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News in Brief

LG orders tapping of power theft in J&K

JAMMU (UNI): Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday ordered officials to crackdown on those indulging in electricity theft in Jammu and Kashmir. The LG was chairing a high-level meeting to review the power scenario. He appraised the multi-pronged strategies to meet the high electricity demand in the summer season and directed for integrating reforms for making the power sector robust and resilient. The Lt Governor directed for effective enforcement through a dedicated enforcement wing for detection of theft of electricity, wrong metering, enquiring into public complaints, unauthorized extensions in load and surprise checking. The Lt Governor also directed for immediate steps to ensure functioning of all the meters on 11 kV and repair of the damaged meters within one month. Smart meters must be saturated feeder-wise to protect consumer interests and quality standards. It will empower the consumers and help them to conserve energy and usage in an efficient manner, the Lt Governor said. He also sought a report on steps taken to reduce AT&C losses. He further directed the department to fix the responsibility and draw up an action plan for reducing the losses within a specific timeframe. The Lt Governor emphasized on training and capacity building of PDD staff; online registration of new consumers; massive awareness drive; proper maintenance of power infrastructure and constitution of teams of officers for monitoring physical condition of equipment.

Nepal puts Amritpal Singh on surveillance list; India asks Nepal not to allow him to flee to third country

KATHMANDU (UNI): Nepal on Monday put fugitive Khalistan sympathiser Amritpal Singh, who is believed to be hiding in the country, on its surveillance list after India requested it not to allow him to flee to a third country and arrest him if he attempts to escape using an Indian passport or any other fake passport. The Department of Immigration has put Singh on its surveillance list following a request from the Indian Embassy here, officials said. "We have received a written note along with a copy of his passport from the (Indian) embassy suspecting that Amritpal Singh might have entered Nepal," said Kamal Prasad Pandey, the Information Officer at the Department. "The Indian Embassy has sent the note asking the Department to put Singh, a member of a separatist group, on the surveillance list," Pandey said.

Oppn MPs hold protest march in black; BJP hits back

M. Nasir Chaand Qureshi

NEW DELHI (UNI): Wearing black attires, Opposition lawmakers, led by Congress, on Monday undertook a march from the Parliament House to Vijay Chowk here to protest against the Centre over the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha and the Adani controversy even as the BJP termed the protest a "drama being enacted to mislead the people".

The Opposition MPs raised slogans against the Centre at Mahatma Gandhi's statue at the Parliament complex and demanding the constitution of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) over the Adani issue. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and the former party president Sonia Gandhi also joined the protest.

Holding a banner of "Satyameva Jayate", the Opposition members took out the protest march from Mahatma Gandhi's statue outside Parliament complex to Vijay Chowk, carrying placards and shouting slogans, seeking a probe into the Adani saga.

BJP termed the protest over disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha and the Adani issue a "drama being enacted to mislead the people".

Trinamool Congress, which had earlier indicated that it won't participate in the protests, also joined the march.

The protests took place soon after both the houses of Parliament were adjourned amid noisy scenes by opposition members.

Earlier in the day, the Opposition MPs held a meeting at the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's Parliament chamber to evolve a strategy for the day. The Opposition parties that participated in the meeting include DMK, Samajwadi Party, JD(U), Bharat Rashtra Samithi, CPI(M), RJD, Nationalist Congress Party, CPI, IUML, MDMK, Kerala Congress, TMC, RSP, AAP, J-K NC and Shiv Sena (Uddhav faction). Trinamool Congress MPs were also present at the meeting that came as a surprise development following Rahul Gandhi's dis-

qualification as Lok Sabha MP.

Addressing the media after a joint Opposition march, Kharge hit out at the Centre over the Adani issue and Rahul Gandhi's dis-



qualification and said that the Opposition leaders were wearing the black attires to show that democracy is being trampled in the country.

He alleged that the Centre used the probe agencies to bend those who did not bow before the government.

"I thank the opposition

leaders for raising their voice against Rahul Gandhi's disqualification. Why are we here in black clothes? We want to show that PM Modi is ending democracy in the country.

gress saying: "Rahul Gandhi continuously insulted the OBC community and did not apologise to them. They don't obey court's order. Why are they creating this drama now? He can never be Savarkar as Savarkar never went on a foreign tour for six months."

He further said, "They are not letting the Parliament session run for one man who goes abroad and insults India. And when he returns, the Parliament cannot run if he does not speak. Will the Congress party keep on insulting the OBC community like this? Will Congress keep wearing black clothes after doing black deeds? Will the party now resort to black magic to save itself?" the Union Minister said.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal, at a press conference, alleged that the Congress party is not letting Parliament run and is also misleading the people

through its statements. He said the "Grand Old Party" is not letting Parliament run and is trying to mislead the people. The Congress MPs are holding "Black Shirt" protests against Rahul Gandhi's controversial disqualification from the Lok Sabha. He also questioned whether the Congress wanted to disrespect the law.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri lashed out at Rahul Gandhi saying the Congress leader should fight the "court's action in the court" instead of speaking against Veer Savarkar.

Earlier, addressing the media after a joint opposition march from the Parliament complex towards Vijay Chowk, the Congress president, while explaining the advantages of the constitution of a Joint Parliamentary Committee, said that there will be transparency after the report is out.

He further questioned

the government stating that there will be more number of representations from the BJP and its allies in the JPC.

"They ask for authenticity for everything in the Parliament. The government has not been able to answer the questions raised by us. MPs of 18 parties are here today. Not a single party is missing. We are asking for a JPC on the matter. The truth will come out. Records will be checked. Whatever will come out, will be known to all. There will be transparency. Why are you scared of constituting a JPC? You have a majority. You (BJP) will have more members in the JPC or will have your allies," he said.

"You are scared which means that there is something fishy. So we are all together today to show unity," Kharge stressed.

Calling it a black day for democracy, Kharge said that the government disqualified Rahul Gandhi as MP from Lok Sabha with "lightning speed" and emphasised that neither Rahul Gandhi nor the Opposition parties will be deterred.

Disqualified as MP, Rahul served notice to vacate official bungalow

NEW DELHI (UNI): Disqualified from the Lok Sabha, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has been sent a notice by the Lok Sabha House Committee to vacate his Parliament-allotted bungalow by 22nd April.

Gandhi has been asked to vacate 12, Tughlaq Lane occupied by him and given a 30-day notice period to vacate the premises to avoid eviction. The Congress leader was convicted in a criminal defamation case by a Surat court on 23rd March, and has to vacate the house by 22nd April.

A communication from a Lok Sabha Secretariat (M. S. Branch) official to Gandhi on Monday quoted the Lok Sabha Secretary-General's notification on his disqualification on 24th March, and said "Consequent upon your disqualification/cessation from the Membership of 17th Lok Sabha with effect from 23.03.2023," he could retain the bungalow along with its units for a maximum period of one month i.e. up to the 22nd April "on the similar terms and conditions as were applicable as a Member immediately before your disqualification

from your seat in Lok Sabha."

"The allotment of the aforesaid accommodation shall deem to have been cancelled with effect from 23.04.2023," the communication said. Constituted by the Lok Sabha speaker, the House Committee deals with the residential accommodation and other amenities for Members.

According to a Lok Sabha publication, "Every Member is entitled to a licence-free flat or hostel accommodation throughout the Member's term of office. Where a Member is allotted a housing accommodation in the form of a bungalow at the Member's request, the Members shall pay full normal licence fee, if the Member is entitled to such accommodation."

"Members of Lok Sabha or their families can retain Government Accommodation for a maximum period of one month after their retirement, resignation/removal, or ceasing to be a Member of Lok Sabha, on payment of the same rent, if any, which they were paying immediately before the occurrence of any of the events mentioned above," the publication says.



BILKIS BANO CASE

SC issues notice on Bano's plea against pre-mature release of 11 convicts

NEW DELHI (UNI): The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre, Gujarat government and all the convicts on a plea filed by Bilkis Bano challenging the pre-mature release of 11 convicts who had gang-raped her and murdered her family members during the 2002 Godhra riots.

A bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna posted the matter for hearing on April 18. It asked the Union and Gujarat governments to be ready with the relevant files granting remission to the convicts on the next date of hearing. The top court also directed that the pleadings in the case to be completed by the next date of hearing.

The apex court said there is a gamut of issues involved and it needs to hear the matter in detail.

During the hearing, Justice Joseph asked, "We have before us many murder cases where convicts are languishing in jails for remission without years. Is

had recused herself from hearing the case.

Besides filing a petition against the pre-mature release of convicts, Bano had also filed a review petition



this a case where standards have been applied uniformly as in other cases too?"

Earlier, a bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M Trivedi had ordered that the matter be listed before a bench of which Justice Trivedi is not a part as she

seeking a review of its earlier order by which it had asked the Gujarat government to consider the plea for the remission of one of the convicts.

The review petition was dismissed.

Some PILs were filed seeking directions to re-

voked the remission granted to 11 convicts.

The pleas were filed by the National Federation of Indian Women, whose General Secretary is Annie Raja, Member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) Subhashini Ali, journalist Revati Laul, social activist and professor Roop Rekha Verma and TMC MP Mahua Moitra.

Gujarat government in its affidavit had defended remission granted to convicts saying they completed 14 years of sentence in prison and their "behaviour was found to be good".

The State government said it has considered the cases of all 11 convicts as per the policy of 1992 and remission was granted on August 10, 2022, and Central government also approved the pre-mature release of convicts.

SC tags BRS leader K Kavitha's petition against summoning by ED with Nalini Chidambaram matter

NEW DELHI (UNI): Amidst claim by the Enforcement Directorate that Bharat Rashtra Samithi (formerly Telangana Rashtra Samithi) leader Kalvakuntla Kavitha has been summoned for an inquiry and she asserting that she has been arrayed as an accused and is being summoned for investigation, the Supreme Court on Monday tagged her petition with two other similar pending matters relating to Nalini Chidambaram and Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee.

Kavitha, daughter of

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, has been summoned by ED allegedly linking her with Delhi excise policy irregularities scam.

At the outset of the hearing, senior advocate Kapil Sibal appearing for Kalvakuntla Kavitha told a bench of Justice Ajay Rastogi and Justice Bela M Trivedi that the question is whether, in pursuance to the summoning by the ED, she (Kalvakuntla Kavitha) will be questioned at the ED's office or at her residence in Hyderabad. However, Additional Solicitor General SV

Raju appearing for the ED said that Kavitha has not been summoned for investigation.



litigation but for inquiry. However, Sibal countered saying that after the regis-

tration of complaint, she has been arrayed as an accused and is now being sum-

moned for investigation. Sibal said that similar issue relating to Nalini Chidambaram and Abhishek Banerjee are already pending before the court and Kavitha matter should be tagged with them - a plea that was opposed by the ED referring to an earlier judgment by a three-judge bench which it (ED) asserted has dealt with aspect.

Observing that while deciding core issues, at times subsidiary issues get missed, the bench ordered tagging of Kavitha's petition with that of Nalini Chidambaram's and directed the listing of the matter after three weeks.

Kavitha in her petition has urged the apex court to quash March 7 and 11 ED summons stating that asking her to appear at agency's office instead of her residence is contrary to the settled tenets of criminal jurisprudence and thus, wholly unsustainable in law being violative of the Proviso to Section 160 of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

She has also sought that the seizure made by the ED be declared as null and void. Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader has also sought that all proceedings

to be carried out by ED, including those in relation to the recording of statements to be audio/videographed in the presence of her lawyer at a visible distance inter-alia by way of installation of appropriate CCTV cameras.

Alleging political conspiracy by certain members of ruling BJP at the Centre, Kavitha in her petition has alleged that despite her not being named in the FIR, certain members of the incumbent ruling political party at Centre, made scandalous statements linking her to the Delhi Excise Policy and the said FIR.

EDITORIAL

Work in progress: On the road ahead for the Opposition in taking on the BJP

The expulsion of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha, following a contestable outcome of a defamation case against him in a Gujarat court, has become a new rallying point for the Opposition, at least momentarily. All the technical arguments notwithstanding, his disqualification is seen by most Opposition parties as a political move of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Regional parties continuously adjust their relationship with the two national parties, the BJP and the Congress. From the vantage points of many regional outfits, these two parties are not necessarily two polar opposites. As a general rule, regional parties seek to expand their influence and power through fluctuating relations with the national parties, even when they are technically equidistant from both. The party in power in Delhi has considerable leverage, and regional parties are often vulnerable to pressure. In recent years, central agencies (the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation) have cornered Opposition leaders, and gone either aggressive or passive on cases according to the convenience of the BJP. While these facts were apparent, regional leaders have remained wary of confronting the BJP, and have often broken ranks with the rest. The Triumvot Congress (TMC), for instance, was not in alignment with the Congress-led strategy against the BJP on the Adani controversy.

The expulsion of Mr. Gandhi has prompted the TMC, the Aam Aadmi Party, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi and the Samajwadi Party, which are usually wary of the Congress, to condemn the action and call it out as dictatorial. These parties possibly realise that mutual rivalries and fear of the BJP and the central agencies could drive them to the margins or, even worse, at the receiving end of more vindictiveness. Fourteen of these parties have now approached the Supreme Court against the misuse of central agencies. The petitioners say they represent 42% of the electorate, and that 95% of the cases filed by the agencies have been against Opposition leaders. This is a move for self-preservation, and these parties are still far from having a joint view on several critical national issues. At the heart of the confrontation between the BJP and the Congress are questions regarding the Adani Group of companies that stands accused of dubious ownership patterns and business transactions. The BJP and the Centre have so far deflected these questions. While Opposition parties such as the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha and the Yuvajana Samika Rytlu Congress Party in Andhra Pradesh continue to stay aloof, it is noteworthy that other Opposition leaders have come out against the expulsion of Mr. Gandhi. Nevertheless, a robust opposition to the BJP is still a work in progress. It suits the BJP to keep the focus on Mr. Gandhi, and not on Mr. Adani.

