



FOR A NOBLE CAUSE

Actor Rakul Preet Singh is all excited after walking the ramp as a showstopper for an annual charity fashion show

LEISURE P2



RETALIATORY MOVE

China imposes trade and investment sanctions on Lockheed Martin for supplying weapons to Taiwan

INTERNATIONAL P10



BALARAM NO MORE

Indian football great & Asian Games gold medallist Tulsidas Baram breathes his last after prolonged illness

SPORTS P12

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SHORT TAKES

ADANI'S ₹7K CRORE DEAL FALLS THROUGH

NEW DELHI: Adani Power Ltd's ₹7,017-crore deal to buy thermal power assets of DB Power has failed after the initial pact expired. "We wish to inform that the long stop date under the Memorandum of Understanding dated August 18, 2022, has expired," Adani Power said in a regulatory filing Thursday. Earlier in August 2022, Adani Power had informed the bourses that it has agreed to acquire DB Power Ltd., which owns and operates a running 2x600 MW thermal power plant at district Janjgir Champa in Chhattisgarh. Despite four extension of dates, Adani Power failed to go through the deal. **P11**

FATHER, MINOR SON DIE IN ROAD MISHAP

NUAPADA: In a tragic incident, a motorcyclist and his five-year-old son were killed Thursday in a road accident on Biju Expressway at Lakhana locality in Nuapada district. The deceased persons have been identified as Kamal Patakinara (35) and his son Dipak Patakinara (five) of Michhapali village. Eyewitnesses said that a speeding truck hit the motorcycle on which the duo was travelling and both father and son died on the spot. Police said that the driver has been detained and the truck seized

I-T 'SURVEY' AT BBC OFFICES FINALLY ENDS

NEW DELHI: The Income Tax department's marathon 'surveys' at BBC's offices ended Thursday, after clocking over 58 hours in total, as officials prepared an inventory of financial data from select staffers and collected digital and paper data. Sources said that the operation which began at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) offices in Delhi and Mumbai around 11.30am Tuesday has ended at both the places. Tax authorities have made an inventory of the available stock, recorded the statement of some staffers and have impounded some documents. A BBC staffer in Delhi said they cooperated with the survey and were broadcasting their news like usual. **P9**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The administration has clarified, 'B' doesn't stand for 'Brahminical'

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
SENSEX	61319.51	▲	44.42
NIFTY	18035.85	▲	20.00
DOLLAR	82.78	▲	₹0.13
EURO	88.23	▼	₹0.21
GOLD	₹56,006	▼	₹120
SILVER	₹65,181	▼	₹240

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	33.8°C	32.2°C
MIN	16.6°C	17.8°C
Humidity	86%	91%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather most likely	



IN WORSHIP MODE: Volunteers polish metallic snake idols Thursday at the Astasambhu temple in Chandini Chowk area of Cuttack ahead of a festival, Saturday

1,000 cold storages in state soon: Agri Secy

Chief Minister harps on importance of technology-based farming in the agriculture sector to increase production

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said Thursday at the three-day 'Krushi Odisha 2023' programme here that technology-led development is a must in the agriculture sector. More importantly however, was the announcement by Agriculture & Farmers Empowerment department principal secretary Arabinda Padhee who announced that 1,000 additional cold storage facilities will come up in the state soon. Each storage facility will have a capacity of 10-15 metric tonne and will be spread across all the 30 districts of Odisha and the facilities will be powered by solar energy, he added.

Lack of cold storage facilities has been a headache for Odisha farmers. Only a few days back, mustard farmers in Jaleswar had told this newspaper that they were being forced into distress sale due to the absence of cold storage facilities. Similar complaints have been voiced from other districts also. So Padhee's announcement will certainly usher



(From left): Agriculture Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain, CM Naveen Patnaik, Arabinda Padhee and Subroto Bagchi at the 'Krushi Odisha 2023' programme in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

Cold storages to come up in all 30 districts
The facilities will run on solar power with capacities of 10-15 MT each

in new hope for farmers.

Earlier after inaugurating the programme, Patnaik emphasised on technological intervention in the farm sector and said that the government is focusing on technology-led development. He urged farmers to adopt new machinery and equipment to make Odisha an agriculture developed state.

'Krushi Odisha 2023' is being organised by the Department of

Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment jointly with FICCI. Patnaik while highlighting Odisha's transition from being a food deficit state to a surplus one said, "We have been supplying rice to the whole nation. Our 'KALIA scheme' ensured income security for farmers and to increase agricultural productivity our government continue to focus on farm mechanisation." **Contd...P4**

Sweta suicide: Live-in partner held

■ Police said they could not arrest Soumyajeet earlier as he had been granted protection by the Orissa High Court

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Commissionerate Police arrested Thursday the estranged boyfriend of software engineer Sweta Utkal Kumari for abetting the latter's suicide in August last year. Sweta died by suicide by hanging herself with a stole from the ceiling fan of her room at an apartment in Sailshree Vihar locality under Chandrasekharapur police limits August 19, 2022.



Soumyajeet Mohapatra

Police arrested the deceased techie's boyfriend, Soumyajeet Mohapatra from his residence at Sambalpur and brought him here. He was produced before the court which sent him to judicial custody. Based on the complaint lodged by the family members, police

registered a case (No 283/22) and started investigation. Police examined the call detail records (CDR) of the victim and her boyfriend, the statements of the couple's friends and family members.

It came to fore during the probe that the couple were in a live-in relationship till 2021 before Soumyajeet shifted to the hostel of a management college where he got admission for MBA. The accused allegedly kept physical relationship with the victim with false assurances of marriage.

However, their relationship soured after Soumyajeet shifted to the hostel. Sweta tried to save the relationship but in vain. A mentally disturbed Sweta failed to bear the break-up and betrayal by her boyfriend. **Contd...P4**

More time for asset list

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The state government has extended the timeline for submission of property statements by its employees for the year, 2022, by two months. The General Administration & Public Grievances department has issued a circular to all departments, RDCs and Collectors about the decision. As per the Odisha Government Servants' Conduct (Amendment) Rule, 2021, every government ser-

vant from the level of Group A to Group D is required to make a true and complete declaration of all his assets including movable and immovable, and the value thereof as on the 1st January every year on-line in the HRMS portal. The details are to be submitted on or before January 31 of that particular year. As such, all government staff were supposed to furnish details by January 31, 2023. However, since many have failed to do so, the deadline has been extended to March 31.

MP'S KUNO TO GET 12 NEW CHEETAHS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Twelve cheetahs will be flown into India February 18 from South Africa, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said Thursday. Under the ambitious 'Cheetah Reintroduction Programme', Prime Minister Narendra Modi had released September 17 last year; the first batch of eight spotted felines – five females and three males – from Namibia into a quarantine enclosure at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. Presently, the eight cheetahs at Kuno are killing a prey every three-four days and are in good health, officials said.

"A C-17 aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) left the country Thursday morning to bring the 12 cheetahs from South Africa. Ten quarantine enclosures have been created at the Kuno National Park for these felines," Yadav said at a press conference here.

The cheetah is the only large carnivore that got completely wiped out from India and the last spotted feline died in 1948 in the Sal forests of Chhattisgarh's Koriya district.

India and South Africa had in January signed an MoU to transport cheetahs from the African country and reintroduce them in Kuno. A majority of the world's 7,000 cheetahs live in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

Heartthrob of millions Raquel Welch dies

THE ACTOR HOWEVER, CONSIDERED HERSELF MORE THAN JUST A SEX SYMBOL AS SHE BROUGHT UP TWO KIDS SINGLE-HANDEDLY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Feb 16: Raquel Welch, whose emergence from the sea in a skimpy, furry bikini in the film *One Million Years BC* set pulses racing and hearts rapidly beating has died. She was 82. It was this film which gave Welch sex symbol status throughout the 1960s and '70s. Welch died early Wednesday after a brief illness, according to her agent, Stephen LaManna.

Welch's breakthrough came in 1966's campy prehistoric flick *One Million Years BC* despite having a grand total of three lines. Clad in a brown doeskin bikini, she successfully evaded pterodactyls but not the notice of the public.

"I just thought it was a goofy dinosaur epic we'd be able to sweep under the carpet one day," Welch told this agency in an interview in 1981. "Wrong. It turned out that I was the Bo Derek of the season, the lady in the loin cloth about whom everyone said, 'My God,



what a bod' and they expected me to disappear overnight."

Welch did not, playing 'Lust' for the comedy team of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore in their film *Bedazzled* in 1967 and playing a secret agent in the sexy spy spoof *Fathom* that same year.

Her curves and beauty captured pop culture attention, with 'Playboy'

crowning her the 'most desired woman' of the 1970s, despite never being completely naked in the magazine.

In 2013, Welch graced the No. 2 spot on *Men's Health's* 'Hottest Women of All Time' list. In the film *The Shawshank Redemption*, a poster of Welch covers an escape tunnel — the last of three that character Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins)

used after Rita Hayworth and Marilyn Monroe. In addition to acting, Welch was a singer and dancer. She surprised many critics — and won positive reviews — when she starred in the 1981 musical *Woman of the Year* on Broadway, replacing a vacationing Lauren Bacall. Welch however felt that she was much more than just a sex symbol.

HIT RAQUEL MOVIES	
NAME	YEAR
One Million Years BC	1966
Fantastic Voyage	1966
Bedazzled	1967
Fathom	1967
100 Rifles	1969
Hannie Caulder	1971
The Three Musketeers	1973
Legally Blonde	2001
How to be a Latin Lover	2017

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today you will feel like displaying your power. If you find that people are awestruck when you pass by, take it that your labours are doing the trick. Otherwise, take it that you have to get things in better order. Ganesha says either ways you have more work to do.

TAURUS

This day, Ganesha sees you brimming with pep and vigour. You'll be feeling playful and frisky and will want to amuse yourself, keep others amused. You are likely to hang out with old friends and cronies and will love very second of it. Long breezy drives on the wide open roads, jungle treks are distinctly in the cards.

GEMINI

Today, you will realise that close relationships need care and concern to grow, predicts Ganesha. You will have new responsibilities and achieve huge profits in all your dealings. Pay special attention to your personal health.

CANCER

You will be quite sharp at work, and equally penetrating in the matters of the heart. Though, you may temporarily lose focus, your mind will bring you back to the real world. You will work at a break-neck speed, only to be able to spend as much time as possible with your sweetheart.

LEO

A lucky day is in the offing. You will taste success in all your endeavours. You will be extremely creative. You will contribute a lot of new ideas in meetings. You will be able to talk about your love without any hesitation today, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

If being humanitarian needed a definite physical form, you are most likely to be nominated. Such is the mix of values and practicality today, says Ganesha. Devise strategies to achieve more productivity. See the bigger picture, says Ganesha. This is not difficult considering you have a broad vision - with or without the glasses.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that you shall be immersed in successfully completing all your remaining work today. Whatever work you undertake today you shall be able to do it to your best capability and successfully and your work ability will be praiseworthy. Ganesha showers his blessings on you

SCORPIO

The grey strands on your head is not just a colour, but speaks about your experiences. Your wisdom will make you take appropriate decisions at work. Ganeshi warns you to stay away from courtrooms and legal issues, or the trap may leave a deep scar.

SAGITTARIUS

Dressed to kill - this phrase is enough to describe you today, says Ganesha. Decked up from head to toe in chic attire and classy jewellery, you make a bold statement. Like a magnet, you will attract attention at a party. Don't get surprised if your list of admirers becomes longer.

CAPRICORN

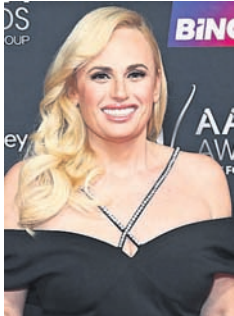
You are not an impulsive person and this reflects in whatever you do. Money will be on your mind almost through out the day. Generally, you are a penny pincher, but during the later half of the day you will go on a spending spree. Don't ignore your pocket while spending, otherwise you may end up burning a hole in it, advises Ganesha.

AQUARIUS

Most of the time it is your way or no other way, especially when you charging towards your goal. Today, you will push your limits to achieve what you have desired. You are talented, hard working, creative, and icing on the cake is your luck which is favouring you big time. You are determined to succeed and you will take up the tried and tested route of hard work, says Ganesha.

PISCES

Controversy and differences circle overhead, almost waiting for a chance to corner you. Even though you are a happy go lucky person, you may feel a little run down and disgruntled today. But don't lost heart, says Ganesha, because as the day progresses you will find bigger and better reasons to smile. Your spouse or loved one will have a major role to play in restoring your happiness.



REBEL REVEALS WHAT STOPPED HER FROM LOSING WEIGHT

Actress Rebel Wilson, who had a successful run in the hit film franchise *Pitch Perfect*, claims her contract for the film prevented her from losing weight. She then embarked on a so-called year of health in 2020, negating her pigeonholed character of fat, funny friend.

LIVELY SAVED HIM FROM SELF-DESTRUCTION, SAYS BADGLEY

Penn Badgley believes Blake Lively 'saved' him from self-destruction. The 36-year-old actor starred alongside Blake in the TV drama *Gossip Girl*, where their relationship blossomed. The actor reminisces about being saved from a "dark undercurrent" that was developing in his life.



Rakul Preet walks ramp for a cause

Mumbai: Actor Rakul Preet Singh is all excited to walk the ramp as a showstopper along with boyfriend Jacky Bagnani for BFF Lakshmi Manchu's annual charity fashion show. The actress has opined about being associated with a cause through Lakshmi Manchu's NGO, Teach for Change.

About the charity, she said, "The quality of education that these children receive from this charity is far superior to others. Having a vision is one thing but to translate that into action and hold your ground for years is another. Lakshmi is always inspiring. This is the 8th edition of the event, and I have seen it grow bit by bit over the years. I hope my humble effort adds to the initiative."

When asked about Rakul as a showstopper, Laxmi said, "She was always my first choice. Apart from the fact that she is

my friend, philosopher, and guide, Rakul is a thoroughbred professional with years of experience on the ramp. I'm glad that she is headlining for us along with Jacky this year."

The proceeds from the fundraiser will go to her NGO, Teach for Change, for educating underprivileged children across Southern India.

AGENCIES

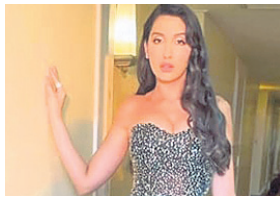
XIM varsity's XAMBOREE to be star-studded affair

Bhubaneswar: XIM University, Odisha is conducting its annual cultural management festival, Xamboree, presented by EVOS, from February 18 to 19, 2023. The festival will feature a variety of artists, including rappers King and musician Yo Yo Honey Singh.

Xamboree is hosted with the vision of creating an atmosphere of togetherness through cultural and business events. The event is organised and managed entirely by XSTEC (Steering Committee of XIM University), and is comprised of shows like Runway Roll: Fashion Show Competition, Sonix: Battle of Bands, Footloose: Group Dance Competition, Battle it out: Street-Style Dance Competition, Dhvani: Solo Singing Competition, and Tamasha: Street Play Competition.

The event will certainly bring sheer enjoyment, knowledge, and a feeling of togetherness through cultural, business, and sports events, claim the organisers. Everyone from the campus, including students, management, administration, and support staff, is eagerly waiting to host all of its guests, they added.

PNN



Mumbai: Nora Fatehi is no stranger when it comes to owning the dance floor with her gracious presence. The Moroccan beauty has often shown that, besides being an outstanding dancer, she is a real fashionista, earning the approval of her critics. In a recent post, she allowed her followers to take a look at her incredible wardrobe collection on social media.

Nora picked a glamorous sparkly sequined gown from designer label Heba Alqurashi that featured a strapless tube body and a bodycon fit that accentuated Nora's well-toned body. The outfit had a sweet-

Nora sizzles in shimmery gown

heart tube neckline and showcased delicate shimmery sequins all throughout. Nora wore no accessories and let her outfit shine. Her glamorous makeup was rosy and minimal.

On the work front, she starred with Sidharth Malhotra in the *Thank God* song *Manike* and in the song *Jedha Nasha* with Aayushmann Khurrana in *An Action Hero*. With a noteworthy

achievement as India's first representation at the FIFA World Cup, Nora Fatehi also featured in the FIFA music video that saw her both singing and performing the FIFA anthem last year.

AGENCIES



Swara enters the married club

Mumbai: It seems to be the wedding season in Bollywood currently. Social media was all over the place with Athiya Shetty and KL Rahul's wedding, followed by picture perfect wedding of Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani. Now the latest one to enter the club is Swara Bhasker. She took her Instagram handle to announce her wedding with Fahad Zhirar Ahmad.

Actress Swara Bhasker, who has managed to entertain us with many of her films, is finally married. The actress took to her Instagram handle to



heart @FahadZhirarAhmad. It's chaotic but it's yours!"

IAN5

Zeenat responds to 'obscenity accusations' in 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram'

Mumbai, Feb 16: Veteran actress Zeenat Aman recently marked her Instagram debut and has been dish-ing out pearls from the past on social media. The veteran actress, Thursday, shared a picture from her look test in 1977 and addressed accusation of obscenity for playing Rupa in *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*.

"This picture was taken by photographer J P Singhal during a look test for Satyam Shivam Sundaram around 1977. We shot the series at RK Studios, and my costumes were designed by Oscar winner Bhanu Athaiya.

Anyone acquainted with the history of Bollywood will know that there was much controversy and brouhaha about my character Rupa in *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*," the actress had shared.

Speaking about the uproar over her 'sensuous' character, Zeenat further wrote, "I was always quite amused by the accusations of obscenity as I did not and do not find anything obscene about the human body. I am a director's actor and these looks were part of my job. Rupa's sensuality was not the crux of the plot, but a part of it. As it is, the set is not even remotely a sen-

sual space. Every move is choreographed, rehearsed and performed in front of dozens of crew members. Director Raj Kapoor (Rajji) had brought me on board the film, but was concerned about my 'western' image. He was unsure whether the audience would accept me in this avatar, and so conducted this look test. Later, on the basis of this test, we shot a small reel pictured on Lata ji's famous song Jaago Mohan Pyare from the 1956 film Jagte Raho. Rajji held a screening of the reel at RK Studios to gauge the response of his distributors to me in this role. After that first screening, the



rights for all territories were immediately sold."

Zeenat Aman marked her Instagram debut February 11 and has since then gained 19.4k followers.

