



SETTING HIGH GOALS

Actor Rashmika Mandanna says she wants to be a performer with pan-India appeal instead of being categorised

LEISURE P2



FARMERS HAIL MOVE

Farmers' unions welcome Delhi government's move to withdraw cases lodged against farmers during the anti-agri law stir

NATIONAL P9



SAURABH SHINES

Shooter Saurabh Chaudhary bags gold in the men's 10m air pistol event in the year's first ISSF World Cup

SPORTS P12

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COMMERCIAL LPG PRICES HIKED

New Delhi: Price of commercial LPG, used by hotels and other commercial establishments, was Tuesday hiked by ₹105, but rates of subsidised gas sold to households remained on freeze. The price of a 19-kg commercial cylinder has been hiked to ₹2,012 from ₹1,907, according to price notification from state-owned fuel retailers. This is the second-highest rate, after ₹2,101 per cylinder in December 2021. LPG rates are revised on the first of every month based on the price of benchmark fuel in the previous month. However, the price of domestic cooking gas LPG remained at ₹899.50 for a 14.2kg cylinder.



AYCI TURNS DOWN TATA OFFER

New Delhi: Ex-Turkish Airlines head Mehmet Ilker Ayçi, who was named as the new Air India CEO-MD, has declined the position. A Tata Group spokesperson confirmed the development Tuesday. However, no reason was given for Ayçi's decision. Last month, the Tata Group-led Air India announced the appointment of Ayçi as the new CEO and MD of the airline. At that time, Ayçi while accepting the position said he is 'delighted and honoured to accept the privilege of leading an iconic airline and to join the Tata Group'. He was scheduled to take charge April 1. So this sudden development has surprised many.

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NO INDIANS IN KYIV: SHRINGLA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 1: All Indian nationals have left Ukrainian capital Kyiv, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said Tuesday. At a media briefing here, Shringla said he has conveyed to envoys of Russia and Ukraine India's demand for 'urgent safe passage' for all Indian nationals stuck in Kharkiv and other conflict zones. He informed that at a high-level meeting on the Ukraine crisis, PM Narendra Modi expressed deep anguish over the loss of life of an Indian citizen in Kharkiv.

UKRAINE TO GET 70 WARPLANES

Warsaw: Three NATO countries will deliver more than 70 warplanes for Kiev, Ukrainian army representatives announced Tuesday morning. Poland, Bulgaria and Slovakia will provide over 70 MiG-29 and SU-25 aircraft that can be based at Polish airfields, 'RT' reported. Sixteen MiG-29 planes and 14 SU-25s will be provided by Bulgaria. Poland will send 28 MiG-29 warplanes, and Slovakia can deliver 12 MiG-29 planes, the officials stated.

"We remain very concerned over the situation in Kharkiv, Sumy and other conflict zones," Shringla stated. "Over the next three days, 26 flights have been scheduled to bring back Indian citizens from countries neighbouring Ukraine," he added. The Russians claimed to have killed 70 Ukrainian soldiers in the assault on Kharkiv. However, officials of emergency services said that 10 civilians have been killed in the Russian attacks. Various intelligence agencies meanwhile said Russia have lost more than 5,000 soldiers so far in the war.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What should be our next step? Surgical strike on Russia?

Indian student killed in Kharkiv



Wreckage around City Hall, the largest building in Kharkiv after the Russian airstrikes; (Inset: Deceased Indian student Naveen Shekarappa Gyanagoudar)

Indians in Ukraine, for the past few days have been complaining about the lack of coordination for evacuation. Amid this, a Karnataka student was killed in an airstrike by Russia on Kharkiv

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 1: India suffered its first casualty in the Russia-Ukraine war when a student from Karnataka was killed Tuesday morning in shelling in Kharkiv city. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed the death of the student in a tweet. The student was identified as Naveen Shekarappa Gyanagoudar, a native of Chalageri in Haveri district of Karnataka. "With profound sorrow we confirm that an Indian student lost his life in shelling in Kharkiv this morning," the MEA said. We convey our deepest condolences to the family. Naveen Shekarappa Gyanagoudar, a native of Chalageri in Haveri district, died in the shelling," it added. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai called up Naveen's father Shekhar Gouda and offered their condolences. The MEA said the foreign sec-

retary is calling ambassadors of Russia and Ukraine to reiterate its demand for 'urgent safe passage' to Indian nationals who are still in Kharkiv and in other cities which are conflict zone. "Similar

action is also being undertaken by our ambassadors in Russia and Ukraine," the MEA informed. Kharkiv city is witnessing a rapid escalation in fighting between the Ukrainian troops and Russian forces.

IAF joins evacuation ops

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked the Indian Air Force (IAF) to evacuate Indians stranded in Ukraine, sources said Tuesday. The IAF is likely to deploy several C-17 aircraft as part of 'Operation Ganga' Tuesday itself, they said. In a statement Tuesday, the IAF said it is geared up for any requirements of evacuation of Indian citizens from Ukraine. C-17 is IAF's largest transport aircraft and it has the capacity to carry approximately 300 passengers in it during a humanitarian relief mission. Sources also informed that of the estimated 20,000 Indian nationals who were present in Ukraine when the battle began, 8,000 have left the country since the Centre's first advisory earlier this month.

Indian students flash the 'V' sign at the IGIA after their arrival from Ukraine



Meanwhile in spite of the death of an Indian student in the Ukrainian town of Kharkiv, the Centre compared Tuesday its response to help Indian citizens with those of several other countries, including the US, the UK and China. The Centre asserted that while its 'Operation Ganga' continues and embassy remains functional, others have been unable to work at such a scale. Students returning from Ukraine however, have different narratives to offer. Nishi Malkani who returned Tuesday to Mumbai said that a large number of students are stuck in different parts of eastern Ukraine and are facing a grim situation. It is difficult for them to travel by road to reach the western borders and move out of the war-hit country.

BJD ACHIEVES LANDSLIDE WIN



BJD candidates celebrate after the party's landslide win in Paralakemundi in Gajapati district

Naveen's magic does the trick as BJD scripts history by forming Zilla Parishads in all 30 districts of Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: The ruling BJD registered a landslide victory in the three-tier panchayat elections by winning 90 per cent of the Zilla Parishad seats which means that they will comfortably secure the post of ZP president in all 30 districts.

Out of the total 853 Zilla Parishad (ZP) zones in Odisha, elections were held in 851 seats and the BJD emerged victorious in 765. Of the remaining two seats, a BJD candidate won one ZP seat uncontested while the election for another seat was countermanded. So in total, the BJD finished with 766 ZP seats.

The BJP was a poor second with 42 ZP seats and Congress a very distant third with 37. Independent candidates won three seats while four other seats went to smaller parties. BJD secured 52.73 per cent of the 2,10,28,403 valid votes polled between February 16 and 24. In comparison, BJP got 30.07 per cent of the votes and Congress only 13.57 per cent.

The BJD had secured 476 ZP seats in the 2017 rural polls, which means it has gained 290 more seats.

ROLL OF HONOUR	
BJD	766
BJP	42
CONG	37
OTH	07

The BJP, on the other hand lost 255 ZP seats, down from the 297 in 2017 elections.

Districts where BJP could not win any ZP seats were Bhadrak, Deogarh, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj and Nabarangpur.

BJD supremo and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said the massive mandate for the party has increased its commitment for 'seva' (service) to the people.

"I thank the people from the core of my heart for their liking for BJD and support to the candidates. This massive mandate has reinforced our commitment towards service of the people. The dedicated service by the winning candidates and our party workers has made the BJD a movement," Patnaik said on Twitter.

SETBACK FOR EX-MIN ANJALI

Dhenkanal: Former minister in the Naveen Patnaik cabinet, Anjali Behera has failed to win after contesting for a Samiti member seat from Giridhar Prasad Gram Panchayat under Hindol block in Dhenkanal district. She was contesting on a BJP ticket after being expelled from the BJD in 2014 for anti-party activities. Behera had been elected to the Odisha Assembly for three consecutive terms from Hindol constituency in 2000, 2004 and 2009 on a BJD ticket.

India 3rd in global billionaires' list

Despite the restrictions due to the various waves of Covid-19, the number of wealthy people in India has grown substantially in 2021

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 1: The number of ultra-high-net worth individuals (UHNWIs) having net assets of USD 30 million (about ₹226 crore) or more, in India increased 11 per cent last year on the back of buoyant equity markets and digital revolution, according to Knight Frank. India is also ranked third in billionaire population globally in 2021. The US is at the top of the list with 748 billionaires, followed by Chinese mainland at 554 and India with 145.



In its latest edition of 'The Wealth Report 2022', property consultant 'Knight Frank' said the number of (UHNWIs) globally increased by 9.3 per cent in 2021 to 6,10,569, from 5,58,828 in the previous year. "The number of UHNWIs in India grew to 13,637 in 2021 from 12,287 in the previous year," the report stated. Amongst key Indian cities, Bangalore witnessed the highest growth in the number of UHNWIs

at 17.1 per cent to 352, followed by Delhi (12.4%, 210) and Mumbai (9% per cent, 1,596).

Knight Frank India CMD Shishir Bajjal said: "Equity markets and digital adoption have been the key factors driving the growth of UHNWIs in India. The growth in younger, self-made UHNWIs has been incredible in India."

With a healthy growth in the UHNWI and billionaire population, Bajjal said India is expected to be one of the fastest growing countries amongst its global peers, further strengthening itself economically and emerging as a super power in different sectors.

As per the report, around 69 per cent of the super wealthy individuals in India are expected to witness an increase of over 10 per cent in their net worth in 2022.

3 hurt in Boudh firing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, March 1: Three persons were critically injured Tuesday morning when two political groups clashed in an incident of poll-related violence in Dahya panchayat of Boudh district.

A Sarpanch candidate, who won in the recently-concluded panchayat elections had taken out a victory procession with his supporters. However, some followers of his arch rival pelted stones at the sarpanch's supporters at Dahya Chhak. In retaliation, the supporters of the victorious candidate fired 10 rounds which caused injuries to three persons of the other group.

The injured, Rajendra Jagadalla, Gopal Mallick and Chandan Mallick from Kirasira village were rushed to the Sonepur hospital. As their condition worsened, the injured were shifted to VIMSAR in Burla.

2 road mishaps claim 11 lives

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Eleven persons were killed Tuesday in two separate road accidents in different districts of the state.

In the first incident, six persons, including a minor boy, were killed after their car travelling at high speed crashed into a tree close to Sunsunia under Sadar block in Nuapada district. Three others in the car also suffered serious injuries.

The accident occurred when the victims and their family members were returning from Nrusinghanath temple in Bargharh district Tuesday afternoon.

Police said that all the occupants of the vehicle belonged to Mahasamund district in Chhattisgarh. They had come to the temple on the occasion of Maha

The mangled remains of the car in Nuapada district



Shivratri. Nuapada and Jonk police personnel along with a fire-fighting team reached the spot and sent the injured to the hospital.

In another incident in the wee hours of Tuesday, five persons were killed as the car in which they were travelling rammed into a stationary truck on NH-149 near Kantiapasi under Khamar police limits in Angul district.

Sources said that the accident took place just after midnight. The driver of the ill-fated vehicle lost control and crashed into the rear of the truck. All the occupants died on the spot. The deceased were supporters of a Sarpanch candidate and had gone to Pallahara where counting of votes was on. They hailed from Injidi village in the district.

leisure



CRAWFORD'S ALLEGED STALKER ARRESTED

Cindy Crawford's alleged stalker has been arrested after he banged on her window. The man - who alleged he and the supermodel had a child together - flew from the UK to arrive at her doorstep in California to bang on windows to get her attention, according to TMZ.

DOUGLAS TO PLAY FRANKLIN IN NEW LIMITED SERIES

Hollywood star Michael Douglas will star as US Founding Father Benjamin Franklin in a new limited series. According to Variety, the yet-untitled series is based on the book *A Great Impression: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America* by Pulitzer Prize winner Stacy Schiff.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You may have a wide circle of casual friends, but today, these associations will prove to be beneficial. Your friends will help you chase away the blues. That way, you will also understand the deeper role of friendship, says Ganesh.

TAURUS

Much to the disappointment and annoyance of your friends and associates, you are likely to act unduly possessive and self-centred about persons and objects, warns Ganesh. Be sure, your overprotective attitude is not likely to amuse anyone. To make matters worse you will possibly ignore their well-founded resentment and instead of setting matters right, you will be running after material gains.

GEMINI

If you are embroiled in a legal dispute, an out-of-court settlement is likely, predicts Ganesh. You are a courageous person and you'll need a lot of it today. Don't back down from your decisions. You may have to be stern with a few people. Your resilience will pay off.

CANCER

Today, you will put your heart and soul into whatever task you take up. But the results may not be too forthcoming. However, that should not be a reason for you to get dejected or anxious. You will get your due sooner or later.

LEO

If you are wondering whether you'll get the carrot or the stick today, then Ganesh has some good news for you: the day promises to bring only rewards for you. This will be especially true for your workplace, where your innate talents get recognised today.

VIRGO

A sudden bend in the journey of life is important to understand it better, says Ganesh. Excellence will drone on throughout the day today. Top on the list are money matters and your loved ones - not necessarily in that order! Much of your time may be spent in appeasing the Gods.

LIBRA

Get a bigger wallet, since it is very likely that today shall prove to be a money-making day for you. It might be through some sort of a partnership deal that this may happen, predicts Ganesh. Destiny lends you a helping hand and guides you in your goals. But it is your sentiments that may darken your thoughts today.

SCORPIO

Two words will define your day - eloquence and elegance. Sweet talk and compliments may take you a long way, but do not become complacent and get carried away with your success. Sometimes, saying the right thing may be more beneficial than saying what the other person wants to hear.

SAGITTARIUS

Unnecessary expenditure might clog your bill today, feels Ganesh. Organising and detailing will be a time-sink as you will spend hapless hours trying to discipline things. The vibrant evening will be a contrast to your hectic day as you kick back and relax while socialising.

CAPRICORN

Paradise is where patience leads you, success is the other terminus, says Ganesh. Keeping your cool will benefit you in more ways than you would have imagined, so think twice before you unleash your vengeance on your foes. You are also likely to have a heart-to-heart conversation with your beloved and make him/her feel wanted.

AQUARIUS

Today, you will understand the value of your job. You decide to do away with everything that has been hampering your work till now. You realise you need to set some long-term goals in your career. Grab the opportunity while the intention lasts, says Ganesh.

PISCES

Your inherent talents, competitive colleagues and supportive superiors will spur you on to great heights at the workplace, beginning today. Make sure that you do not get carried away by little victories, says Ganesh.

Rashmika doesn't want to be categorised

Hyderabad: Actress Rashmika Mandanna, who will next appear in the movie *Aadavallu Meeku Johaarlu*, stated that she doesn't want to get categorised as a North or South actress, but only wants to do content-rich movies.

The *Sarileru Neekevaru* actress, who spoke to the media said, "I don't want to be categorised in any industry like North or the South. I want to be an actor

with a pan-India appeal." The actress who has two big-ticket Hindi flicks, *Mission Majnu* and *Good Bye*, starring Amitabh Bachchan, said that she is open to acting in any good movies, without considering the language barriers.

Rashmika, though, subscribes to the fact that her appearance in South Indian movies like *Pushpa* and *Geetha Govindam* has given her great visibility in Hindi.

"People call me Srivalli (from *Pushpa*) or Geetha (from *Geetha Govindam*), etc. So the audiences remember my characters, which means they are watching all our content," she says.



'People can be unfair to star kids'

Mumbai: After son Abhimanyu Dassani, Bhagyashree's daughter Avantika has also made her way to the showbiz. She recently made her debut with a web show titled *Mithya*.

Being a star kid, Avantika is often questioned if being Bhagyashree's daughter helped her in her career.

Replying to the same, Avantika recently told a news portal that she has worked hard to get where she is. According to her, there are some people who can be unfair to star kids but the response

she got to her performance has been overwhelming so she doesn't think it is right for her to complain about it.

Avantika also opened up about being compared to Ananya Panday and Janhvi Kapoor. According to her, it isn't fair. Everything creative is subjective. What resonates with her as an audience might not resonate with someone else. Avantika added that one should look at every artist for the work they do and their performance.

Mithya, which is a psychological thriller drama, also stars Huma Qureshi in the lead role.

NAT'L MULTILINGUAL THEATRE FESTIVAL PURVA RANGA - DAY 1

Biplabi Krutibas: Odisha's 1st war of Independence revisits on stage

BHUBANESWAR: *Purva Ranga*, a week-long multilingual national theatre festival organised by Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi (OSNA) in collaboration with Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture and Eastern Zonal Culture Centre of Kolkata kicked off here at Rabindra Mandap, Tuesday.

Since the theme of this seven-day event was based on the trials and tribulations of the freedom fighters, Pancharveda, a theatre troupe of this city, presented *Biplabi Krutibas*, a play written by Parsuram Harichandan and directed by Haren Saho, on the life of Krutibas Patsani. He along with Jayee Rajguru and Baxi Jagabandhu, two other prominent freedom fighters, laid down their lives during Paika Rebellion, the first war of Independence of Odias against the British forces in



the early 19th century. The actors who infused life into the historical characters included Chiranjeev Moharana, Muktikanta Mahapatra, Subrat Nandi, Prakash Moharana, Raghunath Behera. Among the dignitaries, noted theatre

personality Anant Mahapatra, OSNA President Aruna Mohanty, Vice-President Manmath Satpathy and Secretary Prabodh Rath were present on the occasion. Six more plays including four in Hindi will be staged over the next six days, said Rath.



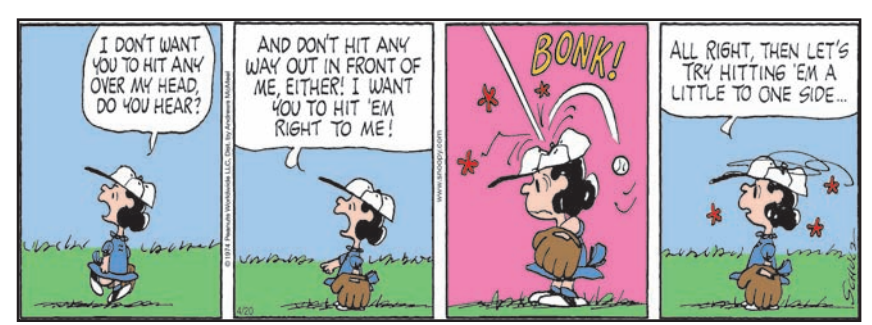
'Often we underrate ourselves as humans'

A talk with Devdutt Pattanaik

Known for his writings on Hindu sacred lore, legends, folklore, fables and parables, eminent Indian mythologist, speaker, illustrator and author Devdutt Pattanaik is back again with two more books - *'Sitanka 5 Ichha'* and *'Pandavanka 6 Juddha'*, for children. Ahead of their release March 3, the mythologist shares with *Orissa POST* about them and much more.

