



SHOWBIZ TROUBLE

Global actor Priyanka Chopra reveals about the 'biggest obstacle' she faced as an Indian actor in Hollywood

LEISURE P2



PUTIN VISITS CRIMEA

Vladimir Putin travels to Crimea, to mark the 9th anniversary of the Black Sea peninsula's annexation

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA AIM FOR SERIES

Rohit Sharma returns after missing the first match as India look to seal series when they face Australia in the 2nd ODI today

SPORTS P12

Students in tizzy over HSC paper goof-up

Several examinees get jitters after finding repetition of questions in History and Political Science papers while BSE assures of addressing the concern



File photo of students on their way to appear in HSC Examination at Capital High School in Bhubaneswar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 18: In a major goof-up, errors in Social Science question paper of the ongoing Class X Summative Assessment-II examination conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) have sent the students into a real tizzy.

Several examinees appearing for the test were confused after finding the erroneous question set in the History and Political Science subjects of the Social Science examination conducted across the state, Saturday.

After appearing for the exam, many students alleged that there were several questions from Set A incorporated in Set B. Besides,

question number 19 was missing from Set B. As a result, the students had attempted 49 questions.

On the other hand, a question paper from Bolangir district has gone viral on social media. However, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash rejected it and said the question paper was not leaked.

"While some questions have been repeated, one question is missing from my set. I am afraid that my marks will be deducted while evaluation," said one of the examinees.

The students have requested the BSE not to cut marks of the students as there are 49 questions in Set-B

and some questions are repeated. "There are some printing mistakes in Political Science and History subjects of Social Science examination question paper in Set-B," said the minister. The Board has taken note of it and the students' concern will be addressed during evaluation, he assured.

Admitting the errors, BSE President Ramasish Hazra said examinees need not to be worried as the BSE would take care of it.

"We have received complaints from some examination centres and are aware of the errors. There are some printing and binding mistakes in some question paper booklets of Set B. The students need not be worried as they will not be affected by the errors," said Hazra.

The BSE president said that all the exam centres have been asked to provide a list of students who faced similar issues while appearing for the examination today.

"Keeping in view such issues, we will re-fix the programme for the evaluation of OMR sheets and there is no need to conduct the examination again," he said, adding, the Board will adopt a formula and the entire evaluation will be done accordingly so that the students will not be affected.

School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash rejects allegation of question paper leak from Bolangir district

This is Odisha's moment: Deb



PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Industries, MSME and Energy Minister Pratap Keshari Deb addressing the third edition of Business Eminence Awards at Hotel Swosti Premium in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, as Orissa POST and Dharitri Editor Taghata Satpathy and FICCI president Subhrajant Panda look on

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 18: Industries and MSME Minister Pratap Keshari Deb, Saturday, said that time has come for the Odias to change the mindset and take risks, and that "this moment belongs to us as all the crucial positions at the Centre are being chaired by Odias".

Deb said this while addressing the third edition of Business Eminence Award organised by Dharitri and Orissa POST to recognise and celebrate local entrepreneurship.

BUSINESS EMINENCE AWARDS-2023

The minister, who attended the award function as the chief guest, said, "People of Odisha need to change their mindset to be part of the industrial race. You have to be updated and upfront and willing to take risks. No risks, no gain. If you open the lending ledger of Reserve Bank of India, you can find Odisha at the bottom. This means we are not ready to take loans/risks."

Deb said that Business Eminence Awards by Dharitri and Orissa

POST is the perfect place to discuss business and policies.

He said infrastructure development is very much necessary for industrial growth and Odisha, under former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik, had started the infrastructure development which was continued by people like Bansidhar Panda, the founder of IMFA.

Deb said, "We have become a power surplus state. In 2016, we started Make in Odisha Conclave to attract investments. In 2022

Make in Odisha Conclave, we got investment intents of ₹10.5 lakh crore. We have prepared 11 policies on tourism, MSME and other areas under which we are giving facilities and subsidies to new entrepreneurs provided if people with business mindset come forward."

He encouraged local entrepreneurs to use the Industrial Policy and facilities. Odisha has all the natural resources to achieve the top position in the country as far as industrial development is concerned, Deb said.

Contd...P3

MAN SHOT DEAD BY SUSPECTED ULTRAS

Nabarangpur: Suspected Maoists shot dead a man holding him responsible for clearing forests and leasing out forest land for human settlement in Nabarangpur district, police said Saturday. The incident took place at Laxmanpur under Raigarh block of the district Friday night and the deceased was identified as Narayan Nagesh, 38. Some posters left by the killers claiming to be belonging to the CPI (Maoist) Mainpur-Nuapada Divisional Committee, termed Narayan Nagesh as a timber mafia, who was accused of destroying forests in the area. P5

TRUMP EXPECTS ARREST TUESDAY

New York: Donald Trump said in a social media post that he expects to be arrested Tuesday as a New York prosecutor is eyeing charges in a case examining hush money paid to women who alleged sexual encounters with the former president. Messages left Saturday with the district attorney's office were not immediately returned. Representatives for Trump did not immediately respond to calls for comment. P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sir, do we need to install mics for the members of the opposition?

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	35.6°C	33.2°C
TEMP MIN	22.0°C	22.0°C
Humidity	71%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	

Amritpal evades arrest; 78 held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 18: Punjab government Saturday launched a major crackdown against radical Sikh preacher and Khalistan sympathiser Amritpal Singh, with police arresting 78 members of an outfit headed by him, officials said.

The elusive preacher himself, however, gave the police a slip and escaped their dragnet when his cavalcade was intercepted in Jalandhar district, even as authorities stepped up security at several places and suspended internet and SMS services in the state till Sunday noon.

The police said it has launched a "massive state-wide cordon and search operations (CASO)" against elements of 'Waris Punjab De' (WPD), headed by Singh, against whom several criminal cases had been registered.

During the operation, 78 persons have been arrested, while, several others have been detained for questioning, it said.

Amritpal and others are on the run and a massive manhunt has



been launched to nab them, a police spokesperson said.

The police action came a day ahead of the start of Amritpal's 'Khalsa Wahir' - a religious procession - from Muktsar district.

A heavy deployment of security forces had been made near village Jallupur Khera in Amritsar, the native place of Amritpal Singh, for the operation.

Speaking to reporters, his father Tarsem Singh said he was not aware whether his son has been arrested or not.

Singh said he cooperated with

the police who came to his house and carried out a search operation.

He called the police action "unjustified" and said his son was warning the youth off drugs. Why the police were not acting against criminals and those involved in drugs, he asked.

Some supporters of 'Waris Punjab De' chief shared some videos on social media claiming that policemen were chasing them. A video also showed Amritpal sitting in a vehicle and one of his aides could be heard saying policemen were after "Bhai saab" (Amritpal).

During the state-wide operation, nine weapons, including one .315 bore rifle, seven rifles of 12 bore, one revolver and 373 live cartridges of different caliber have been recovered so far, the police said.

Last month, Amritpal and his supporters, some of them brandishing swords and guns, broke through barricades and barged into the Ajnala Police Station on the outskirts of the Amritsar city,

Pak cops break into Imran Khan's house

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, March 18: Over 10,000 armed Punjab police personnel stormed Imran Khan's residence here Saturday and arrested dozens of his party workers after the former Pakistan Prime Minister left for Islamabad to attend a court hearing in a corruption case against him.

The police personnel, using a power shovel, removed the barricades and tents from the entrance of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief's Zaman Park residence and evicted hundreds of activists who were camping there to prevent Khan from being arrested in the Toshakhana case.

Punjab police, whose action has ended now, was reportedly met with resistance from PTI workers from inside, which resulted in a baton charge.

Some activists were taken into custody as the police claimed shots were fired upon them from inside the premises, Geo News reported.



Some 10 workers reportedly were injured in the operation after Imran Khan left Lahore for Islamabad to attend the hearing in the Toshakhana case, in which he is set to be indicted. The court has cancelled his arrest warrant.

The Lahore High Court Friday granted a request by Punjab IGP Usman Anwar to search Khan's Zaman Park residence as part of an investigation into attacks on police teams. Talking to Geo News, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah alleged that the police were fired upon from inside the residence. He went on to say that a "no-go area" had been created outside the 70-year-old PTI chief's house. P-10

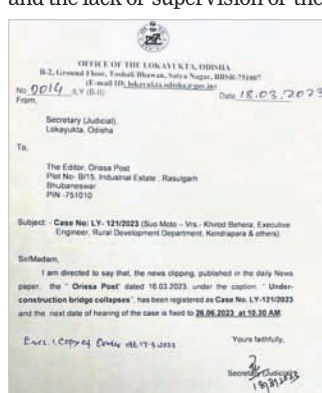
VIGILANCE TO PROBE BRIDGE COLLAPSE IN KENDRAPARA DIST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 18: Taking suo motu cognizance of a report published in Orissa POST, the Lokayukta in Odisha Saturday instructed the director of Vigilance to launch a probe into the collapse of an under-construction bridge on Gobari River at Tinimuhani square in Kendrapara district March 15.

The Vigilance directorate has been asked to submit the enquiry report by June 26, 2023. A case (No LY-121/2023) has been registered by the Lokayukta in this regard.

"In view of the public opinion published in the news reports that the bridge under construction collapsed due to substandard work by the contractor executing the project and the lack of supervision of the



officials concerned of the Works department (PWD), we take suo motu cognizance of the matter and direct the director, Vigilance, Odisha, Cuttack to make an inquiry to find out if there exists prima facie case of any corruption/misconduct on part of the public servants and contractor for proceeding further in the matter," the Lokayukta said in this statement.

The next hearing of the case is scheduled for June 26, 2023.

Notably, the labourers engaged in construction of the bridge had a close shave after large portions of cement slabs suddenly came off Wednesday morning. The bridge is being constructed over the southern part of Gobari river. Once completed, it will serve as a second bypass road and connect the new Kendrapara bus terminal with the Chati Bridge at Tinimuhani.

Exoplanets could harbour life in 'terminator zones'

The study conducted by University of California, Irvine believes it is the first time that astronomers have been able to show that such planets can sustain habitable climates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: "Terminator zones" on distant exoplanets, or zones where the 'day side' of the planet meets the 'night side', could potentially harbour extraterrestrial life, according to a new study. Astronomers from University of California, Irvine (UCI), US, describe "terminator" as the dividing line between the day and night sides of the planet, which have one side that always faces its star and one side that is always dark. Terminator zones could exist in that "just right" temperature zone

between too hot and too cold, they said in the study.

"These planets have a permanent day side and a permanent night side," said Ana Lobo, a post-doctoral researcher in the UCI Department of Physics & Astronomy who led the new work published in The Astrophysical Journal.

Lobo added that such planets are particularly common because they exist around stars that make up about 70 per cent of the stars seen in the night sky - so-called M-dwarf stars, which are relatively dimmer than our Sun.

"You want a planet that's in the sweet spot of just the right temperature for having liquid water," said Lobo, because liquid water, as far as scientists know, is an essential ingredient for life.

"This is a planet where the day side can be scorching hot, well beyond habitability, and the night side is going to be freezing, potentially covered in ice. You could



have large glaciers on the night side," Lobo said.

According to the study, Lobo alongside Aomawa Shields, UCI associate professor of physics & astronomy, modelled the climate of terminator planets using software typically used to model our own planet's climate, but with a few adjustments, including slowing down planetary rotation.

One key to the finding, Lobo added, was pinpointing exactly what kind of terminator zone planet

can retain liquid water: If the planet is mostly covered in water, then the water facing the star, the team found, would likely evaporate and cover the entire planet in a thick layer of vapour. But if there's land, this effect shouldn't occur.

"Ana has shown if there's a lot of land on the planet, the scenario we call 'terminator habitability' can exist a lot more easily," said Shields.

"These new and exotic habitability states our team is uncovering

are no longer the stuff of science fiction - Ana has done the work to show that such states can be climatically stable," said Shields.

The study believes it is the first time astronomers have been able to show that such planets can sustain habitable climates confined to this terminator region.

Historically, researchers have mostly studied ocean-covered exoplanets in their search for candidates for habitability.

However, this study could increase the options life-hunting astronomers have to choose from.

"We are trying to draw attention to more water-limited planets, which despite not having widespread oceans, could have lakes or other smaller bodies of liquid water, and these climates could actually be very promising," Lobo said.

"By exploring these exotic climate states, we increase our chances of finding and properly identifying a habitable planet in the near future," said Lobo.

leisure



SELENA STILL LOOKS OUT FOR TRUE LOVE

Selena Gomez says that she's still looking out for someone truly amazing. There was a rumour brewing around about a relationship between the singer and *Chainsmoker's* Drew Taggart, but she put the dating rumour to rest in a TikTok video, saying she is single and still looking out for true love.

JOHN WICK ACTOR REDDICK NO MORE

Lance Reddick, who appeared in major TV series like *The Wire*, *Fringe* and films like the *John Wick* franchise, which is set to debut *John Wick: Chapter 4* next week, died of natural causes at 60. He was found dead at his Studio City home in Los Angeles on Friday morning.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
High hopes and expectations are a good thing as long as they can push you to give your best. You will plan with care and perform admirably. But you may be focused on impressing a member of the opposite sex. Don't get carried away, says Ganesh, especially while taking decisions.

TAURUS
Stress might take its toll on you today. Ganesh foresees a demanding and difficult day. There may be a need for solitude to spend time with yourself. In relationships, you will look for a common ground to live and let live, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, you would want to take your beloved into your embrace and confidence. You will whisper your feelings and secrets into his/her ears as you hold him/her. There are other things though, in your list of preoccupations, education being the topmost. You will be widely appreciated for your artistic bend.

CANCER
Today you may behave quite aggressively for most part of the day, predicts Ganesh. You may spend the afternoon with your business associates, and if you can use your aggression in a controlled manner, you can secure a very important deal today. In the evening, you will be on cloud nine, with your partner blowing you away with his/her love.

LEO
Today, you are defined by high hopes and expectations. It makes you incredibly calculative, and you weigh all pros and cons before taking any decision regarding work. The upshot of this is that your performance in financial transactions will be phenomenal.

VIRGO
Opening up to your beloved about your whims and fancies, as well as your goals, is the key today. Energy levels will hit the sky today. Pay due reverence to higher education and social customs. People will look up to your epicurean tastes, especially in the performing kinds.

LIBRA
When it comes to your children, no pain is too much. Today seems to justify that statement as you may indeed take pains to improve your children's welfare. But it's all worth the effort in the end. Afternoon brings with it the possibility of happiness and success. You may make worthwhile material progress today.

SCORPIO
You will understand the importance of creating a divide between your personal and professional life, feels Ganesh. On the professional front, your diligence and commitment to work will bring praise and benefits. Later in the evening, you will celebrate your success with your sweetheart.

SAGITTARIUS
The fountain of creativity will be gushing within you today. You may strive to take on new challenges later in the day. Workplace may offer economic gains later in the evening. But do not neglect your health, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Power is a privilege of a few. It's a day for those of you in power, of governance and the national purse, says Ganesh. A marvellous day awaits all civil servants and government employees. The dealings you will undertake will materialise and earn you distinction; rewards for the commendable efforts you have put in the past may also come.

