



## UNWANTED ATTENTION

Actor Alia Bhatt says constant vigilance on her private life does get stifling at times

LEISURE P2



## CM WELCOMES UKRAINE RETURNEES

Welcoming 7 returnees from Ukraine, Chief Minister said all efforts are being made to bring back Odias trapped in the war-hit nation

DOWNTOWN P3



## EYEING KOHLI'S SPOT

Shreyas Iyer says he is most comfortable batting at No. 3, the position Kohli bats in T20Is

SPORTS P12

**ODM GLOBAL SCHOOL**  
Unlock your potential

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

www.odmglobalschool.org  
1800-120-2316

## India's Q3 growth 5.4% against China's 4%

**New Delhi:** Indian economy grew by 5.4 per cent in the October-December quarter of 2021-22, official data released Monday showed. The gross domestic product (GDP) had expanded by 0.7 per cent in the corresponding period of 2020-21, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). In its second advance estimates of national accounts, the NSO has projected 8.9 per cent growth in 2021-22. In its first advance estimates released in January, it had projected 9.2 per cent growth for 2021-22 as against a contraction of 6.6 per cent in 2020-21. The economy had grown by 20.3 per cent in the first quarter of this fiscal due to lower base effect. In the second quarter, the GDP grew by 8.5 per cent. China's economy grew by 4 per cent in October-December 2021.

MORE P11



## No changing Prithviraj title: Delhi HC

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking to modify the name of Akshay Kumar and Manushi Chhillar starrer 'Prithviraj', produced by Yash Raj Films. A bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Neena Bansal Krishna said it was inclined to dismiss the Public Interest Litigation with costs after which the petitioner's counsel sought permission to withdraw the plea. The court allowed the petitioner to withdraw the plea unconditionally. The counsel for petitioner Rashtriya Pravasi Parishad submitted that Samrath Prithviraj was a great emperor and putting movie title only as 'Prithviraj' hurts the sentiments.

**JSW Cement**  
The Leaders' Choice

1800 266 266 1 (toll free)

# BJD SCRIPTS HISTORY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 28:** With the counting of votes for the panchayat election entering the final day Monday, the ruling BJD won 552 Zilla Parishad seats putting the opposition BJP and Congress much behind in the race.

Out of a total of 853 Zilla Parishad zones in the state, elections were held for 851 seats while results of 620 seats have been declared so far (till 8 pm). The BJP and the Congress got 31 and 30 seats respectively while others including independent candidates bagged only seven, the State Election Commission (SEC) said in its latest report.

Counting for the remaining 231 Zilla Parishad seats is underway. As per latest trend, the ruling party candidates are leading in 211 seats while the BJP is leading in just 13 seats and the Congress in seven seats. Going by the trends, the BJD led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is set to create a record in the rural elections by surpassing its previous best of 651 in 2012.

The BJD has wrested several Zilla Parishad seats from the BJP in Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, Bolangir, Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts where the saffron party had performed exceedingly well in the previous rural polls and 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The BJP had emerged as the state's main opposition party when it bagged 297 ZP seats in 2017. It had secured just 36 in 2012. Union Minister Bisheshwar Tudu, who had extensively campaigned for the BJP in Mayurbhanj, blamed the state's ruling party for "influencing voters by using government machinery."

"I am surprised by the panchayat



TOTAL 853 SEATS, ELECTIONS HELD-851 (2022) WIN+ LEAD

TOTAL 853 SEATS, ELECTIONS HELD-849 (2017) WIN

<b>BJD</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>BJD</b>	<b>446</b>
<b>BJP</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>BJP</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>CONG</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>CONG</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>OTH</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>OTH</b>	<b>16</b>

election results. It is hard to believe that the polls were conducted in a free and fair manner," Tudu said. BJP MP from Balasore Pratap Sarangi, however, described the election results as the reflection of money power. The trend also indicates that the Congress, which had won 60 ZP seats in 2017, has failed to retrain at least that many seats in this poll.

Congress MP Saaptagiri Sankar Ulaka said, "It is a very disappointing result for us. We had expected to win at least 100 ZP seats in this poll. When the BJP has remained on the back foot, it has become a direct fight between the

BJD and the Congress." However, the state Congress will definitely introspect the results and make necessary corrections for the next fight in 2024, he said.

According to political analysts, distribution of smart health cards under the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana by the BJD government proved to be a game-changer in this year's panchayat polls.

Altogether 2.2 lakh candidates were in the fray and the State Election Commission (SEC) has already declared 36,523 ward members, 126 sarpanchs, 326 samiti members and one Zilla Parishad nominee elected uncontested.

*As outgunned but determined Ukrainian forces slow down Russian advance, the military confirms that Russia's nuclear forces are on high alert*

AGENCIES

**Kyiv, Feb 28:** The first round of Ukraine-Russia talks aimed at ending the fighting between Moscow and its smaller neighbour concluded with no immediate agreements. An aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin says talks with Ukrainian officials lasted nearly five hours.

Vladimir Medinsky headed the Russian delegation in Belarus. He said the two sides "found certain points on which common positions could be foreseen." Another round of talks was agreed to, Medinsky said. Mykhailo Podolyak, a top adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, gave few details except to say that the talks, held near the Ukraine-Belarus border, were focused on a possible ceasefire and that a second round could take place "in the near future."

"The next meeting will take place in the coming days on the Polish-Belarusian border; there is an agreement to that effect," Medinsky said. Earlier, the two delegations met amid high hopes but low expecta-



Vladimir Medinsky, head of the Russian delegation, (second left) and Davyd Arakhama, faction leader of the Servant of the People party in Ukrainian Parliament, (third right), attend the peace talks in Belarus, Monday

tions for any diplomatic breakthrough, after Moscow unleashed the biggest land war in Europe since World War II but met unexpectedly stiff resistance.

As outgunned but determined Ukrainian forces slowed the Russian advance and sanctions crippled the Russian economy, the military confirmed that its nuclear forces were on high alert, following President Vladimir Putin's order. While that raised the unimaginable specter of nuclear conflict, it was unclear what practical effect it had.

A tense calm reigned Monday in Kyiv, explosions and gunfire were heard in embattled cities in east-

ern Ukraine, and terrified Ukrainian families huddled overnight in shelters, basements or corridors. Exact death tolls are unclear, but the UN human rights chief said 102 civilians have been killed and hundreds wounded in five days of fighting — warning that figure was likely a vast undercount.

Still, a tiny sliver of hope emerged as the first face-to-face talks between Ukrainian and Russian officials since the war began opened Monday. The delegations met at a long table with the blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flag on one side and the Russian tricolor on the other.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's office said it would demand an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of Russian troops. But while Ukraine sent its defense minister and other top officials, the Russian delegation was led by Putin's adviser on culture — an unlikely envoy for ending the war and a sign of how Moscow views the talks. It wasn't immediately clear what Putin is seeking in the talks, or from the war itself.

## 4 MINISTERS TO OVERSEE EVACUATION OF INDIANS

**New Delhi:** The government Monday decided to send four Union ministers to the neighbouring countries of Ukraine to coordinate the evacuation process of Indians, including students, still stuck in the war-torn country. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Union ministers Hardeep Puri, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Kiren Rijiju and V K Singh will be going as "special envoys" of India, government sources said.

## INDIA ABSTAINS ON UKRAINE VOTE AGAIN

**United Nations:** For the second time in as many days, India abstained on a UN Security Council resolution to convene a rare emergency special session of the UN General Assembly on Russia's aggression against Ukraine, even as New Delhi asserted that there is no other choice but to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue to settle the Ukraine crisis.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I am seriously concerned about Indian students in Ukraine. Once they return, they might ask for jobs

# HORROR STORIES

## Minors sacrifice puppy, drink blood in Bolangir

■ The incident reflects impact of animal sacrifice on the impressionable minds of innocent kids. All kids are aged between five and seven

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, Feb 28:** In a shocking incident, as many as five kids allegedly sacrificed a puppy and drank its blood as part of fun while playing animal sacrifice rituals at Pandarapita village under Barkani panchayat of Sadar block in Bolangir district, a report said Monday.

The incident occurred a few days back in Pandrapita village where the children tried to enact animal sacrifice during play. The incident is indicative of the cruel impact of animal sacrifice carried out in the name of tradition on the impressionable minds of innocent kids. All the children are aged between five and seven. The children highly influenced by the animal sacrifice made to deities in their village sacrificed a puppy and drank its blood.

Sources said while playing a ritual-like game, the children picked up a puppy moving nearby. They burnt incense sticks and applied vermilion on its head. Later, one of the



boys beat up plastic container as a dholak while another performed the role of a priest and slit the throat of the puppy with a sharp-edged weapon. Later, all the children consumed its raw blood. The children fell sick after consuming the raw blood and narrated the details when confronted by their parents and family members.

Shocked family members and villagers admitted the children to the Bhim Bhoi Medical College and Hospital (BBMCH) in Bolangir. The condition of the boys was stated to be stable after they were

administered with treatment. Notably, animal sacrifice to deities is organised every year in the village during Dusshera festival in Patakhanda Yatra.

The annual Sulia Yatra is also held every year in the month of Pousha-Magha in January in Bolangir where thousands of animals and birds are sacrificed to propitiate the deity. The annual Chhatra Yatra held in neighbouring Kalahandi district also witnesses sacrifice of thousands of animals and birds for which the roads of Bhawanipatna are stained in blood.

## 6-year-old girl beaten to death by dad, stepmom

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Digapahandi, Feb 28:** A six-year-old girl late Sunday night was allegedly beaten to death by her father and stepmother at Tentuliasahi locality of ward no-5 under Digapahandi NAC limits in Ganjam district.

The deceased was identified as A Tapasya. The accused was identified as A Dibakar and stepmother as A Mamini. The incident came to the fore Monday morning after which the victim's maternal grandfather lodged an FIR with Digapahandi police.

Dibakar had initially married K Sashi and they had a daughter six

years ago. The woman had died of a disease over a year ago. Following this, Dibakar married A Mamini and was staying with her in a rented house. However, the minor girl was residing with her maternal grandfather. Three days ago, Dibakar brought his daughter to the house where the incident occurred.

On the intervening night, Dibakar, his second wife and the minor went to sleep after dinner. Around 11.30pm, Mamini awoke the girl to urinate, but the latter did not listen. However, the stepmother pushed Tapasya's head hard against a wall. Dibakar also beat the girl with a baton leading to her untimely death.



Villagers have gathered in front of the house where the crime took place OP PHOTO

## No Holi at public places this year too

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 28:** The state government Monday imposed restrictions on celebration of Holi at public places. Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena, while issuing the Covid-19 guidelines for March, said the restrictions will remain in force from March 1 to March 31.

"Holi and its related rituals shall not be observed in public places throughout the state. People may celebrate Holi with family members in their houses only and not in public places including on public roads," Jena said.

