



BJPS PAWAN SINGH NOT TO CONTEST FROM ASANSOL, OPTS OUT- PAGE - 3

Army jawan shoots himself dead at DRDO facility in Odisha



Kendrapara, Mar 3 (IANS) A 35-year-old army jawan allegedly shot himself dead with his service rifle at DRDO's Radar Observatory Air Surveillance unit in Odisha's Kendrapara district, police said on Sunday. The incident took place when the army jawan, identified as Sepoy Raj Sekharan, a native of Tamil Nadu, was on duty at the facility of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Kiyarbanka village in Mahakalpada police station area around 2 am on Sunday. He was found lying in a pool of blood and was rushed to a nearby government-run hospital, where he was declared brought dead, a police officer said. As per preliminary investigation, it seems to be a suicide case but further probe is underway, Inspector Bimal Kumar Mallik of Mahakalpada police station said, adding the rifle was seized and sent for examination.

Security beefed up ahead of PM Modi's visit to Kashmir on March 7

Srinagar, March 3 (IANS) Extraordinary security arrangements were put in place throughout Kashmir on Sunday as the Valley gears up to receive Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 7. This would be PM Modi's first visit to the Valley after article 370 was abrogated on August 5, 2019. Last time, he visited the Valley in February 2019. PM Modi is scheduled to inaugurate/lay foundation stone of various developmental projects in the Valley on March 7. He will interact with some local beneficiaries of the national flagship programmes during his nearly two-hour long programme at the Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar city. He will also address a large public gathering at the Bakshi Stadium.

Tributes Paid to Founder JN Tata on Birth Anniversary

With community support Tata Steel to create brighter future for Jamshedpur: Chandrasekaran

Visiting Jamshedpur is like visiting a temple: Tata Sons Chairman

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: City residents gathered at Postal Park in Bistupur to pay homage to Jamsetji Nusservanji Tata, the founder of Jamshedpur, on his birth anniversary. Leading the ceremony, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran and State Health Minister Banna Gupta honored the legacy of the visionary founder. Tata Steel MD TV Narendran and Tata Steel UISL MD Rituraj Sinha were present on the occasion.

Chandrasekaran, in his address, emphasized, "For me, visiting Jamshedpur is like visiting a temple. The significance of Jamshedpur is the spiritual nucleus of



the Tata Group, where each year on March 3, inspiration is drawn to combat global challenges."

Acknowledging the changing global landscape, Chandrasekaran conveyed greetings to employees and residents on Founder's Day, underlining the Group's commitment towards realizing its founder's aspirations amidst evolving challenges.

"Our founder, Jamsetji Tata, envisioned a future where industry would be a

force for positive change, and it is with great pride that we continue to uphold his legacy. In this occasion, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles of integrity, innovation, and social responsibility that have guided us since our inception. We will continue to work together with the community to build a brighter, more prosperous future for Jamshedpur and its residents," Chandrasekaran said. He highlighted Tata

Group's diversification beyond steel production into sectors like semiconductors and energy, emphasizing the imperative to minimize carbon emissions through green energy initiatives.

"With plans to ramp up steel production to 30 million tons in the near future and targeting 40 million tons within a decade, the Group's focus is on sustainable growth," Chandrasekaran stated. He outlined ongoing pilot

Tata Steel UISL MD highlights high quality of life in Jamshedpur

Jamshedpur, March 3: Rituraj Sinha, Managing Director of Tata Steel UISL, extolled the exceptional quality of life in Jamshedpur, expressing pride in the city's infrastructure and amenities. In his address, Sinha remarked on the awe of visitors when confronted with the city's superior standards.

He emphasized the city's exemplary provision of utilities such as electricity and water, which consistently received acclaim from both residents and visitors. Sinha lauded the city's verdant landscapes and cleanliness, citing them as further reasons for admiration.

Rituraj Sinha highlighted the vibrant cultural scene in Jamshedpur, which included popular events like Jam@Street, Carnival, Dog Show, Flower Show, and Football Matches. "These events contribute to the city's dynamic social fabric, garnering widespread appreciation and enjoyment from residents."

Sinha's remarks underlined Jamshedpur's reputation as a model city, celebrated for its unparalleled quality of life and rich cultural offerings. (w/gsd)

projects and strategic adjustments in response to shifting geopolitical dynamics, expressing gratitude to Jamshedpur's citizens for their continued support.

The celebration culminated in a rally flagged off by Chandrasekaran, symbolizing Tata Group's unwavering commitment to Jamshedpur's development and its enduring bond with the city. As Tata Steel founder's 185th birthday was commemorated, the city adorned itself with festive decorations, exemplifying the enduring legacy of JN Tata's vision. (w/gsd)

India's unemployment rate higher than Pak: Rahul

New Delhi, Mar 4 (IANS): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday emphasised the importance of "nyay" (justice) during his ongoing yatra, attributing the rise of hatred in the nation to prevailing injustices.

Addressing a gathering in Mohana, located in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district, he flagged economic disparity, social inequality, and the mistreatment of farmers and youth as key concerns. The BJP has been denying all such charges.

Gandhi, on a brief stopover for his 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra', criticised the adverse effects of policies like the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and demonetisation, linking them to a surge in unemployment rates, which he claimed were the highest in 40 years.

"The GST and note ban have fanned extreme unemployment," he claimed, adding "the unemployment rate now was the highest of the last 40 years".

The Congress leader further claimed that India's youth unemployment rate was even higher than countries like Pakistan, attributing it to the impact of policies of the government which had taken a toll on small businesses.

CM gifts schemes worth Rs 93 Cr in Garhwa

Garhwa, March 3 (IANS): Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren on Sunday inaugurated the newly constructed Collectorate Building, Birsra Munda Park, interstate bus stand and multi-purpose Nilambar Pitambar cultural building at Garhwa district.

Chief Minister also unveiled the newly installed statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the Collectorate Building complex, Bhagwan Birsra Munda in Birsra Munda Park and the newly installed statue of Amar Shaheed Nilambar-



Pitamber in the courtyard of Nilambar-Pitambar Cultural Building. The Chief Minister paid tribute to the statue of Baba

Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar at Ranka More.

The schemes worth Rs 93 crore were inaugurated in the Garhwa district.

The new Collectorate building built at a cost of Rs 60 crore while the Birsra Munda Helipad Park, built at a cost of Rs 15 crore just in front of the Collectorate in Kalyanpur, the much awaited Nilambar-Pitambar Multipurpose Cultural Building, built at a cost of Rs 7 crore in the grounds of Govind University, and the inter-state bus stand at a cost of Rs 4 crore in Sonpurwa. The football sta-

Shehbaz Sharif elected Pakistan PM

Islamabad, March 3 (IANS) PML(N) President Shehbaz Sharif was elected 24th Prime Minister of Pakistan on Sunday. National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq announced that Shehbaz Sharif bagged 201 votes, Dawn reported. PTI candidate Omar Ayub Khan secured 92 votes. Shehbaz Sharif, 72, became the prime minister of the country for the second term. Earlier, he had served as the Prime Minister from April 11, 2022 to August 14, 2023 after the Imran Khan government lost the no-confidence motion. Shehbaz Sharif is younger brother of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif who had spearheaded the PML-N's poll campaign. General elections in the South Asian country were held on February 8, marred by "rigging" and violence. Even as candidates backed by PTI founder Imran Khan had secured win on most seats, PPP and PML(N) stitching an alliance to form the coalition government, made the way for Shehbaz Sharif to be Prime Minister after Nawaz Sharif stepped aside.



Go, win, will see you soon: PM to Ministers ahead of LS polls

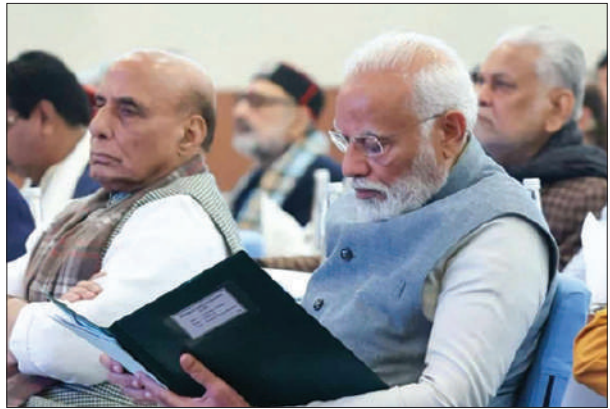
PM Modi chairs Council of Ministers' meet, brainstorm over 'Viksit Bharat' vision

New Delhi, Mar 4 (IANS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday chaired a day-long meeting of his Council of Ministers as they brainstormed over the vision document for "Viksit Bharat: 2047" and a detailed action plan for the next five years.

Government sources said a 100-day agenda for immediate steps to be taken after a new government is formed in May was deliberated upon during the meeting for its quick implementation.

They said the roadmap for "Viksit Bharat" is a result of more than two years of intensive preparation and involved a "whole of government" approach involving all ministries and wide-ranging consultations with state governments, academia, industry bodies, civil society, scientific organisations and mobilisation of youths for inputs.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who chaired a day-long meeting with his Council of Ministers, had a



fairly simple message for them ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections: "Go, win. I will see you soon". The crucial meeting was to brainstorm on the vision document 'Viksit Bharat 2047' and also to deliberate on a detailed action plan for the next five years. As per sources, PM Modi asked ministers to be careful while meeting people, "especially during elections".

In his nearly hour-long address to the ministers, the Prime Minister also advised them to avoid controversies

and be cautious of deep-fakes.

"More than 2,700 meetings, workshops and seminars were held at various levels. Suggestions of more than 20 lakh youths were received," one official said.

The roadmap for "Viksit Bharat" has a comprehensive blueprint with clearly articulated national vision, aspirations, goals and action points, the sources said, adding that its goals include areas such as economic growth, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ease of living, ease

Avoid controversial remarks: PM Modi tells Ministers

New Delhi, Mar 4 (IANS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday chaired a day-long meeting of his Council of Ministers to discuss Bharatiya Janata Party's preparedness for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls and finalise a detailed action plan for the next five years. During the meeting, PM Modi advised ministers to exercise restraint and carefully consider their words when speaking in public, sources told India Today TV. He cautioned the ministers against deepfake attempts, such as altering voices, and encouraged vigilance in this regard.

Modi contributes Rs 2000 to BJP for 'Viksit Bharat'

New Delhi, Mar 4 (IANS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday contributed Rs 2,000 to the BJP's campaign to strengthen efforts to build a "Viksit Bharat".

He contributed Rs 2,000 to the party fund and urged people to be a part of the "Donation For Nation Building". Modi also shared on X a screenshot of the receipt of his contribution. In his post on X, Modi said, "I am happy to contribute to @BJP4India and strengthen our efforts to build a Viksit Bharat." "I also urge everyone to be a part of #Donation For Nation Building through the NaMoApp!" he added.

of doing business, infrastructure and social welfare. Several ministries articulated their ideas in the meeting, which is likely to be the last such get-together before the Lok Sabha polls are announced.

INDIA bloc leaders sound poll bugle at Patna rally, Kharge lambasts Nitish

Patna rally, Kharge lambasts Nitish



Patna, Mar 3 (IANS): The opposition bloc INDIA virtually sounded the bugle for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls on Sunday when top leaders, including Rahul Gandhi of the Congress, converged in the Bihar capital for a mammoth rally.

Gandhi, who had flown down from Madhya Pradesh, taking a break from his 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra', spoke before handing over the mic to AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and returning for the mass outreach programme.

The former Congress president made a brief, about 15-minute-long, speech and charged the Narendra Modi government at the Centre with "working for only two-three super-rich people and neglecting Dalits and backward classes who comprise 73 per cent of the population".

Kharge, after whom the 'Jan Vishwas Maha Rally' was signed off by RJD president Lalu Prasad, lambasted Bihar Chief

Minister Nitish Kumar for his recent volte-face.

Lauding Prasad's son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav for ensuring that jobs were created on a large scale during the 17-month-period the latter occupied the deputy CM's post, Kharge said "Your chacha (referring to Nitish Kumar) has done a flip-flop. He may do so again. But do not accept him henceforth."

Notably, Kumar, who heads the JD(U), had allied with RJD-Congress and Left combine in 2022, snapping ties with the BJP which he accused of trying to engineer a split in his own party.

He played a key role in the formation of the INDIA bloc, though after returning to the NDA, he has been claiming that he was never happy with the way things moved forward in the opposition coalition and that even the acronym did not have his approval.

Study materials distributed on Founder's Day



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: On the occasion of the 185th birth anniversary of Jamshed Ji Tata, the esteemed founder of India's globally renowned industrial conglomerate, Tata Group, a commemorative event was held in Sarjamda. Jagpreet Singh, representing Aagaaz, distributed study materials among underprivileged children as a tribute to the visionary industrialist. Inderjit Singh, the Founder President of the organization, emphasized the extraordinary and significant contributions of Jamshed Ji Tata to the Indian industrial landscape. The event witnessed the presence of notable figures including Sardar Amrik Singh, Head of Central Sikh Youth Sabha, along with Jagpreet Singh, Shumi Kerai, Soma Devi, Surender Singh Shinde, Parminder Singh, Manish Kewat, Rajveer Singh Bhatia, Yuvraj Singh, and others. The gathering highlighted Jamshed Ji Tata's enduring legacy and his pivotal role in shaping India's industrial sector, underscoring the importance of honoring his memory through initiatives aimed at uplifting the marginalized sections of society. (W/pb)

Woman's body recovered from well

Jamshedpur, March 3: The body of a woman, identified as 37-year old Babli Kaur, a resident of Punjabi Refugee Colony, was recovered from a well in Tuiladungru on Sunday morning. The Golmuri police arrived at the scene on information and recovering the body sent it for autopsy. According to family sources, deceased Babli lived with her husband, Dilbag Singh, who sustained injuries after a fall from the stairs and could not move around. Both Babli and Dilbag were suffering from tuberculosis and were childless. The sources added that Babli had seemed distressed over the past few days. The police have started investigating the case. (w/psd)

BJP leader Dilip Puran injured in road accident

Jaduguda, March 3: Dilip Puran, the President of BJP Mandal in Jaduguda, sustained injuries in a road accident that occurred recently. The accident resulted in a complete break of his left leg. The incident unfolded as Dilip Puran was walking from his residence in Rakha Copper Mines to Ruam. A scooter approaching from the opposite direction collided with him from behind. Local residents promptly intervened, rushing him to UCIL Hospital. Subsequently, he was transferred to Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) for more extensive medical attention. The severity of the injuries, with a complete break in his left leg, necessitates surgery, which is scheduled for tomorrow. The Jaduguda police have taken possession of the involved scooter and initiated further investigative actions. (w/nkm)

Youth hangs himself to death

Jamshedpur, March 3: In a heartbreaking incident, 32-year-old Shamsher Khan from Old Purulia Road near Manjar Kazmi Chowk in the Azad Nagar police station area took his own life by hanging with the help of a wire. The tragic event unfolded late on Saturday night, leaving the community in shock. According to Shamsher's brother, on Saturday night, Shamsher informed his wife that he wasn't feeling well. Subsequently, his wife and children went to sleep. However, when they checked the other room the next morning, they discovered Shamsher hanging from a noose made with a wire. Azad Nagar police station was promptly informed of the incident. Upon arrival, the police took custody of the body and arranged for a post-mortem examination. (w/nkm)

Head-on collision between bikes leaves five seriously injured

Seraikela, Mar 3: A road accident near Mudiya on the Seraikela-Kandra main road, under the jurisdiction of Seraikela police station, resulted in five bike riders sustaining serious injuries around 2:00 pm. The incident involved a head-on collision between two bikes, leading to critical injuries for all involved. The mishap unfolded as 20-year-old Manki Hansda, a resident of Chakradharpur, accompanied by his 8-year-old daughter Lakshmi Hansda and 30-year-old Jamudar Champiya, was en route from Jamshedpur to Chakradharpur on a bike. Simultaneously, the bikes of 21-year-old Salim Bankira and 18-year-old Manisha Mundri, a couple from Bandgaon heading to Mirudih in Gamharia, collided head-on near Mudiya village. All five individuals involved in the collision sustained severe injuries. Promptly, local residents assisted in transporting the injured to Seraikela Sadar Hospital via ambulance. (w/nkm)

Preparations for collective fasting upanayana sanskar program reviewed

Mail News Service

Seraikela, March 3: In anticipation of the upcoming mass fast and Upanayana Sanskar program organized by the Utkaliya Brahmin Samaj in Seraikela, a meeting was convened under the guidance of Ramanath Acharya at the Jagannath Shri Temple premises on Sunday. During the meeting, it was disclosed that applications from 18 Brahmakumars have already been received for the collective fasting Upanayana Sanskar scheduled to take place at Jagannath Shri Temple on March 17. The committee unanimously decided to intensify the publicity efforts to encourage more Brahmakumars to participate, with a goal to receive additional applications by the given deadline in March. The maximum age for Brahmakumars participating in the collective fast Upanayana Sanskar has been set at 20 years, and applications within this age limit



will be considered. Detailed discussions were held during the meeting to ensure the successful organization of the Upanayana Sanskar program. A resolution was passed to register the names of Brahmakumars for the Vrat Upanayana Sanskar by March 10. Ganesh Satpati, the society's secretary, announced that a final program outline would be prepared during a meeting scheduled for March 10 at the temple premises. Among the attendees at the meeting were Badal Dubey, Ganesh Satpati, Rajesh Mahapatra, Parasuram Kabi, Chiranjeevi Mahapatra, Munu Sadangi, Kashi Kar, Sumit Mahapatra, and other prominent members of the society. (w/nkm)

JFC CEO and Head Coach pay homage to JN Tata

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: In a heartfelt tribute to one of India's greatest visionaries, Jamshedpur FC, led by CEO Mukul Vinayak Chaudhari and Head Coach Khalid Jamil, paid homage to Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata at Jubilee Park. The founder of the Tata Group, J.N. Tata, is not only remembered as a titan of industry but also as a patriot, a visionary, and above all, a humanitarian. His contributions to the industrial landscape of India are legendary, but equally significant is his role in transforming sports and founding the beloved city of Jamshedpur. On a serene Sunday morning, the



atmosphere at the Tata Football Academy Ground was charged with reverence and nostalgia as the grassroots kids in Jamshedpur FC Blue Cubs, came together to honor the 185th birth anniversary of J.N. Tata. The little champs paid tribute to the visionary founder through various sketches & portraits drawn

by the kids, capturing his enduring vision of Jamshedpur as not just an industrial hub, but also a thriving sports city. The day's events unfolded with a closely contested match in the U13 category, as JFC JPS Dynamos clashed with the Legend of Loyola. The 2-1 victory in favor of JFC JPS Dynamos was not just

a display of skill and determination but a testament to the spirit of competition and camaraderie instilled in the young athletes. The match garnered attention for its intensity, with both teams exhibiting a relentless pursuit of victory through strategic attacks and resilient defenses. (W-mb)

Brahma Kumaris impress with 'Synergy' in March 3 procession

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: On Sunday, March 3, 2024, the 185th birth anniversary of Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, founder of the Tata Group, was celebrated with fervor in Jamshedpur. As part of the annual tradition, a magnificent procession was organized, with this year's theme being 'Technology for People and Planet.' Led by the local main service center of Prajapita Brahma Kumari



Shwariya Vishwavidyalaya at Marine Drive, the procession titled

'Synergy' showcased an exhibition on the theme 'Of Science and Silence.' Members of Brahma

Kumaris participated while marching in solidarity. The procession highlighted significant projects undertaken by the Brahma Kumaris organization, aligning with the theme of utilizing technology for the betterment of humanity and the environment. Anju Didi, the chief Brahma Kumari Rajyogini of the Kolhan region, extended heartfelt tributes to Jamsetji Tata by garlanding his statue. The event served as a poignant tribute to the visionary industrialist, commemorating his enduring legacy and the values he instilled in the community of Jamshedpur. (w/psd)

BJP to stage protest at block offices on Monday

Jamshedpur, March 3: In response to the widespread corruption in the JMM-Congress and RJD coalition government of Jharkhand and the JSSC appointment scam, the BJP Jharkhand State has called for a demonstration at block offices across the state on March 4. The BJP Jamshedpur Mahanagar unit has actively prepared for the protest, holding an assembly-wise meeting to strategize and ensure the success of the demonstration. Under the leadership of Sudhanshu Ojha, President of BJP Jamshedpur Mahanagar, a meeting was organized with the participation of key figures, including Dr. Jitu Charan Ram, former MLA of Kanke and in-charge of Jamshedpur Mahanagar, BJP District Officer, Morcha District President, and Divisional Presidents from all four assemblies under Jamshedpur Mahanagar. The discussions during the meeting focused on various aspects of organizing a successful protest at the four block headquarters under Jamshedpur Mahanagar. Sudhanshu Ojha outlined the plan, stating that BJP workers will actively participate in protests at Karandih Block Office, Potka Block Office, Bodam Block Office, and Patamda Block Office under Jamshedpur Mahanagar, starting from 10:30 am on Monday. (w/nkm)

SCCI's decorated vintage car part of floats

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: Singhbhum Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), celebrated Founder's Day with a grand tribute to JN Tata, the visionary founder. SCCI members paid homage to founder at postal park in Bistupur. Founder's Day witnessed a remarkable display of homage, featuring a march past organized by Tata Steel, in which the Chamber members actively participated. SCCI's decorated vintage car adorned with vibrant flowers was part of floats. As a special highlight, the



Chamber presented a group pictorial photograph featuring nationally honored personalities from the Tata Group, to Chairman N Chandrasekaran. The photograph showcased Tata

Group officials adorned with prestigious recognitions such as Bharat Ratna, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and other honors bestowed by the Government of India. Tata Steel MD TV Narendran

and N Chandrasekaran, commended the Chamber's innovative initiative, particularly the decoration of vintage cars, adding an extra layer of significance to the Founder's Day celebrations. (W-mb)

Preparations in Full Swing for Tiranga Yatra

Jamshedpur, March 3: In anticipation of the Tiranga Yatra slated for March 23, organized by 'Naman' under the leadership of founder Amarpreet Singh Kale, meetings were convened at numerous locations across the city to rally support for the event. Amarpreet Singh Kale held meetings at various venues including East Plant Basti, Sitarandera Community Hall, Bengali Colony, Sakchi, Gurudwara Basti, among other localities.