- Excerpts:
- At the outset please tell us the unique features of these two new releases.
 - Ramayana* has never been told from the perspective of the choices that Sita made. Similarly, *Mahabharata* has not been read from the viewpoint of children who are bullied by their cousins. These are practical issues that I have highlighted. They are not my imagination but the versions of the ancient sages of India which have been retold to help out children.
 - Do you see any change in the language of mythology now?
 - When most people use the word mythology they are really speaking about mythological fiction or retelling mythology in their own way. Very few people study mythology which is more analytical.
 - Do you think the new generation has an interest in learning mythology?
 - Even the older generation doesn't know much about mythology beyond TV shows. My writing is not for young or old people, it is for everyone.
 - How do you convince your readers when your subjects land in controversies?
 - I do not try to convince anyone. As a writer I focus on making people aware.
 - Since you talk about mythology, have you ever faced any competition/resistance from the godmen or women?
 - As a mythologist, I decode stories, symbols and rituals and connect them with everyday life, personal and professional. I do not consider myself in the same space as any godmen or women. I do not want to form any kind of a cult.
 - Please tell us about your other forthcoming releases.
 - When people talk about India they talk about north and south, completely ignoring the east, Odisha in particular: The world knows about the attacks on Somnath Temple but not on Jagannath Temple. Sometimes I feel the Hindi belt overshadows other parts of India which is so sad. Talks are on to translate my essays which are about Odisha's history and culture.
 - The conflict between the Pandavas and the Kauravas is well known. Can you throw some light on the five other wars the Pandavas fought?
 - Other than the battle of Mahabharata, the book *Pandavanka 6 Juddha* talks about the other incidents that led up to the war.
 - How has Sita been portrayed in *Sitanka 5 Ichha*?
 - As a woman who made her own choices.
 - How and when did you get into mythological writings despite being a practicing physician?
 - I have had an interest in mythology since my childhood. But it started taking shape when my first write-up on mythology appeared in our college souvenir: Then, *Shiva - An Introduction*, my first book was released in 1996. I managed to strike the right balance between the two.
 - Being a doctor, was it difficult for you to present mythology to the readers?
 - There is no connection between the two. Just as women can manage both their families and jobs at the same time, I too handle mythology and medicine. Often we underestimate ourselves as humans.

PEANUTS



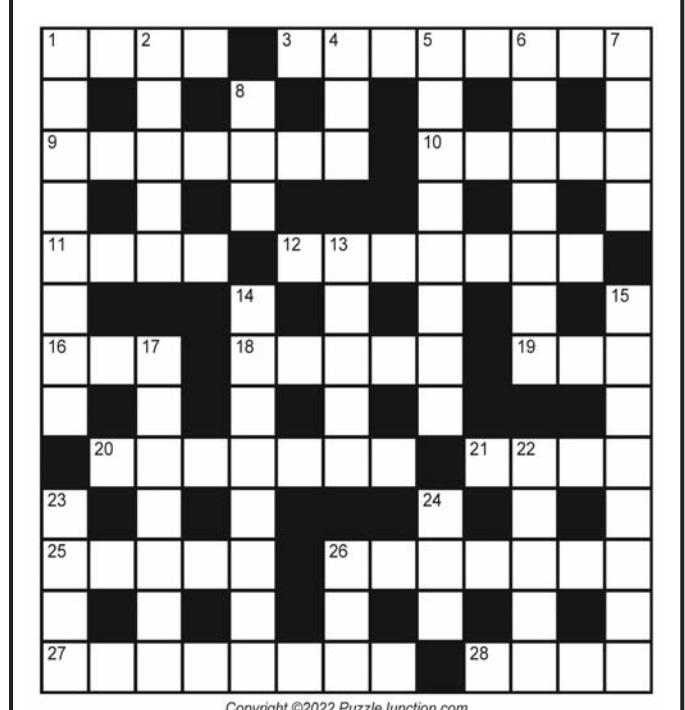
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



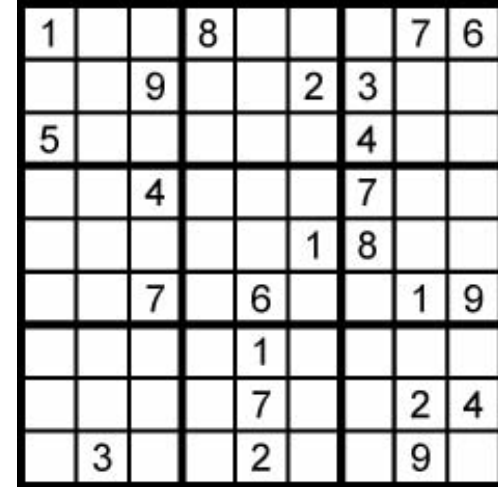
FUN post CROSSWORD



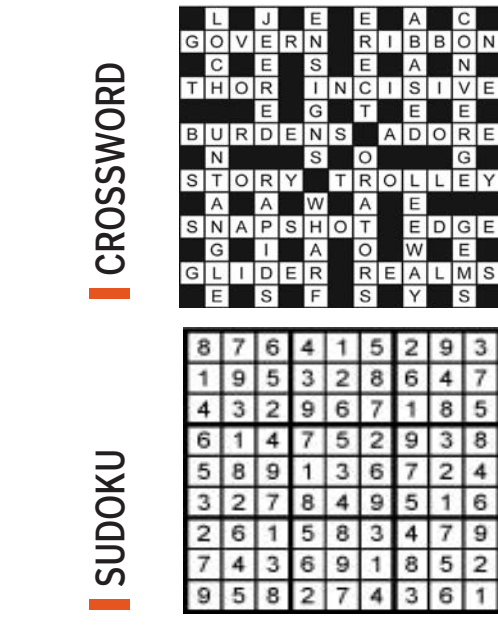
- Copyright ©2022 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across
- 1 Mexican sandwich
 - 3 Conflagrates
 - 9 Obstacles
 - 10 Flabbergast
 - 11 Freshwater duck
 - 12 Chef's forte
 - 16 Commotion
 - 18 Cry of delight (2,3)
 - 19 Rya, for one
 - 20 Classifieds (4,3)
 - 21 Butter substitute
 - 25 Expression
 - 26 Box filled with evils woman
 - 27 Racehorse
 - 28 Kind of moss
 - 5 Fight result, at times (5,3)
 - 6 Wrench
 - 7 Hunt for
 - 8 Grimm character
 - 13 Spherical
 - 14 Scorn
 - 15 Not too smart
 - 17 Loud applause
 - 22 On the lam
 - 23 Life's partner
 - 24 Wildebeest
 - 26 Luau treat
- Down
- 1 Papeete native
 - 2 Around that time
 - 4 Saturn's wife

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



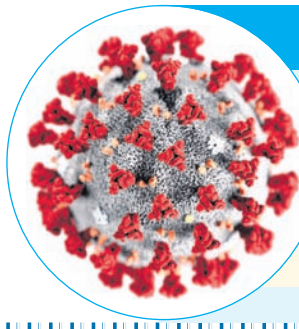
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



DISPELLING DARKNESS

A huge earthen lamp offered at a Shaivite shrine at Chauliaganj in Cuttack on the occasion of Mahashivratri, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	43,78,39,464	36,95,73,914	59,78,450
India	4,29,31,045	4,23,24,550	5,14,023
Odisha	12,85,206	12,74,048	9,079

Oppn to introspect over poll rout

Though we have failed to win enough ZP seats, we have got 30 per cent of vote share in the polls, says state BJP president Samir Mohanty



He congratulated elected BJP candidates, party workers and expressed gratitude to 63.23 lakh voters in the state, who have voted his party in the three-tier Panchayat elections. Admitting his party's defeat in the poll, BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi said, "All party workers of the BJP in Odisha are disappointed and saddened with the results. The BJP could have shown better performance in the poll. Definitely, there are faults in election management, we will find

those during our introspection meeting." She said there will be no impact of this election results on the upcoming urban polls. It will not have any impact on the general election in 2024 too, Sarangi claimed.

"Though we have failed to win enough ZP seats, we have got 30 per cent of vote share in the polls," said state BJP president Samir Mohanty. However, another BJP leader Bijoy Mohapatra indirectly blamed the state BJP leadership for the debacle. "I am not surprised by the results of the Panchayat elections. The kind of preparations we made during the 2017 elections was not done this time. Neither any meeting, nor any specific strategy or blueprint was prepared for the poll." When a party goes to polls with such unpreparedness, what type of results are expected, he asked. State Congress president Niranjana Patnaik alleged that the BJD had taken advantage by spending funds through various government schemes. If health insurance of ₹5 lakh is distributed to 70 per cent of people under the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) smart health card scheme and money is distributed to ration card holders, farmers and street vendors, what can be done, he said. The BJD uses public money to strengthen its vote bank and this is putting them in an advantageous position, Patnaik said. Reacting to the allegations, BJD spokesperson Pratap Deb said, "They should accept and introspect their debacle instead of raising questions over the BJD's integrity."

Students must learn from their surroundings: Nayak

NIIS Group of institutions aims to provide quality learning in disciplines such as information technology, management and social studies. Its Founding Managing Trustee Dr SC Nayak, in an interview to Orissa POST, speaks on the facilities the group provided during Covid-19 pandemic, the pros and cons of online education and many more things. Excerpts:



porate sector and multi-national companies were invited to our campus. We brought down fees during the pandemic to reduce financial burden on parents.

What are the major problems one encounters in online education?

It is easy for a teacher to pay attention to all students during offline classes. But, one can pay attention to only six-seven students in online mode of education. Social media and other websites may affect students' attention in online classes. Poor network

problem is also a big issue. Sometimes, students may find it difficult to grasp the subjects during virtual teaching. This mode of education may be a bit costly for students from poor financial backgrounds. Continuous exposure to screen may create health issues.

How do you motivate students for a better future?

Apart from classes, we have organised seminars, webinars, corporate talks and skill enhancement programmes for our students. We have also arranged online projects for technical students. Quiz competitions, management games, leadership gaming, poster competitions and debates were also organised to enhance students' skills. We provided tutorial classes without extra fees.

What is your advice for aspiring students?

One can learn a thing or two from every incident and person in his/her surrounding. This will help us to solve various problems during our forward journey. Students should enhance their knowledge and skills for a better future for our country. The pandemic induced lockdowns and shutdowns had given a golden opportunity to students to enhance their knowledge in several fields. Youths should have sound knowledge about all aspects of life. This is a good sign for the future of our country.

What facilities did you provide to students during Covi-19 pandemic? It was really challenging to provide teaching facilities to students during the pandemic. We accepted the challenge and imparted training to our teachers and staff in the initial days of 2020. That is why our teachers were able to provide quality teaching through online mode by adhering to Covid norms. Even, we managed to arrange seminars, workshops and projects from our corporate clients online. Corporate talks and skill enhancement programmes were also held online for our students. Several eminent people from the cor-

What are your views on the students of Odisha?

The students of Odisha are doing well continuously. The state government under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has successfully managed the pandemic. The students have also obeyed the Covid guidelines. The state government had initiated cer-

ZILLA PARISHAD POLL RESULTS

DISTRICT	TOTAL ZONES	BJD	BJP	INC	OTH
Angul	28	27	1	0	0
Balasore	45	39	4	2	0
Bargarh	34	27	7	0	0
Bhadrak	28	28	0	0	0
Bolangir	34	26	4	4	0
Boudh	09	7	2	0	0
Cuttack	46	45	1	0	0
Deogarh	07	7	0	0	0
Dhenkanal	27	26	1	0	0
Gajapati	14	11	1	2	0
Ganjam	69	67	2	0	0
Jagatsinghpur	26	25	0	1	0
Jajpur	39	39	0	0	0
Jharsuguda	09	9	0	0	0
Kalahandi	36	33	2	1	0
Kandhamal	18	13	2	3	0
Kendrapara	32	31	1	0	0
Keonjhar	37	33	3	0	0
Khurda	30	28	2	0	0
Koraput	29	16	0	12	1
Malkangiri	15	12	0	3	0
Mayurbhanj	56	53	0	0	3
Nabarangpur	26	24	0	1	1
Nayagarh	24	22	1	0	1
Nuapada	14	12	1	1	0
Puri	33	30	3	0	0
Rayagada	22	16	0	6	0
Sambalpur	18	16	2	0	0
Subarnapur	13	11	1	1	0
Sundargarh	35	33	1	0	1
TOTAL	853	766	42	37	7

State GST mop-up up by 23%

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 1: The collection of GST revenue in Odisha has increased by 23 percent in February 2022 as compared to February 2021, Ministry of Finance said.

According to the ministry, Odisha has collected ₹4,101 crore GST in the month of February this year as compared to ₹3,341 crore collected in same month in 2021.

Significantly, the gross GST revenue collected in the month of February 2022 is ₹1,33,026 crore of which CGST is ₹24,435 crore, SGST ₹30,779 crore, IGST ₹67,471 crore (including ₹33,837 crore collected on import of goods) and cess ₹10,340 crore (including ₹638 crore collected on import of goods).

The ministry further informed that the government has settled ₹26,347 crore to CGST and ₹21,909

crore to SGST from IGST. The total revenue of the Centre and the states in the month of February 2022 after regular settlement is ₹50,782 crore for CGST and ₹52,688 crore for the SGST. The revenues for the month of February 2022 are 18 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year and 26 per cent higher than GST revenues in February 2020, the finance ministry informed.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Math model to predict Covid vaccine efficacy

AGENCIES

Bangalore, March 1: Researchers from Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in collaboration with Australia's Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) have devised a mathematical model which predicts how COVID-19 vaccination antibodies provide protection against symptomatic illnesses. It has ability to improve the usage of existing vaccinations while also accelerating the development of new ones.

Narendra Dixit, a professor at IISc's Department of Chemical Engineering and the study's senior author said that "The reason why forecasting vaccination efficacies has been difficult is that the mechanisms involved are complex and benefits at many interrelated levels," said

"Vaccines produce a variety of antibodies, each of which has a particular effect on virus growth in



the body. This, in turn, has an impact on the infection's dynamics and the severity of its symptoms. Furthermore, different people produce different types of antibodies and in varying quantities "He went on to say more.

Initially, researchers analysed over 80 different neutralising antibodies said to be generated post vaccination against the surface spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. These

antibodies are naturally present in the blood for months and prevent virus entry by blocking the spike protein. Researchers hypothesised that these 80 antibodies constitute a 'landscape' or 'shape space', and each individual produces a unique 'profile' of antibodies which is a small, random subset of this landscape.

Later, the team came up with a model to simulate infections in a virtual patient population of about

3,500 people with different antibody profiles, and to predict how many of them would be safe from symptomatic infection following vaccination.

"This diversity of antibody responses was a challenge to comprehend and quantify," adds Pranesh Padmanabhan, Research Fellow at QBI, the first author of the study. The model was capable enough to predict the level of protection that would be conferred after vaccination based on the antibody 'profile'

of the individual, and the predictions were found to closely match efficacies reported in clinical trials for all the major approved vaccines, an IISc statement noted.

The authors suggest, "The researchers also observed that vaccine efficacy was linked to a readily measurable metric called antibody neutralisation titre. This opens up the possibility of using such models to test future vaccines for their efficacies before elaborate clinical trials are launched."

Dixit further said that the study is based on current vaccines which have been structured to work on the original SARS-CoV-2 strain. "Our formalism is yet to be applied to the new variants, including Omicron, where other arms of the immune system and not just antibodies appear to be contributing to vaccine efficacies. Studies are ongoing to address this."

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Five students from Odisha, who were stranded on the Romania-Ukraine border for many days, Tuesday returned to the state via Mumbai.

The evacuated students are Bikash Behera of Jagatsinghpur, Aishwarya Pani of Sambalpur, Subhasmita Priyadarshini of Bhubaneswar, Aman Kumar and Anupam Kar of Jharsuguda. A few more students are scheduled to arrive in the state Wednesday. They are now staying at Odisha Bhawan in New Delhi.

"After taking permission from Ukrainian embassy, we have arranged buses and brought students to Romania border. We have arranged tickets for students. The state government has assured us all kinds of help for evacuating all our students from the war-torn country," said Alok Kumar Lal of Wise Education Group that arranged medical education for Odia students in various Ukrainian institutes.

"We were forced to wait for several days for evacuation after we arranged buses and reached

Romania border. Finally, we were flown to India in phases. Now, the evacuated students are staying at the Odisha Bhawans in Mumbai and New Delhi," said Madhusudhan Mishra, a medical student in the Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia.

Some Odia students had earlier described their plight in the war-torn country through social media and urged the Centre and the state government to take necessary steps for their early evacuation. The students were facing shortage of food and drinking water.

Sources, meanwhile, claimed that many Odia students are still stuck on Romania boarder and they are yet to get any support from the Indian embassy. The students are facing a tough situation as the temperature plummeted to -10 degree Celsius, sources said.

"We are staying here amidst frequent bombings. We have to go to Romania and Poland borders for evacuation. We are now unable to move anywhere due to lack of any transport service. ATMs are also not working here," said a student who is stuck in Kharkiv city.

WANTED DRUG PEDDLER HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: The Special Task Force (STF) of the state Crime Branch Tuesday claimed to have arrested a notorious drug peddler.

STF sources said Suraj Dalabehera, a resident of Mukundaprasad under Khurda Town police, who was wanted in connection with STF case (1/22) registered under Sections 21(c) and 29 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, has been taken into custody.

Sources said the state police had January 25 this year managed to arrest Dalabehera and recovered over 3 kilograms of brown sugar, Rs 65.32 lakh and three 7mm pistols besides other incriminating documents from his possession. However, he managed to flee the custody and was on the run since then.

Dalabehera was also involved in at least seven cases registered with the Khurda Town police between 2016 and 2021, said an official.

State clocks 168 new Cov cases, 8 fatalities



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 1: The state's Covid-19 tally rose to 12,85,206 Tuesday as 168 more people tested positive for the virus, the health department said. The infections are the lowest since December 28 last when 156 Covid-19 infections were reported, it said.

The coronavirus death toll in the coastal state rose to 9,079 with eight more deaths, it said. The state had logged 171 Covid-19 cases and seven deaths Monday Odisha now has 2,340 active cases, while 12,73,734 patients have recovered from the disease, including 430 in the last 24 hours.

Besides, 53 other Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities so far. The daily positivity

rate was 0.37 per cent, and 29 children were among the new infections, a bulletin stated. The state has conducted 45,204 sample tests in the past 24 hours.

The state's recovery rate currently stands at 99.10% while active cases account for 0.18% of total positive cases registered in the state.

The state's share is 3.44% in the country's confirmed virus case-load while the active cases are 0.14% of India's total active cases. The number of cured patients accounts for 3.61% of the country's total recovery. Odisha has so far reported 1.87% of the country's coronavirus deaths.

The state's health authorities have so far administered 6,09,90,782 Covid-19 vaccine doses while 2,74,32,006 people out of 3.09 crore eligible adult population are fully vaccinated. A total of 7,91,143 have so far received booster or precaution dose so far. Over 88% of the eligible population has so far received both the doses of vaccine.

COURTESY CALL



Noted singer Padmashri Kavita Krishnamurti and Padma Bhushan Dr L Subramaniam interact with Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. 5T Secretary VK Pandian is also seen

OP PHOTO

Debi Prasad Ray SOA chancellor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Noted horticultural scientist Debi Prasad Ray has taken over as the Chancellor of Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University here, an official said Tuesday.

Ray, who was till recently the principal advisor to the SOA founder president Manojranjan Nayak, was previously the two-time Vice-Chancellor of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) in Bhubaneswar; it was learnt.

He succeeds Khageswar Pradhan, who served as the Chancellor of the university since 2011. Ray was welcomed at a simple function at the university Tuesday attended by the founder president, Pro Vice-Chancellors, professors and senior officials.

