



DREAM ROLE

Actor Raashii Khanna does not shy away from wishing for an intense romantic film with Karthik

LEISURE P2



NATO CRITICISES PUTIN

NATO criticises Vladimir Putin a day after the Russian President said he would station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus

INTERNATIONAL P10



DEADLY DUO

Shuttlers Satwik Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty win men's doubles title at Swiss Open

SPORTS P12



CHAMP'S STRIKE: India's Nikhat Zareen (red) en route to her title win lands a punch on Vietnam's Nguyen Thi Tam in the 50kg final of the Women's Boxing World Championships, in New Delhi, Sunday

Ram, Pandavas also dynasts: Priyanka

'We have remained silent but not anymore,' the Congress general secretary said alleging that the Prime Minister and other BJP leaders have repeatedly insulted her family members but no cases were filed against them

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 26: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Sunday hit out at the BJP over the allegation of dynastic politics. "How much will you insult one person?" Priyanka said and asked if Lord Ram, who was sent into exile, was a 'parivaarwadi'. "They accuse us of dynasticism. Who was Lord Ram? He was exiled and he fulfilled his responsibilities towards his family and motherland. Was Lord Ram 'parivaarwadi'? Were the Pandavas 'parivaarwadi' because they fought to uphold the values of their family. Should we be ashamed that our family members sacrificed their lives for this country?" the Congress leader said.

She said the time had come to raise a voice against an 'arrogant government' as the Congress held nationwide protests against the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from Lok Sabha.

Countering the BJP's charge



that Rahul insulted OBCs with his remark for which he has been convicted in a criminal defamation case, Priyanka asked how a leader whose family has "given its blood to nurture democracy" and who has walked thousands of kilometres from Kanyakumari to Kashmir with a message of unity could insult the country or a certain community.

"We have remained silent but not anymore," she said alleging that the Prime Minister and other BJP leaders have repeatedly insulted her family members but no cases were filed against them.

Staunchly defending the former Congress president, Priyanka said no cases were registered when her brother was called Mir Jafer.

Asking if a martyred Prime Minister's son can insult the country, Priyanka said, "This is an insult to that Prime Minister who gave his life."

Contd...P4

Mystery shrouds youth's death

BHUBANESWAR: A youth was found hanging under mysterious circumstances in a hotel room at Jagamara in Khandagiri area here Sunday. The deceased Durga Prasad Mishra, 26, was a resident of Jalaharpur village under Niali police limits in Cuttack district. Mishra, a contractor, was staying in rental accommodation in Old Town area of the city. Saturday, he along with three of his friends including his girlfriend booked two rooms at a hotel in Jagamara area for the birthday celebrations of his girlfriend's female friend.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He is asking why he was not invited. How dare you inaugurate the toy train?

Ganjam will become India's No. 1 dist: CM

Naveen launches projects worth ₹2,000cr in the south Odisha district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Chhatrapur, March 26: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday said that Ganjam is a leading district in the state and sought the cooperation of all to make it the number one district in the country.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by 5T Secretary VK Pandian during his visit to his home district. Patnaik launched developmental projects worth around ₹2,000 crore in Chhatrapur, Hinjli and Kabisuryanagar in the district.

Patnaik said that the Bju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) and school transformation programme under 5T initiative are the two milestones of success of the state government. Over 50,000 people in Ganjam district have been able to avail free medicare facilities so far under BSKY for which the state government has spent over ₹190 crore.

Similarly, in the school transformation programme under the 5T initiative 471 schools out of total 630 schools in Ganjam district have been transformed while all the schools will be transformed by the end of December, the Chief Minister assured the people while addressing a gathering.

During his visit, the Chief Minister distributed Gram Kantha land rights to around 20,000 people — 3500 in Chhatrapur, 4500 in



Hinjli and over 11,000 in Kabisuryanagar.

Patnaik announced that his government would provide ₹619 crore loan with zero per cent interest to 2.24 lakh women of 22,200 SHGs. In the next five years, interest-free loans to the tune of ₹50,000 crore will be provided to different women SHGs for their prosperity, he said. At the same time, farmers are being provided with interest-free loans up to ₹1 lakh to boost agriculture and allied sectors, the CM added.

The Chief Minister paid his tribute to the presiding deity of Ganjam Goddess Tara Tarini and eminent litterateurs like Kabisamrat Upendra Bhanja and Kabisurya Baladev Rath. Ministers Usha Devi, Srikant Sahu, MPs Chandra Sekhar Sahu, Pramila Bisoyi as well as all MLAs and Zilla Parishad presidents were present with the CM.

10 CYCLONES IN 12 YEARS

Sea erosion hits state's coast

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, March 26: Climate change has been badly affecting Odisha for the last few years, with its coasts battered by frequent tropical cyclones and all six coastal districts witnessing sea erosion. The state has faced at least 16 natural disasters, including 10 cyclones in the past 12 years.

According to official data, out of about 480 km of the state's coast line, 267 km in six coastal districts — Balasore, Bhadrak, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Puri — have witnessed sea erosion or accretion.

The Odisha Space Applications Centre (ORSAC) has conducted a DGPS survey based on 2006-2018 satellite image on coastal areas spread-



ing over 3,555 sq.km. The survey found that 2,489 hectare of land in the six coastal districts faced erosion while there was accretion in 1,582 hectare of land in the shoreline.

In total, 4,069 hectares of land in the Odisha shoreline faced either accretion or erosion during the period. Highest 1,058 hectare land in

due to rise in sea level. Similarly, two villages of Ganjam have been affected due to rise in sea level. Some inhabitants of erosion-hit Podampetta and Ramayapatna have already been displaced.

The state government has prepared a shoreline management plan for the Integrated Coastal Zone Management project.

As per the plan, Satabhaya of Kendrapara, Talasahi, Udayapur, the northern side of Budhabalanga in Balasore, Paradip port area of Jagatsinghpur, the bank of Jamuna, the beach areas of Puri, and the northern part of Gopalpur port, the north of Bahuda river in Ganjam have either witnessed coastal erosion or there is a possibility.

Contd...P4

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STYLES, EMILY BREW DATING GOSSIP AFTER SEEN KISSING

Harry Styles and Emily Ratajkowski have sparked dating rumours after the two were seen kissing in Tokyo. In the photos and video obtained by *The Daily Mail*, the musician, 29, and the model and actress, 31, can be seen sharing several kisses with each other, reports *People* magazine.

PARIS DOESN'T WANT HER SON TO PURSUE SHOWBIZ

Socialite Paris Hilton doesn't want her son to be 'in the spotlight'. The 42-year-old star, who's a mother to a two-month-old baby boy named Phoenix, says that she'd prefer her son pursue a different kind of career, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
So, busy bee, you finally realise you've been ignoring your near and dear. And now, it's going to cost you a lot of effort to make it up to them. Dinner at the finest restaurant, a trip to the theatre, shopping at a posh boutique... be ready to splurge, says Ganesh!

TAURUS
Your vision today will have a hue of green as you will draw to money like a fly to sweets. Taste the power of money with fortune as the monkey on your back. You may buy a pendant or a necklace today and your haggling skills will save you from being swindled, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will spend the day safeguarding sentiments of others and it is in your own interest. For most part of the day, probably the entire day, you will be away from your family, mostly on a trip for business or leisure purposes. Today, having a successful career will be only thing on your mind.

CANCER
You are a master of deception, and your sugar-coated comments play a pivotal role in your methods. Today, you will be able to smell trouble from a distance, and will know when to take a U-turn. Your methods may not make you very popular with the so-called moral brigade working with you, but you may think that this is the easiest way to the top.

LEO
Ever been surprised at your own abilities? Today you shall be, says Ganesh. With the perfect blend of amicable gestures and lack of inimical actions, you are poised to become the cynosure of all occasions. The day will bring to the fore your flexible nature, moderate views, and your mature mannerisms in a cocktail that is as heady as the best blend.

VIRGO
Children will ring in applause and praises—in the classroom and off it too! Processing logic and reasoning will improve too. Ganesh asks you to keep calm and enjoy the joy ride, irrespective of anything that happens during the day.

LIBRA
Some days are full of new ideas. Today is one such day as you radiate diligence and intelligence. Consider it an auspicious moment to begin new business schemes, especially if you happen to be self-employed. Today, you will be able to think at a level higher and clearer than the rest. But, as happens when you focus more on work, it comes at the cost of family time. Maintain a balance, advises Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Dig in deep and keep yourself in the hunt, says Ganesh. Karma matters, but don't give much thought to the outcome. In matters of joint ventures, adopt a wait-and-watch approach today.

SAGITTARIUS
Be ready to receive advice—unasked and unwarranted. Don't overlook it either, as these suggestions can be worthy of consideration. But let the last word rest in your hands and look deep inside for the right verdict.

CAPRICORN
The most intimidating of ventures can prove successful if fortune favours you; you will be fortunate today, says Ganesh. Those of you dealing in stocks and shares can expect a profitable day ahead, but don't forget to give credit to your spouse; it will be their luck working wonders for you.

AQUARIUS
Bursting with new ideas, you want to make the world a better place! You will give your best in a team and will come up with great schemes and solutions. At gatherings and social dos, says Ganesh, you will remain your charming self, impressing people with an amazing social grace.

PISCES
Home is where the hearth is, in which the troubles you need to deal with today are smouldering. Running away from your problems will simply have you out of breath; it would be wiser to take a stand and find solutions to petty conflicts without losing your perspective.

RAASHII DYING TO TEAM UP WITH KARTIK

Mumbai: Actress Raashii Khanna recently became a dreamgirl for millions with her portrayal of a counterfeit detective in the black comedy thriller series *Farzi*. The actress started her acting career with *Madras Café* (2013) and subsequently did numerous Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi films. Sharing her future endeavours and desirable costars, she has expressed her enthusiasm to work with actor Kartik Aaryan in a love story just like *Aashiqui*.

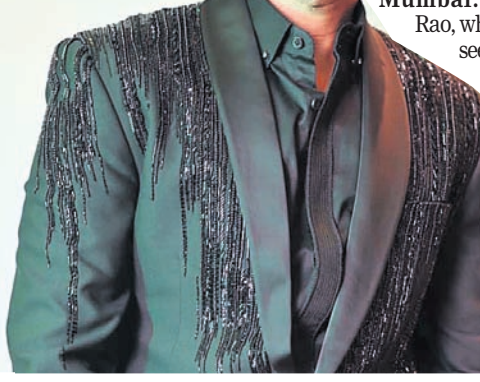
Recently during an interview, while talking about Kartik, Raashii said, "I think with him, I would like to do an intense love story, not a comedy fun genre kind of film, but like an intense film like *Aashiqui*."

She added, "I believe that the film will be very neatly executed because I love romantic films, and I had done a film that was immensely loved by the audience, so I am hopeful that they will inherently love me in a romantic story. So if I have to do with Kartik, probably a film like that would do."

On the work front, Khanna is shooting for the Hindi film *Yodha*, starring Sidharth Malhotra. **IAN S**



Rajkummar dismisses plastic surgery rumour



Mumbai: Rajkummar Rao, who is currently seen in Anubhav Sinha's *Bheed* in the role of a police officer, addressed rumours of him going through plastic surgery to alter his appearance during the promotion of the film.

He was recently asked about the same in an interview, to which the actor brushed aside the allegations with a laugh. The actor denied that he underwent any plastic surgery and instead said, "No, there was no plastic surgery." The actor was further asked about his reaction to such rumours, to which he replied, "Nothing, I just smile as people are talking." The actor was last seen in the Vasan Bala

neo-noir thriller *Monica O My Darling* with Huma Qureshi, Radhika Apte, Sikandar Kher, and Akansha Ranjan Kapoor. He will also be seen in the Dharma Productions film *Mr. and Mrs. Mahi* with Janhvi Kapoor and starring in Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK's upcoming period drama series *Guns & Gulaabs*. **AGENCIES**

Keerthy goes gaga over Nayanthara

Hyderabad: Actress Keerthy Suresh, who is gearing up for the release of her Telugu film *Dasara*, opened up on the rise of strong female-centric projects and characters in the last few years in south Indian cinema. In a promotional interview, she credited Nayanthara with starting the trend of female-centric projects and said that it encouraged other women to take up more such projects.

In an interview with a local media channel, the *Mahanati* actor was asked about her take on the shift in the importance of female characters in Indian cinema. "I think we

have to give it to Nayanthara ma'am because she was the one who started that shift. If I'm not wrong with a film called *Maya*, then eventually it started changing. She did that, and other people (females) have gotten the opportunity to do such films. It's because of her that a lot of women thought they could pull off something by themselves, which is great," she said.

Her upcoming film, *Dasara*, which is all set to release March 30, is set against the backdrop of the Singareni coal mines near Godavarikhani in Telangana. **IAN S**

'Right and wrong are same for all genders'

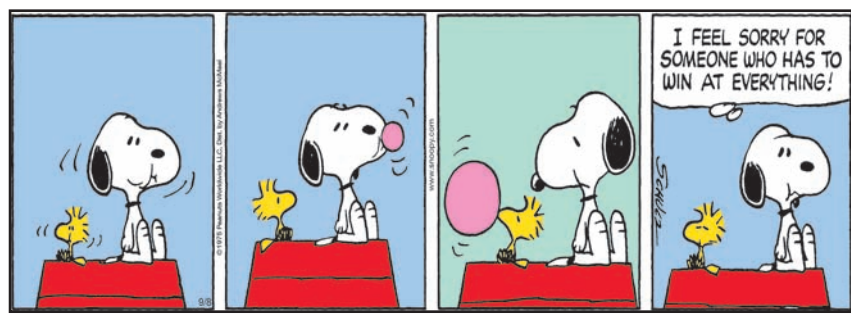
Mumbai: Shweta Tripathi Sharma, the *Masaan* star, had her fair share of experience in the Hindi film industry for more than thirteen years. Recently, in an interview with a media portal, the actress was asked if she has faced any gender discrimination in her personal or professional life.

The actress responded, "Professionally, sometimes it does make a difference where you see that just because of gender, your co-actors are treated differently and by differently, obviously in a better way." However, she added that because of the kind of projects she has done, it is a very small percentage. She said that she is aware that gender discrimination is a real issue, and not just in the film industry.

She further added, "You know in my head, I want to be gender-neutral. And by gender neutral, what I mean is that I don't want to think that because I'm a girl, I have to do it this way I am who I am. Yes, I'm a girl, I'm a woman. Male and female is one thing, but before that, I am a human, and I believe right and wrong is the same for all genders." **AGENCIES**



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

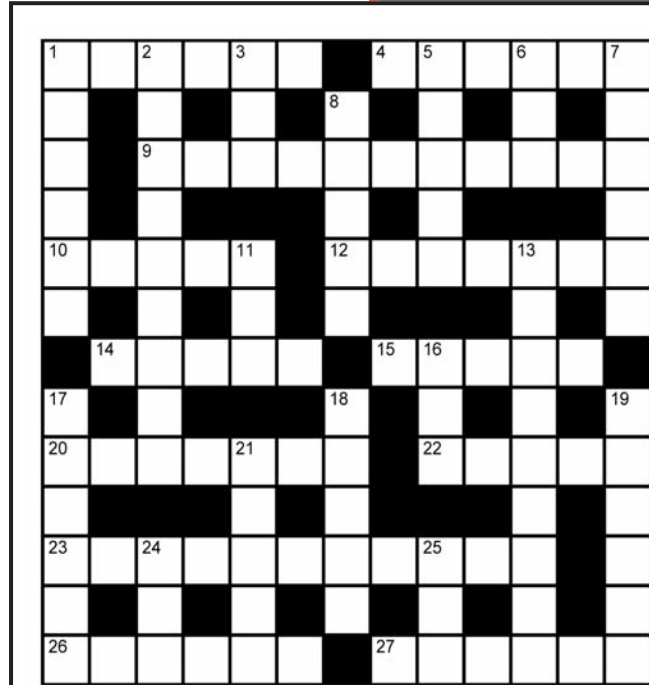


BREVITY



FUN post

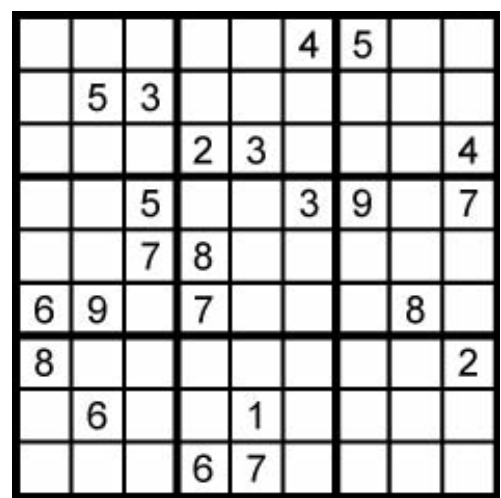
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Campfire leftovers
 - 4 Wedding party members
 - 9 Extinct
 - 10 Roam aimlessly
 - 12 Pirate ship
 - 14 Special shipping lane
 - 15 Seize power
 - 20 Australia bush country
 - 22 Panorama
 - 23 Honourable and upstanding
 - 26 Ambush
 - 27 Midpoint
 - Down**
 - 1 Convert to cypher
 - 2 Epicurean (3,6)
 - 3 Go for a jog
 - 5 Staircase feature
 - 6 Colouring material
 - 7 6th planet from the sun
 - 8 Precise
 - 11 Oolong, e.g.
 - 13 Consensus
 - 16 Distress signal
 - 17 Heartache
 - 18 Type of ray
 - 19 TV control
 - 21 Sports stadium
 - 24 Sauce type
 - 25 Honey maker

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

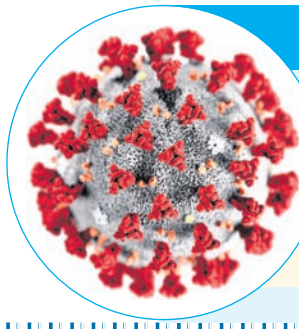


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



DANCE FEST

Artistes perform during a dance festival organised by MOKSHYA at Ekamra Haat in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,32,87,033	65,62,14,535	68,26,716
India	4,47,04,147	4,41,63,883	5,30,831
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Notorious criminal held after encounter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: The Commissionerate Police Sunday arrested a notorious criminal following an encounter near Bankuala, on the outskirts of the City here, late Saturday night, officials said Sunday.

Deputy commissioner of police (DCP) Prateek Singh said Jitu Palei, who has at least 35 criminal cases registered against him with several police stations across the state, has been taken into custody.

"Acting on a tipoff about Palei heading to Bhubaneswar from Niali in a car late Saturday night, Kharvela Nagar inspector in-charge (IC) Rajanikanta Mishra and his team intercepted him near Bankuala. Panicked, Palei opened fire at the police team. In self-defence, the men in khaki opened fire



at the history-sheeter. Palei suffered a gunshot in his left leg. Some police personnel, too, suffered injuries in the scuffle," the DCP said.

