



KATRINA TURNS LENS WOMAN

Vicky Kaushal shared a stylish picture of himself which is clicked by his wife Katrina. Her photography skills were on display

LEISURE P2



EXODUS CONTINUES

More than 2.8 million people have fled Ukraine according to the UN refugee agency

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA COMPLETE WHITEWASH

Rohit Sharma-led India seal 2 Test series against Sri Lanka 2-0 after beating the visitors by 238 runs in the second match

SPORTS P12

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RUSSIA SHELLS RESIDENTIAL PREMISES

A direct strike during Russian shelling has led to fire and destruction of a residential building in Kyiv, Monday. Russian troops kept up pressure on Ukraine's capital and air raid sirens were heard across the besieged country overnight. The attacks around Kyiv came a day after Russia escalated its offensive by shelling areas close to the Polish border including an airbase critical to Ukraine's defense. Prospects for a speedy end to the fighting, however, appear dim.

PTI PHOTO

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Panel to probe Class X Odia paper anomalies

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 14: The Central Board of Secondary Education Monday set up an expert committee to probe into the alleged discrepancies in the question and answer key of Odia paper of Class X first term examinations. On the basis of the report of the expert committee, appropriate decision will be taken by the board within 24 hours. "A dispute has been received from a school regarding the answer key of Odia subject in Class X claiming that the answers given in the answer key for some questions are wrong," the CBSE said. "Therefore, with a view to ascertaining the factual position, an expert panel to examine the discrepancies raised in the representation," it said. "An appropriate decision will be taken by the board within 24 hours, on the basis of the report of the expert committee," it added. Odisha Parents Federation Monday submitted a memorandum to CBSE Regional Office here demanding 17 grace marks to students due to discrepancy in Odia subject term 1 paper where 17 questions and its answers were wrong.

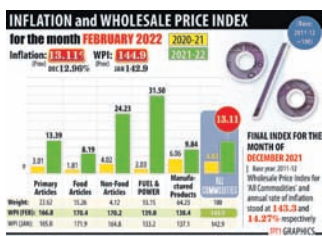
questions are wrong," the CBSE said. "Therefore, with a view to ascertaining the factual position, an expert panel to examine the discrepancies raised in the representation," it said. "An appropriate decision will be taken by the board within 24 hours, on the basis of the report of the expert committee," it added. Odisha Parents Federation Monday submitted a memorandum to CBSE Regional Office here demanding 17 grace marks to students due to discrepancy in Odia subject term 1 paper where 17 questions and its answers were wrong.

Girl inmate at NISER commits suicide

Bhubaneswar: A female PhD scholar allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the six-storied residential building inside the campus of National Institute of Science Education and Research Bhubaneswar (NISER) in Jatni area here Monday morning. The deceased was identified as Pooja Jethwani of Chhattisgarh. According to sources, Pooja, a graduate from Indian Institute of Technology Madras, was doing research for her PhD paper in Physics for last five years. The NISER staff Monday morning spotted Pooja lying dead near D-2 block of the girls' hostel. Police reached the spot and sent the body to AIIMS for post mortem. The autopsy is scheduled to be carried out Tuesday after her parents' arrival.

MORE P3

WPI inflation up to 13.11%; retail 6.07%



New Delhi: The wholesale price-based inflation in February rose to 13.11 per cent on hardening of prices of crude oil and non-food items, even though food articles softened. After two months of mild easing, WPI inflation accelerated in February and remained in double digits for the 11th consecutive month, beginning April 2021. Similarly, retail inflation inched up to 6.07 per cent in February mainly due to an uptick in food prices, showed the government data. The Consumer Price Index based retail inflation was 5.03 per cent in February 2021 and 6.01 per cent in January this year. WPI inflation last month was 12.96 per cent

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Such news could've given us a big shock. Thanks to this govt, we don't have jobs

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	56486.02	↑ 935.72
NIFTY	16871.30	↑ 240.80
DOLLAR	77.02	↑ ₹0.12
EURO	84.15	↓ ₹0.31
GOLD	₹52,415	↓ ₹463
SILVER	₹79,188	↓ ₹1182

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 36.6°C	36.0°C
	MIN 22.3°C	21.5°C
Humidity	88%	87%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Clear sky mainly	

Vax for 12-14 yrs from March 16

Everyone aged 60 years and above, regardless of comorbidities, will now be able to get precaution doses

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 14: The COVID vaccination for children in the age group of 12-14 years will begin from Wednesday, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced Monday.

The COVID-19 vaccine to be administered to the 12-14 years age group would be Corbevax manufactured by Biological E Limited, Hyderabad, the Union health ministry said. Tweeting the announcement in Hindi, the minister said, "if the children are safe then the country is safe! I am happy to inform that the COVID vaccination of children in the age group of 12 to 13 and 13 to 14 is starting from March 16. Also, everyone aged 60 years and above will now be able to get precaution doses."

Mandaviya also urged the families of children and people in the age group of 60 years and above that they must get the vaccination done. The Union government after due deliberations with scientific bodies has decided to start COVID-19 vaccination for 12-13 yr and 13-14 yr age groups (those born in 2008, 2009 and 2010 i.e. those who are already above 12 years of age) of the population from March 16, 2022, the ministry said in a statement.

According to official sources, around 7.11 crore children will be



vaccinated under the new age group. Biological E Ltd has supplied 5 crore doses of Corbevax to the Centre and the vaccine has been distributed to states, sources said.

The announcement comes at a time when schools across the country are opening up given the considerable decline in the COVID cases. The government has also decided that the condition of comorbidity for COVID19 precaution dose for population over 60 years of age will be removed forthwith, the ministry said.

"Hence, from 16th March 2022 onwards, the entire population above 60 years of age will be eligible for precautionary doses of COVID19 vaccine," the ministry

Indian airport premises, was criticised by leading Sikh body Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

Subsequently, March 12, the BCAS removed the ban. Kirpan, a curved dagger, has to be worn next to the body in Sikh religion.

In the March 4 order, the BCAS said, "Kirpan may be carried only by a Sikh passenger, on his person, provided the length of the blade does not exceed six

said. The population above 14 years of age is already being inoculated under the ongoing COVID vaccination program.

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 last year with healthcare workers getting inoculated in the first phase.

The vaccination of frontline workers started February 2 last year. The next phase of vaccination commenced from March 1 for people over 60 and those aged 45 and above with specified comorbid conditions.

The Centre then decided to expand its vaccination drive by allowing everyone above 18 to be jabbed from May 1 last year. The next phase of vaccination commenced January 3 this year for adolescents aged 15-18.

Man ends life, wife hurt as winner hurls abuses

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak/Padmapur, March 14: In a nerve-racking incident, a man hanged himself to death while his wife, who had contested for samiti member's post, consumed poison after the couple was hurled abuses by the winning candidate.

The winner in the recently conducted panchayat polls allegedly hurled abuses and slurs on the couple, it was alleged. A case in this connection was registered with local police. The incident was reported from Bada Agapur village under Padmapur panchayat of Basudevpur block in Bhadrak district. According to sources, Sumati Parida, wife of Ramakant Parida, had contested for a samiti member's post as an independent candidate. Since then, the winner and his supporters were passing lewd comments on the couple.

This eventually led to verbal duel between the couple. Under mental stress, Ramakant set his household items on fire. Later, unable to bear the comments, Sumati consumed poison while Ramakant hanged himself from a ceiling fan.

On being alerted, Basudevpur fire department officials reached the village and doused the flames. Sumati

Threatened by cops, minor girl kills self

AGENCIES

Jagatsinghpur: A minor girl committed suicide after allegedly being threatened by police over the arrest of her father at Haveli Nath Sahi under Sadar police limits. According to reports, a police van was ransacked while two constables sustained injuries after a mob attacked police personnel during panchayat polls February 17. Since then, police were on the lookout for the people involved in the attack. Sunday night, the cops reached the victim's house to arrest her father Manas Nath. However, in the absence of Manas and his wife, the cops threatened his three minor daughters before leaving the village. Manas' elder daughter Smrutiprajna alias Barsha hanged herself to death while her two sisters were asleep.

was rescued in critical condition and rushed to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. However, Ramakant had breathed his last by the time co-villagers reached the house. The incident sparked outrage in the village. Demanding action against the winning candidate, hundreds of villagers placed the body of Ramakant on Padmapur-Biras main road.



Protesters staging a road blockade against minor's suicide in Jagatsinghpur

Pistol found from school classroom



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 14: In a bizarre incident Saturday, a country-made pistol was found in one of the classrooms of an upper primary (UP) school in Sambalpur. The incident has triggered strong resentment among parents who have been left in a state of panic, a source said Monday.

The firearm was recovered Saturday during a search of a classroom at Rengumunda UP school under Jamankira police limits in the district was being cleaned. The weapon was kept in a shelf inside the classroom. However, the room from which the firearm was recovered had been under the possession of a former teacher.

Assistant teacher Gobinda Bhoi occupied two classrooms of the school. Although he was transferred March 4, his personal belongings were not shifted, the source said.

"Bhoi lived in one of the classrooms and used another room as a kitchen. It is suspected that the former assistant teacher was in possession of the pistol," an employee said on the condition of anonymity.

The matter has been duly communicated to local Cluster Resource Center Coordinator (CRCC) and other department higher-ups.

On being informed, Jamankira police have launched an investigation into the matter.

Sikhs can now carry kirpans inside airports

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 14: Aviation security regulator the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has permitted Sikh aviation sector employees to carry kirpan on person within the airport premises, a document stated.

The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security order March 4, banning Sikh aviation sector employees from carrying kirpan on person within any

Indian airport premises, was criticised by leading Sikh body Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

Subsequently, March 12, the BCAS removed the ban. Kirpan, a curved dagger, has to be worn next to the body in Sikh religion.

In the March 4 order, the BCAS said, "Kirpan may be carried only by a Sikh passenger, on his person, provided the length of the blade does not exceed six



inches and the total length does not exceed nine inches."

Kirpan is allowed while travelling by air on Indian aircraft within India, it noted. "This exception shall be for Sikh passengers only

as stated above. And, no stakeholder or its employee at airport (including Sikh) and working in any terminal, domestic or international, shall be allowed to carry kirpan on person," it added.

On March 9, SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhani wrote a letter to Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, stating that the March 4 order was an attack on Sikh rights. Therefore, March 12, the BCAS issued a corrigendum to the March 4 order. The corrigendum removed the paragraph that prohibited Sikh employees to bring kirpan at any airport.

BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa tweeted a photo of the modified order and expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. Singh said airport Sikh employees and passengers can both carry kirpan at Indian airports now.

Doc kicks patient; video goes viral

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawaniapatna, March 14: A video of a doctor kicking, slapping and punching a patient at Dharamgarh Sub Divisional Hospital in Kalahandi district has sparked outrage.

The video of the assault, recorded on a mobile phone, has gone viral on social media. According to sources, a patient identified as Suresh Naik, 35, was admitted to the hospital after he complained of stomach pain Sunday night. He was doctoring in pain when the on-duty doctor Suresh Kumar Dora, directed him to shut up. Later, the angry doctor attacked Naik and beat him up in front of other patients and attendants.

leisure



LAVERNE FIRST MET LEONARDO WHEN SHE WAS A WAITRESS

The *Orange Is The New Black* star Laverne Cox can recall first meeting Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio when she was working as a waitress in a New York City club.

BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH HAS VOICED HIS SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Actor Benedict Cumberbatch says it's impossible to ignore the war in Ukraine. He shared: "We have brothers and sisters who are suffering. It is a really shocking time to be a European, two-and-a-half hours' flight away from Ukraine. It's something that hangs over us."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You've finally realised that diet and exercise are a must, and you especially need to take good care. Today, you may wish to eat something different. Tried Mongolian cuisine? Ganesh suggests that you go out with some friends who you've not been paying attention to.

TAURUS
You will spend your day in the company of near and dear ones, says Ganesh. Family and friends might gather at your place and you will leave no stone unturned in welcoming them to your nest. In all probability, home makers will be able to shine in cooking as well as hosting, foresees Ganesh.

GEMINI
Emotional and material security will hold equal importance today. You want to be in love, but you know that love can't buy you dough. In academics, you will be able to solve whatever problems you set your mind on. Your spare time will be spent on devising methods of making the best use of your knowledge.

CANCER
You are feeling lucky today. The problem is that your feelings have nothing to do with the ground reality. So, while you may get busy trying your luck at risky speculative markets, Ganesh may get increasingly worried about the losses you may incur because of your foolishness.

LEO
Today, the force is with you. Well, at least part of the force that deals with being a smooth talker, says Ganesh. It is your power of expression that comes to the fore and stands you in good stead. Having mastered the art of communication, you now are a wizard of words who conjures showers of pearls with a mere twist of the tongue.

VIRGO
There is a strong indication that you will dabble in writing or performing arts, and emerge with excellent results. Since these are your passions, you may cultivate hobbies in these fields, if they are not already your profession.

LIBRA
No matter what you do, some days are just not happening. Considering the random mood swings that affect you today, it's in the best interest of others that you put up a 'Beware of me' sign. By being forewarned about it, you should be capable of handling your erratic behaviour.