Nayak hoped that the new Chancellor would provide leadership and guidance to the university to help it achieve greater heights.

Bizman loses ₹2.35cr to cyber fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Cyber crooks impersonating as senior officials of the Union finance ministry and IRDA have duped a businessman from Keonjhar of more than Rs 2.35 crores on the pretext of providing funds to him under a central government scheme.

The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of the state Crime Branch has started investigation into the matter after registering a case on the basis of a complaint lodged by Pramod Kumar Rout, 57, of Joda area in Keonjhar.

Rout, in his complaint, claimed that he had invested money in an insurance policy of the Max New York Life Insurance March 29, 2012. However, the victim lost his lifelong savings seven years later after unknown cyber criminals managed to access the details of his insurance policy. In October, 2019, Rout received a call from a person who identified himself as AK Walia, the Fund Raising Head of the Ministry of Finance. He told the vic-



HOWEVER, ROUT LOST HIS LIFELONG SAVINGS SEVEN YEARS LATER AFTER UNKNOWN CYBERCRIMINALS MANAGED TO ACCESS THE DETAILS OF HIS INSURANCE POLICY

PRAMOD KUMAR ROUT, 57, OF JODA AREA IN KEONJHAR, IN HIS COMPLAINT, CLAIMED THAT HE HAD INVESTED MONEY IN A POLICY OF THE MAX NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE MARCH 29, 2012

tim that his office was located at Bashir Bag near Parishram Bhawan in Hyderabad.

Walia informed Rout that his insurance policy had been selected by the ministry of finance for a special grant of Rs3 crores under the Rahat Kosh Yojana. Subsequently, the accused sent a letter issued by Suresh Mathur, HOD (Intermediaries) IRDA and some photographs to Rout's Whatsapp

account.

The victim was shocked while going through the letter in which Kumar had instructed the victim to deposit Rs 1,56,36,500 within four hours through RTGS for the clearance of dues pending against his insurance policy. The accused again called the victim as he did not pay heed to the letter.

The cyber criminal instructed Rout to contact his PAs (Jaisawal

and J Harsih) urgently to discuss about the pending dues but the victim didn't.

Later, the fraudsters resorted to threatening Rout. The accused again called Rout and said all his bank accounts, deposits in insurance policies and others would be blocked if he failed to pay the dues worth around Rs 1.56 crore immediately. Subsequently, the criminals made several calls threatening him to pay the money and avoid freezing of his accounts.

Rout finally gave in to the threats and deposited Rs 2,35,82,806 in the accounts shared by the commen between November, 19, 2019 and February, 4, 2021.

Later, he received different fake letters from RBI, Ministry of Finance and Income Tax departments issued by Ashok Mahajan. The accused also sent two demand drafts worth Rs1,27,73, 000 and Rs70,81,800 in the name of Rout but both drafts were found fake.

Finding no other way, Rout finally sought the help of EOW to find the fraud and nab the culprits.

Best logistic company of the year award to OSL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: Orissa Stevedores Limited (OSL) has been awarded as the 'Best Logistic Company of the Year' for successful diversification in multiple logistics in the 7th edition of 'East Coast Maritime Forum 2022' held in Kolkata recently.

OSL Group VP (Marketing & Coordination) Lingaraj Panigrahy received the award from Paradip Port Trust (PPT) Deputy Chairman Ashis Kumar Bose and Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) former CMD Harjeet Kaur Joshi at a special programme organised by the EXIM India Shipping Times.

OSL Group also bagged the coveted 'Best Stevedores Company of the Year' award, adjudged by the eminent Jury members of the organiser EXIM India Shipping Times, who evaluated numerous companies to choose the best stevedores company.

OSL also bagged 'Best Stevedores Company of the Year' award, adjudged by the eminent Jury members EXIM India Shipping Times

On behalf of OSL Group, Harihar Dash and Subash Acharya received the award.

Speaking about the award, OSL Group Chairman Mahimananda Mishra said, "This award has confirmed that the company is on the right track. We will continue to keep ourselves apprised of the prevailing best standards and practices and implement the same."

Since Odisha eyes to be the steel hub of India, the OSL Group sees huge potential owing to the surge in the steel demand and an increase in the import and export business in the port sector, said a source.

OMFA for milk MSP at ₹35 per litre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 1: The Odisha Milk Farmers' Association (OMFA) has urged the Orissa State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Limited (OMFED) to hike the minimum support price (MSP) of milk to Rs 35 per litre.

OMFA chairman Rabi Behera said except for milk, prices of almost all essential com-

modities have increased. The price revision shall encourage 11 lakh milk farmers, he added. According to Odisha Economic Survey 2020-21, milk production in the state was around 2,370,000 tonne in 2019-20.

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GMMF), which deals with milk and related products under the banner of Amul, has increased the milk prices by Rs 2 beginning March 1. This means Amul Gold

will cost Rs 30 per 500 ml, Amul Taaza Rs 24 per 500 ml and Amul Shakti Rs 27 per 500 ml, it was learnt.

The cooperative dairy producer cited increase in cost of packaging, energy, transportation and animal fodder as the reason behind the price hike of milk products. In the last two years, Amul hiked prices of the fresh milk category by only 4 per cent per annum, the federation said.

India slips 3 spots to 120 on 17 SDGs adopted as 2030 agenda

According to the Centre for Science and Environment's State of India's Environment Report, 2022, India's rank has dropped primarily because of major challenges in 11 SDGs including zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, gender equality and sustainable cities and communities

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 1: India has slipped three spots from last year's 117 to rank 120 on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted as part of the 2030 agenda by 192 United Nations member states in 2015, a new report said.

With the latest rankings, India is now behind all south Asian nations except Pakistan, which stands at 129. The south Asian countries ahead of India are Bhutan (75), Sri Lanka (87), Nepal (96) and Bangladesh (109).

India's overall SDGs score was 66 out of 100.

According to the Centre for Science and Environment's State of India's Environment Report, 2022, released by Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Patel Tuesday, India's rank dropped primarily because of major challenges in 11 SDGs including zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, gender equality and sustainable cities and communities.



India also performed poorly in dealing with quality education and life on land aspects, the report stated.

The previous year, India had suffered on the fronts of ending hunger and achieving food security, gender equality and building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation.

On the state-wise preparedness, the report said Jharkhand and Bihar are the least prepared to meet the SDGs by the target year 2030.

Kerala ranked first, followed by Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh in the second position. The third position was shared by Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhnad.

Among the Union Territories, Chandigarh was ranked first followed by Delhi, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry in the second place and the Andaman and Nicobar

Islands on the third, the report said.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet.

There are 17 SDGs which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership.

Some of these goals are no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure.

It also includes reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions and lastly strengthening global partnerships for the goals.

AT LORD'S ABODE



Devotees make a beeline at Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of Mahashivratri, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

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SHORT TAKES

Woman kills self after hubby's death

Malkangiri: Unable to bear the trauma of her husband's demise, a woman allegedly hanged herself at Durgagudi Sahi under Sadar police limits in this district Tuesday. The victim has been identified as Madhusmita Patra, wife of late Manoj Kumar Patra. According to sources, the couple was residing in a rented house at Durgagudi Sahi. However, Manoj passed away due to heart attack just a couple of days back following which Madhusmita was under severe mental stress. On Tuesday morning, the house owner spotted Madhusmita's body hanging from a ceiling fan and informed the cops. A case of unnatural death has been registered and the body was sent for an autopsy.

Youth held for abduction, rape

Berhampur: Baidyanathpur police Tuesday arrested a 23-year-old youth from the new bus stand here in Ganjam district for allegedly abducting and raping a minor girl. The accused has been identified as Papun Sahu of Parjang area in Dhenkanal district. During investigation, it was revealed that Papun had planned to escape to Goa with the victim. A case was registered and the duo was sent for medical examination. Later, the accused was forwarded to court following which he was sent to judicial custody. On the other hand, the cops recorded the statement of the victim.

Mystery shrouds death of student

Bhadrak: The body of a student was found hanging mysteriously at a private mess in the district headquarters town here, Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Narendra Mahalik, a Plus II Science student of Bhadrak Junior College and a resident of Pangta village under Dhusuri police limits in the district. Town police sent the body for post-mortem and started an investigation. Family members, however, cried foul and alleged that Narendra had been murdered. The deceased's father, Karunakar Mahalik, alleged that someone had hanged the body from the ceiling after killing him, to give the incident a suicide angle. When contacted, IIC Uma Shankar Nayak said exact reason of the death could be ascertained only after the post-mortem report comes.

PARADIP URBAN POLLS

Ward-5 signals 'no entry' to leaders

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, March 1: With urban local body elections around the corner, people of some wards in Paradip municipality are upset over lack of basic facilities. According to sources, residents of ward no-5, particularly people of Balijhari slum, have decided to not allow members of the political parties to enter the ward over job related issues. As per the poll schedule announced by the State Election Commission (SEC), filing of nominations will be conducted from March 2 to 7. Elections to Paradip municipality will be held March 24. Meanwhile, frontline leaders of all three major political parties - BJD, BJP and Congress - are in a hurry and have started hectic par-

leys to pick the right candidates. People of Balijhari held a meeting and decided to oppose entry of political leaders to their area. They have formed a 26-member committee with Bapi Sarkhel being made its advisor. The committee was named as "Ama Samparka Ama Ekata". The locals decided that one of them would be chosen as an independent candidate to contest elections and no political party would be allowed to field any candidate. "No political party will be allowed to the ward," Dipak Swain, a member of the committee. Sahadev Senapati, a resident, said a frontline BJD leader of the slum was working in a PSU here as a contractual worker, but the contractual agency laid him off without any reason.



Fire services personnel dousing the blaze that engulfed a forest near MPV-67 village under Padia block in Malkangiri district, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

FOREST FIRE

BJD turns the tables on BJP in Malkangiri

MATUA BENGALI COMMUNITY SUPPORTS THE RULING PARTY; PRADEEP MAJHI'S EXIT FAILS TO CUT INTO CONG'S VOTE BANK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, March 1: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had stormed into Malkangiri by wresting all the seats from the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in 2017 panchayat elections. However, the situation has reversed in the recently-concluded panchayat polls: The BJD has completely decimated the BJP as the saffron has failed to grab a single seat in the district.

According to political observers, this time, BJP leaders failed to approach people in rural pockets. As a result, voters got disconnected from the saffron party. Malkangiri MLA Aditya Madhi (BJP) and zilla parishad chairperson Dasrath Padiami were seriously ill before the panchayat elections. So, they failed to devote time to campaigning. However, the BJP candidates have lost the polls against the BJD and Congress by slender margins. "The electoral loss will be reviewed," said Ashok Parida, former president of the BJP's district unit. The BJD has won 12 ZP seats. Much ahead of the rural polls, the BJD had managed to include 5,000 voters of Bengali community (Matua) into its fold. To counter the BJD, the BJP had



Political observers say, this time, BJP leaders failed to approach people in rural pockets. So, voters got disconnected from the saffron party

The BJD has won 12 ZP seats. Much ahead of the rural polls, the BJD had managed to include 5,000 voters of Bengali community (Matua) into its fold

roped in a BJP MLA from West Bengal (Matua community) in the campaigning for over a week. However, his expected influence on the Bengali voters failed to work

on Matua community, it was said. On the other hand, well ahead of the panchayat elections, veteran Congress leader and former Nabarangpur MP Pradeep Majhi and a host of frontline Congress leaders had joined BJD. It was apprehended that Majhi's exit from Congress will completely wipe out Congress in the district and bolster the base of the BJD. However, this did not happen. Rather, the Congress strengthened its base and grabbed three ZP seats. More importantly, the Congress could improve its tally without using money and muscle power, political observers noted.

People vote against Kharasrota project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, March 1: Public anger over Kharasrota mega drinking water project in Rajkanika block had its repercussions on the three-tier panchayat elections as people at the project site of Barunadiha and Bharigada panchayats have elected the anti-project activists, a report said.

The anger of the people against establishment of the drinking water project had its reflections on the rural polls as the ruling BJD failed to attract the voters despite all efforts. This is in sharp contrast to the landslide victory of the ruling party across the state.

The people at the project site of Barunadiha and Bharigada panchayats cast their votes in favour of office bearers of Kharasrota Nadi Banchoo Sangram Samiti (KNBSS) and gave a message to the state government to keep off from implementing the project. The office bearers of the KNBSS were contesting as sarpanchs and ward members the counting for which was held, Sunday.

The president of the KNBSS Duryodhan Mohanty was elected as sarpanch while Lakshmi Priya Nayak was elected as samiti member from Barunadiha panchayat. Moreover, the office bearers of KNBSS Pratima Rout, Ananta Charan Nayak, Kalyan Sethi, Narahari Behera, Hemant Kumar Patra, Geetanjali Nayak, Basantilata Sahu, Hemalata Sahu, Aparna Mohanty, Abhiram Behera, Archita Nayak and Nakuli Mallick won as ward members.

Similarly, villagers elected KNBSS activist Meena Kumari as sarpanch and Sarat Kumar Rout as samiti member in Bharigada panchayat. Local intelligentsia Ganesh Chandra Samal, Pradip Kumar Tarai and Pratap Kumar Padhi

The anger of the people against construction of the drinking water project had its reflections on the rural polls as the ruling BJD failed to attract the voters despite all-out efforts

This is in sharp contrast to the landslide victory of the ruling party across the state

BJD tried to show that public opinion was in support of the project, saying if party-backed candidates get elected, the govt will give a blank cheque for the development in these two panchayats

said a mega drinking water project is being constructed at Nuahata of Bhadrak district for which construction of an intake well is underway near Barundiha and Bharigada panchayats to lift water from Kharasrota river.

Locals have been opposing the project for the last two years but the state government is going ahead with its implementation. The KNBSS had made it a main issue during the polls.

The ruling BJD made efforts to show that the public opinion was in support of the project. The ruling party went on to say that if the villagers elect party supported candidates, the state government will give a blank cheque for the development in these two panchayats.

The villagers pleaded the state government to immediately shut down the project as public opinion in these two panchayats are against it.

When contacted, KNBSS president Duryodhan Mohanty and office bearer Sarat Kumar Rout said that their agitation against the project will continue until the state government does away with the project.

BSF IG takes stock of security in Koraput

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, March 1: Border Security Force (BSF) inspector general (IG) Satish Chandra Budakoti Tuesday visited the company operating base (COB) at Podapadar, Tentulipadar and Palur villages in Narayanapatna block of Koraput district.

Budakoti reviewed the security scenario and operational preparedness of the BSF. He also took stock of the LW&E and response of security forces to the menace and stressed on the strategic and tactical deployment of the forces on the border areas of Odisha-Andhra Pradesh. He said that five-phase panchayat elections in the area were concluded peacefully amid heavy security cover of BSF.

Hopefuls race for Sundargarh ZP chair

THIS TIME, THE RULING PARTY WILL FORM THE COUNCIL ON ITS OWN STRENGTH FOR WHICH THERE IS BUZZ ALL AROUND AS TO WHO WILL BE CROWNED AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ZILLA PARISHAD

POST NEWS NETWORK



Of 35 zilla parishad seats, BJD has got 33 seats while CPI(M) and BJP have won one each in Sundargarh this time

A BJD candidate was appointed as the chairperson while the post of vice-chairperson went to Congress.

Out of the 35 seats, BJP won 14 seats, BJD 13, Congress five, CPI and CPM won one seat each while an independent secured one seat.

During voting for the post of chairperson, the Congress and CPI

voted along with the BJD candidates while CPM abstained from voting. However, things have changed this time with the BJD securing an absolute majority.

This time, the ruling party will form the council on its own strength for which discussions have started as to who will be crowned as the ZP

chairperson.

In 2017, BJD had formed the ZP in alliance with Congress and Ema Ekka of Nuagaon block was appointed as the chairperson.

The candidates winning from Nuagaon block have thrice become chairperson of the Sundargarh zilla parishad.

There is buzz about which block candidate will be appointed as the chairperson of the zilla parishad by the ruling BJD while political observers pointed out that candidates from Bonai subdivision or Kuanmunda block might get the chance this time to hold the plum post.



Chorus grows for historic Ulapgarh hill facelift

As history goes, the valiant freedom fighter from western Odisha, Veer Surendra Sai, was hiding in the caves of Ulapgarh hill-fort along with his associates during his fight against the British forces



POST NEWS NETWORK

Belpahar, March 1: Hundreds of local residents Friday demanded development and beautification of the historic Ulapgarh hill, which

is 7 km from Belpahar town of Jharsuguda district.

The famous hill-fort and tourist site lacks adequate road connectivity and several other basic in-

through the hill round the year. They come to enjoy its natural scenic beauty and witness historical ruins present here as well, some residents informed.

Belpahar is well connected through road and railway. After reaching the town a tourist can hire a vehicle to reach the historic place.

"Despite Ulapgarh being recognised by the Central government as a tourist destination, it is yet to be fully developed," they alleged.

After being adequately developed, Ulapgarh as a tourist destination will certainly generate employment opportunities for them and thereby contribute to the district's economy, many locals claimed.

"It is believed, the Pandavas had

stayed here for some days during their spell of 'Agyatbas' (living in disguise) of one year. During the same time Arjun married the Naag Kanya (cobra princess). Hence, Ulapgarh was named as after the name of the princess Ulupi, whom the great archer, Arjun had married," an elderly person stated.

As history goes, the valiant freedom fighter from western Odisha Veer Surendra Sai was hiding in the caves of Ulapgarh hill-fort along with his associates during his revolt against the Britishers. It is pertinent to mention that a dilapidated fort can be witnessed on the Ulapgarh hill. Some stone inscriptions can also be seen in this hill depicting mythological tales and historical events.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. ETELCNBBSST-338E, Dt.24.02.2022
NAME OF WORK : DESIGN, SUPPLY, ERECTION, MODIFICATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF 25KV OHE, FEEDER & AUXILIARY TRANSFORMER FOR 3RD LINE BETWEEN RANITAL JUNCTION CABIN (RLJC) TO JAKHAPURA (JKPR) & HARIDASPUR (HDS) TO BYREE (BYT) IN KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 3785.45 Lakhs, EMD (₹) : 20,42,700/-
Completion Period of the work : 24 Months.
Date and time of closing of tender : At 1200 hrs of 28.03.2022
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>. The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website fifteen days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.
The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of tender documents, submission of Annexure-B/F & F1 duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.
By, Chief Electrical Engineer/Con-I PR-138/CE/21-22 Bhubaneswar

EAST COAST RAILWAY
File No. DRM/Engg/KUR/21-22/E-Tender/108, Dt.25.02.2022
1.Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Bridge-KUR-288-2021, Dt.22.02.2022
DESCRIPTION : PAINTING, GREASING AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH MAINTENANCE OF BRIDGE ASSETS OF HARIDASPUR - PARADEEP SECTION UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 52.00 Lakhs, EMD (₹) : 1,04,000/-
2.Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Bridge-KUR-289-2021, Dt.22.02.2022
DESCRIPTION : PROVISION OF CORROSION GUARD, DROP GUARD, INSPECTION LADDER, BEARING COVER AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH MAINTENANCE OF BRIDGE ASSETS OF HARIDASPUR - PARADEEP SECTION UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 230.62 Lakhs, EMD (₹) : 2,65,300/-
3.Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Bridge-KUR-293-2021, Dt.22.02.2022
DESCRIPTION : PROPOSED PAINTING OF GIRDER BRIDGES UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (BRIDGE) (CUTTACK-I AND CUTTACK-II) OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 72.87 Lakhs, EMD (₹) : 1,45,800/-
4.Tender Notice No. e-Tender-Bridge-KUR-294-2021, Dt.22.02.2022
DESCRIPTION : PROPOSED PAINTING OF GIRDER BRIDGES UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (BRIDGE) NORTH AND SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (BRIDGE) SOUTH IN KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approximate Cost of the work (₹) : ₹ 89.61 Lakhs, EMD (₹) : 1,79,200/-
Completion Period of the work : 12 (Twelve) Months (For all tenders).
Date and time of closing of tender : At 1500 hrs of 16.03.2022 (For all tenders)
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
NOTE : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 10 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.
Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>.
Divisional Railway Manager(Engg.) PR-948/M/21-22 Khurda Road

FOCUS ASSEMBLY POLLS

REFERENDUM ON MODI GOVT



For the BJP, which claims to secure 300 seats, the defeat at the hustings would not only damage the reputation of CM Yogi Adityanath, but also of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi

the Grand Old Party to retain its leadership position among the secular parties.

