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### BRIEF



Cadets perform during the combined display organised as part of the Passing Out Parade, at Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai, Friday.

### Futala Lake

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court has extended till March 21 the order asking the Maharashtra government and its metro rail corporation not to carry out any construction activity at the famous Futala Lake in Nagpur. Initially, on January 25, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud had stayed the ongoing construction at the lake, built by the Bhosle dynasty to which Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji belonged, over 60 acres of land. It was hearing a petition filed by NGO 'Swaachh Association, Nagpur'.

### CISF march

**Thane:** Central Industrial Security Force jawans and police carried out route marches in Kasara and Vashind areas of Thane district as part of the law and order maintenance drill in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, an official said on Friday. The route march was carried out under the guidance of Thane (Rural) Superintendent of Police DS Swami and Additional SP Deepali Ghate on March 5-6 in Kasara, Shirol, Veluk and Vashala under Kasara police station limits and Vashind Bazarpath, Vashind West, Khativali and Sarmal under Vashind police station limits, the official said. "These are considered vulnerable villages. Similarly, route marches were also carried out in Navghar and Bhayander police station limits on March 5.

### IT raid

**Patna:** Income Tax sleuths on Friday searched the premises linked to Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MLC Vinod Jaiswal over an alleged tax evasion case, sources said. The raid was conducted by I-T officials of the West Bengal unit, they said. The RJD MLC, considered close to party supreme Lalu Prasad, was not present when the IT officials reached the premises in the upscale Anugrah Narayan Road locality in the morning, the sources said. Meanwhile, talking to PTI, RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwary slammed the BJP-led central government for the I-T raid. "The BJP uses agencies like the ED, CBI and I-T Department against those it is afraid of..." Tiwary said.

**Weather**

High 34 Low 18

### Cong announces first list of 39 candidates

## Bhupesh Baghel to contest LS elections from Rajnandgaon

Rahul Gandhi fielded from Wayanad

New Delhi, Mar 08 (PTI):

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will contest the Lok Sabha polls from Kerala's Wayanad again, the party announced on Friday as it released its first list of 39 candidates. Congress general secretary K C Venugopal will contest from Alappuzha (Kerala), former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel from Rajnandgaon, Jyotsna Mahant from Korba, Tamradhwaj Sahu from Mahasamund and Shashi Tharoor from Thiruvananthapuram. Venugopal said the list has 15 general category candidates while 24 are from the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. Congress treasurer Ajay Maken said the list has a good mix of youth and experience. The announcement came a day after the Congress' Central Election Committee (CEC) finalised the names for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections after having a discussion on over 60 Lok Sabha seats from 11 states and union territories. The CEC meeting which was chaired by party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Discussions were held on Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Sikkim, Tripura, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Lakshadweep. "We are in election mode and on an aggressive path of campaigning with Rahul Gandhi undertaking the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra which is in Gujarat," Venugopal said.



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### 'Govt ready for dialogue'

#### Chh'garh CM appeals Naxalites to shun violence

**Dantewada, Mar 08 (PTI):** Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Friday appealed to the Naxalites to join the mainstream by leaving the path of violence, and said his government was open to holding a dialogue with them. The BJP government in the state will fulfill their every legitimate demand if they were ready for talks, he said. The chief minister made the statement while interacting with women personnel from the District Reserve Guard, Bastar Fighters and Danteshwari Fighters, all units of the state police engaged in anti-Naxal operations, at Jawanga Education Hub in Dantewada district on International Women's Day. Sumitra Sahu, a DRG commando posted in Narayanpur, spoke about her ordeal when she was a Naxalite. Sahu, who was an active Naxalite for 14 years, quit the outlawed

CPI (Maoist) in 2018 and was subsequently recruited in the police force. CM Sai said he saluted her valour: "I would like to tell our local people who are Naxalites to quit Naxalism. They should live like ordinary people do, and hold dialogue (with the government) and tell what problem they have with the government. Their every legitimate demand will be fulfilled by the Chhattisgarh government," the chief minister said. "I too hail from a tribal community and village, and therefore I understand the pain of tribals and villagers. They should hold dialogue with us without getting influenced (by others). They should hold talks about their demands. Today, on Women's Day, I would like to appeal to them to join the mainstream of development and (we are) ready for dialogue," he added. Danteshwari Shakti Kendra (centres) for sports, cultural and educational activities will be set up at the headquarters of all seven districts in the Bastar division, Sai announced on the occasion.

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### Sudha Murty nominated to Rajya Sabha

**New Delhi, Mar 08 (PTI):** Philanthropist and author Sudha Murty was nominated to the Rajya Sabha on Friday, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauding her contribution in diverse fields. Modi asserted in a post on X that her presence in the Upper House is a powerful testament to "Nari Shakti" (women power), exemplifying the strength and potential of women in shaping the nation's destiny. Wishing her a fruitful tenure, he said, "I am delighted that

#### 'RS nomination coming on Women's Day was a double surprise'

**Bengaluru:** The announcement of her nomination to the Rajya Sabha was a double surprise as it came on Women's Day, philanthropist and author Sudha Murty said on Friday. The former Chairperson of Infosys Foundation, the philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm of Infosys, said that she has never sought the position and had "absolutely no idea" why the government chose to nominate her.

the President of India has nominated Sudha Murty Ji to the Rajya Sabha.

### PM Modi announces Rs 100 cut in LPG cylinder price



A van loaded with LPG cylinders at roadside near a distribution center.

New Delhi, Mar 08 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a reduction of Rs 100 in cooking gas cylinder prices on Friday on the occasion of International Women's Day. This will significantly ease the financial burden on millions of households across the country, especially benefiting "Nari Shakti" (women power), he said in a post

on X. "By making cooking gas more affordable, we also aim to support the well-being of families and ensure a healthier environment. This is in line with our commitment to empowering women and ensuring Ease of Living for them," he said. In a related decision, the government on Thursday announced the extension of Rs 300 per LPG cylinder subsidy to poor women

### LPG price cut height of political cynicism: TMC

**Kolkata, Mar 08 (PTI):** The Trinamool Congress on Friday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of a cut in LPG cylinder prices, asserting that the move was the "limit of political cynicism" ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. West Bengal's ruling party also dubbed it as a "token cut" and a "cheap political stunt" Responding to the announcement, TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sagarika Ghose mocked the prime minister, saying "the country needs a pradhan mantri, what we have is an election mantri". "Days before the general elections, the Modi government has reduced the price of LPG; this is the limit of political cynicism. All this time, all these years, women consumers were labouring under the burden of high LPG prices," she said on X.

under the Ujjwala Yojana for the next fiscal starting April 1. The government in October last year hiked the subsidy from Rs 200 per 14.2-kg cylinders for up to 12 refills per year to Rs 300 per bottle. The Rs 300 per cylinder subsidy was for the current fiscal, which ends on March 31. In another post on X, Modi greeted people on the International Women's Day. "We salute

the strength, courage, and resilience of our Nari Shakti and laud their accomplishments across various fields. Our government is committed to empowering women through initiatives in education, entrepreneurship, agriculture, technology and more," he said. This is also reflected in the government's accomplishments in the last decade, Modi added.

### SC quashes case against academic for denouncing abrogation of Art 370, greeting Pak citizens on I-day

New Delhi, Mar 08 (PTI):

The time has come to enlighten and educate the police machinery about the concept of freedom of speech and expression, the Supreme Court has said and set aside an order of the Bombay High Court against an academic accused of criticising the abrogation of Article 370 that bestowed special status on Jammu and Kashmir and greeting the citizens of Pakistan on the country's Independence Day. The Maharashtra Police had registered an FIR against professor Javed Ahmed Hajam at Hatkanangale police station in Kolhapur under Section 153A (promotion of communal disharmony) of the Indian Penal Code for posting WhatsApp messages that denounced the abrogation of Article 370 and congratulated the people of Pakistan on their Independence day. "August 5-Black Day

Jammu & Kashmir" and "14th August-Happy Independence Day Pakistan," he had written on WhatsApp. "Now, the time has come to enlighten and educate our police machinery on the concept of freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution and the extent of reasonable restraint on their free speech and expression. They must be sensitised about the democratic values enshrined in our Constitution," a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said. If a citizen of India extends good wishes to the citizens of Pakistan on 14th August, which is their Independence Day, there is nothing wrong with it, the apex court observed. "Our country has been a democratic republic for more than 75 years. The people of our country know the importance of democratic values. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude that the

words will promote disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious groups. "The test to be applied is not the effect of the words on some individuals with weak minds or who see a danger in every hostile point of view. The test is of the general impact of the utterances on reasonable people who are significant in numbers," the bench said. Merely because a few individuals may develop hatred or ill will, it will not be sufficient to attract Section 153-A of the IPC, it said. The court said continuation of the prosecution of the appellant for the offence punishable under Section 153-A of the IPC will be a "gross abuse" of the process of law. "Accordingly, we set aside the impugned judgment dated April 10, 2023 of the High Court of Judicature at Bombay and quash the impugned FIR," the bench said.

### Kerala unveils first AI teacher in a school

**Thiruvananthapuram, Mar 08 (PTI):** "What is the most expensive thing in the world," was a question asked by a student from the KTCT Higher Secondary School in Kallambalam here loudly, even as a humanoid draped in a saree listened attentively. A necklace on the humanoid changed colour from green to orange, and it shook its head before giving out the answer with informative details as other children curiously listened. This silk saree-draped humanoid is 'Iris', the first AI teacher unveiled in Kerala. A disturbed network connection and the chatter from the children often slowed down Iris as it tried to catch the noises, pre-

suming them to be questions asked to 'her'. And when there were too many noises, Iris took time to process the question. But when the hall was silent and a student asked a question, either from their syllabus or anything under the sun, Iris gave out the answer in no time, with examples and references. "Our next step is to give her 'eyes' so that she will identify each student and answer their questions. She would be becoming more interactive and completely automated," said Abhijith, an 8th standard student and one of the students who closely worked with Makerlabs Edutech Private Limited in the development of this AI-based teacher as part of an initiative of the Atal

Tinkering Lab at the school. He said that the AI teacher will not be able to answer the questions of the children if the classroom is noisy, so this teacher will make children more disciplined. "The children are very excited, especially the lower KG students. They like this 'teacher' because she never gets angry or irritated and always has an answer to their questions. She also does not ask questions and never gives homework," Meera Suresh, the principal of the KTCT Higher Secondary School, told PTI. Iris works on the generative AI principle with a capacity to convert voice into texts and also texts into voice.

### SC to hear on Mar 11 SBI's plea seeking extension of time to disclose details

New Delhi, Mar 08 (PTI):

A five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court will hear on March 11 an application filed by the State Bank of India (SBI) seeking extension of time till June 30 to disclose details of each electoral bond encashed by political parties before the scheme was scrapped last month. The bench, headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, will also hear a separate plea which has sought initiation of contempt action against the SBI alleging it "wilfully and deliberately" disobeyed the apex court's direction to submit details of the contributions made to political parties through electoral bonds to the

Election Commission by March 6. In a landmark verdict delivered on February 15, a five-judge constitution bench had scrapped the Centre's electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding, calling it "unconstitutional" and ordering disclosure by the Election Commission of the donors, the amount donated by them and the recipients by March 13. Ordering closure of the scheme forthwith, the top court had directed the SBI, the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to submit by March 6 the details of the electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019 till date to the Election Commission which was asked to publish the information on its official website by March 13.

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## Cong fields two sitting MLAs and two ex-MLA and one sitting MP

## Naxalite incidents on rise, fake encounters and arrests taking place: Bhupesh

For six Lok Sabha seats declared today

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Congress party has declared the list of six candidate out of total 11 Lok Sabha seats of Chhattisgarh and fielded former CM Bhupesh Baghel as LS candidate from Rajnandgaon and Dr Shiv Kumar Daharia from Janjgir-Champa (SC) LS constituency. Congress has repeated only one sitting MP Jyotsna Mahant from Korba LS constituency.

As per the list declared by Congress on Thursday evening, Congress has fielded two ex-MLAs and two existing MLAs and



one fresh face for LS ticket and repeated one sitting LS MP in its list of six Lok Sabha constituencies here on Friday. Congress has fielded former CM and MLA Bhupesh Baghel from Rajnandgaon LS constituency and Dr Shiv Kumar Daharia from Janjgir-Champa (SC) LS constituency. Jyotsna Mahant has been repeated from Korba Lok Sabha constituency and ex-

MLA Tamradhwaj Sahu from Mahasamund LS constituency. The party has fielded ex-MLA Vikas Upadhyay from Raipur Lok Sabha seat and fielded one fresh face Rajendra Sahu from Durg Lok Sabha seat.

So the former CM from Congress Bhupesh Baghel will be contesting against Santosh Pandey from Rajnandgaon and sitting MP Jyotsna Mahant against the BJP

LS candidate from Korba Saroj Pandey. The prestigious seat of Raipur Lok Sabha constituency will have tough fight between 8 times MLA of BJP and Cabinet Minister Brijmohan Agrawal with the ex-MLA Vikas Upadhyay. A new face from Durg Rajendra Sahu of Congress will face Vijay Baghel from BJP and Roopkumari Choudhary will face Congress candidate

Tamradhwaj Sahu from Mahasamund LS constituency. Former Minister and ex-MLA Dr Shiv Kumar Daharia will face Kamlesh Jangde of BJP from Janjgir-Champa (SC) reserved LS constituency. Congress is yet to declare its candidate for remaining five LS constituencies of Raigarh, Kanker, Surguja, Bastar and Bilaspur Lok Sabha seats.

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Targeting BJP over Naxalism former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said that Naxalite incidents were on rise in Chhattisgarh. Fake encounters and arrests are also taking place, Baghel said, adding that the old phase has started again. Three incidents have happened in Bastar in 3 months, he said, adding that BJP workers are dying. The Chief Minister and the Home Minister are sitting silent, he said.

Regarding the list of Congress' Lok Sabha candidates, the former Chief Minister said, the CEC meeting took place and the list might be released any time. On the question of contesting the elections,

former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said, the party will decide on it. The orders of the high command have to be followed, he added.

The former Chief Minister also hit back at the statement of Agriculture Minister Ramvihar Netam and said, BJP made 10 crore members through missed calls. The number of 'Kauravas' was more in Mahabharata, he said, adding that 'Kauravas' became BJP. "If there is a 'Dharma Yuddha', we will win", he added.

Commenting over BJP's move to transfer money to beneficiaries of Mahtari Vandan Yojana and farmers before implementation of the code of conduct,

Baghel said the number of married women in the state is 1 crore and names of 30 lakh women have already been deleted. Baghel further said, no verification was being done at present. After Lok Sabha elections names of many beneficiaries would be removed, he said. The former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel also took a dig at the Rs 100 cut in gas cylinder prices and Ramvihar Netam's statement. May Ram Vihar Netam be blessed with wisdom, Baghel said. The price of the cylinder was Rs 400, when Hema Malini and Smriti Irani were sitting on strike but now the price of gas cylinder is being cut by Rs 100 after increase to Rs 1200, he said.

## Nagas, Saints, Sages gather for 'Shahi Snan'



Palkis (palanquins) and 'Shahi Baggis (royal horses) in Shobha Yatra' which started from Sant Samagam via the route behind Shri Kuleshwarnath Mahadev Temple, Nehru Bal Udyan, Rajim Bridge, Pt. Sunderlal Sharma Chowk, Gauravpath Rajim, VIP Road and culminated at 'Shahi Kund' built in the fair. The Shobha Yatra was welcomed by showering flower garlands at various squares and intersections in both the cities of Navapara and Rajim.

Naga Babas, sages and saints armed with various weapons kept running Akharas performing stunts and displaying their bravery in various squares. The people of the region who came to the fair were thrilled to see the Naga Sadhus swinging their swords and axes and dancing with joy.

Slowly Shobha Yatra moved forward and reached 'Shahi Kund', where after worshipping the weapons, the Naga Babas first jumped into the Kund and completed Shahi Snan. Apart from Naga Babas, Abhanpur MLA Inder Kumar Sahu also got down to take a dip in the Kund.

Local public representatives along with various Akharas participated in Shahi Snan. Apart from the entire fair area, a large crowd of devotees and visitors gathered near the Kund to see this panoramic view.

Amid tight security arrangement foreign tourists from France, Italy and other countries enjoyed the grandeur of the event.

Perform stunts with arms in Shobha Yatra, making conclusion of Rajim Kumbh Kalp Mela

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Mar 08:** A historic 'Shobha Yatra' (procession) of Naga Babas, Sadhus-Saints and various Akharas left the Sant Samagam Sthal for Shahi Snan (royal bath) at 8 am today on the holy festival of 'Mahashivratri', the last day of Rajim Kumbh Kalp Mela. All the Nagas, sages and saints along with Abhanpur MLA Inder Kumar Sahu, Deputy Director of Culture Department Pratap Parakh, Girish Bissa of Mela Organizing Committee, local public representatives and officials of various departments also participated in Mahashivratri celebration.

Sages and saints were seen riding in decorated

### Significance of 'Sangam bath' on Mahashivratri

**Rajim:** Although bathing has its own significance during festivals, there is a special reason for taking bath in Triveni Sangam on Mahashivratri. It is said that if Bhole Baba is prayed to at any time during Mahashivratri, then Maa Parvati and Bholenath directly fulfill the wishes of the devotees.

Lord Shankar's identity is the ashes of the cremation ground on his body, a necklace of snakes around his neck, poison in his throat, the holy Ganga in his 'Jatas' (string of hair) and the destructive flame on his forehead.

It is believed that bathing in the confluence of Mahanadi, Sondhur and Pari not only purifies the body but also removes the impurity of the mind. On this day there is also a tradition of taking dry hoist on the dry sand of Sangam. It is believed that Bholenath visits the fair in disguise.

