



### DEFYING EXPECTATIONS

Janhvi Kapoor likes to take the less predictable route with more unconventional roles **LEISURE P2**



### KHAN FACES TERROR CHARGES

Pakistani police registers a terrorism case against Imran Khan and over a dozen PTI leaders for indulging in vandalism **INTERNATIONAL P10**



### BOPANNA'S FEAT

India's Rohan Bopanna at 43 becomes oldest player to win ATP 1000 event doubles title at Indian Wells **SPORTS P12**

## Elephant dies of electrocution in Keonjhar forest



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 19: There is no let-up in elephant deaths as yet another tusker was electrocuted after it came in contact with an 11-KV transmission line at Jadipada Sahi near Basantpur village under Bamebari forest section and Champua forest range in Keonjhar district, Sunday. Three other elephants moving in the area had a close shave.

The matter came to light after villagers spotted the carcass, Sunday and informed the forest officials. Forest and power officials rushed to the spot and as usual held each other responsible for the animal's death. The sub-adult elephant died after coming in contact with 11-KV live wire, forest officials said.

The incident sparked tension in the area as locals held both the departments responsible for the animal's death. Environmentalists have expressed serious concern over the death of the elephants in regular intervals.

On being informed by locals, RCCF, Rourkela, Arun Mishra, Keonjhar DFO HD Dhanraj, Champua forest ranger Akshaya Chhtria and other forest officials rushed to the spot on Sunday morning. Post-mortem of the carcass will be conducted by vets. The pachyderm has a single tooth, they said.

"Prima facie it is an electrocution death, the jumbo came in contact with stay wire, supporting the electric pole, which was charged causing the death of tusker," DFO HD Dhanraj said. **Contd...P4**

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It took the govt a long time to realise that Amritpal has nothing to do with Amrit Kaal

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	26.4°C	26.5°C
MIN	21.6°C	19.5°C
Humidity	86%	89%
Rainfall	5.6mm	15.4mm
Forecast	Light to moderate rain	



**RAINING WOES:** Tehsil officials give away polythene sheets and dry food to an affected family after a thunderstorm damaged houses at Talakharadaha village under Pottangi block in Koraput district, Sunday

## Digital India boon for commonmen, reveals RTI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Pune, March 19: The growing popularity of digital payments in India is proving to be a blessing not only for the common man but also the cyber-crimen, as per the latest figures revealed by RBI under RTI. The RTI reply was given to Pune businessman Prafull P. Sarda, who had sought official details of all types of online-digital-cards frauds that Indian banks have suffered with invisible commonmen duping lakhs of gullible customers since 2014.

The RBI's reply was revealing and unnering...Just as the digital economy is soaring, the fraudsters and scamsters on the prowl in the virtual world are becoming bolder, said Sarda.

From January 2014 till December 2022, Indian banks have reported a total 1,40,736 frauds involving bank ATM/Debit Cards (scams of ₹507.12 crore); Credit Cards 1,37,237 cases involving ₹514.90 crore; and 61,561 Internet Banking scams of ₹354.78 crore. The growing annual figures for all these forms of convenience banking are stunning, said Sarda.

From just 71 ATM/Debit Cards frauds in 2014-2015, it peaked to 36,978 in 2019-2020, with amounts shooting up from ₹1.51 crore to ₹102.13 crore in the same period. This has now come down to 7,395 frauds worth ₹29.21 crore (2022-2023).

### CYBERCROOKS GETTING SMARTER

- From January 2014 till December 2022, Indian banks have reported a total 1,40,736 frauds involving bank ATM/Debit Cards, Credit Cards and Internet Banking scams
- From just 71 ATM/Debit Cards frauds in 2014-2015, it peaked to 36,978 in 2019-2020, with amounts shooting up from ₹1.51 crore to ₹102.13 crore in the same period
- For Credit Cards, there were 119 scams in 2014-2015 involving an amount of ₹3.41 crore, which peaked to 26,580 in 2019-2020 with the amount touching ₹74.69 crore. However, at 20,017 the number of such cases came down in 2022-2023 but involved a staggering amount of ₹93.89 crore, indicating that the commonmen are 'getting smarter' in the same period

For Credit Cards, there were 119 scams in 2014-2015 involving an amount of ₹3.41 crore, which peaked to 26,580 in 2019-2020 with the amount touching ₹74.69 crore.

However, in Credit Cards, the numbers came down to 20,017 frauds with a higher amount ₹93.89 crore lost (2022-2023), indicating that the commonmen are 'getting smarter'.

As far as Internet Banking goes, there were 42 frauds worth ₹2.20 crore (2014-2015), which topped to 20,476 with amounts lost touching ₹86.66 crore in (2020-2021). This has dropped to 8,121 instances involving ₹69.96 crore (2022-2023).

banks and other agencies, Credits Cards remain the most vulnerable to frauds, followed by ATM/Debit Cards and Internet Banking, Sarda pointed out. Additionally, based on offsite returns data provided by supervised entities, there were a staggering 2,99,765 cyber frauds involving Debit Cards/Credit Cards, with an amount of ₹322.92 crore lost (2020-2021); the instances came down to 2,21,705 but a higher amount of ₹392.54 crore was gone (2021-2022); and the scams dropped to 65,271 with an amount of ₹162.15 crore lost (April 2022 - September 2022 period). **Contd...P4**

## DJ AZEX FOUND HANGING



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 19: Popular DJ Akshay Kumar Maharana aka DJ Azex, was found hanging in his residence at Kharabela Nagar in Bhubaneswar, the police said Sunday.

Family members found him hanging in his room Saturday evening and rushed the 29-year-old DJ to the Capital Hospital here, where the doctor declared him brought dead. "Yesterday evening he was in

### FALLOUT OF LOVE TRIANGLE SUSPECTED

his room when it was raining. When we called him for dinner, he did not open the door. We then broke open the door and found him hanging from the ceiling with a bed sheet," said Bhagaban Maharana, DJ Azex's father. "At about 11.15pm Saturday, the Capital Hospital received the body of Akshaya Maharana. It came to notice that he committed suicide in his room. On the basis of the complaint lodged by the deceased's mother Laxmi Priya, a case (121/23) has been registered at the Kharabela Nagar police station under section 306 (Abetment of suicide) of the IPC. Investigation is on in this matter. The post-mortem report is awaited," said Manas Ranjan Garnaik, Zone-I ACP, Bhubaneswar. Meanwhile, Azex's best friend

Rahul claimed that a triangular love story was behind the DJ's death. He alleged that Azex's girlfriend was in relationship with another youth and they were black-mailing the popular artiste. "Azex was under mental stress because of his girlfriend for the last 15 days. Against my advice, he had paid ₹15,000 to his girlfriend. He was also planning to buy a scooter for his girlfriend," Rahul claimed.

Azex and his estranged girlfriend, student of a private medical college here, were in a relationship for the last two years. Sources claimed that Azex and the accused girlfriend had fought a few days back at the latter's residence. Police have seized the mobile phone of the deceased and other incriminating materials during search at the crime scene.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Adani Group suspends work on \$4.2bn project

New Delhi: Adani Group has suspended work on a 349 billion rupee (\$4.2 billion) petrochemical project at Mundra in Gujarat as it focuses on consolidating operations and addressing investor concerns after the Hindenburg short-seller report, according to the Press Trust of India. The group has asked vendors and suppliers to "suspend all activities of the scope of work and performance of all obligations" for Mundra Petrochem Ltd's Green PVC project "till further notice," the newspaper reported, citing mails seen by PTI. **P11**

#### Khalistanis attack Indian high commission in UK

New Delhi: India Sunday night summoned the senior-most British diplomat in Delhi over reports of some Khalistani elements pulling down the Indian flag at the Indian high commission in London during a protest, official sources said. The Ministry of External Affairs conveyed a strong message to the diplomat over the alleged incident at the Indian mission, they said. It is learnt that the Deputy Chief of the UK high commission was summoned to the MEA as high commissioner Alex Ellis is out of Delhi.

## ChatGPT set to eliminate many jobs, says CEO

AGENCIES

San Francisco, March 19: Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, the company that created ChatGPT, believes that artificial intelligence technology will reshape society as we know it, adding that he worries that AI chatbots could eliminate a lot of current jobs.

He believes it comes with real dangers, but can also be the greatest technology humanity has yet developed to drastically improve our lives, according to ABC News. "We've got to be careful here. I think people should be happy that we are a little bit scared of this," Altman was quoted as saying. When asked why he was scared about forming his company he said, "If I wasn't, you should either not trust me or be very unhappy that I'm in this job."

"It is going to eliminate a lot of current jobs, that's true. We can make much better ones. The reason to develop AI at all, in terms of impact on our lives and improving our lives and upside, this will be the greatest technology humanity has yet developed," said OpenAI CEO.

In addition, he discussed the possible effects of chatbots powered by AI on education, including their potential to encourage laziness among students. Moreover, Altman and his team want users to think of ChatGPT as a co-pilot, in any field, someone who can help you write complex computer code or solve problems.

## Putin mocks ICC warrant, visits annexed Mariupol

The port city became known around the world as a byword for death and destruction as much of it was reduced to ruins in the first months of the war, eventually falling to Russian forces in May

REUTERS

Kyiv, March 19: A day after being accused of war crimes by the International Criminal Court (ICC), President Vladimir Putin made a surprise visit to the Russian-occupied Ukrainian city of Mariupol,

scene of some of the worst devastation of his year-old invasion.

State television showed extended footage of Putin being shown around the city Saturday night, meeting rehoused residents and being briefed on reconstruction efforts by Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin.

The port city of Mariupol became known around the world as a byword for death and destruction as much of it was reduced to ruins in the first months of the war, eventually falling to Russian forces in May.

Hundreds were killed in the bombing of a theatre where families with children were sheltering. The Organisation for Security



and Cooperation and Europe (OSCE) said Russia's early bombing of a maternity hospital there was a war crime. Moscow denied

that and has said since it invaded February 24 last year that it does not target civilians. Putin's visit had the air of a ges-

ture of defiance after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant for his arrest Friday, accusing him of the war crime of deporting hundreds of children from Ukraine.

He has not publicly commented on the move, but his spokesman said it was legally "null and void" and that Russia found the very questions raised by the ICC to be "outrageous and unacceptable". The visit to Mariupol was the first that Putin has made to the Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine's Donbas region since the war started, and the closest he has come to the front lines.

While Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has made a number of trips to the battlefield

to boost the morale of his troops and talk strategy, Putin has largely remained inside the Kremlin while running what Russia calls its 'special military operation' in Ukraine.

Kyiv and its allies say the invasion is an imperialistic land grab that has killed thousands and displaced millions of people in Ukraine.

### 'PIECE OF HEAVEN'

Putin's trip to Mariupol took place in darkness. State TV showed him at the wheel of a car, driving through the city in the company of his deputy prime minister, Khusnullin, and being briefed in detail on the rebuilding of housing, bridges, hospitals, transport routes and a concert hall. **Contd...P4**

# leisure



## JASON DOESN'T FEEL ASHAMED OF HIS NEPOTISM PRIVILEGES

Jason Ritter has expressed his lack of embarrassment about being born into a family with connections in the entertainment industry. During a recent interview, the *Candy* actor said that his debut was a full-on nepotism hire, and he is thankful to his late father for it.

## GWYNETH RESPONDS TO BACKLASH ABOUT HER DIET

Gwyneth Paltrow reports on her diet and claims she eats well, after receiving objections to her 'starvation diet plan'. The actress cleared the air after she made headlines by discussing her intermittent fasting, bone broth lunches, and paleo dinners. She claimed that these techniques were 'extremely powerful and beneficial' to her.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Are you a science and technology geek? Well, today you may have a chance to use your knowledge and zoom ahead of everyone! Ganesh says even students will excel in their studies. Housewives, try your own new recipe, the oven will not blast!

**TAURUS**  
You may feel suspicious about the people around you, feels Ganesh. You are also likely to emerge victorious in visa matters. You will take time to let your loved ones know how much you care for them. Have a positive attitude and it will win many hearts for you, advises Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
You are likely to take a break from daily routine. A pleasure trip to recharge your batteries is on the charts, predicts Ganesh. Winning favours from members of the opposite sex comes naturally to you. If you love someone, you will make your move today.

**CANCER**  
Ganesh portends that you will remain invincible and unbeatable throughout the day. However, today will be as boring and uneventful as it gets. It will be just another day at office, and an equally simple day at home. There will not be any low points, but no high points either.

**LEO**  
Love, respect and quality time together – this might just be the perfect recipe for a happy family life, says Ganesh. So on this day, make it a point to spend time with your loved ones, and show them just how much you care for them and what they mean to you.

**VIRGO**  
Pay due attention to your innate feelings. A small tour may be in the offing. You will get along famously with people today, says Ganesh. Your loved ones will receive your sincere feelings and emotions. Work your magic to improve relationships more.

**LIBRA**  
All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy! You don't want to be Jack, now, do you? It's high time you took a break from your busy work schedule. Go on a vacation to recharge your batteries. There are chances that evening could bring with it some hurtful remarks from loved ones. Don't be too sensitive to everything that's said, advises Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
You are likely to get overboard with your ambitions and be loud-mouthed, says Ganesh. But do not be too forceful or severe lest you end up tarnishing your image. It is best to stay clear of conflicts in the larger scheme of things, advises Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Wisdom in words and hero in deeds – this may well be your avatar today. Expect good news at work, especially related to a thicker pay package or an increase in office floor area. Accountants and franchisees – expect to crunch good numbers today!

**CAPRICORN**  
The wait for some good news may have been too long, but it will surely find its way to you today, says Ganesh. Your focus will remain fixed on work, and you may feel like you are finally starting to like your job. This, in turn, will lead you to take some well-informed decisions about your future. And if the good news comes at the right time, you will probably be saved the effort of finding a new job.

**AQUARIUS**  
You may find your schedules running haywire today! Your workload may be daunting, especially if you're an administrator. However, Ganesh says your diligence and commitment will tide you through. And you are still ready to party in the evening. What energy!

**PISCES**  
Your business associates will marvel at your business acumen, and will respect the insights you provide for them to work with. Meanwhile, you will be busy spending quality time with your family and showing them how much they mean to you today, says Ganesh.

## Janhvi doesn't like being put in a box

**Mumbai:** Janhvi Kapoor has already made a name for herself in the film industry with some highly unconventional film choices and power-packed performances. She prefers to play characters that push her out of her comfort zone. The actress recently opened up about her desire to play quintessential glamorous roles in her films and revealed the reason behind it. When she was asked about the selection of unconventional roles, she replied, "I don't like being put

in a box. I like to take a route that is less predictable, learn from it, and prove to myself that I can do it."

"If anything feels like an easier route, it would come naturally to me. To do the glamorous roles where I can come and be in two-to-three comedy scenes and dance. I'm dying to do those kinds of roles because I think they are a lot of fun. But I feel like that's what everyone expected me to do. So I just felt the need to do the complete opposite," concluded the actress.

She has an exciting lineup on her kitty, including the sports drama *Mr. and Mrs. Mahi* and the romantic comedy *Bawaal*.

AGENCIES



## Yami shares her worst feeling

**Mumbai:** The *Lost* star, Yami Gautam says she has done projects to be seen in her initial years, but added that it's the worst feeling if it doesn't have her heart. She claims that while she began her acting career with clarity, the 'out of sight, out of mind' approach steered her toward making conventional choices.

In a recent interview, she said, "For me, the awareness was always there, right from my first film. But your real journey starts with your second film. It is not about getting success with a particular film; it is about what follows after that and how you sustain that. I think that is a bigger challenge."

The actress said there were certain decisions she took because she wanted to be seen. Over the years, she has realised that being part of something that doesn't have her heart is the 'worst' feeling. "There is a time when you become fearless and feel that, rather than doing this, it is okay to sit at home and wait," she concluded.

Her upcoming project, *Chor Nikal Ke Bhaga*, a heist thriller, will be released on Netflix.

AGENCIES



## 'Sense of humour shapes how we view the world'

**Mumbai:** Actor Kunal Kemmu, who is currently seen in the comedy web show *Pop Kaun*, shared his perspective on comedy and how it helped him learn a lot as an actor. He shared that as an actor, he wants to explore something new, and comedy helps him see things in a positive light.

Pressing the importance of comedy, he said, "There is always something new to learn, to explore, or to improvise, and I believe having a sense of humour shapes how we view the world. I also don't give much thought to how I present myself on social media and just do what comes naturally to me."

*Pop Kaun* features Kunal Khemu along with the late Satish Kaushik and many other actors. The film is currently being streamed on Disney+ Hotstar.

AGENCIES

## Zwigato shows Bhubaneswar through eyes of its working class

Viewers from Odisha, specifically Bhubaneswar, will definitely experience this film through their own lens, introspecting every frame to find familiarities, which the film delivers successfully, with a social commentary on the struggle between man and technology.

ATRI PRASAD ROUT, OP

Bhubaneswar is famous for its temples. Any film set in this city must introduce the audience to its environment, which usually begins with a montage of temple shots. But *Zwigato*, Nandita Das's latest film, shot entirely in Bhubaneswar, starts with a dream sequence on a train, which is a metaphor for its main character's life.

Manas (Kapil Sharma) is a former factory manager from Jharkhand who is now living in Bhubaneswar with his wife, sick mother, and two kids. He works as a delivery worker, through an application the film is named after: *Zwigato*. Das shows us Bhubaneswar through the eyes of Manas and his wife Pratima (Shahana Goswami), who travel the city in search of work. So, we get to see the elegant temples only when Manas has to deliver an order inside one of them.

And Das brings to the screen how labour moves in this modern metropolis, how the working class lives, how the daily wage labourers fight for work in auto stands every morning, and how there are levels of economic in-



### Film Review

equality Though the Bhubaneswar of *Zwigato* is nowhere close to the Mumbai of *CityLights* (2014), which is brutal and absolutely merciless to a migrant couple, this city has its share of discrimination and dirty tricks, visible in its separate elevators for 'service people' in gated communities and outside waiting counters for delivery workers in posh restaurants. But central to the film are the struggles of Manas, of the delivery workers: the drive for

incentives and good ratings; the race to complete the maximum number of orders in time; dealing with an algorithm, a system, that's heartless. There are plenty of opportunities for drama in all this uncertainty and imbalance.

Though Das successfully uses some of them to generate conflict, the film overall feels flat, failing to evoke any strong emotions. The experience of watching it can be compared to reading five well-researched articles on how executives use words like freedom and self-employment to sell labour exploitation in the gig economy.

Despite this, the film will go down in film history for documenting labour struggles of this century and, more importantly, for revealing the layers of inequalities that define a city like Bhubaneswar. Furthermore, it will stay in people's memories for the performances of its cast, Sharma and Goswami in particular, who are neither subtle nor over-the-top.

