

■ CM attends ABVP students' event as chief guest

Rekha seeks budget ideas from students

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta, who started her political journey from the Akhli Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and is now helming the Delhi government, attended the Youth Parliament organised by the RSS affiliate on Monday to solicit suggestions from the students for the state budget to be presented later this month.

Back to her roots, Ms Gupta underscored the role of youngsters in shaping the nation's future and sought suggestions from the students for the state budget to be presented later this month.

Ms Gupta started her political journey as a student leader by winning the secretary post of Dusu (Delhi University Students Union) in 1995 and later bagging the presidential position the next year.

"I felt happy to be present among the women students of Delhi University and ABVP. Students from all corners of the country participated in the Youth Parliament. I also asked for their suggestions for our

Govt mulls forming task force to protect Yamuna

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

The Delhi government is mulling over formation of a Yamuna task force in collaboration with the Territorial Army to prevent encroachments on flood plains of the river, dumping of debris and waste.

PWD and water minister Parvesh Verma said he discussed the issue with the Territorial Army.

The task force will be dedicated to protect the Yamuna

upcoming budget," she told reporters.

Ms Gupta was the chief guest on the second day of the three-day event at NDMC Convention Centre, which focused on the "Girls' Parliament."

The Youth Parliament, which began on March 9, has been dedicated to different student communities. The first day focused on tribal students while the second

floodplains, prevent encroachments, stop illegal dumping of debris and waste, and ensuring strict enforcement of regulations, he said.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the double-engine government of the BJP, we are committed to restoring the Yamuna and protecting its floodplains. For years, illegal encroachments and waste dumping have choked the Yamuna," Mr Verma said.

day was for female students.

The final day on March 11 will feature students from the Northeast and the Youth Parliament, with discussions on leadership, education, and nation-building. The Tribal Students' Parliament held on Sunday included deliberations on education, health, employment, language preservation, and heritage conservation.

Delh police beefs up security ahead of Holi

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

Security has been stepped up at over 100 locations across the national capital ahead of Holi festival and Ramzan's Friday prayers, an official said on Monday.

The upcoming Holi festival coincides with Friday prayers during the holy month of Ramzan.

"No one will be allowed to breach the law and order situation for the upcoming Holi and Friday prayers," a senior police officer said, adding that they have already identified sensitive areas.

Delhi HC seeks clarity on IHBAS' promotion plan

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

The Delhi high court has directed the principal secretary (health) and the director of the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) to file a joint status report on the implementation of a revised Assessment Promotion Scheme of the IHBAS.

"Be that as it may, the time has come for a final decision to be made and implemented. The chief secretary, GNCTD, principal secretary (health) and principal secretary (finance) are directed to ensure that a meeting is convened with the director of IHBAS as expeditiously as possible, preferably within a period of three weeks from today, and attended by the officers who are empowered to take

an effective decision in the matter," the court said in its February 21 order. The matter has been listed for further hearing on May 16.

The high court was hearing a 2013 petition on the revised Assessment Promotion of the IHBAS. The court said that the matter has been heard from time to time, and resolutions have also been passed by IHBAS. It said that by an order dated July 10, 2024, the statement of Delhi government standing counsel Avnish Ahlawat was recorded that the decision would, in all probability, be taken in two months.

The counsel submitted that in the light of these resolutions of EC and the governing body, he is unclear as to the nature of the further resolutions required to be passed by the EC.

Man shot dead on NH-24 near Phool Mandi, 2 arrested

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

The Delhi police has arrested two persons involved in killing a 30-year-old man near the Phool Mandi area on National Highway-24 in east Delhi while they were trying to flee.

The accused have been identified as Nazim (40) and Talib alias Tariq (24), he said, adding that the reason for the murder was an ongoing monetary dispute between the victim and the accused. "Eyewitness Akash Chaudhary stated that they were returning from a dumping yard on a scooter after refueling when a car carrying three to four people intercepted them and opened fire," DCP (East) Abhishek Dhanias said.

V-P Jagdeep Dhankhar recovering at AIIMS

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

Vice-president Jagdeep Dhankhar is recovering at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences

(AIIMS), Delhi, and his progress is satisfactory, sources said on Monday.

Mr Dhankhar was admitted in the hospital at around 2 am on Sunday after he complained of

uneasiness and chest pain.

He was admitted to the critical care unit under Dr Rajiv Narang, head of cardiology at AIIMS. A group of doctors is monitoring his condition.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

Ref: Tender Notice No. 97/2024-2025 dated 17.02.2025 S.No. 02
Tender Number 77259006RGC Opening date 19.03.2025

Some Tender Conditions of above referred tender has been modified. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.
The corrigendum has been published on website www.irops.gov.in.

Note : This is the First Corrigendum in above referred tender.

Date:- 06.03.2025

754/2025

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HOLI FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2025

For the Convenience of Rail passengers during HOLI FESTIVAL-2025, Railways are operating several Special Trains in addition to regular trains. The date wise list of Special Trains from Delhi area terminals is given below:-

SPECIAL TRAINS RUNNING ON 11.03.2025 (TUESDAY) FROM DELHI AREA TERMINALS

Spl. Train No.	Station From	Dept. Time	Station To	Arr. Time	Stoppages
04012	Delhi Jn	19:30	Darbhanga	16:30	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Lucknow, Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur Jn, Narkatiaganj, Raxaul, Bairgania, Sitamarhi and Janakpur Road stations.
04062	Delhi Jn.	23:55	Patna Jn.	16:40	Ghaziabad, Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Mirzapur, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara & Danapur stations
03698	Delhi Jn.	08:55	Gaya Jn.	00:30	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Bhabua Road, Sasaram, Dehri On Sone and Anugrah Narayan Road stations.
04404	Delhi Jn	20:40	Ringas Jn	04:10	Delhi Sarai Rohilla, Delhi Cantt, Gurgaon, Pataudi Road, Rewari Jn., Mahendragarh, Loharu, Jhunjhunu & Sikar Jn Stations.
02436	New Delhi	08:30	Patna Jn	20:10	Ghaziabad, Aligarh, Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar and Ara stations.
02394	New Delhi	13:20	Rajendra Nagar	07:45	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Danapur & Patna Jn stations.
04070	Anand Vihar (T.)	00:20	Rajgir	19:50	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., PT. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Patna Jn, Bakhtiyarpur Jn. & Bihar Sharif Jn. stations
04030	Anand Vihar (T.)	09:00	Muzaffarpur Jn.	06:00	Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Sitapur Jn, Gonda Jn., Gorakhpur, Kaptanganj Jn, Narkatiaganj Jn, Sagauli Jn & Bapudm Motihari stations
05578	Anand Vihar (T.)	05:15	Saharsa Jn	10:30	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Sitapur Jn., Gonda Jn, Basti, Gorakhpur Jn, Kaptanganj Jn, Bagaha, Narkatiaganj Jn, Raxaul Jn, Bairagnia, Sitamarhi, Janakpur Road, Darbhanga Jn, Sakri Jn, Jhanyharpur, Ghogardiha, Nirmali, Saraygarh, Supaul & Garh Baruari stations.
04016	Anand Vihar (T.)	00:30	Sitamarhi	02:00	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Lucknow, Raebareilly, Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappgarh, Varanasi Jn, Aunihar, Ghazipur City, Ballia, Suraimanpur, Chhapra, Sonpur, Hajipur Jn & MuzaffarpurJn (Reversal) Stations.
05204	Anand Vihar (T.)	09:20	Muzaffarpur Jn.	05:00	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn, Pt Deen Upadhyaya Jn, Buxar, Ara, Danapur, Patliputra, Sonpur Jn & Hajipur Jn Stations.

SPECIAL TRAINS RUNNING ON 12.03.2025 (WEDNESDAY) FROM DELHI AREA TERMINALS

04062	Delhi Jn.	23:55	Patna Jn.	16:40	Ghaziabad, Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Mirzapur, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara & Danapur stations
03698	Delhi Jn.	08:55	Gaya Jn.	00:30	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Bhabua Road, Sasaram, Dehri On Sone and Anugrah Narayan Road stations.
09004	Delhi Jn	13:05	Mumbai Central	13:30	Delhi Cantt, Gurgaon, Rewari Jn, Alwar, Bandikui Jn, Gandhinagar Jaipur, Jaipur Jn, Kishangarh, Ajmer Jn, Beawar, Marwar Jn, Falna, Pindwara, Abu Road, Palanpur Jn, Mahesana Jn, Sabarmati Bg, Vadodara Jn, Udhna Jn, Valsad, Vapi & Borivali stations
04081	New Delhi	23:45	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	11:40	Sonipat, Panipat, Karnal, Kurukshetra Jn, Ambala Cantt, Dhandari Kalan, Jalandhar Cantt, Pathankot Cantt, Jammu Tawi and Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan stations.
04068	New Delhi	14:00	Bhagalpur	13:30	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn, Buxar, Ara, Danapur, Patna Jn, Bakhtiyarpur Jn, Mokama, Hathidah Jn, Luckeesarai Jn, Kiul Jn, Abhaipur, Jamalpur Jn & Sultanaganj Stations.
02436	New Delhi	08:30	Patna Jn	20:10	Ghaziabad, Aligarh, Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar and Ara stations.
02394	New Delhi	13:20	Rajendra Nagar	07:45	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn, Pt.deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Danapur & Patna Jn stations.
05578	Anand Vihar (T.)	05:15	Saharsa Jn	10:30	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Sitapur Jn., Gonda Jn, Basti, Gorakhpur Jn, Kaptanganj Jn, Bagaha, Narkatiaganj Jn, Raxaul Jn, Bairagnia, Sitamarhi, Janakpur Road, Darbhanga Jn, Sakri Jn, Jhanyharpur, Ghogardiha, Nirmali, Saraygarh, Supaul & Garh Baruari stations.
05306	Anand Vihar (T.)	22:10	Chhapra	22:50	Etawah, Kanpur Central, Aishbagh, Badshahnagar, Barabanki Jn, Gonda Jn, Mankapur Jn, Babhnan, Basti, Khalilabad, Gorakhpur, Kaptanganj Jn, Padrauna, Tamkuhi Road, Thawe Jn & Siwan Jn

SPECIAL TRAINS RUNNING ON 13.03.2025 (THURSDAY) FROM DELHI AREA TERMINALS

04024	Delhi Jn	19:30	Varanasi Jn	09:45	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Lucknow, Raebareilly Jn and Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappgarh Jn. stations.
04026	Delhi Jn	23:05	Raxaul Jn.	19:00	Ghaziabad, Hapur, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Sitapur, Gonda Jn., Gorakhpur and Narkatiaganj Jn stations.
04062	Delhi Jn.	23:55	Patna Jn.	16:40	Ghaziabad, Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Mirzapur, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara & Danapur stations
03698	Delhi Jn.	08:55	Gaya Jn.	00:30	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Bhabua Road, Sasaram, Dehri On Sone and Anugrah Narayan Road stations.
04064	New Delhi	09:30	Gaya Jn	01:50	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya Jn, Bhabua Road, Sasaram and Dehri-on-Sone stations
04066	New Delhi	21:35	Saharsa Jn.	22:00	Govindpuri, Praygraj Jn., Mirzapur, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Danapur, Patliputra Jn., Sonpur, Hajipur Jn, Muzaffarpur Jn, Samastipur Jn, Daisingsarai, Barauni Jn., Begusarai, Khagaria Jn. & Mansi Jn stations
02436	New Delhi	08:30	Patna Jn	20:10	Ghaziabad, Aligarh, Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar and Ara stations.
02394	New Delhi	13:20	Rajendra Nagar	07:45	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn, Pt.deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Danapur and Patna Jn Stations.
04014	New Delhi	10:30	Jaynagar	15:15	Moradabad Jn, Bareilly Jn, Lucknow, Raebareilly Jn, Amethi, Maa Belha Devi Dham, Varanasi, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Danapur Patliputra, Hajipur Jn, Muzaffarpur Jn, Samastipur Jn, Darbhanga Jn & Madhubani stations
04028	Anand Vihar (T.)	23:55	Jogbani	03:00	Ghaziabad, Moradabad Jn, Bareilly Jn, Shahjehanpur, Sitapur, Gonda Jn., Basti, Gorakhpur, Deoria Sadar, Siwan Jn, Chhapra, Sonpur Jn, Hajipur Jn, Shahpur Patoree, Barauni Jn, Begu Sarai, Khagaria Jn., Naugachia, Katihar Jn, Purnea, Arariya & Forbesganj stns.
05578	Anand Vihar (T.)	05:15	Saharsa Jn	10:30	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Sitapur Jn., Gonda Jn, Basti, Gorakhpur Jn, Kaptanganj Jn, Bagaha, Narkatiaganj Jn, Raxaul Jn, Bairagnia, Sitamarhi, Janakpur Road, Darbhanga Jn, Sakri Jn, Jhanyharpur, Ghogardiha, Nirmali, Saraygarh, Supaul & Garh Baruari stations.
05114	Anand Vihar (T)	16:00	Chhapra	14:00	Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Sitapur, Burhwal, Gonda Jn, Basti, Khalilabad, Gorakhpur Jn, Kaptanganj Jn, Padrauna, Tamkuhi Road, Thawe Jn, Dighwa Dubauli, Mashrakh & Chhapra Kacheri Stations.
03012	Anand Vihar (T.)	00:30	Howrah	30:00	Tundia Jn, Etawah Jn, Govindpuri, Fatehpur, Paryagraj Jn., Mirzapur, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Jn, Bhabua Road, Sasaram, Dehri On Sone, Anugraha Narayan Road, Gaya, Koderma, Dhanbad, Asansol, Durgapur, Bardhaman & Bandel stations.
01708	Anand Vihar (T.)	18:05	Jabalpur Jn.	10:00	Ghaziabad, Aligarh Jn, Tundla Jn, Etawah Jn, Govindpuri, Fatehpur, Prayagraj Jn, Shankargarh, Manikpur Jn, Satna, Maihar & Katni stations.
08761	Hazrat Nizamuddin	12:30	Durg	13:50	Mathura Jn, Agra Cantt, Virangana Lakshmbai (Jhanshi), Saugor, Damoh, Katni Murwara, Umaria, Shahdol, Anuppur Jn, Pendra Road, Usalapur & Raipur Jn stations.

