



SYDNEY REACTS TO HER ONLINE TROLLING

Euphoria actress Sydney Sweeney, who was once ostracised for her earlier physical growth, opened up about the mental health struggle she went through due to online bullying. She said that now she has learned to take best advantage of her visuals and photogenic skills to overcome the same.

TYGA'S \$80,000 GIFT TO AVRIL

Tyga has gifted his girlfriend Avril Lavigne a custom-made diamond necklace worth \$80,000 from Mavani & Co. Jewelry. The couple's month long relationship seems to be getting more than casual as the duo gets to know each other.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Today is payback time. Just look around you and count the marvellous blessings that the almighty has showered on you, both on the personal and professional fronts. You will thus want to arrange a small thanksgiving meeting with those close to you.

TAURUS
The desire to rule your community, your neighbourhood is likely to get hold of you, today. Don't get carried away by the idea and go bossing around. No one is likely to appreciate your acting high and mighty. Be sure. You will be creating a lot of enemies. Ganesh, however, warns you to hold your horses or an imminent accident awaits you.

GEMINI
Your career is finally on track and your dreams don't look too distant any more. A candlelit dinner with your spouse will leave you wanting for more. And you shall get more. A night to remember indeed. Ganesh, however, warns you to hold your horses or an imminent accident awaits you.

CANCER
Today, you will be keenly observing the games that people play. But your paranoia will work against you. Certain people are likely to use it to manipulate you and influence important decisions.

LEO
You will demonstrate your skills of networking at the workplace today. At the end of the day you will be afforded the help of some friend or colleague to reduce your workload. You will be able to tide through the day easily if you are able to make some compromises, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You will end up spending the whole day at work today, making detailed plans for the future. While taking important decisions, Ganesh says, keep your partner informed. Whenever needed, also take the consent of your family to avoid any misunderstandings in the future. It will surprise you to receive the mature advice of your partner.

LIBRA
Ganesh says today you will wish to get away from the monotony of daily life and take a break from your work and go off on a vacation. This trip, which you will take, will be beneficial to you and will increase your knowledge and experience. You will find satisfaction and happiness in your personal relationship.

SCORPIO
According to Ganesh, you may just be happy basking in the glory of successful business deals. Focus on your target and there's lot more in store for you on the career front. Sometimes, it's all right to pamper your beloved with precious gifts, and for this you may end up splurging today.

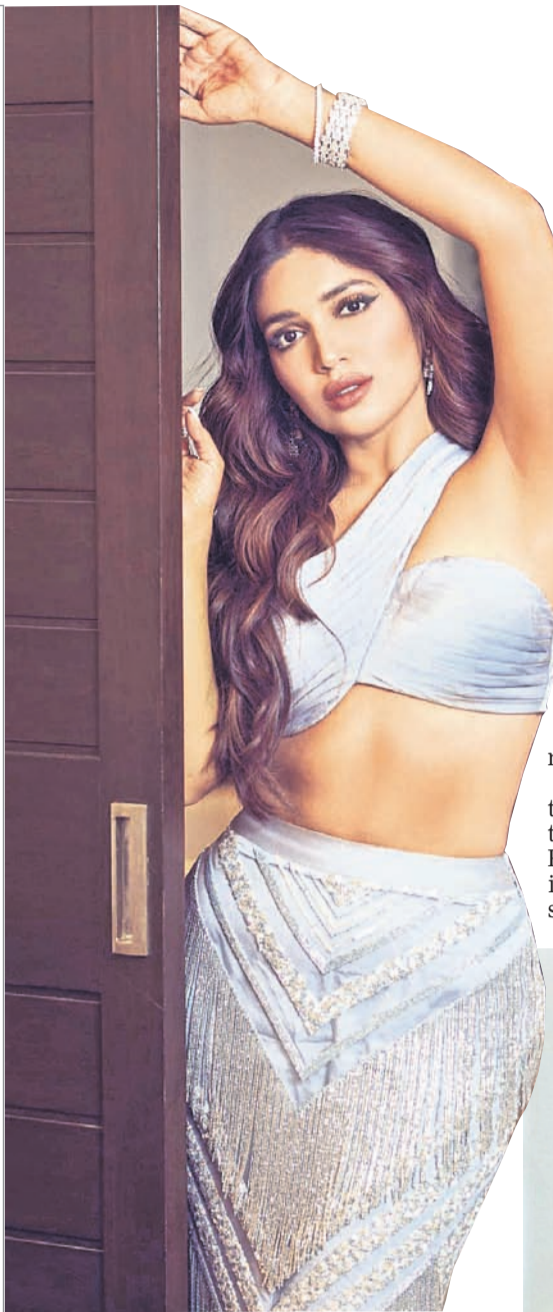
SAGITTARIUS
In your case, the progress will grow two folds today. You will accomplish all the tasks that you take up. Also, you will acknowledge all the people you have contributed in your success story. Keep a watch when splurging on your near and dear ones, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Every venture is fraught with risks and accompanied by uncertainties, but if you have any inclination to start one of your own today, you won't be in two minds about it, says Ganesh. For the professionals, the day may bring recognition and accolades.

AQUARIUS
It's time to have a riot with friends! You don't always have to be goody two-shoes. Do something you've never done before and break a few of those self-made rules. Watch how you suddenly become irresistible to one and all, says Ganesh.

PISCES
You will be busy dealing with minor conflicts throughout the day. You will need time to come out these conflicts even after they have been resolved. You need to guard against your mood swings if you wish to make progress on the work-front.

Bhumi: There is no Planet B



Delhi: The climate warrior and social activist, Bhumi Pednekar, who recently joined UNDP as the first National Advocate of India, has also extended her hands to join PVR Limited, the largest and the most premium cinema exhibition company in India to spread awareness among its patrons about the harmful effects of climate change, inspiring them to make sustainable lifestyle choices to help conserve the environment.

Bhumi said, "I am thrilled to be a part of a focused sustainability campaign by PVR Cinemas. As leaders in the multiplex exhibition space, their initiatives to

reduce power consumption and usage of green measures. There is no Planet B- so the turn to act is now before it's too late."

Among various initiatives being undertaken by PVR, one of the recent ones is the introduction of uniforms made from fabric woven out of yarn from recycled PET bottles. In a span of just 9 months, PVR has been instrumental in recycling 38,000 PET bottles on account of enabling 1000 of its staff to wear sustainable uniforms made out of this fabric (65% recycled polyester and 35% cotton). Going forward, all mainstream cinema uniforms will be replaced by these uniforms, it was learnt.



I am a complete outsider: Adah

Mumbai: Actress Adah Sharma, who marked her silver screen presence with debut film *1920*, recently opened up in an interview about being a complete outsider to the film industry. She also shared her biggest learning over the year.

She was asked if she ever felt inhibition in her career due to the 'first move advantage' of actors from film families. She responded, "I try to destroy any feeling that makes me feel self-pity for not being from a film family, because that means that I don't respect the womb I was born in. I feel huge levels of gratitude that I am a complete outsider but still have a really large audience that supports me unconditionally."

Sharing her biggest learning over the years, she said, "The industry tries very hard to change you and make you a replica of someone else who has been successful. My understanding is that you don't have to thin your eyebrows. Leave them thick, wear them with confidence, and then everyone will want bushy eyebrows."

The actress has *The Kerala Story*, which is based on true events and *Commando 4* in her upcoming pipeline.

Rajkummar banks on word of mouth

Mumbai: Rajkummar Rao is gearing up for the release of his film, *Bheed*. He said the best PR for a medium-budget film is word of mouth. Citing the example of *Kantara*, the actor said a medium-budget movie can pull audiences to theatres if the narrative is 'engaging'.

The actor said, "Especially for a medium-budget film, if you do not give them a big-canvas experience, you have to give them (the audience) something different and engaging. Only then can you talk about a film. Right now, I feel the only PR that is left is word of

mouth."

The actor made an example out of *Kantara* and said that he might be sitting in Mumbai, and then ten other people were checking with him if he had seen *Kantara*.

Language is no longer a barrier, added the National Award winner. "The good thing is people now also expect us to focus on our stories. All languages tell stories. The story has to be engaging; it has to tell something," he said.

Directed by Anubhav Sinha the film is set to be released March 24.



'Being happy is important than being successful'

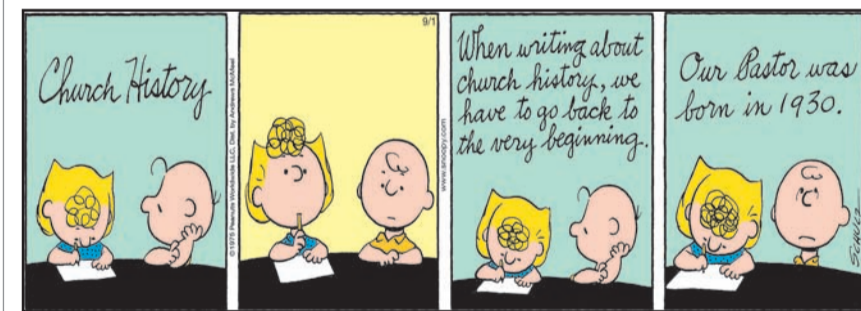
Mumbai: On the International Day of Happiness (March 20), actress Avika Gor, who is making her Hindi film debut with Vikram Bhatt's *1920: Horrors of the Heart*, spoke about what makes her happy and how she stays positive and motivated in life. The actress asserts that being happy is more important than being successful.

She said, "Being happy is way more important than being successful, because if you are really happy and you know that, it reflects on your quality of work, then success just follows. That's why I'm a true believer in something like that. So I do stand by it."

