



JACQUELINE ON PRIVACY

Jacqueline Fernandez in controversy after her pictures with conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar got leaked

LEISURE P2



QUEEN TO MISS COMMONWEALTH

Royal officials Friday said Queen Elizabeth II would not attend next week's Commonwealth Day service

INTERNATIONAL P10



INDIA IN COMMAND

India take control of the 2nd Test against Sri Lanka reducing them to 86/6 after posting 252 in their first innings

SPORTS P12

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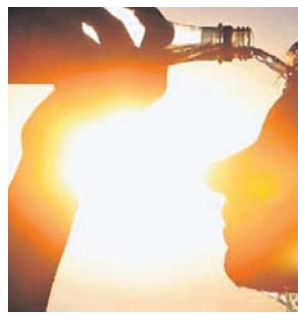
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SRIMANDIR OPEN ON SUNDAYS TOO

Puri: Keeping in view the significant improvement in corona situation across Odisha, Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Saturday announced its decision to further relax restrictions on entry of devotees into the 12th century shrine here. The temple will remain open even Sundays from March 20, said Puri district magistrate-cum-collector Samarth Verma, who is also the deputy chief administrator of the SJTA. He said the decision in this regard was taken at a meeting of the Chhatisa Nijog, the apex body of servitors. He said the devotees will be able to pay obeisance to deities from the time of opening of Lions' Gate in the early morning till 'pahada' (closure of the door) every day.



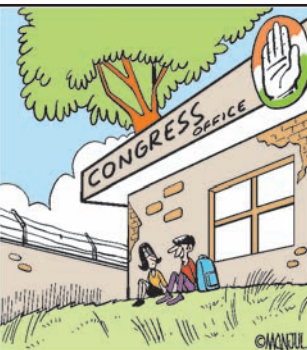
BLISTERING HEAT FROM NEXT WEEK

Bhubaneswar: A heatwave is likely set to singe parts of Odisha next week and the mercury is expected to rise by a few degrees across the state, the Met office said Saturday. A yellow warning of a heatwave has been issued for some places in Bolangir, Subarnapur, Boudh and Angul districts for two days from Tuesday, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said. Met has predicted such conditions in Nayagarh and Khurda, including Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. The temperature in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack may touch 39 and 38 degrees C respectively during the period, it said. The maximum temperature is expected to rise gradually by 2-3 degree celsius in the next two-three days, a bulletin said.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Can't expect privacy at mall, garden or restaurant. This place is pretty safe. No one comes this side anymore!

Jagadev does Kheri in Khurda

At least **27 people** including **10 cops** and **2 scribes** injured

Chilika MLA Prasanta Jagadev plows his car into a crowd that had gathered outside Banapur BDO office for election to block chairperson's post

POST NEWS NETWORK



An angry mob ransacked the vehicle of Prasanta Jagadev following the incident at Banapur in Khurda, Saturday (Inset: An injured Jagadev after the attack)

Bhubaneswar, March 12: In an incident like Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh, Chilika MLA and suspended BJD leader Prasanta Kumar Jagadev plowed his car into a crowd at Banapur in Khurda district Saturday, injuring at least 27 people. Among the injured are 10 police personnel including the Banapur IIC, 15 BJP workers and two mediapersons.

The incident happened around 11am near Banapur block office where indirect election to the block chairperson's post was underway.

As Jagadev who was behind the wheels mowed down a section of the crowd which had gathered outside the Banapur BDO office, all hell broke loose. The assembly of people turned into a frenzied mob and attacked the MLA.

Khurda SP Alekh Chandra Pahi said the situation is now under control. As per preliminary information, when BJP-supported Samiti members were entering the block office premises for the election, the MLA reached there and "tried to enter his vehicle into the crowd," he said.

The cops and some people tried to stop the MLA from running over

the crowd. At that moment, this incident happened in which 10 police personnel including Banapur IIC along with the MLA, a journalist and at least six people were injured in the incident, said the SP. "However, no casualty has been reported so far," he added.

Pahi said all seriously-injured people including the MLA and IIC have been shifted to Bhubaneswar for treatment. Meanwhile, prohibitory order under Section 144 of CrPc has been clamped in the area.

Political leaders from across the party lines strongly condemned the incident. BJD spokesperson Samit Patra said his party strongly condemns the barbaric act of Jagadev. "Violence has no place in democracy and such a violent act is shocking and unfortunate. We are sure that the police and adminis-

tration will take the strongest action against the accused as per law," Patra said. Stating that he was suspended from the party for such acts, he said the BJD is praying for the speedy recovery of the injured in this incident.

BJP leader Prithviraj Harichandan said, a person of sound mind can never do such an incident. He demanded that the legislator should be behind the bars.

Congress leader Suresh Routray dubbed Jagadev a 'habitual offender'. "Who has given him the right to assault people physically? There are several such allegations against the MLA. This kind of behaviour does not suit an elected people's representative," the Congress MLA rued.

In September last year, BJD had suspended Jagadev for thrashing

Russia strikes near Kyiv; mosque hit

Artillery barrages in multiple areas around Kyiv send residents scurrying for cover as air raid sirens wail

AGENCIES

Lviv, March 12: Russian forces pounding the port city of Mariupol shelled a mosque sheltering more than 80 people, including children, the Ukrainian government said Saturday.

Fighting also raged on the outskirts of the capital, Kyiv, as Russia's expanding invasion bombarded cities into rubble. There was no immediate word of casualties from the shelling of Mariupol's elegant, city-center mosque. The encircled city of 4.46,000 people has suffered some of the greatest misery from Russia's war in Ukraine.

An Associated Press journalist witnessed tanks firing on a 9-story apartment building in the city and was with a group of hospital workers who came under sniper fire Friday. A worker shot in the hip sur-

vived, but conditions in the hospital were deteriorating: electricity was reserved for operating tables, and people with nowhere else to go lined the hallways.

Among them was Anastasiya Erashova, who wept and trembled as she held a sleeping child.

Shelling had just killed her other child as well as her brother's child, Erashova said, her scalp crusted with blood.

Ukraine's military said Saturday that Russian forces captured Mariupol's eastern outskirts, tightening the armed squeeze on the strategic port.

Taking Mariupol and other ports on the Azov Sea could allow Russia to establish a land corridor to Crimea, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014. In his nightly video message, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy encouraged his people to keep fighting.

"It's impossible to say how many days we will still need to free our land, but it is possible to say that we will do it," he said from Kyiv.



UKRAINE'S MILITARY SAID RUSSIAN FORCES CAPTURED MARIUPOL'S EASTERN OUTSKIRTS, TIGHTENING THE ARMED SQUEEZE ON THE STRATEGIC PORT

7 killed as fire breaks out in Delhi shanties



New Delhi, March 12: Seven people were killed after a fire broke out in shanties in northeast Delhi's Gokulpuri area in the early hours of Saturday, officials said.

A senior official of the Delhi Fire Services said information regarding the blaze near pillar number 12 of Gokulpuri village was received at 1:03 am. Thirteen fire-tenders were rushed to the site. Seven charred bodies were recovered, the official said, adding that around 60 shanties were affected and 30 of those gutted in the fire.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (north-east) Devesh Kumar Mahla said information about the blaze was received around 1am, following which police and fire officials reached the spot. The blaze was finally brought under control around 4am. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal expressed grief over the incident.

"Heard the sad news early in the morning. I will go to the spot and meet the affected people personally," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	35.5°C	34.8°C
TEMP MIN	22.0°C	22.0°C
Humidity	77%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	

HOCKEY FEVER



The first match of the double-leg FIH Pro League was played between India and Germany at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

EPF interest slashed to 8.1%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: Interest rate on employees' provident fund deposits Saturday was proposed to be cut to a four-decade low of 8.1 per cent for the current 2021-22 fiscal from 8.5 per cent in the previous year, sources said.

This is the lowest interest rate since 1977-78 on deposits that employees make towards their retirement fund. Interest rate on employees provident fund that year stood at 8 per cent.

The interest rate for the current fiscal year ending March 31 was set by the retirement fund body EPFO for its about 5 crore subscribers.

"The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO's) apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees has decided to provide 8.1 per cent rate of interest on

Employees Provident Fund (EPF) for 2021-22 in its meeting held on Saturday," a source said.

The EPFO paid 8.5 per cent interest rate to its subscribers in 2020-21, the same as in the previous year. The EPF rate was 8.65 per cent in 2018-19 and 8.55 per cent in 2017-18.

Provident fund savings are mandatory under the Employees Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.

At least 12 per cent of an employee's basic salary is compulsorily deducted to be saved in provident fund, while an employer co-contributes an equal amount.

Sources added that interest rates are fixed based on the earnings of the retirement fund body on the deposits it has. While the corpus has gone up by 13 per cent, interest income is up only 8 per cent.

Saudi executes 81 convicts in a day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, March 12: Saudi Arabia Saturday executed 81 people convicted of a variety of crimes, including killings and belonging to militant groups, in the largest mass execution conducted by the kingdom in its modern history.

The total number of those put to death surpassed that of the January 1980 mass execution of those convicted of the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, which saw 63 people beheaded.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency announced Saturday's executions, saying they included those "convicted of various crimes, including the murdering of innocent men, women and children."

The kingdom also said some of those executed were members of al-Qaida, the Islamic State group and backers of Yemen's Houthis rebels.

"The accused were provided with the right to an attorney and were guaranteed their full rights under Saudi law during the judicial process, which found them guilty of committing multiple heinous crimes that left a large number of civilians and law enforcement officers dead," the Saudi Press Agency said.

"The kingdom will continue to take a strict and unwavering stance against terrorism and extremist ideologies that threaten the stability of the entire world," the report added.

The kingdom's last mass execution came in January 2016, when the kingdom executed 47 people, including a prominent opposition Shiite cleric who had rallied demonstrations in the kingdom.

Jhulan becomes highest wicket taker in Women's WC

With 40 wickets in her kitty, the right-arm fast bowler breaks the record of Australia's Lynette Fullston, who took 39 wickets during her six-year career



Goswami achieved the feat by dismissing Anisa Mohammed in the 36th over of the innings with West Indies chasing a mammoth target of 318 set by India

AGENCIES

Hamilton, March 12: Veteran India pacer Jhulan Goswami Saturday surpassed yet another milestone in her illustrious 22-year-old career by becoming the all-time highest wicket-taker in the history of the ICC Women's World Cup here.

With 40 scalps in her kitty, Goswami has surpassed Australia's Lynette Fullston, who took 39 wickets during her career spanning six year from 1982 to 1988. Goswami achieved the feat by

dismissal Anisa Mohammed in the 36th over of the innings with West Indies chasing a mammoth target of 318 set by India.

Goswami, thus, lead the chart ahead of Fullston, England duo of Carole Hodges (37 wickets) and Claire Taylor (36) and another Australian in Cathryn Fitzpatrick (33). The veteran 39-year-old right-arm fast bowler has played in five women's Cricket World Cups since 2005.

India rode on brilliant centuries from Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur to comprehensively beat West Indies by 155 runs and bring their World Cup campaign back on track.

India are currently leading the eight-team standings with four

MITHALI RAJ BREAKS CAPTAINCY RECORD

Hamilton: India's ODI skipper Mithali Raj Saturday broke the record for most matches captained in the ICC Women's World Cup, surpassing former Australian counterpart Belinda Clark. Mithali, 39, led the country in 24 World Cup games, claiming 14 victories, 8 losses and one no result. Clark had captained her side in 23 matches. The India skipper achieved the feat when she stepped out to lead the country against the West Indies in a crucial match in the ongoing show-piece event here. Interestingly, Mithali and Clark are the only two cricketers to have led their country at more than two World Cups. Last Sunday, Mithali became only the third cricketer and the first woman to appear in six World Cups, joining the iconic Sachin Tendulkar and Pakistani great Javed Miandad.



points from three games ahead of Australia, New Zealand and

South Africa by virtue of a better net-run rate. **MORE P12**

leisure



REBEL EXCITED TO CELEBRATE JAMES BOND AT THE BAFTAS

Actress Rebel Wilson is excited to celebrate the *James Bond* and *Harry Potter* franchises at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTAs) as she takes to the stage to front the upcoming awards ceremony.

CATE DEVELOPING FILM, TV PROJECTS WITH HER PRODUCTION COMPANY

Australian actress Cate Blanchett, who was recently seen in *Don't Look Up* and *Nightmare Alley*, has taken the onus for developing film and TV projects as she's changing the landscape of audio-visual content through the Dirty Films banner she co-founded with her husband, Andrew Upton, reports *Variety*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today you are going to have a great time, but only if you plan out the right things. Says Ganesh. At the work place it will be business as usual with its highs and lows. But make some good plan for the evening and you will be surprised. Try something romantic.

TAURUS
This day your reasoning, speculations and conjectures could be letting you down. You may thus feel dejected because things are not working out the way you had planned and anticipated. Be prepared and forearmed.

GEMINI
A hectic and busy day awaits you. You need to think about how, where and in what proportion to concentrate your energies upon the numerous jobs thrust upon you. You will be able to successfully complete your tasks in the later half of the day, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today you are likely to be full of enthusiasm, both at work and home, predicts Ganesh. At work, your convictions will get the better of other people's vindictiveness, and your colleagues will come around to your viewpoints.

LEO
If you are the one who sets the corporate mantra each morning, then know that today, your mantra will be fabulous, and will be chanted by many in your organisation. Being a business magnate might not be the easiest thing, but you are who you are, and you are good at it.

VIRGO
Watch your step, warns Ganesh. Trouble is lurking just round the corner and waiting to waylay you. At work, you will find yourself in a high-spirited mood and will be helpful to your colleagues. You might end the day in the company of family members recollecting the happy days you have spent in each other's company.

LIBRA
Today seems like a good day to take a break and go on a pleasure trip to revitalise yourself, says Ganesh. Even on the business front, it will do you a world of good to take a break from the usual routine. This evening, you are at your best winning the heart of the opposite sex at social gatherings.

SCORPIO
Today you are likely to remain the unvarying object of emotions and sentiments, predicts Ganesh. Your inking for performing arts may draw you to take up some lessons in classical music and traditional dance. A romantic, candlelit evening with your sweetheart may be on the cards to wrap up the day.

SAGITTARIUS
Simple living and high thinking, says Ganesh, will be your mantra today. Approach your work with innovative thoughts and diplomatic words. Later in the day, family, friends and relatives revel in the attention that you shower on them. Students will excel in their studies and marvel in leisure activities, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
The day will have a bundle of things to offer today, some good, some not so good. At work, you are likely to overlook the most obvious things, and come across some unexpected ones. But as dawn turns to dusk, a pleasant surprise may get you all pepped up.

AQUARIUS
It always pays to have extra cash, and in that regard, you will be a happy person today! You may carefully update and crosscheck your financial position. Of course, there are people who don't share your happiness and will try to advise you to the contrary.

PISCES
A good day is in the offing, says Ganesh. You are likely to receive news you will be glad to share and celebrate with your family. A few pending deals are likely to be finalised in the afternoon, and there are indications you will need to go off on a short visit for business purposes later on in the day.

Samantha shuts down trolls over bold looks

Mumbai: Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who stole the limelight with her sizzling appearance at the Critics Choice Awards, was trolled for her bold, revealing looks.

A few Telugu tabloids went further to relate her dressing sense with her divorce.

Samantha hence, took to her social media handles to slam her trolls. The *Rangasthalam* actress wrote, "As a woman, I bear firsthand knowledge of what it means to be judged. We judge women based on what they wear, their race, education, social standing, appearance, skin tone, and the list goes on and on."

Samatha continues, "Making snap judgments about a person simply based on the clothes they wear is quite literally the easiest thing one can do. Now that we're in the year 2022, can we finally stop judging a woman based on the

hemlines & necklines she adorns and focus instead on bettering ourselves?"

She further added, "Turning that judgment inward and training it on one's own is evolution! Projecting our deals on someone else never did anyone any good... lets gently rewrite the way we measure and understand a person."

Despite the actress' absolutely stunning looks at the event, she was trolled for her bold choice, as most of her critics felt the dress was 'quite revealing'. Sharing the same collage of pictures, Samantha simply shut down her critics. **AGENCIES**



Kriti reveals her favourite Akshay Kumar films

Mumbai: Actors Akshay Kumar and Kriti Sanon are reuniting in *Bachchan Paandey* after their amazing chemistry in *Housefull 4*. Now, the cast is busy promoting the film and sharing their experience of shooting the film with each other.

In a recent interview, Kriti revealed her favourite movies of Akshay Kumar. The actress stated that she likes many, including *Namaste London*, *Good Newwz*, *Mission Mangal*, *Afatoon*. On hearing the name of his 1997 film *Afatoon*, it seemed Akshay wasn't impressed and gave a tough look at the actress and said it was a flop. However, Akshay said that the songs were good. To which Kriti re-iterated that she loved the film.

Akshay, Kriti, Jacqueline Fernandez, Arshad Warsi and director Farhad Samji were recently seen at a popular comedy show promoting the film. The photos of the *Bachchan Paandey* team from the sets with Kapil Sharma went viral on social media. **AGENCIES**

Jacqueline on invasion of privacy

Mumbai: Actor Jacqueline Fernandez was recently mired in controversy after her pictures with conman Suresh Chandra Sekhar were leaked online. In a conversation with Shilpa Shetty, the *Bachchan Paandey* actress spoke about the effects of invasion of privacy.