DIRECTOR: NANDITA DAS

CAST: KAPIL SHARMA, SHAHANA GOSWAMI

DURATION: 1H 45 M

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

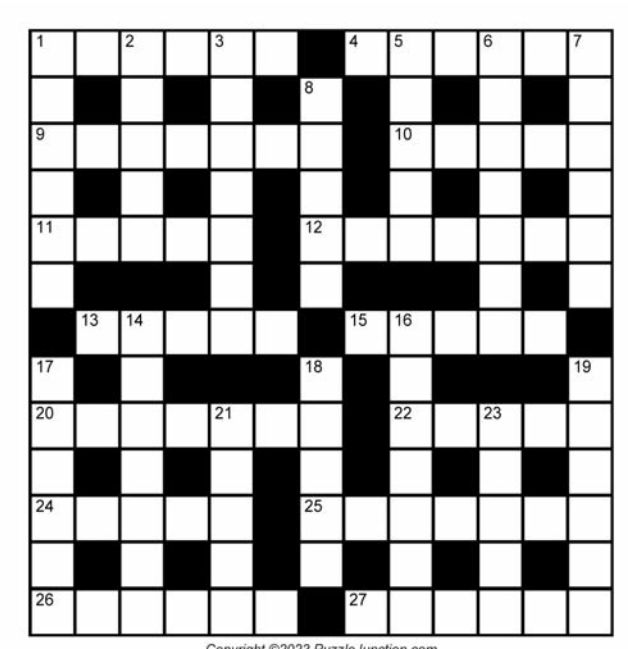


### BREVITY



### FUN post

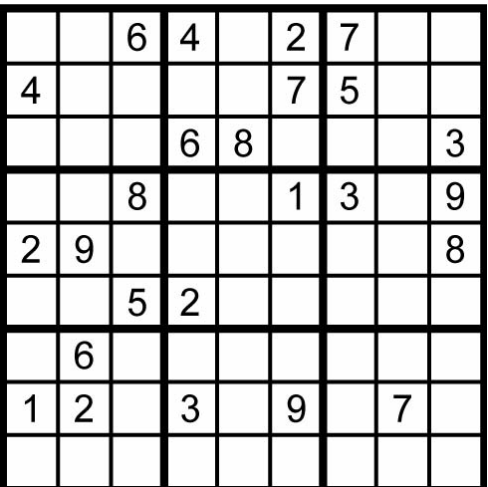
### CROSSWORD



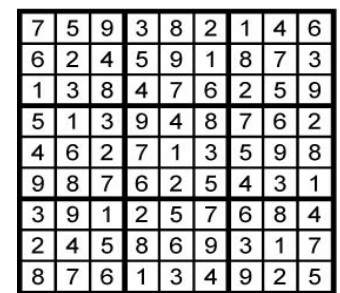
- Across
- 1 Old European coins
  - 4 Porous marine animal
  - 9 Rhine siren
  - 10 Fills to the brim
  - 11 Forbidden
  - 12 Fantasia
  - 13 Fleet of foot
  - 15 Deep ravine
  - 20 Book subdivision
  - 22 Accounting term
  - 24 Rose bush bane
  - 25 Like a letter
  - 26 Teahouse
  - 27 Very thin
  - 6 Zero
  - 7 Comes after
  - 8 Impersonator
  - 14 Exhaust (4,3)
  - 16 Pyramidal stone pillar
  - 17 Grass cutting tool
  - 18 Move about in a predatory manner
  - 19 New South Wales capital
  - 21 Singing voice
  - 23 Giant

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

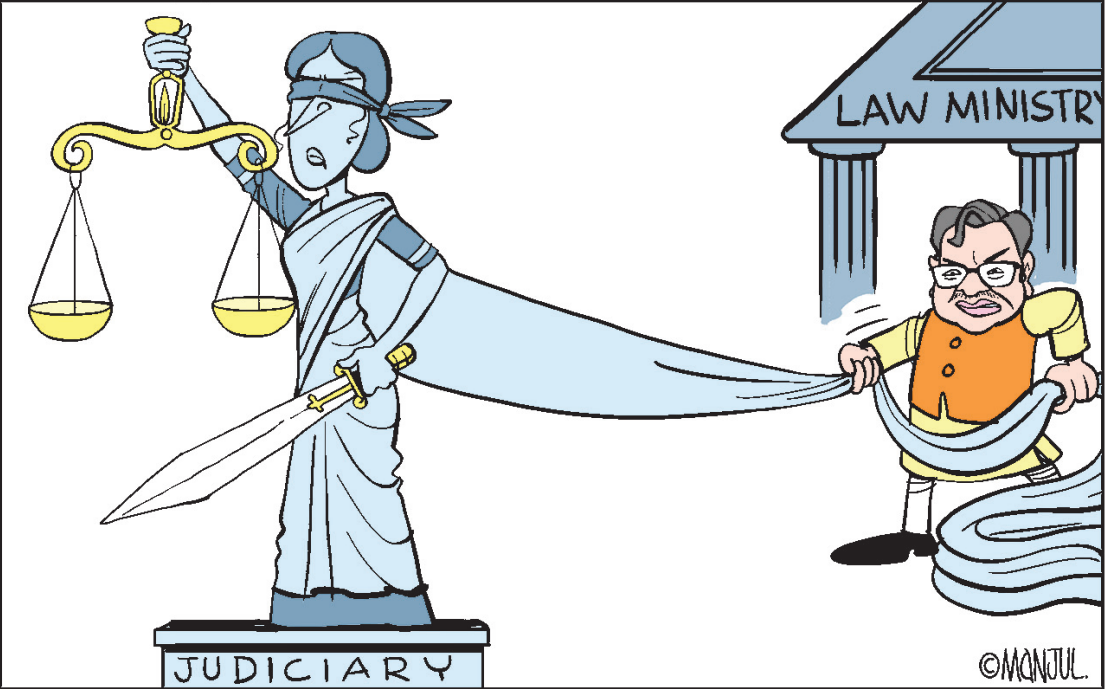


### TALENT HONOURED

Gopika Varma being awarded at the 29th Guru Pankaj Utsav and Mahari Award Presentation Ceremony at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

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

### POLITICKLE by MANJUL



### OLIC team vows to work for uplift of state farmers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: Odisha Lift Irrigation Corporation (OLIC) under the Water Resources department bagged "Water Digest Water Awards 2022-23" for 'Best Community Lift Irrigation Project' because of its outstanding efforts in the water resources management sector.

OLIC managing director-cum Water Resources additional secretary Sudhansu Mohan Samal received this award from Jal Shakti Union Minister Gajendra Singh Sekhawat March 16 in a ceremony held in New Delhi.

"The OLIC team celebrated this award and promised to render consistent effort to provide assured irrigation facilities for betterment of farmers in the state," said a department official. Development commissioner cum additional chief secretary, DoWR, Anu Garg, OLIC chairman Amaresh Patri, MD, OLIC Sudhansu Mohan Samal expressed their opinion on this occasion that the consistent effort of OILC will achieve more success in other categories with different lift irrigation projects in future.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has congratulated the Water Resources department on receiving this award. DoWR, Commerce & Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu has also expressed great pleasure for this achievement of the department as well as OILC.

"The contribution of Community Lift Irrigation Projects in the state has been empowering farmers to diversify into other crops and helping in upliftment of communities, with visible on-ground tangible changes. It has made water resources management cost effective, with given ease of implementation and high social impacts," said a department official.

# NCST seeks report on people of border areas

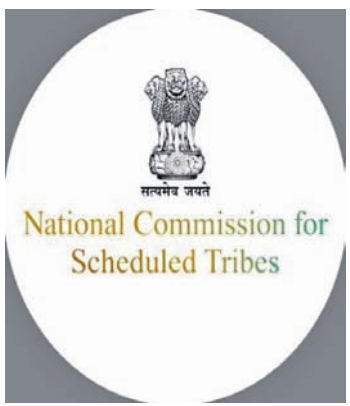
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST), the apex panel for tribal rights in the country, took cognizance of a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer and rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy seeking detailed a reply from the state Chief Secretary on the human rights conditions of tribal people living in border areas of the state within 15 days.

Alleging deprivation of basic human rights of tribal people living in the border areas of state due to apathy and negligent attitude of the bordering states, Tripathy had sought the intervention of the Commission for a permanent solution.

Odisha has border disputes with neighboring Andhra Pradesh, west Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand and more than ten thousand people have been residing in around 100 disputed villages along these disputed border areas of the state.

The petitioner claimed that the state government doesn't have proper records of the disputed villages at the borders as records and demarcations are yet to be done in the areas. He has urged the commission to initiate an investigation over the matter



in a timely manner so that the law-given rights of every individual will be protected in the poverty stricken SC, ST dominated areas of the state.

"These are classic cases of failure of the state government mechanism in acting over the issue. Due to inaction, negligence and failure of the state administration, tribal people live in lurch without bare necessities like potable drinking water, communication facilities, benefits of social welfare schemes, education and health care etc.," the petitioner alleged.

The Commission in its directive said, "The Commission has decided to investigate/inquire into the matter in pursuance of the powers con-

The Commission warned of issuing summons asking for the personal appearance of the Chief Secretary if the state government fails to submit any response within the stipulated time period

Odisha has border disputes with neighboring Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand and more than 10,000 people have been residing in around 100 disputed villages along these borders

ferred upon it under Article 338A of the Constitution of India, you are hereby requested to submit the facts and information on the action taken on the allegations/matters to the undersigned within 15 days of receipt of this notice either by post or in person or by any other means of communication."

The Commission also warned of issuing summons asking for the personal appearance of the Chief Secretary or his representative exercise the powers of Civil Court conferred on it under of Article 338A of the Constitution of India if the state government fails to submit any response within the stipulated time period.

### PAKHALA DIBAS 2023

# City salivates for soaked rice



Attendees savouring special Pakhala platter prepared by chef Smrutisree Singh at Press Club of Odisha in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



Children enjoying popular cuisine as part of Pakhala Dibas celebrations in a get-together organised by Jay Jagannath Seva Samiti Trust in Maachhua Bazar area of Cuttack, Sunday



to the taste buds of Odias but also adds benefits to their health. Nutritionist Priyanka Patnaik said that 'Pakhala' is very good for health as it refreshes people after they come from extreme heat, recharges you, and helps you get energy. 'Torani', the water in which the rice is soaked, provides a cooling effect on our body.

Orissa POST spoke with city hotels and 'Pakhala' fans to share their excitement for the day.

Nutritionist Priyanka Patnaik says that 'Pakhala' is good for health as it refreshes people after they return from extreme heat and help them recharge themselves. The water in which the rice is soaked is called 'torani' which provides a cooling effect on our body and this makes Pakhala a perfect dish to beat the summer heat, she said.

While in small hotels, one bowl of 'pakhala' is sold at ₹100 while in star hotels the price reaches ₹500 and above.

Many hotels are preparing special 'Pakhala' platters that include 'Tanka Torani', 'Koli Achara', 'Lia Pampad', 'Kadali Bhaja', 'Vegetable Paga', 'Kadali Bhaja', 'Panasa Kasa', 'Chhatu Poda', 'Gota Potala Masala', 'Mutton Kassa', 'Chingudi Checha', 'Mitha Chadchadi' etc. Master Chef India fame Smrutisree Singh has also prepared special 'Pakhala' dishes for the food lovers, which can be enjoyed at the Press Club of Odisha.

Sumanta Kumar Parida, Food and Beverage Manager of the city hotel, said, "We offer many varieties of Pakhala, such as Basi Pakhala, Saja Pakhala, Dahi Pakhala, Chipuda Pakhala, Mitha Pakhala, and Jeera Pakhala."

Head chef of Swosti Grand Uttam Das said, "We have prepared a special Pakhala platter along with veg and non-veg dishes and a variety of Pakhala plates."

The Saheed Nagar Durga Puja Committee will celebrate the day by hosting a mass Pakhala eating event.

## ବିଶ୍ୱ ମୁଖଗହ୍ୱର ଦିବସ

୨୦ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ, ୨୦୨୩

“ଆମେ ନିଜ ମୁଖଗହ୍ୱର ପାଇଁ ଗର୍ବ ଅନୁଭବ କରିବା, ସୁସ୍ଥ ଶରୀର ପାଇଁ ନିଜ ମୁଖଗହ୍ୱରର ଯତ୍ନ ନେବା”

### ପ୍ରମୁଖ ମୁଖଗହ୍ୱର ରୋଗ

- ▶ ଦନ୍ତ କ୍ଷୟ
- ▶ ମାଡିରୁ ରକ୍ତସ୍ରାବ
- ▶ ଦୁର୍ଗନ୍ଧ
- ▶ ତୁଟିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଦାନ୍ତ
- ▶ ମୁଖ ଗହ୍ୱର କର୍କଟ

### ମୁଖ ଗହ୍ୱର ସୁସ୍ଥ ଓ ନିରୋଗ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ

- ଦୈନିକ ୨ ଥର (ସକାଳୁ ଉଠିବା ପରେ ଓ ରାତ୍ରୀ ଭୋଜନ ପରେ) ଦାନ୍ତ ଘଷନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରତିଥର ୫ ମିନିଟ୍ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଘଷନ୍ତୁ ।
- ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଖାଇବା ପରେ ଭଲଭାବେ ୪-୫ ଥର କୁଲି କରନ୍ତୁ ।
- ରତୁ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଉପଲକ୍ଷ ହେଉଥିବା ଫଳ ଓ ପନିପରିବା ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଖାଆନ୍ତୁ ।
- ତମାଖୁ ବର୍ଜନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।
- ଅନ୍ତତଃ ବର୍ଷକୁ ଥରଟିଏ ନିଜର ମୁଖ ଗହ୍ୱର ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

ସରକାରୀ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରେ ମୁଖଗହ୍ୱର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଓ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ବିନା ମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ ।

ସାଧୁ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା

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Bhubaneswar: Odisha will observe the 'Pakhala Dibas', marking the popularity of the state's main staple food, Monday. The initiative was started in 2015 by Odias to promote and celebrate the cuisine worldwide March 20 every year. The dish not only caters

# Handloom expo begins today



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 19:** A state level handloom expo, sponsored by the Development Commissioner for Handlooms in the Textile Ministry of the Union government, is being organised at Ekamra Haat in Unit-3 here Monday. Boyanika on behalf of the Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts department of Odisha is organising the event. Handloom, Textiles and

Handicraft department Minister Rita Sahu will inaugurate the expo and principal secretary of the department Arabintha Kumar Padhee will be present on the occasion.

Leading PWCs of the state, top handloom organisations and corporations and major handloom clusters from different states of the country are participating in the event.

Around 200 stalls have been set up for the participants from over 12 states to display an array of

hand-woven products. The exhibition will facilitate the people of the City as well as its adjoining areas to purchase genuine handloom products directly from weavers of different parts of the country under one umbrella.

The expo serves an additional goal of providing the state weavers with the opportunity of interacting with their counterparts from other parts of the nation. Local weavers can exchange their skills and techniques and discuss on topics of cost effectiveness, colour and design patterns prevailing in contemporary markets.

There will be active media intervention in the event. Boyanika is committed for all round socio-economic development of the weavers of the state. It is implementing various developmental programmes for their welfare. It has been exploring every new horizon of marketing by soliciting cooperation from major media platforms.



**MOMENTOUS MILESTONE:** Minister of State, Rural Development Department Pritiranjan Garai with dignitaries during the launching ceremony of 'Naveen@25', a book on CM's unprecedented political journey at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

## CONTINUED FROM P1

### Digital India boon...

Similarly, digital payments cyber frauds for Debit Cards, Credit Cards and UPI payments were 4,49,684 with Rs 636.12 crore siphoned off (2020-2021); 3,59,791 scams with the amount lost shooting up to Rs 816.40 crore (2021-2022); and frauds dropped by over 50 per cent, 148,887 instances with Rs 418.31 crore lost (April 2022 - September 2022 period).

The RBI said it had taken a series of measures to arrest these frauds with at least 16 circulars or advisories to banks, directing them to initiate suitable remedial steps to prevent such frauds.

The regulator has also suggested strong Self Regulatory Organisation for Payment System Operators, Additional Factor of Authentication, Mandatory PIN Authentication, Alert Systems, Only Domestic Card Usage Mechanism, Immediate Incident Reporting Mechanism, Risk Mitigation Measures and Two Factor Authentication to check such scams.

Sarda said that while the government's measures are indeed laudable, the official RTI data indicates that there is scope for more to ensure that the banks always remain a step ahead of the online swindlers so that the money of the ordinary people is safe and secure during digital transactions.

### High drama...

According to the police, Gandhi stated in Srinagar during the Bharat Jodo Yatra that "I have heard that women are still being sexually assaulted", and since the Yatra had passed through Delhi also, they wanted to ascertain if any victim had approached the Congress leader here so that they can initiate a probe into the matter.

The police had asked him to give details of these victims so that security could be provided to them, an official said.

Terming it a serious matter, Special Commissioner of Police Hooda said after Gandhi made his remark, they conducted a local inquiry to collect details if any woman had approached Gandhi during the Yatra's Delhi leg about their ordeal. "But no such incident came to the notice of our officials also nor did we find any victim," the officer said.

Hooda said that after he failed to collect any information in this regard, they decided to approach the Congress leader himself and accordingly, a notice with a questionnaire was also sent to him seeking details of victims who approached him about sexual harassment.

"We tried to contact him (Gandhi) but he was abroad then. So, today, I, along with my team, went to his residence and communicated to his staff about the same," he said.

The officer said he met Gandhi and urged him to provide details. This was the third time that Gandhi was approached in this regard, police said, adding they want to initiate a probe into the matter as soon as they get details about the victims.

"After we get details, we want to ensure that legal action is taken in the matter at the earliest and there should be no loss of evidence

and no victim should be further victimised or abused," he added.

The development comes amid allegations by the Congress and other opposition parties that the Central government was misusing its agencies to target political rivals.

### Putin mocks ICC...

State media said he visited a new residential neighbourhood that had been built by Russian military with the first people moving in last September.

"Do you live here? Do you like it?" Putin was shown asking residents. "Very much. It's a little piece of heaven that we have here now," a woman replied, clasping her hands and thanking Putin for "the victory". Residents have been "actively" returning, Khusnullin told Putin. Mariupol had a population of half a million people before the war and was home to the Azovstal steel plant, one of Europe's largest, where Ukrainian fighters held out for weeks in underground tunnels and bunkers before being forced to surrender.

"The downtown has been badly damaged," Khusnullin said. "We want to finish (reconstruction) of the centre by the end of the year, at least the facade part. The centre is very beautiful." There was no immediate reaction to the visit from the Ukrainian government.

Mariupol is in the Donetsk region, one of four largely Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine that Putin moved in September to annex in an action rejected as illegal by most countries at the United Nations General Assembly.

### Elephant dies...

"Since the insulator was broken, the stay wire got charged as the electric pole was weak, it was supposed to be replaced, but unfortunately that was not done, the incident could have been avoided," he added. Tata Power's superintending engineer Narayan Das, SDO, Joda Dibyanjan Sahu and senior officials of the Power department also reached the spot. Das said as per government rules, the Forest department has to inform them in advance about the movement of elephants in the area where power lines are passing and accordingly they disconnect the power supply. They had disconnected the power supply after being informed about elephant movement in the area, Friday but received no such information, Saturday for which the tusker was electrocuted.

Reports said that the power officials, forest officials, railway officials and NHAi authorities are regularly conducting coordination meeting to check the elephant deaths. However, despite that the animals are regularly falling prey to deaths in frequent intervals.

Rising elephant death has become a cause of concern for environmentalists in the state. Talking to mediapersons, forest and animal rights activist Biswajit Mohanty demanded immediate arrest of electricity officials as they neglected safety features which was responsible for the elephant death.

# Pandian takes stock of govt projects in Nabarangpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 19:** As directed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, GT secretary V K Pandian visited Nabarangpur district March 17 and 18, and made field assessment of various development schemes and projects of the government. He interacted with citizen groups to take their feedback on the implementation of the government programmes and suggestions to improve service delivery.

While in Nabarangpur block, Pandian offered prayer in Maa Bhandargarhani temple. He dis-

cussed the development of the temple and the surrounding area as a tourist destination with the local community and public representatives. He asked the collector to prepare a plan of action in consultation with the local public representatives and local community within 15 days.

