



PUSHING BOUNDARIES
Actor Richa Chadha shares how she was stretched out of her comfort zone by Sanjay Leela Bhansali
LEISURE **P2**



XI TO VISIT RUSSIA
Chinese President Xi Jinping will travel to Moscow on a state visit Monday for crucial talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin
INTERNATIONAL **P10**



TREESA-GAYATRI IN SEMIS
Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand advance to the All England Championships semifinals
SPORTS **P12**



VOICE OF OPPOSITION: Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and other Opposition MPs during a protest over the Adani issue, at Parliament House complex in New Delhi, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Tehsildar suspended as man immolates self

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: Jagdish Chauhan, who attempted self-immolation over a pending land-related case in front of the Nuapada tehsil office, succumbed to burn injuries Friday. The tehsildar was suspended.

Chauhan, a differently-abled man from Kalyanpur under Jonk-Khariar Road police limits, had suf-

fered 80 per cent burn injuries. He died during treatment at Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), Burla. Following the incident, the family members of Chauhan lodged a police complaint against the Nuapada sadar tehsildar and the additional tehsildar. Meanwhile, Nuapada sadar tehsildar Debendra Rout has been suspended by the state government.

The tehsildar will be headquartered at the Revenue Divisional Commissioner's office, Sambalpur during the period of suspension.

He cannot leave the headquarters without the permission of the Revenue Divisional Commissioner, officials said.

Family members and well-wishers of Chauhan have demanded a compensation of ₹50 lakh.

Drivers' strike on hold

'Quit steering' agitation called off for 90 days following an assurance by the state government that all their demands would be fulfilled

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: A day after receiving assurance from the state government that their issues would be resolved, the Drivers Ekata Mahasangha has put on hold their ongoing indefinite 'quit steering' protest for 90 days.

"Keeping in view the government's written assurance and appeal by the Chief Secretary, we are putting the 'quit steering' agitation on hold for 90 days," said Prasant Menduli of the outfit in a video message.

The announcement by the association came within a few hours after Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena and DGP Sunil Bansal appealed to the striking drivers to withdraw the stir. Thanking the drivers for their unity, Menduli urged them to return home.

"The drivers protested peacefully for three days. Because of the strike the people have suffered and the government has also assured us to consider our demands in three months," he said.

Asked if their 10-point charter of demands was not met within the stipulated 90 days as assured by the state government, Menduli

said: "We will go for self-immolation in front of Naveen Niwas on the 91st day, if our demands are not met within three months."

The Chief Secretary held a meeting with the agitating drivers Thursday evening and gave a written assurance to them that their issues will be resolved in three months. Earlier in the day, Jena and DGP Sunil Bansal again appealed to the drivers to call off their strike in view of the ongoing Class-X board examination and problems faced by patients and the public at large.

As per the direction of Speaker BK Arukha, Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu made a statement in the Assembly, Friday. She said that the state government will resolve their issues in three months.

The strike affected supply of fuel and other essential items for two days. Prices of essential commodities have skyrocketed as trucks carrying them were stranded in different parts of the state. Over 2 lakh drivers had launched a strike across Odisha from Wednesday for an indefinite period demanding social security, including pension after 60 years, accident benefits, and formation of a welfare fund.

Groom walks 28 km for wedding



A screen grab of the viral video of the groom and his kin walking to the venue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 17: A groom and his family members had to walk 28 kilometres to reach the bride's village in Rayagada district for the wedding, as they could not arrange a vehicle due to the drivers' strike.

They walked all night Thursday from Sunakhandi panchayat under Kalyansinghpur block to reach Dibalapadu where the marriage was solemnised Friday. A video showing the groom and his family members including a few women walking at night went viral on so-

cial media. "No transport was available due to the drivers' strike. We walked all night to reach the village. We had no other option," one of the groom's family members said.

The marriage was solemnised Friday morning. But the groom and his family members stayed at the bride's house, waiting for the drivers' association to withdraw the strike so that they can return home.

The Driver Eakta Mahasangha has launched the indefinite strike across the state from Wednesday demanding social welfare measures and other benefits.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Never speak your mind. If the govt comes to know about it, you might be in trouble. After all, we're a democracy

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	57989.90	↑ 355.06
NIFTY	17100.05	↑ 114.45
DOLLAR	82.61	↑ ₹0.26
EURO	87.83	↑ ₹0.21
GOLD	₹58,773	↑ ₹767
SILVER	₹67,740	↑ ₹1209

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	33.1°C	31.0°C
MIN	20.0°C	21.0°C
Humidity	67%	75%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather most likely	

CENTRE FOR REFUND TO SMALL DEPOSITORS

KULDEEP SINGH, OP

New Delhi, March 17: The Union government has filed an application in the Supreme Court seeking transfer of ₹5000 crore from SEBI-Sahara account to the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies for the purpose of refund to small depositors duped by chit fund companies.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government, Friday submitted that ₹23,000 crore has been lying idle in the SEBI-Sahara account. Mehta argued that the money can be given to small depositors duped by chit fund companies. "We are interested in ensuring that the investors get their money," Mehta submitted. He argued that in case of cooperative societies, there are verified depositors, whose money was duped.

The solicitor general also told the apex court that a meeting of 18 departments and ministries, including Cooperation department, ED, SFIO, Income Tax and Ministry of Corporate Affairs, was held and discussions were held on refund to depositors.

The solicitor general requested the apex court to take the case for hearing Monday. Significantly, a two-judge bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar observed that 18 officers of different departments meeting together is itself an achievement. The bench adjourned the matter to Monday.

Earlier January 16, the Supreme Court had sought suggestions from the Union government, Odisha and other parties in the chit fund scam on the issue of payment of money to thousands of investors duped by chit fund companies.



CHIT FUND SCAM

SHORT TAKES

Trolling of CJJ: Oppn writes to Prez

New Delhi: Several Opposition MPs have petitioned President Droupadi Murmu for immediate action over social media trolling of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud while he was deliberating on a case related to the Governor's role in Maharashtra during the last government formation. In a letter to the President, Congress Rajya Sabha member Vivek Tankha termed such online trolling a "brazen case of interference with the course of justice" and has called for immediate action against the culprits.

SVB parent seeks bankruptcy shield

New York: SVB Financial Group said Friday it filed for a court-supervised reorganisation under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection to seek buyers for its assets, days after its former unit Silicon Valley Bank was taken over by US regulators. The move to commence bankruptcy proceedings comes as emergency measures to shore up confidence have so far failed to dispel worries about a financial contagion. Financial stocks have lost billions of dollars in value since the collapse of SVB.

Guj conman takes J&K admin for a ride

Posing as PMO official, the imposter got perks, including a bulletproof car and scores of security personnel

AGENCIES

Srinagar, March 17: Kiran Bhai Patel, who posed as a PMO official and got the requisite perks, including a bulletproof car and scores of security personnel, had three cases registered against him in his home state Gujarat, police said Friday.

He was arrested here March



3 but his deception that tricked security forces of the high security zone that is Jammu and Kashmir has come to light only now. Patel was in police custody until Friday and has now been sent to jail for 14

days, officials said.

The story of the alleged conman from Gujarat unravelled earlier this month when he visited Kashmir for the third time, each time passing himself off as Additional Director

(Strategy and Campaigns) Prime Minister's Office, New Delhi.

Three cases under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including cheating, forgery and breach of trust, dating back to 2017 are registered against him in police stations in Ahmedabad and Baroda, police said.

Purported videos of Patel surveying the snow slopes of Gulmarg with a posse of armed security personnel around him and of a convoy of vehicles accompanying him weaving through a Valley town have been circulated widely across social media platforms.

Contd...P4

ଅଭିଜିତା | OrissaPOST

BUSINESS EMINENCE AWARDS

TODAY 10:45 AM ONWARDS

Bhubaneswar

LIVE STREAM ON 10:45 AM ONWARDS

Dharitrilive OrissapostLive

Dharitrinews OrissapostLive

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FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Ganesha sees a wonderful time ahead for you. Today, you will meet many people who will prove reliable and trustworthy in the future. You aim to think and work perfectly. For that, says Ganesha, you will have to remain your practical and head-on-shoulders self.

TAURUS

You will manage to achieve all short-term goals that you had set today and your focus will now shift to setting long-term ones. Work pressure will continue but you will make it a point to find some time to renew your leisure activities. Family and friends will also figure in your scheme of things, predicts Ganesha.

GEMINI

You are likely to be concerned about your finances, jointly held assets and property, says Ganesha. Also, you will be a little edgy today. Even the most insignificant problems will dampen your mood. You will probably take chances in money matters.

CANCER

There is nothing extraordinary about today. You will be busy doing the routine work and will find contentment in the mundane. The absence of thrill and adventure doesn't mean that you'll be free for most part of the day. By evening, you may get indications that tomorrow may not be this boring.

LEO

The complete family man that you are, it is your near and dear ones who have always laid the foundation of your success. So why should today be any different. The auspicious tides of the day begin from your home and follow you everywhere. Be it work or play, you have a tempo that is undiminished.

VIRGO

Don't dilly-dally when it comes to matters of health, says Ganesha. You look lean and mean to take on those old wounds today. But peace and prosperity are the flavours of the day. Ganesha advises you to invest time in fun and entertainment today - just to get those batteries charged.

LIBRA

Put up that 'Do Not Disturb' sign on the door today. That's because Ganesha feels the tingle in your bones to want to stick to your preferred subject matter. This will help you achieve good progress in your research. Also, expect to be hit by a wave of nostalgia, as loving memories from the past sweeten your heart.

SCORPIO

Ganesha predicts you will possibly plan to launch a new product today. But put off the launch if you want to supersede certain unscrupulous elements. But after a waiting game, you may go ahead with your plan with much fanfare, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Zoom in on complicated problems and solve them with style, says Ganesha. Don't fret over problems; instead concentrate on ways to solve them. Your day will get even better when perhaps, news from an overseas friend reaches you.

CAPRICORN

Today, you will get back to playing the power game, using both fair and unfair means to achieve your goals, says Ganesha. Intellectual growth will be phenomenal; equally good will be your intuitions. In fact, your gut feelings will guide all the decisions you take today, and rest assured, none will leave you in a soup. You will be sensitive to and understanding of others' problems, and will lend a helping hand to those who seek your assistance.

AQUARIUS

A romantic liaison is headed towards you. Quite naturally, you don't want to be caught dead in a ratty old tee. Today, you want to keep everyone happy and amused, both at home and at work. And you manage wonderfully, says Ganesha.

PISCES

'Love thy neighbour' is a commandment you may just end up implementing, literally, considering how religious scriptures provide you food for thought today. Spiritual pursuits will keep you occupied. You may also find yourself visiting places of religious significance, says Ganesha.

NAOMI FEELS BEAUTIFUL WHILE MAKING LOVE

Aladdin actress Naomi Scott admits that she feels at her most beautiful during good sex. The 29-year-old star says she and her sportsman spouse Jordan Spence enjoy spa sessions featuring extreme temperatures as it's good for health and admits that she looks her best when they are making love.

SHARON STONE ADMITS LOSING 'HALF HER MONEY'

Sharon Stone broke down in tears during a heartfelt speech at a charity fundraiser as she told the audience she lost 'half her money' due to technological ignorance. The 65-year-old was determined to help despite suffering loss and urged audience to pledge their cash to good cause.

Alaya reacts to PC's shout-out

Mumbai: Alaya F, who received a lot of love for her performance in Freddy, was surprised to find a fan in her favourite actress, Priyanka Chopra Jonas. PC confessed about being a fan of the Jawani Jaaneman actress. The Citadel star not only praised her for being unique but also mentioned that this young actress is one of the most promising superstars in the Hindi film industry.

In an interview, praising the young actress, PC said, "I really like Alaya. I think she is cool and has a unique perspective. She is not trying to be like everyone else. But I think—I don't know. We will find that in a few years."

As an aftereffect of the praise, the 25-year-old wrote, "I can't even begin to describe how overwhelmed and grateful I'm feeling!! When your most favorite actor picks you when asked who they think deserves to be the next Bollywood superstar, there is LITERALLY no better feeling in the world!!! Thank you @priyanka-chopra." A shout out from the global icon was truly a remarkable feat for the actress.

Her upcoming lineup includes U-Turn and the Srikanth Bolla biopic, among others.

AGENCIES



'I don't have a problem with KANGANA'

Mumbai: Thappad star Taapsee Pannu says she doesn't have a problem with Kangana Ranaut, but the latter has a problem with her. She feels that the Thalaivi star is a good actor, and being called her cheap imitation is a compliment.

In an interview with an entertainment portal, Taapsee has said that she would not hesitate to greet Kangana Ranaut if and when she encounters her. In the past, both actresses took their war of words to the online platform Twitter after Kangana and her sister Rangoli Chandel called Taapsee 'a B-grade' actor and a 'sasti copy' of Kangana.

Taapsee said, "If there is a situation where she is in front of me, then I will go and say hello. I won't turn away from her. I do not have a problem with her; she has a problem. It will be her wish. I was shocked at first because she is a good actor and I kept her on a pedestal. When I was called a sasti copy, I was like, 'She is such a good actress'. I took it as a compliment."

Taapsee has Rajkumar Hirani's upcoming film Dunki on her plate opposite Shah Rukh Khan.

AGENCIES



I'm a director's actor: Richa

Mumbai: Actress Richa Chadha, who will soon be seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's debut web series Heeramandi, has shared that she was 'stretched out of her comfort zone' while working on the project.

The actress said, "Sanjay sir is a visionary storyteller. I have never felt so stretched out of my comfort zone as a performer. So many times, I go to a set and the director tells me, 'for you, this is a cakewalk; you were so great in this film, that film.'"

However, she said that it's not as easy as it looks because everyone keeps evolving. She continued, "I feel like saying that was 10 years ago, I am not the same person anymore. I have evolved; I have grown. I am a director's actor. I love being pushed to my maximum potential. And hence, I loved working with Sanjay sir, as he is so respectful of collaboration. He doesn't suffer fools easily and has high standards."

Heeramandi, set in pre-Independent India, is based on the life story of three generations of courtesans in Heeramandi district. The series also stars Sonakshi Sinha, Sharmin Sehgal, and Manisha Koirala and will be released on Netflix.

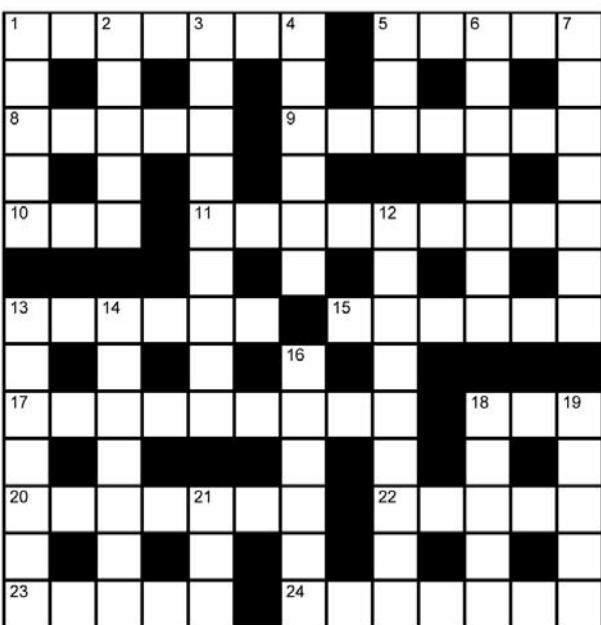
IANS



FUN

post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Topiaries
5 Drink holder
8 Debate
9 Great circle
10 Colouring material
11 Postiche
13 Boxing units
15 Venom
17 Race timer
18 A tiger can have one
20 Personal belief
22 Earth colour

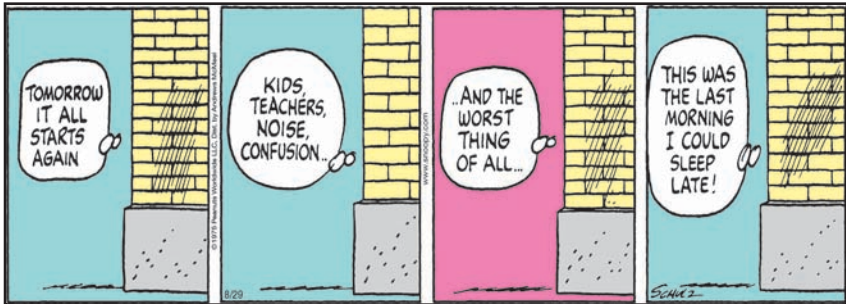
Down

- 23 Harpoon
24 Transparent gem
1 Large and impressive
2 Type of elephant
3 Make-up type (3,6)
4 Pleasing to the eye
5 African antelope

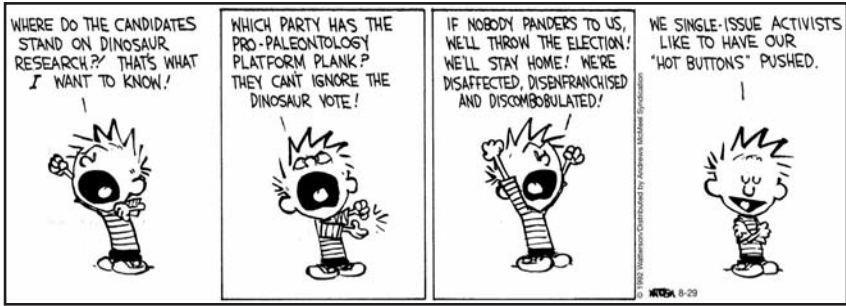
Across

- 6 Priyanka Chopra, for one
7 Medical man or woman
12 Where overspending will land you
13 Attar (4,3)
14 Perfect
16 Immediately (2,4)
18 Egyptian snake
19 Blasé
21 Frost

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

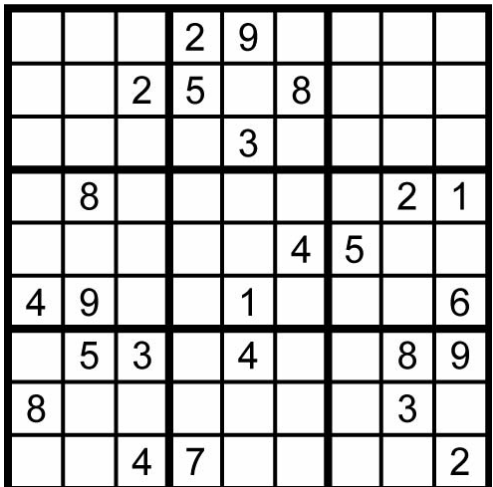


BREVITY



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.