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Prime Minister

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## Provide benefits of labour scheme to migrant, factory workers: Dewangan

● Annual budget of Rs 524.06 cr. approved in the meeting of the Board of Directors

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Labour Minister Lakhn Lal Dewangan on Thursday in the meeting of the Board of Directors of Chhattisgarh Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board in the building of Labour Welfare Board located in Nava Raipur for the implementation of public welfare schemes for the welfare and protection of construction workers for the financial year 2024-25 approved the annual budget of Rs 524.06 cr.



other provinces and benefit them from the schemes run by the Board.

This has been done so that the construction workers of the state in other states can be benefited from the public welfare schemes run by the Board. He said that it should be ensured that 100 percent construction workers of the state get the benefits of the government's welfare schemes,

so that the standard of living of the workers can improve. In the meeting, while simplifying the process of registration of construction workers, instead of the earlier provision of employment certificate being given through the employer or trade union for 90 days of construction work, now the workers are employed in the work themselves. In connection with this, it

was decided to submit the employment certificate on the basis of self-declaration certificate and take applications for registration and renewal. Secretary cum Labour Commissioner Alarmelmangai D., Special Secretary Finance Department Sheetal Shashwat Verma and Secretary BOC Savita Mishra were present in the meeting.



**CM pays tribute to late Shri Dilip Singh Judev**  
On his birth anniversary

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai paid floral tributes to the portrait of former MP and Union Minister Late Shri Dilip Singh Judev on his birth anniversary, at his residence on Friday.

Chief Minister Sai stated, "Late Shri Judev was my political guide. Today, my political life is dedicated to him. It was his wish that I should become the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh. It is my good fortune that his blessings came to fruition today. Late Shri Judev always fought for tribal rights; he always struggled to preserve 'Sanatan' values. Following in his footsteps, the Chhattisgarh Government is working determinedly for tribal welfare and establishing good governance in the state."

Revenue Minister Tank Ram Verma, Priyamvada Singh Judev and Om Prakash Sinha were also present.

## CM Sai offer prayers to Maa Danteshwari in Dantewada



Central Chronicle News

**Dantewada, Mar 08:** Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai is on a one-day visit to Dantewada on the occasion of International Women's Day. Upon his arrival, he offered prayers to Maa Danteshwari, the revered

goddess of Bastar, extending his wishes for the happiness, prosperity, and well-being of the state's people.

MLA Chaitram Atami, MLA Chitrakote Vinayak Goyal along with Bastar Commissioner Shyam Dhawde, IG Bastar Range Sundarraj P,

Commissioner Public Relations Mayank Srivastava, Collector Mayank Chaturvedi, Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai, District Panchayat CEO Kumar Bishwaranjan, and district administration officials were also present on the occasion.

## New webseries to be launched on liberation war of Bastar

On occasion of Int'l Women's Day

First episode of 'Bastar Ek Stree Rajyam' will be available on YouTube

**Raipur, Mar 08:** A new webseries 'Liberation War of Bastar' has been made to make people aware about the liberation war carried out in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh in the Indian freedom struggle movement. This webseries is going to be launched on International Women's Day. The first episode of 'Bastar Ek Stree Rajyam' will be released on YouTube. It can be viewed anywhere through mobile. This webseries has been produced



by Bastar Area Tribal Development Authority. Women have been strong in Bastar region since ancient times. The women here have been participating equally with men in the

socio-economic and political fields. Their role has been effective even during the rule of dynasties, that is why Bastar came to be called Stree Rajyam. Bastar region has many brave women like Maharani Pramila Devi, Princess Chameli Devi, Maskdevi, Ramotin Madin, who have made supreme sacrifice for their water, forest and land.

Keeping in view this strong participation of women in Bastar region, a short short film has been produced by Bastar Area Tribal Development Authority to pay respectful tribute to the brave rulers and brave women of Bastar division. An attempt has been made to convey information about the glorious history of Bastar to the common people through this short film.

**BJP's Kisan Mahasammelan only political gimmick and show off: Cong**

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) has described BJP's Kisan Mahasammelan as a political gimmick and show off. BJP can never be farmer-friendly, PCC spokesperson Dhananjay Singh Thakur said.

BJP's central government is laying nails on the roads to stop the farmers in Delhi and water cannons and tear gas shells are being released on them, he said, adding that BJP leaders are calling farmers traitors. Under Modi government, neither farmers are getting fair prices for their crops nor has their income doubled, Thakur said. According to Dhananjay Singh the problems of farmers have increased three times under the BJP government. Farmers have understood this character of BJP, he said, adding that farmers will bring change in the Lok Sabha elections this time.

## Providing quality health facilities to people is our priority: Choudhary

**Raipur, Mar 08:** State's Finance Minister OP Choudhary on Thursday announced the construction of a new community health center building worth Rs 3 crore 70 lakh 48 thousand, including a new community health center building built at a cost of Rs 2.65 crore, with the aim of expanding the health facilities in the development block Pusaur and providing better medical facilities to the general public. A total of 9 works of cost were inaugurated.

Finance Minister OP Choudhary, while congratulating the people present along with the people of the entire area, said that such a good community health center has been constructed and OPD has started from today itself. Whatever resources the



hospital requires will be provided on priority, so that the people of the area get quality health facilities. He said that all the doctors and nurse staff should work with honesty and dedication to establish the hospital as a modern hospital.

Today, 6 bedded wards have been inaugurated in the Community Health Center as well as in pri-

mary and sub-health centers at other places. Along with this, he said that he announced to give an amount of Rs. 3 thousand each to 321 students for education promotion and gave information about the works sanctioned in various Gram Panchayats. He talked about early approval of the demand for ambulance and hearse as well as operation theater equip-

ment and ortho doctors for the hospital.

During this, Finance Minister Choudhary also inaugurated the newly constructed 06 bedded ward in 03 Primary Health Center and 03 Sub Health Center along with the newly constructed Community Health Center in Pusaur in which 03 works of Community Health Center Pusaur are included.

This includes construction of a new building at a cost of Rs 2 crore 65 lakh, ETP (Effluent Treatment Plant) at a cost of Rs 11 lakh 50 thousand for cleaning polluted water, 20 bedded ward at a cost of Rs 35 lakh. Similarly, 06 bedded wards have been constructed in 03 primary health centers and 03 sub health centers at a cost of Rs 9 lakh 83 thousand.

## Chief Minister to inaugurate Jagar 2024 on March 10



**Raipur, Mar 08:** Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai will inaugurate Jagar 2024, a popular annual handicrafts and handloom exhibition, on March 10 at 7 pm. Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao will be presiding over the event. Organized annually by the Chhattisgarh Handicrafts Development Board, this exhibition aims to showcase the rich cultural heritage of Chhattisgarh.

Jagar 2024 will feature a diverse range of handicrafts from Chhattisgarh, including bell metal (Dhokra), iron, wood, bamboo, carpet, sisal, godana, tumba, terracotta, and chhind-kansa. Handloom enthusiasts can expect to find a variety of textiles including Kosa sarees, dupattas, salwar suits, dress material, cotton bedsheets, and various types of Khadi readymade garments.

In addition to the local crafts, Jagar 2024 will also highlight handicrafts from 11 other states, including chikankari from Lucknow, Banarasi and Bengali sarees, Chanderi and Maheshwari sarees from Madhya Pradesh, as well as brass figurines from Tikamgarh, jute work from West Bengal, Kantha work and Phulkari from Punjab, Mojri leathercraft and embroidered salwar suits from Rajasthan, jewellery from Delhi, bedsheets from Haryana Panipat, Kolhapuris from Maharashtra, Bhagalpuri dress material from Bihar, and shawls and sarees from Jammu and Kashmir. The exhibition will be held at the Chhattisgarh Haat Premises in Pandri, Raipur from March 10 to March 19. Cultural programmes will also be organized every day from 7 pm to 9 pm, adding to the vibrancy of the event.

## Rajim Kumbh's fame is spreading across the world: Maria

● Tourists from Germany said 'Namaste Rajim'

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Tourist Regina Maria from Germany surprised the devotees of Rajim Kumbh by saying 'Namaste Rajim'. Actually, she had reached Rajim Kumbh with the desire to know the vast form of 'Sanatan Dharma'.

Maria said that after taking shelter in Sanatan, she has experienced spiritual peace, the dullness of life has gone away and enthusiasm has been infused.

Maria from Germany said that Rajim's fame has now reached beyond the seven seas. Impressed by this event related to Sanatan culture, she has reached Rajim. The carvings and artefacts of the Rajim Lochan temple have impressed her. She was overwhelmed after visiting the Kuleshwar Nath Mahadev temple situated at Sangam beach and other foreign tourists accompanying her took blessings from the saints and took a tour of the entire fair area on foot.



Stefan Joseph Maria, Hildegard Relda, Christa, Ulrika, Salkmaria, Lens, Ulrich, who came from Germany to the Kumbh Mela with Regina Maria, said that we have come to Rajim for the first time. We all have come to India to see and understand the spiritual and religious culture of India and its influence by culture here.

She said that we also went to Assam, Sikkim and Calcutta, it was good to meet the people. But the cordiality with which the people of Chhattisgarh welcomed us in a traditional manner is a special experience for us.

The German tourist group took blessings from Lord Rajeev Lochan, Shri Kuleshwar Nath Mahadev and Sant Samagam in Rajim. Apart from this, they also met Naga Sadhus. During this time, there was a huge crowd of people who came to visit the fair to take photographs and selfies. These tourists also enjoyed themselves and got themselves photographed with the group of people present.

## Weightlifting champion Bhawesh Sarang selected in Indian Army

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Junior National Weightlifting Champion Bhawesh Sarang has been selected in the Indian Army from the Sports Kota to the post of Hawaldar.



According to the information received, Bhawesh was selected on the basis of the recently held trials at Pune-based Army Sports Institute. He lifted 135 Kg in Snatch and 170 Kg in Clean & Jerk event with the total weight of 305 Kgs. On the basis of the above performance and completion of essential formalities, he has been selected to the post of Hawaldar in Indian Army. Bhawesh is presently undertaking training at Jai Satnam Vyamshaha Raipur and has already won a gold and a bronze medal in the Junior National championship while representing Chhattisgarh.

## BJP 'Kisan Mahakumbh' today

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Agriculture Minister Ramvihar Netam took stock of the preparations for the 'Kisan Mahakumbh' (Farmers Training Cum Conference) program organised at the Science College grounds in Raipur on March 9 and gave necessary instructions to the officials. Agriculture Minister Netam said that our government is a farmer friendly government and is committed to the development of farmers.

## Murder of BJP leaders is very serious: Kashyap

● Resolve to fulfill Modi's guarantee in 100 days, will fulfill every promise

**Jagdalpur, Mar 08:** Forest Minister Kedar Kashyap termed the continuous killing of BJP leaders in Naxalite incidents as extremely serious. He said that efforts will be made to ensure that such incidents do not happen. Target killing is not big or small, everyone is equal. Our big leaders have sacrificed their lives. On the plans of the state BJP government, Kashyap said that we are fulfilling the promises made to the public, every guarantee of Modi's will be fulfilled. Minister Kedar Kashyap, while retorting to the statement of PCC Chief Deepak Baij, said that the Congress State President should first take care of his own family. Fearing certain defeat in the Lok Sabha elections, they are unable to decide who should be made the scapegoat. Regarding the advance strategy including saluting Mahtari and releasing many schemes, Minister Kedar Kashyap said that this is not an election strategy. It has been decided to fulfill the promises and guarantees given to the people, be it Mahtari Vandan or payment of Rs 3100 to the farmer, we are



fulfilling this resolution within 100 days. Congress is out of the electoral battle. On the statement of Congress State President Deepak Baij, Kashyap said that with whom is the resentment, what is it? Deepak Baij will be able to tell that he is not able to handle his family. Kawasi Lakma is not able to handle Mohan Markam. They are not able to decide who should be made the scapegoat.

Regarding the Naxalite incident, Minister Kedar Kashyap said that the incident that has just happened and it is sad. Efforts will be made to ensure that such incidents are not repeated. All these are being taken care of. Where it seems there is a target killing situation. Like the incident happened in Pakhanjor and the culprit has come forward. Investigation action will be taken against him. The target is not big or small, all are equal, our big leaders have made sacrifices.

## There is unparalleled joy in serving patients: Sai

● **Chhattisgarh Cement Transport Welfare Association (CCTWA) presents ambulance key to CM**

● **Sai expresses gratitude for Late Shri Judev's mentorship**

Chief Minister reminisced about his association with the late Shri Judev, highlighting the invaluable lessons he learned, particularly in humility and dedication to public service.

"I learned humility from the late Dilip Singh Judev," Chief Minister Sai remarked, "His deep commitment to service continues to inspire me. There's unparalleled joy in serving patients, which has been the cornerstone of my political journey."

Recounting his efforts in securing medical assistance for the needy, Chief Minister Sai stated, "In just one year of my term as a state minister, I appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Rs 12 cr from the Prime



Minister's Relief Fund to facilitate patient treatments. During Dr Raman Singh's tenure, I relentlessly pursued medical aid for patients, a mission that brought immense satisfaction."

Extending his greetings on Mahashivratri and International Women's

Day, Chief Minister Sai also paid tributes to the late Dilip Singh Judev highlighting Judev's pivotal role in shaping his political career.

"Shri Judev has been my political guru. His guidance in politics, humility, and worker relations has been invaluable. I express

my gratitude to the association for their contribution towards patient welfare", he said.

In addition, Chief Minister Sai shared the story of a truck driver afflicted with a tumor post-accident. "Upon learning of his plight, I ensured his treatment at Delhi AIIMS, where the doctors removed his 16 kg tumor, saying that this is a first-of-its-kind case", he said.

Highlighting Prime Minister Modi's visionary leadership, CM Sai stated "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's idea is to make our country the world's guru again, to call this country a 'Sone ki Chidiya' again, and to realize the dream of a developed India. Efforts in this direction are also proving fruitful.

Before 2014, our country's economy was at 11th place, in these 10 years it has come to 5th place, and in the next 5 years, it will be at the third place. A developed India necessitates a developed Chhattisgarh, requiring contributions from every citizen."

Addressing the gathering, Revenue Minister Tank Ram Verma commended the noble initiative, mentioning the importance of collective efforts in serving the underprivileged.

MLA Guru Kushwant Sahib, Anuj Sharma, Ram Pratap Singh and office bearers of the association were also present on the occasion. During this, Chairman Anjay Shukla led the conduct of the stage during the event.

## Swami Atmanand Eco Club launches 'Save Bird Campaign'



**Raipur, Mar 08:** The Swami Atmanand 'Eco Club' of Shaumavi-Lalpur has launched a spirited "Save Bird Campaign" to address the plight of our avian friends during the scorching heat. Led by passionate students and dedicated teachers, this campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of protecting birds and their habitats.

Principal Anjulata Saraswat, speaking at the program held at Swami Atmanand Government Higher Secondary School, Lalpur (Raipur), emphasized the dire need to provide water and food to birds, especially during times of water scarcity. Students, dressed as symbolic representations of birds, fervently urged the public to join hands in safeguarding these vulnerable creatures.

M.Ed. student teacher Rakesh Kumar Rajak highlighted the invaluable contributions of birds to our ecosystem, underscoring the interconnectedness of all living beings. Echoing the sentiment, B.Ed. student teacher Parvati Dhruv proclaimed, "Service to birds is service to God," emphasizing the moral imperative of protecting wildlife.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from students, as B.Ed. student

teacher Hemdhar Sahu led chants of "Save Birds, Save Birds," rallying support for tree planting initiatives to provide shelter for birds. Concerns were raised about the threats posed by air traffic and radiation from mobile towers, underscoring the urgent need for conservation efforts.

Principal Anjulata

Saraswat, in a symbolic gesture, distributed sugarcane to children, encouraging them to pledge their commitment to bird conservation. The atmosphere was filled with hope and determination as B.Ed student teacher Hemdhar Sahu sang a song "Fur-fur karte neel-gagan mein, hum panchhi kahalate hai- Hamen bachaon, hamen bachaon, aaj ham chillate hain-aaj ham chillate hai." and students spreading their arms like wings, symbolizing their dedication to preserving Earth's rich avian heritage.

The success of the "Save Bird Campaign" wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of teachers and staff. Their tireless efforts, alongside the enthusiastic participation of students, have made a significant impact in fostering environmental consciousness and compassion towards our feathered friends.

## HNLU celebrates Int'nl Women's day with webinar

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Mar 08:** The Hidayatullah National Law University celebrated the International Women's Day by organising a Webinar/ Online Panel Discussion on the theme- Financial Literacy: A Quintessential for Women Empowerment.

The Panel discussion had Prof V.C.Vivekanandan, Vice Chancellor of HNLU observing "financial literacy for women is a cornerstone of not only personal financial health but also broader economic stability and gender equality.

By investing in financial education and resources for women, societies can ensure that women are equipped to make informed decisions that benefit themselves,

their families, and their communities".

The panel had Laxmi Narayan Sahu, Chief manager, SBI remarked, "the importance of financial literacy includes small savings and depositing them in bank accounts brings safe returns by way of interest.

The key measures he highlighted were to a) record expenses, b) create a budget, and c) automate savings which would allow greater accountability and ease of keeping track.

He also mentioned the importance of cutting down non-essential expenses, checking better insurance rates, adjusting tax holdings, and



being disciplined.

"The second panelist R a m a k r i s h n a n Paryirath observed that "the insurance policies are more than investments as they secure the individuals and their dependents to mitigate the future uncertain risks in emergencies, enable financial independence and ensure security for

women."

Kushboo Raichura, Chartered Accountant stated that "the SIP in mutual funds for long term are beneficial and least risky. She focussed on the scope for women in capital markets and importance in financial literacy.

She concluded by explaining that there are

currently 80 million unique accounts, and that the capital market is also a field that women should consider for long-term and short-term finances

The object of the program is to develop knowledge and awareness about savings and money management, however small or big savings it may be is the need of the hour. Instead of keeping money in the grain containers, the women need to put their savings in different saving schemes to increase it.

The well attended event with Dr. Y. Papa Rao welcoming the gathering and Dr. Avinash Samal delivering the

vote of thanks.

