



AAHANA SEEKS MIN'S HELP

Actor Aahana Kumra seeks help of Union Health Minister to get Covid vax certificates for her parents

LEISURE P2



HAPPIEST COUNTRY

For a fourth consecutive year, Finland has been ranked the world's happiest country, a UN report said

INTERNATIONAL P10



SERIES-DECIDER TODAY

After levelling the series with a win in the fourth T20I, India look to seal series against England in final match

SPORTS P12

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He wants a copy of every govt advertisement so that he can know what he is doing for the people

SHORT TAKES

Centre to HC: Block WA's policy update

New Delhi: The Centre Friday urged the Delhi High Court to restrain Facebook-owned WhatsApp from implementing its new privacy policy and terms of service which are to take effect from May 15. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology made the statement in its affidavit filed in response to a petition challenging the new privacy policy of social networking platform WhatsApp.

President arrives in city today

New Delhi: President Ram Nath Kovind will visit Odisha from March 20 to 22, a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan Friday said. He will reach Bhubaneswar Saturday evening. The president will grace the 18th annual convocation of NIT Rourkela Sunday. On the same day, he will inaugurate a super specialty hospital in Rourkela Steel Plant, it said. On March 22, the President will visit the India Oil Foundation Trust Interpretation Centre at Konark, before returning to New Delhi, the statement said. P4

| MARKET WATCH | | |
|--------------|----------|-----------|
| INDEX | | VARIATION |
| SENSEX | 49858.24 | ▲ 641.72 |
| NIFTY | 14744.00 | ▲ 186.10 |
| DOLLAR | 73.00 | ▲ ₹0.01 |
| EURO | 86.17 | ▼ ₹0.43 |
| GOLD | ₹44,900 | ▼ ₹65 |
| SILVER | ₹67,325 | ▼ ₹465 |

| WEATHER | | |
|----------|-------------------------|--------|
| | BHUB | CTK |
| TEMP | | |
| MAX | 39.2°C | 38.8°C |
| MIN | 24.0°C | 22.0°C |
| Humidity | 89% | 82% |
| Rainfall | Nil | Nil |
| Forecast | Fog/mist in the morning | |

Centre will control mines

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 19: The Lok Sabha Friday passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2021, that empowers the Union government to auction mines and issue directions with regard to utilisation of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) funds.

The Bill empowers the Union government to notify the mining area and conduct auction in cases where the state governments fail to notify the area or conduct auction in order to ensure auction of more number of mineral blocks on regular basis for continuous supply of minerals in the country.

Union minister of coal and mines Pralhad Joshi, while moving the Bill, said the country has potential like South Africa and Australia but still imports minerals like gold and coal.

“The reform in the mining sector would generate 55 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities. To enhance mining activity we will allow the private sector with enhanced technology in mineral exploration,” Joshi said.

The Bill also allows the transfer of clearances to the next bidder once the lease period is over. The Union minister said a miner needs around 23 clearances to start mining operations after the allotment of lease. “This will take years together. Now we have decided that these clearances should normally be transferred to the new owner like any other



infrastructure project,” Joshi said.

He also congratulated the Odisha government for its performance in auction of mines and said the state had given several suggestions and the ministry has incorporated them in the amendment Bill.

Meanwhile, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has flagged concerns over some of the amendments which empower the Union government to issue directions with regard to utilisation of DMF funds and to take over the auction process if state governments fail to auction the mines.

BJD parliamentary party leader in the Lower House Pinaki Misra opined that the Bill does tend to give the Union government excessive powers.

Misra said, “The exercise of these

■ The amended Bill empowers the Union government to issue directions with regard to utilisation of District Mineral Foundation funds

■ It also empowers the Centre to take over the auction process if state governments fail to auction mines

powers should be done very sparingly and only in exceptional circumstances and that this should not become an excuse for these powers to be continuously exercised and to take away and whittle down the powers that the state governments have under the Constitution with regard to the mining sector.”

He also flagged concerns over the

Section 9B of the amendment Bill that empowers the Union government to issue directions for utilisation of DMF funds. He said that this provision should be couched as it has the potential to whittle down the powers of the state. However, the BJD supported the Bill in the Lok Sabha and requested the Union minister to take its suggestions on board.

Congress MP from Koraput Saptagiri Ulaka highlighted the condition of mining districts of the state. “Most of the mining areas are occupied by tribal people, who are unskilled. A mining company does not provide employment to the tribal youths and instead hires skilled people from other parts of the country,” Ulaka said.

Paddy to be procured from all listed farmers



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: The six-day long stalemate in the Assembly over the paddy procurement issue came to an end Friday after Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain assured the House that paddy would be procured from all registered farmers in the state till March 31.

As per the instruction of Speaker SN Patro, Swain made a fresh statement in the Assembly on the issue. The minister informed that in the current kharif marketing season, 61.24 lakh tonnes of paddy worth ₹11,441 crore has been procured in the state so far. The procurement process

will continue till March 31, he said.

Swain said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has directed the authorities concerned to ensure that registered farmers did not face problems in selling their produce in the state.

The total paddy procured in this kharif season is 18 per cent higher than last year's kharif season. Till date, 11.50 lakh farmers have sold their paddy to the government against 9.3 lakh last year which indicates more participation of farmers, Swain said.

The minister called upon the MLAs to report if they find any genuine farmer deprived of selling his paddy so that necessary steps can be taken to resolve the issue. The government is taking all possible steps to ensure smooth and hassle-free paddy procurement in the state, Swain added.

However, the minister's statement failed to pacify the Opposition. Leader of Opposition Pradipta Kumar Naik said the government has cheated them and asserted that they would not allow the House to function until all the paddy is procured from the farmers. The BJP members also staged protest in the House for not allowing them to speak during the Zero Hour. Congress legislature party leader Narasingha Mishra sat on a dharna near the Speaker's podium as he was not given more time to speak on the issue. Other party MLAs also joined Mishra. The Speaker adjourned the House multiple times following din.

For how many generations will reservations continue, asks SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: For how many generations would reservations in jobs and education continue, the Supreme Court sought to know during the Maratha quota case hearing Friday and raised concerns over “resultant inequality” in case the overall 50 per cent limit was to be removed.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan was vehemently told by senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Maharashtra, that the Mandal judgement on capping the quota needed a re-look in



changed circumstances.

Arguing in favour of the Maharashtra law granting quota to Marathas, Rohatgi referred to various aspects of the Mandal judgement, also known as Indra Sawhney case, and said the Centre's decision to grant 10 per cent quota to people from economically

weaker sections also breached the 50 per cent cap.

“If there is no 50 per cent or no limit, as you are suggesting, what is the concept of equality then. We will ultimately have to deal with it. What is your reflection on that... What about the resultant inequality. How many generations will

you continue,” observed the bench, which also comprised Justices L Nageswara Rao, S Abdul Nazeer, Hemant Gupta and S Ravindra Bhat.

The bench said 70 years have passed since Independence and the states have been carrying on so many beneficial schemes and “can we accept that no development has taken place, that no backward caste has moved forward”.

It also observed that the purpose of reviewing the Mandal judgement was that those who have come out from backwardness must be eliminated.

ଧାରତ୍ରି | OrissaPOST

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Inaugurator

Shri Naveen Patnaik

Hon'ble CM, Odisha

Chief Guest

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

Hon'ble Union Minister

Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel

Keynote Address

Shri Vishal Dev, IAS

Principal Secretary Tourism, Sports & Youth Services

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ARIES

You are uptight about what is yours and today, you are even less keen on sharing. This possessiveness may have to do with a certain 'someone'. Ganesha says matters regarding love are going forward intensely and your marital life will blossom.

TAURUS

Almost as if crafted by Cervantes himself, you might wake up today feeling passionate and quixotic. Make up and make overs may be on the cards as you will have the urge to be groomed. Once you are done without yourself, you will shower others with attention, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

Even though it is for your own benefit, you will spend the day safeguarding the sentiments of others. Not too uncharacteristic, but unusual nonetheless. For most part of the day, you will be away from your family, mostly on a trip for business or leisure purposes. Today, family takes a backseat and having a successful career will be the only thing on your mind.

CANCER

The workaholic Bull will have more on their plate than they can chew. They will be under so much work pressure that their otherwise robust shoulders may wilt under pressure. Ganesha advises you to take it easy, and learn to say no. Also, this is just a temporary phase and as long as you stay cool, nothing can defeat you.

LEO

Ever been surprised at your own abilities? Today you shall be, says Ganesha. With the perfect blend of amicable gestures and lack of inimical actions, you are poised to become the cynosure of all occasions. The day will bring to the fore your flexible nature, moderate views, and your mature mannerisms in a cocktail that is as heady as the best blend. With a mind set on communal harmony, you are assured to have success coming your way today, foresees Ganesha.

VIRGO

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

LIBRA

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

SCORPIO

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

SAGITTARIUS

Be careful of your words and action. Do not hurt anyone says Ganesha for your Karma will come back to destroy you. Live a simple life without expectations and surrender all your ego, attitude and convictions. Still time to confess your deeds and get solace.

CAPRICORN

Good news for students! If you have been trying your luck for studies abroad, today is an opportune day, says Ganesha. Also, get your priorities straight and see that you achieve them one by one, for only a well-planned move can take you a step closer to your ambition. Those engaged in stock exchange and dealing with shares can expect a fruitful day ahead.

AQUARIUS

Ganesha advises you to make a simple change in your routine and things will work out superbly. You also get recognition and rewards for past achievements. But that does not mean you become complacent, says Ganesha. Get going, as hard work is still the surest way to salvation!

PISCES

Ferdinand the Bull would be the cartoon character that would most aptly describe you today. Calmness will be second nature to you, and wisdom will ooze from your pores. Communal harmony is something dear to your heart, and your amenability will see you achieve it, says Ganesha.



ARMIE BOOKED AS SUSPECT IN RAPE-SEXUAL ASSAULT CASE

Hollywood actor Armie Hammer has been booked as a suspect by Los Angeles Police Department for alleged rape and sexual assault, hours after a 24-year-old woman accused him of rape and physical abuse. A spokesperson for the LAPD told *People* magazine that the 34-year-old actor was booked in a case opened by the LAPD February 3.

WAYNE BRADY ON CO-PARENTING WITH EX-WIFE MANDIE TAKETA

Five-time Emmy Award winning actor Wayne Brady has opened up about co-parenting with his ex-wife Mandie on *The Drew Barrymore Show*. He jokes that if he knew the secret behind having harmony in co-parenting dynamics, he would have sold books.



Aahana seeks Union Health Minister's help for parents



MUMBAI: Actress Aahana Kumra Friday sought the help of Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan to get Covid-19 vaccination certificates for her parents.

Aahana tweeted saying her parents got vaccinated a few days ago but the record shows wrong time, and also she is unable to download the certificate.

"My parents Mr. Sushil Kumar Kumra and Mrs. Suresh Balyan Kumra got vaccinated on 9th March 2021 at the @bkhospital at 10.53 am but the record shows the wrong time and the certificate doesn't download. Can anyone help!?" tweeted the actress.

Commenting on Aahana's tweet, a user wrote: "Better to check again and ask the hospital to show the real data records that written on books. Maybe some misunderstanding happens. Ask the doctors too. @drharshvardhan please see this matter."

To this, she replied tagging Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan: "Yes we have been following up with the centre with no revert from their end. I'm sure this is happening with a lot of people! @drharshvardhan please help!" IANS

Not many TV actors shed their ego: Radhika

MUMBAI: Actress Radhika Madan has made a mark as a Bollywood actress with her roles in *Angrezi Medium*, *Pataakha* and *Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota*. However, before her film debut in 2018, she was a well-known television star. Talking about her transition from television to films, the actress said it was important to shed the ego that comes with television stardom.

"In television, fame comes really quickly, so you get the ego boost really quickly. Once the ego is high up there and you want to start with films, I don't think a lot of people are ready to bring their ego down and start as a student," she told IANS.

Was it easy for her to leave her ego behind? "I wouldn't have survived otherwise. It's a different medium. The dialogues are different, the delivery scenes are different. Now you are sitting a dark room in front of a huge screen in front of you without distraction. The actors' performance needs to be up by a notch to get the attention but in movies even if you blink an eye, you miss the scene," she said. IANS



RANI TO CELEBRATE B'DAY WITH FANS

MUMBAI: Rani Mukerji's birthday celebrations Sunday will include an interaction with her fans.

The actress, who has stayed away from social media all this while, will talk to fans on the official Yash Raj Films Instagram handle.

"Since I'm not on social media, I look forward to spending time with my fans and people, who have been a constant support system for me over the years, through this annual social media interaction," says Rani.

The actress says she has always received love and motivation from fans and she wants to thank them for always being there.

"I'm looking forward to bringing in my birthday with my fans first, even before I celebrate it with my family. Their love and relentless support has motivated me and validated all my film choices. So, this is my way of thanking them for being there and watching my back at every step of my journey in cinema so far," says Rani.

On the work front, Rani will next be seen in the film *Bunty Aur Babli 2*, a follow-up of the 2005 superhit *Bunty Aur Babli*. IANS



'Bhagavad Gita must be part of school curriculum'

MUMBAI: Actress Mouni Roy feels the Bhagavad Gita must be made a part of academic curriculum across India. The actress adds that she turned to the Hindu scripture during lockdown and, having discovered its core value, believes it should be inculcated at school level.

"I read Bhagavad Gita Ka Saar in childhood but didn't understand it until now. See, one of my friends started reading the

Bhagavad Gita and I also joined the class — this is before lockdown — and I didn't make many classes due to hectic schedule. But during lockdown, I was very religious. I think it should be a part of our school curriculum. I genuinely feel that it is more than a religious book. It is '*life ka saar*' (crux of life), eternal knowledge, and it is basic knowledge. If you have a question in your head, the Gita has the answer," said Mouni. Asked if the entertainment

sector needs to inculcate the teachings of the Gita, she replied: "The Gita is needed worldwide, not just in India or Bollywood or School. In India, it could change the orthodox thought process in families. We talk about '*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*'. Instead it should be '*Beta Padhao, Beta Bachao*'. I think society is in need of this knowledge or awareness."

"We literally live in ignorance, and we actually come from a country of the Vedas and the Upanishad, yet we

don't do anything. We are sitting on a gold mine and we don't do anything. The entertainment industry is a stressful place, you don't have the concept of Saturdays and Sundays, a 9-to-5 job, and we are constantly consumed in our minds and thoughts. So, for sure, the Gita is needed here, but having said that I think (be it) the rural, the urban, and the metros, everyone is in dire need of the Bhagavad Gita's teachings," added Mouni. IANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

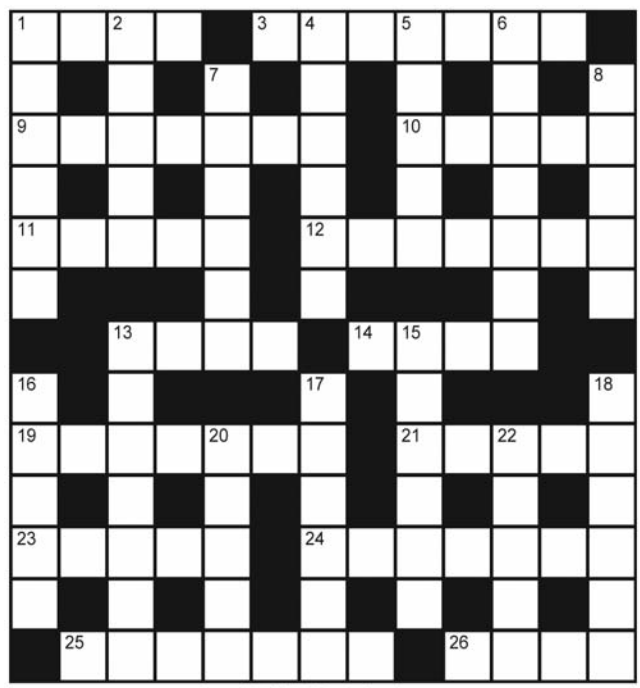


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Tête-à-tête
 - 3 Set apart
 - 9 Ringtail
 - 10 Influence
 - 11 Choral work
 - 12 Foes
 - 13 Mountain pool
 - 14 Feathery scarves
 - 19 Deluxe
 - 21 Title holder
 - 23 Elevators
- Down**
- 24 Crew member
 - 25 Shave wood
 - 26 ___ of Capri
 - 1 Old car deco
 - 2 English race place
 - 4 Vocalist
 - 5 Simoleons
 - 6 Hot spots
 - 7 Baggage handler
 - 8 Secret supply
 - 13 Shakespeare comedy, ___
 - 15 Scents
 - 16 They can be
 - 17 Boardwalk diversion
 - 18 Periphery
 - 20 Strong point
 - 22 Appoints

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 8 | | | | 3 | | | | | | E |
| | | E | | | | A | 5 | | 1 | 7 | 2 |
| 2 | 1 | | | | | | C | 4 | E | 8 | |
| 9 | B | 3 | | | | 2 | | | A | C | 0 |
| | | | | 8 | | C | 1 | | 9 | 6 | |
| 4 | | | 9 | | | D | | | 0 | 8 | 6 |
| | | | | D | 2 | | | 1 | | E | A |
| | D | | | | | | 9 | | 5 | | C |
| | | E | 4 | | | A | | | | | 1 |
| 5 | | 8 | | 6 | | | | | 7 | B | 4 |
| | | | 0 | 6 | | 7 | B | 5 | | C | 4 |
| C | 9 | | B | | | 8 | 7 | | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| A | 2 | | | | | E | D | 5 | | | |
| | E | | 5 | | | | | 0 | | A | |
| | | | C | 3 | | D | 4 | | | | 0 |

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | R | E | E | D | I | T | O | R |
| O | A | Y | C | R | R | E | | |
| V | E | R | A | N | D | A | I | O |
| E | L | A | P | M | G | I | | |
| R | I | S | K | S | T | E | A | R |
| N | T | A | | | E | T | | |
| B | A | B | S | I | T | T | E | R |
| S | N | | N | A | | B | | |
| C | A | T | W | A | L | K | R | O |
| Y | E | E | I | T | O | U | | |
| T | E | N | O | R | | D | | |
| H | N | I | D | R | S | H | | |
| E | R | A | S | E | R | S | E | T |

SUDOKU

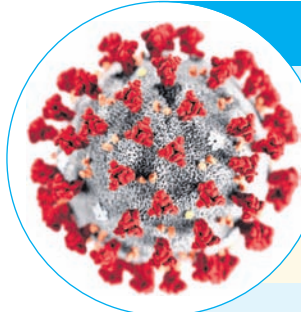
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1 | B | 0 | E | 9 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 7 | C | D |
| 6 | C | 0 | 2 | B | 8 | E | 7 | 9 | 4 | D | A | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 2 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 1 | D | B | A | 0 | 9 | 8 | C | E | 6 | 4 |
| 7 | D | 9 | C | 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | E | 0 | 5 | B | A | 8 |
| 4 | E | 8 | 3 | 5 | A | 6 | C | D | 1 | B | 7 | 0 | 9 | 2 |
| C | 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 1 | B | D | E | 9 | 3 | 2 | A |
| 3 | 8 | D | B | 7 | E | C | 9 | 4 | 2 | A | 1 | 6 | 5 | 0 |
| 9 | 4 | 1 | D | A | 6 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 7 | C | 3 | 8 | E | B |
| B | A | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | D | 8 | E | 5 | 6 | 0 | C | 4 | 9 |
| 0 | 2 | 6 | C | 5 | A | 3 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 5 |
| 8 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 3 | C | 1 | E | 7 | A | 9 | D | 2 | 8 | 6 |
| 1 | 9 | 6 | E | 8 | 7 | 2 | D | A | C | 5 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| E | 3 | A | 6 | 0 | 1 | 9 | B | C | 8 | 2 | 4 | 5 | D | 7 |
| D | 7 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 0 | B | 6 | 5 | 3 | 1 | E | A | 8 | C |
| 5 | B | C | A | D | 2 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 1 | E |

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



BEATING THE HEAT

Girls using umbrellas and stoles to save themselves from scorching sun in Bhubaneswar, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

| | INFECTED | RECOVERED | DEAD |
|--------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| World | 12,25,74,117 | 9,87,85,640 | 27,06,020 |
| India | 1,15,14,331 | 1,10,83,679 | 1,59,370 |
| Odisha | 3,38,599 | 3,35,994 | 1,918 |

Master plan for Dhamra industrial hub

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: Moving a step forward to give a fillip to industrialisation, the state government has decided to develop an industrial hub and township at Dhamra.

