



ASP ARRESTED
Vigilance sleuths arrest ASP (Communication) Trinath Mishra on charges of possessing disproportionate assets **DOWNTOWN P3**



ANDREW SETTLES LAWSUIT
Disgraced British Prince Andrew has reportedly settled a sexual assault lawsuit for a whopping 12 million pounds **INTERNATIONAL P10**



MBAPPE LIFTS PSG
A late goal by Kylian Mbappe helps PSG gain one-goal advantage in their CL tie against Real Madrid **SPORTS P12**



ADMISSIONS OPEN
I - XI (Day Boarding)
VI - XI (Residential)
www.odmglobalschool.org
1800-120-2316

Doc caught with ₹1.12 cr in cash

Bhubaneswar: The Vigilance department allegedly found Wednesday ₹1.12 crore in cash from the residence of government appointed Dr Sukant Kumar Jena. He was working as a gynecologist at the Charichak Community Health Centre in Puri, officials said. He was apprehended when he was allegedly accepting a bribe ₹3,000 after the caesarian delivery of a woman. He allegedly took ₹5,000 prior to the delivery. Vigilance department sleuths held him after the woman's cousin filed a complaint. Later during a raid at his residence at Patia locality ₹1.12 crore in cash was found. Officials said they have also found other assets with Jena that do not match with his income.



Security breach at NSA's residence

New Delhi: A man hailing from Bangalore was apprehended Wednesday for allegedly trying to enter the residence of National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval here, officials said. The incident triggered a minor security alarm, officials said and took place around 7.30am when the man driving a red colour SUV tried to enter through the gate. However, he was promptly intercepted and arrested by CISF personnel who guard Doval's house. Doval was present in the house when the incident happened. Later, the man identified as Shantanu Reddy was handed over to the police. They said that man appears to be mentally unstable and is being medically examined.



JSW Cement
The Leaders' Choice
1800 266 266 1 (toll free)

NEW ELECTION RULE FOR TOP ZP POSITIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The State Election Commission (SEC) is going to implement a new rule for indirect election to the post of Zilla Parishad president and vice-president, which will be conducted March 13 and 25, respectively.

The Panchayati Raj Department recently issued notification amending the Odisha Zilla Parishad (ZP) Election Rules, 1994 by adding another clause.

As per the new norm, during the indirect election to posts of Zilla Parishad president and VP, all members will have to display their votes to the agent appointed by their own party before dropping it in the ballot box.

The parties will have to submit details on appointment of authorised agents in a prescribed form to the concerned electoral officer by 5.30pm a day before the polls.

ZP members interested for the top posts can submit his/her nomination paper between 10.30am to 11.30am on the scheduled day of the polling. The nominations will be scrutinised in an hour and those interested in opting out can do so by 1.00pm the same day. Voting will be held from 1.30pm to 4.00pm followed by the declaration of results.

The same routine will be followed for the election to the post of panchayat samiti chairman and vice-chairman, which will be conducted March 12 and 23, respectively. Similarly, the Naib Sarpanch election will be held March 11 following the same procedures.

It should be stated here that the SEC has asked SPs to make adequate police arrangements during the conduct of indirect elections.



A Brazilian dancer performs during the 'Flower Parade' in Rio de Janeiro in an effort to spread awareness regarding the protection of nature and animals

Violence mars rural polls

Clashes were reported from many villages in different districts of Odisha that left a number of people injured during the panchayat elections held Wednesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The first phase of voting for the three-tier panchayat polls in Odisha ended Wednesday with a voter turnout of 70 per cent, SEC Aditya Prasad Padhi said. He however, said that the polling percentage may go up as final reports are yet to come in. Polling however, was marred by incidents of violence in many of the districts.

Notably, the voter turnout in the 2017 panchayat polls was around 78 per cent while the figure stood at 76.65 per cent in the first phase.

Voting started at 7.00am and ended at 1.00pm. However, at places where voters had queued up before 1.00pm, they were allowed to exercise their franchise.

Padhi informed that violence has been reported in three booths of Dhenkanal district, seven in Jajpur district and five in Puri district. The next course of action for the violence-hit booths will be determined after receiving reports from district collectors, Padhi said.



FREE FOR ALL: Residents of Tichhni village under Alanda panchayat in Krushnaprasad block in Puri district, clash outside Booth No 4 during the panchayat polls, Wednesday

CLASHES GALORE

- Bombs hurled at house of BJD leader Dilip Dash in Salepur area of Cuttack district, wife injured
- Presiding officer critically injured in attack by miscreants in Gondia block of Dhenkanal district
- Journalists attacked in Badala panchayat under Kanas block in Puri district
- Ballot box snatched in Kasijharia village in Puri district
- Booth capturing, attacking voters in booth No-1 at Durgapur Anganwadi centre in Jajpur district
- 2 nabbed for firing at candidate's house in Ghichamura panchayat of Sambalpur district

The Election Commissioner said instructions have been issued to the DGP to ensure law and order during the next four phases of the panchayat polls. The DGP has also been directed to take strong action against law-breakers.

As per reports, some miscreants allegedly looted a ballot box from booth No. 9 in Kasijharia village under Chapamanik panchayat of Brahmagiri block in Puri.

Four correspondents of media organisations were allegedly attacked by miscreants at a booth in Badala panchayat under Kanas block in Puri district. A clash between two groups disrupted the polling process at booth No. 1 in Sujapur panchayat. Miscreants attacked presiding officer Purnachandra Raula in

VOTING DEFERRED AS 23 CANDIDATES DIE

Bhubaneswar: Elections to 23 seats were cancelled Wednesday in the first phase of the three-tier panchayat polls due to the demise of some of the contesting candidates. SEC officials informed later in the day that voting for one Zilla Parishad seat, six seats for the post of sarpanch, three for panchayat samiti members and 13 ward member posts have been cancelled. "Polling for three seats including two sarpanch posts and a ward member post has been cancelled in Barghar. Similarly, elections for a ward member and a samiti member in Angul, a sarpanch and a samiti member in Balasore, two ward members in Bolangir, a sarpanch in Cuttack have also been called off. Elsewhere polling in some constituencies in Ganjam, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Keonjhar districts have also been cancelled due to death of candidates, said an official.

Nihalprasad under Gondia block of Dhenkanal district and looted the ballot boxes. Raula who was critically injured in the attack, has been admitted to a nearby hospital where he is currently undergoing treatment.

Elections were conducted at 22,379 booths in 1,669 panchayats in 70 blocks of Odisha for 200 Zilla Parishad members, 1,669 Sarpanchs, 1,669 panchayat samiti members and 22,379 ward members. **MORE P5**

BAPPI LAHIRI NO MORE

Bappi da, as he was known, redefined Indian music in the 1970s by introducing the disco variety which became a rage among all



AGENCIES

Mumbai, Feb 16: Singer-composer Bappi Lahiri, famous for his disco beats in Hindi films of the 1970s and 80s and also some soulful crooning, died late Tuesday night at a hospital here following multiple health issues. He was 69.

"Lahiri had been admitted to the hospital for a month and was discharged Monday. But his health deteriorated Tuesday and his family called for a doctor to visit their home. He was brought to the hospital. He had multiple health issues. He died due to OSA (obstructive sleep apnea) shortly before midnight," Dr Deepak Namjoshi, director of the hospital, said Wednesday.

The singer-composer, a familiar figure for many with his trademark gold chains he wore for luck and his sunglasses, was known for his songs in films such as *Chalte Chalte*, *Disco Dancer* and *Sharaabi*.

Lahiri also ventured into politics when he joined the BJP in 2014. He contested from the Lok Sabha seat of Srerampur in West Bengal but lost to Kalyan Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress. He is survived by his wife Chitrani and two

children - daughter Reema, also a singer, and composer Bappa Lahiri. Lahiri's last rites will be held Thursday at Juhu's Pawan Hans crematorium on his son Bappa's arrival from Los Angeles, son-in-law Govind Bansal said.

"It's a deeply sad moment for us. Our beloved Bappi Da has left for heavenly abode last midnight... We are seeking love and blessings for his soul," the family said in a statement.

For many fans and colleagues, it is too early to bid 'alvida' to the music composer who scored the memorable 'Chalte chalte mere geet yaad rakha', penned by Amit Khanna.

President Ramnath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among a host of people who mourned Lahiri's death. They said his lively nature will be missed by all and sundry. Lahiri is credited as a pioneer of synthesised disco music in Indian cinema during 1970s to 1990s with songs such as 'I am a Disco Dancer', 'Pag ghunghroo', 'Intehan ho gayi', and 'Laal Dupatte Wali'. Incidentally iconic singer Kishore Kumar was his uncle. **MORE P2**

Strict action on cards

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Feb 16: Karnataka Home Minister Araga Jnanendra has warned protesting students to strictly follow the recent high court judgement failing which immediate and strict action will be taken against them. As students from a particular community started protesting in many parts of Karnataka demanding their right to wear a hijab in spite of the interim order by the high court, Jnanendra spoke tough.

"We adopted a soft approach all these days, it won't be there anymore. Till now, there was consideration not to hurt students as they are sensitive and it was thought that they are protesting with provocation from outsiders. Abiding by the court order and respecting constitution is the responsibility of citizens of this country. If this is violated, harsh action will be initiated immediately without any consid-

eration," warned the minister. Jnanendra however, said that save for a couple of sporadic incidents, the state remained more or less peaceful. "Barring incidents in two to three areas of Karnataka, district commissioners, local and college administrations have convinced the protesting students to attend their classes and overall there is a peaceful environment," Jnanendra informed.

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai appealed

Wednesday to the students to follow the court order and urged the local and college administrations to cooperate for allowing students to receive education. "With concern I request everyone. We have to wait for the final court order with restraint. Sort out the confusions. Cordial environment must be created by resolving issues with the school and college managements and parents," Bommai said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Earlier, going to rallies used to be a family affair. Now I go alone with cotton in my ears!

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	57996.68	↓ 145.37
NIFTY	17322.20	↓ 30.30
DOLLAR	75.41	↓ ₹0.18
EURO	85.57	↑ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹49,515	↑ ₹130
SILVER	₹63,271	↑ ₹282

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	30.6°C	29.8°C
TEMP MIN	15.6°C	16.0°C
Humidity	75%	87%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dry weather most likely

Woman's perseverance pays off, ultras release hubby

Braving all odds, the wife of the abducted engineer went into the Abujhmad forest in search of her husband, after her video appeal did not work

AGENCIES

Raipur, Feb 16: A wife's courage and perseverance paid off with the Maoists finally releasing her engineer husband. The Maoists had abducted engineer Ashok Pawar

and another employee Anand Yadav a few days back. They finally let the two go late Tuesday evening. Unaware of the developments Sonali had decided to search for her husband herself and had travelled to the dense Abujhmad forest, the den of ultras, along with her minor daughter.

Even though Sonali is yet to be reunited with her husband and is still in the forest, sources said that she is in touch with the local police and journalists.

"Pawar and Yadav are currently at Kutru in Bijapur," Additional



Superintendent of Police (ASP) Pankaj Shukla said Wednesday. Shukla confirmed later that Sonali

and her husband have reunited.

A local scribe said that after releasing an emotional video asking ultras to release her husband for the sake of their daughters, Sonali entered the Abujhmad forest along Bijapur and Narayanpur districts in Chhattisgarh to look for him. "She took the help of some locals to enter the forest. We are hopeful she will be out soon," said the scribe. She informed that she came in contact with Sonali through the construction firm which had engaged her husband, a day after he was abducted

February 11.

"Sonali, her two daughters, and other family members reached Bijapur Sunday. She proceeded to Bedre on a forward journey. She is still inside the forest and is expected to reach the Kutru police station where her husband is kept," the journalist said.

The journalist said that she had met Yadav, Tuesday night. "Yadav told me that Naxals gave him and the engineer ₹2,000 each to reach their respective homes," she informed. According to police, Pawar is feeling traumatised and is under

medical observation, she added.

Pawar and Yadav were working for a private construction company building a bridge on the Indravati river near Bedre-Nugur village in Bijapur district when they were abducted.

The Pawar family belongs to Madhya Pradesh. It should be stated that immediately after Pawar's abduction, Sonali had released a video message for the ultras urging them to release her husband for the sake of their daughters. When that did not work, she decided to go to the den of Maoists herself.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Your attractive personality is always at the disposal of others, and today you could benefit immensely through it. However, there is room for improvement and you could be drawn towards charity work. Ganesh says you will surely feel satisfied by helping the needy.

TAURUS
Professionals in all spheres of work are due for a field day today. The day will be particularly outstanding for Administrators and executives are likely to get richer by the end of the day. Even if you are engaged in some other work, you will stand out and get noticed for your overall excellence. Businessmen can expect to get into new partnerships and joint ventures. This is a very auspicious day for launching new projects.

GEMINI
You will want some change in your daily routine today. You are likely to be fed up of the rut of daily life and are looking for a refreshing change. You need to apply your inherent creativity to your work to get more satisfaction out of it and to ease the boredom of your daily schedule, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Don't meddle in others' affairs today, suggests Ganesh. For they will not take it kindly. Adopt the middle path. Ganesh feels that you must keep your bravado and boldness in check.

LEO
Your pride and self-confidence will help you to excel in whatever task it is that you take up today. Other people will also praise you. You will buy new clothes and other possessions that you have been desiring since a long time, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today will be a pleasant day full of surprises and unforeseen changes. You may go for a long drive with your beloved. The trip will be very interesting and will calm your frayed nerves. All in all, Ganesh says, it is an optimistic and happy day, so go ahead and get the best out of it.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will have a good time with your family members and will have fun with them. You will also be able to organize a picnic or a party for your family members and enjoy the day with them. Ganesh says you will go out for a trip to a religious place or temple, which will enhance your mind and ideas.

SCORPIO
Your sixth sense would work wonders today, as per to what Ganesh has to say. Trust your instincts and work accordingly. Work enthusiastically and dedicatedly. When the pressure of work mounts on you, take a break and unwind with the help of soft music.

SAGITTARIUS
Work is likely to keep you on toes. At work place, you and your opinions will be in demand. Those who are associated with stock exchange and shares will be happy to gain profits during the afternoon. Wait and watch the end result in the evening.

CAPRICORN
Actions speak louder than words. Your sincere efforts and honest intentions will motivate others also to put in their best, feels Ganesh. You'll be like a friend, philosopher and guide to them. People will follow you, but it has a darker side to as many will even over take you. It is certainly not a pleasant sight to see opportunities pass by!

AQUARIUS
You will seek spirituality as you feel thoroughly dejected by your present situation. Ganesh says that even struggling courageously with circumstances requires a spiritual endeavour. These trying times give you the patience to deal intelligently with challenges and setbacks.

PISCES
Your spiritual and religious streak comes to the fore. You will likely visit a place of worship to soothe your troubled soul. Meditative techniques may also be resorted to in your quest for peace and calm, says Ganesh.



UNFORGETTABLE TELUGU COMPOSITIONS

Popularly known as the 'Golden Man' and the 'King of Disco' Bappi Lahiri, who passed away aged 69, had composed multiple Telugu songs which made him one of the best composers during 1986-2020 in India. Super hit songs like *Vaana Vaana Velluvaye*, *Aakasham Loo Oka Thaara*, are still some of the most liked compositions by the legendary musician. Bappi Lahiri's Telugu compositions mostly starred Megastar Chiranjeevi and most of the songs in their combinations were chartbusters at that point in time.



Rest in Glory, Disco King

IN THE DECADE BEFORE BAPPI LAHIRI HIT BIG TIME WITH *DISCO DANCER* AND CONTINUED HIS WINNING STREAK IN MOVIES LIKE *HIMMATWALA*, *TOHFA* AND OTHERS, HE SCORED SOME OF THE MOST UNDERRATED GEMS OF HINDI CINEMA

It has not been a fortnight since the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar passed away, and now the entertainment industry is mourning the demise of 'Disco King'

With the demise of iconic music composer-singer Bappi Lahiri, a sensational era in music came to an end. Known for his gold jewellery and iconic Disco numbers like *I am a Disco Dancer* and *Zooby Zooby*, he was one of the most prominent names in the music industry in the 80s.

Several celebrities like Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn, Raveena Tandon and AR Rahman, among others mourned the death of the singer-musician. Here are few condolences messages the celebs wrote on their social media handles.

Akshay Kumar: Today we lost another gem from the music industry...

Bappi Da, your voice was the reason for millions to dance, including me. Omm Shanti

Raveena Tandon: Grew up listening to your music, Bappi da. Your music shall play on forever.

Adnan Sami : He was India's first rockstar. He was full of love and generosity. We will miss you Bappi Da.

Ajay Devgn: "Bappi Da introduced a more contemporary style to Hindi film music with *Chalte Chalte*, *Suraksha* and *Disco Dancer*. Dada, you will be missed.

Chiranjeevi: Deeply anguished at the

demise of legendary music director and singer Bappi Lahiri. I had a great association with Bappi da.

Farhan Akhtar: Yaad rahega aapka pyaar aur sangeet.. RIP Bappi Da.

Sujoy Ghosh: Long live Bappi Lahiri. Legends don't die.

AR Rahman: Rest in peace Bappi! Bappi Lahiri, the Disco King of Hindi cinema!

Kareena Kapoor Khan: Yaar Bina Chain Kaha Re, RIP king.

Shreya Ghoshal: Bappi Da, you are a true rockstar of our country. You have gone too soon. Will miss you terribly. Rest in peace. Om Shanti.



The formidable duo

If Bappi Lahiri was the voice and brain behind the disco revolution in Indian cinema, it was actor Mithun Chakraborty, who brought the songs to life with his swag and charm. Lahiri shared a special relationship with the 'Disco Dancer' revolutionizing disco music in India collaborating in 50 plus movies. Mithun Chakraborty's *Disco Dancer* hit the theatres in 1982. In the actor's biography, it was reported

that *Disco Dancer* was the first Indian film to cross Rs 100 crore worldwide. *Disco Dancer* marked the first collaboration of Mithun and Bappi Lahiri. After the resounding success of *Disco Dancer*, the two went on to work in several superhit films, including *Dance Dance, Guru, Prem Pratigya, Dalaal, Surakhya, Kasam Paida Karne Wale Ki, Muddat, Pyar Ke Do Pal* among others.



Life in Moments



Playing Tabla at 3



With Lata Mangeshkar



With Kishore Kumar



Acting debut (L) with Kishore Kumar



With Jackson during his India trip



Gifting a song to Diego Maradona

LEAVING BEHIND A LEGACY

Bappi Lahiri was a master of Disco as well as melody, inspiring musicians across the world. Here's a look at some of his most memorable compositions



You may not know

As the veteran singer-music composer passed away, here's a look at some lesser-known facts about him

Sandler comedy film, *You Don't Mess With The Zohan* in 2008. He was also credited for the same.

1st Indian in Grammy jury

In 2012, Bappi Lahiri became the first Indian composer to be part of the Grammy jury. He was also nominated at the Oscars and Golden Globes Awards, in 2017, for the films *Moana* and *Lion*. He lent his voice for dubbing the character Tamatoa, in *Moana* in Hindi, and also sang for the film. His song *Come Closer* was in the soundtrack of *Lion*.

Tribute song for Jackson

When Michael Jackson passed away in 2009, Bappi Lahiri composed a special song, called *Don't Say Goodbye* as a tribute to the pop legend.

The world record

The singer earned a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for recording more than 180 songs in 33 films in a year in 1986.