The event was organized by the Centre for Banking and Insurance Laws of the School of Law and Business along with Centre for Law and Human Rights & Centre for Law and Economics of the School for Law and Humanities. The Panel discussion was conceptualized by Dr. Kiran Kori and Dr. Y. Papa Rao assisted by Dr. Eritriya Roy.

Under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) V. C. Vivekanandan, Vice Chancellor of the University, the program is organised by different Centres at HNLU namely Centre for Banking and Insurance Laws, Centre for Law and Human Rights and Centre for Law and Economics together. The program was held online on March 7 from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

## IIM Raipur hosts 6th BRICS Development & Governance conference

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Mar 08:** Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Raipur concludes its 6th International Conference on Development and Governance in the BRICS on March 8th, 2024. The conference served as a platform for intellectual discourse, knowledge sharing, and innovative solutions to address governance challenges faced by the BRICS nations.

With a focus on sustainable development, digitization, and ethical leadership, the event brought together academics, public and private sector leaders, and visionaries to engage in profound dialogues to promote prosperity, inclusivity, and sustainability in the BRICS nations.

The conference reflects IIM Raipur's ongoing commitment to advancing academic excellence and contributing to the development of future leaders.

The second day witnessed a panel discussion that revolved around the theme of "Governance in the Times of Global Turmoil," moderated by Prof. Suresh Babu, IIT Madras. During the panel discussion, Shri Himanshu Shekhar Mishra, Senior Editor at NDTV India, emphasized the pressing need for coordinated global action on climate change.

Providing alarming statistics, his insights stressed the crucial role of collaborations within BRICS to tackle climate-induced challenges effectively. Prof. N R Bhanumurthy, Vice-Chancellor of BASE University, Bangalore, emphasized India's savings leadership and highlighted the New Development Bank's role in addressing post-COVID challenges, advocating for global collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Prof. C P G Tapscott,

University of the Western Cape, South Africa, emphasized the need for BRICS to reform financial institutions for a new global order, acknowledging its evolving structure with new members. He underscored the importance of staying relevant and connected with existing members.

Prof. Alexey G B a r a b a s h e v, National Research University, Russia, focusing on resource concentration, discussed Russia's financial sanctions and advocated for promoting tourism within the BRICS framework. Prof. V.C. Vivekanandan, Vice-Chancellor at HNLU, provided insights on various dimensions and their relevance to the broader themes discussed in the



context of BRICS.

Ms. Arti Ahuja, Secretary to Govt. of India, Labour & Employment, delivered a keynote address on innovation in the BRICS public sector, focusing on social protection and security. She discussed India's

social protection coverage, citing various welfare schemes and the challenges, such as privacy concerns with Aadhar.

The final panel discussion themed "Governance and Entrepreneurship" followed, with Dr. M R Madhavan, President and

co-founder of PRS Legislative Research, emphasized the rise of entrepreneurship in the service sector post-91 reforms, while Dr. Puspinder Puniha (IRS ret.), Financial Advisor to BCCI highlighted the importance of learning from

others and community participation in enhancing welfare indices.

Dr. Ashish Desai, Advisor, Open Network for Digital Commerce- a Govt. of India Initiative, discussed entrepreneurship, particularly the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and the need for collaborative innovation and support, especially for women entrepreneurs. He emphasized the importance of access to financial and market resources.

Prof. Prem Singh (IAS ret.), IIM Raipur, a retired IAS officer, discussed the relationship between the government and entrepreneurs, stressing the need for mutual respect and support, considering entrepreneurs as soldiers contributing to society's welfare.

The panel discussion followed a distinguished award ceremony, providing the Best Paper Award. In addition, participation

certificates were bestowed upon all attendees, symbolizing the commitment to fostering academic collaboration.

The conference, marked by intellectual vigor and insightful discussions, was summarized eloquently by Prof. Satyasiba Das, Dean External at IIM Raipur. Prof. Ms. Pooja Beria, a prominent member of the Board of Governors at IIM Raipur, expressed gratitude to all participants, speakers, and organizers for their invaluable contributions.

In her vote of thanks, Ms. Beria highlighted the collaborative spirit that defined the conference, underscoring the institute's dedication to promoting academic excellence and fostering a vibrant scholarly community. The event's success was attributed to the collective efforts of everyone involved, marking it as a memorable and impactful occasion for IIM Raipur.

## IGNTU celebrated International Women's Day

Central Chronicle News

**Ambikapur, Mar 08:** Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU), celebrated International Women's Day and it was organized by the Gender Studies Cell and Sheel Mandal of the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak under the able leadership of V-C Prof. Prakash Mani Tripathi.

On this occasion Vice Chancellor Prof. Shriprakash Mani Tripathi congratulated everyone on International Women's Day and said that women are worthy of worship. If there is a woman then there is society. The re-

spect for women has been underlined by giving examples from religious texts ranging from Buddha to Hindus. India is a country where women have been called goddesses and revered since ancient times. The program started with Maa Saraswati puja and Kulageet, after which Professor Poonam Sharma welcomed all the guests.

After this, Dr. Neelam Chau, who came from Chitrakoot University, told that India is the leader in the world where women are respected, America is one such country. Where men have the highest salaries and women have very few facilities whereas in our

India there is no difference between men and women. Prof. Vaidehi Daptardar, who came to the program from Mumbai, called upon women to move forward.

She said that along with the Central Government, government and private banks are also running many schemes. Therefore earning money is not a difficult task. We just have to awaken our will power and step out of the four walls of the house.

President of Shri Sheel Mandal, Sheela Tripathi said in her address that women do not work only within the four walls of the house, but their area is both inside and outside the house. God has made an indelible signature by



creating the work of woman.

With the cooperation of the members of Shri Sheel Mandal, a wave of development has spread in this tribal area. Here all the tribal women are working not only at home

but also outside the home. Professor Chandrakala Padia, present in the form of seed time, said that the coming time in India is of youth and among these youth, the number of women is going to be highest who will usher in

the bright future of the country.

Professor Poonam Tandon (Vice Chancellor Deendayal Upadhyay University, Gorakhpur), present as the chief guest, said in her address that women are not dependent on any post, they can do all the work even while staying at home, which other women do by staying at the post or at home.

He congratulated the President of Shri Sheel Mandal, Sheela Tripathi and her workers, saying that awakening the spirit of development and education in this tribal area is indeed a difficult task, which has been done well by this NGO.

The biggest reason for women being backward is

the women themselves, they avoid moving themselves forward.

At the conclusion of the program, vote of thanks was given by Dr. Shikha Banerjee and the tribal women from the area were honoured for their work by the guests on the dais. The program was conducted by Dr. Poonam Pandey.

On this occasion, senior professors of the university, Professor Awadhesh Shukla, Professor Alok Shrotriya, Professor P.K. Samal, Officer on Special Duty Dr. Vijay Nath Mishra and all the academic, non-academic officers and employees of the university were present.

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# Women are successfully leading the admin, bar and bench in Durg: Chief Justice

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Mar 08:** On the eve of International Women's Day, Durg Bar Association organised a special programme in the District Court premises on Thursday. High Court Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha graced the function as chief guest. Sudhir Kumar (Registrar General, Chhattisgarh High Court Bilaspur), M.V.L.N. Subrahmanyam (Joint Registrar), Ravindra Singh Negi (Assistant Registrar), Neeta Yadav (District and Sessions Judge, Durg), Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary, SP Jitendra Shukla, and judicial officers of District Court, Family Court, Labour Court Durg, Bar Association President Neeta Jain and office bearers of Bar Association and other dignitaries were present.

At the outset, Bar Association President



Neeta Jain delivered the welcome address. Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha formally inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamps. He extended International Women's Day wishes to the gathering. He congratulated all the women advocates on Women's Day.

He said that the general administration, justice system and Bar Association of Durg dis-

trict are in the hands of women. District and Sessions Judge Neeta Yadav is leading the justice system (bench) while the responsibility of the administrative system is upon the District Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary. He added that the District Bar Association is being led by Neeta Jain.

Women are participating in every field, be it judiciary, general adminis-

tration department and politics, women have shown their talent in every field. Women have been given more importance than men because of their spirit of sacrifice. He appreciated the women who look after their families and also work shoulder to shoulder with men in the workplace.

Describing the role of women advocates as extremely challenging, he

praised their dedication towards the justice system. Highlighting the participation of women behind the IWD celebration, Chief Justice highlighted the importance of "gender equality". Describing the historical background of Durg district, he spoke on the topic of participation of women in important positions.

Referring to the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, he gave a message to women judges, advocates and other judicial employees that women power is the oldest power in this universe, the universe was created by this women power and the whole earth is surrounded by this power.

By removing the stigma, a society should be established where the women feel empowered and safe. The program concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Prashant Joshi, Vice President, Bar Association.

# KV CISF celebrates International Women's Day



Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Mar 08:** International Women's Day was celebrated at Kendriya Vidyalaya, CISF Bhilai. School Principal Bhubaneswari was the chief guest of the program while the special guest was Kajal Dwivedi, Executive Inspector, CISF.

In the program, mementos were presented to all the female staff of the school including the fe-

male employees of CISF. The program commenced with Saraswati Vandana.

Senior teacher of the school, AB Singh delivered the welcome address. R Laxmi presented Bharatnatyam while Sushma Nayak staged folk dance. The Chief Guest, School Principal congratulated all the women members on International Women's Day.

In her address, she de-

scribed women empowerment as the most important need of the present time and called for increasing the sensitivity of the society towards women's safety.

School teachers Dr Pankaj Shukla, Ashish, RK Yadav, DA Giriya, Benjamin, SK Sant, VK Singh, Anil Kumar and other male staff of the school played a vital role in organising the programme.

# Female Cops handle important traffic junctions on IWD

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Mar 08:** On the occasion of International Women's Day, the traffic arrangements of Nehru Nagar Square were handled by the women constables posted in the Traffic Police.

They intercepted the riders moving without helmets and counselled them. The riders were made aware of the usefulness of helmets in case of road accidents.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Superintendent of Police (Durg) Jitendra Shukla directed the female constables posted in the traffic police to look after the arrangements at the important traffic squares of the district.

Accordingly, DSP



(Traffic) Satish Thakur and Sadanand Vidhyaraj positioned the female cops at Nehru Nagar Chowk. The entire traffic arrangements were handled by women constables Amita Kaudo, Madhuri Kori, Ratna Sagar and Gloria

Tirkey posted in the traffic police department.

Also, the women constables intercepted the riders moving without helmets. They explained how the helmet protects a two wheeler rider, especially a woman rider, in case of a

road accident.

They explained that in the absence of a helmet, the rider can suffer a fatal head injury. They appealed to the riders to always use a helmet while driving a two-wheeler in future.

# Range level training for master trainers held

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Mar 08:** As per the instructions of the Election Commission of India, New Delhi, in connection with the upcoming Lok Sabha elections-2024, all the police officers / personnel are to be trained on various election related procedures.

In this sequence, a training session for Master Trainers was organized in the Auditorium of IGP Office. Inspector General of Police (Durg Range) Ram Gopal Garg and gazetted officers of district Balod, Bemetara and Durg were present in the training.

Information regarding election related crimes, investigation and resolution was given through PPT by Padmashree Tanwar (IGP Office, Durg Range). All the trainers were given in-



formation about various aspects of Lok Sabha elections.

This training was aimed to raise the level of training in the election process, so that the election entry system can be smooth and reliable. The objective of the training is to train everyone about their roles, who will then train other polling officials and successfully conduct free and fair elections.

She gave a detailed pres-

entation through PPT on the role and responsibilities of each officer on duty at the polling station, polling day activities, mock poll, control unit etc. Apart from this, voting process, special circumstances during elections, closing of voting process and transportation were also discussed.

More than 12 officers were present in the training including Additional Superintendent of Police

Padmashree Tanwar, DSP Shilpa Sahu, DSP Panikaram Kujur, DSP (Durg) Rajeev Sharma, Inspector Shiv Chandra, Anil Sahu, DSP (Balod) Navneet Kaur, Inspector Veena Yadav, Inspector Lakshmi Prasad Jaiswal, DSP (Bemetara) Manoj Tirkey, Inspector Chandradev Verma, Inspector Duleshwar Chandravanshi and officials of the IGP office were present.

# JLNH&RC organises Blood Donation Drive under International Women's Day

**JLNH&RC organises Blood Donation Drive under International Women's Day**

**Bhilai, Mar 08:** SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Jawahar Lal Nehru Hospital & Research Centre organised a Blood Donation Drive, as a part of International Women's Day Celebrations, on March 07, 2024. The theme for International Women's Day 2024 is "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress". The drive aims to raise awareness and encourage healthy women to become voluntary blood donors to meet the need for safe blood.



Chief Guest Nisha Soni, CGM (HRD & BE) inaugurated the Blood Donation Programme in the presence of Special Guest Dr Vineeta Dwivedi, CMO, and Dr Ravindranath M, CMO I/c (M&HS), along with other CMOs, Senior Doctors and Officials of the hospital including Dr Pramod Binayake, Dr Kaushalendra Thakur, Dr S Nily Kujur, Dr Lata Dewangan, Dr

Sangeeta Kamra, Puspam Ambrose, GM (SMS-III) and BSP Employees and Hospital Staff in large numbers.

The Blood Centre team of JLNH&RC led by Dr Deepak Dash Mohapatra, and Rajeev Sharma organized the Blood Donation Drive, to celebrate International Women's Day-2024. Through this Blood Donation Drive, women employees of BSP

expressed their commitment towards the welfare of the community at large. Posters raising awareness for Blood Donation were displayed at various locations in the hospital. A Voluntary Blood-donors' Organization 'Inner Wheel Club of Bhilai Steel City' also supported the Blood Donation Drive.

A total of 23 Healthy individuals donated blood to commemorate the day. All the Voluntary Blood Donors including Dr Pooja Sial, Dr Lata Dewangan, Puspam Ambrose, Dr Gayatri Devi Natti, Pinky Lal R,Nisha Baul, Dolly Sahu, Dr Aakanksha Sharma, Geeta Ghosh, Geetanjali Naik, Dr Amit Nayak, Jyoti, Vandana Soni, Tuhendra Singh,

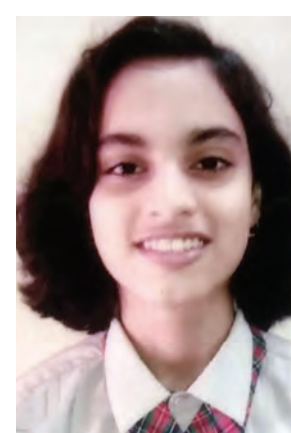
Pushpalata, Dr Raunak Das, Ashish Deshmukh, Sandhya Devi Sharma, S Sanjeev, Bindu Kurup and others were felicitated with Mementos and Certificates. International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated annually on March 8.

It is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality. This year's theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" highlights the importance of investing in women and girls as a way to achieve gender equality and build a more prosperous and sustainable future for everyone.

# Shambhavi Pandey of DAV IPS qualifies for inspire award at district level

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Mar 08:** DAV Ispat Public School Sector 2 added another feather to the cap. The project of Shambhavi Pandey, a class 8 student of DAV Ispat Public School, Sector 2 has been selected for the first round of Inspire Manak Award 2023-24 and has received Rs 10,000 for making the model. Her project is based on Anti-reflective coating (also called "AR coating" or "anti-glare coating") which improves vision, reducing eye strain, due to which one can see the vehicle coming from the front clearly even in bright light. School



Principal Priyanka Shukla congratulated the student on her achievement and wished her a bright future.

It is noteworthy that last year also the projects

of four students of the school were selected for the Inspire Award. Adarsh Kumar created multiple uses of home-use water tulle pump, Shivansh Pandey created a nano robot, Ritika Dey created a talking device for disabled people, and Naitik Acharya created a water purifier.

Inspire Award Standard Scheme is one of the many programs run by the Government of India through the Department of Science and Technology, under which promising students from class 6 to class 10 from recognized government, non-government and private schools across the country.

# BSP records Best Ever Production in All Major Parameters

**In April to Feb Period of current fiscal year**

**Bhilai, Mar 08:** Gearing up its performance in all parameters of production in last quarter of current financial year 2023-24, SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant has recorded its best ever April to February production of hot metal, crude steel and saleable steel for the eleven month period from April to February.

The plant's blast furnaces recorded highest ever hot metal production of 5.44 million tonnes in April 23 to Feb 24 period of current fiscal year, sur-



passing previous best of 5.20 MT in corresponding period of fiscal year 2010-11. This included highest ever production of 2.43 MT by the plant's largest blast furnace, BF 8 surpassing previous best of 2.29 MT recorded in corre-

sponding period of 2022-23.

Highest ever crude steel production of 5.15 MT by Steel Melting Shop 2 (SMS 2) and SMS 3 was recorded in April 23 to Feb 24 period of current fiscal year, surpassing previous best of



4.85 MT in corresponding period of fiscal year 2010-11. Modex unit, SMS 3 recorded best ever total cast steel production at 3.11 MT and best ever cast billet production of 2.10 MT as against previous best of 2.74 MT and 1.68

MT, respectively in corresponding April to Feb period of previous fiscal year 2022-23.

Highest ever saleable steel production of 4.76 MT was recorded in April to Feb period of current fiscal year, surpassing pre-

vious best of 4.34 MT in corresponding period of fiscal year 2022-23. Highest ever loading of Saleable Steel at 4.72 MT was recorded as against previous best of 4.31 MT in April to Feb period of FY 2022-23.

The Plant also recorded best ever Dry BF Coke production of 2.91 MT in April to Feb period surpassing previous best of 2.85 MT recorded in corresponding period of 2010-11. The Plant's Coke Ovens recorded its best ever Equivalent Oven Pushing per day of 781 surpassing previous best of 768 in FY 2010-11. Highest ever sinter production of 7.95 MT

was recorded by the Sinter Plants surpassing previous best of 7.27 MT in FY 2022-23. This included highest production of 5.40 MT from SP 3 as against previous best of 4.89 MT in 2022-23.

