



ANANYA'S OBSERVATION

Actor Ananya Pandey calls former boxer Mike Tyson, her co-actor in the movie *Liger*, a lion in the wild

LEISURE P2



CHINA'S PROMISE

China has promised to India to work for the 'early return' of over 23,000 Indians stranded at home

INTERNATIONAL P10



ATLETICO HOST MAN UTD

Manchester United travel to Spain for their Champions League round of 16 away leg tie against Atletico Madrid

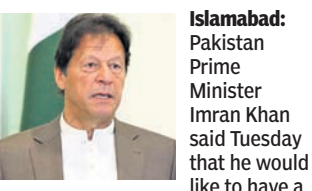
SPORTS P12

ODM GLOBAL SCHOOL
Unlock your potential

ADMISSIONS OPEN
I - XI (Day Boarding)
VI - XI (Residential)

www.odmglobalschool.org
1800-120-2316

Imran seeks TV debate with Modi to resolve row



Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said Tuesday that he would like to have a TV debate with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi to resolve differences between the two countries. Khan made the remarks during an interview with Russia's state-run TV network RT on the eve of his maiden two-day visit to Moscow - the first by a Pakistani premier in over two decades - during which he will hold talks with President Vladimir Putin and exchange views on major regional and international issues. "I would love to debate with Narendra Modi on TV," Khan said in response to a question. He added that it would be so good for over a billion people of the subcontinent," he added.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He will manage stage, you will take care of sound system, you chairs... Crowd will be taken care of by Photoshop

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	57300.68	↓ 382.91
NIFTY	17092.20	↓ 114.45
DOLLAR	74.87	↑ ₹0.37
EURO	84.56	↑ ₹0.31
GOLD	₹50,113	↑ ₹35
SILVER	₹64,250	↑ ₹659

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	31.7°C	31.8°C
TEMP MIN	19.2°C	18.4°C
Humidity	91%	86%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Clear sky mainly

A BOATFUL OF VOTERS



People of Ramchandrapur village under Kalimela block in Malkangiri going in a boat to cast their votes at Tagurukota booth, 60 km from their village, Tuesday

JSW Cement
The Leaders' Choice

1800 266 266 1 (toll free)

4 OF WEDDING PARTY KILLED IN KESINGA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, Feb 22: At least four people of a wedding party died while eight others were rendered critical in a road accident late Monday night near Turlakhman under Kesinga block of Kalahandi district. The deceased were identified as Jajna Nag, 35, of Sishkela, Champa Nag, 38, of Khairamal, Sukan Nag, 62, of Sishkela and Sudam Suna, 45, of Kendubahali. A youth of Sishkela village of Bolangir had his marriage at

Uttarakhand: 14 of marriage party die
Dehradun: Fourteen people returning from a wedding, including five women and two children, died and two were injured when a vehicle fell into a deep gorge on the Sukhidhang-Dandaminar road in Uttarakhand's Champawat district, police said Tuesday.

Pipalpadar: A dozen of people of the marriage party were returning to Sishkela from Pipalpadar in an SUV when the vehicle collided with a truck loaded with paddy.

PUTIN GETS OK TO USE FORCE ABROAD

The move indicates the imminent breakout of a full scale war with Ukraine

Moscow, Feb 22: Russian lawmakers Tuesday authorised President Vladimir Putin to use military force outside the country - a move that could presage a broader attack on Ukraine after the US said an invasion was already underway there.

Several European leaders said Russian troops rolled into rebel-held areas in eastern Ukraine after Putin recognised their independence. But it was unclear how large the deployment was, and Ukraine and its Western allies have long said Russian troops were fighting in the region, allegations that Moscow always denied. Members of the Federation Council voted unanimously to allow Putin to use military force outside the country - effectively formalising a Russian military deployment to the rebel regions, where an eight-year conflict has killed nearly 14,000 people. Shortly after, Putin laid out three conditions to end the crisis that has threatened to plunge Europe back into war, raising the specter of massive casualties, energy shortages across the continent and economic chaos around the globe.

He called for international recognition of Crimea as part of Russia, an end to Ukraine's NATO membership bid and a halt to weapons



People hold their belongings as they wait to cross from Ukrainian gov't controlled areas to pro-Russian separatists controlled territory in Stanytsia Luhanska

240 INDIANS ABOARD AI PLANE LAND IN DELHI

New Delhi: An Air India plane carrying around 240 Indians from Ukraine landed at the Delhi airport Tuesday night, amid rising tensions between the Eastern European nation and Russia. The flight AI 1946 landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here at around 11.40 pm. It took off from Boryspil International Airport in Kyiv at around 6 pm (Indian Standard Time). The airline operated a Boeing 787 aircraft, which had left for Ukraine in the morning.

RUSSIA PULLS BACK DIPLOMATS FROM KYIV

Moscow: The Russian Foreign Ministry said it has decided to evacuate Russian diplomatic personnel from Ukraine, pointing at threats it has received. The ministry said Tuesday Russian diplomats in Ukraine have received multiple threats, adding that they will be evacuated "in the nearest time." The move follows Russia's recognition of Ukraine's rebel regions and the Russian parliament's vote to grant President Vladimir Putin a permission to use military force in Ukraine.

shipments there. The West has decryied Russia's annexation of Crimea as a violation of international law and has flatly rejected permanently barring Ukraine from the NATO alliance. With tensions rising and a broader conflict looking ever more likely, the White

House began referring to the Russian deployments as an "invasion" after initially hesitating to use the term - a red line that President Joe Biden has said would result in the US levying severe sanctions against Moscow. He scheduled an address for later Tuesday.

SC to hear plea seeking online Boards today

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Supreme Court Tuesday said it would hear tomorrow a plea seeking cancellation of offline board examinations for Classes 10 and 12 to be conducted by the CBSE and several other boards this year.

"Without completing the course, how can examination be conducted," a bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar orally observed after the counsel appearing for the petitioner said that although the COVID-19 situation has improved, classes have not been completed.

The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and CT Ravikumar, granted liberty to the counsel appearing for the petitioner to serve the advance copy of the plea to the standing counsel for concerned respondents, including the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

"We will list it tomorrow," the bench said. The plea, filed by activist Anubha Shrivastava Sahai and others, was mentioned before the apex court for urgent listing.

The counsel, appearing for the petitioners, told the bench that the apex court had passed orders in 2020 and 2021 regarding class 10 and 12 board exams and this year also, the same problem is there.

"Last year, there was a scheme after your lordships intervention. This year also, we require some sort of solution otherwise this is going to drag," he said, adding that this will affect further admissions and future of students will be in peril.

Youth killed in poll violence; 10 injured

AGENCIES



Locals gather at booth-164 in Sajanagarh area of Balasore following troubles during the fourth phase of polls

The deceased was identified as Pratap Chandra Rout. It was alleged that he died due to attack by BJP workers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak/Dhamnagar, Feb 22: A youth was allegedly beaten to death in a poll-related violence at Jahangir village of Dalang panchayat under Dhamnagar block of Bhadrak. The incident took place late Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Pratap Chandra Rout. It was alleged that he died due to attack by BJP workers. His brother Keshab Chandra Rout has filed a complaint at the local police station, alleging that some BJP workers had brutally attacked him while he was returning home Monday night.

SARPANCH CANDIDATE ATTACKED, CRITICAL

Kendrapara: A sarpanch candidate of Sanadanga panchayat under Garadpur block of Kendrapara has allegedly been attacked by miscreants late Monday night. The sarpanch candidate was identified as Amiya Ranjan Sahu. He was critically injured and initially admitted to the district headquarters hospital, but later was shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. His family members have filed a complaint at the police station. In the complaint, they said Sahu had gone to his agent's house in the evening to discuss election issues. However, he did not return home.

83% polling in Nagada

Bhubaneswar: Baring a few incidents of violence, the fourth phase of panchayat poll went off smoothly in the state Tuesday. As per preliminary reports, 73 per cent of 51.31 lakh voters exercised their franchise. The polling figure may change when the final figure comes in Wednesday, State Election Commissioner Aditya Prasad Padhi said. The remote Nagada village in Sukinda block in Jajpur recorded 83 per cent polling.

However, BJP leader Manmohan Samal has dubbed the case as a political conspiracy to blame the BJP. He demanded an impartial investigation into the matter. In another incident, 10 people including women were injured due to a group clash in Balimeda panchayat under Basudevpur block. Police force were deployed in the village.

DMET knew about Swain's fake clinics, sealed them in Nov 2015

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: The state health department was aware of the wrongdoings of conman Ramesh Swain as early as 2015. The Directorate of Medical Education & Training (DMET) officials had carried out raids on his clinic at Jayadev Vihar in the city November 3, 2015 and had sealed it. However, the accused had managed to give the officials a slip.

During the raids, the DMET officials had also found that the owner of the clinic, Swain, was not a qualified medical practitioner. He allegedly had some certificates in alternative medicines. The DMET



officials conducted the raids following the directions of the state health department that had received a complaint in this regard. Swain was also conducting illegal diagnostic tests in his clinic which was sealed. The DMET officials had revealed then that the owner of the clinic, Ramesh Chandra Swain, was claiming to be a doctor and prescribing medicines as he mentioned himself as an MD. Investigations also revealed that the clinic came into existence five months before the raids had taken place. "The clinic had two branches in Cuttack and Rourkela. Both the clinics would be sealed soon," a DMET official had said then.

Oppn can pitch Nitish as Prez if he snaps NDA ties

The NCP said opposition parties may think about Nitish Kumar for the post of President, provided his Janata Dal-U severs ties with the ruling NDA

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Feb 22: The Nationalist Congress Party Tuesday said that opposition parties may think about Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for the post of President, provided his Janata Dal-U severs ties with the ruling NDA.

Referring to some media reports that Nitish Kumar could be the Opposition's candidate for the Presidential elections due mid-

2022, NCP national spokesperson and Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik made it clear that there can be no discussion on this until he breaks all ties with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

There have been certain speculative reports claiming Nitish Kumar may part ways with the BJP after the results of the ongoing elections to five states are declared next month and he could be in the race for the post of President.

"We can consider it (his candidature) only if the JD-U first breaks out of the NDA. Then the leaders of all Opposition parties will sit and collectively give a thought to it," Malik told media persons.

On the polls in the five states, he predicted that the BJP will be sub-



jected to "a severe defeat" in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur, and Goa. "History will be repeated after 30 years in UP. It will win less than 150 seats. The people of the state had rejected BJP after it fomented communal violence there in 1993. People are now sick of its policies," asserted Malik. He added that the process to

launch a united 'anti-BJP' front has been initiated in the country and it will take a proper shape well before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"However, no such front can be formed without the Congress. The question of leadership will be taken up later at an appropriate time," Malik said, reiterating the clear stance of NCP and its ally, Shiv Sena, though some Opposition parties have expressed reservations. In this context, he referred to the visit of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in December followed by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao this week to Mumbai to meet the Maha Vikas Aghadi leadership and forge a united national Opposition front to counter the BJP.

Earlier, as part of efforts to unite parties opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party at the national level, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao Sunday met Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar at his residence in Mumbai and discussed the new vision, agenda to run the country properly. KCR called the NCP chief an "experienced leader" and said that both the parties will work together. "This country needs to be run properly with a new agenda, new vision... I discussed the same with Sharad Pawar Ji. He is an experienced leader, has given me his blessings, and we will work together," Telangana chief minister said at a press conference after meeting Pawar in Mumbai.

leisure



BRITNEY SPEARS' PUBLISHING DEAL FOR HER TELL-ALL MEMOIR

Pop icon Britney Spears has secured a publishing deal for her memoir, which will narrate her accounts of and commentary on her rise to fame, her music career and her relationship with her family and landmark events from her life with the publishing house Simon & Schuster.

LACEY BAGS MULTI-FILM DEAL WITH TV NETWORK

Actress Lacey Chabert, who voiced Meg Griffin in the first season of *Family Guy*, has landed an exclusive multi-picture deal with Crown Media Family Networks. The agreement grants the authority to the actress to headline and executive produce films and other content.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
You may take a holiday today to be with your family, and perhaps go to meet your relatives who live nearby. It will make your kith and kin very happy. They will be surprised and Ganesha gives you the thumbs-up.

TAURUS
The planets are not well disposed towards you today, fears Ganesha. There are strong chances of crossing swords with someone, getting into a serious personality clash. Not good is come out of it. You may simply end in alienating those who are otherwise well disposed towards you. Later in the day the situation will ease out.

GEMINI
You will don the role of a very affectionate parent today. Your children, however, may get a bit uneasy by this sudden surge of love on your part. Don't overdo it; if you have just realised that your kids need warmth, be patient with them.

CANCER
Today, your love for your partner will reach the point of obsession. Before you realise it, you will uncharacteristically go out of your way to impress the love of your life. It will be as if you are under a spell. So unless someone shakes you out of your stupor, you may end up doing something that you may live to regret for the rest of your life.

LEO
"Show me the money!" Well, you might as well be saying that aloud, because today, you are going to be heard. Ganesha foresees a fruitful day in money matters. Even professionally, you come to terms with enjoying the power of money. It is a good day for a bit of splurging, especially on those you love.

VIRGO
A candid conversation with your beloved is on the radar today. Labour to complete tasks you've been putting off for a while, says Ganesha. A trip to a sacred place is also blinking. But be advised, and weigh your options before making a choice.

LIBRA
Call it your charm, your influence or whatever you will, but today, it brings incredible results for you, says Ganesha. Also, you may personally contemplate a little bit of self-improvement for ensuring better prospects in the future. It is likely that some of you may decide to smarten up your dream house. After all, your home reflects who you are.

SCORPIO
Endless ambitions and limitless energy - a day tailored to perfection, forecasts Ganesha. On the career front, you will be looking for some challenging activities. You will have more than enough vigour to tackle anything that work or academics can throw at you.

SAGITTARIUS
The artist in you will shine today, and how, says Ganesha. You'll be content with your possessions, which have been preserved over long years. Later in the day, your focus may shift to renovating or decorating your home by adding artifacts and furniture.

CAPRICORN
Don't be surprised if you get unexpected success in your financial dealings, it's all on the cards! You will be pliant, more than the usual, and will be sensitive to and understanding of others' problems, says Ganesha. For those pursuing studies, academic growth is certain.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will battle clutter! You clean up and organise, and actually find the process therapeutic. You will also solve problems in a jiffy. There are decisions to be made, and Ganesha suggests that you research carefully before you make up your mind.

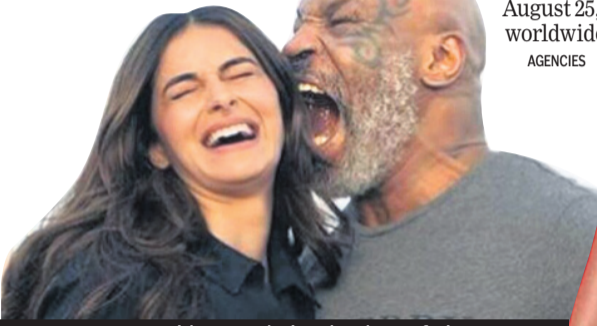
PISCES
The feelings of resentment that you have been harbouring since some time will not allow you to take any criticism that comes your way in the right spirit. This does none harm, but you. Learn to let go of your negative thoughts and indulge in some harmless fun and frolic today, says Ganesha.

Ananya calls Tyson a 'lion in the wild'

Mumbai: Following the release of *Gehraiyaan*, Ananya Panday has an even bigger project to look forward to. It is *Liger* starring Telugu star Vijay Deverakonda who is diving into his first pan-India project, which is releasing in five languages later this year. The film also marks the Indian film debut of former wrestler Mike Tyson. Ananya Panday calls him a 'teddy bear'.

She said, "Mike Tyson was amazing. He was like this big teddy bear. What I loved about him was how humble he was. He would come in, he would be one of the first few people to reach the set and he was ready to do anything that Puri Jagannadh said. He didn't question it. He just went completely with Puri sir's vision. He's actually really funny. Some of his jokes are quite funny. So I would just sit next to him and I observed him it was like almost watching a lion in the wild."

Ramya Krishnan and Ronit Roy play prominent roles in *Liger* which is being made in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam languages. *Liger* is in the last leg of shooting and the makers will release it August 25, 2022, worldwide.



Ananya with Tyson during the shoot of *Liger*



Rashmi raises voice against animal abuse

Chennai: South actress Rashmi Gautam has strongly urged people to say no to animal rides and to animal captivity and thereby stop cruelty being meted out to them.

Sharing a disturbing video clip on her Instagram timeline in which a young temple elephant, after being threatened with a stick, is seen obeying the orders of its mahout, the actress said, "This extremely sad video was shot by a friend of mine

(in) Patteshwara temple, Coimbatore and was scolded and asked not to shoot for obvious reasons. The only way they control these giants is through torture. Is it wrong to treat them with respect? If you are making money out of them, the least you can do is take good care of them and treat them with respect and not push them beyond limits."

"It's upto us to stop it. It's all about demand and supply. Say no to animal rides. Say no to captivity," added Rashmi.

83 pads up for TV premiere

Mumbai: Ranveer Singh starrer sports drama *83* is taking the broadcasting route before it makes its way to the digital medium. The film, directed by Kabir Khan, earlier found itself in troubled waters as the third wave affected its theatrical run.

The film will premiere on Star Gold March 20 at prime time, 8 pm. In addition, to celebrate the nostalgia of an incredible win in the 1983 Cricket World Cup, the channel will be offering brands the chance to replay some of their memorable and iconic TV ads during the premiere.

Apart from Ranveer, the film also stars a string of actors like Deepika Padukone, Tahir Raj Bhasin, Jiiva, Saqib Saleem, Jatin Sarna, Chirag Patil, Dinker Sharma, Nishant Dahiya, Harry Sandhu, Sahil Khattar, Ammy Virk, Addinath Kothare, Dhairya Karwa, R Badree and Pankaj Tripathi.



Kathak stems from my love for Madhuri: Sharvari Wagh

Mumbai: Actress Sharvari Wagh has just started taking Kathak lessons and she credits her on-screen icon and 'twinkle toes' Madhuri Dixit for inspiring her to learn the dance form.

Sharvari, who made her big screen debut with *Bunty Aur Babli 2*, says, "I've always been in awe of Madhuri ji, she's been a huge inspiration for me always wanting to learn kathak."

She added: "Every time I would see Ma'am's songs or even snippets on Instagram or dance shows, I would google kathak teachers to start learning. She's been my idol and I hope I get to dance next to her someday! It would be an honour."

Madhuri and Sharvari hail from Maharashtra, and Sharvari has always been a fan of the superstar who ruled the silver screen in the late 1980s and all of 1990s.

She says, "For me, Kathak actually stems from my love for Madhuri Dixit. Somewhere I want to learn it because I've seen her perform so well! So, it is something I am just trying to do because I love her so much and from that I am trying to pick it up and learn it on my own."