"For me, what I've learned over the years. Don't let it turn you into a bad person. Don't let it turn you into them. That's really important," Jacqueline stated in the chat show, adding that randomly written things suddenly turn into a 'war against you which doesn't exist'. She further added, "Very, very easily, it can turn you into a horrible person, a bitter person. Someone who is upset with the way people behave, one can become untrustworthy. Don't let it change you, don't let it turn you, don't let it steal your light. Stay good, stay positive." Previously,

when her personal pictures were being circulated,



Jacqueline had asked for privacy and said in a statement, "The country and its people have always given me tremendous love and respect. This includes my friends from the media, from whom I have learnt a lot. I'm currently going through a rough patch but I'm sure that my friends and fans will see me through it. It is with this trust that I would request my media friends not to circulate images of a nature that intrude my privacy and personal space. You would not do this to your own loved ones, am sure you would not do this to me either. Hoping that justice and good sense prevails. Thank you." On the work front, she will be *Bachchan Paandey* with Akshay Kumar, post which she has *Attack* with John Abraham. **AGENCIES**

Ajay Devgn unveils motion posters of *Runway 34*



Mumbai: Actor Ajay Devgn's upcoming movie *Runway 34* is creating a lot of buzzes as it is said to be inspired by true events. It also stars Amitabh Bachchan and Rakul Preet Singh in the lead. The action-thriller drama will feature Ajay as a pilot. Ajay unveiled two motion posters of



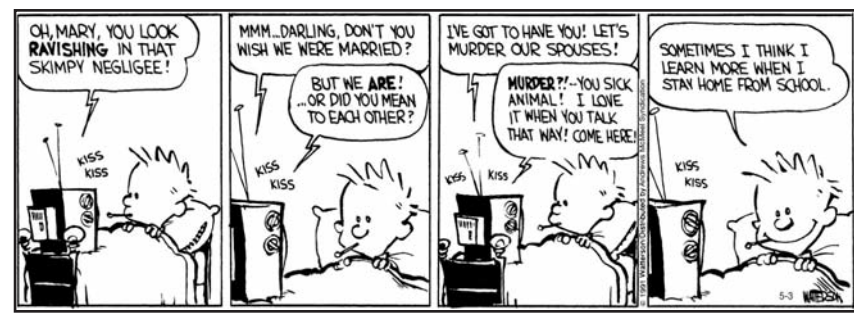
Runway 34. The first motion poster featured an intense look of Amitabh and came with his voice-over wherein he was questioning Devgn for putting the security of the passengers of his flight at risk. While the other poster had a voice-over by Ajay who was trying to present his side of the story from a fateful incident. The actor

also shared a poster featuring himself and Rakul. He captioned the motion poster as, "#Runway34OnApril29". *Runway 34* is directed by Ajay Devgn and also features Boman Irani, Angira Dhar, Aakansha Singh, Carry Minati in pivotal roles. It is slated to release on April 29.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

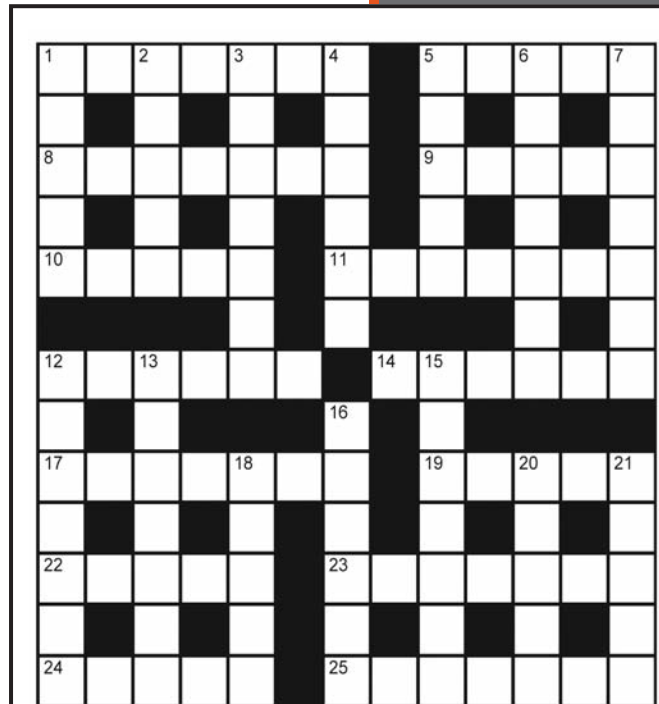


BREVITY



FUN post

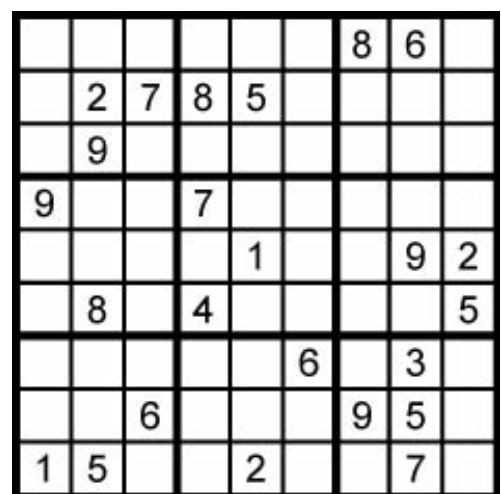
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Inconsistent
 - 5 Model material
 - 8 Cattle feed
 - 9 Nairobi's land
 - 10 Toothsome
 - 11 Parsley, for one
 - 12 Bedding item
 - 14 Pictures
 - 17 Miss World, e.g.
 - 19 Game played on the floor
 - 22 Big cats
 - 23 Colourful Australian parrot
 - 24 Invoice word
 - 25 High-flying singer
 - 5 Muffin maker
 - 6 Staircase part
 - 7 Disconcerts
 - 12 Unlike a wallflower
 - 13 Car selling point
 - 15 Your ___; king's title
 - 16 Mall units
 - 18 Long suit
 - 20 Arum lily
 - 21 Flower holder
- Down**
- 1 Precise
 - 2 Fissures
 - 3 Fox hunting cry (5-2)
 - 4 Battlefield shout

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



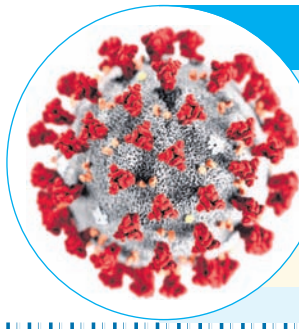
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



PREP FOR HOLI

A boy buys water guns and colours from a stall at Choudhury Bazar in Cuttack, Saturday, for the upcoming Holi festival



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	45,59,69,731	38,97,23,485	60,59,991
India	4,29,87,875	4,24,31,513	5,15,803
Odisha	12,86,540	12,76,565	9,108

BLOOD SPILLS AT BANAPUR



(1) An angry mob trying to overturn the vehicle of Chilika MLA Prasanta Jagadev near Banapur block (2) Two women who sustained injuries in the incident. (3) An injured Jagadev in hospital. OP PHOTOS

2 ponzi directors held for duping 400 investors

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 12: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Crime Branch has arrested two directors of a fake stock market advisory company for duping 400 investors to the tune of Rs 5 crore, police said Saturday.

The accused were identified as Arpan Patel and Adyaji Yoti Nayak, both directors of IAAVIC Pvt Ltd. The duo cheated people claiming their firm is a stock market advisory company.

However, in reality, the company is neither a share broker/sub-broker in any stock exchange in India nor authorised by stock market regulating agencies like SEBI to carry out any such business, the EOW officials said. The duo was arrested March 10 from Mumbai and is being brought to Bhubaneswar after producing them before the additional chief metropolitan magistrate, Bandra, Mumbai.

They were arrested against a case registered on the basis of a complaint filed by Swadhin Kumar Sahoo of Jajpur district of Odisha.

During the year 2020-2021, the two accused persons launched their website www.iaavic.com and made wide propaganda through colourful brochures as well as attractive videos circulated on YouTube, in order to attract gullible depositors to invest in their company under the false assurance of returning hefty interest, the EOW said. During the investigation, the Police also found that the company represented through its accused directors had collected more than Rs 5 crore from 400 investors of Odisha alone and duped them subsequently by not returning money to them.

Jagadev not new to controversies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, March 12: Chilika MLA Prasanta Jagadev, who plowed his car into a crowd near Banapur block office in this district, courted several controversies in the past.

Jagadev had allegedly hurled casteist remarks against BJP's Balugaon unit president Niranjan Sethi and assaulted the latter October 2 last year. He was arrested in this connection and sent to jail.

Taking a serious note of the incident, the BJD high command had suspended Jagadev from the party. Later, Jagadev was removed from the Khurda district planning board.

But this did not bring any change in Jagadev's behaviour. The Chilika MLA had used fowl language towards a woman at a meeting ahead of the three-tier panchayat elections in state. Jagadev reportedly asked the woman to leave the place if

she had no interest to listen to his speech. A purported video of the incident went viral on social media.

Jagadev had also threatened the husband of a panchayat samiti member candidate during the rural polls. A complaint in this regard was lodged with Banapur police. The controversial MLA had misbehaved with a woman tehsildar triggering a statewide commotion among OAS officers.

BJP leader and Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, meanwhile, condemned Saturday's incident. "This is an inhuman incident. I pray for the early recovery of the injured persons," said Pradhan in a tweet.

He also expressed concern over the violent incidents in Bhubaneswar and some other areas ahead of the civic body polls. "It seems that the police are reluctant to take legal action in this regard," Pradhan added.



A profusely-bleeding Jagadev being rescued at the site. OP PHOTO

State, C'garh to file affidavits of witnesses

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 12: The Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal Saturday asked Odisha and Chhattisgarh to submit affidavits of witnesses in order to depose their studies in connection with the Mahanadi river.

A three-judge bench of the tribunal headed by Supreme Court judge Justice AM Khanwilkar and comprising Justice Indermeet Kaur and Ravi Ranjan asked both the states to submit affidavits by April 23. The bench posted the matter for hearing April 30.

Significantly, Odisha proposed nine witnesses to be examined in the tribunal during the hearing of the matter. Meanwhile, Chhattisgarh has proposed around eight witnesses to examine.

MAHANADI DISPUTE

Among the witnesses proposed by Odisha are former Member of Central Water Commission Er ME Haque to depose for assessment of water availability in Mahanadi Basin, former CWC Chairman Rajesh Kumar to depose for planning and regulation in Chhattisgarh for ensuring water at the inter-state border. Former chief engineer, department of water resources Odisha Harmohan Pradhan will depose for development and operation of Hirakud reservoir, Mahanadi delta. Similarly, others are former engineer-in-chief DoWR RC Tripathy, Central Ground water board former scientist Gulab Prasad, Former Dean, College of Agriculture Dibakar Naik, former

Director of GRIDCO Prashant Kumar Pradhan, former Director of Institute of Economic Growth Manoj Kumar Panda and former member of National Green Tribunal Dr PC Mishra.

The witnesses proposed by both states would depose their studies on the Mahanadi river in the tribunal.

Earlier, the tribunal had in December last year directed both Odisha and Chhattisgarh to submit lists of witnesses whom they propose to examine.

It is to be mentioned here that Odisha and Chhattisgarh have filed petitions in the Mahanadi water dispute tribunal in respect of sharing of Mahanadi river water. Odisha in its petition claimed that the state of Chhattisgarh has constructed several barrages on the river obstructing the water flow to Odisha.

'A single window system can make things easier for real estate sector'

Shelter is a basic need of every human being. Everyone has a dream to own a house. Congenial atmosphere and good communication are two important aspects of a good residential building. However, they are not always easy to come by. The process is quite expensive and time-consuming. In an interview to **Orissa POST**, Orissa Twin City Builders Pvt Ltd Managing Director **Anil Kumar Agrawal** speaks about various aspects of and challenges for the real estate sector in Odisha. Excerpts:



What prompted you to enter the real estate business instead of pursuing a career as an industrialist?

Initially, we were producing galvanised buckets under the brand name of Double Monkey by setting up of a small industry. My father was instrumental in setting up of this industry. My mother had inspired me to begin my career as an industrialist. But, a continuous fall in demand for buckets in the market prompted me to search for a new business avenue. My father Rajkishore Agrawal had sound knowledge of construction sector even though he was trained as a chartered accountant. I had also observed a thing or two during construction and renovation of our own house. These things helped me to enter the real estate sector.

development, fire services, environment, drinking water and sewerage departments for our projects. The government has set up the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) to deal with such issues. Introduction of a single window system could make things easier for real estate sector.

Which aspects should people keep in mind while buying flats?

The government has made enough arrangements for the customers. One can collect details regarding the construction company and the housing projects from RERA.

Your take on the real estate policies of the state government?

The urban development department of the state government has introduced some measures for timely delivery of flats at appropriate prices. They are observing the situation and taking steps accordingly.

What is the preference of house buyers in Odisha?

In Odisha, a majority of people are from lower middleclass and middleclass strata. So, the demand for 2BHK and 3BHK flats is quite high in the state. Here, people have a preference for houses with good designs. Besides, they need good ventilation facility in their flats and surroundings having greenery.

How did you manage things during Covid-19 pandemic?

We basically source our labour force from rural areas. Many of our labourers could not return to villages due to sudden imposition of lockdown. We shouldered the responsibilities

How has been your journey in the real estate business?

I had launched Orissa Twin City Builders Private Limited in 2000 by constructing a project of 18 flats in Cuttack. Subsequently, we built apartment blocks at Tulasipur, Professorpara and Canteen Road in the Silver City and at several places in Bhubaneswar. Now, we are constructing a multi-storey apartment block at Trishulia. This new apartment block will accommodate 200 families.

What are the issues plaguing the real estate sector and how can we overcome those?

It is not easy to complete a project by obtaining necessary clearances from various government agencies. We need approvals from urban



of arranging food and shelter for them. We also encountered difficulties in getting construction materials and monetary resources during Covid-induced lockdowns and shutdowns. My father's advice and our strong determination helped us to overcome these difficulties.

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Ensure same day lifting of paddy, DMs directed



The procurement of paddy (Rabi crop) will commence May 1 and continue till June 30 in the state

As monsoon usually arrives in the state by mid-June, the Collectors have been told to complete the procurement process before its onset

The Collectors have been directed to take all necessary steps, monitor and supervise the ensuing Rabi procurement operations personally to ensure that there is no distress sale of paddy in their districts

To facilitate the coordination and sorting out of problems on a daily basis, the secretary advised the Collectors to set up district level control rooms as well

participation in procurement operations after assessing their available manpower, infrastructure, grading equipment, track record, financial capability and management, location, storage capacity, and past performances. Prior registration of farmers is mandatory for procurement.

The Collectors of 17 districts have been directed to take all necessary steps, monitor and supervise the ensuing Rabi procurement operations personally to ensure that there is no distress sale of paddy in the district.

regular coordination and hence, there is a need for designating nodal officers for all procurement centres in these districts," Yadav said.

As monsoon usually arrives in the state by mid-June, Collectors have been told to complete the procurement process before its onset. To facilitate the coordination and sorting out of problems on a daily basis, the secretary advised the Collectors to set up district level control rooms as well.

Further, the Collectors have been told to hold meetings of the District Level Procurement Committees (DLPCs) prior to commencement of procurement, preferably by the second week of April, to decide the starting day of procurement in the concerned districts.

Yadav advised the Collectors to select suitable PACS, LAMPSCS, WSHGs and Pani Panchayats for

CROSSING PATHS



(L) Congress Mayoral candidate Giribala Behera with Barabati Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moquim during the campaign trail, Saturday. (R) BJP Mayoral candidate Sritam Das and BJD nominee Subhas Singh greet each other during the campaign for civic body polls in Cuttack, Saturday.

Candidates intensify campaign for BMC polls

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: With the election to Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation drawing closer, corporator nominees of various political parties have intensified their campaign to reach out to the voters.

The city will go to polls for the selection of mayor and corporators March 24. The political parties have fielded several new faces for the civic body polls in the city to attract the voters.

"We have already started our campaign at different wards. We are in touch with the locals and listening to their problems. The locals have been facing a host of issues in the absence of an elected council to the BMC for the last three years. We have assured them to solve their issues after the formation of the new council," said a BJD worker.

However, a few residents have expressed their displeasure on various political parties due to their

absence during cyclone Fani and Covid-19 pandemic. Some also vented their anger over the arbitrary increase in the holding tax in the city last year.

"We have been raising the issue of urban flooding and dengue in our locality for last five years. Neither the officials nor the political parties have come forward to extend any help to us. The political parties have been giving false promises during every election," said Sabyasachi Kundu, a social activist.

The mayoral candidates of the three major parties have also been adopting various methods to connect with people. While BJD's Sulochna Das was earlier spotted discussing civic issues with vendors and women, BJP's Suniti Mund has sought the help of different senior citizen groups and resident welfare organisations. Similarly, Congress nominee Madhusmita Acharya has been visiting city slums to understand the plight of urban poor.

BGU celebrates Int'l Women's Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: The Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar celebrated the International Women's Day at its Gothapatana campus.

Director of ICMR-RMRC, Bhubaneswar, Sanghamitra Pati graced the function as the Chief Guest and addressed the students and faculty members of the university on the theme 'Gender Equality Today For A Sustainable Tomorrow'.

In her speech, she focused on the concept of equity along with equality and impressed upon the students the need for equity in our society. She urged the students to proactively join hands and work for a sustainable future.

BGU Registrar BK Das in his address cited the example of Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel laureate and professor-turned-banker of Bangladesh, as to how he started giving loans to poor women who were not getting loans from banks due to lack of collateral. This resulted in the empowerment of poor women.

This apart, various programmes like awareness drive on gender equality, nukkad natak, rangoli competition, HR club activities, and debate competition were also organised by various schools. The NSS volunteers conveyed a silent message to public with posters depicting this year's theme.

Poll violence in Capital: Cops conduct flag march

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: The capital City witnessed political violence between different groups of two major political parties late Friday night ahead of the Urban Local Body elections. The city police Saturday carried out flag march to check further escalations in Laxmisagar area.

As per the sources, police have registered five cases against the members of both BJD and BJP in connection with two different incidents in Laxmisagar area.

Speaking to media, twin city Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarsi Saturday stated that stringent action will be taken against the culprits engaged in violence in Laxmisagar area Friday night. Priyadarsi reiterated that the twin city police will take all the steps to ensure free and fair ULB elections March 24. He also in-



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

formed media that DCP Umashankar Dash is personally supervising the investigations into the case.

Notably, nearly 60 individuals including the husband of a BJD corporator candidate for ward no. 33 along with her counterpart from ward no. 32 allegedly Friday attacked the family members including the husband of Dharitri Jena, BJP corporator candidate in ward number 33 under

Laxmisagar police limits.

The skirmish took place over tearing of a poster between BJD and BJP corporate candidates of ward no. 33. Around 60 individuals attacked allegedly attacked BJP candidate Dharitri Jena's family members including her husband.

The attack exposed the helplessness of City police as the cops remained mute spectators when the Jena's family members were attacked before the Laxmisagar police station. Three out of the five injured have been admitted to ICU. BJP leader and MP Aparajita Sarangi Saturday warned the police to immediately arrest the accused within 24 hours.

In another case the members of saffron party allegedly assaulted one BJD leader Jitendra Jena of ward number 45 with iron rods after throwing chili powder into his eyes at the victim's residence Friday evening.

Inter-varsity meet at Utkal March 15

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 12: In a bid to encourage extra-curricular activities among students and hone their skill sets, the Utkal University here will organise a three-day State Level Inter-University Literary and Cultural Competition from March 15.

Students from all the 15 public universities of Odisha will participate in literary events like essay writing and debate in English, Odia and Hindi, quiz, drawing/painting, and just a minute competitions.

Similarly, students will participate in cultural events like skit, mono-acting, classical vocal, light vocal, instrumental-classical/light and classical dance contests.

Sources said that winners will be awarded cash prize of Rs 30,000, Rs 25,000 and Rs 20,000 for first, second and third positions respectively. Governor and Chancellor Ganeshi Lal will hand over the awards to the winners in the valedictory ceremony March 17.