Residents were urged to join the Tiranga Yatra as a mark of homage to the brave sons of India, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru, on their martyrdom day.

Speaking at the venues, Kale emphasized the importance of unwavering commitment to national progress and urged citizens to unite in safeguarding the nation's integrity.

He urged people to participate in the Tiranga Yatra and stand firm against any forces that threaten the unity and cohesion of the country. (w/psd)

1,514 candidates participate in Akanksha Examination, 483 absent

Seraikela, March 3: Under the guidance of the Jharkhand Academic Council, Ranchi, the Aspirational Examination for Engineering, Medical, and Flat Entrance Examination-2024 took place at four examination centers in the district. The examination centers included Nriparaj Plus Two High School Seraikela, KVPSD Girls High School Seraikela, Saraswati Shishu Mandir High School Seraikela, and Government Girls Upgraded High School Seraikela. Out of the total 1997 candidates nominated across the district, a commendable 1514 candidates actively participated in the examination. However, 483 candidates were marked as absent. The examination was conducted peacefully and without any reported malpractices. During a surprise inspection of the examination centers, District Education Officer Jitendra Kumar Sinha expressed satisfaction with the smooth and disciplined conduct of the examination. (w/nkm)

MYM Surabhi organizes mass marriage

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: On Sunday, the Surabhi women's wing of Marwari Yuva Manch (MYM) Steel City branch organized a mass marriage program at Dhalbhum Club, Sakchi. A total of 11 economically disadvantaged couples tied the knot amidst joyous celebrations.

The event witnessed a vibrant procession of the brides, accompanied by musical ensembles, making their way to the venue. Prior to the arrival of the procession, a 'Maira' filling ceremony was organized amidst renditions of Rajasthani bhajans. Distinguished guests including MLA Mangal Kalindi, National President of Marwari Yuva Manch Surendra Bhatar, and Jharkhand Provincial President Arun Gupta graced the occasion. The event was efficiently managed by a dedicated team led by Surabhi branch



president, ensuring a seamless experience for all present. During the ceremony, the newlyweds were presented with household items as gifts from the Marwari community, symbolizing support and blessings for their new journey together. The festivities continued with sumptuous meals and cultural performances, adding to the joyous atmosphere. Various social workers and

dignitaries also extended their blessings to the newlyweds, emphasizing the community's solidarity and support for those in need. Overall, the mass marriage program organized by the Surabhi branch of Marwari Yuva Manch stood as a testament to their commitment towards social welfare and community cohesion. The 11 couples who tied the knot included Deepak Kumar and Babli

Kundu (Parsudih), Chhavi Rani and Bhaskar Patra (Parsudih), Seema and Bunty (Kashidih), (4) Chikuand Khushbu (Sakchi), Komal andTinku (Mango), Nitesh andSawni (Telco), Arun Bagh and Sumitra Tangi (Sambalpur), Sahdevand Rinki (Baripada), Maneka and Sachin Kalindi (Nuamundi), Suman and Amit (Potka) and Rahul and Neha (Kadma).

Woman, three kids killed in house collapse in J&K's Reasi

Jammu, March 3 (IANS) A woman and her three children died on Sunday in a house collapse in J&K's Reasi district. Officials said that the four persons died when a landslide hit their mudhouse in the Chassana area of the district. "This family of four was buried alive as a massive landslide hit their mudhouse after incessant rainfall. "The victims were asleep when the landslide occurred on Sunday night. "Mother and her three children died while three others suffered injuries. "30-year-old PhalaAkther, wife of Muhammad Farid, 5-year old NasimaAkther, 3-year old SafeenKousar and 2-month old Sameer Kousar all died on the spot. "Two persons, 60-year old Kalu and his 58-year old wife, Bano Begum were injured," the officials said.

Depressed over cancellation of exam, woman ends life in UP

Lucknow, March 3 (IANS) A woman has committed suicide in Firozabad city of Uttar Pradesh after she got allegedly depressed over the cancellation of police recruitment exams. The victim's (Varsha) family members claimed that she committed suicide after the police recruitment examinations were cancelled following paper leaks. Varsha, a student who had also been a NCC cadet, was preparing for the Uttar Pradesh Police recruitment exam.

BJP's Madhavi Latha likely to give tough fight to Owaisi

Hyderabad, March 3 (IANS) AsaduddinOwaisi, whose party AIMIM overcame many challenges to hold on to Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat for 40 years, is likely to face tough battle this time with the BJP fielding businesswoman and philanthropist, KompellaMadhaviLatha, who has been working in Muslim-majority old city.



The BJP has named KompellaMadhaviLatha, chairperson of city-based Virinchi Hospitals, as its candidate for the forthcoming polls. Owaisi, seen by many as the face of the Indian Muslims, may face spirited challenge from the BJP whose leaders are confident of wresting the seat from All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM). A professional Bharatanatyam dancer, Madhavi Latha has never been an active politician but multiple factors led to BJP picking her as its candidate to take on Owaisi in his stronghold. The BJP had never fielded a woman in

BJP's Pawan Singh not to contest from Asansol, opts out

Kolkata, March 3 (IANS) A day after the BJP announced his name as the party's candidate from Asansol Lok Sabha constituency in West Bengal, popular Bhojpuri actor-singer Pawan Singh on Sunday announced that he will not be able to contest the upcoming elections. He made this announcement by posting a message on his official X



handle after BJP announced his name as the

candidate on Saturday evening. "I express my heartfelt gratitude to the top leadership of Bharatiya Janata Party. The party trusted me and declared me as the candidate from Asansol. But due to some reasons I will not be able to contest the elections from Asansol," Singh said in his X message. He has also tagged BJP's national president J.P. Nadda in this

message. Asansol has a predominant presence of Hindi-speaking voters mainly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The current sitting Lok Sabha member from the seat is prominent actor of yesteryears, ShatrughanSinha, who is himself from Bihar and also prefers to be identified as 'Bihari Babu'.

Hyderabad and with MadhaviLatha said to be active in philanthropic activities in parts of the old city, the party is looking to tap the Muslim votes.

Known for her pro-Hindutva speeches, MadhaviLatha also campaigned against triple talaq. She is said to be in touch with various Muslim

women groups. The 49-year-old is a trustee of Lathamma Foundation and Lopamudra Charitable Trust and also runs a small fund for

destitute Muslim women. She also runs a gaushala. Hoping for a BJP ticket, she had already started meeting women in some parts of the old city.

96 pc UP children vaccinated in one year target

Lucknow, March 3 (IANS) The Uttar Pradesh government has vaccinated 96 per cent of the target children, according to the data from the Hospital Information Management System by the UP health and family welfare department. Against a target of vaccinating 42,93,472 children below 12 years in the financial year 2023-24, the state has already covered 41,41,003 children. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has

expressed satisfaction over the steps taken by the state government to improve immunisation coverage and lauded the best performing districts, said a government spokesman. The chief minister also pulled the poor performing districts, including Lalitpur, Siddharthnagar, Bhadohi, Jalaun, and Sonbhadra where vaccination rate was between 69.51 per cent and 81.14 per cent. An official spokesperson said that at least 20 districts of the state have achieved



cent per cent of the target between April and December last year. The numbers will go up since there is still time left before

the deadline ends on March 31. Top five districts include Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ghaziabad, Amroha, Mau and Saharanpur. Officials

said that a strike rate of more than 90 per cent is considered good enough so far as implementation of the national programme is concerned. Directives have been issued to meticulously document the data of dropouts and out-of-school children, the officials said, adding that numbers show that 100 per cent children in this category were covered. A closer look at the data revealed that the coverage for Hepatitis B (birth dose) was 71.21 per cent while that for measles and rubella

was 93.87 per cent. In TD-10 (tetanus and diphtheria) category, the achievement was nearly 99.6 per cent. Data also showed that as many as 29,44,433 children were born in the state between April and December 2023, of whom 27,85,207 babies were delivered at the government centres. Among them, 19,83,224 infants received Hepatitis B birth dose, while the remaining were exempted for various reasons, prompting inquiries into the matter.

Denial of poll tickets to motormouth MPs in BJP's 1st list sends strong message : Pradeep Gupta



New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) The first list of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) featuring 195 candidates left out some prominent leaders like Pragya Thakur (Bhopal MP) and a couple of sitting MPs from Delhi including Parvesh Singh Verma (West Delhi) and Ramesh Bidhuri (South Delhi), leaving many surprised. Their omission from the list left many baffled.

However, Pradeep Gupta, the country's leading psephologist and the CMD of Axis My India, told IANS that the BJP has done the 'perfect' thing by dropping the motormouth MPs as this will send a strong message to people that the lawmakers with 'tainted' image do not enjoy place in Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's priorities.

He also opined that this shows BJP's clear and tactical strategy to distance itself from 'troublemaker MPs' especially at a time when the opposition parties have ganged up against the BJP with the intent of dislodging it from power.

Notably, all three Parliamentarians have been accused of making hate speeches and inciting hatred. Pragya Thakur, the BJP MP from Bhopal, found herself in major controversy when she was named BJP nominee in 2019 polls. Though she got elected on a BJP ticket, her brush with controversies did not stop.

Her labeling of Nathuram Godse as 'patriot' led the BJP red-faced and drew stern reproval from Prime Minister himself.

"She has sought an apology, but I would never be able to forgive her fully," PM Modi had said.

BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri's series of jibes at fellow MP Danish Ali inside Parliament seems to have gone against him. His abusive and hateful remarks created a huge row, and he also apologised later. Axis My India CMD told IANS that the BJP, by omitting Bidhuri from the list, has taken high moral ground and this may cushion the adverse public backlash to a great extent.

"By not giving tickets to the likes of Pragya Thakur and Bidhuri, the BJP is hitting the right buttons and sending across a message that PM Modi's developmental agenda remains supreme for the party and the nation's growth remains its biggest poll plank," he further said. The dropping of Parvesh Singh Verma, a two-time BJP MP, has been most surprising. Pradeep Gupta, also a bit surprised, says that Verma too probably faced the price of hate speech but believes that he could find a place in the larger game plan of the party for building a groundswell of support in the run-up to the 2024 elections.

He also ruled out the growing threat of AAP-Congress combine as the reason behind the baffling BJP's Lok Sabha list for Delhi. However, in the case of New Delhi seat, represented by Meenakshi Lekhi, he did see the BJP's poor performance in MCD elections as a probable reason behind dropping her. "Overall, the party is clear on focusing on candidates' winnability factor and also ensuring that motormouth MPs do not remain in the fray as this will give fodder to the INDIA bloc to embarrass the BJP," he said.

Farmer leaders give 'rail roko' call for Mar 10

Chandigarh, Mar 3 (IANS): Farmer leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dallewal on Sunday gave a call to the farmers across the nation to reach Delhi on March 6 for a protest while they also gave a four-hour 'rail roko' countrywide call for March 10 in support of their various demands. The two farmer leaders asserted that the farmers' ongoing agitation will be intensified at the existing protest points and will continue till their demands are met by the government. They were speaking in Bathinda district's Balloh village, the native village of a farmer who died recently during clashes with the Haryana security personnel in Khanauri. Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) is spearheading the 'Delhi Chalo' march by the farmers to press the government to accept their demands, which includes that the Centre should give a legal guarantee of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for the crops.

Odisha: DRI rescues 351 Indian tent turtles

Bhubaneswar, March 3 (IANS) Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials in Odisha have rescued 351 rare Indian tent turtles during a raid at Manguli Square in Cuttack district. Following a tip-off, the DRI intercepted a Tata Tiago vehicle with three passengers, hailing from West Bengal, at Manguli Toll Plaza, Cuttack. "Questioning revealed that they were carrying 351 Indian Tent Turtles (Pangshura tentoria), from

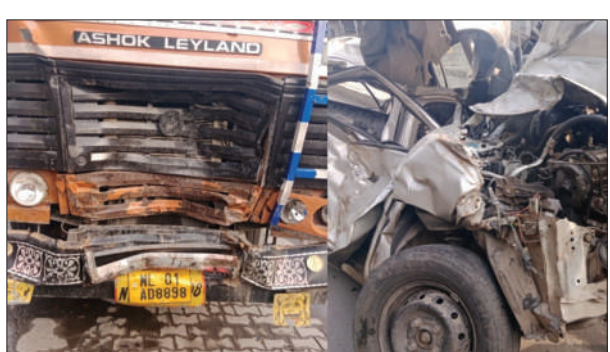


West Bengal, to be taken further to Karnataka," said

DRI sources. The DRI later handed over the turtles to the Odisha State Forest Department officials. "The three persons along with their vehicle were detained and handed over for further investigation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972," DRI sources added. Indian tent turtle is listed in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and is thereby provided the highest degree of protection.

Three killed as car loses control, collides with truck in Delhi

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) Three men died while four others sustained injuries after the car they were travelling in lost control and met with an accident. The police said on Sunday the car hit the divider, crossed onto the opposite carriageway, and collided with a truck in southeast Delhi. The seven people in the car were returning from a wedding function in Faridabad when the incident occurred on the Badarpur flyover. The deceased were identified as Raj (21), Sanju (38), and Dinesh (22), all residents of



Sanjay Colony in Okhla. Police said that Ansul (18) was in critical condition while Neeraj (18), Ajit (28) and Vishal (28) were undergoing treatment. They all are also from the same locality. Deputy

Commissioner of Police (southeast) Rajesh Deo said that a police control room (PCR) call was received at 12:48 a.m. at Badarpur police station. "On the Badarpur flyover, the Maruti Alto car driver lost

Mother-son die in Delhi road accident

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) A man and his mother died after the motorcycle they were riding hit a divider in southeast Delhi, police said on Sunday. The deceased were identified as Rahul and his mother Shanti Devi, both residents of Faridabad in Haryana. Sharing the details, police said that information was received at the Sunlight Colony police station regarding an accident at Gate No.4 IP Park Sarai Kale Khan on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, following which a team

rushed to the spot. Upon reaching the spot, a Bullet motorcycle was found and both the injured were shifted to the LNJH hospital, where they succumbed to injuries. "During the initial probe, it was revealed that both were going towards ITO from their home at Faridabad," said a senior police official. According to an eyewitness, due to imbalance the motorcycle collided with the divider and both mother-son sustained injuries due to collision. truck. All the seven persons were shifted to AIIMS trauma Center," said the DCP. The DCP said that they all had gone to attend a marriage reception of their relative, SohanLal, a resident of Faridabad.

Srinagar-Jammu highway blocked for 2nd consecutive day



Srinagar, March 3 (IANS) The strategic Srinagar-Jammu national highway remained closed on Sunday for the second consecutive day due to landslides. Traffic department officials said that multiple landslides were triggered by incessant rain in the Ramban district. "Efforts to restore the highway for traffic are going on. Intending travellers are advised not to undertake the journey without contacting our control rooms at Srinagar and Jammu," the officials said. It must be mentioned that all essential supplies are brought into the landlocked Valley through this highway. Meanwhile, Srinagar-Leh, Mughal Road, Sinthan-Kishtwar road, Bandipora-Gurez and Kupwara-Tangdhar road continued to remain snowbound and closed for traffic.

Vizag Steel Plant employees take out rally to oppose privatisation

Visakhapatnam, March 3 (IANS) Employees of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) on Sunday conducted MahaPadyatra demanding the Centre to withdraw its move to privatise the plant. Leaders of various workers' unions and the political parties supporting them participated in the MahaPadyatra from their protest camp at Kurmannapalem to the GVMC Gandhi statue. They demanded that the political parties should make it clear in their manifestos for the coming elections that they oppose the privatisation of VSP. The protestors were carrying placards and raising slogans opposing



the privatisation of RashtriyaIspat Nigam Limited, commonly referred to as Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Leaders of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist

Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) joined the workers' unions in the protest demanding withdrawal of the privatisation bid. The participants including family members of the workers were

carrying placards reading "VisakhaUkkuAndhrulaHaku" (Visakha Steel a right of Andhras), "stop the strategic sale of RINL", "Re merge RINL with SAIL" They warned that parties failing to protect VSP will be taught a lesson

in the coming elections. Simultaneous elections to Andhra Pradesh Assembly and Lok Sabha are slated to be held in April-May. The employees of VSP have been protesting for nearly three years, demanding the Centre to withdraw its move to privatise the public sector undertaking. The workers had intensified the protest in April last year after the Centre had stated that the disinvestment was in progress. The Ministry of Steel had stated that there is no freeze on the disinvestment process of RINL. Employees said that the people of Andhra Pradesh made many

sacrifices for the plant and they will not allow the sale of the plant. In 2021, the Andhra Pradesh Assembly had passed a resolution opposing the disinvestment plans and proposed privatization of VSP. Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had also written to the Centre, opposing the move to privatise the VSP. He suggested that the Centre take measures to protect the plant, recover its losses and make it viable. He also suggested the conversion of debts and loans into equity, allotment of captive iron ore and monetising the company's land bank for the continuation of the plant.

Tejashwi attacks Nitish Kumar, BJP at Jan Vishwas Maharally in Patna

Patna, March 3 (IANS) Bihar Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Tejashwi Yadav attacked Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the BJP during Jan Vishwas Maharally in Patna's Gandhi Maidan on Sunday.

Taunting the Chief Minister for his turncoat politics, Tejashwi Yadav also sang a Bollywood song, "Edhar Chala Main Udhara Chala, Jane Kaha Main Kidhar Chala" from the popular Bollywood movie "Koi... Mil Gaya".

"My uncle (Nitish Kumar) always shifts alliances. I want to tell him that JD-U will be finished in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. There is no future for JD-U in Bihar. Nitish Kumar has lost all his credibility as people have no faith in him now," Yadav said while addressing a huge rally in Gandhi Maidan in Patna.

Tejashwi also attacked



Bihar Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha. "BJP has made two Deputy Chief Ministers. One is a babbar (Samrat Choudhary) who has not contested a single election for the last 14 years. The last time, he contested the election was on RJD ticket. Samrat Choudhary is also following Nitish Kumar's Palimar feature. He has changed five parties in the last 14 years," LoP Yadav said. He said the second

Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha always talks nonsense. "No one understands what he is saying publically," Yadav said. Earlier, Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha said that Tejashwi Yadav will not take out Jan Vishwas Yatra but will take out "Jan Vishwasghat Yatra" in Bihar.

Tejashwi Yadav also appealed to the people to show respect to the poor, Dalit, backwards, minority and deprived sections of society.