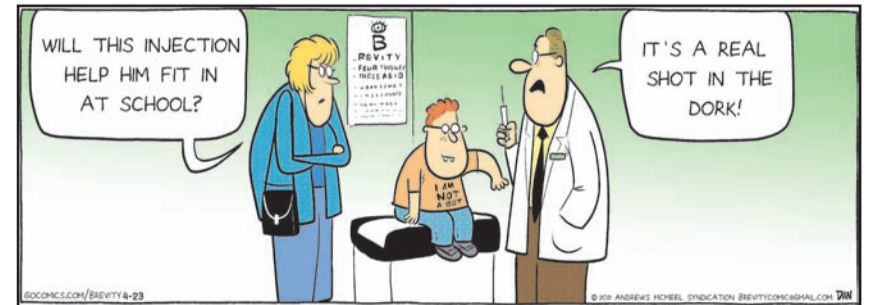
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

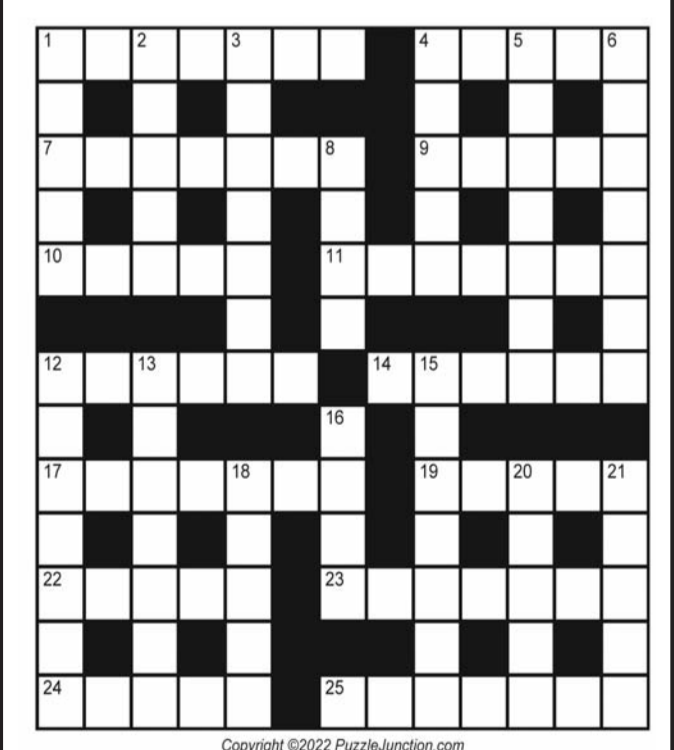


BREVITY



FUN post

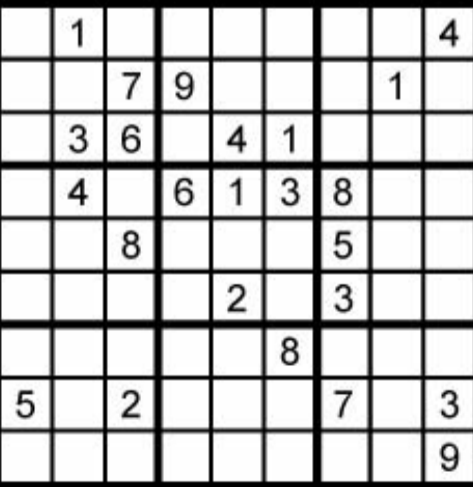
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Keeps
 - 4 Implied
 - 7 Jam ingredients
 - 9 Low-cut shoes
 - 10 Yak's home
 - 11 Springbok
 - 12 Osculation
 - 14 High points
 - 17 Cocktail type
 - 19 Theatre production
 - 22 Overtum
 - 23 Strong and proud
 - 24 Back street
 - 25 Norsemen of old
 - 5 Complicated
 - 6 Wild boars
 - 8 Heroic tale
 - 12 Italian cordial
 - 13 Wildcatter's workplace (3,4)
 - 15 Racehorse area
 - 16 Elliptical
 - 18 Rum drink
 - 20 Unearthly
 - 21 Swears

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.

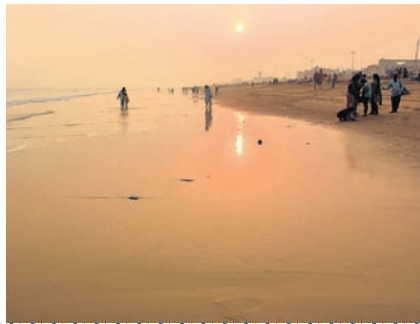


SOLUTIONS



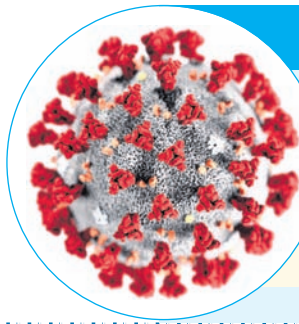
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SUNSET IN PURI

A scenic view of sunset at Puri beach Tuesday when the tourists pack up for the day



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	42,69,73,352	35,42,74,556	59,12,592
India	4,28,51,929	4,21,58,510	5,12,344
Odisha	12,83,297	12,70,221	9,036

Coal crisis: MSMEs seek PM's intervention

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: The Odisha Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (OASME) has sought the Prime Minister's intervention to protect the MSME ecosystem dependent on coal-consuming industries and their ancillaries from acute shortage of coal.

The MSMEs have been struggling due to the shortage of coal for the last seven months. The industry bodies have raised the issue with the state government several times. But, the issue is yet to be resolved.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, OASME secretary general Satwik Swain said, "Even though the government has helped ensure uninterrupted power supply to independent power plants, the situation remains grim for the non-power sectors across Odisha, which are facing severe shortage of coal due to low supply. This has pushed many ancillary SMEs to the verge of closure."

Describing the situation as catastrophic, Swain said the closure



of local industries could lead to huge economic loss and cost the jobs of lakhs of people.

Despite repeated appeals by multiple MSME associations, trade chambers and industry associations like Utkal Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Industrial Entrepreneurs (AIE) and the OASME itself, there has been no resolution in this regard. The affected stakeholders have now resorted to rallying against the production and supply anomalies while seeking prioritisation of coal

allocation for captive power plants (CPPs), said the letter.

"Odisha has 25 per cent of the total coal deposit of the country. Out of the 129 million tonnes of coal produced through Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCA), 54 per cent is being transferred to other states and only 46 per cent is reserved for the industries in the coastal state, against the actual minimum requirement of 65 per cent for local CPPs," Swain said.

"Such acute shortage of coal is creating a dangerous situation for

The crisis, if not attended to immediately, could lead to closure of nearly 5,000 SMEs and loss of employment and livelihood for lakhs of people who are dependent on them

SATWIK SWAIN | OASME SECRETARY GENERAL

the manufacturing sector, threatening the survival of MSMEs, leaving the state deprived of domestic value addition and causing bad impact on the global investment," he added.

The OASME urged the PM to intervene in to the issue and help normalise the situation that is affecting the entire ecosystem.

"The crisis, if not attended to immediately, could lead to closure of nearly 5,000 SMEs and loss of employment and livelihood for lakhs of people who are dependent on them," Swain said.

BJD demands arrest of ex-minister Samal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: An eight member Biju Janata Dal (BJD) team before the State Election Commission (SEC) Tuesday demanded immediate arrest of BJD leader and former Minister Manmohan Samal and his supporters.

Accusing Samal and some BJD workers of hatching a conspiracy for the murder of a youth and BJD activist from Jahangir area of Dhamnagar in Bhadrak district, Pratap Chandra Rout Monday, the

ruling party delegation stated in a memorandum that the Odisha BJD has been unleashing electoral violence in the state.

The eight-member BJD team also drew the attention of the SEC claiming that BJD is losing the panchayat elections badly to the ruling BJD. As BJD has sensed what would be the panchayat polls outcome, it has unleashed massive, murderous electoral violence in the state against BJD candidates, its supporters, citizens and government officials.

They said that BJD leaders and workers in fear of losing the three

tier panchayat election are unleashing a wave of violence against voters, BJD candidates, leaders and party cadres. BJD is involved in election related violence in Bhadrak district and the murder of BJD worker Pratap Chandra Rout belonging to Jahangir area, Dalanga Panchayat, Bhadrak. The planned murder was done at the instigation of BJD leader and former minister Manmohan Samal.

"We demand that Samal and others who are involved in the murder of Rout are immediately arrested," the team demanded.

Fake PwD certs cost admission of 28 students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: The state Higher Education (HE) department Tuesday directed the Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) to cancel the admission of 28 students on the ground of furnishing fake Persons with Disability (PwD) certificates.

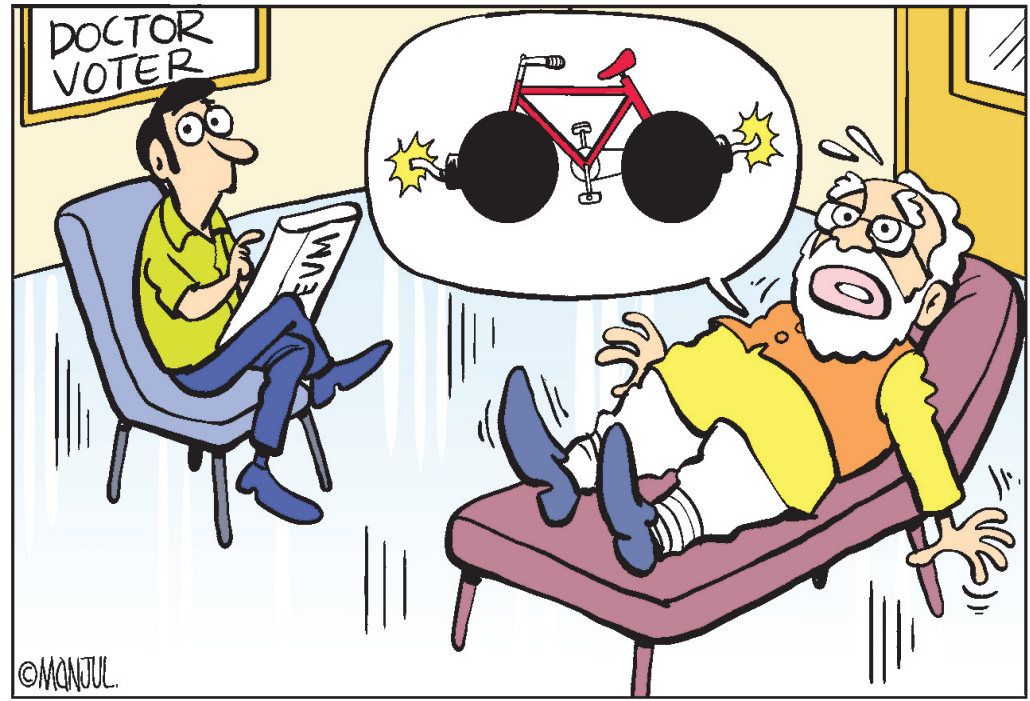
Deputy Director of the HE department Rajesh Kumar Sahoo, in a letter to the General Manager (GM) of OCAC, wrote that 28 students of Bhadrak Autonomous College had taken admission by producing fake PwD certificates for the sessions 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22.

He also directed the OCAC GM to update the list of students in the SAMS portal after cancelling the admission of these students.

Earlier, the state government had asked all degree colleges to verify disability certificates of students admitted under the PwD quota in the last three academic sessions. The HE department had taken this step in the wake of fake admissions in the said college. The principals were asked to verify and authenticate the disability certificates of such students.

In order to detect such malpractices elsewhere, the principals of the colleges across the state were directed to verify the disability certificates of the physically handicapped and orthopedically handicapped (PH-OH) students through the Chief District Medical Officers (CDMOs) of the districts concerned.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Vamsadhara water dispute: SC adjourns hearing to March 9

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Supreme Court (SC) Tuesday adjourned hearing of a batch of petitions filed by Odisha against the order of Vamsadhara Water Dispute Tribunal, which had allowed Andhra Pradesh to construct Neradi barrage over Vamsadhara river.

A three-judge bench of the SC comprising Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant and Vikram Nath posted the matter for hearing March 9. The bench also asked the apex court registry to list the case on top of board for hearing March 9.

During Tuesday's hearing, Justice DY Chandrachud said the court will take up Vamsadhara water dispute after concluding hearing in another case.

Earlier, the state of Andhra Pradesh had filed an affidavit in response to the Odisha's petition against the order of the tribunal. Andhra Pradesh contended that Odisha's petition is conceived and no case is made out for the interference of the apex court.

The apex court had observed September 24 2021 that such interstate disputes should be disposed of at the earliest and posted the matter for final disposal after Diwali vacations.

Significantly, Odisha had earlier filed two petitions in the Supreme Court challenging the order of the tribunal and also opposed the joint survey of the Neradi barrage as directed by the tribunal. In June 2021, the tribunal had



A THREE-JUDGE BENCH OF THE SC COMPRISING JUSTICES DY CHANDRACHUD, SURYA KANT AND VIKRAM NATH POSTED THE MATTER FOR HEARING MARCH 9

DURING TUESDAY'S HEARING, JUSTICE DY CHANDRACHUD SAID THE COURT WILL TAKE UP VAMSADHARA WATER DISPUTE AFTER CONCLUDING HEARING IN ANOTHER CASE

ODISHA HAD EARLIER FILED TWO PETITIONS IN THE SUPREME COURT CHALLENGING THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL AND ALSO OPPOSED THE JOINT SURVEY OF THE NERADI BARRAGE

permitted Andhra Pradesh to construct the Neradi barrage across the river with ancillary structures. The tribunal had said that the barrage can have a right head sluice (RHS) of 8,000 cusec of design capacity for meeting the requirements of AP and have a left head sluice (LHS) to cater to the requirements of Odisha below the Neradi barrage. The cost of LHS is to be borne by Odisha. The tribunal had ruled that

when there is shortage of water in a particular year, the sharing of water should be proportionately reduced. When there is an increase in water availability, it is to be increased proportionately. The distress sharing formula for the river basin is to be applicable for total utilisation by each state.

Aggrieved by this, the state of Odisha filed another special leave petition in the apex court against the order of the tribunal.

DEFT HANDS



Artisans weaving grass curtains for the upcoming summer in Tinikonja Bagicha area of Cuttack, Tuesday

Amar Patnaik among 11 MPs to get Sansad Ratna Award

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: Biju Janata Dal's (BJD) Amar Patnaik and Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP) Supriya Sule are among the 11 Members of Parliament who will be getting the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award 2022, the Prime Point Foundation said Tuesday.

The jury committee has also nominated senior BJP leader from Tamil Nadu HV Hande and Congress veteran M Veerappa Moily for a lifetime achievement award while four parliamentary standing committees - agriculture, finance, education and labour - will be awarded for their contributions.

The 11 parliamentarians include eight from the Lok Sabha and three from the Rajya Sabha, the foundation said in a statement.

The 12th edition of the Sansad Ratna Award function will be held February 26 in the national Capital. According to the foundation, NCP MP Sule, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) MP N K Premachandran and Shiv Sena MP Shrirang Appa Barne will be awarded the 'Sanskrit Ratna' award for their sustained outstanding performance.

Trinamool Congress MP Saugata Roy (West Bengal), Congress MP Kuldeep Rai Sharma (Andaman

and Nicobar Islands), and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs Bidyut Baran Mahato (Jharkhand), Heena Vijayakumar Gavit (Maharashtra) and Sudhir Gupta (Madhya Pradesh) will get the Sansad Ratna Award for their performance in the 17th Lok Sabha, it said.

In the upper house, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Amar Patnaik (Odisha) and NCP MP Fauzia Tahseen Ahmed Khan (Maharashtra) will be awarded for their performance in 2021 under the 'sitting members' category.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) MP KK Ragesh (Kerala) has been nominated for the award under the 'retired members in 2021' category for his outstanding performance during his full term in Rajya Sabha, it said.

The awarders were selected based on their cumulative performance from the beginning of the 17th Lok Sabha till the end of the winter session 2021 based on the data provided by PRS India, Prime Point Foundation's founding chairman K Srinivasan said.

The Sansad Ratna Awards committee was chaired by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal and co-chaired by TS Krishnamurthy, former Chief Election Commissioner of India.

POSITIVITY AMID PANDEMIC

Indian women freelancers' earning grew by 42%

IN 2022, INDIAN WOMEN ARE EARNING 81 PER CENT OF WHAT THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS DO WITH THEIR AVERAGE HOURLY RATES AT \$22 PER HOUR COMPARED TO MEN'S HOURLY RATE AT \$27 PER HOUR (NEARLY ₹2,000)

For women freelance workers in India, the pandemic has resulted in higher levels of satisfaction owing to an increased work-life balance and flexibility in work schedules that the gig culture offers in specialised areas, a new report showed.

Indian women freelancers' average hourly earnings rate grew by 42 per cent since 2020 - \$22 per hour (nearly Rs 1,600) in 2022 against \$14 per hour (about Rs 1,050) in 2020.

Furthermore, their average hourly earnings rate was at par with their global counterparts, ac-



According to 'Freelancer Income Report 2022' by commerce and technology company Payoneer

"Indian freelancing is making a value driven shift in the global gig economy. In the last few years, we have witnessed a constant increase in freelancer income and their movement to more specialised fields like marketing, coding and finance," said Rohit Kulkarni, Senior Vice President at Payoneer India.

More flexibility, better-skilled opportunities, and increased earnings are some of the factors leading to more professionals entering this economy. The average hourly rates of the

Indian freelancing is making a value driven shift in the global gig economy. In the last few years, we have witnessed a constant increase in freelancer income and their movement to more specialised fields like marketing, coding and finance

ROHIT KULKARNI | SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PAYONEER INDIA

The gender pay gap was standing at 77 per cent before Covid-19 where as Indian women freelancers recorded a much better gender pay ratio against their counterparts in developed markets like North America which stood at 71 per cent

Indian freelancers outshined their global counterparts and were able to demand a better average hourly rate for some of the popular professions like finance, demanding an hourly rate of \$71 against global average of \$41 and marketing at \$47 vs global average rate of \$34

Indian freelancing community saw a jump from \$21 in 2020 to \$26 in 2022. In 2022, Indian women are earning 81 per cent of what their male counterparts do with their average hourly rates at \$22 per hour compared to men's hourly rate at \$27 per hour (nearly Rs 2,000).

The gender pay gap was standing at 77 per cent before Covid-19. Interestingly, Indian women free-

lancers recorded a much better gender pay ratio against their counterparts in developed markets like North America which stood at 71 per cent, the findings showed.

Indian freelancers outshined their global counterparts and were able to demand a better average hourly rate for some of the popular professions like finance, demanding an hourly rate of \$71 against global average of \$41 and marketing at \$47 vs global average rate of \$34.

"The findings cement our belief that Indian freelancing will continue making rapid strides in the global gig market in days to come," said Kulkarni.

The freelancing economy is still dominated by young Indian freelancers between the age group of 18-34 years.

More than half of the Indian respondents (57 per cent) stated that they find most of their work through online marketplaces such as Upwork and Fiverr, etc, while only 7 per cent rely on traditional sources like word of mouth and referrals.

Top challenges faced by Indian freelancers were related to business growth, i.e. expanding to new markets, and managing time and fee negotiations, said the report.

ECoR breaks own freight loading record of last fiscal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) surpassed the annual loading of the last fiscal at least 38 days before the end of current financial year, sources said.

The ECoR has surpassed the last financial year's figure within April 1, 2021 and February 21 this year. The ECoR has consistently witnessed incremental loading over the previous year's performance in the field of freight transportation since the inception of the new zone.

According to sources, the ECoR loaded 205.37MT of freight by February 21 and surpassed the last financial year's annual loading of 204.90MT, registering an incremental growth of 0.23 per cent. It carried 15 per cent more freight than the corresponding period of the last fiscal.

During the period, ECoR carried 116.10MT of coal, 7.29 MT of raw materials for steel plants, 18.87 MT of iron & steel, 27.92 MT of iron ore, 1.17 MT of cement, 2.61 MT of food grains, 5.1 MT of fertilizer, 2.38 MT of POL and 23.94 MT of freight loaded in containers and other cargo. It earned revenue worth Rs 20,368.3 crore, registering an increase of 19.7 per cent than the corresponding period of last financial year.

For this achievement, the ECoR utilised 9,472 wagons per day, which is about 174.6 rakes per day, sources said. This could be possible due to the outstanding performance of all the three divisions of ECoR-Khurda Road, Waltair and Sambalpur.

XIM concludes Xpressions'21

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar successfully concluded "Xpressions'21", the flagship annual management and cultural festival, recently.

This year, the two-day long festival was conducted online. The resplendent festival drew a large number of participants from several reputed institutions across India.