The Mahashivaratri will be observed as per the order issued by the SRC February 25. During celebration of Dola Punima, people will have to follow Covid appropriate behavior. All religious rituals are allowed with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols.

There will be no night curfew across the state. The government has allowed all social, religious, political and sports gatherings along with exhibitions, trade fairs, expo and melas with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols.

As urban elections are scheduled to be held March 24, the government has allowed political gatherings, meetings, rallies, door to door campaigns as per the instructions/guidelines issued by the appropriate election commission from time to time. Maximum 500 persons will be allowed for marriages, thread ceremony and other related gatherings with approval from local authorities.

# leisure



## ANDREW GARFIELD NOT TO DON SPIDERMAN COSTUME AGAIN

American Actor Andrew Garfield won't slip into the *Spiderman* costume again in the near future. Garfield told Variety, "No plans, that's the truth. No plan to appear in a *Spiderman* movie anytime soon."

## NICOLA COUGHLAN SAYS TWITTER LACKS 'NUANCE'

Irish actress Nicola Coughlan, best known for playing Penelope Featherington in *Bridgerton*, has stepped back from the micro-blogging platform Twitter in a bid to protect her mental health. She was bored by the lack of nuance on Twitter, the 35-year-old reportedly said.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181\*

**ARIES**  
You delight in meeting new people, and today you will find yourself mingling with a lot of intelligent people. Ganesh says you will continue to be a perfectionist. Besides this, you will end up spending a huge sum of money on a gift for your beloved today.

**TAURUS**  
This day, your expenses are likely to outrun your budget, your earnings. So says Ganesh. In terms of expenditure, the situation can very well get out of hand, causing you a lot of monetary anxieties. Think twice before spending even a penny. If you have surplus funds in your hand, it is advisable to invest them sensibly instead of frittering them away uselessly.

**GEMINI**  
Today, resolving issues will be a tough task, but you will be able to accomplish it nonetheless. It may take time, but don't lose hope. Persistence and hard work will be rewarding. The grind will increase your understanding of the things happening around you. You will be able to understand those around you better.

**CANCER**  
Today, in all likelihood, is going to be a challenging and complicated day for you, says Ganesh. You are likely to be a little short on confidence; either that, or you may be feeling a little subdued. You may not be as assertive as required on certain issues. On the personal front, you may spend a lot of time reflecting upon the ways of finding happiness in your relationships.

**LEO**  
You may want to carry some aspirin with you today, suggests Ganesh. For, there are strong indications that you shall be up against a lot of stress and tension at work. This headache-inducing factor aside, you have the uncanny knack of beating your opponents at their own game.

**VIRGO**  
Setting and resolving issues will be a long-drawn process today, says Ganesh. However, keep at it because the results will be well worth the efforts you put into it. You will feel more capable to look at things from others' perspective today. Loosen your grip on your wallet, as you may end up taking your sweetheart on a shopping spree.

**LIBRA**  
When it comes to your children, no pain is too much. Today seems to justify that statement as you may indeed take pains to improve your children's welfare. But it's all worth the effort in the end. Afternoon brings with it the possibility of happiness and success. You may make worthwhile material progress today.

**SCORPIO**  
You will understand the importance of creating a divide between your personal and professional life, feels Ganesh. On the professional front, your diligence and commitment to work will bring praise and benefits. Later in the evening, you will celebrate your success with your sweetheart.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The fountain of creativity will be gushing within you today. You may strive to take on new challenges later in the day. Workplace may offer economic gains later in the evening. But do not neglect your health, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
Power is a privilege of a few. It's a day for those of you in power, of governance and the national purse, says Ganesh. A marvellous day awaits all civil servants and government employees. The dealings you will undertake will materialise and earn you distinction; rewards for the commendable efforts you have put in the past may also come.

**AQUARIUS**  
A sunny day and a starry night! Today is for friends, says Ganesh. You chat, sing, yell, and even talk philosophy, values and politics with your pals. You may indulge in a romantic evening with your partner, either in a restaurant or at the beach, or simply on the sofa watching Clark Gable woo Scarlett O' Hara.

**PISCES**  
Honesty, sincerity and integrity both in your dedication to work and in your devotion to your family, is your hallmark. On the strength of this foundation, you will reach an important milestone today.

## Scrutiny of private life does get stifling: Alia

New Delhi: Actress Alia Bhatt, who is currently riding high on the success of her latest release *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, agrees that being a public figure is not easy.

Constant vigilance and talks about her private life does get stifling at times, says the actress.

Talking about people wanting to know more on her life, Alia shared: "Scrutiny of private life does get stifling. But then I am like 'why am I an actor?' If you want to be a public figure then your life will get public. That's why one tries to protect his/her personal life."

The actress, who is reportedly in a relationship with actor Ranbir Kapoor, says she likes to keep her private life guarded.

"Like I don't want to give out details of when I am getting married because it is nobody's business or where I am going for lunch as it is nobody's business. But people are speculating and talking about it, now that there is something I can't do much about," said the Raazi actress. IANS



## SAG Awards 2022 Squid Game makes history



**THE SERIES EARLIER HAD SET A RECORD AS THE FIRST KOREAN TV SHOW AND FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE SERIAL TO BE NOMINATED FOR A SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARD**

Los Angeles: Popular Korean survival television show *Squid Game* won Outstanding Action Performance as a Stunt Ensemble at the 2022 Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards.

They are also nominated for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series, Outstanding Performance by a

Male Actor in a Drama Series for Lee Jung-jae and Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series for Jung Ho-yeon, reports eonline.com.

*Squid Game* has already made history as the first Korean TV show and first foreign language series to be nominated for a SAG award.

In a statement, show creator Hwang Dong-hyuk said, "As the director of *Squid Game*, today has to be the happiest moment. I am reminded of all the days spent on first meetings with the cast, the auditions, visiting theatres to see their performances, the script readings, rehearsals and the days on set."

The cast, which includes Lee Jung-jae, Park Hae-soo, Jung Ho-yeon, O Yeong-su, Heo Sung-tae and others, has since made the rounds on the award show circuit.

## Vaani calls Ranbir a selfless actor

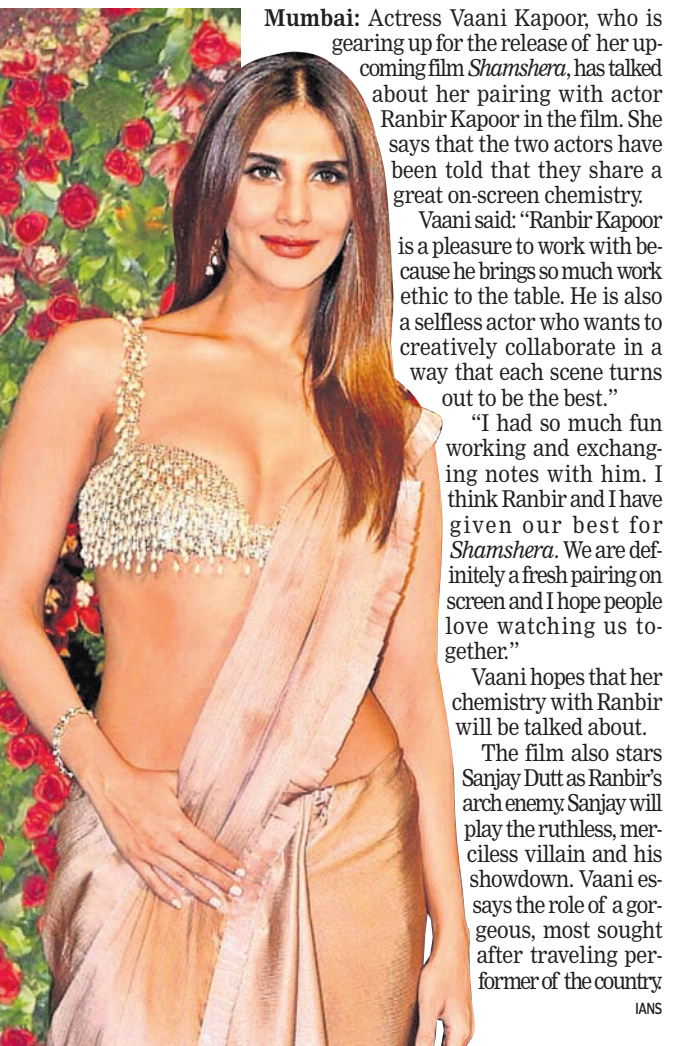
Mumbai: Actress Vaani Kapoor, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film *Shamsher*, has talked about her pairing with actor Ranbir Kapoor in the film. She says that the two actors have been told that they share a great on-screen chemistry.

Vaani said: "Ranbir Kapoor is a pleasure to work with because he brings so much work ethic to the table. He is also a selfless actor who wants to creatively collaborate in a way that each scene turns out to be the best."

"I had so much fun working and exchanging notes with him. I think Ranbir and I have given our best for *Shamsher*. We are definitely a fresh pairing on screen and I hope people love watching us together."

Vaani hopes that her chemistry with Ranbir will be talked about.

The film also stars Sanjay Dutt as Ranbir's arch enemy. Sanjay will play the ruthless, merciless villain and his showdown. Vaani essays the role of a gorgeous, most sought after traveling performer of the country.



## Masoom, Vaishali shine at Milan Fashion Week

Vaishali's showcase marked the very first time an Indian woman designer presented at the prestigious event

New Delhi: Designer Vaishali S and fashion icon Masoom Minawala together create history at Milan Fashion Week in Italy. Vaishali S is the first female Indian designer to showcase a collection at Paris haute couture week; and Masoom, is the first-ever Indian creator to walk the runway as a showstopper at Milan Fashion Week.

On the heels of her tremendously successful show at Paris Haute Couture Week (PHCW) in 2021, Vaishali S. showcased her A/W'22 collection, 'Srauta', at Milan Fashion Week. This showcase marked the very first time an Indian woman designer presented at the prestigious event. With this showcase, the designer presented India's rich heritage coupled with her con-



Showstopper Masoom(L) and Vaishali at the show

ceptual design language to an international stage.

"Showing in Milan takes a designer's journey to another level of maturity and self-awareness. Not only do you need to be extremely

creative, but it is also essential to strike a perfect balance between paying attention to the final customer's needs and being able to express your creativity," said Vaishali. In addition to the models who

walked the runway for the event, global fashion icon who is also known as the Face of Indian Fashion, Masoom Minawala, turned showstopper for Vaishali S. An ardent admirer of Indian craftsmanship and handlooms, Masoom is the first Indian personality ever to walk the runway at Milan Fashion Week to support Vaishali and her ethereal pret-a-porter collection.

She said, "Vaishali is one of my favourite designers and to be a showstopper for her at a global stage like Milan Fashion Week, was an absolute dream come true. I have been attending fashion week in Milan since 2019 and every year, it's a truly sublime experience seeing all the emerging designers and trends showcasing their talent.