Soothing Numbers

- Kavi Alvida Na Kehna :** Chalte Chalte (1976)
- Bambai Se Aaya Mera Dost :** Aap Ki Khatir (1977)
- Mana Ho Tum :** Toote Khilone (1978)
- Pyar Manga Hai Tumhi Se :** College Girl (1978)
- Zid Na Karo :** Lahu Ke Do Rang (1979)
- Chahiye Thoda Pyaar :** Lahu Ke Do Rang (1979)
- Kaliyon Ka Chaman :** Jyoti (1981)
- Kisi Nazar Ko Tera Intezar :** Aitbaar (1985)
- Dil Mein Ho Tum :** Satyamev Jayate (1987)
- Thehre Hue Pani Mein :** Dalal (1993)

The Disco Revolution

- I Am A Disco Dancer:** Disco Dancer (1982)
- Yaad Aa Raha Hai:** Disco Dancer (1982)
- Jimmy Jimmy:** Disco Dancer (1982)
- Pag Ghungroo Bandhi:** Namak Halaal (1982)
- Yaar Bina Chain Kahan Re:** Saahab (1985)
- Zooby Zooby:** Dance Dance (1986)
- Mujhe Kehte hain Romeo:** Muddat (1986)
- Tamma Tamma Loge:** Thanedar (1990)
- Ooh La La :** The Dirty Picture (2011)
- Tune Mari Entriyaan:** Gunday (2013)

When Bappi met MJ

Bappi Lahiri was the only Indian musician invited to attend Michael Jackson's live show in Mumbai in 1996. He liked his song *Jimmy Jimmy* from *Disco Dancer*, *MJ told Bappi*.

Rapper Dr Dre sued

Bappi Lahiri sued the famous rapper, Dr. Dre for lifting his song *Kaliyon Ka Chaman* in the album *Addictive*, in 2002, a stand never taken by an Indian singer before, and won the case.

Jimmy Jimmy in H'wood

Bappi Lahiri's iconic song *Jimmy Jimmy* was featured in the background in the Adam

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

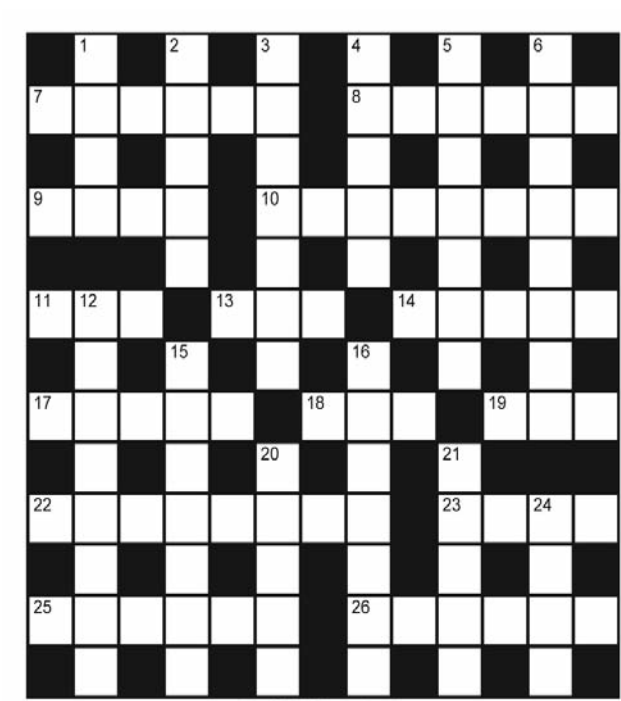


BREVITY



FUN post

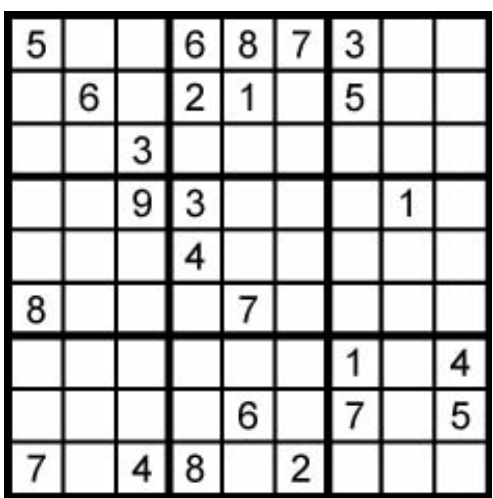
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Fishing pole (3,3)
 - 8 Concurs
 - 9 Free ticket
 - 10 Edible fungi
 - 11 Query
 - 13 ___ de Triomphe
 - 14 Princess topper
 - 17 French monks
 - 18 Keyboard key
 - 19 Antiquated
 - 22 Kind of view (5-3)
 - 23 Cousin of a bassoon
 - 25 Sanctuary
 - 26 Mountain features
 - 4 Hard to pin down
 - 5 Jam ingredient
 - 6 Brainy
 - 12 Lessened
 - 15 Alert (5,2)
 - 16 Dessert wine
 - 20 Small three-masted vessel
 - 21 Swimming holes
 - 24 Dentist's request
- Down**
- 1 Kind of collar
 - 2 Lock of hair
 - 3 Newspaper VIPs

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



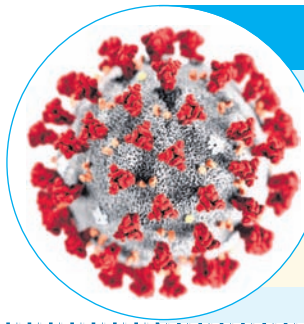
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



B'DAY FETE

Artistes perform at the 83rd birthday celebration of noted musician Prafulla Kar at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	41,68,13,845	33,96,32,448	58,60,171
India	4,27,23,558	4,18,43,446	5,09,872
Odisha	12,79,898	12,63,106	8,945

State to get first luxury house boat at Chilika

AMONG ITS OTHER DISTINCTIVE FEATURES THE BOAT WILL HAVE FOUR PREMIUM ROOMS ALONG WITH TWO SUITE ROOMS WITH 180 DEGREE VIEW OF CHILIKA



its other distinctive features the boat will have four premium rooms along with two suite rooms with 180 degree view of Chilika.

Sources said the boat can accommodate six couples with bookings including a 24-hour package that will comprise breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner. The tour package shall also include sightseeing, birds and dolphin watch, musical evening at deck with barbeque, activities and event at Rajhans/Magarmukh among others.

houseboats and cruise tourism as two key intervention areas. In this background, the project by Vikash Group has been approved through the single window mechanism that facilitates private sector investments," said Principal Secretary Department Tourism, Surendra Kumar, highlighting Odisha's strength on water-based tourism.

While fresh crabs and prawns of Chilika shall feature in the menu list, the popular 'Khainga fish' shall also be served.

Detailing about the official launch of the boat, officials at the tourism department said that the project is in its final stage of completion and will be open to public by mid-March this year. "Rates for four packages and other formalities will be finalised within a month. All bookings will be done through online module only," an official said.

Meanwhile, Kumar added that various interventions have been planned in the form of planning and development of houseboats and cruise tourism in other water bodies like Mahanadi river, Hirakud reservoir and Bhitarkanika.

"Interventions like these are not only aimed to drive private sector investments but also to facilitate private parties to operate such water-based recreation products. Recently, we have also approved refurbishing of catamarans to houseboats by a well-known cruise operator which shall be made operational this year."

FIRE GOD WORSHIPPED

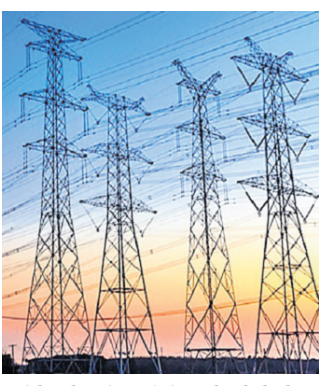


People observe Agni Utsav on the Grand Road in Puri, Wednesday

POWER TARIFF IN STATE MAY GO UP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Power consumers in Odisha may face another hike in power tariff as the companies engaged in the production and distribution of electricity in the state have approached the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC) with a plea for the same.



The companies have produced their financial statements for 2022-23 fiscal before the OERC and urged the regulatory body to hike the power tariff in the state, sources said. It is worth mentioning here that power tariff in the state has been hiked twice since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

The OERC started its hearing on the issue Tuesday and asked companies to represent their cases till February 28. The Odisha Hydro Power Corporation (OHP) and Odisha Power Generation Corporation (OPGC) represented their cases on the first day of the hearing.

The OHP has proposed to sell 5,619.24 million units of electricity in 2022-23 financial year, sources

Crorepati Addl SP packed off to jail

The senior police official was produced before a Special Vigilance Court here which remanded him in judicial custody till February 28

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 16: The Vigilance Directorate here Wednesday arrested Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) (Communication) Trinath Mishra on charges that he amassed Rs 9 crore worth disproportionate assets (DA), which is around 489 per cent of his known sources of income, an official said.

The senior Odisha Police Service official, who is posted as the ASP (Communication) at Tulasipur in Cuttack, was produced before a Special Vigilance Court here which remanded him in judicial custody till February 28, it was learnt.

On Tuesday, 11 teams of the anti-corruption wing carried out simultaneous raids at many places related to Mishra in Cuttack, Khurda, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur and Nabarangpur districts.

The Vigilance sleuths claimed to have found the involvement of Mishra's son and his family members in several business enterprises, including a hospital and a nursing home at Chandikhole in Jajpur and a medicine store licensed in the name of Mishra's wife. A transport business—

Shantilata Transport— with its offices at Chandikhole and Dhanmandal areas of Jajpur— was also found in the name of Mishra's wife.

Besides, a luxurious flat in Bhubaneswar, a farmhouse in Jajpur and three plots in Bhubaneswar and Jajpur were found during the raid. Moreover, a fleet of cars— a BMW X7, Hyundai Creta, Maruti Baleno, Chevrolet Trailblazer LTZ and motorcycles— Triumph Rocket 3, Hyosung GT250R and Royal Enfield Classic 500 were found during the raids. All the vehicles bear the same fancy registration number 0005, it was learnt.

Following the raids, Mishra was found in possession of Rs 9 crore worth of DA, which is around 489 per cent of his known sources of income. Hence, a case (13/22) was registered against Mishra and his wife under relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act-1988 as amended by the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act-2018.

23 babus held since Jan 2022
Addressing the media, Vigilance Director YK Jethwa said as many as 31 cases have been registered



Additional SP Trinath Mishra being taken to a local court in Cuttack, Wednesday

under the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act-2018 since January this year and 23 government servants, including four Class-

I officers, have been arrested. Jethwa said a considerable Vigilance work is based on two types of feedback— pre and post bribery.

A fleet of cars—a BMW X7, Hyundai Creta, Maruti Baleno, Chevrolet Trailblazer LTZ and motorcycles— Triumph Rocket 3, Hyosung GT250R and Royal Enfield Classic 500 were found during the raids

"Pre bribery feedback helps us laying traps and nabbing those demanding and accepting bribe. For this, we're relying on whistleblowers, aggrieved persons and our sources in various departments, institutions and offices across Odisha," the Vigilance Director said.

He said post bribery feedback, on the other hand, helps us targeting the DA generated through bribery and corruption. "For this, we've been increasingly tapping the massive data generated by the 'Mo Sarkar' system that is collecting random feedback on bribery and harassment from those visiting government offices for various services," Jethwa said.

5-member team to submit report on Dhinkia incident

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Feb 16: The Orissa High Court Wednesday ordered the formation of a five-member committee to visit Dhinkia village in Jagatsinghpur district and submit a status report in the wake of the alleged baton charge by police on villagers who opposed land acquisition for a proposed steel plant in the locality.

A division bench of Chief Justice S Muralidhar and Justice RK Patnaik pronounced the order while hearing a batch of petitions filed in connection with the alleged police brutality at Dhinkia.

The team comprising lawyers Prasanta Kumar Jena, Omkar Devdas, Sukanta Kumar Dalei, Debakanta Mohanty and Janmejaya Katikia will visit Dhinkia February 19 and submit its report to the HC. The next hearing on the case has been posted to February 23. Earlier, the state government had filed a report on the incident and denied any police brutality on the agitators.

Not 14, Kendrapara 'doc' has 17 wives

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The number of wives in the list of a 66-year-old man of Odisha, who married middle-aged, educated and well-to-do women of various states, increased to 17 with three more cases coming to the fore, a police officer said Wednesday.

It was earlier alleged that the man, who is currently in judicial custody, had married 14 times.

The police officer said the accused, who approached women under the fake identity of a doctor, had also tied the knot with a chartered account from Chhatisgarh, a physician from Assam and a highly educated lady of Odisha.

"Three more wives of the fake doctor have been identified," Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police U S Dash told reporters here.

A student from Odisha's Jagatsinghpur district also alleged that the fake doctor had duped him of Rs 18 lakh after assuring him a seat in a medical college in the state.

"His mobile phones will be sent to the forensic lab and his financial transactions will be probed," Dash said. The help of RBI has also been sought



A file photo of Ramesh Chandra Swain (R)

since the accused was found in possession of three PAN cards and 11 ATM cards.

According to police, he duped his wives, four of whom live in Odisha, three in Delhi, three in Assam, two each in Madhya Pradesh and Punjab, and one each in Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, of lakhs of rupees before moving on to greener pastures.

The sexagenarian Ramesh Chandra Swain, who acquired different names like Dr Bibhu Prakash Swain and Dr Ramani Ranjan Swain, is from a coastal village Kendrapara district.

Swain was an expert in persuading women and lured college teachers, even hard-boiled policewomen and captious lawyers, as he went about striking middle-aged women desperate for companionship with cupid's arrow.

However, his luck run out on Valentine Day Monday after 38 years when he was arrested by the police based on the allegation of his latest wife from Delhi whom he married in 2020.

Swain got married for the first time in 1982, and the last in 2020. His last marriage to a teacher was solemnized at an Arya Samaj temple in Delhi.

He, however, rejected the accusations. "I have not married all these women and I am indeed a doctor," Swain asserted while being escorted to the court.

Swain befriended women on matrimonial websites and deftly concealed his matrimonial status.

He allegedly duped his wife from Punjab of Rs 10 lakh, and the Gurudwara, where his marriage was solemnized, of Rs 11 lakh with the promise of facilitating setting up a medical college. He was earlier arrested twice for cheating unemployed youth and loan fraud in Hyderabad in 2010 and Ernakulam in 2006, police said.

Varsities told to submit status of NSS units in colleges

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The Higher Education (HE) department Wednesday directed all universities to furnish status of National Service Scheme (NSS) units in all colleges under their jurisdictions by February 25.

In a letter to programme coordinators of NSS units of universities, HE department deputy secretary Ramesh Chandra Behera directed them to furnish the status of the NSS units with information including names of the colleges, status of NSS

units (active/inactive/not opened) and the amounts of grants released in 2021-22 fiscal.

Earlier, the HE department had directed the programme coordinators of the NSS units in different universities to activate the defunct NSS units. "It is observed that there are many defunct NSS units in colleges /higher secondary schools under your jurisdiction. They are not receiving grants and doing any activities. Due to this, students are being deprived of personality development programmes of the NSS,"



the HE department told the programme coordinators.

On the other hand, funds are accumulating and lying unspent at universities/CHSE level. Therefore, the department directed them for activation of the defunct units. The sole aim of the NSS is to train students for delivering community service.

"If no action is taken by the defaulting colleges/ higher secondary schools, then the NSS units shall be withdrawn and re-allocated to other institutes," said the HE department.

Bank of India Vehicle Sale Notice

ZONAL OFFICE: Bhubaneswar Zone, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, PIN-751015

Offers are invited in sealed envelope from interested parties for sale of our following vehicle on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS".

Sl.No.	Branch/Office	Type of Vehicle	Registration No.	Registration Date	Floor Price of the Vehicle
1	Zonal Office	Maruti Swift VXI	OR-02BF-1228	10.05.2010	₹ 70,000/-
2	Zonal Office	Maruti Swift VXI	OR-02BT-8413	26.11.2011	₹ 1,10,000/-

Detailed notification and tender documents are available in Bank's website www.bankofindia.co.in. Any corrigendum/ addendum will be published in BOI website only. Last date & time of submission of offers is up to 03:00 PM on 11.03.2022.

Date: 17.02.2022 Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone

Union Bank of India POSSESSION NOTICE

REGIONAL OFFICE: CUTTACK
M-14, Baramunda Housing Board Colony, Bhubaneswar-751003

[RULE 8(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES - 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India, Concerned Branches under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the Borrower/Guarantor in loan A/C mentioned below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest & expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, Concerned Branches for an amount mentioned below with interest thereon. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to the Borrower to redeem the secured assets.

BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantor	Liabilities due as per Notice (in ₹)	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession	Description of Immovable Properties
CDA BIDANASI BRANCH / Borrower: Mrs. Tarini Prava Mishra, W/o.: Mr. Abinash Kumar Panda / Guarantor: Mr. Abinash Kumar Panda, S/o.: Mr. Padma Lochan Panda, Both are at Plot No.: 2F/868, Sector-11, CDA, Markatnagar, PO/PS: Markatnagar, Cuttack.	₹31,37,250.79 as on 31.03.2021 with further interest, cost & expenses	02.09.2021/10.02.2022	1) Land and Building - Plot No.: 924/2319 (Area: Ac.0.070 dec.), Khata No.: 309/423, Mouza: Kandarpur, Tehsil: Athagarh No.: 92, Thana: Athagarh, Dist.: Cuttack-754029, Odisha, KISSAM, Cuttack-754029, Odisha, KISSAM: Gharabari in the name of Mr. Abinash Kumar Panda, Bounded by North: Village Road, South: Plot No.: 923, East: Road, West: Bansidhar Sahoo & others, 2) Land and Building - Plot No.: 925/2318 (Area: Ac.: 0.783 dec.), Khata No.: 309/423, Mouza: Kandarpur, Tehsil: Athagarh No.: 92, Thana: Athagarh, Dist.: Cuttack-754029, Odisha, KISSAM: Gharabari in the name of Mr. Abinash Kumar Panda, Bounded by North: Common Road, South: Plot No.: 1339, East: Subal Dalei, West: Bansidhar Sahoo.
OSBC BRANCH / Borrower: Mr. Kashinath Biswal, S/o.: Late Kamalakanta Biswal, / Guarantor: Annapurna Biswal, W/o.: Late Kamalakanta Biswal, Both are At: Paikana, Kisanagar, PS.: Kisanagar, Dist.: Cuttack, Odisha-754130	₹5,30,037.33 as on 10.11.2021 with further interest, cost & expenses	10.11.2021 / 14.02.2022	Land and Residential Building belonging to Annapurna Biswal, W/o.: Late Kamalakanta Biswal, at Khata No.: 3, Plot No.: 415 (Area: Ac.0.30 dec., KISSAM: Gharabari), Mouza: Paikana, Dist.: Cuttack-754130

Place: Bhubaneswar
Date: 16.02.2022 Sd/- Authorised Officer
Union Bank of India

Situation is normal, say students from Ukraine



A file photo of a Ukrainian serviceman carrying a NLAW anti-tank weapon during an exercise in the Joint Forces Operation, in Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine (PHOTO: AP)

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: After India advised its citizens in Ukraine to temporarily leave that country amid escalating tension between Moscow and the NATO countries, several Odia students have started preparing for returning to the country and the state.

According to sources, more than 200 students from the state study in many universities of Ukraine in different streams. Some students are in contact with Indian embassy and the agencies while some students will decide after reviewing the situation.