The Gandhi siblings are fighting their own survival battle. If they fail to put up an impressive tally in these elections, they can expect a revolt within the party later this year. The G-23 is active behind the scenes and if Rahul fails to deliver, his leadership is expected to be challenged by any of the rebel leaders. In Uttar Pradesh, Priyanka Gandhi has already sent feelers to Akhilesh Yadav and who hopes to form a coalition with him. That will be possible only if the Congress gets a double digit tally and the SP falls short by a few seats. Truncated mandate for the Congress can dash the hopes of the Congressmen towards the dynasty.

For the BJP, which claims to secure 300 seats, the defeat at the hustings would not only damage the reputation of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, but also of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. All these leaders have left no stone unturned to campaign extensively in the state. Rejection by the voters will only put a question mark on their progress trajectory in future, dampening their spirits for 2024.

These elections can partly be termed as a referendum on the Modi government, as the electorate would be exercising their franchise on the policies of the Central government, which are also similar to the Yogi government. Since the votes are being fetched in the name of 'double-engine' government, it will be a referendum on both Yogi and Modi. Uttar Pradesh has become another laboratory of Hindutva for the BJP, besides Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Modi. If, in UP, the BJP wins with huge numbers, it will be a victory for Hindutva. The BJP will continue to pursue its agenda with greater élan and fanfare!

The writer is Delhi-based senior journalist and political commentator. Views are personal.

Come March 10, the outcome of the Assembly elections will spring surprises, as there is no discernible wave in any of the election-going states – Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa or Manipur. Unlike the previous elections, where the pollsters could easily predict, this time round, it can be either way for the main political parties.

In Uttar Pradesh, Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav's future is pitted against the prestige of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. For both of them, the elections are crucial. On the one side is secularism, 'Parivarwaad' and the unity of Opposition, while on the other, is Hindutva and the claims of development of the 'double-engine Sarkaar'. There is no dearth of sops and promises made by each of the political parties in the electoral fray, making it difficult for the have-nots to decide on their future messiah. Amongst the din and cacophony of slogans, the voters have to make a choice on the grim issues like corruption, law and order situation, communal violence, handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, 'love-jihad', joblessness, and inflation.

Ironically, it is not easy for a voter to make a choice on the issues, as every party brings with it its own baggage. Votes are, therefore, mostly cast as per one's caste and religion. The minority vote, this time, would go en masse to the Samajwadi Party as they are determined to defeat Yogi. Whether the Jats and the Yadavs, along with the Muslims, will favour Akhilesh and the RLD, will have to be seen.

For Akhilesh, the elections are crucial, as he is contesting not only to form a government in Uttar Pradesh, but also to find a respectable place among the handful of Opposition leaders. With the race already having begun for various permutations and combinations against the BJP, Akhilesh Yadav is expected to join the likes of K Chandrashekar Rao, Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray and Mamata Banerjee, only if he succeeds to win sizeable number of

seats by defeating the BJP.

For the sake of Opposition unity, it is essential for Akhilesh to win the polls by trouncing the BJP. The more the seats in the Samajwadi Party's kitty, the easier it would become for the secular forces to form the government after the general elections. In fact, more than Mamata Banerjee, whose vote-bank is restricted to her state of West Bengal, Akhilesh can look beyond Uttar Pradesh, if he manages to trump Yogi Adityanath.

The likes of Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal have commenced their poll journey by trying their luck in states like Punjab and Uttarakhand. In Punjab, it will be no surprise if Aam Aadmi Party defeats the Congress and succeeds to form its own government in the second state, after Delhi. The fight here is restricted between the Congress and the AAP, though BJP-Punjab Lok Congress and Shrimoni Akali Dal (SAD) are also in the fray. The results here would be interesting to watch, as AAP is confident of emerging as the Number One party. If, however, Punjabis vote for a hung Assembly, the

post-poll scenario would change the equations at the national level. Neither the BJP, nor the Congress would like to join hands with AAP as they are arch-rivals in Delhi. However, Amarinder Singh's party, the PLC, or SAD, may shake hands with Kejriwal, much depending on their electoral seats tally.

It is the results that decide the political future of a party, rather than the parleys held by their senior leaders. Who had ever thought that the Congress, the NCP and the Shiv Sena would join hands to form a coalition government called the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi? The Uddhav Thackeray government has been running smoothly for the last two-and-a-half years in Maharashtra.

The future of the Congress, and particularly of the Gandhi siblings, is at stake in the states of Punjab and Uttarakhand. While in Punjab, it is pitted against the AAP, in Uttarakhand, the BJP is putting up a spirited fight against the Congress. In both these states, the Congress is the main force and unless it retains Punjab and wrests Uttarakhand and Manipur from the BJP, it will be difficult for



Anita Saluja

UNLIKE THE PREVIOUS ELECTIONS, WHERE THE POLLSTERS COULD EASILY PREDICT, THIS TIME ROUND, IT CAN BE EITHER WAY FOR THE MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES

Climate Catastrophe

The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), a body of over 700 scientists across the world, paints a bleak future for the survival of humans and the health of planet Earth. Released February 27 by 195 member governments of the IPCC, it says scientific evidence unequivocally points to the fact that climate change is a real and no imaginary threat to human well-being and all forms of life on the planet. Various organisations working for the improvement of the climate, battered by human activities, have been warning developed and developing countries against their reckless use of industries and technology and urging them to drastically reduce carbon emissions to put a brake on greenhouse gas effects. But, the greed for maximising profits and the ruthless exploitation of natural resources have made a mockery of the concerns expressed by the scientific community. The latest damning report of the IPCC says any further delay in concerted global action means missing a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a 'livable' future. Human-induced climate change has been causing widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives of billions of people around the world despite efforts to limit the damage. Now, the scientists say people and ecosystems least equipped to cope with the challenges in Asia, Africa, South and Central America and the Arctic region are being hardest hit. India will also have to witness intense impact of climate change which will drastically affect its agriculture, water resource and economy.

The IPCC report is a dire warning about the consequences of inaction. The report makes it clear that the world is confronted with certain climate hazards over the next two decades with global warming of 1.5 degree C. The earlier report did mention the problem, but now it sounds the alarm bell that even temporarily exceeding this warming level will produce additional severe impacts, some of which will be irreversible causing increased risks for society, including damage to infrastructure and low-lying coastal settlements. Climate change has brought acute food and water insecurity to millions of people, particularly in Africa, Asia, Central and South America. The report states that by the middle of this century, around 35 million people in India could face annual coastal flooding. India is also one of the countries most vulnerable to sea-level rise. India's food production and security could be badly hit. The report also states that almost 40 per cent of India's population will live with water scarcity by 2050. The Ganges and the Brahmaputra river basins could also witness increased flooding if warming crosses 1.5 degree Celsius. All this shows the threat is real and must not be ignored if humanity is to survive. India has to be extra cautious since the country had a Net Zero commitment for 2070 in the COP26 meet. Notwithstanding lack of concrete steps in that direction, the target itself is too far away. There just isn't enough time to linger. Tangible action is required now and not later.

The importance of the latest IPCC report – the second installment of the sixth assessment report (AR6) underscores the urgency of immediate and far more serious action to address climate risks. Half-hearted measures, which have characterised the strategy adopted by heads of government, are, according to the report, "no longer an option." Nothing can be more unequivocal. However, the report offers new insights into nature's potential to reduce climate risks and improve people's lives. This is a significant departure from earlier reports as it holds out some hope for recovery, especially in urban centres which are thought to be one of the main culprits for the catastrophe being brought on the planet. By restoring degraded ecosystems and effectively conserving 30 to 50 per cent of the Earth's land, freshwater and ocean habitats, human society can benefit from nature's inbuilt capacity for absorbing and storing carbon. This will help humans accelerate progress towards sustainable development. The catch is that for these actions, massive finance and political support are needed. The scientists point out that climate change is accelerated by unsustainable use of natural resources, growing urbanisation, social inequalities, losses and damage from extreme events and a pandemic. Their assessment is that tackling all these challenges means concerted actions by governments, private sector and civil society. Only by bringing together technological knowhow and indigenous and local knowledge can effective solutions be found. Failure to achieve climate resilient and sustainable development will cause irreparable damage to the planet and hasten environmental catastrophe. Time is indeed running out and any dillydallying by governments which have the resources to play a crucial role in the fight will be to their peril as well as the entire human species.

WISDOM CORNER

- He who has a why to live can bear almost any how. **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**
- To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance. **OSCAR WILDE**
- Whatever disunites man from God, also disunites man from man. **EDMUND BURKE**

WORDSWORTH

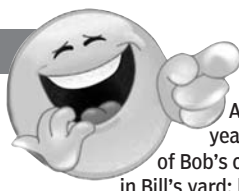
Scotch

It's an elusive word. The one thing the experts are sure about is that it has nothing to do with Scotch in the Scottish sense. Dictionaries often amalgamate this word with scotch in the sense of gashing, or cutting a mark or notch, but there seem to have been two distinct terms involved. Your one comes from the old word meaning to stop something from moving. You might, for example, scotch a gate open with a stone, or scotch a ladder by putting something at its foot to stop it slipping, or scotch a wheel with a chock or stone to stop a cart or carriage from running away. An example appears in The Parent's Assistant, by Maria Edgeworth, dated 1796, in which children are being taught to beg from passing traffic: "The next day, the little boy and girl went with their grandmother, as they used to call her, up the steep hill; and she showed the boy how to prevent the wheels from rolling back, by putting stones behind them; and she said, 'This is called scotching the wheels; and she took off the boy's hat and gave it to the little girl, to hold up to the carriage-windows, ready for the halfpence.'" An old form of the noun, for the block or stone you used to do the scotching with, was scatch. Taking it further back is hard, but it might be connected to scatch in the sense of a stilt or pole, a word once used in English dialect for pattens, shoes with raised soles to lift your feet out of mud or slush. In turn this is linked to skate. Whatever its origin, by the latter part of the nineteenth century scotch was being used figuratively for frustrating some plan or decisively putting an end to something – metaphorically putting a stone under its wheels. Confusingly, there has been yet another sense of scotch that means to render something temporarily harmless.

LOL

Angry neighbours

Two neighbours had been fighting each other for all most four decades. Bob buys a Great Dane and teaches it to use the bathroom in Bill's yard. For one whole year Bill ignores the dog. So Bob then buys a cow and teaches it to use the bathroom in Bill's yard.



After about a year and a half of Bob's cow crapping in Bill's yard; being ignored all the while, a semi pulls up in front of Bill's house. Bob runs over and demands to know what's in the 18-wheeler. "My new pet elephant," Bill replies solemnly.

IN JEST THIS

Sanctions on Russia just not strong enough



Melvin Durai

RUSSIANS ARE USED TO FREEZING, WHETHER IT'S THEIR FACES GETTING FROZEN OR THEIR BANK ACCOUNTS

Two middle-aged American men, Steve and Ralph, were discussing the Russian invasion of Ukraine and all the sanctions that had been imposed on Russia. The United States and its allies, for example, had frozen the bank accounts of many wealthy Russians. The European Union had blocked Russian planes from entering its airspace. And most painfully, the European Broadcasting Union had forbidden Russia from participating in the 2022 Eurovision Song Contest.

"Do you think the sanctions will work?" Steve asked. "No, of course not," Ralph replied. "That's why I'm imposing sanctions of my own."

"Your own sanctions? Tell me more."

"Well, you know Lyudmila, the Russian woman I was planning to marry? It's over between us!"

"You're dumping her?"

"Not just her, but all mail-order brides from Russia! From now on, I'm going to focus on FIT women."

"Lyudmila is out of shape?"

"No, Lyudmila is in great shape. But I'm going to focus on FIT women. Filipino, Indian and Thai.

I sent a press release to CNN and other media outlets, but so far, no reporters have called. They're too busy reporting on all the government sanctions that they've forgotten what a difference individuals can make."

"I can't believe you're dumping Lyudmila over Ukraine. She's so young and beautiful. Show me her pic again."

Ralph took out his phone, handed it to Steve and said, "Just keep scrolling. I've got two dozen pics of her in different outfits and different hair colour."

Steve spent a minute scrolling through the photos. "You sure Ukraine is worth it, Ralph?"

"Yes, I'm sure. It's not just Ukraine—I mean, that's a big part of it, but we've also got a few differences. For example, she wants to have children, but I already have five with my first wife, Ekaterina. And then there's the tattoo."

"The tattoo?"

"Yes, just look at the swimsuit pic. If you zoom in, you'll see a tattoo of some Russian words under her navel. A friend translated it for me, and it says, 'Vladimir Forever!'"

Most painfully, the European Broadcasting Union had forbidden Russia from participating in the 2022 Eurovision Song Contest

"Did you ask her about it?"

"Yes, she said it has nothing to do with Putin. She is a fan of the late Russian scientist Vladimir Vernadsky. But I don't believe her."

"So it's over between you and Lyudmila?"

"Yes, it's over."

"Well, do you think you could give her my email address?"

"You're interested in her?"

"No, of course not. I just want to see if she can give me a first-hand account of what's happening in Russia and how the sanctions are affecting them. Just tell her that you have a friend named Steve who is very interested in Russian affairs."

"You don't have to ask Lyudmila about the sanctions. I can tell you all about them. The sanctions are just not strong enough. It's true that some of them will make it

harder for Russians to heat their homes and move their money around. But Russians are used to freezing, whether it's their faces getting frozen or their bank accounts."

"That's why you're imposing individual sanctions?"

"Yeah, but that's not all I'm doing. I'm also providing sanction consultations. I'll help any organisation or country come up with a good sanction. In fact, I just wrote an email to FIFA, the governing body of football. As part of its sanction, FIFA has ordered that Russia's World Cup playoff against Poland be played at a neutral venue with no spectators, flags or national anthem. The players from Russia will not be able to compete as 'Russia,' but as 'Football Union of Russia (RFU)'. That's not good enough for me. They should be forced to compete as 'Football Union of Country That Invaded Ukraine (FUCTIONU)'. Their hands should be tied behind their backs, and all their goals should count as only half a goal."

"Isn't that a little too much, Ralph?"

"No, Steve, dropping bombs on Ukraine was a little too much."

Say no to war

Sir, Russia's attack on Ukraine has provoked a worldwide outcry. Russia has carried out the inhumane attack despite UN Secretary-General António Guterres urging Russian President Vladimir Putin to refrain from attacking Ukraine. In such a situation, there is a question mark over the world's faith in the United Nations. The peace loving people of the world have criticized the unilateral military intervention of Russia. They have strongly condemned imperialist Russia's invasion of Ukraine in the name of 'a special military operation'. As US-led NATO extended the sphere of control over most of the East European countries, Russia as a contending power in its bid to bring Ukraine under its domination has launched this aggression. Conflict on domination between US imperialism and Russian imperialism created this war situation which is endangering world peace. Moreover, being faced with unprecedented crises of unemployment, poverty and rising people's outbursts these imperialist powers are escalating war and nationalist chauvinism to divert people's attention. The peace loving people of the world demand that the Russian government stop this aggression immediately and call upon the people of 'whole world to raise their voice against this aggression. The world has come together against the war and in support of Ukraine. Huge numbers of people from various countries have come out from their homes and started raising anti-war slogans.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Shun gory practice

Sir, This is in reference to 'Minors sacrifice puppy, drink blood in Bolangir', Orissa POST, March 1. It is high time for all of us to rethink our stand on the indiscriminate killing of mute animals in the name of religion. At a time when all religions call for compassion what is the justification behind this killing spree. No religion requires killing or eating animals. Hacking animals to death with weapons is just plain cruelty. The Supreme Court of India directed in a April 10, 2017 order that animals could be killed only in an area set up in accordance with the law and that the municipal authority would be required to ensure compliance. The Supreme Court through a February 17, 2017 order directed that killing animals without following the Government of India's compendium of acts and rules on animal transport and slaughter is a punishable offence. Many states including Gujarat, Kerala, Pondicherry, and Rajasthan already have laws in place which prohibit religious sacrifice of any animal in any temple or its precincts.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

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

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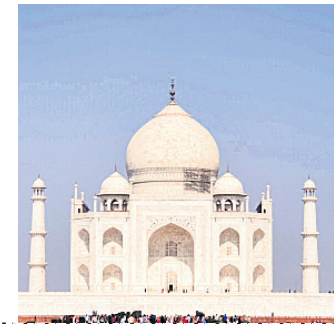


In the five phases of elections, the people of the state have rejected the BJP, and by the time the sixth phase comes, it will become certain that the BJP would be wiped off

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

AIRCRAFT SPOTTED OVER TAJ MAHAL

An aircraft was spotted flying across the high-security no-flying zone of the Taj Mahal Monday. ASI superintending archaeologist (Agra circle) Raj Kumar Patel said that report has been sought from CISF officials in this regard



of the day quote

Of all parties today, only BJP and Prime Minister Modi are the one who worked for the welfare of the poor and the deprived. For 70 years, parties came and went, SP-BSP talked about poor, backwards, Dalits and deprived classes but did nothing for them

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

Our Indian Union is facing a big threat from divisive forces. We all need to come together to defeat them and protect the founding principles of India

M K STALIN | TAMIL NADU CM

I have set a target of developing the road network on par with America by 2024. All kinds of developmental activities depend on road connectivity. Hence, the government has decided to strengthen the road network in the country

NITIN GADKARI | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Maurya's convoy attacked in UP

Kushinagar (UP): Violence erupted in UP's Fazlignagar Assembly constituency Tuesday when the convoy of SP candidate Swami Prasad Maurya was attacked by assailants during a roadshow. Several vehicles in the former minister's convoy were damaged in stone pelting that took place in Khalwa Patti village. While Maurya accused the BJP supporters of attacking him with the intention of killing him, the BJP leaders said that it was Maurya's men who initiated the attack.

Man strangles wife over mobile chatting

Unnao (Uttar Pradesh): A young man allegedly strangled his wife with a 'saree', and later surrendered at the local police station and confessed his crime. The crime took place in the Ahmadpur Vade village under Hasanganj Kotwali police station of Unnao district. The couple had been living there along with a six-year-old son for the past few years. The man told the police that he had strangled his wife as he was upset over her prolonged use of mobile phone.