He then visited the SSD High School at Jatabal under Papadahandi block and interacted with the students and teachers there. Later, he visited Bidri shrine under Jharigam block. After offering prayers, he discussed with the Mission Shakti groups as well



as temple committee members on the overall development of the shrine. He suggested them to develop the approach road to the temple and construct a guard wall on the backside of the temple to avoid water logging within its premises.

He also visited the Satighat Minor Irrigation site and informed of the proposed irrigation project, advising the concerned officials to prepare plan, estimation and design for the project.

The secretary, during his time in

Umerkote block, first offered prayer to Baba Bhairabnath at the historical shrine of Podagada. He stated that he will apprise the Chief Minister for overall development of this historical location of Nabarangpur. Then he proceeded to Indoor Stadium in the block.

He also visited the RMC yard and interacted with the members of Mission Shakti and Farmer Producer groups present there. He assured support of the state government in their activities. He assured them that Maize development will be an area of focus for the government.

## 'Dental treatment are advanced & painless'

POST NEWS NETWORK

### WORLD ORAL HEALTH DAY

**Bhubaneswar, March 19:** Oral health and diseases are a major health concern for many countries and negatively impact people throughout their lives. If not maintained properly oral diseases lead to pain and discomfort, social isolation and loss of self-confidence, and they are often linked to other serious health issues. Good news

is most oral health conditions are largely preventable and can be treated in their early stages if the population is aware.

Subashish Behera (Root Canal Specialist) said, "Dentistry, as one of the oldest branches of medicine, is often undervalued. The industry has expanded leaps and bounds with constant advance-

ments in technology and treatment types. Gone are the days when dental treatments and dentists visit were a horror story. Today dental treatments are so advanced that they are painless and less invasive."

March 20 the world unites to help reduce the burden of oral diseases, which affect individuals, health systems and economies everywhere.

# KIIT offers jobs to 125 village youths



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 18:** KIIT University founder Achyuta Samanta handed over appointment letters to 125 unemployed youths of Patia village in a mega job fair organised Saturday, taking the tally of total employees from the village in the KIIT family to 325.

200 people from the village were already engaged in KIIT, KISS and KIMS.

"Today is a happy moment for all of us. We have given appointment letters to 125 youths of the Patia village acting in accordance to a request made by the citizens of the village," said Samanta. The

transformation of KIIT into one of the premier centres of learning in the country could not have been possible without the support of the villagers of Patia, he added.

During his visit to the village last year, Samanta had assured the villagers to consider their demands for engaging the unemployed village youth at KIIT.

Members of Patia Gram Mangala Samiti and corporator of the ward actively participated in the event. The Gram Mangal Samiti members credited the KIIT University for giving identity to the village and fostering its growth and development. "The founder has deep affection for the people of the village," said a member.

# 72% of Indians snack more when they are happy

There is a strong link between the state of mind and what one eats. When stress is skyrocketing and one's mood is plunging, it's only natural to turn to comfort food.

Calling for happiness to be given greater priority, ahead of International Day of Happiness, 'STTEM - Safety, Technology, Taste, Ease & Mood Uplifter' - The India Snacking Report (Volume I) by Godrej Yummiez, reveals that 72 per cent Indians confessed to snacking more when they are happy, highlighting how snacking is perceived as a mood lifter. Amongst those who connect snacking with their mood, 70 per cent of Indians feel satisfied, happy, and excited after consuming snacks.

When compared across regions, the report highlights that Eastern India showed the maximum skew

with 75 per cent of its citizens snacking more when they are happy. North, West, and South India showed near similar levels of emotions scoring 72 per cent, 67 per cent, and 74 per cent respectively. The above findings get even more corroborated when looked at across cities.

Amongst cities, people from Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata, snack more when they are happy. With Delhi topping the list at 81 per cent, followed by Chennai and Hyderabad at 77 per cent each, and Kolkata at 75 per cent, indicating that locals of these cities find snacks as mood uplifters. Besides, the average for Mumbai stood at 68 per cent, and the average for Ahmedabad residents opting for snacks when happy is 67 per cent. This is followed by Pune and Bengaluru at 66 per cent each,



Lucknow at 62 per cent and Jaipur at 61 per cent.

Another aspect that came up in the report was the food-mood connection in both genders, revealing that 74 per cent women and 70 per cent men snack more when they are happy.

Abhay Parnerkar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Godrej Tyson Foods Limited (GTFL), said,

"As a category thought leader, Godrej Yummiez understands consumers well and shaped trends redefining the frozen ready-to-cook segment. The India Snacking Report is one such initiative by Godrej Yummiez to analyze and predict snacking trends. The report clearly showcases consumers perceive snacking as a mood lifter. Going forward, the dynamics that

'STTEM - Safety, Technology, Taste, Ease & Mood Uplifter' - The India Snacking Report by Godrej Yummiez, reveals that 72 per cent Indians confessed to snacking more when they are happy

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will shape India's snacking habits will be based on the acronym STTEM- Safety, Technology, Taste, Ease & Mood Uplifter- the five pillars. Speaking specifically of the mood pillar, snacking will have a larger influence over both consumers and brands."

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# Losses grow as OMC's mining capacity reduced



FILE PHOTO OF DAITARI MINES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, March 19:** The state pollution control board (SPCB) has revoked the enhanced environmental clearance (EC) limit to the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) for mining of iron ore from Daitari mines in Keonjhar district to 50 per cent over the latter's failure in complying with certain rules, sources informed Sunday. The SPCB has revoked OMC's environmental clearance from six million tonne per annum (MTPA) to three MTPA, in its order dated July 11, 2022.

Since then, OMC is extracting iron ore only 50 per cent of its total capacity and is suffering huge losses.

Various mining firms including OMC have taken lease of mines and are extracting iron ore. However, the Odisha government is allegedly

withdrawing as the OMC failed to fulfill certain conditions and norms. The 50 per cent reduction in production capacity has hit the functioning of various industrial firms dependent on iron ore supplied by the OMC. It is time for OMC to get back in the game by abiding by the rules so that it gets the permission to extract six million tonne annually. If it doesn't do so, many, including the Odisha government will suffer losses.

When contacted, Bibhuti Behera, deputy director, Mines department in Jajpur confirmed that the production capacity of OMC has been reduced to three MTPA due to environmental clearance.

A similar situation exists in the chromite mines under Sukinda block in Jajpur district. Several chromite mines belonging to companies like Balasore Alloys, Jindal, Kalrangi and Kalrangiatra are lying closed for the past few years. As a result, over 5,000 people earning their livelihood from these mines have been rendered jobless. Unable to find a job in Odisha, these people have migrated to other states.

It is claimed that mining started in Sukinda region from 1946. However, no one has the answer as to how much chromite has been extracted from these mines. Also no one is aware about the amount that still can be extracted.

As it did not receive the environmental clear, OMC was forced to decrease its extraction to 50 per cent of its capacity. Since July 2022, iron ore prices have gone up by 27 per cent. As it is not being able to extract its full capacity from the Daitari mines, the OMC is suffering huge losses. In the process, the Odisha government is also losing out on revenues.

Sources said the SPCB had given its consent allowing OMC to enhance production from three MTPA to six MTPA in July, 2021. However, the permission for mining of an excess three million tonne has been



HOLY DIP: People take a dip at the confluence of rivers Rushikulya and Badanadi near Aska in Ganjam district to observe Maha Baruni Snana, Sunday

## Leopard, deer hides seized, 1 held

AGENCIES

**Boudh, March 19:** A team of STF with the help of Forest officials of Boudh division arrested a wildlife criminal Saturday. Leopard and deer skins and other incriminating materials were seized from the possession of the accused.

Sources said Sunday that acting on a tip-off a team of STF con-



ducted raids with the help of Forest department officials

Saturday on vehicles plying on the road connecting Chhatranga to Harabhanga under Harabhanga police station in Boudh district. They intercepted Girish Kumar Sahoo and discovered the valuable animal skins from his possession following which he was arrested.

A case (No U/s 379/411/120(B) IPC r/w Sec.51 of Wild Life Protection Act, 1972) has been

registered in this connection against the accused. STF officials said that the accused will be forwarded Monday to the Court of JMFC in Harabhanga in Boudh.

The officials added that the seized skins will be sent to director WII in Dehradun for forensic examination. Further investigation is going on to find out about the associates of the accused, they said.

## 2 juveniles held for outraging girl's modesty

AGENCIES

**Kendrapada, March 19:** Two juveniles have been sent to a home in Angul by the Principal Magistrate of the Juvenile Justice Board in Kendrapada for their alleged involvement in outraging the modesty of a minor girl.

According to Kendrapada SDPO Jayant Mohapatra, an 11-year-old girl was playing near her house two days back when the two juveniles arrived at the spot, tore her dress and molested her. The incident happened at a place under the Kudanagari police limits.

The victim's family members later lodged an FIR at Kudanagari police station and acting on the FIR, police registered a case and arrested the two accused. They were later produced before the Juvenile Justice Board which sent them to the Angul observation Home, police said Sunday.



Similarly, Marshaghai police March 17 last had also registered a case against a juvenile for his alleged involvement in outraging the modesty of a minor girl March 14 evening. The victim's father lodged an FIR at Marshaghai police station. The juvenile had fled from the area after committing the crime and a hunt is on to nab him, police said.

## Odisha tops list in human deaths by elephant attacks

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, March 19:** Even as the government has increased the focus on conservation of wildlife, instances of human-animal conflict have resulted in loss of life of both in the last couple of decades. The worst sufferers among animals are elephants. A large number of elephants have lost their lives due to various reasons ranging from electrocution, poisoning and accidents between 2019-20 and 2021-22 as per information available from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest.

The ministry data said that a total of 198 elephants were killed by electrocution across India, 41 by trains, 27 by poachers and eight died by poisoning during the same period.

On the other hand, a large number of human beings have also lost their lives in the same period due to elephant attacks. Elephants have killed 1,579 humans in three years - 585 in 2019-20, 461 in 2020-21 and 533 in 2021-22.

As far as the states are concerned, Odisha recorded the highest number of deaths in elephant attacks at 322, followed by Jharkhand at 291, West Bengal at 240, Assam at 229, Chhattisgarh at 183 and Tamil Nadu at 152.

So far as the deaths of elephants are concerned, out of the 198 caused by electrocution, Assam recorded 36, Odisha 30 and Tamil Nadu 29. Assam (15 out of 41) also



264 ELEPHANTS DIED DUE TO ELECTROCUTION, POACHING AND ACCIDENTS IN 3 YEARS

PARL PANEL PULLS UP MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST FOR LARGE NUMBER OF ELEPHANT DEATHS

had the highest number of elephant deaths caused by trains, followed by Odisha (eight) and West Bengal (five). Poaching deaths were the highest in Meghalaya (11) while poisoning deaths were the highest in Assam (seven).

The Ministry while replying to a question in Parliament recently said that assessments of human-wildlife conflicts indicate that the main causes include habitat loss, growth of population of wild animals, changes in cropping patterns that attract wild animals to farmlands, movement of wild animals from forests to human dominated landscapes for food and fodder, movement of human beings to forests for illegal collection of forest produce,

habitat degradation due to growth of invasive alien species, etc.

The Parliament Standing Committee on Environment and Forests in its March, 2023 report took note of the human-animal conflict. The committee noted that Project Tiger and Project Elephant are crucial to the initiatives of the Ministry relating to wildlife conservation, not just from an ecological standpoint but also for its societal and economic value.

"The initiatives of the Ministry, or the lack of it, have a direct bearing not just to the project but also to the human population living in these vulnerable areas. With increasing reports of man-animal conflicts, it becomes even more important that the Ministry sharpens its focus towards these projects and also allocate more funds for meeting necessary expenditures. The committee therefore recommends the Ministry ensures that funds allocated in 2022-23 be optimally utilised, the panel said in its report.

## Sarafgarh set to become favourite tourist spot

Eco-tourism site inaugurated by CM Naveen Patnaik earlier in March

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, March 19:** The Sarafgarh eco-tourism site which is located in Lephripara block of Sundargarh district is a treasure of green beauty in a unique form of nature.

The construction of this eco-tourism site started December 16, 2016 at Badhunjharua village under Sarafgarh gram panchayat. Due to the continuous efforts of staff of the Sundargarh and Lephripara forest departments and cooperation of local people's representatives and villagers, Sarafgarh has now been recognised as a major tourist destination in the district.

Surrounded by green hills and dense forests, this eco-tourism des-



tinuation is visited by thousands of tourists from both inside and outside Odisha.

Accommodation facilities in air-conditioned tents on a small hill, lovely views of the surrounding lakes and forests, good and tasty food, boating and trekking are the main attractions of this tourist destination. A children's park, high-quality play equipment, newly-constructed ropeway, cycling, zip line, watch tower and pre-fabricated cottages add to the charm of the Sarafgarh tourist site.

The Sarafgarh tourist destination was inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, March 10th. Sundargarh DFO Pradeep Mirase expressed hope that many poor families will find new livelihood through Sarafgarh eco-tourism and it will become the favourite destination for tourists from both inside and outside Odisha in the near future.

## WOMAN KILLED IN CROC ATTACK

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapada, March 19:** In the latest human-reptile conflict, a 45-year-old woman lost her life when a crocodile attacked her while she was fishing Saturday in a creek in this district.

Jamboo Marine police station IIC Paresh Mohanty said Sunday that Kausalya Mandal of Kharanashi village went to catch fish with some fellow villagers at the nearby Naubadi jora.

While she was catching fish an estuarine crocodile pounced on her and dragged her into the middle of the water body. The locals later carried out a rescue and search operation and found the body of the woman floating on the river with multiple injuries.

They retrieved the body and handed it over to police officials. A case of unnatural death has been registered and the body has been sent for post-mortem, the IIC said.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Notice is hereby given to the public in general that, (a)Original Registered Sale deed No. 275 Dt. 16.02.2009 executed by Akhya Kumar Ranjan in favour of Smt. Ramamani Sutar relating to property bearing Khata No. 7 and Plot No. 4156 Area Ac. 0.045 Dec. and Plot No. 4157 Area Ac. 0.062 Dec. and (b) ROR (Patta) of Khata No. 1268/139 and Plot No. 4148/4827 Area Ac. 0.110 Dec. standing in the name of Smruti Ranjan Nayak (which are Link deeds) situated at Mouza Byree, Tahasil-Darpan, SRO/PS-Badachana, Dist-Jajpur have been lost. If the same are found please contact Punjab National Bank, MCC Cuttack, Plot No-584, Surya Vihar, Near Nishamani Convention, Link Road, Cuttack. Further, The Punjab National Bank intends to create Equitable Mortgage in respect of the property details of which are given in the notice for the purpose of loan. Any person claiming any interest or title in the property or otherwise having any objection can make representation to Punjab National Bank, MCC Cuttack within seven days (07 Days) of the date of such notice.

Cuttack Assistant General Manager  
Dt. 13.03.2023 MCC Cuttack

### WORLD HOUSE SPARROW DAY

## Ganjam outfits aiding growth in sparrow population

SMRUTI RANJAN MAHALIK, OP

**Berhampur, March 19:** The sparrow is one of the first birds that come to mind from our childhood days. There was a time when people would wake up from their sleep to the chirping of these birds in the Silk City and in villages on the outskirts of this town. Sparrows could be found in most places including even in residential abodes. Sparrows eat all types of food grains and worms; so it is easy for them to survive in any condition.

However in recent times the population of sparrows is declining rapidly in Ganjam district. Many experts are of the opinion that if this continues, sparrows may well become extinct in the near future.

To raise awareness and protect the house sparrows, 'World Sparrow Day' is observed every year March 20. Environmentalists and bird lovers have pointed out that the sparrow population has almost been halved in Odisha since the Super Cyclone in 1999. The house sparrow is in-



cluded in the IUCN red list due to remarkable decrease in its population during the last 25 years.

The modern lifestyle and the development of concrete jungles have led to the rapid decline in the number of sparrows. Also climate change and the general warming of the planet earth is affecting the sparrow population.

Sparrows usually build their nests with straws and twigs preferably in houses made of mud.

However, with cement replacing mud even in village houses, the sparrows are not finding any place to breed. This has resulted in sharp decline in house sparrow population.

However, there is some hope for this species with a number of voluntary outfits coming to its aid. Sparrow population has substantially increased in Dharmanagar, Gunthabandha, Biribadia, Baghajhari, Lanjia and Balakrushnapur areas in

Kukudakhandi block of Ganjam district due to the efforts of these organisations.

Local outfit 'Anchalik Vikash Parishad' was the first to launch efforts for the protection of house sparrows in Gunthabandha village in 2011. The outfit first brought two house sparrows and set up artificial nests with clay pots. Since then the population has grown and now more than 300 sparrows can be found in the village. Villagers also contributed

by providing the sparrows with food and water and above all temperatures which the birds preferred.

Padmabati Samal, a resident of Gunthabandha village said that before the Super Cyclone a large number of sparrows could be seen in the village. However, they disappeared with the climatic disaster. Now however, she is happy as the cacophony of the birds have returned.

Another resident, Rajalakshmi Mohanty informed that her residence has a nest for the house sparrow where some chicks have recently been born.

When contacted, Sagar Kumar Patra, president and Bijendra Majhi, secretary of 'Anchalik Vikash Parishad' said that the house sparrows are now constructing their own nests and their population is increasing. "Initially we had to build nests for the birds. Now however, the birds themselves are building the nests. It proves that their population is increasing," both said. They added that in future steps will be taken for protection of the sparrows.

### Jilted lover kills girl

**Bargarh:** A 15-year-old girl was strangled to death by her jilted lover at Khuntapali village under Bijepur police limits in Bargarh district who later dumped her body in a well, police said Sunday.

The deceased girl from Saipali village, which falls under the jurisdiction of Bijepur police station area, had been missing since March 15. Subsequently, the family members had lodged a complaint at the police station, the report said.

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**NO. CWC/RO PAT/ENGG/PN/2022-23**  
**PRESS NOTICE**  
(E NIT\_RO-PAT/ENGG/22-23/16)

CWC invites on-line tenders from the contractors for the following work:

SL	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. Lakh)	Last date of on-line submission
1	Re-Construction of Office Block alongwith repairing of potholes in internal road at CW, Bajitpada (Odisha).	35.76	27.03.2023

Detailed Tender Notice along with Conditions of Contract and Notice Inviting E-Tender may be seen and downloaded from the CWC's website [www.cewacor.nic.in](http://www.cewacor.nic.in) or e-tender website [www.cwceprocure.com](http://www.cwceprocure.com) or CPP Portal <http://eprocure.gov.in/publish/app>. Further Corrigendum/Addendum to this Tender, if any, will be published on above websites only. Press advertisement in Newspapers shall not be issued for the same. **Executive Engineer**



Whenever in your life, you meet with a hardship, take it as a boon from the Divine's Grace and it will become so.

THE MOTHER



## Macron's 'Retirement'

France is in turmoil due to the government's desperate measure to reform the retirement age changing it from 62 to 64. It is not simply a question of pushing the age limit or improving the country's financial position as claimed by the government. It raises crucial issues of employability of the young population and the physical stamina and emotional life of aged employees. Women, it is feared, will be the worst sufferers.

The reforms are a part of French President Emmanuel Macron's electoral pledge to make France's welfare system more sustainable. The trouble is he had opposed the reforms during his first term. But, he fought the election for his second term promising to go ahead with the reforms. Now, the French government contends that with an increase in life expectancy, these reforms have become imperative for the country.

