



BRIEF



Locals mourn the death of a Special Police Officer (SPO) Ishfaq Ahmad and his brother Umar Jan, during their funeral at Chadbugh area of Budgam, Sunday.

Adieu

■ **Srinagar:** "Mei kya ous khatah (what was my fault)," wailed the inconsolable mother of an SPO and his brother killed by militants as their bodies were brought home in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district on Sunday. A large number of people assembled at their home in Chadbugh locality and bid a tearful adieu to the brothers. "What was my fault? What was my fault?" the grieving mother asked as women tried to console her.

Amarnath yatra

■ **Jammu:** The annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Amarnath located at a height of 3,880 metres in south Kashmir Himalayas has been scheduled to commence on June 30, an official said on Sunday. The decision to schedule the 43-day pilgrimage was taken at a meeting of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board chaired by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha.

Blast

■ **Srinagar:** A blast occurred near an Army camp in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, but no loss of life was reported, officials said. "A mysterious blast took place near the camp of 21 Rashtriya Rifles at Zachaldara in Handwara area of the north Kashmir district," one of the officials said. However, no loss of life or injury to anyone was reported.

CBI probe

■ **New Delhi:** The Congress on Sunday accused the central government of sheltering promoters of certain companies declaring insolvency through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, and demanded a CBI probe into the insolvency of Amtek group. Addressing a press conference, Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam said the government must order a probe into the findings of Ernst and Young's audit report into the insolvency of Amtek Auto.

Weather
High 38 Low 21

BIRBHUM MASSACRE

CBI name 22 accused in Bengal killings

■ TMC leader questioned

Kolkata, Mar 27:

The Central Bureau of Investigation has named 22 people as accused in the Birbhum massacre, in which eight people were beaten and burnt alive earlier this week, triggering political furore. The list of accused is the same as that of the state police, sources said. The agency, however, has questioned the ruling Trinamool Congress's block president Anarul Hossain, who, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had promised,

will be arrested. Around 20 people have been arrested after six women and two children - mostly of members of a single family - were locked in their homes and burnt alive by a mob at the Bogtui village near Birbhum's Rampurhat town earlier this week.

The attack was allegedly retaliation to the murder of a local Trinamool Congress leader, Bhadu Sheikh, who died in a bomb attack.

Mamata Banerjee, during her visit to Bogtui, had promised that Anarul Hossain will be arrested for not informing the police and helping them in preventing the crime.

Eyewitnesses have accused Anarul Hossain of aiding the violent mob by eyewitnesses. Speaking to reporters while being taken away for questioning by the CBI, Anarul Hossain said, "It is a conspiracy by my opponents."

The CBI team has set up a temporary camp at a government guest house in Rampurhat. Led by senior officer Akhilesh Singh, the team has now split up and started work by visiting the home of Sona Sheikh, whose house was set ablaze. Most of the bodies were recovered from this home in Bogtui village, including that of the newly married couple, Lily

Khatun and her husband. A CBI team also visited the hospital in Rampurhat where the injured are recovering.

The CBI has to file a status report on its investigation by April 7 in the Calcutta High Court, which ordered a probe by the Central agency on Friday. The court - which took up the case suo motu - had denied the Mamata Banerjee government's request not to hand over the investigation to the CBI.

Battling a furious political backlash over the killings, the Chief Minister had alleged that "something big" was behind the incident.

"I never believed something so barbaric can happen in modern Bengal. Mothers and children were killed. Your family members died but it is my heart that was crushed," Mamata Banerjee said, surrounded by the family members and relatives of those killed, besides villagers. Alleging a bigger conspiracy, she called for "stringent action" and said the police would investigate all angles.

At least 20 people have been arrested by the local police in connection with the incident. Two officers of the local police have been removed on grounds of negligence.

HORRIFYING TRUTH

Man rapes and kills teen

■ Tries to pass it off as suicide

Surajpur, Mar 27:

A teenage girl was allegedly raped and killed by a 23-year-old man in Surajpur district and the latter tried to pass it off as a case of suicide, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on March 24 and during a probe into it, the police on Saturday arrested the man, identified as Sabir Ali alias Baba Khan, who allegedly strangled the victim to death and then hanged the body from a ceiling fan at her house in Bhatgaon police station limits, Surajpur. A d d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police Harish Rathore said.

As per preliminary investigation, the victim, a Class 12 student, appeared for her practical exam on Thursday and then returned home in Surajpur, located around 300 km from the state capital Raipur.

Her mother was in Bilaspur to take care of her ailing father, who was admitted in a hospital there, while her younger brother had gone out of home to play, the official said. On finding the victim alone in the house, the accused went there. He allegedly raped her and then strangled her to death with her scarf. The man then hanged the body from a ceiling fan and wrote a

About the incident

As per preliminary investigation, the victim, a Class 12 student, appeared for her practical exam on Thursday and then returned home in Surajpur. Her mother was in Bilaspur to take care of her ailing father, who was admitted in a hospital there, while her younger brother had gone out of home to play. On finding the victim alone in the house, the accused went there. He allegedly raped her and then strangled her to death with her scarf. The man then hanged the body from a ceiling fan and wrote a note on her hand with a pen to make it appear as a case of suicide.

note on her hand with a pen to make it appear as a case of suicide, the official said. Later, the victim's brother and neighbours found her hanging and informed the police, he said.

Based on the investigation, the accused was arrested and booked under Indian Penal Code Sections 302 (murder), 376 (rape) and other relevant provisions, the official said. The exact age of the deceased is yet to be ascertained and if she is found to be a minor, provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act will be included in the case," he added. On Saturday, a large number of people gathered in Jarhi area of Surajpur to pay tributes to the victim and demanded death sentence for the accused.

UGC TO CUS

'Use CUET scores to admit students in UG programmes'

New Delhi, Mar 26 (PTD):

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has written to vice-chancellors of all central universities and colleges to use Common University Entrance Test (CUET) scores to admit students in undergraduate programmes. UGC chairman M Jagadeesh Kumar had said on Monday that CUET scores, and not class 12 scores, will be mandatory for admission to 45 central universities. Central universities can fix their mini-

mum eligibility criteria. "Today we have written to the VCs, Directors, and Principals of all Universities and Colleges to use CUET scores for admissions in their UG programs because with CUET in place there is no need for students to worry about writing multiple entrance tests," Kumar tweeted on Sunday. The state universities, private universities, and deemed-to-be universities can also use CUET scores for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions if they want, Kumar had said on Monday.

TWO YEARS OF PANDEMIC

Govt for dropping COVID pre-call announcements from phones

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTD):

The COVID-19 awareness pre-call audio announcements set by telecom operators at the start of the pandemic may soon become history.

After almost two years of raising awareness about the disease, the government is now actively considering the removal of the COVID-19 pre-call messages after receiving representations that audio clips have served their intended

purpose and are delaying critical calls during emergencies. Official sources said the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has written to the Union Health Ministry requesting it to drop these pre-call announcements and caller tunes. It cited representations received from Cellular Operators Association of India (COA) as well as mobile subscribers. "The health ministry is now considering removal of these audio

clips in view of the improved pandemic situation in the country even as other measures for spreading public awareness about the safeguards against the viral disease will continue," an official source said. The instructions for implementation of COVID-19 pre-call announcements and caller tunes to Telecom Service Providers were issued by DoT following directions received from the Union Health Ministry.

Father bashes innocent son to death



Mainpur, Mar 27:

In a heart rendering incident which came to fore on Sunday morning, a father under the influence of alcohol bashed his five-year-old son to death and

tried to bury his dead body by digging a grave inside the house. While he was trying to bury the body relatives of the accused reached his place and former fled away from the house. The activeness shown on the part of Mainpur PS in-charge Harshavardhan Bais led to arrest of the accused within few hours of the incident.

As per information received, incident took place in village Themli, 12 km from tehsil headquarter Mainpur where accused Rohit Kumar Dhruv who daily used to abuse his children and wife under the influence of alcohol. On March 26 night when he repeated the same act, his wife left the house along with his one son and one daughter. On March 27 morning accused again consumed alcohol and called his five-year-old son. When the victim came accused started beating him which led to his death.

Emergency use

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTD):

The Serum Institute has applied to the Drugs Controller General of India seeking emergency use authorisation for its recombinant BCG (rBCG) vaccine for the prevention of tuberculosis, official sources said on Sunday. The EUA application was submitted on March 22 by Prakash Kumar Singh, Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs at the Serum Institute of India (SII). India's TB immunisation programme currently offers BCG vaccination at birth or as early as possible till one year of age.

100-day annual leave plan for CAPF jawans soon

New Delhi, Mar 27:

An ambitious proposal mooted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah to allow Central Armed Police Force jawans spend at least 100 days with their families is likely to be implemented shortly, with officials saying the contours for a comprehensive policy are being worked out. The ministry of home affairs has held multiple meetings, the latest being early this month, to thrash out the issues delaying the implementation of the poli-

cy. The policy aims to reduce work-related stress and enhance the happiness quotient of the about 10 lakh troops and officials who undertake arduous duties in some of the most challenging environmental conditions and in remote locations. "All the central armed police forces have been directed to expedite their proposals. The home ministry is expected to take a final decision by the next month as to how the welfare measure can be implemented," a senior CAPF officer told PTL.

Villagers bring Shivaling to court after notice to temple

Raigarh, Mar 27:

In a bizarre incident, a Shivaling, which was uprooted from a temple in Raigarh district of Chhattisgarh, was brought to the tehsil office in Raigarh district to appear before the court after a summons was issued against the Shiva temple by the revenue officials.

A few days ago, the revenue officials of Raigarh had given notice to Shiva temple to appear in the court. On March 25, the villagers uprooted the



Shivaling at Shiva temple in Raigarh and carried on a cart to present it in the court. "Our villagers and a Shiva temple were given

the notice to appear before the court by a tehsil Office and a fine of Rs 10,000 was also imposed. So we appeared in the court with

the Shivaling. But after waiting for hours, a notice was posted that the next hearing will be on April 13. We were not informed about this earlier," said Sapna Siddar, local Councillor. The councillor said that Sudha Rajwade, who is a resident of our village had moved the petition to the high court.

"We urged her not to do this but she refused and said that she is a government official and is doing her work," she said. Shiva temple at Kauvakunda in Raigarh town was served a notice complaining of illegal occupation.

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Illegal roadside vends and encroachments bulldozed in Supela

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, Mar 27: On Sunday, the enforcement squad of Bhilai Municipal Corporation with support of Durg District Police bulldozed a number of encroachments and illegal structures that have come up on roadside in Supela. The road connecting Supela Square to Gada Square appeared totally different after the anti-en-

croachment drive. This important road has been witnessing Sunday Markets and consequent traffic jams for the last several years. Considering the pains of the common people, the Bhilai Municipal Corporation took strict action against the encroachers and vendors on Sunday and cleared the road for public convenience. It needs to be mentioned here that Bhilai Municipal

Corporation had made elaborate arrangements to systematize the Supela Sunday Market, which had been a prime cause of trouble for thousands of commuters. The joint team of Bhilai Municipal Corporation and District Police reached the Supela Sunday Market area at 04:00 hrs in the morning. BMC Commissioner Prakash Surve, Zone Commissioners Pooja

Pillai, Manish Gaikwad and other officials of BMC were present. Bhilai Chamber of Commerce had already given support to the BMC's initiative. The joint team counselled the vendors and prevented them from putting up their stalls and vends on the roadside. After a few hours, the BMC bulldozers reached the spot and started removing the illegal kiosks, stalls,

sheds, etc from the roadside. In the meanwhile, some of the vendors tried to protest and prevent the eviction drive. They entered into an argument with the BMC officials. At this moment, the police team led by CSP Rakesh Joshi intervened and pacified the tension. The cops managed to maintain law and order as well as ensure smooth conduct of the anti-encroachment

drive. A large number of kiosks, sheds, etc were razed and seized by the BMC team. The drive continued for about seven hours. The joint team has freed both sides of the road from encroachments. It needs to be mentioned here that strict action against the Supela Sunday Market had become very necessary as it creates traffic jams for the entire day on an important road.

Supela Sunday Market has become one of the busiest markets in the city. This market is conducted on the road connecting the Supela Square to Gada Chowk. A large population of Vaishali nagar, Shanti Nagar, Kohka and other areas use this route. On Sundays, the entire road got jammed for the whole day due to the unorganized and haphazard vends. The commuters

faceted troubles in passing through this road as the chances of accidents are high due to heavy rush. It was almost impossible to pass a heavy vehicle from this route. In case of any emergency, it was almost impossible for ambulances or Fire Tenders to use this route. For a long time, various organisations have been raising demands of strict action against this illegal market.

'Samadhan' Performance Improvement Workshop (PIW) held

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: A series of Performance Improvement Workshop (PIW) at Bhilai Steel Plant under the Tag Name of "Samadhan" with an aim to look for adaptable solutions to problems faced on shopfloors was launched on March 22, 2022 at HRDC with participants from various sections of SP-2 and SP-3. PIW is an effective tool and tested HRD intervention in locating the problem and then analyzing it, to look for the solution required. The topic for this PIW workshop was chosen as "Reduction in Conveyor Belts consumption" in Sinter Plants. This PIW has been organized with an objective to increase the life of conveyor belts in SPs. Mukul Saharia, DGM (HRD) welcomed the Chief Guest of the function, SV Nandanwar, CGM (SP)-3 who had been very keen on seeking a solution that would increase the life of conveyor belts in SPs. While narrating his experiences and few critical events, he stressed upon the participants to wholeheartedly contribute in locating and analyzing the problems which will ultimately lead to the solution we are all looking for. AK Dutta, CGM (SP-2) said that we can defi-



nately find a solution to the problems we are facing as regards conveyor belts consumption, by brainstorming amongst ourselves. Outlining the importance of Performance Improvement Workshops at BSP, CGM (HRD & BE), Sanjay Dhar said the knowledge one gains from this work needs to be converted into action plan which in turn can help pin down the problem. He asked the participants to air free and frank opinion about the problems, give their honest opinion. While welcoming all the participants, Program Coordinators and the Program Facilitator, Umesh Oudhia GM (SP-2) along with GMs and seniors officials from HRD and SPs, Mukul Saharia DGM (HRD) said the PIW is a result oriented HRD-intervention, with participants from cross functional sections of departments wherein participants brainstorm on the subject matter with full

freedom to locate the problems and then give their solution through a specific and concrete action plan aimed at achieving the desired goal. A total of 31 participants were released from SP2 & SP-3 for the workshop at HRDC. During the second half of the workshop, the participants grouped in teams of six and made their presentation in front of the CGMs of SP-2, SP-3 and HRD & BE along with their action plan to achieve the target or to reduce the consumption of conveyor belts in SPs. In the concluding remark, CGM SP-3 Nandanwar said that along the action plan, housing keeping is also to be given a complete thrust and priority. While summing up the session, CGM (HRD&BE) Sanjay Dhar said that a follow-up and review will be done to see the progress of the action plans presented by the groups on the subject matter. The programme on Samadhan: PIW was compered by Subhash Patel Senior Manager (HRD) and DGM (HRD) Mukul Saharia coordinated with all the departments & other agencies concerned, in getting released all the participants.

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TU Strike: BSP Management appeals employees to attend the duty

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: Some of the trade unions have given a notice of strike on 28th and 29th March, 2022. Bhilai Steel Plant management has made elaborate arrangements to maintain the production and productivity during the strike. The management has appealed to the employees to attend the duty and upkeep the great work culture and tradition of Bhilai Steel Plant. It has been stated in the appeal that according to the memorandum sent by the Unions, majority of the issues/demands are related to Central/State Government policies and Corporate Office, SAIL, New Delhi on which no decision can be taken at Bhilai Steel Plant level. As the employees are

aware, Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed in NJCS and in accordance with the above, pay and other benefits have been revised accordingly. Bhilai Steel Plant has a long and glorious tradition of industrial peace and harmony. BSP collective is destined to attain greater heights towards performance and all of us must put optimum efforts for attainment of the same. During the present critical situation due to Corona pandemic, all the efforts must be directed towards employee health & safety and safe working to ensure betterment of the plant. It may be noted that RLC (C), Raipur, have seized the issues of strike call in conciliation under ID Act 1947. As Government of India has



declared Iron & Steel Industry as 'Public Utility Service', therefore under the provisions of ID Act 1947, during pendency of conciliation proceedings, going on strike is illegal. The BSP management informed the employees that absence from duty on 28th and 29th March, 2022, will be deemed to be participating in the strike and

for such unauthorized absence, in addition to deduction of wages it will adversely affect SPIS earning also. Further, such employees would also be liable for disciplinary action under the provisions of Standing Orders (Plant/Mines), HSL Discipline & Appeal rules and other applicable rules of the Company.

Participation in such strikes adversely affects the Plant's commitment towards improving production, productivity and profitability. In this regard, employees have been appealed not to hinder or forcefully stop/obstruct any employee from entering the plant premises. Such activities will be viewed as indiscipline and necessary disciplinary action will be taken. The management, therefore, appealed to all employees that during these difficult times, they should maintain the great work culture and tradition of Bhilai Steel Plant and attend to their duties on 28th and 29th March, 2022 and thereby contributing effectively towards improving production, productivity and profitability.

596 Cadets appear for NCC C Certificate Practical Examination

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: C certificate practical examination was conducted at St Thomas College Ruabandha. In the exam organised in offline mode third year cadets of 10 colleges under 37 CG Battalion NCC Durg, 1 CG RV Battalion NCC Anjora and 38 CG Battalion NCC Rajnandgaon participated. A total of 596 Senior Division and Senior Wing cadets of 10 colleges under 37 CG Battalion NCC Durg, 1 CG RV Battalion NCC Anjora and 38 CG Battalion NCC Rajnandgaon appeared for the C certificate examination. The practical and theoretical C certificate examination of cadets were taken under the joint



guidance of Presiding Officer Colonel Chetan Gurubaksh, 27 CG Battalion Raipur and board member of the examination Colonel Ajay Dhawan, 9 CG Battalion Jagdalpur. NCC C Certificate Examination was conducted and managed by Commanding Officer Colonel Hemant Dubey, 37

CG Battalion Durg, Administrative Officer Lieutenant Colonel R Setu Madhavan, Subedar Major Bhupati Thapa, PI Staffs, JCO and NCO as per the guidelines given to NCC and the NCC Officers of 10 colleges under the battalion. The management arrangements and examination work were completed with the joint cooperation of the officials. On the first day of the examination, Foot Drill, Arms Drill, Weapon Training, Map Reading, Field Craft and Field Training practical exam started at 07:30 hrs. All the cadets were present till noon for the practical exam. The theory exam has been conducted for 3 hours

ed with the joint cooperation of the officials. On the first day of the examination, Foot Drill, Arms Drill, Weapon Training, Map Reading, Field Craft and Field Training practical exam started at 07:30 hrs. All the cadets were present till noon for the practical exam. The theory exam has been conducted for 3 hours

on the second day of the exam. On the successful conduct of the NCC C Certificate Examination in St Thomas College Bhilai campus, the administrator of the college, Father Dr Joshi Varghese and the Principal of the college, Dr MG Roymon appreciated and congratulated all the cadets.

Supriti clicks silver, Ashok bronze in Federation Cup Body Building Championship

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: The 11th Federation Cup National Body Building Championship 2022 was held in Gangtok Sikkim from March 11 to 13, where players from Chhattisgarh state also participated. Supriti Acharji won silver medal in senior women's category while Ashok Behera has bagged bronze medal in 65 kg weight category. 450 players from 32 states, 8 sports boards and 150 officials participated in this event. Arvind Singh, Organizing Secretary, Indian Bodybuilders Federation and General Secretary of Chhattisgarh State Bodybuilders Association stated that the 11th Federation Cup Body Building Championship 2022 has been an achievement for the players of Chhattisgarh. Supriti Acharji of Durg, representing Chhattisgarh in the women's category,



performed brilliantly in this competition and got the distinction of winning the silver medal in a tough struggle. On the other hand, Geeta Saini of Haryana got the gold medal in this category, while Karishma Chingangbam of Manipur and Pratibha Thapliyal of Uttarakhand got the third and fourth place and Nandita Rawat of Delhi got the fifth position. Similarly, Ashok Behera of

Korea representing Chhattisgarh in 65 kg of men's category, won the bronze medal. In this category, the gold medal went to Pradeep Kuma Varma of Punjab, while Sashank Sekhar Sahu of Odisha got the silver medal, Sandeep N Sawale of Maharashtra got the fourth position and Tamil Nadu's E Nishanth had to be content with the fifth position. The Chhattisgarh contingent

consisted of 10 players, 4 officials for women and men category. Team coach and manager Nahid Akhtar, international judge Mahendra Tekam, national judge B Rajashekhar Rao accompanied the team. Yogendra Pandey, President, Chhattisgarh State Body Builders Association, General Secretary Arvind Singh, Treasurer Arvind Singh have congratulated the players on the excellent achievement.

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: The working committee meeting of Officers' Association - Bhilai Steel Plant was held on Sunday. All the zonal representatives attended the meeting and expressed concern over the unpleasant situations arising during the strike. The trade unions are going to observe a strike on 28 and 29 March. The OA-BSP discussed this issue and explored measures to ensure safe and easy arrangements in the plant for movement of the officers during the strike. It needs to be mentioned here that some executives of Bhilai Steel Plant had faced unpleasant situations during the last strike. They were misbehaved by the striking employees during the chaotic environment of strike. All the office bearers and representatives of OA-BSP will make efforts to



protect the executives and prevent recurrence of unpleasant situations. During the meeting, SEFI and OA-BSP President Narendra Kumar Banchoor shared detailed information about the SAIL-SEFI meeting held in New Delhi on March 24, 2022. SEFI office bearers raised the issues of pay-fixation of junior officers 2008 and 2010, advance payment of PRP for the financial year 2020-21, payment of

incremental PRP for the financial year 2018-19, SAIL pension scheme NPS monthly payment at the rate of 9 percentage, interest on the corpus of SAIL pension w.e.f. 01.01.2007 to be paid in NPS; enhancement in the limit of mobile handset reimbursement of officers, uniform HRA across all the units of SAIL, amendment in promotion policy, arrears of 39 months from 01.01.2017, notional seniority to

junior officer 2018 batch, special gift to all personnel on the occasion of SAIL turnover exceeding One lakh, Strategic merger of steel sector PSUs instead of disinvestment, payment of gratuity to retired officers between January 2017 and February 2018, etc. SEFI Chairman expressed hope that the long-awaited pay-fixation would be properly resolved soon. On behalf of SAIL Management, SAIL President Soma Mandal, Director (Commerce) VS Chakraborty, Executive Director (P&A) Sameer Swarup, CGM (Chairman's Office) NM Padhi, CGM Manas Rath and General Manager Vikram Uppal and SEFI President Narendra Kumar Banchoor, General Secretary Abkash Malik, Vice-Presidents Narendra Singh, Arindam Dey, Treasurer Sugali Loknath and Deputy Secretary General R Satish was present.

Final decision about cabinet reshuffle only by party High Command: CM

● People of the state know better what my govt has done in last 3 yrs and what it is doing now



Raipur, Mar 27: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel when asked about likely chances of cabinet reshuffle gave a pleasant smile and said people make all sorts of speculations and put on hold to all discussions going on about any changes in his Ministry. But he also said that the final decision will be taken by the party High Command and nothing can be said as to when any order in this regard can come. About review of works of MLAs during his tour to VS, CM said that

the schemes of the state government and department's review will be done and he would also hold talks with the government offices, party office bearers and general public.

It is notable here that CM Bhupesh Baghel's government has completed three years of its governance in the state and the election atmosphere in the country has already gained momentum. Recently elections of VS for five states was held and its results are

out and now there will be elections for three states, for which declaration of dates is still awaited.

In the coming year 2023, apart from Chhattisgarh, VS polls in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan area to be held. In the recently concluded VS polls in five states, Congress faced massive defeat and in view of which the party High Command has given instructions bring a change in the organizational leadership in the five states it lost badly.

This in turn has given air to likely change in the Baghel's cabinet as well and there are rumours in the political circle that there can be five new faces in the Baghel's cabinet. In this case, five Ministers of Baghel's government are likely to be replaced, but so far there is no confirma-

tion about it at party-level. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel while commenting in context of the role of Opposition and forthcoming Khairagarh VS by-poll said that to criticize against the government in power is the actual role that of Opposition and they are trying to fulfill the same and it is good thing. On the other hand, Baghel said that the people of the state clearly know as to what his government has done what it is doing in the state.

It is notable here that being in power for last 15 yrs, BJP got the role of Opposition with limited strength of party MLAs as against the good majority of Congress MLAs during first three terms in the Opposition. But this time it (BJP) has failed to gain respectful position.

Official Twitter handle of Chief Electoral Officer promptly restored

Foreign hackers had hacked

FIR also registered in Cyber Cell and Gol Bazar police station

Raipur, Mar 27: The official Twitter handle of Chief Electoral Officer, Chhattisgarh @CEOCHHATTISGARH was hacked by foreign hackers today (27 March 2022) around 4 am. Taking prompt action, the office of the Chief Electoral Officer contacted Twitter and the Twitter handle was restored within a few hours. An FIR has been lodged by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer against unknown hacker in Chhattisgarh Cyber Cell and Golbazar Police Station.

RE-COLOURING



With festival of 'Chaitra-Navratri' starting in few days from now, the photos of 'Goddess' inside the temples are being painted in different colours.

Nearly 4 cr vaccine doses administered so far

● For prevention of COVID-19; Ch'garh sees 12 cases, no death

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 27: Chhattisgarh on Saturday reported 12 COVID-19 cases, taking the state's tally to 11,52,050, while the death toll remained unchanged at 14,034, an official said. The positivity rate, or cases detected per 100 tests, stood at 0.14 per cent, he added.

The recovery count rose to 11,37,869 after five people completed home isolation during the day, leaving the state with 147 active cases, he said. "Surguja recorded six cases, followed by two in Raipur, and one in Bilaspur, among other districts. No new coronavirus case was reported in 23 districts on Saturday. With 8,841 samples examined during the day, the numbers of tests carried out so far in Chhattisgarh went up to 1,74,68,276," he added.

A government release said 1,75,48,020 people above the age of 18, or 85 per cent of the eligible

population, have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in the state.

As on Friday, 47 per cent of those in the 15-18 age group had received both doses, while pre-caution doses have been administered to 4, 26,935 health workers, front-line staff and people above 60 years of age.

Besides 1,80,844 children aged between 12 and 14 years have been given first dose of the vaccine, it added.

"The first dose has been administered to 100 per cent of the population above 18 years, and 69 per cent of chil-

dren in the 15-18 segment. A total of 1,98,20,657 citizens above 18 years and 11,28,249 children in 15 to 18 age group have received their first dose. In the 15-18 segment, 7, 75,166 children have got both doses," an official said. He said 3,91,10,705 doses have been administered so far across the state. Chhattisgarh's coronavirus figures are as follows: Positive cases 11,52,050, new cases 12, death toll 14,034, recovered 11,37,869, active cases 147, today tests 8,841, total tests 1,74,68,276.

Path of Mata Karma must be followed to remove social disparity: CM

Baghel attends Bhakt Mata Karma Jayanti celebrations Performs 'Bhoomi Pujan' of Mata Karma Dham Auditorium

Raipur, Mar 27: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel today called for following the path of Bhakt Mata Karma to strengthen the social organization, connect the society and work to remove social disparity. Power exists in organization and dedication, he said while addressing Bhakt Mata Karma Jayanti Samaroh at Karma Dham, Krishna Nagar, capital Raipur, on the eve of Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti.

Earlier, the Chief Minister wished for the happiness and prosperity of the state by offering prayers at the Bhakt Mata Karma temple in Karma Dham. On this occasion, he performed Bhoomi Pujan and laid foundation stone for the auditorium to be built in Mata Karma Dham and also planted Rudraksh plant in the premises.

Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, Lok Sabha MP Sunil Soni, State Backward Classes Commission Chairman Thaneswar Sahu, Telghani Board Chairman Sandeep Sahu, Chhattisgarh Rajya Sahkari Dugdha Mahasangh Chairman Vipin Sahu, Chhattisgarh Tourism



Board Vice Chairperson Chitrarekha Sahu, District Sahu Samaj President, many public representatives including Meghraj Sahu, office bearers and members of Sahu Samaj were present in large numbers on this occasion. Bhakt Mata Karma Jayanti celebrations have been organized from 21st to 28th March in Karma Dham on the occasion of 1005th birth anniversary of Bhakt Mata Karma. During the programme, the Chief Minister was honored with presentation of Rudraksha sapling in a pot of cow dung by Sahu Samaj and Green Army.

Addressing the function, Chief Minister Baghel extended greetings and best wishes to all the people on Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti. Referring to the message of Mata Karma, he underlined significance of unwavering faith, reverence and dedication to achieve goal in life. Mata Karma proved that the devotion of the devotee has the power to force the Lord to appear, he said. The Chief

Minister said that the State Government declared a public holiday on Karma Jayanti, but after that due to Corona crisis, the celebrations of Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti could not be organized for the last two years. Now that the situation has become normal, public and religious events are being organized again, he said.

The Chief Minister said that Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti is celebrated in every village of Chhattisgarh with great devotion and enthusiasm. Though this function is organized by the Sahu Samaj, people from all the communities of the village take part in it enthusiastically. There is also a tradition of taking out Kalash Yatra and Shobha Yatra in villages during the Jayanti celebrations in Chhattisgarh. Through this, devotees remember Mata Karma, Lord Krishna and Balabhadra.

According to Baghel there is power in organization and dedication. It is necessary to work for social harmony and brotherhood



and remove disparity in the society by following the path of Bhakta Mata Karma, he emphasised. On the demand of the Samaj to provide the lease of land reserved for Karma Dham, he said that the Chhattisgarh government is giving land to various societies for construction of buildings for social and educational works at only 10 percent of the market price. Sahu Samaj should also take initiative in this direction soon. Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, while wishing Bhakt Mata Karma Jayanti, wished everyone good luck. He said that an atmosphere of social organization, harmony and brotherhood should be maintained. He said that land is being provided by the state government to various societies for social and educational purposes only at 10 percent price and 90 percent discount is being given in it.

Baghel attends Shadani Darbar Varshi Mahotsav



Raipur, Mar 27: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday attended Shadani Darbar Varshi Mahotsav. Lakhs of people across the country and abroad yearn to participate in this ceremony and a large number of people come to Darbar Tirth in Chhattisgarh.

Baghel said that he got the privilege to attend this grand annual function organized at Shadani Darbar Tirth. It is a matter of pride for Chhattisgarh that the main

peeth of Sadani Darbar Tirth tradition established by Shiv Avatari Sadguru Sant Sadaram Sahib ji is located in Raipur, he said.

Baghel said that he found himself fortunate to be along with the sants and sadhus. Sants are the ones who bring happiness and peace in the society, increase humanity, remove discrimination, connect hearts and think for mental and spiritual well-being, he said, adding that sants give inspiration to fol-

low religion as human religion. According to him popularity of Raipur and Chhattisgarh has increased internationally through this Peeth. It is world famous as a center of spirituality as well as a center of cultural coordination and cultural exchange, he said. Our will power will become stronger if we become spiritually strong, he said adding that we also achieve the goal of life and get strength to face challenges. Sindhi Samaj has strengthened the business and industry of Chhattisgarh through its business acumen. Sindhi Samaj has contributed to the economic progress of Chhattisgarh, said the Chief Minister.

Members of Sindhi Samaj and common people in Chhattisgarh have also been getting the blessings of Sadani Darbar. The social activities carried out by the Darbar are also benefiting the

common people. This was the 62nd year festival of Sant Rajaram Sahib Ji, the seventh Peethadheesh of Darbar Tirtha. Sant Rajaram Sahib ji was born in Pakistan but he has scaled the heights of spirituality. The light of his spirituality of Sant Rajaram Sahib ji is spreading all over the world including India. Sant Yudhishtira Lal said that the revered Shadani Teerth is doing the work of human welfare. This annual gathering is being organized for the last 3 days. While praising the welfare schemes being run by Bhupesh Government, he said that the government is working for the welfare of all sections.

People of Sindhi Samaj including Swami Govindanand Maharaj, Swami Rajesh Lal, Swami Harish Lal, Udayalal, Nandlal Baburam Ahuja, Bhojraj ji, Pankaj Sharma and Faizal Rizvi were present on the occasion.

World Oral Health Day observe in Dental College



Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 27: Various programs were organized by Government Dental College, Raipur on the occasion of World Oral Health Day on 20th March. The theme for this year's World Oral Health Day is "Be Proud of your mouth". The one week programs

to raise awareness about the importance of oral health and oral hygiene were organized by the Department of Public Health Dentistry.

In this, dental examination and treatment camp were organized in Central Jail Raipur and Community Health Center Abhanpur. A skit was per-

formed by the intern amongst the patients coming to the dental college, encouraging them to take care of their oral health and improve their quality of life. Rangoli and slogan competition was also organized for the students based on the theme for this year's oral health day celebration.

Ch'garh Thai Boxing team bags three medals



● One gold and two silver

Raipur, Mar 27: 8th Federation Cup Thai Boxing National Championship concluded on March 27 at Mahabaleshwar witnessed participation by Chhattisgarh team and its players won 01 gold and two silver medals. Four member Chhattisgarh team took part in this competition and Tikeshwari Sahu, coach of Shri Gujrati School took part as

coach of Chhattisgarh team and also as referee of the tournament. Yash Rai (U17 +70 kg) of Shri Gujrati Hindi Medium School won gold by defeating the player of Jammu and Kashmir. Shivang Dama (U 17, 65-70 kg) of Shri Gujrati English Medium School won silver by losing to Punjab player and Vaibhavi Dama (U17, +45 kg) also settled for silver by losing to Maharashtra player in the final, informs Anis Memon President of Chhattisgarh Thai Boxing Association.

Axis Bank and Jaiswal Neco qualify for the Semi-finals



Raipur, Mar 27: The 2nd and 3rd quarter finals of the Suresh Agrawal Memorial corporate cricket tournament were played today. The 1st game of the day was played in between Jaiswal Neco Team and Jindal Steel Team. After winning the toss JNIL Captain Sujit Yadav wisely decided batting and his team made 106 runs on a loss of 10 wickets. Countering in the second innings JSPL Batsmen's could not perform up to the mark and lost the game scoring just 83 runs losing 4 wickets. An expe-

rienced batsman Sujit Yadav was awarded as the Man of the Match for scoring 21 runs in 20 balls and snatching 3 wickets.

While the last game of the day was played by Niros Ispat and Axis Bank. After winning the Toss Axis Bank Captain Anshuman Samanata Ray decided to field first. In the start of the innings the NI players took the score to 103 runs losing 6 wickets, while in the next innings countering the score initially it was very tough and on a very pressurized manner losing 7

wickets in the 8th over. It was very early that the match became one sided but the on-ground partnership of Aaqib Hussain and Mehtab Khan proved as boon for the Axis bank team and chasing the score slowly and steadily in a very strategic way they both could meet up the target in the 14th over and that's how they recorded victory.

The ups and downs in this innings were so exciting for the audience that the cheer up sounds didn't stop till the last ball of the game. The Game changer of this match an Axis Bank batsman Mr. Mehtab Khan who scored 21 runs in 10 balls was rewarded the player of the Match trophy. The Last quarter final match will be played tomorrow on Monday 29th March 2022 between Infinity Sevcies and Sarda Energy.

HC orders CBI probe in 2018 murder of family

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Mar 27: The Chhattisgarh High Court has directed the CBI to probe the murder of a couple and their two minor sons that took place in the state's Mahasamund district in 2018.

Justice Goutam Bhaduri on Friday passed the order on a petition filed by a family member of the deceased persons, which claimed that the investigation carried out by the local police was shoddy, and directed to hand over the case to the CBI.

The High Court held that perusal of the material seized along with the

affidavit of the State (in the case) do not inspire confidence of fair investigation. On the intervening night of May 30 and 31, 2018, health worker Yogmaya Sahu (30), her husband Chaitanya (31) and their sons Kunal (9) and Tanmay (7) were killed in a government quarter in Kishanpur village's sub-health centre premises.

The police arrested Dharmendra Bariha of the village in connection with the murder and later based on his narco analysis, four more accused - then sarpanch of Kishanpur Suresh Khunte, Phoolsingh Yadav, Gaurishankar Kewat and Akhandal

Pradhan - were arrested in 2019.

The five accused are in jail and the case is under trial in the district court.

Dissatisfied with the police investigation, Chaitanya's father Babulal Sahu had approached the High Court seeking to get the matter further investigated by other agencies, claiming that the police had failed to carry out a fair probe.

As per the order, the petitioner's counsel Raghvendra Pradhan submitted that the house where the four murders took place was under the CCTV surveillance. In the press conference (after the offence), the then Superintendent of

Police came out with a statement that the digital video recording (DVR) of the CCTV has been seized, but the case diary or the final report is silent about such seizure.

Bariha was made an accused on the report of Suresh, who was subsequently found to be involved in the crime. The police were helping the accused, who were involved in the business of alcohol and drugs, for which a monthly payment was being made to the police, which was revealed in the narco test, the petitioner's counsel argued.

After hearing the arguments of both the parties, the High Court had

reserved its order on March 14.

In its order passed on Friday, the court noted that certain links were missing in the case and they were serious in nature. Prima facie, perusal of the material seized along with the affidavit of the state do not inspire confidence of fair investigation, as such, I deem it proper to direct further investigation of the matter by the CBI, Justice Bhaduri observed.

The CBI will further investigate the case and proceed in accordance with the law within a period of four months from the date of receipt of a copy of the order, the court said.