SCORPIO
The day today is riddled with minor, nagging ailments. Adopt a two-pronged strategy, advises Ganesh. One - change your lifestyle, and two - visit your doctor for regular examinations. Ominous at his best, Ganesh counsels to take care of your health.

SAGITTARIUS
Today, you will most certainly put your heart and soul into your work. But it is rather unlikely that you will get the returns in proportion to the efforts you put in. Yet, at the end of the day, you will be more than satisfied that you have got the chance to display your innate talents, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
New projects and partnership will keep you busy today, says Ganesh. If a meeting is scheduled, you may be praised vociferously for your ability to make the right decision at the right time. You may also bag rewards for the commendable efforts you'd put in the past.

AQUARIUS
Your mood will swing by the hour today! Naturally, you leave your friends stumped. But unpredictability does not mean that you take unnecessary risk. Ganesh suggests you complete all pending projects, and bear in mind that it is only fools who rush in where angels fear to tread.

PISCES
You probably jumped out of bed this morning itching to talk to someone. And why not, since all your latent power of expression will spring out like a jack-in-the-box today. The pearls of wisdom you shower on people who are down-in-the-dumps today will make them feel good about their bluesy, taciturn selves, says Ganesh.

Katrina turns photographer for hubby Vicky

Mumbai: Actor Vicky Kaushal, who is quite active on social media, has shared a stylish picture of himself which is clicked by his gorgeous wife Katrina Kaif. He took to his Instagram story and showed off Katrina's photography skills.

In the candid picture, Vicky is seen sporting a black suit paired with a white shirt. Along with the picture, the actor wrote, 'Mood shot by Mrs'. He shared two more pictures which were also clicked by Katrina.

Recently, Vicky shared a heartwarming picture of Katrina and his mother Veena Kaushal on the occasion of International Women's Day. He shared the picture with a caption that read, 'My strength. My world'.

Katrina and Vicky tied the knot December 9 last year in

Rajasthan. Their close friends and family members were seen attending their big day. The duo opted for a low-key wedding. The couple made their wedding Instagram official by sharing adorable pictures from their D-day. Along with the pictures, the couple wrote, "Only love and gratitude in our hearts for everything that brought us to this moment. Seeking all your love and blessings as we begin this new journey together."

AGENCIES



Yami urges everyone to watch *The Kashmir Files*

Mumbai: Yami Gautam is the latest celebrity who has extended support to Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri's *The Kashmir Files*. The film narrates the story of the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 and Yami urged everyone to watch the film to 'know the truth'. "Being married to a Kashmiri Pandit, I know firsthand accounts of the atrocities that this peace-loving community has gone through. But majority of the nation is still unaware. It took us 32 years and a film to get to know the truth. Please watch and support #TheKashmirFiles," tweeted Yami Gautam.

Previously, her husband, filmmaker Aditya Dhar had also extended support to *The Kashmir Files* in a series of tweets. He wrote, "You might have seen numerous videos of Kashmiri Pandits breaking down in the theatres after watching #TheKashmirFiles. The emotion is real. It shows how long we kept our pain and tragedy repressed as a community. We didn't have any shoulder to cry on and no ear to hear our pleas.

This film is a brave attempt to show our TRUTH! We were forced to keep this tragedy a secret."

The Kashmir Files released on

March 11 and has opened to a phenomenal box office response. At the end of its first weekend, the film raked in Rs 26.50 crore.

AGENCIES



Aamir praises ex-wife Kiran for being brutally honest

Mumbai: Actor Aamir Khan recently praised his ex-wife Kiran Rao for being brutally honest and making him stay grounded, a trait that has helped the *Lagaan* actor make improvements in his social and creative conduct.

Addressing the media on his birthday Monday, the actor said, "If there is anyone who has given me the best gift in my life, it has to be Kiran Rao because she is the one, who has known me from close quarters and with her, it has been the most rewarding relation among all the relations that I share with my friends, family and the peers."

Elaborating on the 'gift' that Kiran has given to him, he mentioned how she gives him precise suggestions that work wonders when he sits down to analyze and follow them, "I was talking to her the other day. I asked her what are some of the things that I need to work on to improve myself as a human being. She made me understand in a very nice way, it was very important for me to listen to her and to follow her advice."

The actor doesn't shy away from exploring himself and look out for his weak areas. "I like the fact that I don't feel shy when I set out for myself as a human being, that's where the growth starts. I like to zero down on my shortcomings and work would improve in myself with each passing day", Aamir concluded.

IANS



National Classical Dance and Musical Samaroha kicks off

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi (OSNA) and the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC) under the Union Ministry of Culture collaboratively flagged off the five-day National Classical Dance and Musical Samaroha at the Eastern Railway Auditorium, Mancheswar here Monday.

EZCC Director Gouri Basu and OSNA President Aruna Mohanty

graced the occasion as chief guests.

Dhaneswar Swain, an exponent and Guru of a traditional percussion instrument of Odissi music 'Mardala', began the programme with soulful musical performance. Dhaneswar is the founder of Vadya Vani Gurukula, an institution for training and research in 'Mardala' and other traditional percussion instru-

ments of Odisha.

The second performance of the inaugural evening came from Rama Vaidyanathan, ace Bharatanatyam artiste from Delhi. She is one of the directors of Ganesha Natyalaya, one of the best Bharatanatyam institutes of the country. Some of her famous choreographies are Vrikshanjali and Shivoham.

The inaugural evening con-

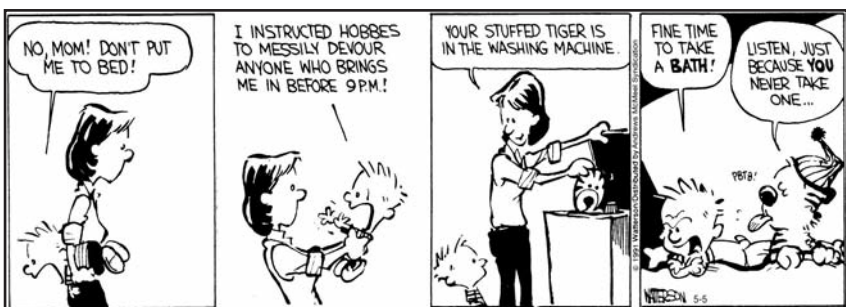
cluded with Odissi performance by Aloka Kanungo, one of the leading classical dancers of India. Aloka Kanungo is the culmination of a dancer, choreographer, teacher and scholar. She combines single-handed devotion and indefatigable industry with a keen and questioning mind. Her style has elegance and dignity, a combination powerful enough to captivate the audiences.

PWN

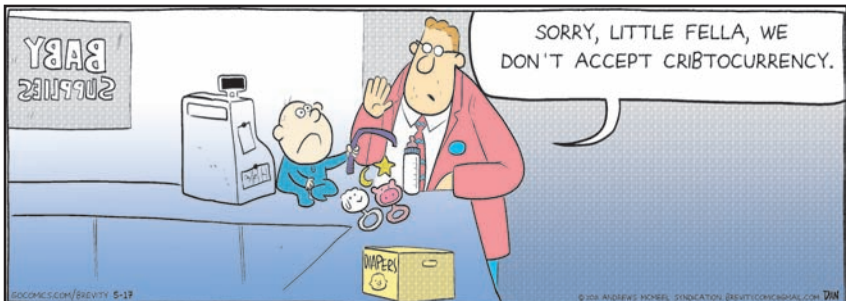
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

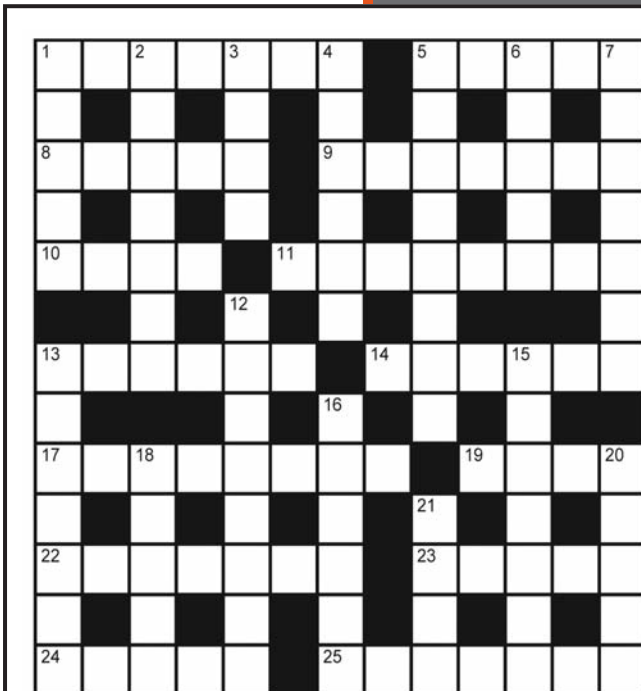


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

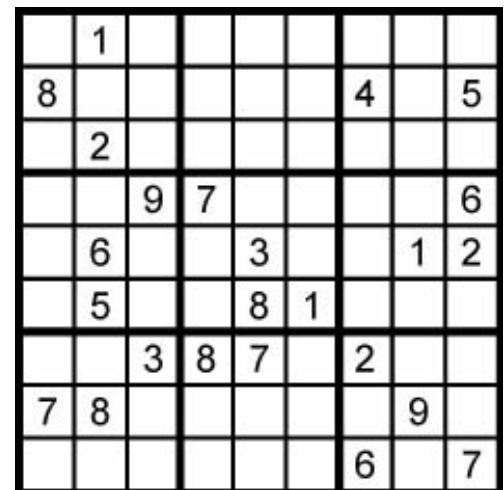


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- Across**
- 1 They were native
 - 5 Crystal clear
 - 8 Cook's wear
 - 9 Tie the knot again
 - 10 Hourglass fill
 - 11 Environmentalist's concern (4,4)
 - 13 Monet subject
 - 14 It hangs around in winter
 - 17 Songbirds
 - 19 Aberdeen
 - 22 Baked dessert
 - 23 Magical wish granter
 - 24 Book keeper
 - 25 Said hello
 - 5 Politician on the way out (4,4)
 - 6 Around that time
 - 7 Matriarch
 - 12 Throw out (3,3,2)
 - 13 Migratory grasshoppers
 - 15 Copra source
 - 16 Travel fatigue (3,3)
 - 18 Like the Vikings
 - 20 Vogue
 - 21 Malarial fever
- Down**
- 1 Blind parts
 - 2 Kind of gland
 - 3 Family member
 - 4 Coniferous tree

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

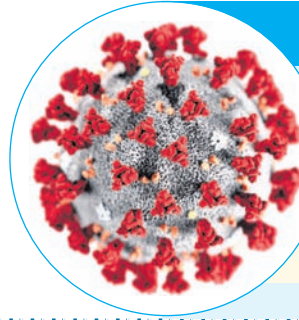
downtown

COURTESY CALL

British Deputy High Commissioner to Kolkata Nick Low paid a courtesy visit to Governor Ganeshi Lal at Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Monday



COVID-19 TRACKER



	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	45,88,54,635	39,22,71,397	60,67,529
India	4,29,93,494	4,24,41,449	5,15,877
Odisha	12,86,694	12,76,782	9,115

Bolangir sizzles at 38.3° C

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Odisha reeled in the scorching early summer sun Monday and the mercury shot up in many parts of the state, where the maximum temperature touched levels which are above normal, the Met office said.



the human body when exposed during a heat wave, the India Meteorological Department said.

A heatwave is declared if the departure from normal temperature is 45-64 degrees when the maximum

reaches at least 40 degrees in the plains or 37 in the coastal weather stations. Few other criteria can also lead to its declaration. A yellow warning denotes that the heatwave conditions will continue for two days during which people should avoid heat exposure. It is tolerable, but there is moderate health concern for vulnerable sections like the elderly and infants. The state Health department advised people to drink plenty of fluids and fruits like grapes and watermelon to stay hydrated and be safe from heatstroke. People should avoid going outside during the afternoon and wear light clothes to stay safe, it added.

The weather was dry in the districts and there will be no large change in the maximum in the next 48 hours. It will subsequently rise by 3-4 degrees celsius across the state, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said.

Bolangir was the hottest place in the state recording a maximum temperature of 38.3 degree celsius, a shade less of 38.2 degree celsius in Jharsuguda, 38.1 in Angul and 38 in Titilagarh, a weather bulletin issued by the Centre stated.

The mercury in Bhubaneswar, where the maximum was 36.6 degrees celsius, is expected to be around 38 Tuesday.

The Met office issued a yellow warning of heatwave at some places in Bolangir, Subarnapur and Boudh districts for two days from Wednesday.

Similar conditions are likely in Angul, Nayagarh and Khurda on Thursday. The temperature in the capital and Cuttack may touch 40 and 39 degrees respectively during the period, it said.