State logs below 100 Covid cases, lowest since March '21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 12: Odisha registered 83 new coronavirus cases Saturday, the lowest single-day spike in a year, for the second consecutive day while three more patients succumbed to the pathogen, the state Health department said in a bulletin.

The state currently has 977 active Covid-19 cases. The active case load fell below the 1,000 mark after March 23 last year. The daily test positivity rate (TPR) was at 0.18 per cent and 22 children were among the newly infected, it said, adding that 46,459 samples were tested in the past 24 hours.

On March 17 last year, the cases were lower than the current single-day count with 82 new infections. The state had logged 104 infections and two fatalities Friday.

Out of the total 83 new infections, 49 were reported from quarantine centres while 34 persons contracted the virus locally.



Sambalpur registered the highest new cases at 12, followed by Sundargarh at 10.

The toll rose to 9,108 with three more fatalities in Sundargarh districts. These are confirmed as Covid deaths after an audit. Fifty-three other coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities so far, according to data.

A total of 2,98,31,243 swab samples have been cumulatively tested so far. As many as 117 patients recovered from the disease.

SOLUTION HITHERTO UNHEARD OF

Indian scientists find way to synthesise novel solid adsorbents for CO2 capture

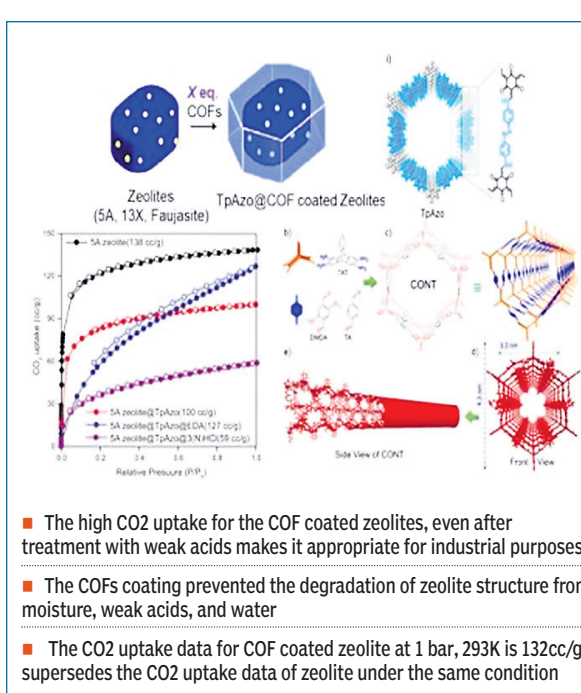
Professor Rahul Banerjee's group at IISER-Kolkata, with support from Department of Science & Technology, Government of India under Mission Innovation programme, has demonstrated a strategy to synthesise novel solid adsorbents, especially for CO2 capture and CO2 utilisation

Amidst the growing attempts to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, Indian scientists have discovered a strategy to synthesise novel solid adsorbents for CO2 capture and utilisation.

Although several industrial advancements have already been demonstrated, none of the technologies can provide an economically viable and complete CO2 capture and utilisation solution. Therefore, fundamental research on novel solid adsorbents might offer a critical material for CO2 capture and CO2 utilisation.

Professor Rahul Banerjee's group at IISER-Kolkata, with support from Department of Science & Technology, Government of India under Mission Innovation programme, has demonstrated a strategy to synthesise novel solid adsorbents, especially for CO2 capture and CO2 utilisation. The group has discovered special types of nano-particles or micro-particles, which can capture CO2 in their micro and mesoporous voids.

The novel materials, with distinct physical properties on surfaces that have been synthesised, include porous covalent organic frameworks like COF-graphene Janus thin films published in 'Journal of American Chemical Society', porous covalent bonded organic nanotubes published in Nature Chemistry, and COF coated zeolite published in 'Journal of



- The high CO2 uptake for the COF coated zeolites, even after treatment with weak acids makes it appropriate for industrial purposes
- The COFs coating prevented the degradation of zeolite structure from moisture, weak acids, and water
- The CO2 uptake data for COF coated zeolite at 1 bar, 293K is 132cc/g, supersedes the CO2 uptake data of zeolite under the same condition

American Chemical Society'. The judicious choice of 2D graphene sheets as a grafter helped

researchers design and create COF-graphene Janus thin films through the interactions (non-covalent) be-

HOW IT WORKS

- The group has discovered special types of nano-particles or micro-particles, which can capture CO2 in their micro and mesoporous voids
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- The judicious choice of 2D graphene sheets as a grafter helped researchers design and create COF-graphene Janus thin films through the interactions (non-covalent) between the COF and graphene, rendering flexible porous Janus films at the DCM-water interface
- The newly designed COF-coated zeolites could be an excellent candidate for CO2 storage in the industry due to their high surface area and increased chemical stability, a release from the Ministry of Science and Technology said

newly designed COF-coated zeolites could be an excellent candidate for CO2 storage in the industry due to their high surface area and increased chemical stability, a release from the Ministry of Science and Technology said.

The high CO2 uptake for the COF coated zeolites, even after treatment with weak acids makes it appropriate for industrial purposes. The COFs coating prevented the degradation of zeolite structure from moisture, weak acids, and water. The CO2 uptake data for COF coated zeolite at 1 bar, 293K is 132cc/g, supersedes the CO2 uptake data of zeolite under the same condition.

Rahul Banerjee's group has recently discovered purely covalent bonded organic nanotubes (CONTs) with a hitherto unavailable structure via a novel bottom-up approach. Although zero-dimensional covalent organic cages and two- and three-dimensional covalent organic frameworks were previously reported, the synthesis of one-dimensional organic nanotubes was hitherto unheard of.

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Poll deferred as 6 samiti members turn Covid+ve

12 other members allege mischief, stage protests

POST NEWS NETWORK
Chhatrapur, March 12: The election to the post of block chairperson in Chhatrapur was deferred by 15 days as six samiti members were stated to be positive for Covid-19.

Termining this as a mischief in order to delay the election, 12 samiti members, BJD and CPI supporters staged protests outside the Ganjam Collector's residence Saturday.

Such a sudden turn of events triggered tension among people in the area. The administration immediately deployed police forces.

The process of election to the block chairperson (reserved for women) was started at the block office. All 18 samiti members were present at the meeting. Later six of them came out from there and sat in another room.

Samiti members Kiran Kumari Das of Agastinagaon filed her nomination for the block chairperson. After nomination filing was over, the electoral officer announced that another samiti member Sugyani Sethi has filed nomination as alleged by 12 samiti members before media.

Later, the six samiti members



who were sitting in another room urged the electoral officer to get them tested for the virus.

A medical team reached there and the samiti members went through the test. Khallikote BDO Mitali Patra, the electoral officer announced that all the six samiti members have tested positive for Covid and cancelled the election and postponed it by 15 days.

The BDO refused to speak to the media about the Covid status of the samiti members before leaving the place. The six samiti members were reportedly sent to MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur.

Later, 12 samiti members staged protests. ADM Lina Kumari Khes, Chhatrapur sub-collector Nilambar Bhoi and Chhatrapur tehsildar Prakash Kumar Mishra held talks with the agitating members. The ADM said that all will be intimidated about the election Monday.

BeMC polls: BJD far ahead; BJP, Congress on back foot

BJP has failed to get candidates for six wards as some of its nominees have pulled out their nominations. Congress, on the other hand has failed to field candidates in 17 wards

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, March 12: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress appear to be on the back foot in the elections to 42-ward-strong Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) while the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is far ahead of the safiron party, given the fact that three BJD corporators were elected uncontested in three wards.

The uncontested candidates of the BJD are Surendra Moharana (ward-32), Samir Mishra (ward-35) and R Pabani (ward-15).



On the other hand, the BJP has failed to get candidates for six wards. The BJP could not field a candidate for ward 15 while a woman nominee for corporator post in ward-25 is missing. Besides, the BJP nominees have taken back their nominations in ward 13, 24, 32 and 35.

However, BJP leader Kanhu Pati, who is looking after party's campaigning for the urban local body polls, alleged that some supporters of the ruling party had scared the BJP candidates into withdrawing their nominations.

Many party workers observed

that without going through political status of the party in some wards, names of party nominees were selected in a hurry, which led to such a situation.

On the other hand, Congress has also fallen behind in campaigning. The party leaders discussed organisational matters at a meeting here Friday. Congress district unit president Ramesh Jena will work out strategy and campaign for the party mayoral nominee Manju Rath. The Congress has failed to field candidates in 17 wards, but is trying to support some independent candidates.

3 days of hunger & 20-km walk to safety

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, March 12: The family members of medical student Priyabrata Sahu took a sigh of relief after his safe return from war-ravaged Ukraine, Friday. Priyabrata, son of Prasanna and Pranati Sahu, natives of Gokarneswarpada in Subarnapur town, is a second year student of Kharkiv National Medical University.

However, his escape from the war zone was fraught with danger at every step. Narrating his ordeal, Sahu said that amid raining missiles from Russia, all Indians in Kharkiv were terri-

UKRAINE RETURNEE'S NIGHTMARE



fied and had been living for 15 days under clouds of war. "Many students had to stay at

metro station there. Following an order of the Indian embassy, over 500 Indian students had to make a file and walked about 20 km since March 2 to reach Pesochin town. While wading in file, all of us were terrified as missiles had struck nearby. For three days, we had to stay hungry. I along with other colleagues had to come to the Romanian border by car, March 7 and there the government of India had arranged accommodation and food for the evacuee students," he said.

He added that students were flown back to India March 8 midnight under Operation Ganga.

3 TEACHERS IN THE SOUP, ANOTHER DEAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, March 12: Three primary teachers in Nabarangpur district are in the soup after their certificates were found to be forged during verification. Another teacher Sukant Kumar Pradhan, whose certificates were found to be forged, has died while three other are absconding, a report said.

The three persons who had been serving as teachers by submitting fake certificates were identified as Baidyanath Sahu of Papadahandi, Dhaniram Nayak of Umerkote and Gitanjali Nayak of Nandahandi.

FAKE CERTIFICATE

The officials of the district education office suspected originality of the certificates of the four teachers. The authorities had sent the certificates to the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) for verification which detected the forgery.

The DEO has directed the block education officers concerned to sack the teachers and start legal proceedings against the three.

FRs were filed against the teachers. Police registered cases and started an investigation.

Speeding truck runs over sr lawyer; irate locals torch vehicle

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 12: A senior lawyer died on the spot after a speeding truck ran over him while he was out for morning walk at Sarla Square on NH-53 in Sambalpur district early Saturday morning.

The deceased was identified as Umesh Chandra Pradhan. According to a source, the legal professional Pradhan was on morning walk near a local educational institution named Saint Joseph's School at around 6.45 am when the fatal mishap took place. The truck laden with grapes was coming from Ainthapali area. Driver of the vehicle lost control over it and ran over Pradhan leading to his untimely death.

Following the incident, a number of locals gathered at the accident site. They fumed as Pradhan was a well known man in the locality. Later, the irate residents detained the truck driver and set the vehicle on fire. They also staged a roadblock on NH-53 by burning tyres. Vehicular movement was completely disrupted for long hours.

"Umesh Pradhan was a senior advocate. The speeding truck hit him while he was on morning walk. He later succumbed on the spot.



Such incidents of fatality will not end and be repeated every day if the local administration and NHAI authorities will not take proper measures to curb the speed of heavy vehicles on the national highways. Importantly, two schools are located near the major road, but there is no speed breaker here," a local youth who took part in the protest said.

"The agitation would continue on NH-53 unless and until the demand for construction of speed-breakers is met," the agitator added. On being informed, police reached the spot and tried to convince the agitators after sending Pradhan's body for post-mortem.

Post-poll violence: Five critical in Ganjam

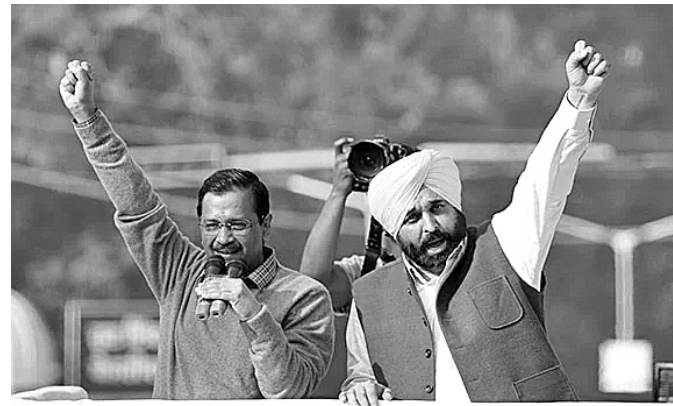
Sorada: In an incident of post-poll violence, five people were critically injured after an organised attack by a group of people at Hinjolkuda village under Sorada block in Ganjam, Saturday evening. All injured people belong to one family. They were identified as Rajendra Gouda, Surya Gouda, Rohit Gouda, Bansidhar Gouda and Bikram Gouda. They were first admitted to the Sorada PHC and later shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur. The attack took place when these people returned to the village along with samiti member Rajeswari Gouda after the election to the block chairperson post was over. However, the reason behind the attack is yet to be known. Meanwhile, IIC Ramesh Kumar Pradhan and ASI Artatrana Dani have started an investigation into the incident.

Sl. No.	A/c. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers	Gross Wt. In Gms.	Net Wt. In Gms.	Balance O/s as on specified date	Total Dues (Excluding Unapplied Charges) as on specified date
3	555077610000310	Pradip Kumar Pradhan, At: Plot No.: 645, Kedar Gouri Lane, Old Town, Bhubaneswar	9.92	9.5	₹34,782.60	₹34,782.60
4	555077610000326	Raj Kumar Khatter, At: D-201, Dhirendranath Villa, Vivekananda Marg, Old Town, Bhubaneswar	46.25	45	₹1,57,743.75	₹1,57,743.75
5	555077610000367	Raj Kumar Khatter, At: D-201, Dhirendranath Villa, Vivekananda Marg, Old Town, Bhubaneswar	145.15	131	₹4,18,021/-	₹4,18,021/-
6	555077610000336	Prasanna Kumar Pal, At: LB/212, Badagada Brit Colony, Bhubaneswar	14.32	13.5	₹40,414.87	₹40,414.87
7	555077610000353	Sandip Kumar Mohanty, At: Raghunathpur, Namara, Puri	40	35	₹1,03,627/-	₹1,03,627/-
8	555077610000364	Subhashmita Behera, At: Qtr No.: 1/R/2, Unit-2, Bhubaneswar	8.01	8	₹26,641/-	₹26,641/-
SATYABADI BRANCH, MAHAJAN COMPLEX, AT/PO- SAKHIGOPAL, DIST.: PURI, ODISHA-752014						
1	517377610000175	Niranjan Mahapatra, At: Tikibila Sahi, Sriramchandrapur, Satyabadi, Puri - 752014	33.37	26.10	₹62,729/-	₹64,372/-
2	517377610000252	Niranjan Mahapatra, At: Tikibila Sahi, Sriramchandrapur, Satyabadi, Puri - 752014	5.72	5.72	₹15,428/-	₹15,846/-
SAHID NAGAR BRANCH, AT.: A/123, SAHID NAGAR, BHUBANESWAR						
1	555177610000197	Alok Ranjan Nayak, S/o.: Mr. Bijay Kumar Nayak, At: Sundarpada, P.O.: Pahanga, Via: Niali, Cuttack-754004	22.66	22	₹74,922.25	₹74,922.25
2	555177610000243	Priti Ranjan Nayak, S/o.: Sri Alekh Chandra Nayak, Flat No.: 216, Ganapati Residency, Bairagi Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751006	168.19	155	₹5,86,532.29	₹5,86,532.29
3	555177610000280	Piyali Jena, W/o.: Mr. Brahmananda Jena, Plot No.: A/47, Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007	11.2	10	₹23,200/-	₹23,200/-
SAILASHREE VIHAR BRANCH, PLOT NO.: 231/2012, SAILASHREE VIHAR, NEAR DAMANA HAT, CHANDRASEKHARPUR, BHUBANESWAR						
1	511377610000006	Jitendra Sethy, Damana, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar, PIN-751016	51.775	51.5	₹91,455.16	₹91,455.16
RAGADI BRANCH, AT/PO.: RAGADI, DIST.: JAJPUR, PIN-755019						
1	510477610000099	Kalpna Mallick, At: Khamigaon, P.O.: Pachhikota, Ragadi, Jajpur 755019	14.9	10.96	₹20,618.38	₹20,618.38
KUHUNDA BRANCH, AT/PO.: KUHUNDA, DIST.: CUTTACK, ODISHA-754204						
1	558877610000219	Ramachandra Sahoo, S/o.: Haribandhu Sahoo, At/PO.: Kusupur, Via: Balichandrapur, Dist: Cuttack, PIN-754006	35.44	29.747	₹1,03,724/-	₹1,03,724/-
2	558877610000130	Kartik Chandra Maharana, S/o.: Phakar Maharana, At/PO.: Mulabasanta, Via: Kuanpal, Dist: Cuttack, PIN-754006	11.75	8.15	₹28,708.88	₹28,708.88
KAPILA PRASAD MARKET COMPLEX BRANCH, HIG-1/65, BDA COLONY, AT/PO.: KAPILA PRASAD, BHUBANESWAR						
1	555977610000128	Madhusudan Giri, Plot No.: 840-B, Friend Colony, GGP Colony, Bhubaneswar, Khordha	10	8.50	₹31,806.41	₹33,075.5
SAMANTRAPUR BRANCH, PLOT NO.: 985, FRIENDS COMPLEX, SAMANTRAPUR CHHAK, BHUBANESWAR, DIST.: KHURDA, ODISHA-751002						
1	513477610000115	Dibakar Sahoo, Qtr No.: WRA 46/8, Site Campus, Gopabandhu Nagar, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar-751012	51.94	51.5	₹1,82,745.27	₹1,90,349.47
2	513477610000116	Dibakar Sahoo, Qtr No.: WRA 46/8, Site Campus, Gopabandhu Nagar, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar-751012	51.9	51	₹1,80,643.7	₹1,88,159.84
3	513477610000117	Dibakar Sahoo, Qtr No.: WRA 46/8, Site Campus, Gopabandhu Nagar, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar-751012	100.76	72	₹2,40,286/-	₹2,50,282.75
4	513477610000118	Dibakar Sahoo, Qtr No.: WRA 46/8, Site Campus, Gopabandhu Nagar, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar-751012	36.55	35	₹1,20,620/-	₹1,25,617.89
5	513477610000132	Jangyaseni Biswal, Plot No.: 707, Lingaraj Temple, Bhubaneswar-751002	13.19	11.8	₹48,356/-	₹50,313.56
6	513477610000133	Jangyaseni Biswal, Plot No.: 707, Lingaraj Temple, Bhubaneswar-751002	17.19	17	₹68,833/-	₹71,626.69
CHANDANPUR BRANCH, CHANDANPUR BAZAR, AT/PO-CHANDANPUR, DIST-PURI, ODISHA, PIN-752012						
1	516477610000393	Ajaya Biswal, At-Batagaon, PO.: Biraharekrushnapur, Puri	58.97	58.4	₹1,77,694.36	₹1,87,000/-
2	516477610000426	Ajaya Biswal, At-Batagaon, PO.: Biraharekrushnapur, Puri	47.94	46	₹1,63,305/-	₹1,70,000/-
3	516477610000459	Jayanta Kumar Pradhan, S/o.: Rajkishor Pradhan, At: Kurunti, PO.: Hantaka, Puri	33.8	24	₹89,920.25	₹96,500/-
4	516477610000327	Ghana Jena, S/o.: Kartika Jena, At: Nahadia, PO.: Alasana, Puri	4.91	4.8	₹9,801.58	₹10,600/-
5	516477610000488	Nrusingh Swain, S/o.: Rajkishor Swain, At: Majhi Sahi, P.O.: Chandanpur, Puri	143.54	114	₹4,32,801/-	₹4,50,000/-
6	516477610000486	Nrusingh Swain, S/o.: Rajkishor Swain, At: Majhi Sahi, P.O.: Chandanpur, Puri	189.04	140.1	₹5,09,580.98	₹5,26,000/-
7	516477610000489	Manoranjan Swain S/o.: Rajkishor Swain, At: Majhi Sahi, P.O.: Chandanpur, Puri	81.02	74	₹2,80,435.69	₹2,90,000/-
BHUBANESWAR SME BRANCH, 102, CUTTACK-PURI ROAD, NEAR FLY OVER, JHARPADA, BHUBANESWAR-751006						
1	556177610000166	Prasanti Biswal, Plot No.: 839, Near BDA Store, Mahavir Nagar, Jharpada, Bhubaneswar - 751006	37.10	34	₹1,35,967/-	₹1,35,967/-
2	556177610000170	Prasanti Biswal, Plot No.: 839, Near BDA Store, Mahavir Nagar, Jharpada, Bhubaneswar - 751006	63.80	55	₹2,21,912/-	₹2,21,912/-
3	556177610000181	Markata Manjari Das, Plot No.: 853/854, Jena Sahi, Jharpada, Canal Road, Jharpada, Budheswari Colony, Bhubaneswar-751006	15.94	14.50	₹58,130.50	₹58,130.50
4	556177610000187	Saty Ranjan Samal, Plot No.: 1245, Mahanadi Vihar, Nayabazar, Cuttack, Pin 753004	39.82	35.83	₹1,42,024.51	₹1,42,024.51
BHUBANESWAR BRANCH, 129, ASHOK NAGAR, UNIT-II, JANPATH, BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA-751009						
1	555077610000196	Gajendra Nath Das, At: LB 389, Phase II, Bhimtangi HB Colony, Bhubaneswar	29.38	18.96	₹45,160.38	₹45,160.38
2	555077610000331	Priti Ranjan Nayak, At: Flat No.: 216, Ganapati Residency, Bairagi Nagar, Bhubaneswar	47.85	47	₹1,64,829/-	₹1,64,829/-