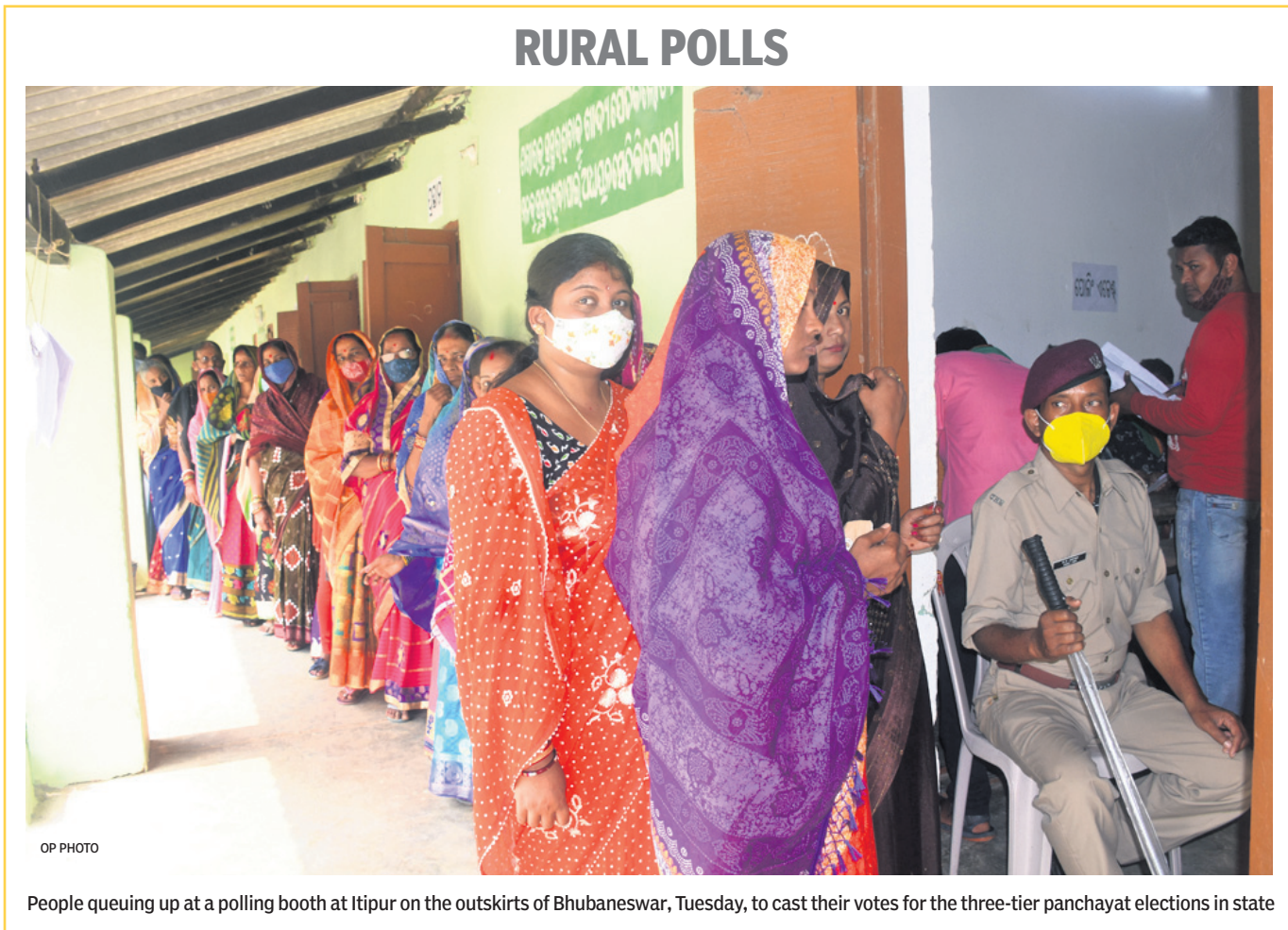
The festival witnessed a myriad of business and cultural events. Various committees conducted their flagship competitions ranging from case studies, business simulations, quizzes and extempore among others.

Case study competitions like 'MPOWER' conducted by Maxim, XIM's marketing committee, and 'Maven' conducted by Constat, and XIM's consulting and strategy consortium saw massive participation.

'Nirnay', an in-house business simulation game conducted by X-Ops (XIM's operations committee) attracted participants along with their flagship case study competition 'Aarohan'. Similarly, the XSys (XIM's systems committee) conducted the case study competition 'Case Connect', which tested the business analytics skill of the participants.

CLASSIFIED LOST

I Bhagabana Padhan, S/o Late Dukhu Padhan, village Dedarha, P.S.-Khoprakhol, Dist.-Balangir declare that on dt.06.02.22, while I was returned to my village from Patnagarh by Bus at that time I had lost my Registration Dalil No. 10321600902 dt.30.07.2016, DCB Bank Pass Book and some other documents. After through search I could not find it.



OP PHOTO

People queuing up at a polling booth at Itipur on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, to cast their votes for the three-tier panchayat elections in state

FAKE DOCTOR, REAL CRIMES, SURREAL FAMILY

More victims show up while cops grill sister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: The Commissionerate Police Tuesday claimed to have come across credible evidences suggesting complicity of the notorious conman Ramesh Chandra Swain's family members in his acts of fraud. Swain had reportedly duped around 18 women of cash and ornaments worth over several lakhs after fraudulently marrying them by claiming to be a doctor.

The City police have been interrogating Swain's sister Rashmita Beura who was nabbed in a raid at Iswarpur village in Kendrapara district during the wee hours Tuesday. Meanwhile, the cops also launched a manhunt to arrest Beura's husband Ganesh who managed to give the cops a slip. Police sources claimed that Swain was aided and abetted by his sister, brother-in-law and his second wife in executing the fraudulent marriages. They used to enjoy a handsome share of the valuables and cash collected by Swain.



The City cops hope to extract vital leads from Beura to unravel further details about the modus operandi followed by Swain and family. The cops will conduct raids at other places related to the accused in the state in the coming days.

Similarly, the count of victims, who lost lakhs after falling into Swain's trap, is increasing with the registration of fresh cases every day. Sources claimed that as many as 15 cases of fraud have already been registered at different police stations of the state including the Capital city.

On Tuesday, two persons, including one businessman from

Rajahmundry of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, lodged separate complaints at the Mahila Police Station and Khandagiri Police Station here. A medical professional who had earlier lodged a case against Swain Tuesday accused the fake doctor of pressuring him to prescribe fake medicines. Swain reportedly owes the Cuttack medico around ₹2 lakh.

Swain allegedly contacted the Andhra businessman G Venkataraman impersonating deputy director of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. He ordered the victim to supply saplings of worth ₹4 lakh for plantation in Kendrapara district. The cheque of a nationalised bank given to him by Swain was later found to be fake one.

Similarly, Swain duped one Abhay Das of Jagatsinghpur of ₹18 lakh on the pretext of arranging an MBBS seat in Bhubaneswar AIIMS for his son. Das Tuesday lodged a complaint against Swain at Khandagiri police station.

10 deaths, 428 new Cov cases

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: Odisha's Covid-19 tally rose to 12,83,297 as 428 more people tested positive for the infection Tuesday, while 10 new fatalities pushed the death toll to 9,036, the state Health department said in a bulletin.

The daily test positivity rate (TPR) stood at 0.81 per cent and as many as 136 children were among the newly-infected, it said, adding that 52,672 samples were tested in the last 24 hours.

As per the Health bulletin, six out of the 10 new fatalities were reported from Sundargarh district. Currently, there are 4,955 active Covid-19 cases and 1,095 patients recovered in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 12,69,253, it added.

Of the fresh cases, Sundargarh district registered the highest 96 infections, followed by Khurda (46) and Kendrapara (35). Other districts with new infections are - Angul (15), Balasore (5), Bargarh (5), Balangir (1), Boudh (1), Cuttack (27), Deogarh (16), Dhenkanal (3), Gajapati (28), Ganjam (4), Jagatsinghpur (4), Jajpur (16), Jharsuguda (15), Kalahandi (3), Kandhamal (8), Keonjhar (3), Koraput (19), Malkangiri (9), Mayurbhanj (11), Nabarangpur (4), Nayagarh (7), Nuapada (5), Puri (2), Rayagada (13), Sambalpur (14) and Subarnapur (4).

Week-long Science Festival commences at KIIT Int'l School

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: As a part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration, a science exhibition named 'Amrit Mahotsav Science Showcase: Roadmap to 2047' was inaugurated at the KIIT International School Tuesday.

The week-long exhibition is being organised by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in collaboration with Integrated Test Range (ITR), NIR, IMMT, STD (Government of Odisha), ORSAC, Odisha Bigyan Academy, IMA and KIIT-TBI.

The Science exhibition was inaugurated in the presence of State E&IT and Science & Technology Secretary MK Mishra; Additional PCCF & Chief Executive of ORSAC PK Mallick; CBSE, Bhubaneswar Regional Officer K Srinivasan; and Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT & KISS.

The exhibition displays models of various missiles like Agni, Akash, Prithvi, Brahmos, Astra, and Nag - and armament systems like MBT Arjun and Artillery Guns.

Students and teachers from different schools in the state Capital Bhubaneswar will be participating in the exhibition and interacting with about 20 grassroots scientists who have been felicitated by the National Innovation Foundation for their uniqueness. About 1,200 delegates have registered themselves for the event.

Samanta, in his address at the inaugural ceremony, pointed out that this is the age of science, knowledge and exposure. In the early days, students were dependent on only books for knowledge. But now due to advancement in science, they are getting exposure, he said.

"We are progressing with the help of science and technology, which has also been enabling us to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide in the last two years," he added.

Science is the understanding of different things. Technology is the way to take it forward. Science should be for common people. Nowadays, technology has become our way of life. Everybody has experienced the importance of technology during the pandemic

MK MISHRA | SECRETARY, E&IT AND SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

Speaking on the occasion, MK Mishra said, "Science is the understanding of different things. Technology is the way to take it forward. Science should be for common people. Nowadays, technology has become our way of life. Everybody has experienced the importance of technology during the pandemic."

PK Mallick said, "We need science to grow, live, and develop. Science and technology are two hands of humans. Conceptualising something is science while making it a reality is technology. Students should develop scientific temper and learn to practice it. Azadi can be protected by nurturing and practicing science."

Srinivasan said, "We need to understand the happenings around us and apply that understanding our knowledge to improve. We should use science and technology for a better life."

The Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is being celebrated at 75 locations across the country, with the main programme based in National Capital New Delhi.

Science and technology concerning organisations of the country are committed to ensure that the benefits of science, technology and innovations reach the masses and help society circumvent various problems.



Is India's gaming industry set to boom and create jobs for Gen-Z?

Worried Indian parents across all segments have typically asked their children to stay off video games - but that was until the Covid-19 pandemic broke out two years ago.

It was considered nothing less than a taboo then. But recently, when the Karnataka High Court reversed amendments to the Karnataka Police (Amendment) Act, 2021, aimed at prohibiting and criminalising participation in online games, it came as a major relief to the country's \$930 million gaming industry.

All India Gaming Federation's (AIGF) Chief Executive, Roland Landers said, "The Karnataka High Court's decision was in the right direction. We look forward to working with the government and stakeholders to develop a clear regulatory framework -- that will enable legitimate gaming companies to operate in the state with safeguards, while eradicating illegal gambling apps from the state."

The pandemic, leading to several lockdowns and restrictions, has changed the landscape of the gaming industry in India, which is one of the leaders in the global

market today. India's internet penetration is estimated at 30 per cent.

The gaming industry is now being seen as an important pillar of the economy. This upcoming sector could create lakhs of jobs in the country. Several gaming startup firms are expected to firm up hiring plans to support growth in the next few years.

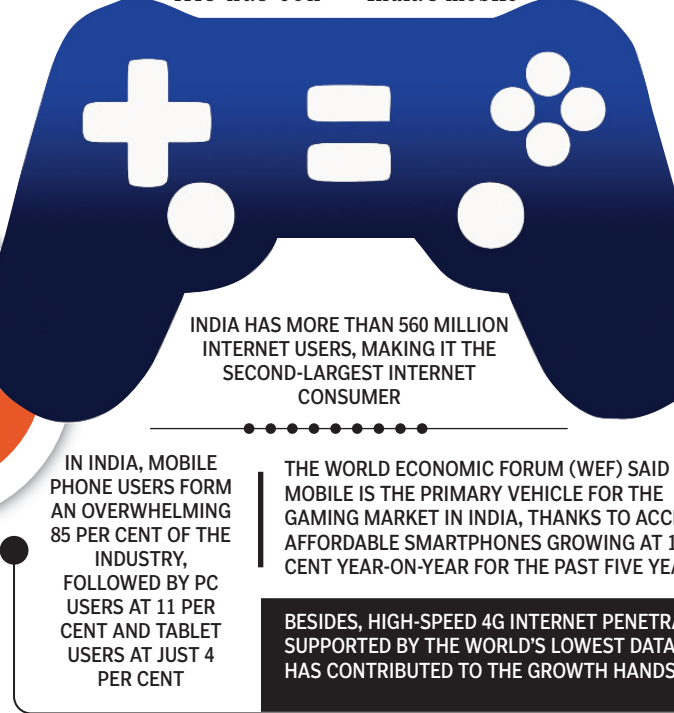
India has more than 560 million internet users, making it the second-largest internet consumer.

In India, mobile phone users form an overwhelming 85 per cent of the industry, followed by PC users at 11 per cent and tablet users at just 4 per cent.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) said mobile is the primary vehicle for the gaming market in India, thanks to access to affordable smartphones growing at 15 per cent year-on-

year for the past five years. Besides, high-speed 4G internet penetration supported by the world's lowest data tariffs has con-

tributed to the growth handsomely. Invest India put out a survey by an AdTech firm which revealed that nearly 45 per cent of India's mobile



It is uplifting to see that the Union Budget has thought about a portion of the long-forthcoming ideas for the AVGC industry while taking note of the solid potential this industry holds for employment generation just as taking 'Make in India' game titles worldwide

SAI SRINIVAS | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, MOBILE PREMIUM LEAGUE

users started playing games on their smartphones during the pandemic.

What also came as a surprise was that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Union Budget this year, announced setting up of a new task force that will look at ways to build domestic capacity and also to serve the global demand in animation, visual effects, gaming and comic (AVGC) sector.

It is uplifting to see that the Union Budget has thought about a portion of the long-forthcoming ideas for the AVGC sector while taking note of the solid potential this industry holds for employment generation just as taking 'Make in India'

game titles worldwide, Sai Srinivas, Co-Founder and CEO, Mobile Premium League, said.

A KPMG report said the number of online gamers in India grew from nearly 250 million in 2018 to about 400 million by the mid of 2020. Growing steadily for the last five years, it is expected to treble in value and reach \$3.9 billion by 2025.

At present, there are more than 400 gaming companies based in India that include Infosys Limited, Hyperlink InfoSystem, Fgfactory and Zensar Technologies among others.

The surge in gaming comes from a growing need for virtual entertainment with friends, family and peer groups, coupled with the rise in influencers encouraging Indians to play more games, the WEF noted.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal 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, Pruthvi 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-Cookiemann-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-977682449, 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.

Booth rigging in Chikiti; locals demand re-polling

SEC TO TAKE A CALL ON RE-ELECTION, SAYS GANJAM COLLECTOR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chikiti, Feb 22: Hundreds of people from various villages of Pitatali panchayat under Chikiti block in Ganjam district staged protests in front of the block office Tuesday, alleging booth rigging at Chairibada village during the second phase of rural polls.

The agitating villagers blocked the road near the block office and demanded re-polling in booth-13 where election was held February 18.

They alleged that some people had beaten up two voters and driven them out of the booth when polling was underway. The booth was rigged while votes of people who are staying abroad were cast by others.



Some locals including sarpanch candidates like P Danabati, K Narsinghamurty, agent Yudhisthir Sethi and S Rajalaxmi had filed a written complaint with block development officer (BDO) Falguni Majhi February 20 about booth rigging. They had demanded action against the people involved in the incident and warned of agitation over the issue if no step was taken in 48 hours.

They had also written to Ganjam Collector, Berhampur sub-collector and the State Election Commission, seeking a re-poll at the booth.

"Since no step was taken over the booth rigging, we had no option than to resort to protests," the local fumed. Over 400 people from Pitatali, Madhabandh, Jagannathpur and Chairibada village took part in the agitation.

The BDO tried to quell the agitators, but the latter refused to relent. Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange visited the spot and said that the decision on re-polling is vested with the SEC. "We have intimated the SEC about the issue. If the SEC orders for re-polling, then their demand will be met," the Collector said.

MOCK DRILL ON FIRE SAFETY



NDRF and fire services personnel along with safety staffers of IOCL take part in a mock drill on disaster management on the premises of Paradip-Haldia-Baruni pipeline plaza at Hidigaon in Balasore, Tuesday

Inmate dies at Kandhamal jail

Phulbani: A jail inmate died while undergoing treatment at Kandhamal district headquarters hospital Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Dandapani Kanhar, 55, of Simijhari village under Phiringia police limits. Kanhar fell sick Monday night and was rushed to the district headquarters hospital. Sources in the jail said that Kanhar died during treatment. He was arrested in connection with ganja smuggling and was in jail since last year. Another jail inmate serving life term had died February 13.

Elderly woman dies in queue for vote

Nilagiri: An elderly woman died at a polling station during the fourth phase of panchayat polls in Berhampur gram panchayat under Nilagiri block of Balasore district Tuesday. The deceased has been identified as Saraswati Barik, 70. According to reports, the incident occurred at booth no-7 in Berhampur village under Nilagiri Block in the morning. Source said that the elderly woman collapsed while standing in queue to cast her vote. She was immediately rushed to the Berhampur PHC, where she was declared dead.

Arrests in Jajpur poll violence reach 98

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Feb 22: Police Tuesday arrested 69 more people for their alleged complicity in brutal attacks on journalists at Binjharpur and booth rigging in parts of the district during the ongoing panchayat elections. With this, the total number of people taken into custody in the district has reached 98.

However, occurrence of such incidents has pointed fingers at the district administration's efficacy in election management. The administration has faced flak from various quarters over poll-related violence.

Meanwhile, various journalists' associations, social activists and cultural outfits have demanded an impartial probe into the incident and expose people with the political affiliations.

Meanwhile, police have started crackdown on those involved in the attack on scribes and other cases. They have arrested 98 people so far in connection with 13 cases.

Jajpur SP Rahul PR stated that 69 more people have been taken into custody in connection with poll-related violence in the district.



FILE PHOTO

All of them were produced in court.

According to the SP, 12 people have been arrested in connection with political violence (case-126/2022) at Bachhalo panchayat under Binjharpur police limits.

Four people were arrested in Jari panchayat; 11 in Mangalpur panchayat under Dasrathpur block; seven in Balichandrapur and Nali panchayats under Barchana block; 13 in Sujapur and Eraba panchayats under Jajpur sadar block; seven in Akarpada panchayat; eight in Goleipur panchayat and seven in Deogda and Arabala panchayats under Dharmasala block.

Police had earlier arrested 29 people over poll violence in the district.

Jajpur SP Rahul PR said 69 more people have been taken into custody in connection with poll-related violence in the district. He also said all of them were produced in the court

Samiti member candidate resorts to black magic

Sajanagarh: In a bizarre incident, a samiti member candidate in Oupada block under Nilagiri area of Balasore reportedly resorted to black magic to win election, Tuesday Police detained him while he was doing sorcery in a forest.

According to villagers, Bholanath Majhi, who is contesting for samiti member post at Shyamsundarpur panchayat, was practicing black magic at a shrine in Kuldihia forest to taste success in the polls. Locals informed the police who rushed to the forest and rescued him.

As the matter came to the fore,



tension flared up near booth no-10. As a result, polling was stalled for two hours.

Nilagiri IIC Droupadi Das said Majhi has refuted the allegation and said he was doing a drama. The IIC said that action would be taken against people who were responsible for disruption in polling.

Farmers fume over procurement woes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balikuda, Feb 22: Farmers in Balikuda area of Jagatsinghpur district are sore over non-lifting of paddy by the millers though procurement had started way back in December last year.

The farmers alleged that the procurement process is not going on as per norms.

As per sources, the district-level procurement committee had decided to procure paddy through 21 cooperative societies in the block. Over 10,000 farmers in Balikuda block have registered online for procurement. However, most of the tokens issued to them have become invalid, it was alleged.

However, farmers of these localities alleged that the mandis have been opened for once or twice since then. During that period, five to 10 farmers each have been able to sell their paddy, but the district administration did not take any action in the lapses at the mandis, farmers alleged. They also pointed out that tokens issued to many farmers have expired.

A delegation of farmers has sub-



FILE PHOTO

Over 10,000 farmers in Balikuda block have registered online for paddy procurement but most of the tokens issued to them have become invalid, it was alleged

mitted a memorandum to the block civil supplies officer about the procurement problems.

Meanwhile, some farmers' leaders have warned of agitation over the issue.

30K Bengali voters hold key to Mahakalapara polls

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapara, Feb 22: As many as 30,000 Bengali voters residing in 11 panchayats will play a decisive role in the outcome of polls for zilla parishad (ZP) zone no-22 and 23 under this block in Kendrapara district, a report said.

