



## AT RECEIVING END

Actor Shweta Tiwari is mercilessly trolled by netizens for appearing in a bikini with her son in a swimming pool

LEISURE P2



## WATER CRISIS IN INDIA

India is expected to be the most severely affected as the global urban population facing water scarcity is projected to increase

INTERNATIONAL P10



## IMPRESSIVE SHOW

Sarabjot Singh and Varun Tomar win gold and bronze medals respectively in the air pistol event at ISSF Pistol/Rifle WC

SPORTS P12

## Padma Shri conferred on puppeteer Kuanr



New Delhi, March 22: President Droupadi Murmu Wednesday conferred Padma Shri to Maguni Charan Kuanr during a ceremony at the President House here.

The President conferred Padma Awards to 85-year-old Kuanr in the field of art. Kuanr from Keonjhar district is a rod puppeteer who was promoting 'Kathi Kandhei Nacha' for six decades.

Murmu will also confer Padma awards to Antaryami Mishra in the field of literature and education, Krishna Patel in the field of art and Patayati Sahu in the field of agriculture next month. For 2023, the President has approved conferment of Padma awards to four eminent personalities from Odisha.

Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian awards of the country, are conferred in three categories - Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. For the year 2023, 106 personalities will be receiving the Padma Awards of whom 19 are women.



**AMID WAR** A woman clicks a photograph of her friend, who stands atop a destroyed Russian tank, during an exhibition displaying mangled Russian military vehicles in central Kyiv, Ukraine

## Uganda passes bill to criminalise LGBTQ

Violations under the new law draw severe penalties, including death for so-called aggravated homosexuality

REUTERS

Kampala, March 22: Uganda's Parliament passed a law Tuesday making it a crime to identify as LGBTQ, handing authorities broad powers to target gay Ugandans who already face legal discrimination and mob violence.

More than 30 African countries, including Uganda, have banned same-sex relations. The new law appears to be the first to outlaw merely identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ), according to rights group Human Rights Watch.

Supporters of the new law say it is needed to punish a broader array of LGBTQ activities, which they say threaten traditional values in the conservative and religious East African nation.

In addition to same-sex intercourse, the law bans promoting and abetting homosexuality as well as conspiracy to engage in homosexuality.

Violations under the law draw severe penalties, including death for so-called aggravated homosexuality and life in prison for gay sex. Aggravated homosexuality involves

gay sex with people under the age of 18 or when the perpetrator is HIV positive, among other categories, according to the law.

"Our creator God is happy (about) what is happening... I support the bill to protect the future of our children," lawmaker David Bahati said during debate on the bill. "This is about the sovereignty of our nation, nobody should blackmail us, nobody should intimidate us," said David.

Meanwhile, Frank Mugisha, a prominent Ugandan LGBTQ activist denounced the legislation as draconian. "This law is very extreme and draconian... it criminalises being an LGBTQ person, but also they are trying to erase the entire existence of any LGBTQ Ugandan," he said.

In recent weeks, Uganda authorities have cracked down on LGBTQ people after religious leaders and politicians alleged students were being recruited into homosexuality in schools.

This month, authorities arrested a secondary school teacher in the eastern district of Jinja over accusations of "grooming of young girls into unnatural sex practices".

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Happiness index is fake! He is ready to confess that we are the happiest people on earth

## 11,710 schools in state sans electricity: Govt

S&ME Minister Samir Ranjan Dash tells House that state govt would submit a proposal to the Centre for required infrastructure in schools

### EDUCATION BLUES

- Nearly 42,000 schools don't have computers
- 6,781 schools run without adequate classrooms
- 6,011 schools function without proper pupil-teacher ratio



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 22: At a time when the state government makes tall claims that it has transformed nearly 4,500 high schools, School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash' statement in the Assembly that 11,710 schools are running without electricity speaks volumes of the sorry state of the school education system in Odisha.

While replying to a query of BJP chief whip Mohan Charan Majhi in the House, the minister said 11,710 primary, upper primary and secondary schools are functioning without electricity or solar power. It means, in these schools,

the students are still waiting to get basic facilities like fans and proper light.

The state government has been spending crores of rupees on development of sports infrastructure. However, 21,065 schools in the state are yet to have their playgrounds or alternative playgrounds, as per the minister's reply.

Similarly, in this digital age, 41,996 primary, upper primary and secondary schools still don't have a computer set.

Moreover, at least 6,781 schools lack adequate classrooms while 6,011 schools run without adequate number of teachers as per the student-teacher ratio, Dash informed the House in his written statement.

He said the Odisha government will submit a proposal before the

Centre on the required infrastructure in the schools. Once the Project Approval Board (PAB) 2023-24 approves the projects, the government will take further action.

He also said that the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department has given the responsibility of redevelopment, repair and maintenance of all government schools in the state.

Dash said the Gross Enrollment Ratio at primary level in Odisha was 100.32 in 2021-22 academic year. Similarly, the ratio was 92.90 at upper primary level and 80.36 at secondary level.

There was zero dropout rate at primary level in 2021-22 academic year. The figure was 7.34 at upper primary level and 27.26 at the secondary level, Dash stated.

On appointment of teachers at schools, the minister said, "The state government has appointed altogether 19,490 Sikshya Sahayaks at primary and upper primary schools during the last eight years."

Out of these, 9,539 Sikshya Sahayaks have been appointed in 2014-15 while 9,951 teachers were appointed in 2016-17 financial year, he added.

## Speeding car kills 3 schoolkids

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, March 22: In a heart-rending incident, three schoolchildren died and another sustained critical injuries when a car ran over them and later rammed into a mango tree on Sonepur-Binika-Dunguripali road in Subarnapur district Wednesday, a police officer said.

The car has been seized and its driver, identified as Sameer Nayak, 21, of Tarbha area, arrested, the officer stated.

All four of them, Class VI students at Saradhapalli Upper Primary School, were waiting outside the main gate of the institute, after having appeared for an examination, when the speeding car



The vehicle following the mishap in Sonepur, Wednesday

CM Naveen Patnaik expressed deep grief and announced ₹3 lakh as ex gratia for the next of the kin of the deceased

dashed against a wall before crushing them under its wheels, he said. One of the children died on the spot

and three others were rushed to a local hospital. Later, two of them succumbed to the grievous injuries.

The deceased have been identified as Subrat Bhoi, 11, Rajesh Pera, 10, and Raja Pera, 10 while the condition of the injured Kapil Blue, 13, is stated to be critical.

Contd...P4

### SHORT TAKES

#### SC to hear pleas on marital rape May 9

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Wednesday fixed May 9 for a detailed hearing on a batch of petitions pertaining to criminalisation of marital rape. Senior advocate Indra Jaising mentioned the matter before a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud. She told the bench that the order of arguments and common compilation in the case is ready. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the Centre's reply is ready and has to be vetted. "List this on May 9, 2023," the apex court bench said.

#### Man kills wife, dies by suicide in Sundargarh

SUNDARGARH: A man allegedly killed his wife before he committed suicide at Damakuda under Talasara police station in Sundargarh district, police said Wednesday. Police suspect that the deaths might be the fallout of a family dispute. They said the bodies of Hemanta Dandasena and his wife were recovered from their house Wednesday and added that the incident had taken place late Tuesday night. Police are investigating the matter and a forensic team has also been pressed into service.

#### Mamata selects land for Bengal Niwas in Puri

AGENCIES

Puri, March 22: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday selected a piece of land near Srimandir here for construction of a Bengal Niwas for visitors from the state to this seaside pilgrim town.

According to sources, the land at Girala on Puri-Brahmagiri Road is about a 20-minute drive from the 12th-century shrine. She said lakhs of Bengalis visit Puri every year and many of them face problems in finding accommodation. "I have been given the privilege of a state guest and therefore got accommodation, but journalists who came from Bengal Tuesday faced difficulties. Puri needs more hotels and rooms."

Banerjee, who visited the spot accompanied by Chief Secretary PK Jena, Puri Collector Samarth Verma and other officers, said she will take up the matter with Naveenji. We will discuss how much land will be available to us," she told reporters.

The Chief Secretary said the government is yet to decide on the size of land to be given to West Bengal. "Many states including Bengal will be provided with the land for construction of their guest houses here," he added. More P3

## Tale of Arif Khan & the crane ends in tears

The crane that lived with Arif Khan Gurjar in Mandkha village, accompanied him to his fields and was accepted like a family member, was taken away by forest officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amethi (UP), March 22: The heart-warming story of Arif Khan Gurjar and the sarus crane is over as the Forest department of Uttar Pradesh has taken possession of the bird.

The crane that lived with Gurjar in this district's Mandkha village, accompanied him to his fields and was accepted "like a family member", said sources. The bird was shifted to Samaspur Bird Sanctuary in Rae Bareilly, Tuesday so that it could live

in its "natural environment".

A YouTube video showed Gurjar placing the big bird in the back of a pick-up truck. He appeared to wipe away a tear as he walked away. The YouTuber asked his subscribers to comment if the officials did a good thing "separating" the man and the bird. But the department said Gurjar agreed with the decision.

"Whatever action has been taken is with Arif's consent," Divisional Forest Officer DN Singh said



Wednesday. Before the send-off, the bird was video-graphed by the

department. The reason for breaking them up? The official said these birds always live in pairs. Since this one was living alone, there was some apprehension.

The bird probably wouldn't have left on its own.

Last month, Gurjar told PTI, "This sarus is now like a family member. On a number of occasions, I left it in the fields to fly away to its own bird community but it refuses to leave me. It comes back to me every time."

Gurjar found the bird about a year back in his fields, lying unconscious with a bleeding leg. He initially thought the sarus was dead, but took it home when he realised that it was still breathing.

He cleaned the wound and applied a mix of turmeric and mustard on it. Then he devised a splint out of bamboo to keep the leg stable. But the crane refused to fly away even after it was well enough. Whenever Gurjar went out, it followed.

"I have not attended any family function in the last year because I just can't go anywhere. If it doesn't find me around, it becomes uncomfortable. If I have to go for some work, I need to dodge it. During the night, the bird sleeps by my cot on his one leg," Gurjar had then said.

"I spend a lot of time taking care of him and my family doesn't mind that. The bird has been accepted as a family member. I have a pet dog too and all of us like the bird."

#### 'Can anyone snatch peacocks from PM'

The bird's relocation to the wild has provoked Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav to take potshots at Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Yadav, who asked indirectly "if any official had the courage to take away the peacocks at the Prime Minister's residence?" He didn't name him, but appeared to be referring to pictures posted online earlier by Modi, in which he seen feeding a peacock. "If the (state) government is snatching the sarus, the government should also snatch the peacock from the one who was feeding grain to it," he said Wednesday.

# leisure



## VANESSA TO EXPLORE FAMILY'S ASIAN HERITAGE

Asian American actor Vanessa Hudgens, who gained stardom with her work in Disney's *High School Musical* series, is set to shoot a travel documentary in the Philippines, the country of her mother's birth. The untitled project will shoot in Palawan and Manila in March, reports *Variety*.

## THE WEEKND BAGS GUINNESS AS WORLD'S MOST POPULAR ENTERTAINER

Canadian singer The Weeknd has topped the ranking and established himself as the most popular musician as per the list with 111.4 million monthly listeners on Spotify. The 33-year-old is the first artiste to reach 100 million monthly listeners on Spotify and has given hits like *Blinding Lights* and *Starboy*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today, you may wake up with your nose in the air. Though you may feel bossy and important, others may not feel that way about you. Avoid giving orders that sound like insults. Otherwise, the whole thing may fall flat on your face, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
Getting through today will be like a cruise, says Ganesh. Business deals will kneel to the charm of your honey tongue and you will taste success. As the day progresses, you may lose interest in things. Beware of being too sentimental in the evening, warns Ganesh. You will feel loved and generous in social gatherings tonight.

**GEMINI**  
You have great business plans and can't wait to launch a few of your ideas today. Your colleagues will lend you their complete support. You may spend the evening decorating your home or finding peace in the arms of your beloved.

**CANCER**  
You will finalise business dealings with your partners today. Your high spirits may be subdued later in the day. However, as evening approaches and you get ready for a party, you will be back in your elements, cracking jokes and generally putting a smile on people's faces.

**LEO**  
Since when was a day complete without a little bit of a scruff and a small squabble? These are the annoying little situations that remind you just how better the alternative is. Ganesh portends a day in which you are jinxed with a propensity for quarrels. So, it is advisable to shun any open confrontation at work. Be good during the day because Ganesh foresees a particularly enjoyable evening in store for you.

**VIRGO**  
Your focus levels will reach their highest point today, says Ganesh. Working will be fun and you shall finish your jobs quickly and efficiently. A twist of tale may crop up its head; worry not, as physical intimacy will take your love affair to the next level, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
It's like a finishing job for you today, says Ganesh, as you complete pending jobs. It was about time things got wrapped up, anyway. But with your high level of energy and vigour, you may also have an inclination to begin a new business. Keep at it, and you may find some satisfaction in business dealings towards the evening, feels Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
Your spouse will shower you with love and warmth today. The afternoon sun may bring good news from distant relatives. On the home front, family members will get special attention, predicts Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You shall push yourself to the limit to make sure your authority goes unquestioned. Colleagues and seniors will laud you for your commitment. Expect that wallet to get heavier as you receive some cash gains, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
Socialising is on the cards, and with increase in the number of acquaintances will be the increase of your social clout, says Ganesh. Later in the day, you will take to reading, and will pick just about any book. You will set out in search for peace as dusk sets in, and will find solace in holy places, where you would strive to improve your concentration power.

**AQUARIUS**  
A romantic encounter may leave you breathless! Naturally, your whole day is tinged with hues of love. You will be in no mood to work or study, but you just have to go along with the world. It's a bittersweet experience, and you may as well enjoy it, says Ganesh. You may want to be alone in the evening, and that is perfectly okay.

**PISCES**  
You will need to be as scheming as the proverbial fox if you hope to wriggle out of the tricky situations that you are likely to find yourself embroiled in today. Keep your temper in check if things don't go your way initially, for the answers to your troubles will come sooner rather than later, says Ganesh.

# Kangana takes a dig at Diljit

**Mumbai:** Actress Kangana Ranaut once again took on Punjabi actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh and cryptically warned him about getting arrested for 'supporting' Khalistanis.

The *Manikarnika* actress took to Instagram, where she borrowed a line 'Pols aagai pols' from a trending meme over the crackdown on radical Sikh preacher and Waris Punjab De chief Amritpal Singh by Punjab Police and tagged Diljit Dosanjh.

Kangana took to Instagram stories, where she shared a post by a food delivery

group. It showed a variety of lentils with 'pulse aagai pulse' written on it. Kangana tagged Diljit and wrote 'just saying'. She added a Khalistan sticker on Instagram Stories, with the word crossed out.

For the caption, she wrote: "Diljit Dosanjh ji pols aagai pols."

"All those who supported Khalistanis, remember next number tumhara hai, pols aa chuki hai, yeh woh waqt nahi hai jab koi bhi kuch bhi karta tha, desh ke saath gaddari ya tukde karne ki koshish ab mehengi padegi," she wrote in another post.

Kangana and Diljit have previously engaged in a war of words in 2020.



# I've been a lover of long films: Nandita

**Bhubaneswar:** Even as the Kapil Sharma and Shahana Goswami starrer *Zwigato*, shot exclusively here at the Capital City, was released all over India without much fanfare, it managed to draw crowds to the theatre with critics going gaga over the film's content.

A week after its theatrical release, director-producer of the movie Nandita Das met the media at Main Atrium, Nexus Esplanade, Bhubaneswar.

Speaking on the occasion the *Manto* director said, "Before writing I travelled a lot to explore and that's when I made up my mind to shoot the whole movie in Bhubaneswar with local artistes. I wrote and improvised with the actors from my state as they comprise 95 per cent of the cast."

Asked what made her make a mainstream movie at a time

when demand for web series is growing she explained, "I did get many offers for web series but I personally feel it becomes business with the inclusion of ads. I have always been a lover of long, detailed films."

She further said, "*Zwigato* is not just about the cogs in the wheel of the gig economy, but also about many others who have become invisible to us in our urban context. But at the heart of it, it is also a love story. Two people doing all that they can for each other!

After the release of *Zwigato*, the outpouring of personal messages and social media feedback has been overwhelming. The movie has certainly triggered something

deeper". Sameer Nair, one of the producers of the movie, said, "*Zwigato* is a poignant reminder of the invisible ordinary people who work tirelessly to keep our world running, often at a great personal cost."

PNN



**Mumbai:** Hasee Toh Phasee actress Adah Sharma, who was seen in the action thriller film *Commando 3*, is busy shooting for *Commando 4* and shared that she loves playing a cop on-screen and following a strict diet to be physically fit. She talked about staying on the banana diet.

Adah, who has been a pure vegetarian all her life, said: "Bananas

## ADAH GOES ON BANANA DIET

are rich in potassium, good for the hair and skin, great for digestion. Bananas release a mood-regulating substance called tryptophan which is converted to serotonin in the brain. It elevates the mood and makes you happy. I'm very inspired by monkeys and gorillas. They eat bananas and seem so fun and energetic."

The actress got an opportunity to essay a police officer in the *Commando* franchise.

"You feel a sense of responsibility when you wear the police uniform for a role. I will be playing Bhavana Reddy again."

Adah will next be seen in the Hindi film *The Kerala Story* based on true events.



# Shweta brutally trolled for donning a monokini

**Mumbai:** Shweta Tiwari is one of the most popular faces of TV world and the actress keeps grabbing the limelight for her fitness and fashion. Most recently, the mother of two shared some pictures with her son Reyaansh from their fun filled pool day.

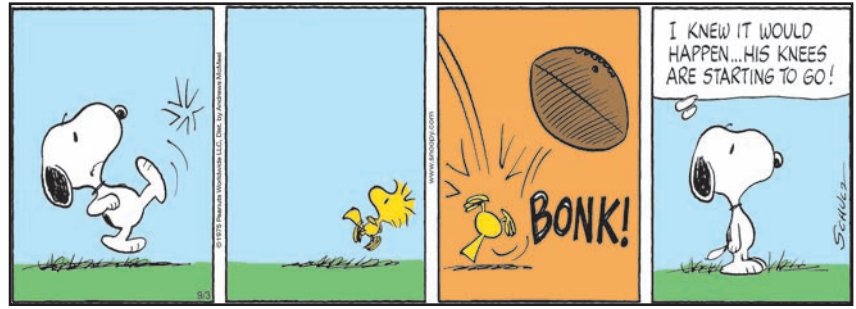
In the pictures Shweta can be seen in a pink monokini and fans showered love on the mother-son duo. However, there was a section who trolled Shweta mercilessly as the images didn't go down well.

Reacting to her pictures, a user commented, "Baal bache bde ho gye hai Shweta jee kuch to shrm kro apni body dikha rhi ho glt baat hai beti ko bhi smjhao wo bhi gndi pic post krte hai (Plz stay away from it as your children have grown up. Also ask your daughter not to post vulgar pictures)."