This was revealed at a high-level review meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra here Friday.

Mahapatra directed the Bhadrak Collector to protect the land adjoining the port for development of industrial hub and township. Chairman-cum-Managing Director of IDCO, Sanjay Singh, present in the meeting, was advised to acquire the land and develop the sites for industrial use in coming years.

“With quantitative and qualitative growth of Dhamra port, railway and road connectivity and coming in of the LNG Tank near the port, the area is rapidly heading towards a port town. Master planning of the area and protection of the available land would provide further fillip to the port-led industrial development in the area,” Mahapatra said.

The Chief Secretary also directed to do demarcate the high tide line through ground level resurvey of the coastal regulation zone for protection

PORT-BASED EXPANSION



THE CEO OF GOPALPUR PORT REVEALS THAT MECHANISATION OF THE BERTH WOULD BE COMPLETED BY MARCH 2021

■ Chief Secretary directs Bhadrak Collector to protect the land adjoining the ports for development of industrial hub and township

■ IDCO CMD Sanjay Singh was advised to acquire the land and develop the sites for industrial use in coming years

Issues relating to widening of existing roads, additional land required for port expansion, construction airstrip at Dhamra, development of industrial park, development of economic corridor were discussed and resolved in the meeting.

The Gopalpur Port has resumed its operations from 2015 after necessary repairs and renovation. The port was severely affected by cyclone ‘Hudhud’ in 2014. The CEO of Gopalpur Port appraised that the mechanisation of the berth would be completed by March 2021.

Presently, Gopalpur Port has two operational railway sidings. Construction of a railway yard with four operational sidings has been expedited. This would cater to multiple rake handling. Gopalpur Port is now running on operational profit with annual handling of around 5 MMT cargo.

Official sources said these two ports are now providing daily employment to around 4,300 people.

The Chief Secretary directed the departments and district administrations concerned to provide all facilities for rapid growth and expansion of the ports.

The port authorities were also advised to mobilise port-based industrial houses for developing industrial clusters near the ports.

of the eco-system while planning for the development.

Commerce and Transport special secretary Manoj Kumar Mishra said Dhamra port was notified by East Coast Railway in 2011 as a full rake handling point for both inward and outward traffic.

In the meanwhile, Dhamra Port Company Limited (DPCL) has developed three new berths, taking the total berths to five. DPCL has also constructed 62.5 km of rail connectivity from Dhamra to Bhadrak connecting

the main Howrah-Chennai railway line, chief executive officer of DPCL, Subrat Tripathy, said.

He said cargo handling from Dhamra Port has increased manifold during the last 11 years.

The total export and import cargo handling has increased from 5 MMT in the FY 2011-12 to 29.71 MMT in 2019-20. This year, the port has already handled 29.37 MMT cargo by February. The total cargo handling during the current FY is expected to cross 30.5 MMT, sources said.

CURBS ON HOLI CELEBRATIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: With the spike in daily Covid-19 cases, the state government has put restrictions on Holi celebration and other related rituals including Dolayatra in public places throughout the state.

“Holi (March 28 & 29) and their related rituals shall not be observed in public places throughout the state. People may celebrate Holi with family members in their houses only and not in any public places including public roads,” Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra said in an order issued Friday.

The Collectors and municipal commissioners have been advised to impose further restrictions as desirable in consideration of local situations. However, religious rituals in temples will continue as usual with strict adherence of Covid protocols.

Considering the local conditions, the authorities may impose appropriate restriction on entry of devotees into temples and celebrations at temples and religious places, the order said.

Any person found violating this order will be punished as per norms of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and other relevant laws, it said.

As Covid rises, govt asks offices to amplify safety

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: The General Administration (GA) department Friday issued fresh orders asking the offices and commercial establishments to comply with the Covid-19 safety protocol as the cases seem to take a surge in the state.

The department said that it has received reports of resurgence of novel coronavirus cases from different parts of the state. “It is thus imperative that scrupulous implementation of the guidelines issued by the state government in June 2020 is re-emphasised,” the department said in the order.

The department also advised to hold meetings virtually until further orders. “In case physical meeting is necessitated, seating may be arranged in such a way that appropriate physical distance amongst the participants is maintained,” the order said.

The department has mandated all office employees to wear masks for the entire period of their stay in office and declared willful deviation from the order as official indiscipline.

Social distancing, hand washing, regular disinfection of the official premises have been ordered by the department. The norms mandate the employers to ensure cleaning and regular disinfection (using 1 per cent sodium hypochlorite) of frequently touched surface and in common areas.

The GA dept has mandated all office employees to wear masks for the entire period of their stay in office

“Officials feeling physical discomfort and suffering, should be advised to seek proper medical care and if having symptoms of fever/respiratory problem should seek leave on due information to respective reporting authorities. In cases of severity, home-quarantine as per the guidelines may be ensured,” the norms said.

“Older employees having underlying medical conditions and pregnant lady employees may not be exposed to direct public contact. Use of stairs should be encouraged and use of lifts should be avoided as far as possible,” the norms said.

The government orders also asked the employers to ensure hand wash and other facilities near toilets and other areas for use of the employees.

“As much as possible, employees should avoid using other employees’ phones, desks or other work tools and equipment. Clean and disinfect them before and after use. More than four persons in the lift are not allowed. Inside the lift, the persons should stand facing the walls of the lift and not facing each other,” the order said.

2 asphyxiated in City manhole

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: Two labourers engaged in sewerage cleaning work Friday asphyxiated inside a manhole at Brahmeswarpatna in Tankapani road area under Badagada police limits. The deceased were identified as Silup Birua (25) of Mayurbhanj and Sunaram Sardar (55) of Jharkhand.

The labourers were working under a contractor engaged in sewerage cleaning work under the Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board (OWSSB).

According to sources, Sunaram first entered the manhole and died due to the toxic gas inside within a few seconds. Silup, who later went into the manhole to save Sunaram, died later at the hospital.

The supervisor present at the spot called fire services personnel who rescued the labourers and rushed them to Capital hospital. Doctors declared Sunaram brought dead while Silup succumbed later during treatment.

Locals alleged that the labourers were not wearing safety gears before entering the manhole.

Autopsy of the deceased will be carried out Saturday. Police have initiated a probe into the matter after registering a UD case (10/21) in this regard, sources said.

Grand ceremony today to felicitate biz honchos

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: The much-awaited Business Eminence Awards ceremony organised jointly by **Orissa POST** and Odia daily **Dharitri** will be held at Hotel Swosti Premium here, Saturday.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan will be the inaugurator and chief guest of the mega event, respectively. Vishal Dev, Principal Secretary, state tourism, sports & youth services department will deliver the keynote address of the event, which will be attended by several business personalities from different sectors. The award ceremony has been organized by the newspapers to recognise the outstanding work by industrialists from the state, especially during the COVID-19 to keep the economy of the state on track.

These awards will be presented to the leading business leaders

The awards will be conferred on 43 such personalities from the fields of education, real estate, automobiles, spices, healthcare, jewellery, electronics and hospitality sectors



from across the state who have been successful in creating a niche for themselves in the competitive market. The awards recognise their hardwork and consistency in creating a positive business atmosphere in the state overcoming various challenges.

The awards will be conferred on 43 such personalities from the fields of education, real estate, automobiles, spices, healthcare, jewellery, electronics and hospitality sectors among others. The event will witness a galaxy of luminaries from the business world assembling under one roof.



Curtains down on Krushi Odisha-2021

Bhubaneswar: On the concluding day of Krushi Odisha-2021, Agriculture Minister Arun Sahoo said that the five-day mahotsav for farmers saw participation of more than 3,000 farmers from across the state. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had inaugurated Krushi Odisha at Baramunda here March 15. On the concluding day, Governor Ganeshi Lal graced the occasion as the chief guest. The minister said that Krushi Odisha 2021 is a symbol of big agriculture progress in the state. He said that the state saw huge growth in farm production including fish, rice and mushroom, which is the mascot of this year's Krushi Odisha. Farmers learnt about different techniques of farming, new fertilizers and new utensils used for farming. They also interacted with experts from agriculture sector such as scientists from OUAT, NRAI and learn about new types seeds and which crops are more profitable than others.

Silk India exhibition a big draw



Models walk a ramp during the inauguration of Silk India expo in Bhubaneswar, Friday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: Artisans of Orissa Art and Craft Samiti from all over India have come to Bhubaneswar to exhibit their ethnic and traditional pure silk and cotton products for this festive season. The exhibition started in capital city Friday with the theme ‘Silk India – Wedding Collection’.

Weavers from various states are part of this year's exhibition which includes gorgeous Uppadas, Banarasi silks, Gadwals, Dharmavaram, Jamdanis, Jamawars and Sambalpuris. Saris,

dressess, items of silk & cotton, materials for suits and dresses, fashion jewelry and home furnishing designer clothes from various regions of the country are up for grabs.

The exhibition aims to provide shoppers with a kaleidoscope of India's color, diversity and talent. Artisans from 14 handloom weaving States including Assam, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and West Bengal, and designers from metros working in collaboration with the weavers will be displaying more than 50,000 varieties work here. The exhibition-

Weavers from various states are part of this year's exhibition which includes gorgeous Uppadas, Banarasi silks, Gadwals, Dharmavaram, Jamdanis, Jamawars and Sambalpuris


Saris, dresses, items of silk & cotton, materials for suits and dresses, fashion jewelry and home furnishing designer clothes from various regions of the country are up for grabs

cum-sale will continue till 28th March 2021 from 10.30 am to 8.30 pm at the The New Marriion hotel.


The pandemic related guidelines will be strictly followed at the exhibition. Visitors without face mask won't be allowed. Sanitization facilities will be available at the entrance. Also, social distancing will be followed.

The organizer, Manas Acharya said that the objective of the handloom exhibition is to promote weavers and encourage and provide a market to the handloom industry. “Through these exhibitions, we have been able to create good market for the weavers and their handloom woven, even in places where exhibitions are not feasible.”

The exhibition's motive is to get pure silk & cotton products directly from weavers to costumers without merchants in the middle. The Cotton and Silk handloom products on display have a range between Rs 500 and Rs 1,50,000 for exclusive hand crafted saris.







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MPs COLLECTIVELY VOCAL ABOUT STATE’S CONCERNS

POST NEWS NETWORK


New Delhi, March 19: Unlike the first week of the second phase of Budget session which witnessed frequent adjournments, the second week turned out to be much more productive with both houses discussing many important issues.

Odisha’s railway connectivity, mobile and banking related issues were raised by MPs from Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). BJD MPs Anubhav Mohanty and Subhash Chandra Singh and BJP MP Nitesh Ganga Deb raised concern over non-availability of railway services in seven districts of the state. Anubhav and Subhash sought immediate attention as seven districts of the state still lack railway connectivity even after seven decades of independence.

Subhash urged in Rajya Sabha to start a passenger train between Haridaspur and Paradip while Anubhav in Lok Sabha urged government to complete the pending railway projects in the state as soon as possible. BJP MP Nitesh Ganga Deb sought allocation of Rs 500 crore for Talcher-Bimlagarh railway project.

Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka and BJD MP N Bhaskar Rao reminded the Union government of the problems faced by people of

WEEKLY REPORT CARD



Odisha’s railway connectivity, mobile and banking related issues were raised by MPs from Biju Janata Dal, Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party

Odisha due to unavailability of mobile network services. Ulaka stated in Lok Sabha that students in Koraput and Rayagada have to trek up hills for signal to complete their studies with the risk of animal attacks. Similarly, Rao said in Rajya Sabha that 69 gram panchayats are without network.

BJD’s Sujeet Kumar raised the issue of poor banking system in the state and said that around 24 gram panchayats in Kalahandi districts have only one bank. He said, “Around 80,000 people are dependent on one bank branch in 24 gram panchayats of the state.”

Senior BJD MP Bharttruhari Mahtab sought Union government’s intervention in resolving Mahanadi water dispute with Chhattisgarh. He said that even after 19 hearings in Mahanadi tribunal, Odisha has-

n’t gained anything.

BJD’s Rajya Sabha MP Prasanna Acharya urged the Centre to set up fast track courts in every district to deal with crime against women and children. Jagatsinghpur MP Rajashree Mallick and Rajya Sabha MP Amar Patnaik urged the Union government to set up another AIIMS in Sundargarh.

Significantly, this week Odisha MPs asked 155 starred and unstarred questions in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Lok Sabha MPs posed 93 questions to the various ministries while the Rajya Sabha MPs posed 62 questions.



Modernise Cuttack rly station: BJD to Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 19: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Subhash Chandra Singh Friday urged the Ministry of Railways to modernise Cuttack railway station and ensure that major trains pass through it.

Speaking during Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha, Singh highlighted the uniqueness of Cuttack saying that it is not just a district but a judicial, medical, educational and commercial hub of the coastal state. The BJD MP also urged the ministry to take measures for re-development of the station at Naraj.

Singh said that many key trains, including the intercity ones that connect the western part of Odisha with Bhubaneswar, are yet to pass via Cuttack.

“Although four major trains go to Gujarat from Odisha, none of them pass through Cuttack. As a result, people especially plumbers and labourers who are giving their services across the country have to go to Bhubaneswar to catch the trains,” the BJD MP pointed out.

He also said that Cuttack’s second railway station, at Naraj near CDA, is yet to be developed. “No train halts at that station. This apart, Cuttack railway station was accorded a national level status around 10 years ago, but not a single brick has been added to it in all these years,” he added.

Lightning claimed 971 lives in 3 years, says minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: Lightning has claimed 971 human lives in the last three years, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi told Assembly, Friday.

In written reply to a question asked by BJD Legislator Souvic Biswal, the minister said the government has received 971 alleged deaths due to lightning between 2018-19 and 2020-21.

While 340 lightning death cases were reported in 2018-19, the cases increased to 357 in 2019-20. Similarly, 274 alleged lightning deaths were registered during the current financial year (so far), he said.

As per Marndi’s statement, highest 98 persons lost their lives to lightning in Mayurbhanj district during the three years, followed by Ganjam (75), Keonjhar (71), Balasore (63), Sundargarh (52), Nabarangpur (47), Dhenkanal (46) and Cuttack (44).

Gajapati district has reported the lowest six such deaths during the period.

Similarly, during the three years, 27 alleged lightning deaths were registered in Angul, 38 in Bolangir, Bargarh (41), Bhadrak (21), Boudh (7), Deogarh (10), Jagatsinghpur (13), Jajpur (34), Jharsuguda (14), Kalahandi (26), Kandhamal (11), Kendrapara

(36), Khurda (32), Koraput (41) and Malkangiri (14).

Besides, 16 such deaths occurred in Nayagarh district, 12 in Nuapada, 22 in Puri, 20 in Rayagada, 21 in Sambalpur and 14 in Sonepur districts, the minister stated.

Marndi further said that 50 people have been injured in 16 districts due to lightning strike since 2018-19. While 19 persons were injured in 2018-19, 13 were hurt in 2019-20 and 18 this year.

Earth Networks, an international organisation, provides early lightning warning services in more than 50 countries and also provides services to Indian states of West Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

The state government has signed agreement with Earth Networks to provide early warning on lightning. The firm has installed lightning detection sensors in eight districts—Keonjhar, Bolangir, Berhampur, Jeyapore, Rourkela, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Panikoiili, the minister said.

The state would be able to detect lightning from about 200 to 250 km through the sensor. Besides, the state is also getting information on lightning from such sensor installed in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh.

We all are born to worship: Governor

Bhubaneswar: Bhubaneswar Branch of All India Marwari Yuva Manch held its 13th National Convention ‘Abhyuday-Sankalp, Samarpan, Srian’ Friday at Puri. Governor Ganeshi Lal inaugurated the convention. He said that the word service should not just come on our lips. “We all are actually born to worship. Therefore, neither help nor service, the rites of service should also be converted into rituals of worship because somewhere in service there is also egoism. But, egoism ends in the spirit of worship.” Lal said.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

This is for information of all concerned that I, Adwait Charan Biswal, S/o. Late Kapil Charan Biswal & Gomati Biswal, W/o. Adwait Charan Biswal have lost the original R.O.R. (Patta) bearing Plot No. 1276/2341, 1277/2342, 1278/2256/2343, Khata No. 1057/148 of Mouza Gobinda Prasad, Bomikhil. Anyone having received the same & to misuse it, We are not held responsible for it. Share document is not mortgaged/any loan taken against the same.