IAN5

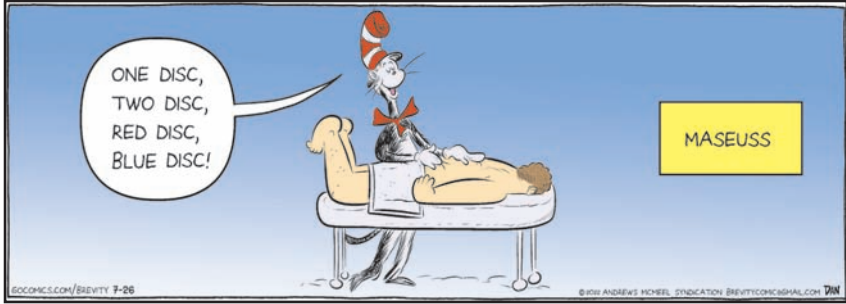
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

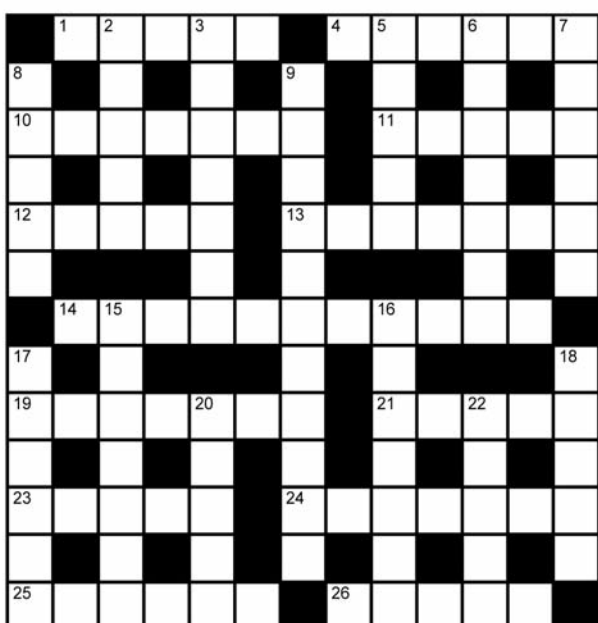


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

1 Vacation destination
4 Gummy
10 Danube country

Down

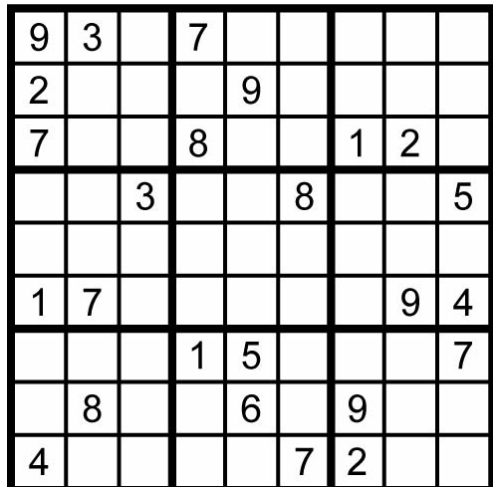
11 Automobile mishaps
12 Imitator
13 Vague
14 Climbing crooks (3,8)
19 Wildfire

21 Requiem
23 Hen perch
24 Cheerful
25 Outer planet
26 Spry

7 Sycophants (3,3)
8 Molten rock
9 Working folks (6,5)
15 Insult
16 Living accommodations
17 Fabric materials
18 Oyster holding item
20 Whirlybird
22 Drive back

SUDOKU

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

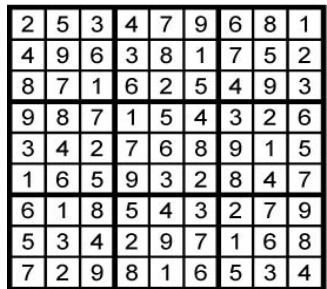


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Centre allocates ₹937 crore to boost road infra in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has allocated ₹937 crore to Odisha for widening and construction of several National Highways crossing the state for the financial year 2023-24.

According to sources, the ministry has allocated ₹835 crore for several ongoing projects, costing above ₹5 crore, in the state, while ₹2 crore was allocated for projects costing less than ₹5 crore. The ministry has also allocated ₹100 crore for new projects in the state.

The budgetary allocation of the ministry to Odisha for FY 2023-24 is more than the expenditure incurred during FY 2022-23. In 2022-23, the total expenditure in Odisha was ₹857 crore.

The ministry has allocated ₹80 crore for widening and strengthening of Kandarpur-Balikuda section of NH-55. ₹70 crore has been allocated for widening and strengthening of Kuakhia-Mangalpur section of NH-20. For the



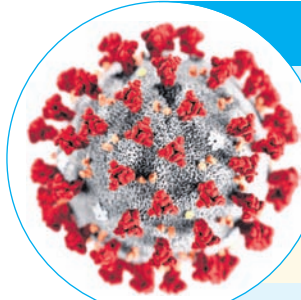
construction of Jharsuguda bypass including land acquisition on NH-49, the ministry has allocated ₹40 crore. Allocation of ₹60 crore was made for construction of bypass on NH-59 near Berhampur town including 4-lane RoB. The ministry also made allocation for construction of roads from Bargarh to Barpali and Barpali to Bolangir (NH-26.)

Further, ₹10 crore has been allocated for widening of NH-57 from Nayagarh to Khurda and ₹40 crore for widening of Bhanjanagar to Aska road of NH-157. The MoRTH further allocated ₹30 crore for construction of railway overbridge at



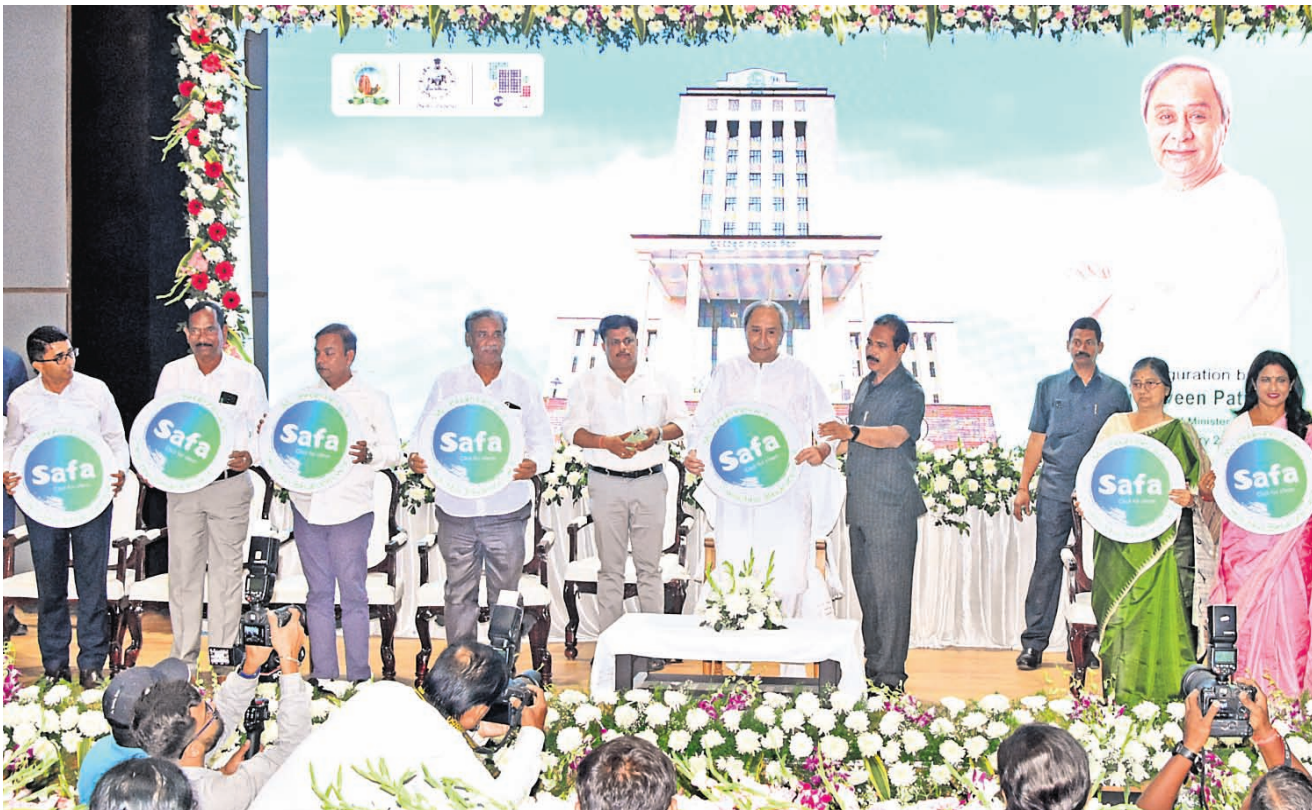
TROPICAL DELIGHT

A vendor arranges watermelons at Mission Road in Cuttack as temperature rises, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	67,81,78,197	65,07,28,686	67,86,677
India	4,46,84,502	4,41,51,910	5,30,757
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204



MODERN INFRA: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated 'Safa' application developed by BMC and BSCL after unveiling the BMC-Intelligent City Operations and Management Centre Tower at Satya Nagar in Bhubaneswar, Thursday. IDCOL MD Balwant Singh, Bhubaneswar (Central) MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, Bhubaneswar (North) MLA Susant Kumar Rout, S&T Minister Ashok Panda, H&UD Minister Usha Devi and City Mayor Sulochana Das were seen

Politics hots up over Mishra-lady cop fight

BJD dubs Jayanarayan Mishra as a habitual offender, while BJP says the ruling party hatched plot to fix the Sambalpur MLA as he was attacking the govt on its Achilles heels



BJD and BJP workers take out rallies against each other in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



OP PHOTOS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Political atmosphere in the state is fully charged following a scuffle between Leader of Opposition (LoP) Jayanarayan Mishra (BJP) and a lady police inspector during a protest in Sambalpur, Wednesday. The two parties took out rallies against each other, Thursday.

Mishra stirred controversy after he allegedly pushed Dhanupalli inspector in-charge Anita Pradhan during a BJP protest in Sambalpur the previous day. The incident took place in front of the district Collector's office, as part of the party's statewide stir on "worsening" law and order.

The saffron party too staged a dharna near Raj Bhawan, claiming that there was a bid to eliminate Mishra, also the BJP MLA

from Sambalpur, for criticising the state government in connection with the assassination of ex-minister Naba Kishore Das.

Members of the BJD and BJP also burnt effigies of Mishra and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik respectively.

Holding placards and banners, the BJD activists who were on a dharna at Mahatma Gandhi Road, accused Mishra of pushing and assaulting the woman police officer. The protesters also demanded an apology from Mishra.

BJD spokesperson Shreemayee Mishra dubbed Mishra as a "habitual offender", with 14 cases including murder registered against him.

Meanwhile, members of the saffron party demanded the Chief Minister's resignation for allegedly failing to maintain law and order

in the state. The BJP for the last two days was holding demonstrations across the state over the "worsening" law and order following the assassination of Naba Das last month allegedly by a former policeman.

Based on the complaint of Dhanupali police station IIC Anita Pradhan, the law enforcers in Sambalpur had Wednesday booked Mishra under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Meanwhile, Sambalpur Mahila BJP also lodged a complaint against Pradhan, alleging that she had pushed and misbehaved with the LoP.

BJP's rank and file, including its MPs, MLAs and senior leaders like national vice-president Bajiyant Panda, came down heavily on the state government alleging that Mishra was being

framed by the BJD after he launched a scathing attack on the state government following Naba Das murder case.

"It is a plot created by the BJD to fix Mishra as he was attacking the government on its weak points. The woman police officer instead misbehaved with the Leader of Opposition, who is considered as second to the chief minister in the Assembly," said BJP state in-charge D Purendeswari.

Meanwhile, Mishra alleged that a group of BJD goons Thursday reached the circuit house where he was staying.

"The BJD goons had come to eliminate me," Mishra told reporters in Sambalpur.

Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the incident was "pre-planned" and "sponsored" by the

PARALLEL PROTESTS

BJD activists staged a dharna at Mahatma Gandhi Road in City and demanded an apology from Mishra

BJP staged a demonstration near Raj Bhawan, claiming that there was a bid to eliminate Mishra

Jayanarayan Mishra stirred controversy after he allegedly pushed Dhanupalli IIC Anita Pradhan during a BJP protest in Sambalpur, Wednesday

government to "cover up its inefficiency and wrongdoings".

"Jaynarayan Mishra was not appointed the Leader of Opposition as a charity from Naveen Patnaik. He was appointed by the Parliamentary Board of the BJP... The law and order situation is fast deteriorating in the state.

"Such pre-planned and state-sponsored acts do not last long in a democracy," Pradhan told reporters.

IG, North Range, Deepak Kumar said the police have registered a case against Mishra on the basis of a complaint by the woman police officer.

The BJP's complaint against the police officer has been registered as a station diary, Kumar said. The complaint by the saffron party will be probed while investigating the allegations made by the woman police officer, Kumar said.

CHIT FUND SCAM

Seashore chairman moves SC for protection of assets

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 16: An intervention application (IA) was filed by the chairman of Seashore Group in the Supreme Court pleading the court to allow his application and not pass any order in the chit fund scam issue without hearing the intervenor.

The intervenor, Prashanta Kumar Das, who is also the chairman of Seashore Group, submitted that the CBI has ignored the mandate of the apex court as it still has not taken up 19 cases registered by the Odisha police against the petitioner.

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Das contended in the IA that he only seeks to protect a few properties which are in no way connected to the criminal case registered by the Crime Branch and have been finally attached by the Designated Court, Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (OPID), Cuttack



Das contended in the IA that he only seeks to protect a few properties which are in no way connected to the criminal case registered by the Crime Branch and have been finally attached by the Designated Court, Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (OPID), Cuttack. Earlier, the Supreme Court January 16 had sought suggestions from the Centre, Odisha and

other parties in chit fund scam on the issue of repayment to thousands of investors duped by ponzi firms.

A two-judge bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar observed that common people are the ultimate victims of delay in investigation into chit fund cases. It also asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta as to how many investors have received the repayment.

"Everything sounds flowery. Common man is only interested in his money. These are your policies. You please work on your own policies," the bench observed.

The matter has been adjourned for hearing to February 20.

Significantly, the Union Cooperation Ministry had filed a status report in the Supreme Court on a petition seeking probe in multi-crore chit fund scam and compensation to thousands of gullible depositors duped by ponzi firms in Odisha.

Ex-banker gets 2-yr RI for ₹1.15cr fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: A local court in Dhenkanal has awarded two years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) to a former banker after convicting him for misappropriation of around ₹1.15 crore belonging to Angul United Central Cooperative Bank in Kamakshya Nagar around seven years ago.

The Kamakshya Nagar SDJM Court has also slapped a penalty of ₹13,000 on the convict identified as Sanjay Kumar Satapathy.

According to the prosecution, Sanjay, a banking assistant at Angul United Central Cooperative Bank's Kamakshya Nagar branch, in criminal conspiracy with three other staffers of the institution misappropriated around ₹1,15,16,300 in 2015-16. "They siphoned off ₹1,15,16,300 by crediting the amount to 65 accounts from different heads of general ledger account through 187 transactions. Subsequently, they withdrew the amount by using the user ID of the account holders," the prosecution said, quoting the EOW that arrested him in 2019.

Food processing, MSME devpt policies amended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: In what would bring relief to the industries, the state government Thursday made some amendments to three of its policies – Odisha Food Processing Policy 2013, Odisha Food Processing Policy 2016 and Odisha MSME Development Policy 2016.

The amendments have enhanced the stipulated time period given to an industrial unit to submit application for availing fi-



The amendments have enhanced the stipulated time period given to an industrial unit to submit application for availing financial incentives

nancial incentives, from six/12 months to two years from date of commencement of operation.

Moreover, a provision for condonation of delay beyond two years has been inserted. Since such a provision was missing earlier, a number of industrial units had been deprived of financial incentives.

With the recent amendment, industrial units whose claims had been rejected due to delay in submission will now get time up to June 30, 2023 to file fresh claims. This is part of a one-time relaxation measure initiated by the state government.

Gopinath Mohanty's stories now in English

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: As many as 20 short stories by doyen of Odia literature Gopinath Mohanty have been translated into English in a new book, titled "Oblivion and Other Stories".

Originally written in Odia, the anthology, translated by Sudeshna Mohanty and Sudhansu Mohanty, includes short stories – 'Da', 'Oblivion', 'The Upper Crust', 'Lustre' and 'Festival Day' – written over the course of five decades (1935–1988).

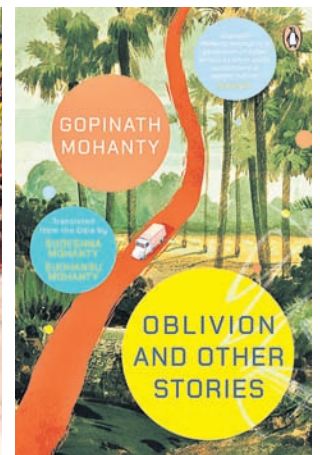
Mohanty, one of the chief architects of modern Indian literature, was the first recipient of the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award (1955) as well as other prestigious honours – Soviet Land Nehru Award (1970), Jnanpith Award (1973) and Padma Bhushan (1981). He wrote 24 novels, 10 collections of short stories, three plays, two biographies, two volumes of critical essays, besides two translations.

The stories, published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI), capture the forgotten others – the trib-



Originally written in Odia, the anthology, translated by Sudeshna Mohanty and Sudhansu Mohanty, includes short stories like 'Da', 'Oblivion' and 'The Upper Crust'

als, the poor, the dispossessed and the disenfranchised – invisibilised in the feudal landscape of Odia society in the 20th century. While 'Oblivion' (1941), the title



story, brings into sharp relief how women, especially the poor, were treated as chattels by feudal zamindars.

"Gopinath Mohanty's short fiction reaches back to the 1930s, spinning tales around everyday lives and ordinary people with whom he shared deep empathy. The milieu may have changed, but the spectrum of unadulterated, earthy human emotions – naive, gritty, undisguised, poignant – portrayed in the stories is timeless," wrote translator Sudeshna in the book.

According to the publishers, the collection will help readers recreate the social life of mid-20th century India curated from the everyday life of Oriya society.

"The embellished past in the stories is not one of nostalgia but a full-toned portrait of society. Marginalisation is the running thread: dispossession, disenfranchisement, class/caste social exclusivity and lack of education," they said.

"Oblivion and Other Stories" is currently available for sale across online and offline stores.