Sandeshkhali tragedy may impact LS polls in Bengal, says Axis My India CMD Pradeep Gupta

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday released its first list of 195 candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The ruling party's list has come at a time when the opposition's INDIA bloc is still struggling to arrive at a seat-sharing agreement in several states. So, it is believed that the BJP is in a position to capitalise on first-mover advantage in several states, which understandably augurs well for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's '400 plus Lok Sabha seats dream' for the BJP-led NDA.

In an interview with IANS, Pradeep Gupta, Chairman and MD of Axis My India -- country's renowned Consumer Data Intelligence Company -- spoke about some key factors that might impact the poll outcome.

Pradeep Gupta believes that apart from the southern



region, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh are the two major states where the BJP has chances to improve its tally as compared to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, BJP had won 62, while NDA had got 64 seats out of total 80 seats in UP. So, there is obviously an "elbow room" for BJP to improve in UP. Similarly, BJP had won 18 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats in Bengal

in the last LS polls. It means the party has tremendous scope to improve its strength in Bengal as well.

When asked about whether the Sandeshkhali incident would enhance BJP's poll prospects in Bengal, Gupta said that it is a regional issue in the state. "Regional issues affect the entire society and state. Such issues could also make a decisive impact on

the elections." He recalled the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, saying that a cabinet minister's son was facing some charges there.

But it did not harm BJP in the polls that followed the incident. The reason is that such issues impact a limited part of the state. The decisive effect would be felt when the issue assumes a larger national proportion. To another query, the Axis My India boss said that the Sandeshkhali happening might impact the elections in Bengal seats. "But I am not in a position to say how much impact it will create," he added. Talking about southern states, Gupta said that BJP has been making massive efforts to lift its electoral fortunes in Kerala for quite some time now. It is static on double digit vote percentage for a long time there. However, the votes could not bring it seats in assembly and Lok Sabha elections earlier in Kerala. This time, some

possibility would be there for the BJP in this southern state. It will move ahead from 'zero' at least.

Talking about Karnataka, Pradeep Gupta, a renowned psephologist, pointed out that two major changes happened in Karnataka in a period of five years. One, Congress registered an impressive victory in Karnataka in the last assembly elections. The outcome boosted the morale of the Congress party. Two, Congress contested the last Lok Sabha election in alliance with JD(S) when BJP was in power in Karnataka. Both parties could then get one seat each. This time, JD(S) is with the BJP-led NDA. The state is obviously ruled by Congress this time. But the alliance is different now. With this in view, Karnataka would be an interesting state to see during the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Calcutta HC judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay to resign

Kolkata, March 3 (IANS) Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay, Calcutta High Court judge, has announced that he will resign on Tuesday.



Justice Gangopadhyay has been handling sensitive cases in the state like cash-for-school job case. In an interview with a vernacular channel on Sunday, he said he would forward his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday. The Justice said he has decided to step into a "larger sphere" of activities. "If I join any political party and if they nominate me, I will surely consider that decision," Justice Gangopadhyay said. Justice Gangopadhyay was scheduled to retire from his judicial services in August 2024. He is currently hearing cases related to labour affairs and industrial relations. While announcing his decision, he launched a scathing attack against Trinamool Congress over alleged corruption charges. "The state is going through an extremely bad phase. A rule of theft and loot is going on here. As a Bengali, I am unable to accept it. I do not think that the current rulers of the state can do any good for the people," Justice Gangopadhyay said.

Retired TN professor to walk on foot for clean electoral system

Chennai, March 3 (IANS) A retired professor and former head of Political Science of Madras University, Dr. Ramu Manivannan, will undertake a walk on foot (padayatra) from Kanniyakumari to Chennai.



The yatra is to educate the people of Tamil Nadu against the culture of freebies during elections and to make people understand that votes were their rights and that it should not be exercised in exchange for money or other freebies. Dr. Ramu Manivannan told media persons in Vellore on Sunday that he was launching the 'Vellore Declaration' and added that he would commence the padayatra from this week itself. He invited every one, who was interested to clean up the electoral system and to work for a new set of leaders and rulers, to participate and join in his yatra which according to him will take a minimum of two months to complete. He said that he would distribute leaflets and written notices during the yatra against the culture of freebies and casting of votes in exchange for money.

The professor said that the people should be educated that they must buy materials like fan, mixers and grinders by themselves instead of taking these as freebies from political parties. He, however, said that this was a vicious cycle and that it would take time to clean this up as public was seeing this as their right to accept such freebies and cash in exchange for votes. He said that the Aam Aadmi Party had succeeded in New Delhi without offering freebies and cash and added that he was also aiming for a similar culture of electioneering and voting. Dr. Ramu Manivannan also said that the government of the day should take initiative to provide medical services and education free of cost and added that if such a decision was taken it would go a long way to cleanse the system.

The professor called upon the people not to vote for those who were exploiting natural resources including plundering river sand, cutting forest trees, destroying hills and shores.

Three die of electrocution in UP

Kaushambhi, Mar 3 (IANS) Three persons, including the DJ, died when a high voltage electric current passed through the music system during a wedding ceremony in Kaushambhi district, police said. The incident took place around midnight in Dulhaniyapur village of Kaushambhi district when the "dwar puja" was taking place.



The three injured persons were rushed to the hospital where all three died during treatment. The deceased included Bhaiyya Ram, 22, younger brother of the groom.

The police reached the wedding venue and inspected the site. Chhotelal, father of Bhaiyya Ram, refused to allow post-mortem. No FIR has been lodged in connection with the incident.

UP govt to hold one-day meet on tackling drought through technology

Lucknow, March 3 (IANS) The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday will hold a one-day state-level conference in Lucknow on tackling drought with the help of technology, an official said.

In its ongoing efforts to address disasters and minimise the loss of life and property within the state, this is a collaborative effort between the Relief Department and IIT-Kanpur.

The conference aims to leverage state-of-the-art technology for drought monitoring, mitigation, and improved management.

Key stakeholders, including major technical institutes, research organisations, technical universities from both the state and the country, as well as experts from relevant departments, will participate in this event.

Principal Secretary Revenue P. Guru Prasad stated that, following Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's instructions, various



programmes are being organised in the state to deal with disasters.

As part of this initiative, recently, experts from IIM-Lucknow provided disaster management training to the Additional District Magistrates in the state.

To address disasters and to stay prepared to deal with them, MoUs have been signed with specialised institutions in disaster management. These institutions will not only provide training but also assist the

department during emergencies.

Relief Commissioner G.S. Naveen said that the conference will be divided into three sessions.

The first session will focus on the subject "Technology for Drought Monitoring" while suggestions will be presented by National Disaster Management Authority member Krishna S. Vatsa, U.P. State Disaster Management Authority Vice Lt Gen Yogendra Dimri, and M.L. Jat from ICRISAT, among other experts.

The second session will include discussion on "Technology for Drought Mitigation".

The third session will discuss various aspects of "Technology for Drought Management" with the participation of Ashish Tiwari, Secretary of the Uttar Pradesh Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, and Dr. P. Sharma, Principal Scientist and Head at ICAR-IGFRI, Jhansi, among other dignitaries.

Schools of Eminence will give wings to dreams: Punjab CM

Ludhiana, March 3 (IANS) To ensure access of quality education to students, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann and his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday dedicated 13 new Schools of Eminence to the people.

Interacting with the media here, the Chief Minister said the government is giving wings to dreams of students for soaring high in life by constructing these schools. He said after Delhi, now Punjab is witnessing a major revolution in the field of education and these schools are a reflection of that. Mann said this is a momentous occasion and the day is not far when Punjab will be a front ranking state in the country. The Chief Minister said this initiative of the government will ensure access of students, especially from poor and underprivileged sections, to the quality education. He said the day is not far when students from these schools will excel in every field and bring laurels for the state.

Mann said with this effort, the process has begun to transform the destiny of



students, adding a paradigm shift is being witnessed in the education sector as students from private schools are now taking admission in government schools.

The Chief Minister said these schools are just a curtain raiser as more such schools will be opened for the wellbeing of the poor students. He envisioned that these schools will be the modern day temples which will bring a qualitative change in the lives of the students.

Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal said the Punjab CM is custodian of the interests of the people of the state and the need of hour is to strengthen his hands so that he can vehemently combat the Centre for its regressive and anti-Punjab stance.

Goa SCPCR issues directive against noise pollution

Panaji, March 3 (IANS)

Taking cognisance of phone calls received during midnight from students preparing for 12th standard exams, the Goa State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (GSCPCR) has issued a directive to stop noise pollution emanating from bars, clubs, and restaurants in the Anjuna and Vagator (coastal areas) of the state.

Talking to IANS, Peter F. Borges, Chairperson of GSCPCR, said that he has received emails complaining about the noise pollution in these areas and asked the authorities to take action.

"Students called me at midnight complaining that the noise pollution is taking place in their areas and hence they can't concentrate on their studies. Last year also, I had asked authorities to take action," Borges said, adding parents are worried about the issue.

He said that the complainants even told him that the noise pollution takes place till 7 am, which starts at night which has



forced him to take steps to write to authorities.

He has asked the authorities to take action, so the students are not disturbed while they prepare for exams.

"In a decisive move to combat noise pollution, we have issued a stern directive targeting bars, clubs, and restaurants in the Anjuna and Vagator areas. These establishments have been identified for blatantly violating noise control regulations, thereby disrupting the peace and affecting the well-being of students, particularly during their examination time," Borges said.

He said that the directive mandates immediate and rigorous enforcement operations to be conducted by the Goa Police, the Goa State Pollution Control Board, and the District Magistrate of North Goa. "These operations are called for the crucial months of March, April, and May, times when students are most in need of a quiet environment to concentrate on their studies," he added.

PM Modi to launch projects worth Rs 62,000cr in Telangana

Hyderabad, March 3 (IANS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch infrastructure projects worth over Rs 62,000 crore during his visit to Telangana on March 4 and 5.

He will inaugurate, dedicate to the nation and lay the foundation of multiple developmental projects related to power, rail and road sector in Adilabad and Sangareddy districts.

The infrastructure projects to be launched at a public meeting in Adilabad are worth Rs 56,000 crore, while the projects to be launched in Sangareddy are worth Rs 6,800 crore.

According to an official release, the major focus of the projects to be launched at Adilabad will be on the

power sector.

He will dedicate NTPC's 800 MW (Unit-2) of Telangana Super Thermal Power Project in Peddapalli, Telangana. Based on Ultra-Supercritical Technology, the project will supply 85 per cent power to Telangana and will have the highest power generation efficiency of approximately 42 per cent among all power stations of NTPC in India. The foundation of the project was also laid by the Prime Minister.

PM Modi will also dedicate the newly electrified Ambari - Adilabad - Pimpalkhuti rail line to the nation.

He will also lay the foundation for two major national highway projects connecting Telangana with



Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh through NH-353B and NH-163, respectively.

On March 5, the Prime Minister will dedicate to the nation the Civil

Airports Authority of India to upgrade and enhance the Research and Development (R&D) activities in the civil aviation sector.

It is envisaged to provide a global research platform for the aviation community through in-house and collaborative research to provide indigenous and innovative solutions.

PM Modi will subsequently leave for Sangareddy, where he will inaugurate, dedicate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth Rs 6,800 crore.

These projects encompass multiple key sectors like road, rail, petroleum and natural gas.

The Prime Minister will inaugurate and lay the foundation for three

national highway projects. Two national highway projects that will be inaugurated by PM Modi include four-laning of 40-km long Kandi to Ramsanpalle section of NH-161.

The project is a part of Indore - Hyderabad Economic Corridor and will facilitate seamless passenger and freight movement between Telangana, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

The section will also substantially reduce travel time between Hyderabad and Nanded by about 3 hours.

The Prime Minister will also inaugurate the upgradation of 47-km long Miryalaguda to Kodad Section of NH-167 to two lanes with paved shoulders.

DC conducts surprise inspection

Mail News Service

Gamharia, March 3: Deputy Commissioner Ravi Shankar Shukla visited the Burudih and Jagannathpur Panchayats in the Gamharia block area on Saturday, conducting a surprise inspection of government schools and sub-health centers. The purpose of the visit was to assess the facilities and progress of various developmental projects in the region. During his visit to DC Government Middle School in Burudih, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the classrooms and interacted with the students. Emphasizing the importance of discipline, he imparted a lesson on its significance to the children. The surprise inspection aimed to ensure the quality of education and infrastructure in the government school. The Deputy Commissioner also turned his attention to the Birsra Irrigation Well Promotion Scheme, inspecting the construction



of wells in the Panchayat. Expressing concern over the apparent lack of interest among beneficiaries, he personally engaged with them, highlighting the benefits of well construction. He urged the beneficiaries to actively participate and instructed the concerned department to complete all well construction before the onset of the rainy season. In addition to the school and well inspection, the Sub Health Center in the village and the booth located in Jagannathpur School were scrutinized. The Deputy

Commissioner provided necessary directions to the healthcare workers and emphasized the importance of these facilities in promoting the health and well-being of the local community.

Accompanied by BDO Praveen Kumar, BPO Mahavir Sahu, and other officials, Deputy Commissioner Ravi Shankar Shukla's surprise inspection aimed to address challenges, motivate beneficiaries, and ensure the efficient implementation of developmental initiatives in the Gamharia block. (w/nm)

One-day training program for BLOs and supervisors

Mail News Service

Gamharia, March 3: In adherence to the directives from the Election Commission, a comprehensive one-day training program was organized for all Booth Level Officers (BLOs), supervisors, and sector officers in the auditorium at the block headquarters. The session aimed to equip participants with essential knowledge and skills related to the electoral process. Assistant Electoral Registrar Officer and



Gamharia Circle Officer, Kaushal Kishore, led the training program, providing detailed insights into various aspects, including postal ballots, voter

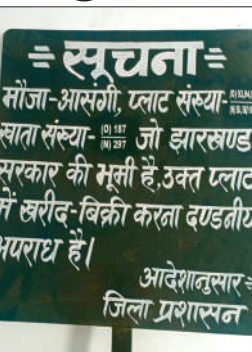
information slips, proper polling station arrangements, and activities leading up to and on the voting day. The session emphasized the

pivotal role of BLOs in ensuring the smooth conduct of elections. During the training, BLOs were urged to deliver the voter lists promptly to the

voters of their respective polling stations, fostering an environment conducive to 100 percent voter turnout. Kaushal Kishore instructed the BLOs to initiate a voter awareness campaign from the upcoming Monday, emphasizing the significance of voting and the benefits it entails. The awareness campaign seeks to inform voters about their rights, duties, and the importance of participating in the democratic process. (w/nm)

Public advisory regarding disputed land

Gamharia, March 3: In a recent development concerning the disputed land proposed for the Adityapur Municipal Corporation office in Satvahini, Jamalpur of Asangi Mauza in Gamharia, the zonal office has taken steps to address the situation. On Saturday, the zonal office, led by Gamharia zonal inspector Pramod Kumar Singh, erected informative boards on the contested land. The purpose of installing these boards is to clarify to the public that the land in question is categorized as government property. The move aims to caution individuals against



engaging in any transactions, such as buying or selling, related to the disputed land. This advisory comes following the disruption of the scheduled Bhoomi Pujan (groundbreaking ceremony) for the Municipal Corporation office, which was initially set to be officiated by Chief Minister Champai Soren on February 24. The ceremony faced a temporary halt due to legal challenges from the Bhalotia brothers, who asserted their rights over the land and obtained a court-issued stay order, preventing further proceedings. (w/nm)

Ravindra Nath Pani passes away



Gamharia, March 3: The community of Jamshedpur mourns the loss of Ravindra Nath Pani, a revered personality known for his courage and social spirit. Ravindra Nath Pani, father of Rinku Roy, Vice President of Gamharia English School, and Treasurer of INTUC Central Women's Working Committee, breathed his last on Saturday, March 2, while undergoing treatment at Apollo Hospital in Hyderabad. He had been hospitalized for the past four days. Ravindra Nath Pani, formerly employed as a foreman in TaYo Works, was recognized for his brave and helpful nature. His passing has left a profound impact on his family, friends, and colleagues, who remember him for his social contributions and amiable personality. The community extends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prays for the departed soul to rest in peace. (w/nkm)

Conclusion of two-day training under Jal Jeevan Mission

Mail News Service

Gamharia, March 3: The two-day training program conducted at Kandra Panchayat Bhawan under the Jal Jeevan Mission reached its successful conclusion on Saturday. The training aimed to enlighten stakeholders about the advantages of water accessibility under the 'Har Ghar Jal' initiative of the Jal Jeevan Mission. The session featured Devanand Devesh, a seasoned trainer from Ranchi, who emphasized the crucial role water plays in sustaining life. He underscored the mission's commitment to providing pure and sufficient water to every household in all villages of the Panchayat.



The primary goal is to save time for women, allowing them to pursue education, contribute to household livelihoods, and engage in other essential tasks. Trainer Devanand Devesh highlighted the transformative impact of educating women,

stressing that it leads to overall family upliftment. He urged participants to ensure timely payment of the government-mandated water tax to sustain the mission's initiatives. The concluding session witnessed the active participation of numerous attendees, including

Kandra Panchayat Deputy Chief Reena Mukherjee, former Deputy Chief Anil Singh, Sunita Pramanik, Jal Sahiya Saraswati Mahato, Director Barun Nag, Subhadra Das, Mona Mahato, Vaishakhi Mahato, Rupali Devi, and Radhika Mahato. (w/nm)

Congress Party booth-level workers meet for election preparations

Mail News Service

Seraikela, March 3: In a significant gathering, booth-level workers of the Congress Party convened on Sunday at Asanbani Community Hall under the Gamharia block to discuss preparations for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The meeting was attended by key party leaders, including State Vice President and former MLA Kalicharan Singh Munda, and State Secretary Chhotrai Kisku. The focal point of the meeting was strategizing for the Lok Sabha elections, where Kalicharan Munda, serving as the State spokesperson, shared insights on winning strategies at the booth level. Notably, several



workers disillusioned with the policies of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) made a switch and joined the Congress during the meeting. Expressing gratitude for their allegiance, Kalicharan Munda personally garlanded the workers who embraced the Congress Party, formally inducting them as members. A unified spirit echoed through the hall as all Congress workers raised the victorious slogan for the Khunti Lok Sabha. The

meeting witnessed the presence of committed individuals such as Kailash Mahato, Ganpati Sardar, Ratanlal Mukhi, Lal Bahadur Singhdev, Krishna Tudu, Janmejay Mahato, Mahadev Mahato, Deepak Mahato, Mohammad Ali Rehman, Akhilesh Tiwari, Samarendra Tiwari, Jagdish Narayan Choubey, and others who actively participated in the discussions and planning for the upcoming electoral battle. (w/nkm)

Historic verdict by special POC SO Court against absconding accused

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 2: In a landmark decision, the Special POC SO Court in Jamshedpur convicted the absconding accused, Pinak Pani Senapati, for forcibly abducting a minor girl and engaging in obscene acts with her on April 24, 2016, in the Baharagora police station area. The court, presided over by POC SO Judge Kawaljeet Chopra, sentenced Senapati to two years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000. The incident involved the abduction and molestation of a minor girl who had gone to fetch water from a hand pump. The victim reported the incident to Baharagora police, stating that Senapati had forcibly restrained her, used a cloth to cover her mouth, and committed obscene acts. A passerby who witnessed the incident was assaulted by Senapati, who subsequently fled the scene. The victim had previously filed a compromise, but Senapati continued to threaten her, leading to the police declaring him absconding. Despite Senapati's absence, the court proceeded with the trial, taking into account the testimonies of eight witnesses. Under Section 2 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Jharkhand Amendment Act 2020 (Act No. 6-2022), which allows trials to proceed based on recorded evidence in the absence of the accused, the court delivered its verdict. In addition to the two-year rigorous imprisonment, Senapati was fined Rs 10,000, with the court specifying that failure to pay the fine would result in an additional six months of imprisonment. (w/nm)

