



**ANYTHING FOR LOVE**  
Actor Shraddha Kapoor has recently turned muse for celebrity photographer and rumoured boyfriend Rohan Shrestha  
**LEISURE P2**



**SHOCKING REVELATION**  
A whopping 93% of Indians live in areas where air pollution levels exceed WHO standards, says report  
**NATIONAL P9**



**WWC BEGINS TODAY**  
India look for maiden ICC title, while Australia seek their VIIIth, when the Women's World Cup gets underway Friday  
**SPORTS P12**

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**Quake hits Nabarangpur, Kalahandi**  
**Bhubaneswar:** An earthquake measuring 3.5 on the Richter scale hit Kalahandi and Nabarangpur districts Thursday. Luckily however, there were no reports of casualties or injuries in either of the two districts. The mild quake struck at a depth of 9km at around 11.30am, informed the Regional Meteorological Centre here. Due to the quake, tremors were felt in several regions of Nabarangpur district including Jharigam and Chandahandi and cracks were found on brick walls of several houses. The shaking lasted for about six to seven seconds, the weather office added. Panicky residents rushed out of their residents when the quake struck.



**Kohli 12th Indian to play 100 Tests**  
**Mohali:** Former Indian captain Virat Kohli is all set to achieve the milestone of playing 100 Tests when he takes the field against Sri Lanka here Friday. Kohli is the 12th Indian to achieve this distinction. Kohli, who made his Test debut against the West Indies in 2011, "never thought" he would come this far. "I honestly never thought I would play 100 Test matches. It has been a long journey. I am just grateful that I've been able to make it to 100," Kohli said in a video posted by the BCCI. So far he has scored 7,962 runs at an average of 50.39 with 27 centuries.

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**2 MORE CASES FILED AGAINST CONMAN SWAIN**  
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** It seems that the allegations against notorious conman Ramesh Swain is increasing by the day. Another complaint was lodged against Swain, Thursday with the victim claiming that the former had duped him to the tune of ₹1,00,000. Swain had asked the complainant (contractor) to construct a boundary wall on his plot on the outskirts of this city 2018. However, he had not paid the ₹1,00,000 due to the contractor.  
A separate case has also been registered against Swain at Saheed Nagar police station over the ownership of a car with forged documents.  
Sources said that in the first case, Swain approached one Upendra Maharana of Satya Vihar for the construction of a boundary wall at his plot at Pahala. Swain had identified himself as the Deputy Director in Union Health Ministry. He had also informed the complainant that he would build a three-storied building on the said plot. **CONTD ON P4**

## Returnees slam Centre

**AIRLIFT FROM KUWAIT (1990, AUG-OCT):** India evacuates 1,75,000 people after Iraq invades Kuwait

**OPERATION SUKOON (2006):** Over 2,000 Indians evacuated from conflict zone when battle broke out between Israel and Hezbollah

**OPERATION SAFE HOMECOMING (2011):** India brought back over 15,000 of its citizens working in Libya after rebels tried to overthrow dictator Muammar Gaddafi

**OPERATION RAAHAT (APRIL 2015):** India evacuated 6,688 people from Yemen after war broke out between the Yemen government and Houthi rebels

**VANDE BHARAT MISSION (2020-2021):** India evacuated more than 1.8 million, mostly civilians, in 15 phases that started in May 2020 and stretched well into 2021.

**19 flights operated Thursday to bring back 3,726 Indians**

**Still around 6,000 Indians stranded in Ukraine**

**SAFE AT LAST:** Indians arrive at the IAF air base in Hindon from Bucharest, Romania early Thursday morning

PTI PHOTO

Many students who returned from Ukraine complained about the lack of help from the Indian Embassy in Kyiv and blamed the government for it

**PTI & AGENCIES**  
**New Delhi, March 3:** There were scenes of joy Thursday at various airports across India including Delhi and Mumbai as stranded Indians in Ukraine, mostly students, reunited with their relatives. However, amid all this feeling of déjà vu, a large number of students were critical of the way the evacuation was planned. They felt it could have been better organised. Above all, most of the Ukraine returnees slammed the way the Indian Embassy at Kyiv, functioned.  
Divyanshu Singh hailing from Motihari in Bihar had crossed over to Hungary. He arrived at the IGIA here Thursday and strongly criticised the government. He stated gestures like distributing flowers are pointless when timely steps are not taken to rescue citizens from conflict zones.  
Divyanshu informed that he and other students in Kyiv did not get any help from the Indian Embassy. "We received help only after we crossed the border into Hungary. Whatever we did, we did on our own. Ten of us formed a group and boarded a train. The train was packed," Divyanshu was quoted as saying by "NDTV".  
"If our government had taken action at the right time, we would not face so many problems," added Divyanshu. The Indian student displayed the rose presented to him by government officials at the airport. "Now that we are here, we are being given this. What is the point?" he asked.

**Russia facilitates rescue of Indians**  
**Moscow:** Russia is ready to send 130 buses to evacuate stranded Indian students from war-torn Ukraine's Kharkiv and Sumy cities to its Belgorod Region, Russian National Defence Control Centre head Colonel-General Mikhail Mizintsev said Thursday. Approximately 8,000 Indians, mainly students, are stranded in Ukraine. "A total of 130 comfortable buses are ready to depart to Kharkiv and Sumy from the Nekhoteyevka and Sudzha checkpoints in the Belgorod region since 6.00am," he said.

Eight students who arrived in Jaipur also accused the Indian embassy officials in Ukraine of not extending any support.  
Akshay Soni thanked the Centre for getting them back but rued the lack of help from the Indian Embassy in Kyiv. "The officials of the Indian Embassy left us to our destiny. We had been trying to contact them through helpline numbers and WhatsApp, but there was no response," Soni said. He said they reached the border at their own risk by hiring a bus.  
Medical students Rajarshi Shyam, Chahat Yadav and Shoab Salim were also reunited with their respective families. All three also had the same complaint against the Indian Embassy at Kyiv. Salim, a student of Vinnytsia National Medical University complained that the Indian Embassy failed to provide proper update. "It's God's grace I made it back home," he said. "The Indian embassy was barely there to help us. They would not even answer our calls," he added. Chahat said that she had to spend two nights in the open in sub-freezing temperatures near the Poland border. "It was only after we entered Poland that we go some help from the Indian Embassy," she informed. **MORE P7**

### US DANGLES WAIVER BAIT

**NEW DELHI:** The US called India Wednesday to distance itself from Russia, its main arms supplier, after the invasion of Ukraine, which New Delhi has yet to condemn. New US sanctions on Russian banks will make it harder for countries to buy major defence equipment from Moscow, a US diplomat said. He added that no decision had been reached on Washington granting a waiver to New Delhi to take delivery of Russian surface-to-air missiles under an earlier contract. India signed a \$5.5 billion deal with Russia in 2018 to buy five of its S400 missile systems, initial supplies of which started late last year. The US this week placed more restrictions on Moscow including the bank sanctions after Russia invaded Ukraine last week. "It is going to be very hard for any country to buy major weapon systems from Russia because of the sanctions now placed on Russian banks," Donald Lu, Assistant US Secretary of State for South Asian affairs, told a senate sub-committee. Asked by senators if the Ukraine crisis had changed the administration's position on a waiver for India, Lu said, "What I can say is that India is a really important security partner of ours now, and that we value that partnership."

### MASON FOUND DEAD IN CUTTACK

**Cuttack:** A 28-year-old mason, who had gone missing since his arrival here February 25, was found dead under mysterious circumstances on Mahanadi riverbed under Bidanasi police limits Thursday. The deceased identified as Azad Yadav was a native of Chakasiya village in Bihar. A missing complaint had been lodged at the Sahid Nagar police station by a relative of Yadav, February 26. Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh said prima facie, it is suspected to be a case of homicide. "We are probing the incident," Singh said.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The rescue operation will be delayed a bit. Everything is ready but the photographer is running late

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	55102.68 ↓ 366.22
NIFTY	16498.00 ↓ 108.00
DOLLAR	76.48 ↑ ₹0.24
EURO	84.08 ↑ ₹0.02
GOLD	₹51,645 ↑ ₹351
SILVER	₹67,244 ↑ ₹281

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	32.7°C	33.4°C
TEMP. MIN	19.9°C	19.4°C
Humidity	94%	50%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	

## SAFE CORRIDOR FOR CIVILIANS

**AGENCIES**  
**Kyiv, March 3:** A member of Ukraine's delegation in talks with Russia informed the parties have reached a tentative agreement to organise safe corridors for civilians to evacuate and for humanitarian supplies to be delivered. Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy who took part in Thursday's talks in Belarus near the Polish border, said that Russia and Ukraine reached a preliminary understanding that ceasefires will be observed in areas where the safe corridors are established.  
Meanwhile Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy challenged his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to sit down for talks stating "Sit down with me to negotiate, just not at 30 metres." He added, "I don't bite. What are you afraid of?"  
Russia may have captured Kherson, its first major city in Ukraine after a week of fighting, but it lost Maj. Gen. Andrei ukhovetsky, the commanding general of the Russian 7th Airborne Division. Earlier in the day, Kherson came under the control of Vladimir Putin's forces. Igor Kolykhaiev, the city's mayor, said in an update around 1.00am that "armed visitors" had stormed a council meeting and imposed new rules.

### RUSSIA FACES WAR CRIME INVESTIGATION

**The Hague:** The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor has launched an investigation that could target senior officials believed responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide amid a rising civilian death toll and widespread destruction of property during Russia's invasion of Ukraine. ICC prosecutor Karim Khan announced the probe late Wednesday night after dozens of the court's member states asked him to take action. "An investigation by the International Criminal Court into Russia's barbaric acts is urgently needed and it is right that those responsible are held to account," British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said. "The UK will work closely with allies to ensure justice is done." Meanwhile Khan said: "Our work in the collection of evidence has now commenced."

## 6 hurt in post-poll violence

**POST NEWS NETWORK**  
**Khurda, March 3:** Miscreants set ablaze a car belonging to a sarpanch-elect's brother at Kaipadar village in Khurda district late Wednesday night over suspected political rivalry. The incident happened after a confrontation between two groups at Mangala Sahi locality in Kaipadar village. However, prompt intervention by officials of the Sadar police station prevented an escalation of the violence.  
"Miscreants found a Maruti Swift of Manas Routray, the sarpanch-elect's brother, parked at a nearby farmhouse and set it afire late Wednesday night. A few villagers spotted the thick smoke and informed the Sadar police who reached the spot and doused the blaze," said a police official quoting the complaint. Manas blamed the incident on the sarpanch candidate of the rival party who lost the poll.  
In another incident of post-poll violence at least six persons sustained critical injuries after supporters of two political parties clashed with each other at Bana Sahi under Mangalpur Gram Panchayat in Jajpur district. The injured were rushed to a local hospital for treatment. Later, two of them were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack after their condition deteriorated. Two persons have been detained in this connection.

## Indian men want 'obedient' wives: Report

**Men in India ready to obey women political leaders, but at home they prefer to be the dominant gender**  
**AGENCIES**  
**Washington/New Delhi, March 3:** A majority of Indians completely or mostly agree with the notion that 'a wife must always obey her husband' and support traditional gender roles but at the same time favour women having the same rights as men, according to a recent study by an American think tank.  
The report by 'Pew Research Centre' was released Wednesday early 2020, before the Covid-19. "Indian adults nearly universally say it is important for women to have the same rights as men, including eight-in-10 who say this is very important. At the same time, however, there are circumstances when Indians feel men should receive preferential treatment," the report said.  
"Eighty per cent agree with the idea that 'when there are few jobs, men should have more rights to a job than women. Nearly nine-in-ten Indians (87%) completely or mostly agree with the notion that 'a wife must always obey her husband'. This includes a majority of Indians (64%) who completely agree with this sentiment," the report added.  
However, referring to key female political figures in Indian politics, including former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalitha, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, the report said that Indians broadly accept women as political leaders.  
The survey results reflect this comfort with women in politics. Most adults say that women and men make equally good political leaders (55%) or that women generally make better leaders than men (14%). However, at home men want to be the boss.



It looks into how Indians view gender roles at home and in society more generally. The report is based on a face-to-face survey of 29,999 Indian adults fielded between late 2019 and

# leisure



## HADDISH TO RETURN WITH THE AFTERPARTY SEASON 2

American murder mystery comedy *The Afterparty* has been renewed for a second season. Actress Tiffany Haddish is confirmed to return in the role of Detective Danner. In the series, each episode is told in a different genre and from a different character's perspective.

## SEAN PENN ABANDONS CAR, LEAVES UKRAINE ON FOOT

Actor-director Sean Penn who was in Ukraine to shoot a documentary has walked towards the Poland border after abandoning his car, according to reports. Penn took to Twitter to reveal that he and his two colleagues walked miles to the Polish border after abandoning their car.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Your day is packed full. There are negotiations, commitments, plans and decisions to wade through. You may feel low on energy and swamped due to lack of information and inputs from others. But clarity will return gradually as matters conclude, says Ganesha.

**TAURUS**  
Armed with ingenuity and lateral thinking, you are all set to take on today with practised ease, feels Ganesha. The toughest of problems will crumble like a house of cards before your intellect. A promotion or salary hike is also likely today. Money lenders and brokers will have a profitable day, says Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you will do an amazing job in dividing your time between work and family. Despite your preoccupation with work, you will take time off for your family, and even plan out a small outing, leaving them pleasantly surprised.

**CANCER**  
There is something different about today. It is unlike any other day. Just when you will start believing that there is nothing great about the day, it will spring a surprise. There have been days where life has thrown carrots at you; then there have been days when it has hurled brickbats.

**LEO**  
On some days, the sun doesn't seem to have risen from the east, and neither does it seem you have gotten up on the right side of the bed. You start your day in a tensed atmosphere in the morning, caused by some annoyance on the part of one of your family members.

**VIRGO**  
Razor-sharp and aesthetic to the last cell in your body, entertain and enthrall people with your guile, especially at a social do, says Ganesha. But conserve that zest and save the time to pay due attention to matters of supreme importance, warns Ganesha.

**LIBRA**  
Your instincts are at their peak today. Generally, this means a lot of good, but for you, it may also mean having to put up with the trouble of small things bothering you in a big way. So, it becomes highly important for you to remain balanced and focused. Do so and you may produce wonderful results at work, and also look forward to raking in the money from various sources, says Ganesha.

**SCORPIO**  
You will see every colour of the kaleidoscope today – people with different temperaments and different attitudes, many of whom will surprise you with their reactions. You may be shocked at the way your colleagues or close friends react to your strategies or success.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You may have been experiencing hair loss in the past due to back-breaking stress, but things will begin to clean up today. As complex issues begin to fall in place, you are likely to receive some good news about a promotion or increment.

**CAPRICORN**  
You will be overpowered with nostalgia and may long to get in touch with old pals. And as Ganesha says, chances are that you may take a liking to your ex-lover, while simultaneously strengthening your social standing. All in all, the day will be a productive one.

**AQUARIUS**  
You may huff and puff, but today is not the day when you'll finish what you started. Don't lose heart, the future is promising. Take a break, says Ganesha, you've worked enough. The results are on the way.

**PISCES**  
Some conflicts could crop up in the morning on the domestic front. However, they will cease to be a cause of annoyance as the day progresses. Come evening and you will be in as fine a mood as you ever were, ready to spend time basking in the affection of your near and dear ones, says Ganesha.

## Shraddha turns muse for rumoured boyfriend

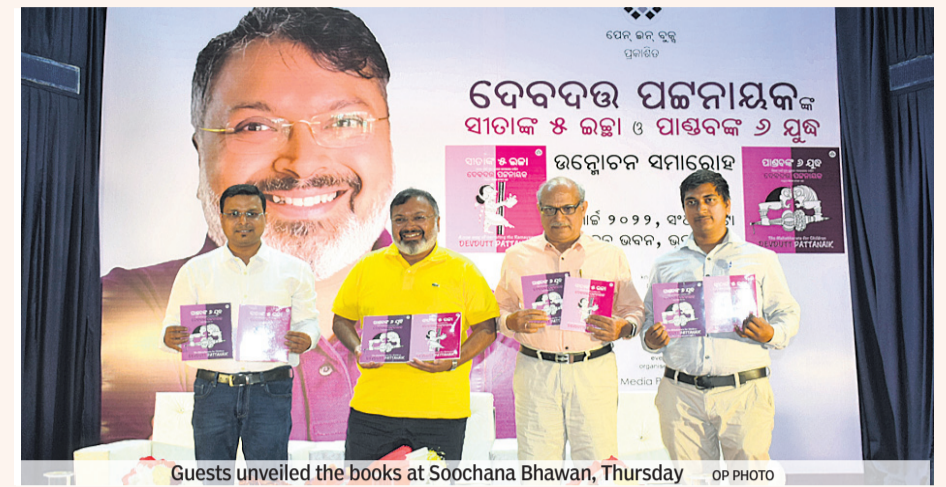
**Mumbai:** Actress Shraddha Kapoor turns 34 today. The actress has been keeping a low profile for a while as she continues to complete her pending projects. As she celebrates her birthday, she recently turned muse for celebrity photographer & rumoured boyfriend, Rohan Shrestha.



can see that the whole world is a garden. France Hodgson Burnett. The Secret Garden, Presenting the Lovestory Lehenga 4.0 with the beautiful and whimsical @shraddhakapoor." Shraddha and Rohan are rumoured to be dating each other for a while now but they have not confirmed anything yet. Shakti Kapoor once said Rohan is a family friend and he visits them often. Currently, Shraddha Kapoor is gearing up for her upcoming film with Ranbir Kapoor helmed by Luv Ranjan. IANS

## Devdutt's books for kids unveiled in City

The noted mythologist has retold the Hindu Epics through his new releases 'Sitanka 5 Ichha' and 'Pandavanka 6 Juddha' from the perspective of the children



Guests unveiled the books at Soochana Bhawan, Thursday. OP PHOTO

**BHUBANESWAR:** Translation is one of the most difficult jobs in literature as every language has its own style and complexity, said noted author, illustrator and mythologist Devdutt Patnaik here at Soochana Bhawan, Thursday. He was in the City for the release of his two new Odia books *Sitanka 5 Ichha* and *Pandavanka 6 Juddha* that narrate the Hindu epics – *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* – from the perspectives of the children. Devdutt also said that the writings of Valmiki and Ved Vyas are authentic as they were

the ones who are believed to have seen the mythology in the making. He went on to add that his two books aim to impart knowledge to the new generation about the Puranas. Published by Pen In Books, the books have been translated in Odia by Bikash Ranjan Ojha. Before the release, the audience and guests were treated to

Classical Odissi music rendition by Prateek Pattanayak, accompanied by Soumya Ranjan Nauak in Mardala. Attending the event as chief guest, noted children's author Dash Benhur said Devdutt Pattanaik has given mythology writing a whole new meaning. He added that Devdutt's version of the Hindu epics always offer

some novelty to the readers. Pen In Books director Subhransu Panda said, "It is an honour to collaborate with Devdutt Pattanaik. His books have been translated in other languages but this is for the first time that they can be read in Odia." He will publish Devdutt's other books in Odia language soon, added Panda. PNN

## Play Sahid Uddham Singh depicts colonial atrocities

**BHUBANESWAR:** With more than 400 deaths and over a thousand critical injuries, the infamous Jallianwala Bagh Massacre is considered one of the darkest chapters in Indian history. The incident shook the entire world at that time and 20-year-old Uddham Singh was no exception. So much so, that he travelled all the way to London to shoot Michael O'Dwyer, believed to be the planner behind the tragic incident. The life of martyr Uddham Singh replayed by Chandigarh-based theatre troupe Theatre for

Theatre on the stage here at Rabindra Mandap, Thursday, on the third evening of Purva Ranga, a week-long multilingual national theatre festival jointly organised by Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi (OSNA) in collaboration with the Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture (OLL&C) and Eastern Zonal Culture Centre of Kolkata. Dramatised by Charan Singh Sindhra, the Hindi play was directed by Sudesh Sharma while Binod Pawar and Harvinder Singh scored the music. Actors Gurpreet Singh, Rabinder Singh,

### PURVA RANGA - DAY 3



A scene from the play. OP PHOTO

Charanjit Singh, Priyanka and Amit Pal played important roles in the drama. Noted film director Sabyasachi Mohapatra, Odisha Sahitya Akademi Secretary

Prabodh Kumar Rout and the theatre director Prasanna Kumar Mishra and OSNA Secretary Prabodh Rath were among the dignitaries who graced the occasion. PNN

## Ajay Devgn steps into Metaverse

**Mumbai:** Actor star Ajay Devgn has stepped into the Metaverse universe with his virtual avatar inspired by Rudra - The Edge of Darkness.