BRAINSTORMING: Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari among dignitaries attending the 28th Annual Conference & General Body Meeting of Odisha Sub-ordinate Finance Service, (Local Fund Audit) Association at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

ITIs in Odisha failing to prepare trainees for jobs

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 16: The objective of setting up Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) seems to be failing down as just two out of 3137 trainees passed in the year 2020 in Odisha got placement, reveals a study by the NITI Aayog.

The objective of setting up ITIs was to reduce unemployment amongst the educated youth by equipping them with the required skills, education, and discipline. However, Transforming Industrial Training Institute, a study by the NITI Aayog, stated that only two trainees, both from government Industrial Training Institute, Chatrapur, out of 3137 trainees passed in 2020 in Odisha got placement. There were 513 affiliated ITIs in Odisha, with only 10.35 percent being government run. The study revealed that out of 6220 trainees admitted in 2020, only 60 percent passed.



It was further stated that there were few takers of the seats in the ITIs in Odisha in 2021. There were 106,270 seats available of which 53.97 percent of them were filled, and out of this, only 13.52 percent of the trainees were females.

Significantly, the government has set up ITIs with the objective to ensure a steady flow of skilled personnel to the public and private sectors. ITIs in India are responsible for delivering vocational

training of one or two-year skill courses through the Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS).

These courses are based on a semester pattern and cover a large number of economic sectors leading to a lifelong career. The training courses in ITIs are supposed to impart basic skills and knowledge in the trades to prepare trainees for employment as semi-skilled/skilled workers or self-employment.

Nat'l workshop on sustainable devpt at KIIT from today

Bhubaneswar: A three day national workshop on "Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) in Gram Panchayats through Adopting Thematic Approaches" will be held from February 17-19 at KIIT Auditorium, Bhubaneswar. In the workshop, discussions will be held on themes of Sustainable Development Goals i.e. 'Child Friendly Panchayat' and 'Women Friendly Panchayat'. The workshop will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in the presence of Union Education Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Kapil Moreswar Patil, Minister of state for Panchayati Raj, government of India, Pradipt Kumar Amat, Minister, Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water, Forest & Environment and Climate Change and Information and Public Relations and Basanti Hembram, Minister of state (Ind. Charge), Women & Child Development and Mission Shakti. Over 1600 delegates from all states and UTs including PRI members and senior officials are going to attend the workshop.

A life saved, thanks to BSKY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Sumant Sahu's happiness knew no bounds when his mother Snehalata, 52, had a successful bone marrow transplantation at SUM Hospital here under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY).

According to sources, Snehalata, a resident of Naubanka village in Jajpur district, was diagnosed with blood cancer a few years back.

"My mother's blood cancer came as a bolt from the blue for us at a time when we were already struggling to make ends meet. My father ran a small eatery at Singhipur market. And it was our only source of income," Sumant recounts.

Sumant's world came crashing down when his father died in 2021. "After my father's demise, things were on me. I was absolutely blank. I managed taking my mother to SUM Hospital in Bhubaneswar in August 2022 with a paltry amount



borrowed from one of my friends," he says.

Upon enquiring at the hospital's reception, Sumant was directed to the BSKY desk. "The Swasthya Karmis at the desk filled the form and my mother was admitted to the hospital. And that's all. After that I didn't spend a penny," Sumant said.

After a few chemotherapy sessions supervised by SUM Hospital Haematology department professor Priyanka Samal, Snehalata underwent bone marrow transplantation in September last year.

After a few days under observation, she was discharged.

Sumant further thanked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for his timely intervention during the treatment when the BSKY card limit exhausted.

"During the treatment, our BSKY (family) card limit exhausted as the expenses exceeded ₹5 lakh. We were tensed. However, at this stage, CM Naveen Patnaik intervened and sanctioned additional money under BSKY," he said.

"With the timely assistance of the CM, and proper medical care under BSKY, my mother got a new lease of life. My family is indebted to the CM, doctors and nurses for all that they did to save my mother," he added.

7 minor girls from Odisha sexually harassed; 4 booked

Recently, the girls had contacted the Odisha Chief Secretary and alleged that they were exploited by their employers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Feb 16: A case has been registered against four people for allegedly sexually harassing seven minor girls from Odisha after illegally employing them at a brick kiln in Sangareddy district, police said Thursday.

A group of 72 migrant workers, including the minor girls were employed at the brick kiln in Narayankhed Mandal of the district about five months ago. Recently, the girls had contacted the Odisha Chief Secretary and alleged that

they were exploited by their employers.

The Telangana government officials received information from the Odisha Chief Secretary in this regard following which officials from the state Labour department, Women Development and Child Welfare Department visited the brick kiln where they were informed by the minor girls about the sexual harassment by the owners.

Later, the officials lodged a complaint with the police based on which a case under the POCSO Act was registered against four owners of the brick kiln Wednesday and the minor girls were rescued, they said.

Following allegations that the workers were illegally employed at the brick kiln, the officials also made arrangements to send them back to Odisha. Further investigation is on, they added.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

Affidavit No. 304, Dt.15.02.23 before Notary Public, Koraput, I, Mrs. Meherajan Bibi, W/o. Sheikh Latif Ali resident of Gountam Nagar, Koraput, Dist.: Koraput (Odisha). My actual name is Meherajan Bibi as per my passport No. R6751671, Aadhaar Card No. XXXXXXXX7626 and PAN Card No. AXPPB1319P, but in my Son's namely Sheikh Arbaz Ali Passport No. R6758523 my name has been wrongly mentioned as Moharjan Bibi instead of Meherajan Bibi due to wrong information. That Meherajan Bibi and Moharjan Bibi both are one and the same person, that I swear this affidavit to file before the passport authority in support of my above said version for rectify/correction my name my Son's Passport.

By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Kantapada, Cuttack, I Sanit Kumar Pradhan do hereby declare that wrongly my wife name in defence Pension Book vide No. - D/12943/7016, Santoshi Pradhan but in Aadhaar Card vide No. 71495823 her name is Santoshi Swain. Santoshi Swain and Santoshi Pradhan is same person.

HC expresses concern over vacancies in child rights body

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Feb 16: Expressing concern over the vacancies in the Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSPCPR), the Orissa High Court Thursday said not filling those defeats the very purpose for which it was established.

Hearing a writ petition over the issue, a division bench headed by Chief Justice S Muralidhar asked the government counsel to take instructions from the state government in response to it. The court fixed March 9 as the next date for the hearing.

The petition stated the

Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 mandates establishing the commission with a chairman and six other members. "Unfortunately, the commission was functioning with just the chairman since August last year," alleged advocate Prabir Kumar Das, who filed the petition.

Das said that it was a matter of grave public concern that the state government failed to fill up the vacancies, which should have been done within 180 days of occurrence of such vacancies. As many as 2,372 cases relating to child rights were pending before the commission as of December 2022, he said.



RAZING DOWN: An excavator engaged by CMC pulling down illegal structures at Balu Bazar in Cuttack, Thursday

Understanding 'tipping point' of neurodegenerative diseases

Scientists have developed a new method which was employed to understand how tau protein changes from a benign protein, essential for normal function in human brains, into toxic neurofibrillary tangles.

Such toxic assemblies of tau proteins are a signature of Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases, and so, this method could allow for its use in understanding the starting point of these diseases, the scientists said.

In this study, the scientists at University of California (UC) Santa Barbara, US, used this method with the core portion, a peptide, of tau.

They were able to observe and analyse a critical "tipping point" between normal, reversible folding and assembly, and the irreversible, pathological assembly that underlies tauopathic, neurodegenerative diseases, the study said.

So far, scientists are not yet clear on how the "tipping point" happens.

This new technique gave the researchers at UC Santa Barbara the ability to control and follow in real time the process by which this critical "tipping point" happens, the study said.

The study appears in the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

According to the study, the technique employed a novel use of low voltage electricity as a surrogate for the natural signals that trigger the protein to fold and assemble, both for its normal function in the brain and in the runaway process leading to often fatal disease.

Employing less than a volt of electrical potential to mimic hyperphosphorylation, the disease-promoting signal, the scientists triggered and finely tuned the tau-peptide's folding in their lab experiments, the study said.

They used spectroscopic meth-



ods to reveal details of the folding and progressive assembly to form amyloid-like filaments, the study said.

"This method provides scientists a new means to trigger and simultaneously observe the dynamic changes in the protein as it transitions from good to bad,"

said Daniel E. Morse, senior author of the study. "The method should be widely useful to identify molecules and conditions that direct different trajectories of assembly in a number of different but related amyloid diseases," stated Eloise Masquiere, lead author of the interdisciplinary

According to the study, the technique employed a novel use of low voltage electricity as a surrogate for the natural signals that trigger the protein to fold and assemble

nary team of students, researchers and faculty from molecular biology, chemistry and engineering.

Unlike other modes of examining protein folding and assembly, such as x-ray diffraction or cryo-electron microscopy that provide static snapshots of the processes as they occur in time, the new electrochemical method allowed users to continuously witness and analyse details of the progressive, dynamical folding and assembly as they occurred

in real time, permitting the first direct observations of the critical earliest steps in these processes, the study said.

Also, the study said, unlike most techniques previously used for studies of tau and its core peptide, because the electrical trigger closely mimics the natural triggering signal, the method permits direct observation of these processes without the need for additional "helper" molecules.

The authors reported that the technology could also be used as a tool to more rapidly test and identify drugs and antibodies potentially useful for prevention or treatment of Alzheimer's and other amyloid diseases.

"Because we can turn on and fine-tune the process at will, we can use this system to see what molecules could interdict or block specific stages of folding and assembly," Morse said. PTI

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Alarming drop in ground water level sparks concern in Balasore



POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, Feb 16: With summer season yet to start, areas under Jaleswar block in Balasore district are experiencing an alarming drop in ground water level.

Absence of rainfall for last five months and excessive use of water for paddy cultivation during the rabi season are attributed as the reasons behind the sharp drop in ground water level.

Ground water is depleting day by day and environmentalists fear that the situation might go out of hand if rain does not occur soon in the coming days. Such has been the situation that ground water can be found as deep as 60 feet down the surface.

The reason behind depletion in ground water level is attributed to functioning of around 300 government managed lift irrigation (LI) points and 2,000 shallows. It is apprehended that the overuse of ground water may lead to saline water ingress in the coastal tracts of the district.

Sources said that the areas under Jaleswar block, which is on the fringes of West Bengal, have not experienced any rainfall since October last year.

The fall in ground water level is so apparent that water level has fallen drastically in all the water bodies including canals, ponds, streams, creeks and rivers even before the start of summer. The drop in the ground water level is also impacting the surface water level in the area.

Meanwhile, farmers under the block have completed transplan-

tation of paddy saplings over 7,000 hectare of land for this Rabi season. As maximum paddy cultivation of the district is done under this block, ground water is the only available source for irrigation for the farmers.

Paddy cultivation requires a lot of water for which farmers draw depend on LI points and shallows to irrigate their farmlands. However, due to lack of awareness, farmers only take up traditional paddy cultivation instead of cash crops which in turn worsens the situation.

The increasing dependence of farmers on the LI points and shallows has started showing its effect. Meanwhile, hundreds of tube wells in various villages installed by the residents have stopped drawing water. People in the riparian villages are the worst hit. They are facing an acute shortage of drinking water after their tube wells developed snags.

The tube wells installed by the government are also giving out muddy water. Some of the tube wells are giving out water in such low amounts that people have to stand for hours to fetch a bucket of water.

People in the hilly pockets of Raibania in Jaleswar block are the worst hit with some of the drinking water projects established under Basudha Yojana lying defunct.

A long queue of men and women near tube wells is a regular scene in the village of Raibania. With many schools lacking a tube well or a standpost, students have to walk a long distance to fetch water. It is apprehended that some of the LI points may stopped functioning if the area does not receive

Pattamundai stares at acute water shortage

Dropping ground water level in this area of Kendrapara district has emerged as a huge problem for the district's residents. The sharp decline in ground water level in the last four years has made life difficult for the locals as the water level has gone down to 70 to 100 feet underground at various spots. According to the report, more than 250 tube wells are inoperable in the area. People are worried that they may face a shortage in drinking water in the upcoming summer. People are now demanding for sensitisation programmes regarding the issue while also expecting the government to bring some remedy. Describing the current situation, assistant engineer Sudam Sahoo says that due to the drop in ground water level, now we have to dig up to 70 to 100 feet, while in 2002 water level was just below 30 feet.

rainfall within a fortnight.

People have demanded irrigation facilities to their farmlands and drinking water facilities to their households. Some farmers have urged the administration to draw water from the river gorge and supply it through pipelines to their farmlands.

Eminent environmentalist cum scientist Dillip Panda said there is need for recharging ground water for which construction of large ponds and tanks is recommended in various places under the block.

RWSS assistant engineer Pradyumna Das confirmed the development stating that the ground water level has depleted to 20 or 24 metre depth in the block. The officials are visiting various areas on a daily basis and repairing the defunct LI points.

Residents of some riparian villages said that the problem can be resolved if water could be lifted from the Subarnarekha river either from Rajghat, Panchughanta or Kuanrpur area and supplied to the residents after proper treatment.



PREVENTING FOREST FIRES: Members of women self-help groups (SHGs) and forest officials take part in an awareness rally on forest fire at Suakati under Bhuyan-Juang Pidha forest range in Keonjhar district, Thursday

GIRL ABDUCTED, RAPED

Police traces kidnapper's location, rescues minor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Feb 16: Using the mobile location tracking technology, police traced Suraj Sahu (21) and rescued a girl from Puri Tuesday, who was allegedly kidnapped and raped by the youth.

Both the accused and the victim were sent for medical examination and a case (no 56/23) has been registered, Thursday. Further the court, under section 164, recorded the statement of the victim.

As per reports, the accused allegedly abducted the minor from her residence after manipulating her. The victim's father reported about the incident later at the nearest police station here, Monday. Police traced the accused's location using his mobile number and recovered the minor from Puri.

The accused, after entering Puri, took a house on rent and raped the minor multiple times at the rented place, as per the victim's statement.

POACHING & BURNING OF CARCASS AT SNP

3 absconding forest officials held for abetting eyewitness' suicide

Chilam Purty, widow of the deceased eyewitness, alleged that the three officials had forced her husband to consume poison

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Feb 16: Jashipur police Thursday nabbed three forest officials for their alleged involvement in the poaching of a tusker and burning of its carcass to destroy evidence in Similipal Tiger Reserve of Mayurbhanj district and the subsequent death of Turam Purty, the lone eyewitness in the case.

The accused forest officials – forester Shiba Shankar Samal and forest guards Chandrabhanu Behera and Binod Kumar Das of



Jenabil forest range under South division of Similipal Tiger Reserve – were produced in the court and remanded to judicial custody in Karanjia.

Notably, a tusker was killed in Gurundia forest section under Jenabil forest range of South forest division of Similipal Tiger Reserve, December 7. The three forest officials had tried to destroy evidence by setting the carcass on fire. They had also dumped the re-

mains of the carcass in a river nearby to cover up the matter.

Locals had informed the senior forest officials that the three accused also abetted the suicide of Turam Purty, a junior level employee at Similipal Tiger Reserve as they feared that the matter might get disclosed. Purty was the only eyewitness of the crime committed by the forest officials. Fearing action, the three allegedly abused Purty and threatened to put him in jail. Panicked, Purty had consumed poison to end life.

He was rushed to Karanjia government hospital and later shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack where he succumbed to death during treatment, December 16 last year. His wife Chilam Purty alleged that the three officials had forced her husband to consume poison.

FISHING THREAT TO HORSESHOE CRABS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, Feb 16: Horseshoe crabs, a rare marine creature, have started swimming ashore from deep sea to Gahirmatha marine sanctuary in Kendrapara district with the start of their breeding season.

The horseshoe crabs having a hard exoskeleton and 10 legs find the Pacific coast and the Odisha coast of Bay of Bengal most habitable. So they migrate to these destinations in large hordes for mating and nesting.

The mating season of horseshoe crabs starts from January and concludes by March. The state is home to two of four varieties of the species that are found globally.

However, before they can reach the coast for mating, these crabs get entangled in the fishing nets of fishermen in trawlers and die prematurely.

These crabs play an important role in maintaining bio-diversity and the marine environment for which they have been included as 'Living Fossils' in the fourth sched-



ule of the IUCN Red List. The blood of these crabs contains copper and a chemical called hemocyanin for which its colour looks blue instead of red and thus draws its name as 'Nila Rakta Kankada' in Odia parlance.

Horseshoe crabs' blood contains a chemical that makes its blood clot in the presence of even the slightest trace of bacteria. That is why many biomedical companies throughout the globe use the blood

to make vaccines making it as costly as ₹11 lakh per litre in the international market.

When horseshoe crabs sight an enemy, they attack it with its spiked tail called 'telson' and release a toxic fluid which causes pain and burn in the body.

They swim in hordes towards the coast with the start of their nesting season. As the mating season starts, they can be found coupled together and mating on

Horseshoe crabs' blood has great medicinal properties making it as costly as ₹11 lakh per litre in the international market

Mating season of horseshoe crabs starts from January and concludes by March. The state is home to two of four varieties of the species

These rare crabs can be seen on the sand bed of Hukitola island, Lunchghola and Becon Point on Mahanadi river basin adjoining the sea

swampy sand bed of the Gahirmatha marine sanctuary.

Their mating mostly takes place on the full moon day and new moon day. The male crabs are smaller in size while their female counterparts are larger than the males.

These rare crabs can be seen on the sand bed of Hukitola island, Lunchghola and Becon Point on Mahanadi river basin adjoining the sea.

Environmentalist Samarendra Mahali said it has become pertinent to conserve these rare marine creatures. Efforts have been launched

to protect these rare species and local fishermen are being sensitised about the value and importance of this creature.

A local intelligentsia Subhash Swain said, "Nearly three decades back, the horseshoe crabs used to be found in large numbers across the coast but now their presence is limited to only some smaller pockets in Kendrapara district."

Their population is rapidly declining after the 1971, 1982 cyclonic storms and 1999 Super Cyclone, he said. Climate change and waste discharged into the sea by the industrial plants have also impacted their population. He said there should be a joint effort by the government, private establishments and forest departments to protect these rare species.

When contacted, Gahirmatha forest ranger Manas Kumar Das said that the blood of these crabs is highly priced in the international market as it has medicinal value. They can be seen in large numbers in Gahirmatha for which efforts are being made to protect these rare species.

70 new tube wells for Jeypore

Jeypore: To review the ongoing installation project of 70 tube wells for 22 panchayats across Jeypore, block development officer (BDO) Rajiv Das, assistant engineer Biswanath Patra, junior engineer Sukant Kishore Barik and Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) department junior engineer Bharat Bhushan

Swain visited the sites here, Tuesday. Reportedly, the block authority is taking necessary steps with the aim of completing the project before the end of February.