Bharat Singh extends congratulations to BJP candidates for Jharkhand LS Seats

Jamshedpur, March 3: As the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unveils its first list of candidates for the impending Lok Sabha elections, Bharat Singh, a State Working Committee member of the BJP, extends heartfelt congratulations to the 11 candidates chosen to represent Jharkhand. Expressing his satisfaction with the selection process, Bharat Singh stated that the candidates, including prominent figures such as Arjun Munda, Geeta Koda, Annapurna Devi, Sanjay Seth, Nishikant Dubey, Tala Marandi, Sunil Soren, BD Ram, Bidyut Baran Mahato, and Sameer Oraon, have garnered immense popularity in their respective constituencies. He particularly congratulated and conveyed best wishes to Vidyt Varan Mahato. Bharat Singh highlighted the public's trust in these candidates, emphasizing that their selection aligns with the best interests of the BJP. He expressed gratitude to the party leaders, including the renowned Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and BJP National President J.P. Nadda, for compiling the list. Confident in the capabilities of the chosen candidates, Bharat Singh predicted a historic victory for the BJP in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He anticipates that the candidates' overwhelming support from the public will lead to a resounding success, marking a new milestone for the party. (w/nkm)



Legal empowerment camp organized by DLSA

Mail News Service

Chaibasa, March 3: Under the auspices of the District Legal Services Authority, a Mega Legal Empowerment Camp was successfully conducted today at Pillai Hall, the district headquarters in Chaibasa. The event saw the participation of key officials, including Vishwanath Shukla, Principal District Judge cum Chairman District Legal Services Authority, Shri Kuldeep Chaudhary, Deputy Commissioner West Singhbhum cum Vice Chairman District Legal Services Authority, and other prominent district-level officials. Addressing the attendees, Vishwanath Shukla emphasized that individuals facing issues across various departments can seek assistance from the District Legal Services Authority. Financially disadvantaged citizens were encouraged to approach the Authority for government benefits and legal support. Shukla also



highlighted the importance of direct communication with the District Legal Services Authority, cautioning against involvement with middlemen. He provided insights into the Motor Vehicle Act and urged citizens not to hesitate in seeking help for their concerns. Deputy Commissioner Kuldeep Chaudhary, in his speech, outlined the primary objective of the program as legal empowerment and awareness. He underscored the significance of Lok

Adalat in swiftly resolving cases by facilitating face-to-face discussions between parties. Chaudhary also praised the efforts of para-legal volunteers in raising awareness about constitutional rights and government welfare schemes, monitored by the District Legal Services. The program featured tests and services by various departments, including the Animal Husbandry Department, Rural Development Department, Land Conservation Office, JSLPS, Agriculture

Department, Supply Department, Social Welfare Department, and Social Security Department. Property distribution and inspections of departmental stalls were also conducted. As part of the upcoming Lok Sabha General Elections 2024, Principal District Judge Vishwanath Shukla led a voter pledge under the sweep program. A signature campaign and selfie point were also inaugurated, encouraging active civic participation among the attendees. (w/nkm)

BJP to stage protest against corruption and public issues

Mail News Service

Chaibasa, March 3: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in West Singhbhum, Jharkhand, is set to stage a "one-day protest program" on March 4th, addressing various public concerns including corruption, question paper leaks in JSSC exams, mineral wealth looting, illegal sand mining, and indiscriminate felling of forests. The protest will be held in front of all 18 block offices across the district. Sanjay Pandey, District President, has appointed block-wise in-charges for effective organization of the protest. Ashok Sarangi and Satish Puri will be in charge of Sadar block, Dinesh Chandra Nandi for Jhinkpani block, JB Tubid for Hatgamharia block, Manoj Leyangi for Tantanagar block, Bhushan Pat Pingua for Manjhari block, Jawaharlal Banra for Manjhari block, Khemkaran Samvaiya for Kumardungi block, Dheeraj Singh for Majhgaon block, Mangal Gilua, Geeta Balmuchu, and Bipin Puri for Noamundi block, Gobid Pathak for Manoharpur block, Shiva Bodra for Anandpur block, Rameshwar Taisum for Gudri block, Gurucharan Nayak for Goilker block, Inderjit Samad for Sonua block, Sanjay Pandey, Lalit Mohan Giluva, and Malti Giluva for Chakradharpur block, Shashi Bhushan Samad and Bijay Melgandi for Bandhgaon block, and Rakesh Bablu Sharma for Khuntapani block. Following the protest, on March 5th, a booth conference at Khudkatti Maidan, Tambo Chowk, will be held at the Singhbhum Lok Sabha level. Key party figures including Babulal Marandi, State President, MP Geeta Koda, State Vice President Badkunwar Gagrai, JB Tubid, State Spokesperson, Geeta Balmuchu, Lok Sabha Conventor, Shashi Bhushan Samad, Lok Sabha co-conventor, Jawahar Lal Banra, Gurucharan Nayak, and others will address booth committee workers from all 1715 booths. (w/nkm)

Tata Steel's West Bokaro Division pays tribute to Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata on his 185th birth anniversary

Mail News Service

Ramgarh, March 3: On the 185th birth anniversary of Founder, Jamsetji Nasarwanji Tata, West Bokaro Division of Tata Steel paid rich tributes to his visionary leadership that paved the way for the establishment and growth of Tata Steel. To mark this momentous occasion, on March 2, the attractive electrical décor of JN Tata Park was inaugurated by Rajesh Patel, Chief, Quarry AB, West Bokaro Division, Tata Steel. A tribute ceremony was held at JN Tata Park on March 3,



where Tata Steel officials paid floral tributes to the founder. The chief guest of the event was Rajesh Patel, Chief, Quarry AB, West Bokaro Division, Tata Steel. An exhibition

showcasing the life and times of Jamsetji Tata was organized for visitors to the park. Other senior officials present were Rajesh Kumar, Chief, Capacity Enhancement Project,

Mrinal Bhadra, Chief, Quarry SE, BV Sudhir Kumar, Chief, Coal Beneficiation, Mazhar Ali, Chief, Engineering & Projects, West Bokaro, Tata Steel. Additionally, a tribute

ceremony was held at the General Services Office and wreath laying was done at the statue of JN Tata. A friendly football tournament for women was organized at Tata Steel Sports Complex, West Bokaro, involving teams from Sugia and Bhuiyandih, followed by fun games for the members of Gali Health Club. Fruits distributed among patients at Tata Main Hospital, West Bokaro. For employee engagement, a 'Jigsaw Puzzle' competition was organized by Corporate Communications (in collaboration with HRM

department) in the canteens and office among the employees of various departments (Quarry AB, Quarry SE, Coal Beneficiation, General Services and Engineering departments) and vendors partners was organized. Around 70 participants took part in the competition. An online quiz was also organized. To celebrate this special occasion, places including JN Tata Park, General Services Office, CMC Chowk, Patel Chowk and others were decorated with beautiful electrical decorations.

Modernizing rail infrastructure and safety protocols

The entire country is on general election mode. Laying of foundation stones for new projects, announcement of schemes and inaugurations have become the orders of the day. It is beyond doubt that these are necessary to speed up national development and create newer avenues of employment. On Monday last, the Prime Minister launched and inaugurated 2,000 railway projects and infrastructure estimated @ Rs 41 thousand crore through video conferencing. These include the remodelling, restructuring and renovation of 553 railway stations under the 'Pradhan Mantri Amrit Bharat Station Yojna' spread across 27 states and Union Territories at an expenditure of Rs 19 thousand crore. These new modifications and introductions have become imperative in consideration of the increasing population and its needs for modernization to add comfort for passengers at rail stations. Even the Prime Minister had indicated that the none-too-bright condition of Indian Railways is the result of cheap and gimmick riddled politics. It had been witnessed in the past that during the reign of coalition governments, there were dogfights and political pressures galore for the post of Rail Minister. This cabinet post was hankered for because it was the wont of the concerned politicians to please the people of their constituencies by introducing new rail services and providing employment in the railways for their supporters in abeyance of all rules and regulations. In spite of being one of the largest rail networks, the Indian railways had neither seen substantial qualitative improvement nor had it been able to stabilize its shaky financial status.

It is undeniable that to provide minimum passenger comfort, money is required as against which, rail fare is comparatively low. For improved facilities and services, whenever the government proposed fare hikes, politicians made it an election issue. To modify and improve on quality of rail facilities, the people's cooperation too is essential. But, in spite of it all, today's rail travel cannot be termed absolutely safe. Almost every day, there are reports of rail accidents and some caused by human errors. On February 25 last, there was a report that a goods train had rolled off from Jammu's Khatua rail station without its driver and guard, at a speed of 60 kilometres per hour. It could only be stopped at a small station after travelling for 90 minutes. Fortunately, no other train came in the 'run away' goods train's route or the result could have been devastating. According to information, there was to be a change of duty for the driver and guard of this goods train at Khatua. The driver had forgotten to apply the handbrake in the engine. The station master and six other officials and employees were suspended following the incident but essentially, it should be ensured that such types of errors are not repeated in the future. Drivers and staff should have to be more alert and answerable. It is necessary to modernize and expand the railway infrastructure but, at the same time, such infrastructure should be made more secure and fool-proof. Rail tracks should be regularly maintained and staff should be extra alert towards their responsibilities. A minuscule error can put thousands of lives at stake. Simultaneously, the fog menace in winter that dogs train running and accounts for delays and occasional cancellations, has to be eradicated through the use of upgraded and modern equipment and techniques so as to overcome these winter lacunae. Upgrading and modernization of infrastructure should be planned and implemented while keeping in mind the growing population and its requirements.

From the Editorial Desk

NC, PDP & Congress firming up for pre-poll alliance in J&K

By Sheikh Qayoom

Political circles are agog in J&K saying that a seat-sharing agreement between the Congress, National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is in the offing and an announcement to this effect is likely within the next few days.

NC president, Dr. Farooq Abdullah had earlier said that his party would fight all the Lok Sabha seats in J&K and Ladakh on its own. Dr. Abdullah appears to have climbed down from his stand as sources within the NC and the Congress are now saying that he never meant to rule out a pre-poll alliance between like-minded political parties.

NC vice president Omar Abdullah had told reporters after his father's statement that the NC was engaged in seat-sharing parleys with the Congress.

Vikar Rasool Wani, president of J&K Congress unit, told reporters recently that the seat-sharing agreement with the NC and the PDP is under serious consideration.

Speculation is now rife that the agreement about pre-poll alliance between NC, PDP and the Congress could be announced sooner than later. Insiders say that the seat-sharing agreement could be announced before the end of the



first week of this month.

"NC would contest the Srinagar-Budgam-Ganderbal Lok Sabha seat and Omar Sahib would be the NC candidate. Mehbooba Mufti would be the PDP candidate from south Kashmir Anantnag-Rajouri-Poonch Lok Sabha constituency and the NC would support her candidature. "North Kashmir Baramulla Lok Sabha seat would be conceded to the NC by the PDP and the Congress as these two parties would not field any candidate against the NC nominee from this constituency," sources within the probable election allies said.

Same sources said the name of the NC candidate for the Baramulla seat is yet to be finalised.

Meanwhile, it is now believed that senior leader and former deputy chief minister, Muzafar

Hussain Beigh could stand as an independent candidate for Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency.

Peoples Conference president, Sajad Gani Lone has already announced that he would fight the polls from Baramulla constituency for the PC. BJP state unit president, Ravinder Raina is likely to contest the Lok Sabha polls from south Kashmir Anantnag seat.

Raina would mainly depend on the BJP cadre in Anantnag, Rajouri and Poonch districts, the segments for the south Kashmir Lok Sabha constituency.

In addition to this, the Pahari community living in Rajouri, Poonch and some parts of Anantnag and Kulgam districts are likely to support Raina overwhelmingly because the Paharis were recently granted the

ST status by the Government of India.

In contrast to this, Mehbooba Mufti is well entrenched in Anantnag district. Once the NC supports her, the large Gujjar/Bakarwal community living in Rajouri, Poonch and parts of Anantnag district is also expected to support her.

Prominent and largely popular Gujjar/Bakarwal leader, Mian Altaf Ahmad of the NC could garner a large number of voters from his community in favour of Mehbooba Mufti. The outcome of two Lok Sabha seats of Jammu and Udhampur-Kathua is widely believed to favour the BJP.

Udhampur-Kathua Lok Sabha seat is presently represented by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (PMO) while Jugal Kishore of the BJP represents the Jammu seat.

Whether Jitendra Singh and Jugal Kishore are repeated as the BJP candidates for these two seats is still not clear. Even if these candidates are not repeated by the BJP for these two seats, the outcome would still favour the BJP as the party is well entrenched in both these constituencies.

Given these likely permutations and combinations, the forthcoming Lok Sabha election in J&K is going to be very interesting because of the number of stalwarts likely to throw in their hat into the poll ring.

Collaboration should be our future 'mantra': Kochi-Muziris Biennale co-founder Bose Krishnamachari

By Sukant Deepak

Stressing that collaboration should be "our future mantra" and it is paramount to encourage collaborations with museums, cultural institutions, writers and artists across contemporary art, theatre, music, performance and audiences, artist and co-founder of the prestigious Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Bose Krishnamachari opines, "I strongly believe we should have more tailor-made travel scholarships."

"Besides, higher-level educational scholarships for students should be opened, and 24x7 studios and sites should be made available. Curated programs and exhibitions must be commissioned. These are all important towards creating an accessible, nourishing art ecosystem," he adds.

Krishnamachari has been ranked 38th on the Global Power 100 list of the most influential people in art by Art Review, an internationally renowned art magazine feels that it is high time that governments start paying more attention to art infrastructure, betterment of museums, exhibition spaces and update the syllabus in art schools.

"Our bureaucracy on all levels must seek advice,



outsource and commission the right people. They need to give powers to the learned or the experienced - powers to envision projects, infrastructure and public policy," he tells IANS.

A pass-out from Sir J. J. School of Art in Mumbai, and a Master of Fine Arts from Goldsmiths' College, University of London, Bose, who was recently in Saudi Arabia for the AIUla Future Culture Summit, agrees that Middle-Eastern countries are now investing hugely in culture, thus opening up a wide scope for cultural tourism like many countries in Europe.

"I was stunned to see the expanse and extent of culture blooming in the region. One had to see the amazing initiatives to believe. Everywhere in Al Ula, below the sky, the visuals are magical and

organic sculpture-scapes in multiple scales. It is one of the best locations to explore more possibilities for a future destination, an intangible and vivacious site in scale. GioForma's designed architecture, 2960 mirror skin absorbing images of surroundings - it was just otherworldly," he says.

Impressed to see an array of talented and educated young women who studied abroad and returned to their origin, the artist adds, "Absolute enthusiasm and inquisitiveness with positive energy. Signs of women leading the culture scene in Saudi and in the UAE - what a great thing! And let us not forget the Louvre by architect Jean Nouvel and Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Abu Dhabi will be ready in a few years."

For someone who has

done theatre, and music, besides a film appreciation course from FTII, Pune, Mumbai-based Krishnamachari feels art learning cannot be just a one-direction journey and it is important to make oneself aware of other creative practices.

"This exercise gives you confidence in complementary subjects and frees you from the conventions of schooled thought and forms. A multicultural, multilingual, multi-race, multimedia and ultra-media and secular place is more creative than a mono-discursive site," he asserts.

In the last one decade, one has witnessed a spate in the number of private museums and art foundations in India with many more coming up. Pleased with the development, the artist feels it is a welcome change, but they too must, like universities, invest in artist support structures.

"Production spaces are the most important - photo processing studios, printmaking studios, woodworking studios, laboratories of material science and experts, metal foundries etc. Present and future universities must transform into universities of culture, aesthetics, design and technology-based laboratory studios. And finance will follow them," he concludes.

'PM - Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' promises to save Rs 15,000 per household

The Centre's 'PM - Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' that aims to provide free electricity to one crore households, who opt to install rooftop solar electricity unit of 3 kilowatt capacity, promises an "assured saving of approximately Rs 15,000 in a year for a household consuming up to 300 units a month".

According to the government, such a household, by generating its own electricity, will save Rs 1,800-1,875 on electricity bill.

The ambitious scheme was approved by the Union Cabinet on February 29, with an outlay of Rs 75,021 crore.

The scheme provides for a subsidy of 60 per cent of the solar unit cost for systems up to 2 kilowatt capacity and 40 per cent of additional system cost for systems between 2 to 3 kilowatt capacity. The subsidy has been capped at 3 kilowatt capacity.

At current benchmark prices, this will mean Rs 30,000 subsidy for 1 kilowatt system, Rs 60,000 for 2 kilowatt systems and Rs 78,000 for 3 kilowatt systems or higher, the government noted.

The applicant must be an Indian citizen to be eligible for the scheme. The applicant must own a house with a roof that is suitable for installing solar panels,



the household must have a valid electricity connection, and must not have availed of any other subsidy for solar panels.

The interested consumer has to register on the national portal www.pmsuryaghar.gov.in to apply for the scheme. This has to be done by selecting the state and the electricity distribution company.

The National Portal will assist the households by providing relevant information such as appropriate system sizes, benefits calculator, vendor

rating etc. The consumers can choose the vendor and the make of the rooftop solar unit they wish to get installed. The consumer can also avail of a loan facility to finance the solar unit, the government said.

Households will be able to access collateral-free low-interest loan products of around 7 per cent at present for installation of residential RTS systems up to 3 kilowatt, it added.

The interest rate has been pegged at 0.5 per cent above the prevailing Repo Rate decided by Reserve Bank of India

(RBI) from time to time. In the event of the Repo Rate, which is 6.5 per cent at present, getting reduced to say 5.5 per cent, the effective interest rate for consumers will become 6 per cent instead of the current 7 per cent.

As per the government, even after deducting the EMI of Rs 610 on the loan availed for financing the solar unit, the savings would be around Rs 1,265 per month or about Rs 15,000 in a year. The savings for the households not availing of loan will be even higher.

Misplaced ambitions of Bengal Cong leaders ensured INDIA's early demise

By Sumanta Ray Chaudhuri

As Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister has made it clear that her party would contest independently from all the 42 constituencies in West Bengal in the Lok Sabha elections scheduled this year, a post mortem has started on the factors that prompted the TMC-Congress bonhomie to turn murky.

Now, while quoting the term "TMC-Congress bonhomie," political observers here have also explained that this concept of sociability was not an overall factor between the Congress and the Trinamool Congress.

Rather, this sociability was more a personal bond between Mamata Banerjee and Congress leader Sonia Gandhi as well as some other national leaders of the

country's oldest national party like Abhishek Manu Singhvi, P Chidambaram and Jairam Ramesh.

Where the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee (WBPC) is concerned, political observers say, the equation of the Chief Minister with almost all state Congress leaders, especially the party's state President Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, was always acrimonious.

People are wondering why the state Congress unit's hardcore "anti-TMC" stand gained supremacy over that of the "pro-TMC" section of the central leadership and that too in a thoroughly high command-driven party like the Congress, which ultimately prompted Mamata Banerjee to announce that her party would go it alone in the Lok Sabha elections.

Political observers say that many factors aided state Congress leaders, especially Chowdhury to

convince the high command that the Trinamool Congress' principal aim was to weaken the Congress and indirectly help the BJP and hence the ruling party in West Bengal could not be trusted.

Political observers opine that the first factor that fuelled the mistrust was the Chief Minister's stand on the last elections for the country President and Vice-President.

At a time when all anti-BJP forces led by the Congress and even the TMC's arch-rival CPI-M agreed to back the erstwhile Trinamool Congress' National Vice-President Yashwant Sinha and officially announced their support, a comment by Mamata Banerjee came as a shocker.

She said had the BJP informed her that it was fielding Droupadi Murmu for the President's post; she would have given a thought



to supporting her candidature.

The second shocker by the Trinamool Congress came during the elections for the Vice-President's post, when it decided to abstain from voting instead of casting its ballot in support of the Congress-backed Opposition candidate Margaret Alva.

Neither the Congress, nor

its friends, bought the Trinamool Congress' logic that the decision to abstain from voting was taken because the call to field Margaret Alva was taken without consultation with the Trinamool leadership.

The next shocker came after the by-elections last year for the Sagardighi Assembly constituency in minority-dominated

Murshidabad district of West Bengal where the Left Front-supported Congress candidate Bayron Biswas emerged as a surprise winner and that, too, with a landslide majority.

However, the jubilation in the combined Congress-CPI-M camp over the victory was short-lived, as within a couple of months after clinching that victory Biswas joined the Trinamool Congress in the presence of the party's General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee.

Since then state Congress leaders led by Chowdhury became more vocal about their theory of the Trinamool Congress playing the role of clandestine benefactor of the BJP by weakening the Congress.