My CBSE 10th grade sheet cum certificate of performance, bearing Roll No. 6112553, 2015-2016 batch of Delhi Public School, Kalinga has been lost by transit. I am not responsible for any misuse. Jyotirmayee Sahoo, D/o. Mrs. Sabitarani Sahoo, Late Dilip Kumar Sahoo, Purighat, Cuttack.

It is notified for the information that my original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Class XII, Roll No.12602119, issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate- H K Omm Prasad Panda, S/o Harekrushna Panda, At-Motel Chhaka, P.O./Dist.-Bhadrak.



HITTING THE STREETS

Members of various farmer outfits take out a four-wheeler rally from BPIA to Chandikhol to press for fulfilment of their demands, Friday

OP PHOTO

Prez Kovind on three-day visit to Odisha

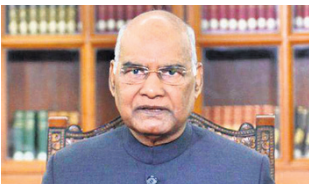
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: President Ram Nath Kovind will reach Bhubaneswar Saturday evening for his three-day Odisha visit beginning March 20. As per the itinerary released by Raj Bhawan, President Kovind will be welcomed by Governor

Ganeshi Lal who will greet him to Raj Bhawan where he will be staying during the trip.

The President will Sunday grace the 18th annual convocation of NIT Rourkela.

He will start his journey from Biju Patnaik International Airport to Jharsuguda airport in IAF BBJ, and then to Rourkela



airstrip in IAF MI17. NIT’s convocation will commence at 11am.

Subsequently, he will inaugurate a super specialty hospital at Rourkela steel plant and return to Raj Bhawan ending the day.

On March 22, President will visit Puri Srimandir and India Oil Foundation Trust Interpretation Centre at Konark before returning to New Delhi.

WASSUP TODAY

BHUBANESWAR

- Business Eminence Awards by Dharitri and Orissa POST, hotel Swosti Premium, 11.30am
- 9th annual festival of Sufiana and devotional music ‘Samarpan-2021’ by Bhubaneswar Music Circle and Odisha Tourism, Rabindra Mandap, 6.30pm
- 6th convocation of Xavier University, old varsity campus, Xavier Square, 5.30pm
- Press meet by Sambhavana, Odisha Union of Journalists’ Bhawan, 4pm
- 13th Kalinga Herbal Mela, Idco Exhibition Ground, 11am
- Pakhala Diwas by Shree Jagannath Sanskriti Parishad, Utkal Rangamancha, 9am onwards

Programmes/announcements for **wassup** today may be sent to opwassup@gmail.com for record, it must also carry the sender’s mobile number for our verification, but not for publication.

FOCUS: ADOLESCENT HEALTH

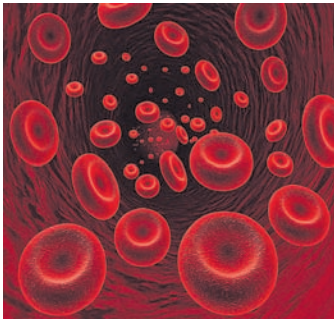
‘Anaemia can impact power of concentration’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: Several health experts from the premier institutes of India Friday spoke at a brainstorming session on adolescent health organised by the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar and other premier developmental agencies virtually.

Several of the doctors and researchers linked anaemia with lower performance of students. “Studies have shown that anaemia in adolescents can potentially reduce their power of concentration. Low nutritional levels can lead to poor productivity and functioning of an adolescent,” said Dr Jugal Kishore, Director (Community Medicine), Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi.

He also said that if anaemic ado-



lescents bear kids, it increases risk of death for both the mother and the child. He also highlighted the rising threat levels of unhealthy and obese teenagers. “Unhealthy teenagers are now on the rise and emerging as a new threat as more number of obesity cases is now being reported. Obesity is a disease in itself and also acts precur-

Studies have shown that anaemia in adolescents can potentially reduce their power of concentration. Low nutritional levels can lead to poor productivity and functioning of an adolescent

JUGAL KISHORE | DIRECTOR (COMMUNITY MEDICINE), SAFDARJUNG HOSPITAL, NEW DELHI

sor to several diseases ranging from diabetes to cancer.”

Monika Nielsen, Chief of Field Office, Unicef Odisha talked about the role of Odisha government in bringing gender parity through government initiatives. “More than 70 per cent of livelihood in Odisha are rural based where access to several important amenities are

limited. The state government has worked well to educate the girl child under the Advika scheme. Now, the government is also planning to include boys under the scheme to help address gender disparities,” she said.

She also said that tackling the issues of new adolescents is different as many of them grew up with access to internet and the massive information surge which was not available earlier, thereby posing challenges to the policy makers.

Dr Vikas Kishore Desai, Director, Urban Health and Climate Resilience Centre of Excellence, Surat talked about several government initiatives aimed at creating awareness among adolescents. She also asked youths to refrain from pondering over routine issues among the teenagers like acne.

JANLA SKELETON MYSTERY

Lady might have died 3-6 months back: Docs

POST NEWS NETWORK

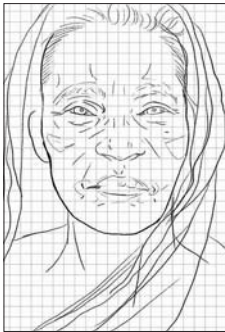
Bhubaneswar, March 19: The Commissionerate Police Friday released a sketch of the unknown woman whose skeleton was recovered from a seized SUV kept in the premises of Janla police outpost February 12. Speaking to media, Bhubaneswar DCP, Umashankar Dash said that the city police recently received the sketch prepared by a software firm from Bangalore.

“We are making the sketch of unknown lady public and will put it up at important public places including police stations across the city. We like to appeal all to share any information related to the deceased lady with the investigating officer and DCP office,” said Dash.

He also shared some details obtained from team of doctors from AIIMS in connection with the woman. As per post mortem report, the lady aged between 35 to 45 years was 164 cm tall. The mal-

nourished woman was suffering from micro-bacterial tuberculosis. The doctors also claimed that the woman had died three to six months before the recovery of her body in February.

Dash also said that the deceased might have gone missing between September and



The sketch released by cops

December, 2020. The lady was wearing four metal bangles on her wrists at the time of her death. Doctors also found the lady wearing a long bottle green coloured sweater.

The autopsy also unveiled that the lady had minor bone fractures in her legs and arms which had healed abnormally due to malnourishment. Her nails were unkempt and ill-

maintained.

“However, the sketch will not match 100 per cent as a photograph due to dearth of information for we have the skeleton only,” said Dash.

The Bangalore firm has been requested to prepare more sketches of lady applying different skin colours and body mass artificially.

Inmate escapes Jamujhari jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: A prisoner has recently managed to escape from Biju Patnaik Open Air Ashram at Jamujhari under Chandaka police limits here.



The escaped prisoner has been identified as Santosh Mirdha alias Munda of Antapalli under Bhatli police limits in Bargarh district.

Sources claimed that Santosh was convicted in murder case and staying at the Ashram.

Jail authorities came to know about his escape during the regular roll call of the inmates Wednesday evening.

The superintended of the open air ashram lodged a complaint in this regard with the Chandaka police Thursday.

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Increase in holding tax triggers fury in Steel City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 19: Days after the state government put on hold a hike in holding tax in Bhubaneswar following protests, a similar hike in holding tax has sparked serious concerns among the denizens, a report said.

The holding tax has been hiked 20 to 50 times per house than what it used to be.

The civic authorities announced to file cases against house owners if the increased holding tax is not paid by March 25. This has left house owners worrying as they have to pay ₹50,000-Rs 60,000 per house as holding tax

People wishing to construct a house and live in Steel City are now repenting their decision. The hike in holding tax is allegedly be a despotic measure of the government when the basic amenities and services provided by the Rourkela Municipal Corporation are not up to mark

The holding tax has been hiked 20 to 50 times per house than what it used to be. The civic authorities announced to file cases against house owners



if the increased holding tax is not paid by March 25. This has left house owners worrying as they have to pay ₹50,000-Rs 60,000 per house as holding tax.

Senior BJP leader and former chairman of Rourkela Municipality Nihar Ray said the recent hike in holding tax has crossed all limits and is more than the draconian Jizya tax levied by the Muslim rulers on Hindu residents.

Reports said people wishing to construct a house and live in Steel City are now repenting their decision. The hike in holding tax seems to be a despotic measure of the government when the basic amenities and services provided by the Rourkela Municipal Corporation are not up to mark.

The civic body on the alibi of

development of Rourkela has dug up roads and drains which has put slum dwellers and denizens into inconvenience. Unhealthy surroundings prevail everywhere while the drainage system has become defunct resulting in mosquito menace in the city. The hike has come as a bolt from the blue when the denizens are yet to recover from the scare of Covid-19.

A similar hike in holding tax in Bhubaneswar had also triggered resentment as stakeholders and political parties opposed the revision. However, the decision was put on hold after the Chief Minister intervened. Ray questioned why the same is not applicable to Rourkela. He warned that his party would take up an agitation if the authorities do not desist from their move.

3 KILLED, 2 HURT AS BIKES COLLIDE IN NAYAGARH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, March 19: Three persons were killed and an identical number critically injured after the two bikes they were travelling on collided head-on near Jagannathpur under Sarankul police limits in Nayagarh district late Thursday night. The deceased have been identified as Krushna Chandra Nayak of Jagannathpur and Shyamasundar Sethi of Patharakata in Nayagarh district.

After getting information about the incident, a team from Sarankul police station reached the spot, rescued the injured and sent them to Sarankul hospital. While undergoing treatment, Krushna Chandra succumbed to injuries. Shyamasundar, who was later shifted to Nayagarh district headquarters hospital, breathed his last while receiving treatment.

Shyamasundar and Dipak Sahu were heading towards Saranakul on their two-wheeler. From the opposite direction, Krushna Chandra and Manmohan Nayak were returning after attending a spiritual programme at Angisingi.

As Krushna and Manmohan were close to their village, their bike had a head-on collision with Shyamasundar's two-wheeler.

Meanwhile, Deepak and Manmohan, who were seriously injured in the collision have been shifted to Bhubaneswar as their condition deteriorated.

FIRE SAFETY



Personnel of the fire department show a demo on fire safety before the students of Govt High School on the premises of MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur, Friday

OP PHOTO

NIT, ISRO ink MoU to set up 'incubation centre'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, March 19: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Bangalore for setting up a Space Technology Incubation Centre (S-TIC), an official of NIT informed Friday.

NIT signed the MoU with ISRO

Thursday after the premier space research organisation agreed to set up an S-TIC on NIT premises in Rourkela. However, NIT's association with ISRO will open up new avenues and opportunities for research and development as well as space start-ups in Odisha.

NIT Rourkela will provide its state-of-the-art laboratories, available facilities and expert faculties for the purpose. The incubation

centre will nurture young academia with innovative research aptitude in the field of space technology and applications, the source added.

The proposed S-TIC in Rourkela will enable start-ups to build applications and products that could be used in future space missions. ISRO will provide an annual grant-in-aid of ₹2 crore for 2 years to NIT Rourkela as seed money for setting up of the STIC.

Wilting disease hits capsicum crop



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, March 19: Rasulpur block in Jajpur district is predominantly an agricultural block where a majority of residents earn their living from cultivation, a report said.

Farmers living in various villages under this block have earned a special name in vegetable cultivation as they always experiment and adopt new techniques and knowledge to better their returns from farming. Recently, the farmers have undertaken capsicum cultivation in their areas in which the return is very profitable.

However, leaf curling and wilting disease has suddenly affected the capsicum cultivation, farmer Sisir Rout said. They were expecting a better harvest and a return ranging from ₹1.5-₹2 lakh per acre when the disease has left them shocked.

Reports said a farmer initially invests ₹25,000-30,000 for planting of 8-10,000 saplings for cultivation in an acre. Later, he needs to invest ₹60,000-70,000 towards medicines and

pesticides and ₹20,000-30,000 on irrigation and harvesting. If all goes well and the climate is conducive, then a farmer can easily harvest 100 quintals of capsicum from an acre and earn around ₹3 lakh if the market rate for per kg of vegetable remains at ₹30. The return will go up if the market rate exceeds ₹30.

Farm scientists held the farmers responsible for the disease. They said the farmers could prevent the disease by making treatment of the soil, seeds and saplings before the cultivation.

When contacted, Lalit Mohanty, agriculture scientist of Krushi Vigyan Kendra in Barchana visited farmers to make treatment of soil, seeds and saplings before undertaking cultivation.

He said farmers could use neem cake powder or chemicals like Trichoderma viride for soil treatment. Similarly, Bavistin fungicide should be used for seed treatment. They should also apply thimethoxam for treatment of saplings after 20-25 days of their plantation.

Angul: Healthcare in comatose state for vacant posts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, March 19: The Handapa primary health centre (PHC) under Kishorenagar block in Angul district has a large number of vacancies. As a result, the health centre is not functioning properly putting close to 35,000 people of seven panchayats to suffering. Among the key positions vacant are doctors, nurses and maintenance staff. The positions are vacant for close to two years. A lone pharmacist is managing the PHC.

The PHC is located alongside the Cuttack-Sambalpur National Highway-55. As it is located on the highway, accident victims frequent the hospital on a regular basis. Residents of Handapa, Bileinali, Nakichi, Thelaknali, Urukula, Kataranga and Kanteikulia panchayats depend on this PHC.

"Left with no choice, people even for a minor cold have to go either to Kishorenagar or the district headquarters hospital which is 50 kilometres away. We have taken the matter up with the higher ups on several occasions. But it seems there is none to listen to us," alleged Arakhita Mishra, a Boishina resident.

"Going to Kishorenagar hospital or DHH is time consuming and expensive. As the PHC has no staff nurse, pregnant women and new mothers are facing a lot of problems. Since there is no one to dress the wounds even first aid cannot be provided to accident victims," alleged others.

Referring to the pathetic condition of the post-mortem facility at the PHC, Handapa sarpanch, Amiya Pradhan said the bodies pile up till a doctor comes from another hospital.

"We do not get the free and cheap medicines supplied by the government as the PHC does not function properly," alleged some local villagers. Demanding appointment of a permanent doctor at the PHC, a memorandum was submitted to the Collector, the CDMO, Athamalik MLA and the Health Minister earlier.

When contacted, CDMO Dr Abhay Kumar Das said, "If the Athamalik MLA gives a written order regarding the appointment of a doctor at the PHC, it will be implemented."

2L Olive Ridley turtles turn up for mass nesting at Gahirmatha



POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, March 19: A total of 2,03,635 Olive Ridley turtles thronged Nasi-1 and Nasi-2 islands of Gahirmatha marine sanctuary for mass nesting from March 8 to March 17, a forest official informed Friday.

According to sources, the mass nesting of the endangered sea turtles had begun March 8 at Gahirmatha in Kendrapara district. Initially, a mini-

mal number of Olive Ridleys had taken part in the mass nesting. On the first day, their number was very few but it increased later.

Around 300 Olive Ridleys laid eggs at Gahirmatha shore on March 8, 800 on March 9, 1,250 on March 10, 7,940 on March 11, 425 on March 12, 210 on March 13, 18,350 on March 14, 32,560 on March 15, 72,600 on March 16 and 69,200 on March 17, a forest official of Kendrapara stated.

THE MASS NESTING OF THE ENDANGERED SEA TURTLES HAD BEGUN MARCH 8 AT GAHIRMATHA IN KENDRAPARA DISTRICT

INITIALLY, A MINIMAL NUMBER OF OLIVE RIDLEYS HAD TAKEN PART IN THE MASS NESTING. ON THE FIRST DAY, THEIR NUMBER WAS VERY FEW BUT IT INCREASED LATER

The department has intensified patrolling along the coast to ensure safety of turtles.

Reports said that mass nesting of Olive Ridleys had started in phases in Babubali island and other adjoining beaches following the arrival of female turtles. Fishing in the sea about 4-km has been banned at and around the Babubali.

Notably, the mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles at Gahirmatha in Kendrapara was first spotted in 1975. The State government has prohibited fishing in the sea up to 20 km from shore and declared it as the first marine sanctuary September 27, 1997.

PARVATI GIRI IRRIGATION PROJECT

Pani panchayat formation in the offing



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh: Balishankara/Sabdega, March 19: Even as work on the Parvati Giri Mega Lift Irrigation project is in progress in Sundargarh, the district administration has laid stress on forming pani panchayats.

Collector Nikhil Pawan Kalyan reviewed the progress of various developmental projects at Balishankara and Sabdega Thursday.

Before the completion of the project, the Collector directed farmers and sarpanchs to form pani panchayats as soon as possible for management and irrigation in the area.

Lift irrigation points under this mega irrigation project are being executed at Katingdiha under Sabdega block and Ghogara and Kusumara under Balishankara block.

The project at Katingdiha will provide irrigational coverage to 2000 hectares of farmland; 500 hectares for Ghogara project and 518 hectares by the Kusumara project.

The Collector during his visit interacted with farmers about the problems affecting agriculture and marketing of the produce.

Agriculture in the region had been suffering for lack of irrigation.

The irrigation problem in the area is going to be over soon with the commissioning of the project. Farmers will get water from the project for crops and vegetables

"The irrigation problem in the area is going to be over soon with the commissioning of the project. Apart from Kharif crops, farmers will avail of water from Parvati Giri Irrigation proj-

Kunakunda ghat to be developed as tourist spot

BALISHANKARA: Kunakunda ghat is a scenic place of Ib river near Ghogara village under Balishankara block in Sundargarh district. Given its prospects for tourism potential, the district administration has initiated steps to develop the place and accord a tourist spot tag to it. Collector Nikhil Pawan Kalyan reviewed the progress of some drinking water projects and that of Parvati Giri Mega Lift Irrigation project. Local people have been demanding a tourism spot status to Kankunda ghat of Ib river which is located in a scenic setting. Thousands of picnickers and people from outside gather here every year. The spot, if developed, can boost tourism in the area, locas said.

ect for vegetables and pulses," said the Collector.