The new tube wells will supply drinking water seamlessly in the upcoming summer while fulfilling the long awaited demand of Jeypore locals.

SO MUCH FOR SHOES

Pair of 'missing' shoes sends cops into a tizzy



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 16: In a dramatic turn of events, Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel have been on a 'shoe-hunt' of sorts for the last one month, after a complaint was registered January 5 with the RPF under Sambalpur Railway Division.

However strange and curious it may sound, the incident is true. After a month of pursuit, the pair of shoes has been re-

After a month of pursuit, the pair of shoes has been recovered from a lady doctor of Delhi

covered from a lady doctor from Delhi.

According to sources, a lady doctor and the daughter of Sambalpur Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Singh were travelling as co-passengers of a train.

The doctor got down from the train at Bareilly railway station early morning at 4am, January 4. However, while disembarking the train she inadvertently wore the shoes of the DRM's daughter and left for her destination. It was

learnt that she even had to give a statement before the police that there was no such intention and she would return the pair of shoes.

Notably, the complaint at the RPF regarding the missing shoes was lodged by DRM Singh, January 5. After the plaint, not only the RPF, but other railway units such as the Government Railway Police (GRP) and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) were also roped in on a look out for the shoes.

On the other hand, keeping in view the travelling passengers' safety, a host of steps including awareness programmes and mock drills are being taken up by the Railways.

While a number of train travellers are lucky enough to get their 'missing goods' back, there are many who never get any trace of their lost or stolen belongings.

Meanwhile, the retrieval of the 'lost' shoes has set the circles abuzz about the RPF's success. Although Sambalpur RPF was contacted regarding this, there was no reaction from the officials.

ZONAL OFFICE:
C-2, Ashok Nagar, Unit-II, Bhubaneswar,
PIN-751009, Ph.: 0674-2620423

POSSESSION NOTICE

(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act., 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the UCO Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount as mentioned below within **60 days** from the date of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **POSSESSION** of the property/ies described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned below. The borrowers & guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the UCO Bank for the amount plus interest plus expenses- thereon. **The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secured assets.**


BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date	Demand / Possession Notice Date	Description of the Immovable Property/ies
TANGI BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. Adisakti Press, Prop.: Mr. Santanu Kumar Patnaik, S/o- Sri Patita Paban Patnaik, At/P.O.: Chandanpur (Main Road), P.S.: Ranpur, Dist.: Nayagarh / Guarantors: 1) Sri Patita Paban Patnaik, At: Brahmabadapatna, P.O.: Tangi, Dist.: Khordha, 2) Sri Prasanna Kumar Patnaik, S/o- Patita Paban Patnaik, Both are At: Ratapurpatna, P.O.: Tangi, Dist.: Khordha	₹2,81,483.40 (inclusive of interest up to 31.08.2008) + further interest & other charges thereon from 31.08.2008	04.06.2009 / 15.02.2023	All that part and parcel of immovable property standing in the name of Sri Patita Paban Patnaik, S/o- Dadhibaban Patnaik, Mouza: Brahmanpada, SRO: Nayagarh, Dist.: Khordha, Khata No.: 74, Plot No.: 94, Area: Ac.0.072dec., Bounded by- North: Plot No. 93, East: Plot No. 195, South: Plot No. 94, West: Plot No. 92.
GANGADHARPUR BRANCH / Borrower: M/s. Fashion Galaxi, Prop.: Mr. Basant Pradhan, At/P.O.: Nachuni, By Pass Road, Dist.: Khurda (Odisha) / Guarantors: 1) Mr. Prafulla Pradhan, 2) Mr. Lalat Keshari Pradhan, Both are At/P.O.: Nachuni, By Pass Road, Dist.: Khurda (Odisha)	₹10,12,772.32 as on 30.12.2021 + further interest & other charges thereon from 31.05.2021	30.12.2021 / 15.02.2023	All that part and parcel of immovable property standing in the name of Mr. Basant Pradhan, Mr. Prafulla Pradhan & Mr. Lalat Keshari Pradhan, All are At/P.O.: Nachuni, By pass Road, Dist.: Khurda (Odisha), Mouza: Nachuni, P.S.: Banapur (367), Tahasil: Banapur (367), Dist.: Khurda, Odisha bearing (1) Khata No.: 654, Plot No.: 1376/2503, Area: Ac.0.103dec. & (2) Khata No.: 655, Plot No.: 1379/2502, Area: Ac.0.019dec., Total 2 nos. of Khata, 2 nos. of Plot, Total Land Area: Ac.0.122dec. i.e. 5314.32 sqft., both are KISSAM: Gharabari, Address: At: By-Pass Road, Nachuni and P.O.: Nachuni, P.S.: Nachuni, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha, PIN-752034, Bounded by- North: N.H.-5, East: Vendors, South: Vendors, West: Dasarathi Baral.

Date: 16.02.2023, Place: Bhubaneswar **Sd/- Authorised Officer, UCO Bank**

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The only work that spiritually purifies us is that which is done without personal motives.

SRI AUROBINDO



Autocratic Turn

After five consecutive elections in three years, four of which ended in political stalemate, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu managed to form a coalition of right-wing and ultra-Orthodox parties late last year. But instead of restoring stability to Israel's increasingly dysfunctional political system, Netanyahu is using his sixth term in office to promote a blitz of constitutional reforms that, if enacted, would turn Israel into an autocracy.

A few election cycles ago, in 2020, the Israeli Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Netanyahu is not barred from serving as prime minister as long as he refrains from using that position to influence the outcome of his ongoing corruption trial. But Netanyahu, who has continued to attack the prosecutors in his trial for allegedly conspiring to keep him out of office, did not allow this constraint to stop him from proposing a judicial coup.

Days after forming his new government, Minister of Justice Yariv Levin announced a comprehensive plan to reshape Israel's legal system. Levin argued that the proposed reform would strengthen Israeli democracy and restore balance between the judiciary and the executive and legislative branches. In fact, the proposal is designed to strip the judiciary of its ability to check the executive branch.

The government's plan includes several key provisions, including one that would enable the government to appoint judges, including Supreme Court justices, unilaterally. Another provision would allow the 120-seat Knesset (parliament) to override Supreme Court decisions by a simple majority.

Israel relies almost entirely on a set of Basic Laws, rather than a formal constitution, to define and protect civil rights. While the Supreme Court has the power to review and strike down legislation that contradicts the Basic Laws, it has done so only 22 times in the last three decades. For comparison, the US Supreme Court has struck down more than a hundred laws over the same period. Under Levin's proposed plan, the Court would be able to make such a decision only if at least 12 of the 15 justices agreed. The reform would also bar the Court from reviewing amendments to Basic Laws, enabling the Knesset to shield legislation from judicial scrutiny.

By stripping the courts of their authority to overrule decisions by the executive branch, the reform undermines the separation of powers. The reform further weakens the independence of the judiciary by enabling cabinet ministers to appoint and terminate legal advisers to the government. Today, government legal advisers are civil servants appointed by a competitive, apolitical process. Their advice is binding, making them effective gatekeepers – or not – against executive corruption and capriciousness.

The Knesset, in which Netanyahu's coalition holds 64 seats, does not restrain the government but rather rubber-stamps its decisions. The fact that Israel's legislature is not divided into two chambers like the US Congress or the Bundestag means that another crucial balancing mechanism is absent. Moreover, because Israel is a small country of approximately ten million people, it does not have a federal structure like the United States, Germany, or Canada, where subnational authorities balance the power of the central government. Another constraint absent in Israel is a presidential veto on legislation.

Many of the proposals included in Netanyahu's judicial reform plan were developed by former fellows at Kohelet Policy Forum, an ultra-neoliberal think tank financed primarily by right-wing Jewish billionaires from the US.

Their influence is so pronounced that some political opponents have taken to calling Netanyahu's coalition the “Kohelet government.”

But the true model for Netanyahu's judicial revolution is Viktor Orbán's Hungary. Over the past decade, the Hungarian prime minister has overseen a series of constitutional reforms that consolidated the control of Orbán's Fidesz party over the media, the electoral system, and the courts.

Overall, however, Israel's prospects are far bleaker than Hungary's, because Hungarian authorities are subject to external constraints. The European Union can sanction Hungary, and the freedom of movement of people and businesses within the bloc means that Orbán must govern in a way that prevents investors and workers from fleeing. Netanyahu is not bound by any such limits.

He does, however, face significant resistance from another source: the Israeli public. Over the past few weeks, tens of thousands of Israelis have protested in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and other cities.

These weekly demonstrations have been accompanied by smaller protests by lawyers, academics, health professionals, businesspeople, and artists. On February 13, the day the Knesset formally began considering the legislation, protesters announced a general strike and 100,000 people rallied in Jerusalem.

But the protests have had little influence on Netanyahu, who maintains a strong hold over Israeli media by constantly threatening to restructure the industry. His communications minister has recently announced a plan to shut down Kan, Israel's public broadcaster, whose critical news coverage has angered Netanyahu and his supporters (the plan has since been temporarily shelved so that the government can focus on getting the judicial reform through the Knesset).

There is only one area in which Netanyahu does not seem to be in complete control: the economy. In January, 300 prominent Israeli economists, including some of Netanyahu's former advisers, signed an open letter warning that the reforms would severely impede Israel's long-term economic prospects. They were later joined by 56 well-known international economists, including 11 Nobel laureates. But it was the prospect of venture capital funds and startup companies moving their bank accounts out of Israel that seems to have gotten the attention of Netanyahu and his supporters. Israel's main growth drivers, high-tech industry and finance, are highly sensitive to fickle foreign capital.

Netanyahu seems to have failed to consider the economic repercussions of his constitutional barrage. The choice is simple: Netanyahu's personal interests, including in upending his corruption trial, or those of the public. At the moment, his own interests seem set to prevail.

The writer is an associate professor of law at the Haim Striks Law Faculty at the College of Management in Israel.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

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Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.

FRANZ KAFKA

“

When there are thoughts, it is distraction: when there are no thoughts, it is meditation.

RAMANA MAHARSHI

“

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

MARK TWAIN



Dhanada K Mishra

MANY ADAM SMITH SCHOLARS, THE GREAT MAN WHOSE TRI-CENTENARY IS BEING CELEBRATED THIS YEAR, WOULD BE QUITE SHOCKED TO SEE ALL THAT IS BEING PASSED IN HIS NAME!



Ido Baum

Instead of restoring stability to Israel's increasingly dysfunctional political system, Netanyahu is using his sixth term in office to promote a blitz of constitutional reforms that, if enacted, would turn Israel into an autocracy



Avilash Roul

THE MODIFICATIONS AND OR AMENDMENTS TO THE IWT ARE ABSOLUTELY PLAUSIBLE ONLY BY THE CONSENT OF BOTH PARTIES TO THE TREATY

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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FOCUS ECONOMIC SYSTEM

FREE MARKET FIASCO



Unfortunately, as it is becoming increasingly clear, the invisible hand of the ‘free market’ is failing miserably when the market players work in collusion with the ruling class who are entrusted to regulate the playing conditions!

lively listed parent companies. Many of these and other serious allegations that have been levelled over the years were brought to focus with supporting evidence by Hindenberg, a little-known short-seller which has exposed the dark underbelly of a mighty corporate house which had inexplicably grown in an exponential manner since around 2014 with strong political patronage from the new ruling dispensation, the Narendra Modi-led government in New Delhi.

The Adani saga is by no means an exception to the rule - although it is by far a most egregious example. Not long ago, an equally egregious corruption scandal of FTX. A murky episode of more recent origin in the tech sector was exposed by a speculative article on the purported issues of corruption. The illicit relationship between the crypto exchange and its sister company Alemeda - a research & trading house, brought down a fast-growing business taking billions of dollars' worth of investors' wealth with it and leaving the disgraced Sam Bankman Fried fighting to avoid arrest. Cases such as Adani and FTX shake the confidence of the public in free market economics at large and make a great case for increasing oversight and regulatory frameworks.

Adam Smith, while being more widely known as an economist, was for most of his life a professor of Moral Philosophy at the

University of Glasgow. Adam Smith was born in a small port town called Kirkcaldy on the east coast of Scotland, not far from where he taught and wrote The Wealth of Nations and the lesser known, but for many, more important The Theory of Moral Sentiments. According to Smith, our moral sense helps us navigate the relationships between ourselves and others. It alerts us to dangers, rewards us for socially desirable behaviour and enforces social conventions regulating human behaviour: Ultimately, it leads to better outcomes for society as a whole. When we were children, most of us learned what was right and wrong by instinct. We learned these morals through trial and error: sometimes, we got rewards for good behaviour and punishments for bad behaviour: This internalised moral sense helped us decide the best way to behave in social situations. Our moral sense keeps us safe and promotes societal cohesion. Empathy is our natural response to the suffering of others- including fellow humans - which drives us to help them overcome their difficulties when necessary.

Interestingly around the mid-eighteenth century, when Adam Smith was writing his books, The British East India Company had just established its rule over the British Indian colony and controlled 50% of global trade. Around this time, millions died in the Great Bengal Famine, and Smith

was agitated by the reports of the dreadful event. Writing in The Wealth of Nations, Smith identified the lack of regulations on the company as the major reason. In his critique, he says, “part of the problem here is it can't be regulated because it's so big, and it has all these independent relationships with Indian government officials that should be part of British state diplomacy. And it has this internal conflict of interest between its commercial and political imperatives. This will lead to state capture where the British government ends up doing bad things for Britain to help the company.”

It shows his concern about how the government in the colonies will corrupt the British government and society. After the famine, the British government got more involved in the oversight of the company. By the 19th century, the East India Company's trading monopolies had been curtailed. After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the company was nationalised, and its activities wound down. As fate would have it, in 2005, the Indian businessman Sanjiv Mehta bought the rights to the name, and he turned it into a consumer brand focused on luxury foods!

Economic historian Robert Heilbroner once wrote: “No economist's name is more frequently invoked than that of Adam Smith, and no economist's works are less frequently read.” Smith remains relevant even today because his two seminal works address some of the fundamental questions we have tried to answer and continue to ponder; e.g., What are the origins of morality? Are we selfish, or are we benevolent? How do you understand the forces of national wealth? What makes a nation happy and productive? While comparing Adam Smith's take on the then East India Company's monopoly business empire over the Indian colony and the unfolding Adani empire saga, it is clear that the great man would have been aghast at what has come to pass in the name of the free market economy.

The writer is a PhD in Civil Engineering from the University of Michigan and is currently based in Hong Kong, working for an ESG-focused prop-tech startup.

SPECTRUM HYDRO-DIPLOMACY

Revitalising Indus Water Treaty

The only example of a water sharing agreement between two arch rivals that defies the ‘water war’ hypothesis is being put to modification by its own signatory member. When India issued a notice for modification of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) to Pakistan on 25 January, Pakistan observers incorrectly termed it India's weaponisation of water. What has prompted India to modify the treaty, which has survived full scale wars, proxy wars, Parliament attack, surgical strikes, and above and beyond hostile posture of 62 years between two belligerent neighbours?

From the outset, let's be clear that India is not asking for unilateral scrapping of the treaty as erroneously put forward. Understandably, since Parliament attack in 2001 as a knee jerk reaction to any hostile activities of Pakistan, the allies and members of the successive NDA governments (I, II & III) usually remarked on the abrogation of the IWT. The modifications and or amendments to the IWT are absolutely plausible only by the consent of both parties to the treaty. The role of the World Bank is not as a party but as a guarantor or facilitator or independent arbitrator of the IWT.

Once a former foreign secretary of India wrote that the IWT was a triumph, but a triumph of the lesser evil. The 1960 IWT provides India unrestricted access to use of waters in eastern rivers - Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, and their tributaries. India is also allowed to use waters of western rivers - Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, and their tributaries - without consuming them and in a way that doesn't obstruct the flow of rivers to Pakistan.

In fact, the Parliament Standing Committee on Water Resources in 2021 in its Report - Flood Management and International Treaties - has recommended that the IWT must be reconsulted to address new realities in the Indus basin. In 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also formed an inter-ministerial panel for reviewing the IWT under public pressure. When the treaty was negotiated for almost 9 years, the focus was on allocation of rivers and their waters. The quantity supersedes the quality. The Committee has recommended to the government of India that there is a need to re-negotiate the treaty so as to establish some kind of institutional structure or legislative framework to address the impact of

climate change on water availability in the Indus basin and other challenges. As written in the treaty, the IWT can be reviewed from time to time with consent from both parties.

Since 2005, India's unilateral initiatives of run-of-the river hydel projects - 900 MW Baglihar hydro power on Chenab, 330 MW Kishenganga hydropower on Jhelum and 850 MW Ratle hydropower on Chenab, which are compliant with the IWT as claimed by India, have been delayed, stalled or referred to as external intervention by Pakistan. Under the IWT, the Indus Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) that meets annually in alternate countries' venues has been unable to resolve bilaterally most technical aspects of the disagreements. India perceives the existing mechanism as the PIC has either ineffective or failed to address the bilateral concerns.

After removal of Article 370, the credibility of leadership in the Modi government to deliver in Kashmir is being closely watched. The government argues that most of these hydel projects if completed in time would boost holistic development of Kashmir valley. While Modi wants the developmental

projects to be completed as soon as possible, the provisions of IWT have derailed the projects. The government sees that the treaty restricts its manoeuvre capacity over construction of dams. Getting rid of such provisions in IWT would be beneficial to the government. Also, many in the government aim to get away with this last harbinger of cooperative functionality agreement with Pakistan.

There is a loss of trust when it comes to water quantity flowing in rivers from India to Pakistan. Pakistan considers dam building by India in upper stretches would cause flooding, droughts, water scarcity, and disruption of energy supplies. This is precisely perceived by India against Chinese dam building in Brahmaputra. While India considers that both countries have the potential to resolve the technical aspects bilaterally, Pakistan, on the other hand, being lower riparian and due to its high dependence on Indus River System as its only lifeline, conceives that it may not protect its national interest if negotiating alone with India.

The writer is Principal Scientist at Peri-urban Initiative, IIT Madras and a Senior Fellow at SSPC.