Next was the factor of Naushad Siddique, the lone All-India Secular Front (AISF) representative in West Bengal Assembly expressing the desire to

contest from minority-dominated Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha constituency in South 24 Parganas district, where the sitting MP is Abhishek Banerjee.

As both CPI-M and Congress took an in-principle decision to give conditional support to Siddique's candidature from Diamond Harbour, the Trinamool Congress leadership accused Siddique of being a clandestine benefactor of the BJP by making attempts to divide the minority votes.

Trinamool also accused the Congress and CPI-M of fuelling that attempt.

Given this background, there was major mistrust between a large section of the Congress and the Trinamool, even after they became a part of the INDIA bloc.

At the same time, the importance given to the CPI-M General Secretary

Sitaram Yechury in the INDIA bloc added to Mamata Banerjee's irritation, which she revealed while speaking at a public meeting in Kolkata on January 22.

"The name 'INDIA' was my brainchild, but I feel sad when I see that the CPI-M is being allowed to control the agenda of the Opposition bloc meetings. I can never accept that. I feel sad since we have struggled for 34 years to end the CPI-M-led Left Front rule in West Bengal," she said on that day.

Finally, as pointed out by observers, Mamata Banerjee floating the name of Mallikarjun Kharge as the projected prime ministerial candidate in an INDIA bloc meeting and suggesting that Priyanka Gandhi contest from Varanasi against Prime Minister Narendra Modi fuelled the mistrust of the Congress against the TMC further.

NZ consider recalling retired Wagner for Christchurch Test, hints Southee

Wellington, March 3 (IANS) New Zealand captain Tim Southee has not ruled out the possibility of fielding the retired Neil Wagner in the second and final Test against Australia at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch.

An injury to fast-bowler Will O'Rourke in his hamstring resulted in him leaving the field on the third day of the first Test, though he came out to bat in the fourth innings at Wellington, where New Zealand lost the match by 172 runs.

Wagner had officially retired from international cricket just days before the start of the first Test after being told he wouldn't be picked in the squad, but briefly came on to the field as a substitute fielder and received warm applause from the crowd at Basin Reserve.

"We haven't had a lot of discussions as yet. We'll see how Will scrubs up. The physio hasn't sort of put a timeframe on it or how bad it is. We'll just wait and see how Will goes over the next couple of days. I'm sure there'll be an update in the next 24 hours."

"We obviously have to go on and make a decision on who comes in and what role we sort of see that playing out in Christchurch. (Wagner's) had a great reception here over the last week where he got a couple of moments on the field and obviously he's been a fan favourite for a long time," said Southee after the match.

But Southee did rule out the chance of an inclusion to left-arm fast-bowler Trent Boult, who last played a Test match in June 2022. "I don't think his loading is up to it on the back of T20," he added.

Kalyan as President has damaged image of AIFF: Bhaichung Bhutia

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) Known as the common man's game, football is not just the most popular sport in the world, it also unites people across boundaries. And it comes as a rude shock that while India as a country is becoming a stronger global power by the day, its position in the common man's game has drastically degraded in the last year. Unfortunately, when one talks of global ambassadors in football, India has only one name -- Bhaichung Bhutia.

And the former India skipper's heart bleeds when he sees India's FIFA ranking has dropped 15 places to 117 in the recent rankings -- worst in last seven years. While not someone to shy away from taking on the strongest defenders on the football pitch, he only watches helplessly as the All India Football Federation (AIFF) has failed to provide a professional set-up to help the game grow in the country.

Speaking exclusively to IANS, the Sikkimese Sniper said Kalyan Chaubey (AIFF President) has failed Indian football and the constant in-fighting is one of the major reasons why the team has failed to rise to the challenges and stride forward in the global platform.

"It is complete mismanagement by the top-most, including the President himself. Even today if you look at it, there is a lot of mismanagement in the administrative activities. There is a lot of misuse of funds. There is a complete mess in the AIFF, and Kalyan as President has really damaged the image of the AIFF."

"And today, I think it is so sad to read a lot of controversies that are happening in the federation with the financial thing. The lawyer of the AIFF has filed a case against the President. The General Secretary has filed a case against the President. I think it is a very sad affair and it is very sad for Indian football that how the President and his leadership has taken the game," he rued.

Asked about the drop in ranking -- a real low in recent times -- Bhaichung Bhutia said the team didn't get enough time to train and the coaching staff were also not given a window to work closely with the boys.

WPL 2024: 'First thing is to reach there and read the conditions', says Harmanpreet ahead of Delhi leg

Bengaluru, March 3 (IANS) Defending champions Mumbai Indians reached their 132-run target set by Royal Challengers Bangalore in 15.1 overs to win Saturday's match in 2024 WPL by seven wickets and now have six points from four games to be at the top of the points table.

The side will now kickstart the Delhi leg of the tournament against Delhi Capitals on March 5 and captain Harmanpreet Kaur, who missed the last two matches due to an injury, said they will now be reading conditions, evaluate the pitch and outfield for making their plans for the road ahead on reaching the national capital.

"The venue will be changing and we'll be moving to Delhi. The first thing is to get there and read the conditions. We'll plan accordingly. It's tough to plan that far ahead from here right now. The second we land, we'll go to the ground and evaluate the pitch, the outfield, and we'll make the team and future plans accordingly," said Harmanpreet on 'Match Center Live' show on JioCinema and Sports18.

Reema Malhotra, the former India women's cricketer, feels the Mumbai Indians are title contenders again for defending their WPL title. "This is a team who have been champions and still play like champions. Harmanpreet Kaur played like a champion (when fit). They beat RCB on their home ground tonight and RCB are a strong team."

"This team has a positive atmosphere around it, and they have a number of match-winners. Nat Sciver-Brunt captained well in Harmanpreet's absence, and Hayley Matthews has played well. The bowling unit did its job. Their Indian players, especially Pooja and Saika did well. I've always felt if your Indian players play well, you will be successful."

India move to top of the WTC standings after NZ's loss to Australia in Wellington

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) The two-time finalists India have moved to the top spot in the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) standings as New Zealand slipped to No.2 following their defeat to Australia in Wellington Test.

Before the start of the Wellington Test, New Zealand were sitting at the top of the table with 36 points in four games and a points percentage of 75.

But, following their massive 172-run defeat, the 2021 WTC champions lost the top spot, slipping to the No.2 position with a points percentage of 60.

India, who were at No.2 with 62 points in 8 matches, replaced them at the top with a stronger points percentage of 64.58.



Australia remain in the third position, gaining 12 crucial points with the win in Wellington, taking their points tally from 66 to 78. Their points percentage has also increased from 55 to now 59.09. The reigning champions have the opportunity to surpass New Zealand and move up to the second spot if they win the

second and final Test of the ongoing series against New Zealand.

The two teams will next meet in Christchurch, with the final Test set to commence on March 8.

Australia can also climb to the top spot if England beat India in the Dharamshala Test, which starts from March 7.

Run Archery trialled for the first time in UAE at the Fazza Para-Archery World Ranking Tournament

Dubai, March 3 (IANS) Just before they get into serious action in the 8th Fazza Para-Archery World Ranking Tournament World Qualifying Tournament for Paris 2024, the participants got a taste of a new unique format of archery, Run Archery.

It was all about fun and excitement on Friday night in Dubai as the organisers of Dubai 2024, the Paralympic Games qualifying event, trialled for the first time in the United Arab Emirates the unique format of archery, Run Archery. As many as 21 shooters, coaches, team officials and players from across the globe took part in the new shooting discipline that connects archery with



running, at the Dubai Club for People of Determination grounds.

"We wanted to try something different; give a unique experience to everyone during the Para Archery World Ranking Tournament. This is a new format of archery which is popular in Europe and recognised by World

Archery. We are looking forward to having this format as competition in UAE," said Al Rao, Para Archery coach. There was also a seminar held for the National Technical Officials ahead of the trialled event and "everyone was so excited", Rao was quoted as saying by the organisers of the event.

ISL 2023-24: Promising Playoffs prospects strengthen NorthEast United FC's resolve against Hyderabad FC

Hyderabad, March 3 (IANS) NorthEast United FC will hope to make a decisive push to make it to the top-six when they play Hyderabad FC in a crucial match in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 at the Gachibowli Stadium, here on Monday. Having lost just one of their last four matches, the Highlanders are now within an arm's length of the Playoffs spots. They have 19 points from 16 games, placing them at the eighth place in the table.

Thus, they are just two points behind the sixth-placed Bengaluru FC (21), having two games in hand as compared to the Blues who have already played 18 matches. The Highlanders have secured victories against East Bengal FC and FC Goa since the season resumed after the break at the halfway mark. They gave Mohun Bagan Super Giant a tough run for their money amidst a 4-2



defeat and held Jamshedpur FC to a 1-1 draw.

Returning to action after 11 days, the Juan Pedro Benali-coached side must have had ample time to reflect and recharge for the next six games against a Hyderabad FC unit that is winless after 17 games, losing all five

of their previous encounters this season.

Form might not be favouring them, but Hyderabad FC has a formidable past record against the Highlanders to fall back on. Indeed, they are unbeaten in their last eight fixtures against NorthEast United FC, winning six and drawing twice in the duration. Against no other team has Hyderabad FC recorded a longer unbeaten streak in ISL history. However, the troubles in their frontline refuse to cool down, with the team failing to find the back of the net in each of their previous six home matches.

This is the longest such streak for any team in the history of the ISL. Another worrying sign has been their inability to start games on a strong footing, conceding seven goals in the first 15 minutes of their matches in the competition.

MLS 2023-24: Inter Miami's Martino hails splendour of Luis Suarez

Washington, March 3 (IANS) Inter Miami manager Gerardo Martino lavished high praise on Luis Suarez after the Uruguayan striker scored two goals and assisted two others in a 5-0 home victory over Orlando City on Saturday.



Suarez, who joined the Florida outfit from Brazil's Gremio on a free transfer in January, struck twice in the first 11 minutes before setting up Finnish midfielder Robert Taylor to make it 3-0. Lionel Messi extended the hosts' lead by bundling home from close range and Suarez then provided the final pass for his former Barcelona teammate's second goal. "Today the team played very well, and [Suarez] appeared in all his splendour, not only as a scorer but as a creator," Martino told journalists after the match at the Chase stadium in Fort Lauderdale. The result leaves Inter Miami top of the Major League Soccer (MLS) standings with seven points after three matchdays, reports Xinhua. Messi, who has three goals already this season, also drew words of approval from Martino. "Talking about Leo is redundant. He feels good physically and is always decisive and transcendental for us," the Argentine manager said of his compatriot.

England's failure to win their last three Test series is due to their batting, says Michael Vaughan

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) With England losing the ongoing Test series to India, former captain Michael Vaughan believes the Ben Stokes-led side haven't been able to win their last three series in the format due to the failure of their batting department. With India taking an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series via a five-wicket win in Ranchi, it marked England's first series loss under the captain-coach duo of Stokes and Brendon

McCullum. Before the tour to India, England had drawn 2-2 with Australia at home and 1-1 with New Zealand in their backyard. "It's a huge week for several of England's batsmen. When we think of this England team, we think of their wonderfully dynamic batting. But when you look at why they haven't won any of their last three series, it's down to the batting." "There never seems to be much scrutiny or noise around England's batsmen.



Even last week I chuckled. They lost in Ranchi in large part because they didn't bat well enough, but there was lots of finger-pointing at Ollie Robinson, a bowler who scored an important half-century!"

"He looked well short of a gallop with the ball and dropped a catch, but I thought it was ironic 'batsmen v bowlers' stuff," wrote Vaughan in his column for The Telegraph.

He also foresees England's batting order may see a change after the

Dharamshala Test is played from March 7-11. "The whole batting lineup has known week in, week out on this tour that it will be playing the next game. That is about to change because after this tour Harry Brook will be back."

"He has to bat at No. 5 because he should be the bedrock of their batting with Joe Root. Does that mean England's statement moment is coming? Consistency of selection is such a fine balance in team sports."

'Tempo of Green's innings stood out for me', says Cummins on all-rounder's match-winning 174

Wellington, March 3 (IANS) Australia captain Pat Cummins said the tempo of all-rounder Cameron Green's match-winning 174 in the first Test against New Zealand under difficult conditions in Wellington stood out for him and it could become a template for him as a number four batter in the longer format. Green rescued Australia from 89/4 with a counterattacking 174 off 275 balls, also his highest score in the format, while sharing a 116-run stand for the last wicket. He hit 23 fours and five sixes as the visitors got their first innings total of 383, which was crucial in setting up the base for a 172-run win to go 1-0 up in the two-match Test series. "I reckon that's as sharp as I've seen him. He put pressure back on the opposition, he was



using his feet to upset the bowlers' lengths on a really tough day one wicket. I thought it was incredibly impressive and it's given him a good blueprint of how to play going forward. "Batting four is a little bit different, but the tempo of the innings was what stood out to me. We know he can spend time and build up his innings that way, but this was a slightly different way he went about it. He scored runs in Sri Lanka on a really tough spinning wicket, a hundred in India and a hundred here, he can do it in all conditions." "So, he should be really confident that if he's ever in a rut - which I'm sure every batter goes through, and he might one day - he can always look back at this innings and get him back where he needs to be.

India draw a blank at World Athletics Indoor Championships

Glasgow, March 3 (IANS) India's Jeswin Aldrin and Praveen Chithravel endured a tough outing, as India drew a blank at the World Athletics Indoor Championships. Only two Indian athletes took the stage in Glasgow with Aldrin finishing 13th while Chithravel placed 11th in the triple jump.

In the men's long jump event, Aldrin entered a field of 16 competitors. He kicked off with a jump of 7.69m on his first attempt but unfortunately fouled his next two, placing him outside the top eight and leading to his elimination. Aldrin's performance fell



considerably short of his personal best mark of 7.97 meters, a record he set at the Asian Indoor Championships last year, earning him the silver medal. Later in the day, Chithravel came 11th in a 14-man men's triple jump

field. Chithravel, who holds the national record at 17.37m, started with jumps of 15.76m and 16.29m and reached a season's best of 16.45m on his third attempt but failed to evade elimination.

'I'd love for him to keep going: Cummins backs Lyon to play Test cricket till 2027

Wellington, March 3 (IANS) Following a 172-run win over New Zealand to go 1-0 up in the two-match series, Australia skipper Pat Cummins believes veteran off-spinner Nathan Lyon can play Test cricket till 2027.

In the win at Wellington, Lyon claimed 6-65 to bowl out New Zealand for 196 in the second innings to finish with a match haul of 10-108.

"I'd love for him to keep going until 2027. The only barrier really is his body, so

if he looks after his body and makes sure he's right for 10 Test matches a year, or whatever it is, I'd absolutely love him to play until 2027.

"And I don't think there's much that's going to get in his way. I've already told him the day he retires I'm definitely giving up the captaincy because it makes my life a helluva lot easier," said Cummins to reporters after the match.

He went on to admit that having Lyon makes it simpler for him to set fields



and execute various plans. "It's a captain's dream really. There's a real sense of calm out there when you know you've got someone that good on a wicket that's giving him a little bit of help."

"It's fun really, you can get creative with some of the field placings knowing he's going to land it exactly where you want it to. I thought he was brilliant over the last couple of days, bouncing through a few different plans but it always just felt like he was in

control. And it felt like we had plan B, C and D we could go to as well, but never really felt like we had to."

Cummins revealed Lyon wanted to have a crack with the new ball in the second innings after the first two overs were bowled. "As soon as Starcy (Mitchell Starc) and Josh (Hazlewood, his opening partner) had bowled their first overs at each end, he (Lyon) was coming up and asking me when he's coming on."

The digital shift transforming education in India

By Aron Kumar

New Delhi, March 3 (IANSLife)

India's educational sector is experiencing a profound transformation as it shifts towards online education, a change propelled by the dual forces of technological innovation and the unprecedented challenges of the global pandemic.

The prominence of Edtech's future intensified during the Covid-19 impact on education, prompting a significant allocation of Rs 1.12 lakh crore in the fiscal year 2023-24 budget -- an impressive 8.26 per cent surge compared to the previous years.

This pivotal transition is altering not just how education is delivered -- moving from traditional classroom settings to digital platforms -- but also significantly expanding its scope and accessibility. It's a shift that promises to democratise education, making it more available and inclusive for students across all backgrounds.

The Drivers of Digital Adoption: Several important factors are driving the rapid adoption of online learning in India. Digital Connectivity Revolution Amidst Pandemic Pressure: The confluence of affordable data plans and government-led digital infrastructure initiatives has dramatically increased internet access in India, its vast and drastic penetration in India can be confirmed by India Internet Report 2023 that says now even rural India has achieved around 425 million internet users surpassing its urban counterparts, indicating a strong 30 per cent growth. This pivotal development, amplified by the urgent demands of the Covid-19

pandemic, facilitated a swift pivot to online learning for educational continuity. This synchronised revolution not only bridged geographical and socio-economic gaps but also accelerated the seamless integration of digital platforms into the teaching and learning process.

Technological Transformations: The surge in online learning in India is propelled by advancements in digital technologies. Breakthroughs in learning management systems, interactive platforms, and mobile applications have revolutionised the accessibility and engagement of online education, accommodating diverse learning experiences. Aligned with the NEP's bold vision, India aims for global academic eminence by 2024. Pledging a 50 per cent

Gross Enrollment Ratio by 2035, the NEP 2020's focus remains on technology as its key area. Beyond immersive realities, transformative technologies like blockchain are securing educational records and adaptive learning platforms are tailoring content to individual student strengths and weaknesses. These driving forces behind the adoption of online education in India are collectively enhancing the educational experience and making the sector huge, aligned with the needs of the digital age so much so that the Edtech sector is all set to reach the USD 4 billion mark by 2025.

Defining Features of Online Learning: Online education stands out for its learner-centric approach, which provides flexibility and customisation that traditional classrooms frequently cannot. According to a report by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur, 83 percent of Indian students prefer online learning platforms owing to flexibility and

learners with practical skills and a deeper understanding of complex subjects. An example would be medical students who can perform virtual surgeries and even history students who can explore ancient civilisations through immersive virtual tours.

Charting the Future Path: The journey towards an inclusive, technology-driven educational landscape in India is filled with opportunities and challenges. As online education expands, challenges arise in ensuring consistent and fair access to technology and internet connectivity. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for unlocking the full potential of online learning. Notably, the NEP 2020 advocates for diverse educational approaches, but the current taxation of technology and learning



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Embodying expression

New Delhi, March 3 (IANSLife) David Abraham and RakeshThakore, the creative minds behind the renowned Abraham &Thakore label, affectionately hailed as the 'Masters of Minimalism,' have consistently ventured into innovative paths within Indian fashion.

Their latest Spring Summer '24 Collection, 'Body Language: The Punctuation Edit, is sharp, wearable, and in conversation with the larger theme of language that the brand has continually explored. This edit also plays with the idea of the elemental - in language and clothing - in myriad ways: whether through alphabets, the form of a flower, explorations on a stripe, or a classic silhouette. This is a springboard to explore larger ideas such as the connections between humans and nature, and the multiple forms we use to communicate with each other in an increasingly digitized world.

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David Abraham, "The patterns are inspired by interpretations on visual frames, or how space is organized. The emphasis is directed towards stripes, color blocks, and checks, portraying them as essential elements to the punctuation and structural framework employed by language to enhance legibility and coherence."

And once in a while there is a break from the structure, and in comes a surprise - sometimes in the delightful form of a voluptuous Ottoman tulip. Designer RakeshThakore added, "This collection commemorates the enduring art of expressing oneself through fashion. We aspire for it to initiate an essential dialogue and surpass the constraints of language."

Like any other Abraham &Thakore collection, there are diverse textiles and crafts at play here. Chettinad Checks, Maheshwari borders, Gingham weaves, and

delicate embroideries - that mix the machine and the hand - all make an appearance, while ikat is once again, articulated uniquely. Uniquely, this edit also presents the building blocks of a wardrobe, or that is, the literal basics of clothing. The brand introduces t-shirts, dresses, pants, and other garments that invite people to lay a strong foundation before they delve deep into the endless possibilities of versatile layering.

The Spring-Summer 2024 edit of the "Body Language" collection by the veteran designers, not only captivates the industry with its stunning aspect but is poised to ignite discussions among trendsetters. This exciting collection is available at all Abraham &Thakore at Dhan Mill, Phoenix Palladium Mumbai, Jio World Drive, and online.