Prime Minister Elizabeth Borne stated that the minimum retirement age to be entitled to a full pension will be gradually increased by three months every year, starting this year. It means from 2027, people will have to work for at least 43 years to become eligible for a full pension. Those who would fail to meet the criterion will have to work till 67 years so as to retire with full pensions.

As a large number of people vehemently expressed their opposition to the new arrangement, the Left parties and the country's trade unions resisted the reforms tooth and nail. The conservatives and Far-Right parties also rallied behind the aggrieved population. This made the passage of the Bill in the French Parliament impossible, forcing the Prime Minister to use a controversial constitutional provision that enables the government to bypass the legislature to make the law. This has only added fuel to fire.

The pension reform project raises, among other things, the question of how time should be divided between work and leisure. A recent study in Europe used data collected since 1975 to ascertain how the feeling of well-being changes as people age. It has monitored successive generations and come out with the findings that the feeling of well-being peaks between the ages of 60 and 69, even rising beyond that expressed by young people. There are many reasons for this "peak of happiness" at an age that more or less coincides with retirement, but they are related to the extra free time that marks the end of a person's working life, when people are still – on the whole – in good health. There is a relationship between the subjective feeling of well-being and the amount of free time people have, i.e. their leisure time. Some studies have even shown that in wealthy societies, the effect of leisure on well-being is stronger than that of income.

The survey distinguishes between active and passive leisure. Active leisure activities involve using specific skills for work including writing and taking part in sports. Passive leisure activities are those that do not require much skill and are aimed at immediate gratification such as entertainment, listening to music, watching television, visiting amusement parks and rest.

Raising of retirement age and requirements on career lengths will specifically affect the most vulnerable – women. This segment of the population is set to be the biggest loser with the new 43-year career requirement. Many women are forced to temporarily quit work to raise families and rejoin after lengthy gaps. According to the proposed reforms, these women will have to still put in 43 years of work or turn 67 to avail full retirement benefits.

Another area of concern is that a high employment rate for older workers, as envisaged in the reforms, does not prevent a low unemployment rate for young people. This is why the young population is so dismayed. The 2010 reform that raised the retirement age from 60 to 62 in 2018 tends to confirm their fears. Though, it has resulted in an increase in the employment of older people, it has caused a marginal increase in unemployment causing sufferings to the youth.

The current state of affairs in France does not augur well for the President after his recent hard earned victory. Macron seems to have taken great risks and he may be reduced to a lame duck Presidency going by the mood of the legislators and the people.



George Soros

**THE COUNTRIES OF THE FORMER SOVIET EMPIRE, EAGER TO ASSERT THEIR INDEPENDENCE, EAGERLY AWAIT DEFEAT OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY IN UKRAINE**

It is exactly one month ago that I gave a speech on the eve of the Munich Security Conference. Since then, so many remarkable things have happened – and have happened so fast – that it is worth comparing my predictions of a month ago with actual developments.

The biggest changes have occurred in the global climate system. By this, I mean actual climate events and climate scientists' understanding of those events. The main message I wanted to convey in Munich was that the global climate system is greatly dependent on what happens within the Arctic Circle. The Arctic Circle climate system used to be separate from the global climate system. Winds used to blow in a predictable counter-clockwise direction; but, because of increased human interference, the separation between the Arctic climate system and the global climate system no longer prevails.

Indeed, cold air now leaks from the Arctic Circle and is replaced by warm air sucked up from outside. Consequently, the Arctic Circle has warmed up four times faster than the rest of the world over the last four decades, and the rate of warming is dangerously accelerating. Since my speech, temperatures in the Arctic Circle have soared over 20° Celsius above normal, setting records and intensifying concerns about the rate at which the Greenland ice sheet is melting.

Climate scientists' understanding of the warming process has also taken a big step forward. They have been able to prove that the release of methane, a far more potent and dangerous greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, is greater than can be explained by the sources of emissions associated with human activity. This finding implies the existence of other sources – for example, increasing methane emissions from the warming permafrost – result from human disturbance of nature.

An increasing number of climate scientists believe it would

**FOCUS WAR IN UKRAINE**

# MUNICH PREDICTIONS



**Putin is desperate for a ceasefire, but he does not want to admit it. Chinese President Xi Jinping is in the same boat. But US President Joe Biden is unlikely to jump at this seeming opportunity to negotiate a ceasefire, because he has pledged that the US will not negotiate behind Zelenskyy's back**

be appropriate to declare a climate emergency, because, at the current rate, global warming is bound to exceed 1.5°C. As Sir David King, chief science adviser to the British government under Gordon Brown and currently the head of the Climate Crisis Advisory Group, said last month, we need to "reduce emissions rapidly and remove excess greenhouse gases, but, most importantly and urgently, freeze the Arctic." That's quite a large programme, given the fact that we are already behind schedule.

The other domain where important changes have taken place is Russia's war against Ukraine. Until October, Ukraine was winning on the battlefield. Then, Russia, with the help of Iran, introduced drones on a large scale. Their aim was to undermine Ukrainians' morale by depriving the civilian population of electricity, heat, and water. This put Ukraine on the defensive.

The regular Russian army is in desperate straits. It is badly led, ill-equipped, and gravely demoralised. President Vladimir Putin recognised this and took a desperate gamble. He turned to

Yevgeny Prigozhin, who had marshalled an army of mercenaries called the Wagner Group and was eager to prove that his forces could outperform the regular army. Putin allowed Prigozhin to recruit prisoners from Russia's jails. With the former convicts' help, and at an enormous cost to their and other mercenaries' lives, Wagner started to gain territory around the town of Bakhmut while the regular army remained stymied or was losing ground elsewhere.

Putin's gamble worked – up to a point. The regular army feeling threatened, started waging a bureaucratic war against Prigozhin – which they won. They saw to it that Prigozhin was prohibited from recruiting more prisoners and supplied Wagner fighters with the wrong types of munitions. In recent weeks, Prigozhin went public with his complaints, an action that put Putin in a difficult position. At first, Putin tried to help Prigozhin, but the establishment supported the regular army. Together, they convinced Putin that Prigozhin poses a threat to his continued rule.

Ukraine is taking advantage of

this Russian infighting. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy consulted his army's leaders, and they unanimously recommended putting Prigozhin's army through the proverbial meat grinder while it is so disadvantaged. Ukrainian forces will thus be able to mount a counterattack when they receive the up-to-date armaments, in particular Leopard 2 tanks, they have been promised. That should happen around May, but it could also be earlier.

So, most of the important predictions I made in Munich a month ago about the war – including that a powerful Ukrainian spring offensive will decisively turn the tide – are likely to come true. I am aware, of course, that a number of reputable publications have published articles that paint a much more dismal picture of the war's progress. How can they be reconciled with the upbeat view that I hold? Only by postulating a successful disinformation campaign.

Putin is desperate for a ceasefire, but he does not want to admit it. Chinese President Xi Jinping is in the same boat. But US President Joe Biden is unlikely to jump at this seeming opportunity to negotiate a ceasefire, because he has pledged that the US will not negotiate behind Zelenskyy's back.

The countries of the former Soviet empire, eager to assert their independence, can hardly wait for the Russian army to be crushed in Ukraine. At that point, Putin's dream of a renewed Russian empire will disintegrate and cease to pose a threat to Europe.

The defeat of Russian imperialism will have far-reaching consequences for the rest of the world. It will bring huge relief to open societies and create tremendous problems for closed ones. Most importantly, it will allow the world to concentrate on its biggest problem, climate change.

*The writer is Founder and Chair of the Open Society Foundations.*

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**SPECTRUM DISPUTE REDRESSAL**

## Case for institutional arbitration

With the amendment of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996 in 2019, and 2022, the government of India ushered in a new era in the arbitration system in India which was hitherto limited to courts and individual choices. Historically, communities and family elders have resolved disputes within families and communities. Formal judicial systems, the courts of today, evolved over time alongside the development of democracies and other widely accepted forms of government. As the rights-based approach to justice delivery gains prominence on a global scale, access to justice is suffocated by bureaucratic processes. The increasing burden of over 4.9 crore pending cases in Indian courts prompted policymakers to consider strengthening alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

With the passage of the Arbitration Act in 1940, pre-Independent India recognised arbitration as one of its ADR mechanisms. With the enactment of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996 (The Act for short), Indian arbitration law radically altered its scope. However, it was not free from judicial interventions and interference. Courts utilised arbitration to shift some of their burden to arbitrators they appointed. Even today, the common belief is that arbitrators are appointed by

courts. In fact, it is not so. The recommendations of the Justice BN Srikrishna Committee of 2017 appointed by the government to look into institutionalisation of arbitration have led to the amendment of the Act in 2019 and institutionalisation of arbitration has been given a priority. AMIKA Arbitration and Mediation Council Hyderabad, Indian International Arbitration Centre New Delhi, Indian Council of Arbitration New Delhi, Indian Institution of Arbitration Kerala, and Nani Palkhivala Arbitration Centre Chennai are some of the institutions in India that are engaged in institutional arbitration with greater force acquired since the amendment of the Act in 2019. These institutes have their own rules, regulations, and procedures based on the Act and United Nations Commission on International Trade Law recommended (UNCITRAL) guidelines.

The only requirement for these institutions to take up a dispute for arbitration is the existence of an arbitration clause in the contracts between the disputants or their mutual agreement for arbitration. Arbitrations are conducted in accordance with the institution's rules and are supervised by the institution, which is responsible for various aspects relating to arbitral tribunal composition, administrative, financial, legal matters and ensuring the quality of an award

passed by their panel arbitrator. An arbitration award thus made is based on evidences and arguments, similar to a judge, but without lengthy procedures, extended dates, or extensive arguments.

Institutional arbitration is an opportunity for the disputing parties for they are saved of time, money and relationships. Property disputes, financial disputes, partnership disputes, franchisee disputes, construction disputes, and any other commercial or business disputes may be arbitrated if a contract specifies arbitration as a dispute resolution mechanism. Even if no arbitration agreement exists, parties can initiate arbitration by submitting a mutually signed letter to an arbitration institution requesting appointment of an arbitrator. The institution handles the remaining tasks like a court. The arbitration institutions maintain absolute secrecy throughout the entirety of the procedure. Small and medium-sized enterprises, construction industry, civil contractors, families seeking property division among siblings, and others with arbitrable cases can walk into the offices of arbitration institutions and file their cases for arbitration without the assistance of lawyers or advocates, as opposed to a litigation. The parties dissatisfied with an arbitrator's award may petition a court under Section 34 of the Act within 90 days to set

aside the award.

Institutional arbitration is not free from challenges. People continue to be unaware that court intervention is not required for the appointment of an arbitrator. Likewise, many are unaware that the arbitrators' award is binding. Certain government officials and bankers are ignorant that an arbitration award by a party-appointed arbitrator is equivalent to a court decree. There are numerous instances of these officers mocking the institutional arbitrators' awards. Section 11(3A) of the Act seeks that the High Courts and Supreme Court designate arbitration institutions, which is still a non-starter. Four years after the passage of the law, the promised Arbitration Council of India to authorise and regulate arbitration institutions has yet to be operationalised. Except for a small number of arbitration institutions established and funded by well-known law firms, some state governments do not support other professionally established arbitration institutions. Thus, there is an urgent need for the Centre and all of the High Courts in the country to take note of the institutions operating in each state and designate them as arbitration institutions in order to alleviate the much-discussed burden on courts.

*The writer is a former senior advisor, United Nations Development Programme.*

**WISDOM CORNER**

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers. **KAHILIL GIBRAN**

There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning. **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**

Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step. **LAO TZU**

**WORDSWORTH**

**Gonfalon**

This word for a banner or pennant hung from a crossbar has close relatives in several modern European languages. It's a variation of the older gonfanon that can be traced to an ancient Teutonic term that meant a war banner. The second part of that word has turned into modern German Fahne, a flag, and also into the obsolete English fane for a flag or a weathercock, which has become our vane. By itself, fane is a shoulder cape worn by the Pope during solemn mass. Gonfalonos usually contain elaborately decorated images or emblems, such as the coat of arms of an organisation. They frequently have swallow tails or streamers attached. Almost any formal procession, such as that of a church, a trade union or university, will have members carrying gonfalonos. Historically, a gonfalon was a standard of the medieval Italian republics. *The sun was setting over the western mountains when the last dhow entered the bay. This was the largest of them all, and at the peak of her stubby mast she flew the snarling leopard head gonfalon and the gaudy colours of the House of Trok Uruk (Warlock, by Wilbur Smith, 2001).*

**Gongoozler**

This is one of the odder words in the English lexicon and not only because of its strange appearance and its meaning of an idle spectator. It suddenly started to become popular in Britain from about 1970 onwards, but with very little previous recorded history attached to it. It is closely linked with canal life, and even now it seems to be a word especially favoured by those who like to mess about on narrow waterways. It is said to have been a bit of canal workers' slang, originally for a person who stood on the towpath idly watching activity. You might expect that it would date from the heyday of the canals in the early part of the nineteenth century, but it's only recorded from the end of that century or the early twentieth.

**LOL**

**Caught stealing**

A shoplifter was caught red-handed trying to steal a watch from an exclusive jewellery store. "Listen," said the shoplifter, "I know you don't want any trouble either. What do you say I just buy the watch, and we

forget about this?" The manager agreed and wrote up the sales slip. The crook looked at the slip and said, "This is a little more than I intended to spend. Can you show me something less expensive?"



P Madhava Rao

**THE INCREASING BURDEN OF OVER 4.9 CRORE PENDING CASES IN INDIAN COURTS PROMPTED POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER STRENGTHENING ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS**

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Sasurahi Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

**Combating influenza**

Sir, The news that two deaths in India this year were caused by the H3N2 influenza virus is distressing and has caused concern among citizens and the government, particularly with the ongoing COVID pandemic still fresh in people's memories. The health officials in the country have been alerted to the fact that the H3N2 virus can result in both flu outbreaks and epidemics. The Union government has been tracking the situation across all states real-time through its Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP). H3N2 was the influenza pandemic that struck the world in 1968 and killed close to 1 million people. Experts say that an infection caused by the H3N2 virus or the influenza A virus is characterised by high fever, breathing issues, fatigue, and dry cough, and the symptoms can linger in the body for up to 3 weeks. Recently, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) experts reported that the persistent cough, which has been reported across the country for the past two to three months, is due to influenza A subtype H3N2, sometimes accompanied by fever. An advisory has stated that increased monitoring and precautionary measures are necessary to prevent the spread of H3N2. As there is no definitive treatment currently available for the H3N2 virus, experts recommend that people strictly adhere to COVID guidelines to prevent its spread. The advisory also urges people to use masks and to cover their faces with fabric or handkerchiefs if they have cold or flu symptoms in order to stop the spread of H3N2. **Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD**

**A state of mind**

Sir, It may not appear strange at all that a day is reserved for "happiness" by the United Nations (UN) and it is aptly termed the International Day of Happiness observed on March 20. Invariably, the definition of happiness may elicit a plethora of contradictory answers. However, that happiness is a state of mind is absolutely beyond doubt. Emotion is a central theme to happiness because philosophers have simultaneously compared emotions, happiness and experience. What makes an individual satisfied is perhaps the key to happiness. Wealth, fame, health, relation, achievement, close family and love life as separate, or taken together, may also constitute happiness. Quite often people fail to count their happiness, and dwell on unhappiness, forgetting the fact that only a past unhappiness will make the present happiness sound real. Perhaps, the best definition of happiness is "not getting what you want but wanting what you get." **Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

# national

## of the day quote

A few retired judges and some activists who are part of the anti-India gang are trying to make the Indian judiciary play the role of the opposition party

KIREN RIJU | LAW MINISTER

In 2019 Lok Sabha polls, we contested only Kishanganj seat in Bihar. Though we polled more than three lakh votes, the seat went to the Congress. Across the country, we contested a total of three Lok Sabha seats. It is preposterous to blame us for the BJP getting a 300 plus tally

ASADUDDIN OWAIISI | AMIM CHIEF

Before 2014 (before Modi gov't) India was mired in corruption. There were scams like 2G, 3G, commonwealth among others, but today the country is among the leading nations of the world

J P NADDA | BJP NATIONAL PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Maoist arrested

**Latehar:** A Maoist 'zonal commander', having a bounty of Rs 10 lakh, was arrested in Jharkhand's Latehar district, police said Sunday. Chandan Kumar Kherwar, also known as 'Sanjivan Ji', was arrested from Sikid forest in Herhanj police station area on Saturday. Latehar's Superintendent of Police (SP) Anjan Anjan said. Two INSAS rifles, 370 live bullets and seven loaded magazines were among the items seized from him, he said.

### Two injured

**Patna:** Two persons were injured after a British-era road bridge collapsed in Bihar's Saran district Sunday. The injured persons were the driver and helper of the truck. The eyewitnesses said that as soon as the truck-laden with stone chips came on the bridge, it collapsed. The truck was on its way from the Tarayee block and was heading towards Bhalua Bazar.

### Shops gutted

**Kokrajhar:** Several shops were gutted as a major fire broke out in Assam's Kokrajhar district in the early hours of Sunday, police said. The fire in the Hauriapet area of Gossagaon broke out around 4 am, they said. About 12-15 shops were reduced to ashes, but no one was injured in the blaze, they added. The fire caused damage worth Rs 1 crore before it was brought under control, police said.

### Gold seized

**Barasat (WB):** Gold biscuits worth Rs 2.78 crore were seized from a truck transporting fish at the Bangladesh border in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, the BSF said Sunday. The truck was coming to India from Sathkira in Bangladesh on Saturday night when it was intercepted at the Petrapole checkpoint, it said. The gold biscuits, weighing around 4.6 kg, were found hidden under crates of raw fish, it added.

### Four drown

**Jaipur:** Four youths drowned in a pond in Rajasthan's Churu district Sunday, police said. The incident occurred in Ramsar village where the youths had gone to take bath and slipped into deep water, they said. The police identified the deceased as Lokesh (18), Yogesh (19), Kabir (19) and Suresh (21). The bodies were shifted to the mortuary of a local hospital for post-mortem. The bodies will be handed over to the relatives after the post-mortem on Monday, police said.



Women are now playing a leading role in different sectors and over 14 lakhs of them are members of elected bodies across the country, leading its social and economic transformation

OM BIRLA | LOK SABHA SPEAKER

## KAVITHA LEAVES FOR DELHI

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Reddy's daughter K. Kavitha Sunday left for Delhi amid uncertainty as to whether she would appear before the ED Monday in connection with the Delhi excise policy case



# Negative emotions grew post-pandemic, reveals study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, March 19:** Negative emotions such as stress, anger, sadness and worry have increased among Indians post-COVID-19 pandemic with struggle and suffering increasing in recent times, a study has found.

According to 'The State of Happiness 2023' report by consulting firm HappyPlus, negative or unhappy experiences are on the rise with 35 per cent of the respondents stating that they have felt such emotions compared to 33 per cent in 2022.

Arunachal Pradesh tops the list of negative emotions with 60 per cent of the respondents from the state claiming they were unhappy, followed by 58 per cent in Madhya Pradesh and 51 per cent each in



Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, it added.

On the other hand, positive emotions among Indians have dropped to 67 per cent from 70 per cent in the year-ago period. The life evaluation score, which is subjective well-being, has also dropped to 6.08 points out of 10 in 2023 from 6.84 points in 2022.

The survey inferred that many as-

pects of life make Indian people unhappy with the top five reasons for negative emotions being financial issues, workplace pressure, societal norms, loneliness and isolation, and uncertainties after the COVID-19 pandemic. The report, which was prepared based on responses from 14,000 people from across 36 states and union territories, stated that

the student population has seen the highest rise in negative experiences and was impacted the most in the overall outcome.