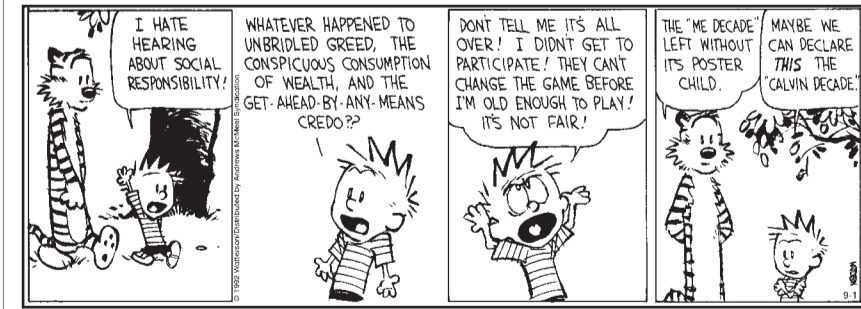
Happiness is also related to health and wellness, as she said, "They say that we should do things for ourselves, not just workwise but also healthwise and stay fit. I think happiness is something that, you know, makes us feel good about ourselves and about our lives. So it is very important to have that mental peace and satisfaction to develop a healthy body."



PEANUTS



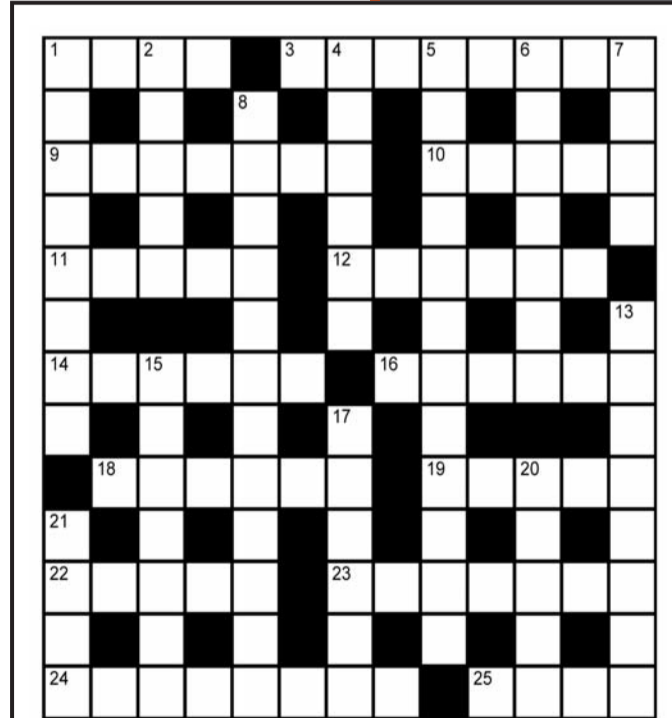
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY

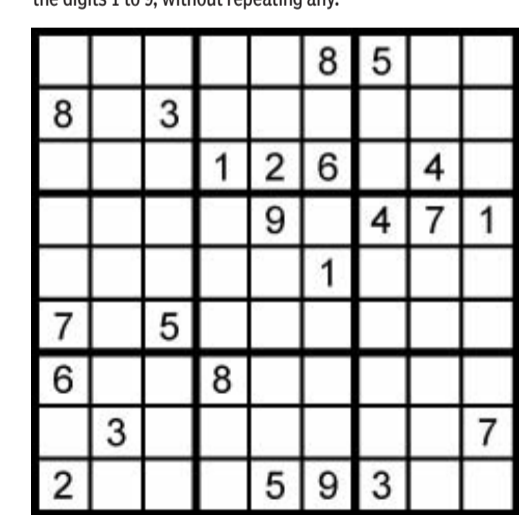


FUN post CROSSWORD

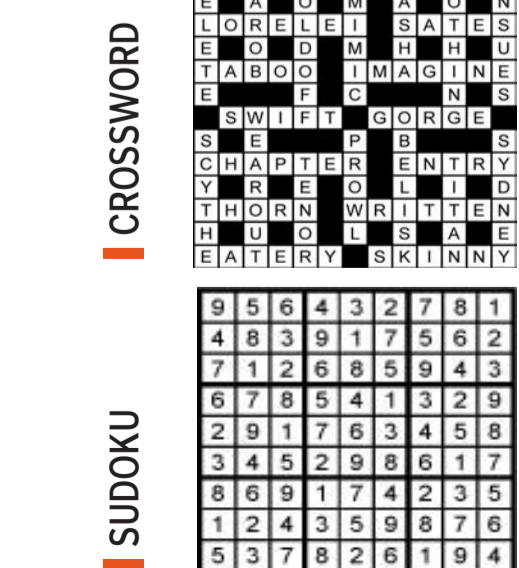


- Across**
- 1 Diet
 - 3 Adventure
 - 9 Porpoise relative
 - 10 Stops
 - 11 Summate (3,2)
 - 12 Inclined
 - 14 Robin Hood was one
 - 16 Watchman
 - 18 Conquer
 - 22 Terse
 - 23 Betrayal
 - 24 Seasickness (3,2,3)
 - 25 Wild oxen
 - 6 Disease
 - 7 Leisurely
 - 8 Meat and potatoes dish (9,3)
 - 13 Violent windstorms
 - 15 Of the greatest importance
 - 17 Middle-of-the-road
 - 20 Panoramic scene
- Down**
- 1 Dissolve, like an odour (4,4)
 - 2 Concrete
 - 4 Symphony
 - 5 Mortal

SUDOKU



SOLUTIONS



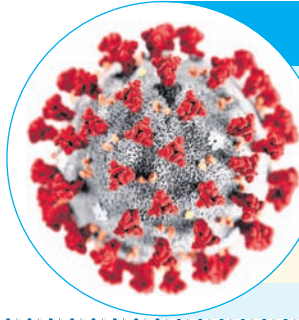
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



FARMERS ON WARPATH

Members of Naba Nirman Krushak Sangathan staged a protest near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Monday, alleging exploitation by millers and demanding pension for farmers



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,25,67,355	65,54,88,717	68,19,943
India	4,46,96,338	4,41,59,182	5,30,806
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

HSC EVALUATION TO START APRIL 3

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 20: The Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha, will begin the evaluation of answer papers for the matriculation examination April 3. BSE president Ramasis Hazra Monday said that around 5 lakh students appeared for the examination and barring some mistakes, the exam passed off smoothly. "Evaluation of answer scripts will be held at 56 centres," Hazra stated. Teachers, who will be engaged in the evaluation exercise, will be given the necessary training, he added. Meanwhile, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash rubbished the allegation of question paper leak from Puri.



BIG RELIEF: Students leave Unit-9 Capital Girls' High School, Bhubaneswar in an exuberant mood as the annual High School Certificate Examination concludes, Monday

Open RTI portals: Apex court tells High Courts

Only the High Courts of Odisha, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh have set up websites for RTI while Karnataka uses the state govt's portal

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 20: The Supreme Court Monday directed all the High Courts (HCs) in the country to set up online Right to Information (RTI) portals to facilitate supply of adequate information.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud expressed surprise over HCs not having online RTI portals even after 17 years of the enactment of RTI Act, 2005, and asked the registrar generals of the HCs to seek directions from their respective Chief Justices for establishment of such portals for district judiciary also. The bench noted that the provisions of RTI Act, state that a person who desires to get information shall do so via an application physically or through electronic means. "All High Courts shall establish online RTI portals within three months from today. High Courts can formulate adequate provisions to facilitate supply of adequate information. Information to be passed onto the secretary generals of High Courts for administrative directions from the Chief Justices (of HCs). Same directions to be sought from Chief Justice for the district judiciary," the bench directed.

The bench noted in its order that HCs of Odisha, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh have set up online portal for RTI. However, no HC has set up RTI portals for district courts. "After a lapse of 17 years, some



A three-judge bench headed by the Chief Justice expressed surprise over HCs not having online RTI portals even after 17 years of the enactment of the Act

High Courts still await to operationalise the websites for this purpose. Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa High Courts have established website for RTI. Karnataka uses the state government portal," the bench said in its order.

The bench also comprising Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala passed the order on a petition filed by non-government organisation Pravasi Legal Cell seek-

ing online RTI portals for all HCs and district courts.

As per the petition the lack of online filing of RTI applications causes many issues, including for NRIs. "RTI Act provides a legal mechanism to enforce and implement the citizen's right to information guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) and Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The present system of submitting RTI applications and corresponding reply from the concerned information officer in physical form take more time which in turn reduces the efficiency of the entire RTI mechanism thus defeating the very purpose of the legislation," the petition argued.

The apex court had earlier issued notice to the state governments. It noted Monday that 18 states had filed their replies.

State able to meet avg peak power: Deb

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 20: With the present capacity of generating 7,920 MW power, the state is able to meet the average peak power of around 4,500-5,000 MW conveniently, said state Energy Minister Pratap Keshari Deb while addressing the media at Geeta Govinda Sadan here, Monday.



commensurately with the increase in number of consumers as well as growing demand from industrial and service sectors, said Deb.

Giving a detailed note on Budget 2023-24, the minister said that the transmission system availability is more than 99.9 per cent in last 10 years. Provisions have been made in the Budget to address low voltage issues in some pockets of the last mile consumers. "We have launched a new Renewable Energy Policy during Make in Odisha (MiO) Conclave 2022. Budgetary

provisions have been made to implement that policy. In this budget, ₹50 crore has been provided for Green Energy Evacuation Corridor (new scheme). Another ₹50 crore has been provided for Odisha Renewable Energy Development Fund (new scheme). We have kept a target to add more than 10,000-MW renewable energy capacity in the state by 2030."

The minister further spoke about two umbrella schemes - Chief Minister's Power Development Programme (CMPDP) with an allocation of ₹1,446.50 crore and Chief Minister's Energy Conservation Programme (CMECP) with an allocation of ₹272.60 crore - by consolidating ongoing schemes & proposed new schemes. This apart, more than 100 33/11 KV sub-stations shall be commissioned by March 2024 to address the low-voltage issues. For ensuring disaster resilient power infrastructure, schemes like Radial to Ring Conversion Project (RRCP Phase-II), State Capital Region Improvement of Power System (SCRIPS), Disaster Resilient Power System (DRPS Phase-II) are planned for implementation and a budget provision of ₹477 crore has been kept collectively, Deb said.