Singh said Palei was undergoing treatment at the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. Two persons — Bhagirathi Swain and Tofan Rout — have also been

arrested.

According to sources, Palei had fled the City after hurling bombs at Ramakanta Maharana, the owner of a jewellery shop in Unit-IV area under Kharvela Nagar police limits here, March 17 evening.

Maharana suffered injuries and was admitted to a nearby hospital. Police later came to know about the involvement of Palei.

Palei and Rout had also attacked Maharana near a school in Unit-IV area in 2022. The police later launched a probe by registering a case (153/22) on the basis of a complaint lodged by Maharana's wife. "Keeping in view both the cases, we formed a special team comprising officials of Kharvela Nagar to begin the investigation afresh," the DCP said.

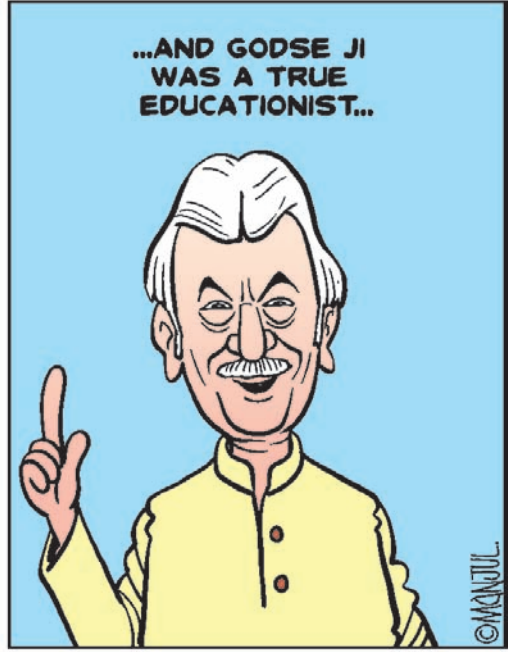
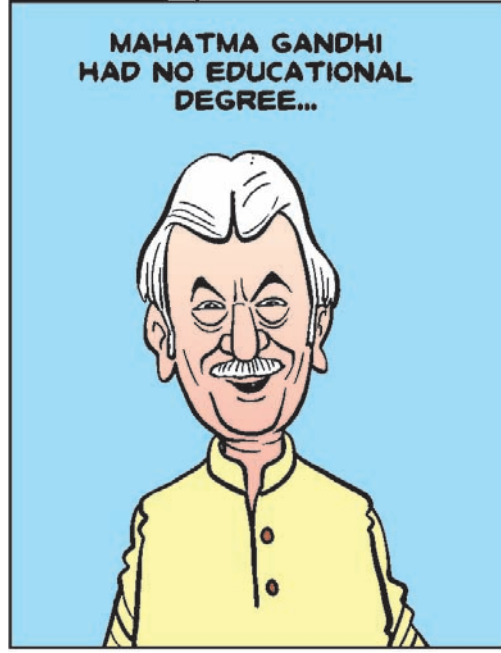
During investigation, cops found

that Maharana had an 'affair' with Bhagirathi's Bijaylaxmi. An insecure Bhagirathi used to blame Maharana for his marital discord. In a bid to take revenge, Bhagirathi hired Palei through his driver Tofan last year to threaten Maharana. They were given ₹75,000 last year to threaten and assault the victim. This year, too, Bhagirathi gave ₹1.75 lakh more to the duo to hurl bomb at Maharana," revealed the DCP.

Palei and Tofan had also engaged two other criminals from Kendrapara to hurl bomb at Maharana.

Police Sunday produced Tofan and Bhagirathi before a local court here that sent them to judicial custody. A case (157/23) has been registered at Badagada police station in connection with the encounter, the DCP pointed out.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Mystery shrouds youth's death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: A youth was found hanging under mysterious circumstances in a hotel room at Jagamara in Khandagiri area here Sunday.

The deceased Durga Prasad Mishra, 28, was a resident of Jaharpur village under Niali police limits in Cuttack district.

Mishra, who worked for a contractor, was staying on a rental accommodation in Old Town area of the city. Saturday, he along with three other friends including his girlfriend booked two rooms at a hotel in Jagamara area for the birthday celebrations of his girlfriend's female friend.

During the birthday party, he had an altercation with his friends over some petty issues. A furious Mishra also reportedly broke the bathroom mirror of the hotel room during the heated argument.

Mishra later went to his room where he allegedly committed sui-

cide by hanging himself from ceiling fan of his room with the stole of his girlfriend who had gone to bathroom.

She spotted Mishra hanging and immediately informed others in the adjacent room. Mishra was rushed to AIIMS where doctors declared him 'brought dead'.

Police reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem.

Mishra's sister lodged a police complaint alleging that her brother's friends killed him after calling him to a hotel on the pretext of birthday celebrations. Police have launched an investigation into the matter after registering an unnatural death case.

"We are waiting for the post-mortem report to know the cause of death. We have been checking the CCTV footage, the statements of his friends and hotel staff. We also came to know that Mishra had earlier tried to commit suicide," said a police official.

Excise dept bags e-Governance award



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 26: State's Excise department has bagged the 20th Computer Society of India-Special Interest Group (CSI-SIG) e-Governance Award for computerisation of e-Abkari, at an event organised in New Delhi, an official said Sunday.

Excise Commissioner AK Singh and NIC (Bhubaneswar) Senior Technical Director Nihar Ranjan

Biswal received the award on behalf of the Excise department at the special ceremony in New Delhi Saturday.

Excise department has switched over to the digital workplace 'e-Abkari' with the technical support of NIC since 2019-20.

It has developed and implemented more than 40 online modules like e-Lottery, instant issue and renewal of Excise licences, brand label registrations with 100

per cent online payment, DPR, CCIS, SIR and mobile application development for tracking of raid spots and Excise shops

bringing transparent, hassle-free, real-time, seamless and timely service delivery and eliminating physical touch points, reducing discretion and providing faceless service at door steps.

This has led to proper monitoring and strengthening of enforcement activities, curbing of illicit and spurious liquor, timely service delivery at different levels, proper supply chain management with regulation of production and manufacture and above all, change of public perception and transformation in the department.

This year, the Excise department has bagged two more prestigious awards at national level - Digital India Gold Award for digital initiatives for ease of doing business through e-Abkari and the SKOCH Group Silver Award for the ICT Intervention in the department.

Human knowledge more vital than AI: Nalco CMD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: A national seminar on 'The Future of Accounting in Increasingly Complex Business Environment' was inaugurated in the Commerce department of Utkal University in collaboration with Indian Accounting Association Sunday.

The seminar chaired by university Vice-Chancellor Sabita Acharya was also attended by chartered accountant Shridhar Patra, CMD, NALCO, who shared his valuable speech on the topic. "Accounting Profession has been a value-added profession for the last 1,000 years and again it will continue to be so for another 1,000 years. However, the challenge in this digital era is technological revolution and how to protect the businesses from the technological/cybercrime/errors," Patra said.

"Do not allow AI to be more intelligent than you, because it is manmade

and operated. Knowledge is most important not AI; you must have an appetite of learning," he added. He also focused on virtual decision making by learning this age which is led for growth in businesses.

This apart, Ranjan Kumar Bal, Vice Chancellor, ASMB University and President of IAA, Bhubaneswar Branch has shared his four decades' rich expertise on the accounting field.

"We have to navigate the complexities of the future of accounting as the change is the constant in recent time. While Prof. Ashish Kumar Sana, a faculty from the department of Commerce, University of Calcutta throw his views on this topic.

On the other hand, a research cell on commerce was inaugurated by the Nalco CMD. A total of 86 research papers are presented by researchers from academics, industries and professional bodies like CA, CMA, CS in two technical sessions.



GEARING UP: Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar, Sunday, decorated with colourful lights ahead of Ram Navami

BIKASH NAYAK

NGT: Evict encroachers from Nayapalli Haza lake

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) to expedite the process of evicting encroachers from Nayapalli Haza lake within two months to ensure smooth flow of sewage and stormwater through natural Drainage Channel No.10.

The NGT pronounced the order while adjudicating a petition filed by Srikanta Kumar Pakal.

The petitioner alleged that several illegal encroachers have been occupying the natural lake - Nayapalli Haza (spread over 6.359 acre), and Drain No.10, thereby obstructing the smooth flow of sewage and stormwater.

The NGT, after going through the documents presented by BMC, Odisha State Pollution Control Board, the petitioners and other

stakeholders, concluded that the authorities have managed to evict several encroachers at various places on Drain No. 10. However, many who are beneficiaries under Rajiv Awas Yojna are still occupying government land along the drain.

Some of them also moved the court seeking revrieve from eviction.

The tribunal also ordered the removal of a Shani Temple constructed on 0.030 acre land belonging to Nayapalli Haza within two months.

The SPCB has been asked to take stringent action against a hotel in the locality within a period of one month for violating various environmental norms. The tribunal directed the board to initiate the process for the determination of Environmental Compensation for violation of environment norms against the said hotel.



Senior citizens told about legal rights

Bhubaneswar: In a bid to bring people closer to judiciary, the Orissa High Court has adopted various citizen-centric initiatives during the last two years. Recently, senior citizens from an old age home of Isani Berhampur, Nischintakoilli run by the Association for Social Reconstructive Activities, Cuttack visited the HC along with Museum of Justice and Odisha State Legal Services Authority. The HC officials explained various aspects of judicial functioning to the senior citizens. Advocates Iswar Mohanty and Aurlina Pal interacted with them and they were elated being present in the CJ's Courts and Chambers in the Heritage Building and the new building of the court. The museum officials explained the senior citizens about the importance of artefacts displayed there as well as the evolution of justice system.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
MAX	TEMP	35.7°C	35.2°C
MIN	TEMP	24.5°C	25.0°C
Humidity		82%	85%
Rainfall		4.5mm	Nil
Forecast		Light rain very likely	

UK CENSUS: Hindus among healthiest in England, Wales

AGENCIES

London, March 26: Hindus living in the UK are among the healthiest and well qualified religious groups and Sikhs are most likely to own their homes, according to latest census data for England and Wales.

The UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been analysing census statistics to release information across various subcategories for the country's population based on the responses of the online census conducted in March 2021.

In its latest release entitled 'Religion by housing, health, employment and education' this week, the ONS finds that life outcomes for religious groups varied considerably.

"In 2021, those who identified as 'Hindu' had the highest percentage of their population reporting either 'very good' or

'good' health (87.8 per cent), compared with 82.0 per cent of the overall population," the ONS finds, adding that the Hindus also reported the "lowest prevalence of disability".

"People who identified as 'Hindu' had the highest percentage with a 'Level 4 or above' [certificate-level] qualification (54.8 per cent), compared with the overall population (33.8 per cent)," it noted.

"People who identified as 'Sikh' were more likely to live in households that owned their home... 77.7 per cent of those who identified as 'Sikh' lived in households that owned their home," the ONS said.

The religion question is voluntary in the census and in 2021, 94 per cent of the overall population in England and Wales of 56 million chose to answer the question.

The ONS said that many of the



British PM Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murthy at a temple on the occasion of Janmashtami (File photo)

life outcomes discussed in its analysis may be influenced by the differing age and sex profiles of religious groups.

"In 2021, people who identified as 'Muslim' were nearly four times more likely to live in overcrowded homes than the overall population of England and Wales," the statistics show.

"In 2021, people who identified as 'Muslim' had the lowest percentage of people aged 16 to 64 years in employment (51.4 per cent compared with 70.9 per cent of the overall population); this resulted from the high percentages of people who were students or looking after home or family in this group," it said.

The ONS pointed out that life outcomes for religious groups often overlap, as people in poor health or caring for others may be less able to work or gain education.

Income, where people live, and cultural background, also have an influence on outcomes.

The analysis reveals that those who identified as "Christian" had

an older age profile and reported poorer health than the overall population.

"People who identified as 'Christian' were most likely to live in households that owned their home outright (36 per cent), 8.9 percentage points higher than the overall population (27.1 per cent).

This group had a median (average) age of 51 years, compared with 40 years for the overall population, suggesting that they may have had time to pay off a mortgage or loan," the ONS said.

The 2021 census survey was filled out by more than 24 million households across England and Wales and data from the survey is being published in stages by the ONS since then.

According to an earlier release, people identifying as Christian fell below half the population for the first time, while those identifying as Hindu, Muslim or Sikh registered a small rise.

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Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers
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IMD yellow warning for 11 dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: Certain places of coastal and interior Odisha might experience heavy rainfall or thunderstorm with lightning and gusty surface wind March 27, warned the regional center of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) here Sunday.

There is a hailstorm warning for Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Ganjam and Gajapati districts. All these activities are expected under the influence of a north-south troughline passing over the state and a western disturbance.

For the next four days, the department has forecast that many places in Odisha are likely to witness rain. The impact of the westerly disturbance has been seen in the state from Sunday. Various districts of south and coastal Odisha will be affected due to the phenomenon.

The IMD has forecast rain accompanied by lightning in the southern and coastal districts including Ganjam, Gajapati, Khurda, Nayagarh and Puri. During this



■ For the next four days, many places in Odisha are likely to witness rain, the department has forecast

■ The impact of the westerly disturbance was seen Sunday afternoon. Various districts of south and coastal Odisha will be affected due to the phenomenon

time, there will be rain with a wind speed of 30 to 40 km per hour.

However, the amount of rainfall will increase from March 27. A yellow warning has been issued to 11 coastal districts March 27.

Light to moderate thunderstorms with lightning and light to moderate rain was witnessed in some parts of Rayagada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Boudh, Gajapati, Ganjam, Nayagarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj and Balasore during Sunday afternoon.

People have been advised to keep

a watch on the weather and accordingly move to safer places to protect themselves from lightning strikes.

Another western disturbance is expected March 30 but its possible impact over the state is not clear, the forecast said.

Meanwhile, the highest maximum temperature of 37.6°C was recorded at Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Sonepur, while the lowest minimum temperature of 17.5°C was recorded at Boudh in the plains of Odisha in the last 24 hours.



HELPING HAND: Members of Odisha Government Outsourcing Employees Federation take a co-agitator to hospital who fell unconscious while protesting for regularisation of job at PMG in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

CONTINUED FROM P1 Ram, Pandavas...

"You have called a martyr's son anti-national, Mir Jafar, insulted his mother in Parliament. The Prime Minister in Parliament asks why this family does not use the 'Nehru' surname. You insult the entire family and the tradition of Kashmiri Pandits. But there is no case against you. You don't get a case or a two-year term and no one disqualifies you. Why?" she asked.

Priyanka said till today they have been insulting "our family and we remained silent but not anymore."

"Time has come and we are not the ones who will remain silent anymore," she said.

With several other parties condemning the action against Rahul, top Congress leaders Ashok Gehlot and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the issue had brought the Opposition together and this unity would grow as days go by.

Kharge, who led the 'Sankalp Satyagrah' protest outside Delhi's Raj Ghat after the police refused permission to hold it at the Mahatma Gandhi memorial, asked why the BJP was feeling hurt if fugitives Nirav Modi and Lalit Modi were being criticised. "They talk of OBC now, is Lalit Modi OBC, is Nirav Modi OBC, is Mehul Choksi OBC, they run away with people's money. If they are fugitives why are you pained if they are criticised."

"You (BJP) punish the person who works to save the country and send those abroad who loot the country," Kharge said.

10 cyclones...

Senior environmentalist Ranjan Panda said sea accretion or erosion occurs due to climate change and global warming.

"There is no specific and instant solution to the problem but, long-time mitigation measures can check it," he added.

The coastal area of Odisha will witness more impact of climate change in coming days, he said.

The state government has been laying emphasis on proper management of cyclones and it has succeeded in protecting human lives. The same level of effort is needed for mitigation of sea erosion too, Panda suggested.

"Coastal erosion cannot be tackled unless you take care of rivers and mangrove plantations. Besides, new technological methods need to be adopted to check it," the environmentalist said.

For proper rehabilitation of displaced people, Panda urged the state government to come up with a specific policy in consultation with the Centre, global climate finance and other stakeholders.

In a recent statement in the Assembly, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister, Pradip Amat, said the state government has constructed a geo-textile wall along 505 metre of the shoreline near Pentha beach of Kendrapara.

The state has prepared a climate change action plan which is being implemented across 11 departments, he added.

Twin city bar associations elect fresh office bearers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: The lawyers across the state elected new office bearers of 133 bar associations as per the one-bar-one-vote rule Saturday. As many as 2,787 advocates in the Capital city also cast their votes as per the schedule from 8 am onwards till 3pm in the afternoon.

The counting of votes for the election of new office bearers of Bhubaneswar Bar Association ended late Saturday evening. Advocate Dhaneswar Mohanty was elected the new president of the Bhubaneswar Bar Association.

Meanwhile, Anjan Kumar Samantray, Tapas Ranjan Das, Pulin Martha and Sukant Behera were

ADVOCATE DHANESWAR MOHANTY WAS ELECTED THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE BHUBANESWAR BAR ASSOCIATION

SENIOR LAWYER DHARANIDHAR NAYAK WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE ORISSA HIGH COURT BAR ASSOCIATION

elected as the new vice president, secretary, assistant secretary and joint secretary respectively.

Similarly, senior lawyer Dharanidhar Nayak was elected president of the Orissa High Court Bar Association, while advocate Chittaranjan Swain became the new secretary.

Other elected members of the Orissa High Bar Association include Bidyadhar Pradhan (vice president), Debashis Nanda (joint secretary), Debashis Swain (assistant secretary) and Janaki Mahapatra (library secretary) of the bar association.

Altogether, 3,055 of 4,297 registered members of the bar association cast their votes and counting began an hour after the end to polling.

A total of 4,297 lawyers were expected to vote for various posts at 37 booths in Cuttack. The entire polling process was video recorded and there was a provision for live streaming of the polling exercise. Members aged above 90 years have been allowed to vote from home.



FOR A BETTER FUTURE: Dignitaries including IIT Bhubaneswar director Shreepad Karmalkar and Central University of Odisha vice-chancellor Chakradhar Tripathi attending a national seminar titled 'Swabalambi Bharat: Building a Self-reliant Society' at the Regional Institute of Education in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

'Assam Type' houses should be preserved for earthquake resilience: Experts

Amid the concrete structures mushrooming all over this northeastern state, some areas are still dotted with historically and aesthetically beautiful buildings known as 'Assam Type' houses, which heritage lovers and experts assert require preservation and restoration.

Sloping roofs, louvres, gables, awnings, skylights, bay windows and a porch are some of the features that make them distinctive, along with their sustainability and resilience to withstand earthquakes, experts point out.

"Architecturally, a typical Assam Type house has features which are aesthetically soothing and at the same time sturdy enough to withstand the vagaries of nature", former chief secretary of the state, Jishnu Barua, said.

This type of architecture is a style developed during the late 19th century and is primarily found in Assam and other Northeastern states along with Sylhet in Bangladesh, Barua, who

has a keen interest in the heritage and preservation of these structures, said.