Healing of ozone layer

Sir, It is surprising news that the ozone recovery is on track, according to the quadrennial assessment study published recently by the Scientific Assessment Panel to the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances. UN scientists and environmentalists have lauded efforts to close the ozone hole as one of humanity's greatest ecological triumphs for decades. The recovery of the ozone layer serves as evidence of our ability to bring about significant change. The majority of people thought it was impossible, so it is a remarkable achievement. The world is now protected from the potentially disastrous effects of ultraviolet radiation thanks to the ozone layer, which is currently recovering. The ozone layer is also necessary for the existence of humans and other living things because it traps enough solar energy to act as an atmospheric blanket. A panel of experts supported by the UN ruled that the ozone layer is on track to regenerate within four decades thanks to the global phaseout of ozone-depleting substances. The effort to close the ozone hole, which was made possible by the 1987 Montreal Protocol, which forbade a set of chemicals frequently found in refrigerants and aerosols, has been hailed by scientists and environmentalists as one of humanity's greatest ecological triumphs. If present policies are followed, it is anticipated that the ozone layer will return to 1980 levels (before the ozone hole appeared) by 2066 over the Antarctic, 2045 over the Arctic, and 2040 for the rest of the planet. The ozone layer is also responsible for the present climatic change that we are experiencing, including the current heatwave and floods that are a result of global warming. We continue to worry about the difficult process of regenerating the ozone layer. The ozone layer must therefore always be monitored since its recovery will have a significant positive impact on the global climate and ecosystem.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

In the dock

Sir, BCCI chief selector Chetan Sharma finds himself in the dock after revealing classified selection matters during a sting operation conducted by a TV channel. Sharma, who the BCCI recently reinstated after being removed following India's poor show in the T20 World Cup in Australia, was seen during the sting operation casting aspersions on players like Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah. Sharma also revealed his internal discussions with head coach Rahul Dravid and Virat Kohli. The development must come as an embarrassment to the BCCI.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

of the day quote

Due to such a large population, water security is an important concern for India. It is a shared responsibility of all of us

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Amit Shah can say anything but he and his BJP are afraid of opposition unity. I have met Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and earlier met with Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren and discussed the current political issues of the country. We are continuously meeting with opposition leaders

TEJASHWI YADAV | BIHAR DEPUTY CM

Economic challenges which are even today prevalent in terms of fuel and fertilisers are coming down a bit, but even then it is a factor beyond us. These are the primary concerns

NIRAMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Adani row: One more PIL filed in SC

New Delhi: A fresh PIL was filed Thursday in the Supreme Court seeking a probe by multiple central government agencies under the supervision of a panel or a former apex court judge against the Adani Group of companies following allegations of fraud and share price manipulation made by the US-based Hindenburg Research. A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud is already seized of as many as three PILs alleging exploitation of innocent investors and "artificial crashing" of the Adani Group's stock value, and they are listed for hearing Friday.

Cricketer Prithvi Shaw manhandled

Mumbai: Indian cricketer Prithvi Shaw was allegedly manhandled and his car attacked with a baseball bat outside a luxury hotel at Santacruz in Mumbai following an argument with a woman social media influencer and her male friend after the player refused to click selfies with her, police officials said Thursday. The incident took place in the early hours of Wednesday, they said, adding that the social media influencer, Sapna Gill, was arrested in this connection Thursday evening, while her friend Shobhit Thakur and six others were booked on the charge of rioting and extortion.

Three trampled to death by elephant

Gorakhpur (UP): An elephant at a religious event here went rogue Thursday, fatally trampling two women and a four-year-old boy at a village here, police said. The incident took place in Mohammadpur Mafi village in Chhatala police station area, they said. A yajna was being conducted and everyone was singing hymns when suddenly an elephant got agitated and created a ruckus, fatally trampling two women and the boy, the police said.

Maurya alleges murderous attack

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party leader Swami Prasad Maurya has written a letter to the Lucknow Police Commissioner, alleging murderous attack by Mahant Raju Das and his supporters. Maurya said that Mahant Raju Das, Mahant Paramhans Das and their supporters of Tapasvi Chawni tried to attack him in Lucknow with swords and axes. He has also demanded security, referring to the threat given by Raju Das in the past when Das had declared a reward for beheading Maurya.

Cong seeks probe into Israeli firm's 'use' in elections

Congress spokespersons Pawan Khera and Supriya Shrinat drew similarities between "Team Jorge", the Israeli team of contractors, and the IT cell of the ruling BJP in spreading misinformation and "fake news" in order to influence the country's electoral process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Congress Thursday demanded a probe into the the alleged use of an Israeli team of contractors to interfere in Indian elections and asked the government to break its silence on the matter.

At a press conference here, Congress spokespersons Pawan Khera and Supriya Shrinat drew similarities between "Team Jorge", the Israeli team of contractors, and the IT cell of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in spreading misinformation and "fake news" in order to influence the country's electoral process.

They also alleged that the data of Indians is being compromised. "Team Jorge", which is feared to have interfered with more than 30 elections around the world, has been linked with a software to operate fake social media campaigns across countries, including India, a report said Wednesday.

"We have seen a pattern in India. We want the government to break its silence and say what has been its contribution in saving democracy in the country," Shrinat said, asserting that it is the Centre's job to give a reply when an international agency has made out such a serious allegation.

"This impacts India's electoral process directly and there should be a probe," she said. "If the government is not doing anything on this, it means it is seeking help to interfere in the country's democracy and elections. The data of Indians is being compromised by handing it over to a foreign firm," the Congress's social media department head alleged.

Shrinat said this is not the first time that allegations of data theft have been levelled against the Narendra Modi government. "One of the serious charges that this government faces is data theft and data manipulation to actually

tamper with the electoral process. You saw what happened in Karnataka. This government is known to play with big data to its advantage. This is nothing but a murder of democracy," she alleged.

Shrinat also accused the BJP's IT cell of often indulging in such activities by "militarising or weaponising" rumours by spreading those further and said this is leading to bad results in the society and hence, questions will be asked. Khera alleged that India's democracy is being "hijacked" by the country's ruling party.

"An Israeli agency's help is being taken to influence the country's democracy. Sitting in India, they are conspiring against India's democracy along with other countries," he said.

Khera also wondered if the BJP used a network of foreign hackers to interfere in Indian elections and recalled that there were allegations of using Cambridge Analytica (CA) and then Pegasus by the Modi government to meddle in the country's political system by spreading misinformation on digital media.

"Is there a link between Post Card News and Team Jorge - a team of Israeli contractors who claim to have manipulated more than 30 elections around the world using hacking, sabotage and automated disinformation on social media?" he asked.

"The pattern of disinformation and fake news campaigns being adopted by the Israelis is mirrored by the ruling BJP very distinctly," the Congress leader alleged, adding that an innocuous social media account puts out "disinformation", which is amplified by the "right-wing ecosystem", including BJP office-bearers, MPs, MLAs and ministers.

"Is it not a fact that the BJP used fake news to repeatedly target the Bharat Jodo Yatra in the last four-five months and was always caught?"

"Will the Modi government investigate the latest scandal that has hit the Indian political spectrum, involving yet again foreign contractors indulging in sophisticated hacking, sabotage and automated disinformation on social media?" he asked.

In an international investigation carried by a group of journalists, including those from "The Guardian" newspaper in the United Kingdom, the so-called "Team Jorge" unit has been linked with allegedly offering a sophisticated software package named Advanced Impact Media Solutions (AIMS) to its commercial clients as one of its key services.



From highly sophisticated areas like defence, aerospace to manufacturing of mobile phones, India has been emerging as the most favoured destination

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

'ONE NATION, ONE ORGAN ALLOCATION'

The Union Health Ministry is working on a 'One Nation, One Organ Allocation' policy in consultation with states to come up with uniform guidelines for registration, allocation and other aspects of the process, official sources said



EXAM TIME: Students leave after appearing for the Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad's Class 12 examination, at a college in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh

Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar to be new Vice Chief of Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar has been appointed as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff, while incumbent Lt Gen B S Raju will take charge as South Western Army Commander, official sources said Thursday.

Lt Gen Rashim Bali has been appointed as the commander of Leh-based 14 Corps which takes care of security along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China in the Ladakh sector, they said.



Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta, the current commander of the 14 Corps, will become the new Chief of Staff of Udhampur headquartered Northern Command, the sources said. They said Lt Gen Raju, at present serving as the Vice Chief of Army Staff, has been appointed as South Western Army Commander. Lt Gen NSR Subramani, currently the Chief of Staff at the headquarters of the Northern Command in Udhampur, has been promoted to the rank of Army Commander and appointed as the next Central Army Commander.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: A city court Thursday dismissed the bail applications of five accused in a Delhi excise policy-related money laundering case, noting it was not possible to hold they will make no attempt to tamper with the evidence if released.

Special Judge M K Nagpal denied the relief to Vijay Nair, Sameer Mahendru, Sharath Reddy, Abhishek Boinpally and Benoy Babu, saying that further investi-

Over 81% turnout in Tripura election



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, Feb 16: Tripura recorded over 81 per cent polling till 4 pm in the one-day election to the 60-member Tripura Assembly Thursday, a senior EC official said.

The voting percentage will increase as around 50,000 voters are still standing in queues at the polling stations to exercise their franchise, the official said.

"Till 4 pm, an average 81.11 per cent polling was recorded in all the 60 Assembly constituencies, while around 50,000 voters are still in queues when the report came in last," additional chief electoral officer U J Mog told PTI. Voters who are in the queues and took tokens by 4 pm will be allowed to cast their votes even after 6 pm or beyond, he added. In the 2018 Assembly election voting had continued beyond the stipulated time till 9.30 pm and the overall turnout was 79 per cent.

In the 2018 Assembly election voting had continued beyond the stipulated time till 9.30 pm and the overall turnout was 79 per cent

Bru refugees who resettled in the state recently took part in the polling for the first time. Of the total 37,136 Bru population in the state 14,005 are eligible to vote.

Police said three CPI(M) activists were injured in two incidents.

"Three CPI(M) activists were injured in two separate attacks at Kakraban in Gomati district and Boxanagar in Sepahijala district. The EC received some complaints and reports of threats and intimidation to the voters. These were addressed in a professional manner," Mog said.

Nikki's family demands trial at fast-track court

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jhajjar (Haryana)/New Delhi, Feb 16: The family members of Nikki Yadav, whose partner Sahil Gehlot had strangled her to death and stuffed her body inside a refrigerator on the day of his marriage to another woman, Thursday demanded a fast-track court trial in the case.

Praveen Yadav, the uncle of Nikki, who was cremated at her village in Jhajjar on Wednesday evening, alleged that the police are "misleading" the family and the public. "The case should be heard at a fast-track



court and the culprit should be hanged. The police are trying to mislead us. Nikki was living at a hostel, she was not in a live-in relationship. The accused should be given capital punishment," he said. In the ghastly incident, similar to that of the Shraddha Walkar murder, Nikki, who was residing at a rented accommodation in west Delhi, was strangled to death with a mobile charging cable by accused Gehlot, hours before his wedding to another woman fixed by his parents, February 10.

Court dismisses bail pleas of five accused

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: A city court Thursday dismissed the bail applications of five accused in a Delhi excise policy-related money laundering case, noting it was not possible to hold they will make no attempt to tamper with the evidence if released.

Special Judge M K Nagpal denied the relief to Vijay Nair, Sameer Mahendru, Sharath Reddy, Abhishek Boinpally and Benoy Babu, saying that further investi-

gation, including the role of other persons involved in commission of alleged offences and to trace the complete trail of ill-gotten money, was still pending. "Keeping in view their (accused) conduct as reflected on record it will not be possible for this court to hold that they will make no attempt to tamper with the evidence of this case in case they are permanently released on bail as serious allegations of tampering with evidence by way of destruction or change of their mobile phones various times have already



been made by the ED against them...

"And further even the specific allegations of destruction of digital data have also been levelled against the accused Reddy," the judge said. The court said the fact

that the accused were involved in a case of economic offence could not be "totally ignored as the economic offences have been held to be constituting a class apart as the same tend to destroy the economic fabric of the nation". Further, the above fact assumes more importance when the accused is found to be involved in a case of money laundering as the Prevention of Money Laundering Act imposes certain restrictions on powers of the court to release an accused on bail in such a case, the judge said.

Court upholds man's divorce over cruelty by wife

THE DELHI HIGH COURT DISMISSED AN APPEAL FILED BY THE WOMAN CHALLENGING THE FAMILY COURT'S ORDER GRANTING DIVORCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

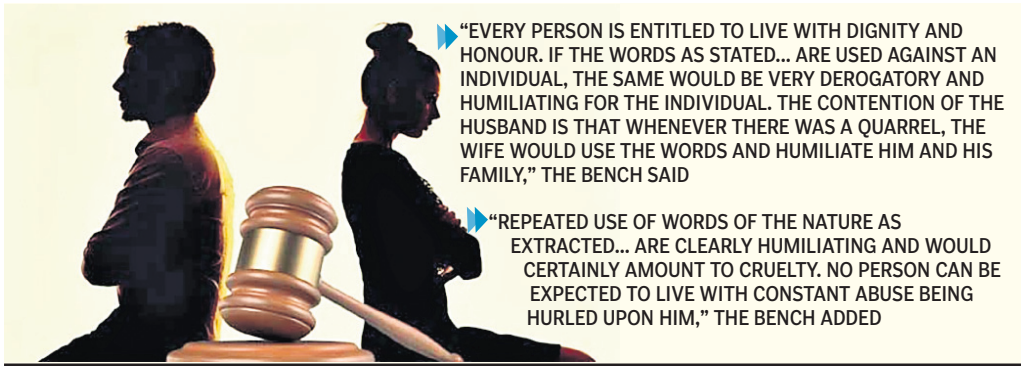
New Delhi, Feb 16: Every person is entitled to live with dignity and honour and no one is expected to live with constant abuse being hurled upon him, the Delhi High Court has held while upholding the divorce decree granted to a man on the ground of cruelty by his estranged wife.

The high court dismissed an appeal filed by the woman challenging the family court's order granting divorce and said there was no infirmity in the findings of the trial court that the man has been treated with cruelty.

"We are also satisfied that the

cruelty that has been proved on record is sufficient and constitutes cruelty as required under Section 13(1)(i-a) of the Hindu Marriage Act. Consequently, we find no infirmity in the judgment allowing the petition and granting divorce on the ground of cruelty. We, accordingly, find no merit in the appeal. The appeal is consequently, dismissed," a bench of Justices Sanjeev Sachdeva and Vikas Mahajan said.

The high court said the conduct of the wife which has been proved on record is of such quality, magnitude and impact as would have caused mental agony, pain, anger and suffering to the husband on a regular and continuous basis and thus



clearly amounting to cruelty.

"Every person is entitled to live with dignity and honour. If the words as stated... Are used against

an individual, the same would be very derogatory and humiliating for the individual. The contention of the husband is that whenever

there was a quarrel, the wife would use the words and humiliate him and his family. "Repeated use of words of the nature as extracted...

Are clearly humiliating and would certainly amount to cruelty. No person can be expected to live with constant abuse being hurled upon him," the bench said. It also rejected the contention of the woman's counsel that specific dates and time as to when the alleged cruelty has taken place were not mentioned. The high court said this would lose its significance as the man, in his evidence, has stated that whenever a quarrel would take place the woman would use those words against him and his family, which implies that those words have been used repeatedly over the period when they were together.



MEHRAULI DEMOLITION

Provide tents, food: Kejriwal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday directed the South district administration to provide families affected by the recent DDA demolition drive in Mehrauli with tents, food and other basic amenities, officials said. This comes two days after Lt Governor V K Saxena directed the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to stop demolitions in Mehrauli and Ladha Sarai villages till further instructions. The DDA, which comes under the BJP-led government at the Centre, had launched the demolition drive in the Mehrauli Archaeological Park area February 10, triggering protests by locals

According to officials, the area has about 55 monuments under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India, the state archaeology department and the DDA

Park area on February 10, triggering protests by locals. "CM Arvind Kejriwal has issued directions to provide affected families with tents, food and blankets along with other basic amenities. He has directed the

district administration to immediately jump into action and ensure that no family is hassled," a government official said.

The demolition drive came a month ahead of a proposed G20 meeting in South Delhi. According to officials, the area has about 55 monuments under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India, the state archaeology department and the DDA.

Revenue Minister Kailash Gahlot said the matter of demarcation of Mehrauli Archaeological Park in Ladha Sarai came to his notice when he received a representation signed by two residents of the area. "I held a meeting with DM (South) on February 10 when it (I) was informed that the demarcation was carried out in December 2021 on the request of the DDA," he said in an official communication. The minister said he was also told that the affected people were not informed about the demarcation exercise.

According to officials, the DDA used the revenue department's demarcation as the basis for the demolition of alleged encroachments. The Delhi government on February 11 announced a fresh demarcation exercise in the area. The BJP has demanded Gahlot's resignation citing the demarcation exercise carried out by his department.

One man's trash is another man's treasure

GANAAIE, WHO IS ALSO AN ADVOCATE, STARTED OUT LAST YEAR BY CONVINCING THE VILLAGERS TO BUILD GARBAGE PITS IN THEIR HOUSES TO ENSURE THAT SOLID WASTE DOES NOT GET OUT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Anantnag (J&K), Feb 16: One man's trash is another man's treasure - not just a fanciful idea but a maxim to save the environment for village headman Farooq Ahmad Ganaie who gives out gold coins in exchange for polythene to prevent household plastic waste being dumped into fields and water bodies.

"If we do not pay attention to cleanliness, you won't find any clean source of water of fertile land within the next 10 years," Ganaie, sarpanch of Sadiwara-A village in Hiller area here, said. "While there is a lot of focus on cleanliness from the government and the administration, the citizens will also have to contribute their bit," he said.

Ganaie, who is also an advocate, started out last year by convincing



TURNING GARBAGE INTO GOLD

the villagers to build garbage pits in their houses to ensure that solid waste does not get out. "However, polythene remained a cause of concern as it does not decompose even in garbage pits. That's when I thought of the idea - bring polythene, take gold. "We now give a gold coin to those who bring us 20 quintals of polythene," he said. "Those who bring less than 20 quintals of polythene will also be suitably rewarded, maybe a silver coin," he added.

The youth of the area have formed a club which helps in implementing innovative ideas for the betterment of society. "Our area has been completely transformed in the past one year. Earlier, there was polythene strewn on the roads but that's not the case now," said Mohsin Amin, a volunteer of the Youth Club. Ganaie's novel idea may soon be replicated across villages in Anantnag. "This model will be incentivised and implemented in all panchayats of the district so that our villages are garbage-free and polythene-free," said Assistant

Commissioner Development (ACD), Anantnag, Riyaz Ahmad Shah. He said though the idea was conceived by the Sadiwara-A panchayat, the district administration has extended all support. Shah said the administration is working on solid waste management in the district. "We have started door-to-door waste collection and provided community dustbins and household dustbins. The construction of drains, compost pits and soakage pits is being undertaken. We have constructed over 60,000 compost pits in the district," he said.