In too deep: On Sri Lanka's economic crisis and the IMF aid package

The International Monetary Fund's approval of a 48-month arrangement with Sri Lanka, under the Extended Fund Facility for a \$2.9 billion package, has been welcomed by Colombo and its creditors, who President Ranil Wickremesinghe will now have to conclude debt restructuring agreements with. Taking credit for some of the heavy lifting, India's Ministry of External Affairs has said that India was the first Sri Lankan bilateral creditor to support the debt restructuring and to provide assurances to the IMF in January. Since last year, New Delhi has been a key part of Sri Lanka's support structure, appealing on its behalf to the IMF and World Bank, extending a \$4 billion package including credit lines, loans and debt deferrals, and raising the issue of debt sustainability at the multilateral sphere including the G-20. China, Sri Lanka's biggest bilateral creditor, and Japan (part of the Paris Club of international financiers) did not move as quickly, which held up the IMF announcement. Announcing the first tranche of \$330 million on Tuesday, Mr. Wickremesinghe said that the key message was to assure other lenders about Sri Lanka's capacity to service its debt, and potentially enable it to access about \$7 billion from international institutions and the IMF. Some credit is due to Mr. Wickremesinghe and his cabinet who have stabilised a few indicators since coming to power in challenging times last year.

However, the IMF decision is no magic pill. This is Sri Lanka's 17th IMF bailout, and the third in the past decade. The IMF loan also comes with a number of conditions, which will cause more hardships and make the government, that has about 10% approval ratings, more unpopular. Adding to its discomfiture is the IMF distancing itself from the government's decision to postpone local elections, saying it had made no political stipulations. In its report, the IMF calls the risks to implementing the programme as "exceptionally high", refers to Sri Lanka's track record of implementing reforms as "weak", and calls for contingency plans in case there is a deeper crisis induced by weak market indicators. Apart from grappling with soaring inflation, stimulating growth and inviting global investment, the government must also ensure that creditors are satisfied with its debt restructuring process and no one accuses it of "side-deals". Sri Lanka appears committed to turning the corner, and is mending fences with every international player engaged in its complex geopolitics, including the U.S., Japan, India and China. It is important that in turn, they recognise Colombo's precarious position and cooperate in shoring up the island nation as it continues to navigate a difficult economic path.



The perils of selective international justice

How can the ICC's arrest warrant against Putin be executed? Can the ICC suo motu act like the West-constituted International Military Tribunal for the Far East (1945), which brought to justice 28 Japanese 'war criminals' and put them to the sword? Assuming that the West-backed ICC does succeed in doing so, will the Bench impart justice objectively and fairly?

ABHIRAM BHATTACHARYA

THE International Criminal Court's (ICC) arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin has given a twist to the Russia-Ukraine war. What's in store for the President of one of the warring nations? Can he be brought to justice? Or will the ICC remain cocooned in its hallowed precincts, in keeping with the tradition of the world bodies of the past 100 years?

It's hard to predict and naïve to visualise a quick and effective implementation of the ruling of a Bench which doesn't have the wherewithal to enforce its verdict. It's because international criminal justice is selective, creating contradictions, confusion and chaos and giving rise to the belief that it's a system of, for and by the privileged to take on the underprivileged, deprived and provoked combatants.

Headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands, the ICC is a "court established by a treaty known as the Statute of the International Criminal Court (effective from 2002), with jurisdiction over genocides, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression." Curiously, the ICC's inception coincided with post-September 11, 2001, developments, when the US, under President George W. Bush, launched the 'global war on terror'. Will it, therefore, be wrong to perceive that the prime

aim and objective of the ICC is to target perpetrators of crime operating in regions located far away from the West?

Today, the ICC has field offices in the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Mali and Uganda — in the developing world. Powered and defined by the 1998 Rome Statute and its amendments, "while the ICC is independent of the UN, the Rome Statute grants the UN Security Council (UNSC) certain powers of referral and deferral."

So, who all constitute the Rome Statute? It consists of '123 parties' and the best — or the worst — part thereof is that all Permanent Five (P5) members of the UNSC (France, China, the UK, Russia and the US) are either virtually conspicuous by their absence or happen to be there with a conditional or token presence. Whereas China is totally absent from the statute, Russia and the US (along with Israel and Sudan) have signed but not ratified the Rome Statute. These four nations declared that 'they no longer intend to become party to the statute.' The UK and France are signatories to the statute, but 'with reservation and/or declaration', thereby reducing the whole institution of the

ICC to a sham, which mirrors the past 400 years of arrogance of the exclusive club of western imperial powers. The situation becomes murkier owing to Ukraine's stand. Kyiv isn't a party to the statute, but it has "accepted jurisdiction of the ICC with respect to alleged crimes committed on its territory since November 21, 2013." Thus, the ICC jurisdiction over Ukraine "extends to action committed by citizens of non-parties to the statute on Ukrainian territory but, since Ukraine itself isn't a party, not to the crime of aggression without a referral from the UNSC." Therefore, an extraordinary situation brings Ukraine under the ICC through an indirect route, without having formally accepted the Rome Statute. The ICC jurisdiction over Ukraine, unlike other contracting and consenting parties, comes through the New York-based UNSC, thereby making it one of a kind in the midst of universally accepted, so-called international law. Exception, rather than equality, seems to have found favour with western expediency when international law comes to the fore in mainland Europe.

Since contextually and conceptually, we are in the legal terrain pertaining to crime, one cannot avoid the fundamentals of jurisprudence or the principles on which the law is made. Hence, the alleged crime of Russia, being ongoing and visible, could be referred to for invoking speedy justice. But, does prosecution for murder or manslaughter have a shelf life? Can it fall under the limitation act for being 'time-barred'? No. That's the reason, even after being absconding for years, charges against a young murderer can be taken up for imprisonment or capital punishment even in the twilight of his life. In other words, murder/manslaughter can be punished any time as it doesn't have any time limit for implementation of the judicial verdict.

Coming back to the ICC arrest warrant against Putin, how can it be implemented, by whom, how and when? Can the ICC suo motu act like the West-constituted International Military Tribunal for the Far East (1945), which brought to justice 28 Japanese 'war criminals' and put them to the sword? Assuming that the West-backed ICC does succeed in doing so, will the Bench impart justice objectively, impartially and fairly?

As of now, a fair trial looks highly doubtful. Everything today, regrettably, appears to be a cacophony of culpability. 'One nation, one man, one army' is cited as the cause of all violence and brutality, mayhem and massacre. In 1945, too, it happened when the jury of the West unanimously found Japan to be a 'war criminal'. The exception, however, was the sole Indian on the Bench. Justice Radhabind Pal gave a landmark dissent judgment, absolving the 25 Japanese defendants in the case. "I sincerely regret my inability to concur in the judgment and decision of my learned brothers," were the words of the Indian jurist. That history-making verdict of Justice Pal was significant because when the West atom-bombed two Japanese cities, there was no uproar over a war crime, human rights violation and barbarism on the part of the Occident. Though the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings are not time-barred, history invariably stood for the crime of the West. Hence, any war on western land is a war against the world and deserves a warrant against the Orient.

Improving employability a challenge for Punjab

BS GHUMAN

Punjab's job seekers consider themselves qualified, but job providers regard most of them as unfit for jobs. The gap is widening as educational institutions are following traditional approaches to designing and implementing curricula, while the landscape of the job market is changing fast owing to technological advances. Future jobs are driven by technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, 3D printing, robotics, cloud computing, smart sensors and drone technology.

PUNJAB'S youth are at a crossroads. Large-scale unemployment, exodus to foreign lands, vulnerability to drug abuse and involvement in agitations suggest that all is not well. The need of the hour is to provide opportunities to the youth for actively participating in development activities.

The state government has made a good beginning by providing 26,797 jobs in a year. In February, the state had an unemployment rate of 8.2 per cent, a little higher than the national figure of 7.45 per cent.

According to sources, the state has around 25 lakh unemployed people and, hence, the generation of quality jobs on a large scale is the most challenging task. Employability of the Punjabi youth is also low. It is around 10 per cent in the case of general education and 25 per cent for technical education. Thus, improving employability should also be prioritised. Jobs offered by the agriculture, industry and service sectors are short of choices for the state's youth.

The thrust of the state's model of development has been on agriculture. The job profile of farm operations, however, is not as per the aspirations of the youth. The agriculture sector has produced jobs which have largely attracted migrant labourers. The state's situation is ironical, with growth creating jobs for the migrants and joblessness for the locals. This phenomenon is also undergoing a change due to rapid mechanisation and, hence, may result in job losses even for migrants.

Barring a few, the existing industries hardly offer decent jobs to the local youth. The industrial sector is dominated by small enterprises using old technologies and employing mainly migrant workers. The service sector, though, is offering around 40 per cent jobs, but technical know-how is not modernised and, hence, the quality of jobs is compromised.

With a view to mitigating unemployment, a three-pronged strategy is suggested. The first strategy is to clear the existing backlog. The second is to prepare the youth for future jobs and the third is to bring structural changes in the economy.

At present, most of the unemployed people are matriculates, Class-XII passouts, graduates, postgraduates and diploma holders. They are qualified in the respective streams but lack skills required in the market. Job seekers consider themselves qualified, but job providers regard most of them as unfit for jobs. The gap is widening as educational institutions are following traditional approaches to designing and implementing curricula, while the landscape of the job market is changing fast owing to technological advances.

What is the way out? To clear the backlog, the government should prepare a roadmap in consultation with the industry, educational institutions, sector skill councils and financial institutions. After getting feedback from the stakeholders about skills in demand, the educational institutions should organise short-duration skill development programmes with practicum to equip the youth with the required skills. For this purpose, the institutions may

Things (IoT), 3D printing, robotics, cloud computing, smart sensors, drone technology, cybersecurity technology, blockchain technology and data science.

According to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) report on the future of jobs, the top emerging jobs in the US are of big-data architects, automation technicians and engineers, renewable energy engineers, organisational development specialists, new technology specialists, IT administrators, digital transformation specialists, IT project managers and data analysts.

The universities in the state should join hands to prepare the youth for future jobs. The universities should identify ubiquitous technology-driven courses, research and innovations, depending upon their strengths. They should also restructure the existing curricula in tune with the new jobs. Institutional partnership with the industry and society should be made mandatory.

Another challenge for the state is the obsolescence of the skills of workers due to changing technologies. The WEF, in its report 'Towards a Reskilling Revolution', has suggested innovative methods to identify viable job transition pathways for disrupted workers. By learning from worldwide experience, the state government should incentivise the employers and educational institutions to initiate reskilling programmes for the workers to make them ready for new jobs.

Structural transformation of the economy based on the existing technology is not enough to generate quality jobs. The policymakers, like entrepreneurs, should adopt innovations in policies to build a 'new Punjab' in tune with technological advances. Thus, for creating future jobs in the state, the structural transformation in economy in favour of high-tech industry (Industry 4.0) and the service sector (Service 4.0), steered by digital and smart technologies, should be initiated in a planned manner. The state's Industrial and Business Development Policy-2022 is a step in this direction. The Education Minister, during a session on 'Future of Work: Industry 4.0, Innovation and 21st Century Skills', during the G20 summit, shared the state's commitment to promote new business skills among school-children. The government should extend this programme to higher education by setting up business incubators. Punjab should take advantage of the Centre's flagship programmes like Skill India and Startup India.

Quality jobs can also be generated in the agriculture sector by promoting digital agriculture (Agriculture 4.0), covering the entire agri-food value chain by employing technologies such as remote sensing, AI, mobile phones, e-extension services, positioning technologies, e-commerce platforms and big data.



set up special-purpose vehicles in the form of finishing schools having the mandate to fill the gaps in the skills the youth possess and those required in the market. For self-employment and startups, the government should provide the seed money and arrange loans from financial institutions.

In order to improve employability, the state's Finance Minister announced two schemes in the 2023-24 Budget — Professional Coaching for Employment, and Soft Skill and Communication Training. The government also announced the Punjab Young Entrepreneur Programme to 'incentivise business ideas'.

Preparing the youth for future jobs is a multipronged process. Our mindset is mainly trapped in the existing jobs. Enabling students for existing jobs is a good practice, but, simultaneously, we should take decisions to invest resources for future jobs. Future jobs are driven by technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of

Grand event organized under Vindhya Gangotsav program at Diwan Ghat of Vindhyachal

Mirzapur: On the fifth day of Chaitra Navratri Mela-2023 going on in Vindhyachal, along with worshipping Maa Vindhyavasini, a large number of devotees also participated in the grand aarti of Maa Ganga, Ganga Aarti, Nauka Deepotsav and Gagan Deepotsav (fire-works) were organized on the evening of March 26, 2023 at Ganga Ghat under the Vindhya Mahotsav program organized with the special efforts of District Magistrate Divya Mittal. In which MLA Nagar Ratnakar Mishra, MLA Madihan Ramashankar Singh Patel, Member Legislative Council Shyam Narayan Singh alias Vineet Singh, President District Panchayat Raju Kanodia, Rajya Sabha MP Arun Singh's representative Dhananjay Pandey, District Judge Anmol Pal, Divisional Commissioner Dr. Muthukumar Swami B, District Magistrate Divya Mittal, Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Mishra, Chief Development Officer Srilakshmi VS, District President BJP Brij Bhushan Singh, Apna Dal S Engineer Ram Lautan Bind, Additional District Magistrate V/R Shiv Pratap Shukla, Namami Gange Amrendra Kumar Verma, B/R Satya Prakash Singh A large number of visitors including Additional Superintendent of Police Shrikant Prajapati and public representatives were present. A huge crowd of devotees gathered at Diwan Ghat in Vindhyachal to see the Ganga Aarti and Gagan Deepotsav programme. People got emotional seeing the sight of fireworks touching the sky from the middle of the Ganga. Amidst the divine and grand decorations and fireworks, Ganga Aarti was a pleasant pastime for the people as well as an unforgettable moment. During this, District Magistrate Divya Mittal, describing the Ganga Aarti and Gagan Deepotsav program as wonderful and supernatural, said that a wonderful ideal power enters life from Mother Ganga Aarti, but light is included in life through Ganga Aarti, Deepotsav. He also expressed his gratitude to all the officers and staff involved in making the program a success and to the devotees including the team members who conducted the Ganga Aarti.