Notably, a total of 209 mega lift irrigation projects have been taken up under the Parvati Giri Mega Irrigation Projects. Nearly 100 projects have been completed while work on other projects is at different stages.

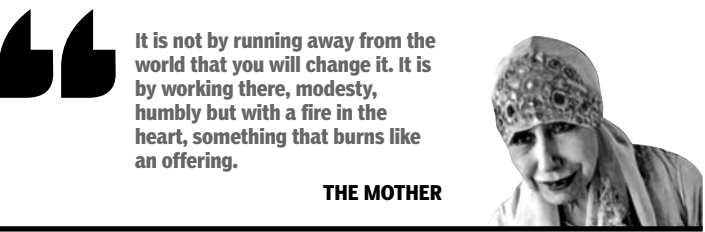
EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. MSM-CW-KBJ-MV-4-21
Name of Work : HIRING OF PICK UP VAN FOR CARRIAGE & WAGON DEPOT AT KANTABANJI FOR A PERIOD OF 02 YEARS.
Approx Cost of the work (₹) : 9,44,880/-
Period of Completion : 24 (Twenty Four) Months from the date of issue of LOA.
Date and time of closing of tender : At 1100 hrs of 07.04.2021.
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.
Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Sambalpur
PR-634/L/20-21

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. C-725
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER P.H. DIVISION, BALANGIR
Ph. No.: (06652-234647), Email ID: eephbgr@yahoo.co.in
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Bid Identification No. EE PH BGR 24/2020-21 Dt.18.03.2021
01. Name of the Work : 5 Nos.
02. Estimated Cost : Rs.8.85 to 38.36 lakhs
03. Period of Completion : 2 (Two) to 4 (Four) Calendar Months
04. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 11.00 A.M. of Dt.24.03.2021 to 5.00 P.M. of Dt.03.04.2021
05. Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal : 5 P.M. of Dt.03.04.2021
06. Date & time of opening of bids : At 11.30 A.M. of Dt.05.04.2021
07. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Balangir, At: Tulsinagar, Dist. - Balangir - 767001
Further details can be seen from the website: <http://tenders.ori.nic.in> or www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./- Executive Engineer P.H. Division, Balangir
OIPR-13005/11/0003/2021

Vidya Daan (3.0)
(Share for Your Care)
PM eVIDYA
An initiative of the Ministry of Education Government of India
CALL FOR ENTRIES
National Council of educational Research and Training (NCERT), invites all CSRs, philanthropic organisations, companies and firms to contribute high quality educational digital contents for dissemination through portals, apps, telecast/broadcast, podcasts through DIKSHA, PM eVIDYA DTH TV channels and FM / Community Radio Stations, under Vidya Daan (3.0) of the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.
For further details, please visit: <https://ciet.nic.in/pages.php?id=pmevidya>
Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET)
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Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016
Website: ciet.nic.in davn 21104/11/0008/2021

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF DISTRICT MEDICAL & PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER, NUAPADA
(District Central Store)
SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE
Notification No. CDM&PHO/06/DMC/2020-21
No. E-639: Sealed tenders are invited from registered firms/suppliers/manufacturers/authorized distributors for supply Drugs and Medical Consumables/Lab. Chemicals & Reagents/Instruments & Equipments to the undersigned. Details regarding items with terms and conditions may be downloaded from District website www.nuapada.nic.in. The tenders should reach the Office of the undersigned by Date: **30.03.2021 upto 05 P.M. through Speed Post/Registered Post/Courier Services only.** The tender paper cost is mentioned in the term & conditions of the tender.
The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
Sd./- Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer, Nuapada
OIPR-10055/11/0027/2021



J&K's governance problem

The merger of the Jammu & Kashmir cadre into the UT cadre, among other things, is meant to address the old problem of the acute shortage of IAS officers in the Union territory. The erstwhile J&K cadre had a stipulated strength of 137 IAS officers but currently has merely 58, of which nine are on Central deputation. The result is that practically every IAS officer in the UT is handling several portfolios, which is not exactly great news for good governance.

The problem has lingered for several years, with the result that officers of the Kashmir Administrative service have long been handling posts reserved for IAS officers, without being promoted to the IAS. For instance, the post of district magistrate (DM) can only be filled by an IAS officer; but in Kashmir, nine out of 20 district magistrates are from the state administrative service.

Apparently, no state administrative service officer has been inducted into the IAS since 2012, which has only accentuated the problem. While in other parts of the country there is a 37 per cent reserved quota for state service officers, in Kashmir it has become 50 per cent!

The cadre merger; the Centre hopes, will allow officers in the AGMUT cadre to be posted in J&K and Ladakh, and vice versa. Until that happens, it is the state service *babus* who will continue to hold most of the administrative positions in the Union Territory.

HIGH PROFILE EXITS

PK Sinha, Senior Advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, quietly put in his papers but cannot stop tongues from wagging. It is being said that the former Cabinet Secretary is being primed for another role by Modi. Among the theories doing the rounds, it is being speculated that Sinha could be the next Lt Governor of either Delhi or Puducherry.

This may not be without precedent. Recall 2019 when Nripendra Misra, the then Principal Secretary to PMO, similarly resigned "for personal reasons" but was soon named chairman of the prestigious Ram temple construction committee.

While Sinha's immediate future is being debated, Mumbai's police commissioner Parambir Singh has been replaced. The cop has been in the headlines after the highly publicised arrest of Republic TV owner Arnab Goswami and the ongoing mystery surrounding the "threat" to Reliance owner Mukesh Ambani and his family. The decision was reportedly taken after several meetings between Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray of the Shiv Sena and Sharad Pawar, chief of the Nationalist Congress Party, which is an ally of the state's ruling coalition. The Maharashtra government seems to want to divert the heat from these high-profile cases and opted for the less controversial Hemant Nagrale.

A DISQUIETING DEPARTURE

Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj has been given an additional charge of Revenue Secretary after the retirement of ABP Pandey last month. However, Pandey's exit hasn't been as quiet as he may have expected. As soon as retired, media reports appeared around the lack of progress in filling more than 400 vacancies of income tax commissioners and others, some of which have been hanging fire since 2019. It was somehow hinted that Pandey did not do enough during his stint as Revenue Secretary to fill these vacancies. Further, sources say, Pandey drew the ire of Odisha-based IT chief commissioner DP Kar, who reportedly wrote to the Prime Minister demanding an enquiry against Pandey.

Yet, others point out that the same Pandey was among the few *babus* who successfully led three crucial institutions of the Modi sarkar - Department of Revenue, Goods and Services Tax Network and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). As Revenue Secretary, Pandey led significant tax reforms undertaken by the government. Clearly, the detractors waited for the man to retire before raising issues that troubled them during his tenure.

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

WISDOM CORNER

- You've gotta dance like there's nobody watching, love like you'll never be hurt, sing like there's nobody listening, and live like it's heaven on earth.

WILLIAM W. PURKEY
- Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.

NEIL GAIMAN
- When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.

HELEN KELLER

WORDSWORTH

Business theatre

This seems to be a common term of trade in the exhibitions field in North America, dating from the late eighties at least, which has also been spotted in Britain. It seems to be a jargon term not well known outside that business. The need to make an effective impact at business presentations to dealers and customers has led to the techniques of the more high-tech end of modern theatre being applied to sales pitches and promotion. Take a line through the average new car launch: complex stage sets, vast lighting grids, high-powered sound systems, actors, dancers, the whole theatrical experience applied to the business of persuasion. So it's not hard to see how the phrase business theatre (less commonly, business theater) came to be applied to this approach.

LOL

Not a porch, it's a Ferrari

A blonde, wanting to earn some money, decided to hire herself out as a handyman-type and started canvassing a wealthy neighborhood. She went to the front door of the first house and asked the owner if he had any jobs for her to do. "Well, you can paint my porch. How much will you charge?" The blonde said "How about 50 dollars?" The man agreed and told her that the paint and other materials that she might need were in the garage.

The man's wife, inside the house, heard the conversation and said to her husband, "Does she realize that the porch goes all the way around the house?" The man replied, "She should, she was standing on it." A short time later, the blonde came to the door to collect her money. "You're finished already?" he asked. "Yes," the blonde answered, "and I had paint left over, so I gave it two coats." Impressed, the man reached in his pocket for the \$50. "And by the way," the blonde added, "it's not a Porch, it's a Ferrari."

TACKLING LEARNING CRISIS

FOCUS EDUCATION



Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg

EDUCATION HAS EMERGED AS ONE OF THE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL CASUALTIES OF THE PANDEMIC. UNESCO ESTIMATES THAT AROUND 1.6 BILLION STUDENTS ACROSS MORE THAN 190 COUNTRIES WERE FORCED OUT OF SCHOOL AT THE PEAK OF THE CRISIS

Education has emerged as one of the most consequential casualties of the pandemic. According to estimates from UNESCO, around 1.6 billion students across more than 190 countries were forced out of school at the peak of the crisis. In higher-income countries, school closures have disproportionately harmed students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, raising concerns about the long-run implications for learning and earnings inequality. There is a visible and widening gap between students with educated parents and access to computers and the internet, and those lacking such resources.

But the picture is even bleaker in low-income settings. In 2019, the World Bank estimated that 53% of children finishing primary school in low- and middle-income countries (and as many as 80% in some low-income countries) still could not read and understand a simple text. In light of these findings, the bank introduced a new concept: "learning poverty."

Along the same lines, the 2018 World Development Report found that in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, three-quarters of third-grade students could not read a basic sentence such as "The name of the dog is Puppy." In rural India, three-quarters of third-grade students could not solve a two-digit subtraction problem such as 46 - 17.

Worse, these learning deficits seem to persist despite impressive growth in average years of schooling in the past two decades, and despite higher enrollments in primary and secondary education in most countries. Simply put, more schooling has not translated into more learning. And this divergence has become so large in some settings as to invite warnings of a global "learning crisis."

As my co-authors and I show in a recent study, this alarming pattern is not confined to a handful of poor countries; it is typical of many middle- and low-income countries. Similarly, a recent study by the Center for Global Development documents learning differences between high- and



By exacerbating a pre-existing "learning crisis," the COVID-19 pandemic has undermined many developing countries' long-term economic prospects. Even in the face of today's fiscal constraints, immediate action to improve educational outcomes has become an urgent priority.

low-income countries that are much larger than differences in years of schooling would predict.

A strategy for tackling the learning crisis must include two components. First, policymakers in countries with low learning levels must be persuaded to place a high priority on education. This may seem obvious, but education's crucial role in enabling economic growth and development is not always so apparent to those who control the resources. Governments often prioritize investments in physical infrastructure over investments in people. Whereas roads and bridges yield fast, tangible returns, and often can help politicians get re-elected, the returns on education tend to materialize only over the long run - and usually after the government that spearheaded them is gone.

To address this problem of incentives, the World Bank's Human Capital Project now computes a Human Capital Index for every country, taking account of learning levels, health, and other important factors. The HCI lays bare the economic cost of inaction. A score of 0.40, for example, indicates that a child born today will enter adulthood (age 18) only 40%

as productive as a peer who receives a complete education and proper health care. By making this information public, the World Bank aims to encourage policymakers to take education (and health) seriously.

The HCI also serves as an important measurement and research function. Because tracking learning progress across countries requires a set of common metrics, the World Bank has built a database of Harmonized Learning Outcomes, comprising data from 164 countries between 2000 and 2017. These measures will be updated every two to three years as new learning metrics become available. Again, in addition to guiding efforts to improve learning, the aim is to spur governments to do more.

But even if governments in developing countries are committed to improving learning, how can they with the meager resources available to them, especially amid the pandemic? This question is addressed by the second component of the strategy: a laser-like focus on cost-effectiveness. Efficient public spending has always been important in low-income, resource-starved settings, but now that the COVID-19 crisis has depleted fis-

cal reserves and dragged many people back into poverty, it is more critical than ever.

To help developing countries identify strategies that deliver the most for the least, the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel, a new initiative spearheaded by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the World Bank, provides an invaluable service. Drawing on an extensive review of empirical evidence from multiple countries, the GEEAP classifies educational interventions into three groups: "Great and good buys"; "Promising but low evidence"; and "Bad buys."

The panel's first report shows that the most cost-effective way to improve learning is to provide information to parents and children on the benefits, costs, and quality of education. Just as it is important for top-level policymakers to take education into their own hands, parents and students must believe in the importance of learning. At the other extreme ("Bad buys"), outlays on new facilities, computers, laptops, tablets, and other equipment yield disappointing results relative to their cost.

This is good news, because it means that progress is feasible without exorbitant expenditures. According to a recent World Bank paper, the most cost-effective interventions deliver the equivalent of three additional years of high-quality schooling (comparable to the highest-performing education systems) for just \$100 per child.

The developing world was in the midst of a learning crisis before COVID-19. Now that the pandemic's end is coming into view, it is imperative that all countries and international institutions maintain their commitment to developing our most important resource: people.

The writer, a former World Bank Group chief economist and editor-in-chief of the American Economic Review, is Professor of Economics at Yale University.

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SPECTRUM ENVIRONMENT

A win for oceans, climate and us



Enric Sala

RECENT RESEARCH FOUND THAT PROTECTING THE RIGHT PLACES IN THE OCEAN WOULD SAFEGUARD UNIQUE AND IRREPLACEABLE MARINE LIFE CURRENTLY AT RISK FROM HUMAN ACTIVITIES

Last November, something happened in the middle of the South Atlantic that was unusual enough to make a local northern rockhopper penguin raise one of its long spiky yellow eyebrows. The tiny archipelago of Tristan da Cunha, a British Overseas Territory, set aside more than 687,000 square kilometers (an area larger than France) of ocean to establish the world's fourth-largest marine protected area (MPA).

Tristan da Cunha hosts the breeding grounds for more than three-quarters of the world's remaining northern rockhoppers, an endangered species. With the archipelago's ecosystem now protected from industrial fishing that targets the penguin's prey, scientists hope that this iconic species can recover.

More than half of all fish stocks in the Southwest Atlantic are overfished, meaning that we are taking them out of the water faster than they can reproduce. Globally, over three-quarters of fish stocks are overfished, and the total catch of wild fish has been declining since the mid-1990s. Excessive fishing is thus harming global food security.

To solve this problem requires recognising that less is more. A

2017 study by the World Bank suggested that reducing fishing efforts by almost half would actually increase the global catch and the economic benefits that it generates. But there is a complementary and more effective way to restore fish populations and preserve marine biodiversity.

Recent research led by the National Geographic Society, published in the scientific journal Nature, found that protecting the right places in the ocean would safeguard unique and irreplaceable marine life currently at risk from human activities, while increasing the supply of seafood.

How much of the ocean we should protect to achieve these multiple benefits depends on how much countries value fishing versus all the other good things that marine life provides. But our study found that, regardless of the preferences of ocean stakeholders, we must protect at least 30% of the global ocean if we are to enjoy the triple win of restored marine life, more seafood, and lower greenhouse-gas emissions.

A growing number of countries have already pledged to conserve 30% of both their land and ocean

waters by 2030 to help stave off a massive extinction event forecast by scientists. From penguins and rhinos to honeybees and medicinal plants, we risk losing one million species at an unprecedented rate during this century. This would be like killing off the dinosaurs, only now the asteroid hitting our planet is us.

Governments are making these "30x30" pledges - along with commitments to respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities - ahead of the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) scheduled to take place in Kunming, China, later this year. At the gathering, leaders are expected to agree on a plan to address the looming extinction crisis.

Tristan da Cunha was not alone in creating an MPA in 2020. The Seychelles, a string of islands in the Indian Ocean, established protected zones covering 30% of its waters. But many more countries need to do the same, because only 7% of the world's ocean is currently under any type of protection.

Expanding protection to at least 30% of the world's land and ocean, and effectively managing those areas, would require an average an-

nual investment of \$140 billion by 2030. That is about one-third of the amount that national governments currently spend on subsidizing nature-destroying activities like mining and oil and gas drilling.

Meeting the 30% goal would also lead to average annual benefits of \$250 billion in increased economic output and at least \$350 billion in improved ecosystem services compared with the status quo. This means that every \$1 invested in protected areas will generate at least \$5 - on top of the importance of stopping the current biodiversity crisis.

To reap these gains, we need to move faster than the rate of overfishing in the high seas, and faster than the pace of destruction of the world's tropical forests. This sprint to embrace and preserve the world's biodiversity quickly and effectively may as well start in Tristan da Cunha with a penguin that has nowhere else to go.

The writer is Explorer-in-Residence at the National Geographic Society.

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Colonial remnants

Sir, India has suffered from colonial remnants. Some practices that continue to exist in several spheres of modern India are direct results of the British hangover. In India, while judges of district courts and magistrate courts are addressed as "Your Honour", judges of high courts are referred to as "Your Lordship" or "My Lord" by members of the bar. The pertinent question here is whether the judges themselves relish to be called as "Lords". The answer lacks clarity because, in January, the Chief Justice of India AS Bobde, in the course of a hearing, took a law student to task for referring to the court as "Your Honour" calling it "incorrect". The Chief Justice said the United States Supreme Court had the tradition of addressing the judges as "Your Honour", obviously meaning in India it is "My Lord". Amid all this, it is equally important to know how the lawyers themselves would like to address the judges. It would be embarrassing if some lawyers continue to use honorifics and some continue with the old tradition. In many states, lawyers converse in the local language. So, exact translation of the honorifics to language of the state would be both tough and awkward. There should be a uniform method to refer to the higher court judges across the country.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Vehicle scrapping policy

Sir, It is true that the older vehicles pollute the environment 10 to 12 times more than fit vehicles and pose a risk to road safety and in the interest of a clean environment and rider and pedestrian safety, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is to introduce the Voluntary Vehicle-Fleet Modernization Program (VVMF) or "Vehicle Scrapping Policy" aimed at creating an eco-system for phasing out of unfit and polluting vehicles. This policy will reduce population of old and defective vehicles, achieve reduction in vehicular air pollutants to fulfill India's climate commitments, improve road and vehicular safety, achieve better fuel efficiency, formalise the currently informal vehicle scrapping industry and boost availability of low-cost raw materials for automotive, steel and electronics industry. The criteria are adapted from international best practices after a comparative study of standards from various countries like Germany, UK, USA and Japan. As conscious citizens we should welcome the government's move in this direction.