Moreover, under CMECP, a budget provision of ₹250 crore has been made for Household Energy Efficiency Programme (new scheme) with an objective of promoting use of energy efficient home/household appliances. About 1,000 energy clubs are actively operating in schools as part of energy conservation and energy efficiency awareness programme. It is proposed to have such clubs in all high schools.

13 more steel plants on the anvil

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 20: As many as 13 steel plants with a total capacity of 64.28 MTPA will be set up in Odisha, Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Mallick told the Assembly Monday.

Replying to a question from Padmini Dian (BJD), the minister said the upcoming greenfield projects are proposed to be set up at Barbil, Karakolha, Keonjhar, Mahadejoda and Nayagarh in Keonjhar district, Banarpal in Angul, Mahakalapara in Kendrapara, Dhinkia in Jagatsinghpur, with two at Kalinganagar in Jajpur district, Lathikata and Bonai in Sundargarh district and Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj district.

Mallick said while Arya Iron & Steel Company Private Limited has

proposed to set up its plant at Barbil, JSW Utkal Steel Limited will set up a plant at Dhinkia, Orissa Alloy Steel Private Limited and Beekay Utkal Steel Industries Limited at Kalinganagar, Envirocare Infraresolution Private Limited at Lathikata, Fedders Electric & Engineering Limited at Bonal and Rungta Mines Private Limited at Rairangpur.

Similarly, Rungta Mines Limited has proposed to set up steel plants at Karakolha and Keonjhar, Siddhiriddhi International Private Limited at Mahadejoda, Orissa Metaliks Limited at Nayagarh, Jindal Steel Odisha Limited at Banarpal and Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India Limited at Mahakalapara.

The minister said the state government has auctioned 41 mines out

Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Mallick informed the House that the state govt has auctioned 41 mines out of which 23 have become operational

of which 23 have become operational. Similarly, the process is on for auction of five more mines while 10 more mines are in pipeline to be auctioned.

Mallick told the Assembly that the five mines for which the process is on for auction include Kendudihi North iron ore block, (Keonjhar), Bhanjikusum Manganese block, Kusumdihi Manganese, Kedesala iron ore north-east block and Orahuri Manganese block, all in Sundargarh.

'Pakhala' wins hearts with lip-smacking side dishes



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 20: Odisha Monday observed 'Pakhala Dibas' and relished the traditional probiotic dish 'Pakhala' with a variety of delicious side dishes.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and many dignitaries greeted the people of Odisha as the state observed the 'Pakhala Dibas'.

'Pakhala' is a term derived from Sanskrit word 'Prakhyala' meaning 'to wash with water'. Pakhala is also one of the favourite 'Prasads' of Lord Jagannath.

Taking to twitter, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said: "Pakhala is among the best dishes of Odisha. It is unique to our food diversity. While

OTDC prepared special menu at its Nimantran restaurant in Capital city and Puri, and Panthanivas

greeting all on Pakhala Dibas, I called upon all the spread the importance of Odia dishes."

Odisha Tourism department and Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) prepared special menu at its Nimantran restaurant and Puri, and Panthanivas in Capital city where they offered many varieties of the watery dish, such as 'Paani Pakhala', 'Subasa Pakhala', 'Tava Pakhala', 'Malliphula Pakhala', 'Ghia Pakhala', 'Basi Pakhala', 'S'aja Pakhala', 'Dahi Pakhala', 'Chipuda

Pakhala', 'Mitha Pakhala', and 'Jeera Pakhala'. Tourism Minister Ashwini Kumar Patra attended the event at Panthanivas and relished Pakhala with others.

Many hotels prepared 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 Chhecha' and 'Mitha Chadchadi'.

Social media platforms were flooded with a large number of people posting pictures of them celebrating the special day.

Not only people from Odisha but the Odia community across the globe celebrated the day. A delegation of environmentalists from Odisha including Soumya Ranjan Biswal, who works for safety of Olive Ridley turtles, was treated with Pakhala by Odia community and members of The Odisha Society of The Americas in America. Huge thanks to the Odia couple Gyana Dash and Archana Dash for hosting and sharing this taste of authentic food that brings the essence of our culture and emotions to all Odia delegates during our stay in USA."

The Saheed Nagar Durga Puja Committee also celebrated the day by hosting a community Pakhala feast which was attended by several political leaders of the state.

DSPL-507

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୧୬-୨୪ ମାସ	ଏଫଆଇ-୨, ଭିଟାମିନ୍-କ***, ଡିପିଟି ଦୁଷ୍ଟର-୧, ଓପିଜି ଦୁଷ୍ଟର-୧, କେଲ-୨**
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* ଯଦି ୩ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ଡିପିଟି/ଟିଡି ଟିକାର ଦୁଇଟି ମାତ୍ର ନେଇଥିବେ ।
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facebook.com/HFWOdisha http://www.health.odisha.gov.in @HFWOdisha ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-10003/13/01/16/2223

of the day quote

The government has taken a serious view on complaints of vulgarity and abusive language in content on OTT platforms and will not hesitate to take tough action to stop this trend

ANURAG THAKUR | INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING MINISTER

What kind of democracy is this? Does it suit a law minister to threaten the judiciary? It is a threat to judges who refuse to bow down to the government and it's an attempt to pressure the judiciary

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

No Opposition front to take on the BJP is possible without the Congress and if a coalition is formed for the 2024 general elections, the party will have a central role in it

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Four dead

Patna: Four women labourers were killed in an explosion that occurred in a brick-kiln here on Monday. Local police and fire brigade have launched a rescue operation at Lucky brick-kiln located in Byapur village under Maner police station. According to sources, the explosion was so intense that a wall came crashing down trapping the women labourers inside the kiln.

Girl ends life

Saharanpur: A 14-year-old girl in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur committed suicide by allegedly consuming poison after she was repeatedly molested and harassed by a youth in her locality, police said. The police have registered a report on the complaint of the girl's father. The girl's father has alleged that Suhail, a youth from the locality, used to molest his daughter and harass her while coming home. She consumed poison and died during treatment.

Gangster killed

Patna: A notorious gangster, Prince Singh, was killed in an encounter in Bihar's Sitamarhi, police said Monday. The action comes after a series of kidnapping, extortion and murder cases have been reported from various parts of the state. A team of Sitamarhi police shot at the gangster in a retaliatory firing at around 3.30 a.m. The accused was involved in liquor smuggling also. Pankaj Sinha, the Inspector General of Police Tirhut range, confirmed the incident.

Four arrested

Thane: Four persons, three of them from Bihar, have been arrested in connection with the shooting of a developer in Navi Mumbai, police said Monday. The main accused in the case was apprehended from Rajkot in Gujarat on Saturday, while the three gunmen he had hired were from Bihar, Navi Mumbai Police Commissioner Milind Bharambe said. Savjibai Gokar Manjeri (56) was gunned down by two motorcycle-borne men in Nerul on March 15, he said.

Leopard captured

Pune: A leopard roaming in a residential area on the outskirts of Pune city in Maharashtra was captured on Monday morning after it was tranquillised during a three-hour operation which involved personnel of police, forest personnel and others, an official said.



The evolution of the Constitution has to take place in Parliament and no other 'super body' or institution, including the judiciary and the executive, has any role in it

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

STAGE SET

The Indian space agency Monday said it will launch the 36 satellites of the UK-based Network Access Associated Ltd (OneWeb) March 26



India, Japan resolve to boost ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 20: The India-Japan global partnership is based on shared democratic values and respect for the rule of law and promotes peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Monday after holding wide-ranging talks with his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida.

The two prime ministers largely focused on significantly boosting cooperation in areas of clean energy, semiconductors and co-development of military hardware besides exploring ways to deal with regional security challenges amidst the increasing assertiveness of China.

During the talks, Modi conveyed to Kishida that one of the areas of very strong cooperation between India and Japan could be co-innovation, co-design co-creation in the defence manufacturing sector, officials said.

Modi and Kishida also vowed to work together to deal with pressing global challenges under India's presidency of the G20 and Japan's chairmanship of the G7 grouping. Kishida, who was in India for just about 27 hours, said he invited Modi to the G-7 summit in Hiroshima in May and the offer was immediately accepted.

On the sidelines of the talks, a note was exchanged between the two sides concerning the provision of the fourth tranche of a Japanese



Tokyo's economic cooperation with New Delhi continues to grow rapidly and it will not only support further development of India but create significant economic opportunities for Japan

FUMIO KISHIDA | JAPAN PM

The India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership is based on our shared democratic values, and respect for the rule of law in the international arena

NARENDRA MODI | INDIA'S PM

loan of up to 300 billion yen (around Rs 18,000 crore) for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail.

"The India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership is based on our shared democratic values, and respect for the rule of law in the international arena," Modi said in his media statement. "Strengthening this partnership is not only important for both our countries, but it also promotes peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. In our conversation today, we have reviewed

the progress made in our bilateral relations," he added.

The Japanese prime minister arrived in Delhi this morning on a brief visit amid global geopolitical turmoil over the Ukraine conflict and increasing concerns over China's aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific. Modi said he and Kishida exchanged views on defence equipment and technology collaboration, trade, health, and digital partnership.

There was also a fruitful discussion on the importance of re-

Centre issues revised guideline to treat Covid



India saw a single-day rise of over 1,000 fresh Covid-19 cases Sunday after 129 days. Monday, the country reported a single-day rise of 918 cases while the active caseload has increased to 6,350

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 20: Antibiotics should not be used in Covid cases unless there is clinical suspicion of bacterial infection, according to a revised guideline for the treatment of adult coronavirus patients issued by the Centre.

The revised guidelines, issued Sunday amid an uptick in coronavirus cases, stated that drugs such as Lopinavir-ritonavir, hydroxychloroquine, Ivermectin, Molnupiravir, Favipiravir, Azithromycin and Doxycycline should not be used for the treatment of adult COVID-19 patients in India.