EARTHEN POTS ON DEMAND



With mercury soaring high each day, people have started purchasing earthen pots of their choice well in advance.

Minister Bhagat releases 'Vijay Kala Yatra'

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 27: Active in the field of folk art and Hindi theatre world for more than four decades with his splendid performances, Vijay Mishra popularly known as 'Amit' has written with perfection his journey of four decades in the form of a book titled 'Vijay Kala Yatra'. The book was released at the hands of Amarjit Bhagat, Culture Minister, Government of Chhattisgarh. While releasing this book Bhagat commented that art lovers strive for excellence in every field of life. He added, Chhattisgarh is a hub of different art and Vijay Mishra holds immense contribution in establishing this art.



His journey of art started from the hub of art-Durg in the year 1976. In Chandeni Gonda organisation of Late Ramchandra Deshmukh and Late Mahaling Chandrakar, folk drama Kari, Sonha Vihan and Lorik Chanda, Mishra earned popularity as an announcer and artist. He earned special recognition from the dramas' directed by Ram Hriday Tiwari and produced by Prem Saiman Rachit staged from Shitij Rang Shivir Durg platform. He has been decorated with several awards at national level which include Balraj Sahani Award in Himachal Pradesh and also as best actor and director. His participation in Doordarshan, Radio and Chhattisgarhi films is praise worthy.

On the occasion of book release of 'Vijay Kala Yatra' the prominent among those present were Rajmadi Sampada president Vivek Vasnik, Shahid Khan, Rajeev Daga, Mahant Narendra Das, Sandeep Puranik, Dr Vilas Diwan, Dr Madhulika Sharma and other invited guests. Speaking on this occasion Mishra said, in 1984 after the presentation of folk drama 'Kaari' he used to spend many nights at Gudhiyari bus stand Raipur so that he can catch bus at 4 am to reach Mahasamund where he was a teacher in a school. He stressed on commitment, sacrifice and loyalty for marching ahead in the field of art.

Divisional Commissioner, IG visit Elmagunda Camp

Central Chronicle News

Sukma, Mar 27: Bastar Divisional Commissioner Shyam Dhawade and Bastar Range IG Sundarraj P on a tour of Sukma district, visited the new security camp set up in the sensitive village Elmagunda and boosted the morale of the soldiers there. They encouraged the security forces to establish peace in the area, and extended all possible cooperation to the villagers for their valuable contribution in the development of the area.

Efforts are being made to strengthen Triveni (Trust, Development and Security) in Bastar, and the establishment of the camp will definitely ensure security and development in the area, which



will increase the confidence of the villagers in the governance, administration and security forces, they stated.

During the interaction program, Sukma Collector Mr. Vineet Nandanwar, Superintendent of Police Mr. Sunil Sharma and top officials of the district were also present. The Commissioner and IG,

while reviewing the works of District Panchayat, Forest Department, Food Department, Public Works Department and Electricity Department also gave necessary directions to the officers in a brief meeting at Circuit House.

The officials also visited Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Kendra, and got acquainted with the students. While addressing the students, IG Sundarraj said that there are many means of acquiring knowledge, but only their better and right use can bring success. Giving the example of high-ranking officers from Bastar, he said that limited resources do not become a hindrance for those studying diligently; and said that only promising students like that of Bastar can change the image of the region in future.

District Panchayat CEO Mr. DN Kashyap, SDM Ms. Preeti Durgam, Tehsildar Mr. Pyarelal Nag, Mr. Mahendra Lahare and Nodal of Yuva Shakti Kendra Ashish Ram and District Sports Officer Virupaksha Puranik were present.

Fluorosis screening, treatment available in district hospitals

Raipur, Mar 27: Clean and safe drinking water and healthy food are among the most important things for good health. Consumption of contaminated water leads to many health related problems. Fluorosis is also a serious disease caused by unsafe drinking water which occurs due to the presence of excessive fluoride in the body. This disease is caused by drinking high fluoridated water or by consuming food grains irrigated with high fluoridated water. Due to fluorosis, the bones of the body become deformed and crooked. According to State Fluorosis Control Program nodal officer Dr Shailendra Agrawal high fluoride content, yellowing of teeth, premature loss of teeth, deformity and curvature of body bones are commonly seen in

people suffering from fluorosis. Fluorosis symptoms include discoloration of teeth, pain in muscles and joints, twisting of arms and legs forward or backward, inability to walk for long distances, abdominal pain and flatulence. Dr Agrawal informed that the team of health department regularly visits fluorosis-hit villages to collect information about people suffering from this disease. Fluorosis is checked in the students at the school level through the National Child Health Program. He said that the amount of fluoride in drinking water should be one ppm. Consumption of fluoride in excess of this is injurious to health. According to Dr Agrawal the problem of fluorosis is more in seven districts of the state namely Raipur, Mahasamund,

Balod, Korea, Kanker, Korba and Kondagaon. The amount of fluoride in the body can be checked by taking blood or urine tests. All the district hospitals, community health centers and primary health centers in the state have facilities for screening and treatment of fluorosis.

Laboratories for testing fluorosis have also been established in Balod, Kondagaon, Korba, Kanker, Raipur, Mahasamund, Balodabazar, Bastar, Gariaband, Surguja, Surajpur and Balrampur. Filtered water, tap water and surface water should be consumed to prevent fluorosis. Reducing food containing calcium, magnesium and vitamin-C increases the chances of fluorosis. Plenty of fruits, green leafy vegetables and milk should be included in our diet.

Free Saraswati cycle scheme beneficial for girl students: Patel

Kawardha, Mar 27: In the current academic session, 6834 girls from SC, ST and BPL (below poverty line) families are being given free cycles under the Saraswati Cycle Scheme run by the School Education Department of the State Government. As per the instructions of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, and Cabinet Minister Mr. Mohammad Akbar, cycles are being distributed to school girls by organizing events in all the schools of the district.

In continuation of the scheme, free cycle distribution was organized here in village Rajnawagaon of Baiga Bahol Bodla development block of the district. Shri Hari Patel, a



member of the Shakambhari Board of the state government, attended the event as the chief guest. He distributed cycles to 888 girl students under Saraswati

Cycle Distribution Scheme and wished them good luck for their bright future.

Under this scheme the students of schools in Rajnawagaon, Baghutola,

Rajpura, Chhapri, Chhibabar, Katgo, Harmo and others were presented with cycles. Here it needs a mention that Chhattisgarh came second in the count of children

dropping out at the secondary level. In view of these increasing figures, the government has taken a proper step so that no female child should leave the school, therefore starting the Saraswati Cycle Scheme. Shri Hari Patel also inspected the school premises after the event. School Principal Shri SR Chandravanshi and Sarpanch Shri Ganguram Dhurve demanded extra room for better educational system. On this occasion Sarpanch Shri Ganguram Dhurve, Chairman of Shawl Development Committee Shri Bhukhan Patel, Parmeshwar Manikpuri, Khemlal Patel, Shiv Prasad was present.

Farmers deprived of benefits due to KYC no update status

Dhamtari, Mar 27: Hundreds of farmers in the region are deprived of benefits of PM Samman Nidhi Yojna, due to non-updating of KYC in banks accounts. Many farmers in the region have complained of zero benefits, and reportedly many are checking in and out of agricultural department and CSC centers. It is noteworthy that the PM Samman Nidhi Yojna has been launched by the central government to provide relief to small and mar-

ginal farmers and an amount of six thousand is to be deposited in their accounts in three slots. According to information there are more than five thousand small and marginal farmers in the district and with this as many though have registered into the ambitious schemes but are deprived of benefits because of KYC updating. A team from a local daily took stock of CSC centers located at Kutchari Chowk, but it was witnessed

that a long queue of farmers were awaiting their chance for updating into the scheme. Many farmers namely Keshav Sahu, Chandrashekar Dewangan and others have alleged that though they had registered into the scheme six months back, not a single penny was deposited in the accounts. Meanwhile agricultural officials are citing KYC non-updating as the reason behind the non dispersal of funds into the accounts.

Inflation breaking records in Modi regime: Janak Dhruv

Central Chronicle News

Mainpur, Mar 27: State Adivasi Congress President Janak Dhruv, who arrived here on tour of assembly constituency Bindranavagadh, accused the Narendra Modi led central government of record rise in inflation. The wrong policies of the government has made the public difficult



to survive, on accounts of steep rise in fuel and essential commodity prices, he said.

Dhruv also took part in digital membership program of the state government and asked the party workers to make sure the welfare schemes of the state government reaches to every doors of the society.

The government has

started many ambitious schemes for the unemployed and tribal youths and many local festivals have been declared as holiday, which has added value to our traditions, he said.

Ensuring the rights of the local community on resources like water forest and land, the government has rightly stood for the tribal population,

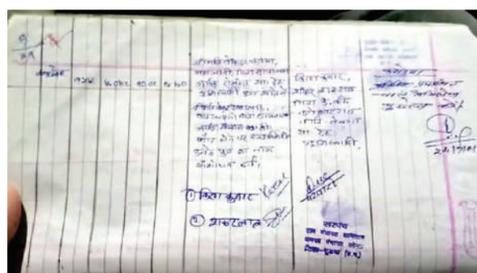
stated Dhruv and said that the tribal cultures enlistment in development in the present government's regime is worthwhile to state. Present were District President Khedu Negi, City Congress Committee president Ramkrishna Dhruv, Bhola Jagat, Shaheed Memon, Nihal Netam and many others.

Arbitrariness of revenue officials in Sukma district

Central Chronicle News

Konta, Mar 27: In Jagargunda of Konta block of Sukma district, recently a case has come to the fore, in which wages were being paid to many dead persons, keeping them alive for years. Now there is also a case in which a living person is being told as dead in the greed of money.

This is the case of a farmer of Halka number 5 in village Raj Penta of Jagargunda, sub-tehsil of Konta. The ancestral land of the farmer which is pending for correction in the sub-tehsil Konta Jagargunda for years. No decision has



Papers showing land fraudulently transferred to Kiran Rao and Shankar Lal Rao.

been taken so far on this matter, despite this, the land rights letter of the concerned land whose Khasra number is 155 by Naib Tehsildar Ram Singh Rana and the then Patwari Madkam Dulal was issued

to other persons in a fake manner due to lack of knowledge of the farmer. Fake Patta has also been issued by changing the names of both the persons named Kiran Rao and Shankar Lal Rao, a



Office where this exchange of records took place.

teacher by profession.

The whole matter is something like this Jagargunda resident applicant farmer Jai Shankar Shukla, father late Badri Narayan Shukla had bought Khasra number - 155 land area in 1969-70 in an auction done

by Tehsildar Konta, with an area of 7710 acres. At the time of conversion, this land was converted into khasra number 157 and acreage 5.61 acres in a fake manner. In the year 2012-13, a legal process was initiated to rectify the land issue in the Tehsil Office, Konta by giving an application to the Collector Sukma. In the meantime, whoever came as Tehsildar, Jai Shankar Shukla, was produced in the Konta Tehsil office. But the resolution of the matter remained pending. In the meantime, due to the sudden separation of Jagargunda sub-tehsil office from Konta tehsil, the file of the case was sent to

the Jagargunda sub-tehsil office for hearing. According to the statement given by the farmer to the media, the Naib Tehsildar Ram Singh Rana posted in the sub-tehsil office for hearing in the matter, while assuring for the settlement of land meales number-155, money was demanded from the farmer, which the farmer expressed his inability to pay the bribe. After which the notice of production was served to the farmer Jai Shankar Shukla on 22 November 2019 and his production took place on 22 November 2019 in Jagargunda sub-tehsil. Before the appear-

ance, on 24/07/2019, Tehsildar Ram Singh Rana transferred the land rights letter in the name of Kiran Rao and Shankar Lal Rao, whereas the farmer Jai Shankar Shukla's case was pending for more than seven years, related to his land rights more than 50 years ago, his rights record, conversion register and related records which were submitted by the office on demand as evidence. While Kiran Rao and Shankar Lal Rao did not have any evidence related to the record of rights, the land rights letter was issued in connivance with Tehsil Dar and Patwari in a fake manner.

In this case one more thing came to fore, a woman who is currently working as a teacher in Chhattisgarh government, who is also related to her family, was declared dead by Patwari and Tehsildar without any investigation. The entire process has been done. Jai Shankar Shukla through media urged the Chief Minister to get this entire matter investigated and demand strict action to be taken against such corrupt culprits. There are more such cases in these areas whose files are buried and how many farmers like us keep on making rounds of government offices which are not listened to.

Embezzlement of Rs 46 lakh for cleaning Bandhua pond

Estimate of work was Rs 3 lakh, cheque disbursed of Rs 46 lakh



Abhishek Banerjee

Narayanpur, Mar 27: Bandhua pond situated in the heart of Narayanpur district headquarter is connected with human sentiments and when it came to the beautification of this pond, those involved in corruption played with the sentiments of local population and engaged in the corruption worth lakhs.

Minister Lakhma ordered to stop work

The cleaning work of pond was ordered on October 11, 2021 and Chhattisgarh Adventure Sports Raipur was made the nodal agency. In a meeting organized on January 12, 2022 minister stopped the work citing

misuse of funds. He asked Executive Engineer of District Construction Committee to evaluate the work and present the report.

Evaluation of Rs 3 lakh, withdrawn Rs 46 lakh

As per information received, total area of the pond is 191000 sq m and nodal agency removed water hyacinth in only 17831 sq m area. The total payment was Rs 3907960 but as per the report submitted payment should have been Rs 319621.

Officers did not sign in agreement

The sanction of Rs 114.94 lakh was given for the cleanliness work and Chhattisgarh Adventure Sports Raipur qualified

for this tender with its price of Rs 59.75 per sq km. The order was given for cleaning on October 07, 2021 but neither District Construction Committee chairman nor Nodal Officer signed in that agreement papers.

Rs 46 lakh was shared among the corrupt persons

It is understood that Rs 46 lakh was allegedly shared among the corrupt persons in the system.

Failure of Cong Govt in power

Former minister Kedar Kashyap alleged that it is the total failure of Congress government in power and corrupt persons are functioning freely without any fear of being tried in the court.

Civic Action Program organized by CRPF 217 Battalion

Konta, Mar 27: According to the guidelines of the force, on 25/03/2022, the 217th battalion KRPU in Naxal affected area district - Sukma, Thana - Maraiguda village, Civic Action Program was organized by the force. Apart from Maraiguda village, poor villagers and school children from other villages - Ramapuram, Pusgufa and Linglapally participated in this civic action programme. Under the Civic Action Programme, radio, saris, lungi, school bags, sports goods, jeans pants and T-shirts for girls were distributed. Along with this, the villagers were treated by organizing medical camps and free medicines were also distributed to the

needy. E/217 Bata to all the villagers and school children present during the Civic Action Program. Meals were also provided by CRPF. On this auspicious occasion, Bhavani Pratap Yadav (Second Command Officer Administration), made the villagers aware against the exploitation, atrocities and hollow ideology of the Maoists and appealed to join the mainstream under the rehabilitation policy of Chhattisgarh Government "Puna Narkom Abhiyan". During this, the villagers of Maraiguda, Ramapuram, Pusgufa and Linglapally were also assured that 217th Battalion CRPF would be there for any problem. The force is always ready at your service.



Development works worth Rs. 1.10 cr approved in Arang

Under MLA fund on recommendation of Minister Dr. Daharia

Arang, Mar 27:

On the recommendation of Urban Administration, Development and Labour Minister Dr. Shiv Kumar Daharia, a fund approval of Rs 1.10 cr has been given for the development works in Arang. From the total fund, Rs. 6.50 lakh has been approved for construction of community building in Sahu Para of village Semaria (N), Rs. 6.50 lakh for construction of community building in Sarva Para of village Chorbhati, Rs. 6.50 lakh for construction of community building in Jheria Sahu Para of village Guma, Rs. 5.20 lakh for construction of community building in Varmapara of village Devratilda, village Chhatauna, Rs. 5.20 lakh for construction of CC road from Lalit Chandrakar's house to Bhushan Patel's house, Rs. 5.20 lakh for construction of CC road from Kumar's house to

Anganwadi center number 2 in village Nakta, Rs. 5 lakh for construction of Aaha in Lodhi Para, community building of village Bhothali, CC from new panchayat building in village Mohmela to Jirakhn Tandon's house. Rs 5.20 lakh for road construction work, Rs 5.20 lakh for construction of CC road from Narsing's house to Hirasingsh's house in village Pirda, Rs. 5.20 lakh for construction work of CC road from Mahamaya Chowk to Kesla road in village Parsada (Sec.), Ghanshyam Dhandhar in village Tekari, Rs. 5.20 lakh for the construction work of drain from the house of Tejram Verma, Rs. 4.93 lakh for furniture supply in the government high school of village Rakhi, Rs. 6.50 lakh for the construction of community building in Nirmalkar Para of village Bhansoz. Approval of Rs. 6 lakh has been received for construction of shed in the primary school building of village Darba, Rs. 3 lakh for construction of community building in Bajrang Chowk of village Borid,

and Rs. 2 lakh for construction of amphitheater at Sahara Devta Chowk.

District President Khilleshwar Devangan, Vice President Hemlata Dumendra Sahu, District Panchayat members Keshari Mohan Sahu, Makhan Kurre, Durga Roy, Anita Thansing Sahu, Manish Narang Sarpanch Semaria, Usha Bhuveshwar Prasad Ahluwalia Sarpanch Bhansoj, Dinesh Kosaria Sarpanch Guma, Rajesh Chandrakar Sarpanch Chhatauna, Khemichand Sahu Sarpanch Mohamela, Tejram Sahu Sarpanch Parsada, Shiv Kumar Gendre Sarpanch Achholi, Dugesh Sahu Sarpanch Bhainsa, Ishwar Sahu Sarpanch Devratilda, Krishnabai Tandon Sarpanch Chorbhati, Vijay Sahni Sarpanch Sarpanch Bhothali, Gopal Chaturvedi Sarpanch Nakta and the people's representatives and Congress workers expressed their gratitude and thanked the Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel and minister Shiv Kumar Dahariya for this venture.

Governor presents three gold medals to traffic man Mahesh

Earns laurels for district



Korea, Mar 27:

Lans Naik Mahesh Mishra better known as Traffic Man has once again made the district proud by winning three gold medals at the hands of Governor Ansuuya Uike. He was presented these medals during the first convocation ceremony of Sant Gahira Guru University Ambikapur at PG College Ground Ambikapur. Mahesh Mishra was presented gold medals for securing first place in three subjects- Sanskrit, Political Science and Sociology during PG level examination.

It needs to be mentioned here, Mahesh Mishra while working in

traffic department is doing excellent work in the field of creating awareness towards traffic. In this process he has curved a niche for himself and received awards from various organizations. There is a wave of happiness in the district after the news of Mishra's winning three gold medals was circulated here.

In today's time when there is continuous increase in road accidents, Mishra by his own expense is creating awareness among the masses and till date has created awareness among 4 lakh people. Mishra is known in the district for his simplicity and easy mixing personality.

Father critical, 2 yr old son dies

Surajpur, Mar 27: In a sensational case of suicide, a father first made his 2 yr old son consume poison and then committed suicide consuming the same. In this the 2 yr old son died and condition of father is critical and is undergoing treatment in Bhatgaon Hospital. Actually the victim Devlal R/o Dharampura became father of one son through a love marriage two years back. It is learnt that Devlal's wife has left for her mother's house a year back and is not returning. After this Devlal tried many times to call her back and went to his inlaws house requesting her to come back, be it was in vain. So getting frustration and felling helpless, Devlal made his 2 yr old son consume poison and himself later drank the same poison and tried to commit suicide. But in this he lost his son and condition of Devlal is reported to be critical. The Police has filed a case and taken the matter under investigation.



Surendra Nath Mishra Memorial Award presented



Dhamnagar, Mar 27:

Surendra Nath Mishra Memorial Award ceremony celebrated in Korua Govindpur High school, Dhamnagar, Bhadrak. This award is given every year in the memory of Late Surendra Nath Mishra to the elite student, who secures highest marks in Annual HSC Examination of the school.

The award giving ceremony started after the lighting the lamp & offering flowers to Lord Jagannath. Banshidhar Sahoo, Retd. Head Master presided over the meeting. Prahalad Charan

Sahoo, Retd Headmaster narrated about the deeds and contribution of Late Surendra Nath Mishra towards education and his popularization in the society. Other invited guests Kamal Lochan Basantia, Niranjan Mishra, Subhas Nayak, Santosh Kumar Das and Nirakar Mishra were also spoke on this occasion.

In their speeches they highly praised to the all round social development activities of Late Mishra. The award is hosted by Nihar Ranjan Mishra son of Surendra Nath Mishra to encourage and inspired the meritorious student. Master Jiban Jyoti Nath

and Master Soumendra Priyadarshi Mohakul have been awarded a Trophy, certificate and cash award of Rs.2000/- each for the year-2020 & 2021 respectively for securing highest marks in HSC Examination in Korua Govindpur High school.

In the end Shri Padmanav Mishra, Headmaster of the school in his speech has said the such type of activities will encourage and inculcate the healthy competition among the student. He also extended vote of thanks to all the Teachers, student and participants.

Surprise inspection by Divisional Commissioner

Koriya, Mar 27:

Surguja Divisional Commissioner Mr. GR Churendra did a surprise inspection of the Sub-Divisional Officer and Tehsil Office Kharagwan here. During the inspection, while discussing with the officers and employees, he directed to organize the maintenance of the documents issued before the caste, income, residence certificate in a systematic manner. He also directed to settle the revenue matters by setting up camp courts for fast transfer partition, demarcation etc. He also gave necessary directions to remove illegal encroachments on pub-

lic purpose places like Haat Bazar, Devasthal, Government premises etc.

He directed to get the boundary wall constructed by the Public Works Department and to improve the water system along with necessary repairs and improvements in the Tehsil office building. He directed to ensure better seating arrangement for common citizens in the Tehsil premises and said that the Tehsil premises should be beautified, and for this, he asked to beautify by planting flowering and fruit trees. During this SDM Kharagwan and block level officers-employees were present.



'Media, a medium to allay frustration and despair'

Amarkantak, Mar 27:

Organized by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak and sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Research, New Delhi, two days on the theme 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - Nationalist Press and Freedom Movement: Forgotten Struggle, Sacrifice and Change'. In the national seminar, the speakers unanimously underlined the role and importance of journalism in liberating the country and called for the re-reading of the golden history of journalism to be widely compiled and publicized. Presiding over the inaugural session of the seminar, Vice Chancellor Prof Prakash Mani Tripathi, while highlighting the importance of journalism, threw light on the golden history of journalism and the struggle for freedom of editors. He said that the media is a medium to remove frustration and despair. To keep the work, sacrifice, journalism and contribution of freedom fighters coming out of the ocean of freedom movement in the memories and taking inspiration from them is the basic goal of the elixir of freedom. He further said that most of the journalists also performed the

role of advocate and teacher and worked to give impetus to the movement. Describing the struggle of journalists for independence and the norms established by journalism as relevant even in the present times, he said that even in the present times, media can take inspiration from those values, spread the sense of nationalism and establish the feeling of patriotism in the hearts of the people. | The Vice Chancellor further said that the nationalist letters did the tortures right, but the culture of the movement was developed through journalism. In the time of slavery, journalism did the work of awakening the sleeping soul of the nation. He said that 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is a unique and necessary program which will revive the history of the country's independence among the people, various aspects of the culture of the movement was developed through journalism. In the time of slavery, journalism did the work of awakening the sleeping soul of the nation. 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BRIEF

Traced

■ **Palghar:** A 22-year-old man from Jammu and Kashmir who had allegedly eloped with a 16-year-old girl was traced in Maharashtra's Palghar district. Zulfikar Mohammed Sadique Khatana had allegedly run away with the girl who hails from Rajouri on March 5, said a police official. The couple were staying in Palghar. Police from Jammu and Kashmir got tip-off about their whereabouts and arrested Zulfikar earlier this week. The girl was rescued.

Held

■ **Gurugram:** Two more people were nabbed in connection with the double murder of liquor businessmen here last month, police said, adding that the killings took place over business rivalry. They identified the arrested men as Ajay alias Jaidar, a resident of Khod village in Pataudi area here and the alleged mastermind behind the killings, and his associate Karambir alias Karmu, from Haryana's Jhajjar. Thirty rounds of bullets were fired.

Opens

■ **Jammu:** BSF Wives Welfare Association (BWWA) inaugurated a handicraft and handloom shop at Border outpost Octroi for tourists visiting the Suchetgarh sector along the International Border (IB) for the 'retreat ceremony' on weekends. President of BWWA, Jammu frontier, Sunita Boora inaugurated the 'Sakhi' shop, a BSF spokesperson said. He said the shop contains women's accessories, including clothing, footwear and bags.

Re-opens

■ **New Delhi:** The 210-km Manali-Sarchu road was re-opened by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), the defence ministry said. It said the opening of the road will provide connectivity to Lahaul district in Himachal Pradesh and it further leads to Leh in Ladakh. The road remains closed for over 160-180 days in a year during the winters.

Increase

■ **Jammu:** Jammu and Kashmir has recorded an eight-fold increase in controlled atmosphere (CA) storage since 2015-16. The Jammu and Kashmir government, in a bid to reduce post-harvest losses by increasing the shelf life of various agriculture and horticulture products besides addressing the issue of distress sale of crops by the farmers, has encouraged and aided private players to set up cold storage (CA) facilities, which is expected.

Revives

■ **Jaipur:** After a brief respite, the heatwave condition revived in many parts of Rajasthan with a maximum temperature of 42.1 degree Celsius reported in its Banswara district. The Meteorological Department has issued a warning of a heatwave at many places in the coming days.

'Muslims now placing faith in Modi, Adityanath'

● **Danish Azad Ansari is UP's lone minority minister**

Ballia, Mar 27 (PTI):

Danish Azad Ansari, the only Muslim minister in Uttar Pradesh, on Sunday claimed that his community is warming up to the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The Ballia resident was inducted into the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government as a minister of state on Friday and needs to be elected to the state assembly or the legislative council in the next six months to continue on the post.

Ansari said the Muslim community is now shedding the "illusion" created by opposition parties like the Samajwadi Party, the



Danish Azad Ansari

Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress. "The BJP is getting the love of Muslim society now and the love for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is increasing continuously in the Muslim community, he told PTI. Faith in the BJP is being awakened in the community," he added.

Ansari, 34, said Modi's vi-

sion of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Vikas' is expanding the BJP vote base and Muslims are being drawn more towards the BJP.

He claimed that the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and the 2022 Assembly elections suggest this.

But the BJP fielded no Muslim candidate in the just-ended UP Assembly election. Its ally Apna Dal (S) nominated Haidar Ali Khan from Suar in Rampur, and he was defeated. The previous Adityanath government too had a single Muslim member — Mohsin Raza, a minister of state.

Ansari claimed that the opposition thought of Muslims only as a vote bank. But the Muslim community has now understood that the SP, the BSP and the Congress have always cheated them. The

Muslim community has realised that only Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will work for their true development, he said. The minister said Modi has dreamed of making India a global leader and all youth, and the Muslim community, will have to play an important role in making this come true. He said it is the dream of Modi and Adityanath that every section of society is connected with the mainstream of development, and they will fulfil this. He said there should be efforts to take government schemes to the grassroots. He said the Adityanath government will take inputs on what it needs to do for the betterment of the Muslim community, particularly the youth.

UNESCO says Edu system should have crisis-sensitive policies

● **Citing Ukraine war**

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

The unfolding events in Ukraine are a stark reminder that crises can strike anytime and the education system in all the countries must have plans to prepare, respond and recover from such emergencies, according to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report. Teachers need to be equipped to teach in increasingly challenging conditions such as damaged facilities or overcrowded classrooms, and to be able to differentiate pedagogy to adapt to learners from education systems that use other curricula and languages, it pointed out. The report comes amid a fierce Russian military offensive in Ukraine, with the toll on civilians rising as Moscow seeks to pound cities into submis-



A rural school classroom in India.

sion from entrenched positions. "The unfolding events in Ukraine are a stark reminder that crises can strike anytime, anywhere. In addition, other ongoing crises such as COVID-19, various conflicts and disasters across the globe, including those due to climate change, are all threatening education continuity and quality especially for those displaced," it said. The report pointed out that in 2021, the UN Refugee Agency re-

ported that more than 84 million people were forcibly displaced globally. In 2022, this figure is set to rise, as more than 1.5 million children have already fled Ukraine, the report said. "Education systems are often under-prepared in the face of crises whether in terms of welcoming the sudden arrival of refugee children, protecting the safety of learners and teachers, or having to quickly shift to remote learning," it said.

RENOVATION



Workers renovate a Ministers room before being occupied, at Vidhan Bhawan, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh on Sunday.

India to start building nuclear power plants in 'fleet mode'

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

With the first pour of concrete for a 700 MW atomic power plant in Karnataka's Kaiga scheduled in 2023, India is set to put in motion construction activities for 10 'fleet mode' nuclear reactors over the next three years.

The first pour of concrete (FPC) signals the beginning of construction of nuclear power reactors from the pre-project stage which includes excavation activities at the project site. The FPC of Kaiga units 5&6 is expected in 2023; FPC of Gorakhpur Haryana Anu Vidyut Prairyanjan units 3 & 4 and



Nuclear power plant construction.

Mahi Banswara Rajasthan Atomic Power Projects units 1 to 4 is expected in 2024; and that of Chutka Madhya Pradesh Atomic Power Project units 1 & 2 in 2025, officials of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) told the Parliamentary panel on science and technology. The Centre had ap-

proved construction of 10 indigenously developed pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWR) of 700 MW each in June 2017. The ten PHWRs will be built at a cost of Rs 1.05 lakh crore.

It was for the first time that the government had approved building 10 nuclear power reactors in

one go with an aim to reduce costs and speed up construction time.

Bulk procurement was underway for the fleet mode projects with purchase orders placed for forgings for steam generators, SS 304L lattice tubes and plates for end shields, pressuriser forgings, bleed condensers forgings, incoloy-800 tubes for 40 steam generators, reactor headers, DAE officials said.

Engineering, procurement and construction package for turbine island has been awarded for Gorakhpur units three and four and Kaiga units five and six, they added.

Delhi court acquits man in Satyam-Liberty cinema blast case

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

A Delhi court has acquitted a man accused of being a member of alleged terror organisation Babbar Khalsa International in case related to 2005 Satyam Cinema and Liberty Cinema bomb blasts, saying police miserably failed to prove the case beyond the shadow of doubt.

Additional Sessions Judge Dharmender said that though the prosecution had ascribed meaning to general words like 'plot', 'khet', 'fasal', 'paani', etc. in his telephonic conversation, the possibility of any enthusiastic police officer misinterpreting plain and simple words on account of suspicion and overzealous approach cannot be ruled out. I am of the considered opinion that shad-

ow of doubt appears upon the prosecution version and the evidence available on record is not of sterling quality to hold accused Trilochan Singh liable for the commission of offence punishable under section 18 (conspiracy for terrorist acts) and 20 (membership of terrorist organisation) of UAPA and under section of Arms Act, the judge said.

The court also said that the police miserably failed to prove that the accused was a member of Babbar Khalsa International.

Delhi Police Special Cell had arrested Singh, a driver, in 2007 as a part of its investigation into the 2005 Satyam Cinema and Liberty Cinema bomb blasts and had claimed that the accused was trying to revive militancy in Punjab.

MP CM stresses to explore economic potential of cow-rearing

Bhopal, Mar 27 (PTI):

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has stressed on the need to promote cow-rearing and make people aware of the economic potential of its products, including cow dung. During brainstorming session of the MP cabinet at Pachmarhi, Chouhan said steps will also be taken to make cow shelters self-sustainable and 'Gobardhan' projects will be started in different cities of the state. "Arrangements will be made to purchase cow dung in the state. New works will be started in Madhya Pradesh by studying the experiments of cow conservation and protection in other states, including Gujarat, he said.



Madhya Pradesh cabinet members led by CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan at brainstorming session in Pachmarhi.

People will be made aware about how to take care of stray cows and other animals. The common citizens will be motivated towards cow-rearing if they have an income from cow dung and urine. Concerted efforts will also be made to

make 'gaushalas' (cow shelters) self-sustainable, Chouhan said. After the successful operation of a Bio-CNG plant at Indore in MP, the Gobardhan scheme will also be implemented in other cities of the state, he said.

Sanjay Raut targets BJP over Mehbooba's comments on Kashmir

Mumbai, Mar 27 (PTI):

A day after Mehbooba Mufti remarked that peace would be elusive in Kashmir until the Centre holds dialogue with Pakistan and people of Jammu and Kashmir; Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said the PDP chief could make such comments as the BJP had given people like her strength by forming government with her party in the erstwhile state.

Talking to reporters, Raut said the Mufti-led People's Democratic Party (PDP) was a friend of the BJP at some point of time.

The PDP has been pro-Pakistan and sympathises with terrorists right from the beginning, he claimed.

Notably, the PDP and BJP had come together to form a government in



Sanjay Raut

Jammu and Kashmir in 2015. The alliance broke in June 2018. Mufti had reiterated her call to the BJP-led government at the Centre for a dialogue with Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Raut said Mufti had supported Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru and still, the BJP had formed a government by forming an alliance with her party in Jammu and Kashmir.

Anti-encroachment drive sparks protests in Jammu

Jammu, Mar 27 (PTI):

Authorities on Sunday carried out an anti-encroachment drive in different parts of Jammu, triggering protests by people who blocked the Narwal Bypass for several hours, officials said.

Dozens of structures, including buildings and shops, were demolished partially or completely near Bathindi crossing on the Narwal Bypass in the early Sunday morning drive by the revenue department amid heavy deployment of police and paramilitary forces, they said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people took to streets and blocked the highway by burning tyres and staging a sit-in against the "selective drive". Additional Deputy Commissioner,



People burn tyres and block highway in protest against anti-encroachment drive, in Jammu, Sunday.

Jammu, Shyambir had a tough time in maintaining law and order and was seen persuading the protesters to lift the blockade with an assurance that the administration will look into their grievances sympathetically.

We suspended the drive on the public demand and

asked them to form a committee to raise their issues at the right forum. We are here to address their genuine issues, he told reporters at the scene of the protest.

Asked about the demand for compensation for the damage, he said the issue of compensation

will be decided during deliberations with the committee.

The police officer said the drive was carried out in accordance with the laid down rules to reclaim the state land illegally occupied by the people and there was no violation on part of the administration.

However, the protesters accused the district administration of going for selective drives to dislodge a particular community.

They came around 4 am and started the demolition drive without any prior notice. The law is equal for everyone, but why this selective drive in our areas? Was the government sleeping when the buildings were raised? Shabir Ahmad, one of the protesters, said.

Amit Shah inaugurates several projects in Chandigarh

Chandigarh, Mar 27 (PTI):

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday inaugurated several projects, including the state-of-the-art Integrated Command and Control Centre under which over 2,000 CCTV cameras have been installed here to keep a check on traffic violations.

Shah also laid foundation stones of a hostel block of commerce college, a project for constructing 240 houses for police personnel and a bus depot-cum-workshop.

The ICCC centre is also integrated with major citizen services including water, electricity, sewage, solid waste management, transport, e-governance, parking and public-bike sharing for an effective monitoring of services



Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurates Integrated Command and Control Centre in Chandigarh on Sunday.

and data analysis. The Union minister was accompanied by Punjab Governor and Chandigarh administrator Banwarilal Purohit on this occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Shah said he was visiting the 'beautiful city' after a long time and felt very good.

"In the history of the modern world, Chandigarh is the most developed city in the category of planned cities," said Shah.

He recalled that when he was young, children in Gujarat were then given an example of Chandigarh as the planned and good city.

BRIEF

Seizes

London: Britain has seized two jet aircraft belonging to Russian billionaire Eugene Shvidler as Western governments seeking to end the war in Ukraine put pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin by targeting the luxury lifestyles of his closest supporters. Treasury Secretary Grant Shapps said that the two aircraft would be detained indefinitely after three week investigation that had already grounded planes from flights.

Separatists

Quetta: The Pakistani army said that security forces killed six Baluch militants during a raid at their hideout in the country's volatile southwest. The military said the raid was conducted in the Nagao mountains near the Sibbi district of Baluchistan. Militants opened fire triggering a shootout in which six of them were killed. One soldier was also killed and two others wounded in the heavy exchange of fire.

Planning

New York: New York City officials are planning to remove makeshift shelters set up by homeless people on city streets, mirroring similar efforts in other liberal metropolises that had previously tolerated the encampments. Mayor Eric Adams disclosed the initiative in an interview, but provided few details. It comes a month after he announced a push to remove homeless people from the city's sprawling subway system in response.

Reestablish

Skopje: North Macedonia and Bulgaria reestablished a commercial air link after 13 years of interruption, as a symbolic trust-building move. Relations between the two Balkan neighbours have long been strained as the Bulgarians do not recognise a separate Macedonian ethnicity and language, saying the language is actually a Bulgarian dialect. Sofia has vetoed its smaller neighbour's plan to start membership talks with the European Union.

Offering

Liberty: A man who runs a little-known, low-budget radio station in suburban Kansas City of US says he is standing up for free speech and alternative viewpoints when he airs Russian state-sponsored programming in the midst of the Ukrainian war. Radio Sputnik, funded by the Russian government, pays broadcast companies in the US to air its programs.

Remove

London: The British Museum will remove the Sackler name from galleries, rooms and endowments following global outrage over the role the family played in the opioid crisis. The museum is the latest cultural institution to cut ties with the Sacklers. The Sackler name has been removed in recent years from wings and galleries at institutions including the Louvre in Paris and the Serpentine Gallery in London. It had mutually agreed on the move.

