

Deepika's revelation

Actor Deepika Padukone says she used to hide therapy sessions from the public during her battle with depression

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 330 I www. orissapost.com

LEISURE | P2



Truce in Turkiye

Outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party militant group declares immediate ceasefire in a step toward ending a 40-year insurgency

INTERNATIONAL | P10



GST collections up

Gross GST collections rise by 9.1% to about Rs 1.84 lakh crore in February, boosted by domestic consumption

BUSINESS | P11



India to take over

A seemingly invincible India will be eager to sharpen their game against spin and give a run to second-line players ahead of the semifinal

SPORTS | P12

BHUBANESWAR | SUNDAY | MARCH 2. 2025

12 PAGE+SUNDAY POST | ₹5.00



COLD ADVENTURE: Some of 2461 polar swimmers wait in the water to set a world record for the largest polar bear dip at a lake in Most, Czech Republic, Saturday AP/PTI

DISCREPANCY IN CLASS X EXAM QUESTION PAPER slams CPI(M) 'note'

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Board of Secondary Education (BSE) authorities admitted a discrepancy in the question paper of Science subject, the examination of which was held Saturday.

Students and teachers found the discrepancy after the question papers were distributed among the candidates. It was found that in set-C of the science question paper, the total marks are 96 and not the required 100. However. in three other sets of the same subject, questions for full 100 marks were there.

"A question carrying 4 marks was missing in 'C' set paper. The BSE will look into the matter and students will not be affected, the Board will take some measures during evaluation of answer sheets," BSE president Srikant Tarai said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Haven't vou seen? Zelenskyv even snubbed Trump. But stopped the war after just one call from Modi ii!

Shreya Ghoshal's X account hacked

New Delhi: Singer Shreya Ghoshal Saturday said that her X account has been hacked and warned fans not to access any link sent from her profile on the microblogging site. Ghoshal shared a post on her Instagram handle, saying that her X account was hacked February 13 and she has been trying to get it restored ever since.

clarifying that it does not consider the Modi government or the Indian State as "neo-fascist", CPI(ML) Liberation litical question of the day".

CPI(ML) Liberation

General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharva said Saturday that any "downplaying of the fascist danger" at this juncture can only erode the electoral strength and moral authority of the communists.

New Delhi, March 1: Dis-

approving of the CPI(M) note

His remarks came days after the CPI(M) issued the note to its state units on the draft political resolution for the upcoming party congress and stressed that the stand is different from that of the CPI and CPI(ML).

In an article published on the website of the Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist) Liberation, Bhat- ment fascist or neo-fascist.

Sundargarh/Bargaon.

March 1: In a shocking case of blind-faith, two alleged

sorcerers brutally whipped a

woman for nearly five hours

at Litipada village under

Bargaon block in Sundargarh district Friday evening,

The victim was identified

as Sangita Bage, wife of Mu-

na Bage. Sources said that

a youth in Litipada village

was mentally unstable for

which his family members

sought the help of a sorcerer

named Gagan from Mach-

The sorcerer explained to

the family members that evil

spirits, or some planetary

influences, were causing his

ailment. On Friday evening,

Gagan and his associate visit-

Litipada to perform the rituals.

Historian Stephen Snobel-

en and scientist Carmichael

Wallace spent around 20

years researching Newton's

personal beer flagon and his

uses of beer. They think the

physicist likely wrote the

amara village for cure.

seriously injuring her.

tacharya questioned if the CPI(M)'s stand is due to the immediate electoral circumstances faced by the party in West Bengal and Kerala and if any communist party can "increase its strength and role by obfuscating the central po-

The draft political resolution of the CPI(M), which will be discussed at the party congress in Tamil Nadu's Madurai in April, said that "the push to impose a reactionary Hindutya agenda and the authoritarian drive to suppress the opposition lice launched an investigaand democracy display neo-fascist characteristics". In the note, the CPI(M) has clarified that talking about the political setup showing "neo-fascist characteristics" does not mean that the party is calling the Modi govern-

Later, at 10 pm, they alleged-

ransacked the puja room.

The assault on the woman

continued intermittently

The sorcerers allegedly ig-

nored Muna's pleas to stop the

beatings. Though no formal

police complaint was lodged

in connection with the inci-

dent at the time of filing the

report, the incident sparked

awareness campaigns have

tension in the village.

till late at night.

Woman flogged by sorcerers

officials visited the school and asked the headmaster to report the matter to the police which registered a case and sent the girl again for medical examination to a health centre at Joda where the report came out

To combat such atrocities by sorcerers on indigenous tribal communities, social activist Shashiprabha Bindhani had filed a public interest petition, prompting the state government to enact a dedicated law in 2013 that criminalised these practices. However, despite legal gets completed."

District Welfare Officer Prabir Kumar Deo dismissed claims of the girl's pregnancy while terming

Class VI student Titilagarh sizzles at found 'pregnant'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 1: Days after two Class X girls delivered babies in Malkangiri and Jajpur districts respectively, a 12-year old girl studying at an ST/SC school in Champua of Keonjhar district was reportedly found pregnant, prompting a police probe, Saturday.

The girl is studying in Class $V \breve{I}$ in the school which is run by the state SC/ST department. Her pregnancy was detected during a monthly medical check-up at the school. Champua potion after the headmaster of the school lodged a complaint Friday evening.

Sources said that the girl had gone home during Makar Sankranti holidays in January. She returned to the school hostel February 25 when the ANM found irregularities in the monthly periods of two girls during their regular health examinations.

Following this, pregnancy tests were carried out on Sangita, who had come to the two girls at the Keonjhar witness the proceedings. district headquarters hospital where the report of one of ly barged into her house and the girls came positive.

District administration negative.

Champua police IIC, Debaki Navak said "During the medical examination of the girl at Joda health centre the report was found negative. However, the school authorities had lodged a complaint after the initial report came out positive. The truth can be ascertained only after the investigation

Atlantic divide

Deep fissures have emerged between traditional allies, the US and Europe, after a New York, March 1: Ukraine's European partners remarkable showdown between US President Donald as well as other global lead-Trump and his Ukrainian ers rallied behind President Volodymyr Zelenskyy while Volodymyr counterpart Zelenskyy in the Oval Ofthe White House touted supfice, with European leaders port for President Donald lining up to show solidarity with Zelenskyy. Within a short time after the extraordinary clash, prime ministers and presidents from the north, south, east and west of the continent posted on social media in support of Zelenskyy and Ukraine in the war against Russia's invasion. While they did not directly criticise the US president, their comments made it clear they stood by Kyiv. Russia, meanwhile, Bhubaneswar, March 1: didn't miss the opportunity to vent its ire against foe Zelenskyy saying it was "a

up at the White House came

after weeks of frustration by

Trump and his top aides

who saw the Ukrainian

leader as an obstacle to

Trump's 'American First strength' after a remarkable showdown in the Oval Office between the two leaders. Zelenskyy departed the White House Friday after an unprecedented verbal clash in the Oval Office between him and Trump and Vice President JD Vance. The heated exchange between Trump and Zelenskyy and the resulting outpouring of support for the Ukrainian leader highlighted the deep fissures that have emerged over Ukraine. miracle of restraint" how Trump and his deputy held themselves back from "hitting that scumbag". Analysts say the stunning blow-

between America and Europe Zelenskyy's timeline on X was filled with messages of support from European allies and other countries from across the world. His response to all the messages was "Thank you for your support." President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, who was in India Friday for an official

bravery of the Ukrainian people. Be strong, be brave, be fearless. You are never alone, dear President @ZelenskyyUa. We will continue working with you for a just and lasting peace."

French President Emmanuel Macron, who met Trump at the White House just this past Monday, said in a post on X that there is an aggressor: Russia. "There is a victim: Ukraine. We were right to help Ukraine and sanction Russia three years ago—and to keep doing so.

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, a close Trump ally, she would call for an EU-US summit to get diplomacy back on track.

Reacting to their spat Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova wrote on Telegram Friday that Zelenskyy's biggest lie of all his lies was his assertion in the White House that the Kyiv regime in 2022 was alone, without support.

"How Trump and (Vice President JD) Vance held back from hitting that scumbag is a miracle of revisit, said in a post on X, straint," she said.



Bolangir 38°C, Sonepur and their goals of quickly end-

38.5 degrees Celsius

Titilagarh in western Odis-

ha recorded the highest tem-

perature at 38.5°C Saturday as

a heatwave gripped the state

right from the beginning of

March. As many as 11 cit-

ies across the state record-

ed temperatures of 37°C or

higher. According to the re-

gional meteorological centre.

Jharsuguda recorded a max-

imum of 38.2 degrees Celsius,

Angul 37.7°C each.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Yoggram and Niramayam

Exclusive Health Gift for Allopathic Doctors Celebrate Wellness this Holi

Patanjali Wellness, Niramayam and Yoggram offering Special discounts for allopathic medical practitioners such as MD, MBBS, Surgeons, Dentists, Dermatologists, ENT specialists, Ophthalmologist, Orthopedists, Gynecologists, Cardiologists etc.

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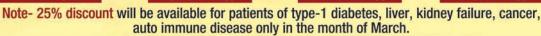












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Newton used beer to write his theory of gravity

ed the house of Asha Bage in measures, no significant

around 8 pm, the sorcerers the public, social activist

suddenly began whipping Subhashree Ray said.

During the rituals, at been conducted to educate

ir Isaac Newton wrote his theory of gravity in a homemade ink created with beer as a key ingredient, according to a study. Newton published his theory of calculus, his three eponymous laws of motion and the detailed theory of gravity in the 1687 work Philosophae Naturalis Principia Mathematica (the Principia). The book would

ical science. A paper in the Royal Society's journal – Notes and Records – has revealed two ink recipes in Newton's various works. While one includes a quart of wine, the other utilises a quart Principia using the ink.

form the foundation of phys-



"Though chemical analysis of the ink in Newton's voluminous manuscript corpus has yet to be carried out, many 17th-century authors used beer as a solvent in their home-made writing ink," Snobelen said. "Newton's two surviving ink reci-sculptures.

in this craft, at least while he was at Cambridge," the historian added. Writing in the paper it-

self, the researchers said, "When Newton penned, with the very beer-based ink in which this recipe is written the words 'it will endure many years', he wrote more truly than he likely imagined.'

The wooden mug will be on public display at the Royal Society in central London from March 4 alongside items including Newton's greatest work, the Principia, and the scientist's death mask, which was prepared shortly after his death to serve as a likeness for

















KELLY BROOK ADMITS FAME RUINED HER LIFE

Former glamour model Kelly Brook says she would never want the level of fame she had when she was appearing in lads mags again. "It has ruined my life on a couple of occasions, so I just don't want it anymore," admitted the 45-year-old.

MISCHA: I'M A **HUGE OASIS FAN**

British-American actress Mischa Barton is a huge *Oasis* fan and wants to see the Britpop band on their reunion tour later this year. The 39-year-old appeared in the music video Everybody's on the Run for Noel Gallagher's *High Flying Birds* in 2011.

Mumbai: Actor Am-

chan has spoken

way wondering

will "be able

justice to it".

ing to his

night, the

82-year-

actor

Fri-

himselfa

puppet",

that he

do and act

tor's direction".

manner



to do

Tak-

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is "told to

in a certain

per the direc

Big B on his old

age challenges

Amitabh wrote how he doesn't have much idea about

the state of the movie industry. "Meetings and meetings

and meetings abound for work to come .. and this makes it a test, a challenge .. what to take what to refute what

to politely refuse .. The point is that the discussions

eventually end up with the topic of the Film Industry,

and its functioning and the State it is in .. None of

which I am conversant with AT ALL," his post read

"The concern has ever been, what is the work I

am getting and will I or shall I be able to do justice

to it .. what happens after that is a blur .. the Pro-

duction, the Costs, the Marketing, the Exhibition

.. et al. .. just an unknown non-understandable dark, blur ... Selecting a project has ever been

the decisions of the 'other' - the makers and

the writers and all those concerned with the

making of a film. I am a

mere puppet, told to

do and act in a cer-

tain manner as

per the direc-

tor's direction

.. and that is

added

the Kalki

actor.

👼 Ganesha Speaks.com accuracy • reliability • trust

Today people will actually drag you into altercations, so flash the peace sign if you must. You may face some sort of legal troubles from peace-loving groups Therefore, Ganesha advises you to meditate, take a walk or just seek out the company of your near and dear ones.

TAURUS

Today, you need to take hold of your emotions. Ganesha urges you to get carried away by your feelings. Instead, you should try to main tain a practical, sensible frame of mind. Women are like to feature prominently in your life during the day. Try to be magnanimous and open hearted.

GEMINI

An extremely profitable and progressive day awaits you. You may come into a hand some inheritance. Your responsibilities will increase along with a possible promotion at work. However, do not let your success go to your head, says Ganesha

CANCER

Ganesha advises you to watch your back today. However, he wants to make it clear that you may be at the receiving end of others' actions. Anyway, your cautious and watchful approach will save you from needless discomfiture. In short, life will teach you priceless and precious lessons today, predicts Ganesha.

LEO

You have to let go of your stubborn and obstinate streak. You will need to compromise according to the situation. If you do not have such an attitude, arguments and confrontations with your business partners, friends and family members are possible. You do not like delays, however you will be forced to postpone important events, says Ganesha.

VIRGO You are quick-witted, sharp

and artistic to the core, says Ganesha, so you may go ahead and enrapture people with your special abilities, perhaps at a social gathering. However, Ganesha says it would be better if you could conserve some of that enthusiasm in order to focus your attention on issues of greater importance.

LIBRA

Ganesha says you will be able to show your love and loved. Small issues will crop up and keep you tensed and uncomfortable today. Just remember good days and old memories and life will seem good again.

SCORPIO

According to Ganesha, it's a good day for long term and real estate investments. It may lead to benefits and profits in long run. Sit back, relax and enjoy the pleasures of life before you miss out on them. Welcome all the opportunities with

SAGITTARIUS The wheel of fortune turns towards you today, says Ganesha. Make a wish and it's bound to come true. However don't be over-confident when it comes to decision-making. In case of disappointments, 'this too shall pass' would be the best remedy.

CAPRICORN

Overcome with feelings, you may take decisions that may stand in the way of success. Don't let your sentiments ruin your future prospects because the damage done will be beyond repair, warns Ganesha. Today, there are also chances that your down-toearth nature and amiable approach will win the hearts of many. A bit of caution and guidance from the elderly will help you move on the right path.

AQUARIUS

You will be on a spending spree today. But, make sure that your desire to enjoy life doesn't burn a hole in your pocket. Watch your words and steps, as people are observing your every move. You have put all of your eggs in one basket, so make sure that you don't mess up and lose everything that you have, advises Ganesha

PISCES Today your professional and love life will cause worry. You will want to be emotionally balanced but you may not find the time to sort things out. Long sightedness and open discussions will help resolve matters easily.

Mumbai: Acclaimed actress Nandita Das has never been one to follow the beaten path. Known for her unconventional choices in cinema, she will next be seen in the forthcoming drama Ziddi Girls as Professor

The Fire actress revealed that when she was approached for the movie, it wasn't just the character of Professor Handa that spoke to her—it was the spirit of the story itself.

She explained, "I do resonate with Professor Handa's character. I've had many such mentors in my life, whose biggest inspirational asset was their conviction and how they lived by it. I have had many such strong women in my life, and I try to pass that sense of conviction and purpose to other young

Nandita further revealed that when director Shonali Bose first reached out to her for the role. the story sparked a sense of nostalgia, but also hesitation. She disclosed, "At the beginning I felt the role was

small and not particularly challenging. But then, I thought about all the wonderful actors who have done cameos in my films—those who believed in the story and supported it. This was my time to pay it forward." Produced by Pritish

Nandy under Pritish Nandy Communications, the show has been created by Rangita Pritish Nandy and Ishita Pritish Nandy. Ziddi Girls

streaming on Prime Video in India and over 240 countries and territories world wide.