The AIIMS/ICMR-COVID-19 National Task Force met on January 5 to revise the clinical guidance protocol. It has also ad-

vised doctors not to use convalescent plasma therapy. "Antibiotics should not be used unless there is clinical suspicion of bacterial infection. Possibility of co-infection of COVID-19 with other endemic infections must be considered," the guidelines said.

Additionally, in moderate or severe diseases at high risk of progression, Remdesivir may be considered for up to five days. It should be started within 10 days of onset of symptoms in those having moderate to severe disease with a high risk of progression (requiring supplemental oxygen) but who are not on IMV or ECMO.

There is no evidence of benefit for the treatment of more than five days and is not to be used in patients who are not on oxygen support or in home setting, the guidelines stated. Besides, in rapidly progressing moderate or severe disease, Tocilizumab should be considered preferably within 24-48 hours of the onset of severe disease/ICU admission.

India saw a single-day rise of over 1,000 fresh COVID-19 cases Sunday after 129 days. On Monday, the country reported a single-day rise of 918 cases while the active caseload has increased to 6,350.

Porn clip played at Patna railway station

Patna: Hundreds of passengers waiting to board trains at the Patna railway station faced an awkward situation when a porn clip played at all the TV screens installed across the 10 platforms for three minutes. The incident took place Sunday night. The contract of telecasting videos and films on the railway stations of Danapur division is given to a private company. Railway Protection Force (RPF) officials immediately contacted them and stopped the telecast. Confirming the incident, Prabhat Kumar, official spokesperson of the DRM office in Danapur, said: "We have initiated an inquiry into the incident and started the process of cancellation of contract. We have registered an FIR against the company officials... It is an intolerable incident. We will blacklist this company." Sources said that a similar incident had taken place on Sunday morning as well in the same railway station.



People hold snow after a hailstorm in Khargone district

PTI PHOTO

AI peeing victim moves SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 20: A 72-year-old woman, at the centre of headlines after a co-passenger allegedly urinated on her on board a New York-Delhi Air India flight last November, has moved the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the DGCA and airlines to frame SOPs to deal with such incidents.

The woman said she was constrained to approach the court because Air India and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)

failed to treat her with care and responsibility after the incident. "In addition, the wide-ranging national press reportage full of conjecture and surmises has severely undermined the petitioner's rights as a victim under Article 21 of the Constitution, and in fairness has also affected the rights of the accused as well. Their rights to a free and fair trial have also been substantially affected due to a selective leaking of the petitioner's 'AIR SEWA' complaint of the petitioner; the FIR and selective witness statements being released to the media to match specific narratives," she said in her plea.



Mumbai cops step up Salman's security

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 20: The Mumbai police have stepped up the security of Bollywood superstar Salman Khan after he received a threatening e-mail, which had led to cops earlier registering an FIR against gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldy Brar, an official said Monday.

According to the official, two Assistant Police Inspector (API)-rank officers and eight to ten constables will be part of Khan's security detail round the clock. Also, fans will not be allowed to assemble outside the 57-year-old actor's residence-cum-office in Galaxy Apartments in suburban Bandra, he said.

Khan was earlier provided



with Y plus category security by the police and he moved around in a bullet-proof car along with his personal security guards. Now, the police have taken additional security measures for the safety of the 'Dabangg' actor; the official said.

Khan was earlier provided with Y plus category security by the police and he moved around in a bullet-proof car along with his personal security guards

On Saturday, the Bandra police registered an FIR (first information report) against three persons - gangsters Bishnoi, Brar and one Rohit - for allegedly sending a threatening e-mail to Khan's office. The FIR was registered on the basis of a police complaint lodged

by one Prashant Gunjalkar, who according to cops, frequently visits the Bandra-based residence of the popular filmstar and runs an artist management company.

When Gunjalkar was present in Khan's office on Saturday afternoon, he noticed an email had come from the ID 'Rohit Garg', the official said quoting the FIR.

The e-mail stated Khan must have seen the interview given recently to a news channel by Bishnoi, and if not, he should see it. Addressing Gunjalkar, it said if Khan wants to close the matter, he should talk face-to-face with Goldy bhai, adding "there is still time but agli bar, jhatka dekhe ko milega" (next time he will receive shock).

ONE FAKE IS ENOUGH TO QUESTION MANY FACTS

Close on the heels of a fake feigning his way into the ranks of a police training establishment for officers in Gujarat, comes news of an Ahmedabad conman breaching the might of the multi-layered security in the most sensitive region of Jammu and Kashmir using fraud credentials of the country's most heavily screened establishment: The Prime Minister's Office. And doing it not once but thrice before nemesis caught up with the culprit.

The most heartening part, in both cases, is that the con-culprits were nabbed and will now face the full brunt of the law but the cause for concern remains. The fake

trainee may, at best, rank as a procedural lapse but the Jammu and Kashmir penetration of a multi-layered security grid by a fake who lacked finesse but flaunted Z-plus security in the valley, is the stuff of a national nightmare that needs re-evaluation at the highest level.

While his doctor wife would have you believe that her husband Kiran Patel, the man who faked being an additional director, strategy and campaigns, in the Prime Minister Office (PMO), is working in 'national interest' and is being needlessly defamed, the emerging profile paints an altogether different picture. The impersonator used bluff and bluster; name-dropping, swagger and social media, paraded a plush lifestyle replete with swanky BMW and a posh residence in a pricy area of Ahmedabad, to carry on his business, unmindful of the criminal

trail he left behind. Though the alleged imposter had spread his dragnet around four states besides his home ground of Gujarat, it was on his third high profile visit to the Kashmir



valley that the establishment woke up to his shenanigans and he was picked up from a top hotel, questioned and then taken into custody after he faltered. He was arrested March 3 but the matter remained under wraps until he was produced in court last week and sent to judicial custody.

The conman had been involved in at least three known cases of cheating in Gujarat. Claiming a line of degrees including a PhD from a US University, on social media, bulk of them fakes, Patel had made it a point to attend meetings held for BJP workers, and hovering around the state party headquarters and the secretariat to

showcase his left in the portals of power. The man even had the gall to organize a conference claiming it a part of the warm-up to the G-20 summit at a top city hotel on "emerging avenues for industrial development which was advertised as being attended by top state government officials.

As the trail of investigations heats up, those who were once scrambling to get onto Kiran Patel's bandwagon are doing double time distancing themselves from him now. And these include some BJP leaders as well. However this entire imposter episode has raised more questions than his arrest has answered.

international



Kyiv expects China to use its influence on Russia to end the war in Ukraine
OLEG NIKOLENKO | UKRAINIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

DROUGHT IN SOMALIA

A new report says an estimated 43,000 people died amid the longest drought on record in Somalia last year and half of them likely were children. It is the first official death toll announced in the drought withering large parts of the Horn of Africa. At least 18,000 people are forecast to die in the first six months of this year



of the day quote

The campaign against the Army chief is intolerable and a continuation of the conspiracy against the institutions

SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PAKISTAN PM

The Sri Lankan rupee (LKR) will gradually appreciate against the US dollar once the country enters into an International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement

RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | LANKAN PRESIDENT

There is no such thing as a Palestinian nation. There is no Palestinian history. There is no Palestinian language

BEZALEL SMOTRICH | ISRAELI FINANCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Thailand PM dissolves parl

Bangkok: Thailand's Parliament was dissolved Monday by a government decree, setting the stage for a May general election that poses an opportunity to lessen the military's influence in politics. The dissolution, just a few days before the end of the four-year term of the House of Representatives, was initiated by Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who is seeking a fresh mandate in the election expected to be held May 7 or 14. The date will be announced next week. The election will pit the popular opposition Pheu Thai party, backed by billionaire populist Thaksin Shinawatra, against parties representing the conservative establishment and closely linked to the military.

Moscow opens case against ICC

Moscow: The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor and judges, who issued an arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin, have become the targets of a criminal case, Russia's Investigative Committee announced Monday, according to a media report. In a Telegram post, the committee said that it has opened cases against ICC prosecutor Karim Ahmad Khan, as well as judges Tomoko Akane, Rosario Salvatore Aitala and Sergio Gerardo Ugalde Godínez, RT reported.

Palestine, Israel to de-escalate tension

Cairo: The Palestinian National Authority and Israel reaffirmed their commitment to advancing security, stability and peace for both Palestinians and Israelis. According to a communique released after a meeting between officials from the two sides, Egypt, Jordan and the US in Egypt's Red Sea resort city of Sharm El-Sheikh, the parties recognised the necessity of de-escalation on the ground, the prevention of further violence, as well as of pursuing confidence-building measures, and addressing outstanding issues through direct dialogue.

SK lifts years-long mask mandate

Seoul: Amid a stable Covid situation, South Korea Monday finally lifted its years-long mask mandate for public transportation. Wearing a mask is no longer mandatory on public transportation, such as buses, the subway or taxis, as one of the last-remaining Covid-19 restrictions came to an end in the country's efforts to return to pre-pandemic normalcy, reports Yonhap News Agency. The decision came two years and five months after the government made it mandatory to wear a mask on public transportation in October 2020 at the height of the pandemic.



ON THE BOIL: A protester jumps in the air as he throws a rock towards police next to a burning barricade in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya. Hundreds of opposition supporters have taken to the streets of the Kenyan capital over the result of the last election and the rising cost of living, in protests organised by the opposition demanding that the president resigns from office

XI, PUTIN HOLD TALKS IN MOSCOW

CHINA & RUSSIA HAVE DESCRIBED XI'S TRIP AS PART OF EFFORTS TO FURTHER DEEPEN THEIR "NO-LIMITS FRIENDSHIP"

AGENCIES

Moscow, March 20: Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart and ally Vladimir Putin held crucial talks in Moscow Monday amid concerted efforts by China to push for a peace deal to end the Ukraine war, weeks after Beijing successfully brokered a pact between Iran and Saudi Arabia to end their bitter rivalry. Xi and Putin, who met over 40 times in the last 10 years to forge close ties to oppose the US-dominated world order, held talks hours after the Chinese leader arrived in Moscow for a three-day state visit to a "grand welcome", official media on both sides reported. Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told the media that Presidents Xi and Putin will hold face-to-face talks followed by their delegations later.