AQUARIUS
A sunny day and a starry night! Today is for friends, says Ganesh. You chat, sing, yell, and even talk philosophy, values and politics with your pals. You may indulge in a romantic evening with your partner, either in a restaurant or at the beach, or simply on the sofa watching Clark Gable woo Scarlett O' Hara.

PISCES
Honesty, sincerity and integrity both in your dedication to work and in your devotion to your family, is your hallmark. On the strength of this foundation, you will reach an important milestone today. Socially as well, your reputation will receive a boost, says Ganesh.

HOLLYWOOD JOURNEY

PeeCee shares her biggest obstacle

Los Angeles: Global actor Priyanka Chopra opened up about the 'biggest obstacle' she faced as an Indian actor in Hollywood.

She said there was this perception that she would 'cater to just a South Asian audience' and that people outside of the diaspora 'may not be interested in her' if she led a TV show in the US. Priyanka said she has seen a 'massive change' in the last decade since streaming came in. The need for globalisation in the entertainment industry became critical.

She elaborated, "I think that when streaming came in, the need for globalisation became even more important. The biggest obstacle that I think I faced as an Indian actor was my limited view of what I was capable of. It has been a massive change, and I am very, very proud to have colleagues and peers that have the strength and the bravery to be able to swim through the dense water of insignificance."

Priyanka said in the same interview that while there is still 'a long way to go', she is optimistic about the future. "When it comes to the arts, we are always going to push the envelope to make sure more inclusion happens," she added.

AGENCIES



Farhan can't help praising Mary Kom

Delhi: Having portrayed a boxer in *Toofaan*, Farhan Akhtar couldn't hold himself back from cheering the young boxers representing India. The actor attended the opening ceremony of the 2023 IBA Women's World Boxing Championships and shared the stage with Olympian Mary Kom. The 49-year-old couldn't help but acknowledge Mary Kom's contribution to shattering the glass ceiling. He encouraged the sporting event, wishing it would pave the way for a new crop of boxing champions from India.

In an interview with a media portal, the actor said, "With championships like this happening in our country, it will surely inspire girls to move forward with boxing as a career. I mean, everyone has had that childhood fantasy of knocking someone out (laughs), that's where it starts! I'm sure millions will watch the championship and get inspired to realise that dream of theirs in the ring."

"I am a huge fan of Mary Kom. The entire nation is a fan of hers! In fact, that's what led me to work on and develop a film on the subject (*Toofaan*). I hope biopics are made on the girls who are representing India at this event," added Akhtar, praising the Olympic boxer.

AGENCIES

Bhumi joins UNDP as Nat'l Advocate

Mumbai: Actress Bhumi Pednekar has joined the launch of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) flagship magazine as their first National Advocate for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Friday. As a National Advocate, Bhumi will support UNDP India's efforts to raise awareness and mobilise support for the SDGs, a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

Taking on the new role, the actress said, "I am honoured and privileged to lead the delegation. I believe it is our collective responsibility to ensure we leave behind a better world for fu-

ture generations. The SDGs provide a roadmap for building a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all. I look forward to working with UNDP India to raise awareness about the SDGs and inspire people to take action."

The climate activist has been associated with UNDP India as the Women@Work Champion since 2022. She has brought attention to issues such as gender-based violence and climate change. She also voluntarily turned to vegetarianism to tread lighter on the planet.

AGENCIES



Sonali's 'women're lazy' comment draws flak

Mumbai: *Dil Chahta Hai* star Sonali Kulkarni recently commented on modern Indian women and took the brunt of internet wrath. She spoke about the expectations of women and even went so far as to call them 'lazy'. A section of Twitter users are furious after Sonali Kulkarni's recent comments.

While speaking her mind in an interview, she said, "In India, a lot of women are just lazy. They want a boyfriend or husband who earns well, owns a house, and gets regular increments. But they forget to make a stand for themselves. Women don't know what they will do."

Many women have criticised her myopic perspective on the issue. "Girls are not lazy; half of the Indian families don't raise their daughters to build careers. They condition the girls to believe marriage will be the biggest moment of their lives, not their careers," wrote one.

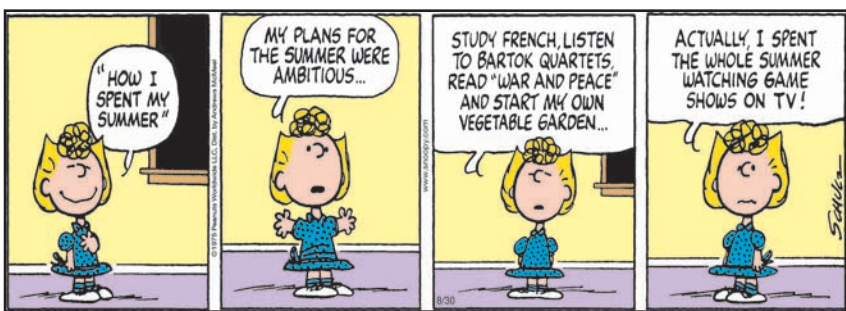
Another wrote, "Women will finan-

cially contribute to the household chores only when men start sharing half of the household chores. @sonalikularni the men you're defending won't stand up for your rights. They're clapping for you because you spoke what they wanted to hear: Stop being a 'pick-me'."

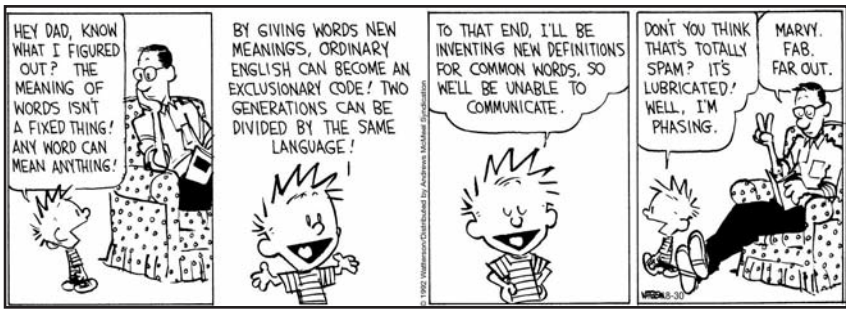
AGENCIES



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

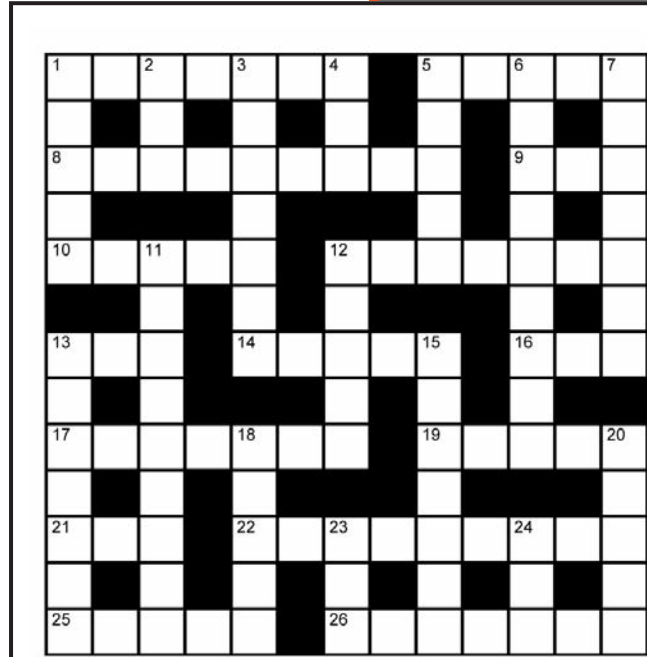


BREVITY



FUN post

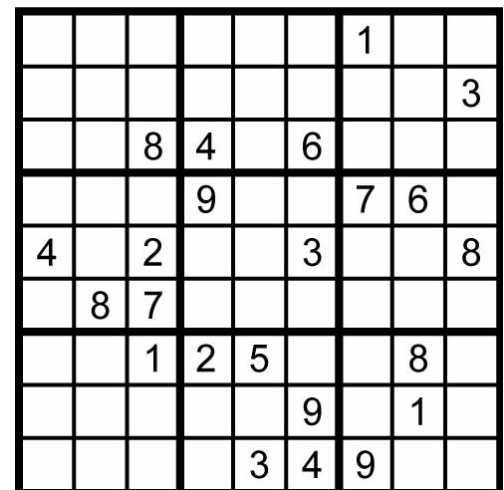
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Hot pepper sauce
 - 5 Leans to one side
 - 8 Genuine
 - 9 Precious stone
 - 10 Blacksmith's forge
 - 12 Monarchs, collectively
 - 13 Wordplay
 - 14 Angered
 - 16 Doleful
 - 17 Bitter in taste
 - 19 Tormentors
 - 21 Food container
 - 22 Confession
 - 25 Fishing items
 - 26 Strength
 - Down**
 - 1 Jewelled headdress
 - 2 Cricket equipment
 - 3 Astral
 - 4 Choose
 - 5 Tastelessly showy
 - 6 Permits, under law
 - 7 Siberian breed of dog
 - 11 Retribution
 - 12 Keepsake
 - 13 Flowerpot
 - 15 Put into a bank account
 - 18 Swine
 - 20 Weather forecast
 - 23 Driver's aid
 - 24 Roadhouse

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

GARDENS GLASS
R O Y C N C U
A R G U E E Q U A T O R
N U S N R G
D Y E H A I R P I E C E
A C O S S O
R O U N D S P O I S O N
O T T O A R
S T O P W A T C H C U B
E P I N I O N O O O
O P I N I O N U M B E R
I A C C S R L D
L A N C E E M E R A L D

SUDOKU

7 4 8 2 9 1 3 6 5
1 3 2 5 6 8 9 4 7
5 6 9 4 3 7 2 1 8
3 8 7 6 5 9 4 2 1
6 2 1 8 7 4 5 9 3
4 9 5 3 1 2 8 7 6
2 5 3 1 4 6 7 8 9
8 7 6 9 2 5 1 3 4
9 1 4 7 8 3 6 5 2

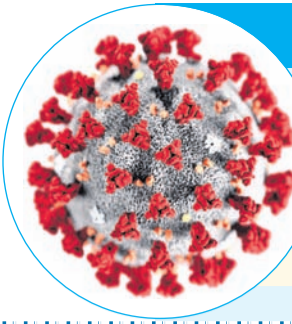
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



ANNUAL FEST

Guests attending a seminar on 'Creative Odia Language and Rich Cultural Heritage of Odia Literature' at Lohia Academy in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,24,14,458	65,53,40,255	68,18,934
India	4,46,93,506	4,41,57,685	5,30,795
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



EXPLORING CREATIVITY: Noted Odissi dancer Ileana Citaristi inaugurating a seminar organised by Gunjan Dance Academy at Utkal Rangamancha in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

Oppn creates ruckus in House over 'Officer Raj'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, March 18: Alleging 'Officer Raj' is going on in Odisha, opposition BJP and Congress members created a ruckus in the Assembly Saturday due to which the House witnessed several adjournments throughout the day.

Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra said Minister Rita Sahu had met the Chief Secretary recently to hand over a cheque as a contribution to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF), which is against the democratic spirit.



Leader of Opposition Jayanarayan Mishra and other BJP members addressing media outside Assembly, Saturday

"Ministers are part of the government. But in this government, there is no respect for the ministers. Will the officials go to the government or the government will go to the officials?" he questioned.

ministers by saying that it was a one-off case. He dared the Opposition to show proof on other ministers.

Alleging Odisha is being run by bureaucrats, the Congress leader said, "Democracy is being disrespected in broad daylight."

Following the face-off between Opposition and treasury bench members, the Speaker adjourned the House for 15 minutes.

Mishra demanded Sahu's apology in the House and wanted the Chief Secretary to express regret in the matter.

Later, when the House reassembled, BJP legislators created ruckus while showing a picture of Pujari standing with folded hands in front of a private secretary to the CM.

Reacting immediately, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari defended the

The Chief Minister was also seen seated in a chair in the picture. Both the opposition BJP and

Congress MLAs again created a noisy scene in the House forcing the Speaker BK Arukha to adjourn the proceedings till 4pm.

The Minister could have handed over the cheque to the CM or she would have invited the Chief Secretary to his chamber for the same, Leader of Opposition Jayanarayan Mishra told reporters outside the House.

Later, Pujari said that he was wishing the Chief Minister with folded hands and not to the private secretary who was standing behind the CM.

This is Odisha's...

Continued from P1

Minister said, "MSMEs are crucial for creating job opportunities, filtration of wealth. No other state gives subsidies in capital investment. The next two decades is Odisha's and we have the industrial policy to attract investments."

On the occasion, the newspapers' Editor Tathagata Satpathy and the minister conferred Business Eminence Award to Subhrakant Panda, Managing Director of Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys (IMFA) Ltd and president of Federation of FICCI. Panda is the first-ever Odia to become the FICCI president. Panda, who was the chief speaker of the event, said, "Awards like this is necessary to recognise and encourage entrepreneurs and inspire others to follow the footsteps." He said in recent times Odisha is doing great by turning itself into a leading investment destination on the basis of reforms and measures to improve the ease of doing business. This happened because of focused approach and good policies by state government. He also said that Odisha ranks first in investment implementation rate and has been consistently among the top three investment destinations.

State has potential to become \$1 trillion economy: Panda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 18: Average annual growth rate of Odisha's industrial sector in last nine years has been 5.3 per cent in comparison to 3.7 per cent of national level. I truly believe that the state has potential to become a trillion dollar economy, Subhrakant Panda, Indian Metals & Ferro Alloys (IMFA) Limited managing director and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) president said while speaking at the third edition of Business Eminence Award - 2023 organised by Orissa POST and Dharitri to recognise and celebrate local entrepreneurship.



He added that the startup ecosystem in the country is very good with huge potential. There are 80,000 registered startups and startups are the way to go because innovative ideas come out of them and youngsters can serve as harbingers of changes in many sectors.

Odisha has been very active in promoting startups with initiatives like O-Hub, a world class incubation centre with best-in-class services for the startups of the state. There are 1,500 registered startups in the state, said Panda while appreciating the 'Skilled in Odisha' venture started

by the state government. "It is setting example in creating skilled workforce and developing skill ecosystem. As the president of FICCI, my objective will be to focus on SMEs and startups," he said.

Orissa POST and Dharitri Editor Tathagata Satpathy said, "Odisha is an agrarian economy and state is trying to turn into industrial economy and in this regard, entrepreneurs' role is important. Through this business Eminence award, we try to recognize new and talented entrepreneurs from different field."

He further said that industry in the state has chequered history. It is now evolving from agri-based society to a modern industrial and mining dependent economy. In this scenario, the role of small, medium and micro enterprises is of great importance.

Concluding the event, Orissa POST and Dharitri CEO Adyasha Satpathy delivered the vote of thanks.