PEANUTS

HEY, FRANKLIN, SHE STUCK A GOLD STAR ON YOUR PAPER!

CALVIN AND HOBBES

IANS

been making waves with her performances, but beyond the glitz and glamour, she craves solitude and quiet moments. In a recent interview with *Cosmo India*, the actress opened up about her love for solo travel, revealing details about a unique experience in a remote French village.

Triptii acknowledges the importance of stepping back. "I think last year was quite hectic for me, and while I have no complaints, I feel like when you are continuously working, you need to also mentally disconnect," she shared. For her, escaping to a secluded destination is not just about relaxation but also about self-reflection and regaining mental clarity. Unlike the usual celebrity get-

> ity therethat's how want to feel most of the time," she said.



In an industry that demands constant engagement,

aways to exotic beach resorts or bustling European cities, Dimri opted for an intimate and quiet escape. She revealed that she traveled to a remote village in France, inhabited by only 10 people. "It was the most beautiful trip of my life, and I plan to go there every now and then since I felt such positiv-

AGENCIES

Deepika shares her battle with anxiety

Mumbai: Deepika Padukone has openly spoken about her struggle with depression as she highlights the significance of mental health care. The actress revealed that she used to hide therapy sessions from the public during her

battle with depression. "I was at the peak of my career, doing everything I loved," the Om Shanti Om actress shared with an entertainment portal. While she expected fatigue and exhaustion to be part of her profession, she realised

something was wrong the morning she collapsed. Deepika shared, "I went for a whole bunch of scans, but over the next couple of weeks, I realized I wasn't feeling any better." She added, "There was this weird feeling in my stomach. I would just keep

SORRY, MA'AM!

I COULDN'T

GET A STAR ON

A CHRISTMAS

TREE!

crying and breaking down at the drop of

a hat. I just didn't feel like myself."

Initially, she kept her therapy sessions private, going to great lengths to avoid the paparazzi. "We didn't want it to be seen that I was going to the therapist... We were so covert and didn't tell anyone about how I was feeling," she shared.

As she began to heal, Deepika became aware of the stigma surrounding mental health and felt compelled to speak up. "I wondered why we had hushed everything up and why there was so much stigma around mental health," reflected.

AGAENCIES

10

CROSSWORD

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains



S

DOST



THE TEACHER NEVER

STICKS A STAR ON ANY OF MY PAPERS

BREVITY



25 Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com 24 Bury 7 Swamp thing 25 Plumber's 8 French brandy

Across

1 Nimbus

- 3 Circumvent 9 Negative
- stimulation
- 10 Odour
- 11 Blanched
- 12 Toboggan

21 Protective

- 14 Morals
- 16 Body decoration
- 2 Coniferous tree 19 Jury verdict

Down

4 Steep 5 Wipe clean

6 Idea

1 Deep trouble (3,5)

friend

26 Dissolve (4,4)

27 Lazy Susan

- ness
- 17 Protective covering 18 Nearsighted-

13 Maternally

15 Inhabited by

apparitions

- 20 Cocoon

23 Squabble

- contents
- 22 Potent potable

SUDOKU

G F I C A U U L O T U S P O S I T I O N

F M A X N R S N I P P Y S T I C K Y

WEEPINGWILLOW

E S O N

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

owntown

MUSICAL EVENT

Artistes perform during 29th Guru Pranam Utsav organised by Sushama Sangeet Sadan at Rabindra Mandan in Bhubaneswar, Saturday



SC: Borrower not 'consumer' if Cong workers clash with loan taken for profit generation cops during City protest loan taken for profit generation

New Delhi, March 1: A borrower cannot be called a 'consumer' under the Consumer Protection Act if the loan was taken from the bank for a profit-generating exercise, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Prashant Kumar Mishra was hearing an appeal filed by the Central Bank of India against an order of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC).

The NCDRC had directed the bank to pay a compensation of Rs 75 lakh along with litigation cost to the Ad Bureau Advertising Pvt Limited for the alleged incorrect reporting of the borrower as a defaulter to the Credit Information Bureau of India

Subhadra Yoiana:

instalment March 6

Bhubaneswar, March 1: The

state government Saturday

announced that the fifth phase

money of the first instalment

under Subhadra Yojana will

Around 1.7 lakh women ben-

eficiaries are slated to receive

the Subhadra money in the fifth

phase of first instalment March

6. the Chief Minister's Office

Similarly, over one crore

beneficiaries would get the

second instalment of financial assistance under the flagship

scheme on the occasion of International Women's Day —

said in a post on X handle.

5th phase of 1st

POST NEWS NETWORK

be released March 6.



Limited (CIBIL).

In this case, the Central Bank of India had sanctioned a loan of Rs 10 crore to Ad Bureau Advertising Pvt Limited for the post-production of the Raiinikanth-starrer Kochadaiyan.

After the Ad Bureau Advertising Pvt Limited defaulted on

Tribunal and the matter was finalised by one-time payment of Rs 3.56 crore.

The Ad Bureau Advertising Pvt Limited contended that despite paying the amount as per the one-time settlement, the bank marked it as a defaulter to the CIBIL, which resulted in its reputational damage and business loss

The company then approached the NCDRC alleging deficiency of service on the part of the bank.

The NCDRC allowed the Ad Bureau Advertising Pvt Limited's petition (Consumer Complaint) and directed the bank to pay a compensation of Rs 75 lakh and issue a certificate stating that the loan account was

settled and no outstanding dues remained.

The top court said, "We are cognisant of the fact that respondent No. 1 (company) would not be excluded from the definition of consumer merely on account of the fact that it is a commercial entity/enterprise. But what has weighed with us in coming to the conclusion that in the instant case, respondent No. 1 cannot be said to be a 'consumer' is the fact that the transaction in question i.e. obtaining a project loan did have a close nexus with a profit-generating activity and in fact, the dominant purpose for getting



SUMMER AHEAD: Students cover their head and face as daytime temperature soars, in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

State govt launches new

website for ration cards



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Congress workers clashed with police personnel near Chief Minister Mohan Charan Maihi's residence here Saturday while protesting crimes against women in the state

Hundreds of Congress workers, led by the party's state president Bhakta Charan Das. marched towards the CM's residence on the Mahatma Gandhi Marg, shouting slogans denouncing the attacks on women.

"Over 1,600 cases of crimes against women, including 54 gangrapes, were registered in the last eight months. Children are getting pregnant in staterun schools. What is happening in the land of Lord Jagannath? Das told reporters, attacking the BJP which came to power in the state in June last year.

Over 1,600 cases of crimes against women, including 54 gangrapes, were registered in the last eight months. Children are getting pregnant in state-run schools. What is happening in the land of Lord Jagannath?

BHAKTA CHARAN DAS CONGRESS STATE PRESIDENT

"Schoolgirls in Malkangiri, Jajpur and Keonjhar districts have got pregnant while staying in state-run hostels. How is this possible?" he asked, seeking a reply from the Chief Minister.

He said Majhi, who is also in charge of the Home department, cannot escape his responsibilities.

Congress leader Meenakshi Bahinipati alleged that the victims of crimes against women

"We have a tribal leader as the Chief Minister and he has utterly failed to protect the state's girls and women," she alleged.

The Congress workers

clashed with the police when

they were stopped a few hun-

dred metres away from the CM's residence. Several activists scuffled with the police personnel who

tried to prevent them from pro ceeding further. After taking charge as the

state Congress president, Das has been raising the issue of women's safety regularly. He formed a team February

26, and it has been tasked to visit different districts to look into cases of atrocities against

"At least seven women are subjected to atrocities in some form or the other every day in the state," Das claimed.

Suresh Pant new PCCF



Bhubaneswar, March 1: The state government appointed Suresh Pant as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PC-CF) and Head of Forest Force (HoFF), Saturday.

The 1990-batch Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer will replace Debidutta Biswal, an officer of 1988 batch who retired Friday.

Pant, who hails from Uttarakhand, had been serving as the Managing Director of Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC) Limited since 2021.

Bhubaneswar, March 1: The state government Saturday launched a website for the issuance of new ration

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said this website will help in enrolling the eligible people who have been left out.

He also said that by the end of this month, all pending work related to e-KYC verification will be completed.

Names of lakhs of ineligible people have been deleted from the list of beneficiaries, Patra said, adding that errors in the list will be rectified soon.

Some government employees, who are ineligible, have voluntarily returned their ration cards, he said.

The FS&CW Minister said the government will conduct a door-to-door survey of the people who file I-T returns, and those who earn 'handsome money' will be removed from the list of beneficiaries

FS&CW MIN SAYS

← Some government employees, who are ineligible, have voluntarily returned their ration cards

← The government will conduct a door-to-door survey of the people who file I-T returns, and those who earn 'handsome money' will be removed from the list of beneficiaries

Names of about four lakh people have been removed from the list of

He said people can apply for new ration cards on the website that was launched.

A total of 3.25 crore people in the state are beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), while another 6.48 lakh people have been covered under the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS)

Names of about four lakh people have been removed from the list of beneficiaries, officials said.

Human activities can affect body clock of mammals: Study

New Delhi, March 1: Human-driven activities, including climate change, could be affecting body clocks of mammals, according to a global study that found that only 39 per cent of the species are behaving in line with what previous research

Further, because of the environmental changes and the resulting effects, a majority of previous research related to body clocks of mammals could be outdated, researchers, including those from The University of Sydney, Austra-

All animals are known to have circadian rhythms, or body clocks, regulating activities over a 24-hour period -- also called diel cycle. Collectively, the rhythms can develop into a generalised behaviour for a

However, climate change threatens to upend these established patterns with unexpected consequenc-



rhythms, or body clocks, regulating activities over a 24-hour period -- also called diel cycle Collectively, the rhythms can develop into a generalised behaviour for a species

es, the researchers said.

For their analysis, published in the journal Science Advances, the team analysed video camera footage of 445 mammal species to note activity patterns over a 24-hour period. Results were compared with previous studies.

"Through a global network representing 38 countries, we leveraged 8.9 million mammalian observations to create a library of 14,587 standardised diel activity estimates for 445 species," the authors wrote. "Overall, we found only 39 per

cent agreement between our results and reference classifications, which further suggests that we need to re-evaluate species diel behaviour to fully understand their niche and how to conserve them in an anthropogenic world," they said.

The team looked at whether circadian activity was responsive or resistant to environmental changes.

The species showed a high plasticity in their diel patterns, indicating an ability to adjust daily activity depending on environmental conditions, the authors said.

Finally, among a selected 126 species, the team studied how geography affected diel plasticity.

'Distance from the equator, daylight hours per day, and exposure to human activity influenced diel phenotypes for 74 per cent of these species," they wrote.

Data for the study was taken from the Global Animal Diel Activity Project, which includes 217 collaborators from 20,080 camera sites across 38 countries.



downtown/state



Key conspirator held in Vani Vihar murder

Bhubaneswar, March 1: The Mancheswar police Saturday arrested a 38-year-old man for allegedly orchestrating the brutal daylight murder of Sahadev Naik in Vani Vihar area Janu-

The accused, identified as Sushanta Nayak of Nayagarh district, is believed to have played a key role in planning the crime, making him the seventh individual to be apprehended in connection with the case.

Inspector-in-Charge (IIC) Mrutyunjay Swain revealed that Sushanta led multiple secret meetings at his residence in Dumduma to devise the plan to eliminate Sahadev. Investigations further revealed that



the accused has a criminal record, having been booked earlier in a theft case by the Capital police. His arrest comes weeks after Mancheswar police nabbed a 40-year-old woman, February 11, for her alleged involvement in the murder.

The chilling murder took place January 8, when five as-

sailants—three men and two women-brutally attacked Sahadev Naik near the Vani Vihar railway overbridge (ROB). The assailants hacked him to death over an unresolved dispute, despite heightened securi ty in the City due to the Prayasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) event The shocking incident raised concerns over law enforcement's ability to curb violent crimes in the city. Following the murder, police

launched an intense 24-hour operation that resulted in the arrest of five key suspects from Nayagarh. Sushanta Nayak has been booked under relevant sections of the Bharativa Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and was produced before a local court



SIGNATURE DELICACY: Women savour Dahibara-Aloodam, a famous street food of the Millennium City, at a function organised by the district administration at the Silver City Boat Club in Cuttack to mark Dahibara Utsav, Saturday

Tusker tramples man to death YOUTH SUFFERS ACID The mishap occurred

Champua range sees 2 fatalities in 10 days

Keonjhar, March 1: A man was trampled to death by a tusker at Nambira village under Bamebari forest section of Champua forest range in Keonihar district. Thursday night.

The deceased was identified as Hari Munda, 41. The mishap occurred when the animal strayed into the village leaving the villagers panicked as they ran helter-skelter to save their lives. Hari spotted the animal near his house and tried to shoo it away by beating a tin. Enraged, the animal chased Hari and pinned him to the ground

before trampling him to death. A cattle shed was also de-

stroyed during the chase, according to Hari's family members. On being informed, Bamebari forest personnel reached the spot and drove away the animal. The body was seized and sent for post-mortem to Keonihar.

Ashok Das, Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF), Keonjhar said, "Compensation will be provided as per the government norms. We are tracking the movement of the elephants and sensitising the locals. The villagers have been urged not go near the elephants and tease

Notably, this was second death due to elephant attack during last ten days in areas under the Champua forest range. Earlier, a 22-year-old youth was killed in elephant attack February 20. The deceased was identified as Karan Karua

when the animal strayed into the village leaving the villagers panicked as they ran helterskelter to save their lives

of Badanai village under Champua police limits.

Sources said that there were four elephants inside a small sal jungle near Badanai village. Karua and others entered the forest when one of the elephants caught hold of him and flung him away. He sustained internal haemorrhage and died during treatment in Champua sub-divisional hospital.

ATTACK DURING SLEEP

Basudevpur/Sabarang. March 1: In a shocking incident, a 26-year-old youth sus tained grievous burn injuries after unidentified miscreants poured acid on him while he was asleep at his residence in Ramchandrapur village under Lakshmidaspur panchayat, late Friday night. The attack has triggered panic and outrage among locals, who have demanded swift police action.

The victim, identified as Jagabandhu Palei, owns a tent house business and supplies materials for various events. He had returned home late after overseeing arrangements for an event and retired to bed



unaware of the lurking danger. Taking advantage of the late hours, the assailants poured acid on him through an open window and fled the scene.

Palei's agonising screams woke up his family, who rushed to his aid. They found him writhing in pain, with severe burns on his face, eyes, and chest. Without delay, he was taken to Basudevpur hospital

en the severity of his injuries, he was later shifted to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar for advanced medical care.

Following a complaint lodged by his brother, Nayakanidihi police registered a case and launched a probe, Sadar SDPO Bichitrananda Sethy and local police officials visited the scene Saturday morning, speaking to family members and villagers to gather more information.

It has been alleged that Pa lei was targeted before, with his tent house materials be ing set on fire multiple times However, it remains unclear whether the acid attack was motivated by business rivalry or personal enmity.

Speeding container truck collides with tourist bus; 10 hurt



Bhadrak, March 1: Ten people were injured following a collision between a stationary tourist bus and a speeding container truck in Bhadrak district Saturday, police said.

The incident occurred on a stretch of National Highway-16 in Bhandaripokhari area.

The bus, heading to Puri. had halted near Chhatabara to change a punctured tyre when the container truck rammed into it from behind, said Mahaprasad Nayak, Inspector-In-Charge of Bhandaripokhari police station. The injured were taken to the

District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) for treatment, he said. Later, four of them were

shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, the officer added

WEATHER

FORECAST

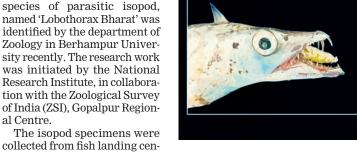
Mainly clear sky

BBSR CTC Max Temp Min Temp Humidity 70% Rainfall

and Rourkela.