"People below 18 years and above 60 years are experiencing anger or sadness higher than any other age group in India. It also found 5 out of 10 reported as unhappy persons in comparison to 2 out of 10 in the previous year," HappyPlus Senior Director and Research Head Shyamashree Chakrabarty said.

Relationship issues and work life have pulled down the scores along with the lack of social support in India, she said, adding "these points need to be addressed soon". The report said 20 per cent of Indian people are suffering in 2023 compared to 12 per cent in 2021, while 63 per cent of people are

struggling as against 49 per cent in the previous year. On the other hand, only 17 per cent of Indians feel that they are thriving compared to 39 per cent last year.

Though people started coming back to normal life in 2022 after recovering from pandemic-induced restrictions, their struggle has increased as the rise in the number of job losses or continuous fear of 'job losses' added insecurities in life, the study opined.

"Global economic scenario and constant glooming news of global recession have its share in the rise of stress and unhappiness. Indians are also struggling from a silent pandemic - loneliness and isolation. Loneliness has been recognised as one of the major public health concerns across generations," it added.

## Cops grill youth for reciting 'azaan' during protest



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, March 19:** The police in Karnataka's Shivamogga have questioned a Muslim youth who recited 'azaan' during a protest at the Deputy Commissioner's office two days ago.

A Muslim organisation had staged a protest at the office of the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate on March 17 against former minister and BJP legislator K.S. Eshwarappa over his remarks about 'azaan', or the Islamic call for prayers.

During the protest, a youth had recited 'azaan' and the video of the same had surfaced on social media. The protesters had reportedly threatened to recite 'azaan' in front of the Vidhana Soudha as well.

The police have registered a case against the youth who has been summoned and questioned about the incident, confirmed Shivamogga Superintendent of Police, G.K. Mithun Kumar. The SP said the youth was advised not to repeat such activity. The officer also clarified that the youth has not been arrested.

The police are checking the antecedents of those who participated in the protest. The SP said action would be taken if the police find anything suspicious about them. Eshwarappa had said last week that loudspeakers used for 'azaan' disturb people, especially students preparing for examinations and patients in hospitals. His remarks had evoked protests from the Muslim community.

# Amritpal's aides sent to Assam jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dibrugarh, March 19:** Four members of radical preacher Amritpal Singh's outfit were brought to Assam from Punjab on Sunday, police said.

They were among the 78 people arrested on Saturday in the Punjab government's major crackdown against 'Waris Punjab De' (WPD), headed by Amritpal, who is wanted in several criminal cases. "Four people who were arrested in Punjab have been brought here. They are being kept at the Dibrugarh Central Jail," said Tejbir Singh Hundal, an officer of the Punjab Police.

The four accused who were brought here are Daljit Singh Kalsi, Bhagwant Singh, Gurmeet Singh and Pradhanmantri Bajeka. A 27-member team from AAP-ruled Punjab, including an inspector general-rank officer, accompanied the four accused to Dibrugarh, an Assam police officer said.

However, no officer, including Dibrugarh SP Shwetank Mishra, was willing to share why these four accused were brought to BJP-ruled Assam, over 2,500 km away. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is at present in New Delhi, said that his state will provide necessary security to the accused in the jail.

"Sometimes, such persons who are arrested in one state are sent

A 27-member team from AAP-ruled Punjab, including an inspector general-rank officer, accompanied the four accused to Dibrugarh, an Assam police officer said

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is at present in New Delhi, said that his state will provide necessary security to the accused in the jail

to another state's jail. As per my information, four people have been sent by Punjab Police. We will provide them all security in the jail," he said.

Dubai-returned Amritpal was appointed the head of WPD last year. The outfit was founded by actor-activist Deep Sidhu who died in a road accident. WPD members are named in criminal cases relating to spreading disharmony among classes, attempt to murder, attack on police personnel, and creating obstructions in the lawful discharge of duties of public servants, according to the Punjab Police.

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 Amritsar city, demanding the release of a WPD member.



Rapid Action Force personnel stand guard amid a crackdown against 'Waris Punjab De' chief Amritpal Singh and his aides in Amritsar

## Man ties dog to bike, drags it over 2 km

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ghaziabad, March 19:** In a shocking incident, a man has been arrested here for tying a dog to his motorcycle with a rope and dragging it for around 2.5 km Saturday.

The man has been identified as Islam, a resident of the Vijay Nagar police station area.

He was caught by the onlookers who rescued the injured dog and took it to a hospital.

Surbhi Rawat, President of People for Animals (PFA), said that the accused first hit the stray with a brick, following which it lost consciousness.

Rawat said she reached the spot on receiving information of the incident and found the dog covered in blood, following which Islam was handed over to the police.

The accused claimed that he was taking the dog to abandon it at a different place after it had shown signs of "abnormal behaviour" and bitten several people.

ACP Anshu Jain said: "A video was received through social media, wherein a dog was being dragged after being tied to a bike by a person. The said person has been identified and arrested. Further action is being taken in the matter."

# LAND ROW INTENSIFIES

The university has been claiming that Sen is in possession of 1.38 acres of land on the Santiniketan campus, which is in excess of his legal entitlement of 1.25 acres

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, March 19:** Visva-Bharati university has issued a notice to Nobel laureate Amartya Sen asking him to show cause why an eviction order will not be issued against him for not vacating a 13 decimal plot he is allegedly occupying illegally.

The noted economist was asked to reply to the notice by March 24 and appear before Ashok Mahato, the Joint Registrar and Estate Officer of the central university, personally or through a representative by March 29 along with evidence in support of Sen's assertion that he is not occupying any plot unauthorisedly.

"In case you and your authorised representative fail to appear on the said date, the case may be decided ex-parte," the notice said.

The 89-year-old Sen, who is now abroad, or his family members could not be contacted for reaction.

The university has been claim-



ing that Sen is in possession of 1.38 acres of land on the Santiniketan campus, which is in excess of his legal entitlement of 1.25 acres. The economist has earlier asserted that most of the land he is holding in the Santiniketan campus was purchased from the market by his father while some other plots were taken on lease.

"I hereby call upon you to show cause on or before March 24, 2023, why an order of eviction should not be made against you..." the estate officer said in the notice dated March 17, a copy of which was made available to the media on Sunday.

Visva-Bharati had in the past two months sent three other missives to him reiterating that he has been occupying public premises illegally.

"I call upon you to appear before me in person or through a

duly authorised representative capable to answer all material questions connected with the matter, along with the evidence which you intend to produce in support of cause shown, on March 29, 2023, at 4:45 pm for a personal hearing," Mahato said in the university's latest communication.

Visva-Bharati spokesperson Mahua Banerjee claimed that Sen neither responded to any of the earlier letters sent by the university nor took any follow-up action, prompting it to send this notice. "We have no problem if he deputes someone, but we hope he will be responding to the notice this time," she said.

Banerjee said Visva-Bharati is not treating Sen's issue separately from other such land occupation cases and steps are being initiated to free all illegally occupied plots.

There have been allegations from certain quarters that the university's actions may be politically motivated given the fact that Sen has been critical of many policies of the present central government.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had come out in support of the economist and handed over land-related documents to the octogenarian during a visit to his residence in Birbhum district in January when he was at Santiniketan. Visva-Bharati sent two letters on this issue within three days to Sen in January.

# Conservation efforts offer hope for sparrows' return to Delhi

Buildings without balconies and windows, fewer crevices for sparrows to build nests in, use of pesticides that to eradicate insects and depletion of native plantations are some of the major reasons behind the sparrow's disappearance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 19:** House sparrows, small fuzzy birds recognisable by their distinct chirping and black, brown and white wings, went all but extinct from Delhi's urban areas around 2012, prompting the then chief minister and avid bird lover Sheila Dikshit to declare it the state bird and initiate a slew of conservation measures.

Eleven years since, sparrows are once again showing themselves

to those with patience and keen eyes, fluttering between trees, sitting on ledges and hopping from one windowsill to another. Despite their growing numbers in the national capital, experts said on Sunday, the eve of World Sparrow Day, that the road to recovery is long and riddled with obstacles endemic to the modern urban landscape.

"Since 2012, there has been a great improvement in sparrow numbers, largely due to people's participation and increased aware-



ness. However, the modern lifestyle and infrastructure do not support house sparrows. Hence, the sightings are limited to areas like Old Delhi, JNU campus and forests," Surya Prakash, a retired zoologist from Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of Life

Sciences, told PTI. Buildings without balconies and windows, fewer crevices for sparrows to build nests in, use of pesticides that to eradicate insects and depletion of native plantations are some of the major reasons behind the

sparrow's disappearance.

"It is also because of the increased population of common mynas and domestic pigeons as they have taken over all the nesting places and feeding grounds of sparrows," Prakash said. The State of India's Birds 2020 (SoIB 2020) report put the house sparrow in the 'Low Concern' category, noting that even though its numbers have decreased in large cities, they remain "roughly stable overall".

Nature Forest Society's Mohammed Dilawar, who started the practice of observing March 20 as World Sparrow Day in 2010, noted that human intervention is essential for the conservation of sparrows.

"Sparrows cannot prosper without humans, their nesting and feeding are dependent on humans and their lifestyles. It is also im-

portant to understand how everything is connected. Depletion of native plants has led to a decrease in insects which has further removed the first food option for sparrow chicks," Dilawar said.

Dilawar and his organisation have been spreading awareness about this "cascading effect" and encouraging people to plant native species of plants, not use pesticides and install feeders and nest boxes outside their houses.

A combination of these remedies has helped the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the Delhi government create a 'Goraiya Gram' (Sparrow Village) on the banks of the Yamuna river. Located inside the Garhi Mandu forest in east Delhi, the pilot project of 'Goraiya Gram' has attracted a number of house sparrows that feed at a special 'insect hotel'.

## For Akhilesh, 'third front' is a ticket to bigger political identity

At present, many Opposition leaders are facing CBI and ED investigations. However, Akhilesh has got a 'clean' image and can emerge as the leader who can prepare ground for the 'third front'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



Lucknow, March 19: Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav seems to be considering joining a 'third front' against the NDA in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

If political experts are to be believed, the SP's national president these days is busy in building his image in central politics. He is not only fielding party candidates in various states, but is also participating in events organised by non-BJP parties. After the visit to Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, the SP's national executive meeting in Kolkata is being seen as a strategy.

Akhilesh also met Chief Ministers of various states during his visits to the national capital. Earlier, he went to Telangana and gave a message of solidarity there with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and CPJ's D. Raja.

A few days back he had reached Chennai, where he addressed a programme organised on the birthday of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin.

Akhilesh visited Gujarat March 11, where he met former Chief Minister Shankar Singh Baghel. Now, the SP chief is on a tour to West Bengal between March 17 and March 19 to attend his party's national convention.

A senior SP leader told IANS that Akhilesh is trying to fit himself in central politics. In absence of his father Mulayam Singh Yadav, the responsibility of taking the party forward in national politics

has fallen on his shoulders. That's why he is busy uniting the Opposition.

SP leaders say that the party chief is working on a plan to take his party to the national level and promote the new generation of leaders. SP's national spokesperson Ashutosh Verma says that amidst the privatisation of government institutions across the country and the harassment of Opposition parties by the government, Akhilesh has come forward to unite the Opposition. "He has been engaged in this exercise for the last four months. Only Akhilesh can become the axis of unity in the Opposition," asserts Verma.

Senior political analyst Ratanmani Lal says that at this time Akhilesh has 'dual opportunities' - one inside Uttar Pradesh and the other in the country. "Akhilesh considers himself the only challenger for the BJP in Uttar Pradesh. For this reason, he can be

seen targeting the BSP as well as the Congress."

While several parties are not ready to support the Congress, Akhilesh has kept all the options open. In the Adani issue, he formed a human chain with the Congress. But in the case of Rahul Gandhi, he is silent. He is now weighing himself.

At present, many Opposition leaders are facing CBI and ED investigations. However, Akhilesh has got a 'clean' image and can emerge as the leader who can prepare ground for the 'third front'.

BJP state spokesperson Avneesh Tyagi says that since 2012, many experiments have been done but none has been successful. "First, he (Akhilesh) contested the elections in alliance with the Congress. Then, SP and BSP became one but could not defeat BJP. People have completely rejected him. Now, no matter how much unity they create, they will not be successful."

## Apple bowl Himachal to promote exotic fruits

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, March 19: Seeing burgeoning demand and high profitability, the cultivation of exotic fruits and vegetables is set to be expanded at a fast pace this year in Himachal Pradesh, the apple bowl Himalayan state where farming communities are some of the most vulnerable to changing climate.

In a first-of-its-kind attempt, the government will introduce new exotic fruit crops like dragon fruit, blueberry and avocado by using techniques of high density plantation and micro-irrigation system, said Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu in his budget speech for 2023-24.

Saying the government is bringing a new horticulture policy with an aim to increase income of horticulturists, he said the government will develop 6,000 hectares for horticulture in 28 development blocks of Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra, Mandi, Sirmaur, Solan and Una districts under HPSHIVA Project in the next five years with an outlay of Rs 1,292 crore.

This will be done in two phases. The project will benefit more than 15,000 horticulturist families.

Under the project, the production of orange, guava, pomegranate, litchi, plum, pecan nut, persimmon, mango, and other fruits will be promoted under the 'One Crop One Cluster' approach. The target is to plant one crore saplings under the project.

Post-harvest, losses will be reduced by developing value chain infrastructure, Sukhu, who also holds a Finance portfolio, said.

Apples constitute 49 per cent of the total area under fruit crops and 81 per cent of the state's fruit economy comes to Rs 3,583 crore.

Officials told IANS the aim to introduce exotic fruits is largely owing to the fluctuations in the production of apples in the past.



CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS	
OVER THE YEARS HIMACHAL, RANKED SECOND IN APPLE AND ALMOND PRODUCTION, HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HORTICULTURE WITH A GROWTH OF 17.60 PER CENT FROM 2007 TO 2022	
BESIDES APPLE, MANGO, ORANGE, PEAR, PLUM, PEACH AND APRICOT ARE THE MAJOR HORTICULTURE CROPS IN THE STATE	
THE TOPOGRAPHICAL VARIATIONS AND ALTITUDINAL DIFFERENCES COUPLED WITH FERTILE, DEEP AND WELL-DRAINED SOIL FAVOUR THE CULTIVATION OF TEMPERATE TO SUBTROPICAL FRUITS	
FARM EXPERTS SAY THE STATE IS ALSO SUITABLE FOR CULTIVATION OF ANCILLARY HORTICULTURAL PRODUCE LIKE FLOWERS, MUSHROOM, HONEY AND HOPS	

The overall fruit output in 2021-22 was 7.54 lakh tonnes, while the total fruit production in 2022-23 (up to December 20) was 7.93 lakh tonnes, as per Economic Survey of 2022-23.

It was planned to put 1,556 hectares of new space under fruit plants in 2022-23, but only 1549.27 hectares were brought under plantations, and 4.40 lakh fruit plants of various types were distributed.

As per the budget for 2023-24, the government proposes to set up fruit grading and packing houses, controlled atmosphere and cold stores in association with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in Bhavanagar (Kinnaur), Sandasu (Chirgaon), Anu (Jubbal), Chopal (Shimla), Jabli (Solan), Sundernagar (Mandi), Duttanagar (Rampur Bushehar) and Kharapathar (Shimla).

## HIMACHAL REGISTERS MINOR DECREASE IN JOBLESSNESS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, March 19: The number of unemployed people in Himachal Pradesh was still considerably high at 8.21 lakh, despite a decrease in comparison to the previous fiscal year, according to the data from employment exchange.

The number of such people registered in all employment exchanges in the state in December 2022 stood at 8.21 lakh compared to 8.73 lakh in December 2021.

As many as 1.41 lakh persons registered themselves in employment exchanges till December 2022 during the current financial year compared to 1.68 lakh the previous year.

Kangra district with 1,66,325 registered unemployed persons topped the list, followed by Mandi 1,61,085, Shimla 71,316, Una 64,384, Chamba 62,436 and Hamirpur 61,989, while tribal districts of Lahaul and Spiti and Kinnaur were at the bottom with 5,226 and 8,300 unemployed



youths. Out of 4,75,156 employed persons, 2,79,365 persons were employed in the government sector in 4,417 establishments, while 1,95,791 people were employed in the private sector in 1,824 establishments as on March 31, 2021, as per the Economic Survey.

As the job avenues in the public sector are shrinking and the private sector keen only on hiring skilled and highly skilled workers, the government has started several skill development programmes,

introducing emerging trades in technical institutions and updating vocational courses to enhance the employability of workers.

The Himachal Pradesh Kaushal Vikas Nigam (HPKVN) has launched several programmes in this direction, enrolling 57,781 people so far under its various skilled development programmes. Out of them, 31,770 have been certified.

The HP Skill Development Programme was started in 2018 with an outlay of Rs 827 crore, out of which, Rs 661 crore contributed by Asian Development Bank.

The government is also giving an allowance of Rs 1,000 per month for skill development courses to each aspirant, and Rs 1,500 to people with more than 50 per cent permanent disability.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu who presented the budget for 2023-24 Friday told media that the government had set a target to generate 90,000 jobs in the public and private sector this year.



GRAIN ATM: Beneficiaries collect ration at a grain ATM (grain vending machine) that has been set up at a subsidised grain shop in Lucknow.

## UP to include millets in midday meals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 19: Uttar Pradesh agriculture minister Surya Pratap Shahi has said that millets will now be included in the midday meal programme in schools and will also be made available to people through public distribution system.

He said that the state government was continuously engaged in the promotion of millets cultivation, production and consumption besides increasing farmers' income through it.

"By including millets in the midday meals, we want to increase the nutrition being provided to children and also help them develop a taste for millets," he said.

The minister said the government was also working for the betterment of soil health and that of people.

Shahi said, "Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India and the fourth largest in terms of area and the state's land is suitable and conducive for cultivation of coarse grains."

"Currently 12 lakh-hectare of land in UP is under coarse grains cultivation which produces 19 lakh metric tonnes of these grains. With the inspiration of the Prime Minister and under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state government is running 'Shree Anna Purnaruddhar Karyakram (Shree Anna rejuvenation programme)' with a proposed expenditure of Rs 186 crore in the next four years," he added.

He said that various millet feasts were being organised in the state for the promotion of millet.

It was March 5, 2021 when the United Nations General Assembly, while accepting India's proposal, declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.



## Strict vigil in HP amid crackdown on Amritpal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Una (HP), March 19: Security has been beefed up at Himachal Pradesh borders with Punjab in view of a massive crackdown against Khalistan supporter Amritpal Singh, the police here said Sunday.

Strict vigil is being kept with checking of all suspicious looking vehicles at every check post along Nangal and Gagret, said Una Superintendent of Police Arjit Sen Thakur.

The Una Police has barricaded several places and deployed its personnel in heavy numbers at Bathari, Marwari, Santoshgarh, and Mehatpur on the Himachal-Punjab border.

Thakur appealed to the people to remain calm and peaceful and if they spot any unwanted elements in their areas report them to police.

The radical preacher and Khalistan sympathiser has been on the run since the Punjab Police launched a massive crackdown Saturday and arrested 78 members of the 'Waris Punjab De', headed by him.

## Shrinking forests make jumbos turn aggressive

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 19: Shrinking forests, increasing penetration of humans in the forest areas through expanding cultivation and tourist interaction are leading to man-elephant conflicts along the Terai region on the UP-Nepal border.

A 'domesticated' tusker brought in to participate in a fair in Gorakhpur last month, suddenly turned aggressive and trampled three to death. His caretaker later said that the elephant was 'disturbed' by the loud music playing there.