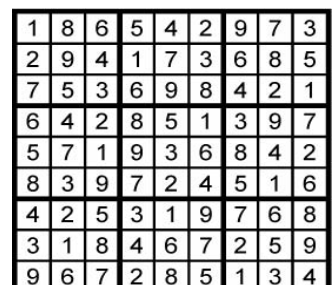


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

SC favours ₹533 per day allowance to home guards

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 17: In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court Friday held that home guards shall be paid ₹533 per day as duty call-up allowance (DCA) in Odisha and rejected the petition filed by the state government against the Orissa High Court order.

A two-judge bench of the Justices MR Shah and MM Sundresh clarified that the arrears shall be paid from June 2018 and the amount shall be disbursed within a period of three months.

“It goes without saying that the home guards shall be entitled to the periodical rise which may be available to the police personnel of the state and the DCA to be paid to the home guards be periodically increased taking into consideration the minimum pay which the Police

personnel of the state are entitled to,” the bench said.

The apex court upheld the judgement of a division bench of Orissa High Court that directed the state government to pay ₹533 per day to home guards. Both the parties had moved the SC challenging the judgement of the High Court, which had directed for payment at the rate of ₹533 per day to the home guards from January 2020, instead of November 2016, as directed by the single judge of HC.

Odisha government had submitted that the HC has materially erred in directing the state to pay ₹533 per day as DCA to the home guards as this would be a much greater amount to what is being paid to the constables at the entry level posts.

The aggrieved home guards prayed the apex court to direct the state government to pay arrears from 2016.

State to pump in ₹18K cr for rural roads, bridges

Rural Development department allocates ₹7,500 crore for development of infrastructure in rural Odisha for FY 2023-24

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: The state government has decided to construct 15,000-km roads with an investment of ₹12,000 crore under Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana (MMSY) and 1,500 new bridges with an outlay of ₹6,000 crore under Biju Setu Yojana (BSY) in the next 5 years, Rural Development (RD) department said, Friday.

Addressing media here on highlights of allocation to the department in State Budget 2023-24, Rural Development Minister Pritiranjan Gharai said ₹7,500 crore has been allocated towards development of infrastructure in rural Odisha.

The department has so far constructed 1,254 bridges under BSY and 900 bridges are in different stages of execution. “During 2023-



Rural Development director Aravind Agrawal, Minister Pritiranjan Gharai and Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh during the press meet in Bhubaneswar

24, 526 new bridges will be constructed with an outlay of ₹1,900 crore,” said Gharai.

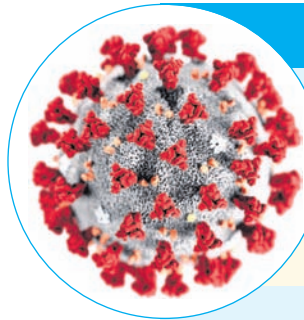
In a bid to recharge groundwater and instream storage of flowing water, the department has planned to construct 100 bridge-

cum-weirs with an outlay of ₹50 crore. So far, 32 instream structures have been completed.

The state has planned to build 6,000-km roads with a budgetary allocation of ₹2,061 crore under MMSY, MMSY-Improvement of ex-

BRINGING SMILES

Motivational speaker Monica Singhal speaks during an event organised by Hari Om Smiles at Saheed Bhawan in Cuttack, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,22,58,910	65,51,58,379	68,17,436
India	4,46,93,506	4,41,57,685	5,30,795
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

INFRA REVAMP PLAN

₹2,061 crore
will be spent on building 6,000-km rural roads in the current fiscal

₹1,900 crore
has been allocated for construction of 526 bridges during 2023-24

₹1,158.79 crore
has been set aside for maintenance of rural roads and improve riding quality in 50,000-km roads

isting RD roads, MMSY-Transferred Roads Improvement Programme (TRIP), MMSY-Connection of Missing Road Links (CMRL) and MMSY-Connection of Unconnected Villages in Difficult Areas (CUVDA). “Till date, the department has constructed 10,621 km of roads under

MMSY,” he said.

The state government has prioritised construction of 200-km roads in difficult LWE-hit areas, Swabhimana Anchal of Malkangiri and other missing links.

RD department principal secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh said in a bid to ensure all-weather connectivity, the state has decided to construct 15,000 km of rural roads under MMSY with an investment of ₹12,000 crore and 1,500 bridges with an investment of ₹6,000 crore under BSY in the next 5 years.

“A budgetary allocation of ₹1,158.79 crore has been made in order to ensure maintenance of rural roads and improve riding quality in 50,000-km of roads,” the RD department principal secretary said.

Techie from Bihar held in interstate job fraud case

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police has arrested one of the prime accused in the multi-crore job scam spreading across 17 states of the country. The accused was identified as Amit Kumar Singh, a resident of Kasdeora in Maharajganj area of Siwan district in Bihar.

A team of EOW arrested Singh, an information technology (IT) professional, from Maharajganj area Wednesday. The accused has developed

the website - www.grks.org - of ‘Gramin Rojgar Kalyan Sansthan’ for floating fake advertisements for jobs. “He was also managing the website by updating it,” revealed the EOW sources.

The sources also claimed that Singh used to provide all kinds of technical support to cyber criminals in running the racket through Gramin Rojgar Kalyan Sansthan website.

Singh was reportedly in liaison with payment gateways like Cashfree, Razorpay and BharatPe for maintenance of wallets of ‘Gramin Rojgar

Kalyan Sansthan’ with them. “He was also responsible for giving the advertisement for the fake job racket in social media like facebook. He was providing technical support to the job racket knowing it well to be fake and was getting the lucrative benefit of ₹40,000 per week from the account of Gramin Rojgar Kalyan Sansthan,” EOW sources added.

The fraudsters publish job advertisements having similarities with different employment ads published by various government agencies. The advertisements were published

in the website and popular regional dailies. They also offered reservations and concessional fees as per the government norms and regulations to deceive the job seekers. They conduct online exams and interviews and upload syllabus for each post on the website.

However, the accused would disqualify the candidates and misappropriate the amount.

The amounts would be credited to accounts managed by the fraudsters. The scam was on since 2020 and lakhs of unemployed youths across the nation applied for the posts.

Week washed out amid Adani, Rahul row

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 17: The entire week of the Parliament’s Budget Session was washed out due to the impasse over demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into Adani group controversy and Rahul Gandhi’s remarks on democracy.

The second leg of the Budget Session, that commenced March 13, witnessed continuous uproar in both the Houses, with the Opposition demanding joint parliamentary probe into the allegations of stock manipulation by the Adani group and the ruling-BJP demanding apology from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his remarks that democracy is under attack. Lok Sabha could function for around 65 minutes out of scheduled 180 minutes in five days while Rajya Sabha could function for a little over 150 minutes. The full-day adjournments would, however, not affect the pay packets and allowances of the MPs. An MP is entitled to claim a daily allowance of



₹2,000 for attending the proceedings provided the member signs the register maintained by the House. From March 13 to 16, both the Houses have registered 2,201 attendances. It will cost at least ₹44.02 lakh to the exchequer, unless an MP refuses to claim daily attendance allowance. This cost is above other expenses to hold the session. In 2012, then Parliamentary

BUDGET SESSION

Affairs minister in UPA government, Pawan Bansal had said that each minute of running Parliament during sessions costs ₹2.5 lakh. The Congress and BJD blamed the ruling-BJP for the continued din in the House. Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka said this is for the first time in the history of independent India that a ruling party is disrupting the House pro-

ceedings. “If that is the case, why do they summon the Parliament? They are wasting the money of taxpayers,” Ulaka said.

The Congress MP said that they will continue demanding a JPC probe into the allegations against Adani group. About BJP’s allegations on Rahul Gandhi, Ulaka said the saffron party has been making flimsy allegations against Gandhi to divert attention from the Opposition’s demand.

BJD MP Sujate Kumar said it is very unfortunate that the BJP is disrupting the House proceedings.

“It seems that the Union government is not interested in running the session. This is a huge loss of time and money. At least Question Hour and Zero Hour should not be disrupted. People sent us with hope. Ruling party MPs should not indulge in disruption of the House proceedings,” Kumar said.

Kumar and Ulaka asserted that at least Zero Hour and Question Hour should be allowed to run as it gives opportunity to the members to raise issues of their areas.

CM greets Water Resources dept for winning awards

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday congratulated Water Resources department on receiving Best Community Project Award for Odisha Lift Irrigation Corporation (OLIC) and Best Infra Pioneer Project Award for Upper Indravati Lift Irrigation Project.

The awards were given away by Union Ministry of Jal Shakti for exemplary work in water conservation and management. Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat presented the awards to Odisha at a function held in New Delhi recently.

OLIC has bagged the prestigious ‘National Water Digest’ award in the category of Best Community Project.

It may be mentioned here that the OLIC was established October 1, 1973. Since then, it has contributed to 30 per cent of the total irrigation facility of the state by irrigating over 13.50 lakh hectares of cultivable land.

Upper Indravati Lift Irrigation Project is a part of Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project and is located in Nabarangpur and Kalahandi districts. This Multipurpose Project comprises of four dams and eight dykes to form an Integrated Reservoir over River Indravati & its three Tributary of having Gross Storage Capacity of 2,300 MCM.

In 2021, the CM dedicated 100 projects worth ₹2,085 crore including Upper Indravati Lift Canal system to the people of Kalahandi.

SMILES TO A MILLION ENERGY SECURITY TO A BILLION

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ବିନାମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସେବା ସହିତ

- ଆୟୁଲୀନ ସେବା (୧୦୮)
- ଅତିକମ୍ବଳ ୪ଥର ପ୍ରସବ ପୂର୍ବ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଅଲଟ୍ରାସାଉଣ୍ଡ ସହିତ
- ନର୍ମାଳ ପ୍ରସବ କିମ୍ବା ଅସ୍ତ୍ରୋପଚାର (ସି-ସେକ୍ସନ) ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରସବ ସେବା
- ଗର୍ଭାବସ୍ଥା ସମୟରେ ଓ ପ୍ରସବର ୬ ମାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମା' ପାଇଁ ଏବଂ ଶିଶୁ ପାଇଁ (୧ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ) ଲାବୋରେଟୋରି ଟେଷ୍ଟ ଏବଂ ଔଷଧ
- ଆକର ସମ୍ମାନର ସହିତ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ସେବା
- ଅଭିଯୋଗ ନିବାରଣ ସୁବିଧା (ନିଃଶୁଳ୍କ ଫୋନ୍ ନମ୍ବର-୧୦୪)

ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା “ସୁମନ” ଅଭିଯାନ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ ଉପକଳ୍ପ ଏହି ସେବାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ସୁଯୋଗ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

ବିଶି ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଥରେ ନିଃଶୁଳ୍କ ଫୋନ୍ ନମ୍ବର-୧୦୪ରେ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ

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ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

Color calibration bar and registration marks.

₹3.12cr Mo College infra boost plan gets go-ahead

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: ‘Mo College Abhijan Parichalana Sangathan’ (MCAPS) Thursday approved developmental projects worth ₹3,12,23,702 for seven colleges in the state.

Under the supervision of Mo College chairperson Akash Das Nayak, the Mo College Scrutiny Committee (MCSC) approved the project abstracts, which include: Creation of an alumni centre of excellence at MKCG Medical College, Berhampur; installation of smart classroom and video conference hall in Uma Charan Patnaik Engineering School, Berhampur; setting up of young tinkers space at Odisha University of Technology & Research, Bhubaneswar; extension of cycle stand building and construction of science lab in Laxmikanta Degree College, Bangripasi; purchase of electronic equipment and air conditioner in Mahima Mahavidyalaya, Joranda; completion of repair and renovation of staff common room in Baji Rout Memorial Degree College,



ମୋ କଲେଜ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞାନ
ଆନ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠତ୍ବ ଆନ ବ୍ୟବହାର

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

Creation of alumni centre of excellence at MKCG Medical College, Berhampur

Setting up of young tinkers space at Odisha University of Technology & Research, Bhubaneswar

Purchase of electronic equipment and air conditioner in Mahima Mahavidyalaya, Joranda

Bhuban, Dhenkanal and books for seminar library in Khallikote Unitary University, Berhampur.

“All these projects will boost morale of the students in these institutions leading them to a brighter future and future academic excellence,” said an official.

During the scrutiny committee meeting, MCAPS vice-chairman and principal secretary Bishnupada Sethi, Mo College CEO Amiya Kumar Rout, finance officer Anita Sahu, Skill Development and

Technical Education joint secretary Rojina Das, Health and Family Welfare under secretary Rashmi Mishra were present and shared their opinions.

“Mo College has always prioritised the overall development of students to provide them with best possible exposure and has maintained brilliant academic records. Thus, improving the facilities and availing world-class amenities inside the campuses can make it a total success,” said an official associated with Mo School.



FOR A HEALTHIER DIET: Cuttack Barabati MLA Mohammed Moquim, Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain, mayor Subhash Singh, Baramba MLA Debiprasad Mishra among dignitaries at the inauguration of Millet Café and Information Centre at Barabati Palace in Cuttack, Friday

OP PHOTO

House uproar over retirees’ appointment

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: The state Assembly Friday witnessed uproarious scenes during Zero Hour over the appointment of retired officers in the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO).

The BJP members rushed to the well of the House and launched a vociferous attack on the government over the issue. The treasury bench members stood on their seats and countered the BJP’s attack.

The Congress members also stormed into the well urging the Speaker to give a ruling, directing the government to make a

statement in the House on the collapse of an under-construction bridge on Gobari river in Kendrapara.

As the House witnessed ruckus, Speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha initially adjourned it for 10 minutes and later for five minutes. He convened an all-party meeting to resolve the issue. Normalcy returned to the House after the issue was resolved in the all-party meeting.

The problem began when Leader of Opposition (LoP) Jayanarayan

Mishra, raising a question during the Zero Hour, alleged that several officers after their retirement were given reappointment in the CMO which, he said, has become a retired officers’ club.

Mishra said instead of making new recruitments, the government is appointing retired officers, and demanded a statement from the government in the House on the issue.

Reacting strongly to the state-



IN THE HOUSE

Dileswar Sahu murder: Jayanarayan gets bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 17: The special Additional District Judge (ADJ) court, Bhubaneswar Friday granted bail to senior BJP leader and MLA Jaynarayan Mishra in a murder case filed in 2018.

Mishra, who is also the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Assembly, appeared before the court along with 11 others in connection with BJD worker Dileswar Sahu’s murder February 22, 2018. The court granted bail to all of them on the same conditions as set by the lower court, a government pleader said.