Modex unit, Bar & Rod Mill too has recorded its highest ever production of 8.86 Lakh Tonnes as against previous best of 7.47 lakh T recorded in April to Feb period of last fiscal year 2022-23. Plate Mill recorded highest ever production of 2.30 lakh T of high tensile plates as against previous best of 2.15 lakh tonnes in FY 2016-17.

was recorded by the Sinter Plants surpassing previous best of 7.27 MT in FY 2022-23. This included highest production of 5.40 MT from SP 3 as against previous best of 4.89 MT in 2022-23.

Modex unit, Bar & Rod Mill too has recorded its highest ever production of 8.86 Lakh Tonnes as against previous best of 7.47 lakh T recorded in April to Feb period of last fiscal year 2022-23. Plate Mill recorded highest ever production of 2.30 lakh T of high tensile plates as against previous best of 2.15 lakh tonnes in FY 2016-17.

## Global South believes in India: Jaishankar

● **China does not participate in voicing their concerns**

Tokyo, Mar 08 (PTI):

Highlighting India's leadership in the Global South, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said the 125 countries of the platform placed their trust in India and not in China which skipped the two meetings convened by India last year to listen to their concerns. Addressing the Nikkei Forum on the India-Japan partnership here, India's top diplomat said that countries of the Global South feel for each other on several issues.

"On a lot of issues, these countries feel for each other. The feeling has been intensified by COVID because many countries of the Global South felt that they were the last in the line to get the vaccine. They even felt at the time



when India became G20 President that their concerns were not even on the agenda of the G20.

"So we did last year two meetings of the voice of the Global South because we wanted to listen to these 125 countries and then put before the G20 a set of issues which were the collective views of these 125 countries.

Within Asia and Africa, Global South is very popular in those continents. They know exactly what is happening, who's speaking up for them, and how

their issues are getting on the table.

"They don't think it is a coincidence that it was under the Indian presidency that the African Union, which had long been promised a seat in the G20, got a seat. So the Global South believes us," he said. "The two summits which we convened last year to listen to their concerns, I don't believe China was present," Jaishankar said, referring to 1st Voice of Global South Summit 2023 held in January and the 2nd Voice

of Global South Summit in November last year.

The ties between India and China nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

About India's relationship with Russia and its criticism of Moscow's war in Ukraine, he said: "Sometimes in world politics, countries pick one issue, one situation, one principle and they highlight it because it suits them. But if one looks at the principle itself, we in India know better than almost any other country.

"Immediately after our independence, we experienced aggression, an effort to change our boundaries and even today parts of India are occupied by another country but we did not see the world respond saying, oh, there's a great principle involved and therefore, let us all go with India.

## About a million visitors expected to throng Pashupatinath temple on Mahashivaratri

Kathmandu, Mar 08 (PTI):

About a million devotees from Nepal and India are expected to visit the revered Pashupatinath temple situated at the bank of the holy Bagmati River here on the occasion of Mahashivaratri to pay homage to Lord Shiva on Friday, authorities said.

Thousands of devotees carrying flowers, incense, rice and other offerings in their devotion to the Lord queued up around the Pashupatinath temple for hours since early morning to have a view of Shiva Linga. Lord Shiva or Mahadeva is regarded as one of the trinity responsible for the dissolution of the world during pralaya. Mahashivaratri is known as the day when Shiva was born. Officials at Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT) which is responsible for managing the af-



**A devotee dressed as Lord Shiva at the Pashupatinath Temple on Mahashivaratri festival, in Kathmandu, Friday, March 8.**

fairs of the temple estimated that around one million devotees will visit the temple from early morning till the night on Mahashivaratri.

Around 10 per cent of the visitors are expected to come from different parts of India. Some 3,000 saints, including naga babas, have arrived at the temple premises to pay homage to

Lord Pashupati during the festival.

The Himalayas is known as the abode of Lord Shiva and in Nepal there is a sizable number of Shaivas whose main deity is Lord Shiva.

The Lord, who is regarded as auspicious and purified heart and known as the deity to grant boon easily, is worshipped by both Hindus as well as Buddhists.

At night, people light campfires at homes, around temples and road junctions and prepare food items, including sweets, to observe Shivaratri, the night of Lord Shiva.

Pashupatinath temple has been colourfully decorated with lights, paper fags and garlands during the festival.

The PADT offered free food, tea and water to thousands of Sadhus coming from both Nepal and India.

## India's policy towards Nepal remains unchanged

● **Assures envoy after meeting top new ministers**

Kathmandu, Mar 08 (PTI):

Terming the scrapping of the alliance between the Nepali Congress and the CPN (Maoist Centre) an "internal matter", India has assured Nepal that its policy towards the Himalayan nation remains unchanged following the formation of a new government, the Nepalese media reported on Friday. India's ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava on Thursday separately met Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Narayankaji Shrestha and Finance Minister Varshaman Pun and conveyed New Delhi's stand on the latest political developments in the Himalayan nation, the reports said. An Indian embassy spokesperson confirmed that the Indian envoy separately

called on Foreign Minister Shrestha and Finance Minister Pun at their respective offices without any further comment. However, media reports here said that during the meeting with Finance Minister Pun, Srivastava said a "change in the power equation in Nepal is the country's internal affair". Both the ministers took the oath of office and secrecy on Wednesday, and Srivastava is the first foreign diplomat to meet and congratulate them. Srivastava conveyed to the two ministers that India's policy towards Nepal remains unchanged and considers the political changes in Nepal as its "internal matter", amid speculation here that New Delhi was not happy with the dissolution of the alliance between the Nepali Congress and the CPN (Maoist Centre) and the formation of the new coalition between the CPN-UML and the Maoist Centre.

## Democracy and freedom under 'threat' in US and world under Trump: Biden

Washington, Mar 08 (PTI):

US President Joe Biden delivered a feisty speech on Thursday to defend his policies before skeptical voters in an election year as he launched a vitriolic attack on his Republican rival Donald Trump who he said was a "threat" to democracy within the country and globally.

Without taking the name of Trump, Biden, a Democrat, in his final State of the Union Address to the joint session of the US Congress, less than eight months ahead of the presidential elections, identified him as "my predecessor", which he mentioned as many as 13 times in his speech that lasted for over an hour.

Following Super Tuesday primary contests, it has become clear that it will be a rematch of 2022 in the November 5,



2024 presidential elections.

Biden, 81, who is the oldest American president, slammed Trump, 77, on several issues ranging from his recent comment on Russian President Vladimir Putin, immigration, January 6 insurrection, abortion, and gun control.

"A president, my predecessor, who failed the most basic duty. Any President owes the American people the duty to care. That is unforgiv-

able," Biden, said amidst multiple standing ovations from Democratic Party lawmakers.

"Now, my predecessor, a former Republican President, tells Putin, "Do whatever the hell you want". A former American President actually said that, bowing down to a Russian leader. It's outrageous. It's dangerous. It's unacceptable," Biden said.

Trump recently said he would encourage Russia to do "whatever the hell they want" to any NATO member country that doesn't meet spending guidelines on defence in a stunning admission he would not abide by the collective defence clause at the heart of the alliance if reelected.

Biden said he came to the office determined to get America through one of the toughest periods in the nation's history.

## UNICEF: 230 million females are circumcised globally, 30 million more than in 2016

Cairo, Mar 08 (AP):

Over 230 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation, most of whom live in Africa, according to a report issued on Friday by the United Nations children's agency.

In the last eight years, some 30 million people have undergone the procedure, in which external genitalia are partially or fully removed, UNICEF estimated in the report, which was released on International Women's

Day. The percentage of women and girls who experience female genital mutilation is declining, UNICEF said, but it warned that efforts to eradicate the practice are too slow to keep up with fast-growing populations.

"The practice of female genital mutilation is declining, but not fast enough," the report said.

The practice, incorrectly believed to control women's sexuality, can cause serious bleeding and even death.

Girls are subjected to the procedure at ages ranging from infancy to adolescence. Long term, it can lead to urinary tract infections, menstrual problems, pain, decreased sexual satisfaction and childbirth complications, as well as depression, low self-esteem and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"We're also seeing a worrying trend that more girls are subjected to the practice at younger ages, many before their fifth birthday. That further reduces the window to inter-

vene," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell.

Some 144 million women and girls have been through female genital mutilation in Africa alone, followed by Asia and the Middle East with 80 million and 6 million respectively, the report said. Somalia tops the list of countries where the practice, also known as female circumcision, is prevalent, with 99% of the female population between the ages of 15 and 49 having been circumcised.

## UK ex-PM Theresa May to stand down as MP after 27 years

London, Mar 08 (PTI):

Theresa May, who was the prime minister of Britain between 2016 and 2019, on Friday announced her exit from frontline politics after 27 years as a member of Parliament in the House of Commons.

The 67-year-old, whose travails with getting a Brexit deal through Parliament in the wake of the June 2016 referendum ended in a forced exit from 10 Downing Street over four years ago, said she had taken the "difficult decision" to not con-



test in the next general election from her Maidenhead constituency in south-east England.

She has been the Conservative MP for the Berkshire seat since 1997, having been elected seven times.

"Since stepping down as prime minister I have

enjoyed being a backbencher again and having more time to work for my constituents and champion causes close to my heart including most recently launching a Global Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking," said May in a statement to her local Maidenhead Advertiser.

"These causes have been taking an increasing amount of my time. Because of this, after much careful thought and consideration, I have realised that looking ahead, I would no longer be able to do my job as an MP in

the way I believe is right and that my constituents deserve. I have therefore taken the difficult decision to stand down at the next general election," she said.

The senior parliamentarian, often referred to as the "new Iron Lady" as the second female prime minister of the UK after Margaret Thatcher, pledged her continued support to the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak-led government and said she believed the Conservatives could win the next election, which is expected later this year.

## Iran is responsible for the physical violence that killed Mahsa Amini in 2022, UN probe finds

Dubai, Mar 08 (AP):

Iran is responsible for the "physical violence" that led to the death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022 and sparked nationwide protests against the country's mandatory headscarf, or hijab, laws and its ruling theocracy, a UN fact-finding mission said on Friday.

The stark pronouncement came in a wide-ranging initial report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council by the Fact-Finding Mission on Iran. It also found that the Islamic Republic employed "unnecessary and disproportionate use of lethal force" to put down the demonstrations that erupted following Amini's death, and that Iranian se-

curity forces sexually assaulted detainees.

The monthslong security crackdown killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained.

There was no immediate comment on the report from Iran. Iranian officials did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press on the mission's findings. The release of the report is unlikely to change the trajectory of Iran's government, now more firmly in the hands of hard-liners after a low-turnout vote last week put them back in charge of the country's parliament. However, it provides further international pressure on Tehran amid wider Western concerns about its advancing nu-

clear program, Iran's arming of Russia in Moscow's war on Ukraine and the continued harassment and imprisonment of activists, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi.

"The protests were unprecedented because of the leadership of women and youth, in their reach and longevity and, ultimately, the state's violent response," the report

says. Amini, 22, died on September 16, 2022, in a hospital after her arrest by the country's morality police over allegedly not wearing her hijab to the liking of the authorities. She was brought to Iran's Vozara detention facility to undergo a "re-education class", but collapsed after 26 minutes and was taken to a hospital 30 minutes later, according to the report.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR COLLEGE OF NURSING LAJPAT NAGAR IV, NEAR MOOLCHAND METRO STATION, NEW DELHI-110024. Tel Nos. 011-2643 6785, 2643 5270, E-Mail-principal-rakcon@gov.in**

**ADMISSION NOTICE**

**M.Sc. NURSING (Session 2024-2025), Affiliated to University of Delhi**

Application are invited for admission to M.Sc. Nursing academic session 2024-2025. Prescribed application forms with prospectus can be downloaded from college website [www.rakcon.ac.in](http://www.rakcon.ac.in) and should be submitted (by hand or by post) in the college from 18/03/2024 to 19/04/2024 by 5:00 p.m. on payment of Rs. 1000/- by Demand Draft in favor of Principal, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur College of Nursing payable at New Delhi. The last date for submission of form will be from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on all working days i.e. Monday to Friday except gazetted holidays.

**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The Candidate must have passed the B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing Examination from University of Delhi or B.Sc. Nursing Post Basic Nursing from a recognized University with minimum 55% marks in the aggregate and completed one year experience in Nursing in a Hospital/Specialty Institute/Educational Institution or Public Health/Agency. The experience will be calculated up to 19th April, 2024. This selection test will be held on 26th May, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

cbc-17149/12/0001/2324

**GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**

**MINIMATA BANGO DAM DIVISION NO. 03, MACHADOLI DISTT.-KORBA (C.G.)**

**e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**

eProcurement Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

**(FIRST CALL)**

**System Tender No. 153678 NIT No.: 23/SAC/2023-24**

**Dated: 06-03-2024**

**Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 27-03-2024 at 17.30 Hour**

**Name of work: TREATMENT OF SPILLWAY OF MINIMATA MACHADOLI (Block No.- 19 to Block No.- 30)**

**Probable Amount of Contract :- Rs. 953.59 Lakhs**

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) from Date 13-03-2024 at 17.31 Hours (IST) onwards.

**NOTE:-** All eligible/intrested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the Integrated e- procurement portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under Centralized Contractor/Supplier Registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process. Other terms and condition of this tender visit WRD website <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> under Live Tender available.

2. It is mandatory for the tenderer to use the certificate issued for Pre Bid Qualification (Valid upto 30.09.2024) in the year 2023 in this tender.

Other terms and condition of this tender visit WRD website <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> under Live Tender available

**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,**

**MINIMATA BANGO DAM DIVISION NO. 03 MACHADOLI (C.G.)**

G-08400/2

**Public Works Department**

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PWD, AMBIKAPUR CIRCLE AMBIKAPUR (C.G.)**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

No. 196/G **Ambikapur, Dated. 06.03.2024**

Public Works Department (PWD) invites proposal for Planning, development, estimation and Structural design, detailed engineering and related services for the work

**Construction of Rest House Bandarchuhan, CM Camp House office & OSD Room Bagiya, C.M. Camp office Kunkuri, CM Camp Office Jashpur & Helipad Lounge at Village-Bagiya, Dist-Jashpur (C.G.)**

Probable cost of project - 1550.00 Laacs

Minimum eligibility for participants shall be as below:-

S.N.	Building project cost	The applicant firms, firms farming Joint venture/ consortium shall be	Earnest money (In shape as per annexure-1 Favor of Executive Engineer, PWD Division Pathalgaon)	No. Of Call
1	For project cost between Rs. 10 to 25 crore	Empanelled as architect in class "C & above class" in C.G. PWD	Rs. 15,000=00	1st call

**General condition :-** All the documents & Information as per para 7.4, shall be submitted through speed post/Registered post, so as to reach the office of under signed on or before dated 27.03.2024 by 17.30 hour. Any documents received after the last date and time will not be entertained.

The detailed RFP is available on the website [pwd.cg.nic.in](http://pwd.cg.nic.in) from where it can be downloaded for submission. CG.PWD reserves the right to reject all or any of the application without assigning any reason. Right to modify the process of Pre-qualification is reserved with CG.PWD.

**Superintending Engineer**

**Public Works Department**

**Ambikapur Circle Ambikapur**

G-08387/1



## CENTRAL Chronicle

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### Muizzu's Misstep

#### The Maldives' Risky Diplomatic Shift

The Maldives, a picturesque archipelago in the Indian Ocean, has recently made headlines for its diplomatic maneuvering that seems to be steering it away from its traditional ally, India, towards a closer relationship with China. This shift, spearheaded by President Mohamed Muizzu, is not just a change in foreign policy but a strategic realignment that carries significant implications for the region's stability and the Maldives' long-term prosperity. At the heart of this diplomatic pivot lies a recent agreement between the Maldives and China, wherein Beijing pledged to provide free 'non-lethal' military equipment and training to Maldivian soldiers. This marks a significant departure from the Maldives' previous stance, where India had primarily assisted the nation in urban and economic development. The timing of this agreement is particularly noteworthy, coming shortly after President Muizzu's announcement that no Indian personnel, whether civilian or uniformed, would be allowed to operate helicopters deployed by India after May 10. President Muizzu's decision to distance the Maldives from India is not a sudden development but rather a culmination of a trend that began with his election campaign last year. During his bid for the presidency, Muizzu championed the 'India Out' narrative, portraying Indian assistance as intrusive and detrimental to the Maldives' sovereignty. This sentiment of resentment towards India was further amplified when Muizzu labeled India as a bully, signaling a significant shift in the Maldives' foreign policy orientation. However, India's response to Muizzu's provocations has been firm yet diplomatic. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar highlighted India's substantial financial assistance, amounting to \$4.5 billion, provided to the Maldives during times of crisis, contrasting it with Muizzu's accusations. Jaishankar's remarks underscore India's commitment to its longstanding friendship with the Maldives and its willingness to support the nation's development and security needs. From a strategic perspective, the Maldives' decision to cozy up to China while alienating India raises several concerns. The Maldives, known for its stunning beaches and luxury resorts, heavily relies on tourism as its primary source of revenue. Any disruption in diplomatic relations, particularly with India, could have far-reaching consequences for the Maldivian economy, potentially deterring tourists and investors alike. Furthermore, India's response to the Maldives' diplomatic tilt towards China has been telling. India commissioned a new naval base at Minicoy Island, a mere 125 kilometers from the Maldives, signaling its intent to safeguard its strategic interests in the Indian Ocean region. This move, coupled with India's continued support for the Maldives' development projects, underscores the significance of the Indo-Maldivian partnership. Domestically, Muizzu's confrontational approach towards India has not gone unnoticed. The recent victory of the Opposition in the politically significant Male Mayor's seat, previously held by Muizzu, suggests growing discontent with his administration's handling of foreign affairs. Additionally, India's symbolic gesture of naming the new naval base INS Jatayu, after the mythical bird from the Ramayana, serves as a subtle reminder of India's historical ties with the Maldives and its commitment to regional stability. President Muizzu's diplomatic overtures towards China and his confrontational stance towards India represent a risky gamble for the Maldives. The nation must strike a delicate balance between its strategic interests, economic stability, and regional security to ensure its continued prosperity in the face of evolving geopolitical dynamics.

