



DRUNKEN DRIVING

Odisha lost at least 298 lives to drunken driving in 2020, said State Transport Authority Sunday

DOWNTOWN P4



COV SURGE IN CHINA

China's govt responds to a spike in coronavirus infections by shutting down its southern business centre of Shenzhen

INTERNATIONAL P10



REWRITING HISTORY

Cristiano Ronaldo becomes the highest scorer in world football with 807 goals to his credit

SPORTS P12

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BJP DEMANDS CHILIKA MLA'S EXPULSION

BHUBANESWAR: A day after Chilika MLA Prasanta Jagadev's car ploughed through a crowd leaving 27 people injured, the opposition BJP Sunday demanded his expulsion from the ruling BJD claiming that the suspension of the lawmaker from the regional party is an "eyewash". The demand was made by senior BJP leader and the party's national spokesperson Sambit Patra who met the injured people at a hospital after reaching here from New Delhi. The BJD claimed that the BJP wants to politicise the "barbaric incident" as the ruling party has already sought the strictest action against the suspended MLA. As many as 27 people including 10 police personnel and two journalists were injured Saturday when the suspended BJD MLA's vehicle allegedly ploughed through a crowd outside the Banapur BDO's office. P3



BUDGET SESSION RESUMES TODAY

NEW DELHI: The second part of the Parliament's Budget session will begin Monday with the Opposition set to corner the government on a range of issues, including rising unemployment, reduction in the interest rate on employees' provident fund (EPF) and the evacuation of Indians stranded in war-hit Ukraine. Top on the government's agenda would be getting Parliament's approval to the budgetary proposals and presentation of the budget for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to present the budget for Jammu and Kashmir in the Lok Sabha Monday. P7

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Pant breaks Kapil's record

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 13: Flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant Sunday broke the legendary Kapil Dev's 40-year-old record of fastest Test fifty by an Indian on the second day of the Day/Night match against Sri Lanka here.

The dashing left-hander cruised to his half century in 28 balls (7x4, 2x6) in the 42nd over of Indian second innings when he hit a Praveen Jayawickrama delivery through the extra cover boundary.

India's first World Cup-winning skipper Kapil Dev had cracked a 30-ball half century against Pakistan in the Karachi Test in 1982.

"Rishabh Pant surpasses Kapil Dev to score the fastest 50 by an Indian in Test cricket... Take a bow, Rishabh," posted BCCI in its Twitter handle.

Pant also set a world record for notching up the fastest 50 by a wicketkeeper-batter in Tests. He bettered the efforts of Australia's Ian Smith and former India captain MS Dhoni (both scored 34-ball fifty).

Shardul Thakur is the third in the list of fastest Test 50 by an Indian with his 31-ball half-century in the Oval Test against England last year. Former India opener Virender Sehwag had scored a 32-ball 50 against England in Chennai in 2008.

BJD scripts history, forms zilla parishad in all dists



Woman from Swabhiman Anchal chosen as Malkangiri ZP chief

While 26 ZP presidents have completed at least Plus II, 18 have completed graduation

Average age of all the ZP presidents put together stands at 41

Reposing his faith in women leadership, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has chosen 21 women as the ZP presidents—70% of total seats

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: In a first in Odisha, and probably across the country, a single party—Biju Janata Dal (BJD)—has managed to form zilla parishad (ZP) in all the 30 districts of the state.

The immense faith of voters on the leadership of BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has resulted in the unprecedented victory of the party, it was learnt.

Sources said the CM chose young and educated party workers as ZP presidents with a long-term strate-

gic view to mentor them for leadership positions.

Saraswati Majhi, 23, who hails from the remote Kashipur block, has become the youngest ZP president. A graduate in BSc, Majhi will be spearheading the development activities in Rayagada district.

Continuing his focus on the remote areas, Patnaik picked Samari Tantul of Swabhiman Anchal as the ZP president in Malkangiri. The 26-year-old has studied Plus II Arts. Similarly, Kumudini Nayak who will lead the development activities in Sambalpur district also hails from remote Bamra block.

It is expected that these areas will see further development activities in the coming years under the leadership of the local ZP presidents, it was learnt.