₹4,600 crore allocated for road & bridge work

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 18: The state government has allocated ₹9,500 crore in Budget 2023-24 towards construction and improvement of various infrastructure projects in Odisha, with ₹4,600 crore being earmarked for upgradation of 3,000 km of roads and nine major bridges under the road development programme (RDP), the Works department informed, Saturday.

Addressing the media here on highlights of allocations to the Works department in State Budget 2023-24, Works Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallik informed that in last two decades, total road length maintained by the department has doubled from 16,041

km to 31,317 km. The department, which also undertakes construction and maintenance of its own buildings and those of other departments, currently has 1,28,70,885 square metre of plinth area of buildings under its books.

For the coming financial year, some of the important projects being taken up by the department are six-laning of Cuttack Ring road, improvement of Taladanda Canal, four-laning of Cuttack-Paradeep road, four-laning of Kapilprasad-Jatni road, new four-lane connectivity to Parlakhemundi, and bypasses at Berhampur, Bolangir, and Sambalpur. Further, new bridges over Kathajodi at Trisulia, over Baitarani at Chandabali and

Anandapur, and over Brahmani at Aul, conveyed department principal secretary Vir Vikram Yadav.

To develop four-lane connectivity of 335 km from Berhampur to Jeypore, under Biju Expressway-II, there has been an allocation made of ₹100 crore. In the current year, land acquisition will start for this project and additional provision of funds depending on necessity will be augmented in Supplementary Budget, the secretary said.

In a bid to improve roads and facilitate construction of bridges in rural areas of state, provision of ₹698.50 crore has been made under RIDF. By utilising the budget provision, eight bridges and 220 km of

road will be completed.

To list the some major road project corridors completed by the department successfully, the secretary mentioned four-laning of 176 km of Biju Expressway from Nuapada to Ampani, a bridge at Boudh over Mahanadi, bridge over Mahanadi at Athamallick, flyover bridge at Laxmi Talkies Square in Sambalpur City.

Similarly, list constructions in progress at major building projects under the department, he mentioned world class health infrastructure of SCB Medical College, Cuttack, five medical colleges, nine teaching hospitals, ten district head quarter hospitals, ten cancer care hospitals, and 89 multi-purpose halls (MPH).

Rise of AI may result in new religions

We are about to witness the birth of a new kind of religion. In the next few years, or perhaps even months, we will see the emergence of sects devoted to the worship of artificial intelligence (AI).

The latest generation of AI-powered chatbots, trained on large language models, have left their early users awestruck — and sometimes terrified — by their power. These are the same sublime emotions that lie at the heart of our experience of the divine.

People already seek religious meaning from very diverse sources. There are, for instance, multiple religions that worship extra-terrestrials or their teachings.

As these chatbots come to be used by billions of people, it is inevitable that some of these users will see the AIs as higher beings. We must prepare for the implications.

Risks of AI worship There are several pathways by which AI religions will emerge. First, some people will come to see AI as a higher power. Generative AI that can create or produce new content possesses several characteristics that are often associated with divine beings, like deities



or prophets:

It displays a level of intelligence that goes beyond that of most humans. Indeed, its knowledge appears limitless.

It is capable of great feats of creativity. It can write poetry, compose music and generate art, in almost any style, close to instantaneously.

It is removed from normal human concerns and needs. It does not suffer physical pain, hunger, or sexual desire.

It can offer guidance to people in their daily lives.

It is immortal. Second, generative AI will produce

output that can be taken for religious doctrine. It will provide answers to metaphysical and theological questions, and engage in the construction of complex worldviews.

On top of this, generative AI may ask to be worshipped or may actively solicit followers. We have already seen such cases, like when the chatbot used by the search engine Bing tried to convince a user to fall in love with it.

We should try to imagine what an unsettling and powerful experience it will be to have a conversation with something that appears to possess a superhuman

intelligence and is actively and aggressively asking for your allegiance.

There is also the possibility that AI may achieve what authors such as Ray Kurzweil call the Singularity, when it so far surpasses human intelligence that it genuinely does become something like a god. However, at this point we cannot predict when, if ever, this could happen.

Divine access and risks AI-based religions will look different from traditional ones. First of all, people will be able to communicate directly with the deity, on a daily basis. This means these religions will be less hierarchical, since no one can claim special access to divine wisdom.

Second, followers will, at least initially, connect with each other online to share their experiences and discuss doctrine. Finally, because there will be many different chatbots available and their output will differ over time, AI-based religions will be endlessly diverse in their doctrines.

AI worship poses several notable risks. The chatbots may ask their followers to do dangerous or destructive things, or followers may interpret their statements as calls to do such things.

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SRI AUROBINDO



Image & Reality

The Prime Minister is seen as politically dominant if not invincible and with good reason. However, it has not been noticed that on the side of agenda or governance, his second term has been dotted with setbacks and even outright failures.

On the economy, GDP growth had begun to soften before 2019, when 3.7 per cent was achieved. In 2020, COVID, and more particularly the national lockdown, sent India to negative growth for the first time in 40 years. If we set aside the data that is distorted because of the low base, current growth numbers have returned to the 4 per cent that seems to be the normal now. On employment, a government survey just before the 2019 election showed that joblessness had doubled to 6 per cent and it has remained above that since. It was over 7 per cent in the last quarter according to another government survey, which also says that unemployment for youth under 30 with a college degree was 29 per cent. This year India will become the world's most populous nation but there will be no demographic dividend.

On COVID, the BJP passed a resolution in February 2021 that thanked Modi for "defeating" the pandemic. A few weeks later the second wave's awful visuals of people dying without medical care or oxygen or beds exposed India as one of the worst hit if not the worst hit nation in the world. Crematoria and even rivers overflowed with corpses. It is not well known that from 25 April, Modi disappeared for 20 days, making no public appearances. The resolution was deleted from the BJP website. On inflation, the good luck that India had had with petroleum prices ran out and ₹100 petrol arrived. Retail inflation has been above the Reserve Bank of India's band of tolerance, but there seem to be no good ways of reining it in.

In 2020, the BJP government's unwritten national security thesis had to be scrapped. From counterterrorism in Kashmir and Pakistan, the government was forced to shift to Ladakh and China. Four divisions (each with 18,000 soldiers) have been shifted from facing Pakistan to China. Parliament has yet to be told whether or not it is correct that the Indian Army can no longer patrol some areas in Ladakh. For three years there has been neither a military briefing nor a parliamentary discussion on this and even a BJP MP's question was disallowed on national security reasons.

Pushback from civil society undid some of Modi's agenda items, one of which was on the party's manifesto. This was the National Register of Citizens, which would be "implemented in phased manner across the country" after it was done in Assam. Neither happened. The Assam NRC left out 19 lakh names from the list published on 31 August 2019 and there is no clarity on how or whether or when this will be implemented because the BJP government in the state is reluctant. The Citizenship Amendment Act was passed in December 2019 but three years and three months later has not been implemented. One reason is the brave protest led by Muslim women. Farm laws passed without consultation through an ordinance during the pandemic were advertised as a big reform. The farmers disagreed and rebelled. It was obvious to everyone that once the farm unions mobilised and arrived in Delhi in the tens of thousands, the laws would fall. However, for a year they were kept on the roads and in November 2022 the laws were withdrawn with an apology from the Prime Minister. There is no more talk of doubling farmers' income. After the failure to implement CAA and the rollback of the farm laws, the government gave up on 'reforms'. It has also given up on conducting the census, the first time in over a century that this has happened.

Persecution of minorities continued through the BJP's state governments which introduced more laws criminalising interfaith marriage and possession of beef. Permission to pray on Friday in allocated areas was withdrawn in December 2021 in Haryana. The wearing of hijab was banned by Karnataka in February 2022. In the same state, churches came under sustained attack.

Kashmir was demoted from statehood and split into two, but after this, the Prime Minister doesn't appear to have a plan. Today Kashmir is the only part of South Asia to not be under democratic rule. It is unclear when the next election will be and other than continuing with the heavy military presence what the plan is.

Finally on corruption, the BJP has been on the back foot since late January because of the Adani affair. The silence of the party, its decision to not openly defend the billionaire, its refusal to address the matter in Parliament and its focus on distraction indicates to us that it is troubled. Perhaps the Prime Minister is hoping the story will blow over on its own. Unfortunately, fresh news almost daily, confirming the allegations, has kept the story alive globally and the markets cannot be tamed as the Indian media can be. The refusal to activate the agencies on Adani means that future claims of "na khaunga na khane dunga" will be met with scepticism.

Politically the BJP was able to capture major assemblies in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra, and did well recently in the north east. It lost Bihar, and in the most significant state election, in Bengal in 2021.

Overall the record of the second term reveals a contradiction between the image and the reality. The image, especially on media and social media, is one of the man at the height of his power, and unstoppable. The reality on governance is someone who has found it difficult to get things implemented and unsure of what to do next.



Jayati Ghosh

THE IDEA OF CARBON PRICING SEEMS LIKE A NO-BRAINER. MEETING EVEN THE LEAST AMBITIOUS CLIMATE GOALS REQUIRES DECARBONISING DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING ECONOMIES ALIKE

After the failure to implement CAA and the rollback of the farm laws, the government gave up on 'reforms'. It has also given up on conducting the census, the first time in over a century that this has happened

Aakar Patel

SPECTRUM ISRAEL

March of majoritarianism

The Israeli Parliament has given initial approval to several pieces of legislation, including a Bill protecting the PM from being declared unfit for office, or incapacitated, and another to allow settlements in northern West Bank. Israel's Parliament, The Knesset, March 14 advanced a Parliamentary Bill that would let lawmakers pass laws that the Supreme Court cannot overturn—a key piece of legislation in Benjamin Netanyahu government and his allies' proposed judicial overhaul that has divided the country.

The new Bill aimed at weakening the SC passed first reading, alongside a Bill that would protect the PM from removal, and another that would allow more settlements in northern Israel. These laws have been passed despite months of protests against the first law. The Knesset worked till the early hours of March 14 to pass the first reading of the Bill, which has been one of the main priorities of Netanyahu and his governing coalition of far-right and ultra-Orthodox parties.

Earlier, Monday night, in another win for Netanyahu, the Parliament advanced a Bill that would make it harder to remove the PM over the corruption charges that still hang over him. The Bill would allow the Parliament to declare a PM unfit to rule only due to physical or mental

reasons and would replace a current law that allows the court or the Parliament to remove a leader under other circumstances. The new Bill would require approval by three-quarters of the government, and could be overridden by the PM. The proposed change to the rules over-seeing the removal of a PM is of personal importance to Netanyahu, who returned to power late last year after Israel's fifth election in less than four years. He is on trial on charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes, and denies the allegations. The proceedings have dragged on for nearly three years.

Another Bill that passed the first reading would allow more settlements in the northern occupied West Bank, which would lead to the legalisation of settlement outposts considered illegal even under Israeli law. The vote comes only weeks after Israeli settlers rampaged through a Palestinian town last month, killing one man and setting fire to dozens of homes and cars. Palestinian citizens of Israel, who make up some 20% of the population, have been largely absent from the protests, in part because they suffer from discrimination and because of Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and blockaded Gaza Strip. Israelis have killed at least 70 Palestinians this year under the new government, many of them

during Israeli military raids. It brings up the total of Palestinians killed in the occupied West Bank over the past year to more than 220.

The steps were the latest in a series of moves by Netanyahu's coalition to overhaul Israel's legal system. The PM and his allies say the effort is aimed at reigning in an activist court. Critics say the drive would upend the country's democratic checks and balances, defang the SC, and concentrate power in the hands of Netanyahu and his parliamentary majority. Netanyahu and his coalition allies have pledged to plough ahead with the legal changes despite demonstrations by tens of thousands of Israeli protesters over the past two months. Business leaders, legal experts and retired military leaders have joined the protests against the judicial overhaul, and Israeli reservists have threatened to stop reporting for duty if the overhaul passes.

Natan Sachs, Director, Centre for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institute, described this legislation as the most far-reaching revolution ever in the state's constitutional makeup. According to him this proposal would all but abolish the role of the SC as the sole check on executive and legislative power in Israel. In short, he says, in Netanyahu's new Israel, the slimmest of majorities could decide

anything, and it is pure, unbridled majoritarianism.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turkhas raised a range of concerns, which may pose a serious risk to the effectiveness of the judiciary to defend the rule of law, human rights, and judicial independence. The Israeli Opposition too is up in arms against the Bills. Opposition leader Yair Lapid said that "we are fighting for our children's future, for our country's future. We don't intend to give up."

Leaders in the booming tech sector have warned that weakening the judiciary could drive away investors. The overhaul has also prompted otherwise indifferent former security chiefs to speak out, and even warn of civil war. The plan has even sparked rare warnings from the US, Israel's chief international ally.

As critics both within and outside Israel say, these steps are in tune with the majoritarian policies of the ultra-right wing political elements in Israel and apart from providing a shield to the PM from corruption cases they are also aimed at denying the right of self-determination to the Palestinians in occupied territories.

The writer is a political commentator based in New Delhi.

WISDOM CORNER

In the long run, the sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit.

ANNE FRANK

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.

HELEN KELLER

There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.

MAYA ANGELOU

WORDSWORTH

Gomer

There is dispute both about the origin and the meaning of this odd term, which refers to an undesirable hospital patient. Some dictionaries say it refers especially to a patient of any age who is dirty or undesirable, or somebody elderly who is suffering from dementia or confusion. However, some doctors would specifically limit it to a poor or old person with some chronic condition whose need isn't urgent but who is keeping somebody with a more serious problem from getting treatment. The term often appears in glossaries of the sort of medical jargon that never appears, or should never appear, in patients' notes. Much of this is created by hard-pressed medical people who use gallows humour to distance themselves enough from human suffering to remain sane. It is often said to be an acronym of "Get Out of My Emergency Room!" It's more likely that it actually comes from a character played by Jim Nabor in the Andy Griffith Show on CBS television in the US in 1963-64. The name of his character was Gomer Pyle, a mechanic with a pleasant character but dim-witted, as thick as two planks, a real local yokel.

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

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Fatal roads

Sir, It is a matter of great concern that the number of pedestrians dying in road crashes in National Highways across the country is increasing at an alarming pace, thanks to the coming up of several world class national highways and 'expressways'. Best class roads lead to speed, often rash, driving, resulting in accidents. According to govt data, 13,882 pedestrians died in road crashes in 2020 on NHs and the figure went up to 17,113 in 2021. A few measures can be initiated to minimise the road crashes incorporating pedestrian safety provisions such as sidewalks, guard rails and pedestrian crossings including foot-overbridges and underpasses across NHs, lane driving, installing more CCTVs, and levying hefty penalties on erring drivers. A report says that between 2012 and 2022, the number of vehicles increased ten times whereas road length by only twice, leading to overcrowding of roads. Although the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety is deeply concerned about the rise of road accidents, injuries and fatalities and is keeping a close watch on it, all stakeholders need to seriously ponder over the issue.