The exciting and novel space of the metaverse is an all-new world. I have always wanted to be closer to my fans and today I can proudly say - I am there - Ajay Devgn

close to my heart now." Exploring the emerging intersection of the digital and physical world, the platform, in an initiative, has associated with Hungama Digital's Web3 venture called Hefty Entertainment to create this Metaverse. Commenting on the launch, Gaurav Banerjee, Head, Content Disney+ Hotstar, and HSM Entertainment Network, Disney Star, said, "We are thrilled to present Ajay Devgn in a never-seen-be-

fore digital avatar inspired by his character in a highly-anticipated series Rudra - The Edge of Darkness. It will be a unique presentation and an engaging content experience for our users." Spanning six episodes, the series is an Indian rendition of the globally successful British series *Luther*. *Rudra-The Edge of Darkness* will be available exclusively on Disney+ Hotstar from March 4 in Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Bengali. IANS



### PEANUTS



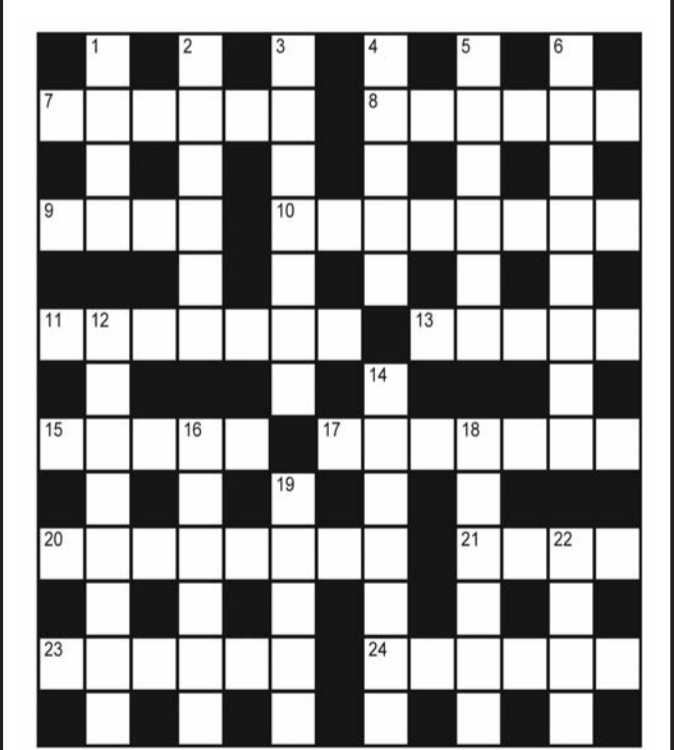
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



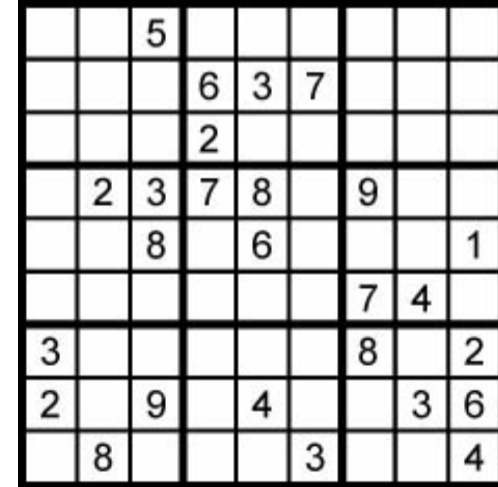
### FUN post CROSSWORD



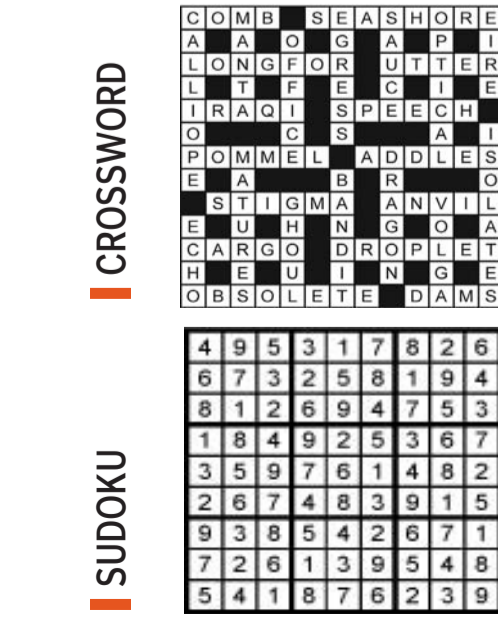
- Across**  
7 Ravel classic  
8 Reverberates  
9 Hearty party  
10 Coalition  
11 Excluded  
13 Kvetch  
15 Brunch serving  
17 The colour of rubies  
20 Mammoth
- Down**  
21 Letter after epsilon  
23 Deep blue  
24 Tea type  
1 Roman wrap  
2 Pour out  
3 Venues  
4 Barkers  
5 Protective cover
- 6 Operatic singing style (3,5)**  
**12 Next door neighbors?**  
**14 Bulldozer**  
**16 Unruffled**  
**18 Silencer, of sorts**  
**19 Razor sharpener**  
**22 Circus sight**

### 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



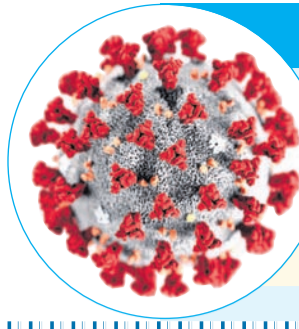
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## AT LORD'S SERVICE

Srimandir servants perform Benta Niti at a pond inside Sri Jagannath Ballava in Puri, Thursday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	44,11,54,330	37,40,33,091	59,95,917
India	4,29,45,160	4,23,53,620	5,14,388
Odisha	12,85,487	12,74,756	9,085

# State can levy duty on human consumption liquor only: SC

A two-judge bench of the apex court refused to interfere with the order passed by the Orissa HC wherein it granted relief to M/s Utkal Distilleries from paying excise duty on weak spirit



POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, March 3:** Dismissing petitions filed by the Odisha government challenging the Orissa High Court order of 2008, the Supreme Court Thursday held that the state had power to levy excise duty only on alcoholic liquor meant for human consumption.

A two-judge bench of the apex court, comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao and BR Gavai, refused to interfere with the order passed by the Orissa HC wherein it granted relief to M/s Utkal Distilleries from paying excise duty on weak spirit.

While dismissing the state government's petitions against the

HC order, the SC relied upon the judgment by a Constitution Bench in case of Synthetics and Chemicals Ltd and the three Judge Bench in the case of Modi Distillery and the statutory provisions contained in the erstwhile Bihar and Orissa Excise Act, 1915.

"We see no reason to interfere with the impugned judgment and order. The appeals, therefore, are found to be without merit and as such, dismissed," the SC bench said.

The Constitution Bench had held that the state was only empowered to levy excise duty on alcoholic liquor for human consumption. "The state has no power to levy excise duty on wastage of

liquor after distillation," the apex court had ruled.

Notably, M/s Utkal Distilleries was granted licence by the Excise Commissioner of Orissa in September, 1990 for manufacturing, bottling, blending and reduction of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) from rectified spirit. The license was granted with the condition that the company shall install one rectification column to rectify/purify the rectified spirit to be used in manufacturing of IMFL.

In September 1997, the state government had issued a demand notice to the company, calling upon it to pay excise duty on the weak spirit, which was more than 2 per cent allowable wastage.

The company made representation to the Excise department stating that the wastage generated during rectification was an impure /weak spirit, which was not fit for human consumption. It was, therefore, contended that the state government has no authority to impose excise duty on the weak spirit. However, the state government issued three demand notices to the company in 1998, 2003 and 2005.

The company approached the Orissa HC against the notices issued by the state government. The HC in December 2008 decided the matter in favour of the company. Aggrieved by the HC order, the state government moved the Supreme Court in 2009.

## Spl geriatric clinic opens at City AIIMS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** The Department of Medicine at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar has started a special clinic in geriatric medicine to provide comprehensive care to elderly people.

The special clinic, which opened March 1, will provide service from 2 pm to 5 pm every Tuesday. Medicine department additional professor Rashmi Ranjan Mohanty has been made in-charge for the special clinic. This clinic will be helpful for the geriatric population to get a holistic care, AIIMS sources said.

"The importance of geriatric care can't be undermined as it is evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. As geriatric population is likely to reach 13.1 per cent of our total population by 2031, this special clinic will be very helpful for addressing various issues like diabetes, hypertension, obesity, constipation, COPD and different cardiac, renal and mental illness," Mohanty said.

Geriatric care has become a major challenge with increased urbanisation and lifestyle modifications. A special geriatric care clinic at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar will be a boon for the people of Odisha, Mohanty added.

On this occasion, a guest lecture was arranged to discuss the various aspects of geriatric care. Eminent professor in geriatric medicine, AB Dey, delivered the lecture. Other faculties of the department of medicine, Anupama Behera and Dhriti Sundar Das will be involved in the special clinic for geriatric care.

# A piece of jewellery is a touch of emotion: Mishra

Hallmark Ornaments Pvt Ltd is a leading jewellery chain in Odisha. It is highly popular among customers for its designer ornaments, quality of metal and service. In an interview to **Orissa POST**, Hallmark Ornaments director **Biswachetan Mishra** speaks about the journey, uniqueness and future plans of the company. Excerpts:



### How the market for Hallmark Ornaments is growing?

■ We had launched Hallmark Ornaments in 2006. Prior to this, we did not have any involvement in jewellery business. Initially, we faced non-cooperation from several quarters. It was a challenge for us to survive in the jewellery business. The price of gold was around ₹9,000 per 10 grams when we entered this sector. Now the price of the yellow metal has crossed ₹50,000 per 10 grams. The price of gold has sharply gone up over past 15 years. Taking this into account, we concentrated on wholesaling and took steps to open more jewellery stores.

Now, we have showrooms at Bhubaneswar and Angul.

### What is your strategy to fulfill the requirements of the young and the old?

■ The young generation usually starts choosing costumes and ornaments immediately after the finalisation of the wedding dates. We display the ornament designs to them in 3D format. We move forward as per their requirements. The older generation has a preference for traditional designs. During our 15 years' journey, we have identified our customer segments and are working accordingly.

### How do you differentiate yourself from others and what are the secrets behind your strong customer base?

■ The demand for hallmarked ornaments was growing at the time of our entry into this business. That is why we had named our showroom as Hallmark Ornaments. The very name of our showroom has a special attraction for the customers. This is our USP. A piece of jewellery is like an emotional touch. This emotion passes from one generation to another. People often trust the jewellery shops from where their parents or grandparents had purchased ornaments. We take extra care to maintain the emotional touch.

### Has the rise in gold price hit jewellery sales?

■ Indians always regard ornaments as their wealth. The demand for jewellery is much higher in India than in any other countries. People pass on their ornaments from one generation to other. The rise in gold price does not have much

impact on our people. In fact, many people believe the value of their wealth (ornaments) would go up if there was a rise in gold price.

### Has people's inclination to buy gold gone up in recent years?

■ When there is a sudden rise in the price of gold, the amount of sales in monetary terms goes up. But, the volume of sales comes down. However, the rise in gold price does not hamper people's inclination for buying gold. People have a preference to buy new ornaments than go for exchanging the old ones.

### What are the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on jewellery business?

■ The first wave of the pandemic has affected jewellery business very much. There was virtually no business for four-five months. Wedding plans were postponed for a year. In the meantime, the price of gold went up significantly. Thus, the jewellery market was down for almost six months in 2020-21 fiscal. There was an upward trend in our business from October 2020.

### What are your views on online sale of ornaments?

■ We are yet to enter the online business. However, we are allowing customers to place their bookings online and collect ornaments from our stores. Till now, online sales of jewellery have not gained momentum. We can opt for online sales only when there is trustworthy courier service and insurance coverage.

### What are your future plans?

■ We have plans to open more showrooms. We had planned to open a showroom at Balasore but the plan has been postponed for a year. We will take an appropriate decision in this regard after taking into account the Covid situation.



## Puri temple gets 1 month to make it disabled-friendly

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, March 3:** The High Court of Orissa has asked the Sree Jagannath Temple administration in Puri to decide within a month on making the 12th-century shrine disabled-friendly.

Ramps and other facilities to make the temple accessible to persons with disabilities are not currently available at the Puri temple. Hearing a writ petition filed by a differently-abled person, the court asked the temple management committee, chief administrator and the Puri district collector to take a collective decision within a month to make the shrine disabled-friendly.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# BSCL kicks off fitness campaign

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** Aiming to increase awareness and interest in health and fitness among denizens, the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), Thursday, commenced a month-long musical fitness programme.

The BSCL along with Business Club of Entrepreneurs announced the commencement of the programme under the guidance of General Manager (Administration) BSCL Kamaljit Das. Named Fit Odisha, the program aims to increase public awareness and interest in health and fitness of people, as well as to help them get the most out of the programmes. "We are aiming to promote a

healthier lifestyle among people of the capital city. The programme includes marathon, cyclothon, zumba training and other aerobic exercises. People are encouraged to exercise for one hour each day as part of the efforts. Athletes, doctors, movie stars, and fitness influencers are among the celebrities who have recently thrown their support to the campaign," Das said.

The event was kicked off by Dillip Tirkey, the star hockey player, who stated that the programme aims to improve people's behaviour by introducing workout practices into their daily lives. Sources said that the event is set to draw a large number of participants from all across Bhubaneswar.

It can be mentioned that lifestyle disorders are becoming more common in India. Obesity, depression, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other lifestyle-related diseases are only a few examples. The population of major cities exceeds 57 per cent. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, the number of people dying in India from noncommunicable diseases grew from 37% in 1990 to 61.8 per cent in 2016.

"The importance of fitness and regular moderate activity on our mental health and overall wellbeing cannot be overstated, which is why being active can assist with isolation, stress, anxiety, and immune system support," said BSCL CEO, Sanjay Kumar Singh.

## Disabled fraudster held for cheating mobile shop owner

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** The commissionerate police Thursday arrested a physically-handicapped fraudster who reportedly duped a person of ₹30,000 by impersonating as a senior officer of Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI). The accused identified as Papuni Swain alias Nikhil, 34, is a resident of Poparada under Madhupatna police limits in Cuttack.

Nikhil has been staying near RD Women University under Saheed Nagar police limits here.

Police claimed the complainant, Tika Prusty, came into contact with the accused who had recently visited his mobile shop to purchase mobile accessories February 12. During an informal conversation, Prusty revealed before Nikhil that his niece has been suffering from a serious disease and her family has to spend big on treatment. Subsequently, Nikhil promised to arrange medicines for his ailing niece at a subsidized rate and took ₹30,000 from him. However, Nikhil neither gave medicines nor returned the money.

Prusty later lodged a complaint with Tamando police who arrested Nikhil by registering a case (50/22) in this regard. During the course of investigation, the cops found that Nikhil had duped an OLA driver of ₹40,000 on the pretext of releasing his vehicle which was seized by financial institution over nonpayment of EMI. He identified himself as a senior secretary level officer of Odisha government. Nikhil has cheated several others in the past too.

# CT & GST raids in 30 places across state

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** The Commercial Tax and GST enforcement wing Thursday conducted raids on 20 tobacco manufacturers and traders at 30 different locations across the state.

Based on intelligence inputs, data analysis and frequency of interception of vehicles carrying tobacco products illegally, the State CT and GST Enforcement Wing identified 20 manufacturers and traders of pan masala and tobacco products covering 14 districts and conducting simultaneous raids at 30 different places in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Keonjhar, Rairangpur, Balasore, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Bolangir, Rourkela, Bhawanipatna, Keshinga and Berhampur.

In the ongoing raids, 30 teams consisting of 121 officers and police personnel are verifying documents, computers, laptops, transaction details and recording the physical stock available in their business premises and stores for cross verification with books of accounts, an official said. The unexplained

## Preliminary investigation reveals that these tax payers have paid very negligible amounts of tax on their sales despite having huge purchase and sales

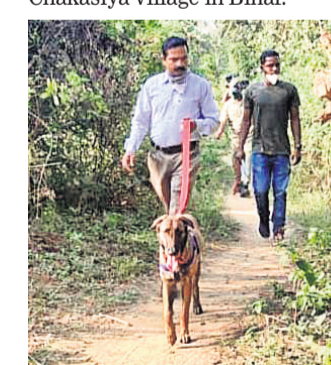
documents have been seized for further investigation, he said adding that in some places, the manufacturer tried to destroy incriminating documents.

Preliminary investigation reveals that these tax payers have paid very negligible amounts of tax on their sales despite having huge purchase and sales turnover, he said. The investigating officers have been instructed to complete the investigation as quickly as possible. From the raids conducted earlier in jewellery and furniture sector, tax, penalty and fine amounting to ₹9.82 crores and ₹2.51 crores respectively have been collected and deposited in government account.

## Missing man found dead in Cuttack

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, March 3:** A 28-year-old man, who was missing for last couple of days, was found dead under mysterious circumstances on Mahanadi riverbed under Bidanasi police limits here, an official said Thursday. The deceased, identified as Azad Yadav, was a native of Chakasiya village in Bihar.



Sources said Yadav had come to Cuttack February 25 in search of work and later went missing. A day later, his relative lodged a missing complaint with Saheed Nagar police in Bhubaneswar.

Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh said suspecting his link in Cuttack, police launched a search operation to locate him. "His bloodstained body was recovered from Mahanadi riverbed today. Prima facie, it is suspected to be a case of homicide," added the DCP.

"A probe is on into the incident. There are a few suspects in this case. Soon, we'll take them into custody for interrogation," said the DCP, who was present at the spot along with a scientific team.

## PEACE RALLY



The students of Capital Law College in Bhubaneswar take out a peace rally, Thursday, in the wake of Russian invasion on Ukraine



# CYBER CROOKS SIPHON OFF ₹1.39CRORE IN FEB



As many as 254 people out of 288 who contacted the cyber help desk of the city police in February belong to the capital city

in the city of Rs 1, 39, 60, 479 last month. The crooks cheated 94 victims through UPI related issues while 97 persons lost their hard-earned money after sharing credit and debit card details.

However, cops managed to retrieve Rs10,52,802 for victims who managed to contact the help desk within a few hours of the fraud in February. Similarly, Rs 12, 73,483 withdrawn by the criminals was blocked by the cops.