Madhusudhan, a medical student at Vinnytsia National Pirohov Memorial Medical University, said there is absolutely no war kind of

if we want to travel back. They will arrange tickets and flights for the students. Everything depends upon the students. If they want to go back they can go, he said.

There is a lot of false information going around in Indian media. But the ground reality is everything is very normal here. Parents call Indian embassy and different consular offices over Ukraine to know what is the situation there but everything is normal here and life is normal.

As of now, there is no threatening situation but we are also ready if something shows up we will be immediately leaving for India.

Alok Kumar Lal of Wise Education Group, which sent medical students to Ukraine, said we are in talk with the students from Odisha and we are arranging chartered flight for students who want to come back.

India Tuesday advised its citizens in Ukraine to temporarily leave that country amid escalating tension between Moscow and the NATO countries over Russia's increasing military build-up close to the Ukrainian border.

In an advisory, the Indian embassy in Kyiv asked Indian nationals to avoid all non-essential travel to and within Ukraine. "In view of the uncertainties of the current situation in Ukraine, Indian nationals in Ukraine, particularly students whose stay is not essential, may consider leaving temporarily," it said.

situation in any city as per my knowledge. Of course political tension is there but people and students all normal here.

He said various universities have shown their support towards the notice issued by the Indian embassy but they also advise students not to fly to their own country right now and students will be having of fine classes after February 25. In this situation, it is not a wise decision to fly as there is no threat towards anyone

Parents of older students are a bit worried about the situation and of course we are talking with our juniors and our seniors and if somebody wants to travel back to India then they can go. Our educational agency has already given us the notice and they have also asked us

AGAINST OFFLINE EXAMS



Shailabala Women's College students stage a demonstration on the institution premises in Cuttack, Wednesday, demanding cancellation of offline exams (OP PHOTO)

India's food security system a model for all, says Parajuli

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: India's food security is an example for the world, said Bishow Parajuli, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) representative and country director to India. He said this while delivering the 18th foundation day lecture at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) Deemed to be University here Wednesday.

"India has made tremendous progress in the field of food security during last 50 years. It has become a food surplus country. Apart from food production, conducive policy, science and technology, efficient supply chain and market access have contributed to India's progress in this field," he added.

According to Parajuli, around 811 million people in the world do not have enough food while 270 million suffer from acute hunger despite production of plenty of food.

"Initiatives like National Food Security Act, Public Distribution System (PDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme have ensured food security in India," Parajuli said.

He also lauded KIIT and KISS

18TH FOUNDATION DAY OF KIIT



founder Achyuta Samanta for setting up of the twin institutions, which contribute significantly to the field of knowledge, job opportunities and nation-building.

Speaking on the occasion, Samanta said, "KIIT and KISS are community-based institutions and contribute to the objectives of achieving sustainable development. Apart from quality academics

and research, KIIT has been significantly contributing to the field of art, culture, sports, social development, and spiritualism."

KIIT is attracting students from about 65 countries while its graduates work in 70 countries across the globe, said vice chancellor Sasmitha Samanta in her presidential address. Pro vice chancellor Saranjit Singh proposed the vote of thanks.

Chadha spl secy to agri dept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The state government Wednesday appointed 1989 batch IFS officer Sanjeev Kumar Chadha as the special secretary in the Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department in a minor reshuffle in the IAS and IFS cadres. This apart, Chadha has been given the responsibility of the cooperation department's special secretary, sources said.

Similarly, 2007 batch IAS officer Aravind Agarwal has been appointed as the director of the women and child development department. Besides, 2013 batch IAS officer Shubham Saxena has been appointed as the director to the revenue and disaster management department.

19 Covid deaths

BHUBANESWAR: Nineteen coronavirus patients, including a teenager, have died in Odisha and 852 people tested positive for the pathogen, the Health Department said Wednesday. The daily positivity rate was 1.38 per cent and 181 children were among those newly infected. The infections are the lowest since 680 cases January 4. The state had logged 925 COVID-19 cases and 22 deaths Tuesday.

SOULFUL TRIBUTE TO LATA BY STUDENTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Students of DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar, paid soulful tribute to legendary singer Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar on 11th day of her last rites Wednesday.

In the program observed to mark the occasion, Principal of the school Bipin Kumar Sahoo, all supervisors and teachers offered their floral tribute to the icon of Indian music. In his address to the gathering, the principal highlighted the unparalleled contributions of Lata to the field of music in general and Indian music in particular.

He said the empress of the music world shall continue to rule over the hearts of millions of music lovers all over the world till eternity. Other activities organised to mark the occasion included a display of a biopic showcasing the rise to excellence by the accomplished architect of music and a musical rendition by the teachers of Lata Mangeshkar's evergreen songs.

The entire programme was arranged with full respect to COVID-19 protocols by the support of staff. Singing legend Lata Mangeshkar, the voice of generations of Indians and one of the biggest music icons of the country, died February 6 due to multiple organ failure. She was 92.

The singing legend was admitted to the ICU of a Mumbai hospital in early January after she tested positive for Covid-19.

Activists seek action against forest officials

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: Animal activists protested the repeated deaths of elephants in the state and demanded action against the wrongdoers and incompetence of the forest department and its officials.

The protestors and members of the Animal Welfare Trust Ekamra (AWTE) said, "We have been observing that sheer incompetence and lack of goodwill from forest officials have resulted in unnecessary

deaths of wild animals. Furthermore, the officials to hide their ineptness towards their duties, indulged in criminal offences such as hiding the carcasses, burning and destroying evidence which would have led to more such scandals where both poachers and forest department worked hand in hand for poaching and smuggling of wild animal products."

Purabi Patra of AWTE said it is horrifying to learn that when senior officials are suspected to be guilty, their subordinates are made scapegoats so as to protect their higher-ups.

She said in Narsinghpur burial matter, immediate action is required to suspend the local range officer and forester and investigate the crime, which is now 7 days old. The investigation should have

been completed within 48 hours. We demand that all forest officers implicated in the cover-up be fired.

We also demand that the details of the Mundali elephant drowning case be made public, and that responsibility for the inability to rescue the trapped animals be assigned. The inquiry has been open for more than four months, yet no report has been produced.

The department should execute its own circular of 2012 and undertake a thorough investigation through the Crime Branch of all the 12 documented examples of cover-up that have happened over the 12 years in order to determine culpability.

"We demand that the guilty officers be fired from government employment under Article 311 of the Constitution, just as the Chief Minister has fired top forest officers for wrongdoing, we expect you to take action in these incidents within 30 days and we be notified of the developments," Patra said.

"We also demand that local officers or rangers who were thus supposedly found guilty and made scapegoats in place of their superiors, be dismissed from service and strict action be taken so that no such practices are committed," she added.

REPEATED JUMBO DEATHS

Odia writer Haraprasad Parichapatnaik no more

BHUBANESWAR: Eminent Odia writer, academician and journalist Haraprasad Parichapatnaik died Wednesday due to multi-organ failure following a brain stroke, his family said. He was 69 and survived by two sons. Parichapatnaik was admitted to a private hospital after he suffered a brain stroke. He died a few hours later due to multi-organ failure, his family said. Parichapatnaik worked as the chief editor of an Odia daily in Bhubaneswar after retiring as an English professor. People from various walks of life including Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed grief over his death.

Blood cancer most common among children: Experts

The threat of cancer is rising globally among children. Blood cancer is the most prevalent cancer among children of one to 10 years, experts say, adding, cancers in the paediatric age group contribute around 5 per cent of total cancer burden of India.

Dr Vishwanath, paediatrician of the RML's Haemato-Oncology Department, said that most common cancer among children is blood cancer which needs early intervention and treatment. In India, most of the cases go unreported on the time due to the lack of awareness which is a major concern, he added.

"After this, acute lymphoblastic leukaemia is the most common childhood cancer which occurs when a bone marrow cell develops errors in its DNA. Thirdly, lymphoma cancer is also common among children which begins in infection-fighting cells of the immune system," he said.

About the common symptoms of cancer in children, Dr Rakesh, paediatrician at Lady Hardinge Medical College, said that prolonged fever of over one month and pain in bones and common viral illnesses are the common symptoms. "If children are losing weight continuously, it is also a symptom of cancer as well as bleeding resulting into the lower platelets is also among some of the symptoms which need

EARLY DIAGNOSIS KEY TO SURVIVAL

Cancers in the paediatric age group contribute around 5 per cent of total cancer burden of India

Dr Rakesh, paediatrician at Lady Hardinge Medical College, said prolonged fever of over one month, pain in bones, common viral illnesses, weight loss and bleeding resulting into lower platelets are among some of the symptoms of cancer in children which need early detection and treatment

Dr Vishwanath, paediatrician of the RML's Haemato-Oncology Department, said most common cancer among children is blood cancer which needs early intervention and treatment. In India, most of the cases go unreported in children and is not diagnosed on the time due to the lack of awareness which is a major concern

early detection and treatment."

Most of the childhood cancers have a male preponderance. Cancer forms the 9th most common cause of mortality among children between 5 to 14 years of age in India.

"There are more than 10 types of cancers which can be seen in children. Some of the common childhood cancers are acute leukemia, brain tumour, lymphoma, neuroblastoma, Wilm's tumour, retinoblastoma and soft tissue sarcomas. Among these, the most common paediatric cancer is acute

leukemia (blood cancer) which constitutes more than one third of all pediatric malignancies," said Dr Vikas Dua, Director, Paediatric Haematology & Oncology, Fortis Hospital, Gurugram.

He said that some symptoms which warrant urgent referral of the child to a paediatric haematologist are low hemoglobin, low or high white blood cell count and low platelet count since these findings are not always explained by nutritional factors and infections.



A yagna being performed at Khandagiri on the last day of the annual fair in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday (OP PHOTO)

CULMINATION OF ANNUAL FAIR

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Daya Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar-Dreamland Studio-9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics-9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point-Janpath Road, Ram Mandir-9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre-7992914045, World Solution-9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi Travels-Gajapati Nagar-9777675867, Nayapalli-The Cake Room-7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemana-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate-Shreeram Medical Store-8763711714, Net Square-Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)-7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar-Maa Communication-9437353424, Sahini General Store-Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar-9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur-Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion-Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision-Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7-LIC Premium Point-9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Double voting 'right' of border villagers baffling

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, Feb 16: It may sound queer, but true. Scores of voters in the fringe areas of Jaleswar block in Balasore enjoy the unlawful privilege of casting their vote in both Odisha and West Bengal.

This has also ensured them availing benefits from both the states. Over years, the administration has not acted upon such illegality of double voting.

According to reports, hundreds of people have their names in the voter lists of the both the states. It is said that as many as 45 villages in Netua, Sugo, Nachhimpur, Gobarghata, Makidia, Olamara and Sardarbandh panchayats under this block share borders with West and East Midnapur districts. Strangely, there are some people whose houses are in the territory of Odisha and farmlands and ponds in West Bengal. It is vice versa in



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

several other cases too.

In fact, Surbarnarekha river passing through the area is regarded as the boundary line for the two states. The river has set the limits between Dantun police station in West Bengal and Raibania police station in Balasore. As scores of people have properties on both sides, they have the privilege of having two voter identity cards.

They also take benefits of ration, pension, housing, loans and calamity relief from both the states.

Locals observed that a person casting vote twice and that too in two separate states is blatant violation of constitutional norms.

They have long been opposing such illegality of enjoying dual benefits, but the administration has been sitting quiet.

ADMIN MUTE

- As scores of people have properties on both sides, they have the privilege of having two voter identity cards
- They also take benefits of ration, pension, housing, loans and calamity relief from both West Bengal and Odisha
- Over years, the administration has not acted upon such illegality of double voting

It was learnt that 32 people of Netua panchayat, 13 of Sugo panchayat, 20 of Nachhimpur panchayat, 100 of Gobarghata panchayat, 52 of Sardarbandh panchayat and 15 of Olamara panchayat have names in the voter lists of West Bengal and Odisha. Locals have demanded that the leaders and the administration take steps to rescind their names from the voter list of West Bengal.

MINOR GIRL ALLEGES MURDER BID BY DAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nischantakoili, Feb 16: A minor girl under this block in Cuttack district has alleged that her father tried to kill her for marrying a Dalit boy and sought the assistance of the child protection officer, said sources Wednesday.

The matter came to the fore after the girl recorded her statements at Nischantakoili police station Wednesday. She claimed that her life is under threat from her father as the latter allegedly tried to kill her for marrying a Dalit boy of the neighbouring village.

According to reports, the girl hailing from Kentalo panchayat was in love with a Dalit boy and later decided to marry him. On being informed, her father allegedly tried to kill her with a crowbar.

Horrified by the act of her father, she left her home and reached the boy's house. Her family members lodged a complaint at the police station when they failed to trace her. Learning about the development, the girl reached the police station and recorded her statement.

Nischantakoili police has not registered a case, but informed the child protection officer about the incident.

The minor girl decided to marry a Dalit boy following which her father got agitated and tried to kill her

1 held for smuggling wildlife body parts in Mayurbhanj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police has seized wildlife body parts including pangolin scales and arrested one person allegedly involved in smuggling of such items in Mayurbhanj district.

Based on reliable information, the STF conducted a raid along with Karanjia Forest Officials Tuesday at Padagada village under Jasipur police station in Mayurbhanj. One alleged wildlife criminal was also apprehended, police said. Around 3.5kg pangolin scales, two leopard teeth, 29 leopard claws and 46 parakeets were

seized from the possession of the wildlife criminal. The accused person has been handed over to Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Karanjia for necessary action at their end. The police said.

Since 2020, in the special drive against wildlife criminals/poachers, the STF has so far seized 25 leopard skins, 13 elephant tusks, 7 deer skins, 11 live pangolins, 19.5kg pangolin scales, 2 leopard teeth, 29 leopard claws, 46 wild parakeets and arrested 58 wildlife criminals.

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of India Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
e-Tender Notice No: KR-CO-INFRA-28-ECOR dated 15/02/2022

General Manager/Project/II, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Open Tenders in Two Packet Bid System through e-Tendering on IREPS Portal from eligible Bidders for the following work. Name of Work: Execution of Viaduct, Major Bridges, ROBs, Supply of Vehicle, Site Facilities & other Allied Works between km. 143 to km. 184 [172 (29 route km + 12.108 long chainage=41.1km)] of Khurda Road-Bolangir New BG Rail Link Project of E.Co.Railway. Estimated Cost: ₹ 125.04.31.148/- (Including GST). Bidding Start Date: 21/02/2022. Closing Date/Time: 07/03/2022 @ 15.00 hrs. Completion Period: 22 months. Manual Offers shall not be accepted. Please visit www.ireps.gov.in website for details / participation & Corrigendum / Addendum which will be hosted only in this website.

Woman hurls hot gruel on 18-mth old granddaughter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Buguda, Feb 16: An elderly woman hurled hot gruel on her 18-month old granddaughter after her daughter-in-law lodged a dowry torture complaint against her with the local police in Ganjam district, Wednesday.

The little girl sustained burn injuries on her belly and is undergoing treatment. The accused was identified as Narsu Goud, wife of late Bijay Goud of Nrusingha Mandir Sahi in Buguda town. The woman's daughter-in-law Liza Goud has again lodged a complaint with Buguda police.

Sources said Liza's daughter of Pradip Singh of Khariguda

village under Bhanjanagar police limits was married to Rabintra Goud, son of late Bijay Goud, three years back. However, Liza was allegedly tortured by her mother-in-law and elder sister-in-law over dowry.

A frustrated Liza lodged a complaint of dowry torture against her in-laws in Buguda police station. Police called the family members to the police station and asked them to reconcile among themselves. Enraged on being called to the police station, the elderly woman brought hot gruel from the kitchen and hurled it on the little girl. However, no case has been registered by the police when the last report came in.

'CASH-FOR-VOTE' AUDIO GOES VIRAL IN KEONJHAR



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Feb 16: An audio clip of a candidate of Bansapal block in the district discussing distribution of cash with a village head has gone viral on social media Wednesday.

According to sources, in the purported audio, the contestant tries to woo local voters by distributing cash.

The audio has prompted political parties to demand a detailed probe into the alleged distribution of money intended to buy votes.

"The audio clip has surfaced at a time when the first phase of voting for the three-tier panchayat elections began at 7am Wednesday. Distribution of cash was carried out the previous night in the villages near Gandhamardan mine area," supporter of a particular party said.

"The audio contains conversation be-

THE AUDIO HAS PROMPTED POLITICAL PARTIES TO DEMAND A DETAILED PROBE INTO THE ALLEGED DISTRIBUTION OF MONEY INTENDED TO BUY VOTES

tween two people regarding distribution of ₹2,000 each to 30 families to support a particular political party. The money meant for distribution came from a firm that looks after loading of minerals at Gandhamardan mine. The said cooperative society is under control of Keonjhar administration. The cash, as heard in the viral audio clip, was distributed in ward no-3 of Kumundi panchayat under Bansapal block," he added.

"A group of people visited each household last night and distributed cash urging the families to cast their votes in favour of the party," another member of a party from Kumundi panchayat stated.

Despite several attempts, reactions of government officials linked to the cooperative society could not be obtained.

Women voters outnumber men in Hinjili

Hinjilicut: In a heartwarming turn of events, women voters have outnumbered their male counterparts in the first phase of polling held for the three-tier panchayat polls under this block in Ganjam district, Wednesday. Over 62,860 voters in the block exercised their franchise of which 32,872 are female and 30,988 are male. The block registered 64 per cent polling as the total number of voters stands at 98,224, BDO Subrat Kumar Jena said. The first phase was held for the posts of 17 sarpanchs, 13 samiti members in three zilla parishad zones. As many as 66 candidates are contesting for sarpanch posts, while 49 candidates are in the battle for samiti members. Four sarpanchs and eight samiti members have been elected unopposed.

PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS IN MALKANGIRI

Bengali-speaking voters may change the game



Polling underway at a booth of MV-82 village in Malkangiri district, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Feb 16: Bengali-speaking voters in the district will play a decisive role in the ongoing panchayat polls, if the percentage of votes recorded from this community during 2017 elections is any indication.

Malkangiri district had logged 64 per cent voting in the 2017 panchayat elections. However, it was 75 per cent in the areas dominated by Bengali-speaking people.

Political observers are of the view that Bengali-speaking people will hold the key in deciding the electoral fortune of candidates contesting for sarpanch, samiti member and zilla parishad (ZP) posts.

As per reports, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had managed to woo the Bengali voters during the last panchayat elections. The

- Malkangiri district had logged 64% voting in 2017 panchayat elections. However, it was 75% in the areas dominated by Bengali-speaking people
- Political observers are of the view that Bengali-speaking people will hold the key in deciding the electoral fortune of candidates contesting the rural polls this time

saffron party had won 10 ZP seats while two seats went to BJD's kitty and one to Congress. The BJP had formed the ZP in the district.

Political analysts say the BJP leadership had drawn up strategies that clicked in their favour as a large number of Bengali voters had voted for the saffron.

"Bengali-speaking voters are very conscious and hold the key. They take calcula-

tive steps while choosing their leaders and their votes never get rejected," they noted. This time, the BJD has set its sight on these voters and drawn up some new strategies.

A month ago, the leaders of the ruling party had organised a meeting at Poteru where over 5,000 Bengalis belonging to Madhua community joined the BJD. A package of ₹1 crore was announced for construction of a temple for Madhua community just to hold the vote bank. This has dealt a blow to the saffron party.