The temperature can be fatal to

Submit status report on 'Mo Sarkar': HE dept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 14: The Higher Education (HE) department Monday directed the state public universities and colleges to furnish month-wise status on implementation of the 'Mo Sarkar' initiative. Special Secretary of the department Rajashree Mohanty said that the Mo Sarkar initiative has been adopted by this department since March 4, 2020. But due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, it could not be implemented properly as the pandemic situation had badly affected the functioning of the institutions.

"The situation has been improving since September 2021. You had been requested to resume Mo Sarkar from September, 2021 by entering the details of visitors in the Mo Sarkar login page available at SAMS portal. But sufficient data of visitors are not being received by the portal from your end," she said.

Transport dept issues SOP for heatwave

Bhubaneswar: As temperature starts soaring in the state, the transport department has issued an SOP to tackle the heatwave this year.

As per the SOP, the public transport services will be rescheduled so that plying of buses during peak heatwave hours—from 11am to 3pm—is restricted.

Provisions of safe drinking water, ice packs, ORS will be made in buses and cool resting spaces will be made at bus stops. Overcrowding of passengers in the public transport vehicles will

also be avoided during the season, it said.

'Jalachhatras' will be set up at bus stands and bus stops for the passengers and water kiosks will be set up on highways for the commuters. Temporary passenger sheds will be set up near the bus stops with provisions of drinking water.

The enforcement wing of the Transport department will check implementation of the SOP and penalty be imposed against the erring transporters/operators, it said.

The department has asked concerned authorities to set up control rooms at district-level and make it functional round-the-clock during the period of heat wave.

The bus and truck associations of the district and the local NGOs will be involved in a public awareness campaign about heatwave. Regular meetings will be held to sort out any issue related to heatwave management, says the SOP. Additional commissioner (admin) Srinivas Behera has been appointed as the nodal officer for this purpose.

NISER scholar found dead, suicide suspected

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 14: A female PhD scholar allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the six-storied girls' hostel inside the campus of National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) in Jatni area here Monday.

The deceased was identified as Pooja Jethwani of Chhattisgarh. Pooja, a graduate from Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, was doing research for her PhD paper in Physics for last five years.

The NISER staff Monday morning spotted Pooja lying dead near D-2 block of the girls' hostel. Police reached the spot and sent the body to AIIMS for post mortem. Sources in police claimed that

Pooja was allegedly suffering from some psychological disorder. The staff in the hospital inside the NISER campus informed the cops that she was undergoing medication for the disorder.

Pooja, who was with her family for around five to six months, allegedly received treatment for the psychological ailment. She had reportedly isolated herself after her return from Chhattisgarh.

However, her family members are yet to make any allegations in this regard. Police have started investigation into the case after registering an unnatural death case. A diary, reportedly of the deceased, has been seized by city police too.

Police are awaiting the autopsy report to know the actual reason behind her death.

R&B techie under Vigilance scanner

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Vigilance sleuths Monday carried out simultaneous raids at six places linked to an assistant executive engineer (AEE) of Roads and Buildings (R&B) division No-IV in Bhubaneswar.

The R&B engineer was identified as Ajaya Kumar Mishra. House searches were conducted based on the allegation that Mishra has amassed assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Acting on a tip-off, the sleuths conducted raids at different places in Khurda, Dhenkanal and Angul districts on the strength of a search warrant issued by the Special Vigilance Judge in Dhenkanal, said an official.

Surgery on babies our forte: Dr Mohapatra

Jagannath Hospital needs no introduction. Established in 2012, the exclusive perinatal centre in Saheed Nagar area of Bhubaneswar has been the No. 1 paediatric hospital in the eastern zone of India for the 6th consecutive year. In an interview with Orissa POST, its managing director Dr Arjit Mohapatra speaks about their journey, health care services and many more. Excerpts:



- How has the journey been so far? We faced a host of challenges while launching the hospital in 2012. However, things began falling in place as time went by. Ours is the biggest hospital in eastern India which is providing round-the-clock services to patients.
- What are the services your hospital offer? We are among the select private healthcare institutions in Odisha to offer 24x7 perinatal care. Except for the heart surgery, we perform almost all the surgeries on babies. In fact, none of the hospitals in Odisha perform heart surgery on babies. Apart from the neonatal intensive care unit for ill or premature newborns, we have ven-

tilator and ICU facilities as well.

- Your take on high treatment costs at private hospitals? Prices of almost everything are on the rise. And so are the treatment costs. Here, health insurance comes to the rescue. Of late, there has been a big jump in demand for health insurance. Huge medical expenses are always expected, and hence having adequate health insurance cover is a must.

What are the facilities the state government is providing?

I believe Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana is helping us a lot as many families are covered under the state government's universal health insurance scheme. The Odisha State Treatment Fund has also been a boon for many requiring critical surgeries,

which are not available in Odisha. Those patients are being referred to hospitals outside the state under the ambitious scheme.

What are the steps your institution has taken to ensure treatment during Covid-19 pandemic?

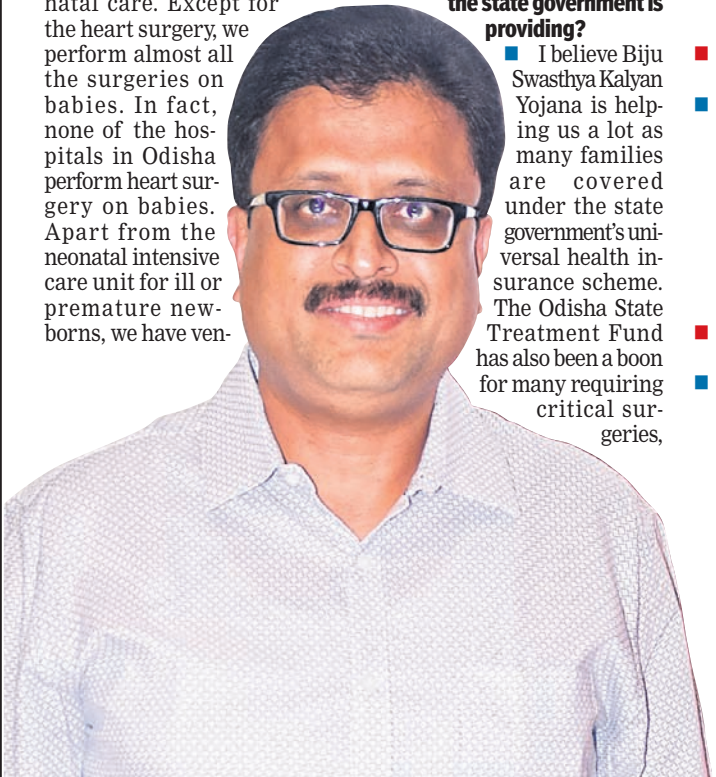
We undertook many initiatives during the lockdown while following Covid protocols. Fever clinic, isolation room and isolation ICU were to name a few. And, we also managed to beat the Covid.

What needs to be done to tackle Covid-like challenges in future?

Covid has taught us to face odds. We should look at the positive side. The pandemic has changed peoples' behaviour as they are now more health-conscious. Cleanliness and hygiene are very important.

Don't you think it's necessary to further boost the health infra?

There's no end to infrastructure development. A sizeable infrastructure has already been developed in the past 20 years. We have witnessed introduction of new technology in healthcare. Earlier, people hardly knew about public health. Now, the scenario is different. People are well aware of it. Hence, awareness about public health and development of facilities in the sector are needed.



About Dr Arjit Mohapatra: After completing MBBS from SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Mohapatra pursued MD in Paediatrics in 1998. Later, he did DM in Neonatology from Mumbai. In his 28-year long career, Mohapatra has won laurels from across the county for successfully performing many critical surgeries.

HOLI AHEAD



People were seen buying coloured powder from a stall at Unit-1 market in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

6,411 candidates left in fray for urban poll

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 14: With the deadline for withdrawal of nomination papers for the urban elections scheduled for March 24 having come to an end Monday, a total of 6,411 candidates have remained in the fray.

According to sources in the State Election Commission (SEC), 641 candidates have withdrawn their nomination papers. After that, 569 candidates have remained in the battle field for the post of chairperson and mayor while 5,842 candidates are there for the election to councillors and corporators. Monday was the last day for withdrawal of nomination papers.

A total of 102 candidates who had filed their nominations for the posts of chairperson and mayor



in different Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have withdrawn their papers. Similarly, 539 councillor and corporator candidates took back their nominations, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the commission has asked District Collectors to ensure that the ongoing campaigning for

urban polls in the state ends at 5 pm March 22.

After receiving queries from different districts, SEC secretary RN Sahu has clarified to the District Magistrates about this in a letter.

As per Odisha Municipal Rules and Odisha Municipal Corporation Rules, "No person shall convene,

hold or attend any public meeting in any polling area during the period of 48 hours preceding the hour fixed for the closure of the poll for any election in that polling area."

This being the provision, the commission directed that any public meetings and campaigning in any mode would be stopped at 5 pm, March 22, 2022 positively, Sahu said.

Urban elections will be held March 24 and the results will be declared March 26.

Over 41 lakh voters are eligible to cast their votes in the poll. About 27 lakh voters, 3,030 booths and 1,731 wards are there in 106 municipalities and NACs while there are 14.26 lakh voters, 168 wards and 1,407 booths in three corporations of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur.

ISRO to unveil 'RESPOND BASKET 2022'

This is the flagship programme of ISRO through which necessary financial and technical support is provided to academia to promote the extramural research in emerging areas of space

the academia Tuesday 2pm on its website.

'RESPOND BASKET 2022', the Bangalore-headquartered space agency's focused research topics for sponsored research, will be launched by ISRO Chairman and Secretary in the Department of Space S Somanath on account of ISRO Academia Day.

"Every year, we publish ISRO-focused topics for research in the Respond Basket. Then, several universities and colleges apply to ISRO for joint collaboration. We will enter into MoUs with finalised academia," an ISRO official told PTI.

RESPOND's objective is to encourage academia to participate and contribute in various space-related research activities. Under



RESPOND, projects are taken up by universities/academic institutions in the areas of relevance to space programme.

ISRO said it has evolved the RE-

SPOND programme through which necessary financial and technical support is provided to academia in India for conducting research and development activities related to

space science, space technology and space applications.

This is the flagship programme of ISRO to promote the extramural research in emerging areas of space for academia.

To enable the faculty of universities/institutes to prepare suitable proposals of relevance to the space programme, a detailed list of R&D areas/sub areas/topics are evolved as per major programmes of ISRO, by the various centres of ISRO and published annually.

"RESPOND programme is mutually beneficial to ISRO and academia, wherein the rich talent of academia/ faculty is being harnessed to support the nation's space programme," it was stated.

Bagchi-Sri Shankara Cancer Hosp to offer services by mid-2023

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Bagchi-Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Centre at Info Valley II here is likely to start patient services by Rath Yatra of 2023, said Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra as he visited the institution site Monday.

Mahapatra along with Subrato Bagchi, the funding patron of the hospital, visited the campus and reviewed the progress of the work with the engineers and supervisors at the site. The construction is going on in full swing. Target was set to start treatment of patients after completion of the first phase of construction by car festival of 2023, it was learnt.

Being built with estimated cost of around Rs 220 crore, the hospital would sport 750 beds with latest equipment and world-class expertise in cancer treatment, sources said.

Later, Mahapatra and Bagchi visited the premises of Bagchi-Karunashraya Palliative Care Center being constructed over 20acre of land near the hospital. The centre would have a 150-bed unit with all palliative care and service facilities. It would also provide consultancy to the patients and their family members. The centre would have a 500 seat auditorium for education and research activities. An amount of Rs210 crore would be invested for development of the centre. Target was set to complete its construction by July 2023.

Bangalore, March 14: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will unveil its latest sponsored research opportunities to

UNTIL NEXT TIME



Dignitaries at the concluding event of 14th Kalinga Herbal Fair 2022 at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

Naveen among PM-led panel for Netaji's 125th birth anniversary

Earlier January 19, 2021, in order to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation, the Government of India had decided to celebrate his birthday January 23 every year as 'Parakram Diwas' to inspire people, especially the youth, to act with fortitude in the face of adversity as Netaji did, and to infuse in them a spirit of patriotic fervour

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the chairperson of the 82-member High Level Committee constituted by the Centre for the year-long celebration of the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The Committee comprises Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik; Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla; former Prime Ministers HD Deve Gowda and Manmohan Singh; several cabinet ministers from the current government; Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister PK Mishra; Advisor to the Prime Minister Amit Khare; Governors of West Bengal and Manipur; Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland and Mizoram; Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and a number of MPs from Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha.

The committee also has INA freedom fighters and office bearers of Netaji Subhash Bose-INA Trust. Also, a number of former Lok Sabha speakers, former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Dasgupta, former Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Arup Saha and former Chief of Army Staff Gen (Retd) Shankar Roy Chowdhury are part of the panel. The Committee also has journalist Kanchan Gupta, author and academician Anirban Ganguly, former Indian national football team member Subrata Bhattacharya, film maker Kaushik Ganguly, Ravi R Kasliwal of Medanta Hospital, and General Secretary of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission Swami Suvirananda Maharaj. Apart from prominent political and cultural members, the Committee also has former India captain Sourav Ganguly, ac-

tors Mithun Chakraborty and Kajol, and music director AR Rahman.