Hitesh Kumar Parida, JAJPUR

Punjab orders fresh curbs to check COVID

Punjab Chief Minister Friday ordered massive statewide restrictions with closure of educational institutions till March 31 and restrictions on cinema and mall capacities

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, March 19: Clamping down heavily on the fresh COVID-19 surge, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Friday ordered massive statewide restrictions with closure of educational institutions till March 31 and restrictions on cinema and mall capacities.

The restrictions will come into force from Saturday.

All educational institutions, other than medical and nursing colleges, will remain closed till March 31, with restriction of 50 per cent capacity in cinema halls and not more than 100 persons in a mall at any time. He appealed to the people to keep social activity in their houses to the bare minimum for the next two weeks to break the transmission chain. Not more than 10 visitors should be entertained in homes, he urged.

In the 11 worst-hit districts, a complete ban has been ordered on all social gatherings and related functions, except for funerals, cremations and weddings, which will be allowed with only 20 persons in attendance.

In these districts, which will remain under night curfew from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m, the Chief Minister ordered cinemas, multiplexes, restaurants, malls, etc., to remain closed Sundays, though home deliveries will be allowed subject to night curfew. Industries and essential services will be allowed to function, but



IN BRIEF

- ▶ In the 11 worst-hit districts, a complete ban has been ordered on all social gatherings and related functions, except for funerals, cremations and weddings, which will be allowed with only 20 persons in attendance
- ▶ Industries and essential services will be allowed to function, but barring these, all restrictions shall be strictly enforced, the Chief Minister directed the top civic and police officials in these districts

barring these, all restrictions shall be strictly enforced, the Chief Minister directed the top civic and police officials in these districts.

Also, starting next week, one hour of silence will be observed across the state every Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 12 noon, in memory of those who lost their lives to Covid, with no vehicles to ply during that time.

The Chief Minister asked the district administration to involve the general public, along with market committees, sarpanchs, etc., in this initiative, which will, however, remain voluntary for them.

In the 11 worst affected districts

of Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala, Mohali, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, SBS Nagar, Fatehgarh Sahib, Ropar and Moga, the Chief Minister ordered restrictions on in-person public dealings in the government offices, with citizens to be encouraged to visit offices only for essential services.

Amarinder Singh directed officials to encourage online and virtual modes for grievance redressal, and asked departments concerned to issue necessary instructions for limiting appointments per day for registries, etc.

Though other districts will not be placed under such stringent re-

strictions for now, the Chief Minister ordered immediate reinforcement and strict monitoring of the strategy of micro-containment and containment zones where there are evident clusters.

He made it clear that if necessary, strict curbs will also be imposed in other districts if the situation worsens and COVID protocols and norms are not adhered to be by the people. The situation will be reviewed after two weeks, said the Chief Minister, chairing a meeting of the COVID Task Force with top officials.

Directing health officials to ramp up testing per day to 35,000, the Chief Minister said special focus should be on super spreaders, and government employees, teachers in educational institutions, etc., must be tested routinely.

RAT testing should be stepped up along with RT-PCR testing, he ordered, while directing contact tracing and contact testing to be taken up to 30 per positive person.

KK Talwar, who heads the state government's expert team on COVID, said the surge in cases appeared to be the result of opening of schools and colleges, with young asymptomatic people appearing to be spreading the virus.

There was no evidence as of now to show that the spike was due to the mutants, as only two cases of new strains had been found in Punjab so far.

Kerala Crime Branch files case against ED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, March 19: Even as a fierce electoral battle is on the cards in Kerala, another battle is shaping up between the Centre and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The Crime Branch of the Kerala Police on Friday registered a case against the Enforcement Directorate based on a complaint by two women police officials that they were pressurised by the ED officials to testify that the prime accused Swapna Suresh was asked loaded questions and was pressurised to make her name Vijayan.

An FIR has been filed before a court in Kochi against Kochi ED officials on charges which include conspiracy and other non-bailable offences.

tion manifesto for the previous Assembly elections and every year we came out with a progress report on what happened and now when we look back we can say that of the 600 promises that were made we could accomplish 570," added Vijayan.

Attacking the policies of the partners in the Kerala Model, Vijayan said three Central public sector units are now put up for sale and the Congress never spoke a word against that because it's their policies that the BJP is taking forward.



with the People's Plan, it later became a model that was studied universally. We came out with an elec-

SABARIMALA TEMPLE ISSUE

Congress, NSS hit out at Vijayan

The vexed Sabarimala temple issue, which purportedly cost Kerala's ruling CPI-M heavily in the 2019 LS elections, has again emerged as an issue ahead of the April 6 Assembly polls

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, March 19: The vexed Sabarimala temple issue, which purportedly cost Kerala's ruling CPI-M heavily in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, has again emerged as an issue ahead of the April 6 Assembly polls, with the Congress and the NSS, the powerful organisation of the Hindu Nair community, attacking Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for his "double standards".

After the apex court in 2018 ruled that the temple should be open to women of all ages, lifting the bar on entry of women aged 10 to 50, the Vijayan government floated a renaissance movement, much to the anguish of the believers of Lord Ayyappa, the deity at the Sabarimala temple, and even provided security to two women activists women to pray at the temple.

The temple town then became a battle ground after believers in large members resisted attempts by the police to take women in the hitherto banned age group.

At that point of time, Vijayan and his party stressed that all what they did was to abide by the apex court verdict.

However, Vijayan, in his address to the media Thursday, said that the matter of the Sabarimala temple is before the apex court and once the verdict comes, they will discuss with all concerned and then only decide what needs



to be done.

Incidentally, state Devasom Minister Kadakampally Surendran, who is contesting from his sitting seat at Kazhakkootam, had after beginning his campaign, expressed regret in what happened at the temple town.

It was these statements that riled the NSS and its general secretary Sukumaran Nair Thursday slammed Vijayan, saying that he is taking the people for a ride.

"Vijayan all along then said they are duty-bound to implement the verdict and now he says, when the new verdict comes, he will discuss with all concerned. He is taking people for a ride. Wish to know what his real stand is," he said.

Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said if Vijayan has any shame left, he should immediately apologise to the people and say that their stand then was wrong.

"Surendran has by now apologised, but Vijayan is silent, while (CPI-M chief) Sitaram Yechury says their stand remains the same. Vijayan should first step down from the role of the renaissance leader. He is only taking the believers for a ride," he said. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the CPI-M claimed they will win 19 out of the 20 seats, but they could manage only just one seat and the main reason that was attributed for their rout was the stand taken by them in the Sabarimala temple issue. Meanwhile, Vijayan Thursday said the Sabarimala temple issue is raked up every time when there is an election in Kerala.

With election campaigning picking up, both the Congress and the BJP have raised the Sabarimala issue and it appears that this will be intensified in the coming days.

Control ISI before talk on stability: Punjab CM to Pak General Bajwa

For India to trust Pakistan, the latter will have to do much more than offer an olive branch: Punjab CM Amarinder Singh

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, March 19: Terming Islamabad-sponsored terrorism as the biggest hurdle to normalising relations between the two nations, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Friday said Pakistan Chief of Army Staff, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, should back his rhetoric on peace with India with solid action.

Bajwa should first control his ISI, and then talk about stability in Indo-Pak relations, said the Chief Minister, adding that India cannot afford to go soft with Pakistan till they walk the talk and prove their sincerity with concrete actions.

"Infiltration into India from across the border is still happening; Indian soldiers are being killed at the borders every day. They (Pakistan) are dropping arms and heroin into Punjab via drones every other day. Efforts to create trouble



in my state continue to take place. All this should stop first, only then we can talk peace," said Amarinder Singh.

For India to trust Pakistan, the latter will have to do much more than offer an olive branch, said the Chief Minister, citing his own experience of 1964 as ADC to GOC-in-C, Western Command.

"We used to receive daily reports then of firing and trouble from the western border; as we continue to do now," he said.

It is important for not just Bajwa but the entire Pakistan military apparatus to be on board with the

idea of burying the past and paving the way for peace with India, said Amarinder Singh, adding that it is not New Delhi but Islamabad which has obstructed the path of peace between the two countries.

"Are they all of the same view as shared by General Bajwa? Are they withdrawing all support to terror groups immediately? Have they asked the ISI to back off and leave India alone?"

These, said the Chief Minister, are questions that need to be answered before India can start believing in, and responding to, Pakistan's overtures of peace.

"India is all for peace, all Indians stand for peace, but India cannot compromise on its security and integrity," he stressed, adding that peace cannot be conditional."

Given the way the situation has evolved over the past few months, Pakistan's increasing collusion with China, which has been causing a whole lot of trouble for India on the other border, is a matter of concern, the Chief Minister said.

"If Islamabad seriously wants peace with New Delhi, they should send out the message to Beijing, loud and clear; that Pakistan is not with them in the dangerous escapades at the Line of Actual Control (LAC)," the Chief Minister added.

Vijayan terms Cong-BJP 'secret tie up' as the 'Kerala Model'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, March 19: Reinforcing his statement on a secret tie up between the Congress-led UDF and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Friday termed the alliance as the 'Kerala Model' in politics.

Vijayan said this while speaking to the media in Palakkad, just before starting his election tour in the district.

"Today this 'Kerala Model' tie-up is now spreading canards against

the ruling Left government. If one looks, the Left has taken an alternate route for the overall development, which is not what these two outfits did after the Congress started with the liberalisation policies and now followed by the BJP. We have taken a different route and hence these people are spreading canards against us, but the people of Kerala have seen what has happened in the past five years under us," said Vijayan.

"Just look into the decentralisation process that the Left started



with the People's Plan, it later became a model that was studied universally. We came out with an elec-

LDF releases poll manifesto; assures pension to housewives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, March 19: The Ruling CPI(M) led LDF Friday released its manifesto for the April 6 Assembly elections promising to create 40 lakh new jobs for the youth and "pension for all housewives".

The manifesto was released at the AKG centre here by CPI (M) state secretary-in-charge A Vijayaraghavan, CPI secretary, Kannan Rajendran and other leaders of the Left Democratic Front (LDF), which is seeking a second straight term.

A Rs 5,000 crore package for coastal area development to protect the shores from erosion, increasing the minimum support price for rubber to Rs 250a kg, attaining self-sufficiency in production of eggs, milk and vegetables are among assurances in the manifesto.

In his address on the occasion, Vijayaraghavan said pension would be given to all housewives,



but did not elaborate.

The social security pension would be increased to Rs 2,500 in phases, he added.

Apart from more houses under the LIFE Mission project for the poor, the poll document also assures dwelling units will be constructed for all members of tribal and Scheduled Caste communities, he said.

He claimed that "the biggest achievement" of the LDF government headed by Pinarayi Vijayan was "corruption-free" governance and said the manifesto has been drawn up keeping in mind its aim to retain power.

KERALA STATE ELECTION 2021

KK Shailaja - From teacher to Kerala's COVID fighter-in-chief

AS THE HEALTH MINISTER, KK SHAILAJA LED KERALA'S EFFORTS AGAINST THE OUTBREAK OF NIPAH AND THE COVID PANDEMIC

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, March 19: KK Shailaja, Kerala's Health Minister, starts her day by meeting visitors at her home in Kannur's Mattannur, now her constituency for the April 6 election. Mattannur is a CPI(M) stronghold where state minister EP Jayarajan won with a margin of around 40,000 votes in the last election.

A quick change of sari, a smile and KK Shailaja, 65, is ready for her day's campaign.

At various meeting stops, KK Shailaja speaks of the Left government's efforts to contain the COVID pandemic. "At a time even the most developed countries were helpless with increasing deaths, Kerala has a death rate of 0.4 per cent. This is our biggest achievement. In other states, you've had people go without food for days. In Kerala, government gave every

card-holder free ration," she says.

"This is a CPM bastion. I don't support this party. I support the United Democratic Front (UDF), but Shailaja will win here. She is a good candidate," says Hashim. At his shop, exclusively selling masks, election season is on display. Masks with CPI(M), Congress and BJP symbols are a big draw. "Masks with the CPM logo are most in demand here. This is my business, so I am happy about the sales," Hashim grins. He is yet to get any masks depicting RSP, an ally of the Congress-led UDF, fielded from here in a surprise move.

On the campaign trail, KK Shailaja is juggling her constituency meetings with her ministerial responsibilities. She is contesting for the fourth time and has lost one state election. As the Health Minister, she led Kerala's efforts against the outbreak of Nipah and the COVID pandemic.



She grew up in Mattannur; where she completed school and graduation. KK shailaja was active in Left politics from school. She also met her future husband, K Bhaskaran, during their college time Left activism.

Shailaja went on to teach in a school, and till today, is often known by the nickname "Teacher."

Her husband, currently the Mattannur CPI(M) Area Committee Member, also retired as a teacher more than a decade ago. The couple has two sons in their 30s.

On the campaign trail, Shailaja is juggling her constituency meetings with her ministerial responsibilities. "It is very tiring. After the

day's campaigning I am exhausted. But the official work has to go on. I make sure I speak to my health secretary in the evening and I take calls from my officials - anytime. If they are calling, it could be good news or a bad news, anything..." she says.

She is known as a hands-on minister who likes to dive into issues and work in a team with a calm demeanor. She seems to have won over her own following, regardless of political affiliation.

"I am a retired a navy officer. I don't support any particular party. But I like KK Shailaja. She is an able minister. She should be back as health minister. Someday, may be as Chief Minister too," said a retired officer.

"Just watch. The margin of win is going to be around 60,000 for Shailaja. People in Kerala have seen what a government can do," says a shop owner.

of the day quote

It's a good opportunity for India & Pakistan to set aside hostilities & find a long lasting solution vis-a-vis Kashmir. Both countries have huge military budgets to outdo each other when the same resources can instead be used on common challenges like poverty, education & healthcare

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP LEADER, J&K

Safety remains the focus area of Railway operations and no one should let the guard down on that front. A thorough review and rechecking of all safety measures in the running of trains needs to be taken up by all concerned

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION RAILWAY MINISTER

The people of India must rise to fiercely resist the attempt to impose one thought all over the country. 'BJP Thought' or 'Modi Thought' will wreck the country and turn India into an autocracy

P CHIDAMBARAM | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Major police reshuffle in JK

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir government Friday effected a major police department reshuffle, transferring 25 officers which led to 14 districts getting new police chiefs, days after a similar rejig in the administrative setup. The police and administrative changes come ahead of the summer season that usually sees increased militant activities and law and order problems in the union territory. As many as 10 IPS officers were among the 25 senior personnel transferred which resulted in 14 districts -- seven each in the Kashmir Valley and the Jammu region.

Man injured by lion at Alipore

Kolkata: A man was seriously injured after being attacked by a lion when he entered the animal's enclosure at the Alipore Zoo here Friday, an official said. The unidentified man is undergoing treatment at the SSKM Hospital and his condition is "critical", hospital sources said. The incident happened this morning at around 11.30 am when the man after entering the zoo "somehow managed to climb the boundary wall before jumping over the two netted-boundaries to get inside the enclosure. The lion, which was out of its cage, attacked the man. He has been very badly injured," an official said.

Ex-minister HT Krishnappa dead

Bengaluru: Former Minister H T Krishnappa died at his residence here following a cardiac arrest, his family said Friday. The 91-year-old leader breathed his last Thursday. He was the Minister for Health and Family Welfare in the Ramakrishna Hegde government in 1986.

Three held for poaching nilgais

Chandrapur: Three men were arrested Friday for allegedly poaching two nilgais (Asian antelopes) from the jungles of Chandrapur district in Maharashtra. The three accused allegedly mixed urea in a pond to kill the wild animals in the vicinity of Dongargaon village under Talodhi forest range, the official said. The accused Nimesh Nannaware (37), Pravin Dhanvijay (23) and Channa Rushi (55) from Palasgaon village have confessed to the crime.



It is because of the concerted efforts that Uttar Pradesh has come out of the 'Bimaru' state category and become a capable and efficient state and as a leading economy in the country

YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER OF UP

TEJASHWI TABLES REPORT ON CRIMINAL CASES

LoP in Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Prasad Yadav of the RJD Friday tabled a report which said 18 out of 31 state ministers are facing serious criminal cases. He also said that 44 out of the 54 RJD MLAs are facing criminal cases of serious nature



Bengal BJP in trouble over list



AGENCIES

Kolkata, March 19: The BJP faced widespread protests from local workers after it announced the candidates list for the upcoming West Bengal Assembly election.

The situation went out of control after the saffron camp fielded leaders who had joined the state's BJP union after leaving the ruling Trinamool Congress, barely a few weeks ahead of the crucial contest in the state.

Ashok Lahiri was initially fielded from the north Bengal's Alipurduar seat.

It triggered protests in the district by a section of angry BJP workers who staged an agitation against Lahiri's candidature saying they would not accept any outsider on the seat.

On Thursday, the state unit of the BJP replaced its candidate Lahiri, a former Chief Economic Advisor to the central government. Local BJP leader Suman Kanjilal replaced the noted economist on the seat.

Sources in the BJP said that Lahiri is likely to be fielded from the Balurghat Assembly seat in South Dinajpur district.

The party is yet to announce candidates for five Assembly seats

Shah to release manifesto Sunday

Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah will release the party's manifesto for the West Bengal Assembly elections, Sunday. In a statement, BJP's national media in-charge and Rajya Sabha member Anil Baluni said that Shah will be on a one-day visit to West Bengal on Sunday, where he will launch the party's manifesto and attend various other programmes across the state. "Shah will address a public meeting at Pallighai school ground at Egra and later will chair a meeting with the district and divisional office-bearers of the party at Mecheda in Purba Medinipur district," the statement said.

so far, these are - Balurghat, Rashbehari, Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong.

Similar protests also broke out at several other places across Bengal this week. BJP workers ransacked a party office in Panchla seat in Kolkata's adjoining Howrah district, where Trinamool Congress turncoat Mohitlal Ghati was given the BJP ticket.

Disgruntled BJP activists had also staged protests outside the party's election office at Hastings in Kolkata on Monday and Tuesday (March 15-16).

Angry supporters had also heckled senior party leaders such as Shiv Prakash, Mukul Roy and Arjun Singh during the protest programme.