Mishra will have to inform the court if he goes out of the state. He is not allowed to get involved in the

case directly or indirectly and must not attempt to tamper or destroy evidence, the court said in the bail conditions.

Earlier, the case was transferred from JMFC court, Sohela in Bargarh district to the Bhubaneswar special ADJ court. Mishra had been granted bail by the Sohela court.

The deceased Dileswar, who was also working as a driver of the then BJD Minister Susanta Singh’s brother, had died in a firing incident that had taken place at Sohela February 22, 2018, two days before the Bijepur bypoll.

Mishra and 11 others were arrested in the case based on the complaint against them in connection with the murder.

ment of the LoP, BJD’s Arun Sahoo wanted to know how many retired officers have been appointed in the Prime Minister’s Office, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s office and at other offices in the South Block.

“The Opposition questioned who are there in the CMO. As per the Assembly rule book, those who are not present at the House, their names cannot be taken. It seems they have forgotten the practice which needs to be followed inside the Assembly,” Sahoo said.

“He (Jayanarayan Mishra) just wants to find himself in the headlines,” Sahoo added.

Mall sealed for poor sanitation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday temporarily sealed a shopping mall run by a private firm in Nayapalli for poor sanitation.

A penalty of ₹1,00,000 has been imposed on the shop that will be allowed to open after improving sanitation. The BMC requested the owners of malls and shops of the locality to maintain cleanliness within 5 metre radius of their complexes. “It is our appeal to the shop owners to keep twin dustbins, segregate waste and hand it over to BMC safai gadi. Littering around the establishments will result in closure of shops and invite penalty,” said the official. BMC also imposed a penalty of ₹ 5,000 for open burning of garbage in Unit9 area.

2-day conclave for agri startups at SOA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: Around 60 startups, working on new technologies aimed at enabling farmers to adopt climate-resilient practices and other modern methods of agriculture, will be taking part in a two-day conclave titled ‘Ideation to Commercialisation—Opportunities for Startups’ starting at the Siksha ‘O’ Anusandhan Deemed to be University here Saturday.

The conclave is being organised by Livelihood Alternatives, a social enterprise, in association with Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA)-iSEED Foundation, PACE Foundation and SOA.

“The objective of the conclave is to create an enabling framework where ideas, technological know-how and methods emanating from the social startup ecosystem could be leveraged for a market fit product,” Livelihood Alternatives chairman-cum-managing director Sambit Tripathy told reporters Friday.

The conclave would expose farmers, artisans and rural households of the state to the world of new ideas, technology and innovations, he added.

“It will have two parallel tracks—one where the startups will present ideas and technology to the target audience and the other, which will provide these startups



The conclave would expose farmers, artisans and rural households of the state to the world of new ideas, technology and innovations

SAMBIT TRIPATHY | LIVELIHOOD ALTERNATIVES MD

the space to exhibit their products,” he said.

Tripathy also claimed that the conclave will help startups with market-connect while farmers and rural households in Odisha will get an opportunity to enhance their income by adopting new technology and business models.

Notably, the startups are mainly drawn from different social incubators, including from Odisha. The prominent participating incubators are I-hub, Gujarat, IRMA-SEED Foundation, KIIT’TBI, Social Alpha and Institute of Life Sciences. Some 300 farmers from 65 blocks of the state are expected to participate in the conclave, he informed.

A hackathon is also scheduled where startups will compete with each other to create sustainable models in agriculture, dairy and allied industries and agro forestry. SOA additional dean (research) Priyabrata Patnaik and Rakesh Arrawatia, Chair, iSEED, were present during the news conference.

Health tech boot camp at KIIT for Indian startups

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: Technology business incubator of KIIT University KIIT-TBI, along with Academic Health Science Network, Yorkshire and Humber and Bhubaneswar City Knowledge Innovation Cluster Foundation (BCKIC), organised a UK-India HealthTech boot camp recently.

Top 25 startups in digital health-care sector present across the nation participated in the programme to navigate and scale their health-tech business to the UK and the world.

Attending the event Odisha Science and Technology Minister Ashok Chandra Panda said, “Due to the Covid-19 experiences, focus has already shifted to the technology enabled health-care delivery sector with emphasis on genomics and bio-engineering-led early and preventive interventions.”

The Covid management steps taken by the state government, social security schemes for the elderly during the pandemic, BSKY benefits and KIMS Hospital, a constituent of KIIT University, together came to the rescue of the people of the state in those difficult times, Panda added.

The minister called upon the participating startups to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) and other IT-based tools in work to help senior citizens suffering from neurological disorders like dementia and Alzheimer’s.

Odisha Parba from March 24 to 26

New Delhi: The Odia Samaj in New Delhi will organise Odisha Parba 2023, a cultural extravaganza that will showcase the rich and diverse culture of Odisha, from March 24 to 26 here. The event will take place at Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium here and will be open for the public. The three-day event will feature a gamut of unique music, dance, and theatre traditions from Odisha, the Odia Samaj said, adding that an exciting line-up of performances will take visitors on a journey through the history and culture of the state. “We are thrilled to be hosting Odisha Parba 2023 and to be able to showcase the unique and vibrant culture of Odisha to the people of Delhi. The carnival of Odia culture and cuisine, Odisha Parba is back after three years. This fantastic event had to shut down for 2020, 2021 and 2022. Covid forced us to hold virtual events. However, we are very enthusiastic and charged up for this year’s Parba. We invite everyone to come and experience the magic of Odisha through its music, dance, and theatre traditions,” a spokesperson of Odia Samaj said.



VOICE TO DEMANDS: Members of Odisha State Employees Rehabilitation Aspirants Association took out a rally demanding reintroduction of 1990’s Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Friday

Govt seeds boon for Kandhamal dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: State government’s initiative to supply vegetable seeds to rural households in Kandhamal has helped in combating malnutrition, a survey conducted by civil society organisations (CSOs) claimed.

‘Atmashakti Trust’ and its allies ‘Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha’ and ‘Mahila Shramajeebee Mancha’ conducted a survey covering 900 households in 650 villages of Tumudibandha and Kotagada blocks in Kandhamal district which revealed that 96 per cent of households had used vegetable seeds provided by the Horticulture department to grow nutritional kitchen gardens while 100 per cent of the seeds have yielded output.

According to the survey, 87 per cent of the households expressed interest in using the seeds to grow winter vegetables, 90 per cent demanded more seeds and 84 per cent wanted to add other nutritious vegetables



to the seed list supplied by the department.

This apart, 11 per cent of households said they could generate additional income by selling surplus production.

“Keeping in view the benefits of

the initiative in achieving nutritional food security and dietary diversity among people, the state government should start providing seeds for vegetable gardens in areas that are dominated by the SC/ST communities living in remote rural

COMBATING MALNUTRITION

■ 96% of households used vegetable seeds provided by the Horticulture department to grow nutritional kitchen gardens and 100% of the seeds used yielded output

■ Amid growing demands for seeds, the CSOs urged the state to increase supply and add variety

and hilly terrain by April 2023 so that they can grow it during the monsoon,” said executive trustee of Atmashakti Trust Ruchi Kashyap.

“As there is a growing demand for more seeds, the government should increase the number of seeds provided to households and give the people winter vegetable seeds which will help in combating malnutrition in the state,” she suggested in the survey.

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MELON MISHAP: Watermelons scattered on NH-49 after a truck carrying them overturned near Judia ghat near Keonjhar town, Friday

OP PHOTO

Electrocuted labourer's kin get ₹10L damages

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, March 17: The family members of an electrocution victim have received the compensation of ₹10 lakh, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was informed March 10.

One Gopal Tirkey was electrocuted to death while working at Gate No. 4 of Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela January 10.

Seeking intervention from the apex human rights panel of India, Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy sought legal action against the wrongdoers and compensation to the deceased's family.

The victim was working as an electrical labourer for M/s Deepshikha Enterprises on a daily basis at ₹400 wage per day.

On January 10 at about 12.20pm, while Gopal was performing his duty, he met with an accident and was hanged with a safety belt at the electric pole. The worker was immediately taken to the hospital but he was declared dead.

The NHRC had sought an action taken report from the district magistrate of Sundargarh about the incident.

Sources said the father of the victim had stated that he had received an amount of ₹10 lakh from Biswajit Hatoi, proprietor of M/s Deepshikha Enterprises towards financial assistance on the sympathetic ground.

The payment was made by way of ₹1 lakh in cash and the rest of ₹4 lakh and ₹5 lakh through cheques.

Odisha's longest flyover nears completion in Joda

THE 4.47KM BRIDGE WILL GIVE COMMUTERS RELIEF FROM TRAFFIC SNARLS APART FROM SPEEDING UP VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, March 17: The longest flyover in Odisha is being constructed at the mineral rich Joda block in Keonjhar district and will be operational soon, according to officials involved with the project. The flyover is being constructed with funds sanctioned by the district mineral foundation (DMF) here to provide people relief from travelling on congested and polluted roads.

Work on the flyover started in 2020 and is now in its final stage. Notably, roads in this town are perennially congested due to traffic snarls. This also gives rise to high levels of pollution as more than 7,000 mineral-laden trucks ply along this road on a daily basis. So the flyover will certainly be a huge relief for residents of this town and visitors.

The flyover after its completion will be the largest in the state paving the way for development in the region, officials of Odisha Bridge Construction Corporation (OBCC) said.

Sources said the flyover is being constructed at a planned outlay of ₹206 crore sanctioned by DMF. The flyover starts from Ranasal near National Highway-520 and



goes till Kamarjoda for a stretch of 4.487km. The actual flyover is 2.980km in length.

The flyover will be 12 metre wide while two service roads (each 5.5 metres wide) will pass under it. To prevent waterlogging, drains with 5.5 metre width will be constructed on both sides of the service roads.

The deadline for completion of the flyover has been fixed for December 31. However, the work may get delayed due to some unavoidable circumstances, Bhagirathi Panda, human resources officer of the consultancy agency said.

The load capacity of the flyover is 400 metric tonne. The service road that will go inside this town is being constructed with

pavement quality concrete (PQC) which will last for a period of 20 years. Flowers and plants will be used on the roadside for beautification while sufficient lighting arrangements will be done to facilitate the users.

Susant Barik, secretary of Joda Truck Owners' Association said residents, students and guardians have been demanding for a long time a solution to the unending traffic snarls. He added that once the flyover is functional, woes of the town's residents will substantially recede. Barik pointed out that the flyover will also be of great relief to truck owners as it will facilitate transportation of minerals quickly and smoothly.

4 broken Buddhist sculptures unearthed from Parabhadi hill

Parabhadi hill is an important Buddhist site in the Diamond Triangle of Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur/Chandikhole, March 17: A 15-feet-high Buddhist stupa, four broken Buddha sculptures, several household articles and clay utensils were unearthed during the ongoing excavation on top of the Parabhadi hill near Chandikhole in Jajpur district.

According to historians, the Buddhist stupa is 1,500 years old. Discovery of the stupa has come as a surprise in the area making people wonder how such a high dome could be built on the hilltop which is 140 metre above the sea level.

The recovered Buddha sculptures have been kept in the Buddhist museum at Lalitgiri. Parabhadi hill is an important Buddhist site in the Diamond triangle of Odisha comprising three clusters of hills in Jajpur and Kendrapara districts namely Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri. The hill could not be excavated till now because of its location and height. The site was discovered between 1975 and 1985 and archaeologists had deemed it to be a Buddhist settlement due to the presence of more than three rock cut caves, archaeological remains and a structure that looked like a stupa on the hilltop.

Several caves had Buddhist artifacts while ancient idols of Hindu deities had also been recovered.



However, the ASI authorities woke up after mining of khondalite stones began on the hill for ABADHA project in Srimandir. As a result, the excavation works on the hill was undertaken leading to the discovery.

Dibishada Brajasundar Garnayak, the Odisha chief of Archeological Survey of India (ASI) said that the stupa is believed to be of 7th or 8th century and may date earlier on the basis of findings from the excavation.

The broken sculptures are believed to be of Ratnsambhava but the actual truth can be ascertained after further research and documentation. Meanwhile, the excavation work which was carried out for over a month has been completed and the documentation works started, ASI officials said.

Reports said that the Landa hill, Lalitgiri and Badaphad

(Sukhuapada), Olasuni, Gangi and Regidi (Bandereswar) are important sites having rich Buddhist heritage. Meanwhile, the ASI has raised concern over mining on the hill both by private parties and Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) for khondalite stones. The hill has been leased out to OMC for ABADHA project. However, rampant mining is destroying the Buddhist remains as the miners are using heavy earth moving equipment to extract stones and in the process damaging the historical artifacts.

Locals and historians alike have demanded to declare Parabhadi and its adjoining areas like Hatikhal, Ghantiasuni, Sukhuapada, Keshraipur and Languli mutt as a corridor to conserve the rich Buddhist heritage and take up peripheral development of the area by involving the locals.

JSW integrated greenfield proj gathers speed

Paradip: The ground-breaking ceremony of a pellet plant for JSW Utkal Steel (JUSL) Greenfield Project coming up at Nuagaon, Dhinkia and Gada Kujang panchayats under the Ersama block of Jagatsinghpur district was held Friday in the presence of the public representatives of the three panchayats. Sarpanch Kishore Parida and Suchitra Mantri expressed their happiness over the course of events leading to the establishment of the plant for the betterment of the local communities. The test piling work would commence soon. Concurrently, 41 youths from the plant site were offered employment letters for jobs at BPSP (a subsidiary of JSW). In a significant development, the president and whole-time director of JSW subsidiary BPSP, Anil Singh has been recently appointed as the new project head of the upcoming Greenfield Steel Plant. Sources expressed that as there is a single management between BPSP & JUSL, new joiners would experience ease of navigation and once the Paradip plant operations commence, the youth from the plant site will be inducted into the JUSL fold. Remarkable progress has been made in Jagatsinghpur district in terms of employment and skill development with the combined efforts, hard work and dedication of the project officials, administrative authorities and the locals towards building a better future. An alternative livelihoods program for the economically vulnerable population at the site has been implemented in Dhinkia, Mahala, Gobindpur, Patana, Nuagan, Gadakujang, Nolia Sahi, Polang, and Bhuyanpal villages in the plant site.



Mayurbhanj dist in TIME's list of 'World's Greatest Places of 2023'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 17: In a refreshing development, TIME Magazine has named Mayurbhanj district in its list of 'World's Greatest Places In 2023' - which features 50 extraordinary destinations to explore in the world.

Alongside Mayurbhanj, India's Ladakh has also featured in the list. The coveted magazine dubs Mayurbhanj as a place of rare tigers and ancient temples.

"Visitors can once again enter the only location on earth where they can see the incredibly rare black tiger in Simlipal National Park, which is located in Mayurbhanj, an unnoticed area in the eastern state of Odisha in India," TIME said Thursday.

Talking about Mayurbhanj district, it mentioned Simlipal National Park's reopening in November 2022 in the description. Now, visitors can take guided safaris or self-guided bicycle tours to discover the distinctive flora and fauna of the national park, it said.

Describing the renowned 'Mayurbhanj Chhau' festival, the magazine said, "This April, Mayurbhanj Chhau, a captivating dance festival on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list will take place on a much larger scale following the pandemic hiatus. Bespoke 'Chhau' performances that combine ancient martial arts and folk dance are scheduled at The Belgadia Palace, an elegant boutique hotel and royal residence. Guests staying at the



11-bedroom old-world property can also participate in experiential retreats and visit the area's Indigenous handicraft communities (many of which are composed of only women) that focus on intricate handlooms, Sabai grass weaving, and the dying art of Dokra (metal casting)."

It is pertinent to mention here that only 60 vehicle entry permits are available each day in Simlipal National Park. This is done to safeguard Simlipal's ecosystem, which is home to over 40 species of mammals including Asian elephants and Royal Bengal tigers.

The state capital and other locations in Odisha also found a

place in the magazine. "Stunning biodiversity and interminable heritage continue throughout the state. In the capital Bhubaneswar, a new guided walking tour series, 'Odisha Walks', explores ancient cultural sites, monolithic rock edicts, and remarkable temple architecture. Later this year, the Pangi forest reserve in Jeypore, home to the eponymous Jeypore ground gecko, is opening a new trekking trail up the 4,600-foot Nakti Dangar hill," it said.

The list of the world's best locations for 2023 includes Tampa, Florida, Washington DC, Naples, Barcelona, Kyoto, Jerusalem, and Sharjah among others.