Earlier January 19, 2021, in order to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation, the Government of India had decided to celebrate his birthday January 23 every year as 'Parakram Diwas' to inspire people, especially the youth, to act with fortitude in the face of adversity as Netaji did, and to infuse in them a spirit of patriotic fervour.

Bose was born January 23, 1897 in Cuttack and had founded the Indian National Army (INA) that attacked the Britishers from the eastern side of the then undivided India, mostly comprising NE India.



Seonath water not leased out: Centre

New Delhi, March 14: The Union Jal Shakti Ministry Monday informed the Rajya Sabha that the water of Seonath river, a tributary of Mahanadi, has not been leased out by the state of Chhattisgarh. Responding to a question asked by Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Amar Patnaik, Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti Bishweshwar Tudu said that as per the information received from the state of Chhattisgarh, water of Seonath river has not been allotted on lease. The minister also informed that as many as nine projects are currently underway on the tributaries of Mahanadi river and these projects have got the approval from



House pays homage to Hemananda Biswal

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha Monday mourned the passing away of former MP and former Chief Minister of Odisha Hemananda Biswal, who breathed last at a hospital in Bhubaneswar February 25 at the age of 82 years. Biswal was a Member of the Parliament during the 15th Lok Sabha from Sundargarh constituency. He was also a six-time MLA from Jharsuguda district, besides being the state's Chief Minister twice. He was elected Chief Minister for the first time for December 7, 1989 to March 5, 1990 and again for December 6, 1999 to March 5, 2000. He was the first tribal Chief Minister of Odisha.

Shekharpur Major Tank Project and Pairi High Dam Project were received in Central Water Commission for techno economic appraisal. The ministry further said that in case of basins where a Tribunal has been constituted for the first time, prior consent of the Tribunal concerned is necessary for techno-economic clearance of projects.

"Techno-economic clearance could be considered for those projects for which an agreement is reached among co-basin states under intimation to the Tribunal. As of now, there is no agreement between the two states. MWDT consent for these projects was also not available. Hence, these have not been concurred," the ministry said.

Nine arrested for post-poll violence in Ganjam district

Berhampur, March 14: A total of nine individuals have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the post-poll violence in Ganjam district, police said Monday.

However, there has been no breakthrough yet into the violence at Kendupadar area in Gangapur Saturday night, in which an elected ward member was killed and four others were severely injured.

On Sunday night, there was a clash between the BJD and BJP supporters at Hinjalakuda in Ganjam district in which eight people were injured, and out of them five were critical.

The dispute was over bursting of crackers to celebrate the victory of a ruling BJD worker as the chairperson of Sorada block.

"We have arrested nine persons for their involvement in the clash," Badagada inspector Suraj Jhankar said. A search is on for more suspects, he added.

Bhanjanagar subdivisional police officer SS Mishra said a few suspects have been detained in the Kendupadar clash and an investigation is on to identify others who were involved in it.

Another clash had occurred in Aska block after a heated argument on casting of votes in the election for the panchayat samiti chairperson Saturday but none have yet been arrested in connection with the incident.

CBSE Odia paper anomalies: OPF demands grace marks

Bhubaneswar, March 14: Members of Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) Monday submitted a memorandum to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) at its regional office here demanding 17 grace marks to students due to discrepancies in the question and answer key of Odia paper of Class X first term examinations.

OPF co-chairman Prasanna Bisoai said, "We have noticed discrepancies in the question and answer key of Odia paper of Class X first term examinations. Why should students and their parents suffer for CBSE's fault? We demand 17 grace marks in Odia."

The parents' federation also threatened to hit the streets if the CBSE fails to address the issue, it was learnt.

On the other hand, the CBSE has set up an expert committee in order to investigate into the alleged discrepancies in the question and answer key of Odia paper of Class X first term examinations.

On the basis of the report of the expert committee, appropriate decision will be taken by the board within 24 hours.



POST NEWS NETWORK

IMPRESSIVE INAUGURATION



Guides performed at the inaugural occasion of Pratiksha camp at Bharat Scouts and Guides office in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

UN gathering gears up for push to save planet's biodiversity

Nearly all the world's countries kicked off a UN-backed meeting Monday aimed at preventing the loss of biodiversity, which is critical to avoid the extinction of many vulnerable species, the emergence of pathogens like the coronavirus, and the damage to both lives and livelihoods of people around the world, indigenous people in particular.

The two-week meeting of over 190 countries on the Convention on Biological Diversity, after a two-year delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be the last gathering of its kind before a major conference in the coming months in Kunming, China, that will try to adopt an international agreement on protecting biodiversity.

"We have this one goal, which is to bend the curve on biodiversity loss and to really build that shared future, in order to live in harmony with the nature in the long run," the convention's executive secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema told reporters Monday.

Possible diplomatic fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine lurked in the background - potentially denting any prospects of global unity on the issue.

Russian delegates scheduled to attend the meeting had their travel plans cancelled amid the closure of much of Europe's airspace to flights from Russia after the invasion, organisers said expressing hopes that Russian diplomats based in Geneva would nevertheless participate.

An inter-governmental, science-based assessment of biodiversity



worldwide, conducted three years ago, had pointed out the decline of nature at unprecedented rates and an acceleration of the extinction of species - with up to a million species facing possible disappearance in the coming decades.

The US-based Campaign For Nature says that the major theme in Geneva will be a target to protect and conserve at least 30 percent of the world's lands, inland waters and oceans to help stanch habitat loss, the overexploitation of nature by people and businesses, and the emergence of pathogens

that thrive off upheaval in the environment.

Convention managers point to five drivers of biodiversity loss: Changes to the use of land and sea; unsustainable exploitation through activities like agriculture; climate change; pollution; and the spread of invasive alien species into new habitats. Indirectly it says, unsustainable production and consumption also play a role.

Mrema said that one key issue will be efforts toward repurposing and redirecting harmful subsidies to the tune of some USD 500 billion per year currently and how these financial flows can move away from nature-negative to biodiversity-positive outcomes. A draft proposal for the framework to be adopted in China would aim at requiring that USD 700 billion to be put into sustaining or improving biodiversity. The issue of reducing pollution from plastics is also part of the draft, she said.

"We have this one goal, which is to bend the curve on biodiversity loss and to really build that shared future, in order to live in harmony with the nature in the long run"



ELIZABETH MARUMA MREMA | EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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SHORT TAKES

■ BJP satyagraha against Jagadev

Bhubaneswar: Opposition BJP Monday hit the streets with its workers, supporters and leaders staging a satyagraha (sit-in) in all towns, block and district headquarters...

■ Education officer, daughter ran over

Angul: An assistant block education officer (ABEO) and his daughter, an Anganwadi supervisor, died after a speeding truck ran over them Monday morning.

■ Gangrape: Two get 20-year jail

Keonjhar: A court here Monday sentenced two persons to 20 years of imprisonment after convicting them of gangrape of a minor girl in 2018.

Man attempts to kill wife, bury her alive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, March 14: In a shocking incident, a man attempted to kill his 23-year-old wife and subsequently tried to bury her alive in a pit in the backyard of his house, Monday.

The incident was reported from Sitalabasa village under Kamakhyanager police limits in Dhenkanal district.

According to a source, the accused identified as Ranjan Kumar Sahu had married Sukanti of the same village about two years ago.

They had been indulging in verbal duel over dowry demand since their marriage. The husband-wife duo had an altercation once again.

Things took an ugly turn earlier in the day when Ranjan, in a fit of rage, severely thrashed his wife leaving her grievously injured. Sukanti sustained injuries on her head and chest.

Taking advantage of the situation, Ranjan then buried her in a pit at the backyard of his house. On being informed, the victim's paternal family members rushed to the site and rescued her.

After being rescued, Sukanti was initially admitted to nearby hospital at Kamakhyanager for treatment. She was later shifted to Dhenkanal district headquarters hospital as her condition deteriorated.



Students and staffers of DAV Autonomous College at Titlagarh in Bolangir district walk to the college, Monday as part of 'No fuel consumption' campaign launched in the college.

7 polluting mills warned of closure

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, March 14: The State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) has warned to close down seven mills including six rice mills in the state over violation of Supreme Court order on pollution management.

The matter came to the fore after SPCB issued show-cause notice to the errant mills in the first and second weeks of March.

Notably, 'Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti', a green outfit, had filed a public interest litigation (Case no-375/2012) in the Supreme Court over discharge of toxic water and effluents from the rice mills which were affecting the lives and livelihoods of the residents living in the vicinities.

The rice mills are: Maa Samalei Agro Products and Shanti Rice Mills at Bargaon, Sri Radhakshay Rice Mill at Nua Larpanka, Preeti Oil Ltd at Rampela, Sri Durga Rice Mills at Nua Rampela in Sambalpur district, Minerva Paddy Processing Pvt

SPCB SHOW-CAUSE NOTICE



SPCB issued show-cause notice to the errant mills in the first and second weeks of March

The pollution watchdog has warned to initiate legal action against the concerned firms if they fail to reply to its notice satisfactorily within 15 days

Ltd at Bhadrappalli in Bolangir district, Sri Lakshmi Rice Mill at Brahmaturka in Bargarh district.

The apex court had February 22, 2017 heard the matter and ordered that the rice mills can be allowed to operate if they install effluent treatment plants (ETPs) on their premises and make them fully functional.

Accordingly, the apex court directed the SPCB authorities to oversee installation of ETPs in all rice mills within a period of three months.

However, most of the rice mills in the state are yet to install and operate ETPs even though five years have passed since the SC passed the order which is blatant viola-

tion of Section 33 (A) of Water Pollution Act-1974.

Notably, rice mills boil the paddy in eight to 20 tanks at a temperature of 70 degrees Celsius. Each tank has the capacity to boil around 35 quintal of paddy. The boiling tanks discharge over 50,000 litres of liquid effluents which is highly toxic in nature and harmful for humans as well as the environment.

The toxic effluents, when released on ground, destroy the soil fertility. The effluents when mixed with water lead to spread of skin diseases, cold, cough, respiratory diseases, tuberculosis and if left unattended to might result in death of the patients.

The SPCB authorities had visited some rice mills in February when they found the latter are not operating the ETPs on their premises and discharging the effluents to their surroundings.

Admin apathy: O2 plant at Keonjhar DHH dysfunctional

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 14: Much to the apathy of the district administration, an oxygen plant set up at the district headquarters hospital here has been lying defunct since its inauguration.

Surprisingly, the medical authorities have allegedly been sitting pretty and attributed it to technical glitch. There is a leakage in the plant and it cannot be made operational until the repair work is done, a medical staffer said.

Now, lakhs of rupees spent on the installation of the plant has gone down the drain. Patients have to go through unwanted problems every day while the staffers engaged in the plant have been drawing their salary without doing any work.

Inadequate oxygen supply has been a major issue for patients here.

Locals alleged that neither the state gov-

ernment nor the medical authorities have concern for the defunct plant. Most of the time, patients have to return frustrated without getting facilities. For the last couple of months, oxygen cylinders have not been available to cater to the needs of the patients, it is alleged.

Worth mentioning, an oxygen plant with 960 litre/minute capacity was installed at Keonjhar DHH six months back. A private company had been given the tender. But, thanks to the attitude of the negligent authorities, the plant has remained non-operational till now.

"Oxygen given to a patient was exhausted, but no staff came to supply fresh oxygen. The patient and his relatives had a tough time then," another patient said while narrating the ordeal of an elderly person admitted to the hospital.

Hospital manager admitted that the oxygen plant was out of order.

5-yr-old dies as slab falls on her

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, March 14: A 5-year-old girl died after a cement slab fell on her at Balarampalli village under Sadar police limits here, Sunday evening.

The deceased was identified as Prabhati Naik, daughter of Mohan Naik in the village. On being informed, police sent the

body for post-mortem and registered a case of unnatural death. The incident occurred when Prabhati was playing outside her house Sunday evening when the cement slab kept nearby fell on her. Locals rescued her in a critical condition and admitted her to MKCG Medical College and Hospital where she succumbed during treatment.

Advertisement for East Coast Railway E-Procurement System, listing tender details for PVC trunking and other materials.

Government of Odisha Office of Special Relief Commissioner. Quotation Call Notice No.F-332 regarding hiring vehicles and other services.

Bank of India Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli. Advertisement regarding gold ornaments and loan borrowers.

Dialysis centre at Nayagarh DHH comes a cropper

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, March 14: The dialysis centre at district headquarters hospital (DHH) here is struggling to stay afloat due to administrative bottlenecks and lack of coordination between the authorities of the hospital and the dialysis centre, a report said.

The dialysis unit is being run on public-private partnership (PPP) mode. Reports said the state government had recently provided 11 dialysis machines to the unit out of which the authorities of the dialysis centre returned back two machines.

It is alleged that the RO (reverse osmosis) water purifiers at the centre often develop snags as the water supplied to the hospital contains harmful minerals. As a result, the dialysis centre often remains closed much to the sufferings of the patients.