A man and a woman were trampled to death by tuskers in Dudhwa last year.

AN Singh, a wildlife enthusiast, says: "Elephants are peace-loving animals who prefer to remain in their natural habitat. However, there has been deforestation in Dudhwa and Pilibhit regions and local people are expanding their cultivation areas by encroaching upon the forest. Elephants are being disturbed by the changing situation and their behaviour changes when people burst crackers and play drums to shoo them away. They turn aggressive."

A senior forest official said that their foremost concern was to en-



sure that there is no repeat of the 2019 human-elephant confrontation when two wild tuskers killed five men after they strayed from their migratory path and reached Rampur via Bareilly and Pilibhit.

Another challenge is to protect the wild elephants from electrocution. The Power Department had been told to repair all low hanging and faulty lines near forest areas and ensure transformers are installed at a height. Farmers have been warned that an FIR would be registered against them if they do not remove electric fences around their cultivated fields.

The state government is also coordinating with the Indian Railways to prevent accidents on rail tracks passing through the sanctuaries. Physical barriers have been tried in the past with limited success in some states. The solution for this needs to be driven by technology that can enable an early warning system in combination with increased sensitisation of locomotive pilots towards presence of elephants on tracks on known corridors.

Uttar Pradesh now has two elephant reserves - the recent one being the Terai Elephant Reserve (TER) in Dudhwa-Pilibhit area.

The new reserve, spread over 3,049 sqkm, will include protected areas, forest areas and corridors for conservation of wild elephants.

It will be almost four times bigger than the state's first elephant reserve - Shivalik Elephant Reserve - which is spread over Bijnor and Saharanpur.

According to UP forest officials, a major problem in elephant management in state reserves is the migration of elephant herds from Nepal.

Herds of elephants come in from Nepal and destroy acres of tender paddy and sugarcane crops. The cultivated land is part of the corridor used by elephants since time immemorial to move between Nepal and India.

"Every year, at the onset of the monsoon, herds migrate from Nepal's forests to Dudhwa. The elephants tend to become more aggressive if there are calves in the herd. Their protective instincts increase and even the slightest provocation makes them react dangerously," said a retired forest official.

The Dudhwa tiger reserve (DTR) and Pilibhit tiger reserve (PTR) authorities have embarked upon an innovative plan that envisages peaceful cohabitation by promoting bee-keeping and using advanced

technology.

The plan also encapsulates a coordinated strategy to promote the replacement of the sugarcane crop, which is a savoury food liked by jumbos, with some other remunerative crops.

Beehives have produced outstanding results in drastically reducing the intrusion of elephants in cropped fields and village habitations in East African countries.

"Researchers have found that the trunk's tip of an elephant is extremely sensitive and goes through excruciating pain when stung by a bee. This makes elephants respond with alarm to the buzz of aggressive bees. They quickly move away from the sound source," said the official.

"In addition, beekeeping has the additional advantage of producing honey, potentially diversifying and bettering the livelihoods of local communities. We have identified the villages and the training of beekeeping will be initiated there very soon," he said.

In 2013, the formation of anti-depredation squads (ADS) on the periphery of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, resulted in over 60 per cent drop in man-elephant conflicts in the area, officials said.



of the day quote

A committee has been formed to dispel apprehensions of Katra residents over the proposed ropeway project at the Vaishno Devi shrine

A person came from Gujarat and said he was an officer in the PMO but no one verified his claim.

The BJP has ensured the empowerment of farmers and Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are committed to doubling the income of farmers

SHORT TAKES

Six killed in TN

Chennai: Six people, including a child, were killed when a minivan they were travelling in collided with a truck in Tiruchi district of Tamil Nadu early on Sunday.

Four found dead

Kolkata: Bodies of four members of a family were recovered under mysterious circumstances on Sunday from their residence at the industrial township of Durgapur in West Bengal's West Burdwan district.

Woman dies

Bangalore: A 45-year-old woman and her two sons died after they came in contact with a live power cable that had snapped and fallen to the ground due to high-speed winds.

14 hurt in accident

Jammu: At least 14 people were injured on Sunday in a road accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

Govt begins eviction, sale of enemy assets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: The Union Home Ministry has started the process for eviction and sale of enemy properties, the immovable assets left behind by people who have taken citizenship of Pakistan and China.

There are a total of 12,611 establishments called enemy property, roughly estimated to be worth over Rs 1 lakh crore, in the country.

According to a Home ministry notification, the guidelines for disposal of the enemy properties have been changed under which the process for eviction of enemy properties now shall be initiated with the help of the District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner concerned before the sale of properties.

In case of the enemy properties valued below Rs 1 crore, the custodian shall offer for purchase to the occupant first and if offer of purchase is refused by the occupant, then the enemy property shall be disposed of in accordance with the procedure specified in the guidelines, the notification said.

Those enemy properties having valuation of Rs one crore and below Rs 100 crore, shall be disposed of by the CEPI through e-auction or otherwise as may be decided by the central government and at the rate determined by the Enemy Property Disposal Committee.

The e-auction platform of public enterprise, the Metal Scrap



There are a total of 12,611 establishments called enemy property, roughly estimated to be worth over Rs 1 lakh crore, in the country

Trade Corporation Limited, shall be used by the CEPI for e-auction of enemy properties, the home ministry said. The government has earned over Rs 3,400 crore from disposal of enemy properties, mostly movable assets like shares and gold, officials said.

The Home ministry has already launched a national survey of enemy properties, spread across 20 states and three Union Territories, with a purpose to identify and subsequently monetise all such properties. The first-of-its-kind national survey by the Directorate General of Defence Estates (DGDE) will assess the present condition and value of the enemy properties identified by the CEPI.

The government formed a Group of Ministers (GoM), headed by Union Home minister Amit Shah, in 2020 to supervise monetisation of enemy properties.

BJP, like Congress, will be finished: Akhilesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 19: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav Sunday asserted that the BJP would be politically finished in the days to come, "just like the Congress", for allegedly misusing central agencies against opposition parties.

Yadav also pressed for the caste census which, he said, would be a major issue in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. "Earlier, the Congress used to misuse the central agencies, and now the BJP is doing the same. Congress is now finished. The BJP, too, will meet a similar fate. They are only sending agencies after those parties who are fighting the BJP," he told a press conference here.

Asked whether the "misuse" of the central agencies will increase as the 2024 Lok Sabha election approaches, Yadav said, "It might be the case but it won't help the saffron camp as preparations for the Lok Sabha polls would start in the next few months."

Speaking about the political resolution adopted in the two-day national executive held here from Saturday, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said the party would leave no stone unturned to ensure that the BJP is defeated in UP and the country in the election next year. "Uttar Pradesh is the only state which can stop the BJP as it has the



Uttar Pradesh is the only state which can stop the BJP as it has the largest number of seats. We will defeat the BJP in Uttar Pradesh. The entire country is looking up to the Samajwadi Party. The BJP has told many lies, be it prices of diesel, petrol or LPG or price rise

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

largest number of seats. We will defeat the BJP in Uttar Pradesh. The entire country is looking up to the Samajwadi Party. The BJP has told many lies, be it prices of diesel, petrol or LPG or price rise," he said, adding that the saffron party is working for big corporate houses.

SC TO HEAR KHERA'S PLEA TODAY

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday a plea of Congress leader Pawan Khera seeking transfer and clubbing of FIRs lodged against him in Assam and Uttar Pradesh for allegedly making objectionable remarks against the Prime Minister



UP HORROR Minor tortured, wood pieces found in private parts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh), March 19: An 11-year-old girl has been admitted to the city's cantonment board hospital with brutal injuries.

The doctors not only found torture marks on her body but also pieces of wood from her private parts. The woman, who brought the girl to the hospital, claims that she adopted the minor. However, the police detained her after she could not give a satisfactory response to questions about the girl's injuries.

The accused woman called Dr Sidharth Pandey and told him that the 11-year-old sustained minor injuries during a sibling fight. The next morning, she visited the hospital with the girl and the doctors were shocked to find out the nature of the injuries.

Dr Pandey said, "An X-ray revealed several old and new injuries on her body, including her private parts. Following this, she was examined by a female gynaecologist who found pieces of wood in her private parts. The girl also had a fractured hand. In view of the injuries, we informed the police."

The accused woman is a resident of an apartment in the Dhumanganj area of the city and her husband is a teacher at a prominent school. The woman claimed that she had adopted the girl from a shelter home in Kanpur, but the girl has said that following her mother's death and abandonment by her father, she was taken home by the accused.

Madras HC allows AIADMK GS polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, March 19: The Madras High Court Sunday allowed the conduct of the long-awaited election to the AIADMK's general secretary post as scheduled on March 26. However, the court said the results shall not be declared as it will take up on March 22 the hearing of a plea by the O Panneerselvam camp against the party's July 11, 2022 General Council decisions that among others expelled them.

The high court heard a plea by Panneerselvam's (OPS) aides on Sunday against the election to the powerful General Secretary post, scheduled to be held March 26. Panneerselvam camp counsel Paul Manoj Pandian, also an aide of the deposed leader, told reporters that their original petition against the July 11, 2022 general council decisions would be taken up by the court on Wednesday.

The court said it would completely go through their plea and directed that till then the election result not be declared, he told reporters. The OPS camp had moved the court against the GS elections announced by the Edappadi K Palaniswami-led AIADMK. So far, only Palaniswami has filed his nomination, the deadline for which was scheduled to end by 3 PM on Sunday.



Participants ride their cars during a luxury car and bike rally organised by Queen's Drive Club in Bangalore

Lakhs of farmers to reach Delhi, says SKM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) Sunday said lakhs of farmers from across the country are on their way to Delhi to participate in the 'kisan mahapanchayat' that will be held at Ramlika Maidan on March 20.

The 'kisan mahapanchayat' will be held to press for a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP), the SKM, an umbrella body of farmers' union, had said last month. Lakhs of farmers from various states and union territories are headed to Delhi to attend the 'kisan mahapanchayat' in Delhi on March 20, the SKM said in a statement.

Addressing a press conference here, SKM leader Darshan Pal said, "The Centre must fulfil the assurances it gave to us in writing on December 9, 2021 and also take effective steps to

mitigate the ever-increasing crisis faced by farmers."

The SKM spearheaded an over a year-long agitation against the Centre's now-repealed farm laws.

It suspended the movement in December 2021 following a government assurance to consider the farmers' pending demands, including the withdrawal of cases lodged against farmers during the agitation and a legal guarantee for MSP.

Jharkhand reports two cases of H3N2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi/Jamshedpur, March 19: Jharkhand reported for the first time two new cases of H3N2 influenza, besides five fresh cases of COVID-19, a health department official said Sunday.

A 68-year-old woman, who was admitted to Tata Main Hospital (TMH), Jamshedpur with symptoms of cold and fever on Thursday, tested positive for influenza virus H3N2 on Saturday, the official said.

Confirming the report, the Civil Surgeon of East Singhbhum district, Dr Juhar Manjhi said the victim was kept in an isolation ward and is under observation.

The victim did not have any travel history, he said. The second case was reported

at Rani Hospital in Ranchi. The head of the hospital Dr Rajesh Singh said, "A four-year-old child has tested positive for influenza virus H3N2 on Saturday. The child was admitted to the hospital with symptoms of pneumonia. Ranchi-based MicroPraxis Lab confirmed the report."

Meanwhile, the state's total active COVID-19 cases reached 10 with five new cases of the disease reported on Saturday. Ranchi and West Singhbhum districts have reported two cases each, while Deoghar registered one case on Saturday. Earlier, Deoghar, East Singhbhum and Latehar districts reported one case each, while Ranchi two, according to the Covid bulletin of the health department.



BJP's silent moment

The BJP is known for its new found aggression under its new dispensation since 2014 and taking the bull by the horns. The party's spokespersons and ministers shout down all and sundry. But developments in Punjab have exposed chinks in its armoury and they have gone in a silent mode. Ever since self-styled head of 'Waris Punjab De' Amritpal Singh threatened the Union Home Minister Amit Shah saying he would meet the same fate

as that of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, there is a silence of the grave. Some of the hardliners in the BJP pleaded with the top leadership to take immediate action against Amritpal Singh for his anti-national statements and act faster before it's too late in the day. The BJP has issued an advisory to all the leaders not to comment on the issue. Even the Home Minister maintained a studied silence.

Kejriwal in silence zone too

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has also gone in silent mode in respect of developments in Punjab. He has not uttered a word ever since the Ajnala incident took place and the AAP government in Punjab quashed the FIR against an accused. But those closely watching developments in Punjab say that AAP's links with these elements were first noticed in January 2017 when Arvind Kejriwal stayed in the house of Khalistan

Liberation Front activist Gurwinder Singh ahead of Punjab polls. Gurwinder is the former chief of KLF. He is accused of inciting Sikh-Hindu riots during the years when terrorism was at its peak in Punjab. He was even jailed in cases relating to murder. Though Gurwinder was acquitted in all such cases, the controversy cost dearly to AAP in 2017. But it is said that these elements campaigned to ensure AAP's win in the 2022 Assembly polls. It is largely because of this very reason that Kejriwal has opted to remain silent.

BJP's Vasundhara moment

The BJP leadership may have resolved the thorny issue of handling Karnataka's B S Yediyurappa by inducting him in the Central Parliamentary Board and in state's campaign committee. The tallest 80 year-old leader made the BJP high command to reverse a decision to send him to Vanprasth Ashram (retirement

home like LK Advani and others). But the leadership has to settle the leadership issue in Rajasthan where 70 year-old former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje is refusing to fall in line. The BJP leadership wants to buy peace with her on its own terms. But a Rajput by birth married into a Jat family and daughter-in-law from a Gujjar community is turning out to be a tough nut.

Kharge's new team soon

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge is going to undertake a major reshuffle in the Congress organisational set up. It is being said that Kharge sought a report card of all general secretaries and in-charges and was not satisfied with the work of about 70 per cent office-bearers. Kharge wants well-oiled machinery before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and wants to win Karnataka at all costs. Kharge is also unhappy with the work of

the media department of the Congress.

Govt stares at massive losses

The Prime Minister can rightfully take the credit for almost doubling the number of airports in the country during the past nine years. Civil Aviation and Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is contemplating to launch Kisan Udan for the farming community. But barring Pune, Kolkata, Goa and a handful of others, most of the 124 airports under the command and control of Airport Authority of India (AAI), have been incurring massive losses for the past five years. The AAI's accumulated losses during the past five years are a whopping Rs 5,285 crores. Had Pune (Maharashtra), Kolkata (West Bengal) and Goa not made profits during this period, losses could have sky-rocketed. Even these three airports were in losses during 2020-21 and 2021-22 due to the pandemic.

# international



When many countries across the world are on the verge of a fuel crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine war at that time this oil pipeline with India will play a vital role in ensuring the fuel security of our people  
SHEIKH HASINA | PM, BANGLADESH

**UK's NEW WARNING SYSTEM**  
A siren-like alert will be sent to mobile phone users across the UK next month to test a new public warning system over life-threatening events such as severe weather events, the British government announced Sunday



## of the day quote

I think issuing an arrest warrant for Putin, not to go into legal matters, will have had political consequences and it says that there is a great reluctance to talk about peace (and) about truce in Ukraine  
ALEKSANDAR VUCIC | PRESIDENT, SERBIA

Last time, I received support from 99 per cent members of the House of Representatives, and I hope, this time I will get one hundred per cent votes  
PUSHPA KAMAL DAHAL PRACHANDA | PM, NEPAL

I sincerely believe that this world leading partnership between two allies and two friends, the United Kingdom and Rwanda, will lead the way in finding a solution which is both humanitarian and compassionate  
SUELLA BRAVERMAN | INTERIOR MINISTER, UK

## SHORT TAKES

### Grain deal renewed

**Ankara:** A deal allowing the safe Black Sea export of Ukrainian grain was renewed Saturday for at least 60 days - half the intended period - after Russia warned any further extension beyond mid-May would depend on the removal of some Western sanctions. The pact was brokered with Russia and Ukraine by the United Nations and Turkey in July and renewed for a further 120 days in November. The aim was to combat a global food crisis that was fueled in part by Russia's Feb 24, 2022, invasion of Ukraine and Black Sea blockade. The deal had been set to expire on Saturday.

### 3 terrorists killed

**Karachi:** Three terrorists were killed by the Pakistani security forces in the country's restive Balochistan province Saturday while thwarting a planned terror attack in urban areas, including Quetta and Chaman, according to the nation's military's media wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The three terrorists were killed by security forces during an Intelligence-Based Operation (IBO) in the Awaran district. The ISPR said it had initiated operation after getting information that a group of militants were involved in carrying out terror attacks through "firing and improvised explosive devices along the Turbat Awaran Road and surrounding areas."

## AFTER TOSHAKHANA

# Khan in terrorism net

PAK POLICE REGISTER TERRORISM CASE AGAINST EX-PM IMRAN, PTI LEADERS FOR VANDALISM IN ISLAMABAD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, March 19:** Pakistani police Sunday registered a terrorism case against Imran Khan and over a dozen PTI leaders for indulging in vandalism, attacking security personnel and creating unrest outside the judicial complex here ahead of a court hearing in a graft case involving the ousted premier.

Clashes erupted outside the Islamabad Judicial Complex Saturday when Khan arrived in Islamabad from Lahore to attend a much-awaited hearing in the Toshakhana case. During the confrontation between Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers and police, over 25 security personnel were injured, prompting Additional District and Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal to defer the court hearing till March 30.

The case was registered against arrested PTI workers and wanted party leaders. About 17 PTI leaders were named in the FIR lodged by the Islamabad Police, Geo News reported.

The FIR states that the workers damaged the police check post and the main gate of the judicial complex, it said.

As many as 18 people were arrested for arson, pelting stones and breaking the judicial complex's building, said the FIR.

"About two police vehicles and seven motorcycles were burned, and the official vehicle of the station house officer (SHO) was damaged," it added.

Khan, 70, arrived in Islamabad from Lahore to appear before the court. He was accompanied by his supporters in a convoy.

Soon after he departed for



**KHAN, OVER 1,000 PTI WORKERS BOOKED UNDER TERRORISM CHARGES IN TWO CASES**  
**THE NUMBER OF CASES AGAINST KHAN HAS CLIMBED UP TO 97 RIFLES, KALASHNIKOVs, BULLETS, MARBLES AND PETROL BOMBS RECOVERED FROM HIS HOUSE**

Islamabad to attend the hearing, over 10,000 armed Punjab police personnel stormed Khan's Zaman Park residence in Lahore and arrested dozens of his party workers.

The police personnel, using a power shovel, removed the barricades and tents at the entrance of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief's residence and evicted hundreds of his supporters camping there to prevent Khan's arrest in the Toshakhana case.

They conducted a search at the house after demolishing its main gate and walls. Punjab Police, whose action ended later, were reportedly met with resistance from PTI workers from inside, resulting in violence. About 10 workers were reportedly injured in the police operation in Lahore.

PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry said Sunday said the party will get cases registered against police officers involved in the "illegal operations" and violence at Khan's residence.

"Today, a meeting of the legal team has been called. The way in which the police defied the Lahore High Court's decision entering Imran Khan's residence has trampled every rule of the home's sanctity. [things were] stolen. [They] also took away juice boxes. Innocent people were subjected to torture," he tweeted.