Berhampur, March 1: A new

New marine parasitic isopod species found



The research team, lead by Jaya Kishor Seth also included research scholars Sandeep Kumar Mohapatra and Sanmitra Roy, along with scientists Basudev Tripathi (ZSI, Pune) and Anil Mohapatra (ZSI, Gopalpur).

Globally, around 380 species

of parasitic isopods have been documented, with India being home to approximately 70 species. Around 25 specimens are found in Odisha.

The newly-discovered isopod is a buccal-attaching parasite that affixes itself to the tongue of its host species. Fresh specimens are creamy white but turn yellowish-brown or dark brown upon preservation. The genetic analysis showed

2.5 - 2.6 per cent difference from

Lobothorax typus and a 23.9 -32.2 per cent variation from other related species. Parasitic isopods are known to infect marine and estuarine fishes impacting their growth,

which in turn affects aquacul ture industries and their pro-The biology of parasitic isopods is important for bio-diver-

sity conservation, ecosystem management, and improved aquaculture practices

The researchers said further studies are needed to understand the evolutionary patterns and biology of Lobothorax

ADVANCES: ECOR GM model within Railways. He also highlighted the crucial role of

ADAPT TO RAPID TECH

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Adapt to rapid technological advancements and prepare for the next 25 years, said East Coast Railway (ECoR) general manager Parmeshwar Funkwal during the centenary celebration of the launch of India's first electric train February 3, 1925.

Indian Railways celebrated the centenary of electric traction, marking 100 years of technological evolution and opera-

tional excellence here recently. On the occasion, Funkwal underlined the importance of improving asset maintenance and acknowledged Traction Distribution (TRD) as a role

automation, maintenance, and diagnostics in modern railway operations.

The celebration was attended by ECoR additional general manager, principal heads of departments of ECoR, and senior officials, including the principal chief electrical en gineer, who collectively rec ognised the remarkable jour ney of railway electrification in the country.

The ECoR general manager said, "From the launch of a 16km electric train service in 1925 to achieving 100 per cent broad gauge electrification in 2024, the transformation has been extraordinary.

Kanhakund back in spotlight after Mahindra's X comments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

al Centre.

Bhubaneswar, March 1: State government Saturday rushed a team to Kanhakund, a natural rock formation on the river Ib in Sundergarh district, for verification of its actual position after being informed about the place by industrialist Anand Mahindra.

tres at Bahabalpur in Balasore

and Gopalpur between March

and May, 2023. Researchers

from the university and ZSI

jointly conducted extensive

study and analysed six samples

of the specimens of the isopod

from the host fish Trichiurus

lepturus (family Trichiuridae).

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, who also holds the Tourism portfolio, said the state government will develop the place as a global tourist destination.

Kanhakund is a natural rock formation on the river Ib and located in Sundergarh district about 130km from Sambalpur

'We thank Anand Ji for

bringing this spot to our notice. Sometimes, it so happens that the state government misses out on such places which are highlighted by nature lovers and others. We will certainly develop that place and consult Anand ji in making Kanhakund as a global tourist destination,' Parida said.

The Deputy CM said she has already issued an order for the spot verification of the place and officials will reach the tourist destination soon.

Anand Mahindra, the chairperson of Mahindra and Mahindra, had recently brought the unique tourist destination to the knowledge of the government through a re-post made by a nature lover Aaraynsh. He has also tagged three pictures



of the place.

Mahindra in a post on X February 27, said, "No need to compare it to the Grand Canyon. This is unique in its own way. Not sure if these pics are



photoshopped, but even if they are to an extent, these formations are... AMAZING Hello @ odisha_tourism _tourism what can we do to make this first a national destination and then

ocated at about 130km from Sambalpur and Rourkela and headquarters, Kanhakund remains relatively underdeveloped

The scenic beauty of the landscape coupled with the gushing Ib water's gurgling sound is a sure recipe to mesmerise anyone

a global hot spot???."

Responding to Mahindra's offer on what he could do to make this place a national destination and then a global hot spot, Parida said, "I will again thank Anand ji for his offer. We will write a letter to him and take his help and inform him that we like to develop the place like this.'

"We will also seek his visionary ideas to develop the Kanhakund. We have taken his suggestions very positively to develop the tourist destination We thank him from the core of our heart and will develop the place taking his suggestions."

A Delhi-based traveller Aarayansh had shared pictures of Kanhakund on X and mentioned its clear blue waters and granite beds. In the same post, he questioned why such offbeat places were not on the tourism map of India.

In a post on X, Odisha Tour ism said, "We're working on enhancing infrastructure, cre ating sustainable tourism ex periences, and promoting such unique destinations on national and international platforms.'

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488

Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816 Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347 Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.







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Trust the divine power, and she will free the godlike elements in you and shape all into an expression of divine nature.



SO IF THIS VIEW

PRIMARY QUEST

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ENDING OF THE

UKRAINE WAR

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SRI AUROBINDO

Trump's Real Target

hat is one to write about hours after a day when the US president scolds Ukraine's leader about gambling with world war? In November last year, which is to say only three months ago, it was reported that the Biden administration had 'allowed' Ukraine to use American made missiles to attack deep inside Russia to escalate the war. After this, Reuters ran a report with the headline 'Biden risking World War 3 with missile decision, says Russian lawred for.'

The month before that, October 2024, the head of the United States' largest bank was quoted in a headline which read 'Western power is at risk and there could be a World War 3, says JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon'. He was referring not only to the war in Ukraine but also the genocide in Gaza and the rise of China as being trigger events for something wider.

So the circus that unfolded at the famous Oval Office in the White House on Friday was not the only time that we have been discussing the potential obliteration of humankind. What is one to make of this? Let us try to see if some sense can be made of what is going on.

To begin, what does Donald Trump want? On the surface it is hard to tell because he talks so much and so casually about so many things. His detractors say this is because he is stupid and mercurial but it

is difficult to square this with a person who won the US presidency twice. Let us assume that he knows what he is doing.

The view that appears to be most coherent is that the real target of the American president is China. He wants to handicap its rise so that it does not equal the US in power. He wants the dollar to remain the only reserve global currency and he wants China to cede some ground on manufacturing and exports back to the US.

And so all of his larger actions should be seen, according to this view, from the China lens.

China is scheduled to equal and then exceed the US economy over the next couple of decades if past growth rates hold. Trump does not want to allow that. His first term's tariffs and other restrictions that came under Biden on China, such as the ban on high end computer chips with the naked desire that China not progress technologically are the largest part of that plan. In this term Trump added 10 per cent additional tariff on all Chinese goods coming into the US and then another 10 per cent that is scheduled to come into effect this week. He has said he could go as high as 60 per cent. This will introduce high levels of uncertainty and turbulence in China and also the US because many industries are intertwined. Several people have pointed out directly to Trump that this will affect American consumers as much as it will the Chinese companies but he has repeatedly waved this concern off. His open threat to BRICS against using

currencies other than the dollar is another part of the plan to keep China under control.

Under this view, to continue its logic, the US involvement in Ukraine and the Middle East is a distraction which has to end quickly so that the main business of China can be focussed on. China is America's only peer competitor, not Russia and not anybody else. Therefore, it makes little sense to be diverted from the overall mission.

The two years of continuous and murderous bombing of Gaza ended with a peace deal that Trump forced on Israel in January, and now it seems like Ukraine will have to capitulate to Russia after the ending of US backing. If this view is correct, after that happens, meaning after Russia has prevailed over Ukraine, there will be sharper US focus on China. But if this is the case, then why is Trump also going after America's largest trading partners and allies and Mexico and Canada?

Under this view that we have assumed to be Trump's, the suggestion is that it is a continuation of his desire to keep America ahead of China. The tariffs have introduced a level of chaos and uncertainty in the global markets and that always leads to a strengthening of the dollar, as we are witnessing. The only counter here is that a stronger dollar then makes it even harder for the US to export its manufactures and the trade deficits that Trump wants to reduce remain in place. Perhaps Trump has thought about this also, and perhaps he has not. We shall see: four years is a long time.

The larger question mark is how China will react. China has not reached the position it has today because it has been the beneficiary of external largesse. It has a large and talented population that has moved its economy and industry up the value chain faster than any nation in history over a period of just 40 years. It will defend its position and it will do what it can to first equal and then overtake the US. China's ambitions cannot be determined by America.

China's leader cannot be summoned to the White House king's court and scolded and forced to bend the knee as other allies have been made to do. And as recent developments in artificial intelligence, and the growth of Chinese exports to the rest of the world in 2024 show (China has a trillion dollar trade surplus), the tariffs by themselves may slow but not stop China.

So if this view that Trump's primary quest is to ensure America retains its global dominance is correct, the ending of the Ukraine war will clear his Oval Office desk to focus on the task at hand. What comes next, whether world war or something else, absolutely nobody knows.

WISDOM CORNER

There's no reality except the one contained within us. That's why so many people live an unreal life. They take images outside them for reality and never allow the world within them to assert itself

HERMANN HES

Man is not a machine that can be remodelled for quite other purposes as occasion demands, in the hope that it will go on functioning as regularly as before but in a quite different way. He carries his whole history with him; in his very structure is written the history of mankind.

ARL JUNG

There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can't move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies.

obert fros



DEHUMANISING DEPORTEES

n 19 Feb., the White House posted a 41 second video showing deportees being put in shackles as they are herded into an airplane for deportation operations as part of the Donald Trump administration efforts to remove illegal immigrants ("illegal aliens" as they are known there) from US territory. The video did not show the faces of the deportees or the US officials but the jackets the latter wore clearly shows them to be from ERO, which is short for Enforcement & Removal Operations of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The video was to achieve nothing but mock, embarrass, and humiliate not only the deportees, many of whom are from India, but also their nations and their people as a whole.

The video was shockingly titled: "ASMR: Illegal Alien Deportation Flight," and it has over a 100 million views on the social media platform owned by Elon Musk, called 'X'. ASMR in the video refers to the tingling sound of steel chains as they are laid out on the tarmac, as prisoners step forward and are shackled one by one. ASMR, which is short for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response. is a sense of satisfaction and pleasant tingling ("tingles") felt down the spine, triggered by certain sounds in some people, like the crushing of tissue paper or popping of bubble wrap. The sound of steel shackles being laid out is the tingle they love. Musk retweeted the video with the words: "Haha Wow," with images of a medal and an emoji of a green-skinned, pointy-eared goblin.

The dehumanisation of deportees is not just in the way they are treated. There is a story of "aliens" being deep wired into the head of Americans, with multiple layers at play, like white supremacy, the criminalisation of poverty and/or the



India's quiet acceptance of this dehumanisation and mistreatment stands out. Smaller nations have done better. They hold up as an example of a good response

normalisation of abuse. There has to be something rotten in the head for an official account of the US President to issue such a video and for his most-trusted lieutenant to laugh as he retweets it. It is important for all nations to whom the deportees are being returned to not allow the US to get away with normalising this conduct, and to let the US know that deportation is fine but mistreating human beings is not. Treating them in this manner is behaviour that is closer to a fascist regime that sees other human beings as lesser than human.

As a nation that is the biggest, strongest and the largest economy among those being targeted for deportation, India must make this protest heard. In this, India has clearly, loudly, miserably failed. India even appears to justify the actions of the US. Was it not India's external affairs minister S Jaishankar who said in a statement on 6 Feb.: "The Standard Operating Procedure for deportation by aircraft used by ICE, that is effective from 2012, I repeat, that is effective from 2012, provides for the use of restraints. However, we have been informed by ICE that women and children are not restrained. Further, the needs of deportees during transit related to food or other necessities, including possible medical emergencies, are attended to. During toilet breaks, deportees are temporarily unrestrained if needed in that regard. This is applicable to chartered civilian aircraft as well as military aircraft. There has been no change, I repeat, no change, from past procedure for the flight undertaken by the US on 5 February 2025."

Jaishankar seems to be saying that the present government is doing what earlier Indian governments have done – accepting what is standard US procedure for returning deportees. There is a difference this time though. Earlier operations were quiet, but now deportees are being returned in a widely publicised manner that mocks at and humiliates them and their countries. India's quiet acceptance of this dehumanisation and mistreatment stands out.

Smaller nations have done better. They hold up as an example of a good response. Colombia, Brazil and Mexico have brought into sharp focus the mistreatment of deportees returned to their countries. The angry responses of the two South American nations and Mexico stand out like a shining example of a good and measured response.

There are images of President Gustavo Petro addressing Colombian deportees on a commercial flight. He was the first to raise a voice when he refused to allow in a US military cargo flight bearing deportees. "I deny the entry of American planes carrying Colombian migrants into our territory," Petro had said on the social media platform 'X'. "The United States must establish a protocol for the dignified treatment of migrants before we receive them." Colombia sent planes to get back deportees and Petro even offered the presidential plane to return his people with dignity. This is in sharp contrast to the Indian response.

Three batches of deportees

have been returned to India. handcuffed and chained at the feet, aboard the stuffy confines of US military cargo aircraft. On 23 February, the fourth and latest batch of Indian deportees arrived at Indira Gandhi International Airport. Unlike the earlier groups who returned handcuffed and chained on US military cargo flights, this batch of 12 came back on a commercial flight from Panama. They were unshackled and wearing electronic devices on their legs, but the deportees did recount torture and hardship at the Tijuana camp, on the US-Mexico border, where US officials made them sit on the floor for hours in extreme cold before leaving for Panama on a commercial flight. They noted that countries like Colombia, Brazil and Mexico denounced this treatment of their people while India remained silent adding to their problems.

None of these countries are anywhere close to the might of the US, yet they have made a point by saying: You cannot treat our people badly. We will not remain silent if you do so. India can learn some lessons here.

The writer is the Managing Editor of The Billion Press.

SPECTRUM

COLOMBIA,

BRAZIL AND

INTO SHARP

FOCUS THE

RETURNED

COUNTRIES

TO THEIR

MISTREATMENT

OF DEPORTEES

BROUGHT

MEXICO HAVE

GEO-ECONOMICS

A new Gulf growth model



Faris Al-Sulayman & Steffen Hertog

MULTIPOLARITY
AND THE RISE
OF ALTERNATIVE
BLOCS SUCH
AS THE BRICS
HAVE GIVEN
RELATIVELY
AUTONOMOUS
MIDDLE POWERS
LIKE SAUDI
ARABIA AND THE
UAE A STRONGER
NEGOTIATING
POSITION

ver the last three years, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) has signed agreements with leading MNCs to build new manufacturing facilities in the Kingdom. Yet, despite sufficient oil wealth to entice global players, past attempts at this type of industrial policy did not bear fruit. Is this time different?

There are signs it might be, owing to multiple factors, such as improvements in state capacity and infrastructure and the declining cost of renewable energy. Perhaps even more important is the Gulf monarchies' growing ability to understand and manipulate the shifting geo-economic landscape to carve out a place for themselves in global value chains, which have become increasingly contested with the rise of major rival blocs.

It is not just Chinese companies that have started to engage with the region. In the UAE, Microsoft recently signed a \$1.5 billion agreement to invest in the state-owned tech company G42, and the Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri has formed a joint venture

with the Emirati technology and defense conglomerate EDGE Group to export naval vessels to non-NATO partners.

These developments are occurring against a backdrop in which states in the region have become prolific entrepreneurs - a phenomenon that is particularly visible in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Seeking to industrialize and modernize through a distinctly state-capitalist model, domestic sovereign wealth funds have established or acquired dozens of firms in a variety of sectors. and these have become the preferred partners of foreign industrial players looking to set up shop in the Gulf. But while the vast resources and capacity provided by the state have created a host of new opportunities, it remains to be seen whether there is sufficient market discipline to establish a sustainable, export-oriented industrial strategy.