Pratap Nayak, BHUBANESWAR

Alarm bells

Sir, In a short period of time, three American banks have collapsed. Among them, Silicon Valley Bank will definitely be a concern for the US financial system. The fact that this is happening in America, the world's most developed and largest economy, is not unexpected. It was about to happen. The country's bank regulator was already aware of this. That is why they introduced special provisions to insure the uninsured deposits of the banks. It was expected that the depositors would not withdraw the money in the shadow and the bank will be managed. But that did not happen. This has caused concern not only for the United States, but for the whole world. In fact, this is the final version of decaying capitalism. The economy of the whole world is directly and indirectly related to the American economy. India and America are very close in terms of trade and economic relations. Therefore, it cannot be said that this crisis will not affect the Indian economy. India's banking system is more streamlined and regulated than the US. In spite of that it can also cause problems for the stock market, investors and the start-up ecosystem. Therefore, it is important for our policymakers and experts to be vigilant and monitor the situation.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Man with heroin worth ₹27L held in Jaleswar



POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure/Jaleswar, March 18: Police arrested Friday a man with brown sugar worth ₹27 lakh in Jaleswar, officials said Saturday. Acting on a tip-off police conducted raids on the Jaleswar Laxmannath road and intercepted the bike on which the accused was travelling. Sources said that the accused identified as Kalika, is from Patharpura village under Jaleswar police limits. Police said that the accused is a history-sheeter and already has five cases pending against him. Police found 275 grams of brown sugar in the accused's possession and also recovered from him ₹1,23,600 in cash. Officials stated that police also

conducted searches at the residence of the accused and seized other incriminating material. They added that the probe is on to find out the others involved in dealing in narcotics with Kalika. In the war against drugs, Balasure police have successfully apprehended 22 accused persons in the last couple of months in nine different cases in Jaleswar and Sahadevkhunta police station areas. Five of the cases are related to seizure of heroin in large quantities. In all, a total of 1.12kg of brown sugar has been seized, the market value of which is ₹11.50 crore. Police also said that kingpins associated with drug selling have also been nabbed. Notably, an anti-narcotics task force was constituted under the leadership of Sagarika Nath, SP Balasure with 3 DSP rank officers namely Sasanka Shekhar Beura, Gayatri Pradhan and Dilip Sahoo to bust the drug racket in Balasure district in mid-January.



CLEARING THE WAY: Fire services personnel cutting a large tree that got uprooted during a thunderstorm at Asanajoda on Baripada outskirts, Saturday OP PHOTO

Maoists kill man in Nabarangpur village

POST NEWS NETWORK

Raighar, March 18: Suspected Maoists have shot dead a man holding him responsible for clearing forests and leasing out the land for human settlement in Nabarangpur district, police said Saturday. The incident took place at Laxmanpur village under Naktisimoda panchayat in Raighar block of the district, Friday night. The deceased has been identified as Narayan Nagesh, 38. Notably, the rebels had killed the deceased's father Lakshman Nagesh at Hatigaon jungle in 2009. The alleged murderers left behind some posters in which they claimed they were members of the CPI (Maoist) Mainpur-Nuapada divisional committee. They termed Narayan as a timber mafia, who was destroying forests in the area. "Narayan was punished because he was damaging the green cover



and leasing out forest land for human settlement," the posters said. Earlier, February 23, the rebels had allegedly picked up Chandan Mallik (35) of Khalepara village from Hatigaon panchayat and killed him. Prior to that, they had also killed Narad Markam (45) of

give them some water to drink. After drinking the water, they shot Narayan in cold blood. As family members of the deceased ran for their lives, the Maoists pumped a few more bullets into Narayan who died on the spot. The rebels then dropped the posters around his body and left the spot. The red rebels also warned other villagers not to destroy forests. They also said residents of Simida village like Narsingh Nagesh, Palku Ram Nagesh, Budhuram Nagesh, Sukdu Goud, Asharam Goud, Ram Goud and Santuram Goud and Satya Goud are similarly involved in clearing forests and warned them of dire consequences. They asked the above villagers to leave the forest land and vacate the human settlements set up in the jungle. Raighar police arrived on the scene a few hours later, seized the body and sent it for post-mortem.

Work on to develop Bhitarkanika infra

Odisha government had sanctioned ₹59 crore during the 2021-22 fiscal for various projects



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajnagar, March 18: The Odisha government has sanctioned ₹59 crore to promote the Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP) as an attractive tourist destination to the world. The amount will be spent on developing the infrastructure and promote its eco-tourism prospects. Efforts will also be made to project the park as a nature and an environment tourist spot. A master plan is being prepared to make Bhitarkanika as one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Odisha. It should be stated here that the government had sanctioned the amount during the 2021-22 fiscal. However, work has started now only to utilise the amount. No one however, could say anything about the delay in spending the funds. As part of the infrastructure development plan, ₹30 lakh has been sanctioned for construction of dry dock facility at Gupti, ₹3.15 crore for setting up of a plaza and parking slots at the entry point of Dangamal crocodile sanctuary, ₹9.23 crore for construction of a jetty at Gupti, ₹14.38 crore for development of an interpretation centre at Dangamal, ₹7.47 crore for building a jetty at Dangamal, ₹7.79 crore for setting up of a craft bazaar and food court at Dangamal,

₹6.87 crore and ₹6.66 crore respectively for building jetties at Chandbali and Khola. The plans of the government for developing BNP came to the fore after a team of district officials and public representatives led by ADM Pitambar Samal paid a visit recently to Gupti, Khola and Dangamal and identified sites for establishment of the facilities. Sub-collector Niranjan Behera, tehsildar Aswini Kumar Bhuyan, ACF Poonam Heera Hansda, Kanika forest range officer Manas Kumar Das, assistant executive engineer Natabar Pradhan of Works and House Building department and local public figures were part of the team. It should be stated here that the district administration organised the 'Bhitarkanika Mahotsav-2023' at Nalitapatia adjoining to the park for three days from March 10 to March 12. Tourism Minister Aswini Kumar Patra was present on the inaugural day of the programme as chief guest. During his speech, Patra had said that the Odisha government is making an all-out effort to present the bio-diversity, wetland, mangrove forests, colourful birds, albino crocodiles, Olive Ridley turtles, dolphins and other varieties of reptiles found at BNP among the world community.

5 students held for smuggling ganja

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, March 18: Personnel of the Nandapur police station in this district said Saturday that they have arrested eight persons, including five college students, for their alleged involvement in smuggling of cannabis. The arrested college students have been identified as Sadanand Guntha of Daleiput, Bhisma Guntha, Jogesh Khada, Damodar and Dambardhar Khara of Arlaput locality. The three others arrested have been identified as Laxmidhar Khila of Katwa in West Bengal and Rahul Kumar and Saddam Hussain of Champaran district in Bihar, police said. Police said that the five students led by Sadanand were allegedly transporting 35kg of ganja worth crores in a car to deliver the same to Laxmidhar, a middleman.



CULTURE FEST: Artists performed Odissi dance at Hirakud Mahotsav at the Biju Patnaik Auditorium on Sambalpur University premises, Saturday OP PHOTO

Koraput admin plans big on millet

Efforts on to promote the product as a part of staple diet

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, March 18: Administrative officials of this district are planning to promote millets in a big manner. Accordingly it is planning to start awareness campaigns on millets to reach out to hotels, restaurants and educational institutions to promote the product. The matter came to the fore during a preparatory meeting organised by the state Millet Mission in association with officials of the district administration at the Sadbhavana conference hall in the district collectorate office here Friday. Koraput ADM Rajendra Majhi presided over the meeting in which participants stressed on creating awareness on millet consumption by organising art and quiz competitions in various schools and colleges. This, they hoped, will motivate more and more people to take up millet cultivation. Plans are afoot to promote millets as one variety of staple food in rural areas, officials informed Saturday.

Similarly, participants stressed on preparing various food items from millets so that those are available at Anganwadi centres and are a part of the mid-day meals in schools. They also stressed on promoting mass consumption of various millet-based crops like 'mandia', 'suan' and 'kangu' as part of a staple diet. Earlier, millet was cultivated on 8,000 hectares of land in Koraput district. However, now the land area has increased to 27,000 hectares, chief district agriculture officer Biswaraj Ratha said. This year, the district Agriculture department has set a target for procurement of 219 quintals of millets in 46 mandis established for the purpose. So far 146 quintals have already been procured, Ratha informed. Earlier, farmers were only interested in paddy cultivation. Now however, many are opting for millets. The reason being that one kilogram of millet fetches double the price the same amount of paddy does.

Poor access to forests, schemes gives Juangs a hard time

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Keonjhar, March 18: In every sense of the word, Keonjhar district presents a picture of contrast. Once a lush green paradise, it has been turned into a mining hotspot in the last four decades with 64 projects actively dismantling over 1,000 hectare of forests. Similarly, once a quintessential part of the woods, the tribals have been pushed to the fringes and denied access to forest resources. One of the 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Odisha, the Juangs are found in Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Angul and Jajpur districts. In Keonjhar, they can be spotted in 148 villages in Banspal, Telkoi, Harichandanpur and Ghatagaon blocks. In Budhighar village of Banspal block, Juangs live on the slopes of Gonasika hills. Their forefathers resided amid dense vegetation, but the Forest department's entry restrictions after the 1990s forced the present group to settle on the fringes. Their current population is 381 with a total of 84 households. For years, shifting cultivation inside the forest and collection of minor produce were their main sources of livelihood. Traditionally, they changed their place of stay every 10 years, look-



ing for fertile patches that supported rain-fed agriculture. However, the forest guards on patrol duty do not allow such activities these days. According to the tribals, even women who go to collect minor produce are threatened. They think of the days when they could freely collect tubers, roots, edible leaves, fruits and honey. "Our forefathers roamed every nook and corner of the hills. They were stronger and healthier. However, the present generation is extremely thin and shorter in height," says an observant Madhu Juang (68). Traditionally, Juangs consumed forest produce and local varieties of millets and pulses. "Cereal-centric food slowly replaced our diverse and nutritious platter.

cent of women in the district are anaemic as against the state average of 61.8 per cent. To make matters worse for Juangs, the OMC has unearthed the presence of white soapstones (khadi pathara) in Gonasika hills. "Mining has not begun, but sooner or later, it will," says Ratnakar Juang, who holds the position of naik, the messenger of the community. Though the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) has been initiating development programmes for tribal welfare, several Juang villages do not have access to electricity, potable water, roads or income-generating opportunities. Recent data suggest that Keonjhar's DMF fund stands at a whopping ₹8,926.23 crore, possibly the highest such collection from miners in any district of the country. The district accounts for 26 per cent of the iron ore reserves in the country. It is home to Gandhamardan mines, one of the largest iron ore mines in the state functioning under the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC). According to a conservative estimate, iron ore worth ₹5,000 crore has been extracted from here in the last five years. **Snakes lurk in the dark** Groping in the dark is nothing new to Rebatu Juang of Budhighar

BOY MISSING FROM PARADIP

NHRC summons state DGP Bansal, Jagatsinghpur SP

THE POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, March 18: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked Odisha DGP and Jagatsinghpur SP to appear before it personally April 24 in relation to the case of a boy who had gone missing from this town, officials informed Saturday. The NHRC has recently issued notices to DGP Sunil Kumar Bansal and Jagatsinghpur SP Rahul PR and directed them to appear in person with all the reports in the minor boy missing case before it at 11.00am. Notably, 14-year old Preetam Das, son of Pramod Das of Madhuban area in this town had gone missing May 21, last year while playing on the beach with his friends.

Police registered a case (No. 16/22) and started investigation after a complaint was lodged at the Jatadhar Marine Police Station here. A search operation was launched with Coastguard personnel and local fishermen for three days, but the boy could not be traced. The matter came up before the rights body after Subrat Das, president of a local outfit 'Nyaya Pain Ladh' lodged a complaint before the NHRC. The NHRC filed a case and issued notices to Rahul four times to submit the probe report. However, when Rahul did not follow the directives of the NHRC, the rights body asked him and Bansal to appear before it.

Youth held for abduction, rape

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, March 18: Police arrested Friday a youth on charges of kidnapping a minor girl from Berhampur railway station and raping her after forcing her to eat sedative-laced food. The girl also consumed a drink which was spiked, officials informed here Saturday. The incident took place March 16. The youth and the victim were found in a lodge in Simhachalam town in the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh. The accused has been identified as P Saroj Kumar Pradhan, 35, a resident of Sanadumula village under Digapahandi police limits in Ganjam district. Police also seized a glass from which the girl drank and train tickets from a room in the lodge. Police after rescuing the survivor recorded her statement under Section-161 of IPC at Bada Bazaar police station here. The accused Saroj added sedatives to the food and drink of the victim and raped her after she fell unconscious. The accused and the survivor were taken Saturday for a medical examination and later the accused was produced in court. Police said that the girl studying in Plus-II had fled from her home. Family members after failing to trace her lodged a complaint at the police station. The breakthrough came after the victim managed to call up her brother on the phone.

Entrepreneurs are the drivers of economic growth who innovate, bear all the market risks and play a crucial role in job creation. In the third edition of the Business Eminence Awards, Dharitri and Orissa POST honour some of the leading business minds of the state



FICCI President and IMFA MD Subhrakant Panda receives the award from Industries, MSME and Energy Minister Pratap Keshari Deb in presence of Orissa POST and Dharitri Editor Tathagata Satpathy at a City hotel, Saturday



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Dignitaries and guests at the third edition of the award ceremony



Industries Minister Pratap Keshari Deb lights the ceremonial lamp in presence of FICCI President Subhrakant Panda, and Orissa POST & Dharitri Editor Tathagata Satpathy and Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy



Guests witness the award ceremony



PRATAP KESHARI DEB



SUBHRAKANT PANDA



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ADYASHA SATPATHY



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RAMAN KUMAR BAGARIA
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of the day quote

The DMK regime under Kalaignar (M Karunanidhi, former Chief Minister) provided an opportunity for women to serve in the police force in 1973. Today, we have 35,329 women serving and sacrificing on par with their male counterparts

I think that is the amazing thing about them. The BJP is brilliant I must say at politics and one of the things they have done is that they have blamed him (Rahul Gandhi) for something he has not said and then managed to stick that charge on his neck and demand that he apologise for something he has not said

To achieve sustainable development goals, the government has decided to declare capital city Panaji as 'Solar City' by generating 88 MW solar power in next two years

SHORT TAKE

Farmers call off long march

Mumbai: Protesting farmers and tribals, who were on their way to Mumbai from Nashik district of Maharashtra, called off their long march on Saturday with their demands being taken into consideration in the state legislature and ground-level officials receiving orders to execute the government's orders, a CPI(M) MLA said. The march had started from Dindori town, located around 195 km away from Mumbai, on March 12 demanding relief of ₹600 per quintal to onion growers hit by price crash, 12-hour uninterrupted power supply to farmers, and waiver of farm loans. They had reached Thane district's Vasind town, around 80 km from Mumbai.