'Russia sowing deep hatred among Ukrainians'

Lviv, Mar 27 (AP):



Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy angrily warned Moscow that it is sowing a deep hatred for Russia among his people, as constant artillery barrages and aerial bombings are reducing cities to rubble, killing civilians and driving others into shelters, leaving them to scrounge for food and water to survive.

You are doing everything so that our people themselves leave the Russian language, because the Russian language will now be associated only with you, with your explosions and murders, your crimes," Zelenskyy said in

an impassioned video address.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has ground into a war of attrition in many places, with the toll on civilians rising as Moscow seeks to pound cities into submission from entrenched positions.

Russian rockets struck

the western Ukrainian city of Lviv while President Joe Biden visited neighboring Poland, serving as a reminder that Moscow is willing to strike anywhere in Ukraine despite its claim to be focusing its offensive on the country's east.

Early Sunday, a chemical smell still lingered in the air as firefighters in Lviv sprayed water on a burned section of an oil facility hit in the Russian attack.

A security guard at the site, Prokopiv Yaroslav, said he saw three rockets strike and destroy two oil tanks but no one was hurt. The second strike threw me to the ground, he said.

Russia's back-to-back airstrikes shook the city that has become a haven for an estimated 200,000 people who have had to flee their hometowns. Lviv had been largely spared since the invasion began, although missiles struck an aircraft repair facility near the main airport a week ago.

In the dim, crowded bomb shelter under an apartment block a short ways from the first blast site, Olana Ukrainets, a 34-year-old IT professional, said she couldn't believe she had to hide again after fleeing from the northeastern city of Kharkiv, one of the most bombarded cities of the war.

Jaishankar calls on Maldivian President Solih

● Discusses special partnership between two countries

Male, Mar 27 (IPTD):

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday called on Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in Addu City and discussed the special partnership between the two countries.

Jaishankar, who arrived here, also conveyed the personal greetings and good wishes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President Solih.

An honour to be received by President @ibsolih of Maldives. Conveyed the personal greetings and good wishes of PM @narendramodi. Discussed the special



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets with Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in Male on Sunday.

partnership between our two countries that has produced so many substantive outcomes during his tenure, he tweeted.

Jaishankar said he was privileged to join President Solih in the inauguration of the National College of Police and Law Enforcement (NCPLE), which underlines India's strong support for law enforcement.

"The NCPLE will assist the Maldives Police Service to train its officers and enhance its crime-fighting capacities," Jaishankar had said at a joint press appearance with Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid.

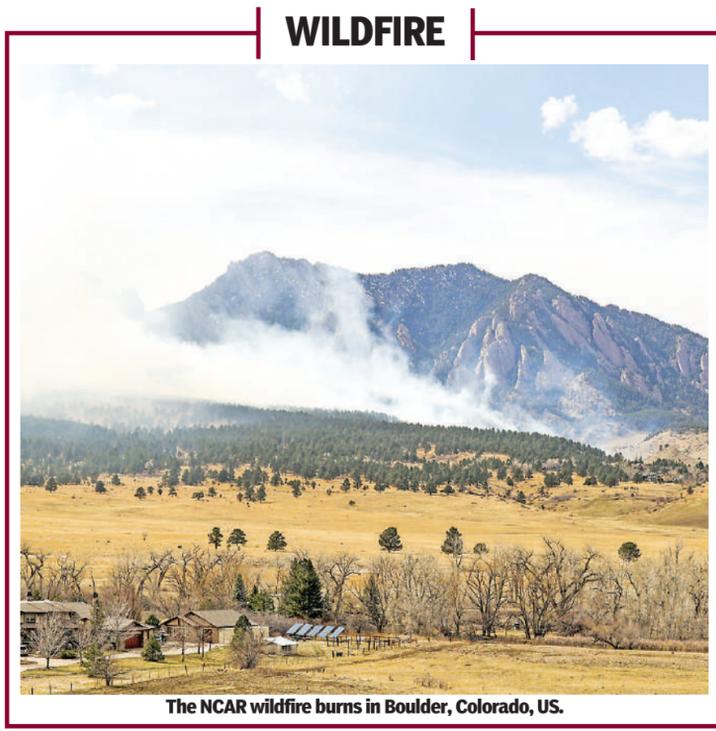
Ground-breaking of the Addu roads project, similarly emphasizes our development partnership.

San Salvador, Mar 27 (AFP):

El Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele urged lawmakers to declare a state of emergency after authorities arrested dozens of gang members over a recent wave of bloodshed.

Gang violence has soared in El Salvador in recent days, with more than 20 killings registered since this weekend, government human rights lawyer Ricardo Martinez reported, while other public security sources said up to 30 homicides may have taken place.

Police and the military arrested several leaders of the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang over the deaths.



The NCAR wildfire burns in Boulder, Colorado, US.

El Salvador seeks emergency powers over spike in gang killings



Police work at the scene where a man was killed by alleged gang members in Colon, El Salvador.

In response Bukele asked Congress — controlled by his ruling party — to meet to declare a state of emergency, under which certain freedoms are curtailed.

The Salvadoran constitution says that a state of

emergency can be put into place "in cases of war, invasion of territory, rebellion, sedition, catastrophe, epidemic or other general calamity, or serious disturbances of public order."

"Since last week we

have had a new spike in homicides, something that we had worked so hard to reduce," Bukele said in a statement posted on Twitter by Congress president Ernesto Castro.

"While we fight criminals in the streets, we must try to figure out what is happening and who is financing this." Castro said the country "must let the agents and soldiers do their job and must defend them from the accusations of those who protect the gang members."

Bukele asked the prosecutor's office "to be effective with all the cases" of gang members that it processes, warning he would keep an eye on "judges who favor criminals."

Turkish people feel pinch as Ukraine war drives up poverty

Istanbul, Mar 27 (AFP):

The financial turmoil unleashed by the Ukrainian conflict is hitting Turkey harder than most, with its economy still grappling with galloping price hikes caused by last year's currency collapse.

In Istanbul, opposition mayor Ekrem Imamoglu is turning to a historic tradition to alleviate hardship as inflation surges past 50 percent. His efforts have won international recognition, enhancing the mayor's reputation as a possible challenger to sitting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

For decades baker Yavuz Eraldi has been serving Turkey's largest city Istanbul, where — like

in many other places — bread is a traditional staple of the poor. But not anymore, with the price of bread nearly doubling in less than a year. Such hard times, Eraldi says, mean people are increasingly turning to a centuries-old charitable tradition called "on the hook".

Pointing to a plastic board above the counter, Eraldi explains: "A customer pays for three extra loaves. Then I write here on a board — 3 "on the hook", and people in need see that free bread is available.

People's purchasing power has really gone down. Even those on a monthly salary have started to come and ask if there's any bread left "on the hook".

Without Russia, science going solo on world's woes, dreams

Paris, Mar 27 (AP):

Without Russian help, climate scientists worry how they'll keep up their important work of documenting warming in the Arctic. Europe's space agency is wrestling with how its planned Mars rover might survive freezing nights on the Red Planet without its Russian heating unit.

And what of the world's quest for carbon-free energy if 35 nations cooperating on an experimental fusion-power reactor in France can't ship vital components from Russia?

In scientific fields with profound implications for mankind's future and knowledge, Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine is



This illustration made available by the European Space Agency shows the European-Russian ExoMars rover.

causing a swift and broad decaying of relationships and projects that bound together Moscow and the West. Post-Cold War bridge-building through science is unraveling as Western nations seek to punish and isolate the Kremlin by drying up sup-

port for scientific programs involving Russia.

The costs of this decoupling, scientists say, could be high on both sides. Tackling climate change and other problems will be tougher without collaboration and time will be lost.

Expecting Chinese investment, Taliban now preserve buddhas



Taliban soldier stands guard at the entrance gate of Mes Aynak valley.

Mes Aynak, Mar 27 (AP):

The ancient buddha statues sit in serene meditation in the caves carved into the russet cliffs of rural Afghanistan. Hundreds of meters below lies what is believed to be the world's largest deposit of copper.

Two decades ago when the Islamic hard-line Taliban were first in

power, they sparked world outrage by blowing up gigantic buddha statues in another part of the country, calling them pagan symbols that must be purged. But now they are intent on preserving the relics of the Mes Aynak copper mine. Doing so is key to unlocking billions in Chinese investment, said Hakumullah Mubariz, the Taliban head of security at the site, peering into the remnants of a monastery built by first-century Buddhist monks. 'Protecting them is very important to us and the Chinese,' he said.

Previously, Mubariz commanded a Taliban combat unit in the surrounding mountains battling with US-backed Afghan forces. When those troops capitulated last year, his men rushed to secure the site.

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Myanmar army says it will annihilate coup opponents

Naypyidaw Mar 27 (AFP):

Myanmar's junta will "annihilate" coup opponents, army chief Min Aung Hlaing said Sunday as the military staged a show of force on the anniversary of its bloodiest crackdown so far on democracy protests.

The Southeast Asian country has been in chaos since a putsch in February 2021, with more than 1,700 people killed in crackdowns on dissent, according to a local monitoring group.

Across the country "People's Defence Force" fighters — often armed with homemade or rudimentary weapons — clash regularly with junta troops, with some analysts suggesting the military has struggled to respond effectively to their hit-and-run tactics.

Fighting has also flared



Military hardware is displayed during a parade to celebrate Myanmar's 77th Armed Forces Day in Naypyidaw on Sunday.

with more established ethnic rebel groups along the Thai and Chinese border.

Presiding over the annual parade that showcased tanks, truck-mounted missiles, artillery and troops on horseback, Min Aung Hlaing told some 8,000 assembled security personnel that the army would not let up.

The military will "no

longer negotiate... and annihilate until the end" groups fighting to overturn its rule, he said ahead of the Armed Forces Day procession in army-built capital Naypyidaw.

Jets flew overhead trailing the yellow, red and green of the national flag, while state media showed women lining the streets

leading to the parade ground to give flowers and place garlands on the marching soldiers.

In commercial hub Yangon around a dozen anti-junta flashmob protesters set off flares and shouted slogans, according to footage posted on social media.

Others called on social media for residents to switch off their lights at home in a national "power strike".

Armed Forces Day commemorates the start of local resistance to the Japanese occupation during World War II, and usually features a military parade attended by foreign officers and diplomats.

Last year, as new junta chief Min Aung Hlaing inspected the parade, troops brutalised those protesting the coup that had ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's government.



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Futility of prohibition

Liquor prohibition must take place in Madhya Pradesh but it should be implemented after proper study, BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya said. The issue of prohibition is assuming importance as a topic of political discussion in the state with former CM and senior BJP leader Uma Bharti coming out in support of such a move while the state government, on the other hand, recently unveiled an excise policy for 2022-23 which has several measures to boost revenue from sale of alcohol. Prohibition has proved to be futile policy with reports of widescale underground and illegal alcohol smuggling in both Bihar and Gujarat. The alcohol menace keeps coming up on the media radar and is pushed back every time. India has a recurring problem of poisoned or spurious liquor though it is not limited to states with prohibition. Prohibition is a phantom which rises regularly in politics of India. Two years ago, Rajasthan toyed with the idea, but thankfully discarded it after studying its impact in Bihar and Gujarat. Andhra Pradesh is another state which promised prohibition and is now struggling with implementation. Yet another example is Maharashtra, which has archaic laws of permits to drink (bars are called 'permit rooms') despite the fact that it has never been enforced. It now intends to enforce permit for small private parties at home. Similarly, there are inexplicable limits on stocking of alcohol for personal consumption. Such ad-hocism prevents a consistent public policy aimed at creating a culture of responsible drinking. Prohibition has not succeeded anywhere in the world. Also, to a large extent, the move to ban consumption and sale of liquor has been more of a populist intervention on part of the government.

There is a lot to learn from the US experience with respect to prohibition during the first half of the 20th century. It almost established that prohibition leads to an increase in organised crime. It also drives up corruption amongst law enforcement agencies and gives rise to illicit liquor trade. Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala too have experimented with prohibition at different times, but abolished it due to its ineffectiveness. Prohibition did not solve the problem of alcohol consumption, it only drove it underground. In recent times north eastern states have also overturned years old prohibition policy due to its failure. Prohibition also does not win elections. Demand for prohibition comes from a highly vocal and visible, but small group of voters. Indian Made Foreign Liquors (IMFL) industry contributes over Rs 1 lakh crore in taxes every year. It supports livelihood of 35 lakh farming families and provides direct and indirect employment to lakhs of workers employed in the industry. It also supports hundreds of ancillary industries in glass, tin, plastic and paper with a turnover of Rs 6,000-7,000 crore. The belief that banning alcohol would check issues related with alcoholism is a very simplistic notion, whereas in reality the situation is much more complex. Given the seriousness of the problem, it is nothing short of a scandal that liquor control policy does not figure on India's national agenda. It is not hard to imagine what such a policy might be like. Total prohibition is unlikely to figure there because it has proven counter-productive far too often. While it does bring drinking seriously down, it tends to encourage smuggling, liquor mafia and spurious liquor. Policy makers should focus on framing laws which encourage responsible behaviour and compliance.

Administrative shortage

There is a shortage of 1,515 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, Union minister Jitendra Singh told Parliament. He said Jammu and Kashmir has 59 IAS officers while it should have 137 of them. Tamil Nadu has the highest number of IAS officers (85 percent of the total strength) followed by Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh with 84 percent each. There are 6,746 posts for IAS officers across the country. The number of IAS officers available for deputation has gone down from 309 in 2011 to 223 as of January 2022. Meanwhile, on a petition by three civil services aspirants, who missed out the papers of the UPSC Civil Services Main Examination due to COVID-19 seeking additional attempt to appear in the exam, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati for the Union of India informed the Supreme Court that on consideration, additional attempts are found not to be possible and that an affidavit stating that position has been filed. Reforms can be undertaken to deal with such administrative shortage. Perhaps the most crucial decision of the then national leadership of free India about the strategy of management of the newly democratic Republic was to retain the 'steel frame' left behind by the British in the form of ICS and IP and establish IAS and IPS as the All India Civil Services to succeed them.

These were envisioned as the specially empowered national instruments to broadly handle development administration and the law and order apolitically taking into account the federal scheme of things in the Republic. In no other major country in the world does an equivalent of IAS and IPS exist in the sense that on a merit-based selection at the national level, the entrant is installed in the decision-making leadership position of an Under Secretary of Government of India just within three years after the training and Collector in the states represent that status granted at the start of the service career itself. The comparative perks and facilities provided to even the young officers, considering the general economic situation of the country are noticeable enough to promote self-confidence and a sense of pride in All India Civil Services. For long years after Independence, many of their members distinguished themselves in both Central and state governments. They served the cause of national integration and also added to the credit of the leadership in power in any part of India, regardless of its party label. There has to be a new emphasis on a further build-up of IAS as the principal instruments of governance through intake of available resources and implementation of reforms.

Central Chronicle welcomes, articles, write ups, comments on different issues for editorial page (800-900 words), Letter to editor for this page. It can be sent by e-mail at: editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com
The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

ROBOTIC INTERACTION



A visitor interacts with "iBones" robots during "You and Robots? What is it to be Human?" exhibition at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Tokyo, Japan.

Minor rainfall fluctuations under British rule caused most famines in south India

SAHANA GHOSH



Extreme rainfall deficiencies were not the only causes of famines in semi-arid regions of southern India in the 18th to 20th centuries, according to research that blends paleoclimate reconstruction and British administrative records for the area. A minor 13 to 17 percent deficit in rainfall, rather than extreme events, triggered famines in southern India's semi-arid regions, including the Great Famine of 1875-1878 and the Indian Famine of 1899-1900, which, according to the colonial records, were caused by 'rain failure' killing millions. The findings underscore the need to consider the potential impacts of minor fluctuations in rainfall patterns in drought-prone semi-arid regions in climate change risk assessments. 'We focus on understanding extreme events (such as floods due to extreme rainfall). And that is critical because our infrastructures and practices are not equipped to deal with these extremes, given that these extremes have become more frequent,' the study's corresponding author Atreyee Bhattacharya told.

She cautions that 'we are vulnerable even more than we think we are' because minor fluctuations are not given importance due to the assumption that one is resilient to these fluctuations, which are part of normal climate variability. 'It appears that we are vulnerable to 'normal' variations in climate, particularly rainfall, especially in rain-fed agricultural societies in our country and across the Indian Ocean region. Our practices and decisions do not even factor in normal variability in rainfall,' Bhattacharya of the University of Colorado-Boulder, the US, said. Co-author Gaurav Arora of the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology

(IIIT)-Delhi, emphasised that there were socioeconomic and administrative factors that would have cooked the famines in the semi-arid region of peninsular India 'at least in cases where rainfall shortages were modest (relative to a long-term normal rainfall level for the region).' Motivated to unravel how 'vulnerable we are to climate variability,' Bhattacharya and colleagues wanted to independently probe how much rainfall deficits were considered 'rain failure,' enough to cause the repeated instances of famines. 'We used India Meteorological Department's rainfall record (from 1870), tree ring-based reconstructions of humidity and cave carbonate (speleothem) based reconstructions of regional relative humidity to assess rainfall fluctuations,' she adds.

India Meteorological Department and historical rain gauge reconstructions show that most famines struck when average rainfall in the southern interior peninsula deviated by 13 percent and 17 percent in the western interior. In addition, they dug through information in over 600 British administrative documents (including 19th-century records associated with Bombay and Madras Presidencies) preserved in the National Archives of India, that takes one through socioeconomic upheavals and human impacts (famines) associated with 'rain failures' over 218 years (1729-1947). They were looking for climate-related information: records of climate and impacts. The Bombay Presidency, headquartered in Bombay (present-day Mumbai), included parts of the present-day states of Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat and western Karnataka. The Madras presidency (headquartered in Madras; present-day Chennai) spanned present-day Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Odisha. The records contain discussions on famines due to rain failures of 1803-1807, 1811-1812, 1823-1824, 1832-1833, 1838-1840, 1868-1869, 1875-1878, 1896 and 1899-1900. These famines affected several districts of Madras and Bombay presidencies and usually lasted for three to four years, including the Great Famine of 1875-1878 and the Indian Famine of 1899-1900.

Also recorded are famines of 1845

(in Gujarat), 1854-1855 (parts of Bombay and Madras Presidencies), 1862 (Ahmednagar) and 1882 (Mysore). When the reduction in rainfall continued for a second year, especially if accompanied by a decrease in summer and winter rainfall, cascading socioeconomic impacts extracted severe human costs such as starvation, death, slavery and migration, the authors write in the paper. The famine of 1875-1876 prompted the formulation of the Famine Commission in 1880; the last report by the commission was in 1901. The Great Famine likely killed over 50 million people in South and East Asia, Brazil, and Africa between 1876 and 1878. In India, it claimed between 12.2 and 29.3 million lives. Researchers in a 2021 paper dubbed it as 'arguably the worst environmental disaster' and 'one of the worst calamities of any sort in at least the last 150 years, with a loss of life comparable to the World Wars and the influenza epidemic of 1918/19.' According to the Environment and Society project of Germany's Rachel Carson Centre for Environment and Society, the Great Famine, also known as the Southern India Famines or Great Madras Famine, began in 1876. It affected south and southwestern India as in Madras (Chennai), Mysore (Mysuru), Hyderabad, and Bombay (Mumbai) for two years. 'During its second year, the famine also spread north to some regions of the central provinces and the United Provinces (present-day Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand), and a small area in Punjab to the northwest, covering a total area of 257,000 square miles.'

Southern India was hit by severe drought from 2016 to 2018, which led to a water crisis in Chennai, India's sixth-largest city of 11 million inhabitants. The drought followed low rainfall during the northeast monsoon, which occurs during the winter. According to researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Gandhinagar, who investigated the causes of past flash droughts in India between 1951 and 2016, the 2016 to 2018 drought was worse than the Great Madras Famine. Lauding the research by Bhattacharya et al., climate scientist Jayanarayanan Kuttippurath, who was not associated

with the study, agreed with the suggestion to factor in the potential impacts of more frequent low-level anomalies in drought-prone semi-arid regions for climate change risk assessment. 'We generally do not look at minor fluctuations. We know the socioeconomic situation of those years... they were very different. There were limited resources and we did not have advanced technologies that we have today so they may have also contributed to the impact of the famines,' Kuttippurath, an assistant professor at IIT-Kharagpur's Centre for Oceans, Rivers, Atmosphere and Land Sciences told. Gaurav Arora explained that drought-prone regions like the semi-arid regions are by definition poorer in their natural resource endowments. 'Long-term deficient rainfalls imply not only lack of water access but also poorer quality soils that are erosive.'

Therefore, traditional agricultural practices are for subsistence and not typically for market-friendly products like cash crops. However, the advent of technologies like irrigation dams (in the British era) and the proliferation of tubewells (in independent India, post-1950s) has meant that these resource-poor regions have shifted to cultivating water and nutrient-thirsty crops like sugarcane and cotton. Such shifts in land use are often termed as 'development' in the policy domain. 'Given that the southern Indian semi-arid region did not exhibit resilience to 'small' rainfall shocks under subsistence agriculture, Arora questioned if one can say that 'these regions will be resilient to more frequent rainfall shocks under future climate change scenarios when being subjected to cash-crop agriculture?' A UN Special Report on Drought 2021 estimated the impact of severe droughts on India's GDP to be between 2 to 5 percent. Jal Shakti Ministry notes that around 68 percent of the country is prone to drought in varying degrees, of which 35 percent receives rainfall between 750 mm and 1125 mm and is considered drought-prone while 33 percent receiving less than 750 mm is chronically drought-prone.

(Sahana Ghosh, based in Kolkata writes on climate change, biodiversity and gender issues.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Baloch situation

All is not well in the Baluchistan province of Pakistan. The Baloch people have taken up arms against the state to free their land from Pakistan, which is their long-standing struggle. In successive armed attacks recently on the Pak security camps in Baluchistan, dozens of security personnel have lost their lives, while it has also been claimed that large number of freedom fighters have been neutralized. The people of Baluchistan were never reconciled to Pakistani domination. The province was administered after establishment of the Baluchistan Agency as a part of British India. After partition of India in 1947, Baluchistan was forcefully annexed to Pakistan on March 28, 1948 by an army operation and in 1955 Baluchistan was merged into Pakistan as fourth province. Baloch nationalism asserts that the Baloch people, an ethnic group, are a distinct nation. The clear view of the Baloch movement leaders is that Muslims are not a nation and that ethnic loyalty must surpass religious loyalty, a concept which was proved right when East Pakistan had snatched independence from Pakistan in the 1971 civil war. In the recent years the Baloch nationalist uprising, which was a low-intensity struggle, against the Government of Pakistan has greatly intensified. Pakistan, which is a theocratic state and weakened by internal contradictions, misrule, social tensions, religious intolerance and impudent army, will succumb to the unshakable patriotic zeal of the Baloch freedom fighters the same way Bangladesh had emerged as an independent country in the world map 50 years ago.

At the same time, persecution on minority Hindu population in Pakistan is continuing unabated. A Hindu teacher, Nautan Lal by name, was sentenced on February 8 to life imprisonment and also fined Pakistani Rs 50,000 by a local court on a charge of blasphemy in Sind province. Needless to state that when a student had alleged the blasphemy charge against the teacher in September 2019, violent protests erupted in the town (Gotki in Sind) and the mob ransacked properties and a temple and damaged its idols. Besides, Hindu girls are kidnapped and converted to Islam and married to Muslim boys in full view of cheering fanatics, which are regular happenings in Pakistan. Where are two young female Rights activists - Swedish Greta Thunberg and Pakistani Malala Yousafzai - who have remained very active in issues Indian, on tweeter?

Pannalal Dey, via email

WHAT THEY TWEET!



Nirupama@NMenonRao

When Russia began its military offensive in Ukraine, I expressed opposition to Moscow's actions. Some weeks down the line, am growing extremely disillusioned with the assumed righteousness of the western response & echoes of post 9/11 rhetoric about 'either you're with us or not'

D.Muthukrishnan@dmuthuk

We don't realise that the highest tax we pay is inflation tax. If we earn 10 percent on an investment and if inflation is 5 percent, we pay 50 percent as inflation tax on our income. Since we always focus on nominal numbers, we don't realise the enormity of this. This is also known as money illusion.



Happymon@HappymonJacob
US/West's Weaponisation of trade against Iran, Afghanistan, Russia etc. is increasing calls for the de-dollarisation of global trade. India has been at the receiving end of such weaponisation. And yet, if it joins the de-dollarisation bandwagon, it'll only help strengthen China.



Jakub@JakubJanda
After war will be over, China will offer major financial packages to rebuild Ukraine. It will be the usual geopolitical trap - as we know how China operates, China will try to buy strategic influence via its so called development projects. I really hope Ukraine will not accept.



Sneha@magicarchivist
Women painting themselves into the city.



Aman@amanbandvi

By holding the path lab report as the holy grail, by making LAMA (left against med advice) too dreary, having doctors contradict each other on discharges, by playing with consent forms - tracheotomy, intubation, dialysis and by raising suspicion on any medicine procured by self.

Arun Vel@unraveaero

RRR's business numbers are staggering. Satisfying to see Telugu industry eclipse Bollywood but Tamil cinema's stagnation is concerning. 20 years back Tamil films used to outgross them, now RRR has collected 20 percent of Tamil cinema's annual gross in one day. Rajamouli the great.

BRIEF

Expand



New Delhi: SparkCognition on Sunday said its new acquisition of Integration Wizards will allow it to expand into new markets like retail, mining, and construction. CTO Sridhar Sudarshan told PTI that we are focusing on accelerating sales and marketing expansion.

Invests

New Delhi: Property consultant India Sotheby's International Realty on Sunday said it has made a strategic equity investment in Mumbai-based data analytic firm CRE Matrix to offer more and better advisory services to its clients. The company did not disclose the amount it has invested and the percentage of the stake it has acquired in CRE Matrix. When contacted, Abhishek Kiran Gupta, CEO and co-founder, CRE Matrix, told PTI about decision.

Need



New Delhi: Andromeda & Apnaisa CEO V Swaminathan said that with the economy coming back on the rails post-COVID-19 pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India may consider a strict debt recovery mechanism with regulatory backing to boost activities of lending.

Outreach

New Delhi: The West Bengal government will intensify its investor outreach efforts, and is betting big on a planned deep-sea port, coal mine and industrial corridor being developed in the state to attract entrepreneurs. West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) Chairman Rajiva Sinha said there is a need to change the perception that investors have about Bengal, and considering the priority accorded.

Expects



New Delhi: PVR Ltd expects business to reach pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2022-23 on the back of a slew of new film releases. JMD Sanjeev Kumar Bijli told PTI that March is going to be one of best months. It may even surpass any pre-pandemic month.

Aims

New Delhi: Edtech firm Schoolnet aims to grow multifold to generate Rs 6,000 crore in the next 5-7 years from expansion of services in schools and subscriber growth on its learning app. The 25-year old firm provides digital classrooms to around 40,000 schools at present, along with digital learning content and trains teachers.

Ukraine war unlikely to roil Rs 5 trillion refinancing next fiscal

Mumbai, Mar 27 (PTI):

Over 1,400 large companies have to refinance Rs 5 lakh crore next fiscal, but the ongoing global crisis following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the form of rising inflation risks and the resultant likely spike in interest rates, is unlikely to cause any trouble for them given their strong balance-sheets and stable earnings, says a report.

According to an analysis by India Ratings, the top 1,423 non-financial, debt-heavy corporates have to refinance as much as Rs 5 lakh crore next fiscal, but the refinancing risk is manageable despite a challenging environment owing to the tightening monetary policy condition, volatile commodity prices and rising geopolitical risks. Total refinancing requirement is estimated at Rs 5 lakh crore in FY23



on a blue-sky scenario, marginally up from Rs 4.98 lakh crore in FY22, the agency said, but added that the quantum will go up 33 per cent to Rs 6.6 lakh crore in FY23, based on a hazy-sky scenario.

The blue-sky scenario assumes growth in revenue and operating margins, while the hazy-sky scenario assumes a moderation in both along with an increase in working capital requirements.

The agency expects refinancing risks to ebb in FY23, largely driven by healthy earnings in the past two years and a significant deleveraging by many debt-heavy entities. Under the blue-sky scenario, it estimated that 85 per cent of the refinancing requirement is likely to be for the top 100 corporates based on gross debt, which have a better credit quality than medium- and smaller ones. In terms of ratings,

75 per cent of the refinancing is for AA-rated or better entities. The report expects refinancing worth Rs 3.6 lakh crore of the total Rs 5 lakh crore can be refinanced by with an interest coverage ratio of 1.5x and above, indicating high probability of refinancing. For the remaining Rs 1.3 lakh crore debt, for which interest coverage is below 1.5x and/or have negative operating margins, may find the going tough given the still cautious approach of lenders. The debt heavy sectors like oil, power, capital goods and iron & steel will have an estimated refinancing of Rs 2.32 lakh crore or 47 per cent of the total requirement, in FY23 and the report does not expect these entities to face any challenges in refinancing given their superior access to the markets and strong financial health.

Indian consumers show cautious optimism

Balancing non-discretionary spends

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Indian consumers are showing cautious optimism and balancing non-discretionary spending as they are saving more for the future, according to a report.

Indian consumers are prioritising shopping, recreational and entertainment activities, according to the Deloitte Consumer Tracker report.

The consumers surveyed are planning to spend a large share of their wallets on personal care and clothing, recreation, entertainment and leisure travel, followed by electronics and home furnishings and restaurants, it said. "The analysis indicates a ray of positivity amongst consumers, who



are now cautiously balancing their happiness and spending and saving more for the future," the report noted.

With corporate India returning to "business as usual" and travel restrictions gradually easing, Indians have resumed their business travels, it added.

According to the report, about 83 per cent of consumers are likely to travel for business within the next three months.

India, UAE to establish Investment Council as part of CEPA

Dubai, Mar 27 (PTI):

India and the UAE on Sunday have agreed to set up a technical council on Investment, Trade Promotion and Facilitation, as part of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed between the two countries last month.

India and the UAE on February 18 had signed CEPA with a view to boosting bilateral trade to USD 100 billion over a five-year period and creation of lakhs of jobs.

The pact covers areas including goods, services, rules of origin, customs procedures, government procurement, intellectual property rights, and e-commerce. Under the agreement, the two trading partners reduce or eliminate customs duties



and trade relations, identify opportunities for expanding investment and trade, and to identify issues relevant to investment and trade that may be appropriate for further discussion, the text said. It will also hold consultations on specific investment and trade matters of interest to the parties besides working toward the promotion of investment and trade flows, it said.

The council will also identify and work towards the removal of impediments and facilitate investment and trade flows and seek views of the private sector.

The parties shall avail themselves of the opportunity to discuss and resolve the issue amicably in the council keeping in mind the objective of promoting and facilitating trade and investment, it added.

Govt to launch common portal for different schemes

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

To improve the ease of living for the common man, the government is working on a proposal to launch a common portal for various schemes run by different ministries and departments.

As part of the Narendra Modi government's vision of minimum government maximum governance, the new portal will initially onboard 15 credit-linked government schemes, sources said.

The offerings will be gradually expanded, depending on compatibility, as some of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes have involvement from multiple agencies, they added.

For example, schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS) are being administered by different ministries. The proposed portal intends to bring these schemes on a single platform so that they can be



accessed by the beneficiaries without much hassle.

Pilot testing is being done and loose ends are being tied up before the actual launch takes place, the sources said, adding State Bank of India (SBI) and other lenders doing the testing.

The sources said it is likely to have open architecture enabling state governments and other institutions to also onboard their schemes on this platform.

To provide comfort to borrowers, the government in 2018 had launched a portal pbsloansin59minutes.com for various kinds of credit products, including MSME, home, auto and personal loans.

The portal facilitates in-principle approval of loans for MSMEs and other borrowers in 59 minutes by various banks compared to the earlier turnaround time of 20-25 days.

After receiving an in-principle approval letter, the loan is expected to be disbursed in 7-8 working days.

The portal processes loan applications without human intervention till the sanction stage. Any MSME borrower does not need to submit any physical document for in-principle approval for a loan.

Instead, the portal depends on advanced algorithms to analyse data points from several sources such as Income Tax returns, GST data, Bank Statements etc.

The platform is integrated with the government's Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) to check borrowers' eligibility.

Adani, Tata AIG, ICICI Lombard among 54 bidders for Reliance Capital

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Adani Finserve, ICICI Lombard, Tata AIG, HDFC Ergo, and Nippon Life Insurance are among the 54 prominent firms that have expressed interest to acquire debt-ridden Reliance Capital Ltd, promoted by the Anil Ambani Group, sources said.

The last date for submission of bids for the debt-ridden firm had been extended to March 25 from March 11 earlier by the Reserve Bank-appointed administrator. Other bidders include Yes Bank, Bandhan Financial Holdings, Cholamandam Investment, OakTree Capital, Blackstone, Brookfield, TPG, KKR, Piramal Finance and Poonawala

Finance, sources said.

The deadline was extended on the request of some prospective bidders who had sought more time to submit the Expressions of Interest (EoI), sources said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had on November 29 last year superseded the board of Reliance Capital Ltd (RCL) in view of payment defaults and serious governance issues. This is the third large non-banking financial company (NBFC) against which the central bank has initiated bankruptcy proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) recently. The other two were Srei Group NBFC and Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL).

Lenders approve IL&FS' debt recast proposal for CNTL

Mumbai, Mar 27 (PTI):

The lenders have approved IL&FS Group's proposal to restructure the Rs 5,500 crore debt of its subsidiary Chenani Nashri Tunnelway (CNTL), which offers almost full repayment to them.

The move comes after the company has revalued itself at Rs 5,257 crore now after the deal with Cube Highways of Singapore failed last year, due to regulatory delays, for a consideration of Rs 3,900 crore.

The three-day voting opened on March 21 and saw the lenders favouring debt recast as it offers them 99 per cent of their money while unsecured lenders will get back 90 per cent. The new proposal in the values the company at Rs 5,257 crore and will address



Rs 4,910 crore of the IL&FS Group debt.

An IL&FS spokesperson confirmed the development, saying we have got the requisite approvals from the lenders to restructure the debt of CNTL.

The proposal entails CNTL converting itself into a green entity, with secured and unsecured lenders getting over 99 per cent and 90 per cent of the principal amount, respectively, upon implementation of the new proposal, a company official in the know of the development told PTI.

CNTL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of ITNL (an IL&FS company) that jointly with its nominees holds 100 per cent equity. It has been classified as an amber company, which will now undergo a change in status.

The lenders will receive an upfront payment of around Rs 1,700 crore of the principal (they have already debited Rs 670 from the escrow account), in addition to interest accrual from April 2021, providing a benefit of around Rs 370 crore on implementation.

CNTL continues to maintain and operate the longest tunnel in J&K and is receiving an annuity of Rs 635 crore annually, which are being received on time.

CNTL lenders, in their last meeting, had unanimously approved Crisil

and Icrs as rating agencies, SVKM as the forensic auditor and considered RBBSA's valuation report as the next step to complete the process, which also involves appointing one more valuer as the present value determined by the company-appointed valuer.

The consortium of CNTL lenders includes the State Bank of India, Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank, Canara Bank, Punjab National Bank, Uco Bank and Edelweiss ARC, among others.

The recovery in the restructured debt proposal is far higher for all lenders compared to the divestment proposal wherein Cube Highways had emerged as the highest bidder offering Rs 3,900 crore.

AI could be used for early resolution of matters

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

New-age technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) could be used for early resolution of matters, including insolvency cases, National Company Law Tribunal President Justice Ramalingam Sudhakar said.

While addressing a national-level colloquium of NCLT, Justice Sudhakar suggested that AI can be used in case of resolution, especially in the admission of cases, a statement issued by NCLT said.

"One aspect for early resolution is the development of Artificial Intelligence technology, he said. We are

focusing on leveraging artificial intelligence and standardisation of processes. This will help in reducing delays. We are also focussed on evolving a code of best practices so that there is certainty in decision making, said Justice Sudhakar.

According to Justice Sudhakar, India was envisioning a multi-trillion dollar economy.

"The bedrock in a nation's economy is industry and commerce, which is governed by Company Law besides other laws, he said.

NCLT President stated that the government has come out with a code to resolve corporate issues to enable corporates of India to compete with the world.

India pays for Russian LNG imports in US dollar

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

India's largest gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd continues to pay for the LNG it imports from Russia's Gazprom in US dollars and will seek exchange rate neutrality in any other currency such as Euro, two sources said.

GAIL has a deal to receive 2.5 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) annually on a delivered basis from Russia's Gazprom. This translates into 3 to 4 cargoes or ship loads of super-cooled natural gas every month. "The contract with Gazprom provides for



making payments in US dollars," a source with direct knowledge of the matter said. "Payments become due 5-7 days after the delivery of the LNG cargo. The last payment was made on March 23, which was in US dollars." An LNG shipload was received on March 25 and its payment will be due in early April. There is no indication that the payment for

Draft rubber bill proposes one-time registration

Removal of some archaic provisions

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

To promote ease of doing business and growth of the sector, the draft rubber bill has proposed a series of steps, including replacement of periodic licensing with one-time registration, removal of permission requirement for possession of natural rubber and laying down clear procedures for inspection.

The commerce ministry has proposed the repeal of decades-old laws on rubber and introduced new legislation that seeks to address the challenges faced by the sector and remove some of the archaic



provisions of present law to create a conducive environment for businesses.

The ministry has put the draft Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill, 2022, on its website for stakeholders' views and suggestions. In an office memorandum, the Department of Commerce has said it is proposing to repeal the Rubber Act 1947 and introduce a new law.

Explaining the rationale behind the proposal to repeal the Rubber Act, the draft bill has said that in recent years, there have been widespread changes in the industrial and economic scenario, especially concerning development in rubber and allied sectors.