'Action against Mamata'

The BJP Friday urged the Election Commission to take legal action against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her allegation that Union Home Minister Amit Shah may be influencing the poll watchdog and accused her of running a "smear campaign" against him. A BJP delegation made a representation to the EC in which it submitted a part of her speech at a rally in Bankura in March 16 in which she had lashed out at Shah saying, "Who is running the election commission, Amit Shah, are you running the election commission?" She had alleged that he had been hatching conspiracies sitting in Kolkata, the BJP noted.

Women's participation at protest sites declines

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ghazipur, March 19: As the farmers' protest against the three new farm laws completes four months, the participation of women is gradually decreasing at the various protest sites on the Delhi borders as compared to the initial days.

However, the farmer leaders denied that the numbers have declined as they said that women are now busy in farming. Rajvir Singh Jadaun, president of the Uttar Pradesh unit of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), told IANS: "The number of women at the borders is less because they are not able to come here due to the repressive policies of the government."

"The government is using various tactics to stop people

from coming to the protest sites. The roads leading to the protest sites have been closed. Despite all this, women are coming to participate in the protest. A lot of women have gone back for farming as the male members from the families are here at the protest," he said.

On the declining number of protesters at the protest site, Ghazipur border protest committee spokesperson Jagtar Singh Bajwa said: "The numbers are not declining at all. From the last three days, the number of participants is more than expected. They are not able to gather at one place because the day temperature has increased." However, there are fewer women at the borders who are working as daily wage labourers or belong to a farmer's family.

DUTY FIRST



A sweeper cleans a road in the backdrop of a wall with a painted slogan, in Ahmedabad

PTI PHOTO

Cong will not implement CAA in Assam: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahowal/Chabua/Doomdana (Assam), March 19: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Friday assuring the carrying out of its '5 guarantees' said that the CAA will not be implemented and daily wages of tea workers in Assam will be hiked to Rs 365 within six hours of the party being voted to power in the state.

Gandhi gave the assurances to people from all walks of life - college students, tea workers and at a poll rally on the first day of his visit to the poll-bound state for campaigning.



Congress will ensure in Assam assembly that the Citizenship Amendment Act is not implemented in the state. "In the other states we will stop it (CAA) after we come to power at the national level," he told students of Lahowal College in Dibrugarh district, tea garden workers in Chabua and at a poll rally in Doomdooma.

Assam had witnessed violent agitations in December 2019 when the Act was passed. "We will increase the daily wages of tea workers to Rs 365 from the existing Rs 167 within six hours of coming to power," Gandhi said in an interaction with workers at Dinjoy Tea Estate at Chabua and also at a subsequent election rally.

"Mera naam Narendra Modi nahi hain aur main jhoot nahi bolta (My name is not Narendra Modi and I don't tell lies). Let anybody say what they want but I guarantee that you will get Rs 365 as soon as the government is formed. "I understand that tea garden owners might find this difficult, but let me assure them that this will be done with the help of the government," the Congress leader said.

India crosses 4 cr vax doses figure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: India has scaled a landmark peak in its fight against COVID-19 with the total doses administered in the country having crossed 4 crore till Friday evening, the Union health ministry said.

A total of 4,11,55,978 vaccine doses have been given, as per the provisional report till Friday 7pm. As many as 18,16,161 people were vaccinated during the day. The total figure includes 76,86,920 healthcare workers (HCWs) who have taken the first dose and 47,69,469 HCWs who have taken the second dose, 79,10,529 frontline workers (FLWs) who have been administered the first dose and 23,16,922 FLWs who have been given the second dose.

Besides, 1,53,78,622 beneficiaries more than 60 years old and 30,93,516 individuals aged 45 to 60 with specific co-morbidities have taken the first dose. "Total 18,16,161 vaccine doses were given till 7 pm on Friday, the sixty-third day of nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive. "Out of which 16,43,357 beneficiaries were vaccinated for 1st dose and 1,72,804 HCWs and FLWs



received 2nd dose of vaccine as per the provisional report," the ministry said adding final reports would be completed for the day by late night. The 16,43,357 figure includes 12,00,856 beneficiaries aged above 60 and 3,13,518 individuals aged 45-60 with comorbidities.

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with healthcare workers getting inoculated and vaccination of the frontline workers started from February 2. The next phase of COVID-19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for those who are over 60 years of age and for people aged 45 and above with specified co-morbid conditions.

RAWAT 'APOLOGISES'

But at the same time, he repeated his objection to ripped jeans, saying he has no problem with jeans but wearing 'torn' ones is 'not right'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, March 19: Facing flak over his "ripped jeans" comment, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat Friday said he apologises for the remark if it has hurt anybody.

But at the same time, he repeated his objection to ripped jeans, saying he has no problem with jeans with but wearing "torn"

ones is "not right".

Referring to his remark made earlier this week, Rawat told the media that he had commented that nowadays children bring a costly jean home and then cut it with a scissor.

He had only talked about the environment at home and this applies to him as well, Rawat said. If we inculcate good values and discipline in children, they will never fail in future, the CM added, stressing that he had made the comment at a programme held to keep the children away from intoxicants and other evils.

Describing himself as a man from a rural background, Rawat Friday said whenever his pant was torn in schooldays, he feared that his teacher would scold him.

Due to discipline and values, we used cover it with a patch, he said.

Rawat had drawn flak after an event earlier this week he said youngsters follow strange fashion trends due to a lack of values and consider themselves to be big shots after wearing jeans ripped at the knees. Women also follow such trends.

Rawat then went on to describe the attire of a woman who sat next to him on a flight. He described her as wearing boots, jeans ripped at the knees, bangles in her hands and with two children travelling with her. He also said she runs an NGO, goes out in society and has two children and wondered what values she would give them.

25% of phase-1 Bengal poll candidates declared criminal cases

According to the report, about 48 candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves while 42 have declared serious criminal cases against themselves

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: Forty-eight of the 191 candidates contesting the first phase of assembly elections in West Bengal March 27 or a little over 25 per cent have declared criminal cases against themselves, according to a report by poll rights group Association for Democratic Reforms.

On the education details of candidates, ADR said 96 (50 per cent) candidates have declared their educational qualifications to be between class 5 and 12 while 92 (48 per cent) candidates have declared to be graduates or above. Three candidates are diploma holders.

The West Bengal Election Watch and Association for Democratic

Reforms (ADR) have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of all 191 candidates, who are contesting in the first phase.

According to their report, about 48 (25 per cent) candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves while 42 (22 per cent) have declared serious criminal cases against themselves.

Out of the 191 candidates, the report said 19 (10 per cent) are crorepatists. Among the major parties, 10 (56 per cent) out of 18 candidates analysed from CPI(M), 12 (41 per cent) out of 29 candidates analysed from BJP, 10 (35 per cent) out of 29 candidates analysed from AITC, 2 (33 per cent) out of 6 candidates analysed from Congress, 3 (11 per cent) out of 28 candidates



analysed from SUCI(C) and 1 (9 per cent) out of 11 candidates analysed from BSP have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

Nine (50 per cent) of 18 candidates analysed from CPI(M), 11 (38 per cent) out of 29 candidates analysed from BJP, 8 (28 per cent) out of 29 candidates analysed from

AITC, 1 (17 per cent) out of 6 candidates analysed from Congress, 1 (9 per cent) out of 11 candidates analysed from BSP and 2 (7 per cent) out of 28 candidates analysed from SUCI(C) have declared serious criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits. The report said 12 candidates have declared cases related to crime against women. Out of 12 candidates, 1 candidate has declared cases related to rape (IPC Section-376), eight candidates have declared cases related to murder (IPC Section-302) against themselves and 19 candidates have declared cases related to Attempt to murder (IPC Section-307) against themselves.

Seven (23 per cent) out of 30 constituencies are red alert con-

stituencies by the report. Red alert constituencies are those where three or more contesting candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves.

On financial status of the candidates, the report said among the major parties 9 (31 per cent) out of 29 candidates analysed from AITC, 4 (14 per cent) out of 29 candidates analysed from BJP, 2 (11 per cent) out of 18 candidates analysed from CPI(M), 2 (33 per cent) out of 6 candidates analysed from Congress and 1-1 each candidates from SUCI(C) and BSP have declared assets valued more than Rs 1 crore. "The average of assets per candidate contesting in the West Bengal Assembly Elections 2021 Phase I is Rs 43.77 lakh," the report said.

of the day quote

If Islamabad seriously wants peace with New Delhi, they should send out the message to Beijing, loud and clear, that Pakistan is not with them in the dangerous escapades at the Line of Actual Control (LAC)

AMARINDER SINGH | CM OF PUNJAB

Today, a booklet has been released on the inefficiency of the BJP government. The situation in UP has worsened in the last four years. Uttar Pradesh is at the number one spot in terms of farmer suicides and crime against women

AJAY KUMAR LALLU | UP CONGRESS COMMITTEE PRESIDENT

Once a vial of COVID-19 vaccine is opened the same has to be used within 4 hours. To ensure that full doses of COVID-19 vaccines are utilized, the states and UTs have been guided to efficiently plan vaccination sessions in multiples of vaccine doses per vial

ASHWINI CHOUBEY | MINISTER OF STATE AOR HEALTH

SHORT TAKES

Ch'garh man dies after COVID jab

Mahasamund: A 62-year-old man died in Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district Friday after he took the COVID-19 vaccination a day earlier, officials said. Vibhisan Banjare, a resident of Savitripur, was administered COVID-19 vaccine at the local government health and wellness centre Thursday evening and died this morning, said Dr NK Mandape, Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) of Mahasamund. As per his family, Banjare complained of pain in his shoulder where he got the vaccination injection and was also sweating profusely.

Child mauled by leopard dies

Indore: A one-year-old girl injured in a leopard attack March 11 in Limbodi in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district died Friday while undergoing treatment at a hospital, an official said. Five people, including the child, identified as Bhumika, were injured in the leopard attack, he added. The injuries sustained by Bhumika were multiple and severe and, therefore, she could not be saved, said Dr Amit Bhatt, deputy director, medical services, Choithram Trust Hospital.

11 held for killing man at birthday

New Delhi: As many as eleven persons, including three women, were arrested in connection with the killing of a 32-year-old man in West Delhi's Raghuvir Nagar, police said Friday. Police said that the incident took place Monday night when a birthday bash turned tragic after some neighbours indulged in a scuffle with some of the guests, leaving several injured. One of the injured Rukesh (32), later succumbed to his injuries.

Ex-serviceman held for minor rape bid

Hoshiarpur: An ex-serviceman was arrested Friday for allegedly attempting to rape a two-year-old girl in a village here, police said. Police said the girl's grandmother alleged that the incident took place Thursday when she was playing in the courtyard of their house. The woman said on noticing the rape bid, she tried to free her granddaughter from him but the accused flung her away and fled.



The unplanned lockdown disaster continues to haunt the country. Condolences to the lakhs of families being punished with indescribable pain for GOI's incompetence and myopia

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

JAIL INMATES TO BE JABBED

The Yogi Adityanath government will be launching a special drive to vaccinate all inmates lodged in the state prisons. There are more than 1.16 lakh inmates lodged across 74 jails, including central jails, in UP



PMLA CASE

Mufti denied stay on summons by ED



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: The Delhi High Court Friday refused to stay summons issued to former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh said they are not granting any relief to the PDP leader. The 61-year-old leader, who was released last year after more than a year in detention following the scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, has been served notice to appear at the ED headquarters in the national capital.

The court asked the ED to file a short note of submission along with compilation of judgements relied upon by them before the next date April 16.

It also asked Mufti's counsel to file their short note. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the ED, said Mufti just has to appear before the officials.

The ED, which had earlier summoned Mufti for March 15, had not insisted for her personal appearance at that time. The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister has been now summoned for March 22 by the ED, also represented through Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma and advocate Amit Mahajan. Senior advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan, representing Mufti, urged the court to ask ED not to insist for her personal presence as was done earlier.

To this, the bench said, "We are not giving any stay. We are not granting any relief." Mufti has sought quashing of summons issued to her by the ED in a money laundering case.

Fresh Covid cases at new high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: India saw 39,726 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, the highest single day rise recorded so far this year, taking the nationwide COVID-19 tally to 1,15,14,331, according to Union Health Ministry data updated Friday.

Registering an increase for the ninth day in a row, the total active caseload has reached 2,71,282, which now comprises 2.36 per cent of the total infections, while the recovery rate has further dropped to 96.26 per cent, the data stated.

The daily rise in infections (39,726) was the highest recorded in 110 days, while the death toll increased to 1,59,370 with 154 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed. As many as 41,810 new infections were recorded in a span of 24 hours on November 29.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged



to 1,10,83,679, while the case fatality rate has further to 1.38 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark August 7, 30 lakh

August 23, 40 lakh September 5 and 50 lakh September 16. It went past 60 lakh September 28, 70 lakh October 11, crossed 80 lakh October 29, 90 lakh November 20 and sur-

passed the one-crore mark December 19. According to ICMR, 23,13,70,546 samples have been tested up to March 18 with 10,57,383 samples being tested Thursday.

US Def Secy discusses 'pressing' challenges facing Indo-Pacific

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin Friday expressed his country's strong desire to further deepen strategic ties with India to address the "most pressing" challenges facing the Indo-Pacific as he began a three-day visit to the country that is aimed at expanding cooperation with close partners amidst China's growing assertiveness in the region.

Austin, who arrived here as part of his three-nation first overseas tour as the Defence Secretary, called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed international, regional and bilateral issues of mutual interest, following which Modi tweeted that India and the US are committed to their strategic partnership that is a "force for global good".

The US defence Secretary also held wide-ranging discussions with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and almost all key issues of mutual concerns, including China's aggressive behaviour in the region are learnt to have figured in the deliberations.



After the Prime Minister's discussions with Austin, a PMO statement said the US Defence Secretary reiterated Washington's continued commitment towards strengthening the bilateral defence ties and "expressed strong desire" to further enhance the strategic partnership for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

"Pleasure to meet US Sec Def Lloyd Austin today. Conveyed my best wishes to POTUS Joe Biden.

The visit is seen as a reflection of the Biden administration's strong commitment to its relations with its close allies and partners in the region

India and US are committed to our strategic partnership that is a force for global good," Modi tweeted.

Austin's visit is seen as a reflection of the Joe Biden administration's strong

commitment to ties with its close Asian allies and partners. Austin visited Japan and South Korea before India. "Thrilled to be here in India. The breadth of cooperation between our two nations reflects the significance of our major defense partnership, as we work together to address the most pressing challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region," the US Defence Secretary tweeted.

DISPLAYING DISSENT



Delhi Pradesh Mahila Congress members take part in a protest against Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawats remarks regarding ripped jeans, at Connaught Place in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Guava roots can help fight diabetes: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Prayagraj, March 19: Guava comes packed with many health benefits and now its roots are said to be beneficial in fighting diabetes.

A research scholar of the Department of Chemistry of Naini-based Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHU-ATS) has succeeded in carrying out green synthesis of Silver Nanoparticles, prepared from roots extract of Guavas (Psidium Guajava) that have proved effective as anti-diabetic agents and have also effectively fought off bacterial infection.

According to the research

scholar, Amrita Raj, "Green synthesis is an emerging area in various fields and provides economic and environmental benefits as an alternative to chemical and physical methods. In this method, non-toxic safe reagents which are eco-friendly and safe, are used. This eco-friendly technique incorporates the use of biological agents, plants or microbial agents as reducing and capping agents. Silver nanoparticles (AgNPs) synthesized by green chemistry offer a novel and potential alternative to chemically synthesized Nanoparticles."

Raj, who is pursuing her research under associate Professor Reena Lawrence, has recently pre-



sented her work at an international conference on "Global Approaches in Natural Resource Management for climate-smart Agriculture (GNRSA)-2021" and bagged the "Young Scientist Associate Award" along with "Best oral presentation award".

She further explains, "The green

synthesized of AgNPs has shown best anti-diabetic results with effective inhibition against carbohydrate digestive enzymes. It can be advantageous for heart health, benefit the digestive system, aid weight loss besides being used for anticancer effect, and boost immunity."

Diabetes Mellitus has emerged as an epidemic that has affected millions of people worldwide, including India in the last few decades.

The rapidly developing field of various nanomaterials and nanodevices using AgNPs has increased the possibility for early diagnosis and effective treatment, said Prof. Reena Lawrence.

PETA calls for animal sexual abuse to be 'cognisable offence'

THE GROUP ALSO EMPHASISED ON THE NEED FOR STRONGER PENALTIES FOR CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 19: Reiterating the demand of including sexual assault on animals as cognisable offence in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1990, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India has again appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Giriraj Singh to pay attention to their appeal made February.

This comes in the backdrop of arrest of a man for allegedly raping a dog in Mumbai earlier this month, the animal rights organisation said. The Group also emphasised on the need for stronger penalties for cruelty to animals.

PETA India has been campaigning to strengthen the PCA Act, 1960 and demanding to include sexual assault as cognisable offence under which a police officer has the authority to make an arrest without a warrant and to start an

investigation with or without the permission of a court. It includes heinous crimes.

It had first made this appeal 2018 to the Environment Ministry in the wake of reports that eight men allegedly gang-raped and killed a pregnant goat in the town of Mewat in Nuh district in Haryana, leading to arrests.

In 2019, following complaints filed with local police by a local animal rights activist and PETA India, a First Information Report (FIR) was registered against a man for allegedly raping a female stray dog in Kharghar, Navi Mumbai.

The year before, a complaint by PETA India and another local animal rights activist led to an FIR being filed against a man for allegedly raping a female stray dog in Jaipur.

In 2016, PETA India called for the arrest of Vellore medical students who, according to eyewitnesses, used a blanket to catch a



female bonnet macaque and tied her by the hands, legs, and neck.

They also thrashed her with sticks and belts, impaled her with a sharp object, broke her legs and jaw, raped her with a rod, and killed her. These are just a few examples.

"Violent people often start by abusing animals and then move on to targeting human victims. Therefore, these cases of sexual abuse of animals should worry everyone," said PETA India Associate Manager of Emergency

Response Team Meet Ashar.

"PETA India calls for anyone found harming animals to be punished to the fullest extent of the law and requests that penalties for abusing animals be strengthened for the entire community's safety."