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1 Nos. of work	: 12 nos.
2 Tendered amount in Rs.	: Rs. 6,66,744/- to Rs. 20,66,137/-
3 Period of completion	: 60 days to 120 days
4 Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 10.00 Hrs. of 21.03.2023 to 17.30 Hrs. of 31.03.2023
5 Last date/ time of receipt of original documents in the tender box at the office of the undersigned	: Before 17.30 Hrs. of 03.04.2023
6 Date & Time of opening of bids	: 11.00 Hrs. of 04.04.2023 onwards
7 Name and Address of the officer inviting bid	: Executive Engineer (Agril.), Northern Zone, Soil Conservation, At/Po-Burla, Near Planetarium Chowk, Sambalpur, 768107

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd./- Executive Engineer (Agril.),
Soil Conservation, NZ, Sambalpur
OIPR-01481/11/0002/2223

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION, NO.-V, BHUBANESWAR
Mail id: eernb5bbsr@gmail.com

INVITATION OF BIDS
E-Procurement Tender Call Notice No. 25 of 2022-23
No. 1987 Bhubaneswar the 14th March, 2023
No. B-1354: The Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No. V, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for one number Composite Building work to be received in online bidding. Single Cover System for construction work as detailed in: <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from 11.00 A.M. of 20.03.2023 to 5.00 P.M. of 27.03.2023. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at 11.30 A.M. of 28.03.2023 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No. V, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Addendum/Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd./- Er. P.C. Dalai
Superintending Engineer
Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No. V,
Bhubaneswar
OIPR-34135/11/0025/2223

OFFICE OF THE
BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, SONEPUR
No. 777 Date: 17.03.2023

SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE
Sealed percentage rate bids are invited from the contractors registered with the State Government for execution of the work as mentioned below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	Bid Security (in Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion	Cost of Tender Paper
1.	Construction of Panchayat Samiti Building at Sonepur (1st Floor)	66,69,907 (Excluding GST)	66,699	A & B	6 Months	10000.00

The tenderers are requested to submit valid & upto date photocopy of licence, GST Certificate, copy of PAN Card along with tender documents. The tender bids complete in all respect must reach in the address of the Block Development Officer, Sonepur through Registered Post/Speed Post on or before 05.00 P.M. of Dt.03.04.2023 and will be opened on Dt.04.04.2023 at 11.00 A.M. in presence of the tenderers or their authorised representatives willing to be present. The winner of the bid is to submit Bid Security in shape of D.D. to be drawn in favour of the Block Development Officer, Sonepur of any Nationalized Bank payable at Sonepur before issue of work order. The tender document will be sold from 10 A.M. on Dt.18.03.2023 to 11 A.M. on Dt.03.04.2023 on payment of tender paper cost as noted above to be deposited in the Cash Counter of BDO, Sonepur. The tenderer must be mentioned the name of the work in capital letter on the top of the envelope of tender paper to be submitted. The authority will not be held responsible for any postal delay in respect of receipt of tender documents and reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Block Development Officer, Sonepur

“It is in proportion to our trust in the Divine that the Divine grace can act for us and help

THE MOTHER



Border in Focus

Some 70 ministers are heading to the India-China border, not to fight the enemy but to ensure that the huge numbers of border villages are given the kind of support that they need. According to sources, 1,400 border villages have been identified and Union ministers will visit to understand the issues faced by the people there and take steps to address them. This decision was reportedly taken after a review of telecom connectivity for border habitations by the Secretary of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs DS Gangwar. Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav also recently visited border villages in Ladakh.

The aim of this Vibrant Village programme is to encourage people to stay in their native locations in the border areas and reverse the migration from these villages. Sources have informed DKB that these visits have been planned to pacify the Ladakhis, who recently staged protests in Delhi demanding statehood. China has reportedly built several border villages and roads to strengthen its territorial claims on the disputed LOC, and the Centre seeks to counter their moves with this initiative.

As a result, babus in charge of these states and particularly these districts are on high alert as the ministers will spend a day and perhaps even stay overnight at the model villages given that this flurry of VIP visits will require coordination at many levels. The development work in these states will also be done by people who have never been there.

This is a huge exercise and one that is being done by the Modi government to ensure that there is no question of morale and lack of enthusiasm in these villages at this time when border tensions are high.


Govt moves to revitalise CCI

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has been functioning without a full-time chairperson, four months after the previous chairperson retired and seven months since the search for his replacement began. CCI member Sangeeta Verma has been the acting chairperson since last October, and recently, her tenure was extended by three months. Currently, CCI is functioning with just two members, which is half the sanctioned strength and one short of a quorum.

Even before it lost quorum, the commission suffered from a staff shortage, with at least 30% of positions unfilled through the last decade. Some of the commission's present woes may be of the government's own doing. In 2018, faced with rising vacancies at the top, the government "rightsized" the commission from seven to four members in the interest of "minimum government—maximum governance", it said. The change may have streamlined decision-making but robbed orders of diversity in opinion.

Sources have informed DKB that things are now beginning to stir within the ministry and the issue is being prioritised. Perhaps the babus have finally woken up to the issue and the impact of the absence of a full-time chairperson on CCI's decision-making process and its ability to carry out investigations. Some quarters had even begun to question the government's commitment to promoting fair competition in the market.

Now as the government searches for his replacement, it has also advertised to fill the posts of three members, with the current two up for retirement over the next 16 months. The appointment of a new chairperson will help ensure the stability and continuity of the CCI's operations.



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

Divestment dilemma

The fiscal balancers at the Finance Ministry are rather busy these days. Even as the Budget session begins its second innings, the officials are understood to be extraordinarily tied up with internal matters. Finance Secretary TV Somanathan and Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra have convened several meetings to try and see how the anxiety about billowing borrowings can be addressed.

The other issue seems to be that some of the attempts at divestments haven't quite borne fruit. The usually easy-paced Finance Ministry has seen a flurry of activity between these twin factors over the last couple of weeks. In February's budget, the Central government had marked down the disinvestment target to ₹50,000 crores from ₹65,000 crores budgeted initially. Despite lowering the target, it has managed to raise only ₹31,107 crores so far.

But finance babus believe they have a plan and that matters are well in hand. They are planning to limit the increase in government borrowing to reduce the public debt burden and lower interest payments. To make up for any shortfall in divestment receipts, the Centre is banking on higher dividend income from state-run companies, and savings due to the new fund release system for autonomous bodies and central schemes. Somanathan says he expects the Centre to save ₹13,000 crores from the new fund release system, and another ₹8,000 crores from Centrally-sponsored schemes.

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

WISDOM CORNER

“Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky.”
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

“Of all creatures that breathe and move upon the earth, nothing is bred that is weaker than man.”
HOMER

“Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart.”
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WORDSWORTH

Apotropaic

February 2 is a Christian festival day that has a number of names, one of them Candlemas. It got that name because on that day in medieval times people brought candles to church to have them blessed by the priest. This was thought to give the candles the power to ward off evil spirits — in the language of religion and folklore, they became apotropaic. The word is classical Greek, apotrepein, to turn away or avert. Like other civilisations, Greeks and Romans had many rituals that were designed to ward off evil. Throughout history, grotesque masks and faces, such as the Medusa heads of classical Greece or the grotesque figures on medieval churches, frightened witches and demons away; incantations and gestures kept the devil at a safe distance; amulets preserved their wearers from malignant spirits; holly and rowan trees and their woods were effective against evil; symbols such as the all-seeing eye were put on wineglasses, houses, boats or tombs. All were apotropaic.

LOL

The very bad accident



Two men got out of their cars after they collided at an intersection. One took a flask from his pocket and said to the other, "Here, maybe you'd like a nip to calm your nerves." "Thanks," he said, and took a long pull from the container. "Here, you have one, too," he added, handing back the whiskey. "Well, I'd rather not," said the first. "At least not until after the police have been here."

FOCUS INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

HOW CHINA LOST ASIA



Deeply concerned about the territorial disputes fuelled by Chinese claims in the South China Sea, the Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. has decided to reaffirm and enhance his country's partnership with the US

Since the dawn of international politics, smaller states have faced the formidable challenge of navigating great-power rivalries. Today, it is the geopolitical contest between the United States and China that has compelled countries to balance their competing national interests. Toward which side they gravitate depends on domestic and external circumstances.

Consider the Philippines, which has an interest in maintaining both its growing economic ties with neighbouring China as well as its half-century-old security alliance with the US. The Philippines' last president, Rodrigo Duterte, placed greater emphasis on the former, turning sharply away from the US and toward China after his election in 2016.

In exchange for effectively siding with China in the escalating great-power competition, Duterte sought Chinese investment in his pet project — the "Build! Build! Build!" infrastructure program — and moderation of China's aggressive behaviour in the West Philippine Sea, particularly its seizure of islets and outcroppings claimed by the Philippines. But China did not oblige. When Duterte's presidency ended last June, China had delivered less than 5% of the \$24 billion it had pledged to invest in the Philippines, and its provocations in the West Philippine Sea, which comprises part of the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, continued unabated.

Duterte's successor, President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., has so far taken a more prudent strategic approach. Deeply concerned about the territorial disputes fuelled by Chinese claims in the South China Sea, Marcos has decided to reaffirm and enhance his country's partnership with the US.

To this end, the Philippines has decided to grant the US access to four more military bases — for a total of nine — some of which are located near disputed areas of the South China Sea. American troops rotate regularly through the designated bases. The US and the Philippines have also agreed to resume joint patrols in the South China Sea, which, under Duterte, were suspended for six years.

Beyond the US, the Philippines and Japan recently agreed to deepen defence ties, with Japanese troops securing greater access to Philippine territory for training and logistics. Moreover, the Philippines is pursuing greater maritime cooperation with the United Kingdom. The two countries held their inaugural Maritime Dialogue on February 7. Two weeks later, the Philippine defence minister agreed with his Australian counterpart to formalise their "strategic" defence engagement — potentially including joint patrols in the South China Sea.

So, the Philippines is gradually becoming a key hub of military cooperation among Southeast Asia's democracies. This affords the US important strategic benefits — for which China has only itself to blame. China's efforts to bully its neighbours into acquiescing to its demands and preferences have not only failed; they have led to the emergence of a kind of anti-China coalition in the Indo-Pacific.

This has certainly been the case in South Korea. After the country agreed in 2016 to deploy a US Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile system on its territory — a response to escalating threats from North Korea — China imposed heavy economic sanctions. With that, public opinion in South Korea turned sharply against China: measured on a scale of 1 (most negative) and 100 (most positive), South Korean sentiment toward China now stands at 26.4 — two points less favorable than sentiment toward North Korea (28.6), according to a Hankook Research poll conducted in 2021.

Partly in response to public opinion, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, like Marcos, has sought to strengthen its alliance with the US. He is also working to improve long-strained relations

with Japan, not least by announcing a plan to compensate Koreans who performed forced labour under Japanese colonial rule during World War II.

China's aggressive sanctions against Australia — imposed in 2020 as punishment for the Australian government's call for an independent inquiry into the origins of COVID-19 — spurred a similar foreign-policy reorientation. In September 2021, Australia formed an "enhanced security partnership," known as AUKUS, with the US and the United Kingdom. And Australia, India, Japan, and the US have sought to strengthen the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue.

All of these steps aim to bolster security, but they also carry risks. In his 1995 book *Diplomacy*, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger argued that it was Imperial German leaders' combination of "truculence" and "indecisiveness" that "hurled their country first into isolation and then into war." In his view, World War I erupted partly because leaders were "swayed by the emotions of the moment and hampered by an extraordinary lack of sensitivity to foreign psyches." A similar dynamic may be at play today.

Ensuring that the dark history of the twentieth century does not echo today will require sound judgment from both sides. China must recognise the fear it has incited with its bullying, and democracies across the Indo-Pacific must take care to ensure that their responses do not heighten tensions excessively. Otherwise, we may well sleepwalk into catastrophe.

The writer, a former minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Korea, is Professor Emeritus of International Relations at Seoul National University.

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SPECTRUM DIPLOMACY

Deepening geo-political ties



DK Giri

THE GROWING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND AUSTRALIA WILL DO A WORLD OF GOOD TO BOTH COUNTRIES AND WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE INDIA-PACIFIC AND BEYOND

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was in India on a four-day visit last week. His meetings and exchanges in Gujarat, Mumbai and Delhi sought to deepen the economic and security ties between the two countries. The significance of his visit is manifested in his powerful tweet, "my visit to India reflects my government's commitment to place India at the centre of Australia's approach to India-Pacific and beyond". No doubt, the India-Australia bilateralism is currently at its best. It is, however, important to remember that the relations were not so close until recently. India had under-valued the importance of ties with Australia for her economic interests. Well, this has been an inexplicably hurtful trend in India's foreign policy — a mismatch between economy and diplomacy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Australia in 2014 which gave a push to the relations between the two countries. He was the first Indian Prime Minister to visit after three decades of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Australia in 1986. The neglect of expanding relations has been corrected. New Delhi's warmth and reciprocity to Australia can be seen in the visit of 10 Union Ministers to Australia in one year i.e. 2022.

Likewise, Australia has also been in and out of alliances and activities involving India, for instance Quad and Malabar Exercise. Australia's stance towards India

and others was influenced by their changing equation with China. That is, however, history. Both countries now realise the common danger to their interests posed by China who is challenging the supremacy of the US, the leading ally of Australia. At the same time, India and the US relations are also improving slowly but certainly. As their Prime Minister said, "Australians consider India as a friend". I had the opportunity of hosting a delegation of Australian legislators from Albanese's party, the Labour Party. When I asked the visiting delegation the prime purpose of their visit, they said, "We are here to make contacts with our comrades as the relations between two countries at a governmental level are becoming closer". The Labour Party was then in Opposition.

The other variable to factor in is the slow but certain rise of India as a world economic power. Many observers and experts predict the inevitable decline of China and rise of India as economic powers. Given the size of India's demography and nature of its economy, politics and society, India is bound to remain a market of millions and a source of global supply chain. Unlike China, Indians are lot closer to things they need, not as dependent on the external market as China has been. Indians can come up with solutions to the problems they face. In a couple of decades, India will be the biggest population in the age group of 40-65, and

remain so for at least 50 years. That is huge. Australians recognise this. India is the first stop out of Persian Gulf for any investor and trader. New Delhi also realises that Australia is now friendlier than it is to China. New Delhi can rely on food and mineral supplies from resource-rich Australia.

Let us scan the present scope of ties between India and Australia. Albanese suggested in a pre-visit press conference in Canberra that the bilateralism with India consisted of three sectors — cultural ties, economic relations and national security.

The cultural ties not only relate to cricket but are sought to be expanded to many other areas. Australia nicely fits into India's efforts to modernise its higher education under the New Education Policy. It has decided to set up two universities in Gujarat's Gift City; Deakins University has signed an agreement to set up a physical campus. Both are members of the Commonwealth, share democratic traditions, the English language, social-cultural fabric and extended neighbourhood.

To boost the economic ties, negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) were initiated in May 2011; nine-rounds had happened until 2016 when they got suspended pending the outcome of multilateral regional negotiations. In December 2022, an Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement was initiated which will lead to the signing of CECA.

On security ties, the exchanges have expanded enormously. Australia has rejoined the Malabar Exercise and will host it for the first time this year. Remember, Malabar Exercise was initiated between the navies of India and the US in 1992, later joined by Japan and Australia, increasing interoperability between the naval forces. Likewise, India will participate in Talisman Sabre Exercise which began in 2005 between the Australia and the US. Later Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and United Kingdom joined it. Under the initiative of Prime Minister Modi, the inaugural Australia-India General Rawat Defence Officers Exchange Programme is currently taking place in India.

Anthony Albanese's visit has demonstrated the willingness of both the countries to continue to come closer. Both countries tried their best to adjust their policies towards China and seem to have failed in the face of growing expansionism and belligerence from Beijing. It is in fitness of things that they lean on each other to counter the common threat. The growing friendship between India and Australia will do a world of good to both countries and will contribute to the peace and security in the India-Pacific and beyond.