"Therefore, it has become imperative to remove archaic provisions, create an environment conducive for easy conduct of business, reorient functions of the (Rubber) Board with equal focus on upstream and downstream sectors and to contribute towards making world-class rubber industry," as per the draft Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill.

Lamborghini sees 'huge' opportunity in India

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Italian supersports luxury car-maker Automobili Lamborghini sees a "huge opportunity" of growth in India with rising number of ultra high net-worth individuals driving demand in the country, its Chairman and CEO Stephan Winkelmann.

The company which posted a record sales of 69 cars, a growth of 86 per cent, in 2021 in the country is also evaluating its plans to introduce hybrid vehicles in the country as part of a global strategy towards electrification. "I think in India there's a huge opportunity for growth, because there's a big wealth around the Indian market, and we will see how this is devel-

oping. We had one of the highest growth in terms of percentage last year, so there are opportunities also for the future.

"What we can see in the Indian market is that we have more and more ultra high net-worth individuals entering the market... We already have the second generation of ultra high net-worth individuals, and their average age is younger than other countries," Winkelmann said in an interaction. Given the results of last year and the demographic situation of the Indian market, both in terms of young wealthy people and wealth in general, Winkelmann said, "We think that there is a growing demand also in the Indian market in years to come."

Rakul Preet Singh on 'Attack': We are all prepared for films like this

John Abraham-starrer 'Attack' is all about a cybertronic humanoid super-soldier developed to combat terrorism. The film's actress Rakul Preet Singh agrees that it is different but the audiences are prepared for new films like this. During the promotion of the film in Noida, Rakul talked about working in the film, which has a new concept. "The experience was great and I would just like to add that we are all prepared for films like this. We have been watching these 'Spiderman' movies, we have been watching all sorts of action films. We lap it up we love them but because we haven't seen anything in our own country we think we are not ready for it but if India was not ready there wouldn't have been such a huge market for international films." She added: "So I think my whole experience became more special because I was ready to take that risk and plunge into a genre and say 'Made in India' something that is international level and not been seen or done before. That is what 'Attack' is." 'Attack' is directed by Lakshya Raj Anand. It based on a story by John Abraham, who stars in the film alongside Jacqueline Fernandez and Rakul. The film is scheduled to be released on April 1.



Bomb Fire Crew's performance makes Miss Universe 2021 dance

Sony Entertainment Television's talent based reality show India's Got Talent is gearing up for yet another exciting and entertaining weekend with the Top 11 contestants! This Sunday, celebrated 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' the show welcomed dance wizard Terence Lewis and Miss Universe 2021, Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu. Amidst all the brilliant acts, the Bomb Fire Crew from Delhi fired up the atmosphere with their thrilling performance on the 'Gangubai

Kathiawadi' song 'Dholida'. Impressing not only the judges - Kirron Kher, Shilpa Shetty Kundra, Badshah and Manoj Muntashir, the crew left special guest Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu awestruck with their dance act. Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu who is the biggest supporter of the Bomb Fire Crew joins them on stage and says, "Such a powerful performance! I have to say I was surprised but not surprised at the same time. I was surprised to see how you girls just came in and set the stage on fire! India hai yaar, talent toh hoga hi!" She continued, "Your performance has reminded me of how I was, shy and under-

confident. There was a lot of self-doubts but yet there is that one episode that occurs in your life that can completely change you. It depends on you and how much you believe in yourself and for that, self-esteem is really important. I have realised that in the whole world, the only constant and your sole supporter is 'you'. When you have that self-confidence, nobody can stop you." Harnaaz then presented the crew with a sash with the words "Main Hoon India!"

Tune in to India's Got Talent this Saturday and Sunday at 8:00 PM only on Sony Entertainment Television!



Payal Dev: I can recreate but I would love to make my own music

Singer Payal Dev shares her opinion on the latest trend of recreating songs in the music industry. The singer is known for some hit numbers such as 'Say yes to the dress', and composed songs like 'Tumse Pyaar Karke', 'Baarish Ban Jana', 'Tum hi Ana' and 'Dil Chahte ho'. She talks about recreating old classic songs that have become a trend. "I can recreate it but I would love to create my own songs!" Payal adds that she also enjoys recreating the old songs but is more fond of original creations. "Recreations of old classic songs are definitely relieving but the essence of making and singing original songs and reaching out to the heart of my audience is what I wish to work on for," says the singer.



&TV artists to be victim of crime

Viewers can expect some high-voltage drama this week on &TV, as popular characters become victims of crime. About &TV's Baal Shiv, Mahasati Anusuyashares, "Baal Shiv (Aan Tiwari) and Devi Parvati reach Darukavan to find aushadhi to save Nandi's (Danish Akhtar) life. In the meantime, Vajrangi (Sanyogita Bhawe) asks Anjumukhi (Srashti Maheshwari) to send a Rakhshasi to Mahasati Anusuya's (Mouli Ganguly) house so that she can kill Anusuya and her family in the absence of Baal Shiv. Rakhshashini, taking advantage of the situation, poisons Mood's milk that he is about to have. In Darukavan, Baal Shiv and Devi Parvati find a bird who is sad and wants to commit suicide as she has lost her partner. Baal Shiv retrieves the bird, making the bird couple happy. Later, the two help them find the medicine. Seeing this, Ajamukhi

(Srashti Maheshwari) gets angry and tries to burn Darukavan so that they cannot take medicine back home. How will Baal Shiv save Nandi's life? Will Rakhshashini succeed in poisoning Mood?" About &TV's Aur Bhai Kya Chal Raha Hai? track, Shanti Mishra shares, "With the help of his family members and Mirza, Mishra (Ambrish Bobby) gives a surprise birthday party to his wife Shanti (Farhana Patema), where they all go for a picnic. Overjoyed, Shanti shares her best childhood memories when her KismisNanni used to send her a letter and 11 rupees every year to buy Kismis. While everyone there is having a good time and enjoying themselves playing musical chairs, Bittu (Annu Awasthy) tries to cheat, which makes his nephew Rahul angry, and they both fight. After that, Rahul decides to run away from home for a few days to live independently and teach his uncle a

lesson. Rahul hides in Mansion 3/13 with kids' help in favour of doing their homework and assignments. Bittu is worried and starts searching for him but fails to track him down. Mishra confronts Rahul, but his children threaten to reveal the truth about him, writing a letter to Shanti citing KismisNanni this year. Mirza also learns about Rahul but is blackmailed by his children for accidentally offering non-veg kebabs to Shanti on his last birthday. How will Bittu find his nephew now?" Watch Baal Shiv at 8:00 pm, Aur Bhai Kya Chal Raha Hai? at 9:30 pm, Hattu Ki Ultan Paltan at 10:00 pm and Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai at 10:30 pm airing every Monday to Friday only on &TV.

John Abraham Fight sequence choreographed for a song in 'Attack'

Actor-producer John Abraham says that his upcoming film 'Attack' has a fight sequence choreographed just for a song in the upcoming film. John is known as an action icon as he has worked in high-octane actioners such as 'Dhoom', 'Dishoom', 'Force' and 'Romeo Akbar Walter' among many others. He now awaits the release of 'Attack', which is slated to hit the screens on April 1. About what attracts him towards the genre, John said: "My thing is you know when we set out to do this film I told (director) Lakshya Raj Anand, we can't have the run of the mill songs. We have very sweet songs and then we have got a lot of background music. "I think this is first time in Hindi cinema where you have a song where a fight sequence is choreographed for a song...The second half is the climax so there is no midway." John stressed he does not want to do any run of the mill kind of films. "The way I want to produce films is from 'Vicky Donor', to 'Madras Cafe', 'Parmanu' to 'Bata House' -- I want to make something radically very different. My funda in life is simple -- you fail doing the regular stuff it's sad... You fail doing something different at least you tried which is why 'Attack' happened." Directed by Lakshya Raj Anand, 'Attack (Part 1)' also stars Jacqueline Fernandez, Rakul Preet Singh, Prakash Raj, and Ratna Pathak Shah. Jayantilal Gada (Pen Studios), John Abraham (JA Entertainment), and Ajay Kapoor Productions present John Abraham's action entertainer 'Attack', which will be released worldwide by Pen Marudhar. The movie is slated to hit the cinemas on April 1.



HOROSCOPE MONDAY MARCH 28

Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18

The cupid may strike you today. You don't want make a wrong first impression, so wear something nice and be presentable all the time. Professionally, the day will be favourable for you to make some important decisions. Overall, you are in a happy mood and you will spread the joy around, feels Ganesha.

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

An auspicious time for starting new projects, today will see you make substantial investments in your future. Your family is the foundation of your success, and keeping that in mind will provide you with some vital insights. Your smile wins many a heart today, says Ganesha.

Gemini: May 22 - June 21

You may come up with a precise understanding of others today, says Ganesha. You will please your sweetheart with both your presence and presents. You will browse through dozens of showrooms for that perfect, and expensive, gift for your beloved. You will also work towards achieving your long-term goals. Ganesha wishes you good luck.

Cancer: June 22 - July 22

Today, you and your soul mate will be rolling in the hay; there will be little time or inclination to do anything else. In fact, you will show such single-minded devotion to the act of rolling as if the future of the world lies in the haystack. Your mind can think of nothing more, and nothing less.

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23

Ganesha feels the day will be beneficial for you when it comes to transactions with the government. But you already expect that. It is more than likely that public servants will have encouraging and optimistic achievements lined up for their efforts. Your expertise may be put to test and it is your experience that will come in handy.

Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22

Ganesha feels that you may be confronted with vital decisions at work. You will need to trust the opinions of your close friends and peers so that you may take informed decisions. Keep your mind away from negative thoughts and delegate responsibilities accordingly. Favourable returns will come from appointing the best possible person for the job, suggests Ganesha.

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20

Boy! Are you ambitious today or what! You plan meticulously and perform impeccably. However, you will progress at snail's pace. But don't lose heart, as Ganesha showers his blessings on you, dear one.

Leo: July 23 - Aug 23

Try and put on some protective gear today a/c maybe a suit of armour should do fine, says Ganesha. For, you may find some need for it on this day of mixed fortunes as you miss out the expected and come face-to-face with the unexpected.

Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 21

It is not your nature to warm the bench, but you will wake up feeling lazy and laid-back today, says Ganesha. This may be due to the fatigue of some recent endeavours. For a change, you will try and delegate your work and responsibility to those around you. Make sure that they do so wisely as they may not live up to your standards, warns Ganesha.

Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21

You are going to be exceptionally intense in the way you communicate your emotions and feelings. You will, no doubt, succeed in making the impact, the impression you are striving to make, says Ganesha. You will be so involved in this that you are likely to get caught in the mysterious and magical web of relationships.

Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22

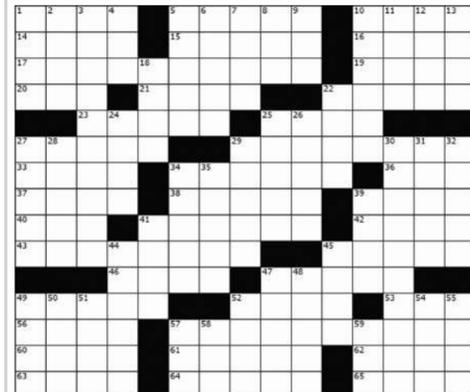
Today, you will be aspire to be a master of your own destiny. You have the ability to see through the façade that people put up to shield their true self. You will choose your company wisely and plan for success. Polish your presentation skills and you may need to work an extra bit to get your ideas approved, says Ganesha.

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20

Plans for expanding business may require you to take risks, leaving you in a dilemma on more than one occasion. In such desperate circumstances, following your instincts can lead you to success, advises Ganesha.

CROSSWORD

252



ACROSS

1. Completely absorbed
5. Skips
10. Works on a tan
14. Levin and Gershwin
15. Coastal birds
16. Jogging gait
17. Commit (a crime)
19. Mexican water
20. Gobble up
21. Ore beds

DOWN

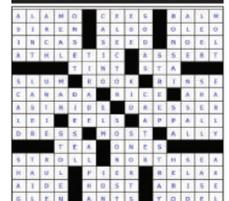
22. Uncovers
23. Motionless
25. Invoice
27. Nervous walker
29. Savior
33. Border on
34. Swipes
36. Raw mineral
37. Buddies
38. Stop
39. Be acquainted with
40. One ___ time (2 wds.)

41. Builds
42. Bare
43. Military rank
45. Clocked
46. Charity
47. Box
49. Metal spikes
52. Slender
53. Heat's league (abbr.)
56. Female voice
57. Germ-free
60. Soothsayer
61. Trim trees
62. Pledge
63. Pinnacle
64. Talks wildly
65. Other

DOWN

1. Ready for picking
2. Neighborhood
3. Specific
4. Recipe unit (abbr.)
5. Aquatic animal
6. Earn
7. Tehran's country
8. Blasting letters
9. Wind dir.
10. Paper fastener
11. Impel
12. Person, place, or thing
13. Amtrak terminals (abbr.)
18. Happily ___ after
22. Bullring cheers
24. Butterfly catchers
25. "Beauty and the ___"

SOLUTION 251



England crush Bangladesh by 100 runs to book semifinal berth

Wellington: Defending champions England became the third team to book its place in the semifinals of the Women's World Cup with a comfortable 100-run win over Bangladesh here on Sunday. Sophia Dunkley's 72-ball 67 helped the reigning champions post 234 for six at Basin Reserve and a polished bowling performance, led yet again by Sophie Ecclestone's economical spell of 3/15, meant Bangladesh never threatened to rein in England's total and were bowled out for 134 in the 48th over. England have now won four matches on the trot, having more than made up for their slow start to the tournament with a string of impressive performances that has highlighted the depth in their squad. Experienced seamer Anya Shrubsole was rested on Sunday, paving the way for Charlie Dean (3/31) and Freya Davies (2/36) to show their prowess as Knight used seven different bowlers to successfully negate the Bangladesh batters.



Medvedev tops Murray at Miami Open



Miami Gardens: Daniil Medvedev never gave Andy Murray a chance. The top-seeded Medvedev opened his bid to reclaim the No. 1 ranking on Saturday by toppling Murray 6-4 6-2 in the second round of the Miami Open. Medvedev never faced a break point in any of his nine service games. He can regain the No. 1 spot by making the Miami semifinals. "Definitely, I have a lot of motivation to try and get it back," Medvedev said. Only five men in the past 18 years have held the No. 1 ranking that is currently held by Novak Djokovic. Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are also past No. 1's while Medvedev and Murray are the others.

Asian Games archery selection: Rai, Ridhi book berths; Atanu misses cut

Sonapat: Top-ranked Indian archer Atanu Das missed the cut for the upcoming Asian Games as he finished outside top-eight in the final selection trial at the Sports Authority of India Centre here on Saturday. Veteran Services archer Tarundeep Rai, who won a historic individual silver in 2010 Asian Games, was the first to book a berth, finishing on top in the men's recurve trial. In the women's section, promising Ridhi Phor of Haryana finished on top to confirm her berth for the Asian Games slated in Hangzhou, China from September 10-25. The remaining three spots in both the men's and women's sections would be confirmed after Sunday's round robin matches. The same team would also represent India in the first three stages of the World Cup, beginning with the Antalya leg from April 18-24.

Kane the 2nd highest-scoring Englishman for his country



London: Harry Kane moved level with Bobby Charlton in second place on the all-time England men's scoring chart by slotting a penalty to seal a 2-1 victory against Switzerland in a friendly. The captain's 49th goal in 69 appearances for his country on Saturday leaves him only four from leveling with the retired Wayne Rooney. By converting from the spot after Steven Zuber handled, Kane completed a turnaround in a game that kick-started the buildup to the World Cup in November for both teams. Before the tournament draw on Friday, there's a chance for Kane to rack up more goals when the Ivory Coast visits Wembley Stadium to face the European Championship runner-up.

NZ batter Chapman out of ODI series against Netherlands

Auckland: New Zealand batter Mark Chapman has been ruled out of the upcoming ODI series against Netherlands after testing positive for COVID-19. George Worker replaced Chapman in the squad for the three-match series. He last played for New Zealand in 2018. Chapman, who was a part of the T20I squad, flew from Napier to Auckland on Saturday and after waking up with symptoms on Sunday. He tested positive in a rapid antigen test on Sunday following his arrival here from Napier. "It's really unfortunate for Mark and we're all really feeling for him at this time," New Zealand's head coach Gary Stead said.

DC's Lalit, Axar script win over Mumbai Indians

Mumbai, Mar 27 (PTI):

Delhi Capitals beat Mumbai Indians by four wickets in their IPL match here on Sunday. Lalit Yadav smashed 48 not out off 38 balls down the order as DC chased down the target of 178 with 10 balls to spare. Axar Patel also chipped in with a 17-ball 38 not out, while opener Prithvi Shaw contributed 38. For MI, Basil Thampi took three wickets for 35 runs. Earlier, Ishan Kishan hit a brisk unbeaten 81 as Mumbai Indians scored 177 for 5 after being asked to bat first.

Kishan and skipper Rohit Sharma (41) shared 67 runs for the opening wicket to lay the foundation for the total. For DC, Kuldeep Yadav picked up three wickets for 18 runs.

The 23-year-old opener, who became the most expensive buy of the IPL 2022 auction when MI bought him back for Rs 15.25 crore, proved his worth as he smashed 11 fours and two sixes in his 48-ball unbeaten knock.

After playing a second-fiddle to his skipper Rohit Sharma (41) inside the Power Play, Kishan came on his own to smash his



Lalit Yadav and Axar Patel put together a big fight in their seventh-wicket stand.

third fifty in a row for MI, and 10th overall.

Delhi put on the brakes in the middle overs, riding on Kuldeep Yadav's fine bowling effort of 4-0-18-3 which included the prized wickets of Rohit and Kieron Pollard (3).

But Kishan held fort even as wickets fell around him before exploding in the death with Mumbai scoring 59 runs in the final five overs. Mumbai debutant Tilak

Varma also impressed in his 22 off 15 balls, but it was the Jharkhand batter who stepped on the gas in the death overs and also displayed a helicopter shot to prop up the total.

Playing with just two foreigners, Delhi missed their overseas recruits like Anrich Nortje (hip injury) and Lungi Ngidi as their pace attack of Shardul Thakur (4-0-47-0), Khaleel Ahmed (4-0-27-2) and Kamlesh Nagarkoti

Brief Scores

Mumbai Indians: 177 for 5 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 81 not out, Rohit Sharma 41; Kuldeep Yadav 3/18).
Delhi Capitals: 179 for 6 in 18.2 overs (Lalit Yadav 48 not out, Axar Patel 38 not out, Prithvi Shaw 38; Basil Thampi 3/35).

(2-0-29-0) looked ordinary.

In a new avatar, Kuldeep bowled flat out and was spotted on with his lengths and did not let the batters have a go at him.

He first had Rohit with a back of a length delivery and then got Anmolpreet holed out to long off with a tossed up delivery.

Rohit and Kishan gave Mumbai a rollicking start. The skipper smashed three boundaries and two sixes, while his left-handed partner Kishan hit three boundaries and a six as the duo raced to 53 runs in six overs.

Just when Mumbai were toying with the lacklustre Delhi pace attack, Kuldeep halted their run flow with his twin breakthroughs after the Power Play.

Sindhu clinches Swiss Open title



Basel, Mar 27 (PTI):

Ace Indian shuttler P V Sindhu notched up her second women's singles title of the season with a straight game win over Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrunphan in the summit clash of the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament here on Sunday.

Playing her second successive final in the tournament, Sindhu, a double Olympic medallist, took 49 minutes to get the better of the fourth seeded Thai 21-16 21-8 at the St. Jakobshalle here.

It was Sindhu's 16th win over Busanan in 17 meetings, having lost to the Thai only once -- at the 2019 Hong Kong Open.

Sindhu had lost to Rio Olympic gold medallist Carolina Marin of Spain in the final in the last edition. The 26-year-old from

Hyderabad has happy memories of this venue as she had claimed the World Championships gold in 2019.

Sindhu had won the Syed Modi International Super 300 in Lucknow in January this year.

Super 300 tournaments are the second lowest tier of BWF Tour events.

Sindhu rode on her attack to open up a 3-0 lead but Busanan started to stay in the rallies and she produced some good quality shots to make it 7-7.

Busanan tried to keep Sindhu away from the net, making her move across the court but the Thai was erratic in her finishing, allowing the Indian to get into the break with a narrow two-point lead.

Busanan used her deceptions and drop shots to dictate the rallies but Sindhu relied on her retrieval skills to stay ahead.

I've not really thought about my future: Mithali on retirement call



Christchurch, Mar 27 (PTI):

She may have earlier hinted at a possible retirement at the end of the Women's World Cup, but veteran India captain Mithali Raj on Sunday said it's not the right time to take a call on her future just after the country's heart-breaking exit from the showpiece.

The 39-year-old Raj, the lone women cricketer to have played in six World Cups after making her maiden appearance 22 years ago, said she has not even come out of the disappointment of failing to qualify for the semifinals after India's three-wicket loss to South Africa here.

"You've not given me even an hour to think about my future, to go through and process what

has just happened today," Raj said in the post-match virtual media interaction, replying to a query about future plans.

"When you have a disappointment and in the campaign which ends like this in a World Cup where you've really prepared very hard over a year, it takes time to accept and then probably move on from there.

"Whatever the future holds for each and every player, so I've not really thought about my future."

Raj, only the third cricketer (men and women) after Sachin Tendulkar and Javed Miandad to play in six World Cups, had earlier dropped hints about her retirement, saying "life has come full circle" for her as she looked forward "to finishing the journey".

Proteas send India packing from World Cup

Christchurch, Mar 27 (PTI):

An inconsistent India crashed out of the Women's World Cup after suffering a heart-breaking three-wicket defeat against South Africa in a must-win league-stage game that went down to the wire, here on Sunday.

Smriti Mandhana (71), Shafali Verma (53) and skipper Mithali Raj (68) struck half-centuries, setting the platform for India to reach a competitive 274 for seven at the Hagley Oval.

Despite India's average bowling and fielding, the match last full distance with off-spinner Deepti Sharma needing to defend seven runs in the final over.

A well-set Mignon du Preez was caught in the deep off the penultimate ball, raising hopes of a memorable win for India. The Proteas now needed three runs off the final ball.

However, moments later the umpires ruled that Deepti had overstepped, turning India's ecstasy into agony in a matter of seconds.

Du Preez eventually hit the winning runs off the final ball and remained unbeaten on 52 to see her team through and finish



Mignon du Preez looks skywards after helping South Africa cross the line.

second in the league stage behind Australia.

As it panned out, Australia, South Africa, England and West Indies reached the last four stage.

In possibly her last match for India, skipper Mithali Raj was left devastated along with her teammates. India were not con-

sistent enough to make the semifinals and ended fifth in the league stage with three wins and four losses.

South Africa were cruising in their run chase with the in-form Laura Wolvaardt (80 off 79) and Lara Goodall (49 off 69) sharing 125 runs for the second wicket.

India rely heavily on veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami for early breakthroughs and her absence due to a side strain made the task easier for the South Africans.

Harmanpreet Kaur, who made 48 with the bat, got rid of opener Lizelle Lee (6) with a brilliant direct hit before Wolvaardt and Goodall got together and took the game away from the opposition.

Wolvaardt continued her sensational run of form with her fifth fifty-plus score in seven innings. It took a double strike from Harmanpreet to bring India back in the game as she found the stumps of Wolvaardt and trapped Sune Luus (22) with her probing off-spin.

The Indian fielding once again was sloppy and late evening dew made the job tougher for them. However, individual brilliance of Harmanpreet helped India take the game deep with South Africa needing 45 off the last 30 balls.

Du Preez, who was dropped by Smriti in the 45th over, and Chloe Tryon (17) were up for the challenge and took their team on the cusp of victory.

Tyron got three boundaries in the 47th over bowled by Gayakwad to reduce the equation to 20 off 18 balls.

West Indies on brink of series win

St George's, Mar 27 (AP):

A maiden Test century by Joshua da Silva and another England collapse contrived to put West Indies on the brink of winning the series-deciding third Test.

England led by only 10 runs with just two wickets in hand in its second innings, and still two days to play.

The English barely avoided losing on day three on Saturday when they crawled to stumps on 103-8. Their failure to win a test series in the Caribbean in 18 years was set to be extended.

Meanwhile, West Indies was looking at a first test series win at home since 2019, when England last visited.

The team's chief destroyer was batting allrounder Kyle Mayers who bowls medium pace. Unwanted for the first two tests both



Kyle Mayers (L), Jayden Seales (C) and Kraigg Brathwaite (R) of West Indies celebrate the dismissal of Alex Lees of England.

draws he replaced spinner Veerasammy Permaul in Grenada to shore up the batting. But his disciplined and relentless length

proved too much for England.

Mayers had an incredible 5-9 from 13 overs, a maiden five-for. That followed Da

Silva's equally remarkable unbeaten 100 in the morning that gave West Indies an intimidating 93-run lead on the first innings.

Infighting, inconsistency plagued India's campaign; 'time to look beyond Mithali and Jhulan'

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Rift in the team, "fitness issues" and an attack that lacked variety and sting, all of it seems to have contributed to India's pre-mature exit from the ICC Women's World Cup.

The runners-up finish five years ago had changed the face of women's cricket and considering the massive strides the game made since that final in 2017, there were expectations that India would go all the way this time.

However what unfolded was a disastrous campaign that ended at the league stage itself. Course correction for the Indian women's cricket team has become the need of the hour. The BCCI organised series against the likes of South Africa, England, Australia and World Cup hosts

New Zealand ahead of the ICC event but in the end, the players failed to deliver. The team could never attain the consistently levels that are required to win a major event.

It was a last-ball heartbreak against the South Africans on Sunday that halted their run but the Mithali Raj-led squad could not get over the line even against other SENA teams including Australia and New Zealand.

The team atmosphere was also far from ideal with a long-standing rift between two senior players creating a sense of unease in the team. Head coach Ramesh Power, who was brought back last year after being controversially sacked following the 2018 World Cup, also has a lot of answering to do for the team's hot and cold run over the past one year.

'Will not accept any offer of President's post'

Lucknow, Mar 27 (PTI):

BSP supremo Mayawati on Sunday asserted that she will not accept the offer of President's post from any party and alleged that the BJP and the RSS had spread false propaganda that she will be "made the President" if BJP comes to power in Uttar Pradesh, misleading her supporters.

In a statement after reviewing the party's humiliating defeat in the state elections, the four-time former chief minister said she is a firm disciple of Kanshi Ram who had also refused the post in the past. "How can I accept such a post when we know that it will be the end of our party. So I want to



BSP supremo Mayawati waves at the party leaders, during a review meeting to discuss the party's performance in the recent Assembly polls, at the party office, in Lucknow, Sunday.

make it clear to every BSP office bearer that in the interest of our party and movement, I will not accept any offer for the

President's post from the BJP or other parties and they should never be misled in future," Mayawati said. The term of President Ram Nath Kovind ends on July 24 and elections to the post have to be held before that.

The BSP chief said she will spend every moment of her life strengthening the party across the country and urged its members not to be disheartened.

"In this election, through a well-thought-out strategy and conspiracy, the BJP, through its RSS organisation has spread false propaganda among our people that if a BSP government is not formed in UP, we will make your 'Behenji' the President of the country. That is why

you should allow BJP to come to power," Mayawati said while delving into the reasons for her party's defeat. "Let alone becoming the President, I cannot even imagine such a thing in my dream. They (BJP) also know that long ago Kanshi Ram ji had rejected this offer and I am his firm disciple," she said.

The BSP had got only one seat out of 403 in the recently-held assembly elections while in 2017 it had won 19 seats. Addressing a state-level meeting held at the party's state office here, Mayawati also alleged that the BJP instead of providing jobs to the poor, gave free ration and made them 'lachaar' (helpless) and 'gulam' (slave).

MP power company hires drones

To detect faults in transmission lines

Jabalpur, Mar 27 (PTI): The state-owned Madhya Pradesh Power Transmission Company Limited (MPPTCL) has hired drones to detect faults in the high voltage transmission lines, officials said on Sunday.

The drones are being used on an experimental basis for a year in dense forests, hilly terrains and plains in and around Jabalpur, doing away with the time-consuming traditional practice where technical staffers climb on towers to find out faults in the transmission lines, before repairing them manually, MPPTCL's Managing Director Sunil Tiwari told PTI.

Calligraphy of Anik Dutta's 'Aparajito' released

Kolkata, Mar 27 (PTI):

With Anik Dutta's movie 'Aparajito' (The Undeclared), a tribute to legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray, all set for the release in May, the director has brought out the calligraphy of the film's title in Bangla and English. The maestro's filmmaker son Sandip Ray has helped Dutta in facilitating the calligraphy.

"There is the imagery of Durga and Apu in the first letter and that of Mitchell camera, used by Ray, in the second. A steam engine train, synonymous with an iconic scene from 'Pathar Panchali', and smoke billowing out of it

makes the last two letters.

"For the English title 'The Undeclared', we have used Ray Roman font developed by the maestro himself. There was much brainstorming for the logo. I am thankful to Sandip Ray for encouraging and helping us in the work," Dutta told PTI.

The filmmaker, who has award-winning movies such as 'Bhootee Bhoobisot' and 'Borunbabur Bondhu' to his name, said he always explores graphical possibilities for the logo once the title of his film is decided. "In Aparajito, the excitement doubled as there were so many possibilities to play with. The

film is based on the indomitable journey of one of the world's greatest filmmakers who overcame all odds to bring out 'Pathar Panchali', which put Bengali cinema on the world map.

"The movie 'Aparajito' revolves around debutant director Aparajito Ray's struggles to make his first film 'Pathar Padabali'. There has been a little playing with the names," Dutta said. He said that Ray was a master of calligraphy and cited the logo of 'Ghare Baire' (Home and the World) as an example. Sandip Ray extended best wishes for the movie and said he was looking forward to watching it.

PRIDE MARCH



People belonging to LGBTQIA community sing and dance, during 6th Awadh Queer Pride March in Lucknow, Sunday.

Bidders few for J'khand's ambitious 'Grain ATM' project

Ranchi, Mar 27 (PTI):

The Jharkhand government's flagship 'Grain ATM' project that aims at modernising the public distribution system has failed to attract more than one bidder even after completion of the second deadline on March 23, an official said on Sunday. The government is now contemplating extending the last date for submitting the expression of interest by a week or so, he said.

The food and public distribution department had planned to set up 'Grain ATMs' at 10 locations across the state to check leakages in the supply chain. The primary focus was to install these multi-commodity au-

tomated machines at high-volume fair price shops and state food corporation godowns in populated areas by June this year, the official said.

The department also planned to set up 'Grain ATMs' at more than 2,600 fair price shops in the state, he said. It had accordingly floated an expression of interest (EOI) for the project in February and extended the deadline for submitting bids till March 23.

Till now, only one bidder has shown interest in the project. To finalise it, we need at least two bidders. We are now planning to go for another extension of the last date by a week or so to invite more bidders, Food,

public distribution and consumer affairs director Dilip Tirkey told PTI. A Ranchi-based bidder has so far shown interest in the project, he said.

The Grain ATMs will mainly be established at fair price shops and they will be linked to e-PoS (point of sale) machines. There will be a biometric authentication system in the unit. The benefit of the initiative is that PDS dealers cannot provide lesser amounts of foodgrains to beneficiaries.

Once a PDS dealer pushes the button of kg, it will automatically come to the department's record and a beneficiary will get food items, another official said.

The move is to check irregularities in the supply of ration as beneficiaries of the public distribution system often lodge complaints against PDS dealers for malpractices. The department had suspended more than 100 PDS dealers on basis of such complaints in 2020, the official said.

Around 2.28 crore beneficiaries, who are registered under the priority household category of the food security scheme in Jharkhand get 5 kg of grains a month at Re 1 per kg, while 9 lakh BPL households enrolled under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana programme are entitled to 35 kg of grains per month at Re 1 per kg.

BEATING THE HEAT



Children play while swimming in the Hooghly river, on a hot summer day, in Nadia, Sunday.

Amid fuel price rise, Maha man commutes to work on horse

Aurangabad, Mar 27 (PTI):

In the wake of the fuel price rise and problems in maintaining a motorcycle due to the COVID-19 pandemic-induced restrictions, a man working as a lab assistant at a pharmacy college here in Maharashtra commutes on a horse to his workplace everyday. The diesel price in Aurangabad is just a few paise short of Rs 100 per litre, while the petrol rate has crossed Rs 115 per litre.

The petrol price on Sunday was hiked by 50 paise and diesel by 55 paise, taking the total increase in rates since resumption of daily price revision less than a week back to Rs 3.70-3.75 per litre. The rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending upon the incidence of local taxation.

SPIRITUAL GATHERING

PM Modi addresses Shwetambar Terapanth event

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that government, society and spiritual authority always played an equal role in the country which, he added, has never had the tendency that only government will do everything.

In a video message at the concluding ceremony of "Ahimsa Yatra" of Shwetambar Terapanth, a Jain sect, Modi said the country is reflecting this spirit during the ongoing 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' while walking on the path of duty towards achieving its pledges with the motto of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas', according to an official statement.



PM Narendra Modi

Recalling the ancient tradition of saints emphasising constant movement, he especially noted that the Shwetambar Terapanth has made abdication of lethargy into a spiritual pledge and complimented chief Acharya Mahashraman for completing 18,000-km 'padayatra' in three countries. The prime

minister lauded him for expanding the tradition of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam' and propagating the mantra of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' as a spiritual pledge. He also recalled his long association with the Shwetambar Terapanth.

Modi underlined the importance of the 'padayatra' that was flagged off from the Red Fort in 2014 and noted the coincidence that he himself started his journey as prime minister in the same year and embarked on the journey of public service and public welfare. Praising the theme of the padayatra - harmony, morality and de-addiction - he said real self-realisation is possible only in the absence of any kind of addiction.

Villagers throng hospital for vaccine jabs

After milk-based dish at feast spreads rabies fear

Gwalior, Mar 27 (PTI):

People of a village in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district hurried to get anti-rabies vaccine shots after falsely believing that they could get the viral disease from eating a dish prepared from the milk of a buffalo that had been bitten by a rabid dog.

Health authorities in Chandpura village in the district's Dabra tehsil even administered the shots to 25 people but heaved a sigh of relief as no one had shown any symptoms of the ailment, considered fatal, as on Sunday, an official said. "Some 700 people ate a

dish made from buffalo milk at a funerary feast held three days ago. The next day they got to know that the buffalo had been bitten by a dog with rabies, and that the animal and its calf had died," Dabra Sub Divisional Magistrate Pradeep Sharma told PTI.

"They gathered at Dabra civil hospital demanding anti-rabies vaccine shots. Doctors there administered 25 jabs and also told people having the milk of rabid animals does not bring about the infection. However, only after a health team arrived from Gwalior did the villagers relent," the SDM added.

Palaniswami rules out scope for Sasikala in AIADMK

Salem (TN), Mar 27 (PTI):

AIADMK top leader K Palaniswami on Sunday reiterated that there is no place for V K Sasikala in the party saying no one could give a new lease of life to a matter that has already been settled. Days after his colleague and party coordinator, O Panneerselvam (OPS) said he personally had respect and admiration for Sasikala, the confidante of late Chief Minister J Jayalalitha, Palaniswami made it clear that there is no scope for her in the party. Already, the party brass had passed a resolution against admitting her into the organisation and it was seconded by the party's district units across the state, Palaniswami told reporters here when asked if there are chances for her being taken back into the AIADMK.

'Nobody can break Modi-Yogi pair'

Surat, Mar 27 (PTI):

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on Sunday said nobody can break the Modi-Yogi pair, and added that the BJP retained power in UP with the support of a lot of people, including a large number north Indians settled in Gujarat's Surat. She was referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath, who took oath as the Uttar Pradesh chief minister for a second term at a ceremony held on Friday, which was attended by the PM.

In the UP Assembly polls held earlier this year, the BJP-led alliance has won 273 of 403 seats. While the BJP got 255 seats, its allies Nishad Party and the Apna Dal (S) bagged 18. This is the first time in

over three decades that a party has won the assembly elections twice in a row in the crucial state.

"We have formed the government in Uttar Pradesh, friends. Nobody can break the Modi-Yogi pair...nobody can do this. A lot of people have given their support to achieve this. Several people from here (Surat) went there (UP) for campaigning," she said. This is after 35 years that one party returned to power for a second term in a row, creating history, she added.

"For this, you must congratulate us...A large number of north Indians are settled in Surat, and they have supported us to achieve this," the former Gujarat chief minister said. Patel was in Surat to lay the foundation stone



Governor of Uttar Pradesh Anandiben Patel, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Gujarat BJP President C.R.Patil, Gujarat Home Minister Harsh Sanghvi during the foundation stone-laying ceremony of Kiran Medical College, in Surat, Sunday.

for Kiran Medical College, being set up by Samast Patidar Arogya Trust at Vadod in Olpad taluka of the district. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Gujarat

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel were also present on the occasion.

Stating that India lags behind in the field of research, she suggested that the proposed college

should have a dedicated department for this purpose. "India rose to the occasion to carry out research and came out with a vaccine against COVID-19," the UP governor added. She also stressed the need for girls to get vaccinated against cervical cancer.

"A new vaccine (against cervical cancer) has entered the market. As of now, it is very costly. I have been told that the price of this vaccine will come down in the range of Rs 100 to Rs 300 by August-September. Whenever this vaccine is available, I request you to get your daughters in the age group of 9 to 14 vaccinated against cervical cancer. I have started this vaccination work in UP irrespective of the price the vaccine," she said.