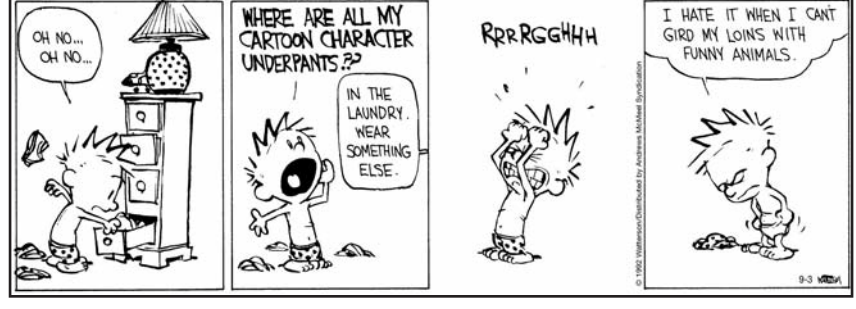
On the other hand, another one wrote, "Apni hi beti ki dukaan band karoge. (Do you want to down the shutter of your daughter)." AGENCIES



### PEANUTS



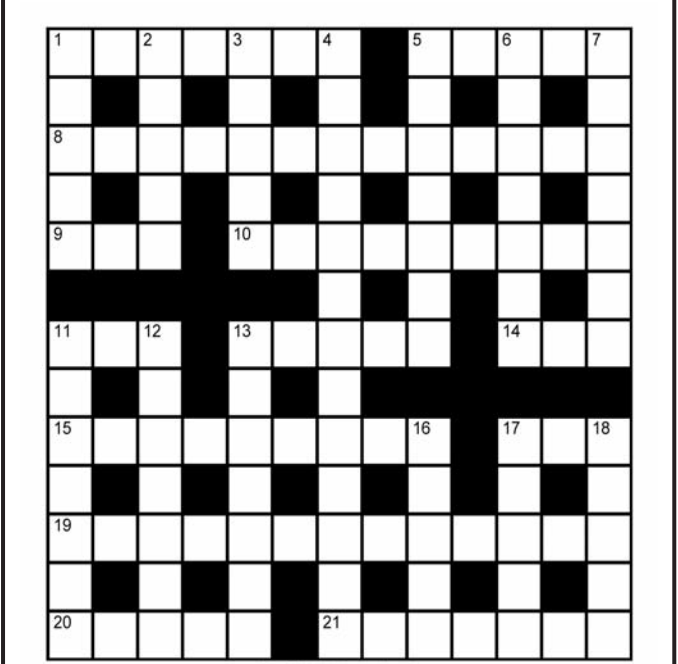
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



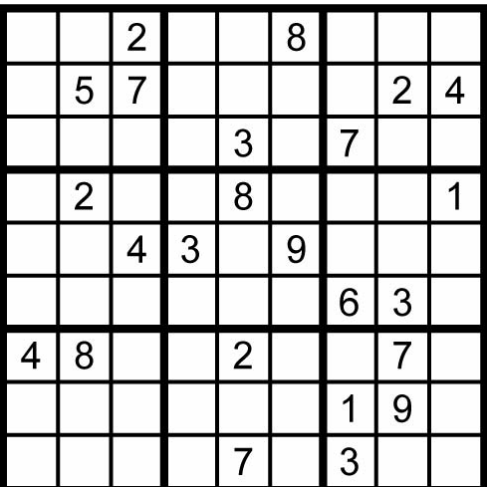
## FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Pugilist
  - 5 Cravat
  - 8 Totaliser (6,7)
  - 9 Amusement device
  - 10 Getting better (2,3,4)
  - 11 Centre
  - 13 Overly self-confident
  - 14 Farm female
  - 15 Stolen
  - 17 Young canine
  - 19 Bowled over, emotionally
  - 20 Cruise ship
  - 21 Fidelity
  - 5 Robin Hood's stock in trade
  - 6 Type of checkers
  - 7 Older sewing machine lever
  - 11 Optimistic
  - 12 Special purchase
  - 13 Jemmy
  - 16 Personal journal
  - 17 Floral leaf
  - 18 Roly-poly
- Down**
- 1 Large banquet
  - 2 Given to frivolity
  - 3 Latin dance
  - 4 TV accessory (6,7)

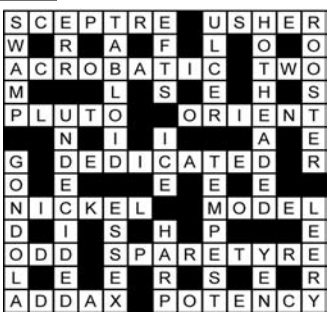
### SUDOKU

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

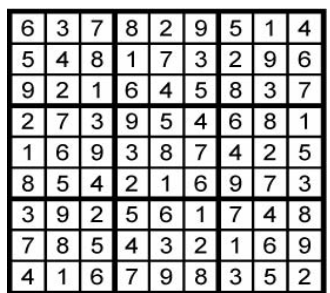


### SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



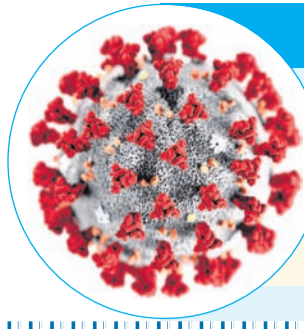
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## DANCE FEST

Artistes perform Odissi during an event organised by Aradhana Nritya Mandir at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,28,06,146	65,57,29,723	68,21,674
India	4,46,98,118	4,41,60,279	5,30,813
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

## Zwigato now tax-free in state



'Zwigato' director Nandita Das meets Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during the film's screening at his residence in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** The state government has waived off entertainment tax on Hindi movie Zwigato. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has approved a proposal to this effect Wednesday after watching its special screening at his residence here. The Chief Minister praised the

movie as it presents the struggling life of a common man in cities. He also appreciated the artistic portrayal in the movie. "The movie will succeed in giving a positive message for social change and human values," he hoped. The movie has been directed by Nandita Das with famous comedian Kapil Sharma and Sahana

Goswami in the lead. The storyline of the movie depicts the life of a food delivery boy and his struggle. It may be mentioned that the state government is promoting Odisha as a destination for film shooting through proactive policies. The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of Nandita Das for promoting Odisha as a destination for shooting commercial movies.

## ECOR GM reviews infra development

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager (GM) Manoj Sharma inspected the Baghuapal-Budhapank railway section of the Angul-Sukinda Rail Line project Tuesday accompanied by senior officials from ECoR headquarters, divisional railway manager Rinkesh Roy, Khurda Road Division, as well as officials from Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL).

During the inspection, Sharma reviewed the facilities and infrastructure works advising the officials to take necessary steps to ensure that train traffic is not hampered. It is worth noting that the 92.825 km long Broad Gauge Single Electrified Railway Line section between Budhapankh station in Angul and Baghuapala Station near Sukinda in Jajpur under Khurda Road Railway Division of ECoR have recently been authorised for the operation of goods traffic.

The Angul-Sukinda Railway Limited (ASRL) is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) incorporated February 20, 2009, by the Ministry of Railways through RVNL for the construction and maintenance of the Broad Gauge Single Railway Line between Budhapankh Station (Angul) and Baghuapala Station (Sukinda).

# ₹3,000 crore under MSPY to address malnutrition

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** In a bid to address malnutrition, especially in adolescent girls, the state government will spend ₹3,000 crore from 2023-24 to 2027-28 under Mukhyamantri Sampurna Pushti Yojana (MSPY), Women and Child Development (W&CD) Minister Basanti Hembram said Wednesday. Addressing media on allocation to W&CD department in the State Budget 2023-24, Hembram said Odisha has topped the country in decline of infant mortality rate (IMR), while it stands second in decline of maternal mortality rate (MMR).

"In order to address the issue of malnutrition among adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) as well as moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) children under six years of age, the state government has decided to introduce MSPY, under which ₹3,000 crore will be spent from 2023-24 to 2027-28," the W&CD Minister pointed out. Hembram said ₹219 crore has



been allocated for Mamata scheme and ₹52 crore for Ashirbad scheme in 2023-24.

Highlighting that the state government has been providing uniforms, shoes and sweaters to toddlers in a bid to motivate them to attend Anganwadi centres, the minister said ₹250 crore has been allocated under MSPY, while ₹91.13 crore will be spent under preschool uniforms during 2023-24.

The state government will introduce Adivka scheme with an allocation of ₹5 crore during 2023-24. It aims at ending child mar-

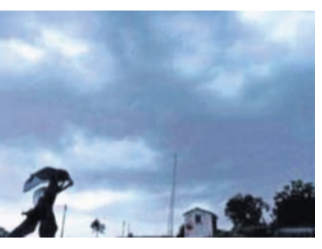
riage. Besides, Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala will be introduced with an outlay of ₹37.77 crore for prevention of trafficking and rescue, rehabilitation and re-integration of victim of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

W&CD department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Subha Sharma said that the department has been allocated ₹3,670.00 crore (₹3,611 crore under programme expenditure and ₹59 crore under administrative expenditure) in the State Budget 2023-24 as against ₹3,724.17 crore for 2022-23.

## More rain in store: IMD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** Several places in the state are likely to experience rain for another five days. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Wednesday issued a yellow warning for thunderstorms and lightning for one or two places in Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam Kandhamal, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj in the next 24 hours.



Light to moderate rain or thundershower is also likely to occur at a few places in Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Balasore, Bhadrak and Mayurbhanj.

A partly cloudy sky with the possibility of the development of thunder and lightning is forecast for Bhubaneswar and neighbouring regions during the next 2 hours. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 36°C and 23°C respectively.

Light to moderate rain and thundershower has occurred in many places over the districts of coastal Odisha and at a few places in interior Odisha. The major amount of rainfall recorded in cm are Gopalpur (5 cm), Marsaghai (5 cm), Banpur (4 cm), Dharmagarh (4 cm), R.Udaigiri (4 cm), Mahendragarh (4 cm), Mohakalpada (3 cm), Krishnaprasad (3 cm), Gaisilet (3 cm), Komna (3 cm), Rangeilunda (3 cm), Nuagada (3 cm), Berhampur (3 cm) and Khurda Pto (3 cm).

According to reports, hailstorm activity occurred in Bolangir, Cuttack and Kendrapada districts during the past 24 hours.

Maximum temperatures observed appreciable rise at one or two places in south Odisha, marked fall at one or two places in south interior Odisha, appreciable fall at one or two places in interior Odisha and no large change elsewhere in the state.

They were markedly below normal at most places over in interior Odisha, appreciably below normal at a few places in coastal Odisha, below normal at a few places in coastal Odisha and normal at a few places in coastal Odisha.

Minimum temperatures observed appreciable rise at one or two places in north coastal Odisha and south interior Odisha and no large change elsewhere in Odisha. They were above normal at one or two places in interior Odisha, appreciably below normal at many places in coastal Odisha and at one or two places in interior Odisha.

## 'STATE MAY FACE SEVERE WATER SCARCITY BY 2051'

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** The state may face a severe water scarcity by 2051, a study released by SwitchON Foundation on World Water Day said. The groundwater levels across Odisha have been declining due to over-extraction of groundwater and lack of proper water management, the study said while revealing the distressing situation of groundwater depletion in Odisha.

The report said groundwater depletion is leading to reduced water availability, in regions that rely on underground reserves as their primary source of freshwater. This will lead to an increase in competition for scarce resources and worsening water scarcity in already dry regions. The research findings said parts of the state are

yet to achieve the recommended daily drinking water target of 40 litres per capita per day (lpcd). About 17 districts in the state have issues with saline groundwater and in many districts, the concentration of fluoride, nitrate, iron and chromium is found to be above the permissible limits. Availability of water by 2051 was assessed, and the result shows that the surface water availability from its own drainage boundary remains more or less fixed but the inflow of surface water from neighbouring states will be reduced from 37.556 billion cubic meters (BCM) to 25.272 BCM.

Assessment by researchers for the water resources in Odisha indicates that by 2051, the water requirement may go up to 85 BCM from the present requirement of 55 BCM, and the state may face a severe water scarcity situation by 2051.

# Mamata offers prayers at Srimandir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Puri, March 22:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who is on a three-day visit to Odisha, Wednesday offered prayers at Srimandir here.

Banerjee, accompanied by senior government officials from Bengal and Odisha, entered the temple at 4pm and had a darshan of the sibling deities - Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath.

"She offered prayers to the deities standing alone near the 'Bhitar Katha' (inner cordon). She is a devotee of Lord Jagannath," said Ramakrushna Dasmohapatra, her priest.

She witnessed 'aarti' while standing near Bhitar Katha. She also went to 'Mukti Mandap' (seat of religious pundits) and sought the blessings of the pundits there.



The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration presented a wooden idol of Lord Jagannath to the West Bengal Chief Minister

Later, she also visited the temple of Maa Laxmi and Maa Bimala on the shrine premises while making a round of it.

The West Bengal Chief Minister stood at the 'Pata Agana' (a corridor near the main temple) to witness the 'Bana Bandha' (tying of flag)

ritual during which the flag atop the 65m high temple is changed every day. "She offered a 14-haath flag to the Lord praying for the wellbeing of all," the priest said, adding that one haath is 1.5 feet.

Local police in plainclothes provided security to her and no one was allowed to go close to her. The devotees were, however, allowed to enter the temple and have 'darshan' of the deities when Banerjee was inside the temple.

The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration presented a wooden idol of Lord Jagannath to her.

"A lot of people from Bengal come to Shree Jagannath Temple here every year. The Bengalis have a great bond with the Lord. You have cooperated with and I am indebted to you all. Keep happy," Banerjee told reporters waiting outside the temple.

# Oppn, govt in war of words over corruption

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** Opposition BJP and Congress MLAs Wednesday targeted the state government alleging rising corruption and PC culture in the state. They said the state government's zero tolerance to corruption slogan is only in pen and paper.

Participating in a debate on the admissibility of an adjournment motion on corruption, opposition chief whip Mohan Majhi said PC culture has prevailed from panchayat to the state-level.

Dubbing the government as "PC Sarkar", he said no bill was passed without giving bribes to the officials.

He said right from the junior engineer to the top and officers in almost all departments including

Mines and Water Resources are involved in corruption.

Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra said the corruption has gone to such a level that even bills are being passed without the required work being done.

Raising the mining scam issue, he said the government is silent after issuing notices to mine leaseholders involved in corruption of ₹500 to 700 crore.

On behalf of Chief Minister



## IN THE HOUSE

Naveen Patnaik, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari said the allegations levelled by the Opposition members are not based on facts.

He said the government is determined to weed out corruption and strong steps are being taken against corrupt practices.

"The government firmly believes in honesty, transparency and high morality in public life," Pujari said.

To substantiate his statement, he said the Vigilance, in 2022, has

registered 287 criminal cases including 118 trap cases and 85 disproportionate assets cases against 557 persons including 60 Group-A officers and arrested 198 persons including 36 Group-A officers and 37 Group-B officers.

As many as 124 persons including 23 Group-A officers and 7 Group-B officers have been convicted, the Minister pointed out.

The state has achieved a 46 per cent conviction rate in corruption cases. The conviction rate in DA cases in 2022 was 77 per cent which was the highest in a decade, he added.

However, the Congress and BJP members, expressing their displeasure over the reply of the minister, walked out of the House in protest.

# Cong, BJP 2 sides of same coin: BJD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** BJD leader Debi Prasad Mishra Wednesday described in the Assembly the Congress led UPA and the BJP NDA as two sides of the same coin.

According to the BJD legislator the Mahanadi, which passes through 15 out of Odisha's 30 districts, has dried up due to check dams constructed by Chhattisgarh government at the upstream of the interstate river.

"They are releasing excess water during monsoon flooding the lower catchment areas in Odisha and stop water flow during the summer causing hardship for lakhs of people in the state," the BJD member said. "Both the UPA and NDA governments have worked against Odisha's interest for which Chhattisgarh has been obstructing free flow of water to downstream," he alleged, demanding a ruling from the chair for a special discussion on the Mahanadi water crisis.

Speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha, in his ruling, asked the Water Resources minister to make a statement on the water crisis in the Mahanadi river.

Leader of Opposition (LoP) Jayanarayan Mishra of BJP said that his party was prepared for a discussion on the Mahanadi water crisis. He criticised the BJD government for not utilising Mahanadi water as a huge volume is flowing to the sea. "The Odisha government has not been able to construct any check dam to regulate water in the downstream," the BJP leader said.

Earlier, the BJP and Congress raised objection to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik reading out the speech he delivered while reply-

ing to debate on Home and General Administration department demands Tuesday evening.

The issue was raised during the Zero Hour when Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Narasingha Mishra stood to speak on a privilege notice he served for consideration. He was, however, not allowed to speak on the privilege notice as the matter was under examination of the Speaker.

When Mishra raised objection for being denied permission to speak on the matter, the Speaker said that he would certainly allow him, but after examination.

The LoP also urged the Speaker to allow the CLP leader to speak on the privilege notice.

There was an exchange of words between the Congress and BJD members over the CM reading out the speech from a sheet instead of directly speaking to the House while replying to the debate on the Home and General Administration department demands.

The Opposition's objection was challenged by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari who said that there is provision under Rules that a minister can read out speech in the House.

"Along with Parliamentary Affairs portfolio, I am also the Finance minister. Am I not reading the Budget speech in the House? Therefore, there is nothing wrong in a minister reading out speech in the House," Pujari argued.

The CLP leader rejected Pujari's argument and claimed that though the Finance minister reads the Budget speech, it is presented in the House. He said a member or minister can refer books, newspapers and other write ups during the speech, but cannot read it out as it is.



EXPO LAUNCHED: Visitors to the State-level Handicrafts Expo check handmade items as the fair kicks off at Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

WORLD WATER DAY

# IT initiatives to ensure water management: Min



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** The Department of Water Resources observed the World Water Day in the conference hall of Department of Water Resources (DoWR) at Rajiv Bhawan here Wednesday.

The theme of the day was 'Accelerating change to solve water and sanitation crisis.' The programme was graced by Water Resources, Commerce & Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu and led by the Department of Water Resources Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg.

Speaking on the occasion, Sahu said, "Water is a precious resource and plays a major role in the evolution of human societies. Water nurtures and nourishes

life on the planet. The Communication Strategy and the IT initiatives will ensure greater involvement of the community in water management and participation in conservation initiatives in the state."

Garg mentioned that the department has chosen the World Water Day to introduce the game-changing initiatives to bring the people closer to governance and to get them involved in the process.

Series of activities were carried out by Department of Water Resources on the occasion. A water communication strategy, 'Urmi' and other IT applications were launched by Minister Sahu.

'Urmi', has been developed after a series of consultations held with key stakeholders, in-

cluding the PRI members, Pani Panchayat members, farmers, Jal Sahayaks, sanitation volunteers, SHGs and other frontline workers to get behavioural insights from the key players associated with water management at the institutional, community and household levels.

Besides, IT applications such as PINSYS and WaterDox were launched on the occasion. While PINSYS is a robust database of WR Engineers for effective HRM, WaterDox is a web enabled interface to store documents and legacy data of the department in digital form to be accessible to users for official purpose. One booklet on Jal Shakti Abhiyaan 2.0 was released on the occasion. The Roof Rain-Water Harvesting Structure (RRHS) was also dedicated by the Minister.

Besides, a series of IT initiatives were introduced by the department to showcase how technology could bring in transparency and transformation and ensure ease of transaction in the department. They are Water ERP for irrigation management, project monitoring and flood forecasting, PROMiSe for expediting procurement work, e-CAD application software for tracking CAD and PIM activities and Ama Sahayak portal.



**CREATING ART:** Students participating in drawing competition during a district level JRC Study-Cum-Training camp organised at Ravenshaw Collegiate School Auditorium in Cuttack, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

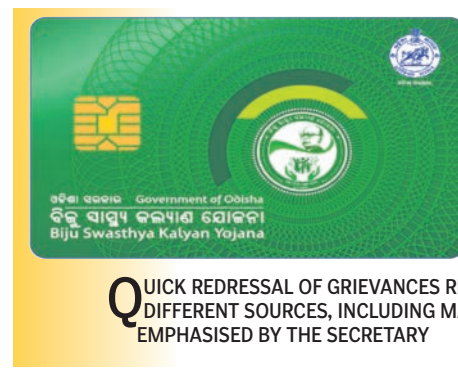
## Health secy reviews BSKY implementation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** Health and Family Welfare secretary and State Health Assurance Society (SHAS) chairperson Shalini Pandit Wednesday reviewed the implementation of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) directing the state team to organise regular orientation camps for district coordinators (DCs)/swasthya mitras (SMS) presenting them with best practice modules on extending health services to people at the ground level.