2023 significant for Delhi police: Shah

G20 SUMMIT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday asserted that 2023 will be a significant year for the Delhi police as the force will have to stay alert for the upcoming G20 summit to be attended by international dignitaries from across the world. Speaking at the 76th Raising Day parade of the Delhi police, he also paid tributes to ASI Shambhu Dayal, who was stabbed to death by a snatcher in west Delhi's Mayapuri last month. "I pay tribute to ASI Shambhu Dayal whose supreme sacrifice brought tears to everyone's eyes," he said.

Dayal (57) was stabbed multiple times by a man he nabbed for allegedly snatching a mobile phone in Mayapuri. Dayal fought for his life for four days, but succumbed to injuries on January 8. The home minister also inaugurated Delhi police's 'mPassport Seva' initiative. "People living in Delhi will no longer have to worry about their passports as they will now get police clearance within five days as against the earlier 15 days," he said. Shah said with India as-



Delhi police's women contingent marches past during the 76th Raising Day parade of the Delhi police, at the New Police Lines, in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

The year 2023 is very important for the Delhi police. From the point of view of security and traffic system during the G20 summit, the city police will have to stay alert since the heads of several countries will be here

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

suming the presidency of G20, the year of 2023 assumes significance. "The year 2023 is very important for the Delhi police. From the point of view of security and traffic system during the G20 summit, the city police will have

to stay alert since the heads of several countries will be here," he said. He added that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the humane side of Delhi police was seen by everyone as the personnel helped elderly

and other vulnerable sections of the society. "During this time, many security personnel also lost their lives," the minister added. The Union Minister also said that after the revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution in 2019, Kashmir has seen a huge change with reduction in terror activities and resumption of tourism. He asserted that incidents of left-wing extremism and insurgency in the north-east have also seen a significant decline.

Delhi govt set to relocate air quality monitoring stations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Delhi government is considering relocating some of its continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations (CAAQMS) to be able to provide a "real picture" of the air pollution situation in the capital, officials have said. A total of 50 air quality monitoring stations -- 10 manual and 40 real-time -- cover Delhi, which has an area of 1,484 sq km. The Delhi Pollution Control Committee operates 24 monitoring stations. Officials aware of the development said some of the CAAQMS are located in areas having heavy traffic flow, right next to a bus stand or a major construction site which means they continuously report higher readings. "This doesn't show the real picture. This is not the case in the entire city. So, we will try and relocate some of the CAAQMS to neutral lo-

A total of 50 air quality monitoring stations -- 10 manual and 40 real-time -- cover Delhi, which has an area of 1,484 sq km

cations. A proper study will be done to identify new locations," an official of the environment department said. Citing the example of the Anand Vihar CAAQMS, the official said the monitoring stations is located right in the middle of a Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project. Some large areas such as Najafgarh have got just one CAAQMS and are under-represented. After this exercise, all areas, be it industrial, residential or agricultural, will have proper representation in Delhi's air quality, the official said. He clarified that no new stations will be added.



‘Radio Sharda’ helps Kashmiri Pandits reconnect with their roots

THE RADIO STATION WHICH BAGGED TWO NATIONAL AWARDS FOR COMMUNITY RADIO IN 2018 AND 2019 HAS NEVER STOPPED TRANSMISSION SINCE THE BEGINNING OF ITS OPERATION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Feb 16: A Jammu-based community radio station, 'Radio Sharda', has become the "voice of Kashmiri Pandits" as community members from across the globe tune into it to connect to their roots and culture. "We are connecting Kashmiri Pandits living in India and 108 other countries through this community radio station. It is a household name in the community because of its programmes on Kashmiri culture, history, music, bhajans and issues confronting the community," Founder Director of Radio Sharda Ramesh Hangloo said.



Kashmiri Pandits who were forced to leave their homes after the spread of terrorism in the valley in 1990 have found a voice through the radio as it speaks not just about their culture but about their issues too, he said. The slogan of Radio Sharda 90.4 FM is 'Booziv Te Khosh Rooziv' (Listen and Be Happy), he said. "Those who get uprooted need to be connected to their roots and our service helps them with that," he said. Radio Sharda began operations

in December 2011 to connect the Kashmiri Pandit community to its roots and preserve, promote and propagate culture, music, and knowledge about Kashmir among the next generation. "I bought a radio especially to hear Radio Sharda. It gives me peace of mind. I switch on Radio Sharda at 7 am every day to hear Kashmiri bhajans and other programmes afterwards," an 82-year-old listener, Avtar Krishen Bhat said. "It brings old memories of Kashmir back to my mind and

make me feel that I am still living in my home in the valley," Avtar said. Like him, the young Kashmiri Pandits listen to community radio's Kashmiri songs. "I love its foundation slogan - Booziv Te Khosh Rooziv. I tune into the radio station on my mobile and cherish Kashmiri songs," a 19-year Kashmiri Pandit student Shivansh Raina said. The radio also acts as an information dissemination centre. The Kashmiri Pandits who stay away from home had contacted the radio station to get information about their kin in the valley after the abrogation of provisions of Article 370 and, during the Kashmir floods in 2014, Hangloo said. The radio station which bagged two national awards for Community Radio in 2018 and 2019 has never stopped transmission since the beginning of its operation. The radio will be airing a 'live herath' pooja on the occasion of Kashmiri Pandits' biggest festival, Maha Shivratri known as 'Herath' in Kashmir. It will be celebrated on February 17-18. While the significance of the festival changes from place to place, for Kashmiri Hindus, it is the day of the divine wedding of Lord Shiva with Mata Parvati called 'Harratri'.

HO HO BUSES SET FOR COMEBACK



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Hop-on Hop-off (Ho Ho) buses are all set to make a comeback on Delhi's roads with the city government planning to revive them in the lead up to a G-20 summit here. A senior official said the modalities still need to be worked out but they are seeing March or April for the launch. "We are still thinking whether we will launch it in partnership with DTC or bring on board a private operator who can run the bus for us. We plan to have electric buses for the scheme to resume since it will send out a positive message and they will be comfortable also," said the official. Another official said the buses are likely to ply on two routes covering monuments in old and south Delhi while the frequency is likely to be an hour, keeping in mind the unpredictable traffic situation in Delhi. He said initially they plan to have at least eight such buses and the maximum number could be up to 15.

of the day **QUOTE**

After the death of my father, I and my mother are the only claimants of every asset of Ram Vilas Paswan. My uncle has nothing to do with it. If it is investigated properly, he may fall into trouble

CHIRAG PASWAN | **LOK JANSHAKTI PARTY-RAM VILAS PRESIDENT**

The thoughts of our saints should be translated into all languages as they are useful for the unity of the country because their message is same

MOHAN BHAGWAT | **RSS CHIEF**

Wherever required, one should criticise the government's policies, provide constructive suggestions. In democracy, criticism is a 'shuddhi yagna'. But the new tradition of aarop-pratyarop (allegations and counter-allegations) rather than criticism seen these days in these institutions is not proper for the constitutional democracy of the country

OM BIRLA | **LOK SABHA SPEAKER**

SHORT TAKES

Four infants die of 'cold' at kids home

Lucknow: The Superintendent of a government-run children's home here was suspended after the death of four infants in the last five days, allegedly due to cold, officials said Thursday. A magisterial inquiry has been ordered into the deaths and Kinshuk Tripathi, the superintendent of the home, issued a show-cause notice, District Probation Officer Vikash Singh said. Four infants reportedly died of cold between February 10-14 at the children's home located on Prag Narayan road. Women and child development minister Baby Rani Maurya disputed the allegation as "totally false."

Leopard spotted in court premises

Ghaziabad: Another leopard Thursday was spotted in the premises of a Ghaziabad court, barely 10 days after a big cat entered the same establishment and attacked three persons. According to lawyers, the leopard, suspected to have entered the District Court premises Wednesday, was seen on Thursday morning in a CCTV footage. Expressing concern over the frequent spotting of big cats, the Ghaziabad Bar Association Thursday called a strike.

Road crash in Raj leaves three dead

Jaipur: Three men on their way to a wedding function were killed when their car collided head-on with a state roadways bus in Rajasthan's Nagaur district, police said Thursday. The incident occurred near Hudeel Wednesday night. While two of the car occupants died on the spot, the third succumbed to injuries.

Train wheel catches fire near Mumbai

Mumbai: The wheel of a running local train caught fire near Asangaon station in Maharashtra's Thane district Thursday morning, with officials saying it happened due to "brake binding" and no passenger was injured. A video of the incident, which took place about 70 km away from Mumbai, went viral on social media wherein a passenger was seen jumping out of the train which had stopped.

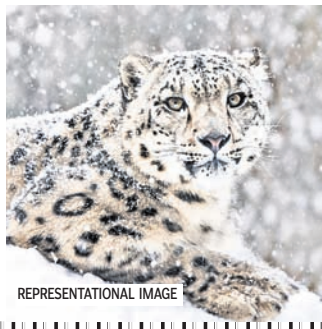


They (BJP) think: we are in power and can do whatever we feel like. But that cannot be done. I have to abide by the Constitution, go by the mandate of the people. But they don't care about people's mandate, their only mandate is dictatorship

MAMATA BANERJEE | **WEST BENGAL CM**

SNOW LEOPARD SPOTTED

A snow leopard has been sighted for the first time in the Darma valley in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district. A team of explorers in search of high-Himalayan fauna has spotted a solitary animal of this elusive species in a snowy terrain above Dar village on February 6, Pithoragarh Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Mohan Dagare said



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

I-T dept's survey at BBC offices ends

Opposition parties have denounced the I-T department action against the London-headquartered public broadcaster, terming it "political vendetta"

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Income Tax department's marathon "surveys" at BBC's offices ended Thursday, after clocking over 58 hours in total, as officials prepared an inventory of financial data from select staffers and collected digital and paper data.

The operation that began at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) offices in Delhi and Mumbai around 11:30 am Tuesday has ended in Mumbai and will be wound up at Delhi by tonight, sources said late on Thursday.

Tax authorities have made an inventory of the available stock, recorded the statement of some staffers and have impounded some documents as part of the survey action that continued for three days clocking about 57-58 hours, officials told PTI.



FILE PHOTO

FRESH PIL IN APEX COURT

A fresh PIL was filed Thursday in the Supreme Court challenging the Centre's decision to block the BBC documentary. The top court is already seized of two pleas filed by veteran journalist N Ram, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra, activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan and lawyer M L Sharma on the issue. On February 3, a bench comprising justices Sanjiv Khanna and M M Sundresh had taken note of the two pleas and directed the central government to produce original records related to its decision to block the documentary on the riots. The matters are now listed for hearing in April. The fresh third plea has been filed by Mukesh Kumar, who claims to be a social worker, through lawyers Roopesh Singh Bhadauria and Mareesh Pravir Sahay. Lawyer Bhadauria also heads the legal cell of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC). The plea has sought quashing of the "impugned Notification dated January 20, 2023 passed by the Ministry of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021".

The survey was carried out to investigate issues related to international taxation and transfer pricing of BBC subsidiary companies, they had said.

The I-T teams, it is understood, sought answers on financial transactions, the company structure and other details about the news company, and copied data from

Sukesh again arrested by ED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar in a fresh money laundering case linked to duping former Religare promoter Malvinder Singh's wife by posing as Union home and law secretaries.

Chandrashekhar, 33, was taken into custody under criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) from a local jail on Thursday evening and a Delhi court later sent him to nine-day ED custody.

The federal probe agency had sought 14-day custody of the alleged conman from the court of Additional Sessions Judge Shailender Malik.



Giving details, the spokesman said troops deployed in an anti-infiltration grid detected movement of three terrorists across the LoC while they were approaching the LoC fence.

Shashi Tharoor rules out contesting CWC polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Thursday virtually ruled out contesting the CWC polls if the party decides to hold them, saying he is not considering any further elections after having fought the AICC presidential polls and it is "for others to step forward".

In an exclusive interview with PTI on the Congress' upcoming plenary session in Chhattisgarh's Raipur, Tharoor said the convention comes at an "inflection point" in the party's history as it is being held after the presidential polls and the Bharat Jodo Yatra, and ahead of the 2024 elections.

The Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram said the plenary could not have come at a more opportune time and gives the party members an opportunity to focus on what "we have gained" and what faces the party in terms of challenges for the future.

Asked if it was essential for the party to have polls for the Congress

Working Committee (CWC) at the party's plenary session and if he had raised this issue with the party leadership, Tharoor said, "I had made the point that elections are healthy for the party and participated in one election myself and now that I have lost, I don't think it is my business to tell the party leadership what to do. Let them take the steps that they judge are appropriate."

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor contested the Congress presidential polls last October but lost to Mallikarjun Kharge

He stressed the majority view in the All India Congress Committee (AICC) is the view that will prevail. "I am fairly confident that if a majority of the delegates want an election they will hold one and if the majority feels that they would rather not rock the boat at this time and just move ahead, then that too will be a possible option," the former Union minister said.

"I just feel that by having contested once, making my point and not winning the majority, or not even coming close to the majority of delegates, I have in a sense forfeited the right to keep demanding the same thing," he said.



SHOWING CREATIVITY: Folk artistes perform during the inauguration of 'Aadi Mahotsav' - National Tribal Festival, at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi

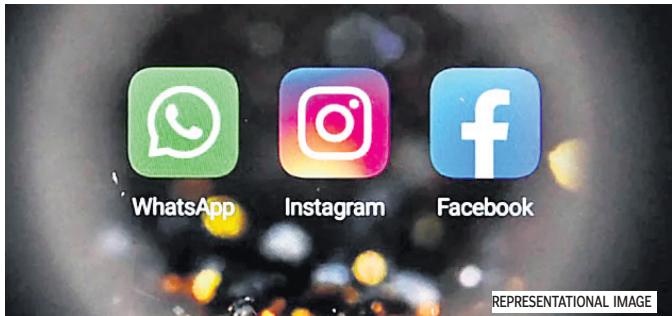
'2,767 complaints against influencers, Insta tops violations'

More than half of the violations have been found on Meta-owned Instagram platform, while Alphabet's Youtube contributed a third of them, the self-regulatory organisation for the advertising industry said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 16: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) Thursday said it has processed 2,767 complaints since coming up with influencer guidelines in May 2021.

The body said in over 90 per cent of the cases, there were modifications required. "...The Central Consumer Protection Authorities also now require disclosure of material connection between brands and influencers. Hence, non-disclosures are potential violations of the law," the body's chief executive and secretary general Manisha Kapoor said. In FY22, the total



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

number of violations stood at 1,592, with virtual digital assets like bitcoins topping with nearly 24 per cent, and followed closely by personal care category which accounted for 23 per cent.

In the first nine months of FY23 (April-December 2022), there were 1,175 complaints received with personal care category topping by contributing a third of them, followed by food and beverage at 16 per cent.

Eating almonds daily may improve diabetes risk factors: Study

The research, published in the journal Frontiers in Nutrition, found that eating almonds daily for 12 weeks reduced insulin resistance, improved pancreatic function, and helped control blood glucose levels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Eating almonds regularly may lead to improvements in both body weight and blood sugar in overweight and obese people, according to a study. The group given almonds also achieved significant reductions in body weight, body mass index (BMI), and waist circumference over the intervention period and lowered their total cholesterol, the researchers said.

"Our almond consumers had improvements to both body weight and blood sugar," said Viswanathan

Mohan, president and chief of diabetes research at Madras Diabetes Research Foundation in Chennai, and one of the study authors.

"Obesity is a health problem seen around the world, and we know obesity raises the risk of chronic diseases, like type 2 diabetes. We also know this is a complex problem, tightly interwoven with diabetes, and we think we have identified a rather simple solution," Mohan said in a statement.

Gayathri Rajagopal, PhD scholar at the University of Madras, and first author on the study, noted that almond eaters demonstrated



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

enhanced function of their beta cells, which are the cells in the pancreas that make insulin.

"This is substantial for people with prediabetes and suggests the potential for regular almond consumption to delay onset of dia-

betes. Besides that, we know almonds increase satiety making them a healthy snack for people predisposed to type 2 diabetes," Rajagopal said.

The researchers also found that people participating in the al-

mond intervention had better levels of total cholesterol and triglycerides - both of which are very important to manage obesity and diabetes.

Nuts like almonds are a healthy dietary component that could reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease as well, they said.

The study was conducted on 400 participants aged 25-65 years with a body mass index over 23 kilograms per square metre (kg/m2).

Researchers used BMI guidelines from the World Health Organization - Western Pacific Region stating that over 23 kg/m2 corresponds to overweight and over 25 kg/m2 to obese. Participants had central obesity, dyslipidemia i.e. Imbalance of blood lipids, such as cholesterol, family history of diabetes, normal blood pressure as well as hyper-

tension, and they routinely consumed mid-morning snacks.

A subsample of 126 participants was asked to wear a continuous glucose monitor for 14 consecutive days.

Researchers found that participants in the almond treatment group had improvement in their beta cell function, reduced insulin resistance and lowered total cholesterol.

In addition, these participants had significant reductions in body weight, BMI, waist circumference, glucose, and triglycerides over 12 weeks, they said.

The almond intervention participants also consumed 13 per cent fewer carbohydrates, increased calories from fat, and experienced increased intakes of protein, monounsaturated fat, and dietary fibre.

international

of the day quote

When we look at the Indo-Pacific, we certainly see Fiji as a very important partner with whom we have a historic link



S JAISHANKAR | INDIA'S EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

My position is that both can be ratified now. But the main issue is not whether they are ratified together, the main issue is that Finland and Sweden are ratified as soon as possible



JENS STOLTENBERG | NATO SECRETARY-GENERAL

Every day we're told America is flawed, rotten, and full of hate. Joe and Kamala even say America is racist. Nothing could be further from the truth. Take it from me, America is not a racist country



NIKKI HALEY | REPUBLICAN LEADER

SHORT TAKES

6 dead in Egypt road crash

Cairo: At least six people were killed on Thursday when a pickup truck and a minibus collided near Egypt's eastern city of Ismailia, health officials said. Three others were injured in the crash. Among the dead were five Palestinians, between 20 and 50 years of age, and one Egyptian, the local ambulance service said in a statement. According to Egyptian media, the five Palestinian passengers were heading to Rafah, Egypt's official border crossing with the Gaza Strip.