BRIEF



Locals mourn the death of a Special Police Officer (SPO) Ishfaq Ahmad and his brother Umar Jan, during their funeral at Chadbugh area of Budgam, Sunday.

Adieu

Srinagar: "Mei kya ous khatah (what was my fault)," wailed the inconsolable mother of an SPO and his brother killed by militants as their bodies were brought home in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district on Sunday. A large number of people assembled at their home in Chadbugh locality and bid a tearful adieu to the brothers. "What was my fault? What was my fault?" the grieving mother asked as women tried to console her.

Amarnath yatra

Jammu: The annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Amarnath located at a height of 3,880 metres in south Kashmir Himalayas has been scheduled to commence on June 30, an official said on Sunday. The decision to schedule the 43-day pilgrimage was taken at a meeting of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board chaired by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha.

Blast

Srinagar: A blast occurred near an Army camp in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, but no loss of life was reported, officials said. "A mysterious blast took place near the camp of 21 Rashtriya Rifles at Zachaldara in Handwara area of the north Kashmir district," one of the officials said. However, no loss of life or injury to anyone was reported.

CBI probe

New Delhi: The Congress on Sunday accused the central government of sheltering promoters of certain companies declaring insolvency through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, and demanded a CBI probe into the insolvency of Amtek group. Addressing a press conference, Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam said the government must order a probe into the findings of Ernst and Young's audit report into the insolvency of Amtek Auto.

Weather
High 38 Low 21

BIRBHUM MASSACRE

CBI name 22 accused in Bengal killings

TMC leader questioned

Kolkata, Mar 27:

The Central Bureau of Investigation has named 22 people as accused in the Birbhum massacre, in which eight people were beaten and burnt alive earlier this week, triggering political furore. The list of accused is the same as that of the state police, sources said. The agency, however, has questioned the ruling Trinamool Congress's block president Anarul Hossain, who, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had promised,

will be arrested. Around 20 people have been arrested after six women and two children - mostly of members of a single family - were locked in their homes and burnt alive by a mob at the Bogtui village near Birbhum's Rampurhat town earlier this week.

The attack was allegedly retaliation to the murder of a local Trinamool Congress leader, Bhadu Sheikh, who died in a bomb attack.

Mamata Banerjee, during her visit to Bogtui, had promised that Anarul Hossain will be arrested for not informing the police and helping them in preventing the crime.

Eyewitnesses have accused Anarul Hossain of aiding the violent mob by eyewitnesses. Speaking to reporters while being taken away for questioning by the CBI, Anarul Hossain said, "It is a conspiracy by my opponents."

The CBI team has set up a temporary camp at a government guest house in Rampurhat. Led by senior officer Akhilesh Singh, the team has now split up and started work by visiting the home of Sona Sheikh, whose house was set ablaze. Most of the bodies were recovered from this home in Bogtui village, including that of the newly married couple, Lily

Khatun and her husband. A CBI team also visited the hospital in Rampurhat where the injured are recovering.

The CBI has to file a status report on its investigation by April 7 in the Calcutta High Court, which ordered a probe by the Central agency on Friday. The court - which took up the case suo motu - had denied the Mamata Banerjee government's request not to hand over the investigation to the CBI.

Battling a furious political backlash over the killings, the Chief Minister had alleged that "something big" was behind the incident.

"I never believed something so barbaric can happen in modern Bengal. Mothers and children were killed. Your family members died but it is my heart that was crushed," Mamata Banerjee said, surrounded by the family members and relatives of those killed, besides villagers. Alleging a bigger conspiracy, she called for "stringent action" and said the police would investigate all angles.

At least 20 people have been arrested by the local police in connection with the incident. Two officers of the local police have been removed on grounds of negligence.

HORRIFYING TRUTH

Man rapes and kills teen

Tries to pass it off as suicide

Surajpur, Mar 27:

A teenage girl was allegedly raped and killed by a 23-year-old man in Surajpur district and the latter tried to pass it off as a case of suicide, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on March 24 and during a probe into it, the police on Saturday arrested the man, identified as Sabir Ali alias Baba Khan, who allegedly strangled the victim to death and then hanged the body from a ceiling fan at her house in Bhatgaon police station limits, Surajpur. Additional Superintendent of Police Harish Rathore said.

As per preliminary investigation, the victim, a Class 12 student, appeared for her practical exam on Thursday and then returned home in Surajpur, located around 300 km from the state capital Raipur.

Her mother was in Bilaspur to take care of her ailing father, who was admitted in a hospital there, while her younger brother had gone out of home to play, the official said. On finding the victim alone in the house, the accused went there. He allegedly raped her and then strangled her to death with her scarf. The man then hanged the body from a ceiling fan and wrote a

About the incident

As per preliminary investigation, the victim, a Class 12 student, appeared for her practical exam on Thursday and then returned home in Surajpur. Her mother was in Bilaspur to take care of her ailing father, who was admitted in a hospital there, while her younger brother had gone out of home to play. On finding the victim alone in the house, the accused went there. He allegedly raped her and then strangled her to death with her scarf. The man then hanged the body from a ceiling fan and wrote a note on her hand with a pen to make it appear as a case of suicide.

note on her hand with a pen to make it appear as a case of suicide, the official said. Later, the victim's brother and neighbours found her hanging and informed the police, he said.

Based on the investigation, the accused was arrested and booked under Indian Penal Code Sections 302 (murder), 376 (rape) and other relevant provisions, the official said. The exact age of the deceased is yet to be ascertained and if she is found to be a minor, provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act will be included in the case," he added. On Saturday, a large number of people gathered in Jarhi area of Surajpur to pay tributes to the victim and demanded death sentence for the accused.

UGC TO CUS

'Use CUET scores to admit students in UG programmes'

New Delhi, Mar 26 (PTD):

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has written to vice-chancellors of all central universities and colleges to use Common University Entrance Test (CUET) scores to admit students in undergraduate programmes. UGC chairman M Jagadish Kumar had said on Monday that CUET scores, and not class 12 scores, will be mandatory for admission to 45 central universities. Central universities can fix their mini-

mum eligibility criteria. "Today we have written to the VCs, Directors, and Principals of all Universities and Colleges to use CUET scores for admissions in their UG programs because with CUET in place there is no need for students to worry about writing multiple entrance tests," Kumar tweeted on Sunday. The state universities, private universities, and deemed-to-be universities can also use CUET scores for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions if they want, Kumar had said on Monday.

TWO YEARS OF PANDEMIC

Govt for dropping COVID pre-call announcements from phones

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTD):

The COVID-19 awareness pre-call audio announcements set by telecom operators at the start of the pandemic may soon become history.

After almost two years of raising awareness about the disease, the government is now actively considering the removal of the COVID-19 pre-call messages after receiving representations that audio clips have served their intended

purpose and are delaying critical calls during emergencies. Official sources said the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has written to the Union Health Ministry requesting it to drop these pre-call announcements and caller tunes. It cited representations received from Cellular Operators Association of India (COA) as well as mobile subscribers. "The health ministry is now considering removal of these audio

clips in view of the improved pandemic situation in the country even as other measures for spreading public awareness about the safeguards against the viral disease will continue," an official source said. The instructions for implementation of COVID-19 pre-call announcements and caller tunes to Telecom Service Providers were issued by DoT following directions received from the Union Health Ministry.

Father bashes innocent son to death



Mainpur, Mar 27:

In a heart rendering incident which came to fore on Sunday morning, a father under the influence of alcohol bashed his five-year-old son to death and

tried to bury his dead body by digging a grave inside the house. While he was trying to bury the body relatives of the accused reached his place and former fled away from the house. The activeness shown on the part of Mainpur PS in-charge Harshavardhan Bais led to arrest of the accused within few hours of the incident.

As per information received, incident took place in village Themli, 12 km from tehsil headquarter Mainpur where accused Rohit Kumar Dhruv who daily used to abuse his children and wife under the influence of alcohol. On March 26 night when he repeated the same act, his wife left the house along with his one son and one daughter. On March 27 morning accused again consumed alcohol and called his five-year-old son. When the victim came accused started beating him which led to his death.

Emergency use

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTD):

The Serum Institute has applied to the Drugs Controller General of India seeking emergency use authorisation for its recombinant BCG (rBCG) vaccine for the prevention of tuberculosis, official sources said on Sunday. The EUA application was submitted on March 22 by Prakash Kumar Singh, Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs at the Serum Institute of India (SII). India's TB immunisation programme currently offers BCG vaccination at birth or as early as possible till one year of age.

100-day annual leave plan for CAPF jawans soon

New Delhi, Mar 27:

An ambitious proposal mooted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah to allow Central Armed Police Force jawans spend at least 100 days with their families is likely to be implemented shortly, with officials saying the contours for a comprehensive policy are being worked out. The ministry of home affairs has held multiple meetings, the latest being early this month, to thrash out the issues delaying the implementation of the poli-

cy. The policy aims to reduce work-related stress and enhance the happiness quotient of the about 10 lakh troops and officials who undertake arduous duties in some of the most challenging environmental conditions and in remote locations. "All the central armed police forces have been directed to expedite their proposals. The home ministry is expected to take a final decision by the next month as to how the welfare measure can be implemented," a senior CAPF officer told PTL.

Villagers bring Shivaling to court after notice to temple

Raigarh, Mar 27:

In a bizarre incident, a Shivaling, which was uprooted from a temple in Raigarh district of Chhattisgarh, was brought to the tehsil office in Raigarh district to appear before the court after a summons was issued against the Shiva temple by the revenue officials.

A few days ago, the revenue officials of Raigarh had given notice to Shiva temple to appear in the court. On March 25, the villagers uprooted the



Shivaling at Shiva temple in Raigarh and carried on a cart to present it in the court. "Our villagers and a Shiva temple were given

the notice to appear before the court by a tehsil Office and a fine of Rs 10,000 was also imposed. So we appeared in the court with

the Shivaling. But after waiting for hours, a notice was posted that the next hearing will be on April 13. We were not informed about this earlier," said Sapna Siddar, local Councillor. The councillor said that Sudha Rajwade, who is a resident of our village had moved the petition to the high court.

"We urged her not to do this but she refused and said that she is a government official and is doing her work," she said. Shiva temple at Kauvakunda in Raigarh town was served a notice complaining of illegal occupation.

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Har Pal Aapke Saath

Illegal roadside vends and encroachments bulldozed in Supela

**Central Chronicle News**

Bhilai, Mar 27: On Sunday, the enforcement squad of Bhilai Municipal Corporation with support of Durg District Police bulldozed a number of encroachments and illegal structures that have come up on roadside in Supela. The road connecting Supela Square to Gada Square appeared totally different after the anti-en-

croachment drive. This important road has been witnessing Sunday Markets and consequent traffic jams for the last several years. Considering the pains of the common people, the Bhilai Municipal Corporation took strict action against the encroachers and vendors on Sunday and cleared the road for public convenience. It needs to be mentioned here that Bhilai Municipal

Corporation had made elaborate arrangements to systematize the Supela Sunday Market, which had been a prime cause of trouble for thousands of commuters. The joint team of Bhilai Municipal Corporation and District Police reached the Supela Sunday Market area at 04:00 hrs in the morning. BMC Commissioner Prakash Surve, Zone Commissioners Pooja

Pillai, Manish Gaikwad and other officials of BMC were present. Bhilai Chamber of Commerce had already given support to the BMC's initiative. The joint team counselled the vendors and prevented them from putting up their stalls and vends on the roadside. After a few hours, the BMC bulldozers reached the spot and started removing the illegal kiosks, stalls,

sheds, etc from the roadside. In the meanwhile, some of the vendors tried to protest and prevent the eviction drive. They entered into an argument with the BMC officials. At this moment, the police team led by CSP Rakesh Joshi intervened and pacified the tension. The cops managed to maintain law and order as well as ensure smooth conduct of the anti-encroachment

drive. A large number of kiosks, sheds, etc were razed and seized by the BMC team. The drive continued for about seven hours. The joint team has freed both sides of the road from encroachments. It needs to be mentioned here that strict action against the Supela Sunday Market had become very necessary as it creates traffic jams for the entire day on an important road.

Supela Sunday Market has become one of the busiest markets in the city. This market is conducted on the road connecting the Supela Square to Gada Chowk. A large population of Vaishali nagar, Shanti Nagar, Kohka and other areas use this route. On Sundays, the entire road got jammed for the whole day due to the unorganized and haphazard vends. The commuters

faceted troubles in passing through this road as the chances of accidents are high due to heavy rush. It was almost impossible to pass a heavy vehicle from this route. In case of any emergency, it was almost impossible for ambulances or Fire Tenders to use this route. For a long time, various organisations have been raising demands of strict action against this illegal market.

'Samadhan' Performance Improvement Workshop (PIW) held

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: A series of Performance Improvement Workshop (PIW) at Bhilai Steel Plant under the Tag Name of "Samadhan" with an aim to look for adaptable solutions to problems faced on shopfloors was launched on March 22, 2022 at HRDC with participants from various sections of SP-2 and SP-3. PIW is an effective tool and tested HRD intervention in locating the problem and then analyzing it, to look for the solution required. The topic for this PIW workshop was chosen as "Reduction in Conveyor Belts consumption" in Sinter Plants. This PIW has been organized with an objective to increase the life of conveyor belts in SPs.



nately find a solution to the problems we are facing as regards conveyor belts consumption, by brainstorming amongst ourselves. Outlining the importance of Performance Improvement Workshops at BSP, CGM (HRD & BE), Sanjay Dhar said the knowledge one gains from this work needs to be converted into action plan which in turn can help pin down the problem. He asked the participants to air free and frank opinion about the problems, give their honest opinion. While welcoming all the participants, Program Coordinators and the Program Facilitator, Umesh Oudhia GM (SP-2) along with GMs and seniors officials from HRD and SPs, Mukul Saharia DGM (HRD) said the PIW is a result oriented HRD-intervention, with participants from cross functional sections of departments wherein participants brainstorm on the subject matter with full

freedom to locate the problems and then give their solution through a specific and concrete action plan aimed at achieving the desired goal. A total of 31 participants were released from SP2 & SP-3 for the workshop at HRDC. During the second half of the workshop, the participants grouped in teams of six and made their presentation in front of the CGMs of SP-2, SP-3 and HRD & BE along with their action plan to achieve the target or to reduce the consumption of conveyor belts in SPs. In the concluding remark, CGM SP-3 Nandanwar said that along the action plan, housing keeping is also to be given a complete thrust and priority. While summing up the session, CGM (HRD&BE) Sanjay Dhar said that a follow-up and review will be done to see the progress of the action plans presented by the groups on the subject matter. The programme on Samadhan: PIW was compered by Subhash Patel Senior Manager (HRD) and DGM (HRD) Mukul Saharia coordinated with all the departments & other agencies concerned, in getting released all the participants.

Mukul Saharia, DGM (HRD) welcomed the Chief Guest of the function, SV Nandanwar, CGM (SP)-3 who had been very keen on seeking a solution that would increase the life of conveyor belts in SPs. While narrating his experiences and few critical events, he stressed upon the participants to wholeheartedly contribute in locating and analyzing the problems which will ultimately lead to the solution we are all looking for. AK Dutta, CGM (SP-2) said that we can defi-

nitely find a solution to the problems we are facing as regards conveyor belts consumption, by brainstorming amongst ourselves. Outlining the importance of Performance Improvement Workshops at BSP, CGM (HRD & BE), Sanjay Dhar said the knowledge one gains from this work needs to be converted into action plan which in turn can help pin down the problem. He asked the participants to air free and frank opinion about the problems, give their honest opinion. While welcoming all the participants, Program Coordinators and the Program Facilitator, Umesh Oudhia GM (SP-2) along with GMs and seniors officials from HRD and SPs, Mukul Saharia DGM (HRD) said the PIW is a result oriented HRD-intervention, with participants from cross functional sections of departments wherein participants brainstorm on the subject matter with full

freedom to locate the problems and then give their solution through a specific and concrete action plan aimed at achieving the desired goal. A total of 31 participants were released from SP2 & SP-3 for the workshop at HRDC. During the second half of the workshop, the participants grouped in teams of six and made their presentation in front of the CGMs of SP-2, SP-3 and HRD & BE along with their action plan to achieve the target or to reduce the consumption of conveyor belts in SPs. In the concluding remark, CGM SP-3 Nandanwar said that along the action plan, housing keeping is also to be given a complete thrust and priority. While summing up the session, CGM (HRD&BE) Sanjay Dhar said that a follow-up and review will be done to see the progress of the action plans presented by the groups on the subject matter. The programme on Samadhan: PIW was compered by Subhash Patel Senior Manager (HRD) and DGM (HRD) Mukul Saharia coordinated with all the departments & other agencies concerned, in getting released all the participants.



TU Strike: BSP Management appeals employees to attend the duty

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: Some of the trade unions have given a notice of strike on 28th and 29th March, 2022. Bhilai Steel Plant management has made elaborate arrangements to maintain the production and productivity during the strike. The management has appealed to the employees to attend the duty and upkeep the great work culture and tradition of Bhilai Steel Plant. It has been stated in the appeal that according to the memorandum sent by the Unions, majority of the issues/demands are related to Central/State Government policies and Corporate Office, SAIL, New Delhi on which no decision can be taken at Bhilai Steel Plant level. As the employees are

aware, Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed in NJCS and in accordance with the above, pay and other benefits have been revised accordingly. Bhilai Steel Plant has a long and glorious tradition of industrial peace and harmony. BSP collective is destined to attain greater heights towards performance and all of us must put optimum efforts for attainment of the same. During the present critical situation due to Corona pandemic, all the efforts must be directed towards employee health & safety and safe working to ensure betterment of the plant. It may be noted that RLC (C), Raipur, have seized the issues of strike call in conciliation under ID Act 1947. As Government of India has



declared Iron & Steel Industry as 'Public Utility Service', therefore under the provisions of ID Act 1947, during pendency of conciliation proceedings, going on strike is illegal. The BSP management informed the employees that absence from duty on 28th and 29th March, 2022, will be deemed to be participating in the strike and

for such unauthorized absence, in addition to deduction of wages it will adversely affect SPIS earning also. Further, such employees would also be liable for disciplinary action under the provisions of Standing Orders (Plant/Mines), HSL Discipline & Appeal rules and other applicable rules of the Company.

Participation in such strikes adversely affects the Plant's commitment towards improving production, productivity and profitability. In this regard, employees have been appealed not to hinder or forcefully stop/obstruct any employee from entering the plant premises. Such activities will be viewed as indiscipline and necessary disciplinary action will be taken. The management, therefore, appealed to all employees that during these difficult times, they should maintain the great work culture and tradition of Bhilai Steel Plant and attend to their duties on 28th and 29th March, 2022 and thereby contributing effectively towards improving production, productivity and profitability.

596 Cadets appear for NCC C Certificate Practical Examination

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: C certificate practical examination was conducted at St Thomas College Ruabandha. In the exam organised in offline mode third year cadets of 10 colleges under 37 CG Battalion NCC Durg, 1 CG RV Battalion NCC Anjora and 38 CG Battalion NCC Rajnandgaon participated. A total of 596 Senior Division and Senior Wing cadets of 10 colleges under 37 CG Battalion NCC Durg, 1 CG RV Battalion NCC Anjora and 38 CG Battalion NCC Rajnandgaon appeared for the C certificate examination. The practical and theoretical C certificate examination of cadets were taken under the joint



guidance of Presiding Officer Colonel Chetan Gurubaksh, 27 CG Battalion Raipur and board member of the examination Colonel Ajay Dhawan, 9 CG Battalion Jagdalpur. NCC C Certificate Examination was conducted and managed by Commanding Officer Colonel Hemant Dubey, 37

CG Battalion Durg, Administrative Officer Lieutenant Colonel R Setu Madhavan, Subedar Major Bhupati Thapa, PI Staffs, JCO and NCO as per the guidelines given to NCC and the NCC Officers of 10 colleges under the battalion. The management arrangements and examination work were completed with the joint cooperation of the officials. On the first day of the examination, Foot Drill, Arms Drill, Weapon Training, Map Reading, Field Craft and Field Training practical exam started at 07:30 hrs. All the cadets were present till noon for the practical exam. The theory exam has been conducted for 3 hours

ed with the joint cooperation of the officials. On the first day of the examination, Foot Drill, Arms Drill, Weapon Training, Map Reading, Field Craft and Field Training practical exam started at 07:30 hrs. All the cadets were present till noon for the practical exam. The theory exam has been conducted for 3 hours

on the second day of the exam. On the successful conduct of the NCC C Certificate Examination in St Thomas College Bhilai campus, the administrator of the college, Father Dr Joshi Varghese and the Principal of the college, Dr MG Roymon appreciated and congratulated all the cadets.

Supriti clicks silver, Ashok bronze in Federation Cup Body Building Championship

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: The 11th Federation Cup National Body Building Championship 2022 was held in Gangtok Sikkim from March 11 to 13, where players from Chhattisgarh state also participated. Supriti Acharji won silver medal in women's category while Ashok Behera has bagged bronze medal in 65 kg weight category. 450 players from 32 states, 8 sports boards and 150 officials participated in this event. Arvind Singh, Organizing Secretary, Indian Bodybuilders Federation and General Secretary of Chhattisgarh State Bodybuilders Association stated that the 11th Federation Cup Body Building Championship 2022 has been an achievement for the players of Chhattisgarh. Supriti Acharji of Durg, representing Chhattisgarh in the women's category,



performed brilliantly in this competition and got the distinction of winning the silver medal in a tough struggle. On the other hand, Geeta Saini of Haryana got the gold medal in this category, while Karishma Chingangbam of Manipur and Pratibha Thapliyal of Uttarakhand got the third and fourth place and Nandita Rawat of Delhi got the fifth position. Similarly, Ashok Behera of

Korea representing Chhattisgarh in 65 kg of men's category, won the bronze medal. In this category, the gold medal went to Pradeep Kuma Varma of Punjab, while Sashank Sekhar Sahu of Odisha got the silver medal, Sandeep N Sawale of Maharashtra got the fourth position and Tamil Nadu's E Nishanth had to be content with the fifth position. The Chhattisgarh contingent

consisted of 10 players, 4 officials for women and men category. Team coach and manager Nahid Akhtar, international judge Mahendra Tekam, national judge B Rajashekhar Rao accompanied the team. Yogendra Pandey, President, Chhattisgarh State Body Builders Association, General Secretary Arvind Singh, Treasurer Arvind Singh have congratulated the players on the excellent achievement.

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Mar 27: The working committee meeting of Officers' Association - Bhilai Steel Plant was held on Sunday. All the zonal representatives attended the meeting and expressed concern over the unpleasant situations arising during the strike. The trade unions are going to observe a strike on 28 and 29 March. The OA-BSP discussed this issue and explored measures to ensure safe and easy arrangements in the plant for movement of the officers during the strike. It needs to be mentioned here that some executives of Bhilai Steel Plant had faced unpleasant situations during the last strike. They were misbehaved by the striking employees during the chaotic environment of strike. All the office bearers and representatives of OA-BSP will make efforts to



protect the executives and prevent recurrence of unpleasant situations. During the meeting, SEFI and OA-BSP President Narendra Kumar Banchoore shared detailed information about the SAIL-SEFI meeting held in New Delhi on March 24, 2022. SEFI office bearers raised the issues of pay-fixation of junior officers 2008 and 2010, advance payment of PRP for the financial year 2020-21, payment of

incremental PRP for the financial year 2018-19, SAIL pension scheme NPS monthly payment at the rate of 9 percentage, interest on the corpus of SAIL pension w.e.f. 01.01.2007 to be paid in NPS; enhancement in the limit of mobile handset reimbursement of officers, uniform HRA across all the units of SAIL, amendment in promotion policy, arrears of 39 months from 01.01.2017, notional seniority to

junior officer 2018 batch, special gift to all personnel on the occasion of SAIL turnover exceeding One lakh, Strategic merger of steel sector PSUs instead of disinvestment, payment of gratuity to retired officers between January 2017 and February 2018, etc. SEFI Chairman expressed hope that the long-awaited pay-fixation would be properly resolved soon. On behalf of SAIL Management, SAIL President Soma Mandal, Director (Commerce) VS Chakraborty, Executive Director (P&A) Sameer Swarup, CGM (Chairman's Office) NM Padhi, CGM Manas Rath and General Manager Vikram Uppal and SEFI President Narendra Kumar Banchoore, General Secretary Abkash Malik, Vice-Presidents Narendra Singh, Arindam Dey, Treasurer Sugali Loknath and Deputy Secretary General R Satish was present.

Final decision about cabinet reshuffle only by party High Command: CM

● People of the state know better what my govt has done in last 3 yrs and what it is doing now



Raipur, Mar 27: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel when asked about likely chances of cabinet reshuffle gave a pleasant smile and said people make all sorts of speculations and put on hold to all discussions going on about any changes in his Ministry. But he also said that the final decision will be taken by the party High Command and nothing can be said as to when any order in this regard can come. About review of works of MLAs during his tour to VS, CM said that

the schemes of the state government and department's review will be done and he would also hold talks with the government offices, party office bearers and general public.

It is notable here that CM Bhupesh Baghel's government has completed three years of its governance in the state and the election atmosphere in the country has already gained momentum. Recently elections of VS for five states was held and its results are

out and now there will be elections for three states, for which declaration of dates is still awaited.

In the coming year 2023, apart from Chhattisgarh, VS polls in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan area to be held. In the recently concluded VS polls in five states, Congress faced massive defeat and in view of which the party High Command has given instructions bring a change in the organizational leadership in the five states it lost badly.

This in turn has given air to likely change in the Baghel's cabinet as well and there are rumours in the political circle that there can be five new faces in the Baghel's cabinet. In this case, five Ministers of Baghel's government are likely to be replaced, but so far there is no confirma-

tion about it at party-level. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel while commenting in context of the role of Opposition and forthcoming Khairagarh VS by-poll said that to criticize against the government in power is the actual role that of Opposition and they are trying to fulfill the same and it is good thing. On the other hand, Baghel said that the people of the state clearly know as to what his government has done what it is doing in the state.

It is notable here that being in power for last 15 yrs, BJP got the role of Opposition with limited strength of party MLAs as against the good majority of Congress MLAs during first three terms in the Opposition. But this time it (BJP) has failed to gain respectful position.

Official Twitter handle of Chief Electoral Officer promptly restored

Foreign hackers had hacked

FIR also registered in Cyber Cell and Gol Bazar police station

Raipur, Mar 27: The official Twitter handle of Chief Electoral Officer, Chhattisgarh @CEOCHHATTISGARH was hacked by foreign hackers today (27 March 2022) around 4 am. Taking prompt action, the office of the Chief Electoral Officer contacted Twitter and the Twitter handle was restored within a few hours. An FIR has been lodged by the office of the Chief Electoral Officer against unknown hacker in Chhattisgarh Cyber Cell and Golbazar Police Station.

RE-COLOURING



With festival of 'Chaitra-Navratri' starting in few days from now, the photos of 'Goddess' inside the temples are being painted in different colours.

Nearly 4 cr vaccine doses administered so far

● For prevention of COVID-19; Ch'garh sees 12 cases, no death

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 27: Chhattisgarh on Saturday reported 12 COVID-19 cases, taking the state's tally to 11,52,050, while the death toll remained unchanged at 14,034, an official said. The positivity rate, or cases detected per 100 tests, stood at 0.14 per cent, he added.

The recovery count rose to 11,37,869 after five people completed home isolation during the day, leaving the state with 147 active cases, he said. "Surguja recorded six cases, followed by two in Raipur, and one in Bilaspur, among other districts. No new coronavirus case was reported in 23 districts on Saturday. With 8,841 samples examined during the day, the numbers of tests carried out so far in Chhattisgarh went up to 1,74,68,276," he added.

A government release said 1,75,48,020 people above the age of 18, or 85 per cent of the eligible

population, have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in the state.

As on Friday, 47 per cent of those in the 15-18 age group had received both doses, while pre-caution doses have been administered to 4, 26,935 health workers, front-line staff and people above 60 years of age.

Besides 1,80,844 children aged between 12 and 14 years have been given first dose of the vaccine, it added.

"The first dose has been administered to 100 per cent of the population above 18 years, and 69 per cent of chil-

dren in the 15-18 segment. A total of 1,98,20,657 citizens above 18 years and 11,28,249 children in 15 to 18 age group have received their first dose. In the 15-18 segment, 7, 75,166 children have got both doses," an official said. He said 3,91,10,705 doses have been administered so far across the state. Chhattisgarh's coronavirus figures are as follows: Positive cases 11,52,050, new cases 12, death toll 14,034, recovered 11,37,869, active cases 147, today tests 8,841, total tests 1,74,68,276.

Path of Mata Karma must be followed to remove social disparity: CM

Baghel attends Bhakt Mata Karma Jayanti celebrations Performs 'Bhoomi Pujan' of Mata Karma Dham Auditorium

Raipur, Mar 27: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel today called for following the path of Bhakt Mata Karma to strengthen the social organization, connect the society and work to remove social disparity. Power exists in organization and dedication, he said while addressing Bhakt Mata Karma Jayanti Samaroh at Karma Dham, Krishna Nagar, capital Raipur, on the eve of Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti.

Earlier, the Chief Minister wished for the happiness and prosperity of the state by offering prayers at the Bhakt Mata Karma temple in Karma Dham. On this occasion, he performed Bhoomi Pujan and laid foundation stone for the auditorium to be built in Mata Karma Dham and also planted Rudraksh plant in the premises.

Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, Lok Sabha MP Sunil Soni, State Backward Classes Commission Chairman Thaneswar Sahu, Telghani Board Chairman Sandeep Sahu, Chhattisgarh Rajya Sahkari Dugdha Mahasangh Chairman Vipin Sahu, Chhattisgarh Tourism



Board Vice Chairperson Chitrarekha Sahu, District Sahu Samaj President, many public representatives including Meghraj Sahu, office bearers and members of Sahu Samaj were present in large numbers on this occasion. Bhakt Mata Karma Jayanti celebrations have been organized from 21st to 28th March in Karma Dham on the occasion of 1005th birth anniversary of Bhakt Mata Karma. During the programme, the Chief Minister was honored with presentation of Rudraksha sapling in a pot of cow dung by Sahu Samaj and Green Army.

Addressing the function, Chief Minister Baghel extended greetings and best wishes to all the people on Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti. Referring to the message of Mata Karma, he underlined significance of unwavering faith, reverence and dedication to achieve goal in life. Mata Karma proved that the devotion of the devotee has the power to force the Lord to appear, he said. The Chief

Minister said that the State Government declared a public holiday on Karma Jayanti, but after that due to Corona crisis, the celebrations of Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti could not be organized for the last two years. Now that the situation has become normal, public and religious events are being organized again, he said.

The Chief Minister said that Bhakta Mata Karma Jayanti is celebrated in every village of Chhattisgarh with great devotion and enthusiasm. Though this function is organized by the Sahu Samaj, people from all the communities of the village take part in it enthusiastically. There is also a tradition of taking out Kalash Yatra and Shobha Yatra in villages during the Jayanti celebrations in Chhattisgarh. Through this, devotees remember Mata Karma, Lord Krishna and Balabhadra.

According to Baghel there is power in organization and dedication. It is necessary to work for social harmony and brotherhood



and remove disparity in the society by following the path of Bhakta Mata Karma, he emphasised. On the demand of the Samaj to provide the lease of land reserved for Karma Dham, he said that the Chhattisgarh government is giving land to various societies for construction of buildings for social and educational works at only 10 percent of the market price. Sahu Samaj should also take initiative in this direction soon. Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu, while wishing Bhakt Mata Karma Jayanti, wished everyone good luck. He said that an atmosphere of social organization, harmony and brotherhood should be maintained. He said that land is being provided by the state government to various societies for social and educational purposes only at 10 percent price and 90 percent discount is being given in it.

Baghel attends Shadani Darbar Varshi Mahotsav



Raipur, Mar 27: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday attended Shadani Darbar Varshi Mahotsav. Lakhs of people across the country and abroad yearn to participate in this ceremony and a large number of people come to Darbar Tirth in Chhattisgarh.

Baghel said that he got the privilege to attend this grand annual function organized at Shadani Darbar Tirth. It is a matter of pride for Chhattisgarh that the main

low religion as human religion. According to him popularity of Raipur and Chhattisgarh has increased internationally through this Peeth. It is world famous as a center of spirituality as well as a center of cultural coordination and cultural exchange, he said. Our will power will become stronger if we become spiritually strong, he said adding that we also achieve the goal of life and get strength to face challenges. Sindhi Samaj has strengthened the business and industry of Chhattisgarh through its business acumen. Sindhi Samaj has contributed to the economic progress of Chhattisgarh, said the Chief Minister.

Members of Sindhi Samaj and common people in Chhattisgarh have also been getting the blessings of Sadani Darbar. The social activities carried out by the Darbar are also benefiting the

common people. This was the 62nd year festival of Sant Rajaram Sahib Ji, the seventh Peethadheesh of Darbar Tirtha. Sant Rajaram Sahib ji was born in Pakistan but he has scaled the heights of spirituality. The light of his spirituality of Sant Rajaram Sahib ji is spreading all over the world including India. Sant Yudhishtira Lal said that the revered Shadani Teerth is doing the work of human welfare. This annual gathering is being organized for the last 3 days. While praising the welfare schemes being run by Bhupesh Government, he said that the government is working for the welfare of all sections.

People of Sindhi Samaj including Swami Govindanand Maharaj, Swami Rajesh Lal, Swami Harish Lal, Udayalal, Nandlal Baburam Ahuja, Bhojraj ji, Pankaj Sharma and Faizal Rizvi were present on the occasion.

Ch'garh Thai Boxing team bags three medals



● One gold and two silver

Raipur, Mar 27: 8th Federation Cup Thai Boxing National Championship concluded on March 27 at Mahabaleshwar witnessed participation by Chhattisgarh team and its players won 01 gold and two silver medals. Four member Chhattisgarh team took part in this competition and Tikeshwari Sahu, coach of Shri Gujrati School took part as

coach of Chhattisgarh team and also as referee of the tournament. Yash Rai (U17 +70 kg) of Shri Gujrati Hindi Medium School won gold by defeating the player of Jammu and Kashmir. Shivang Dama (U 17, 65-70 kg) of Shri Gujrati English Medium School won silver by losing to Punjab player and Vaibhavi Dama (U17, +45 kg) also settled for silver by losing to Maharashtra player in the final, informs Anis Memon President of Chhattisgarh Thai Boxing Association.

Axis Bank and Jaiswal Neco qualify for the Semi-finals



Raipur, Mar 27: The 2nd and 3rd quarter finals of the Suresh Agrawal Memorial corporate cricket tournament were played today. The 1st game of the day was played in between Jaiswal Neco Team and Jindal Steel Team. After winning the toss JNIL Captain Sujit Yadav wisely decided batting and his team made 106 runs on a loss of 10 wickets. Countering in the second innings JSPL Batsmen's could not perform up to the mark and lost the game scoring just 83 runs losing 4 wickets. An expe-

rienced batsman Sujit Yadav was awarded as the Man of the Match for scoring 21 runs in 20 balls and snatching 3 wickets.

While the last game of the day was played by Niros Ispat and Axis Bank. After winning the Toss Axis Bank Captain Anshuman Samanata Ray decided to field first. In the start of the innings the NI players took the score to 103 runs losing 6 wickets, while in the next innings countering the score initially it was very tough and on a very pressurized manner losing 7

wickets in the 8th over. It was very early that the match became one sided but the on-ground partnership of Aaqib Hussain and Mehtab Khan proved as boon for the Axis bank team and chasing the score slowly and steadily in a very strategic way they both could meet up the target in the 14th over and that's how they recorded victory.

The ups and downs in this innings were so exciting for the audience that the cheer up sounds didn't stop till the last ball of the game. The Game changer of this match an Axis Bank batsman Mr. Mehtab Khan who scored 21 runs in 10 balls was rewarded the player of the Match trophy. The Last quarter final match will be played tomorrow on Monday 29th March 2022 between Infinity Sevcies and Sarda Energy.

World Oral Health Day observe in Dental College



Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 27: Various programs were organized by Government Dental College, Raipur on the occasion of World Oral Health Day on 20th March. The theme for this year's World Oral Health Day is "Be Proud of your mouth". The one week programs

to raise awareness about the importance of oral health and oral hygiene were organized by the Department of Public Health Dentistry.

In this, dental examination and treatment camp were organized in Central Jail Raipur and Community Health Center Abhanpur. A skit was per-

formed by the intern amongst the patients coming to the dental college, encouraging them to take care of their oral health and improve their quality of life. Rangoli and slogan competition was also organized for the students based on the theme for this year's oral health day celebration.

HC orders CBI probe in 2018 murder of family

Central Chronicle News

Bilaspur, Mar 27: The Chhattisgarh High Court has directed the CBI to probe the murder of a couple and their two minor sons that took place in the state's Mahasamund district in 2018.

Justice Goutam Bhaduri on Friday passed the order on a petition filed by a family member of the deceased persons, which claimed that the investigation carried out by the local police was shoddy, and directed to hand over the case to the CBI.

The High Court held that perusal of the material seized along with the

affidavit of the State (in the case) do not inspire confidence of fair investigation. On the intervening night of May 30 and 31, 2018, health worker Yogmaya Sahu (30), her husband Chaitanya (31) and their sons Kunal (9) and Tanmay (7) were killed in a government quarter in Kishanpur village's sub-health centre premises.

The police arrested Dharmendra Bariha of the village in connection with the murder and later based on his narco analysis, four more accused - then sarpanch of Kishanpur Suresh Khunte, Phoolisingh Yadav, Gaurishankar Kewat and Akhandal

Pradhan - were arrested in 2019.