Pandit gave this direction while reviewing the implementation plan of BSKY in conference hall of the SHAS recently wherein SHAS Chief Executive Officer and NHM mission director Brundha D outlined the issues for discussion.

Pandit asked the state team to "empower DCs with sufficient know-how for immediate redressal of people's grievances" at the



**QUICK REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES RECEIVED FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES, INCLUDING MASS MEDIA, WERE EMPHASISED BY THE SECRETARY**

**PANDIT EMPHASISED THOROUGH SCRUTINY OF ALL NEGATIVE FEEDBACKS RECEIVED FROM THE PATIENTS THROUGH MO SARKAR SYSTEM**

hospital level. It was decided to strengthen office of the DCs with required infrastructure, computer and internet support for enabling them to deliver timely services.

Further, Pandit emphasised thorough scrutiny of all negative feedbacks received from the patients through Mo Sarkar system. The nodal officers of different empanelled hospitals both inside and outside Odisha were asked to do

due diligence of the negative feedbacks and grievances received through different channels.

"Resolving the issues that create bottlenecks for people to avail assured services of BSKY is a concrete step forward in ensuring quality healthcare," said Pandit. Quick redressal of grievances received from different sources including mass media were emphasised by the secretary.

Review showed that around 95 per cent of the grievances received through different windows including social media were attended, and resolved within the scheduled timeline in interest of the patients. The matters relating to the empanelment and delisting of hospitals as per BSKY performance figured in the meeting. Criteria for performance assessment of the empanelled hospitals were deliberated and worked out

The SHAS chairperson also emphasised upon intensification of IEC activities at ground level for empowering the people with appropriate information. Fixing of BSKY signages in the conspicuous places of the hospitals for convenience of the patients, functional issues relating to the speed of internet connectivity, strengthening of human resource at district level, and up-gradation of BSKY software etc were discussed, and resolved in the meeting.

## BMC ready with rules for pet dogs, owners

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) discussed the rules and guidelines for pet dogs and owners of the City at a special meeting held Tuesday where it was said that the by-laws will be passed at the next corporation meeting headed by Mayor Sulochana Das.

"The draft by-law will be placed in the corporation meeting soon to finalise it. A special corporation meeting was held Tuesday where the views of the corporators were taken and steps will be taken to finalise it in the subsequent meeting where it will be converted into law," Das said.

A new chip based for registration system for the pet dogs and their owners will be started. The chip will contain details like name and address of the owner. The owner will also be required to keep the dog chained while taking it outside. The aggressive ones have to be muzzled when they are taken out.

## SBI donates ambulance to Konark Cancer Foundation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** State Bank of India Bhubaneswar Circle donated an ambulance (Force Trax Cruiser) to Konark Cancer Foundation Wednesday. Konark Cancer Foundation is a pioneer organization providing all types of support to cancer patients of Odisha.

In a function held at SBI Bhubaneswar Administrative Office, SBI Bhubaneswar Circle

CGM Chander Shekhar Sharma handed over vehicle keys to Arup Mohan Pattnaik, Managing Trustee of Konark Cancer Foundation.

GM-I P Murugan, CDO Manoj Kumar Singh, DGM (B&O) Bhubaneswar Zone Sanjay Kumar Jha, AGM (Marketing & Communication) Amaresh Das, other officials and staff members of SBI Administrative office, Bhubaneswar and Konark Cancer Foundation were also present in the event.



## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, I, Birendra Kumar Mohanta, Village: Badabali Poshhi, P.O: Badabali Poshhi, PS: Patna, Dist: Keonjhar, Odisha have changed my son's name to Bishwabijay Mohanta from Bishwabijayee Chandrachud Mohanta. Hence he shall be known as Bishwabijay Mohanta for all purposes.

## LOST

I, Babul Behera, R/o - At- Sihini, P.O.- Bahabal, Dist.- Bolangir declare that the RoR of holding No.150/105 of Mouza-Sihini recorded in my name on dt.01.02.2023. The said RoR has been lost somewhere, while I was coming from Sihini to Belpada. In spite of my best effort, I could not trace it out.

## KIMS sports state's first 'sleep lab'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 22:** Sleep disorder is a symptom that should not be ignored as it may lead to serious medical conditions, cautioned doctors at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS). Sleep disorder can lead to multiple complications, with one study estimating that 50-60 per cent of youths in India are suffering from it. Several remedial measures are available to treat the disease including a dedicated 'sleep lab' commissioned at KIMS, the first of its kind in Odisha.

The Level-1 sleep lab with 64 channels has been installed in KIMS to cater to the needs of patients with sleep disturbances. Patients are being referred from departments like pulmonary medicine, ENT, cardiology, neurology, endocrinology, psychiatry, paediatrics, physiology and dental medicine, among others, for management of disorders like obstructive sleep apnea, obesity



hypventilation syndrome, insomnia, periodic limb movement disorders, parasomnia, etc.

A sleep board has also been created for multidisciplinary discussion in case of complex sleep disorder cases. With increased awareness, both the medical community and society as a whole can begin to address this disease and help relieve the negative sequelae that result from it.

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is the more prevalent one. It is an underrecognized and underdiagnosed medical condition, with a myriad of negative consequences

on patients' health and society as a whole. It affects 17 per cent of women and 34 per cent of men in the US, with similar prevalence in other countries.

The causes of OSA include a narrow, crowded, or collapsible upper airway, a low threshold for arousal to airway narrowing during sleep, and unstable control of breathing. Common symptoms include snoring, awakening from sleep with a sense of choking, excessive daytime sleepiness, morning headaches, fitful sleep, lethargy and decreased libido.

"While the 'gold standard' of diagnosis is by polysomnography, a detailed history and focused physical examination may help uncover previously undiagnosed cases, said the doctors. They belonged to the Departments of pulmonary medicine, ENT, cardiology, neurology, endocrinology, psychiatry, paediatrics, physiology and dental medicine," said a doctor at the facility.

## First detection of neutrinos made at a particle collider

THE DISCOVERY COULD PROVIDE A WINDOW ON DISTANT PARTS OF THE UNIVERSE BY SHEDDING LIGHT ON COSMIC NEUTRINOS THAT TRAVEL LARGE DISTANCES AND COLLIDE WITH THE EARTH

Physicists have detected neutrinos created by a particle collider, where two beams of particles smash together at extremely high energy.

The scientists, led by University of California, Irvine (UCI), US, have claimed it to be a "scientific first".

According to them, the discovery is expected to deepen scientists' understanding of neutrinos, subatomic particles that also play a key role in the process that makes stars burn.

"We've discovered neutrinos from a brand-new source - particle colliders," said UCI particle physicist and FASER Collaboration Co-Spokesman Jonathan Feng, who initiated the project, which involves

over 80 researchers at UCI and 21 partner institutions.

The discovery could also provide a window on distant parts of the universe by shedding light on cosmic neutrinos that travel large distances and collide with the Earth. "They can tell us about deep space in ways we can't learn otherwise," said Jamie Boyd, a particle physicist at CERN and co-spokesman for FASER.

"These very high-energy neutrinos in the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) are important for understanding really exciting observations in particle astrophysics," said Boyd.

Brian Petersen, a particle physicist at CERN, announced the results Sunday on behalf of FASER at the



57th Rencontres de Moriond Electroweak Interactions and Unified Theories conference in Italy.

The results are the latest from the Forward Search Experiment, or

FASER, a particle detector designed and built by an international group of physicists and installed at CERN, the European Council for Nuclear Research in Geneva, Switzerland. There, FASER detects particles produced by CERN's Large Hadron Collider.

Neutrinos, which were first spotted in 1956, were co-discovered by the late UCI physicist and Nobel laureate Frederick Reines and are the most abundant particle in the cosmos.

Since the groundbreaking work of Reines and others like Hank Sobel, UCI professor of physics & astronomy, the majority of neutrinos studied by physicists have been low-energy neutrinos.

But the neutrinos detected by

FASER are the highest energy ever produced in a lab and are similar to the neutrinos found when deep-space particles trigger dramatic particle showers in our atmosphere.

"Neutrinos were very important for establishing the standard model of particle physics," said Boyd.

"But no neutrino produced at a collider had ever been detected by an experiment," said Boyd.

"Neutrinos are the only known particles that the much larger experiments at the LHC are unable to directly detect, so FASER's successful observation means the collider's full physics potential is finally being exploited," said UCI experimental physicist Dave Casper.

## State awards to 57 teachers on Utkal Divas

**Bhubaneswar:** 57 teachers from the state will receive state awards for the year 2017 on Utkal Divas, April 1. In a letter, Directorate of Secondary Education to all the collectors cum district magistrate said that the school and mass education department will give state awards to teachers in recognition of their contribution to the cause of education. The last award was September 5, 2017 for the year 2016. The awardees will receive ₹25,000 each along with shawl and citation.

CONTINUED FROM P1

## Car runs over...

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed deep grief over the incident and announced ₹ 3 lakh as ex gratia for the next of the kin of the deceased students. The Chief Minister also announced ₹50,000 for the injured student.

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# IOC to invest ₹61K-cr in petrochemical complex

This mega project will be the largest-ever investment of Indian Oil at a single location



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi/Paradip, March 22:** Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) will invest ₹61,077 crore in building a petrochemical complex at Paradip - its largest-ever investment at a single location - as it doubles down on its transition plan.

In a statement, IOC said its board has given "Stage-1 approval for setting up Paradip petrochemical complex at Paradip, Odisha at an estimated cost of ₹61,077 crore."

"This mega project will be the largest-ever investment of Indian Oil at a single location," it said but did not give timelines for completion of the project.

This is a part of its transition plan including boosting petrochemical intensity to help protect against volatility. Petrochemical intensity refers to the percentage of crude oil that is converted directly into chemicals that are used to make plastic and other material.

Crude oil, pumped out of the ground and from below the seabed, is processed in refineries to make petrol, diesel and other fuel. It can

be processed to make petrochemicals, bypassing the fuels.

IOC's petrochemical intensity - the percentage of crude oil converted into chemicals - is low at 5-6 per cent currently. The company intends to take it up to 10-12 per cent.

The firm's newer refineries at Panipat in Haryana and Paradip in Odisha have the petrochemical intensity of 15-20 per cent which would be raised to 25 per cent, its chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya had told PTI in an interview last month.

Energy transition refers to the shift from fossil-based systems of energy production and consumption - including oil, natural gas and coal - to renewable energy sources like wind and solar, as well as lithium-ion batteries. This shift is likely to gradually cut demand for petrol and diesel and so in preparation of that IOC is doing petrochemical projects.

The company said the petrochemical complex at Paradip would include a world-scale cracker unit along with downstream process units for producing several petrochemical products including

polypropylene (PP), high-density polyethylene (HDPE), linear low-density polyethylene (LLDPE) and poly vinyl chloride (PVC) - these being building blocks of different grades of plastics. It shall also facilitate production of niche chemicals and petrochemicals like phenol and isopropyl alcohol.

Talking of the development, Vaidya said, "This mega project is aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Purvodaya that is sure to accelerate the development trajectory and fuel prosperity in Eastern India. This cutting-edge, state-of-the-art petrochemical complex will undoubtedly be transformative in its impact, significantly advancing the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative."

"This mega project shall significantly improve the petrochemical intensity index of IndianOil. It shall be a growth driver in making the company a major player in the petrochemical industry, while strengthening India's self-reliance in the petrochemical sector," he said.

The project, the statement said, will catalyse the growth of PCPIR and Plastic Park at Paradip.

"On commissioning of this project, domestically available Petrochemicals are expected to provide feed and vitalise industrial growth in key downstream industries like plastic, pharma, agrochemical, personal care, paints etc. It is also expected to create employment opportunities in eastern India, especially Odisha," it added.

## 9-YEAR-OLD BOY ELECTROCUTED



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, March 22:** A nine-year-old boy was electrocuted after he accidentally came in contact with a live wire during play at an abandoned house at New Colony Adivasi Sahi in Geltua village in this block and district, Wednesday.

The deceased minor was identified as Dinabandhu Munda, son of late Gania Munda of the area. The incident occurred when the boy was playing inside a house abandoned for the last three years without disconnecting the power supply brought to the house through an iron pipe.

The boy fell unconscious after he accidentally touched the iron pipe during play. Family members and villagers rushed him to the district headquarters hospital where doctors pronounced him dead. Bhadrak Rural Police registered a case of unnatural death and handed over the body to his family members after a post mortem.

The incident has sent shockwaves sparking resentment among the locals. They alleged that they had repeatedly demanded before power officials to disconnect the power supply to the abandoned house but they never spared a thought to address their pleas as a consequence if which the innocent minor lost his life.

# Ganjam admin launches Aadhaar updation drive

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, March 22:** The district administration here has launched the Aadhaar card updation programme for the benefit of the citizens in Ganjam district.

As per the programme, people having Aadhaar cards for more than 10 years can update them on their mobile phone or with the data-entry operators in the district office free of cost. They will have to pay ₹50 for updation of their Aadhaar cards at the Mo Seva Kendras in the district. The programme has started from March 15 and will continue till June 14.

The matter came to the fore at a meeting held in the district Collectorate premises, Wednesday. Additional district magistrate (ADM) Leena Kumari Khes presided over the meeting. People who have done their Aadhaar cards 10 years back can update the information and correct the errors



if any in their cards under this programme, she said.

This will help them to keep their Aadhaar cards updated and valid. The updation can also be done in all the Mo Seva Kendra in the 503-gram panchayats in the district.

She said that one needs to have a mobile phone number for updation of their Aadhaar cards while those whose mobile numbers have changed should visit the Aadhaar centres and update their mobile phone numbers in their cards.

The district administration has set a target for daily updation and the details of the updation will be submitted daily by the centres with the ADM. Chief food supplies officer Pusha Munda, district women and child development officer Subhashree Patra, district social welfare officer Kalyani Das, district information and public relation officer Rabi Narayan Behera, BEO Sitaram Patra, district e-governance manager Guru Prasad were present in the meeting.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
**E-AUCTION FOR RAIL COACH RESTAURANT**  
Auction Catalogue No.: WAT-MISC-CR-002  
DESCRIPTION: SETTING UP, OPERATION, MANAGEMENT OF RAIL COACH RESTAURANT AT RAYAGADA STATION, WALTIRA DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS.  
Auction Start Date & Time: 06.04.2023 at 11:00 hrs. Auction Close Date & Time: 06.04.2023 at 11:30 hrs.  
Minimum Increase: 0.2%, Lot Status: New in Draft Catalogue.  
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Sr. Divl. Commercial Manager / PR-1103/N/22-23 Waltira

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Limited hereby informs the public that State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Bhubaneswar, Odisha under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India, New Delhi has accorded Environmental Clearance (EC) vide EC Identification No. EC23B007OR110978, File No. - 78693/31-IND/07-2022, dated 14.03.2023 to our proposed Expansion of Iron Ore Beneficiation Plant from 10.7 MTPA (Throughput) Capacity to 16.0 MTPA (Throughput), Relocation of Tailing Dam at Village - Sankari, Gram Panchayat - Phuljar, Dist. - Keonjhar, Laying of Tailing Pipeline and Return Water Pipeline from Beneficiation Plant to Tailing Dam and Laying of Water Pipeline and Slurry Pipeline from Beneficiation Plant to Ghoraburhani - Sagashi Iron Ore Block under the provisions of EIA Notification dated 14th September, 2006 & its amendments. The copy of Environmental Clearance letter is available with the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) and may also be seen on the website of the SEIAA, Odisha (<http://parivesh.nic.in/>)  
Place: Bhubaneswar Executive Director - Projects  
Date: 20.03.2023 ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Limited, Odisha

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, GANJAM, BERHAMPUR**  
Phone-0680-2404096, E-Mail: eerwgmt@yahoo.co.in  
Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice  
Bid Identification No. SEMIDNGPUR-02/2022-23  
Memo NO...2154.../RWD-IIGB, Date: ...17.03.2023

1 Name of the Work	:: Building Work
2 Estimated Cost	:: Rs. 11.00 to 13.00 Lakh
3 Period of Completion	:: 3 (Three) Months as per Annexure
4 Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal	:: 23.03.2023 at 10.00 AM to 29.03.2023 upto 2.30 P.M.
5 Last Date/Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	:: 29.03.2023 upto 2.30 P.M.
6 Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	:: Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Ganjam, Berhampur

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal tendersodisha.gov.in/nicgep/app  
Superintending Engineer  
OIPR-25073/11/0017/2223 R.W.Division-II, Ganjam, Berhampur

**OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, NABARANGPUR**  
No.A-1304: Letter No.327, Dt.15.03.2023  
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA e-Procurement Notice  
Bid Identification No. SEMIDNGPUR-02/2022-23  
E-mail ID: -mingpur@yahoo.in Ph No. 06858-222130

1. Name of work	:: Construction of "C" type quarter at M.I. Colony, Nabarangpur in Nabarangpur Block of Nabarangpur District
2. Total number of work	:: 01 (One)
3. Estimated cost	:: Rs. 36.98 lakhs
4. Class of Contractor	:: "C" & "B" Class Contractor
5. Tender paper Cost (Online)	:: Rs. 6000/-
6. Bid Security (Online)	:: Rs. 37,000/- as per DTCN
7. Period of Completion	:: 09 (Nine) Calendar Months
8. Availability of Bid Document	:: From 24.03.2023, 10.00 AM to 04.04.2023, 5.00 PM in website ( <a href="http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in">www.tendersorissa.gov.in</a> )
9. Last date & Time of receipt of Bid	:: 04.04.2023 at 5.00 PM through online
10. Date of opening of Bid documents	:: 05.04.2023 at 11.00 A.M in the Office the S.E. M.I. Division, Nabarangpur.
11. Name and address of the OIT	:: Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Nabarangpur A/P.O. - Nabarangpur, District - Nabarangpur, PINCODE - 764059
12. Further details can be seen	:: <a href="http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in">www.tendersorissa.gov.in</a> from the Government of Odisha Web-Site

Sd./- Superintending Engineer  
M.I. Division, Nabarangpur  
OIPR-32294/11/0010/2223

**TENDER NOTICE**  
Ref No:-47/SFURTI/ST/23 Date: 21.03.2023  
**Siksha Trust** Tarapur, Laxminagar, Jajpur Road, Jajpur, Odisha, 755015 invites tender notice in a sealed cover under two bid system i.e. Technical Bid & Financial Bid from licensed registered Civil Engineers/contractors/persons having (at least of B or C class) for construction of Approach road to CFC of Haripur Mytho Dresses Private Limited At/P.O. Kabirpur, Via- Kuakhia, Jajpur, Odisha 755009.