The writer is Professor in International Relations, JIMMC

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarih Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Travel safety

Sir, There have been close-on-the-heels misdemeanours by Train Ticket Examiners (TTE) and policemen on trains much to the common man's disgust and dismay. In at least two of the three recent shockers, alcohol was the common denominator: There absolutely is no check on the use of alcohol on trains. Some TTEs, railway staff and a few policemen are consistently found drunk. Gullible passengers are their targets. Many passengers keep mum and move on, but not all. One is eager to know whether the Indian Railways has a plan in place to keep a tab on drunken staff. What about the safety of passengers who are at the receiving end of these drunkards? Shouldn't the Railways also be acting fast to keep unauthorised people out of its portals? Where are the GRP and CISF personnel, one is constrained to ask. Top priority for a traveller is safety and security.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Wake up call to banks

Sir, The recent fall of the banks in the US in quick succession is indeed a warning to the other banks, particularly those in our country ('Lessons learnt' - March 16). As a former banker of a Public Sector Bank and also a multinational bank of repute, I sincerely feel it is time a thorough review of the working of our banks, particularly their credit exposures to large borrowers and group of companies, the real quantum of non-performing assets and the veracity of the numbers found in their balance sheets should be assessed by a reputed audit firm of impeccable record. This is necessary when we witness steep rise in the NPA levels in the books of the PSBs to the tune of lakhs of crores of rupees, huge amounts of NPAs of large borrowers simply written off and many unscrupulous borrowers have also left the country with the swindled money and their return to India appears to be a distant possibility. All the stakeholders of the banks should keep in their mind that they are the guardians of public money deposited with the banks in trust and any suspicion in the minds of the people about the safety of their money should not result in run on deposits as it happened in the Silicon Valley Bank leading to its closure. Time for banks to act in the interest of the public and not otherwise.

Tharcus S Fernando, CHENNAI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

both the Congress and BJP and indicated possible talks with other regional players ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Banerjee met Yadav here at her Kalighat residence for a meeting where the two powerful opposition leaders decided “to fight

Hyderabad: Six persons including four women died of asphyxiation following a stampede in Secunderabad here, in an unconscious condition by the doctor of the 'Swapnalok' multi-run hospital, they said. All the victims were said. A senior police officer said an investigation but, most of the reason. Legal action will be taken, Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy said after the accident and announced an inquiry.

TMC also announced it would hold talks with other regional parties in their bid to take on the BJP in the crucial 2024 elections but at the same time denied that it was planning a “third front”, separate from the Congress-led front.

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The Prime Minister's remarks were made during his reply to the motion of thanks on the President's address in the Rajya Sabha on February 9 during the first part of the budget session. "I hereby give a notice of question of privilege against the prime minister of India under Rule 188 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business

Venugopal said in his notice that the very suggestion by the Prime Minister on why they did not take Nehru as a surname is "preposterous" by its very nature. The prime minister, he said, knows very well that the surname of the

father is not taken by daughter. "Despite knowing that, he deliberately mocked....The tone and tenor of the remark is insinuating and derogatory in nature. This clearly amounts to casting reflections upon Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi by the prime minister, which breaches upon their privileges and also tantamount to contempt of the house." To seek privilege proceedings against Shri Narendra Modi, prime minister of India, for having made derogatory, insulting, distasteful and defamatory remarks against Smt Sonia Gandhi and Shri Rahul Gandhi, which has amounted to breach of their privileges and also contempt of the house," the Congress Rajya Sabha member said in his notice.

[illegible]



DELHI

TWO STATES



KARNATAKA

OrissaPOST

SATURDAY | MARCH 18 | 2023 | BHUBANESWAR

P8

BJP on inauguration spree to impress Lingayats

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bengaluru, March 17: The Ruling BJP has been on a spree of inaugurating statues across the state to attract the Lingayat vote bank.

From northern tip of the state Belagavi to southern tip Chamarajanagar districts, statue politics has taken a precedence. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has announced the construction of a 108-foot tall Basavanna statue on the banks of Ghataprabha River. The announcement was made to make an appeal to the Lingayat vote bank, according to insiders.

Close on the heels of inauguration of the 36-foot statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji atop the his-



torical Rajahansgadhi fort located 20 kms from Belagavi, CM Bommai

laid foundation stone for the 15-ft tall Basavanna statue and a me-

The Chief Minister has also inaugurated a 65-foot tall Akkamahadevi statue at Udupadi in Shivamogga district

Akkamahadevi was one of early female poets in 12th century and revered by the Lingayat community in Karnataka and other states

morial in Belagavi South constituency. Religious seers and political leaders were present on the occasion. BJP insiders said that after Maratha votes, the BJP is focusing on the Lingayat vote bank. The community plays an important role in most of the 18

Assembly seats of Belagavi district.

CM Bommai is all set to inaugurate 108-foot tall statue of Male Mahadeshwara March 18 at the famous pilgrimage spot Male Mahadeshwara Hills in Chamarajanagar district.

People are objecting that the inauguration is being done hastily without the completion of the project as elections are nearing.

The Chief Minister has also inaugurated a 65-foot tall Akkamahadevi statue at Udupadi in Shivamogga district. Akkamahadevi was one of early female poets in 12th century and revered by the Lingayat community in Karnataka and other states.

Delhi HC quashes PIL for compulsory voting in elections

“We are not lawmakers. We can’t pass such directions. Is there any provision in the Constitution that makes voting compulsory?” a bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad said



choice. “We cannot force a person present in Chennai to come back to his hometown in Srinagar and vote there. You want us to direct the police to catch him and send him to Srinagar,” the bench said.

It also refused to direct the Election Commission to treat the petition as a representation. The petition had said, “When voter turnout is high, the government is more accountable to the people and is more likely to act in their best interests.”

It said compulsory voting promotes political participation by making voting a civic duty, and when voting is compulsory, people are more likely to take an interest in politics and get engaged in the democratic process.

“This can help overcome voter apathy, which is a significant problem in India. Many people are disillusioned with the political system and feel that their votes do not count. Compulsory voting can help restore faith in the democratic process and encourage people to become more involved in politics,” the petition said. It added that compulsory voting ensures that elected representatives are chosen by a larger and more representative group of people, which will increase the legitimacy of the government.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: The Delhi High Court Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking direction to the Centre and the Election Commission to make voting compulsory in parliament and assembly polls, saying it cannot force a person to vote.

The court warned the petitioner, advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, it would dismiss the petition with costs after which he withdrew it.

Upadhyay had filed the public interest litigation, saying compulsory voting will ensure every citizen has a voice, will improve the quality of democracy and secure the right to vote. The plea said low voter turnout is a persistent problem and compulsory voting can help increase the turnout, particularly among marginalised communities.

During the hearing, the petitioner cited the example of drivers, saying many of them are not able to cast vote as they had to work in other cities. The bench said it is their right and their

Baby dies in mother’s womb after doc refuses surgery without bribe

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Yadgir (Karnataka), March 17: In a shocking incident, a baby died in mother’s womb as the doctor refused to perform a C-Section surgery until the family paid Rs 10,000 bribe to her in Karnataka’s Yadgir district.

The district administration suspended the gynecologist Friday. Dr. Pallavi Poojari, Gynecologist attached to the district hospital of Yadgir is the suspended doctor.

According to authorities, Sangeetha, a local homemaker, had come for delivery to the district hospital Thursday. Dr. Pallavi had allegedly asked for a Rs 10,000 bribe to conduct cesarean surgery on her. The family of Sujatha, who did not have money, left to arrange the money from relatives and friends.

Only after the money was paid to her, she performed the surgery. However, as the delivery got delayed, the baby died in the womb. The family and relatives alleged that the negligence of the gynecologist was responsible for the death of the baby.

Sisodia’s family gets five days to vacate official bungalow

New Delhi: Former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia’s family has been given five days to vacate the official bungalow as his Mathura Road residence has been allotted to the newly-sworn in Delhi Minister, Atishi. The Public Works Department (PWD) in an order said: “The Competent Authority is pleased to offer the Bungalow No. AB-17, Mathura Road, to Atishi, Minister in the Delhi government.” The PWD order asked the occupants to vacate it on or before March 21. According to the order, the directions were issued in line with provisions of the Delhi Administration Allotment of Government Residences (General Pool) Rules, 1977 that govern such allotments against “the invocation of penal provisions under the rules” if not vacated.

from the start, the ED had alleged. There was a conspiracy behind framing the excise policy.

The conspiracy was coordinated by Vijay Nair, along with others and the excise policy was brought out for extraordinary profit margin for wholesalers, the ED had argued in the court. On March 6, Judge Nagpal sent Sisodia to 14-day judicial custody in the CBI case, and he was lodged in the national capital’s Tihar jail. The CBI was given his remand for seven days before the judge sent him to judicial custody till March 20.

EXCISE POLICY CASE



The ED arrested Sisodia March 9 in the Tihar jail, where he was lodged in connection with a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) case about alleged corruption in the formulation and implementation of the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy for 2021-22. The CBI arrested Sisodia February 26

front Sisodia with some other people.

ED’s counsel Zoheb Hossain, while claiming that Sisodia was part of the “money laundering nexus” had said that the movement of tainted money through hawala channels was also being probed.

Hossain had submitted that the policy was formulated to ensure that certain private entities got huge benefits and that one of the biggest cartels was made to operate 30 per cent of liquor business in Delhi. Referring to the meetings between restaurants association and Sisodia, ED alleged that relaxations were afforded to the restaurants in excise policy like reducing the legal age of drinking and other things. The central agency had argued that Sisodia had destroyed the evidence.

“Within a span of one year, 14 phones have been destroyed and changed,” the agency had claimed. “Sisodia has used phones purchased by others and SIM cards that are not in his name so that he can use it as a defence later. Even the phone used by him is not in his name,” the ED counsel had submitted.

He (Sisodia) has been evasive

Serial deaths of cows in K’taka village, locals point fingers at BJP Yatra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Raichur (Karnataka), March 17: Seven cows have been reported to have died and eight others critically ill after allegedly eating waste food in the Gunjalli village in Raichur district.

The locals Thursday alleged that the cows ate waste food piled up in the village after the Vijay Sankalp Yatra of the BJP.

The locals said that so far seven cows have died and eight cows are critically ill after consuming the leftover food and waste materials. Even buffaloes and other animals have also taken ill. The abdomen of several cows are bloated and farmers who reared them have expressed shock and anger over the development.



Delhi govt issues health advisory to curb H3N2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj Friday said the city government has directed authorities to conduct early screening to detect cases of influenza in the national capital.

Addressing a press conference, he said though the peak of seasonal influenza is usually over by March, a large number of cases are being registered this time in parts of the country. Bharadwaj also said that the city government has no plan for making masks mandatory. The focus is on taking precautionary measures such as avoiding public places, washing hands etc, he added.

“People who have had severe asthma or Covid are among those impacted the most by influenza.



Extra precaution is needed for those aged above 65, children below five years of age and those suffering from lung diseases,” he said. The Delhi health minister said the Centre has issued Covid advisory for six states but Delhi is not on the list. “However, we are issuing an advisory to check the spread of influenza. The precautionary measures to be followed in case of influenza and Covid are the same,” Bharadwaj said.

“Instructions have been issued to district surveillance units, health facilities and government hospitals authorities to monitor the situation on a daily basis. All districts have been asked to ensure early screening to detect cases,” he said.

Bharadwaj said there are not many influenza cases in Delhi hospitals and the situation is being monitored closely. The government will issue advertisements in newspapers and on FM radio channels to create awareness, the health minister said.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said that the rise in influenza cases is due to the Influenza A subtype H3N2 virus. The H3N2 virus is leading to more hospitalisations than other subtypes. The symptoms include a runny nose, persistent cough and fever.



WARM WELCOME: Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy during a meeting, at Parliament House in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

It is duty of Twitter to provide details of users: Govt to K’taka HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 17: The union government has informed the High Court of Karnataka that being a significant intermediary, micro blogging site Twitter has additional responsibility and it was its duty “to provide details of account holders”.

Additional Solicitor General R Sankarnarayanan who appeared for the central government, gave the examples of “dangerous” tweets that “is going to affect the integrity, sovereignty of India or is going to create a public (dis) order; then naturally we will step in and either we will issue a take down notice or we will say block the account.”

The ASG cited “somebody gives a tweet under the assumed name of Government of Pakistan about

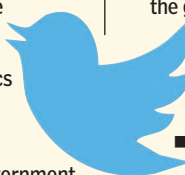
India Occupied Kashmir; somebody says (V) Prabhakaran (LTTE leader) is a hero and he is coming back. All this is so dangerous that it is going to incite violence.”

The ASG also submitted to the

court that Twitter cannot take protection under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act which exempts social media intermediaries in certain cases. Twitter was bound to follow the directions of



- Twitter approached the HC in June 2022 against the take-down orders issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
- Twitter has also claimed that the government has even prevented it from informing the account holders whose accounts have been ordered to be blocked
- During a hearing February 6, the government had told the HC that Twitter being a foreign entity cannot claim protection under Article 19 of the Constitution.
- Twitter claims the government is required to issue notice to the owners of the twitter handles whose accounts are blocked



the authorities designated by the government, he submitted. The ASG said that according to Rule 4 of IT Rules 2021, Twitter was required to provide details required by the government. “It is very difficult for a government to monitor and do it, to the extent it does, it requires support,” he said in a statement.

According to the ASG, “The doctrine of proportionality has undergone a lot of change consistent with the change in societal values. After the Anuradha Bhasin case the intermediary guidelines were also framed.”

“Rule 3 of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media

Ethics Code) Rules, the due diligence by an intermediary is necessary. Twitter being a significant social media intermediary, it is the duty of the intermediary to provide details of the account holder,” the ASG told the court. Justice Krishna S Dixit asked the ASG, “What is meant by significant intermediary?”

To which the ASG replied that it depended on the volume of traffic on the site. “It is the number of users. The volume. As per Rule 2(1)(v) Significant Social Media intermediaries having number of registered users in India above such threshold as notified by the Central Government,” he said. “It is the duty of the intermediary to provide the origin (of tweet). Rule 4 mandates that he must give it. Therefore, the argument must fall flat,” the ASG said.

of the day quote

Militancy in Jammu and Kashmir has come down in the past some years and time has come for the Centre to help the Union Territory in development activities

GHULAM NABI AZAD | DEMOCRATIC PROGRESSIVE AZAD PARTY CHIEF

If treated early, influenza can be cured. This should be known to everyone

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

India has its own healthcare model with shared social and national responsibilities. Multi-sectoral engagement is a key pillar in supporting the National TB Elimination Programme by leveraging cooperation from other stakeholders

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Telangana BJP chief detained

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Police Friday detained Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay, MLA Eatata Rajender and others when they were trying to march to the office of Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) office to protest exam paper leak. Tension prevailed at Telangana Martyrs' Memorial Gun Park near Assembly building when police stopped Sanjay and other BJP leaders from proceeding towards TSPSC office in Nampally.

Jawan arrested

Bareilly (UP): An Army jawan has been arrested in Bareilly district for allegedly killing the wife of a colleague, who was in an illicit relationship with his spouse. The local police said that the jawan took this extreme step as his colleague was blackmailing his wife using her objectionable pictures and videos. According to Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Rahul Bhati, a case was registered on March 13 against an unidentified person at Cantt police station for the murder of Sudeshna, the wife of Army jawan Manoj Senapati.

Three killed

Pune: At least three persons were killed when a speeding car rammed into a stationary goods laden truck parked on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway on Saturday, police said here. The crash took place near the Urse village around 7.30 a.m. when the car virtually drove into the truck that had suffered a tyre burst and repairs were underway. The impact was so powerful that the car almost fully went under the loaded truck and was crushed, killing the three occupants on the spot, said a local eyewitness.



The ruling party in Pakistan is trying to arrest former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The BJP-led central government here is misusing central agencies to put opposition leaders in jail. Nothing new is happening in Pakistan... It is happening here (India) as well

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

BIG MOVE

Rajasthan government has taken a big decision regarding the promotion of its employees. Now an employee will be able to get a promotion even after having a third child. Earlier, the government had put a hold on the promotion of such employees for three years



Oppn writes to Prez over 'trolling' of CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: Several opposition MPs have petitioned President Droupadi Murmu for immediate action over social media trolling of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud while he was deliberating on a case related to the governor's role in Maharashtra during the last government formation.

In a letter to the President, the Congress' Rajya Sabha member Vivek Tankha termed such online trolling a "brazen case of interference with the course of justice" and has called for immediate action against the culprits.

Tankha was supported by several opposition MPs, including Congress' Digvijaya Singh, Pramod Tiwari, Shaktisinh Gohil, Akhilesh Prasad Singh, Ameer Yajnik, Ranjeet Ranjan, Imran Pratapgarhi, Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Priyanka Chaturvedi, AAP's Raghav Chadha, SP's Ram Gopal Yadav and Jaya Bachchan.

A copy of the complaint has also been sent to the Minister of Law, Minister of IT and the Police Commissioner of Delhi. In a similar complaint to the Attorney General of India, Tankha has demanded strict action against those accused of trolling.