IANSLife can be contacted at ianslife@ians.in

Raw milk face packs for brighter skin

New Delhi, March 3 (IANSLife)

In the pursuit of radiant and glowing skin, sometimes the most effective solutions are found in nature. Raw milk, with its rich blend of vitamins, proteins, and lactic acid, serves as a versatile ingredient for DIY face packs that can rejuvenate your skin.

Dr. Blossom Kochhar, Chairperson of Blossom Kochhar Group of Companies shares with IANSLife eight raw milk face packs, each tailored to address specific skin concerns, ensuring that you can harness the power of nature for a brighter and more luminous complexion.

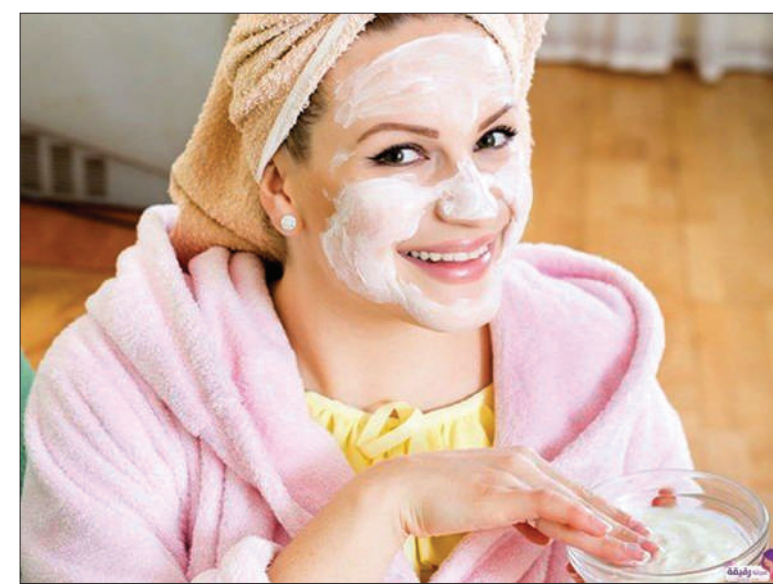
Turmeric and Raw Milk Face Pack

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons of raw milk
1 teaspoon of turmeric powder
Why this pack: Turmeric is known for its anti-inflammatory and brightening properties. When combined with the moisturising effect of raw milk, this face pack becomes a potent solution for reducing blemishes and dark spots. Use it twice a week, and be cautious with the turmeric quantity, as excessive use may temporarily stain the skin.

Honey and Raw Milk Face Pack

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons of raw milk
1 tablespoon of honey
Why this pack: Honey is a natural humectant that helps retain moisture, making it an excellent complement to raw milk. This pack is perfect for those with dry skin, providing hydration and a radiant glow. Apply it weekly, leave it on for 15-20 minutes, and rinse thoroughly. Ensure the honey used is pure and free from additives for optimal benefits.

Oatmeal and Raw Milk Face Pack



Ingredients:
2 tablespoons of raw milk
1 tablespoon of finely ground oatmeal
Why this pack: Oatmeal acts as a gentle exfoliant, making this face pack ideal for sloughing off dead skin cells and promoting cell turnover. Raw milk complements the exfoliation with its moisturising properties. Use this pack bi-weekly for smoother and brighter skin. Adjust the consistency by adding more milk if needed, and massage it in circular motions while applying for added exfoliation.

Cucumber and Raw Milk Face Pack

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons of raw milk
2 tablespoons of cucumber juice
Why this pack: Cucumber is renowned for its soothing and cooling properties, making it a perfect match for raw milk. This pack is excellent for calming irritated skin and reducing puffiness. Refrigerate the cucumber before extracting its juice for an added cooling effect.

Papaya and Raw Milk Face Pack

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons of raw milk
2 tablespoons of ripe papaya pulp
Why this pack: Papaya contains enzymes like papain, known for exfoliating and brightening the skin. Mixed with raw milk, this face pack provides a gentle yet effective solution for achieving a radiant complexion. Use it bi-

weekly, leaving it on for 15-20 minutes before rinsing. Ensure the papaya is ripe for the best results.

Aloe Vera and Raw Milk Face Pack

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons of raw milk
1 tablespoon of fresh aloe vera gel
Why this pack: Aloe vera is celebrated for its soothing and healing properties. Combined with the nourishing benefits of raw milk, this face pack is perfect for calming irritated skin and promoting an even skin tone. Apply it weekly, leaving it on for 20 minutes before rinsing. Ensure the aloe vera used is pure and free from additives.

Sandalwood and Raw Milk Face Pack

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons of raw milk
1 tablespoon of sandalwood powder
Why this pack: Sandalwood has been a traditional skincare ingredient, known for its skin-brightening and anti-inflammatory properties. Mixed with raw milk, this face pack becomes a luxurious treatment for achieving a radiant complexion. Use it once a week, leaving it on for 15-20 minutes before rinsing. Adjust the quantity of sandalwood for your desired consistency.

Embrace the goodness of raw milk and natural ingredients with these DIY face packs to reveal a brighter and more radiant complexion.

Remember to perform a patch test before applying any new ingredient to your face, especially if you have sensitive skin. Additionally, consistency is key, so make these face packs a part of your regular skincare routine for the best results.

IANSLife can be contacted at ianslife@ians.in

A fusion of technology, art and future forward bathspaces

New Delhi, March 3 (IANSLife) Kohler Co., a global leader in kitchen and bath design, synonymous with innovation and design yet again took the spotlight at India Design Week 2024 with an India debut of the brand's most advanced smart toilet Numi 2.0.

Numi 2.0 Intelligent Toilet with KOHLER Kconnect exemplifies technological transformation by providing ultimate comfort and personalisation with warm-water cleansing, a heated seat, and five preset lighting and sound scenes. A completely hands-free experience with motion-sensing lid and seat opening, automatic flushing, bidet cleansing with wand rinsing, and UV sanitisation.

The Numi 2.0's pre-use bowl mist ensures a complete rinse while flushing. A perfect blend of design and technology, the Numi 2.0 smart toilet is the epitome of comfort and cleanliness.

The exhibit also featured a full smart bathroom set up with cutting-edge innovative products from the brand which can

reshape the way people experience comfort and convenience like:

Anthem Digital showering system which puts the control of one's custom shower at their fingertips. A sleek, minimalist display lets configure and control one's outlets, temperature, and flow, creating a personalised showering experience every time. Optional built-in eco mode lets conserve water by using just one outlet at a time, and the summary screen helps to promote mindful water usage.

Statement shower collection is the ultimate palette boasting exquisite forms, while seamlessly blending into the spaces we inhabit. Defined by voluminous proportions and soft, organic designs, the Statement showering collection brings form and finish to the forefront without overwhelming the space. Within the thoughtfully crafted forms of the Statement showering collection are signature spray experiences, which one can easily select and change. These sprays create wholly immersive

environments for drenching the body and relaxing the mind to foster a sense of well-being.



The Vibe Lighted Mirror is a stylish addition to any contemporary bathroom, combining beauty and functionality seamlessly. With personalised integrated LED lights, users can choose from a range of colors and adjust the intensity for the perfect ambience. The elegant design incorporates

defogging technology, enhancing a clear reflection even in steamy conditions. The mirror features a touchless switch for intuitive control and effortless installation with a cleat mounting system. It is also water-resistant, making it suitable for humid or damp spaces.

This convergence of innovation signifies a shift towards a more technologically advanced and user-friendly lifestyle

in bath spaces, ultimately enhancing the overall well-being of individuals.

The brand also showcased a unique installation featuring a 'limited artist edition' collection at the pre-symposium area. A true epitome of "Art meets Technology".

Ziling Wang's installation: a world on Strings brings abstract expression to the bathroom suite by melding dynamic

brush strokes with traditional Chinese scenes, in bold interpretations that connect sculptural designs and contemporary KOHLER structures.

PushpaKumari of India, a maestro in intricate line paintings that redefine the Mithila tradition, brings her artistic brilliance to life in the KOHLER Artist Editions series titled 'Aranya'. The brand's commitment to artistic expression and innovative

design shines through in these exclusive collections where heritage and modernity converge to redefine the boundaries of artistic expression in bathroom design.

Salil Sadasandan, President of South Asia and Asia Pacific at Kohler Co. said, "India Design Week serves as a remarkable platform for us to showcase our commitment to innovation, design, and the seamless integration of technology and art and this year is no different. Our booth at IDW 2024 has been a revelation of the future of bath space, featuring groundbreaking products like Numi 2.0 and the Anthem Digital Showering System through which we are ushering in a new era where technology seamlessly integrates with daily routines. These advancements reflect our commitment to enhancing lifestyle, offering not just products but transformative solutions that prioritise comfort, convenience, and elegance while adding a touch of luxury."

He further added, "The pre-symposium area housing our limited artist

edition collection is a testament to our dedication to artistic expression and heritage. Ziling Wang's 'A World on Strings' and PushpaKumari's 'Aranya' bring together diverse artistic perspectives, redefining the boundaries of creativity in bathroom design."

Ranjeet Oak, Managing Director - K&B South Asia said, "As leaders in bath space innovation, we recognise the transformative power of technology in redefining the modern bathroom experience. The Numi 2.0 Intelligent Toilet, alongside our flagship products showcased in the exhibit area, epitomises our dedication to seamlessly fusing cutting-edge functionality with state-of-the-art design sensibilities, thus setting new industry standards. Our commitment remains steadfast as we continue to push the boundaries of creativity and excellence, ensuring every bath space reflects the pinnacle of innovation and luxury."

IANSLife can be contacted at ianslife@ians.in

13 shops gutted in fire in Bangladesh



Dhaka, March 3 (IANS) At least 13 shops were gutted in a fire in Mohipur fishing port in Bangladesh's Patuakhali district, local media reported. The fire broke out in a fish store and later spread to nearby shops, Dhaka Tribune reported. It was spotted in Akon's fish farm after which locals attempted to extinguish it. The fire was controlled in two hours, as per Kalapara Fire Service Station Officer Ilias Hossain. A fireman was injured in the fire fighting operation who was rushed to hospital, the fire service official said. Cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

Six killed, dozens injured in road accident in Syria

Damascus, March 3 (IANS) At least six people were killed and dozen others injured on Sunday after a bus they were travelling in overturned in Syria's Hama province, local media reported. The incident occurred near the Maarin Al-Jabal village intersection, south of Hama, said local Sham FM radio. The bus overturned on the busy highway while transporting the passengers from Lebanon to Syria's northern Aleppo province, Xinhua news agency reported. The cause of the accident is under investigation.

29 killed, 50 injured due to heavy rains in Pakistan

Islamabad, March 3 (IANS) At least 29 people were killed and 50 others injured due to heavy rains that swept across Pakistan in the past 48 hours, the country's authorities told media on Sunday. The rains caused several houses to collapse and the rain-triggered landslides blocked roads, particularly in the northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, said the authorities, Xinhua news agency reported. Around 23 people had been killed in rain-related incidents in KP since Thursday night, while five people died in the southwestern Balochistan province due to flooding, it added. Five people died in the southwestern Balochistan province after the coastal town of Gwadar got flooded, forcing authorities to use boats to evacuate some 10,000 people. National Disaster Management Authority said emergency relief was being provided to people in affected areas and heavy machines have been deployed to remove debris blocking highways, Al Jazeera reported. Landslides have blocked the country's Karakoram Highway, which links Pakistan with China, as per spokesperson for the northern Gilgit Baltistan region, Faizullah Faraq. Pakistan is among the 10 most vulnerable countries to climate change despite the South Asian nation's almost zero contribution to global carbon emissions, according to the United Nations.

Jordan, US conduct joint aid airdrops to Gaza

Amman, March 3 (IANS) Jordan and the US have jointly carried out airdrops of aid to Gaza, the first time that the US participated in the multinational humanitarian effort. Two aircraft from the Jordan Armed Forces airdropped in the northern Gaza Strip, while three aircraft belonging to the US Air Force airdropped in the south, the state-run Petra news agency reported on Saturday. The US Air Force said its three planes carried 66 bundles containing about 38,000 meals, Xinhua news agency reported. Jordan has been air-dropping supplies directly to Gaza and sending aid planes to Egypt's North Sinai since November last year. Some of the operations involve cooperation with other countries, including the UAE, Egypt, France, and Britain, among others.

Iran invites foreign investors in energy projects: President

Tehran, March 3 (IANS) Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has invited international investors and the member states of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) to participate in the country's energy projects. Raisi made the remarks on Saturday at the seventh GECF Summit in the Algerian capital Algiers, according to a statement published on the website of his office. He noted that Iran welcomed GECF members to start systematic cooperation in making joint investments for exchanging information and experience in gas extraction, processing, transfer, trade and related technologies, Xinhua news agency reported. He added that Iran has huge natural gas reserves, a favourable geographical position regarding gas transit and advanced technological capacities. Raisi said Iran is ready to become an energy hub and a safe route for gas distribution and transfer between producers and their target markets. According to the Energy Information Administration affiliated with the US Department of Energy, Iran sits on the world's second-largest gas reserves.

Sanctions won't work on solving Russia-Ukraine crisis: Slovak FM

Antalya (Turkey), March 3 (IANS) Slovak Foreign Minister Juraj Blahar has said that his country opposes imposing sanctions on Russia and won't send any weapons or troops to Ukraine to escalate the war. "Sanction hurts even more the European Union than the Russian economy," he told reporters on Saturday after a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum held in the southern Turkish city. "We will not support any other sanction which will hurt more Slovakia than Russia," he noted. "As the new government of Slovakia, we will not deliver any weapons from the warehouses of Slovakia force to Ukraine," said Blahar, noting that his government halted sending a package of weapons that cost around 40 million euros to Ukraine, Xinhua news agency reported. "Our position is more clear now than before because the frontier doesn't move, and we are calling for ceasefire and peace talking process which is the only solution of this crisis," he told reporters. His remarks came after French President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday that "everything that is necessary" must be done to ensure the defeat of Russia, including deploying troops. In response to Macron's remarks, Lavrov on Friday said Macron did not misspeak over the possibility of NATO sending troops to Ukraine, noting that the troops were already there unofficially. Macron's remarks have been rejected by several NATO countries, who said that they had no plans to send troops to Ukraine to fight against Russia.

Congressional review over, US sale of MQ-9B drones to India ready for next steps

Washington, March 3 (IANS) The decks are clear now for India to take the next steps in acquiring 31 MQ-9B SkyGuardian armed drones with ammunition with the lapse on Friday of the 30-day period for Congressional review of the deal.

These armed drones are meant for intelligence gathering, surveillance, reconnaissance and for land, air and sea warfare. India has two of these drones -- MQ-9A -- company-lease-and-operation basis from the manufacturers, General Atomics.

The entire package of drones with ammunition that India has sought will cost an estimated \$3.99 billion. The drones will come with 161 embedded global positioning and inertial navigation systems; 35 L3 Rio Grande Communications Intelligence Sensor Suites; 170 AGM-114R Hellfire



missiles; 16 M36E9 Hellfire Captive Air Training Missiles; 310 GBU-39B/B Laser Small Diameter Bombs; and eight GBU-39B/B LSDB Guided Test Vehicles with live fuzes. The proposed sale of these drones were announced by US President Joe Biden during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington D.C. in June 2023. The administration notified Congress of the deal, as it must for all military exports of a certain value, on February 1, giving lawmakers 30 days to raise objections to the proposed deal, which will be deemed

cleared of no there is opposition to it.

"The Congressional review period will conclude at the end of the 30th calendar day after notification and the posting of the media announcement," said a US official. The announcement came on February 1.

"After that it's up to the parties to conclude and sign a Letter of Offer and Acceptance."

A wrinkle in the deal had emerged before the notification period when Ben Cardin, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is a key

Congressional body for clearing foreign military sales, linked his support for the deal to assurance from the Biden administration that India would cooperate in the murder-for-hire case involving the alleged to murder a Khalistani activist. He subsequently announced his support for the deal shortly after Congress was notified.

General Atomics says that the SkyGuardian "is designed to fly over the horizon via satellite for up to 40-plus hours in all types of weather and safely integrate into civil airspace, enabling joint forces and civil authorities to deliver real-time situational awareness anywhere in the world--day or night". And apart from his combat capabilities, "it can be used for humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, search and rescue, law enforcement and border enforcement".

UNSC expresses 'deep concern' over Gaza food convoy deaths, mentions Israeli forces' 'involvement'

United Nations, March 3 (IANS) The United Nations Security Council has expressed "deep concern" over more than 100 deaths in Gaza around a humanitarian convoy and to cite the "involvement" of Israeli defence forces in the incident.

The Council issued the consensus statement on Saturday evening that said all "parties to conflicts must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law".

While the statement does not have the power of a resolution that at least in theory is binding, it expresses the sentiment of the members even if they are not ready to endorse a resolution.

The statement came under the Council

presidency of Japan's Permanent Representative Yamazaki Kazuyuki, who has the difficult task of forging consensus in a rigidly divided body.

The statement, citing observations by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) "lent credence" to reports that the people at the site of the incident were shot by Israeli forces, while that country has to pass off the incident as a stampede and vehicles running over people.

"The Council Members express deep concern regarding reports stating that over 100 individuals lost their lives with several hundred others sustaining injuries, including people with gunshot wounds as observed by UN-OCHA in an incident involving Israeli forces at a large



gathering surrounding a humanitarian assistance convoy southwest of Gaza City," it said.

It added, "The Council Members take note that an Israeli investigation is underway".

The consensus on the statement is a sign that the administration of US President Joe Biden has under domestic and international pressure scaled back its opposition

to anything that can be seen as criticising Israel.

Last month, the US, in line with Israel's position, vetoed a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

On Thursday, when the Council held consultations soon after the Gaza incident, the US opposed a statement on the incident, according to diplomats.

US Deputy Permanent Representative Robert Wood told reporters before

Shehbaz Sharif - the only Pak politician to be elected PM for second consecutive term

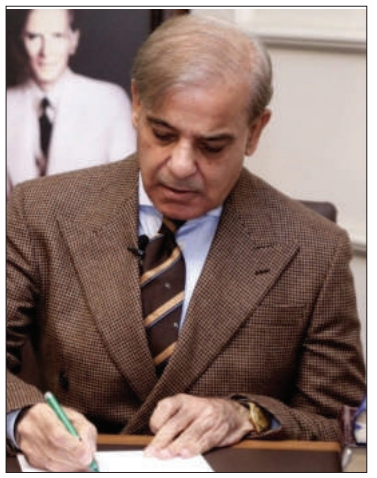
Islamabad, March 3 (IANS) Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday took over the country's premiership for the second time after he bagged 201 votes in the National Assembly, becoming the 24th prime minister.

"Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has been elected prime minister with 201 votes. [While] Omar Ayub Khan obtained 92 votes," announced National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq amid protest by the SIC lawmakers.

The speaker then invited Shehbaz Sharif, the only politician to be elected as the PM for the second consecutive time, to sit in the prime minister's seat and asked him to address the house, The News reported.

In his maiden speech as the prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, surrounded by party leaders, thanked PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif for nominating him for the coveted post and expressed gratitude to his allies for supporting him. Without taking any names, Shehbaz Sharif took a jibe at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for hounding the then-opposition, going against the country's national interests while resorting to levelling serious allegations against the armed forces. "It is sad that the nation had to witness the [state] institutions including the GHQ, Corps Commander Houses being attacked," he said while recalling the May 9 riots that were triggered after the arrest of PTI founder Imran Khan in a graft case last year, The News reported.



Trump wins Missouri's Republican presidential caucus

Washington, March 3 (IANS) Former US President Donald Trump on Saturday won Missouri's Republican presidential caucus, continuing his march toward the GOP nomination. Trump's victory over former US Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, in the midwestern state was another piece of good news for the former President, who previously won Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina. In Michigan, a key swing state, Trump won the Republican primary on Tuesday, garnering more



than 68 per cent of the vote, Xinhua news agency reported. On Saturday, he was awarded more delegates during a Republican convention, cementing his victory in the northern

state. Trump, who has already collected more than 100 delegates in the contests so far, will need to attain at least 1,215 delegates to clinch the Republican presidential nomination.

Super Tuesday, the day in the presidential primary cycle when most states vote, is fast approaching. It's typical for nearly one-third of all delegates to the Republican or Democratic conventions to be distributed on this day. This year's Super Tuesday falls on March 5, when some 15 states and one territory will vote.