Date of commencement of Tender	Last date and time of submission of tender	Date & time for opening of Tender	Cost of tender paper
21.03.2023	10.04.2023 at 5.00 P.M.	11.04.2023 at 11.00 A.M.	Rs. 500

A complete set of the Bid documents containing the details of the terms and conditions may be downloaded from the website [www.shikshatrust.in](http://www.shikshatrust.in) and the same can be submitted along with cost of tender paper in shape of Bank Draft. Any corrigendum/ addendum/ information related to this NIT will only be uploaded in Siksha Trust website which will not be published in Newspapers. The authority reserved the right to accept / reject any part or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof. The authority has the right to increase/ decrease / cancel the quantity of construction without assigning any reason thereof.  
Chairman

**TENDER NOTICE**  
Ref No:-46/SFURTI/ST/23 Date: 21.03.2023  
**Siksha Trust** Tarapur, Laxminagar, Jajpur Road, Jajpur, Odisha, 755015 invites tender notice in a sealed cover under two bid system i.e. Technical Bid & Financial Bid from registered MV licenced Electrical Engineers/contractors/persons for internal wiring of CFC machines and etc. of Haripur Mytho Dresses Private Limited, At/P.O. Kabirpur, Via-Kuakhia, Jajpur, Odisha 755009.

Date of Commencement of Tender	Last date and time of submission of tender	Date & time for opening of Tender	Cost of tender paper
21.03.2023	10.04.2023 at 5.00 P.M.	11.04.2023 at 11.00 A.M.	Rs. 500

A complete set of the Bid documents containing the details of the terms and conditions may be downloaded from the website [www.shikshatrust.in](http://www.shikshatrust.in) and the same can be submitted along with cost of tender paper in shape of Bank Draft. Any corrigendum/ addendum/ information related to this NIT will only be uploaded in Siksha Trust website which will not be published in Newspapers. The authority reserved the right to accept / reject any part or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof. The authority has the right to increase/ decrease / cancel the quantity of construction without assigning any reason thereof.  
Chairman

## Man sent to jail for raping minor niece

**Kendrapara:** Marshaghai police have arrested a man for raping his minor niece and threatening her with dire consequences, Kendrapara SDPO Jayanta Mohapatra said Tuesday. The accused was produced before the local court Tuesday which remanded him into jail custody. According to police sources, Sarada Prasad Mohanty, uncle of the minor victim girl, allegedly took the victim to a hotel for food in December last year. After taking their food, Sarada took her into a hotel room where he raped her and threatened her to kill if she disclosed the matter to anybody. When Sarada further made an attempt to keep physical relations, the victim girl narrated the incident to her parents. The minor girl Sunday lodged a complaint at Marshaghai police station. Acting on the FIR, Marshaghai police registered a case, arrested Sarada Prasad Mohanty and recorded the statement of the victim under Section 161 Cr.PC.

## Huge amount of explosives seized

**Koraput:** Odisha police have recovered a huge quantity of explosives and other incriminating materials hidden in a dump during combing operation along the state's border with Andhra Pradesh, sources said Tuesday. A source at the DGP office here said police have seized 50kg to 60kg of Codex wire, six tiffin boxes, two walkie-talkies, some medicines and other incriminating materials from Kusumpet in Andhra Pradesh which is close to the border. Odisha police teams have been conducting anti-Naxal operations in Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh on a regular basis in association with cops belonging to the two neighbouring states, sources informed.

## 10-yr jail for minor's rape

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, March 22:** A special POCO court here sentenced a man to 10 years of imprisonment after convicting him in the rape case of a minor girl, Wednesday.

The convict was identified as Sambhunath Murmu, 43, of Basantpur area under Basta police limits in neighbouring Balasore district.

The additional district and special POCO court judge Sumita Jena awarded the punishment after completion of hearing on the matter. The judge also slapped a penalty of ₹10,000 on the convict, apart from the punishment.

In default, he has to undergo additional three months of punishment. The

judge also directed the district legal services authority (DLSA) to pay ₹4 lakh as compensation to the survivor, special public prosecutor Abhinna Kumar Pattnaik said.

According to the case diary, the incident occurred when the girl accompanied Sambhunath to her maternal uncle's house to bring a bicycle, February 15, 2016. The girl was returning home with Sambhunath when he took her inside Kudumsola jungle and raped her over there. The girl narrated her ordeal after she returned home.

Family members lodged a complaint at the Rasagobindapur police station. Police registered a case, arrested Sambhunath and produced him in court.

**Bank of India**  
Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Ph.: 0674-2362249  
GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, persons engaged in business of gold ornaments and general public that in spite of repeated notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues. Notice is hereby published that if they fail to deposit all their dues in their respective gold loan accounts (including Up-to-date interest and all costs, charges /expenses) by Dt.29.03.2023, then from 11.00 AM of Dt.30.03.2023 their pledged gold ornaments will be sold in public auction at Respective Branch Premises given below and/or Sriram Automal India Ltd. (SAMIL), Cuttack, At: Sriram Automal Yard, Nuapatana, NH-42, Choudwar-Angul Road, Cuttack-754007, Contact Person: Mr. Prabhakar Kumar (Mob-8658738320), Mr. Debashish Subudhi (Mob-9861342494). For this Bank shall not be held responsible for any inconvenience or damage caused to the concerned borrowers and no allegations or representations will be entertained from any borrowers in this regard. Bank reserves the right to cancel the auction without assigning any reasons in case, the bidding price so arrived at is observed to be low or inadequate. Further, if need be, Bank reserves the right to change the date, time and place of the above scheduled auction or cancel the same without assigning any reasons thereon. The purity & net weight & the reserve price of the gold ornaments / coins etc. will be made available to the intending bidders on the date and at the site of auction / auction portal.

Sl. No.	A/c. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers	Gross Wt. In Gms.	Net Wt. In Gms.	Balance O/s as on specified date	Total Dues (Excluding Unapplied Charges)
<b>KUHUNDA BRANCH, AT/PO.: KUHUNDA, DIST.: CUTTACK</b>						
1	558877610000529	Sarada Prasad Swain, At: Dhaulia, P.O.: Kuhunda, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN - 754204	3.7	2.49	₹8,000/-	₹8,602/-
2	558877610000619	Sarada Prasad Swain, At: Dhaulia, P.O.: Kuhunda, Dist.: Cuttack, PIN - 754204	6.34	6.1	₹15,368/-	₹16,208/-
3	558877610000296	Prasanta Samal, At: Gunupur, P.O.: Dharmadaspur, Via: Kuanpal, Dist.: Cuttack	12.54	9.2	₹30,086/-	₹33,497/-
4	558877610000322	Prasanta Samal, At: Gunupur, P.O.: Dharmadaspur, Via: Kuanpal, Dist.: Cuttack	6.62	4.9	₹16,082/-	₹17,915/-

Place: Bhubaneswar  
Date: 23.03.2023  
Zonal Manager  
Bank of India

**भारत सरकार GOVT. OF INDIA**  
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय  
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य प्रशिक्षण केंद्र  
Rural Health Training Centre  
नजफगढ़, नई दिल्ली - 43  
Najafgarh, New Delhi-110043  
F.No.2-7(MO)/2023-RTC/5310 Dated: 07.03.2023  
**Walk-in-Interview**  
The Director, Rural Health Training Centre, Najafgarh, New Delhi-43 invites applications for engagement of the posts of Specialist Doctors (Medical Specialist-2, Surgery Specialist-2, Obstetrics & Gynaecology Specialist-2, Paediatrician-1, Anesthetist (Regular Trained)-2, ENT Surgeon-1, Orthopaedics-1) and General Duty Doctors-6, Dental Surgeon-1, Ayush Physician-1 on the basis of walk-in-interview. The prescribed format for applying along with the details of posts, eligibility criteria, remunerations, date of walk-in-interview and the other terms & conditions will be available on the websites of Directorate General of Health Services and Rural Health Training Centre ([www.dghs.gov.in](http://www.dghs.gov.in) & [www.rhtcnajafgarh.in](http://www.rhtcnajafgarh.in)). Applications may be submitted to the Director, RHTC by post or at email: [hundredbeddedhospital@gmail.com](mailto:hundredbeddedhospital@gmail.com), within 15 days from the date of publication of this Notice. Candidates are advised to visit these websites at regular intervals for all further notifications.  
Sd./- ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
RURAL HEALTH TRAINING CENTRE  
NAJAFGARH, NEW DELHI-110043  
CBC-17133/12/0002/2223

Peace is the first condition, without which nothing else can be stable.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Who Is To Blame?

The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in northern California and Signature Bank in New York are the largest bank busts since 2008. Regional and mid-sized bank stocks have tanked, and depositors and businesses are worried about who might be next. US President Joe Biden's administration and the Federal Reserve have duly stepped in to prevent more panic-driven bank runs, and to shore up the broader financial system where needed.

For legislators, regulators, bank boards, and CEOs everywhere, these sudden bank failures are a stark reminder that the work of ensuring a firm's stability and soundness never ceases. In the case of SVB and Signature Bank, there is plenty of blame to go around.

But a good deal of it lies with those members of Congress and former President Donald Trump's administration who listened to bank lobbyists and decided that it would be wise to lighten the regulatory and capital burden on so-called smaller banks. Under legislative changes in 2018, banks with assets of less than \$250 billion were exempted from the stricter supervision (including capital and stress testing) to which large banks are subjected. The grounds for doing so - that such banks do not pose systemic risks to the stability of the US financial system - were clearly spurious.

Shockingly, Barney Frank, one of the architects of the post-2008 Dodd-Frank banking legislation, actually supported this regulatory exemption, having since become a member of Signature Bank's board. Obviously, bank board members should not undermine the stability of their own firms; but that appears to be what happened here. If lawmakers had listened to the late Paul Volcker, who warned against eliminating the Volcker Rule (a prohibition against using deposits for proprietary trading) for smaller institutions, SVB and Signature Bank might have been spared.

We can now see that, as in the 2007-08 financial crisis, panic can spread quickly from a small bank to larger ones, and then across borders and markets. Given this dynamic, it is essential that Congress revisit the ill-considered regulatory unraveling of Dodd-Frank. But the problem doesn't stop there. Aside from the loosening of financial rules, regulators and supervisors also dropped the ball.

Where were the Federal Reserve Board supervisors in San Francisco and Washington as these large regional banks loaded up on risky and highly volatile tech, crypto, and other assets? Why were supervisors and regulators not paying more attention to their micro-prudential responsibilities and the entirely predictable spillover effects that monetary-policy tightening could have on banks' financial stability? Where were California's bank regulators? Were they too cozy with SVB to be sufficiently critical?

The American public has a right to answers to these questions. They are now paying the price for private risk-taking and greed, by guaranteeing 100% of uninsured deposits belonging mostly to venture capitalists, crypto investors, and others who should be sophisticated enough to bear the downside risks of their actions.

What about the firms themselves? Since a bank's managers are responsible for its success or failure, they should be held to account, including by facing legal jeopardy when appropriate. The public has a right to know what questions - if any - the SVB and Signature Bank boards were asking as risks jumped, rates rose, concentration risks loomed, and costs increased. Just hours before SVB's collapse, its CEO, Greg Becker, reportedly paid bonuses to employees. Why would SVB's board agree to this?

It should come as no surprise to learn that Becker, too, advocated a loosening of the Dodd-Frank regulations. After he got what he wanted, SVB took its customers' deposits and went in search of higher yields.

While other banks avoided the growing risks associated with volatile cryptocurrencies and excessive concentration on risky tech startups, SVB and Signature Bank leaned in. While risk managers elsewhere adjusted their portfolios in anticipation of the monetary tightening the Fed had clearly signaled, these banks failed to recalibrate (and SVB didn't even have a senior risk manager in place during the key months before its collapse). While other banks' managers understood that the Fed was taking away the proverbial punch bowl of easy money, SVB and Signature kept dancing.

In the end, both made the mistake of adopting their clients' mindsets. Their internal cultures and norms seem to have mutated to mirror those of Silicon Valley: They moved fast, lent fast, broke things, and ultimately destroyed themselves.

Too many people in Congress, federal regulatory agencies, and bank C-suites lack the visceral recollection of good times gone bad. Too many legislators and policymakers (particularly in the Trump White House) believed the arguments of bank lobbyists who were desperate to open new avenues for risk taking. In the end, regulators and supervisors were caught out as the Fed rapidly raised interest rates to restrain inflation - a shift that was always going to have implications for bank risks and portfolios.

One hopes that this crisis will be relatively limited following the swift interventions by the White House, the Treasury, the FDIC, and the Fed. But Credit Suisse's woes indicate that the past week's events may already be having global repercussions. Even if the US economy escapes another financial calamity, we must revisit and relearn the lessons of past banking crises. That means making certain that those who are responsible for these bank collapses face hard questions and a real reckoning.

William R. Rhodes is President of William R. Rhodes Global Advisors, LLC. Stuart PM Mackintosh is Executive Director of the Group of Thirty. @PROJECT SYNDICATE



William R. Rhodes & Stuart PM Mackintosh

We can now see that, as in the 2007-08 financial crisis, panic can spread quickly from a small bank to larger ones, and then across borders and markets



Dhurjati Mukherjee

THIS YEAR, EXPERTS HAVE ALREADY PREDICTED THAT THE EL NINO EFFECT WOULD RESULT IN DROUGHT-LIKE CONDITIONS

The demand for water in India is growing at a rather fast pace at around 2.8% CAGR from 2010 to 2030, facing a supply gap of 50% by 2030. Thus, water scarcity is inevitable, affecting all sections of society but especially those from lower segments. Records reveal that Indian women spend 150 million-odd days collecting water annually losing an estimated Rs 10 billion in incomes. Most people are unaware that availability of freshwater resources is such an acute problem that with just 4% of freshwater resources, India supports 18% of human population.

Indeed it's distressing to note that our cities and towns have grown without planning for water need versus water availability. In 1951, the per capita water availability was about 5177 m3. This has now reduced to about 1486 m3 in 2021 with some regions being water stressed, as per figures with Central Water Commission. A few figures from the World Bank highlight the plight the country is facing: 163 million Indians lack access to safe drinking water; 210 million lack access to improved sanitation; and 500 children under five die from diarrhoea each day in India. Meanwhile, a recent report of National Statistical Office (NSO) pointed out that less than a quarter of rural households and under two-thirds of urban ones in India reported having piped water for drinking in their houses or yard.

Not India alone but in many parts of the world 80% cent of the impacts of climate change are felt through water, say experts. Many countries are simultaneously grappling with three major kinds of water crises: "It's too much, it's too little or it's too dirty to use or drink." The fact is that around 97% of usable freshwater comes from groundwater and the reliance on groundwater is immense and this

### FOCUS WATER CRISIS

# CONSERVATION CRITICAL



Already most regions in north, west and south India face severe water crisis during summer months. And if rainfall is not adequate, the situation becomes quite acute

is true even for India. Nearly half the global urban population today uses groundwater sources to meet daily needs, according to UN World Water Development Report 2022.

In such a critical situation, there have been projections that India would shortly become water stressed. Already most regions in north, west and south India face severe water crisis during summer months. And if rainfall is not adequate, the situation becomes quite acute. This year, experts have already predicted that the El Nino effect would result in drought-like conditions, thereby raising food inflation. Several research reports highlighted the possibility of a drop in farm output, keeping inflation high during the current year. As is well known, El Nino and La Nino are climate patterns in the Pacific Ocean. They influence climate conditions worldwide. The US-based National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration predicted a re-emergence of El Nino with a high probability (55-60%) in June-December 2023. This could ad-

versely impact the Indian monsoon during June-October and this view is also shared by Indian meteorologists.

That climate change has affected water supply is evident from the fact that both floods and drought-like situations affect the country, almost every year. Moreover, the prediction of a heat-wave in March ahead of the rabi harvest and initial forecasts of a below normal monsoon this year due to El Nino is further adding to concerns about food inflation. Keeping the climate factor in view, the government has failed to effectively manage water resources, leading to wastage and misallocation of water. The lack of proper infrastructure for water storage, treatment and distribution also contributes to the crisis. The changing weather patterns have resulted in more frequent and intense droughts and floods, further exacerbating the water scarcity.

To address the grave situation, India needs a multi-pronged approach that includes effective

water management policies, investment in infrastructure for water storage and distribution and promotion of sustainable water use practices. It is also essential to increase awareness and education about the importance of water conservation among the public.

The Government launched many initiatives such as Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA), Catch the Rain Campaign, National Perspective Plan for Water Resources, and Jal Jeevan Mission (JMM)-Har Ghar Jal but these have not been effective enough. Under the JSA, it was the government's goal to improve water availability and even improve the groundwater conditions in 256 marked water-stressed districts in India. States like Punjab and Haryana have been facing extreme stress on their groundwater.

Thus, rainwater harvesting and wastewater recycling have to be introduced - even made mandatory - at least in offices, institutions and factories where water usage is quite high. Other important measures include strict monitoring and implementation of laws by government regarding release of chemicals and effluents into rivers, streams, and ponds.

Additionally, lack of on-time de-silting operations in large water bodies is necessary as these can enhance water storage capacity during monsoon. It is surprising that the state governments have not taken this up on priority as an annual practice. This act alone can significantly add to the water storage levels. In sum, there's need for a concrete plan pertaining to efficient water management and distribution of water between urban consumers, the agriculture sector, and industry.

The writer is Sr Consultant & Guest Faculty at Bharatiya Vidyya Bhavan, Kolkata. @INFA

### SPECTRUM SOCIETY

## The case for same-sex marriage

The Centre's decision to actively oppose the recent petitions in the Supreme Court to legalise same-sex marriage has expectedly raised considerable outcry. Though RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat recently did advocate for more acceptance towards the LGBT community citing history of tolerance in Hinduism, this was immediately backtracked amidst recent developments by the RSS general secretary's opposition to same-sex marriage.

In its opposition to the plea, the Centre cites the "deeply embedded religious and societal norms" as a reasonable justification for impermissibility of same-sex marriage. Had our founding fathers cared for such regressive norms, un-touchability in India would've still been rampant. The ban on un-touchability is an implicit recognition of the fact that religious norms detriment to the liberty and fundamental rights of a citizen need not be discarded. Interestingly, one of the icons of Hindu nationalism and the BJP, VD Savarkar recognised precisely this. Savarkar argued that all religious scriptures are man-made and thus should be updated according to prevailing conditions and the advancement of scientific reason. If the claims of these scriptures do not stand the test of reason, they ought to be "discarded". Savarkar wrote "everything that is ancient is not necessarily sacred and worthy of

worship." On one hand the government repeatedly advocates for uniform civil code, on the other hand it cites personal laws to defend its opposition to same-sex marriage.

The Centre goes a step further by arguing that homosexual marriages are a threat to the "existence and continuance of the state." How powerless could the state be to feel threatened by the idea of two human beings living together peacefully in their personal space? Same-sex marriage is recognised by 34 countries. All of them seem to be functioning just fine. Can the government bother to cite an instance where the legal recognition of same-sex marriage has led to the fulfilment of an anarchist's fantasy? Needless to say, no such precedence exists.

As the political philosopher Hannah Arendt has pointed out, the right to marry according to one's choices is an "elementary human right." Throughout history, there have been multiple attempts to restrict this elementary right to the marginalised through societal norms and state repression. Not long ago, interracial marriages were illegal in many of today's developed countries. Similarly, we continue to witness lynching and honour-killings in India as a consequence of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. It is clearly recognisable to every sane individual that anti-miscegenation

laws and the prohibition of inter-caste marriages were a denial of the individual's worth as a complete human being. It is an affirmation that certain human beings are "inferior" and "lesser" than others. The denial of the right to marriage to gays and lesbians serve as a constant reminder to the fact that their emotional connection is somehow "lesser" than heterosexuals and that they are not capable of love and raising a family in the same manner as heterosexuals.

For the sake of argument, let us consider the claim that same-sex couples cannot raise their children as well as heterosexual couples. There have been multiple studies on same-sex parenting that credibly dismiss this. A 2013 report by the American Academy of Paediatrics has found that children raised by gay and lesbian parenting show healthy social and psychological development despite societal stigma. Marriage provides a semblance of stability which strengthens developmental growth in children.