These two zones comprising 11 panchayats and having over 69,000 voters will go to polls February 24. Of the total number of voters, more than 30,000 are Bengalis. While zone 22 has over 35,000 voters, zone 23 has more than 34,000 voters, said sources.

Candidates of various political parties are adopting different strategies to lure these Bengali voters to win the elections.

According to sources, over 10,000 traditional fishermen reside in Batighar, Kharinasi, Ramnagar, Petachhela, Baulakani, Jambu, Suniti, Nanjura, Gagua, Kansar and Bada Dandua panchayats under the block. On the other hand,



ZP zones 22 and 23 comprising 11 panchayats and having over 69,000 voters will go to polls February 24

Of the total number of voters, more than 30,000 are Bengalis

Bengali and fishermen voters of these two zones are grappling with two main issues

The issues are curbs imposed on fishing in the marine sanctuary area and unavailability of permanent land pattas to the Bengali voters residing on forest lands for years

Bengali and fishermen voters of these two zones are grappling with two main issues

They are: Restrictions imposed on fishing in the marine sanctuary area and unavailability of permanent land pattas to the Bengali voters residing on for-

est lands for years.

According to locals, during every election various political parties promise them the moon but forget them once the election is over. These two problems are always haunting the fishermen and Bengali voters.

However, not to rest with, the ruling BJD, which has been wining from these two zones, is leaving no stone unturned to win the elections. Appu Parida from BJD, Saroj Kanta Sahu from BJP and Braja Mohan Mandal from Congress are contesting from zone-22. BJD's Kabita Mallick won from this zone with more than 11,000 votes in 2017 panchayat polls.

Similarly, from ZP zone no-23, Mrutyunjaya Mandal from BJD, Sashi Kanta Parida from BJP, Narottam Partha Sarathi from CPM and Sushil Senapati from Congress and an independent are contesting from this zone. BJD's Madhavi Lata Haldar won from this zone in 2017 panchayat polls.

Election observers said that the going will be tough for BJD as BJP is giving a tough fight to the ruling party in the panchayat polls. BJD candidates have realised this reality and are pulling out all the stops to protect their citadel in these two zones.

Tipsy pharmacist attacks patient

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rupsa, Feb 22: A pharmacist, under the influence of alcohol, allegedly attacked a person with a liquor bottle and abused him at Idda primary health centre under Singla police limits of Balasore Tuesday. Police started an investigation into the matter.

According to reports, pharmacist Subhasis Tudu was drunk while on duty in the morning. Prashant Ghadei, a resident of Dandi village, was in the hospital to get vaccinated for Covid-19.

As Ghadei asked Tudu about vaccination, the latter was infuriated and attacked the former with a liquor bottle. Ghadei sustained deep injuries on his hands and legs. Later, the drunken pharmacist started attacking other people in the hospital.

On being informed, police rushed to the hospital and overpowered the accused pharmacist. He was brought to the police station. A few days ago, the pharmacist



Detained pharmacist

in a drunken state had attacked some patients with swords.

Locals along with sarpanch Debiprasad Bhanj have lodged a written complaint with the medical officer of Basta CHC, seeking transfer of the pharmacist.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We, (1) Lambodar Dhananjay Patel and (2) Ms. Snehalata Lambodar Patel (Naik), R/o. Biju Nagar, Ward No.09, P.O.- Industrial Estate, Jharsuguda, Odisha-768203, state that Mr. Arpan Lambodar Patel is our son and that is residing at Mumbai and since he is not on talking terms and visiting terms and neglected us and we have disinherited him and we have ceased our relations with him and we shall not be responsible about his any act litigation in any manner. We shall not be questionable about the acts of said Arpan Lambodar Patel who is our son. Nor we are responsible of his transactions Jharsuguda, Odisha
Lambodar Dhananjay Patel
Ms. Snehalata Lambodar Patel (Naik)
Dated- 4/2/22

DOCUMENTS LOST

This is to inform the general public that Smt. B. Krishnaveni, the proprietor of M/s Meenkashi Rice and Flour Mill, Kumuliput, has availed certain credit facilities from SBI, Jeypore Branch by mortgaging immovable properties in her name. While shifting branch premises from Surya Mahal, Jeypore to MG road, Jeypore the following properties documents have been misplaced during transit some-where. Sri K. Balaji, Chief Manager, SBI, Jeypore Branch and his staff searched the documents but could not findout. So they filed a report at Jeypore Town Police station on 11.02.2022.

Details of the document : 1) Mouza: Kumuliput, Khata No.: 52/174, Plot No.: 84/351, Rsd. No.: 1954/03 & 3491/91, Area: Ac.0.04 dec. in the name of B. Krishna Veni
2) Mouza: Kumuliput, Khata No.: 52/174, Plot No.: 65/1/349, RSD No.: 1954/03 & 3491/91, Area: Ac.0.02 dec. in the name of B. Krishna Veni
3) Mouza: Kumuliput, Khata No.: 52/46 & 52/90, Plot No.: 84/202 & 84/203, RSD No.: 3282/84, Rectification No.: 77/85, RSD No. 2713/93, RSD No.: 3283/84, Rectification No.: 76/85, Area: Ac.0.05 dec. & Ac.0.05 dec both in the name of B. Krishna Veni
4) Mouza: Perahandi, Khata No.: 55/206, 31, 57 & 69/337, RSD No.: 51/06, Area: Ac.4.14 dec. in the name of B. Krishna Veni.
If anybody have found the same please inform to Jeypore Town PS immediately
Sd/- Deponent

Clamour for 1,000-yr-old Raibania fort facelift

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Feb 22: Hundreds of locals have demanded development and beautification of the historic Raibania fort in Balasore district. Despite being a place of much interest for historians, researchers, scholars and tourists as well, the millennium-old fort has not been given due importance, they alleged.

"The 1,000-year-old Raibania fort located under Jaleswar tehsil will be renovated soon. Odisha government has sanctioned funds for repair of the South Gate of the ancient structure to give it a new look," state Culture and Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi had said during his visit to the site in July 2019.

However, little progress has been made in this regard since Panigrahi's visit. A lot more needs to be done to develop the tourist destination, the locals rued.

Raibania fort dates back to King Virat of Matsya Kingdom who reigned during Mahabharat Era.



IN A NUTSHELL

Raibania fort had played a significant role in thwarting invaders during the reign of Odia kings and helped in establishing their dominance in West Bengal

The fort was providing security from invasion of Mughols, Afghans and Marathas
It was then being regarded as the largest fort of eastern India

Initially, the fort spread over six square miles and it was a five-cornered gigantic structure, encircled by walls on which a horseman could ride easily to keep a watch on enemies.

Raibania fort had played a significant role in thwarting invaders during the reign of Odia kings and helped in establishing their dominance in West Bengal. It has structural remains such as the Jayachandi

shrine, Jagannath Temple, observation towers and over 50 ponds.

The fort was providing security from invasion of Mughols, Afghans and Marathas. It was then being regarded as the largest fort of eastern India. The fort had previously three gates - the eastern one was called Singhadwar, the western Hatidwar and the southern Sunamukhidwar. The remains of only two gates can be seen now, the source added. Goddess Kichakeswari was previously worshipped in a temple inside the fort.

As a legend goes, there was a huge meadow spreading from Raibania to Kaptipada in Mayurbhanj district. A ruler of Mayurbhanj belonging to Bhanja Dynasty had relocated the deity from here to Khiching in the district and subsequently established the goddess there. Raibania fort is situated about 65 km from Balasore district headquarters and 14 km from Jaleswar tehsil.

Notably, Raibania fort was a cen-

tre for training of soldiers as well as the cavalry and elephantry in between 1238 and 1264 AD. Large number of war horses and elephants along with nearly 5,000 soldiers were stationed in the fort. A deep water body called Gadakhai had surrounded the fort, as per historians.



अखिल भारतीय आयुर्वेद संस्थान
ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF AYURVEDA (AIIA)
(आयुष मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के अन्तर्गत स्वायत्त संस्थान)
(An Autonomous Organization under the Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India)

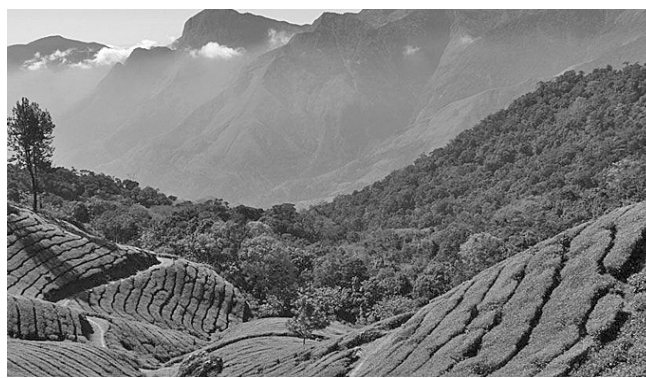
NOTIFICATION for Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programs 2022-23

- Applications are invited for admission in Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programs in various disciplines of Ayurveda at All India Institute of Ayurveda under University of Delhi. The desirous candidates of seeking admission to the aforesaid programs may apply for the same through www.aiaa.gov.in.
- The online application form will be available on the entrance examination portal from 15th February, 2022. The last date for submission of online application is 15th March 2022.
- Candidates are requested to go through Ph.D. Bulletin from the website before applying for Ph.D. Program.
- Ph.D. Entrance Test will be held on 03rd April 2022. Please see for detailed description of Entrance Exam on portal www.aiaa.gov.in.

davp 17219/12/0004/2122 **Director, AIIA**

FOCUS AMENDMENTS TO BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ACT

A BLOW TO BIO-DIVERSITY



This is a classic case of facilitating the misappropriation and centralised accumulation of resources, in the hands of the now powerful AYUSH firms, away from communities – tantamounting to biopiracy

These amendments create a parallel post to the Chairperson, called the 'Member-Secretary' and makes her the convener and coordinator of the NBA. Curiously, this post has almost identical powers and functions to the Chairperson. This raises questions about the intention behind this amendment – particularly the design to end the independence of the NBA.

As per these amendments, the centralisation is also set to happen in the three-tier model. According to the Act, the local body and the locals are key stakeholders in determining the nature and amount of benefit sharing. However, the recent amendments undermine the importance given to the local body (Biodiversity Management Committee) by providing that it shall be 'represented by the National Biodiversity Board' in these negotiations. The actual holders of the traditional knowledge are no longer a party to the determination of benefits due to them. Thus, it ignores the critical features of environmental legislation – consultation with local communities to assess their impact.

Recent reports suggest that India supports a legally-binding UN treaty to preserve biodiversity in oceans and eliminate single-use plastic. While the international posturing of the government has been pro-climate, Indian environmental governance is being diluted in the name of ease of doing business. From the proposed dilution of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment policy to everyday executive orders, which hollow out the Forest Rights Act, 2006, the government compromises the environment to secure industry interests. The focus in the budget speech on single-window environmental clearance is a cause for concern when looked at from this perspective. Scholars suggest that environmental regulation should be 'slow' to hear the concerns of affected communities and ecosystems adequately. Prioritising speed results in shoddy decisions that threaten communities and the planet.

Amlan Mishra is a final year law student at NLU, Jodhpur with a keen interest in social justice and environmental issues. Dhanada Kanta is an academician and civil engineer with an interest in sustainability and climate change.

When foreign firms tried to patent the Indian Basmati rice, turmeric, neem or Darjeeling tea and their usage known traditionally for ages, rightly there was widespread resentment, and the government did its best to oppose such patents from being granted. One should be just as agitated if healing traditions indigenous to Odisha are appropriated and commercialised by big AYUSH companies, without any benefit accruing to the region – some of them only Indian by name, if at all. The recently proposed amendments to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, offer just that and worse.

When passed, the Bio-diversity Act (2002) was viewed with scepticism by various sections of the society, for it provided access to traditional knowledge guarded zealously by local communities. The UN's 1992 Convention for Biological Diversity, which forms the basis for this Act, has three objectives – conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources are complementary and mutually beneficial reinforcing. The second objective of 'use' (access) of these resources by outsiders raised eyebrows because it triggered memories of misappropriation of knowledge by colonial or feudal overlords – now well documented. But this was sought to be mitigated by the first and third provisions, i.e., conservation of biodiversity and sharing benefits accrued from such access. There was some hope that the Act would also benefit local communities by improving expenditure in preserving biodiversity and ensuring sustainable development.

The Act also sought to regulate the commercialisation of these traditional resources. It provided for a three-tier set of institutions to perform this crucial gatekeeping function at the national, state and local levels. It also provided a mechanism for disbursement of gains from using these resources to the local community. Thus, by and large, it guarded against the use and patenting of Indian knowledge systems by big pharma companies. Companies with foreign equity were barred from research or commercially utilising tradi-

tional resources without special permission.

The recently proposed changes are unabashed in facilitating 'access' to resources to AYUSH companies by making the aforementioned gatekeeping mechanism inapplicable to them. The Act's preamble invokes the idea of 'benefit sharing' and the development of local communities. Still, it gives broad exemptions to these companies from this mandatory benefit sharing.

First, the definition of a 'foreign company' has been changed to only include companies incorporated outside India. Thus, companies with significant foreign investment can avoid the previous regulatory requirement of seeking permission from the National Biodiversity Authority for their research. Notably, 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment is now permissible in the AYUSH sector – meaning that certain AYUSH companies are 'Indian' in name only.

Secondly, all 'Indians' have been exempted from seeking permission to research 'codified traditional knowledge.' This means that Indian companies can research local resources for monetary gain, even without sharing benefits with local communities. Thus the fundamental basis of the biodiversity convention – of having a mutually reinforcing relationship between the local community and the entity accessing the resources – falls apart.

Third, earlier, only local grow-

ers, cultivators, vaidas and hakims who practice the indigenous medicine were exempt from taking permission for commercial utilisation under this Act, as the resources belonged to them collectively. This very clearly excluded AYUSH companies.

In 2020, the Uttarakhand High Court had clarified that Divya Pharmacy-Patanjali Yog Peeth (Baba Ramdev's pharmacy) would also have to seek permission from the State Biodiversity Authority for its research. It must share the profits from commercial utilisation of the research with local communities – echoing that it is not exempt from the Act.

These amendments attempt to clearly and directly circumvent this decision by adding 'AYUSH practitioners' to the set of 'people who are exempt from the rigours of the Act. Hence any AYUSH firm shall now have free access to research and commercially utilise resources of remote communities, again without any benefit sharing. This is a classic case of facilitating the misappropriation and centralised accumulation of resources, in the hands of the now powerful AYUSH firms, away from communities – tantamounting to biopiracy.

Earlier, the National Biodiversity Authority was supposed to be a semi-independent body of scientists and conservationists who understood the impact of their actions. Even though it was under the direction of the Central government, there was no scope for day-to-day meddling in its affairs.



Amlan Mishra & Dhanada Kanta

WHILE THE INTERNATIONAL POSTURING OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PRO-CLIMATE, INDIAN ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE IS BEING DILUTED IN THE NAME OF EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

One of the chief obstacles to the establishment of a progressive harmony is our eagerness to prove to an opponent that he is wrong and we are right.

THE MOTHER



Bicycle Kick

It is unfortunate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi equated the Samajwadi Party's poll symbol – the bicycle – with those used to plant bombs by terrorists in Ahmedabad. The reference to Ahmedabad holds special significance at this moment because a trial Court has sentenced as many as 38 Moslems to death for the bomb blasts in that city in 2008. It appears he was enthused by the fact that the judicial verdict may create the impression that his party-ruled state can bring to book terrorists with firmness.

This analogy shows the level to which the BJP has stooped during the ongoing crucial election to the UP Assembly. It has lowered the dignity of the chair of the Prime Minister. Earlier, PM Modi had remarked on a poll battle between "shamshan (crematorium) and kabarstan (grave)." It must have been difficult for many to understand the reference to death concerning two religious groups. Apart from morbidity, it could also be said that the Chief Executive of the country has to be very careful about the language he uses in public, which could easily be misconstrued. Although, there is no ambiguity about what the PM wanted to communicate. But, this time, by mocking the poll symbol of Samajwadi Party, the primary opposition to the BJP in UP, and connecting it to a terror attack, thereby insinuating that SP is a party of terrorists, the PM may have crossed the critical line which should have attracted action by the Election Commission.

Addressing a public meeting in Hardoi, where polling is scheduled February 23 in the fourth phase, Modi also targeted the previous SP government for deciding to withdraw cases against some of those accused of terror attacks in the state. Referring to the Ahmedabad blasts, when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat, Modi said that he had taken a pledge "with that blood soaked soil" that his government would find the terrorists "even in hell and punish them."

The objectionable part of his speech was his assertion that the Ahmedabad terrorists had used bicycles to plant bombs before the blast and he was surprised why the SP preferred bicycle as its electoral symbol. It is interesting to observe the Prime Minister raise such a question. On 26 July 2008, Ahmedabad witnessed 22 blasts which killed 56 people and injured 246 more. The blasts were carried out with the help of explosives planted in buses, cars and even bicycles. Drawing such far-fetched connection just to deride a political opponent seems immature. Every Indian is aware that the bicycle is the only and preferred mode of transport for the poor of this country. The bicycle has no gender or religion. Today, the bicycle is globally considered the most non-polluting method of transport that offers the user an additional benefit of exercise for good health. While insinuating that the cycle is connected to terrorism, the PM is not insulting a political party but pointing fingers at the millions of bicycle users who pedal daily to work, school and back home. It is noteworthy that BJP state governments since way back in 2011 have distributed bicycles to students.

SP president Akhilesh Yadav responded in a dignified manner to Modi's remarks and retorted that the BJP did not seem to know that the bicycle is used by the poor, labourers and youth of the country. He said that the people are angry with the BJP and want to "give it a 440-volt shock" which is why the party's top leaders are making "cheap statements." AAP leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also told a Lucknow rally that the PM's remarks were an "attack on the poor who ride bicycles."

The Election Commission was an institution on which Indians prided themselves. It was the symbol of a strong democracy in this country. Other countries took advice from the ECI to conduct elections. This image has been consistently getting tarnished, more so the way the ECI conducted itself during Bihar and West Bengal elections. The last nail on the coffin seemed to be hammered in when all the Election Commissioners dutifully attended a meeting summoned by the Prime Minister's office shortly before the Uttar Pradesh and other state elections were declared. The Prime Minister's speech about the bicycle bombs was a golden opportunity for the ECI to redeem itself and act. Had it banned the Prime Minister from campaigning for even a day, it would have proven that institutions are larger than any individual. Unfortunately, India has not been lucky to have people with spine in most positions of power.

Piate
Tathagata Satpathy

WISDOM CORNER

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

After all, science is essentially international, and it is only through lack of the historical sense that national qualities have been attributed to it.
MARIE CURIE

The liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization. It was greatest before there was any civilization.
SIGMUND FREUD

WORDSWORTH

Satisficer

The idea here is the paradox of choice. The classic story is the one about the donkey which was placed exactly halfway between two bales of hay. Unable to decide which one of the two bales was the more enticing, the poor animal starved to death. The modern equivalent is supermarket shelves laden with two dozen varieties of tomato sauce or twenty sorts of bread or shops with dozens of styles of trainers or jeans. The burden of having to decide among myriad options has been shown to leave people dissatisfied, stressed and miserable about the choice they finally make – perhaps one of the others was better? A satisficer, on the other hand, is content with the idea that good is good enough. If the pair of jeans fits and wears well or the tomato sauce tastes pretty good then that's fine. Another choice might have been better but almost certainly not so much better that the hassle of testing all the possibilities was worth the time and trouble. Though the word is often applied to the consumerist lifestyle in developed countries, the American economist and Nobel laureate Herbert Simon coined it more than half a century ago in more general terms. His original creation was satisfice, a conflation of satisfy and suffice, which appeared first in an article in 1956. He extended his ideas the following year in his books Administrative Behavior and Models of Man. His discussion was directed at all forms of decision making, in which he argued that people showed what he called bounded rationality. Contrary to the conventional view of economists, people don't seek to maximise the benefit they get from some course of action because in most cases they don't have all the facts or too much information would overwhelm them. The best situation may not be, as might be thought, to have no choice at all (which brings problems of its own), but to have a relatively limited range of choices that makes it feasible to select the most appropriate.