"These fascinating houses are disappearing fast with the onslaught of concrete structures changing the architectural landscape of the state, and there is an urgent need to document, preserve and, where necessary, restore the buildings", heritage activist Nandinee Kalita told PTI.

Upkeep of the structures is necessary for which considerable effort, time, skill and finance are required, Kalita said.

"We have attempted to document the history of these houses, its architectural significance, cultural tradition and sociological evolution in a coffee-table book titled 'Aakariti' which covers a wide spectrum of over 100 houses across the state, ranging from simple family homes to opulent bungalows, government residences and public institutions," she said.

Some of these houses are al-



- Sloping roofs, louvres, gables, awnings, skylights, bay windows and a porch are some of the features that make them distinctive, along with their sustainability and resilience to withstand earthquakes
- Teak wood for the pillars, doors, windows and ventilators were brought from Burma and Naga Hills and when the devastating earthquake of 1950 struck the state, the houses were able to stand

most 150 to 200 years old and have gone through extraordinary journeys which "we attempted to highlight through literary and photographic accounts", she said.

It was the 1897 earthquake of 8.1 magnitude that struck the Shillong plateau, causing considerable damage to the houses, that led the British government to set up

Pharmacists to go on strike from April 17



Raising various issues of negligence by the state government, the association presented its 12 point charter of demands that includes creation of a directorate of pharmacy and provision for 30,000 new pharmacist posts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 26: Odisha Registered Pharmacist Association (ORPhA) informed at a press meet here Sunday that it will go on strike from April 17 if the government fails to fulfill its demands.

The association alleged that the state government has been ignoring its demands for a long time and if by April 16 the demands are not fulfilled, the government will be the one responsible for all

healthcare problems caused in the state, said association president Dipti Ranjan Swain.

Raising various issues of negligence of the state government towards the pharmacists of the state and the pharma industries, the association presented its 12 point charter of demands that includes creation of a directorate of pharmacy and provisions for 30,000 new pharmacist posts and re-naming of pharmacists as pharmacy officers.

His demands also include transformation of the post of the pharmacist to class-1 gazetted posts, making the formation of pharmacy industry rules easier, give first chance to all the pharmacists, who had worked hard in unselfish ways during Covid times in any new post opening, and starting of pharmacy courses in government medical colleges.

Swain elaborated that in the health services sector, the role of the pharmacist is important, as they are present from the phase of creation of medicines to supply and distribution of it.

an expert committee for the construction of buildings suited to the region, engineer Ochintya Sarma, involved in documenting the buildings, said.

British engineers and experts studied the environment and locally available building materials and suggested a construction system more suited to withstand the vagaries of nature, he said.

The architectural intervention suggested steep roofs, walls constructed of 'ikora' (elephant grass), vertical and lateral timber frames, high ceilings, and finishing of mud and whitewash.

"Strength and insulation from the impact of seasonal changes were the key consideration with local sources mostly used as building materials but zamindars, aristocrats, tea planters, professionals like doctors and lawyers sourced materials from as far as England, Poland, Belgium and Ireland", he pointed out.

Teak wood for the pillars, doors, windows and ventilators were

brought from Burma and Naga Hills and when the devastating earthquake of 1950 struck the state, the houses were able to stand, validating the resilience of its distinctive construction style, Sarma added.

Times have, however, changed and with pressure on land, many of these structures have given way to concrete structures though there are some who still hold on to their heritage with pride.

For 86-year-old Hironmoyee Goswami, her Assam-type abode is an oasis of peace and "though there has been pressure from many family members that we build a three-storied concrete house as these type of houses are difficult to maintain. I refuse to give in and will spend the last few years of my life in my sprawling home".

In recent years, due to renewed awareness and public goodwill, many such dilapidated buildings have been restored by experts, a government official pointed out.

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Kendu leaf pluckers' kids stare at uncertain future

MOST OF THE PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH KENDU LEAF PLUCKING EARN MEAGRE AMOUNTS AND HENCE CANNOT SEND THEIR KIDS TO SCHOOL



The pluckers are paid ₹30 for each bundle of leaves and a family at an average earns ₹200 to ₹250 daily. They lamented that the Odisha government is not doing much for them

deal to this correspondent. They said that they are forced to bring their children with them as there is no one to look after their kids in their village which is 40 kilometres away from the collection centre. The workers live in tents pitched for them near the godown. Kendu leaf collection is an arduous job, they said as they informed that they have to walk quite a distance to complete their daily quota of collection. Only after they finish their collection, they return to the godown in the evening. However, the work doesn't end there. After their arrival at the centre or godown as the workers call it, they stack the leaves into bundles as per instructions of forest officials. The quota for each kendu leaf plucker is fixed by the Forest department. They are paid ₹30 for each bundle of leaves and a family at an average earns ₹200 to ₹250 daily. The workers lamented that the Odisha government is not doing much for them. They said that if the rates are increased they can send their kids to school so that their children can have a better future. The workers said they are concerned about the education and health of their children but cannot do anything as they have to earn their means of livelihood. "With the money that we earn, it is difficult to send my children to any school," lamented a kendu leaf plucker. Sanjit Mohanty, advisor of State Kendu Leaf Welfare Board said that the government has launched various schemes for the benefit of kendu leaf pluckers, binders and seasonal workers. "There are over 18,000 kendu leaf binders and pluckers in Odisha. They can receive the benefits if their names are registered with the government, he added. Jujumura Kendu Leaf Range officer Kishore Chandra Swain said the labourers are being given work on contract basis. He said that they are also provided accommodation, food and healthcare facilities. He added that even creches have been set up for the kids. "These pluckers stay at a particular place for 2-3 months. So it is difficult for us to provide educational facilities to the children," Swain pointed out.



IMPARTING CLEANLINESS: Swachha Sathis engaged by Dhenkanal Municipality urging street vendors not to throw waste on roads and to use dustbins in Dhenkanal, Sunday

Unknown pest invasion sparks panic

Balasure, March 26: A swarm of unidentified pests, most of them looking like bugs have left people living in the Badakhuaadi Dalit hamlet in Jambeswarpur village under Sadar block of in Balasure district, panic-stricken. Locals said hordes of the unidentified pests have completely taken over the hamlet. The pointed out that these pests (black and red coloured), thousands in numbers, have been biting people. These insects have virtually invaded every house and taken over every nook and corner. Those who have been bitten said that they developed swelling and rashes. Also the part of the skin bitten turns red and painful. Stunned over the development, some villagers informed the Health



department about the development. On being informed, Anganwadi and ASHA workers reached the village and took stock of the situation. A team from the Veterinary department in Balasure also reached the village and reviewed the situation. However, they expressed their inability and helplessness over the matter. Social activists Shanta das and Sudhakar Sethi said they have the informed Krushi Vigyan Kendra be-

longing to Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in Bhubaneswar about the pest attack. A special team of OUAT reached the village and after a thorough investigation assured the people that there is nothing much to worry about. The unidentified species as 'pentimide bugs'. Senior resource person and team member Swagatika Sahoo said that the insects are born in dry weather and do not cause much damage. However, Swagatika urged the residents to remain cautious. She also asked the villagers to keep their houses and surroundings clean and not to dump waste around the village. She said the pests will slowly go away if cleanliness is maintained. Swagatika also stated that these bugs are not health hazards and also do not damage crops.

Sambalpur, March 26: An uncertain future awaits the children of kendu leaf workers in this district. Most of them spend their time in godowns during the day as their parents go out for plucking kendu leaves. Without proper education in schools, these kids are staring at a bleak future, sources said Sunday. The better part of their growing days are going to waste in godowns, the sources added. A case in point is the kendu leaf workers working in a godown at Jarang village under Jujumura department about 55 kilometres from this town. Workers come with their families and spend about three months in this place. As the adults get busy in plucking leaves for their survivals, the kids are left behind in and around the godown with nothing to do. The matter came to the fore after the kendu leaf workers residing at a godown near Babupali jungle under Jhankarpali panchayat in Jujumura block narrated their-



SENSITISING DENIZENS: Students of Vikash Nursing College in Bargarh participate in an awareness programme on tuberculosis, Sunday

Royal era pond gathers dust as locals averse to facelift

₹7 CRORE SPENT IN RENOVATING THE HADABANDHA POND AND DEVELOPING A PARK AROUND IT

Keonjhar, March 26: The Odisha government has renovated the Hadabandha pond and areas around it. The pond, a royal era water body, has been given a facelift as part of the beautification programme undertaken in Keonjhar Old Town. A total of ₹7 crore has been spent in giving the pond and its surrounding areas a makeover. The funds were sanctioned by the district mineral foundation (DMF). Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated this pond during his visit to this town, a month back. However, since then the pond as well as the park around it has remained closed for the public. Moreover, developing a park has not gone down well with the residents who have criticised the authorities. Locals also pointed out that the renovation programme started December 3, 2020 and ended December 2, 2021. However, they said that work is still pending



and blamed the district administration for not hauling up the company which had been entrusted with the job. Prabhanjan Patnaik, a former chairperson of Keonjhar Municipality alleged despite unfinished work, the park and pond was inaugurated only to get accolades. Others said that despite spending a huge amount, many parts of the pond are still have small rocks and boulders. As a result, the much-vaunted boating facility is yet to start. Others said that earlier, people used to bathe in the pond and perform religious as well as the post-death rituals. However, the Keonjhar Municipality has banned bathing and performing rituals after a park was developed near the pond. People have condemned the move as they do not have any other options to carry out their religious rituals. Local lawyer Santosh Das said it would have been better if the authorities had set up boating facilities in the pond instead of taking up unnecessary beautification work around it. He pointed out that the former royals had created this pond for the public. However, without making any alternative arrangement, the authorities have stopped people from using the pond. When contacted, Bishnu Prasad Acharya, chief executive of DMF and a member of the Zilla Parishad said, that the pond and the park will soon be reopened for the public. The place will be lit up properly, Acharya stated. Also people indulging in physical activities will be allowed free entry into the park in the morning. However, for evening visitors, there will be an entry fee, informed Acharya. Keonjhar District Collector Ashish Thakare said he will order an inquiry as to why the pond has not been opened for the public.

LOOT REPORTED FROM 2 HOUSES Masked robber scare in Keonjhar

Keonjhar, March 26: Four armed, masked miscreants entered Baladevjee Lane No. 6 and 7 Saturday night here and decamped after looting two houses. The Forest department has lodged an FIR regarding the incident at the town police station. Reportedly, while house owners Utpal Kumar Roy and Shubham Kahali were sleeping in their bedrooms, the miscreants locked them from outside and fled away after looting valuable objects. However, they have failed to rob the valuable belongings from their bedroom. Reports said, four masked men entered Shubham's house cross-

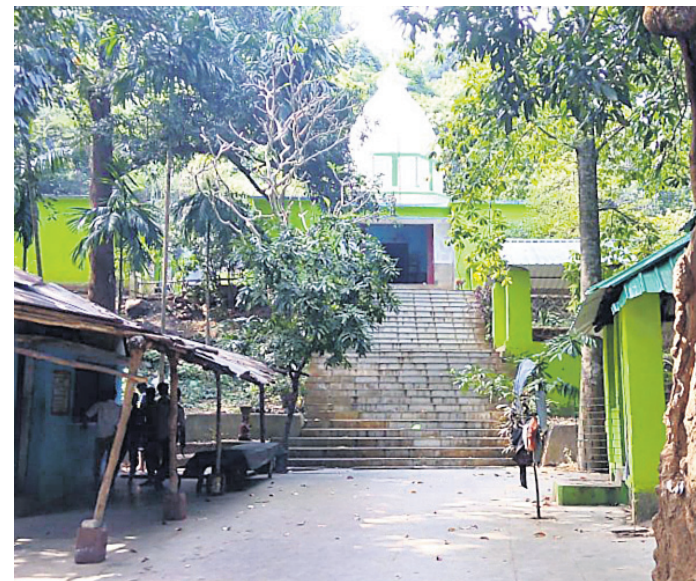


ing the boundary wall Saturday night. Then they broke through the window and took away ₹5,000 in cash, the police complaint suggested. After the loot, the miscreants again entered Roy's house. Reportedly, they cut open the iron

net, entered the premises and dug out the grill window to enter the house. They searched the whole house except the bedrooms and found nothing but ₹1,000 in cash and fled away. Considering the two complaints, town police have registered a case (no 26/23) and launched an instant probe into the matter. Adhering to some CCTV footage of the nearby area, town police are trying hard to nab the miscreants. After watching the miscreants with arms in the footage following the incident, a chaotic and fearful atmosphere is dominating the town, as per the reports. Also, the police have increased patrolling to nab the suspects, a police official said.

SAPTASAJYA ALL SET TO GET A MAKEOVER

Dhenkanal, March 26: Dhenkanal's famous tourist spot Saptasajya is all set to get a facelift soon as the road map for the project has already been prepared. The matter came to the fore after a team of representatives led by Sub-Collector Snigdharani Dhal visited the spot recently. According to reports, the main road from the entrance gate till the temple will be electrified with laying of cables to facilitate illumination of the whole tourist spot. The blueprint also proposes to clean the water of the natural stream along with rock packing on both sides to control soil erosion. Rest houses for tourists and devotees will be built inside the temple premises, said the report. Two selfie points will be set up at the picnic spot and on the temple premises to make the nature



trail packed with pleasant memories for the visitors. Apart from that, an attractive road will be built from the beat house to the temple.

A parking area will come up near Goddess Jenadei temple or the picnic spot. The 'pindi' and its nearby area will be kept clean and will be given utmost preference for development. A new 'pindi' or altar will also be constructed considering the situational requirement. Two bore wells will be drilled to tackle the drinking water needs. Signage will come up on both sides of the road to guide the tourists. The Tourism department has already sanctioned ₹4.80 crore for the development project. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has also announced another ₹50-crore grant for six tourist places in the district along with Saptasajya. ₹5 crore from the ₹50-crore grant will be utilised at Saptasajya, the report suggested. Notably, a meeting was organised under the chairmanship of the District Collector Saroj Kumar Sethi for the development of Saptasajya. Following the meet-

ing, a representative team under Sub-Collector Snigdharani Dhal visited the place. ZP chairman Archana Puhana along with ACF Subrat Kumar Patra, Deputy Collector (Judicial, Endowment) Harihar Panchuati, sarpanch Abhimanyu Behera and other government officials reviewed the place during their visit. Notably, Saptasajya is a unique tourist place that attracts tourists from the state and outside throughout the year with its scenic beauty. Apart from that, people also gather here at different times of the year to celebrate festivals like Ram Navami, Hanuman Jayanti, Kartik Purnima, Dussehra and other festivals. Despite the footfall, this tourist place is yet to get a proper facelift. The recent intervention of the district tourism department is getting appreciations from all quarters especially the locals.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/22-23/
E-Tender/170, Dt. 22.03.2023

(1) Tender No. etender-SOUTH-KUR-470-2022, Dtd.: 18.03.2023

DESCRIPTION : PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF 12.0 MTR WIDE FOOT OVER BRIDGE CONNECTING ALL PLATFORMS AT BRAHMAPUR RAILWAY STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION IN CONNECTION WITH AMRIT BHARAT SCHEME.
Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 800.38 Lakhs, EMD : ₹ 5,50,200/-

(2) Tender No. etender-SOUTH-KUR-471-2022, Dtd.: 18.03.2023

DESCRIPTION : PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF 12.0 MTR WIDE FOOT OVER BRIDGE CONNECTING ALL PLATFORMS WITH PASSENGER LIFTS AT BALUGAON RAILWAY STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION IN CONNECTION WITH AMRIT BHARAT SCHEME.
Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 771.12 Lakhs, EMD : ₹ 5,35,600/-

(3) Tender No. etender-HQ-KUR-468-2022, Dtd.: 18.03.2023

DESCRIPTION : PROVISION OF 12 M WIDE FOOT OVER BRIDGE WITH PASSENGER LIFTS AT SAKHIGOPAL STATION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 719.64 Lakhs, EMD : ₹ 5,09,800/-

Completion Period : 06 (Six) Months (for all SI. Nos.).
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 10.04.2023 (for all the Tenders).
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website : <https://www.ireps.gov.in>
Note : The prospective bidders are advised to visit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The bidders/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering.
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FORM G
INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR
SAV INDUSTRIES PRIVATE LIMITED
HAD BEEN OPERATING IN MANUFACTURING OF COLD ROLLED AND COIL SHEETS
AT ROURKELA, ODISHA
(Under Regulation 36A(1) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)

RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1. Name of the corporate debtor along with PAN/INILP No.	SAV INDUSTRIES PRIVATE LIMITED PAN: AAGCA07000 CIN: U28112OR1999PTCO05891 (Hereinafter referred to as 'CD')
2. Address of the registered office	Room No. 02, 1st Floor, Khalsa Niwas ITI Chowk, Near Tarini Temple Rourkela, 769004, Odisha
3. URL of website	Not Known
4. Details of place where majority of fixed assets are located	Not Known
5. Installed capacity of main products/services	Not Known
6. Quantity and value of main products/services sold in last financial year	Not Known
7. Number of employees/workmen	Not Known
8. Further details including last available financial statements (with schedules) of two years, lists of creditors, relevant dates for subsequent events of the process are available at:	Details can be obtained by sending email to : cirp.savindustries@gmail.com
9. Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the Code is available at:	Details can be obtained by sending email to : cirp.savindustries@gmail.com
10. Last date for receipt of expression of interest	11.04.2023
11. Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	16.04.2023
12. Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	21.04.2023
13. Process email id to submit EOI	cirp.savindustries@gmail.com

Arun Kumar Gupta
Regn. No.: IBB/PA-001/PP-P001/32016-2017/10037
AFA No. AA11/0037/02/2022/4/105495 valid till 20.2.2024
P-15 Benticent Street, 3rd Floor, Kolkata-700011
Mobile: 98301 24481
E-mail: guptaarunkumar2001@yahoo.com
Date : 27.03.2023
Place : Kolkata
RP of SAV Industries Private Limited

FOCUS TECHNOLOGY

ARTIFICIAL IDIOCY



The problem with the new chatbots is not just that they are often stupid and naive; it is that they are not 'stupid' or 'naive' enough to pick up on the nuances, ironies, and revealing contradictions that constitute human culture and communication. Worse, by relying on them, we risk succumbing to the same obtuseness

There is nothing new about "chatbots" that are capable of maintaining a conversation in natural language, understanding a user's basic intent, and offering responses based on preset rules and data. But the capacity of such chatbots has been dramatically augmented in recent months, leading to hand-wringing and panic in many circles.

Much has been said about chatbots auguring the end of the traditional student essay. But an issue that warrants closer attention is how chatbots should respond when human interlocutors use aggressive, sexist, or racist remarks to prompt the bot to present its own foul-mouthed fantasies in return. Should AIs be programmed to answer at the same level as the questions that are being posed?