Urging the President for immediate action against the troll army defaming the administration of justice and the Chief Justice of India, the complaint said the



IN A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, THE CONGRESS' RAJYA SABHA MEMBER VIVEK TANKHA TERMED SUCH ONLINE TROLLING A 'BRAZEN CASE OF INTERFERENCE WITH THE COURSE OF JUSTICE' AND HAS CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION AGAINST THE CULPRITS

A COPY OF THE COMPLAINT HAS ALSO BEEN SENT TO THE MINISTER OF LAW, MINISTER OF IT AND THE POLICE COMMISSIONER OF DELHI. IN A SIMILAR COMPLAINT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF INDIA, TANKHA HAS DEMANDED STRICT ACTION AGAINST THOSE ACCUSED OF TROLLING

Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court headed by CJI D Y Chandrachud is seized of and hearing an important Constitutional issue in the matter of government formation and the governor's role in Maharashtra.

"While the matter is subjudice, the troll army, presumably sympathetic to the interest of the ruling party in Maharashtra, has launched an offensive against the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India. The words and contents are filthy and deplorable, which has garnered

views in lakhs on social media platforms.

"In a matter which is subjudice and in seisin before the Supreme Court, such despicable conduct is only possible if such people enjoy the support of the ruling dispensation. Your excellency and the constitutional and statutory authorities in India are duty bound to protect the dignity and decorum of the Indian judiciary," the MPs' letter said.

It cited Justice J S Verma's remark in the Vineet Narain case: "Be

you ever so high, the law is always above you". "This also is a brazen case of interference with the course of justice. We expect immediate action not only against the persons indulging in trolling but also against the people behind it, i.e., supporting and sponsoring it. As law-abiding Parliamentarians, we expect immediate action against the culprits," the MPs said in their petition to the President.

In their complaint to the Attorney General, Tankha said he and other MPs are appalled by the filthy conduct of the troll army presumably sympathetic to the interest of the ruling party in Maharashtra against the Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud.

He also sought time from him, saying a delegation of Parliamentarians would like to call on him on Monday after court hours to beseech him to "use your position as the Attorney General of India for initiating strong and exemplary action".

Tankha urged the attorney general to seek a report from the Delhi police commissioner about names and details of people involved in the trolls and the ones supporting and encouraging them. He also sought to issue directions to the ministries of IT and law to demonstrably ensure visible action against the despicable trolls and their IDs as "what is at stake is the majesty of law, the dignity of the court and the image of our constitutional institutions".

Cops wait for hours for Rahul to serve notice

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 17: After Rahul Gandhi mentioned about the victims of sexual harassment in his Bharat Jodo Yatra speech in January in Srinagar, the Delhi Police have visited him twice and waited for hours to serve the necessary notice to get the details.

The Congress MP was served the notice on Wednesday after he did not meet the police team on Tuesday at his residence here even after waiting for three hours, said a Delhi Police source, adding that the team had visited twice his residence to serve him the notice to provide details about the victims of sexual harassment who had approached him to seek security.

According to sources, the police team on March 15 had waited for three hours at Rahul Gandhi's residence to serve him the notice, however, he did not meet them.

"Again on March 16, senior officers visited his residence and served the notice after waiting for one-and-a-half hour," said the sources in Delhi Police. A senior police officer said the notice was is-



sued after the police took cognisance of social media posts and sent a list of questionnaires.

According to sources, the police team on March 15 had waited for three hours at Rahul Gandhi's residence to serve him the notice, however, he did not meet them

so that security can be provided to them," said the official.

"... in one particular case, I asked a girl (who had been raped) if we should call the police? She said 'don't call the police... I will be shamed'," Rahul Gandhi had said during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Srinagar.

Govt bats for simultaneous polls



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: The government Friday battled for holding simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and state assemblies, saying it would result in huge saving to the public exchequer, as it listed out "imperatives" such as amending the Constitution and bringing all political parties on board before carrying out the gigantic exercise.

In a written reply in Lok Sabha, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said a parliamentary panel had examined the issue of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies in consultation with various stakeholders, including the Election Commission. The Committee made certain recommendations in this regard.

"The matter now stands referred to the Law Commission for further examination to work out a practicable road map and framework for simultaneous elections ...," Rijiju said. Simultaneous elections, he noted, would result in huge savings to the public exchequer and avoid replication of effort on part of administrative and law and order machinery in holding repeated elections. It would bring considerable savings to political parties and candidates in their election campaigns.

The matter now stands referred to the Law Commission for further examination to work out a practicable road map and framework for simultaneous elections



"Further, asynchronous Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections (including by-election) result in prolonged enforcement of Model Code of Conduct with its concomitant adverse impact on developmental and welfare programmes," the minister said.

He also listed out "major impediments/imperatives" for synchronisation for Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections. He said the change would require amendments in "not less than five" articles of the Constitution - article 83 relating to duration of Houses

of Parliament, article 85 relating to dissolution of Lok Sabha by the President, article 172 relating to duration of the state legislatures, article 174 relating to dissolution of the state legislatures, and article 356 relating to the imposition of President's Rule in the states.

Before the proposal is implemented, it would also require obtaining consensus of all political parties. "Having regard to the federal structure of our system of governance, it is imperative that consensus of all state governments is also obtained," the minister pointed out.

He said it would also require an additional number of electronic voting machines and VVPATs (paper trail machines), "which would cost a huge amount, might be in thousands of crores (of rupees)." "Considering that the life of a machine is only 15 years, this would imply that machine would be used for about three or four times in its life span, entailing huge expenditure in its replacement after every 15 years".

He also flagged the need for additional polling personnel and security forces. He said the department-related Parliamentary standing committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its 79th report had highlighted that in South Africa, elections to national as well as provincial legislatures are held simultaneously for five years and municipal elections are held two years later.

In Sweden, elections to national legislature (Riksdag) and provincial legislature/county council (landsting) and local bodies/municipal assemblies (Kommunfullmaktige) are held on a fixed date - second Sunday in September for four years. In the UK, the term of Parliament is governed by the Fixed-term Parliament Act, 2011, he informed the house.



President Droupadi Murmu with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R. Hari Kumar and others during a visit to the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier INS Vikrant in Kochi

UP cold storage tragedy: Toll rises to 14

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambhal/Lucknow/Moradabad, March 17: The death toll in a roof collapse incident at a cold storage in Sambhal district climbed to 14 Friday as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited the injured and formed a committee to probe the reasons behind the tragedy.

Twenty-four people were pulled out of the rubble of the collapsed structure on Indira Road under Chandausi police station limits and 14 of them died, Deputy Inspector General of Police Shalabh Mathur said. Almost all the missing workers have been found and the rescue operation is in its last phase, Mathur said.

District Magistrate Manish Bansal said four people are undergoing treatment at a Moradabad hospital, while six have been dis-

charged. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who was on an official visit to Moradabad, visited the hospital where the injured from Sambhal were being treated. He met the injured and asked about their wellbeing.

A government spokesperson said in Lucknow CM Adityanath has announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased, ₹50,000 for those critically injured and free treatment for all those who suffered injuries in the incident.

Adityanath expressed grief and directed officials to ensure proper treatment to the injured, according to the spokesperson. He has formed a committee led by the divisional commissioner and the DIG of Moradabad to probe the reasons behind the roof collapse.

AMRUTA FADNAVIS CASE

Designer sent to police custody till March 21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 17: A Mumbai court Friday remanded designer Anishka Jaisinghani in police custody till March 21 in a case registered against her for allegedly offering a bribe to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's wife Amruta for intervening in a criminal case and also threatening her.

Anishka was arrested on Thursday, while her father, also an accused in the case, was still at large. The Malabar Hill police station had registered a First Information Report (FIR) on February 20 on Amruta Fadnavis's complaint.

The accused was produced before Sessions Judge DD Almale. The police, represented by Chief Public Prosecutor Jaysing Desai, sought her custody for seven days, saying this is not a simple matter. Unless the person is remanded in sufficient custody it will be difficult to investigate the case, he said.

The court then remanded Anishka in police custody till March 21. As per the FIR, Anishka was in touch with Amruta for the past 16 months and also visited her residence. In her statement to the police, Amruta said she first met Anishka in November 2021. Anishka claimed that she was a designer of clothes, jewellery and footwear and requested the BJP leader's wife to wear them at public events saying it would help her promote the products, a police official said.

After gaining Amruta's trust, Anishka offered to provide her with information on some bookies through which, she claimed, they could make money.

Elite male footballers have higher risk of developing dementia: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: Elite football players had increased risk of developing Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases compared to general population, according to an observational study published in The Lancet Public Health journal.

Among male footballers playing in the Swedish top division, 9 per cent (537 out of 6,007) were diagnosed with neurodegenerative disease, compared to 6 per cent (3,485 out of 56,168) population controls.

In recent years, there have been growing concerns about exposure to head trauma in football and whether it can lead to increased risk of neurodegenerative disease later in life. A previous study

from Scotland suggested that footballers were 3.5 times more likely to develop neurodegenerative diseases.

Following this evidence, certain footballing associations implemented measures to reduce heading in younger age groups and training settings, the researchers said. "While the risk increase in our study is slightly smaller than in the previous study from Scotland, it confirms that elite footballers have a greater risk of neurodegenerative disease later in life," said Peter Ueda, an assistant professor at Karolinska Institute, Sweden.

"As there are growing calls from within the sport for greater measures to protect brain health, our study adds to the limited evidence-base and can be used to



guide decisions on how to manage these risks," said Ueda.

The study used Sweden's national health registers to look for

records of neurodegenerative disease (diagnoses, deaths, or use of prescription drugs for dementia) in 6,007 male football players who

In recent years, there have been growing concerns about exposure to head trauma in football and whether it can lead to increased risk of neurodegenerative disease later in life

A previous study from Scotland suggested that footballers were 3.5 times more likely to develop neurodegenerative diseases

had played in the Swedish top division from 1924 to 2019.

It compared players' risk of neurodegenerative disease with population controls, who were people matched with football players according to sex, age, and region of residence. The analysis broke down the risk for different neurodegenerative conditions, including Alzheimer's and other dementias, motor neuron disease, and Parkinson's disease. It also compared the risks between outfield players and goalkeepers.


Overall, football players had a 1.5 times increased risk of neu-

rodegenerative disease compared to controls. 9 per cent (537 out of 6,007) of football players compared to 6 per cent (3485 out of 56,168) of controls were diagnosed with neurodegenerative disease.

The authors caution that although 9 per cent of football players and 6 per cent of controls were diagnosed with neurodegenerative disease during their study, most participants were still alive at the end of data collection, so the lifetime risk of developing neurodegenerative disease for both groups are likely to be higher.

of the day quote

We commit to communicating transparently with all of you on any debt treatment terms that are agreed with any creditor or group of creditors, before being formalised. In the same vein, we commit to reporting regularly on our indebtedness, ensuring no financial liabilities incurred by the country are undisclosed



RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | SRI LANKA PRESIDENT

Our report paints an unacceptable picture of impunity and the near-total destruction of civic space and fundamental freedoms in Belarus



VOLKER TÜRK | AUSTRIAN LAWYER

I have no illusions. We know that in our country, wages are still low, and they are being squeezed even more by inflation



KYRIAKOS MITSOTAKIS | PM OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

SHORT TAKES

Turkish FM to visit Egypt

Istanbul: Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu will visit Egypt, his ministry announced Friday, the first such high-level trip in more than a decade as the countries repair relations damaged in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring. A statement from the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Cavusoglu will go to Egypt on Saturday at the invitation of his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukry. The ministers will discuss bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues.

Japan PM Kishida praises SK leader

Tokyo: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said hats off to South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol for “making a difficult decision and action” by overcoming the troubled history between the two countries, pledging to work with him toward better future relations. “I want to express my heartfelt respect to President Yoon for making a difficult decision and action by overcoming various (troubled) background and history between the neighbours Japan and South Korea,” Kishida told a news conference Friday.

Freddy toll rises

Blantyre (Malawi): Authorities are still getting to grips with the scale of Cyclone Freddy's destruction in Malawi and Mozambique since late Saturday, with over 370 people confirmed dead, several hundreds still missing and tens of thousands displaced.

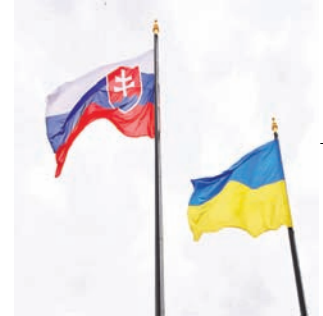


Allah gives us lives, and He has the supreme authority to give lives and take lives, killing is against the Quran

SHEIKH HASINA | BANGLADESH PM

SLOVAKIA TO HELP UKRAINE

Slovakia's government has approved a plan to give Ukraine its fleet of 13 Soviet-era MIG-29 fighter jets, becoming the second NATO member country to agree to fulfill the Ukrainian government's pleas for warplanes to help defend against Russia's invasion



ON THE BOIL: A petrol bomb explodes near riot police as they clash with protesters during a 24-hour nationwide strike over the country's deadliest train disaster last month in Athens, Greece

Xi to visit Russia to boost ties

AGENCIES

Beijing/Moscow, March 17: Chinese President Xi Jinping will travel to Moscow on a state visit Monday for crucial talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin during which he is expected to pitch for peace talks to end the raging Ukraine conflict.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying, in a brief announcement, said Friday that “at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation, President Xi Jinping will pay a state visit to Russia from March 20 to 22”.

Later, answering a spate of questions about whether Xi will promote peace talks between Russia and Ukraine to end the war, another Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told the media: “We always believe political dialogue is the only way to resolve conflicts and disputes”. Xi's visit to Russia comes days after China clinched the Iran-Saudi Arabia peace deal, regarded as a diplomatic coup, aimed at expanding Beijing's role in world hotspots to end conflicts.

Beijing has not condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and continues to maintain close political, trade, and military ties with Moscow. Referring to a 12-point position paper issued by China earlier to end the Ukraine conflict, Wang said the document “fully lays out China's fair and objective position on the Ukraine issue”.

“Fanning flames during the fight and imposing unilateral sanctions will make matters worse,” he said, in a veiled dig at the US and EU's firm backing of Ukraine. Asked whether Xi will speak to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy about the peace deal, Wang said: “China will uphold an objective and fair position on the Ukraine crisis and play a role in promoting talks for peace”. “China's position is consistent and clear. We maintain communication with all parties,” he said. Wang also sought



China's visit follows US-Russia row over drone crash

West concerned Beijing will arm Russia

China denies any such plan, has called for peace talks

International grain deal due to expire Saturday

UK says Russia edges forward in Bakhmut, offensive slows

This will be Xi's first visit abroad after getting endorsed for an unprecedented third five-year term as President and head of the military early this month by the NPC, China's Parliament

ICC issues arrest warrant against Putin

The Hague: The International Criminal Court said Friday it has issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Putin for war crimes because of his alleged involvement in abductions of children from Ukraine. The court said in a statement that Putin “is allegedly responsible for the war crime of unlawful deportation of population (children) and that of unlawful transfer of population (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation.” It also issued a warrant Friday for the arrest of Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, the Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, on similar allegations.

to play down US warnings to China not to supply weapons to Russia, saying “China-Russia cooperation is completely above board and shall be free from disruption or coercion from any third party”. China always handles the export of military items in a prudent manner and dual-use articles in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, he said, but at the same time, expressed Beijing's opposition to unilateral sanctions by the US.

China is consistently opposed to long-arm jurisdiction or sanctions that are not in accordance with

United Nations, Wang said. On the US and the EU criticism of China-Russia relations as an alliance-building a new world order, Wang said: “the China-Russia relationship is based on no alliance, no confrontation and no targeting of any third party”.

China is committed to the UN-centred international system and an international order underpinned by international law, he said. On ending the Ukraine conflict, Wang said China will continue to play a constructive role to work out a political settlement of the crisis.

Pressure mounts on Macron after violent unrest over pensions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, March 17: Angry protesters disrupted traffic along a busy Paris ring road Friday in opposition to French President Manuel Macron's decision to ram a bill raising the retirement age from 62 to 64 through parliament without a vote while the government faces two no-confidence motions.

A day after Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne invoked a special constitutional power to skirt a vote in a chaotic lower chamber, the far-right National Rally and a small group representing leftist lawmakers and others filed separate no-confidence motions that are expected to be voted on early next week.

The fury Borne had faced in the National Assembly poured into the streets with citizens resolving to carry on their protests against the widely unpopular measure. Protesters halted cars along a stretch of the road circling Paris, students blocked some university campuses and Paris garbage collectors extended their strike for a 12th day, with piles of foul-smelling rubbish growing daily in the French capital.