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Clips from courts circulated for sensationalism: SC judge

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

Expressing concern over the circulation of edited clips of hearings on social media to sensationalise legal proceedings, Supreme Court judge Justice B.R. Gavai said that the judiciary might have to formulate guidelines over live-streaming of courts.

At an event in Kenya, Justice Gavai, next in line to be the Chief Justice of India, said: "I would highlight another concern from the Indian experience. Short clips from court hearings are often circulated on social media, sometimes in a way that sensationalises the proceedings. These clips, when taken out of context, can lead to misinformation, misinterpretation of judicial discussions, and inaccurate reporting."

Speaking on "Leveraging on

Technology within the Judiciary", Justice Gavai pointed out several content creators, including YouTubers, re-uploaded short excerpts from the hearing as their own content, raising concerns over intellectual property rights and ownership of judicial recordings. "The unauthorised use and potential monetisation of such content blur the lines between public access and ethical broadcasting," he said. The judge said managing such challenges was an emerging issue for the judiciary and courts might have to establish guidelines on the usage of live-streamed proceedings.

Striking a balance between transparency, public awareness, and the responsible use of court content will be critical in addressing these ethical concerns, he added.



SHORT TAKES

10 Cong cadre hurt in MP stage collapse

Bhopal: At least 10 Congress activists were injured on Monday when the stage at a protest site collapsed. The activists were protesting against the alleged failure of the Madhya Pradesh government to fulfil the promises made to the farmers. Sources said that the injured Congress workers were given first-aid treatment. The party had called for a gherao of the state Assembly, the Budget Session of which commenced on Monday, in protest against the state government's failure to implement various promises made to the farmers before the last Assembly polls. AICC general secretary in-charge of party affairs in MP Harish Choudhury, who was present on the occasion, dismissed the incident, saying, "Such things happen during a struggle." He said that his party was gaining strength in the state to wage a struggle against the state BJP government.

Route changed for Sabarimala devotees

Thiruvananthapuram: Considering the long-pending demand of Sabarimala devotees, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) has decided to change the "darshan" route at Sabarimala, allowing devotees to have darshan directly as they climb the holy 18 steps at Sannidhanam. TDB president P.S. Prasanth announced that this change would be implemented on a trial basis from March 15 during the monthly pooja and would continue for 12 days during the Vishu Pooja. "If it proves successful, this change will be made permanent during the next Mandalam-Makaravilakku season," Mr Prasanth said. He said that the board had received numerous requests, including thousands of letters from devotees, urging a revision of the route to facilitate a better darshan experience upon climbing the 18 holy steps. "Currently, devotees who ascend the holy steps are directed to a bridge, where they wait in a queue before proceeding to the other side for darshan."

TMC's Roy falls ill in Parl, rushed to hosp

New Delhi: Senior Trinamul Congress (TMC) leader Saugata Roy was on Monday rushed to the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital from Parliament complex after he fell sick. Mr Roy had participated in a debate on a bill in Lok Sabha after he felt unwell. He was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance by the Parliament staff. "He was brought a little while ago. He had pain in the back and had little sweating. "He has been admitted to the nursing home. He is being evaluated by a team of doctors. His tests are being done," said Dr Manoj Jha, additional medical Superintendent at RML hospital. — PTI

CHAR DHAM HELI TICKETS' SALE UNDER CM LENS

AGE CORRESPONDENT
DEHRADUN, MARCH 10

Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday directed the state vigilance department to crack down on black marketing of helicopter tickets during the Char Dham season. The Char Dham pilgrimage will begin with the opening of the portals of the Yamunotri and Gangotri shrines on April 30. "The vigilance department should remain alert and keep strict vigil on black marketing of helicopter tickets during the upcoming Chardham Yatra. The police must bust rackets or nab those involved in such malpractices and take strict action against them," the chief minister told senior officials at a high-level meeting. He also asked tourism minister Satpal Maharaj to take stock of the ongoing preparation of the yatra to the Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath, and Kedarnath shrines. The CM ordered officials to ensure only single-use plastic items are sold and adequate pink toilets are set up, with key priority given to cleanliness. He also directed secretaries and senior police officers to conduct a field inspection by March.



Pushkar Singh Dhami

Stalin slams 'arrogance', tells Pradhan to control his tongue

If Union minister's remarks had approval of PM Modi? asks TN CM

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR
and D. SEKAR
CHENNAI, MARCH 10

Urging Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan to mind his tongue and stop speaking arrogantly against Tamil Nadu as though he was a monarch, chief minister M.K. Stalin asked him if he would release the funds due for the state that were collected as tax and meant to be spent on students of the state or not.

Mr Stalin told Mr Pradhan, who ignited the second bout of angry exchanges between the BJP and state leaders over the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) by derogating Dravidian Munnatra Kazhagam (DMK) MPs on Monday, three weeks after he first triggered the controversy, in no uncertain terms that he had insulted the people of Tamil Nadu. Though Mr Pradhan had



Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Jayant Chaudhary and Sukanta Majumdar during the Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Monday.

reportedly withdrawn his insulting remark against Tamil Nadu MPs, which was made on the floor of the House, with Speaker Om Birla expunging it from the records, the fire he lit continued to rage all over the state. DMK workers held protests and set on fire his photographs and effigies to express their anger over the overbearing attitude. In his message on X, Mr

Stalin made it clear that the state government did not agree to implement the Centre's PM Shri scheme, denying Mr Pradhan's charge that the state reneged on its promise. The chief minister said that when he had not agreed to implement the Centre's scheme, nobody could persuade him on it. He also asked Union education minister if his remarks against Tamil

Nadu had the approval of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Recalling Mr Pradhan's letter to him, dated August 30, 2024, outlining Tamil Nadu's rejection of the NEP, the 3-language policy, and the PM Shri MoU, Mr Stalin said the DMK government worked on the basis of the aspirations of the people and not like the BJP leaders bound by diktat of Nagpur.

He slammed Mr Pradhan for using a word to target the DMK MPs and said the Central minister deceived Tamil Nadu by not releasing funds. "You are insulting the people of Tamil Nadu. Does PM Narendra Modi accept this?" he asked.

Meanwhile, BJP leader K. Annamalai said DMK MPs think they can always spread half-truths and untruths and did not expect to be exposed on the floor of the Parliament by Mr Pradhan.

Want to be part of CM's developmental steps: Tapasi Mondal Suvendu's close aide MLA joins TMC

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, MARCH 10

A year ahead of the Assembly elections in West Bengal, the BJP suffered a huge blow as its MLA Tapasi Mondal, a close aide of Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari, defected to the Trinamul Congress on Monday. Ms Mondal joined the ruling party at its office in Kolkata in the presence of state minister Aroop Biswas.

Ms Mondal, who is the 12th MLA to have switched to the TMC from the BJP in the last four years, represents the Haldia constituency in East Midnapore, the home turf of Mr Adhikari.

Ironically, she had defected to the BJP along with Mr Adhikari at a rally of Union home minister Amit Shah months

WB Speaker suspends BJP MLA over ruckus in House

Kolkata, March 10: The West Bengal Assembly witnessed chaos on Monday as Opposition BJP MLAs protested the Speaker's decision to switch off the microphone of one of their colleagues, prompting Speaker Biman Bandopadhyay to suspend saffron party legislator Dipak Barman for the rest of the session and order marshals to

evict two others from the House. The BJP MLAs later staged a walkout in protest against the "biased approach" of the Speaker.

The developments began when BJP MLA Hiran Chatterjee, during the discussion on the budget, raised concerns about the functioning of the West Bengal Public Service Commission.

— PTI

before the 2021 Assembly polls. She won the Haldia seat as a Congress-supported CPI(M) candidate in the 2016 Assembly polls. After joining the TMC, Ms Mondal said, "I decided to be a part of chief minister Mamata

'Must seek citizenship for legitimate reasons' Lalit Modi in fresh trouble, Vanuatu to cancel passport

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10



Lalit Modi

The leadership of Vanuatu has ordered the cancellation of the citizenship of alleged economic offender and fugitive Lalit Modi, who had recently submitted an application to the Indian high commission in London to surrender his Indian passport after obtaining citizenship of the archipelago nation Vanuatu.

According to global media reports on Monday, Vanuatu's Prime Minister Jotham Napat announced that his country had decided to cancel Lalit's citizenship, adding that a Vanuatu passport was a "privilege" and that "applicants must seek citizenship for legitimate reasons".

"None of those legitimate reasons include attempting to avoid extradition, which the recent facts brought to light clearly indicate was Lalit

Modi's intention," he said. He also reportedly said that background checks and Interpol screenings conducted during Lalit's application for a passport had shown no criminal convictions. Mr Napat, however, added that in the past 24 hours, he had been made aware that Interpol had twice rejected India's requests to issue an alert notice, citing a lack of "substantive judicial evidence".

A statement by the Vanuatu government was quoted by media reports as stating, "Any such alert would've triggered an

automatic rejection of Modi's citizenship application."

According to reports, the former chief of the Indian Premier League (IPL) is "wanted for allegedly rigging bids" during his tenure as IPL head and has been living in Britain since 2010 while denying the allegations against him.

India had last week said it is examining rules following an application by Lalit Modi who has submitted an application in London to surrender his Indian passport after taking citizenship of Vanuatu.



Christopher Luxon

Kiwi PM will visit India on Mar 16, Modi talks next day

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon will pay an official five-day visit next week to India starting Sunday during which he will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and will also be the chief guest on Monday at the Raisina Dialogue conference in the capital.

In a statement, New Delhi said, "At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of New Zealand Christopher Luxon, will pay an official visit to India on 16-20 March 2025. He will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including ministers, senior officials, businesses, media and members of the Indian diaspora community in New Zealand. This would be the first visit to India by Prime Minister Luxon in his present capacity. He will visit New Delhi and Mumbai before returning to Wellington on March 20."

The MEA added, "During his visit, Prime Minister Luxon will hold talks with PM Modi on 17 March 2025, covering various aspects of India-New Zealand relations. Prime Minister Modi will host a lunch in honour of the visiting dignitary. A call on President Droupadi Murmu is scheduled on the same day. Prime Minister Luxon will join the inaugural session of the 10th Raisina Dialogue 2025 on 17 March 2025 in New Delhi as the chief guest and deliver the Keynote address."

Reclaim Kabaw Valley 'gifted' to Myanmar by Nehru: MP to govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

The titular king of the erstwhile princely state of Manipur and Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba on Monday urged the Central government to reclaim the "historically significant" Kabaw Valley, now part of Myanmar, which was "unjustly" handed over to Burma (now Myanmar) by then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on March 3, 1953, following a meeting with his Burmese counterpart, U. Nu, in Manipur. The BJP MP charged that the Valley was gifted away by Nehru "whimsically and unconstitutionally" to the neighbouring country.

Raising the matter during Zero Hour in the Upper House, the MP said if the valley is not reclaimed, the government should ensure the continuation of compensation payments as stipulated under the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826) and the Kabaw Valley Agreement (1834). Asserting that the valley had been an integral part of the Manipur Kingdom since 1450 AD, the BJP MP said it was unjustly handed over to Burma (now Myanmar) without the approval of the Indian Parliament or the endorsement of the Manipur state.

Mr Sanajaoba termed the handing over of the valley as "the most unfortunate day in the history of

Govt: Ganga water was fit for bathing during Kumbh

New Delhi, March 10: The Central government on Monday cited a new report from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in Parliament and said the water in the Ganga at Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj was fit for bathing during the recently concluded Maha Kumbh. Triveni Sangam is where the Ganga meets the Yamuna and Saraswati rivers.