Acts of cruelty to animals indicate a deep mental disturbance. Research in psychology and criminology shows that people who commit acts of cruelty to animals often don't stop there - many move on to hurting humans.

The US Federal Bureau of



Investigation has found that a history of cruelty to animals is one of the traits that regularly appear in its records of serial rapists and murderers.

Examples of such individuals include Ameerul Islam, who used to rape and kill dogs and goats before he was sentenced to death for raping and murdering law student Jisha in Kerala, PETA said.

Convicted criminal Joseph Bateson of Northern Ireland - who allegedly sexually assaulted farmed animals - was found guilty of 17

counts of gross indecency with a child and of indecent assault after he sexually abused a 6-year-old boy.

American criminal Jerry Cook was convicted of cruelty to animals and assault and battery following an incident in which he raped a dog - fatally injuring her in the process - and attacked the owner of a home he was burgling.

Cook's history of violence began nearly two decades earlier, when he was convicted of the first-degree rape of a human.

Previously PETA India had requested that the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Law and Justice retain the criminalisation of bestiality - the sexual assault of an animal by a human being - under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code while amending the wording to decriminalise sexual acts between same-sex human partners and between other consenting adults. That wording has been retained.

of the day quote

I will hold talks with the Sultan of Brunei as chairman of Asean for the possibility of an Asean summit to discuss the crisis in Myanmar



JOKO WIDODO | INDONESIAN PRESIDENT

There is information that some external and internal parties are pushing for a civil war in Lebanon



SAYYED HASSAN NASRALLAH | HEZBOLLAH LEADER

We thank President Biden for sending us these vaccines



ANDRES MANUEL LOPEZ OBRADOR | MEXICO'S PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Drones attack Riyadh oil facility

Dubai: A drone attack struck an oil installation in Saudi Arabia's capital of Riyadh Friday, the Saudi state-run news agency reported, igniting a blaze at the facility deep in the kingdom's territory. The dawn attack caused no injuries or damage, and did not disrupt oil supplies, according to the official Saudi Press Agency. The kingdom is facing more frequent airborne assaults as Saudi-led coalition forces battle Iran-backed Houthi rebels across the southern border in Yemen.

13 killed in Mexico ambush

Mexico City: At least 13 top officials were killed after a police vehicle was ambushed in Mexico, according to authorities. The incident took place Thursday afternoon in Coatepec Harinas town in the state of Mexico, Xinhua news agency reported. According to the state's Security Secretary Rodrigo Martinez-Celis, members of the local police and the prosecutor's office were ambushed while patrolling.

Judge limits proof in Floyd death

Minneapolis: A judge on Friday denied a defence request to delay or move the trial of a former Minneapolis police officer charged in George Floyd's death after the announcement of a USD 27 million settlement for Floyd's family raised concern about a tainted jury. In a separate ruling, Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill said he would allow the jury to hear limited evidence from Floyd's 2019 arrest, but only that pertaining to the cause of Floyd's death in 2020. He acknowledged there are several similarities between the two incidents, including that Floyd swallowed drugs after police confronted him. The rulings were a blow to Derek Chauvin's defense. His attorney, Eric Nelson, had sought to halt or move the trial due to concerns that the settlement announcement had tainted the jury pool.

Samia Tanzania's first woman prez

Dar Es Salaam: Samia Suluhu Hassan, 61, made history Friday when she was sworn in as Tanzania's first female president at State House, the government offices in Dar es Salaam, the country's largest city. Wearing a hijab and holding up a Quran with her right hand, Hassan took the oath of office, administered by Chief Justice Ibrahim Jumawowing, in which she vowed to uphold the East African country's constitution.



Rich Germany is making below-average investments in its future in European terms

ROBERT HABECK | GERMAN WRITER

SHOCKING REPORT

The bushfires that ravaged Australia between 2019 and 2020 were so huge that they spewed as much smoke into the stratosphere as a large volcanic eruption, with serious consequences for the environment, according to a study published Thursday in the journal Science



First US, China talks under Biden turned chaotic

AGENCIES

Washington, March 19: US Secretary of State Tony Blinken has bluntly told China's top diplomats that Beijing's actions have threatened the rules-based order that maintains global stability, as the two sides exchanged sharp rebukes in public during their first in-person high-level meeting since President Joe Biden took office.

The talks involved Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan on the US side, facing off with China's top foreign policy official, Yang Jiechi, and foreign minister Wang Yi.

In his opening remarks to the much-anticipated US-China talks being held in Anchorage, Alaska, Thursday, Blinken said that the issues to be raised by his delegation are relevant not only to the two countries but to others across the region and indeed around the world.



The Biden administration, Blinken asserted, is committed to leading with diplomacy to advance the interests of the United States and to strengthen the rules-based international order.

"That system is not an abstraction. It helps countries resolve differences peacefully, coordinate multilateral efforts effectively, and participate in global commerce with the assurance that everyone is following the same rules," Blinken said.

"The alternative to a rules-based order is a world in which might makes right and winners take all, and that would be a far more violent and unstable world for all of us," he said.

At the first-ever meeting of the Quad last week, US President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said they were committed to promoting a free, open, rules-based order, rooted

in international law to advance security and prosperity and counter threats to both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

"We support the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, democratic values, and territorial integrity," the top leaders of the US, India, Australia and Japan said in a joint statement, amidst China's aggressive actions in the strategic Indo-Pacific.

Blinken said the meeting was an opportunity to discuss key priorities, both domestic and global, so that China can better understand the Biden administration's intentions and approach. The relations between the US and China are at an all-time low. The two countries are currently engaged in a bitter confrontation over various issues, including trade, Beijing's aggressive military moves in the disputed South China Sea and human rights

in Hong Kong and Xinjiang region.

"We'll also discuss our deep concerns with actions by China, including in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Taiwan, cyber attacks on the United States, and economic coercion toward our allies," Blinken said.

"Each of these actions threatens the rules-based order that maintains global stability. That's why they're not merely internal matters and why we feel an obligation to raise these issues here today," Blinken said. America's relationship with China will be competitive where it should be, collaborative where it can be, adversarial where it must be, he said.

Yang, Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs of the ruling Communist Party of China, fought back by asserting that China does not follow what is advocated by a small number of countries of the so-called "rules-based" international order.

GOLDEN HOUR



A man is silhouetted in front of a rainbow in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia

PTI PHOTO

Countries resume AstraZeneca shots

REUTERS

Amsterdam/London, March 19: Nearly a dozen countries resumed use of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 shots on Friday as EU and British regulators said the benefits outweighed any risks after reports of rare instances of blood clotting that temporarily halted inoculations.



The EMA came to what it called a clear conclusion that the vax's benefits in protecting people from covid related death or hospitalisation outweighed the possible risks

After the EMA move, others also sought to reinforce confidence in AstraZeneca's vaccine, which is seen globally as an important asset due to its relatively easy storage and transport requirements and inexpensive price, compared to mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer and Moderna. "What we really should be focusing on is that this

The end of suspensions will kick off a test of public confidence, both in the shot and in drug regulators whose conclusions are under unprecedented scrutiny, as virus variants spread and the global death toll, now at nearly 2.7 million, rises. Indonesia joined Germany, France and others in re-administering the shots after they suspended vaccinations on reports of around 30 cases of rare brain blood clots, after millions of injections, that sent scientists and governments scrambling to determine if there was a link.

Still, EMA said a link between rare events of blood clots in the brain and the shot could not be definitively ruled out and that it will continue its scrutiny, along with the British Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). "This is a safe and effective vaccine," EMA director Emer Cooke told a briefing Thursday. "If it were me, I would be vaccinated tomorrow."

The EMA said it would update its guidance on the vaccine to include an explanation for patients about the potential risks and information for healthcare professionals, to help people recognise instances when they may need to seek medical assistance following a vaccination.

is incredibly reassuring. The processes are working, the safety monitoring that we all expect from our authorities is happening," Andrew Pollard, who runs the Oxford Vaccine Group, told BBC radio, after both regulators said vaccinations could continue after reports of blood clots. "We do need to continue to monitor safety, but in the end it's the virus we're fighting, not the vaccines." Oxford University is partnered with AstraZeneca on the vaccine.

Germany resumed administering the AstraZeneca vaccine from Friday morning, while French Prime Minister Jean Castex said he would seek to promote a similar resumption in his country by getting the shot himself Friday. Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi said Italy would follow suit, echoing sentiments from Cyprus, Latvia and Lithuania.

Spain will resume inoculations from Wednesday. Canada also gave its backing to the vaccine. Britain's MHRA is investigating five cases of the rare brain blood clot that had been reported out of 11 million shots administered in the UK. It said it would investigate reports of clots in the cerebral veins (sinus vein thrombosis, or CSVT) occurring together with lowered platelets soon after vaccination.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

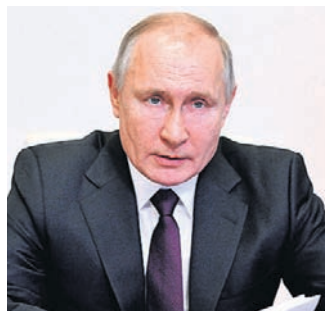
Moscow, March 19: The Kremlin said Friday that President Vladimir Putin's offer to speak by phone with US President Joe Biden was intended to prevent bilateral ties from completely falling apart over the American's remark that the Russian leader was a killer.

Putin made it clear that "it makes sense to have a talk to maintain Russia-U.S. Relations instead of trading barbs," and he wanted to make it public to help defuse tensions

over Biden's "very bad remarks," said his spokesman, Dmitry Peskov.

In an interview broadcast Wednesday, Biden replied "I do" when asked if he thought Putin was a "killer." Russia responded by recalling its ambassador in Washington for consultations and Putin on Thursday pointed at the US History of slavery, slaughtering Native Americans and the atomic bombing of Japan in World War II in an "it-takes-one-to-know-one" response.

At the same time, Putin noted



that Russia would still cooperate with the United States where and

when it supports Moscow's interests, adding that "a lot of honest and decent people in the U.S. Want to have peace and friendship with Russia." He proposed the phone call with Biden in the next few days to discuss the coronavirus pandemic, regional conflicts and other issues, and he suggested that the conversation be open to the public.

Peskov said Putin's offer to make the call public was intended to prevent Biden's statement from inflicting irreparable damage to the already-frayed ties.

UN launches 1st online platform on migration

AGENCIES

United Nations, March 19: The UN Network on Migration has launched its first online platform to share "knowledge, expertise, good practices and initiatives" on migration-related issues, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said.

The platform, named Migration Network Hub, aims to be a community tool for use by the UN member states, the IOM said in a statement Thursday.



The tool was designed to encourage online discussions, and resource and publication-sharing

and its users can attend webinars, the IOM said, adding that later this year, "governments will have access to migration-related services and support", Xinhua news agency reported.

"The launch of the hub is a milestone as it allows us to work better together, learn from each other's experiences and exchange ideas on how to foster the implementation of the Compact at all levels," said Antonio Vitorino, coordinator of the UN Network on Migration.

US House passes Bills offering Dreamers path to citizenship

AGENCIES

Washington, March 19: The US House of Representatives has passed two key bills that would create a pathway to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants, some migrant farmworkers and children whose parents immigrated legally to the country, like those under the H-1B visa programme.

The passage of the American Dream and Promise Act of 2021, by the House on Thursday by 228-197 votes, was welcomed by the President Joe Biden, who described it as a critical first step in reforming the country's immigration system. It will provide much-needed relief to Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders and Dreamers, young people who came here as children and know no other country, Biden said.

"I support this bill, and commend the House of Representatives for passing this important legislation," Biden said in a statement. Dreamers are basically undocumented immigrants who enter the US as children with parents. There are nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants, including over 500,000 from India, according to a policy document issued by the Biden campaign in November last. The H-1B visa, the most sought after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Finland retains title as world's happiest country

Once again, the top spots were dominated by European countries -- with Denmark coming second, followed by Switzerland, Iceland and the Netherlands

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Helsinki, Finland, March 19: For a fourth consecutive year and despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Finland has been ranked the world's happiest country, a UN report said Friday.

The researchers behind the World Happiness report, now in its ninth year, used Gallup data asking people in 149 countries to rate their own happiness, also taking into account measures such as GDP, social support, personal freedom and levels of corruption to give each nation a happiness score, which is an average of the past three years.

Once again, the top spots were dominated by European countries -- with Denmark coming second, followed by Switzerland, Iceland and the Netherlands.

New Zealand, falling one place to ninth, was again the only non-European nation in the top ten.

Other climbers included Germany, up from 17th to 13th, and France, rising two to 21st.

The UK, meanwhile, fell from 13th to 17th place, while the US fell one spot to 19th.

African nations Lesotho, Botswana, Rwanda and Zimbabwe came at the bottom of the table, but ahead of Afghanistan which was classed as the world's unhappiest nation this year.

The authors also compared this year's data to previous years' averages to gauge the impact of the pandemic, and found "significantly higher frequency of negative emotions" in just over a third of the countries.

But positive emotions increased



in 22 countries, and "surprisingly there was not, on average, a decline in well-being when measured by people's own evaluation of their lives," John Helliwell, one of the report's compilers, said in a statement.

"One possible explanation is that people see Covid-19 as a common, outside threat affecting everybody and that this has generated a greater

sense of solidarity and fellow-feeling."

Author Jeffrey Sachs meanwhile warned that "we need urgently to learn from Covid-19," adding that "we must aim for wellbeing rather than mere wealth."

Finland, which throughout the health crisis has reported some of Europe's lowest incidences of the coronavirus, "ranked very high on

the measures of mutual trust that have helped to protect lives and livelihoods during the pandemic," the authors said.

Finland's top spot in the happiness list has previously been met with raised eyebrows in the country whose population of 5.5 million is said to shy away from spontaneous demonstrations of joy, valuing instead the quiet and solitude of the country's vast forests and thousands of lakes.

The northern country's long dark winters were reputed to be behind high levels of alcoholism and suicide, but a decade-long public health drive has helped cut rates by more than half. Finland's residents enjoy a high quality of life, security and public services, with rates of inequality and poverty among the lowest of all OECD countries.

of the day quote

Ficci supports effective implementation of FDI policy. Necessary clarification in terms of policy could be issued so as to enhance transparency



UDAY SHANKAR | PRESIDENT, FICCI

India Inc needs to focus on inclusive growth and should join hands with the government in its aspirational programs and initiatives



RAJIV KUMAR | VICE CHAIRMAN, NITI AAYOG

It might take at least 3-6 more months to resume short-haul international operations within the sub-continent based on bilateral government approvals. While global rollout of the vaccine has begun in full swing, resumption of regular international air travel is still some time away



VINOD KANNAN | CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, VISTARA

SHORT TAKES

HDFC's MSME book grows 30%

Mumbai: HDFC Bank's MSME book grew 30% y-o-y to cross the ₹2-lakh-crore mark as of December-end, mainly boosted by the pandemic-induced ECLGS under which it disbursed over ₹23,000 crore. The growth is also driven by a renewed push towards customers in semi-urban and rural areas, the bank said. In December 2019, HDFC's MSME book stood at ₹1.4 lakh crore, which has grown by over ₹60,000 crore to ₹2.01,758 crore by December quarter, giving it a 10.6% share system-wide MSME lending.

e-Comm talks in progress: Govt

New Delhi: The government Friday said detailed discussions are being held to finalise a national e-commerce policy, a move aimed at promoting growth of the sector. In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash said a draft e-commerce policy was placed in public domain February 23, 2019, for public consultations.

DFI Bill to be introduced in LS

New Delhi: The government will next week introduce in the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) Bill 2021 in Lok Sabha to pave way for setting up of a government-owned DFI to fund infra projects. The Union Cabinet earlier this week had approved a budget proposal of setting up a Development Finance Institution (DFI), which will have tax benefits to enable fund raising from investors.

Tata Motors enters 'healthcare'

New Delhi: Tata Motors Friday said it has launched a patient transport ambulance, designed specifically for healthcare mobility in the economy ambulance segment. The Magic Express ambulance is designed to support medical and health related services, which assumes significance especially during the pandemic, Tata Motors said. The compact dimensions of the vehicle enables easy manoeuvrability on Indian roads, resulting in speedy movement of patients requiring emergency care, thereby saving lives, it added.

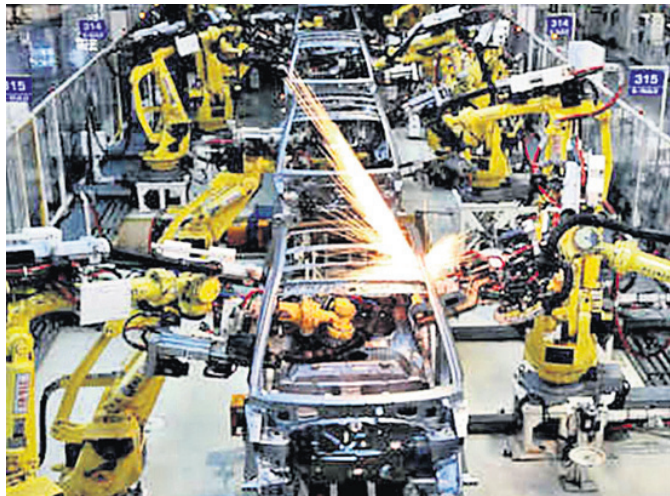


“With their impact at scale, cities are our best bet to plan, develop and build a renewable future. But all too often their potential for transformation remains massively underused

RANA ADIB | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, REN21

Economy may grow at 12% in 2021: Moody's

A stronger than expected December quarter GDP growth of 0.4% following a 7.5% contraction in the previous three months has turned India's near-term prospects more favourable



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: India's economy is likely to grow by 12% in 2021 following a 7.1% contraction last year, as near-term prospects have turned more favourable, Moody's Analytics said.

A stronger than expected December quarter GDP growth of 0.4% following a 7.5% contraction in the previous three months has turned India's near-term prospects more favourable, it said.

Domestic and external demand has been on the mend since the easing of restrictions, which has led to improved manufacturing output in recent months.

"We expect private consumption and nonresidential investment to materially pick up over the next few quarters and strengthen the domestic demand revival in 2021," it said. Moody's saw real GDP growth of 12% in the 2021 calendar year, partially due to a low base-year comparison.