If we decide that some kind of regulation is in order, we must then determine how far the censorship should go. Will political positions that some cohorts deem "offensive" be prohibited? What about expressions of solidarity with West Bank Palestinians, or the claim that Israel is an apartheid state (which former US President Jimmy Carter once put into the title of a book)? Will these be blocked as "anti-Semitic"?

pose collectivization only in their thoughts – yes, I mean this, we should fight even people's thoughts." One can safely presume that this passage was not prepared in advance. After getting caught up in the moment, Stalin immediately became aware of what he had just said. But instead of backpedaling, he decided to stick with his hyperbole.

As Jacques Lacan later put it, this was a case of truth emerging by surprise through the act of enunciation. Louis Althusser identified a similar phenomenon in the interplay between prise and surprise. Someone who suddenly grasps ("prise") an idea will be surprised by what she has accomplished. Again, can any chatbot do this?

The problem is not that chatbots are stupid; it is that they are not "stupid" enough. It is not that they are naive (missing irony and reflexivity); it is that they are not naive enough (missing when naivety is masking perspicacity). The real danger, then, is not that people will mistake a chatbot for a real person; it is that communicating with chatbots will make real persons talk like chatbots – missing all the nuances and ironies,

obsessively saying only precisely what one thinks one wants to say.

When I was younger, a friend went to a psychoanalyst for treatment following a traumatic experience. This friend's idea of what such analysts expect from their patients was a cliché, so he spent his first session delivering fake "free associations" about how he hated his father and wanted him dead. The analyst's reaction was ingenious: he adopted a naive "pre-Freudian" stance and reproached my friend for not respecting his father ("How can you talk like that about the person who made you what you are?"). This feigned naivety sent a clear message: I don't buy your fake "associations." Would a chatbot be able to pick up on this subtext?

Most likely, it would not, because it is like Rowan Williams' interpretation of Prince Myshkin in Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*. According to the standard reading, Myshkin, "the idiot," is a saintly, "positively good and beautiful man" who is driven into isolated madness by the harsh brutalities and passions of the real world. But in Williams' radical re-reading, Myshkin represents the eye of a storm: good and saintly though he may be, he is the one who triggers the havoc and death that he witnesses, owing to his role in the complex network of relationships around him.

It is not just that Myshkin is a naive simpleton. It is that his particular kind of obtuseness leaves him unaware of his disastrous effects on others. He is a flat person who literally talks like a chatbot. His "goodness" lies in the fact that, like a chatbot, he reacts to challenges without irony, offering platitudes bereft of any reflexivity, taking everything literally and relying on a mental auto-complete rather than authentic idea-formation. For this reason, the new chatbots will get along very well with ideologues of all stripes, from today's "woke" crowd to "MAGA" nationalists who prefer to remain asleep.

The writer is Professor of Philosophy at the European Graduate School.
PROJECT SYNDICATE



Slavoj Žižek

THE NEW CHATBOTS WILL GET ALONG VERY WELL WITH IDEOLOGUES OF ALL STRIPES, FROM TODAY'S 'WOKE' CROWD TO 'MAGA' NATIONALISTS WHO PREFER TO REMAIN ASLEEP

There is nothing new about "chatbots" that are capable of maintaining a conversation in natural language, understanding a user's basic intent, and offering responses based on preset rules and data. But the capacity of such chatbots has been dramatically augmented in recent months, leading to hand-wringing and panic in many circles.

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The problem does not end there. As the artist and writer James Bridle warns, the new AIs are "based on the wholesale appropriation of existing culture," and the belief that they are "actually knowledgeable or meaningful is actively dangerous." Hence, we should also be very wary of the new AI image generators. "In their attempt to understand and replicate the entirety of human visual culture," Bridle observes, "[they] seem to have recreated our darkest fears as well. Perhaps this is just a sign that these systems are very good indeed at aping human consciousness, all the way down to the horror that lurks in the depths of existence: our fears of filth, death, and corruption."

But just how good are the new AIs at approximating human consciousness? Consider the bar that recently advertised a drink special with the following terms: "Buy

one beer for the price of two and receive a second beer absolutely free!" To any human, this is obviously a joke. The classic "buy one, get one" special is reformulated to cancel itself out. It is an expression of cynicism that will be appreciated as comic honesty, all to boost sales. Would a chatbot pick up on any of this?

In his 1805 essay "On the gradual formation of thoughts in the process of speech" (first published posthumously in 1878), the German poet Heinrich von Kleist inverts the common wisdom that one should not open one's mouth to speak unless one has a clear idea of what to say: "If therefore a thought is expressed in a fuzzy way, then it does not at all follow that this thought was conceived in a confused way. On the contrary, it is quite possible that the ideas that are expressed in the most confusing fashion are the ones that were thought out most clearly."

The relationship between language and thought is extraordinarily complicated. In a passage from one of Stalin's speeches from the early 1930s, he proposes radical measures to "detect and fight without mercy even those who op-

pose collectivization only in their thoughts – yes, I mean this, we should fight even people's thoughts." One can safely presume that this passage was not prepared in advance. After getting caught up in the moment, Stalin immediately became aware of what he had just said. But instead of backpedaling, he decided to stick with his hyperbole.

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SPECTRUM ECONOMY

The inflation conundrum

The typical Indian scenario is hit by inflation, global job cuts, bank crisis and agitated farmers. Inflation is a pre-pandemic problem. It is misconstrued as a mere problem of purchasing power. It impacts a government the most, being the largest spender. Evolving ways to check it could help the government in reducing expenses, debt, and accelerate welfare and development schemes. Inflation is bleeding the government despite slump in Brent crude prices to \$70 from \$90, a few weeks back.

The government feels upbeat that growth would remain around 7%. Now it needs to check inflation, not an easy task in an uncertain world. It's not an easy task amid job cuts by IT giants like Accenture – 19000, including 7000 in India, Amazon – 9000 and Meta 11000 in March 2023 in addition to their earlier staff reduction. It impinges on the domestic IT companies as well. The privatised economy is finding creating jobs difficult.

Banks almost all over the West are uncomfortable with periodic si-phoning. The US banks do not have a good record. The US Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation closed 465 failed banks from 2008 to 2012. In contrast, in the five years

prior to 2008, only 10 banks failed. At the end of 2022, the US banking industry had a total of about \$620 billion in unrealised losses as a result of investments weakened by rising interest rates.

Credit Suisse is not the only European bank to suffer. There could be many more. In the stock market, banks remain unimpressive. Indian banks took a few hair-cuts due to failure of some large loans not being repaid. There have been mergers and recapitalisation till a few years back. Defaulting on payment, write-offs are the common aspects that afflict the banking industry everywhere. India is not absolutely insulated. LIC and a group of banks have lost a tidy sum due to crashes.

Inflation remains a key issue. The interest rate hike is a reality. As this happens anywhere, the inflation indicator may shoot up in India. At 6.44% consumer price index (CPI) is beyond the RBI's tolerance level. Last year, CPI hit the highest of 7.79% in April, and WPI reached 15.88% in May 2022. Compared to inflation in February 2020, CPI is down 0.14%, whereas WPI is up 1.59%. That is an indicator of over three years of inflationary trend. The WPI at 2.95% in January and 2.75% in February 2023 looks at a

low level. It is over the high of 15.88% WPI and 7.79% CPI, that RBI despite rate hikes struggles to keep under check.

The prices are at a high plateau. Each small hike robs the purchasing power of the people. Except for the most essentials all other goods lack demand. It is causing production slump. Except during the seven-year drought in 1960s, never have the prices been on a continuous upward trend for so long. Ironically, it has fomented once again the farmers' stir. About 10,000 of them marched to Mumbai as onion prices slumped to a never before level. Prices of farm inputs are going up while costs of produces are plummeting. Potato and onion farmers are finding the going tough forcing them in many parts to throw these away.

These all have a bearing on the job market. The crisis in the secondary industry of IT is a pointer to the crisis in the primary industry. The manufacturing and core sectors are yet to have normal operations. Pandemic-driven enthusiasm around digitisation and technology drove companies to go on a hiring spree but it came to a screeching halt towards the later part of 2022, as workforce reductions started. Mass layoffs have become

the norm.

The Layoff.fyi, website on job tracking in tech industry, says globally 153548 jobs were cut in 2022 by over 1000 companies. It continues through 2023. Despite NASSCOM saying that India is least affected, overall the IT industry is reducing manpower though it has 51 lakh on rolls with a value of \$227 billion. The reduction in manpower comes with higher software and hardware costs. Unethical tech "upgradation" is virtually a no-discussion zone. It hikes cost on the consumers without a rise in production cost and makes inflation worse.

The complex questions of job losses across the board from the rural, farm sectors to every other conceivable area adds to the social, law and order and governance costs. Is it all going beyond the capacities of the government? That's a critical question. It can happen just as a process or may have been deliberately planned. The society and governments need to study these. Inflation cannot be accepted as natural when critical input costs like crude prices slump. India should lead the probe as every cent increase in prices delays India's progress.

Defamation

The disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from his Lok Sabha seat is under great public discourse now. For a political rally speech during the run-up to the 2019 general elections, Rahul had purportedly said that the Modi surname is sported by some crooks. It is generally accepted in Indian politics that contesting candidates often use harsh words against their opponents. The Election Commission is known to have acted on such complaints in the past. Yet nobody has been disqualified earlier from an elected post simply because of a speech that is supposedly defamatory. It is also known that Indian politics is now going through an extremely virulent and poisonous speech making phase which is way ahead in dividing society compared to Rahul Gandhi's timid speech. Freedom of Speech is an integral part of any living democracy. Once Freedom of Expression is removed from its hallowed position then obviously there will exist no democracy.

Interesting to note that Rahul Gandhi has been convicted by a lower judiciary of Surat in Gujarat for 2 years, which is the maximum period permissible under criminal Defamation law. The Indian law on criminal Defamation (IPC 499 and 500) stipulates a maximum punishment of 2 years imprisonment while the disqualification law stipulates that a People's Representative must be awarded a minimum of 2 years imprisonment which would deem her/him fit for disqualification. Also to note is the fact that no member of any elected House can be disqualified merely by a court order until and unless the Speaker of the House passes an order of disqualification. This, no doubt, happened very swiftly for Rahul Gandhi and that too in just a day after conviction.

It is worth mentioning that the criminal part of the Defamation law is a British colonial era enactment. While this law has only the Civil aspect across the democratic world, it is having the additional Criminal tributary in India.

Disqualifying any elected member is a slap on the face of the electorate. The five year term given to any legislator does not flow down from a court or a bureaucratic setup like the Election Commission. It is by the voters of a particular constituency, which is an integral part of the whole nation. In a democracy, the Ultimate Lord is the voter. There are umpteen instances of inept legislators being disqualified (voted out) by the same voters in the next election. However, in Rahul Gandhi's matter, the instantaneous disqualification reeks of political vendetta because it was the Speaker of the Lok Sabha who took the decision with extreme alacrity. The current Parliament session has been disturbed and non functional because the ruling BJP was hell bent on not allowing Rahul Gandhi to speak fearing discussion on sensitive subjects like the Adani imbroglio.

Also notable is the reaction of the party that Rahul Gandhi is supposed to be leading. One may wonder if he truly enjoys the support of the Congress oldies. Imagine a scenario where, after Rahul's disqualification, all the Congress Members of Lok Sabha would have resigned from the House in solidarity and protest. That has not happened and Rahul has been ditched by his own people to fight a lone battle. Probably the 'Congress Oldies' felt such a show may not help their ambitions. It is also possible that some of them might have dreamt of a replay of the PV Narasimha Rao scenario where one of them could become Prime Minister. This may, however, help Rahul strengthen his own position within the party and change the old guard within the Congress or this may be the true end of the Nehru Gandhi legacy again from within the Congress. Time alone will tell.

Today's vote catcher may be rubbished by the people tomorrow. Indian democracy will surely continue to evolve and individuals are destined to be relegated to history very soon in a fast moving world.

WISDOM CORNER

- Mastering others is strength. Mastering yourself is true power. LAO TZU
- Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect. MARK TWAIN
- Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive. DALAI LAMA

WORDSWORTH

Green roof

It's also called an eco-roof or a living roof. A green roof is a wild garden of grasses and herbs planted on a suitable surface, usually on an urban house. It traps rainfall and releases it slowly, so it helps to prevent the flooding that can happen after a storm in a built-up area. It also acts as extra insulation for the building. But its principal virtue is that it's a haven for wildlife, especially beetles and spiders. In turn these provide food for birds – the black redstart has been encouraged to nest in one part of London as a result of green-roof construction. A recent survey for English Nature found over a hundred species of bugs, some of them rare, in a mixture not found in nature. This has led to the creation of tecticolous as a term to describe this characteristic group (from Latin tectum, a roof). The building features a "Green Roof" built on top of the parking deck to provide additional outdoor space and help with storm water runoff (The Capital Times (Madison, WI), 21 Sep. 2004). "It's a remarkable thing, having a green roof," says Jon Alexander, who can stand in his dining room and look out on his planted garage roof in Ballard. "There is this constantly changing show, including wildlife – birds, squirrels, butterflies and bees." The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 2 Sep. 2004

Green room

Originally, the term referred to an off-stage room in a theatre where actors could rest while they were waiting for their cues. A lot of theatres now don't have green rooms, often through lack of space. These days, the term applies as much – if not more often – to the reception room in a television studio where guests wait before appearing. Why it should be called a green room is a minor mystery. The first recorded use is in a play by Thomas Shadwell called *The True Widow*, first performed at Dorset Garden Theatre in London in December 1678: "No, Madam: Selfish, this Evening, in a green Room, behind the Scenes, was before-hand with me". The use of a here might suggest it was just a green-painted room, but a slightly later example, in a book called *Love Makes Man*, written by the actor and dramatist Colley Cibber and published in 1701 makes the usage clear: "I do know London pretty well, and the Side-box, Sir, and behind the Scenes; ay, and the Green-Room, and all the Girls and Women Actresses there". Colley Cibber was closely associated with a different theatre, the Drury Lane. It has been suggested that the room was painted green to rest the actors' eyes after exposure to bright stage lighting, but in the early 1700s, when lighting was by candles, that could hardly have been much of a problem. In an article in *De Proverbio*, an online journal of proverb studies, George B Bryan points out that the colour green has long been associated with the theatre, perhaps originating in the liveries worn by members of acting companies in the time of Shakespeare. Mr Bryan also records that green baize was sometimes used to cover the stage at this period to protect the costumes of the actors. This is a possible origin of an associated usage, the green, for the stage itself, which is still sometimes to be heard. The direct connection seems to be twentieth century rhyming slang: greengage = stage, but there may be a subconscious – or even a direct – link back to the colour of the stage covering. What is clear from the early citations is that the usage was not limited to a single theatre (and so was not an accident of paint colour or wall covering), but otherwise, its origins are obscure.



Shivaji Sarkar

INFLATION CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AS NATURAL WHEN CRITICAL INPUT COSTS LIKE CRUDE PRICES SLUMP

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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Lankan woes

Sir, Sri Lanka is looking down the barrel hoping its economy would recover soon. Some strict debt restructuring guarantee directions by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have not made life easy for it after its demand for a 2.9 billion dollar bailout demand was snubbed by the IMF. China's effort to create a "debt trap" in Sri Lanka to emerge as its natural saviour, is obvious. India, the other major creditor to Sri Lanka, should be watching the developments closely. The government in Colombo has hiked income tax and power tariff hoping the steps would prop up the economy but the common man is aghast. However, all hope is not lost for Colombo because both Beijing and New Delhi have assured they would support its debt restructuring plan. Before people's anger goes out of control, the Lankan government should persuade the IMF for a swift bailout package.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Blessing in disguise

Sir, The tearing hurry with which the BJP government has acted to disqualify Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from the Parliament conveys one message clearly – the government is scared of Rahul Gandhi and doesn't want him to speak on the Adani issue and also about the alleged nexus between Gautam Adani and the powers that be, in the Parliament. If the government was sure that any revelation by Rahul Gandhi on the Adani conundrum will have zero effect on them, why they have refused to allow him to voice his opinion in the Parliament? That whatever he had already spoken about Adani and the connected issues in the Parliament have been removed from the House records for obvious reasons, is also a case in point. However, the hasty decision of the ruling dispensation has resulted in a good thing also. It has brought all the Opposition parties that have in one voice condemned the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi terming it the most undemocratic move, under the same umbrella, which is indeed a blessing in disguise. This is a God sent opportunity for the Opposition parties to come together, sinking all their differences, form a mega alliance with a common minimum programme to take on the common enemy unitedly in the hustings in 2024.

Thacius S. Fernando, CHENNAI

national

of the day quote

Article 370 and 35 A, being the obstacles in the development of Jammu and Kashmir, were revoked for the welfare of the people



RAMDAS ATHAWALE | UNION MINISTER

I am not a legal expert but with due respect to the process of law, the sentence awarded to Rahul Gandhi seems to be excessive. In the heat of elections, people say all types of things. This was not the first instance and not going to be the last



PRASHANT KISHOR | POLITICAL STRATEGIST TURNED ACTIVIST

When Rahul Gandhi said 'chowkidar chor hai' in the last elections, people defeated him. He insulted the country by targeting PM Modi and Indian democracy in the country and abroad. During his 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', he was speaking of 'Bharat todo' (break the country)



EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

SHORT TAKES

Rahul updates Twitter bio

New Delhi: Following his disqualification from the Lok Sabha, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday changed his bio on Twitter where he described himself as a "Dis'Qualified MP". He also wrote "Dis'Qualified MP" on his official Wayanad Twitter account.

Fire flares up again in Kochi

Thiruvananthapuram: Almost two weeks after the blaze there was doused, the Brahmapuram waste dump yard in Kerala's Kochi caught fire again Sunday, officials said. The fire was spotted in sector 7 of the dump yard on Sunday afternoon, and five fire tenders have been deployed to douse it. Local people have come out against the corporation and the state government on fire being detected again at Brahmapuram.

Couple lynched

Kolkata: In a shocking incident, a tribal couple was lynched by local people on suspicion of practicing witchcraft in West Bengal's Birbhum district, police said. The incident took place in the Ahmedpur area under Sainthia Police Station in Birbhum district. The deceased persons have been identified as Pandu Hembram (62) and his wife Parvati Hembram (52). Local police sources said that they were severely beaten up by the locals late Friday night, following which they were admitted at the local Bolpur Sub-Divisional Hospital under extremely critical condition. Both died early Sunday morning.

UP bizman duped

Lucknow: A Lucknow businessman has been duped of over Rs 4 lakh on the pretext of supplying 84 refrigerators in Aliganj. The victim, Prakhar Chaudhry of Mehndi Tola, received a call from an unidentified person, who introduced himself as a representative of a company selling refrigerators. The miscreant talked at length about the goods and managed to convince the victim to purchase refrigerators from the company.

Body found

New Delhi: The body of a 23-year-old man was recovered from a well in southwest Delhi's Dhaura Kuan, police said Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Pawan. He was a resident of Haryana's Faridabad and was in a private job, they said.