Recently, the women's wing of the RSS started a campaign to instil "sanskar" to unborn children. Along with the usual claims of instilling Hindu pride was the assertion that homosexuality is the consequence of misplaced gender expectations. I.e. if the mother gives birth to a boy while expecting a girl. This is in consonance with Baba Ramdev's claim of looking at

homosexuality as a disease. The fact is that homosexual behaviour is by no means unique to human beings. It has been observed in cats, dogs, baboons, elephants, penguins, fox, chicken, duck, sparrow, lion, panda, goats, fish, and tortoise. Nevertheless, the claim that homosexuality should not be allowed because it is unnatural falls into the naturalistic fallacy. Everything "natural" is not necessarily good. It is not natural to have democratic institutions. It is not "natural" to wear clothes or eat cooked food or compose music. What makes monogamy more natural than polygamy? Baboons, with whom we share 99% of our DNA, do not form monogamous pairs. The flaw in this argument is instantly recognisable. The privileging of some forms of relationships over others by the state is a clear example of discrimination. Same-sex marriage does not affect the rights or the lives of heterosexual couples in any way whatsoever. It is high time for the state and the larger society to accept, welcome and celebrate the humanity of sexual minorities. As Bob Dylan once sang "Your old road is rapidly agin/ Please get out of the new one if you can't lend a hand/ For the times they are a changing."

The author is a writer and a student at the Jindal School of International Affairs. Views are personal.



Anwesh Satpathy

HOW POWERLESS COULD THE STATE BE TO FEEL THREATENED BY THE IDEA OF TWO HUMAN BEINGS LIVING TOGETHER PEACEFULLY IN THEIR PERSONAL SPACE?

### WISDOM CORNER

Life is thickly sown with thorns, and I know no other remedy than to pass quickly through them. The longer we dwell on our misfortunes, the greater is their power to harm us. VOLTAIRE

Pursue some path, however narrow and crooked, in which you can walk with love and reverence. HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn, whatever state I may be in, therein to be content. HELEN KELLER

### WORDSWORTH

#### Grangerise

Work has been grangerised if illustrations have been added from other sources, usually other books. In a transferred sense, the verb can refer to the mutilation of books by removing their illustrations for this purpose. It's an eponym. It commemorates James Granger, who would have lived and died as an obscure parish priest (he was vicar of Shiplake in Oxfordshire from 1747 until his death in 1776), had he not been an early and avid collector of portrait prints, amassing in his lifetime some 14,000 of them. In 1769 he published A Biographical History of England from Egbert the Great to the Revolution, which combined a chronological catalogue of prints with biographical information. This was a huge success, even among people who didn't collect portrait prints, and went through several editions. Grangerisation is also known as extra-illustration. It was a popular pursuit in 18th and 19th centuries. The method was to mount illustrations on sheets of same size as the book you were grangerising, remove the binding, interpolate extra sheets and rebind the book.

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

#### Early school hours

Sir, Debates on the correctness of early school hours for children erupt and fade at regular intervals. Most schools start almost at an unearthly hour - before 8 am. Studying in larger cities means traversing long distances; students may have to get up when it's pitch dark. So children should rush to their schools with little time to get ready. Sleep deprivation is a major problem for children because today's school curriculum has made sure young bodies cannot hit the bed early. Researchers have pointed to poor academic record in some bright children who have early school start. Since parents have different work timings, sometimes quite a lot of parents hardly see the faces of their children till night as children run to their buses even before parents see the light of day and scurry to their tuitions even before parents return. Lack of family bonding may push the children to psychological and psychosomatic disorders in later life.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

#### Crucial meet

Sir, The meeting between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin is a significant development. Xi's first visit to Russia since the Ukraine invasion and his efforts to broker peace must lift Putin's spirit after the International Criminal Court issued an international arrest warrant to the latter on war crimes charges related to Ukraine war. Moreover, the meeting sends a powerful message to Western leaders allied with Ukraine that their efforts to isolate Moscow have fallen short.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

#### Internet shutdown

Sir, The blocking of internet services in Punjab is a major concern for residents. Putting restrictions on the internet is not a solution as it only disrupts everyday life as a large number of people rely on the internet for their livelihood. Students also suffer when the blocking of internet services is extended. Despite this, there has been no arrest of the man in question - Amritpal Singh - who is working at the behest of his masters in ISI. If they want a separate Khalistan let them create it in Canada or the UK, where they live. Why don't they create it in Pakistan Punjab which is a bigger Punjab compared to ours?

Vishal Mayur, TUMKUR (KARNATAKA)



Fake news can misguide millions of people at once, and this will be in direct contradiction with the fundamentals of democracy which form the bedrock of our existence

BY CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

NAVY TO HOLD CAR RALLY

The Indian Navy in association with Navy Welfare and Wellness Association (NWWA) is undertaking a maritime awareness coastal motor car expedition "Sam No Varunah" covering the entire Indian coastline, a statement from the Indian Navy said Wednesday



of the day quote

Perpetrators of terrorism are ultimately consumed by terrorism itself

Punjab is land of great gurus, saints and seers, who have shown the way of communal harmony, peace and brotherhood

A continuous campaign against criminals is going on in Jodhpur, Bikaner, Udaipur and Nagaur. Criminals from other states come here but they are being caught

SHORT TAKES

Delhi HC upholds life term of man

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has upheld the life imprisonment awarded to a man for raping and killing a 23-year-old woman in August 2015, saying the evidence clearly connects him to the crime.

Himachal receives snow and rainfall

Shimla: Higher reaches and tribal areas received another mild spell of snow with Kadhrala and Gondla receiving 3 cm and 1 cm of snow, while mid and low hills were lashed by light to moderate rains, according to the weather department.

Goa to construct more six dams

Panaji: Goa Water Resources Minister Subhash Shirodkar Wednesday said the state government would construct six more dams, adding that the process has already started and urged the people not to oppose such public-oriented projects.

WB: Employees to go on mass leave

Kolkata: As a measure to continue building up additional pressure on the issue of pending dearness allowance (DA) arrears, a section of state government employees in West Bengal has decided to go on a mass leave March 30. Also on same day, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will stage a sit-in protest in New Delhi against the non-payment of dues from the Union government under various centrally-sponsored schemes.

New catfish species found in Arunachal

Kolkata: A new Catfish species has been discovered by scientists of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in Arunachal Pradesh, a statement said. The new species has been named 'Exostoma Dhritiae' after Dhriti Banerjee, the first woman director of the ZSI, as a mark of honour for her contributions to research on the fauna of the country, it stated.

CENTRE 'PREVENTING' ELEVATION OF JUDGES

SC Collegium expresses 'concern'

The Collegium voiced its concern in the resolution in which it recommended the names of four district judges—R Sakthivel, P Dhanabal, Chinnasamy Kumarappan, and K Rajasekar—for appointment as judges of the Madras High Court



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: The Supreme Court Collegium has voiced concern over instances of the Centre withholding or overlooking the names recommended for appointment as judges and asked it to take "necessary action" for elevation of those selected earlier. The critical remarks by the Collegium, which noted that this practice disturbs the seniority of the candidates, come amid the tussle between the Centre and the judiciary over the Collegium system of judges appointing judges.

for appointing Sathyan as a judge of the Madras High Court, brushing aside the objections of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to his social media posts including the one critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The names which have been recommended earlier in point of time including the reiterated names ought not to be withheld or overlooked as this disturbs their seniority whereas those recommended later steal march on them. Loss of seniority of candidates recommended earlier in point of time has been noted by the collegium and is a matter of grave concern," it stated.

The resolution further said that in order to ascertain the fitness and suitability of the above-named judicial officers for elevation to the high court, in terms of the memorandum of procedure, the apex court Collegium has consulted the judges of the Supreme Court conversant with the affairs of the Madras High Court. "By its resolution dated 17 January 2023, the Collegium of the Supreme Court recommended the appointment of Shri Ramaswamy Neelakandan, advocate practising before the Madras High Court, as a judge of the high court. As on March 31, 2023, Shri Ramaswamy Neelakandan was 48.07 years of age while Shri K Rajasekar on that date was 47.09 years of age. "Shri Neelakandan, who is a member of the Bar, has been recommended earlier in point of time and must be appointed before Shri Rajasekar is appointed. Otherwise, Shri Rajasekar, who is a judicial officer and younger than Shri Neelakandan, would rank senior to Shri Neelakandan. Such a deviation in seniority would be unfair and against the settled coriority whereas those recommended later steal march on them. Loss of seniority of candidates recommended earlier in point of time has been noted by the collegium and is a matter of grave concern," it stated.

Security beefed up at Assam's Dibrugarh jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dibrugarh, March 22: A multi-tier security arrangement has been made at Dibrugarh Central Jail in Assam, where seven associates of radical preacher Amritpal Singh, including his uncle, are currently lodged, the district's deputy commissioner Biswajit Pegu said n Wednesday. The Punjab Police recently launched a massive crackdown in the northern state, arresting several supporters of Amritpal Singh, the chief of pro-Khalistan outfit 'Waris Punjab De'. Security has been beefed up in and around the jail since March 19, when initially four members of the outfit were shifted here by the Punjab police, Pegu told reporters here. "Seven members of Waris Punjab De are lodged in Dibrugarh jail as of today. They have been kept in high-security cells. The security system for NSA detainees is different compared to other prisoners," Pegu explained. According to sources in the jail, a team of elite black panther Assam police commandos have been entrusted with securing the outer perimeter of the jail, while the CRPF, Assam Police personnel and prison guards have taken up the responsibility of inner security. The entire outer boundary of the jail has been fitted with CCTVs.

Delhi govt tables ₹78,800-cr Budget



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi Finance Minister Kailash Gahlot arrive for the presentation of Delhi Budget at Delhi Legislative Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: Delhi Finance Minister Kailash Gahlot Wednesday presented a ₹78,800-crore budget, giving a major push to transport and infrastructure with an allocation of ₹21,817 crore ahead of the G20 Summit, and announced a comprehensive plan to make the capital a "clean, beautiful and modern city". Opposition BJP dismissed the budget as "directionless" and alleged that it is a bundle of lies and has only paper announcements. In his 150-minute speech in the Delhi assembly, Gahlot said a comprehensive infrastructure rejuvenation project was being launched in a very significant year when Delhi will be hosting India's first G20 summit. The comprehensive plan includes beautification of 1,400-km roads maintained by PWD, construction of 26 flyovers and three double-decker flyovers, induction of 1,600 electric buses and electrification of all bus depots. Also, the government has proposed to construct three world-class inter-state bus terminals, two multi-level bus depots, two modern bus terminals and nine new bus depots. As many as 1,400 new and modern bus queue shelters will also be built in the national capital. Six-point action plan for a clean Yamuna and clearing all three garbage mountains of Delhi are also among the major schemes announced by the AAP government Wednesday. In the 2023-24 Budget, the government has set aside ₹2,034 crore for the beautification and upgrade of PWD roads. Gahlot announced that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi will be given ₹8,241 crore in the financial year 2023-24, up from ₹4,374 crore allocated during 2022-23. He also said a loan of ₹850 crore was earmarked for the civic body for the removal of mountains of garbage. The government announced that it will set up 100 mohalla clinics.

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PM holds review meeting on Covid, influenza situation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: Amid a spike in influenza and Covid-19 cases in the country in the past two weeks, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting and directed officials to enhance genome sequencing while also emphasizing on Covid-appropriate behaviour. Modi chaired the meeting to assess the Covid-19 and influenza situation in the country in terms of preparedness of health infrastructure and logistics, status of the vaccination campaign, emergence of new Covid-19 variants and influenza types and their public health implications for the country, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. This high-level review meeting comes in the backdrop of a spike in influenza cases in the country and rise of Covid cases in the past two weeks. During the meeting, a comprehensive presentation was made covering the global Covid situation including the rising cases in India by Secretary, Health, Rajesh Bhushan. The prime minister was briefed that India has been witnessing a slight rise in new cases with average daily cases reported as 888 and weekly positivity reported as 0.98 per cent in the week ending March 22. However, 1.08 lakh daily average cases have been reported globally during the same week. The action taken on the directions given by Modi during the last Covid review held December 22, 2022 was also briefed, the statement said.

India has recorded 1,134 new coronavirus cases, while the active cases increased to 7,026, according to Union Health Ministry data updated Wednesday. The death toll climbed to 5,30,813 with five deaths. One death each has been reported in Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra while one fatality was reconciled by Kerala, the data updated at 8 am stated. He was informed that availability and prices of 20 main Covid drugs, 12 other drugs, eight buffer drugs and one influenza drug is being monitored. A mock drill was also conducted December 27, 2022 in 22,000 hospitals, and many remedial measures taken by hospitals thereafter. The Prime Minister was apprised on the influenza situation in the country particularly with respect to higher number of cases of H1N1 and H3N2 being noted in last few months. Modi directed officials to enhance whole genome sequencing of positive samples with the designated INSACOG genome sequencing laboratories. This will support tracking of newer variants, if any, and timely response, the PMO said. The prime minister emphasized Covid-appropriate behaviour including wearing of masks in hospital premises by both patients, health professionals and health workers. He also stressed that wearing of masks is advisable when senior citizens and those with comorbidities visit crowded areas, the statement said.

Crushed under police boot, newborn dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, March 22: A newborn baby died allegedly after being crushed under police boots during a raid in Jharkhand's Giridih district in the small hours of Wednesday, prompting Chief Minister Hemant Soren to order an investigation. The alleged incident, which occurred at Koshodinghi village under Deori police station when police personnel went to a house to arrest two persons in connection with a case, led the opposition BJP to demand suspension of senior officials. "It has been alleged that a four-day-old boy died when the police went there to execute two non-bailable warrants issued by the court. Prima facie, external injuries have not been found on the baby's body. It has been sent for postmortem examination," Giridih Superintendent of Police Amit Renu told PTI. Once the post-mortem report comes, the police will be in a position to say what actually happened, the SP said. He said the autopsy will be conducted by a team of doctors under the supervision of a magistrate with proper videography. "Right now we don't have any information that any policeman had crushed the infant. If the allegation is found to be true, the erring personnel will not be spared," Renu said.



The SP said four to five police personnel had gone to execute non-bailable warrants against Bhushan Pandey, grandfather of the deceased infant, and another person. Chief Minister Hemant Soren ordered a probe into the incident after a video went viral in which a person, apparently Bhushan Pandey, is seen alleging that police personnel raided their home at 3.20 am and they opened the door using force when it was not opened. "I fled and the women also rushed out. The policemen started searching the house when the four-day-old child was sleeping there. The baby was crushed and killed," the person in the video claimed.



A DAILY STRUGGLE: People collect drinking water from a mobile water tanker on World Water Day in a residential area in New Delhi

New Covid-origins study hints at spillover: Scientists

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 22: A recent study which found the deadly Covid-19 may have originated in raccoon dogs from the Wuhan market in China, hints that the pandemic may be the result of a spillover from an animal, according to scientists. The study, now posted on scientific research repository Zenodo and not peer reviewed yet, is based on genetic data drawn from swabs taken from in and around the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market starting in January 2020. The swabs were collected in early 2020, after the market was shut down and cleared of animal products, after being linked to the out-

break of Covid pandemic. The researchers got the samples from swabbing walls, floors, metal cages and carts that are used for transporting animal cages. Besides raccoon dogs, the international team of scientists also found DNA of bamboo rats, palm civets, Malayan porcupine and Amur hedgehog. Their results showed that large amounts of genetic material were a match for the raccoon dog, suggestive of a spill over from an animal. While the study does not confirm whether the animals themselves were infected with the Covid virus, it does establish that the animals were present at the market. This supports the hypothesis that the pandemic had an animal origin,



according to some researchers. "Of course, this is not direct evidence. But this is the best we can get now, because all the animals have been eliminated from the market and we don't have swabs of

the animals," Leo Poon, a virologist at the University of Hong Kong, was quoted as saying in a report in the journal Nature. However, some researchers said the analysis "falls short of definitive proof," as they did not find an infected animal. The work confirms the animal species that were at the market, but because it includes only samples that had tested positive, "there is no data in this work associating SARS-CoV-2 with the presence of any of these animals", Justin Kinney, a quantitative bi-

ologist at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York, was quoted as saying. In total, Debarre and her colleagues downloaded around half a terabyte of genomic data from some 50 samples. But soon after, it disappeared from public view on GISAID. Debarre and her colleagues say they reached out to authors of the preprint to collaborate on the analysis, but the China CDC declined. The researchers said many more forensic insights could still come from the data if they were made public again.

# Corruption behind Kochi landfill blaze, alleges BJP

The landfill in Kochi caught fire March 2 and continued for nearly 15 days, causing medical complications to a large number of people as thousands were forced to leave the smoking zone



There are three sons-in-law, two companies and a big scam. The LDF and the UDF have come together in looting Kerala

Prakash Javadekar | BJP Leader

Muraleedharan and former Union minister KJ Alphons, were part of the presser.

"I am directly saying that the chief minister has taken interest," Javadekar said.

Noting that the high court in the state has taken up the matter on its own, he expressed hope that it will order a CBI probe into the issue.

"While the Left is in power in Kerala, the Congress is the main opposition party. Both are now together in looting the state," Javadekar alleged.

He noted that the landfill caught fire March 2 and it continued for nearly 15 days, causing medical complications to a large number of people as thousands were forced to leave the smoking zone.

Answering a question, he said the Centre will also act over the issue.

While the solid management rules were notified by the Centre in 2016, the Kerala government never followed them, leading to a complete mismanagement of waste all over the state, he said. Javadekar was the Union environment minister then.

He said the firm chosen for the waste management in Kochi received a ₹54 crore-contract and it in turn subcontracted the task to other firms for over ₹22 crore. ₹32 crore went straight into its pocket, the BJP leader claimed.

Goa and Indore have been among the best examples of managing waste and turning it into wealth. But the Kerala government never tried to do anything in this regard, he said.

In Kochi, there is no plant, no processing, no machinery but only expenditure. When various teams including from the Central Pollution Control Board and other organisations visited Kerala and studied the site, they found no waste-processing plant, no waste bio-mining plant but just a dilapidated compost structure, Javadekar claimed.

## UP engineer sacked for eulogising Laden

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh), March 22: The Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd (UPPCL) has terminated the services of an engineer for praising the slain Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden.

Ravindra Prakash Gautam, a Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), had been suspended in June 2022 after he put a picture of Laden at his Kayamganj sub-division-II office in Farrukhabad district.

UPPCL Chairman M Devraj issued Gautam's termination order after a probe committee found the latter guilty of indulging in an anti-national act that tarnished the image of the department.

A video of Gautam's Kayamganj office with Osama's picture hanging in it had gone viral last year. The caption of the picture called him 'Respected Osama bin Laden, world's best engineer'.



His colleagues told reporters then that Gautam used to idolise the former al-Qaeda chief as he had an engineering degree. Gautam also accepted that the video indeed was true.

Dakshinanchal Vidut Vitran Nigam Ltd (DVVN L) Managing Director, Amit Kishore, said Gautam was suspended immediately and a probe initiated against him.

"If a section of people in the country can consider Godse as their idol, then why can't I consider Osama bin Laden as my idol," Gautam told reporters.

## Unseasonal rains damage wheat crop, vegetable cultivation in UP



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

UP IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST PRODUCERS OF WHEAT AND A LARGE PART OF THE DAMAGE IS BEING CAUSED BY FLOODING OF FIELDS

LOWER CROP YIELDS WILL CUT INDIA'S WHEAT OUTPUT FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR THE FCI TO SHORE UP ITS DEPLETING STOCKS

Lucknow, March 22: Unseasonal rains accompanied by strong winds reported from most parts of Uttar Pradesh in the past couple of days have caused considerable damage to crops, mainly wheat.