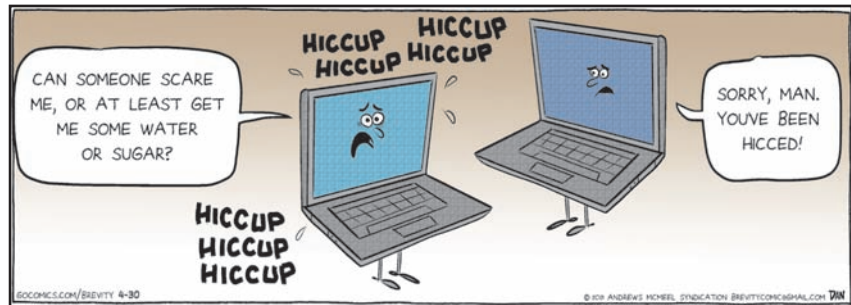
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

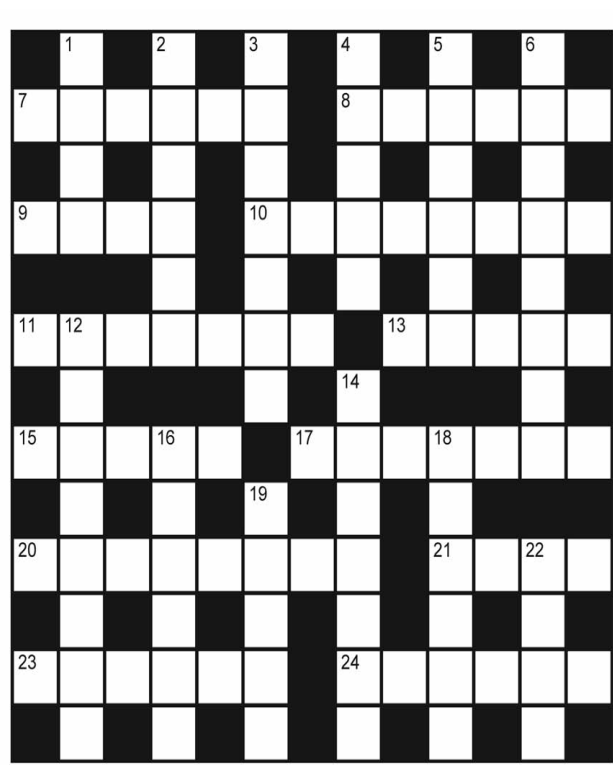


### BREVITY



### FUN post

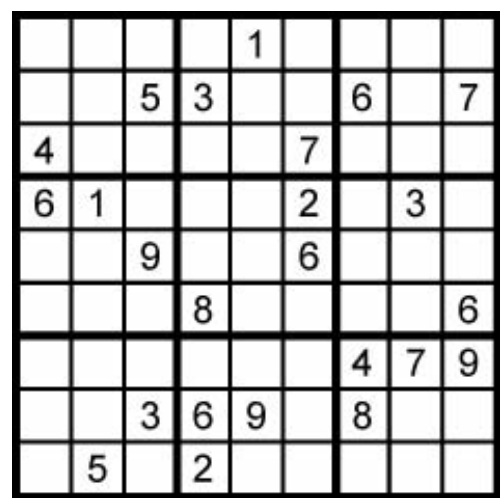
### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Be the king
  - 8 Gift box tie
  - 9 Norse thunder
  - 10 Sharp
  - 11 Onuses
  - 13 Cherish
  - 15 Narrative
  - 17 Streetcar
  - 20 Photo
  - 21 Head start
  - 23 Sailplane
  - 24 Spheres
- Down
- 1 Nessie's hangout
  - 2 Gave the raspberry
  - 3 Flags
  - 4 Build
  - 5 Humiliated
  - 6 Come together
  - 12 Straighten out
  - 14 Loud speakers?
  - 16 River features
  - 18 Wiggle room
  - 19 Quay
  - 22 Jewels

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





SHORT TAKES

Six held with brown sugar

Rourkela: Six suspected drug peddlers were arrested and brown sugar worth around ₹10 lakh were seized from their possession, police said Monday. Four people who were moving suspiciously were stopped by a police team Sunday evening, Additional Superintendent of Police Bikram Kishore Bhoi said. During search, police recovered narcotics, two country-made pistols and seven live cartridges from their possession. While three were arrested, one managed to escape, Bhoi said. Based on their inputs, three more suspects were arrested in the morning and some amount of brown sugar seized. Cash worth ₹1.67 lakh have also been seized, according to Bhoi. Initial investigation revealed that they used to procure contraband from Kolkata and sell those in small packets worth ₹300-400, the ASP said. Attempts are on to arrest the other suspects, police added.

CBI nabs mine security in-charge

Talcher: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Monday arrested the security in-charge of Talcher-based MCL's Balam Coal Mines here in Angul district. The accused has been identified as Jayant Kumar Barik. The CBI arrested him red-handed for demanding a bribe of Rs 4,500 from an employee of the mines.

Kendrapara: Panchayat elections show sorry state of development

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Feb 28: The recently concluded three-tier panchayat elections have once again brought to the fore the sorry state of development in this coastal district.

Over 52 makeshift polling booths had been established as many of the villages in the district lack communication facilities and one has to toil a lot to reach these villages.

Bridges have been constructed on the rivers to connect one place to another but construction of roads in 8,138 villages under poverty alleviation scheme Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is yet to get completed.

The migrant workers who have migrated to other states and countries did not turn up this time to vote in the elections. This is indicative that they are more concerned for their livelihood than voting in the elections. Aul, Pattamundai, Rajkanika, Rajnagar and Mahakalpara blocks are known for rampant out-migration.

However, what is heartening is that the number of women voters has gone up this time in comparison to their male counterparts. The district has 11,48,046 voters out of which 70.95 per cent men and 78.69 per cent women have voted in the elections.

Over 3 to 4 per cent more women have voted in Kendrapara, Derabish, Marshaghai and Garadpur blocks. Even 7 to 16 per cent more women have voted in the elections than their male counterparts in migration-prone blocks like Aul, Pattamundai, Rajkanika, Rajnagar and Mahakalpara. In this context, improving the socio-economic condition



A temporary polling booth in Rajnagar

Over 52 temporary booths had been established as makeshift polling booths as many of the villages in the district lack communication facilities

Construction of roads in 8,138 villages under poverty alleviation scheme MGNREGS is yet to get completed

of people will pose a serious challenge to the newly elected people's representatives, political observers said.

Social activist Banambar Sahu said that the economic condition of the district is quite weak and the district administration has no plan to make proper utilisation of the human resources. The male voters here prefer to migrate to other states for employment due to lack of livelihood opportunities, he said. The women empowerment schemes of the government have led to an increase in the number of women voters.

The funds allocated to women self-help groups are more responsible for an increase in the number of women exercising their franchise in the elections than their political consciousness, he added.

Political observer Bhuban Mohan Jena said that the problem of migration has been reflected in five blocks of the district in this election. He attributed the absence of migrants in the elections to Covid pandemic.

The eight per cent increase in women's votes has compensated the loss of male migrants' votes during

the polls. However, the time has come for the public representatives to become conscious as the economy of the district will become an issue in the next election, he added.

Utkal Keshari Parida, district president, BJD said that the state government has fulfilled the dreams of late Chief Minister Biju Patnaik. Empowerment of women has turned into a movement in the state as women have become an example to emulate by participating more in numbers in the elections.

Kishore Kumar Panda, district president, BJD said that the participation of women has strengthened the democracy which has become possible only due to the policies of Union government and a public movement. He claimed that the votes of women have gone more towards the BJP and its supported candidates.

Senior Congress leader and former Aul MLA Debendra Sharma said that the Covid infection has cast its shadow on the elections. The BJD had tried to lure the women into its fold while Congress will reap better results in the panchayat polls than the previous elections.

Mahashivratri at Aradi to be held amid curbs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Feb 28: The Mahashivratri festival at the famous Shiva shrine of Aradi will be held adhering Covid guidelines issued by the special relief commissioner as the district administration clamped prohibitory orders under Section-144 in and around the temple shrine, Monday.

The Mahashivratri festival will be held at the shrine, March 1. In the festival, devotees from Nandapur, Aradi, Sundarpur and Olag panchayats will be permitted to visit the temple and have darshan of the deity on the basis of Covid guidelines.

The permission to residents of four panchayats has sparked a row with people flaying the decision. During the festival only one servitor will be allowed to perform rituals inside the temple while no public address systems can be used.

Odia girl stranded in Ukraine cries for help

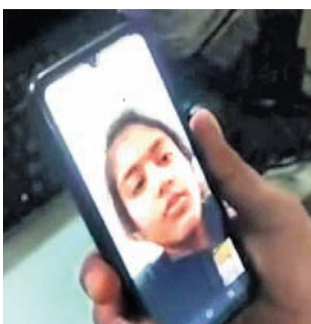
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Feb 28: A medical student from Bhadrak has been stuck in war-hit Ukraine as Russia goes ahead with its invasion. Archana, a first year medical student at Keryly National Medical University, is stranded in Ukraine's Kharkiv city.

The girl through video messages to her family has been pleading for her rescue ever since Russia invaded Ukraine. She had booked her return tickets, but the war started before she could come back home.

Archana, daughter of Umakant Kar, left for Ukraine December 5 to study medicine. But, as bad luck would have it, she is now stranded in Ukraine.

Unable to come out of the war zone, Archana had video-called her parents. In one of her video calls, she said that she was living in a bunker with 200 other fellow Indians. Archana also unfolded horrors of the war. She had pointed out that she was taking shelter in a bunker along with fellow Indians. They were given food just twice a day and had to survive days and nights in the chilling sub-zero temperatures in Ukraine.



Archana's last call was at 11pm, Sunday. Now, her phone has been switched off. Her family is unable to contact her to know her whereabouts

She maintained that they had been regularly hearing loud sounds of bomb blasts and missiles amid the noises of artillery and fighter jets. Furthermore, they were running out of food as all the shops in the area had been shut down, she said. Her family has appealed the Central government and Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik to rescue her.

'Health inequality waning in state'

In comparison to 2005-06, the neonatal mortality rate has decreased from 56 to 27 per 1,000 live births. Infant mortality rate has decreased from 65 to 36 per 1,000 live births

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Feb 28: Odisha has made significant progress to address the health inequality in the state due to the efforts of the state government. This has become possible through various schemes launched by the state government where doctors played a major role. This was the essence of the 39th annual conference organised by Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine (IAPSM) at VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla. The role of doctors, healthcare professionals and volunteers during the Covid pandemic has been crucial. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sanjeev Kumar Mishra, secretary of IAPSM said that people have become conscious on taking Covid vaccines during the pandemic. The number of medical colleges has gone up in the state while shortage of doctors is declining. The rest of the problems will be removed in a few years.