The Congress is the biggest party in the Opposition but wherever regional parties are strong, they should be allowed to sit in the 'driver's seat' to take on the BJP in the 2024 general elections

TEJASHWI YADAV | BIHAR DEPUTY CM

HOSPITALS CARRY OUT MOCK DRILLS

Delhi government-run hospitals carried out mock drills Sunday to assess their Covid-19 preparedness, amid a spurt in the number of coronavirus cases in the city



Man held in Raj over threat mail to Salman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 26: The Mumbai police have apprehended a man from Rajasthan in connection with an email threatening actor Salman Khan that was received at the latter's office here recently, an official said Sunday.

The accused was nabbed by a team of Bandra police station and is being brought to Mumbai, an official said. The accused Dhakad Ram Bishnoi (21) is a resident of Siyagon ki Dhani in Rohicha Kalan village under the Luni police station in Jodhpur. He was on bail in a case of Arms Act, police said.

Jodhpur's DCP (West) Gaurav Yadav said a team from Mumbai's Bandra police station arrived here to arrest Bishnoi on Sunday. "They asked us to assist them in detaining Bishnoi. We provided them support and handed Bishnoi over to the Mumbai Police," said Yadav.

The complaint about the threat e-mail was recently lodged at the Bandra police station by one Prashant Gunjalkar, who according to police, frequently visits the Bandra-based residence of Salman



Khan and runs an artist management company.

When Gunjalkar was present in Khan's office in Galaxy Apartment recently, he noticed an email had been received from the ID "Rohit Garg". The sender of the e-mail, written in Hindi, said: "Goldy Bhai (gangster Goldy Brar) wanted to talk to Salman Khan face-to-face to close the matter", adding, "Agli baar, jhatka dekhne

ko milega (You'll see something shocking)", the police had said.

"After a detailed technical investigation into the case, police got information about the accused person's whereabouts, following which a team was sent to Rajasthan and the man was apprehended," the official said. He is being interrogated by a police team about the threat to the actor, he said.

After the threat mail was re-

ceived, the Mumbai police had registered a first information report (FIR) against gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi and Goldy Brar. The FIR was registered under sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 506-II (criminal intimidation) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the police said.

Yadav said Bishnoi had been arrested in September last year by the Sardarpura police for possessing illegal weapon and was out on bail. However, no link between him and Lawrence Bishnoi or any other local gang has come to the notice during investigation so far, he added.

Jodhpur police officials said a case had also been registered against Bishnoi at Mansa's Sadar police in Punjab on March 24 for sending a similar threatening mail to the father of slain Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala.

A team of Punjab Police also reached Jodhpur to arrest Bishnoi on Sunday, he said. However, the Punjab Police will have to wait to claim Bishnoi's custody until Mumbai police completes its investigation, he added.

Cops to produce Atiq in UP court March 28



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, March 26: A police team from Uttar Pradesh came to the Sabarmati central jail in Ahmedabad Sunday and took gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed to Prayagraj, where he will be produced before a court on March 28 when it passes an order in a kidnapping case in which he is an accused, officials said.

The UP police team reached the Sabarmati jail in the morning and left the premises amid tight security with Ahmed in a police van around 6 pm after completing the necessary formalities, they said. Ahmed, a former Samajwadi Party MP, has been lodged in the Sabarmati central jail since June 2019. He was shifted there from his home state as per the Supreme Court's order.

"A court in Prayagraj has set March 28 as the date to pass its order in a kidnapping case in which Ahmed is an accused," Prayagraj Police Commissioner Ramit Sharma said in the Uttar Pradesh city. He said a team of the Prayagraj police was sent to Ahmedabad to bring Ahmed for his court appearance the given date. "As part of the procedure, all the accused are to be produced before the court on the date of the judgment and then sent back to their respective jails,"

the police officer said. The Supreme Court had in April 2019 directed that the former MP from Phulpur in UP be shifted to a high-security jail in Gujarat after he was accused of orchestrating the kidnapping and assault of a real estate businessman Mohit Jaiswal while in jail. He is named in more than 100 criminal cases, including the recent Umesh Pal murder case, police said.

Among the most sensational murders in which Ahmed is allegedly involved was that of Raju Pal, the MLA from the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) who was shot dead in 2005. Umesh Pal, a key witness in this murder case, was gunned down outside his residence in Prayagraj on February 24 this year, they said.

Earlier this month, Ahmed had moved the Supreme Court for protection, claiming that he and his family were falsely implicated in the Umesh Pal murder case in Prayagraj and he may be killed in a fake encounter by the Uttar Pradesh Police.

In his plea, Ahmed said the Uttar Pradesh police were in all likelihood seeking his transit remand and police remand to take him from Ahmedabad to Prayagraj and he "genuinely apprehends that he may be eliminated during this transit period".

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Left-Congress alliance wins Haldia dock polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 26: The Left-Congress alliance made a clean sweep in the elections of the Haldia dock institute management committee in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur district by trouncing ruling the Trinamool Congress candidates.

The win of the Left-Congress alliance on Saturday assumes significance after the defeat of the TMC in the Sagardighi assembly by-election at the hands of Left supported Congress candidate Byron Biswas recently.

The Left-Congress alliance won 19 out of 19 seats which is significant ahead of the panchayat polls. Of the 737 electorate, 694 cast their franchise in the high voltage triangular battle between Left-Congress, TMC trade union (INTTUC) and Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh which was supported by BJP, an official involved in the election process said.

The permanent employees and officers of the port cast votes. The total number of candidates in the three panels was 58.

Last time Trinamool Congress had won all the seats in the management committee, but the post of vice president was bagged by the Left. The TMC tasted its first defeat after 13 years.

The elections are held every two years. A spokesperson of the Left union at Haldia dock said this victory shows the way wind is blowing.

This victory is significant and indicative of the good show by both Left and Congress in the coming panchayat polls in Purba Medinipur district which was known to be the stronghold of Trinamool Congress and BJP, he said.

A leader of INTTUC at Haldia dock refused to attach much importance to the election results saying it will not have any impact in the Haldia civic body poll and panchayat poll in coming days. "The Left Congress and BMS had a tacit understanding to defeat the TMC candidates. Such machinations will not work everywhere," he said.



Chenab Rail Bridge, world's highest railway bridge, over the Chenab river in Reasi district, Sunday. The Chenab Bridge is part of Indian railways' Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link project

Actress found dead in hotel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi (UP), March 26: Popular Bhojpuri actress Akanksha Dubey was found dead inside a hotel room here on Sunday with police suspecting it to be a case of suicide, officials said.

The 25-year-old actress was found hanging from the fan with a piece of cloth and the police were called immediately, according to the hotel staff. Assistant Commissioner of Police (Sarnath) Gyan Prakash Rai said, "The family members of the deceased live in Mumbai. They have been informed about the incident. No suicide note has been recovered from her room. Prima facie it appears to be a case of suicide."

Dubey, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district, had come to Varanasi for the shooting a movie and was staying in the hotel under Sarnath police station area. When Dubey did not come out of the room till late morning the hotel staff, on the insistence of her colleagues, opened the gate of her room using a master key.

Varanasi police Commissionerate, in its statement, said that the body has been sent for post-mortem and police are investigating the matter. Dubey starred



in several regional films including Kasam Paida Karne Wale Ki 2, Mujhse Shaadi Karogi (Bhopuri) and 'Veeron ke Veer'.

Bhojpuri film personalities such as Rani Chatterjee, Vinay Anand and Aamrapali Dubey took to social media to pay condolences. "Can't believe seeing this news. What should I write, it is not right to end your life like this. May your soul find peace wherever it is, which it could not find in this world, it could find in heaven. It is hurting a lot! Om Shanti! #rip #aakanshadubey" Chatterjee wrote on Instagram.

Anand said he is pained by Dubey's demise and he would like the authorities to investigate the case.

Helicopter crashes, pilot saves 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, March 26: One person was injured when a Coast Guard helicopter crashed Sunday just after takeoff from its enclave at the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) here, but the "presence of mind" of the pilot saved the lives of three persons onboard, a release said.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) said the ALH Mk III chopper CG 855, based in Kochi, took off from the enclave located inside CIAL complex at about 12.25 pm for "inflight checks after fitment of control rods" on the aircraft.

It said the chopper lost control when it was about 30-40 ft above the ground. However, the pilot showed "exemplary professionalism and presence of mind" with bare minimum controls and maneuvered the aircraft away from blocking the main runway of the international airport, the ICG statement said.

"Prior to the inflight checks, HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) and ICG teams had carried out extensive and satisfactory ground trials," the ICG said. "Immediately after takeoff, when CG 855 was at about 30-40 ft above ground, the



The pilot 'cushioned the landing to the extent possible' in order to save the three persons on board

The chopper's rotors and airframe have been damaged, and an inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the crash

cyclic controls (which controls longitudinal and lateral movement of aircraft) did not respond."

The pilot "cushioned the landing to the extent possible" in order to save the three persons on board, it added. One person has a minor in-

jury in his hand, sources said. The chopper's rotors and airframe have been damaged, and an inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the crash.

Meanwhile, CIAL said airport operations were suspended for two hours after the Advanced Light Helicopter of the Coast Guard met with the accident. "The ALH was removed from the operational area around 2 PM and the runway has been cleared substantially after safety inspections, and flight operations have been resumed," CIAL said in a statement.

Case against UP man who rescued Sarus crane

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amethi (UP), March 26: The forest department has filed a case and issued a notice to an Uttar Pradesh man who rescued a Sarus crane and took care of it for a year, officials said.

The crane, which lived with Arif Khan Gurjar in the Mandkha village of Amethi district, accompanied him to his fields and was accepted "like a family member", was taken away by forest department officials on March 21.

The bird was shifted to the Samaspur sanctuary in Rae Bareilly to allow it to live in its natural en-

vironment, an official had said. On Saturday, the department issued a notice to Gurjar and asked him to appear at the office of the Gauriganj divisional forest officer on April 4 to record his statement.

According to the notice issued by Assistant Divisional Forest Officer (Gauriganj) Ranvir Singh, Gurjar has been booked under relevant sections of the Wildlife Protection Act. Arif issued a video statement, acknowledging the case and the notice, but said he was "absolutely innocent".

"I had got the Sarus crane in an injured state. I took it to my house, and gave treatment to it



. And, it was never my intention that the Sarus crane should re-

main with us." "I thought that after its injury is healed, the

crane will fly away from here. It used to go, and then come back again. I had not forcibly kept the Sarus (with myself). I am innocent in this case," Arif said.

A day after the bird was taken away, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav held a press conference during which he condemned the forest department action and asked indirectly if any official had the courage to take away the peacocks from the prime minister's residence.

Gurjar sat on the dais with the former chief minister but did not speak. Yadav had visited Gurjar after he gained fame due to his

"friendship" with the bird. He had also shared pictures of himself with the bird and Gurjar on social media.

Responding to Yadav's allegations, Divisional Forest Officer DN Singh had said, "Whatever action has been taken is with Arif's (Gurjar) consent." The official said these birds always live in pairs. Since this one was living alone, there was some apprehension about its wellbeing. On Thursday, Yadav alleged that the crane had gone missing before being rescued by some local residents. Forest officials, however, had denied the claim.

2024 GENERAL ELECTION

BJP's IT, minorities cells go on overdrive in UP



The BJP is considered far ahead of its opponents in terms of social media and IT reach. This time the BJP is further strengthening its IT team in the state -- a strategy that will not be easy for its opponents to match

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 26: Uttar Pradesh is the most important state to capture the power in Delhi. For the last two Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has been achieving stupendous success in Uttar Pradesh. In 2024 also, the party wants to repeat this success again. This is the reason why the saffron party has made a completely different strategy this time in the state. About 27,000 IT teams are being prepared in the state. In fact, there are about 27,000 'Shakti Kendras' in BJP's state. These centres play an important role in taking the party's campaigns, programmes to the grassroots level and taking feedback. The BJP wants to strengthen its network by connecting these Shakti Kendras online. By doing this, the leadership will have a direct eye on the workers working at the grassroots level. Information related to the pro-

grammes and campaigns of the party will reach the workers in a better way. Along with this, the party will be able to do video conferencing with the workers even at the smallest level and will be able to get the grassroots feedback directly. Significantly, in 2019, BJP had won 62 out of 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh. Ten seats went to the BSP and five to the SP, while Congress got only one seat. The BJP had won 71 out of 80 seats in the state in 2014 Lok Sabha polls. This success of the party was surprising as it had got only 10 seats in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections. Not only the IT department, BJP's Minority cell in Uttar Pradesh

is also way ahead in the preparation for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. BJP's Minority Morcha on Wednesday launched a year-long outreach programme for Muslims, named 'Sufi Samvad'. The campaign launched in the run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections especially focuses on the Muslim-dominated districts in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala and Telangana. According to the party's minority morcha head, Jamal Siddiqui, a team of 150 people associated with Sufism has been formed for the campaign, which will culminate in a large meeting addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The initiative comes months after Prime Minister Modi suggested that the party workers reach out to Sufis, Bohras, and Pasmandas in the country's Muslim community. At the launch of the campaign Wednesday, people working in Sufi dargahs across 30 states and Union territories gathered at the BJP headquarters to firm up various events under the campaign. Majority of the events under this initiative will be held in the Muslim-majority districts and where there is a substantial population of Muslims. A special focus will be laid on Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, Bihar and Telangana, which cumulatively send 199 members to the Lok Sabha. Earlier in March, the BJP made history by retaking control of Tripura, Nagaland, and Meghalaya, three northeastern states that recently had Assembly elections, and keeping them under its control with the aid of its allies.

ABOUT 27,000 IT TEAMS ARE BEING PREPARED IN THE STATE. IN FACT, THERE ARE ABOUT 27,000 'SHAKTI KENDRAS' IN BJP'S STATE. THESE CENTRES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN TAKING THE PARTY'S CAMPAIGNS, PROGRAMMES TO THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL AND TAKING FEEDBACK. NOT ONLY THE IT DEPARTMENT, BJP'S MINORITY CELL IN UTTAR PRADESH IS ALSO WAY AHEAD IN THE PREPARATION FOR THE 2024 LOK SABHA POLLS.

Bengal forest dept to grow crops for tuskers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 26: The Forest Department of West Bengal government is planning to grow crops that are favourites of elephants on vested lands adjacent to jungles that connect the forests with the nearby villages. According to Forest Minister Jyotipriyo Mullick, the initiative has been mooted to provide adequate food for the elephants so that they do not enter the villages in search for food. "This initiative, if successful, will bring down instances of human-elephant conflict in these regions to a great extent. The Forest Department has already initiated survey work to identify the vested lands, and once the suitable land is identified, farming will start there under the supervision of the forest officials and staff," Mullick added.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

It is learnt that the survey will be conducted in both the forest belts in North Bengal and South Bengal. A pilot project has already started covering the three districts in North Bengal, namely Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar. In the next phase, the survey work will start in the forest belts of South Bengal. "This is for the first time that a survey of this

kind has been initiated by us," the minister said. A senior official in the Forest Department said that the idea of farming came to the officials following a somewhat similar and successful model adopted by the residents of Latabari village in Alipurduar district, where the villagers stock a portion of the farm products produced by them

The initiative has been mooted to provide adequate food for the elephants so that they do not enter the villages in search for food

as food for the tuskers at the entry points to the village. The incidents of human-elephant conflict, which was frequent in that village in the past, have come down substantially in the recent past. Wildlife experts like former principal chief conservator of forests, Atanu Raha, too feel that this is a very effective and scientific way involving elephant psychology to avoid human-elephant conflict.



TOILING HARD: Farm workers spread paddy grain for drying in Nadia district, West Bengal

PTI PHOTO

Darjeeling preps for G20 meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Siliguri (WB), March 26: Preparations are in full swing in West Bengal's Darjeeling district for the 2nd Tourism Working Group Meeting of G20, which will begin April 1, officials said Sunday. At the first meeting held in Gujarat's Kachchh in February, five priorities were identified for the sector -- green tourism, digitalisation, skills, tourism MSMEs and destination management.

At the second meeting in Darjeeling, representatives of G20 countries, invitee nations and international organisations will be discussing deeper aspects of the five priorities, they said.

The Tourism Ministry will also host a side event on 'adventure tourism as a vehicle for achieving Sustainable Development Goals'.

A full-day programme has also been organised for the domestic tourism industry, and the states to deliberate on adventure tourism, officials said. On the first day, the delegates will be taken to the Makaibari Tea Garden in Kurseong for witnessing moonlight tea-plucking, officials said. Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy, Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh and Union MoS for Minority Affairs John Barla will address the gathering on the second day, April 2, they said. Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) will brief the gathering later that day, besides presentations by G20 member countries, international organisations and invitee nations.

Italy, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Australia and Indonesia will make presentations on the five priorities identified by the G20, officials said. The delegates will be visiting Ghum April 3, and take a ride on the iconic Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, a UNESCO world heritage site.

'TENT CITY' ON NGT SCANNER

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Varanasi, March 26: Someone has rightly said: "If you hurt nature, you are hurting yourself". Industrialisation has affected the whole ecosystem drastically and it could be discerned by the way the climate is changing.

A lot has been said in different ways about protecting nature, but we do not seem to pay much attention. One latest example is that of the 'Tent City' project in



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Varanasi, situated on the banks of the river Ganga with no thought to its flora and fauna. Built on a 100-hectare area opposite the ghats of Varanasi near Ramnagar, the high-end facility can accommodate 200 people and is divided into three categories -- Ganga Darshan Villas, premium tents and super deluxe tents.

According to the Central government, Varanasi has seen an uptick in tourism since the inauguration of Kashi Vishwanath Dham and the Tent City was conceptualised in order to cater to the influx of tourists.

The project has, however, garnered enough criticism by environmentalists as well as the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

The NGT has sought a factual report from a panel over allegations that the Tent City project was flouting environmental norms.

It was hearing a petition alleging the project was detrimental to the flora and fauna and also resulted in untreated sewage going directly into the river.

"Such projects coming up on the riverbed/floodplains of rivers, tend to impair the vital ecological functions, such as ground water recharge, riverine biodiversity and wildlife protection done by the rivers and their floodplains," lawyer and environmentalist, Akash Vashishtha said.

DA ISSUE

Agitating employees to send mass emails to Prez

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 26: As President Droupadi Murmu will be reaching Kolkata Monday to attend the annual convocation of Visva Bharati University in West Bengal's Birbhum district the next day, the state government employees agitating on the streets against non-payment of dearness allowance arrears have decided to greet her with mass email highlighting their demands on this count.

According to a spokesman of the Joint Forum of State

Government Employees, the umbrella organisation spearheading the protest demonstration, in the mass email, the forum will also highlight how the state government is resorting to "vindictive" show-cause notices and transfers to employees who participated in the strike convened by it March 10.