### The GDP is estimated to be 173 Lakh crore in 2023-24

Er.Rajesh Pathak



The data of third quarter (Q3) of the financial year 2023-24 is out. To the amazement of everybody else GDP growth is declared to have achieved 8.4 % mark! Notably, the GDP comes out according to the universal practice by the summing up of the private consumption; government expenditures, particularly in the distribution of salaries and constructions and building infrastructures; net export (export-import).

The calculation is done by the simple norms in vogue of comparing it with previous year's (here, 2022-23) same 3rd quarter (Q3) composed of the months October, November, December. Report says that in the current GDP growth the consumption constitutes 25.60 lakh crore rupees; while the greatest boost came from investment with 14.80 lakh crore rupees, attributive of investors' booming sentiments towards Indian economy, contrary to the critics and more particularly Rahul Gandhi's much day-night hyped recession in the market. On the other hand, the total spending done by the government came out to be 3.4 lakh crore rupees. Previous financial years 2022-23 (FY 23) the total sum of production in goods and service, the two parameters of GDP, in all 4 quarters taken together was 160 lakh crore rupees. While the same is notably estimated to touch the figure of as high as 173 lakh crore rupees by the end of current financial year 2023-24(FY24) on 31st March. Moreover, the sectors yielding proportionally more jobs such as manufacturing and construction propelled into 11.6% and 9.5 % growth respectively, leaving many to immense surprise. And, obviously, would have caused shock to the likes of Raghuram Rajan, who had once derided to have said that country would be fortunate if GDP remained to be even just 5%. Now Raghuram Rajan is needed to remember the year 2013, when the country has Manmohan Singh as the PM, and he being Finance minister. The inflation went bounced up as high as 11.06%, and he got into increasing the repo-rate to 8% in order to contain it. But in 2014 Modi government came to power. It adopted strict fiscal discipline, gradually bringing inflation rate down to as low as 4.5 % in less than two years. Now government wanted repo-rate being brought down. So that money flowed into the market, businesses and industries flourished yet again subsequently. But Raghuram Rajan was unwilling to respond to government's perception, giving no tenable ground either. As the time went on and no change was seen in the stance of Raghuram, whispers of his being involved in promoting the interest of developed world began to gain ground in the higher circle of governance and political corridors. However country got rid of him only when his tenure ended, and government went not in extending his service any further.

Central Chronicle invites articles, write-ups, and comments on a wide range of issues for our editorial page. Submissions should be between 800-900 words in length. In addition, we welcome letters to the editor for this page. While letters may be edited for clarity, we aim to preserve the integrity of the original message, and ask that they be kept to around 50-60 words. Submissions can be sent via email to editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com.

### PASSING OUT PARADE

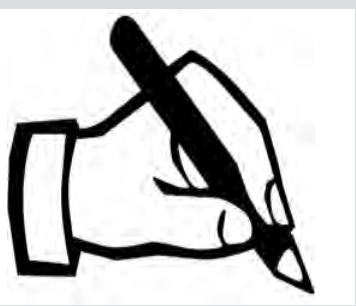


Cadets perform during the combined display organised as part of the Passing Out Parade, at Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai, Friday, March 8.

## Bihar politics revolves around CM Nitish Kumar - II



ER. PRABHATH KISHORE



Gender empowerment and strengthening have been an ambitious goal of Nitish Kumar. Apart from Poshak & Cycle Yojana in schools, 50 % reservation in Panchayats and Local bodies and 35% reservation in government jobs for women, Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana for phase wise development of girls, Jeevika programme for rural women have been implemented. On the tune of "Sapt Kranti" vision during JP movement, he planned 7-point programme, called "Saat-Nischay" for the all-round development of the State. The Saat-Nischay includes (1) Aarthik Hal Yuvaon Ko Bal for financially helping students & youths to become self-reliant, (2) Aarakshit Rojgar Mahilaon Ka Adhikar through reservation for female in jobs as well as Panchayat & local bodies, (3) Har Ghar Bijli, (4) Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal, (5) Har Ghar Tak Pakki Gali-Naliyan, (6) Gharon Mein Shauchalay Nirman, (7) Aawsar Badhe Aage Padhe by opening Technical/ Medical/ Nursing/Polytechnic/ ITI/Para Medical institutes in every districts. The positive face of Nitish is that his priority is not only government welfare schemes. His start-ups in the social sectors are more praise-

worthy. The public campaign against age-old social evils such as Child marriage, Dowry System and Alcoholism is unique, as these issues are not said to be vote pulling agenda for politicians. Jal-Jiwan-Hariyal scheme for water conservation is also an ambitious mission. The ban on alcoholism has reduced domestic violence to a great extent. The Sharab Mafias are campaigning aggressively against Nitish and under their pressure a lobby comprising of opposition as well as some BJP leaders are opposing the ban in the name of revenue collection.

Although a lot of works have been done or are in progress, there is still a lot to be done. A generation has changed in past 20-30 years and they have not faced the worst prevailing situations. Naturally, they will judge and act on the basis of the present scenario. The opening of Engineering and Medical colleges does not come under the ambit of development until its graduates are absorbed into jobs. Presently unemployment is a big problem, not only in Bihar but in all the states. All the vacant seats in government as well as private sectors have to be filled up. Small scale and agriculture based industries should be estab-

lished. Various defunct factories should be revived. The Central government will have to make a policy to set up new heavy industry factories in backward regions like Bihar. The rivers should be connected to tackle the problem of seasonal drought & flood. The shortcomings prevailing in schools, colleges, hospitals, transport and other sectors should be carefully rectified. Criminals and Corrupt personals should be crushed. Officers belonging to depressed class should also be positioned on strategic posts. The government should make time bound programme in all works sector for its timely implementation.

Nitish Kumar has always been criticized by his so-called secular political opposition parties for his alignment with the BJP, although previously all non-Congress governments in Bihar have been formed with direct or indirect support from BJP or the erstwhile Jansangh. In 1990, Laloo Prasad had become CM with the support of BJP. In 2014, Nitish also tried to part away from the BJP when its leadership was transferred to Narendra Modi; but in the election, his works were not converted in to votes and as earlier castes & religion remain the major poll issue. Despite being in alliance with BJP, he never compromised with 3 "C" i.e. Crime, Corruption and Communalism. Unlike the Congress regime, his whole tenure remained riot-free.

Nitish Kumar has always been a struggler since the inception of his political career. In the political war of 2020, it was his struggle that despite being the target of all powerful groups comprising of opposition alliances, Liquor Mafia, biased electronic media as well as his own ally BJP's core upper caste voters, he won the battle, with some bruises

in terms of less number of seats. As per pre-Poll strategy, Nitish has become 34th CM of Bihar despite having less number of lawmakers of his Party and seeing the history of BJP's "Chaal, Charitra, Chehara", it is obvious that his struggle would still continue.

Due to deceit in the election, day to day criticism by BJP leaders and a conspiracy to break up JDU on the tune of Maharashtra, Nitish came out of the NDA and formed Mahagathbandhan government on 10th August, 2022 with the support of Lalu Prasad-led RJD & UPA and took oath as CM for the 8th time. Nitish Kumar established his organizational skill at the national level by forming INDIA block of 28 national and regional parties to fight BJP. Opposition parties have a golden opportunity to fight under his non-controversial image and leadership. But the INDIA block failed in timely seat sharing and strategy formulation for the Lok Sabha election, which irked Nitish.

In Bihar, even though Nitish Kumar has announced publicly to contest the Vidhan Sabha election 2025 under the leadership of Tejaswi Yadav, but Lalu was in hurry to crown Tejaswi as CM by breaking some MLAs of Nitish Party. Such a conspiracy, forced Nitish to reconsider his alliance with Lalu Prasad and ultimately he stepped down from the post of Chief Minister on 28th January 2024 and formed the NDA government again in Bihar on the same day. Nitish Kumar took oath as CM for the record 9th times. Nitish Kumar also holds the record of serving as the Chief Minister of Bihar for the longest period of over 17 successful years.

(Author is a technocrat & academician.)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Helmet saves life

Although wearing a helmet is definitely discomforting to the riders, its advantages easily outweigh the hardship of sporting one because there is much more to safety than mere comfort. Linear or direct impact forces on the head are considerably reduced and the foam shell of the helmets largely absorbs the impact thereby dissipating its energy. Skull injuries and fractures are avoided or minimised, so are brain injuries. Several reports have indicated that fatalities due to two-wheeler accidents are lessened by thirty seven percent when a driver or pillion rider protect their heads with helmets. Head injury risk is reduced by sixty nine percent due to helmet use. An AIMS Trauma Centre study has said that, in 2022, forty percent of pillion riders of Delhi suffered injuries because they did not wear helmets. The 2019 amendment to the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 makes it clear that every individual above the age of 4 years shall wear protective gears while driving motorcycles including both the driver and the pillion rider.

Dr Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

#### Indians Abroad: Safety Concerns

Recent events in Israel and Russia have raised alarms for Indian citizens. In Israel, the tragic death of Pat Nibin Maxwell, hailing from Kerala, highlights safety risks. His family urges better protection for Indian workers. Additionally, reports indicate Indians in Russia face bonded labor conditions, necessitating immediate government intervention. These incidents underscore the need for stringent safety measures and thorough policy reviews to safeguard Indian citizens abroad. It's imperative for the government to prioritize the well-being of its citizens and ensure their safety in foreign lands.

Yash Pal Raihan, Jalandhar

#### Combat Maoism

Reduced Maoist activity signals progress, likely stemming from enhanced governance. Yet, challenges persist in 45 districts. Basic amenities such as education and health-care are pivotal for peace. Despite strides, sporadic attacks persist due to SOP non-compliance and intelligence gaps. Addressing these is vital. Furthermore, disrupting Maoist supply chains for weapons and resources remains crucial for sustained success.

MK Nair, Raipur

#### SBI's Delayed Disclosure

The State Bank of India's (SBI) plea for an extended deadline to disclose donor details under the electoral bond scheme raises eyebrows. Why the delay in furnishing information? It suggests an attempt to shield the ruling party, primary beneficiaries of this contentious scheme. The bank's reluctance hints at yielding to political pressure to withhold crucial data ahead of the General Election, potentially influencing electoral outcomes. The Supreme Court should reject SBI's request, prioritizing transparency over political expediency.

Shiv Kumar Mishra, Raipur

## United Nations has failed to keep peace and security in the world

Nantoo Banerjee

Two ongoing devastating wars - one in Ukraine and the other in the Gaza strip - have so far killed and injured tens of thousands of civilians since last year. The Ukraine-Russia war started in February 2022. As of February 15, this year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) verified a total of 30,457 civilian casualties in the course of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Of them, 19,875 were reported to have been injured. Nearly 3.7 million Ukrainians were internally displaced. Around 6.5 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded globally. Approximately 14.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2024. In Gaza, at least 29,782 people have been killed and 70,043 wounded in Israeli attacks since October 7, last year. The revised death toll in Israel stands at 1,139. The war continues. Gaza-based Palestinians, comprising large numbers of children and women, are dying in hordes almost every day. So far, little pressure has been exerted by the friends of Israel and Palestine on the two sides to bring the mindless war to an end. So far, the UN, including its all-powerful Security Council, proved to

be totally ineffective to stop the wars in Ukraine and Gaza to establish peace and human security in the two politically explosive regions. In Ukraine, the US and its allies are actually fanning the war by providing massive arms and financial assistance adding to the endless suffering of the people of the east European nation. Last week, French President Emmanuel Macron went to the extent of openly discussing the possibility of sending European troops to Ukraine to help the country fight the war against Russia, threatening a major escalation of the largest ground war Europe has witnessed since World War II and challenging the authority of the UN. Russia has responded immediately with the possibility of a nuclear war in Europe. France is one of the UN Security Council's five permanent members. In a way, President Macron's public outburst once again undermined the authority of the UN. There are at least 10 other countries and regions where civil wars, armed violence and terror attacks have been causing human disasters for years and even for decades. They include Afghanistan, Burkina Faso and the Sahel, the Central African Republic, Chad and the Lake Chad Basin, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and the Yemeni

Houthi rebels-controlled Red Sea. In Afghanistan, nearly 150,000 civilian casualties have been recorded since the US military withdrawal in 2021. By now, some 28.3 million people need humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. The inter-communal conflict in Chad and the Lake Chad Basin has been going on for nearly 15 years. The conflict in Congo has so far affected 26.4 million people who badly need humanitarian assistance. The violence and brutality in Somalia, ethnic cleansing in South Sudan and inter-communal conflict in Sudan have sent millions of people in utter distress. Syria is one of the world's worst affected countries trapped in the violence assisted by outside powers. In the Red Sea, controlled by allegedly Iran-backed Yemeni Houthi pirates, a trillion-dollar annual global sea trade has been severely impacted. All the countries mentioned in the list are UN members. Yet, the UN stands totally ineffective, if not unconcerned, to help establish peace and security in the region.

The helpless condition of the UN and its rarely cooperative five-member Security Council, led by two rival groups (one under the US and the other a Russia-China combine) are increasingly creating a situation which the world witnessed in the 1930s under the League of Nations.

The League was the first worldwide intergovernmental organization whose principal mission was to maintain world peace. The League of Nations was established on January 10, 1920, at the initiative of victorious Allied powers at the end of the first World War. The League of Nations failed as aggressor nations - as also its powerful permanent members such as France and Britain - undermined the authority of the world body. France and Britain even ignored the League in their efforts to appease Germany's Hitler at the early stage, which arguably led to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. By 1937, the League became a totally useless body. It was formally disbanded on April 19, 1946.

Right now, trust between the UN's member-governments appears to be reaching a breaking point. Not many countries trust the UN for resolving or reshaping critical inter-governmental issues. China is seriously questioning the legitimacy of the US to help establish the world order. New intergovernmental bodies such as BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa group), Quad (Quadrilateral Dialogue involving the US, Japan, India and Australia), US-Japan-Australia Strategic Cooperation, Aukus (the Australia-UK-US strategic pact), and

Beijing's own multibillion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or a Chinese Marshall Plan for global dominance involving so far some 60 countries pose a new challenge to the diminishing UN authority. Interestingly, China is believed to be the main opposer to the UNSC reforms for now. Earlier, the western powers resisted the call for the reforms.

To be effective, the UN needs to be urgently revamped. The UNSC must recognize the changing world order - economic and strategic. It is unthinkable that some of the world's most influential countries today such as India, Japan, Germany and Brazil are still to become permanent members of the UNSC. India is the world's most populous country, fifth largest economy, and the fourth largest military power after the US, Russia and China. Japan and Germany are economic and technological super powers. Brazil is South America's most influential country. Their presence as permanent members of the UNSC would have made the council much stronger to deal with the global political impasse. The deepening global crisis demands a fundamental and rapid shift in the operational style of the UN. The UNSC must recognize and represent the contemporary global power dynamics.



**BRIEF**

**Foundation stones**



**Gwalior:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate and lay foundation stones of 16 airport projects on Sunday, Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said. Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate the airport terminal of Gwalior aerodrome virtually. On the occasion, the statue of Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia would be unveiled at the airport, the BJP Rajya Sabha member told reporters here.

## FTA possible' before India elections: Kemi Badenoch

London, Mar 08:

A trade deal being negotiated with India is "possible" to be concluded before a general election in the country but Britain does not want to use that as a deadline, UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Kemi Badenoch has said. The minister in charge of signing off on the free trade agreement (FTA), now in its 14th round of negotiations, pointed to India's "protectionist economy" in comparison with the UK's liberalised regime as one of the factors behind the long-drawn discussions. Badenoch, who was speaking during a Global Trade conference at the think tank Chatham House on Thursday, stressed that she wanted to ensure a "commercially meaning-



ful" pact as opposed to just a pre-election picture opportunity. "India is still very protectionist where we are very, very liberalised," claimed Badenoch. "I am not interested in just taking a picture and moving on."

It has to be something that is commercially meaningful. People need to be able to say ah now I can do this', like we had with our Australia agreement or with Japan for example," she said, referring

to FTAs with the two major economies. On the timeline for getting to the finishing line with the talks with India, she added: "We can actually sign an agreement before the Indian election. I suspect that that is not necessarily going to be the case because I don't want to use any election as a deadline. "It is possible that that will be done but I am very resistant to deadlines being set on trade negotiations because it runs down the clock."

It is very possible that we can sign but I am not using it as a deadline for the work that I am carrying out basically," India and the UK have been negotiating an FTA since January 2022 to significantly enhance the GBP 36-billion bilateral trading partnership.

## Modi govt always keeps in mind long-term benefits of FTAs for India: Goyal

New Delhi, Mar 08:

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said that the Modi government always keeps in mind commensurate and long-term benefits for the domestic industry while negotiating free trade agreements. He stressed that "gone" are the days when India used to accept the terms of the world.

"We crystal gaze into the future to make sure that its (FTAs) impact in the future will also be positive and we also look at balanced, fair and equitable FTAs," he told PTI in an interview.

"So we can see the big Indian opportunity that we are offering and we want to make sure that we get commensurate benefits (from these pacts) for the country," he said. He



indicated "some good news" on this front in the days to come.