Sources said 15 of the 30 districts (50 per cent) have ZP presidents below the age of 40. On the other hand, 23 of the 30 districts (76

per cent) have ZP presidents below the age of 50. The average age of all the ZP presidents put together stands at 41.

Another important trait of the election is the higher educational qualifications of the selected candidates. While 26 of the 30 district ZP presidents have completed at least Plus II level education, 18 ZP chiefs have completed graduation.

Sources said the Chief Minister has meticulously picked educated candidates with good public reputation and without any criminal cases in order to provide enlightened leadership and good governance in the districts.

Reposing his faith in the women leadership and the cause of women empowerment, Patnaik has chosen 21 women as the ZP presidents—70 per cent of total seats, even though the women reservation is 50 per cent statutorily. This is the first time such a large number of women are heading the districts in Odisha and probably, unprecedented anywhere else in the country, it was learnt.

The larger districts of Mayurbhanj, Ganjam, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Bolangir and Sambalpur and districts of undivided Koraput (except Nabarangpur) are headed by women ZP presidents.

Out of 18 unreserved seats (including women), 12 OBC candidates (67%) have been made ZP president. This is as per the commitment of the CM regarding giving preference to OBC candidates. In his home turf of Ganjam, Patnaik has selected an OBC woman candidate as the ZP chief.

GANGA FACELIFT



A view of Khidkiya Ghat on the banks of River Ganga in Varanasi during the renovation work Sunday. The ghat is named so because it is like a window to Varanasi from where the crescent shape of the Ganga flowing is clearly visible. PTI PHOTO

Sonia doesn't quit



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Days after its election debacle in five states, the Congress' top decision-making body Sunday brainstormed over the way forward and "unanimously reaffirmed" faith in the leadership of Congress President Sonia Gandhi.

Amid calls for large-scale reforms to revive the party's dwindling electoral fortunes, AICC general secretary KC Venugopal said after the over four-hour meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) that the party president will immediately take up corrective measures to revamp and re-strengthen organisation.

The Congress will hold a 'Chintan Shivir' immediately after the Budget Session of Parliament and the CWC will meet again before that, he told reporters. Gandhi listened to all leaders at the CWC meet and said she is willing to make required changes to strengthen the party, sources said. "Every single member of the

CWC wants Sonia Gandhi to guide party till organisational elections are held," Congress leader Randeep Surjewala said.

The CWC has unanimously reaffirmed faith in the leadership of Congress President Sonia Gandhi, Venugopal added. Former party chief Rahul Gandhi, general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Venugopal, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, party's leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and P Chidambaram were among those who attended the Congress Working Committee meeting.

Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and Mukul Wasnik were the only three from the Group of 23 leaders who participated in the meeting of the CWC, which has a large number of Gandhi family loyalists. Congress president Sonia Gandhi listened to all leaders at the CWC meet and said she is willing to make all required changes to strengthen the party, sources said.

Shatrughan, Supriyo TMC picks for bypolls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, March 13: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Sunday named Shatrughan Sinha as TMC's candidate for bypoll to Asansol Lok Sabha seat, and Babul Supriyo as nominee for Ballygunge Assembly byelection.

"Happy to announce on behalf of the All India Trinamool Congress that Sri Shatrughan Sinha, former Union Minister and famed actor, will be our candidate in Lok Sabha byelection from Asansol," the TMC boss tweeted.

"Sri Babul Supriyo, former union minister and noted singer, will be our candidate in Vidhansabha by-election from Ballygunge. Jai Hind, Jai Bangla, Jai Ma-Mati-Manush!" she wrote. Asansol Lok Sabha seat fell vacant after Supriyo, a two-time BJP MP, quit the saffron party last year and joined the TMC. The Ballygunge Assembly seat fell vacant following the demise of state minister Subrata Mukherjee.



1 killed, 3 hurt in post-poll violence

POST NEWS NETWORK

Aska, March 13: A man was killed and three others sustained severe injuries following a clash between two groups in an incident of post-poll violence at Kendupadar village under Aska block of Ganjam district late Saturday night, said sources.