In the mass email to the President, the forum will also seek her intervention in resolving the ongoing impasse on the issue. On the same day, a similar mass email will be forwarded to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the matter,



the joint forum spokesman said. The joint forum has already announced that they will be going on mass leave March 30 besides organising a mega protest rally on the streets of Kolkata on the same day. At the same time, the forum will be organising a two-day sit-in demonstration at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi from April 10. Already the state government employees are observing the "digital non-cooperation" movement against the state government on the DA issue. Prior to that, they observed a day's strike and a two-day pen-down strike on the issue.

'Rampuri chaku' vies for an edgy comeback with statue in honour

AGENCIES

Rampur (UP), March 26: 'Rampuri Chaku', a style of knife made famous by the Bollywood flicks of the 1980s, has been given a fitting tribute here by authorities which named a roundabout 'chaku' chowk and installing in its centre a 20-foot Rampuri knife.

The 'knife' was inaugurated by Moradabad Divisional Commissioner Aunjaneya Kumar Singh Monday in presence of senior officials and local leaders. The roundabout on Nainital road marks the entry point to Rampur when travelling from Uttarakhanda.

Rampur MLA Akash Saxena, who was also present at the unveiling of the big knife, said Rampuri knife used to be a symbol of fear once, but today it is being recognised as a craft. The MLA said that the authorities have appealed to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to keep the industries involved in knife-making out of GST.

Local traders on the other hand believe that the new roundabout may give a boost to the demand of the trademark knife, but still a lot needs to be done.

Rehmat Raza Khan, a local who has been manufacturing knives for generations, told PTI, "In early



PTI PHOTO

- ▶ Rampur, located 320 km north of the state capital, was once known for its several small-scale units that made high-quality foldable knives
- ▶ With a blade made of hardened steel and brass handles the knives were once in a popular demand
- ▶ Cheap copies imported from China are giving a tough time to the Rampuri knife and people related with its trade

nineties, there were over two dozen units manufacturing Rampuri knives which were sold in several small shops. Apart from the main

2nd aquatic animal research centre of country in UP soon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bahraich (UP), March 26: The Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS) will soon be developed as the second research centre of the National Aquatic Animal (Gangetic dolphin) in the country.

A proposal in this regard has already been sent to the Centre by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). The proposal seeks Centre's nod to set up a dolphin research centre along the bank of Geruwa river, which flows through KWS in Bahraich.

According to B Prabhakar, field director (FD), Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR), the proposal is pending at the level of the Government of India.

As per the proposal, the area would be improvised and focused for boosting production of Gangetic dolphins. Besides, a rapid action force would be deployed to deal with poachers/hunters.

In Uttar Pradesh, dolphins are found in the stretches of Ganga River from Bijnor to Narora, in the Chambal on the border of Etawah and Agra and in Ghaghra and Geruwa river in KWS in Bahraich.

The Gangetic dolphin is listed endangered by the IUCN and is placed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Recent dip in temperature takes toll on mango crops



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

THE MANGO GROWERS OF THE STATE WERE EXPECTING A BUMPER CROP THIS TIME DUE TO GOOD FLOWERING

HOWEVER, THE STORM, RAIN, HAILSTORM AND THE RESULTING COLD WEATHER HAVE DAMAGED 2/5TH OF THE CROP SO FAR

Lucknow, March 26: Recent storms accompanied by rain and hailstorm have dashed the hopes of mango farmers in Uttar Pradesh, compelling them to appeal to the government for help.

Insrām Ali, president of the Mango Growers' Association of India, told PTI Sunday, "The climatic conditions were very good 10 days ago but the recent drop in temperature caused by rain and hailstorm have destroyed nearly 40 per cent of the crop," adding that if the climatic conditions continue to be erratic, further loss is expected.

He said this year the flowering of the fruit crop was very good and no disease of any kind was reported across the state.

Kalimullah, a famous mango grower from Malihabad in Lucknow said the mango crop requires mild summer weather in the month of March to grow, but this time that

did not happen. Last March, mango flowers were scorched due to scorching heat, he added, estimating this year's loss around 50 per cent.

Ali said this year about 60 lakh metric tonnes of mango production was expected, but now it can get reduced to 35 lakh metric tonnes, which will be a big loss. If the weather remains like this for the next 10 days, then even more damage is possible.

The Mango Growers Association of India has put forth its demand in front of the government.

Accusing the governments of neglecting the mango growers, Ali said even though one crore people of the state depend on the mango business for employment, they are not considered farmers.

He told that in about 14 districts of Uttar Pradesh, mangoes are produced in about 1.5 lakh hectare area. These 14 districts include Lucknow, Unnao, Pratapgarh, Moradabad, Hardoi, Bulandshahr and Barabanki.

of the day quote

India is ready to lead from the front and be the voice of the Global South in the collaborative fight against tuberculosis

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA UNION HEALTH MINISTER

A vibrant economy, sound security and deepened societal harmony has resulted in two back to back mandates from the people of our region

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA ASSAM CM

Sometimes, tough decisions have to be taken. But if our AAP government in Punjab under the leadership of Bhagwant Mann will have to take tough decisions, we will not hesitate from taking them

ARVIND KEJRIWAL DELHI CM

SHORT TAKES

Four of techie's family die

Hyderabad: A software engineer poisoned his wife and two children before killing himself in what appears to be a suicide pact. The bodies of G. Satish (39), his wife G. Veda (35) and their children, G. Nishiket (9) and G. Nihar (5), were found in their flat in the Kusaiguda area in Hyderabad late on Saturday. Police suspect that the couple resorted to the extreme step due to chronic ill-health of their children. Police found a suicide note from the flat in which the couple claimed that they decided to take the extreme step and that no one was responsible for their death. In the suicide, the couple requested that no one should try to save them and that they be allowed to die peacefully.

Cop found dead

New Delhi: A head constable was found dead with a bullet injury at the third battalion campus in Delhi's Vikaspuri area, an official said. According to the police, the deceased head constable identified as Abhay was found dead with a bullet injury to his chest at around 3:15 p.m. in the battalion campus. It has been revealed that the bullet was fired from his service weapon.

Eight booked

Pilibhit: Eight persons of a family in Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit district have been booked for allegedly torturing a 22-year-old woman for dowry, raping her, and then throwing her out of the house, police said. The case has been registered on the orders of the chief judicial magistrate's court. According to the police, the victim got married on May 12, 2022, and her father spent more than Rs 35 lakh on her marriage and dowry but her husband and in-laws were not satisfied with it and demanded an additional Rs 20 lakh. The woman claimed that she was tortured physically and mentally soon after the marriage.

Boy drowns

Pilibhit: A 10-year-old boy drowned in a water-filled pit at a brick kiln in Dilawarpur village of Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit district, police said. According to the deceased Shivam's father, Pappu Lal, his son had gone for a walk after dinner but he did not return home. His body was later found floating in the water-filled field at midnight. The police sent the body for autopsy while a written complaint has been filed in the case.

CRACKDOWN ON AMRITPAL

197 freed, 7 detained under NSA: Police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 26: Days after launching a crackdown against radical preacher Amritpal Singh and his aides, the Punjab Police Sunday said it has released 197 people out of the total 353 taken into preventive custody on apprehension of breach of peace and disturbance of law and order. The police said it has detained seven persons under the stringent National Security Act (NSA). On March 18, the police had launched a crackdown against elements of 'Waris Punjab De,' headed by pro-Khalistan radical preacher Amritpal Singh.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has issued clear directions that the Punjab Police should adopt a positive approach while screening persons arrested on account of apprehension of breach of peace or in substantive criminal offences, said an official release here. "197 persons out of a total of 353 persons arrested under preventive sections of law have been released till today," it said. Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav said directions have been issued to all senior superintendents of police and commissioners of

police in the state to ensure that no innocent person is harassed or arrested.

Investigating officers and their supervisory officers should first examine the available evidence and satisfy themselves before undertaking any preventive arrest or arrest in substantive offences, he said. The DGP said apart from the 353, 40 persons have been arrested under substantive criminal offences and seven persons have been detained under the National Security Act. In accordance with the chief minister's directions, police will review the status of persons arrested under substantive criminal offences by examining the available evidence and taking a positive approach, said Yadav. Yadav appealed to all Punjabis to continue maintaining peace and harmony in the state and not to pay any heed to fake news and rumours. The DGP asserted that the law and order situation is completely under control and stable.

He warned that strict action would be taken against persons spreading rumours and fake news. Police conducted flag marches, patrolling and maintained presence in markets and other important locations in the state on Sunday.



Man dies in police custody in Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, March 26: The death of a man in police custody at Tripunithura near here has led to strong protests by the locals of the area and Youth Congress workers Sunday demanding action against all the officers involved in the incident.

Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly VD Sathesan demanded lodging of a case under Section 302 (murder) of IPC against all the police officers in this regard. "The police who are unable to protect women are stopping two-wheeler riders on the road and behaving so cruelly with them. If they (concerned police officers) are not booked for murder and an investigation initiated, Kochi will witness another protest," he contended.



Police, earlier in the day, suspended a sub inspector of Hill Palace police station who was accused by the locals of having beaten the victim. The incident occurred on Saturday evening when the victim, Manoharan, was asked to stop his motorbike by a squad from the Hill Palace police station during routine vehicle checking.

As he did not stop, the squad chased him down and asked him why he did not stop. According to a woman who claims to be an eye-



A mysterious silence

The mystery regarding Amrita Fadnavis's bribery and blackmail case is getting curious day by day. The wife of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has always been in the news for her tweets and social activities. But this time something strange happened. It was in February when

she lodged a complaint with the police that a designer Aniksha Jaisinghani wanted to bribe her to help her father Anil Jaisinghani in a criminal case. Anil Jaisinghani is a bookie and has been facing numerous cases. She wanted Amruta Fadnavis to wear her designer's clothes and will be paid Rs one crore as advance. Therefore, the FIR was registered against Aniksha Jaisinghani to bribe her. But after two days, Amruta added a new dimension where it was said that she was black-mailing her and wanted Rs 10 crore as blackmailing amount. The first surprise was that the FIR was lodged on February 20 and police swung into action in the third week of March. Secondly, how could a person be first charged for bribing and a couple of days later of blackmailing her. But another shocker is that the entire Opposition has remained quiet and did not raise a single question in the state assembly



A man walks through a blooming mustard field on a sunny day in Pulwama district of South Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

ISRO's LVM3 injects 36 satellites into orbits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sriharikota (AP), March 26: The Indian Space Research Organisation's heaviest LVM3 rocket Sunday successfully placed 36 internet satellites of UK-based OneWeb group company into intended orbits.

The 43.5 metre tall rocket blasted off at a prefixed time of 9 am Sunday, from the second launch pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre here, about 135 kms from Chennai, at the end of a 24.30 hour countdown. This is the second dedicated mission of NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), the commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation.

ISRO had signed an agreement with Network Access Associates Ltd, United Kingdom, a OneWeb Group Company, for the launch of 72 satellites into Low-Earth orbits (LEO). The first batch of 36 satellites were launched on October 23, 2022 by ISRO, and the second batch Sunday. OneWeb is a global communication network powered from space, enabling connectivity for governments and businesses. Soon after



The launch vehicle took off with a total payload of 5,805 kg at 9.00 hrs and gained the required altitude of 450 km in about nine minutes of flight, and achieved satellite injection conditions, ISRO said in a statement. OneWeb confirmed the acquisition of signals from all 36 satellites, it said.

takeoff, the rocket sequentially deployed the satellites into multiple orbits. While the first set of 16 satellites were injected around 20 minutes after lift off, the remaining satellites were placed into intended orbits later.

ISRO said, "LVM3-M3/OneWeb India-2 mission is accomplished. All 36 OneWeb Gen-1 Satellites injected into the intended orbits." "In its sixth consecutive successful flight,

LVM3 carried 5,805 kgs of payload to Low Earth Orbit," the space agency said on its official social media account.

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OneWeb confirmed the acquisition of signals from all 36 satellites, it said.

ISRO chairman S Somanath congratulated NSIL, ISRO and OneWeb for the successful launch of the mission. "As we know today the first 16 satellites of the series are already placed into the right orbit. And now it has gone into the far south of the Earth and we will be getting confirmation of the remaining spacecraft separation soon, once the onboard storage data is acquired by our Indian ground stations," he said, addressing scientists

at the Mission Control Centre.

The launch was the 18th for OneWeb while for ISRO, it would be the second mission in 2023 after the successful launch of the SSLV/D2-EOS07 undertaken in February. "Till now, based on observations, the vehicle has done extremely well, it went up to the right orbit and placed the spacecraft at the right orbit and also with very minimal disturbances to it," Somanath noted.

Somanath expressed gratitude to NSIL for its support and also for the confidence that the OneWeb India team reposed in ISRO for building the rocket. Union Minister Jitendra Singh lauded ISRO for Sunday's successful launch.

"Proud to be associated with the department of space #ISRO at a time when India under PM @NarendraModi has emerged as the frontline Space Tech nation of the world," he wrote on Twitter. "Team ISRO adds yet another feather to its much decorated hat. Successful launch of LVM3-M3/OneWeb India-2 Mission", the Union Minister of State (independent charge) Science and Technology said.

INDIA SUMMONS CANADIAN ENVOY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: India has summoned Canadian High Commissioner Cameron MacKay and conveyed its strong concerns about the actions by pro-Khalistani extremist elements against its diplomatic missions in Canada recently.

MacKay was summoned by the External Affairs Ministry on Saturday and sought an explanation on how "separatist and extremist elements" were allowed to breach the security of its diplomatic mission and consulates despite the presence of police, the Ministry of External Affairs said.

On Sunday last, India's High Commissioner to Canada Sanjay

Kumar Verma was forced to skip an event in British Columbia province after a violent protest by Khalistan supporters. Indian-origin journalist Sameer Kaushal, who was at the venue to cover the protest, was also assaulted by protesters.

Canada was reminded of its obligations under the Vienna Convention and asked to arrest and prosecute the individuals who have already been identified as being involved in such acts, the ministry said. It said it expected the Canadian government to take all steps needed to ensure security of its diplomatic premises and the safety of its diplomats so that they are able to fulfil their normal diplomatic functions.

Centre notifies revised MGNREGA wage rates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: The Centre has notified a hike in wage rates under the rural job guarantee programme for the 2023-24 financial year with Haryana having the highest daily wage at Rs 357 per day and Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh the lowest at Rs 221. The Union Ministry of Rural Development issued a notification on the change in wage rates under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme on March 24.

The notification was issued under Section 6(1) of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, that says the Centre may, by notification, specify the wage rate for its beneficiaries.

The wage hikes, which range from Rs 7 to Rs 26, will come into effect from April 1. Compared to last year's rates, Rajasthan registered the highest percentage increase in wages. The revised wage for Rajasthan is Rs 255 per day, up from Rs 231 in 2022-23.

Bihar and Jharkhand have registered a percentage increase of around eight from last year. Last year, the daily wage for a MGNREGA worker in these two states was Rs 210. It has now been revised to Rs 228. For Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, which have the lowest daily wages at Rs 221, the percentage increase from last year was recorded at 17.

In 2022-23, the two states had a daily wage of Rs 204.

till date. Despite the Maharashtra state legislature being in session, the opposition has been relatively quiet on the controversy surrounding the FIR.

Telangana polls: BJP to field all MPs

The BJP high command has decided to put its entire might to win Assembly polls in Telangana due in early December this year. As part of this strategy, it has decided to field all its four Lok Sabha MPs including Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and Development of North East G Kishan Reddy. It would be interesting to mention here that G Kishan Reddy may not be the sole choice for the Chief Ministerial race if BJP wins Telangana. It is learnt that state BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar is the hot favourite for

the post. He is a Member of Lok Sabha and heading the state unit since 2020. He is among the four Lok Sabha MPs from Telangana.

Massive preparations on

Massive preparations are on in the Central government and the BJP to celebrate the completion of nine glorious years of Modi as Prime Minister. A high-powered committee of nine Union ministers and party functionaries has been constituted under the chairmanship of Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi. It may be remembered that Joshi belongs to Karnataka where Assembly polls will be held soon which will also coincide with nine years of Modi rule. Anurag Thakur, Bhupendra Yadav, Dharmendra Pradhan, Piyush Goyal have also been included in this committee.

international



What an honour it is to be here in Ghana and on the continent of Africa. I'm very excited about the future of Africa
KAMALA HARRIS | VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

SRI LANKA, INDIA TO BEGIN PASSENGER FERRY SERVICE

The much-delayed passenger ferry service between Sri Lanka and India is set to start by the end of April, Civil Aviation Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said Sunday



of the day quote

We all recall the horrors that took place January 6 spurred on by then-President Trump. I think the fact that he's calling for protests again -- I have been briefed by the FBI
MARK WARNER | UNITED STATES SENATOR

Now almost 1.5 million hectares of land have been planted with forest
SAIDA MIRZIYOYEVA | UZBEKISTANI POLITICIAN

China's attitude towards developing a healthy, stable and constructive Sino-US relationship remains unchanged, while it hopes the United States will stop using unscrupulous means to contain and suppress China
QIN GANG | CHINA'S FOREIGN MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Daylight savings time row erupts

Beirut: The Lebanese government's last-minute decision to delay the start of daylight savings time by a month until the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan resulted in mass confusion Sunday. With some institutions implementing the change while others refused, many Lebanese have found themselves in the position of juggling work and school schedules in different time zones -- in a country that is just 88 kilometers (55 miles) at its widest point. In some cases, the debate took on a sectarian nature, with many Christian politicians and institutions, including the small nation's largest church, the Maronite Church, rejecting the move.

Turkmenistan votes for new Parliament

Ashgabat: Voters in Turkmenistan headed to the polls Sunday to elect a new parliament that is expected to be opposition-free and loyal to the government of the gas-rich Central Asian nation. A total of 2,602 polling stations opened in Turkmenistan at 7 a.m. (0200 GMT) to accommodate about 3.5 million registered voters, with another 42 polling sites set up at embassies abroad. Voters will elect 125 members of parliament out of 258 candidates, put forward by three political parties or running independently. All of them support President Serdar Berdimuhamedov.

Travel disruption hits Germany

Berlin: An increased number of travellers in Germany boarded trains and planes Sunday, a day before a major one-day strike that aims to bring the country's transportation system to a standstill. But even advance travel was met with disruption in some places as Munich airport already shut down because of the impending strike on Monday, and technical problems affecting German airline Lufthansa in Frankfurt led to flight delays and cancellations at the country's biggest airport.

Indian delegation calls on SL President

Colombo: A high-level Indian delegation called on Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe here Sunday and briefed him on the developments in the jointly-identified priority areas for collaboration in the energy sector. President Wickremesinghe provided his insights on the early implementation of these initiatives, the Indian High Commission in Colombo said. It said India would gift Sri Lanka 500 solar-powered indoor cooking systems.