LOL

You're back again?



The judge said to the defendant: "I thought I told you I never wanted to see you in here again."

"that's what I tried to tell the police, but they wouldn't listen."

IN JEST THIS

Animals aren't trained to recycle plastic



Melvin Durai

CONSUMING JUST ONE PLASTIC BAG CAN INCREASE YOUR RISK OF EARLY DEATH TO THE SAME DEGREE AS BADMOUTHING VLADIMIR PUTIN ON THE STREETS OF MOSCOW

Wildlife journalist Ranjeet Jadhav recently shared a video taken near a village inside Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Maharashtra. The video showed a young leopard moving around cautiously with its head stuck inside a large plastic jar.

"Irresponsible behaviour of tourist and people venturing into forest to party is posing a grave threat to the wild animals," Jadhav tweeted.

The "irresponsible behaviour" was tossing a plastic jar in a place where an animal could easily find it. The jar probably had a little water in it, but it doesn't take much to arouse an animal's curiosity. If you don't believe me, just search online for the video of the two bears that came across some boys playing football in Nabarangpur district, Odisha. The bears started playing with the ball and then ran off with it into the forest, where last I heard, they have formed their own football league.

Trust me, if you conducted a study by leaving large plastic jars

in the forest and allowing 10 random animals to come across them, nine out of 10 would get their heads stuck in the jars. And the 10th animal would take a video and share it on Twitter.

The video of the leopard quickly reached forest officials and animal welfare groups, who mounted a search involving about 30 people. Two days later, they tracked down the leopard, tranquilised it and removed the plastic jar. The leopard was dehydrated and needed treatment before being returned to the wild.

One reporter did manage to get a short interview with the leopard. Reporter: "What was it like, being trapped in a jar?"

Leopard: "It was very jarring."

A growing number of animals, unfortunately, are being affected by plastic waste, not just in India but throughout the world. They're not just getting trapped or entangled in plastic, they're also ingesting plastic—sometimes in great quantities. This is terrible for at least three reasons: (1) plastic tastes

awful; (2) plastic has no nutritional value; and (3) consuming just one plastic bag can increase your risk of early death to the same degree as badmouthing Vladimir Putin on the streets of Moscow. As they say in Russia, "No bagging on Putin or Putin bagging in your stomach."

Three years ago, a marine biologist found about 40 kg of plastic, including 16 rice sacks and numerous plastic bags, inside the stomach of a whale that had washed up in the Philippines. Whoever dumped all those rice sacks and plastic bags in the ocean is extremely lucky that whales cannot afford to hire lawyers.

But humans need to be held accountable for all the plastic that's polluting oceans. About 80 per cent of it is being dumped by Asian countries, with India among the top culprits, but the United States and other western countries are more culpable than they appear.

The US generates more plastic trash than any other country, but conveniently ships a large quantity of it for "recycling" to Asian coun-

tries, where much of it makes its way, via rivers, into the oceans. I'm not sure who is supposed to do the actual "recycling," but the animals in the ocean have not undergone adequate training to do so. This is just an assumption on my part, of course. I have not verified their credentials or observed what they're learning in all those schools of fish.

Dolphins and whales are among the smartest mammals in the ocean, and we might be able to train some of them to recycle, perhaps by putting large recycling containers in the ocean. But there are too many creatures in the ocean and many of them just won't bother to recycle.

Dolphin: "Don't let that plastic bag float around. Bring it to the recycling container."

Shark: "Are you talking to me?"

Dolphin: "No, I'm just talking to myself."

Shark: "You need to see my therapist."

Dolphin: "I can't afford to."

Shark: "Of course you can. He accepts plastic."

Tall task at hand

Sir, This refers to "Time for change: Maha, T'gana CMs", Orissa POST, Feb 21. Telangana CM K Chandrashekhara Rao (KCR) flew down to Mumbai Sunday and held talks with Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray and NCP leader Sharad Pawar to forge an anti-BJP front. KCR has also held telephonic talks with several other prominent regional leaders. The motivation is understandable. With the Congress in doldrums, the national opposition space appears wide open. The regional parties have learnt that the more localised the election becomes, the more vulnerable the national party is to regional vagaries. The BJP's expansion into new frontiers has also alarmed regional leaders that they need to be proactive to protect their turf. KCR's forays come as the BJP emerges as the principal Opposition party in Telangana – overshadowing the Congress. But the challenges for any such front are formidable. With general elections becoming more presidential, it will be tough for regional parties to do well against the BJP's strategy of making the Lok Sabha polls a referendum on PM Modi, the most popular national leader. No regional formation has gained power in Delhi without the backing of a national party, and voters are becoming adept at making distinct national and state choices. In December 2018, Congress trounced BJP in Assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, but the BJP swept in Parliament elections held just a couple of months later. Also, there are perennial problems among regional leaders such as egotism, personality clashes, and contradictory regional priorities, which means that most attempts remain still-born. KCR and others have a tall task at hand.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Cricket controversies

Sir, Controversies are part and parcel of Indian cricket. Even the elicit captains play dirty politics in removal of certain players and Wriddhiman Saha is one such case. India's head coach Rahul Dravid is not at all hurt that veteran wicket keeper Wriddhiman Saha has revealed a classified conversation that he had on his future but at the same time wanted to give the Bengal stumper clarity about his position in the team. In India, cricket and controversies go hand in glove and this is yet another example of dirty politics in the BCCI. Sourav Ganguly as BCCI president seems to lack a moral sense of what is his role as he interferes with the matters of daily duties of the team, thus creating a conflict of interest and chaos in cricketing administration.
CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI

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, Rasulpur Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

of the day quote

The coronavirus pandemic has not ended yet. Question is being asked for how long we need to keep wearing masks. It is difficult to comment on it at this point. We need to use this time (when cases are declining) to ramp up vaccination

Diwali used to come in Uttar Pradesh earlier also but why there was no Deepotsav in Ayodhya? Even Krishna Janmashtami used to come earlier but why was Mathura not decorated? Why even Varanasi was not decorated on Dev Deepavali earlier? Now all this is happening under the BJP rule. This is the power of your vote

Samajwadi Party works for a particular area and particular community. Due to riots during the Samajwadi Party rule, the situation used to be always tense

SHORT TAKES

Four-year-old raped by minor

Badaun: A four-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her minor cousin, who lives in the same village, in Uttar Pradesh's Badaun district. When the victim narrated her ordeal to her mother, her family filed an FIR Monday. The accused was detained and produced before the juvenile justice board, while the girl has been sent for medical treatment. The girl belongs to a family of farmers and the accused is a student of class 7.

Major power outages in C'garh

Chandigarh: Many residential and industrial parts of the city faced major power outages as employees of the Electricity Department went on a three-day strike from Monday night in protest against the privatisation of the department. Most of the places have been facing snapping of power since midnight. Even elective surgeries at the Government Medical College Hospital in Sector 32 (GMCH 32) have been postponed.

Youth sets himself ablaze

Srinagar: A youth set himself ablaze Tuesday during a demolition drive in J&K's Ganderbal district. Police sources said that during the demolition of an illegally constructed complex at Gund Rahman village in the district, a youth identified as Amir Ahmad Shah sustained burn injuries after he set himself ablaze. Sources said the youth has been shifted to Srinagar for specialised treatment. The person set himself on fire when the demolition drive was being conducted and the officials tried to raze his family's newly-constructed complex on government land.

18 CISF personnel hurt in road mishap

New Delhi: The officials in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Tuesday said that 18 of its troopers got injured when the bus in which they were travelling turned turtle after an accident in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri. The accident happened Monday night. There were 38 security personnel travelling in the bus provided by the district administration and they were heading to Lakhimpur Kheri from Shikohabad for the next round of poll Wednesday, the CISF officials further said.



This is not an ordinary assembly election but polls to save the democracy and change the fate of Uttar Pradesh
AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

PM CARES FOR CHILDREN SCHEME EXTENDED

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has extended the PM CARES for Children Scheme till February 28, 2022. Earlier, the scheme was valid till December 31, 2021. The ministry said that a letter in this regard has been sent to all Principal Secretaries, Secretaries, Women and Child Development, Social Justice & Empowerment Department of all states and UTs with a copy to all District Magistrates for necessary action



PEGASUS SNOOPING CASE

SC postpones hearing to Friday

The top court October 27 last year said it was compelled to take up the cause to determine the truth, as it appointed an independent expert technical committee supervised by a retired top court judge, Justice RV Raveendran, to probe the Pegasus snooping allegations



New Delhi, Feb 22: The Supreme Court Tuesday agreed to hear the case relating to the Pegasus surveillance scandal February 25, after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta requested for a new date before the Chief Justice NV Ramana, pointing out that he is supposed to be arguing a different part-heard case Wednesday.

February 23. The panel had earlier said that only two people submitted their mobile phones with it for forensic examination. The technical committee to devise its own procedure to effectively implement and answer the terms of reference. The committee can hold an investigation it deems fit and take statements of any person in connection with the inquiry and call for records of any authority or individual.

The Pegasus panel, appointed by the Supreme Court, have submitted an interim report appraising the apex court about the progress on the probe. The matter was listed for hearing before a bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana and comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli

Justice Raveendran is overseeing the functioning of the technical committee and he is assisted by Alok Joshi, former IPS officer and Dr Sundeep Oberoi, Chairman, Sub Committee in International Organisation of

Six held in connection with Bajrang Dal activist's murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shivamogga, Feb 22: Six people have been arrested in connection with Bajrang Dal activist Harsha murder case here while some are at large, a senior police officer said Tuesday, as stray incidents of arson and violence were reported in the city this morning. The victim's sister rued the "brutal" manner in which Harsha was killed and appealed to people to give up fanaticism. She also wondered if there was no value for humanity. The 28 year-old Harsha was stabbed to death Sunday night here leading to clamping of prohibitory order even as the city witnessed arson, violence and stone pelting.

"We have arrested Mohammed Kashif, Syed Nadeem, Ashifullah Khan, Rehan Khan, Nehal and Abdul Afnan in connection with the case. All are aged between 20 to 22 years, except Kashif who is 32. They are all residents of Shivamogga," Superintendent of Police B M Lakshmi Prasad told reporters. Meanwhile, the activist's sister, Ashwini said she has been receiving photos and videos from unknown mobile phone numbers of her brother lying dead in a pool of blood. "My brother always used to chant 'Jai Sri Ram' and is now no more. Is this the brutal way a person should be killed. Don't they have family members at home. Isn't there any value for humanity," she told reporters. Ashwini asked people to give up fanaticism.



LET'S VISIT TAJ: Women cover their heads as they visit the Taj Mahal during a sunny day in Agra

Petitioner alleges her brother was attacked by mob; 3 detained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Udupi, Feb 22: One of the petitioners in the Hijab case in the Karnataka High Court, Hazra Shifa, has alleged that a mob attacked her brother and "our property was ruined", following which three people have been detained. Reports said the window glasses of the family-run restaurant in nearby Malpe was broken in the incident Monday night. A case has

been registered at Malpe police station, and the police are conducting an investigation "Three persons have been taken into custody in connection with the assault and targeting of the restaurant", police sources said. "My brother was brutally attacked by a mob. Just because I continue to stand for My #Hijab which is MY RIGHT. Our property was ruined as well. Why?? Can't I demand my right? Who will be

HIJAB CASE

their next victim? I demand action to be taken against the Sangh Parivar goons," Shifa tweeted. According to Shifa, her 20-year-old brother - Saif - is admitted to Hitech Hospital, Udupi. The full bench of the Karnataka High Court comprising Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, Justice J M Khazi and Justice Krishna S Dixit is hearing

the case where some Muslim girls are demanding that they be allowed to wear hijab in classrooms. On January one, six girl students of a college in Udupi attended a press conference held by the Campus Front of India (CFI) in the coastal town protesting against the college authorities denying them entry into classrooms wearing hijab. This was four days after they requested the principal permission to wear hijab in classes

which was not allowed. Till then, students used to wear the headscarf to the campus, but entered the classroom after removing it, college principal Rudre Gowda had said. "The institution did not have any rule on hijab-wearing as such and since no one used to wear it to the classroom in the last 35 years. The students who came with the demand had the backing of outside forces," Gowda had said.

RAE BARELI SADAR

UP Assembly seat dominated by one family since 1993

THE SEAT IN THE HIGH-PROFILE CONGRESS BASTION WAS LAST OUTSIDE THE FAMILY IN 1991--WHEN THE JANATA DAL AND THE JANATA PARTY WERE TOP CONTENDERS AND INDIA YET TO OPEN EYES TO A MORE LIBERAL ECONOMY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rae Bareli (UP), Feb 22: Whether it was represented by the Congress, Peace Party, BJP or an Independent, the Rae Bareli Sadar seat has remained within one family for almost three decades now. The segment is part of the parliamentary seat held by Congress president Sonia Gandhi. It's the family of the five-term MLA, the late Akhilesh Singh, and his daughter Aditi Singh, both of whom have had their trysts with the Congress and the Gandhi family.

The seat in the high-profile Congress bastion was last outside the family in 1991--when the Janata Dal and the Janata Party were top contenders and India yet to open eyes to a more liberal economy. Last week, just days ahead of the February 23 Assembly polls here, Aditi Singh (34) made an emotional appeal to voters, launching on social media a short documentary of his father. She seeks another term to fulfil his dreams for Rae Bareli. She was elected as a Congress candidate in 2017 but switched over to the BJP in 2021, after a bout of attacks on the

grand old party, which boasted of familial ties with Rae Bareli since the Indira Gandhi days. This time, Aditi Singh's appeal in poll campaigns focused on the "rich legacy" of her father, who passed away in August 2019 due to cancer. The Samajwadi Party, which has fielded RP Yadav, a grassroots-level party worker, dubbed Akhilesh Singh's regime as a "legacy tainted and mired in crime" and claimed it would take the seat out of the family clutches in this election. The Congress too has launched an all-out campaign against Aditi



Aditi Singh (FILE) photo Singh, calling her a betrayer: It has fielded Manish Chauhan, an eminent doctor with political lineage

in the city. "In 1993, there were discussions about Akhilesh Singh contesting the elections from Rae Bareli (Sadar). No one had any idea that Akhilesh Singh, who was fighting his first poll, would become the cornerstone of Rae Bareli's politics in times to come," says the documentary on Akhilesh Singh. "His relation with people was such that no equation could cut him off from people. Whichever party had a wave in UP, Rae Bareli would choose Akhilesh Singh only," the documentary added. Considered a strongman, Akhilesh Singh had

declared being accused in eight criminal cases including one case each of murder and extortion, while five of intimidation, according to his 2012 election affidavit. His electoral campaign began in 1993, when he contested as the Congress candidate and won. He continued his winning streak in 1996 and 2002 also but after that relations between him and the Congress soured. Akhilesh Singh was expelled from the Congress but he fought the 2007 election as an independent candidate, winning by 76,603 votes.

Mamata writes to Modi on Ganga erosion

BANERJEE URGED THE PM TO HAVE THE MATTER LOOKED INTO SERIOUSLY SO THAT FLOOD MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION SCHEMES CAN BE CARRIED OUT IN THE RIGHT EARNEST TO SAVE LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS FROM DISASTER

Kolkata, Feb 22: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing concern over the continuous erosion along the Ganga in Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia districts and urged him to look into the issue so that flood management and restoration schemes can be carried out in earnest to save lives and livelihoods from disaster.

She said that erosion along the Ganga for the past two decades after the construction of Farakka barrage has led to loss of public utilities, private properties and agricultural land. There has been adverse impact on Ganga-Padma erosion in context of the Indo-Bangladesh Ganga Treaty of 1996, both downstream and upstream of Farakka, in the districts of Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia, she wrote.

Banerjee also sought reconsideration of the Centre's decision in 2017 to withdraw the extended jurisdiction of Farakka Barrage Project Authority (FBPA) for protection of the river bank from further erosion.

Almost 2,800 hectares of fertile land have been engulfed by the river and there have been damage to public and private properties to the tune of Rs 1,000 crore during the last 15 years, her letter said.

The erosion has caused loss of thousands of square kilometres of land, she said in her letter dated February 21 which was made available to the media Tuesday.

Banerjee urged the PM to have the matter looked into seriously so that flood management and restoration schemes can be carried out in the right earnest to save lives and livelihood from disaster.

The chief minister said that perpetual flood and erosion along trans-boundary rivers like Mahananda, Fulhar, Tangon, Atrayee and Purnabhava are also a major cause for erosion in 21 blocks of Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda

A bilateral treaty was signed between India and Bangladesh in December, 1996, establishing a 30-year water-sharing arrangement. Banerjee said that the erstwhile ministry of water resources had in 2005 extended the jurisdiction



BARRAGE OF ISSUES

Banerjee sought reconsideration of the Centre's decision in 2017 to withdraw the extended jurisdiction of Farakka Barrage Project Authority (FBPA) for protection of the river bank from further erosion in 21 blocks of Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda districts

There has been adverse impact on Ganga-Padma erosion in context of the Indo-Bangladesh Ganga Treaty of 1996, both downstream and upstream of Farakka, in the districts of Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia

of FBPA from 40 km upstream of the barrage to 80 km downstream for taking up anti-erosion and river bank protection work in the entire stretch. But the body did not address the problem of river erosion adequately in the extended jurisdiction of 120 km.

Perpetual flood and erosion along trans-boundary rivers like Mahananda, Fulhar, Tangon, Atrayee and Purnabhava are also a major cause for erosion in 21 blocks of Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda districts

The water resources ministry had in July 2017 unilaterally withdrawn its 2005 decision and restored the original jurisdiction of FBPA from 11.5 km upstream to 5.9 km downstream of Farakka bar-

rage, she said and urged the prime minister to reconsider it so as to fulfil the earlier commitment of the central government and arrange for taking up urgent bank protection schemes in the entire stretch of the extended jurisdiction by FBPA in consultation with the state government.

The severity of the problem of erosion along this river system in West Bengal can be appreciated from the fact that almost 2,800 hectare of fertile land has been engulfed by the river and there have been damages to the public and private properties to the tune of ₹1,000 crore during last 15 years

MAMATA BANERJEE | CM, WEST BENGAL

had to take up urgent bank protection work over the last four years at a cost of Rs 168.47 crore. Another Rs 80.67 crore was spent after the 2021 monsoon for anti-erosion work in 9.9 km along the river. Maintaining that this expenditure will not suffice since as per the latest assessment 37 locations along the river in a stretch of 28.80 km are vulnerable and require immediate attention, she said, "The concomitant expenditure for river bank protection would be to the tune of Rs 571 crore."

Stating that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the state government to arrange for funds required for new bank protection work, the chief minister said that the matter was raised during a visit by Bengal's ministers to the union Jal Shakti minister August 31, 2021, but no response has yet been received.

RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK

Tiger population explosion raises serious concern

Serious imbalance in tigers' gender ratio has resulted in the spurt of the big cat population, forcing many of them to either leave the park or die in fighting over territories and females



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Feb 22: At a time when the nation discusses the challenge of overpopulation and its ill effects, a new fact has emerged that tigers in the Ranthambore National Park are facing the blues of overpopulation, leading to issues like territorial fights, the big cats leaving the forests, going missing and preying upon the rural folk.

National Park between 2019 and 2021. Two male tigers T-20 and T-23 went missing from the park in 2019 and seven big cats - five males named T-47, T-42, T-64, T-95, T-97 and two females T-73 and T-92 - disappeared in 2020.

In fact, ever since after the establishment of the Reserve in 1973, the number of tigers is maximum in present times.

Similarly two male tigers T-72 and T-62 and two females T-126 and T-100 went missing in 2021. The forest officials said that the serious imbalance in tigers' gender ratio has resulted in the spurt of the big cat population, forcing many of them to either leave the park or die in fighting over territories and females.

The number of tigers and their cubs in the adjoining areas of Ranthambore has gone up from 66 in 2019 to 81 in 2021.

PS Somashekhar, a retired forest officer from Rajasthan told IANS, "As the tiger is a carnivore, it needs regular movement from one area to another; however, we have created obstructions in its movement area. The government land has been converted into agricultural land, agricultural land into commercial land and so on. Hence, when the animal moves into corridor areas, it gets confused on seeing four-lane highways, dazzling lights and sounds, leading to conflict."