"Defying court order is unforgivable. The high court should guard its judgment. Cases are being registered on all police officers who conducted illegal operations and were involved in violence," he said. Earlier, Khan appeared before

If anyone had any doubt, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Niazi's antics of the last few days laid bare his fascist and militant tendencies. Khan has taken a leaf out of the RSS book  
SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

Lahore High Court Friday and assured that he was ready to present himself Saturday before Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADSJ) Iqbal handling the corruption case against him.

The PTI chief has been in the dock for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch, he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana and selling them for profit.

Established in 1974, the Toshakhana is a department under the administrative control of the Cabinet Division and stores precious gifts given to rulers, parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and officials by heads of other governments and states and foreign dignitaries.

The cricketer-turned-politician was disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in October last year for not sharing details of the sales. The top electoral body later filed a complaint with the district court to punish him, under criminal laws, for selling the gifts he had received as prime minister of the country.

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.

## PROVOCATIVE MOVE

# NK fires missile as US-SK drills go on

G7 foreign ministers said they "deeply regret" inaction by the UNSC against the North caused by some members' "obstruction". No country was named, but China and Russia have blocked attempts at the UN to respond to North Korea's series of missile tests



REUTERS

**Seoul, March 19:** North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile towards the sea off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula Sunday, South Korea and Japan said, in the latest of a series of tests carried out by the nuclear-armed state since the start of this year.

The missile, launched from the Dongchang-ri site on the west coast around 11:05 a.m., flew some 800 km before hitting a target, a South Korean military statement said. Japan's Defence Ministry said the missile flew as high as 50 km.

Soon after the launch Sunday, South Korea's Ministry of National Defence said the US deployed a B-1B strategic bomber to a joint air drill, which Seoul and Washington say they are holding to strengthen deterrence.

The deployment of the bomber was planned in advance and unrelated to the latest North Korean launch, South Korean news agency Yonhap reported, citing the military.

Japan and the US also conducted joint air and sea military exercises over the sea between the Korean peninsula and Japan for a third straight day Sunday, Japan's local media reported.

Seoul has condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launches as a "clear violation" of a UN Security Council resolution.

### 'UNACCEPTABLE' THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE

The launches have prompted criticism from Tokyo and Washington, as well as from Seoul. "North Korea's behaviour threatens international peace and security, and is unacceptable," Japan's State Minister of Defence Toshiro Ino told a news conference, adding that Japan had protested strongly via North Korea's embassy in Beijing.

The US Indo-Pacific Command said Sunday's launch did not pose an immediate threat to US personnel or its allies. But the missile launches highlight the destabilising impact of Pyongyang's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, it said in a statement.

## PENSIONS ROW Vandals attack French politician's office

The vandals also scrawled the words "the motion or the stone" — in reference to the motions of censure against the pension reform that will be voted Monday in the National Assembly in Paris

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, March 19:** Protesters have vandalized the nice office of the president of the Republicans party in an apparent threat to get his right-wing party to vote to block President Emmanuel Macron's pension reform.

Eric Ciotti tweeted a photo of his office in the French Riviera city with shattered windows, after a paving stone was thrown at it overnight on Sunday.

Amid weeks of mass protests over Macron's plan to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64, Macron last week ordered Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne to invoke a special constitutional power to skirt a vote in the lower chamber of parliament.

In response, lawmakers at both

ends of the political spectrum filed no-confidence motions against her Cabinet Friday.

Ciotti had announced his party would not vote for either of the two motions of censure — meaning there would not be enough votes to stop the law.

Reacting to the vandals, Ciotti tweeted: "I will never give in to the new disciples of terror."

Getting a no-confidence motion to pass will be challenging — none has succeeded since 1962, and Macron's centrist alliance still has the most seats in the National Assembly.

A minority of conservatives could stray from the Republicans party line, but it remains to be seen whether they're willing to bring down Macron's government.



**MASSIVE OUTCRY:** A group of Israelis describing themselves as reservists in elite military and intelligence units said they would not turn up for some duties from Sunday, escalating weeks of protests at the hard-right government's planned judicial overhaul

REUTERS

# 'Modi Laoxian': Unusual nickname on Chinese internet

Most Chinese people feel a sense of superiority and self-confidence vis-a-vis India and of course, most Chinese people don't like to see India get too close to the United States, but they also think China and India can still cooperate, the article said

Chinese social media, especially Sina Weibo, (akin to Twitter in China), also said that most Chinese feel that India led by Modi can maintain a balance among major countries in the world. Sina Weibo has over 582 million active users.

They point to both his dress and physical appearance, seen as Laoxian-like, and some of his policies, which are different from India's previous ones, Mu said.

On India's relations with other major countries, he said, whether it is Russia, the United States, or Global South countries, India can enjoy friendly ties with all of them, which is "very admirable" to some Chinese netizens.

"So the word 'Laoxian' reflects the complex sentiment of Chinese people toward Modi, combining curiosity, astonishment, and perhaps a dash of cynicism," Mu wrote.

"I have been doing international media reports for nearly 20 years and it is rare for Chinese netizens to give a nickname to a foreign leader. Modi's nickname stands out above all others. Clearly, he has made an impression on Chinese public opinion," he said.



Besides hosting Chinese President Xi Jinping and former Premier Li Keqiang, since he came to power in 2014, Modi also held two rare informal summits with Xi, 69, in Wuhan and later in Mamallapuram near Chennai, which raised expectations of improvement in the relations between the two Asian giants.

The Sino-Indian relations hit the bottom following aggressive military actions by the Chinese military in eastern Ladakh violating the agreements to resolve the border dispute leading to a nearly three-year-long military standoff.

The two countries have held 17 rounds of high-level military commanders' talks to resolve

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has an unusual nickname on the Chinese internet: Modi Laoxian. Laoxian refers to an elderly immortal with some weird abilities. The nickname implies that Chinese netizens think Modi is different - even more amazing - than other leaders

MU CHUNSHAN | JOURNALIST KNOWN FOR ANALYSING CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA

the standoff. India has been maintaining that ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

Modi is also well known in China as he interacted with the Chinese public through his account on Sina Weibo which he opened in 2015 and had over 2.44 lakh followers.

In his article, Mu says Chinese views of India are very complicated - but generally based on a sense of superiority and self-confidence.

Significantly, he writes that the Chinese netizens believe China's at-

tempts to use its "all-weather ally", Pakistan as "unrealistic" as the gap between the two South Asian neighbours is "getting wider", an apparent reference to the political and economic meltdown Pakistan is currently experiencing.

"Of course, China has not forgotten Pakistan. But many Chinese netizens have a realistic view of the two South Asian neighbours. The argument is very sober: The idea of using Pakistan to restrain India is becoming more unrealistic because the gap between Pakistan and India is getting wider", he said.

He also writes about Chinese apprehension about India's growing popularity with western countries, especially with the US and New Delhi's handling of the Ukraine crisis without disrupting its close ties with Russia and America.

"This is just one example of a widespread perception in China: India is the favourite of the West, while China has become the target of the West. How did India manage this? Why is India's circle of international friends so big?" was the question debated by the Chinese netizens.

## 19 killed, 30 hurt in B'desh bus mishap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhaka, March 19:** At least 19 people were killed and 30 others injured Sunday when a speeding bus crashed into a ditch in Bangladesh, officials said.

The Dhaka-bound bus operated by Emad Paribahan veered out of control on the Bangabandhu Expressway at 7.45 am in Madaripur's Shibchar, Police Superintendent Md Masud Alam said.

The bodies of 14 people have been recovered from the spot, according to Madaripur Deputy Commissioner Rahima Khatun. She said that three others died on their way to hospitals.

The injured, many in critical condition, were shifted to Shibchar Upazila Health Complex and Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment, she said. The on-duty doctor at the DMCH declared two more dead.

Many of the victims were from Madaripur as the bus from Khulna took passengers aboard in Madaripur.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, March 19:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi is reverentially called 'Modi Laoxian' meaning 'Modi the immortal' by Chinese netizens, a rare respectful reference to an international leader, notwithstanding the bitter India-China border row, according to an article published in the US-based strategic affairs magazine The Diplomat.

In the article - 'How is India viewed in China?', Mu Chunshan, a journalist known for analysing

## of the day quote

Domestic production of special steel under PLI schemes for specialty steel will help cut down imports of value-added products and save forex outgo

FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE | UNION MINISTER

Exporting through e-commerce channels can result in higher profits per unit of export, as businesses can cut out intermediaries like indenting agents, bulk buyers, and shopkeepers

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | CO-FOUNDER, GTRI

I still see India to be shining among all the other countries. When we see our global reports the growth is still there in India even in the first two months of the year

SANTOSH IYER | MD & CEO, MERCEDES-BENZ

## SHORT TAKES

### Top 10 most valued firms lose ₹2.09L-cr

**New Delhi:** Market capitalisation (m-cap) of the top-10 most valued companies eroded by over ₹2.09 lakh crore last week, with Reliance Industries and TCS taking the biggest hit amid an overall weak trend in equities. On a weekly basis, domestic equity benchmarks witnessed heavy selling. The 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 1,145.23 points or 1.93 per cent. Corporate major Reliance Industries' m-cap plunged ₹67,722.33 crore to ₹15,04,001.93 crore. IT bellwethers TCS' market valuation tumbled ₹55,654.17 crore to ₹11,63,194.14 crore and that of Infosys nosedived ₹21,250.8 crore to ₹5,97,905.17 crore. In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, HUL, SBI, HDFC, ITC and Bharti Airtel.

### BoB raises rates on retail term deposits

**New Delhi:** Bank of Baroda has increased interest rates on domestic retail term deposits, including NRO and NRE term deposits, by 25 basis points on select tenors. These rates are applicable on deposits below ₹2 crore, with effect from March 17, 2023, the public sector lender said in a statement. Interest rates have also been hiked on the Baroda Tax Savings Term Deposit as well as Baroda Advantage Fixed Deposit, a non-callable retail term deposit scheme. The new rate on deposits of above 3 years to 5 years is 6.5 per cent and for resident Indian senior citizens, it is 7.15 per cent. For term deposits of above 5 years to 10 years, the new rate is 6.5 per cent and for senior citizens it is 7.5 per cent. Bank of Baroda had earlier increased retail term deposit interest rates in December 2022 by up to 65 basis points and in November 2022 by up to 100 basis points.

### RIL re-auctions gas

**New Delhi:** Reliance Industries Ltd and its partner bp plc have re-launched an auction for sale of natural gas from their eastern offshore KG-D6 block after incorporating the government's new marketing rules to give CNG-selling city gas companies first priority over supplies. Reliance and its partner BP Exploration (Alpha) Ltd (BPEAL) will sell 6 million standard cubic meters per day of gas in an e-auction planned for April 3, a tender notice said. The price is indexed to the global LNG marker, JKM but will be subject to the government-notified ceiling price.



If Google, Twitter or Facebook actually lay off people in the US, it's not that they don't need to build products. They still need to continue to do their work and I believe that a lot of that work will come to India, because they will still need the talent to keep doing the work

NITESH BANGA | CEO, GLOBALLOGIC

## INDIA-EU TRADE TALKS

India and the European Union (EU) Saturday concluded the fourth round of talks for a comprehensive free trade agreement in Brussels, a move aimed at further strengthening economic ties between the two sides. The next round of the talks is planned for 12-16 June here



# Swiss banks in spotlight over 'merger of century'

## UBS OFFERS OVER \$2 BILLION FOR CREDIT SUISSE IN RACE TO SAVE BANK

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Bern, March 19:** UBS has agreed to take over its troubled Swiss rival Credit Suisse after doubling its offer to \$2 billion, the Financial Times reported amid urgent talks Sunday aimed at sparing the embattled bank from a bloodbath when the markets reopen.

The two largest banks in the wealthy Alpine nation famed for its banking prominence have been in negotiations throughout the weekend, with the government, the central bank and financial regulators all involved.

The Financial Times newspa-

per, which was the first Friday to report the prospect of Switzerland's biggest bank swallowing up Credit Suisse, said UBS had agreed to buy it for \$2 billion, with its fellow Zurich-based lender having spurned an earlier offer of \$1 billion.

The FT said shareholders would get 0.50 Swiss francs per share, with the deal to be done Sunday before the markets open in Asia.

After suffering heavy falls on the stock market last week, Credit Suisse's share price closed Friday at 1.86 Swiss francs, with the bank worth just over \$8.7 billion.

Credit Suisse's share price has tumbled from 12.78 Swiss francs in February 2021 due to a string of scandals that it has been unable to shake off.

UBS was being urged by the authorities to get a deal over the line before the stock exchange reopens at 0800 GMT Monday, in a bid to re-



assure investors and avoid a wave of contagious panic on the markets.

A merger of this scale - involving swallowing up all or part of a bank arousing growing investor unease - would normally take months.

'Merger of the century'

The SonntagsZeitung newspaper called it "the merger of the century". "The unthinkable becomes

true: Credit Suisse is about to be taken over by UBS," the weekly said. The government, FINMA and the SNB "see no other option", it claimed.

"The pressure from abroad had become too great - and the fear that the reeling Credit Suisse could trigger a global financial crisis," it said.

Too big to fail?

Like UBS, Credit Suisse is one

of 30 banks around the world deemed to be Global Systemically Important Banks - of such importance to the international banking system that they are considered too big to fail. But the market movement seemed to suggest the bank was being perceived as a weak link in the chain.

Amid fears of contagion after the collapse of two US banks, Credit Suisse's share price plunged by more than 30 percent Wednesday to a new record low of 1.55 Swiss francs. That saw the SNB step in overnight with a \$54-billion lifeline.

After recovering some ground Thursday, its shares closed down eight percent on Friday at 1.86 Swiss francs as the Zurich-based lender struggled to retain investor confidence.

In 2022, the bank suffered a net loss of \$7.9 billion and expects a "substantial" pre-tax loss this year.

## FPIs PUMP IN ₹11,500CR IN MAR SO FAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 19:** Foreign investors have put in ₹11,500 crore in the Indian equities so far this month, mainly driven by bulk investment from the US-based GQG Partners in the Adani Group firms.

Going ahead, FPIs may take a cautious stance in their approach in the coming days following the collapse of the US-based banks - Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank - that dented sentiments in the market, experts said.

According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) invested ₹11,495 crore in Indian equities till March 17. This came after a net outflow of ₹5,294 crore in February and ₹28,852 crore in January. Prior to that, FPIs infused a net amount of ₹11,119 crore in December, data showed.

Excluding this, FPI activity in equities represent a strong selling undercurrent. In the calendar year 2023, FPIs have sold equities to the tune of ₹22,651 crore.

On the other hand, FPIs pulled out ₹2,550 crore from the debt markets during the period under review. In terms of investing in sectors, FPIs have been consistent buyers only in capital goods.

## HINDENBURG FALLOUT

# Adani junks ₹34,900cr petrochemical project

The Adani Group is hit hard by Hindenburg report as it has cancelled a ₹7000 crore coal plant purchase as well as shelved plans to bid for stake in power trader PTC to conserve expenses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 19:** Adani Group has suspended work on a ₹34,900 crore petrochemical project at Mundra in Gujarat as it focuses on resources to consolidate operations and address investor concerns following a damning report by a US-based short seller, sources said.

The group's flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) had in 2021 incorporated a wholly-owned subsidiary, Mundra Petrochem Ltd for setting up a greenfield coal-to-PVC plant at Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) land in Kutch district of Gujarat.

But after Hindenburg Research's January 24 report alleging accounting fraud, stock manipulations and other corporate governance lapses chopped off about \$140 billion from the market value of Gautam Adani's empire, the apples-to-airport group is hoping to claw back and calm jittery investors and lenders through a comeback strategy.

The comeback strategy is based on addressing investor concerns around debt by repaying some loans, consolidating operations, and fighting off allegations. It has repaid some debt and pre-paid some of the finances raised by pledging promoter stake in group



Adani Group had planned the project as PVC demand in India at around 3.5 MTPA was growing at the rate of 7% YoY. With near stagnant domestic output of PVC at 1.4 million tonne, India is dependent on imports to keep pace with the demand

companies. The group has denied all allegations levelled by Hindenburg. As part of this, projects are being re-evaluated based on cashflow and finance available.

And of the projects the group has decided not to pursue for the time being is the 1 million tonne per annum Green PVC project, two sources said.

The group has shot off mails to vendors and suppliers to "suspend all activities" on immediate basis.

In the mails, seen by PTL, the group has asked them to "suspend all activities of the scope of work and performance of all obligations" for Mundra Petrochem Ltd's Green PVC project "till further notice."

This is the following "unforeseen scenario". The management, it said, was "re-evaluating various project/s being implemented at group level in different business verticals. Based on future cashflow and finance, some of the project/s are being re-evaluated for its continuation and revision in timeline."

Reached for comments, a group spokesperson said AEL will be evaluating the status of growth projects in primary industry vertical over the coming months.

"The balance sheet of each of our

independent portfolio companies is very strong. We have industry-leading project development and execution capabilities, strong corporate governance, secure assets, strong cashflows, and our business plan is fully funded. We remain focused on executing our previously outlined strategy to create value for our stakeholders," the spokesperson said.

The unit was to have a poly-vinyl-chloride (PVC) production capacity of 2,000 KTPA (kilo tonne per annum) requiring 3.1 million tonne per annum (MTPA) of coal that was to be imported from Australia, Russia and other countries.

PVC is the world's third-most widely produced synthetic polymer of plastic. It finds wide applications - from flooring, to making sewage pipes and other pipe applications, in insulation on electrical wires, packaging and manufacture of aprons etc.

The Hindenburg report had alleged "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud" and use of offshore shell companies to inflate stock prices. The group has denied all Hindenburg allegations, calling them "malicious", "baseless" and a "calculated attack on India".

## Sebi tightens rules for IPO clearance



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 19:** After the Paytm's IPO fiasco, Sebi has turned cautious while giving clearance to the initial share sales as it has returned the preliminary papers of half a dozen companies, including Oravel Stays, which operates hospitality chain OYO, in over two months.

These companies have been asked to re-file their draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with certain updates.

Apart from OYO, the firms whose draft papers have been returned by the regulator are - Go Digit General Insurance Ltd, a firm backed by Canada-based Fairfax Group; home-grown mobile maker Lava International; B2B payments and services provider Paymate India; Fincare Small Finance Bank India and integrated services company BVG India, according to an analysis of data with Sebi.

The six companies had filed their preliminary initial public offering (IPO) papers with Sebi between September 2021 and May 2022 and their papers were returned during January-March (till March 10). Together, these companies were hoping to raise at least ₹12,500 crore.

Sebi has become stricter in its approach while giving its go-ahead to IPOs after investors lost their money in some of the high-profile initial shares in 2021 and according to data compiled by Primedatabase.Com, the average time taken by the markets regula-

tor in approving an IPO in 2022 was 115 days.

One97 Communications, the parent entity of digital payments firm Paytm, made a disappointing debut on the bourses in November 2021. The company's ₹18,300-crore IPO was the biggest on Dalal Street after Coal India. The digital payment firm stock was still trading 72 per cent lower from its issue price.

So far this year, only nine companies have approached Sebi with their draft IPO papers amid extremely volatile market conditions and jittery investors' sentiments.

This came after 38 companies collectively garnered close to ₹59,000 crore through IPOs in 2022, which was much lower than ₹1.2 lakh crore mopped up by 63 companies in 2021, which was the IPO year in a decade.

The overall collection in 2022 would have been much lower had it not been for the ₹20,557 crore-LIC public offer, which constituted as much as 35 per cent of the total amount raised during the year.

## UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND

### India's power usage rises 10% in Apr-Feb

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 19:** India's power consumption surged 10 per cent to 1375.57 billion units (BU) during April-February this fiscal year and has already surpassed the level of electricity supplied in entire 2021-22.