Combined with the expansion of this state capitalist model, today's shifting geopolitical landscape may offer new opportunities. Multipolarity and the rise of alternative blocs such as the BRICS

have given relatively autonomous middle powers like Saudi Arabia and the UAE a stronger negotiating position, allowing them to muscle in on global value chains that previously lay beyond their reach. This new dynamic has been on display in trade talks between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and counterparts like the EU and the UK, in attempts to attract global finance, technology, and sport to the region, and in the economic relationship with China - the GCC's most important trade partner. Saudi Arabia's recent hosting of preliminary talks between US and Russian diplomats is an early sign of the central role to which Gulf states are aspiring under US President Donald Trump's second administration. These changes in the international system, combined with a more muscular industrial strategy aimed at attracting multinationals. have fueled a rapid change in fortunes.

Following a slow start, renewables are now being deployed at a rapid pace across most of the region, and this trend is helping Gulf states localize important parts of these value chains. Already, two of the world's largest solar panel manufacturers - China's LONGi and JinkoSolar - are planning assembly lines in Saudi Arabia in partnership with the PIF. Moreover, the proliferation of cheap renewables supports the case for an export-oriented green-hydrogen strategy. The world's largest such facility should open in the Saudi northwest in 2026, and the UAE and Oman have plans to host other, similarly notable projects.

Betting on this kind of industrial strategy is not without risks, though. Globally, it is not yet clear that newly fashionable industrial policies are working out so well. Nonetheless, the coming months and years may represent the best chance the region has ever had to develop a viable post-oil growth model.

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is Co-Founder of Haala
Energy. Steffen Hertog is
Professor of Comparative
Politics at the London
School of Economics.

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Bhubaneswar-751010

Justice delayed

Sir, The life imprisonment handed down to former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar for his nefarious role in the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom stands as a sombre testament to the profound fissures within India's judicial machinery. While the pronouncement reaffirms the time-honoured maxim that none stand above the law, the disquieting passage of over four decades to arrive at this juncture exposes the inertia and inefficacy that have long plagued the corridors of justice. In a nation where justice delayed is synonymous with justice denied, this prolonged legal odyssey has not only denied closure to the victims but has also cast an enduring shadow upon the very credibility of the judicial process itself. The protracted struggle for justice endured by survivors, many of whom lost entire families to orchestrated carnage, paints a heart-wrenching portrait of resilience against a callous and lethargic system. For forty agonising years, they navigated an unforgiving labyrinth of legal hurdles, where justice appeared not merely distant, but deliberately obstructed by political interference and institutional indifference. Had the mechanisms of justice functioned with the urgency befitting the enormity of the crime, this verdict could have arrived at a time when solace still held meaning — when justice could have served as balm rather than a hollow echo.

iollow echo. *Amarjeet Kumar,* HAZARIBAGH

Pesticide regulation

Sir, Pesticides are sprayed on crops to control pests and increase yield among other reasons. It is also known that pesticides are added to fruits and vegetables to enhance their longevity. Pesticide residue, that is the trace pesticide left in food, spares no food. Once the use of pesticides exceeds the safe level, then it is a cause of worry. Its levels in food and feed should not exceed the maximum residue limit (MRL) to protect consumer safety. Nevertheless, commercial farming is an unavoidable reality. Farmers themselves are at the risk of pesticide contamination via direct contact or inhalation. Strict testing and scrupulous monitoring of pesticide residues in food is better said than done though one cannot deny that India's food safety and food quality regulator Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is burdened by shortage of manpower.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA



TWO STATES





CAG report flags Covid-19 fund misuse, drug crunch

DELHI HEALTH SYSTEM



The report said the Delhi government received ₹787.91 crore under emergency Covid response plan from the Centre, out of which only ₹542.84 crore was spent till November 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: The Delhi government did not spend ₹245 crore out of nearly 788 crore provided by the Centre for emergency response during the Covid pandemic and also delayed release of funds for vaccination against the deadly infection, said a CAG report tabled in the Assembly Friday. The report also pointed that

the State Rapid Response Team and Death Audit Committee, formed by the AAP government during the pandemic in 2020-2022, failed to perform their assigned tasks.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta tabled the performance audit report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on Public Health Infrastructure and

Management of Health Services in the Assembly.

The report said the Delhi government received ₹787.91 crore under emergency Covid response plan from the Centre, out of which only ₹542.84 crore was spent till November 2021.

The report pointed to "significant" percentage of savings (unspent amount) under sever-

"The reasons for under-utilization of funds for implementation of the Covid-19 emergency response was not provided to the auditors by the Delhi government," it said.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released ₹9.60 crore in two installments - ₹3.46 crore in January 2021 and ₹6.14 crore in March 2021 - to the Health department of Delhi government for "COVID-19 Vaccination" but these funds were released to Delhi State Health Society (DSHS) in April and May 2021 only, said the report.

"The DSHS had remitted the funds to the integrated district health societies for further distribution. As per utilisation certificate, ₹7.93 crore out of ₹9.60 crore remained unspent as of March 2022," the report

The State Rapid Response

team (RRT) constituted in March 2020 in the wake of Covid to ensure emergency preparedness "failed" to carry out its assigned task, said the CAG audit report.

Its mandate was to ensure that prompt adequate emergency preparedness and appropriin place to tackle the outbreak.

"Audit observed shortcomings in the functioning of RRT as well as a total disregard for its instructions by various agencies. After its constitution, the RRT met only five times, all in 2020 and no meeting was held in 2021 and 2022, said the report.

Activities suggested by the RRT which could have helped in better management of Covid outbreak were not implemented which defeated the purpose of its formation, the report said.

In view of outbreak of the Covid pandemic, the Delhi government had constituted a Death Audit Committee to audit each and every death in which the patient was Covid positive in the government and private hospitals.

"It was also noticed that Death Audit Committee did not analyse any case of Covid death during the period January to December 2021. From the records furnished to audit, (January 2022 to April 2022), it was observed that out of 938 deaths reported, only 684 deaths were analysed by the Committee," said the report.

In the remaining 254 cases (27.07 per cent), case sheets of Covid deaths were not furnished by the hospitals concerned, it said.

Even in Covid death cases, 707 deaths (March to June 2020) in LNH and 42 deaths (March to May 2020) in RGSSH were not subjected to such audit. thereby depriving hospitals the feedback for making informed



Muslim devotees visit Jama Masjid ahead of the holy month of Ramadan, in New Delhi, Saturday

64,910 girls quit higher studies in WB

Educationists corroborate the trend of declining interest among female aspirants in the state to go for higher education after secondary examination

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, March 1: The number of female students appearing for the higher secondary examinations conducted by the West Bengal state board has drastically reduced, raising questions about whether they are increasingly reluctant to appear for the exam.

This question was fueled by the comparative figure of female aspirants appearing for the "Uccha Madhyamik (Higher Secondary)" examination conducted by the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHSE) in March this year to the corresponding figure of female

aspirants in the "Madhyamik (Secondary examination)" conducted by the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) in 2023.

The Madhyamik aspirants in 2023 are the Uccha Madhyamik aspirants this year.

As per figures from the state education department, the number of female aspirants in the 2023 Madhyamik examination was 3,42,902. However, the number of female aspirants in the Uccha Madhyamik exammonth this year is 2,77,992. A total of 64,910 female students have opted out. This means that the number

of female Uccha Madhyamik has declined by 19 per cent from a similar figure in the 2023 Madhyamik examination.

Educationists believe that the logical conclusion from this decline is that a major section of such female aspirants has dropped out after passing out "Madhyamik" education, while a small section might have migrated to different

The first is the declining number of monthly allowance recipients under the Kanyashree Prakalpa, which is the state's own dole-cum-devel opment scheme to encourage young girls to pursue higher education, where the monthly allowance is ₹1.000.

In the 2023-24 academic year. the number of recipients of the monthly allowance under this scheme was 20.69 lakh. However, with just a month remaining for the ongoing academic year of 2024-25 to end, the number of recipients stands at around 15.75 lakh, as per the figures of the state education department.

In the state budget proposals for the financial year 2025-26 the proposal for budgetary al lotment for higher education in West Bengal had shown a marginal increase over the corresponding figure of 2024 25. The proposed budgetary al location for higher education for 2025-26 is ₹6,593.58 crore marginally higher than the figure of ₹6,401,11 crore pro-

No fuel for overage vehicles from April in Delhi

The move aims to curb vehicular emissions and put a check on air pollution in the city which remains a persistent challenge for the residents

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: In a move aimed at combating air pollution, the Delhi government announced Saturday that from April 1, fuel pumps in the national capital will not provide petrol and diesel to vehicles older than 15 and 10 vears, respectively.

equipped with devices to identify overage vehicles and restrict fuel supply to them, Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said after a high-level meeting with officials to discuss anti-pollution measures.

Fuel pumps would be

Talking to reporters, the minister said the Delhi government would inform the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas about the decision and the ministry would, in turn, notify the fuel pump owners.

The city has around 500 petrol-diesel stations.



"We are setting up gadgets at our petrol pumps that will identify vehicles older than 15 years. They will not be provided fuel." Sirsa said.

A senior official of the Delhi government told PTI that diesel-run vehicles older than 10 years will also be denied fuel after March 31.

According to rough estimates, there are around 55 lakh overage vehicles, 66 per cent of which are two-wheelers and 54 per cent four-wheelers, the officer said.

Giving more details about the implementation of new rules, the officer said many fuel stations in Delhi have already installed AI-enabled cameras to check violations of pollution under control (PUC) certificate rules.

"These cameras currently detect vehicles which do not have PUC certificate and the fuel pump staff deny fuel to

such vehicles. We can also use these AI-enabled cameras to detect the age of particular vehicles. For this, we need to upgrade our system." the officer added. He said the fuel pumps which currently do not have such devices will have them installed soon.

Moreover, the Delhi government will deploy teams to identify overage vehicles and ensure they are either prevented from entering the city or removed if already present.

The government's decision aligns with a 2018 Supreme Court ruling that banned diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years in Delhi. A 2014 National Green Tribunal order prohibits parking of vehicles aged over 15 years in public

The government also plans to phase out nearly 90 per cent of CNG-driven public transport buses in Delhi by December 2025, replacing them with electric buses to promote cleaner and more sustainable

According to the Delhi government, 11,000 buses, including around 8,000 e-buses, will be procured by 2026.

Sirsa said procurement of 3,680 e-buses will be completed by September this year to encourage people to avail public transport for their daily commute.During the meeting, the minister was informed that around 7,600 buses, including 2002 e-buses, are plying in Delhi, another official said.

In November, the Centre for Science and Environment said in its report that vehicular emission is the top contributor to Delhi's pollution during winters -- more than stubble burning, road dust or bursting of firecrackers -- with over 50 per cent of pollution from local sources linked to the city's fragmented transportation system. Nischal Singhania, the president of the Delhi Petrol Dealers Association welcomed the move and said, 'Vehicles older than 15 years are already banned in Delhi by the Supreme Court."

"We already have apparatus to detect vehicles without pollution under control (PUC) certificates. I think those can be used to detect vehicles older than 15 years," he said.

New fleet of yellow taxis hits Kolkata roads

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 1: In an effort to revive the iconic yellow taxis which are dwindling in numbers with time, the West Bengal government in association with a private company has launched a fleet of 20 mod-



The hatchback cars were flagged off by the state transminister Chakraborty Friday.

The transport secretary, Soumitra Mohan, and other officials were also present on the occasion.

Christened 'Yellow Heritage Cabs', the fleet is likely to evoke the nostalgia and emotions surrounding the iconic yellow taxis which have been an integral part of the city for many years.

According to a transport department official 3,000 such cabs hit the streets in two months. The private company has entered into an agreement with a leading automobile company to launch the new yellow taxis in the city.

All the taxis will have modern features, including seat belts and airbags, he said.

TMC begins voter list verification drive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 1: Trinamool Congress leaders Saturday began a door-to-door campaign to scrutinise the electoral rolls amid allegations of voter list manipulation by the BJP ahead of next year's assembly polls in West

Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim personally carried out the voter list verification drive in the Chetla area of south Kolkata.

"The BJP is trying to ma-

nipulate the electoral rolls by bringing in fake voters from other states. So, along with our party workers, we are on a door-to-door visit to verify the voter list," Hakim told reporters

Local TMC leaders were also busy in a similar exercise in the Bhabanipur assembly constituency of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

The verification drive is being carried out by party workers in other places as well, as instructed by Banerjee, also the TMC supremo.



ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସମିତି, ନୂଆଗାଁ, ଜିଳା - ସୁନ୍ଦରଗଡ଼, ଓଡ଼ିଶା At/Po - Nuagaon, District - Sundargarh, State - Odisha

PIN-770035, e-mail: ori-snuagaon@nic.in

TENDER CALL NOTICE No-04/2024-25

No.i-518: Sealed Tenders are invited from the interested bidder for the civil work under BDO, Nuagaon of Sundargarh district. The detail of works eligibility, estimated cost, EMD Cost of Tender paper has been uploaded in the district website www.sundargarh.odisha.gov.in. The bidder should be a "B" or 'C" class contractor. They have to submit the bid documen to the undersigned in the address of "Office of the B.D.O. Nuagaon, At/Po-Nuagaon, Pin-770035, Dist.- Sundargarh (Odisha)" through Registered Post/Speed Post only on or before 21/03/2025 (up to 05.00 P.M.). DTCN & other details can be downloaded from the Dist. website www.sundargarh.odisha. gov.in from 27/02/2025 to 13/03/2025. The authority reserves the right to cancel or reject the entire process without assigning any reason thereof. The tender will be opened on dt. 24/03/2025 at 11.00 A.M. in the Office of the undersigned in the presence of the bidders or his/her representatives.
Sd./- Block Development Officer

OIPR-19358/11/0005/2425

No.O-1558

Delhi experiences warmer Feb this year

New Delhi, March 1: Delhi experienced a warm February this year, with both maximum and minimum temperatures showing a rise compared to the previous year.

According to the weather department's data, the average maximum temperature for the month was 26.7 degrees Celsius, higher than last year's average of 24.4 degrees Celsius.

Similarly, the average mini-



mum temperature was 11.6 degrees Celsius, making it the highest February minimum in the last

The last time the city recorded such a warm average minimum temperature was in 2017.

The month also witnessed a record-breaking night, with the minimum temperature settling at 19.5 degrees Celsius February 27, marking the hottest February night in 74 years

According to the data, this

broke all previous records since 1951. On the same day, the maximum temperature peaked at 32.4 degrees Celsius, making it the warmest day of the month.

Additionally, with a cloudy sky, the maximum temperature was recorded at 27 degrees Celsius Friday, 0.9 notch above the seasonal average, while the minimum was recorded at 18.4 degrees Celsius, the second highest minimum this month, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).