Crops have been flattened in the fields due to the heavy downpour accompanied by strong winds.

Vipul K Singh, a farmer from Sultanpur, said, "Most of the early sown varieties of the crop are at a semi-ripe stage. Flattening of the crop at this stage will cause shrinking of immature wheat grain leading to a fall in the yield."

However, some agriculture experts are of the view that there will be only partial impact on the crop, but more rain at this stage could be harmful and will delay the harvesting.

Farmers said the rain is beneficial for the lateral varieties of wheat and vegetables, but the strong winds that cause flattening

will damage the yield.

Uttar Pradesh is one of the biggest producers of wheat and a large part of the damage is being caused by flooding of fields.

Lower crop yields will cut India's wheat output for the second consecutive year, making it difficult for the state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) to shore up its depleting stocks, said an official.

A sudden rise in temperature had hit the wheat crop earlier this month. Last year, a heat wave had cut the country's wheat production.

The wheat crop looked promising until early March when the weather became unfavourable due to a rise in temperature and then the rains came along with hail that damaged the crop, said Shvinnath Ojha, a farmer from

Pratapgarh.

Rains and hailstorms have also hit chickpea and potato crops, farmers said.

Vegetable cultivation has also been affected in places where fields have become water-logged. Potato crop has started becoming unfit for consumption because of rain and water logging, said Ojha.

Although it is too early to know the extent of the damage, the government has directed all district magistrates to make an assessment of the crop damage and send their reports to the state government by the end of this week.

The situation, however, could worsen for the farmers since the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted more rainfall this week.

## 46 one-horned rhinos sighted in UP's Dudhwa National Park

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lakhimpur Kheri, March 22: In a recent survey, forest officials have sighted as many as 46 one-horned rhinos at the Dudhwa National Park (DNP) in Uttar Pradesh.

The headcount exercise was carried out by forest officials, and experts from Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) from March 15 to 17.

Deputy director of DNP Rengaraju Tamiliselvan said Among the 46 rhinos, 40 were spotted in the 27 sq km area of the rhino rehabilitation area-one (RRA-1) in the Sonaripur range and six in the

RRA-2 in the Belrayan range.

Seven teams - five in RRA-1 and two in RRA-2 - were engaged for the exercise and they patrolled the rhino area on elephant backs to carry out the counting work.

The official, however, said the gender of six rhinos could not be ascertained and added that the WII experts took DNA samples from the rhinos for molecular analysis.

The exercise was carried out by dividing the entire area in grids measuring 5x5 kms.

The DNF deputy director, WII scientist Samrat Mandal, WWF expert Amit Sharma and biologists Vipin Kapoor and Apoorva Gupta led the headcount exercise.



GOD'S OWN COUNTRY: Elephants arriving for the temple festival at the Thirunakkara Mahadeva Temple in Kottayam district in Kerala, Wednesday

## UP schools get back to 100 pc syllabus

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj (UP), March 22: The Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (UPMSP) has decided that 100 per cent of the syllabus would be taught to students from this academic session.

The decision will be implemented in all 28,000 schools affiliated with the UP Board.

During the pandemic, the board had reduced the syllabus by 30 per cent for Classes 9 to 12. The practice continued till the last academic

session. However, from the new session, the entire syllabus will be taught in all subjects. The new session will start from April 1.

UP Board secretary Divyakant Shukla said, "During the last two years, due to Covid-19, regular teaching and learning in schools was disrupted.

Keeping in view the interest of the students, the course committee had recommended the curtailment of 30 per cent of the annual course. Under this, the curriculum in schools was short-

ened. Now, as the conditions have returned to normal, 100 per cent of the syllabus will be taught from the new academic session."

The UP Board secretary added that the secondary schools are back to their regular routine after two years and hence, there is no justification left for the curtailment of syllabus.

The UP Board has also laid emphasis on paying attention to extra-curricular activities for the all-round development of the students from the new session.

## In a first, women will offer Tarawih in Lucknow Eidgah

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 22: With the holy month of Ramadan set to begin, the Aishbagh Eidgah in Lucknow, for the first time, will allow women to offer Tarawih namaz during Ramadan.

Tarawih namaz is one of the most special prayers for Muslims which involves reading long portions of the Quran as well as performing many 'rakahs' (cycles of movement involved in Islamic prayer).

A part of the Eidgah will be reserved for women for performing Tarawih namaz during Ramadan this year, said Imam Eidgah, Maulana Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahali.

Women were first allowed to offer namaz on Eid and Bakrid in the Eidgah in 2016.

The entry for women will be from the designated gate of the Eidgah to offer namaz at its Baradari. Several women believe that Tarawih namaz is only for men, but Fikah and Fatwa has mentioned that tarawih should be taken up as a habit by both women and men, said Mahali, who is also rector of Islamic Centre of India.

There is a mention that in the times of the Sahaba (one of the four caliphs), the practice of women



offering tarawih was followed. The doors of the mosques are and will always remain open for the women, he added.

The move has been applauded and welcomed by Muslim women.

Fatima Asad, a school teacher, said, "At times, it becomes problematic for women to offer namaz properly at home due to bustle of the servants and children. This move will provide proper space and a peaceful environment for the women. The Eidgah should provide proper sanitation, safety and pardah so that women feel comfortable while offering namaz."

She said that this step will assure gender equality. In several Muslim countries, this provision has been made available for several years. "I am happy that finally women got their rights in Lucknow," she said.

## Doting parents place QR code on son's tomb

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thrissur (Kerala), March 22: A QR code placed on a tombstone at a church in Kerala's Thrissur helps one to relive and reminisce on the creative work rendered by a doctor, who died young at just 26.

The parents of Dr Ivin Francis decided to place the QR code on the tomb of the youngster at St Joseph Church, Kuriyachira in the central Kerala district to give people a glimpse into his world as they can watch videos of his performances by scanning the code.

His family from Kuriyachira has designed a web page containing all the works of Ivin and linked it with the QR code.

Son of Francis, an officer with a private company in Oman, and Leena, principal of the Indian School in Oman, Ivin was well-

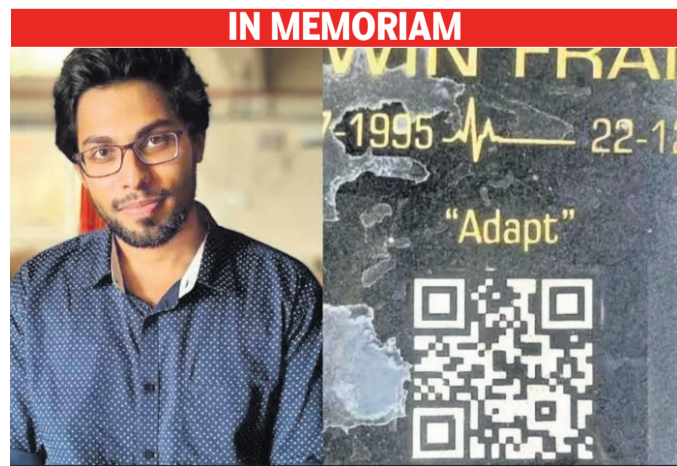
versed in music and sports, and found time to indulge in his passion along with his medical course. He was popular among the community with his performances.

Ivin's unfortunate death came in 2021 when he collapsed and died while playing badminton.

"We wanted his life to be a motivation for everyone and that is how we thought of placing a QR code on his tomb," Francis said.

Ivin had created profiles of people using QR codes and his parents also decided to do the same. He also used to send me a lot of QR codes for information. I could scan the QR code and could download the information I was seeking, the father said.

He said the idea of placing a QR code was of Ivin's sister Evelyn Francis. "My daughter told me that just writing something about



Ivin on the tomb will not be sufficient to portray what all he did. We thought he may not be satisfied with just that. So, she said we can have a QR code linked to his pro-

file and place it on the tomb. So, people who scan the code will know what was he and what all he could do. She created the site and QR code in 10 days," Francis said.

The doting father said his daughter had asked him not to inscribe anything on the tomb when he ordered it. "She created the site and QR code and asked me whether that could be printed on the marble tomb. So I asked the maker, and he said it can be printed," Francis said.

He said when the tomb is placed in a cemetery and people see Ivin's grave, there will not be anyone available to tell them about his son.

Now, they can just scan the QR code and can know what sort of a person Ivin was, Francis said.

Francis said by scanning the QR code, people can see Ivin's photographs, his programmes at the college, his friend circle, among other details about him. His keyboard and guitar performances can also be seen, Ivin's father added.

## KERALA PUT ON ALERT AS COVID CASES CROSS 1000

USE OF MASKS RECOMMENDED



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, March 22: Kerala Health Minister Veena George, chairing a meeting to review the increase of Covid cases in the state Wednesday, said it would be better if the aged, children and those with ailments use masks in public places.

In the meeting, which came on the eve of the third anniversary of Kerala announcing a lockdown due to Covid, she said the use of masks when visiting hospitals should be a must.

George noted that the total number of active Covid cases in the state, as of Tuesday, was 1,026 with 172 new cases and 111 of them were being treated at various hospitals in the state.

"We have asked for a caution to be maintained and surveillance also will be strengthened. Officials have been asked to prepare a surge plan and also to have a look into the ICU and ventilator facilities besides being given instructions to see adequate stock of medicines and testing kits are readily available. However there need be no worry at all," said George.

It was March 23, 2020, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced a week-long lockdown to counter the spread and soon Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the nationwide lockdown.



of the day quote

Amidst a global crisis, today India's economic system is strong, the banking system is strong



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

On this happy and auspicious occasion of Ugadi festival, the Telugu New Year Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to the people of Andhra Pradesh and to the Telugu people living all over the world



S ABDUL NAZEER | ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNOR

I will come back as chief minister again. God has given me an opportunity to serve Mother Karnataka. I have done sincere work



BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

Army to restore millets in ration

New Delhi: The Indian Army is reintroducing millets flour in the rations of soldiers in a bid to promote consumption of coarse grains...

Shah e-inaugurates Sharda Devi temple

Srinagar: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday e-inaugurated the Mata Sharda Devi temple near the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir...

PM Modi to visit Varanasi March 24

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Varanasi on a day-long visit March 24, where he will address the One World TB Summit and dedicate and lay the foundation stone of various projects worth more than ₹1,780 crore.

Vehicle runs over four in UP, 3 dead

Sultanpur (UP): Three persons were killed and one other was seriously injured after a four-wheeler allegedly ran over them near Arjo Ishipur village on Chanda-Kadipur road Wednesday, police said.

Four drown

Barwani: Four young men, including three from Gujarat, drowned in river Narmada in Madhya Pradesh's Barwani district Wednesday, a police official said.



I am never going to participate in Assembly elections as long as Article 370 is not restored. Whenever I took oath as a member of the Assembly, it was under two Constitutions -- the J&K Constitution and the Constitution of India, with two flags at the same time.

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP CHIEF

RECORD RAIN

Mumbai received 16.6 mm of rainfall Tuesday, the highest in a day in March since 2006, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said.



Is marital rape a crime? SC to hear petitions May 9

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 22: The Supreme Court Wednesday said it will hear May 9 a clutch of pleas in connection with the criminalisation of marital rape.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising mentioned the matter before a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud. Jaising submitted before the court that common compilation and the order of arguments in the case is ready.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the Centre's reply is ready and it has to be vetted, and added that he would argue the case for one-and-a-half days as it pertains to an important issue. The bench



THE TOP COURT DECIDED TO TAKE UP THE MATTER ITSELF INSTEAD OF LETTING DIFFERENT HIGH COURTS TAKE A CALL

On January 16, the Supreme Court sought response from the central government on a clutch of petitions seeking criminalisation of marital rape

said, "List this May 9, 2023".

On January 16, the Supreme Court sought response from the central government on a clutch of petitions seeking criminalisation of marital rape.

The top court decided to take up the matter itself instead of letting different high courts take a call.

In May last year, after the Delhi High Court's verdict that expressed 'split views' on criminalisation of

marital rape, an appeal was moved in the Supreme Court challenging the exception to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code.

Also, in July last year, the top court had stayed the Karnataka High Court judgment, which allowed the trial of a husband for allegedly raping his wife. In May, the apex court had issued notice in the husband's plea against the Karnataka High Court judgment, however, it had then refused to stay the high court's judgment and trial proceedings. And, petitions have also been filed in the apex court seeking criminalisation of marital rape.

On May 11 last year, a high court bench of Justice Rajiv Shakdher

and Justice C. Hari Shankar expressed different opinions in the judgment on the exception to Section 375 of the IPC, which exempts forceful sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife from the offence of rape.

Justice Rajiv Shakdher supported striking down the contentious law stating that the exemption of the husband from the offence of marital rape is unconstitutional to which Justice Hari Shankar did not agree.

"The impugned provisions in so far as they concern a husband having intercourse with his wife without consent are violative of Article 14 and are therefore struck down," said Justice Shakdher.

Sisodia remanded to judicial custody



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 22: A Delhi Court Wednesday sent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia to judicial custody till April 5 in the excise policy case being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

On expiry of Sisodia's ED custody, which was extended on March 17, he was produced before Special Judge M.K. Nagpal of Rouse Avenue Court. The judge said: "We will send him to judicial custody till April 5." Sisodia is already in judicial custody in the corruption case being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Sisodia, however, urged the court to allow him to carry some religious and spiritual books during his judicial custody. The court then asked him to move an application in this regard.

Sisodia Tuesday moved a bail plea in the same court in the ED case and the court while issuing notice to the central agency, listed the matter for the next hearing March 25. The court had, Monday, sent Sisodia to judicial custody till April 3, in the same case by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). After the CBI arrested Sisodia February 26, the ED also arrested him in the same case March 9.

During the last hearing in the ED case, the court was apprised by the ED that important details have come up during Sisodia's custody and he had to be confronted with other accused persons. The probe agency had informed the court that voluminous data from Sisodia's email and mobile, etc. is also being forensically analysed.

Top court to form special bench to hear Bilkis' plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: The Supreme Court Wednesday agreed to constitute a special bench to hear a plea against the remission of sentence of 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano gangrape case, which also involves the killing of seven members of her family during the 2002 Gujarat riots.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala assured Bano, represented through her lawyer Shobha Gupta, that the new bench will be formed.

Gupta mentioned the matter for urgent hearing and said a new bench needs to be constituted.

"I will have a bench constituted. Will look at it this evening," the CJI said. Earlier February 7, the plea was mentioned for urgent hearing by a fresh bench and the CJI had assured Bano's lawyer that he will set up one at the earliest.

Prior to this, the hearing on Bano's plea could not be taken up for hearing January 24 as the judges concerned were hearing a matter related to passive euthanasia as part of a five-judge constitution bench. On that day, the petition was listed for hearing before a bench of justices Rastogi and CT Ravikumar.

Both justices Rastogi and Ravikumar were then busy hearing, as part of a constitution bench headed by Justice K M Joseph, the pleas seeking modification of guidelines on the execution of a "Living Will or Advance Medical Directive"

for permitting passive euthanasia.

On January 4, a bench comprising justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M Trivedi took up the plea, including some PILs.

However, Justice Trivedi recused from hearing the case without citing any reason. Bano had moved the apex court on November 30, 2022 challenging the "premature" release of 11 lifers by the state government, saying it has "shaken the conscience of society".

Besides the plea challenging the release of the convicts, the gang-rapist survivor had also filed a separate petition seeking a review of the apex court's May 13, 2022 order on a plea by a convict. The review plea was later dismissed in December last year. All 11 convicts were granted remission by the Gujarat government and released August 15, last year.

The victim, in her pending writ petition, has said the state government passed a "mechanical order" completely ignoring the requirement of law as laid down by the Supreme Court.

"The en-masse premature release of the convicts in the much talked about case of Bilkis Bano has shaken the conscience of the society and resulted in a number of agitations across the country," she has said in the plea. Referring to past verdicts, the plea said en-masse remissions are not permissible and, moreover, such a relief cannot be sought or granted as a matter of right without examining the case of each convict individually based on their peculiar facts and role played by them in the crime.



The 11 convicts sentenced to life imprisonment were released in August last year under the Gujarat government's 1992 remission policy



HAPPY NEW YEAR: Women in traditional attire take part in a procession to celebrate the Marathi New Year, 'Gudi Padwa' at Girgaon in Mumbai, Maharashtra

9 killed in explosion at TN firecracker unit



AGENCIES

Kancheepuram (TN), March 22: Nine workers were killed in an explosion at a firecracker unit near here Wednesday and at least 12 others suffered injuries, police said.

When workers were engaged in processes related to manufacturing and storage of the firecrackers, there was an explosion, which started a fire. Nine workers died and 12 others were injured in the blaze. The building that housed the manufacturing-cum-storage facility collapsed in the impact of the explosion.

The cause of the accident is being investigated and violations have been identified, police said. The injured are being treated in various hospitals, they added.

Police said that 25 persons were working in the unit when the explosion took place Wednesday afternoon. Four Units of fire force reached the unit and doused the fire. More information on the explosion are awaited.

Prez confers Padma awards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: Former Karnataka chief minister S M Krishna, noted industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla and famous playback singer Suman Kalyanpur were given Padma awards by President Droupadi Murmu at a ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Wednesday.

Besides them, billionaire stock market investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, who had passed away last year, was given the Padma Shri posthumously. Krishna, a former external affairs minister, who is "known for his statesman-like vision and administrative acumen during a career spanning more than six decades", was given the Padma Vibhushan, the country's second highest civilian honour. Doshi, known for using minimalist, simple and eco-friendly approach to architecture, designed many iconic structures.

Birla, chairman of the Aditya Birla Group, was given the Padma Bhushan. One of the first Indian groups to venture abroad, it has acquired widespread global presence, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in another tweet.

Delhi-based professor Kapil Kapoor, spiritual leader Kamlesh D Patel and Kalyanpur were co-



President presents Padma Vibhushan to former Union Minister SM Krishna

The ceremony was attended by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla as well as Home Minister Amit Shah and several other Union ministers

The President had approved conferment of 106 Padma awards, including three duo cases (in a duo case, the award is counted as one), on the eve of this year's Republic Day

ferred Padma Bhushan, the country's third highest civilian award.

In another tweet, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said Kalyanpur, a renowned Indian playback singer lent her voice to innumerable hit songs in Hindi, Marathi and 11 other languages during a career spanning

four decades.

Jodhaiya Bai Baiga, a prominent artist of Baiga painting, Usha Barle, performer of Pandwani and Panthi art forms of Chhattisgarh, and Raman Cheruvayal, a tribal farmer from Kerala who is known for his contribution to sustainable agriculture and preservation of biodiversity, were given the Padma Shri.

Bhanubhai Chumilal Chitara, who has helped in preserving and promoting the traditional Mata Ni Pachedi craft of Gujarat, and Sankurathri Chandrasekhar, a managing trustee of Sankurathri Foundation which has educated a large number of rural students, provided eye-care to over 37 lakh people and performed over 3 lakh surgeries, were also awarded the Padma Shri.

'West Antarctica has lost over 3K-bn tonne of ice since 1996'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: Scientists have calculated the ice lost from the Amundsen Sea Embayment, the fastest changing Antarctic region and lying in West Antarctica, to be more than 3,000 billion tonnes over a 25-year period.

The study by University of Leeds, UK, shows that West Antarctica saw a net decline of 3,331 billion tonnes of ice between 1996 and 2021, contributing over nine millimetres to global sea levels.