It is said that votes of Bengali community may not go in favour of the BJP this time. Besides, the government has been trying to ensure all government benefits like health cards, drinking water, housing and education to these people through self-help groups (SHGs).

EAST COAST RAILWAY

1.e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-48-21
NAME OF WORK : ELECTRIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH PROVISION FOR INTERLOCKING OF SIXTEEN NOS. LEVEL CROSSING GATES OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 50,07,216.64, EMD (₹) : 1,00,200/-, **Completion Period of the work :** 6 Months.

2.e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-49-21
NAME OF WORK : ELECTRIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH PROVISION FOR INTERLOCKING OF NINE NOS. LEVEL CROSSING GATES AT LEVEL CROSSING NO.139, LEVEL CROSSING NO.167A, 238, 341, 361, 363, 364, CT-61 & KP-5 OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 62,83,187.19, EMD (₹) : 1,25,700/-, **Completion Period of the work :** 6 Months.

3.e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-50-21
NAME OF WORK : ELECTRIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH PROVISION OF ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING AT PARADEEP FOR POWER OPERATION OF ADDITIONAL POINTS AND SIGNAL IN CONNECTION WITH INTERLOCKING OF PPT, PETCOKE, IFFCO SIDINGS AND RAIL VIKAS NIGAM LIMITED CONNECTIVITY FOR HARIDASPUR - PARADEEP NEWLINE.
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 72,94,616.89, EMD (₹) : 1,45,900/-, **Completion Period of the work :** 6 Months.

4.e-Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Elect-G-51-21
NAME OF WORK : ELECTRIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH PROVISION FOR ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING AT PARADEEP (PRDP) FOR POWER OPERATION OF ADDITIONAL POINTS AND SIGNAL IN CONNECTION WITH INTERLOCKING BOT LINE, PEQCTPL, ADDITIONAL LINES OF EXCHANGE YARD AND IFFCO / CONCOR SIDING.
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 11,19,651.11, EMD (₹) : 22,400/-, **Completion Period of the work :** 6 Months.

Date and time of closing of tender : At 1500 hrs of 08.03.2022 (For Sl. No.1 & 2) & 11.03.2022 (For Sl. No.3 & 4).

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

NOTE : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.

Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G) Khurda Road PR-821/M/21-22

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council
(A Government of India Enterprise)

INVITES PROPOSALS
for
Development, validation & pre-commercialization of products/technologies in the areas of

- Healthcare
- Energy and Environment
- Veterinary Sciences and Aquaculture
- Agriculture and Secondary Agriculture

Under Challenge CallSM

i4 (Intensifying the Impact of Industrial Innovation)
Supports industry through:

- SBIRI (Small Business Innovation Research Initiative)
- BIPP (Biotechnology Industry Partnership Programme)

PACE (Promoting Academic Research Conversion to Enterprise)
Supports academia through:

- AIR (Academic Innovation Research)
- CRS (Contract Research Scheme)

***Refer to RFP for more information**

For online application, scheme details, eligibility criteria and RFP please log on to BIRAC website (www.birac.nic.in)

Last date for submission of proposals: **31st March, 2022** (up to 5:30 pm)

For queries, please contact: GM & Head - Investment, BIRAC Email: investment.birac@gov.in



We find in others what is in us. If we always find mud around us, it proves that there is mud somewhere in us.

THE MOTHER



Unlearning Helplessness

There was little cause for geopolitical optimism in 2021, and this grim trend has continued at the start of 2022. Almost every month over the last couple of years, a fresh emergency has dominated the news, contributing to a sense of a mounting tide of crises that threatens to overwhelm us. The world is struggling to cope simultaneously with the seemingly endless COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of illiberal forces in many countries, the failure of international interventions that were supposed to stabilise conflict-ridden regions, rising great-power tensions, and military buildups in key territories. Beyond these immediate concerns, the impact of climate change, a major long-term threat to humanity, has become all too tangible – and political leaders have yet to mount a sufficiently forceful response. Who could be blamed for feeling overwhelmed?

In the eyes of many citizens, politicians seem far from getting a grip on today's urgent problems and steering the world away from catastrophe. And the seemingly endless series of crises threatens to erode the public's confidence that they and their political leaders can shape a better future.

The current malaise arguably resembles 'learned helplessness', a phenomenon first described by the psychologists Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania and Steven Maier of the University of Colorado in the 1960s.

In an experiment, Seligman and Maier were surprised to find that dogs that were conditioned to expect an electric shock after hearing a tone did not try to escape it, even when, in a later setting, they could do so by jumping over a small barrier. The animals, the psychologists reasoned, had learned that no matter what they did, they could not control their fate. So, they just gave up – despite having the chance to escape.

Seligman and his colleagues compared the dogs' behaviour to the symptoms exhibited by depressed people, and suspected that clinical depression results from a real or perceived lack of control over the outcome of a situation. The same may be true of groups. Smaller or larger groups of people, and perhaps even whole societies, may collectively come to believe that they are unable to effect positive change and, as a result, stop trying.

If so, the recent sequence of crises, and political leaders' apparent inability to cope with them, may be fostering a form of collective learned helplessness. According to new data from the Munich Security Index 2022, based on public-opinion surveys in the G7 countries and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), those who agree with the statement that they feel helpless in the face of global events constitute the largest group in all the countries polled.

In the democracies surveyed, the 'helpless' are in the majority: 57% of respondents agree with the statement, while only 12% disagree. China is the only country among the 12 in which more than a quarter of respondents (27%) disagree with the statement. Similarly, although the figures are in general slightly lower, majorities or pluralities of respondents in all 12 countries agree that their countries have no control over global events. Of course, one might ask why anyone should believe that they or their countries can steer global events. But the promise of control, even if an illusion, has been a crucial element of politics in the modern age, when human beings, rather than God or fate, are supposed to be pulling the strings.

This helps to explain why the widespread perception of a loss of control, and a longing to regain it, are key political themes of our time. Slogans such as 'take back control', 'America first', 'strategic autonomy' and 'European sovereignty' all reflect the same underlying impulse.

The danger is that a widespread feeling of collective helplessness risks preventing the world from addressing the most important crises until it is too late. Societies overwhelmed by a wave of emergencies may end up meekly accepting what happens to them, even though they have the tools and resources to change it. In many countries, for example, people do not believe that the international community can successfully mitigate climate change, or do not trust others to do their fair share.

But while today's challenges are huge, our ability to cope with them will depend to a significant degree on our self-perception. Do we really believe that we are collectively helpless? Or are we willing to use our collective resources and intensify international cooperation because we believe we can turn the tide?

Above all, political leaders need to show that we can collectively 'unlearn helplessness.' As key decision-makers such as US President Joe Biden and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz have stressed repeatedly, democracies must demonstrate that they can deliver. Despite – or perhaps because of – the challenges liberal democracy faces, leaders need to inspire a new sense of confidence at home and abroad that we can tackle the crises in front of us.

And there is a silver lining. Notwithstanding all the angst about the future of democracy, Munich Security Index data also show that people still think democracies are better able than undemocratic countries to solve the problems of the future. Now they need to prove it.

The writer is Director of Research and Policy at the Munich Security Conference.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

Changes and progress very rarely are gifts from above. They come out of struggles from below.

NOAM CHOMSKY

You are always free to change your mind and choose a different future, or a different past.

RICHARD BACH

Sometimes if you want to see a change for the better, you have to take things into your own hands.

CLINT EASTWOOD

WORDSWORTH

Sand

What does Huckleberry Finn mean when he says that Mary Jane 'had more sand in her than any girl I ever see'? Sand here has just the same sense as the older grit, clear grit, or true grit, that refer to a person who has strength of character, pluck, stamina, the ability to see things through to the end. The reference here, presumably is to the toughness of grit, especially that in gritstone, a common name for the material that made up the stones of a corn mill. Why sand should suddenly pop up in its place – sometime near the end of the 1860s – is hard to say, though it is an obvious enough synonym. In its earliest appearances, it forms part of expressions such as sand in his gizzard or sand in his craw, which are obvious enough references to the small stones that some birds swallow into their gizzards to help grind their food (The second of these expressions is still sometimes used by older people in the US, though it is unknown to most young ones). Mark Twain uses both grit and sand in successive sentences in that place in Huckleberry Finn: "She had the grit to pray for Judus if she took the notion – there warn't no backdown to her, I judge. You may say what you want to, but in my opinion she had more sand in her than any girl I ever see; in my opinion she was just full of sand." How these became interchangeable terms is a small mystery that needs to be resolved, but don't bank on anyone finding the solution anytime soon!

FOCUS INEQUALITY

FREE THE MONEY WE NEED



One major reason for the highly uneven global economic recovery is the huge variation in fiscal responses between rich countries and the rest of the world. An annual issuance of special drawing rights, the International Monetary Fund's reserve asset, could help to bring about a more equitable and climate-friendly rebound

nancing needs.

Even so, the SDR allocation was a lifeline for several developing countries facing severe balance-of-payments problems, and helped to prevent further economic decline. Since August, at least 80 countries have used SDRs for various purposes. Thirty-two countries exchanged them for hard currency, 55 used them to pay their IMF dues, and 39 recorded them in the government budget, presumably to spend on healthcare and other priorities.

Moreover, SDRs have several advantages over other types of international financing. They do not add to countries' external debt burdens, and, unlike loans from the IMF and other multilateral lenders, they are non-conditional. SDRs are accessible to all countries, including middle-income economies that may face balance-of-payments constraints but are excluded from other multilateral funding. And they are virtually costless, with an interest rate currently below 0.1%. It is difficult to think of an easier way to provide external finance to countries that urgently require it.

This is why many leaders want more frequent SDR allocations. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow last November, for example, the prime minister of Barbados, Mia Amor Mottley called for the issuance of \$500 billion in

SDRs annually for 20 years to fund climate action. Since advanced economies have failed to fulfill even their relatively modest pledge at COP15 in 2009 to mobilise \$100 billion per year in climate finance for the developing world, regular SDR allocations would provide essential resources to bolster mitigation and adaptation efforts in countries where they are most needed. In addition, the SDRs would provide some of the financing required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which currently seem out of reach.

Those who worry about the monetary consequences of annual SDR allocations should note that the proposed sum is trivial compared to the \$25 trillion increase in liquidity fueled by loose monetary policies in advanced economies since the 2008 global financial crisis. At \$943 billion, SDRs currently account for only 7% of the \$12.8 trillion in global reserves. Even if the share of SDRs in global reserves were limited to, say, 30-50%, there is clearly significant scope for more issuance.

The more immediate question is how to use the \$400 billion of SDRs allocated to rich countries that are unlikely to need them. Simply holding these excess SDR balances with the IMF is a tremendous waste, given the massive opportunity costs. Some richer economies

have pledged to reallocate a total of \$100 billion in SDRs, but have yet to meet that target.

As a result, how to recycle or re-channel existing SDRs has become an urgent question. But the IMF's proposal to establish a \$50 billion 'Resilience and Sustainability Trust' would deprive developing countries of many of the advantages of SDRs. For starters, the amount is shockingly small. Worse, the resources are to be provided in the form of debt that must be repaid (albeit at low interest rates), and will be subject to IMF conditionalities that have far too often proved hugely counterproductive. And the money will be available only to low-income countries or those currently under IMF programmes, leaving out most of the developing world. In other words, the IMF's proposed scheme is business as usual, implying little meaningful positive impact. Other suggestions are more promising. Rich countries could channel their SDRs to regional development banks, which are authorised to hold them. Institutions like the African Development Bank could use the SDRs to enlarge their capital base and provide developing countries with more climate finance and budgetary support for meeting the SDGs.

Likewise, the economist Avinash Persaud has proposed creating a \$500 billion per year climate finance trust, funded by SDR issuance. The trust would auction funds to countries, with successful bids being those that promise the greatest likely reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions resulting from the proposed investment.

If rich-country governments remain sluggish in their response to proposals to use what is essentially free money, they will not only be wasting a huge opportunity. Failure to ensure a more equitable and sustainable global recovery will come back to bite them.

The writer, Executive Secretary of International Development Economics Associates, is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Jayati Ghosh

THE SYSTEM OF SDR ALLOCATION IS CLEARLY OUTDATED AND ILLOGICAL, ESPECIALLY GIVEN TODAY'S HUGE CROSS-COUNTRY INEQUALITIES

Notwithstanding all the angst about the future of democracy, Munich Security Index data, based on a 12-country opinion survey, show that people still think democracies are better able than undemocratic countries to solve the problems of the future

Tobias Bunde

Notwithstanding all the angst about the future of democracy, Munich Security Index data, based on a 12-country opinion survey, show that people still think democracies are better able than undemocratic countries to solve the problems of the future

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

RBI belt-tightening seems imminent

The definition of 'vikas' (development) apparently changes as Uttar Pradesh goes to polls. Hard-pressed voters harp on myriad problems, including junking of 10-year-old tractors, scarce jobs, high prices, low farm MSP and even interest rates. Interestingly enough as polling begins the Reserve Bank of India almost agreeing to the rising prices and other uncertainties at its monetary policy committee (MPC), lowers growth forecasts to 7.8 per cent in 2022-23, against Finance Minister's 8 to 8.5 per cent in the bi-monthly MPC meeting. A belt-tightening forecast! RBI has kept interest rates unchanged at a low of 4 per cent repo rate and 3.5 per cent reverse repo rate.



Shivaji Sarkar

THE MPC HAS CONCERN OVER STAGNANT PRIVATE CONSUMPTION, WHICH HAS YET TO TOUCH THE PRE-PANDEMIC LEVEL

Former Chief Economic Advisor Kaushik Basu notes that growth has been decelerating. It was 8.2 per cent in 2016-17; 7.2 per cent in 2017-18; 4.2 per cent in 2018-19; and minus 7.3 per cent in 2020-21, each year growing less, a first since 1947. The MPC presumes retail price inflation this year to be at 4.5 per cent but cautions about hardening of global crude prices on inflation. However, it ignores 13 plus per cent of wholesale inflation. The US agrees to one per cent rate rise. The RBI too could have incentivised deposits and ensured better banking health.

The contrary lines are reflecting in the lone MPC dissenting voice of Prof Jayanth R Varma. He had disagreed with the MPC resolution of August 20, 2021, saying, "By creating the erroneous perception that the MPC is no longer concerned about inflation and is focused exclusively on growth, the MPC may be inadvertently aggravating the risk that inflationary expectations will be dis-anchored. In that scenario, rising risk premia could cause long-term rates to rise."

Even the main MPC discourse does not belie the perception of Varma. RBI Governor Shaktikant Das says that next year's Centre's borrowings would not be as high as projected in the Budget. It means shrinkage of borrowings, deposits, uncertain expenses and growth. It is a bit eerie. Consumption is not rising. That seems to be the concern of the voters, RBI and the government alike. The voters realise that the economy would be shaky whatever the official rhetoric. The BJP had overwhelmingly benefitted in UP riding on high expectation in 2017. Its manifesto speaks of MSP but does not guarantee, and repeats payment to cane growers in 14 days as does the SP in 15 days.

One interesting aspect is that in the Budget, minorities have been given priority in allotment of PM

Awaz Yojana, free food doles and increase in minority affairs allocation to Rs 5,000 crore, Rs 674 crore more than the revised estimates of Rs 4346 crore. The minority youth get Rs 2431 crore for scholarships and skill development. And most interestingly minorities have been given Rs 10 crore for containing population decline despite many harping on its unusual increases. These issues are being propagated by the Rashtriya Muslim Morcha in close interactions with minority religious groups.

But this does not give much reprieve to the common man. Governor Das says that rising inflation would continue to peak till the second half of 2022-23 "within the tolerance band of RBI providing room for policy to remain accommodative." Overall, the MPC notes loss in momentum of near-term growth even as global factors turn adverse. It assesses that owing to Ukraine-Russia conflict, Iran-US quagmire, fluid Afghanistan and uncertain Middle East the economic situation may deteriorate. In such circumstances, expecting improvement in domestic growth drivers is a bit optimistic. These have been the concern for lowering growth to 7.8 per cent. RBI expects a very high growth in the first quarter and then gradually tapering off to 4.5 per cent in the last quarter.

ter of 2022-23, according to Das. Though the Indian voters need not understand the phenomenon emerging in the distant West, it can hit India hard. Considering it, the MPC has concern over stagnant private consumption, which has yet to touch the pre-pandemic level. The global problem may hit India harder in tune possibly with the pessimistic Indian voters. The World Bank warns of a fragile economy infested with daunting challenges. The global growth may be hit by the difficult situation in the US.

Despite tom-tomming high growth, the US suffers from the China syndrome. China has bought none of the \$200 billion it promised from the US under 'phase-I' trade deal. It can lead the US to choppy regime impacting global economy. A global inflation and unstable US economy can create turbulence. Everything is getting expensive in the US. Das says India can still recover with buoyant rabi crop, robust exports, liquidity conditions improving credit uptake and continued push on capital expenses and infrastructure. The hope is a bit too high and the MPC cautions are sharper than any voter can expect. The unsaid is grim and 2022-23 as per the MPC may not be as bright as it is trying to be projected. Belt-tightening seems imminent.

INFA

Punish perpetrators

Sir, This refers to "Look out notices against ABG Shipyard bosses," Orissa Post, Feb 16. Four years after the Rs 14,000-crore Punjab National Bank scam rocked the country's financial sector, an even bigger fraud has hit the headlines. The CBI has booked Gujarat-based ABG Shipyard Limited and its directors for allegedly cheating a banks' consortium of more than Rs 22,842 crore. The case has triggered a blame game, with the Congress accusing the BJP of delaying action against the company even though irregularities had been red-flagged by the State Bank of India and the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) over the years. The BJP has stated that it was during Congress-led UPAs rule that the firm managed to borrow thousands of crores of rupees from public sector banks. In 2014, CAG had pulled up the state-run Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) for not taking "any action to suspend the operation of ship-building facility of ABG" over its failure to pay pending lease rent to the tune of Rs 2.1 crore in spite of repeated reminders. That even this relatively small amount had not been paid should have set the alarm bells ringing. However, it's vital to establish whether major contracts were bagged through hefty kickbacks. The accountability of the then ministers and government officials who gave the go-ahead to the deals needs to be fixed. The bank staffers who facilitated the disbursement of loans despite the company's steeply rising debt burden should also be brought to book. Making India corruption-free will remain a distant dream unless exemplary action is taken to punish the perpetrators and abettors of such monstrous frauds.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Farmers need help

Sir, Indian agriculture is plagued by problems and one of the major problems is lack of good transportation and cold storage facilities. Instead of giving nickels and dimes as financial incentives to farmers, the government should focus on improving transport and cold storage facilities. The current government deserves a big applause for embarking on the rather uphill task of smoothening out each and every road in the country but there is still a lot to be done. Due to lack of proper transportation and cold storage facilities Indian farmers have to incur losses to the tune of Rs 92651 crore. It will be a big ask if we want that humongous figure to even out but the government can considerably bring that figure down and help out the poor farmers who are already reeling under extreme poverty.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR (ASSAM)

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

national

of the day quote

Punjab won't give a fractured mandate. Punjab won't go for an experiment and will give a clear-cut mandate in Congress' favour, we will win with a clear majority



HARISH RAWAT | FORMER U'KHAND CM

The farmers held a protest, but they were mowed down. The minister's son came in his jeep and mowed down six farmers in front of thousands of people. But what did the government do? The PM and the CM share stage with that minister even today and have released their son on bail



PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

The Delhi Police has worked hard during the northeast Delhi riots and the coronavirus pandemic. For the way the Delhi Police investigated the riot cases in a strict and fair manner and presented the rioters in court, I congratulate them



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Four terrorist associates held

Srinagar: Four terrorist associates of proscribed terror outfit TRF, involved in providing logistic and other support to active terrorists in Kashmir Valley, have been arrested from Srinagar, police said Wednesday. Police said on the basis of reliable intelligence input, it was found that terrorist organisation, The Resistance Front (TRF) is active in J&K and is being orchestrated by handlers based in Pakistan.