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 13.03.2022 Zonal Manager, Bank of India

FOCUS POLL RESULTS

PUNJAB SHOWS THE WAY



The spectacular victory of the Aam Aadmi Party tells us that corruption, plain and simple, is a raging issue with the people of India. It may have gone out of focus, appeared to be sidelined by communal politics but draws votes the moment a credible, viable and organised alternative is presented with a clear campaign: to fight corruption and to offer good governance

been directly linked to allegations of corruption which will not go away in a hurry, given the intensity of the protests, their length, the forced come back of the BJP and the voices within the BJP, notably the Governor of Meghalaya, Satya Pal Malik raising many questions on the legislation.

It should be clear at this stage that the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not earned itself the image of a clean party. There was a time of tussle between the so-called old-timers and the 'pragmatists', the latter represented by the likes of the late Pramod Mahajan who wanted to grab power, whatever the means or costs. What has eventually emerged is an entirely different and potent force that seeks to override, overwhelm and even obliterate the past, in an unprecedented kind of 'Rumsfeldian' shock-and-awe spread across the nation. The US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld used it against Iraq. The BJP uses it against India.

In the end, the BJP can hardly keep away from allegations of corruption. It needs more of the business connections to feed its pipeline, to do the 'shock-and-awe', and to carpet bomb the nation with its propaganda. Its policies, like the new labour laws that will take effect now, will pit it against the ordinary people and particularly the poor. Its establishment status and the desire to perpetuate its power and to promote its communal agenda, will lead to more strife. In the end, its corruption is as vulnerable to Kejriwal's rhetoric and work as it has proved against the Congress. So, in the reality of a 4-1 victory and a divisive politics sits the tale of a seismic change that carries some hope that governments in future will run on issues of governance and not on issues of gushala.

The writer is a journalist and a faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.
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One message of the BJP's 4-1 victory in the Assembly polls is that it can turn around a poor performance and anti-incumbency with aggressive campaigning laced with doses of communalism, like it did in Uttar Pradesh. But the bigger message comes from Punjab, where the spectacular victory of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) tells us that corruption, plain and simple, is a raging issue with the people of India. It may have gone out of focus, appeared to be sidelined by communal politics but draws votes the moment a credible, viable and organised alternative is presented with a clear campaign: to fight corruption and to offer good governance. Lest we forget, this was the agenda on which Modi first won the national mandate: 'sab ka saath, sab ka vikas.' It is another matter that he and the BJP took everyone on a different ride. It is another matter that the ride still sells a good number of tickets, given the lack of or the lacklustre nature of the alternatives and the fatigue of falling back on the same old-timers who have often failed in the past.

It is therefore a no-brainer that Arvind Kejriwal's victory speech was sharply focused on issues of governance. Why, for example, do Indian students go to Ukraine to study medicine, a fact that the nation learned in the aftermath of the crisis in that country? Why do schools not work as they should, why do hospitals turn away patients, why are public utilities so poorly maintained? These everyday questions of everyday people can still become turning points even though the election air has been driven by a hateful, communal edge.

The victory undoubtedly has huge implications for national politics headed into the next national elections in 2024, in the light of the expected completion of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, and will unleash its own dynamic

that may pave the BJP's pathway into the future. But as the political power behind the thrones of Delhi and Punjab states, Kejriwal will now have the credibility to play out his idea of governance, putting him on a better footing to spread to other states and build his party and candidature for bigger roles. The defeat in Punjab of biggies like former Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh, who aligned with the BJP, the recently appointed Congress Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi (who stood from two seats and lost both), Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) patron Parkash Singh Badal, who is 94 and lost an election for the first time in 50 years, SAD chief and Badal's son Sukhbir Singh Badal, senior SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia and others, gives the nature of the mandate for AAP.

There is merit in the view aired again post-election by the BJP that voters have rejected dynasty politics everywhere. In the 2017 polls in Punjab, for example, the Congress attempted to change faces with a "one family, one ticket" policy but it saw more than half the new entrants as relatives of old-timers! This time, there is range of fresh faces and an entirely different section at work, an example being mobile repair shop owner Labh Singh Ugoke who defeated Chief Minister Channi or Jeevan Jyot Kaur, the sanitary pad activist who defeated Majithia.

The BJP has been quick to note that Kejriwal is no threat to its growth. But like it or not, the vote in Punjab is as much a vote against the incumbency of the Singh-led Congress government, which ruled for the most part of the term, as it is against the farm laws in a place where the protests were the most visible, significant and felt directly. The farm laws have now



Sanctifying Victory

Do not look behind, look always in front, at what you want to do - and you are sure of progressing.
The Mother

Election victories sanctify the actions of a political party; they do not validate them. Sanctification is the giving of a blessing and has nothing to do with the real world. Validation is based on facts. At this point in time, now that the results are in, one can claim that the voter was attracted to a party because of its welfarism or its competence at governance or delivery of services. This is what is happening in the wake of the BJP's spectacular success in Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere. And it happens each time there is a BJP victory, of which there have been many and will continue to be. One reason is that the BJP needs secular validation because it operates in a world and under a constitution that does not tolerate overt communalism. This is the reason its supporters feel the need to trot out non-communal factors to justify the BJP's success.

Those who wanted the Trinamool Congress to win in Bengal and were fortunate to see it triumph over the BJP, did not pretend that it was welfarism or competent governance or messianic leadership that carried the day. They were just relieved that the divisive 'ideology' that is tearing this nation apart was stopped at one frontier. It is mostly the BJP and its backers who seek to find granular reasons for its electoral success. So what was the win of the BJP on March 10 due to?

The truth lies in front of us. What the BJP itself did and say to the voters, how its leaders behaved and what they said, is important. What they asked voters for and in the name of is relevant: the rest is punditry.

The Chief Minister of UP says "80 vs 20 is a reality. This is definitely an 80 vs 20 election." The dividing of Indians by religion for votes is a reality for the BJP and it pursues this reality. If it believed that votes would be won mostly on the basis of performance and delivery, why would it engage with such things? Again, this is a rhetorical question and it will be bizarre if one does not know the answer.

This month Haryana has become the seventh BJP state since 2018 to write up a bill against 'love jihad'. February 4, 2020, the Lok Sabha was told by the Union Home Minister that there were no 'love jihad' cases in India and that the phenomenon does not exist. So why are BJP states, including UP (which passed its 'love jihad' law in 2020) chasing a phantom? This question will only be asked by those who are innocent of what the BJP wants and what it does, which is the constant harassment of our minorities especially Muslims.

It is comical that instead of looking at what the BJP itself is saying to its voters, analysts and supporters look at tarot cards to divine what the factors for voting were.

The BJP has got more than 40 per cent of the votes in Uttar Pradesh in four consecutive elections (2014, 2017, 2019, and 2022). We are now asked to believe that this is on the basis of the UP government's performance and not the incessant focus on temple, beef, 'love jihad' and the violence they have produced.

Consider the fact that if communal mischief were not important or only marginal to the BJP's electoral success why their leaders would focus on it. Why put off minority voters if the burden of your song is development and delivery? The answer is that the burden of the BJP's song is not development and delivery. It is communalism and division and the stoking of hatred and even violence.

Consider also that this is successful and has been always. The BJP did not have a majority of its own in any state in India from the time that the party (as Jana Sangh) was founded till 1990, when Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and later Uttar Pradesh got BJP chief ministers. It had a national vote share in the single digits for four decades till it suddenly doubled to 18 per cent and then doubled again. What happened in a short time for the party to become nationally popular? Of course it was the movement that mobilised Hindus against the mosque in Ayodhya that was destroyed triggering pogroms across the country.

There was no delivery of services from any government and no competence to show in anything to the voter then, and there is none now.

Will this continue to attract voters in the future? This is interesting to consider, given that the Union government has made a total mess of the economy according to its own figures. Perhaps it will continue and perhaps it will not, we will see. But it would be a relief if we were not told that the BJP's success is not on the back of what the party's leaders themselves repeatedly demanded votes for but some mystical factors that have only now come to light in the wake of these results.

WISDOM CORNER

- One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between Man and Nature shall not be broken. **LEO TOLSTOY**
- The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measures to gauge spiritual progress. **RAMANA MAHARSHI**
- World belongs to humanity, not this leader, that leader or that king or prince or religious leader. World belongs to humanity. **DALAI LAMA**

WORDSWORTH

Sennight
Among Germanic peoples it was once normal to record the passage of time by the number of nights rather than days. Sennight is an abbreviation of the fuller phrase seven nights, hence a week. So Sir Thomas Malory wrote in Le Mort d'Arthur (1485): "They sojourned there a sennight, and were well eased of their wounds, and at the last departed." It has been written in various ways down the centuries, for example as sen'night, sevennight and sen-night, as in a letter written by Edward Gibbon in April 1777: "The day of my departure is not absolutely fixed; Sunday sen-night, the 27th instant, is talked of: but if any India business should come on after the Civil list, it will occasion some delay." The same process led to fortnight from fourteen nights. It's a quirk of the language that fortnight has survived as standard British English (though not American) while sennight is now defunct. It did last into the twentieth century in some areas as a dialect term, though eventually driven out from everyday life by competition with the shorter week. It has had some continuing existence as a deliberate archaism, especially in historical and fantasy novels: The tailor, she found after breakfast, was away on a trip. "Buying cloth up at the Count's fair," said his wife. "He's got a commission to make cloaks for the new council members, and has gone to buy cloth. He won't be home for a sennight or more." -- The Deed of Paksenarrion, by Elizabeth Moon, 1992.

LOL

Dealing with a juggler
A juggler, driving to his next performance, was stopped by the police. "What are those knives doing in your car?" asked the officer. "I juggle them in my act."



Jagdish Rattanani

THE DEFEAT IN PUNJAB OF BIGGIES GIVES THE NATURE OF THE MANDATE FOR AAP



Aakar Patel

Consider the fact that if communal mischief were not important or only marginal to the BJP's electoral success why their leaders would focus on it

SPECTRUM DISINFORMATION

How to disrupt the fake news market



Mohamed Suliman

BY CONNECTING AD PLACEMENT TO TRAFFIC, COMPANIES LIKE TWITTER, FACEBOOK, AND GOOGLE ARE FACILITATORS OF THE FAKE NEWS MARKET

After Russia invaded Ukraine, some young Americans created scam Instagram accounts that shared videos and photos about the unfolding events. Pretending to be journalists on the ground, they attracted millions of followers and profited from the ads placed on their pages before they were taken down. It was not an isolated incident; the opportunity to monetise by misleading is the basis of a massive fake news market.

The explosive growth of fake news is one of the most significant consequences of the internet's expansion. While creators of fake news have a range of motives - from political objectives to satire - the economic factor cannot be overlooked. According to a 2020 study by the Global Disinformation Index (GDI), European fake news sites earn more than \$76 million annually.

Fabricated content on the internet is monetised through a complex, decentralised network that involves actors ranging from major tech companies to small-scale TikTok creators. To understand how the system works, consider an example from the 2016 presidential election in the United States. In the months leading up to the election, young people in the Macedonian village of Veles produced fake news stories promoting the themes and positions of

Donald Trump's campaign. These writers mixed misinformation with real news to persuade readers of their stories' veracity. They then posted the stories to right-wing websites and generated traffic by linking the stories to social media platforms. As traffic grew, the stories attracted ad placements sold by big tech companies, generating revenue.

By connecting ad placement to traffic, companies like Twitter, Facebook, and Google are facilitators of the fake news market. But they are only part of the overall system. Ad tech companies are responsible for the environment that funds fake news.

In a 2019 study of the US ad tech industry, researchers concluded that the online advertising ecosystem encourages the promotion of fake news through its use of intermediaries. Advertisers rarely know where their ads end up, so major companies like tech firms, airlines, and retailers indirectly fund fake news websites. And the market's decentralised nature means these brands face no consequences if their ads run on sites that promote misinformation.

PR and marketing firms also play a role in expanding the market by offering money to celebrities to spread fake news. Over the past two years, marketing agencies have sought YouTubers and other social media influencers to spread

misinformation about COVID-19, particularly among young people.

Ad blockers can reduce the effect of fake news by limiting the number of people who see a promotion for a fake news story. But growing use of ad blockers also damages legitimate news websites that rely on advertising for revenue.

Much of the fake news market operates behind the scenes, so its overall size is not known with certainty. An analysis by NewsGuard and Comscore estimates that publishers of misinformation earn \$2.6 billion annually from big brands through advertising companies, and the GDI estimated that disinformation websites brought in \$250 million in advertising revenue in 2019.

The easiest way to combat the spread of fake news is to prevent it from generating income. Revcontent, a global leader in on-line content marketing, has announced that it will demonetise content rated as false by at least two international fact-checking organisations. This kind of intervention will have a more significant impact if it is adopted by big tech companies.

Exposing the networks that sustain this market is another way to confront the problem. The watchdog group Check My Ads has helped to pioneer this approach. Earlier this year, research from Check My Ads led Google to remove some accounts

that promoted misinformation about COVID-19 from its AdSense platform. A freely accessible database tracing funding sources would be an important tool in the fight against the misinformation market.

There is a strong argument that governments should tax platforms on the revenue they generate from fake news. But such a plan would be difficult to implement without a compelling definition of the targeted content. And Section 230 of the US Civil Code, which protects online platforms from liability for content published by third-party actors, further complicates the task of regulating the circulation of fake news.

The fake news market depends on the exchange of online attention for money. An effective strategy to combat it must reset this equation. While governments devise legal measures to hold content creators and marketers accountable for disseminating fake news, ordinary people also must take responsibility for their role in spreading misinformation. The best way to push market-driven companies and influencers to be more engaged with the content they promote is to stop buying what they're selling.

The writer is a senior disinformation researcher at the Northeastern University Civic AI Lab.
©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Advantage China

Sir, This refers to the article 'Putin and risk of WW-III', Orissa POST, March 12. International peace today depends to a great extent on Xi Jinping, not only in East Asia. While Russia intends to subdue, defeat or break up Ukraine, and the US, EU and Japan will defend Ukraine as much as they can without engaging their own military forces, China does have a choice. It could stand by Russia and use the occasion of turmoil in Europe to make its own push against Taiwan or in the South China Sea. This would greatly increase the risk of world war. Alternatively, it could put pressure on Russia by refusing to bail it out of the financial and economic trouble it now encounters, and try to compel it to allow Ukraine to survive as a sovereign nation. This would greatly enhance China's standing globally, but put its security vis-à-vis Russia at risk. Putin depends too much on China to accept Chinese mediation and would prefer a less powerful mediator. When pondering his options, Xi is most likely to stay on his middle way and abstain from choosing sides. If Xi stands aside and allows Putin's war to run its course, then he will prolong the current global crisis. The greatest non-event in the 20th century was World War-III. At present, it is Putin, Xi and Biden who carry the burden of preventing it from happening in this century.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

AAP's giant strides

Sir, Denigrated by many as an upstart, the nine-year-old Aam Aadmi Party has made giant strides in Indian politics. The landslide victory in Punjab is its first outside the home territory of Delhi, and the win can change the political landscape of the country. In fact, no party in Punjab has registered such a resounding win in the history of its polls. Coming on the heels of the year-long farmers' protest, AAP's grand performance is expected to give a big boost to its aspirations of becoming BJP's national alternative. Major factors like anti-incumbency, Bhagwant Mann's immense popularity among locals, and exporting the Delhi governance model to Punjab have contributed to AAP's thumping win. Meanwhile, the Punjab results are a big blow to PM Narendra Modi, who has relentlessly tried to undermine the Kejriwal government since 2014. As for the Congress, it has declined to an all-time low with the drubbing it has received in all the five states, and the results have pushed the Grand Old Party to the danger of facing existential crisis.
Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

national

of the day quote

The reduction (in the number of seats) of the BJP will continue. More than half the confusion and deceit has been cleared. The rest will be cleared in some days. The struggle will continue in public interest

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

BJP's landslide victory in Uttar Pradesh and three other states in the just concluded assembly poll reflect the people's unwavering trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to inclusive empowerment for all

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINISTER

The third budget of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) was aimed at an all-around development of the state, which was in a revival mode after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a step towards becoming a USD 1 trillion economy

UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CM

SHORT TAKES

12 injured

Patna: Some 12 people were injured after students from the Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) in Bihar set fire to four shops, two cars and a bike following a clash with employees of a store. The incident took place Friday night, and the injured included four medical students and a firefighter. The police said that the students hurled petrol bombs on the shop employees. However, four of them managed to escape. A couple of medical students went to buy noodles from a grocery store. As the owner of the shop was not present, they then asked the employees for a nearby medical shop.