The five accused are in jail and the case is under trial in the district court.

Dissatisfied with the police investigation, Chaitanya's father Babulal Sahu had approached the High Court seeking to get the matter further investigated by other agencies, claiming that the police had failed to carry out a fair probe.

As per the order, the petitioner's counsel Raghvendra Pradhan submitted that the house where the four murders took place was under the CCTV surveillance. In the press conference (after the offence), the then Superintendent of

Police came out with a statement that the digital video recording (DVR of the CCTV) has been seized, but the case diary or the final report is silent about such seizure.

Bariha was made an accused on the report of Suresh, who was subsequently found to be involved in the crime. The police were helping the accused, who were involved in the business of alcohol and drugs, for which a monthly payment was being made to the police, which was revealed in the narco test, the petitioner's counsel argued.

After hearing the arguments of both the parties, the High Court had

reserved its order on March 14.

In its order passed on Friday, the court noted that certain links were missing in the case and they were serious in nature. Prima facie, perusal of the material seized along with the affidavit of the state do not inspire confidence of fair investigation, as such, I deem it proper to direct further investigation of the matter by the CBI, Justice Bhaduri observed.

The CBI will further investigate the case and proceed in accordance with the law within a period of four months from the date of receipt of a copy of the order, the court said.

EARTHEN POTS ON DEMAND



With mercury soaring high each day, people have started purchasing earthen pots of their choice well in advance.

Minister Bhagat releases 'Vijay Kala Yatra'

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 27: Active in the field of folk art and Hindi theatre world for more than four decades with his splendid performances, Vijay Mishra popularly known as 'Amit' has written with perfection his journey of four decades in the form of a book titled 'Vijay Kala Yatra'. The book was released at the hands of Amarjit Bhagat, Culture Minister, Government of Chhattisgarh. While releasing this book Bhagat commented that art lovers strive for excellence in every field of life. He added, Chhattisgarh is a hub of different art and Vijay Mishra holds immense contribution in establishing this art.



His journey of art started from the hub of art-Durg in the year 1976. In Chandeni Gonda organisation of Late Ramchandra Deshmukh and Late Mahasingh Chandrakar, folk drama Kari, Sonha Vihan and Lorik Chanda, Mishra earned popularity as an announcer and artist. He earned special recognition

from the dramas' directed by Ram Hriday Tiwari and produced by Prem Saiman Rachit staged from Shitij Rang Shivir Durg platform. He has been decorated with several awards at national level which include Balraj Sahani Award in Himachal Pradesh and also as best actor and director. His participation in Doordarshan, Radio and Chhattisgarhi films is praise worthy.

On the occasion of book release of 'Vijay Kala Yatra' the prominent among those present were Rajmadi Sampada president Vivek Vasnik, Shahid Khan, Rajeev Daga, Mahant Narendra Das, Sandeep Puranik, Dr Vilas Diwan, Dr Madhulika Sharma and other invited guests. Speaking on this occasion Mishra said, in 1984 after the presentation of folk drama 'Kaari' he used to spend many nights at Gudhiyari bus stand Raipur so that he can catch bus at 4 am to reach Mahasamund where he was a teacher in a school. He stressed on commitment, sacrifice and loyalty for marching ahead in the field of art.

Divisional Commissioner, IG visit Elmagunda Camp

Central Chronicle News

Sukma, Mar 27: Bastar Divisional Commissioner Shyam Dhawade and Bastar Range IG Sundarraj P on a tour of Sukma district, visited the new security camp set up in the sensitive village Elmagunda and boosted the morale of the soldiers there. They encouraged the security forces to establish peace in the area, and extended all possible cooperation to the villagers for their valuable contribution in the development of the area.

Efforts are being made to strengthen Triveni (Trust, Development and Security) in Bastar, and the establishment of the camp will definitely ensure security and development in the area, which



will increase the confidence of the villagers in the governance, administration and security forces, they stated.

During the interaction program, Sukma Collector Mr. Vineet Nandanwar, Superintendent of Police Mr. Sunil Sharma and top officials of the district were also present. The Commissioner and IG,

while reviewing the works of District Panchayat, Forest Department, Food Department, Public Works Department and Electricity Department also gave necessary directions to the officers in a brief meeting at Circuit House.

The officials also visited Swami Vivekananda Yuva Shakti Kendra, and got acquainted with the students.

While addressing the students, IG Sundarraj said that there are many means of acquiring knowledge, but only their better and right use can bring success. Giving the example of high-ranking officers from Bastar, he said that limited resources do not become a hindrance for those studying diligently; and said that only promising students like that of Bastar can change the image of the region in future.

District Panchayat CEO Mr. DN Kashyap, SDM Ms. Preeti Durgam, Tehsildar Mr. Pyarelal Nag, Mr. Mahendra Lahare and Nodal of Yuva Shakti Kendra Ashish Ram and District Sports Officer Virupaksha Puranik were present.

Fluorosis screening, treatment available in district hospitals

Raipur, Mar 27: Clean and safe drinking water and healthy food are among the most important things for good health. Consumption of contaminated water leads to many health related problems. Fluorosis is also a serious disease caused by unsafe drinking water which occurs due to the presence of excessive fluoride in the body. This disease is caused by drinking high fluoridated water or by consuming food grains irrigated with high fluoridated water. Due to fluorosis, the bones of the body become deformed and crooked. According to State Fluorosis Control Program nodal officer Dr Shailendra Agrawal high fluoride content, yellowing of teeth, premature loss of teeth, deformity and curvature of body bones are commonly seen in

people suffering from fluorosis. Fluorosis symptoms include discoloration of teeth, pain in muscles and joints, twisting of arms and legs forward or backward, inability to walk for long distances, abdominal pain and flatulence. Dr Agrawal informed that the team of health department regularly visits fluorosis-hit villages to collect information about people suffering from this disease. Fluorosis is checked in the students at the school level through the National Child Health Program. He said that the amount of fluoride in drinking water should be one ppm. Consumption of fluoride in excess of this is injurious to health. According to Dr Agrawal the problem of fluorosis is more in seven districts of the state namely Raipur, Mahasamund,

Balod, Korea, Kanker, Korba and Kondagaon. The amount of fluoride in the body can be checked by taking blood or urine tests. All the district hospitals, community health centers and primary health centers in the state have facilities for screening and treatment of fluorosis.

Laboratories for testing fluorosis have also been established in Balod, Kondagaon, Korba, Kanker, Raipur, Mahasamund, Balodabazar, Bastar, Gariaband, Surguja, Surajpur and Balrampur. Filtered water, tap water and surface water should be consumed to prevent fluorosis. Reducing food containing calcium, magnesium and vitamin-C increases the chances of fluorosis. Plenty of fruits, green leafy vegetables and milk should be included in our diet.

Free Saraswati cycle scheme beneficial for girl students: Patel

Kawardha, Mar 27: In the current academic session, 6834 girls from SC, ST and BPL (below poverty line) families are being given free cycles under the Saraswati Cycle Scheme run by the School Education Department of the State Government. As per the instructions of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, and Cabinet Minister Mr. Mohammad Akbar, cycles are being distributed to school girls by organizing events in all the schools of the district.

In continuation of the scheme, free cycle distribution was organized here in village Rajnawagaon of Baiga Bahol Bodla development block of the district. Shri Hari Patel, a



member of the Shakambhari Board of the state government, attended the event as the chief guest. He distributed cycles to 888 girl students under Saraswati

Cycle Distribution Scheme and wished them good luck for their bright future.

Under this scheme the students of schools in Rajnawagaon, Baghutola,

Rajpura, Chhapri, Chhibabar, Katgo, Harmo and others were presented with cycles. Here it needs a mention that Chhattisgarh came second in the count of children

dropping out at the secondary level. In view of these increasing figures, the government has taken a proper step so that no female child should leave the school, therefore starting the Saraswati Cycle Scheme. Shri Hari Patel also inspected the school premises after the event. School Principal Shri SR Chandravanshi and Sarpanch Shri Ganguram Dhurve demanded extra room for better educational system. On this occasion Sarpanch Shri Ganguram Dhurve, Chairman of Shawl Development Committee Shri Bhukhan Patel, Parmeshwar Manikpuri, Khemlal Patel, Shiv Prasad was present.

Farmers deprived of benefits due to KYC no update status

Dhamtari, Mar 27: Hundreds of farmers in the region are deprived of benefits of PM Samman Nidhi Yojna, due to non-updating of KYC in banks accounts. Many farmers in the region have complained of zero benefits, and reportedly many are checking in and out of agricultural department and CSC centers. It is noteworthy that the PM Samman Nidhi Yojna has been launched by the central government to provide relief to small and mar-

ginal farmers and an amount of six thousand is to be deposited in their accounts in three slots. According to information there are more than five thousand small and marginal farmers in the district and with this as many though have registered into the ambitious schemes but are deprived of benefits because of KYC updating. A team from a local daily took stock of CSC centers located at Kutchari Chowk, but it was witnessed

that a long queue of farmers were awaiting their chance for updating into the scheme. Many farmers namely Keshav Sahu, Chandrashekar Dewangan and others have alleged that though they had registered into the scheme six months back, not a single penny was deposited in the accounts. Meanwhile agricultural officials are citing KYC non-updating as the reason behind the non dispersal of funds into the accounts.

Inflation breaking records in Modi regime: Janak Dhruv

Central Chronicle News

Mainpur, Mar 27: State Adivasi Congress President Janak Druv, who arrived here on tour of assembly constituency Bindranavagadh, accused the Narendra Modi led central government of record rise in inflation. The wrong policies of the government has made the public difficult



to survive, on accounts of steep rise in fuel and essential commodity prices, he said.

Dhruv also took part in digital membership program of the state government and asked the party workers to make sure the welfare schemes of the state government reaches to every doors of the society.

The government has

started many ambitious schemes for the unemployed and tribal youths and many local festivals have been declared as holiday, which has added value to our traditions, he said.

Ensuring the rights of the local community on resources like water forest and land, the government has rightly stood for the tribal population,

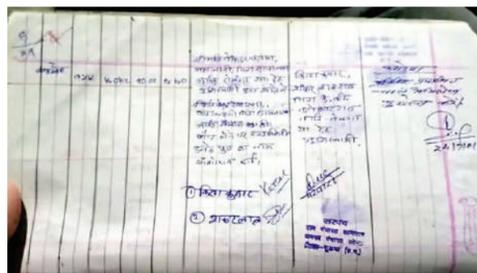
stated Dhruv and said that the tribal cultures enlistment in development in the present government's regime is worthwhile to state. Present were District President Khedu Negi, City Congress Committee president Ramkrishna Dhruv, Bhola Jagat, Shaheed Memon, Nihal Netam and many others.

Arbitrariness of revenue officials in Sukma district

Central Chronicle News

Konta, Mar 27: In Jagargunda of Konta block of Sukma district, recently a case has come to the fore, in which wages were being paid to many dead persons, keeping them alive for years. Now there is also a case in which a living person is being told as dead in the greed of money.

This is the case of a farmer of Halka number 5 in village Raj Penta of Jagargunda, sub-tehsil of Konta. The ancestral land of the farmer which is pending for correction in the sub-tehsil Konta Jagargunda for years. No decision has



Papers showing land fraudulently transferred to Kiran Rao and Shankar Lal Rao.

been taken so far on this matter, despite this, the land rights letter of the concerned land whose Khasra number is 155 by Naib Tehsildar Ram Singh Rana and the then Patwari Madkam Dulal was issued

to other persons in a fake manner due to lack of knowledge of the farmer. Fake Patta has also been issued by changing the names of both the persons named Kiran Rao and Shankar Lal Rao, a



Office where this exchange of records took place.

teacher by profession. The whole matter is something like this Jagargunda resident applicant farmer Jai Shankar Shukla, father late Badri Narayan Shukla had bought Khasra number - 155 land area in 1969-70 in an auction done

by Tehsildar Konta, with an area of 7710 acres. At the time of conversion, this land was converted into khasra number 157 and acreage 5.61 acres in a fake manner. In the year 2012-13, a legal process was initiated to rectify the land issue in the Tehsil Office, Konta by giving an application to the Collector Sukma. In the meantime, whoever came as Tehsildar, Jai Shankar Shukla, was produced in the Konta Tehsil office. But the resolution of the matter remained pending. In the meantime, due to the sudden separation of Jagargunda sub-tehsil office from Konta tehsil, the file of the case was sent to

the Jagargunda sub-tehsil office for hearing. According to the statement given by the farmer to the media, the Naib Tehsildar Ram Singh Rana posted in the sub-tehsil office for hearing in the matter, while assuring for the settlement of land meales number-155, money was demanded from the farmer, which the farmer expressed his inability to pay the bribe. After which the notice of production was served to the farmer Jai Shankar Shukla on 22 November 2019 and his production took place on 22 November 2019 in Jagargunda sub-tehsil. Before the appear-

ance, on 24/07/2019, Tehsildar Ram Singh Rana transferred the land rights letter in the name of Kiran Rao and Shankar Lal Rao, whereas the farmer Jai Shankar Shukla's case was pending for more than seven years, related to his land rights more than 50 years ago, his rights record, conversion register and related records which were submitted by the office on demand as evidence. While Kiran Rao and Shankar Lal Rao did not have any evidence related to the record of rights, the land rights letter was issued in connivance with Tehsil Dar and Patwari in a fake manner.

In this case one more thing came to fore, a woman who is currently working as a teacher in Chhattisgarh government, who is also related to her family, was declared dead by Patwari and Tehsildar without any investigation. The entire process has been done. Jai Shankar Shukla through media urged the Chief Minister to get this entire matter investigated and demand strict action to be taken against such corrupt culprits. There are more such cases in these areas whose files are buried and how many farmers like us keep on making rounds of government offices which are not listened to.

Embezzlement of Rs 46 lakh for cleaning Bandhua pond

Estimate of work was Rs 3 lakh, cheque disbursed of Rs 46 lakh



Abhishek Banerjee

Narayanpur, Mar 27: Bandhua pond situated in the heart of Narayanpur district headquarter is connected with human sentiments and when it came to the beautification of this pond, those involved in corruption played with the sentiments of local population and engaged in the corruption worth lakhs.

Minister Lakhma ordered to stop work

The cleaning work of pond was ordered on October 11, 2021 and Chhattisgarh Adventure Sports Raipur was made the nodal agency. In a meeting organized on January 12, 2022 minister stopped the work citing

misuse of funds. He asked Executive Engineer of District Construction Committee to evaluate the work and present the report.

Evaluation of Rs 3 lakh, withdrawn Rs 46 lakh

As per information received, total area of the pond is 191000 sq m and nodal agency removed water hyacinth in only 17831 sq m area. The total payment was Rs 3907960 but as per the report submitted payment should have been Rs 319621.

Officers did not sign in agreement

The sanction of Rs 114.94 lakh was given for the cleanliness work and Chhattisgarh Adventure Sports Raipur qualified

for this tender with its price of Rs 59.75 per sq km. The order was given for cleaning on October 07, 2021 but neither District Construction Committee chairman nor Nodal Officer signed in that agreement papers.

Rs 46 lakh was shared among the corrupt persons

It is understood that Rs 46 lakh was allegedly shared among the corrupt persons in the system.

Failure of Cong Govt in power

Former minister Kedar Kashyap alleged that it is the total failure of Congress government in power and corrupt persons are functioning freely without any fear of being tried in the court.

Civic Action Program organized by CRPF 217 Battalion

Konta, Mar 27: According to the guidelines of the force, on 25/03/2022, the 217th battalion KRPU in Naxal affected area district - Sukma, Thana - Maraiguda village, Civic Action Program was organized by the force. Apart from Maraiguda village, poor villagers and school children from other villages - Ramapuram, Pusgufa and Linglapally participated in this civic action programme. Under the Civic Action Programme, radio, saris, lungi, school bags, sports goods, jeans pants and T-shirts for girls were distributed. Along with this, the villagers were treated by organizing medical camps and free medicines were also distributed to the

needy. E/217 Bata to all the villagers and school children present during the Civic Action Program. Meals were also provided by CRPF. On this auspicious occasion, Bhavani Pratap Yadav (Second Command Officer Administration), made the villagers aware against the exploitation, atrocities and hollow ideology of the Maoists and appealed to join the mainstream under the rehabilitation policy of Chhattisgarh Government "Puna Narkom Abhiyan". During this, the villagers of Maraiguda, Ramapuram, Pusgufa and Linglapally were also assured that 217th Battalion CRPF would be there for any problem. The force is always ready at your service.



Development works worth Rs. 1.10 cr approved in Arang

Under MLA fund on recommendation of Minister Dr. Daharia

Arang, Mar 27:

On the recommendation of Urban Administration, Development and Labour Minister Dr. Shiv Kumar Daharia, a fund approval of Rs 1.10 cr has been given for the development works in Arang. From the total fund, Rs. 6.50 lakh has been approved for construction of community building in Sahu Para of village Semaria (N), Rs. 6.50 lakh for construction of community building in Sarva Para of village Chorbhati, Rs. 6.50 lakh for construction of community building in Jheria Sahu Para of village Guma, Rs. 5.20 lakh for construction of community building in Varmapara of village Devratilda, village Chhatauna, Rs. 5.20 lakh for construction of CC road from Lalit Chandrakar's house to Bhushan Patel's house, Rs. 5.20 lakh for construction of CC road from

Anganwadi center number 2 in village Nakta, Rs. 5 lakh for construction of Aaha in Lodhi Para, community building of village Bhothali, CC from new panchayat building in village Mohmela to Jirakhn Tandon's house. Rs 5.20 lakh for road construction work, Rs 5.20 lakh for construction of CC road from Narsing's house to Hirasingsh's house in village Pirda, Rs. 5.20 lakh for construction work of CC road from Mahamaya Chowk to Kesla road in village Parsada (Sec.), Ghanshyam Dhandhar in village Tekari, Rs. 5.20 lakh for the construction work of drain from the house of Tejram Verma, Rs. 4.93 lakh for furniture supply in the government high school of village Rakhi, Rs. 6.50 lakh for the construction of community building in Nirmalkar Para of village Bhansoz. Approval of Rs. 6 lakh has been received for construction of shed in the primary school building of village Darba, Rs. 3 lakh for construction of community building in Bajrang Chowk of village Borid,

and Rs. 2 lakh for construction of amphitheater at Sahara Devta Chowk.

District President Khilleshwar Devangan, Vice President Hemlata Dumendra Sahu, District Panchayat members Keshari Mohan Sahu, Makhan Kurre, Durga Roy, Anita Thansing Sahu, Manish Narang Sarpanch Semaria, Usha Bhuveshwar Prasad Ahluwalia Sarpanch Bhansoj, Dinesh Kosaria Sarpanch Guma, Rajesh Chandrakar Sarpanch Chhatauna, Khemichand Sahu Sarpanch Mohamela, Tejram Sahu Sarpanch Parsada, Shiv Kumar Gendre Sarpanch Achholi, Dugesh Sahu Sarpanch Bhainsa, Ishwar Sahu Sarpanch Devratilda, Krishnabai Tandon Sarpanch Chorbhati, Vijay Sahni Sarpanch Sarpanch Bhothali, Gopal Chaturvedi Sarpanch Nakta and the people's representatives and Congress workers expressed their gratitude and thanked the Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel and minister Shiv Kumar Daharia for this venture.

Governor presents three gold medals to traffic man Mahesh

Earns laurels for district



Korea, Mar 27:

Lans Naik Mahesh Mishra better known as Traffic Man has once again made the district proud by winning three gold medals at the hands of Governor Ansuya Uike. He was presented these medals during the first convocation ceremony of Sant Gahira Guru University Ambikapur at PG College Ground Ambikapur. Mahesh Mishra was presented gold medals for securing first place in three subjects- Sanskrit, Political Science and Sociology during PG level examination.

It needs to be mentioned here, Mahesh Mishra while working in

traffic department is doing excellent work in the field of creating awareness towards traffic. In this process he has curved a niche for himself and received awards from various organizations. There is a wave of happiness in the district after the news of Mishra's winning three gold medals was circulated here.

In today's time when there is continuous increase in road accidents, Mishra by his own expense is creating awareness among the masses and till date has created awareness among 4 lakh people. Mishra is known in the district for his simplicity and easy mixing personality.

Father critical, 2 yr old son dies

Surajpur, Mar 27: In a sensational case of suicide, a father first made his 2 yr old son consume poison and then committed suicide consuming the same. In this the 2 yr old son died and condition of father is critical and is undergoing treatment in Bhatgaon Hospital. Actually the victim Devlal R/o Dharampura became father of one son through a love marriage two years back. It is learnt that Devlal's wife has left for her mother's house a year back and is not returning. After this Devlal tried many times to call her back and went to his inlaws house requesting her to come back, be it was in vain. So getting frustration and felling helpless, Devlal made his 2 yr old son consume poison and himself later drank the same poison and tried to commit suicide. But in this he lost his son and condition of Devlal is reported to be critical. The Police has filed a case and taken the matter under investigation.



Surendra Nath Mishra Memorial Award presented



Dhamnagar, Mar 27:

Surendra Nath Mishra Memorial Award ceremony celebrated in Korua Govindpur High school, Dhamnagar, Bhadrak. This award is given every year in the memory of Late Surendra Nath Mishra to the elite student, who secures highest marks in Annual HSC Examination of the school.

The award giving ceremony started after the lighting the lamp & offering flowers to Lord Jagannath. Banshidhar Sahoo, Retd. Head Master presided over the meeting. Prahalad Charan

Sahoo, Retd Headmaster narrated about the deeds and contribution of Late Surendra Nath Mishra towards education and his popularization in the society. Other invited guests Kamal Lochan Basantia, Niranjan Mishra, Subhas Nayak, Santosh Kumar Das and Nirakar Mishra were also spoke on this occasion.

In their speeches they highly praised to the all round social development activities of Late Mishra. The award is hosted by Nihar Ranjan Mishra son of Surendra Nath Mishra to encourage and inspired the meritorious student. Master Jiban Jyoti Nath

and Master Soumendra Priyadarshi Mohakul have been awarded a Trophy, certificate and cash award of Rs.2000/- each for the year-2020 & 2021 respectively for securing highest marks in HSC Examination in Korua Govindpur High school.

In the end Shri Padmanav Mishra, Headmaster of the school in his speech has said the such type of activities will encourage and inculcate the healthy competition among the student. He also extended vote of thanks to all the Teachers, student and participants.

Surprise inspection by Divisional Commissioner

Koriya, Mar 27:

Surguja Divisional Commissioner Mr. GR Churendra did a surprise inspection of the Sub-Divisional Officer and Tehsil Office Kharagwan here. During the inspection, while discussing with the officers and employees, he directed to organize the maintenance of the documents issued before the caste, income, residence certificate in a systematic manner. He also directed to settle the revenue matters by setting up camp courts for fast transfer partition, demarcation etc. He also gave necessary directions to remove illegal encroachments on pub-

lic purpose places like Haat Bazar, Devasthal, Government premises etc.

He directed to get the boundary wall constructed by the Public Works Department and to improve the water system along with necessary repairs and improvements in the Tehsil office building. He directed to ensure better seating arrangement for common citizens in the Tehsil premises and said that the Tehsil premises should be beautified, and for this, he asked to beautify by planting flowering and fruit trees. During this SDM Kharagwan and block level officers-employees were present.



'Media, a medium to allay frustration and despair'

Amarkantak, Mar 27:

Organized by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak and sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Research, New Delhi, two days on the theme 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - Nationalist Press and Freedom Movement: Forgotten Struggle, Sacrifice and Change'. In the national seminar, the speakers unanimously underlined the role and importance of journalism in liberating the country and called for the re-reading of the golden history of journalism to be widely compiled and publicized. Presiding over the inaugural session of the seminar, Vice Chancellor Prof Prakash Mani Tripathi, while highlighting the importance of journalism, threw light on the golden history of journalism and the struggle for freedom of editors. He said that the media is a medium to remove frustration and despair. To keep the work, sacrifice, journalism and contribution of freedom fighters coming out of the ocean of freedom movement in the memories and taking inspiration from them is the basic goal of the elixir of freedom. He further said that most of the journalists also performed the

role of advocate and teacher and worked to give impetus to the movement. Describing the struggle of journalists for independence and the norms established by journalism as relevant even in the present times, he said that even in the present times, media can take inspiration from those values, spread the sense of nationalism and establish the feeling of patriotism in the hearts of the people. The Vice Chancellor further said that the nationalist letters did the tortures right, but the culture of the movement was developed through journalism. In the time of slavery, journalism did the work of awakening the sleeping soul of the nation. He said that 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is a unique and necessary program which will revive the history of the country's independence among the people, various aspects of the culture of the movement was developed through journalism. In the time of slavery, journalism did the work of awakening the sleeping soul of the nation. 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BRIEF

Traced

■ **Palghar:** A 22-year-old man from Jammu and Kashmir who had allegedly eloped with a 16-year-old girl was traced in Maharashtra's Palghar district. Zulfikar Mohammed Sadique Khatana had allegedly run away with the girl who hails from Rajouri on March 5, said a police official. The couple were staying in Palghar. Police from Jammu and Kashmir got tip-off about their whereabouts and arrested Zulfikar earlier this week. The girl was rescued.

Held

■ **Gurugram:** Two more people were nabbed in connection with the double murder of liquor businessmen here last month, police said, adding that the killings took place over business rivalry. They identified the arrested men as Ajay alias Jaidar, a resident of Khod village in Pataudi area here and the alleged mastermind behind the killings, and his associate Karambir alias Karmu, from Haryana's Jhajjar. Thirty rounds of bullets were fired.

Opens

■ **Jammu:** BSF Wives Welfare Association (BWWA) inaugurated a handicraft and handloom shop at Border outpost Octroi for tourists visiting the Suchetgarh sector along the International Border (IB) for the 'retreat ceremony' on weekends. President of BWWA, Jammu frontier, Sunita Boora inaugurated the 'Sakhi' shop, a BSF spokesperson said. He said the shop contains women's accessories, including clothing, footwear and bags.

Re-opens

■ **New Delhi:** The 210-km Manali-Sarchu road was re-opened by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), the defence ministry said. It said the opening of the road will provide connectivity to Lahaul district in Himachal Pradesh and it further leads to Leh in Ladakh. The road remains closed for over 160-180 days in a year during the winters.

Increase

■ **Jammu:** Jammu and Kashmir has recorded an eight-fold increase in controlled atmosphere (CA) storage since 2015-16. The Jammu and Kashmir government, in a bid to reduce post-harvest losses by increasing the shelf life of various agriculture and horticulture products besides addressing the issue of distress sale of crops by the farmers, has encouraged and aided private players to set up cold storage (CA) facilities, which is expected.

Revives

■ **Jaipur:** After a brief respite, the heatwave condition revived in many parts of Rajasthan with a maximum temperature of 42.1 degree Celsius reported in its Banswara district. The Meteorological Department has issued a warning of a heatwave at many places in the coming days.

'Muslims now placing faith in Modi, Adityanath'

● **Danish Azad Ansari is UP's lone minority minister**

Ballia, Mar 27 (PTI):

Danish Azad Ansari, the only Muslim minister in Uttar Pradesh, on Sunday claimed that his community is warming up to the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The Ballia resident was inducted into the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government as a minister of state on Friday and needs to be elected to the state assembly or the legislative council in the next six months to continue on the post.

Ansari said the Muslim community is now shedding the "illusion" created by opposition parties like the Samajwadi Party, the



Danish Azad Ansari

Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress. "The BJP is getting the love of Muslim society now and the love for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is increasing continuously in the Muslim community, he told PTI. Faith in the BJP is being awakened in the community," he added.

Ansari, 34, said Modi's vi-

sion of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Vikas' is expanding the BJP vote base and Muslims are being drawn more towards the BJP.

He claimed that the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and the 2022 Assembly elections suggest this.

But the BJP fielded no Muslim candidate in the just-ended UP Assembly election. Its ally Apna Dal (S) nominated Haidar Ali Khan from Suar in Rampur, and he was defeated. The previous Adityanath government too had a single Muslim member — Mohsin Raza, a minister of state.

Ansari claimed that the opposition thought of Muslims only as a vote bank. But the Muslim community has now understood that the SP, the BSP and the Congress have always cheated them. The

Muslim community has realised that only Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will work for their true development, he said. The minister said Modi has dreamed of making India a global leader and all youth, and the Muslim community, will have to play an important role in making this come true. He said it is the dream of Modi and Adityanath that every section of society is connected with the mainstream of development, and they will fulfil this. He said there should be efforts to take government schemes to the grassroots. He said the Adityanath government will take inputs on what it needs to do for the betterment of the Muslim community, particularly the youth.

UNESCO says Edu system should have crisis-sensitive policies

● **Citing Ukraine war**

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

The unfolding events in Ukraine are a stark reminder that crises can strike anytime and the education system in all the countries must have plans to prepare, respond and recover from such emergencies, according to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report. Teachers need to be equipped to teach in increasingly challenging conditions such as damaged facilities or overcrowded classrooms, and to be able to differentiate pedagogy to adapt to learners from education systems that use other curricula and languages, it pointed out. The report comes amid a fierce Russian military offensive in Ukraine, with the toll on civilians rising as Moscow seeks to pound cities into submis-



A rural school classroom in India.

sion from entrenched positions. "The unfolding events in Ukraine are a stark reminder that crises can strike anytime, anywhere. In addition, other ongoing crises such as COVID-19, various conflicts and disasters across the globe, including those due to climate change, are all threatening education continuity and quality especially for those displaced," it said. The report pointed out that in 2021, the UN Refugee Agency re-

ported that more than 84 million people were forcibly displaced globally. In 2022, this figure is set to rise, as more than 1.5 million children have already fled Ukraine, the report said. "Education systems are often under-prepared in the face of crises whether in terms of welcoming the sudden arrival of refugee children, protecting the safety of learners and teachers, or having to quickly shift to remote learning," it said.

RENOVATION



Workers renovate a Ministers room before being occupied, at Vidhan Bhawan, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh on Sunday.

India to start building nuclear power plants in 'fleet mode'

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

With the first pour of concrete for a 700 MW atomic power plant in Karnataka's Kaiga scheduled in 2023, India is set to put in motion construction activities for 10 'fleet mode' nuclear reactors over the next three years.

The first pour of concrete (FPC) signals the beginning of construction of nuclear power reactors from the pre-project stage which includes excavation activities at the project site. The FPC of Kaiga units 5&6 is expected in 2023; FPC of Gorakhpur Haryana Anu Vidyut Prairyanjan units 3 & 4 and



Nuclear power plant construction.

Mahi Banswara Rajasthan Atomic Power Projects units 1 to 4 is expected in 2024; and that of Chutka Madhya Pradesh Atomic Power Project units 1 & 2 in 2025, officials of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) told the Parliamentary panel on science and technology. The Centre had ap-

proved construction of 10 indigenously developed pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWR) of 700 MW each in June 2017. The ten PHWRs will be built at a cost of Rs 1.05 lakh crore.

It was for the first time that the government had approved building 10 nuclear power reactors in

one go with an aim to reduce costs and speed up construction time.

Bulk procurement was underway for the fleet mode projects with purchase orders placed for forgings for steam generators, SS 304L lattice tubes and plates for end shields, pressuriser forgings, bleed condensers forgings, incoloy-800 tubes for 40 steam generators, reactor headers, DAE officials said.

Engineering, procurement and construction package for turbine island has been awarded for Gorakhpur units three and four and Kaiga units five and six, they added.

Delhi court acquits man in Satyam-Liberty cinema blast case

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

A Delhi court has acquitted a man accused of being a member of alleged terror organisation Babbar Khalsa International in case related to 2005 Satyam Cinema and Liberty Cinema bomb blasts, saying police miserably failed to prove the case beyond the shadow of doubt.

Additional Sessions Judge Dharmender said that though the prosecution had ascribed meaning to general words like 'plot', 'khet', 'fasal', 'paani', etc. in his telephonic conversation, the possibility of any enthusiastic police officer misinterpreting plain and simple words on account of suspicion and overzealous approach cannot be ruled out. I am of the considered opinion that shad-

ow of doubt appears upon the prosecution version and the evidence available on record is not of sterling quality to hold accused Trilochan Singh liable for the commission of offence punishable under section 18 (conspiracy for terrorist acts) and 20 (membership of terrorist organisation) of UAPA and under section of Arms Act, the judge said.

The court also said that the police miserably failed to prove that the accused was a member of Babbar Khalsa International.

Delhi Police Special Cell had arrested Singh, a driver, in 2007 as a part of its investigation into the 2005 Satyam Cinema and Liberty Cinema bomb blasts and had claimed that the accused was trying to revive militancy in Punjab.

MP CM stresses to explore economic potential of cow-rearing

Bhopal, Mar 27 (PTI):

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has stressed on the need to promote cow-rearing and make people aware of the economic potential of its products, including cow dung. During brainstorming session of the MP cabinet at Pachmarhi, Chouhan said steps will also be taken to make cow shelters self-sustainable and 'Gobardhan' projects will be started in different cities of the state. "Arrangements will be made to purchase cow dung in the state. New works will be started in Madhya Pradesh by studying the experiments of cow conservation and protection in other states, including Gujarat, he said.



Madhya Pradesh cabinet members led by CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan at brainstorming session in Pachmarhi.

People will be made aware about how to take care of stray cows and other animals. The common citizens will be motivated towards cow-rearing if they have an income from cow dung and urine. Concerted efforts will also be made to

make 'gaushalas' (cow shelters) self-sustainable, Chouhan said. After the successful operation of a Bio-CNG plant at Indore in MP, the Gobardhan scheme will also be implemented in other cities of the state, he said.

Sanjay Raut targets BJP over Mehbooba's comments on Kashmir

Mumbai, Mar 27 (PTI):

A day after Mehbooba Mufti remarked that peace would be elusive in Kashmir until the Centre holds dialogue with Pakistan and people of Jammu and Kashmir; Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said the PDP chief could make such comments as the BJP had given people like her strength by forming government with her party in the erstwhile state.

Talking to reporters, Raut said the Mufti-led People's Democratic Party (PDP) was a friend of the BJP at some point of time.

The PDP has been pro-Pakistan and sympathises with terrorists right from the beginning, he claimed.

Notably, the PDP and BJP had come together to form a government in



Sanjay Raut

Jammu and Kashmir in 2015. The alliance broke in June 2018. Mufti had reiterated her call to the BJP-led government at the Centre for a dialogue with Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Raut said Mufti had supported Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru and still, the BJP had formed a government by forming an alliance with her party in Jammu and Kashmir.

Anti-encroachment drive sparks protests in Jammu

Jammu, Mar 27 (PTI):

Authorities on Sunday carried out an anti-encroachment drive in different parts of Jammu, triggering protests by people who blocked the Narwal Bypass for several hours, officials said.

Dozens of structures, including buildings and shops, were demolished partially or completely near Bathindi crossing on the Narwal Bypass in the early Sunday morning drive by the revenue department amid heavy deployment of police and paramilitary forces, they said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people took to streets and blocked the highway by burning tyres and staging a sit-in against the "selective drive". Additional Deputy Commissioner,



People burn tyres and block highway in protest against anti-encroachment drive, in Jammu, Sunday.

Jammu, Shyambir had a tough time in maintaining law and order and was seen persuading the protesters to lift the blockade with an assurance that the administration will look into their grievances sympathetically.

We suspended the drive on the public demand and

asked them to form a committee to raise their issues at the right forum. We are here to address their genuine issues, he told reporters at the scene of the protest.

Asked about the demand for compensation for the damage, he said the issue of compensation

will be decided during deliberations with the committee.

The police officer said the drive was carried out in accordance with the laid down rules to reclaim the state land illegally occupied by the people and there was no violation on part of the administration.

However, the protesters accused the district administration of going for selective drives to dislodge a particular community.

They came around 4 am and started the demolition drive without any prior notice. The law is equal for everyone, but why this selective drive in our areas? Was the government sleeping when the buildings were raised? Shabir Ahmad, one of the protesters, said.

Amit Shah inaugurates several projects in Chandigarh

Chandigarh, Mar 27 (PTI):

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday inaugurated several projects, including the state-of-the-art Integrated Command and Control Centre under which over 2,000 CCTV cameras have been installed here to keep a check on traffic violations.

Shah also laid foundation stones of a hostel block of commerce college, a project for constructing 240 houses for police personnel and a bus depot-cum-workshop.

The ICCC centre is also integrated with major citizen services including water, electricity, sewage, solid waste management, transport, e-governance, parking and public-bike sharing for an effective monitoring of services



Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurates Integrated Command and Control Centre in Chandigarh on Sunday.

and data analysis. The Union minister was accompanied by Punjab Governor and Chandigarh administrator Banwarilal Purohit on this occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Shah said he was visiting the 'beautiful city' after a long time and felt very good.

"In the history of the modern world, Chandigarh is the most developed city in the category of planned cities," said Shah.

He recalled that when he was young, children in Gujarat were then given an example of Chandigarh as the planned and good city.

BRIEF

Seizes

London: Britain has seized two jet aircraft belonging to Russian billionaire Eugene Shvidler as Western governments seeking to end the war in Ukraine put pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin by targeting the luxury lifestyles of his closest supporters. Treasury Secretary Grant Shapps said that the two aircraft would be detained indefinitely after three week investigation that had already grounded planes from flights.

Separatists

Quetta: The Pakistani army said that security forces killed six Baluch militants during a raid at their hideout in the country's volatile southwest. The military said the raid was conducted in the Nagao mountains near the Sibbi district of Baluchistan. Militants opened fire triggering a shootout in which six of them were killed. One soldier was also killed and two others wounded in the heavy exchange of fire.