Haryana lifts all Covid curbs

Chandigarh: The Haryana government Wednesday lifted all Covid-related restrictions in the state, officials said. However, the residents of the state are advised to strictly follow Covid-appropriate behavioural norms, including social distancing, an order issued by Sanjeev Kaushal, Chief Secretary-cum-Chairperson of the State Executive Committee of Haryana State Disaster Management Authority (HSDMA) said.

Complaint filed against Kejriwal

New Delhi: A complaint has been filed against Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal at a police station in Mohali in Punjab for his alleged collaboration with Khalistani separatists. The complainant, Congress leader Sandeep Dixit, in his complaint quoted an interview former Aam Aadmi Party leader, Kumar Vishwas. As put forth by Dikshit, Vishwas in the interview had spoken about his and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's conversations during the 2017 Assembly elections in Punjab.

88 Bangladeshi fishermen held

Kolkata: The Indian Coast Guard apprehended 88 Bangladeshi fishermen who were fishing illegally in Indian waters and seized three boats from them, an official said Wednesday. All the apprehended poachers and the fishing boats were handed over to the marine police at Fraserganj in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal Wednesday afternoon, he said. "Indian Coast Guard apprehended 88 Bangladeshi poachers illegally fishing in Indian waters off Bangadhuni Island approximately 10 to 15 nautical miles inside International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL)," the official said.



National Conference is committed to assuage the urges and aspirations of every segment of the society in all the regions and sub-regions

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

Centre asks states to review, amend additional Cov curbs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Centre has asked states and union territories to review, amend or do away with additional Covid-19 restrictions after considering the trend of new cases and positivity rate in their regions, stating sustained downward trend in the nationwide case trajectory.

In a letter to sent to chief secretaries and chief administrators of all states and UTs Tuesday, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said the coronavirus pandemic in India is showing a sustained declining trend since January 21.

The average daily cases during last week were 50,476, and 27,409 new cases were reported in the last 24 hours. The daily case positivity rate declined to 3.63 per cent Tuesday. In earlier months, in view of the high case trajectory, certain states had imposed additional restrictions at their borders and at airports, he said.

While effectively managing the public health challenge of Covid-19, it is equally important that movement of people and economic activities should not be hampered by additional restrictions imposed at state-level points of entries, Bhushan said in the letter.

With the changing epidemiology of the pandemic globally and in India, existing guidelines aimed at minimising the transmission

Presently, as the case trajectory across the nation is showing a sustained downward trend, it will be useful if states/UTs review and amend/do away with the additional restrictions so imposed after considering the trend of new cases, active cases and positivity within the state and UT

RAJESH BHUSHAN | UNION HEALTH SECRETARY

and circulation of the virus have been reviewed and updated. The Union Ministry of Health accordingly revised its guidelines for international arrivals February 10, he stated. Bhushan underlined that states and UTs must also continue monitoring the trajectory of cases and spread of infection on a daily basis. They may also follow the broad five-fold strategy of Test Track-Treat-Vaccination and adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour.

"I'm sure that under your continued leadership the state and UT will continue to address the challenge of Covid-19 while minimizing its impact on lives and livelihood of the people," Bhushan said in the letter. The cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 174 crore Wednesday.



Now crash helmet, safety harness must for children

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: The road transport ministry Wednesday notified new rules to make the use of safety harness and crash helmet mandatory for children below the age of four years on motorcycles.

The new rules state that the speed of a motorcycle with a child up to the age of four years being carried on the pillion will not be more than 40 kmph.

These rules will come into force after one year from the date of publication of the Central Motor Vehicles (Second Amendment) Rules, 2022. "The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, vide notification dated February 15, 2022 has amended Rule 138 of CMVR, 1989 and has prescribed norms related to safety measures for children below four years of age, riding or being carried on a motor cycle," the



Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said in a statement.

"This has been notified under Section 129 of the Motor Vehicles Act, which mandates that the central government may, by rules, provide for measures for the safety of children below four years of age, riding or being carried on a motor

cycle. Further, it specifies use of a safety harness and crash helmet. It also restricts speed of such motor cycles to 40 kmph," the ministry said. For children below four years, safety harness shall be used for attaching the child to the driver of the motorcycle, the ministry said.

Safety harness is a vest to be worn by the child, which shall be adjustable, with a pair of straps attached to the vest and forming shoulder loops to be worn by the driver. This way, the upper torso of the child is securely attached to the driver.

"A feature by which this is achieved is by attaching the straps to the back of the vest and crossing the straps over the vest so that two large crossing-over loops are formed that pass between the legs of the passenger and child sits on the seat of the two-wheeler," the ministry said.

'Salary increments to touch 5-yr high of 9.9pc in '22'

AROUND 88% ORGANISATIONS FORESEE AN IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS OUTLOOK IN 2022, 11 PER CENT HIGHER FROM 2021, THE SURVEY SAID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: Salary increments in India will touch a five-year high of 9.9 per cent in 2022 as organisations are planning to invest in new-age capabilities to build a resilient workforce amid strong economic recovery and positive business sentiment, a survey said on Wednesday.

According to leading global professional services firm Aon's 26th Salary Increase Survey in India, organisations across industries project a 9.9 per cent salary increase in 2022, compared to 9.3 per cent in 2021.

The study that analysed data across 1,500 companies from more than 40 industries, noted that the



industries with the highest projected salary increases are e-commerce and venture capital, hitech/IT and IT enabled services (ITeS) and life sciences.

Survey participants reported the highest attrition figure - 21 per cent - in over a decade in 2021, the

report said, adding that highest attrition in over two decades signifies the impact of 'Great Resignation' on India.

"Salary increases should come as a welcome break for employees amidst a volatile period. For employers, it could emerge as a double-

DU TO REOPEN FROM TODAY

Delhi University (DU) colleges are gearing up to welcome the students Thursday as many of them will be visiting the campus for the first time since they took admission. The university has been closed for nearly two years owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is set to resume offline academic activities from Thursday



MOCKERY OF COVID NORMS



Devotees take holy dip in the Ganga on the occasion of Maghi Purnima during the ongoing Magh Mela at Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

HUAWEI RAIDED OVER TAX EVASION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Income Tax department Wednesday carried out raids at multiple premises linked to Chinese tech conglomerate Huawei across the country in connection with alleged tax evasion.

A source told IANS that the raids were being conducted in the National Capital Region (NCR), Bengaluru and some other parts of the country.

The officials of the IT team scammed a number of account books belonging to the company according to the source, adding that the financial records of the last three years and company records were also checked.

The tax department officials prepared a list of associates, clients and partners of the company which includes its foreign and country based partners. The source said



that during the raid, they have recovered a few incriminating documents. The company told IANS in a statement that it is confident that its operations in India are firmly compliant to all laws and regulations. "We will approach related government departments for more information and fully cooperate as per the rules and regulations and follow the right procedure," the company spokesperson said. Last month, multiple tax raids

were carried out at the premises of Chinese smartphone makers in the country. The Finance Ministry issued a statement, saying that Chinese smartphone manufacturer Xiaomi's local company in India had engaged in "tax evasion" and demanded that it pay a total of Rs 6.53 billion (\$88 million) in taxes owed between April 2017 and June 2020.

Xiaomi denied the claim, saying that the company adheres to legal and compliant operations

around the world and abides with the relevant laws and regulations of each jurisdiction in which it operates. Chinese mobile phone brands are highly popular in the Indian market, and their market share far exceeds that of local Indian brands.

China also expressed concern over the business environment in India as Indian authorities conducted 'irregular' tax audits of smartphone firms, Global Times reported. It urged India to provide a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory environment for Chinese enterprises.

"China has contributed to Indian economic development, and created a large number of local jobs, and we hope India can provide a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory environment for Chinese businesses," said Gao Feng, spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce in China.

HC refuses to suspend 7-yr jail term of Ansal brothers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Delhi High Court Wednesday refused to suspend the seven-year jail term awarded to real estate barons Sushil and Gopal Ansal in the Uphaar fire tragedy evidence tampering case, saying that allowing their plea would "amount to eroding the faith of the public in the judicial system".

Justice Subramonium Prasad stated that the Ansans have been convicted for the offence of tampering with the court records which is extremely serious and post-conviction there is no presumption of innocence in their favour and their medical condition "is not that serious that it should justify" the suspension of sentence.

"In any event, there are jail hospitals and, in case of any emergency, there are referral hospitals as well. This court does not deem it appropriate to allow the petitioners herein to take advantage of their own wrongs," the court said in its 53-page order.

Uphaar fire tragedy

"This court is of the opinion that suspending the sentence of the petitioners would, therefore, amount to eroding the faith of the public in the judicial system as it would entail allowing convicts, whose finding of guilt has already been established, to take advantage of the passage of time as well as the judiciary as an institution," the judge said.

The court added that cases, such as the present one, have to be heard at the earliest and thus requested the concerned appellate court to expeditiously decide the appeals filed by the petitioners within one month by conducting day-to-day hearings if necessary. Last year, Ansans and former court staff Dinesh Chand Sharma and two others - PP Batra and Anoop Singh Karayat - were awarded a seven-year jail term by the trial court and the sessions court had subsequently refused to suspend the sentence and release them on bail.

52 DNLA ultras lay down arms in Assam



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Feb 16: Altogether 52 cadres, including four women, of Dimasa National Liberation Army (DNLA) deposited their arms in Assam's Karbi Anglong district and came overground Wednesday, a police official said.

Additional Director General of Police (Special Branch) Hiren Chandra Nath said the programme took place at the existing DNLA designated camp at Dhanisiri in the district.

"In total, 52 cadres came overground and they include four women. This culminates in the mainstreaming of the DNLA. These cadres could not come earlier as they were holed up in very interior locations of Nagaland," Nath told PTI.

In the presence of the Karbi Anglong superintendent of police, the cadres deposited one carbine, one pump action gun, two .22 rifles, one .303 rifle, a hand grenade, two .32 pistols, he said.

The DNLA was formed in early 2019 with an aim to establish a sovereign nation for the people belonging to the Dimasa tribe. It declared a unilateral ceasefire for three months on September 7 as a 'goodwill gesture and as a positive response to the call of peace' by the Chief Minister.

Dimasa people live mainly in Assam and Nagaland. In the last year, 113 DNLA cadres had laid down their arms. Altogether 165 militants belonging to the organisation have come overground so far.

Its members were suspected to have been involved in killing five drivers of coal-carrying trucks in Dima Hasao district on August 27 last year after they purportedly failed to pay money demanded by the outfit.

Surge seen in days of heavy to extremely heavy rain in Kerala

The information was provided by IMD in a written reply to Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor, who asked if the Ministry of Earth Sciences had conducted any study on the water holding capacity of soil in different regions of Kerala

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 16: There has been an increase in heavy rainfall events in recent decades over Kerala and the worrisome part is that these incidences are occurring not just during the southwest monsoon but also the northwest monsoon months, making it nearly 10 months in a year, India Meteorological Department (IMD) data said.

The IMD has said 2018 recorded the highest number of heavy rainfall incidences during the last five years. The devastating 2018 floods had put Kerala on the edge with similar extremely heavy rainfall incidences in 2019 and later, too, making the citizens jittery.

The total incidences of heavy rain (64.5-115.5 mm per day) in 2015 were 360 across 10 months with a maximum in June (116) followed by July (61). In 2016, the total incidences were 225 with a maximum

108 in June followed by 44 in July. The year 2017 again saw heavy rain incidences climbing to 360 with maximum 114 in June followed by 98 in September and August, too, witnessing 48 instances.

In 2018, the number of heavy rainfall events increased to 607 with July recording the maximum (198), followed by June (147) and August (144). In 2019, the total number of heavy rainfall events was 528 with 184 of them recorded in August alone, followed by 123 in July and 101 in October.

Year 2020 saw 484 incidences of heavy rainfall, in which August recorded the maximum (132), followed by September (124) while in 2021, there were a total 574 such events with maximum recorded in May (130) followed by October (112 days) and July 107 days.

In case of very heavy rainfall (115.6 to 204.4 mm per day), not just the total number of days per year has been increasing but the incidences are spread over all monsoon months too. The year 2015 registered a total 43 days, of which 19 were in June; year 2016 registered 23, of which 16 alone were in June again; year 2017 registered 38 such days with September witnessing 14 days of very heavy rainfall.

The Minister of State for Earth Sciences, Jitendra Singh said his Ministry has not conducted any study on the water holding capacity of soils of Kerala.

"However, the Kerala government had published various information on Kerala soils," he said and provided the link to that online portal.



10 overground workers of JeM held in Kashmir

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Feb 16: Jammu and Kashmir's state investigation agency (SIA) Wednesday arrested 10 overground workers (OGWs) of Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) terror outfit during raids in south and central Kashmir areas.

SIA sources said these raids were carried out during the night at different locations.

These raids were focused on the network of JeM. Ten persons, who were part of the OGW modules and taking instructions from JeM commanders, have been arrested.

The module whose members were organised into sub-modules, in the form of verticals, so that in the event of detection of one member the bigger network does not get compromised, have been painstakingly discovered through discreet surveillance in which corroborative intelligence capable of being converted into admissible evidence in court was used to ascertain and confirm the OGW membership of these individuals, sources said.

NIA'S SEARCH OPS IN VALLEY

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) with the help of the Central Reserve Police Force and the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Police Wednesday conducted search operations at three locations across Kashmir valley in connection with a case related to radicalising, motivating and recruiting youths by terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). A senior NIA official said the case pertains to radicalising, motivating and recruiting the youth of J&K to carry out terror activities in the Union Territory and the rest of the country by the LeT or The Resistance Front (TRF) commanders - Sajjad Gul, Salim Rehmani alias Abu Saad and Saifulah Sajid Jutt. The NIA has arrested four persons in the case so far. The NIA official said during the searches, incriminating material and digital devices were seized.

The SIA was constituted recently to investigate cases connected with militancy and secession.

'The God of Small Things' village in Conde Nast's list

The village Aymanam, bordered by Lake Vembanad and River Meenachil, is the stuff that makes people dream of taking a writing retreat to become a published author, says Conde Nast

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 16: The pastoral charm of Aymanam village in Kerala, which was the setting of Arundhati Roy's 1997 Booker Prize-winning 'The God of Small Things', has been featured in Conde Nast's 30 best places in the world to visit in 2022.

Aymanam, located on the state's picturesque backwaters near Kottayam, shot into prominence in November last year, when its Responsible Tourism (RT) Village

project was awarded 'Indian Responsible Tourism One to Watch' at the World Travel Market (WTM) for its travel initiatives showcasing heritage and culture while keeping things clean and plastic-free besides creating more community jobs.

The village, bordered by Lake Vembanad and River Meenachil, is the stuff that makes people dream of taking a writing retreat to become a published author, or plugging out in a digital detox, or living a simple life close to nature, points out Conde Nast in its commendation

Army adopts 'deaf and mute' village in J&K

Dadhaki, a hilltop tribal village, is home to 105 families. Of these, 55 families mysteriously have at least one person who can neither speak nor listen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhaderwah, Feb 16: A month after distributing hi-tech specialised hearing aids among the deaf and mute villagers of Dadhaki in Doda district, the Army has gone a step ahead and adopted the village to address the concerns of its people.

The hilltop tribal village, 105 km from Bhaderwah town, is home to 105 families. Of these, 55 families mysteriously have at least one person who can neither speak nor listen. There are 78 such people in the village, of which 41 are women and 30 children aged three to 15 years. An Army spokesman said its

Rashtriya Rifles has adopted the village in order to ensure the overall welfare of the population, with multiple social security programmes aimed at giving them the confidence to survive and make a living on their own.

In the first step, besides looking after their basic needs such as clothing, food and healthcare, the Army has begun door-to-door personalized teaching classes for the mute children by deploying sign language experts who have been specially trained in Telangana, the spokesman said.

In the next step of the ongoing scheme, a school with a hostel facility will be provided in Dadhaki panchayat, he said.

"We want to help them in a comprehensive and long-lasting manner. To teach them the best possible sign language, two teachers were sponsored by the Army to get specialised training at Hyderabad and Secunderabad (Telangana) and now, the deaf and mute population is being taught by them at their homes," the



spokesman said.

Bhalessa Block Development Council chairman Mohammed Hanief, a resident of Dadhaki, expressed gratitude to the Army for its continuous welfare efforts.

"Whenever a woman conceives, not only the family but the entire village lives in constant fear of the

offspring being deaf and mute. If it happens, it only increases miseries," he told PTT.

He said a number of government officials and NGOs visited the village in the last couple of decades, but "nothing concrete was done".

"The Army has initiated practical

steps which will surely go a long way to minimise the miseries due to the disability, the root cause of which has not been identified yet," Hanief said.

Some of the girls, who have learned the sign language, expressed their desire to start sewing centres. They sought sewing machines and a residential school.

"We have pinned our hopes on the Army as it is the only one looking after us for the last 10 years. My three daughters - Asran Bano (8), Reshma (12) and Asha Bano (23) are born with the disability and the Army has recently provided them with hearing aids," Hussan Bibi, a local woman, said.

She said her daughters are showing a keen interest in stitching and said she is hopeful that the Army will help them achieve their dream by providing sewing machines and setting up a tailoring centre.

In January, the Army gave hearing aids, costing ₹17,000 each, to 10 children in the first phase, besides starting tutorials to teach them sign language.

NC TO DELIMITATION COMMISSION

'Withdraw draft proposals for demarcation of constituencies'

SSSPRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Feb 16: The National Conference has asked the Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Commission to withdraw the draft proposal for demarcation of assembly constituencies and also stop further proceedings of the Commission till the final adjudication of pleas challenging validity of revocation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the erstwhile state into two union territories.

The three Lok Sabha members, who are associate members of the Commission, in their written objections filed Monday said, the draft proposal made in working paper 2-6 proposing demarcation of the assembly and parliamentary constituencies be withdrawn without acting upon the proposals in any manner or proceeding ahead in the matter.

The Commission must stop the exercise forthwith pending final adjudication and disposal of the batch of writ petition questioning Vires and constitutional validity of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, NC leaders Farooq Abdullah, Hasnain Masoodi and Mohammad Akbar Lone said.

Making public their response to the proposals, they said a bare look at the working papers would reveal that the population as the first and foremost criteria of delimiting the constituencies has not been given the prominence it deserves.

The deviation in population ranges from 56,077 more than average of 1,36,304 in case of 41-Dooru to 85,025 less than average in case of 50-Paddar. There are seven Assembly segments with less than 100,000 population (Paddar, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, Bani Mughal Madaan, Basohli, Ramgarh and Kishwar) in Jammu Province while number of such constituencies is only three (Gurez, Karnah and Kunzer), they said.

The NC leaders pointed out that there were 18 Assembly segments with population of more 1,50,000 in Kashmir province while number of such Assembly segments was seven in case of Jammu province.