Folk artists mesmerized one & all in Vindhya Mahotsav located at Roadways Complex of Vindhyachal

Mirzapur: With the special efforts of District Magistrate Divya Mittal in Chaitra Navratri Vindhyachal, Vindhya Mahotsav cultural program organized at Vindhyachal Roadways Complex is attracting pilgrims from every corner of the country coming to Vindhyachal Navratri fair. Bhajan Sandhya, Devi Geet program was inaugurated by

presented Jai Ho Ganpat Raja, Meri Vanti Sun Kar Aaja.... Describing Lord Shri Ram's city, he narrated that no one can see, my Ram's cities... On the faith, enthusiasm and demand of the devotees of the goddess, who were forced to dance on the hymns of folk artist Ashish Pathak, they again turned to the mother in the form of Shakti. Describing the immense splendor of Durga through his songs, riding on a lion, presenting Kathari in Hathwa..... forced people to dance. Taking forward the sequence of Devi songs, he attacked the dowry system and forced people to think by presenting how long will his



Member Legislative Council Shyam Narayan Singh alias Vineet Singh by garlanding the statue of Mother Goddess and lighting the lamp. On the occasion of the fourth day of Vindhya Mahotsav, people were forced to dance on the songs of Vibhu Vajpayee, who came from Lucknow, Kathak dance artist Vishal Krishna, who came from Varanasi, mesmerized the people through his Kathak dance. Famous folk artist Ashish Pathak, who came from Jaunpur in the field of Bhajan Kirtan Ramayana in the sequence of Bhajan Sandhya Devi songs, along with his team,

daughter of India continue to climb the altar of dowry. After the program, District Magistrate Divya Mittal, Additional District Magistrate V/R Shiv Prakash Shukla honored all the artists on the stage by giving mementos and mother's chunri. On this occasion, Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Mishra, Chief Development Officer Srilakshmi VS, District Commandant Home Guard BK Singh, Tourism Officer Naveen Kumar, District Information Officer Om Prakash Upadhyay, Regional Magistrate Nagar Parmanand Kushwaha and other officials, dignitaries were present.

Chief Development Officer inaugurated Vindhya Mahotsav program on fifth day

Mirzapur: Despite the indifference of the weather, a crowd of pilgrims thronged to enjoy the cultural evening on Sunday in the Vindhya Mahotsav and cultural program organized with the special efforts of District Magistrate Divya Mittal at the Chaitra Navratri fair in Vindhyachal. The program was inaugurated by Chief Development Officer Srilakshmi VS by garland-

and presented Bharatnatyam art dance, making people emotional. Prior to this, Dr. Sucharita Gupta, who came from Varanasi itself, swayed people in the spirit of devotion through Devi Geet and Bhajan songs. In this sequence, Dr. Shantis Gayawali forced people to dance to the tune of the flute by playing the flute. After the program, all the artists were honored by District Magistrate



Divya Mittal. Chief Development Officer Srilakshmi VS, Additional District Magistrate V/R Shiv Prakash Shukla, Namami Gange Amarendra Kumar Verma, Lank/R Satya Prakash Singh, City Magistrate Vinay Kumar Singh, Special Land Teaching Officer Neeraj Prasad, District Home Guard Commandant BK Singh, District Information Officer Om Prakash Upadhyay, Tourism Officer Naveen Kumar and officers of all departments and a large number of devotees were present.

Satyagraha sitting under statue of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri

Mirzapur: Satyagraha was performed sitting under the statue of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. Organizer of the program, Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee member and media in-charge Minhaj Ahmad Chhote Khan said that today we have done

Former Municipal Council Chairman Deepchand Jain said that the power of truth is with Rahul Gandhi who raised the voice of farmers, youth and public. Crores of countrymen of Rahul Gandhi are with him. Congress leader Amitabh Pandey said that the BJP government is doing



Satyagraha to save democracy. Chhote Khan said that the BJP government is worried about the success of our leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra. BJP government is trying to scare Rahul Gandhi. But Rahul Gandhi is not afraid and will keep on raising the voice of the people. District Panchayat member Shiv Shankar Choubey said that our popular leader Rahul Gandhi has always been raising the voice of the people, Rahul Gandhi is not afraid.

dictatorship. The BJP government is nervous about the popularity of Rahul Gandhi. Advocates Kamlesh Dubey, Saroop Singh, Syed Mumtaz, Ashok Dharkar, Kaushal Dubey, Ishitq Ansari, Athar Ali, Sinha Prabhu Tripathi, Shyamdhur Upadhyay, Nareesh Chowdhary, Manish Dubey, Shahbaz Ansari, Bau Pathak, Roshan Ansari, Manna Lal were present in the Satyagraha program. Verma, Suresh Ojha, Sanjay Panda, Rose Ansari etc. were present.

Union Minister inaugurated Hotel Mark One

Mirzapur: Hotel Mark One at Lal Diggi was inaugurated by Union Minister MP Anupriya Patel on Sunday. Hotel Mark One proprietor Seraj Ahmed told that today



Hotel Mark One has been inaugurated by Union Minister Anupriya Patel. Compared to earlier, now a lot of improvement has been done in the hotel. He told that the facility of luxury rooms will be taken in the hotel. He appealed to the people to give them a chance to serve in the hotel.

Inauguration of window and door showroom made of UPVC completed

Mirzapur: Shrishyam Metals' UPVC-made doors and window showroom on Imarti Road in the district was inaugurated by the Chief Guest of the program, Union Minister Mrs. Anupriya Patel and District President BJP Brijbhushan Singh by cutting the ribbon and worshipping Maa Vindhyavasini. The Union Minister congratulated the owners of the establishment, Brijmohan Agarwal and



Pratik Agarwal, and said that traders are the backbone of the Indian economy. New employment is being created by traders only. Special guest District President BJP congratulated everyone and said that it is a matter of pride for the district to open such a showroom. Bharatiya Janata Party Mirzapur General Secretary Santosh Goyal, Treasurer of Sanjay Yadav, District Minister Kaushal Srivastava, District Minister BJYM Mirzapur E. Vivek Baranwal, District President of Apna Dal Yes Ramlotan Bind, District Coordinator of BJP Prabuddha Cell Janhvi Tiwari, Rajesh Keshari, Rotary Club President Mahavir Sethia, Ajay Jaiswal, Mayank Gupta etc. Senior businessmen were present.

Group of youth gathered in motorcycle Jan Jagran Yatra

Shobhayatra on March 30, women's scooty Jan Jagran Yatra today

Mirzapur: A motor cycle Jan Jagran Yatra was taken out in the city before the Shri Ram Janmotsav Shobhayatra to be held on Ram Navami, March 30. The group of youth hoisting the religious flag on the road toured the different routes of the city and concluded by visiting the Sangmohal temple. The city was colored in the colors of devotion with the shouts of the youth participating in the yatra and the slogan of Jai Shri Ram, Tilak on the frontal, religious flag in hand and Jai Shri Ram's resounding slogan changed the climate of the city. Jan Jagran Yatra started from railway station premises Sangmohal, Katra Kotwali, Kachchi Sadak, Ratanganj, Teliaganj, Dunkinganj Square, Pakki Sarai, Ghantaghar, Basnali Bazar, Dhundhi Katra, Gurhatti Square, Mukeri Bazar, Laldiggi, Ganeshganj, Musaffarganj, Imambara, Tedhi Neem, Trimohani, Tivarani Tola, Sankatmochan, Ramai Patti, Police Line, Pandeypur Square, Tehsil Road, Mahuvaria, Girdhar Square. After passing

through Beltar, Chaubetola, Katra Bajirao Sangmohal ended at Hanuman temple. BJP state working committee founder. Manoj Srivastava, Vishwa



Hindu Parishad district president Ramchandra Shukla, city president Raj Maheshwari, Mahesh Tiwari, Ravi Shankar Sahu etc were walking in the front of the procession. Behind him was a group of youths riding motorcycles chanting Lord Shri Ram. During this all arrangement head Mahesh Tiwari, Patron Nanhe Tiwari, Amod Chaudhary, Minister Vinay Mishra Ankaj, Treasurer Raj Maheshwari, Bijrang Dal coordinator Praveen

Maurya, Program coordinator Ravi Shankar Sahu, Program in-charge Manoj Damkal, Program co-coordinator Shivanshu Singh, Motorcycle travel in-charge Pranjal Singh Rishi, Security Chief Gopal Kesarwani, Co-Security Chief Pawan Umar, Vishal Malviya, Ved Prakash Pandey, Shridhar Pandey, Divyansh Awasthi etc. were prominently involved.

District Magistrate inspected site for state level Vindhya Vishwavidyalaya

Mirzapur: District Magistrate Divya Mittal today inspected the land by reaching village Danti under Tehsil Sadar for the site/land selection of state level Vindhya University approved by the government for district Mirzapur. During the inspection, the District Magistrate instructed to complete all the preparations to be done for the land of the University. On this occasion, Chief Revenue Officer Satya Prakash Singh, Deputy District Magistrate Sadar Chandrabhanu Singh and other concerned officers were present.



Sunderkand recitation organized by Elite branch of Bharat Vikas Parishad on occasion of Chaitra Navratri

Azamgarh: On the auspicious occasion of Chaitra Navratri in the district, in Shikri Chand Temple, located in the old vegetable market of the city, under the leadership of Giriraj Singhul, president of the elite branch of Bharat Vikas Parishad, under the leadership of secretary Shikha Anil Agarwal, women's convenor Latika Agarwal, treasurer Rajesh Agarwal and others of the branch. Musical Sunderkand recitation was organized jointly by women and men. In which all the members of the branch together cleaned the temple and recited the Sundar Kand recitation with all their heart and worshiped God wholeheartedly. After the musical recitation,

the aarti prasad was distributed and concluded. Bharat Vikas Parishad's Regional Secretary Ashok Agarwal said that in Kaliyuga, a man can cross the Bhavsagar

the year in the spirit of the welfare of the world. Along with this, all the members of the branch expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the guidance received by



only by taking the name of God. All sins are cut off just by remembering the name of the Lord. Sunderkand is the worship of Bajrangbali. Bajrangbali is pleased by reciting this. Various programs are organized by the Bharat Vikas Parishad throughout

Sudarshan Das Agarwal, the doer of the temple. All other members including Ramesh Agarwal, Pankaj Agarwal, Anil Agarwal, Arvind Agarwal, Pooja, Renu, Manila, Monika, Kavita, Dimple, Anu Anshu, Sarika, were present on this occasion.

Parikrama and installation of Divya Ramsetu completed at Mahavir Ghat Sidhari

Azamgarh: Shri Mahaveer Mandir Seva Samiti, Azamgarh, circumambulation and installation of holy divine Ramsetu in Mahavir Mandir premises, Sidhari, was completed with worship and aarti by the courtesy of Chitransh Mahasabha President Subhash Chandra Srivastava and wife Maya Srivastava. Social worker Hritik Jaiswal, senior advocate Dinesh Srivastava and prominent social worker Arvind Chitransh were mainly present in Janardan, Shri Mahaveer Yuva Sangathan (Narayani Sena) convenor Brijesh Kumar Gupta, co-coordinator- Rajneesh Kumar Nishad, Guddu Modanwal, Rajendra Gupta, Deepak Madheshiya, Pratap Madheshiya, Ram Singh, in

the establishment of Divya Ramsetu at Sidhari Mahaveer Ghat, going back to Sidhari Highdeal inter-

Srivastava, Geeta Devi, Sonali Devi, Supriya Devi, Priyanshi Modanwal, Muskaan, Neha, Sandhya



section. Shyam Singh, Monty Modanwal, Shyam Dayal Gupta, prominent social worker Arvind Chitransh and women Maya Srivastava, Smrita

and other members and office bearers of Shrimahavir Mandir Seva Samiti Divya He was prominently present in the establishment and circumambulation of Ramsetu.

27th Federation Cup Carrom Tournament begins

The journey to the pre-quarterfinals of the women's and men's doubles matches is complete

Second day of Carrom Mahakumbh at Jeevandeep Educational Institute

VARANASI: In the doubles match played on the second day of the 27th All India Federation Cup Carrom Tournament organized under the aegis of All India Carrom Federation, 8=8 pairs of men and women entered the pre-quarterfinals.

VK Singh and Sonu Chowdhary of PSPB, K. Srinivas and Mohd. Gufran of Assam, Mohd. Arif and Mohd. Pair of M. Nataraj and Abdul Rehman of Air India Pair of Bal Ganga Putra and Naveen of Telangana Pair of Kishore Dutta and Rupam Pathak of Assam Pair of Neil Lokhande and Irshad Ahmed of Vidarbha and Pair of Yogesh Pardesi and Ramesh Babu of PSPB Delhi The pair of K Mohd Anas and Mohd Abrar, the pair of R Sankara and Sandeep Dabe of Air India, the pair of Yogesh Ghunde and Rahim Karim Khan of Jain Irrigation, the pair of Sandeep Deokar and Ashok Gaur of PSPB and the pair of Prashant More and Zaheer Pasha of RBL. Secured a place in the quarterfinals of the men's section.