"This forecast is equivalent to real GDP, in level terms, growing by 4.4% above pre-Covid-19 levels (as of March 2020) by the end of 2021, or equivalently, by 5.7% above the GDP level in December 2020 by the end of 2021," it said.

It said monetary and fiscal policy settings will remain conducive to growth.

"We do not expect any additional rate cuts this year below the current 4% at which the benchmark repurchase rate is being maintained," it said. It saw some addi-

tional fiscal support being mobilised during the second half of the year, depending on the softness in domestic spending.

Direct forms of fiscal support such as income tax cuts, however, are less likely in the current setting.

"We expect the budget for fiscal 2021-2022 to drive the annual fiscal deficit to nearly 7% of GDP," it said. "It includes additional expenditure on infrastructure development, and the associated benefits in the form of employment creation should accrue over the coming quarters."

Core inflation is likely to see a more controlled rise in 2021, although food-price or fuel-driven inflation can become a recurring factor, weighing on household disposable income.

Moody's Analytics said a strengthening second wave of Covid-19 remains the key risk to recovery in 2021.

"The good news is that the resurgence appears to be limited to just a few states, which should increase the chances of containing the spread at an early stage," it said.

"Our baseline forecasts assume that state governments are likely to adopt a targeted approach through limited-duration curfews and shutdowns if the situation deteriorates rather than large-scale shutdowns of the kind seen during the first wave."

Vaccinations hold the key to sustaining domestic recovery. Total vaccinations crossed the 35 million mark by March 16.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 19: Air travel will now become a little expensive as the government has decided to increase the lower limit on airfares by 5% amid rising aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri Friday

The upper limit on airfares will remain as it is for now. Just a month back, the Centre had increased the lower and upper limits on domestic airfares by 10-30 per cent due to rising ATF prices.

While announcing resumption of scheduled domestic flights in May last year, the Aviation Ministry had placed limits on airfares through seven bands classified on the basis of flight duration.

The first band consists of flights having less than 40-minute duration and its lower limit has been increased to ₹2,310 on Friday. The lower limit for the highest band of flights having duration of 180-210 minutes was further hiked to ₹7,560.

Mercedes-Benz India launches new E-Class

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pune, March 19: India's leading luxury car manufacturer Mercedes-Benz today bolstered its strong presence in the luxury saloon segment with the launch of the new E-Class. The new E-Class debuts with comprehensive changes on exterior styling and design, significant interior updates along with the integration of latest new-generation NTG 6 telematics, industry benchmark MBUX, making it more dynamic and intelligent than ever before. The E-Class is launched in three variants E 200, E 220 d and E 350 d. The new model features an all-new front fascia with new headlamps, new grille design, new bumpers, new split tail lamps. E 350 d is extremely sporty with the new AMG Line, diamond grill and AMG alloys. The interiors enriched with refreshed appointments, new generation steering wheel, latest telematics including NTG6 MBUX head unit with touchscreen.

The E-Class is tech-laden featuring 2021 'Mercedes me connect' with Alexa, Google Home integration and Parking location POIs on navigation system. The E-Class intelligently blends driving per-



"There has been a continuous rise in price of ATF so it has been decided to increase the lower fare band by 5% keeping the upper fare band unchanged," Puri tweeted. "We may open the sector for 100% operations when daily passenger traffic crosses 3.5 lakhs on 3 occasions in a month."

Currently, the airlines are permitted to operate not more than 80 per cent of their per-COVID domestic flights.

"Last few days have seen a decline in the number of air passengers largely due to restrictions & imposition of compulsory RT-PCR test by various states. Due to this we

Government to increase the lower limit on airfares by 5% amid rising aviation turbine fuel prices

have decided to retain the permissible limit to 80% of schedule," Puri added.

The government had taken the decision to impose lower and upper limits on airfares while resuming domestic services in May last year in order to ensure that the financially-hit airlines are able to survive as well as passengers are not charged exorbitantly.

The aviation sector has been significantly impacted due to the travel restrictions imposed in India and other countries in view of the coronavirus pandemic. All Indian carriers last year took cost-cutting measures like pay cuts, leave without pay and firing of employees.

Digital transactions at SBI up 67%: Khara

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 19: The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has seen a perceptible increase in the number transactions happening at its multiple digital channels, with the percentage moving from 60% in the pre-pandemic period to 67% currently, Chairman Dinesh Khara said.

The rise in the number of digital transactions at the bank was largely driven by pick up in e-commerce during the pandemic-induced lockdown, which restricted movement, he said.

"When e-commerce picked up, it was actually the digital channels we are offering that got wider cur-



rency and acceptability. That is one of the reasons our digital transactions have gone as high as 67% now.

"I think it is a phenomenal number, considering the fact that we are a bank which is serving all kinds of customers - digitally savvy and not digitally savvy," Khara said.

BIZ BUZZ

Samsung launches Galaxy A52, A72

Bhubaneswar: Samsung has launched a new range of exciting Galaxy A Series smartphones at its global event called 'Galaxy Awesome Unpacked'. Galaxy A Series smartphones are known for great display, awesome camera and long-lasting battery life. Galaxy A is one of Samsung's most popular smartphone series in India. Globally too, Galaxy A Series has been hugely successful.



MSDS imparts 'safe driving' skills to 1.5mn

Bhubaneswar: Maruti Suzuki Driving School (MSDS), India's leading driving training school, has successfully trained more than 1.5 million applicants in safe driving. MSDS was created with the core endeavour of making Indian roads safer, it has introduced global standards for quality driving training. MSDS has persistently set benchmarks through its advanced training methodology that includes state-of-the-art driving simulators, and carefully designed practical & theoretical courses. Shashank Srivastava, Executive Director (Marketing & Sales), MSIL said, "MSDS has grown to become India's leading professional driving school chain with over 492 facilities in 238 cities across India. The MSDS network has around 1400 certified and qualified expert trainers. At MSDS, our focus is to inculcate safe & responsible road behaviour in each applicant while imparting safe driving skills with 360° knowledge about the vehicle basic maintenance and emergency handling techniques."



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 19: Indian Metals Public Charitable Trust (IMPACT), the charitable wing of IMFA in partnership with Swabhimana, the State Disability Information and Resource Centre has conducted an empowering program to distribute standing wheelchairs and laptops to people with disabilities from different parts of Odisha.

Sulochana Das, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Odisha was the chief guest on this occasion. Paramita Panda, Trustee, IMPACT, Vice Chairman-MD of UMSL and Sruti Mohapatra, Founder & CEO Swabhimana, was also present at the event.



Mohapatra praised Panda for her consistent support in providing scholarships to meritorious students with disabilities for the past ten years. She highlighted the need

for assistive devices like standing wheelchairs, educational aids like laptops for people with disabilities.

On the other hand, Das spoke about the commitment of the government towards the empowerment and development of people with disabilities. She also elaborated on the activities being taken up by the office of SCPD in this direction.

The standing wheelchairs developed in an incubation lab in IIT were distributed to five deserving persons and the laptops to meritorious students. Kamalkant Nayak, (with a spinal cord injury), from Puri district, who is the first disabled marathon runner from Odisha, and the first wheelchair tennis player from the state were felicitated.

Consumer confidence declines in March: Survey

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 19: The extended run of the pandemic with a surge in Covid cases in several parts of the globe seems to have shaken consumer confidence that had build up in the beginning of 2021.

According to the March 2021 wave of the monthly Refinitiv-Ipsos Primary Consumer Sentiment Index (PCSI) for India, consumer confidence has declined by 0.8 percentage points over February 2021. The monthly PCSI, which is driven by the aggregation of the four weighted sub-indices is a mixed bag.

While The PCSI Employment Confidence ("Jobs") Sub-Index has moved up 1.2 percentage points; the PCSI Current Personal Financial

Conditions ("Current Conditions") Sub-Index is down by 2.5 percentage points.

Besides, the PCSI Investment Climate ("Investment") Sub-Index is down by 3.0 percentage points and the PCSI Economic Expectations ("Expectations") Sub Index, is same as last month (unchanged).

The index clearly brings out that while opening up of the economy post lockdown has certainly helped to give a boost to economic activity and improved employment opportunities, investment still remains sluggish as demand conditions are picking up slowly while extended run of the pandemic is still making investors jittery of putting their money in projects.

Moreover, salary cuts and job



losses during the lockdown period is still continuing in some sectors, preventing a build up of confidence levels. Moreover, rising prices in wake of higher inflation have re-

duced the pricing power of consumers.

Amit Adarkar, CEO, Ipsos in India, said, "The economy is in the recovery mode and the job mar-

“The economy is in the recovery mode and the job market has started to look up after a long hiatus, but the rising inflation is a strain on daily expenses and savings - due to the high cost of living and high fuel prices. And the common man is feeling the pinch

AMIT ADARKAR, CEO | IPSOS IN INDIA

ket has started to look up after a long hiatus, but the rising inflation is a strain on daily expenses and savings - due to the high cost of living and high fuel prices. And the common man is feeling the pinch. With the pandemic still around and the

second wave rearing its head, consumers will choose to be discreet with their expenses and tread with caution."

"Over the last 6-7 months, we have seen a steady recovery in consumer confidence, but the downturn in March is worrying."

IIP contraction in January 2021, CPI-based/ retail inflation accelerating to 5.03% after falling to a 16-month low in January, stock markets falling from their recent high are pointing to the hard times not being over, yet and this reflects in reduced consumer confidence.

The findings are of an Ipsos online poll conducted February 19 - March 5, 2021. For this survey, a sample of 500 adults from Ipsos' India online panel aged 16-64, were interviewed online.

With the series locked at 2-2, India and England lock horns in the T20I series-decider today

Battle for supremacy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, March 19: Having outsmarted England in challenging conditions, a confident India will back themselves to win the series-decider here, Saturday and take another firm step towards finalising their core for the T20 World Cup.

India, who went into the series with a fresh and fearless approach in the shortest format, find themselves well-placed in their preparations for the mega event at home later this year, irrespective of what happens in the fifth game.

The Virat Kohli-led side, which did not have the depth earlier to attack in all situations, finds itself full of 'x-factor' with the emergence of Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav, whose willow bludgeoned the England bowlers, making it a dream debut Friday.

His innings at No.3 was pure delight and left even the likes of Kohli 'stunned', reinforcing the role of IPL in providing polished talent to the national team. It was not a surprise that Suryakumar found a place in the squad for the upcoming ODI series.

"It's not easy to walk in at three in your first game and we all were stunned. He stamped his authority and allowed the likes of Shreyas, Hardik and Pant to do their job. I am a fan of these youngsters," said

Kohli referring to Suryakumar.

With Kishan and Suryakumar making massive impact in their maiden series, Haryana all-rounder Rahul Tewatia is the only one in the squad left to make his debut and that could happen Saturday.

Another big plus for India in the series has been Hardik Pandya contributing with the ball regularly. He was among the star bowlers Thursday, taking two wickets for 16 runs in four overs.

Leggie Rahul Chahar, playing in place of Yuzvendra Chahal, also did a decent job while Washington Sundar had a rare off day. India will now be hoping KL Rahul fires at the top, having showed some form in the previous game following scores of 1, 0, 0.

Kohli must have got a lot of satisfaction out of the fact that India were able to put up a big score and defend with the dew around in the night. It was the first time in the series that the team batting first went on to win the game.

England, on the other hand, will expect Jos Buttler and world's number one batsman Dawid Malan to show more consistency with the bat. The pace duo of Jofra Archer and Mark Wood have been impressive but they have not got a lot of support from Chris Jordan, who leaked most runs in the fourth T20.



KOHLI QUESTIONS 'SOFT SIGNAL'

AHMEDABAD: Indian captain Virat Kohli Thursday questioned the concept of requiring 'conclusive proofs' to overturn a 'soft signal' of the field umpires, saying that rules should be made simpler so that teams do not suffer in high-stake games.

During the fourth T20I against England here, which India won by eight runs, there were at least two dismissals that benefitted England for want of conclusive proofs. Asked about the incidents at the post-match presentation, Kohli went back to a Test match against England, which preceded the T20I series.

"There was an instance during the Test series when I was next to Jinks (Ajinkya Rahane) and he clearly caught the ball but he wasn't sure so we went upstairs. If it



is a half and half effort and the fielder is in doubt, there is no way the umpire from square leg can see it clearly.

"The soft signal becomes that important and it becomes tricky. Where there should be conclusive proof? I don't know why there can't

be an 'I don't know' call with the umpires as well. It is similar to umpire's call as well. "These are decisions that can change the course of the game, especially in these big games. We were on the receiving side today, and tomorrow it could be some other team."

Suryakumar Yadav was unlucky to have been given out in the 14th over after repeated replays of Dawid Malan's catch off Sam Curran by the TV umpire. A part of the ball seemed to have touched the ground but the TV umpire did not overturn the on-field umpire's decision (soft signal) due to a lack of conclusive proof.

Washington Sundar was also given out in the last over after repeated replays by the TV umpire to see if Adil Rashid had touched the ropes with his back heel while taking the catch failed to get a conclusive evidence.

The Indian captain said the rules should be made simple by 'ironing out' the grey areas. "Keep the game really simple and linear. It isn't ideal in high pressure games and have a lot of clarity on the field."

KRISHNA, KRUNAL, SURYA INCLUDED FOR ODIs vs ENG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 19: Karnataka pacer M Prasidh Krishna, all-rounder Krunal Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav earned their maiden ODI call-up Friday as selectors named them in India's 18-member squad for the three-match series against England. All three ODIs will be played in Pune, starting March 23.

Krishna and Krunal have been rewarded for their good performances in the recently held Vijay Hazare Trophy while Suryakumar's selection was not a surprise given his stupendous T20 debut in the fourth T20 against England.

Krishna, who has been on the radar for a while and has also earned Virat Kohli's praise, took 14 wickets in the domestic 50-over competition while Krunal, who has played 18 T20s, earned his maiden ODI call-up by scoring two hundreds and as many fifties in five games for Baroda.

THE SQUAD

Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant (wk), KL Rahul (wk), Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Krunal Pandya, Washington Sundar, T Natarajan, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna and Shardul Thakur.

Stupmer-batsman Rishabh Pant and pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar are back in the side and so is Washington Sundar. In the absence of the rested Jasprit Bumrah, who recently got married, and injured Mohammad Shami, the Bhuvi will lead the pace attack. Left-arm pacer T Natarajan has regained fitness and therefore finds a place in the squad following an impressive outing in Australia.



BAYERN FACE PSG IN UCL QUARTERS

THE Champions League quarterfinals draw set up mouth-watering contests as defending champions Bayern Munich to take on French giants PSG in a replay of last season's final. In another blockbuster face-off, Spanish powerhouses Real Madrid will lock horns with Premier League side Liverpool, while Manchester City to face Erling Haaland's Borussia Dortmund. However, Chelsea drew comparatively an easy opposition as they face Portuguese side Porto, who stunned Juventus in the round of 16.

In the Europa League quarterfinals, Manchester United will face La Liga side Granada, while Arsenal will take on Slavia Prague. Ajax play Roma, while Dinamo Zagreb have been drawn against Villarreal.

ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI (BAYERN)
KYLIAN MBAPPE (PSG)



Lakshya crashes out of All England C'ship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, March 19: Indian ace Lakshya Sen crashed out of the All England Open Championships quarterfinals after losing to Mark Caljouw of the Netherlands 17-21, 21-16, 17-21 here, Friday. The match, which lasted 55 minutes, saw the end of Indian challenge in men's singles.

The women's doubles pairing of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy also bowed out of the tournament following their defeat in straight games to the Netherlands' Selena Piek and Cheryl Seinen in the quarterfinals.

The World No.30 Indian pairing went down 22-24, 12-21 to 24th-ranked duo of Selena and Cheryl in 39 minutes. Ashwini and Sikki had defeated 13th ranked duo of Bulgarian sisters Gabriela Stoeva and Stefani Stoeva 21-17, 21-10 in just 33 minutes in the second-round match Thursday night.

World No.10 men's doubles pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, seeded sixth, had crashed out of the event after losing 16-21, 21-11, 17-21 to Denmark's Kim Astrup and Anders Skarup Rasmussen in the second round. It



was their second consecutive defeat against the World No.13 combine, having lost to them at Swiss Open earlier this month.

In the men's singles, Sameer Verma too suffered a second successive loss to third seed Anders Antonson of Denmark, going down 20-22, 10-21 in the second round.

The mixed pairing of Dhruv Kapila and Meghana Jakkampudi also bowed out after losing 19-21, 8-21 to Niclas Nohr and Amalie Magelund of Denmark.

Caljouw, who had defeated Sen once before, claimed the first set 21-17 in 17 minutes. Sen, 19, bounced back in the second game, opening up a lead of 11-6 and later sealing it 21-16 to stay alive in the contest. The World No.36 Caljouw, however, won the last game 21-17 to clinch the match.

Man Utd, Arsenal march on, while Spurs suffer exit

ASSOCIATED PRESS


Milan, March 19: Paul Pogba returned from injury to score the winner as Manchester United beat AC Milan 1-0 to reach the Europa League quarterfinals, while Mislav Orsic netted a hat trick as Dinamo Zagreb stunned Tottenham 3-0 to eliminate the London team.

Pogba was brought on at halftime and had an immediate impact as he scored two minutes later to help United secure a 2-1 aggregate victory. Arsenal, Roma, Ajax and Villarreal all went through as well.

Orsic completed his hat-trick with the winner in extra time as Dinamo Zagreb overturned a 0-2 deficit from the first leg to reach the quarterfinals 3-2 on aggregate.


Arsenal advanced despite a 0-1 loss at home to Olympiakos, progressing 3-2 on aggregate. After a tight first half, Youssef El-Arabi, who also scored in the first leg, weaved through the box to score and give the Greek side hope after 51 minutes. Ousseynou Ba was sent off for a second booking seven minutes from time.

Roma cruised through after a 2-1 win over Shakhtar Donetsk in Kiev completed a 5-1 victory on aggregate. It was equally comfortable for Ajax, who won 2-0 at Young Boys to progress 5-0 on aggregate. Villarreal earned a second straight 2-0 win over Dynamo Kyiv, while fellow Spanish team Granada advanced 3-2 on aggregate despite losing 2-1 at Molde. Slavia Prague won 2-0 at Scottish champion Rangers. The Czech team progressed 3-1 on aggregate.



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