In comparison to 2005-06, the neonatal mortality rate has dropped from 56 to 27 per 1,000 live births. Infant mortality rate has decreased from 65 to 36 per 1,000 live births. Institutional delivery has increased from 36 per cent to 92 per cent, which has helped control the infant mortality rate (IMR) and maternal mortality rate (MMR) in the state.

More than 90 per cent of children below two years are fully vaccinated in comparison to 52 per cent in 2005. Coming to use of contraception, 74 per cent of couples are using it which is 20 per cent more than 2006.

Dr D Shobha Malini in her presentation on malaria elimination in Odisha discussed the improvement of malaria situation in Odisha in recent years in areas that are hard to reach.

Dr JS Kshatri presented a topic on multi-morbidity and how elderly people are affected by different diseases simultaneously.

State health minister Naba Kishore Das joined as chief guest while Bargarh MP Suresh Pujari was the guest of honour. Prof Durga Madhab Satapathy HOD Department of Community Medicine, MKCG Medical College Berhampur, Dr Sanghamitra Pati Director RMRC and Dr Lalmoan Nayak were felicitated for their role in management of Covid-19 pandemic in the function.

KVB Karur Vysya Bank advertisement for Berhampur Branch. Includes possession notice for an immovable property in Swamy Temple, Berhampur, Orissa, 760002.

KVB Karur Vysya Bank advertisement for Aska Branch. Includes possession notice for an immovable property in Binayak Bazar, Besides Sree Jewellers, Aska, Orissa, 761110.

KVB Karur Vysya Bank advertisement for Aska Branch. Includes possession notice for an immovable property in Binayak Bazar, Besides Sree Jewellers, Aska, Orissa, 761110. Includes a table with Khata No., Plot No., Area, and Boundary details.

KVB Karur Vysya Bank advertisement for Berhampur Branch. Includes possession notice for an immovable property in Swamy Temple, Berhampur, Orissa, 760002.

KVB Karur Vysya Bank advertisement for Berhampur Branch. Includes possession notice for an immovable property in Swamy Temple, Berhampur, Orissa, 760002.

KVB Karur Vysya Bank advertisement for Berhampur Branch. Includes possession notice for an immovable property in Swamy Temple, Berhampur, Orissa, 760002.



Change yourself if you wish to change the world.

THE MOTHER



## Markets, Not Tanks

Russia's Putin put his nuclear forces on alert when the war in Ukraine reached the fourth day, surprising everyone who thought the outcome of the invasion was but obvious. The non capitulation of the Ukrainian leader and the common citizens would have stunned not only Putin and his commanders but also the world at large. This nuclear threat of Putin has been pooh poohed by all European leaders as everyone understands the ground realities. That is also the main reason for Moscow to be eager for talks with Ukraine. This war also proved another very important assumption that had been doing the rounds across the world. It has proven that the conventional wisdom supporting war as a means of subjugation and dominance is dying a natural death. The US administration has termed Russian President Vladimir Putin's order putting on alert the country's nuclear deterrence as a "rhetorical exercise intended to manufacture threats that don't exist in order to justify further aggression."

But, in a significant development an overwhelming majority of people in South Korea have expressed their desire for domestic nuclear weapons capability. A poll last week shows that 70 per cent of South Koreans want to go nuclear in the face of North Korea's nuclear ambitions and nuke-powered China's domination as a global player. The poll made by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs has found that South Koreans overwhelmingly want nuclear weapons even though they believe the country's alliance with the United States and their own military strength would help them face any crisis created by North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons. This view of the South Koreans may be relevant because of the recent events enacted by the US administration in Afghanistan and its initial hesitation in sending forces to Ukraine that emboldened the Russian military to invade. It is no doubt the South Korean reaction stems from the fact that North Korea has been unpredictable and a rogue nation for far too long. But clubbing China with North Korea may not be appropriate. For instance, the world observed how China abstained from the UN Security Council vote against Russia but has been dancing around with contradictory ever since. This is primarily because China has much too much global trade and commerce interests to be involved in a prolonged war and possibly face global economic isolation. It may sound hilarious that China has, a day earlier, not only invited the United States to participate in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) but also expressed its willingness to actively participate in the US led programme called B3W (Build Back Better World). This goes to show that the mighty economic empire held by China does not feel the need to be excessively military in its global outlook. The exclusion of Russia from global financial system SWIFT demonstrates the new power of economy that has the whole world held within limited but very strong economic bond. If a nation like Russia can be grievously wounded by means of economic sanctions, it is a lesson for all nations that tanks, missiles and warships will no more be decisive in future battles. The future wars will be fought through banks, markets and economic decisions.

In this backdrop, India and its leadership have to, per force, rethink on the nation's future. A bulk of the national budget is being swallowed by defence spending over the past half a century while core matters concerning national economy have been sidelined. If there is a conventional war in the future, effective territorial defence can happen not by the armed forces alone but a united populace as demonstrated by Ukraine. What we see in India is worrisome because social systems have been very divided since ages. The divides are deepening even further because of current political leadership. In such a situation, the armed forces are turning into ceremonial showpieces while the economy is getting crippled. When nation's interests override political games, then only genuine decisions can be adopted.

### WISDOM CORNER

The essence of science is independent thinking, hard work, and not equipment. When I got my Nobel Prize, I had spent hardly 200 rupees on my equipment. CV RAMAN

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. ALBERT EINSTEIN

Not only does God play dice, but... he sometimes throws them where they cannot be seen. STEPHEN HAWKING

### WORDSWORTH

#### ■ Scofflaw

There have been many competitions down the years encouraging people to coin new words. Few of these creations ever find a permanent place in the language, because they must meet an obvious need or catch the public's imagination to be successful. Scofflaw has achieved this difficult feat. The EU, for its part, must quickly comply with WTO rulings against it. Shedding its unenviable reputation as an international scofflaw is much more important than pursuing its quixotic efforts to launch a trade round this year, in the face of widespread indifference (Financial Times, 26 May 2000). A contest was held in Boston in 1923, during the Prohibition era, to find a descriptive word for "a lawless drinker of illegally made or illegally obtained liquor". A prize of \$200 was offered by Delceavare King of Quincy, a rich Prohibitionist, to find such a word in order to "stab awake the conscience" of those who drank alcohol. Since \$200 was a sum not to be sneezed at, more than 25,000 entries were received from all over America and beyond. The winner was announced on 15 January 1924; as scofflaw had been sent in by two contestants, the prize was divided equally between Mr Henry Irving Dale and Miss Kate L Butler. H L Mencken mentioned the competition in his work The American Language, and commented that "The word came into immediate currency, and survived until the collapse of Prohibition". As any modern dictionary will relate, it has survived rather longer than that, though these days it often refers to persistent offenders against parking laws and other minor regulations.

#### ■ Scombroid

The scombroid fish are a group of about 100 species that include the mackerel, tuna, marlins and swordfish. The scombroid fishes are robust, torpedo-shaped, voracious fish. Some have small, inconspicuous scales; others are partly naked. The mouth is large and the color is usually blue or green on top and silvery-white underneath (Introduction to the Fishery Sciences, by William F Royce, 1972). It's a moderately common technical term in zoology, deriving ultimately from the Greek scombro for the mackerel or tunny, which also led via Latin to scomber as an uncommon English word for the mackerel, which is now only used as the formal name for the genus. It has, extremely rarely (not to say uniquely), been used of somebody of piscine appearance, especially a person who suffers from protruding fishy eyes: "Here then," the kindly scombroid face scanning Eventyr, quick as a fire-control dish antenna and even less mercy (Gravity's Rainbow, by Thomas Pynchon, 1978). You are most likely to encounter the word in the phrase scombroid poisoning, which is caused by eating fish that contains histamines produced by bacterial activity as a result of poor storage. As you can get this through eating other spoiled foods such as cheese, perhaps the alternative name of histamine poisoning is more suitable.



Ajit Ranade

### THE UKRAINE CONFLICT CAN UNDERMINE INDIA'S ECONOMIC MOMENTUM

The Russian invasion into Ukraine's sovereign territory is very bad news for Europeans. It has the potential of unravelling belief in what is known as the post-World War II 'Europe Project'. This project has been an experiment for more than 50 years, and a belief that dissimilar countries separated by language and ethnicity who have had bloody conflicts can live peacefully as neighbours. For over 60 years it seemed to be working. There have been occasional spurts of violence. The peace of six decades has been punctuated by the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and subsequent intensive bombing of Kosovo by NATO forces, which was not approved by the United Nations. But until recently the belief was that the very existence of Europe, a salad mix of two dozen plus nations, was proof that peaceful coexistence was possible. The peaceful unification of East and West Germany in three decades after the Berlin Wall was built, the introduction of a common currency, the Euro embraced by nineteen countries are testimony to the desire to live together in harmony. The Schengen treaty signed by twenty-six countries meant no border controls. Signed in Schengen, Luxembourg, the treaty too has survived, fostering the free movement of people. The Maastricht treaty introduced voluntary fiscal discipline and free movement of capital between member States and was signed by twelve major EU economies. The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union was a severe jolt, an unthinkable act of a major nation breaking away. But even that did not shatter the belief in the endurance of the European project. War-weary Europe wanted no conflicts which could not be resolved by dialogue and diplomacy. The Europe project is also like a beacon of hope for troubled neighbourhoods around the world, showing them that peaceful coexistence is possible, and that disagreements can be resolved without war.

In 2014, Russia annexed the autonomous Republic of Crimea, situated along the Black Sea coast. While Russia and many UN member States recognise Crimea as

### FOCUS UKRAINE IMPACT ON INDIA

# GRIN AND BEAR IT



Ukraine can indeed cast a long shadow on the economy and markets. The LIC IPO too looks vulnerable. All this cannot be countered easily by economic policy

part of the Russian Federation, Ukraine claims Crimea as part of its territory, a wound in the belief structure that has not healed. The current intrusion into Ukraine has the potential to provide a fatal crack in that belief structure. The crack may get repaired over time, but scars will remain and will show. Europe seems helpless and cannot stop Russia. It is bound by trade links, but cannot condone an attack on the sovereignty of Ukraine. And who knows how long drawn this violent conflict will be. The Russians have indicated that they are ready for talks and negotiations just one day after the bombing. But they might change their stand. The United Nations is trying to get the world community to stand as one and impose sanctions against Russia, but the permanent members of the Security Council will use their veto power to scuttle any resolution. Obviously, Russia will not vote against itself, and China is likely to remain non-committal about condemning the Russian action.

India faces a double challenge, one diplomatic and the other economic. Both challenges are formidable. On the diplomatic side, it is under pressure from the United States and allies, to strongly con-

demn the Russian action. But India has historic, military and diplomatic ties with Russia, which to this day provides reliable military support in terms of armament supplies, maintenance, other hardware and training. The S-400 missile system which India is thinking of buying from the Russians is state of the art. But this too has displeased the United States, which can threaten punitive actions against India for proceeding with the purchase.