In the women's category, PSPV's pair of Rashmi Kumari and Yashilawajki, Airport Authority's Neha Kumari and Nidhi Gupta, Odisha's Mamta Kumari Deepa Nayak, Defense Accounts Board's Devjani Tamuli and Rosina Yas0 Godake and Bihar's

Khashboo Rani and Shalu Kumari Jain Irrigation's Neelam Ghotke, Deepika Sinha and Medha Madkari of Yes Pundkar Bhask Life Insurance Corporation, Kesar Nirgun and Samridhi

of Maharashtra, Kavita Somanchi and Sangeeta Chandorkar of Reserve Bank of India, Mitali Bhavesh Pathak and Farheen Mazhar Khan of Jain Irrigation, Yama Parimala Devi of PSPB and Rinki Kumari of Jayshree Bihar. And Sonali Kumari's pair of Shinee and Stelina of Karnataka, K Nagajyoti and Vinita of Arunachal Pradesh, Sonam and Papidada Kumari of Arunachal Pradesh, Kajal Kumari and V Mitra of PSPB were successful in making it to the pre-quarterfinals of

of Tournament Director and General Secretary of All India Carrom Federation Smt. Bharti Narayan and Secretary General of International Carrom Federation BD Narayan GK Under the supervision of Chief Referee NK Jaiswal Assistant Sandar Ranveer Singh Kashiram Rana President of Uttar Pradesh Carrom Association Mr. Baijnath Singh Officiated by 32 outside umpires with secretary Zaheer Ahmed. Baijnath Singh President Uttar Pradesh Carrom Association and Organizing Secretary.



Important meeting of state committee of Rashtriya Samata Party concluded

VARANASI: On Monday the state committee meeting of Raspa was held at Laxmi Vatika. It was presided over by State President Rambhachan Yadav. The chief guest was National President Mahila Manch Didi Vandana Singh. Didi Vandana Singh said that the Sangh is the power, till now we have left behind the political parties which make women weak, the party in which women were neglected, that party has been destroyed. Partnership is fixed. Special guest Shashipratap Singh said that the mother Mamta, the mother of education, begins with the woman, whom we call women, that Mamta is the idol of courage and shame. Raspa is also a party with a mission which talks about ongoing global education by including NEP in itself. The aim is to educate ourselves and to educate the neighborhood as well leaving everything that is related to the mission of our party. We will field our candidates in all the upcoming elections. National Advisor Rajkumar Gupta said that the party will start Har Ghar Chalo campaign after Navratri. Those who are benefited from the mission of Raspa are with us, those who want to follow the path

of a particular caste, they are slowly getting out.

Dozens of people have joined the party under the chairmanship of State President Rambhachan Yadav, in order to take forward our mission, we will start the task of going to every house every day to explain our mission to one worker from tomorrow. Many have been decorated today. Went. Vinod Yadav State Vice President, National Secretary Dr. Sanjay Kumar Santhal Prajapati State Secretary Sunil Prajapati State Secretary Nandlal Jaiswal State Secretary Mo. Amir

District President Minority Cell Varanasi Mo. Tajuddin District President Mirzapur was made. Mainly present were Santalal Prajapati Sunil Prajapati Brijesh Prajapati Nehra Rajbhar Gulab Rajbhar Gurudayal Vishwakarma, Dinesh Patel Jitendra Patel Vijendra Pal Ajay Kumar Mishra, Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Jaynath Yadav, Ramprakash Yadav, Keshav Singh, Ranju Devi, Deepa Singh, Ranju Devi, Premnath Singh, Raju Patel, Tajuddin, Mo Amir, Suraj Yadav, Narendra Upadhyay, Gyanchandra Patel, Vijay Sonkar, Bablu Sonkar, Faujdar Yadav, Ashwani Patel, Vijay Patel, Mahendra Patel, Devbrat Yadav, Deepak Keshari etc. were the people.



Kisan Panchayat held in Ambari on the sixth death anniversary of Dr. Nandkishore Yadav

A Z A M G A R H / AMBARI: Kisan Panchayat held at Radha Krishna Inter College, Ambari on the sixth death anniversary of senior social worker Dr. Nand Kishore Yadav of the district. Senior social worker Dr. Nand Kishore Yadav fought lifelong for basic facilities like education, health. Tributes were paid in the Kisan Panchayat organized on the death anniversary of Dr. Nand Kishore, who worked for the betterment of farmers and laborers throughout his life. On this occasion, organ clothes were presented to Dr. Nand Kishore's

fellow senior farmers, laborers and farmers who came from Khirriya Bagh. In the Kisan Panchayat organized

and the farmer laborers of the dharna going on in Andika village along the Purvanchal Expressway,

political leaders and activists involved in the panchayat, while supporting both the movements going on in Azamgarh, insisted on connecting every village for its expansion. There will be no compromise in the fight for conscience. The proposal of the panchayat was put forward by Purvanchal Kisan Union general secretary Virendra Yadav in the panchayat. In support of which farmer leader Rajiv Yadav, former MLA Shyam Bahadur Yadav, Kamlesh Yadav, Dr. Subhash Yadav, Dr. Suresh Yadav, Adya Prasad Singh, Dr. Lallan

Prasad, Ravindra Yadav, Advocate Raj Bahadur Yadav, Advocate Santosh Yadav expressed their views. On this occasion Avadhu Pradhan, Ram Chandra Yadav, Ajay Yadav, Nand Lal Yadav, Sinto Yadav, Suppo Rai, Rajesh Paswan, Mithlesh from Andika, Geeta, Kaushalya, Urmila, Vivek Vishwakarma, Saimrath Yadav, Rus Yadav, Ambika Yadav from Khirriya Bagh, etc. were included. The program was presided over by former Principal of Janata Inter College Ismail Shah and coordinated by Dinesh Yadav.



A discussion program on Amrit Kaal budget was organized

Varanasi. Varanasi Vyapar Mandal and Karkhiao Agro Park Industries Welfare has organized a discussion program on Amrit Kaal Budget on 27/3/2023 at 3:00 pm in the premises of St. Mary's School near Milan Palace and Banquet Hall Sona Talab Panchkoshi Road I In which discussion was held together with the entrepreneurs and businessmen of Purvanchal. The chief guest in the program was K Laxman ji, Rajya Sabha member OBC national president, along with Banaras minister and MLA Ravindra Jaiswal was invited. Along with social worker Jitendra Tiwari was present, who President Ajit Singh Bagga and



Manoj Madheshia also presented business problems in writing by garlanding and giving mementoes and welcomed Honorable K. Laxman and Minister Ravindra Jaiswal. Handed over to ji and told about the problems of lawn traders and informed about the broken gumtio at Godaulia intersection and some business was discussed on how to revive those traders. Rios and entrepreneurs were honored in which Radheshyam Lohia Shesh Pal Garg Ramnagar Industrial State Entrepreneur Jagdish Gupta Utkarsh Banking Zonal Head Santosh Ranjan and his team Shailesh Srivastava social worker and Raktaveer Satya Prakash Arya who has donated blood 35 times and gave SDP Honble Rajya Sabha member K Laxman ji honored two new office bearers, Amir Ahmed Senior Vice Chairman Shyam Chowkaghat Purvanchal Minister On this occasion, about 800 traders from 15 branches of Varanasi Vyapar Mandal and 50 Vyapar Mandals belonging to Varanasi Vyapar Mandal participated in this meeting. Honored Rajya Sabha member K. Laxman and Minister Ravindra Jaiswal, who attended the meeting, on this occasion, K. Laxman said that I will work to convey all your words to the Honorable Prime Minister. Informed Laxman ji.

A large number of businessmen were present on this occasion Patron Vijay Jaiswal General Secretary Kavindra Jaiswal Operation done by Joint General Secretary Manish Gupta Deepthi Maideya Gupta Sanjay Gupta Sujit Kumar Maurya Nanhe Jaiswal Dr. Ramesh Pandey Shiv Prakash Saroj Gupta Asif Sheikh Anand Singh Rajeev Verma Arvind Jaiswal Aarti Gupta Soni Khan Kailash Chaurasia Ghanshyam Jaiswal Haji Shahid Qureshi Guddu Khan Chandni Srivastava Priya Agarwal Pawan Gupta Achal Maurya Satya Prakash Jaiswal Jasim Ahmed Shiv Prakash Joshi Gauri Shankar Dhanuka Harishchandra Virendra Kumar Gupta Hathua Market Ravinder Treasurer Shashikant Lawn Professional Association Anil Patel Industrial Area Piyush Aggarwal, Shyam Bali, Madheshiya, Ghanshyam Das, Sangeeta Choubey, Soni Khan, Dev. Anand, Ranjita Singh, Shahini Khanna, Aarti Sharma, Savita Vishwakarma etc. were present.

Mahayogi Gorakhnath University student Shivam Pandey represented Gorakhpur in youth conference

GORAKHPUR: Shivam Pandey, first year BSc Biotechnology student of Mahayogi Gorakhnath Vishwavidyalaya, Gorakhpur, represented Gorakhpur district in the State Conference of Youth-20 organized in Lucknow. Under the direction of the Sports Ministry, a conference named 'Youth-20 Consultation' was organized at King George's Medical College, Lucknow by the Department of Youth Welfare. In which one-day discussions were held in various sessions on topics related to mental health, health related to sports injuries, various dimensions of sports, yoga and Ayurveda. In this, the experts kept their point and interacted with the youth. Shivam Pandey, a student of Mahayogi Gorakhnath University, was selected from Gorakhpur district to participate in this conference. The conference was inaugurated by Additional Chief Secretary Sports and Youth Welfare Navneet Sehgal and Vice Chancellor of King George's Medical University Prof. Vipin Puri. Mahayogi Gorakhnath University has congratulated Shivam Pandey for representing the district in the Youth Conference and wished him a bright future.



1 Day Dharna BY JDU Leaders and Party Workers Against Merger of Scheme

Patna: On 24th March a 1 day dharna was done by the JDU leaders and the party workers against the name change of Babu Jaggiwan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana and merging it with Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP) and Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) and making the all the 3 as Pradhan Mantri Anusuchi Jaat Abhyuday Yojna (PM-AJAY)

The objective of the scheme is to Reduce poverty of the SC communities by generation of additional employment opportunities through skill development, income generating schemes and other initiatives. To improve socio-economic developmental indicators by ensuring adequate infrastructure and requisite services in the SC dominated villages and To increase literacy and encourage enrolment of SCs in schools and higher educational institutions by providing adequate residential facilities in quality institutions, as well as residential schools where required, in the aspirational districts/SC majority blocks and elsewhere in India.

As per the record the allocated budget for 2020-21 was RS 10956 and for 2021-2022 i RS 5626, but both the years the funds, has not been released by the central govt. to Bihar state.

The scheme for Hostel



for Schedule Caste is proposed since the 3rd five year plan (1996-1996) and this project finally got implemented in 1989-90, in 2008 and 2018 the changes were made by the govt, for alleviating the yojna. The mission of this scheme was to erect the 100 bed hostel at the block headquarter to the district which are educationally backward especially for the girls.

On 2nd December, 2021, the President of the Social Justice and Empowerment Smt. Rama Devi presented the report on Babu Jaggiwan Ram Hostel Scheme, the total approved Hostel was 819, for girls 391 and for boys 271, 366 hostel has been constructed, from which 344 girls hostel and 22 boys hostels are operational. As per the report Bihar and Punjab like big states less hostel allocation was done as compare to the other BJP ruling states.

Under the BIRCY the residential school for ignoring the rights of the SC people it is the injustice to the lower strata people and the govt intention is of not alleviating condition of the schedule caste people. Chandan Kumar Singh the General Secretary (JDU) said that they need same affection from the centre govt when not every project but the developmental projects will come to Bihar which will ameliorate the state condition. Niraj Kumar (Chief Whip Legislative council), Ravindra Prasad Singh (MLC) and other party workers present in dharna to press their demand.

On Navratri, the business head of IGL got Durgashaptasati recited in the campus

GORAKHPUR: On the auspicious occasion of Hindu New Year and Navratri, on the auspicious occasion of Hindu New Year

and Navratri, the business head of India Glycols Limited, SK Shukla organized Durga Saptashati recitation and performed Havan. On the inspiration and instructions received from the government, SK Shukla got the Durga Saptashati recitation done in the IGL campus with full legal process. Guidelines were also given to everyone in the program to come in Indian clothes. Senior Manager Adminis-

tration and Public Relations Dr. Sunil Kumar Mishra talked to Vedic scholar Rakesh Mishra and made all arrangements for this wor-

Anand Singh, Ajit Tripathi, Atul Pandey, Sanjay Mishra, Dharendra Pandey, etc. and co-hosts, Ashutosh Singh, Virender



ship. SK Shukla says that recitation of Durga Saptashati during these auspicious days of Navratri is extremely fruitful, welfare and auspicious. With this worship, he wished for the welfare of the people of the district and the state and prayed for the income and peace of the state. The main hosts of this puja were DGM Shailendra Pandey, Rameshwar Singh, Ashish Gupta, Shailendra Singh.

Singh, Mahendra Ojha, Anupam Tiwari, Chandrabhusan Dubey, Ashok Srivastava etc. stayed with their workers. On this occasion, Dr. Sunil Kumar Mishra prayed for the progress of the plant and the health of all. Assistant manager Akhilesh Shukla got the puja done and along with security officers Sandeep Tripathi, Shabir Ahmed, Prince Singh distributed prasad to all.

36 villages will have new police station Siktaur - Balapar

The police station will be the 30th of the district with a population of 1 lakh 64 thousand 200

GORAKHPUR: IG Range J. Ravindra Gaur had sent the proposal of the reporting police post of Chitlatal police station Siktaur-Balapar Bazar to the elevated police station Siktaur-Balapar in the district to the Police Headquarters/Government. As soon as the approval is received, the Siktaur police station will come into existence and start its work. To make Siktaur Balapar a new police station, 18 villages from Chitlatal police station, 14 from Gulariha police station and 4 from PPganj police station will be cut and included in Siktaur Balapar PS. In this way Siktaur Balapar new police station where there will be police station of 36 villages, Siktaur-Balapar will be the 30th police station of the district. Sonbarsa, Balapar, Baijnathpur, Bishunpur, Debipur-Durgapur, Parneshwarpur, Jeetpur, Jungle Bahadur Ali, Siktaur, Maniram, Rahmatnagar, Chithua, Prempur, Karhiya, Jungle Nand Lal Singh alias Haminpur, Nawapur Rampur



Chak, Daulatpur, 18 villages of Chitlatal police station. Amihwa village has been included in Siktaur Balapar PS. Similarly, 14 villages of Gulariha police station Sarhari, Maharajganj, Siyarampur, Rampur, Gopalpur, Thakurpur number one, Thakurpur number two, Mangalpur, Jungle Bhelampur alias Bhagwanpur, Jungle Bhelampur alias Raghunathpur, Bistouli, Karamaura, Jungle Bhelampur alias Sarkar, Mammour, Tikaria, Similarly, Budheli, Luxmipur, Gaighat and Badhni in 4 villages of PPganj police station will be included in the new police station.