Planning

New York: New York City officials are planning to remove makeshift shelters set up by homeless people on city streets, mirroring similar efforts in other liberal metropolises that had previously tolerated the encampments. Mayor Eric Adams disclosed the initiative in an interview, but provided few details. It comes a month after he announced a push to remove homeless people from the city's sprawling subway system in response.

Reestablish

Skopje: North Macedonia and Bulgaria reestablished a commercial air link after 13 years of interruption, as a symbolic trust-building move. Relations between the two Balkan neighbours have long been strained as the Bulgarians do not recognise a separate Macedonian ethnicity and language, saying the language is actually a Bulgarian dialect. Sofia has vetoed its smaller neighbour's plan to start membership talks with the European Union.

Offering

Liberty: A man who runs a little-known, low-budget radio station in suburban Kansas City of US says he is standing up for free speech and alternative viewpoints when he airs Russian state-sponsored programming in the midst of the Ukrainian war. Radio Sputnik, funded by the Russian government, pays broadcast companies in the US to air its programs.

Remove

London: The British Museum will remove the Sackler name from galleries, rooms and endowments following global outrage over the role the family played in the opioid crisis. The museum is the latest cultural institution to cut ties with the Sacklers. The Sackler name has been removed in recent years from wings and galleries at institutions including the Louvre in Paris and the Serpentine Gallery in London. It had mutually agreed on the move.

'Russia sowing deep hatred among Ukrainians'

Lviv, Mar 27 (AP):



Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy angrily warned Moscow that it is sowing a deep hatred for Russia among his people, as constant artillery barrages and aerial bombings are reducing cities to rubble, killing civilians and driving others into shelters, leaving them to scrounge for food and water to survive.

You are doing everything so that our people themselves leave the Russian language, because the Russian language will now be associated only with you, with your explosions and murders, your crimes," Zelenskyy said in

an impassioned video address.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has ground into a war of attrition in many places, with the toll on civilians rising as Moscow seeks to pound cities into submission from entrenched positions.

Russian rockets struck

the western Ukrainian city of Lviv while President Joe Biden visited neighboring Poland, serving as a reminder that Moscow is willing to strike anywhere in Ukraine despite its claim to be focusing its offensive on the country's east.

Early Sunday, a chemical smell still lingered in the air as firefighters in Lviv sprayed water on a burned section of an oil facility hit in the Russian attack.

A security guard at the site, Prokopiv Yaroslav, said he saw three rockets strike and destroy two oil tanks but no one was hurt. The second strike threw me to the ground, he said.

Russia's back-to-back airstrikes shook the city that has become a haven for an estimated 200,000 people who have had to flee their hometowns. Lviv had been largely spared since the invasion began, although missiles struck an aircraft repair facility near the main airport a week ago.

In the dim, crowded bomb shelter under an apartment block a short ways from the first blast site, Olana Ukrainets, a 34-year-old IT professional, said she couldn't believe she had to hide again after fleeing from the northeastern city of Kharkiv, one of the most bombarded cities of the war.

Jaishankar calls on Maldivian President Solih

● Discusses special partnership between two countries

Male, Mar 27 (IPTD):

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday called on Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in Addu City and discussed the special partnership between the two countries.

Jaishankar, who arrived here, also conveyed the personal greetings and good wishes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President Solih.

An honour to be received by President @ibsolih of Maldives. Conveyed the personal greetings and good wishes of PM @narendramodi. Discussed the special



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets with Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in Male on Sunday.

partnership between our two countries that has produced so many substantive outcomes during his tenure, he tweeted.

Jaishankar said he was privileged to join President Solih in the inauguration of the National College of Police and Law Enforcement (NCPLE), which underlines India's strong support for law enforcement.

"The NCPLE will assist the Maldives Police Service to train its officers and enhance its crime-fighting capacities," Jaishankar had said at a joint press appearance with Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid.

Ground-breaking of the Addu roads project, similarly emphasizes our development partnership.

El Salvador seeks emergency powers over spike in gang killings

San Salvador, Mar 27 (AFP):

El Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele urged lawmakers to declare a state of emergency after authorities arrested dozens of gang members over a recent wave of bloodshed.

Gang violence has soared in El Salvador in recent days, with more than 20 killings registered since this weekend, government human rights lawyer Ricardo Martinez reported, while other public security sources said up to 30 homicides may have taken place.

Police and the military arrested several leaders of the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang over the deaths.



Police work at the scene where a man was killed by alleged gang members in Colon, El Salvador.

In response Bukele asked Congress — controlled by his ruling party — to meet to declare a state of emergency, under which certain freedoms are curtailed.

The Salvadoran constitution says that a state of

emergency can be put into place "in cases of war, invasion of territory, rebellion, sedition, catastrophe, epidemic or other general calamity, or serious disturbances of public order."

"Since last week we

have had a new spike in homicides, something that we had worked so hard to reduce," Bukele said in a statement posted on Twitter by Congress president Ernesto Castro.

"While we fight criminals in the streets, we must try to figure out what is happening and who is financing this."

Castro said the country "must let the agents and soldiers do their job and must defend them from the accusations of those who protect the gang members."

Bukele asked the prosecutor's office "to be effective with all the cases" of gang members that it processes, warning he would keep an eye on "judges who favor criminals."

Turkish people feel pinch as Ukraine war drives up poverty

Istanbul, Mar 27 (AFP):

The financial turmoil unleashed by the Ukrainian conflict is hitting Turkey harder than most, with its economy still grappling with galloping price hikes caused by last year's currency collapse.

In Istanbul, opposition mayor Ekrem Imamoglu is turning to a historic tradition to alleviate hardship as inflation surges past 50 percent. His efforts have won international recognition, enhancing the mayor's reputation as a possible challenger to sitting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

For decades baker Yavuz Eraldi has been serving Turkey's largest city Istanbul, where — like

in many other places — bread is a traditional staple of the poor. But not anymore, with the price of bread nearly doubling in less than a year. Such hard times, Eraldi says, mean people are increasingly turning to a centuries-old charitable tradition called "on the hook".

Pointing to a plastic board above the counter, Eraldi explains: "A customer pays for three extra loaves. Then I write here on a board — 3 "on the hook", and people in need see that free bread is available.

People's purchasing power has really gone down. Even those on a monthly salary have started to come and ask if there's any bread left "on the hook".

Without Russia, science going solo on world's woes, dreams

Paris, Mar 27 (AP):

Without Russian help, climate scientists worry how they'll keep up their important work of documenting warming in the Arctic. Europe's space agency is wrestling with how its planned Mars rover might survive freezing nights on the Red Planet without its Russian heating unit.

And what of the world's quest for carbon-free energy if 35 nations cooperating on an experimental fusion-power reactor in France can't ship vital components from Russia?

In scientific fields with profound implications for mankind's future and knowledge, Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine is



This illustration made available by the European Space Agency shows the European-Russian ExoMars rover.

causing a swift and broad decaying of relationships and projects that bound together Moscow and the West. Post-Cold War bridge-building through science is unraveling as Western nations seek to punish and isolate the Kremlin by drying up sup-

port for scientific programs involving Russia.

The costs of this decoupling, scientists say, could be high on both sides. Tackling climate change and other problems will be tougher without collaboration and time will be lost.

India asks Lanka to exercise caution while handling fishing boats

Colombo, Mar 27 (PTI):

India has asked Sri Lanka to "exercise caution" so as to prevent any casualties in the course of crackdowns on Indian fishing boats and requested the island nation to tackle the fisheries issue based on a humanitarian approach.

During a virtual meeting of the Joint Working Group on Fisheries on Friday, both countries agreed that the use of force could not be justified under any circumstances, and reiterated the importance of extending humane treatment to all fishermen, the Indian High Commission here said in a statement. "The Indian side asked the relevant Sri Lankan authorities to exercise caution so as to prevent any casualties in the

course of crackdowns on fishing boats, and suggested using paramilitary to apprehend civilian fishermen," the statement said.

"Suggesting that relevant UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) clauses are fishermen friendly in spirit and letter, the Indian government requested Sri Lankan authorities to tackle the fisheries issue based on humanitarian approach," it said.

The Sri Lankan side raised its concerns on the methods used by fishing vessels and stressed that it is imperative for the two countries to work together in drawing up effective measures to mitigate the loss of livelihood. The Indian side took a constructive approach in its response and assured its assistance.

Expecting Chinese investment, Taliban now preserve buddhas



Taliban soldier stands guard at the entrance gate of Mes Aynak valley.

Mes Aynak, Mar 27 (AP):

The ancient buddha statues sit in serene meditation in the caves carved into the russet cliffs of rural Afghanistan. Hundreds of meters below lies what is believed to be the world's largest deposit of copper.

Two decades ago when the Islamic hard-line Taliban were first in

power, they sparked world outrage by blowing up gigantic buddha statues in another part of the country, calling them pagan symbols that must be purged. But now they are intent on preserving the relics of the Mes Aynak copper mine. Doing so is key to unlocking billions in Chinese investment, said Hakumullah Mubariz, the Taliban head of security at the site, peering into the remnants of a monastery built by first-century Buddhist monks. "Protecting them is very important to us and the Chinese," he said.

Previously, Mubariz commanded a Taliban combat unit in the surrounding mountains battling with US-backed Afghan forces. When those troops capitulated last year, his men rushed to secure the site.

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Myanmar army says it will annihilate coup opponents

Naypyidaw Mar 27 (AFP):

Myanmar's junta will "annihilate" coup opponents, army chief Min Aung Hlaing said Sunday as the military staged a show of force on the anniversary of its bloodiest crackdown so far on democracy protests.

The Southeast Asian country has been in chaos since a putsch in February 2021, with more than 1,700 people killed in crackdowns on dissent, according to a local monitoring group.

Across the country "People's Defence Force" fighters — often armed with homemade or rudimentary weapons — clash regularly with junta troops, with some analysts suggesting the military has struggled to respond effectively to their hit-and-run tactics.

Fighting has also flared



Military hardware is displayed during a parade to celebrate Myanmar's 77th Armed Forces Day in Naypyidaw on Sunday.

with more established ethnic rebel groups along the Thai and Chinese border.

Presiding over the annual parade that showcased tanks, truck-mounted missiles, artillery and troops on horseback, Min Aung Hlaing told some 8,000 assembled security personnel that the army would not let up.

The military will "no

longer negotiate... and annihilate until the end" groups fighting to overturn its rule, he said ahead of the Armed Forces Day procession in army-built capital Naypyidaw.

Jets flew overhead trailing the yellow, red and green of the national flag, while state media showed women lining the streets

leading to the parade ground to give flowers and place garlands on the marching soldiers.

In commercial hub Yangon around a dozen anti-junta flashmob protesters set off flares and shouted slogans, according to footage posted on social media.

Others called on social media for residents to switch off their lights at home in a national "power strike".

Armed Forces Day commemorates the start of local resistance to the Japanese occupation during World War II, and usually features a military parade attended by foreign officers and diplomats.

Last year, as new junta chief Min Aung Hlaing inspected the parade, troops brutalised those protesting the coup that had ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's government.



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Futility of prohibition

Liquor prohibition must take place in Madhya Pradesh but it should be implemented after proper study, BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya said. The issue of prohibition is assuming importance as a topic of political discussion in the state with former CM and senior BJP leader Uma Bharti coming out in support of such a move while the state government, on the other hand, recently unveiled an excise policy for 2022-23 which has several measures to boost revenue from sale of alcohol. Prohibition has proved to be futile policy with reports of widescale underground and illegal alcohol smuggling in both Bihar and Gujarat. The alcohol menace keeps coming up on the media radar and is pushed back every time. India has a recurring problem of poisoned or spurious liquor though it is not limited to states with prohibition. Prohibition is a phantom which rises regularly in politics of India. Two years ago, Rajasthan toyed with the idea, but thankfully discarded it after studying its impact in Bihar and Gujarat. Andhra Pradesh is another state which promised prohibition and is now struggling with implementation. Yet another example is Maharashtra, which has archaic laws of permits to drink (bars are called 'permit rooms') despite the fact that it has never been enforced. It now intends to enforce permit for small private parties at home. Similarly, there are inexplicable limits on stocking of alcohol for personal consumption. Such ad-hocism prevents a consistent public policy aimed at creating a culture of responsible drinking. Prohibition has not succeeded anywhere in the world. Also, to a large extent, the move to ban consumption and sale of liquor has been more of a populist intervention on part of the government.

There is a lot to learn from the US experience with respect to prohibition during the first half of the 20th century. It almost established that prohibition leads to an increase in organised crime. It also drives up corruption amongst law enforcement agencies and gives rise to illicit liquor trade. Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala too have experimented with prohibition at different times, but abolished it due to its ineffectiveness. Prohibition did not solve the problem of alcohol consumption, it only drove it underground. In recent times north eastern states have also overturned years old prohibition policy due to its failure. Prohibition also does not win elections. Demand for prohibition comes from a highly vocal and visible, but small group of voters. Indian Made Foreign Liquors (IMFL) industry contributes over Rs 1 lakh crore in taxes every year. It supports livelihood of 35 lakh farming families and provides direct and indirect employment to lakhs of workers employed in the industry. It also supports hundreds of ancillary industries in glass, tin, plastic and paper with a turnover of Rs 6,000-7,000 crore. The belief that banning alcohol would check issues related with alcoholism is a very simplistic notion, whereas in reality the situation is much more complex. Given the seriousness of the problem, it is nothing short of a scandal that liquor control policy does not figure on India's national agenda. It is not hard to imagine what such a policy might be like. Total prohibition is unlikely to figure there because it has proven counter-productive far too often. While it does bring drinking seriously down, it tends to encourage smuggling, liquor mafia and spurious liquor. Policy makers should focus on framing laws which encourage responsible behaviour and compliance.

Administrative shortage

There is a shortage of 1,515 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, Union minister Jitendra Singh told Parliament. He said Jammu and Kashmir has 59 IAS officers while it should have 137 of them. Tamil Nadu has the highest number of IAS officers (85 percent of the total strength) followed by Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh with 84 percent each. There are 6,746 posts for IAS officers across the country. The number of IAS officers available for deputation has gone down from 309 in 2011 to 223 as of January 2022. Meanwhile, on a petition by three civil services aspirants, who missed out the papers of the UPSC Civil Services Main Examination due to COVID-19 seeking additional attempt to appear in the exam, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati for the Union of India informed the Supreme Court that on consideration, additional attempts are found not to be possible and that an affidavit stating that position has been filed. Reforms can be undertaken to deal with such administrative shortage. Perhaps the most crucial decision of the then national leadership of free India about the strategy of management of the newly democratic Republic was to retain the 'steel frame' left behind by the British in the form of ICS and IP and establish IAS and IPS as the All India Civil Services to succeed them.

These were envisioned as the specially empowered national instruments to broadly handle development administration and the law and order apolitically taking into account the federal scheme of things in the Republic. In no other major country in the world does an equivalent of IAS and IPS exist in the sense that on a merit-based selection at the national level, the entrant is installed in the decision-making leadership position of an Under Secretary of Government of India just within three years after the training and Collector in the states represent that status granted at the start of the service career itself. The comparative perks and facilities provided to even the young officers, considering the general economic situation of the country are noticeable enough to promote self-confidence and a sense of pride in All India Civil Services. For long years after Independence, many of their members distinguished themselves in both Central and state governments. They served the cause of national integration and also added to the credit of the leadership in power in any part of India, regardless of its party label. There has to be a new emphasis on a further build-up of IAS as the principal instruments of governance through intake of available resources and implementation of reforms.

Central Chronicle welcomes, articles, write ups, comments on different issues for editorial page (800-900 words), Letter to editor for this page. It can be sent by e-mail at: editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com
The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

ROBOTIC INTERACTION



A visitor interacts with "iBones" robots during "You and Robots? What is it to be Human?" exhibition at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Tokyo, Japan.

Minor rainfall fluctuations under British rule caused most famines in south India

SAHANA GHOSH



Extreme rainfall deficiencies were not the only causes of famines in semi-arid regions of southern India in the 18th to 20th centuries, according to research that blends paleoclimate reconstruction and British administrative records for the area. A minor 13 to 17 percent deficit in rainfall, rather than extreme events, triggered famines in southern India's semi-arid regions, including the Great Famine of 1875-1878 and the Indian Famine of 1899-1900, which, according to the colonial records, were caused by 'rain failure' killing millions. The findings underscore the need to consider the potential impacts of minor fluctuations in rainfall patterns in drought-prone semi-arid regions in climate change risk assessments. 'We focus on understanding extreme events (such as floods due to extreme rainfall). And that is critical because our infrastructures and practices are not equipped to deal with these extremes, given that these extremes have become more frequent,' the study's corresponding author Atreyee Bhattacharya told.

She cautions that 'we are vulnerable even more than we think we are' because minor fluctuations are not given importance due to the assumption that one is resilient to these fluctuations, which are part of normal climate variability. 'It appears that we are vulnerable to 'normal' variations in climate, particularly rainfall, especially in rain-fed agricultural societies in our country and across the Indian Ocean region. Our practices and decisions do not even factor in normal variability in rainfall,' Bhattacharya of the University of Colorado-Boulder, the US, said. Co-author Gaurav Arora of the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology

(IIIT)-Delhi, emphasised that there were socioeconomic and administrative factors that would have cooked the famines in the semi-arid region of peninsular India 'at least in cases where rainfall shortages were modest (relative to a long-term normal rainfall level for the region).' Motivated to unravel how 'vulnerable we are to climate variability,' Bhattacharya and colleagues wanted to independently probe how much rainfall deficits were considered 'rain failure,' enough to cause the repeated instances of famines. 'We used India Meteorological Department's rainfall record (from 1870), tree ring-based reconstructions of humidity and cave carbonate (speleothem) based reconstructions of regional relative humidity to assess rainfall fluctuations,' she adds.

India Meteorological Department and historical rain gauge reconstructions show that most famines struck when average rainfall in the southern interior peninsula deviated by 13 percent and 17 percent in the western interior. In addition, they dug through information in over 600 British administrative documents (including 19th-century records associated with Bombay and Madras Presidencies) preserved in the National Archives of India, that takes one through socioeconomic upheavals and human impacts (famines) associated with 'rain failures' over 218 years (1729-1947). They were looking for climate-related information: records of climate and impacts. The Bombay Presidency, headquartered in Bombay (present-day Mumbai), included parts of the present-day states of Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat and western Karnataka. The Madras presidency (headquartered in Madras; present-day Chennai) spanned present-day Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Odisha. The records contain discussions on famines due to rain failures of 1803-1807, 1811-1812, 1823-1824, 1832-1833, 1838-1840, 1868-1869, 1875-1878, 1896 and 1899-1900. These famines affected several districts of Madras and Bombay presidencies and usually lasted for three to four years, including the Great Famine of 1875-1878 and the Indian Famine of 1899-1900.

Also recorded are famines of 1845

(in Gujarat), 1854-1855 (parts of Bombay and Madras Presidencies), 1862 (Ahmednagar) and 1882 (Mysore). When the reduction in rainfall continued for a second year, especially if accompanied by a decrease in summer and winter rainfall, cascading socioeconomic impacts extracted severe human costs such as starvation, death, slavery and migration, the authors write in the paper. The famine of 1875-1876 prompted the formulation of the Famine Commission in 1880; the last report by the commission was in 1901. The Great Famine likely killed over 50 million people in South and East Asia, Brazil, and Africa between 1876 and 1878. In India, it claimed between 12.2 and 29.3 million lives. Researchers in a 2021 paper dubbed it as 'arguably the worst environmental disaster' and 'one of the worst calamities of any sort in at least the last 150 years, with a loss of life comparable to the World Wars and the influenza epidemic of 1918/19.' According to the Environment and Society project of Germany's Rachel Carson Centre for Environment and Society, the Great Famine, also known as the Southern India Famines or Great Madras Famine, began in 1876. It affected south and southwestern India as in Madras (Chennai), Mysore (Mysuru), Hyderabad, and Bombay (Mumbai) for two years. 'During its second year, the famine also spread north to some regions of the central provinces and the United Provinces (present-day Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand), and a small area in Punjab to the northwest, covering a total area of 257,000 square miles.'

Southern India was hit by severe drought from 2016 to 2018, which led to a water crisis in Chennai, India's sixth-largest city of 11 million inhabitants. The drought followed low rainfall during the northeast monsoon, which occurs during the winter. According to researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Gandhinagar, who investigated the causes of past flash droughts in India between 1951 and 2016, the 2016 to 2018 drought was worse than the Great Madras Famine. Lauding the research by Bhattacharya et al., climate scientist Jayanarayanan Kuttippurath, who was not associated

with the study, agreed with the suggestion to factor in the potential impacts of more frequent low-level anomalies in drought-prone semi-arid regions for climate change risk assessment. 'We generally do not look at minor fluctuations. We know the socioeconomic situation of those years... they were very different. There were limited resources and we did not have advanced technologies that we have today so they may have also contributed to the impact of the famines,' Kuttippurath, an assistant professor at IIT-Kharagpur's Centre for Oceans, Rivers, Atmosphere and Land Sciences told. Gaurav Arora explained that drought-prone regions like the semi-arid regions are by definition poorer in their natural resource endowments. 'Long-term deficient rainfalls imply not only lack of water access but also poorer quality soils that are erosive.'

Therefore, traditional agricultural practices are for subsistence and not typically for market-friendly products like cash crops. However, the advent of technologies like irrigation dams (in the British era) and the proliferation of tubewells (in independent India, post-1950s) has meant that these resource-poor regions have shifted to cultivating water and nutrient-thirsty crops like sugarcane and cotton. Such shifts in land use are often termed as 'development' in the policy domain. 'Given that the southern Indian semi-arid region did not exhibit resilience to 'small' rainfall shocks under subsistence agriculture, Arora questioned if one can say that 'these regions will be resilient to more frequent rainfall shocks under future climate change scenarios when being subjected to cash-crop agriculture?' A UN Special Report on Drought 2021 estimated the impact of severe droughts on India's GDP to be between 2 to 5 percent. Jal Shakti Ministry notes that around 68 percent of the country is prone to drought in varying degrees, of which 35 percent receives rainfall between 750 mm and 1125 mm and is considered drought-prone while 33 percent receiving less than 750 mm is chronically drought-prone.

(Sahana Ghosh, based in Kolkata writes on climate change, biodiversity and gender issues.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Baloch situation

All is not well in the Baluchistan province of Pakistan. The Baloch people have taken up arms against the state to free their land from Pakistan, which is their long-standing struggle. In successive armed attacks recently on the Pak security camps in Baluchistan, dozens of security personnel have lost their lives, while it has also been claimed that large number of freedom fighters have been neutralized. The people of Baluchistan were never reconciled to Pakistani domination. The province was administered after establishment of the Baluchistan Agency as a part of British India. After partition of India in 1947, Baluchistan was forcefully annexed to Pakistan on March 28, 1948 by an army operation and in 1955 Baluchistan was merged into Pakistan as fourth province. Baloch nationalism asserts that the Baloch people, an ethnic group, are a distinct nation. The clear view of the Baloch movement leaders is that Muslims are not a nation and that ethnic loyalty must surpass religious loyalty, a concept which was proved right when East Pakistan had snatched independence from Pakistan in the 1971 civil war. In the recent years the Baloch nationalist uprising, which was a low-intensity struggle, against the Government of Pakistan has greatly intensified. Pakistan, which is a theocratic state and weakened by internal contradictions, misrule, social tensions, religious intolerance and impudent army, will succumb to the unshakable patriotic zeal of the Baloch freedom fighters the same way Bangladesh had emerged as an independent country in the world map 50 years ago.

At the same time, persecution on minority Hindu population in Pakistan is continuing unabated. A Hindu teacher, Nautan Lal by name, was sentenced on February 8 to life imprisonment and also fined Pakistani Rs 50,000 by a local court on a charge of blasphemy in Sind province. Needless to state that when a student had alleged the blasphemy charge against the teacher in September 2019, violent protests erupted in the town (Gotki in Sind) and the mob ransacked properties and a temple and damaged its idols. Besides, Hindu girls are kidnapped and converted to Islam and married to Muslim boys in full view of cheering fanatics, which are regular happenings in Pakistan. Where are two young female Rights activists - Swedish Greta Thunberg and Pakistani Malala Yousafzai - who have remained very active in issues Indian, on tweeter?

Pannalal Dey, via email



WHAT THEY TWEET!



Nirupama@NMenonRao

When Russia began its military offensive in Ukraine, I expressed opposition to Moscow's actions. Some weeks down the line, am growing extremely disillusioned with the assumed righteousness of the western response & echoes of post 9/11 rhetoric about 'either you're with us or not'

D.Muthukrishnan@dmuthuk

We don't realise that the highest tax we pay is inflation tax. If we earn 10 percent on an investment and if inflation is 5 percent, we pay 50 percent as inflation tax on our income. Since we always focus on nominal numbers, we don't realise the enormity of this. This is also known as money illusion.



Happymon@HappymonJacob

US/West's Weaponisation of trade against Iran, Afghanistan, Russia etc. is increasing calls for the de-dollarisation of global trade. India has been at the receiving end of such weaponisation. And yet, if it joins the de-dollarisation bandwagon, it'll only help strengthen China.

Sneha@magicarchivist

Women painting themselves into the city.



Jakub@JakubJanda

After war will be over, China will offer major financial packages to rebuild Ukraine. It will be the usual geopolitical trap - as we know how China operates, China will try to buy strategic influence via its so called development projects. I really hope Ukraine will not accept.



Aman@amanbandvi

By holding the path lab report as the holy grail, by making LAMA (left against med advice) too dreary, having doctors contradict each other on discharges, by playing with consent forms - tracheotomy, intubation, dialysis and by raising suspicion on any medicine procured by self.

Arun Vel@unraveaero

RRR's business numbers are staggering. Satisfying to see Telugu industry eclipse Bollywood but Tamil cinema's stagnation is concerning. 20 years back Tamil films used to outgross them, now RRR has collected 20 percent of Tamil cinema's annual gross in one day. Rajamouli the great.

BRIEF

Expand



New Delhi: SparkCognition on Sunday said its new acquisition of Integration Wizards will allow it to expand into new markets like retail, mining, and construction. CTO Sridhar Sudarshan told PTI that we are focusing on accelerating sales and marketing expansion.

Invests

New Delhi: Property consultant India Sotheby's International Realty on Sunday said it has made a strategic equity investment in Mumbai-based data analytic firm CRE Matrix to offer more and better advisory services to its clients. The company did not disclose the amount it has invested and the percentage of the stake it has acquired in CRE Matrix. When contacted, Abhishek Kiran Gupta, CEO and co-founder, CRE Matrix, told PTI about decision.

Need



New Delhi: Andromeda & Apnaisa CEO V Swaminathan said that with the economy coming back on the rails post-COVID-19 pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India may consider a strict debt recovery mechanism with regulatory backing to boost activities of lending.

Outreach

New Delhi: The West Bengal government will intensify its investor outreach efforts, and is betting big on a planned deep-sea port, coal mine and industrial corridor being developed in the state to attract entrepreneurs. West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) Chairman Rajiva Sinha said there is a need to change the perception that investors have about Bengal, and considering the priority accorded.

Expects



New Delhi: PVR Ltd expects business to reach pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2022-23 on the back of a slew of new film releases. JMD Sanjeev Kumar Bijli told PTI that March is going to be one of best months. It may even surpass any pre-pandemic month.

Aims

New Delhi: Edtech firm Schoolnet aims to grow multifold to generate Rs 6,000 crore in the next 5-7 years from expansion of services in schools and subscriber growth on its learning app. The 25-year old firm provides digital classrooms to around 40,000 schools at present, along with digital learning content and trains teachers.

Ukraine war unlikely to roil Rs 5 trillion refinancing next fiscal

Mumbai, Mar 27 (PTI):

Over 1,400 large companies have to refinance Rs 5 lakh crore next fiscal, but the ongoing global crisis following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the form rising inflation risks and the resultant likely spike in interest rates, is unlikely to cause any trouble for them given their strong balance-sheets and stable earnings, says a report.

According to an analysis by India Ratings, the top 1,423 non-financial, debt-heavy corporates have to refinance as much as Rs 5 lakh crore next fiscal, but the refinancing risk is manageable despite a challenging environment owing to the tightening monetary policy condition, volatile commodity prices and rising geopolitical risks. Total refinancing requirement is estimated at Rs 5 lakh crore in FY23



on a blue-sky scenario, marginally up from Rs 4.98 lakh crore in FY22, the agency said, but added that the quantum will go up 33 per cent to Rs 6.6 lakh crore in FY23, based on a hazy-sky scenario.

The blue-sky scenario assumes growth in revenue and operating margins, while the hazy-sky scenario assumes a moderation in both along with an increase in working capital requirements.

The agency expects refinancing risks to ebb in FY23, largely driven by healthy earnings in the past two years and a significant deleveraging by many debt-heavy entities. Under the blue-sky scenario, it estimated that 85 per cent of the refinancing requirement is likely to be for the top 100 corporates based on gross debt, which have a better credit quality than medium- and smaller ones. In terms of ratings,

75 per cent of the refinancing is for AA-rated or better entities. The report expects refinancing worth Rs 3.6 lakh crore of the total Rs 5 lakh crore can be refinanced by with an interest coverage ratio of 1.5x and above, indicating high probability of refinancing. For the remaining Rs 1.3 lakh crore debt, for which interest coverage is below 1.5x and/or have negative operating margins, may find the going tough given the still cautious approach of lenders. The debt heavy sectors like oil, power, capital goods and iron & steel will have an estimated refinancing of Rs 2.32 lakh crore or 47 per cent of the total requirement, in FY23 and the report does not expect these entities to face any challenges in refinancing given their superior access to the markets and strong financial health.

Indian consumers show cautious optimism

Balancing non-discretionary spends

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Indian consumers are showing cautious optimism and balancing non-discretionary spending as they are saving more for the future, according to a report.

Indian consumers are prioritising shopping, recreational and entertainment activities, according to the Deloitte Consumer Tracker report.

The consumers surveyed are planning to spend a large share of their wallets on personal care and clothing, recreation, entertainment and leisure travel, followed by electronics and home furnishings and restaurants, it said. "The analysis indicates a ray of positivity amongst consumers, who



are now cautiously balancing their happiness and spending and saving more for the future," the report noted.

With corporate India returning to "business as usual" and travel restrictions gradually easing, Indians have resumed their business travels, it added.

According to the report, about 83 per cent of consumers are likely to travel for business within the next three months.

India, UAE to establish Investment Council as part of CEPA

Dubai, Mar 27 (PTI):

India and the UAE on Sunday have agreed to set up a technical council on Investment, Trade Promotion and Facilitation, as part of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed between the two countries last month.

India and the UAE on February 18 had signed CEPA with a view to boosting bilateral trade to USD 100 billion over a five-year period and creation of lakhs of jobs.

The pact covers areas including goods, services, rules of origin, customs procedures, government procurement, intellectual property rights, and e-commerce. Under the agreement, the two trading partners reduce or eliminate customs duties



and trade relations, identify opportunities for expanding investment and trade, and to identify issues relevant to investment and trade that may be appropriate for further discussion, the text said. It will also hold consultations on specific investment and trade matters of interest to the parties besides working toward the promotion of investment and trade flows, it said.

The council will also identify and work towards the removal of impediments and facilitate investment and trade flows and seek views of the private sector.

The parties shall avail themselves of the opportunity to discuss and resolve the issue amicably in the council keeping in mind the objective of promoting and facilitating trade and investment, it added.

Govt to launch common portal for different schemes

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

To improve the ease of living for the common man, the government is working on a proposal to launch a common portal for various schemes run by different ministries and departments.

As part of the Narendra Modi government's vision of minimum government maximum governance, the new portal will initially onboard 15 credit-linked government schemes, sources said.

The offerings will be gradually expanded, depending on compatibility, as some of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes have involvement from multiple agencies, they added.

For example, schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS) are being administered by different ministries. The proposed portal intends to bring these schemes on a single platform so that they can be



accessed by the beneficiaries without much hassle.

Pilot testing is being done and loose ends are being tied up before the actual launch takes place, the sources said, adding State Bank of India (SBI) and other lenders doing the testing.

The sources said it is likely to have open architecture enabling state governments and other institutions to also onboard their schemes on this platform.

To provide comfort to borrowers, the government in 2018 had launched a portal pbsloansin59minutes.com for various kinds of credit products, including MSME, home, auto and personal loans.

The portal facilitates in-principle approval of loans for MSMEs and other borrowers in 59 minutes by various banks compared to the earlier turnaround time of 20-25 days.

After receiving an in-principle approval letter, the loan is expected to be disbursed in 7-8 working days.

The portal processes loan applications without human intervention till the sanction stage. Any MSME borrower does not need to submit any physical document for in-principle approval for a loan.

Instead, the portal depends on advanced algorithms to analyse data points from several sources such as Income Tax returns, GST data, Bank Statements etc.

The platform is integrated with the government's Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) to check borrowers' eligibility.

Adani, Tata AIG, ICICI Lombard among 54 bidders for Reliance Capital

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Adani Finserve, ICICI Lombard, Tata AIG, HDFC Ergo, and Nippon Life Insurance are among the 54 prominent firms that have expressed interest to acquire debt-ridden Reliance Capital Ltd, promoted by the Anil Ambani Group, sources said.

The last date for submission of bids for the debt-ridden firm had been extended to March 25 from March 11 earlier by the Reserve Bank-appointed administrator. Other bidders include Yes Bank, Bandhan Financial Holdings, Cholamandam Investment, OakTree Capital, Blackstone, Brookfield, TPG, KKR, Piramal Finance and Poonawala

Finance, sources said.

The deadline was extended on the request of some prospective bidders who had sought more time to submit the Expressions of Interest (EoI), sources said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had on November 29 last year superseded the board of Reliance Capital Ltd (RCL) in view of payment defaults and serious governance issues. This is the third large non-banking financial company (NBFC) against which the central bank has initiated bankruptcy proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) recently. The other two were Srei Group NBFC and Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL).

Lenders approve IL&FS' debt recast proposal for CNTL

Mumbai, Mar 27 (PTI):

The lenders have approved IL&FS Group's proposal to restructure the Rs 5,500 crore debt of its subsidiary Chenani Nashri Tunnelway (CNTL), which offers almost full repayment to them.

The move comes after the company has renewed itself at Rs 5,257 crore now after the deal with Cube Highways of Singapore failed last year, due to regulatory delays, for a consideration of Rs 3,900 crore.

The three-day voting opened on March 21 and saw the lenders favouring debt recast as it offers them 99 per cent of their money while unsecured lenders will get back 90 per cent. The new proposal in the values the company at Rs 5,257 crore and will ad-



dress Rs 4,910 crore of the IL&FS Group debt.

An IL&FS spokesperson confirmed the development, saying we have got the requisite approvals from the lenders to restructure the debt of CNTL.

The proposal entails CNTL converting itself into a green entity, with secured and unsecured lenders getting over 99 per cent and 90 per cent of the principal amount, respectively, upon implementation of the new proposal, a company official in the know of the development told PTI.

CNTL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of ITNL (an IL&FS company) that jointly with its nominees holds 100 per cent equity. It has been classified as an amber company, which will now undergo a change in status.

The lenders will receive an upfront payment of around Rs 1,700 crore of the principal (they have already debited Rs 670 from the escrow account), in addition to interest accrual from April 2021, providing a benefit of around Rs 370 crore on implementation.

CNTL continues to maintain and operate the longest tunnel in J&K and is receiving an annuity of Rs 635 crore annually, which are being received on time.

CNTL lenders, in their last meeting, had unanimously approved Crisil

and Icrs as rating agencies, SVKM as the forensic auditor and considered RBBSA's valuation report as the next step to complete the process, which also involves appointing one more valuer as the present value determined by the company-appointed valuer.

The consortium of CNTL lenders includes the State Bank of India, Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank, Canara Bank, Punjab National Bank, Uco Bank and Edelweiss ARC, among others.

The recovery in the restructured debt proposal is far higher for all lenders compared to the divestment proposal wherein Cube Highways had emerged as the highest bidder offering Rs 3,900 crore.

Draft rubber bill proposes one-time registration

Removal of some archaic provisions

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

To promote ease of doing business and growth of the sector, the draft rubber bill has proposed a series of steps, including replacement of periodic licensing with one-time registration, removal of permission requirement for possession of natural rubber and laying down clear procedures for inspection.

The commerce ministry has proposed the repeal of decades-old laws on rubber and introduced new legislation that seeks to address the challenges faced by the sector and remove some of the archaic



provisions of present law to create a conducive environment for businesses.

The ministry has put the draft Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill, 2022, on its website for stakeholders' views and suggestions. In an office memorandum, the Department of Commerce has said it is proposing to repeal the Rubber Act 1947 and introduce a new law.

Explaining the rationale behind the proposal to repeal the Rubber Act, the draft bill has said that in recent years, there have been widespread changes in the industrial and economic scenario, especially concerning development in rubber and allied sectors.

"Therefore, it has become imperative to remove archaic provisions, create an environment conducive for easy conduct of business, reorient functions of the (Rubber) Board with equal focus on upstream and downstream sectors and to contribute towards making world-class rubber industry," as per the draft Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill.

AI could be used for early resolution of matters

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

New-age technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) could be used for early resolution of matters, including insolvency cases, National Company Law Tribunal President Justice Ramalingam Sudhakar said.

While addressing a national-level colloquium of NCLT, Justice Sudhakar suggested that AI can be used in case of resolution, especially in the admission of cases, a statement issued by NCLT said.

"One aspect for early resolution is the development of Artificial Intelligence technology, he said. We are

focusing on leveraging artificial intelligence and standardisation of processes. This will help in reducing delays. We are also focussed on evolving a code of best practices so that there is certainty in decision making, said Justice Sudhakar.