Twenty-four constituencies in Kashmir province have more than an average population of 1,36,304



WHAT THE NC SAYS

A bare look at the working papers would reveal that the population as the first and foremost criteria of delimiting the constituencies has not been given the prominence it deserves

The Working Papers 2-6 script a story of disenfranchisement and disenfranchisement of Kashmir and far flung unattended areas of Jammu

In most of cases geographical compactness, facilities of communication and convenience to the public spelt out in Section 60 have not attracted any consideration

It appears that the Working Paper 2-6 is being used as a device to deface and obliterate history and make an assault on culture

The proposal has shockingly obliterated a number of constituencies of historical importance

while population of only eight constituencies in Jammu province exceeds the average population of a constituency worked out by the Commission. The population of Dooru almost equals population of three constituencies - Paddar, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (SMVD) and Bani constituencies of Jammu, they added.

The leaders said as per the draft proposal, people of Dooru will have one member in Assembly while an almost equal population from Paddar, Bani and SMVD constituencies shall have three members in the Assembly.

The Working Papers 2-6 script a story of disenfranchisement and disenfranchisement of Kashmir and far flung unattended areas of Jammu, they said.

The NC leaders said even when a district is taken as a unit for delimitation, Anantnag, Budgam, Kupwara and Srinagar districts - having regard to the population,

and criteria of 10 percent deviation from average, fixed by the Commission in Paper -1 - deserve to be allotted an extra Assembly segment each out of the seven increased seat while Rajouri, Poonch and Doda in Jammu province are to get one each.

In most of cases geographical compactness, facilities of communication and convenience to the public spelt out in Section 60 have not attracted any consideration. The constituencies have been demarcated, areas joined and areas annexed without least regard for these factors and for reasons other than permissible under settled norms, they said.

The leaders said the proposal has shockingly obliterated a number of constituencies of historical importance. The leaders said it appears that the Working Paper 2-6 is being used as a device to deface and obliterate history and make an assault on culture.

Aharbal hosts the 1st Winter Carnival in Kashmir Valley

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Srinagar, Feb 16: Who would have known 'The Niagara of Kashmir' would one day host the Winter Carnival in the Kulgam district of J&K? The small hill station of Aharbal, 70 km from Srinagar, has recently gained popularity amongst the tourists who are swarming to this lesser known treasure of Kashmir.

Aharbal's attraction is its waterfall, which is formed when the Vishav River (tributary of River Jhelum) falls 25 meters on a rocky gorge of granite boulders. It is populated with pine and fir trees that accentuate the sound of waterfall making it seem right out of a fairytale. Under the Lt Governor Manoj Sinha 75 offbeat tourist destinations are being promoted under the banner of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahostav.

The Carnival began February 14 on the snow-covered dreamy grounds of Aharbal. It is organised by the District Administration in collaboration with Aharbal Development Authority, Tourism Department, and Forest Division Kulgam.

The main attractions of the Winter Carnival are the trekking expeditions, snow sports activities, and adventure camps. The trekking routes have been finalised by the Department and suitable arrangements have been made to make the journey smoother and safer. The UT's best trekkers are present to lead the way on this

75 offbeat tourist destinations of J&K are being promoted under the banner of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahostav

rugged terrain that leads to spectacular lands of Chiranbal, Yadipathri, Panchanpathri, Nuspathri, and Kongwatan.

The expert trekkers claim Aharbal has far more daring slopes in comparison with Gulmarg, perhaps the best in the Valley. It has the potential to come up as an extreme sports destination. Aharbal-Kounsarnag Trek expedition is the sole major trek in the Pir-Panjal Mountain range, a sub-mountain range of the Himalayas. The trek begins at Aharbal Falls and ends at the breathtaking Kounsarnag Lake.

The games at the carnival include Snow Rugby, Snow Volleyball, Snow Runs for Peace, Snow Skiing, Tug of War, etc. The congregation overwhelmed the authorities and they had to expand their systems to incorporate the youngsters who witnessed such a Carnival for the first time in a hamlet like Aharbal. Today's tourist is an explorer and a back-packer; they seek adventure, scenic beauty, less settlement and more authentic vibe in a destination. And that's why Aharbal tops the charts in Kashmir because it offers that enthralling experience preserved in the originality of nature.



KERALA CONG ALLEGES MASSIVE CORRUPTION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 16: Leader of Opposition in the Kerala Assembly VD Satheesan Wednesday alleged that the State Electricity Board (KSEB) is being run as a CPI-M party unit and has been indulging in massive corrupt deals.

"This is what we the opposition has been saying that KSEB is a storehouse of corrupt deals and now the KSEB chairman, a senior IAS official in the state, has said the same in his Facebook post. It has now come to light that hundreds of acres of land belonging to the KSEB has been given on lease to pro CPI-M outfits for a song in the name of hydel tourism. These are blatant corrupt deals," said Satheesan.

He also pointed out that all this has been happening since 2016 and the then Minister MM Mani a top CPI-M leader, is now threatening the present State Minister for Power K Krishnakutty, who belongs to an ally of the CPI-M led Left.

Power purchase agreements have been done without knowledge of the Kerala State Electricity Regulatory Commission. This has caused huge losses to the KSEB and it is around ₹600 crore annually, added Satheesan.

Satheesan demanded a complete probe into the activities of KSEB and wanted Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to break his silence.

With the budget session of the Kerala Assembly beginning from Friday, this is one issue which the opposition will be using to take on the Vijayan government.



of the place.

It also beckons tourists to visit Aymanam for undertaking bird watching tours, walking in paddy fields, visiting temples and churches, watching the martial art Kalaripayattu and the classical dance Kathakali, enjoying boat rides, and savouring delicious co-

conut-rich preparations.

Aymanam may be a tiny village, but its pristine charm is spellbinding and its cultural diversity spectacular. Till recently, it was largely an unexplored area for tourists, but its recognition as a model RT Village has changed its profile on the global tourism

national

of the day quote

In order to realise the dreams of Sant Ravidas, it is very important to form the government of the BSP again. This will be your true tribute to him

MAYAWATI | BSP SUPREMO

We will create job opportunities for youth in all districts of North Bengal. Believe in us, trust us. Don't misunderstand. And see what spurt in development takes place in north Bengal. The place will witness development like never before

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

BJP has done what it said. Whatever has been put in the party's election manifesto, we have done it. We will not break your trust at any cost

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Car rams into truck, 6 killed

Barabanki (UP): Five members of a family were among six people killed when a car rams into a stationary truck on the Ayodhya-Lucknow highway early Wednesday, police said. The family was returning after attending a wedding in Surat when the accident took place near village Narayanpur. Additional Superintendent of Police, Purnendu Singh, said the driver of the car was among those killed. It is suspected that the driver, who was driving at a very high speed, dozed off at the wheel and missed the truck parked on the roadside.

4 students killed in road accident

Bangalore: Four college students, including a girl, were killed and two others critically injured in a road accident on National Highway 75 in Bangalore Rural district of Karnataka Wednesday. The deceased have been identified as Vaishnavi, Bharath, Siril and Venkat. The injured have been identified as Siri Krishna and Anika Reddy. According to police, the incident took place when the students of Garden City College in Bangalore were returning from a cafe centre in Kolar.

Quake jolts Kashmir

Srinagar: A light intensity earthquake occurred in Kashmir Wednesday as the authorities said no casualty or damage to property has been reported from anywhere. Officials said, "A light intensity earthquake measuring 3.2 on the Richter scale occurred at 5.43 a.m. today."

Two set on fire

Amethi (Uttar Pradesh): In a shocking incident, two young boys were set on fire in the Harkhau village under Bazar Shukul police circle. Police sources said that Ram Awadh and Ram Adhaar, both natives of Harkhau village were trying to settle a dispute with their neighbour when Jeet Bahadur poured petrol on them and set them ablaze Tuesday evening. Both victims were severely burnt and rushed to the Community Health Centre from where Ram Awadh was referred to another medical facility for advanced treatment.

Zoo safari in Rajgir

Patna: In a bid to promote tourism in Bihar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Wednesday inaugurated zoo safari in Bihar's Rajgir. Zoo Safari is a much awaited pet project of CM Kumar which spreads over 472 acres of land situated in lush green Swarnagiri and Vaibhav Giri mountain ranges.



The minister's son who trampled farmers has got bail from court. The government did not pursue the case as it should have been

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

UP TO EMERGE AS HUB FOR EV, DRONE UNITS

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh plans to make the state a hub of electric vehicles and drone units. The Technical Education Department in Uttar Pradesh has decided to encourage technical and vocational institutes to introduce courses tailored to suit the requirements of these industries



UKRAINE CRISIS

MEA sets up control room to help Indians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Wednesday set up a control room to provide information and assistance to Indian nationals in Ukraine in view of the prevailing situation in that country over its tensions with Russia.

Separately, the Indian embassy in Kyiv said it has been receiving calls about the non-availability of flights from Ukraine to India and advised Indians not to panic, but book the earliest available and convenient flights to travel home. "The embassy of India has been receiving several appeals about non-availability of flights from Ukraine to India. In this regard, students are advised not to resort to panic, but book the earliest available and convenient flights to travel to India," it said in a statement.

It said the Ukrainian International Airlines, Air Arabia, Fly Dubai and Qatar Airways are operating flights at present from Ukraine.

"To meet the additional demand, more flights are being planned in the near future, including from Ukrainian International Airlines, Air India, etc. Details on the same would be shared by Embassy as

The Indian embassy in Ukraine has also set up a 24-hour helpline for the Indians in the eastern European nation

and when confirmed," the embassy said. The embassy Tuesday advised Indian citizens, especially the students, to temporarily leave that country in view of the uncertainties of the current situation. It also asked Indian nationals to avoid all non-essential travel to and within Ukraine. The MEA said a control room has been set up in the ministry to provide information and assistance.

The contact details of the control room in Delhi are: Phone +91 11 23012113, +91 11 23014104, +91 11 23017905 and 1800118797 (toll free). Email: situationroom@mea.gov.in. The contact details of the helpline in the Indian embassy in Ukraine are: Phone, +380 997300428 +380 997300483, Email: consl.kyiv@mea.gov.in.

Official sources said the government is exploring the possibility of increasing the number of flights between India and Ukraine to facilitate the return of Indians from that country.

'Oppn unity' on menu at Maha-T'gana CMs' meet



Uddhav Thackeray



K Chandrashekar Rao

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

According to a note from the Telangana Chief Minister's office, Thackeray extended his support to KCR's fight against "federal justice, denouncing the anti-people policies pursued by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Union government"

Mumbai, Feb 16: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray invited his Telangana counterpart K Chandrashekar Rao for lunch Sunday with a power menu comprising national affairs and opposition unity, officials said.

Earlier Wednesday, Thackeray called up KCR, as Rao is popularly known, and lauded his efforts to rally the country's regional and Opposition parties and forge a united challenge to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party at the Centre.

Thackeray is understood to have conveyed to KCR the need to "save the country" from BJP's divisive political agenda for which the Shiv Sena would extend full support.

KCR is expected to fly down from Hyderabad Sunday morning and drop in at the CM's official residence 'Varsha' at Malabar Hill for the 'lunch pe charcha', an official indicated.

However, ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) other constituents - the Nationalist Congress Party and Congress - told IANS that "as of now, no meetings are scheduled between their leaders and KCR".

Key states like Maharashtra, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu or even Delhi - where the BJP has lost elections since the 2019 Lok Sabha polls - are considered critical in

its ambitions to ensure maximum leverage for the 2024 Lok Sabha or even the future Rajya Sabha polls.

Since the past few weeks, the Telangana CM has been zipping around the country, meeting top leaders of various national and regional Opposition parties to rally them for a united front against the BJP before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Among the leaders he has already met are Tejaswi Yadav, his Tamil Nadu counterpart M.K. Stalin, and is likely to meet Thackeray and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee - who incidentally had come to meet Thackeray and Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar in

December.

Former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda has also expressed support to KCR on his anti-communal agenda and the duo are slated to have a meeting shortly.

Most states ruled by Opposition or regional parties have been strongly protesting at the BJP's continuing "destabilizing" efforts or "toppling attempts".

They have also been accusing the BJP of misusing power and government machinery by letting loose various Central investigating agencies against their top leaders and even family members to make them "bend" or "break".

Among the parties that are considered the prime targets include Shiv Sena, the NCP, the Trinamool Congress, and certain other parties, too.

A MVA leader said that similar issues had come up during Banerjee's confabulations with Thackeray and Sharad Pawar last December, and the upcoming discussions with KCR are likely to move these even further. On Tuesday, Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut launched a scathing attack on the state BJP functionaries, Enforcement Directorate and other central agencies, on how they have been harassing people on flimsy reasons to target the top leaders.

He also charged the Central agencies of going all out against the Opposition leaders, but not displaying the same vigour when BJP leaders are accused of graft charges despite providing evidence repeatedly.

A senior state Congress leader said while the Opposition unity plans are necessary to dare the BJP's communal and disruptive politics, "no such exercise can be complete or practical without Congress" - a sentiment voiced even by Pawar several times in the past.

Mukhtar Ansari gets bail in Gangster Act case



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mau (UP), Feb 16: An MP-MLA Court here Wednesday granted bail to mafia turned politician Mukhtar Ansari in a murder case but he is unlikely to be released as other cases are pending against him.

Special Judge Dinesh Kumar Chaurasia allowed the bail to Ansari, who is lodged in Banda jail, on a surety of ₹1 lakh. The case in which he got the relief was lodged at Dakshin Tola police station in Mau in 2011 for the murder of a witness and a police gunner.

Ansari was named as accused in the case and was slapped with the stringent Gangster Act.

According to his lawyer Daroga Singh, the court while granting bail observed that Gangster Act carries a maximum sentence of 10 years and Ansari has been in jail for more than this period.

After the court's decision, there was speculation about Ansari's release, but the Mau police said he had other cases pending against him, so his release is unlikely.

The police, in a press statement, said, "Mukhtar Ansari is currently in jail. He has in all 12 cases including five in Mau, four cases in Ghazipur district, one each in Varanasi, Barabanki and Azamgarh districts."

As the majority of the cases against Ansari are still under trial, it will be difficult for him to come out of jail anytime soon, a senior police official said.

Bureaucracy taking tribunal vacancies lightly: Apex court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Supreme Court Wednesday ruled the "knee jerk" actions in filling up vacant posts in tribunals, saying the bureaucracy has been taking up the issue "lightly".

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana, which has been proactively dealing with the issue of huge vacancies in various tribunals across the country, said that after a few appointments made initially, nothing substantial happened.

"We are getting (pleas for) extension of time for the members of the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) ... Some knee-jerk appointments took place and nothing happened after that. We do not know the fate of members and many are retiring. Bureaucracy is taking it (the issue) lightly," observed the bench which also comprised justices A S Bopanna and Hima Kohli.

Attorney General KK Venugopal, who has been assisting the bench in dealing with the vacancies-related matters, attempted to show the list of vacancies and the steps taken to fill them up.



Around 250 posts are lying vacant in various key tribunals and appellate tribunals across the country

The bench said that it would hear the issue after two weeks. The top court has been asking the Centre to make appointments in tribunals that are facing a severe crunch of presiding officers as well as judicial and technical members.

The Centre, in its affidavit filed in September 2021, had submitted that it has made 84 appointments in six tribunals including ITAT and NCLT and no recommendations of the Search cum Selection Committees (SCSC) is pending with it then.

The Centre had also given the chart containing details of appointments made in Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Telecom Disputes and Settlement Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT), National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL) and Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT).

"In all, a total of 84 appointments were made to various tribunals during the years 2020 and 2021," the affidavit had said.



TOILING HARD: labourers work on an under-construction building in udupi, karnataka

ABG SHIPYARD LOAN FRAUD

ED files money laundering case for defrauding banks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The ED has registered a criminal case of money laundering against ABG Shipyards Ltd, its former promoters along with others for allegedly cheating a consortium of 28 banks of over Rs 22,842 crore, official sources said Wednesday.

The action comes days after the CBI registered an FIR in the country's biggest alleged bank loan fraud case till date.

The ED case has been filed under sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after the investigators studied the CBI complaint and the forensic audit report, the sources said.

They added that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) will specifically look into the charges of alleged "diversion" of bank loan funds.

Instances of "huge investments" being made in the overseas subsidiary of the company by "diverting" the loans will also form an essential part of the ED probe.

Over 9cr rural households receiving tap water: Govt

Every rural household in Goa, Haryana, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Pondicherry, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu has tap water supply while many more states such as Punjab (99 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (92.4 per cent), Gujarat (92 per cent) and Bihar (90 per cent) are on the verge of becoming 'Har Ghar Jal' in 2022

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 16: Under the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission of the Jal Shakti Ministry, the government on Wednesday claimed to have provided tap water supply to more than 5.77 crore rural households, taking the total number to 9 crore since the programme was launched in August 2019.

"In order to translate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of providing clean tap water to every home in the country by 2024, in a short span of two-and-a-half-years and despite Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown disruptions, Jal Jeevan Mission has provided tap water supply to more than 5.77 crore rural households," a release from the Ministry of Jal Shakti said.



At the time off the announcement of the Mission August 15, 2019, of the 19.27 crore households, only 3.23 crore (17 per cent) house-

holds in India had tap water connections. "Following the principle of Prime Minister's vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas', in this short period, 98 districts, 1,129 blocks, 66,067 Gram Panchayats and 1,36,135 villages have become 'Har Ghar Jal', the Ministry claimed.

Every rural household in Goa, Haryana, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Pondicherry, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu has tap water supply while many more states such as Punjab (99 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (92.4 per cent), Gujarat (92 per cent) and Bihar (90 per cent) are on the verge of becoming 'Har Ghar Jal' in 2022. 'Har Ghar Jal' is a term used for saturation coverage of tap water in a given rural habitation.

The government said that to achieve this mammoth task, ₹3.60 lakh crore has been allocated for five years. ₹60,000 crore has been allocated to 'Har Ghar Jal' in Union Budget 2022-23 to provide tap water to 3.8 crore households.

In addition to above, in 2021-22, ₹26,940 crore has been allocated to states as 15th Finance Commission tied grant for water & sanitation to Rural Local Bodies/Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). There is an assured funding of ₹1.42,084 crore for the next five years i.e. up to 2025-26. "This huge investment in rural areas across the country, is accelerating economic activities and boosting the rural economy, as well as creating employment opportunities in villages," the release said.

international



The United States and Europe failed to meet their obligations under the JCPOA. The deal has now become an empty shell for Iran in the economic sphere and the lifting of sanctions

ALI SHAMKHANI | SECRETARY OF SUPREME NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, IRAN

MOST POLLUTED RIVER

A study by the University of York on pharmaceutical pollution of the world's rivers found Lahore's River Ravi the most polluted in the world posing a 'threat to environment and human health'. It placed waterways in Lahore, Bolivia and Ethiopia among the most polluted while rivers in Iceland, Norway and the Amazon rainforest fared the best



of the day quote

In the next few days I will be convening a team... which will deal with issues of logistics, facilities, transport, infrastructure. We must be prepared for the worst. We are helping the Ukrainians to mitigate the consequences of a Russian attack

MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI | PM, POLAND

China has instead retained and expanded its state-led, non-market approach to the economy and trade. China's policies and practices challenge the premise of the WTO's rules and cause serious harm to workers and businesses around the world

KATHERINE TAI | TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, US

The program addresses the needs of the armed forces, it helps maintain our strong alliances, it's being implemented at a fast pace and it mobilizes forces in our national economy, but it will not upset the necessary fiscal balance

KYRIAKOS MITSOAKIS | PM, GREECE

SHORT TAKES

S'pore opens border

Singapore: Singapore will expand quarantine-free travel to Hong Kong, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates this month, its health ministry said Wednesday, resuming border reopening after a pause due to an outbreak of the coronavirus. The city-state will also restore and increase quotas under its vaccinated travel programme, which had been reduced in December to deal with the Omicron variant. Singapore will streamline border measures for all travellers, and remove an entry approval requirement for eligible residents who are long-term pass holders, the ministry said, making it easier for expatriates to travel.