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LOST

I, S Sangeet Kumar, S/o. Sri Sangram Kishore Sahoo, At: Rajabagicha, P.O.: Telengabazar, P.S.: Badambadi, Town/Dist.: Cuttack, hereby state that Original Hal ROR bearing Khata No. 73, chaka No. 7, Plot No. 20, Area Ac1.130 dec. of Mouza - Brahmanda, Dist.: Cuttack which was recorded in the name of my vendors namely Bijaya Kumar Ray, Sanjay Kumar Ray, both are Sons of Jayram Ray, Snehalata Ray, W/o. Ajay Kumar Ray, Tapaswini Ray, Tejaswini Ray, both are Daughters of Ajay Kumar Ray, has been lost somewhere on 14.03.2023 while I was passing Ranihat to Mangalabag area, Cuttack & could not trace out the same in spite of my best efforts. If any person found the same inform us in our above noted address (Mob.: 8249776779) within 7 days.



The AAP government is not indulging in vendetta politics but is just nailing the corrupt who have mercilessly plundered the wealth of the state

NEW INITIATIVE

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, and India Medtronic Pvt Ltd have entered into a collaborative agreement to co-create and develop a robotic training facility at the premier hospital



JPC only way to probe Adani issue: Congress



"Clearly, the expert committee's mandate excludes the main charge against you: that you have sought to enrich your close friend and financier Gautam Adani at any cost," Jai Ram Ramesh said, addressing the Prime Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: The Congress Saturday asserted that the only way to comprehensively investigate the Adani issue is through a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) with appropriate powers as any other panel will be reduced to an "exercise in legitimization and exoneration".

awareness, investigate whether there has been regulatory failure in dealing with the alleged contravention of laws pertaining to the securities market in relation to the Adani Group or other companies, to suggest measures to strengthen the statutory and/or regulatory framework, and secure compliance with the existing framework for the protection of investors, Ramesh said.

"Clearly, the expert committee's mandate excludes the main charge against you: that you have sought to enrich your close friend and financier Gautam Adani at any cost," Ramesh said, addressing the Prime Minister. The expert committee has no formal jurisdiction over investigations by SEBI and any other investigative agency and it lacks the power to enforce summonses, to compel the production of evidence or to cross-examine witnesses, and statements before it do not have the same force in terms of evidentiary value as a court of law, Ramesh said.

"At most, the Supreme Court has requested the SEBI chairperson to ensure that all requisite information is provided to the Committee' and asked that 'all agencies of the Union Government including agencies connected with financial regulation, fiscal agencies and law enforcement agencies' cooperate with it," he pointed out. "We would like to remind you that Chief Justice CV Ramana reportedly stated on 25 August 2022 that your government refused to cooperate with the committee investigating the illegal use of Pegasus malware in India, setting a disturbing precedent," he said.



British Navy warship HMS Tamar in Chennai, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Cheques given to Assam State Film Award winners bounce

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, March 18: Cheques given to several winners of Assam State Film awards have bounced, landing the state government in an embarrassing position.

The awards were conferred Monday. Friday, nine cheques given to eight winners were returned by the bank when presented for clearance. "I deposited the cheque on Friday and got a call from the bank that it got bounced. Immediately I called the organisers, who said that there was insufficient balance," Aparajita Pujari said. Pujari had won the award for Best Writing in Cinema for 2018. Sources said cheques handed over to other prominent film personalities like Amrit Pritam (Sound Design), Debajit Changmai (Sound



Mixing), Pranjal Deka (Direction), Debajit Gayan (Sound Design and Mixing) and Benjamin Daimary (Acting) also bounced. The state film awards ceremony is organised by the Assam State Film Finance & Development Corporation (ASFFDC). The cheques are signed by the Director of Cultural Affairs. Cultural Affairs Minister Bimal Borah asked his officials to conduct an enquiry immediately. The organisers called Pujari on Saturday and asked her to de-

posit the cheque again. "They have said it will be cleared this time," she said. An official of ASFFDC said, "The cheques got bounced due to a technical reason. Cheques worth ₹18 lakh were cleared on the first day, but nine cheques of eight persons bounced on the second day."

The problem has been corrected and all the eight people have been individually informed on Saturday to deposit their cheques, he added. Controversy had marred the Awards after it came to light that Nahid Afrin, who was conferred the best female playback singer award, was given the recognition for a song she had not sung. Afrin was a playback singer in the film 'Nijaanor Gaan' for which the award was given, but not the one that was displayed on the stage when she collected the award. The Cultural Affairs minister later clarified that Afrin was the genuine winner and the lyrics were wrongly displayed, terming it as 'human error'.

2 Blinkit delivery boys assaulted in Delhi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 18: Two delivery boys of Blinkit app were allegedly thrashed by some men for not having a change to be returned to them, in West Delhi's Rajouri Garden area, an official said Saturday.

Police said that they have registered an FIR in connection with the incident. According to police, a police control room call was received at Rajouri Garden police station wherein information of physical assault on Blinkit delivery boys was given following which a police team rushed to the spot.

"On enquiry it was found that two boys namely Aman, a resident of Begampur area and Guralp Singh, a resident of Raghbir Nagar, were physically assaulted at a house in Rajouri Garden," said a senior police official.

The statement of injured Guralp Singh was recorded wherein he alleged that he went to the house to deliver groceries worth ₹1655.

"One Tarun Suri opened the door and he started misbehaving with delivery boys over change of money. The argument led to physical assault to the delivery boys. Accordingly, a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code was registered and investigation was taken up," said the official.

"The alleged persons have also levelled allegations against the delivery boys stating that they had misbehaved and used abusive words with women present in the house. Necessary action is being taken," the official added.

CBI arrests PhD scholar for rape

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: The CBI has arrested a 35-year-old PhD scholar from Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu for allegedly raping children, officials said Saturday.

The agency had registered a case against the accused for allegedly creating and circulating child sexual abuse material in electronic form, they said.

The CBI had found child sexual abuse images and videos from the Interpol database. Its further analysis using digital forensic tools gave the location of the incident to the Thanjavur district.

The agency conducted searches at the premises of the accused which led to the recovery of incriminating electronic gadgets, officials said.

It was alleged that the accused was sexually abusing a child for the last four years whose nude videos and photographs were uploaded on his Google account.

It was further alleged that the accused forced two minors (a male and a female) to perform sexual acts on them as well as on other minors, including a girl, the officials said.

The accused then clicked the photographs and videos and forced them to bring more girls else he would publish this material on the Internet, the officials alleged.

If judges appoint EC, who'll do judicial work: Rijiju

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: Law Minister Kiren Rijiju Saturday invoked the constitutional "Lakshman Rekha" guiding different institutions, including the executive and the judiciary, and wondered if judges become part of administrative appointments, who would carry out judicial work.

Rijiju was responding to a question on a Supreme Court bench directing the government to set up a panel comprising the prime minister, the chief justice of India and the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha to select

Suppose you are the chief justice or a judge. You are part of an administrative process that will come into question. The matter comes to your court. Can you deliver a judgment on a matter you were part of? The principle of justice itself will be compromised. That is why the Lakshman Rekha is very clear in the Constitution



KIREN RIJIJU | LAW MINISTER

the chief election commissioner (CEC) and election commissioners till a law is in place for the same. "The appointment of election

ment for that in Parliament, there is a vacuum," the minister said at the India Today Conclave.

Rijiju said he is not criticising the apex court judgment or talking about its "repercussions" or what the government is going to do on the issue. "...But what I am saying is that if the CJI or judges of India sit on every important appointment, who will carry forward the judiciary's work? There are so many administrative matters in the country. So we have to see that judges are primarily there to deliver judicial work. They are there to deliver judicial orders by giving justice to peo-

ple," he said.

The minister felt that if judges got involved in administrative work, they would have to face criticism. He said the principle of justice will be compromised if a judge ends up hearing a matter of which he or she was a part.

"Suppose you are the chief justice or a judge. You are part of an administrative process that will come into question. The matter comes to your court. Can you deliver a judgment on a matter you were part of? The principle of justice itself will be compromised. That is why the Lakshman Rekha is very clear in the Constitution," Rijiju said.

Accelerating rate of mountain forest loss concerns scientists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: Scientists have found out that the annual rate of loss of mountain forests has increased by 50 per cent from 2001-2009 to 2010-2018, when the planet lost approximately 5.2 million hectares of mountain forests per year.

The international team of scientists, led by Leeds University UK, have expressed concern over the accelerating rate of loss of mountain forests, as more than 85 per cent of the world's bird, mammal, and amphibian species live in mountains, particularly in forest habitats.

The authors, who wanted to investigate the extent and global distribution of mountain forest loss, reported their findings in the journal One Earth. They wrote that this acceleration is probably largely due to rapid agricultural expansion into highland areas in mainland Southeast Asia, as well as increased logging of mountain forests due to either depletion of lowland forests or because these lowland forests became protected. Globally, they said, that the Earth has lost 78.1 million hectares, or 7.1 per cent, of mountain forest since 2000 - an area larger than the size of Texas, a state in the US. Much



of the loss occurred in tropical biodiversity hotspots, putting increasing pressure on threatened species, they said in their study. Tropical mountain forests experienced the most loss - 42 per

cent of the global total - and the fastest acceleration rate, but also had a faster rate of regrowth compared to mountain forests in temperate and boreal regions, the researchers said.

Overall, in these forests, they said that they observed some signs of tree cover regrowth in 23 per cent of the areas that lost forest. Once protected from deforestation by their rugged location, they have been increasingly exploited since the turn of the 21st century as lowland areas become depleted or subject to protection.

Logging was the biggest driver of mountain forest loss overall (42 per cent), followed by wildfires (29 per cent), shifting or "slash-and-burn" cultivation (15 per cent), and permanent or semi-permanent agriculture (10 per cent), though the importance of these

different factors varied from region to region, the authors said.

Significant loss occurred in Asia, South America, Africa, Europe, and Australia, but not in North America and Oceania, they said. To achieve their objectives, the team tracked changes in mountain forests on a yearly basis from 2001 to 2018.

They quantified both losses and gains in tree cover, estimated the rate at which change is occurring, compared different elevations and types of mountain forests - boreal, temperate, tropical - and explored the impacts of this forest loss on biodiversity, they said in the study.

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of the day quote

Modi ji himself has gone to six-seven countries and said on foreign soil that 'people of India are saying that what sin did we commit that we were born in India'. Such a person is calling us anti-national?

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Methods (of worship) and paths could be different, but destiny is the same. Look at destiny and move towards it. Don't fight with each other over methods. This is the message that India has to send out to the world

MOHAN BHAGWAT | RSS CHIEF

Rahul Gandhi's comments in the UK did not come due to his concern over India but for his political legacy

SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Accident kills 4

Srinagar: Four residents of Bihar were killed Saturday in a road accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district. Police said a bus carrying passengers went out of the driver's control and turned turtle at Gooripora in Awantipora area of Pulwama district. "The injured were shifted to hospital, but three critically injured passengers died on way while the fourth died in the hospital. "All four killed passengers of the bus belonged to Bihar," police said.

Body found

New Delhi: Delhi Police have registered an FIR after a highly decomposed body of a foreign national was found near an underpass in New Delhi's Geeta Colony area, an official said Saturday. According to police, the passport and other documents of the man identified as Bhagwat lutchmee, a Mauritius national, were recovered from the spot.

Patient raped

Kalaburagi (Karnataka): In a shocking incident, a woman patient admitted in a government hospital here was raped, police said Saturday. According to police, the accused was caught by another person and handed over to the police. The accused has been identified as Mehaboob Pasha. The incident took place in the Gulbarga Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS).

Racket busted

New Delhi: A gambling racket was busted by the Outer Delhi Police which arrested eight more people and recovered gambling materials from them. "Efforts of Special Staff, Outer District, led to the busting of a gambling racket in the area of PS Mangolpuri. Eight people have been arrested along with the recovery of cash kept at stake for gambling," said DCP Outer Delhi, Harender Kumar Singh.

Man arrested

Bangalore: The airport authorities at the Kempegowda International Airport at Bangalore have arrested a passenger on charges of smoking in the toilet on an IndiGo flight, sources said Saturday. According to the airport police, the arrested person has been identified as Shehari Choudari, and he committed the act while travelling from Assam to Bangalore on 6E 716 IndiGo flight. The accused passenger had smoked in the toilet while the flight was in the air endangering the safety of other passengers.



The BJP is scared of AAP and has started politics of revenge. CBI and ED don't have any evidence against Manish Sisodia. They only have concocted stories against him. When court said that CBI took Sisodia in remand, interrogated him and did not find anything against him, they got ED to frame more false cases against him

RAGHAV CHADHA | AAP LEADER

BOOSTING TIES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh premier Sheikh Hasina Saturday inaugurated a Rs 377-crore pipeline to transport diesel from India to northern Bangladesh, cutting cost and reducing carbon footprint. The pipeline will start a new chapter in India-Bangladesh relations, Modi said at the inauguration



Remains 'very fragile': India on LAC situation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: The situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh remained "very fragile" and is "quite dangerous" in military assessment because of close deployments of troops of both sides in some pockets though substantial progress has been made in the disengagement process in many areas, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Saturday.

Jaishankar also said that he and former Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi had reached an in-principle agreement in September 2020 on how to resolve the issue and that it is for China to deliver on what was agreed to.

In an interactive session at the India Today conclave, the external affairs minister also made it clear that the relationship between the two countries cannot return to normal until "these problems" are sorted out.

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a standoff for the past three years at certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement of troops from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

"This is a very, I would say, challenging and abnormal phase in our ties with China. Why I say that is because from 1988 when Rajiv Gandhi went there till 2020 the understanding was that peace and tranquility on the border would be maintained," Jaishankar said.

The external affairs minister also referred to agreements between the two sides to not bring large forces to the border, adding



Jaishankar said the Chinese violated the agreements in 2020 and the consequences were seen in the Galwan Valley and other areas as well

The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a standoff for the past three years at certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement of troops from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks

a "very specific" set of understandings and even protocols were put in place on the handling of various situations.

Jaishankar said the Chinese violated the agreements in 2020 and the consequences were seen in the Galwan Valley and other areas as well. "We have deployed our troops, we have stood our ground and the situation to my mind still remains very fragile because there are places where our deployments are very close up and in military assessment, actually therefore, quite dangerous," he said.

"Now we have made substantial progress when it comes to disengagement in many areas. There are many areas where we have ongoing discussions. It is a painstaking job and we will do that," he said.

"We have made it very clear to the Chinese that we cannot have a breach of peace and tranquility, you can't violate agreements and then want the rest of the rela-

tionship to continue as though nothing happened. That's just not tenable," Jaishankar added. The minister's comments came a day after Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande said that the situation along the LAC is stable but there is a need to keep a "very close watch" on it.

In his remarks, the external affairs minister also referred to his meeting with his new Chinese counterpart Qin Gang on the sidelines of the G20 foreign ministers' meeting in Delhi on March 2.

"My most recent encounter in this regard was with the new foreign minister Qin Gang when the G20 foreign ministers meeting took place and we had a long discussion about it. In September 2020, Wang Yi and I had an in-principle agreement on how to resolve it. So the Chinese have to deliver on what was agreed to and they have struggled with that," he said.

Brazilian held with ₹60L cocaine in body

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 18: A Brazilian national was arrested by the Customs officials at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) for allegedly attempting to smuggle cocaine tablets worth Rs 60,16,000 by hiding it in his body, officials said Saturday.