Striking sanitation workers continued their blockade Europe's largest incineration site and two other sites that treat Paris garbage. Leaders of the influential leftist CGT union have called on people to leave schools, factories, refineries and other work places to force the gov-

NK test-fires missile in ‘warning to rivals’

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Seoul, March 17: North Korea test-fired a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in a show of the “toughest response posture” of its strategic forces against “aggressive” massive combined drills by the US and South Korea, Pyongyang's state media reported Friday.

The nation's leader Kim Jong-un “guided” the launch Thursday together with his young daughter Ju-ae, as it served as an occasion to “give a stronger warning to the enemies intentionally escalating the tension” on the peninsula, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

It cited the “unstable security environment” in the region attributable to “provocative and aggressive large-scale war drills”, referring to the South Korea-US Freedom Shield (FS) exercise underway in a program coupled with major field trainings, reports *Yonhap News Agency*. The drill involving the Hwasong-



17 was “aimed at confirming the mobile and normal operation and reliability of the country's nuclear war deterrent”, the KCNA said.

It confirmed “the war readiness of the ICBM unit and the exceptional militancy of the DPRK's strategic forces and strictly verified their reliability,” it added, using the acronym for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The KCNA said the ICBM, launched at Pyongyang International Airport, reached a maximum altitude of 6,045 km and flew 1,000.2 km for 4,151 seconds before accurately landing on the preset area in the open waters off the East Sea.

Imran granted protective bail



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, March 17: In a relief to embattled Imran Khan, a top Pakistani court here granted protective bail to the former prime minister Friday in eight terrorism cases and a civil case after he appeared before the court, hours after another court suspended non-bailable arrest warrants against him till March 18 in a corruption case.

Khan, the 70-year-old chief of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, travelled to the Lahore High Court (LHC) in a bullet-proof vehicle to seek protective bail in nine cases. A two-member bench of the LHC, comprising Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh and Justice Farooq Haider conducted the hearing on bail pleas filed against the cases that are lodged under terrorism sections, according to *Geo TV*.

For the five cases in Islamabad, the court granted bail to the PTI chief till March 24 and for the three cases in Lahore, Khan received bail till March 27, the report said. Meanwhile, Justice Saleem also heard the bail pleas that Khan filed against the civil case registered against him, it said.

Earlier, the Islamabad High Court suspended non-bailable arrest warrants issued against Khan till March 18, providing him with a chance to appear before the district court hearing the Toshakhana case.

Ahead of the LHC decision, a tense calm prevailed in Lahore's upscale Zaman Park near Khan's residence, which was the scene of pitched battles for two days between his defiant supporters and Punjab Police. The clashes ultimately subsided after the courts intervened Wednesday.

Covid may have originated from racoon dogs: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, March 17: The deadly Covid-19 pandemic may have originated in raccoon dogs from the Wuhan market in China, according to an international team of virus experts.

More than two years after the pandemic, the origins of Covid-19 remain unclear. It has been a political and scientific debate with scientists and politicians globally contending that the Coronavirus jumped into people from bats, or have been leaked from a laboratory.

The new study, yet to be published, and led by experts including from Universities of Arizona, Utah and Sydney and from the Scripps Research Institute is based on genetic data drawn from swabs taken from in and around the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market starting in January 2020, the *New York Times* reported.



Although the Chinese authorities had shut down the market after being linked to the outbreak of

Covid pandemic, and the animals cleared out, the researchers got the samples from swabbing walls,

- More than two years after the pandemic, the origins of Covid-19 remain unclear
- It has been a political and scientific debate with scientists and politicians globally contending that the Coronavirus jumped into people from bats, or have been leaked from a laboratory

floors, metal cages and carts that are used for transporting animal cages. The results showed that large amounts of genetic material were a match for the raccoon dog, the NYT report said. Raccoon dogs are related to foxes and are known to be able to transmit the Coronavirus. “We were able to figure out relatively quickly that at least in one of these samples, there was a lot of raccoon dog nucleic acid, along with virus nucleic acid,” Stephen Goldstein, a virologist at the University of Utah who worked

on the new analysis, was quoted as saying. (Nucleic acids are the chemical building blocks that carry genetic information.)

However, the team noted that “jumbling together of genetic material from the virus and the animal does not prove that a raccoon dog itself was infected. And even if a raccoon dog had been infected, it would not be clear that the animal had spread the virus to people.”

“Another animal could have passed the virus to people, or someone infected with the virus could have spread the virus to a raccoon dog,” they said. But the scientists stated that their “analysis did establish that raccoon dogs deposited genetic signatures in the same place where genetic material from the virus was left,” the NYT report said. That evidence was consistent with a scenario in which the virus had spilled into humans from a wild animal.

Ramsahay Yadav elected Nepal's VP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 17: Ramsahaya Prasad Yadav, a senior leader from the Madhes region, was elected as Nepal's Vice President Friday in a further boost to the coalition government headed by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’.

Ramsahaya Prasad Yadav, a candidate from the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP), comfortably defeated his nearest rival Ashta Laxmi Shakya of CPN-UML to become the Himalayan nation's third Vice President and the first from the Madhes region, bordering India. Yadav, 52, secured 30,328 votes against 16,328 secured by Shakya, according to the Election Commission. Yadav had the support of the Nepali Congress, CPN-Maoist Centre, CPN-Unified Socialist, and other fringe parties. Rastriya Prajatantra Party did not take part during the vice presidential vot-



ing held Friday. The outcome of the election comes as a relief for the government headed by Prime Minister “Prachanda” as the CPN-UML led by former prime minister K P Sharma Oli withdrew its support to his government following a rift over backing Poudel for the presidential poll. Ram Chandra Poudel of the Nepali Congress was elected as the new president of Nepal March 9. Like the President, the Vice President is elected by an electoral college comprising the members of the Federal Parliament (House of Representatives and the National Assembly) and the Provincial Assembly.

The transaction (IDBI Bank privatisation) continues to be on track as per the defined process in post-EoI stage following receipts of multiple EoIs

TUHIN KANTA PANDEY | SECRETARY, DIPAM

We have rolled out unlimited data offer for 5G users in 4G plans starting from ₹239 onward. We hope our customers enjoy the power of world-class Airtel 5G Plus

SHASHWAT SHARMA | DIRECTOR CONSUMER BUSINESS, BHARTI AIRTEL

The loan from Maanaveeya will help boost our efforts in fostering financial inclusion by addressing the unmet and growing need for credit in the ₹1-10 lakh small business loan segment

DEEPAK AGGARWAL | CO-FOUNDER, MONEYBOX

SHORT TAKES

TCS CEO to exit

Bangalore: Tata Consultancy Services CEO Rajesh Gopinathan is resigning in an unexpected move to pursue other interests, adding to worries for India's largest IT services provider amid slowing tech spending and challenges in its key markets. The company named its president and head of global financial services business K Krithivasan as the CEO-designate, effective March 16, and said he would take over as CEO and managing director in the next financial year, subject to shareholders' approval. Krithivasan joined TCS in 1989 and has held various leadership roles at the company.

Tough disclosure norms for FPIs

New Delhi: Capital markets regulator Sebi has made stringent norms for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs), asking them to disclose any material change in their structure and common ownership within seven working days. With regard to new FPI registrations, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) can ask them for any additional documents which may be required, according to a notification. Under the new rules, FPIs will inform Sebi and designated depository about any false or misleading information about change in material respect and any change in their structure or control within seven working days in writing.

Fert imports from Russia skyrocket

New Delhi: India imported 34.19 lakh tonne of fertilisers, including urea and DAP, from Russia during April-February of the current fiscal, highest in the last three years, according to the data placed before Parliament. The imports have risen notwithstanding the Russia-Ukraine war. Out of total fertiliser import of 34.19 lakh tonne, about 6.26 lakh tonne of urea was imported till February of the ongoing 2022-23 financial year, as against 2.80 lakh tonne imported during the entire previous fiscal, he said.

Tata arm nixes talks to buy Bisleri

New Delhi: Negotiation with Chauhan's to acquire their packaged water business Bisleri International has "ceased", Tata group's FMCG arm Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) said Friday. Resting the speculations about a possible acquisition, TCPL in a regulatory update said it has not entered into any agreements over the acquisition of Bisleri.



Today is an important day in the history and future of the steel industry. PLI 1.0 is not a full stop, it is the beginning of the journey. Our ministry is already looking at PLI 2.0

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION MINISTER OF STEEL

YT HIKES PRICE OF ITS TV SERVICES

Google-owned YouTube has announced that it is raising the price of its TV subscription from \$64.99 per month to \$72.99 per month due to rising "content costs". The price change for new members began March 16, while the price change for existing members will begin April 18. This is YouTube TV's first price increase in three years



US BANKING TURMOIL SPIRALS

RBI governor cautions banks

Das cautions banks against any build-up of asset-liability mismatches

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 17: Reserve Bank governor Shaktikanta Das Friday cautioned banks against any build-up of asset-liability mismatches, saying both are detrimental to financial stability and hinted that the ongoing crisis in the US banking system seems to have emanated from such mismatches.

Delivering the annual KP Hormis (Federal Bank founder) commemorative lecture in Kochi this evening, the governor was quick to acknowledge and assure that the domestic financial sector is stable and the worst of inflation is behind us.

Amid the continuing volatility in exchange rates, especially due to the excessive appreciation of the US dollar, and its impact on the external debt servicing ability of nations, Das said, "We have nothing to fear as our external debt is manageable and thus appreciation of the greenback does not pose any problem to us".

The banking system is "well-supervised and well-regulated" and the RBI has constantly encouraged lenders to adopt robust risk management practices, conduct periodic stress tests and build sufficient capital buffers, Das said.

Banks must also ensure deposits

TCS, Infosys have highest exposure to US banks: JPM

Top Indian information technology firms Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys have the highest exposure to regional banks in the United States that are gripped by a financial turmoil, analysts at JPMorgan said Friday. Regional banks in the United States account for 2-3% of their revenue, JP Morgan said in a note, adding that the exposure to the recently collapsed Silicon Valley Bank could be 10-20 basis points for TCS, Infosys and smaller rival LTIMindtree, with the Tata group company in the lead. All three companies might need to set aside provisions in the fourth quarter due to their exposure to SVB, JP Morgan said in a note.

and credit grow sustainably, while periodically assessing their asset-liability profiles, he added.

It is also important for banks to properly examine interest rate-related risks and, more broadly, focus on identifying the root cause of vulnerability rather than deal with symptoms alone, Das said.

On the US baking crisis where two mid-sized banks (SVB and First Republic Bank) with over \$200 billion in balance sheets each went belly up last week, he said the ongoing crisis drives home the importance of robust regulations that focus on sustainable growth and not excessive build-up either on the asset side or liability side.

SVB Financial seeks default shield

FINANCIAL STOCKS HAVE LOST OVER BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN VALUE SINCE THE COLLAPSE OF SILICON VALLEY BANK AND SIGNATURE BANK LAST WEEK, WHILE CREDIT STRESS HAS WORSENER FOR WALL STREET'S BIGGEST BANKS

REUTERS

New York, March 17: SVB Financial Group, the parent firm of US lender Silicon Valley Bank, said Friday it filed for a court-supervised reorganization under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection to seek buyers for its assets, days after its former unit SVB was taken over by US regulators.

The move to commence bankruptcy proceedings comes as emergency measures to shore up confidence have so far failed to dispel worries about a financial contagion.

Shares of big banks fell between 1.5% and 3% in early trading. "It is impossible to know if there are other shoes to drop, but I think a good majority of the negative news is out there," said Art Hogan, chief market strategist at B Riley Wealth Management.

California regulators shuttered Silicon Valley Bank last Friday and appointed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) as receiver, making it the largest collapse since Washington Mutual went bust during the financial crisis of 2008.

SVB was forced to sell a portfolio of treasuries and mortgage-backed securities to Goldman Sachs at a \$1.8 billion loss after a rise in yields eroded value.

To plug that hole, it attempted



China makes surprise rate cut

Hong Kong: China's central bank has made a surprise cut to the amount of money that banks must keep in reserve, in an effort to keep money flowing through the financial system and prop up the economy, media reports said. The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said it would cut the reserve requirement ratio (RRR) for almost all banks by 0.25 percentage points, effective March 27, CNN reported. "(We must) make a good combination of macro policies, better serve the real economy, and maintain reasonable and sufficient liquidity in the banking system," the PBOC said in a statement. The late Friday move came as a surprise and follows a week of turmoil in global financial markets triggered by the failure of some regional US banks.

to raise \$2.25 billion in common equity and preferred convertible stock but spooked clients pulled out deposits that led to \$42 billion of outflows in a day.

Earlier this week, the company said it was planning to explore

strategic alternatives for its businesses including the holding company, SVB Capital and SVB Securities.

SVB Securities and SVB Capital's funds and general partner entities are not included in

PhonePe raises \$200mn; valuation reaches \$12bn

The \$12 billion pre-money valuation makes Walmart-owned PhonePe the most valuable fintech in the country, surpassing payment services provider, Razorpay which was last valued at \$7.5 billion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: PhonePe, one of India's largest fintech platforms, Friday said it has raised an additional \$200 million (around ₹1,649 crore) in primary capital from Walmart, at a pre-money valuation of \$12 billion.

This new funding comes as a part of PhonePe's ongoing fundraising of up to \$1 billion in capital, following its domicile shift to India last year. With this tranche, the company has raised \$650 million (around ₹5,360 crore) from several global investors, PhonePe said in a statement.

PhonePe competes with Google Pay and Paytm.

"The company expects further investments, which will be announced in due course," the statement said. "PhonePe plans to deploy these funds to build and scale new businesses like insurance, wealth management, lending, stock-broking, ONDC-based shopping and account aggregators."

The fundraise will also help PhonePe turbo-charge the next wave of growth for UPI payments



in India, including UPI lite and Credit on UPI.

Speaking on the fundraise, Sameer Nigam, CEO and Founder of PhonePe said, "We would like to thank Walmart, our majority investor, for their continued support of our long-term aspirations. We are excited about the next phase of our growth as we build new offerings for Indian consumers and merchants, along with enabling financial inclusion across the nation".

The statement, however, did not give how much shareholding Walmart has in PhonePe now.

President and CEO of Walmart International Judith McKenna said: "We are excited about PhonePe's future and have confidence in how it continues to expand its offerings and provide access to financial services for Indians at scale. India is one of the world's most digital, dynamic and fastest-growing economies, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to continue to support PhonePe."

REUTERS

Washington, March 17: Russia is not reaping the benefits of higher costs of some recent cargoes of crude oil bought by refiners in India priced above the price cap set by countries in the West and Australia, a US official said Thursday.

Some cargoes of low sulphur, or sweet, crude oil bought by Indian refiners have risen above the \$60 per barrel cap set by the Group of Seven rich countries, the European Union and Australia, due to rising demand, while most cargoes are below the cap.

China has also been buying Russian crude from the Eastern Siberia Pacific Ocean pipeline (ESPO) at above the price cap level, according to Reuters calculations.

Some Dubai-based traders, and Russian energy companies Gazprom and Rosneft are seeking non-dollar payments for certain niche grades of Russian oil that have in recent weeks been sold above the price cap, three sources with direct knowledge said.

The US official said some Indian refiners have recently paid above the price cap for Russian oil because freight and insurance costs have risen as the oil moves further distances to markets in Asia, rather than Europe, which banned most sea-borne Russian cargoes.

"It's true that the all-in cost to the buyer has crept up the past couple of weeks, as those transportation costs have got higher," the official



The report showed that the G7 cap has helped cut Russian energy tax revenues, the Kremlin's key source of revenue, by 42% since last February, the month Russia invaded Ukraine

said on condition of anonymity. "But the market is clearing well below the price cap for the oil."

The G7 set the price cap December 5, seeking to squeeze Russia's revenues during its war on Ukraine and left it relatively higher than some European countries wanted to ensure oil flowed to global markets. The US Treasury, including Secretary Janet Yellen, has touted the unprecedented system as part of sanctions on Russia.

"Russian oil cheapened significantly relative to non-Russian oil when the price cap was implemented. And since then, that large discount for Russian oil has re-

mained stable," the official said.

The higher costs typically pay for Western services, such as Greek tankers and British insurers, while Russia gets none of the higher price because the oil itself was bought at a discount to international benchmark Brent and below the cap, the official said.

An International Energy Agency report Wednesday showed that the cap is working, a Treasury spokesperson said. The report showed that the cap has helped cut Russian energy tax revenues, the Kremlin's key source of revenue, by 42% since last February, the month Russia invaded Ukraine.