Reports said the centre provides free dialysis facilities to kidney and cancer patients for which the concerned firm running the centre gets ₹7 to ₹8 lakh



The state government had recently provided 11 dialysis machines to the unit out of which the authorities of the dialysis centre returned back two machines

It is alleged that the RO water purifiers at the centre often develop snags as the water supplied to the hospital contains harmful minerals

per month from the state government.

The centre needs more water to perform dialysis for which it draws water from two bore wells on the hospital premises. Since the bore well water contains harmful minerals, it is purified by RO purifiers, which often develop snags and become defunct due to presence of excessive minerals in the water.

The private firm regularly complains of water shortage. The hospital authorities rubbished the charges stating that the firm is neglecting on purifying the water despite drawing huge sum from the government.

neering organisation (PHEO) is supplying water to the dialysis centre after the district Collector intervened. Efforts are also on to supply water to the hospital from Mahanadi river. Ranjit Dash, Congress district president, termed the return of the two dialysis machine as unfortunate and demanded to bring back the two machines.

When contacted, CDMO Makaran Behura rejected the charges stating that earlier the hospital had seven dialysis machines and the number rose to 11 after the state government supplied four machines. Currently, nine machines are working while two have been installed but yet to become functional. The two machines will become functional after the new building starts functioning.

national



The maximum number of passengers in India per day in pre Covid times were close to about 4 lakh. We reached a level of 3.83 lakh per day in the month of December. So we are very well on our way back to recovery, roughly about 5 to 6 per cent off from pre pandemic level

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER



COPS TO GET LEAVE TO WATCH 'THE KASHMIR FILES'

The Madhya Pradesh government Monday said policemen in the state will be provided leave to watch the recently-released film "The Kashmir Files". Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had Sunday decided to exempt the film from entertainment tax in the state

of the day quote

I am not scared of jail. I will continue to expose the corruption

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | LEADER OF OPNN IN MAHA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

I feel honoured by Mamata Banerjee herself announcing my name as the TMC candidate from Anasol in the Lok Sabha by-poll. She is a tried, tested and successful politician who holds the nation's future hope against 'divisive politics' pursued by the government of the day

SHATRUGHAN SINHA | ACTOR-TURNED-POLITICIAN

There has been a rapid increase in Covid cases in China. When Covid cases worldwide have decreased, a rise in cases in China is worrying as the virus emerged from there two years ago

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Ker CPI-M all set for a minor re-jig

Thiruvananthapuram: Ahead of the CPI-M Party Congress to be held at Kannur in April where the party's national policies and outlook will be decided for the next three years, a major re-shuffle in its Kerala unit is on the anvil. Sources in the CPI-M reveal that two Rajya Sabha seats will be vacant and if needed, an election will be held March 31. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's office is also witnessing major changes. His political secretary Puthethu Dineshan has been promoted and is now among the powerful 17 member CPI-M secretariat.

Ch'garh: ED raids eight locations

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is conducting raids at multiple locations in Chhattisgarh in connection with Rs 54 crore Prevention of Money Laundering case lodged against businessman Subhash Sharma. A source close to the development said that the ED is raiding eight places in Chhattisgarh. The officials are looking for incriminating documents related to the case. Sharma was arrested on March 6 from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport when he was about to board a flight. He is currently in ED's custody till March 15.

New-born kidnapped

Hassan, (Karnataka): Posing as nurses, child lifters have kidnapped a new-born baby boy from the government hospital in Hassan district of Karnataka. The incident took place Sunday midnight in the Arakalagodu Government hospital. According to police, a complaint has been lodged in this regard and the statement of the baby's mother, who is a labourer from Assam, recorded. The police said that the child lifters gained entry from the back door of the hospital dressed as nurses.

3 charred to death

Aizawl: At least three people including a 14-year-old girl were charred to death after a major fire broke out in a farmhouse in Mizoram's Suangpuilwan village, the police said Monday. As per the officials, the fire broke out late Sunday night in Aizawl district, killing the three on the spot and damaging the entire farmhouse and a vehicle that was parked nearby. The victims included the farm's caretaker Vanalmaria, 58, his 14-year-old daughter Zorinmawii and the farm owner Lalnuankima, 51.

COV SURGE IN EUROPE, ASIA

India shouldn't be complacent: Experts

New Delhi, March 14: Even as India Monday reported the lowest single-day Covid tally in 680 days, with only 2,503 new cases in the last 24 hours, doctors caution against being complacent as the virus is seeing a resurgence in many countries in Europe and Asia. Although many countries across the globe have relaxed Covid-related norms, including the use of masks and Covid surveillance, scientists, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) have been warning of the possibility of another global surge. "It is prudent to not pursue a zero Covid policy, and therefore accept that there will be surges periodically, especially with the onset of newer variants," Dr. Lancelot Pinto, Consultant Pulmonologist, PD Hinduja Hospital & MRC, Mahim, Mumbai, told IANS. Data from Johns Hopkins University has shown that the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy have seen an upswing in cases this past week, USA Today reported. China is also



facing its severest domestic Covid-19 outbreaks in two years, the Global Times reported. There has been a sharp rise in the number of asymptomatic patients, forcing several major cities to go into lockdowns. Further, South Korea, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand are also seeing a record surge in Covid cases. So can this wave spread to India, leading to a fourth wave?

"There is no doubt that Covid can happen again in India and the spike can reappear in the next couple of months. We really cannot be complacent in whatever we are doing," said Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, Senior Consultant Internal Medicine, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals. A non-peer-reviewed research by IIT Kanpur, had earlier, using a statistical model predicted that India will see a fourth wave of the pandemic that may start around mid June and peak from mid to late August this year. "A majority of the surges across the world at present are being caused by the BA.2 variant of Omicron, and most of the infections caused still appear to be of a mild nature. As long as this continues to be true, we need to learn to live with SARS-

Cov-2," Pinto said. However, it is very difficult to predict the severity of a new wave "because right now, most of the people in the world have gained their antibodies and immunity against this virus", Dr. Avi Kumar, Consultant - Pulmonology, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, told IANS. Kumar noted that since the pandemic is continuously changing its size and severity, it is very difficult to predict the fourth wave "but yes we have to keep ourselves guarded". The experts urged the government to try and limit economic disruptions as much as possible in the wake of a new wave, while also ensuring that the vulnerable and the old are protected by measures such as vaccinations and boosters, based on sound scientific evidence. "More attention to ventilation of indoor spaces, as this is going to be a critical determinant of spread in the future," Pinto said.

India has also relaxed several norms including opening up of schools, workplaces, airports, etc. Government guidelines on the use of masks continue, but it is hardly followed on the ground

COVID-19 DEATHS

Order regarding ex-gratia payment 'very clear': Top court

In an effort to provide some help to over 10,000 children who have lost both their parents to Covid-19, the apex court had January 19 directed all the state governments to reach out to those kids and pay them compensation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: The Supreme Court Monday said its earlier order regarding ex-gratia of Rs 50,000 to the family members of those who lost their lives due to Covid-19 is "very clear" and the payment is to be made for each death.

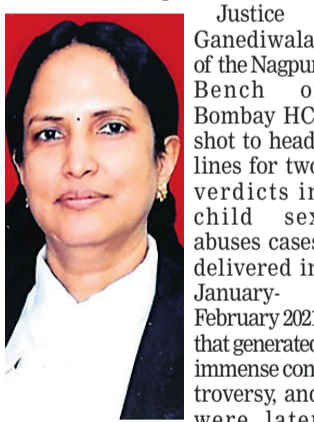
The apex court said this while dealing with an application filed by the Assam which had sought a clarification whether each of the children of the deceased parents would be provided ex-gratia payment of Rs 50,000, in case there is more than one child. "In fact, our earlier order is very clear and the ex-gratia payment of Rs 50,000 shall be qua each death," a bench of Justices M R Shah and B V Nagarathna said. "Therefore, it is observed and clarified that if there is more than one child, only one child/family member, as the case may be, shall get ex-gratia payment of Rs 50,000," it said. The top court observed that in case both the parents have died, the child shall get Rs 50,000 qua

each death, that is one for the deceased father and another for the deceased mother. During the hearing on Monday, the counsel appearing for Assam said they have filed an application seeking clarification on the issue as there are such families in the state where there are more than one children. "Whether we are supposed to give it to both the children or should it be one ex-gratia payment made to the family," the counsel said. The bench observed that its order is very clear. "It is per death Rs 50,000," it said, while disposing of the application. The issue had cropped up when the top court was hearing pleas filed by advocate Gaurav Bansal and some intervenors who have sought ex-gratia assistance to family members of Covid-19 victims. While hearing the matter in January, the top court had taken note of the submissions that over 10,000 children have been orphaned due to Covid-19 and other reasons since the start of the pandemic and they be compensated.

'SKIN-TO-SKIN' VERDICT

Centre accepts Justice Pushpa's resignation

Mumbai, March 14: The Centre on Monday issued a notification confirming the resignation of Bombay High Court's Additional Judge, Justice Pushpa V Ganediwala, who quit her post last month after some controversial judgements delivered last year. The Ministry of Law & Justice said that Justice Ganediwala's resignation has been accepted with effect from February 11, 2022 - a day before her tenure was due to expire - as the Supreme Court collegium did not recommend extending her term or elevating her.



Justice Ganediwala, of the Nagpur Bench of Bombay HC, shot to headlines for two verdicts in child sex abuses cases delivered in January-February 2021 that generated immense controversy, and were later overruled by the Supreme Court. One pertained to the proposition that direct 'skin-to-skin' contact was necessary for constituting an offence of sexual assault under the POCSO Act, and another of holding a minor girl's hand to open the zip of the man's pant did not constitute an offence under POCSO but under the IPC. Following widespread reactions to the verdict, the apex court collegium revoked its recommendation of January 20 to make her a permanent judge of Bombay HC, and in February 2021, it recommended extending her term as an Additional Judge by one year. Appointed as Bombay HC Additional Judge on February 13, 2019, after there was no further extension or elevation as a permanent judge, Justice Ganediwala resigned from her post last month and her resignation has now been officially accepted by the President.

LET'S PLAY HOLI



School teachers pose for photos, after playing with colours ahead of the upcoming festival of Holi at a school in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh PTI PHOTO

Close to 300 lions died in Guj in 2 yrs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, March 14: The Gujarat government Monday informed the state Assembly that a little less than 300 lions, lionesses and cubs have died in the last two years of natural and unnatural causes in and around the Gir sanctuary. Replying to questions of various Congress MLAs, Minister of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Kiritsinh Rana, informed the House that a total of 283 lions in Gir, which is the only abode for Asiatic lions in the world, died till December 2021. During the same period, more than 300 leopards have also died in the state, Rana said. The minister further informed that 63 lions died of natural causes while five died unnaturally, 57 lionesses died natural deaths while 16 died unnaturally. Out of the 142 lion cubs which died, 134 died naturally while eight died of unnatural causes. Replying to a question on what steps have been taken by the government to curb the unnatural deaths of the big cats, the minister said that patrolling is being carried out day and night by the forest department officials. Joint patrolling is also being carried out in collaboration with the Paschim Gujarat Vij Company Limited (PGVCL).

Court refuses VIP treatment to Chitra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 14: A CBI court here Monday refused to give VIP treatment to Chitra Ramkrishna, the ex MD and CEO of the National Stock Exchange (NSE), who was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), in connection with the NSE co-location case. "Every Person is the same. She can't be a VIP prisoner because of what she had been. Rules cannot be changed", observed Judge Sanjeev Aggarwal. However, the court permitted her to carry four books including a copy of Hanuman Chalisa and Bhagwad

Gita for prayers. Ramkrishna was produced before the special court after the expiry of her custodial remand. The court remanded her to 14-day judicial custody. She will be lodged at Tihar Jail. The CBI had March 6 arrested Chitra Ramkrishna, accused of grave lapses at India's largest stock market including sharing confidential information with an individual. She was produced before the court March 7 after her anticipatory bail plea was rejected by the court a day earlier. Anand Subramanian, the ex Group Operating Officer, was also arrested by the CBI. He was inter-



rogated at length during the custodial period. He is also currently in judicial custody. The federal probe agency is probing the matter since May 2018 but they haven't found any concrete ev-

Delhi court Monday sent to 14-day judicial custody the former managing director and chief executive officer of National Stock Exchange (NSE) Chitra Ramkrishna in connection with the co-location scam case

idence to identify mysterious Himalayan Yogi with whom the classified information was shared

by Ramkrishna. Recently, the SEBI had imposed a fine of Rs 3 crore on her, following the market regulator finding that she allegedly shared vital inputs about the NSE with the yogi. "Information regarding organisational structure, dividend scenario, financial results, human resource policies and related issues, response to regulator, etc, were shared by her with the yogi," said the source. Between 2014 and 2016 she sent emails at rigyajurmasa@outlook.com. On April 1, 2013, Ramkrishna became the CEO and MD of NSE. She brought Subramanian to NSE as her advisor in 2013.