Iraqi intelligence rescues Yazidi woman kidnapped by IS militants

Baghdad, March 3 (IANS) The Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) has said that its members rescued a Yazidi woman kidnapped ten years ago by the extremist Islamic State (IS) group. Acting on intelligence reports, the Iraqi intelligence agents carried out an operation inside Syria and were able to reach Kufan Eido Khorto, a Yazidi woman who was kidnapped by IS militants in 2014 when they took control of the town of Sinjar, nearly 120 km west of Nineveh's provincial capital Mosul, an INIS statement said on Saturday. The Iraqi intelligence returned Khorto to Iraq and handed her over to her family, it added as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. The Yazidis are an Iraqi ethnic and religious minority. In 2014, the extremist IS militants abducted and enslaved hundreds of Yazidi women and children.

South Korea doctors hold mass rally protesting medical school quota hike plan

Seoul, March 3 (IANS) Tens of thousands of doctors held a rally in Seoul on Sunday to protest the government's medical school quota hike plan as South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo hinted at the possible suspension of medical licenses for striking trainee doctors.

The rally by member doctors of the Korean Medical Association (KMA), the biggest medical lobby group, came as thousands of trainee doctors have remained off their jobs at general hospitals for the 13th day, protesting the plan to add 2,000 more medical school seats starting next year, Yonhap news agency reported.

Crowds of doctors filled up a street in Seoul's western district of Yeouido, waving protesting flags and holding up signs reading "Absolute opposition to a medical school quota hike without agreement from medical fields," or "Unprepared medical school quota hike compromises medical education."

Kim Taek-woo, the KMA's emergency committee chief, warned at the start of the rally that "the government will face resistance from the public if it turns a blind eye to doctors' efforts and attempts to repress them."

Kim accused the government of unilaterally pursuing medical reform without prior consultation with the medical field, while calling on the government to engage in dialogue with protesting doctors to resolve the ongoing walkout.

"No trainee doctors or members of the KMA's emergency committee have ever encouraged or desired the crippling of medical services," he said, protesting that the government is using pressure to bring trainee doctors back to work while remaining uncompromising over its quota hike plan.

About 9,000 medical interns and residents, who play a vital role in assisting with surgeries and emergency services at major general hospitals, have maintained their collective labor action for



the 13th day, leading to mass cancellations and delays in surgeries and emergency medical treatment.

The government gave protesting doctors until last Thursday to return to work, warning them that non-compliance could result in punitive action, including criminal punishment or revocation of their doctors' licenses.

So far, the warning has done little to bring them back to work.

"If the situation of illegally vacating medical

sites continues, the government will fulfill the duty entrusted by the Constitution and the law without hesitation," Han said at a meeting on the doctors' collective action at the main government building in central Seoul.

The presidential office also vowed to respond with "zero tolerance" after allegations emerged online that some doctors were trying to forcibly mobilize drug salesmen for their rally protesting the government's medical school quota hike plan.

Ahead of Sunday's rally, several postings appeared on online communities, claiming that some doctors were forcing salesmen of pharmaceutical companies to join the gathering.

Salesmen of pharmaceutical companies are often under the sway of doctors who have the authority to prescribe or change certain drugs. A posting said, "I am being forcibly mobilized because a doctor I trade with said he will change drugs if I do not show up." Responding to the allegations, the presidential office warned "any illegal acts will be dealt with the principle of zero tolerance."

A presidential official told Yonhap News Agency, "We are watching the situation in real time with regard to the threats to the public's lives and health rights from the doctors' collective action."

Officials said police launched a legal review of the allegations, saying the allegations, if found to be true, could constitute illegal coercion and violations of the Medical Service Act.

Police have also imposed

an overseas travel ban on four former and current KMA executives, including incumbent emergency committee chief Kim, as a police investigation into them broadens on suspicions of instigating and conniving in the trainee doctors' walkout.

Separately, Interior Minister Lee Sang-min also renewed back-to-work calls on trainee doctors, saying that trainee doctors will be granted leniency if they return to their hospitals by Sunday. "For trainee doctors who return to work by today, the government plan to grant utmost leniency ... if they fail to return by today, the government has no choice but to deal with them sternly in accordance with the law and principles," Lee said during his appearance on a live news program with KBS.

The minister stressed that the increase of 2,000 additional medical school admissions is not substantial given the workforce required for the development of the bio industry, which he said will emerge as a new growth engine of South Korea.

Health

Obesity is key for reducing chronic disease risk in kids, adults



New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) Obesity, a known precursor for many conditions like diabetes, hypertension, mental health and cancers, must be efficiently controlled to curb these non-communicable diseases, said experts here on Sunday, a day ahead of World Obesity Day.

World Obesity Day is observed every year on March 4 to raise awareness about the condition and its implications. A recent global analysis, published by The Lancet, showed that every eighth person or more than 1 billion people worldwide are living with obesity. While 43 per cent of adults were overweight in 2022, the numbers more than doubled worldwide in the last three decades. Among children and adolescents (5 to 19 years of age), the condition has increased four times.

The numbers are even more staggering in India, where non-communicable diseases are already sky-high.

In India, a whopping 12.5 million children (7.3 million boys and 5.2 million girls), aged between five and 19, were grossly overweight in 2022. Among adults, the numbers rose from 2.4 million women and 1.1 million men in 1990 to 44 million women and 26 million men aged above 20 in 2022, the global report showed. "Obesity has detrimental effects on health, raising the risk of chronic conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Its emergence is attributed to various factors, including environment, lifestyle, and culture," Dr. Gaurav Bansal, Senior Consultant - General Laparoscopic Laser and Bariatric Surgery, Marengo Asia Hospital, Gurugram, told IANS.

"Childhood obesity, particularly in those under 10 years old, poses significant implications for both immediate health and long-term well-being. The rise in obesity among children is linked to various factors, including sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy eating habits, and limited access to nutritious foods. The consequences extend beyond physical health, impacting psychological and social aspects as well," added Dr. Vivek Bindal, Director & Head - Max Institute of Minimal Access, Bariatric & Robotic Surgery, Max Hospital, Vaishali. Dr. Vivek explained to IANS that besides developing conditions like type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular issues, and joint problems, obese kids may also face challenges such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety due to societal pressures and potential bullying. Socially, obesity can contribute to social isolation and hinder the development of healthy peer relationships.

Getting wiser with aging

By Madan Prasad Singh

Jamshedpur, March 3: We can maintain good brain health even at old age. The loss of memory and impairment of cognitive ability are not the consequences of aging. We are blessed beings. We have owned such a brain which knows no bounds. Shedding limitations is well within our reach. The aging of brain depends on same thing as other parts of the body but there are areas in the brain in which rate of neurogenesis, generation of new nerve cells are high which help in replacing diseased and dead cells by new healthy cells. This is happening in important areas of the brain. Hippocampus, learning and memory are such areas where neurogenesis takes place even in adulthood and thereafter too. The rate of neurogenesis can be increased too. Our brain ensures that we can keep learning till the end of our lives. We have been designed accordingly. We are macro in miniature. The gap can be bridged. We can learn to become what we intend to be by learning and practicing. Our nerves and glands have such capacity.

Taking advantage of neurogenesis and neuroplasticity and our developed language we can enhance our learning capabilities and stay mentally young, alive and wiser. We become wiser with learning. It has been found that those who keep learning, exposing them to new situations and values, their brains become upgraded and on the other hand who don't spend time in creativity, spirituality shrinkage takes place in learning memory areas due to unabated death of neurons in this area. We can't be called wise by not using the precious brain the way it should be and benefit self and others. Unwise actions cause pain.

In a perspective good learning is earning and memory is balance on which depends our peace and progress.

There is vast differences between the rate of neurogenesis of different persons and so are the qualities of their lives. Through learning we can explore untapped potential areas and use them. Our life is a battle. Neurons are our armies. When the neurons of concerned brain parts fire, connect and communicate in required number winning battle becomes easy.

Randeep Hooda to unveil trailer of 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar' on Monday

Mumbai, March 3 (IANS) The trailer of the upcoming Randeep Hooda-starrer 'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar' is set to be unveiled on Monday.

The film marks the directorial debut of Randeep, who is known for films such as 'Highway', 'Extraction', 'Kick' and 'Sarbjit'.

The trailer of the film will be unveiled at a multiplex in the Juhu area of Mumbai.

Taking to X (formerly called Twitter), Randeep on Sunday shared the news of the trailer launch with his followers.

Sharing the film's poster, he wrote in his

tweet: "Unsung and unheard, until now! Join us as we reveal the untold story of The Most Controversial Revolutionary of Akhand Bharat #Swatantrya Veer Savarkar. #Swatantrya Veer Savarkar Trailer Out Tomorrow."

'Swatantrya Veer Savarkar' presents the tale of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

Randeep, who has also helmed the film, stars in the titular role. The film also stars Ankita Lokhande, and Amit Sial.

Earlier, Randeep visited the 'Kalapani' or the cellular jail in the Andaman and Nicobar



Islands, on the death anniversary of Savarkar. He shared pictures from his visit on X (formerly called Twitter).

The actor also penned a lengthy note in his tweet and shared that during the recce of his film, he couldn't even stay locked for 20 minutes in the jail.

Produced by Zee Studios, Anand Pandit, Sandeep Singh, Randeep Hooda and Yogesh Rahar, and co-produced by Roopa Pandit, Sam Khan, Anwar Ali and Panchali Chakraborty, the film is set to release on March 22 in Hindi and Marathi.

Telegram unveils new features to enhance group communication

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) Instant messaging app Telegram on Friday announced new updates in group communication with the introduction of nine innovative features.

The new features include Boosts for Groups, Stories from Groups, Emoji Status, Covers, Wallpapers, and Link Styles, Group Emoji Packs, Voice-to-Text and others. Boosts for Groups feature will enable groups to level up through member boosts or giveaways. Higher group levels unlock an array of premium features, including voice-to-text transcription and custom emoji packs.

Rashmika Mandanna: Japan was a place I've dreamt of going to for years

Mumbai, March 3 (IANS) Rashmika Mandanna is in awe of Japan, which she dreamt of going to for years, as the actress said that she found the picturesque locale "amazing".

Rashmika, who was in Tokyo, Japan for the Crunchy Roll Anime Awards, took to Instagram on Sunday, where she shared a string of pictures of herself.

In the photos, the 'Animal' actress is seen posing dressed in a tube embellished dress.

The 27-year-old actress is seen sporting short hair and completed her look with nude make-up and some chunky accessories.

For the caption, Rashmika, who has promised to keep visiting the destination, wrote: "Japan was a place I've dreamt of going to for years... since childhood never thought it would ever be possible... let alone be a part of an award show giving an award to one of the creators of and in the anime world!!! and finally it came true!!!"



The actress added: "Being able to meet everyone here, receiving the incredible love here, receiving such a warm welcome... the food, the weather, the place so clean, such lovely people... It's amazing! Thank you Japan! Really! I love you! Truly! You are just toooo special..."

Adah Sharma looks fearless in two avatars in 'Bastar: The Naxal Story' poster

Mumbai, March 3 (IANS) A new poster from the upcoming Adah Sharma-starrer film 'Bastar: The Naxal Story' was unveiled on Sunday.

The poster features the actress in two different avatars, one wearing the uniform as IPS Neerja Madhavan, and the other on a field operation as a Naxal combat soldier.

Committed to her duty, Adah stands in the fight against the Naxals.

Sharing the poster on their social media, the makers wrote in the caption: "Duty or Pledge: Committed till the end, relentless in the fight against Naxals. Uncover the truth in #BastarTheNaxalStory, trailer out on March 5, 2024."

The film presents Adah Sharma as IPS Neerja Madhavan and her glimpses in the teaser have left the viewers intrigued.

The film marks the second association of Adah with director Sudipto Sen and producer Vipul Amrutlal Shah after their last film 'The Kerala Story'.



The trailer of the film is all set to release on March 5.

The makers have stated that in the film they have shown the truth about a number of martyrs and how Pseudo-intellectuals run the propaganda to divide the country with funding from China.

Arjun Rampal: True happiness lies in your children; not money, fame or fortune

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) Bollywood's "quad father" Arjun Rampal says becoming a father is a blessing from God and true happiness lies in your children and not in money, fame or fortune.

Arjun has two daughters Mahikaa and Myra Rampal from his first wife Mehr Jesia.

In 2019, the actor became a father to a son named Arik Rampal, whom he shares with his partner Gabriella Demetriades. The couple welcomed their second child in 2023.

Talking about how life has been for him since he has become a "quad father", Arjun told IANS: "Becoming a father is like a blessing from God. I think I have been blessed many times and God has been very kind to me and it is children where the happiness is. It is not money, fame or fortune. Real and true happiness lies in your children."



Arjun started his career as a model. He made his acting debut with "Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat" after which he was seen in films such as 'Dil Ka Rishta', 'D-Day', 'Chakravyuh', 'Inkaar', 'Aankhen', 'Rajneeti' and 'Rock On!!!', for which he was feted with a National Film Award for Best Supporting Actor in 2008.

The 51-year-old, who has a

following of two million on Instagram, gets a lot of attention courtesy his good looks.

Talking about the same, he said: "I respect women very much and if I can evoke an emotion in them on whatever level it feels a little flattering, I can't deny that. But at the end of the day I think I have found my woman who I would rather swoon over, Gabriella."

Kristen Stewart can't watch herself on screen: 'It's just horrible'

Los Angeles, March 3 (IANS) Actress Kristen Stewart finds it a "horrible" idea to watch her movies, as she would want to make changes.

The actress would rather watch a horror movie than go through any of her movies, including 'Twilight', 'Spencer', and 'Charlie's Angels'.

Talking about her ideal date night movie, Kristen told Australia's WHO magazine: "The Shining' is a perfect date night movie for me. I love that movie. I love anything horror."

Her worst nightmare is watching any of her own films, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

The actress said: "It's just horrible! I'm always thinking about the millions of things I could have done more or different. The thought of watching myself on screen fills me with terror."

Last month, Kristen revealed she was hospitalised with an anxiety attack after lying on her bathroom floor for hours.



From Munger to Mumbai, Manisha Rani's 'namumkin se mumkin wali' journey

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) Social media personality Manisha Rani, who was declared winner of 'Jhalak Dikhla Jaa 11' on Saturday night, says she has received a sweet reward whenever she has worked hard for something.

The wild card entry was among the five finalists, along with Shoaib Ibrahim, Dhanashree Verma, Adrija Sinha and Sreerama Chandra.

Coming from a middle-class family in Munger, Bihar, it was a 'namumkin ko mumkin wali journey' for Manisha.

Talking to IANS, the 26-year-old dancer said: "If you have 'chaahat' in you, true hard work and passion, then you can turn any impossible goal into possible. Munger is a small town and you don't have many opportunities to learn

dancing or acting and become something."

Then she said something that should resonate well with her followers. "But if you have talent and 'that thing' in you, then you can reach anywhere you want. This is how I started my journey from Munger to Mumbai -- 'namumkin ko mumkin kiya hai'. I have fought for my dreams, worked hard and have come here," Manisha said.

Manisha, who has 12 million followers on Instagram, began her journey from the dance reality show 'Dance India Dance'. She got evicted in the first round. Her first Instagram post dates back to September 15, 2017, wherein she is seen performing on the stage of 'Dance India Dance' in front of the judges, Punit Pathak, and Mudassar Khan.



The post was captioned: "I lvvvvvvvvv myself ..."

Mai apni firt hu", and the journey continues, as Manisha follows the success mantra: "Mehnat karo, kisi se na daro, apne dil ki suno, aur sabko pyaar do. (Work hard, don't be afraid of anyone, listen to your heart, and love everyone.)"

Her latest Instagram post is a series of pictures, where we can see Manisha lifting the trophy of the celebrity dance reality show 'Jhalak Dikhla Jaa 11' and is overflowing with happy tears.

It is captioned: "DREAMS DO COME TRUE ... Aaj shabd kam hain aapki tareef mein. Bihar ke chhote gaon se aai ek chhoti se ladki ne bade sapne dekhe! Aur us sapne ko pura karne ke liye pura Hindustan saath aa gaya... Shukriya un sab ko jinhone mujhe Jhalak ki journey

mein itna pyar diya aur trophy bhi mere hath mein dilwai, sirf yahi kahungi. Aap ki tareef mein kya kahen ... Aap hamari jaan ban gaye. I am happy ... So happy, I'm going to sleep like a baby today after a hard day's work and it's all because of my FANS = FAMILY. Sooo grateful."

Manisha said she believes in the present. "Mai aaj mein jeeti hun. So, when I entered as the wild card, I thought I have received this opportunity, then I should definitely do this. I was passionate about dancing since my childhood.

And when I got this platform, I thought I should not leave this, whatever the result will be, I will take this opportunity and will give my best."

The 'Bigg Boss OTT 2' second runner-up shared

how she believed Shoaib and Adrija were her biggest competitors.

"Shoaib had a great fan following and he was such a good dancer. Adrija was one of the best contestants, she used to dance so well. I had a gut feeling that we three will be in the top three," she said.

Manisha is thankful for God's grace upon her and feels like she is getting whatever she wants in life.

"I have my good deeds with me and the blessings of people. I am getting so much love from everybody. And I feel like whatever work I have done till date, I have got a sweet result. I want this to keep continuing. I won't let this love go away from me. I am super happy with myself and my life," Manisha said.

Sharing her ambition to enter Bollywood, Manisha

said: "I also want to get into Bollywood in the future. Even if I get a 10-minute role I want to do a movie. I will work upon it soon. I just love Priyanka Chopra. Even if I get 5 to 10 per cent close to what she has done, I will be happy with that."

About her social media fandom, Manisha commented: "I think people like me on social media because I present myself the way I am. I never try to be fake. If I want to speak in English, I speak, but when I know that I am getting it wrong, I accept that -- and say, yes, I am wrong."

She added: "I just be myself and people love me like this. People feel I am one of them. I want to remain the same so that I can be connected to the people."

Byju's saga: Financial discipline biggest lesson for startups, says Simplilearn Co-founder

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) As embattled edtech firm Byju's finds itself mired in several controversies, one learning that startups can take from this episode is to ensure "financial discipline", Simplilearn Co-founder and COO Kashyap Dalal said on Sunday.

Facing an uphill battle with the investors, Byju's is yet to process the salaries of its more than 20,000 employees for the month of February.

The amount raised through the rights issue is currently locked in a separate account "at the behest" of some key investors, its founder and CEO Byju Raveendran has told employees.

Dalal told IANS that the entire



Byju's story had gone wrong after multiple rounds of funding when they got into 'financial engineering'.

"For example, Byju's themselves were underwriting loans to parents who were buying their product and somewhere, that entire cycle just got completely out of hand, which has led to all kinds of financial issues," Dalal noted.

"I think if there's one learning for everybody, not just in edtech but outside of it, it's basically 'financial discipline'."

The edtech company once reached a peak valuation of \$22 billion.

Today, it is fighting to stay afloat after suffering a 99 per cent

valuation cut.

Dalal said while there are many problems and enough people have written about it, people forget the reason why Byju's got so big.

"It was a good starting point. They had a good product and had a good model. At some point in time, they made wrong choices. Everyone should learn from it that you have to build a long-term business and not take some of the short-term calls," he told IANS.

According to industry leaders, recent governance issues with well-funded and "poster boys" of startups have added to the ongoing bearish trend for the ecosystem amid the funding winter.

Punjab sees 15.69pc increase in GST: Minister

Chandigarh, March 3 (IANS) Punjab registered 15.69 per cent increase in Goods and Services Tax (GST) and a 11.71 per cent increase in excise revenue collection by the end of February in this fiscal compared to 2022-23, state's Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said on Sunday.

He said the state has seen a shift in its fiscal trajectory since the Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann-led government took office in March 2022. The net GST collection up to February in the current fiscal year is Rs 19,222.5 crore against Rs 16,615.52 crore during the same period in 2022-23, registering an increase of Rs 2,606.98 crore.

He said that the increase in revenue from excise also reflected a growth of Rs 842.72 crore with a collection of Rs 8,093.59 crore as against Rs 7,244.87 crore during the same period in the last fiscal year.



"With better planning and implementation, the state has recorded net tax revenue growth of 13.85 per cent, surpassing Rs 34,158 crore in revenue from VAT, CST, GST, PSDT, and excise by the end of February," he added.