When it comes to military supplies and technology, what the US offers India is not top-of-line, but at least one or two generations older, and runs the risk of obsolescence. So that is a sore point for India. On the other hand, it was the US which brought India out of nuclear apartheid, by signing the Indo-US civil nuclear deal in 2006. Since then, the India-US bonhomie has blossomed into high levels of strategic dialogue, and more recently the formation of QUAD or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between the United States, Japan, India and Australia. Bilateral trade is also robust and rising. The US is one of the very few countries with which India enjoys a large trade surplus, thanks to the export of software

services. But bear in mind, that a lot of that software export is from American companies which are based in India, such as IBM, Ernst & Young, Accenture or Google. Indians of course have a cultural affinity with America, and now many Indian Americans are visible not just as corporate leaders but also as political leaders in that country. So, India will have to do a tightrope balancing act, in the way it deals with the Russian aggression in Ukraine. It cannot be prescriptive, nor can it condemn, but can articulate its principles of why such action is unacceptable. For the Americans it needs to show support but without being seen to tilt too much. Incidentally, the Americans and other allies have not exactly gone overboard in supporting India in the face of Chinese aggression at Galwan.

The other formidable challenge for India is economic. If oil prices spike up and stay above 100 dollars a barrel, it would have four adverse effects. Firstly, the current account deficit will worsen, secondly the exchange rate will be under pressure, thirdly the domestic inflation might flare up and lastly the fiscal deficit will take a hit, since a lot of subsidies like fertiliser and cooking gas, depend on oil prices. To add to this, are investor anxiety and nervousness, the pull-out by foreign portfolio investors, the consequent tremors in the stock market and overall business sentiment. Ukraine can indeed cast a long shadow on the economy and markets. The LIC IPO too looks vulnerable. All this cannot be countered easily by economic policy. As a developing country dependent on global oil prices and foreign inflows (to plug the trade deficit), India will have to grin and bear it (or rather the right metaphor may be that it will have to "clench its teeth"). There has been considerable domestic heft to the economic momentum, and the country's post pandemic recovery is well under way. The Union Budget gave a capex boost signal. However, the Ukraine conflict can undermine India's economic momentum.

The writer is a noted economist.  
©THE BILLION PRESS

### SPECTRUM UP POLLS

# High costs, doubtful probity

The extravaganza of expenses in Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections is nobody's guess. The sum is supposed to be whopping. This election, campaigning is becoming more innovative, direct-to-voter, expensive and with doubtful probity. The parties are sweating for having intricate 'personalised contact' with the voters in their den appointing 25% of their budget.

The cost was ₹5500 crore in 2017 UP elections, according to Centre for Media Studies (CMS). And this is likely to surpass ₹8000 crore in 2022 State elections, according to reports. Being the supposed gateway to Delhi in 2024, stakes in UP remain high and so is the spending. It is raining money for news channels, event managers, poll organisers as political parties open their coffers to net each vote. The note for vote itself has a huge cost.

According to Carnegie Foundation, Indian elections in 2019 cost \$5 billion and the US presidential poll \$6.5 billion in 2016. Around ₹55,000 crore, or \$8 billion, was spent nationally during 2019 Lok Sabha elections, according to CMS. The report suggests that the maximum amount—roughly a third of the total expense—was spent towards campaigning and pub-

licity. The second largest was putting money directly in the hands of the voters. CMS estimates that roughly 25 per cent, about ₹15,000 crore, was distributed among voters. About 10 to 12% voters acknowledge receiving cash. In UP, many parties are reportedly laying special emphasis on poor minority votes, other deprived people and wherever possible helping enlist them for various official benefits like the PM Awas Yojana. The free food dole has cost the state ₹2 lakh crore. Though it is not linked to cash for vote, it is believed to sway psyche of some voters.

Almost all political parties started their campaigning about three months or more before EC announced dates. Most of these expenses such as at meetings, rallies, marches, road shows also have heavy costs and are not part of the expenditures filed with the EC. The Opposition complains that the ruling party has advantages of using official machinery, transportation and other paraphernalia to organise their poll-oriented meetings, inaugurations or launchings of programmes 'to woo the voters'. Surprisingly, no party after coming to power acts to prevent it and they also indulge in similar practices.

As far as political parties are concerned, in the 2017 UP elections, the BJP showed an expenditure of ₹111 crore, Congress ₹18.47 crore. The individual candidates spent as per EC norms ₹28 lakh, which in 2022 has been increased to ₹40 lakh. A major chunk in UP is being spent on the TV news channels, supposedly about ₹3200 to ₹3600 crore.

This apart, parties are spending on targeted perky vitriolic campaign messages through various social media sites. The anonymous hate campaigns largely escape the watchful eyes of EC or other authorities. The 'personalised' messages have greater reach and have multiplier effect as viewers share with acquaintances.

There are also costs on party volunteers fanning out to remote areas for direct voter meets. The richer and more organised parties are apparently spending more through their campaign managers and small groups. Such campaigns establish dialogue as also give an assurance to the voters that they would have an access even after the polls with their 'bhaiyyas', 'bhaisahebs' and 'dadas' or 'taus'. The evolving poll method is more expensive than organised meets

but supposedly more effective.

These expenses neither go into the individual candidate expenses nor official party accounts. These individual meets, door-to-door interactions, special lunches, liquor and more 'touch' the hearts and give rich dividends. Yes, campaigning is becoming complex, personalised and expensive. Inflation at 6% retail and over 13% wholesale adds to the burden. Parties complain but each time they spend more. The Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) says the combined assets of 48 national and regional parties stand at ₹7372 crore. In 2019, it says, the BJP spent ₹763.31 crore and, the Congress ₹488.97 crore. The Congress spent more for publicity ₹402.91 crore followed by BJP ₹376.62 crore.

Since the stakes are high in UP, the expenses are to be more. The BJP spent ₹252 crore in five elections to West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. The Trinamool Congress spent ₹154 crore in state polls. The total funds collected by 19 political parties for the polls in 2021 were ₹1,116.81 crore and total expenditure incurred was ₹514.30 crore. The rising campaign expenses, raising eyebrows on ethicality, pose a challenge to political probity. INFPA



Shivaji Sarkar

### SINCE THE STAKES ARE HIGH IN UP, THE EXPENSES ARE TO BE MORE

### Far-reaching effects

Sir, Russia-Ukraine war has far-reaching consequences. It has both national and international and long-term and immediate implications. Given that the war directly or indirectly involves many countries, the implications develop from the international situation. The implications of the war for India need to be understood against this backdrop. India will have to deal with the volatile situation in the wake of the war. Inflation level in India is already very high with rise in fuel and food prices. The war will worsen the situation. Given that sanctions will adversely affect supply, prices of other commodities will also rise. The uncertain situation will badly affect investment. Both imports and exports will be hit. Weakening of rupee compared to dollar will aggravate inflation. All these factors will reduce growth of the already flagging economy. Expenditure will increase whereas revenues will be badly affected. In the defence sector, India may face difficulties. Since Russia is on the war front, it needs defence equipment. This will delay the delivery of defence equipment for India. As a consequence, India's preparations to face China and Pakistan will weaken. India's relations with both Russia and the US will be badly affected due to India's neutral stand on the war. India will have to change its international relations. In short, India will be burdened with the responsibility of boosting its economy already hit by the pandemic. Both the public sector and private sector need to be strengthened. The productivity of workers must increase and their living conditions must improve.

### Sanctions on Russia

Sir, The West's harsh sanctions imposed against Russia have begun to have a crippling effect on the former. The Russian Central Bank doubled key interest rates from 9.5 per cent to 20 per cent, which could hit the average citizens hard. Besides, the rouble tumbled to a record low against the dollar - a steep drop of 30 per cent from Friday's close - as Russians rushed to draw cash at ATMs. The sanctions could also cause severe inflation besides stifling growth. Meanwhile, Ukrainians continued to show extraordinary resilience in defending their country against extreme odds, even as both countries agreed for talks to deescalate tensions.

# 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

OrissaPOST  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Venu GS, KOLLAM

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

# national

## of the day quote

While the Samajwadi Party's (SP) candidate list gives a clear message that the party is not ready to leave criminals, goons and rioters, the Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) list of candidates resembles a 'Muslim league'. This proves that they will not give equal representation to all sections and regions

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

The Congress has performed well in five phases of the elections so far. We are contesting elections on 400 seats after many years. Our candidates are fighting well. They are fighting strongly at many seats

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

In order to bring down the pressure on Bangalore city due to urbanisation, the land beside the highways could be acquired to establish smart villages and industries

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

## SHORT TAKES

### Sanjay Pandey new Mumbai police chief

Mumbai: Sanjay Pandey, the former acting Director General of Police of Maharashtra, has been appointed as the new Mumbai Police commissioner, replacing the incumbent Hemant Nagrale. An official order said Nagrale will take over as Managing Director of the Maharashtra State Security Corporation. This is the third time in less than a year that the Mumbai Police is witnessing a change of guard. Then city police chief Param Bir Singh was shunted out in March 2021 after Mumbai Police officer Sachin Waze was arrested in the 'Antilia' explosives case and was replaced by Nagrale.

### Boat tragedy: Six more bodies found

Ranchi: Days after a boat capsized in Barakar river in Jharkhand's Jamtara district, six more bodies were recovered by NDRF teams Monday, taking the toll in the accident to 14, an official said. Chief Minister Hemant Soren during the day announced an ex gratia of ₹4 lakh each to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the accident.

### 3 hacked to death

Gurugram: Three employees of a CNG pump in Sector-31 here were hacked to death using sharp weapons in the early hours of Monday, police said. The deceased are identified as pump manager Pushpendra and workers Bhupendra and Naresh. They hailed from different districts of Uttar Pradesh, police said. "Pushpendra and Bhupendra had around 10 injuries on their neck and chest while Naresh had over 12 injuries on his abdomen, chest and neck," Dr Deepak Mathur, who conducted the post-mortem, said, adding all three men were killed using different weapons. Considering the grievous nature of the wounds the trio sustained, police suspect it to be a case of personal enmity.

### 19 Naxals surrender

Sukma: Nineteen Naxals, including four women cadres, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's worst insurgency-hit Sukma district, police said Monday. The ultras, three of them carrying cash rewards of ₹1 lakh each on their heads, turned themselves in before police and CRPF officials at Bheji police station in the district Sunday evening, citing disappointment with the "inhuman" and "hollow" Maoist ideology, an official said.

## India may see 4th Covid wave from June, peak in August: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 28: The fourth wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in India may start around June 22 and peak from mid to late August, a modelling study by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur suggests.

The yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, recently posted on the preprint repository MedRxiv, used a statistical model to make the prediction, finding that the possible new wave will last for four months. The study led by Sabara Parshad Rajeshbhai, Subhra Sankar Dhar and Shalabh of IIT Kanpur's Department of Mathematics and Statistics shows that the severity of the fourth wave will depend on the emergence of a possible new coronavirus variant, and vaccination sta-

## ₹2.37LAKH CR BUDGET PRESENTED IN BIHAR

Amid uproar in the Bihar Vidhan Sabha, Deputy Chief Minister Tar Kishore Prasad, who also holds the finance portfolio, presented the annual state budget Monday afternoon. Prasad presented a ₹2,37,691 crore budget for the financial year 2022-23 in the Vidhan Sabha. He has also set a target to not let the fiscal deficit go beyond 3.5%



tus across the country. "The data indicates that the fourth wave of Covid-19 in India will arrive after 936 days from the initial data availability date, which is January 30, 2020," the authors of the study said. "Therefore, the fourth wave starts from June 22, 2022, reaching its peak August 23, 2022, and ends October 24, 2022," they wrote in the research paper. However, the researchers noted that there is al-

ways a fair chance that a possible new variant of coronavirus may have an intense impact on the whole analysis. The impact will depend on the various factors like the variant's infectibility, fatality, etc. they said.

"Apart from this fact, the effect of vaccinations - first, second or booster dosage may also play a significant role on the possibility of infection, degree of infection and various issues related to the fourth wave," the authors said. Officials at the World Health Organisation recently warned that Omicron may not be the last Covid variant and the next strain could be more contagious.

"The next variant of concern will be more fit, and what we mean by that is it will be more transmissible because it will have to overtake what is currently circulating," said

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's Covid-19 technical lead. The same research team had previously predicted that the third wave of the pandemic in India would peak by February 3, 2022.

That research studied the trend of the Omicron-led surge in Covid-19 cases in other countries and predicted that India too will witness a similar trajectory.

In the current study, the researchers applied the statistical methodology to Covid-19 data from India to forecast the occurrence of the fourth wave in the country.

The researchers noted that many countries have already witnessed the third wave of Covid-19, and a few countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe have started to face the fourth and higher waves of the pandemic.

## INDIA SENDING AID TO UKRAINE: MEA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 28: India is sending humanitarian aid, including medicines, to war-hit Ukraine at the request of Ukraine's Ambassador to India, Igor Polikha, the Ministry of External Affairs said Monday. Briefing mediapersons here, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "India is sending humanitarian aid (to Ukraine)."

He also said that India has decided to send four Union ministers to the neighbouring countries of Ukraine to help evacuate Indian citizens stuck at various border areas. Bagchi said: "Four Union ministers are going to four countries near Ukraine to help in the evacuation of the Indian students who are stuck there." According to the spokesperson, Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia will travel to



Romania and Moldova; Kiren Rijiju will be at the border with Slovakia; Hardeep Singh Puri will be at the Hungary border; while former Army chief General VK Singh will be in Poland.

They are going as special envoys of Indians to help evacuate those who are stuck on various bor-

## Mamata offers unconditional support to PM

NEW DELHI: In a statesman-like gesture, West Bengal's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday offered unconditional support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Ukraine crisis, even as she asked him to consider calling an all party meeting to take a united stand on the issue. The Chief Minister better known for her feisty battles against the BJP, in her letter to the Prime Minister also iterated that the country stands united on rescuing students in distress, "irrespective of party or politics." She also underlined that India, as the largest democracy must take the lead to offer a peaceful solution. "I would request you to accept my unconditional support during the ongoing international crisis and to consider whether you will like to have an all-party meeting now for consolidating our national resolve to come out of the crisis with our head held high," the letter said.

ders. Under 'Operation Ganga', India is bringing back students who are stuck in the conflict zones as well as in non-conflict zones in Ukraine. The decision to send four ministers to oversee smooth evacuation was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Replying to a query over students being asked to pay exorbitant amounts for evacuation, the spokesperson dismissed it as rumour and said: "No one is paying any money for these evacuation flights. The government is not changing any money to bring them back." He also stated that till now, six evacuation flights have landed in India with almost 1,386 Indian nationals. A flight from Budapest landed earlier Monday with 240

Indians. It is estimated that when Operation Ganga was launched, around 15,000 Indians were left in Ukraine. After Ukraine closed its airspace, India identified four land evacuation points through Poland, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

Talking about military help in Afghanistan, Bagchi said the situation is different in Ukraine as compared to Afghanistan when India had sent military aircraft to evacuate Indians after Afghanistan was taken over by Taliban forces in August last year.

"We are evacuating through commercial flights and we are open to using military aircraft if the need arises. Sending military aircraft there involves more countries," he added.

## Modi calls another high-level meeting

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday evening chaired a second high-level meeting on the Ukraine crisis after it was decided in an earlier meeting to send four Union ministers to the neighbouring countries of the war-hit nation to coordinate efforts to evacuate Indian students stranded there. Union ministers Hardeep Puri, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Kiren Rijiju and V K Singh, who will be flying as India's "special envoys" to spearhead evacuation efforts, were present in the evening meeting, besides External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and top bureaucrats.

## Railways resumes general class passenger services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 28: The railways Monday announced the resumption of general class passenger services which were suspended due to the coronavirus crisis.

The railways had been running fully reserved 'special trains' during the pandemic to prevent crowding in trains so as to contain the spread of the disease. Even the general second class coaches, mostly used by people on short distances and from economically backward sections, were made reserved coaches. Apart from this, second class accommodation of special trains currently running as holiday special trains will also be earmarked and reserved or unreserved as per policy, it added. In regular trains, general coaches shall be earmarked as reserved or unreserved as these were prevailing during pre-pandemic period, a railway spokesperson said.

## PROTEST TURNS UGLY



Police detain BJP activists during their call for a 12-hour bandh in West Bengal to protest against alleged rigging and violence during civic polls in Howrah district

## Rare disease policy does not give hope to patients: Experts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Feb 28: India is home to nearly 70 million rare disease patients, but the country lacks significantly in terms of research, treatment as well as government policies, experts said here Monday. "As per data that is available in India, there are around 70 million rare disease patients. However, the number could be much higher than that and that is difficult to gauge," Prof Alok Bhattacharya, Professor of Biology and Head of Department at Ashoka University, told IANS.

"It is because unfortunately neither the epidemiological studies have been done in India nor we have any idea about how many patients are there partly because there are only few centres where real diagnosis and management of these diseases happen," he



Representational image

lamented. Further, Bhattacharya said that research on rare diseases has been "very rare" in India.

But there has been some improvement in the diagnosis of the disease due to private DNA sequencing sectors that are necessary for confirmative diagnosis of many of the diseases, he noted.

"But, there isn't much real research undergoing to understand therapy or the biology behind the rare diseases," he said.

In 2017, the government came up with a National Policy for Treatment of Rare diseases. It earmarked a financial allocation of ₹100 crore.

February 28 is globally observed as Rare Disease Day. It was set up by the European Organisation for rare diseases and was first observed in 2008

"It did not talk about rare diseases per say, and the allocation of ₹100 crore for a country like this where some of the treatments can be very expensive can treat only a few," Bhattacharya said. It was revised on the suggestions of the law courts, state governments and patient advocacy groups. A new policy was then formulated by January 2020 and was released by the government on March 31, 2021.

According to Dr. Anjali Taneja, there have been some positive and welcoming changes. Yet, the government could have considered more of a uniform financial allocation mechanism, she said.

It is because "for about 95 per cent of the rare diseases, there are no therapies and treatments in India," Taneja told IANS.

The new policy does not mention what should be done for those 95 per cent of the rare diseases, she added. Taneja recommended a re-look of the policy more importantly in the implementation aspect of the policy and also the financial allocation, the accessibility especially to the rare disease patients who are staying in the remote areas.

Accessibility and affordability is a major issue because the cost of the treatment is exorbitantly high, she said.

## FIR against K'taka Congress leaders

### MEKEDATU PADAYATRA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Feb 28: Karnataka Congress' padayatra (foot march), demanding implementation of the Mekedatu project across the Cauvery river, continued Monday even as an FIR was registered against 38 party members, including state president D K Shivakumar and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah, for violation of Covid-19 rules.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai called the padayatra as "politically motivated" and questioned the opposition party's contribution to the project.

An FIR that has been booked under various sections of Indian Penal Code and the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act, for violation of Covid-19 rules, which names Congress leaders like Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah, D K Suresh, Ravi S, Dhruva Narayan, Priyank Kharge, Eshwar Khandre, Saleem Ahmed, among others.

The FIR has been registered at Ijoor police station in Ramanagara district, for the padayatra held Sunday, by gathering a large number of people, not wearing face masks or maintaining social distance, and violating Covid-19 guidelines.

The prevailing Covid norms carry a ban on rallies, dharnas and protests.

The FIR also cites a letter by the Ramanagara Deputy Commissioner to Shivakumar February 24, denying permission for the padayatra. Reacting to the FIR, Shivakumar speaking to reporters said even 100 cases could be booked but the padayatra will continue. "Let them (BJP govt) give whatever trouble they want, we will continue," he said, as he questioned as to why

The FIR has been filed under various sections of Indian Penal Code and the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act, for violation of Covid rules, which names Congress leaders like Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah, D K Suresh, Ravi S, Dhruva Narayan, Priyank Kharge, Eshwar Khandre, Saleem Ahmed, among others

cases were not booked against BJP leaders and other right-wing organisations, when they held gatherings or protests. He further said, Congress had informed the CM, DG, district administration and authorities about the padayatra. "As they (BJP govt) didn't want us to hold the padayatra, they extended Covid rules," he alleged.

After temporarily halting it in January due to Covid-19 concerns, the Congress had resumed the padayatra Sunday, and had covered a distance of 15 km from Ramanagara to Bidadi. On Monday, the foot march covered a distance of 20.5 km to reach Kengeri from Bidadi.

The 'padayatra 2.0' with the theme 'Namma Neeru, Namma Hakku' (Our water, Our right) will culminate at the National College Ground in Basavanagudi in Bengaluru on March 3, after covering a total distance of 79.8 kilometres. This is the second leg of the march that ended abruptly in Ramanagara January 13, when the third wave of the Covid-19 had peaked.