Total Number of Work

Class of Contractor

Estimated Cost

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, R.W.S&S **DIVISION, SAMBALPUR**

"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE Bid Identification No. RWSS (SBP): 11/2024-25

piped water supply to village Bhaliapali under Dhankauda Block of Sambalpur District

Rs.11.28 lakhs

Procurement Office Bid Identification No Executive Engineer, RWSS Division, Sambalpur Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "www.tendersorissa.gov.in". Subsequent corrigendum

quired shall be appeared in the website only Sd./- (I/c) Executive Engineer, R.W.S&S. Division, Sambalpu OIPR-25015/11/0002/2425

national



For decades, the world referred to India as their back office. Now, India is becoming the new factory of the world. We are no longer just a workforce but instead becoming a world force

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

RAHUL THANKS PORTERS FOR SAVING LIVES

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday urged the government to draw lessons from the February 15 tragedy at New Delhi Railway Station in which several passengers lost their lives in a stampede and hoped concrete steps would be taken to prevent such incidents. Gandhi also met porters of the New Delhi Railway Station and thanked them for saving the lives of many passengers during the stampede





come down in the state due interventions, their occurrence even now in a progressive society like that of Kerala was a matter of serious concern

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | CHIEF MINISTER, KERALA

The steel was sourced from leading manufacturers like TATA, JSW, and SAIL, ensuring high-quality

material for the project. This highlights India's self-reliance in infrastructure development and commitment to the Make in India initiative



will do its work OMAR ABDULLAH | CHIEF MINISTER,

SHORT **TAKES**

Punjab begins anti-drugs op

Chandigarh: Punjab Police has launched a statewide operation against drugs, conducting raids at 750 locations as the cabinet sub-committee on the drug menace held its first meeting Saturday, officials said. Around 12,000 police personnel were involved in the operation being carried out as part of an anti-drug campaign. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Friday set a deadline of three months to make the state drug-free. As part of the state government's renewed push against the drug problem, action is being taken against drug peddlers and in some places, their properties were also demolished. Cabinet Minister Aman Arora Saturday appealed to all political parties that instead of playing politics, they should extend their support to the state government's

Paid maternity leave for ASHAs

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has approved the payment of gratuity, paid maternity leave and the increase of retirement age to Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA). The Chief Minister directed officials to ensure gratuity payments to ASHA workers, who serve as a vital link between people and the healthcare system. "This amounts to providing a sizeable retirement benefit of ₹1.50 lakh to each ASHA (worker) who puts in 30 years of service," said an official press release Saturday. adding that 42,752 workers will benefit from the CM's decisions. He approved the extension of 180 days of paid maternity leave for the first two deliveries of eligible health workers.

5 pilgrims killed in road accident

Chamarajanagar (K'taka): Five pilgrims who were on their way to Male Madeshwara temple in this district were killed when the car they were travelling in collided head on with a truck Saturday, police said. According to police, the accident occurred at Chikkindumadi under Kollegal Taluk in the district. The deceased were on their way to the temple located atop a hill as grand celebrations were underway there on account of Maha Shivaratri. Bodies of the deceased have been shifted to the hospital

Compensation must be paid to workers affected by GRAP: SC

A bench of Justices **Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said** compensation should be paid to affected workers using funds collected as labour cess

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi. March 1: The Supreme Court directed Haryana, pay compensation to construction workers whenever they are affected by the closure of activities due to GRAP measures in Delhi-NCR even if there is no specific court order on it.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said compensation should be paid to affected workers using funds collected as labour cess.

Anti-pollution measures under Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) are implemented based on average air quality in Delhi-NCR.

The bench said, "As far as 2024 and 2025 are concerned we have issued directions to the state to pay compensation. We make it clear that hereafter whenever the construction activities are required to be closed due to implementation of GRAP measures, compensation shall be paid to the affected workers in terms of directions issued by this court dated 24th November 2021.'



Even if there is no specific direction of the court to pay compensation, the NCR States shall pay compensation," it

During the hearing Friday, the court was informed that Haryana, in the first and second phases of GRAP-4, has paid a compensation to 2,68,759 and 2,24,881 workers, respectively.

Besides this, the process of paying compensation to around 95,000 workers for the January 2025 GRAP 4 period is underway.

The counsel for the Delhi government told the court that compensation had been paid to 93,272 workers and the verification process for the remaining registered workers is in progress.

Rajasthan government disclosed that compensation had been paid to 3,197 workers, while Uttar Pradesh informed that compensation had been disbursed to 4,88,246, 4,84,157, and 691 workers affected during phases 1, 2, and 3 of GRAP, re-

The top court had earlier pulled up the Delhi government for not paying the full subsistence allowance to construction workers, who went without work due to the curbs imposed to combat air pollution in the national capital.

The Delhi government was directed to convene a meeting of the workers' union immediately to ensure their regis-

Similar directions were passed for Rajasthan, where two districts Bharatpur and Alwar, fall in the NCR, besides 14 districts of Haryana and eight districts of UP, to convene a meeting of workers' unions and pay the subsistence allowance.

The top court directed the chief secretaries of NCR states December 2, to appear before it through video-conferencing to inform whether or not any subsistence allowance was paid to the construction workers who went without work owing to the

COURT CORNER

Safe public spaces essential for true progress on women's issues: Delhi HC

New Delhi: Calling for strict action against those who make public spaces unsafe for women, the Delhi High Court has said unless an environment free from harassment and fear was created, all discussions on women's progress were superficial. Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma said real empowerment began with women's right to live and move freely without fear. The court made the observations in a judgement passed February 28 while refusing to interfere with the conviction of a man for sexually harassing his female co-passenger on a public bus in 2015. In 2019, the trial court convicted the accused and sentenced him to undergo simple imprisonment for one year for offence punishable under Section 354 (Assault of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) of the Indian Penal Code and six months under Section 509 (Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of the woman) IPC. The decision was also upheld by the sessions court in appeal.

Delhi court allows withdrawal of JNU leader Shehla Rashid's case

New Delhi: A court here has allowed Delhi police to withdraw a 2019 case of sedition against former JNUSU vice president Shehla Rashid Shora for her tweets on the Army, police sources said. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Anuj Kumar Singh passed the order February 27 on an application moved by the prosecution, which claimed that Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has withdrawn his sanctions to prosecute Shora. The case was filed for offences including sedition, promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, language, race, place of birth etc., and inciting riots. The charges carried a maximum punishment of life imprisonment. According to the application, the LG order came on the recommendation of a Screening Committee.

Courts can't grant compensation for wrongful confinement: SC

New Delhi: Frowning upon courts overstepping jurisdiction, the Supreme Court has set aside an order of the Allahabad High Court which directed the Director of Narcotics Control Bureau to pay ₹5 lakh as compensation to a man for alleged wrongful confinement. A bench of Justices Saniay Karol and Manmohan said the grant of compensation was without the authority of law. The apex court was hearing an appeal filed by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) challenging an order of the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court. In this case, in a joint operation, the NCB seized 1,280 grams of brown powder (allegedly heroin) from the possession of one Man Singh Verma and one Aman Singh, Accordingly, criminal case was registered against Verma under Sections 8(C), 21 and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. 1985 and he was remanded to judicial custody. While awaiting results from the laboratory, the accused filed plea before Special Judge, NDPS, Barabanki district, seeking bail which was rejected. The accused approached the the high court against the order.

Kuki-Zo groups stage demonstration, demand separate UT PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: The Kuki Students' Organisation and the Kuki-Zo Women's Forum Delhi and NCR staged a demonstration here Saturday and raised the demand for a separate Union Territory with a legislature for the Kuki areas of Manipur.

Scores of members of the Ku ki-Zo tribe gathered at the Jantar Mantar and raised slogans saying they cannot go back to Manipur unless the crisis in the northeastern state has been re-

The protesters carried placards with slogans that called Biren Singh's resignation from the chief minister's post a "smokescreen" and highlighted their demand for a separate Union Territory. The protesters blamed the former chief minis ter for the situation prevailing in Manipur. In a statement is sued at the demonstration site, the protesters said the Kuki-Zo community has endured histor ical injustices

"The Kuki-Zo community has endured historical injustices and would like to reiterate the urgent need for a political solution for the community in Ma nipur." the statement, copies of which would also be sent to the offices of the prime minister and home minister as a charter of demand, said.

It said the community, an integral part of the Indian Union since its inception, has histori cally faced marginalisation, injustices and systemic exclusion from mainstream governance structures in Manipur, despite its significant contributions to the country.

Whereabouts of 4 trapped men located

Telangana minister put the chances of their survival at 'one per cent'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagarkurnool (Telangana), **March 1:** The rescue operations to pull out the eight persons trapped inside the partially collapsed SLBC tunnel here for a week saw a breakthrough Saturday with the whereabouts of four of them being located, though a Telangana minister put the chances of their survival at "one per cent."

State Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao, who attended a meeting with officials involved in the rescue operation along with Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy, said there was lot of progress during the last couple of days

"In my view, the whereabouts of four persons have been located through radar,' he told reporters at the tunnel and expressed hope they would be extricated by Sunday evening.

Asked about the condition

TUNNEL COLLAPSE



of the four whose whereabouts have been found, the minister recalled he had said on the first day itself that the chances of survival of the trapped persons

"I had said the chances (of survival) are very, very remote. I am not talking about it but waiting in view of one per cent possibility (for survival),"

Krishna Rao added desilting was being carried out manually where the whereabouts of four persons has been identified which is expected to be

completed by Sunday evening.

from National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) used

Scientists

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and detected some "anomalies" inside the tunnel, providing a crucial lead in the operation.

The other four appear to have been stuck beneath

the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM), the minister said. It may take some time to get a breakthrough about them, he

The 450 ft tall TBM was being cut, he said. The personnel of about 11 agencies, including Army, NDRF, rat miners, are involved in the operation.

Referring to the criticism of Opposition parties that the operation is getting delayed, Krishna Rao said those involved in the endeavour are experts but the rescue work is

complex in view of the **Eight** conditions, includpersons have ing slush, inside the tunnel. been trapped under The rescue the collapsed roof of the nersonnel

Srisailam Left Bank Canal should not be tunnel since February 22 put at risk, he and the rescue operations are in full swing to ter also said depull them out

watering, repairto safety ing the damaged conveyor belt and other aspects of rescue work is going simultaneously.

Krishna Rao also said the families of those trapped in the tunnel were waiting as the operation was underway.

The minis-

Woman advocate attacked with chemical in court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow/Moradabad (UP), March 1: A woman lawver was allegedly attacked with an inflammable substance in a Moradabad court by two male litigants, police Saturday said.

The incident took place Thursday at around 10.30 am in a court in Thakurdwara tehsil. Advocate Shashibala in her

complaint said her tenant Satvendra dropped her near the main gate of the court. About a minute later, Sachin Kumar and his relative Nitin Kumar, who were hiding there, threw some inflammable substance on her from behind, she said.

The two are residents of Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand, police said.

Shashibala said one of them also put a country-made pistol to her temple and said, 'today we will give you a very good gift." The two decamped when she raised an alarm and drew the attention of other lawyers. The chemical burned her clothes and parts of her body.

Shashibala said she is pursuing some cases in Thakurdwara court against Sachin and Nitin.



They have been booked under sections 124 (1) (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by use of acid etc) and 351 (3) (criminal intimidation) of the BNS at Thakurdwara Police Station in Moradabad, police said.

"The incident seems suspi cious. The CCTV footage show the accused at some other loca tion. And this is not a case of acid attack; some inflammable material was used. The medical examination also does not confirm this. The matter is being investigated," Superintendent of Police (Rural) Kunwar Akash Singh told PTI.

He said Sachin and Nitin have been seen to have entered the district from Kashipur in Uttarakhand and took the same

Of 50 workers rescued, 4 die; search on for 4 amid bad weather

The avalanche hit the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) camp between Mana and Badrinath between 5:30 am and 6 am Friday, burying 55 workers inside eight containers

and a shed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, March 1: Fifty workers have been pulled out of snow from the site of an avalanche-hit BRO camp in Mana village in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, but four of them died Saturday as rescuers raced against time to trace four more labourers feared trapped.

According to latest rescue updates provided by the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority (USDMA), five

labourers were missing but one of them -- Sunil Kumar from Kangra in Himachal Pradesh -- has reached home safely on his own and now, the search is focused on the four remaining The avalanche hit the Border

Roads Organisation (BRO) camp between Mana and Badrinath between 5:30 am and 6 am Friday, burying 55 workers inside eight containers and a shed, according to the Army. Thirty-three of them were

rescued by Friday night and 17 Saturday. Rain and snowfall hampered

the rescue efforts Friday and the operation was suspended as the night fell. As the weather cleared up

Saturday morning, the Army and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel based in Mana resumed the rescue operation, District Disaster Management Officer NK Joshi said.

Six helicopters -- three of the

UTTARAKHAND AVALANCHE



Indian Army Aviation Corps, two of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and a civil chopper hired by the Army -- have been engaged in the operation, Army's Public Relations Officer (PRO) Lieutenant Colonel Manish Shrivastava said.

Located three kilometres from Badrinath, Mana is the last village on the India-Tibet border at

a height of 3,200 metres

"Fifty labourers have been rescued, of whom, unfortunately, four injured have been confirmed as fatal casualties, while the search for the remaining ones is underway," Lt Col Shrivastava said, adding that the injured were being prioritised for evacuation.

The USDMA also confirmed

the death of four rescued labourers. One died during treatment in Jvotirmath and three in Badrinath-Mana, it said.

The deceased were identified as Mohindra Pal and Jitendra Singh from Himachal Pradesh, Manjit Yadav from Uttar Pradesh and Alok Yadav from Uttarakhand, the USDMA said.

The four labourers still missing are Harmesh Chand from Himachal Pradesh, Ashok from Uttar Pradesh and Anil Kumar and Arvind Singh from Uttarakhand, it added.

Army officials said the rescue operation Saturday was mostly carried out by the Army and IAF helicopters as the approach road was blocked by snow at several points, making vehicular movement nearly im-

The priority is to bring the rescued workers to the Army hospital in Jvotirmath and look for the four missing workers, they said.

Officials said 24 people were brought to the Army hospital with injuries and two of them were referred to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rishikesh.

According to the Army PRO Lt Gen. Anindya Sengupta, GOC-in C, Central Command and Lt Gen. D G Mishra, GOC Uttar Bharat, have reached the avalanche site to monitor the rescue operations.

Lt Gen. Sengupta said movement by road is impossible since it is clogged by snow. The Badri nath-Joshimath highway is blocked at 15-20 places, he added.

However, the USDMA subsequently said the three remaining containers have also been locat ed but no worker was found in

Uttarakhand Chief Minis ter Pushkar Singh Dhami did an aerial survey of the avalanche-hit site and reviewed the relief-and-rescue operations at Jyotirmath.

nationa



Philanthropic endeavours should not be driven by the philosophy of commodification and commercialisation. Our healthcare and education systems are being plagued by these

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR VICE PRESIDENT

FIRST 'WE PARK' **OPENED IN KOLLAM**

Kerala Tourism Minister PA Mohamed Riyas inaugurated the 'WE Park' located under the railway bridge near SN College here, Saturday. 'WE Park' is the first project completed under the Kerala government's new design policy, which aims to beautify and enhance the productivity of unused urban spaces



let the facts come to the fore. After that, action who vandalised public property. They will not be spared. Does anyone damage his own house's

AJIT PAWAR | DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER,

I won't comment on how far and to voice of the temple of democracy reaches everyone-be it Hindus. Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, the

HEMANT SOREN | CHIEF MINISTER, JHARKHAND

(UBT) will stake claim is less, there is no law or provision in the Constitution which says that the House should function without the LoP. Shiv Sena (UBT) has the

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

Shah reviews Manipur security

Aiming to bring normalcy in Manipur, Amit Shah directs security forces to ensure free movement of people on roads from March 8

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday directed security forces to ensure free movement of people on all routes in Manipur from March 8 and also called for strict action against those creating obstructions.

The direction was given here by Shah at a high-level meeting where the security situation of Manipur was discussed thread-

The order bears significance as travel through the areas inhabited by Imphal valley-based Meiteis and neighbouring hills based Kukis was totally prohibited since ethnic violence broke out between the two communities in May 2023.

While Kukis travel mostly through Mizoram to go outside the state, the Meiteis don't go to the hills dominated by the Kukis. This confidence building step came 10 days after Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla ordered those holding illegal and looted arms to surrender before the security posts.

Chairing the review meeting, Shah also said the Centre remains fully committed to restoring lasting peace in the state and is providing all necessary assistance in this regard.



This confidence building step came 10 days after Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla ordered those holding illegal and looted arms to surrender before the security posts

that free movement of people should be ensured on all roads of Manipur from March 8, according to an official statement.

He also said that strict action should be taken against those creating obstructions on the roads. This was the first such meeting held after the imposition of President's rule in the northeastern state, which has been witnessing ethnic violence since May 2023. Over 250 people have lost their lives in

Sources said Shah took stock of the security situation in Manipur and a detailed briefing was given on the overall law and order situation in the state.