Youth ends life

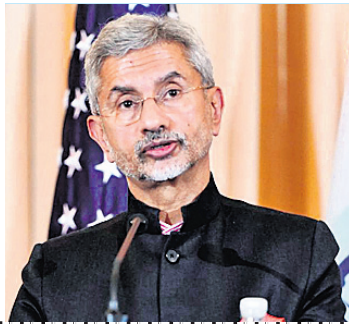
Gurugram: A 19-year-old student jumped to his death from the fifth floor of a society located in sector-102 of Gurugram, allegedly due to the fear of examinations. The student took the extreme step on Friday evening, police said. Tushar told his family that he was going to market to buy a pen for the examination, but jumped off the fifth floor. The victim was worried over his lack of preparation for the examination, the family said.

PFI member held

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate has arrested a PFI member from Kerala's Kozhikode airport while he was "trying to flee the country" as the agency probes him in a money laundering case linked to alleged raising of foreign funds for "anti-national" activities, official sources said Saturday. The immigration authorities at the airport had intercepted Abdul Razzak BP, a divisional president of the Popular Front of India's Perumpadappu unit in Malappuram, on March 9, acting on an Enforcement Directorate lookout circular (LOC) issued against him.

Constable dies

Patna: A constable of Bihar Military Police (BMP) died of a cardiac arrest, just a day after he underwent hair transplant here, an official said Saturday. The family members of the deceased claimed that he underwent hair transplant at a private clinic called 'Enhance' on Boring Canal Road on Wednesday and died due to the reaction of medicines the next day. The doctors and nursing staff of the private clinic have fled after the incident. Manoranjan Paswan, a native of Kamal Bigha village under Rajgir police station in Nalanda district and posted in Gaya, was in Patna for undergoing hair transplant.



Operation Ganga, undertaken at the direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has delivered due to both leadership and commitment. We are thankful to all those who facilitated its objectives

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

STALIN THANKS CENTRE

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Saturday thanked External Affairs Minister S.Jaishankar for bringing back safely the Indian students, including those from Tamil Nadu from Ukraine



CWC to meet today to discuss poll debacle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: The Congress Working Committee will meet Sunday to discuss the outcome of the Assembly elections in five states where the party received a drubbing, the sources said.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi will chair the meeting of the party's top decision-making body at its headquarters here at 4 pm tomorrow, they said.

The Congress lost Punjab to the AAP and could not win any of the four other states - Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur. The Sunday meeting is likely to see some fireworks as the G-23 leaders had suggested corrective measures after the previous round of assembly polls, when the party lost Puducherry and failed to make a mark in Kerala, Assam and West Bengal, but there had been little movement on that front.

The leaders of G-23, who have been demanding an organisational overhaul, had met Friday evening



The leaders of G-23, who have been demanding an organisational overhaul, had met Friday evening at the residence of senior leader Ghulam Nabi Azad to evolve their strategy ahead of the crucial CWC meeting

at the residence of senior leader Ghulam Nabi Azad to evolve their strategy ahead of the crucial CWC meeting. Azad and senior leader Anand Sharma are the two leaders of the group who are part of the CWC. Mukul Wasnik had initially

signed a letter from the group to Gandhi but has since kept his distance. The 'Group of 23', at their Friday meeting, expressed shock at the party's defeat. Sources said the leaders discussed the way forward and steps for the revival of the

Congress which has become even "more marginalised, weakened and isolated".

They also expressed dismay at the Congress leadership not taking any corrective steps to revive the party, they said. Some leaders were concerned that the report of the committee formed to evaluate the party's losses in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Puducherry was not even discussed.

Following the poll debacle, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who is among the G-23 leaders, had Thursday said it is clear that change is unavoidable.

"All of us who believe in INC India are hurting from the results of the recent assembly elections. It is time to reaffirm the idea of India that the Congress has stood for and the positive agenda it offers the nation. "And to reform our organisational leadership in a manner that will reignite those ideas and inspire the people. One thing is clear, change is unavoidable if we need to succeed," he had tweeted.

RS to get 19 hours of additional time

The House will sit from 11 am till 6 pm with a one-hour lunch break during the 19 scheduled sittings, while it sat from 10 am till 3 pm during the first part of the session



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: With the Budget session of Parliament resuming Monday, the Rajya Sabha will get 19 hours of additional time for business over the earlier schedule, officials said Saturday.

The House will sit from 11 am till 6 pm with a one-hour lunch break during the 19 scheduled sittings, while it sat from 10 am till 3 pm during the first part of the session. With this increase in the sitting time of one hour per sitting, the Upper House will get 64 hours and 30 minutes for transacting the government's legislative business and taking up the issues of public importance during the second part of the session, according to an official statement.

The House will have four days for Private Members' Business and the Question Hour will continue to be for an hour, while the Zero Hour, which was curtailed to half-an-hour during the first part of the session, will now be for an hour per sitting, the Rajya Sabha officials said. The Budget session resumes after a 30-day recess during which the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSCs) examined

the Demands for Grants of various ministries and departments.

Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu is likely to give an account of the working of the eight DRSCs of the Rajya Sabha during the recess in the House on Monday. The first part of the Budget session with 10 sittings concluded on February 11, with the House reporting a productivity of 101.4 per cent.

After the president's address to the members of both houses and the presentation of the Union Budget for 2022-23 on the first two days, the Rajya Sabha witnessed eight full consecutive sittings without disturbances and forced adjournments after about three years.

The previous such performance was during the first 13 sittings of the Monsoon session in 2019. No legislative business was proposed by the government during the first part of the Budget session given the time available and priorities like the debates on the Motion of 'Thanks to the president and the Union Budget.'

During the first part of the session, Naidu had urged the members to enable the House to function smoothly so that it could better the productivity of 94 per cent of last year's Budget session.

JD(U), NPF TO SUPPORT BJP IN MANIPUR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, March 12: The Janata Dal (United) and the Naga People's Front (NPF) Saturday announced to support the BJP-led government in Manipur, party sources said.

The JD(U), which fielded 38 candidates in the recent Assembly elections, won six seats, while the NPF, which put up 10 nominees won five seats against four seats it won in the 2017 Assembly polls. National office secretary of the JD(U), Mohammad Nisar, said in a statement that in the interest of the people of Manipur, the party has decided to support the BJP in the formation of the government.

The JD(U) would like to appeal to the BJP to honour the mandate reposed on the party and fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people of Manipur, the statement said. It said that the party legislators have unanimously elected Khumukcham Joykisan Singh as the leader of the legislature party of JD(U) in the presence of Afaq Ahmad Khan, national General Secretary, in-charge of northeast region.

NPF Secretary General Achumbemo Kikon said the party supports the BJP government keeping in mind its association with the saffron camp since 2017. NPF sources said the party is likely to seek a few Cabinet berths in the new ministry.

The BJP secured absolute majority on its own and retained power in Manipur for the second consecutive term by winning 32 seats in the 60-member Assembly. The BJP came to power in Manipur for the first time in 2017, in alliance with four National People's Party (NPP) MLAs, four NPF members, the lone Trinamool Congress MLA and an Independent member.

The BJP's estranged ally NPP, which won seven seats, has announced to play the role of opposition party in Manipur. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh Friday met Governor La Ganesan and resigned from his post.

SIMMERING TENSION



A man with his face painted with colours of the national flags of Russia and Ukraine, holds portraits of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy requesting them to stop the war, in Bhopal

Census: Citizens can self-enumerate online

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: The citizens of the country, if they wish, will be able to self-enumerate online in the upcoming census as the government has amended the rules that allowed the census schedule, which contains questions to be asked during the decennial exercise, to be both on paper and in electronic forms.

According to the Census (Amendment) Rules, 2022 issued late on Friday night, the phrase "electronic form" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in clause (R) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 - any information generated, sent, received or stored in media, magnetic, optical, computer memory, micro film, computer generated micro fiche or similar device.

Apart from allowing the provision of online self-enumeration, home visit by the enumerators for collecting census data will continue as in the past. The housing listing phase of the census and the exercise to update



Apart from allowing the provision of online self-enumeration, home visit by the enumerators for collecting census data will continue as in the past

the NPR were scheduled to be carried out across the country from April 1 to September 30, 2020, but got postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

According to the earlier schedule, the census would have its reference date as March 1, 2021 and in snow-bound Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, it would have been

October 1, 2020.

The census operation continues to be on hold and the government is yet to announce the new schedule. The new rules define self-enumeration as "filling-up, completion and submission of census schedule by respondents themselves".

In Rule 5, which deals with publishing of the census statis-

tics through publications of magnetic media, the word "media" has been replaced with "electronic or any other media". A clause has been added to Rule 6 to allow filling up of the census schedule through self-enumeration.

"Without prejudice to any other provisions of these rules, a person may fill-up, complete and submit the census schedule through self-enumeration," according to the rules notified by the Union home ministry. Rule 8 has an addition: "print media, electronic media, social media", to the list of modes for ensuring wide publicity for the exercise.

The earlier list only included radio, audio-visuals and posters. Rule 9 has been updated to allow the census schedules filled through self-enumeration to be kept along with the census schedules and the connected papers canvassed by the enumerators at the office of the director of census operations or at such other place that the census commissioner may direct for the processing of the data as collected.

Alliance Air's flight overshoots runway

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Jabalpur, March 12: An Alliance Air flight from Delhi carrying 55 passengers overshoot the runway by 10 meters while landing at the Jabalpur airport Saturday afternoon, aviation regulator DGCA officials said.

None of the 55 passengers or five crew members was injured, they said, adding the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has started an investigation. Following this incident, Alliance Air said it has de-registered the pilots of the flight and initiated a probe into the matter.

DGCA officials said the Delhi-Jabalpur flight was operated using a 70-seater ATR-72 aircraft.

Airport Director Kusum Das said that operations at the airport were suspended for four to five hours. In a statement, Alliance Air said during the operation of Alliance Air flight 9I 617 from Delhi to Jabalpur on March 12, it shot off the runway by 10 meters.

PIL filed to resume education of Ukraine-returned students

AS PER THE PETITIONER PRAVASI LEGAL CELL, THEY HAVE FILED THE PIL ON BEHALF OF 20,000 UKRAINE RETURNEE INDIAN STUDENTS FOR ALLOWING THEM TO JOIN MEDICAL COLLEGES IN THE COUNTRY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 12: A PIL was filed in the Delhi High Court seeking directions to the Centre and National Medical Commission to take measures to enable Ukraine-returned Medical students resume their education in India.

As per the petitioner Pravasi Legal Cell, they have filed the PIL on behalf of 20,000 Ukraine returnee Indian students for allowing them to join medical colleges in the country. The High Court agreed to hear the plea on March 21, the petitioner said.

The Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed through Adv M.P. Srivignesh highlighted the plight of the Indian medical students

rescued from war-hit Ukraine that has the potential of disrupting the careers of several thousand young men and women who have already gone through the trauma of being in the war zone.

It is submitted that thousands of Indian medical aspirants prefer Ukraine for medical education due to various factors including affordability, quality of education, and the license to practice abroad.

In Ukraine, Indian medical students also have no compulsion to give any medical entrance exam if they clear NEET. All the above factors make Ukraine a comfortable option for Indians.

Indian students who study in Ukraine also have the advantage



of getting to practice medicine in India. A medical degree earned from Ukraine is accepted by National Medical Commission on passing their Foreign Medical Graduates Examination (FMGE) exam.

According to the new rules of the FMGE, an MBBS aspirant can take up to 10 years to complete the programme apart from the minimum course work tenure of 4.5 years, candidates need to intern for two years - 12 months in the for-

ign medical institute where they are studying and another year of supervised internship in India, it stated.

As per the provisions of the National Medical Commission (Foreign Medical Graduate Licentiate) Regulations, 2021 the entire course, training, and internship or clerkship shall be done outside India in the same foreign medical institution throughout the course of study.

The provisions also state that no part of medical training and internship shall be done in India or in any country other than the one from where the primary medical qualification is obtained.

Further, it was submitted that at present there are no norms or

regulations in India to accommodate medical students, who were studying abroad and had to return to India midway, in Indian medical colleges in between an academic session.

Pointing out to a circular dated March 4, allowing payment of stipend to those who qualify for the Foreign Medical Graduate Exam in India, the PIL said, however, the above circular is not of much use to students who have been rescued from Ukraine as many of them are in the second, third or fourth year of studies and have not completed their degree yet. To qualify for the stipend, one has to complete the degree, appear for the exam, qualify and then get the internship.

Mann stakes claim to form government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 12: Punjab chief minister-designate Bhagwant Mann Saturday staked claim to form government in the state after meeting Governor Banwarilal Purohit here.

After the meeting, Mann told reporters outside the Raj Bhawan that he handed over a letter of support of his party MLAs to the governor who accepted it.

"We staked claim to form the government and the governor sahib approved it," said Mann.

The 48-year-old Mann was elected the AAP Legislature Party leader at a meeting of the party MLAs in Mohali Friday.

Mann said the swearing-in ceremony will be held at 12:30 pm March 16 at Khatkar Kalan, the ancestral village of legendary freedom fighter Bhagat Singh, in Nawanshahr district.

"We invite the people of Punjab (for the ceremony). Every Punjabi will take oath on that day...We will vow to sacrifice everything for the progress of Punjab," he said. "We will pay tributes to Bhagat Singh."

Replying to a question on the cabinet formation, Mann said, "The cabinet will be good. Historic decisions will be taken."

Mann has also invited AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for the



We invite the people of Punjab (for the ceremony). Every Punjabi will take oath on that day...We will vow to sacrifice everything for the progress of Punjab

BHAGWANT MANN, CM-DESIGNATE

Security of 122 ex-mins, MLAs to be withdrawn

Chandigarh: The Punjab Police has ordered the withdrawal of security cover of 122 former ministers and MLAs, days before AAP leader Bhagwant Mann takes over as the chief minister. Personnel deployed on specific orders of the courts will, however, not be withdrawn, the letter by the additional director general of police (security), dated March 11, to police commissioners, senior superintendents of police and other senior police officers mentioned. Prominent among those who stand to lose their security cover are former ministers Manpreet Singh Badal, Raj Kumar Verka, Bharat Bhushan Asnu, Brahm Mohindra, Sangat Singh Gilzian and former speaker KP Singh.

swearing-in ceremony.

Sunday, the two leaders will pay obeisance at the Golden Temple, Durgiana Mandir and Sri Ram Tirath Mandir.

They will take part in a road show in Amritsar to celebrate the AAP's stupendous victory in the polls and thank voters.

The AAP romped home by winning 92 seats in the 117-member Punjab Assembly.

Anger against existing parties led to AAP's win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: Disenchantment against established political parties, coupled with populist measures and leadership clarity, was among the primary reasons for the AAP's thumping poll victory in Punjab, but the party did not get the same traction in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh as the discontent was not high against the existing parties there, political analysts observed.

The AAP swept the Punjab assembly polls, results of which were announced Thursday, bagging 92 seats in the 117-seat assembly.

Several top leaders from the ruling Congress and opposition Shiromani Akali were trounced. Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, former CMs Parkash Singh Badal and Amarinder Singh, SAD leaders Sukhbir Singh Badal and Bikram Singh Majithia and Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu lost the polls. The AAP bagged 42 per cent of the total votes polled, while the first runner-up Congress and second runner-up SAD were way behind the AAP securing 23 and 18 per cent votes respectively.

Sanjay Kumar of the Centre for Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, said it is the combination of several factors that contributed to the AAP's stupendous performance. He said the percentage of votes bagged by the AAP in Punjab shows that there was massive disenchantment against the ruling Congress and the SAD.

But factors such as populist measures and leadership were also major determinants that led to the AAP's victory in Punjab, Kumar noted.



ANTI-INCUMBENCY

The AAP bagged 42 per cent of the total votes polled, while the first runner-up Congress and second runner-up SAD were way behind the AAP securing 23 and 18 per cent votes respectively

Several top leaders from Congress and SAD were trounced. CM Charanjit Singh Channi, former CMs Parkash Singh Badal and Amarinder Singh, SAD leaders Sukhbir Singh Badal and Bikram Singh Majithia and Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu lost the polls

The AAP has promised 300 units of free electricity, education and health reforms on the lines of Delhi.

On the leadership front, the party projected AAP national convener and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal as the party leader and Bhagwant Mann as its CM candidate for Punjab. This is not for the first time that the AAP tried to sell the Delhi model of governance. In 2017, it tried hard to sell the model in Punjab but could only bag 20 seats.

It contested Goa and Gujarat assembly polls in 2017, Maharashtra and Haryana assembly polls in 2019 but failed to win even one seat.

Political scientist Suhas Palshikar said leadership or populist measures were not the primary factors behind the AAP's victory in Punjab. "Disenchantment against the existing ruling parties was the major reason behind AAP's feat," he said. Palshikar pointed out that 2022 was the AAP's second attempt to secure power in Punjab.

For the first time, AAP's four MPs got elected to Lok Sabha in 2014 from Punjab, not Delhi. In 2017, the AAP secured 20 seats and 23 per cent votes, bagging the honour of becoming an opposition party in its very first attempt. So the party was

not starting from scratch in Punjab, said Palshikar, who is a former professor of political science at the Savitribai Phule University, Pune.

He noted that Delhi has a large section of people who have connection with Punjab. A lot of Sikhs from Delhi also hail from Punjab, so there is a natural connect in what happens in Delhi and Punjab, Palshikar added. The AAP secured a second term in Delhi, bagging more than two-thirds seats in the national capital in 2020.

Uttara Sahashrabudde, a political science professor at the Mumbai University, echoes Palshikar. "The kind of disillusionment against the established parties which was seen in Punjab was not seen in Goa," Sahashrabudde said. "The way Amarinder Singh was sacked as the chief minister and internal squabbles too contributed to the Congress defeat," she said. On the other hand, the AAP looked united.