**'EUROPEANS TO PAY A PRICE FOR RUSSIA SANCTIONS'**

European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, has acknowledged that the sweeping sanctions the bloc has imposed on Russia in recent days over Moscow's military operation in Ukraine will have a negative impact on Europeans, too



# international

## THE GRIM REALITY



People sit and lie on the floor in the improvised bomb shelter in a sports centre in Mariupol, Ukraine



A pregnant woman and children sit on a bench in the improvised bomb shelter in a sports centre in Mariupol, Ukraine



An armed local resident carries a cat in a carrier and a fish in an aquarium, which he took out of an apartment building damaged by recent shelling in Kyiv, Ukraine

# Europe welcomes Ukrainian refugees but others, less so

Barcelonans: They flee into neighbouring countries by the hundreds of thousands - refugees from Ukraine clutching children in one arm, belongings in the other. And they're being heartily welcomed, by leaders of countries like Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania. But while the hospitality has been applauded, it has also highlighted stark differences in treatment given to migrants and refugees from the Middle East and Africa, particularly Syrians who came in 2015. Some of the language from these leaders has been disturbing to them, and deeply hurtful. "These are not the refugees we are used to... These people are Europeans," Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov told journalists earlier this week, of the Ukrainians. "These people are intelligent, they are educated people... This is not the refugee wave we have been used to, people we were not sure about their identity, people with unclear pasts, who could



have been even terrorists..." "In other words," he added, "there is not a single European country now which is afraid of the current wave of refugees." Syrian journalist Okba Mohammad says that statement "mixes racism and Islamophobia". Mohammad fled his hometown of Daraa in 2018. He now lives in Spain, and with other Syrian refugees founded the first bilingual magazine in Arabic and Spanish. He said he wasn't surprised by

"We're letting everyone in". Those comments were made only three months apart by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. In the first, in December, he was addressing migrants and refugees from the Middle East and Africa seeking to enter Europe via Hungary. In the second, this week, he was addressing people from Ukraine. When over a million people crossed into Europe in 2015, support for refugees fleeing wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan was much greater. Of course, there were also moments of hostility - such as when a Hungarian camerawoman was filmed kicking and possibly tripping migrants along the country's border with Serbia. Still, back then, Germany's chancellor, Angela Merkel, famously said "Wir schaffen das" or "We can do it", and the Swedish prime minister urged citizens to "open your hearts" to refugees. Volunteers gathered on Greek beaches to rescue exhausted families crossing on flimsy boats from Turkey. In Germany, they were greeted with applause at train and bus stations. But the warm welcome soon ended after EU nations disagreed over how to share responsibility, with the main pushback coming from Central and Eastern European countries like Hungary and Poland. One by one, governments across Europe toughened migration and asylum policies, doubling down on border surveillance, earning the nickname of "Fortress Europe". Just last week, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees denounced the increasing "violence and serious human rights violations"

"These are not the refugees we are used to... These people are Europeans," Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov told journalists earlier this week, of the Ukrainians. When it comes to Ukraine, the change in tone of some of Europe's most extreme anti-migration leaders has been striking - from "We aren't going to let anyone in" to "We're letting everyone in"

the remarks from Petkov and others. Mohammad described a sense of déjà vu as he followed events in Ukraine. Like thousands of Ukrainians, he also had to shelter underground to protect himself from Russian bombs. He also struggled to board an overcrowded bus to flee his town. He also was separated from his family at the border: "A refugee is a refugee, whether European, African or Asian," Mohammad said. When it comes to Ukraine, the change in tone of some of Europe's most extreme anti-migration leaders has been striking - from "We aren't going to let anyone in" to

## Biggest cargo plane 'Mriya' destroyed

Russian forces have destroyed Ukraine's flagman aircraft An-225 Mriya, the world's biggest cargo plane, Ukraine's state defense conglomerate Ukroboronprom said on Telegram. The aircraft was destroyed in an attack by Russian troops on the Hostomel airport outside Kiev, Ukroboronprom added Sunday. The restoration of the plane will cost more than \$3 billion and will take a long time, it said. The An-225 Mriya, designed in the 1980s, is the longest and the heaviest airplane ever built. It was capable of carrying up to 640 tons of cargo, Xinhua news agency reported.



## From beer to Molotov cocktails

In an industrial part of western Ukraine's main city Lviv, employees at the Pravda brewery have responded to the Russian invasion by switching from producing beer to Molotov cocktails. Lviv -- a bastion of Ukrainian identity -- lies near the Polish border and fears Russian tanks will at some point roll into the historic city. "You have to wait for the cloth to be well soaked. When it is, that means the Molotov cocktail is ready," said one smiling employee. With a cap on his head, he pushed the cloth deep into a beer bottle filled with a mixture of oil and petrol. Two other barmen next to him, all in good humour, do the same. They have a few dozen Molotov cocktails ready for use already, placed neatly on tables so as to protect them from the light snowfall. While these Molotov cocktails might seem ridiculous in the face of tanks and rockets, the switch could not be more serious for Yuriy Zastavny, the owner of the brewery. "We do this because someone has to. We have the skills, we went through a street revolution in 2014," said Zastavny, referring to Kyiv's pro-Western uprising that ousted a Kremlin-backed regime. "We had to make and use Molotov cocktails then," he said.



## Denmark to allow citizens to fight

Copenhagen has revealed it will allow Danish nationals to join the international military force as Kiev plans to set up to aid its own military in the conflict with Russia, RT reported. "It's a choice that anyone can make. This goes for all Ukrainians who live here, but also for others who think they can contribute directly to the conflict," Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said. "There is nothing at first sight that would legally prevent someone from going to Ukraine to participate in the conflict, on the Ukrainian side," Frederiksen added. Earlier, the Danish PM took part in a massive protest against Moscow's operation in front of the Russian embassy in Copenhagen, telling the crowd that "it is all of you and all of Europe who are threatened by Russia." The Danish prime minister is not the first to support the idea. Earlier on Sunday, UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss also said she would "absolutely" support Brits who want to join the military action on the side of Ukraine, RT reported.



## Boris offers UK visas to Ukrainian relatives

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced that Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion can come to the UK if they already have members of their immediate family settled in the country. As part of a new GBP 40 million humanitarian package for the supply of basic necessities and medical supplies such as medicines, syringes, dressings and wound care pack, Johnson confirmed that any person settled in the UK will be able to bring their Ukrainian immediate family members to join them here. Downing Street said this would benefit many thousands of people who at this moment are making desperate choices about their future. "The UK will not turn our backs in Ukraine's hour of need. We are providing all the economic and military support we can to help those Ukrainians risking everything to protect their country," Johnson said. "In the last days the world has witnessed awe-inspiring displays of bravery and heroism from the Ukrainian people in response to those who seek to obliterate their freedom by force," he said. More details of the new Ukrainian visa policy is set to be announced in Parliament this week.



## Germans swap Carnival parade for anti-war rally

Cologne: Germans in Cologne swapped their traditional Carnival festivities for an anti-war rally Monday that featured parade floats lampooning Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. The Cologne Carnival parade, at which clubs traditionally poke fun at Germany's politicians with colourful floats, was cancelled last week in favour of a peace demonstration after Russia invaded Ukraine in the biggest assault on a European country since World War Two. Carnival is hugely popular in parts of western Germany, especially in Rhineland cities such as Cologne and Duesseldorf, where



Carnival revellers show signs for peace in Cologne, Germany, during a peace march of tens of thousands against the war in Ukraine, Monday

festivities peak on Shrove Monday - or Rose Monday - with tens of thousands attending street parades featuring comical or satirical floats. Thousands of people flocked to the

parade route Monday, many wearing costumes in blue and yellow, the colours of Ukraine's national flag, and carrying signs reading Peace and Stop Putin.

# Afghan who moved to Ukraine forced to flee again

Medyka, Poland: After leaving Afghanistan a year ago, Ajmal Rahmani believed he had found a haven of peace in Ukraine. This week, he and his family had to flee again -- this time to Poland to the sounds of Russian bombs. "I run from one war, come to another country and another war starts. Very bad luck," Rahmani said shortly after crossing into Poland. His seven-year-old daughter Marwa clutched a beige-coloured soft toy dog as Rahmani spoke. Together with Marwa, his wife Mina and son Omar, 11, the family walked the last 30 kilometres (19 miles) to the crossing on foot be-



cause of the gridlock on the Ukrainian side of the border. After arriving at the Medyka on the Polish side, the family waited

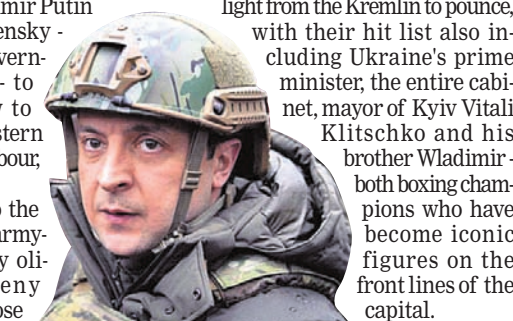
**UNLUCKY AGAIN**  
I run from one war, come to another country and another war starts. Very bad luck

with other refugees for a bus that will take them to the nearby city of Przemysl. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled during the four days of conflict into neighbouring countries, mainly Poland, Hungary and Romania. While most of the refugees are Ukrainian, among them are also students and migrant workers from further afield, including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India and Nepal. 'I lost everything' Rahmani, who is in his 40s, said he worked for NATO in Afghanistan for 18 years at Kabul airport. He decided to leave the country four months before the US withdrawal because he received threats and was so scared he kept his children out of school.

Before that "I had a good life in Afghanistan, I had a private house, I had a private car, I had a good salary," said Rahmani. "I sold my car, my house, my everything, I lost everything," he said. But he added: "nothing is better than my love, than my family life". Rahmani said he struggled to get a visa to leave Afghanistan and decided to go to Ukraine because it was the only country that would take him in. They set up home in Odessa - a Black Sea port city. Four days ago, when Russia began its invasion of Ukraine, they had to leave everything again and travelled the 1,110 kilometres to the border. Polish authorities said nearly 213,000 people have crossed into Poland from Ukraine since Thursday.

# 400 mercenaries sent to assassinate Zelensky

More than 400 Russian mercenaries have been flown in from Africa to assassinate Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky, Daily Mail reported. A private militia known as the Wagner Group allegedly has orders from Vladimir Putin to take out Zelensky - and 23 other government figures - to allow Moscow to take over its eastern European neighbour, the report said. According to the Times, UK, the army-for-hire, run by oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin - a close ally of the Russian president who is often dubbed 'Putin's chef' - was flown in five weeks ago and is being offered a huge sum for the mission. The highly-trained operatives are said to be waiting for the green light from the Kremlin to pounce, with their hit list also including Ukraine's prime minister; the entire cabinet, mayor of Kyiv Vitali Klitschko and his brother Vladimir - both boxing champions who have become iconic figures on the front lines of the capital.





NEWS IN BRIEF

Ramadhin dead

**Port of Spain:** Legendary West Indies spinner Sonny Ramadhin, who was a part of the side that won their first away series in England in 1950, has died at the age of 92, the country's cricket board said. Ramadhin had made his Test debut against England at Old Trafford in 1950. He played 43 Tests taking 158 wickets at an average of 28.98. "Mr Ramadhin made an impact from the moment he first stepped onto the field of world cricket. He combined with Alf Valentine to form cricket's 'spin twins' as West Indies conquered England away from home for the first time," Cricket West Indies president Ricky Skerritt said Sunday.