NATO condemns Putin's N-arms plan

AGENCIES

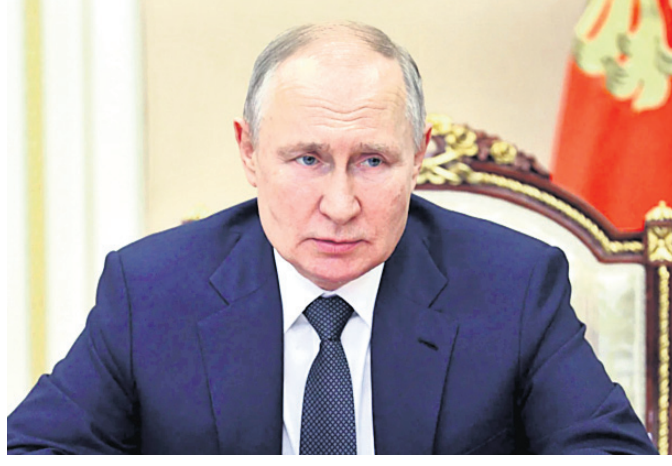
Kyiv, March 26: NATO Sunday criticised Vladimir Putin for what it called his "dangerous and irresponsible" nuclear rhetoric, a day after the Russian president said he would station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.

Putin announced the move Saturday and likened it to the US stationing its weapons in Europe, while insisting that Russia would not violate its nuclear non-proliferation promises.

Although the move was not unexpected, it is one of Russia's most pronounced nuclear signals since the beginning of its invasion of Ukraine 13 months ago, and Ukraine called for a meeting of the UN Security Council in response.

While Washington, the world's other nuclear superpower, played down concerns about Putin's announcement, NATO said the Russian President's non-proliferation pledge and his description of US weapons deployment overseas were way off the mark.

"Russia's reference to NATO's nuclear sharing is totally misleading. NATO allies act with full respect of their international commitments," a NATO spokesperson said in emailed comments to Reuters Sunday. New START caps the number of strategic nuclear warheads that the United States and Russia can deploy, and the deployment of land- and submarine-based mis-



siles and bombers to deliver them. A top security adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Oleksiy Danilov, said Russia's plan would also destabilise Belarus, which he said had been taken "hostage" by Moscow. Experts said Russia's move was significant since it had until now been proud that unlike the United States, it did not deploy nuclear weapons outside its borders. It may be the first time since the mid-1990s that it has done so. Another senior Zelenskyy adviser Sunday scoffed at Putin's plan, saying the Russian leader is "too predictable". "Making a statement about tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, he admits that he is afraid of losing & all he can do is scare with tactics," Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter. Washington appeared to

RUSSIA, CHINA ARE NOT CREATING MILITARY ALLIANCE, PUTIN SAYS
KYIV CALLS FOR UN SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION OVER PUTIN'S NUCLEAR PLANS
MOSCOW SAID IT WAS MAKING THE MOVE IN RESPONSE TO THE WEST'S INCREASING MILITARY SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE
PUTIN ARGUED THAT BY DEPLOYING ITS TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN BELARUS, RUSSIA WAS FOLLOWING THE LEAD OF THE UNITED STATES

see no change in the potential for Moscow to use nuclear weapons in the war in Ukraine, and it and NATO said the news would not affect their own nuclear position.

NETANYAHU FIRES DEFENCE MINISTER



AGENCIES

Tel Aviv, March 26: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired his Defense Minister Sunday, a day after Yoav Gallant called for a halt to the planned overhaul of Israel's judiciary that has fiercely divided the country.

Netanyahu's office did not provide further details. The move signals the Prime Minister will move ahead this week with plans to overhaul Israel's judiciary, which has sparked widespread opposition. Tens of thousands of protesters have taken to the streets, military and business leaders have spoken out against it and leading allies of Israel have voiced concerns. Gallant, a former army general, is a senior member of Netanyahu's ruling Likud party.

On Saturday, he called for a pause in the controversial legislation until after next month's Independence Day holidays, citing the rift's threat to Israel's na-

tional security. Meanwhile, an Israeli good governance group Sunday asked the country's Supreme Court to punish Netanyahu for allegedly violating a conflict of interest agreement meant to prevent him from dealing with the country's judiciary while he is on trial for corruption.

The request by the Movement for Quality Government in Israel intensifies a brewing showdown between Netanyahu's government and the judiciary.

Netanyahu's government is pushing ahead for a parliamentary vote this week on a centerpiece of the overhaul -- a law that would give the governing coalition the final say over all judicial appointments. Outgoing Defense Minister Gallant was the first to break ranks late Saturday by calling for the legislation to be frozen. Gallant cited the turmoil in the ranks of the military over the plan. But it was unclear whether others would follow him.

Imran unveils 10-point roadmap to revive Pak



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, March 26: Pakistan's ousted prime minister Imran Khan held a massive rally here Sunday and presented his party's 10-point roadmap for the cash-strapped country's economic recovery, including sops for the diaspora.

Addressing the public rally at Minar-i-Pakistan in the early hours of Sunday, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman challenged the country's ruling party to put forward a plan to rescue Pakistan from the many crises it finds itself mired in. "I challenge that the incumbent rulers don't have the ability or the intention [to save the country]," he said. Khan, 70, said he would happily step aside if the establishment tells him they have a plan. "I know what the programme is... there is no programme," he was quoted as

saying by the Dawn newspaper. Announcing the 10-point programme, Khan said that overseas Pakistanis will be motivated to invest in Pakistan to attract foreign direct investments to avoid going to the IMF again and again.

"We will facilitate all those who would export and bring dollars into the country," he added. "A major surgery is needed to put our house in order. Overseas Pakistanis will bring their dollars to the country provided they are given incentives," he said, adding that only 2.5 million Pakistanis out of 220 million pay taxes.

"There is a need to increase the tax base to achieve progress," he said and also proposed giving loans to young people to start businesses and reviving the mortgage scheme. Khan said his government would promote tourism, adding that the minerals sector would be focused on generating revenue.

The ex-premier said after coming to power his government would increase agriculture productivity with the cooperation of China. The government would take measures to stop money laundering, he said, adding that the current account deficit would be curtailed as well. Khan, who is facing threats to his life, addressed the rally from a bullet-proof glass container.

PAKISTAN, WHICH IS IN DIRE NEED OF FUNDS AS IT BATTLES A WRENCHING ECONOMIC CRISIS, HAS RECEIVED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE IMF IN THE PAST
THE COUNTRY IS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH GLOBAL LENDER TO RESUME ITS LOAN PROGRAMME



CHINA FASHION WEEK : Models present creations from Chinese fashion studio D. Martina Queen during a show in Beijing, China

Indian journalist attacked in US by Khalistani elements

AGENCIES

Washington, March 26: A journalist working for news agency PTI faced physical assault and verbal intimidation by Khalistani elements protesting outside the Indian Embassy in Washington, drawing strong reaction from the Indian mission.

The US correspondent of the Press Trust of India, Lalit K Jha, was covering the pro-Khalistan

protest when he came under attack. But the timely intervention by the US Secret Service and the local police saved him.

"We have seen disturbing visuals of a senior Indian journalist from the Press Trust of India being abused, threatened & assaulted physically while covering the so-called 'Khalistan protest' in Washington DC earlier today," the Indian Embassy here said in a statement.

"We understand that the journalist was first verbally intimidated, then physically assaulted, and fearing for his personal safety and well-being, had to call in law enforcement agencies, who responded promptly," the statement said.

"Such activities only underscore the violent and anti-social tendencies of the so-called 'Khalistani protestors' and their supporters, who routinely engage in wanton violence and vandalism," it said.

Hong Kongers hold first protest under strict rules

AGENCIES

Hong Kong, March 26: Dozens of people Sunday joined Hong Kong's first authorised protest since the lifting of major Covid-19 restrictions under unprecedentedly strict rules, including wearing a numbered badge around their necks.

The rules set out by the police, who cited security reasons, came as the financial hub was promoting its return to normalcy after years of anti-virus controls and political turmoil.

During the pandemic, protests were rare due to COVID-19 restrictions. In addition, many activists have been silenced or jailed after Beijing imposed a national security law following massive protests in 2019.

Critics say the city's freedom of assembly that was promised Hong Kong when it returned to China from Britain in 1997 has been eroded.

Demonstrations have been rare in recent years due to Covid-19 and the 2019 imposition of Beijing's national security law, which strictly limited protests

Sunday's demonstration against the proposed reclamation and construction of rubbish-processing facilities was the first police-approved march of its kind after the city scrapped its mask mandate and social distancing limits. But organisers had to comply with police requirements such as taking measures to ensure the number of participants would not exceed the expected turnout of 100 people and asking for proof of a "reasonable excuse" from protesters who wore masks during the event. At the height of the 2019 anti-gov-



ernment movement, Hong Kong's government invoked emergency powers to ban masks from public gatherings so it can identify protesters who officials accused of illegal acts. On Sunday, about 60 people expressed their opposition to the plans in Tseung Kwan O, a residential and industrial area, and had to walk in a cordoned-off moving line in the rain amid heavy

police presence. Theresa Wang described the new restrictions as "a bit weird" but said they were still acceptable because the city was adjusting to "the new Hong Kong." "I'm not happy but we have to accept it. We have to accept what is deemed legal now," the 70-year-old retiree said, adding that she hoped the protest would be a sign the government is more open to dis-

China, Honduras establish ties

Beijing: Honduras formed diplomatic ties with China Sunday after breaking off relations with Taiwan, which is now recognized by only 13 sovereign states, including Vatican City. The announcement reported by Chinese state media CCTV came after the Honduran and Taiwanese governments made separate announcements that they were severing ties.

Earlier this month, the Hong Kong Women Workers' Association planned a march to call for labor and women's rights but canceled it at the last moment without specifying why. Days later, the association said on its Facebook page that police had invited it for further meetings after granting it the approval and that it had tried its best to amend the agreement. But it still could not launch the protest as it had wished, it wrote at that time.

said earlier the requirement aims to prevent lawbreakers from joining the march. "But if it is a requirement, what can I say? I prefer not to comment further. You know what I mean," he said.

In granting its approval, police also requested that organisers ensure there would not be any acts that might endanger national security, including displaying anything seditious.

Earlier this month, the Hong Kong Women Workers' Association planned a march to call for labor and women's rights but canceled it at the last moment without specifying why. Days later, the association said on its Facebook page that police had invited it for further meetings after granting it the approval and that it had tried its best to amend the agreement. But it still could not launch the protest as it had wished, it wrote at that time.

business

of the day quote

One of the topics at the G20 Presidency is showcasing digital public infrastructure that India has built over the last many years... Aadhaar is the largest national identity project in the world... Look at the UPI numbers, they are mind blowing. There is nothing like UPI anywhere in the world

DAISY CHITILAPILLY
PRESIDENT, CISCO INDIA AND SAARC

I am confident that India's highways will be on par with that of the US by 2024. Work in a time bound mission mode is on to build a robust infrastructure including a network of green expressways across the length and breadth of India

NTIN GADKARI | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

I think AI has a big future in India and across the world because at the end of the day, repetitive jobs are something people do not like doing. People also wonder whether this will mean jobs will decrease but this will not be the case. It is only that our consumption patterns will change

ARUNDHATI BHATTACHARYA
FORMER SBI CHAIRPERSON

SHORT TAKES

X-ray imports duty increased to 15%

New Delhi: The government has hiked customs duty on import of X-ray machines and non-portable X-ray generators to 15 per cent with effect from April 1. Currently, portable X-ray machines and non-portable X-ray generators and apparatus attract 10 per cent import duty. The changes in the customs duty rate were brought in as part of the amendments to the Finance Bill, 2023, which was passed by the Lok Sabha last Friday.

Some textile items get export benefits

New Delhi: The government has extended export benefits under RoDTEP scheme to 18 items related to textiles sector, including saari and lungi, with a view to boost shipments of these goods. Benefits under the duty refund scheme - Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) -- will be given to exports made from March 23, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has said in a notification.

Zydus recalls 55k drug bottles in US

New Delhi: Drug firm Zydus Lifesciences is recalling over 55,000 bottles of generic medication in the US market due to failed impurities specifications. As per the latest enforcement report by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Zydus Pharmaceuticals (USA) Inc is recalling 21,936 (30 count) and 33,096 (100 count) bottles of Colchicine tablets, which are used to treat gout.

Crompton Greaves, Butterfly merge

New Delhi: Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd (CGCEL) and Butterfly Gandhimathi Appliances have announced a merger to accelerate and smoothen the realisation of synergies of the combined business. This will also simplify corporate and governance structure and convergence of public shareholders of Butterfly at the parent level and align interests for shareholders of both companies, said a joint statement. This would be based on a share swap, it added.



“If you ask me, can the pricing of satellite communication be at par with mobile tariffs? Whatever is currently available in the Western world, it can be done today. What is available in India for 2 and 2.5 dollars a month? No, because that is a pricing which is extremely low

SUNIL BHARTI MITTAL | EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, ONEWEB

ELON PUTS \$20BN VALUE ON TWITTER

Twitter Inc CEO Elon Musk has offered the social-media company's employees stock grants at a valuation of nearly \$20 billion. The reported valuation is less than half of the \$44 billion that Musk paid to acquire the social media platform, pointing to a drop in Twitter's value



Govt caps maximum GST cess rate on pan masala and tobacco

The capping of the cess rate is part of the 75 amendments to the Finance Bill, 2023 which was passed by the Lok Sabha March 24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: The government has capped the maximum rate of GST compensation cess that would be levied on pan masala, cigarettes and other forms of tobacco and linked the highest rate to their retail sale price.

The capping of the cess rate was brought in as part of the amendments to the Finance Bill, 2023, which was passed by the Lok Sabha last Friday. As per the amendment, the maximum GST compensation cess rate for pan masala will be 51 per cent of the retail sale price per unit. In the current regime, the cess is charged at 135 per cent ad valorem.

The rate for tobacco has been fixed at ₹4,170 per thousand sticks plus 290 per cent ad valorem or 100 per cent of the retail sale price per unit. So far, the highest rate was ₹4,170 per thousand sticks plus 290 per cent ad valorem. The cess is levied over and above the highest Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate of 28 per cent. Changes in schedule-I of GST compensation cess Act, brought in via amendment in Finance Bill, has capped the maximum cess that can be charged on Pan masala and tobacco products.

'RBI may hike interest rate by 25bps in April MPC meet'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 26: With retail inflation remaining above the comfort level of 6 per cent and most global peers including US Fed continuing hawkish stance, the Reserve Bank of India too may go in for a 25 basis points hike in the bi-monthly monetary policy to be announced April 6, opined experts. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank will be meeting for three days April 3, 5 and 6 to take into account various domestic and global factors before coming out with the first bi-monthly monetary policy for fiscal 2023-24. The two key factors which the committee will deliberate intensely while firming up the next monetary policy are elevated retail inflation and the recent action taken by cen-



Maximum GST compensation cess rate for pan masala will be 51 per cent of the retail sale price per unit. In the current regime, the cess is charged at 135 per cent ad valorem

The rate for tobacco has been fixed at ₹4,170 per thousand sticks plus 290 per cent ad valorem or 100 per cent of the retail sale price per unit

introduce applicable tax rates through a notification.

This change marks a significant shift in taxation policy for pan masala and tobacco-supplying companies. Though this policy will arrest tax evasion to a great extent in this sector, it still may prove to be a regressive plan from an economic standpoint, Mohan said.

In February, the GST Council chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising state counterparts, had approved the report of a panel of state finance ministers on plugging tax evasion in pan masala and gutka businesses. The GoM had recommended that the mechanism for levy of compensation cess on pan masala and chewing tobacco be changed from ad valorem to a specific rate-based levy to boost the first stage collection of the revenue.



tral banks of the developed nations especially the US Federal Reserve, European Central Bank and Bank of England. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been raising benchmark rates since May 2022 to contain inflation which has been largely driven

HOUSING SALES Top 7 cities see 14% surge YoY in Q1

Anarock data also suggest that average housing prices across the top 7 cities increased 6-9% annually in January-March, 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: Housing sales in India's top seven cities are estimated to rise 14 per cent during January-March to over 1.13 lakh units on strong demand despite increase in prices by 6-9 per cent, according to Anarock.

Real estate consultant Anarock, which tracks the primary (fresh sales) residential market, said the bull run continued in the housing segment of Indian realty sector despite rise in interest rates on home loans, leading to highest quarterly sales in the last one decade.

According to the data compiled by Anarock, housing sales are estimated at 1,13,770 units in January-March, up 14 per cent from 99,550 units in the year-ago period across seven major cities.



The quarter has recorded the highest ever sales in the last decade amid significant rise in demand for high-ticket priced homes (more than ₹1.5 crore)

ANUJ PURI | CHAIRMAN, ANAROCK

Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Pune contributed 48 per cent to total sales. Delhi-NCR is the only city likely to witness a decline in sales during the first quarter of this calendar year. The residential market's winning streak continued in the first quarter of 2023 with housing sales in top cities breaching the previous high of Q1, 2022.

Puri, however, cautioned that emerging headwinds could pose a

challenge in the short-term. Persistent inflation concerns along with another possible rate hike by the RBI in the near future could dent the housing market's growth trajectory in the upcoming two quarters, Puri said.

As per the data, housing sales in MMR are likely to rise 19 per cent to 34,690 units in January-March from 29,130 units in the corresponding period of last year.

In Pune, sales are set to rise 42 per cent to 19,920 units from 14,020 units. Housing sales in Delhi-NCR, however, are seen falling by 9 per cent to 17,160 units from 18,835 units. In Bangalore, the sales of residential properties are esti-

mated to rise 16 per cent to 15,660 units from 13,450 units.

Sales in Hyderabad are set to rise 9 per cent to 14,280 units from 13,140 units. Chennai is likely to witness 18 per cent growth in sales to 5,880 units from 4,985 units.

Sales of residential properties in Kolkata are estimated to increase by modest 3 per cent to 6,180 units in January-March quarter this year from 5,990 units in the same period last year. Anarock data also suggest that average housing prices across the top 7 cities increased 6-9 per cent annually in January-March 2023, mainly due to increase in the prices of construction raw materials and overall rise in demand.

MMR and Bangalore recorded the highest 9 per cent annual jump. Commenting on the data, realty firm Signature Global Chairman Pradeep Aggarwal said the housing sector is experiencing strong sales due to increased affordability over the year.

Despite the rise in home loan interest rates, there has been minimal impact on demand nationwide. We anticipate that the demand in the housing sector will continue for at least a few more years, Aggarwal said.

March FPI inflow at ₹7.2K-cr so far



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: Foreign investors have pumped ₹7,200 crore into the Indian equities so far this month, mainly driven by bulk investment in the Adani Group companies by the US-based GQG Partners.

Going ahead, FPIs are likely to be cautious in the near term since there is a risk-off sentiment in equity markets globally due to the stress in the US banking system and the crash in banking

stocks, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

The stress appeared in the US banking system after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank earlier this month. Most global equity markets witnessed a sharp recovery, even as macro sentiments remained volatile as frailties in European and US banks were under focus.