BIZ BULLETIN

J Kumar Infraprojects' JV gets ₹5.2 bn order

J Kumar Infraprojects Ltd said its joint venture J Kumar - MEPL got a contract worth 5.15 bn rupees from Brihanmumbai Municipal Corp in Mumbai for the construction of a sewer tunnel. The work includes the design and construction of a 4.75-km sewer tunnel between pumping stations in Goregaon and Malad with segmental lining method, the company said.

Aditya Birla Capital exits insurance broking biz

Aditya Birla Capital on Monday said it has decided to sell its entire stake in Aditya Birla Insurance Brokers Limited (ABIBL) to Edme Services for an undisclosed amount. The proposed deal includes the sale of the entire 25.65, 103 equity shares of Rs 10 each held by the company (along with its nominees), representing 50.002 per cent of the issued and paid-up share capital of ABIBL to Edme Services Private Limited, Aditya Birla Capital said.

Trai cracks down on pesky calls, messages

Trai on Monday asked telcos to take immediate action to curb pesky calls and messages by getting banks and FIs to clean up unused templates, as the regulator initiated a slew of steps to crackdown on the issue of unsolicited commercial communications that, at times, leads to instances of frauds and scams.

CCI clears JM Baxi Ports-HAL deal

Competition Commission has cleared the proposed acquisition of certain shareholding of JM Baxi Ports and Logistics Ltd by Germany's HLAG. The acquisition would be done by HL Terminal Holding B.V., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hapag Lloyd Aktiengesellschaft.

Dalmia Bharat arm to sell 42.4% stake in arm

Dalmia Bharat Ltd has said its material wholly-owned subsidiary Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd will sell its entire 18.72 mln shares, or 42.36% stake in associate company Dalmia Bharat Refractories Ltd to promoter group company Sarvaapriya Healthcare Solutions Pvt Ltd for 8 bn rupees, according to an exchange filing.

L&T's subsidiary bags large orders

Larsen and Toubro Ltd said that its power transmission and distribution business has bagged 'large' orders in India and overseas, according to an exchange filing on Monday. The power transmission and distribution business will establish over 365 km of 765 kV double circuit transmission lines.

Mahindra Logistics in pact for warehouse park

Mahindra Logistics Ltd will set up a 1-min-sq-ft warehouse park in Talegaon, Pune, in partnership with industrial real estate developer, Ascendas-Firstspace, the company said in exchange filing on Monday. The project will be developed over three phases, with the first phase of 0.5 mln sq ft set to be operational by the end of 2023-24, it said.

Heritage unveils products under A-One brand

Heritage Foods Ltd. on Monday announced the launch of its new range of buttermilk products under the brand name 'A-One' and a new range of milkshakes in the easy-to-carry and single serve carton boxes. Heritage A-One Spiced Buttermilk is a low-calorie natural refresher. Heritage has also revamped its range of Milkshakes with a range of new flavours and a refreshing new look.

TVS Motor launches 7 new products in Ghana

TVS Motor Co Ltd has launched seven new products in Ghana, according to an exchange filing. The products include TVS Neo NX Bebek, three variants of the TVS HLX series (HLX 125, HLX 150 and HLX 150X), TVS Apache 180, and the three-wheelers TVS King series.

Gujarat Ambuja begins production at Malda unit

Gujarat Ambuja Exports Ltd has commissioned production at maize processing greenfield unit at Malda in West Bengal, having a capacity of 1,200 tn per day, according to an exchange filing.

MEIL fulfils its offering of 10 e-buses to TTD

Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) offered 10 electric buses to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) on Monday. The delivery marks the completion of the infrastructure giant's commitment made on October 21, 2022, when it announced the offering of 10 electric buses to the TTD, Andhra Pradesh, as a gesture of thanks to Lord Venkateshwara for his blessings.

Nothing launches Ear (2) wireless earbuds

London-based consumer tech brand Nothing has launched Ear (2), a set of true wireless earbuds that celebrates Nothing's transparent design with elite engineering and next-level personalization for best audio experience. —Agencies

GLOBAL FINANCIAL STABILITY AT RISK FROM BANKING TURMOIL: IMF CHIEF

Says rising interest rates have put pressure on debts, leading to "stresses" in leading economies, including lenders

IANIS / London

International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Kristalina Georgieva has warned that the global economy faces risks to its financial stability because of the turbulence in the banking sector.

Georgieva said rising interest rates had put pressure on debts, leading to "stresses" in leading economies, including among lenders, the Guardian reported.

She said the world economy would expand by just 3 per cent in this year as rising borrowing costs, combined with the war in Ukraine and scarring from the Covid-19 pandemic, would suffocate growth.

Adding to a growing chorus of warn-



ings from economic leaders, the IMF chief said it was clear that risks to fi-

nancial stability had increased after the recent collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and the Swiss-government brokered rescue of Credit Suisse by UBS.

Investors will be watching shares in Deutsche Bank when European markets reopen on Monday after they led the sell-off in banking stocks on Friday.

"At a time of higher debt levels, the rapid transition from a prolonged period of low interest rates to much higher rates - necessary to fight inflation - inevitably generates stresses and vulnerabilities, as evidenced by recent developments in the banking sector in some advanced economies," the Guardian quoted Georgieva as saying at a conference in Beijing.

Her stark comments came as the European Central Bank (ECB) said the recent turmoil in banking would have a real-world impact on business and growth.

The EU central bank fears problems in the banking sector will result in lower growth and dampen inflation, the ECB vice-president, Luis de Guindos, said in an interview with Business Post.

Meanwhile, Georgieva, told a conference in Beijing on Sunday that risks to financial stability have risen as interest rates are raised to fight inflation.

She said actions by central banks and other regulators have helped to ease strains on markets, "but uncertainty is high, which underscores the need for vigilance."

RBI may pause repo rate hike next month: SBI Research



IANIS / New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to apply the pause button on continuous hikes in repo rates during next week's meeting of its monetary policy committee (MPC), says a report by the State Bank of India's (SBI) research wing.

"We expect the RBI to pause in April policy.. It has enough reasons to pause in April. There are concerns of a material slowdown in affordable housing loan market and financial stability concerns taking centre stage," SBI's research report titled "Prelude to MPC Meeting", which was released on Monday, said.

The RBI's rate setting MPC's meeting is scheduled to take place between April 3 to 5. The SBI report further noted that "while concerns on sticky core inflation is justified, it may be noted that average core inflation is at 5.8 per cent over the last decade and it is almost unlikely that core inflation could decline materially to 5.5 per cent and below as post pandemic shifts in expenditure on health and education and the sticky component of transport inflation with fuel prices staying at elevated levels will act as the constraint. By this logic, the RBI may then have to go for more round of rate hikes".

The report said that as per the latest data, bank borrowings from the recently announced Fed Bank term funding programme window reveal that fears of a greater bank contagion is receding.

Motilal Oswal keeps FY24 GDP forecast unchanged at 5.2%

INFORMIST / New Delhi

Motilal Oswal Investment Services has kept its forecast for India's real GDP growth unchanged at 5.2% for 2023-24 (Apr-Mar), with the expectation of economic concerns in the US leading to worries over growth in India, according to a report by the company on Monday.

The forecast is way lower than the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 6.4% for the next fiscal. It is also lower than the Economic Survey's projection of 6.5%.

Favourable base and the pent-up demand have led to double-digit GDP growth in the first quarter of the previous two financial years, and the RBI and the market consensus continue to believe in strong GDP growth for the first

S&P keeps India FY24 eco growth forecast unchanged at 6%

S&P Global Ratings on Monday kept its forecast for India's economic growth unchanged at 6 per cent in the fiscal year starting April 1, before rising to 6.9 per cent in the following year. In the quarterly economic update for Asia-Pacific, S&P saw inflation rate easing to 5 per cent in 2023-24 fiscal, from 6.8 per cent in the current financial year.

quarter of 2023-24 as well, Motilal Oswal said. "We, however, expect it to moderate due to an expected end of the pent-up and the base effect turning unfavourable."

Sensex snaps two-day losing streak; Nifty tests 17K level

PTI / Mumbai

Equity benchmark Sensex snapped two-day losing streak to close 126 points higher on Monday, propped up by buying in index heavyweights Reliance Industries, Maruti and SBI amid a higher opening in European equities. However, investors remained cautious amid stress in the US and European financial systems, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 126.76 points or 0.22 per cent to finish at 57,663.86. During the day, the index witnessed a high of 58,019.55 and a low of 57,415.02.

The broader NSE Nifty advanced 40.65 points or 0.24 per

cent to end at 16,985.70, with 27 of its scrips ending in the green. Reliance Industries emerged as the biggest gainer in the Sense pack, rising 1.54 per cent, followed by Maruti.

A strengthening rupee bolstered sentiment, even as relentless foreign capital outflows restricted the gains, according to traders. "...the market ended mixed with marginal gains in large caps while mid and small caps had losses. Some certainty was seen in domestic banks and large caps due to ease in the US and European markets aided by reports on the acquisition of SVB by First Citizens Bank.

Saudi National Bank chair resigns after Credit Suisse storm

AP / Dubai

The chairman of Saudi National Bank has resigned for "personal reasons," a regulatory filing said Monday just after his comments on Credit Suisse sent that firm's stock cratering and ultimately saw rival UBS to acquire the firm.

The resignation of Ammar al-Khudairy at Saudi National Bank, the largest commercial bank in the oil-rich kingdom, comes just months after the lender invested an additional \$1.5 billion in Credit Suisse to take its holding in the Swiss bank to nearly 10% of its value.

While al-Khudairy sought to clarify his remarks after making them March 15, they caused Credit Suisse shares to drop by around a third of their value at the time and fuelled its ultimate collapse.

Removal of long-term capital gains benefit to impact 15% on MF AUMs

INFORMIST / Mumbai

Stripping debt mutual funds of the long-term capital gains and indexation benefit will impact 15% of the assets under management of the mutual fund industry, Jefferies said in a report.

According to the amendment to the Finance Bill, 2023, income from investments in mutual funds, where not more than 35% is invested in equity shares of domestic companies, will not get long-term capital gains and indexation benefits and will be taxed at the individual's tax rate for investments after Apr 1.

"This may affect Rs 6 trln or 15% of mutual fund assets under management and 47% of debt assets under management, 13% of bonds, 4% of bank loans. Still,



we see only part of this moving to bank deposits and others" the brokerage said. Jefferies said the affected segment of debt assets under management forms only 3% or 4% of deposits or credit, and thus sees limited benefit to bank credit or deposit growth.

"Impact on corporate net debt flows may not be significant and it is unlikely that a chunk would shift to fixed deposits given debt mutual funds are open ended offering more flexibility and debt fixed deposits would offer a com-

pounded cash flow advantage to fixed deposits, since gains would be taxed only on sale while fixed deposits are taxed each year," broking firm Prabhudas Lilladher said.

Corporates and high net-worth individuals are major participants in the debt segment. Corporates invest in debt for treasury management, while high net-worth individuals do so for tax advantage.

Prabhudas Lilladher also said that the impact on the earnings of asset management companies will not be material. From 2014-15 (Apr-Mar) to 2022-23, the debt segment would most likely see 4% compound annual growth rate from Rs 5.30 trln to Rs 7.3 trln assets under management on closing basis.

NEW DEBT MUTUAL FUND NORMS

AMCs open subscription for international schemes

PTI / New Delhi

Several asset management companies (AMCs) have opened up subscription for international schemes to maximise inflows ahead of new taxation rules for debt mutual funds kicking in from April 1.

The fund houses that resumed their international schemes are - Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund, Mirae Asset Mutual Fund and Edelweiss Mutual Fund.

Edelweiss Mutual has opened its all seven international funds for subscription from this Monday. It has started accepting switch-in or lumpsum transactions in these schemes. "We had some limits, so we thought of let-

ting investors take benefit of taxation by investing before March 31," said Niranjan Awasthi, Head - Product, Marketing and Digital Business at Edelweiss AMC.

Mirae Asset has opened subscription in a lump sum manner for three international ETFs and three Fund of Fund (FoF) based on these ETFs from March 27 onwards. "Since we have limited room available to take fresh inflows, these funds are likely to get closed again in future for subscription, in order to comply with the current regulatory limit and applicable guidelines for the overseas funds," Siddharth Srivastava, Head - ETF Product & Fund Manager at Mirae Asset Investment Managers (India) said.

'Four SAIL projects worth ₹2,338 crore face delays'

PTI / New Delhi

Four projects of Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) worth Rs 2,338 crore are facing delay due to reasons like delayed placement of orders and supply of materials/equipment, Parliament was informed on Monday.

However, there is no cost overrun in these projects, Union steel minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia said in a reply to Rajya Sabha.

As per the information provided by the minister, SAIL is executing a project of the modification in the washing circuit of CSW plant of Dalli mines at Rs 168 crore in Chhattisgarh and another project is installation of a new sinter plant with an investment of Rs 1,111 crore at its Bokaro Steel Plant in Jharkhand.

SAIL is also rebuilding coke oven battery -2 (COB-2) along with augmenting coke handling



and gas handling facility with an investment of about Rs 434 crore at its Rourkela Steel Plant in Odisha and rebuilding COB-7 & 8 at Rs 625 crore at Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh, he said.

"There is delay in projects...mainly on account of poor performance of contractors/ sub-contractors, poor mobilisation of resources by the contractors, delay in placement of orders and supply of materials/equipment, etc. However, there is no cost overrun," Scindia told the Upper House.

FM moves amendment to Finance Bill to correct STT rate

PTI / New Delhi

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday moved an amendment to the Finance Bill in Rajya Sabha to correct the figures with regard to rate of Security Transaction Tax (STT) to be levied on sale of options as well as futures.