The government also said it had provided a total of ₹7,421 crore to the National Mission for

Clean Ganga in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 (until March 9).

In response to a question from Samajwadi Party MP Anand Bhadauria and Congress MP K. Sudhakaran, Union environment minister Bhupendra Yadav said that according to the CPCB report, the median values of pH, dissolved oxygen (DO), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and faecal coliform (FC) at all monitored locations were within the permissible limits for bathing.

— PTI

Manipur". Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishemba further said that under the two agreements, Burma had agreed to pay a monthly compensation, which was paid to Manipur till 1949, and after 1949 with the merger of Manipur into India, the same amount was paid to the Indian government till around 1953.

Delhi-based designers face heat, apologise after uproar No govt role in Gulmarg show: Omar

Jammu/New Delhi, March 10: Outrage over a fashion show in Gulmarg found wide echo in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Monday, with chief minister Omar Abdullah saying his government had no role in the event organised at a private hotel, and would not have given its permission even if it was not Ramzan.

At the centre of the controversy over the show, which Kashmir's chief priest Mirwaiz Umar Farooq dubbed obscene, were designer duo Shivan & Narresh. As the issue over the March 7 fashion walk through the snow meadows in Gulmarg

escalated, they expressed deep regret.

The Delhi-based designers, whose full names are Shivan Bhatiya and Narresh Kukreja, had showcased their skiwear collection to mark the 15th anniversary of their label.

"Our sole intention was to celebrate creativity and the ski & apres-ski lifestyle, without any desire to offend anyone or any religious sentiments. Respect for all cultures and traditions is at our heart, and we acknowledge the concerns raised. We sincerely apologise for any unintended discomfort and appreciate the feedback from our com-



Omar Abdullah

munity. We remain committed to being more mindful and respectful," the designers said in a statement on Sunday night.

The apology did little to assuage the anger. A day after Mr Abdullah asked for a report on the matter, he said in the

Assembly that those who organised the fashion show had not applied their mind, shown disregard to public sentiment and paid no attention to where it was happening and its timing.

"Some people are saying that such a show should not have happened in the month of Ramzan. After what I have seen, I am of the opinion that it should not have taken place any time of the year," Mr Abdullah said.

Making a statement in the House after the Question Hour, the CM said the "disappointment and concern" of the members are genuine. — PTI



SHORT TAKES

Crackdown on sand mining, 123 arrested

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Police, under the leadership of director general (DG) Yoghesh Bahadur Khurania, has initiated a sweeping statewide crackdown on illegal sand mining. In coordination with the state's mines department, law enforcement authorities raided multiple locations, seizing 136 vehicles and arresting 123 individuals since Sunday. The operation aims to dismantle the entrenched networks of the sand mafia, whose illegal activities pose significant threats to local resources and communities. Senior police officials across various districts have been spearheading extensive raids to curb unauthorised sand and minor mineral extraction. District police units remain on high alert, carrying out targeted missions to disrupt sand smuggling operations.

ED raids Baghel, his son in ₹2,16lcr liquor scam case

Continued From Page 1

parallel system of illegal liquor trade in the state, causing huge loss to the state exchequer. Earlier, the ED arrested former excise minister Kawasi Lakhma, Anwar Dhebar, Anil Tuteja, and former IAS officer Arunpati Tripathy in connection with the case.

Reacting strongly to the raids, Mr Baghel linked the searches to his recent appointment as Congress in-charge for Punjab, asserting that such actions would not deter him from fulfilling his party responsibilities. He also claimed that the case had been ongoing for seven years and had previously been dismissed by the court.

The raids triggered a political storm in the Chhattisgarh Assembly, with Congress MLAs condemning the ED's actions, calling it a "murder of democracy."

In a dramatic turn, the ED team was reportedly attacked by a crowd while exiting Baghel's residence. Officials, including Congress workers, staged demonstrations against the searches. The car of a deputy director-level ED officer was also allegedly attacked. The ED officials were heckled by some people who gathered outside Mr Baghel's residence.

Mr Baghel later told the media that the ED team had recovered a cash of ₹32-33 lakhs and some documents during the search in his house that lasted nearly 10 hours.

The former chief minister, however, said that the cash recovered from his house was related to the agriculture and dairy businesses of his family.

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Charan Das Mahant slammed the ED action, saying that his party would not be cowed down by such intimidation by the probe agencies.

State Congress president Deepak Baij accused BJP of doing politics through the probe agencies.

Bullet train station will also be situated near airport: Ajit Maharashtra to build third airport near Vadhvan port

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, MARCH 10

Two major initiatives - a third airport for Mumbai near the upcoming Vadhvan port in the Palghar district and the night landing facility at Shirdi Airport - have found a place in the Maharashtra government's budget for the financial year 2025-26.

Maharashtra's deputy chief minister and finance minister Ajit Pawar, in his address to the Vidhan Sabha, indicated that the new airport would be situated near Vadhvan port, which is expected to become operational by 2030. Vadhvan Port, the proposed deep seaport in Palghar district, will see the state contributing 26 per cent of the total project cost, said Mr Pawar while announcing plans for the third Mumbai airport as part of the port's development. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train station will also be situated near the airport, he added.

The Vadhvan port — a Greenfield all-weather port is coming up in Vadhvan for which PM Narendra Modi performed the ground-breaking ceremony last year. The total project cost, including the land acquisition component is ₹76,220 crore.

In addition, Mr Pawar also announced that the Shirdi Airport will soon have a "night landing facility."

SC slams J&K staff over daily wagers' issue

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

The Supreme Court has censured Jammu and Kashmir officials for not complying with a 2007 high court order over the regularisation of daily wagers who had worked for 14-19 years and dubbed the procrastination as a "glaring and textbook example of obstination".

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N. Kotiswar Singh said: "We are constrained to observe that the present case is a glaring and textbook example of obstination exhibited by the state officials/authorities, who consider themselves to be above and beyond the reach of law."

In its order on March 7, the bench said instead of complying with the 2007 order of the HC for regularisation of daily wagers, who worked between 14-19 years, the state authorities kept on passing "cryptic orders" to harass them.



Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar while presenting the Maharashtra government's budget for the 2025-26 fiscal on Monday. — RAJESH JADHAV

₹2,100 promised to 'Ladki Bahin' before polls still a distant dream

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, MAR. 10

In a clear indication that the beneficiaries of the Ladki Bahin Yojana will not get a hike in payments, the Maharashtra government has cut down the amount earmarked for the popular scheme in the annual budget.

Maharashtra finance minister Ajit Pawar has earmarked ₹36,000 crore for the state's flagship women's welfare scheme, as against the funds of

₹46,000 crore in the last budget.

Mr Pawar announced a budget allocation of ₹36,000 crore for the populist scheme for the fiscal year 2025-26. The allocation marks a substantial reduction from the previously projected amount of ₹46,000 crore. He also stated that the actual expenditure under the scheme since its inception has been ₹33,232 crore, with the revised estimate for financial year 2024-25 now pegged at ₹36,000 crore.

The numbers easily cross a lakh and above on Thursdays, Sundays and holidays.

Priyanka Chopra may join ₹1,000crore film Rajamouli's next to put Odisha's Koraput on global cinematic map

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 10

Odisha's picturesque Koraput district is set to become the latest hotspot for Indian cinema as legendary filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli gears up for the shoot of his much-anticipated film, SSMB 29. Starring South Indian superstar Mahesh Babu, this upcoming cinematic spectacle has already generated massive buzz, not just for its star-studded cast but also for its choice of location.

Mr Rajamouli's team has been meticulously scouting for breathtaking locations for the action-packed adventure film, and Koraput's mesmerising landscapes, with its towering hills and lush greenery, have captivated their imagination. Impressed by the region's raw and untamed beauty, Mr Rajamouli personally visited Koraput and finalised it as one of the primary



Crew members (right) of S.S. Rajamouli at the foothills of Deomali preparing for the shoot of SSMB 29 in Odisha's Koraput district.

shooting locations. Reports suggest that shooting will commence on March 28.

According to sources, a 500-member crew has already arrived in Koraput to begin the groundwork for the film. The first phase of shooting will take place in the Talamali area, where preparations are in full swing. The scale of the production is evident from the fact that all hotels in nearby Semiliguda have been fully booked for the film's crew and staff.

With a reported estimat-

Pawar tables ₹7.2 lakh-cr state budget

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, MARCH 10

Unlike the election year of 2003-2024, the Maharashtra budget this year did not have any populist announcements. Instead, state finance minister Ajit Pawar, who on Monday presented the "Mahayuti" government's first budget after the election, announced plans to develop the Mumbai metropolitan region as an international-class "growth hub". He also increased taxes on non-transport four wheelers CNG and LPG vehicles.

Mr Pawar presented a ₹7.20 lakh crore budget with revenue deficit of ₹45,892 crore and fiscal deficit of ₹1,36,234 crore.

As per the budget document, the debt stock of the state is ₹8,39,275 crore in the financial year 2024-25, while it would be increased to ₹9,32,242 crore in the financial year 2025-26. However, CM Devendra Fadnavis said, "A state's debts should not be more than 25 per cent of its GDP. We are at 18 per cent. Maharashtra and Gujarat are the only two states in the country to have debt less than 20 per cent of its GDP."

Gold smuggling case: Ranya Rao sent to JC till March 25

2 Cong ministers tried to help her in the case: BJP

M.B. GIRISH
BENGALURU, MARCH 10

The special court for economic offences, Bengaluru on Monday remanded actress Ranya Rao, an accused in gold smuggling case, to judicial custody till March 25 after her 3-days custody given to directorate of revenue intelligence, a Central agency, ended.

Earlier, the special court for economic offences gave 3-days custody of actress Ranya Rao to DRI on Friday.

A DRI officials produced Ranya Rao before the court and submitted a report to the court. DRI officials on March 3 successfully intercepted Rao on her arrival from Dubai to Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) near Bengaluru city.

Upon her interception, the DRI officials recovered 14.2 kg of gold bars of foreign origin and valued at ₹12.56 crore.

Over the seizure made from the actress allegedly involved in gold-smuggling, the officials stated "The successful interception and seizure (of gold

DRI arrests 1 more person in gold smuggling case involving actress

Bengaluru, March 10: The DRI officials on Monday arrested one more person in connection with the gold smuggling case involving actress Ranya Rao.

The arrested person is the son of a prominent hotelier and was allegedly a partner in gold smuggling involving the actress. The businessman was produced before the special court for economic offences, which allowed the directorate of revenue intelligence (DRI) to keep him in its custody for five days.

The DRI seized gold bars



Ranya Rao is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra Rao. The DGP-rank officer is chairman and managing director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. —PTI

from actress) marked a significant blow to organised gold-smuggling."

The seizure of 14.2 kg of gold is one of the biggest seizures at Kempegowda International Airport in recent years.

Prior to court order in the actress case, BJP MLA Bharathi Shetty told reporters in Bengaluru, said the actress, immedi-

ately after being caught by DRI officials at KIA, tried to contact some Congress minister to get out of the trouble.

Mr Shetty alleged two Congress ministers alleged to have been involved (with the accused) and tried to help her. Now, a CBI investigation is going to reveal "Who is behind the case?"

Violence over celebrations after India's win, 13 held

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, MARCH 10

Clashes erupted in Mhow in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district late on Sunday night after a rally, taken out to celebrate India's ICC Champions Trophy victory, in the town was attacked by some miscreants, police said on Monday.

Four were injured and several four and two wheelers were set ablaze by the miscreants in the incident, according to the Indore district collector Ashish Singh.

As per the police, four cars and a dozen two-wheelers were damaged by the miscreants in the incident. Thirteen people have so far been arrested in connection with the incident, Mr Singh said.

Videos surfacing on social media in connection with the incident and the footage of CCTVs were being scrutinized to identify the other accused in the incident, he said.

As per him, reinforcements rushed to the town to maintain law and order. Peace has been restored in the town and the situation is under control now, he said.

SANJAY KAW
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

With an outlay of ₹7,706 crore for safety works of level crossings and road over / under bridges as thrust areas of the railways for the next fiscal, a parliamentary panel has made a strong recommendation for a sufficient budgetary allocation for structural improvement and early shifting to condition-based / predictive maintenance to mitigate water-logging woes on these assets of the country's largest public transporter.

The standing committee on railways, which tabled its report in the Lok Sabha on Monday, also flagged delays in the upgradation of 1,337 stations for development under Amrit Bharat Station scheme.

Out of these stations, the panel said that tenders for development works have been allotted and works are in progress at 1,202 stations.

It, however, noted that as against the target for upgradation of 453 stations during 2024-25 (as of December 2024), only one station has actually undergone uplift.

The committee has recommended setting up of a

THE REPORT stressed the need to improve average speed of freight trains which stood at 25 km per hour during 2023-24 as freight remains the backbone of the public transporter

dedicated task force for better project oversight and coordination among stakeholders, besides early engagement with local representatives and state governments to reduce bureaucratic delays.