The government data showed that power consumption in April-February 2021-22 was 1245.54 BU.

In entire fiscal year 2021-22, power consumption was 1374.02 BU, which is less than 1375.57 BU recorded during April 2022 to February 2023 period.

Experts say power consumption is expected to grow in double digits in the coming months in view of forecasts of unprecedented high demand, especially in summer.

The power ministry has estimated peak power demand in the country at 229 GW during April this year, which is higher than 215.88 GW recorded in the same month a year ago. The ministry has taken many steps to meet high power demand and also asked state utilities to not go for power cuts or load shedding. The ministry has also asked all imported coal-based power plants to run on full capacity from March 16, 2023, to June 15, 2023.

Besides, it has asked other thermal power generators to import coal for blending with domestic dry fuel. Experts say higher economic activities would boost commercial and industrial demand in the coming months. They opined that scorching heat during summer would result in higher consumption of power for running air conditioners and other cooling appliances.

## DEADLINE NEARS

# Carmakers race to conform to stricter emission norms

## TATA MOTORS HAS UPGRADED ITS PV RANGE TO CONFORM TO STRICTER EMISSION NORMS BEFORE APRIL 1 DEADLINE; MARUTI, MAHINDRA ON COURSE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 19:** Tata Motors has upgraded its passenger vehicle portfolio to conform to stricter emission norms while Maruti Suzuki India and Mahindra & Mahindra are confident of transitioning their respective product range before the April 1 deadline.

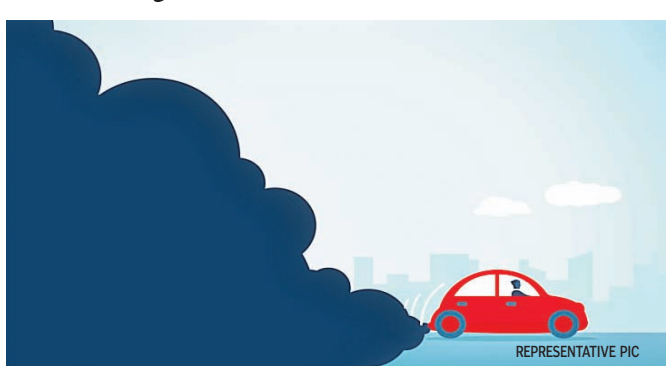
The Indian automobile industry is currently working to make their products meet the second phase of Bharat Stage VI, equivalent to Euro-VI emission norms, in real-time driving conditions.

Four-wheeler passenger and commercial vehicles will need more sophisticated equipment to be added to meet the next level of emission standards. The second phase of BS-VI emission norms are set to kick in from April 1.

Car prices are also expected to rise as automobile companies are investing to add additional equipment in powertrains.

"Our portfolio has already transitioned to BS-VI phase 2 emission norms in February 2023, ahead of the regulation timelines. We have also enhanced the products with improved performance, added new technology features and increased warranty of our vehicles," Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Managing Director Shailesh Chandra told PTI.

As far as pricing is concerned, part of the cost escalation arising out of this regulatory change has partially been passed on in the price increase announced in February, he noted.



"Remaining part may be passed on in the next price hike. Can't confirm any timeline on the same," Chandra said.

Mahindra & Mahindra President Automotive Division Veejay Nakra noted that all company models will comply with BS-VI phase 2 norms as per timelines set by the government. "The cost increase is much lower than the cost of BS-IV to BS-VI transition and will be passed on to consumers in a phased

manner," he added. Maruti Suzuki India Executive Director Corporate Affairs Rahul Bharti stated that the auto major is fully committed to a cleaner environment and will complete the BS-VI phase-2 transition well in time.

"In fact, out of our total 62 applications, we had transitioned 31 applications to BS-VI phase-2 almost a year ahead of the compliance date," he added. Even in 2019-20, Maruti Suzuki

had upgraded many of its cars from BS-IV to BS-VI well before the compliance date, Bharti stated.

He noted that the Maruti Suzuki fleet currently has the least CO2 emission per car among all car manufacturers in the country which will keep getting lower.

From April 1, vehicles will need to have an on-board self-diagnostic device to monitor the real-time driving emission levels. The device will constantly monitor key parts for meeting emission standards such as the catalytic converter and oxygen sensors, to keep a close watch on emissions.

In a scenario wherein emissions exceed the parameters, the device will indicate through warning lights that the vehicle be submitted for a service. Additionally, in order to control the level of fuel burnt, vehicles will also carry programmed fuel injectors, which would control the timing and amount of fuel injected into the petrol engine. Even semiconductors used by

the vehicle will have to be upgraded to monitor throttle, crankshaft positions, air intake pressure, temperature of the engine and the contents of the emissions from the exhaust (particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, CO2, sulphur), etc. India had leaptfrogged to BS-VI emission regime from BS-IV norm with effect from April 1, 2020. The transition saw the domestic automobile industry pumping in around ₹70,000 crore to upgrade its technology.

In 2016, the government asked the automobile industry to upgrade to BS-VI norms by April 2020.

The short deadline was unprecedented anywhere in the world as it was a leap from BS-IV to BS-VI. Deteriorating air pollution situation in various cities, including Delhi-NCR, was one of the prominent reasons to usher in stricter vehicular emission norms in the country. Sulphur content is the major difference between BS-IV and BS-VI norms.

AUSTRALIA COMPLETELY PULVERISE INDIA WITH DOMINANT SHOW BY PACERS AND BATTERS

# STARC REALITY HITS INDIA



Mitchell Starc is delighted after dismissing Suryakumar Yadav for a first ball duck during the second ODI at Visakhapatnam, Sunday

**STAT FACTS**

- 2** Times Australia have beaten India by 10 wickets
- 9** Times Mitchell Starc has taken five wickets in an ODI, the same as Brett Lee
- 4** Indian batters who scored ducks in the game. There have been five occasions when 4 Indian batters have been dismissed for ducks in a home game

**117**  
India's fourth lowest total at home, the others being 78 against Sri Lanka (1986), 100 against West Indies (1993) and 112 against Sri Lanka (2017)

**234**  
Balls remaining when Australia reached the victory target making it the biggest win for any team chasing against India

AGENCIES

**Visakhapatnam, March 19:** They had come in thousands to the stadium here to watch their favourite cricketers perform. However, they went back disappointed after the second ODI between India and Australia finished with the hosts failing to put up even a whiff of a fight and going down by 10 wickets against Australia here Sunday. It was stark reality for India as Mitchell Starc (5/53) bowled in a devastating fashion to dismiss the hosts for 117. And then another Mitchell, Marsh (66 n o, 36b, 6x4, 6x6) and Travis Head (51 n o, 30b, 10x4) put on an opening stand of 121 runs to increase India's woes as the visitors levelled the three-game

ODI series 1-1. It was a tale of abject surrender by both the Indian batters and bowlers and will certainly leave head coach Rahul Dravid a worried man. A match that was supposed to last 100 overs, finished in just 37 overs. It was India's worst-ever defeat in the 50-over format in terms of number of deliveries. After recording their fourth-lowest total at home and overall third lowest against Australia in ODIs, Indian bowlers were in for an uphill task. However, they failed to use the seam and swing conditions which Starc and company had exploited perfectly. Marsh turned out to be the lead aggressor for the visitors with Head turning out to be the perfect foil. Marsh continued from where he had



Mitchell Marsh (left) and Travis Head celebrate after the win Sunday

left off in the first ODI at Mumbai, bringing up his second consecutive half century of the series. It was Starc laid who laid the platform for the morale-boosting win by destroying India's batting. It was his ninth five-wicket haul in ODIs and he took four wickets in his first spell to completely destroy the Indian batting. He was well-supported by Sean Abbott (3/23) and Nathan Ellis (2/13) who ran through the middle and lower-order. Virat Kohli (31, 35b, 4x4) did hold one end up for a while, but once he was dismissed by Abbot, the Indian hopes faded. Axar Patel (29, 29b, 1x4, 2x6) looked to be the most comfortable against the Aussie bowlers, but he ran out of partners. Their knocks were the

**BRIEF SCORES**

**INDIA 117 IN 26 OVERS**  
(Virat Kohli 31, Axar Patel 29 n o, Mitchell Starc 5/53, Sean Abbot 3/23) lost to

**AUSTRALIA 121 FOR NO LOSS IN 11 OVERS**  
(Mitchell Marsh 66 n o, Travis Head 51 n o) by 10 wickets

only bright spots for India with their batting exposed once again by swing and pace. Starc claimed four wickets in his opening spell of 6-1-31-4, removing the subman Gill (0), Rohit Sharma (13), Suryakumar Yadav (0) and KL Rahul (9). It was the second consecutive golden duck for Suryakumar as Starc had him plumb in front, a similar dismissal to the one in Mumbai.

# At 43, Bopanna becomes oldest ATP doubles winner

Indian-Australian duo stuns top seeds en route to title



AGENCIES

**Indian Wells (US), March 19:** India's Rohan Bopanna became the oldest ATP Masters 1000 champion when he and his Australian partner Matt Ebden claimed the men's doubles crown at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament here Saturday. The 43-year-old Bopanna and Ebden, 35, defeated top-seeded Wesley Koolhof of the Netherlands and Neil Skupski of Britain 6-3, 2-6, 10-8 in the final. "Truly special. It's called Tennis Paradise for a reason," said Bopanna, who was playing in his 10th ATP Masters 1000 final. "I've been, over the years, coming here and seeing all these guys win for so many years. I'm really happy that Matt and I were able to do this and get this title here. It's been some tough matches, close matches. Today (Saturday) we played against one of the best teams out there. I am really happy that we got the trophy," the Indian added. Bopanna thus surpassed Daniel Nestor of Canada, who had claimed the 2015 Cincinnati Masters to become the oldest champion at the age of 42. "I spoke to Danny (Nestor) and I told him 'sorry' I'm going to beat his record," Bopanna joked. "Winning the title, that stays with me, so really happy with that." It was the 43-year-old's fifth

## ALACARAZ TARGETS WORLD NO. 1 SPOT

**Indian Wells:** Spain's Carlos Alcaraz edged Janik Sinner to reach the final of Indian Wells and move within one victory of a return to the top of the ATP Rankings. In the semifinals played Saturday, the Spaniard overcame Sinner 7-6 (7-4), 6-3. In the final Alcaraz will play Daniil Medvedev who beat Frances Tiafoe 7-5, 7-6 (7-4). If Alcaraz wins the final, he will once more become the World No. 1 in ATP rankings. "I'm really happy with the performance. I'm really happy to get through this great match," Alcaraz, who has not lost a set in the tournament, said after his match. Masters 1000 doubles title and first since he won in Monte Carlo in 2017. This was the third final of the year for the Indo-Australian duo. Bopanna now has 24 tour-level trophies in his cabinet. The Indo-Australian pair stunned defending and two-time title winners John Isner and Jack Sock in the semifinals, while getting the better off Canadian singles stars Felix Auger-Aliassime and Denis Shapovalov in the quarters. A former World No. 3, Bopanna jumped four places to No. 11 in the Pepperstone ATP Live doubles rankings with the title win.

## SHORT TAKES

### Two walkers qualify for Paris Olympics

**Nomi (Japan):** India's 20km race walkers Vikash Singh and Paramjeet Singh Bisht qualified Sunday for the 2024 Paris Olympics as well as the 2023 World Championships during the Asian Championships here. Vikash and Paramjeet finished second and third in the open category men's section clocking 1:20:05 seconds and 1:20:08s respectively, behind Qian Haifeng (1:19:09s) of China. The qualifying mark for both the 2024 Paris Olympics and 2023 World Athletics Championships in August in Budapest is 1:20:10s, which the two Indians breached by a small margin.

### Ibra oldest player to score in Serie A

**Rome:** Zlatan Ibrahimovic became the oldest scorer in Serie A history at age 41 but had little else to celebrate Saturday after AC Milan was beaten 1-3 at Udinese. The result extended Milan's winless streak to three matches in the Italian league. Roberto Pereyra, Beto and Kingsley Ehibizue scored for Udinese. The loss left Milan in fourth place and in danger of losing their grasp on the final Champions League spot, while Udinese moved up to eighth. At 41 years and 166 days, Ibrahimovic beat the previous record for oldest scorer held by Alessandro Costacurta, who was 41 years and 25 days when he scored in 2007 — also for Milan with a penalty against Udinese.

### India to host SAFF Cup

**Bangalore:** The 2023 edition of the SAFF Championship, South Asia's marquee international tournament, will be held here June 21 to July 3, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced Sunday. India will be hosting the tournament for the fourth time and first since the 2015 edition when it was held in Thiruvananthapuram. All the member associations of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) are expected to participate in the 13th edition of the tournament, the AIFF said. India have won the tournament eight times out of the 12 earlier editions. The teams will be divided into two groups with the top two from each qualifying for the semifinals.

# TOP SHOOTERS ARRIVE IN BHOPAL FOR WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, March 19:** Some of the top marksmen from across the world, including Olympic medalists and world champions, will headline a field of 198 shooters, who will compete at the ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol event to be held here March 20-27. Most of the contingents from the 30-odd countries have already arrived here. The competitions will begin March 22. India and China have entered the largest contingents of 37 shooters each, while some of the leading countries whose athletes are expected to do well here are Denmark, Switzerland, USA, Korea, France and Germany. The World Cup here will see a total of 10 finals — all Olympic events — over five competition days. The medals in the men's and women's 10m air pistol events will be decided on the first day of competition (March 22). China's Liu Jinyao and Lu Kaiman are the reigning men's and women's world champions in the category and both have arrived here. Besides the two, China have sent a squad consisting mainly of young shooters. Talented 19-year-old men's rifle shooter Du Linshu, who won

**India and China have fielded the largest contingents with 37 shooters in each squad**

**2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Jean Quiquampoix will be the main attraction of the meet**

five gold and two silver medals in the junior category at the Cairo World Championships last year, is accompanied by junior women's rifle shooter Min Hou, who also won two gold medals in the junior category at the Worlds. Jean Quiquampoix will be the only reigning Olympic champion on show here and the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol ace is leading a five-member French contingent that also include Clement Bessagnet, silver medalist at the Cairo Worlds last year, and Lamolle Mathilde, who won the women's 25m pistol event at the same tournament. USA has sent an eight-member contingent, including reigning women's air rifle world champion Alison Marie Weisz, who won alongside India's Rudranksh Patil (men's world champion) in Cairo. Tokyo Olympics silver medalist in the air rifle mixed team, Carolyn Mary Tucker, is also here along with her partner Lucas Kozminsky.

# Nikhat beats top seed to seal pre-quarters spot

GOOD DAY FOR INDIAN PUGILISTS AT WOMEN'S BOXING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 19:** Star Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen out-punched Algeria's Boualam Roumaysa to secure a pre-quarterfinal berth in the Women's World Championships here Sunday. Last edition's bronze medalist Manisha Maun (57kg) too advanced to the round of 16 with a 5-0 win against Rahimi Tina of Australia. Competing in the 50kg event, Nikhat beat the reigning African champion by a similar margin to notch her second successive win in the tournament. Both boxers held themselves back initially and maintained a safe distance. Nikhat, who won gold in the last edition, drew first blood. The Algerian followed suit as the two pugilists tried to get the better of each another. If Nikhat landed a few combination punches, Roumaysa capitalised on the Indian boxer's open stance to land several blows. However, the first round went in Nikhat's favour and the Indian began the next round by going all out. Roumaysa too looked set to come forward and attack. Both boxers played with aggression and resorted to a lot of



Nikhat Zareen acknowledges the applause from the crowd after her win Sunday

**I was not given a seeding despite my previous performances. So this win is to impress the judges**

**NIKHAT ZAREEN**

body clinching but in the end, much to the delight of the Indian fans at the KD Jadhav Stadium here, Nikhat emerged victorious. Manisha, on the hand, made an aggressive start. She danced around the ring, dominating the bout. She mixed offence and defence, fighting from a distance. With the crowd chanting her name, Manisha played with confidence as she patiently waited for the right time to punch her opponent and garner points.

**MATCH SCHEDULE**

**CRICKET**

Gujarat Warriors vs UP Warriors 3.30pm

Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals 7.30pm

Telecast: Sports 18 channels

# MSD has weird eating habits: Uthappa

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, March 19:** Right-handed batter Robin Uthappa has revealed an interesting fact about former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni. He said that when it comes to eating, the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) skipper has weird habits. Uthappa and Dhoni have known each other for over two decades, with the former witnessing the latter's meteoric rise from close quarters and fondly recalling the time they spent together. "We always used to eat together. We had a group: Suresh Raina, Irfan Pathan, RP Singh, Piyush Chawla, Munaf Patel, MS and me. We would order dal makhni, butter chicken, jeera aloo, gobi and rotis. But MS is a very rigid person when it comes to eating. He would eat butter chicken but without the chicken, only with the gravy! When he ate chicken, he wouldn't eat the rotis. He is quite weird when it



**Dhoni's simplicity is something that amazes me, he is still the same person I met more than two decades ago**

**ROBIN UTHAPPA**

comes to eating," Uthappa informed. Uthappa also informed that Dhoni has always been very informal and simple. "His simplicity is something that's always been there and it's something which hasn't changed. He's just as simple

today as he was the first time I met him. Dhoni is the most uncomplicated person in the world," Uthappa said in an episode of *My Time With Heroes* on 'JioCinema'. The former India batter shared the story of meeting Dhoni for the first time in 2003. "The first time I saw MS was in 2003 at an India camp at the NCA in Bangalore. He was batting against Munaf when the latter used to bowl really fast with the sling action. Other fast bowlers were also bowling. MS was hitting long sixes off them. He actually ended up in-

cluding S Sriram. Sriram was bowling to him and Dhoni stepped out and hit the ball extremely hard. Sriram touched it with his hand and the ball went 10-20 yards back," stated Uthappa. "We thought Sriram was running after the ball, but he ran past it and straight into the dressing room because he broke two fingers. That is the power MS has and that has made him a very special batter," added Uthappa. Dhoni enjoyed phenomenal success as a captain, both for India and CSK, and Uthappa explained the reason for this. "He has sharp instincts and he backs those. That's why he's been such a successful captain. He takes responsibility for every outcome, whether it is a win or a loss. If he makes a bad decision because of his instincts, the man can't sleep for a few days. However, the instincts of MS usually turn out to be correct most of the time," stated Uthappa.

# Haaland show sinks Burnley

AGENCIES

**Manchester, March 19:** Burnley manager Vincent Kompany endured a nightmare return Saturday to Manchester City as Erling Haaland scored his sixth hat-trick of the season in a 6-0 rout that sent Pep Guardiola's men into the FA Cup semifinals. Kompany who won four Premier League titles in an 11-year career at City as a player, was given a hero's reception at the Etihad. But on the pitch Man City showed no mercy towards their former captain as Haaland took his tally for the season to 42 goals. Julian Alvarez also scored twice and Cole Palmer netted the other goal as City remained on course for a treble of Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup. Haaland scored five as RB Leipzig were put to the sword in a 7-0 thrashing in the Champions League in midweek. The Norwegian has now scored at least a hat-trick in six of



his 19 appearances at the Etihad this season. "It's been a good couple of games — important games. (To win) 7-0 and 6-0 before the national team break is impressive. I'm really happy," said Haaland. "I think we're in the part of the season where we should be at our best," the forward added. The visitors had started the brighter of the two sides but were undone once Haaland opened the scoring by prodding home Alvarez's pass on 32 minutes. Moments later it was 2-0 as Phil Foden was released down the left to square for Haaland to stroke home.