The amended Finance Bill 2023 by correcting STT rate has been returned to Lok Sabha, sources said. The amended Bill is likely to be taken up by Lok Sabha either today or tomorrow and thereafter the Budgetary exercise would be complete. In the Finance Bill 2023, passed by the Lok Sabha on Friday, the Securities Transaction Tax on options is proposed to be increased to 0.0625 per cent from 0.05 per cent and on futures contracts to 0.0125 from 0.01 per cent.

EPFO likely to decide rate of interest on employees' PF deposits for FY23 today

PTI / New Delhi

The retirement fund body EPFO is likely to announce the rate of interest on employees' provident fund (EPF) deposits for 2022-23 at its two-day meeting beginning Monday.

EPFO had lowered the interest on EPF for 2021-22 to an over four-decade low of 8.1 per cent for its about five crore subscribers, from 8.5 per cent in 2020-21 in March 2022.

This was the lowest since 1977-78, when the EPF interest rate stood at 8 per cent.

"The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO's) apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees (CBT) is likely to decide the rate of interest on EPF for 2022-23 at its two-day meeting beginning on Monday afternoon," a source said.

Besides interest rate, the CBT will also discuss the annual accounts of the EPFO for 2022-23.

The trustees will also deliberate on the action taken by the EPFO on the Supreme Court order for giving a four-month window to Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 subscribers to opt for higher pension.

The EPFO has provided the facility to opt for higher pension to its subscribers till May 3, 2023.

The 8.5 per cent interest rate on EPF deposits for 2020-21 was decided by the CBT in March 2021.

After the CBT decision, the interest rate on EPF deposits for 2022-23 will be sent to the Ministry of Finance for concurrence.

EPFO provides the rate of interest only after it is ratified by the government through the finance ministry.

Gilts end on mixed note; MFs step up long-term bond buys



INFORMIST / New Delhi

Government bond prices ended on a mixed note today. Long-term bonds were up as mutual funds stepped up purchases on increase in inflows in their debt schemes, as they will no longer benefit from long-term capital gains and indexation benefits after Apr 1.

The Finance Bill, 2023 stripped the benefits on long-term capital gains that debt mutual funds enjoy and plugged the tax arbitrage between fixed deposits of banks.

"There's mutual fund buying in the longer tenures, that's what has caused this market movement," said a dealer at a private sector bank. "They were selling in the short tenures; five-year is quite far down."

According to amendments to the Finance Bill, income from investments in mutual funds, where not more than 35% is invested in equity shares of domestic companies, will not get long-term capital gains and indexation benefits and will be taxed at the individual's tax rate for investments after Apr 1.

Currently capital gains arising from transfer of mutual fund units, other than equity-oriented funds, held for more than three years, are considered long term, and are taxed at 20% with indexation benefit.

CHATGPT FALLOUT

Big announcement in few weeks: Vaishnav on conversational AI tool

PTI / New Delhi

IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Monday hinted at a "big announcement" in a few weeks in the context of conversational AI tools.

To a specific question on whether India can build something equivalent to the conversational AI tool ChatGPT, the minister said "wait for a few weeks, there will be a big announcement".

When asked about what the big announcement might be, the minister said, "Parliament is in session, so I cannot say anything..." He declined to give further details.

Vaishnav was speaking at the India Global Forum event.

It is pertinent to mention that ChatGPT has dazzled the world with its conversational skills and triggered an AI (Artificial Intelligence) chatbot race.



The new AI chatbot tool - created by the San Francisco artificial intelligence company OpenAI - has over the past weeks exploded in popularity and grabbed headlines.

It can be tasked to provide definitive answers to questions, responds to user prompts, and based on online information, it can churn out scripts, speeches, song lyrics, homework material, articles, marketing copy, classroom essays and even draft research paper abstracts.

'India's first quantum computing-based telecom network link now operational'

Telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Monday said the country's first quantum computing-based telecom network link is now operational in the national capital.

While speaking at the first international quantum enclave, Vaishnav said that the quantum communication link is now operational between Sanchar Bhawan and National Informatics Centre office located in CGO Complex in the national capital.

"The first quantum secure communication link between Sanchar Bhawan and NIC, CGO complex is now operational," Vaishnav said and announced a Rs 10-lakh prize money for ethical hackers who can break the encryption of the system.

"We are also launching a hackathon, a challenge round, for anybody who breaks this system and system developed by C-DoT, we will be giving Rs 10 lakh per break," Vaishnav said.

Cong pledges support to Velsao locals on double-tracking issue

GPCC PREZ SAYS PARTY TO BACK VILLAGERS SHOULD THEY SEEK LEGAL RECOURSE

VASCO

Assuring the Congress party's support to the locals of Velsao in their fight against the double tracking works, GPCC President Amit Patkar on Monday said his party would also back the villagers if they sought a legal recourse against work.

GPCC President Amit Patkar along with other Congress leaders, Captain Viriato Fernandes and South Goa District President Savio D'Silva, some panchas and a group of locals inspected the railways double tracking works at Velsao, to understand the difficulties faced by the locals in the area.

"The government is silent on the issue and is filing cases on people raising their voices. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant must visit the site and give his reply to the people who are



GPCC President Amit Patkar, Congress leader Captain Viriato Fernandes, South Goa District President Savio D'Silva along with Velsao villagers during the inspection of Railway works at Velsao.

Vikram Nayak

suffering due to coal transportation," said Patkar.

"It looks like the government is using its machinery to carry out illegal works because there is no act that can allow stoppage of the natural course of water and no organisation can carry out works without

having relevant permissions and land documents."

"The Government should have filed cases against the Railways but is instead filing cases on people who are raising their voice. Goa Police is offering protection to Railways who are working with-

out land acquisition and are burying water bodies here."

"People have raised their voice, agitated and even come on roads but nothing has changed and they have now requested that they will approach the court and I have assured them that Congress will stand with them and offer support," said Patkar.

Patkar said the party would brief Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemão so that this issue can also be raised in the assembly. "Double tracking may be a central project but the rivers and the creeks belong to us which are being landfilled and this is a source of income for fishermen," said Patkar.

South Goa District President Savio D'Silva, Congress leader Captain Viriato Fernandes and Goenchea Ramponkaranchi Elvott President Angelo Rodrigues also spoke on the occasion.

Centre sanctions ₹4.9 cr to widen accident-prone curve at Karmalghat

CANACONA

The Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has granted technical, administrative and financial sanction to the estimate amounting to Rs 4.9 cr to widen the accident-prone curve at the Karmalghat in Canacona and widening of the NH66 road from Karmalghat to Bhumi-purush temple, Gulem.

In a letter to the Secretary (PWD), the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways stated that the Chief Engineer (NH, R&B), Goa on February 28 had forwarded an estimate for the urgent restoration to existing road formation of NH66 at Karmalghat-Canacona.

"The estimate has been examined in the Ministry and approved for Rs 4.9 cr in the light of comments contained in the Technical Note dated February 25."

The ministry has granted technical, administrative

The widening of the accident-prone curve at the Karmalghat turn and widening of the NH66 road from Karmalghat to Bhumi-purush temple, Gulem, is expected to solve the issue of accidents in the area

and financial sanction to the estimate amounting to Rs 4.9 crore.

The widening of the accident-prone curve at the Karmalghat turn and widening of the NH66 road from Karmalghat to Bhumi-purush temple, Gulem, is expected to solve the issue of accidents in the area.

It may be recalled that several accidents and vehicles falling off the NH66 at both locations had led to severe criticism from Canacona locals, as they blamed PWD for remaining mute spectators to the frequent road mishaps.

IN SHORT >>



State Agricultural Management and Extension Training Institute Goa organised a one day induction training programme for newly recruited staff in the Directorate of Agriculture at Conference Hall, Krishi Bhavan, Tonca, Caranzalem.

Chief Minister launches Nari Shakti App



Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, State Women Self Help Group Association President Sulakshana Sawant and others at the launch.

BICHOLIM: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Sunday launched the 'Nari Shakti' App at Ravindra Bhavan, Sankhalli, in the presence of Goa State Women Self Help Group Association President Sulakshana Sawant and others. "The app has been designed to empower women and promote gender equality, so that every woman has access to resources and opportunities needed to thrive," said Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, while addressing a gathering. "We believe that women have the power to transform their own lives and the world around them. Through education, advocacy, and community building, we work to support women at every stage of their journey," he added. Goa State Women Self Help Group Association President Sulakshana Sawant said the 'Nari Shakti' App is available for download on Google Play Store. "I request all local self-help groups to make use of it to the fullest potential. The vision of Nari Shakti is to create a world where women have equal rights, opportunities, and representation in all aspects of life," she said.

GIT team wins national hackathon contest

BELAGAVI: Students of KLS Gogte Institute of Technology (GIT) here have won the national level hackathon competition TCE-HACKATHON-2023 conducted by Tontadarya College of Engineering, Gadag in association with Ditihe. The competition was held on March 24 and 25. Shriram Naik and Aum Pauskar from the department of computer science and engineering have earned laurels for the institute. Eighty teams from various engineering colleges participated in the event. Prof. Sagar Pujar rendered the guidance while Prof. Gajendra Deshpande & Prof. Vidyadheesh Panduranghi mentored the team. Principal Prof. Dr. D. A. Kulkarni and Prof. Satish Deshpande have congratulated the team on its success.



Two students of GIT seen with Principal Dr. Kulkarni, Prof. Deshpande and others.

BITS' Young Entrepreneurs' Bootcamp today

PANAJI: BITS Pilani, KK Birla Goa Campus, is hosting 64 school students from across India to participate in the Young Entrepreneurs' Bootcamp (YEB), from March 28 to April 2. The programme had received hundreds of applications from over 20 different states of India. The programme is designed for school students between 9th to 12th grade to experience technology-driven innovation and an entrepreneurial ecosystem at the campus. "The aim of the programme is to create an entrepreneurial spirit and provide exposure to initial steps in creating a startup," says Prof. Suman Kundu, Director of BITS Pilani, KK Birla Goa Campus. "The technology infrastructure of the campus will be used to provide hands-on experience for developing innovative prototypes" narrated Prof. Mridula Goel, who is spearheading the event on the campus along with a team of driven faculties and students.



Devotees accompany a cane basket as they proceed 'Devi Mulgoakarinchí Per' to Mayem at midnight. The Pethichei Zatra is one of the biggest religious and cultural events of the village, which attracts a big crowd.

Narayan Pissurlenkar

Youth dies in road mishap at Cortalim

VASCO

A youth was killed in a road mishap at Cortalim on Monday evening. Sources said the

incident took place as the deceased, Vishal Borana (24) of Mundvel-Vasco, was riding his bike from Vasco to Cortalim.

"As he reached near the Cortalim junction, he was

knocked down by an oncoming KTC bus which was coming from Cortalim to Vasco," said the source.

Verna police is carrying out further investigation.

SC asks govt why 3 pesticides banned in India, seeks placing of two reports

PTI

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court asked the Centre on Monday to place two reports on the use of harmful chemicals and pesticides in India before it and questioned it on why only three pesticides have so far been banned in the country.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala said the PIL petitioners "may have some agenda", but the Centre should satisfy it as to why only three pesticides have so far been banned.

"The Union government shall place on the record the final report of the Dr SK

'TOP COURT BEING USED'

■ The pleas have sought a ban on harmful pesticides in the country on the ground that they cause severe health problems to farmers, farm workers and others living in the vicinity. Lawyer Prashant Bhushan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said at least 27 pesticides were to be banned by January 2018.

■ Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee alleged that the top court is being used as a forum with an ulterior motive and said this should not be allowed

Khurana Sub-Committee (referred to in paragraph 10 of the status report) and the report dated September 6, 2022 of the committee chaired by Dr TP Rajendran (referred to in paragraph 11 of the status report)," the court said.

"The Union government shall also file a further affidavit, explaining the basis on which action has been taken presently only with respect to three pesticides in the notification dated February 2, 2023 within a period of four weeks

from today," it said in the order.

The bench then posted three pleas, including the PIL filed by NGO "Vanashakti", for further hearing on April 28.

The pleas have sought a ban on harmful pesticides in the country on the ground that they cause severe health problems to farmers, farm workers and others living in the vicinity. Lawyer Prashant Bhushan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said at least 27 pesticides were to be banned by January 2018.

Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee alleged that the top court is being used as a forum with an ulterior motive and said this should not be allowed.

Navelim biodiversity management panel opens new office



Our Lady of Rosary Church, Navelim Parish Priest Fr Gabriel Coutinho with Navelim Sarpanch Paul Pereira, members of bio-diversity committee members and others.

MARGAO

Parish Priest of Our Lady of Rosary Church, Navelim Fr Gabriel Coutinho has stressed on the importance of millets such as Raggi in the form of Ambil and Tizan and its value that has been lost to present-day pizzas.

Fr Gabriel further underscored the need to revive the knowledge of the old people even as he assured all support to the Navelim Bio-diversity Management Committee to conduct and involve students of the schools and college, so that students get first-hand knowledge through outdoor projects and activities.

He was speaking after inaugurating and blessing the new office of the Navelim Biodiversity Management Committee at the VP of Navelim.

The audience was touched by the sign of solidarity shown by the NBMC towards the conservation of river Mhadei, presented a poem composed and recited by Sheila and simul-

'NEED TO REVIVE TRADITIONS'

■ Parish Priest of Our Lady of Rosary Church, Navelim underscored the need to revive the knowledge of the old people

taneously expressed in dance form by Sachika Almeida.

The Outgoing Chairperson, Celly Q Coutinho presented the report of the activities done during her tenure from 2017 to 2022.

Officially the keys of the office were handed over by the Sarpanch Paul Pereira and the rules/Handbook & PBR draft were handed over to the incoming Chairperson Priya Almeida by the outgoing Chairperson.

Reshma Kerkar, Scientific & Admin. State Biodiversity Board Officer congratulated the new Chairperson. She also informed of the importance of the People's Biodiversity Register and recording the healers in the village.