The panel underscored that the redevelopment of stations should focus on improving crowd management to prevent any untoward incidents and recommended to the railways to explore private investment and expertise to evaluate the success of the public private partnership model.

The report stressed the urgent need to improve average speed of freight trains which stood at 25 km per hour during 2023-24 as freight remains the backbone of the public transporter contributing about 65 per cent of its total revenue. It has also recommended development and usage of freight corridors on a priority basis.

Parl erupts as TN govt targeted

Continued From Page 1

said: "They are dishonest and they are ruining the future of the students of TN. They are doing politics." Mr Pradhan said that at one point the government of TN had agreed to the PM SHRI scheme and several (DMK) MPs, who came to see him, conveyed this to him.

"But when they went back, they made a U-turn. They are doing mischief with the lives of the students. They are misleading the people and doing injustice to the students of Tamil Nadu. They are undemocratic," he alleged.

Mr Pradhan told the House that Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin had also agreed initially "but suddenly some super CM appeared and they took a U-turn. They just want to do politics".

"Today is March 10. We still have 20 days left in March," he said, indicating the time left for the Tamil Nadu government to sign the MoU on PM SHRI. Taking strong exception to the minister's remarks, the DMK members raised slogans against the Centre in the House.

Speaker Om Birla asked the agitating members to return to their seats and allow the House to function normally. Mr Birla said he had given an opportunity to the Opposition members to pose questions and, subsequently, the minister had replied.

"But now you are doing this (protests). This is not good. You are setting a wrong precedent. Don't violate par-

liamentary procedures," the Speaker said. However, the DMK members ignored Mr Birla's request and continued their protests. Members of the Congress and other Opposition parties also joined them. After some time, Mr Birla adjourned the House till 12 noon.

When the House reassembled at noon, DMK member Kanimozhi told the House that she was "very pained and hurt" by a particular word used by the minister. "We are speaking to our leaders about moving a privilege motion," she added. Ms Kanimozhi also said she and other DMK MPs, along with the Tamil Nadu education minister, had met Mr Pradhan to request him to release the funds to the state under education schemes. "We have clearly said that we have issues with the NEP and we cannot accept it in full. We said that the three-language formula is not acceptable to Tamil Nadu. The truth is that the chief minister of Tamil Nadu had written to the minister as well as the PM saying we have some issues with the NEP and cannot accept it in total. He had also requested to release the funds," she said, adding: "The MPs of TN have never accepted the NEP".

Responding to Ms Kanimozhi, Mr Pradhan said: "My esteemed colleague, one of my dearest sisters and senior member Honourable Kanimozhi has raised two points.

"At one point she said that I have used a word which I should not have used by the members from TN, TN government and people of TN. Let's not mix it. Let me withdraw it. I withdraw my word if it has hurt anyone. I have no issues with that," he said.

Mr Pradhan further said the MPs met him on several occasions and the education minister of Tamil Nadu was also part of the delegation, which was in a "good spirit that something (solution) should come up."

"I was also open. We have agreed on certain things. They went back and mentioned this to the chief minister who has also given his consent to go ahead. Later, they told me informally that certain issues had come up. This is unfortunate," he said. The minister said that since today is March 10, there is time and the Tamil Nadu government can come back on the issues they have agreed to and the central government would respond to that.

"We have no issues with the non-BJP ruled states - Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab," he said. After the minister's comments, the Speaker said since the minister withdrew the word that he had used, it would be expunged from the records. Later, speaking to the media in the Parliament complex, Mr Pradhan said the DMK-led TN should rise above political interests for the benefit of students.

Rahul joins protests by TMC

Continued From Page 1

on voters' lists.

"We accept your remarks that the government does not make voter lists. But we demand a discussion on the issue. The voters' lists are being questioned across the country. Questions have been raised by the Opposition in one voice in every state, including Maharashtra," Mr Gandhi said.

Earlier, TMC member Saugata Roy said there were some flaws in the voters' lists and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee had pointed out that voters with the same Electoral Photo Identity Card numbers were present in Murshidabad and Burdwan parliamentary constituencies and in Haryana.

Mr Roy said that a TMC delegation was meeting the newly-appointed chief election commissioner to flag concerns on voters' lists. Mr Roy also demanded a thorough revision of the voters' lists, particularly ahead of the Assembly polls in West Bengal and Assam scheduled next year. "There are some serious flaws. This has been pointed out with respect to Maharashtra, which had inflated voter lists. This was pointed out in Haryana. They are now trying to jump into West Bengal and Assam where elections are due next year," Mr Roy claimed.

He further said that let the total voter lists be thoroughly revised and the Election Commission should answer to the country why some mistakes occurred in the lists.

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee demanded action against the EC and said the poll body had "failed" to conduct fair and transparent elections over the past few years.

Mr Banerjee said West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee had first flagged the issue of numerous instances of 'duplicate' voter cards and the explanation given by the EC was a clear breach of the Conduct of Election Rules itself.

"These things have come up over the last few years. Earlier, it was not there. Where is the increase in the number of voters in West Bengal from? Voters are coming from Gujarat and Haryana... This is not tolerable," Mr Banerjee said.

"The EC, all the time, says they have conducted transparent and fair elections. It is clear that there were no transparent elections for the last few years. There was no fair election for the last few years, not at all," he said. "The EC has not done a proper act and appropriate proceedings should be brought against the Election Commission for this reason," the TMC leader said.

In the RS, Opposition MPs demanded an immediate discussion on the discrepancies in voters' lists but were disallowed to raise the issue, leading to a walkout.

Mr Kharge was initially allowed to speak but as he mentioned the "EPIC" issue, deputy chairman Harivansh refused to allow him to make his remarks, saying the notices were rejected. Opposition MPs shouted slogans against the rejection of notices and announced a walkout from the House.

Later in an X post, Mr Khareg said: "The entire Opposition wants a detailed discussion on the doubts arisen regarding various discrepancies in the Voters List. Parliament must protect the faith of the people in Democracy and the Constitution of India."

PM's Mauritius visit from today

Continued From Page 1

"significant agreements" to advance economic ties during Mr Modi's visit starting Tuesday. Mr Srivastava highlighted the launch of the RuPay card and Unified Payment Interface in Mauritius as key tools to boost tourist inflows into the East African nation. He said, "In terms of our economic relationship, there is a lot of potential. The expectation is that during the visit, there would be discussions and agreements regarding trade to take forward economic ties."

On Monday, the PM added: "We are connected by history, geography and culture. Deep mutual trust, a shared belief in the values of democracy, and celebration of our diversity are our strengths. The close and historical people-to-people connect is a source of shared pride. We have

made strides in last 10 years with people centric initiatives. I look forward to the opportunity to engage with the Mauritius leadership to elevate our partnership in all its facets and strengthen our enduring friendship for the progress and prosperity of our peoples, as well as for security and development in the Indian Ocean Region, as part of our Vision SAGAR Security and Growth for All in the Region).

"During the visit, the PM will call on the President of Mauritius, meet the PM, and hold meetings with leaders of political parties in Mauritius. The PM will also interact with the members of the Indian-origin community and inaugurate the Civil Service College and the Area Health Centre, both built with India's grant assistance," New Delhi had said earlier.

Opp. walks out of Rajya Sabha

Continued From Page 1

been rejected. Citing the rejection, Harivansh did not allow Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge to make his submission. The Opposition MPs then protested for a while before staging a walkout. Terming the walkout "irresponsible behaviour", Mr Nadda also termed the practice of Opposition MPs giving notices under Rule 267 despite elaborate rulings by the Chair a "vicious design to demean the institution of Parliament".

"They are not interested in debate. They want to give an impression that the government does not want to answer queries or enter into a

debate... the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is ready to discuss anything under this roof. But there are certain rules and regulations for debates in the House," Mr Nadda said, adding that MPs will get an opportunity to raise their issues during the debate on the Union Budget over the next 10 days.

"We are ready for that discussion. There is a provision for short duration discussions and there is a provision for long duration discussions. They (Opposition) don't read the rules," Mr Nadda said, as he asked the Opposition MPs to first read the rules and learn to debate.



THE ASIAN AGE

11 MARCH 2025

Team India assert white cricket ball supremacy

Team India have a trophy to endorse their white ball supremacy as seen in a two-year run in three ICC events in which they lost only one match to the Australians, which was the ODI World Cup in India, while winning 22, including the Champions Trophy. As a squad, they honed their game skills to a level of consistency that makes them true champions.

Team India's victory gladdened the hearts of their billion fans while leaving the rest of the cricket world fuming over the preferential treatment that saw them play all their games in Dubai, skipping Pakistan which they could not visit for security reasons. That the New Zealanders stretched them to the end of the penultimate over while defending a total in Dubai on Sunday night says much about the Kiwis' competitive and sporting spirit.

And yet the Indians were formidable through the tournament with a team that contained four all-rounders who lent heft to the batting, great finishers in Virat Kohli and K.L. Rahul who absorbed all the pressures in the chase on slowing pitches and a skipper who believed in batting with near reckless abandon to give the team dynamic starts against the new ball that are the key to strategically timed aggression the format calls for.

Having unselfishly dropped himself from the Sydney Test in Australia, captain Rohit displayed exemplary leadership in sustaining India's comeback trail across two tournaments in the space of 10 months while keeping faith with a chosen set of players with limited-overs capabilities. Convinced that the same unselfish way of going after the new ball is in the best interest of his team, Rohit has proved himself to be a great general even if he could do with a bit of luck with the toss.

Body-shamed by a misandrist of a Congress spokesperson, Rohit put up a 'stout' attacking show in the final that compensated for the inevitable slowing down against spin on pitches that could have come straight out of the subcontinent. The contributions of Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer and Hardik Pandya made this a combined effort by the top order that gave the batting lineup its awe-inspiring look.

The outstanding performers of the ODI tournament were the spinners, of whom India played as many as four in the playing XI. The most crucial element was the advent of Varun Chakravarty, who was not in the original squad and who brings an asphyxiating quality by persistently harrying batsmen with accuracy more than bedazzling variety. With Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel chipping in, there was never a tension-free moment for opposing batsmen in the middle overs.

Having gotten over their bogey team Australia in a hard-fought semi-final, Team India were up against another southern hemisphere team that has always punched above its weight though it was again confined to the invariable role of bridesmaid rather than bride. The trans-Tasman teams and South Africa had to journey to Dubai from out of Pakistan, but those conditions were known long before the first ball was bowled.

With two of four ICC trophies in their kitty, Team India, along with their seniors, may have raised their ambitions to chasing the other two in the ODI World Cup and the World Test Championship (WTC), both of which are slotted for 2027. In its blend of youth and experience the current team and a few talents who were not in this squad can make fine combinations in any of the three formats and Indian cricket has the clout to help them try for the quadruple.

Telangana banks on education

Following the caste census, chief minister A. Revanth Reddy-led Congress government in Telangana appears to have doubled down on its welfare agenda by announcing its intent to spend ₹11,000 crores to construct Young India Integrated Residential Schools for students from the BC, SC and ST communities.

The government aims to construct 55 such schools in the state, which translates into having one residential school for two Assembly constituencies. The campus of each school, spread over about 20 to 25 acres, will have a hostel, a sports complex and a housing complex will also be built to provide accommodation to the teachers.

The goal is to provide international standard education to the poor, marginalised, weak, ordinary and middle-class children of the state, which appear to be left out of race in the fast-changing global technological landscape.

India spends nearly ₹8 lakh crores on education every year — ₹6 lakh crores by state governments and nearly ₹2 lakh crores by the Central government. The combined spend will make up nearly 3 per cent of India's ₹272-lakh crores economy. However, except for a few exceptions, government schools are not known for imparting the best education due to the lack of resources and lack of accountability among teaching and non-teaching staff.

If the Telangana government's proposal was implemented as envisaged, these schools would become harbinger of equality in the foundational education. However, if the government does not monitor education imparted at these schools, they will not achieve academic excellence. Therefore, the government should follow innovative management models such as institutionalising the collective role of parents to jointly manage these schools or handing over the management of the schools to academic institutions of global repute.

Education is one of the basic facilities that a welfare-focused government is expected to provide to its citizens. It would, thus, be apt to allow a certain number of children from economically-weaker sections, regardless of their caste, to gain admission into these schools.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Printer & Publisher

THE ASIAN AGE office is located at:
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for

Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector III, Noida - 201 301.

London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.

RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Subhani



Is Delhi looking at a new neighbourhood via N-E?



Wasbir Hussain

Northeast India, if one looks at the map, has Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal and China as neighbours. Of these, Bhutan is a traditional ally, China an arch-rival, Nepal a friendly, yet complex neighbour, Myanmar has mixed loyalties between New Delhi and Beijing and Bangladesh has turned out to be hostile towards India after the fall of Sheikh Hasina.