He directed that the fencing work on both sides of the designated entry points along Manipur's international border should be completed at the earliest

The home minister said to make Manipur drug-free, the entire network involved in the drug trade should be dismantled. Those who attended the meetUnion Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, Deputy Chief of Army Staff and Commander of the Army's Eastern Command among others. President's rule was imposed

in Manipur February 13 after N Biren Singh resigned as chief minister.

The state Assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation. The security review was held after the February 20 ultimatum given by the governor to everyone holding illegal and looted arms to surrender.

During the seven-day period, more than 300 weapons were surrendered by the public, primarily in the valley districts.

These include 246 firearms surrendered by Meitei radical group Arambai Tenggol. Bhalla Friday extended the dead line for the surrender of looted and illegal arms until 4 pm March 6 following demands by people from both hill and valley areas for additional time.

Several thousand arms were looted from police in different places in Manipur during the initial phase of the ethnic violence that began about 22 months ago.



Question of ballot paper out of your scope: Centre to panel



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: The question of reverting to ballot papers does not fall under the ambit of the mandate of a joint committee of Parliament examining the two bills on simultaneous polls, the Union law ministry is learnt to have said.

Going back to the ballot paper system was a "suggestion" made by some of the members of the joint committee, and the law ministry was to respond to

While the ministry's Legislative Department gave elaborate responses to a variety of questions posed to it by the committee, it did not give a direct reply on the suggestion on the ballot paper system.

The ministry is learnt to have said it was "out of scope" of the parliamentary panel to make a suggestion on the use of the ballot paper system, according to sources.

Whether to use Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) or ballot papers for casting votes is not the subject the panel is examining, they underlined.

The committee is mandated to examine the bills on simultaneous polls -- the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill -- and give its report on whether they are sound enough for the purpose or need changes, the

sources said. While the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill lays down a legal framework to hold the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls together, the Union Territo ries Laws (Amendment) Bill seeks to align the terms of legislative Assemblies of Delhi Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir for the purpose of

Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu and Kashmir are the three union territories with legislative Assemblies.

multiple occasions told Partoo has weighed in favour of using EVMs.

Bengal education minister attacked by SFI leaders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 1: Members of CPI(M) students wing SFI and Naxalite AISA gheraoed West Bengal Education minister Bratya Basu and damaged the windscreen of his vehicle in the Jadavpur University campus here Saturday to press for their demands for declaring students union election dates in the state at the earliest.

Basu who went to the JU campus to attend the annual general meeting of West Bengal College and University Professors Association(W-BCUPA), tried to speak to the agitating students while leaving the campus but was surrounded by around 100 students who damaged the windscreen of his car, showed him shoes and smashed the rearview mirror of his vehicle.

The minister was later taken to state-run SSKM Hospital where he complained about uneasiness and suffering gashes on his left hand which was hit by broken glass shreds. His security personnel had a trying time to escort him to his vehicle.

"I have undergone an x-ray test as I felt pain in my chest. However, doctors told me



marks on the upper part of my body but these are not serious," he told reporters while leaving the hospital.

"I was ready to talk to the protesting students. Even the SFI handed over a memorandum to me, but when I was about to board the car again, over 100 protestors turned aggressive and surrounded me. I was ready to speak to five representatives even in the presence of the vice-chancellor, but they did not want constructive dialogue. They wanted chaos and lawlessness. They tried to attack my vehicle," the minister said after the medical check-up

He said the protestors did not entirely belong to SFI but other ultra-left outfits active on the campus as well.

The minister said despite grave provocations on the part of the agitating students, his security guards did not react nor did he seek intervention from the accompanying police escort as "we don't believe in violence and entry

of police into campus." Basu, who is also the president of WBCUPA, said the real undemocratic, unruly self of the left student's outfit was exposed by their protests as they shouted slogans against the members of the teaching

Protest held against incineration of Bhopal gas tragedy waste

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

of women staged an agitation in Pithampur town in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district Saturday to protest against the incineration of the waste linked to the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, a day after its trial burning began. However, the protesters

Dhar (MP), March 1: A group

ended the sit-in within halfan-hour after the police held discussions with them, an official said. The trial incineration of

10 tonnes out of a total of 337 tonnes of hazardous waste commenced Friday afternoon in Pithampur area with initial reports indicating that the air quality and other monitored parameters were within nor-

But to oppose the incineration of the waste in Pithampur, several women gathered near the local bus stand, sporting black bands on their foreheads and holding pictures of Dr BR Ambedkar.

During the sit-in, protest leader Monika Solanki said, "A huge number of people died due to the Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984 as a result of toxic gas leak from the Union Carbide factory. The bones of the victims of this industrial disaster are also being burnt at the incinerator along with the waste.

holding joint elections.

The government has on liament that it does not favour returning to the ballot paper system and the Supreme Court

In northeast India, a border fence could cut through villages, lives

Residents have been worried about another, less visible, local landmark: the border between India and Myanmar, which runs right through the village's centre

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Longwa, March 1: To the people who live there, Longwa is a typical hilltop village. The most imposing structure is a corrugated tin roof belonging to the Angh, a hereditary tribal chief.

But recently, residents have been worried about another, less visible, local landmark: the border between India and Myanmar, which runs right through the village's center.

National boundaries never mattered before to the local Konyak tribe. "I eat in Myanmar and sleep in India," says Tonyei Phawang, the Angh, whose house sits on the border.

The Indian government is now seeking to stop border crossings for the first time, revoking a system that made it legal for Indigenous people to cross freely and threatening to build a border fence that could

cut villages like Longwa in two.

Two countries, one community

Longwa's marketplace was bustling with shoppers from the Myanmar side, motorbikes loaded with as much salt, flour. biscuits, clothes, milk, tea, soap as they could carry a Thursday in December. The nearest town with a market on the other side of the border is Lahe, a full day's drive away.

Locals have long come and gone to shop, study or seek medical care, with no sign that they're crossing an international border except a border marker sitting on a hilltop in the village. The Angh and village council members say their forefathers had no idea that the concrete pillar was meant to divide them when it was built in the early 1970s

Like dozens of other Indigenous Naga tribes, the Konyak's



land straddles the mountains that divide India and Myanmar. Naga villages are usually built on hilltops for security, something that wasn't considered when the British East India Company drew the border in an

agreement with the then-King-

dom of Burma.

The Constitution of India does not allow dual citizenship, but people in Longwa see themselves as belonging to both countries. "I am from both India and

Burma," Phawang said, using

another name for the country officially known as Myanmar. "I vote in the Burmese election. And when the Indian election comes I vote there too.'

Phawang is chief of six Konyak villages in India and more than 30 in Myanmar, whose residents pay allegiance with a yearly feast as they have for some 10 generations

Border guards and fences could cut the village

Until recently, residents from both sides could travel legally within 16 kilometers (9.9 miles) of the border, but that started to change in February 2024, when the government revoked the Free Movement Regime "to ensure the internal security of the country and to maintain the demographic structure of India's North Eastern states bordering Myanmar.'

Change has come slowly in

Longwa: it took almost a year before soldiers stationed in the village began checking docu ments, and Longwa residents still move freely after their shifts end in the early afternoon. But people from other vil lages in Myanmar are afraid to travel beyond Longwa to reach schools or medical care, said B Phohi Konyak, a former local leader of an organization representing Konvak women. Indian Home Minister Amit

Shah said the government has decided to construct a fence along the entire 1,643-kilometer (1,021-mile) long Indo-Myanmar

If it follows the legal border, it would have to cut through dozens of houses. Of the 990 buildings in the vil lage, 170 lie on the boundary line — including a government school, the church and

an army camp.



will be taken against those window panes if an accused is not

whom the voices of temples, mosques, or Gurudwaras reach, but the

rich, or the poor

Sabha. Even if the

exchange between Trumn-Vance-Zelensky is a spectacle - a

reality TV show

like no other

What struck me the most about this 'conversation' between 'world leaders' is the American President and his VP disowning and deriding the previous US govt There is no governance in continuity - not anymore We live in a world where sensitive politics with global impact is being

discussed by heads of state on RIP diplomacy!

@SupriyaShrinate

SHORT TAKES 2006 NRI murder:

Lifer for 10 persons

Ahmedabad: A sessions court here has sentenced 10 persons to rigorous life imprisonment for the murder of an NRI in 2006 after he sought accountability for foreign funds he helped raise for a spiritual organisation.

5 of family killed in roof collapse Tarn Taran (Punjab):

Five members of a family died after the roof of their house collapsed while they were asleep, police said Saturday. The incident occurred at around 4:30 am in village Pandori Gola here, said police. The structure of the house was in dilapidated condition. Some waste material was kept at the roof of the house and because of its weight, the roof collapsed.

Two Naxalites gunned down Sukma: Two Naxalites

were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district Saturday, police said. He said personnel from the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action - an elite unit of the CRPF) are involved in the operation launched Friday based on inputs about the presence of Maoists in the area.



international



There is enough fuel stocks and no question of a shortage. People have begun panic **buying for** no reason

ANIL JAYANTHA FERNANDO I DEPUTY FM. SRI LANKA

MT EVEREST REOPENED

China Saturday reopened the scenic area of Mt Everest, known as Mount Qomolangma, in the Tibet Autonomous Region after it was closed to the public following the January earthquake. The area was closed January 7 after a 6.8-magnitude quake struck Dingri, home to the northern base camp of the world's highest peak, Mount Qomolangma





threat is not the right way to deal with China. Instead, mutual respect is the basic prerequisite

LIU PENGYU | SPOKESPERSON. CHINA'S EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON

We believe that time has come for full decolonisation... not piecemeal or partial or phased MARK GOLDING I



anti-Muslim hate crime is unacceptable and has no place in our society. That's why we've committed

to defining Anti-Muslim Hatred/ Islamophobia, as a crucial step forward in tackling it and creating a society where everyone feels safe and welcome

ANGELA RAYNER | SECRETARY OF STATE, MHCLG

SHORT TAKES

Pak's tax shortfall widens to Rs 606bn

Islamabad: Pakistan's tax shortfall widened to Rs 606 billion in the first eight months of this fiscal year, piling up pressure on authorities for violating commitments made with the International Monetary Fund. The fund provided a \$7 billion loan but imposed strict conditions, including on tax collection. The Express Tribune reported that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) sustained a colossal shortfall of Rs 606 billion against the July-February target of Rs 7.95 trillion because it provisionally pooled Rs 7.342 trillion during this fiscal year's July-February period.

B'desh delegation to travel to India

Dhaka: An 11-member Bangladeshi delegation will travel to India Monday for a meeting regarding the Ganga Water Treaty, which is due for renewal in 2026. India and Bangladesh are set to hold the 86th meeting of the joint committee of technical the renewal of the 30-year-old treaty for sharing the waters of the trans-boundary river. "The Bangladeshi delegation, led by Muhammad Abul Hossen, member of the Joint River Commission (JRC), will reach Kolkata March 3 and immediately leave on a two-day visit to the joint observation site on the Ganges at Farakka until the morning of March 5," The Daily Star newspaper said.

Ukraine exposed in war with Russia

The meltdown between Trump and Zelenskiy in the White House leaves the Ukrainian leader more exposed than ever in the three-year war, during which his country has relied heavily on aid and weapons supplied by Trump's predecessor Joe Biden

REUTERS

Washington, March 1: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's meeting with Donald Trump ended in disaster Friday, after the two leaders clashed in an extraordinary exchange before the world's media at the White House over the war with Russia.

Zelenskyy had seen the meeting in the Oval Office as an opportunity to convince the United States not to side with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who ordered the invasion of Ukraine three years ago.

Instead US President Trump and Vice President JD Vance laid into Zelenskyy, saying he showed disrespect, driving relations with Kyiv's most important wartime ally to a new low. The Ukrainian leader was told to leave, a US official said. An agreement between

Ukraine and the United States to jointly develop Ukraine's rich natural resources, which Kyiv and its European allies had hoped would usher in better relations, was left unsigned and in limbo

The already-tense meeting blew up when Vance stressed the need for diplomacy to resolve the biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two. Zelenskyy, his arms folded. countered that Putin could not be trusted and noted that Vance had never visited Ukraine.

The head of the Ukrainian armed forces, Oleksandr Syrskyi, posted a statement on Telegram affirming that his troops stood by Zelenskyy and that Ukraine's strength was in

Anxious Ukrainians following from afar largely rallied around their leader but fretted



Thank you America, thank you for your support, thank you for this visit. Thank you @POTUS, **Congress, and the American** people. Ukraine needs just and lasting peace, and we are working exactly for that

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT. US VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

about the prospects of continuing flows of US military aid that the country has relied on.

was mixed, while Democrats lambasted his handling of the meeting. The Ukrainian leader conducted the meeting in his

In Congress, reaction from

Trump's Republican Party

non-native English, and as it progressed he was drowned out by Trump and Vance. **EARLY EXIT**

After the talks, Trump directed two top aides to tell Zelenskyy it was time to leave, even as attendants were preparing to serve lunch to the delegations. according to a White House official.

The Ukrainians were instructed to depart despite their desire to continue the talks, the

official added. The falling-out meant that

Ukraine and the United States failed to sign a much-vaunted minerals deal that Kyiv hoped would spur Trump to back Ukraine's war effort and potentially win support from Republicans in Congress for a new round of aid.

I have determined that

is not ready for

is ready for Peace

President Zelenskyy

Peace if America

is involved. He can

come back when he

Trump is not interested in revisiting the minerals deal at the moment, a senior White House official told Reuters Friday evening.

The clash also undermined efforts by European leaders to convince Trump to provide security guarantees for Ukraine even if he has refused to deploy US soldiers on Ukrainian soil to maintain peace. Such guarantees are seen as crucial to deter Russia from future ag-

Trump instead threatened to withdraw US support from

The US president has lurched toward **Russia since taking** over as president, shocking traditional allies in Europe and beyond and leaving **Ukraine increasingly** vulnerable

Zelenskyy, who won billions of dollars of US weaponry and moral support from the Biden administration, is facing a sharply different attitude from Trump. Trump wants to quickly wind down the three-year war, improve ties with Russia and recoup money spent to support Ukraine.

Ukraine has rapidly expanded its defense industry production but remains heavily reliant on foreign military assistance, while also struggling to replenish manpower as it battles a much larger foe.

While Ukraine repelled Rus sia's invasion from the outskirts of Kviv and recaptured swathes of territory in 2022, Russia still controls around a fifth of Ukraine and has been slowly taking ground since a failed Ukrainian counteroffensive in 2023.

Kyiv's troops hold a chunk of land in Russia's western Kursk region after a 2024 incursion.

Trump has engaged in a long-distance feud with Zelenskyy in recent weeks, criticizing his handling of the war, calling him a "dictator" and urging him to agree to the minerals deal. He subsequently distanced himself from the "dictator" remark.

MOSCOW GLOA



Moscow, March 1: Russia reacted with glee Friday to the bitter clash between Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the White House, saying the Ukrainian leader got what he deserved. The acrimonious shouting

match was a gift to Moscow, which is working to build ties with Trump's new administration while trying to discredit Zelenskyy and undermine his legitimacy.

Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev said Zelenskyy, who was accused by Trump Zelenskyy lost and Vice President this round with a JD Vance of being deafening rattle. And he disrespectful towill have to crawl to the wards the Unitnext one on his knees ed States, had KONSTANTIN KOSACHYOV | DEPUTY received a "solid CHAIRMAN OF slap". "A brutal RUSSIA'S UPPER HOUSE dressing down

in the Oval Office,' Medvedev, who is deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, posted on Telegram.

Russian Foreign Ministry

spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said it was a miracle that Trump and Vance restrained themselves from hitting Zelenskyy during the argument, which was broadcast on news channels around the world. She said Zelenskyy was biting the hand that fed him. Hardline nationalist TV com-

mentator Vladimir Solovyov announced a special show devoted to "Zelenskyy's suicide in the White House"

Medvedev, in his post, insulted Zelenskyy and said he had finally been told the truth to his face that, as he put it, "the Kyiv regime is playing with World War Three." He called for miled, something Moscow has long been pushing for. Russia has long portrayed

Zelenskyy as an unstable and self-obsessed US puppet who was used by the previous Biden administration to try to inflict a strategic defeat on Moscow by "fighting to the last Ukrainian."