Demand for key minerals to soar with growth of EVs



Seoul, March 3 (IANS) South Korea's demand for key minerals is expected to see 19-fold jump from 2021 to 2040 due to expansion in the electric car and wind power industries, a report showed on Sunday.

The demand for lithium, nickel, manganese and cobalt, essential for electric car batteries, will be up by 15-fold, 12-fold, 19-fold and 4-fold, respectively, by 2040 compared with the corresponding tally in 2021, according to the report from the Korea Energy Economics Institute (KEEI), reports Yonhap news agency.

The demand for neodymium, praseodymium, dysprosium and terbium, needed for electric car motors, will all increase by 10-fold as sales of electric cars

in South Korea are expected to increase by 11 times over the same period.

The report also showed new installments of wind power facilities will likely rise by eight times by 2040 from 2022, pushing up the demand for related materials, such as neodymium, praseodymium, dysprosium and terbium, by 2.6 times, 3.1 times, 21.6 times and 2.7 times, respectively.

The KEEI said South Korea should work to diversify its key mineral supply chain to lower its dependence on China as part of efforts to strengthen its competitiveness in the electric vehicle and secondary battery industries. As of 2022, South Korea had imported most nickel, manganese and cobalt supplies from China, according to the KEEI.

FPIs big sellers in financials and FMCG in February

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) In February, FPIs turned buyers in equity for Rs 1539 crores. This is despite the U.S. bond yields ruling high with the 10-year yield at around 4.25 per cent, says V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

FPIs may again turn sellers in some of the coming days but are unlikely to sell aggressively because their selling is not having any impact on the market which is setting new record highs.

FPIs will have to buy the same shares, which they are selling now at higher prices when the situation turns favourable for FPI buying.

Therefore, even if they sell in the coming days, that will be subdued, he said.

DIIs, HNIs and retail investors are calling the shots now, not FPIs. FPIs were big sellers in financials and FMCG in February, he said.

FPIs are steadily increasing their buying in debt. They have bought debt to the tune of Rs 22419 crores in February on top of the Rs 19836 crores they bought in January. This trend of steady debt investment is likely to continue, he said.



'Anytime': Sam Altman responds to old X thread after Elon Musk sues OpenAI



New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has responded to an old X thread of a brief conversation he had with Elon Musk after the tech billionaire sued the ChatGPT maker, alleging that the company breached their original contractual agreements around AI.

Altman supported Musk's Tesla in May 2019, saying that it was gross to see so many people oppose the EV maker.

"It's gross seeing so many root against Tesla. Be the person on the side of the climate and innovation, not the person hoping to make money on puts," Altman had posted on X.

"Also, betting against Elon is historically a mistake...and the best product usually wins," he added.

To which Musk responded: "Thanks

Sam".

On Friday, Altman revived the five-year-old thread by responding to Musk's thank-you note.

"Anytime", he wrote, with a salute emoji.

The lawsuit, filed in a court in San Francisco in the US, revolves around OpenAI's latest natural language model titled GPT-4.

Musk alleged that OpenAI and Microsoft (which has poured billions of dollars into Sam Altman-run company) have "improperly licensed GPT-4" despite agreeing that artificial general intelligence (AGI) capabilities "would remain non-profit and dedicated to humanity".

He was an original board member of OpenAI until 2018.

Flipkart launches its UPI handle to boost India's digital economy vision

Bengaluru, March 3 (IANS) E-commerce marketplace Flipkart on Sunday launched its Unified Payments Interface (UPI) handle to further enhance its digital payment offerings for all customers, including its 500+ million customers.

With Flipkart UPI, users can now set up their own UPI handle for online and offline Merchant transactions within and outside of the Flipkart marketplace. For a distinctive customer experience, loyalty features such as Supercoins, Cashback, Brand Vouchers, Milestone benefits and more will be offered post the UPI launch.

On the Flipkart app, Flipkart UPI can be used to pay for any product or service, including e-commerce transactions, Scan and Pay to UPI ID, and recharges and bill payments, the company said in a statement.

In its first phase, Flipkart has partnered with Axis Bank, wherein users can register for UPI with @fkaxis handle for their digital transactions using the Flipkart app.

"Recognising the dynamic digital

landscape, the launch of Flipkart UPI seamlessly merges the convenience and cost-effectiveness of UPI with the trusted efficiency customers expect from us," said Dheeraj Aneja, Senior Vice President - Fintech and Payments Group at Flipkart.

"At Flipkart, we are committed to delivering the best-in-class commerce experience to customers by offering safe and convenient payment options along with a wide array of rewards and benefits such as Supercoins, Brand Vouchers, and others."

According to Aneja, "Flipkart UPI underscores our dedication to shaping a digitally-empowered society and reaffirms our role as a leading catalyst in India's digital evolution."

It also introduces one-click and



quick functionalities for recharges and bill payments, enhancing overall payment efficiency for the users.

With the tagline, 'India's Most Rewarding UPI', the offering aims to provide customers an intuitive, safe, and convenient digital payment experience through its integrated checkout funnel and a slew of delightful incentives

including the benefit of instant refunds, according to the company.

In 2023, UPI processed over 117 billion transactions worth Rs 182.84 trillion, showcasing a dynamic landscape with participation from banks, payment service providers, and fintech companies, according to reports.

"We continue to scale our growth in UPI with partnerships and innovations. Our partnership with Flipkart has come a long way from launching one of India's most successful co-branded credit cards to now launching the payment UPI service," said Sanjeev Moghe, President and Head - Cards & Payments, Axis Bank.

"Customers can now register for UPI with @fkaxis handle and can do all fund transfers and checkout payments using the Flipkart app. This solution is cloud hosted and hence provides one of the most stable and scalable UPI platforms for customers," he added.

Corrections in mid and small cap stocks are underway, say analysts

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) Corrections in mid and small caps are underway and expected to continue, with regulators urging disclosure of associated risks to AMCs, says Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Banking stocks reversed initial weakness to perform well on the back of an improved economic outlook, while weakness persisted in the IT and pharma sectors, which are more closely tied to the global economy, he said.

The release of additional data from the US, such as PMI and payroll data, along with inflation data from China, may influence market dynamics moving forward, he added.

At the onset of a week laden with economic data releases, investor sentiment appeared cautious. However, indices surged in the final session, propelled by stellar Indian GDP figures and a healthy performance in the Indian manufacturing sector as output and new order picks up, he said.



While robust economic data boosted confidence in the Indian economy, concerns lingered regarding the RBI's policy decisions amidst high liquidity and inflation worries, he added.

On the global front, in-line US personal consumption expenditure data and benign Euro zone, inflation may influence global central banks to take a dovish view on interest rates. US bond yields dipped after the inflation data release, also supporting the equity market.

Hyundai Motor's sales up 6 pc in US due to hybrids, EVs

Seoul, March 3 (IANS) South Korea's top automaker Hyundai Motor said on Saturday that it recorded a 6 per cent increase in its sales in the United States last month.

It sold a total of 60,341 units in the world's largest auto market last month, compared with sales of 57,044 units a year earlier.

The gain was led by a rise in eco-friendly models, such as hybrid and electric vehicles, reports Yonhap news agency.

"Hyundai's sales of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids are steadily rising, with significant year-over-year growth," Randy Parker, CEO of Hyundai Motor America, said in a statement.

"We take pride in the recognition our EV and plug-in hybrid models have received



and remain committed to providing our customers with a diverse range of products."

Kia Corp, its sister company, sold a total of 59,059 units in the U.S. last month, down 3 per cent from the 60,859 units a year earlier.

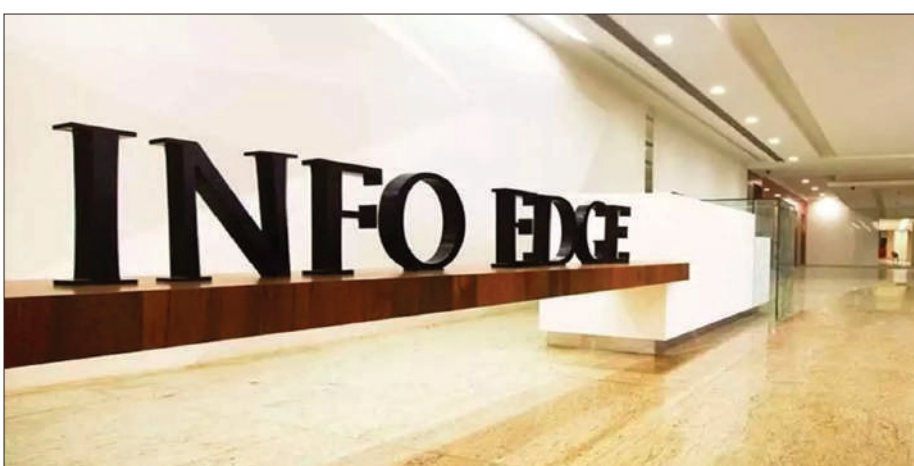
Reinstate Bharatmatrimony, Info Edge, Shaadi.com, TrulyMadly: IAMA tells Google

New Delhi, March 3 (IANS) The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMA) on Saturday slammed removal of Indian companies' apps and asked Google to reinstate those delisted apps on its Play Store.

In a statement, the association "strongly condemned" the removal of some of the most prominent consumer digital companies' apps from the Play Store, including those of Bharatmatrimony, Info Edge, Shaadi.com and TrulyMadly.

"The association's governing council has called the delisting of apps unfair and disproportionate," said IAMA.

Info Edge Founder Sanjeev Bikhchandani posted on X that Indian companies will comply for now.



"But what India needs is an App Store/Play Store that is a part of Digital Public Infrastructure - like UPI and ONDC. The response needs to be strategic," Bikhchandani commented.

The IAMA urged Google to

urgently reinstate the delisted apps and engage in consultations with the industry body or member companies to find "mutually agreeable solutions till the matter is subjudice".

The industry body responded

after Google said that at least 10 companies, including many well-established ones, "have chosen to not pay for the immense value they receive on Google Play by securing interim protections from court", and removed some of them from Play Store as it enforced new policies.

The IAMA is a non-profit industry body representing 580 companies, including Indian and multinational corporations, as well as startups.

The Alliance of Digital India Foundation (ADIF), a policy think-tank representing homegrown startups, on Friday condemned the move, saying that by delisting apps, Google is trying to "intimidate and coerce the developers" who have dared to challenge its "exploitative policies".

Chandrasekaran, others pay tribute to founder JN Tata in Jamshedpur

Tata Sons Chairman interacts with visitors inside works

The theme of this year's Founder's Day is 'Technology for people & planet'
Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: Tata Steel and Jamshedpur today paid homage to its Founder Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, also regarded as the legendary 'Father of Indian Industry' on his 185th Birth Anniversary. Celebrated as the Founder's Day, the flagship event happens every year at Jamshedpur on March 3 to pay tributes to the founder's vision of an industrial future with community welfare at its core.

The theme of this year's celebrations is "Technology for people & planet". The event in



Jamshedpur today was graced by N Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons and T V Narendran, CEO & Managing Director, Tata Steel. Other senior company officials, as well as Union members, were also present during the occasion. The event started

with paying homage to the Founder at the Jamshedpur Works Main Gate by the Chairman, CEO & MD, Union officials, Group company officials, company employees and citizens of Jamshedpur. Daisy Irani (wife of the late MD Dr JJ Irani), former Deputy MD Dr T

Mukherjee, and Tata Electronics MD, among other senior executives, graced the occasion to pay their respects. The festivities began with March Past parade by various Departments of Tata Steel and Tata Steel's group companies at the Works Main Gate inside



the Tata Steel premises. Colourful tableaux depicting the work process of various departments preceded each of their processions, respectively. The event, marked by the rhythmic beats of an enchanting band, witnessed participation from all departments,

including the security department, as a collective tribute. The tribute was manifested through the ceremonial offering of flowers, symbolizing a shared reverence for the occasion. Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran took the opportunity to engage with

those present, extending warm greetings and fostering a sense of camaraderie. He even shook hands with a few of them. Representatives from various groups, including the Tata Workers Union, TISCO Mazdoor Union, and the Senior Citizens

Committee, also actively participated in the event, contributing to the overall sense of unity and solidarity.

The representatives of different groups in the procession paid homage at the Founder's Statue at the Works Main Gate. Floats and Audio-Visual displays were part of the contingents.

The representatives of different groups in the procession paid homage at the Founder's Statue at the Works Main Gate. JN Tata had begun his entrepreneurial journey with a textile mill in central India in the 1870s.

His vision inspired the steel and power industry in India, set the foundation for technical education, and helped the country leapfrog to join the ranks of industrialised nations. (W-mb)

Tata Power pays homage to Founder JN Tata



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: Tata Power paid homage to the Founder Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata's visionary legacy at the Founder's day celebration in Jamshedpur. The event was graced by a group of 50 participants from Jojobera, KPO, Haldia & MPL. The Tata Power team led by VijayanRanjana (CEO - MPL), along with Jagmit Singh Sidhu (CEO - IEL & Chief Jamshedpur Operations), BasudevHansdah (Chief O&M Jojobera) and RakeshwarPandey (President -Tata Power Employee Union) participated in the garlanding ceremony and showed commitment towards innovation and community empowerment in this year's 'Technology for People and Planet' themed celebrations. (W-mb)

Tata Motors delivers fleet of EVs, LNG vehicles to Tata Steel

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: Tata Motors, India's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer, today flagged off its next-generation, green-fuel powered commercial vehicles to Tata Steel. The fleet includes Prima tractors, tippers and the Ultra EV bus, powered by Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and battery electric technologies. The vehicles were flagged off by Tata Sons Chairman, N Chandrasekaran, as part of the Tata Group's Founder's Day celebrations in Jamshedpur. Present at the ceremony were T V Narendran, CEO & Managing Director, Tata Steel and GirishWagh, Executive Director, Tata



Motors, along with senior members of their leadership teams. Speaking about the long-standing partnership with Tata Motors, T. V. Narendran, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, Tata Steel said: "This delivery marks another significant

milestone in our long-standing partnership with Tata Motors. As leaders in our respective industries, Tata Steel and Tata Motors share a common vision for sustainability and innovation. By harnessing our collective expertise and resources, we are not only

revolutionising our industries but also leading the way in environmental responsibility. Together, we are committed to driving positive change and delivering eco-friendly solutions that not only benefit our businesses but also contribute to a greener

tomorrow." Speaking about the future-ready vehicles being flagged-off, GirishWagh, Executive Director, Tata Motors said, "Tata Motors is driving the global megatrend of sustainable, safe and smart mobility in India. Our green fleet of commercial vehicles will accelerate Tata Steel's efforts towards making its supply chain carbon neutral. We have collaborated with them and their transportation partners to design holistic solutions for enhancing functionality, performance, connectivity and safety. Every aspect of these vehicles has been purposefully augmented to cater to varied duty cycles and special applications. We look forward to strengthening our historic partnership in our

respective quests of reducing carbon footprint and achieving net-zero emissions by 2045." Engineered for a variety of applications, the Tata Prima LNG range of trucks including Tippers (3530.K) and Tractors (5530.S) will be used for surface, mining, and long-haul commercial transportation. As part of the accelerated adoption of battery-electric range, 28T EV Tipper (E28.K) and 46T EV Tractor (E46.S) are being deployed for establishing real-world performance, as part of Tata Steel's logistic movement. In addition to the zero-emission trucks, the company will also start using Tata Ultra EV buses for employee transport, across plant locations. (W-mb)

N Chandrasekaran inaugurates exhibition at Steelenium Hall

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: N Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons inaugurated exhibition at Steelenium Hall inside Jamshedpur Works as part of the 185th Founder's Day celebration on March 3. The theme for the exhibition this time is "Technology for People and Planet". Various departments presented their technology-led initiatives aligned with the theme. Technology is crucial to being culturally, structurally, and financially future-ready. Whether capacity growth, transition to green steel, or



deepening our relationship with our customers and the community, technology undergirds Tata Steel's ambition to become an industry leader. With its diverse geographical footprint, Tata Steel takes great pride in its contribution to economic prosperity while also being conscious of its impact on the environment. The Company firmly believes that technology has the power to solve some of the most pressing challenges faced by humanity and unlock its latent potential. T V Narendran, CEO & Managing Director, Tata Steel and other company officials were present. (W-mb)



Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran met the Union officials at the Tata Workers' Union after paying homage at the postal park on March 3. Chandrasekaran also paid floral tribute to former TWU president VG Gopal. Tata Steel MD TV Narendran, Tata Steel VP CS ChanakyaChaudhary, AtrayeeSanyal, Vice President, HRM, Tata Steel, Chief Group, HR and IR, ZubinPalia along with Tata Workers Union officials including SanjeevChaudhary, President were also present during the programme.

Election Officer and SSP lead training for Flying Squad and Surveillance Teams



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: In a proactive move towards ensuring a clean and fair election process, District Election Officer cum Deputy Commissioner, Ananya Mittal, and Senior Superintendent of Police, Kishore Kaushal, actively participated in the FST/SST training held at Michael John Auditorium. During the training session, Mittal provided essential insights into the election process to the constituted Flying Squad Team (FST) and Static Surveillance Team (SST). He emphasized the importance of their role in maintaining the integrity of the electoral process and urged them to carry out their responsibilities with utmost honesty. Mittal outlined specific directives for the teams, instructing them to closely monitor

vehicles at their duty locations, checking each one diligently. The primary objective is to prevent any unethical activities during the elections. Emphasizing the prompt resolution of complaints, especially those received through the C-Vigil app, he set a strict timeline of 100 minutes for resolution. Furthermore, Mittal highlighted the inclusion of a videographer within the FST and SST teams, tasked with capturing footage when necessary. He underscored the need for immediate action in case of any violations of the Election Commission of India's code of conduct. The event was attended by key officials, including the Deputy Development Commissioner, City SP, SDM Dhalbhum, Director NEP, and Deputy Election Officer, signifying a collaborative effort to ensure the success of the electoral process. (W/pb)

CM to lay foundation stone of Megha Dairy Plant

Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: In preparation for the visit of the Chief Minister, Champai Soren, to East Singhbhum district on March 07, a comprehensive inspection of the venue, Baliguma Maidan, was conducted by District Magistrate-cum-Deputy Commissioner, Ananya Mittal. The primary objective of this high-profile visit is the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the Megha Dairy Plant, symbolizing a significant leap forward in the region's dairy sector. Present during the inspection were Deputy Development Commissioner Manish Kumar, Sub-Divisional Officer Dhalbhum Piyush Sinha, Rural SP Rishabh Garg, and a cadre of officials responsible for various aspects of event management. District Magistrate Ananya Mittal meticulously reviewed and provided directives concerning every facet of the event.

Key areas addressed during the inspection included: Traffic Management and Evacuation Protocols: The District Magistrate emphasized the need for a well-organized traffic flow and efficient evacuation procedures to ensure the safety and convenience of attendees. Security Measures: Stringent security arrangements were discussed, encompassing the



deployment of security personnel, coordination with law enforcement, and the safeguarding of the Chief Minister during the event. Barricading and Parking Arrangements: Detailed plans for barricading and parking were laid out to manage the influx of attendees and facilitate a smooth flow of vehicles in and around the premises. Deputation of Magistrates: The District Magistrate directed the deployment of magistrates at strategic locations to oversee the proceedings and maintain order. Route Chart and VIP Movement: A meticulous route chart for the Chief Minister's movement was established, ensuring seamless traffic arrangements and minimal disruption during VIP movements.

Overall Law and Order Maintenance: An overarching emphasis was placed on the maintenance of law and order, with clear instructions to officials to ensure a secure and peaceful environment throughout the event. ADM Law and Order, GM of Jharkhand State Milk Cooperative Federation, DTO, DPRO (Public Relations), municipal body officials, and building construction officials actively participated in the inspection, showcasing a collaborative effort to guarantee the success of this significant event in East Singhbhum. The District Public Relations Office remains committed to providing updates and coverage of this milestone event as it unfolds. (W/pb)

Car catches fire while under repair



Mail News Service

Jamshedpur, March 3: A car caught fire when it was being repaired at Dimna Road under Uldih PS. The incident occurred during welding operations. The car suddenly caught fire and local people, after alerting the police and Jharkhand Fire Department, tried to douse the flames with water. The fire brigade arrived and brought the fire under control in half an hour. According to reports, the owner of the car was having it welded at a nearby grill shop on Dimna Road. The car was totally charred. (w/gsd)