They will continue their talks Tuesday too, according to Russian official media. Ushakov said the visit would be strictly a business visit, "there will be no additional protocol stuff, the main thing is negotiations, negotiations and negotiations." In his arrival statement, Xi said, "Our two countries have consolidated and grown the bilateral relationship on the basis of no-alignment, no-confrontation and not targeting any third party, and set a fine example for developing a new model of major-country relations". He said China will continue to work with Russia to safeguard the international system with the UN at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. President Putin said that Moscow has studied Beijing's proposals for resolving the conflict in Ukraine and that he will discuss it at a meeting with President Xi, state-run Tass news agency reported. "We have thoroughly studied your proposals for resolving the acute crisis in Ukraine," Putin said, addressing the Chinese leader at a meeting Monday. "Of course,



Xi's visit follows Putin arrest warrant for war crimes

China and Russia both denounce international court ruling

China seeks to broker Ukraine peace, Kyiv wants Russia out

Fighting rages round Bakhmut in east Ukraine

we will have an opportunity to discuss this," he stressed. "We know that you proceed from the principles of justice and observance of the fundamental provisions of international law and indivisible security for all countries," Putin said, noting that China was taking a "fair and balanced position on most pressing international problems." Putin stressed Russia's openness to negotiations. "Of course, we will discuss all these issues, including your initiatives,

which we treat with respect, of course," he said. Significantly, as Xi arrived in Moscow becoming the first world leader to meet Putin after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against the Russian leader accusing him of committing war crimes in Ukraine, Beijing strongly criticised the Court accusing it of double standards. Xi said his plan takes into account the "legitimate" concerns of all parties and reflects the broadest common understanding of

FRANCE PENSION REFORM

Macron faces no-confidence votes

AGENCIES

Paris, March 20: France's government is facing a critical, maybe fatal, moment Monday with no-confidence motions filed by lawmakers who are furious that President Emmanuel Macron ordered the use of special constitutional powers to force through an unpopular bill raising the retirement age from 62 to 64 without giving them a vote. National Assembly lawmakers are set to vote in the afternoon on two no-confidence motions, one from the far-right National Rally and the other; more threatening one from a small group that has gathered support across the left. The Senate, dominated by conservatives who back the retirement plan,



Smoke rises from a burning barricade on highway during a protest against pension reform in Rennes, France

passed the legislation last week. The no-confidence motions each need the backing of 287 lawmakers in the National Assembly; the lower chamber, to pass. Although the motions appear unlikely to succeed, the climate of protest that Macron's pension reforms has sparked in parliament and on the streets means the outcome of voting in the National Assembly is not guaranteed.

Monday's no-confidence votes look unlikely to pass, but the result could be tight

A successful no-confidence vote would fell the government and kill the legislation, which is set to raise the retirement age by two years to 64

More legal cases piling up against Imran Khan

AGENCIES

Islamabad, March 20: More legal cases are piling up against Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan following the violence staged by his supporters during his hearing at the Islamabad Judicial Complex in the Toshakhana case. Till now, the total number of cases have gone up to 80. As per details, the latest case has been lodged against the former premier and members of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party at Islamabad's Golra Sharif police station for setting government vehicles a blaze, attacking police officials and snatching away their official weapons.

Khan's nephew held

Islamabad: Pakistan police arrested Imran Khan's nephew and a number of his supporters Monday for their alleged involvement in the attacks on the security personnel outside a court here over the weekend where the ousted premier arrived from Lahore to appear in the much-awaited hearing in a corruption case. Monday's arrests bring the total number of Khan's followers detained in Islamabad to 198 since Saturday. This comes after the Punjab Police raided Khan's residence at Zaman Park, Lahore in a clearance operation, immediately after he left for Islamabad to appear before the judges at the judicial complex.

VANDALISM BY PRO-KHALISTAN GROUP

AGENCIES

London, March 20: Security was beefed up around the Indian High Commission here Monday and Scotland Yard detained one person in connection with vandalism at the mission by Khalistan supporters a day earlier as India asked the UK to quickly arrest and prosecute those involved in the attack. The tricolour flying atop the Indian High Commission in London was grabbed at by the protesters waving separatist Khalistan flags and chanting pro-Khalistan slogans Sunday. After the incident, police arrested one person related to the violent dis-

Security beefed up around Indian mission in UK

order. In New Delhi, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said Monday that India has asked the UK to quickly arrest and prosecute those involved in pulling down the Indian flag at its mission in London. Kwatra said that India lodged a strong protest and clearly indicated to the British authorities the need for putting up adequate security at the Indian high commission. Following the incident, India summoned the senior-most British diplomat in Delhi and demanded an explanation over complete "absence of security" at the mission. Kwatra, replying to a question at a media briefing, said the British deputy high commissioner was



summoned and India demanded that the culprits and perpetrators of what happened in London on Sunday be quickly "arrested and prosecuted". On Sunday, a group of pro-Khalistan protesters also attacked and damaged the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, prompt-

ing sharp condemnation from Indian-Americans who demanded immediate action against those responsible for it. Kwatra, however, did not respond to a query on reports of pro-Khalistan protesters attacking the Indian Consulate in San Francisco. In Canberra,

San Francisco consulate attacked

Washington/Canberra: A group of pro-Khalistan protesters Sunday attacked and damaged the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, prompting sharp condemnation from Indian-Americans who demanded immediate action against those responsible for it. "We are also appalled by the complete law and order failure in both in London as well as in SFO where a few radicalised separatists attacked India's diplomatic missions," Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) said after pro-Khalistani protesters attacked the Indian Consulate in San Francisco. Khalistan supporters gathered outside Australian parliament on Monday to protest against police crackdown on radical preacher Amritpal Singh and his associates in Punjab. Officials from the mission in London said the "attempted but failed" attack had been foiled and that the tricolour was now flying "grander", with a larger tricolour now adorning the India House facade. The Metropolitan Police said two members of security staff sustained minor injuries, which did not require hospital treatment and an investigation has been launched after an arrest on suspicion of violent disorder.

IMF denies linking loan with Pakistan's nuclear weapons



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, March 20: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has rebuffed claims that the global lender had attached any strings to the revival of a loan programme for Pakistan stalled for months despite the two sides engaged in talks for weeks. IMF resident representative in Islamabad Esther Perez Ruiz denied attaching any strings to the External Fund Facility (EFF), Geo News reported. "Regarding recent speculation that programme discussions with the authorities for the ninth review under the IMF supported programme may have covered Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, I want to be categorical that there is absolutely no truth to this or any insinuated link between the past or current IMF supported programme and decision by any Pakistani government over its nuclear programme," the official said. She further said that the discussions have exclusively focused on economic policies to solve Pakistan's economic and balance of payments problems, in line with the Fund's mandate for promoting macroeconomic and financial stability.

On March 16, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar promised that there would be no compromise on the country's nuclear and missile programme. He made the statement in the Senate in response to Senator Raza Rabbani's questions about the delay in signing the agreement with the IMF. Rabbani regretted that the upper House of the Parliament had "neither before nor today been taken into confidence on what are the conditionalities of the IMF" for extending the loan facility to Pakistan, Geo News reported.

'Prachanda' wins vote of confidence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 20: Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' Monday secured a vote of confidence in parliament, winning the second floor test within three months after the formation of the new government.

Prime Minister Prachanda secured 172 votes in the 275-member House of Representatives. Other 89 lawmakers voted against him whereas one abstained. A total of 262 members of the lower house were present in the house. The 68-year-old Maoist leader needed at least 138 votes out of 275 lawmakers. Eleven political parties including Nepali Congress, CPN-Maoist Centre, Rastriya Swatantra Party CPN-Unified Socialist, Janata Samajwadi Party Nepal, Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party, Nagarik Unmukti Party, Janamat Party among others voted in favour of Prachanda. CPN-UML and Rastriya Prajatantra Party voted against



him. Nepal Workers and Peasants Party abstained. Prachanda's victory paved the way for the expansion of the cabinet by inducting ministers from ruling alliance including the largest party in the Parliament - Nepali Congress, which has already announced plans to join the government. The expansion of the cabinet is likely within the next two-three days to give a full shape to the government, according to party sources. Prachanda Sunday exuded confidence that he will comfortably win a vote of confidence in the House of Representatives.

business

of the day quote

If you have a smart prepaid meter, your cost of electricity will come down by 2-2.5 per cent and the consumer gains (at benefit)

RK SINGH | UNION POWER MINISTER

India is currently a top 10 country for Cisco, and our ambition is to get into the top 5 by 2025. We are on a good trajectory to be there

DAISY CHITILLAPALLY | PRESIDENT, CISCO INDIA AND SAARC

This \$4,00,000 investment is a natural extension of our global goal to be net water positive by 2030, helping replenish more water than we use and is a key pillar of our purpose programme

AHMED EL-SHEIKH | PRESIDENT, PEPSICO

SHORT TAKES

SEBI to refund ₹3bn to NSE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday directed the market regulator to refund Rs 3 billion (\$36.3 million) to the National Stock Exchange of India in a case involving alleged lapses in the bourse's systems, lawyers representing the parties said Monday. The top court also refused to stay a tribunal order, which had set aside the regulator's ruling against NSE, the lawyers added. In 2019, SEBI passed a series of orders against the NSE and its former chief executives, Chitra Ramkrishna and Ravi Narain, alleging that the exchange did not exercise due diligence while setting a network that allowed high-frequency traders unfair access to some network servers at the exchange. SEBI had ordered the NSE to deposit nearly Rs 11 billion, including interest, in an investor fund and barred it from raising money from the securities market directly or indirectly for six months.