Ganga water fit for bathing: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: The dissolved oxygen level of River Ganga, which is a parameter to assess the health of the water body, has been found to be within acceptable limits of the bathing criteria, the government said Monday. Minister of State for Jal Shakti Bishweswar Tudu said none of the Ganga stretches are in priority category I to IV and only two stretches are in category V with Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) ranging between 3 and 6 mg/l as per

CPCB categorisation of polluted stretch. Category I is considered to be the most polluted with high amount of BOD while category V is considered to be the least polluted. According to the CPCB data for 2021, the observed water quality of River Ganga indicates that dissolved oxygen (DO) has been found to be within acceptable limits of notified primary bathing water quality criteria and is satisfactory to support the ecosystem of the river for almost its entire stretch. "The comparison of median data of water quality parameters



The dissolved Oxygen level of Ganga, which is a parameter to assess the health of the water body, has been found to be within acceptable limits of the bathing criteria

viz., DO, BOD and Faecal coliforms (FC) of year 2014 and 2021 shows that DO (Median) has improved at 31 locations; BOD at 46 locations and FC at 23 locations, respectively," he said in a written response. Under the Namami Gange Programme, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is carrying out water quality assessment of the River Ganga at 97 locations in five states through respective State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs). A total of 364 projects have been sanctioned under the programme at an estimated cost of Rs 30,853

crore and 183 projects have been completed and made operational. "Out of these 364 projects, 160 projects belonging to sewerage infrastructure projects have been taken up for creation and rehabilitation of 5024 Million Litres per Day (MLD) of Sewage Treatment Plant capacity and laying of 5,227 km of sewerage network, out of which 76 projects have been completed resulting in creation and rehabilitation of 1,079 MLD of STP capacity and laying of 3,860 km sewerage network," he said.

Delimitation panel makes its proposals public

THE COMMISSION HAS INVITED OBJECTIONS TILL MARCH 21

Press Trust of India
Jammu, March 14: The Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir has made its proposals public and invited objections and suggestions till March 21 before visiting the Union Territory later this month for public sittings.
 The commission published its final proposal, maintaining the number of Lok Sabha constituencies at five but increasing the Assembly seats from present 83 to 90 (adding six in Jammu and one in Kashmir), in the gazettes of India and Jammu and Kashmir.
 The detailed proposal, published in leading newspapers Monday, also carried two dissenting notes signed by four of the five associate members - three National Conference Lok Sabha MPs (Farooq Abdullah, Hasnain Masoodi and Mohammad Akbar Lone) and BJP MP Jugal Kishore.
 Union Minister Jitendra Singh is the fifth associate member of the commission.
 Set up May 6, 2020 with a one-year term to redraw Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies, the commission headed by former supreme court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai has given two extensions of one year and two months, respectively, to complete its task.
 However, its draft proposals had evoked a strong reaction, espe-



MAJOR PROPOSALS

The Commission said the number of Parliamentary seats in Jammu & Kashmir will remain five. Kashmir and Jammu divisions now have two Lok Sabha seats each while one seat is spread over both the divisions and, of them, seven segments will be reserved for SCs and nine for STs

The Commission said no Parliamentary constituency has been reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The Commission said Jammu and Kashmir will have a 90-seat Assembly and, of them, seven segments will be reserved for SCs and nine for STs

cially from the opposition parties including the National Conference whose dissent note pertained to different assembly constituencies besides challenging the very constitution of the panel pending the Supreme Court verdict on the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act.
 While splitting Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories through the Reorganization Act in August 2019, the Union Home Ministry had increased Assembly seats of Jammu and Kashmir by seven taking total seats to 114, 24 of which are reserved for Pakistan-

inated to the House, which was the position earlier also. In the previous Assembly, Kashmir had 46 seats, Jammu 37 and Ladakh four.
 Delimitation of the Assembly constituencies was last held in 1994-95 during the President's Rule when seats of the erstwhile State Assembly were raised from 76 to 87.
 Jammu region's seats were increased from 32 to 37, Kashmir's from 42 to 46 and Ladakh's two to four. However, the delimitation was frozen in 2002 by the then National Conference Government headed by Abdullah in line with the decision taken by the then central government led by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
 "...the Delimitation Commission hereby publishes its proposals for the delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, together with the dissenting proposals of the Associate Members, and specifies 21st March 2022 (Monday) as the date on or after which the proposals will be further considered by it," the advertisement signed by Secretary K N Bhar read.
 He said any objections or suggestions in regard to these proposals should reach the Secretary, Delimitation Commission, New Delhi, on or before March 21.
 The Commission said that it will visit Jammu and Kashmir March 28 and 29 for public sittings.

UP: 11 Yogi ministers lose despite party's historic win



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, March 14: Despite the BJP's historic victory in Uttar Pradesh, the drubbing faced by 11 ministers of the Yogi Adityanath government, including Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Maurya, who was credited with the party's win in 2017, and Sugarcane Minister Suresh Rana, has raised many questions within the party.
 The defeat of Rana from Shamli district, Rajendra Pratap Singh alias Moti Singh from Pratapgarh, Chandrika Prasad Upadhyay from Chitrakoot, Anand Swarup Shukla from Ballia, Upendra Tiwari, Satish Dwivedi from Sidharthnagar district, Lakhan Singh Rajput from Auraiya, Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar from Bareilly, Ranvendra Singh from Fatehpur, Sangeeta Balwant from Ghazipur and the controversial MLA Sangeet Som, has raised several questions about the party's prospects in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.
 While the BJP broke the trend in Uttarakhand by returning to power for the second time, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama lost the election from Khatima, which has made it difficult for the party to elect a new Chief Minister. Uttar Pradesh polls have proved that the Modi-Yogi bond is stronger

than the combined popularity of Samajwadi party's Akhilesh Yadav and the Congress's Rahul-Priyanka pair. For the first time in 37 years, Uttar Pradesh has returned a party to power, that too, with a thumping majority of 273 seats. In a state where the government is usually formed with 30 per cent votes, the BJP is set to form the government for the second time in a row, by securing over 40 per cent votes.
 While Priyanka Gandhi's failure in resurrecting the Congress in Uttar Pradesh called for revamp in the party, Modi held a massive roadshow in Gujarat, the very next day after poll results, to kickstart his party's campaign for the Assembly elections in the state scheduled this year.
 Assembly elections are due in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, which is the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi where he has been the Chief Minister for over 12 years.
 The BJP has been winning the Assembly elections in Gujarat since 1995. However, since 1993, no party has been voted to power twice in a row in Himachal Pradesh.
 Even though the Congress is the main opposition party in both the states, the BJP, which is determined to win both the elections, has already fielded its most popular faces for the post of Chief Minister.
 However, unlike the Congress, the BJP constantly analyses its election results and accordingly keeps on altering its future strategies.

Oppn seeks restoration of J&K's statehood in LS



Press Trust of India
New Delhi, March 14: The Congress, TMC and other parties Monday alleged in Lok Sabha that the government has not been able to achieve the objectives it set out while abrogating Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and demanded the early restoration of statehood.
 Speaking during the discussion on the budget for the Union Territory, members of the BJP, JD(U) and others, however, supported the Centre's efforts in accelerating development in the Union Territory.
 Opposition parties also accused the government of not doing enough for the displaced Kashmiri Pandits. Congress leader Manish Tewari, who initiated the discussion, said that the law and order situation in Jammu and Kashmir was a cause of concern.
 He said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated 'extremely noble sentiments' in her budget speech for Jammu and Kashmir but 'ground realities are different'.
 The Congress MP said that when the government abrogated Article 370 and divided Jammu and Kashmir into Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, it put forward two arguments - that Kashmir's merging with India will be strengthened as the state will be emotionally integrated, and the development there would be speeded up.
 "Today 33 months have passed. Has the government been successful in achieving those objectives? I would like to state that the answer is no," he said, arguing that the situation is more sensitive than it was in 2019 while citing figures of ceasefire violations.
 "Since April 2020, the situation in eastern Ladakh is extremely sensitive. The Chinese army is occupying those lands which India considers its own. The situation has become more complex now since 2020 because of factors such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Imran Khan's visit to Moscow, the agree-

J&K media 'choked' by local admin curbs, says PCI panel

Press Trust of India
New Delhi, March 14: A three-member Fact Finding Committee (FFC) of the Press Council of India (PCI) has said that news media in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in the valley, is 'slowly being choked' due to extensive curbs imposed by the local administration.
 The FFC, in its report submitted last week, has also advised the Union Territory administration to immediately stop the 'tendency' to see all critical reporting and opinions as 'anti-national'.
 "A conflict zone has many players and many aspects of events that unfold. A journalist cannot and should not ignore the government version; at the same time, he is not the spokesperson of the government," it said.
 Headed by Prakash Dubey (convener) with members Suman Gupta and Gurbir Singh, the FFC was set up by the PCI -- a statutory quasi-judicial body which acts as



a press watchdog -- six months after a complaint by PDP president Mehbooba Mufti in September last year.
 The report submitted to the council is yet to be considered and adopted.
 While advocating restoration of lines of communication with the local press, the FFC said the administration was suspecting that a large number of local journalists were sympathisers of the militants' cause.
 "This was admitted by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who frankly told the FFC that many journalists were of 'anti-national' per-

suasion. He conceded that when he was first appointed, he used to encourage open press conferences, but now had gone back to a 'selective engagement' with preferred journalists," the report said.
 The FFC took a holistic view of press freedom especially after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 and came out with a set of recommendations to prevent harassment of journalists and also advised the Jammu and Kashmir Police to not become representatives of other departments 'by default'.
 While drawing a distinction between a journalist and a terrorist, the FFC said those indulging in any criminal acts are not journalists pursuing their profession.
 "If a journalist is bearing arms or carrying grenades and other ammunition, he is not a journalist; he is a militant, and should be treated as such," the FFC said after meeting all stakeholders in its visits to twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar.
 However, the security establishment cannot label writing against government policies, or quoting a family or civilian sources in a story about excesses of the armed forces, or tweeting a point of view as fake news or anti-national activity and then arrest the journalist for sedition, it said.

Smaller local parties rise and shine in UP elections

THE RLD AND APNA DAL HAD AN IMPACT ON THE POLITICS OF THE STATE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow, March 14: Smaller local parties have emerged strong in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls this time, bolstering the BJP and the SP, and leaving behind the Congress and the BSP.
 The BJP's ally Apna Dal (Sonela) has won 12 of the 17 seats it had contested and emerged as the third largest party after the BJP and the SP. In Mauraanipur, Apna Dal (Sonela) candidate Rashmi Arya won by 58,595 votes.
 The Nishad Party, which had entered into an alliance with the BJP for the polls, has also fared well. Ten candidates of the Nishad party contested on the party symbol while six from the party contested on BJP tickets. Of the total 16 candidates, six emerged victorious.
 The son of Nishad Party chief Sanjay Nishad reached the Assembly after securing a win on a BJP ticket. The Nishad Party had fought the 2017 Assembly polls in alliance with local parties and fielded candidates on 72 seats, but due to the BJP wave, only one candidate Vijay Mishra could make it to the Assembly. Seventy of the party candidates lost their security deposit.
 The SP may not have emerged successful but smaller parties supported it a lot. The RLD played a major role in campaigning for the SP in western Uttar Pradesh to improve its poll prospects. It has secured eight seats. The SP-RLD alliance grabbed three seats in



The BJP's ally Apna Dal (Sonela) has won 12 of the 17 seats it had contested and emerged as the third largest party after the BJP and the SP

Bulldozer tattoos a rage in UP

During the recent elections, Yogi Adityanath came to be called 'bulldozer baba' due to frequent references of his government deploying bulldozers to demolish ill-gotten property of criminals and mafia in the state
 INDU-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow, March 14: After the popularity of the bulldozer in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, it has turned into the most happening thing.
 While Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has been named as 'bulldozer baba' after he extensively used the machine to demolish the properties of criminals and mafia, the youths are trying to immortalise his memory by getting a tattoo on their arms.
 Tattoo artists in Lucknow claim that young boys, in particular, are demanding bulldozer tattoos on their arms. Some have even got 'Bulldozer Baba' written alongside.
 Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav during a speech had said, "Till now we were calling him 'Baba Chief Minister' but today one of the reputed English newspapers called him 'Baba Bulldozer'. I have not kept this name, this name was kept by a reputed English newspaper."
 Suresh Khatri a tattoo artist in a shopping mall said that ever since the results came out last Thursday, he has inked the bulldozer on about 28 customers.



RLD dissolves all party units

INDU-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow, March 14: Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief Jayant Chaudhary has dissolved all the units and fronts of the party in Uttar Pradesh with immediate effect.
 "As per the orders passed by RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary, party's state, regional, and district units and fronts in Uttar Pradesh have been dissolved effective immediately," the RLD tweeted.
 The RLD will also hold its first meeting of its UP legislators in Lucknow March 21. The RLD had contested the recently-concluded Uttar Pradesh assembly elections in alliance with the Samajwadi Party (SP). The party, which was reduced to a single seat in the 2017 state elections, fought on 33 seats this time and won eight of them, while the SP bagged 111 seats, a significant improvement from 2017 polls when it won only 47 seats.