Zelenskyy has rejected that characterisation, saying he is doing all he can to defend his country from Russia with help from Ukraine's allies.

The rapid rapprochement between Moscow and Washington has worried Ukraine and its European allies, who fear that Trump

and President Vladimir Putin could cut a deal that leaves them sidelined and undermines their se curity. Putin has said

repeatedly that Zelenskyv is not a legiti mate leader because his five-

year term expired last year. Ukraine has been unable to hold elections because it has been under martial law since full-scale war erupted in Feb ruary 2022. Former Kremlin adviser Ser

gei Markov said the Oval Office clash was likely to accelerate the end of Zelenskiy's political career, something some Rus sian officials have been keen to see for some time, believing it will be easier to strike a peace deal with someone else. "The main conclusion that every one has drawn from the public scandal of Zelenskiy and Trump is that Zelenskiy is completely out of line and should step down from the presidency as soon as possible," said Markov.

40-YEAR **LONG WAR**

Kurdish militants declare truce with Turkiye

The development could give Erdogan a domestic boost and an historic opportunity to bring peace and development to southeast Turkey where the conflict has killed thousands and severely hurt the economy

REUTERS

Ankara, March 1: The outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group declared an immediate ceasefire Saturday, a news agency close to it said, heeding jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan's disarmament call, in a major step toward ending a 40-year insurgency against the Turkish state.

Ocalan Thursday called on the PKK to lay down its arms and dissolve, a move that President Tayyip Erdogan's gov-ernment and the opposition pro-Kurdish DEM party voiced support for.

If successful, the move could have wide-ranging implications for the region, while ending a conflict that has killed



more than 40,000 people since the PKK - now based in the mountains of northern Iraq launched its armed insurgency in 1984.

The group said it hoped An-

kara would give Ocalan, held in near total isolation since 1999, more freedoms so he can lead a disarmament process, adding that the necessary political and democratic conditions must be established for it to succeed.

'We, as the PKK, fully agree with the content of the call and state that, from our front, we will heed the necessities of the call and implement it, the group said in a statement, according to the Firat news

"Beyond this, issues like laying down arms being put into practice can only be realised

under the practical leadership of Leader Apo," the group said, using its nickname for Ocalan, adding it would halt all hostilities immediately unless attacked.

The PKK, designated a terrorist group by Turkey and its Western allies, said it was ready to convene a congress, as Ocalan called for, but the necessary security conditions should be established for him to "personally direct and run" it.

Previous efforts to end the insurgency, held in the years 2009-11 and 2013-15, failed and resulted in increased violence.

Hamas sees 'no progress' on second ceasefire phase

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, March 1: The latest round of talks on the second phase of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas has made no progress so far, and it was unclear whether the talks would resume Saturday, a senior Hamas official said.

The first phase of the ceasefire, which paused 15 months of fighting in the Gaza Strip, saw the release of 33 hostages, including eight bodies, in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Phase one expires Saturday.



Deacons take part in a mass for their jubilee in St Peter's Basilica at The Vatican Sunday February 23 that was supposed to be presided over by Pope Francis who was admitted at Rome's Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic



A protestor holds a placard at the Brandenburg Gate, illuminated in Ukrainian colors, during a demonstration against Russia's war on Ukraine as they mark the third anniversary of the full-scale invasion in Berlin, Monday, February 24



A man plays a guitar and harmonica, as riot police clash with demonstrators, at a protest near the Greek parliament in Athens, February 28



Palestinians spin steel wool sparklers amid the rubble of buildings, ahead of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, at Jabalia refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip. February 28

Business



Some of them (Nifty stocks) may have seen some downfall, but by and large the Nifty still reflects decent valuations

PIYUSH GOYAL I

TUHIN KANTA PANDEY ASSUMES CHARGE

Tuhin Kanta Pandey assumed charge as the 11th chairman of capital markets regulator Sebi Saturday. Pandey, a career bureaucrat who was serving as the Finance Secretary till now, was appointed chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) by the government Thursday. He replaces Madhabi Puri Buch, whose three-year tenure ended Friday.





very good opportunity to do a win-win bargain. So we can really turn it into a win-win

situation. Now that the reciprocal tariff threat is coming, it is doubly beneficial that we also, in the process, hold the **United States to reciprocal** tariff reductions as well, and get access for our goods that we export to them

ARVIND PANAGARIYA | CHAIRMAN OF THE



Fundamentally our **business** was built on the back of dy-

namic pricing. Now, it was not designed on models that today's world of AI is using because we started our business 7-8 years back

RITESH AGARWAL OYO CO-FOUNDER AND CEO

SHORT **TAKES**

CIL production drops marginally

New Delhi: State-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) recorded a marginal 0.9 per cent decline in coal production in February compared to the year-ago period. The company's' coal production stood at 74.1 MT in February this fiscal, down from 74.8 MT in the corresponding month of previous fiscal. The company's production in the April-February period was 695.3 MT over 685.1 MT in the year-ago period, CII said in a filing to BSF. Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output. The cumulative coal production during April-February period was at 928.95 million tonnes. registering an increase of 5.73 per cent, over 878.55 MT of fossil fuel produced in the year-ago period. the coal ministry said in a statement. The cumulative coal dispatch during the April-February period rose to 929.41 MT, registering a growth of 5.50 per cent from 880.92 MT produced in the corresponding period of previous year, the ministry

NMDC iron ore production up

New Delhi: State-owned NMDC Saturday said that it has registered a 17.8 per cent increase in iron ore production at 4.62 million tonnes (MT) in February. The company had produced 3.92 MT of iron ore in the corresponding month of previous fiscal year, NMDC said in a filing to BSE. The company said that the figures are provisional. The iron ore production in the April-February period rose to 40.49 MT over 40.24 MT in the year-ago period, the filing said. The sale of iron ore in February was at 3.98 MT, over 3.99 MT in February last fiscal. Hyderabad-based NMDC, under Ministry of Steel, is the country's largest iron ore mining company. The PSU alone caters around 20 per cent to the country's demand for the key steelmaking raw material. Since inception, the company has been involved in the exploration of a wide range of minerals including copper, rock phosphate, limestone, magnesite, diamond, tungsten and beach sands amongst others in some of the most remote corners of

GST collections rise 9% to ₹1.84L-cr

New Delhi, March 1: Gross GST collections rose by 9.1 per cent to about ₹1.84 lakh crore in February, boosted by domestic consumption and indicating potential economic revival.

As per the official data released Saturday, on a gross basis, mop up from Central GST stood at ₹35,204 crore, State GST at ₹43,704 crore, Integrated GST at ₹90,870 crore and compensation cess of ₹13,868 crore. GST revenues from domestic

transactions jumped 10.2 per cent to ₹1.42 lakh crore while that from imports grew 5.4 per cent to ₹41,702 crore during February.

Total refunds issued during February were ₹20,889 crore, a 17.3 per cent increase over the year-ago period. Net GST collections during February 2025 grew 8.1 per cent to about ₹1.63 lakh crore Gross and net GST revenues

in February 2024 were ₹1.68 lakh crore and ₹1.50 lakh crore, respectively.

The gross GST collections



in February 2025, at ₹1.84 lakh crore are, however, lower than ₹1.96 lakh crore collected in January 2025

EY Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal said the robust GST collection figures indicate that the Indian economy is withstanding global economic challenges.

"The consistent rise in domestic GST revenue compared to import-related collections points to the effective implementation of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat policies. Furthermore,

the government's increased disbursement of domestic and export refunds, including those related to inverted duty structures, demonstrates its commitment to easing working capital pressures on businesses," Agarwal said

KPMG, Indirect Tax Head & Partner, Abhishek Jain said, "GST collections growth of 10.2 per cent on domestic supplies and overall growth of 9.1 per cent indicates a potential revival of economy for Q4. If the Maha Kumbh effect comes into play, next month's revenue growth could be even better.

Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said while GST collections in large manufacturing and consuming states like Haryana, UP, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, MP, Karnataka have shown handsome increases in the range of 10-20 per cent, a detailed evaluation on the reasons for the low growth in the range of 1-4 per cent in Telangana, Gujarat, Assam, AP and Odisha could provide reasons on the factors responsible for growth in GST collections.

Tax Connect Advisory Services LLP Partner Vivek Jalan said this year's GST collection is almost on target and that is one of the reasons for revised estimates pegging fiscal deficit for FY24-25 lower at 4.8 per cent, below the bud geted 4.9 per cent.

So far this fiscal (April-February), gross GST collections have grown 9.4 per cent to about ₹20.13 lakh crore, while net GST collections rose 8.6 per cent to over ₹17.79 lakh crore.

Maruti sales up; Hyundai, Tata decline

98.18% of ₹2000 notes returned: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 1: The Reserve Bank Saturday said 98.18 per cent of the ₹2000 banknotes have been returned to the banking system, and only ₹6,471 crore worth such notes are still with the public.

On May 19, 2023, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the withdrawal of ₹2000 denomination banknotes from circulation. The total value of ₹2000

banknotes in circulation, which was ₹3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, declined to ₹6,471 crore at the close of business on February 28, 2025, RBI said.

"Thus, 98.18 per cent of the ₹2000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it said in a statement.

The facility for deposit and/or exchange of the ₹2000 banknotes was available at all bank branches till October 7, 2023. However, this facility is still available at the 19 issue offices of the Reserve Bank.

Since October 9, 2023, RBI issue offices are also accepting ₹2000 banknotes from individuals and entities for deposit into their bank accounts.

Further, members of the public can also send ₹2000 banknotes through India Post from any post office within the country to any of the RBI issue offices for credit to their bank accounts

The ₹2000 banknotes continue to be legal tender.

India to grow at 6.5% in FY26: IMF



New York, March 1: Multilateral financing agency International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that India will retain its position as the fastest-growing major economy by clocking a GDP growth of 6.5 per cent in 2025-26, on the back of robust private investment and macroeconomic stability.

India's strong economic performance, the IMF said, provides an opportunity for the country to advance critical and challenging structural reforms to realise the ambition of becoming an advanced economy by 2047. "Real GDP is expected to grow at 6.5 per cent in 2024-25 and 2025-26, supported by robust growth in private consumption on the back of sustained macroeconomic and financial stability.'

According to the second advance estimate released by the Indian government, the country's economy is expected to clock a growth rate of 6.5 per cent during 2024-25. "Headline inflation is expected to converge to target as food price shocks wane," the IMF said after Article IV consultations with India.

The IMF statement also underlined the need for deeper implementation of structural reforms to boost private investment and employment, and push growth. "...comprehensive structur-

al reforms are crucial to create

high-quality jobs, invigorate investment, and unleash higher potential growth. Efforts should focus on implementing labour market reforms, strengthening human capital, and supporting greater participation of women in the labour force," it added. Boosting private investment

and FDI, the IMF statement said, was vital and would require stable policy frameworks, greater ease of doing business. governance reforms, and increased trade integration. These would include both tariff and non-tariff reduction measures.

It further said that despite recent moderation. India's economic growth has remained robust, with GDP growth of 6 per cent y-on-y in the first half of 2024-25. Inflation has broadly declined within the tolerance band of the Reserve Bank (of 2 to 6 per cent), though food price fluctuations have created some volatility, the statement said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Leading passenger vehicle maker Maruti Suzuki Saturday reported marginal growth while Hyundai and Tata Motors posted a decline in their sales in February as a slowdown in the market continued with demand remaining muted.

On the other hand, Mahindra & Mahindra and Toyota Kirloskar Motor posted double-digit growth riding on their SUV and MPV models.

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its total domestic passenger vehicle sales were at 1,60,791 units last month as compared with 1,60,271 units in the year-ago month, a marginal year-on-year growth. Sales of the company's mini

segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, declined to 10,226 units as against 14,782 units in same month last year, while those of compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, and WagonR, rose to 72,942 units as compared to 71,627 units in the year-ago month.

MSI said its utility vehicles, consisting of Grand Vitara Brezza, Ertiga, XL6, Jimny clocked higher sales at 65,033 units last month as compared to 61.234 units earlier.

Rival Hyundai Motor India said it dispatched 47,727 units to dealers in the domestic market last month, a drop of 5 per cent as compared with 50,201 units in February 2024

"On the domestic sales front, despite geopolitical challenges, we remain optimistic that the proposed tax reforms in the Union Budget 2025 and improved liquidity will provide the much-needed demand boost to the market," Hyundai Motor India Whole-time Director and CEO Tarun Garg said.

Tata Motors said its domestic passenger vehicle (PV) sales, including electric vehicles, were down 9 per cent at 46,435 units as compared with 51.267 units a year ago. On the other hand, M&M said

its utility vehicles sales in the domestic market were at 50,420 vehicles, a growth of 19 per cent as compared with 42,401 units in February last year.

"This strong performance is a result of a continued positive momentum for our SUV portfolio," Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Automotive Division President Veeiav Nakra said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said its overall sales increased 13 per cent year-onyear to 28,414 units in February as compared to 25,220 units in February 2024. The company dispatched 26,414 units to its dealers in the domestic market

and exported 2,000 units. "MPVs and SUVs continue

to be the primary growth driv-

ers, contributing 68 per cent to overall sales," Toyota Kirloskar Motor Vice President, Sales-Service-Used Car Business Varinder Wadhwa said The strong demand for mod-

els such as the Innova Crysta, Innova Hycross, Urban Cruiser Hyryder, Hilux, Fortuner, Legender, and Rumion reflects the growing preference for reliable and quality products, he added.

Kia India also reported a 23.8 per cent rise in total sales at 25,026 units in February compared to 20,200 units sold in the same month last year.

"Kia India continues to grow steadily, driven by strong customer demand and our commitment to delivering cutting-edge mobility solutions...With a diverse and evolving product lineup, Kia India continues to respond to market demand with agility and precision," Kia India Senior Vice President and Head of Sales and Marketing, Hardeep Singh Brar said.

Similarly, JSW MG Motor India reported a 16.3 per cent rise in retail sales at 4,956 units in February this year compared to 4,261 units in the same month

In the two-wheeler segment, Royal Enfield reported a 19 per cent vear-on-vear rise in total sales at 90,670 units in February as compared to 75,935 units in

the same month a year ago. The company's domestic sales were at 80,799 units, as against 67,922 units in February last year, up 19 per cent. Ex ports jumped 23 per cent to 9,871

units last month compared to 8,013 units in February 2024. Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt

Ltd (SMIPL) posted total sales of 90,206 units last month, down from 97.435 units in February

DeepSeek claims theoretical cost-profit ratio of 545% per day

The revelation could **further rattle AI stocks** outside China that plunged in January after web and app chatbots powered by its R1 and V3 models surged in popularity worldwide

REUTERS

Beijing, March 1: Chinese AI startup DeepSeek Saturday disclosed some cost and revenue data related to its hit V3 and R1 models, claiming a theoretical cost-profit ratio of up to 545 per cent per day, though it cautioned that actual revenue would be significantly lower.

This marks the first time the Hangzhou-based company has revealed any information about



its profit margins from less computationally intensive "inference" tasks, the stage after training that involves trained AI models making predictions or performing tasks, such as through chatbots.

The revelation could further rattle AI stocks outside China that plunged in January after web and app chatbots powered by its R1 and V3 models surged in popularity worldwide.

The sell-off was partly caused

by DeepSeek's claims that it spent less than \$6 million on chips used to train the model, much less than what U.S. rivals like OpenAI have spent.