Brazil rain claims 44

Rio De Janeiro: At least 44 people died after heavy rain hit Petropolis, a city in the mountainous region of Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state, local government said Wednesday. City streets were flooded by downpours, while landslides also resulted in fatalities. President Jair Bolsonaro, who is traveling to Russia, said on Twitter he had asked ministers to help the city and the victims of the storm. Rio de Janeiro's Governor Claudio Castro went to Petropolis Tuesday night.

Journo held in Pak

Lahore: Pakistan Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested journalist Mohsin Baig on the complaint of the government against a discussion during a television channel's show involving Pak Prime Minister Imran Khan, Ary News reported. Mohsin Baig is blamed for initiating a debate on a television show with obscene references towards Prime Minister Imran Khan and a federal minister, the report said.

Shark kills swimmer

Sydney: A shark killed a swimmer off a Sydney beach Wednesday in the city's first fatal attack in nearly 60 years, causing "catastrophic injuries", police and ambulance services said. Witnesses told local television they had seen the attack on a swimmer wearing a wetsuit. "Some guy was swimming and a shark came and attacked him vertically," witness Kris Linto, told Nine. "We heard a yell and turned around it looked like a car had landed in the water, a big splash then the shark was chomping at the body and there was blood everywhere," he added.

NATO sees no sign of Russian pullout

DRAWING A PARALLEL WITH THE WORLD WAR II, BIDEN SAID, "WORLD WAR II WAS A WAR OF NECESSITY. BUT IF RUSSIA ATTACKED UKRAINE, IT WOULD BE A WAR OF CHOICE OR A WAR WITHOUT CAUSE OR REASON. INVASION REMAINS DISTINCTLY POSSIBLE"

REUTERS

Moscow/Kyiv, Feb 16: Russia said more of its forces surrounding Ukraine were withdrawing Wednesday but NATO urged Moscow to prove it was pulling back, saying there were signs that more troops were on the way.

Britain joined the United States in saying it had yet to be convinced the pullout was real, while in Ukraine, the defence ministry said an unprecedented cyber attack was into its second day. Russia said it had nothing to do with any attack.

The Russian defence ministry published video that it said showed tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and self-propelled artillery units leaving the Crimean peninsula, which Moscow seized from Ukraine in 2014.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said a pullout would be welcome but that moving troops about did not confirm it.

"It remains to be seen whether there is a Russian withdrawal... What we see is that they have increased the number of troops, and more troops are on the way," he told reporters at the start of a two-day meeting of NATO defence ministers at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels.

US President Joe Biden said Tuesday that more than 150,000 Russian troops were still amassed near Ukraine's borders. He said Washington had not yet verified any pullout.

"Our analysts indicate that they remain very much in a threatening position," he said.



- Russia says video shows tanks leaving Crimea
- Britain and US say pullout has yet to be confirmed
- Cyber attack continues on Ukraine's defence ministry
- US says more than 150,000 troops still threaten Ukraine

We have not seen any withdrawal of Russian forces. And of course, that contradicts the message of diplomatic efforts. What we see is that they have increased the number of troops and more troops are on their way. So, so far, no de-escalation

JENS STOLTENBERG | SECRETARY-GENERAL, NATO

To be honest, we react to the reality we have, and we don't see any withdrawal yet, we've just heard about it. I think all normal people expect de-escalation. When the troops do withdraw everyone will see that.. but for now, it's just a statement

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace told Times Radio Wednesday: "We haven't seen any evidence at the moment of that withdrawal."

Speaking separately to the BBC, he said: "Physical observations that we see show the opposite of some of the recent rhetoric coming out the Kremlin."

EU court paves way to cut billions to Poland, Hungary

REUTERS

Brussels, Feb 16: The European Union's top court Wednesday cleared the way to cut billions of euros of funds to Poland and Hungary, whose populist rulers the bloc accuses of violating democratic rights.

There is no appeal against the ruling by the Luxembourg-based European Court of Justice, which dismissed challenges by Warsaw and Budapest against a new EU sanction that would halt funding to member countries which break European laws.

"Today's judgements confirm that we are on the right track," said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, announcing the Brussels-based EU executive would decide how to act in the coming weeks.

At stake are hundreds of billions of euros of funds, the EU's internal cohesion, and its international standing. Hungary and Poland have long been big beneficiaries of EU



- Landmark ruling comes ahead of April 3 election in Hungary
- European Parliament pushes executive Commission to act swiftly
- Warsaw, Budapest reject liberal EU values but deny wrongdoing
- Rule of law crisis may destroy EU from within, warns lawmaker

funds, which the bloc has poured into the former communist countries to help develop their economies since they joined in 2004.

The EU says that to receive those benefits, countries must uphold common European standards,

which Warsaw and Budapest have flouted by imposing political control over the judiciary and media, and restricting civil rights.

Disagreements over the rule of law come as the bloc seeks to present a united front on its eastern flank, where Russia has massed forces near Ukraine.

The decision could also have immediate political impact, particularly in Hungary, where an April 3 national election is expected to be the tightest race for nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban since his landslide victory in 2010.

Orban's ruling Fidesz party said the ruling was "political revenge" against Hungary, meant to help the united opposition. Justice Minister Judit Varga said Brussels was abusing its powers against national member states.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki told a news conference: "Poland believes that centralisation, bureaucratic centralisation, federalisation... is a dangerous process."

DAY OF THE SHINING STAR



Citizens pay tribute to the statues of their late leaders Kim Il Sung, left, and Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang

North Korea has celebrated the 80th birthday anniversary of leader Kim Jong Un's late father with a music concert and fireworks in a refurbished holy city, but no missile launch or military parade, state media KCNA reported Wednesday. Kim attended a gathering of government, military and ruling Workers' Party officials which took place Tuesday in front of the statue of Kim Jong Il in Samjiyon City to commemorate the anniversary, a major holiday called the Day of the Shining Star in North Korea, KCNA said.

Prince Andrew pays \$16mn to settle sexual assault case

The settlement raised questions of who is footing the bill for the perennially cash-strapped prince, with the Telegraph reporting it would come from one of the private estates belonging to his mother Queen Elizabeth II

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

London, Feb 16: Disgraced British royal Prince Andrew faced a call Wednesday to "live out his retirement in ignominy" after reportedly settling a sexual assault lawsuit for a whopping 12 million pound (\$16.3 million, 14.3 million euros).

The lawyer for US accuser Virginia Giuffre revealed Tuesday that both parties had settled out of court, sparing Andrew the public humiliation of a trial. The details were not revealed.

Giuffre has said she had sex with Andrew when she was 17 and a minor under US law, after meeting him through the late US financier Jeffrey Epstein, who took his own life in prison while awaiting trial for sex crimes.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that Andrew was to

pay 10 million pounds to Giuffre and 2 million pounds to a charity for victims of sex trafficking.

The scandal has threatened to overshadow the queen's Platinum Jubilee this year, marking her 70 years on the throne. Any jury trial could have coincided with nationwide jubilee celebrations due to take place

in the summer. "Finished"

But British media said the prince was now "finished", and called on him to withdraw entirely from public life, after he

was already stripped of his honorary military ranks and the title of "His Royal Highness".

"A man truly determined to clear his name of such heinous allegations would have fought tooth and nail... and then, if he won, tried to rebuild his life," said an ed-

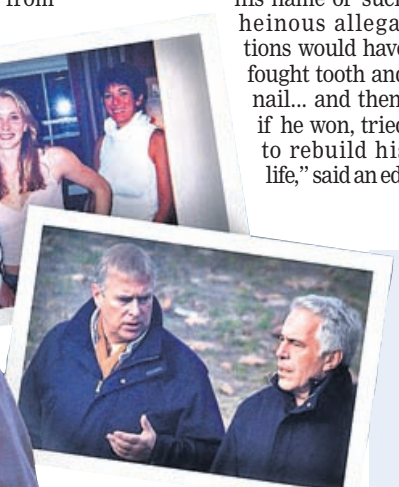
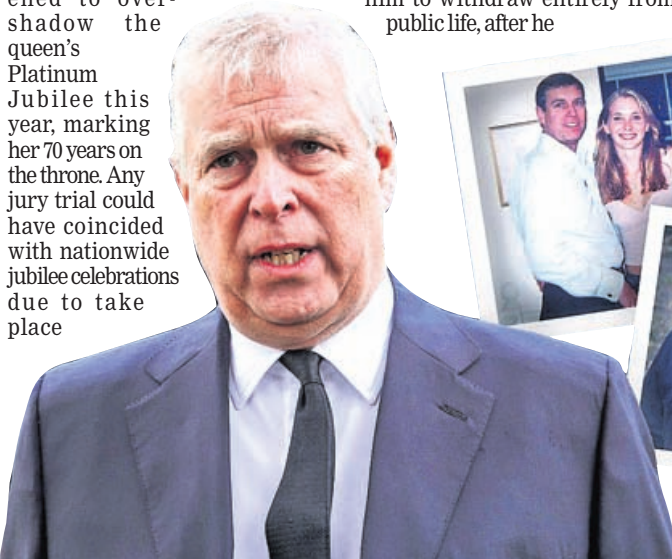
itorial in The Sun. "That is all over: Andrew is finished -- undone by his insufferable arrogance, entitlement and staggering naivety. He must retreat entirely from public life and live out his retirement in ignominy," it added.

British commentators also ridiculed Andrew for claiming he had never met Giuffre, querying why he had agreed in that case to settle for such an apparently large amount, and pointing to a photograph of the pair

together when she was 17.

Others called for transparency on where the settlement money is coming from, whether from the queen's private income or from official sources effectively backed by British taxpayers.

Mark Stephens, a media specialist at law firm Howard Kennedy, told BBC television that "Andrew is going to have to confirm that the public hasn't paid this, because that threatens to have wider implications for the royal family".



PRINCE ANDREW IS FACING FRESH CALLS TO BE STRIPPED OF HIS DUKE OF YORK TITLE AFTER AGREEING TO SETTLE THE CASE. THE SURPRISE OUT-OF-COURT AGREEMENT MEANS ANDREW MAKES NO ADMISSION OF GUILT OVER THE CLAIMS MADE BY VIRGINIA GIUFFRE, WHICH HE HAD REPEATEDLY DENIED

business

of the day quote

If we have to bring some sort of sanity and some consistency in the way big tech and these technology platforms are more accountable to the communities and societies they serve, countries will have to cooperate

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR | UNION MINISTER

The EGR segment will benefit as it will lead to greater assurance in the quality of gold supplied, efficient price discovery and transparency in transacting

SAMEER PATIL | CBO, BSE

We have already invested ₹1,900 crore till 2021. We will invest ₹3,500 crore by 2023, and then in our next phase, we are committed to investing ₹7,500 crore. These are investments in manufacturing only

PAIGAM DANISH | DIRECTOR, VIVO INDIA

SHORT TAKES

RBI net seller of US dollar in Dec

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) turned net seller of the US currency in December 2021 after it sold \$2.917 billion on a net basis in the spot market. In the reporting month, the RBI bought \$7.475 billion and sold \$10.392 billion in the spot market, the RBI Bulletin for February 2022 released Wednesday showed. In November 2021, the RBI had purchased \$8.489 billion from the spot market and sold a similar amount in the market.

Mineral output rises 3% in Dec

New Delhi: India's mineral production rose 2.6 per cent in December 2021 over the same month a year ago, the mines ministry said Wednesday. The index of mineral production of mining and quarrying sector at 120.3 was 2.6 per cent higher in the month under review as compared to the level in the same period of 2020, the ministry said in a statement. As per the provisional statistics of Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), there was a cumulative growth of 16 per cent during April-December period of 2021-22 over the year-ago period.

ETFs log \$435mn outflow in Dec qtr

New Delhi: India-focused offshore funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs) witnessed a net outflow of \$435 million in three months ended December 2021, making it the 15th consecutive quarter of withdrawal, according to a Morningstar report released Wednesday. This was way higher than the net outflows of \$95 million registered during the quarter ended September 2021. The higher outflow during the quarter under review could be attributed to "enhanced concerns on the global and domestic fronts and driven by the US Fed's hawkish statement that it might raise interest rates much earlier than assumed".

RailTel net profit at ₹474.15cr in Q3

New Delhi: RailTel Corporation of India announced consolidated income of ₹474.15 crore in Q3 of FY22, registering a quarter on quarter growth of 24.38 per cent over consolidated income of ₹381.09 crore in Q2 of FY22, a statement from the company said. RailTel is a Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) under the railway ministry. With this, RailTel has posted a Profit Before Tax (PBT) amounting to ₹88.14 crore and Profit After Tax (PAT) of ₹66.01 crore during the third quarter of the financial year 2021-22 on a consolidated basis.



While we are restoring our services progressively and systematically, we will also be introducing new enhancements at various customer touchpoints

DEEPAK RAJAWAT | CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, VISTARA

VEDANT FASHIONS' STELLAR DEBUT

Vedant Fashions, which owns the ethnic wear brand Manyavar, made an impressive debut on exchanges on Wednesday with its stock closing nearly 9 per cent higher over the issue price of ₹866. On BSE, the scrip opened at a positive note of ₹936. Intra-day, it had touched a high of ₹993 and finally settled at ₹934.85, surging 7.95 per cent in comparison to the issue price of ₹866



Growth to be swiftest among large nations

The Finance Ministry report said the Budget 2022-23 has strengthened the direction set for India's economy by the previous year's budget

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Indian economy is poised to grow at the quickest pace among the league of large nations on the back of various initiatives taken by the government in Budget 2022-23, said the Finance Ministry's Monthly Economic Review. "The current year may as well end with an economic reset manifest of a post-Covid-19 world... Manufacturing and Construction will be the 'growth drivers', triggered by the PLI schemes and public capex in infrastructure," the review report said.

Agriculture, which continues to see a constant increase in net sown area and crop diversification, will strengthen food buffers while benefiting farmers through generous volumes of procurement at remunerative minimum support prices and income transfers through PM KISAN scheme, it added.

Observing that the IMF in its January 2022 update has lowered its global growth estimate for 2022, it said India is yet the only large and major country listed by the IMF whose growth projection has been revised upwards in 2022-23.

"In a testimony to the resilience of its people and the farsightedness



The capex budget, higher by 35.4 per cent over current year's budget estimates and rising to 4.1 per cent of GDP after inclusion of grants-in-aid to states for capital works, will power the seven engines of growth to reduce the infrastructure gap and facilitate private investment in the country, the report said

On the impact of third wave of Covid-19, it added, overall economic activity remained resilient and this is reflected in robust performance of several high frequency indicators like power consumption, PMI manufacturing, exports and e-way bill generation

of its policymaking, the Indian economy that contracted by (-6.6 per cent in 2020-21 is now projected in 2022-23 to grow the quickest among the league of large nations," it said.

"Once the uncertainty and anxiety caused by the Covid-19 virus recedes from people's minds, consumption will pick up and the demand revival will then facilitate the private sector stepping in with investments to augment production to meet the rising demand. Barring external shocks - geo-political and economic - this scenario should play out for the Indian economy in

2022-23," it said.

The Budget has targeted a nominal GDP growth of 11.1 per cent in 2022-23 with a GDP deflator of 3.0-3.5 per cent. The implied real growth component of just about 8 per cent is close to the forecast in Economic Survey, 2021-22 as well as 7.8 per cent projected by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI in its meeting of February 2022.

The unchanged repo and reverse repo rate along with the MPCs accommodative stance prioritise growth during these uncertain times and reinforce the investment orientation of the budget.

Reserve Bank sets tone for durable economic revival

Mumbai: The 2022-23 Budget proposals and the recent monetary policy committee (MPC) announcements have set the tone for a durable and broad-based economic revival which has started gaining traction as the nation emerges from the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to an RBI article. The RBI article on the 'State of Economy' also emphasised that the domestic economic situation continues to improve, the unsettled global environment notwithstanding. "The Union Budget 2022-23 and the monetary policy announcement of February 10, 2022, have set the tone for a durable and broad-based revival," said the article published in RBI's February bulletin. The renewed emphasis on public investment in the Budget through infrastructure development is expected to crowd-in private investment and strengthen job creation and demand in 2022-23, it said. "Fundamental to the infrastructure boost is the GatiShakti National Master Plan, which aims to achieve inclusive growth through multi-modal connectivity and logistics efficiency," the article said. "In India, the recovery in economic activity is gaining strength and traction as it emerges from the third wave," the article added.

IMF sees inflation as 'significant risk'

The IMF said downside risks continued to dominate and economic indicators released after it downgraded its forecast for global growth by half a percentage point to 4.4% in January pointed to "weak growth momentum"

REUTERS

Washington, Feb 16: Headline inflation has moved above central bank targets in most Group of 20 economies despite weaker growth momentum and remains a "significant risk," but rising prices should moderate gradually in most economies this year, the IMF said Wednesday.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said inflation had "continued to surprise on the upside" mainly due to rising commodity and shipping prices, continued mismatches in supply and demand, and shifting demand for more goods.

But longer-term inflation expectations remained generally well-anchored in economies with strong policy frameworks, the global leader said in a surveillance note prepared for a meeting of G20 finance ministers and central bankers this week.

Renewed mobility restrictions in the euro area, Japan and Britain had weakened service-sector activity in recent months, while the spread of the coronavirus had dented consumer sentiment in the United States.



Potential emergence of new variants of the Covid-19 could drag down economic activity further

Supply disruptions had likely subtracted between 0.5 and 1 percentage point from global GDP growth in 2021

Supply-demand mismatches could also take longer to resolve than expected, weighing on output and fueling wage inflation, which in turn could prompt an earlier-than-expected tightening of monetary policy in major advanced economies, especially in the United States, the world's largest economy, the IMF said.

"This could dampen the global growth outlook, lead to a sudden tightening of financial conditions, and prompt capital outflows from emerging market economies," the IMF said, noting the added risk posed by already-high debt levels.

Central banks in emerging market economies should be prepared for adverse shocks if inflation continues to rise in major economies and they adopted steeper-than-expected interest rate increases, the fund said.

BIZ BUZZ

Gems and jewellery exports up 6.5%

NEW DELHI: Gems and jewellery exports rose by 6.5 per cent to \$32.37 billion during April-January this fiscal, industry body GJEPC said Wednesday. The exports stood at \$30.40 billion in the same period of the previous year. The top 10 export destinations include the UAE (41.50 per cent), Belgium (15.81 per cent), Japan (12.20 per cent) and Hong Kong (3.06 per cent) during the 10 months period of this fiscal, Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said in a statement. It added that the free trade agreement (FTA) with the UAE, when implemented, would help to further push exports of plain gold and gold studded jewellery.