PE/VC investments nearly halve in Feb

Mumbai: Investments by private equity and venture capital funds declined by 44 per cent to \$3.7 billion in February compared to the same period a year ago, a report said Monday. The venture investing industry poured in \$6.6 billion into companies in February 2022, while the same stood at \$4.314 billion in January 2023. In volume terms, the number of deals dropped by 60 per cent in February with 55 transactions getting recorded as against 139 in the year-ago period, the report said, adding that there were 75 deals in January 2023.



No instructions have been given to banks for not filling Rs 2,000 notes in ATMs. Banks make their own assessment of amount and denominational requirement for ATMs on the basis of past usage, consumer requirement, seasonal trend, etc

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

AMAZON TO AXE 9K MORE WORKERS

Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said in a blog post Monday that the tech major will slash another 9,000 jobs in the next few weeks. The development comes just months after the e-commerce giant in January this year, said it will lay off over 18,000 employees, amid a rush of other tech companies downsizing their head count



GLOBAL BANKING TURMOIL

'Indian banks more resilient than US'

REUTERS

Mumbai, March 20: Turbulence in the United States and the European banking sectors has prompted Indian policymakers to assure investors that the domestic financial institutions are resilient. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Central Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das have both said that local lenders are strong, after the US banking crisis spilled over to the Indian stock market and rattled bank stocks.

However, analysts say that unlike in the past few years, when Indian banks had large bad loans and limited capital, these lenders are now in a better position to withstand stress.

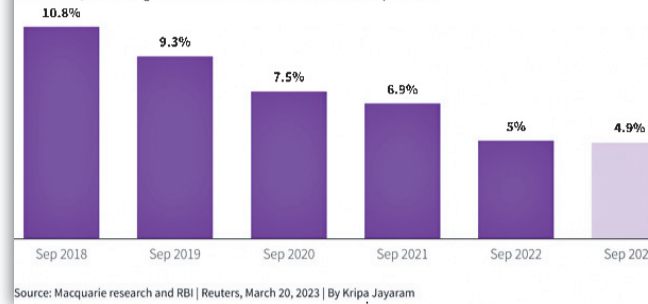
"Right now, Indian banks are showing resilience compared to their US counterparts and that largely has to do with their current capital levels, healthy asset quality and strict monitoring by the regulator," said Anil Gupta, senior vice president and co-group head for financial sector ratings at ICRA ratings agency. He does not foresee a direct impact of the global banking turmoil on Indian banks.

HOW WELL CAPITALISED ARE INDIAN BANKS?

The Indian financial sector has seen large insolvencies, including Yes Bank, over the past three years but lenders have reduced bad debt

Indian banks' bad loans on a declining trend

RBI estimates the gross NPA ratio of all Indian scheduled commercial banks to decline by 10 bps to 4.9% by September 2023.



The Nifty Bank index is down 5.3% since the crisis at Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) erupted earlier this month, compared with a near-18% fall in the US banking index

While the Federal Reserve has raised interest rates by 450 basis points since March last year, India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has increased the policy repo rate by 250 bps since May

Indian banks have a high proportion of low-cost current account savings account (CASA) deposits and high proportion of retail deposits, making them more resilient

ADITYA AHAREKAR | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CAREEDGE RATINGS

India's benchmark 10-year bond yield has risen 20 basis points since the rate hiking cycle began in May 2022, while the comparable US 10-year yield has risen 150 bps since the Federal Reserve started hiking rates

and raised capital since then, putting them in a stronger position.

Stress tests conducted by the central bank and released as part of the Financial Stability Report (FSR) in December showed that

Indian banks would be able to comply with the minimum capital requirements even under adverse scenarios.

According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) norms, banks are re-

quired to maintain a minimum Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 9% on an ongoing basis.

As per latest RBI data released in December, the CRAR and Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) ratio of Indian banks stood at 16% and 13%, respectively, as of September-end.

WHAT IS THE ASSET QUALITY POSITION OF BANKS?

The gross non-performing assets to total advances ratio for Indian banks has been on a declining trend since hitting a high of 10.8% in September 2018. It fell from 5.9% in March 2022 to 5% in September 2022.

The provision coverage ratio (PCR), which reflects the percentage of funds set aside for bad loans, has also been increasing since March 2021 to 71.5% as on September-end.

HOW ARE INDIAN BANKS' BOND PORTFOLIOS PERFORMING?

One of the pressures faced by US banks is the sharp rise in interest rates, leading to mark-to-market losses on their bond portfolios.

Indian banks are not facing the same level of pressure on their bond portfolios as US banks because Indian interest rates have risen less.

If Indian banks mark their held-to-maturity (HTM) investments to market, it would bring down their

CET-1 capital by 12-25%, estimates Moody's Investors Service. "That said, banks are unlikely to realize such losses because their funding and liquidity are strong enough to allow them to hold onto their HTM securities," Moody's said in a report.

HOW COMFORTABLE ARE BANKS ON LIQUIDITY?

While deposit growth has trailed credit growth in recent times, the credit-to-deposit (CD) ratio remains comfortable at 75.3%.

This means that the banking system has sufficient stable funding. Indian banks are also comfortable on liquidity, with the coverage ratio at 135.6% as of September-end, latest central bank data showed, well above the regulatory requirement of 100%.

HIGHER DEPOSIT INSURANCE

After two large bank failures in the last three years, India has raised the limit of insurance cover for depositors in insured banks from the earlier level of Rs 100,000 (\$1,211.23) to 500,000 per account. This was done with a view to providing a greater measure of protection to depositors in banks.

While the amount seems small, it fully insures 98% of deposit accounts, according to a State Bank of India (SBI) research note. By contrast, deposits of top 10 banks in the US were insured in the range of 38.4% to 66%, SBI said.

GDP likely to grow at 7%: FinMin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 20: Indian economy is expected to grow at 7 per cent in FY23 despite global headwinds while retail inflation would moderate in line with wholesale inflation which fell to a 25-month low in January, the Finance Ministry said Monday.

Supported by the gains from high services exports, the moderation in oil prices, and the recent fall in import-intensive consumption demand, India's current account deficit is estimated to fall in FY23 and FY24, providing a buffer to the rupee in uncertain times, Monthly Economic Review by the ministry said.

This will provide a much-needed cushion to India's external sector at a time when the Fed is likely to raise rates further and ensure that India's external finances are not a major cause of concern, it said.

Indian economy witnessed a growth of 4.4 per cent in the third quarter that ended in December 2022. Growth momentum gathered in Q3 of 2022-23 is likely to be sustained in Q4, as reflected in the performance of High-Frequency Indicators for January/February 2023, it said.

GST collections have now, in February 2023 crossed the Rs 1.4 lakh crore benchmark for twelve successive months.

Noting that falling international commodity prices and government measures have aided in easing inflationary pressures, the report said, inflationary pressures eased in February, with a slight moderation in CPI inflation and WPI inflation softening to a 25-month low.

BIZ BUZZ

Falcon Group inks MoU with Gujarat govt



BHUBANESWAR: Falcon Group has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government of Gujarat to set up a state of the art french fries processing facility at Mehsana district of Gujarat with a proposed investment of ₹1,050 crore. The deal was signed in the presence of Bhupendra Patel, Chief Minister of Gujarat among other dignitaries.

JSP gets India's 1st BIS licence to make fire resistant steel

New Delhi: Jindal Steel & Power (JSP) has received BIS certification to manufacture India's first fire resistant steel structures at its Rail Mill & Special Profile Mill in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh. The hot rolled structural steel, manufactured as per IS 15103, can be used for high-temperature or fire-prone areas and can withstand temperatures up to 600 degrees Celsius for a maximum duration of 3 hours. Bimlendra Jha, Managing Director of Jindal Steel & Power, said in a statement, "The licence provided to Jindal Steel & Power to produce Fire Resistant Steel will be a game-changer in strengthening India's infrastructure & its safety standards. Fire Resistant Steel will provide much-needed assurance to the end users for fire safety, building a safer AtmaNirbhar Bharat". A felicitation ceremony for the BIS certifications was held during the World Consumer Rights Day celebration at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi in which the license was formally granted to Jindal Steel & Power.



Union Bank of India unveils mid corporate branch

Cuttack: Union Bank of India, Cuttack mid corporate branch was inaugurated by Cuttack district Magistrate Bhabani Sankar Chayani in the august presence of Sarvesh Ranjan, Field General Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone. Tushar Kanta Kar, Regional Head, Cuttack Regional Office and Susanta Kumar Nayak, Deputy Regional Head, Cuttack Regional Office along with Sukamal Saha, Chief Manager of Cuttack Mid Corporate Branch were present to grace the occasion.



India to boost aviation infra as demand booms

WEAK INFRASTRUCTURE IS SEEN AS HINDERING INDIA'S AVIATION GROWTH, ESPECIALLY AS IT LOOKS TO CONNECT THE COUNTRY'S HINTERLANDS TO BIGGER CITIES IN A BID TO GET MORE PEOPLE TO FLY

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 20: India outlined plans Monday to invest billions of dollars in airports, aircraft and recruitment as the world's fastest-growing economy seeks to meet booming air travel demand.

Growth will include new airports, more regulators and air traffic controllers, and new flying schools, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia told an industry audience at the CAPA India Aviation Summit in New Delhi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government said this year that the



We need to put in place the civil aviation infrastructure and capabilities that by 2047 would be able to support a \$20 trillion economy within India

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER

country would spend Rs 980 billion by 2025 to boost regional connectivity by constructing airports and modernising existing ones. Scindia said passenger capacity at the country's six major airports is expected to grow to 420 million in four years from 192 million today, and Indian carriers' fleet will grow to 2,000 aircraft in five years from 700.