Mandhana cleared

**Rangiora (New Zealand):** In a relief for India, opener Smriti Mandhana has been cleared to continue playing at the ICC Women's World Cup after taking a blow to the head during the team's first warm-up fixture against South Africa. According to an ICC report, the 25-year-old Mandhana was assessed by the team doctor following the incident and was originally declared fit to continue, only to retire hurt an over and a half later after another consultation. The report also states that the left-hander felt no concussion symptoms, or experienced delayed effects from the incident.

SCEB held again

**Vasco:** RNorthEast United (NEUFC) played out a 1-1 draw in their final game of the ISL season against fellow strugglers SC East Bengal (SCEB) here Monday. While Marco Sahaneck (45th+1) scored for NEUFC, it was Antonio Perosevic (55th) who restored parity for the Kolkata side. NEUFC thus ended the season with only three wins, while SCEB's winless run extended to seven matches. Both sides had a number of scoring opportunities in the first half but failed to utilise those. The second half was a drab affair.

Dipa 'suspended'

**New Delhi:** Gymnast Dipa Karmakar is currently identified as 'suspended' in the International Gymnastics Federation's (FIG) website, a development which has left the national body flummoxed. It said that there has been no official communication from the world body on the 28-year-old Dipa's suspension. All other Indian gymnasts registered with the website have been marked 'active'. Dipa came into limelight after her fourth-place finish in the vault event in the 2016 Rio Olympics. She has not been competing since 2019 due to injuries. "We have not received any communication from the FIG regarding Dipa's suspension," GFI president Sunil Mittal said Monday. "So we cannot comment," he added. AGENCIES

4 FROM ODISHA IN PROBABLE LIST FOR JUNIOR WC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 28:** Hockey India (HI) named Monday a 28-member probable group for the final phase of preparations for the FIH Junior Women's World Cup (WC) to be played in South Africa starting April 1. The four-week preparatory camp began here Monday and will end March 26 before the team leave for South Africa. Salima Tete, Nikita Toppo, Beauty Ddungdung and Deepika Soreng are the Odia players who have found a place in the list of probables.

Women's hockey team chief coach Janneke Schopman talked Monday about the final stages of preparations. "The players have remained committed in their pursuit of leaving no stone unturned in their preparations for the FIH Junior Women's World Cup in South Africa," Schopman stated. "The group underwent a camp in Bangalore over the past few weeks. In Bhubaneswar we will go through our final preparations. It is going to be exciting couple of weeks and I am sure watching the Pro League games their senior compatriots are playing, will also be a good learning experience for the juniors," the coach added. She also said that the juniors will interact with the seniors on a regular basis and it will be an opportunity for them to learn new things.

# Liverpool lift League Cup



A NIGHT TO REMEMBER: Liverpool players celebrate with the trophy at the Wembley Stadium after their dramatic win over Chelsea, Saturday

Dramatic 11-10 shootout gives Reds victory over Chelsea after pulsating 120 minutes at Wembley

AGENCIES

**London, Feb 28:** Liverpool won the League Cup final in dramatic fashion as Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga missed the decisive penalty to give the Reds an 11-10 shoot-out victory after a pulsating 0-0 draw at the Wembley Stadium here Sunday night. Jurgen Klopp's side clinched their first domestic knockout prize since the 2012 League Cup when Kepa blazed his spot-kick high over the bar. It was the only miss in the nerve-jangling shoot-out, which saw Liverpool keeper Caoimhin Kelleher score his penalty just before Kepa failed. Ironically, Kepa was sent on at the end of extra time to replace Edouard Mendy under the Chelsea bar given his reputation as a penalty saving specialist. However, the Spaniard was unable to repel any

## 'WAR OF ONE REALLY BAD MAN'

**London:** Liverpool manager, Jurgen Klopp, has said that he cannot understand "how one adult person can put the whole world" at risk by allowing his army to invade Ukraine. "I am nearly 55 and I don't understand how one adult person can put the whole world in such a situation," Klopp was quoted as saying by 'Viaplay Fotball'. It was obvious he was referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin. "I know so many Ukrainian people. It is the war of one really bad man. We have to show solidarity," he added.

of Liverpool's kicks.

While there were no goals in 120 minutes, it was a fascinating final which produced countless chances for both sides to win the game before the cruel denouement.

Liverpool saw Joel Matip's second half controversially disallowed for a marginal offside against Virgil van Dijk. Chelsea on the other hand, had three goals ruled out for offside later in the match.

players united in a show of support for war-torn Ukraine. Amid the Russian invasion of its neighbour, Chelsea skipper Cesar Azpilicueta and Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson carried flowers in the country's yellow and blue colours onto the pitch. Both teams stood for a minute's applause, while a message on the stadium scoreboard in yellow and blue read 'Football Stands Together'.

There were chances galore for both sides. Chelsea's Christian Pulisic wastefully guided his close-range effort straight at Kelleher in the opening minutes. On the other hand Mendy sprawled to his right to repel Naby Keita's 20-yard drive, then scrambled across to push Sadio Mane's close-range follow-up over the bar with one hand when it seemed certain he would score.

## BATTER SAYS HE IS MOST COMFORTABLE BATTING EARLY ON AS HE CAN THEN PACE HIS INNINGS

# Shreyas eyes Kohli's No. 3 position

AGENCIES

**Dharamsala, Feb 28:** Shreyas Iyer relishes finishing off games, but, on the back of his excellent run in the T20Is against Sri Lanka, he has expressed his desire to bat at No.3, the place which is normally reserved for Virat Kohli.

Shreyas, who got a chance in the side after Kohli was given a bio-bubble rest following the second T20I against the West Indies, cracked three 50s against Sri Lanka to ensure a 3-0 sweep for the hosts.

"I'm not keeping any expectations from myself or from the team coaches because if you see the competition in our side, it's immense," Shreyas said in an interview for 'BCCI.tv'. "Every individual is capable of winning you games. Personally I want to enjoy each and every moment and opportunity, which I've been provided with," he added.

Given a choice however, Shreyas said that he would prefer batting at No. 3. "Obviously in this format, top-three is the only place where you can pace your innings pretty well. Otherwise if you bat down the order you can't give yourself time you need to start going from ball one. "So yeah, if I had to say the best number to bat for me personally, it's obviously No. 3," asserted the Mumbaikar. Shreyas is not losing sleep over



IN GOOD NICK: Shreyas Iyer raises his bat after reaching his half century, Sunday PTI PHOTO

EVERY PLAYER HAS HIS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. I WOULD RATHER FOCUS ON MY STRENGTHS THAN WEAKNESSES  
SHREYAS IYER

keeping his place in what is shaping up to be a formidable middle-order. He instead is 'cherishing' his good form in the run-up to the T20 World Cup. He is aware of the cut-throat competition in the team.

"Personally, I want to cherish this moment, I've achieved really good scores in the series," Shreyas, who scored 204 runs at a strike rate of 174 said. "I want to relax a bit, give myself time and not think much beyond because it's something that is not in my hand. If I start thinking about those things, I won't be able to focus on my game," he pointed out.

Shreyas now has four 50s in his last five matches that include an 80 against West Indies in an ODI earlier this month. However, he still doesn't feel he has cemented his place in the squad for the T20 World Cup in Australia. "I can't talk about cementing my place because as I mentioned earlier as well, the competition is so much," he pointed out.

# MAN WITH NERVES OF STEEL

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 28:** When the going gets tough, the tough gets going. First class Baroda cricketer Vishnu Solanki definitely falls into the 'tough' category.

In the last two weeks, the 29-year-old has shown that when it comes to showing nerves of steel in times of tragedy, he is one in a million. Not many people have the courage to turn up in a first class game after losing his newborn and then score a hundred only to get the news of his father's death and watch the funeral on a video call.

This Vishnu isn't God, he is a mere human, who is dealing with Herculean tragedy. Vishnu was blessed with a daughter February 10 and with the bliss



of fatherhood, he was ready to turn a chapter in his life. But a day later, the infant died in hospi-

tal and Vishnu, who was in a bio-bubble, left for his hometown to attend the funeral when all he

wanted was to hold his bundle of joy in his arms. Instead, he was performing the last rites.

No one would have thought anything if Vishnu would have stayed back to be by his wife's side. However, he was back in Cuttack for his side's game against Chandigarh. He smashed a hundred, perhaps reminded of a Sachin Tendulkar, who was back in Bristol days after his father's death.

But it seemed that the tragedy wasn't enough. On the final day of the match Sunday, Vishnu got a call from the manager. He was given the news that his ailing father, who has been battling severe illness, has passed away at a hospital in his home town. Vishnu however, did not leave the team... he stayed back. Commitment to core.

# WOMAN WITH GOLDEN GLOVES

Nitu beats all odds to achieve her dreams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 28:** It was deep-rooted patriarchy versus her father's resolve in Haryana's Dhanana village when Nitu picked up the gloves back in 2012. It was a huge decision as sports were never considered a 'good' thing for girls in her village. However, the rest as they say is history.

"It was not considered nice for girls to be very outgoing or ambitious in our village. So, yes there were a few things said when I started," the 48kg category boxer said Monday from Sofia, Bulgaria, recalling her journey after winning a gold on debut at the 73rd Strandja Memorial boxing tournament, one of Europe's most prestigious and oldest tournaments, Sunday.

The lanky pugilist said despite the many challenges, she could always count on her father to steer her boxing dreams since he was as convinced about them as she was. Nitu's father Jai Bhagwan was determined to make sure that his daughter became the outgoing and ambitious one that he put his own career on hold.

And the results have been, to put it mildly, quite pleasing.

The two-time former youth world champion talked about her problems and the inspiration she got from Olympic bronze-medalist Vijender Singh.

The gold proves that I am on the right path. It gives me confidence that I can beat anyone in the world  
NITU

"...There was societal pressure to be a home body at that time. I wanted to become a boxer after I saw Vijender bhैया win a bronze in the Beijing Olympics in 2008," the 21-year-old said.

"It was in 2012 when I decided that this is what I wanted for myself and my father decided that he would do all he can to help me. So, for nearly four years he went on leave without pay from his Haryana government job and accompanied me to training every day," recalled Nitu.

Bhagwan did rejoin work after Nitu started showing promise with some excellent performances at the age group international tournaments, including the Asian Youth Championships gold.

"But when Covid-19 struck and national camps shut down, my dad was back accompanying me to the Bhiwani Boxing Club for training. He would do road running with me. He made things happen for me and kept my morale up," informed Nitu.

It's a family that has stuck together to support Nitu even if it meant cutting corners to ensure that the budget did not go completely haywire while running the household.

"My mother was scared of me ruining my face with injuries.

But she was still supportive. My diet

was priority for her and to this date, she does this even though we are three siblings," she added.