Bus attacked

Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh): Some unidentified miscreants pelted stones on a bus carrying policemen from Maharashtra state armed police for election duties to Sant Kabir Nagar district. The police have reportedly detained two persons on the spot. Panic gripped Tharwai and adjoining areas under the limits of Tharwai police station in trans-Ganga area when the incident took place. The police said that some unidentified miscreants suddenly pelted stones on a bus carrying policemen for election duties.

Two shot dead

Hyderabad: Two realtors were killed when unidentified men opened fire on them near Ibrahimpatnam on the outskirts of Hyderabad Tuesday. The incident occurred around 6 a.m. at Karnamguda village in Rangareddy district under the limits of Rachakonda Police Commissionerate. Police suspect that a dispute over 20 acres of land purchased by the duo led to the killings. Srinivas Reddy died on the spot, while Raghavendra Reddy, who was critically injured, succumbed at a hospital in Vanasthalipuram.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Indian students stare at uncertainty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Uzaif Rabbani is spending his days in a bunker in Ukraine's Kharkiv amid a fierce Russian offensive, hoping for evacuation, but as the fourth-year medical student waits, he like many from India, is worried if he will ever be able to complete his education.

However, government officials said a meeting will soon be held to discuss the issue with all stakeholders, keeping in view the extraordinary situation in Ukraine. The matter will be looked into "sympathetically", they said. Rabbani's situation is shared by many Indian students enrolled in medical courses in institutes in the war-torn country. "I have to complete four years to get my medical degree. Once I am evacuated, I will have to think of what happens next. I hope the government allows a special provision to migrate to any Indian college and continue my education there," Rabbani told PTI over phone from Kharkiv, where a student from Karnataka was killed in shelling on Tuesday morning.

Though his daughter is back home from Ukraine, Nidhi Yadav's



father worries whether she will be able to resume her studies in Kiev. "I don't know what will happen next. I took a huge loan to send her to Ukraine in hope that she will become a doctor, but now things have worsened. There is no clarity on whether the situation will return to normal, whether she will be able to resume her education, will she have to explore other options here," the father of the first-year medical student said.

The new rules of the Foreign Medical Graduate Licentiate regulations state that MBBS aspirants

can take up to 10 years to complete the programme. They also state that besides the minimum course work tenure of 4.5 years, candidates need to intern for two years, including 12 months in the foreign medical institute where they are studying and another year of supervised internship in India.

The MBBS programme in Ukraine lasts for six years, and being much affordable in comparison to that in private medical colleges in India, it is a popular choice among Indian students. "As of now, there are no norms and

regulations under the National Medical Commission to accommodate medical students, who were studying abroad and had to return to India midway, in Indian medical colleges in between an academic session," a health ministry official told PTI, on the condition of anonymity.

"However, keeping in view such extraordinary situations, the Indian government will look into the matter sympathetically. A meeting to discuss this issue with all stakeholders is likely to take place soon," he said.

Sahil, a medical student at the Poltava State Medical University in Ukraine, is one of those who has returned after spending four years there.

"Getting out of a war zone was the first thing on my mind but what happens next? I hope the government gives us some clarity on this and our years of effort and money doesn't go waste," he said. Depleting food stock and long queues for water are adding to the trauma of stranded Indian students in the war-hit nation, while they await evacuation amid reports of some being roughed up by security personnel and spending freezing nights out in the open.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella's son dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Tech giant Microsoft Tuesday announced that its Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella's son Zain Nadella, who was born with cerebral palsy, has died. He was 26.

"Very sadly Satya's son Zain Nadella has passed away. The Nadellas are taking time to grieve privately as a family," a Microsoft spokesperson said in response to an email query by PTI.

Condolence messages poured in on social media platforms and many took to Twitter to mourn the demise. Nadella's son was born on August 13, 1996, after his wife Anu during her thirty-sixth week of pregnancy noticed that the baby was not moving as in a normal situation.

The Microsoft CEO in a blog in 2017 mentioned that Zain did not cry at the time of birth and had to be shifted to Seattle Children's Hospital with its state-of-the-art Neonatal Intensive Care Unit from the hospital in Bellevue across Lake Washington.

Nadella had said he learnt that damage caused by utero asphyxiation caused severe cerebral palsy in his child. He also wrote that as a father of a son with special needs was the turning point of his life and helped him better understand the journey of people with disabilities. Several political leaders in India expressed their condolences for the Nadella family. "Saddened to hear abt passing of @satyanadella's son Zain. My deepest condolences to him and his family n friends. I pray that God gives him n family the strength to bear with this loss," Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in a tweet. Hyderabad-born Nadella was named CEO of Microsoft in February 2014.



Hindu devotees stand in queues on the occasion of Maha Shivratri at Maha Mrityunjay temple, in Nagaon

CONSENT NOT NEEDED FOR OFFLINE CLASSES IN DELHI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 1: The consent of parents for attending of offline classes or exams for students of Class 10 and 12 in the national capital will not be mandatory any more.

In an order issued by the Directorate of Education, the Delhi government has allowed all government schools to conduct offline classes and exams for students of class 10 and 12. The order says that the consent of parents will not be required to attend the offline classes for students.

"Schools may also deploy transportation facilities for the convenience of students and parents with Covid appropriate behaviour

as notified from time to time", the order reads further. However, the hybrid mode of classes and exams - offline as well as online - will continue as before for classes up to 9 and class 11 till March 31, the order reads.

The government has also allowed all schools to go offline from April 1. The decision has been taken by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority.

Meanwhile, the daily Covid caseload has been witnessing declining trend in the national capital. Delhi on Monday reported considerable decline of nearly 46 per cent in daily Covid cases at 258 fresh infections. The city reported no Covid related death for the first time after December 31.

'Max temp may remain below normal'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Maximum temperatures are predicted to remain "below normal" in the northern plains, including Punjab, parts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, during the March to May period, the India Meteorological Department said Tuesday.

"Above normal maximum temperatures are most likely over many areas in western and adjoining central India, northwest India and northernmost parts of northeast India," it said. However, below normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of Peninsular India, east and north-east India as well as the northern plains, the IMD said.

The number of heat waves in the Indo-Gangetic plains is likely

Indian recounts evacuation ordeal

The advisory said Ukrainian railways is putting up special trains for evacuation but the reality on ground was quite different. Ashna and her brother Ansh, who study in the same college, said. The twins are from Ghaziabad



A student evacuated from war-torn Ukraine, with his mother on his arrival by an 'Operation Ganga' Air India flight at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, in New Delhi, Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Devising their own stratagem to get out of Kyiv, about 100 Indian students stranded at the train station split into groups of 10 to board a train from the Ukrainian capital to city of Lviv where they would be safer, one of the students said Tuesday.

"We realised no one is going to come to help us and it is up to us now," 20-year-old Ashna Pandita told PTI over the phone as the train took them to the western city of Ukraine, about 80 km from the Poland border, where the fighting has been relatively less.

"We split into smaller groups and somehow managed to board the train," she added a day after the students from Taras Shevchenko National Medical University in Kyiv managed to escape from the back gate of their hostel and reach the Vokzal station, the capital's main train hub.

Though they responded to an advisory from the Indian mission asking all students to "make their way to the railway station for onward journey to the western part", the students alleged that officials had failed to provide any transportation to shift them to a safer location.

The advisory said "Ukrainian

railways is putting up special trains for evacuation" but the reality on ground was quite different, Ashna and her brother Ansh, who study in the same college, said. The twins are from Ghaziabad.

The group of 100 odd youths, including many women, were not allowed to board a train and Ukrainian guards thrashed some of them, they alleged. After they were pushed away from many trains, the students split into smaller groups and somehow managed to get on to the train to Lviv, where the officials of many embassies are stationed.

The train was crowded and they could manage only standing space during the nine-hour journey. "At least let us reach Kyiv," Ashna said tearfully, recounting their struggles to reach the station from a city that had run out of food and cash in ATMs and then the many hurdles to get on to a train.

Left to their own devices, the students said they would either try to cross over to Poland or to the Hungary border, about 570 km from Lviv. On Monday, the train station was teeming with people. The Indian students sat huddled together, holding a large tricolour aloft so they could be recognised in the crowd and also so no one from the group gets lost.

AT RISK Plastic ingestion threatens India's dolphins, gharials

TOGETHER, THE GANGA AND MEKONG RIVERS CONTRIBUTE TO AN ESTIMATED 2,00,000 TONNES OF PLASTIC POLLUTION TO THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN EVERY YEAR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Nairobi, March 1: A new report Tuesday about plastic pollution and migratory species mapped hotspots and assessed its risk on migratory species in the Ganga and Mekong river basins which are protected under the UN's Convention on the Conservation

of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

In the Ganga river, the river dolphin, the gharial, a crocodile species, and the greater spotted eagle face the threat of dying from ingesting litter and by entanglement. Together, the Ganga and Mekong rivers contribute to an estimated 2,00,000 tonnes of plastic pollution to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean every year.

The report, "Risk assessment of plastic pollution to migratory species in the Mekong and Ganga River Basins", focuses on the impacts of plastic pollution on freshwater and terrestrial species, which has been significantly understudied.

It was launched during the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA5) that began on Monday in this beautiful Kenyan city amidst the



presence of environment ministers and other representatives from over 150 nations with high hopes to advance a global agreement on plastic pollution, among a series of draft resolutions on biodiversity and health, green economy, and circularity.

Talking about the report, CMS Executive Secretary Amy Fraenkel said: "This study confirms that



plastic pollution is adversely impacting migratory species in freshwater and terrestrial settings. It provides an important tool to assess potential risk on such species that can be used globally."

While there are many studies that examine the impact plastic pollution poses to marine wildlife, the impacts on freshwater species are much less well studied. Research

on plastics in freshwater ecosystems account for only 13 per cent of the plastics studied in all aquatic environments. Only four per cent of peer-reviewed studies on the impacts of plastic pollution are relevant to terrestrial ecosystems.

Both the Ganga and Mekong rivers are home to 605 species protected under CMS, including freshwater species, land animals, and birds. Many of them are listed as threatened or endangered by the IUCN. Among its findings, the report concludes that in the Asia-Pacific region discarded fishing gear is a particular threat to migratory species. Of migratory species studied, five in the Mekong and 19 in the Ganga are most at risk.

In Mekong, it is estimated that the critically endangered Mekong catfish and the Mekong river sub-population of the Irrawaddy dol-

phin face lethal threats from entanglement and ingestion of plastic. Drowning because of entanglement in nets is the key threat to Irrawaddy dolphins that are estimated to number less than 100 individuals.

The Mekong catfish is considered a flagship species for the conservation of the lower Mekong ecosystem. It is long-lived, matures late, and is a long-distance migrant. This makes it even more vulnerable to human disturbances such as plastics and dams.

In the Ganga, the Ganges river dolphin is at high risk of entanglement in fishing lines, especially in gillnets. Ingestion of microplastic is an additional threat. The Gharial, a crocodile species, is likely to become entangled in fishing nets where fisheries overlap with its habitat. It is critically endangered.

MAFIA, MONEY LAUNDERING, MUD-SLINGING

HC to hear Nawab Malik's plea today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 1: The Bombay High Court Wednesday will hear Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik's petition seeking quashing of the case registered against him by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) which is probing money laundering linked to fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim.

Malik, who was arrested last week and is currently in ED custody till March 3, had Monday filed a petition in the HC and sought immediate release while claiming his arrest was 'illegal'. On Tuesday, his advocate Taraq Sayed mentioned the plea before a division bench of Justices SS Shinde and NR Borkar seeking urgent hearing.

The court was informed that the regular bench of Justices PB Varale and SP Tawde, designated to hear criminal petitions, would not be available this week. Justice Shinde then said his bench would also not be available Wednesday. The matter shall be listed for hearing before a bench of Justices SB Shukre and GA Sanap Wednesday, he said.

NCP leader Malik Monday filed a petition in the High Court, seeking to quash the case as well as the order passed by a special court remanding him in the ED custody.

He alleged that his arrest was 'illegal' and that he was targeted for being a 'vocal critic of the misuse of Central agencies'. The petitioner stated that he is not the first to be targeted and this is a worrying trend across the nation, where Central agencies are being



In his petition, Malik stated that he was forcibly picked up from his residence by the ED officials February 23, without any notice or summons under section 41A of the Criminal Procedure Code

The Minister further stated that the February 23 order of the special court, designated to hear the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) cases, was without jurisdiction

misused by the party in power. "The political rivals of the petitioner naturally have been deeply embarrassed by the exposes carried out by the petitioner and the present brazen and completely illegal action of the ED is to try to muzzle him," the petition said.

Malik claimed that he has absolutely no connection with any of the 'anti-national' accused (Dawood Ibrahim and other gangsters) named in the FIR registered by the NIA which was the basis of the ED's case.

In his petition, Malik stated that he was forcibly picked up from his residence by the ED officials February 23, without any notice or summons under section 41A of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The Minister further stated that the February 23 order of the spe-

The ED's case is that Malik hatched a criminal conspiracy in connivance with Dawood Ibrahim's aides Haseena Parker, Salim Patel and Sardar Khan for usurping the ancestral property of one Munira Plumber at Kurla in Mumbai, which is valued at around Rs 300 crore, and thus, it is the proceeds of crime, the federal anti-money laundering agency had claimed.

The probe agency's case is based on an FIR filed recently by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) against Dawood Ibrahim and others

The NIA had filed its criminal complaint under sections of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)

The court, designated to hear the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) cases, was without jurisdiction.

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connivance with Dawood Ibrahim's aides Haseena Parker, Salim Patel and Sardar Khan for usurping the ancestral property of one Munira Plumber at Kurla in Mumbai, which is valued at around Rs 300 crore. Thus, it is the proceeds of crime, the federal anti-money laundering agency had claimed.

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The statement of state Ministry Affairs Minister Malik was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

In his petition, Malik said the case in hand pertains to a property purchase done two decades ago, when PMLA was not on the statute book and hence, there cannot be any retrospective application of the Act.

Won't let budget session run with Malik in Cabinet: BJP

MUMBAI: The BJP's Maharashtra unit president Chandrakant Patil Tuesday said that the party will not allow to function the upcoming budget session, set to begin March 3, if Nawab Malik remains a Cabinet Minister despite being accused of serious charges under the PMLA. Speaking to reporters, Patil said though the state cabinet minister has been arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the Maharashtra government has not decided to remove him from the post. "Malik is arrested under the PMLA by the Enforcement Directorate. But the Maharashtra government seems to have decided not to remove him from his post. The BJP will not allow the House to carry out its daily work if Malik remains a cabinet minister," the BJP leader said. The three constituents of MVA, the NCP, Shiv Sena and Congress, have termed Malik's arrest as political vendetta with no solid ground. The MVA leaders have countered the BJP, citing that the alleged crime had been committed at least 30 years ago, but Malik was facing the charges now.

'Govt committed to implement Mekedatu, Cong march a facade'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 1: Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai Tuesday said that his government was committed to implement the Mekedatu project across river Cauvery, as he hit out at the opposition Congress for staging 'padayatra' (foot march), demanding its quick implementation.

Accusing the grand old party of not doing anything for the implementation of the project while in power, he said, it had no moral right to stage a protest now.

"Congress which was unable to implement the project during their tenure is protesting now. It could not even prepare a DPR for the Mekedatu project, but now demands immediate implementation of the project. We (BJP) have made progress during our tenure and are committed to implement the Mekedatu project and we will do it," Bommai said. Speaking to reporters here, he said the Congress has no moral right to protest or criticise the current government on the issue, as they did not do anything for the project during their tenure.

Hitting out at the Congress leaders for targeting the government and police for filing FIR against them, the Chief Minister said, "Law enforcing agencies have done their job, they (Congress leaders) are overreacting. You (Congress) had booked several cases against the opposition while in power, how many lathi-charges took place; there was a large-scale effort to suppress the opposition."

"You are a responsible national party. Everyone has the right to



The Mekedatu multi-purpose (drinking and power) project involves building a balancing reservoir near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district, to which neighbouring Tamil Nadu is opposed

The estimated ₹9,000 crore project, once completed, is aimed at ensuring drinking water to Bengaluru and neighbouring areas (4.75 TMC) and it can also generate 400 MW power

protest in a democracy, in the same way everyone has to abide by law. This shows to what low the Congress has stooped to for the sake of politics and how desperate they are for power," he said.

An FIR has been registered against 38 people under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act, for holding the march Sunday in violation of Covid-19 rules, which names Congress leaders like Shivakumar and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah, among several others. The prevailing Covid norms carry a ban on rallies, dharnas and protests.

The padayatra, which has entered Bangalore on its third day, is covering a distance of 15.8 km to reach Jayadeva Junction in the city from near Kengeri.

This is the second leg of the march that ended abruptly in Ramanagara on January 13, when the third wave of the Covid-19 had peaked. The 'padayatra 2.0' with the theme 'Namma Neeru, Namma Hakku' (Our water, Our right), that resumed Sunday, will culminate at the National College

Ground in Basavanagudi in Bengaluru March 3, after covering a total distance of 79.8 kilometres.

Further stating that the Congress could have staged a protest at the freedom park at the city centre, Bommai said, instead of that they are staging a padayatra for three days in the city, which will create traffic jams across the city.

"You are aware that if there is a traffic jam in one part of Bangalore it will have its effect across, they (Congress) are aware of it, still they are putting people of the city in trouble, for their political benefit. Their padayatra will do no good for Bangalore," he added.

The Mekedatu multi-purpose (drinking and power) project involves building a balancing reservoir near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district, to which neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu is opposed.

The estimated ₹9,000 crore project, once completed, is aimed at ensuring drinking water to Bengaluru and neighbouring areas (4.75 TMC) and it can also generate 400 MW power.

BPCL to spend ₹4,000cr on Maha gas distribution project

The company plans to connect 3 lakh customers in the first phase and seven lakh in the next five years



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aurangabad, March 1: Union Minister Bhagwat Karad Tuesday said Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has launched a gas distribution network in Aurangabad and Ahmednagar districts of Maharashtra and will invest Rs 4,000 crore for the completion of the project. The Minister of State for Finance was addressing a press conference with the BPCL officials here.

The ground-breaking ceremony of the project will be held in Aurangabad Wednesday, for which Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri will remain present through video conferencing, Karad said.

"The work on the gas distribution network line work is underway from Srionda in Ahmednagar to Aurangabad. The ceremony will

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years, the company has already started laying steel pipeline for the development of PNG and CNG in two districts. BPCL has set up 21 CNG stations (15 in Ahmednagar and six in Aurangabad) and work for 40 more is underway in both the districts

SUKHMAL JAIN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (GAS), BPCL

be the commencement of distribution line in Aurangabad city. By December, gas will be supplied through pipeline to households in the city," the Minister said.

Talking to reporters, BPCL's Executive Director (gas) Sukhmal Jain said that the company will spend around Rs 1,600 crore in the next five years and a total of Rs 4,000 crore for completion of the project.

"Despite the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years, the company has already started laying steel pipeline for the development of PNG and CNG in two districts. BPCL has set up 21 CNG stations (15 in Ahmednagar and six in Aurangabad) and work for 40 more is underway in both the districts," Jain said.