If one is to measure the importance of these neighbours vis-a-vis the eight landlocked northeastern Indian states, two nations come at the top — Bangladesh and Myanmar. This is because Bangladesh and Myanmar can provide Northeast India access to the sea through ports in the vicinity like Chittagong and Mongla (in Bangladesh) and Sititwe (in Myanmar's Rakhine state). Moreover, Myanmar is India's land bridge to Southeast Asia as it is the only Asean nation that shares a land border with our country.

The question now is with the ad hoc government in Dhaka led by economist Mohammed Yunus training his guns against India, even going to the extent of inviting the Pakistani Army to train Bangladeshi soldiers, and the continuing instability in Myanmar with the junta being pushed to the wall in large parts by the pro-democracy resistance forces, will India's Act Policy take a hit. An unstable Myanmar will certainly affect the Asian Highway and Asian Railway projects, and an unfriendly Bangladesh will affect communication through the waterways.

Of late, New Delhi is seen lending its weight behind mega investment and trade initiatives being launched by Assam, the most populated state in the Northeast, and its immediate neighbour Bhutan. Under the leadership of its visionary King Jigme Khesar

Namgyel Wangchuck, Bhutan is going full steam to build a mega city called the Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) at Gelephu, on the border with Assam. The Gelephu International Airport, a six-hour drive from Guwahati, is coming up at a cost of \$500 million (Phase I) and is positioned to connect with all the major Southeast Asian nations. The Government of India is building a railway line connecting Assam to Bhutan's Gelephu, a distance of about 60 km, at a cost of Rs 3,500 crores.

Last fortnight (February 25-26), Assam held a mega Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit in Guwahati that attracted investments totalling a whopping Rs 4.91 lakh crores. From Mukesh Ambani to Gautam Adani, Tata Sons chairman N. Chandrasekaran to Anil Agarwal of the Vedanta Group and Sajjan Jindal, India Inc not only attended the Advantage Assam Summit in strength but made public announcements of their investment plans spanning the next five years.

That the Narendra Modi government gave its full backing to this mega initiative by Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma was indicated by the fact that the Prime Minister spent two days in the state, addressing the investors, foreign diplomats and government representatives. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar himself led a 67-member diplomatic corps delegation from New Delhi to the summit in Guwahati, flying into Assam in a special aircraft. The summit had nine partner countries, including Japan, Australia, Germany, Britain, Bhutan, Malaysia and Singapore.

With the Tata Group setting up a Rs 27,000-crore semi-conductor plant near Guwahati, Assam has received global attention. After all, chips which will be produced at the Assam

Despite many who may dismiss it as farfetched, it is possible to look at a new neighbourhood other than Bangladesh and Myanmar.

semi-conductor facility will be purchased by global entities like Tesla and so on. So, is India eyeing trade and investment from the Southeast Asian tiger economies with Guwahati as the hub? This is possible because most of the Southeast Asian capitals are within a three-hour flying distance from Guwahati. Incidentally, the fast-developing Guwahati International Airport is run by the Adani Group.

Despite many who may dismiss it as farfetched, it is possible to look at a new neighbourhood other than Bangladesh and Myanmar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said at the Guwahati summit that he has become the "brand ambassador of the Northeast", given that he visits the region frequently and has paid more than 70 visits during the past 11 years. The Centre under Mr Modi is working to change the identity of the Northeast as a peripheral region of the country to that of a core.

Therefore, now that we have an unpredictable government in Dhaka and a beleaguered junta regime in Myanmar that China is trying to bring under its clutches, it is important for New Delhi to look at Southeast Asia bypassing Bangladesh and Myanmar. This is necessary to ensure the success of the "Act East" policy and towards this end, air connectivity and the proximity of the Northeast to the Southeast Asian capitals will come in handy.

The Advantage Assam 2.0 has laid the foundation at home for Assam to emerge as the hub of activity. Mukesh Ambani has announced a Rs 50,000-crore investment in the field of Digital Transformation and AI Readiness, clean and green energy and retail expansion and hospitality. On his part, Gautam Adani has also announced investment of Rs 50,000 crores in

expanding the Guwahati Airport and building an aerocity and in sectors such as defence manufacturing, cement and road projects. Anil Agarwal of Vedanta, too, has made an announcement about a Rs 50,000-crore investment in Assam.

Can India and Bhutan complement each other and make South Bhutan and Northeast India a new economic hub in Southeast Asia? Prime Minister Modi was among the first world leaders whom King Wangchuck sounded out on the idea of setting up the Gelephu Mindfulness City to be spread over a 2,600 sq km stretch, more than three times the size of Singapore. And, Prime Minister Modi gave King Wangchuck the assurance of India's full support to this game-changer initiative by Bhutan.

It will be a win-win situation for India and Bhutan when the Gelephu City project is completed. As Assam CM Himanta Sarma said after a four-day visit to Bhutan in December last year: "We do not want to compete with Bhutan on the Gelephu Mindfulness City, we want to play a complementary role by facilitating an infrastructure buildup on our side of the border and providing them logistic support." With the buzz around Assam gaining traction after the Tata semi-conductor plant and the just-concluded Advantage Assam 2.0 and countries like Australia already withdrawing its travel advisory to its nationals against visiting the state, a new climate of entrepreneurship has gripped the area.

Is it possible Southern Bhutan and Western Assam can play a big role in leapfrogging this landlocked region and emerge as a new Southeast Asian business hotspot? The answer is yes, as New Delhi may not wish to depend on the traditional access points to link its far east to the rest of the world.

Wasbir Hussain, author and political commentator, is editor-in-chief of Northeast Live, Northeast India's only satellite English and Hindi news channel. The views expressed here are personal.

LETTERS

TAMILSAI'S PLIGHT

Though the BJP government went out of its way to honour Tamilisai Soundararajan by making her governor of not only Telangana but also of Puducherry, her greed for power made her resign and fight the Lok Sabha polls. She thought that on winning, she would become a minister at the Centre. Alas! That was not to be, as she was defeated in a humiliating way by DMK candidate Tamizhachi Thangapadain. Now she is running from pillar to post to be named as successor of Tamil Nadu BJP leader K. Annamalai, that may be a distant possibility. It is pathetic to see her going door to door under the hot sun, sweating profusely, for signatures in support of the BJP's three-language formula. And to think she is the daughter of the illustrious Kumari Anandan, a great scholar of Tamil and a freedom fighter.

Tharcus S. Fernando
Chennai

MAMMOTH REVIVAL

THE DE-EXTINCTION drive of US biotech company Colossal Biosciences is unethical. Just as Victor Frankenstein, scientists are faced with the question of whether they should bring life into existence simply because they can. The woolly mammoth venture with piecemeal DNA might produce a genetically engineered elephant instead of an authentic mammoth. Where would these animals reside, considering climate change and the loss of habitat? This venture seems driven by corporate interests, diverting resources from more pressing conservation efforts. Shouldn't preserving existing species be our priority?

Anshu Bharti
Begusarai, Bihar

GST RELIEF NEEDED

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman recently gave a statement saying that GST rates will come down. Of course, she has been saying this for the last four years and we have been waiting for some relief, year after year. In fact, senior citizens, who cough up 18 per cent GST on our medical insurance premiums, have been requesting a waiver since it is eating into our pensions. But it is yet to see the light of day. It would be nice, too, if she could put a cap on insurance premiums, which the companies keep increasing by 25-30 per cent each year.

N. Mahadevan
Chennai

Aakar Patel



Global and local problems many: Trump has added trade war threats

Some problems humanity has created together and must tackle together. Some problems are created locally. Climate change is something that the world as a whole has to resolve. If half the world lessens its emissions while the other half increases them, climate change will not be resolved. The earth's atmosphere and the oceans bind humanity.

Local problems are created because of an imbalance in power and the desire to stir up trouble. Ukraine is one such example and the Gaza Strip is another. It is hard to understand why apartheid, ethnic cleansing and indeed genocide are acceptable in the world of 2025.

Then there are other problems that might not even be thought of as problems at all but punitive solutions emanating from them are still inflicted on the world. One such solution that we are dealing with is regarding the problem of the United States' trade deficit and the desire to level it out through tariffs. These are required, according to the American President, because the system is grossly unfair to the US and other nations have been "ripping us off", in his words. Have they? If they really have, this "ripping off" has been mostly to their detriment.

The average per person GDP of the world is \$13,000, according to the World Bank. Most countries are considerably lower than that.

These include India (\$2,500), Indonesia (\$4,800), Iran (\$4,400), Iraq (\$5,500), Thailand (\$7,100) and Vietnam (\$4,200). Sub-Saharan Africa, which has a population a little smaller than India's, is at \$1,600. Of our fellow Brics members, Brazil is \$10,200, Russia \$13,800, South Africa \$6,000 and China is at \$12,600.

A few countries have a per person GDP considerably higher than the global average. The Euro area average is \$45,000, with Germany at \$54,000, France at \$44,000 and Italy at \$39,000. The UK is similar to France.

The United States of America is at \$82,000, meaning it is more than six times the global average and more than 30 times India's per person GDP.

The US is by far the wealthiest large nation. Its position has made the dollar the world's reserve currency, meaning that most trade globally happens in US dollars, and it is the most attractive destination for the world's talented people. Its population growth is bolstered by this migration and its corporate and academic elite is studded with those who were born abroad. Its future is assured because of this enormous corps of talent. The US' per person GDP has doubled since 2004, which is incredible given how high the base already was. This has not been the case for Europe and the Euro area's per person GDP has stagnated since

2004. Of course, there is the problem of inequality in the US, as there is elsewhere, but that is an issue for the US to sort out internally, and not inflict it on a world that is much poorer than the average American.

This weekend, Donald Trump said about us that: "India charges us massive tariffs. Massive. You can't even sell anything in India..." They have agreed, by the way; they want to cut their tariffs way down now because somebody is finally exposing them for what they have done." Whatever position one has on free trade, it is hard to blame India and its government for trying to protect the interests of its people and to advance its economy. In a nation where a billion people cannot buy anything discretionary and must spend all their earnings on survival, what is there to buy from advanced nations?

Economists suggest that the US trade deficit is a reflection of the country's budget deficit. The US government spends more than it earns and so it has to borrow. In 2024, this deficit was \$1.8 trillion. This borrowing means capital inflows into the US, raising the demand for the dollar and keeping it strong. The strong dollar in turn makes it difficult for the US to export its products and easier to import, which explains the deficit in the trade balance. If the US were to balance its budget and borrow less, accord-

ing to this "twin deficits" theory, it would not have a trade deficit as wide as it does. This is not going to happen, especially when Donald Trump is going to continue and deepen tax cuts that will reduce his government's income.

Mexico has a per person GDP of \$13,790, meaning it is around the global average. Canada is \$53,000, meaning about \$30,000 per person per year lower than the US. It is not easy to make out the case as Mr Trump is trying to do that these countries are engaging with the US on trade in bad faith. If they were, the numbers would not be what they are. It is strange that someone is making the case that they are ripping the US off.

Take a look at the markets around the world and we see the turbulence that has been deliberately created by one man in a powerful nation.

Some problems we have to hunker down and face and resolve as a species, and there are enough of these, and these are problems of sufficient difficulty, to require our full attention. And then we have these ones that are being gratuitously thrust on us, ones that we did not have till a few weeks or months ago, but are now keeping a large part of the world occupied.

The writer is the chair of Amnesty International India. Twitter: @aakar_patel

SHORT TAKES

TANKER, CARGO SHIP COLLISION INJURES 32

London, March 10: A major rescue operation was under way after a collision between an oil tanker and a cargo ship in the North Sea on Monday which sparked a huge blaze and left 32 people injured.

The injured had been brought ashore for treatment “in three vessels”, the Grimby port director Martyn Boyers told *AFP*, adding that “ambulances were queueing on the quay”.

UK Coast Guard was coordinating after “reports of a collision between a tanker and cargo vessel off the coast of East Yorkshire”.

13 AIRPORTS IN GERMANY STRIKE, CANCEL FLIGHTS

Berlin, March 10: A one-day strike by workers at 13 German airports, including the Frankfurt and Munich hubs and all the country's other main destinations, caused the cancellation of most flights across the country on Monday.

The 24-hour walkout, which started at midnight, involves public-sector employees at the airports as well as ground and security staff.

At Frankfurt Airport, 1,054 of the day's 1,116 scheduled take-offs and landings had been cancelled, German news agency *dpa* reported, citing airport traffic management.

NK SLAMS U.S.-SK DRILLS, THEN FIRES MISSILES

Seoul, March 10: North Korea fired multiple ballistic missiles on Monday, hours after condemning the South Korean and US militaries for launching drills that Pyongyang called a “dangerous provocative act” that risked accidentally sparking a confrontation.

South Korea's military said the missiles were fired from North Korea's western region toward the Yellow Sea. The missiles were believed to be close range ballistic missiles, a South Korean defence ministry official said, referring to a type of weapon with a range of under 300 km (186 miles).

PROSECUTORS TO PURSUE SK PREZ CONVICTION

Seoul, March 10: South Korean prosecutors will pursue President Yoon Suk Yeol's conviction for insurrection despite a court ordering his release.