'Panches, sarpanches soft targets for militants'

Three local elected representatives have been killed by terrorists in the Union Territory this month

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, March 12: Panches and sarpanches are soft targets for militants as around 90 per cent of them do not have personal security officers but the police are taking steps to ensure their safety, Kashmir's IGP Vijay Kumar said Saturday.

His remarks came a day after a sarpanch was shot dead by militants in Adoura in south Kashmir's Kulgam district. This was the third killing of a local elected representative in the union territory this month.

"Panches and sarpanches are a



soft target as about 90 per cent of them do not have a PSO (personal security officer). We have provided secure accommodation in Srinagar to those who face a threat. Some have been put up in district headquarters," Kumar told reporters here.

Referring to Friday's killing in Kulgam, the inspector general of police said the sarpanch was given a secure accommodation at a hotel here but he left without informing the police. "We regret it. I went to Kulgam and took a (review)

meeting there, discussed the preventive measures and dos and don'ts. We will try our best to keep all the PRIs or PPs (protected persons) safe so that they can work in a safe environment," he said.

According to officials, terrorists fired upon the sarpanch, Shabir Ahmad Mir, near his residence in Adoura around 8.50 pm Friday.

March 9, an Independent sarpanch, Sameer Bhat, was shot dead by terrorists on the outskirts of Srinagar. March 2, terrorists

shot dead an Independent panchayat member, Mohammad Yaqub Dar, in Kulgam's Strandoo area.

Kumar said in every encounter, there is at least one Pakistani militant. Pakistan has instructed militants to carry out attacks near religious places so that they suffer some damage and people's religious sentiments are stirred.

"Pakistan wants to create law and order problems. The militants are carrying out such activities on the directions of Pakistan. We are taking preventive measures and carrying out operations without any loss (damage) to religious places or any collateral damage," he said.

A Pakistani militant of Lashkar-e-Taiba was killed in a brief shootout with police near the Hazratbal shrine here Thursday. His aim was to attack the shrine guard and snatch his weapon, Kumar had said.



People wearing masks pose with water cannons at a shop, ahead of Holi, in Jammu, Saturday.

PTI PHOTO

20,000-capacity lodgements for Amarnath pilgrims soon

The 2020 and 2021 yatras to the shrine situated at an altitude of 3,880 metre were conducted on symbolic basis due to Covid pandemic, and this year the number of pilgrims is expected to be very high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, March 12: The Jammu and Kashmir administration is making arrangements to create 20,000-capacity lodgements. A 3000-bedded yatri niwas has been constructed at Chanderkote in Ramban district by the shrine board and it will give a major boost to the lodgment capacity for pilgrims along the Yatra route, he said. He said Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) has introduced IT interventions to ensure the safety of intending pilgrims.

The board has decided to use Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) for tracking movement of vehicles and pilgrims during this year's pilgrimage to the revered shrine, housing the naturally formed ice-Shivalingam, the officer said. He said the RFID tag cards will be issued to all the pilgrims. During the meeting, the participants suggested laying special focus on cleanliness of market areas, religious places and the city besides better lighting arrangements, more lodgment centres, and better control room services, an official spokesman said. They suggested distributing



pamphlets with information regarding tourist destinations in the districts of Jammu division at Lakhanpur - the gateway to Jammu and Kashmir bordering Punjab, the spokesman said.

To make the yatra more comfortable for the pilgrims, he said the participants also suggested conducting the checking and tagging of vehicles only at Lakhanpur if the documents are complete and said there should be no further checking at any other checkpoint.

The participants advised for starting the chopper service from Jammu, permitting tourists to visit destinations of other districts and easing of the langer (community kitchen) permission process, the spokesman said. They also suggested starting special vehicle services for yatris to visit local tourist destinations, he said.

He said all the participants assured full cooperation to the administration for making the yatra successful.

Will Punjab help Delhi get rid of pollution?

DELHI CM ARVIND KEJRIWAL HAS ALL ALONG BLAMED STUBBLE BURNING IN NEIGHBOURING HARYANA AND PUNJAB FOR AIR POLLUTION IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 12: With the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) set to form the government in Punjab, can Delhi expect to breathe fresh air in the winters?

Will Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has all along blamed stubble burning in neighbouring Haryana and Punjab for the air pollution in the national capital, ensure that his party's government does not let 'parali' (stubble) burning add to Delhi's problem this winter?

With a very small window available for the farmers in Punjab and Haryana between harvesting paddy and sowing of wheat, every year, the beginning of the winter season witnesses agro-waste burning in Haryana and Punjab, and the meteorological conditions bring that pollution towards Delhi.

The situation worsens further as and when the cold/fog condition aids in stagnation of the pollutants. Perception over the years has been that it is only the 'parali' burning in the fields of Punjab and Haryana which is responsible for Delhi's air pollution, whereas science has established other sources of emissions too.

Aarti Khosla, Director, Climate Trends, an advocacy NGO working on the issue of air pollution and climate change, said: "If they (AAP government) really take it as a top priority, if they can really set up some kind of a governance mechanism for better coordination quickly, it will be a good possibility that can be explored."



AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said, "As we have done in Delhi, we would push for biodecomposters in Punjab. We would think of offering subsidy or give them for free to the farmers and also include machines such as happy seeders that can help tackle the problem."

When his attention was drawn towards the problem of collection of agro-waste from the farmers' fields, Bhardwaj said, "We will need to work it out with the industry that utilises agro-waste to come up with products and push them to collect them from the farmers' fields."

Delhi Minister Satyender Jain said, "Now that AAP is in power in

Perception over the years has been that it is only stubble burning which is responsible for Delhi's air pollution, whereas science has established other sources of emissions too

Punjab too, we will plan better and coordinate better." However, it is easier said than done as stubble burning is just one part of the larger picture. The sources of emission for

Delhi include transport, power plants around Delhi, local sources, brick kilns and of course, stubble burning.

Khosla agreed that crop burning is part of the problem and said, "But when it is a problem, it is very significant in terms of contribution, as it can go to as high as 40 per cent. In terms of public perception, it captures a lot of attention as this is a very significant issue."

"So, given the enormity of the problem, addressing the complex issue of stubble burning will be a big task. It might be small in the overall picture, but in absolute terms, it is a big problem and it won't be a bad idea if AAP can address it in some measures."

of the day quote

Ayurveda must provide patient-oriented outcomes and move beyond its glorious past to realise its full potential

SARBANANDA SONOWAL | AYUSH MINISTER

Not everything may be likeable or agreeable about history, but it's necessary to study it to strengthen our roots and lay the foundation for the future

MEENAKASHI LEKHI | UNION MINISTER

Had there been a triangular contest in Uttar Pradesh then the results would have been as per the expectations of BSP. Then BJP could have been stopped from coming to power. In all, the Muslim community was with BSP but its vote went to SP

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

Sarpanch escapes militant attack

Srinagar: A sarpanch escaped unhurt on Saturday after militants fired at him in J&K's Pulwama district. Police sources said militants fired at Sarpanch, Ghulam Nabi Kumar in Arihal village of Pulwama district Saturday afternoon, but he escaped unhurt.

Fake call centre busted

Gurugram: In a major breakthrough, a team from the cyber crime police station of Gurugram Police has busted a fake call centre and arrested 38 persons, including nine women, who used to dupe people on the pretext of recovering loans given via online Chinese and other loan applications.

3-yr-old girl raped

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested a 21-year-old man for raping a 3-year-old girl child in the national capital, an official said here Saturday. According to the official, the incident took place on Friday morning at the Punjabi Bagh area of west Delhi after which the girl child was admitted to a nearby hospital.

Six arrested

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested six persons and busted a human trafficking racket that was helping Rohingyas Muslims enter India and settle down on the basis of forged documents.

CRPF jawan killed

Srinagar: Terrorists shot dead a CRPF personnel in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir Saturday, police said. At about 7:35 pm, terrorists fired upon CRPF personnel, Mukhtar Ahmad, at his home in Check Chopipora area of Shopian in south Kashmir.



Farmers will take what they want. If it is not given through talks, they would take it through a fight. They cannot be muzzled. They know how to get their demands met. If these demands are not met, they would again resume their agitation

SATYA PAL MALIK | GOVERNOR OF MEGHALAYA

ZERO COVID DEATHS IN LAST 24 HRS IN TN SINCE APRIL 30, 2020

Tamil Nadu did not report any Covid-19 death in the past 24-hour period for the first time since April 30, 2020, according to the state public health department



PHONE TAPPING CASE

Cops to grill Fadnavis



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 12: The Mumbai cyber police have issued a notice to senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis, asking him to appear before them Sunday in connection with a case of alleged illegal tapping of phones, an official said Saturday.

Fadnavis, however, said that a senior police officer called to inform him that police will visit his residence to take the required information and there was no need for him to visit the BKC cyber police station.

Phones of political leaders, including state Congress chief Nana Patole, minister Bachchu Kadu, former MLA Ashish Deshmukh, former MP Sanjay Kakade and others were tapped illegally by IPS officer Rashmi Shukla, when she was the state intelligence chief, Maharashtra home minister Dilip

Walse Patil had alleged last month. "In the notice issued to Fadnavis, police have said that questionnaires were earlier sent to him in sealed envelopes in connection with the case, but he did not respond to them. Besides, notices were also issued to him twice to seek his reply, but he had again failed to reply," the police official said.

In addition to this, three letters were sent to Fadnavis, reminding him to appear before the police. However, he failed to give any reply. In the fresh notice, he has been asked to appear before the cyber police on Sunday, he said.

A case was registered under the Official Secrets Act at the BKC cyber police station in Mumbai last year against unidentified persons for allegedly illegally tapping phones and leaking confidential documents. The complaint was lodged by the State Intelligence

The former Chief Minister said the notice was served to him because he had exposed the MVA government of Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress

Department (SID).

However, before the FIR was registered, the then Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte had alleged in his inquiry report that IPS officer Rashmi Shukla had leaked the confidential report.

Shukla is accused of tapping phones of political leaders and senior officials illegally when she was chief of the SID. She found herself at the centre of controversy after Fadnavis cited a letter purportedly written by her to the then Maharashtra Director General of Police about alleged corruption in transfers in the police department.

The letter also had details of intercepted phone calls, leading to an uproar with leaders of the Shiv Sena-led ruling coalition alleging that Shukla tapped phones without permission.

In April last year, the Mumbai police had summoned Shukla for interrogation before the BKC cyber cell. She did not turn up citing the coronavirus pandemic. In May, a team from the Mumbai cyber police recorded her statement in Hyderabad in connection with the phone tapping leak case.

Earlier in the day, Fadnavis, who is the Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly, told reporters that he had received the notice and he would visit the police station at 11 am on Sunday as being asked.

Woman kills husband, keeps head in temple

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, March 12: A woman allegedly beheaded her 50-year-old husband and kept the blood-soaked head in a plastic bag at the family's temple in Tripura's Khowai district in the wee hours of Saturday, a police officer said.

While Khowai Superintendent of Police Bhanupada Chakraborty said the reason behind the killing is not yet known, the couple's elder son said his mother has developed a psychological disorder recently and underwent treatment by a local occultist.

The 42-year-old woman was arrested from their residence at Indira Colony village of the district. She was living there with her husband Rabindra Tanti, a daily wager, and two minor sons.

"My mother had always been a vegetarian. But she had chicken last night and all of us went to sleep. Suddenly I woke up and saw my father was beheaded. I was shocked to see my mother was standing with a blood-soaked dao (a sharp weapon). When we raised an alarm, she rushed out of the room and kept my father's head in our temple," the elder son said.

She then confined herself to a room from where the police arrested her.

"We have recovered the body and arrested the woman. An investigation has started," the SP said. A forensic team has visited the place and collected pieces of evidence, he said. About the mental illness of the accused, Chakraborty said he cannot comment on that without a doctor's report.

India, China agree to continue talks



Sources in the defence and security establishment said the talks failed to yield any significant outcome

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: India and China could not make any significant headway in resolving the outstanding issues on the remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh at the 15th round of military talks but agreed to maintain the dialogue to reach a mutually acceptable resolution at the earliest.

A day after the nearly 13-hour meeting, the two sides in a joint statement on Saturday reaffirmed that such a resolution would help restore peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh and facilitate progress in bilateral relations.

The 15th round of Corps-

Commander level talks took place at the Chushul-Moldo border point on the Indian side of the LAC in eastern Ladakh Friday.

Sources in the defence and security establishment said the talks failed to yield any significant outcome.

"They reaffirmed that such a resolution would help restore peace and tranquillity along the LAC in the Western Sector and facilitate progress in bilateral relations," the joint statement, released simultaneously in Delhi and Beijing, said.

The government refers to eastern Ladakh as Western Sector. "The two sides also agreed to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector in the interim. They agreed to maintain dialogue via military and diplomatic channels to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest," it said.

The previous round of talks had taken place on January 12 and it too had failed to make any progress in resolving the outstanding issues.

NEET PG EXAM

Govt okays reduction of cut off by 15 percentile

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 12: The Union health ministry has approved the reduction of cut off by 15 percentile, across all categories for the NEET PG exam.

In an official communication to the National Board of Examinations, the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) has said that it has been decided by the health ministry to reduce the cut off by 15 percentile across all categories.

"After due discussion and deliberations, it has been decided by the MoHFW in consultation with NMC with prior approval from HFM to reduce the cut-off by 15 percentile across all categories i.e. the qualifying percentile for general category may be reduced to 35th percentile, for PH(Genl) to 30th percentile and for reserved category (SC/ST/OBC) be reduced to 25th

percentile," said the MCC's letter to the NBE with the name of Dr B Srinivas, ADG (ME) and member secretary MCC.

Welcoming the government step, Dr Rohan Krishnan, President of the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) Doctors Association, said that the cut off has been reduced to 15 percentile for all categories which is a good step.

"The examination was delayed twice due to Covid and the counselling process was also delayed due to the pandemic and court cases. This is the admission of 2021 batch which is taking place in 2022 due to delay. Still around 6,500 seats are vacant so we were expecting such steps from the government," he said.

Talking about the impact the cut off reduction would have on the students, he said: "Reducing the cut off does not mean reducing the merit criteria any way."



ON CLOUD NINE



Students, who were stuck in war-torn Ukraine being greeted by their relatives, upon their arrival at Srinagar airport, in Srinagar

PTI PHOTO

4 terrorists killed, one arrested in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, March 11: Four terrorists, including a Pakistani commander of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), were killed and another was arrested during three separate encounters with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, police said Saturday.

The encounters took place in Pulwama, Ganderbal and Kupwara

districts of Kashmir Valley, a police spokesman said. In Pulwama, acting on specific information regarding the presence of terrorists in village Chewaklan, a cordon and search operation was launched by security forces, the spokesman said.

As the search party moved towards local Darul Uloom Islamic seminary, terrorists hiding inside fired indiscriminately upon the

search party in which one civilian suffered gunshot injuries.

The injured civilian was identified as Zahoor Ahmad Shergoiji, a resident of Chewaklan. He was taken to a hospital where his condition was stated to be stable. The security forces retaliated the fire leading to an encounter, the spokesman said.

"Keeping the sanctity of the institution in mind, the operation

was carried out with all due precautions and deliberations. In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of the encounter," he said.

The slain terrorists were identified as Pakistani terrorist commander Kamaal Bhai alias Jatt and Aqib Mushtaq alias Usman Hyder, a resident of Karimabad in Pulwama.

After landslide win, delighted AAP looks to south India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has decided to launch a massive membership drive in the southern states to build on the momentum of its stupendous victory in the Punjab Assembly polls.

The party will start its membership drive in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep, senior AAP leader Somnath Bharti said Friday.

"After the thunderous victory of the AAP in Punjab, people from the southern regions have started

showing interest in the politics of our party. We are receiving an unprecedented response from southern India," he said here.

"Seeing the mood of the people and taking into account the response that our teams in the southern states have been receiving, we have decided to launch membership campaigns throughout the region," he added.

Bharti said the membership drive will be carried out by the party's local teams. "These campaigns will actively penetrate deep into Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep," he said.



"I call upon all those who feel the need to bring a change in India's politics to join the AAP and be a part of the revolution," he said.

Bharti said the party has also decided to take out foot marches across the southern states in phases. "This sequence will begin on

After the thunderous victory of the AAP in Punjab, people from the southern regions have started showing interest in the politics of our party. We are receiving an unprecedented response from southern India

SOMNATH BHARTI | SENIOR AAP LEADER

April 14 on BR Ambedkar's birth anniversary with our first foot march in Telangana. We will cover each and every Assembly con-

stituency of the region. Through these foot marches, we will take the politics of (Arvind) Kejriwalji and the ideals of Babasaheb and Bhagat Singh to every resident of the region," he added.

Bharti said the party will highlight the difference it has made in the lives of the people of Delhi. The AAP has its units in Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The party had contested the Karnataka and Telangana Assembly polls in 2018 as part of its efforts to make inroads into south India but could not open its account.

international

SAUDI BLOGGER, ACTIVIST FREED AFTER A DECADE

Saudi Arabia confirmed Saturday a 10-year travel ban for freed blogger and human rights activist Raif Badawi, who has become a symbol of freedom of expression around the world. Badawi, now 38, who was arrested and detained in Saudi Arabia in 2012 on charges of "insulting Islam", was released Friday. At the end of 2014, Badawi was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 50 lashes a week for 20 weeks. His first flogging in the kingdom's Jeddah square shocked the world and was described by the United Nations as "cruel and inhuman". After the outcry, he was not lashed again



WAR AT KYIV'S DOORSTEP



AS THE RUSSIAN INVASION ENTERED ITS THIRD WEEK, ITS FORCES KEPT UP THEIR BOMBARDMENT OF CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SATELLITE IMAGES SHOWED THEM FIRING ARTILLERY AS THEY ADVANCED ON KYIV. AIR RAID SIRENS BLARED ACROSS MOST UKRAINIAN CITIES SATURDAY MORNING URGING PEOPLE TO SEEK SHELTERS. RUSSIAN ROCKET ATTACKS DESTROYED A UKRAINIAN AIRBASE AND HIT AN AMMUNITION DEPOT NEAR THE TOWN OF VASYLKV IN THE KYIV REGION

'12,000 US TROOPS MOVED ALONG RUSSIAN BORDERS'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington: US President Joe Biden said he has moved 12,000 troops along the borders with Russia -- Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania et cetera... Granted, if we respond it is World War three. But we have a sacred obligation on NATO territory... although we will not fight a third World War in Ukraine." "The idea that we're going to send in offensive equipment and have planes and tanks and trains going in with American pilots and American crews, just understand -- and don't kid yourself, no matter what you all say -- that's called World War Three," he said.