The government talks a lot about Kashmiri Pandits, but in its Budget document, there is no mention about them... if you feel for them, please include them... Let's not live only in a bubble, please deliver
 SUPRIYA SULE | NCP LEADER

international

Missile barrage: Iran claims responsibility

THE ATTACK DREW HARSH CONDEMNATION FROM THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT, WHICH CALLED IT A "VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND NORMS"

Iraq's Foreign Ministry Sunday summoned Iran's ambassador to protest the attack, calling it a "violation of the country's sovereignty"

The United States strongly condemned the strike and said it was an unjustified attack on a civilian residence

Iraq's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad al-Sahhaf said that the ministry summoned the Iranian ambassador, Iraj Masjedi, to deliver the diplomatic protest

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Baghdad, March 14: Iran claimed responsibility Sunday for a missile barrage that struck near a sprawling US consulate complex in northern Iraq, saying it was retaliation for an Israeli strike in Syria that killed two members of its Revolutionary Guard earlier this week.

Iraq's Foreign Ministry Sunday summoned Iran's ambassador to protest the attack, calling it a "violation of the country's sovereignty. No injuries were reported in Sunday's attack on the city of Irbil, which marked a significant escalation between the US and Iran.

Hostility between the longtime foes has often played out in Iraq, whose government is allied with both countries. The attack drew harsh condemnation from the Iraqi government, which called it a "violation of international law and norms" and demanded an explanation from the Iranian leadership.

Iraq's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad al-Sahhaf said that the ministry summoned the Iranian ambassador, Iraj Masjedi, to deliver the diplomatic protest. The United States strongly condemned the strike and said it was an unjustified attack on a civilian residence.

"We will support the Government of Iraq in holding Iran accountable, and we will support our partners

We will support the Government of Iraq in holding Iran accountable, and we will support our partners throughout the Middle East in confronting similar threats from Iran

JAKE SULLIVAN
WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER



throughout the Middle East in confronting similar threats from Iran," the White House national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said in a statement. "The United States of America stands behind the full sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Iraq."

No US facilities were damaged or personnel injured, State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters in Washington. The US had no indication the attack was directed at the US he said. Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard said on its website that it attacked what it described as an Israeli spy center in Irbil.

It did not elaborate, but in a statement said Israel had been on the offensive, citing the recent strike that killed two members of the Revolutionary Guard. The semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted an unnamed source as saying Iran fired 10 Fateh missiles, including several Fateh-110 missiles, which have a range of about 300 kilometers (186 miles).

The source claimed the attack resulted in multiple casualties. There was no immediate comment from Israel on the allegations or the Iranian missile barrage. An Iraqi official in Baghdad initially said several missiles had hit the US consulate in Irbil, which is new and unoccupied, adding that it had been the intended target of the attack.

Later, Lawk Ghafari, the head of Kurdistan's foreign media office, said none of the missiles had struck the US facility but that residential areas around the compound had been hit.

"I understand that we may not see them. I wish this war would end," she said. At a refugee center in Suceava in northern Romania, 28-year-old Lesia Ostrovskaya watched over her 1-year-old son as her daughter, who is 8, played nearby with other children displaced by the war.

"I left my husband, my father, my mother, my grandparents," said Ostrovskaya, who is from Chernivtsi in western Ukraine. "It's hard with kids, in the bus, here in this situation... We hope that the war is finished soon and we can go back home."

As the fighting, now in its third week, continues to exact a grievous human toll in Ukraine with Russian troops bombarding many of the

MORE THAN 2.8 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE FLED UKRAINE



The grim reality

Warsaw, March 14: As Russia's war in Ukraine becomes a grim new reality for millions of Ukrainians, the tens of thousands who make the increasingly treacherous journey toward safety in the European Union each day are left with no sense of when, or if, they'll ever return home.

More than 2.8 million people have fled Ukraine in the wake of Russia's invasion, according to the UN refugee agency, the vast majority seeking refuge in Poland which has taken in more than 1.7 refugees in the last 19 days.

In the Polish border town of Przemysl, some of those who are fleeing, mostly women and children, are exhausted and express a simple wish that the war and violence would stop. "All day crying from the pain of having to part with loved ones, with my husband, my parents," said Alexandra Beltuyeva, 33, who fled from Dnipro, a city between the embattled metropolises of Kyiv and Mariupol.

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As the fighting, now in its third week, continues to exact a grievous human toll in Ukraine with Russian troops bombarding many of the



In the Polish border town of Przemysl, some of those who are fleeing, mostly women and children, are exhausted and express a simple wish that the war and violence would stop

I saw destroyed houses and fighting. I saw a lot of tanks when I was driving from Kyiv. I know that a house near us was completely destroyed this morning

INESSA ARMASHOVA | UKRAINIAN RESIDENT

country's most populous cities, the number of those crossing into countries on the eastern edge of the EU has begun to slowly wane in recent days.

In Hungary, where around 255,000 refugees have entered so far, only 9,000 people crossed the border with Ukraine on Sunday compared to more than twice that on March 1, according to police.

In Slovakia, where more than 200,000 people have fled, fewer than 9,000 crossed the border on Sunday, down from more than 12,000 four days earlier. And in Poland on Sunday, about 82,000 refugees were admitted, down from an earlier daily peak of around 129,000. Still, those who managed to flee the vi-

der. In Przemysl, some recounted being witnesses to military attacks on civilians, something Russia continues to deny.

"I saw destroyed houses and fighting. I saw a lot of tanks when I was driving from Kyiv. I know that a house near us was completely destroyed this morning," said Inessa Armashova, 40, a resident of the Ukrainian capital. "Many people fled. But many cannot leave, sick children or sick elderly people."

The continued push by Russian forces toward Kyiv comes a day after Russia escalated its offensive by launching airstrikes close to the Polish border, raising fears in the West that the fight was edging closer to the EU and members of the NATO military alliance.

Those strikes, which involved waves of deadly Russian missiles hitting a military training base less than 25 kilometers (15 miles) from Ukraine's border with NATO member Poland on Sunday, killed at least 35 people.

PTI/REUTERS PHOTOS

Russia may face deep recession: IMF chief

Washington/Moscow: Russia may face a "deep recession," IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva has said, as she warned that the impact of the "unprecedented" Western sanctions on Moscow for its military aggression against Ukraine will be "quite severe" for the Russian economy. IMF's Managing Director Georgieva also said that a Russian sovereign default is no longer an "improbable event" because the economic sanctions on Russia will prevent it from accessing foreign reserves and paying down the outstanding debt. Half of the gold and foreign exchange reserves of the Bank of Russia have been frozen due to sanctions, Russia's Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said Sunday.



Musk challenges Putin

Washington: Elon Musk, the world's richest man, Monday challenged Russian President Vladimir Putin to a fight, with nothing less than the fate of Ukraine, the scene of Moscow's brutal invasion, at stake. The eccentric billionaire and founder of aerospace company SpaceX took to Twitter, where his messages are notoriously erratic, to see whether the Russian leader would test his mettle in person rather than through his country's forces fighting across the border. "I hereby challenge Vladimir Putin to single combat. Stakes are Ukraine," said Musk. "Do you accept this fight?" he added in Russian, directly addressing the official English-language Twitter account of the 69-year-old President. When one of Musk's 77 million followers wrote that the Tesla founder might not have thought his challenge through, Musk said he was "absolutely serious." "If Putin could so easily humiliate the west, then he would accept the challenge. But he will not," he added.

Ukraine President to address US Congress

Washington: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will deliver a virtual address to the US Congress as the Russian war on his country intensifies. Zelenskyy will speak Wednesday to members of the House and Senate, the Democratic leaders announced. The event will be livestreamed for the public. "The Congress, our country and the world are in awe of the people of Ukraine," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer Monday. They said all lawmakers are invited to the talk that will be delivered via video at the US Capitol. It comes as Congress recently approved \$13.6 billion in emergency military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine.

SHORT TAKES

Rawat takes charge

Beijing: India's new ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat assumed charge Monday. Rawat arrived in China March 4 and underwent mandatory quarantine as per China's COVID-19 protocols.

Chinese envoy summoned

Manila: The Philippine government Monday summoned the Chinese ambassador to protest what it said was the "illegal incursion" of a Chinese navy ship into the country's waters and to demand that Beijing order its ships to respect the country's territory and follow international law, officials said.

Putin signs law to allow online voting

Moscow: An online voting system that was criticised by some defeated candidates at parliamentary elections last year will be rolled out for use across Russia after President Vladimir Putin signed electronic voting procedures into law Monday. A coalition of defeated parliamentary candidates in Moscow claimed they were cheated of victory in a parliamentary election last September by the system and sought to try to overturn the results via lawsuits and public pressure.

Top nuke envoys hold talks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Seoul, March 14: The top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the US and Japan Monday denounced North Korea's recent missile tests and called on Pyongyang to cease acts that could escalate tensions, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said.

Noh Kyu-duk, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, his US counterpart Sung Kim and Japan's Takehiro Funakoshi spoke on the phone amid rising tension on the Korean Peninsula over the possibility of Pyongyang's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) system test, reports Yonhap News Agency.



The trio denounced the North's recent spate of ballistic missile launches as violations of UN Security Council resolutions and urged it to return to dialogue at an early date, the ministry said in a release.

They also agreed to closely monitor Pyongyang's moves and remain in close cooperation to respond to its acts, it added. South Korea and the US accused Pyongyang on March 11 of having tested a new ICBM system on February 27 and March 5 ahead of a full-range missile test.

Seoul and Washington have detected signs that North Korea is preparing to conduct another ICBM firing as early as this week, according to informed sources. Concerns have persisted that the North could engage in more provocative acts as it made a veiled threat in January to lift its years-long self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and ICBM tests.

5 Indians dead in Canada accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Toronto, March 14: Five Indian students have been killed here in a horrific road accident in Canada's Ontario province, the second major tragedy involving Indians in this country since January.

The accident between a passenger van and a tractor-trailer took place on Saturday on Highway 401 in the Quinte West city in Southern Ontario, The Canadian Press reported.

Harpreet Singh, 24, Jaspinder Singh, 21, Karanpal Singh, 21, Mohit Chouhan, 23 and Pawan Kumar, 23 were pronounced dead at the scene, Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in Quinte West said

in a statement. The police said that they were all students in the Greater Toronto and Montreal areas.

High Commissioner of India to Canada Ajay Bisaria termed the incident a "heart-breaking tragedy" and said the Indian mission in Toronto is in touch with friends of the victims for required assistance.

"Heart-breaking tragedy in Canada: 5 Indians students passed away in an auto accident near Toronto on Saturday. Two others in hospital. Deepest condolences to the families of the victims. @IndiaInToronto team in touch with friends of the victims for assistance," he said on Twitter.

According to the report, the students were travelling west in the passenger van on Highway 401 on Saturday morning when they collided with a tractor trailer at around 3:45 AM (local time).

Two other passengers were taken to a nearby hospital with serious injuries following the crash, the police said, adding that an investigation into the accident was underway even though no charges have been laid.

The driver of the tractor-trailer was not hurt, CTV News reported. "It's a tragedy. Nobody wants to respond to that call for service, but we're there, we're working," said OPP Constable Maggie Pickett on Saturday.

China battles multiple outbreaks, driven by stealth Omicron

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taipei, March 14: China banned most people from leaving a coronavirus-hit northeastern province and mobilised military reservists Monday as the fast-spreading "stealth omicron" variant fuels the country's biggest outbreak since the start of the pandemic two years ago.

The National Health Commission reported 1,337 locally transmitted cases in the latest 24-hour period, including 895 in the industrial province of Jilin. A government notice said that police permission would be required for people to leave the area or travel from one city

to another. The hard-hit province sent 7,000 reservists to help with the response, from keeping order and registering people at testing centers to using drones to carry out aerial spraying and disinfection, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Hundreds of cases were reported in other provinces and cities along China's east coast and inland as well. Beijing, which had six new cases, and Shanghai, with 41, locked down residential and office buildings where infected people had been found.

"Every day when I go to work, I worry that if our office building will suddenly be locked down then I won't be able to get home, so I



PTI PHOTO

have bought a sleeping bag and stored some fast food in the office in advance, just in case," said Yimeng Li, a Shanghai resident.

While mainland China's numbers are small compared to many other countries, and even the semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong, they are the highest since COVID-19 killed thousands in the central city

Every day when I go to work, I worry that if our office building will suddenly be locked down then I won't be able to get home, so I have bought a sleeping bag and stored some fast food in the office in advance, just in case

YIMENG LI | SHANGHAI RESIDENT

of Wuhan in early 2020. No deaths have been reported in the latest outbreaks. Hong Kong Monday reported 26,908 new cases and 249 deaths in its latest 24-hour period. The city counts its cases differ-

ently than the mainland, combining both rapid antigen tests and PCR test results. The city's leader, Carrie Lam, said authorities would not tighten pandemic restrictions for now. "I have to consider whether the public, whether the people would accept further measures," she said at a press briefing.