The deceased has been identified



as Bulu Swain. Three motorcycles were vandalised during the melee while police have detained more than 20 people in this connection.

All the injured were rushed to Aska hospital and subsequently one person was shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur.

Meanwhile, Bhanjanagar sub-divisional police officer (SDPO)

Subhransu Sekhar Mishra, Aska SDPO Umashankar Singh and other police officials rushed to the village and brought the situation under control.

Two platoons of police force were deployed in the village.

The panchayat election this year was marred by violence which has put the district administrations in a tight spot.

Putin may be suffering from brain disorder: Report

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: Russian President Vladimir Putin may be suffering from a brain disorder caused by dementia, Parkinson's disease or 'roid rage' resulting from steroid treatment for cancer, a media report said citing intelligence sources.

Citing sources close to the Kremlin, senior figures in the Five Eyes intelligence alliance, comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US, believe there is a physiological explanation for the Russian President's globally reviled decision to invade Ukraine, the Daily Mail report said.

The intelligence community is sharing a growing number of reports about 69-year-old Putin's "increasingly erratic behaviour", combined with a bloated appearance in recent footage, and the absurd distance he insists on keeping



from visitors to the Kremlin, the report added.

A security source said, "It is only human sources that can offer you the sort of rich picture that we have of Putin's psyche. There has

been an identifiable change in his decision-making over the past five years or so. Those around him see a marked change in the cogency and clarity of what he says and how he perceives the world around him."

Indian embassy shifted to Poland

NEW DELHI: India has temporarily relocated its embassy in Ukraine to Poland in view of the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the war-torn country. The decision comes amid increasing Russian attacks on the Ukrainian capital Kyiv and several other prominent cities. "In view of the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Ukraine, including attacks in the western parts of the country, it has been decided that the Indian Embassy in Ukraine will be temporarily relocated to Poland," the Ministry of External Affairs said.

The source said this failure to think clearly was being compounded by the lack of a "negative feedback loop", with the Russian leader "simply not being briefed" on elements of failures with the invasion. Meanwhile, Russia's ongoing war on Ukraine entered the 18th day Sunday

Russian airstrike kills 35 in Ukraine Lviv: Waves of Russian missiles pounded a military training base close to Ukraine's western border with NATO member Poland, killing

35 people and injuring 134 others. The strike followed Russian threats to target foreign weapon shipments that are helping Ukrainian fighters defend their country against Russia's grinding invasion. More than 30 Russian cruise missiles targeted the sprawling training facility that is less than 25 kms from the closest border point with Poland, according to the governor of Ukraine's western Lviv region. Poland is a key location for routing Western military aid to Ukraine. P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Forget about Chandigarh being a part of Punjab, my latest concern is what if they declare Punjab a Union Territory?

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	36.6°C	35.6°C
TEMP MIN	21.6°C	21.4°C
Humidity	80%	80%
Rainfall	NIL	NIL
Forecast	CLEAR SKY MAINLY	

leisure



KIM GOES INSTAGRAM OFFICIAL WITH BEAU

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian has posted a selection of loved-up snaps of her and comedian Pete Davidson, just over a week after she was declared legally 'single by a judge in California amid her divorce from rapper Kanye West.

PEOPLE 'MEDICATE' WITH COMEDY: AMY POEHLER

Actress Amy Poehler thinks TV series *Parks and Recreation* is still popular because people want to heal themselves with comedy. She told *The Guardian* newspaper: "I think - when times are scary and unsure, we like to go back to things that we've seen before. Comedy especially is a way to medicate."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may pick up the hammer and chisel today. No, you're not taking up sculpture; you're finally giving in to your spouse's demands to take some home improvement measures. It's in your interest to be speedy and focused, as you are the guilty party, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
There is a strong possibility of receptivity and sensitivity in your love life. On the down side, your negativity may lead to mediocre results. You are a fire-fighter when it comes to others' problems, but can forget digging a well for your own home, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, you will toil as if you have to conquer Mt. Everest. And you will, says Ganesh. You may not get a standing ovation or a medal of honour for your hard work and dedication, but you will be lavishly appreciated by your superiors and colleagues.