2nd mobile food testing van launched at FDA's Eat Right Millets mela



Health Minister Vishwajit Rane, Director FDA Jyoti Sardesai, President GCCI Ralph D'Souza and others at the mela.

PANAJI

This year has been declared the International year of Millets by The United Nations General Assembly at the request of India. To create awareness about the health and other benefits of Millets, Directorate of Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) held Eat Right Millets Mela on March 25 at Inox Courtyard Panaji.

The programme was inaugurated at the hands of Health Minister Vishwajit Rane in the presence of Director FDA Jyoti Sardesai, President GCCI Ralph D'Souza, Director Agriculture Neville Alphonso and Designated Officer of FDA Richard Noronha.

The second Mobile Food

Testing Van of the FDA was launched at the hands of the dignitaries. The invocation song was presented by the students of Chubby cheeks school on the theme of respecting the farmers who grow millets.

FDA officials and the chef from Taj Vivanta Dwipen Goswami and his team and hygiene manager Dorothy Pereira were felicitated at the hands of the Health Minister for their excellent work in promoting millets.

Live demonstration on millets recipes, cooking competition for professional chefs on millets, workshop for self-help groups, supplying mid-day meals was organised.

Debate on the topic of Food Safety Panorama of Goa was conducted by Prudent media.

FROM PAGE 1 >>

Oppn censures govt for seeking supplementary grants again

grants could have easily been estimated in January and included in the second batch of demands.

Sawant however said, it was necessary for a handful of departments such as General Administration Department (GAD), Urban Development and a couple of others.

GAD, he said, had to make a deposit in the bank due to land issues related to a court while the provision for 'Smart City' works was inevitable as otherwise the funds would have reverted back to the Centre.

Mayor's post: Rohit set for a hat-trick

Meanwhile at a special meeting of the CCP on Monday, the corporation presented a Rs 1.72 crore overall surplus budget. It envisages a total (capital as well as revenue) receipts of Rs 99.8 crores and a total expenditure of about Rs 98.09 crore.

However, the revised estimates of the current 2022-23 fiscal show the Corporation having fallen short of the revenue targets presented a year ago.

Former mayor, Surendra Furtado, has sought an explanation from the govt. w.b. demo. readhere. com

tion for the failure to meet the targets.

"Will the mayor, commissioner or taxation officer explain the failure to collect outstanding dues pending for a few years?," Furtado asked.

Govt allays fears on model shacks, to consult owners

model shacks.

Sardesai claimed that the proposal gives an "impression that the government is opening doors for crorepati outsiders" to take over the operations of the upcoming model shacks.

The Department of Tourism's current policy formulated for the tourist season 2019-22 allowed 359 temporary beachside structures on various nominated beach stretches.

Considering financial losses faced by the shack allottees during the tourist season 2019-20 due to the adverse impact of Covid pandemic, the government granted a 50 per cent waiver in the annual shack and deck-bed fees for the tourist season 2020-21.

The State thereafter extended the time limit upto December 31, 2020 and then upto February 28, 2021 for the tourist season 2020-21. The Tourism Shack Policy 2019-22 was also extended by one year with some modified terms and conditions.

WOMEN'S BOXING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Fantastic Four sparkle but Indians have long way to go

EMERGENCE OF THREE NEW CHAMPIONS, PREETI'S PERFORMANCE KEY TAKEAWAYS

PTI

NEW DELHI

The indomitable Nikhat Zareen continued to shine bright while Lovlina Borgohain rediscovered her winning touch as hosts India capped off a memorable campaign in the Women's Boxing World Championships, fetching four gold medals.

With the Paris Olympics approaching, it augurs well that the Indian contingent matched its best performance in terms of gold medals. The highlight of the tournament was Nikhat becoming only the second Indian to win the World Championships twice after the legendary MC Mary Kom, who has an unprecedented six titles on the global stage. The emergence of three new champions in Lovlina (75kg), Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) and Saweety Boora (81kg) and some promising performances from the likes of Preeti Pawar (54kg) were also key takeaways from the tournament.

Nikhat had to battle through six exhausting bouts, including playing back-to-back pre-quarters, quarterfinals and semifinals. She got precious little recovery, and the fact that she defeated tough opponents under the immense pressure of performing at home, is a testament to her mental resolve and fitness. The 50kg field was one of the toughest with 35 boxers vying for the top honours. Several pugilists had either gained or cut down their weight to make the cut for the light flyweight class as it is



Women's Boxing World Championships gold medalists Nitu Ghanghas, Saweety Boora, Lovlina Borgohain and Nikhat Zareen pose for photographs in Ghaziabad, Monday.

young Preeti. Competing in the 54kg category, the 19-year-old packed a punch in her three rounds as she toppled the top seed and last edition's silver medalist Lacramioara Perijoc of Romania before going down to two-time Worlds medalist Thailand's Jitpong Jutamas in a fiercely-contested bout.

The performances of the last edition's bronze medalist Manisha Moun (57kg), Commonwealth Games bronze medalist Jaismine Lumboria (60kg) and Manju Bamboriya, all competing in Olympic categories, however, left a lot to be desired. Jaismine promised a lot but didn't quite deliver as she was completely outboxed in the quarterfinal.

Overall, India topped the medals tally, but it should be noted that the field was depleted. More than 10 countries boycotted the event after the International Boxing Association (IBA) went against the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) recommendations and allowed Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete under their own flags.

To put things in perspective, five of the boycotting nations — USA, Ireland, Canada, Poland and Netherlands — had finished in the top-10 in the last two editions of the tournament. In the light heavyweight (81kg) and heavy-weight (81+) categories, there wasn't much competition as only 13 and 12 pugilists respectively were competing for the top prize. Saweety, who received a first-round bye, had to play only three bouts to be crowned champion.

MATCHING THEIR BEST SHOW

■ With the Paris Olympics approaching, it augurs well that the Indian contingent matched its best performance in terms of gold medals

■ The highlight of the tournament was Nikhat becoming only the second Indian to win the World Championships twice after the legendary MC Mary Kom, who has an unprecedented six titles on the global stage

an Olympic category. "These World Championships were tougher than last time as I had to manage my weight, and follow a strict diet," Nikhat, who won the 52kg title last year in Istanbul, said.

Considered a high-performing asset, Lovlina's triumph is also an encouraging sign. For one, Lovlina has broken the 'bronze jinx' that she admitted ahead of the tournament was affecting her psychologically. The 25-year-old had three bronze — two at the

World Championships and one at the Tokyo Olympics — coming into the mega event.

The win at home following a series of underwhelming results, including the 2022 Commonwealth Games, will do a world of good to Lovlina's confidence. However, both Nikhat and Lovlina are still adapting to their new weight categories and have several aspects to work on.

Another boxer who impressed despite making a pre-quarterfinal exit was

IBA threatens IOC with legal action for breach of contract

PTI

NEW DELHI

The International Boxing Association (IBA) has accused the International Olympic Committee (IOC) of "lack of transparency" and "unlawful" conduct and raised questions about its "transparency principles" while inviting boxing officials for the 2024 Paris Olympics qualification process. The IBA has threatened to take IOC to court for redressal of the issue.

In an open letter to IOC president Thomas Bach ahead of the global sports body's executive board meeting on Tuesday, IBA has said its competition officials were being approached by IOC "without prior approval or communication to IBA", which is a breach of the data transfer agreement signed between the two parties in 2019.

At the root of the problem is the ban imposed by IOC on the boxing body due to concerns around its governance, financial transparency, sustainability and the integrity of refereeing and judging process. The IOC has informed IBA that it would conduct boxing qualification events leading up to the Paris Olympics, the same way it had done before of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Despite the IOC's instructions, the boxing body declared that the IBA-run women's World Championships in New Delhi, which concluded on Sunday, would be the main qualification event for 2024 Paris. On Monday, IBA wrote to IOC, saying, "...sharing the IBA's deep concerns regarding basic IOC governance, impartiality, and transparency principles seen during the monitoring process ahead of Paris 2024 which will mark the 120th anniversary of boxing's participation the Olympic Games.

Ronaldo happy again with Portugal's national team

Under new coach, the star is enjoying his return

Cristiano Ronaldo is feeling at home again. It took only two games for him to make his peace with Portugal's national team and show he is not done impressing at the international level just yet.

In his return after a disappointing World Cup and a controversial move to Saudi soccer, the 38-year-old Ronaldo scored four goals in Portugal's first two games in 2024 European Championship qualifying, showing he remains the leader that fans got used to seeing wearing the national team's red and green uniform.

Ronaldo netted twice in the 6-0 rout of Luxembourg on Sunday, three days after scoring another brace in the 4-0 win over Liechtenstein, when he became the men's player with the most international appearances with 197.

"Two games, two victories," the Portugal captain said on his social media accounts after the win at Luxembourg. "Happy to have contributed to a very positive start by our national team. Let's go."

The goals came against European minnows but seemed to be enough to restore Ronaldo's confidence and his role as a starter with the national team.

Ronaldo was in tears the last time he left the field with Portugal following a loss to Morocco in the quarterfinals of the World Cup in Qatar last year after he was benched by then coach Fernando Santos in the knockout stage.

The disappointing World Cup, added to his decision to accept a lucrative deal from Saudi club Al Nassr, had put in doubt his future with the national team. He said last



Cristiano Ronaldo has scored four goals in Portugal's first two games in 2024 European Championship qualifying.

week he wasn't sure if he would ever play internationally again and only returned after reflecting with his family and realising it wasn't time to "throw in the towel" yet.

Also likely playing a part in his decision to keep playing was the arrival of coach Roberto Martinez to replace Santos after the World Cup. The Spaniard pledged to respect Ronaldo's history, and the star forward said he welcomed the "breath of fresh air" to the national team.

Martinez said he was thrilled with the attitude shown by Ronaldo in the coach's first two games in charge. "Ronaldo is a unique player and brings a lot of experience to the locker room," the former Belgium coach said. "He is a reference and is prepared to be a leader and a

captain of this national team."

With his four goals at the start of the Martinez era, Ronaldo extended his international scoring record to 122 goals, 13 more than former Iran striker Ali Daei. Ronaldo's 198th international appearance on Sunday left him two ahead of Kuwait's Bader Al-Mutawa.

Portugal, the 2016 European champion, plays its next two matches against Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iceland in June. The team leads Group J in Euro 2024 qualifying with six points, two more than Slovakia. The top two finishers in each group will advance to the tournament in Germany next summer.

And if Ronaldo remains as happy and motivated as he is now, he will certainly be there to try to help Portugal win yet another European trophy.

India take on Kyrgyz Republic today

PTI

IMPHAL

A draw against Kyrgyz Republic is enough for India to win the Tri-Nation International Football tournament on Tuesday but head coach Igor Stimac said the hosts will go all out for a win.

The Blue Tigers began with a slender 1-0 win over Myanmar on Wednesday last. They need just a draw to win the tournament after Kyrgyz Republic snatched a 1-1 draw against Myanmar in the second match of tournament on Saturday. Kyrgyz Republic, on the other hand, will require a win against India to claim the trophy. "We will go all out to win. We have a full house with

our supporters and a chance to prove ourselves. It will also be a much stronger team than the first game," Stimac said at the pre-match press conference.

TRI-NATION TITLE DECIDER

"I was right when I said Myanmar is a serious side that can hurt you. We saw that against the Kyrgyz Republic. It will, of course, be a different challenge against the Kyrgyz side because they don't have any option but to come out and win."

Goalkeeper Amrinder Singh, who started in the 1-0 win over Myanmar, accompanied Stimac in the press confer-

ence and said he would want to keep up his good performance. "I always try to do my best whenever I get the chance. Coach gives me a lot of confidence on and off the pitch. I work hard in training, rest well, sleep well and eat well. I'm happy with my performance and I want to keep it up," Singh said.

Stimac was all praise for the custodian as well and said Singh had "top reactions and eliminated every danger". "He has always done well in the few games he's played under me — against Thailand (1-0), Oman (1-1) and now Myanmar (1-0)," the head coach said.

➤ Match starts 6 pm, live on Star Sports 3

State sailing championship: Katya, Adarsh, Pearl win gold

PANAJI

Katya Coelho won the IQ Foil women's title while Adarsh Chunekar won the gold in Raceboard Youth category at the Goa State Sailing Championship organised by Goa Yachting Association (GYA) under the aegis of Sports Authority of Goa (SAG), recently at Hawaii beach, Dona Paula.

Windsurfers competed in the IQ Foil and Raceboard category while other sailors participated in the ILCA and Optimist category. The championship was conducted by Capt Prashant Menon, national race officer, assisted by Arjun Singh and measurer Russell Lobo. Strong windy conditions and massive swells on all three days of the championship ensured that the sailors were pushed to their limits.

Katya, who will represent India at the Asian Games in



The Goa State Sailing Championship was held at Hawaii beach, Dona Paula.

China in September, won the gold in the IQ Foil women's category. In Raceboard Youth category, Adarsh Chunekar won the title ahead of Rudra Palekar and Vinay Kulabkar who won the silver and bronze respectively.

In the ILCA 4 Youth Boys category, Advait Menon of INWTC Mandovi, who will represent India at the Asian Games, China, won the

gold while Vishwanath Padidala and G Mallesh of the Navy Boys School Company (NBSC), Verem, won the silver and bronze respectively.

Pearl Colvalcar, who is the reserve sailor to represent India in the ILCA 4 category at the Asian Games, China, won gold in the ILCA 6 Women's category. In the Optimist Junior Boys category, NBSC made a clean sweep with the gold going to Sharanya Yuvraj Jadhav, silver to Ajay Gajji and bronze to Vikram Singh Bhati.

In the Optimist Sub Junior Boys category, there was a tough competition with the top two sailors separated by only one point as Siddhant Guttikunda managed to clinch the gold ahead of Neel Karmalkar, who took the silver and Azzuro Patrao who won the bronze. In the Optimist Sub Junior Girls category, Tara Manral won the gold while Saachi Guttikunda won the silver.

Elder sportspersons felicitated



The elder sportspersons felicitated by AWES.