Prosecutor General Shim Woo-jung said he respected the weekend court ruling but did not agree with its assessment that the indictment filing was past the legally allowed expiry time, which the court said made Yoon's detention while on trial illegal. “I've directed that the prosecution makes arguments on various disputes during trial, and we'll do everything we can to pursue this indictment,” he said.

LANKA POLICE CHIEF PETITIONS TO STOP ARREST

Colombo, March 10: Deshabandu Tennakoon, Sri Lanka's suspended police chief, has petitioned the Court of Appeal to stay his arrest in connection with a shooting incident in which an officer was killed.

The two-member Court of Appeal decided to take up the case on March 12.

Tennakoon remains a fugitive and has been hiding since a court ordered his arrest over the December 2023 incident in the southern resort of Weligama.

Incidentally, several raids on his likely locations with a travel ban on him have turned out to be futile.

AF CAMP ROOF COLLAPSES IN PAK, KILLS 6

Karachi, March 10: Six people, including five Afghan sisters, were killed in Karachi's Afghan Basti when the roof of their house collapsed on Saturday night, officials said.

A senior police official said that some construction work was going on at the house in the Afghan Basti neighbourhood on the outskirts of Karachi when the roof collapsed.

Majority of Afghan refugees/settlers in Karachi have several neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city commonly known as Afghan Basti.

Greenland PM says Trump is ‘unpredictable’

Nuuk, March 10: US President Donald Trump, who wants to take over Greenland, is very erratic, the island's premier said on Monday, the eve of the self-governing Danish territory's legislative elections.

“There is a world order that is faltering on many fronts — and a president of the United States who is very unpredictable — in such a way that makes people feel insecure,” Prime Minister Mute Egede told Danish public radio *DR*.

In a speech to the US Congress last week, Trump reiterated his designs, arguing the US needed the vast Arctic island for reasons of national and international security and saying he expected to get it “one way or the other”. Determining a timeline for Greenland's independence from Denmark has dominated the territory's election campaign.

In a post addressing Greenlanders on his social media platform *Truth Social* late on Sunday, Trump said the US was “ready to INVEST BILLIONS OF DOLLARS to create new jobs and MAKE YOU RICH”.

“And, if you so choose, we welcome you to be a part of the Greatest Nation anywhere in the World, the United States of America!” he wrote.

Aaja Chemnitz — one of two Greenland representatives in the Danish Parliament and a member of the Prime Minister's left-green Inuit Ataqatigit party — accused Trump of “inadmissible” election interference.

“It's pretty desperate to make such a statement on the eve of an election in Greenland,” she said. “As a foreign power, you're not supposed to interfere.” In his interview with *DR*, conducted before Trump published his latest post, Egede said the US President's recent behaviour had only served to push Greenlanders away.

“We deserve to be treated with respect and I don't think the American president has done that lately since he took office,” Egede said.

“The recent things that the American President has done mean that you don't want to get as close to (the US) as you might have wanted in the past,” he added.

In large part, Greenland's economy is currently dependent on the fisheries sector and Danish subsidies. But Egede stressed it was already diversifying through tourism, mining and green energy generation. He said he saw Greenland's future as “within the Western alliance”. “There are

U.S. IN TALKS WITH FOUR GROUPS OVER TIKTOK SALE, SAYS TRUMP

Washington, March 10: President Donald Trump said on Sunday the United States was in talks with four groups interested in acquiring TikTok, with the Chinese-owned app facing an uncertain future in the country.

A US law has ordered TikTok to divest from its Chinese owner ByteDance or be banned in the United States. Asked on Sunday if there was going to be a deal on TikTok soon, Trump told reporters: “It could be.” “We're dealing with four differ-

ent groups. And a lot of people want it, and it's up to me,” he said aboard Air Force One. “All four are good,” he added, without naming them.

The law banning TikTok took effect on January 19 over concerns that the Chinese government could exploit the video-sharing platform to spy on Americans or covertly influence US public opinion. TikTok temporarily shut down in the US and disappeared from app stores as the deadline for the law approached. — *AFP*

Brasilia, March 10: Brazil will push for more funding to reverse deforestation when it hosts United Nations climate talks later this year, arguing natural carbon sinks can provide a buffer against the sluggish fight to curb global warming. “Forests can buy us time in climate action in our rapidly closing window of opportunity,” Andre Correa do Lago, president-designate of the summit, known as COP30, wrote in an open letter published on Monday.

“Tapping into such an

outstanding potential requires enhanced global support and investment.” Negotiators are gathering in the Amazonian city of Belém in November, ten years on from the landmark Paris Agreement, in which countries agreed for the first time to limit global warming.

The future of international climate diplomacy has been put into doubt by President Donald Trump's decision to leave the pact for the second time.

As it outlines plans for its COP30 presidency,



Mute Bourup Egede

U.S. CANCELLING 83% OF USAID PROGRAMMES

Washington, March 10: US secretary of state Marco Rubio said he had officially cancelled 83% of USAID's contracts and that his agency will administer its few remaining programmes.

“The 5,200 contracts that are now cancelled spent tens of billions of dollars in ways that did not serve, (and in some cases even harmed), the core national interests of the United States,” Rubio posted on X. — *AFP*



Marco Rubio

AIRCRAFT FLYING NEAR MAR-A-LAGO INTERCEPTED

West Palm Beach (US), March 10: Air Force fighter jets intercepted a civilian aircraft flying in the temporarily restricted airspace near Donald Trump's Florida home on Sunday. North American Aerospace Defence Command said in a statement that the incident saw F-16s deploy flares to get the attention of the civilian pilot. Jets also conducted an intercept on Saturday morning. — *AP*

some security and defence policy issues where we need to ally ourselves with other countries with which we are already in alliance,” he said.

Egede said an independent Greenland in an alliance with Denmark and its other territory, the Faroe Islands, through a new, updated agreement “might be a possibility”.

The day after Trump's speech to Congress, Egede wrote on Facebook that the 57,000 people of Greenland “don't want to be Americans, or Danes either”. — *AFP*

Zelenskyy, before US talks, says Ukraine wants peace

Kyiv to propose aerial, naval ceasefire at talks in Saudi: Ukrainian official

Kyiv, Jeddah, Paris, Moscow, March 10: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Monday ahead of talks with US officials in Saudi Arabia that Ukraine wants peace and Russia is the “only reason” that the war has dragged on.

Kyiv will propose an aerial and naval ceasefire with Russia during talks with US officials in Saudi Arabia this week, a Ukrainian official told *AFP* on Monday as Zelenskyy arrived in Jeddah.

“We do have a proposal for a ceasefire in the sky and ceasefire at sea,” the official told *AFP*.

Military officials from more than 30 nations will take part in Paris talks on the creation of an international security force for Ukraine, a French military official said on Monday as Kyiv is reinforcing its troops involved in fighting in Russia's region of Kursk, where Moscow's forces have been regaining ground. Ukraine conceded last month they had lost two-thirds of the territory they once controlled inside the region after their audacious offensive in Au-

gust, catching even their Western allies off guard and dealing an embarrassing blow to the Kremlin.

Russia said on Monday it was expelling two British diplomats based at the embassy in Moscow over spying allegations.

Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB, said in a statement quoted by the

PEACE PARLEYS

March 11: Saudi Arabia is to host talks in Jeddah on Tuesday between the US and Ukraine in a new diplomatic push.

February 28: This is after an argument erupted during President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's visit to the White House.

February 18: Initial Russia-US talks over Ukraine war were held in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

People hold up cellphone lights during a demonstration against Russia's war on Ukraine in Berlin. — *AP*

“I think you're gonna have eventually — and maybe not in the distant future — you're gonna have some pretty good results coming out of Saudi Arabia this week.”

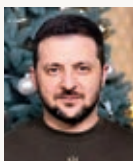
— DONALD TRUMP, US President



“It doesn't matter what we're expecting. It matters what the United States is expecting. Meanwhile, everyone is waiting to hear from the Ukrainian side that they are ready for peace.”

— DMITRY PESKOV, Kremlin spokesman

WHO WILL ATTEND THE TALKS?



• Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will be in Saudi Arabia. His team includes his chief of staff Andriy Yermak, foreign minister Andriy Sybha and defence minister Rustem Umerov.

US secretary of state Marco Rubio will be leading the American team.

New Canada PM Carney pledges to fight Trump, rebuild India ties

March 16, 1965: Mark Carney was born in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, and raised in Edmonton, Alberta.



• Carney received a bachelor's degree in economics from Harvard University in 1988, and master's and doctoral degrees in economics from Oxford.

• His wife Diana is British-born and he has four daughters.

• 13 years: He worked as a former Goldman Sachs executive in London, Tokyo, New York and Toronto.

• 2003: Was appointed deputy governor of the Bank of Canada.

• CARNEY RAN THE BANK OF CANADA from 2008 to 2013 and the Bank of England from 2013 to 2020

• 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS: After helping Canada manage the worst impacts, he was recruited to become the first non-Brit to run the Bank of England.

ties,” Carney said last week in Calgary before being elected as the Liberal Party party leader.

“And there are opportunities to rebuild the relationship with India. There needs to be a shared sense of values around that commercial relationship. If I'm Prime Minister, I look forward to the opportunity to build that,” he

had said.

India-Canada ties saw tensions after PM Justin Trudeau said in September 2023 in the House of Commons there were “credible allegations” of a potential link between Indian agents and the killing of pro-Khalistan separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia.

VOLCANO IN GUATEMALA SPEWS LAVA

Alotenango, Guatemala, March 10: Guatemalan authorities evacuated around a 1,000 people on Monday after Central America's most active volcano erupted, spewing lava, ash and rocks. Residents sought safety in a temporary shelter after the Fuego volcano — located 35 km (22 miles) from the capital Guatemala City — showed escalating activity on Sunday.

“We heard the rumblings and then a strong eruption. We have faith in God... that the activity of the volcano will calm down soon,” Manuel Cobos, 46, said. — *AFP*

Jerusalem, March 10: Israel's negotiating team left for Qatar Monday for talks aimed at extending the fragile Gaza ceasefire, after Israel cut the Palestinian territory's electricity supply to ramp up pressure on Hamas.

Ahead of the negotiations, Israel disconnected the only power line to a water desalination plant in Gaza, a move Hamas denounced as “cheap and unacceptable blackmail”.

The first phase of the truce deal expired on March 1 with no agreement on subsequent stages that should secure a lasting end

Displaced Palestinian children push into a queue to get a portion of cooked food from a charity kitchen in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip. — *AFP*

to the war that erupted with Palestinian militant group Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

There are differences

over how to proceed — Hamas wants immediate deal on the next phase, but Israel prefers extending phase one. — *AFP*

Syria op. against Assad ‘regime remnants’ ends

Damascus, March 10: Syria's defence ministry announced on Monday the end of a major security operation in coastal provinces, after days of violence and mass killings that sparked international concern.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said nearly 1,500 people have died in the violence since Thursday, the majority civilians of them killed by security forces and allied groups in the heartland of the Alawite minority to which deposed president Bashar al-Assad belongs.

In a statement on official news agency *SANA*, defence ministry spokesman Hassan Abdul Ghani said security forces had neutralised security threats and “regime remnants” in Latakia and Tartus provinces. “Having achieved this, we announce the end of the military operation,” he said.

He hailed “the success of our forces... in achieving all the objectives set”. “We were able... to absorb the attacks of the remnants of the toppled regime and its officers” and push them from “vital” locations, he said. — *AFP*

CLIMATE | QUICK FIX

Global warming: Natural carbon sinks can provide buffer

Brazil will pitch for forestry funding

A view of the Amazon forest in Brazil which will host the COP30 in the city of Belém later this year. — *AP*

Brazil is setting out to not only counter deforestation, but also scale up climate finance and elevate

indigenous voices in a bid to show that multilateralism can still work amid the US retreat.

Do Lago acknowledged the “sadness and indignation” felt by those who fear a backslide on climate action and called on world leaders to honour their commitments to keep the rise in global temperatures to ideally 1.5°C — and well below 2°C — above pre-industrial levels.

Countries are expected to submit their updated plans for how to reach that goal before the summit, after most nations missed a February deadline that was set under the Paris accord. — *Bloomberg*

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	74,115.17	-0.29
Nifty 50	22,460.30	-0.41
S&P 500*	5,672.62	-1.69
Dollar (₹)	87.33	0.51
Pound Sterling (₹)	112.73	0.28
Euro (₹)	94.76	0.41
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	85,955▲78	0.09
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	69.96	-0.57
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.702	0.015
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.249	-0.069

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Anti-dumping duty on select chemical imports

India has imposed anti-dumping duty of up to \$986 per tonne for five years on a chemical, used for water treatment, imported from China and Japan to protect the domestic industry from cheap inbound shipments, according to a finance ministry. The decision follows recommendations from the directorate general of trade remedies, an investigation arm of commerce ministry, to impose the duty on 'Trichloro isocyanuric acid'.