SK revives 'enemy' label for North

Seoul (South Korea): South Korea called North Korea "our enemy" in its biennial defence document published Thursday, reviving the label for its rival for the first time in six years, as tensions worsen between the two. North Korea conducted an unprecedented number of missile tests in 2022, including simulated nuclear attacks on South Korea. In response, South Korea's conservative government led by President Yoon Suk Yeol has been seeking a stronger U.S. security commitment and boosting its own military capabilities.

Two dead in helicopter crash

Montgomery (US): A Black Hawk helicopter from the Tennessee National Guard crashed Wednesday in Alabama, killing two crew members, the Tennessee National Guard said. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of two Tennessee National Guardsmen, and our prayers are with their families during this heartbreaking tragedy," Brig. Gen. Warner Ross, Tennessee's Adjutant General, said in a statement. "We ask Tennesseans to join us in supporting their families during this time of unthinkable grief."

1 killed, 3 injured

El Paso: One person was killed and three more were wounded on Wednesday in a shooting at a shopping mall in El Paso, Texas, adding to the dozens of people already killed this year in mass shootings across the United States. El Paso police said hours after the gunfire that two people had been taken into custody, though details of what led the shooting remained unclear. Interim police chief Peter Pacillas said that Cielo Vista Mall was still considered a crime scene, and that it would remain locked down until authorities had completed their investigation.

CHINESE BALLOON INCURSION

CHINA BLASTS US OVER RESPONSE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Feb 16: China's ceremonial parliament has accused



American law-makers of trampling on the sovereignty of other nations after the US passed a measure condemning a suspected Chinese spy balloon's intrusion into US airspace. The statement issued on Thursday by the National People's Congress's Foreign Affairs Committee repeated Beijing's insistence that the balloon was an unmanned civilian weather research airship, a claim the US has dismissed citing its flight route and payload of surveillance equipment.

While China at first expressed regret over the February 4 incident, it has toughened its rhetoric in a further sign of how badly rela-

tions between the sides have deteriorated in recent years. On Wednesday, the Foreign Ministry said it will take measures against

US entities somehow related to the downing of the balloon, without giving details.

The resolution earlier passed unanimously by the US House of Representatives "deliberately exaggerated the China threat," the Foreign Relations Committee statement said. That was "purely malicious hype and political manipulation," it said.

"Some US Congress politicians fanned the flames, fully exposing their sinister designs to oppose China and contain China." "In fact, it is the United States that wantonly interferes in other countries' internal affairs, violates their sovereignty, and conducts surveillance on other countries," it said.

China sanctions Lockheed Martin, Raytheon over Taiwan arms sales

THE UNITED STATES BARS MOST SALES OF WEAPONS-RELATED TECHNOLOGY TO CHINA, BUT SOME MILITARY CONTRACTORS ALSO HAVE CIVILIAN BUSINESSES IN AEROSPACE AND OTHER MARKETS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, Feb 16: China Thursday imposed trade and investment sanctions on Lockheed Martin and a unit of Raytheon for supplying weapons to Taiwan, stepping up efforts to isolate the island democracy claimed by the ruling Communist Party as part of its territory.

Lockheed Martin Corp. And Raytheon Technologies Corp.'s Raytheon Missiles and Defense are barred from importing goods into China or making new investments in the country, the Ministry of Commerce announced.

It said they were added to the "unreliable entity" list of companies whose activities are restricted because they might endanger national sovereignty, security or development interests. It wasn't clear what impact the penalties might have. The United States bars most sales of weapons-related technology to China, but some military contractors also have civilian businesses in aerospace and other markets.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war. The island of 22 million people never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the Communist Party says it is



◆ Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war. The island of 22 million people never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the Communist Party says it is obliged to unite with the mainland, by force if necessary

◆ Lockheed Martin Corp. And Raytheon Technologies Corp.'s Raytheon Missiles and Defense are barred from importing goods into China or making new investments in the country, the Ministry of Commerce announced

obliged to unite with the mainland, by force if necessary.

President Xi Jinping's government has stepped up efforts to intimidate Taiwan by flying fighter jets and bombers near the island and firing missiles into the sea.

The United States has no official relations with Taiwan but maintains extensive commercial and informal contacts. Washington is obligated by federal law to make sure the island's government has

aims to secure a much-needed USD 2.9 billion tranche from the Washington-based global lender. President Ranil Wickremesinghe has directed officials to ensure an uninterrupted power supply to customers after the tariff revision is implemented, a statement from the President's Media Division said.

The state power entity said that the power cuts ranging from one to 14 hours from January last year would end on Thursday. A 66 per cent tariff hike would be in effect, the second in the last six months. A 70 per cent rate increase was introduced in August last year.

The government opted for a cost-reflective tariff plan as dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Energy Minister



The country's redesigned currency would bolster the upcoming presidential election

MUHAMMADU BUHARI
| NIGERIAN PRESIDENT

POPES ARE FOR LIFE: POPE FRANCIS

Pope Francis has said that pontiffs resigning instead of ruling for life should not become a 'fashion' in the Roman Catholic Church and happen only in truly exceptional circumstances



LOST CHILDHOOD: Displaced Syrians sit at a temporary accommodation centre erected to support people affected by a devastating earthquake in Gaziantep, Turkey

AL QAEDA GETS NEW CHIEF

REUTERS

Dubai, Feb 16: Seif al-Adel, a former Egyptian special forces officer who is a high-ranking member of Al Qaeda with a \$10 million U.S. bounty on his head, is now the "uncontested" leader of the militant group, according to a new UN report on the organization.



Al Qaeda has not formally named a successor for Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was believed to have been killed in a U.S. missile strike in Kabul last year, dealing a blow to the organization since its founder Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011.

Although a U.S. intelligence official said in January that Zawahiri's succession remained unclear, the United Nations report assessing risks from the group said: "In discussions in November and December, many Member States took the view that Seif al-Adel is already operating as the de facto and uncontested leader of the group."

Zawahiri's death piled pressure on the group to choose a strategic leader who can carefully plan deadly operations and run a jihadi network, experts on al Qaeda say.

Unlike his slain predecessors who maintained a high profile with fiery videos broadcast around the globe threatening the United States, the experts say Adel planned attacks from the shadows as he helped turn al Qaeda into the world's deadliest militant group.

Adel was indicted and charged in November 1998 by a U.S. federal grand jury for his role in the bomb attacks on the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya that killed 224 civilians and wounded more than 5,000 others.

There are few photos of him, aside from three pictures - including a very serious black and white image of him on the FBI most wanted list.

REELING UNDER CRISIS

Pakistan hikes fuel prices to historic high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Feb 16: People in Pakistan woke up on Thursday to the shock of a historic price hike in the prices of petrol and gas as the government tried to appease the IMF for unlocking the critical loan tranche for the cash-strapped country.

The "petrol bomb" as the price hike is termed these days, was dropped around Wednesday midnight, hours after the government unveiled a tax-loaded 'mini-budget' in the Parliament to extract Rs 170 billion from the people through new taxes and increase in electricity and gas prices.

The price of petrol was hiked to Rs 272 per litre after an increase of Rs 22.20, a press release from the Finance Division read Wednesday night, noting that the surge has taken place due to the rupee's devaluation against the dollar.

The price of the high-speed diesel (HSD) hiked by Rs 17.20, kerosene by Rs 12.90 and light diesel oil (LDO) by Rs 9.68.

The new price of HSD will cost Rs 280 per litre. Kerosene will be available at Rs 202.73 whereas LDO will be sold at Rs 196.68 per litre.

"Increase in price is due to Pakistani rupee devaluation applicable for the calculation of cur-

rent pricing period," the press release said, adding that the prices would be effective from February 16. The increase came as finance minister Ishaq Dar presented the money bill in the parliament to fulfill the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) demand to increase revenue before it releases USD 1.1 billion out of the USD 7 billion loans.

The price of petrol was hiked to ₹272 per litre after an increase of ₹22.20, a press release from the Finance Division read Wednesday night

The increase in the price of petroleum products was one of the preconditions of the Washington-based lender, which will lead to a hike in the already record-high inflation, coupled with the new fiscal measures undertaken through the 'mini-budget'. Petrol is used by motorbikes and cars and is an alternative to compressed natural gas.

Gas is not already available at CNG stations to feed transport due to its availability issue in the winter season.

Kerosene oil is used in remote areas where liquefied petroleum gas is not available for cooking purposes.

Pakistan Army is a key user of it in northern parts of Pakistan. Pakistan is struggling with instability stemming from an economic crisis, last summer's devastating floods, and a recent surge in terror attacks across the country.



AT HIGHER COST

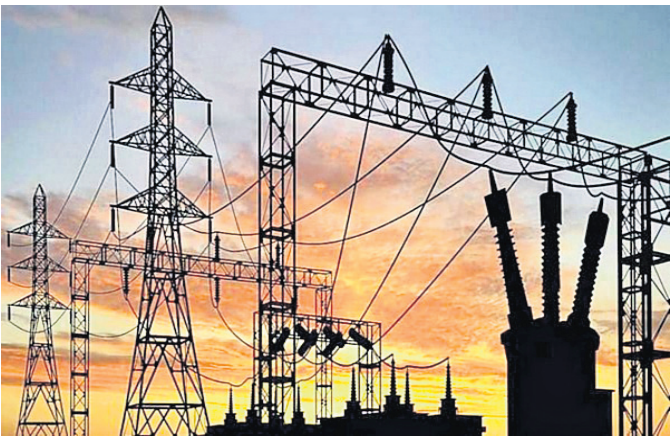
Lanka returns to uninterrupted power supply after a year

Trade unions and the opposition parties have criticised the tariff hike and have vowed to organise joint protests to force the government to reduce the tariff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Feb 16: After a year of load-shedding, Sri Lankans will get continuous power from Thursday, albeit with a hike in tariff in line with the conditions set by the IMF.

The Sri Lankan government's move comes as the debt-hit country



Kanchana Wijesekara said. "This will be a giant step in securing the IMF facility," he said.

The island nation awaits the formal approval of the IMF for a USD 2.9 billion bailout package over

four years as it aims to recover from its worst-ever economic crisis after announcing its first-ever default in April last year.

The IMF has said that state energy entities Ceylon Electricity Board and the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation should not bank on the Treasury for cash injections to run their operations, Wijesekara said, adding that the exchequer had injected Rs 120 billion into the two institutions.

"The treasury has no money to subsidise electricity," he said. "With increased revenue, we will be able to buy the fuel necessary to ensure no power cuts," Wijesekara said.

Trade unions and the opposition parties have criticised the tariff hike and have vowed to organ-

ise joint protests to force the government to reduce the tariff. The long power cuts and shortage of essential commodities led to intense street protests, which forced the then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa out of office.

The debt-ridden country owes USD 51 billion in foreign debt, of which USD 28 billion must be paid by 2027. There have been street protests in Sri Lanka against the government since early April last year due to its mishandling of the economic crisis.

A crippling shortage of foreign reserves has led to long queues for fuel, cooking gas, and other essentials, while power cuts and soaring food prices have heaped misery on the people.

of the day **quote**

We had a PLI for speciality steel and that includes steel products with zinc. I report we have awarded 54 applications submitted from close to 26 companies (which will lead to) an investment of...Rs 30,000 crore, a capacity addition of 26 million tonne

JYOTIRADITYA M SCINDIA | UNION STEEL MINISTER

We believe linking Rupay credit card on UPI to be a game-changer for the ecosystem and will give impetus to the adoption of UPI across businesses with multiple use cases

PRAVEENA RAI | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, NPCL

We plan to install over 2,500 charging stations by this year-end to facilitate a hassle-free transition to Evs. We have already installed over 1,000 fast charging stations across 80 cities in the country

RAVNEET PHOKELA | CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, ATHER ENERGY

SHORT TAKES

Windfall tax cut

New Delhi: The government has cut windfall profit tax on export of diesel and ATF to their lowest while also reducing the levy on domestically-produced crude in line with softening international oil prices, according to an official order. The levy on crude oil produced by companies such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has been cut to ₹4,350 per tonne from ₹5,050 per tonne. The government has also cut the tax on export of diesel to ₹2.5 per litre from ₹7.5, and the same on overseas shipments of ATF to ₹1.50 a litre from ₹6 a litre.

BoB, IOB hike lending rates

Mumbai: Bank of Baroda and Indian Overseas Bank have increased their marginal cost of fund-based lending rates (MCLR), following a hike in the interest rates on loans and deposits by their largest public sector peer SBI. The latest hikes in the interest rates come days after the Reserve Bank of India February 8 increased the borrowing costs by 25 basis points. State-owned Bank of Baroda has increased its MCLR by 5 bps across all tenors from February 12. Indian Overseas Bank has raised its MCLR by up to 15 bps across all tenors.

HDFC gets ₹25K-cr through NCDs

Mumbai: Merger-bound mortgage lender HDFC Thursday concluded its rupee-bond sale through the private placement route, mopping up ₹25,000 crore. HDFC said it has raised ₹25,000 crore of 10-year money by issuing non-convertible debenture (NCDs) carrying a coupon rate of 7.97 per cent per annum. The issue was launched Tuesday on the electronic book platform to raise ₹5,000 crore with an option to retain subscription for additional ₹20,000 crore.

YouTube CEO quits

Washington: YouTube Chief Executive Officer Susan Wojcicki will be stepping down after nine years at the helm of the world's largest online video platform, she said in a blog post Thursday. YouTube's chief product officer, Neal Mohan, will be the new head of YouTube, she said. Wojcicki, who was previously a senior vice president for ad products at Google, became CEO of YouTube in 2014.



The India-Australia trade deal would make a big difference through closer economic cooperation between the nations

BARRY O'FARRELL | AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO INDIA

AKASA AIR EYES INTERNATIONAL SKIES

Akasa Air will place a “substantially” large order for new narrowbody jets this year, as the start-up budget airline looks to capitalise on booming demand at home and begin international flights, its chief executive said. The 200-day-old airline has taken delivery of 17 Boeing 737 MAX planes out of a total order of 72 jets to be delivered by March 2027



FIRST SOCIAL MEDIA FIRM

TWITTER SAID THAT THE RELAXED POLICY AIMS TO CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ‘RESPONSIBLE CANNABIS MARKETING’

WASHINGTON, Feb 16: Twitter Wednesday became the first social media platform to allow cannabis companies to market their brands and products in the United States. The company had earlier only allowed advertising for hemp-derived CBD topical products, while other social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok follow a “no cannabis advertising policy” as pot remains illegal at the federal level. However, more states in the United States are moving towards allowing the sale of recreational cannabis, with 21 already on board.

Air India has options to buy 370 more jets post mammoth order



THIS WILL BE ONE OF THE LARGEST AIRCRAFT ORDERS BY AN AIRLINE IN THE MODERN AVIATION HISTORY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Tata Group-owned Air India has placed an order for 840 planes with Airbus and Boeing, including the option to acquire 370 aircraft, with a senior airline official Thursday saying the order is a “landmark moment” in the Indian aviation history. The announcement by Air India's Chief Commercial and Transformation Officer Nipun Aggarwal comes a day after the airline said it has placed a firm order for 470 aircraft – 250 from Airbus and 220 from Boeing. In a LinkedIn post, Aggarwal said the airline is humbled by the excitement generated across the world by the airline's aircraft order. “The order comprises 470 firm aircraft, 370 options and purchase rights to be procured from Airbus and Boeing over the next decade,”

he said. According to him, this order of 840 aircraft has been a culmination of a fascinating journey that began almost two years ago with the Air India privatisation process. The Airbus firm order comprises 210 A320/321 Neo/XLR and 40 A350-900/1000. The Boeing firm order comprises 190 737-Max, 20 787s and 10 777s. “We have also signed up for long-term maintenance of the engines with CFM International (CFM), Rolls-Royce and GE Aerospace,” he said. This was also the first time in more than 17 years that Air India, which was acquired from the government by Tata Group in January 2022, has ordered planes. The first A350 plane will be delivered to the airline by the end of this year. Aggarwal Thursday said the order demonstrates the vision and aspiration of Tata Group to transform Air India into a world-class airline and connect India “non-stop” to every major city in the world. “This order is also a testament to the tremendous economic potential unleashed by the Air India privatisation,” he said, adding that it is indeed a landmark moment in the history of Air India and Indian aviation.

Fuel demand sees sharpest rebound

India's oil demand had been rising steadily since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: India's fuel demand witnessed the sharpest rebound in February as petrol and diesel consumption rose by double digits after a winter lull in the previous month, preliminary industry data showed Thursday. Petrol sales jumped almost 18 per cent to 1.22 million tonne in the first half of February, as compared to 1.04 million tonne of consumption in the same period of last year. Sales were 18.3 per cent

higher than in Covid-marred first half of February 2021 and 15.7 per cent more than in the same period of 2020. Month-on-month, the demand was up 13.6 per cent, reversing the dip in the previous month. Sales had fallen 5.1 per cent month-on-month in January as cold conditions cut vehicular movement. Diesel, the most used fuel in the country, posted a near 25 per cent rise in sales during February 1-15 to 3.33 million tonne, as compared to the same period last year.



PETROL SALES JUMPED 18% DIESEL SAW 25% RISE IN SALES

Consumption was up 16.7 per cent over the first half of February 2021 and 7 per cent higher than 2020. Month-on-month sales surged 10.3 per cent from 3.01 million tonne in the first half of January.

In January, diesel consumption fell 8.6 per cent month-on-month basis as snowfall in higher reaches halted truck movement. The rebound in sales is the sharpest. Industry sources said diesel demand surged as trucks returned to roads and there was a pick up in the agriculture sector. Use of the fuel in irrigation pumps and trucking helped build the momentum generated. January sales were lower month-on-month also because the previous month had seen a surge in consumption due to vacation travel. With the continued opening of the aviation sector, India's overall passenger traffic at airports inched closer to pre-Covid-19 levels.

Debt clouds force Byju's to look for more funds

WITH THE DEBT CRISIS LOOMING OVER THE EDTECH INDUSTRY, BYJU'S IS STEPPING UP EFFORTS TO RAISE FUNDS AND IN TALKS WITH TPG, SOVEREIGN FUNDS

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Feb 16: India's one of the largest edtech company, Byju's is in negotiations with investors including TPG to raise over \$500 million, a much-needed investment that could help the world's most valuable edtech startup stave off potential debt issues. Despite a global tech rout that has prompted layoffs in the thousands, depressed global investment activity and shaved billions off the valuations of once high-flying tech startups, several investment firms including TPG and two Middle Eastern sovereign wealth funds

have begun due diligence on the company, sources said. The company is hoping to keep its valuation steady at about \$22 billion during the negotiations, they added. Negotiations are ongoing and it's unclear if the prospective investors will go ahead with a deal, sources said. Byju's, which grappled with mounting losses after the pandemic-era boom in online tutoring petered out, is in separate talks with creditors to renegotiate an agreement governing a \$1.2 billion loan that's in breach of covenants. Founder Byju Raveendran is now working on that turnaround plan, pledging a recovery in 2023.