Mainland China has seen relatively few infections since the initial Wuhan outbreak as the government has held fast to its zero-tolerance strategy, which is focused on stopping transmission of the coronavirus by relying on strict lockdowns and mandatory quarantines for anyone who has come into contact with a positive case.

INDIA WRAP UP SERIES

Rohit & co complete Sri Lankan series-whitewash with massive 238-run win in second Test as Karunaratne's fighting century goes in vain in Lakmal's farewell Test



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 14: India extinguished whatever little spark Sri Lanka showed and wrapped up the second Test inside three days for a comprehensive 238-run win, completing a 2-0 whitewash of the Islanders, here Monday. A Herculean task at hand, Sri Lanka took the field on the third day with a lot of determination but it was always going to be tough to negotiate the Indian attack on a track that has been offering turn and uneven bounce from day one. Resuming at 28/1 in pursuit of

an improbable 447-run target, the Sri Lankan batters, led by skipper Dimuth Karunaratne (107, 174b, 15x4), resisted the Indian attack for some time before folding for 208 in the post-tea session.

Left-handed Karunaratne, one of the most consistent performers for Sri Lanka in recent times, raised his 14th Test century with a boundary off Jasprit Bumrah (3/23). He took some time to settle but worked the ball around swiftly, consistently placing them in the gaps.

Bumrah eventually sent him back with slightly seaming ball that beat his bat to shatter the stumps. The lethal Indian fast bowler, who consistently made life tough for the Lankans, returned with match figures of 8/47, having taken a fiver at home for the first time in the first innings.

Ravichandran Ashwin (4/55), Axar Patel (2/37) and Ravindra Jadeja (1/48) did their bit in wrapping up the Lankan innings.

India now have won all three pink-ball Tests at home, having beaten beating Bangladesh (in Kolkata, 2019) and England (in Ahmedabad, 2021) before.

Two wins against Sri Lanka fetched India 24 points but Rohit Sharma's men remain in fifth position in World Championship table due to 'low percentage points' (64.16).



MATCH-WINNING SPELL: R Ashwin is mobbed by his teammates after getting a wicket, Monday

They have 77 points in their kitty.

Visitors' early positive intent, something which has not been witnessed much in this series, resulted in a rare productive batting session for the Lankans who collected

123 runs for loss of three wickets.

Adopting a positive yet cautious approach, both Kusal Mendis (54, 60b, 8x4) and Karunaratne used their feet with confidence to counter the Indian spinners.

Mendis was impressive on both front and back foot as he pulled and cut the short-pitched stuff and used his feet to cut down the spin. Karunaratne too charged down the wicket, following a similar plan but Mendis was more expressive.

Mendis completed his fifty with a single off Jadeja but was beaten by flight on an Ashwin delivery and was stumped by Rishabh Pant. That brought about the end of their fighting 96-run stand for the second wicket.

From there on, it was a downward slide for the visitors. Jadeja cleaned up Angelo Mathews (1) and Ashwin had Dhananjaya de Silva (4) caught at forward short-leg.

Karunaratne was ruled caught behind by umpire off Jadeja but the Lankan skipper survived, using DRS with replay showing that the ball had kissed the thigh pad and the bat before reaching Pant's gloves. He completed his fifty with a single off Axar, who replaced Ashwin from the pavilion end.

A small partnership began to develop between Karunaratne and Dickwella (12) even as Mohammed Shami troubled the batters with his pace. Axar broke the 55-run stand when he had Dickwella stumped and also sent back Charith Asalanka (5) by having him caught in backward short leg, where skipper Rohit Sharma took simple catch. Like the first innings,



Jasprit Bumrah congratulates Suranga Lakmal following his dismissal on his farewell Test

Dickwella did not build on a start. **BRIEF SCORES: India 252 & 303/9d** beat Sri Lanka 109 & 208 (Dimuth Karunaratne 107, Kusal Mendis 54; Ravichandran Ashwin 4/55, Jasprit Bumrah 3/23, Axar Patel 2/37, Ravindra Jadeja 1/48) by 238 runs.

PLAYERS' TAKES ON SERIES TRIUMPH

ROHIT SHARMA

On team's performance: It's been a good run, and I have enjoyed it personally and as a team. We wanted to achieve a few things as a team, and we have done that.

On Jadeja: We have seen Jadeja grow as a batter, and he seems to get better and better. He strengthens the team, and he's also improving as a bowler. And he's a gun fielder, so he is a complete package.

On Shreyas: Shreyas just carried on from where he left off in the T20 series against Sri Lanka. He seemed to carry that form into the Test series. He knew he was stepping into the big shoes of guys like Rahane and Pujara, but he has everything that he requires. He will be better now when he starts travelling.

On Pant: Rishabh seems to get better with each game that he plays. Especially in these conditions. We saw it in the England series (last year) and now. A couple of catches and stumpings showed how confident he is.

On Ashwin: (On Ashwin) It was personally my feeling (that he is an all-time great). Whenever we give him the ball, he comes up with match-winning performances.

He's got a lot of years left in him. We have lots of occasions to look forward to. I have to ensure he's in a good mind space. Pink-ball Tests are challenging.

DIMUTH KARUNARATNE

Team's performance: I would have been happier if we had won the match. Once I got in, I knew I could get a big one. As a team, we know we are a decent team. We didn't get enough good starts to capitalise. And as a bowling unit, we gave too many loose balls.

On Lakmal: One of the best I have seen in my career. I am very happy for him.

that he's going to county cricket and I know he will do very well there as well

As a cricketer you want to evolve. In the past, I have made a few mistakes, but I want to keep improving. It was a difficult pitch and I decided I had to attack the bowling early on. I think it's more about confidence. I used to think too much about what I might miss. Now I am focusing on my process.

RISHABH PANT

Team	PCT (%)	PTS	W	L	D	Series
AUS	77.77	56	4	0	2	2*
PAK	66.66	40	3	1	1	3*
SA	60.00	36	3	2	0	2
IND	58.33	77	6	3	2	4
SL	50.00	24	2	2	0	2
NZ	38.88	28	2	3	1	3
BAN	25.00	12	1	3	0	2
WI	23.33	14	1	3	1	3*
ENG	11.67	14	1	6	3	3*

(* stands for continuing series)

Joshi, Bhagat shine as India secure 21 medals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 14: Manishi Joshi and Nithya Sre claimed a gold each, while Tokyo Paralympics champion Pramod Bhagat secured two silver and a bronze as India bagged as many as 21 medals at the Spanish Para Badminton International in Cartagena, Spain.

World No.1 Joshi (SL3) and Sre (SH6) were among the six gold medalists, while India also secured seven silvers and eight bronze medals in the level I tournament, which concluded Sunday.

Raja/Krishna (men's doubles SH6), Raj/Parul (mixed doubles SL3-SU5), Chirag/Raj (men's doubles SU5) and Nitesh/Tarun (men's doubles SL3-SL4) also bagged the yellow metal.

World No.1 Bhagat (SL3) secured two silver and a bronze, while World No.2 Sukant Kadam (SL4) ended up with a bronze medal at the event.

Tarun Dhillon (men's singles SL4), Krishna Nagar (men's singles SH6), Mandeep Kaur (women's singles SL3), Manasi/Ruthvik (mixed doubles SL3-SU5), Hardik/Ruthvik (men's doubles SU5) and Manoj/Bhagat (men's doubles SL3-SL4) also won silver medals.

The bronze medal winners were Nitesh Kumar (men's singles SL3), Manoj (men's singles SL3), Nilesh Gaikwad (men's singles SL4), Parul Parmar (women's singles SL3), Bhagat/Kohli (mixed doubles SL3-SU5), Arwaz/Deep (men's doubles SL3-SL4), and Prem Ale/Abu Hubaida (men's doubles WH1-WH2).



It was a tough week and I couldn't execute what I had planned for. I have identified my mistakes and will start working on them immediately. I am going to head straight back in to training and focus on my upcoming tournaments

PRAMOD BHAGAT

Kadam lost to World No.1 Lucas Mazur from France 21-19, 19-21, 12-21 in the semifinal to settle for a bronze. Mazur went ahead to secure gold medal defeating India's Tarun 21-7, 21-9 in the summit clash.

India had claimed 34 medals, including 11 gold, seven silver and 16 bronze, from the Spanish Para badminton International II event recently.

Evolving Barca rout Osasuna

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, March 14: It didn't take long for Barcelona's offense to regain their scoring touch. After being held to a disappointing scoreless draw with Galatasaray in the first leg of the round of 16 of the Europa League, Barcelona scored three goals in less than 30 minutes Sunday en route to a comfortable 4-0 win over Osasuna in the Spanish league.

Ferran Torres found the net twice and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Riqui Puig added a goal each to keep the Catalan club in third place. It has the same 51 points as Atlético Madrid but leads on the head-to-head tiebreaker. Barcelona also has a game in hand compared to the defending champions.

Barcelona and Atlético trail second-placed Sevilla by five points. League leaders Real Madrid, who will visit relegation-threatened Mallorca, are 12 points ahead of Barcelona and Atlético. Madrid host Barcelona next Sunday at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium.

Barcelona had scored 14 goals in its last four matches in all competitions before the 0-0 home draw against Galatasaray Thursday.

Torres opened the scoring Sunday by converting a 14th-minute penalty kick and added to the lead seven minutes later from inside the area after a nice through ball by Ousmane Dembélé.

Dembélé also set up the third goal by Aubameyang in the 27th, making a well-placed cross into the box from the right flank, and the fourth by Puig in the 75th.

Barcelona defender Gerard Piqué, making his 600th appearance with the club, had a goal dis-



FINDING SCORING TOUCH: Ferran Torres (R) celebrates one of his goals with skipper Sergio Busquets at Camp Nou, Sunday

allowed for offside in the 55th. Xavi Hernández's team is unbeaten in 10 straight games, since a loss at Athletic Bilbao in the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey in January.

Barcelona women's team, who clinched their third straight league title earlier in the day, was honoured before the match at the Camp Nou Stadium.

Sevilla were held again in their pursuit of Madrid with a 1-1 draw at Rayo Vallecano Sunday, and is seven points off the lead.

It was the second consecutive

league draw for Sevilla, and sixth in its last eight matches in the competition. Julien Lopetegui's team extended its unbeaten streak in the league to 14 matches, since a loss at Madrid in November. It hasn't won in four straight away games, drawing all of them.

Bebé put the hosts ahead early in the second half and Thomas Delaney equalized for Sevilla in the 63rd. Sevilla had a penalty awarded in the second half but it was reversed by video review. It also had a goal disallowed by VAR early in the first half.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Five boxers clinch gold at Asian youth meet

NEW DELHI: Previous edition's medal winners Tamanna (50kg) and Nivedita Karki (48kg) were among five Indian women boxers who grabbed gold medals in the youth competition of the Asian Youth and Junior Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan Monday. Shaheen (60kg), Ravina (63kg) and Muskan (75kg) were the other three boxers who also registered victories in the finals and bagged gold medals. Nivedita clinched a sensational 3-2 win over Uzbekistan's Saidakhon Rakhmonova. Tamanna defeated another Uzbek boxer Robiyankhon Bakhtiyorova by a similar margin. Shaheen (60kg) outperformed Mukhlisa Tokhirova, while Ravina thrashed UzbekSitora Bahodirova. Muskan also produced an aggressive show against Kazakhstan's Aidasaribarov before referee stopped the contest in the first round.

Shreyas named ICC Player of the Month

DUBAI: Fast-rising India batter Shreyas Iyer was on Monday voted the ICC 'Men's Player of the Month' for February, while New Zealand all-rounder Amelia Kerr bagged the honour among women. Iyer earned the award on the back of his brilliant white-ball exploits during the home series against the West Indies and Sri Lanka respectively. He was named the Women's POTM, following her supreme consistency with both bat and ball during the home white-ball series against India. Kerr was chosen ahead of fellow nominees, India captain Mithali Raj and all-rounder Deepti Sharma for the award.

Junior eves' handball team create history

NEW DELHI: Indian women's handball team Monday scripted history by clinching the country's maiden gold medal in the Asian junior championships in Almaty, Kazakhstan and qualifying for the world championships later this year. The Indian team beat Thailand 41-18 in its fourth and final match on Monday to top the five-team tournament. India finished on top of standings with six points - from three wins and one loss. The team beat Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, besides Thailand and lost to Iran. By virtue of the top-place finish, India qualified for the 23rd IHF Women's Junior World Championships to be held in Slovenia from June 22 to July 3.

Barca USD 157 million over spending limit

MADRID: Barcelona's spending power has been reduced again, with the club heading into the next transfer window more than 144 million euros (USD 157 million) over its limit, the Spanish league said Monday. Barcelona is the only club in the first and second divisions of Spain with a negative spending limit after the league updated its figures following the winter transfer window. Real Madrid is at the top of the list with a cap of 739 million euros (USD 809 million). The Catalan club will still be able to sign new players if it wants, but it will be tied to further spending restrictions. Its ability to add players will depend on how much the club will be able to save and earn in general.