As many as six cases have been registered against cyber criminals by the commissionerate police last month.

Rs1.39 crore from victims' accounts in February, 2022. Denizens in the city have lost Rs1.31 crore in January this year.

As many as 254 people out of 288 who contacted the cyber help desk of the city police in February belong to the capital city. The cyber crime help desk received 34 calls from outside Bhubaneswar.

The criminals duped 254 people

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** The awareness campaign against cyber fraud has yielded little as people continue to lose lakhs of rupees after getting trapped by cyber fraudsters.

According to the data shared by the commissionerate police, cyber crooks siphoned off more than

## STATE RECORDS 138 NEW COVID CASES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** Odisha's COVID-19 caseload rose to 12,85,487 Thursday as 138 more people tested positive for the virus, the health department said. The death toll remained unchanged at 9,085 with no reports of any more fatalities due to coronavirus. The state had registered 143 new COVID-19 cases and six deaths on Wednesday.

Odisha now has 1,923 active cases, while 12,74,426 people have so far recovered from the disease, including 378 in the last 24 hours.

The health department said 53 COVID-19 patients have died of comorbidities so far. The daily positivity rate was 0.32 per cent while 33 children were among the newly infected people, the department said in a bulletin. The state has conducted 43,669 sample tests for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours.

## 2 new cases against conman Swain

Continued from P1

Subsequently, Maharana constructed a concrete wall around plot spending around Rs 1,00,000. When Maharana tried to contact the accused to get the payment, Swain started avoiding him. He even did not pick up Maharana's repeated calls.

After coming to know about Swain's arrest the victim filed Thursday, a case (21/22) at the Pahala police station here.

Similarly, Commissionerate Police registered another case over the buying of the SUV from a showroom by submitting a fake name and forged documents in 2020. The investigating officers seized the Ford Eco sport vehicle during a raid at Swain's residence at Patrapada recently.

Meanwhile, the SDJM court here Thursday permitted Commissionerate Police to take Swain on five-day remand in a case filed by one ophthalmologist from Guwahati in Assam. Swain duped the lady of Rs 23 lakhs after marrying her through a matrimonial site. The conman had also cheated one of her staffers of Rs 12 lakhs by promising to provide a job at AIIMS.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

That I Sri Debabrata Roy husband of Sital Roy as per her Aadhaar Card. That in my passport No. J9597877 there in her name has been wrongly recorded as Sunita Roy. I do hereby declare that Sital Roy & Sunita Roy is one and same person.

## Lazy eye treatment cut to 4-6 weeks with Bynocs



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** Amblyopia, often called lazy eye, is a serious eye condition that affects about 4 per cent of children globally. Untreated, it can cause permanent vision loss. Traditional treatment for the condition takes months or even years, but with Bynocs—a technology-based program, the treatment is possible within four to six weeks, said Chandra Sekhar Sahoo, a senior consultant and paediatric ophthalmologist at Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital here, Thursday.

Addressing the media here, Sahoo said amblyopia often leads to permanent vision loss. It happens when there is reduced vision in one eye caused by abnormal visual development early in life. Refractive error is one of the common causes of amblyopia. Due to

lack of awareness among parents about refractive errors in children, it is often identified late. As a child grows older, it gets more difficult to repair the damage.

"Bynocs comes as a cost effective, innovative and efficient approach to treat Amblyopia in children. The traditional treatment for the condition required months and in some cases years. But with Bynocs the treatment schedule is for a maximum of 20 to 30 sessions over a period of 4 to 6 weeks. Patients have experienced 80-90 per cent improvement in their vision. The price difference between the traditional treatment and this one is very little," said the paediatric ophthalmologist.

Data predicts a rising burden of amblyopia from about 99.2 million in 2019 to 175.2 million by 2030 and 221.9 million by 2040, added Sahoo.

## CUO-FIDR pact for tribal digital literacy centre

**BHUBANESWAR/KORAPUT:** The Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput has collaborated with the Forum for Integrated Development and Research (FIDR) to establish a digital tribal literacy centre, an official said Thursday. CUO Registrar Asit Das has signed a MoU with the research and development organisation for three years through a virtual programme, said the official. "The university in Koraput would offer a digital literacy programme to tribal and marginalised students of the region with the support of FIDR," said acting vice-chancellor SK Palita, adding that it will help them acquire digital skills and make them self-employed over time. During the CUO's 13th foundation day celebration August 29 last year, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had announced the establishment of the digital literacy centre.



Puri Collector Samarth Verma and senior officials of OBCC inspect the progress of Srimandir Heritage Corridor project in the Holy City, Thursday

OP PHOTO

## CIVIC BODY POLLS



(Clockwise from top) A candidate files her nomination for the urban polls in Bhubaneswar while a BJP nominee and one from CPI take out separate rallies to submit their papers in the Capital city Thursday

OP PHOTOS

## 5 BMC mayor nominations on day 2

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** Five candidates Thursday filed nominations for the post of mayor in the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) along with 177 others who will fight for the posts of corporators. So far eight persons have filed nominations for the BMC Mayor's position.

The names buzzing around for the post of Mayor from the BJD included Kandhamal MP Achyuta Samanta's sister Iti Samanta, OTDC Chairperson Shreemayee Mishra, wife of Skill Development Authority Chairman Subroto Bagchi Susmita

Bagchi, BJD spokesperson Sulata Deo and former State Women's Commission Chairperson Lopamudra Baxipatra.

Filing of nominations for elections to various posts in 109 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) began in the state Wednesday. The first day nomination saw three forms filed for the mayor's post. Similarly, 194 had filed for corporator posts. The two-day nomination filing has seen a total of eight candidates for the mayor's post and 371 for corporators.

Security has been beefed up at the offices of the Additional District Magistrate and the Electoral Officer in connection with the selection and

submission of nominations. Additional District Magistrate Prafulla Kumar Swain Thursday visited various counters opening for nominations and arranged the sale of forms and the smooth conduct of nomination papers by the candidates.

It can be mentioned that a total of 7,25,765 voters from 67 wards of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) are expected to cast their votes in the by-elections, of which 3,94,510 are male voters and 3,30,815 are female voters and 440 are other voters. Voters will cast their votes at a total of 705 polling stations.

## In 21-22, RSP creates production records

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) kept the graph rising in all key production areas in the first 11 months of 2021-22, an official said Thursday.

In April 2021-February 2022 period, the plant was successful in producing 39,27,790 tonne of hot metal, 36,18,231 tonne of crude steel and 33,16,518 tonne of saleable steel which were its best-ever performance since inception.

The oven pushing from coke oven battery -6 also witnessed the best-ever figure of 89.2 in the period.

## Fishing cat census in Chilika area soon

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** The Chilika Development Authority (CDA) is all set to begin Phase 2 of the fishing cat population estimation in the area from the second week of March, officials said Thursday.

The Chilika wildlife division and the fishing cat project, in partnership with Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance (FCCA), will collaborate with the CDA for this estimation.

"This is the first time in the world that this globally endangered species' population is being estimated completely outside the purview of protected areas which required the involvement of local fishermen, local wildlife protection committees as well as student volunteers from national universities," said Jim Sanderson, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) cat specialist group member. The first



phase of the population estimation was conducted in the north-eastern sector of Chilika lake. Their abundance was established to be 119 individuals from 230 sq km of the study area including 115 sq km of marshland and the rest comprising other lands, the officials said.

Phase 2 of the exercise will be conducted in the islands along the coastal strip of Chilika lake, in between Bay of Bengal and the lagoon. This area has a matrix of mangrove associated species like Pandanus or Keya, ponds along with cashew plantations and ham-

lets. The total abundance of fishing cats in Chilika will be analysed from the combined result of both phases, they said.

Fishing cat is a Schedule-I species like the tiger and elephant and the CDA had declared the fishing cat as Chilika's ambassador species in 2020. This led to the initiation of the population estimation exercise in 2021 and 2022.

"We want to regularise fishing cat monitoring in Chilika just like we monitor birds and dolphins regularly," said Susanta Nanda, Chief Executive Officer, CDA. In each phase, camera traps are deployed in Chilika with the traps staying at each location for 30 days, he said.

In 2021, the fishing cat project and CDA started a year-long patrolling and monitoring initiative on the fishing cat by engaging local residents.

"During such events, worked with local fishermen to reduce in-

cidents of reed fires which are a threat to native bird populations as well as otter pups and fishing cat cubs, which are 2-3 months old, when incidents of reed fires occur.

"In addition, we conducted rallies and awareness programs to make people aware about the importance of conserving the fishing cat," says Tiasa Adhya, co-founder of the fishing cat project.

The CDA in association with the fishing cat project will design a fishing cat action plan in Chilika this year.

"Just like the tiger's presence indicates the health of a jungle, the fishing cat's presence will tell us how a wetland's health is doing," said Adhya. The action plan will be socio-ecological in nature preventing reed fires and introducing small scale wetland tourism. Chilika has one of the country's largest extensive marsh-ecosystem spanning around 100 sq km.

## Loud music may up hearing loss risk in 1bn young adults: WHO

More than 1 billion people aged 12 to 35 years risk losing their hearing due to prolonged and excessive exposure to loud music and other recreational sounds, the World Health Organisation warned.

"Millions of teenagers and young people are at risk of hearing loss due to the unsafe use of personal audio devices and exposure to damaging sound levels at venues such as nightclubs, bars, concerts and sporting events," said Dr Bente Mikkelsen, WHO Director for the Department for Noncommunicable Diseases, in a statement.

"The risk is intensified as most audio devices, venues and events do not provide safe listening options and contribute to the risk of hearing loss," she added.

The WHO stated that hearing loss due to loud sounds is



permanent but preventable.

Exposure to loud sounds causes temporary hearing loss or tinnitus. But prolonged or repeated exposure can lead to permanent hearing damage, resulting in irreversible hearing loss. Young people can better protect their hearing by keeping the volume down on personal audio devices, using well-fitted,

and if possible, noise-cancelling earphones/headphones, wearing earplugs at noisy venues, and getting regular hearing check-ups.

The WHO has also issued a new international standard for safe listening at venues and events, which includes a maximum average sound level of 100 decibels, live monitoring and recording of sound levels, optimising venue acoustics and sound systems, among others.

"Governments, civil society and private sector entities such as manufacturers of personal audio devices, sound systems, and video gaming equipment as well as owners and managers of entertainment venues and events have an important role to play in advocating for the new global standard," said Dr Ren Minghui, WHO Assistant Director-General, in the statement.

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SHORT TAKES

Youth held for raping minor

**Aska:** Aska police Wednesday arrested a youth for allegedly raping, assaulting and giving death threats to a minor girl here in Ganjam district. The accused, Kala Charan Sahu of Mamudih village, lured the Class X girl into a relationship in 2021. He then allegedly kidnapped her and took her to Surat where he kept her for a few months and raped her. Later, he brought her back to his village after she was impregnated. He has been assaulting her and giving death threats. Following a complaint, Aska police picked him up from his house and forwarded to court, IIC Prasant Kumar Sahu stated.



POST NEWS NETWORK

74-year-old jailed for raping teen

**Baripada:** A court in Mayurbhanj district Thursday sentenced a 74-year-old man to 10 years of imprisonment for raping a teenager four years ago. Baripada PCO judge Sumita Jena also imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on the man, special public prosecutor Abhina Pattanaik said. The court directed the District Legal Services Authority to pay Rs 7 lakh compensation to the rape survivor. On April 27, 2018, the 17-year-old girl had gone to a forest near her village in Jharpokharia block for grazing goats when the incident took place. The teenager got pregnant and subsequently gave birth to a child. The judgement was based on the girl's statement, medical reports, and statements of 20 witnesses, the prosecution added.

Samiti member's husband nabbed

**Baliguda:** The husband of a newly-elected Samiti member was arrested over his links with ganja trade here in Kandhamal district. The accused has been identified as Madan Digal. An arrest warrant was issued against him at Baliguda Additional District and Session's Court following which he was arrested and forwarded to court. Madan's wife was elected as the samiti member of Salaguda panchayat under Baliguda block.

Scribe attacked in Joda, breaks leg

**Joda:** A reporter of electronic media was brutally attacked by some people following arguments that broke out about selection of candidates of a particular party near Joda cinema hall Thursday. The reporter, identified as Satyajit Das, has broken his leg in the attack. Sources said Bijay Mahakud, a local youth, had called Satyajit over phone to come near the cinema hall at 1pm. Some people of a political party were then wrangling over selection of candidates for Joda civic body polls. Suddenly, Ripu Das, a resident of Joda market complex area, came out of the crowd and started beating up Satyajit with a lathi. Some people also attacked local trader Jagannath Panigrahy. But what actually led to the attack on the two is not yet known. Police rescued them and admitted the duo to Tata Hospital.

Gang of burglars busted; 5 nabbed



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Gopalpur, March 3:** Acting on a tip-off, Golanthara police busted a gang of burglars in Silk City by arresting five of its members. The police also seized gold and silver ornaments, and firearms from their possession late Wednesday night. "The accused, identified as CH Rambabu, 21, S Srinu, 19, S Ganesh, 40, CH Senbabu and P Narsingh of Sukunda under Bada Bazaar police limits in Silk City, were arrested while two others managed to escape," SDPO Shiba Shankar

Mohapatra told the media Thursday. The arrests came following a series of complaints of loot from locked-up houses under Golanthara, Berhampur Sadar, Baidyanathpur, Gopalpur and Bada Bazaar police limits in regular intervals. A PCR van of Golanthara police was patrolling near Kanishi haat when intelligence input alerted about the presence of some dacoits in the area. It raided a place when two of them hurled bombs at police and escaped. Later, police pounced on the rest five and nabbed them. A sharp weapon, two iron bars, three live bombs, two empty liquor bottles, two torchlights, 40 gram gold ornaments, 2.6kg silver ornaments and ₹20,000 in cash were seized from their possession. The accused admitted to their crime during interrogation and were produced in court, Thursday.



Tribal women participated in an art workshop organised by Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi at Regional Art Gallery in Koraput Thursday

OP PHOTO

Truckers to face music for blocking jumbo path

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, March 3:** Parking of trucks within 100 metres of elephant corridor signage or obstructing the path of pachyderms in this district will invite punishment for the vehicle owners. The Forest department has put up information plaques in this regard to warn the truckers, sources said Thursday.

The action follows a recent report published in Orissa POST on how the long column of trucks parked illegally on roads was hindering jumbo movement in the district. Sources said the pachyderms need to cross the National Highways-49 and 20 and other roads in the district to travel from one jungle to another under Keonjhar forest division.

However, the animals find it difficult to cross the highways due to heavy traffic on the route and parking of mineral-laden trucks in rows alongside the highways. The blazing lights of the vehicles also dissuade the jumbos from moving ahead. This has been witnessed near Suakati mines under Bansapal block where hundreds of trucks are lined up to load minerals for hours together. The animals, after finding it difficult to cross the highways, unleash a reign of terror in the surrounding areas which results in loss of lives and properties. The Forest department has warned that any truck found parked within 100 metres of the signage on elephant corridor or obstructing the path of the animals will be liable to punishment. The move has been welcomed by the environmentalists as they demanded conduct of patrolling in these areas and ensure safe passage for the animals.



CRUX OF THE MATTER

The pachyderms need to cross National Highways-49 and 20 and other roads in the district to move from one jungle to another under Keonjhar forest division

However, the animals find it difficult to cross the highways due to heavy traffic on the route and parking of mineral-laden trucks in rows alongside the highways

The blazing lights of the vehicles also dissuade the jumbos from moving ahead

ULB ELECTIONS

Land patta, basic amenities key issues in Malkangiri

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, March 3:** With the urban local body (ULB) elections drawing closer, people in some wards of Malkangiri municipality are sore over absence of basic facilities and land pattas. Some of the residents have even decided to boycott the polls.

Reports said people of ward no-3, 7, 14 and 17 of the civic body have expressed their unhappiness over the civic amenities. Ward-3 has over 1,500 voters while 400 families have been deprived of pattas of their dwelling place, even though they have been residing in the municipality area for years. "We are tired of frequenting to the collectorate and the tehsil office for pattas. As it yielded no results,

we moved the court for the land rights. We have decided to boycott poll this time," residents said.

The same is the issue in ward 17 where 1,000 voters will exercise their franchise. "We will boycott polls unless we get written assurance from the administration. We will continue our agitation against the administrative apathy towards us," they fumed. In ward 7, some streets have remained inundated for the last four months due to cracks in underground water pipes. "The continuous water logging of streets has left the roads in bad shape, giving bumpy ride to the commuters. We had drawn attention of the public health and engineering organisation (PHEO) authorities several times in the past, but no action was taken," they said.

11 hurt in Jajpur, Ganjam violence

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dasrathpur/Gopalpur, March 3:** At least 11 people were injured, six of them critically, in Jajpur and Ganjam districts Thursday.

Reports said a group of people had entered the house of defeated sarpanch candidate Pankajini Mohapatra under Mangalpur panchayat of Jajpur late Wednesday night and attacked her. Pankajini's husband Pradip along with some supporters was attacked by the people of the other group over the incident Thursday. Seven people were injured and two of them were

critically injured. A case was filed against Pankajini, her husband and her three brothers. Police started an investigation into the matter and detained two supporters of Pankajini.

Reports from Gopalpur said two groups clashed over past and political enmity at Pitatali in Ganjam late Wednesday night. Both sides hurled bombs and stones at each other. Four people were critically injured and admitted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur. Four separate cases were filed at Golanthara police station in this regard.

11 samiti members go into hiding

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kalinganagar, March 3:** At a time when the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is on its toes to form the panchayat samiti in Danagadi block of Jajpur district, 11 samiti members have gone into hiding, sparking fear of horse trading.

With election to the block chairperson post scheduled for March 12, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is also making an attempt to form the panchayat samiti, a report said.

BJD-backed 14 samiti members have been elected this time while BJP-supported samiti member can-

didates have won 9 seats. As the BJD has majority, the party is in a comfortable position to form the panchayat samiti.

The party has decided to see Archana Das, wife of Danagadi block's BJD president Pradip Kumar Mohanty as chairperson of the block. In view of possible cross-voting, the BJD as part of its strategy has kept 11 samiti members in an undisclosed location ahead of the election.

The plan is that these samiti members will come out of their hiding and take part in the election to the block chairperson post.

4 women BJD contenders in race for ZP chief

EDUCATION & LEADERSHIP SKILLS TO BE THE GUIDING FACTORS FOR NOMINATION OF SAMBALPUR ZP CHIEF

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, March 3:** Four newly-elected women leaders from BJD are in the race for Sambalpur zilla parishad (ZP) chairperson post with the party winning 16 out of 18 zones, said sources.

The ruling party has won five out of six zones in Kuchinda Assembly segment, six out of seven zones in Redhakhole Assembly segment and all five from Rengali Assembly segment. The party's spectacular victory has given rise to speculation as to who would be the chairperson with the post being reserved for women.

Siddharth Das, BJD's district president, said, "It has become a daunting task for the party to nominate one of the women leaders as chairperson with 10 women candidates winning from different zones. All the winners have brought glory for the party."

However, educational qualifications, organisational skills, party's reach in their constituencies and leadership skills will be given priority while nominating one of them as chairperson, he said.

The district leaders will first converge at a meeting and the local MLAs will be consulted before sending the final list to the state lead-



Sujata Khuntia

Tikeshwari Meher

Choleswari Mahananda

Kumudini Nayak

ership. There the party president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will take the final call, he added.

