

News Brief

Three killed in multi-vehicle crash in Australia

Sydney, March 23 (IANS) At least three people were killed in a fatal five-vehicle crash accident at Maryborough West in the Australia's state of Queensland.

Five vehicles crashed at the Bruce Highway and Walker Street intersection at around 10 p.m. local time on Friday, with two vehicles catching fire, police said, Xinhua news agency reported.

Three people suffered minor injuries in the incident. Two semi-trailers, a dual cab ute, a hatchback and a caravan trailer were involved in the incident. Investigation into the accident is underway.

Youth found dead in central Kashmir's Budgam, family allege murder

Srinagar, March 23 (IANS) A youth was found dead on Saturday, near his home in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district. The family alleged murder.

Officials said that the body of 23-year-old Shabir Ahmad Jehrah was found near his home in mysterious circumstances in Gogji pathri village of Chadoora tehsil of Budgam district on Saturday.

Officials said that the body was removed from the spot and would be handed over to the family for last rites after completion of medico-legal formalities.

Elderly, women dominate voters' list in Gurugram LS constituency

Gurugram, March 23 (IANS) The elderly and women dominate the voters' list in the Gurugram Lok Sabha constituency of Haryana with over 67,000 being the elderly voters above the age of 80 years. An Election Commission report said that there are a total of 25,21,332 voters in the Gurugram Lok Sabha constituency.

Out of the total votes, in the middle-age category voters, there are 36,334 (54 per cent) are women voters and 30,700 (46 per cent) are male. In the category of 80 to 89 years, 52 per cent are women while 48 per cent are men. In the age group of 90 to 99, 60 per cent are women and 40 per cent are male voters.

Russia denounces EU grain tariff proposal as 'unfair trade practice'

Moscow, March 23 (IANS) The European Union's proposal to increase tariffs on Russian and Belarusian grain imports is an example of unfair trade practice, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

The European Commission submitted a proposal earlier on Friday to raise tariffs on cereals, oilseeds and derived products from Russia and Belarus, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The European consumer will definitely suffer," Peskov said, adding that Moscow has many alternative supply routes.

Peskov noted that experts would need to study ways in which it would be possible to compensate for any potential restrictive measures, calling the proposal "another clear example of unfair competition".

India is not to overlook terrorists: Jaishankar

Singapore, March 23 (IANS) Stating that the mood in "India is not to overlook terrorists", External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Saturday that it is "unfortunate" to deal with a neighbour like Pakistan that blatantly uses terrorism as an instrument of statecraft.

Speaking at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) of the National University of Singapore (NUS) on Saturday, EAM Jaishankar said that "every country wants a stable neighbourhood, it's logical". "We have been unfortunate... How do you deal with a neighbour who does not hide the fact that they use terrorism as an instrument of statecraft?"

the minister, who is on a three-day visit to Singapore, said in response to a question on India-Pakistan's relations.

On Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism, he said: "It's not a one-off happening... but very sustained, almost at an industry level... So what we have come to conclude is that we have to find a way of addressing (the menace), that dodging the problem gets us nowhere, it only invites more trouble," he said.

The Minister added that while India does not have a "quick instantaneous fix" to the issue, he underlined that New Delhi "will not skirt this problem anymore".

"We are not going to say, 'well, that happened and let's continue our dialogue'... we have a problem and we must be honest enough to face up to that problem, however difficult it is... we should not give the other country a free pass, saying there's nothing they can do about it or it's a very hard problem, or there's so much else at stake that let us overlook," he said. At the recent Rising Bharat Summit, EAM Jaishankar said that India's relations with Pakistan are very "formal and minimal".

He stated that the bilateral ties have been also hit because of the neighbouring nation's reaction to the abrogation of Article

370 in Jammu and Kashmir. S. Jaishankar is on a three-nation tour to Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia from March 23-27, to strengthen bilateral relations.

He began his Singapore visit on Saturday by paying homage to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the brave Indian National Army (INA) soldiers.

"The INA Marker in Singapore recognises their deep patriotism and indomitable spirit that remain an inspiration for generations to come," he wrote on X.

The Minister last visited Singapore in October 2023 to deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries.



Farmers staged a protest for their various long pending demands near Rani Chennamma circle in Belagavi on Saturday. UNI

Delhi HC dismisses PIL for removing IVR system from Emergency Helpline No 112

New Delhi, March 23 (IANS) The Delhi High Court has rejected a public interest litigation (PIL) aimed at removing the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system from Emergency Helpline No 112. A division bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora, acknowledged the imperfections of the current IVR system but deemed it the best option for now. The PIL, filed by Ganga Saran, argued that the IVR system was unnecessary and discouraged direct contact with the helpline. While acknowledging the potential for improvement in the future, the court stressed the importance of the IVR system in managing the high volume of unintentional or prank calls received at the Emergency Helpline. Data presented by the Delhi Police revealed a significant disparity between the actual number of calls received and the intended genuine calls. The court noted the risk of system breakdown and neglecting genuine callers if the volume of calls continues to overwhelm the helpline.