Sun Pharma in pact to acquire Checkpoint

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries said it will acquire oncology firm Checkpoint Therapeutics for up to \$355 million. As per the pact inked by the companies, Sun Pharma will pay upfront \$4.10 per share of common stock, representing aggregate upfront consideration of up to \$355 million, Sun Pharma said. Checkpoint stockholders will also receive a contingent value right for up to \$0.7 per share.

Honda Cars India gets new chief executive officer

Japanese automaker Honda on Monday said it has appointed Takashi Nakajima as the new president and CEO of Honda Cars India. Nakajima will take charge from April 1, consequent to the management changes announced annually by Honda Motor. Nakajima will take over from Takuya Tsumura, who moves to Japan at Honda head office after completing his India tenure, the automaker said.

Zydus gets FDA nod to market antifungal drug

Zydus Lifesciences has received approval from US health regulator USFDA to market a generic antifungal medication to treat dandruff, fungal infections, and other skin conditions. It has received final approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to manufacture Ketoconazole Shampoo, 2 per cent, it said. The product will be produced at the Zydus's topical manufacturing site in Ahmedabad.

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Markets slide on weak Asian cues, fall in US stocks futures

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 10

Weak cues from Asian markets and a sharp decline in US stock futures led to last hour fall in benchmarks Sensex and Nifty-50 after a positive start for the week and gains in previous three sessions.

The broader market fell sharply with weakness seen from early morning trade on simmering US trade tariff tensions and Indian currency's sharp fall during the day.

Investors' notional wealth was down by over ₹4.43 lakh crore.

However, the positive on Monday is foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) selling fell sharply to ₹485.41 crore from more than ₹2,000 crore everyday last week. Domestic institutions were net buyers by ₹263.51 crore.

The Nifty-50 index fell 92.20 points or 0.41 per cent to 22,460.30 at market close after touching a high of 22,676 intraday while the Sensex closed at

GLOBAL RISKS

BSE MID-CAP index falls 1.46% and BSE small-cap index goes down by 2.11%



Nifty-50 falls 92.20 pts or 0.41% to 22,460.30.

74,115.17 down by 217.41 points or 0.29 per cent after touching a high of 74,741 intraday.

"Nifty breached the critical support level of 22,500, which it had been holding in recent sessions, signaling potential weakness ahead," said Sundar Kewat, technical analyst, Ashika Institutional Equity.

BSE mid-cap index fell by 1.46 per cent and BSE small-cap index was down by 2.11 per cent.

INVESTORS' notional wealth erodes by over ₹4.43 lakh cr

SENSEX CLOSES at 74,115.17 down by 217.41 pts or 0.29%.

FPIs SELLING fell sharply to ₹485.41 cr from more than ₹2,000 cr everyday last week.

"The market initially saw an upward movement led by heavyweights, pushing the Sensex and Nifty-50 higher. However, the index struggled to sustain its gains and faced difficulty overcoming the resistance level of 22,620. In the second half of the trading session, a sharp decline in the mid and small-cap segments weighed heavily on the index," said Aditya Gaggar, director, Progressive Shares.

Centre invites applications as Irdai chief's term set to end

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 10

The government has invited applications for the position of chairperson at the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) as the tenure of the current chairman, Debasish Panda, will end on March 13, 2025. This ends the speculation on a possible extension for Panda.

The deadline for the submission of applications is April 6, per the notification from the department of financial services, ministry of finance. In its advertisement, the department has sought applications from individuals with "knowledge or experience in life insurance,

general insurance, actuarial science, finance, economics, law, accountancy, administration or any other discipline, which would, in the opinion of the central government, be useful to the authority."

The candidate should have a minimum 30 years of relevant work experience and must have worked as secretary to the government of India or in an equivalent position with the government with proven track record of leadership and authority in decision making.

Applicants from the private sector are expected to have worked as chief executive officer or in an equivalent position in a

large financial institution. The applicant's age should not be more than 63 years old as on the date of vacancy - March 14.

Since Panda took office in March 2022, he has overseen significant reforms in India's insurance sector to facilitate growth, including the shift to principle-based regulations, the transition to a 'use and file' system, and new expense of management regulations.

He also revised the Surrender Value norms mandating insurers to pay a special surrender value after policyholders have completed the full premium payment for the first year.

Const. costs up moderately on lower cement, steel prices

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, MARCH 10

Construction costs on greenfield projects in the country saw a moderate escalation in 2024 compared to previous years, with the dip in the cement, steel and aluminium prices.

In 2024, construction costs saw a marginal rise of 2-4 per cent compared to 2023. This was much lower than the 6-8 per cent cost increases witnessed in 2021 and 2022. Easing of supply chain bottlenecks and stabilising of inflationary pressures led to the moderation in cost escalation, finds CBRE.

In 2024, cement prices were down by 6-8 per cent compared to the previous year. According to India Ratings, in FY25 cement

INFRA GAINS

CONSTRUCTION N costs saw marginal rise of 2-4% in 2024 compared to 2023.



prices witnessed the sharpest price fall in almost two decades.

The weak pricing environment may continue in FY26, though a fall similar to FY25 is not likely.

Steel prices were down by 3 to 5 per cent and aluminium prices saw a decline of up to 2 per cent in 2024.

IN FY25 CEMENT PRICES

witnesses sharpest price fall in almost two decades.

HYDERABAD, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Chennai and Pune record 3-4% growth.



Domestic steel prices declined due to increased supply from imports and a softening global steel market.

Mumbai witnessed the highest construction cost increase of 4-6 per cent in 2024, while Hyderabad, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Chennai and Pune recorded a 3-4 per cent growth.

Rupee suffers big fall, reaches 87.36 vs dollar

Marks steepest drop since Feb. 5 amid statements by US on tariffs

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 10

The Indian rupee fell by 41 paise (0.47 per cent) to close at 87.36 against the US dollar on Monday marking its steepest single day drop in over a month since February 5 amid worries about United States statements on tariffs on Indian exports to the US. The depreciation occurred despite the dollar index and crude oil prices reaching four month and 22 month low respectively.

"Investor uncertainty led to increased demand for the US dollar as a safe haven asset. Additionally, India's ongoing negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement with the US also contributed to market volatility. Market participants are now closely monitoring consumer inflation data from both India and the US, set to be released on Wednesday, as this will influence expectations of rate cuts by the countries central banks," said Rahul Kalantri, vice-president commodities at Mehta Equities.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened weak at 87.24 and

VOLATILE PHASE

RUPEE opens weak at 87.24 and touches day's low of 87.36 amid intense volatility.



DOLLAR index trading lower by 0.15% at 103.65

INVESTOR UNCERTAINTY led to increased demand for the US dollar as a safe haven asset. Additionally, India's ongoing negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement with the US also contributed to market volatility.

— RAHUL KALANTRI, VP commodities, Mehta Equities

INDIAN CURRENCY to remain volatile this week due to global conditions.

MARKET PARTICIPANTS monitoring consumer inflation data from both India and the US, to be out on Wednesday.

RUPEE DEPRECIATED despite dollar index and crude oil prices reaching 4-mth and 22-mth lows respectively.

US FEB JOBS REPORT LAST FRIDAY WAS UNDERWHELMING.



US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP dodged questions on fears of a recession possibility in 2025.

touched the day's low of 87.36 amid intense volatility. The unit touched an intraday high of 87.16 before ending the session at 87.33 (provisional) against US dollar, registering a loss of 38 paise from its previous closing level.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by

0.15 per cent at 103.65.

"We expect the rupee to remain volatile this week amid volatility in the dollar index and volatility in the global financial markets and the pair could trade in the range of 86.90 to 87.70," added Kalantri.

The US Feb Jobs report on last Friday was underwhelming. Headline non farm payrolls, a key economic indicator in the US

came in at 1,51,000 against expected 160,000. Unemployment rate came in at 4.1 per cent against expected 4 per cent.

Meanwhile the US President Donald Trump dodged questions on fears of a recession possibility in 2025 saying that while the economy could be in a transition phase due to tariffs, he hated to predict things.

Feb. consumer inflation likely below 4% on lower food prices

Bengaluru, March 10: India's February consumer inflation likely eased below Reserve Bank of India's medium-term target of four per cent for the first time in six months on moderating food price rises bolstering expectations of interest rate cuts.

As fresh winter produce hit markets over the past few months, food items - which make up nearly half of the inflation basket - saw a sustained slowdown

in price increases. Inflation as measured by the annual change in the consumer price index (CPI) fell to 3.98 per cent in February from 4.31 per cent in January.

Forecasts for the data, set to be released on March 12, ranged from 3.4 per cent to 4.65 per cent, with many economists expecting it to come in at or below the RBI's medium-

term target of four per cent. Only few predicted it would exceed January's reading. "We see a continued slowdown in vegetable price rises," said Gaura Sengupta, chief economist at IDFC First Bank.

With inflation comfortably within the RBI's 2-6 per cent target range, economists say the central bank is likely for another interest rate cut in April.

— Reuters

Govt set to spend addl. ₹51,462 cr

FC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

The government on Monday sought Parliament nod to spend a net additional ₹51,462.86 crore in the current financial year ending March, with a large chunk going towards pension and subsidy fertiliser.

The gross additional spending sought by the government is over ₹6.78 lakh crore, of which ₹6.27 lakh crore would be matched by savings and receipts. The net additional spending by the government would be ₹51,462.86 crore in the current fiscal, as per the second batch of supplementary demands for grants tabled by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok

Sabha. The additional expenditure includes ₹14,100 crore to the department of fertilisers, including subsidies for urea and P&K fertilisers. An additional allocation of ₹13,449 crore has been provided for the pension of government employees, including ₹7,000 crore towards unified pension scheme.

The total spending also includes a defence pension of ₹8,476 crore and ₹5,322 crore to the department of telecommunications. An additional ₹2,186 crore funds have been allocated to the agriculture department and ₹3,722 crore to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for meeting additional expenditure.

MONEY MATTERS

GOLD INTEGRAL OF FIN. PLANS



SHAILY GANG

Gold does not earn interest rate. Whenever there is environment of low interest rates, Gold prices rise as demand for Gold increases and vice-versa. When US Fed announces rate cuts, dollar goes weak and Gold prices rise. However, these interlinkages get disturbed during geo-political events.

Diversifying between interest generating assets and assets which are a hedge against high interest rates and inflation like

gold, is a good thing to do. Thus, a perennial presence of 15-20 per cent in gold in the portfolio. Last 40-year data shows gold has yielded 1 to 1.5 per cent CAGR more than inflation and 1 per cent higher than GDP rate.

INVESTING IN GOLD

Different ways of investing in gold are - gold ETFs and gold ETF fund of funds, bars and coins through jewellers, jewellery. Physical gold attracts GST, incurs storage cost, making cost and has a risk of theft. Jewellery too attracts huge making cost and the problem of storage. SGBs were listed units but were available in tranches only, now discontinued by RBI. Holding gold ETFs and



FoFs is convenient as it is digitally held and can be invested online. Gold ETFs, FoFs attract GST and incur expense ratio. gold ETF attracts long term capital gains (LTCG) tax of 12.5 per cent when the period of holding is more than 12 months with short term capital gains (STCG) tax as slab rate when the period of holding is less than 12 months.

In case of gold ETF FoF the period of holding is 24 months for LTCG to be applicable at 12.5 per cent

and STCG is at slab rate

OUTLOOK ON GOLD

Central banks rate cut regime, geopolitical factors and supportive fundamentals like central bank buying, new Trump administration policies shall continue to support gold prices. The market may look for the global factors pertaining to US trade policies and tariffs change, central bank policies, US economic data and geopolitical factors. Pause in Fed rate cut cycle may affect the pace of rally in gold prices. Currency related volatility into commodities would exist for the short term.

(The author is Tata Asset Management head-products)

Thalinomics

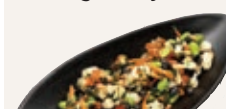


COST OF VEGETARIAN, NON-VEGETARIAN THALI DECLINE BY 5% ON-MONTH IN FEB. DUE TO LOWER VEGETABLE AND BROILER PRICES.

ON AN ANNUAL basis, the cost of home-cooked vegetarian thali declines 1% in Feb., while that of non-vegetarian thali grew by 6%.

TOMATO PRICE decline 28% on-year to ₹23/kg in Feb., from ₹32/kg a year ago, owing to a 20% increase in arrivals on-year.

ONION, POTATO AND TOMATO prices were down 7%, 17% and 25% on-month, respectively, amid fresh arrivals.



CHICKEN PRICES decline by 5% on-month because of lower demand amid bird flu scare in Southern India.



SHORT TAKES

Harman, bowlers guide MI to win

Mumbai: Harmanpreet Kaur's fluent half-century was backed by an exceptional bowling performance as Mumbai Indians beat Gujarat Giants by nine runs to strengthen their chances of finishing on top in the Women's Premier League here on Monday. Sent in to bat, Harmanpreet showcased her class as she slammed nine boundaries to score 54 off 33 balls and anchor MI to a competitive total of 179/6.