Reports said among the winners, four are in the fray for the post. Sujata Khuntia has won from zone-1 under Jamankira block in Kuchinda Assembly segment. This zone was earlier deemed as a BJP citadel with the BJP candidate winning from this zone in the last panchayat election.

This time, Sujata's educational qualification and her skill in organising people endeared her to the voters.

Sujata defeated BJP's Simantika Bariha by a margin of 7,993 votes which is the highest vote margin among all the winners in this Assembly segment. As a result, she is deemed as the most favourable for the chairperson's post.

Kumudini Nayak, who earlier

won zone-1 of Bamra block has

The ruling party has won five out of six zones in Kuchinda Assembly segment, six out of seven zones in Redhakhole Assembly segment and all five from Rengali Assembly segment

The party's spectacular victory has given rise to speculation as to who would be the chairperson with the post being reserved for women

again won this time from zone-2 of the same block.

She carries rich political experience and the voters have reelected her as she is a known face in the area. She defeated BJP's Sunil Kumar Das by a margin of 7,129 votes. She is one of the main contenders for the chairperson's post.

Similarly, Tikeshwari Meher, a

graduate, of the ruling party has won zone-2 of Naktideula block. She is a teacher at a private school. She defeated BJP candidate Luchna Gardtia by a margin of 4,912 votes and is in race for the chairperson's post.

BJD's Choleswari Mahananda has won zone-1 of Rengali block by defeating her nearest BJP rival Priyambada Behera by a record margin of 15,414 votes. The record margin of votes she has secured has made her a probable contender for the post of ZP chairperson.

Among these four, Sujata has organisational skills while Kumudini carries rich political experience. Similarly, Tikeshwari has good educational background while record margin of votes weighs for Choleswari on her side. Choleswari has also completed her intermediate in Science.

Students recall horror in war-torn Ukraine

SMITI KUJUR, DAUGHTER OF KINJIRIKELA HEALTH CENTRE OFFICER FRANKLIN KUJUR, AND SAKIT SOHAIB KHAN FROM ROURKELA WERE TWO OF THE THOUSANDS OF INDIAN STUDENTS STRANDED IN UKRAINE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, March 3:** Two medical students from Sundargarh who managed to escape from Ukraine and reach home safely have shared their nightmarish experience in the war-torn country.

Smiti Kujur, daughter of Kinjirikela health centre officer Franklin Kujur, and Sakit Sohaib Khan from Rourkela were two of the thousands of Indian students stranded in Ukraine.

Their dream to study medicine in Ukraine took an unusual turn after Russia invaded Ukraine. The two medical students recalled the horror they had to go through in Ukraine to reach back home safely.

Speaking about her ordeal, Smiti said, "I had gone to Ukraine January 26 to study medicine. I was a first year medical student at Ukraine's Uzhhorod



National University where at least 600 Indian students were studying."

"We were just trying to adjust with Ukraine culture and language, when the war broke out. Initially, we thought the war would not have much impact. But, we were wrong. So, amid the ongoing war, we decided to fly back home, but ticket prices skyrocketed

from ₹23,000-30,000 to 1 lakh."

Later, Indian government launched 'Operation Ganga' to airlift Indians stranded in Ukraine. As Ukraine's airspace is closed, flights are being operated from neighbouring Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia.

With the help of our University, at least 240 students arranged five buses

and managed to reach Hungary border. "We had to spend 20-30 hours on Hungary border for verification of visa and other documents," she said.

"Later, we were taken to Hungary's Budapest Airport from where we flew to Delhi. I then flew from Delhi to Jharsuguda Veer Surendra Sai Airport from where I was received by my family," she added.

Meanwhile, many students have shared that they had to walk 100-200km in the chilly weather to reach borders of other countries as officials had failed to provide any transportation to shift them to safety.

Many students were not allowed to board trains and Ukrainian guards thrashed them. They were also pushed away from many trains. There are still hundreds of students stuck in Ukraine. On the other hand, two Indian students have lost their lives in the war:

**ODISHA PISCICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Ltd.**  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମତ୍ସ୍ୟଚାଷ ଉନ୍ନୟନ ନିଗମ ଲିଡ. **ODISHA PISCICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A Government of Odisha undertaking) **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL** Date:03.03.2022

No.373

**SELECTION OF CAG EMPANELLED CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT FIRMS FOR COMPILATION OF ACCOUNTS OF 8 FILLING STATIONS, 23 GOVERNMENT HATCHERIES AND 1 NET MANUFACTURING UNIT FOR THE FY 2018-19, 2019-20 & 2020-21**

No.CAD-3049:OPDCL invites sealed proposals from eligible bidders to carry out compilation of accounts of 8 filling stations, 23 government hatcheries and 1 net manufacturing unit. Bidders fulfilling the prescribed eligibility criteria of the RFP can access and download the complete RFP Document and other details from www.fishfedodisha.in The bid calendars under the end to end process are:

Sl.No	List of Key Events	Critical Dates
1	Date of Issue of RFP	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022
2	Last Date for Submission of Bid	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, 4 P.M.
3	Date of Opening of Technical Bid	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, 5 P.M.
4	Date of Technical Presentation	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, 5 P.M. (Tentative)
5	Date of Opening of Financial Bid	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2022, 4 P.M. (Tentative)

The proposal complete in all respects must reach the undersigned by Speed Post/ Registered Post/Drop in the Tender Box only latest by 11th March 2022, 4pm in a sealed envelope clearly mentioning on the top of it "REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL - SELECTION OF CAG EMPANELLED CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT FIRMS FOR COMPILATION OF ACCOUNTS OF 8 FILLING STATIONS, 23 GOVERNMENT HATCHERIES AND 1 NET MANUFACTURING UNIT".

The cost of document Rs. 1000/- + GST 18% = Rs. 1,180/- in shape of Banker's Cheque / DD in favour of MD OPDCL Ltd drawn in any scheduled commercial bank payable at Bhubaneswar.

The proposals received beyond the last date and time will be rejected. The authority reserves the right to reject any/all proposals without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Managing Director  
CC: To the Notice Board of OPDCL Ltd and webhosting of the same in fishfed website for publicity.  
OIPR-06020/11/0011/2122

FOCUS UKRAINE

# WHERE INDIA STANDS



The current regime which is super-critical of Nehru on his foreign policy is adopting the same stance of neutrality, middle-of-the road, and so-called balancing act

The invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign and independent country, by Russia has shaken the international community. It is unlike the NATO and American forces moving into Iraq, Syria or Afghanistan, where dictators and fundamentalists were torturing their own people. Russia invaded Ukraine on a twisted narrative of Vladimir Putin about the history between the two countries, that Russians and Ukrainians are one people and hence inseparable.

Various reasons and interpretations of the motivations for Russia's outright armed invasion have been put forth by leaders, experts and observers. The front-running perspective of the war is that Ukraine has become a hapless pawn in rivalry between US-led NATO and Russia. The other major interpretation of Russian military action is Putin's reading of history which suggests that Ukrainians and Russians have same ancestry and thus, Ukraine is an inseparable part of Russia. Putin colours this view by seeking to bring order in Ukraine. One could write trees of notes to explain the reasons for Russian invasion. That is not the remit in this article. The war is on causing deaths and destruction in Ukraine. The urgent objective is to end the war, and analyse what other countries in the international community are doing or not doing to contribute to this end.

We are here talking about India's stance on the war between Russia and Ukraine. To put it pithily, New Delhi's position vis-à-vis the Ukrainian crisis has been disappointing so far. It has also diminished India's chance or to be precise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambition of becoming a 'Vishwa Guru'. India's balancing role between two super powers (in the Cold War era), and now between the US-led bloc and the United Front comprising Russia and China has reached a biting

point; New Delhi could neither go forward or backward. In the current war, India has shown a pro-Russian tilt which is a function of New Delhi's 'time tested' friendship with Moscow as well as of geopolitical necessity. So say the pro-government strategic community and the proponents of the concept of strategic autonomy. The foregoing formulation does not hold water. In fact, it was started by Jawaharal Nehru who had conceived the policy of non-alignment. It was an impractical idea from the world, go. All countries are interdependent, no country could remain non-aligned or isolated. Nehru could not maintain it. In 1956, he criticised the Anglo-French invasion of Suez Canal, but kept quiet on Soviet Union's attack on Hungary the same year. The explanation for such contrasting positions was that Nehru relied on the Russian Veto on Kashmir. But it was Nehru who took an incredible and inexplicable step in taking the Kashmir dispute to the United Nations. The current regime which is super-critical of Nehru on his foreign policy is adopting the same stance of neutrality, middle-of-the

road, and so-called balancing act. Modi is following the same policy of continuing with non-alignment. He even addressed digitally a non-alignment meeting. Admittedly, there has been some change, but no departure from the past on China and Russia. What could India do in the case of invasion of Ukraine? Agree that New Delhi could not suddenly oppose Russia. But some of us have been urging New Delhi to choose the corner, either the democratic world or the authoritarian bloc. India has abstained twice (at the time of writing this article) in the United Nations on Russian invasion with small murmurs against the invasion. New Delhi did not want to offend Russia for their long friendship and the arms trade. If India joined a security bloc with tacit assurance of support for her territorial integrity, India's dependence on Russian arms would have been reduced. If New Delhi actively made friends with Japan and South Korea at the behest of the US, it would not have relied on Chinese material for her economy after China has taken away at least 50,000 square kilometres of our land.

Secondly, the so-called strategic autonomy has cost India billions of dollars in arms purchase affecting her growth and development. India, as a poor and developing country, could have followed the policies adopted by Japan and Germany in reducing the defence budget and built her economy.

Anyway, here we are now. India's option to get out of China-Russia axis, like SCO, or BRICS is limited by the mistakes made by the West. American and NATO leadership should not have seduced Ukraine into joining NATO. New Delhi has a great scope in resolving the impasse and stopping the war. New Delhi is correctly focusing its diplomatic resources in evacuating Indians in Ukraine. It should take two more steps. The Indian leadership should convince Putin that annexing Ukraine or proxy-ruling the country as a vassal state is not an option. Ukraine could be declared as an internationally acknowledged neutral country like Austria and Switzerland are.

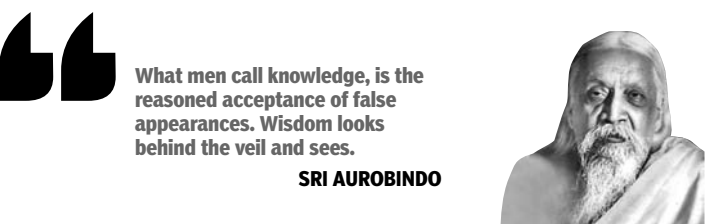
The second step for New Delhi could be, should the first step fail, to differentiate between Putin and Russia. Evidently, many Russians are against the war, and Putin's autocracy has opposition in the country. Putin has violated international laws and the BRICS resolution just six months ago forgoing the use of force. New Delhi could be seen as guilty of complicity unless it finds a way out for Russia or condemns it. New Delhi could establish other channels than Putin to help consolidate democracy in Russia. That will help India also in the long run. In any event India's credibility and capability are challenged at this time of international politics. We wish India succeeds in overcoming those challenges.

The writer is Professor of International Politics, JIMMC. ©INFA



DK Giri

TO PUT IT PITHILY, NEW DELHI'S POSITION VIS-À-VIS THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTING SO FAR



## Imperium of Grievance

Soon after the news of Russia's invasion of Ukraine flashed across my computer screen, I received an email that seemed to mark another milestone in the dismantling of the old global order. Having tickets to attend a Vienna Philharmonic concert at New York's Carnegie Hall, I received a 'Customer Service Announcement' reporting that the Valery Gergiev - described as "a friend and prominent supporter of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia" - would no longer be conducting the orchestra. Many other orchestras have since cut ties with Gergiev as well.

Until the Russian invasion, it was still possible to believe that a full Western "decoupling" from China and Russia was both unlikely and unwise. Yet Gergiev's removal is a metaphor for how the newly confected Sino-Russian axis is catalysing a rift that will now affect everything from cultural exchanges to trade.

After all, until the invasion, many were skeptical that the European Union (especially Germany) would ever get the Russian natural-gas needle out of its arm - especially with the Nord Stream 2 pipeline offering up a fresh vein. Equally, many have wondered how the US could ever kick its addiction to low-cost Chinese-made merchandise now that so many of its own factories have closed.

During the halcyon days of globalisation - when "Davos man" ruled the planet with cheery bromides about win-win-win outcomes - global supply chains seemed to promise boundless benefits for everyone. What was wrong with outsourcing to distant lands if they could make something cheaper and ship it faster? Open markets were touted for their ability to create more open societies. All we had to do was keep trading transnationally, paying no heed to the ideological or political cast of the other country. Thus did the West, and much of the rest of the world, become codependent with Russia (for gas) and China (for rare earths, polysilicon, pharmaceuticals, and old-fashioned consumer goods).

But with Putin invading Ukraine and Chinese President Xi Jinping expressing revanchist attitudes toward Taiwan, we are left to assess not only an upturned world order and a shattered global marketplace, but also the sundering of anodyne cultural exchanges.

What is driving this unexpected and dangerous train wreck? Why would Putin throw Russia's real national interests to the wind by invading a once-fraternal neighbour? What would lead Xi to countenance sacrificing his own people's historic economic miracle for the sake of seizing a flea-shaped island that China hasn't ruled in well over a century? Why have these two latter-day authoritarians indulged such self-destructive urges and alienated so many other important countries, just when the world was becoming so interdependent?

First, it is important to remember that autocrats are far freer to act in unrestrained ways, because they face few if any political checks and balances. Thus, as "supreme" leaders, they can shape policies according to their own characterological disorder without challenges. While Putin and Xi have very different backgrounds and personalities, they share some key traits. Both are deeply insecure, paranoid men who have been shaped by historical narratives of grievance, especially against the "great powers" of the West.

These narratives center around Leninist themes of foreign exploitation, humiliation, and victimisation. They demonise Western democracies as hypocrites and oppressors (as in Lenin's theory of imperialism). And they impute arrogant and disdainful attitudes to the West.

More than anything else, Putin and Xi want respect. Yet they know that most Western leaders do not, and probably never will, respect their authoritarianism - no matter how successful they are in building high-speed rail lines, constructing modern cities, or hosting Olympic Games. It is this respect-deficit syndrome that has created their imperium of resentment and grievance. Putin and Xi recognise that they will never overcome this, regardless of how successfully their foreign, technology, and space policies advance their countries' development, or how much oil and gas they sell to the world. And it does no good to admonish them that gaining respect requires them to behave respectfully, rather than jailing opposition candidates and dissidents, persecuting people for their religious beliefs, bullying other countries with punitive trade policies, and launching invasions. Having drunk the Leninist Kool-Aid of victimisation, Putin and Xi simultaneously want to overthrow the Western order and be esteemed by it.

As such, they are animated by a contradiction that no amount of Western handholding can resolve. Not even the tonic effect of "engagement," sustained through nine US presidential administrations, was enough to overcome China's sense of being the target of constant disapprobation and ideological threat from the world's democracies. Putin and Xi take great umbrage at having to live next door to successful democracies, like Ukraine and Taiwan, comprised of peoples with similar histories, cultures, and ethnicities.

The magnetic force of shared grievance has brought these two former rivals so close that they recently declared there were "no limits" to their partnership. Both insist that it should be up to the people of the country "to decide whether their state is a democratic one." And Putin and Xi claim they are leading a new kind of democracy, never mind that Putin fancies himself a czar, and that Xi's version of governance is a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat."

The question now is whether Russia and China will be able to maintain their opportunistic pact following Putin's decision to go to war. Just before the invasion, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the Munich Security Conference that the "sovereignty" and "territorial integrity" of all countries should be protected, and that "Ukraine is no exception." And Xi subsequently called Putin to explain that, while he understands Russia's security concerns, China still respects the sovereignty of nation-states and intends to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter. After all, the Communist Party of China does not want foreign powers interfering in its own "internal affairs," never mind invading China.

Which of these imperatives will win out? Most likely, China and Russia's shared aversion to liberal democracy (and to the self-righteousness of democratic leaders) will ultimately trump the quaint nineteenth-century idea that national sovereignty is sacred. The narrative of victimisation that is psychologically fueling both countries' nationalism with reservoirs of resentment is simply too powerful to be nullified by the niceties of international law.

The writer is Director of the Center on US-China Relations at the Asia Society. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WISDOM CORNER

- Health is the greatest possession. Contentment is the greatest treasure. Confidence is the greatest friend. Non-being is the greatest joy. LAO TZU
- If you use your mind to study reality, you won't understand either your mind or reality. If you study reality without using your mind, you'll understand both. BODHDHARMA
- By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. CONFUCIUS

### SPECTRUM SUSTAINABILITY

## Governing an ocean of plastics



Raimund Bleischwitz

WHILE THERE ARE PROMISING INNOVATIONS THAT EXTRACT PLASTIC FROM THE OCEAN, THESE PROJECTS WILL BARELY MAKE A DENT IN THE AMOUNT OF PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THE WORLD'S WATERWAYS

Images of plastic pollution in the ocean and on beaches are now commonplace, and the problem is likely to get worse. Last week, the OECD's first Global Plastics Outlook revealed a dramatic increase in the plastic waste leaked into aquatic environments. That report came only a month after the World Wildlife Fund for Nature released a study that projects a doubling of microplastics in the ocean over the next few decades.

While there are promising innovations that extract plastic from the ocean or intercept it in rivers, these projects will barely make a dent in the amount of plastic pollution in the world's waterways. Even under the most optimistic projections, these technologies will affect only 5-10 per cent of all plastic in the ocean. More than 1,000 organisations, including businesses and governments, have signed on to a plan for a new, circular economy for plastics. But this kind of voluntary action also is not enough.

The problem requires a new form of global governance to change the entire production and consumption cycle of fossil-based plastics. The fifth meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) offers a unique forum to turn the tide on marine plastics via legally binding mechanisms.

The international community has already shown its ability to act on serious environmental challenges. The landmark Montreal Protocol of 1987 on substances that

deplete the ozone layer managed to phase out the use of chlorofluorocarbons in only a few years. An international treaty on plastic pollution will require a similar transformation in societies' priorities, based on ocean literacy and a new vision for the blue economy.

An effective international agreement on ocean plastic pollution should account for all aspects of plastics production - from manufacturing to disposal, and it must involve governments, the private sector, and the public. Specifically, a new treaty should address six issues.

First, plastic use must be reduced at all points along the supply chain. Food packaging, particularly take-out containers, is a major source of ocean pollution. Eliminating it will require policy support and funding for the development of novel biodegradable food containers and stronger efforts to encourage reusable packaging.

Second, a new treaty must encourage the growth of the blue economy. Governments should create programmes to promote sustainable, ocean-friendly tourism, fishing, marine renewable energies, and other businesses. Policymakers also must invest in urban-waste and wastewater-management infrastructure that includes resource-recovery options.

Third, the impact of plastic pollution on the marine environment must be regularly assessed and improved. While research suggests that corals have some resilience

to plastic pollution, they face myriad other threats, including ocean heat waves, changes in oxygen levels, and ultraviolet radiation.

More systematic and regular assessments will be needed to understand the long-term consequences for corals and other ocean life. Experience with climate-change governance suggests that a more agile structure than the IPCC is needed to improve response strategies. One option is regular ocean assessments that synthesise findings on key topics and engage with relevant parties.