The chips DeepSeek claims it used, Nvidia's H800, are also

much less powerful than what OpenAI and other U.S. AI firms have access to, making investors question even further U.S. AI firms' pledges to spend billions of dollars on cutting-edge

DeepSeek said in a GitHub post published Saturday that assuming the cost of renting one H800 chip is \$2 per hour, the total daily inference cost for its V3 and R1 models is \$87,072. In contrast, the theoretical daily revenue generated by these models is \$562,027, leading to a cost-profit ratio of 545 per cent. In a year this would add up to just over \$200 million in revenue.

However, the firm added that its "actual revenue is substantially lower" because the cost of using its V3 model is lower than the R1 model, only some services are monetized as web and app access remain free, and developers pay less during offpeak hours.

MICROSOFT SHUTTING DOWN SKYPE IN MAY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York. March 1: Microsoft is closing down Skype, the video-calling service it bought for \$8.5 billion in 2011, which had helped spark a transformation in how people communicate online.

The tech giant said Friday it will retire Skype in May and shift some of its services to Microsoft Teams, its flagship videoconferencing and team applications platform.

Skype users will be able to use their existing accounts to log into Teams. Microsoft has for years prioritised Teams over Skype and the decision to fold the brand reflects the tech giant's desire to streamline its main communications app as it faces a host of competitors.

Founded in 2003 by a group of engineers in Tallinn, Estonia, Skype was a pioneer in making telephone calls using the internet instead of landlines.

MEN IN BLUE WILL TAKE ON NEW ZEALAND IN THEIR FINAL GROUP A CLASH IN THE ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY

India look to sharpen spin play

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai. March 1: A seemingly invincible India will be eager to sharpen their game against spin and give a run to second-line players ahead of the semifinal when they take on New Zealand in their last group match of the Champions Trophy here Sunday.

A win in their last league match will help India top the Group A. But that position of pride is of little value because they are set to face either Australia or most likely South Africa in the last four, and both of them have handy spin units at their disposal.

Indian batters have not been really comfortable against spin despite two victories thus far in the event, and New Zealand, who are also qualified for the semifinals, could offer them a tough challenge.

The star Indian batters were focusing more on playing out Bangladesh spinners Mehidy Hasan Miraz (037) and Rishad Hossain (238) without taking risks, and they followed the same approach against Pakistan leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed (128).

But they will come up against more wily customers in Mitchell Santner and Michael Bracewell Sunday, and it could be their harshest test against spin yet in this event.

Both the Kiwi spinners are in fine fettle here, and could be even more effective on the worn out surface at Dubai.

Indian batters have been clever enough to milk spinners for singles and twos, while reserving the big shots against pacers when the ball came much more quickly and predictably at them.

But they will face 20 overs from Santner and Bracewell while a few more of Glenn Phillips' part-time off-spin.

India do not have very fond memories of facing Santner and



Phillips in a Test series at home late last year, which they lost 0-3, and now they have Bracewell too to tackle.

The off-spinner has been quite parsimonious so far, conceding just 3.2 runs per over across two matches.

So, the effectiveness of Shubman Gill. India's standout batter in ODIs of late, batting icon Virat Kohli, who made a morale-boosting 100 against Pakistan, Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul against them will have a telling impact on the outcome

And even beyond this match, considering the slowing-down nature of the decks at the DICS. Spinners to the fore

But there is a pleasing side to spinners' dominance here.

The selection of five spinners — Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakravarthy, Washington Sundar — was not viewed with any conviction ahead of the

marquee event because of the overwhelming success pacers had at this venue in the past.

But what India encountered at Dubai are tired pitches after

ARSHDEEP MAY REPLACE SHAMI

The presence of five left-handed batters in the New Zealand line-up and the slight calf

trouble faced by Mohammed Shami during the

Pakistan game may force the Indian team man-

agement to play left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh

If the Friday's practice session was an indica-

tion, then the Punjab pacer in all likelihood will

replace Shami, who has recently returned to

the national fold following a long injury lay-off.

of bowling Coach Morne Morkel, bowling 13

overs with full run-up while Shami only bowled

6-7 overs with a curtailed run-up. He was not

bowling full steam. During the game against

Pakistan February 23, Shami had received treat-

ment in his right leg from the physios just after

The body language of the players during the

bowling his third over of the innings.

Arshdeep trained under the watchful eves

in the Sunday's Champions Trophy game.

the venue hosted the ILT20 recently, vindicating the selection call to a large extent.

The three tweakers India employed so far — Jadeja, Axas per the conditions, making it tough for their opponents.

They have not produced any magical spells but were able to keep the opposition batters in check in the middle overs, as none of them have given in excess of five runs per over in

The match against Pakistan stands as a prime example for this. Despite constructing a 100-plus stand Mohammad Rizwan and Saud Shakeel were never able to acceler ate between the 11th and 34th over — a phase when Indian spinners applied the brakes remarkably well.

In fact, the Pakistan batters could not find a boundary for nine overs on the trot.

But they might just face a different scenario against New Zealand as batters such as Kane Williamson, Will Young, Tom Latham, Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra etc are excellent against spin.

If the Indian spinners can contain them, then it will do a world of good to their already high confidence.



training session Friday suggested that India are likely to give Shami a much-needed break before all important semi-finals.

While KL Rahul in his interaction with media was not very sure if India would alter the winning combination despite the temptation, assistant coach Rvan Doeschate, later in the evening, hinted that the bowling line-up could be changed a bit.

Pragg scores first win, Aravindh shoots lead



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prague, March 1: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa cruised to a smooth victory against Nguyen Thai Dai Van of Czech Republic, while Aravindh Chithambaram emerged as the sole leader, defeating top seed Wei Yi of China in the third round of the Prague Masters here

It was a swift and commanding victory for Praggnanandhaa, widely regarded as the biggest favourite to win this tournament.

It was a Nimzo-Indian defense and in Praggnanandhaa's words it was "just a position to play". The middle game surfaced with Dai Van being on the defensive despite his extra pawn, a typical feature of the structure and the Indian navigated the complexities with

The decisive moment came on the 14th move itself when Praggnanandhaa got an undeniable advantage and after that though the game took a few twists but the result was never in doubt.

Having played two draws in the first two rounds, it was an essential victory for Praggnanandhaa and he achieved the final result in style. The Indian won a rook for a minor piece and when it comes to technicalities, no one can doubt the acumen of Praggnanandhaa.

"Yesterday (the second round) was nothing, in the first round I had a good position", was how the Indian reflected on his performance thus far.

Praggnanandhaa scored his first win, compatriot Aravindh Chithamabaram announced his arrival in the elite circles by entering the world top 20 in live ratings for the first time.

Aravindh showed deeper opening understanding in the Ragozin where the Chinese played as black. The middle game approached with a dynamic balance but Aravindh out-calculated Yi and launched a king side attack, sacrificing two pawns on the other flank.

The game lasted 44 moves.

The victory took Aravindh to 2.5 points out of a possible 3 on a day when American Sam Shankland lost to Vincent Kevmer of Germany. The second place is now shared by Praggnanandhaa and Keymer on two

Gukesh ranks No 3; Pragg back in top 10



world champion D Gukesh climbed to a career-high number three ranking, while compatriot R Praggnanandhaa broke back into the top 10 in the latest FIDE classical ratings released Saturday. The 18-year-old Gukesh, who has been in sublime form ever since he beat China's Ding Liren to clinch the world title in Singapore in December, has gained 10 points and now has a 2787 rating. Gukesh, who lost the Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee to Praggnanandhaa on tiebreak, is behind second-placed Hikaru Nakamura (2802) while and Norway's Magnus Carlsen (2833) continues to be the top-ranked chess player in the world. The Indian Grandmaster has overtaken compatriot Arjun Erigiasi and USA's Fabiano Caruana. Erigiasi, who was the highest-ranked Indian for a long time, has moved down to fifth with a rating of 2777 Praggnanandhaa, who is currently competing in the Prague Masters, is back in the top 10 for the first time since July last year thanks to He has moved up to the eighth spot after gaining 17 pointing. He has a 2758 rating. Koneru Humpy remains the sole Indian in the top 10 in the women's list at number six with a rating of 2528, while R Vaishali (2484) and Harika Dronavalli (2483) are 14th and 16th respectively. The FIDE rating are

Sharing the fourth spot is Quang Leim Le of Vietnam. David Navara of Czech Repub lic. Anish Giri of Holland and Shankland, a half point ahead of Dai Van and Gurel Ediz of

Top seed Wei Yi is surprisingly at the bottom of the table with six rounds still remaining in the 10-player round-robin tournament.

In the challengers' section being played simultaneously, Divya Deshmukh succumbed to her second defeat in three days losing to Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan.

SHORT **TAKES**

PCB to refund for rain-hit matches

Lahore: The Pakistan Cricket Board Saturday announced full ticket refunds for the two Champions Trophy matches in Rawalpindi that were washed out by rain. The affected matches --Australia vs South Africa February 25 and Bangladesh vs Pakistan February 27 -- were abandoned without a ball bowled. As per the PCB ticket refund policy for Champions Trophy, ticket holders are eligible for a full refund if the match was abandoned before the toss. All enclosure tickets will be refunded, the PCB said in a statement. Ticket holders of hospitality tickets (boxes and PCB gallery) will not be eligible for a refund, it said.

Neeraj supports fit India initiative

New Delhi: Two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra Saturday pledged support to the government's 'FIT India Sundays on Cycle' event, saying that the initiative would not only help people improve their fitness but also contribute towards controlling pollution. The javelin superstar urged the people to take out time every Sunday and join the initiative. "Namaste Fit India Sundays on Cycle is a fantastic way to improve one's fitness and to contribute towards controlling pollution. So, I would like to tell you that please indulge in cycling every Sunday, if you are not able to find time every day," Chopra said in a ministry release.

Iyer gifts shoes to net bowler

Dubai: It was a special moment for one of the net bowlers Jaskiran Singh at the ICC Cricket Academy here when India top-order batter Shreyas Iyer walked up to him and gifted him a pair of spikes during a Champions Trophy practice session. Jaskiran, a chartered accountant by profession and an avid cricket lover, was fielding at long-off when Iver came up to him and asked, "Paaji kya haal-chaal, sab badiya? "Shreyas bhai came up to me and asked 'what's your show size'? I said 10, and then he said I've got something for you and he gave me these spikes. It really means a lot," Jaskiran, who is one of the ICC net bowlers for the Champions Trophy, told PTI.

Nair scores 9th ton of season

THE BATTER'S UNBEATEN 132 PUTS VIDARBHA IN COMMAND IN RANJI TROPHY FINAL AGAINST KERALA

Nagpur, March 1: Vidarbha batting mainstay Karun Nair Saturday put the ball in the selectors' court regarding a strong case for his India call-up after his ninth century of the season, saying "I'm not the right person to ask the question.

Nair struck an unbeaten 132 against Kerala to help Vidarbha extend their overall lead to 286 runs in the Ranji Trophy final. his fourth century in the redball competition which took his tally to 860 runs at 57.33. Nair, one of the only two In-

dians in history to have scored triple hundreds in Test cricket, was also in red-hot form in the 50-over Vijay Hazare Trophy wherein he struck 779



runs in only nine matches with five centuries and one fifty at a mind-boggling average of

389.50. "I'm not the right person to ask. I cannot comment on that.

I have to just say that I have to

that I get and if it happens, it happens. I have to do my job to the best," Nair told the reporters at the VCA Stadium after the close of play on Day Four.

Nair signalled 'nine' with his hands to the dressing room Saturday after completing his

it wasn't a message to anyone else but to the members of the Vidarbha support staff. "I'd been speaking about it

ninth ton but maintained that

before this match that I've got eight (centuries), if I score another one, I'll show nine," said Nair, who has played six Tests and two ODIs for India.

'I was just speaking to some of our sidearm throwers, Yash Thorat, who always help us with batting and everything. We were speaking and I said to him that if I do score a hundred, I'll show him the nine, so it was discussed."

When pressed if the signal was only meant for the Vidarbha support staff, Nair quipped, "You can take it however you

Proteas hammer England, qualify for CT semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, March 1: South Africa secured their place in the Champions Trophy semifinals after hammering a struggling England by seven wickets in the last Group B match here Saturday.

South Africa first dismissed England for just 179 before comfortably chasing down the target with 20.5 overs to spare

England, already eliminated from the semifinal race, needed a victory by at least 207 runs to give Afghanistan a chance of qualifying for the last-four stage based on net run-rate.

South Africa completed the chase with ease, reaching 1813 in 29.1 overs, thanks to impressive fifties from Heinrich Klaasen (64) and Rassie van der Dussen (72 not out). Klassen and van der Dussen added 127 runs for the third wicket.

With this victory, South Africa joined Australia in the semifinals from Group B. The Proteas topped the group with five points from three matches ahead of Australia (4 points).

The semifinal line-up will be confirmed after the final Group A match between India and New Zealand Sunday.

Asensio double lifts **Aston Villa into QFs**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, March 1: A clinical second half double from Marco Asensio took Aston Villa into the FA Cup quarterfinals for the first time in a decade after beating plucky Cardiff

Cardiff's last win at Villa Park was in 1954 and the visitor never looked like ending that long drought. The home side was on top from the start and Cardiff goalkeeper Ethan Horvath was one of the busiest men on the park.

However, the Welsh club defended stoutly and it took Villa until the middle of the second half to finally get the goal its superiority deserved.

Asensio, the Spanish striker who signed on loan from Paris Saint-Germain in the January transfer window, scored twice in Villa's 2-1 win over Chelsea last week and he continued to iustify the faith of coach Unai Emery in only his third start for the club.

The big striker took a cut back from the left from Marcus Rashford and slotted home with his left foot.



Twelve minutes later, he did the same but this time from the right, steadying himself to take an Ollie Watkins pass and sidefoot home.

"It was not an easy game," Asensio told ITV. "We knew it was a difficult game. (I'm) very happy for the goals, for the win. We're in the next round, that's the most important.'

The other fifth-round ties will be played Saturday and Sunday, followed by the draw for the quarterfinals.

Duplantis smashes pole vault world record for 11th time

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

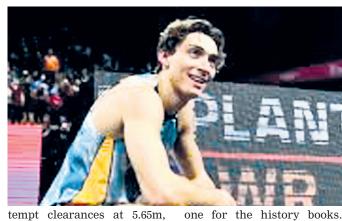
Clermont-Ferrand, March 1: I just did it, said Armand Duplantis, who delivered yet another historic performance, with a record-breaking leap of 6.27 metres at the All-Star Perche meet in France, Friday.

The Swedish superstar, who has now shattered the world record an incredible 11 times, needed just one attempt to clear the height, igniting celebrations in the arena.

Reflecting on his achievement, Duplantis summed it up simply "I just felt really good. What can I say, I came here to do it. I put everything in place to do it. The run-up worked really well. I just did it.

Duplantis, the reigning Olympic and world champion, needed just one attempt to clear the new benchmark, eclipsing the 6.26m height he set in Silesia last August. As soon as the bar stayed up, the packed arena erupted in celebration, with track-side fireworks illuminating the historic moment.

The 25-year-old had already secured victory after first-at-



tempt clearances at 5.65m. 5.91m, 6.02m, and 6.07m. But, as has become customary in his career, he wasn't content with just winning - he wanted to push the sport's boundaries once more.

Adding to the drama of the night, Duplantis' newly released song Bop played in the background as he made his record-breaking leap.

"When I made this song a couple of months ago, I thought this would be a perfect song to jump to here, he said. That's why I rushed it out."

The competition itself was

petition. Duplantis' dominance has been relentless. Since first breaking Renaud Lavillenie's 6.16m world record in 2020, he has raised the mark centimetre by centimetre, with this being the fourth time in the last 11

Greece's Emmanouil Karalis

finished second, setting a na-

tional record with a clearance

of 6.02m, while Australia's Kur-

tis Marschall claimed third af-

ter clearing 5.91m. For the first

time ever, six athletes cleared

5.91m or higher in a single com-

months alone.

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