According to Justice Sudhakar, India was envisioning a multi-trillion dollar economy.

"The bedrock in a nation's economy is industry and commerce, which is governed by Company Law besides other laws, he said.

NCLT President stated that the government has come out with a code to resolve corporate issues to enable corporates of India to compete with the world.

India pays for Russian LNG imports in US dollar

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

India's largest gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd continues to pay for the LNG it imports from Russia's Gazprom in US dollars and will seek exchange rate neutrality in any other currency such as Euro, two sources said.

GAIL has a deal to receive 2.5 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) annually on a delivered basis from Russia's Gazprom. This translates into 3 to 4 cargoes or ship loads of super-cooled natural gas every month. "The contract with Gazprom provides for



making payments in US dollars," a source with direct knowledge of the matter said. "Payments become due 5-7 days after the delivery of the LNG cargo. The last payment was made on March 23, which was in US dollars." An LNG shipload was received on March 25 and its payment will be due in early April. There is no indication that the payment for

this cargo will be in a currency other than US dollar, sources said. "So far, the US dollar payment continues without any problem," another source said. "Gazprom has so far not communicated anything to GAIL about change in payment mode." Sources said the last payment was settled through State Bank of India (SBI) - the bank that has been used to pay for imports from Gazprom since the start of supplies in June 2018. GAIL, they said, has so far not received any written communication from Gazprom for change in the currency for settling the payments.

Lamborghini sees 'huge' opportunity in India

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Italian supersports luxury car-maker Automobili Lamborghini sees a "huge opportunity" of growth in India with rising number of ultra high net-worth individuals driving demand in the country, its Chairman and CEO Stephan Winkelmann.

The company which posted a record sales of 69 cars, a growth of 86 per cent, in 2021 in the country is also evaluating its plans to introduce hybrid vehicles in the country as part of a global strategy towards electrification. "I think in India there's a huge opportunity for growth, because there's a big wealth around the Indian market, and we will see how this is devel-

oping. We had one of the highest growth in terms of percentage last year, so there are opportunities also for the future.

"What we can see in the Indian market is that we have more and more ultra high net-worth individuals entering the market... We already have the second generation of ultra high net-worth individuals, and their average age is younger than other countries," Winkelmann said in an interaction. Given the results of last year and the demographic situation of the Indian market, both in terms of young wealthy people and wealth in general, Winkelmann said, "We think that there is a growing demand also in the Indian market in years to come."

Rakul Preet Singh on 'Attack': We are all prepared for films like this

John Abraham-starrer 'Attack' is all about a cybertronic humanoid super-soldier developed to combat terrorism. The film's actress Rakul Preet Singh agrees that it is different but the audiences are prepared for new films like this. During the promotion of the film in Noida, Rakul talked about working in the film, which has a new concept. "The experience was great and I would just like to add that we are all prepared for films like this. We have been watching these 'Spiderman' movies, we have been watching all sorts of action films. We lap it up we love them but because we haven't seen anything in our own country we think we are not ready for it but if India was not ready there wouldn't have been such a huge market for international films." She added: "So I think my whole experience became more special because I was ready to take that risk and plunge into a genre and say 'Made in India' something that is international level and not been seen or done before. That is what 'Attack' is." 'Attack' is directed by Lakshya Raj Anand. It based on a story by John Abraham, who stars in the film alongside Jacqueline Fernandez and Rakul. The film is scheduled to be released on April 1.



Bomb Fire Crew's performance makes Miss Universe 2021 dance

Sony Entertainment Television's talent based reality show India's Got Talent is gearing up for yet another exciting and entertaining weekend with the Top 11 contestants! This Sunday, celebrated 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' the show welcomed dance wizard Terence Lewis and Miss Universe 2021, Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu. Amidst all the brilliant acts, the Bomb Fire Crew from Delhi fired up the atmosphere with their thrilling performance on the 'Gangubai

Kathiawadi' song 'Dholida'. Impressing not only the judges - Kirron Kher, Shilpa Shetty Kundra, Badshah and Manoj Muntashir, the crew left special guest Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu awestruck with their dance act. Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu who is the biggest supporter of the Bomb Fire Crew joins them on stage and says, "Such a powerful performance! I have to say I was surprised but not surprised at the same time. I was surprised to see how you girls just came in and set the stage on fire! India hai yaar, talent toh hoga hi!" She continued, "Your performance has reminded me of how I was, shy and under-

confident. There was a lot of self-doubts but yet there is that one episode that occurs in your life that can completely change you. It depends on you and how much you believe in yourself and for that, self-esteem is really important. I have realised that in the whole world, the only constant and your sole supporter is 'you'. When you have that self-confidence, nobody can stop you." Harnaaz then presented the crew with a sash with the words "Main Hoon India!"

Tune in to India's Got Talent this Saturday and Sunday at 8:00 PM only on Sony Entertainment Television!



Payal Dev: I can recreate but I would love to make my own music

Singer Payal Dev shares her opinion on the latest trend of recreating songs in the music industry. The singer is known for some hit numbers such as 'Say yes to the dress', and composed songs like 'Tumse Pyaar Karke', 'Baarish Ban Jana', 'Tum hi Ana' and 'Dil Chahte ho'. She talks about recreating old classic songs that have become a trend. "I can recreate it but I would love to create my own songs!" Payal adds that she also enjoys recreating the old songs but is more fond of original creations. "Recreations of old classic songs are definitely relieving but the essence of making and singing original songs and reaching out to the heart of my audience is what I wish to work on for," says the singer.



&TV artists to be victim of crime

Viewers can expect some high-voltage drama this week on &TV, as popular characters become victims of crime. About &TV's Baal Shiv, Mahasati Anusuyashares, "Baal Shiv (Aan Tiwari) and Devi Parvati reach Darukavan to find aushadhi to save Nandi's (Danish Akhtar) life. In the meantime, Vajrangi (Sanyogita Bhawe) asks Anjumukhi (Srashti Maheshwari) to send a Rakshashi to Mahasati Anusuya's (Mouli Ganguly) house so that she can kill Anusuya and her family in the absence of Baal Shiv. Rakshashini, taking advantage of the situation, poisons Mood's milk that he is about to have. In Darukavan, Baal Shiv and Devi Parvati find a bird who is sad and wants to commit suicide as she has lost her partner. Baal Shiv retrieves the bird, making the bird couple happy. Later, the two help them find the medicine. Seeing this, Ajamukhi

(Srashti Maheshwari) gets angry and tries to burn Darukavan so that they cannot take medicine back home. How will Baal Shiv save Nandi's life? Will Rakshashini succeed in poisoning Mood?" About &TV's Aur Bhai Kya Chal Raha Hai? track, Shanti Mishra shares, "With the help of his family members and Mirza, Mishra (Amrishi Bobby) gives a surprise birthday party to his wife Shanti (Farhana Patema), where they all go for a picnic. Overjoyed, Shanti shares her best childhood memories when her KismisNanni used to send her a letter and 11 rupees every year to buy Kismis. While everyone there is having a good time and enjoying themselves playing musical chairs, Bittu (Annu Awasthy) tries to cheat, which makes his nephew Rahul angry, and they both fight. After that, Rahul decides to run away from home for a few days to live independently and teach his uncle a

lesson. Rahul hides in Mansion 3/13 with kids' help in favour of doing their homework and assignments. Bittu is worried and starts searching for him but fails to track him down. Mishra confronts Rahul, but his children threaten to reveal the truth about him, writing a letter to Shanti citing KismisNanni this year. Mirza also learns about Rahul but is blackmailed by his children for accidentally offering non-veg kebabs to Shanti on his last birthday. How will Bittu find his nephew now?" Watch Baal Shiv at 8:00 pm, Aur Bhai Kya Chal Raha Hai? at 9:30 pm, Hattu Ki Ultan Paltan at 10:00 pm and Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai at 10:30 pm airing every Monday to Friday only on &TV.

John Abraham Fight sequence choreographed for a song in 'Attack'

Actor-producer John Abraham says that his upcoming film 'Attack' has a fight sequence choreographed just for a song in the upcoming film. John is known as an action icon as he has worked in high-octane actioners such as 'Dhoom', 'Dishoom', 'Force' and 'Romeo Akbar Walter' among many others. He now awaits the release of 'Attack', which is slated to hit the screens on April 1. About what attracts him towards the genre, John said: "My thing is you know when we set out to do this film I told (director) Lakshya Raj Anand, we can't have the run of the mill songs. We have very sweet songs and then we have got a lot of background music. "I think this is first time in Hindi cinema where you have a song where a fight sequence is choreographed for a song...The second half is the climax so there is no midway." John stressed he does not want to do any run of the mill kind of films. "The way I want to produce films is from 'Vicky Donor', to 'Madras Cafe', 'Parmanu' to 'Batia House' -- I want to make something radically very different. My funda in life is simple -- you fail doing the regular stuff it's sad... You fail doing something different at least you tried which is why 'Attack' happened." Directed by Lakshya Raj Anand, 'Attack (Part 1)' also stars Jacqueline Fernandez, Rakul Preet Singh, Prakash Raj, and Ratna Pathak Shah. Jayantilal Gada (Pen Studios), John Abraham (JA Entertainment), and Ajay Kapoor Productions present John Abraham's action entertainer 'Attack', which will be released worldwide by Pen Marudhar. The movie is slated to hit the cinemas on April 1.



HOROSCOPE MONDAY MARCH 28

Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18
The cupid may strike you today. You don't want make a wrong first impression, so wear something nice and be presentable all the time. Professionally, the day will be favourable for you to make some important decisions. Overall, you are in a happy mood and you will spread the joy around, feels Ganesha.

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20
An auspicious time for starting new projects, today will see you make substantial investments in your future. Your family is the foundation of your success, and keeping that in mind will provide you with some vital insights. Your smile wins many a heart today, says Ganesha.

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20
Boy! Are you ambitious today or what! You plan meticulously and perform impeccably. However, you will progress at snail's pace. But don't lose heart, as Ganesha showers his blessings on you, dear one.

Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21
You are going to be exceptionally intense in the way you communicate your emotions and feelings. You will, no doubt, succeed in making the impact, the impression you are striving to make, says Ganesha. You will be so involved in this that you are likely to get caught in the mysterious and magical web of relationships.

Gemini: May 22 - June 21
You may come up with a precise understanding of others today, says Ganesha. You will please your sweetheart with both your presence and presents. You will browse through dozens of showrooms for that perfect, and expensive, gift for your beloved. You will also work towards achieving your long-term goals. Ganesha wishes you good luck.

Cancer: June 22 - July 22
Today, you and your soul mate will be rolling in the hay; there will be little time or inclination to do anything else. In fact, you will show such single-minded devotion to the act of rolling as if the future of the world lies in the haystack. Your mind can think of nothing more, and nothing less.

Leo: July 23 - Aug 23
Try and put on some protective gear today a/c maybe a suit of armour should do fine, says Ganesha. For, you may find some need for it on this day of mixed fortunes as you miss out the expected and come face-to-face with the unexpected.

Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22
Today, you will be aspire to be a master of your own destiny. You have the ability to see through the façade that people put up to shield their true self. You will choose your company wisely and plan for success. Polish your presentation skills and you may need to work an extra bit to get your ideas approved, says Ganesha.

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23
Ganesha feels the day will be beneficial for you when it comes to transactions with the government. But you already expect that. It is more than likely that public servants will have encouraging and optimistic achievements lined up for their efforts. Your expertise may be put to test and it is your experience that will come in handy.

Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22
Ganesha feels that you may be confronted with vital decisions at work. You will need to trust the opinions of your close friends and peers so that you may take informed decisions. Keep your mind away from negative thoughts and delegate responsibilities accordingly. Favourable returns will come from appointing the best possible person for the job, suggests Ganesha.

Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 31
It is not your nature to warm the bench, but you will wake up feeling lazy and laid-back today, says Ganesha. This may be due to the fatigue of some recent endeavours. For a change, you will try and delegate your work and responsibility to those around you. Make sure that they do so wisely as they may not live up to your standards, warns Ganesha.

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20
Plans for expanding business may require you to take risks, leaving you in a dilemma on more than one occasion. In such desperate circumstances, following your instincts can lead you to success, advises Ganesha.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Completely absorbed
5. Skips
10. Works on a tan
14. Levin and Gershwin
15. Coastal birds
16. Jogging gait
17. Commit (a crime)
19. Mexican water
20. Gobble up
21. Ore beds

DOWN

22. Uncovers
23. Motionless
25. Invoice
27. Nervous walker
29. Savior
33. Border on
34. Swipes
36. Raw mineral
37. Buddies
38. Stop
39. Be acquainted with
40. One ____ time (2 wds.)

26. Does nothing
27. Daddies
28. Lesson
29. Respond (to)
30. Impressively large
31. Wear down
32. Married again
34. Vamoose!
35. Adolescents
39. Make a sweater
41. Snaky fishes
44. In abundance
45. Docile
47. Actor/Director ____ Eastwood
48. Goes up
49. Astronauts' gp.
50. Baldwin or Guinness
51. Ledger entry
52. Shock
54. Morsels
55. Feel bad
57. Rainy mo.
58. Gun lobby (abbr.)
59. "The Raven" poet

SOLUTION 251

England crush Bangladesh by 100 runs to book semifinal berth

Wellington: Defending champions England became the third team to book its place in the semifinals of the Women's World Cup with a comfortable 100-run win over Bangladesh here on Sunday. Sophia Dunkley's 72-ball 67 helped the reigning champions post 234 for six at Basin Reserve and a polished bowling performance, led yet again by Sophie Ecclestone's economical spell of 3/15, meant Bangladesh never threatened to rein in England's total and were bowled out for 134 in the 48th over. England have now won four matches on the trot, having more than made up for their slow start to the tournament with a string of impressive performances that has highlighted the depth in their squad. Experienced seamer Anya Shrubsole was rested on Sunday, paving the way for Charlie Dean (3/31) and Freya Davies (2/36) to show their prowess as Knight used seven different bowlers to successfully negate the Bangladesh batters.



Medvedev tops Murray at Miami Open



Miami Gardens: Daniil Medvedev never gave Andy Murray a chance. The top-seeded Medvedev opened his bid to reclaim the No. 1 ranking on Saturday by toppling Murray 6-4 6-2 in the second round of the Miami Open. Medvedev never faced a break point in any of his nine service games. He can regain the No. 1 spot by making the Miami semifinals. "Definitely, I have a lot of motivation to try and get it back," Medvedev said. Only five men in the past 18 years have held the No. 1 ranking that is currently held by Novak Djokovic. Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are also past No. 1's while Medvedev and Murray are the others.

Asian Games archery selection: Rai, Ridhi book berths; Atanu misses cut

Sonapat: Top-ranked Indian archer Atanu Das missed the cut for the upcoming Asian Games as he finished outside top-eight in the final selection trial at the Sports Authority of India Centre here on Saturday. Veteran Services archer Tarundeep Rai, who won a historic individual silver in 2010 Asian Games, was the first to book a berth, finishing on top in the men's recurve trial. In the women's section, promising Ridhi Phor of Haryana finished on top to confirm her berth for the Asian Games slated in Hangzhou, China from September 10-25. The remaining three spots in both the men's and women's sections would be confirmed after Sunday's round robin matches. The same team would also represent India in the first three stages of the World Cup, beginning with the Antalya leg from April 18-24.

Kane the 2nd highest-scoring Englishman for his country



London: Harry Kane moved level with Bobby Charlton in second place on the all-time England men's scoring chart by slotting a penalty to seal a 2-1 victory against Switzerland in a friendly. The captain's 49th goal in 69 appearances for his country on Saturday leaves him only four from leveling with the retired Wayne Rooney. By converting from the spot after Steven Zuber handled, Kane completed a turnaround in a game that kick-started the buildup to the World Cup in November for both teams. Before the tournament draw on Friday, there's a chance for Kane to rack up more goals when the Ivory Coast visits Wembley Stadium to face the European Championship runner-up.

NZ batter Chapman out of ODI series against Netherlands

Auckland: New Zealand batter Mark Chapman has been ruled out of the upcoming ODI series against Netherlands after testing positive for COVID-19. George Worker replaced Chapman in the squad for the three-match series. He last played for New Zealand in 2018. Chapman, who was a part of the T20I squad, flew from Napier to Auckland on Saturday and after waking up with symptoms on Sunday. He tested positive in a rapid antigen test on Sunday following his arrival here from Napier. "It's really unfortunate for Mark and we're all really feeling for him at this time," New Zealand's head coach Gary Stead said.

DC's Lalit, Axar script win over Mumbai Indians

Mumbai, Mar 27 (PTI):

Delhi Capitals beat Mumbai Indians by four wickets in their IPL match here on Sunday. Lalit Yadav smashed 48 not out off 38 balls down the order as DC chased down the target of 178 with 10 balls to spare. Axar Patel also chipped in with a 17-ball 38 not out, while opener Prithvi Shaw contributed 38. For MI, Basil Thampi took three wickets for 35 runs. Earlier, Ishan Kishan hit a brisk unbeaten 81 as Mumbai Indians scored 177 for 5 after being asked to bat first.

Kishan and skipper Rohit Sharma (41) shared 67 runs for the opening wicket to lay the foundation for the total. For DC, Kuldeep Yadav picked up three wickets for 18 runs.

The 23-year-old opener, who became the most expensive buy of the IPL 2022 auction when MI bought him back for Rs 15.25 crore, proved his worth as he smashed 11 fours and two sixes in his 48-ball unbeaten knock.

After playing a second-fiddle to his skipper Rohit Sharma (41) inside the Power Play, Kishan came on his own to smash his



Lalit Yadav and Axar Patel put together a big fight in their seventh-wicket stand.

third fifty in a row for MI, and 10th overall.

Delhi put on the brakes in the middle overs, riding on Kuldeep Yadav's fine bowling effort of 4-0-18-3 which included the prized wickets of Rohit and Kieron Pollard (3).

But Kishan held fort even as wickets fell around him before exploding in the death with Mumbai scoring 59 runs in the final five overs.

Mumbai debutant Tilak

Varma also impressed in his 22 off 15 balls, but it was the Jharkhand batter who stepped on the gas in the death overs and also displayed a helicopter shot to prop up the total.

Playing with just two foreigners, Delhi missed their overseas recruits like Anrich Nortje (hip injury) and Lungi Ngidi as

their pace attack of Shardul Thakur (4-0-47-0), Khaleel Ahmed (4-0-27-2) and Kamlesh Nagarkoti

Brief Scores

Mumbai Indians: 177 for 5 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 81 not out, Rohit Sharma 41; Kuldeep Yadav 3/18).
Delhi Capitals: 179 for 6 in 18.2 overs (Lalit Yadav 48 not out, Axar Patel 38 not out, Prithvi Shaw 38; Basil Thampi 3/35).

(2-0-29-0) looked ordinary.

In a new avatar, Kuldeep bowled flat out and was spotted on with his lengths and did not let the batters have a go at him.

He first had Rohit with a back of a length delivery and then got Anmolpreet holed out to long off with a tossed up delivery.

Rohit and Kishan gave Mumbai a rollicking start. The skipper smashed three boundaries and two sixes, while his left-handed partner Kishan hit three boundaries and a six as the duo raced to 53 runs in six overs.

Just when Mumbai were toying with the lacklustre Delhi pace attack, Kuldeep halted their run flow with his twin breakthroughs after the Power Play.

Sindhu clinches Swiss Open title



Basel, Mar 27 (PTI):

Ace Indian shuttler P V Sindhu notched up her second women's singles title of the season with a straight game win over Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrunphan in the summit clash of the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament here on Sunday.

Playing her second successive final in the tournament, Sindhu, a double Olympic medallist, took 49 minutes to get the better of the fourth seeded Thai 21-16 21-8 at the St. Jakobshalle here.

It was Sindhu's 16th win over Busanan in 17 meetings, having lost to the Thai only once -- at the 2019 Hong Kong Open.

Sindhu had lost to Rio Olympic gold medallist Carolina Marin of Spain in the final in the last edition. The 26-year-old from

Hyderabad has happy memories of this venue as she had claimed the World Championships gold in 2019.

Sindhu had won the Syed Modi International Super 300 in Lucknow in January this year.

Super 300 tournaments are the second lowest tier of BWF Tour events.

Sindhu rode on her attack to open up a 3-0 lead but Busanan started to stay in the rallies and she produced some good quality shots to make it 7-7.

Busanan tried to keep Sindhu away from the net, making her move across the court but the Thai was erratic in her finishing, allowing the Indian to get into the break with a narrow two-point lead.

Busanan used her deceptions and drop shots to dictate the rallies but Sindhu relied on her retrieval skills to stay ahead.

I've not really thought about my future: Mithali on retirement call



Christchurch, Mar 27 (PTI):

She may have earlier hinted at a possible retirement at the end of the Women's World Cup, but veteran India captain Mithali Raj on Sunday said it's not the right time to take a call on her future just after the country's heart-breaking exit from the showpiece.

The 39-year-old Raj, the lone women cricketer to have played in six World Cups after making her maiden appearance 22 years ago, said she has not even come out of the disappointment of failing to qualify for the semifinals after India's three-wicket loss to South Africa here.

"You've not given me even an hour to think about my future, to go through and process what

has just happened today," Raj said in the post-match virtual media interaction, replying to a query about future plans.

"When you have a disappointment and in the campaign which ends like this in a World Cup where you've really prepared very hard over a year, it takes time to accept and then probably move on from there.

"Whatever the future holds for each and every player, so I've not really thought about my future."

Raj, only the third cricketer (men and women) after Sachin Tendulkar and Javed Miandad to play in six World Cups, had earlier dropped hints about her retirement, saying "life has come full circle" for her as she looked forward "to finishing the journey".

Proteas send India packing from World Cup

Christchurch, Mar 27 (PTI):

An inconsistent India crashed out of the Women's World Cup after suffering a heart-breaking three-wicket defeat against South Africa in a must-win league-stage game that went down to the wire, here on Sunday.

Smriti Mandhana (71), Shafali Verma (53) and skipper Mithali Raj (68) struck half-centuries, setting the platform for India to reach a competitive 274 for seven at the Hagley Oval.

Despite India's average bowling and fielding, the match last full distance with off-spinner Deepti Sharma needing to defend seven runs in the final over.

A well-set Mignon du Preez was caught in the deep off the penultimate ball, raising hopes of a memorable win for India. The Proteas now needed three runs off the final ball.

However, moments later the umpires ruled that Deepti had overstepped, turning India's ecstasy into agony in a matter of seconds.

Du Preez eventually hit the winning runs off the final ball and remained unbeaten on 52 to see her team through and finish



Mignon du Preez looks skywards after helping South Africa cross the line.

second in the league stage behind Australia.

As it panned out, Australia, South Africa, England and West Indies reached the last four stage.

In possibly her last match for India, skipper Mithali Raj was left devastated along with her teammates. India were not con-

sistent enough to make the semifinals and ended fifth in the league stage with three wins and four losses.

South Africa were cruising in their run chase with the in-form Laura Wolvaardt (80 off 79) and Lara Goodall (49 off 69) sharing 125 runs for the second wicket.

India rely heavily on veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami for early breakthroughs and her absence due to a side strain made the task easier for the South Africans.

Harmanpreet Kaur, who made 48 with the bat, got rid of opener Lizelle Lee (6) with a brilliant direct hit before Wolvaardt and Goodall got together and took the game away from the opposition.

Wolvaardt continued her sensational run of form with her fifth fifty-plus score in seven innings. It took a double strike from Harmanpreet to bring India back in the game as she found the stumps of Wolvaardt and trapped Sune Luus (22) with her probing off-spin.

The Indian fielding once again was sloppy and late evening dew made the job tougher for them. However, individual brilliance of Harmanpreet helped India take the game deep with South Africa needing 45 off the last 30 balls.

Du Preez, who was dropped by Smriti in the 45th over, and Chloe Tryon (17) were up for the challenge and took their team on the cusp of victory.

Tyron got three boundaries in the 47th over bowled by Gayakwad to reduce the equation to 20 off 18 balls.

West Indies on brink of series win

St George's, Mar 27 (AP):

A maiden Test century by Joshua da Silva and another England collapse contrived to put West Indies on the brink of winning the series-deciding third Test.

England led by only 10 runs with just two wickets in hand in its second innings, and still two days to play.

The English barely avoided losing on day three on Saturday when they crawled to stumps on 103-8. Their failure to win a test series in the Caribbean in 18 years was set to be extended.

Meanwhile, West Indies was looking at a first test series win at home since 2019, when England last visited.

The team's chief destroyer was batting allrounder Kyle Mayers who bowls medium pace. Unwanted for the first two tests both



Kyle Mayers (L), Jayden Seales (C) and Kraigg Brathwaite (R) of West Indies celebrate the dismissal of Alex Lees of England.

draws he replaced spinner Veerasammy Permaul in Grenada to shore up the batting. But his disciplined and relentless length

proved too much for England.

Mayers had an incredible 5-9 from 13 overs, a maiden five-for. That followed Da

Silva's equally remarkable unbeaten 100 in the morning that gave West Indies an intimidating 93-run lead on the first innings.

Infighting, inconsistency plagued India's campaign; 'time to look beyond Mithali and Jhulan'

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Rift in the team, "fitness issues" and an attack that lacked variety and sting, all of it seems to have contributed to India's pre-mature exit from the ICC Women's World Cup. The runners-up finish five years ago had changed the face of women's cricket and considering the massive strides the game made since that final in 2017, there were expectations that India would go all the way this time. However what unfolded was a disastrous campaign that ended at the league stage itself. Course correction for the Indian women's cricket team has become the need of the hour. The BCCI organised series against the likes of South Africa, England, Australia and World Cup hosts

New Zealand ahead of the ICC event but in the end, the players failed to deliver. The team could never attain the consistently levels that are required to win a major event. It was a last-ball heartbreak against the South Africans on Sunday that halted their run but the Mithali Raj-led squad could not get over the line even against other SENA teams including Australia and New Zealand. The team atmosphere was also far from ideal with a long-standing rift between two senior players creating a sense of unease in the team. Head coach Ramesh Power, who was brought back last year after being controversially sacked following the 2018 World Cup, also has a lot of answering to do for the team's hot and cold run over the past one year.

'Will not accept any offer of President's post'

Lucknow, Mar 27 (PTI):

BSP supremo Mayawati on Sunday asserted that she will not accept the offer of President's post from any party and alleged that the BJP and the RSS had spread false propaganda that she will be "made the President" if BJP comes to power in Uttar Pradesh, misleading her supporters.

In a statement after reviewing the party's humiliating defeat in the state elections, the four-time former chief minister said she is a firm disciple of Kanshi Ram who had also refused the post in the past. "How can I accept such a post when we know that it will be the end of our party. So I want to



BSP supremo Mayawati waves at the party leaders, during a review meeting to discuss the party's performance in the recent Assembly polls, at the party office, in Lucknow, Sunday.

make it clear to every BSP office bearer that in the interest of our party and movement, I will not accept any offer for the

President's post from the BJP or other parties and they should never be misled in future," Mayawati said. The term of President Ram Nath Kovind ends on July 24 and elections to the post have to held before that.

The BSP chief said she will spend every moment of her life strengthening the party across the country and urged its members not to be disheartened.

"In this election, through a well-thought-out strategy and conspiracy, the BJP, through its RSS organisation has spread false propaganda among our people that if a BJP government is not formed in UP, we will make your 'Behenji' the President of the country. That is why

you should allow BJP to come to power," Mayawati said while delving into the reasons for her party's defeat. "Let alone becoming the President, I cannot even imagine such a thing in my dream. They (BJP) also know that long ago Kanshi Ram ji had rejected this offer and I am his firm disciple," she said.

The BSP had got only one seat out of 403 in the recently-held assembly elections while in 2017 it had won 19 seats. Addressing a state-level meeting held at the party's state office here, Mayawati also alleged that the BJP instead of providing jobs to the poor, gave free ration and made them 'lachaar' (helpless) and 'gulam' (slave).

MP power company hires drones

To detect faults in transmission lines

Jabalpur, Mar 27 (PTI): The state-owned Madhya Pradesh Power Transmission Company Limited (MPPTCL) has hired drones to detect faults in the high voltage transmission lines, officials said on Sunday.

The drones are being used on an experimental basis for a year in dense forests, hilly terrains and plains in and around Jabalpur, doing away with the time consuming traditional practice where technical staffers climb on towers to find out faults in the transmission lines, before repairing them manually, MPPTCL's Managing Director Sunil Tiwari told PTI.

Calligraphy of Anik Dutta's 'Aparajito' released

Kolkata, Mar 27 (PTI):

With Anik Dutta's movie 'Aparajito' (The Undeclared), a tribute to legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray, all set for the release in May, the director has brought out the calligraphy of the film's title in Bangla and English. The maestro's filmmaker son Sandip Ray has helped Dutta in facilitating the calligraphy.

"There is the imagery of Durga and Apu in the first letter and that of Mitchell camera, used by Ray, in the second. A steam engine train, synonymous with an iconic scene from 'Pathar Panchali', and smoke billowing out of it

makes the last two letters.

"For the English title 'The Undeclared', we have used Ray Roman font developed by the maestro himself. There was much brainstorming for the logo. I am thankful to Sandip Ray for encouraging and helping us in the work," Dutta told PTI.

The filmmaker, who has award-winning movies such as 'Bhootee Bhoosyot' and 'Borunbabur Bondhu' to his name, said he always explores graphical possibilities for the logo once the title of his film is decided. "In Aparajito, the excitement doubled as there were so many possibilities to play with. The

film is based on the indomitable journey of one of the world's greatest filmmakers who overcame all odds to bring out 'Pathar Panchali', which put Bengali cinema on the world map.

"The movie 'Aparajito' revolves around debutant director Aparajito Ray's struggles to make his first film 'Pathar Padabali'. There has been a little playing with the names," Dutta said. He said that Ray was a master of calligraphy and cited the logo of 'Ghare Baire' (Home and the world) as an example. Sandip Ray extended best wishes for the movie and said he was looking forward to watching it.

PRIDE MARCH



People belonging to LGBTQIA community sing and dance, during 6th Awadh Queer Pride March in Lucknow, Sunday.

Bidders few for J'khand's ambitious 'Grain ATM' project

Ranchi, Mar 27 (PTI):

The Jharkhand government's flagship 'Grain ATM' project that aims at modernising the public distribution system has failed to attract more than one bidder even after completion of the second deadline on March 23, an official said on Sunday. The government is now contemplating extending the last date for submitting the expression of interest by a week or so, he said.

The food and public distribution department had planned to set up 'Grain ATMs' at 10 locations across the state to check leakages in the supply chain. The primary focus was to install these multi-commodity au-

tomated machines at high-volume fair price shops and state food corporation godowns in populated areas by June this year, the official said.

The department also planned to set up 'Grain ATMs' at more than 2,600 fair price shops in the state, he said. It had accordingly floated an expression of interest (EOI) for the project in February and extended the deadline for submitting bids till March 23.

Till now, only one bidder has shown interest in the project. To finalise it, we need at least two bidders. We are now planning to go for another extension of the last date by a week or so to invite more bidders, Food,

public distribution and consumer affairs director Dilip Tirkey told PTI. A Ranchi-based bidder has so far shown interest in the project, he said.

The Grain ATMs will mainly be established at fair price shops and they will be linked to e-PoS (point of sale) machines. There will be a biometric authentication system in the unit. The benefit of the initiative is that PDS dealers cannot provide lesser amounts of foodgrains to beneficiaries.

Once a PDS dealer pushes the button of kg, it will automatically come to the department's record and a beneficiary will get food items, another official said.

The move is to check irregularities in the supply of ration as beneficiaries of the public distribution system often lodge complaints against PDS dealers for malpractices. The department had suspended more than 100 PDS dealers on basis of such complaints in 2020, the official said.

Around 2.28 crore beneficiaries, who are registered under the priority household category of the food security scheme in Jharkhand get 5 kg of grains a month at Re 1 per kg, while 9 lakh BPL households enrolled under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana programme are entitled to 35 kg of grains per month at Re 1 per kg.

BEATING THE HEAT



Children play while swimming in the Hooghly river, on a hot summer day, in Nadia, Sunday.

Amid fuel price rise, Maha man commutes to work on horse

Aurangabad, Mar 27 (PTI):

In the wake of the fuel price rise and problems in maintaining a motorcycle due to the COVID-19 pandemic-induced restrictions, a man working as a lab assistant at a pharmacy college here in Maharashtra commutes on a horse to his workplace everyday. The diesel price in Aurangabad is just a few paise short of Rs 100 per litre, while the petrol rate has crossed Rs 115 per litre.

The petrol price on Sunday was hiked by 50 paise and diesel by 55 paise, taking the total increase in rates since resumption of daily price revision less than a week back to Rs 3.70-3.75 per litre. The rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending upon the incidence of local taxation.

SPIRITUAL GATHERING

PM Modi addresses Shwetambar Terapanth event

New Delhi, Mar 27 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that government, society and spiritual authority always played an equal role in the country which, he added, has never had the tendency that only government will do everything.

In a video message at the concluding ceremony of "Ahimsa Yatra" of Shwetambar Terapanth, a Jain sect, Modi said the country is reflecting this spirit during the ongoing 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' while walking on the path of duty towards achieving its pledges with the motto of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas', according to an official statement.



PM Narendra Modi

Recalling the ancient tradition of saints emphasizing constant movement, he especially noted that the Shwetambar Terapanth has made abdication of lethargy into a spiritual pledge and complimented chief Acharya Mahashraman for completing 18,000-km 'padayatra' in three countries. The prime

minister lauded him for expanding the tradition of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam' and propagating the mantra of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' as a spiritual pledge. He also recalled his long association with the Shwetambar Terapanth.

Modi underlined the importance of the 'padayatra' that was flagged off from the Red Fort in 2014 and noted the coincidence that he himself started his journey as prime minister in the same year and embarked on the journey of public service and public welfare. Praising the theme of the padayatra - harmony, morality and de-addiction - he said real self-realisation is possible only in the absence of any kind of addiction.

Villagers throng hospital for vaccine jabs

After milk-based dish at feast spreads rabies fear

Gwalior, Mar 27 (PTI):

People of a village in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district hurried to get anti-rabies vaccine shots after falsely believing that they could get the viral disease from eating a dish prepared from the milk of a buffalo that had been bitten by a rabid dog.

Health authorities in Chandpura village in the district's Dabra tehsil even administered the shots to 25 people but heaved a sigh of relief as no one had shown any symptoms of the ailment, considered fatal, as on Sunday, an official said. "Some 700 people ate a

dish made from buffalo milk at a funerary feast held three days ago. The next day they got to know that the buffalo had been bitten by a dog with rabies, and that the animal and its calf had died," Dabra Sub Divisional Magistrate Pradeep Sharma told PTI.

"They gathered at Dabra civil hospital demanding anti-rabies vaccine shots. Doctors there administered 25 jabs and also told people having the milk of rabid animals does not bring about the infection. However, only after a health team arrived from Gwalior did the villagers relent," the SDM added.

Palaniswami rules out scope for Sasikala in AIADMK

Salem (TN), Mar 27 (PTI):

AIADMK top leader K Palaniswami on Sunday reiterated that there is no place for V K Sasikala in the party saying no one could give a new lease of life to a matter that has already been settled. Days after his colleague and party coordinator, O Panneerselvam (OPS) said he personally had respect and admiration for Sasikala, the confidante of late Chief Minister J Jayalalitha, Palaniswami made it clear that there is no scope for her in the party. Already, the party brass had passed a resolution against admitting her into the organisation and it was seconded by the party's district units across the state, Palaniswami told reporters here when asked if there are chances for her being taken back into the AIADMK.

Surat, Mar 27 (PTI):

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on Sunday said nobody can break the Modi-Yogi pair, and added that the BJP retained power in UP with the support of a lot of people, including a large number north Indians settled in Gujarat's Surat. She was referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath, who took oath as the Uttar Pradesh chief minister for a second term at a ceremony held on Friday, which was attended by the PM.

In the UP Assembly polls held earlier this year, the BJP-led alliance has won 273 of 403 seats. While the BJP got 255 seats, its allies Nishad Party and the Apna Dal (S) bagged 18. This is the first time in

over three decades that a party has won the assembly elections twice in a row in the crucial state.

"We have formed the government in Uttar Pradesh, friends. Nobody can break the Modi-Yogi pair...nobody can do this. A lot of people have given their support to achieve this. Several people from here (Surat) went there (UP) for campaigning," she said. This is after 35 years that one party returned to power for a second term in a row, creating history, she added.

"For this, you must congratulate us...A large number of north Indians are settled in Surat, and they have supported us to achieve this," the former Gujarat chief minister said. Patel was in Surat to lay the foundation stone



Governor of Uttar Pradesh Anandiben Patel, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Gujarat BJP President C.R.Patil, Gujarat Home Minister Harsh Sanghvi during the foundation stone-laying ceremony of Kiran Medical College, in Surat, Sunday.

for Kiran Medical College, being set up by Samast Patidar Arogya Trust at Vadod in Olpad taluka of the district. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Gujarat

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel were also present on the occasion.

Stating that India lags behind in the field of research, she suggested that the proposed college

should have a dedicated department for this purpose. "India rose to the occasion to carry out research and came out with a vaccine against COVID-19," the UP governor added. She also stressed the need for girls to get vaccinated against cervical cancer.

"A new vaccine (against cervical cancer) has entered the market. As of now, it is very costly. I have been told that the price of this vaccine will come down in the range of Rs 100 to Rs 300 by August-September. Whenever this vaccine is available, I request you to get your daughters in the age group of 9 to 14 vaccinated against cervical cancer. I have started this vaccination work in UP irrespective of the price the vaccine," she said.