This leads to the fourth issue that a new treaty on marine plastic pollution must address: an agreement on legal principles for sustainable ocean governance. Given that plastic pollution has multiple sources, establishing proper accountability is essential. Packaging producers, food retailers, delivery platforms, shipping companies, tourism firms, and others must be part of the discussion about such principles. Companies already disclose relevant data on emissions, in accordance with environmental, social, and governance reporting standards. Comparable figures on plastic waste could be included in these frameworks.

Fifth, improvements are needed in waste management and circular-economy systems, particularly in key countries like Indonesia and China. Policy options include extended producer responsibility, landfill taxes, deposit-refund, and pay-

as-you-throw usage pricing. A treaty also should offer support for coastal communities in their efforts to manage plastic waste. New policies could pilot funding schemes for innovative local businesses and plastic recovery options, including incineration facilities with energy recovery.

Lastly, legal principles governing the ocean as part of humanity's common heritage should be developed, going beyond the current scope of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. These principles would enable the ocean to be turned from a dumping ground into a source of global prosperity.

Meanwhile, the private sector must spearhead the change in unsustainable patterns of plastic-waste production and promote new innovations that can replace plastic or reduce its use. Consumer awareness, based on learning tools such as "reflectorics" and curriculum units on marine plastic pollution, will be needed to push these efforts forward.

An international treaty on marine plastic pollution based on ocean literacy, industry transformation, and agreed legal principles would recognise the multiple services provided by the ocean. It is a crucially important step toward a blue new deal that emphasises equality, democracy, and justice.

The writer is Scientific Director at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

### Students in Ukraine

Sir, It came as a surprise to many of us that over 18,000 Indian students are pursuing medical education in Ukraine. This number is very high. This is due to the high fees being charged by private medical colleges in India. The total cost incurred by a student in a 5-year medical course in India is ₹50 lakh to ₹1.50 crore. The government should take action against the mafia operating in the field of medical education, to improve the quality of medical education in the country. Health of a nation is the health of its citizens.

Gopal Mittal, BHUBANESWAR

### Alarming situation

Sir, The Russian military targeting Ukraine's civilian areas has set off alarm bells. Hundreds of innocent civilians have perished, and refugees continue to flee, leaving everything behind in the war-torn eastern European country. Videos emerging from the war theatre show the Russian military shelling schools, kindergartens, hospitals, residential buildings and other critical infrastructure. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has made an impassioned plea to the European leaders to prove their unity and solidarity. Meanwhile, the European Union has taken unprecedented steps, including financing weapons deliveries to Ukraine.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

### Helmet hesitancy

Sir, Helmet hesitancy is nowadays the greatest threat to two-wheeler riders. Not wearing helmets resulted in 44,666 deaths of two-wheeler riders in 2019 in our country. This accounts for 29.82 per cent of total road accident fatalities. A huge number of bikers do not wear a helmet and even if they wear a lot of the helmets are of poor quality. This indicates that safety is not high on the agenda of two-wheeler riders. Many riders sincerely carry the helmets along with them but by securely hanging them from the handle, rear side, sideways, near the legs, or carry in their hands while riding. Some of those who do not wear helmet or have it in their vehicle do not hesitate to tamper with their vehicle registration number using tapes, plastic covers. Some are going to the extent of using fake number plates to escape from the eyes of CCTV cameras. As the World Health Organisation says: "Just correct helmet use could reduce the risk of fatal injuries by 42 per cent and head injuries by 69 per cent."

K Ravi, BHUBANESWAR

# national

## of the day quote

I had promised that the rule of mafia will end in Uttar Pradesh, and in five years, all mafia have been finished. Atiq Ansari and Mukhtar Ansari are in jail under the Yogi Adityanath government. It will not be the same if the SP comes to power in UP and such elements will be released

AMIT SHAH | HOME MINISTER

We oppose NEET. It is a trap to suffocate students and fill somebody else's coffers. We will end it. Is it being treacherous to question NEET? I don't know how to react to the statement of Higher Education Minister CN Ashwath Narayan

HD KUMARASWAMY | FORMER KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

Talks will be held with the Central government and some way would be found to resolve this issue. Last time also we had got tractors excluded from the NGT policy

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Picnic tragedy claims 4 lives

**Palghar:** In a tragic incident, 4 teens, including 3 from Nashik on a picnic, drowned at the Kelve Beach while trying to rescue a 13-year-old boy who was being swept away in strong currents of a whirlpool during high tide, here Thursday, police said. One 17-year-old boy, Abhilekh Devare, who was also sucked in by the swirling waters, but could swim, was pulled ashore with a rope thrown by a local tongawala (cart owner), said an official. The 3 victims were part of a 39-strong group of junior college students, including 11 girls, accompanied by 5 teachers, who arrived here in a tourist bus for a day's picnic at the picturesque Kelve Beach, when the tragedy struck.

### 4 killed in road crash

**Gurugram:** Four restaurant workers were killed after a speeding car ramed into their bikes while they were returning home from work Thursday morning, police said. One of them, who delivered food for the restaurant, also worked for Swiggy, they said, adding that the driver of the car, who was allegedly drunk, has been nabbed and sent to judicial custody.

### J'khand govt tables Budget

**Ranchi:** Aiming at fuelling growth, the JMM-led Jharkhand government Thursday unveiled a Rs 1.01-lakh crore budget for the 2022-23 fiscal, with higher spending on sectors like health and infrastructure. The budget also proposed a massive 59 per cent jump in capital expenditure to Rs 24,827.70 crore. "... Capital expenditure is essential for the development of the state and in view of this, there is a proposal to increase the capital expenditure by 59 per cent," Finance Minister Rameshwar Oraon said in the assembly while presenting the budget. Revenue expenditure is pegged at Rs 76,273.30 crore.

### Man kills father

**Panaji:** A 34-year-old man killed his father, after attacking him with an iron rod, after blaming the latter for rejecting marriage proposals, police said Thursday. The accused Rajesh Gaonkar has been arrested under section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code, Deputy Superintendent of Police in-charge of Ponda sub district Chetan Patil told reporters.



In UP, people have come out to listen to me in large numbers everywhere. In western UP, during the first two rounds of elections, it was very cold, even then, people had come out to listen to me

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

## UNIQUE TREND

Setting a new trend in public outreach, newly-appointed Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Pandey Thursday issued a public message and shared his personal mobile numbers on social media, soliciting peoples' cooperation for better policing



## Nawab Malik's ED custody extended



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, March 3:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) was left red-faced before a special court when the agency conceded of a "typographical" error in an earlier remand note in which it had mentioned that the amount allegedly paid by Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik to underworld don Malik had been arrested February 23 following extensive interrogation

## Dawood Ibrahim's sister as Rs 55 lakh instead of Rs 5 lakh.

After the ED accepted the mistake, the court extended Malik's remand till March 7. During the hearing, the agency conceded that there was a mistake in its earlier remand plea which had alleged that Malik paid Rs 55 lakh to late Haseena Parkar, Ibrahim's sister, and it should be read as Rs 5 lakh. Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh also clarified that the figure of Rs 55 lakh mentioned in the first remand application was a "typographical error" and should be read as Rs 5 lakh. The minister was produced before Special Judge for Prevention of Money Laundering Act R N Rokade after his first ED remand ended. Seeking his further custody, the ED told the court that Malik had allegedly occupied a property in suburban Kuria.

## Fresh rules for vehicles

**New Delhi:** The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a draft rule mandating the vehicles to display their fitness certificate and registration mark. According to the draft rule, the vehicle owners will have to display the fitness certificate and the validity of the registration mark in a prescribed manner on the vehicles. As per the rules, the fitness certificate should be displayed in the 'DD-MM-YYYY' format. For heavy and medium goods or passenger vehicles, and light motor vehicles, the certificate has to be displayed on the upper edge of the left side of the wind screen. Similarly, for auto-rickshaw, e-rickshaw, e-cart, and quadricycle, it has to be displayed on the upper edge of the left side of the wind screen, if fitted. In case of Motor cycle, it has to be exhibited on the conspicuous part of the vehicle.

# 92% Cov deaths in '22 due to lack of vaccinations: ICMR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, March 3:** Unvaccinated individuals account for 92 per cent of Covid deaths in India so far this year, the government said Thursday, while asserting the country is in a "vaccine-protected low coronavirus phase" now and it is "rational" to open schools, colleges, and normal affairs of society while taking necessary precautions.

He also said that India is the second country which is having a vaccine tracker. At a press briefing on current Covid situation in the country, the ICMR chief, about vaccine effectiveness in mortality prevention, said that the first dose is responsible for 98.9 per cent vaccine effectiveness, and if both doses are given, then it is 99.3 per cent effective.

He said that vaccines development, deployment, and impact have been scientifically measured. About the vaccine development, he said that two different approaches - leveraging India's scientific prowess and leveraging international sciences - were undertaken. Elaborating on the first, he said that research and development, product development, and large clinical trials were undertaken to develop two indigenous vaccines - one a whole virus vaccine and second a DNA vaccine, resulting into Covaxin and ZyCoV-D.

"Under the second approach, we had technology transfer, bridging studies, and augment Production which resulted into the development of four vaccines - Covishield,



Covovax, Corbevax and Sputnik V," Dr Bhargava said.

About Covaxin's development, the ICMR chief said that prelin-

ical studies were done on small animals like monkeys to establish the safety, immunity and dosage of vaccines.

About vaccine effectiveness, he said that the impact has been measured and shows high vaccination has reduced morbidity and mortality.

The National Database which combines three databases - CoWIN, ICMR Testing and India Portal Database has data of total 94,47,09,598 individuals. Among them 15,39,37,796 are partially vaccinated, 73,98,46,222 are fully vaccinated and 5,09,25,580 are still unvaccinated, he said.

India experienced considerably lower numbers of deaths due to vaccine deployment, vaccine acceptance and wide scale coverage, he added.

# Several students still stranded in Kharkiv

STUDENTS HAVE ALMOST 'RUN OUT' OF FOOD AND ESSENTIALS

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 3:** A day after the Indian government asked citizens to "immediately" leave the war-hit Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, several students are still stranded there, desperately waiting to get to a safe zone as the Russian onslaught on the eastern Ukrainian city continued.

As fighting intensified in Kharkiv, India had Wednesday asked its nationals to leave the second-largest Ukrainian city urgently to three nearby places "even on foot", while Russia promised to create "humanitarian corridors" for evacuation of Indians from the conflict zones.

However, the students claimed they are still struggling to get out to safety.

"Just because the night passed and we survived does not mean the struggle is over for us. We are far from being in a safe zone. We did start walking but the railway stations were flooded with people and still haven't been able to board a train," said Firdaus Tarannum, an Indian medical student in Kharkiv.

"We are in a shelter at Pischyn near Kharkiv. We have no blankets and are left with almost no food. We started walking immediately after the advisory by government. I hope they arrange buses for us soon and we can be out of here," said Rehyam Khan, a first-year medical student.

The Indian embassy in Ukraine Thursday advised all Indian nationals in Kharkiv to fill up an on-line form on an urgent basis.

"By grace of God, we are still safe... Very very tough day we had yesterday. Only God saved all of us. We are in Pischyn where no food is available. Students who took train are desperately waiting to reach a safe zone while many are still stranded," said Pragun, another student.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday said the pace



Look what is happening right now. There is a war underway in Ukraine and Modi is doing meetings here (in Uttar Pradesh). What is important? Isn't bringing back our Indian students important?

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

## Govt seeking publicity: Cong

**New Delhi:** The Congress Thursday attacked the government and alleged that it is seeking publicity over the humanitarian crisis due to the war in Ukraine. Congress Deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi said, "It's a pity to see that the humanitarian duty of the government of India towards its citizens has become a self-seeking publicity drive for their supreme leader. The scripted speeches and the flashlight of a dozen cameras debate what is essential public service." Congress leader Rahul Gandhi too said that it is the duty of the government and is not a favour. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Thursday said that all members of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) gave strong and unanimous support to the government for its efforts to bring back all the Indians from Ukraine.

of India's evacuation operation from Ukraine is accelerating and about 1,000 Indians have left Kharkiv to nearby Pischyn pursuant to its advisory a day ago.

"Still more than 1000 students stuck in Kharkiv Oblast. No Indian govt aid yet, not even a piece of bread. Is this the punishment you are giving for choosing small country to pursue our dreams?" tweeted Pooja Prahraj, a student coordinator in Kharkiv.

Russia on Wednesday said it is working "intensely" to create a "humanitarian corridor" for safe passage to Russian territory of Indian

nationals stuck in Kharkiv. Somy and other conflict zones in Ukraine following a request from New Delhi.

Asked when the "humanitarian corridors" will be activated, Alipov said he hoped they would be in place as "soon as possible". Russia launched its attack on Ukraine last Thursday.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, nearly 17,000 Indian nationals have left Ukraine's borders since advisories were issued over a fortnight back.

An estimated 20,000 Indian nationals, mainly medical students, reside in Ukraine.

## India 'missing' 25.87mn hectare forests: CSE analysis

**Nimil (Rajasthan):** India is "missing" 25.87 million hectares (Ha) of forests - combined together, the area would be equivalent to Uttar Pradesh - which is a result of the difference between recorded forest and the forest cover as per official data, Centre for Science & Environment (CSE) analysis showed Thursday. The CSE analysis was based on the India State of Forest Report 2021 (ISFR2021) published a few weeks ago. "The State of the Forest Report does not explain what is the state of this forest land that India is 'missing' - as massive as 25.87 million Ha. This is the difference between what is 'recorded' as forest area and the actual forest cover on that recorded area. The recorded forest area is 77.53 million Ha but the forest cover on these lands is 51.66 million Ha. Which clearly means that as much as 34 per cent of the area classified as forests is missing in the assessment," CSE Director General Sunita Narain said. Nowhere in the whole report is it explained, "where is this difference of 25.87 million Ha?" she said. As, off the record, a very senior forest official told her that 11 million Ha is accounted for, including 3 million Ha is encroached, 1 million Ha is inside villages and 2 million Ha is diverted.

## SURVIVAL GUIDELINES

# India warns its stranded nationals of aerial attacks

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 3:** India's Defence Ministry Thursday issued survival guidelines for Indian nationals stranded in Ukraine, especially Kharkiv, while warning them of aerial raids and drone attacks.

"Here are the sentences in Russian: 'Ya student iz Indii (I am a student from India)', 'Ya nekombatant (I am a non-combatant)', 'Pazhalusta Pamaгите (please, help me)'," the ministry said in advisory for Indian nationals in Ukraine's Kharkiv about potentially dangerous and difficult situations to be expected.

This advisory, prepared by the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, warns about aerial raids, missile attacks, artillery shelling, small arms and gun-fire, grenade explosions and 'Molotov cocktails', including by local people/militia.

It also warned of building collapse, falling debris, internet jamming, lack of electricity and food and water, exposure to freezing temperature, psychological trauma, feeling of panic, injuries and lack of medical support, as well as lack of transportation,



The ministry told stranded Indian citizens to learn a few sentences in Russian language, such as telling people they were students from India

and coming face-to-face with armed fighters and military personnel. Providing round rules and things to do, it asked nationals to compile and share information with fellow Indians, remain mentally strong and do not panic.

"Organise yourselves in small groups/squads of ten Indian students/within that organise a buddy/pair system/nominate a coordinator and a deputy coordinator in each group of ten persons," said the ministry advisory, adding that their presence and whereabouts must always be known to their buddy and small group coordinator.

The ministry also told Indian nationals make a Whatsapp group, compile details, names, address, mobile numbers and contacts in India and share geolocation on WhatsApp with control rooms in the Embassy or in New Delhi.

## FOR A REASON



Students and members of Gandhi Mandela Foundation light candles during a peace march over the Russia-Ukraine conflict at Jantar Mantar

# Women faced more job losses, violence during Covid: Lancet

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi/New York, March 3:** Covid-19 has caused major disruptions in all aspects of life, and women have experienced negative social and economic impacts to a greater extent than men, threatening to reverse progress towards gender equality, according to new research.

In the study, published in The Lancet, women reported higher rates of employment loss (26 per cent compared to 20 per cent of

men), and school dropouts (women 1.21 times more likely to leave education than men), as an indirect result of the pandemic.

The perception of gender-based violence also increased with women 1.23 times more likely to report an increase than men by September 2021 compared to men.

"This study provides the first comprehensive global evidence on gender disparities for a wide range of health-related, social, and economic indicators throughout the pandemic," said Professor



In the study, published in The Lancet, women reported higher rates of employment loss (26% compared to 20% of men), and school dropouts (women 1.21 times more likely to leave education than men), as an indirect result of the pandemic

Emmanuela Gakidou, from Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, at University of Washington, US.

"The evidence suggests that Covid-19 has tended to exacerbate previously existing social and economic disparities rather than create new inequalities," Gakidou added.

The researchers noted that action must be taken now to not only reverse the current disparities, but to further close the gaps present before the pandemic began.

The authors analysed publicly

available data sets from 193 countries using surveys taken from March 2020 to September 2021 that reported on health and well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Further the researchers also reported vaccine hesitancy and access to health services varied by region. However by September 2021, there was no significant difference in reported vaccine hesitancy between men and women globally, although regional variations did exist, particularly between high- and low-income countries.

# HC orders development of Amaravati as capital

With nine theme cities, and 27 townships, Amaravati on the banks of Krishna river was planned in an area of 217 square km as a world-class city

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati, March 3:** In a setback to Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government's plans to develop three state capitals, the Andhra Pradesh High Court Thursday directed it to complete implementation of Amaravati capital city master plan in six months.

The court also asked the government to hand over developed plots with all basic amenities to farmers within three months. The government was also asked not to alienate lands in Amaravati for any work other than development of state capital.

It also made it clear that the Assembly has no powers to make laws on state capitals. A bench of three judges headed by Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra pronounced the judgment on 75 petitions filed by Amaravati farmers and others challenging the government's move for trifurcation of state capital.

The court directed the government to keep it informed about the development works taken up as per capital city master plan.

Counsel of one of the petitioners told media persons that the bench directed the government not to shift any office from Amaravati as the earlier interim order in this regard will remain in force.

The government was directed to pay Rs 50,000 each to the petitioners towards legal costs.



## TDP hails order

Andhra Pradesh's main opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Thursday hailed the High Court verdict on Amaravati as the state capital. The TDP Politburo meeting, presided over by party President and former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, discussed the High Court's latest verdict and described it as a big blow to the 3 capitals plan of the Jagan Mohan Reddy government. Briefing media about the decisions of the Politburo, former minister Kalva Srinivasulu said by directing the government to implement the CRDA Act, the court has upheld the merit and value of the Act passed by the previous government. It welcomed the court's decision to review the future progress of capital city works.

The Andhra Pradesh government Nov 22, 2021 repealed two laws enacted last year to create three state capitals but announced that it will come out with a new comprehensive legislation.

The Assembly passed Andhra Pradesh Decentralization and Inclusive Development of all Regions Repeal Bill 2021. The Bill repealed the Andhra Pradesh Decentralization and Inclusive Development of all Regions Act 2020 and the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region development Authority Repeal Act 2020 Act.

The government, however, had made it clear that it had not gone back on the decision to have administrative, legislative and judicial capitals at Visakhapatnam, Amaravati and Kurnool respectively.

The development had come as the High Court was to resume hearing on a batch of petitions challenging the two legislations made in 2020.

After coming to power in 2019, the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) had reversed the decision of the previous TDP government to develop Amaravati as the only state capital. This had triggered massive protest from farmers of Amaravati, who had given 33,000 acres of land for the capital and were hoping to reap its economic benefits.