On the economy front, the US Federal Reserve increased the Fed Fund rates by 25 basis points while

voicing confidence in the stability of the US financial system. FPI flows are expected to remain volatile given the tight central bank monetary policy, Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

According to the data with the depositories, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) invested ₹7,233 crore in Indian equities till March 25.

This came after a net outflow of ₹5,294 crore in February and ₹28,852 crore in January. Prior to that, FPIs infused a net amount of ₹11,119 crore in December, data showed.

The inflow in March is inclusive of the bulk investment of ₹15,446 crore by GQG in the four Adani stocks, Vijayakumar said.

Mutual funds nomination deadline to end March 31

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: Existing mutual fund investors have time till March 31 to nominate a beneficiary or opt out of it by submitting a declaration form, failing which their folios will be frozen, and they will not be able to redeem investment.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), in its circular June 15, 2022, made it mandatory for mutual fund subscribers to submit the nomination details or declaration to opt out of the nomination on or after August 1, 2022. Later, the deadline was extended to October 1, 2022.

The deadline for all the existing mutual fund folios, including jointly-held ones, was set as March 31, 2023, failing which the folios will be frozen for debits.

Explaining the rationale behind



the Sebi's move, Anand Rathi Wealth Ltd COO Niranjan Babu Ramayanan said that many investment accounts in the past have been opened without nominating anyone to whom the assets should be transmitted in case something happens to the account holders.

This means that the rightful heirs had difficulty in getting the assets transmitted to them due to the hassles of different kinds of documentation requirements.

Soft drinks to soaps: Reliance unveils big price war plan

RIL AIMS TO BE A RELEVANT PLAYER IN THE \$110-BN FMCG SEGMENT, LARGELY DOMINATED BY PLAYERS AS HUL, P&G, RECKITT, AND NESTLE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 26: After stirring a price war in the soft drink segment with the re-launch of Campa, billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance has entered the personal and home care segment of FMCG, offering products at 30 to 35 per cent lesser price.

Experts say the jury is out and a competitive offering from Reliance would attract the customers to try its products and evaluate performance, quality and perception in comparison to the same from the established brands.

Products of RCPL, the FMCG arm and wholly-owned subsidiary

of Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL), are available only in selected markets but the company is building a dealer network on a pan-India basis, and the availability of its products will be scaled up across modern and general trade channels.

They are creating a distinct and dedicated distribution network comprising traditional dealers/stockists as well as modern trade b2b channels, said an industry source.

It articulates ambitions to be a relevant player in the USD 110-billion FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) segment, largely dominated by players as HUL, P&G, Reckitt, and Nestle.



RCPL has priced its Glimmer beauty soaps, Get Real natural soaps, and Puric hygiene soaps at ₹25, which is much lower than the products of leading brands such as Lux (Rs 35 for 100 gm), Dettol (Rs 40 for 75 gm) and Santoor (Rs 34 for 100 gm) etc, while prices of its Enzo 2 litre front load and top load liquid detergent is ₹250 (on Jio

Mart) in comparison to a 2-litre pack of Surf Excel Matic priced at ₹325.

For Enzo front-load and top-load detergent powder, it had priced at ₹149 for 1-kilogramme pack (on Jio Mart). Front-load and top-load refer to the two categories of washing machine.

While, in the dish wash seg-

A report from expert market research estimates the Indian beauty and personal care industry valued at USD 21.65 billion in 2022

ment, it has started with the attractive price point of ₹5, ₹10 and ₹15 for bars and has also launched liquid gel packs at price points of ₹10, ₹30 and ₹45.

RCPL, which competes with HUL's Vim, Jyothy Lab's Exo and Pril in the dish wash category, has also introduced a ₹1 sachet of liquid gel in the category. It is yet to announce the price of Enzo detergent bars.

Earlier this month, RCPL relaunched the iconic soft drinks brand Campa, entering into the turf of US cola majors PepsiCo and

Coca-Cola. It had priced competitively at ₹10 for a 200-ml bottle and ₹20 for a 500-ml bottle.

According to the online market and consumer data platform Statista, the Indian soft drinks segment is estimated at USD 8.85 billion.

Technopak Advisors Chairman Arvind Singhal said Reliance has earlier successfully disrupted the market in the telecom sector with its prices.

They want to compete with HUL's Surf and Lux, market leaders in their respective categories. They have a product, which is of ₹25 against ₹34 of Lux, it is a substantial incentive for the customer to try it once. Once the customer has tried it and the product is actually as good as Lux is, then Reliance can build a market. But if the consumer finds that it is slightly inferior to Lux, then Reliance will not succeed, said Singhal.

GLOVES OF GOLD

All-round show helps MI clinch maiden WPL crown

WOMEN BOXERS MAKE INDIA PROUD AS NIKHAT ZAREEN, LOVLINA BORGHAIN BECOME WORLD CHAMPS



Packing a punch: (Left) Lovlina Borgohain celebrates her gold medal win



Nikhata Zareen holds aloft her World Championship belt

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 26: Nikhat Zareen continued to grow in stature as she added a second World title to her swelling trophy cabinet while Lovlina Borgohain broke her 'bronze jinx' to claim her maiden gold medal at the marquee event here Sunday.

Nikhata upstaged two-time Asian champion Vietnam's Nguyen Thi Tam by a 5-0 verdict to take the light flyweight title in front of a packed KD Jadhav Indoor Hall. Two-time World Championship bronze medalist Lovlina, on the other hand, defeated Caitlin Parker of Australia 5-2 to win her maiden title.

With the win, Nikhat became only the second Indian after the legendary MC Mary Kom to win the title of the prestigious tournament

Nikhata only 2nd Indian women boxer to win 2 World Championship titles

By winning 4 gold medals, Indian boxers equalled the feat achieved in 2006, the country's best-ever show

twice. MC Mary Kom had once angrily asked, "Who Nikhat Zareen?" Well it seems that Nikhat has given Mary Kom the perfect riposte.

"I am very happy that I have become a World Champion for the second time, especially in an Olympic category," Nikhat, who won the 52kg title last year, said after her bout.

"Today's (Sunday) bout was the toughest for me, she (Nguyen) is an Asian champion and my next tar-

get is Asian Games and I might meet her, so I will work hard. It was a roller coaster bout, she got a warning, I got a warning, she got a count and so did I. But I went all out and it paid off," Nikhat said.

Nikhata, who has moved down from her preferred 52kg, looked tentative at first as Tam was the first one to attack. But after a few seconds, the home favourite turned aggressive. She then landed two right hooks, followed by straight jabs.

Tam was handed a penalty point for clinching further, tilting the result in Nikhat's favour as she took the first three minutes by an unanimous verdict. However, Nguyen came back strongly in the second round and won it.

In the final three minutes, both boxers went for broke and attacked each other relentlessly. If Nikhat's

powerful right cross forced the referee to give Tam the eight count, Tam's jab compelled the referee to do the same to the Indian.

"For me, this is the first major competition in this category after the Commonwealth Games, which did not have much competition. I had to compete in back-to-back matches and my body was a bit slow in some matches. I will learn from these experience and try to become stronger," Nikhat, who has already qualified for the Asian Games, said.

Lovlina's bout, on the other hand, had to be reviewed and the verdict went in the Indian's favour.

"I could not fully execute the plan, the coaches had worked out for me. However, in the end, some of it was successful and I am happy I could win the gold," Lovlina stated.

AGENCIES

Mumbai, March 26: A late flourish from England all-rounder Nat Sciver-Brunt (60 n o, 55b, 7x4) helped Mumbai Indians (MI) beat Delhi Capitals (DC) by seven wickets in a low-scoring summit clash to become champions of the inaugural Women's Premier League here Sunday. In front of a partisan crowd that filled the Brabourne Stadium here to the brim, MI chased down the target of 131 with three balls to spare to lift the trophy.

Opting to bat first, DC suffered a collapse to be reduced to 79 for nine in 16 overs but posted a respectable total of 131 for nine, thanks to a 52-run partnership for the unbroken 10th wicket between Shikha Pandey (27 n o, 17b, 3x4, 1x6) and Radha Yadav (27 n o, 12b, 2x4, 2x6).

It was not an easy run chase for MI but they eventually crossed the line, reaching 134 for 3 in 19.3 overs, with Sciver-Brunt and captain

Harmanpreet (37, 39b, 5x4) and Sciver-Brunt joined forces when MI were precariously placed at 23 for two in the fourth over, and combined their batting prowess to soak the pressure and add 72 runs for the third wicket.

MI needed 45 runs from the last five overs though they had eight wickets in hand then. Sciver-Brunt was 28 off 38 balls at that stage but she struck a flurry of boundaries to help her side cross the line.

Earlier, Shikha and Radha fought back with a counter-attacking stand to help DC post a fighting total. However, in the end, it was not enough.

Delhi Capitals were off to a rocky start, collapsing from 74 for three in the 11th over to 79 for 9 after

16, thanks to devastating show from overseas bowlers Hayley Matthews (3/5), Isabelle Wong (3/42) and Amelia Kerr (2/18). It was Kerr again at the centre stage when Mumbai smashed 15 runs in the penultimate over. It was that over from Jess Jonassen which changed the complexion of the game. Prior to that over MI required 21 from two overs.

The three wickets to Caribbean all-rounder Matthews took her tally to 16 – the highest in the tournament. UP Warriorz' Sophie Ecclestone, Wong, Kerr and MI's Saika Ishaque finished with 15 wickets each.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals 131 for 9 (Meg Lanning 35, Shikha Pandey 27 n o, Radha Yadav 27 n o, Haeley Matthews 3/5, Isabelle Wong 3/42) lost to Mumbai Indians 134 for 3 in 19.3 overs (Nat Sciver-Brunt 60 n o, Harmanpreet Kaur 37) by seven wickets.



MOMENT OF ECSTASY: Players of MI are jubilant after winning the final of the WPL played Sunday in Mumbai

SHORT TAKES

Youth lifters shine

NEW DELHI: Indian weightlifters Dhanush Loganathan and Jyoshna Sabar won bronze medals in their respective categories on the opening day of the IWF World Youth Championships in Durres, Albania. Competing in the women's 40kg event, 14-year-old Jyoshna had a combined lift of 115kg (53kg in snatch and 62kg in clean & jerk) as she finished third Saturday night. Jyoshna won silver in the snatch section but was sixth in the clean and jerk category in the seven-lifter field. Dhanush, on the other hand, heaved a total weight of 200kg (88kg+112kg) to finish third behind Filipinos Prince K Santos and Eron Borres in the men's 49kg event. The 16-year-old won a silver medal in the snatch category.

Samra bags bronze

BHOPAL: India's upcoming shooter Sift Kaur Samra came up with an inspired performance to clinch her second senior medal at the international level, beating a tough field to win the 50m rifle 3P bronze on the penultimate day of the ISSF Rifle/Pistol World Cup here Sunday. On a day when China continued their domination, with Zhang Qiongyue winning gold in the event, Samra, the reigning national champion, scored a total of 403.9 points in the ranking round to finish third, even as Zhang (414.7 points) and Czech Republic's Aneta Brabcova (411.3) entered the title round. India are currently second on the medals table behind China with one gold, one silver and five bronze medals.

Messi honoured

BUENOS AIRES: Argentine football legend Lionel Messi was honoured in the town of Ezeiza on the outskirts of this city, where the Argentine Football Association (AFA) named its training complex after the national team captain. "Welcome to the home of the World Champions. Welcome to the home of all our national teams, that has introduced Argentine football to the world," AFA president Claudio Tapia said during the launching ceremony on Saturday. He indicated that there will be a new sports housing complex on the site, which will also bear the star's name. "It is indeed a big honour for me," Messi said.

Chirag, Satwik sign off with title

5TH CAREER TITLE FOR INDIAN DUO AS THEY OVERCOME CHINESE COMBO

AGENCIES

Basel, March 26: The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty capped off their impressive campaign with a title win here, beating China's Ren Xiang Yu and Tan Qiang in the final of the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament Sunday. The second-seeded Indian pair, the 2022 World Championships bronze medallist, was solid in defence and dished out an attacking game to outwit the Chinese combo 21-19, 24-22 in 54 minutes.

It was the first title of the season for the Indian pair, who had claimed the India Open and French Open titles last year, besides securing the Thailand Open in 2019 and Hyderabad Open in 2018. Satwik and Chirag had also won the Commonwealth Games gold in 2022. Playing the Chinese pair for



FAST AND FURIOUS: Chirag Shetty (L) and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (R) pose with their trophies after winning the doubles title at Basel

the first time, Satwik and Chirag turned up the heat at crucial junctures to come out victorious.

Both the games were close affairs with leads frequently changing hands. However, the Indians held

their nerves to win their fifth title.

A service error from Chirag was a dampener but India managed to lead 3-1 early on before the Chinese drew parity at 6-6. There was another service error for height from Satwik before the Indians entered the break with a three-point cushion.

The Indians tried to keep the rallies flat and short and it worked, as they led 15-10 and then 18-13. However, Tan and Ren soon narrowed down the gap to 17-18. However, a precise smash from Chirag, which bisected the court, gave India two game points. The Chinese pair saved one, but Satwik sealed the game with a smash.

The second game was an extremely close affair as the rivals fought tooth and nail. The Chinese duo led 4-2, but the Indians went into the break with a two point advantage at 11-9. However, soon it was 16-all and it looked anybody's game. Finally however, Chirag and Satwik prevailed.

The Indians won because they won the vital points and adopted a cautious but aggressive approach. It was their back-court play which helped them subdue the attacking Chinese pair.

Spain cruise against Haaland-less Norway

Wales frustrate Croatia with last-gasp goal

AGENCIES

Madrid, March 26: Spain won 3-0 against a Norway side missing the injured Erling Haaland in the opening round of Euro 2024 qualifiers here Saturday, while Wales snatched an added-on time equaliser to frustrate Croatia in another game.

Dani Olmo turned in Alejandro Balde's driven low cross on 13 minutes in Malaga and Joselu scored twice on his Spain debut to give new coach Luis de la Fuente a victory in his first match in charge. Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga pulled off a brilliant reflex stop to deny Fredrik Aursnes of Norway and clawed another effort off the line on his first start for Spain since October 2020.

Alexander Sorloth then volleyed wide before Espanyol striker Joselu came off the bench and bagged a quick-fire double – heading in his first and sweeping home a rebound for the second goal. "I still can't believe it," said the 32-year-old Joselu, the first Spain player to net twice on his international debut since

Fernando Morientes in 1998.

Three-time European champions Spain next go to Scotland, who saw off Cyprus 3-0 in their Group A opener after Scott McTominay scored twice late on as a substitute at Hampden Park.

Croatia, finalists and semifinalists at the past two World Cups, conceded a last-gasp equaliser to kick off Group D as Wales debutant Nathan Broadhead tapped home a flick-on from a long throw.

Andrej Kramaric's low shot from just outside the area had given Croatia the lead in Split against a Wales team beginning life after the retirement of their record goalscorer and captain Gareth Bale.

Luka Modric won his 163rd cap for Croatia, who have never lost a home European Championship qualifier – a run now spanning 36 matches dating back to 1994. Turkey came from behind to defeat Armenia 2-1 in Yerevan as efforts from Orkun Kokcu and Kerem Akturkoglu cancelled out an early own goal by former Liverpool defender Ozan Kabak.

Rybakina survives Badosa scare, Gauff sent packing

AGENCIES

Miami, March 26: Elena Rybakina kept her 'Sunshine Double' hopes alive as she battled from the brink to beat Paul Badosa in the third round of the Miami Open tennis tournament here Saturday, while Russian Anastasia Potapova upset Coco Gauff in three sets.

Wimbledon champion Rybakina, fresh off her Indian Wells triumph last week, calmly saved a match point on serve in the second set and fired 60 winners, including a dozen aces, as she earned a gutsy 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 win against Badosa. In another match, World No 27 Potapova produced some of her best tennis to see off World No six Gauff in a 6-7(6-8) 7-5, 6-2 win and set up a meeting with China's Zheng Qinwen.

Rybakina, who also had to go the distance in her opening match against Anna Kalinskaya, struggled to find her rhythm on serve in the opening set but wrestled back momentum in the second. From then on she never looked back. After being broken four times in the

OTHER RESULTS

Felix Auger-Aliassime beat Thiago Monteiro 7-6, 7-6

Jessica Pegula bt Danielle Collins 6-1, 7-6

Mackenzie McDonald bt Matteo Berrettini 7-6, 7-5

opening set, Rybakina lost her serve only once more in the match.

"It didn't start well in the first set but in the end I just found some energy," Rybakina said. "I was trying to push more on the serve and started to move better on the court. It was a really tough battle," she added.

Potapova on the other hand, mounted a stout defense to fend off 10 of 13 breakpoints and grinned widely as she fired down an unreturnable serve to secure the win.

In the men's section, Indian Wells runner-up Daniil Medvedev breezed past Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena 6-1, 6-2 in just over an hour.

A morale-boosting meeting for Rishabh

FORMERS CALL ON KEEPER-BATTER, WHO MET WITH AN ACCIDENT IN DEC, TO WISH HIM WELL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 26: Former Indian cricketers Suresh Raina, Harbhajan Singh and S Sreesanth met wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant, who is recovering from injuries sustained in a horrific car accident last year.

"Brotherhood is everything...family is where our heart is...wishing our brother Rishabh Pant the very best and fast recovery," tweeted Raina, the former India left-handed batter after the meeting.

After the meeting Harbhajan also tweeted wishing Pant the best. "TRUST AND KNOW THERE IS SOMETHING INSIDE YOU THAT IS GREATER THAN ANY OBSTACLE YOU FACE...GOOD TO SEE YOU CHOTTE BHAI...WAITING FOR YOUR COMEBACK," Harbhajan tweeted.

Pant suffered a horrific accident last year December 30 early in the morning. Pant, 25, miraculously survived when his Mercedes car collided with a divider and caught fire on the Delhi-Dehradun highway while on the way to his hometown



(From left): Suresh Raina, S Sreesanth, Rishabh Pant and Harbhajan Singh

Roorkee. The car accident happened between Manglaur and Narsari in Haridwar district in the state of Uttarakhand.

Pant was initially taken to

Saksham Hospital Multi-Specialty and Trauma Centre, before being admitted to Max Hospital, Dehradun. Then he was shifted January 4 to Mumbai for surgery and so that he

Sourav wants Pant to heal 'properly'

NEW DELHI: Former BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has said that Rishabh Pant 'must take his time to heal properly' from his injuries, before launching his bid for a comeback to competitive cricket. He doesn't want Pant to rush back to the field. Ganguly who is director of cricket in IPL franchise Delhi Capitals said that the team will definitely miss the dashing keeper-batter in the upcoming IPL.

could be under the direct supervision of Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala, the head of the Centre for Sports Medicine, and Director of Arthroscopy & Shoulder Service, at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Andheri West.

Later in February, Pant shared through his social media accounts that his surgery was successful. Since then, he has posted pictures and videos of himself on the recovery process and walking on crutches.