Presently the ratio of male to female tiger is 11.3 which is abnormal, said the Forest Department of Rajasthan in response to a question raised by Amer MLA Satish Poonia on the missing number of tigers.

Another environmentalist Harshwardhan says, "The tiger faces a challenge; its forest territories are shrinking. Almost 10-15 tigers and tigresses are roaming outside almost all the best breeding reserves in India as dominant males do not let newly-born, young and sub-adult males to remain inside the park. Additional population of tigers inside reserves therefore is getting rehabilitated outside the reserves. Further, tiger corridors are missing. The outcome many wild tigers and tigresses are poached by rural folk, or get knocked down in road accidents and mishaps."

On Poonia's question whether an inquiry has been conducted into the number of tigers born and missing from areas like the Ranthambore National Park, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Mukundra Hills National Park, among others, from January 2019 to January 2022, the Department said, "At present most of the 32 female tigress are in reproductive age, due to which there has been an increase in the birth of cubs. A total of 44 cubs have been born between the year 2019 to 2021. Due to the high number of tigers in the battered areas of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, there is a high number of cases of missing tigers, territorial fights and deaths."

May be, it's time to start another Project Tiger.

The record submitted in the state Assembly on missing tigers revealed that a total of 13 tigers have disappeared from the Ranthambore

Administering 'Charak' oath a mistake: Principal



Kolkata, Feb 22: Amid a raging controversy over first-year students of Calcutta Medical College Hospital, Kolkata being administered the new 'Charak' oath, Dr Raghunath Mishra, principal of the prestigious college Tuesday said it was a mistake arising from a misunderstood communication.

"It was a mistake on our part... We misunderstood the reference to be an official guideline," he said. The NMC, the regulator for medical education that replaced the Medical Council of India two years back, had some weeks ago suggested that medical colleges should replace the traditional Hippocratic Oath by the Charak Oath drawn from an ancient text 'Charak Samhita' (Charak's text).

The clarification came a day after first-year students of the 187-year-old medical college were asked to take the 'Charak Shapath' (oath named after the author of an ancient Indian medical text), proposed by the National Medical Council, instead of the traditional Hippocratic Oath.

The Principal said interns are normally administered the Hippocratic Oath, a centuries-old code of ethics for medical practitioners worldwide, which asks doctors to pledge beneficial treatment, to refrain from causing harm and to maintain secrecy of a patient's confidences.

"A few days back, there was a video conference with officials of NMC. During that conference there was a reference to Charak Shapath. Our staff and officials misunderstood it as an official guideline (to be compulsorily followed) and administered it on first-year stu-

"There has never been any instance where we have administered Charak oath. We only follow the centuries-old system of administering Hippocratic Oath," the principal said.

Chandernagore replete with French heritage style: Deville

Patrick Deville is known in the literary world for curating mesmerizing realities in his works, often inspired by his extensive travel expeditions all across the globe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 22: Eminent French author Patrick Deville said Chandernagore town in West Bengal's Hooghly district is dotted with architectural marvels with many buildings retaining the French heritage style.

A SLICE OF FRANCE ALONG HOOGHLY



Chandernagore town is about 35 km from Kolkata.

ings," he added.

Deville, who was talking to media at a heritage bookstore at an event in association with The Embassy of France, The French Institute in India and the Alliance Française du Bengale, said he found Chandernagore a historical place dotted with architectural marvels and quieter than Kolkata.

Deville, who tours the world with his writer's quill and shares stories from around the globe, said beforehand he visited Jorasanko Thakurbari, Victoria Memorial, Netaji Bhawan and Satyajit Ray's Birth Centenary Celebration Exhibition at an art gallery.

"I took a cruise trip onboard river Hooghly and was fascinated by the glimpse of the former European settlements and reached Chandernagore, which was established as a French colony in 1673," he said about his tour last week.

Deville is known in the literary world for curating mesmerizing realities in his works, often inspired by his extensive travel expeditions all across the globe.

"I found the place historical and saw a restoration project was taking place to rebuild heritage buildings. There are many buildings retaining the French heritage style - schools, the museum and the church on Strand on the side of river," he said.

"India is a land where one place is so immensely different from the other. Delhi is different from Kolkata. I had been to Ranikhet

ANISH KHAN DEATH

Police, students clash in Kolkata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Feb 22: Clashes broke out between police personnel and students of Aliah University in College Street area of Kolkata Tuesday after the latter tried to break barricade and march towards Writers Buildings, the erstwhile state secretariat, demanding justice for student leader Anish Khan who was allegedly killed last week. Police said some of the activists were detained. Four people in uniforms of police and civic volunteers had allegedly pushed off Khan from the third floor of his house in Howrah district's Amta in the dead of night February 18, according to his family. Khan, who was earlier with SFI, the student wing of the CPI(M), was a prominent face of the protests in Kolkata against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). He later joined the Indian Secular Front (ISF). His death sparked widespread protests. The state government has formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the matter.



Students of Aliah University holding banners, participate in a protest march over the Anish Khan murder case, in Kolkata, Tuesday

Rajasthan to present separate agri Budget

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, Feb 22: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot will present a separate agriculture Budget in the state Assembly February 23, officials said.

Rajasthan is the second government after Tamil Nadu which is presenting a separate agriculture Budget

This is for the first time that a separate agriculture Budget will be presented in the state. In his last year's Budget speech, CM Gehlot had announced to present a separate agriculture budget. The Budget is expected to include some big announcements related to farmers, they said.

At present, Rajasthan is the country's largest state in terms of area and agriculture and animal husbandry are the mainstay of the people's livelihood. Hence, a separate agriculture Budget is being started here from this year, the officials said.

Ministers and officials had a dialogue with farmers, livestock workers, dairy union officials and farmers of tribal areas too regarding it.



They confirmed that the agriculture Budget will focus on increasing the income of farmers and how to produce more at lesser cost. At the same time, the Budget will also focus on how to help farmers facing natural calamities.

With self-reliance being the focus, the Budget will aim at uplifting farmers, state-of-the-art warehouses to be built in every gram panchayat to store the produce of the farmers among others.

Rajasthan is the second government after Tamil Nadu which is presenting a separate agriculture Budget. For the first time, the DMK government presented the first special agriculture Budget in the state

of the day quote

I say that people who cannot think about the country and keep the country's security at risk can't do any good to Uttar Pradesh



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

The Chhattisgarh government provides 35 kg rice and "providing food grain is not a favour, it is the responsibility of the government"



BHUPESH BAGHEL | CHHATTISGARH CHIEF MINISTER

Debt, corruption and crime have increased in Haryana whereas development has come to a standstill



BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

HC sets aside RAS prelim exam result

Jaipur: The Rajasthan High Court Tuesday set aside the result of the preliminary examination, 2021 for the state's administrative service. A bench of Justice Mahendra Goyal directed the Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) to declare a revised result for the last year's preliminary examination for the Rajasthan Administrative Service after getting the disputed questions of it re-examined by an expert committee. The preliminary examination was held October 27 and the result was announced November 19 last year. The high court order is bound to affect the RAS (Mains) examination schedule now.

1 Maoist killed, 9 others held

Ranchi: One member of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) was killed and nine others, including a top ultra leader who was carrying a bounty of Rs 10 lakh on his head, were arrested in a 12-day operation in Jharkhand, a senior police officer said Tuesday. Three jawans of CoBRA battalion, a special unit of the Central Reserve Police Force, were injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast during the anti-Maoist operation in the Bulbul forest range, which falls in the border area of Lohardaga and Latehar districts, he said.

4.8L cigarette sticks seized

Kolkata: The customs officials at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata seized 4.8 lakhs sticks of cigarette worth Rs 48 lakhs from a domestic cargo complex Monday. The action was taken based on an intelligence input. The official said that a case in this respect was lodged.

SKM raises voice for WB farmers

New Delhi: The Samyukt Kisan Morcha Tuesday said it has noted with alarm reports that farmers of Deocha-Panchami-Harinsingha-Dewanganj area of West Bengal's Birbhum district are being forced to accept a "compensation package" announced by the state government for giving up their farmlands and pastures for a greenfield coal mining project.

Bus gutted

Hyderabad: An electric bus of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation went up in flames in Secunderabad here Tuesday, police said. No one was injured in the incident that occurred at Jubilee Bus Station of the TSRTC, while the bus was charging. The vehicle was completely gutted as the flames engulfed it before a fire engine could rush there.



Without the Congress, no alliance or third front can succeed in defeating the BJP. The Congress has played a pivotal role in building this nation over the past 70 years and there is no alternative to the Congress in the country

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

HUMANITARIAN AID

India will send 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan following an appeal made by the United Nations for humanitarian assistance to the war-torn country. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the supply will be effected by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and transported from Attari (India) to Jalalabad (Afghanistan) by Afghan transporters



SECURITY CHALLENGE

Ultras in J&K might be using arms left by US forces in Af: Intel

Recently, intelligence inputs revealed that eight Iridium satellite phones were activated in the Kashmir Valley, which were earlier used by the US forces in Afghanistan



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 22: Security agencies are suspecting that parts of sophisticated arms and ammunition left behind by the US forces in Afghanistan might have been transported to Jammu and Kashmir, which may become a security challenge for the forces deployed in the Valley.

Recently, intelligence inputs revealed that eight Iridium satellite phones were activated in the Kashmir Valley, which were earlier used by the US forces in Afghanistan.

The intelligence inputs also suggested that these satellite phones are being used by Pakistan-backed terrorists active in J&K, who are possibly possessing the weaponry left behind in Afghanistan by the US forces in August 2021.

The sources in the intelligence grid said that these are the same Iridium satellite phones that the US Army used, and they got activated again for the first on February 13 when eight communication systems were activated simultaneously, a day ahead of the third anniversary of the Pulwama terror attack of February 14, 2019.

The sources also said that these communication sets were seen active once in Budgam, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Kupwara, and Pulwama, while in Baramulla, it was seen active twice. They were together ac-

In August last year, after the US troops left Afghanistan, the Taliban took over the country. The US troops had left their arms and weapons in Afghanistan

tive from 10.30 am to 3 pm on the same day. The sources in the security set up also confirmed that these communication sets were active in Bandipora, Baramulla and one in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) just opposite to Uri sector on February 14.

"Indian security forces are capable and well-equipped to deal with the terrorists even if they possess US-made weapons," said a senior security person deployed in the operational zone in the Valley. "We are aware of the weaponry left behind by the US forces in Afghanistan, and have an idea that part of these might have been handed over to the terror outfits in PoK and later it would be transferred to the ultras active in Kashmir valley, the officials said.

The government agencies such as the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) are quite capable of tracking these iridium satellite systems, the officer further said.

'Put hands on hold': SC to Maha govt

THE APEX COURT HAD EARLIER ALLOWED MUMBAI POLICE TO CARRY ON THE INVESTIGATION AGAINST SINGH BUT RESTRAINED IT FROM FILING CHARGE SHEETS ON THE FIRS AGAINST HIM OVER THE ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT AND CORRUPTION

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Supreme Court Tuesday directed the Maharashtra government to put "hands on hold" in the investigation against former police commissioner Param Bir Singh over the allegations of misconduct and corruption. A

PARAM BIR SINGH CASE



bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and MM Sundresh expressed concern over the ongoing legal battle between Singh and the Maharashtra government, terming it a "messy state of affairs" and also a "very unfortunate situation". "We have had occasion to say earlier that it is a messy state of affairs. Very unfortunate situation... having the propensity of shaking the confidence of people in the po-

lice system and the elected system. Process of law must carry on." Former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, who was accused by Singh of corruption, is already under arrest for offences, including money laundering.

The top court also stayed all proceedings against Singh, probe and filing of charge sheet, and listed the case for final disposal March 9 on the question of transfer of inves-

tigation of cases against Singh to the CBI. The bench also asked the Maharashtra government to completely keep its hands off with regards to the ongoing investigation till the top court decides Singh's plea to transfer all cases against him to the CBI. Justice Kaul told senior advocate Darius Khambata, representing the Maharashtra government: "Meanwhile, you please completely stay your hand. We do not know if the investigation has to be transferred to the CBI."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the CBI, said all the FIRs must come to the central investigating agency. He added that there would be a possibility that statements may point to a particular direction or colour of the case, making things difficult for the investigating agency.

The bench remarked that if it were to be inclined to pass an order of transferring the cases to the CBI, investigation being completed would cause problems. Khambata assured the bench that, in all senses, the matter will be on hold, and the court took it on record.

DMK sweeps TN urban body polls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 22: The DMK-led alliance Tuesday swept the urban local body elections in Tamil Nadu with 75 per cent of the results declared.

The urban polls were held in the state after a gap of 11 years and the win of the DMK is considered as a stamp of approval for the nine-month-old M.K. Stalin government in the state. The dismal performance of the AIADMK was reflected with the party losing its bastions and the DMK winning several seats in western Tamil Nadu including Coimbatore, Erode and Salem. In Edappadi, the home constituency of former Chief Minister K. Palaniswami too, the AIADMK candidate lost the polls to the DMK.

Palaniswami's own ward no 23 in Salem Municipal Corporation was also wrested by the DMK leading to a major loss of face for the former Chief Minister who is also the Leader of Opposition in Tamil Nadu. According to the State Election Commission till the late afternoon, the DMK alliance won 494 seats in corporations, 2,021 in municipalities, and 4,619 seats in town panchayats.

The AIADMK, on the other hand won only 81 wards in corporations, 511 in municipalities, and 1,188 seats in town panchayats.

JOY OF TOGETHERNESS



Ducks swim in a pond at the Lodhi Gardens in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

6 killed, 14 injured in firecracker factory blast

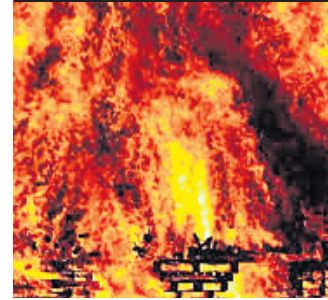
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shimla, Feb 22: Six migrant workers were killed and 14 others sustained burn injuries in an explosion at an illegal firecracker factory in Himachal Pradesh's Una district Tuesday, officials said.

The injured included nine women, they said, adding that 11 who were in serious condition were shifted to the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur directed the Divisional Commissioner to inquire into the incident and submit a report within a week. The state government announced Rs four lakh assistance to the next of kin of each of the deceased, the officials said. Prime Minister Narendra

TRAGEDY IN HP



Modi condoled the loss of lives and said Rs two lakh each from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) would be given to the families of those killed in the incident. A sum of Rs. 50,000 would be given to each of the injured. Una Deputy Commissioner

Earlier, the state disaster management and the district administration stated that 7 people were killed but later they revised the death toll as 6

Raghav Sharma told PTI that the incident occurred in the Bathu industrial area in Haroli tehsil of Una district and the victims are migrant labourers from other states. He said strict action will be taken against officials who allowed the illegal factory to run. Efforts are on to apprehend the factory owners, Superintendent of Police Arjit Sen told reporters. Sharma said information regarding the factory was

being verified by the police and industries department. The deceased are yet to be identified. The injured have been identified as Narsala, Lasrat, Hasgiri, Jushi, Nasreen, Shakila, Esrat, Asma, Natisha, Muskan, Jafri, Farha, Jasheel, officials said. They were currently residing at various places in the Una district while their permanent addresses are being ascertained, they added. Expressing grief over the loss of lives, the chief minister directed the district administration to immediately provide relief to the affected persons and take stern action against the guilty. Leader of opposition Mukesh Agnihotri demanded a judicial probe into the incident. He sought exemplary action against all those responsible for the mishap.

Ram Rahim gets Z-plus security

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 22: Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been provided Z-plus security cover during his 21-day release on furlough from a Haryana jail, officials said Tuesday.

He has been given the high security cover due to threat to his life from 'pro-Khalistan' extremists, officials added.

Rahim is on 21-day furlough from Sunaria jail and is camping in Gurugram. He will be getting 10 NSG security personnel for mobile security and eight security personnel for his residence security. The Dera chief was released on furlough February 7 after the Haryana government's conclusion that he does not fall in the category of hardcore prisoners.



Incidentally, the 21-day furlough had come just days ahead of the Assembly polls in Punjab that was held February 20 and he has a large number of followers, particularly in Bathinda, Sangrur, Patiala and Muktsar. The sect chief has been currently serving life imprisonment for the murder of former journalist Ramchandra Chhatrapati and the rape of two Dera disciples. He was convicted by a special CBI court in Panchkula in 2017.

EC allows road shows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Election Commission Tuesday further eased Covid-induced restrictions imposed on campaigning in assembly polls by allowing road shows with prior permission of district authorities.

It also allowed political parties and candidates to hold meetings and rallies with the restriction of using only 50 per cent capacity of space being relaxed. Campaigning is on for the two-phase Manipur assembly elections and phases five, six and seven of the Uttar Pradesh polls. Elections have concluded

in Goa, Punjab and Uttarakhand. Counting in all the five states will take place March 10.

"The commission has also allowed road shows subject to SDMA regulations and with prior permission of district authorities," a statement said. Citing the rise in Covid cases, the poll panel had imposed a ban on physical rallies, road shows and padayatras when it announced the poll schedule for Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Punjab and Manipur January 8.

The commission has been reviewing the pandemic situation periodically and allowing some relaxations.

Bird flu unlikely to spread in India: Expert

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 22: Bird flu has resurfaced in India with cases being reported from Maharashtra's Thane and Palghar regions. Thousands of birds have been culled in Palghar alone.

However, an expert said that the disease is unlikely to spread majorly in the country.

Talking to IANS, Adil Amin from the Department of Medicine, Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, said that this infection rarely follows human-to-human transmission.

People can contract the bird flu virus from bird droppings or close contact with infected birds only, he said. Bird flu or avian influenza



is a highly-contagious viral disease that affects both domesticated and wild birds. The infection is caused by the Type A virus in the intestines and respiratory tracts of

birds, Amin said. He said that people can contract the infection from close contact with birds, especially those working in poultry farms.

"In large-scale poultry farms, many people are involved in daily work. Birds are dispatched from there to the small-scale poultry farms, which becomes the main reason of transmission. The infection can be transmitted in close clusters, but rarely," Amin said.

It is also possible to contract the virus while bathing or swimming in water contaminated with infected birds, he added.

Some common mild symptoms include cough, fever, sore throat, muscle aches, headache, and shortness of breath, which may continue for three to 12 days. However, pneumonia or kidney dysfunction can also be seen in severe cases, he added.

international



The pandemic is not over but thanks to the incredible vaccine rollout we are now one step closer towards a return to normality and finally giving people back their freedom while continuing to protect ourselves and others
BORIS JOHNSON | BRITISH PM

QUEEN CANCELS VIRTUAL EVENTS

Queen Elizabeth II cancelled her scheduled online engagements Tuesday as she recovers from "mild cold-like symptoms" of COVID-19, Buckingham Palace said



of the day quote

The two-way trade in the recent past has witnessed a quantum jump with exports from Bangladesh, for the first time, expected to cross \$2 billion this year
HARSH VARDHAN SHRINGLA | INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY

The plan to return the trust of the people will put an end to all the existing (political) bodies, mainly the Government of National Unity
ABDUL-HAMID DREIBAH | LIBYAN PM

Russia's recognition of two breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine is unacceptable
TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

Russia-Ukraine tensions: India calls for restraint



People wave Russian national flags in the centre of Donetsk, Monday AP/PTPHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Feb 22: Voicing "deep concern" over the escalation of tension along the Russia-Ukraine border after Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his troops into eastern Ukraine, India has told the UN Security Council that the immediate priority is de-escalation of tensions and said it was convinced that this issue can only be resolved through diplomatic dialogue.

President Putin Monday signed decrees to recognise Ukraine's regions of "Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics" as "independent", escalating the tension in the region and increasing fears of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. He also ordered Russian troops into eastern Ukraine in what the Kremlin called a "peacekeeping" mission in the Moscow-backed regions. Addressing an emergency meet-

ing of the UN Security Council on Ukraine Monday night, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti said, "We have been closely following the evolving developments relating to Ukraine, including developments along the eastern border of Ukraine and the related announcement by the Russian Federation."

"The escalation of tension along the border of Ukraine with the Russian Federation is a matter of deep concern. These developments have the potential to undermine peace and security of the region," he said. India called for "restraint on all sides" and stressed that the immediate priority is "de-escalation of tensions" taking into account the legitimate security interests of all countries and aimed towards securing long term peace and stability in the region and beyond.

