bowling wicketless. Every delivery that he bowled, he was a fierce competitor. "So even if you're facing the second last over of the day, one had to keep their eyes open, because he was always up to something and trying to figure out how could he dismiss."

Remembering his last meeting with Warne in 2021, Tendulkar said: "After the last IPL, I went to spend some time in London where we got in touch. There was never a dull moment. He was full of entertainment, full of jokes and you know those battles those mini competitions.

"I realised that it was not just about spin, the swing also came naturally to him. He was a good golfer. I hate saying he was a good golfer because it's hard to accept what has happened and for us he will continue to live in our hearts.

"He had this tremendous attitude towards life. Always positive and always welcoming. It's really hard to accept that he is no more among us..." Tendulkar said "there were number of good spinners, but Shane was different"

## ANOTHER NEERAJ IN THE MAKING FROM SONEPAT! From selling vegetables to Asiad team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, March 29:** Uncapped 19-year-old India archer Neeraj Chauhan was driven into penury as the novel coronavirus had begun to spread its ugly tentacles, forcing him to sell vegetables to make ends meet.

As he hit the road as a vendor in the face of the all-pervading poverty two years ago, Chauhan was left with no option but to contemplate quitting the sport. He didn't take that extreme step, though.

Instead, thanks to his resilience and never-say-die attitude, the archer from Meerut is now bracing for his World Cup debut in three months, followed by an Asian Games participation.

"Sabzi bechte bechte, archery se kaafi dur chala gaya tha (Was sell-



ing vegetable, and had lost touch with archery) but thankfully we got help from the sports ministry and got back to archery," Chauhan

told this agency from Sonipat.

Chauhan, who grew up near the Kailash Prakash Stadium where his father Akshay Lal Chauhan worked

as a cook for 30 years in his mess, took up archery after being picked by the academy in 2013, and went on to win a handful of medals at the national level.

But the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 halted his progress as the archer, along with his two elder brothers (one of them a national boxer), got down to selling vegetables. To survive, they sold vegetables on the bylanes of Meerut for nearly two years.

"Majboori thi (we're helpless). Dad earned about Rs 7,000-8,000 and everything had stopped after lockdown, so it was all about survival - archery and boxing took a back seat," he said of his days of struggle.

Their plight was highlighted by Archery Association of India (AAI) president Arjun Munda, who had

requested then union sports minister Kiren Rijju for help.

Rijju's department took stock of the situation and promptly sanctioned Chauhan and his brother Sunil financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh each under the ministry's Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund.

Since then he joined the Sports Authority of India where his transformation came under coach Jitendra Chauhan. That he had sharp focus and stable head was known to him since childhood when he would easily outperform his friends in the game of seven stones, which is also called 'Satolia' or 'Lagori' in many places.

"I used to love target-hitting games, so archery naturally became my first love," Chauhan said. At the senior level however, it was

a different ball game and he realised it after failing to make the cut in two India selection trials last year.

"I knew there was something missing and I was not up to the mark," he said, adding that his real transformation came under coach Jitendra. "He kept working on me all the time from day one, and I'm blessed to have him as my coach."

For the Asian Games and the preceding three World Cups, the national federation had a three-week long trial, with heavyweights like Tarundeep Rai, Atanu Das, Praveen Jadhav also participating in the elimination round. Chauhan edged out the Tokyo Olympian duo of Das and Jadhav to join Rai, Jayanta Talukdar and Sachin Gupta in the four-member squad.