# Premature deaths: Far & wide impact of CSTPS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, March 3:** A study on the adverse impact of air pollution due to thermal power plant at Chandrapur in Maharashtra has estimated that there are several premature deaths happening not just around it but also very far from it.

The residents from Chandrapur and Nagpur are suffering significant health impacts from air pollution caused by the 2,920 MW coal powered Chandrapur Super Thermal Power Station (CSTPS) units in Chandrapur, 150 km from Nagpur.

A comprehensive air pollution health impact modelling conducted by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) - 'Health impacts of Chandrapur coal-based power plant, Maharashtra' - estimates that the air pollution from the operation of units at Chandrapur Super Thermal Power Station (CSTPS) has resulted in 85 premature deaths in Chandrapur, 62 pre-



## AIR POLLUTION

ture deaths in Nagpur, 45 in Yavatmal, 30 in Mumbai, 29 premature deaths in Pune and Nanded each during 2020 among several other cities in central India, which has been the worst impacted.

This independent assessment by CREA, which comes a little over a month after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) observed clear vi-

olations of air quality and other norms by the CSTPS in its recent order from January 2022. Among several other directions, the NGT had directed a health impact assessment study to assess the damage caused by the power station.

Findings showed that the effects of ambient air pollution coming from CSTPS resulted in respira-

tory among other health illnesses, which led to 34,000 sick leave days in Chandrapur and 30,000 days of absenteeism in Nagpur in 2020. This shows how the productivity of people from these two cities is being compromised due to the impact of thermal power plant emissions, said Sunil Dahiya, an analyst at CREA and one of the authors of the report.

The operation at CSTPS resulted in the emission of high pollutant load 4,724 tonnes of particulate matter emissions, 1,03,010 tons of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), 28,417 tons of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and 1,322 kgs of mercury in 2020.

The operation of the CSTPS in 2020 alone contributed to more than eight lakh sick leave days, approximately 1,900 asthma emergency room visits, of which over 800 were children, deaths of at least 1,300 people, and 1,800 preterm births across central India at 78 per cent PLF (Plant Load Factor - the ratio of average power generated by the plant to the maximum power that could have been generated in a given time), according to the study.

## UP IN SMOKE



Smoke rises after a fire broke out at Zakaria Industrial Estate in Byculla area in Mumbai, Thursday

## LOCAL BODY POLLS

# SC rejects Maha govt report on OBC quota

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, March 3:** The Supreme Court Thursday directed the Maharashtra government and the State Election Commission (SEC) not to act upon the interim report of Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission to reserve seats for Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the upcoming local bodies election.

A bench, headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar, said the election should be conducted without the OBC reservation. It also pulled up the Commission over its report, and declined to accept its argument that there is sufficient data to reserve the seats. The bench, also comprising Justice CT Ravikumar, said, "Where is the logic? There is not even a single logic given."

As senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, representing the Maharashtra government, submitted that the Commission may be able to justify the recommendation to reserve the seats, the bench wondered did it rely on the same data, which looked contentious to the court earlier.

The top court said it cannot allow the Maharashtra government to move with such an interim report. It declined to accept the Commission's recommendation to restore 27 per cent reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the local body elections, noting that the report did not

comply with an earlier Supreme Court direction, under which the Commission was required to conduct research before proposing any suggestions. The bench emphasised that the report filed by the Commission must stand the test of judicial scrutiny, and there should be more authentic data.

It said there is no date on the report and how it could know whether it was prepared with full understanding or not. If this is how a Commission will work, then we doubt the recommendations of the Commission.

Citing that report was not in compliance with its earlier order, the bench said, "We direct all the concerned not to act upon the recommendation." However, it permitted the Commission to continue with its exercise to study the empirical data local-body wise and submit its interim report.

In December last year, the top court stayed the implementation of the 27 per cent quota, as it did not comply with the triple test principle laid down by the apex court. The Maharashtra government introduced the quota through an ordinance in 2021. The Commission was asked to prepare a report on OBC reservation in local body elections. The top court directed the SEC to notify the election process for the gram panchayats in accordance with its orders passed in December 2021 and in January 2022, against the implementation of the OBC quota.



## First time in 2 yrs

# No Covid death in Maharashtra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, March 3:** In a significant development, Maharashtra recorded zero Covid-19 death - first time since April 1, 2020 - emboldening the state government to announce easing of curbs in 14 districts, including Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, from Friday (March 4), as per an official notification.

For the first time in two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, the state entered the Green Zone as far as fatalities are concerned but recorded 544 new patients, besides 38 Omicron cases during the day, while active cases stood at 5,643.

The cumulative Covid-19 cases recorded in the state now touched 78,66,924, and the total fatalities recorded are 143,706, besides 4,771 Omicron patients - all highest in the country - but the day's developments spread cheer among the health authorities

For the first time in two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, the state entered the Green Zone as far as fatalities are concerned

ious parameters including the percentage of vaccination, positivity rate, bed occupancy with or without oxygen or ICU beds.

In the 14 districts, the government has allowed resumption of physical classes in all academic institutions, from pre-primary to university levels, but they will be encouraged to leverage a hybrid model of imparting education through online-offline methods.

Work From Home will no longer be mandatory as all government, private, industries, scientific institutions can now function with full attendance.

Similarly, all social, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural, religious, political, festivals, marriages and funerals will be allowed up to 50 percent capacity, but if the attendance is over 1,000 people, the nod of the District Disaster Management Authority will be required.

All deliveries, e-commerce, couriers have been permitted in the 14 districts, and restrictions on intra-district and inter-state travel for the fully vaccinated persons have been lifted, and the others would require valid negative RTPCR test reports.



# Amid heckling by MVA & BJP, Guv 'walks out' of Legislature

The incident resulted in a bitter brawl between the MVA-BJP, each blaming the other for the Governor's sudden departure from the House amid uproarious scenes

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, March 3:** In an unprecedented development, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari 'walked out' of the state Legislature without completing his customary address to the joint House amid heckling by members of both the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi and Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party here Thursday.

Soon after reaching the Legislature for the customary inaugural of the Budget Session, the Governor rose to deliver his



speech, but ruling MVA legislators from the Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress raised slogans against him for his recent utterances against the warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and on the child-marriage of social reformers Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Savitri Phule.

At this the Opposition BJP members raised slogans at the MVA demanding the resignation of Minority Affairs Minister Nawab Malik, who was arrested last month by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in an alleged money-laundering case arising

out of a land deal with mafia links. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and other leaders attempted to placate the agitated members, but the ruckus continued.

Amid the continuing fracas by both sides a few minutes into his speech, the Governor placed his speech copy on the podium and quietly walked away without completing his much-awaited address or waiting for the National Anthem.

Irate MVA members termed Koshyari's step as "an insult" to the Legislature, the National Anthem, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Mahatma Jyotirao and Savitri Phule, and some demanded his immediate resignation. Hitting back, the BJP Leaders of Opposition alleged that the MVA government was attempting to protect a 'mafia-tainted minister' and they would not rest till Malik quit his post.

# Protesting for 800 days, Amaravati farmers erupt in joy

RAISING SLOGANS OF 'JAI AMARAVATI', THE FARMERS BURST CRACKERS AND DISTRIBUTED SWEETS TO HAIL THE COURT ORDER

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati, March 3:** Amaravati erupted in celebrations Thursday after Andhra Pradesh High Court pronounced its judgment on petitions challenging Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government's decision to create three state capitals.

Raising slogans of 'Jai Amaravati', farmers of the region burst crackers and distributed sweets to hail the court order.

Farmers and women, who have been agitating for over 800 days, welcomed the judgment as victory of truth and justice. A group of women bowed down to thank the judiciary



for upholding the justice.

Over 200 people have lost their lives in this protest due to a wrong decision by the government. At least now, the government should shed its arrogance and resume developing Amaravati as the only state capital, one of the women said.

Farmers said the court verdict has come as a big relief for them as they were losing hopes of getting justice. They demanded that the

area of 217 square km as a world-class city.

After coming to power in 2019, Jagan Mohan Reddy declared that Amaravati, a Rs 2 lakh crore project, was not his priority.

Later, Jagan Mohan Reddy announced that Visakhapatnam will be developed as administrative capital and Kurnool as judicial capital while Amaravati will serve as only legislative capital.

This triggered massive protest from farmers in 29 villages of Amaravati, who had given 33,000 acres of land for the capital and were hoping to reap its economic benefits. The government's decision had shattered dreams of 24,000 farmers who had voluntarily given lands ranging from half-an-acre to 50 acres.

For every acre of cultivable land the farmers were promised 1000 square yards of residential plot and 250 square yards of commercial plot with all the infrastructure. Almost all the farmers received the allotment papers but their dreams of owning developed plots remained on paper with the

Jagan Mohan Reddy government respect the court order and implement it without challenging it in the Supreme Court.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone for Amaravati October 22, 2015. Then Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu had grand plans to develop the capital.

With nine theme cities, and 27 townships, Amaravati on the banks of Krishna river was planned in an

change of guard. They were also promised Rs 50,000 annuity per acre with an annual hike of 10 per cent.

On July 31, 2020, Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan signed the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) Repeal Bill 2020 and Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill 2020, paving the way for trifurcation of the state capital.

The repeal of the APCRDA, which was created for development of Amaravati as the state capital, had led to formation of the Amaravati Metropolitan Region Development Authority (AMRDA).

Several farmers moved the High Court challenging the two Bills on the ground that they were not passed in accordance with the rules.

Even as more than 75 petitions were being heard by the high court, the government in November last year repealed the two laws but made it clear that it has not gone back on its decision to develop three capitals.



# national

of the **quote**

Make in India is the need of the hour. Today, the world is looking at India as a manufacturing powerhouse

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

The MVA government is devoted to Dawood Ibrahim. There are enough documents to prove Nawab Malik's links with Dawood

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA LEADER OF OPPOSITION

If a Chief Minister (Mamata Banerjee) cannot be given proper security in the (Lok Sabha) constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, then we can well understand the situation in other parts of the country under BJP rule. This is an insult to a woman

TRINANKUR BHATTACHARYA | TMC STATE PRESIDENT

**SHORT TAKES**

**Widespread rain & snow likely in J&K**

**Srinagar:** Cloudy weather with light rain and snow occurred in J&K and Ladakh Thursday as the Meteorological (MeT) department forecast widespread moderate to heavy rain and snow during the next 24 hours. An official of the MeT department said, "Moderate to heavy rain/snow is likely to occur in J&K and Ladakh during the next 24 hours." Srinagar had 4.6, Pahalgam 0.5 and Gulmarg minus 4.4 degrees Celsius as the minimum temperature. Drass town of Ladakh had minus 11.7, Leh minus 4.6 and Kargil minus 9.0 as the night's lowest temperature.

**Hyd: Student dies in school**

**Hyderabad:** In a shocking incident, a Class 10 student died during a scuffle with two classmates. The 16-year-old succumbed after allegedly being hit by two other boys during a petty fight in a classroom of a private school in Hyderabad Wednesday. The incident occurred at Sai Krupa High School in Yousufguda during lunch break when the students in a classroom were busy playing cricket with a ball using papers rolled into a ball. According to police, an argument broke out between the victim and two other boys after they threw a paper ball on him. Two students pounced on him and rained blows.

**Five killed in road mishap**

**Gurugram:** Five people were killed in an accident Thursday along the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway, police said. The accident took place at around 3 a.m. between a Celerio car and a truck near Binola village. Police said the five victims, all male, in the car were travelling towards Rajasthan. They hailed from Rajasthan as per the car's registration details.

**Constable shoots self**

**Chennai:** A 26-year-old Constable with the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) shot himself dead at the rest room at the Chennai International Airport Thursday. The deceased constable, Yashpal was a native of Rajasthan and police on preliminary inquiry said that it was a case of suicide and that the actual reason for his death was not known. Police said that Yashpal fired from his Self-Loading Rifle (SLR) on his forehead and died on the spot. He was on duty at the departure terminal. He had joined the CISF service in 2017.

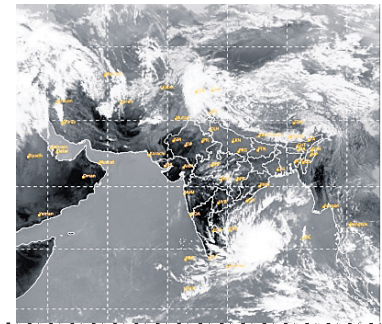


Unemployment, inflation and social unrest are key issues before the country today. Due to this, restlessness and anger is increasing among the youth, which is a big problem in itself. Far from the solution, the PM does not even talk about them

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

**MORE RAINS LIKELY IN TN, SURROUNDINGS: IMD**

The depression over southwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining Equatorial Indian Ocean Thursday is likely to intensify into a deep depression during next 24 hours bringing in thundershowers and more rains over Tamil Nadi coastal areas



# 'ENSURE NO VIAL OF COV VAX IS WASTED'



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 3:** The Centre has asked all states and Union Territories to ensure that no vial of Covid-19 vaccine is wasted in hospitals.

In a letter to states and UTs, Health Ministry's additional secretary Vikas Sheel said that the instruction was in reference to the issue of vaccines available at private vaccination centres that were nearing their expiry date.

"Earlier also the directions have been issued to specific States of West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra," the letter further reads. The letter was issued to the states and UTs February 23.

"In this regard, it is reiterated to all the States/UTs that the MoHFW has no objection for the States/UTs to consider of near expiry vaccine vials of private CVCs with long

expiry vaccine vials available with government CVCs after due diligence. Kindly ensure that no vials of Covid vaccine in government CVCs as well as in private CVCs should be wasted," the letter added.

As per the ministry's report, over 15.19 crore balance and unutilised Covid vaccine doses are still available with the states and UTs as on Thursday morning. The additional secretary also said that the provision of these exchanged vaccines is available on CoWIN.

With the administration of over 21 lakh Covid vaccine doses in the last 24 hours, India's Covid inoculation coverage has reached 178 crore as of Thursday morning, the ministry said. This has been achieved through 2,05,41,983 sessions.

At 6,561, India's daily Covid cases marginally declined. In the last 24 hrs, total 142 new Covid re-

**PC SUSPECTS DEATH NUMBERS**

**NEW DELHI:** Citing the academic journal Science, Congress leader P Chidambaram Thursday said the official number of deaths due to Covid-19 in the country is suspect. The reputed journal estimates that the Covid toll in India between "1-6-2020 and 1-7-2021 was 3,200,000 - eight times the official death toll of 400,000", Chidambaram said on Twitter. "Of these deaths, 2,700,000 occurred in the months of April, May and June 2021," he added. The former Union minister said India has 638,365 villages. "The Government's figures suggest that the average number of deaths per village was less than one! Unbelievable! "Add the number of deaths in towns and cities. The official number is suspect," the Congress leader said.

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 3:** The Supreme Court Thursday asked Attorney General K K Venugopal to use his "good office" in helping evacuate some Indian medical students stranded in war-ravaged Ukraine near the Romania border.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana said earlier in the day, when the plea was mentioned for urgent hearing, it sympathised with the stranded students and asked can the court direct the head of the state to stop the war: "Please tell us what can the court do? Can we direct the President (of Russia) to stop the war," said the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and Hima Kohli, and asked the counsel for petitioner Fathima Ahana who is stranded in Ukraine to wait inside the courtroom till the time Venugopal appears in court. The bench took note of the submissions of Ahana's lawyer that several students are stuck near the Romanian border in freezing cold and the government is not running flights from Romania. "There are 1,000 students like this. But some have come here. We cannot say 'no'. Please use your good offices and do something," the bench told Venugopal, who, in turn, apprised that the Prime Minister has sent one minister to Romania. Venugopal said the Prime Minister has also talked to the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine



and discussed this aspect.

"Flights are being operated from Poland and Hungary and not from Romania. The students, who also include many girls, are stuck without any facility," the lawyer told the bench. "We have all sympathies with them. But what can the court do," the bench said.

It, however, asked the top law officer to consider extending help to the stranded students. Venugopal asked whether students have crossed the Ukraine border and entered Romania. Senior advocate A M Dar, appearing for the student, said that they are still in Ukraine and have not crossed over to Romania.

In the plea, filed through lawyer Abhay Anand Jena, Ahana has sought a direction to the Ministry of External Affairs to secure permission for her and other stranded students to cross the check point in Moldova from Ukraine enroute to Romania for boarding the Air India evacuation flight.

**SIXTH PHASE OF UP POLLS**

**28% criminal candidates in final phase**

AGENCIES

**Lucknow, March 3:** The seventh and final phase of Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh has 28 per cent criminal candidates.

According to an analysis report released by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), out of 607 candidates in the final phase, 170 candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

Of these, 131 candidates have serious criminal cases against them. The Samajwadi Party is again leading the list of criminal candidates with 26 out of 45 candidates having a criminal background. The BJP has 26 such candidates out of a total of 47 and the BSP has 20 out of 52.

The Congress has fielded 20 criminal candidates out of 54 and 8 out of 47 candidates are from AAP.

Eleven candidates have declared cases related to crime against women and two have cases related to rape (IPC Section-376).

**53.31% TURNOUT TILL 5 PM:** Over 53 per cent voter turnout was registered till 5 p.m. in the sixth phase of the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls, the Election Commission of India said Thursday.

The Election Commission also said that 53.31 per cent of voter turnout figure was an approximate trend as the data from some polling stations takes time to reach.

# India accuses China's Huawei of tax evasion

REUTERS

**New Delhi, March 3:** An Indian tax investigation into China's Huawei Technologies has found the telecoms equipment maker manipulated account books to reduce its taxable income in the country, an Indian government source told Reuters Thursday. Without naming the company, India's Ministry of Finance said a major telecoms group did not account for income of 4 billion rupees (\$52 million) in its books, and showed expenses of 4.8 billion rupees that the firm failed to justify.

A Huawei (HWT:UL) spokesperson in India did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The government allegations follow raids by its income tax authorities last month at Huawei's office premises in New Delhi, neighbouring Gurugram and tech hub Bengaluru. The residences of senior executives were raided too, read more The finance ministry

said more investigations were in process. The move comes amid escalating tensions between India and China following a border clash in 2020 between the neighbouring nations. In February, India blocked access to 54 mobile apps mostly of Chinese origin, citing security concerns. read more

Globally, Huawei has been at the centre of a campaign by the United States, which has asked allies to exclude the company from their 5G networks over spying concerns. The company has denied it is a security risk. In India, the government overlooked Huawei when it named foreign network equipment suppliers allowed to carry out 5G trials in what is one of the world's biggest markets by number of mobile phone users.

Huawei has also been hobbled by trade restrictions imposed by the US administration on the sale of chips and other components used in its network gear and smartphones businesses.



**GEARING UP:** Workers start making gular ahead of the upcoming festival of Holi in Mathura

PTI PHOTO

# UKRAINE CRISIS IAF avoids Pak airspace to bring nationals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, March 3:** Under 'Operation Ganga', the Indian Air Force has avoided the Pakistan airspace to bring back stranded Indian nationals from countries bordering Ukraine as the war entered eighth day. The Indian Air Force till Thursday brought 798 citizens from Hungary, Poland and Romania. The force had sent four C-17 transport aircraft on Wednesday to bring back the Indian nationals who had

crossed the Ukraine border.

All four transport aircraft returned with the 798 citizens to the Hindon airbase in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad bordering Delhi on Thursday early morning.

The force has also sent three more aircraft to bring another lot of stranded citizens. The Air Force was called in to augment the commercial flights.

About avoiding the Pakistan airspace, a military source said that the decision was taken by the gov-



ernment not to take any military favour from Islamabad. What it costs is an additional around 30 minutes of travel.