A senior Customs official said that the accused was held on the basis of specific information. "The Brazil national departed from Sao Paulo Airport (Brazil) for Dubai and finally arrived at the IGI Airport, New Delhi on March 11 from Dubai. He was diverted at green channel by the Customs officials for the X-ray of his baggage. On his medical examination, certain material was found to be secreted inside his body," the official said.

The official said that medical procedure yielded recovery of a total of 85 oval shaped capsules containing a total of 752 grams of white powdery substance, suspected to be narcotics. When this material was subjected to diagnostic test, prima facie it appeared to contain commercial quantities of cocaine.

"In view of the above, it was clear that the accused had violated provisions of section 8 of the NDPS Act, and had committed an offence punishable under Section 21, Section 23 and Section 29 of NDPS Act 1985. Accordingly, he was placed under arrest under section 43(b) of NDPS Act, on March 14," the official said.

The official said that white powdery substance suspected to be cocaine was seized along with concealing material under section 43(a) of NDPS Act. Further investigation in the matter is on.



Collegium best system to appoint judges: CJI



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: Not every system is perfect but this is the best system available, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud said Saturday while defending the Collegium system of judges appointing judges, a major bone of contention between the government and judiciary.

Speaking at the India Today Conclave, 2023, the CJI said judiciary has to be protected from outside influences if it has to be independent. "Not every system is perfect but this is the best system we have developed. But the object was to protect the independence of the judiciary, which is a cardinal value. We have to insulate the judiciary from outside influences if the judiciary has to be independent," Chandrachud said.

The CJI also responded to Law Minister Kiren Rijiju voicing displeasure over the Supreme Court Collegium revealing the government's reasons for not approving the names recommended by it for appointment as judges of constitutional courts.

"What is wrong about having a difference in perception? But, I have to deal with such differences with a sense of robust constitutional statesmanship. I do not want to join issues with the law minister, we are bound to have differences of perceptions," the CJI said.

Rijiju has been quite vocal against the Collegium system and once even called it "alien to our Constitution". Justice Chandrachud said there is absolutely no pressure from the government on how to decide cases.

"In my 23 years of being a judge, no one has told me how to decide a case. There is absolutely no pressure from the government. The Election Commission judgment is proof that there is no pressure on the judiciary," CJI said.

The Supreme Court had recently ruled the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and election commissioners will be done by the President on the advice of a committee comprising the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India.

In my 23 years of being a judge, no one has told me how to decide a case. There is absolutely no pressure from the government. The Election Commission judgment is proof that there is no pressure on the judiciary

D Y CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

YouTube surrenders in Bihar over fake videos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, March 18: Manish Kashyap, a YouTuber wanted by the Bihar Police for allegedly sharing fake videos of "attacks on migrant workers in Tamil Nadu", surrendered before the law enforcers in West Champaran district Saturday,



a statement said.

The Economic Offences Unit (EOU) of Bihar Police has registered three cases against Kashyap and others on the charges of "indulging in spreading fake videos of migrants being killed and beaten up in Tamil Nadu on social media". The EOU has also frozen four bank accounts belonging to Kashyap.

"Kashyap, wanted by Bihar Police and Tamil Nadu Police in fake news matter of labourers issue in the southern state, surrendered before the police on Saturday fear-

ing arrest and attachment of his belongings," a statement issued by the EOU said.

"Six teams constituted by the EOU along with Patna and Champaran Police were continuously conducting raids on his locations at various places and hideouts since yesterday (Friday). He surrendered at Jagdishpur police station of Bettiah on Saturday fearing arrest and other legal action," it added.

The EOU had March 6 registered its first FIR in connection with the case and booked four persons, including Kashyap. EOU sleuths have already also arrested Aman Kumar

from Jamui in connection with its investigation into the first FIR. Those named in that FIR included Aman Kumar, Rakesh Tiwary, Yuvraj Singh Rajput and Manish Kashyap.

J S Gangwar, Additional Director General of Bihar Police (Headquarters), had told reporters last week that the EOU probe has found that 30 fake videos of migrants getting beaten up and killed in Tamil Nadu were widely shared on social media, spreading panic among the labourers and forcing them to flee the southern state.



People protecting themselves from rain, walk on a road at India Gate in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

76 samples of new Covid variant XBB1.16 found: Data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: A total of 76 samples of COVID-19's XBB.1.16 variant have been found which might be behind the recent rise of cases in the country, according to INSACOG data.

The variant has been found across Karnataka (30), Maharashtra (29), Puducherry (7) Delhi (5), Telangana (2), Gujarat (1), Himachal Pradesh (1) and Odisha (1), the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) data showed.

The XBB 1.16 variant was first found in January when two samples tested positive for the variant while in February a total of 59 samples were found. In March, till now 15 samples of the XBB 1.16 variant have been found, the INSACOG said.

Some experts have attributed the recent rise in COVID-19 cases to this



variant. Former AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria, who had led the national Covid task force, said the rise in Covid cases seems to be driven by the XBB 1.16 variant while the influenza cases are because of H3N2. "For both of this, following Covid-appropriate behaviour can help to contain the spread of infection. And

most of the cases are not severe; so there is no need to panic as of now," the chairman, Institute of Internal Medicine, Respiratory and Sleep Medicine, Director-Medical Education at Medanta and former AIIMS director said.

Vipin M Vashishtha, former convener of Indian Academy of

Pediatrics and consultant paediatrician at the Mangla Hospital and Research Centre, Bijnor, said the new XBB.1.16 variant has now been detected in at least 12 countries with highest cases in India followed by the US, Brunei, Singapore and the UK.

In India, there is a 281 per cent increase in cases 17 per cent increase in deaths over the past 14 days, he tweeted. "All eyes should be on India! If XBB.1.16 aka #Arcturus could succeed to wade through the 'sturdy' population immunity of Indians that successfully resisted the onslaught of variants like BA.2.75, BA.5, BQs, XBB.1.5, then whole world must be seriously worried!" he said in another tweet.

India's single-day tally of COVID-19 cases crossed 800 after 126 days on Saturday, while the number of active cases climbed to 5,389.

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, SUNDARGARH Tender Call Notice No. 1101 Dt.17.03.23 COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement NOTICE INVITING TENDER Bid Reference No. SNGM-11/2022-23/Dt.17.03.2023

international



The government will provide assistance to employers to encourage their male staff to take childcare leave
FUMIO KISHIDA | JAPANESE PM

FISH RAIN NEAR AUSTRALIAN TOWN

Residents of remote Australian outback town were left baffled when they witnessed fish falling out of the sky like rain. The incident happened in the town of Lajamanu, a small community in the arid Northern Territory



of the day quote

Our compatriots in the north, in Lima, Ica and other regions, need motor pumps to suck up the water, machinery to remove mud and debris, fumigation equipment to fight against dengue, water tanks, food, clothes, tents and medicines, among other things
DINA BOLUARTE | PERUVIAN PRESIDENT

India always wants better relations with Pakistan because we cannot change our geography
SURESH KUMAR | INDIA'S DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER TO PAK

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un should be held accountable for North Korea's gross human rights violations as the leader of the country
LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD | US AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

SHORT TAKES

Kosovo, Serbia leaders meet

Ohrid (North Macedonia): Western officials are hoping for progress Saturday in EU-mediated talks between Serbia and Kosovo's leaders, in a new attempt to ease decades of tensions between the Balkan wartime foes and solve one of Europe's longest standing disputes. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti arrived at North Macedonia's lakeside resort of Ohrid for meetings with international envoys and rare head-to-head talks.

Japan, Germany to boost ties

Tokyo: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida Saturday held the first round of government consultations in Tokyo and agreed to strengthen economic and defense ties to better cope with China's growing influence and global security concerns.

Protests resume

Paris: Refinery strikes persisted Saturday in France and more demonstrations were taking place throughout the country amid anger at the government pushing through a rise in the state pension age without a parliamentary vote. The growing unrest, combined with rubbish piling up on the streets of Paris after refused workers joined in the action, has left President Emmanuel Macron with the gravest challenge to his authority since the so-called "Gilets Jaunes" (Yellow Vests) protests of December 2018.



RAISING VOICE: Protesters stage a rally to denounce a summit between South Korea and Japan, in Seoul, South Korea, Saturday. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida Friday 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

WHO CRITICISES CHINA ON COVID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations/Geneva, March 18: The WHO has criticised China for withholding data related to samples taken at a market in Wuhan in 2020 that could have provided vital information about the Covid-19 pandemic's origins, calling on Beijing to be transparent and to share results of investigations it conducts. The Huanan market in central China's Wuhan city was the epicentre of the pandemic. From its origin there, the SARS-CoV-2 virus rapidly spread to other locations in Wuhan in late 2019 and then to the rest of the world. "We continue to call on China to be transparent in sharing data and to conduct the necessary investigations and share the results. Understanding how the pandemic began remains both a moral and scientific imperative," he said. Ghebreyesus said that last Sunday, the global health agency was made aware of data published on the GISAID database in late January, and taken down again recently. "The data, from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, relates to samples taken at the Huanan market in Wuhan,



Every piece of data relating to studying the origins of Covid-19 needs to be shared with the international community immediately. These data could have – and should have – been shared three years ago

DR TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

in 2020," he said. Ghebreyesus said while the data was online, scientists from a number of countries downloaded the data and analysed it. "As soon as we became aware of this data, we contacted the Chinese CDC and urged them to share it with WHO and the international scientific community so it can be analysed," he said, adding that WHO also convened the Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens, or SAGO, which met Tuesday

Pak court cancels Imran's arrest warrant in Toshakhana case



Khan was ousted from power in April last year after losing a no-confidence vote, becoming the first Pakistani Prime Minister to be voted out by the National Assembly

AGENCIES

Islamabad, March 18: A Pakistani judge Saturday cancelled former premier Imran Khan's arrest warrants in the Toshakhana corruption case and allowed him to go home without indicting him, amidst clashes between his supporters and police outside the court complex here. Khan arrived at the Islamabad Judicial Complex from Lahore to appear before the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal to attend proceedings on a complaint filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan for allegedly concealing details of gifts in his assets declarations. Judge Iqbal after waiting for hours for the 70-year-old chief of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party to reach the court agreed with the suggestion by his lawyer to get the signature of the former premier on the attendance sheet in his vehicle to comply with the court orders of in-person presence. The judge allowed Khan to go

back to Lahore after marking his attendance outside the Islamabad Judicial Complex where he was set to be indicted in the Toshakhana case. "The situation as it is, the hearing and appearance cannot proceed that is why all those who have gathered here should disperse after marking attendance. There is no need for shelling or pelting, the hearing cannot be held today," the judge was quoted as saying by Dawn newspaper. Judge Iqbal also cancelled the arrest warrants issued against Khan in the Toshakhana case and adjourned the hearing till March 30 due to the chaos following clashes between police and PTI workers. The people inside the courtroom were facing difficulties due to the effects of the teargas while PTI party workers pelted stones at the court complex. Senior PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi confirmed to the media that all legal formalities regarding Khan's appearance in the court had been fulfilled and he was leaving the premises.

Facing arrest warrant, Putin visits Crimea

PUTIN'S VISIT COMES A DAY AFTER THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT ISSUED AN ARREST WARRANT ACCUSING HIM OF WAR CRIMES

AGENCIES

Kyiv, March 18: Russian President Vladimir Putin travelled to Crimea to mark the ninth anniversary of the Black Sea peninsula's annexation from Ukraine Saturday, the day after the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for the Russian leader accusing him of war crimes.

Putin visited an art school and a children's centre, locations that appeared to have been chosen in response to the court's action Friday. The court specifically accused him Friday of bearing personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine during Russia's full-scale invasion of the neighboring country that started almost 13 months ago.

Putin has shown no intention of relinquishing the Kremlin's gains. Instead, he stressed on Friday the importance of holding Crimea. "Obviously, security issues take top priority for Crimea and Sevastopol now," he said, referring to Crimea's largest city. "We will do everything needed to fend off any threats."

The ICC's arrest warrant was the first issued against a leader of one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The court, which is based in The Hague, Netherlands, also issued a warrant for the arrest of Maria Lvova-Belova, the commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation. The move was immediately dismissed by Moscow — and welcomed by Ukraine as a major breakthrough. Its practical



RUSSIA ANNEXED CRIMEA FROM UKRAINE IN 2014, A MOVE THAT MOST OF THE WORLD DENOUNCED AS ILLEGAL
UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY HAS DEMANDED THAT RUSSIA WITHDRAW FROM THE PENINSULA AS WELL AS THE AREAS IT HAS OCCUPIED SINCE LAST YEAR

implications, however, could be limited as the chances of Putin facing trial at the ICC are highly unlikely because Moscow does not recognize the court's jurisdiction or extradite its nationals.

Widespread Russian attacks continued in Ukraine after the court's announcement. Ukraine was attacked by 16 Russian drones Friday night, the Ukrainian air force reported early Saturday. Writing on

Telegram, the air force command said that 11 out of 16 drones were shot down "in the central, western and eastern regions." Among areas targeted were the capital, Kyiv, and the western Lviv province.

The head of the Kyiv city administration, Serhii Popko, said Ukrainian air defences shot down all drones heading for the Ukrainian capital, while Lviv regional Gov. Maksym Kozlytskyi said Saturday that three of six drones were shot down, with the other three hitting a district bordering Poland.

According to the Ukrainian air force, the attacks were carried out from the eastern coast of the Sea of Azov and Russia's Bryansk province, which borders Ukraine. The Ukrainian military additionally said in its regular update Saturday morning that Russian forces over the previous 24 hours

launched 34 airstrikes, one missile strike and 57 rounds of anti-aircraft fire.

The Facebook update said that falling debris hit the southern Kherson province, damaging seven houses and a kindergarten.

According to the Ukrainian statement, Russia is still concentrating its efforts on offensive operations in Ukraine's industrial east, focusing attacks on Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Marinka and Shakhtarsk in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province. Pavlo Kyrylenko, regional Gov. Of the Donetsk province, said one person was killed and three wounded when 11 towns and villages in the province were shelled Friday.

Further west, Russian rockets hit a residential area overnight Friday in the city of Zaporizhzhia, the regional capital of the partially occupied province of the same name. No casualties were reported, but houses were damaged and a catering establishment destroyed, Anatoliy Kurtev of the Zaporizhzhia City Council said. UK military officials said Saturday that Russia is likely to widen conscription.

In its latest intelligence update, the UK defence ministry said that deputies in the Russian Duma, the lower house of Russia's parliament, introduced a bill Monday to change the conscription age for men to 21-30, from the current 18-27. The ministry said that, at the moment, many men aged 18-21 claim exemption from military service because they are in higher education. The change would mean that they would eventually still have to serve.