What will Russian recognition mean

WHAT ARE THE BREAKAWAY REGIONS
Russian-backed separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions - collectively known as the Donbass - broke away from Ukrainian government control in 2014 and proclaimed themselves independent "people's republics", until now unrecognised. Since then, Ukraine says about 15,000 people have been killed in fighting. Russia denies being a party to the conflict but has backed the separatists in numerous ways, including through covert military support, financial aid, supplies of COVID-19 vaccines and the issue of at least 800,000 Russian passports to residents. Moscow has always denied planning to invade Ukraine.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN
For the first time, Russia is saying it does not regard the Donbass as part of Ukraine. That could pave the way for Moscow to send military forces into the separatist regions openly, using the argument that it is intervening as an ally to protect them against Ukraine. A Russian parliament member and former Donetsk politi-

cal leader, Alexander Borodai, said last month that the separatists would then look to Russia to help them wrest control of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions still under the control of Ukrainian forces. If that happened, it could lead to open military conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

WHAT ABOUT THE MINSK PEACE PROCESS
Russia's recognition effectively kills off the 2014-15 Minsk peace agreements, though still implemented, have until now been seen by all sides, including Moscow, as the best chance for a solution. The accords call for a large degree of autonomy for the two regions inside Ukraine.

HOW WILL THE WEST RESPOND
Western governments have been lining up for months to warn Moscow that any movement of military forces across the Ukrainian border would draw a strong response, including stringent financial sanctions. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said last week that recognition "would further undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integri-

ty, constitute a gross violation of international law, (and) call into further question Russia's stated commitment to continue to engage in diplomacy to achieve a peaceful resolution of this crisis". He said it would necessitate a "swift and firm" response from the United States and its allies.

HAS RUSSIA RECOGNISED BREAKAWAY STATELETS BEFORE?
Yes - it recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two Georgian breakaway regions, after fighting a short war with Georgia in 2008. It has provided them with extensive budget support, extended Russian citizenship to their populations and stationed thousands of troops there.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS FOR MOSCOW
In the Georgia case, Russia used recognition of the breakaway regions to justify an open-ended military presence in a neighbouring former Soviet republic in an attempt to indefinitely thwart Georgia's NATO aspirations by denying it full control of its own territory. The same considerations would apply to Ukraine. On the downside, Moscow faces sanctions and international condemnation for abandoning the Minsk process after long maintaining that it was committed to it. It will also be saddled indefinitely with responsibility for two territories ravaged by eight years of war and in need of massive economic support.



China promises 'early return' of many Indians

In its first positive communication on the vexed issue of stranded Indian students, mostly studying medicine in various Chinese colleges, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has informed the Indian Embassy here "they are cognizant of the welfare of all foreign students, including Indian students"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Feb 22: China has promised to India to work for the "early return" of over 23,000 Indian students stranded at home for over two years due to Beijing's rigid COVID-19 visa ban and assured New Delhi that they will not be discriminated in any manner as their resumption of studies is not a "political issue".

In its first positive communication on the vexed issue of stranded Indian students, mostly studying medicine in various Chinese colleges, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has informed the Indian Embassy here "they are cognizant of the welfare of all foreign students, including Indian students".



"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of China has assured the Embassy that they are cognizant of the welfare of all foreign students, including Indian students, and have also conveyed that they will work on their early return to China in a coordinated manner and will continue contact with the Embassy on this matter," an Indian Embassy press release here said on Tuesday.

"Chinese MFA also conveyed that the return of Indian students was not a political issue and they will not be discriminated in any manner while deciding on the return of foreign students to China to resume their education," it said.

The assurance followed the Embassy "continuously highlighting these issues with the relevant Chinese authorities in the last two years", it said. "The MFA too has made vague assurances in the last two years whenever the Indian media here questioned the delay of the return of the students and the plight they suffered at home despite paying hefty fees.

HK TO TEST ALL FOR COVID-19

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong, Feb 22: Hong Kong will test its entire population of 7.5 million people for COVID-19 in March, the city's leader said Tuesday, as it grapples with its worst outbreak driven by the omicron variant.

The population will be tested three times in March, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam said. She said testing capacity will be boosted to 1 million a day or more. "Since we have a population of some 7 million people, testing will take about seven days," she said.

Hong Kong has reported about 5,000 new daily infections since Feb 15, with the cases threatening to overwhelm its healthcare system. Since the current surge began at the beginning of the year, the city has recorded nearly 54,000 cases and 145 deaths.

The order for citywide testing comes after mainland Chinese authorities dispatched epidemiologists, health workers and other medical resources last week to help contain the outbreak in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

Hong Kong has largely aligned itself with mainland China's "zero-COVID-19" policy, which aims to totally stamp out outbreaks, even as many other countries are shifting their approach to living with the virus. Lockdowns of entire cities have been imposed in a number of areas of the mainland, but Lam said no such measure is currently being considered in Hong Kong because it is "not realistic".

Canada lawmakers extend powers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toronto, Feb 22: Canadian lawmakers voted Monday night to extend the emergency powers that police can invoke to quell any potential restart of blockades by those opposed to COVID-19 restrictions.

Lawmakers in the House of Commons voted 185 to 151 to affirm the powers. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said earlier that the powers were still needed despite police ending the occupation of the nation's capital by truckers over the weekend and police ending border blockades before that.

Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair said the protesters were going for the "lifeblood of this nation, which is trade with the United States."

Trudeau noted there were some truckers just outside Ottawa who might be planning further blockades or occupations. His public safety minister said there was an attempt to block a border crossing in British Columbia over the weekend.

The emergencies act allows authorities to declare certain areas as no-go zones. It also allows police to freeze truckers' personal and corporate bank accounts and compel tow truck companies to haul away vehicles.

The trucker protest grew until it closed a handful of Canada-U.S. Border posts and shut down key parts of the capital for more than three weeks. But all border blockades have now ended and the

TRUCK PROTESTS



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau noted there were some truckers just outside Ottawa who might be planning further blockades or occupations

streets around the Canadian Parliament are quiet. Ottawa protesters who vowed never to give up are largely gone, chased away by police in riot gear in what was the biggest police operation in the nation's history.

"The situation is still fragile, the state of emergency is still there," Trudeau said before the vote. Opposition New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh's party supported it, ensuring Trudeau had enough votes. Singh said they know there are protesters waiting

in the surrounding areas of Ottawa and in the capital itself. "They need to be cleared out," said Singh, who also noted there have been convoys that have been intercepted. "This is an attack on our democracy. This is a group of folks who are very clearly connected to the extreme right wing. The organizers clearly have a goal in mind to undermine democracy. That's something we can't allow to continue."

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said those who had their bank accounts frozen were "influencers in the illegal protest in Ottawa, and owners and/or drivers of vehicles who did not want to leave the area."

Beekeepers turn to anti-theft technology as hive thefts rise

IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, 1,036 BEEHIVES WORTH HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS WERE REPORTED STOLEN FROM ORCHARDS STATEWIDE, AUTHORITIES SAID

Woodland, Feb 21: For a few frenzied weeks, beekeepers from around the United States truck billions of honeybees to California to rent them to almond growers who need the insects to pollinate the state's most valuable crop.

But as almond trees start to bloom, blanketing entire valleys in white and pink flowers, so begin beehive thefts that have become so prevalent that beekeepers are now turning to GPS tracking devices, surveillance cameras and other anti-theft technology to protect their precious colonies.

Hive thefts have been reported elsewhere in the country, most recently three hives containing about 60,000 bees taken from a grocery chain's garden in central

Pennsylvania. They happen at a larger scale and uniquely in California this time of year because bees are most in demand during the largest pollination event in the world.

In the past few weeks, 1,036 beehives worth hundreds of thousands of dollars were reported stolen from orchards statewide, authorities said. The largest heist involved 384 beehives that were taken from a field in Mendocino County, prompting the state beekeepers association to offer a \$10,000 reward for information leading to their recovery.

"It's hard to articulate how it feels to care for your hives all year only to have them stolen from you," Claire Tauzer wrote on Facebook



to spread the word about the reward. A day later, an anonymous tipster led authorities to recover most of the boxes and a forklift stolen from Tauzer's family business some 55 miles (88 kilometers) away, at a rural property in Yolo County. One suspect was arrested.

Investigators also found frames, the kinds used to hold the honeycomb, belonging to Helio Medina,

"We have do what we can to protect ourselves. Nobody can help us," Medina said. Thefts usually happen at night, when no one is in the orchard and the bees are back in their hives. The rustler is usually a beekeeper or someone familiar with the transportation of bees.

"More often than not, they steal to make money and leave the bees to die," said Rowdy Jay Freeman, a Butte County sheriff's detective who has been keeping track of hive thefts since 2013.

A tightening supply of bees and soaring pollination fees — jumping from less than \$50 to rent a hive two decades ago to as much as \$230 per hive this year — are likely motivating beekeepers to go rogue.

The demand for bees has steadily risen over the last 20 years as popularity of the healthy, crunchy nut turned California into the world's biggest almond producer. Accordingly, the amount of land used to grow almonds has more than doubled to an estimated 1.3 million acres (526,000 hectares).

Beekeepers have been keeping up with that growth by providing an ever-increasing proportion of the nation's available stock of hives. This year, a survey of commercial beekeepers estimated it will take 90% of honeybee colonies in the U.S. to pollinate all the almond orchards.

"What that means is that beekeepers are coming from as far as New York and Florida, and to get them to come all that way, pollinator fees have to rise," said Brittny Goodrich, an agriculture economist at the University of California at Davis.

But bee populations are notoriously unstable due to a host of problems, including disease, loss of habitat and insecticides. The drought that gripped Western states last summer also weakened colonies. The lack of rain ravaged wildflowers that provide the nectar that bees turn into honey. Beekeepers had to artificially supplement their diet with sugar solutions and pollen substitutes — and incur more costs.

of the day quote

Our current staff strength is about 4,000... So, we expect to go up to 5,000 as we ramp up through the year. As we take new aircraft, deliveries and as we increase capacity utilisation, I think we will look at that number towards the end of this year.

VINOD KANNAN | VISTARA CEO

Safety of our users is at the core of everything we do at WhatsApp and launching a dedicated 'Safety in India' resource hub is a way of reiterating our commitment to educating and empowering users to take control of their online safety

ABHIJIT BOSE | HEAD OF INDIA, WHATSAPP

Apparel and garmenting is not very investment-centric but it is important from the employment point of view. Perhaps, there is a need for backward integration and more of you can get into integrated value-chain like spinning and weaving

UPENDRA PRASAD SINGH | TEXTILES SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

Societe Generale sells HDFC shares

New Delhi: Societe Generale Tuesday offloaded shares of Housing Development Finance Corp (HDFC) worth nearly ₹1,730 crore through an open market transaction. As per block deal data on BSE, Societe Generale sold nearly 71 lakh shares at an average price of ₹2,436.8 apiece. The total deal value stood at ₹1,729.67 crore. Through a separate transaction, BNP Paribas Arbitrage bought shares of HDFC at the same price. On BSE, shares of HDFC closed marginally higher at ₹2,454.05 apiece.

SIS bags ₹225cr contract from MCL

New Delhi: SIS Ltd Tuesday said it has bagged a project worth ₹225 crore to provide security solutions to Coal India-arm MCL. As part of the contract, SIS will deploy security personnel in different categories to provide security services across 18 sites of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) at Sambalpur, Bhubaneswar, IB Valley Coalfields and Talcher Coalfields. "SIS Ltd...Announced that it has been awarded a two-year contract valued at approximately ₹225 crore to provide security solutions at 18 sites of Mahanadi Coalfields located across India with an option to renew for a further one-year period," the company said in a statement.

Azure refines solar project

New Delhi: Azure Power Tuesday said it has refinanced its 600 MW solar power project at the lowest rate of interest in its portfolio to date. Azure Power is an independent sustainable energy solutions provider and power producer in India. The company has successfully refinanced its existing project finance facility of ₹23.50 billion (USD 313 million or ₹2,350 crore) utilised towards construction of its largest project - 600 MW Interstate Transmission System-connected solar project implemented by Azure Power Forty Three Pvt Ltd, a company statement said. The project was fully commissioned in December 2021. The refinancing has been completed at a rate of interest of 7.2 per cent per annum, which is fixed for 42 months and the lowest rate of interest for any project finance facility in terms of rupee financing for the company's existing portfolio so far.



Half-a-million is a big number and we are proud to have attained this milestone in less than 2.5 years

TAE-JIN PARK | KIA INDIA MD & CEO

BPCL, HERO MOTOCORP TIE UP FOR CHARGING INFRA

State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters Hero MotoCorp have collaborated to set up charging infrastructure for two-wheeled electric vehicles (EVs) across the country, the firms said Tuesday.



Oil nears \$100: Fuel price hike coming after polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: International oil prices surged close to USD 100 a barrel Tuesday after Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine, but petrol and diesel prices in India continue to be on freeze and are expected to rise once assembly elections in states like Uttar Pradesh end.

Amid fears of supplies being disrupted because of Russian aggression, the price of futures contract for Brent crude oil with April delivery on London's ICE rose by 4.18 per cent to USD 99.38 per barrel Tuesday morning, before paring some gains to settle just above USD 98. The last time Brent exceeded USD 99 per barrel was in September 2014. Russia makes up for a third of Europe's natural gas and about 10 per cent of global oil production. About a third of Russian gas supplies to Europe usually travel through pipelines crossing Ukraine.

But for India, Russian supplies account for a very small percentage. While India imported 43,400 barrels per day of oil from Russia in 2021, coal imports from Russia at 1.8 million tonnes in 2021 made up for 1.3 per cent of all coal imports. India buys 2.5 million tonnes of LNG a year from Gazprom of Russia. While supplies at the moment seem to be of little worry for India, it is the



prices that are a cause of concern. Domestic fuel prices - which are directly linked to international oil prices - have not been revised for a record 110 days in a row. Rates are supposed to be revised on a daily basis but state-owned fuel retailers IOC, BPCL and HPCL froze rates on sooner did electioneering to elect a new government in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and three other states last year.

Retail pump rates are aligned to a price of USD 82-83 per barrel and they would certainly go up once elections end next month, industry officials said.

Petrol costs ₹95.41 a litre in Delhi and diesel is priced at ₹86.67. This price is after accounting for the excise duty cut and a reduction in the VAT rate by the state government.

Prior to these tax reductions, petrol price had touched an all-

time high of ₹110.04 a litre and diesel came for ₹98.42. These rates corresponded to Brent soaring to a peak of USD 86.40 per barrel October 26, 2021. Brent was USD 82.74 November 5, 2021, before it started to fall and touched USD 68.87 a barrel in December.

Prices, however, started to rise thereafter and have risen by 12 per cent in February alone, they said.

Petrol and diesel prices have been in the past frozen before crucial elections. There was a 19-day price freeze on petrol and diesel ahead of Karnataka polls in May 2018, despite international fuel prices going up by nearly USD 5 per barrel. However, no sooner were the elections over, oil companies rapidly passed on to customers the desired increase - over 16-straight days post-May 14, 2018. Petrol price climbed by ₹3.8 per litre and diesel by ₹3.38 per litre after the hike.

Ukraine situation challenge to our financial stability: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 22: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday said the Russia-Ukraine crisis and the ensuing jump in global crude prices are a challenge to financial stability in India.

The two issues were discussed at the meeting of Financial Stability Development Council (FSDC), which comprises all the financial sector regulators, Sitharaman told reporters here.

"It is difficult to say how it (crude prices) will go. Even today, in the FSDC, when we were looking at the challenges which are posed for the financial stability, crude was one of the things. International worrisome situations where we actually voiced that we want a diplomatic solution for the situation that is developing in Ukraine... All these are headwinds," Sitharaman, who is on a two-day visit to the fi-

ancial capital, said.

She said the Brent has touched over USD 96 per barrel Tuesday and added that the country is keeping a watch on the same. The finance minister said the oil marketing companies will take a call on the retail prices.

Trade has not been impacted because of the geopolitical tensions but the government is keeping a close watch on the same, Sitharaman said adding that we are careful that the exporters should not suffer. Parrying questions on the exact timeline for the LIC IPO, she said there is a buzz and interest in the market after the life insurance behemoth filed its papers with Sebi for the over ₹60,000 crore issue, and the government will be going ahead with it.

She also said that the government is looking into the lapses that happened at the NSE.



Freebies to docs by pharma firms prohibited by law: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Supreme Court Tuesday held that granting freebies to doctors by pharmaceutical companies to boost sales of medicines is 'clearly prohibited by law' and dismissed a plea of a firm seeking deduction under the Income Tax Act on account of giving incentives to medical practitioners.

The top court termed as a "matter of great public importance and concern" the manipulation of doctors' prescriptions in lieu of freebies offered to them by pharmaceutical companies, ranging from gifts such as gold coins, fridges, and LCD TVs to funding international trips for vacations or to attend medical conferences.

A bench comprising justices UU Lalit and S Ravindra Bhat dismissed the appeal of M/s Apex Laboratories Pvt. Ltd against the order of the high court and in the verdict, it also dealt with a tricky legal issue where tax deduction on account of granting freebies to doctors was claimed saying though medical practitioners are restrained under the regulations from accepting such gifts, it was not an offence under any law and hence, companies are entitled to the tax benefit.

Analysing the law and regulations concerned, the verdict, penned



by Justice Bhat, said, "pharmaceutical companies' gifting freebies to doctors, etc. Is clearly 'prohibited by law', and not allowed to be claimed as a deduction under Section 37(1). Doing so would wholly undermine public policy. The well-established principle of interpretation of taxing statutes - that they need to be interpreted strictly - cannot sustain when it results in an absurdity contrary to the intentions of Parliament."

Deprecating the practice of giving freebies, the bench said medical practitioners have a quasi-fiduciary relationship with their patients and their prescriptions are considered the final word on the medication to be availed by the patient, even if the cost of such medication is unaffordable or barely within the economic reach of the patient - such is the level of the trust reposed in doctors.

Shares tumble for 5th straight day on global market rout

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 22: Benchmark BSE Sensex plummeted by nearly 383 points in a volatile trade Tuesday due to losses in index heavyweights TCS, Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank amid a massive sell-off in global markets triggered by deepening geopolitical tensions.

After sinking about 1,300 points in early deals, the 30-share barometer finally closed lower by 382.91 points or 0.66 per cent at 57,300.68 points.

The broader NSE Nifty too reclaimed part of its early losses before closing 114.45 points or 0.67 per cent lower at 17,092.20.

On the Sensex chart, Tata Steel fell the most by 3.64 per cent, followed by TCS (3.59 per cent), and SBI (2.67 per cent).

Dr Reddy's dropped 2 per cent, ITC by 1.44 per cent, Bharti Airtel by 1.39 per cent, and IndusInd Bank by 1.39 per cent. Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, HCLTech, Wipro, HUL, LT and UltraTech were among the losers.

Of the 30 Sensex constituents, 20 closed in the red. "Escalations in Ukraine tensions with Russia recognising two pro-Russian rebel regions have aggravated the crisis. The economic consequences are already visible



in higher crude and gold prices," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

The biggest macro headwind for India is crude racing to USD 97 a barrel, he said, adding that the inflationary consequence of this will force the RBI to abandon its dovish monetary stance.

Continuing their selling spree, foreign institutional investors sold shares worth ₹2,261.90 crore in the

Indian capital market Monday, exchange data showed.

Other Asian bourses Tuesday followed Wall Street rout and massive selloffs in European equities triggered by the Russia-Ukraine standoff.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 declined 1.7 per cent while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong closed lower by 2.7 per cent. South Korea's Kospi lost 1.4 per cent and the Shanghai Composite index fell 1 per cent.

Lot of buzz in market for LIC IPO: Sitharaman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 22: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday said there is a lot of interest and buzz in the market for the upcoming initial public offering of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

She also indicated that the Initial Public Offering (IPO) will happen in the current financial year.

February 13, the state-owned insurer filed draft papers with capital markets regulator Sebi for the sale of a 5 per cent stake by the government for an estimated ₹63,000 crore.