Town Hall Meeting organised by UCO Bank

BHUBANESWAR: UCO Bank Zonal Office, Bhubaneswar organised a Town Hall Meeting February 15, 2022 at Bank's Conference hall under the banner of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' (AKAM). Customers of Bhubaneswar city based branches attended the meeting. Discussions were made on various Deposit schemes & Loan products offered by the Bank at competitive pricing and the bank is also providing various third party products namely SBI Life, Care Health, Star Health, Oriental Insurance Kotak, Future Generali, Fisdom, UCO-SBI credit card. All the customers were informed about the lowest Rate of Interest in Home Loan our Bank is offering among all the banks including waiver of Documentation & Processing Charges up to March 31, 2022. In the meeting Arupananda Jena, GM & Zonal Head, Lingaraj Nayak, AGM, SLBC, Lucky Nayak, AGM, Ashoka Market Branch & other officials of the Bank were present.



IPO PREP Unclaimed funds of over ₹21,500 crore with LIC

Nearly ₹10 out of every ₹100 saved by the Indian household each year goes to LIC, making it larger than even the perceived staple of household savings -- a deposit with SBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 16: State-owned insurance behemoth LIC had unclaimed funds to the tune of ₹21,539 crore as of September 2021, according to draft prospectus filed for IPO with market regulator Sebi. This includes interest earned over the outstanding unclaimed amount. As per the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed by the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), the unclaimed amount was ₹18,495 crore at the end of March 2021 and ₹16,052.65 crore at the end of March 2020. The total unclaimed amount stood at ₹13,843.70 crore at the end of March 2019.

Every insurer is required to display information about any unclaimed amount of ₹1,000 or more on their respective websites (to continue even after completion of 10 years) and a facility is to be provided on the website to enable policyholders or beneficiaries to verify unclaimed amount due to them.

Further, it said, the unclaimed amounts circular by Insurance Regulatory and Development



Authority of India (IRDAI) prescribes the procedures relating to the mode of payment of the unclaimed amount, communication to the policyholders, accounting, utilisation of investment income etc.

The SCWF Act mandates the transfer of unclaimed amounts of the policyholders held beyond a period of 10 years to the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund (SCWF).

The Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund Rules, 2016 (SCWF Rules) specifies the entities that are required to transfer the amounts into the SCWF and contains provisions pertaining to administration of the SCWF, it said.

The Unclaimed Amounts Circular prescribes that the unclaimed amount, on completion of 10 years, be treated in accordance with SCWF Rules, it said.

"All insurers must adhere to the accounting procedure issued by Budget Division, Department of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Finance for transfer of the unclaimed amounts into the SCWF," it said.

Every financial year the process laid down in the SCWF Rules read with the accounting procedure for transfer of the funds into the SCWF must be followed, adding all insurers must make transfers to the SCWF on or before March 1 every year.

Air travel to get costlier as ATF prices soar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 16: Air travel is expected to get costlier as oil marketing companies Wednesday raised the aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices for the second time in February.

In Delhi, the price of jet fuel was raised to ₹90,519.79 per kilolitre from ₹86,038.16 per kilolitre.

At present, fuel based expenses account for over 30 per cent of the overall operating cost of an airline. India, currently, has some of the world's highest rates of tax-

RECORD HIGH

The increase in price will put pressure on the already strained balance sheets of airlines that are yet to resume full operations due to pandemic-related curbs

tion on the ATF which massively drives up the fuel cost component.

This is the fourth hike in jet fuel or Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices in less than two months following a spike in global oil prices but petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged for a record 103rd day in a row, coinciding with electioneering to elect new governments in states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. This is the highest ever price touched by ATF. The rate is higher than ₹71,028.26 per kl reached in August 2008 when international crude oil prices touched \$147 per barrel.

UK INFLATION CLIMBS TO HIGHEST SINCE 1992 AT 5.5%

The British central bank has said it does not expect inflation to return to its 2% target until early in 2024. The bulk of economists think inflation will fall faster

REUTERS

London, Feb 16: British consumer prices rose at the fastest annual pace in nearly 30 years last month, intensifying the squeeze on households and reinforcing the chances that the Bank of England will raise interest rates for a third meeting in a row.

The annual rate of consumer price inflation rose to 5.5% in January, the highest since March 1992, when Britain was emerging from a long period of inflation-feeding high wage deals. This was above most economists' forecasts

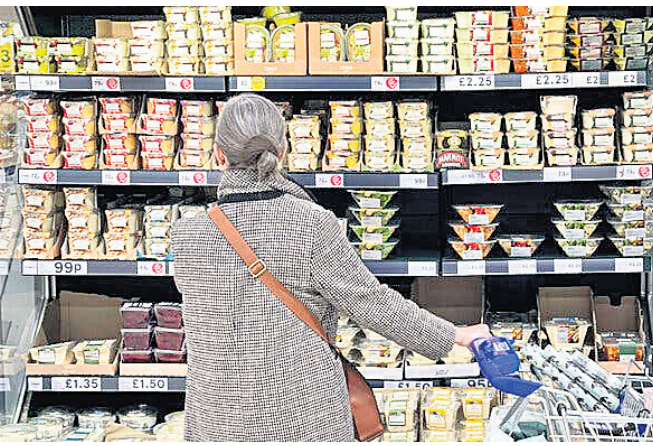
in a Reuters poll for it to hold at December's 5.4% rate.

Earlier this month the Bank of England predicted inflation will peak at around 7.25% in April, when household energy bills are due to rise by more than half.

US consumer price inflation hit a 40-year high of 7.5% in January, while inflation in the euro zone was a record 5.1%. The BoE has already raised rates twice since December - to 0.5% from 0.1% - and financial markets expect a further increase to 0.75% or 1% on March 17 after its next meeting.

Two-year British government bond yields hit their highest since 2011 shortly after the inflation data was released. Financial markets expect BoE interest rates to rise to 2% by the end of 2022, though most economists say they will not get close to that level.

"There will probably then be another hike in May taking interest rates to 1.0%, but we think that's where the (BoE) committee will



This morning's upside surprise to UK inflation serves to underscore a recent global trend: higher and more persistent inflation has caught central banks on the back foot and opened the door to more interest rate hikes this year

AMBROSE CROFTON | GLOBAL STRATEGIST, JP MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT

- January CPI rises to 5.5% from 5.4% in December
- Costlier clothing drives latest pick-up in prices
- Bank of England expected to raise rates again in March
- Households face biggest annual squeeze in 30 years

than a year earlier, while the cost of second-hand cars was 28.7% higher.

Core inflation, which excludes sometimes volatile prices for energy, food, alcohol and tobacco, rose to 4.4% in January from 4.2% in December, its highest since these records began in 1997.

Retail price inflation - a longer-running series which the ONS says is no longer accurate, but which is used in commercial contracts and to set interest payments for some government bonds - was the highest since March 1991 at 7.8% in January.

There were signs of further inflation pressure ahead as manufacturers increased prices by 9.9%, the biggest annual jump since September 2008 and above all forecasts in a Reuters poll.

But the surge in manufacturers' raw material costs slowed slightly, rising by 13.6% which was down from 13.8% in December and a peak of more than 15% in November.

India breeze past Windies

Odisha, CFC further dent slim last 4 hopes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 16: Suryakumar Yadav (34 n o, 18b, 5x4, 1x6) played the finisher's role to perfection after skipper Rohit Sharma (40, 19b, 4x4, 3x6) blazed away at the top as India secured a clinical six-wicket win over the West Indies in the first T20 International here Wednesday.

At his favourite Eden Gardens, Rohit gave India the perfect foundation after his bowlers restricted the visitors to 157/7. In the company of Venkatesh Iyer (24 n o, 13b, 2x4, 1x6), Suryakumar helped India chase down the target with seven balls to spare and take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Roston Chase (2/14) bowled brilliantly in the middle overs and dismissed the two Indian openers - Rohit and Ishan Kishan (35, 42b, 4x4) - before the hosts also lost Virat Kohli (17) and Rishabh Pant (8) to leave them at 114/4 inside 15 overs.

Rohit's flying start meant that India remained on course before Suryakumar and Iyer produced the finishing act with an unbroken 48-run partnership from 26 balls.

Spectators in for 3rd T20I vs Windies

KOLKATA: The BCCI has decided to allow 20,000 spectators, mostly ticket holding members of Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) to watch the third and final T20I between India and West Indies October 20. With this only the complimentary tickets will be issued by CAB to its members and affiliated units. The BCCI president Sourav Ganguly had earlier in an interview to PTI, had said that BCCI won't allow spectators as they don't want any health risk for the players. Dalmiya had then requested the Board to allow entry of fans. 70 per cent spectators were allowed to attend the India-New Zealand T20I in November last year.



ROHIT SHARMA

The 50-partnership was up for India in just 4.3 overs but Rohit could not convert his start and was dismissed by Chase while trying to clear the deep midwicket fence.

Earlier, on a high after his hefty IPL buyout, wicketkeeper-batter Nicholas Pooran returned to form with a brisk 61 (43b, 4x4, 5x6) as West Indies recovered from a mid-innings slump to post a fighting total. The Windies No.3 made his intention

clear by smashing Bhuvneshwar Kumar for a big six early on.

The Indian spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal (1/34) and debutant leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi (2/17) derailed the Windies in the middle overs by taking three wickets in between them, but Pooran held on as the visitors unleashed their fury in the last five overs. A fit-again Kieron Pollard played a cameo (24 n o).



RAVI BISHNOI

Jodhpur's googly man Bishnoi made his debut memorable as he returned with tidy figures dismissing Chase (4) and Rovman Powell (2) in a space of four balls to derail the Windies in the middle overs.

Bhuvneshwar got his swing going up front and dismissed Brandon King (4) in the first over after the batter had failed to negotiate his outswingers.

Kyle Mayers (31) and Pooran

steadied the innings before the wicketkeeper broke the shackles with a big six against Bhuvneshwar.

BRIEF SCORES

West Indies 157/7 (Nicolas Pooran 61, Kyle Mayers 31, Kieron Pollard 24 n o; Ravi Bishnoi 2/17, Harshal Patel 2/37) **lost to India 162/4** (Rohit Sharma 40, Ishan Kishan 35, Suryakumar Yadav 34 n o; Roston Chase 2/14) **by 6 wickets.**

PNN & ISL

Goa, Feb 16: Odisha FC and Chennaiyin FC were dealt body blows to their flailing semifinal aspirations as they shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw in the Indian Super League at the Tilak Maidan Stadium here Wednesday.

Both teams had to win this game in order to keep their slim chances alive but a stalemate means while they are mathematically still not out, their chances of making the cut are all but over.

Rahim Ali (second minute) opened the scoring for Chennaiyin before Javi Hernandez (18th) pulled one back for Odisha for Jonathas Cristian (51st) to help them go in front in the second half. But Nerijus Valckis found the back of the net for Chennaiyin to ensure their rivals don't get all three points.

Chennaiyin remained in eighth place with 20 points from 17 matches while Odisha stayed in seventh spot having 22 points from 17 matches.

Chennaiyin nosed ahead inside the first two minutes, Rahim Ali tucking in a free-kick from Nerijus Valckis which was initially blocked but fell to the striker who was unmarked at the far post.

It was all Chennaiyin in the

opening 15 odd minutes but Sabir Pasha - in charge of the team after Bozidar Bandovic parted ways with the club - saw his team not being able to make the most of the great start.

Javi equalised in the 18th minute after some brilliant off-the-ball movement saw him get past his markers to then play a one-two with Jonathas and curl the ball with his left foot from outside the box and into the back of the net.

Chennaiyin tried to keep more of the ball after the equaliser with Ariel Borysiuk's ambitious attempt from yards outside the box flying over the bar. Borysiuk did better with another effort closer to half-time but the ball just missed the target to sail over the bar.

Jonathas then forced Debjit Majumder into a good save as the referee blew the whistle for half-time. Odisha started on the front foot in the second half and Jonathas helped them take the lead for the first time in the game, smashing home off a rebound after Chennaiyin defenders failed to clear the ball inside the area.

Soon after, Jonathas chipped an effort before Valckis nodded in a powerful header into the bottom corner from a cross.



Odisha FC players celebrate their first goal, while a Chennaiyin player looks on

Ruthless City blank Sporting

Mbappe rectifies Messi's penalty miss



MAN OF THE MOMENT: Bernardo Silva points towards the fans in celebration after one of his goals, Tuesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lisbon, Feb 16: Manchester City was so good in the Champions League that even the fans of its opponents couldn't help but applaud.

When Phil Foden side-footed home the third of City's four first-half goals in a 5-0 win over Sporting in the last 16, it wasn't just the vocal away fans showing their appreciation inside the Estádio José Alvalade Tuesday.

Some of the home supporters were also seen clapping in recognition of one of the most dominant performances ever seen at this stage of Europe's top club competition.

Helping inflict the humiliation were four players who once played for Sporting's fierce Lisbon rival, Benfica. One of them was Bernardo Silva, who scored two of the goals - his first an outrageous half-volley that flew in off the underside

of the crossbar.

Riyad Mahrez began the demolition in the seventh minute with a close-range volley that was only given after a long video review.

Silva then scored in the 17th and 44th minutes - either side of Foden's well-worked team goal in the 32nd - as City went into half-time leading 4-0.

Raheem Sterling curled in a sublime fifth in the 58th and Pep Guardiola's team can start planning for the quarterfinals, even with the second leg still to come in three weeks.

Not that City manager Pep Guardiola, as close to a perfectionist as there is in world soccer, was getting too carried away. What did please Guardiola was City's efficiency in front of goal, which is something he often criticizes his players for.

For Sporting and its fans, it was

that sinking feeling again in the last 16 - where the club hasn't been since the 2008-09 season. On that occasion, the Portuguese team was embarrassed 12-1 on aggregate by Bayern Munich after losing 5-0 at home and 7-1 away. The thrashing by City must have felt similar.

As for the English club, tougher tests are coming in the Champions League but these kinds of performances are why many make it the favorite to win the competition for the first time.

It was City's ninth straight appearance in the knockout stage and the team arrived on the back of a stunning run of form that had seen it lose just one of its last 20 games in all competitions.

The mismatch was obvious from the moment Mahrez guided in a volley with his right foot after Foden had a shot tipped aside by Antonio Adán.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Feb 16: After teammate Lionel Messi missed a penalty, Kylian Mbappe saved his team again by scoring a brilliant solo goal deep into stoppage time as Paris Saint-Germain beat Real Madrid 1-0 in their Champions League last-16 match.

Mbappe has rescued PSG many times with late goals in the French league this season - as recently as last Friday - and he did so again on the biggest stage.

After taking a back-heeled pass from substitute Neymar in the fourth and final minute of stoppage time of the first leg, Mbappe cut inside two players down the left and shot the ball between the legs of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Mbappe does not expect his team to sit back and defend in the return leg, as Madrid mostly did in Paris and got punished.

Although it was a great finish, the sudden attack happened because Madrid somehow gave the ball away under no pressure in midfield instead of clearing it easily wide or long.

Courtois had played the starring role, denying Mbappe early in each half and then stopping record seven-time Golden Ball winner Messi's penalty in the 61st minute. It was awarded after Mbappe was fouled by right back Dani Carvajal. Courtois guessed correctly and dived to his left for a fine stop.

Messi scored 26 goals and delivered 14 assists in 45 games against Madrid during his glory era with Barcelona, but did not find the net in several games before joining

PSG last summer.

PSG threw on Neymar for the last 20 minutes as the Brazil standout made his return from a sprained ankle, while Madrid's star forward Karim Benzema shook off a hamstring injury and faced ex-club rival Messi and France teammate Mbappe.

Mbappe is out of contract at the end of the season and remains heavily linked with a move to

Madrid, which had an offer of 180 million euros (USD 204 million) rejected by PSG last summer.

Now the Spanish giant might get arguably the world's most dangerous striker for free, although Mbappe pushed back on talk of a move.

The second started better as Courtois produced a superb one-handed save low to his right to deny Mbappe, who was set up by

right back Achraf Hakimi's astute quick pass.

PSG have never won the competition while record 13-time champion Madrid hasn't reached the final since completing a straight hat-trick of European Cups in 2018.

This is the first season in 57 years that the away-goals rule - a way of deciding two-legged matches in European club competitions if necessary - is not being used.



CONTRASTING FORTUNES: Kylian Mbappe celebrates the late winner against Real Madrid; (inset) Lionel Messi's goal from the spot denied by Thibaut Courtois earlier in the game at Parc des Princes, Tuesday

E.Co. Railway, SAI-STC script narrow wins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 16: East Coast Railway and SAI-STC eked out victories with narrow margins in their respective matches of the Odisha Women's League football tournament here, Wednesday.

E.Co. Railway overcame Rising Student Club challenge 3-2 in a five-goal thriller at the Capital Ground. E.Co. Railway opened the account as early as in the seventh minute through Lahari Mangaraj. They went into the half-time break with a two-goal advantage, courtesy a 21st minute strike by Lochana Munda.

Rising Student Club pulled one back in the 63rd minute through Premshila Lugun. However, their



Players of East Coast Railway and Rising Student Club in action

joy was shortlived as E.Co. Railway restored their two-goal advantage in the 79th minute through Tara

Khaton. Rising Student Club continued to create chances and managed to reduce the deficit to 2-3 on 88

minutes, but it was too little too late.

The other match on the day saw SAI-STC edged past OGP Club by a solitary goal at the Kalinga Stadium. After a goalless first half despite some wonderful goal-scoring chances, SAI-STC found the much-needed goal in the 76th minute through Deepa Nayak, which turned out to be the difference between the two sides.

ODISHA EVES BEAT WB

Odisha eves defeated West Bengal women in their match of the ongoing 34th Federation Cup Volleyball (Men & Women) Championship at the KIIT Deemed to be University here, Wednesday. The hosts beat their neighbours 3-1 (25-21, 21-25, 25-18, 26-24).

BADMINTON ASIA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS INDIA WOMEN GO DOWN FIGHTING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shah Alam (Malaysia), Feb 16: A young but talented Indian women's team put up a brave effort before going down 2-3 to hosts Malaysia in its opening match of the Badminton Asia Team Championships here Wednesday.

Ashmita Chaliha and Tara Shah notched up convincing wins but the two inexperienced doubles pairs couldn't make a mark as the Indian team jeopardised its chances of reaching the knockout stage of the tournament.

With the in-form Malvika Bansod pulling out at the last minute due to health issues, world No. 56

Aakarshi Kashyap, who had reached the semifinals of India Open, started the proceedings but she couldn't get past 64th ranked Kisona Selvadurai, losing 16-21, 21-18, 16-21 in an hour and 12 minutes in the opening match.

Khushi Gupta and Mehreen Riza were then shown the door 1-21, 6-21 by the Malaysian combination of Valeree Siow and Pearly Tan to make it 2-0 in the home team's favour.

Assam's Ashmita Chaliha dished out a superb show to see off Siti Nurshuhaini 21-11, 21-19 in 29 minutes to bring India back into the contest. However, Arul Bala Radhakrishnan and Nila Valluvan proved no match for Anna Ching

Yik Cheong and Teoh Mei Xing, losing 10-21, 12-21 as Malaysia took an unassailable 3-1 lead.

Little-known Tara Shah, who had claimed the Hungarian International Junior Championships in 2020 and had reached the finals of U-15 Asia Junior Championships, beat Myisha Mohd Khairul 21-16, 21-15 to make it 2-3 in the end.

The Indian women's team will take on the defending champions Japan in group Y Friday. The men's team, led by world championship bronze medalist Lakshya Sen, had also lost its opening match 0-5 against Korea Monday. They will face Hong Kong Thursday.