The bowlers then took over, with superb performances from Shabnim Ismail (2/17) and Amelia Kerr (3/34) as MI bowled Gujarat Giants out for 170 in 20 overs, despite a whirlwind 25-ball 61 by Bharti Fulmali.

With this win, Mumbai joined Delhi Capitals at 10 points but stayed at second position due to a lower net run-rate. MI will aim to seal their direct qualification to the final by finishing at the top when they face Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the final league match on Tuesday.

— PTI

Brief scores: Mumbai Indians 179/6 (Harmanpreet Kaur 54, Nat Sciver-Brunst 38) beat Gujarat Giants 170 (Bharti Fulmali 61, Amelia Kerr 3/34, Hayley Matthews 3/38, Shabnim Ismail 2/17).

Vanuatu to cancel Lalit Modi passport

Port Vila: Vanuatu Prime Minister Jotham Napat on Monday directed the Citizenship Commission to cancel the passport issued to former Indian Premier League (IPL) founder Lalit Modi, saying that the fugitive was attempting to avoid his extradition. On March 7, Modi filed an application with the Indian high commission in London to surrender his Indian passport. He is known to have acquired citizenship of Vanuatu, a South Pacific island nation. He left India in 2010 and is learnt to have been living in London.

An official media release by the Republic of Vanuatu stated, "I have instructed the Citizenship Commission to cancel the Vanuatu passport issued to Lalit Modi following recent revelations in international media. "I have been made aware in the past 24 hours that Interpol twice rejected Indian authorities' requests to issue an alert notice on Lalit Modi due to lack of substantive judicial evidence. Any such alert would have triggered an automatic rejection of Mr Modi's citizenship application," the statement said. — PTI

Brook pulls out of IPL, faces ban

London: England batter Harry Brook faces a two-year ban from the IPL after pulling out of his deal with Delhi Capitals ahead of the tournament beginning March 22. Brook, who has made himself unavailable for the second straight season, apologised "unreservedly" to the franchise and its supporters. "I have made the very difficult decision to pull out of the upcoming IPL. I apologize unreservedly to the Delhi Capitals and their supporters," Brook wrote on social media. "It is a really important time for England cricket and I want to fully commit to preparing for the upcoming series. "In order to do this, I need time to recharge after the busiest period in my career to date. I know not everyone will understand, and I don't expect them to, but I have to do what I believe is right and playing for my country remains my priority and focus."

England will play India in a home Test series in June, which will be followed by the much-anticipated Ashes from November to January. — PTI

Sukant & Nitesh win gold in Spain

New Delhi: Paris Paralympics champion Kumar Nitesh and Sukant Kadam secured gold medals in SL3 and SL4 categories respectively, leading India's charge at the Spanish Para Badminton International 2025 in Vitoria, Spain. Nitesh registered a 21-19, 21-19 win over Japan's Daisuke Fujiwara in the final of the SL3 category, while Sukant defeated fellow Indian Tarun 21-13, 21-10 in the SL4 category on Sunday. — PTI

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C - 9, Sector - III, Noida - 201301.
Editor - Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 57290/94 Price in Nepal - Nep.Rs. 20.00 per copy.

ROCK & ROLL

ODI WC quite far away but India need Rohit in transition phase

New Delhi, March 10: There were two instances during Rohit Sharma's lengthy post-tournament press conference on Sunday when the issue of his retirement cropped up.

The first time the subject was broached with him after a triumphant campaign in the Champions Trophy in Dubai, the Indian captain gave an open-ended answer, "No future plans, *jaise chal raha hain, chalta rahega* (the way it is going, it will continue that way)."

When he next mentioned the dreaded 'R' word, it was more voluntary and was an afterthought to a completely different question.

Just before concluding the press meet, he said: "One more thing. I'm not going to retire from this format, just to make sure that no rumours are spread moving forward."

Rohit's statement was a loaded one as the stress was on "this format", which is 50-over cricket.

He retired from T20Is after the World Cup triumph in Americas last year, and questions remain over his future in Test cricket, with the Indian team set to tour England this summer.

He spelt out his ambitions loud and clear and obviously, he has some unfinished business with an eye on the 2027 World Cup, which will be co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The World Cup is still some distance away and the Indian skipper is a bonafide legend of the ODI format.

By laying emphasis on "this format", Rohit has made his intentions clear and as long as he is scoring runs, age wouldn't be a barrier although he would be close to 40 by the time the marquee event comes calling.

While ODI is still his preferred format, Rohit has in no way said that he doesn't want to play Test matches. In fact, except the Australia tour and the series before that against New Zealand at home, he has been the team's best Test batter.

Rohit's best overseas performance came against England during the 2021 series where he scored a century at the Oval.

Jasprit Bumrah has shown his mettle as a Test skipper but Rohit is still the most revered leader in the Indian dressing room.

Owing to Bumrah's fitness concerns and the selectors' preference to groom Shubman Gill for some more time in the role of a deputy, Rohit remains the ideal candidate to continue leading the side as it goes through a transition phase.

Virat Kohli, Rohit's longtime teammate, aptly put it after the Champions Trophy final that the team's core is ready to play for the next eight years but it is his duty to put Indian cricket in good hands "as and when" he decides to call it a day.

Fitness will also be taken into account in the coming time. — PTI

PCB TO PROTEST AS NO OFFICIALS AT CT CLOSER

Lahore, March 10: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is set to register its protest with the ICC for ignoring its CEO and Champions Trophy tournament director Sumair Ahmed Syed during the event's closing ceremony in Dubai. A source in the PCB said on Monday that chairman Mohsin Naqvi was not satisfied with the explanation given by the ICC for not having Ahmed on stage at the presentation ceremony on Sunday.

"The ICC, apparently, has said it had prepared for Mohsin Naqvi to be on stage so when he didn't show up for the final, they changed their plan," the source said.

The PCB has rejected this explanation and noted that the ICC had made a number of errors during the tournament regarding Pakistan's status as host nation. This included changing the CT2025 logo in the live broadcasts feed of the India versus Bangladesh game and then playing the Indian national anthem in the Australia versus England match in Lahore. — PTI



India captain Rohit Sharma poses with the winners trophy on the Dubai International Stadium pitch after defeating New Zealand in the final of the ICC Champions Trophy in Dubai on Sunday.

We learnt from past losses in ICC events, says Kohli

Dubai, March 10: Superstar Virat Kohli says lessons learned from tough defeats in past ICC knock-out games have paved the way for India's second major title in less than 12 months.

India won the T20 World Cup in June last year and on Sunday, they lifted the Champions Trophy for the third time.

It was a total team effort from Rohit Sharma's men over the course of their campaign in the UAE.

"It's been a long time since we've had a Champions Trophy, and the format is really good. This was our aim. After a tough tour of Australia, we came here and won a big tournament, which has once again boosted our confidence as a team," Kohli told the host broadcaster.

"Throughout the tournament, different players stepped up in different matches. There were moments in past tournaments where we weren't able to finish games or capitalise on crucial situations. But this time, we learned from those experiences," he added.

The experience of Rohit and K. L. Rahul towards



Virat Kohli (left) and Hardik Pandya share a laugh during the Champions Trophy presentation ceremony in Dubai on Sunday.

the end got India over the line in the final against New Zealand.

"That's why you back experienced players — they have faced these moments before, and when you apply those learnings and work hard, you get a chance to turn things around," Kohli said.

"The way KL (Rahul) finished in the last two matches is a testament to that experience. When you've been in those situations before and couldn't cross the line, there's always a desire to get another opportunity and overcome it. And that's exactly what we did," he added. — PTI

Santner admits Rohit took the match away from NZ

Dubai, March 10: New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner admitted that his Indian counterpart Rohit Sharma's exceptional knock was the difference between the two teams in the Champions Trophy final, and termed the four-wicket defeat as a "bittersweet end".

Rohit made a fluent 76 off 83 balls as India chased down 252 in a close finish here on Sunday.

"I think the way Rohit Sharma played kind of took it away from us, I think, obviously, India here understood the con-

ditions in Dubai perfectly and played some good cricket. Yeah I guess it's kind of bittersweet at the end," said Santner in the post-match conference.

Santner said he was "proud" of his side despite the surrender in the title clash.

"I think we came up against a good side in the final. We challenged at times throughout this game, which was pleasing and I think there were probably a couple of small moments where we let it get away from us. "But yeah, incredibly

MIGRATING TO NO. 6 SLOT WAS TOUGH FOR KL

Dubai, March 10: K. L. Rahul is delighted after successfully migrating to No. 6 batting slot, and termed it as a result of his unrelenting 'preparation' and improving his game constantly.

Rahul, who usually bat No. 5, was pushed down a position lower in the Champions Trophy here. "It's really pleasing for me. The work that I'm putting in to different roles requires a lot of preparation, work outside the cricket field, thinking about how I need to take each game and how I need to perform in different situations and watch some of the players that bat at 5, 6 and how they've been successful," said Rahul.

"I've been taught from by my coaches that cricket is a team game and whatever the team requires of you, you need to be able to accept that and find a way to put in performances for the team and understand what your role is, understand what the responsibility is, understand what it takes to be successful batting in different positions," he added. — PTI

PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal title bid fades with draw

Manchester (England), March 10: Declan Rice's equaliser denied Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim a much-needed win but Arsenal's faltering Premier League title challenge suffered another damaging blow in a 1-1 draw at Old Trafford on Sunday.

The Gunners sit 15 points behind runaway leaders Liverpool, now with just one game in hand, with their focus beginning to turn to holding off the chasing pack for a place in next season's Champions League.

Bruno Fernandes' stunning free-kick put United ahead in first half stoppage time.

The Red Devils, though, could not hold on for just a sixth Premier League win in 16 games under Amorim as Rice swept home 16 minutes from time.

A point leaves United down in 14th. Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta was taking charge of his 200th Premier League match.

The Spaniard's 118 wins in that time places him only behind a stellar cast of Pep Guardiola, Jose Mourinho, Jurgen Klopp and Alex Ferguson in the English top flight.

● The Gunners sit 15 points behind runaway leaders Liverpool, now with just one game in hand, with their focus beginning to turn to holding off the chasing pack for a place in next season's Champions League.

But his wait for a league title looks set to continue with Arsenal on course to finish second for the third consecutive season.

United have had three permanent managers and an interim during Arteta's five years in charge of Arsenal.

Amorim said he knows he will not get the time Arteta did to turn around a sinking ship at Old Trafford.

The discontent among the home support could be seen around the stands with many taking part in a protest by wearing black over what they perceive as "the death" of their club.

Arsenal had failed to score in either of their previous two league games to realistically wave goodbye to their hopes of a first title in 21 years.

— AFP



Arsenal's Martin Odegaard (left) and Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes vie for the ball during the English Premier League match at Old Trafford Stadium in Manchester, England, on Sunday.

Toss-up between Rahul, Axar for Delhi captaincy

New Delhi, March 10: Leading allrounder Axar Patel and senior keeper-batter K. L. Rahul are the two contenders for Delhi Capitals captaincy in the upcoming Indian Premier League season with the multi-skilled Gujarat man having his nose slightly ahead. It is understood that the franchise bigwigs will be announcing the name of their new captain in the next few days, having waited for the Champions Trophy to end.

Delhi Capitals will have a short training-cum-simulation camp in Delhi before flying to Visakhapatnam for their first two games.

With Rahul and wife Athiya Shetty expecting their first baby, the senior player could miss a game or two depending on the due date.

Into his seventh season with the Capitals, the 31-year-old Axar, who has played 150 IPL games, scored 1653 runs at a strike rate of nearly 131, and took 123 wickets at an economy rate of 7.28, looks a more likely candidate to lead the team than Rahul, who will be donning the Delhi blues for the first time. — PTI

ALL ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

TOUGH CHALLENGE FOR TOP INDIAN SHUTTLERS

Birmingham, March 10: Grappling with injuries, health setbacks and poor form, Indian shuttlers will face one of their toughest challenges when they aim to capture the elusive All England Championships beginning here on Tuesday.

Since Padukone's historic win in 1980 and Pulella Gopichand's triumph in 2001, no Indian has managed to capture the coveted All England title — one of the sport's most prestigious crowns after the Olympics and World Championships.

In the past two decades, Indian badminton has soared to new heights, with stars like P. V. Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, and Kidambi Srikanth

claiming major titles. However, none have been able to conquer the All England Championships, despite their numerous successes on the world stage.

Every year, the Indian contingent sets its sights on this historic title, and yet, the elusive crown continues to slip through their grasp.

After a disappointing Paris Olympics, the Indian shuttlers struggled to get off the mark in 2025. Sindhu faced injury woes, H. S. Prannoy made a slow recovery from a bout of chikungunya, Lakshya Sen has battled poor form, and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy is coping with the loss of his father who died last month. — PTI