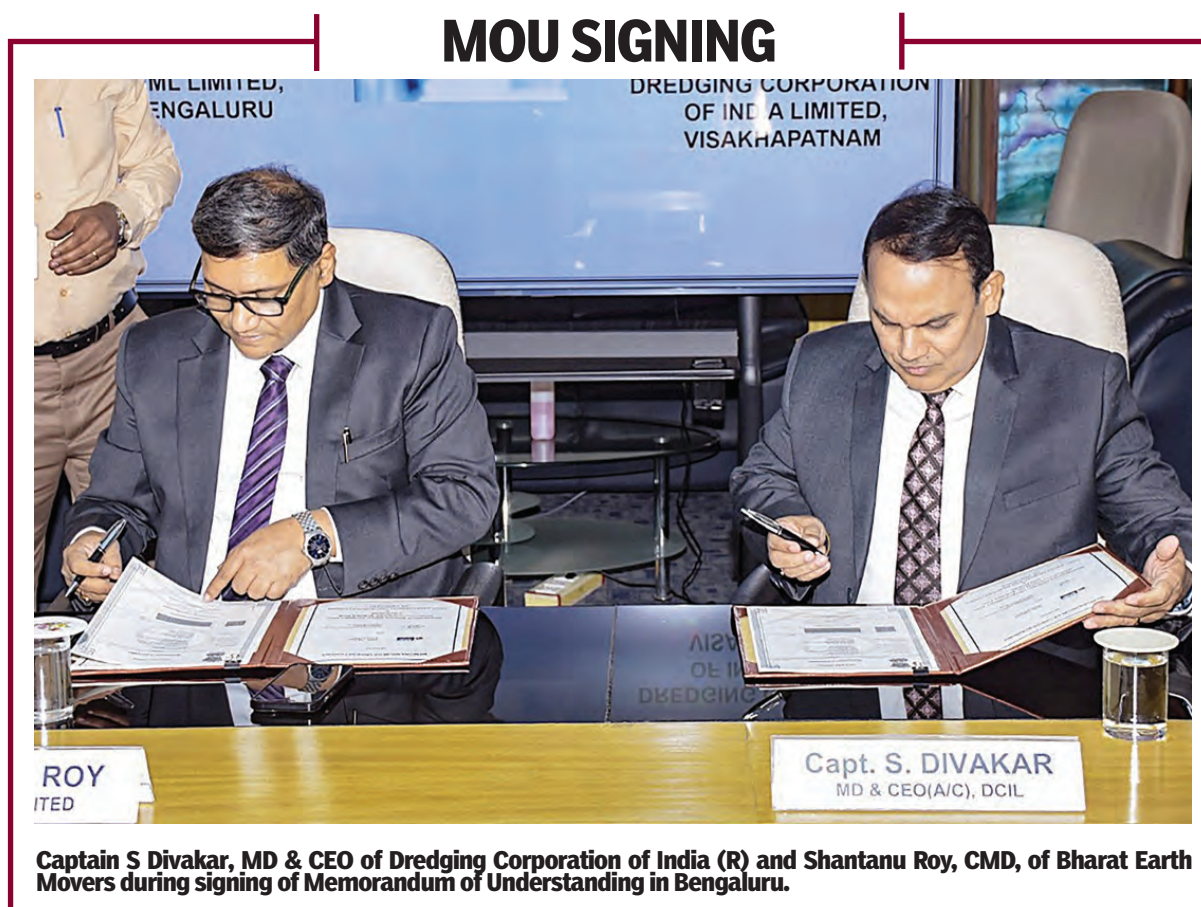
The remarks assume significance as India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) bloc concluded the talks for an FTA.

EFTA members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. The minister said that the free trade pacts of the Modi government involve a huge amount of stakeholder consultations with industry.

## Fund of Funds commits Rs 9,500 cr for Startups: SIDBI Chairman

New Delhi, Mar 08:

SIDBI chairman S Ramann on Friday said that the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS) has committed Rs 9,500 crore for the promotion of new ventures in the country. The FFS was unveiled by the Prime Minister on January 16, 2016, in line with the Start-up India Action Plan. It has approved a corpus of Rs 10,000 crore for contribution to various Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) registered with SEBI. Introduced with a focused objective of supporting development and growth of innovation-driven enterprises, FFS facilitates funding needs for start-ups through participation in the capital of SEBI-registered Alternative Investment Funds. The commitment of Rs 9500



## MOU SIGNING

## Geonix conducts major IT Dealer Convention



Mumbai, Mar 08: Geonix, a well-known and diverse IT Hardware brand in North India, is making a strong foray into the Chhattisgarh market. This week, Geonix held a major Dealer Convention in Raipur city, featuring over 150 IT Retailers and consultants from every party of the city, and beyond. IT retailers and wholesalers form Raipur's main computer market, Millennium Plaza, thronged to the extravagant event. Representing Geonix were National Sales Manager, Nikhil Maheshwari, locally based Branch Manager, Niranjana Sethi, and Marketing Head, Saurabh Dey. Sethi told the press "Our products are relevant for various consumer needs, and highly affordable. Geonix has set ambitious targets to expand its consumer base and dealer ecosystem in the state". Geonix launched multiple new ICT products for the region, within important sub-categories such as surveillance, networking, IT peripherals, computer gaming, sound systems and consumer electronics. Guests at the convention included ICT consultants, systems integrators, wholesalers, IT after-sales service professionals, some corporate executives and regional distributors.

**Spectrum auction**

**New Delhi:** The upcoming spectrum auction will start from May 20, according to the notice inviting application released by the Department of Telecom on Friday. Government will auction eight spectrum bands for mobile phone services at a base price of Rs 96,317.65 crore.

**Cooperative federalism**



**New Delhi:** Ahead of the planned protest against the Centre, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday said the central government's recent actions have weakened cooperative federalism. The protest against the Centre's alleged neglect of the state is not to defeat anyone but to get what is rightfully eligible for the state, he said, adding that the Centre has been cutting down funds.

**Green infra**

**Jamshedpur:** Private steel major Tata Steel said it will jointly work with South Eastern Railway (SER) to develop sustainable rail infrastructure by utilising its slag-based aggregates. A deliberation on the project execution was held between officials of the SER and Tata Steel, the company said in a statement.

## Odisha approves seven key projects with Rs 80,125 cr investment

Bhubaneswar, Mar 08:

The Odisha government has approved seven key projects with an investment of Rs 80,125 crore in different sectors, an official said. The projects received the state government's nod at a High-Level Clearance Authority (HLCA) meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday. These investments are expected to create job opportunities for 24,552 people in various sectors, including steel, green energy, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals, the official said. These projects are spread over Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Ganjam, and Bhadrak districts, he said. Granules Life Sciences Private Limited, a leading producer of paracetamol



in India, has proposed to set up its pharmaceutical unit at Tata SEZ, Gopalpur in Ganjam district. The company aims to produce 4 billion units of paracetamol, metformin, ibuprofen and other pharma products, for which it will pump in Rs 1,100 crore in the Ganjam plant, generating jobs for around 1,500 people. Granules CZRO Private Limited will also set up a chemical plant for its pharmaceutical prod-

ucts at the Tata SEZ, investing Rs 2,000 crore and creating jobs for around 1,000 people, the official said. EG Solwin Hybrid Private Limited will establish a 0.30 MT green ammonia production unit at the Tata SEZ, investing Rs 6,330 crore and employing 1,050 people. ACME Greentech Urja Private Limited has plans to set up an integrated manufacturing unit at Khurda to produce solar power panels, for which it will pump in Rs 36,000 crore and hire around 6,300 people, he said. Waaree Clean Energy Solutions Private Limited, India's largest solar panel manufacturer, will set up a 1.20 MMTPA green ammonia plant in Jagatsinghpur at an investment of Rs 12,480 crore, providing employment to 3,250 people.



crore has led to over 100 AIFs raising Rs 56,000 crore more, he said at TiEcon Delhi 2024 conference here. "It's really a staggering figure. The ability of all of you (AIFs) to go out and bring in that kind of money from your foreign Limited Partners (LPs) convince the Indians to become LPs," he said. Observing that AIFs space is getting more exciting, he said, there is still a lot

## Sudha Murty holds about Rs 5,600 cr worth of stocks in Infosys

**New Delhi:** Sudha Murty, who was on Friday nominated to the Rajya Sabha by the President, holds a 0.83 per cent stake in IT bellwether Infosys which at current prices is worth close to Rs 5,600 crore. The 73-year-old philanthropist is the wife of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy. She is the chairperson of the Murty Trust and has authored several books. According to the latest shareholding filed by Infosys with the BSE, she holds 3.45 crore shares of the company. At the last closing price of Rs 1,616.95 on the BSE, Murty's holding in Infosys is currently worth Rs 5,586.66 crore. Her husband Narayana Murthy owns 1.66 crore equity shares that are worth Rs 2,691 crore. Sudha Murty, who was awarded the Padma Shri in 2006 and Padma Bhushan in January this year, is also the mother-in-law of UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. While Padma Shri is the country's fourth-highest civilian award, Padma Bhushan is the second-highest civilian honour.

## Ola Electric announces price reduction

**Bengaluru, Mar 08:** Ola Electric has announced the price reduction of up to Rs 25,000 on its S1 scooter portfolio for the month of March. The announcement is aimed at continuing the company's biggest push yet to accelerate India's electrification efforts and breaking all barriers to EV adoption. The price reduction came on the back of the company's robust cost structure coupled with strong vertically integrated in-house technology and manufacturing capabilities, and eligibility to manufacturing incentives. Now is the best time to buy Ola S1 as the FAME (Faster Adoption & Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles) scheme is likely to end on March 31st, 2024 and there may be changes in the prices of EVs. With a robust, aggressively priced product portfolio, the Ola S1 scooters outper-



form any traditional ICE vehicles, making it the superior choice in the scooter market with savings of up to Rs 30,000/year. Recently, Ola Electric became the first Indian 2W company to receive Domestic Value Addition (DVA) certificate under Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for automobile and auto component industry. The PLI certification is a testament to the company's vertically integrated manufacturing capabilities, which coupled with its robust localised supply chain ecosystem and government subsidies have helped the company restructure costs.

## Number of board seats held by women in India Inc increased over past 5 years: Report

New Delhi, Mar 08:

The number of board seats held by women across India Inc has increased gradually over the past five years with them holding 18.3 per cent board seats in 2023, a Deloitte report said on Friday. The 'Women in the boardroom: A global perspective' report, however, said that it is lower than the global average of 23.3 per cent. The report by Deloitte Global Boardroom Program analysed more than 18,000 companies in 50 countries exploring representation of women in the boardroom. This includes analysis of 400 companies from India. "Boardroom diversi-



ty requires a paradigm shift. Since many companies prefer to recruit board members with CEO or CFO experience, these numbers do not paint an optimistic outlook for pipeline development. India Inc. must break from

historical patterns and prioritise capabilities over past roles," Deloitte South Asia Chairperson Shefali Goradia said. The report shows a gradual increase in the number of board seats held by women across

India Inc, with women holding 18.3 per cent board seats in 2023, up from 13.8 per cent in 2018, and 17.1 per cent in 2021, said the report released on the International Women's Day. India's number is lower than the global average of 23.3 per cent, which has seen an increase of 3.6 per cent since 2022, reducing the timeline towards achieving parity by seven years from 2045 to 2038. "This indicates that even if India were to match the global pace, achieving gender parity on boards would still remain a distant goal until a robust pipeline of women leaders is developed," the report said.

## NMDC hosted a Health Talk to celebrate Int'n'l Women's Day

Hyderabad, Mar 08:

On the occasion of International Women's Day, NMDC organised a health talk for female employees at its Head Office, Hyderabad. The session was conducted by Dr. Sai Lakshmi, a gynaecologist from Apollo Hospitals focusing on Women health and Wellness. The session aimed at raising awareness on growing health challenges for women including cervical cancer and breast cancer. Dr. Sai Lakshmi also emphasized on the importance of early detection and screening for controlling the condition as well as preventive measures. The chief guest Vinay Kumar, Director



(Technical) NMDC said, "As we celebrate International Women's Day, we are reminded of the pivotal role of women in our society. With the female labour participation rate rising to 37% in 2023, it's evident that women's contributions are integral to achieving India's vision of becoming a 5 trillion economy." During the lecture, Dr. Sai Lakshmi said,

"Cervical cancer and breast cancer are most common in Indian women, therefore the need to stay informed about the preventive measures is crucial. NMDC's initiative of providing free HPV vaccination is commendable and aid in early prevention." HYBIZ organized an award show to celebrate the women leaders in the Industry, G Anupama GM

(Finance & SoT CMD) and P Shanthi GM (Commercial) were presented with the HYBIZ Women's Leadership Award 2024 in the finance category. The award recognises their valuable contribution and versatile expertise in corporate finance & strategic management that has helped the corporation achieved significant milestones.

## Thousands took Holy Dip at the confluence of three rivers

### On occasion of Mahashivratri in Rajim

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 08: It was amidst light chilliness in the air, devotees in large number took a Holy Dip on occasion of Mahashivratri at the confluence of three rivers in Rajim here on Friday and offered prayers to Lord Shri Bholenath and sought blessings.

The amount of faith of people towards religion and 'dharma' was visible since Thursday night itself and those having immense faith in religion and Lord Shri Bholenath went for the Holy Dip at 2:00 in the night (early morning) and took the holy dip in Rajim confluence.

This year's Mahashivratri is considered to be very much auspicious and therefore the devotees thronged the confluence in Rajim since early morning hours and



taking the Holy Dip offered 'deepdan'. After this there was long queue of devotees seen outside Shri Kuleshwar Nath Mahadev Mandir and Shri Rajiv Lochan Mandir and Baba Garib Nath. Devotees were found anxiously waiting for their turn to pay oblations to Lord

Shri Shiva and this started since 3:00 early in the morning.

It is notable here that the tradition to take Holy Dip on occasion of Mahashivratri and 'deepdan' is going on for last hundreds of year and devotees were found adhering to the same even

today. It is by keeping the 'douna' in flow of the current, the lighted 'diyas' inside it were resembling the 'juganoo' in the night. Many a woman constructed 'Shivling' with the help of the sand and offered 'bel-patta', 'dhatura' and flowers as per rituals and



performed prayers. As per belief, many devotees got the head of their children tonsured and there was huge crowd of 'Pandits' at Shri Kuleshwar Nath temple and people were found offering prayers to Lord Shri Satyanarayan and Shivaji as well.

## Aadhaar integration simplifies banking procedures

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Mar 08:

The State Bank of India (SBI) has issued a directive to its customers regarding the Mahtari Vandan Yojana, stating that if transactions for the scheme are conducted through Aadhaar-linked accounts, no additional KYC documentation is required. In essence, if Aadhaar is already linked to the bank account and KYC procedures have been completed, there is no need to submit a separate form to the bank for the Mahtari Vandan Yojana.

SBI emphasized that customers visiting the bank for KYC purposes should ensure that the name spelling in their bank account matches exactly with that on their Aadhaar card.

Additionally, customers are requested to bring their token number for efficient processing and co-operation. This move aims to streamline the process and facilitate smoother transactions for beneficiaries of the Mahtari Vandan Yojana.

## Vaishnav Nagas perform Nishan Puja in Rajim Kumbh Kalpa

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 08:

On the 12th day of the Rajim Kumbh Kalp Mela, Vaishnav Nagas demonstrated their devotion and bravery by performing Nishan Puja, led by Mahant Narendra Das Ji Maharaj, General Secretary of Shri Akhil Bharatiya Manch Ramanandi Akhara, at the Sant Samagam Sthal. This sacred ritual, deeply rooted in the Vaishnav sect's tradition, saw the participation of three Akharas representing the Vaishnav community.

The ceremony commemorated the historical significance of Vaishnav Nagas in defending Sanatan Dharma against invaders. In ancient times, a formidable army of saints was formed to protect the faith, equipped with the knowledge of weaponry and warfare. These saintly warriors, guided by the blessings of Hanuman Ji sym-

bolized by the Nishan (flag), valiantly defended the religion's sanctity.

Amidst the presence of saints, officials, and public representatives, the Nishan Puja unfolded with grandeur and adherence to rituals. Mahant Narendra Das Ji was joined by prominent figures including Mahant Radha Mohan Das Ji, Mandaleshwar Radheshyam Das Ji, and Mahant Ramdas Ji Maharaj, among others. The event was also attended by officials such as Pratap Parakh, Deputy Director of the Culture Department, and Girish Bissa, a member of the fair organizing committee.

Rajim stands out as a unique destination during the Kumbh Kalpa, where seekers and devotees receive blessings from sages and saints, enriching their spiritual journey with the profound wisdom and divine grace bestowed by these revered souls.

## Training for FST & SST conducted



Central Chronicle News

Manendragarh, Mar 08: In a concerted effort to uphold the integrity of the electoral process, a meeting cum training session for the flying squad and static surveillance team was conducted today in the presence of Collector and District Election Officer D. Rahul Venkat, Deputy District Election Officer Anil Sidar, and Expenditure Monitoring Nodal Officer Vijayendra Sarathi.

Addressing the attendees, Collector and District Election Officer D. Rahul Venkat underscored the crucial role of the Expenditure Monitoring Team in ensuring transparency and fairness in elections. Emphasizing the importance of diligent oversight, Venkat highlighted the responsibilities of the Flying Squad Team (FST) and Static Surveillance Team (SST) assigned to the Korba Lok Sabha constituency.

With the imminent announcement of elections, Venkat urged all parties to remain vigilant and adhere strictly to the model code of conduct. He

stressed the need for caution, strictness, vigilance, and decency in carrying out their duties, emphasizing the significance of impartiality and transparency at all check posts.

In addition to impartial monitoring, Venkat instructed the teams to intensively investigate and monitor both legal and illegal expenses incurred by candidates.

He emphasized the importance of complete videography during seizure processes and directed special vigilance in sensitive areas within the Lok Sabha constituency.

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## Villagers protest against proposed cement factory

### Surround Collector's office demanding attention to their concerns

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Mar 08: A group of villagers from Vicharpur, Bhardakhurd, Pandariya, Bundeli, and Sandi of KCG district staged a protest outside the Collectorate building, expressing their opposition to the proposed establishment of a cement plant in their area.

The protest, which lasted for five hours, highlighted the deep-seated concerns of the villagers regarding the potential impact of the cement factory on their livelihoods and environment.

The villagers, primarily farmers, voiced their discontent with the district administration's decision to grant approval to Shree Cement Company for setting up the plant.

Despite the state government's preliminary nod for

the project, the villagers remained steadfast in their opposition, citing potential threats to their agricultural lands and traditional way of life.