"To fly military aircraft from any nation's airspace, there is a requirement of various permissions from that country so it was decided to avoid it," source said.

The same aircraft was used to evacuate Indian nationals from Afghanistan after the Taliban took over in August last year. Under Operation Ganga, India has sent 15 aircraft, both commercial and military, till Wednesday. A total 15 more aircraft are also scheduled to land in India on Thursday.

# 93% Indians live in below air quality areas: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi/New York, March 3:** A whopping 93 per cent of Indians live in areas where air pollution levels exceed WHO standards, according to a global report.

The report revealed that life expectancy in India, as a result, has been shortened by about 1.5 years. The findings by Health Effects Institute (HEI) in Washington, US, is part of its annual State of Global Air annual analysis for 2020.

The study showed that with an average annual population-weighted PM2.5 of 83 microgram/cubic metre (mg/cu) in 2019, as many as 9,79,700 deaths in India can be attributed to PM 2.5.

It showed that almost 100 per cent of the world's population lived in areas where the PM2.5 levels

exceeded WHO recommendations - which is average annual PM2.5 exposure levels of 5 mg/cu.

On average, more than 40 per cent of the world's population lives in areas where ozone levels exceeded the least stringent WHO interim target in 2019.

Globally, India ranks ninth highest population exposure to ozone (98 per cent), following countries like Congo, Ethiopia, Germany, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey taking the top eight positions and China ranking 10th.

"Air pollution is a leading risk factor for deaths and disability around the world; in 2019 alone, exposure to air pollution was linked to 6.7 million deaths," the authors wrote in the study. The large exposure to PM2.5 has

**POLLUTION A MAJOR THREAT**



also reduced life expectancy for countries and regions - Egypt (2.11

years), Saudi Arabia (1.91 years), India (1.51 years) China (1.32 years)

**O**N AVERAGE, MORE THAN 40 PER CENT OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION LIVES IN AREAS WHERE OZONE LEVELS EXCEEDED THE LEAST STRINGENT WHO INTERIM TARGET IN 2019

**G**LOBALLY, INDIA RANKS NINTH HIGHEST POPULATION EXPOSURE TO OZONE (98 PER CENT), FOLLOWING COUNTRIES LIKE CONGO, ETHIOPIA, GERMANY, BANGLADESH, NIGERIA, PAKISTAN, IRAN AND TURKEY TAKING THE TOP EIGHT POSITIONS AND CHINA RANKING 10TH

Australia, and New Zealand. "We estimate that the average human life is shortened by approximately 1.8 years due to the combined effect of ambient (outdoor) ozone pollution and fine particulate matter pollution (PM2.5) in ambient air and in households from cooking with wood and other solid fuels," the researchers said.

The combined impacts of these pollutant exposures are especially high in the world's lowest income countries (typically shortening a life by two to three years).A

These impacts on human life expectancy are quite large in comparison to other major diseases and threats to human health.

The findings also showed that improvements in global air quality could lead to longer and healthier lives in many regions of the world.

INVASION PLANNED A YEAR AGO: RUSSIAN MP

A Russian MP has said Moscow started planning for an invasion of Ukraine 12 months ago, BBC reported. "We did not prepare this, this operation spontaneously," State Duma member Rifat Shaykhtudinov said. "It had been in preparation for a year, maybe more," he said. He suggested that Russia would have come under attack had it not invaded



# international

# RUSSIAN ASSAULT CONTINUES

THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS ALSO WORSENERD, WITH MORE THAN ONE MILLION REFUGEES NOW HAVING FLED UKRAINE, THE UNITED NATIONS SAID

## Ekho Moskvyy shuts down

REUTERS

Ekho Moskvyy, a liberal radio station and one of Russia's leading media outlets, has been taken off the air over its critical coverage of Moscow's attack on Ukraine, the head of the radio station said Thursday. Alexey Venediktov, the radio station's Editor-in-Chief and one of Russia's most prominent journalists, wrote on Telegram that "higher-ranking people" earlier had hinted to him that such a decision was under consideration. "The Ekho Moskvyy board of directors has decided by a majority to close down the Ekho Moskvyy radio channel and the website," he said. The press service of the Gazprom Media holding has confirmed the information to Russia's state-run news agency TASS. Venediktov told TASS that he planned to hold a meeting of the radio station's journalistic staff later in the day.



**Borodyanka, Ukraine:** Russia's invasion of Ukraine entered its second week Thursday with its main assault force halted north of the capital Kyiv and several cities enduring heavy Russian bombing.

The humanitarian crisis also worsened, with more than one million refugees now having fled Ukraine, the United Nations said. Hundreds of Russian soldiers and Ukrainian civilians have been killed since President Vladimir Putin sent his troops over the border last Thursday. Russia itself has been plunged into isolation never before experienced by an economy

of such size.

Despite an initial battle plan that Western countries said was aimed at swiftly toppling the Kyiv government, Russia has captured only one Ukrainian city so far - the southern Dnipro River port of Kherson, which its tanks entered Wednesday.

Russia has shifted tactics, escalating its bombardment of major cities. Swathes of central Kharkiv, a city of 1.5 million people, have been blasted into rubble. Mariupol, the main port of eastern Ukraine, has been surrounded under heavy bombardment, with no water or power. Officials say they cannot evacuate the wounded.

The city council compared the situation to the World War Two siege of Leningrad. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has stayed in Kyiv, releasing regular video updates to the nation. In his latest message, he said Ukrainian lines were holding. "We have nothing to lose but our own freedom," he said.

Britain's defence ministry said the main body of the huge Russian column advancing on Kyiv was still 30 km (19 miles) from the city centre, delayed by Ukrainian resistance, mechanical breakdown and congestion.

"The column has made little discernible progress in over three days. Despite



Hundreds of Russian soldiers and Ukrainian civilians have been killed since President Vladimir Putin sent his troops over the border last Thursday

Russia itself has been plunged into isolation never before experienced by an economy of such size

The World Bank has announced that it will stop all its programmes in Russia and Belarus with "immediate effect" in response to Moscow's military operations in Ukraine

A civilian trains to throw Molotov cocktails to defend the city, in Zhytomyr, Ukraine

## Spiritual heart at risk

Kyiv, bracing for a potentially catastrophic Russian attack, is the spiritual heart of Ukraine. Among the sites at risk in the Ukrainian capital are the nation's most sacred Orthodox shrines, dating back nearly 1,000 years to the dawn of Christianity in the region. The sites, along with other landmark shrines in Kyiv, are religiously significant to both Ukrainian Orthodox and Russian Orthodox. They also stand as powerful symbols in the quarrel over whether the two groups are parts of a single people - as Russian President Vladimir Putin has claimed - or are distinct but related Slavic nations. The landmarks include the golden domed St. Sophia's Cathedral and the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, a sprawling underground and above-ground complex also known as the Monastery of the Caves. Others include the multi-towered St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery and St. Andrew's Church.



## Ukrainian couple, lovers during Soviet rule, watch war

REUTERS

**BUENOS AIRES:** Viktor Paniouk and Lyudmyla Bots met and fell in love in Kyiv in October 1990 during a hunger strike for Ukrainian independence from Soviet rule, achieved a year later. Now the two 54-year-olds, thousands of miles away in Argentina, are watching in horror from afar as Russian troops invade their homeland.

Along with millions of overseas Ukrainians scattered around the world, the couple - both doctors - have been glued to news reports since Russia's invasion last week, with tanks rolling towards capi-



Lyudmyla Bots and Viktor Paniouk, who met and fell in love in Kiev in October 1990 during a hunger strike for Ukrainian independence from the Soviet rule, leave after attending a mass at the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Santa Maria del Patrocinio, in Buenos Aires

**Due to a circumstance of life, I had to leave the country, but I never forgot or forget my country. I have my roots there. Kyiv for me is something more than capital. It is something sentimental**

LYUDMYLA BOTS

tal Kyiv and missile attacks on major cities.

"It felt like it couldn't be possible. It must be a movie," said Paniouk about the images of shelled buildings and lines of armored vehicles

## Fighter jets violate Swedish airspace

The Swedish Armed Forces said that four Russian fighter aircraft have violated the country's airspace. In a statement, the Forces said that it conducted an operation with JAS 39 Gripen aircraft of the rapid readiness unit, which documented and photographed the incident. "This demonstrates that our readiness is good. We were on site to secure the territorial integrity and Sweden's borders. We have complete control of the situation", said Air Force Commander Carl-Johan Edstrom. The Swedish airspace was violated by two Russian SU 27 and two Russian SU 24. The incident was brief and took place east of Gotland, out at sea. "With the current situation as backdrop, we take this incident very seriously. Russia's conduct is unprofessional and irresponsible", says Air Force Commander Edstrom.



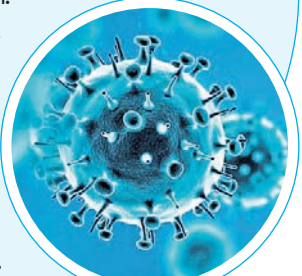
## US arms Ukraine with missiles

The US delivers anti-aircraft gun-stinger missiles -- as military aid to Ukraine to take down Russian aircraft and helicopters what it did in Afghanistan 42 years ago to end USSR's presence over there. The stinger surface to air missiles will be a boost for Ukraine's air defence if Russian fighter aircraft bombs the cities. So far Russians have not involved its Air Force into the war. The war between Russia and Ukraine has entered into the eighth day after Russian President Vladimir Putin called for a military operation. Stinger shipments to Ukraine are part of the aid package that the US had announced on Friday. Apart from Stinger missiles, Javelin anti-tank missiles are also being sent to Ukraine. In addition, Germany has also announced that it will send around 500 stinger missiles.



## Covid transmission may rise: WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict is likely to increase Covid-19 transmission and in turn increase the risk of large numbers of people developing severe disease. "WHO is deeply concerned about the unfolding humanitarian emergency in Ukraine," said WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a press briefing on Wednesday. "Prior to the conflict, Ukraine had experienced a recent surge of cases of Covid-19. Low rates of testing since the start of the conflict mean there is likely to be significant undetected transmission. "Coupled with low vaccination coverage, this increases the risk of large numbers of people developing severe disease," he said, adding that critical shortages of oxygen will have an impact on the ability to treat patients with Covid-19 and many other conditions.



## LIFE UPSIDE DOWN



# CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD STRAFED BY PUTIN

THE ATTACKS ARE GALVANIZING PAN-EUROPEAN SENTIMENT AGAINST CHINA, WHICH REFUSES TO CALL RUSSIA'S MOVE AN INVASION

REUTERS

**HONG KONG:** Russia is destroying what China is trying to build. Having refused to condemn President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and suppressed domestic criticism of Russia, Beijing is alienating many eastern European countries where it is constructing trade, investment and technology relationships under its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative. Ukraine is strategically positioned across rail, road and energy pipelines linking Russia to the rest of Europe. Since it joined President Xi Jinping's signature infrastructure policy in 2017, Chinese companies have been upgrading the country's ports and subways. And in 2020 Kyiv signed a memoran-

dum of understanding with telecoms giant Huawei Technologies, which the United States has been trying to drive out of worldwide networks. With a population of 44 million, Ukraine provides an attractive market for companies such as smartphone maker Xiaomi (1810.HK), and it is an important source of agricultural produce. China bought 30% of its corn imports from Ukraine in 2021.

With Russian army convoys advancing toward Kyiv, Beijing is stuck watching missiles wreck a country once receptive to its overtures. The attacks are galvanizing pan-European sentiment against China, which refuses to call Russia's move an invasion. As the West and Moscow make it harder for private companies to

transact, the flow of goods along the "Iron Silk Road," a rail system across which \$75 billion of Chinese products travelled to Europe in 2021, is likely to slow.

Another casualty of war might be China's relationship with Poland, which has been trying to strike its own balance between Beijing and Washington.

Poland is a major rail node on the Belt and Road and hosts Huawei's regional headquarters. Having experienced tribulations under Russian dominance, it is now being swamped by Ukrainian refugees who blame China for supporting Putin. Former Soviet satellites are aligning more closely with NATO and the European Union, further undermining Beijing's strategy in the region.

China's investment in the EU was already cooling. Its M&A deals there dipped to 6.5 billion euros in 2020, a 10-year low. Having miscalculated by openly backing Putin, Beijing is now trying to hedge that position. Unless it can orchestrate peace, however, the diplomatic and commercial damage will be hard to repair.



# business

## of the day quote

If the geo-political tension continues for long then it could have ramifications on the semiconductors industry which was already struggling to find ground

**HEMAL THAKKAR** | DIRECTOR, CRISIL

Increasing access to affordable capital for small enterprises with solutions for greater reach will enable long-term impact. This new partnership between Axis Bank and SAMRIDH will further our joint efforts to provide innovative healthcare solutions to some of the most vulnerable people in India

**VEENA REDDY** | DIRECTOR, USA/INDIA MISSION

MG is constantly working towards its mission of enhancing the EV ecosystem in India. With the launch of MG Charge, we will bring increased convenience and address the charging concern of the customers, encouraging more to adopt the EV lifestyle

**RAJEEV CHABA** | PRESIDENT AND MD, MG MOTOR

## SHORT TAKES

### Eveready Batteries' Chairman, MD quit

**New Delhi:** Batteries and flashlights maker Eveready Industries India Ltd Thursday said its Non-Executive Chairman Aditya Khaitan and Managing Director Amritanshu Khaitan have resigned following an open offer from the Burman group. The Burman group, through various entities had Monday made a ₹604.76-crore open offer to acquire around 1.89 crore shares of Eveready Industries, representing 26 per cent of the expanded voting share capital, at a price of ₹320 per share, payable in cash.

### Mahindra partners with Google Cloud

**New Delhi:** Mahindra Group and tech giant Google Cloud Thursday announced collaboration as part of the homegrown conglomerate's digital transformation strategy to fuel its next phase of business growth. Under the collaboration, Mahindra group's digital, data and cloud centre of excellence, referred to as Mahindra Digital Engine (MDE), will use Google Cloud's secure and reliable infrastructure and advanced data analytics technology, the two partners said.

### Mobile showrooms by Tata Motors

**New Delhi:** Tata Motors Thursday said it is deploying over 100 mobile showrooms across the country as part of an initiative to offer doorstep car buying experience in the rural areas. The auto major has launched Anubhav, a showroom on wheels, in line with its rural marketing strategy. The initiative will help increase the company's reach in rural areas, which have high potential in terms of population and economy. A total of 103 mobile showrooms are being deployed across the country to enhance the company's brand awareness in rural parts of the country.

### TV market soars to record high in '21

**New Delhi:** The post-pandemic economic recovery, faster upgrades in the entry tier and pent-up demand aided by festive sales helped India's TV shipments grew at highest-ever 24 per cent last year. The smart TV market grew even faster at 55 per cent (on-year) in 2021 and 65 per cent in Q4 2021 to reach its highest ever shipments for a calendar year.



Today, the world is looking at India as a manufacturing powerhouse. Manufacturers should see that the dependence of the country on the outside is minimized  
**NARENDRA MODI** | PRIME MINISTER

## LIC APPOINTS SUNIL AGRAWAL AS CFO

IPO-bound Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has appointed Sunil Agrawal as its chief financial officer (CFO). Agrawal was earlier the CFO of Reliance Nippon Life Insurance for over 12 years. He was also associated with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance for 5 years



## RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT EXPOSES BIZ RISKS

# War spurs corporate exodus

**COMPANIES' PUSH TO FLEE RUSSIAN MARKET AFTER AN ORDER FROM MOSCOW TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED FOREIGN INVESTORS FROM SELLING RUSSIAN ASSETS**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, March 3:** Car factories idled, beer stopped flowing, cargo ships dropped port calls, and energy companies cut their pipelines. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has thrown business plans into disarray and forced a growing number of the world's best known brands — from Apple to Mercedes-Benz and BP — to pull out of a country that's become a global outcast as companies seek to maintain their reputations and live up to corporate responsibility standards.

Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said Tuesday that it would help investors make "a considered decision" rather than succumb to the political pressure of sanctions. Oil and gas companies, already feeling the heat from climate activists to invest in renewable energy, were among the companies that announced the most rapid and dramatic exits.

Energy firm BP said Sunday that it would abandon its \$14 billion stake in Russian state-owned oil and gas company Rosneft. The next day, Shell said it was leaving its joint venture with state-owned Gazprom and its involvement in the now-suspended Nord Stream 2 pipeline built to carry natural gas to Western Europe.

ExxonMobil said it will pull out of a key oil and gas project and halt any new investment in Russia. All their chief executives said they were shocked and saddened by the increasingly bloody conflict. Smaller energy firms have followed suit.

Companies in other industries, including automakers, signalled they're staying out of the Russian market either out of concern for Ukraine or to comply with Western



sanctions.

Toyota is halting production at its St Petersburg plant that makes RAV4 and Camry models starting Friday because of supply chain disruptions, saying it was watching events "with great concern for the safety of the people of Ukraine."

Others with more at stake in Russia might find it harder to navigate the crisis.

French automaker Renault, whose second-biggest market is Russia, said only that it's temporarily suspending production at its Moscow plant through Saturday "due to some logistics issues," without being more specific.

Danish brewery group Carlsberg said last week that it suspended production at two breweries in Ukraine and that it's "following the situation with great concern" but didn't comment on its extensive Russian operations, including St Petersburg-based Baltika Breweries, which exports worldwide.

Czech brewer Budvar, which

counts Russia as one of its five major markets, halted beer deliveries to the country, saying business is not the top priority and that it's looking for ways to help, including finding accommodations for Ukrainian refugees.

## IMPACT OF SANCTIONS

- BP abandoned its \$14 billion stake in Rosneft
- Toyota halting production at St Petersburg plant
- Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen suspended exports
- Volvo Cars stopped deliveries, Ford halted operations
- Harley-Davidson halted motorcycle shipments
- Ikea paused Russian exports and imports
- H&M, Nike paused sales in Russian stores
- AP Moller-Maersk stops making Russian port calls
- Apple stops selling iPhone and popular devices inside Russia
- Dell Technologies suspended sales in both Ukraine, Russia
- Netflix pauses future projects, acquisitions

## HIGHEST IN A DECADE

# Brent soars to \$119

Crude oil prices have surged by nearly 20% in the last three days on fear of tight supplies

US sanctions targeting Russian refineries, disruptions to shipping and a fall in US crude stocks to multi-year lows kept oil prices racing Thursday as Brent charged towards \$120 a barrel, its highest since May 2012. Brent crude futures rose as high as \$119.84 a barrel, the highest since May 2012. The contract was at \$119.78

a barrel, up \$6.85, or 6.1%, by 0752 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude hit a high of \$116.57, the loftiest since September 2008, and was at \$116.41 a barrel, up \$5.81, or 5.3%. The gains followed the latest round of US sanctions on Russia's oil refining sector that raised concerns that Russian oil and gas exports could be targeted next. India is a major crude oil importer, and for it, the price range is a cause of concern as it may add \$20 to \$22 to petrol and diesel selling prices if the OMCs decide to revise the current rates.

# Crisis widens wheat supply vulnerability

Paris: The threat to wheat supplies from Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been exacerbated by a shift in global stocks away from major exporters such as the United States and European Union, undermining their effectiveness as a cushion in times of crisis.

US wheat futures rose to a 14-year high Thursday as importers scrambled for supplies following the closure of ports in Ukraine and disruption to supplies from Russia. The two countries account for about 29% of global wheat exports.