"Changes in ocean temperature and circulation appear to be driving the long-term, large-scale changes in West Antarctica ice sheet mass. We absolutely need to

research those more because they are likely to control the overall sea level contribution from West Antarctica," said Benjamin Davison, lead researcher of the study, University of Leeds. The twenty major glaciers, which form the Amundsen Sea Embayment in West Antarctica, play a key role in contributing to the world's oceans' levels. They together are more than four times the size of the UK.

If all the water held in the snow and ice were to drain into the sea, the study said, global sea levels could increase by more than one metre. The findings are published in the journal Nature Communications. Davison calculated the "mass



balance" of the Amundsen Sea Embayment, which describes the

balance between mass of snow and ice gain from snowfall and mass lost

through calving, where icebergs form at the end of a glacier and drift out to sea.

The Embayment loses mass overall when the rate of calving is higher than that of ice being replaced by snowfall, thereby, contributing to global sea level rise.

Similarly, when snowfall supply drops, the Embayment can lose mass overall, again, contributing to sea level rise. "The 20 glaciers in West Antarctica have lost an awful lot of ice over the last

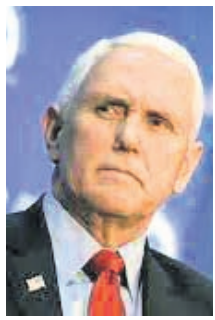
quarter of a century and there is no sign that the process is going to reverse anytime soon although there were periods where the rate of mass loss did ease slightly," said Davison.

The scientists further found that several extreme snowfall events that the Amundsen Sea Embayment had experienced over the 25-year study period, played a key role in the Embayment's contribution to sea level rise during certain time periods.

This is because these events contributed up to half of the ice change at certain times. The researchers factored these extreme events of heavy snowfall and "snow drought" into their calculations.

If all of this lost ice was piled on London, it would stand over 2 km tall

# international



What we need now is leadership because, if we act in this moment with the support of this generation, we can introduce common sense reforms that will never touch anyone who is in retirement, or anyone who will retire in the next 25 years  
MIKE PENCE | FORMER VP, US

## FIRST DAY OF RAMADAN

Millions of Muslims in Indonesia are gearing up to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan, which is expected to start Thursday, with traditions and ceremonies across the world's most populous Muslim-majority country amid soaring food prices



## of the day quote

We are proud to continue our strategic partnership with Egypt and we are committed to supporting ongoing efforts dedicated to improving the quality of life for Egyptians

MARINA WES | DIRECTOR FOR EGYPT, YEMEN AND DJIBOUTI, WORLD BANK

The IMF bailout has restored Sri Lanka's international recognition, ending the image of bankruptcy and is helping the local banks regain foreign investors' confidence

RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | PRESIDENT, SL

Bearing in mind the increasing burden on Poland due to the prolonged invasion of Ukraine, Japan would offer Poland assistance to support its role and is looking to vigorously build up projects

FUMIO KISHIDA | PM, JAPAN

## SHORT TAKES

### Pak quake kills 12

Islamabad: A strong 6.8 magnitude earthquake with the epicentre in Afghanistan shook Pakistan, killing at least twelve in the country and injuring over 160 others and causing many buildings to collapse, according to media reports Wednesday. Three persons were also killed in Afghanistan, the Associated Press reported. Tremors were also felt in many parts of north India, including the Delhi-National Capital Region.

### \$15.6bn to Ukraine

Frankfurt: Ukraine and the International Monetary Fund have agreed on a \$15.6 billion loan package aimed at shoring up government finances severely strained by Russia's invasion and at leveraging even more support by reassuring allies that Ukraine is pursuing strong economic policies. The loan programme will run for four years, with the first 12 to 18 months focusing on helping Ukraine close its massive budget deficit and alleviating pressure to finance spending through printing money at the central bank, the IMF said.

### Thunberg wins big

Stockholm: A Swedish court gave Greta Thunberg and other climate activists the go-ahead Tuesday to proceed with a class action lawsuit against the Swedish state for "insufficient climate policy". Thunberg, and 600 other young activists in a group called Aurora, sued the Swedish state in November, claiming it had to do more to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius in order to live up to the European Convention on Human Rights.

### Trains start in Greece

Athens: Train services resumed Wednesday in Greece for the first time since a deadly rail disaster three weeks ago, as the country's centre-right government struggles to regain its footing ahead of a general election. The February 28 head-on collision, the deadliest in the country's history, killed 57 people and left dozens injured, with nine still hospitalised.

### 8 dolphins dead

Sea Isle City: Eight dolphins have died after they became stranded on a beach in New Jersey, marine animal welfare officials said. The Marine Mammal Stranding Center said on Facebook Tuesday morning that a pod of eight dolphins known as "common dolphins" had become stranded in Sea Isle City and that staff and a veterinarian had responded with help from local officials. Officials said at the time that two of the dolphins had died.

## 'VAMPIRIC OVERCONSUMPTION'

# India at severe water crisis risk: UN

India likely to be most severely affected as global urban population facing water scarcity projected to increase up to 2.4 billion in 2050, says UN report

AGENCIES

United Nations, March 22: India is expected to be the most severely affected as the global urban population facing water scarcity is projected to increase from 933 million in 2016 to 1.7-2.4 billion people in 2050, a flagship UN report said Tuesday.

The 'United Nations World Water Development Report 2023: partnerships and cooperation for water', issued Tuesday ahead of the UN 2023 Water Conference, said that around 80% of people living under water stress lived in Asia; in particular, northeast China, as well as India and Pakistan. "The global urban population facing water scarcity is projected to increase from 933 million (one third of global urban population) in 2016 to 1.7-2.4 billion people (one third to nearly half of global urban population) in 2050, with India projected to be the most severely affected," the report said, citing data. "There is an urgent need to establish strong international mechanisms to prevent the global water crisis from spiralling out of control," said UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay. "Water is our com-



mon future, and it is essential to act together to share it equitably and manage it sustainably."

Globally, two billion people do not have safe drinking water and 3.6 billion lack access to safely managed sanitation, the report found. Richard Connor, the report's editor-in-chief, told reporters at a press conference at UN Headquarters ahead of the launch that "uncertainties are increasing".

"If we don't address it, there definitely will be a global crisis," he said, pointing to rising scarcity that reflects reduced availability and increased demand, from urban

26 PER CENT OF WORLD LACKS CLEAN DRINKING WATER, 46 PER CENT SANITATION  
COST OF MEETING THE GOALS IS BETWEEN \$600 BILLION AND \$1 TRILLION A YEAR

and industrial growth to agriculture, which alone consumes 70 per cent of the world's supply.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in the report that "Water is the lifeblood of humanity. It is vital for survival itself and supports the health, resilience, development and prosperity of peo-

## BRITISH SIKH GROUPS PROTEST

# Protesters hurl flares, bottles at Indian mission in London

The planned demonstration claims to be "in response to discriminatory actions of the Indian Police in Punjab"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, March 22: TArOUND 2,000 protesters waving Khalistan flags descended upon the Indian High Commission here Wednesday for a planned demonstration and hurled objects and chanted slogans amid a heightened security presence and barricades.

The Indian High Commission countered by unfurling an additional humongous tricolour on the roof of its building, which seemed to rile the protesters further who then hurled coloured flares and water bottles towards the mission building and at police officers and



media covering the protest.

Scotland Yard reacted by further blockading the area outside India House and several additional uniformed and mounted officers on horseback were deployed immediately to the area.

Unlike the violent disorder

Sunday when India House came under attack, the protesters were barricaded across the road with uniformed officers standing guard and patrolling the area throughout. The protesters, including turbaned men, and some women and children, had been bused in from different parts of the UK and chanted pro-Khalistan slogans.

The organisers used mikes to make anti-India speeches and attack the Punjab Police for alleged human rights violations. The speeches switched between English and Punjabi to make allegations of Indian media bias for calling them fringe elements and backed by Pakistan's spy agency ISI.

Banners for the so-called "National Protest", organised by groups such as the Federation of Sikh Organisations (FSO) and Sikh Youth Jathebandia, have been circulating on social media since before a protest on Sunday, which ended in violent disorder at India House.

The Indian government had registered a strong protest over the lack of security measures at its diplomatic mission, which ended in Khalistan flag-waving protesters smashing windows of the Indian High Commission and attempting to pull down the Tricolour.

Several diaspora groups gathered for a "We Stand By High Commission of India" festive demonstration outside India House in London Tuesday as a show of solidarity following vandalism.

# Beijing's population drops for 1st time in 20 yrs

Beijing's population decline was in line with national trends, with China's population falling last year for the first time in six decades, weighed down by rising living costs especially in big, sprawling cities like Beijing, weak economic growth, and changing attitudes towards raising a family

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Beijing, March 22: The death rate in China's capital Beijing surpassed its birth rate in 2022, official data showed Tuesday, pushing its natural population growth into negative territory for the first time since 2003.

The death rate in the city of 21.84 million, one of the country's most populous urban centres, rose to 5.72 deaths per 1,000 people, while the birth rate fell to 5.67 births per 1,000 people, official statistics released by the Beijing government showed.

Beijing's population decline was in line with national trends, with China's population falling last year for the first time in six decades,



weighed down by rising living costs especially in big, sprawling cities like Beijing, weak economic growth, and changing attitudes towards raising a family.

In early December, a nationwide

## Macron firm on pension bill

Paris: French President Emmanuel Macron said Wednesday that the pension bill he pushed through without a vote in parliament needs to be implemented by the "end of the year", sticking to his decision to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 despite mass protests. Macron, who made the comments in an interview broadcast on national television, said the bill will "continue its democratic path". The Constitutional Council needs to review the bill in the coming weeks, and it can only be turned into law after the body gives its approval. It was the first time that Macron spoke publicly since his government forced the pension bill through parliament last week, prompting scattered protests in Paris and across the country, some degenerating into violence. His government survived two no-confidence votes at the lower chamber of parliament Monday. The 45-year-old president repeatedly said that he was convinced that France's retirement system had needed to be modified to keep it financed. "That reform is not a luxury, it is not fun, it's a necessity for the country," he said. Macron also condemned the violence at some protests. He notably referred to rioters storming the US Capitol in 2021 and Brazil's top government buildings earlier this year, as well as the yellow vest movement against social injustice in France in 2018 which led to violent clashes and vandalism in the Paris streets.

## 'Marriage of convenience': US' jibe at Putin-Xi meeting

In President Vladimir Putin and Russia, the Chinese President Xi Jinping sees a counterweight to the American and NATO influence in the world, the White House said

AGENCIES

Washington, March 22: In President Vladimir Putin and Russia, the Chinese President Xi Jinping sees a counterweight to the American and NATO influence in the world, the White House said Tuesday. The statement by John Kirby, National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the White House, came as Putin hosted the Chinese leader.

"I think you've seen over the years that these two countries are growing close together. I wouldn't go so far to call it an alliance... (it's) a marriage of convenience, because that's what I think it is. In President Putin and Russia, President Xi sees a counterweight to American influence and NATO influence, certainly on the continent and elsewhere around the world," Kirby told reporters at a daily news conference here.

"In President Xi, President Putin sees a potential backer here. This is a man who doesn't have a whole lot of friends on the international stage. They can count them on one hand mostly. He really needs and wants President Xi's support for what he's trying to do, because he's blowing through inventory," he said.

Referring to the joint statement after the Putin-Xi meeting, Kirby noted that on Ukraine the two sides



just said, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter must be observed and international law must be respected.

"Well, we agree. Following the UN Charter would mean that Russia should withdraw from all the territory inside Ukraine, the territory of another member state of the UN, a member that it has invaded," he said.

The UN Charter enshrines the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, including Ukraine, he said. Now, they also said, the parties call for the cessation of all steps that contribute to escalation of tensions and the prolongation of hostilities, he added. "We agree."

"One way to stop the hostilities is to pull Russian troops out of Ukraine. But short of that, Putin could stop bombing hospitals, he could stop bombing schools, he could stop launching Iranian drones into civilian infrastructure. He could stop the forcible deportation of young kids, thousands of them, putting them in filtration camps inside other places inside Ukraine, but also inside Russia," Kirby said.

Responding to another question, Kirby said the US does not think that China has taken providing lethal aid to Russia off the table, but they haven't moved in that direction. "We've seen no indication that they're about to fixing to provide lethal weapons," he said.

# business

## of the day quote

No other social media company, or entertainment platform like TikTok, provides this level of access and transparency

SHOU ZI CHEW | CEO, TIKTOK

Decarbonising the transport sector is crucial to achieving the climate goals that India has set for herself. IFC, with its focus on sustainability and boosting prosperity, is an ideal partner for us

ANISH SHAH | MD AND CEO, M&M

With steel consumption expected to grow in high-single digits next year, we expect the industry's capacity utilisation rate to improve to around 80 per cent in FY2024, despite the commissioning of some new expansion projects

JAYANTA ROY | SENIOR VP & GROUP HEAD (CORPORATE SECTOR RATINGS), ICRA

## SHORT TAKES

### Hero MotoCorp hikes prices by 2%

New Delhi: Hero MotoCorp Wednesday said it will increase prices of its model range by around 2 per cent from next month in order to offset the impact of rise in production cost in order to conform to stricter emission norms. The company will make an upward revision in the ex-showroom prices of its select motorcycles and scooters, effective from April 1, 2023, the country's leading two-wheeler maker said in a statement. The price revision will be around 2 per cent and the exact quantum of increase will vary by specific models and markets, it added.

### IFC to buy 5.6% stake in JK Tyre

New Delhi: JK Tyre & Industries Ltd Wednesday said World Bank Group member IFC will invest \$30 million (about ₹240 crore) to pick a 5.6 per cent stake in the company to part-fund expansion of energy-efficient tyre manufacturing. The investment by IFC in JK Tyre & Industries will part-finance the expansion of manufacturing capacities and integrate advanced, resource-efficient technologies in the production of commercial and passenger car radial tyres, which have better safety and longevity, the company said. Subsequently, International Finance Corporation (IFC) will hold a 5.6 per cent stake in the tyre major through the issue of compulsorily convertible debentures (CCDs) on a preferential basis, it added.



There will be no shortage of fertilisers in the upcoming kharif season

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS MINISTER

## UK INFLATION JUMPS TO 10.4%

Britain's inflation rate rose for the first time in four months in February, surprising analysts and increasing pressure on the Bank of England to raise interest rates at its meeting Thursday. The consumer price index jumped to 10.4 per cent in the 12 months through February from 10.1 per cent the previous month, as high energy prices continued to squeeze household budgets, reports said



# Ambani 9th richest globally, Adani slips to 23rd

FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR, MUKESH AMBANI RETAINED THE WEALTHIEST ASIAN TITLE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 22: Despite an erosion of 20 per cent or \$21 billion in wealth, Reliance Industries' Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani continues to be at the top 10 wealthiest individuals in the world with a wealth of \$82 billion, states the 2023 M3M Hurun Global Rich List.

With a 35 per cent decrease or \$28 billion in wealth to \$53 billion, Gautam Adani & family, of Adani Group slipped to 23rd rank in the world's wealthiest from the last year's second rank. Adani also lost

the second richest Asian title in 2023.

A report in January by US short-seller Hindenburg led to Adani seeing his wealth down by more than 60 per cent from his peak. Last year, it was said that Adani topped the list by adding ₹1,600 crore per day over 2022.

The other Indian billionaires who figure in the world's top 50 richest are: Cyrus Poonawalla (global rank 46, wealth \$27 billion), and Shiv Nadar and family (rank 50, \$26 billion).

Interestingly, barring Poonawalla whose wealth went up by 4 per cent, the wealth of all other Indian



billionaires in the global top 100 wealthiest had seen an erosion.

In stark contrast to the 2022 M3M Hurun Global Rich List, India is at the top of the league table when it

comes to wealth depletion.

When countries such as China and the US had 178 and 123 billionaires, respectively, who lost more than \$1 billion, India has 41

billionaires who lost more than a billion-dollar YoY in 2023 M3M Hurun Global Rich List.

In terms of number of billionaires who have added \$1 billion or more over the last year, India occupies sixth rank in the list.

India added 16 billionaires and occupies the third spot, comfortably ahead of Italy which added 9 billionaires in this year's list.

The richest new entrant from India, Rekha Rakesh Jhunjhunwala & family, tops the list of top 16 new Indian entrants in 2023 M3M Hurun Global Rich List.

Over the last 5 years, Indian bil-

lionaires in 2023 M3M Hurun Global Rich List added circa \$360 billion to their cumulative wealth - equivalent to Hong Kong's GDP.

"M3M Hurun Global Rich List 2023 tells the story of the current global economy through the eyes of the entrepreneurs," said Anas Rahman Junaid, MD and Chief Researcher, Hurun India.

"At a critical point in history, when India's GDP is poised to double by the end of the decade, we are excited about celebrating and benchmarking wealth creation in India with the rest of the world," said Pankaj Bansal, Director, M3M India.

# Govt unveils 6G vision document

6G initiative shows India's confidence, nation becoming big telecom tech exporter, says PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday unveiled the 6G vision document of the country and said initiatives around 6G within six months of the 5G rollout show India's confidence.

He said from being a mere consumer of telecom technology, India is now moving fast to become a big exporter of that technology.

"Within six months of the 5G rollout, today we are talking about 6G. This shows the confidence of India. Today we have brought the vision document to the fore. This will become a big base for the rollout of 6G," Modi said.

The vision document released by Department of Telecom states that while 5G technology promises a speed of 40-1,100 Mbps with the potential to hit maximum speed of 10,000 Mbps, 6G will offer ultra-low latency with speeds up to 1 terabit per second - which is 1,000 times more than the top speed of 5G.

The prime minister at the event inaugurated the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Area Office and Innovation Centre, which has been set up in the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT) campus. It will be fully funded by India.

He said the ITU office in India will help create the right environment for 6G in the country.

"Before 4G, India was only a user of telecom technology, but now India is moving fast to become a big exporter of telecom



While 5G technology promises a speed of 40-1,100 Mbps with the potential to hit maximum speed of 10,000 Mbps, 6G will offer ultra-low latency with speeds up to 1 terabit per second --which is 1,000 times more than the top speed of 5G

I must also share with you that 127 patents have been obtained by Indians

ASHWINI VAISHNAV | UNION MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS

technology," he said. The prime minister said that technology that has been successfully developed indigenously is getting attention from across the world. He said India has two main powers - "Trust and Scale".

"Without trust and scale we cannot take technology to every nook and corner. I will say that trust is a prefix to present day technology. With 100 crore mobile phones, India is the most connected democracy of the world. Cheap smartphones and cheap data has transmogrified India," Modi said.

He said digital inclusion has taken place at a large scale in India with digital payments, direct benefit transfer, JanDhan, Aadhaar, rapid rollout of broadband services etc. "Telecom technology is not just a mode of power in India but it is a mission to empowerment," Modi said.

Talking about India's telecom success story, Modi said the number of internet users has increased from 25 crore in 2014 to 85 crore. The prime minister said the

government and private sector have jointly laid out 25 lakh kilometers of optical fibre in the country which includes connectivity to about 2 lakh gram panchayats. He said India will set up 100 new 5G labs in the coming days. Modi said India is one of the countries to have rolled out 5G mobile technology at the fastest pace. He said the services have been expanded to 125 cities within 120 days of the launch of 5G.

The Bharat 6G vision document unveiled by the prime minister is prepared by Technology Innovation Group on 6G (TIG-6G) that was constituted in November 2021 with members from various ministries/departments, research and development institutions, academia, standardization bodies, telecom service providers and industry to develop a road map and action plans for 6G in India.

ITU Secretary General Doreen Bogdan Martin said that Digital India has put the country on the forefront of technology innovation with the help of game changing initiatives like Aadhaar, UPI etc. She said India has now much to contribute in the growing space economy as well.