Airline traffic is recovering quickly from coronavirus restrictions that led to jets being grounded worldwide in 2020, with manufacturers now struggling to keep pace with aircraft demand and engine

Local air traffic up 56.82% in Feb YoY

India's domestic air passenger traffic grew 56.82 per cent to 1.20 crore in February over the same month last year, as per the data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Monday. All domestic carriers together had flown a total of 76.96 lakh passengers on local routes in February 2022. The growth in traffic was led by market leader IndiGo, which flew 67.42 lakh passengers during the previous month, cornering 55.9 per cent of the total domestic passenger traffic in February 2023. Air India, AirAsia India, and Vistara, which in the process of merging with Air India, together transported a total of 29.75 lakh domestic air passengers during the month under review. The total market share of the three entities together was 24.6 per cent during the reporting month, as per DGCA data. Budget carrier SpiceJet, which is facing multiple headwinds, recorded the highest load factor at 91 per cent in February 2023 while IndiGo delivered the top on-time performance at 88.8 per cent on an average from across four key airports -- Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore, data show.

shortages grounding some planes. "Surprisingly and shockingly, the situation has turned the other way. Where at one point we did not

have passengers to fill our airplanes... now we do not have enough airplanes to fly our passengers," Scindia said.

Govt's debt/liabilities at 57.3% of GDP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 20: The total amount of the Central government debt or liabilities is estimated at about Rs 155.8 lakh crore (57.3 per cent of GDP), as March 31, the Parliament was told Monday.

Out of this, external debt, valued at current exchange rate, is estimated at Rs 7.08 lakh crore (2.6% of GDP), Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told the Lok Sabha in a written reply.

The share of external debt is only about 4.5 per cent of total debt/liabilities of the Central government and less than 3 per cent of GDP. External debt is mostly financed by multilateral and bilateral agencies at concessional rates, and therefore, the risk profile stands out as safe and prudent, said the reply.

The minister also said that the RBI, in consultation with the government, has announced various measures recently to diversify and



expand the sources of forex funding to mitigate exchange rate volatility and global spillovers.

Some of such measures are include exemption to Incremental Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) (FCNR(B)) and Non-Resident (External) Rupee (NRE) deposit liabilities from maintenance of Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) for deposits mobilised up to November 4, 2022.

Also fresh FCNR(B) and NRE deposits were exempted from the extant regulation on interest rates - interest rates shall not be higher than those offered by the banks on comparable domestic rupee term deposits, till October 31, 2022.

Too Grace-ful from UPW DC rout MI, jump to top spot



the prized scalp in just the second over of the innings after being dispatched for consecutive boundaries by the Australian.

Monika was given a pep talk by team-mates, and the result was the big wicket two deliveries later. The left-armed kept a back-of-length delivery on middle and leg stump that bounced a bit extra and Healy committed herself to a pull shot slightly early, getting an edge which flew to Harleen Deol at deep deep square leg.

The third over saw the Warriorz lose their second key batter in Kiran Navgire with Australian right-arm quick Kim Garth dismissing the quick for just four and reducing the Warriorz to 2/19.

To add to their woes, left-arm spinner Tanuja Kanwar got Devika Vaidya caught behind the stumps by Sushma Verma in the fifth over. Devika aimlessly raced down the track to flick the ball only to get a feather touch which flew to the keeper.

Earlier, a brilliant 93-run partnership between Dayalan Hemalatha (57, 33b, 6x4, 3x6) and the second costliest player Ashleigh Gardner (60, 39b, 6x4, 3x6) helped Gujarat Giants post 178/6 in their do-or-die clash.

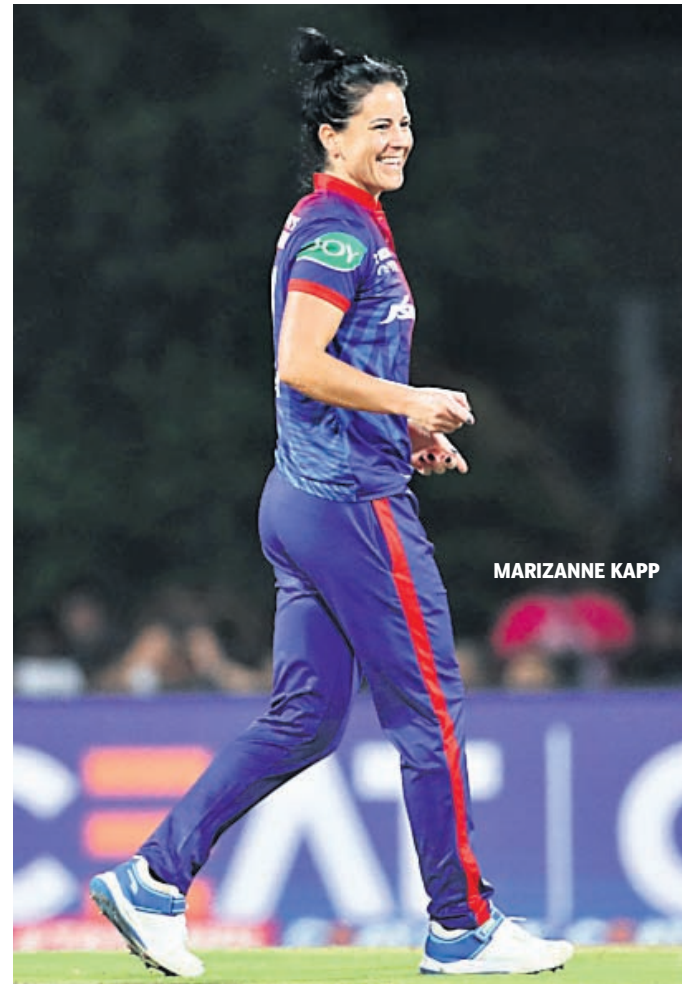
The authority and attacking ways with which the duo played indicated they were on a mission, given the do-or-die nature of the contest as the tournament enters its business end.

By the time the partnership ended, with Hemalatha dismissed by Parshavi Chopra (2/29) in the 17th over with the team total on 143, the stand had put the team on course for a competitive total.

South African opener Laura Wolvaardt and Sophia Dunkley went about their task of scoring runs in powerplay with a lot of urgency.

BRIEF SCORES

GG Women 178/6 (Ashleigh Gardner 60, Dayalan Hemalatha 57; Parshavi Chopra 2/29) lost to UPW Women 181/7 (Grace Harris 72, Tahlia McGrath 57; Kim Garth 2/29) by 3 wickets.



MARIZANNE KAPP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, March 20: A breathtaking boundary-hitting show after a clinical bowling attack helped Delhi Capitals thrash Mumbai Indians by nine wickets to jump to the top of the table in the Women's Premier League here Monday.

South African pacer Marizanne Kapp (2/13) struck twice in two balls early on to help Delhi restrict Mumbai, who were put in to bat, to a meagre 109/8. Shikha Pandey (2/21) and Jess Jonassen (2/25) also chipped in with two wickets for DC.

Chasing a small total, the top three Delhi batters of captain Meg Lanning (32 n o, 22b, 4x4, 1x6), Shafali Verma (33, 15b, 6x4, 1x6) and Alice Capsey (38 n o, 17b, 1x4, 5x6) competed among themselves

in hitting boundaries as their side chased down the target with 66 balls remaining.

Already in the playoffs before Monday's match, Delhi and Mumbai now have 10 points from seven matches each. But Delhi are ahead on net run rate - plus 1.978 as against plus 1.725 of Mumbai.

Delhi face UP Warriorz - who also have qualified for the playoffs - Tuesday, while Mumbai take on Royal Challengers Bangalore - who are out of reckoning - on the same day. Tuesday's matches will decide which team tops the table and directly qualifies for the final. The second and third place teams will play the eliminator.

Defending a small total, Mumbai needed early wickets but Delhi openers Lanning and Shafali denied

them any breakthrough till the fifth over when the latter was out. Lanning and Capsey then took upon themselves to chase down the target in a jiffy.

Earlier, invited to bat in the top-of-the-table clash, Mumbai were reduced to 10/3 in 3.3 overs with Kapp fetching wickets off consecutive deliveries in the third over; and they never recovered from there.

Pooja Vastrakar top-scored for Mumbai with a 26 while captain Harmanpreet Kaur and Issy Wong contributed 23 each. The 37-run partnership for the fifth wicket between Kaur and Vastrakar was the highest for Mumbai. Mumbai crawled to their lowest powerplay total of 19/3, before another blow struck them.

Introduced in the seventh over, Arundhati Reddy struck in her fifth ball, dismissing Amelia Kerr as Mumbai wickets continued to tumble. Mumbai took 18 runs from the 10th over to reach 46/4 at the halfway mark.

With Kaur needing to play sheet-anchor, Vastrakar was given the task to take risks and she had another couple of boundaries in the next over. But her stay was cut short with Jonassen dismissing her in the 12th over.

Runs were hard to come by and even an in-form Kaur could not force the pace of Mumbai innings. Mumbai were 74/6 when Kaur was out and they added 35 runs in the last five overs to go past the 100-run mark.

BRIEF SCORES: MI Women 109/8 (Pooja Vastrakar 26, Issy Wong 23, Harmanpreet Kaur 23; Marizanne Kapp 2/13, Shikha Pandey 2/21, Jess Jonassen 2/25) vs DC Women 110/1 (Alice Capsey 38 n o, Shafali Verma 33, Meg Lanning 32 n o) by 9 wickets.

MATCH SCHEDULE

CRICKET	
Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Mumbai Indians	3.30pm
UP Warriorz vs Delhi Capitals	7.30pm
Telecast: Sports 18 channels	

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 20: UP Warriorz's Grace Harris (72, 41b, 7x4, 4x6) once again set the stage on fire with her heavy-duty hitting, as the team defeated Gujarat Giants for the second consecutive time by three wickets with just one delivery to secure a place in the playoffs of the inaugural season here Monday.

Following the win, Mumbai Indians, Delhi Capitals and UP Warriorz have made the grade, while Gujarat Giants and Royal Challengers Bangalore have been eliminated from the tournament.