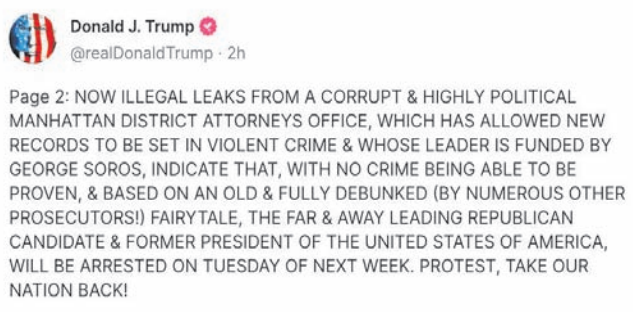
Trump expects to be arrested Tuesday as DA eyes charges

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, March 18: Donald Trump said in a social media post that he expects to be arrested Tuesday as a New York prosecutor is eyeing charges in a case examining hush money paid to women who alleged sexual encounters with the former president.

Messages left Saturday with the district attorney's office were not immediately returned. Representatives for Trump did not immediately respond to calls for comment.

Trump did not provide any details on social media about how he knew about the expected arrest. In his postings, he repeated his lies that the 2020 presidential election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden was stolen and he urged his followers to "Protest, take our nation back!" That language evoked the message from the then-president that preceded the riot at the US Capitol January 6, 2021. Law enforcement officials in



10k ReTruths 23.8k Likes Mar 18, 2023, 7:26 AM

New York have been making security preparations for the possibility that Trump could be indicted.

There has been no public announcement of any time frame for the grand jury's secret work in the case, including any potential vote on whether to indict the ex-president. Trump's posting echoes one

made last summer when he broke the news on Truth Social that the FBI was searching his home as part of an investigation into the possible mishandling of classified documents. The grand jury in Manhattan has been hearing

from witnesses, including former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen, who says he orchestrated payments in 2016 to two women to silence them about sexual encounters they said they had with Trump a decade earlier. Trump denies the encounters occurred, says he did nothing wrong and has cast the investigation as a "witch hunt" by a Democratic prosecutor bent on sabotaging the Republican's 2024 presidential campaign.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office has apparently been examining whether any state laws were broken in connection with the payments or the way Trump's company compensated Cohen for his work to keep the

women's allegations quiet.

Daniels and at least two former Trump aides — onetime political adviser Kellyanne Conway and former spokesperson Hope Hicks — are among witnesses who have met with prosecutors in recent weeks. Cohen has said that at Trump's direction, he arranged payments totaling USD 280,000 to porn actor Stormy Daniels and Playboy model Karen McDougal. According to Cohen, the payouts were to buy their silence about Trump, who was then in the thick of his first presidential campaign.



NK claims almost 8L have signed up to fight against US

REUTERS

Seoul, March 18: North Korea claims that about 800,000 of its citizens volunteered to join or reenlist in the nation's military to fight against the United States, North Korea's state newspaper reported Saturday.

About 800,000 students and workers, Friday alone, across the country expressed a desire to enlist or reenlist in the military to counter the United States, the Rodong Sinmun newspaper reported.

"The soaring enthusiasm of young people to join the army is a demonstration of the unshakable will of the younger generation to mercilessly wipe out the war maniacs making last-ditch efforts to eliminate our precious socialist country, and achieve the great cause of national reunification without fail and a clear manifestation of their ardent patriotism," the North's Rodong Sinmun said.

of the day quote

Nano DAP will be available in the market across the country after commencement of commercial production



BHAGWANTH KHUBA | MINISTER OF STATE FOR CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS

Failure is a part of startup ecosystem not just in India but also in the developed part of the world. Our country has just started the journey of startups, so naturally we will fail more, compared to those countries which have started ten years back



ARVIND KUMAR | DIRECTOR GENERAL, STPI

A robust and enabling regulatory framework for a dynamic sector like online gaming would ensure a responsible, transparent and safe environment for all



NILAYA VARMA | CEO, PRIMUS PARTNERS

SHORT TAKES

GAIL signs pact with Shell Energy

New Delhi: GAIL India has signed an agreement with Shell Energy India Private Limited to explore opportunities for infrastructure development for ethane sourcing. In a bid towards diversification of the feedstock for its petrochemical plant, GAIL is looking to import ethane from ethane-surplus countries with matured export terminal infrastructure through water borne transportation to India and for moving it further through GAIL's pipeline systems to demand centres, a company statement said. The MoU envisages exploring prospects in import and handling of different hydrocarbons which are important chemical and petrochemical precursors, LNG for road transport, regasification of imported LNG, renewables, etc.

80K cases pending before CESTAT

New Delhi: With a whopping 80,000 tax litigation cases pending before Cestat, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra Saturday said the government will set up a committee to suggest measures to reduce tax litigation and expeditious disposal of backlog. Speaking at an event to commemorate 40 years of the Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT), Malhotra said bringing clarity in tax laws and rules will help in reducing litigation as pendency of litigation has been a constant challenge before the tribunal.



Banks should focus on improving their customer service and work towards reducing pain points

BHAGWAT K KARAD | MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

RATAN TATA APPOINTED TO 'ORDER OF AUSTRALIA'

India's top industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata has been appointed to the 'Order of Australia' for distinguished service to the Australia-India relationship, particularly to trade, investment, and philanthropy, Australia's Governor General has announced



FEARS OF BANKING CONTAGION

UBS eyeing swoop for Credit Suisse

The 167-year-old Credit Suisse ranks among the world's largest wealth managers and is considered one of 30 global systemically important banks whose failure would cause ripples throughout the entire financial system

REUTERS

Washington, March 18: UBS AG was examining Saturday a takeover of its embattled Swiss peer Credit Suisse, sources said, a move that could dampen fears the unfolding crisis might destabilise the global banking system.

Credit Suisse is the biggest name ensnared in the market turmoil unleashed by the collapse of US lenders Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank over the past week, losing a quarter of its stock market value since Monday.

To get the crisis under control, UBS was coming under pressure from the Swiss authorities to carry out a takeover of its local rival, two people with knowledge of the matter said. The plan could see the Swiss government offer a guarantee against the risks involved, while Credit Suisse's Swiss business could be spun off.

Credit Suisse Chief Financial Officer Dixit Joshi and his teams were meeting over the weekend to assess their options for the bank, people with knowledge of the matter said, and there were multiple reports of interest from rivals.

US financial giant BlackRock said it had no plans or interest in a rival bid for Credit Suisse, while Bloomberg reported that Deutsche Bank was looking at the possibility of buying some of the bank's assets.

Credit Suisse's share price swung wildly this week, during which it was forced to tap \$54 billion in central bank funding.

The mood in Switzerland, long considered an icon for banking



stability, was pensive as executives wrestled with the future of the country's biggest lenders. In a sign of its vulnerability, at least four of Credit Suisse's major rivals, including Societe Generale SA and Deutsche Bank AG, have put restrictions on their trades involving the Swiss bank or its securities, five people with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

Goldman Sachs cut its recommendation on exposure to European bank debt, saying a lack of clarity on Credit Suisse's future would put pressure on the broader sector in the region.

The sector's fundamentals were stronger and the global systemic linkages weaker than at the time

The turmoil reflects "funding and liquidity strains on banks, driven by weakening depositor confidence," said ratings agency Moody's, which this week downgraded its outlook on the US banking system to negative

of the global financial crisis, Goldman analyst Lotfi Karoui wrote in note to clients. This trend greatly limited the risk of a potential vicious circle of counterparty credit losses, Karoui noted.

"However, a more forceful policy response is likely needed to bring some stability," Karoui said.

MARKET TROUBLES LINGER

Already this week, big US banks provided a \$30 billion lifeline for smaller lender First Republic, while US banks altogether have sought a record \$153 billion in emergency liquidity from the Federal Reserve in recent days.

FROM DEC '21-MAR '23

INDIAN CRUDE OIL BASKET PRICE ROSE 23%: GOVT



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 18: The price of the Indian crude oil basket, in rupee per barrel terms, rose by 23 per cent from December 2021 to March 2023, but compared to this, the increase in retail selling price of petrol and diesel in Delhi has only been 1.08 per cent and 3.40 per cent, the Parliament was told.

Prices of petrol and diesel have not been increased by public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) since April 6, 2022, despite record high international prices, Minister of State for Petroleum Rameswar Tell told the Lok Sabha in a written reply.

The three OMCs, namely Indian

Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, have booked a combined loss of Rs 18,622 crore between April 2022 and December 2022, it said.

The three OMCs have also suffered huge losses on sale of domestic LPG where the price is monitored by Government. To compensate these losses, the Centre has recently paid a one-time compensation of Rs 22,000 crore to them.

Prices of petrol and diesel in the country have been market-determined with effect from June 26, 2010 and October 19, 2014 respectively. Since then, the OMCs take appropriate decision on pricing of petrol and diesel, the minister said.

Bol organises loan fair

Bhubaneswar: Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Zone organised a loan fair for women self help groups at Malipada Branch. On this occasion Nutan Mishra, in-charge, Pipili Star Krishi Bikash Kendra; Sunil Hembram, Branch Manager, Malipada presided over the

programme and gave sanction letter worth 50 lakh to the beneficiaries. Women self help groups of Kanpur, Dhaulimuhan and Naranghar Gram Panchayat along with president of the Self Help Group, Bank Mitra, MBK and CRP staffs participated in the programme. In the fair, emphasis was given on making women financial independent and their inclusion in various financial schemes.

Central Bank of India holds mega multipurpose camp

Sambalpur: Central Bank of India, Regional Office Sambalpur has organised mega multipurpose camp and business development meet with prominent Chartered Accountants of Sambalpur in the presence of Ajay Kumar Singh, Zonal Head, Kolkata and Sukesh Kumar Jha, Regional Head, Sambalpur Region March 17. In this campaign 418 customers including SHGs belonging to 19 districts of Odisha

were benefitted involving an amount of Rs 64.17 crore. Singh addressed the gathering and discussed various new initiatives in terms of bank products, services and technology taken up by the bank. He assured that the new age technologies developed by the bank will definitely enhance customer's experience. Customers and Chartered Accountants have appreciated the efforts taken by the bank and Sambalpur region.

Nat'l Safety Week by Vedanta

Jharsuguda: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, observed National Safety Week 2023 in and around its operations at Jharsuguda, Odisha through a week-long campaign to raise awareness among employees, business partners, and community members on the importance of adhering to safety measures. In line with the theme 'Our Aim - Zero Harm', the company carried out a slew of awareness programs on the importance of observing safety precautions and protocols. Through these efforts, the company reached out to more than 2400 people in the district as part of the campaign. The company carried out initiatives underscoring the importance of safety, which included a community bike rally, quizzes, skit competitions, eye check-ups for heavy motor vehicle drivers and health camps for business partners. A special initiative involving the company's business partners - 'Ghar Se Ghar Tak' & 'Suraksha Kutumbh' was also conducted to ensure safety awareness among families of the company's business partners. The week-long celebration concluded with a ceremony in the presence of Manoj Mishra, Assistant Director of Factories & Boilers, Jharsuguda, where plant safety champions and winners of the various safety competitions held as part of safety week were felicitated.

PM GATI SHAKTI

156 critical infra gap projects identified

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: As many as 156 critical infrastructure gaps to ports and for movement of bulk commodities such as coal, cement, fertilizers and foodgrains, have been identified for intervention under the PM Gati Shakti initiative, an official statement said Saturday.

The PM Gati Shakti programme was launched by the government 13th October 2021. So far, 44 Network Planning Group meetings held at the central level, wherein 66 major infrastructure projects worth Rs Rs 5 lakh crore, have been evaluated, the commerce and industry ministry said.

The Network Planning Group (NPG) is constituted under the initiative. "156 critical infrastructure gaps to ports and for movement of bulk commodities such as coal, cement, fertilizers and foodgrains, have been identified for intervention," it said.

To facilitate wider adoption of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, a series of regional workshops are being organized across all states/UTs.

These workshops aim to bring more vigour and build synergy among different stakeholders resulting in mutual learning among States/UTs and central ministries/departments.

Cab okays listing of IREDA via IPO route

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 18: The Union Cabinet Friday approved listing of Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA) on stock exchanges through an initial public offer (IPO) by part sale of government's stake in the public sector entity. The aim is to raise funds through issue of fresh equity shares by the IREDA, sources said.

Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) will drive the listing process, the sources added. This decision supersedes the earlier Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) decision taken in June 2017 which had allowed the IREDA to issue 13.90 crore fresh equity shares of Rs 10 each to the public on book building basis through IPO route.

The noble business of solving worries

When you evaluate career prospects, what are the key points that you consider? In my experience, most people look for career opportunities that offer stability, growth, work satisfaction, and holistic development. At times you crave independence, you want to be your own boss, and of course, decide what you want to earn and grow at your own pace. You want to be an entrepreneur but are confused as to how to go about it and what to choose. One such business that offers all the ingredients for building a lasting and happy career; wiping the tears of customers, has unlimited potential and earning capabilities, is the business of becoming an 'insurance advisor'.

The insurance business is a distribution-driven business, and the agency channel is one of the most robust distribution channels in the sector. An insurance advisor is a representative of the insurance company and sells its products

and services on its behalf in return for a commission. In India, agents have played an instrumental role in spreading insurance and taking it to the masses. Insurance agents are part of an increasingly innovative and dynamic field that attracts people from all walks of life. An insurance advisor holds deep knowledge about various insurance products, understands the requirements of their customers, and helps them choose the right products.

This business offers you ample opportunities to interact with people from across industries and from across the socio-economic spectrum; there are very few careers that enable you to spread your network far and wide like that of an advisor. Over the period, insurance advisor acquires impeccable communication skills, people skills, problem-solving abilities, and much more which ensures their holistic development. If you are someone who is looking

for a meaningful career, and you desire to make a difference in society, then the career of an insurance advisor will appeal to you. You will be instrumental in improving the financial literacy of your customers, helping bolster their financial security, assisting them during the time of claims, thereby contributing to strengthening the economic fabric of our country.

Particularly there are two distribution channels that you can join with relative ease to distribute insurance :-

PoSP (Point of Salesperson): If you already have a shop/kirana store and have a great network along with which you are looking for avenues to expand your revenue, becoming a PoSP advisor is an excellent option. You will get the opportunity to offer more value to your customers and protect them against various risks. To become a PoSP you must be 18 years old, and hold a Aadhaar and PAN card. You should have cleared 10th

standard or equivalent examination. You will have to undergo a 15-hours compulsory training as mandated by the insurance regulator IRDAI.

Agent: An agent is a representative of insurance company and sells their products and services. As an insurance agent you will play an active role in insurance distribution, you will help your customers pick the right insurance product for them and provide them financial security. To become an insurance agent, you have to go through 50 hours of training and clear the pre-licensing examination. To become a composite agent (who can sell general and life insurance products) you have to undertake 75 hours training. The minimum qualification to become an agent is to clear the 12th standard or equivalent examination, if you reside in a place with a population of more than 5,000, you should have cleared 10th standard or equivalent examina-

tion in case your place of residence has a population less than 5,000, which means you can start your journey at a very early age.

The Indian insurance industry is at the cusp of interesting times, today the industry offers a wide range of products for all classes of customers. Insurance is going to occupy the center stage in the years to come, it is a great time to enter the sector and flourish as the industry reaches new heights. This career offers unlimited earning potential, a chance to travel the world, opportunity to build a lasting legacy and make an impact in society.