Their frustration peaked when Collector Chandrakant Verma failed to meet with them despite their repeated attempts to engage with the administration. Feeling neglected and unheard, the villagers surrounded the Collector's office, demanding attention to their grievances. Their anger was palpable as they expressed their disappointment at being ignored by the very authorities responsible for addressing their concerns.

However, after several hours of standoff, the Collector finally agreed to meet with a delegation representing the protesting villagers. During the meet-



ing, he assured them that he would escalate their demands to higher government authorities for further consideration. While this provided a temporary respite, the underlying tension between the villagers and the administration remained unresolved.

The core issue driving the villagers' protest was their fear of losing their

means of livelihood and autonomy over their land. They vehemently opposed the government's purported plan to convert them into mere labourers in exchange for their land, viewing it as a betrayal of their identity and way of life. To them, their land was not merely a piece of property but a source of sustenance and heritage

that they were determined to protect at all costs.

Moreover, the looming threat of the cement factory not only jeopardized their livelihoods but also posed a significant environmental risk to the surrounding land. The villagers expressed concerns about the potential adverse effects of industrialization on their agricultural practices and the fertility of their soil, emphasizing the need to preserve their natural resources for future generations.

The protesting villagers issued a stern warning to boycott the upcoming Lok Sabha elections if their demands were not addressed promptly. They viewed this as a last resort to compel the authorities to take their grievances seriously and prioritize their welfare over industrial interests.

## Regional Saras Fair concludes with cultural splendour

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, Mar 08: The Regional Saras Fair 2024, organized for the first time in Kabirdham district, concluded on a vibrant note, leaving residents enthralled with cultural performances and an array of artistic displays. The event, spearheaded by Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, witnessed a colorful finale, drawing curtains to ten days of festivities.

Pandaria MLA Bhavna Bohra graced the closing ceremony as the chief guest, inaugurating the cultural extravaganza with the traditional lighting of the lamp. Interacting with stallholders and



artisans, MLA Bohra explored the diverse range of products and crafts on display, fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship among local groups and artisans. She also extended her support to self-help groups and vendors, emphasizing the impor-

championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Addressing the gathering, MLA Bhavna Bohra highlighted the significance of events like Saras Mela in promoting local entrepreneurship and fostering economic growth.

She envisioned the realization of Modi ji's vision of empowered and prosperous women, or "Lakhpati Didis." The cultural program at the closing ceremony captivated the audience, featuring performances by

renowned artists such as Chhattisgarhi film star Rajesh Awasthi and musician Ajay Pandey. Local talent was also showcased through folk songs and dances, adding to the vibrant ambience of the fair.

District Panchayat members, public representatives, and dignitaries including Ramkumar Bhatt, Rekha Pandey, Chandraprakash Chandravanshi, and Roshan Dubey graced the occasion, acknowledging the success of the event in promoting regional culture and entrepreneurship.

The Saras Fair not only provided a platform for cultural exchange but also offered visitors a glimpse into the rich heritage and traditions of Chhattisgarh. From traditional delicacies to agricultural innovations, the fair showcased the best of the region, while also disseminating information about government schemes and initiatives.

## Collector emphasizes error-free process in resolving revenue cases

Central Chronicle News

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Mar 08: In a proactive move towards enhancing efficiency in revenue case resolution, Collector Leena Kamlesh Mandavi chaired a review meeting at the Arpa Hall of the Collectorate. Addressing the gathered revenue officers, the Collector emphasized the importance of ensuring a flawless process in resolving revenue cases.

During the meeting, Collector Mandavi issued instructions for the swift resolution of pending cases, urging officers to undertake a week-long campaign to address them. She underscored the signifi-



cance of adhering to the guidelines set forth by the state government regarding data entry in software systems.

Furthermore, the Collector directed Tehsildars to maintain oversight over Patwaris and thoroughly investigate any complaints lodged against them. She urged all revenue officers to streamline office procedures, in-

stitute reforms, and carry out their duties with sensitivity towards the needs of the public.

Specific directives were issued to prioritize the resolution of disputed and undisputed demarcation and division cases within specified timeframes. In demarcation cases, both parties are to be duly informed, and the order sheet must be signed accordingly.

Additionally, the Collector reviewed various tasks such as diversion, tree cutting, digital signature authentication, Aadhaar data entry, record accuracy, map numbering, RBC 6-4 compliance, map renewal, and renumbering of Khasra numbers across different tehsils.

She instructed officers to resolve pending cases related to these matters within a week. Present at the meeting were Additional Collector Namrata Anand Dongre, Joint Collector Dileram Dahire, SDM Pendaroad Amit Beck, Deputy Collector Prafulla Rajak, along with all Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, and Revenue Inspectors.

### Classifieds

**आवश्यकता है**  
नर्सिंग स्टॉफ एन.एम.जी एनएम.बी.एस.सी. वाई ब्यॉय, ओटी स्टाफ, लैब टेक्नीशियन, स्वीपर, क्लर्क (महिला) विशेषज्ञ की तत्काल जरूरत है। संपर्क करें:- 9244329123

**REQUIREMENT**  
Required Accountant with knowledge of tally prime sale purchase and E-invoice and E way bill 07714007838/ 7879163613

**आवश्यकता है**  
मां मातृगी दिव्य धाम अमनपुर में आवश्यकता है:- निडिया एडिटर (40 हजार प्रतिमाह), वाफिकस डिजाइनर (20 हजार प्रतिमाह), ऑडियो निस्कार ऑपरेटर (दिन 20 हजार प्रतिमाह), कैमरा ऑपरेटर (दिन 30 हजार प्रतिमाह), सोशल मीडिया अकाउंट मैनेजर (दिन 20 हजार प्रतिमाह) कार ड्राइवर (दिन प्रतिमाह 15 हजार) परमाणु ट जी। संपर्क:- 8249950263

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## Turmoil surrounds no-confidence motion

Central Chronicle News

Dhamdha, Mar 08: The atmosphere in Dhamdha remains fraught with uncertainty as the scheduled election of a no-confidence motion faces turmoil and eventual adjournment, leaving political tensions at a peak.

The impending motion, initiated by BJP councillors against current president Sunita Gupta of the Nagar Panchayat Council, was triggered by allegations of delays in various governmental projects and services, including the PM Awas Yojana, pension payments, electricity, water, sanitation, and developmental initiatives.

With only eight months



remaining in the council's tenure, BJP councillors sought to oust President Sunita Gupta citing negligence and inefficiency in governance. The planned election, overseen by Dhamdha's sub-divisional officer and BJP observer MLA Lalit Chandrakar alongside Congress observer Rajendra Sahu, was slat-

ed to occur last Thursday. However, the proceedings descended into confusion when a Congress councillor unexpectedly vanished, casting doubt on the election's legitimacy. Despite the presence of BJP councillors, including MLA Chandrakar and the district president, at the designated rest house for the election,

the sudden absence of the Congress representative disrupted the electoral process.

Further exacerbating the situation, the sub-divisional officer, slated to oversee the election, was sidelined due to purported health concerns, prompting the abrupt postponement of the election.

### Unprecedented Development Progress

Nagar Panchayat President Sunita Gupta highlights a significant transformation in Dhamdha Nagar under her leadership, bolstered by the guidance of former minister Ravindra Choubey. Over the past four years, a series of developmental projects totaling Rs 8 crores have reshaped the landscape. However, amidst the transition to BJP rule, a cloud of suspicion looms as Gupta accuses BJP councillors of eyeing commissions, leading to a malicious no-confidence motion against her. Despite the postponement of elections under political pressure, Gupta remains confident in securing a trust vote in her favor when the time comes.

### Alleged embezzlement claims

District BJP President Jitendra Verma alleges significant irregularities and embezzlement of funds by Dhamdha Nagar Panchayat President during developmental projects. These accusations prompted BJP councillors to initiate a no-confidence motion. However, elections were postponed due to the presiding officer's health issues and alleged irregularities. Verma expresses confidence in winning future elections whenever they occur.

## Rohit, Gill put India in driver's seat

Dharamsala, Mar 08 (PTI):

Skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill's splendid hundreds gave India complete control of the fifth Test against England despite a late batting collapse that saw the hosts end day two at 473 for eight here on Friday.

India lost as many as five wickets for 97 runs in the final session after Rohit (103 off 162 balls) and Gill (110 off 150 balls) shared a stroke-filled 171-run partnership off 244 balls for the second wicket.

Debutant Devdutt Padikkal (65 off 103) showed a lot of class in his debut innings while Sarfaraz Khan (56 off 60) was guilty of throwing away his wicket first ball after tea. The home team, which began the day at 135 for one, led England by 255 runs at stumps.

Off-spinner Shoaib Bashir (4/170 in 44 overs), who was taken to the cleaners by the Indian openers, bounced back strongly to take three wickets in the final session. Left-arm spinner Tom Hartley (2/126 in 39) too was impressive towards the end of the day while Mark Wood (0/89 in 15) was the most expensive.

The pitch remains good for batting and at 376 for three at tea, India looked set to bat England out of the game before the combination of good bowling



and reckless batting kept the visitors alive in the match. India scored at close to 4.5 runs per over until slowing down significantly in the final session. Kuldeep Yadav spun the ball a lot more than fellow Indian spinners on day one but after a tough time in the first two sessions on day two, Bashir and Co. got a lot out of the surface. After lunch, England captain Ben Stokes bowled Rohit Sharma off his first ball in nine months to give

the visitors something to cheer about.

But Sarfaraz and Padikkal then got together and ensured runs kept flowing for the home team.

Stokes, who had been bowling only in the nets thus far, finally decided to roll his arm over in a match situation after nothing went England's way in the morning session. He had stopped bowling owing to a knee injury and had undergone surgery last year.

Bowling the second over of the afternoon session, Stokes produced a peach that seamed away a touch from good length to dislodge Rohit's off-stump.

In the next over, James Anderson bowled Gill with a beauty that seamed back in, leaving India at 279 for three.

In his debut game, Padikkal's off-side play stood out as he regaled the crowd with exquisite back-foot punches and cover drives.

Sarfaraz, on the other hand, started slowly before changing gears both against pace and spin. What attracted most attention was his attacking play against the express pace of Mark Wood.

His game against fast bowlers has been questioned but Sarfaraz was razor sharp on Friday as he dispatched Wood for a lofted back-drive before pulling him for a six over backward square leg. He also played a ramp shot off Wood using the extra pace and bounce that he generated.

Sarfaraz tried to cut a harmless ball off Bashir and ended up giving an easy catch to Joe Root at first slip. Padikkal got a gem from the England off-spinner that spun away from middle stump to hit the top of the off-stump. Like Sarfaraz, Dhruv Jurel (15) too went for an avoidable shot and perished.

## Nishant Dev enters pre-quarterfinals of World Olympic Boxing Qualifiers

Busto Arsizio: World Championships bronze-medallist Nishant Dev out-punched Georgia's Madiev Eskerkhan to enter the men's 71kg category pre-quarterfinals of the first World Olympic Boxing Qualifiers here. The Indian won by a unanimous 5-0 margin on Thursday night.

Tokyo Olympics quarterfinalist Eskerkhan looked clueless against the Indian's attack. He tried his best to recover in the second round but Nishant denied him any chance of a comeback. Nishant will play his Round of 16 bout on Sunday. Meanwhile, the youth world champion Ankushita Boro (66kg) and national champion Sanjeet (92kg) suffered contrasting defeats in the opening round.

While Ankushita went down fighting 2-3 against Sonvico Emilie of France, Sanjeet lost 0-5 to Aibek Oralbay of Kazakhstan, continuing what has overall been a poor outing for the country's boxers.

This tournament, featuring over 590 boxers, offers a total of 49 quotas, including 28 for men and 21 for women for the 2024 Paris Olympics. India have already secured four quotas for Paris with Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti (54kg), Parween Hooda (57kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) confirming their berths at the Asian Games. The second World Qualification Tournament will be held in Bangkok from May 23 to June 3.

## Satwik-Chirag pair cruises into French Open quarterfinals



Paris, Mar 08 (PTI):

Star Indian doubles players Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty cruised into the quarterfinals of the French Open Super 750 badminton tournament here with a straight-game victory against the Malaysian pair of Man Wei Chong and Kai Woo Tee.

Satwik and Chirag, who have been on a dream run with successive runner-up finishes in 2023 China Open, Malaysia Open Super 1000 and India Open Super 750 this season to emerge as the world No. 1 doubles pair, defeated the Malaysian duo 21-13, 21-12 in a round-of-16 clash on Thursday night. The Indians' domination was such that the match ended in just 32 minutes.

They will take on the Thai pair of Jomkoh Supak and Kedren

Kittinpong for a place in the semifinal later on Friday.

Meanwhile, PV Sindhu, playing her first BWF tour event since returning from a knee injury, will take on second seed Chen Yu Fei of China in the women's quarterfinal.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, had battled her way from an opening-game reversal to outgun world No. 10 Zhang 13-21, 21-10, 21-14 to enter her first quarterfinal of the season.

In another Thursday night match, the women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also progressed to the quarterfinals, shocking seventh seeded Japanese duo of Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota 21-18, 21-13.

They will face top seeds Qing Chen Chen and Yi Fan Jia of China in the next round.

## Sindhu loses epic battle against Olympic champion Chen

India's PV Sindhu produced a gallant fight before marginally falling short against reigning Olympic champion Chen Yu Fei of China in an epic quarterfinal at the French Open Super 750 badminton tournament here on Friday. On a comeback trail from a four-month-long injury layoff, Sindhu gave ample display of her stroke-play and physical fitness during a marathon one hour and 32-minute battle before settling for a 24-22 17-21 18-21 loss to the second seed and defending champion Chen in a riveting last eight battle here.

The last time Sindhu had beaten the world no. 2 Chen was en route to her 2019 World Championships gold. Since then the Indian has lost to the Chinese twice in the last two meetings although she held a better 6-5 head-to-head record against her opponent coming into the crucial tie.

Playing a top-class opponent after quite sometime, Sindhu didn't show any sign off the left knee injury that had pushed her out of the circuit since October last year. There was nothing to separate the two as Sindhu produced an attacking display and also moved well on the court but a steady Chen Yu Fei managed to keep her nose ahead in the end.

## Kohli's longevity is connected to fitness, an example for young cricketers: Du Plessis

Bengaluru, Mar 08 (PTI):

Virat Kohli's unwavering passion for fitness is the secret behind his longevity at top-flight cricket and young cricketers should take a cue from that to build a career of their own, reckoned Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Faf du Plessis.

Kohli brought in a culture change in the Royal Challengers dressing room during his time as their skipper, making fitness a non-negotiable part of a player's life.

"He's amazing, he trains hard, he's very fit. I feel in today's age of sport, you have to be like that if you're looking for longevity. So, he will be a great example," Du Plessis told Star Sports.

Du Plessis said talent alone will not help a budding player to construct an extended career at top-



level sport. "The younger generation may feel like they can just come in and rely on their talent. Yes, they are good enough in terms of talent.

"But in terms of longevity in your body to make sure you can play for as long as possible, fitness will definitely play a role," he said. The former South African captain, himself a gym creature, said Kohli's hunger for physical fitness

was their connecting point when he joined the franchise in 2022.

"There are quite a few things that Virat and I are very similar, alike in the way we see the game or think about the game. Obviously (we think about being) athletic, train hard, be fit, eat well.

"So, we look at a holistic approach to being a professional sportsman. I think that's why we connected so well in my first season at RCB. We were very similar," he said.

Under Du Plessis, the Royal Challengers had reached the playoffs in 2022, while they finished sixth in the previous edition.

Former India and RCB pacer Varun Aaron, who recently announced his retirement, hoped Kohli would bat in this IPL like he did in 2016, beginning on March 22. Kohli scored 973 runs in that season to top the batting charts.

## Nagal bows out of Indian Wells ATP event following first-round loss



Indian Wells, Mar 08 (PTI):

Sumit Nagal was handed a straight-set defeat by Canada's Milos Raonic in the opening round of the BNP Paribas Open here, bringing a swift end to the Indian tennis player's campaign after he made the main draw as a 'lucky loser' due to Rafael Nadal's pullout. Nagal, who is ranked 101st in the ATP charts, went down 3-6 3-6 in a match that lasted one hour and 28 minutes. Raonic, who entered the match with a pro-

tected ranking of 224, converted three of the 12 break points he earned during the encounter. Nagal, on the other hand, could not manage to make good of the two break points he got. Nagal had lost in the second round of the qualifying tournament but snaked into main draw after Nadal's last-minute withdrawal, citing lack of readiness for the event. The Spaniard has been battling injury issues and was forced to undergo a hip surgery last season.

## IPL has made all three formats more competitive: Dhimal

Dharmasala, Mar 08 (PTI):

The Indian Premier League has not only played an important role in talent identification over the years but has also made all three formats of the game more competitive, league chairman Arun Dhimal said on Friday. Since its maiden season in 2008, the IPL and T20 cricket have grown exponentially. Several players including the likes of Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rinku Singh have gone on to get the coveted India cap after stellar performances in the lucrative league. "IPL has done a phenomenal job as far as the identification of new boys is concerned. We have seen, every season you will have very talented youngsters coming



in like Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh," Dhimal told PTI Video in an exclusive chat here.

"They have then played for India also, so that way IPL has turned out to be a great tournament for the young talent and hopefully this season is going to be no different," he added. The IPL has become the world's second-richest sports league in terms of per match value,

behind USA's National Football League (NFL) and Dhimal feels the league has had a positive effect on the Test and ODI formats as well.

"Definitely IPL in the last 15 years has become the second most important league in the world, it is the second most valuable league. You can imagine how cricket has tremendously shifted post-IPL, we have seen Test matches yielding more results, ODI's becoming more competitive." "Some two decades back 250-300 used to be a good score now you have 400 happening regularly, we all celebrated when Sachin scored his first 200 in an ODI game and after that there has been so much that has come, and thanks to this T20 format and this IPL coming into play," Dhimal added.