"Now that DRHP (for LIC IPO) is out, there is a buzz and a lot of interest in the market. I am glad the way in which it is crafted where shareholders also have a role to play. The way it has been crafted has created a lot of interest and we will be going ahead with it," Sitharaman told reporters.

When asked whether the IPO will come in this financial year, Sitharaman said, "DRHP is not issued two years in advance. Is it?" LIC IPO is entirely an Offer for Sale (OFS) through which the Government of India would dilute 5 per cent of its stake by selling 31.63 crore shares.

Employees and policyholders of the insurance behemoth would get a discount over the floor price.

Monday, LIC Chairman M R Kumar said the insurance behemoth was watching the geopolitical situation carefully, though it was keen on listing the IPO in March.

"We are watching the situation closely and carefully... But we are very keen on having a listing in March," Kumar had said when asked about the impact of the evolving geopolitical situation on the upcoming IPO.

Barclays pegs India's Q3 GDP growth at 6.6%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 22: Forecasting a lower-than-previously projected 10 per cent GDP growth for the fiscal year 2022 due to the third wave of the pandemic, foreign brokerage Barclays said the Indian economy is likely to have expanded by 6.6 per cent in the December quarter.

The economy had a relatively stable Q3 with several sectors returning to pre-pandemic level of activity, with services playing a bigger role in activity, the report said, adding that with the mild Omicron wave in January, there is clear downside risks to the earlier growth forecast of 10 per cent in FY22.

In the July-September quarter, the Indian economy had clocked a growth of 8.4 per cent.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) will declare the GDP estimates for Q3 FY 2021-22 February 23. As high base effects kick in, and activity consolidates, growth rate is likely to slow down from 8.4 per cent in Q2 to 6.6 per cent in Q3, it said, adding there scope for a steady farm sector growth, even though there are clear signs of weakness in rural consumption.

Potential investors in LIC's IPO fret over govt control of insurer

HOW EFFECTIVELY LIC AND ITS INVESTMENT BANKERS ARE ABLE TO ADDRESS THE INVESTOR CONCERNS WILL HELP IN DETERMINING THE INSURER'S VALUATION IN THE FLOAT

REUTERS

Mumbai, Feb 22: Prospective investors in Life Insurance Corp of India's (LIC) ₹8 billion IPO are seeking assurances from company management that it will not sacrifice their interests to meet the goals set out by the government, its controlling shareholder, sources said.

In virtual roadshows for India's biggest ever public listing, LIC management and the IPO bankers have been peppered with questions

about the insurer's past investments and their quality, four people with knowledge of the matter said.

LIC has in recent years been a key buyer of shares in state-owned firms sold off by New Delhi, often bailing out less-than-successful public issues of shares. It has also been tapped to rescue struggling financial institutions.

Potential conflicts of interest issues are taking centre-stage in the IPO roadshows that began last week and are expected to go on till the end of the month, the sources said. "The government tends to act as a regulator, manager and shareholder and it tends to get its position confused at different points of time," said Shriram Subramanian, founder of proxy advisory firm InGovern, who has not attended the roadshows.

"The government ministries may tend to think that LIC is 100% under their control and would like to exert that kind of an influence whenever required and that is a concern for investors," Subramanian added. How effectively LIC and its in-



vestment bankers are able to address the investor concerns will help in determining the insurer's valuation in the float, and consequently the state of finances of the Indian government which is banking on proceeds from the IPO to plug an annual fiscal deficit hole.

The Finance Ministry did not respond to emails seeking com-

ment while LIC declined. The sources declined to be identified as the discussions are private.

In its draft prospectus, the insurer cited involvement of the government, which owns 100% of LIC now and is expected to own about 95% after the IPO, as a risk factor and said that minority shareholders could be disadvantaged by gov-

ernment action.

LIC chairman MR Kumar told a news conference Monday that potential investors should not worry about government control post the IPO as decisions are taken by its board and not by the government.

PARALLELS TO COAL INDIA?

LIC, which was formed six decades ago when India's insurance sector was nationalised, straddles the business in the country, with more than 280 million policies and over 60% of the insurance segment.

It is also a big investor, owning as of March last year 23.5 trillion rupees (\$315 billion) worth of government securities, higher than even the central bank, out of the total central and state government securities worth 115.2 trillion rupees, according to the prospectus.

In 2019, it took over troubled IDBI Bank as the government struggled to find a viable buyer for the lender whose shares had tanked and nearly a third of its book had gone bad. LIC said in its draft papers

that it may have to infuse more capital into IDBI Bank even though it has been pursuing a buyer for its more than 50% stake in the lender.

Some market analysts and fund managers are drawing parallels of LIC with Coal India, which made its market debut in 2010 and, despite being a monopoly, has lost over half its equity value.

In its last earnings call, Coal India chairman and managing director Pramod Agrawal said one of the reasons for its current low market valuation could be because sometimes government takes steps that are not appreciated by shareholders. "If LIC makes decisions that are not beneficial for the shareholders then they will raise concerns," said Ashvin Parekh, an independent financial services consultant.

"We have seen that happen earlier when Children Investment Fund exited from state-owned Coal India after listing as it had concerns over what the majority shareholder was doing and LIC could also face similar pushbacks from its shareholders."

ATLETICO TEST AWAITS RED DEVILS

White Ferns thrash India in rain-hit ODI



LUIS SUAREZ



in the group stage of the 2021-22 Champions League, winning just two of their six matches against Liverpool, Porto and AC Milan, but a 3-1 victory over Porto on the final matchday moved them onto seven points and allowed them to finish second in the section behind Liverpool.

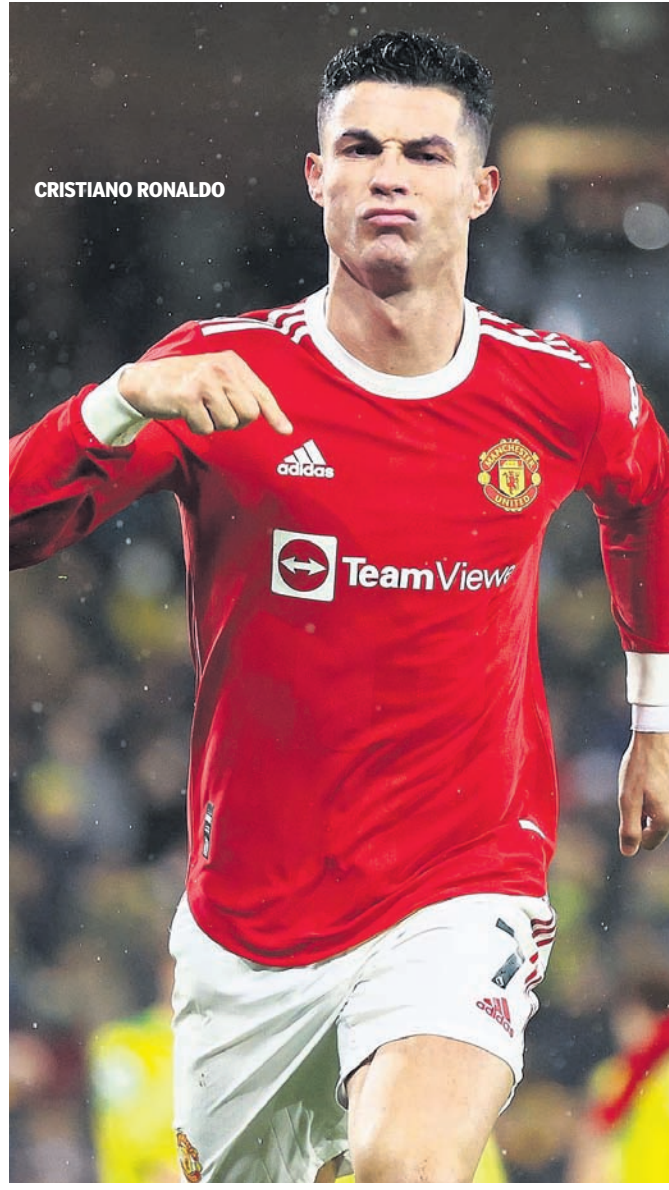
The Red and Whites have only faced Man United on one previous occasion, tackling them in the second round of the 1991-92 Cup Winners' Cup, with the Spanish outfit winning 4-1 on aggregate, but they twice lost to English opposition - Liverpool - in the group stages of this season's Champions League.

Atletico also lost to Chelsea in last season's round of 16, but they have reached the quarter-finals or better in five of their last eight Champions League campaigns under Simeone, while the capital giants have been victorious in nine of their 12 two-legged knockout contests against English clubs.

Man United, meanwhile, will enter the contest off the back of a 4-2 win over Leeds United on Sunday with Fred and Anthony Elanga coming off the bench to secure a vital three points for the Red Devils, who sit fourth in the table, four points clear of West Ham United on the same number of matches (26).

The 20-time English champions have picked up big wins over Brighton & Hove Albion and Leeds in their last two but will now switch their attention to the Champions League and will be aware of the importance of picking up a positive first-leg result ahead of the return match at Old Trafford next month.

Man United finished top of Group F to advance to this stage, collecting 11 points from their six matches, with Cristiano Ronaldo coming up with some incredibly important goals to help send his team into the knockout round of the



CRISTIANO RONALDO

competition for the first time since the 2018-19 campaign.

The Red Devils, who are two-time winners of the Champions League, beat Paris Saint-Germain at this stage of the 2018-19 competition, but they failed to make it through the group stage last term, ultimately dropping into the Europa League, reaching the final before losing to Villarreal.

The Premier League giants have won seven of their previous 11 round-of-16 ties, while they are in the knockout round for the 19th time - an English record - but the club have not managed to make

the final of the competition since 2011, and it will be fascinating to see what Ralf Rangnick can deliver this season.

Atletico will be without the services of both Yannick Carrasco and Felipe through suspension Wednesday night, while Daniel Wass and Matheus Cunha are both out through knee injuries.

As for Man United, Mason Greenwood is out due to a club suspension, while Edinson Cavani remains a doubt due to a groin problem, but Eric Bailly could recover from an ankle issue to make the squad.



RICHA GHOSH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Queenstown, Feb 22: The Indian women's cricket team's horror tour of New Zealand continued as the White Ferns demolished the visitors by 63 runs in a rain-curtailed fourth WODI Tuesday to inch towards a clean sweep in the five-match series here.

The game became a glorified 'T20' due to rain as Amelia Kerr stole the show with a 33-ball-68 (11x4, 1x6) which took New Zealand to 191/5. Amelia then mopped up the tail with 3/30 as India managed only 128 before being all-out in 17.5 overs.

Teenager Richa Ghosh's counter-attacking half century (52, 29b, 4x4, 4x6) was the only silver lining in an otherwise disastrous performance which has now led to five defeats on this tour including the one-off T20.

The bowling performance of the Indians seemed to have nose-dived with each passing game and it was the worst Tuesday where only Rajeshwari Gayakwad (4-0-26-1) looked the part. Meghna Singh (1/45) and Deepti Sharma (1/49) were two bowlers taken to the cleaners by Amelia.

New Zealand started on a rousing note with a 53-run opening stand between Sophie Devine (32) and Suzie Bates (41, 26b, 7x4). Once the platform was laid, Amelia and Amy Satterthwaite (32, 16b, 3x4, 2x6) literally pummelled the Indian bowling.



AMELIA KERR

A chase of 192 was always going to be a tough ask even though the out of form Harmanpreet Kaur was dropped from the playing eleven.

Smriti Mandhana very understandably was out of rhythm after a long and hard quarantine and youngsters Shafali Verma (0) and Yastika Bhatia (0) were out in quick succession. The match was as good as over by the fifth over when India were reduced to 19/4.

Richa and Mithali Raj (30) added 67 runs but it was in a lost cause as wickets fell at regular interval. Amelia's sister Jess also got two wickets (2/11) upfront while Francis Mackay (2/22) and Heley Jensen (3/32) shared the spoils with two and three wickets respectively.

The only time India had something to cheer about was when Richa clobbered the White Ferns bowlers for four huge sixes and four boundaries while Mithali played the second fiddle. Once Richa was gone, the stomach for fight wasn't evident in others as six wickets fell for 32 runs.

Time is running out for coach Ramesh Powar as only two weeks are left for World Cup to start and it is not at all looking good for the team.

Brief scores: New Zealand Women 191/5 (Amelia Kerr 68 n.o, Suzie Bates 41; Renuka Singh 2/33) beat India Women 128 (Richa Ghosh 52, Mithali Raj 30; Amelia Kerr 3/30, Hayley Jensen 3/32) by 63 runs.

AGENCIES

Manchester, Feb 22: Manchester United will make the trip to Wanda Metropolitan Wednesday evening looking to claim an advantage in the first leg of their last-16 Champions League clash with Atletico Madrid.

The Red Devils finished top of Group F to advance to the knockout round of the competition, while Atletico claimed second spot in Group B behind Liverpool to ensure that they would be present at this stage.

Atletico will enter Wednesday's

contest off the back of a 3-0 win over Osasuna in La Liga, with Joao Felix, Luis Suarez and Angel Correa on the scoresheet, but there is no getting away from the fact that the Spanish champions have disappointed in the league this term.

Indeed, Diego Simeone's side are currently down in fifth spot in the table, 15 points behind leaders Real Madrid, so the Champions League is their only realistic chance of silverware this term, and they might need to win the competition to secure a position in next season's leading European cup competition.

Atletico were far from convincing

Praggnanandhaa bags two wins in Airthings Masters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Feb 22: Continuing his good run, India's teen prodigy R Praggnanandhaa registered wins against fellow Grandmasters Andrey Esipenko and Alexandra Kosteniuk in rounds 10 and 12 of the Airthings Masters, an online rapid chess tournament.

A day after a stunning victory over World No.1 Magnus Carlsen, the 16-year old scored two wins and drew against Nodirbek Abdusattorov early Tuesday.

He, however, lost to Russian GM Ian Nepomniachtchi in the 11th round. Despite the twin victories and a draw, Praggnanandhaa is in 12th place with 15 points.



He beat the highly rated Russian Esipenko in 42 moves after having started the day with a draw against Abdusattorov. After going down to Nepomniachtchi, he rallied to beat former women's World Champion Kosteniuk in a 63-move encounter.

Praggnanandhaa will be up against Vincent Keymer of Germany, USA's Hans Moke Niemann and Russian Vladislav Artemiev respectively in round 13, 14 and 15 later Tuesday night.

Nepomniachtchi, who lost the World Championship match a few months ago to Carlsen, is on top of the standings with 27 points.

Carlsen bounced back from the loss to Praggnanandhaa with wins over Quang Liem Le and Jan Kryzstof Duda but suffered an unexpected reverse against Eric Hansen of Canada in 33 moves. He is in joint second place with 20 points along with Artemiev and Keymer.

Spain eyes arrive for FIH Pro League tie



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Feb 22: The Spanish women's hockey team arrived here Tuesday ahead of its two-legged FIH Pro League matches against India February 26 and 27.

Spain suffered a defeat in their opening match of the tournament at home against the Netherlands (0-1) but managed to push their second game against the Dutch to a shootout (after a 2-2 stalemate) where they lost.

Playing in the top league for the first time, the Indians had won both their two matches against China (7-1) and Muscat (2-1) in Oman January 31 and February 1.

Spain head coach Adrian Lock said the visiting team is excited to be playing in India for the first time, and that too in a big venue like the Kalinga Stadium.

"We don't often get to play at big stadiums. So, we are very much looking forward to it. It's a new

experience for us. Both teams are in the FIH Pro League for the first time. So, yes, very much looking forward to the game."

Captain Maria Lopez said that earning a point against the Netherlands has given their team confidence ahead of the away games against India.

"We were really happy with the level of skills we showed against the Netherlands. They are definitely the best team in the world. We earned a point against them. So, we obviously come here very confident," Lopez said.

"But we know India are a really strong team. They have already played two games in the FIH Hockey Pro League and won both their games. So we know we have to fight for it."

"We are ready to go. We have a lot of new members in our team, who have been performing well. We got a good start in Spain, we hope we can continue in the same vein of form here in India."

India go with tried, tested side vs Spain



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 22: Promising forward Sukhjeet Singh was the new face in India's 20-strong men's hockey squad announced Tuesday for the FIH Pro League tie against Spain in Bhubaneswar later this week.

The two-leg tie will be played February 26 and 27 and the Indian team will be led by Manpreet Singh. Dragflick specialist Harmanpreet Singh will serve as Manpreet's deputy.

The Indian team will see a new face in 25-year-old Sukhjeet from Punjab, who was picked in the core group following an impressive stint during the maiden Hockey India Inter-Department National Championship last year.

The 20-member squad for the double-header against Spain includes goalkeepers PR Sreejesh and Suraj Karkera.

Harmanpreet, Mandeep Mor,

Surender Kumar, Varun Kumar, Jarmanpreet Singh and Dipsan Tirkey are the defenders in the squad.

The team features an experienced midfielder with Manpreet, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Hardik Singh, Jaskaran Singh, Shamsheer Singh, Nilakanta Sharma and Akashdeep Singh.

The forward line includes Mandeep Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Shilanand Lakra, new

comer Sukhjeet and Abhishek, who did well against South Africa and France earlier this month, has also received a call-up to the team.

Additionally, Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Amit Rohidas, Rajkumar Pal, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh and Dilpreet Singh have been named as standbys.

"We have chosen a balanced group to play Spain for this week-

end and are looking forward to playing at home in Bhubaneswar," chief coach Graham Reid said.

"It includes another new debutant striker Sukhjeet Singh who impressed during the selection camp last month and has been working hard since selection in the Core Probable's Group.

"Spain has a new coach and will be keen to impress after losing to England. These games are an important step in preparation for what is a very busy year," Reid added.

India endured mixed results in Pro League matches in South Africa where they won against the hosts but were stunned by France in one game, prompting a sharp response from Indian Olympic Association and FIH President Narinder Batra.

Batra had demanded an explanation for the setback and even met the Hockey India officials and Reid after their return.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mandhana, Jemimah retained

LONDON: Indian stars Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues were among the overseas players retained by their respective franchises for the 2022 edition of the women's Hundred. The three other Indian players - Harmanpreet Kaur, Shafali Verma and Deepti Sharma - who were part of the last edition have been released by their franchises and will be available for selection by other teams. Rodrigues plays for the Northern Superchargers while Mandhana represents the Southern Brave in the 100-ball per innings match. Birmingham Phoenix have released Shafali, London Spirit let go of Deepti Sharma while Manchester Originals did not retain Harmanpreet. In all, 12 overseas stars have been retained.

UEFA 'monitoring' situation

NYON: European football's governing body, UEFA, are reportedly "monitoring" the situation with Russia and Ukraine's military crisis, with a possible view to a switch of this year's Champions League final location. The final of Europe's most prestigious club competition is due to be played in Russia's second-largest city - at the Gazprom Arena in St. Petersburg - 28th May. But UEFA has found itself under increasing pressure to move that choice of venue after Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, announced a decision to send troops into Ukraine's eastern Donbas region. UEFA's current position remains that the match will be played in St. Petersburg, but it is understood that the situation is fluid, with officials considering contingency plans.

Nitu, Anamika in quarters

NEW DELHI: Indian women boxers Nitu (48kg) and Anamika (50kg) advanced to the quarterfinals of the 73rd Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria, after clinching impressive opening-round wins. Nitu outpunched Russia's Chumgalakova Iulija 5-0, while Anamika defeated local hero Chukanova Zlatislava 4-1 to make the last-eight stage Monday. Nitu and Anamika will now take on Italy's Roberta Bonatti and Algeria's Roumaysa Boualem respectively in their next bouts. However, Shiksha (54kg) and Akash (67kg) lost their respective bouts to bow out of contention. While Shiksha lost to Kazakhstan's former world champion and reigning Asian gold-medallist Dina Zholaman, Akash was bested by Germany's Deniel Krotter.

Chahar out of SL T20Is

NEW DELHI: India pacer Deepak Chahar has been ruled out of the upcoming T20 International series against Sri Lanka due to a hamstring injury. The in-form bowler had suffered the injury during the third T20I against West Indies in Kolkata Sunday. "He is ruled out of the series and will complete his rehab at NCA," said a BCCI official. It remains to be seen if Chahar will be fit for the IPL. "The team has sought no replacement as Jasprit Bumrah is already in the side," the official added. The T20I series against Sri Lanka begins in Lucknow Thursday.