VENERATING VISWANATHA



Kudroli Gokarnanatha Temple in Mangaluru illuminated with lights on the occasion of Mahashivratri, Monday



Devotees stand in queues to pray to Lord Shiva on the occasion of Maha Shivratri near an artificially made ice Shivling at Mandapeshwar Caves in Mumbai, Tuesday

PTI PHOTOS

CHAMARAJANAGAR O2 TRAGEDY

13 aggrieved families yet to receive compensation

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, March 1: Thirteen out of the 36 families, who lost members due to the reported oxygen shortage at Karnataka's Chamarajanagar District Covid Hospital during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, are yet to receive compensation. The Chamarajanagar tragedy was reported in the midnight of May 2, 2021.

Meanwhile, the report of BA Patil, the Chairman of the government-appointed 'unanimous' commission, has also not been disclosed till date. Nine months have passed since the incident that claimed lives from 36 families due to oxygen shortage during the peak of the second Covid wave.

Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) President Abdul Majeed met the families of the victims in Bengaluru in this regard Monday. Later, he also submitted a memorandum to Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot, seeking ₹50 lakh compensation for the victims' families and government job to one of the family members of the deceased. Majeed also demanded action against 'negligent' officers.

"More than 50 per cent of the victims belong to SC/ST communities. They are community work-



ers. These poor families are worried about the education and future of their children. It is ironic that the ruling BJP government is irresponsible towards the victims," he said adding, "The struggle will be continued until justice is provided."

A committee constituted by the Karnataka High Court had found that 36 patients died in Chamarajanagar District Hospital due to a lack of oxygen during the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. However, then Deputy Chief Minister CN Ashwath Narayan denied finding the report. He maintained that the logistical issues and negligence of the hospital cannot be reflected as Oxygen shortage. Report of the state-level committee of Karnataka State Legal Services Authority constituted by Karnataka HC showed that out of 62 deaths declared by the Chamarajanagar District Hospital between May 4 and May 10, 36 patients died due to non-availability of oxygen on the intervening nights of May 2 and May 3.

Maha taps European nations for FDI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Keen to maintain its position as a leading investment destination, the Maharashtra government is engaging European nations for FDI in focussed sectors such as logistics, renewable energy, machinery, electric vehicles and chemicals.

The state government had engaged the services of European Business and Technology Centre (EBTC) along with Primus Partners for a series of interactive, closed-door meetings with senior representatives of European diplomatic missions in the country, the heads of Europe-India bilateral chambers of commerce, and leaders of major business enterprises from the continent.

"The meetings focused on assessing the demand for different innovative and sustainable solutions offered by European businesses to facilitate Maharashtra's long-term industrial and investment goals and define paths for their entry into the state as we

The discussions initiated by EBTC and Primus Partners are indeed meaningful and will help in further strengthening the presence of European businesses in the state of Maharashtra

Maharashtra provided a great opportunity for European stakeholders exploring the Indian market and the state's focus towards sustainability was an area where Europe unlocked immense technology and potential for India

FDI

BALDEV SINGH | ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY, INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT, MAHARASHTRA

POUL V JENSEN | MD, EBTC

collectively step out of the lull caused by the pandemic," an EBTC statement said.

The EBTC said the enhanced focus presented a unique oppor-

tunity for European businesses that have pioneered the shift of industries to become more sustainable and environmentally responsible. Leading European businesses

view India as a massive opportunity and huge consumption market and closer business ties between both regions is crucial for sustainable and inclusive growth, said Arnaldo Abruzzini, a Member of the Advisory Board at EBTC and former CEO at EUROCHAMBRES.

Davinder Sandhu, Chairman, Primus Partners said in view of India's commitment to Net Zero and climate change and Europe's thought and tech leadership in these areas, there is fertile territory for partnerships in energy, transportation, and urban infrastructure.

During the meetings, Asian Paints evinced interest in making fresh investments in Maharashtra to expand its existing capacity in Khandala. "Asian Paints Ltd is in advanced stage of discussions with Industries Dept of Maharashtra Government for exploring the possibility of expanding the capacity in our Khandala plant," Amit Kumar Singh, AVP and Group Head of Corporate Affairs of Asian Paints said.

Petitioner girl blames college authorities of 'sowing' hatred

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Udupi, March 1: Three girl students from Udupi Girls Pre-University College, who have moved the High Court to seek consent for attending classes with hijab, were allegedly denied entry to sit for practical examinations while wearing hijab.

Later, one of the students released a video slamming the college authorities "for sowing the seeds of hatred against the hijab". The video has gone viral on social media.

Alamas AH, Hazra Shifa and Bibi Ayesha, the three petitioners among the six college students who are studying in science stream, were denied entry Monday.

Expressing their displeasure over social media platforms, one of the students put out a video in Kannada and Urdu languages, alleging that they were "ruthlessly asked to get out from the college



The Education department has made it clear that about 80,000 Muslim girl students are studying in Pre-University Colleges in the state and only a handful of them are objecting to attend classes without hijab

The state government has stated that they suspect the role of an organisation behind these students and the police department is probing the matter

premises by the Principal of the college and were warned of slapping cases against them".

The three students had come to the classroom with hijab to appear for a practical examination Monday. The Principal of the college Rudre Gowda asked them to take exams without hijab and when they refused to take off their hijab, he asked them to leave the place. The students had also made representations to the Pre-University Education department requesting to postpone the practical examinations.

Almas stated, "Today was our final practical exam. We had completed our records and went in great hopes to attend the practical exam. It was disheartening when our principal threatened us saying we had 5 minutes to leave, and if we did not leave, he would file a complaint."

"Right now, we should have been in our labs attending the practicals, not compelled to leave. The hopes I had from my college and my dreams are getting shattered due to the hatred sowed against hijab," she said.

of the day quote

A large number of Indian students are still waiting to be rescued in war-hit Ukraine

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

The Narendra Modi government is working round the clock to ensure the safety and evacuation of the Indian citizens stuck in war-hit Ukraine

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINISTER

Akhilesh Yadav protected terrorists during his tenure as the CM of Uttar Pradesh, which is witnessing a rule of law today

J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Man attacks daughter

Chennai: A man attacked his 20-year-old daughter with a sickle in Tamil Nadu's Tenaki district as he was opposed to her relationship with a village youth.

Blast leaves many injured

Srinagar: Several people were injured in a cooking gas cylinder explosion at a hospital in Jammu & Kashmir's Anantnag district Tuesday.

9 buses gutted

Amaravati: Nine private Volvo buses were gutted in a huge fire in Ongole town of Andhra Pradesh's Prakasam district Tuesday.

Four arrested

Bijnor (Uttar Pradesh): Four thieves, who allegedly stole with a truck laden with pan masala have been arrested from the Kadarpur area.

LeT associate held

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Police Tuesday arrested a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) associate in Srinagar district.



They talk of the dynasty when all the children of politicians have moved to their own party! Which dynasty were they against or abstaining from? They were against only my family because my family will never bow down to them.

PRİYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

STALIN TURNS 69

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several Chief Ministers, political leaders, film fraternity, and others wished Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on his 69th birthday Tuesday



Malik's son summoned

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, March 1: In a latest development in the PMLA case involving underworld Don Dawood Ibrahim and unknown Mumbai-based politician, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has now summoned Faraz Malik, son of NCP leader and Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik, who is already in police custody.

The ED wants to confront him with his father Nawab Malik and also a few documents and other evidence collected by them.

On February 23, the ED arrested Nawab Malik and later got his custodial remand till March 3.

ED sources have claimed that they have established a money trail linking Nawab Malik to the people connected to the underworld. ED sources have also claimed that they have found details of benami investments of Nawab Malik in a few real estate projects.

The ED had on February 18 arrested Dawood's brother Iqbal Kaskar in the matter.

Salim Qureshi, an aide of Chhota Shakeel, was also interrogated in the case.

February 3, 2022 the NIA had received an information that Dawood Ibrahim was raising terror funds and was working with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Al Qaeda (AQ). He was controlling the criminal activities in India through his close aides.

The ED filed a PMLA case against Dawood. Another case was lodged against his brother Iqbal Kaskar, Iqbal Mirchi and 19 others.

Later both the cases were merged by the ED.

The central probe agency conducted nine raids and recovered incriminating documents from the premises of the aide of Dawood.

Chhota Shakeel's relative Salim Fruit told the probe agency that in 2006 he met Chhota Shakeel three to four times during his Pakistan visit.



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Farmers laud nod to withdraw cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Farmer leaders Tuesday welcomed the Delhi government's move to withdraw cases lodged against farmers during the anti-farm law stir and urged the Centre to fulfil other promises too, including the formation of a committee on MSP.

They said the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) - an umbrella body of 40 farm unions - will hold a meeting in Delhi March 14 to decide the future course of action if the remaining promises made to the farmers by the Centre are not met.

Farmer leader and SKM core committee member Shiv Kumar Kakka hailed Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal and the city government for withdrawing cases lodged against farmers during the movement.

"It is a good move, and we thank the Delhi government and the L-G for this effort. This move has given us hope that other promises such as formation of a committee on MSP will also be met," Kakka said.

The Delhi government has approved the withdrawal of 17 cases registered during the anti-farm law stir, including one involving last year's Republic Day violence, a senior official said on Tuesday.

He said the file related to the



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SHIV KUMAR KAKKA | SKM CORE COMMITTEE MEMBER

cases was sent by Lt Governor Anil Bajjal's office to Delhi Home Minister Satyendar Jain on January 31. It was approved by Jain and sent to the Chief Minister's Office on February 25. The CMO sent the file to the L-G office on February 28 and it was approved the same day, the officer said.

The Centre is yet to act on its promise of forming a committee on MSP, granting compensation to farmers who died during the stir and others, he said. "We are wait-

ing for elections to get over; and then on March 14, the SKM will hold a meeting to pressure the central government to fulfil other promises as well. Future course of the action will also be decided in the meeting," Kakka added.

Another farmer leader and SKM member Abhimanyu Kohar said withdrawing cases lodged against farmers was a welcome step. "Though it came a little late but it is a commendable move. This will help in bridging the trust deficit between the government and the farmers," Kohar said.

He said the Centre should also make efforts to consider other demands of the farmers which include a legal guarantee on MSP, land for a memorial for farmers and expulsion of Union minister Ajay Mishra Teni from the Cabinet.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, laid siege at Delhi borders in November 2020 demanding that the Centre withdraw the three farm laws.

JEE-Main's first phase in April

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: The JEE-Main's first phase will be conducted in April while the second phase is scheduled in May, officials of the National Testing Agency said Tuesday.

The first phase of the engineering entrance exam will be conducted from April 16 to 21 and the second phase, from May 24 to 29, they said. The Joint Entrance Examination-Main (JEE-Main) comprises two papers.

Paper one is conducted for admission to undergraduate engineering programmes - BE and B.Tech - at NITs, IITs and other centrally-funded technical institutions, and institutions and universities funded and recognised by participating state governments.

It is also an eligibility test for JEE (Advanced), which is conducted for admission to IITs. Paper two is conducted for admission to B.Arch and B.Planning courses.

"The applications for JEE-Main 2022 will start from today, March 1, and the last date to fill the JEE Main 2022 application form for the first session is March 31, 2022. The exam will be held in Assamese, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu in addition to Hindi, English, and Gujarati," an official said.

Last year, the exam was conducted four times to offer flexibility to students and a chance to improve their scores.

Reveal booze source to avoid jail: Bihar



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, March 1: The Bihar government Monday announced it has decided not to arrest liquor consumers if they reveal the name of sellers.

Commissioner, Liquor Prohibition, Krishna Kumar, said that the fresh initiative is effective from now onwards. "We have amended the current law that comes under liquor prohibition law with the actual idea to initiate a crackdown on the big fish (liquor mafia). We want to crack the nexus of illegal manufacturers, smugglers, transporters, and traders of liquor in Bihar."

"Consuming liquor is a social evil and the individual violator should be given a chance to rectify his/her bad habits," Krishna Kumar said.

"The liquor prohibition law came into effect in April 2016 and we have witnessed a large number of persons being arrested in a drunken state in Bihar. At present, over 4.5 lakh people lodged in jail for over 4 years only for consuming liquor," he added.

The Bihar government is facing criticism of ill-planned implementation of its liquor ban. Even Chief Justice of India N.V.

We have amended the current law that comes under liquor prohibition law with the actual idea to initiate a crackdown on the big fish (liquor mafia). We want to crack the nexus of illegal manufacturers, smugglers, transporters, and traders of liquor in Bihar. Consuming liquor is a social evil and the individual violator should be given a chance to rectify his/her bad habits

KRISHNA KUMAR | COMMISSIONER, LIQUOR PROHIBITION

Ramana criticised the Nitish Kumar government for implementing the same without considering a ground study and its aftermath. He said that the decisions like liquor ban in 2016 "put a huge burden on courts. It was a short-sighted decision of the Bihar government."

Ramana pointed out that every policy needs to be addressed with futuristic planning, its evaluation, and constitutionality before its implementation on ground. Due to the liquor ban decision of Nitish Kumar government in 2016, a large

number of cases are pending in the courts, and even a bail hearing in simple cases is taking one year time in the courts, he had said.

Bihar government officials admit that due to the arrest of liquor drinkers in large numbers, the jails of the state are becoming overcrowded.

Sources have said that the officials of Bihar are under huge pressure from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who is currently carrying out his "Samaj Sudhar Abhiyan (Social Reform Campaign)" in Bihar.

The new condition-based initiative is a prime example of it as officials are working in desperation to make this ambitious liquor ban policy of Nitish Kumar to get successful on the ground at any cost. "After an individual drunk violator is caught, if he/she reveals the name of the seller, he should not be arrested by police. In case, the seller is not arrested with liquor or the charge levelled by the consumer would not be proved, the individual customers would have to go to jail," Krishna Kumar said.

However, such a condition-based initiative may not be successful as threat always looms on the head of that consumer if he reveals the name of liquor mafia. The other loophole of the initiative is police on the ground. In many cases, police are either suspended, sent on line or even terminated for the jobs after their alleged links established with the liquor mafia.

Hence, if a consumer reveals the name of the mafia before police, the chances of passing the information from the police station to liquor mafia cannot be ruled out. In that case, if the liquor mafia flees the spot or shifts the liquor to somewhere else before the arrival of police, it would be life-threatening to the consumers.

EXCITEMENT BACK



A leopard sits on a tree inside its enclosure at National Zoological Park, that reopened for public, in New Delhi, Tuesday. The zoo was temporarily closed due to a high number of Covid cases

PTI PHOTO

AFSPA EXTENDED IN ASSAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, March 1: The Assam government Tuesday said it has extended the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in the entire state for six more months with effect from February 28.

The act empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior warrant. It also gives a certain level of immunity to the security forces in case of an operation going wrong.

"After reviewing the law and

order situation in Assam in the past six months, the state government has declared the entire State of Assam as 'Disturbed Area' up to 6 (six) months with effect from 28/02/2022, unless withdrawn earlier," an official release said on Tuesday.

The Assam government had last extended the "Disturbed Area" status of the state for another six months with effect from August 28 last year, thereby continuing the application of the AFSPA.

The AFSPA was imposed in Assam in November 1990 and has been extended every six months

since then after a review by the state government. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said on January 1 that the Army was virtually withdrawn from Assam, except for five-six districts and when AFSPA would come up for renewal, the state government would take "some pragmatic decision".

"As far as AFSPA is concerned, Assam will see some rationalising in 2022...How and when we don't know. But I am an optimistic man. We are looking at 2022 as a year of hope. There will be some positive moments regarding AFSPA," he had said.

'Over 100 ultras, OWGs on radar in J&K; operation soon'

According to sources, these ultras are hiding in the villages and forest areas in South Kashmir and only come out to execute an attack on the security forces or targeted civilians

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 1: Over 100 terrorists and Over Ground Workers (OWGs) are on the radar of the security forces which will soon launch an operation against them in

Jammu and Kashmir, sources in the security grid said on Tuesday.

According to sources, these ultras are hiding in the villages and forest areas in South Kashmir and only come out to execute an attack on the security forces or targeted civilians. The recce is mostly done by the OWGs, they added.

The security officials deployed in Kashmir Valley further said that despite the fact that a large number of ultras were killed in the operation last year; Pakistan supported terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Al-Badr and Hizbul Mujahideen have been sending more terrorists in the Valley.

"To prevent local youths from joining terror groups is also a major challenge for the security forces," the officials said.

They also said that last year, the



security grid in Kashmir Valley made robust counter attack and drones were used to oversee the areas, but to identify terrorists in forest is still a challenge for them. The intelligence agencies have

identified 'some locations' near Srinagar and Baramulla districts and a coordinated operation against these terrorists are being planned at the earliest.

The J&K Police's Special

The intelligence agencies have identified 'some locations' near Srinagar and Baramulla districts and a coordinated operation against these terrorists are being planned at the earliest

According to the messages intercepted by the intelligence agencies, Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) officials are annoyed with the terrorists in J&K for not doing 'something big' and forcing them to execute a major terror attack

Operation Group will be leading the operation along with central security forces.

According to the messages intercepted by the intelligence agencies, Pakistan's Inter-Service

Intelligence (ISI) officials are annoyed with the terrorists in J&K for not doing 'something big' and forcing them to execute a major terror attack.

Recently, Jammu and Kashmir Police recovered a cache of weapons possibly dropped from a drone along the International Border in RS Pura sector after which a massive search operation was launched by the SOG of J&K Police.

Two magazines, 70 cartridges, one pistol, three detonators, three remotely controlled IEDs, three bottles of explosives, a bundle of cortex wire, two timer IEDs and six grenades were recovered from Treva village in Arnia sector.

This indicates the vicious plan of the ISI to disrupt the peace and developmental works in the Union Territory of J&K, the officials in the security forces said.

international

ICC TO PROBE WAR CRIMES IN UKRAINE

International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan said Monday he was launching an investigation on the situation in Ukraine following Russia's invasion. "Today I wish to announce that I have decided to proceed with opening an investigation into the situation in Ukraine, as rapidly as possible," Khan said in a statement. "I am satisfied that there is a reasonable basis to believe that both alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed in Ukraine since 2014," he said



A refugee child fleeing from Ukraine gestures REUTERS

'UNDISGUISED TERROR'

KHARKIV STRIKE CHILLS UKRAINE

UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENKY SAID THE ARTILLERY BARRAGES ON KHARKIV AMOUNTED TO STATE TERRORISM

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kharkiv: In the dust and debris — and the dead — in Kharkiv's central Freedom Square, Ukrainians Tuesday saw what might become of other cities if Russia's invasion isn't countered in time.

Not long after sunrise, a Russian military strike hit the center of Ukraine's second-largest city, badly damaging the symbolic Soviet-era regional administration building. Closed-circuit television footage showed a fireball engulfing the street in front of the building, with a few cars continuing to roll out of the billowing smoke.

"You cannot watch this without crying," a witness said in a video of the aftermath, verified by The Associated Press.

An emergency official said the bodies of at least six people had been pulled from the ruins, and at least 20 other people were injured. It wasn't immediately clear what type of weapon was used or how many people were killed, but Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelensky said there were dozens of casualties. Zelensky called the attack on Kharkiv's main square "frank, undisguised terror," blaming a Russian missile and calling it a war crime. "This is state terrorism of the Russian Federation," he said.

It was the first time the Russian military had hit the center of the city of about 1.5 million people whose residential neighborhoods have been under fire for days. The Ukrainian emergency service said it had put out 24 fires in and around Kharkiv caused by shelling, and it had disabled 69 explosive devices.