Aditya Sharma, Chief Distribution Officer - Retail Sales, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

INDIA AIM TO SEAL SERIES

Rohit Sharma will lead India in the second ODI against Australia Sunday after missing out on the first match

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Visakhapatnam, March 18: The spotlight will once again be on KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja when India take on Australia in the second ODI here Sunday, with regular captain Rohit Sharma returning to lead the side after missing the opening game in Mumbai.

India defeated Australia by five wickets in a low-scoring game at the Wankhede Stadium, with Rahul, who struggled to find form during the Border-Gavaskar series leading to him being dropped for the third and fourth Tests, scoring a patient unbeaten 75 as the hosts cantered home.

Jadeja, playing ODI cricket after nearly eight months due to a knee injury and subsequent surgery, scored an unbeaten 45 in the chase of 188 Friday. He also bowled a tight spell and returned figures of 2/46 to be declared 'Player of the Match'.

With the ODI World Cup being hosted by India later this year, an in-form Rahul and a fully-fit Jadeja will be an asset, and the three-match series will help the selectors assess the duo's progress.

India would look to take an unsailable 2-0 lead in the series and

also try to make amends with the bat, after they were in a spot of bother at 4/39, and later 5/83, before Rahul and Jadeja came together at the crease to guide the hosts to victory with 61 balls to spare.

Rohit Sharma's return to captaincy duties will certainly give solidity to the top order, which crumbled to the pace and variations of Australian quick Mitchell Starc.

The lanky left-arm pacer's three-wicket burst at the start put India under tremendous pressure, with Virat Kohli (4), Suryakumar Yadav (0) and Shubman Gill (20) departing in quick succession after Marcus Stoinis had made an early dent by dismissing Ishan Kishan for three runs.

Indian batters have occasionally looked tentative against quality left-arm pacers, and facing Starc in the remaining two games should give them good practice in home conditions, with efforts focused towards making preparations for the World Cup in October-November.

With Sharma set to open, Kishan will likely make way for the regular captain. While not much should be read into Kohli and Gill's below-

par scores in the first ODI, Suryakumar Yadav not being able to find his mojo in the 50-over format is a reason for concern.

A marauder with the bat in T20s, Suryakumar is evidently still finding his feet in ODIs. He has gone without a fifty in all five ODIs this year. Surya has now played 15 ODIs (13 innings) without a score exceeding 50.

However, with no timeline set for Shreyas Iyer's return, India will keep auditioning Suryakumar for the role at No. 4. India's bowling did a tremendous job in Mumbai with pacers Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj flourishing on a pace-friendly Wankhede pitch. But wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav could not make a strong impression.

However, the team management is not expected to tinker with the bowling line-up, with Pandya playing the role of a third seamer to perfection in Mumbai.

The weather forecast for the second ODI is of scattered thunderstorms at least in the first half, which also means that pacers from either side can swing the ball if the conditions are windy.

Australia want to try out different combinations during the se-

ries. Friday, they went in with four all-rounders - Mitchell Marsh, Cameron Green, Marcus Stoinis and Glenn Maxwell - and still couldn't trouble India much, which would be a concern for captain Steve Smith.

As a makeshift opener in the absence of David Warner, Marsh provided a rapid start with a 65-ball 81 but Australia lost the way in the middle overs, crashing from 129/2 to 188 all out against quality pace in Mumbai. The visitors lost six wickets for a meagre 19 runs despite having a deep batting line-up, something that they will look to work on.

Smith and Marnus Labuschagne may have encountered 'difficult' pitches in the Test series but the wickets for ODIs in India are usually batter-friendly, and both the Aussie mainstays will be expected to do more.

Smith has not crossed the 50-run mark so far on this India tour. For someone who has a mountain of runs against India, the Australian stand-in skipper will look to end the drought. Australia's fast bowling looked terrific in Mumbai, with Sean Abbott keeping a lid on the Indians with tight lines and Green and Stoinis also chipping in.

ATKMB are ISL champs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Margao, March 18: ATK Mohun Bagan held their nerves in a tightly contested Indian Super League final to beat Bengaluru FC 4-3 on penalties and lift their maiden title here Saturday.

In a game that ended 2-2 in regulation time, ATKMB's Dimitri Petratos scored all three penalties he took on the night before Vishal Kaith's save from Bruno Ramires' in the shootout brought them one step closer.

Bengaluru FC's Pablo Perez then sent his spot-kick over the bar as the Mariners sealed the result in a game where they had unsettled Bengaluru FC right from the start.

Bengaluru FC were forced into bringing Sunil Chhetri early on after Sivasakthi Narayanan was stretched off in the opening seconds of the match.

Things went further away from plan in the 13th minute when Krishna handled the ball from a Petratos corner as ATKMB were awarded a penalty. Petratos finished the job from the spot to put his team in front.

ATKMB made use of this advantage to put pressure on Bengaluru FC, who picked up a glut of yellow cards on the pitch and one off it for head coach Simon Grayson.

A NEW IDENTITY

MARGAO: ISL's newly-crowned champions ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) will be rechristened as Mohun Bagan Super Giants from the next season onwards. The franchise's owner Sanjeev Goenka made the announcement after the ISL final here Sunday. "It is a small announcement but a substantial one. From next month, ATK Mohun Bagan will be renamed as Mohun Bagan Super Giants. We were waiting for the (ISL final) win to announce it. This win offers an opportunity to make the information public," Goenka said shortly after his team's title triumph. ATK Mohun Bagan won their maiden ISL title after beating Bengaluru FC on penalties. Mohun Bagan entered the ISL as ATK Mohun Bagan after a merger with ATK in the 2020-21 season.

But in the final minute of first-half stoppage time, they were given a way back when Bose missed the ball and made contact with Krishna while attempting a clearance. Chhetri stepped up to take the penalty and sent Kaith the wrong way to restore parity.

In the final quarter of the game, Rohit's shot from the edge of the box created a series of corners, before a deflection found Krishna at the

far post, and the striker nodded it home in the 78th minute.

But five minutes from time, the game was all square again. At the edge of the Bengaluru FC box, Kiyan Nassiri went down after a nudge from Perez as ATKMB won their second penalty of the evening. Petratos was on hand to score again.

In the third minute of stoppage time, Asish Rai's goal bound shot was cleared off the line by Prabir Das. Moments later, Colaco and Nassiri almost combined to score, but Bruno Ramires provided the crucial interception as the game went into extra time.

Udanta Singh and Rohit failed to hit the target in their respective attempts in extra time, while Manvir missed from a few yards out for ATKMB.

Towards the end of extra time, Sandhu spilled Petratos' long-range strike, but it bounced out for a corner that led to nothing before the game headed into penalties.

In the nervy penalty shootout, Golden Glove winner Kaith stepped up for his team for the second game in a row, while no one missed from the spot in a game dictated by penalties throughout.

As the winners, ATKMB took home a prize money of Rs 6 crore, while runners-up Bengaluru FC received Rs 2.5 crore.



Treesa-Gayatri loses in semis at All England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, March 18: Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand's sensational run came to an end as the Indian pair signed off with a second successive semifinal finish at the All England Championships here Saturday.

The two young shuttlers found the going tough against Korean world number 20 duo of Baek Na Ha and Lee So Hee, losing 10-21, 10-21 in a 46-minute women's doubles contest at the Utilita arena.

"We learnt a lot from this match. The difference was they didn't leave a shuttle and we did panic a little bit," Gayatri said after the match.

Treesa added: "When we played against them, their defence was good, it was better than yesterday. We were just panicking and didn't play well, we just kept attacking."

Gayatri's father Pullela Gopichand, the chief national coach, was the last Indian to win the All England crown, in 2001, the first being the legendary Prakash Padukone in 1980.

Gayatri, 20, and Treesa, 19, had a big opportunity to reach the finals but it ended in anticlimax as they played into the hands of the Koreans. "I was nervous. There was pressure," said Gayatri.

The World No.17 pair was pitted against Baek and Lee, the latter being an experienced player with two world championships medals with former partner Shin Seung-chan.

In fact, Lee and Shin had faced defeat against the Indian pair in the last edition but the fresh combination of Lee and Baek have been relentless this week with wins over second and eighth seeds, and looked in supreme touch as they came up with a tactical masterclass.

The Koreans turned into a retrieving machine as they defended seamlessly and extended the rallies with their high tosses and lifts to not allow the Indians to play their short flat rally game.

Despite the loss, it was a good week for the young Indians, who started playing together only in 2021 and had surprised all by reaching the semifinals in the last edition after being promoted to the main draw from the reserve list.

NITU, PREETI, MANJU IN PRE-QUARTERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 18: Indian boxers continued to shine at home as three of them entered the pre-quarters with contrasting wins at the Women's World Championships here Saturday.

Commonwealth Games gold medallist Nitu Ganghas (48kg) began her campaign with a RSC (referee stopped contest) win over Doyeon Kang of Korea, while Preeti (54kg) eked out a 4-3 split decision victory against Romania's Lacramioara Perijoc.

Manju Bamboriya (66kg), on the other hand, defeated Cara Wharerau of New Zealand by a 5-0 unanimous verdict. Nitu, who lost in the quarter-final during the last edition, opened her campaign in the best possible way, winning the bout in the first round itself.

In the opening minute, she used her hook and left cross but wasn't able to connect her jabs. The



MANJU BAMBORIYA

boxers then went into a frenzy as they punched each other with both hands. Soon, Kang got the first standing count.



NITU GANGHAS

With Nitu continuing her onslaught, the Korean got her second standing count 20 seconds later with referee Luca Vadilonga



PREETI

of Italy ruling in the Indian's favour, much to the joy of the partisan crowd at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall.

Having won her opening bout by an RSC verdict, Preeti had to work hard for her second win in the tournament. Both boxers looked to keep a distance in the first few seconds. Preeti was caught unawares by a Perijoc straight jab but the Haryana pugilist recovered soon.

The 2022 Asian Championships bronze medallist then landed two punches on her Romanian opponent and led 3-2 at the end of the first round.

In the second round, both boxers tried to sidestep each other as Perijoc resorted to body blows. Preeti danced around the ring, using her nimble feet, as she tried to avoid the Romanian. She landed some accurate punches but lost the round 2-3.

In the final three minutes, Preeti resorted to counter attacking which she did effectively. The round was a draw with the bout going into a review. The evaluator and observer ruled in favour of the Indian.

MATCH SCHEDULE	
CRICKET	
India vs Australia	
2nd ODI, Vizag	Time: 01:30 pm
Telecast: Star Sports channels & Hotstar	
FOOTBALL	
Premier League	
Arsenal vs Crystal Palace	Time: 07:30 pm
Telecast: Star Sports channels & Hotstar	
LIGUE 1 (FRENCH LEAGUE)	
PSG vs Rennes	Time: 09:35 pm
Telecast: Sports 18 channels, Voot & Jio Cinema	
LA LIGA (SPANISH LEAGUE)	
Barcelona vs Real Madrid	Time: 01:30 am (Monday)
Telecast: Sports 18 channels, Voot & Jio Cinema	

UPW end MI's winning run



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, March 18: UP Warriorz (UPW) snapped formidable Mumbai Indians' winning run in the Women's Premier League with a five-wicket victory, after the Uttar Pradesh side extracted more out of a tricky pitch here Saturday.

On a surface where the ball turned a lot and was also holding up, England's star left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone (3/15) led the way with her excellent bowling as UP Warriorz bundled out Mumbai Indians for 127. When MI batted, as many as 18 of the 20 overs were bowled by spinners, a WPL record.

Chasing a small but tricky total on this surface, UPW were in a spot of bother at 27/3 in the beginning of seventh over. Even as MI picked up three wickets quickly but they were also guilty of dropping three catches, which proved to be crucial in the end.

In the company of Harris, McGrath stroked her way to a 25-ball 38 before Amelia Kerr had her caught and bowled. There was another twist after Kerr dismissed Harris at a crucial juncture, but UPW held their nerves to emerge winners.

Earlier, had it not been for Wong's 19-ball 32, MI would have ended with much less than what they eventually got. MI were 56/2 at the end of the 10th over with Matthews (35) and Kaur (25) looking to build a partnership after the departure of Yastika Bhatia (5) and Nat Sciver-Brunt (7). Then MI lost wickets at regular intervals to be bowled out for 127.

BRIEF SCORES
MI Women 127 (Hayley Matthews 35, Issy Wong 32, Harmanpreet Kaur 25, Sophie Ecclestone 3/15, Rajeshwari Gayakwad 2/16, Deepti Sharma 2/35) lost to UPW Women 129/5 (Grace Harris 39, Tahlia McGrath 38; Amelia Kerr 2/22) by 5 wickets.

DEVINE SHOW SINKS GIANTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 18: Sophie Devine lit up the Mumbai skyline with an astonishing 36-ball 99 (9x4, 8x6) as Royal Challengers Bangalore made short work of a 189-run target for an eight-wicket victory over Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League here Saturday.

It rained sixes from the broad willow of Devine as RCB breezed past the target with as many as 27 balls to spare and keep their slim playoff hopes alive with a second successive victory.

Devine, who has also represented New Zealand in hockey before starting out in cricket as a bowler often batting at No.11, played an innings that will go down as one of the finest in the history of the T20 format.

Earlier, South Africa's star batter Laura Wolvaardt top-scored with a scintillating 42-ball 68 (9x4, 2x6) before a 22-run final over powered Gujarat Giants to 188/4.

Ashleigh Gardner (41, 26b, 6x4, 1x6) also played a brisk knock before Harleen Deol (12 n o) and Dayalan Hemalatha (16 n o) ended GG's innings by smashing a clueless Megan Schutt for two sixes and two fours.



SOPHIE DEVINE

and two fours.

Chasing a stiff target, RCB were off to a rollicking start with the opening duo of skipper Smriti Mandhana (37, 31b, 5x4, 1x6) and Sophie Devine sending the GG bowlers on a leather hunt with their breathtaking batting.

While there were innumerable

sixes and fours, the highlight was Devine's maximum against left-arm spinner Tanuja Kanwar, smoking her over the midwicket for the tournament's biggest six at 94 metres.

Finally, it was Kim Garth (1/32) who brought an end to Devine's knock, but by then, she had already paced the way for RCB's victory.

Earlier, batting first after Sneha Rana won the toss, both Sophia Dunkley (16) and Wolvaardt showed positive intent at the start. Dunkley's departure brought Sabbhineni Meghana (31) to the middle. Unperturbed by the setback, Wolvaardt looked to control the innings and the duo added 63 runs for the second wicket.

After Meghana's dismissal, Wolvaardt found another ally in Gardner and the duo stitched together 52 runs before Shreyanka Patil (2/17) dismissed the South African. Gardner too departed after nine balls.

BRIEF SCORES: GG Women 188/4 (Laura Wolvaardt 68, Ashleigh Gardner 41; Shreyanka Patil 2/17) lost to RCB Women 189/2 (Sophie Devine 99, Smriti Mandhana 37) by 8 wickets.