Grace smashed the Giants at-attack to smithereens, hitting seven fours and four maximums in the chase of the Giants' 178/6. When she departed at 172, caught by Kim

Garth of Harleen Deol, there were still seven runs to be scored for victory.

There were a few nervous moments when Simran Shaikh departed and it became 177/7 for the Warriorz. Two runs off the last two deliveries can always be a tricky proposition, but Sophie Ecclestone swept a Sneha Rana delivery to the boundary to signal the win with just one ball to spare.

Grace was involved in two productive partnerships, with country-mate Tahlia McGrath (57, 38b, 11x4) and Sophie Ecclestone (19 n o). While Graces' stand with McGrath was worth 78 runs, with Ecclestone it fetched 42 runs and it ensured an easy passage into the knockouts with just one ball to spare.

The partnership between Grace

and McGrath had laid a solid foundation and the former continued even after her country-mate had departed at 117/4.

Grace, who had scored an unbeaten 59 the last time the teams had met at the DY Patil Stadium and ensured a thrilling victory for the Warriorz with just one ball to spare, played with such ferocity, it made the Giants bowlers look mere pedestrians.

All this despite the UP Warriorz being off to a rank bad start on a pitch that offered good bounce and carry. The team was down in the dumps at 3/39 before Grace and McGrath came together to turn the tables on the Giants.

Skipper Alyssa Healy (12) went early after giving indication she meant business. Young Giants medium-pacer Monica Patel took

ALCARAZ, RYBAKINA REIGN SUPREME AT INDIANA WELLS



CARLOS ALCARAZ RETURNED TO NO.1 IN THE ATP RANKINGS REPLACING NOVAK DJOKOVIC

RAFAEL NADAL DROPPED OUT OF THE TOP 10 (RANKED 13TH) FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 18 YEARS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indian Wells, March 20: Carlos Alcaraz defeated Daniil Medvedev 6-3, 6-2 Sunday to win the BNP Paribas Open title and regain the World's No.1 ranking.

The 19-year-old Spaniard will move from second to first in the ATP Tour rankings Monday, displacing Novak Djokovic. The Serb withdrew from Indian Wells before the tournament began when he couldn't gain entry to the US because he's unvaccinated for COVID-19.

In the women's final, Elena Rybakina beat Aryna Sabalenka 7-6(13-11), 6-4 and handed the world's second-ranked player just her second loss this year.

Last year, Alcaraz became the youngest man to reach No.1 in ATP history after his title at the US Open. He achieved another mark in the third round at Indian Wells. That's when Alcaraz notched his 100th career match victory, the second-quickest player behind John McEnroe to do so.

Alcaraz also became the first man to win the tournament without dropping a set since Roger Federer in 2017 and the youngest man to win the title in the desert.

Alcaraz and Rybakina earned USD 1,262,220 each for their wins. Rybakina carried the momentum from her straight-set semifinal upset of top-ranked Iga Swiatek into the final and beat Sabalenka for the first time in five career meetings.

The 10th-seeded Rybakina had seven aces and No.2 seed Sabalenka committed 10 double faults. Sabalenka won just 11 of 35 second-serve points. Rybakina improved her match record to 16-4 this year; Sabalenka fell to 17-2.

Lovlina, Sakshi reach quarters



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 20: Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain made a winning start to her campaign as she and Sakshi Chaudhary moved to the quarter-finals of the Women's World Championships with dominant victories here Monday.

Both Sakshi (54kg) and Lovlina (75kg) notched identical 5-0 unanimous decision wins respectively. While Lovlina outpunched Mexico's Vanessa Ortiz, Sakshi got the better of Zhazira Urakbayeva of Kazakhstan to progress to the last eight stage.

But the most electrifying Indian performance of the day was displayed by Preeti (54kg). The youngster though eventually lost her bout to last year's 52kg silver medallist Thailand's Jitpong

Jutamas by a 4-3 verdict, the bout was so close that a review had to be taken.

Preeti entered the tournament on the back of a selection row, where her place in the side was questioned as she didn't win the National Championships. However, the 19-year-old justified her place in the Indian team with her fearless performance.

The tenacious Preeti showed aggression against a more experienced opponent to take the first round 4-1. She fought toe to toe with Jutamas as both pugilists connected punches but the Thai was able to edge the Indian and took the remaining two rounds with the final result being decided by a bout review.

Competing in her new 75kg category, Lovlina, who received a first round bye, won her opening en-

counter to walk one step closer to a medal. The two-time World Championship bronze medallist looked a little defensive against her stocky opponent.

The Indian, who was considerably taller than her Mexican opponent, was forced to play from a distance as Ortiz capitalised on every opportunity to move forward and attack. The result was that Lovlina wasn't able to connect a lot of the punches as she seemed nervous moving ahead.

Sakshi, the 2021 Asian Championship bronze medallist, utilised her height and long reach to her advantage. She would punch Urakbayeva and step back quickly, not letting her opponent counter-attack. The Indian danced around the ring, playing with aggression and released a number of punches to emerge victorious.

United in FA Cup semis; Arsenal extend EPL lead

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, March 20: It was all set up for a famous FA Cup upset as Fulham led treble-chasing Manchester United at Old Trafford. But in the space of seven chaotic second-half minutes, the visitors were reduced to nine players, had their manager sent off and conceded twice.

It was a meltdown of epic proportions and United capitalised on it in ruthless fashion to advance to the semifinals with a 3-1 win that keeps its three-pronged trophy pursuit on track.

There is also the prospect of a mouthwatering FA Cup final against Manchester City after the rivals were kept apart in the draw for the last four.

Thoughts of an all-Manchester showdown at Wembley June 3, however, looked in serious doubt after Aleksandar Mitrovic fired Fulham ahead in the 50th minute of the quarterfinal match. That was before the game was turned upside down as Fulham's players and manager Marco Silva lost control.

Emotions boiled over after William blocked Jadon Sancho's goal-bound shot in the 70th and VAR instructed referee Chris Kavanagh to review the incident on the touchline monitor.

Before the official could even make a decision, he had shown a red card to Silva for remonstrating furiously in the dugout.

Replays showed William had clearly used his hand and was sent off as a result. That sparked outrage from Mitrovic, who angrily approached Kavanagh and was also

shown red. All three dismissals came over a period of 40 seconds.

All that was left was for Bruno Fernandes to dispatch his penalty and even the score in the 75th. Two minutes later Marcel Sabitzer put United in front and nine-man Fulham were on their way out.

Fernandes scored a second to make it 3-1 in the sixth minute of stoppage time and set up a Wembley semifinal game against Brighton.

ARSENAL MARCH ON
Knocked out of Europe Thursday, Arsenal's sights are now solely fixed on winning the Premier League title for the first time in 19 years. And that elusive prize edged closer as a 4-1 win against Crystal Palace moved Mikel Arteta's team eight points clear at the top of the table.

There was no sign of a hang-over after the penalty shootout loss to Sporting Lisbon in the Europa League as Arsenal underlined its title credentials. Gabriel Martinelli, who missed the decisive spot-kick in that match, quickly put that disappointment behind him by opening the scoring against Palace.

Arsenal still has to play second-placed Manchester City and Liverpool before the end of the season. But the London club is in impressive form having won six in a row in the league.

Bukayo Saka provided the pass for Martinelli and became the first player in the league to reach double figures for goals and assists this season. He then went on to score two more himself. Granit Xhaka got Arsenal's other goal, while Jeffrey Schlupp scored for Palace.

Barca top Real, inch closer to title

Madrid, March 20: Closer than ever to the title, Barcelona finished the last Spanish league "clasico" of the season by celebrating on the field at Camp Nou. Real Madrid were left complaining about the refereeing after seeing his chances of retaining the title all but end.

Barcelona took a major step toward winning their first league title since 2019 after coming from behind to beat Madrid 2-1 Sunday, with Franck Kessie scoring in stoppage time to give the Catalan club the home victory and a 12-point lead over second-place Madrid with 12 matches to go.

Barcelona were saved by the VAR for the second consecutive game, as Madrid had a potential go-ahead goal by Marco Asensio called back in the 81st minute because



ENTERTAINING NIGHT: Barcelona players celebrate after Franck Kessie's (No.19) winner against Real Madrid at Spotify Camp Nou, Sunday

of offside. Last week, they edged Athletic Bilbao when an 87th-minute equaliser by Athletic forward Inaki Williams was disallowed by video review.

Barcelona went into the match

still facing criticism over its payments of several millions of dollars over several years to the former vice president of the country's refereeing committee. Prosecutors have formally accused Barcelona of alleged

corruption, fraudulent management and falsification of documentation.

Real is among the clubs siding against Barcelona in the legal proceedings, so is the Spanish government, the league and the football federation. Barcelona has consistently denied any wrongdoing or conflict of interest, saying it paid for technical reports on referees but never tried to influence their decisions in games.

The visitors opened the scoring in the ninth minute with a fortunate own-goal by Ronald Araujo, who unintentionally redirected the ball into the net with a header after a cross by Vinicius Junior from the left side of the area.

Sergi Roberto equalised after picking up a loose ball inside the area in the 45th, and Kessie netted the winner from the middle of the box after a late breakaway.

India thrash Nepal in SAFF U-17 tourney

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, March 20: India scored an emphatic 4-1 victory over Nepal in the opening match of the SAFF U-17 Women's Championships here Monday.

India scored the first goal in the 10th minute through Shilji Shaji. Just when it looked Nepal would escape the half without conceding more goals, India hit them with a double blow. First, Shilji scored in the 40th minute, her second goal, and barely a minute later, Pooja made it 3-0. Shilji, this time, was the provider.

Barsha Oli scored off a well-taken volley in the 54th minute to reduce the deficit for Nepal. Shilji rounded off a brilliant performance with her third of the night.



RIGHT ON THE MONEY: Bruno Fernandes scores from the spot for Manchester United's first goal against Fulham, Sunday