The Delhi Police defended the IVR system, stating that it takes only five seconds for a serious caller to reach an operator by pressing '8'.

India calls German diplomat's remarks on Delhi CM's arrest 'most unwarranted'

New Delhi, (IANS) The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Saturday called the German Foreign Office Spokesperson's comments on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest "most unwarranted" and said that it sees them as interfering in the country's judicial process. Summoning the Deputy Head of Mission of the German Embassy, George Enzweiler, the MEA lodged a strong protest with him regarding comments on India's internal affairs. "We see such remarks as interfering in our judicial process and undermining the independence of our judiciary," the MEA said in a statement as it stressed that India is a "vibrant and robust democracy with rule of law". "As in

all legal cases in the country, and elsewhere in the democratic world, law will take its own course in the instant matter. Biased assumptions made on this account are most unwarranted," the statement added. India's strong reaction came after the German Foreign Office said on Friday that it has "taken note" of Kejriwal's arrest and expects that "standards regarding the independence of the judiciary and basic democratic principles" will apply. The remarks by Sebastian Fischer, a spokesperson for the German foreign ministry, were in response to how the country's government assessed Ke-

riwal's arrest weeks before the Lok Sabha elections. "We have taken note of the case. India is a democratic country. We assume and expect that the standards relating to the independence of the judiciary and fundamental democratic principles will also apply in this case," Fischer said in his ministry's website. "Like anyone facing accusations, Kejriwal is entitled to a fair and impartial trial, this includes he can make use of all available legal avenues without restrictions. The presumption of innocence is a central element of the rule of law and must apply to him [sic]," the statement said.

Shivakumar is ready to join BJP with 40 MLAs, claims BJP MLA

Bengaluru, March 23 (IANS) Karnataka BJP MLA and former minister Muniathna on Saturday claimed that Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar is ready to join the BJP with 40 other MLAs. He said that Shivakumar desperately wants to join the BJP and if the doors of the party are opened he is set to rush inside and join the party. Knowing this well, the BJP leaders are not opening the door for Shivakumar, he said. "Shivakumar is claiming that he is sending BJP leaders to the Congress party. But, it is ironical that Shivakumar waits to join our party (BJP) desperately with his followers," MLA Muniathna stated.

Muniathna said that there are demands to create four more posts of Deputy Chief Ministers. Shivakumar thinks that it is best for him to join the BJP rather than be in the Congress.

"We will not open our doors to him, let him stay in Congress," MLA Muniathna said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being send off by the Prime Minister and King of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay at PBH Paro International Airport, in Thimphu on Saturday. UNI

Gurugram: Elvish Yadav gets bail in Delhi-based YouTuber's assault case

Gurugram, March 23 (IANS) Bigg Boss OTT 2 winner Elvish Yadav was granted bail by a Gurugram court in connection with an assault case involving YouTuber Sagar Thakur aka Maxtern on Saturday, police said.

According to the police, Uttar Pradesh (UP) Police took Elvish Yadav to the Gurugram court where Gurugram Police took him into custody.

Yadav was then produced by the Gurugram Police in the court of Duty Magistrate Akshay Kumar around 1.30 p.m. on Saturday.

While confirming the development, SHO (station house officer) of Sector-53 Police Station, Rajender Kumar told IANS that "Yadav has been released on bail by a court of duty magistrate. He was produced before the court around 1.30 p.m. on Saturday and after furnishing his bail bond by his lawyers, he was granted bail."

Gurugram Police also recorded Yadav's statement in the assault case of YouTuber Sagar Thakur. After recording the statement, he was produced in court, where the court granted bail to Elv-

ish. The SHO earlier had said that Elvish was issued a notice to appear in the assault case on March 18. However, Elvish had already been taken into custody by Noida Police, so no communication was received. The police had also applied for Yadav's production warrant in the

Gurugram Court, where Yadav's appearance was fixed on March 27 but before this, he was granted bail by a Noida Court.

However, after the entire controversy, the agreement between Elvish Yadav and Maxtern also came to light. It was reported that Elvish had apologised to Maxtern.

Six Congress rebels in Himachal Pradesh join BJP

New Delhi, March 23 (IANS) Six former Congress MLAs of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly, who were disqualified for defying a party whip, joined the BJP on Saturday in the national Capital.

Three Independent legislators, who resigned from the House of 68 a day earlier, may also join the saffron party soon.

Already, the Election Commission has announced bypolls in six constituencies vacated by the Congress rebels.

The six disqualified Congress legislators had supported the BJP in the Rajya Sabha election, apart from the three Independent legislators.

The BJP inducted leaders were Rajinder Rana, who represented the Sujapur constituency; Sudhir Sharma (Dharamshala); Inder Dutt Lakhnpal (Barsar); Devinder Kumar Bhutto (Kutehar); Ravi Thakur (Lahaul-Spiti) and Chetanya Sharma (Gagret).

They joined the BJP in the presence of Union Minister, Anurag Thakur, former Himachal Chief Minister, Jai Ram Thakur, and the party's state President Rajeev Bindal.

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