MARGAO

The Association for the Well-being of Elder Sportspersons (AWES) organised a multi-sport festival and get-together on Sunday that saw the felicitation of over 40 sportspersons, aged 80 and above, for their contribution to sports.

While football and athletics events for elder sportspersons were held at the Sinquetim sports complex, Navelim, the BPS Sports Club in Margao saw yesterday stars in table tennis, badminton and tennis action. Several sportspersons from across the State took part in the sports festival and then got together at the BPS Sports Club for fellowship and felicitation.

Shaji Prabhakaran, secretary general of the All India Football Federation (AIFF), was present for the felicitation and expressed the unique

efforts of the organisers to get elder sportspersons together and recognise their contribution to sports.

Earlier in his welcome address, AWES president Derrick Pereira, who himself took part in the football event, said the organisation was pleased to see heroes who had inspired a generation.

"Every time we meet, my heart fills with immense joy and pride. Joy at seeing all of you share memories and smiles. And pride at the fact that we at AWES have managed to get all of you together," said Pereira, a former India defender.

Former players, officials and administrators from several disciplines were felicitated at the hands of Prabhakaran, Caltano Fernandes, president of Goa Football Association and principal sponsor, Padma Shri Brahmanand Shankhwalkar, Avertano Fur-

SC, and Santosh George, president of BPS Sports Club.

Those felicitated include Avinash Raiturkar, Manohar Netravalkar, Menino Figueiredo, George Rosemond, Inacio Fernandes, Socorro Coutinho, Nicholas Fernandes, Benzinho Fernandes, Avinder Singh, Suresh Kudachadkar, Bismark Gonsalves, Alfredo Correia, Pandari Naik, Socrates Carvalho, Juliao Rodrigues, Bernadino Velho, Cyril D'Canha, Felix Afonso, Andrew Rodrigues, Prabhakar Sinar, BC Sirvoic, Franco Gouveia, Joaquim F. Soares, Peter Caetano Fernandes, Zephyrus Mascarenhas, Minguel Rebelo, Edmundo Miranda, Caltano Mascarenhas, Alvaro Pinho, Kishore Angley, Levino Dias, Dr Sicletica Rebelo, Rene Costa, Jacinto B Miranda, Fr Jose Roque Gonsalves, Fr Avinash Rebelo, VV Vernekar, Stella Albuquerque, Lawrence Afonso, Joao Baptista Ferrao and Maria Imelda D'Sousa.

Himachal hold Odisha, Andhra blank Rajasthan

MARGAO

Odisha and Himachal Pradesh shared points in a six-goal thriller after playing out a 3-3 draw in the 27th Senior Women's National Football Championship PJN Stadium, Fatorda on Monday.

SR WOMEN'S NAT FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

There were six different scorers in the morning game where Sumita Hembram (32'), Jasoda Munda (20') and Malati Munda (2') scored for Odisha. Himachal Pradesh scored through Riya Sharma (26'), Anju (70') and Poonam (53'). Tamatapu Aruna scored a brace as Andhra Pradesh scored 2-0 win over Rajasthan. Tamatapu scored in 70th and 73rd minutes.



Fatorda Veterans beat Vasco Veterans 3-1 to win the 5th Fatorda Veterans Cup at Don Bosco Oratory, Fatorda ground.

Fatorda win home title

MARGAO

Fatorda Veterans made short work of Vasco Veterans 3-1 in the final to win the 5th Fatorda Veterans Cup at Don Bosco Oratory, Fatorda ground.

Fatorda Veterans scored two quick goals through Francis Andrade and Rosario Carvalho in the 5th and 15th minutes respectively. Vasco's Vishal Pednekar and Uday Naik missed chances to score.

In the second half, Fatorda Veterans netted the third

goal through Santan Furtado's placement shot in the 56th minute. Alaric Gomes of Vasco sent in a long ball to Andrew Plexito, who coolly placed the ball into the Fatorda net to make it 1-3 in the 60th minute.

Individual prizes: 1st goal of the final - Francis Andrade (Fatorda Veterans), Best player of the tournament - Socorro Colaco (Nuvem Veterans). Vijay Sardesai, Fatorda MLA, was the chief guest and gave away the prizes in the presence of Fr Ralino.

IN SHORT >>>

Goa team for fast5 netball nationals



The Goa players pose with GNA secretary Pratish Naik and SAG netball coaches Sameer Raikar and Sandeep Shetkar.

PANAJI: Goa Netball Association has selected the Goa team for the 1st Senior National fast5 netball championship 2022-23. Supresh Naik will captain the side. Goa team: 1. Supresh Naik (C), 2. Haidar Ali Multani, 3. Yash Naik, 4. Pratik Kamble, 5. Dhruv Gaude, 6. Vaibhav Vernekar, 7. Aniket Bhoi, 8. Omkar Gurav, 9. Prathamesh Mathadawar, 10. Karthik Mane; Coach - Sameer Raikar; Manager - Pratik Naik. The Senior Nationals will be organised by Haryana Netball Association at Govt Senior Secondary School, Sisana, Haryana from March 30 to April 2.

Masters badminton: Juliana, Roseline win bronze

MARGAO: Goan players Juliana Colaco and Roselin Bunyan won a bronze medal in Women's Doubles 65+ age group at the 45th Yonex Sunrise Indian Masters (Veteran) National Badminton championships, which concluded on Sunday in Navelim. The Goan pair lost 21-12 12-21 to Savitri Mohan Raj (MAH) and Neera Parisha (UP) in the semifinals to settle for a bronze.



Bronze winners Roseline Bunyan and Juliana Colaco.

IWL to begin from April 25: AIFF

THE NEXT edition of the Indian Women's League (IWL) will kick start on April 25, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) decided during its League Committee meeting on Monday. AIFF also decided to allow teams to recruit three foreign players with a maximum of two allowed on the field at a time. The meeting was chaired by Lalingsingh Hmar over video conferencing on Monday. Secretary General Shaji Prabhakaran was present in the meeting, along with committee members M Satyanarayan, Kiran Chowgule, Reginold Varghese, Amit Chaudhuri and Caltano Fernandes. "The Committee, in its first order of the day, decided that the Hero India Women's League shall start from April 25, 2023," AIFF said in a release.

TODAY'S ACTION

➤ **RELIANCE FOUNDATION DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE (REGIONAL QUALIFIERS - GOA):** Churchill Brothers Football Club vs FC Goa, Monte de Guim ground, Guim, 4 pm

➤ **GFA FIRST DIVISION LEAGUE, SALTETE ZONE:** Nuvem Sports Club vs Mandopa Sporting Club, Navelim ground, Saltete, 4 pm; Cortalim Villagers Sports & Social Welfare Association vs Curtirim Gymkhana, Becalim ground, 4 pm

➤ **15TH LONDON TROPHY INTER-VILLAGE FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT:** Ambelim Sports Club vs Neral Sports Club, Goa Velha Sports Club ground, 4.30 pm

CHILL WITH THRILL

Sara Ali Khan talks about her upcoming film *Gaslight*, having OTT releases, and more

ROHIT BHATNAGAR

Sara Ali Khan will soon be seen in *Gaslight*. After acting in several drama, romantic and comedy films, this is the first time Sara will be seen in a thriller movie. Directed by Pavan Kiplani, it also stars Vikrant Massey, Chitrangada Singh and Akshay Oberoi. It will start streaming on an OTT platform on March 31. *The Free Press Journal* caught up with her for an exclusive chat. Excerpts:

***Gaslight* seems to be a metaphorical title. What does it mean in the context of the film?**

It is a metaphor for what happens in the story of the film. It has been very intelligently shown and told. But, the rest is for the audience to see.

With *Gaslight*, you are delving into thriller space for the first time. What were your challenges?

When I read my character and the script, the wheelchair part was really convincing for me. The challenging part was to perform on the wheelchair. But for me, the whole setting of the film in totality was so new to me that it was extremely exciting to delve into it. *Gaslight* got newness in me.

Were you longing to do a thriller?

As an actor, I want to explore all kinds of genres. I don't want people to box me in one particular genre or

A still from *Gaslight*

make them think that Sara doesn't do different roles on screens. I want to work with every filmmaker and just keep learning everyday. I wasn't looking for a script like *Gaslight*. I always look for good stories and that's what matters to me the most, genre comes secondary.

The makers released a quirky introduction video with you, Chitrangada Singh and Vikrant Massey. What are your thoughts on the much talked about chemistry between you and Chitrangada?

I got to learn a lot from actors like Vikrant and Chitrangada ma'am. It was really inspiring.

What was your mother Amrita Singh's reaction after watching the trailer of *Gaslight*?

She is very excited. It is also new for her to see me in a film like this. She can't wait to watch the film.

It's been a long wait for your film with Vicky Kaushal. When is it coming out?

I don't know when it is coming out but it was such a blast to work with Vicky and director Lakshman Utekar sir. He is such a thorough director. He has an honest, emotional and heartland way to tell a story. I truly hope people will perceive the story in the same way.

After *Atrangi Re* and *Coolie No. 1*, *Gaslight* too is releasing on OTT. How does it feel to have a straight to digital release being a commercial star?

For instance, *Atrangi Re* also had an OTT release. It got so much love by the audiences that I realised medium is really secondary. If you are a part of good films, you will get your due.

Honouring the OTT accomplishers

LIPIKA VARMA

Here are the highlights of an awards function held recently in Mumbai

The Covid 19 pandemic ushered in a new era of talent from all across India on OTT platforms. To honour these talented artistes, an awards function was held on March 26. *The Free Press Journal* was also present at the gala.

Gulshan Grover spoke about the entire OTT change, he shares, "My son Sanjay Grover has been a film producer for the last 11 years at MGM. When his film was releasing in theatres as well on OTT, Sanjay sent an email to Mary Parent, the chairwoman of a legendary movie studio in Hollywood. In her reply she said, 'This hybrid release of my film is a marriage between OTT and cinema'. It was released during the times of the pandemic and today almost after two years Mary's words have completely come true."

Gulshan gave away the Puthubreaking Performer of The Year (Male) Award to Rajkumar Rao for *Badhaai Do* and *Monica, O My Darling*. An elated Rajkumar says, "I accept this with gratitude. Both films are very close to my heart. The pandemic taught me a lesson to go back to my roots and do films that I believed in. I will continue that way, especially whatever work my heart wishes to do."

The Fashionista of The Year award was bagged by none other than Urfi Javed. Living up to her public appearances, she arrived at the event wearing something like a 'Makdi ka jala'. Ask her what it is and she instantly replies, "It's a 'rib cage'. I feel very nervous on stage thank you."

Rupali Ganguly, recipient of Compassionate Changemaker of The Year Award, says, "This trophy is very special to me. I have received this award for my off-screen work. People want to become actors just because they want to become famous. I wanted to be an actor because I wanted people to lend their ears to me when I spoke about animal cruelty and I just wanted to have fame so that I could feed every animal I saw in distress."

Rocket Boys 2 fame Regina Cassandra won the Disruptive Star of The Year Award (female). She gushes, "Wow! First of all, it's being familiar with a lot more faces over here other than the ones from down South. The OTT platform recognises everyone irrespective of the language. We are part of this change. I am elated."

Sandhya Shetty was awarded the Reader's Choice OTT Debut of The Year for her web series, *Dharavi Bank*. She explains, "Firstly, the reason to attend this award is only because of Rishabh Shetty sir. I am grateful to the entire team and every department who worked honestly."

CAUGHT ON CAM

Glitterati were snapped as they were out and about in Mumbai

Shalin Bhanot keeps it stylish at an awards show

Aditya Roy Kapur and Mrunal Thakur while promoting *Gumraah*

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja mesmerises in black outside a store in Bandra

Shilpa Shetty Kundra waves to the paps at the airport

Shalini Pandey looks cute in a red top and black and white skirt

The big announcement

CJ DESK

Ram Charan, Kiara Advani's *RC15* finally gets a name on pan-India superstar's birthday

On the occasion of Ram Charan's birthday (March 27), the superstar presented his fans with a gift as he finally announced the title of his upcoming film, which was, until now, called *RC15*. Ram Charan's next, which also stars Kiara Advani, has been officially named *Game Changer*.

On Monday morning, Ram Charan took to his official social media handles to reveal the name of the film. Announcing the name of the film, Ram Charan wrote, "*Game Changer* it is!!!" The film went on floors in September 2021 and since then, it was being referred to as *RC15*, meaning Ram Charan's 15th film.

The film will mark the second collaboration between Ram Charan and Kiara, the first one being their 2019 Telugu actioner *Vinaya Vidheyra Rama*.

While not much has been revealed about Kiara's role yet, Ram Charan is set to play an IAS officer in the film. Birthday celebrations began early for Ram Charan as Kiara, along with the film's director Shankar threw a bash for him on the sets of their film on Sunday.

Several photos and videos from the celebrations surfaced online in which Ram star was seen posing with Kiara, Shankar and Prabhudeva.

The crew also showered him with rose petals and got him a huge birthday cake. They were all smiles as the superstar posed with everyone for pictures.

Twitter Trend of the Day

All hail the Game Changer

As soon as Ram Charan shared the first look as well as title of his upcoming film *Game Changer* on the microblogging site, fans went wild. He shared the poster of the film along with the caption, "I couldn't have asked for a better birthday gift! *Game Changer*. Thank you @shankarshannmugh sir!! Here's how they reacted:

@AlwaysAkashRC: "Game Changer arrived with a STYLE! Man of masses Ram Charan."

@Sam_Jonvik2: "Look arachakam... Thank you @shankarshannmugh sir. Definitely it's gonna change the game..."

@KVWicky9: "Kissass poster Game Changer"

@AlwaysRamCharan looks stylish and graceful... mass-Indian director @shankarshannmugh romantic @advani_kiara... the biggest super duper hit movie for sure!"

@ayeshaneehraf: "Love you RC! First look is fire... Waiting for the movie! Hope you are having a blast on your birthday today. We love you!"

@Mae634876221: "Can't even wait to see you on screen once again thalaiva! We are very excited for that and are waiting to celebrate the festival!"

— CJ DESK