Instagram has lost its soul: Co-founder

INSTAGRAM'S CO-FOUNDER SAID THE PHOTO-SHARING APP HAS TURNED INTO A BUSINESS APPARATUS FOR CREATORS AND BRANDS TO MINT MONEY

AGENCIES

Washington, March 17: Instagram co-founder Kevin Systrom Friday said that he is not happy with the evolution of the photo-sharing app to a marketplace for influencers. "I think we've lost the soul of what made Instagram Instagram," Systrom said during a podcast interview.

Systrom said earlier he used to go to, "Instagram to see what his friends and family were up to, but now it has turned into a business apparatus as creators and brands use the platform to make money."

The problem, he said, is that Instagram's "incentives are to go



to more commercial, more creators, more deals, more ad dol-

lars," which can have unintended social consequences.

This has "focused the energy on people living apparently amazing lives with no bounds, doing the fanciest things, looking the best, wearing the fanciest clothes," he said.

That creates a "terrifying" dynamic, he said, where Instagram users believe that the curated facades they see on the app are people's real lives.

"Life is really hard, and whatever people post on Instagram is the tip of the iceberg," he said. "It's this race to the bottom of who can be the most perfect."

In fact, the co-founder has seen Instagram's transformation play out on his own feed. He said he has

friends who used to upload pictures of their daily lives and now just post "#ads." "That, to me, is not the Instagram we started," Systrom said. He called out BeReal as an alternative app where people can be themselves and catch themselves in real moments.

Systrom's thoughts on Instagram came nearly five years after he left the company in 2018 in response to growing tensions with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg. He sold Instagram to Facebook, now Meta, in 2012 for \$1 billion. He is now one of the co-founders of Artifact, an AI-powered news app that was launched at the beginning of the year.

CHINESE LOAN APP CASE

ED files chargesheet against Razorpay, fintech firms, NBFCs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: The Enforcement Directorate Friday said it has filed a charge sheet against payment gateway Razorpay, three fintech companies controlled by Chinese nationals and as many NBFCs and some others in a money laundering probe linked to Chinese loan apps which allegedly cheated numerous people.

The federal probe agency said in a statement that the special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court based in Bengaluru has taken cognisance of the prosecution complaint (chargesheet).

A total of seven entities and five individuals have been named as accused in the charge sheet.

The accused entities include fintech companies Mad Elephant Network Technology Private Limited, Baryonix Technology Private Limited and Cloud Atlas Future Technology Private Limited which are "controlled" by the Chinese nationals and three non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) registered with RBI named X10 Financial Services Private Limited, Track Fin-ed Private Limited and Jamnadas Morarjee Finance Private Limited.

Payment gateway Razorpay Software Private Limited has also been named in the charge sheet as an accused, the agency said.

The money laundering case of the ED stems from multiple FIRs of the Bangalore Police CID which were filed based on complaints received from various customers who had availed loans and "faced harassment" from the recovery agent of these money-lending companies.

According to the ED, the probe found that fintech companies had "agreement with respective NBFCs for disbursement of loans through digital lending apps".

"The money-lending business was being illegally run by these fintech companies actually and these NBFCs knowingly let these firms use their names for the sake of getting commission without being careful about their conduct. The same is also a violation of the fair practices code of the Reserve Bank of India," the agency said.

The agency earlier had issued two provisional attachment orders to freeze ₹77.25 crore worth funds kept in bank accounts and payment gateways which was later confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority of the PMLA.

RAHUL, JADEJA SCRIPT WIN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 17: KL Rahul silenced his critics with a splendid match-winning knock (75 n o, 91b, 7x4, 1x6) as the Karnataka man, along with Ravindra Jadeja (45 n o, 69b, 5x4), guided India to a five-wicket victory in the first ODI against Australia here, Friday.

After the Indian bowlers bowled Australia out for just 188, the home team batters were expected to complete the chase with sheer comfort. However, the reality turned out to be completely different as they were reduced to 16/3 in five overs and 39/4 in 10.2 overs with the Indian top four batters back in the hut.

Rahul was at the middle when Shubman Gill (20) was dismissed off Mitchell Starc (3/49) as the fourth Indian batter. Skipper Hardik Pandya (25) joined Rahul at the middle and the duo tried to resurrect Indian chase. However, Marcus Stoinis (2/27) broke the 44-run fifth wicket partnership getting rid of the Indian captain.

With 106 runs needed to win, Jadeja joined Rahul at the middle and the duo played watchfully without taking any risk. The pair stitched together 108 runs for the unbroken sixth wicket to take India past Australian total and give the hosts 1-0 lead in the three-match ODI series.

Earlier, Mohammad Shami (3/17) and Mohammed Siraj (3/29) shared three wickets apiece as India bowled out hapless Australia for a mere 188 in 35.4 overs after Hardik Pandya won the toss and opted to field.

The collapse was an inexplicable one as Australia lost last six wickets for only 19 runs in a space of 7.5 overs as Pandya's decision to bring in Shami for a quick second spell turned out to be decisive.

The delivery to Cameron Green that sent the off-stump cart-wheeling was a real peach. It pitched on line of off-stump and Green had to commit but there was shade late



Ravindra Jadeja and KL Rahul run between the wickets during their match-winning partnership against Australia

movement that beat the batter and knocked back the off-stump.

The veteran pacer helped India pull things back in control after an attacking 65-ball 81 (10x4, 5x6) from Mitchell Marsh set Australia on the course of a competitive total, as his second spell of 3-2-8-3 broke the back of Australia's resistance after a sparkling start.

On the other hand, Siraj, who provided an early wicket in the second over, also enjoyed success in his second spell, snaffling the last two wickets in the Australian innings.

Marsh provided Australia with a rollicking start in his first-ever innings as an opener in ODIs. It was

also his comeback to international cricket after a three-month layoff following an ankle surgery.

Marsh's charge in the first half of the game ensured Australia kept moving briskly towards a big total, but India kept making inroads at regular intervals and eventually bundled

them out for a below-par score.

After Travis Head played one onto his wickets off Siraj in the second over, Marsh joined forces with Australia captain Steve Smith (22) for a sturdy 72-run stand for the second wicket. Smith chased one outside off from Hardik Pandya to walk back.

Marsh continued with his attack but as he was nearing his second ODI century against India and first since January 2016, he played one shot too many to be dismissed by Jadeja (2/46). The Indian spinner bowled a delivery wide on the off-stump, and Marsh mis-hit it to be caught at short third man.

Jadeja then produced a stunning one-handed catch to get rid of Marnus Labuschagne (15) off Kuldeep Yadav (1/48), and Josh Inglis chopped one onto his wickets off Shami as Australia stuttered to 169/5 in the 28th over. The Aussies then lost wickets at regular intervals to be bundled out for 188.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 188 (Mitchell Marsh 81; Mohammed Shami 3/17, Mohammed Siraj 3/29, Ravindra Jadeja 2/46) lost to India 191/5 (KL Rahul 75 n o, Ravindra Jadeja 45 n o; Mitchell Starc 3/49, Marcus Stoinis 2/27) by 5 wickets.



Suryakumar Yadav congratulates Mohammed Shami after the latter dismisses an Australian batter, Friday

Jaismine, Shashi sail on at Worlds



JAISMINE LAMBORIA



SHASHI CHOPRA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: Commonwealth Games medallist Jaismine Lamboria packed a powerful punch to win her opening bout against Nyambega Beatrice Ambros of Tanzania via a RSC verdict at the Women's World Championships here Friday.

Shashi Chopra (63kg) continued the winning momentum as she notched a facile 5-0 win over Mwangi Teresiah of Kenya. India, however, suffered its first casualty as Shruti Yadav (70kg), who had replaced Sanamacha Chanu, succumbed to a 0-5 defeat at the hands of China's Zhou Pan.

Competing in the 60kg event, Jaismine, who won the bronze in the 2022 Birmingham CWG, needed less than 90 seconds to end the bout. The 21-year-old from Haryana was at her a belligerent best as she unleashed a series of jabs on her opponent. The referee gave the Tanzanian boxer two standing counts before he was forced to stop the contest.

It was the third RSC win by an Indian boxer in the tournament. On the opening day, reigning champion Nikhat Zareen and Preeti had won after the referee stopped their respective bouts. Jaismine will face Samadova Mijgona of Tajikistan in the next round.

Shashi too dominated her bout. The Indian proved to be too strong for her opponent as she utilised her deft jabs and stern defence to win the bout comfortably. She will take on the 2022 Asian Championships silver medallist Kito Mai of Japan in the Round of 16.

In the final Indian bout of the day, Shruti, who was disadvantaged because of her height, threw a lot of punches but was unable to connect. She struggled with her balance and her footwork looked sluggish. The Chinese boxer, on the other hand, utilised her long reach as she did not let Shruti come near and attack.

Two Indian pugilists, CWG champion Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) and Manju Bamboriya (66kg), will begin their campaign Saturday.

Swiatek, Rybakina reach Indian Wells last 4 stage



ASSOCIATED PRESS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indian Wells (California), March 17: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek breezed past Sorana Cirstea 6-2, 6-3 to reach the semifinals of the BNP Paribas Open. Swiatek, the defending champion, took a 4-0 lead in the second set and converted her second match point to close it out Thursday.

"I'm happy that I played so intense that I could start both sets well," Swiatek said. "I'm feeling like I'm handling things pretty well and just playing my game."

Next up for Swiatek is No.10 seed Elena Rybakina, who outlasted Karolina Muchova 7-6(7-4), 2-6, 6-4. It will be a rematch from the Australian Open in January, when Rybakina won 6-4, 6-4 in the quarterfinals.

Rybakina became the first

woman from Kazakhstan to earn a semifinal berth at Indian Wells. She dropped her first set of the tournament in the second, but turned it up in the third. The 2022 Wimbledon champion won 15 of 16 first-serve points and never faced a break point in the set.

"I served much better in the third," Rybakina said on court. "I didn't start that well in the beginning of the match, I was a bit slower than usual and here the conditions are not that easy for me. In the end, in the important moments I played well."

Rybakina and Swiatek are 1-1 against each other in their careers. "In Australia, I just know that when I went to play against her, I had really nothing to lose. She's number one and kind of pressure on her in that moment," Rybakina said.

Treesa-Gayatri in All England semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, March 17: Indian pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand continued their impressive run, dishing out another superlative performance to advance to their second successive semifinals at the All England Championships here Friday.

The World No.17 Indian pair looked solid in their defence and relentless in attack, claiming 21-14, 18-21, 21-12 win over the newly-formed Chinese pair of Li Wen Mei and Liu Xuan Xuan in a 64-minute quarterfinals.

The only Indians in the fray, Gayatri and Treesa will face either Indonesian combination of eighth seeded Apriyani Rahayu and Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti or Korea's Baek Ha Na and Lee So Hee next.

Gayatri and Treesa had reached the semifinals in the last edition as well when they were handed a spot in the main draw at the last moment. But this time they entered the draw with a fair amount of experience, having claimed the Commonwealth Games bronze last year and notch-



ing up wins over higher-ranked pairs such as World No.7 Tan Pearly and Thinnah Muralitharan at the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship in February.

The Indian duo had shocked seventh seeded Thais Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Ravindra Prajongjai and former World No.1 pair from Japan Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota in the previous rounds.

In the quarterfinals, Gayatri, 20, and Treesa, 19, were up against Li, who has been World No.9 in the past, and Liu, a former World No.16. Taking on the World No.52 pair, Gayatri stood solid at the net while Treesa came up with delectable smashes and drops from the back to dominate the proceedings in the rallies.

With coach Constantias Boe and Arun Vishnu constantly chirping from the sidelines, the Indian pair

Arsenal ousted, Man United through

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, March 17: Arsenal's hopes for a European title ended when the Premier League leaders were eliminated from the Europa League by Sporting Lisbon in a penalty shootout.

Lisbon reached the quarterfinals by prevailing 5-3 in the shootout at the Emirates Stadium Thursday after a 1-1 draw in regulation in the second leg of their round-of-16 encounter. The first leg ended 2-2. Gabriel Martinelli failed to convert from the spot for Arsenal. Meanwhile, Manchester United cruised into the quarterfinals after a 1-0 victory at Real Betis.

Arsenal dominated the extra time with playmaker Martin Odegaard coming on as a substitute but Sporting goalkeeper Antonia Adán made some stunning saves to force the shootout. Manuel Ugarte was sent off two minutes before the end of extra time after picking his second yellow card.

Granit Khaka gave Arsenal a first-half lead on a rebound to complete a flowing move by the hosts. Pedro Goncalves levelled the score on the hour to spark the visitors' attack and force extra time.



Teammates congratulate Marcus Rashford (No.10) after his goal against Real Betis, Thursday

UNITED ADVANCE

In Seville, Marcus Rashford produced a clinical finish in the 56th minute, finding the bottom corner of the net with a low drive from out-

side the area to help United advance on a 5-1 aggregate score in the second-tier European competition. United had won 4-1 in the first leg at Old Trafford last week.

OTHER MATCHES

Juventus beat 10-man Freiburg 2-0 to advance 3-0 on aggregate. Feyenoord overwhelmed Shakhtar Donetsk 7-1 in Rotterdam to advance 9-2 on aggregate. Leverkusen beat Ferencvaros 2-0 to advance. Roma progressed despite a 0-0 draw at Real Sociedad after a 2-0 win in the first leg. Belgium's Union Saint-Gilloise moved into the quarterfinals with a 3-0 win over 10-man Union Berlin in Brussels after a 3-3 draw last week.

CONFERENCE LEAGUE

West Ham outclassed AEK Larnaca 4-0 in London. Lazio was eliminated by Dutch club AZ Alkmaar after losing 2-1 in both legs. Fiorentina rallied to beat Turkey's Sivasspor 4-1 to progress 5-1 on aggregate. Anderlecht had a 1-0 win at Real Sociedad for a 2-1 advancement while Nice was in command for a 4-1 aggregate victory after winning 3-1 at home over Sheriff. Sweden's Djurgarden lost 3-0 to Polish club Lech Poznan for a 5-0 aggregate elimination. Basel won a penalty shootout 4-1 after the match against Slovan in Bratislava went to extra time after the two teams were 4-4 on aggregate. Gent advanced by beating Turkish club Istanbul Basaksehir 4-1.

Hardik, Savita bag top honours at HI Awards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 17: Midfielder Hardik Singh and goalkeeper Savita Punia were Friday conferred with the men's and women's Indian 'Hockey Player of the Year' awards at a glittering ceremony here.

The 24-year-old Hardik beat his illustrious senior players like Manpreet Singh and Harmanpreet Singh to win the coveted award for 2022 named after hockey legend Balbir Singh senior at the fifth Hockey India Annual Awards. Both Hardik and Savita received ₹25 lakh each, along with a trophy. The total prize money for the wards was in excess of ₹2.7 crore.

Hockey India also gave away awards for 2021 as it could not be held due to post COVID-19 difficulties. Member of 1964 Olympics gold winning team, Gurbux Singh won the prestigious Hockey India Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award for 2022 for his outstanding contribution to the sport of hockey. The award carries ₹30 lakh and a trophy.

Harmanpreet was named the best defender for 2022. Savita also won the women's player of the

year 2021 award while Harmanpreet was named in the men's corresponding category.

Krishan B Pathak was named the best goalkeeper for 2022 while Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam of the women's national team was conferred with the best midfielder award. Hockey India Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year 2022 was given to Vandana Katariya of the women's national team. Each of them pocketed ₹5 lakh, along with a trophy.

Mumtaz Khan won the Asunta Lakra Award for upcoming women's player of the year for 2022 while the men's corresponding honour in the name Jugraj Singh was received by Uttam Singh.

Meanwhile, the Indian women's team that won gold at the FIH Women's Nations Cup in December last was also felicitated during the ceremony with each player winning ₹2 lakh while the coaching staff was presented with ₹1 lakh each.

Also, the Indian junior men's team that won gold at the Sultan of Johor Cup 2022 was also felicitated with each player earning ₹2.00 lakh each and the coaching staff receiving ₹1.00 lakh each.



The other half of the draw is dominated by Italian clubs with the possibility of a Milan derby in the semifinals. AC Milan will first face Napoli, the runaway Serie A leader who are making their debut in the quarterfinals of the Champions League or the old European Cup. The first leg is at San Siro.

Inter Milan will play at Benfica in the first leg, returning to the country where it eliminated Porto in the round of 16. Inter are playing at this stage of the competition for the first time in 12 years, while Milan is ending an 11-year wait.

The first legs will be played April 11-12. The return games are scheduled for April 18-19. The semifinals will be played between May 9-17 and the final is set for June 10 at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul.