

DOUBLE WHAMMY City gets airport-like bus terminal

In an alarming trend, more and more Indians are getting unhealthy. Two paradoxical conditions -- undernutrition and obesity -- are playing havoc with a majority of our population, adding extra burden to the country's already overwhelmed healthcare system. At a time when India is yet to solve its undernutrition-related problems, something associated with low- and middle-income countries, the scourge of obesity, a disease common to the developed world, is spreading fast. A host of factors such as nutritional, biological, economical and social are responsible for this catastrophe of colossal proportions. Sample this paradox. While on the one hand there is inadequate consumption of nutrition-rich food, there is an easy access to cheap and unhealthy junk alternatives on the other.



overweight in 2022. Of the 12.5, 7.3 million were boys and 5.2 million girls.

"These numbers are up from 2.4 million and 1.1 million in 1990 for women and men, respectively, while for children, the baseline number was about 0.4 million," study co-author Guha Pradeepa, from Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF), Chennai said.

The Lancet study looked at body mass index (BMI) to understand how obesity and underweight have changed worldwide from 1990 to 2022. It analysed the weights and heights of over 220 million people aged five years or older, from across more than 190 countries. The findings also highlighted a major shift in lifestyle over the past decades, including lack of exercise and healthy food, said Pradeepa.

The study found that the adult obesity rate in India increased from 1.2 per cent in 1990 to 9.8 per cent in 2022 for women, while for men, it rose from 0.5 per cent

to 5.4 per cent.

Pradeepa attributed the spike in obesity rate to a combination of biological and social factors.

"Biological factors involve constant, cyclical hormonal activity with pregnancy-specific weight gain, following which taking care of the child takes precedence. On the other hand, social factors compel them to prioritise their children's and family's health over their own. These factors present as barriers to doing exercise for women and taking care of themselves," she explained.

The findings revealed the need for innovative interventions in terms of introducing more physical activity and movement in a day, especially for women, said Pradeepa.

Worldwide, the total number of children, adolescents and adults living with obesity has surpassed one billion. These trends, together with the declining prevalence of people underweight since 1990, make obesity the most common form of malnutrition in most countries, the Lancet study said. Obesity and underweight are both forms of malnutrition and are detrimental to people's health in many ways.

"It is very concerning that the epidemic of obesity that was evident among adults in much of the world in 1990 is now mirrored in school-aged children and adolescents," said senior author Prof Majid Ezzati, from Imperial College London in the UK.



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik after inaugurating the Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bus Terminal in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OP PHOTO

The state-of-the-art Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bus Terminal is set to offer world-class transit facility to over 30,000 commuters of the state and beyond daily. The airport-like infrastructure spread over a sprawling 17.32 acres with several modern amenities such as commercial office space, retail space, multi-level car parking and open public space has been a long cherished dream of the people of the state. For the convenience of commuters, the transit hub comes with easy access facilities

such as pick-up and drop-off for private vehicles, pre-paid taxis, pre-paid auto rickshaws and taxi-aggregators.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday inaugurated the Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bus Terminal at Baramunda in the state capital.

The bus terminal, built over 17.32 acres of land by the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), is situated at

the same place where the old bus stand used to be.

"This bus terminus will serve the commuters with all modern facilities and will remain a landmark in development initiatives of the state government," Patnaik said, adding that it is Odisha's tribute to Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. The terminal also has a gallery based on Ambedkar's life and ideals.

The Chief Minister said that the bus terminal has all facilities that are available at airports. He also said that this bus terminal under the 5T initiative has been

built with the cooperation of bus owners, traders/passengers and the public. It has 44 bus bays, with space for parking more than 100 auto-rickshaws, 20 taxis, 85 two-wheelers and 20 private cars, an official said. Passengers will also get facilities such as a dormitory, water taps, cloakroom, prepaid auto service, ATM and a baby feeding room, he said.

The entire campus will be under surveillance with 120 CCTV cameras, the official added.

The CM requested everyone to cooperate in the proper maintenance of the bus terminal.

PNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 1: A recent Lancet study has found that in India, nearly 44 million women and 26 million men were obese in 2022, respectively. The analysis by the NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC) - a global network of scientists - and the World Health Organisation (WHO) also found that about 12.5 million children aged between five and 19 were

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You write so well, my friend. All your recent judgements are illuminating examples of great resume writing

Intense heatwave in state this year

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 1: More heatwave days than normal are predicted in Odisha this summer, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Friday.

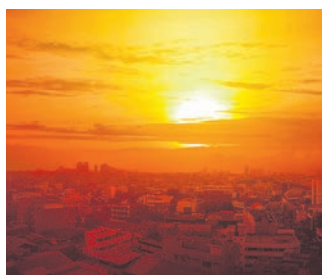
India is likely to experience a warmer start to the summer season this year with El Nino conditions predicted to continue through the season, the IMD said.

More heatwave days than nor-

mal are predicted over many parts of Maharashtra and Odisha and northeast peninsular India -- Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and north interior Karnataka.

The country is likely to record above-normal rainfall in March (more than 117 per cent of the long-period average of 29.9 mm).

India is likely to see above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures in most parts of the country in the March to May period, IMD Director



General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said at a press conference. Heatwave conditions are not

expected over north and central India in March, he said.

Mohapatra said that the prevailing El Nino conditions -- the periodic warming of waters in the central Pacific Ocean -- will continue through the summer and neutral conditions are likely to develop thereafter.

La Nina conditions -- generally associated with good monsoon rainfall in India -- are likely to set in by the second half of the monsoon season. **MORE P2**

10 hurt in B'lore café blast

AGENCIES

Bangalore, March 1: A low intensity bomb blast at a popular eatery here Friday left 10 people injured even as the police invoked the stringent UAPA provisions in the case.

Police suspect that an IED fitted with a timer inside a bag could have exploded. Officials from the local unit of the NIA arrived at the spot and conducted inquiry. The injured are undergoing treatment.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah

said investigation is on to ascertain the cause and nature of the explosion at the popular Rameshwaram Cafe in Whitefield locality.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said it was a low intensity explosion and a timer was fixed. "The blast occurred at 1 pm. A young man of about 28-30 years came to the cafe, purchased rava idli at the counter, placed the bag near a tree (adjacent to the cafe) and left. After one hour the blast took place," he said.

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leisure



EMILY BLUNT IN TALKS TO STAR ALONGSIDE DWYANE JOHNSON

Actress Emily Blunt is currently in talks to feature in the upcoming film *The Smashing Machine* starring Dwyane Johnson. The Academy Award-nominated actress would essay the role of Dawn Staples, the new wife to legendary MMA fighter Mark Kerr.

PAMELA SHOCKS SONS REFUSING TO HIRE A GLAMOUR TEAM

Actress Pamela Anderson has shocked her sons by not hiring a glamour squad. The *Baywatch* actress said: "My boys were like, 'Mom, you must have a glam team.' And my agents were like, 'You have to have a glam team! Where's the stylist?' I go, 'I know how to put a dress on myself.'"



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
The ruling emotion today will be passion. You will feel like chatting with your beloved the whole day. However, you will incur expenses and Ganesh advises you to remain balanced. But, if you have decided already to go the whole hog, make fully sure you are in the right trappings.

TAURUS
The fates smile on you this day, assures Ganesh. You have a great chance of going for a new car, may be an SUV and go for a long spin. If that, for some reason doesn't materialize, you are sure to board a luxury bus and take a tour. Financial gains are strongly indicated.

GEMINI
You will break free of your routine work today and spend the day having fun with your family and friends. Plans for dinner or for a picnic with your loved ones are strongly indicated, and should see you filled with enthusiasm. Waiting for a couple of days before proposing to that special someone should net you a favourable response, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Some days require you to slow down, and assess your relationships. Today may be one of such, says Ganesh. You will earnestly wish to spend time with your spouse or an intimate relation to discuss certain key issues. This need will be magnified with the ardent affection you receive from your loved one.

LEO
You will interact with many people today. Your friend circle could expand. Businessmen will make new contacts. The later half of the day will see you experience uneasiness and stress, however the source of this will likely fade away in a short while. Hence there is no need to worry, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
The only thing you have to do is begin what you want to do; don't bother about results, they will come automatically. Ganesh says monetary dealings will be beneficial, but warns that things may not turn out to be as stimulating as you would have wished.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that today you should not only look after your outward appearance but also your inner self. You shall be in demand in the office or at social gatherings. Today you will be spending money on entertainment. You will also be getting some form of good news from relatives or friends abroad which will make you happy.

SCORPIO
The day begins with challenges at work, predicts Ganesh. But, don't worry as you have all the zest to tackle your career front. Evenings will be full of social exchanges and attending parties and dinner with friends is on the cards.

SAGITTARIUS
Good and bad; highs and lows is what the day has to offer you. According to Ganesh, you may come across unexpected monetary gains, but you plan to spend the extra income on renovating your home. All in all, a tedious day at home as well as office.

CAPRICORN
You are in for a windfall, predicts Ganesh. Patience is the key for you. Your patience and composure will enable you to put yourself in others' shoes and understand their problems. If you're a student or planning to enrol yourself for a course, Ganesh ensures tremendous growth for you in that direction.

AQUARIUS
You'll go on a cleanliness drive, today! Cleaning up the mess will bring clarity to your mind and you will have an idea about what needs to be done at the back burner.

PISCES
You will be successful in defeating your enemies and seeing your capabilities some people might try to involve you in illegal activities. Ganesh advises you to be cautious of these people. Head for a long drive or take a walk, if things begin to bother you as this make put you in a better mood, says Ganesh.



BEBO, DILJIT SET INTERNET ON FIRE

Mumbai: Kareena Kapoor Khan and Diljit Dosanjh are set to share screen space again in *Crew* after *Uda Punjab* and *Good Newwz*. The teaser of *Crew* starring Tabu, Kareena and Kriti Sanon has been unveiled a few days ago and fans cannot wait for the film. The teaser of this heist comedy has gotten some great response while all the three actresses have won hearts!

But wait, there's more! Kareena and Diljit have now dropped new stills from a song from the film that they will feature in together. Kareena is making heads turn with her red backless dress avatar while Diljit looks handsome. Fans are in awe to see this and surely thing that they've steamed up the internet. The excitement is at its peak as Diljit shared this photos with the caption, "Tera Ni Mai I LOVE @kareenakapoorkhan."

Fans now cannot wait for it. Here's how users have reacted! A user said, "Instagram aaj hang ho jana." Another said, "hello!!! should've been a disclaimer!! I was not ready." Another netizen said, "Bebo serving You are my Soniya look once again. Yet another wrote, "The reason why I pay for the internet." AGENCIES

Tamannaah unfazed by public scrutiny

Mumbai: Tamannaah Bhatia, known for her work in both Hindi and Southern industries, opened up about the relentless scrutiny celebrities face. Despite this awareness, she remains steadfast in her commitment to living authentically, unfazed by external judgments.

Speaking to a news portal, the *Baahubali* actress said, "There is a saying that goes 'Kuch toh log kahenge, logon ka kaam hai kehna' (People would say something; their job itself is to speak). So that is going to happen and there's nothing much you can do about it. I am not so concerned with what other people do. That's the honest thing. I always focus on what I need to do and not what suits others because, at the end, it's your life." While juggling between South and Hindi film industries, Tamannaah Bhatia continues to portray her diverse capabilities. When asked how she manages to do it well, she added, "Well, I don't have to, because for me, both are places where I've almost spent all my growing-up years. I was born and brought up in Mumbai and I have worked a lot of my early life in the South, so both feel very much like home to me." Meanwhile, on the work front, Tamannaah will next star in *Aranmanai 4*, John Abraham starrer *Vedaa* and a few more projects. AGENCIES



What made Kriti shifting to production

Mumbai: Actress Kriti Sanon shared that her upcoming film *Do Patti* is an opportunity for her, both as an actor and producer. The *Mimi* actor is stepping into the realm of film production with *Do Patti*, which also stars Kajol. The actress revealed the reason behind starting her home banner Blue Butterfly Films - creating more opportunities. Reflecting on her choices, Kriti said: "After *Mimi*, I was consciously trying to find something meaningful, intense, and which had layers to

it. As an actor, I should feel satisfied and be able to push myself to do things I haven't attempted before." "I wasn't getting such an opportunity for a long time. I really believe that sometimes when you can't find an opportunity that excites you, you've got to create one. *Do Patti* is that opportunity for me, both as an actor and producer," she added. Directed by Shashanka Chaturvedi, *Do Patti* is a mystery thriller set in the hills of north India. It will release on Netflix. IANS



ANANT AMBANI-RADHIKA MERCHANT PRE-WEDDING PARTY

Rihanna, Bill Gates, top celebs to attend bash

Mumbai: Charter jets for tycoons and celebrities, a performance by Rihanna and directions to don 'jungle fever' outfits when visiting an animal rescue centre - that's how billionaire Mukesh Ambani is kickstarting big fat Indian wedding celebrations for his son. The head of Indian conglomerate Reliance and Asia's richest man with a net worth of \$114 billion according to Forbes, Ambani is known for never doing a party by halves. The occasion of the moment that has India transfixed is a three-day pre-wedding jamboree for his youngest son Anant Ambani, 28, who is set to marry his long-time girlfriend Radhika Merchant, 29. It begins Friday, will entertain 1,200 guests and takes place in a township in

Jamnagar near Reliance's main oil refinery in the western state of Gujarat. Coming back to the Barbadian singer, she was not kidding when she sang 'better have my money' in 2015. The R&B singer is in India - Jamnagar in Gujarat to be exact - to perform at Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's pre-wedding celebration. According to DailyMail, she is getting paid a whopping amount to perform at the star-studded event. **Rihanna's remuneration** Daily Mail reports that Rihanna is being paid \$5 million (₹52 crore) to perform at the wedding. The website also reports that the celebrations cost the Ambanis a staggering \$120 million, with the catering alone costing them \$20 million. Rihanna was clicked arriving in

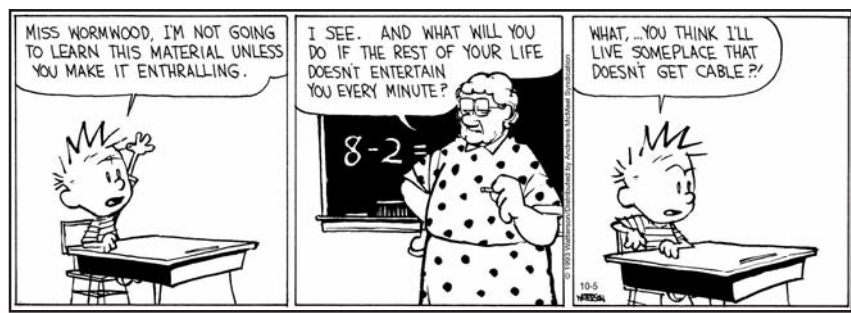
Jamnagar with her partner A\$AP Rocky, but her 'luggage' arrived first and made waves. The publication also notes that the Ambanis had Beyonce perform at Isha's wedding in 2018, which also costed them a whopping amount. **The star-studded guest-list** Celebrities like Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh, Rani Mukherjee, Salman Khan, Arjun Kapoor, Atlee, Ayan Mukherji, Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth, Abhishek Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Aamir Khan, Akshay Kumar, Twinkle Khanna, Ajay Devgn, Kajol, Saif Ali Khan, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal, Katrina Kaif and more will be attending the wedding. Other important personalities who are

expected to attend Anant's pre-wedding bash are Bill Gates, fellow Indian billionaires Gautam Adani and Kumar Mangalam Birla, as well as many cricketers and politicians. **Pre-wedding events** The pre-wedding events were kick-started in Jamnagar Thursday with an 'anna seva' that saw the couple and their families feed numerous villagers. It involved serving food to approximately 51,000 local residents, and it is expected to continue for several days. Festivities will kick-start on Friday evening with an event titled, An Evening in Everland. Given that Rihanna's last performance was at the 2023 Super Bowl when she was pregnant, fans are pumped to see videos from the event. AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8			9			
10						
11				12		13
14						
15	16					17
18						19
20				21		

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Across
1 Cuts in half
5 Happen
8 Stupid and silly
9 Shoots for
10 British cash (5,8)
11 Drink garnish, at times
12 Hardy draughts

Down
15 Relative by marriage (8-2-3)
18 Core
19 Flip side?
20 Spooky
21 Tangible

4 Shack
5 Expedient grab
6 Welsh dog
7 Quits
11 Poetic rhythm
13 Italian filmmaker
14 Rich and fashionable person (3,3)
16 Lesion
17 Garbage

SUDOKU

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

	1		3					7
				8			9	
3	9							
				5				
			4	7	6			
4	7						2	8
1						5		6
6				9	4			
8								1
								3

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

R	E	B	E	C	C	A	T	R	A	P	S	
I	I	O	C	R	B	I						
V	E	N	T	R	I	C	L	E	A	X	E	
A	O	O	A	N	R							
L	I	N	E	N	M	A	T	A	D	O	R	
I	E	M		O	A							
S	W	E	E	T	N	O	T	H	I	N	G	S
U	T											
B	A	Z	O	O	K	A	N	A	D	I	R	
W	S	C	T									
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G	O	L	F	E	R	S						

SUDOKU

9	8	4	3	6	1	5	2	7
1	7	6	8	2	5	4	3	9
5	3	2	9	7	4	6	8	1
2	9	8	1	5	3	7	4	6
7	4	5	6	8	2	9	1	3
3	6	1	4	9	7	2	5	8
8	5	7	2	3	6	1	9	4
6	1	3	5	4	9	8	7	2
4	2	9	7	1	8	3	6	5

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

NO APPEAL ON CASTE OR RELIGION BASIS: EC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 1: Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the Election Commission (EC) Friday asked parties and their leaders to refrain from seeking votes on the basis of caste, religion and language, and not insult the devotee-deity relation or make any suggestion of a divine curse.

Temples, mosques, churches, gurdwaras or any other place of worship should not be used for poll propaganda or electioneering, the EC said in its advisory

to parties, warning their candidates and star campaigners that they will face stern action, rather than just 'moral censure' as is the practice, for any violation of Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

The EC has issued advisories to parties in the past too, but the latest one comes ahead of the parliamentary elections.

It said that the star campaigners and candidates who have received notices in past will face stern action for repeat violation of model code.

The advisory comes days before the model code is expected to come into effect with the likely announcement of the Lok Sabha

and four state Assembly polls later this month.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar had recently emphasised that political parties should foster ethical and respectful discourse which inspire rather than divide, promote ideas instead of personal attacks.

The EC advisory has now formally set the stage for ethical political discourse and cut the clutter in 2024 General Elections, an official said, adding the methodical approach to MCC violations has prepared the ground for civilised campaigning.

It cautioned that all phases and geographical area of elections will be the basis to determine 'repeat' offences of the poll code and its advisory.

The EC warned the parties to maintain decorum in public campaigning and put additional responsibility on star campaigners and candidates, especially those who were issued notices in the past.

It asked the parties to raise the level of election campaign to issue-based debate and said the parties and their leaders should not make statements without factual basis or mislead the voters.



PREZ IN SILVER CITY: President Droupadi Murmu lights a ceremonial lamp to mark the golden jubilee celebrations of Brahma Kumaris at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Friday, as Agriculture Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain looks on

OP PHOTO

State rejects NTCA leopard count, to hold survey in May

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 1: With the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) estimating a decline of about 25 per cent in leopard numbers in only four years, the state government Friday said it would conduct a survey to ascertain the animal count from May.

The NTCA report 'Status of Leopards in India 2022' said that as many as 192 leopards vanished from the state's forests.

It said there were 760 leopards in the forests of Odisha in 2018, while the number came down to 568 in 2022.

On the other hand, the report said there were 12,852 leopards in the forests across the country in 2018, while the number in-

creased to 13,874 in 2022. Not convinced about the count in Odisha, state's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife, Susanta Nanda, raised doubts about the NTCA report.

"While NTCA had installed cameras to take pictures of leopards in 14 places in Odisha forests during the 2018 survey, this time, they used such techniques only in three places such as Similipal, Satkosia and Sunabeda," Nanda said.

Nanda claimed that no cameras were installed in the core area of the Similipal National Park, where the number of leopards is said to be significant.

Therefore, the state government has decided to launch its estimation of leopards from May, he said.

No truck with BJD: Samal

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 1: State BJP president Manmohan Samal Friday made it clear that there would be no alliance with any political party, including the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls.

Following his return from the national capital, where he attended the party's election management committee meeting, Samal told reporters that the

It is a rumour being spread by some unknown forces. We have no plans for any alliance with the BJD

MANMOHAN SAMAL | ODISHA BJP PRESIDENT

BJP will field its candidates in all 21 Lok Sabha seats and 147 Assembly constituencies in Odisha.

"It is a rumour being spread by some unknown forces. We have no plans for any alliance with the BJD," Samal said.

Pay hike for temporary teachers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 1: The state government Friday announced a hike in the remuneration of temporary teachers and regularisation of the services of those who passed the Odisha Teacher Eligibility Test (OTET).

The decision has been taken by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

The temporary teachers, known as 'Gana Sikshyaks', who have not passed the OTET will get enhanced remuneration, it said.

From now on, they will get a remuneration of ₹10,000 per month, which is currently ₹7,000 a month. This move will benefit 1,121 Gana Sikshyaks, the statement said.

Patnaik also announced that the services of Gana Sikshyaks, who have passed the OTET, will be regularised,

and they will become assistant teachers, it said, adding that a total of 1,472 such teachers will benefit as a result.

This apart, the assistant teachers, who have cleared the OTET and do not get annual increments, will also receive yearly increments. It will benefit 9,520 such teachers, it said.

The decision will benefit a total of 12,113 Gana Sikshyaks in the state, the statement added.

DSPL - 759



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Information & Public Relations Department

OIPR-15001/13/0578/2324

State registers record GST collection in Feb

During February, the state recorded the highest ever collection of gross GST with a total amount of ₹5,135.81 crore, against the corresponding amount of ₹4,519.35 crore during February last year, registering a growth of 13.64 per cent

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Odisha has registered a record gross goods and services tax (GST) collection of ₹5,135.81 crore as well as the third highest ever state GST collection of ₹2,295.41 crore during February 2024, of official sources said Friday.

As per sources, during February, the state has recorded the highest ever collection of gross GST (CGST, IGST, OGST and Cess combined) with a total amount of ₹5,135.81 crore against a corresponding amount of ₹4,519.35 crore during February, 2023.

"This was the highest-ever collection of the Gross GST registering a growth rate of 13.64 per cent. The progressive Gross GST collection during FY 2023-24 (till February 2024) is ₹49,638.64 crore with a growth of 11.07 per cent over the corresponding period of FY 2022-23," said the official.

Odisha has also recorded the third highest ever collection of State GST (OGST and IGST settlement combined) with a col-



lection of ₹2,295.41 crore during February, 2024 against the corresponding collection of 1,673.96 crore during February, 2023 with a phenomenal growth rate of 37.12 per cent.

"The progressive collection of State GST (OGST and IGST Settlement) up to February, 2024 is ₹21,846.55 crore against the collection of ₹16,710.34 crore up to February, 2023, registering a growth rate of 30.74 per cent," said the official.

The collection under all Acts monitored by the Commissionerate of CT and GST, Odisha including OGST/IGST Settlement, VAT and Profession Tax during February 24 is ₹3,470.75 crore against the

collection of ₹2,765.44 crore during February, 2023, with a growth rate of 25.50 per cent.

The progressive collection under all Acts up to February 2024 is ₹32,807.67 crore with a growth rate of 20.84 per cent over the corresponding collection up to February 2023.

During February 2024, a total of 23.77 lakh of waybills were generated vis-à-vis 19.86 lakh of waybills generated during February, 2023 recording a growth of 19.69 per cent reflecting the buoyancy in the state economy.

Out of the 23.77 lakh e-waybills generated during February 2024, as many as 14.06 lakh were intra-state waybills while 9.71 lakh were inter-state waybills.

Interior Odisha to feel more heat

D HARICHANDAN & A GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 1: With the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Friday predicting severe heat wave conditions in the state this summer, scientists at the regional meteorological centre in Bhubaneswar said the impact will be maximum felt in the interior districts.

Senior scientist Umashankar Das told Orissa POST that the heat wave situation, starting from April, will have its extreme impact felt in districts like Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, Phulbani, Boudh, Balangir and Bhawanipatna. These districts are located in western and central Odisha.

Das said early predictions have projected that the EL Nino pattern would arrive early in the state - in first week of April - and would continue till end June. However, March would provide some relief due to the looming western disturbance. The non-monsoon phenomenon



would tend to create slight rainfall in parts of Odisha, he added.

"However, the EL NINO phenomenon beginning from April would continue for a prolonged period in the state, causing surface temperature to rise than normal. Side by side, the Bay of Bengal would tend to add to the heat in the entire state," he added.

He said monsoon may arrive very late in the state, most likely by end of June, breaking the

spell of heat wave.

Guidelines for schools

With the IMD predicting harsher summer days ahead, the state School and Mass Education department Friday directed all district education officers and schools to remain prepared and take precautionary measures to tackle the approaching heat wave situation. The department also released

guidelines to be followed to tackle heat wave.

Additional secretary, School and Mass Education department, Durga Prasad Mohapatra issued the set of dos and don'ts to be followed by all government, govt aided and private schools to tackle the heat wave situation during the season.

As per the guidelines, schools, colleges and other academic/technical institutions have been asked to ensure availability of drinking water. Wherever required, tube wells inside the school campus may be repaired to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply.

Moreover, the institutions have been directed to stock sufficient ORS and provided it to students/ staff in need of the same. "Outdoor activities have to be restricted so that the students are not exposed to heat wave condition." Parents have been urged to ensure that their children carry a water bottle while going to school/ college.

'Work towards vision of developed India'

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister PK Mishra visited the KIIT and KISS campuses here Friday, where he interacted with students of both the institutions, encouraging them to work hard with team spirit to help achieve the vision of a developed India by 2047.

During his visit, Mishra highlighted the importance of women's empowerment and the pivotal role of education in societal and economic development. He spoke about the significance of hard work, team spirit, and the crucial part students can play in realizing the dream of Viksit Bharat, a mission that envisions India as a developed nation by 2047.

Mishra took a tour of the university campus accompanied by the KIIT and KISS Founder Achyuta Samanta, who praised Mishra for his leadership and for being at the forefront of many transformative policies.

Giving a pep talk to KIIT students under the 'Knowledge Tree initiative,' Mishra praised the institute's remarkable journey and said he was impressed by the



inclusive architecture and the diversity of the student population in the KIIT Group of Institutes, which includes many from tribal, backward, and hilly regions, reflecting a commendable effort towards inclusivity and preservation of tribal culture and values.

Speaking about the National Education Policy, he said that its aim is to develop an education system that provides equitable access to all, praising KIIT and KISS for working towards making education more inclusive.

Mishra reaffirmed the Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat, elaborating on the laying of a strong foundation in the last decade, the rapid technological advancements, and the emergence of new opportunities for the youths.

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Follow 5T formula at workplace: CM

Bhubaneswar: Welcoming 1,152 new recruits during an event organised at Lok Seva Bhawan here Friday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik advised them to follow the 5T formula of governance at their workplace. As many as 997 lecturers in non-government-aided colleges, 57 inspectors of Cooperative Societies, 31 Group-C personnel in the Information and Public Relations (I&PR) department at the district level, and 57 gram panchayat development officers joined the service on the occasion. 5T is a governance model in the state based on teamwork, transparency, technology and time leading to transformation. "This initiative (5T) has fast-tracked our development projects by bringing transformation in every sector and empowered everyone, including the people at the last mile," the chief minister said.

Odisha Food Processing Conclave in Capital

Bhubaneswar: Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries organised the Odisha Food processing Conclave in collaboration with the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and state MSME Department here Friday. MSME Special Secretary Bibhuthi Bhushan Dash joined the event as the chief guest. Other dignitaries present included FSSAI director Shakti P Mishra and OUAT dean Sanjay Kumar Dash. ICC state council agri food processing committee advisor and SNM Group chairman Pradipta Mohanty gave the inaugural address while ICC chairman JB Pany welcomed the guests while giving them detailed information about the food processing industry in Odisha. ICC Senior Director Madhuparna Bhowmick delivered the vote of thanks.



ICC chairman JB Pany welcomed the guests while giving them detailed information about the food processing industry in Odisha.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Biswajeet Das, S/o- Late Haramohan Das, resident of Kakaleswar, P.O.- Kalupadaghat, P.S.- Tangi, Dist.- Khurdha, Pin- 752022, Odisha declare by this affidavit No.4677 dtd.29.02.2024 that now onwards I shall be known as BISWAJIT DAS for all future purposes.

I, Nemichand Sovalchand Jain, S/o- Sovalchand Jain, R/o- Plot No.-6, Chintamaniswar, Fishery Lane, Budheswari, Laxmi Sagar, Bhubaneswar- 751006, Dist.- Khordha, Odisha declare by this affidavit No.- 124/24 dtd. 27.02.2024 have changed my name to Nemichand Jain for all future purposes.

CM launches 32 projects worth ₹6,992.94 crore



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

to 24,508 people, they said. The 14 districts are: Bolangir, Boudh, Cuttack, Ganjam, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Khurda, Puri, Rayagada, Sambalpur, Subarnapur and Sundargarh.

"Our industrial portfolio is expanding with the inclusion of new-age and employment-intensive sectors such as green energy equipment manufacturing, textiles and tourism," Patnaik said.

"The continuous improvement in the Ease of Doing Business ranking of the state, coupled with a business-friendly environment, world-class industrial infrastructure, and highly sought-after skill development initiatives, have been instrumental in attracting investments to Odisha," he added.

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday virtually inaugurated nine industrial projects and laid the foundation stone of 23 others, officials said.

The ₹6,992.94-crore projects, spread across 14 districts, are likely to provide employment



HEALTH FIRST: Directorate of Research, OUAT organised a seminar on 'medicinal and aromatic plants for health and prosperity' at the College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (CEAT) in Bhubaneswar, Friday

I-Hub startup incubator opens at IIM Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur/Bhubaneswar, March 1: The one-day 100 Cube Startup Conclave kicked off at IIM Sambalpur here Friday with Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurating I-Hub Foundation, the physical and virtual incubator.

Established under Section 8 as a registered company, I-Hub Foundation will play a pivotal role in nurturing and supporting innovative ventures across diverse sectors including textiles, art and culture, agriculture, healthcare, financial and digital inclusivity, tribal entrepreneurship, and sustainability, among others. Spearheaded by the Union Education Ministry,



the 100 Cube conclave at IIM Sambalpur aims to establish 100 startups on its premises, each with an approximate valuation of ₹100 crore by Odisha's centennial celebration in 2036.

The conclave witnessed a gathering of entrepreneurs and industry stakeholders, who were welcomed by Mahadeo Jaiswal, director of IIM Sambalpur. During the event, an MoU was signed for establishment of the Centre of Management Education in Angul, Odisha, by IIM Mumbai and IIM Sambalpur.

Human mind an enigma, there can be myriad suicide reasons

Supreme Court bench acquits man charged with abetting suicide of landlady

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: The human mind is an enigma and there can be myriad reasons for a man or a woman to die by suicide, the Supreme Court has said while acquitting a man charged with abetting the suicide of his landlady 24 years ago.

A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Ujjal Bhuyan said it may not always be the case that someone has to abet commission of suicide and circumstances surrounding the de-

ceased in which he finds himself are relevant.

"Human mind is an enigma. It is well nigh impossible to unravel the mystery of the human mind. There can be myriad reasons for a man or a woman to commit suicide: it may be a case of failure to achieve academic excellence, oppressive environment in college or hostel, particularly for students belonging to the marginalized sections, joblessness, financial difficulties, dis-appointment in love or marriage, acute or chronic ailments, depression, so on and so forth," the bench said.

In this case, the man, a former tenant, proposed to his landlady, who was returning after dropping her sister's children



off at school.

The man threatened her that if she did not agree to marry him, he would destroy the families of her sisters, outrage their modesty and kill them.

After she reached home, the woman informed her sisters about the incident over the phone. Thereafter, she consumed poi-

son in the house. She was rushed to hospital where she died July 6, 2000.

The top court said there was no evidence on the basis of which it can hold the appellant guilty of abetting the suicide of the deceased.

"While the death of a young woman is certainly very tragic,

it cannot be said with any degree of certainty that suicide has been proved; the other essential ingredient constituting the offence under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of IPC (abetment) cannot also be said to have been proved," the bench said.

The court said on a conjoint reading of the entire material on record, it is of the opinion that the prosecution had failed to prove the charge of abetment to suicide against the appellant.

"The settled legal position, the evidence on record and the glaring omissions of the prosecution as pointed out above, leaves no room for doubt. We are therefore of the unhesitant view that the conviction of the appellant is wholly unsustainable," the bench said.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VIATION	
SENSEX	73745.35	↑	1245
NIFTY	22338.80	↑	356
DOLLAR	82.98	↓	₹0.03
EURO	89.85	↓	₹0.21
GOLD	₹63,145	↑	₹578
SILVER	₹70,095	↑	₹430

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP	MAX 34.6°C	34.0°C	Forecast Dry weather very likely
	MIN 23.5°C	23.4°C	
Humidity	84%	83%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

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-889550649, 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-Cookiemann-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.

LaccMi buses help students reach exam centres in time



their respective schools. This apart, they had to incur additional expenses while hiring vehicles to reach their examination centres.

On the other hand, the situation has seen a transformation after the launch of LAccMi bus service. The students are no more dependent on their guardians or the auto-rickshaws to reach their examination centres. LAccMI buses have also reduced their cost of commuting.

Now, candidates appearing for the HSC and Plus II examinations are taking the LAccMI buses to reach their examination centres in time with the female students paying only Rs 5 to the bus conductor to reach their examination centres.

To appear for their board exams, Class X students of Kodinga Government High School have to travel to their centre Ekori High School, which is at a distance of 7km from Kodinga.

Earlier students used to reach their exam centre by their own means or hired auto-rickshaws or any other private vehicle spending hefty amounts from their pocket.

However, with the state government launching the LAccMI bus service this year, students are able to reach their centres in time. Local students Basanta Kumar Bhadra, Parikshit Bishoi, Debadatta Pattnaik, Umakant Randhari, Nishant Singh, Mamata Kumari Majhi, and Rani Kumari Bhadra expressed their gratitude towards the state government's initiative which has proved to be a blessing for them.

blocks of Nabarangpur district. The buses are running from 10 block headquarters to 189 panchayats under their jurisdictions and have stoppage at 289 places. As many as 59 drivers and 120 conductors have been appointed in the LAccMI bus service.

In the past, except for some urban areas where a few private and government buses were available for the commuters, the western district lacked a bus service or any other mode of communication which would connect every panchayat with the block headquarters. This deprived many from visiting their destinations.

Moreover, the high prices of the bus tickets and irregular timings and stoppage were also a bane for the commuters. However, school and college students appearing for their examinations were the worst hit.

The students had to hire an auto-rickshaw or any other vehicle to reach their examination centres, most of which were situated at distant places from

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, March 1: The Location Accessible Multi-Modal Initiative (LAccMI) bus service launched by the Odisha government has proved to be of great help to the candidates appearing the HSC and Plus II examinations in tribal dominated Nabarangpur district.

Surrounded by hills and forests, the tribal-dominated district earlier lacked proper facilities for commuting. Students appearing for the examinations were the worst sufferers. In most of the cases, students would earlier fail to reach their examination centres, which are situated at far-off places owing to various reasons, in time and write their papers.

However, launch of the LAccMI bus service has changed the scenario for commuters in the district. Now, candidates are able to reach their examination centres without any hassle by paying a nominal fare.

Currently, as many as 39 LAccMI buses are plying in 10



WATER WOES: Women return home carrying water collected in pots after digging pits on the ground at Belgachhatunda village under Kashipur block in Rayagada district, Friday

Parents donate kidneys of brain-dead youth

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, March 1: Playing a Good Samaritan for the society, the bereaved family members of a Plus II student, who was declared brain dead, donated the two kidneys of their son to save the lives of two persons.

Shri Om Sibru (18), son of Ramesh Das of Nayakote village under Pattamundai Block

was suffering from brain tumour and was undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack since January 17. He was declared brain dead Thursday.

The bereaved family members then decided to donate Sibru's kidneys to give new life to others. The parents later discussed the matter with the SCB medical authority about their wish to

donate their son's kidney.

On their request, the medical authorities retrieved Sibru's kidneys with the help of the State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO).

Medical sources said one of his kidneys will be transplanted to a patient at SCBMCH and the second one will be provided to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar for transplantation.

Earlier February 15, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had announced to give state honours to the funeral of the organ donor in recognition of the sacrifice and courage to save the lives of others by donating their organs.

As per the decision of the Odisha government, the state honour was accorded to the mortal remains of Sibru at the village funeral ground.

Pradhan launches project ODISERV

Sambalpur: Union Education and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Friday launched Project ODISERV here to prepare young graduates of Odisha for employment opportunities in the financial services sector. While speaking at the event, Pradhan said that the Project ODISERV will empower the youth of the country, make them more employable and fulfill their aspirations. He said the NEP 2020 is bridging the gap between education and skilling, creating more synergies and allowing students to acquire job-ready skills along with academic knowledge. 1,100 students in Odisha have already been trained under Project ODISERV and a few of them have also received job offers Friday. The Union minister said the 100-hour training programme will equip Odisha's youth with crucial skills required in the banking, finance and insurance industries. Pradhan said the 100-hour training programme will equip Odisha's youth with crucial skills required in the banking, finance and insurance industries. Project ODISERV envisages launching the CPBFI programme in 60 colleges of Odisha across 11 cities and 10 districts. Under the partnership with NSDC, Bajaj Finserv will introduce the CPBFI programme in 22 states across India, covering over 400 colleges.

COURT NIXES ELECTION OF LADY SARPANCH FOR VIOLATING 2-CHILD RULE



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, March 1: The court of District and Session Judge, Kendrapara has set aside the election of a woman sarpanch of Dhumat Gram Panchayat (GP) for violating two-child norms while filing nomination. Reports said Manjulata Sethy was elected as sarpanch of Dhumat GP February 18, 2022 by defeating her rival candidate Annapurna Mallick.

During filing of nomination, Annapurna had approached the Election Officer of Kendrapara block against Manjulata with a prayer to reject Manjulata's nomination papers as she was the mother of four children but in vain.

After Manjulata was elected as sarpanch, Annapurna filed a case in the court of Civil Judge (Junior Division) alleging that as per Section-11 of Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, a person having more than two children is not entitled to contest in the rural polls.

But the court dismissed the case as Annapurna could not prove her allegation.

Annapurna then filed an appeal in the District and Sessions Judge Court which set aside the election of the sarpanch after examining the school admission registers and birth certificates of the children of Manjulata.

The court also directed the administration to issue fresh election notification for the post of sarpanch.

Dad, son sentenced for raping minor girl

Keonjhar: A special court in Keonjhar district Friday sentenced a father-son duo to rigorous imprisonment (RI) for kidnapping and raping a minor girl. POCSO Court Judge Subhashree Tripathy convicted Babun Sethi (20) and his father Dolagovinda (43) after hearing 18 witnesses and verifying evidence. The court sentenced Babun to 25 years of RI and imposed a fine of ₹20,000 on him, Special Public Prosecutor Ganesh Prasad Mohapatra said. Babun will have to spend another two years in jail if he fails to pay the fine, he said. The court sentenced Dolagovinda to RI for 20 years and slapped a penalty of ₹10,000 on him. Besides, the court directed the DLSA to pay a compensation of ₹6 lakh to the rape survivor. Babun had kidnapped the girl in an SUV near Baunsapal market under Keonjhar Sadar police station in October, 2021. When the girl shouted for help, some locals informed the police, following which she was rescued and handed over to her family. However, after a few days, Dolagovinda forcefully brought the girl to his home and his son raped her repeatedly. Later, Dolagovinda took her to another place and raped her, the prosecution said.

Era of women-led devpt has begun in India: Prez



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, March 1: President Droupadi Murmu Friday said that an era of women-led development has begun in India as girls are taking centre stage in all spheres of the nation building, and the trend is very encouraging for the country.

Addressing the 25th convocation of Berhampur University at Bhanja Bihar in Ganjam district, she said the participation of women in literature, culture, dance and music has been remarkable.

"The potential of our daughters is visible in every field from science and technology to po-

lice and army. Now, we are moving from the phase of women's development to women-led development," the President said.

Noting that around 45,000 students are getting education in Berhampur University's post-graduate departments and its affiliated colleges, she said more than 55 per cent of students are women.

Not only this, 60 per cent of the gold medal winners are also women and half of the researchers, who received doctoral degrees today are also girls, the President said.

"This is an excellent example of gender equality," Murmu said. Noting that she came across

many talented girls and women when attending different convocation programmes across the country, the President said that women who were confined to art, culture and other such spheres, now have started performing very high in the field of science and technology.

Even women are now leading in the police force and defence services, she pointed out.

As 49 per cent of the country's 140 crore population is women. Their role in the economic, social and other sectors is now becoming prominent, the President said expressing her happiness over the women's studies being a course at Berhampur University.

She said that there is no doubt that girls have the potential to outperform boys if given equal opportunities.

They have already made their marks in different national and international sports and the performance by the girls in the recently held Republic Day show was excellent she said, adding that women have now become fighter pilots.

She told the students that convocation is not just a celebration of receiving degrees, but also a celebration to recognise their hard work and success.

This opens doors to new dreams and possibilities, Murmu said. She also said that getting a degree is not the end of education, and students should have a passion for learning throughout their lives.

Gram Laxmi Haat: RSP's unique CSR initiative

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 1: 'Gram Laxmi Haat', a one-of-its-kind CSR initiative of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) aimed at empowering rural women, has been inaugurated by RSP Director In-Charge Atanu Bhowmick Thursday in the presence of other top officials of RSP.

The facility established adjacent to the nursery of Horticulture department in Sector-4 provides a perfect market place to the SHGs run by the rural women to showcase and sell their products.

Bhowmick in his address applauded the special CSR initiative and expressed hope that the 'Gram Laxmi Haat' would not only provide a sustainable marketplace for the rural commodities produced by women SHGs but also promote their financial independence. "The initiative also would help the rural folk to get the right price for products which they make utilising the training or skills effectively" he said.

After a formal welcome, the DIC and others went around the 'Haat' displaying diverse goods by the tribal folk from around the region. Bhowmick interacted with the members of the SHGs who explained about their journey, support from



the CSR department of RSP and their efforts to boost their economic condition. A host of products including beautifully stitched fabrics, artistic bamboo crafts, vermicompost, pesticide-free rural goods, berries, organic vegetables, hand pounded brown rice and millets were on display for sale. Hundreds of customers thronged the market. As many as 47 SHGs put their stalls in the 'Haat' on the inaugural day.

The vending zone has 46 covered stalls on raised platforms. Washroom and drinking water facilities have been provided at the place. A beau-

tifully landscaped water fountain and a stage for conducting cultural programmes are the added attractions of the place. It has direct access to the ring road for easy conveyance of all. The market will remain open from 8am to 12 Noon round the week.

The 'Gram Laxmi Haat' has been conceptualised to encourage better market linkages for the direct and indirect rural women beneficiaries of RSP CSR programmes, who have undergone training or have been associated as field nodal during various CSR initiatives like Synergy, Samvardhan etc.

<p>Bank of India Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015</p>	POSSESSION NOTICE	
	[Rule-8 (1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002	
<p>Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the borrowers/guarantors in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest & expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.</p> <p>The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described here in below in exercise of the powers conferred on him / her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with Rule-8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The borrowers/guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property & any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India, Jagatsinghpur Branch for the amount stated below with interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secured assets.</p>		
<p>JAGATSINGHPUR BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower(s)</p> <p>Borrower: Mr. Manas Ranjan Khuntia, S/o- Mr. Dhaneswar Khuntia, resident of: At/PO: Jaipur, Dist.: Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, PIN-754133.</p>	<p>Liabilities due as per Notice</p> <p>₹19,80,574.54 + interest & expenses thereon</p>	<p>Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession</p> <p>22.12.2023 / 29.02.2024</p>
<p>Description of Immovable Property/ies</p> <p>All that piece & parcel of the land and building erected thereon situated under Pattadari Khata No.: 639/56, Plot No.: 744, admeasuring Area of Ac.0.110dec., Kسام: Gharabari (Homestead), situated under Mouza: Jaipur, SRO: Raghunathpur, Dist.: Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, standing in the name of the borrower Mr. Manas Ranjan Khuntia, S/o- Mr. Dhaneswar Khuntia. All that part and parcel of the property within the jurisdiction of SRO, Raghunathpur, Dist.: Jagatsinghpur. Bounded by- North: Cuttack-Paradeep Road & Nayanajori/Chirakala, South: Rev. Plot No. 745 of Mr. Padana Dalei, East: Part of Plot No. 744 of Mr. Manoj Pradhan & Mr. Pabitra Kumar Pradhan, West: Rev. Plot No. 752 of Mr. Madan Dalai.</p>		
<p>Date: 01.03.2024, Place: Bhubaneswar</p>		<p>Authorized Officer, Bank of India</p>

FOCUS SOCIETY

DYING OF FEAR



Youngsters need to realise that there is no quick, easy route to lifelong success. Making career choices for the wrong reasons can only cause sorrow

With exam season looming ahead, a single day saw two young students from our city buckling under pressure and ending their own lives. Shocked and sorrowful, we demanded that this malaise stop right now. As the day advanced, business resumed as usual after appropriate expressions of sadness. It's easy to blame a faceless and ambiguous SYSTEM and sit back and expect an equally vague AUTHORITY to set things right. But are we as detached from the system as we would like to believe. Don't we, and "people like us", also contribute to make this very "system" what it is? Let's take a closer look at the problem and consider how best to make a difference by means within our own reach.

Suicides among Indian students are rising at an alarming rate. In one of the most shocking cases in recent days, a 12-year-old Mumbai boy ended his life by hanging himself in the school bathroom. Closer scrutiny will show that academic pressure is not the sole reason for these deaths. Self-destructive tendencies are fuelled by a complex toxic cocktail of unrealistic parental aspirations, competitiveness among peers and the compulsion to 'fit in,' along with various concerns unrelated to academics. An otherwise balanced youngster, for example, may be already depressed by the death of a parent, or due to family discord. Celebrities and films are also major influences on impressionable youngsters, inspiring them to mimic dangerous acts of bravado. Multiple factors can cause a critical build up of tensions. Fear of approaching exams may merely

be the final straw.

The young have always been under pressure, and successfully overcome obstacles. Centuries ago, people lived under eternal fear of plagues and famines. Cavemen faced danger and death at every turn and went on to create wonderful cave paintings, tame fire and invent the wheel. The fear of academic failure may be daunting, but millions of youngsters in our country are facing it and surviving to live peaceful normal lives. Only a small percentage take their own lives.

Relentless and unrealistic parental aspirations, whether for securing high marks or making unsuitable career choices, can push young students to the brink. Perhaps as a reaction, some people toss sour grapes at those who shine by virtue of their own capabilities as engineers, doctors or MBAs. Let's accept their hard-earned success gracefully and avoid needless comparisons. Rightly placed and well considered aspirations don't kill anyone. When youngsters make inappropriate choices, cracks begin to show.

The craze for alternate new-age careers can also cause misery. One of the youngsters who took her own life recently, reportedly aspired to be an RJ and feared failure. Teachers and parents need to impress upon youngsters that behind the perceived glamour of any profession, is the foundation of dedication and hard work. Youngsters need to realize that there is no quick, easy route to lifelong success. Making career choices for the wrong reasons can only cause sorrow.

Some parents pressure their children to excel in games, sports and hobby classes, needlessly comparing them with high achievers. By thrusting their own unfulfilled ambitions upon their children, they impose rigid control and stifle the child's joy in daily life. A recent study showed that a large percentage of Indian fathers put up a pathetic show when it comes to communicating with their children. Sadly, Indian mothers do not fare much better. To ease the pressure on the young and help them cope better, parents and elders can take steps to

build up rapport and healthy camaraderie with the young, offering them emotional support when they need it.

Adults aren't the sole culprits. Peer pressure can also pull young people down. Classmates, by incessantly discussing the horrors of exams and vying in cutthroat competition, can cause a vulnerable student to take the extreme step. The hankering for trendy clothes, cell phones and gadgets, and peer pressure to have a fashionable 'relationship' with someone of the opposite sex; can add to the unhappiness of youngsters. A rebuff from the object of infatuation can devastate some teenagers. Youngsters can make a conscious effort to appreciate and nurture friendships based on genuine liking, and avoid making every relationship needlessly competitive.

What does a suicidal young person go through before taking the final fatal step? According to experts, it is rarely an impulse, and often a planned and premeditated decision. Alert teachers, parents and friends can watch out for tell-tale signs such as uncharacteristic withdrawal from once-favourite concerns, moodiness, and expression of suicidal thoughts. Trained counsellors and psychologists can help most effectively if potentially suicidal young persons are brought to them early. Spending a little quality time and attention on our children and classmates and offering a shoulder to lean on in times of need, can help by nipping their negative thoughts in the bud.

The writer is an author and columnist. Views are personal.



Monideepa Sahu

THE FEAR OF ACADEMIC FAILURE MAY BE DAUNTING, BUT MILLIONS OF YOUNGSTERS IN OUR COUNTRY ARE FACING IT AND SURVIVING TO LIVE PEACEFUL NORMAL LIVES

I am full of sympathy but unshakably convinced that each one meets in this life the circumstances which he has, inwardly and outwardly, built for himself.

THE MOTHER



For The Long Haul

Almost 60 per cent of empanelled IAS officers just got the nod as secretaries and equivalents, and most of them are getting a five-year stint. This is Modi sarkar's way of providing long tenures to high-ranking officials so that they can really sink their teeth into their roles.

Usually, the Defence and Home secretaries get a measly two-year stint, which isn't enough time to make some real moves. But for the rest, it's been a mixed bag. Some babus often grumble about how short stints impede when it comes to making big decisions and getting things done.

Sources have informed DKB that from the latest group of empanelled officers from the 1993 batch, 12 out of 200 of them are in for the long haul, with more than five years on the clock. Even from among the preceding batch of 1992, five IAS officers out of 20 are looking at a five-year tenure.

The word is that we might see a major babu reshuffle in June-July once the new government settles into the driver's seat. Consequently, many of the recently empanelled officers are likely to be reassigned to new postings soon.

Former secretaries have offered insights into this evolving trend, noting that the traditional three-year tenure for secretaries was once considered sufficient. However, circumstances and administrative imperatives have prompted a shift towards longer tenures to facilitate effective governance.

Punjab goes after senior cops

Two years ago, in January 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's convoy was stranded on a flyover for half an hour when he was travelling in Punjab due to a crowd of 300 protestors who had blocked the flyover. The security breach had sparked a political controversy. At the time state government was led by Congress Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi. The inquiry conducted by the Indu Malhotra committee later recommended significant disciplinary action against three senior officers for the security breach.

Now, the Punjab government of Bhagwant Mann has decided to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the cops. The officers in the dock include former Director General of Police (DGP) Siddharth Chattopadhyaya, the then Faridkot DIG Inderbir Singh and former Ferozpur SSP, Harmanbir Singh Hans. While Chattopadhyaya has since retired and could be off the hook, Mann intends to proceed against the other two, both of whom will be allowed to present their responses.

According to directives from the Supreme Court, which appointed the investigative committee, the Union Home Secretary has requested Punjab to furnish an action-taken report. Those in the know say that the implicated officers may be looking at anything from a slap on the wrist to dismissal from service. Talk about a rollercoaster ride from security slip-up to political uproar, it's never a dull moment in Punjab!



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

Maha's babu reshuffle unfolds

Big changes are going down in Maharashtra's babu corridors as the nation braces itself for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

In a decisive move, the state government recently executed a massive babu overhaul, reassigning 12 IAS officers to new roles. Notable among them is the transfer of Rajesh Kumar, a senior 1988-batch officer, from additional chief secretary of cooperation and marketing to the pivotal position of additional chief secretary of revenue. Meanwhile, OP Gupta steps into the role of overseeing finance, filling a vacancy left by Nitin Kareer's ascent to chief secretary.

Sanjay Sethi, returning from his tenure as chairman of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority, takes the reins as additional chief secretary of transport, displacing Parrag Jaini Nainutia, who has moved to the Information Technology Department. Then there is Vijay Singhal, who is now steering the ship at CIDCO and Milind Shambharkar taking charge at Mumbai Repairs and Reconstruction Board.

This reshuffle extends beyond Mumbai, with Kavita Dwivedi's transfer from Commissioner of Akola Municipal Corporation to Additional Divisional Commissioner of Pune division.

Amidst these transitions, given that it's rather crowded at the top with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, everyone's trying to guess who's pulling the strings behind this shake-up.

Those in the know informed DKB that the Election Commission's three-year transfer policy is also a major factor prompting the state government's action. The EC, reportedly, wants officers posted for more than three years shifted out. Consequently, a major reshuffle is expected in the powerful Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), with the fate of heavy hitters like BMC's Commissioner IS Chahal and Pune Municipal Corporation's Vikram Kumar hanging in the balance. Expect more changes in the days ahead.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Banking on the World Bank's knowledge



Wempi Saputra

THE WORLD BANK MUST ENSURE THAT IT IS PROVIDING CLIENT COUNTRIES WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THEY NEED

Amid a cascade of intertwined challenges, including public-health emergencies, climate change, and violent conflict, that threaten to reverse decades of hard-won development progress, the World Bank has introduced an Evolution Roadmap to boost efforts to reduce poverty and inequality. Crucially, the unified and scaled response called for by Bank President Ajay Banga includes leveraging knowledge to help countries make more informed and effective decisions.

While best known for its financial services, the World Bank has a long history of researching and disseminating the lessons of development. In 1996, then-President James D. Wolfensohn, recognising the potential of the information-technology revolution, urged the institution to function as a 'Knowledge Bank'. He emphasised that the World Bank's relationships with governments and international organisations would allow it to play a leading role in new global partnerships for creating and sharing knowledge. So long as it invested in the necessary systems, the Bank would be able to make more and better information available to its client countries.

Since then, the World Bank has offered both financial support and knowledge services, including technical assistance, training, capacity-building, policy advice, and data analysis. In fact, many clients consider these services — which capitalise on

the Bank's vast experience, sectoral expertise, and wide array of data sources — to be as valuable as the financial assistance provided by the institution, if not more so.

But, to become a fully-fledged Knowledge Bank, the World Bank still needs to build these services into its operating processes and develop a model that supports the creation and dissemination of information as a standalone activity. This is crucial to improving the effectiveness and relevance of its knowledge initiatives.

Moreover, the Bank must ensure that it is providing client countries with the knowledge they need. After visiting 14 countries over the past year in my capacity as an executive director of the Bank, I have identified three areas in which clients could use more guidance. Fortunately, the Bank can mostly fill these gaps with its existing knowledge services and products.

For starters, client countries need to know how to use financial resources more efficiently to create projects or programmes that have the largest multiplier effects and serve as many beneficiaries as possible. For example, a successful mangrove-rehabilitation project in Indonesia could be a model for other countries seeking to improve the welfare of local communities, support small and medium-size enterprises, and generate revenue through carbon credits in a transparent way.

Countries also require a bet-

ter understanding of how to align domestic priorities with climate and development goals, which is essential for accelerating the green transition, broadening crisis-response toolkits, and strengthening climate resilience. According to the International Monetary Fund, delaying the transition to a low-emissions economy could impede GDP growth. But so far, striking the right balance between meeting environmental and social targets and pursuing an agenda for domestic development has been a challenge for many of the Bank's clients.

Lastly, there is the question of how to sustain strong, balanced, and inclusive economic growth by mobilising private capital and boosting investment. To address this challenge, the Bank could provide systematic country assessments and international comparisons of good practices or lessons learned, which would likely contribute to poverty alleviation and shared prosperity.

Over the past 25 years, the World Bank has developed the capacity to address such questions. Last year's annual report summarised the World Bank's knowledge achievements to date, showcasing how far it has come.

Examples include the launch of the Utility Knowledge Exchange Platform in 2022, which helps countries improve the performance of their electricity systems through policy, regulatory, institutional, and gover-

nance reforms. This initiative was complemented by more than \$27 billion in Bank-financed projects supporting utilities between 2018 and 2022.

In 2023, the Bank also supported 510 employment-related projects, totaling around \$87 billion, while conducting job diagnostics and facilitating global knowledge-sharing and research. And in Kenya, a youth-empowerment programme that combined classroom learning with on-the-job experience significantly increased the number of young Kenyans in paid work.

When Wolfensohn first proposed the idea of a Knowledge Bank, he aptly noted that lessons from economic development are part of the 'global commons,' and that the cultivation and dissemination of this expertise requires international cooperation. Banga has inherited an even more daunting development challenge in this context, given the corrosive effects of contemporary geopolitics on multilateralism.

Even so, with the new play-book developed under Banga's watch, the World Bank can continue its shift toward becoming a Knowledge Bank. Now more than ever, the Bank must make its expertise more widely available, use its convening power, and deepen its partnerships to meet the needs of its client countries.

The writer is Executive Director of the World Bank Group of Southeast Asia.

WISDOM CORNER

- Everyone chases after happiness, not noticing that happiness is right at their heels. **BERTOLT BRECHT**
- Emotions are steep like cliffs, -please, step away farther. Farther step away, please. **VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY**
- Never fight fair with a stranger, boy. You'll never get out of the jungle that way. **ARTHUR MILLER**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1498:** Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama and his fleet reached the Island of Mozambique on their first voyage to India.
- 1931:** Soviet official Mikhail Gorbachev, who instituted reforms that led to the end of the Cold War while serving as the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1985-91) and president of the Soviet Union, was born.
- 1933:** The landmark monster movie King Kong had its world premiere; in addition to pioneering special effects by Willis O'Brien, it was the first significant feature film to star an animated character.
- 1956:** The North African country of Morocco, situated directly across the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain, proclaimed independence from France this day in 1956, the sultan Muhammad V having formed its first government.
- 1962:** American basketball player Wilt Chamberlain scored a record 100 points in a National Basketball Association (NBA) game.

BJP in search of partners

Sir, The Tamil Nadu BJP unit has formed a seven member seat-sharing committee headed by L Murugan, Union Minister of State, to finalise the allotment of Lok Sabha constituencies with their alliance partners. What is really amusing and interesting is that the number of political outfits that are said to have come forward to align with the BJP led NDA, is less than the number of members on the above said committee. It is also a pity that despite the party's open declaration that they have not only kept their doors open but their windows too wide open to welcome new partners, particularly the AIADMK to their alliance, no party is willing to join the saffron bandwagon, fearing that it would be suicidal doing so. People are also angry with the Modi government for their step-motherly treatment to TN and also over the most inhuman, uncharitable and arrogant comments made by Nirmala Sitharaman against the legitimate demands of the state to release funds towards flood relief and GST share. It would be better for the PM to announce the release of funds to mitigate the losses incurred, at least, during his next visit to TN, if he wants the nominees of his NDA for the Lok Sabha elections, to, at least, get back their deposits.

Tharcus S Fernando, CHENNAI

Road to Kaziranga

Sir, The approval for the proposed four lane Elevated Road Corridor Project in Assam's Kaziranga National Park and Tiger reserve along the existing National Highway-715 (new) is great news as it will ensure the safety and security of the animals. Habitat fragmentation and corridor encroachment are important reasons for animal deaths. During rains, as the park got flooded, the rush of animals towards the nearby Karbi Anglong hill traversing across the highway resulted in animal deaths. Therefore, the 35-km elevated corridor in earmarked area of Kaziranga, where definite animal-crossings are said to happen, stands to shield many endangered species like the one-horned rhinos. Nil chances of animal-vehicle collisions also means safe commuting options. The corridor is also a significant step towards tapping and boosting tourism in Assam as 'viewing platforms' are set to be constructed on the elevated road.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

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UP govt mulls documentary on Ayodhya makeover

Shots and archival footage of the city would be prepared to cover its journey from the time the Supreme Court gave its verdict on Ram Mandir till the Pran Pratishtha ceremony

makeover of Ayodhya. Being made on the initiative of local development authority, the documentary will be presented as a case study by the Uttar Pradesh government. The idea is to showcase the urban transformation and rejuvenation of the city as per the 'Ayodhya Vision 2047' document in a time-bound manner. The biggest challenge for various agencies working on the ground was to create greenfield projects in the highly congested temple town of Ayodhya, which is home to thousands of temples, mutts and ashrams, a government spokesperson said. The shots and archival footage



of the city would be prepared to cover its journey from the time the Supreme Court gave its verdict on Ram Mandir. It will culminate with the Pran Pratishtha ceremony that took place in January, the spokesman said. The agency working on the project would be responsible for conceptualising, creating and

producing content in line with the overall theme. The documentary would cover various chapters associated with the ancient city, starting with its history, its architecture, cultural and religious importance, before switching over to the infrastructure works being undertaken by various government departments. The film will include key cultural programmes, events and fairs of the city, along with interviews of the officials, prominent residents, members of the local community and pilgrims. Divisional Commissioner of Ayodhya Gaurav Dayal said, "A sum of about ₹40,000 crore has

been invested in Ayodhya on development works from the time Ram temple verdict was announced. About 350 projects of various scale and size being commissioned by 40 different departments have been executed or are underway to develop Ayodhya as a global tourism destination in the next two decades." The duration of the film would be at least 30 minutes and would be enriched with graphics, infographics, animation and images to make it appealing. A budget of ₹20 lakh has been set aside by the local development authority and a time of three months would be given once the agency is finalised.

Siddaramaiah accepts caste census report ahead of LS elections

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Bangalore, March 1: In a major development, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has accepted the controversial Socio-Economic and Educational Survey Report, also known as the caste census report. The Congress-led government's move is likely to trigger a controversy in the state ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Chairman of Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, K Jayaprakash Hegde, submitted the report to CM Siddaramaiah at his office in Vidhana Soudha Thursday in the presence of Minister for Kannada and Culture, Shivraj Tangadagi. Siddaramaiah said the caste census report will now be placed before the Cabinet for discussions. He, however, refused to divulge any further information on the report. Speaking to the media after the submission of the report, Jayaprakash Hegde said that the report has been accepted, and it will be placed before the next Cabinet meeting. "We can't divulge the details, our responsibility was to prepare the report and submit it," he said. "The report was prepared by the 1.60 lakh government officers led by the Deputy Commissioners in 2014-15. The report is prepared based on the data collected during the tenure of former Chairman of the commission H Kantharaju. For technical reasons, he could not submit the report. This is a socio-economic survey I won't talk about politics," he said while reacting to the opposition to the report. Hegde maintained that there is no relevance to the allegation about the missing original copy of the caste census report. "We have got it prepared and there is no confusion in it," he added. When asked about the caste census report being dubbed as unscientific, Hegde questioned without reading the report, how anyone can arrive at the judgment that the report is unscientific. He also clarified that the report is not leaked, and it has the signatures of all officers.



Minister for Law, HK Patil, said that if needed, legal opinions will be sought on the report. "First, we will have to see how much time is required to study the report," he said. Meanwhile, former chairman of the State Commission for Backward Classes, H Kantharaj, said he was happy that the report is finally being submitted. "Once you study the report, the pros and cons will be known. The report is prepared to ensure the welfare of all sections of people. It gives voice to the voiceless. It is for the welfare of all," he said. The move to accept the report came amid strong opposition by the influential Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities. The associations of both these communities have declared that they would reject the report, dubbing it as 'unscientific'.

Former Chief Minister and JD-S state President HD Kumaraswamy had even challenged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah that if he had the capacity, he should accept the caste report prepared by Kantharaj. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar was one of the signatories in the memorandum submitted to the state government urging not to accept that report. Seers of the backward communities, on the other hand, had urged CM Siddaramaiah to accept the caste census report. Amid the opposition, the CM had declared that he would accept the controversial report. Union Minister Pralhad Joshi had stated that the state government does not have the authority to conduct a caste census. Joshi maintained that the task of conducting a caste census rests only with the Central government.

Agra jail inmates set to offer 'taste of prison' to outsiders



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agra, March 1: District jail authorities here have decided to open a restaurant just outside their premises to give outsiders a taste of prison. The restaurant named 'Jail Chowpati' will serve 'jail ki roti', poori bhaji, chai, samosa, kachori, and thali among others, all prepared by inmates of the Agra district jail.

Inaugurated by state Prison Minister Dharamveer Prajapati Wednesday, the restaurant is being managed by people who have been released from the jail. The jail administration is also planning to set up a selfie point at the restaurant and make the premises air-conditioned. Launching a tiffin service for students and office goers will be the next move. Talking to PTI, Hariom Sharma, Superintendent of District Jail, Agra said, "In Jail Chowpati opened outside the district jail premises, inmates will prepare food while those who have been released will

Inmates will prepare food while those who have been released will manage the distribution, the superintendent of the district jail said

The restaurant will help rehabilitate former inmates and prisoners will also get paid for their work, he said. "Snacks like kachori and samosa will be served along with tea and coffee at reasonable rates. Besides, thali at ₹50 will also be available for locals and people who visit the jail," Sharma said. "Eventually, we will add more food items in the menu and also begin a tiffin service for the students and office goers. Former inmates will be hired as food delivery agents only after their police verification. And we will also take help from the local NGOs to materialise our plan," he said.

Double-engine government guarantees jungle raj: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Mar 1: The truth of the double-engine government in Uttar Pradesh is that it is a guarantee of jungle raj, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said Friday while announcing a statewide protest by party workers against the law and order situation.

The law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh is the biggest example of how the BJP and Modi media together are indulging in the 'business of lies', he alleged in a post in Hindi on 'X'. Highlighting several recent cases of crimes against women, he said the bodies of minor sisters are found hanging from trees at some places. Somewhere the audacity of gang rape by BJP members in IIT-BHU campus, and somewhere a woman judge was forced to commit suicide for not getting justice. This is the condition of that state whose law and order system is being praised tirelessly, Gandhi said. He also mentioned the recent murder of a Dalit student returning after taking her Class X exams in Rampur. It is time to come out of the false image created by Modi media and see the truth that the double engine government is the 'guarantee of jungle raj', the former Congress president said. Uttar Pradesh Congress workers will raise their voice for justice by protesting in every district and every tehsil today against the BJP system and this alliance of criminals, he said. Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said, "In Modi's 'Anyay-kaal', at least three women are raped every hour. The latest tragedy struck yesterday, the 29th of February, when two girls were found hanging from a tree in Kanpur, having been driven to suicide after allegedly being raped by the contractor of the brick kiln where they worked." The inaction and unresponsiveness of the BJP's political leadership to women's safety issues only emboldens criminals further, he added in a post on 'X'. The nation witnessed the Yogi



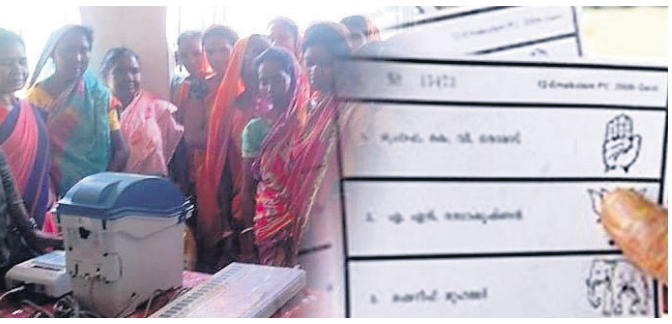
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

government put narrow political calculations over justice for the victim when they protected and patronised their rape-accused MLA Kuldeep Sengar in Unnao until 2019. The nation saw the BJP's cynical and ruthless politicking when they forcibly cremated the body of the deceased victim in Hathras in 2021. The nation also saw the Prime Minister dragging his feet on Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, despite multiple women wrestlers and witnesses coming forward to substantiate allegations that he is a serial molester, Ramesh said. The increasing number of atrocities on women is the truest reflection of Prime Minister Modi's decade-long 'Anyay-kaal', Ramesh said using hashtag #BJPHataoBetiBachao.

The law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh is the biggest example of how the BJP and Modi media together are indulging in the 'business of lies' RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

SP reiterates demand for ballot papers instead of EVMs in polls

The EC team led by CEC Rajiv Kumar is in Lucknow on a three-day visit to review the preparation in UP for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 1: The Samajwadi Party (SP) has told the Election Commission (EC) that people had lost faith in electronic voting machines (EVMs) and ballot papers should be used in polling. In a meeting with the EC team Thursday evening, other opposition parties raised the issue of alleged malfunctioning in EVMs, irregularities in electoral rolls, abuse of government machinery by the ruling party and strict enforcement of the model code of conduct during elections. SP also raised objection to the EC's directive to the political parties to refrain from using children in election campaigns. "Elections are considered a festival of our democracy and people of all age groups, including children, participate in the election activities," said Naresh Uttam Patel, SP State President. The EC team led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar is in Lucknow on a three-day visit to review the prepara-

tional political parties, including the Aam Aadmi Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Communist Party of India, Indian National Congress, Apna Dal (Sonelal) and Samajwadi Party in a meeting organised in Yojana Bhawan Thursday. The SP State President said, "The EC told us that EVMs will be used in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. The Samajwadi Party will participate in the electoral process and during the counting of votes when a candidate raises demand for recounting of votes then instead of counting slips of five voter verifiable paper audit trails (VVPATs) the EC should order recounting of the slips of all the VVPATs." The SP also drew the attention of the EC toward irregularities in electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh. During the revision of voters' lists, 30.85 lakh names of the voters had been removed while the names of 57.29 lakh voters had been added. Today, there are 15.3 crore voters in Uttar Pradesh. "We told the panel that names of the supporters of the SP have been deleted from the voters' lists. The anomalies in the voters' lists should be corrected before the poll," Patel added. Congress delegation raised the issue of abuse of official machinery by the ruling BJP in the coming Lok Sabha election, uniformity in voters' lists and deletion of names of voters during the revision of electoral roll.



MATTER OF FAITH: Muslim devotees leave after offering 'Namaz' at the Gyanvapi Mosque amid tight security arrangements, in Varanasi, Friday

Deadline to comply with Kannada signage rules extended by two weeks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 1: The Karnataka government has extended, by two weeks, the deadline for business establishments to comply with the Kannada signage rules, whereby information in the state language should be displayed on 60 per cent of the space on nameplates. The decision was taken so that the order is duly followed, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said. "Considering that it takes time to change the signage, Karnataka Govt has decided to extend the deadline given to commercial establishments by two more weeks so that the 60 per cent signage in Kannada rule can be followed," Shivakumar posted



on social media platform 'X'. Explaining further, the DCM said, "It is important that we

uphold our mother tongue in utmost respect. Therefore, we expect that this law will be duly followed, and we shall ensure compliance by the end of the two-week extended period." The decision came on the last day of the deadline to implement the rule. Two months ago, pro-Kannada activists went on a rampage, vandalising shops, business establishments and other commercial ventures which did not adhere to the usage of Kannada in signboards and nameplates. Subsequently, the Karnataka government passed a resolution in the cabinet, ordering the implementation of Kannada displays to fill up 60 per cent of the space on signboards.

PRO-PAK SLOGANS ROW IN K'TAKA

Congress, BJP spar over making FSL report public

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, March 1: The pro-Pakistan slogans row continued to be a source of confrontation between the Karnataka BJP and Congress Friday. The BJP alleged that the Karnataka government was reluctant to release the report of the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), while the ruling Congress stressed that it was awaiting an additional report from the FSL. Taking to social media late Thursday night, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka claimed that the government's actions raised suspicions as it was hesitant to make the FSL report public. Responding to the accusations Friday, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara stated that another FSL report was pending. Parameshwara explained, "The report is yet to reach us. Once submitted, we will take action. Seven individuals have already been summoned, and voice samples have been collected." The BJP has decided to continue its agitation against the alleged raising of pro-Pakistan slogans during the February 27 victory celebrations of the Congress' Raja Sabha candidate, Syed Naseer Hussain in the Assembly premises, until arrests are made. A delegation of BJP leaders also met the Governor on the issue, seeking dismissal of the government.

BJD may field new faces in 3 key coastal LS seats

THE REGIONAL PARTY IS LIKELY TO FIELD ARUP PATNAIK FROM PURI, SHREEMAYEE MISHRA FROM BHUBANESWAR AND SANTRUPT MISHRA FROM CUTTACK



Bhubaneswar, March 1: With less than a fortnight left for the model code of conduct (MCC) to come into effect for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, party hopping and ticket distribution have kept the political atmosphere in the state warmer.

The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is gearing up to form government in the state for the sixth time in a row under the leadership of party president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Since the regional party is ruling the

state for the last 24 years, the number of ticket aspirants is growing by leaps and bounds as the battle of ballots draws closer. Amidst this, all eyes are set on BJD's announcement of candidates for Puri, Cuttack and Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha constituencies.

Grapevines have it that the regional party may field new faces for the three crucial Lok Sabha seats in coastal Odisha. While the second and third rung leaders and workers seem to be aware of the undercurrents, only an official announcement will state this effect by the top brass is

awaited.

Rumours have started doing the rounds within the party about the candidatures of former Mumbai police commissioner Arup Patnaik (from Puri Lok Sabha seat), Shreemayee Mishra (from Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha seat) and former Aditya Birla Group HR Head Santrupt Mishra, who recently joined the party, (from Cuttack Lok Sabha seat). MLAs from these Parliamentary constituencies have started predicting the political fortune of these leaders.

Sources said the incumbent Puri Lok Sabha MP Pinaki Misra is likely to be denied a ticket

this time round and, instead, the party may pick Arup Patnaik, a native of Pipli Assembly constituency in the coastal district, for the crucial seat. Pinaki had won Puri LS seat in 2009, 2014 and 2019. However, the margin by which he defeated his rival Sambit Patra of BJP in the last election was only 11,714.

Arup, on the other hand, was BJD's candidate for Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha segment in the 2019 elections, but was defeated by BJP's Aparajita Sarangi by 23,839 votes. Both Arup and Aparajita made their electoral debut during 2019 elections.

BJD insiders said that the party is planning to field Shreemayee in place of Arup for the upcoming polls.

Likewise, the regional party may field Santrupt in place of incumbent Cuttack MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, who has won the seat six times. He has been the MP for the last 26 years. However, this time, buzz is afloat that Santrupt may get the ticket from Cuttack Lok Sabha seat, while the fate of Bhartruhari is unclear.

Youth Congress supporters hurl tomatoes, eggs at cops



The Opposition holds such protests during election time. But the reality is that the people of Odisha have already decided to elect the BJD and make Naveen Patnaik the CM for the sixth term.

RAJENDRA SAHOO | BJD LEADER AND MLA

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Youth Congress supporters hurled tomatoes and eggs at police personnel after they were prevented from marching towards the Chief Minister's residence during a protest rally against 'unemployment' and 'corruption' here, Friday.

Led by their national president BV Srinivas, hundreds of youth Congress supporters participated in the protest rally, party sources said.

The protest saw the involvement of key figures such as Odisha Congress campaign committee chairman Bijay Patnaik, former president Jaydev Jena, senior MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati, state youth Congress president Ranjit Patra and other senior leaders, they said.

As the rally approached Raj Mahal Square en route to Naveen Niwas, police intervened, leading to a confrontation between them and the Congress supporters. In response, some people hurled tomatoes and eggs at the police, they added.

Subsequently, the police detained several Congress supporters and leaders and released them later.

Speaking to reporters, Srinivas emphasised the demands for employment opportunities for

youths and end to corruption in the state.

He criticised both the BJD and BJP, likening them to two sides of the same coin, and pledged to continue fighting for the people of Odisha.

Congress leader Jayadev Jena accused the CM of stifling Opposition voices, alleging that the government even barred the Congress from protesting.

He highlighted the issue of migration from Odisha due to

lack of employment opportunities, stating that over 30 lakh people from the state have migrated to other states for livelihood.

Reacting to the protest, senior BJD leader and MLA Rajendra Sahoo said, "The Opposition holds such protests during election time. But the reality is that the people of Odisha have already decided to elect the BJD and make Naveen Patnaik the CM for the sixth term."

Cong slams Centre over GDP growth claim

New Delhi, March 1: The Congress Friday sought to downplay the latest GDP figures, saying growth that relies on net taxes and comes despite flagging consumption rise, is neither desirable nor sustainable and bodes poorly for the country's medium-term growth.

In a post on X, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said, "The Q3 GDP growth figures have come in, and the BJP's spin doctors led by 'FekuMaster' himself, will tell you that this is a reflection of an 'India Sparkling'."

"The GDP growth that relies on growth in net taxes, and comes despite flagging consumption growth, is neither desirable nor sustainable. It bodes poorly for our medium-term growth," he also said.

"Of course, this won't stop the Prime Minister's drumbeaters," Ramesh said in his post after India reported GDP growth at 8.4 per cent in the third quarter of this financial year.

He said the reality check is that the GDP is GVA plus net taxes and the Gross Value Added (GVA) is considered by economists as the most meaningful metric to track actual economic activity.

"GVA growth was only 6.5 per cent, but there has been a 1.9 per cent change in net taxes. This has made it appear that GDP growth is 8.4 per cent."

"Net taxes have not risen due to greater revenue collection - which would have been a wel-



come development. They have actually fallen due to a decrease in subsidies provided to the vast majority of Indians," he said.

Ramesh said private consumption, the money the average person spends on buying goods and services - is the largest and most important part of the GDP.

"Growth in private consumption expenditure in FY24 is now expected to be 3 per cent, the slowest in twenty years."

"All this taken together, all the data points continue to indicate severe economic distress for the common man: consumption is barely growing year-over-year, and subsidy support from the Modi Government is also declining," the Congress leader said.

"Here are the two key facts we should know about the Modi Government's economic performance: Even after these GDP numbers, growth has been much much slower under the Modi government than the UPA. We saw 7.5 percent average annual

GDP growth in the UPA, vs 5.8 percent under the Modi Government," he noted.

"Average GDP growth rate in Modi 2.0 is 4.3 percent, the lowest in over 30 years," the Congress leader claimed.

India's economy grew by better-than-expected 8.4 per cent in the final three months of 2023 - the fastest pace in one-and-half years, fortifying Prime Minister Narendra Modi's record of providing a world-beating growth rate ahead of general elections.

The growth rate in October-December was higher than 7.6 per cent in the previous three years, and it helped take the estimate for the current fiscal (April 2023 to March 2024) to 7.6 per cent, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Thursday.

The estimate for 2023-24 is better than the 7.3 per cent projection made in January and exceeds by a significant margin the outlook of 6.7 per cent and 6.3 per cent made by the IMF and World Bank, respectively.

BJD masterplan brings success in Anandapur

Anandapur, March 1: All the three prominent political parties under this Assembly segment in Keonjhar district have begun preparations in full swing for the upcoming elections with political observers opining that the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has been successful in bagging the seat for consecutive three times by picking up new candidates every time, and, thereby, thwarting anti-incumbency.

According to sources, the regional party has been changing its candidates since 2009 elections and tasting success, while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress have mostly been repeating their candidates and, obviously, are contended with the second and third positions, respectively.

BJD's Bhagirathi Sethi had



trounced his Congress rival Jayadev Jena by a margin of 5,306 votes in 2009. While Sethi secured 54,266 votes, Jena had to remain content with 48,960 votes. Similarly, BJP's Arati Singh secured 10,644 votes and came third.

BJD's Mayadhar Jena emerged victorious in 2014 elections by polling 82,520 votes while

Congress' Jayadev Jena bagged 60,296 votes. BJP's Alok Sethi got 12,664 votes to secure the third position. The saffron party picked Alok Sethi as its candidate for Anandapur Assembly seat in 2014 as Arati Singh (2009 candidate) was purportedly leaning towards BJD.

Similarly, Sethi won the election in 2019 by securing 89,850

votes as against 45,657 votes secured by Jena. BJP's Alok Sethi remained in third position with 31,554 votes.

It is observed that the vote share of BJP has been increasing since 2009 as compared to Congress. Since BJP does not have any viable alternative for Alok Sethi in the 2024 polls, the chances of Sethi's re-nomination appear brighter.

Meanwhile, keeping in view the growing number of ticket aspirants in BJD, party veterans are apprehensive of their own poll prospects. There is also a discussion that the disgruntled veterans might be wooed by the saffron party in the event they were denied tickets this time.

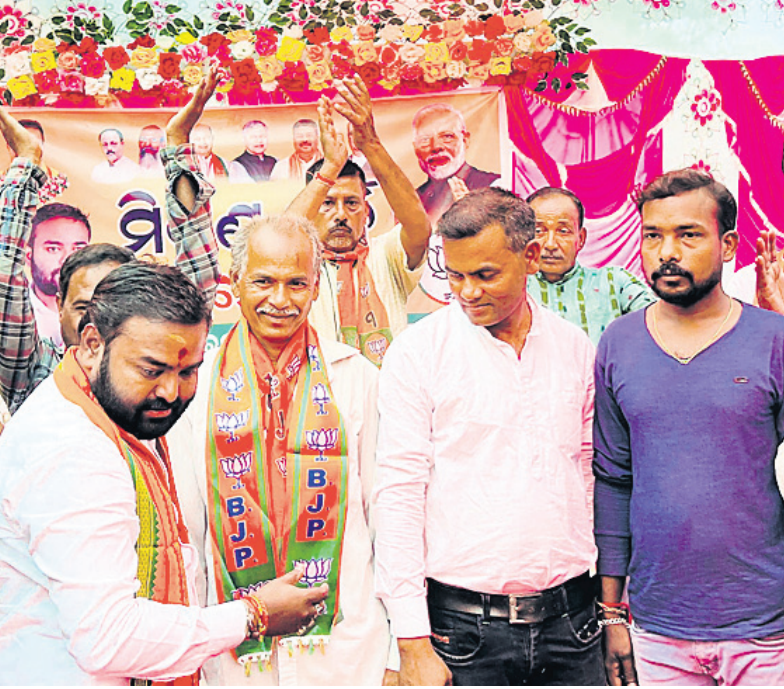
The grand old Congress party, on the other hand, is contemplating to repose faith in Jayadev Jena or his son Manoj.



A rally by Congress members at Mahakalapara in Kendrapara district, Friday



BJD's 'Ghare Ghare Sankha' programme in progress at Titlagarh in Bolangir district, Friday



Several BJD leaders and workers join BJP in Balasore, Friday

national

of the day quote

The Prime Minister goes to do snorkelling in Lakshadweep, but does not find time to visit Manipur

SHANTANU SEN | TMC SPOKESPERSON

I am not going to respond to speculations. Whatever our senior national leadership decides, my duty is to obey and make sure it is implemented on the ground

K ANNAMALAI | TN BJP PRESIDENT

In the next 25 years, India must build deep national strengths that will drive its transition towards a developed economy and leading power

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER OF INDIA

SHORT TAKES

SC dismisses plea filed by OPS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday dismissed the plea filed by expelled AIADMK leader and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister O Panneerselvam (OPS) against the notice issued to him and his relatives in the suo moto revision petition taken by the Madras High Court in the disproportionate asset case.

Case registered against MP MLA

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh MLA Kamleshwar Dodiya, who heads the Bhartiya Adivasi Party (BAP), faced accusations of attempting to extort Rs one crore from a medical store proprietor, a charge denied by him. Dodiya, whose organisation represents tribal political factions in certain areas bordering Rajasthan, had stated in his political affidavit during assembly elections that he was contesting with a mere Rs 10,000.

Man gets life term

Mathura (UP): A court here Friday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for molesting a teenager over nine months ago, a government counsel said. The court of Special Judge (POCSO) Ram Kishore convicted Nehra alias Lokesh in a molestation case of a 16-year-old girl, Special District Government Counsel (DGC) Alka Upmanyu said. The bench awarded the convict life imprisonment and slapped a fine of ₹30,000 on him, Upmanyu said.

'33% of RS MPs have declared criminal cases'

In an analysis conducted by the ADR and National Election Watch (NEW), two Rajya Sabha sitting members have declared cases related to murder under IPC Section 302, while four MPs have declared cases related to attempt to murder under IPC Section 307

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Of 225 Rajya Sabha sitting members analysed, 33 per cent have declared criminal cases against themselves while the total assets of these sitting MPs stood at ₹19,602 crore, according to poll rights body ADR.

Also, 31 of them or 14 per cent are billionaires. The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) also showed that 18 per cent of these parliamentarians have declared serious criminal cases which include instances of murder and attempted murder.

The ADR analysis said five (38 per cent) out of 13 Rajya Sabha members from TMC, four (67 per cent)

PM slams TMC over Sandeshkhali

Addressing a public meeting at Arambagh in Hooghly district, Modi also criticised the opposition bloc INDIA for keeping silent on the Sandeshkhali atrocities

AGENCIES

Arambagh (WB), March 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday launched an all out attack against the Mamata Banerjee-led government in West Bengal over the Sandeshkhali issue and said the entire country is "ashamed" and seething with anger over sexual atrocities against women by TMC leaders there.

Addressing a public meeting at Arambagh in Hooghly district, Modi also criticised the opposition bloc INDIA for keeping silent on the Sandeshkhali atrocities. He likened the inaction of the Opposition alliance to the "three monkeys" of Mahatma Gandhi. The Prime Minister took on the TMC government over corruption charges, saying: "It is my guarantee that those who have looted public funds will face consequences."

"The whole country is sad and is seething with anger after seeing what the TMC, which beats



the drum of Maa, Mati, and Manush, has done to the sisters of Sandeshkhali. The TMC leader crossed all limits of audacity with the sisters and daughters in Sandeshkhali. What TMC has done to the sisters of Sandeshkhali is a matter of shame," he said.

Referring to the neighbouring area of Khanakul, the birthplace of 19th-century social reformer Raja Rammohan Roy, the Prime Minister said: "Even the soul of Raja Ram Mohan Roy would be petrified after what has happened to the sisters and mothers of Sandeshkhali. His soul must be crying today. The TMC has to answer for the atrocities." Modi urged the people of Bengal to respond to the wounds they were inflicted with by casting their votes against the TMC. "Will you forgive such a party, will you forgive TMC? You have to reply to every pain that they

Mamata meets PM

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who interacted with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Raj Bhavan Friday evening, called it a courtesy meeting as per protocol. Banerjee said she also took up the issue of the state's pending dues with the PM. "I mentioned the issues of the state to the prime minister, besides having a chat with him," Banerjee told reporters after the meeting. Asked about the issue of the Centre's dues to the state, which the ruling TMC has been flagging frequently, Banerjee said, "I raised that matter also." Modi, who is on a two-day tour of West Bengal from Friday, will stay the night at Raj Bhavan. Banerjee's convoy entered the governor's house shortly after the prime minister arrived there. Taking to X, Governor C V Ananda Bose said he received the PM at the Raj Bhavan.

have caused to you through your votes," he said.

The defeat in LS polls will start the countdown of TMC's farewell from the state, Modi asserted. The Sandeshkhali region, located on the fringes of the Sunderbans, has been engulfed in turmoil for over a month due to accusations against TMC leader Shajahan Sheikh and his associates of sexual abuse and land usurpation.

Top court refuses to entertain Asaram's plea in rape case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a plea of self-styled godman Asaram, serving life term in a rape case, for suspension of the sentence because of his deteriorating health condition.

A bench of Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta asked senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, to approach the Rajasthan High Court for relief after he said Asaram was willing to accept the public prosecutor's statement that he could avail treatment at Madhavbaug Heart Hospital in Maharashtra's Khopoli in police custody.

The bench asked Asaram to submit an application before the Rajasthan High Court for his treatment at Madhavbaug Heart Hospital and it would be considered in accordance with the law. Justice Khanna also flagged deliberate attempts made by Asaram to delay the hearing of his appeal before the high court against his conviction and sentence in the case. The top court directed for expeditious hearing of his appeal by the high court after Rohatgi said Asaram had multiple heart attacks and suffers from anaemia with gastrointestinal bleeding, besides other age-related ailments.

LOSS OF LIVES IN NORTHERN GAZA

Deeply shocked: India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: India Friday said it is "deeply shocked" at the loss of lives in northern Gaza during the delivery of humanitarian aid, a day after more than 100 people were killed and over 700 injured in an incident.

In a strongly-worded statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said such loss of civilian lives and the larger humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to be a cause for "extreme concern". "We are deeply shocked at the loss of lives in northern Gaza yesterday during delivery of humanitarian assistance," the MEA said.

"Such loss of civilian lives and the larger humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to be a cause for extreme concern," it added. India also called for safe and timely delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance to the people of Gaza.

"We reiterate our call for safe and timely delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance," the MEA said in a statement.

There was no reference to Israel in the statement. More than 100 people were killed and over 700 injured when Israeli troops fired on a large crowd of

Palestinians trying to pull food off an aid convoy in Gaza, according to reports. India has been calling for de-escalation of the situation and creating conditions for an early resumption of direct peace negotiations towards a two-state solution to the Palestine issue.

There have been sharp international reactions to the incident, with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres strongly condemning it. "I condemn Thursday's incident in Gaza in which more than 100 people were reportedly killed or injured while seeking life-saving aid," he wrote on X.

On Wednesday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the conflict in Gaza is of "great concern" and the humanitarian crises arising out of it require a sustainable solution that gives immediate relief to those most affected.

"The conflict in Gaza is of great concern to us all. The humanitarian crises arising from conflicts require a sustainable solution that gives immediate relief to those most affected," Jaishankar said in a virtual statement at the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva.

SNIPPETS

Manipur Assembly urges Centre to implement NRC

Imphal: The Manipur assembly Friday passed a resolution urging the central government to implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state. Speaker Th Satyabrata said, "The House resolves to reaffirm its previous resolution passed August 5, 2022, and also to urge the Government of India to implement NRC in Manipur in the interest of the state in particular and of the nation in general." In another development, Chief Minister N Biren Singh informed the House that eight FIRs have been filed regarding the February 15 incident in Churachandpur, where a mob vandalised and partially torched the DC and SP office.

TN: DRI confiscates 36 kg of methamphetamine tablets

Madurai (Tamil Nadu): Sleuths from the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 30 kg of narcotic drugs, identified as methamphetamine, from a male passenger at the railway station here, and another six kg from the Kodungaiyur dump yard, Chennai, in a meticulously planned operation, the central agency said Friday. The value of the confiscated drugs was ₹180 crore and the man and his wife were detained, it said. Methamphetamine, also known as "ice" or "crystal meth" is a highly addictive psychostimulant drug which exhibits powerful euphoric effects similar to those of cocaine, leading to life-threatening consequences, the agency said.

'Delhi Chalo' call stands, further announcement Mar 3

Chandigarh: Farmer leaders Friday asserted that their "Delhi Chalo" agitation will continue till demands are met, saying they will announce their next course of action March 3 after a prayer meeting for a farmer who died during clashes with Haryana security personnel in Khanauri. They said the existing 'morchas' of farmers at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders will be strengthened and farmers will also hold a sit-in protest in Dabwali in support of their demands. Speaking to reporters at the Shambhu border, farmer leaders Manjeet Singh Rai and Jaswinder Singh Longowal said the next announcement will be made after the final prayers at Shubhkaran Singh's native village Balloh in Bathinda district.

India inks defence deals worth ₹39,125 crore

New Delhi: India Friday sealed five major defence acquisition contracts worth ₹39,125 crore including procurement of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, radars, weapon systems and aero-engines for MiG-29 jets as part of efforts to boost the combat capabilities of the armed forces. The mega procurement projects were firming up amid India's lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh, and they will be implemented under the broad framework of the government's policy to boost domestic defence manufacturing. The contracts for the procurement of the platforms and weapons systems were signed in presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane, under whose guidance these deals fructified, an official readout said.

ZILLA SWASTHYA SAMITI DISTRICT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT (NHM) DHH, MODIPARA, SAMBALPUR NOTICE INVITING PROPOSAL

TENDER CALL NOTICE FOR HIRING OF SPUTUM TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

Adv. No. 54 Date: 29.02.2024

No. E-902: Sealed tenders are invited from registered Courier Agency/Carrier Transporter Agency/Individual for Human Sputum Transportation. Details regarding eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and the formats of submission of tender (Technical & Price Bid) are mentioned in the tender document which may be downloaded from the website: www.sambalpur.nic.in. The tenders should reach the office of the undersigned by 18.03.2024 (till 05.00 P.M.) The tenders will be opened at 11.00 A.M. on 19.03.2024. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer, Sambalpur

OIPR-10049/11/0010/2324

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF DISTRICT MEDICAL & PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER, BARGARH

Short Tender Call No. 1299 Dt. 01.03.2024

SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE

No. E-903: Sealed tenders are hereby invited from authorized agencies/firms/suppliers for supply of Anti-TB Drugs under National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme for Bargarh district. Bid documents should be submitted through Regd. Post/Speed Post/Courier. For date, time & terms and conditions regarding tender call, please log on to the district website: www.bargarh.nic.in.

Sd./- Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer, Bargarh

OIPR-10124/11/0021/2324

MUNICIPAL OFFICE PATTAMUNDAI CORRIGENDUM NOTICE No. 757/PM, DATE: 29.2.2024

No. C-3298: In partial modification to this office procurement notice No. 684, Dtd. 23.02.2024 the following amendments have been made.

The work mentioned in Sl. 1 to 15 & 55 has been cancelled due to error during preparation of bid.

The clause No. 06 mentioned in the DTN may be read as "The EMD & ISD amount deposited by the bidder will be kept as security for the maintenance period i.e. 2 year" the APS amount will be released after completion of the work.

The end date for submission of Tender online mentioned in the serial No. 69 to 77 has been extended to 10 AM of 08.03.2024.

All other terms and conditions of the tender notice No. 684, Dtd. 23.02.2024 are remain unchanged.

Sd./- Executive Officer Pattamundai Municipality

OIPR-13220/11/0025/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. C-3303: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER P.H. DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR, AT-CHATRAPUR

E-mail - oephchpr@gmail.com

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Invitation For Bids (IFB)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Bid Identification No.	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lakh)	Period of Completion	Availability of Bid document for online bidding		Name & Address of Office Inviting Bid
					From	To	
1	Procurement, installation with testing and commissioning of 125KVA DG set 2 nos at intake well & WTP Balighata under State Plan BASUDHA for the year 2023-24	Identification No. 94/03/SPHCJ/2023-24 dt.29.02.2024	26.52	1 (One) Month	11.00 Hrs of 06.03.2024	17.30 Hrs of 15.03.2024	Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur
2	Procurement, installation with testing and commissioning of 250 KVA DG set at intake well site, Kabisuryanagar under State Plan BASUDHA for the year 2023-24	Identification No. 95/03/SPHCJ/2023-24 dt.29.02.2024	27.80	1 (One) Month	11.00 Hrs of 06.03.2024	17.30 Hrs of 15.03.2024	Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur
3	Procurement, installation with testing and commissioning of 100 KVA DG set 3 nos at 6MLD Narayan Mundia, Phubani under State Plan BASUDHA for the year 2023-24	Identification No. 96/03/SPHCJ/2023-24 dt.29.02.2024	38.96	1 (One) Month	11.00 Hrs of 06.03.2024	17.30 Hrs of 15.03.2024	Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur
4	Procurement, installation with testing and commissioning of 250 KVA DG set at intake well near Narayan Mundia, Phubani under State Plan BASUDHA for the year 2023-24	Identification No. 97/03/SPHCJ/2023-24 dt.29.02.2024	27.80	1 (One) Month	11.00 Hrs of 06.03.2024	17.30 Hrs of 15.03.2024	Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur
5	Procurement, installation with testing and commissioning of 250 KVA DG set at Badagaon for intake well & WTP for Balighata under State Plan BASUDHA for the year 2023-24	Identification No. 98/03/SPHCJ/2023-24 dt.29.02.2024	27.80	1 (One) Month	11.00 Hrs of 06.03.2024	17.30 Hrs of 15.03.2024	Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur
6	Procurement, installation with testing and commissioning of 100 KVA DG set at intake well and 150 KVA DG set for WTP of G.Udayagiri under State Plan BASUDHA for the year 2023-24	Identification No. 99/03/SPHCJ/2023-24 dt.29.02.2024	31.24	1 (One) Month	11.00 Hrs of 06.03.2024	17.30 Hrs of 15.03.2024	Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur
7	Procurement, installation with testing and commissioning of 125 KVA DG set at intake well site, Sorada NAC under State Plan BASUDHA for the year 2023-24	Identification No. 100/03/SPHCJ/2023-24 dt.29.02.2024	31.24	1 (One) Month	11.00 Hrs of 06.03.2024	17.30 Hrs of 15.03.2024	Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur

The Technical Bid shall be opened on dt. 16.03.2024 at 11.00 AM

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal <https://www.tenderorissa.gov.in>.

OIPR-13172/11/0037/2324 Sd./ Superintending Engineer (PH), P.H. Division, Bhanjanagar, at Chatrapur

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, RAIRANGPUR

Phone No. 06794-222054, E-mail ID: rairangpur.hud@ori.nic.in, rrprnuc@gmail.com

No. C-3296: "e" Procurement Notice

TENDER CALL NOTICE No. 165/Dt. 1.3.2024

BID IDENTIFICATION NO.: T8RRP2023-24

- Name of the Work : Civil Works
- Total No. of Works : 2 Nos.
- Estimated Cost : 9 to 12 lacs
- Class of Contractors : As per DTN
- Period of Completion : As per DTN
- Availability of Tender Online : 02.03.2024 at 11 AM to 11.3.2024 upto 5.00 PM for bidding
- Tender Box Offline documents : 12.03.2024 upto 5.00 PM Dropping
- Date & Time of Opening of Tender : 13.03.2024 at 11.00 AM

Other details can be seen from the website www.tenderorissa.gov.in Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.

Sd./- Executive Officer Rairangpur Municipality

OIPR-13106/11/0022/2324

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପବ୍ଲିକ୍ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନନାମା ପରିଷଦ, ବାଲିମେଳା

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BALIMELA

Odisha, PIN - 764051, e-Mail: eonacbalimela@gmail.com
Letter No. 351/2024 Dated: 28.02.2024

Expression of Interest (EOI) for Selection of Mission Shakti Groups for Processing of Waste for Bio-mining of Legacy Waste under Balimela NAC

No. C-3273: The Expression of Interest (EOI) in sealed cover with Prescribed Format (Annexure-I & II) are invited from local MSG/ALF/Rag picker Groups for processing of Legacy Waste for Bio-mining of Dumpsite at Ward No. 12, Balimela NAC.

The proposal should reach the office of the Executive Officer, Balimela NAC on or before 06.03.2024 by 01.00 P.M. through Courier/Speed Post/Registered Post or by hand and the same will be opened on the same day at 04.00 P.M. in presence of MSG/ALF/Rag picker Groups and their authorised agent if any.

01	Available of EOI documents in website	http://www.malkangiri.nic.in
02	Last date and time of submission of EOI	06.03.2024, 01.00 P.M.
03	Date and time of Opening of EOI	06.03.2024, 04.00 P.M.
04	For downloading the EOI documents and term and condition of assignment, please visit:	http://www.malkangiri.nic.in

The authority reserves right to reject any or all the EOIs without assigning any reason thereof. Any Change/Correction/Corrigendum in respect of the above shall be placed in <http://www.malkangiri.nic.in> portal.

Sd./- Executive Officer, Balimela NAC
OIPR-13140/11/0017/2324

international

of the day quote

Kiev plans to create a special register of the destroyed cultural and tourism facilities, which will be a tool for determining the amount of compensation from Russia



DENYS SHMYHAL | UKRAINE PM

This is a country that used to be one of the richest in the world. For the last 100 years, they've apparently had dozens of financial crises and defaulted on their international debt nine times



JANET YELLEN | US TREASURY SECRETARY

Israel has no intention of maintaining the occupation of Gaza or displacing civilians



BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | ISRAELI PM

SHORT TAKES

Flash floods in Indonesia

Jakarta: Flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall in Indonesia's capital Jakarta Thursday inundated 34 roads, causing traffic disruptions and evacuation of residents in some areas of the city, according to authorities. The floodwater depths ranged from 15 centimeters to over 50 centimeters, according to the Jakarta Disaster Mitigation Agency. Indonesia's weather agency Thursday issued a warning for potential heavy rains across the capital of Jakarta and its satellite cities for the next eight days.

India, SL sign pact

Colombo: India and Sri Lanka Friday signed an agreement for the development of a hybrid renewable energy system at three islands of the northern Jaffna peninsula. The project will consist of work to construct 530 kw of wind power, 1,700 kw of solar power, 2,400 kWh of battery power and a 2,500 kw diesel power system for Delft, Anatalivu and Nainativu islets, Sri Lanka's Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekara said in a statement. "Under a full financial grant of USD 10.995 million extended by the government of India - these islands would receive the hybrid renewable energy systems by March 2025," the statement said.

Trump to seek delay of trial

Fort Pierce: Donald Trump was set to ask a federal judge in Florida Friday to push back his criminal trial on charges of mishandling classified documents until the thick of the US presidential campaign. Trump's lawyers wrote in a court filing Thursday that he cannot have a "fair trial" while he is running for president. Nevertheless, Trump's legal team proposed an August 12 trial date, which would put the former president in court in the weeks before the November 5 presidential election. A crowd of Trump supporters cheered and waved banners as a large motorcade arrived at the courthouse 130 miles (209 km) north of Miami, though Trump himself was not visible. US media outlets reported that he had arrived at court.

Quake hits Japan

Tokyo: A 4.9 magnitude earthquake struck Japan's Chiba prefecture, east of Tokyo, the weather agency said Thursday. The tremor occurred at 6:35 p.m. local time (0935 GMT) at a depth of 20 km, measuring 4 on Japan's seismic intensity scale which peaks at 7, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said.



Sharing the values of freedom, human rights and the rule of law, our two countries have become partners in the pursuit of common interests for global peace and prosperity

YOON SUK YEOL | SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT

STRIKES HIT GERMANY

Local buses, subway trains and trams ground to a halt in much of Germany Friday, at the peak of a week of walkouts by employees demanding better working conditions. The Ver Di service workers' union called for a week of strikes lasting from Monday to Saturday, with the main day of walkouts Friday



46 dead in B'desh shopping mall fire



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, March 1: A massive fire that ripped through a seven-storey shopping mall in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka that also housed several illegal eateries killed at least 46 people and injured 22 others, the government said Friday, in one of the worst infernos to hit the country in recent years.

The fire broke out around 9:50 pm Thursday at a popular restaurant named "Kacchi Bhai" on the first floor of the building, Green Cozy Cottage, and quickly spread to the upper floors that had more restaurants and a garment shop, according to fire service officials. Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen said around 2 am that 33 bodies were brought to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and 10 others to the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery. Another victim died at the Police Hospital. The condition of those injured is "critical", he told reporters at a briefing. "One more person died during treat-

ment in the intensive care unit of Dhaka Medical ICU this morning. A total of 46 people have died so far," Sen said Friday. Currently, 10 people are undergoing treatment at the Sheikh Hasina burn unit and two at DMCH, he said.

Till now, the bodies of 39 people have been identified. Of them, at least 31 bodies of the victims have been handed over to families without an autopsy. Till now, the identities of six bodies remain unknown. The authorities will hand them over after conducting a DNA test.

The commercial building that was gutted did not have permission for restaurants, The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported. The building had permission for office use, not restaurants and eateries, according to Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk). But the building housed eight restaurants, a juice bar and a tea and coffee shop, the report said.

Ashraful Islam, Town Planner and Director of the Detailed Area Planning (DAP) project of Rajuk,

Till now, the bodies of 39 people have been identified. Of them, at least 31 bodies of the victims have been handed over to families without an autopsy

Till now, the identities of six bodies remain unknown. The authorities will hand them over after conducting a DNA test

said commercial approval had been taken for the building from one to seven floors. But it was only for office use. There was no approval for restaurants, showrooms or anything else.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is closely monitoring the fire incident at the commercial building, the Health Minister said. She noted that the multi-storied building had no fire exit.

She urged all to follow the rules and regulations while constructing any building. Hasina said that 46 people died in the Bailey Road fire incident.

"What could be more painful than this," she said. Fire officials said 75 people, including 42 in unconscious state, were taken out of the seven-storey building. Thirteen fire service units were mobilised, the officials said.

The minister, a burn wound specialist, said 22 people are being treated at both health facilities and their condition is "critical". Doctors said some of the bodies were burned beyond recognition and feared that the death toll could rise.

Witnesses and officials said to escape the fire, people rushed to the upper floors.

Iran votes in its first Parl election since 2022 protests

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 1: Iran Friday held the country's first Parliamentary election since the mass 2022 protests over mandatory hijab laws after the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini, with questions looming over just how many people will turn out at the polls.

Iranian officials and even Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have urged the public to cast ballots, but polling stations in the country's capital, Tehran, appeared to see few voters. Authorities have largely barred politicians calling for any change within the country's theocracy, known broadly as reformists, from running in the election - leaving mostly only a broad slate of conservative or hard-line figures.

Iran's economy continues to stagnate under Western sanctions over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program and the country's arming of militia proxies in the Middle East and Russia in its war on Ukraine. Some of the voters acknowledged the challenges facing the Islamic Republic.

"There are many problems; too many problems," said one voter, who just gave her last name, Sajjad. "We are sad, we are sorrowful and we voice our criticism as much as we can. God willing, those responsible (will) start thinking about us, and probably many of them do care."

Khamenei, 84, cast one of the first votes in an election that also will see new members elected to the country's Assembly of Experts. The panel of clerics, who serve an eight-year term, is mandated to create a new supreme leader if Khamenei steps down or dies, underscoring the panel's increased importance, given Khamenei's age.

Gaza aid convoy deaths spark global outrage



REUTERS

Paris/Jerusalem, March 1: Pressure mounted on Israel Friday over the deaths of Palestinians queuing for aid in an incident during which its soldiers fired at the crowd, with several countries backing a UN call for an inquiry.

Gaza health authorities said Israeli forces had killed more than 100 people trying to reach a relief convoy near Gaza City early Thursday, with famine looming nearly five months into the war that began with a Hamas attack on Israel October 7.

Israel blamed most of the deaths on crowds that swarmed around aid trucks, saying victims had been trampled or run over. An Israeli official also said troops had "in a limited response" later fired on crowds they felt had posed a threat. Israel's military campaign has since killed more than 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza.

With a humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, many countries have urged a ceasefire, but US President Joe Biden said Thursday's incident will complicate talks for a deal involving a truce and hostage release. France and Germany have backed a call for an international inquiry. The US has also urged an inquiry India said it was "deeply shocked" at the deaths and Brazil said the incident was beyond

- Gaza health authorities say over 100 killed awaiting aid
- Israel says many victims were trampled or run over
- France and Germany call for incident to be investigated

"ethical or legal limits" South Africa, which has brought a genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, condemned the deaths. Israel denies genocide.

French President Emmanuel Macron voiced "deep indignation" and the "strongest condemnation of these shootings". Germany said "the Israeli army must fully explain how the mass panic and shooting could have happened."

Israel's closest ally, the United States, has also urged a thorough investigation, saying the incident shows the need for "expanded humanitarian aid to make its way into Gaza".

In Israel, ultra-rightwing security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir urged "total support" to Israeli soldiers who had "acted excellently against a Gazan mob that tried to harm them". However, an opinion piece on the N12 online news site said the incident showed the lack of any civil administration or rule of law in Gaza, and that this "may place Israel in a difficult position in terms of legitimacy for continuing the fighting".

SNIPPETS

Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple opens for public

Abu Dhabi: The UAE's first Hindu stone temple, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi February 14, was opened to the general public Friday. The temple was built by the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) on a 27-acre site in Abu Mureikah, near Al Rahba off the Dubai-Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed Highway at a cost of around Rs 700 crore. The land for the temple was donated by the UAE government. A grand ceremony attended by almost 5,000 people marked the inauguration of the architectural marvel by Modi February 14. Overseas devotees were allowed to visit between February 15 and 29. It also mentioned that the temple would be open from 9 am to 8 pm on all days except Monday when it would be closed for visitors.

Pak's new Prez to be elected March 9

Islamabad: The polling to elect Pakistan's new President will be held March 9, the election commission announced Friday, a position that former President Asif Ali Zardari is almost certain to win again after nearly 11 years. The new president would replace the incumbent Dr Arif Alvi, whose five-year term ended last year. However, he has continued since the new electoral college was not yet formed. Alvi's successor could not be elected due to the absence of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies which were dissolved in August 2023 ahead of the February 8 general elections. Members of the federal parliament and provincial assemblies constitute the electoral college which elects the president of the country. Three weeks after the February 8 elections, the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies all have newly elected members.

Deadly mining protests in Liberia

Monrovia (Liberia): Violent protests in Liberia over the presence of armed guards in mining areas in the country's northwest killed one demonstrator and left several injured, a government official said. Both protesters and police were armed when the clashes erupted Thursday in the mining town of Kinjor, according to the minister of information and culture, Jeronlinmek Piah. He told reporters that the death is being investigated and that 18 protesters were arrested. The protests followed a demand by the mining district's lawmaker, Mohammed Dosii, who Tuesday asked for an immediate withdrawal of armed guards in the community and at the gold mine operated by Bea Mountain Mining Company.

Fresh blow to Cambodian press freedom

Cambodia's dwindling media landscape was dealt another blow with the management of the Phnom Penh Post announcing the English and Khmer editions of the daily newspaper will close by the end of this March due to financial difficulties

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Phnom Penh, March 1: The Phnom Penh Post, a newspaper founded in 1992 as Cambodia sought to re-establish stability and democracy after decades of war and unrest, said Friday that it will stop publishing in print this month, the latest blow to the country's dwindling independent media.

The Post was founded as an English-language biweekly in 1992. It later added a Khmer-language edition, and in 2008 began publishing daily.

It wrote on social media accounts that it would stop publishing both English and Khmer editions by March 29, citing a

decline in advertising revenues due to a pandemic-related economic downturn, which added to financial difficulties caused by the spread of social media and other new technology.

Although not mentioned in the announcement, Ly Tayseng, the Post's current CEO and publisher, confirmed in a text message to The Associated Press that it will continue publishing online.

The government of then-Prime Minister Hun Sen cracked down heavily on independent media in 2017. The Cambodia Daily, a competitor of the Post, was forced to close when it was presented with a huge tax bill which it felt was presented for political reasons. The Post came under sim-



FOR A CAUSE: Protesters display a banner during a rally against alleged fraud in the February 14 Presidential poll outside the Parliament building in Jakarta, Indonesia. Hundreds of people staged the rally demanding the election authorities to disqualify Presidential frontrunner Prabowo Subianto and his running mate Gibran Rakabuming Raka, the eldest son of Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who are now leading the tallies, on allegation of a massive fraud in the election



ilar political pressure as it also lagged in advertising revenue, and in 2018 was sold by its Australian publisher to a Malaysian investor who was widely seen as acting as a proxy for the interests of the ruling Cambodia People's Party. Several

senior staff resigned and it ceased most of the sort of aggressive independent reporting that had once been its hallmark.

The Post was founded on a shoestring by Americans Michael Hayes and Kathleen O'Keefe as Cambodia with UN help, sought

to recover from the devastation wrought by the brutal rule of the Khmer Rouge in the late 1970s. Its journalism flourished, in competition from The Cambodia Daily founded in 1993 and also heavily staffed by young Westerners. Both papers served as a sort of training ground for young journalists early in their careers.

The Post, which was never very profitable, was sold by its founders to an Australia-led media group in 2008. By that time, all independent media was coming under increasing pressure as then-Prime Minister Hun Sen and his Cambodia People's Party tightened their grip on power and sought to silence most critics.

Navalny's funeral held amid security

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, March 1: Under a heavy police presence, thousands of people bade farewell Friday to Alexei Navalny at his funeral in Moscow after his still-unexplained death two weeks ago in an Arctic penal colony.

The service followed a battle with authorities over the release of the body of President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critic. His supporters said several churches in Moscow refused to hold the funeral for the man who crusaded against official corruption and organised big protests. Many Western leaders blamed the death on the Russian leader, an accusation the Kremlin angrily rejected.

Navalny's team eventually got permission from the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God Soothe My Sorrows, which was encircled by crowd-control barriers Friday.

As his coffin was removed from the hearse and taken inside the church, the crowd waiting outside broke into respectful applause and then chanted: "Navalny! Navalny!" Some also shouted, "You weren't afraid, neither are we!" and later "No to war!"

Western diplomats, including US Ambassador Lynn Tracy, were among those who attended,



along with presidential hopefuls Boris Nadezhdin and Yekaterina Duntsova. Both wanted to run against Putin in the upcoming presidential elections and opposed his war in Ukraine; neither was allowed on the ballot.

Navalny's father was also present, but it wasn't clear who else in his family attended. His widow, Yulia Navalnaya, just two days ago addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France; his daughter is a student at the Stanford University, and the whereabouts of his son are unknown.

business

of the day quote

The company is on track to achieve a ratio of 30 per cent women employees on its rolls by the end of FY25. Notably, the milestone is set to arrive five years sooner than the company's stated target of 2030, with women professionals already comprising 22 per cent of the total number of employees



JOHN SLAVEN | CEO, VEDANTA ALUMINIUM

We believe this serves as an excellent example for our nation towards attaining self-sufficiency in line with our honourable prime minister's vision of Atmanirbharta and will further inspire India's goals to become a global manufacturing and supply chain hub



SP KOCHHAR | DIRECTOR GENERAL, COAI

We envision these advancements to not only attract substantial investments to India's logistics sector, but also to create a significant number of jobs, driving economic growth and prosperity



SACHIN PATIL | MD & CEO, MESSE STUTTGART

SHORT TAKES

Forex kitty jumps

Mumbai: India's forex reserves jumped by \$2.975 billion to \$619.072 billion for the week ended February 23, the Reserve Bank said Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had dropped by \$1.132 billion to \$616.097 billion. For the week ending February 23, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by \$2.405 billion to \$548.188 billion. Gold reserves increased by \$472 million to \$47.848 088 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by \$89 million to \$18.197 billion, the apex bank said. India's reserve position with the IMF was up by \$9 million to \$4.839 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed. India's forex reserves hit an all-time high of \$645 billion in October 2021.

Bitcoin tops \$60K

Washington: Bitcoin rose to the coveted \$60,000 mark for the first time in more than two years, amid a surging optimism that demand for the token is widening beyond committed digital-asset enthusiasts. Bitcoin Thursday traded at about \$60,301, closing in on its all-time high of \$68,991 -- which was struck in November 2021. The largest cryptocurrency has already jumped more than 40 per cent this year, fuelled in part by the successful launch of US exchange-traded funds (ETFs) holding the coins that have attracted more than \$6 billion since they began trading January 11.

GDP BOOST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 1: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rallied more than one-and-a-half per cent to hit their lifetime highs Friday helped by impressive GDP data and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,245.05 points or 1.72 per cent to reach 73,745.35 - its all-time closing peak. During the day, it zoomed 1,318.91 points or 1.81 per cent to hit a record intra-day high of 73,819.21.

The Nifty climbed 355.95 points or 1.62 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 22,338.75. During the day, it soared 370.5 points or 1.68 per cent to reach its intra-day record peak of 22,353.30.

A rally in global markets and auto sales numbers added to the

SERVICE FEE DISPUTE

Google junks apps from Play Store

Indian startups have for years been protesting against many of the US giant's practices, including its in-app fee charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Google Friday began removing some apps, including popular matrimony apps, from its Play Store in India over a dispute on service fee payments.

Google said that 10 companies in the country, including "many well-established" had avoided paying fees despite benefiting from the platform.

It did not name the firms but a search of Play Store on android phones did not give results for matrimony apps such as Shaadi, Matrimony.Com and Bharat Matrimony. Balaji Telefilms' Altt (formerly ALTBalaji), audio platform Kuku FM, dating service Quack Quack, Truly Madly also disappeared from the Play Store.

The dispute is over Google imposing a fee of 11 per cent to 26 per cent on in-app payments after anti-competition body CCI ordered scrapping of an earlier system of charging 15 per cent to 30 per cent.

Google went ahead to remove the apps not paying the fee after the Supreme Court did not provide interim relief to companies behind these apps in their battle against the search giant's platform fees.

Google previously sent notices of Play Store violations to Matrimony.Com, which runs the app BharatMatrimony, and Info Edge, which runs a similar app, Jeevansathi.

In a blog post, Google said 10 Indian companies had chosen for an extended period of time not to pay for the "immense value they receive on Google Play".

"For years, no court or regu-



Major contributing factors for good performance were India's rising economic diversity and the role of policy in smoothing shocks. Both these helped India do well despite multiple external shocks

ASHIMA GOYAL | MPC MEMBER, RBI

MUSK SUES OPENAI, CEO ALTMAN

Elon Musk has sued OpenAI and its chief executive Sam Altman, among others, accusing them of breaching contractual agreements made when he helped found the ChatGPT-maker in 2015, according to a lawsuit filed in San Francisco. The lawsuit said Altman originally approached Musk to make an open source, non-profit company that would develop artificial intelligence technology for the "benefit of humanity"



GST revenues grow 12.5% to ₹1.68L-crore

FOURTH HIGHEST GST COLLECTION SINCE ROLLOUT



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: GST collections rose by 12.5 per cent to Rs 1.68 lakh crore in February 2024 compared to the year-ago period buoyed by an increase in domestic sales as well as imports.

"Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collected for February 2024 is Rs 1,68,337 crore, marking a robust 12.5 per cent increase compared to that in the same month in 2023. This growth was driven by a 13.9 per cent rise in GST from domestic transactions and 8.5 per cent increase in GST from import of goods," a finance ministry statement said.

The average monthly collections in the current fiscal stood at Rs 1.67 lakh crore, higher than Rs 1.5 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.

GST revenue net of refunds for February 2024 is Rs 1.51 lakh crore, a growth of 13.6 per cent over February 2023.

The central government settled Rs 41,856 crore to Central GST and Rs 35,953 crore to State GST from the Integrated GST collected. This translates to a total revenue of Rs 73,641 crore for CGST and Rs 75,569 crore for SGST after regular settlement in February.

The highest-ever GST collec-

tion was recorded at Rs 1.87 lakh crore in April 2023, followed by Rs 1.74 lakh crore in January 2024, and Rs 1.72 lakh crore in October 2023. In February 2024, the collections came in at Rs 1.68 lakh crore, the fourth-highest monthly collections so far.

Deloitte India Partner M S Mani said coming on the back of the robust GDP numbers for the third quarter, the impressive GST collection is reflecting the broad-based consumption increase across sectors.

"Almost all major states have shown an impressive increase in GST collections ranging from 8 to 21 per cent demonstrating that the consumption growth is across states as GST is a destination-based consumption tax," Mani added.

KPMG in India

Partner and National Head, Indirect Tax Abhishek Jain said the GDP growth and GST revenue numbers collectively show the robustness of the Indian economy and domestic consumption story going strong.

N.A. Shah Associates, Partner, Indirect Tax, Parag Mehta, said the collection is proof of Indian economy moving towards all-time high.

"GST has stabilized. Strict compliance by trade, dealing only with registered and law-compliant vendors, has been a major reason for increasing turnover. Besides the authorities have been very vigilant and sharing of information between various government departments has ensured control and strict action against tax evaders," Mehta said.

With this, gross GST collection in April-Feb of the current fiscal stood at ₹18,40L-cr, up by 11.7% YoY



Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in a statement said, "The affected members of IAMAI are of the view that a substantive hearing of the case is pending before the Supreme Court of India, and Google should not take any coercive action during the pendency of the case"

lator has denied Google Play's right to charge," it said, adding that the Supreme Court February 9 also "refused to interfere" with its right to do so.

Google asserted that allowing a small group of developers to get differential treatment from the vast majority of developers who are paying their fair share creates an uneven playing field putting all other apps and games at a competitive disadvantage.

"After giving these developers more than three years to prepare, including three weeks after the Supreme Court's order, we are

taking necessary steps to ensure our policies are applied consistently across the ecosystem, as we do for any form of policy violation globally," Google said.

"Today, we have over 2,00,000 Indian developers using Google Play who adhere to our policies, helping us ensure we have a safe platform; however, for an extended period of time, 10 companies, including many well-established ones, have chosen to not pay for the immense value they receive on Google Play by securing interim protections from the court," it said.

These developers comply with payment policies of other app

Indian companies will comply - for now. But what India needs is an App Store/Play Store that is a part of Digital Public Infrastructure - like UPI and ONDC. The response needs to be strategic

SANJEEV BIKHCHANDANI | INFO EDGE FOUNDER

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING LAW

₹5.49cr fine on PPBL

Fresh blow for the Paytm Payments Bank after RBI barred it from accepting fresh deposits or top-ups in customer accounts, wallets, FASTags, and other instruments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) has imposed a Rs 5.49 crore penalty on Paytm Payments Bank for violating anti-money laundering rules, the Finance Ministry said Friday.

FIU-IND initiated a review of Paytm Payments Bank on receipt of specific information from law enforcement agencies in respect of few entities and their network of businesses engaged in a number of illegal acts, including organising and facilitating online gambling.

The money generated from these illegal operations, i.e. proceeds of crime were routed and channelled through bank accounts maintained by these entities with the Paytm Payments Bank Ltd, the ministry said.

"The Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND)...has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 5.49 crore on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd with reference to the violations of its obligations under the PMLA (Prevention of



Money Laundering Act)," the ministry said.

The FIU passed its order imposing the penalty March 1.

The FIU action follows RBI's January 31 directive barring Paytm Payments Bank from accepting fresh deposits or credits in the accounts of its customers from February 29. The date was later extended to March 15.

On Monday, Vijay Shekhar Sharma stepped down as part-time non-executive Chairman of Paytm Payments Bank Limited and the board of the bank was reconstituted. PPBL will commence the process of

appointing a new Chairman.

Ties severed Amid RBI's action on its associate firm, One 97 Communications on Friday said the board has approved the discontinuation of inter-company pacts with Paytm Payments Bank to reduce dependencies.

The move assumes significance as Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) is under the RBI's lens over persistent non-compliance and continued material supervisory concerns.

In a statutory filing Friday, One97 Communications (which owns and operates Paytm) said the company and its associate entity, Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL), have introduced additional measures to strengthen their approach towards independent operations of PPBL.

"As part of this process to reduce dependencies, Paytm and PPBL have mutually agreed to discontinue various inter-company agreements with Paytm and its group entities," the BSE filing said.

Strong SUV demand: Maruti, Hyundai, Tata see robust sales in Feb

February turned out to be the third-best month for sales for the industry ever

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Leading automakers Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai and Tata Motors Friday reported robust sales for February as demand for sports utility vehicles continued to remain strong.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Toyota Kirloskar Motor and Honda Cars also witnessed higher vehicle dispatches to dealers last month.

The highest-ever passenger vehicle wholesales in a month was reported in January this year with dispatch of 3,94,500 units. It was followed by October 2023, with wholesales of 3,91,811 units.

Maruti Suzuki India said its total domestic passenger vehicle sales grew 9 per cent to 1,60,271 units in February against 1,47,467 units in the month a year ago.

Sales of utility vehicles, including Brezza, Ertiga, Grand Vitara, and XL6, rose 82 per cent to 61,234 units last month compared to 33,550 units in February 2023.

However, dispatches of mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso declined to 14,782 units against 21,875 units in February 2023.

Similarly, sales of compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, Tigor S, and WagonR, also declined by 10 per cent to 71,627 units compared to 79,898 units in the year-ago month.

In a virtual press conference, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Senior Executive Officer (Marketing and Sales) Shashank Srivastava said the passenger vehicle industry saw the best-ever monthly sales performance for February. "The streak of best-ever monthly sales also continued for the 14th straight month," he noted.



The auto major exceeded the 16 lakh sales mark during the current fiscal year in February, Srivastava said.

Srivastava noted that SUVs account for 21.5 per cent of the company's total sales at the moment and should go up a little bit in March.

"So, we might fall short of the 24 per cent mark, which we had set for this fiscal year," he noted.

Last month, Tata Motors took over the second spot in terms of passenger vehicle sales with a dispatch of 51,321 units, a growth of 19 per cent year-on-year compared to February 2023.

Hyundai Motor India said its domestic wholesales grew 7 per cent to 50,201 units last month from 47,001 units in the year-ago period.

Mahindra & Mahindra said its passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market rose 40 per cent to 42,401 units last month against 30,358 in February last year.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported its best-ever monthly wholesales at 25,220 units in February.

Honda Cars said its domestic sales stood at 7,142 units in February, a growth of 17 per cent year-on-year.

MG Motor India said its retail sales grew an 8 per cent increase in retail sales at 4,532 units in February compared to the same month last year.

97.62% of ₹2,000 currency returned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 1: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday said nearly 97.62 per cent of the Rs 2,000 bank notes have returned to the banking system, and only about Rs 8,470 crore worth of the withdrawn notes are still with the public.

On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 denomination bank notes from circulation.

"The total value of Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of Rs 2000 banknotes was announced, has declined to Rs 8,470 crore at the close of business on February 29, 2024," the RBI said in a statement.

Thus, 97.62 per cent of the Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, have since been returned, it added.

"The Rs 2,000 banknotes continue to be legal tender," the RBI added.

People can deposit and/or exchange Rs 2,000 bank notes at the 19 RBI offices across the country. People can also send Rs 2,000 bank notes through India Post from any post office to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts in India.

Public and entities holding such notes were initially asked to either exchange or deposit them in bank accounts by September 30, 2023. The deadline was later extended to October 7, 2023. Deposit and exchange services at bank branches were discontinued on October 7, 2023.

Starting October 8, 2023, individuals have been provided with the choice of either exchanging the currency or having the equivalent sum credited to their bank accounts at the 19 offices of the RBI.

The 19 RBI offices depositing/exchanging the bank notes are in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Belapur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi, Patna and Thiruvananthapuram.



positive momentum in the equity markets, analysts said.

India's economy grew by better-than-expected 8.4 per cent in the final three months of 2023 - the fastest pace in one-and-a-half years.

The country's manufacturing sector growth climbed to a five-month high in February amid a sharper uptick in factory pro-

duction and sales, supported by both domestic and external demand, a monthly survey said.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 56.5 in January to 56.9 in February, pointing to the strongest improvement in the health of the sector since September 2023.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers Thursday as they bought equities worth Rs 3,568.11 crore.

The BSE benchmark climbed 195.42 points or 0.27 per cent to settle at 72,500.30 Thursday. The Nifty gained 31.65 points or 0.14 per cent to 21,982.80.

SPECIAL SESSION Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE will conduct a special trading session in the equity

and equity derivative segments Saturday to check their preparedness to handle major disruption or failure at the primary site.

The special live trading session will have intra-day switch over from Primary Site (PR) to Disaster Recovery (DR) site. The exchanges said there will be two sessions - the first from 9:15 am to 10 am on the PR, and the second from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm on the DR site.

INVESTORS RICHER

Investors became richer by Rs 4.29 lakh crore Friday as markets fired on all cylinders with the BSE Sensex rising sharply by 1,245 points or nearly 2 per cent.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies soared by Rs 4,29,339.75 crore to Rs 3,92,25,029.98 crore (\$4.78 trillion).

RANJI ROW

Kapil backs BCCI strictness

SAFF U-16 Women's C'ship: India destroy Bhutan 7-0

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE



a long ranger that curled into the corner of the net, leaving Bhutan goalkeeper Kelzang Wangmo baffled.

The Bhutan goalkeeper, despite conceding so many goals, was perhaps the best player of her team, as her valiant efforts saved her team from further embarrassment.

Though the Indian midfielders and forwards had an easy time, the defence was hardly tested - goalkeeper Surajmuni Kumari didn't have to exert at all, as her rival attackers could rarely ever reach the India box. This does not augur well for tougher matches ahead in the event.

The flow of goals somewhat dried up in the second session and it could partly be because of a lack of experience and the complacency factor.

Overall, it was a good show by the Young Tigresses, the majority of whom had never had any international exposure. Yet, they played their passes, both long and short ones, confidently and displayed an understanding that would help them in the title hunt for the next eight days.

Kathmandu, March 1: India began their campaign in the SAFF U-16 Women's Championship on an easy note with a 7-0 thrashing of Bhutan at the ANFA Complex, Lalitpur, Nepal, Friday. The winners led 6-0 at halftime.

Anuksha Kumari, the 13-year-old from Hazaribagh who earned a name for herself by scoring 22 goals in the National Sub-junior tier 1, tore the Bhutan defence open to complete a well-deserved hat-trick. Striker Pearl Fernandes (2), Shveta Rani and substitute Anwita Raghuraman were other goal scorers for the Young Tigresses.

The four-team tournament also features hosts Nepal and Bangladesh. The two top teams will play the final March 10.

Bhutan had always been the favourite whipping side for India in the SAFF region and Friday was no exception. It didn't take the goodly crowd around much time to realise the hopelessly one-sided nature of the contest as Bibi Thomas's girls pumped in five goals within 27 minutes in the first half to leave hapless opponents reeling.

Skipper and winger Shveta Rani decided to open the Indian account herself and found the mark with a right-footer off a combined move.

The floodgate opened thereafter. Between the 13th and 27th minutes, India netted four more, with the fourth goal by Pearl Fernandes certainly the best of the day. The Goa girl unleashed

Forcefully you can't do anything: Saha

Veteran India wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha said nothing can be done 'forcefully' if a cricketer does not want to play domestic cricket, while adding that it is the base and every player should value it enough to prosper. Saha's reaction came after Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer were Wednesday excluded from the annual player retainership list for the 2023-24 season. "That is BCCI's decision and personal decision of concerned players. Forcefully, you can't do anything," the stumper said about Kishan and Iyer's axe. Saha said a cricketer should treat every match with equal importance citing his own example. "Whenever I am fit to play, even I played club matches, office matches as well. I always treat a match as a match. All matches are equal for me. If every player thinks on those lines, they will only prosper in their career and it will be better for Indian cricket as well," he said.

30,000, while former Test players, who got Rs 37,500, are now getting Rs 60,000.

Women international players, who received Rs 30,000 prior to the revision are now receiving Rs 52,500, while first-class cricketers who retired before 2003 and were getting Rs 22,500 are now getting Rs 45,000.

"I am also happy that the BCCI has increased the pension amount of the players. This was a much needed boost to those whose family depends on the pension received," added Kapil.



I was sad to see domestic cricket being given the skip by players once they had established themselves in international cricket," the captain of the 1983 World Cup-winning side observed in his statement.

The BCCI, while announcing the central contracts, urged the players to give due importance to domestic competitions.

The 25-year-old Kishan did not turn up for Jharkhand throughout the team's campaign in Ranji Trophy despite not being on national duty after leaving

the tour of South Africa in December citing personal reasons. He instead focussed on preparing for the IPL next month for his franchise Mumbai Indians.

Iyer, on the other hand, did not make himself available for Mumbai's Ranji quarterfinal against Baroda after being excluded from the Indian team after the second Test against England. He, however, has been picked for Mumbai's Ranji semi-final against Tamil Nadu starting March 2.

"It was high time the message was given and this strong step by the BCCI will go a long way in restoring the prestige of domestic cricket," he added. Kapil asserted that it was the duty of established stars to play domestic cricket as they owe their suc-

cess to their respective states. "I have always believed in the process of international players making themselves available to play for their respective states. It helps them extend their support to domestic players. Also it is a nice way to pay back for the services rendered by the state association in grooming a player," he said.

Kapil also expressed his gratitude to the BCCI for enhancing the pension of former cricketers, saying it has come as a major relief to families of several yesteryear players.

In 2022, the board had announced a hike in the monthly pensions of former cricketers - both men and women.

Former first-class men's cricketers, who earlier got Rs 15,000 per month are now getting Rs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: "A few players will suffer, but let it be," said legendary former India captain Kapil Dev Friday as he backed the BCCI's decision to terminate central contracts for lack of commitment to domestic cricket, calling it a much-needed step to protect marquee first-class events like the Ranji Trophy.

Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer were Wednesday excluded from the BCCI's central contracts after ignoring the board's diktat to play in the Ranji Trophy. The decision evoked mixed reactions with some former players like Kirti Azad and Irfan Pathan backing the out-of-favour duo.

Kapil refrained from taking names but said the BCCI's decision to assert the importance of domestic cricket was long overdue.

"Yes, few players will suffer, kuch logon ko taqleef hogi, hone do lekin desh se badhkar koi nahi hai (some people will feel hurt but let it be because nobody is bigger than the country). Well done," he said.

"I congratulate the BCCI for taking the much needed step to protect the status of domestic



I congratulate the BCCI for taking the much needed step to protect the status of domestic cricket. I was sad to see domestic cricket being given the skip by players once they had established themselves in international cricket

KAPIL DEV | FORMER INDIA CAPTAIN

SHORT TAKES

Advani, Rawat to clash in semis

Mumbai: Multiple world champion Pankaj Advani of Bengaluru eked out a hard-fought 6-4 win over Mumbai's Nitesh Madaan in a best-of-11-frame quarterfinal match at the CCI Snooker Classic here Friday. Advani, India's most illustrious player with 27 world titles, secured a 61-51, 78-8, 75-2, 57-68, 4-61, 15-71, 89-9, 108-9, 54-65, 102-0 win against Madaan in a thrilling last-eight match at the CCI's Sir Wilson Jones billiards hall here. In the semifinals, defending champion Advani will meet Bombay Gymkhana's Laxman Rawat, the lone local challenger who fought hard to overcome a spirited Pushinder Singh 6-5 (68-66, 70-33, 28-81, 80-23, 54-82, 50-53, 40-73, 23-68, 83-39, 71-36, and 85-0) in a nerve-wracking quarterfinal. Advani came from behind to win the first frame. Madaan, who also practices at the Bombay Gymkhana, rolled in a break of 50 but Advani made a strong reply, compiling a 54 to snatch the opening frame.

Ashok jumps into top-10 in S'pore

Singapore: A bogey free three-under 69 in the second round saw India's Aditi Ashok move into the Top-10 at the HSBC Women's World Championship here Friday. The World No 40, who is getting ready for another shot at an Olympic medal that she missed by a whisker in Tokyo, birdied three times on the fifth, 12th and the 16th and parred the rest of the holes to be placed Tied-9th in the field. On the opening day, she had five birdies but also gave away five bogeys in her card of 72. World No 3 Celine Boutier gave her father a fine birthday present as the 30-year-old added a bogey-free 64 to her opening round of 73 to lie one shot clear of Japan's Ayaka Furue. Boutier shot to the top of the leader board despite a first round 73. She said she holed a lot of putts in the second round, which had less wind than the first.

Indian Open from March 28 to 31

New Delhi: The Indian Golf Union Friday announced the schedule of the Indian Open - the country's National Open and flagship golf tournament, which will be held from March 28-31 at the DLF Golf & Country Club, Gurgaon. The tournament will feature 144 professional golfers across the globe including Aman Raj, Manu Gandas, and other 31 Indian participants. However, the list of players is still not confirmed for the event.

India's Zarah youngest competitor at World Skateboarding Tour 2024

8-year-old Zarah, who started skateboarding at the age of four, made her international debut at the Skateboarding Park World Championship 2023 in Rome last year



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New Delhi, March 1: India's Zarah Ann Gladys, at just eight years of age, has become the youngest competitor at the World Skateboarding Tour 2024 in Dubai.

Zarah participated in the women's park event, achieving a score of 8.50 during the qualification round and securing the 61st position out of 63 competitors Wednesday. The Dubai meet is a crucial event for skateboarders looking to improve their Olympic World Skate Ranking for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Zarah, who started skateboarding at the age of four, made her international debut at the Skateboarding Park World Championship 2023 in Rome last year, where she had the best run of 10.66, according to

Olympics.com.

The adorable skateboarder, who hails from Kerala but currently resides in UAE, began skateboarding during Covid-19 pandemic after being inspired by her friends. Since then, she has participated in numerous local and international competitions, securing titles at events such as the Aljada Skate Jam and Circuit X in the UAE.

She also clinched a silver medal at India's National Roller Skating Championships in December 2022 in the under-9 age group.

The young girl has amazed people around the world with her impressive skating abilities. Her social media posts feature videos of her executing jumps onto her board from varying heights and successfully completing kickflips with finesse.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 1: Grace Harris made a powerful fifty that helped UP Warriorz negate a sluggish surface to register a facile six-wicket win over Gujarat Giants in their Women's Premier League match here Friday.

Harris (60 not out, 33 balls, 9x4, 2x6) and skipper Alyssa Healy (33, 21b, 7x4) helped Warriorz hunt down 143 in 15.4 overs for their second win in the tournament.

Giants were restricted to 142 for five after left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone (3/20) used a rough deck to her advantage.

Harris gave finishing touches to her good work with an outstanding innings.

The Australian right-hander used her reach and force to telling effect to keep the pressure on the Giants bowlers after Healy gave them a fantastic start in the Power Play.

The diminutive Australian



smashed pacer Meghana Singh for three successive fours in the third over as the UP outfit reached 33 in just three overs, which they later swelled to 69 for two in the Power Play section.

The Giants also suffered a major blow when Harleen Deol

had to limp off the field after she landed on her knees while trying to stop the ball near the ropes. But the Gujarat side showed some signs of a comeback when they collected the quick wickets of Healy, debutante Chamari Athapathuthu

and Shweta Sherawat to reduce UP to 90 for 4 in the 11th over.

They needed 53 more runs to finish the chase at this stage but Harris and Deepthi Sharma (17 not out) amassed the runs in just 30 balls to propel their side to victory.

Earlier, Gujarat, in fact, made a fine start to their innings as Lara Wolvaardt (28, 26b, 4x4) helped them reach 41 in the Power Play for the loss of skipper Beth Mooney.

Wolvaardt smashed Anjali Sarvani for three fours in a row through the off-side as the pacer erred in line outside the off-stump. But once the Power Play ended, the Giants slipped into a period of hibernation, going without a boundary for 23 balls, and the dismissal of Wolvaardt too did not help their cause.

It required a forceful 52-run partnership for the fourth wicket between Phoebe Litchfield (35, 26 balls) and Ashleigh Gardner (30, 17 balls) to add a touch of respectability to their total.

Ireland bag maiden Test victory

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Abu Dhabi, March 1: Ireland clinched their first-ever Test victory, breaking a six-year drought and ending a streak of seven consecutive defeats in the longest format of the sport, beating Afghanistan by six wickets on Day 3 of the only Test, at the Tolerance Oval Cricket Stadium here Friday.

Facing a modest target of 111 runs for victory, Ireland stumbled early, finding themselves at a precarious 13 for 3 in their fourth innings.

However, led by captain Andy Balbirnie's unbeaten 58, supported by Lorcan Tucker's 27 not out, they weathered the storm and overcame the Afghan challenge, sparking tears of joy among the travelling Irish fans as Tucker struck the historic winning run.

While Balbirnie's masterful innings guided Ireland to victory on a challenging surface, it was their pace bowling trio of Barry McCarthy (3-48), Mark Adair (3-56), and Craig Young (3-24) that set the stage for the triumph. Combining forces, they dismantled the Afghan batting lineup, sharing nine crucial wickets in the third innings, restricting Afghanistan to a modest total of 218.

Hyderabad, March 1: Puneri Paltan overcame a young and resilient Haryana Steelers to lift their maiden Pro Kabaddi League trophy here Friday.

Puneri Paltan win maiden PKL title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

In a contest which could have gone either way, Puneri Paltan won 28-25 at the GMC Balayogi Stadium.

Puneri Paltan took the early lead with their defenders giving a good account of themselves. Ankit opened the account for the Steelers with Rahul Sethpal leading the charge to keep the clash interesting.

The first half saw Puneri Paltan unleash their raids, and a moment of magic from Pankaj Mohite saw him complete a 'super raid' worth four points as the winners took a decisive lead.

Ashish's successful raid for the Steelers in the last few seconds of the half meant the score read 10-13 heading into the final 20 minutes.

The only 'all out' of the final came off Mohit Goyat's raid, giving the Puneri Paltan a substantial lead at the start of the second half.

However, this did not deter the young Haryana Steelers, as their raiders entered the action and grabbed as many bonus points as they could to make the contest entertaining.

Pankaj Mohite was the game-changer for the Puneri Paltan, living up to his form to seal victory for his team.

MAKING A COMEBACK AFTER 6-YR HIATUS

BCCI to hold women's red-ball series from March 28

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Women's red-ball cricket will return to India's domestic calendar after six years when the BCCI conducts a Senior Inter Zonal Multi-Day Trophy in Pune from March 28.

The move comes after the Indian women's team's return to Test cricket. The side has played Tests against Australia and England in the recent years. Domestic red ball cricket for women was last held in 2018.

"It is a welcome step taken by BCCI. The national team has started playing Test cricket again and we need the next generation of cricketers to play red ball cricket at the domestic level," former India pacer Amita Sharma told PTI.

"I would also want red ball to be played at the state level and



not just zonal level. Back in the day we had both those events," she added. The Maharashtra

Cricket Association will be hosting the tournament which will feature six teams, representing

East, West, North, South, Central, and North-East zones. They will be competing in a se-