He's explored options including using his shares as collateral to raise funds and lift his stake in the company to as high as 40%. It's also finalizing plans for a \$1 billion initial public offering of tutoring business Aakash Educational

Services, and may consider IPOs of other units. Founded in 2015 and formally known as Think & Learn Pvt, the Bangalore-headquartered startup shelved plans for a stock-market debut last year as global markets

■ EDTECH UNICORN BYJU'S IN TALKS TO RAISE OVER \$500 MILLION
■ PLANS IN PIPELINE FOR \$1BN IPO OF AAKASH EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
■ IT REPORTED A LOSS OF ₹45.64BN IN MAY FOR FISCAL 2021
■ THE COMPANY HAS LAID OFF NEARLY 4,000 EMPLOYEES

slumped. It last raised funds in October at a \$22 billion valuation, days after announcing it would reduce its workforce by 5%. Backed by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, General Atlantic and Tiger Global, Byju's raised billions

of dollars in capital to finance a global acquisition spree in the face of a tech downturn worldwide. The company, which had at one point 150 million users, has since been plagued by challenges including a long-delayed filing of audited financial statements and a truncated fundraising last year. The company in 2022 filed its audited financial results for the year ending March 2021 showing steep losses. And last year, it said it would shed 2,500 workers or about 5% of its total workforce and lower its marketing and sales costs, pledging to become profitable by March.

HINDENBURG EFFECT

Adani, DB Power deal off the table

Adani Power's ₹7,017 crore deal to buy DB Power assets falls through

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Embattled tycoon Gautam Adani-led Adani Power's planned ₹7,017-crore acquisition of coal-based electricity generating units of DB Power Ltd has fallen as the deadline to complete the transaction expired without signing of the pact. “We wish to inform that the long stop date under the memorandum of understanding dated August 18, 2022, has expired,” Adani Power said in an exchange filing Wednesday, without providing any information about the extension of dates or agreement renegotiation. The announcement of the expiry of the long-stop date essentially implies that the acquisition is off for now. The date to complete the process of acquisition of DB Power was extended four times after the initial deal was signed in August last year. This comes at a time when the ports-to-energy conglomerate is battling fallout of a damning report by a US short-seller Hindenburg that alleged accounting fraud and stock manipulation, allegations that the group has vehemently denied. The report, which flagged high debt including pledging shares of inflated stock for loans, put the entire group on precarious financial footing. Since the January 24 report, the group companies have seen half of their market value wiped out and the conglomerate having to pledge



Listed companies of the group lost over \$125 billion in market value in the last three weeks

more shares to meet lending norms. It also called off a follow-on share sale at its flagship firm, Adani Enterprises Ltd that barely scraped through on the last day of the sale. In the stock exchange filing, the company did not give reasons why the deal could not be completed or if the deal would be revived in future. The initial term of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) was till October 31, 2022, which was extended by mutual agreement. The long-stop date was first extended to November 30, 2022, and then to December 31, 2022, and January 15, 2023, and finally to February 15, 2023. The acquisition of DB Power, which currently operates a 2x600

S&P places Adani Transmission's ESG evaluation UR

S&P Global Ratings Thursday placed its ESG evaluation for Adani Transmission Ltd (ATL) ‘under review’ following a US short-seller raising governance issues at the group helmed by billionaire Gautam Adani. When monitoring environment, social and governance (ESG) evaluations, S&P uses the term ‘under review’ (and the label ‘UR’) to identify certain ESG Evaluations as being potentially affected by changing events. “We will closely monitor developments, including any investigations by the Indian regulators and any additional disclosures by the Adani group,” S&P Global Ratings said.

MW coal-fired power plant in Janjgir Champa district in Chhattisgarh, was expected to expand Adani Power's offerings and operations in the thermal power sector in the state. DB Power has long and medium-term power purchase agreements for 923.5 MW of its capacity, backed by fuel supply agreements with Coal India Ltd. It had recorded a turnover of ₹3,488 crore for the financial year 2022. The DPPL (Diligent Power Pvt Ltd) is the holding company of DB Power.

Blacklist fear for renewable firms

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 16: India will blacklist renewable power companies for three-to-five years if they do not meet project completion deadlines, a government order seen by Reuters shows. “If any renewable energy project is not completed by the prescribed date of completion, then its bank guarantee should be encashed and the developer blacklisted after asking to show cause,” the order issued by the new and renewable energy ministry said. The blacklisting will be for a period of three to five years, the order issued Wednesday said. So far India has not blacklisted any company from renewable energy generation contracts for delays, but the government order said the blacklisting was in accordance with the government's General Financial Rules and would apply to all tenders. India needs to add over 40 gigawatts capacity annually to achieve its commitment to 500 gigawatts of renewable energy generation capacity by 2030. The country's renewable energy installed base is nearly 175 gigawatts. The pace of installation is less than 15 gigawatts per annum following disruptions in equipment supply caused by heavy import duties on solar equipment. As a result of the pandemic, the ministry allowed several extensions, most recently an order in December 2022 granted a one-year extension to March 2024 year for project completion.



WIDENING TAX BASE

Govt looks to tap mom-and-pop stores

REUTERS

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Indian federal government is planning to widen its goods and services tax (GST) by tapping a section of mom-and-pop stores, a top tax official said Thursday, as New Delhi looks to bring more elements of the economy into the tax net. Mom-and-pop stores refer to small business entities that are independent or family-owned. India has a large informal economy and the government has been trying to boost its tax revenues by including more of these activities. The GST - which subsumed a

host of state and federal levies when it was introduced in 2017 - requires businesses with an annual turnover of ₹4 million or more to be registered under the regime. “We may adopt a sectoral approach in some sectors where we feel the taxpayer base is too slim compared to the size of the market,” Vivek Johri, chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs said. The number of businesses within the GST net has increased to 14 million as of January 2023, from about 6 million in 2017, he said, seeing potential to further increase the taxpayer base under the GST regime.

EYES ON INDIAN TOP-ORDER

Hosts look for another win to make Pujara’s landmark 100th Test a memorable one when they face Australia in the second Test



Rohit Sharma bats at the nets having wicketkeeper KS Bharat helping him out from behind the stumps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: KL Rahul prolonged run of failures remains a worry but India will still start as overwhelming favourites for another three-day finish when they take on Australia in the second Test here from Friday.

The match will be one of Indian crickets understated warrior Cheteshwar Pujaras 100th Test, a feat achieved after 13 years of sweat and toil. While Pujara would like to savour the momentous personal milestone with a 20th Test ton, one cant but paper over the concerns around Indian top-order.

Save skipper Rohit Sharma, who was regal in attack and classical in defence during his hundred on a slow turner in Nagpur, the others failed to get going in the opener. Besides Rahul, the list of strugglers includes the peerless Virat Kohli and, to an extent, Pujara.

Kohli is leaving no stone unturned to up the ante while facing the spinners. Round two of Kohli versus Nathan Lyon and Todd Murphy could be equally enticing.

Time is running out for Rahul as Virat Kohli’s heir apparent,

Shubman Gill, is waiting in the wings despite being in prime form.

Having wasted so many opportunities in his 46-Test career with a below par average of 34, it will be interesting to see what call is taken by the Indian team management if the 30-year-old Karnataka man endures another failure before the squad for the last two Tests is announced.

With Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja putting enormous pressure on the Australians during the hosts comprehensive innings win in Nagpur, one can confidently say that another slow turner will greet the visitors at the Ferozshah Kotla.

Unless Australia bat out of their skin, they won’t even be able to stretch it to the fifth day. The Ferozshah Kotla tracks, after the initial moisture dries up, turn as dead as a dodo.

India head coach Rahul Dravid had no hesitation in admitting that in the recent past, it has been the middle-order troika of Jadeja, the now-injured Rishabh Pant and the

fit-again Shreyas Iyer that has bailed the team out on most occasions. Even in the opening Test, it was left to the duo of Axar Patel and Jadeja to out-bat Australia.

The Kotla pitch promises to



ICC APOLOGISES INDIA FOR RANKING GLITCH

DUBAI: The ICC has apologised for the technical glitch, which saw India displace Australia to attain the No.1 spot in the men’s Test team rankings Wednesday. Hours after India had ‘topped’ the Test ranking, the ICC issued another updated list that showed Rohit Sharma’s side back at No.2. It gave the impression that Rohit’s team had briefly claimed the top spot. Thursday, the game’s global body admitted the error and said in a statement that the “ICC acknowledges, for a short period of time February 15, 2023 that, due to a technical error, India were erroneously displayed as the No.1 Test team on the ICC website”. “We apologise for any inconvenience caused. Australia remain on top of the ICC Test Team Rankings after the latest update following the conclusion of Zimbabwe’s two-match series against West Indies.”

whether he gets another chance remains to be seen.

Having already brought in an additional left arm spinner in Matt Kuhneman in the squad, it will also be interesting to see whether Australia decide to go with three tweekers. Mitchell Starc, if fit, could replace Scott Boland as the Kotla pitch, with no tangible help off the surface, could seriously dent the confidence of the burly Victorian.

Oz spinners struggling with low bounce: Pat



Pat Cummins inspects the pitch in Delhi ahead of second Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Spinner Nathan Lyon and company’s effectiveness on Indian tracks has been curtailed because of low carry as they are used to bowling on bouncy Australian pitches, conceded skipper Pat Cummins Thursday.

Though Australia’s young Test debutant spinner Todd Murphy took seven wickets, Nathan Lyon could manage just one even as Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja ran through the visitors’ batting lineup to help India win the Nagpur Test.

Lyon bowled 49 overs in the opening Test with only Suryakumar Yadav’s wicket to show for his efforts. Cummins said that his spin unit is still adjusting to the changes.

“It’s an adjustment. Even the last game we saw a lot of around the wicket bowling, whereas in Australia it’s mainly over-the-wicket bowling. The close catchers don’t feel like the ball is going to pop up as much when there isn’t much bounce. It is bit of an adjustment,” Cummins said on the eve of the second Test here.

“Using side-spinners, just changing up your angles a bit more. All those things come into a bit more. I think the bowlers did a really good job, both spinners (in the) last game (in Nagpur). It’s a bit of an adjustment but in some ways it doesn’t get any better.”

Tracks in western India are predominantly made with red soil, while up north it is black soil. While the colour of the soil had changed, Cummins feels the nature of the

pitch will not change a lot.

“Not too sure, really. It’s different soil here (Delhi), the black soil, but it looks pretty similar. I think it’s going to spin. That’s our expectation and the wicket matches that. We will see,” the skipper said.

The skipper said that both rookie left-arm spinner Matt Kuhnemann and, the tried and tested Ashton Agar were an option for the second Test.

“We are open to both (Kuhnemann and Agar) options. Both, we are really confident will do a fantastic job out there. They both had long sessions the last couple of days and looked awesome. If we wanted a third spinner variety we’d be comfortable with either of those two.”

The best version of David Warner is when he counter attacks and Cummins wants the talismanic opener to employ that approach in the upcoming Test, if he gets a chance. So, will Warner be in the scheme of things for the second Test?

“I’m not a selector. I don’t think they’ve had a meeting but I’m sure Davey (Warner) will be there. You saw this year at the Boxing Day Test when he puts pressure back on the opposition he’s pretty hard to bowl to. I’m sure that’d be part of his plan,” said Cummins.

“He has been batting really well here. Even in the lead up, I thought he was fantastic. I know there’s a lot of talk about spin bowling through the middle but with that new ball, it’s sometimes the hardest time to bat as well,” said Cummins, sounding confident.



Indian football great BALARAM passes away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 16: Asian Games gold medallist and Olympian Tulsidas Balamram, a part of Indian football’s ‘holy trinity’ in the 1950s and 60s, died here Thursday after a prolonged illness, sources close to his family said.

Balamram belonged to the golden generation of Indian football and teamed up with legends such as Chuni Goswami and PK Banerjee to forge a formidable partnership upfront. Balamram was 87 and a widower living in a flat on the banks of Hooghly river in Uttarpara.

The 1962 Asian Games champion was hospitalised December 26 last year and was being treated for urinary infection and abdominal distension. “His condition did not improve and he breathed his last around 2pm today,” a source close to his family told PTI.

“We are grateful to the state government and the sports minister Aroop Biswas for taking good care of him during his last days,” he added.

Born October 4, 1936, to Tamil parents – Muthamma and Tulsidas Kalidas – in Ammuguda village in the garrison town of Secunderabad, Balamram scored 131 goals across seven seasons.

An Arjuna awardee, Balamram’s exploits at the 1960 Rome Olympics are well documented. Placed in the ‘group of death’ with Hungary,

France and Peru, India lost the opener to Hungary 1-2 but Balamram covered himself in glory by scoring a 79th-minute goal. He also scored against Peru in the Games.

India came close to upsetting France a few days later with Balamram again showing his class.

The Jakarta Asian Games gold, where India beat South Korea 2-1 in the final, was the country’s second title triumph in football at the multi-discipline continental games, and the achievement hasn’t been repeated since.

Besides his ability to score brilliant goals, Balamram was well-known for his amazing ball control, dribbling and passing abilities through a comparatively short but very successful career.

Balamram, who mostly played as a centre-forward or as a left-winger, called it a day in 1963 owing to poor health. His career spanned eight years between 1955 and 1963, before being cut short by tuberculosis at the age of 27.

Having made his international debut against Yugoslavia at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, where India finished fourth, he went on to play 36 matches for the country while finding the net 10 times, including four in the Asian Games.

He has represented Bengal and Hyderabad in the Santosh Trophy and tasted success with both states. After his retirement as an active footballer, Balamram coached the Calcutta Mayor’s team in the Gotha Cup in Sweden. He had also served as a talent spotter of the All India Football Federation.

Dortmund beat slumping Chelsea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dortmund, Feb 16: Lots of talent, but not the results to match. It’s becoming a familiar story for Chelsea. Despite spending record sums on new signings, Chelsea fell short once again in a 1-0 loss at Borussia Dortmund Wednesday and will need to improve in the second leg to avoid elimination in the Champions League round of 16.

Karim Adeyemi sprinted the length of the field to score the only goal on a lightning counterattack after Chelsea created — and missed — many of the best chances.

After Chelsea’s Joao Felix missed a headed chance on a corner, the German team launched into the counter as Adeyemi surged down the field, beating Enzo Fernandez before rounding goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga and scoring into the empty net.

Starting from the edge of his



TOO SWIFT: Karim Adeyemi dribbles past Chelsea goalie Kepa Arrizabalaga before scoring, Wednesday

own penalty area, Adeyemi picked up the ball from a clearance and needed fewer than nine seconds to score at the other end. He celebrated with a backflip.

Kalidou Koulibaly was at the heart of the Chelsea defense but

nearly rescued a draw for his team at the other end. Dortmund goalkeeper Gregor Kobel couldn’t hold Koulibaly’s low shot in the 78th minute and the ball rolled onto the goal line before Emre Can hooked it away to keep Dortmund ahead.

CITIZENS TOO STRONG FOR GUNNERS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Feb 16: Manchester City seized the momentum in the Premier League title race after Jack Grealish and Erling Haaland helped secure a 3-1 win at Arsenal Wednesday in a top-of-the-table match.

Grealish and Haaland both scored in the second half as the defending champions extended their recent dominance over Arsenal and showed they won’t relinquish the title easily.

The win puts the Citizens in first place ahead of Arsenal on goal difference, although the Gunners still have a game in hand. More importantly, perhaps, it maintained a psychological edge over



Mikel Arteta’s team as City has now beaten Arsenal in 11 straight league matches. In a game that lived up to the

billing of the biggest Premier League match of the season so far with moments of end-to-end action, City took the lead when Kevin de Bruyne capitalized on a defensive error in the 24th minute, before Bukayo Saka equalized from the penalty spot in the 42nd.

But City retook the lead after another mistake by Gabriel, who turned the ball over in his own half. The visitors countered quickly and Ilkay Gundogan squared the ball for Grealish, who beat Ramsdale with a low shot that took a deflection off Tomiyasu.

Haaland took his tally to 26 league goals this season when De Bruyne cut the ball for the striker, who took one touch before slotting a shot into the far corner.

Benzema eclipses Raul in Real’s 4-0 victory over Elche

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brugge (Belgium): Benfica remains a dangerous attacking team despite losing Enzo Fernandez to Chelsea. Joao Mario scored from the penalty spot and substitute David Neres added a second goal with two minutes left Wednesday as Benfica took a step toward the Champions League quarterfinals with a 2-0 victory over Club Brugge in the first leg of their last 16 tie. Benfica are now unbeaten in their last eight games in the Champions League, with five wins and three draws.

Fernandez — Chelsea’s expensive signing last month — nearly scored a last-gasp equaliser in stoppage time but the World Cup winner from Argentina saw his curling shot saved by Kobel.

It was Dortmund’s seventh win in a row, while Chelsea has one victory from nine games overall in 2023.

Madrid, Feb 16: Karim Benzema converted two first-half penalty kicks in Real Madrid’s 4-0 win over Elche and became the team’s second-highest scorer in the Spanish league with 230 goals.

Marco Asensio and Luka Modric also scored Wednesday as Madrid won at home to get back within eight points of Barcelona in a game postponed because of the Club World Cup.

The 35-year-old Benzema entered the match even with Madrid great Raul with 228 league goals — second to Cristiano Ronaldo’s 311.

It was Benzema’s fifth goal in his last six matches. He had also scored in the Club WC final against Saudi Arabian club Al-Hilal after being out because of an injury.



GOLDEN GIRLS FETED: State tennis players Sohini Sanjay Mohanty and Aradhya Verma were Thursday felicitated by the Odisha Tennis Association (OTA) at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar for their stellar performance at the Khelo India Youth Games in Bhopal, February 4-11. The duo had bagged a gold medal in the girls’ doubles event, beating Madhya Pradesh team 7-6, 7-6. Sohini and Aradhya were also awarded cash incentives of ₹25,000 each. Their coach, Syed Farhan Ali was also felicitated on the occasion. Sports Secretary (Govt of Odisha) Vineel Krishna (L) and OTA officials – president Asit Tripathy (C), secretary Satyajit Mohanty and joint secretary Saneeb Panda (R) along with some other office bearers – graced the occasion.