## AIRLINE FLYING RIGHTS

# Air India expansion plans spark tension

Dubai's Emirates, Turkish Airlines and Kuwaiti carrier Jazeera Airways all called for sharp increases in traffic rights to and from India to meet demand. Vietnam and Indonesia also want more flights

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 22: Tensions over plans to transform Air India into a global airline with hundreds of new jets rippled across the aviation sector Tuesday as foreign carriers clamoured for more access to the world's fastest-growing economy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government faces growing demands to ease a near-freeze on capacity that can be deployed on many routes to and from India, now that India's flag carrier has been sold to the cash-rich Tata conglomerate.

Current limits on the amount of flying allowed between India and many markets date back to heavy losses at Air India around the beginning of the last decade, analysts said. But a huge overhaul of the airline, including the world's largest ever plane order for 470 jets, rekindled a debate over market access at a New Delhi aviation conference Tuesday.

"We are not getting enough share from this market," Turkish Airlines Chief Executive Bilal Eksi told the CAPA India conference. Dubai has requested an extra 50,000 seats a week on India routes.

But in an exclusive interview,

India's civil aviation minister told Reuters the government is not currently looking at easing curbs. He urged Indian airlines to order more big jets to meet demand without forcing passengers to change planes.

"I think it's about time that our carriers looked at the international market with greater focus. That's what we are pushing the airlines to do and that process has already started," Jyotiraditya Scindia said.

Currently most Indians use foreign carriers for long trips, often changing at Gulf hubs, with relatively few long-range jets based in the country despite a population of 1.3 billion.

## 'BIGGER SHARE'

Now, the rebirth of Air India and launch of a new Saudi carrier with dozens of jet orders has shuffled the deck and left Dubai's massive international hub flanked by new rivals.

But Emirates President Tim Clark welcomed the launches and said there was enough room for everyone without traffic curbs.

"There's so much (demand) there that none of us will be able to deal with it, if we allow unconstrained growth," he said.

Analysts said India's government is in no hurry to relax the curbs as it seeks to recapture traffic lost to foreign carriers - part of a wider initiative to create an economic powerhouse.

"There is clear evidence that the government wants a mega-carrier of size, scale and quality to emerge over the years," said Kapil Kaul, head of the CAPA India consultancy, adding the refusal to allow more flights for now appeared to be tactical.



## THROUGH OFS

# Govt to sell up to 3.5% in HAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 22: The government will sell up to 3.5 per cent stake in Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) at a floor price of ₹2,450 a share, if fully subscribed, would fetch about ₹2,800 crore to the exchequer.

The two-day Offer For Sale (OFS) will open for institutional investors on Thursday and for retail buyers Friday.

The OFS comprises of base issue size of 1.75 per cent or 58.51 lakh shares, with an option to retain over-subscription of an equal quantum.



"In the event the oversubscription option is exercised, the equity shares forming part of the base offer size and the oversubscription option will represent 3.50 per cent (1,17,03,563) equity shares of the company," HAL said in a regulatory filing.

At the floor price of ₹2,450 apiece, the sale of 3.5 per cent stake would fetch about ₹2,800 crore to the exchequer.

The floor price is at a discount of around 6.7 per cent over the closing share price of HAL on the BSE. Shares of HAL closed 0.93 per cent down at ₹2,625.20 each on the BSE.

The government currently holds 75.15 per cent in HAL, which is a Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) under the Defence Ministry. The proceeds from HAL OFS would add up to the government's disinvestment kitty for the current fiscal. The government has so far mopped up ₹31,106.64 crore from disinvestment and share buy-back in CPSEs.

The government had last month pegged a lower revised estimates of disinvestment revenue estimates for the current fiscal at ₹50,000 crore, against the budget target of ₹65,000 crore.

# As AI booms, EU lawmakers wrangle over new rules

THE EU DISCUSSIONS HAVE RAISED CONCERNS FOR COMPANIES -- FROM SMALL STARTUPS TO BIG TECH -- ON HOW REGULATIONS MIGHT AFFECT THEIR BUSINESS AND WHETHER THEY WOULD BE AT A COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE AGAINST RIVALS FROM OTHER CONTINENTS

REUTERS

Stockholm, March 22: Rapid technological advances such as the ChatGPT generative artificial intelligence (AI) app are complicating efforts by European Union lawmakers to agree on landmark AI laws, sources with direct knowledge of the matter have told Reuters.

The European Commission proposed the draft rules nearly two years ago in a bid to protect citizens from the dangers of the emerging technology, which has experienced a boom in investment and consumer popularity in recent months.

The draft needs to be thrashed out between EU countries and EU lawmakers, called a trilogue, before the rules can become law. But a 5-hour meeting Feb 13 resulted in no resolution and lawmakers are at loggerheads over various facets of the Act, according to three sources familiar with the discussions.



While the industry expects an agreement by the end of the year, there are concerns that the complexity and the lack of progress could delay the legislation to next year, and European elections could see MEPs with an entirely different set of priorities take office.

"The pace at which new systems are being released makes regulation a real challenge," said Daniel Leufer, a senior policy analyst at rights group Access Now.

BRISK DEVELOPMENTS

Lawmakers are working through the more than 3,000 tabled amendments, covering everything from the creation of a new AI office to the scope of the Act's rules.

"Negotiations are quite complex because there are many different committees involved," said Brando Benifei, an Italian MEP

It's a fast-moving target, but there are measures that remain relevant despite the speed of development: transparency, quality control, and measures to assert their fundamental rights

DANIEL LEUFER | ANALYST, ACCESS NOW

and one of the two lawmakers leading negotiations on the bloc's much-anticipated AI Act. "The discussions can be quite long. You have to talk to some 20 MEPs every time." Legislators have sought to strike a balance between encouraging innovation while protecting citizens' fundamental rights.

This led to different AI tools being classified according to their perceived risk level: from minimal through to limited, high, and unacceptable. High-risk tools won't be banned, but will require com-

panies to be highly transparent in their operations.

But these debates have left little room for addressing aggressively expanding generative AI technologies like ChatGPT and Stable Diffusion that have swept across the globe, courting both user fascination and controversy.

By February, ChatGPT, made by Microsoft-backed OpenAI, set a record for the fastest growing user base of any consumer application app in history.

Almost all of the big tech players have stakes in the sector, including Microsoft, Alphabet and Meta.

Behind the scenes, Big Tech companies, who have invested billions of dollars in the new technology, have lobbied hard to keep their innovations outside the ambit of the high-risk clarification that would mean more compliance, more costs and more accountability around their products, sources said.

## BIZ BUZZ

# Jio launches True 5G in Rayagada, Byasanagar



Bhubaneswar: Reliance Jio today announced the launch of its True 5G services in 41 additional cities across 16 states and union territories, including Rayagada and Byasanagar towns in Odisha. Jio had previously launched True 5G services in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela, Berhampur, Sambalpur, Balasore, Baripada, Bhadrak, Jharsuguda, Puri, Bolangir, Nalco-Angul, Talcher, Sundargarh, Bhawanipatna, Jatni and Khurda towns in the state. Jio is tirelessly working towards India's digital transformation and is the first telecom operator to extend futuristic and pioneering True 5G services in most of these cities. Though Jio is rapidly rolling out its advanced True 5G services, being a customer-obsessed organization, it extends True 5G to a new city only when the city is substantially covered by its True 5G network, to ensure the best customer experience. Jio True 5G is already being experienced by millions of users across hundreds of cities, the response to which is yet again a global milestone. Customer insights and feedback is helping Jio build, what is, and will be, the most advanced 5G network globally.

# AUSSIES SEAL SERIES

# Sarabjot bags gold, Varun bronze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, March 22:** Sarabjot Singh shot down a gold in men's air pistol while Varun Tomar clinched a bronze in the same event as India opened their ISSF Pistol/Rifle World Cup campaign with two medals here Wednesday.

The Indian women air pistol shooters though couldn't make it to the medal bracket, with Manu Bhaker, Divya Subbaraju and Rhythm Sangwan failing to come good on the inaugural day of competitions here.

Sarabjot, the 2021 junior world champion in the team and mixed team categories, defeated Azerbaijan's Ruslan Lunev 16-0 in the gold-medal match in the first final of the World Cup.

The 21-year-old Sarabjot was in awesome form all through as he emerged leader at the end of the qualification round with 585 points. Sarabjot was hitting the bulls eye every time he took aim, with his scores of 98, 97, 99, 97, 97 in the six qualification series suggesting he would be hard to beat.

China's Liu Jinyao was a close second at 584. Six other shooters - Jason Solari (Switzerland, 583 points), Vladimir Svehinko (Uzbekistan, 582), Frederik Larsen (Denmark, 580), Zhang Jie (China, 580), Ruslan Lunev (Azerbaijan, 579) and Varun Tomar (India, 579) - completed the list of eight marksmen who made it to the ranking round.

In the ranking round, Sarabjot continued to excel, while 19-year-old Varun also began superbly after qualifying eighth and last for the ranking round.

At the end of the ranking round, Sarabjot (253.2 points) and Ruslan (251.9) were placed first and second respectively and both of them entered the gold-medal round high on confidence, while Varun, who scored 250.3, settled for bronze.

In the battle for the top podium place, the Azerbaijan shooter was no match for Sarabjot, with the Indian firing single-shot scores of 10.4, 10.4, 10.3, 10.2, 10.9 in comparison to Ruslan's 10.1,



Sarabjot Singh (L) and Varun Tomar pose with the Tricolour, bouquets and their medals, Wednesday

10.1, 9.6, 9.5, 8.9 and 10.4.

As per the ISSF's new format, the winner of a single shot in the final gets awarded two points and the first to race to 16 points is the winner of the competition.

With Sarabjot shooting better scores in all six shots, he raced to the title, giving India its first gold medal in the competition.

For Varun, who has given ample indication of his precocious talent, this was his second consecutive World Cup bronze after he had finished third last month as well in Cairo. He had beaten Sarabjot in the shoot-off for the third place then.

The third Indian in the fray, Sumit Raman could not make the eight-shooter ranking round, bow-

ing out in the qualification after finishing 13th with a score of 577.

In the women's air pistol event, 27-year-old Divya Subbaraju did much better than Olympian Manu Bhaker, entering the ranking round after coming third in qualification with a score of 579.

However, the Indian ended up ranked fifth with China's Li Xue winning gold after defeating Germany's Doreen Vennekamp in the title round. Another Chinese shooter, Wei Qian bagged the bronze medal.

The two other Indians - Rhythm (572) and Manu (568) - couldn't make the ranking round, getting eliminated in the qualification, after finishing 13th and 16th respectively.



IMPRESSIVE SHOW: Adam Zampa (L) smiles after dismissing an Indian batter during the third ODI, Wednesday

the back of Shubman Gill (37).

Rahul (32) joined Virat Kohli (54, 72b, 2x4, 1x6) and the duo added 69 runs in 15.3 overs but were never able to dominate as such on a track that got slower with passage of time.

However a ball fired by Zampa into the blockhole was dug-out by Rahul but Abbot timed his jump well to hold onto it at the boundary. Then it was the turn of Agar to quickly send back Kohli and the out-of-form Suryakumar Yadav (0) for his third first-ball duck in as many games.

From 146/2, India had slumped to 185/6 when Pandya and Jadeja joined forces with the Australian close-in fielders making it infinitely difficult.

Earlier, a fine opening spell by Pandya (3/44) and a probing effort by Kuldeep Yadav (3/56) put a tight leash around the Australian batters before its tail wagged considerably

to take the visitors to a fighting 269 all out in 49 overs after opting to bat first. The last five wickets added 131 to keep Australia in the game.

While Pandya shaved off the top order, Kuldeep's rhythm and guile on a helpful Chennai track was the biggest takeaway as the latter's delivery to remove Carey was the ball of the series. It was a classical left-arm wrist spinner's leg-break that beat the southpaw all ends up and Kuldeep's ecstasy was there to be seen.

India were in control after pegging Australia back at 138/5 but a 58-run stand between Carey and Marcus Stoinis for the sixth wicket and 42 for the eighth wicket between Sean Abbott (26) and Ashton Agar (17) took them close to 250 while Mitchell Starc and Adam Zampa added 22 precious runs for the final wicket.

What looked like a good toss to win for Australia after Mitchell Marsh (47, 47b, 8x4, 1x6) and Travis Head (33) put on 68 for the opening stand didn't seem so as Pandya bowled three different deliveries in his first three overs to completely seize the momentum in favour of the hosts.

David Warner (23) and Marnus Labuschagne (28) paid dearly for their indiscreet shot selection off Kuldeep's bowling before Carey (38) played his first innings of substance on the final day of a long near two-month tour.

#### BRIEF SCORES

**Australia 269** (Mitchell Marsh 47, Alex Carey 38, Travis Head 33; Hardik Pandya 3/44, Kuldeep Yadav 3/56) **beat India 248** (Virat Kohli 54, Hardik Pandya 40, Shubman Gill 37; Adam Zampa 4/45, Ashton Agar 2/41) **by 21 runs.**

## Four medals assured at boxing Worlds



NITU GHANGHAS



Nikhata Zareen in action during her quarterfinal bout against Chuthamat Raksat



SAWEETY BOORA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, March 22:** Riding on impressive performances, star Indian pugilists Nikhat Zareen, Nitu Ghanghas, Saweety Boora and Lovlina Borgohain registered thumping victories to confirm at least four medals for the hosts at the IBA Women's World Boxing Championships by advancing to the semifinals at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex here Wednesday.

Lovlina (75kg) assured another medal with a 5-0 win over Adosinda Rady Gramane of Mozambique.

Squaring off against the two-time Worlds bronze medallist Madoka Wada of Japan, Nitu (48kg) secured a scintillating win with the Referee Stops Contest (RSC) verdict in the second round of the bout. With an attacking approach

from the word go, the 22 year old hardly had to break a sweat against the veteran Japanese and was in complete control of the bout.

The Indian will now take on the reigning Asian champion and last year's World Championships silver medallist Alua Balkibekova of Kazakhstan in what will be a rematch of last year's World Championships quarterfinals.

Following Nitu's victory, Nikhat (50kg) successfully continued her title defence by recording a hard-fought 5-2 win on points after the bout was reviewed against the two-time World Championships bronze medallist Chuthamat Raksat of Thailand.

Both pugilists were at the top of their game and gave it their all to emerge victorious in this bout that went right down the wire. However it was the 26-year-old Indian who uti-

lized her superior technical ability to edge out her Thai opponent and come out on top with the win. Nikhat will face Ingrid Valencia of Colombia in the semifinals.

Contrary to Nikhat, the three-time Asian medallist Saweety (81kg) recorded a dominating 5-0 win against the 2018 World Championships bronze medallist Viktoriya Kebikava of Belarus.

In what was her first match of the tournament, the experienced pugilist from Haryana was extremely confident throughout the bout and landed strong, accurate punches to seal the win. She will be going up against Emma-Sue Greentree of Australia in her next bout.

Meanwhile, Sakshi Chaudhary (52kg) and the 2022 World Championships bronze medallist Manisha Moun (57kg) went down

fighting in the quarter finals despite their best efforts. While Sakshi lost 0-5 against Wu Lu of China, Manisha lost 1-4 against Amina Zidani of France and bowed out of the competition.

The 2020 Olympics bronze medallist Irma Testa (57kg) of Italy also secured her place in the semifinals after beating Jucielien Romeu of Brazil with a 5-0 scoreline. The Italian who won silver at last year's World Championships looked determined to better that this time round and proved it with her stellar performance.

The Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain (75kg), the 2022 Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Jaismine Lamboria (60kg) and Nupur Sheoran (+81kg) will all take to the ring for their respective quarterfinals bouts.

## SEN MAKES FIRST ROUND EXIT; SRIKANTH, MITHUN ADVANCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Basel, March 22:** Commonwealth Games champion Lakshya Sen's woeiful run continued as he made a first round exit at the Swiss Open badminton tournament, even as senior compatriot Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the next round of the BWF World Tour Super 300 event, here Wednesday.

Srikanth had to dig deep to get the better of China's Weng Hong Yang 21-16, 15-21, 21-18 to set up a second round clash against Hong Kong's Cheuk Yiu Lee, who dashed the hopes of World No.12 Sen.

The eighth seeded Sen looked a pale shadow of himself as he failed to match the level of his rival, losing 18-21, 11-21 to bow out of the men's singles competition.

But Mithun Manjunath registered a straight-game 21-8 21-17 win over Joran Kwekel of Netherlands to sail into the men's singles pre-quarterfinals. He will next face qualifier Chia Hao Lee of Chinese Taipei.

The women's doubles pair of Sikki Reddy and Arathi Sara Sunil also crashed out in the opening round, losing 12-21, 14-21 against Japan's Sayaka Hobara and Yui Suizu.

But the celebrated men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty meant business as the second seeded India pair defeated Malaysian combination of Xin Yuan Boon and Tien Ci Wong 21-15, 21-18 to book their place in the pre-quarterfinals.

## Thapa strike hands India win over Myanmar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Imphal, March 22:** Anirudh Thapa struck in the added time of the first half to hand India a 1-0 win over Myanmar in the opening match of the Tri-Nation International Football Tournament, here Wednesday.

The scoreline should have been bigger considering the fact that India dominated the share of possession, but missed chances combined with the luck factor kept the victory margin at the bare minimum for the hosts.

Indian wingers Bipin Singh and Lallianzuala Chhangte looked lively from the start, as they made repeated inroads into the opposition third.

Sunil Chhetri had an early look in, as he headed a cross by Thapa over the crossbar. The India captain



Anirudh Thapa (R) celebrates his goal with teammates

had another chance from a flag kick at the far post, but the effort produced the same result.

Chhetri had a golden chance

just a little over the half-hour mark, when Chhangte played him in, but his shot from close range went straight into the keeper's gloves.

Minutes later, India 'keeper Amrinder Singh kept the scores level at the other end, when he put his big gloves in the way to keep away Aung Thu's effort.

The Blue Tigers finally found the breakthrough they were looking for during the injury time of the first half as Thapa latched on to a stray rebound inside the box and smashed it past the keeper from close range.

India thought they had added another goal to their tally with little over quarter of an hour of regulation time left when Chhetri poked in a Thapa cross, but he ruled offside.

The India captain had a crack at the rival goal just minutes later, but it was saved by the opposition keeper. As the clock wore down, Ritwik Das was given his debut.

### NEW IPL RULE

## Captains allowed to name playing eleven after toss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 22:** The captains of IPL teams can name their playing eleven after the toss instead of handing over team sheets before the spin of coin, stated the new playing conditions issued by the BCCI.

According to playing conditions clause 1.2.1: "Each captain shall nominate 11 players plus a maximum of 5 substitute fielders in writing to the IPL Match Referee after the toss."

"Other than set out in Clause 1.2.9 no player (member of the playing eleven) may be changed after



the nomination and prior to the start of play without the consent of the opposing captain."

This effectively means that after the toss, if a skipper feels that he needs to change his eleven as per demands of the situation, he is free to do that till the match starts.

The other significant change in playing conditions is penalising unfair movement by the wicket-keeper in case there is shift in position before the batter meets the ball.

In the event of unfair movement by the wicket-keeper, either umpire shall call and signal dead ball and inform the other umpire the reason for doing so. The bowler's end umpire shall then: "award the one-run penalty for Wide or No ball, if applicable or award 5 Penalty runs to the batting side. Inform the captain of the fielding side of the reason for this action. Inform the batters and, as soon as practicable, the captain of the batting side of what has occurred."

The "Impact Substitution" where a new player can be introduced during the match from the five designated substitutions had already been announced by the tournament committee.