## Hazlewood takes 5-31, Australia in control of 2nd Test against New Zealand

Christchurch, Mar 08 (AP):

Josh Hazlewood took 5-31 as Australia bowled out New Zealand for 162 on the opening day of the second Test on Friday, overshadowing the 100th test appearances of Kane Williamson and Tim Southee. Williamson made 17 in the course of an accelerating collapse of the New Zealand batting order in which Tom Latham's 38 was the highest score. Southee made 26 in a 55-run partnership for the ninth wicket with Matt Henry (29) which was the highest of the innings. By stumps, Australia was 124-4 and the deficit had been reduced to 38. Marnus Labuschagne had played his way out of a slump and was 45 not out at the close and night-watchman Nathan Lyon was unbeaten on one. Australia had been 32-2 after Ben Sears dismissed Steve Smith (11) with his third ball in test cricket and Usman Khawaja was bowled by Henry.



Labuschagne put on 49 with first test century-maker Cameron Green who was out for 25 in the last hour. Henry dismissed Travis Head (21) when Australia was 107-4 and finished the day with 3-39. But, Labuschagne's fighting

innings ensured Australia finished the day on top. "What we pride ourselves on is how we go about our work and obviously it wasn't ideal with the bat," Henry said. "But, we knew how we to operate out here with the ball to put Australia under pressure.

"But, there's a long way to go and it's going to be a big first session tomorrow." Hazlewood's inexorable line and length, just on off stump and ducking away, was too much for the New Zealand top order. His 12th five-wicket bag in tests included the wickets of Williamson, Latham, Rachin Ravindra, Daryl Mitchell and Henry, whose wicket was the last to fall in only the 46th over. Mitchell Starc took the wickets of Will Young (14), Glenn Phillips (2) and Scott Kuggeleijn for a first-ball duck. With Phillips' wicket, Starc surpassed Dennis Lillee's career tally of 356 Test wickets, a significant Australian milestone.

## Indian challenge ends at Nagpur Open ITF

Nagpur: Indian challenge ended at the W35 Nagpur Open ITF Women's Championships, with the ouster of Sahaja Yamalapalli from the singles and Shrivalli Bhamidipathy and Vaidehi Chaudhari from the doubles category here on Friday. In the singles quarterfinal, fifth seed Sahaja was stunned by unseeded Deyeon Back 4-6 1-6. Later in doubles semifinal, Korean Yeonwoo Ku and Lithuania's Justina Mikulskyte defeated the local duo of Shrivalli and Vaidehi 6-2 2-6 10-8 in a keenly-contested match.

In other quarterfinal matches, runner-up at the Gurgaon event last week, Yeonwoo Ku of Korea kept her singles hopes alive, beating Russian Ekaterina Yashina 6-1 6-0 to progress to the last-four. In Saturday's semifinals, Ku will take on another Russian Daria Kudachova, who carved out a 6-4 6-3 win over Rinon Okuwaki of Japan.

## Luis Suarez, Lionel Messi rally Inter Miami for a 2-2 tie with Nashville

Nashville, Mar 08 (AP):

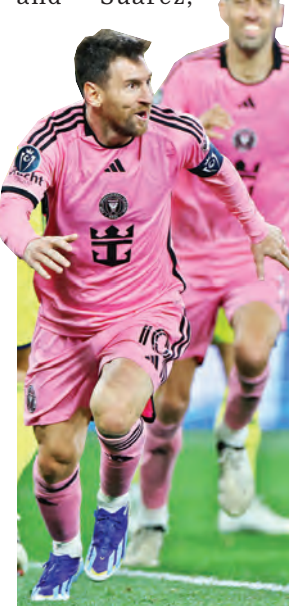
Luis Suarez scored in stoppage time, while Lionel Messi also scored after half-time to help Inter Miami tie Nashville 2-2 Thursday night in the CONCACAF Champions Cup.

The teams will meet Wednesday night in Florida in the second leg of the home-and-home, total-goals series in the pre-quarterfinals.

Suarez tied it up by scoring in the fifth minute of stoppage time with a header off a cross from former Barcelona teammate Sergio Busquets.

Messi got Inter Miami on the board with his first CONCACAF goal in the 52nd minute. "It's a completely different level of intelligence from the likes of Lionel Messi

and Busquets and Suarez."



Lionel Messi #10 of Inter Miami CF celebrates after a goal by Luis Suarez #9 against Nashville SC during the second half of the Concacaf Champions Cup Leg One Round of 16 match at GEODIS Park on March 07.

Nashville coach Gary Smith said of facing Inter Miami with the talent the team has added. "Completely different level. And for the most part, I thought the guys did a wonderful job."

Jacob Shaffelburg scored in the fourth minute, then again in the 47th minute after halftime to put Nashville up 2-0 before a crowd of 30,109. Nashville thought it had a 3-1 lead when Shaq Moore scored in the 83rd minute, only to have the goal waived off for being off-side.

Smith wasn't happy with the officiating, making clear he hadn't seen Moore's goal. Smith said he thought the rules required clear error or the decision on the field should stand.

## Bristol Open squash: Urwash Joshi enters quarterfinals

Bristol, Mar 08 (PTI):

India's Urwash Joshi upset second-seeded Australian Sophie Fadaely 3-2 to advance to the quarterfinals of the Bristol Open squash tournament here on Friday. Urwash, a semi-finalist during the 2023 National Championships, was engaged in a thrilling contest as she conquered the Australian 7-11, 11-6, 9-11, 11-5, 11-7 during the intense 35-minute pre-quarterfinal meeting of the USD 3000 PSA Challenger event.

The Maharashtra player, who defeated Jasmin Kalar of England 11-4, 11-5, 9-11, 11-9 in the opening round within 21 minutes, will take on fifth seed Erin Classen of Australia in the quarterfinals. Classen prevailed over Olivia Besant of England in the pre-quarterfinal, routing her 3-0 (11-5, 11-5, 14-12).

# 'IAF guarding skies, making paramount contribution to space programme'

Ghaziabad, Mar 8 (PTI)

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said the Indian Air Force's contribution to the nation's service is etched in "golden letters" and it is not only guarding the skies but also making a paramount contribution to the country's space programme.

In her address at a ceremony held at the Hindan Air Force Station to award President's Standard and Colours to four units of the IAF, Murmu said she believed that more and more women will sign up for the force and serve the nation and emphasised that increased representation of women in the force will make it "more inclusive".

She also extended her wishes to women on International Women's Day.

The President is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

The IAF's contribution to the nation's service in protecting the country is "etched in golden letters", she said.

"It is a matter of joy that the IAF is not only guarding our skies but also making a paramount contribution to India's space programme," the President said.

The President said the four astronauts chosen to be part of the Gaganyaan mission are IAF officers.

Gaganyaan — the country's



President Droupadi Murmu addresses during the President's Standard and President's Colours Presentation 2024, at the Air Force Station, Hindon, in Ghaziabad, Friday.

she said while expressing confidence that in coming times, "more and more girls will join the Air Force and serve the country".

"And, increased representation of women in the Air Force will make this Force more inclusive," Murmu added.

In her address after the ceremony, the President said she was pleased to know that the IAF has been adopting modern technologies in the last few years.

"I praise the contribution made by serving and former air warriors and officers in the service of the nation. The air warriors have shown amazing courage, dedication and self-sacrifice in the wars of 1948, 1965, 1971 and 1999.

"Even in peacetime, they have contributed to relief, and rescue work and rendered humanitarian aid in the country and abroad. Their devotion to duty is a matter of inspiration for all Indians," she said.

She also underlined the 'Operation Safed Sagar' undertaken by the IAF during the 1999 Kargil war.

The President also touched upon the role of evolving technology in the growth of a force like the IAF.

In this rapidly changing era, defence-related "requirements and priorities also changing fast". Akin to other sectors, the role of technology is also growing in the defence sector, she said.

maiden human space flight mission — envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching a crew of three members to an orbit of 400 km for a three-day mission and bringing them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters, according to ISRO website.

Names of these astronauts are — Gp Capt Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Gp Capt Ajit Krishnan, Gp Capt Angad Pratap Wg Cdr Shubhanshu Shukla —

who are all fighter pilots in the IAF.

President Murmu also said, that besides guarding land, sea and air, today it's also essential to protect cyberspace and laboratories.

She also said it was "a matter of joy that women are being provided equal opportunities in all branches of the Indian Air Force".

They are being "encouraged" to make a career in the Air Force,

## ED attaches sugar mill of Sharad Pawar's grandnephew

New Delhi, Mar 8 (PTI) : The Enforcement Directorate on Friday said it has attached assets worth more than Rs 50 crore of a sugar mill owned by a company of Rohit Pawar, the grandnephew of NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar.

The action pertains to the money laundering investigation conducted by the federal agency in the alleged Maharashtra State Co-operative Bank (MSCB) scam. A total of 161.30 acres of land, plant, machinery and building of the Kannad Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Limited (Kannad SSK) located in Kannad village of Aurangabad district has been provisionally attached under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the ED said in a statement. The Kannad SSK is owned by Baramati Agro Ltd., a company of Rohit Pawar, who is also an MLA of the Sharad Pawar faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

## LORD SHIVA SCULPTURE



Sand artists give finishing touches to a sculpture of Lord Shiva on the occasion of Maha Shivratri festival, in Mumbai, Friday.

## LS polls, Sandeshkhali, Manipur likely to be discussed in upcoming RSS meet in Nagpur

New Delhi, Mar 8 (PTI): Upcoming Lok Sabha polls, alleged atrocities against women in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali and the prevailing situation in Manipur are among various contemporary issues that may come up for discussion at the RSS's all-India 'Pratinidhi' meeting scheduled to be held in Nagpur next week, according to sources.

The three-day meeting, scheduled to begin on March 15, will also see election for the post of RSS general secretary, the second top position in the organisation after its chief, the sources said.

At present, Dattatreya Hosabale holds the post. He had been elected as RSS general secretary for a term of three years at the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha held in Bengaluru in 2021.

During the forthcoming RSS's meeting in Nagpur, the sources said, elections for the position of 'sanghchalak' (chief) and 'sarkaryawah' (secretary) of the respective state units of the organisation will also be held.

In a statement on March 1, RSS national publicity and media in-charge Sunil Ambekar had said the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha will review all the works and 'sewa karya' done by the RSS volunteers and its various wings in 2023-24.

There will also be a wide-range of discussion on Sangh's plan for the year 2024-25, he said.

"The meeting will also discuss various contemporary issues including Lok Sabha polls, atrocities against women in Sandeshkhali and the prevailing situation in Manipur," a source said.

## HC issues directions to deal with surrender petitions

Chennai, March 8 (PTI): The Madras High Court on Friday held that surrender petitions filed by accused who have voluntarily surrendered before a Magistrate having no jurisdiction to try the case, were not maintainable.

Justice N Anand Venkatesh, who gave the ruling, further said no order of remand can be passed by the Magistrate under section 167 (2) Cr.PC (on detention) on such petitions, in the light of the decisions of the Supreme Court.

In the context of cases concerning offences under the Indian Penal Code, a person accused of an offence who has not been forwarded under Section 167(1) Cr.PC, and who voluntarily appears and files a surrender petition before the Magistrate cannot be dealt with under Section 167(2) Cr.PC.

Consequently, the period for the purpose of the proviso to Section 167(2), the period of 15 days police custody or 60/90 days custody will commence only from the date on which he comes into the custody of the Court, upon being forwarded by the police under Section 167(1) Cr.PC, the judge added.

The judge gave the directions while disposing of a petition filed by the Tamil Nadu government, challenging an order of the Judicial Magistrate, Sathyamangalam, accepting the surrender of four accused and remanding them to judicial custody under Section 167(2) Cr.PC in connection with a murder.

The judge said in the event an accused voluntarily appears before the Magistrate having no jurisdiction to try the case, it would be open to the Magistrate to direct the Station House Officer of the nearest police station under his jurisdiction to take the accused into custody and deal with him in accordance with the procedure set out in Clauses (3) to (5) of Police Standing Order.

## V-P interacts with ISRO scientists

# 'Woman is always in a leadership role right from birth'

Bengaluru, Mar 8 (PTI)

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar celebrated International Women's Day with ISRO scientists, praising the space agency for its culture of gender diversity and inclusivity in decision making process and describing it as a befitting example to other organisations.

"India's 'Rocket Women' are leading us to the sky and beyond; they have broken ceilings for themselves and for our progress to go beyond benchmarks set earlier," he said while interacting with the scientific community at ISRO's U R Rao Satellite Centre here on Friday.

He also celebrated Women's Day with ISRO scientists and said: "A woman is always in a leadership role right from birth."

Commending the "indomitable spirit and contribution" of India's women scientists, Dhankhar said ISRO has exemplified the theme of International Women's Day 2024 - "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress".

"It is worth noting that presently, there are about 20 per cent women in scientific and technical areas in ISRO and more than 500 women employees are in leadership roles at different lev-

els in managerial and administrative domains, including leading a Centre," he said.

Describing it as an honour to be at "the heart of India's space exploration prowess" in Bengaluru, he congratulated the ISRO family, for their incredible talent and commitment for globally defining India's innovation and technological quantum jump. Lauding numerous achievements of ISRO including Chandrayan-3 and launching of several foreign satellites, the Vice-President underlined that ISRO has showcased our scientific prowess and technological expertise on the world stage, while enhancing the quality of life for millions of our fellow citizens.

Observing that ISRO's success has ignited the fascination of masses and brought space technology to every household, he praised ISRO's support in disaster management, early warning and government programmes such as 'PM Fasal Bima Yojana' and 'PM Awas Yojana'.

The launch of Chandrayan-3 broke the internet (record) by becoming one of the most watched live streams on YouTube with over eight million viewers," he said.

# 'Congress lacks a strong leader like PM Modi' 'Bullets of unjustified accusations lead to fatal wounds between spouses'

Thiruvananthapuram, Mar 8 (PTI)

Padmaja Venugopal, who joined the BJP a day ago, said on Friday that the Congress lacks a strong leader like Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Padmaja, who was accorded a grand welcome at the airport here by BJP leaders, including its state president K Surendran, and party workers, later said at a press conference that it pained her to leave the Congress, but she was not ready to put up any longer with the "insults" she has been suffering.

She said that someone asked her why she joined the BJP as she has stood strong with the Congress even when facing problems from within the party.

"After seeing Prime Minister Modi's style of functioning for some time, I realised that every party needs a strong leader. The Congress does not have any such strong leaders," she said.

Padmaja, the daughter of Congress stalwart and former Kerala Chief Minister K Karunakaran, alleged that the leaders in the party do not even have time to meet its functionaries.

She said that when she recently went to the Congress's headquarters in Delhi, she found that Sonia Gandhi does not meet anyone, "Rahul Gandhi has no time and



BJP Kerala President K. Surendran felicitates newly-joined party leader Padmaja Venugopal during a reception, in Thiruvananthapuram, Friday.

most of the senior leaders have left (the party)".

"...That day, I realised there was no point in remaining there. I had had enough of being insulted.

"During the elections, I was not included in any committees, four-to-five people within the party were working to chase me out of Thrissur and create problems for me everywhere else and when I complained about it, the party leadership did not take it seriously, which hurt me," Padmaja said.

All these things had been in her

mind for some time, but she had not shared it with anyone else, she said.

"So, they (Congress) were shocked by my sudden decision. They never thought I would take such a decision. I told them that anyone pushed into a corner would push back," she said.

On reporters seeking her views about what Youth Congress state President Rahul Mamkootathil said about her parentage a day ago, she said that his comments amounted to insulting her mother

and therefore, she would be filing a complaint against him in that regard.

Regarding what her elder brother, Congress MP K Muraleedharan, said about her decision, Padmaja said that he has no right to blame her when he has changed parties several times in the past.

"I never said anything bad about him when I was in the Congress and he left it to join some other parties. He is my brother, so I have no intention of saying anything against him.

"But, we need to keep our political and personal lives separate. My political life is different," she said.

On reporters pointing out that Muraleedharan said she was working from home and therefore, does not need any more consideration than what she has already got, Padmaja said that was an unfair statement coming from him.

She said that Muraleedharan was aware of the health problems she had been suffering for over one-and-a-half years and therefore, he should not have made such a statement.

"What he said, therefore, was for political gains and votes," she remarked.

Padmaja officially joined the BJP at a function held at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday.

New Delhi, Mar 8 (PTI)

The bullets of unjustified accusations cause wounds that make it impossible for spouses to live together, and the "rabbit hole" of criminal litigation pushes them toward the point of no return, the Delhi High court has said while granting divorce to a man on grounds of cruelty by wife.

The court, while granting divorce, said false complaints of dowry and harassment by the wife, which dragged the husband and his family into the "loop of endless criminal litigations", were sufficient to conclude mental, emotional and physical cruelty to him.

"Though the aggrieved person is entitled and well within their rights to avail

the remedy under laws, but, crossing the point of 'no return' becomes inevitable once the spouses get engulfed in this rabbit hole of criminal litigations.

The bullets of unjustified accusations and complaints cause such fatal wounds, leading to unendurable mental and physical acrimony, making it impossible for the spouses to live together," said the bench headed by Justice Suresh Kumar Kait in a recent order.

"Making such unsubstantiated allegations of dowry harassment which are palpably not made out from the family circumstances of the parties is nothing but an act of mental trauma and cruelty," the bench, also comprising Justice Neena Bansal Krishna, held.

## Govt focus on integrating new technology into tribal welfare: Arjun Munda

New Delhi, Mar 8 (PTI): The government will focus on leveraging new technology such as artificial intelligence and machine learning for tribal welfare going ahead, Union Minister Arjun Munda said on Friday.

The BJP government has given an opportunity to tribals to protect their culture and identity and acknowledged the contribution of tribal revolutionaries to the making of India, he said while briefing the media about the achievements in 10 years of the Narendra Modi dispensation.

"We have traversed 75 years of independence but it is the first time we got a President from a tribal community. No one except the Narendra Modi government can do this," he said.

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