Addressing members of the House Democratic Caucus on Friday, Biden stressed over "not fighting a third World War in Ukraine" but avowed sending an "unmistakable message that we will defend every inch of NATO territory".

Biden said the people of Ukraine have demonstrated remarkable bravery and courage in the face of a Russian military offensive but the security assistance that the US provides has been critical in their defence. "And as we provide support to Ukraine, we're going to continue to stand together with our allies in Europe and send an unmistakable message that we will defend every inch of NATO territory with a united galvanized NATO," the US president said. "That's why

Direct confrontation between NATO and Russia is World War III. Something we must strive to prevent

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US



REUTERS

Lviv, March 12: Conflict raged northwest of Kyiv Saturday and other cities were encircled and under heavy shelling, while Ukrainian officials said fighting and threats of Russian air attacks were endangering attempted evacuations. Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk had said the government planned to use agreed humanitarian corridors out of the besieged southern port city of Mariupol as well as towns and vil-

lages in the regions of Kyiv, Sumy and some other areas. But the governor of the Kyiv region said fighting and threats of Russian air attacks were continuing during evacuation attempts and the Donetsk region's governor said constant shelling was complicating bringing aid into Mariupol. An adviser to the Ukrainian presidency said earlier that 79 evacuation buses and two trucks with humanitarian cargo had left for Sumy Saturday. Buses and trucks also left Zaporizhzhia for Mariupol,

BULK OF RUSSIAN GROUND FORCES OUTSIDE KYIV, SAYS UK
UKRAINE SAYS HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS THREATENED
US SANCTIONS HIT TOP KREMLIN STAFF, OLIGARCHS
OVER 1,300 UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN KILLED

a video released by the deputy head of the Ukrainian presidential ad-

ministration on social media showed. Ukraine said it expected a new wave of attacks on the regions around the capital Kyiv, the country's second city Kharkiv and Donbass in the east, where Russian-backed separatists have expanded their control. Britain's defence ministry said Friday that Russian forces could target the capital Kyiv in a few days. In an update Saturday, it said fighting northwest of the capital continued, with the bulk of Russian ground forces 25 km (16 miles)

from the centre. The cities of Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Sumy and Mariupol remained encircled under heavy Russian shelling, it said. The bombardment has trapped thousands of people in besieged cities and sent 2.5 million Ukrainians fleeing to neighbouring countries. Russian President Vladimir Putin launched the invasion Feb 24 in an operation that has been near universally condemned around the world and that has drawn tough Western sanctions on Russia.

Putin talks with Macron and Scholz

Russian President Vladimir Putin Saturday slammed what he said was the "flagrant violation" of international humanitarian law by Ukraine's forces as he held phone talks with the leaders of France and Germany, the Kremlin said. "Putin informed (them) about the real state of affairs" in Ukraine, his office said in a statement. "In particular, numerous examples of the flagrant violation of the norms of international humanitarian law by Ukrainian security forces were cited," the statement said. "At the same time, nationalist battalions are systematically disrupting operations to rescue the population, intimidating civilians during evacuation attempts," the Kremlin said. Putin urged France's Emmanuel Macron and Germany's Olaf Scholz to pressure Kyiv authorities into halting these "criminal activities," the Kremlin said.

Zelenskyy open for talks with Putin

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he's open for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Israel, but only if there is a cease-fire in place. Zelenskyy said Saturday he told Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett that he would be ready to meet Putin in Jerusalem. Bennett visited Moscow for a meeting with Putin and spoke repeatedly with Zelenskyy and the leaders of France and Germany as he sought to help mediate an end to the war. Zelenskyy said Bennett informed him about his talks with Putin, adding that he can't share details. Putin has ignored numerous previous offers of talks from Zelenskyy.

ZELENSKY'S APPEAL TO RUSSIAN MOTHERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy Saturday called on the mothers of Russian soldiers to prevent their sons being sent to war in Ukraine. "I want to say this once again to Russian mothers, especially mothers of conscripts. Do not send your children to war in a foreign country," Zelenskyy said in a video address released on Telegram. "Check where your son is. And if you have the slightest suspicion that your son could be sent to war against Ukraine, act immediately" to prevent him being killed or captured, he said. "Ukraine never wanted this terrible war. And Ukraine does

'CHECK WHERE YOUR SON IS'

not want it. But it will defend itself as much as necessary," he added. Wednesday, Russia for the first time acknowledged the presence of conscripts in Ukraine and announced that a number of them had been taken prisoner. Moscow had previously claimed that only professional soldiers were fighting there. The announcement came as posts from mothers without news of their sons sent to Ukraine multiplied on social networks. Kyiv last week invited mothers of



Zelenskyy furious as Mayor abducted

Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called Saturday on the leaders of France and Germany to help secure the release of the mayor of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, who Kyiv says was abducted by invading Russian forces. "During the night and today we are talking to our partners about the situation with our mayor. Our demand is clear: he must be released immediately... I have already phoned (German) Chancellor Olaf Scholz. I have spoken to (French) President Emmanuel Macron... I will speak to all the necessary people to get our people released," Zelenskyy said in a video released by the Ukrainian presidency. "Do you hear, Moscow? If 2,000 people demonstrate in Melitopol against the occupation, how many are there in Moscow against the war?" he said in his video.

Russian soldiers captured on its territory to come and pick their children up. The Ukrainian defence ministry published phone numbers and an email through which they could obtain information about them. Kyiv claims to have taken dozens of prisoners since the start of the Russian invasion.

SHORT TAKES

Deuba thanks Modi

Kathmandu: Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba Saturday expressed gratitude to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government for evacuating four Nepalese nationals stranded in Ukraine amidst the military offensive by Russia. The evacuation of the Nepalese students was done as part of India's 'Operation Ganga' that was launched to bring back the Indians stuck in Ukraine after Russia launched a military attack February 24.

Chile gets its youngest Prez

Santiago: Left-leaning former student leader Gabriel Boric was sworn in as Chile's new President Friday, vowing to oversee a political and economic renovation of a nation shaken by repeated massive protests over inequality in recent years despite a relatively vibrant economy. At 36, Boric is the youngest president in the history of the South American nation.

Outbreak in China

Beijing: Mainland China reported more than 1,500 new local Covid-19 infections Saturday, the most since the first nationwide outbreak in early 2020, as the Omicron variant prompted Beijing to introduce self-testing kits for the first time.

Iran: US has failed to stop oil exports

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Tehran, March 12: Iran said Saturday that US attempts to seize its tankers and oil cargo had failed to stop exports that are subject to sanctions imposed by its arch foe. The comments by Iran's oil minister, Jawad Owji, came after US court documents showed the United States had seized the cargo of two tankers accused of carrying Iranian crude. "Attempts by the enemy to reduce Iran's oil exports and capture the country's ships have taken place many times" in past months, Owji said. "When the enemy saw that it was helpless and could not stop our exports and contracts, it went for our ships," he said. Court documents that have been made public showed US authorities

seized several weeks ago 700,000 barrels of oil which they said had left Iran in 2020 before being transferred to other vessels to avoid detection. The United States had previously issued a number of warrants to seize the cargo of tankers carrying Iranian oil to different countries. It confirmed in August 2020 the seizure of fuel aboard four tankers sent by Iran to Venezuela. "Now you have heard one or two cases, but several other similar cases have occurred, which fortunately were thwarted by the good strength of the armed forces," Owji said. The latest announcement comes against the backdrop of a pause in negotiations to restore the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers.

ACCIDENTAL MISSILE FIRING

The Pakistan Foreign Office said that the incident raises several fundamental questions regarding security protocols and technical safeguards against accidental or unauthorised missile launch in a nuclearised environment

REUTERS

Islamabad, March 12: Pakistan on Saturday demanded a joint probe into a missile India said it accidentally fired into its territory, rejecting New Delhi's decision to

Pak demands joint investigation



hold an internal inquiry into the incident and calling on the international community to play a role. "Such a serious matter cannot be addressed with the simplistic explanation proffered by the Indian authorities," Pakistan's foreign office said in a statement. "Pakistan demands a joint probe to accurately establish the facts surrounding the incident," it added.

India said Friday it had accidentally fired the missile into Pakistan this week because of a "technical malfunction" during routine maintenance, giving its version of events after Pakistan warned New Delhi of "unpleasant consequences." The international community must play its "due role in promoting stability in a nuclearised en-

vironment", the foreign office statement from Pakistan said, warning of "dire consequences" if any misinterpretation by one of the sides lead to an escalation. Military experts have in the past warned of the risk of accidents or miscalculations by the nuclear-armed neighbours, which have fought three wars and engaged in numerous smaller armed clashes, usually over the disputed territory of Kashmir. Pakistan demanded clarifications from India over its safety mechanism to prevent accidental missile launches, and whether it was appropriately handled by its armed forces. According to the US-based Arms Control Association, the missile's range is between 300 km (186 miles) and 500 km (310 miles), making it capable of hitting Islamabad from a northern Indian launch pad.

Queen Elizabeth to miss Commonwealth Service post-Covid

BRITAIN'S QUEEN, WHO HAS RARELY BEEN SEEN IN PUBLIC SINCE OCTOBER LAST YEAR WHEN SHE HAD AN UNSCHEDULED OVERNIGHT STAY IN HOSPITAL, TURNS 96 NEXT MONTH

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

London, March 12: Queen Elizabeth II's heralded return to major public duties has been put on hold, as royal officials announced Friday she would not attend next week's Commonwealth Day service. The 95-year-old monarch had been scheduled to attend the annual event at Westminster Abbey in central London Monday afternoon, joined by some 1,500 guests. Her expected attendance had been seen as a return to work after a period of fragile health,

during which she had a mild bout of Covid. But Buckingham Palace said "after discussing the arrangements with the Royal Household, the Queen has asked the Prince of Wales to represent Her Majesty" instead. Prince Charles, 73, is the queen's eldest son and heir, who is expected to take over from her as head of the 54-nation Commonwealth when he becomes king.

The Queen tested positive for coronavirus February 20, and developed what the palace said were "mild" Covid symptoms, which forced her to cancel a series of virtual audiences. But she was well enough last week to meet visiting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

in person at her Windsor Castle home west of London. The palace gave no reason for her pull-out of Monday's event, adding: "The Queen will continue with other planned engagements, including in-person audiences, in the week ahead." The queen last month became the first British monarch in history to reign for 70 years. Public events for her Platinum Jubilee are planned for early June. She is the queen and head of state in Britain and 14 other Commonwealth nations or realms around the world, including

Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Her position as head of the Commonwealth grouping, which comprises about a quarter of the world's population, has made her an enduring global figure. Monday's event would have seen her alongside Charles, other senior royals, as well as leading British politicians, and senior foreign diplomats. The last Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey was held in March 2020, as coronavirus cases spiralled and just before Britain locked down for the first time.



of the day quote

As many as 67 companies have made applications for being a part of the PLI for MMF and technical textiles and against our expectations of over ₹19,000 crore investments, these companies have shown that they would be investing like ₹22,000-23,000 crore in the MMF and technical textiles

UP SINGH | TEXTILES SECRETARY

We are very excited to partner with Lighthouse and look forward to learning from their deep consumer insights, developed through a focused investment approach

VIKAAS GUTGUTIA | FOUNDER & MD, FNP

Our aspirations for India are not just related to products, they are related to running global businesses out of India. We are running complete businesses out of India. We are disproportionately invested in India, and that trend will continue

SHANTANU NARAYEN | CHAIRMAN AND CEO, ADOBE

SHORT TAKES

Forex reserves rise by \$394mn

New Delhi: The country's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$394 million to \$631.92 billion in the week ended March 4, the RBI data showed. In the previous week ended February 25, the reserves had declined by \$1.425 billion to \$631.527 billion. It touched a lifetime high of \$642.453 billion in the week ended September 3, 2021. During the reporting week, the gain in the reserves was due to a rise in the foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) weekly data released on Friday showed. FCA increased by \$634 million to \$565.466 billion in the week ended March 4.

India, Canada to re-launch FTA talks

New Delhi: India and Canada Friday agreed to formally re-launch the negotiations for a proposed free trade agreement, which aims at boosting economic ties between the two countries. This issue was discussed during the fifth Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment (MDTI). Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Canadian Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade Mary Ng co-chaired the meet. The two countries also agreed to consider an interim agreement or early progress trade agreement that could bring early commercial gains to both the countries.

Ruchi Soya to unveil FPO soon

New Delhi: Edible oil firm Ruchi Soya, which is owned by Baba Ramdev-led Patanjali Ayurved, will hit the capital market with its follow-on public offer (FPO) March 24 to raise up to ₹4,300 crore. In a regulatory filing late Friday, Ruchi Soya said a committee of the board has approved and adopted the red herring prospectus (RHP). It also approved the bid/issue opening date of March 24, 2022, and closing date of March 28, 2022. In August last year, the company had received capital markets regulator Sebi's go-ahead to launch the FPO. It had filed the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) in June 2021. The company is coming out with the public issue to meet Sebi's norm of minimum public shareholding of 25 per cent in a listed entity.



As part of the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) it will be easier for India to import scrap from the Gulf kingdom, which will be recycled for precious industrial metals

RAM CHANDRA PRASAD | UNION STEEL MINISTER

AIRBNB'S TECH HUB IN BANGALORE

Online accommodation platform Airbnb Saturday announced the opening of a new technology hub in Bangalore to help it serve its "global community". The Bangalore technology hub will aim to create local, skilled jobs, with plans for the centre to cater to a few hundred people in the initial phases, followed by an expanded footprint in the future, the company said in a statement



Russia seeks Indian investment in oil, gas

Russia's economy faces its deepest crisis since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, as the West imposes severe sanctions over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine

REUTERS

New Delhi, March 12: Russia urged India to deepen its investments in the sanction-hit country's oil and gas sector, and is keen on expanding the sales networks of Russian companies in Asia's third-largest economy.

Russia's economy faces its deepest crisis since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, as the West imposes severe sanctions over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Some western allies have encouraged India to condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine, after New Delhi abstained from voting against Moscow, a long-standing arms supplier, at the United Nations.

"Russia's oil and petroleum product exports to India have approached \$1 billion, and there are clear opportunities to increase this



figure," said Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, according to a statement shared by Russia's embassy in India late Friday.

"We are interested in further attracting Indian investment to the Russian oil and gas sector and

expanding Russian companies' sales networks in India," Novak told Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri.

The United States this week banned Russian oil imports and Britain said it will phase

BOYCOTT DRIVE

■ The US last week banned Russian oil, natural gas and coal imports in response to the Russian invasion

■ Britain said it will phase out imports of Russian oil and oil products by the end of 2022

■ Germany said Saturday it aims to be nearly free of Russian oil imports by the end of this year

Australia has also joined major allies and banned imports of Russian oil

Russia's oil and petroleum product exports to India have approached \$1 billion, and there are clear opportunities to increase this figure

ALEXANDER NOVAK | DEPUTY PM, RUSSIA

them out by year end, decisions expected to further disrupt the global energy market, where Russia is the second-largest exporter of crude.

Indian state-run companies hold stakes in Russian oil and gas fields, while Russian entities including Rosneft (ROSN.MM) own a majority stake in Indian refiner Nayara Energy. Some Indian companies also buy Russian oil.

Russia expects both countries to continue cooperation on civilian nuclear power, including building new units at a nuclear power plant in the south Indian town of Kudankulam, Novak said.

YOUTUBE BLOCKS KREMLIN BACKED MEDIA GLOBALLY

Moscow: Google-owned streaming platform YouTube has said it is now blocking Kremlin-backed media outlets globally -- not just in Europe where two Russia state-affiliated channels, Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik, along with their subsidiaries, were sanctioned by the European Union last week. According to TechCrunch, this goes above and beyond any legal mandates to block this content -- but is not entirely unprecedented; last week Apple pulled RT and Sputnik's apps from its global App Stores following a request by Ukrainian vice prime minister Mykhailo Fedorov. That said, YouTube's wording suggests it may be going further than barring the six (in total) RT and Sputnik entities the EU has sanctioned -- as the company writes that it is now "blocking access to YouTube channels associated with Russian state-funded media globally", the report said. While the expanded YouTube blocks on Russian state media are "effective immediately", per an update to the policy the platform just tweeted out, it also warns it may take time for the change to take effect -- writing that "we expect our systems to take time to ramp up".

RE BOOST India, SL sign pact to build solar plant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, March 12: India and Sri Lanka have signed an agreement for developing a 100 megawatt solar power plant in the island nation's eastern port district of Trincomalee, as part of the efforts to strengthen bilateral economic partnership, including through cooperation in the renewable energy sector.

The signing ceremony took place Friday at the Ministry of Finance of Sri Lanka for the plant in the country's Eastern province.

The Joint Venture and Shareholders' Agreement (JVSHA) for the Trincomalee Power Company Limited (TPCL) -- a joint venture between National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Limited from India and the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) for developing the 100 megawatt solar power plant at Sampur -- has been signed, the Indian mission said in a statement.

"Signing of this JVSHA demonstrates yet again India's ability to respond to Sri Lanka's priorities in a comprehensive and mutually beneficial manner," it said.

"Our cooperation with Sri Lanka in this domain will only become stronger with the implementation of the \$100 million Line of Credit offered by India to Sri Lanka for development of solar power projects.



DEUTSCHE BANK SHUTS DOWN OPERATIONS IN RUSSIA

Berlin: Germany's biggest lender Deutsche Bank said Friday it was following other international companies in shutting down its operations in Russia in protest of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. "Like some international peers and in line with our legal and regulatory obligations, we are in the process of winding down our remaining business in Russia while we help our non-Russian multinational clients in reducing their operations. There won't be any new business in Russia," the bank said in a statement. "We condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and support the German government and its allies in defending our democracy and freedom." It said it had already "substantially reduced" its exposure in Russia since 2014, when Russia invaded Crimea. It said in a previous statement it valued its gross exposure to loans in Russia at 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 billion). Among other international companies to have announced they are quitting Russia are the US banks Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase.



RBI lifts curbs on HDFC Bank's Digital 2.0 plan

In December 2020, the RBI had barred HDFC Bank from issuing new cards and launching new digital initiatives after repeated instances of technological outages at the lender, which is the market leader in the credit cards segment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 12: The RBI has lifted all restrictions on HDFC Bank, permitting it to launch new digital initiatives, the private sector lender said Saturday.

"We would like to inform one and all that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted the restriction on the business generating activities planned under the Bank's Digital 2.0 programme, vide its letter dated March 11, 2022," HDFC Bank said in a statement.

Digital 2.0 programme of the bank is designed to provide products to its customers for frictionless financial experience. It will

help customers to move from a single transaction to a complete financial solution journey such as loan disbursement, payments and investment.