Human rights groups and Ukraine's envoy to the US accused Russia of attacking Ukrainians with cluster bombs and vacuum bombs

The Russian military has denied targeting civilians, despite abundant evidence of shelling of residential buildings, schools and hospitals. The military "takes all measures to preserve the lives and safety of civilians," Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Tuesday. "I would like to stress that strikes are carried out only on military targets and uses exclusively precision weapons."

Russian armed convoy nears Kyiv

RUSSIA WARNS KYIV RESIDENTS TO FLEE THEIR HOMES AS A 60-KM-LONG MILITARY CONVOY CLOSES IN

REUTERS

Kyiv, March 1: A Russian armoured convoy bore down on Ukraine's capital Kyiv Tuesday and invasion forces fired rocket barrages into the centre of the country's second largest city Kharkiv, on the sixth day of Russia's assault on its western neighbour.

Pictures released by US satellite company Maxar showed Russian tanks, artillery and fuel trucks stretching for 60 kilometre along a highway to the north.

Kyiv's mayor published a video showing the moment when a TV antennae in the city was engulfed in flames, apparently hit by a rocket, killing five people.

Nearly a week since Russian troops poured over the border, they have failed to capture a single major Ukrainian city after running into fierce resistance. The civilian deaths of the last 48 hours were an ominous sign that frustrated Russian commanders could be resorting to more devastating tactics.



A satellite image shows a 60-kilometre long Russian military convoy passing through the scorched countryside, northwest of Kyiv, Ukraine AP

KYIV UNDER THREAT FROM RUSSIAN CONVOY	RUSSIA SAYS WILL PUSH ON UNTIL GOALS MET
ROCKETS RAIN DOWN ON SECOND LARGEST CITY	REFUGEES PACK BORDER CROSSINGS

Russia still has more forces to throw into the fight even though President Vladimir Putin faces worldwide condemnation and international sanctions for his actions. The sanctions and global financial isolation have already had a

devastating impact on Russia's economy, with the rouble in freefall and queues outside banks as Russians rush to salvage their savings.

Russia's TASS news agency reported new peace talks would be held Wednesday. Talks between

Prove you are with us: Zelensky to EU

BRUSSELS: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged the European Union Tuesday to prove that it sided with Ukraine in its war with Russia and a day after signing an official request to join the bloc. The European Union is going to be much stronger with us, that's for sure. Without you, Ukraine is going to be lonesome, Zelensky told the European Parliament by video link. Do prove that you are with us. Do prove that you will not let us go. Do prove that you are indeed Europeans and then life will win over death and light will win over darkness. Glory be to Ukraine, he continued.

Russian and Ukrainian officials held Monday at the Belarus border failed to reach a breakthrough. Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said Kyiv was ready to talk to Moscow but would not just follow Russian ultimatums.

Zelensky's government remains in control of Kyiv with soldiers and civilians ready to fight invaders street by street.

"For the enemy, Kyiv is the key target," Zelensky, who has remained in the capital rallying Ukrainians, said in a message overnight. "We will neutralise them all."

Some residents in the capital of 3 million people have been sheltering in underground metro stations at night. There are long lines for fuel and some products are running out in shops, but by day the city is still holding out, with a semblance of ordinary life on the streets.

Russian troops fired artillery at Kyiv, Kharkiv and the southern port city of Mariupol overnight while the Ukrainian side shot down Russian military planes around the capital, presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovych said in a briefing. Ukrainian authorities also reported 70 soldiers killed in a rocket attack in a town between Kyiv and Kharkiv.



This handout photo released by Ukrainian Emergency Service shows a view of the damaged City Hall building in Kharkiv, Ukraine AP PHOTO

A million people displaced: UN



Stockholm: An estimated one million people have been displaced inside Ukraine by the Russian invasion, the UN refugee agency said Tuesday, in addition to hundreds of thousands who have fled elsewhere.

There has been a lot of attention on those who flee to neighbouring countries, but it's important to remember that the largest number of people affected are located within Ukraine, Karolina

Lindholm Billing, UNHCR representative to Ukraine, told reporters in Stockholm.

We still don't have reliable figures regarding the number of people displaced inside Ukraine, but we estimate that it has to be about one million people who have fled internally or who are currently on a train, a bus or in a car trying to get to safety, she added.

UNHCR is currently working to step up assistance within the borders of the war-torn country.

At the same time in Geneva, the UNHCR announced that 660,000 people had already fled Ukraine to neighbouring countries and that figures were increasing exponentially.

We have now over 660,000 refugees who have fled Ukraine to neighbouring countries in the past six days alone, spokeswoman Shabia Mantoo told reporters.

Realise the scale: Ukraine on Twitter

The official Twitter handle of Ukraine posted a thread showing the resilience of its civilians and forces alike towards the overwhelming Russian aggression. The first tweet, captioned "Realize the scale of Ukrainian heroism", had a map comparing both the countries area wise. The handle said in the follow up tweet, "Do not be afraid to stand up to evil, no matter how powerful it seems at the dawn the flag will still be there." In the wake of the conflict, many videos showing Ukrainians' bravery are doing rounds on social media. Civilians are seen confronting Russian military and beauty queens are found wielding guns to defend their country. In another video, a civilian is seen blocking an entire Russian convoy. Another clip shows a Ukrainian man carrying a landmine with his bare hands.

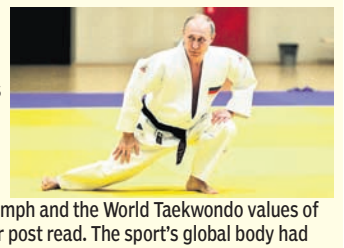


Russian soldier's last message to his mom

Ukraine's ambassador to the UN, Sergiy Kyslytsya read a dead Russian soldier's message to his mom the UN General Assembly session Monday, in an effort to substantiate the allegations on Putin of lying to his soldiers. The Russian boy, just before falling, had written to his mother describing the ground realities of the invasion of Ukraine. According to the Ukrainian envoy, the message read, "Mama! I am in Ukraine. There is a real war raging here. I am afraid. We are bombing all of the cities together, even targeting civilians. We were told that they would welcome us and they are falling under our armoured vehicles, throwing themselves under the wheels and not allowing us to pass. They call us fascists. Mama, this is so hard."

Putin stripped of Taekwondo title

World Taekwondo, through its Twitter handle, announced stripping Russian President Vladimir Putin of his honorary Taekwondo black belt, citing his aggression against Ukraine. "World Taekwondo strongly condemns the brutal attacks on innocent lives in Ukraine, which go against the World Taekwondo vision of Peace is More Precious than Triumph and the World Taekwondo values of respect and tolerance," the body's Twitter post read. The sport's global body had conferred the honorary 9th dan black belt on Putin back in November 2013.



We will win: Former Miss Ukraine

Anastasiia Lenna, Miss Ukraine turned resistance, shared a video of shelling, with a note supporting her country. Calling herself just a human and not military, she said, "I am also an airsoft player for years. You can google what airsoft means." Hoping that the pictures in her profile would inspire people, she urged the world to try and stop the war. "I appreciate all the support to my country. We will win every day against Russian aggression. We will win," she wrote, clarifying that she wanted to show that Ukrainian women were strong and powerful, and did not want to do propaganda.



How Ukraine's influencers used TikTok to tell stories of war

REUTERS

When Russia invaded Ukraine last week, some of social media's youngest users experienced the conflict from the front lines on TikTok.

Videos of people huddling and crying in windowless bomb shelters, explosions blasting through urban settings and missiles streaking across Ukrainian cities took over the app from its usual offerings of fashion, fitness and dance videos.

Ukrainian social media influencers uploaded bleak scenes of themselves wrapped in blankets in underground bunkers and army tanks rolling down residential streets, juxtaposed against photos of blooming flowers and laughing friends at restaurants that hon-

ored more peaceful memories of their hometowns.

They urged their followers to pray for Ukraine, donate to support the Ukrainian military and demanded Russian users in particular to join anti-war efforts.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which it has called a special operation, is the latest example of the central role TikTok has played in bringing news and current events to the app's large Gen Z audience. Its famed algorithm is known for serving trending content even if users do not follow certain people, allowing topics to quickly go viral among its 1 billion monthly users.

The app has become so influential in this conflict that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky appealed to TikTokers as a group that could help end the war, in a



speech directed at Russian citizens. Some TikTokers picked up where the politician left off.

Montages of residential buildings destroyed by missiles, empty grocery store shelves and long lines of cars piled up outside gas stations

could be seen on the TikTok pages of top Ukrainian influencers.

Russian influencers have also taken to the app to share their reaction. Niki Proshin, who has over 763,000 TikTok followers, said in a video Thursday that normal peo-

ple in Russia do not support the war. None of my friends and none of the people I personally talk to sup-



ported today's events, he said, referring to the invasion of Ukraine.

On Monday, Russia's communications regulator Roskomadzor demanded the app stop including military-related content in recommended posts to minors, saying much of the content was anti-Russian in character. TikTok did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Online misinformation researchers warned that false information about the conflict were now mixed in with authentic ones and has spread widely on TikTok and other tech platforms including Meta Platforms's Facebook, Twitter and Alphabet Inc's YouTube.

Footage of military simulator video game Arma 3, images of explosions from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Gaza Strip, old footage of heavy firing and animations of

flying aircraft have been shared on social media sites as if they depict the Russian invasion of Ukraine last week.

Some Ukrainian TikTok users have made it a mission to share information and spread awareness with Western audiences.

I want people to understand this is not a joke, this is a serious situation that Ukrainians face, Marta Vasyuta, 20, said in an interview Monday.

One of Vasyuta's TikTok videos showed what appeared to be a missile in the sky with the caption Kyiv 4:23 am. It had over 131,000 comments by Monday as users flooded the video to offer their prayers and express disbelief.

Never thought I would get WAR updates on TIKTOK, commented one user.

of the day quote

Retail investors may start making small investments or SIPs and not invest all their capital in one go as the Indian stock market may remain volatile till this war and geopolitical tensions are not over

We are monitoring the situation closely but not raising the price in a haste. We will take a call after monitoring the demand scenario also. Price rise impacts volume demand

In line with our vision to be the leading European automotive brand in India, I am delighted to welcome this group of seasoned professionals to bolster the leadership team in India

SHORT TAKES

Power consumption grows 2.2% in Feb

New Delhi: India's power consumption growth remained subdued at 2.2 per cent year-on-year in February to 105.54 billion units (BU), showing the impact of local restrictions imposed by the states due to the third wave of Covid-19. Power consumption in February 2021 was 103.25 BU, a tad lower than 103.81 BU in the same month of 2020, as per the power ministry data. According to the data, peak power demand met or highest supply in a day rose to 193.64 GW in the month under review compared to 187.97 GW in February 2021 and 176.38 GW in February 2020.

Adani forays into media business

New Delhi: Quint Digital Media Limited, India's only new-age digital media group listed on an Indian stock exchange has, via its wholly owned subsidiary, entered into a binding term sheet with the Adani Group. Adani Group will acquire a minority stake in Quintillion Business Media Private Limited (QBM), an indirect subsidiary of Quint Digital. The proposed transaction with the Adani Group is only for QBM which is a digital business news platform and not in relation to other digital media/ media tech properties owned by Quint Digital viz.

CIL output rises 4% in February

New Delhi: State-owned CIL produced 64.3 million tonnes of coal in February, registering a growth of nearly 4 per cent compared to the year-ago period. Coal India Ltd (CIL) had produced 61.9 MT of coal in the corresponding month of previous fiscal. In a statement Tuesday, the company said that stepping up its output tempo, it produced 64.3 MT of coal in February. On a month-on-month basis, CIL's average production increased to 2.3 MT per day in February.

Parag Milk Foods hikes milk prices

New Delhi: Dairy firm Parag Milk Foods Ltd Tuesday said it has raised the price of the Gowardhan brand of cow milk by Rs 2 per litre with effect from March 1 due to rising input cost. Monday, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which markets milk and milk products under the Amul brand, announced a hike in milk prices by Rs 2 per litre from Tuesday. With the hike in prices, Gowardhan Gold milk will now cost Rs 50, up from Rs 48 per litre, Parag Milk said in a statement.



A detailed disclosure framework for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending by companies notified by the government is a positive step as it brings transparency

NIDHI PUNDHIR
DIRECTOR, HCL FOUNDATION

HERO ELECTRIC UNVEILS NEW MODEL

Hero Electric on Tuesday unveiled a new two-wheeler Hero Eddy for the domestic market. The electric scooter is easy to manoeuvre product that strikes a perfect balance between technology and convenience to fulfil the need for short-distance commutes to next-door coffee shops, golf courses and gymnasium etc, the company said in a statement



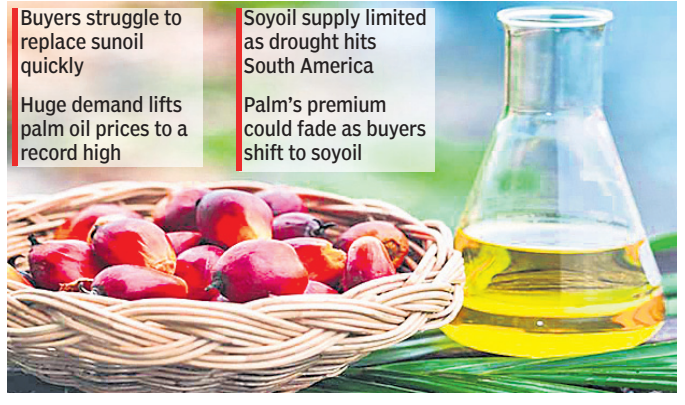
RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR TAKES TOLL ON BUSINESS

Palm oil now costliest vegoil

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine is set to push the country's import bills beyond the \$600 billion mark this fiscal, given India's import dependence on crude oil, natural gas, gems and jewellery, edible oils and fertilisers, which can lead to a spike in inflation and current account deficit, and a falling rupee, warns a report by Ratings agency India Ratings

REUTERS

Mumbai, March 1: Palm oil has become the costliest among the four major edible oils for the first time as buyers rush to secure replacements for sunflower oil shipments from the top exporting Black Sea region that were disrupted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Buyers struggle to replace sunoil quickly
Soyoil supply limited as drought hits South America
Huge demand lifts palm oil prices to a record high
Palm's premium could fade as buyers shift to soyoil

ments, compared with \$1,865 for crude soybean oil. Crude rapeseed oil was offered at around \$1,900, while traders were not offering crude sunflower oil as ports are closed due to the Ukraine crisis. The Black Sea accounts for 60% of world sunflower oil output and 76% of exports. Ports in Ukraine will remain closed until the invasion ends. Soybean production in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay is expected to fall be-

Asian and European refiners have raised palm oil purchases for near-month shipments to replace sunoil. This buying has lifted palm oil to irrational price level. They have the option of buying soyoil as well. But prompt soyoil shipments are limited and they take much longer to land in Asia compared to palm oil

MUMBAI-BASED DEALER WITH A GLOBAL TRADING FIRM

cause of dry weather. "Price-sensitive Asian buyers traditionally relied on palm oil because of low costs and quick shipping times, but now they are paying more than \$50 per tonne premium over soyoil and sunoil," said a Kuala Lumpur-based edible oil dealer. Palm oil's price premium is temporary, however, and could fade in the next few weeks as buyers shift to soyoil for April shipments, the dealer said.

Russia blocks exit of foreign investments

Russia is temporarily halting the exit of foreign investments from the country, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin has announced Tuesday. The move comes in response to Russian capital being frozen abroad by the US, EU and their allies, RT reported. "We hope that those who have invested in our country will be able to continue to do so in the future. I am sure that the sanctions pressure will eventually subside, and those who will not curtail their projects in our country, succumbing to the slogans of foreign politicians, will win," Mishustin said at a daily briefing on Russia's economic development. "To enable businesses to make informed decisions, a draft Presidential Decree has been prepared to introduce temporary restrictions on exiting Russian assets. As practice shows, it is easy to exit the market, but it is much more difficult to return to a place that is already densely occupied by competitors," the PM said.



5TH INCREASE IN 2022

ATF price hiked by 3.3% to all-time high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Jet fuel prices Tuesday were increased by 3.3 per cent to all-time high levels across the country, in step with international oil prices surging to over seven-year-high.

This is the fifth hike in jet fuel or Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices this year following an unrelenting rise in global oil prices, but petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged for a record 116th day in a row, coinciding with electioneering to elect new governments in states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. ATF price was hiked by Rs 3,010.87 per kilolitre (kl) or 3.22 per cent to Rs 93,590.66 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. Jet fuel, which makes up for almost 40 per cent of the running cost of an airline, has this year surged to new highs. The previous peak of Rs 71,028.26 per kl was recorded in August 2008 when international crude oil prices touched \$147 per barrel. Brent crude oil Tuesday was trading above \$100 per barrel.

ATF prices have increased every fortnight since the start of 2022. In five hikes beginning January 1, ATF prices have been increased by Rs 19,508.25 per kl or 26.35 per cent.

These hikes in the rate came on the back of two rounds of price cuts seen in December that reflected a drop in international oil prices during the second half of November and mid-December.

SBI halts transactions with sanctioned Russian entities

India's top lender, State Bank of India (SBI), will not process any transactions involving Russian entities subject to international sanctions imposed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine, according to a letter sent by Reuters and people familiar with the matter. "No transactions involving entities, banks, ports or vessels appearing" on a US, European Union or United Nations sanctions list shall be processed irrespective of the currency of the transaction, said a letter sent by State Bank of India to certain clients. SBI in the letter to clients also urged "extra precautions" while handling any transactions related to sanctioned countries.

Invasion may throw a wrench in LIC IPO

The Indian government is open to reviewing plans for the initial public offering of state-run Life Insurance Corp of India (LIC) this month, the finance minister said, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine which has impacted global markets. The government and LIC's management had launched virtual roadshows for India's biggest-ever public listing, aiming to float a stake of 5% to raise about \$8 billion this month. "If global considerations warrant that I need to look at it, I wouldn't mind looking at it again," Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance Minister told Business Line newspaper.

Brent tops \$100 again

New Delhi: Concerns over lower supply amid escalating Russia-Ukraine conflict pushed up global crude oil prices to \$102 per barrel Tuesday. The rise in crude oil prices comes after negotiations failed to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The Brent-indexed crude oil prices had risen by 5 per cent to over \$98 per barrel Monday. Russia is the third largest producer of crude oil in the world. It is feared that sanctions against Russia will start to curtail global supplies and stifle growth. "Crude oil prices rallied on Tuesday with ICE Brent oil surging more than 4 per cent, above \$102 per barrel," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities), HDFC Securities.

Concerns over lower supply amid escalating conflict pushed up global crude oil prices to \$102 per barrel Tuesday

For India, the price range is a cause of concern as it may add Rs 8 to Rs 10 in petrol and diesel selling prices

Analysts are worried about the cascading effect of higher fuel cost will trigger a general inflationary trend



FEARING RUSSIAN SUPPLY CONCERN BPCL SEEKS EXTRA GULF OIL

State-run Indian refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp. is seeking extra oil from Middle Eastern producers for April, fearing Western sanctions against Russia could hit deliveries of Urals crude, a source familiar with the matter said. BPCL, India's second biggest state refiner, on an average buys two million barrels of Russian Urals every month on a delivered basis, where the seller arranges for insurance of the cargo and ships. The oil is processed at BPCL's 310,000 barrels per day (bpd) Kochi refinery in southern India. BPCL has booked one million barrels of Urals for loading in March and three million in April. Traders are willing to meet the existing commitments, but have told BPCL they will not quote for supplies in future months, the source said, adding: "No one knows how the situation will pan out in April, so BPCL wants to be prepared." The source said Gulf producers had not committed to additional supplies for BPCL, as allocations for April loading are due to be finalised next week. BPCL also intends to draw from its inventories to make up for any shortfall of Russian oil, the source said.