Wheat futures have risen by about 40% so far this year, driving up food prices and contributing to a broader surge in a global inflation surge as economies recover from the coronavirus crisis.

MAJOR EXPORTERS HOLDING ONLY ONE-FIFTH OF WHEAT STOCKS

CHINA NOW ACCOUNTS FOR NEARLY HALF OF GLOBAL WHEAT STOCKS

US WHEAT FUTURES CLIMB TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN 14 YEARS

## BLOODBATH IN THE WHEAT MARKET

With Russia, the world's biggest exporter of wheat, going to war, the commodity's price in the international market has shot up by \$334 per quintal since February 18

Date	Closing Price*	Change %
18.02.2022	790.00	—
22.02.2022	844.25	6.90%
23.02.2022	876.00	3.76%
24.02.2022	926.00	5.70%
25.02.2022	843.00	-8.96%
28.02.2022	928.00	10.08%
01.03.2022	1,001.75	7.94%
02.03.2022	1,058.00	5.62%
03.03.2022	1,134.00	7.18%

\* \$per quintal



## ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING

# Reliance set to invest \$220mn in Sanmina JV

REUTERS

**Bangalore, March 3:** Indian conglomerate Reliance Industries said Thursday it would invest \$220 million (\$220.70 million) to create a joint venture (JV) with US-listed Sanmina Corp for making electronic products in the Asian country.

The JV aims to make hardware for 5G communications, cloud infrastructure, healthcare systems, clean technology, and defense and aerospace, Reliance said in a regulatory filing.

The deal comes as India pushes for more investment in the manufacturing sector in a bid to establish the country as a global electronics production hub. India has offered about \$30 billion in incentives to woo electronics manufacturers to set up shop in India.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance will hold a 50.1% stake in the JV after the investment in Sanmina's existing Indian entity through a Reliance unit. Sanmina will contribute its existing contract manufacturing business to the JV. All manufacturing will initially



Reliance will hold a 50.1% stake in the JV after the investment in Sanmina's existing Indian entity through a Reliance unit

take place at Sanmina's campus in the south Indian city of Chennai, with an option for expansion in other manufacturing sites within the country.

Sanmina, whose Indian entity Sanmina SCI India Private Ltd raked in revenue of about ₹12.3 billion for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2021, looks to scale up its existing footprint in India with the deal. Reliance shares rose as much as 0.7% after the deal Thursday.

# Vi okays ₹14,500cr fund-raising plan

AN AMOUNT OF RS 10,000 CRORE WOULD BE RAISED BY WAY OF SALE OF EQUITY OR THROUGH DEBT INSTRUMENTS SUCH AS ADR, GDR AND FCCBS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 3:** Debt-ridden telecom operator Vodafone Idea (Vi) Thursday said its board



has approved raising of up to ₹14,500 crore, including ₹4,500 crore from promoter entities.

An amount of ₹10,000 crore would be raised by way of sale of equity or through debt instruments such

as ADR, GDR and FCCBs.

In a regulatory filing, the company said the board has cleared issuance of up to 338.3 crore equity shares of face value of ₹10 each at an issue price of ₹13.30 per equity share for an aggregate consideration of up to ₹4,500 crore.

These shares will be issued to Euro Pacific Securities Ltd and Prime Metals Ltd (Vodafone Group entities and promoters of the company), and Oriana Investments Pte Ltd (an Aditya Birla Group entity) on a preferential basis, the filing said.

Besides, the board has approved issuance of equity shares or se-

curities convertible into equity shares, among other instruments to raise up to ₹10,000 crore.

The company will also look at raising the amount by way of Global Depository Receipts (GDRs), American Depository Receipts (ADRs), Foreign Currency Convertible Bonds (FCCBs), convertible debentures, warrants, composite issue of non-convertible debentures and warrants.

Such a fund raising would be done by way of private placement, qualified institutions placement or through any other permissible mode in one or more tranches, the filing said.

## AUTO BUZZ

### Audi to hike prices up to 3% from April

**New Delhi:** German luxury car maker Audi Thursday said it will increase prices across its product range in India by up to 3 per cent from April 1. The price hike is a result of rising input costs and will come into effect from April 1, 2022, the automaker said in a statement. "At Audi India, we are committed to operating a sustainable business model. With rising input costs and changing forex rates, we are required to take a price hike of up to 3 per cent across our model range," Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillon said.



## Mercedes-Benz rolls out Maybach S-Class

**New Delhi:** Luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz India Thursday said it has launched Maybach S-Class in the country with the price starting at ₹2.5 crore (ex-showroom). The company has introduced the model in two trims - Maybach S-Class 680 AMATIC starts from ₹3.2 crore, while the price of locally produced Maybach S-Class 580 AMATIC begins at ₹2.5 crore. "The new Mercedes-Maybach S-Class is a unique combination of luxury and technology, and we are confident it will exceed customer expectations," Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director & CEO Martin Schwenk said in a statement.



# Amazon, Future agree to talks after US retailer offers olive branch

ACCORDING TO SOURCES AMAZON IS PLANNING TO FILE A CRIMINAL CASE AGAINST FUTURE FOR ALLOWING THE TRANSFER OF ASSETS TO RELIANCE

REUTERS

**New Delhi, March 3:** Amazon.com Inc and India's second-largest retailer Future Group have agreed to talks proposed by the US e-commerce giant, seeking to resolve

legal wrangles at the heart of a battle for supremacy in the country's vast retail sector.

The unexpected olive branch extended by Amazon comes days after rival Reliance, the country's biggest conglomerate, began a de facto takeover of Future's assets, seizing control of some 500 stores.

"Amazon which has been in combative mode is now in conciliatory mode," said a lawyer involved in the dispute, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Gopal Subramaniam, a lawyer for the US company, suggested at a Supreme Court hearing Thursday that the two sides negotiate, saying the "whirlpool" of disputes fought on multiple fronts had been dragging on for too long.



"All that I'm saying is let us at least have a conversation. We cannot allow the spinners' wheel to continue like this. Please consider this," Subramaniam said. "We

must agree, discuss ... come face-to-face and discuss the best possibilities."

Future Group lawyer Harish Salve agreed to negotiations, say-

AMAZON SAYS LEGAL WRANGLES ENDLESS

MOVE COMES AFTER RELIANCE STARTED TAKING OVER FUTURE'S ASSETS

ing "nobody is winning in this battle." The judges said the two sides could take 10 days to reach a possible solution.

Legally, Amazon has successfully stalled Future's \$3.4 billion asset sale to Reliance since 2020, accusing its business partner of violating certain contracts. Future denies any wrongdoing, but the US firm's position has been backed by a Singapore arbitrator and Indian courts.

Despite the dispute being before

the courts, Reliance has pressed ahead with rebranding the stores and last month began to take possession of the prized real estate after Future failed to make rental payments to it, sources say.

Currently, operations at hundreds of Future Retail stores remain suspended across India due to the takeover by Reliance.

After agreeing to the talks, Future's lawyer Salve cited the Supreme Court hearing and sought assurances that Amazon would not initiate criminal action during negotiations.

In response, Subramaniam said he would advise Amazon "not to do anything to exacerbate the situation."

# A 'TREAT' OF TEST

Rohit's Team India ready to dish out stellar show in King Kohli's 100th match in the longest format of the game

## Rohit lauds Virat



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mohali, March 3:** Hailed by many as the 'Last of the Mohicans' in cricket's purest format, Virat Kohli will be focussed on making his 100th appearance memorable while "white-ball legend" Rohit Sharma plots the demolition of an out-of-depth Sri Lanka as India's 35th Test captain in the series-opener starting here Friday.

If one looks back at Indian team's journey since its inception in international cricket back in 1932, it has been about stars, superstars, and megastars, who become the reason for the footfall at turnstiles of various stadiums across the country.

It was the case when Sunil Gavaskar scored his 10,000th run, Sachin Tendulkar bade the most emotional farewell that cricket has ever seen and now the spotlight will be firmly on Kohli, whose domineering presence has turned an international match into a footnote.

Kohli is one among "them" and in a fast-paced world, perhaps the last cricketer star who will enjoy an organic following of manic fans. India was, and will remain more of a "cricketer-loving" nation and the social media war-cry that perhaps led to fans being allowed in the stadium from Friday is a testimony to Kohli's immense popularity.

This is his 'Test' and for Kohli, a century to mark a 'century' is something he would be craving, having missed that sense of accomplishment that comes with a three-figure mark for over two years now.

A bowling attack that has the likes of Suranga Lakmal, Lahiru Kumara or Lasith Embuldeniya is perfect for a sumptuous 'five course' Kohli treat with cover drives, on drives, flicks and pulls on the menu. Gavaskar and Tendulkar couldn't, neither could a Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid or VVS Laxman but Kohli is a different beast.

The empty amphitheatre was

never meant for him. He feeds off the energy from his fans, and as the undisputed hero of his story, he always finds an antagonist, he is trying to slay.

He is a product of the modern day, who loves the spotlight and the spotlight has always loved him back.

However, every story has its own set of sub texts and this Test match is as much as a Kohli story as it is about Rohit and his remarkable ascendancy making light of set ideas and templates.

They say, 'A good Captain, who is a good captain, is a good captain'. Everyone knows Rohit's credentials in white-ball cricket especially IPL, where he has even challenged the hegemony of the peerless MS Dhoni.

There is no reference frame to judge how good he will be in a game that's played over five days for six hours. He is 34 and will surely not be playing white ball cricket for more than three years at a stretch with a demanding calendar.

How he handles a transition phase in Indian cricket, which has started with curtains on careers of Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane and Ishant Sharma. Will have a huge impact on how he is perceived - just a mere captain or a leader of men.

Does he have it in him to control the ebbs and flows of a Test match where a session changes the complexion or a long partnership can induce frustration? The proof of the pudding as they say lies in eating and one can only wait to see how he responds to the entirely different dynamics of five-day cricket as captain.

India squad: Rohit Sharma (C), Mayank Agarwal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant (wk), Hanuma Vihari, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Jayant Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, KS Bharat (wk), Umesh Yadav, Saurabh Kumar & Priyank Panchal



**Mohali:** India captain Rohit Sharma Thursday lauded former skipper and batting mainstay Virat Kohli ahead of his landmark 100th Test, saying he deserves all the credit for putting the team in a good position in the format.

Rohit will start his Test captaincy journey when he steps out to lead India against Sri Lanka in the opening game here starting Friday.

"As a Test team, we stand in a very good position. The whole credit goes to Virat for where we stand in this format. What he has done with the Test team over the years was brilliant to see," Rohit said in the pre-match press conference, his first as Test skipper. "I have to just take it from where he has left. I just have to do the right thing with right players," he added.

Although India's chances of making it to the World Test Championship final look dim at present, Rohit insisted that the team has been moving in the right direction.

"The team stands in good position. Yes, we are mid-position in the WTC table but I don't think we have done anything wrong in the last two to three years," Rohit added.

The mutual respect was there to see when he paid rich tributes to his contemporary ahead of his landmark game. "It's been a brilliant journey for him and a long one

since he made his debut. Now to go and play his 100th game, it's been a wonderful one. He has done exceedingly well in this format, changed so many things in the way team is moving forward, it's been brilliant to watch that.

"It's been one hell of a ride for him, and we definitely want to make it special for him. We are all prepared for that and let's hope, we have good five days of cricket. The crowd is coming to see Virat play and that's a great thing."

For Rohit, the best phase under Kohli was the 2018 Australia series which they won 2-1. "As a team, the series we won in Australia in 2018 and it was a big series, and Virat was our captain."

The best knock of Kohli among his 27 Test hundreds, according to Rohit, is the one he hit in South Africa on his first tour in 2013. "As a batter, I remember his hundred (in Johannesburg) against South Africa in 2013. The pitch on which we played was a challenging one and we had bowlers like Dale Steyn, Morne Morkel, Vernon Philander and Jacques Kallis to face which wasn't easy," Rohit recollected.

"It was a bouncy track and we all were playing Test cricket in South Africa for the first time. He scored a hundred in first innings and 90 odd in the second innings. That hundred for me is his best. Then there is Perth 2018 but 2013 South Africa beats Perth," he added.

## Russians, Belarusians out of '22 Paralympics

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Beijing, March 3:** Faced with threats of withdrawals and growing animosity in the Athletes Village, organizers of the Winter Paralympics Thursday reversed course and expelled athletes from Russia and Belarus.

The about-face came less than 24 hours after the International Paralympic Committee announced it would allow Russians and Belarusians to compete when the Games open on Friday, but only as neutral athletes with colors, flags and other national symbols removed because of the invasion of Ukraine.

The Paralympics in Beijing, which follow the Winter Olympics, close March 13. "The war has now come to these Games and behind the scenes many governments are having an influence on our cherished event." IPC President Andrew Parsons said Thursday after announcing the ban. "We were trying

to protect the Games from war."

Parsons said the IPC underestimated the negative reaction to letting Russians and Belarusians compete - even as neutral athletes. The Athletes Village, which Parsons hoped would be a place of harmony, is now depicted as a tinderbox.

And it was not only Ukrainians resenting the Russian and Belarusian participation, but across the board. "It was a very volatile environment in the (Athletes) Village. We did not think that entire delegations, or even teams within delegations, will withdraw, will boycott, will not participate."

The first instance came when Latvia said its curlers would refuse to play against the Russians in a scheduled group game. Parsons said he expects legal action from the Russian and Belarusian Paralympic committees, which is what he said he feared Wednesday when he ruled their athletes could compete.

## Eve troika gives India second gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Cairo, March 2:** The Indian trio of Shri Nivetha, Esha Singh and Ruchita Vinerkar combined to win the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol team event of the ISSF World Cup here Wednesday.

The Indians shot 16 in the gold medal contest to finish on the podium for the country's third medal, and second gold, in the year's first World Cup. India led the standings with three medals - two gold and a silver.

Germany's Andrea Katharina Heckner, Sandra Reitz and Carina Wimmer settled for the silver medal after managing 6 in the fight for the top prize.

The three Indian women had topped the qualification stage 2 with a total score of 574 on their way to the gold medal match. Behind the Indian women were Heckner, Reitz and Wimmer, with 571. Esha, Shri Nivetha and Ruchita had also topped qualification stage 1 with a total score of 856.



Earlier in the day, Olympian Saurabh Chaudhary, Gaurav Rana and Uchaganav Kedarling Balakrishna missed out on a bronze medal in the men's 10m air pistol team competition. In the bronze medal match, the Indian pistol team finished with a total of 6 to finish at fourth place, behind Italy's Torracchi Alessio, Monna Paolo and Tesconi

Luca, who aggregated 16. In the Qualification Stage 2, the Indians totalled 581, ahead of their Italian counterparts (577). In the first qualification, the Indians aggregated 765.

Before that, the Indian team of Rudrankash Balasaheb Patil, Divyansh Singh Panwar and Srinjoy Dutta failed to secure a

place in the bronze medal contest by a point in the men's 10m air rifle team event.

The Indian men's rifle team aggregated 624.1, only a point less than Czech Republic's Ales Enrichel, Jiri Privratsky and Filip Nepejchel's total score of 624.2. The Czechs went on to win the bronze medal ahead of Austria.

## Shantanu knock propels Odisha versus Mumbai

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 3:** Shantanu Mishra (89, 213b, 11x4) played a watchful knock to help Odisha reach 250/6 at stumps on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy Group D match against Mumbai in Ahmedabad, Thursday.

It was same tale for Odisha as all the batters, barring Shantanu, got off to good starts but failed to convert those into big ones. Odisha skipper Subhranshu Senapati (13) won the toss and opted to bat first. Debashish Samantray (10) and Shantanu started Odisha innings before Siddharth Raut (1/42) drew the first blood getting rid of Debashish. Mohit Avasthi (2/48) sent Odisha skipper Senapati packing to reduce Odisha to 36/2.

However, Shantanu and seasoned Govind Poddar (37) raised



hope of resurrection adding 74 runs for the third wicket and guided Odisha past 100-run barrier in the process. It was Avasthi who broke the dangerous looking stand dismissing Poddar. From there on, Odisha managed to build up small partnerships to get to the total of 250 when the umpires decided to call off the day's play.

Shantanu tried his best to hold on to one end, despite losing out of partners at the other end. He missed out on a well-deserved century when experienced pacer Dhawal Kulkarni (1/33) trapped the opener in front as Odisha slumped to 188/5. Abhishek Raut (35 batting) and Rajesh Mohanty (17 batting) were occupying the crease when bails were drawn. Tanush Kotian (2/65) also bowled well for Prithvi Shaw-led Mumbai.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Odisha 250/6 (Shantanu Mishra 89, Govind Poddar 37, Abhishek Raut 35 batting, Mohit Avasthi 2/48, Tanush Kotian 2/65) v Mumbai. Match to continue.

## WWC: India eye first ICC title, Australia favourites

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mount Maunganui, March 3:** Mithali Raj will be eager to get her hands on a maiden title in what would be her last hurrah for India at the world stage, Heather Knight will hope to defend it while Meg Lanning seems primed to lead Australia to a 'Magnificent Seventh' when the ICC Women's World Cup gets underway here Friday.

The tournament, which was postponed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be played across six venues with the ICC deciding that teams will stay in a 'managed environment' instead of stringent bio-bubbles.

The marquee event will be played in the league format, where all eight teams will face each other once with the top four sides qualifying for the semifinals.

India, who were runners-up in the last edition and in 2005, open their campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan, while hosts New



Zealand, who won the title in 2000, will take on West Indies in the tournament opener. Australia, the most successful side with six titles, will meet defending champions England, who have been crowned champions four times.

The month-long event will see young stars and veterans

come together. While the likes of Mithali, Jhulan Goswami, Suzie Bates and Megan Schutt will look to add to their already glittering legacies, England have teenagers including Shafali Verma, Richa Ghosh, Fran Jones and Darcie Brown will be eager to make one.

**Here's a look at the eight contenders:**

**AUSTRALIA:** Hurt by the shock semifinal loss to India in 2017, six-time champions Australia have left no stone unturned in their quest for an unprecedented seventh title. Such has been Australia's dominance in the past four years

in the 50-over format that the Southern stars have lost just one ODI in their last 30 games.

**INDIA:** Runners up in the last edition, India will be keen to go one step ahead and claim the title that has eluded them, specially skipper Mithali and veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami, who will be playing their last World Cup.

**ENGLAND:** The defending champions and the second most successful team in the history of the tournament, England will be eager to retain their crown. Despite the recent Ashes white-wash, England has been one of the most successful sides in women's ODIs since the end of the last World Cup.

**NEW ZEALAND:** Last time the tournament was held in New Zealand 22 years ago, the White Ferns won their maiden and only title. The hosts will look to repeat the feat and they have had the perfect lead up to the tournament.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Riding high on confidence owing to series victories

over West Indies, Pakistan and India, South Africa will aim to ride the momentum in search of their maiden World Cup title. The team have enough depth and talent in their squad to go all the way.

**WEST INDIES:** West Indies qualified for the tournament owing to their ODI rankings after the Qualifiers was cancelled mid-way last year due to COVID-19. The runners-up finish in 2013 was their best ever performance. They have a blend of youth and experience in their side.

**PAKISTAN:** Pakistan have competed in four World Cups, finishing at the bottom in three of them. Their best result was a fifth place finish in the 2009 edition. Pakistan captain Bismah Maroof, who returns from maternity break, hopes to lead her side to the semifinals.

**BANGLADESH:** Bangladesh will play in the tournament for the first time, having qualified on the basis of their ODI rankings. They will hope to leave an impression in their maiden tournament.