In December 2020, the RBI had barred HDFC Bank from issuing new cards and launching new digital initiatives after repeated instances of technological outages at the lender, which is the market leader in the credit cards segment.

The RBI action came after the bank's customers faced a number of incidents of outages in internet banking, mobile banking, and payment utilities over the past two years. Rivals ICICI Bank and SBI Cards seized the opportunity to narrow the gap with HDFC Bank.

The action against HDFC Bank was followed by a ban on new card issuances by Mastercard and American Express due to their failure to adhere to data localisation rules.

Following remedial action from HDFC Bank, the regulator partially lifted the ban on card issuances last year in August. However, the ban on launching new technology initiatives continued.



BIZ BUZZ

BoB holds national seminar on cyber crimes in banking

Sambalpur: Bank of Baroda (BoB) organised 'All India Seminar on Cyber Crime in Banking' in Mysore, Karnataka for Public Sector Banks, Insurance Companies and other financial institutions. Ajaya Kumar Khosla, Chief General Manager (operations) and MD Sarat, Superintendent of Police, Karnataka police inaugurated the programme. Sri Khosla said that banking sector is also one of the most affected sectors due to cyber crimes. Hence, implementation of advance technologies in banking is as much necessary as having right information of security about cyber attacks. Narendra Mehra, Asst Director, Regional Office (Implementation), South, Official language Department, Ministry of Home affairs, Govt of India was the chief guest on this occasion. Sarbesh Gupta, Chief Information Officer, Sudhakar D Nayak, General Manager, Bangalore Zone and Murali Krishna, Regional Head were present in this programme. Punit Kumar Mishra, Assistant General Manager (Official and Parliamentary Committee) coordinated the programme.



CMD Gurdeep Singh visits NTPC Darlipali

Sundargarh: Chairman and Managing Director of NTPC Ltd Gurdeep Singh visited NTPC Darlipali March 11, 12 and was welcomed by AK Samaiyar, Chief General Manager (Darlipali) and Shri Vijay Chand, General Manager (O&M) in the august presence of senior officials of NTPC. The CMD took a tour of Darlipali Plant area, Unit Control Room and reviewed the progress of Darlipali station. Singh also chaired interactive meetings with the senior officials, young executives, female employees and Darlipali Executive Association and encouraged them to continue with the same effort and dedication for the progress of the station.



"Similarly, there is significant interest among the private sector on both sides for cooperation in renewable energy which is likely to increase in the coming years," the statement added.

A 2013 agreement with NTPC to build a thermal power plant in Sampur was later abandoned.

Sri Lanka is facing its all-time worst foreign exchange crisis after the pandemic hit the nation's earnings from tourism and remittances. By December, the reserves position had plummeted to just one month's imports or a little over \$1 billion.

In recent months, the public has experienced a shortage of many essentials due to the foreign exchange crisis. Import restrictions to save dollars have threatened cooking gas and fuel supplies in addition to the looming power cuts.

Unfair trade practices under CCPA radar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 12: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has decided to take up cases involving sale or offer for sale, which violate compulsory standards as a matter of preventing unfair trade practice, and to protect, promote and enforce the rights of consumers as a class. The CCPA has already issued 15 notices in this regard.

Chief Commissioner, CCPA, Nidhi Khare has also taken suo-motu action against e-commerce entities and sellers who were found to be selling pressure cookers online in violation of compulsory standards. "As many as 15 notices



have already been issued with respect to such violations. The cases have also been forwarded to BIS for taking necessary action under the BIS Act, 2016," a statement from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs said.

"Any person found selling the household items without conforming to compulsory standards and holding valid license as pre-

scribed by BIS shall be liable for violation of consumer rights and unfair trade practices and face action under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019," it said.

The CCPA has already issued Safety Notice alerting consumers for multiple household goods such as electric immersion water heaters, electric iron, switches for domes-

tic purposes and domestic gas stoves for use with LPG.

The other items in the list include microwave oven, aluminium foil for food packaging, hand held blender, domestic electric food mixer, cooking gas cylinder, sewing machines and helmets for two-wheeler riders.

The Safety Notice in exercise of powers under Section 18(2)(j) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 by the CCPA has been issued to alert consumers against buying household goods which do not hold valid ISI Mark and violate the standards directed for compulsory use by the Central government, the statement said

Relatives helped Grovers siphon off BharatPe funds

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 12: Amid the hubbub over Ashneer and Madhuri Jain Grover and their tussle with BharatPe, the admin head at the fintech firm who was Madhuri Jain's close relative and allegedly involved in the misappropriation of funds, was also sacked.

Deepak Jagdishram Gupta, who is Madhuri Jain's brother-in-law, worked as admin head and reported to head of controls Madhuri Jain, who, in turn, reported directly to Co-Founder and Managing Director Ashneer Grover. They were al-

legedly involved in siphoning of funds via creating bogus vouchers and inflated vendor bills.

According to media reports, the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) had conducted a search operation at BharatPe's head office October 21, 2021.

Gupta had told the GST team that the vendors on whom details are sought "do not exist".

A total expenditure of ₹53.25 crore was made towards at least 30 vendors that did not exist and BharatPe had incurred a loss of ₹10.97 crore in those dealings.

According to media reports,



Madhuri Jain herself received invoices for payments and forwarded them to the accounts team. These invoices were created by Shwetank



Jain, who is her brother. According to BharatPe, Grover, his wife and their relatives were engaged in extensive misappropriation

Gupta had told the DGGI team that the vendors on whom details are sought "do not exist"

tion of funds and grossly abused company money "to fund their lavish lifestyles." "The Grover family and their relatives engaged in extensive misappropriation of company funds, including, but not limited to, creating fake vendors through which they siphoned money away

from the company's expense account and grossly abused company expense accounts in order to enrich themselves and fund their lavish lifestyles," the company had said.

According to sources, the Grovers allegedly spent company money on expensive business class tickets for the entire family for vacationing abroad, beauty/skin treatments, buying electronic items, providing house staff salaries (driver/maids), 5-star dinners, etc.

"As a result of his misdeeds, (Ashneer) Grover is no longer an employee, a founder, or a director of the company," the company had said.

RECORDS TUMBLE IN INDIA WIN

Centuries by Mandhana, Kaur help their side register 155-run win over West Indies in ICC Women's World Cup

Mithali happy with team's performance



SMRITI MANDHANA

Pooja Vastrakar (1/21) and Rajeshwari Gayakwad (1/24) then got into the act, removing Shemaine Campbelle (11) and Chinelle Henry (7) as the Windies slumped to 134/6.

Gayakwad and Rana then combined to run-out Aaliyah Alleyne (4), while Jhulan Goswami (1/43) returned to get rid of Anisa Mohammed (2) and became the all-time highest wicket-taker in the women's World Cup with 40 wickets in her kitty.

Earlier, opener Yastika Bhatia scored a quick 31 (21b, 6x4) to give the team a good start along with Mandhana. Bhatia and Mandhana put on 49 runs for the opening stand in 6.3 overs but once she departed, Mithali Raj (5) and Deepti Sharma (15) also followed suit, leaving India tottering at 78/3.

While Bhatia was caught and bowled by S Selman, Mithali was

caught by Shamilia Connell at mid-wicket off Matthews in the 10th over.

Mandhana and Kaur then joined hands and steadied the innings as India amassed 100 runs in 20 overs. The duo picked by the ones and twos and also got the boundaries regularly to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Mandhana was dismissed in the 43rd over when she found Selman at deep mid-wicket but Kaur took the onus on herself and steered the team across the 300-mark even as India kept losing wickets in pursuit of quick runs.

Brief scores: India Women 317/8 (Smriti Mandhana 123, Harmanpreet Kaur 109; Anisa Mohammed 2/59) beat West Indies Women 162 (Deandra Dottin 62, Hayley Matthews 43; Sneha Rana 3/22, Meghna Singh 2/27) by 155 runs.



Hamilton: Skipper Mithali Raj Saturday hailed India's "special effort" to comprehensively beat West Indies by 155 runs but wants more consistency in the upcoming games of the ICC Women's ODI World Cup.

"Could not have asked anything better than today's display. Today's win should keep us in the (frame) tournament for the knockouts. Batting and bowling really came out well," Raj said in the post-match presentation.

"It had a lot to do with the couple of games, could see the nerves in the girls. Everyone knew the importance of today's game. Required a special effort, we knew West Indies came from 2 wins, we were playing after a big loss.

"We need to be consistent as the next game is in a different venue and a different opponent, we will be having different plans."

OTHER COMMENTS

On Mandhana, Kaur: The way Smriti and Harman played, very sensible and they have used their experience to get us to the table

Praising youngsters: It's good

to have youngsters around, me and Jhulan have played for a long time. When you have to let your guard down, need the youngsters to crack a joke - it eases out our nerves, which has helped me in the past

MANDHANA'S TAKE
On Kaur: From the outset, I feel when her back is towards the wall, that's when she comes the best out and that's something which I've seen. Her work ethic is really up there in the whole team. She keeps going even if she does not get the results. World Cups are the place where she comes good

Partnership with Kaur: The situation was quite tricky when she came into bat. I didn't want to lose her or lose her focus. But once she was on 30-40 we all started having a lot of fun. We started talking a lot after that. She was smiling a lot more today

On Mithali, Jhulan: She's (Mithali Raj) been a brilliant captain, playing that consistently for a long time is so remarkable. Someone like her and Jhulu Di (Jhulan Goswami) in the dressing room, is great to have



HARMANPREET KAUR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hamilton, March 12: Smriti Mandhana (123, 119b, 13x4, 2x6) and Harmanpreet Kaur (109, 107b, 10x4, 2x6) slammed twin centuries as India produced a splendid batting display to notch up a comprehensive 155-run win over West Indies and bring their campaign back on track at the ICC Women's ODI World Cup here Saturday.

The duo forged a 184-run stand for the fourth wicket, India's high-

est partnership for any wicket at the women's World Cup, to help the team post its highest total in the history of the showpiece event, a challenging 317/8 after skipper Mithali Raj won the toss and elected to bat.

The 2017 edition finalists then returned to dismiss West Indies for 162 in 40.3 overs to keep themselves in contention for the knock-out stage.

By virtue of this win, India now lead the eight-team standings with

four points from three games, ahead of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa because of a better net run-rate.

Chasing the stiff total, West Indies were off to a flier with openers Deandra Dottin (62, 46b, 10x4, 1x6) and Hayley Matthews (43, 36b, 6x4) putting up 100 runs in 12.1 overs but the spin-pace duo of Sneha Rana (3/22) and Meghna Singh (2/27) put the break by rocking the top-order, as the Caribbeans slumped to 114/4 in 19th over.

STATFACTS
317 India Women's total against West Indies - their second-highest total in ODI cricket, behind the 358/2 against Ireland in 2017. It is also the first instance of India breaching the 300-run mark in the Women's World Cup, surpassing their previous best of 284/6 in 2013 against West Indies

7 India's win over West Indies in 7 Women's ODI World Cup matches they have played

1 Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur became the first Indian pair to score centuries in the same Women's World Cup game. They also became the third Indian pair to score hundreds in a women's ODI

184 Partnership between Mandhana and Harmanpreet, the highest for India at the Women's World Cup. The previous highest stand was 175 between the opening pair of Punam Raut and Thirushi Kamini against West Indies in 2013. The 184 between Mandhana and Harmanpreet is India's highest stand in Women's ODIs for the fourth or a lower wicket

109 Harmanpreet became the first Indian batter to score a century while batting at No.5 or lower in Women's ODIs. Only two players had a higher score in Women's ODIs while batting at No.5 and lower

3 Hundreds for Harmanpreet in the Women's World Cup, the most by a batter for India. She surpassed Mithali Raj and Mandhana, who have two hundreds each

162 West Indies' total in Hamilton is the second-lowest all out score to involve a century partnership in ODI history across men or women. The lowest is 161 by Pakistan against Sri Lanka in a men's ODI in 2009 despite a 108-run fourth-wicket stand

India women go down fighting



India women wear dejected looks after their loss against Germany at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 12: The Indian women's hockey team lost 1-2 to Germany in a shoot-out after both the teams were locked at 1-1 at the end of the regulation time in the first match of the double-leg FIH Pro League here Saturday.

Early goals from Navneet Kaur (fourth minute) and Carlotta Sippel (fifth) set the tone for what was an exciting contest between World No.9 India and World No.5 Germany.

Both teams wasted numerous scoring chances to finish tied after the end of the regulation 60 min-

utes, forcing the match into shoot-out where the Germans did just enough to come out on top.

Navneet scored the only goal for India in the shoot-out even as Sharmila Devi, Neha Goyal, Laremsiam and Monika wasted their chances.

For Germany, Pauline Heinz and Sara Strauss found the net in the shoot-out, which was enough for the visitors to eke out a favourable result. Playing their debut season in the Pro League, the Indian women made a fine start to their campaign, beating China 7-1 and 2-1 in their opening two games in

Muscat. The Indians then defeated World No.6 Spain 2-1 at home before slumping to a 3-4 defeat in the return-leg last month.

The draw after regulation time ensured India to secure one point from the match, while the Germans secured two points, including a bonus. Despite the loss, India are placed third in the standings with 10 points from five games while the Germans are in sixth place with just two points from three matches. Both the sides will face each other in the second match of the tie at the Kalinga Stadium here Sunday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 12: Shreyas Iyer's (92, 98b, 10x4, 4x6) pyrotechnics with the bat drove India to a position of strength after Sri Lanka made early inroads on a spinner-friendly track with the second Test heavily tilting in favour of the hosts, here Saturday.

The bright afternoon sun in the beginning of the day/night contest did not allow the pink ball to swing enough and trouble the batters but the early and sharp turn on offer made life tough for the Indians, who were tottering at 126/5 at one stage.

Rishabh Pant began the counter-attack with his fiery 39-run knock and Iyer carried forward the recovery work with his scintillating 92-run knock that helped India post a decent 252 in their first innings.

Iyer negated all the good work done by the visiting bowlers in the first session when they had taken four wickets, including that of skipper Rohit Sharma (15) and Virat Kohli (23).

Iyer missed out on what would have been a deserving second Test hundred as he was stumped off left-arm spinner Praveen Jayawickrama (3/81) while going



STARS OF THE DAY: Shreyas Iyer walks off the field after getting out as he is followed by Jasprit Bumrah, who bagged three wickets to put SL in trouble

for a big shot.

Later, the pink ball was expected to assist the fast bowlers in comparatively cooler floodlit conditions and the lethal India pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah (3/15) and Mohammed Shami (2/18) blew away the top-order with two wickets apiece.

Shami's dismissal of rival captain Dimuth Karunaratne (4) was a treat to watch as the ball came in

to shatter the stumps. Sri Lanka ended the day at 86/6, trailing by 166 runs, as 16 wickets fell on the opening day with nine of them taken by the spinners.

Old warhorse Angelo Mathews (43) and Charith Asalanka (5) had a 22-run stand for the fifth wicket but it did not last long with Axar Patel getting rid of the left-hander.

Mathews' combative knock ended

when he fished outside off stum and edged one from Bumrah to Rohit in second slip. Niroshan Dickwella (13) and Lasith Embuldeniya (0) will resume Lankan innings Sunday.

The sharp turn that Sri Lankan bowlers derived off the pitch coupled with the unpredictable bounce reminded of the Ahmedabad pink-ball game, where Indian spinners ruled the roost to win the game inside two days.

The world cricket is yet to see a pink-ball game, out of 18 played so far, lasting the full distance. The games under flood lights, as of now, are being dominated by the bowlers and they won't complain.

Exploiting the conditions to the maximum, the visiting bowlers, especially left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya (3/94) kept the Indian batters guessing and close to 25,000 fans on tenterhooks.

BRIEF SCORES

India 252

(Shreyas Iyer 92, Rishabh Pant 39, Hanuma Vihari 31; Praveen Jayawickrama 3/81, Lasith Embuldeniya 3/94);

Sri Lanka 86/6

(Angelo Mathews 43; Jasprit Bumrah 3/15, Mohammed Shami 2/18, Axar Patel 1/21).

Match to continue.

SEN STUNS OLYMPIC CHAMP AXELSEN, ENTERS FINAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Muelheim An Der Ruhr (Germany), March 12: World Championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen stunned Olympic gold winner Viktor Axelsen in a hard-fought match to enter the final of German Open Super 300 tournament here Saturday.

The 20-year-old Sen, who had claimed his maiden Super 500 title at the India Open in January, continued his rich vein of form as he sent the World No.1 and top-seed Axelsen packing with a 21-

13, 12-21, 22-20 win in the semi-final that lasted one hour and 10 minutes.

It was a memorable performance from the World No.12 Indian as he recorded his first win over his highly-fancied rival who has a 4-0 head-to-head record before Saturday's match.

In the final Sunday Sen will face Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn who beat Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the other semi-final.

Sen was ahead throughout the first game. Sen opened up with a 4-1 lead and then extended it to 9-4. But



Axelsen narrowed it down to 7-9 before Sen grabbed four consecutive points to make it 13-7. Sen's attacking game paid dividends as he took five consecutive points to lead 18-10 before clinching the first game with ease.

Axelsen made a comeback in the second game to make it one all and take the match to the decider. He was trailing 3-8 early on but used his height and reach to good effect to take five consecutive points and level the score at 8-8 before zooming ahead. From there on, Sen lost way and Axelsen pocketed the second

game without any fuss.

The two players left their best for the last as they fought tooth and nail in the dramatic deciding game. It turned out to be a battle of nerves as rallies got longer with both fighting for each point. From 2-2, it was 4-4 and then 6-6 before Axelsen zoomed ahead 15-8.

But the young Indian fought his way back in a remarkable fashion to close the gap to 15-17 and then to 17-19. He levelled the score 19-19 and then 20-20 before sealing the match with two consecutive points.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Liverpool seal victory

LONDON: Luis Diaz continued the fine start to his Liverpool career as the Reds maintained their three-point deficit to Manchester City in fight for the Premier League. Diaz raced on to Joel Matip's superb pass and headed past the onrushing Robert Sanchez after 19 minutes. Mohamed Salah sealed the three points with a second-half penalty awarded after a handball by Yves Bissouma - with the Egypt forward's 20th strike of the campaign bringing up Liverpool's 2,000th Premier League goal. It is a fifth successive defeat for Brighton.

Faf new RCB skipper

BANGALORE: The Royal Challengers Bangalore Saturday appointed former South Africa national team skipper Faf du Plessis as their new captain for the upcoming edition of IPL. "Obviously coming in as an outsider, I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity," Du Plessis said. He made it clear that he will depend a lot on experience of domestic players and someone of Virat Kohli's calibre. "I will rely heavily on the amazing experience that we have in our domestic players but also the International players."