IEA to deploy 60mn barrels from reserves

Frankfurt: All 31 countries that are members of the International Energy Agency have agreed to release 60 million barrels of oil from their strategic reserves "to send a strong message to oil markets" that there will be "no shortfall in supplies" as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the group said Tuesday. The IEA board made the decision at an extraordinary meeting of energy ministers chaired by US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm. IEA members hold emergency stockpiles of 1.5 billion barrels of oil. The release amounts to 4 per cent of stockpiles, or roughly 2 million barrels per day for 30 days.

Chip woes continue to hobble auto sales

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Leading carmakers Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Toyota and Honda witnessed a drop in vehicle dispatches to dealers last month as the global semiconductor shortage continued to impact production.

Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Skoda and MG Motor, on the other hand, reported an increase in wholesales in February as compared to the same month last year.

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its domestic sales slipped 8.46 per cent to 1,40,035 units as against 1,52,983 units in February 2021.

"The shortage of electronic components had a minor impact on the production of vehicles which are primarily sold in the domestic market. The company took all possible measures to minimise the impact," the auto major noted.

Similarly, Hyundai Motor India, the country's second largest carmaker, reported a 14.6 per cent drop in domestic sales to 44,050 units last month as against 51,600 in February 2021.

Similarly, Honda Cars reported a 23 per cent decline in domestic wholesales to 7,187 units for February.

Tata Motors reported a 47 per cent increase in passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market in February at 39,981 units compared to 27,225 units in the same month last year.

Similarly, Mahindra & Mahindra said its passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market soared by 80 per cent to 27,663 units last month as against 15,391 units in February 2021.

GST collection rises 18% in Feb

The revenues for February 2022 are 18 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year and 26 per cent higher than in February 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: GST collections in February grew 18 per cent to over Rs 1.33 lakh crore in February even as the Omicron wave dented the month-on-month collection momentum.

This is for the fifth time in the current fiscal that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection has crossed Rs 1.30 lakh crore mark. Also, this is the first time, cess collection has crossed the Rs 10,000 crore mark, signifying recovery in certain key sectors, especially automobile sales, the Finance Ministry said Tuesday.

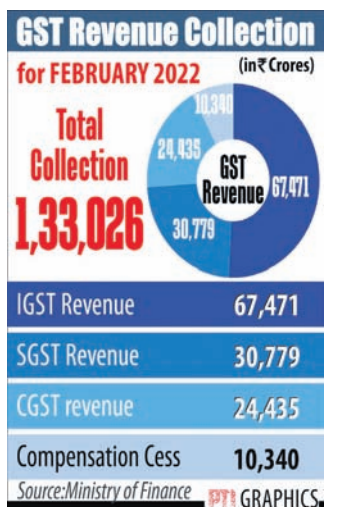
The GST revenues had hit a record high of Rs 1,40,986 crore in January.

"The gross GST revenue collected in February 2022 is Rs 1,33,026 crore of which Central GST is Rs 24,435 crore, State GST is Rs 30,779 crore, Integrated GST is Rs 67,471 crore (including Rs 33,837 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,340 crore (including Rs 638 crore collected on import of goods)," the ministry said.

During the month, revenues from import of goods were 38 per cent higher, and that from the domestic transaction are 12 per cent higher than the year-ago period.

The ministry said February, being a 28-day month, normally witnesses revenues lower than in January.

This growth in February 2022 should also be seen in the context of partial lockdowns, weekend and



night curfews and various restrictions that were put in place by many states due to the Omicron wave, which peaked around January 20, it added.

During the current fiscal, the gross mop-up in April was over Rs 1.39 lakh crore, in May (Rs 97,821 crore), June (Rs 92,800 crore), July (over Rs 1.16 lakh crore), August (over Rs 1.12 lakh crore), September (over Rs 1.17 lakh crore), October (over Rs 1.30 lakh crore), November (Rs 1.31 lakh crore) and December (over Rs 1.29 lakh crore).

Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said that GST collections exceeding Rs 1.33 lakh crore despite the challenging pandemic situation January 22 indicate that the collections are now on a stable trajectory and the FY22 targets would be exceeded.

"While on an overall basis, the collections are 18 per cent higher than the same period last year, there is significant divergence amongst states with increases in the range of 2 per cent to 23 per cent amongst the large states," Mani added.

BIZ BUZZ

Coal crisis hits Vedanta's plant

Bhubaneswar: Vedanta is facing an unprecedented and prolonged coal crisis due to which one of its power units has shut down.

According to a company spokesperson, the power plant provided only a small fraction of the overall power needed by Odisha to the Grid Corporation of Odisha (GRIDCO) and will not have a major impact on the state's overall power situation. The unit is now under maintenance as per the standard protocol of maintaining power plants when they are not being operated. "Vedanta itself is importing more than 1000MW power from market for its own consumption and to that extent it does not burden GRIDCO and gives relief. Vedanta stands committed to assist the state of Odisha with its power requirement as needed," added the spokesperson. Vedanta has informed GRIDCO that in compliance with OERC's October 5, 2021 order, Vedanta will pay the extra cost incurred by GRIDCO for procurement of power from market. Power is a raw material and it is better used in the state for value addition. Vedanta is using its own power in the state for generating revenue for the state and employment for the people, it was learnt.



FLW-2022 inaugurated by RBI

Bhubaneswar: The inauguration event of FLW-2022 (Financial Literacy Week) was conducted in RBI, Bhubaneswar to propagate financial education messages on a particular theme across the country. Banks were advised to disseminate the information and create awareness among its customers and the general public. Vishal Kumar Dev, IAS, Principal Secretary, Finance Department, Govt of Odisha graced the occasion as Chief Guest. C Uday Bhaskar, CGM NABARD; Vidya Krishnan, CGM SBI; Arupananda Jena, GM, UCO and SLBC Conventor, Pragyansmita Sahoo, DIF, Govt of Odisha and Controlling Heads of few major banks operating in the state participated in the event. The Financial Literacy posters and leaflets with the theme "Go Digital, Go Secure" were inaugurated. The Chief Guest presented a narrative on the developments in digital banking across the last three decades and how Covid has changed the banking landscape with increased digital usage.



BharatPe co-founder quits post Kotak saga

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 1: Fintech firm BharatPe's managing director Ashneer Grover has resigned minutes after receiving an upcoming board meeting agenda, which included consideration of action against him based on the report submitted by advisory firm PwC.

"Ashneer Grover resigned as Managing Director and from the Board Director of BharatPe minutes after receiving the agenda for an upcoming Board meeting that included submission of the PwC report regarding his conduct and considering actions based on it. The Board reserves the right to take action based on the report's findings," BharatPe said in a statement. The board meeting is scheduled



to be held Tuesday to discuss the PwC report findings on Grover's conduct. There have been allegations of financial irregularities against him.

According to sources, Grover in his resignation letter said that he is being forced to bid adieu to a company of which he is a founder. Grover alleged in the letter that he and his family have been embroiled in baseless and targeted

The development comes within a week after BharatPe sacked Grover's wife Madhuri Jain Grover, who was head of controls in the company, over alleged financial irregularities and cancelled ESOPs vested with her

She is alleged to have used the company funds for personal beauty treatments, buying electronic items and family trips to the US and Dubai

attacks by a few individuals, who are ready to not only harm his reputation, but also the reputation of the company.

Grover - who last month went on a two-month leave of absence following allegations of using abusive language against Kotak Mahindra Bank staff and fraudulent prac-

tices - had filed an arbitration plea with the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), claiming the company's investigation against him was illegal.

Recently, Grover lost an arbitration that he had filed over the company's investigation against him, arguing that there was no ground to stop governance review at the fintech firm.

The emergency arbitrator (EA) has, however, rejected all the five grounds of his appeal and denied relief. Grover had pleaded before the arbitrator that the preliminary investigation was invalid because it violated shareholder agreement and articles of association, and the company has no authority to conduct such an investigation.

Saurabh shoots gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cairo, March 1: Indian shooting ace Saurabh Chaudhary won the gold medal in the men's 10m air pistol event, opening the country's account in the year's first ISSF World Cup here Tuesday.

The Asian Games gold medallist shot 16 in the gold medal contest to finish ahead of Germany's Michael Schwald (6).

The bronze in the event was bagged by Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Artem Chernousov of Russia, whose country's flag was removed owing to its involvement in the ongoing conflict with Ukraine.

The 19-year Chaudhary, an Olympian who also has a Youth Olympic gold medal to his name, was third in the men's 10m air pistol qualification stage with a total of 584 points, making it through to the elimination as one of the top eight shooters.

This was Chaudhary's third individual ISSF World Cup gold and first in the new format, dominating Germany's Schwald in the final. Chernousov topped the 92-strong qualification field with 591 points.

In the first semifinal where the first of four athletes are eliminated after 10 shots and the second after 15, Chaudhary made it to the medal round along with Chernousov for company as both notched up 38 points to eliminate Robin Walter of Germany first and then Emis Vasermanis of Latvia.

In this round, the shooter with the highest single-shot score is awarded four points, while the others get three, two and one each respectively, as they move down the hierarchy. Points are split in case of a tie. This format continues till the medal round.

Schwald and Azerbaijan's Ruslan Lunev were the other two shooters



SAURABH CHAUDHARY (CENTRE; INSET)

to make it to the medal round from the second semi-final.

In the medal round where the bronze winner is determined and the top two make it through to the gold medal match, Chaudhary topped the four-man field after 15 shots with a score of 42.5 points.

Schwald joined the Indian with 41.5 points while Chernousov had to be satisfied with bronze, finishing with 40. Lunev finished

fourth, bowing out after 10 shots with a score of 21.

In the final, the winner of a single shot is awarded two points and the first to 16 points wins. In case of a tie, each shooter gets a point. Chaudhary needed just 11 single shots, including shots of 10.5, 10.8 and 10.6 in the last three of his four attempts to seal the deal in his favour.

Over 500 shooters from 60 na-



tions are taking part in the Cairo World Cup which has 20 medal sets on offer. The day also has the women's 10m air pistol finals scheduled. France, Italy and India currently atop the medals tally with one gold each.

Russia excluded from skating

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lausanne, March 1: Russian athletes have been excluded from yet another sport that is extremely popular at home following the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Russia was banned from competing in international ice skating events Tuesday, a day after being kicked out of soccer competitions and hockey — Vladimir Putin's favorite sport.

The decisions follow the International Olympic Committee's request to keep Russian athletes out of sporting events around the world.

The International Skating Union (ISU), the body that runs the sport around the world, said no athletes from Russia or Belarus "shall be invited or allowed to participate" in events until further notice.

"The ISU Council reiterates its solidarity with all those affected by the conflict in Ukraine and our thoughts are with the entire Ukrainian people and country," the ISU said in a statement.

Belarus has been a key ally of Russia in its attack on Ukraine. The World Figure Skating Championships are scheduled for later this month in Montpellier, France.

The ISU decision means Olympic champion Anna Shcherbakova and 15-year-old teammate Kamila Valieva, who was the focus of a still-unresolved doping dispute at last month's Winter Olympics, will be excluded from the competition.

Also Tuesday, the International Volleyball Federation said it had stripped Russia of hosting the men's world championships in August and September and would seek another host country or countries.

"It would be impossible to prepare and stage the World Championships in Russia due to the war in Ukraine," the FIVB board

said. The International Volleyball Federation said it had stripped Russia of hosting the men's world championships in August and September and would seek another host country or countries

World swimming body (FINA), however, has so far chosen to ignore the recommendation from the IOC to ban Russians. The sport's governing body said Tuesday it would allow Russian and Belarusian swimmers to take part "as neutrals, competing under the FINA flag and with the FINA anthem"

FINA also decided to withdraw the FINA order awarded to Russian President Vladimir Putin. "The FINA Order awarded to Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2014 has been withdrawn," FINA said in a statement

It's unclear if Russian track athletes will be allowed to compete at the world indoor championships this month in Serbia. The country remains suspended from the sport for doping but many Russians compete as "neutral athletes" without a flag or national emblems

The International Boxing Association (IBA) said it would convene a meeting of its board of directors later this week "with a view to suspending" Russian and Belarusian boxers from competition owing to the invasion of Ukraine that has evoked worldwide condemnation

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) too barred Russia, from taking part in the upcoming FIH Women's Junior World Cup, which is scheduled to be played in Potchefstroom, South Africa April 1-12

from competing in upcoming World Cup events in its country.

"We had hoped that FIS would reach the same conclusion on behalf of all ski nations, but now the Norwegian Ski Federation can no longer wait.

"The executive board has therefore today decided to notify FIS that Russian and Belarusian athletes will not be allowed to participate in the upcoming events in Norway," Norwegian Ski Federation president Erik Roste said.

It's unclear if Russian track athletes will be allowed to compete at the world indoor championships this month in Serbia. The country remains suspended from the sport for doping but many Russians compete as "neutral athletes" without a flag or national emblems.

The International Ski Federation has also decided to allow Russians to continue to compete, but the Norwegian Ski Federation said Tuesday it would block Russians



ISU's decision to ban Russian from competing in international ice skating events is a huge blow to Olympic champion Anna Shcherbakova

Smith recovers from concussion, ready for Pak tour

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Islamabad, March 1: Australia vice-captain Steve Smith says he has fully recovered from the concussion he sustained last month and is looking forward to his team's first test cricket series in Pakistan since 1998.

Smith was concussion when he landed on his head while attempting to save a six on the edge of the boundary during a Twenty20 International against Sri Lanka at Sydney. He missed the last three T20s against Sri Lanka before flying to Pakistan for the test series which starts Friday.

"The head's progressed really well, the last few days, so I'm feeling in a good space," Smith told reporters in an online news conference Tuesday.



"I've done a lot of stuff ... getting back to playing and had a couple of good hits in Melbourne before we came away. Today (practice) is just about ticking off facing fast bowling, and once that's done, then everything should be fine."

Smith was speaking ahead of Australia's first practice session at the Pindi Cricket Stadium, venue for the first of three test matches.

The second Test will be played at Karachi from March 12-16 and the third in Lahore from March 21-25. The series is part of the International Cricket Council's World Test Championship, with Australia in second spot — between Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The Tests will be followed by three ODIs and a T20I — all in Rawalpindi.

In the wake of reports that Australian spin bowler Ashton Agar's wife had received a death threat on social media, which was investigated and deemed not credible by both the Pakistan and Australian cricket boards, Smith said the squad feels safe in Pakistan.

"We've got a lot of people here working with us. We trust our security and everyone involved, and we're feeling incredibly safe here in Pakistan," Smith said.

Teen attempts batting record



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 1: Eyeing a new world record for batting the longest, Mumbai teen Siddharth Mohite stayed at the crease for a whopping 72 hours and five minutes during a marathon net session and is now waiting for the Guinness

Book of World Record to recognise the feat.

The 19-year-old Mohite passed compatriot Virat Mane's 50-hour record, created in 2015, before batting for 72 hours and five minutes over the weekend.

"I am very happy that I completed what I was trying. This was

one way I wanted to show people that I have something extra in me," Mohite said in a media release.

"Due to the COVID lockdown I lost two good cricketing years which was a big loss. So, I thought of doing something different and randomly this thought came to me and then I contacted many academies and coaches," he added.

Mohite was supported in his endeavour by his mentor Jwala Singh, who has also coached young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal. "Everyone said no to me. Then I contacted Jwala Sir and he said why not? He supported me all the way and provided whatever was required," added Mohite.

A group of bowlers stayed with Mohite to support him throughout his session. As per the rule, a batter can take a break for five minutes in one hour.

Mohite's recording and required papers will now be sent to the Guinness World Record books, Singh said in statement.

Eves to open campaign vs England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 1: India will open their campaign in this year's FIH Women's Hockey World Cup against England July 3, two days after the marquee tournament opens in Spain and the Netherlands.

The schedule was announced by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) Tuesday. Place in Pool B, India will next face

China July 5 and New Zealand July 7. India will play all their pool matches at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, Netherlands in the event to be held from July 1 to 17.

Soon after the schedule was made public, India women's team halfback Sushila Chanu said the team won't be intimidated by any opposition.

"It does not matter against which opponents we start our

campaign. We are not afraid as our mentality and our mindset is to take each game as it comes and try and win every match," Chanu said in a virtual press conference.

"We have faced China recently in Muscat, Oman, in the Women's Hockey Asia Cup 2022, and in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22. And so it will be an advantage for us," she asserted.

"We will be playing the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22

matches against England next month. We had last played New Zealand in 2020. So we know these teams quite well and we know how we have to prepare for the upcoming challenges."

India played Spain in the double-leg FIH Pro League at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar over the past weekend, where they won the first match 2-1 before losing 3-4 in the next game.

India forward Navneet Kaur said the team has gained confidence in the past couple of years because of constantly facing higher-ranked opponents.

"Around 2-3 years ago, there used to be a concern in the team before facing stronger opponents. But now, there is no fear in our team and we feel we are ready to face every challenge.

"Even if an opponent scores the first goal, we know we have the capability and skills to get things back in our favour," Navneet said.

"Our team has developed a fighting spirit over the past couple of years. This has worked really well for us," she added. In the FIH Pro League, India will next play Germany March 12 and 13.

"We have faced off against Germany last year. So, we will definitely take a look back at videos of those matches to recognise what are our stronger areas, and what areas we have to improve upon when we face them again," Navneet said.

SPECTATORS TO WITNESS VIRAT'S LANDMARK GAME



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Earlier, it was decided that Kohli's landmark Test would be held behind closed doors. It led to widespread criticism with many accusing the BCCI of not doing enough to celebrate Virat's historic feat

into the ground is one taken by State Cricketers Associations and in present circumstances, is based on various factors. I have spoken with the PCA office bearers and they have confirmed that cricket fans will be able to witness the historic moment of Virat Kohli playing his 100th Test match."

The BCCI Secretary said though the recent white-ball series against the West Indies was played behind closed doors, the dip in COVID-19 cases across the country allowed the hosting associations to permit crowds.

"Based on the advisories by the state health authorities, fans were able to witness the games in Kolkata and Dharamsala while UPCA had Lucknow T20I without crowds owing to polling a day before the match.

"I am really looking forward to Virat Kohli's 100th Test and wish our champion cricketer the very best. This is an occasion for our fans to savour. May he continue to represent the country in many more matches to come."

PCA treasurer RP Singla told PTI that crowd would be allowed at 50 per cent capacity of the stadium during the Test match.

Mohali, March 1: The first Test between India and Sri Lanka, which will be superstar batter Virat Kohli's landmark 100th match, beginning here Friday, will be played in front of spectators, reversing an earlier decision to hold the game behind closed doors.

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said in a statement Tuesday that cricket fans will be able to witness the historic moment of Kohli playing his 100th Test match. Punjab Cricket Association confirmed that the Test match will be held at 50 per cent stadium capacity.

"The first Test between India and Sri Lanka to be played at the Punjab Cricket Stadium in Mohali will not be held behind closed doors," Shah said in the statement.

"The decision to allow spectators