CANCER
In all likelihood, this is going to be a fairly easy day for you, says Ganesh. The only tough part of the day would be how to spend it. There will be hardly anything to do, anyone to talk to. Ideally, this is what you would call a perfect day.

LEO
Call it an epiphany of sorts, but today promises to be a day of revelations for you. Finally, things fall into place as your Odyssey nears its end, and you come to terms with your hidden talents, says Ganesh. Follow your heart and dive into the bottomless pool of your imagination.

VIRGO
Ganesh suggests that you take a much-needed break from the daily rigmarole. Introduce an element of the exotic in order to replace all the mundane work that fills up your day. You may attend private and social get-togethers, and Ganesh advises you to mingle with other people to keep your spirits high.

LIBRA
Health is always a key issue, and today, you may have to pay some special attention to the same. It may be some elderly person in the family, or even you. Take the time to give it your full attention in order to avoid any further complications. You may do well to undergo a physical examination yourself.

SCORPIO
The target is locked in and the arrow is shot. It is only a matter of time before Cupid celebrates and hits the bull's eye and you find yourself in the mush of things. Sentiments and romance will be the order of the day. There is a good chance that marriage proposals or new relationships will find their footing today, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Whatever you take up today, you are on a winning spree, foresees Ganesh. A leader, you will guide and instruct your subordinates when they seek your advice. In a way, you even encourage and motivate them.

CAPRICORN
Your intuition will get the better of you today, bagging you respect and recognition, says Ganesh. But it's not every day that you get so lucky, so try and make the most of what's on the platter, for all you know, intuitions could have a mood swing too. Besides, if winning hearts is like a once-in-a-blue-moon thing, be on your best behaviour and wear your best suit - it's a blue moon day for you today.

AQUARIUS
If Elvis Presley is who you dreamed of being, today may be your day! You seem to impress one and all, and even money flows in! You play smart today and everything seems to work in your favour.

PISCES
A hectic day of socialising awaits you. You will discover hidden talents and unnoticed traits about yourself. Either that, or whoever brought them to your notice was only lying to get some socialising action of their own.

Classics make great audio-books: Ruskin Bond



The wordsmith was speaking on the topic 'Am I Audible? - the rise of podcasts, radio and audio-books' at a literary meet in Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar: Timeless classics brought out as audio-books or podcasts may well ignite minds and open up the world of literature to many, a galaxy of authors debating on the topic at a literary festival here felt.

Having grown up on radio where many plays were aired, noted author Ruskin Bond said a great deal depends on how the voices behind

an audio-book bring it to life and stimulate the listener's imagination.

He doesn't normally listen to audio-books, but strongly believes the technology does help in making stories better known and in reaching a wider audience, added the wordsmith.

"Sometimes, children like listening to a story rather than making an effort of reading it themselves," he said, while virtually attending the sixth edition of the three-day Tata Steel Bhubaneswar Literary meet here.

The 87-year-old was deliberating on the topic 'Am I Audible?' - the rise of podcasts, radio and audio-books - with journalist Sandip Roy and Tanaya Patnaik, the executive director of Radio Choklate 104FM.

An audio-book is basically a recording of a book that is available online. Its popularity is soaring worldwide, including in India.

Bond points out that reading a classic book can actually be a little troublesome and difficult.

"Sometimes, we hesitate to pick up a classic because of its length, language - Victorian (era) English or something earlier," he said.

Therefore, the audio-book makes it more accessible, according to Bond. "I think, very often, it's the classics that make good audiobooks," the author whose audio-books such as *Tales of Fosterganj*, *Schooldays* and *Road to the Bazaar* have found a wide audience.



The 10th anniversary of Jagannath Hospital, the No. 1 Paediatric Hospital in the Eastern Zone of India for the 6th consecutive year, was celebrated at Hotel Padmaja, Bhubaneswar, Sunday. Hospital's Managing Director Dr Arjit Mohapatra (extreme right) lighted the lamp on the occasion in the presence of Paediatrician Dr Biswajit Mishra, Dr Avinash Mohapatra and Dr GV Basavraja (L-R).

Plight of Pandits takes box office by storm

After earning around ₹3.5 cr on the first day, the movie showed a huge growth collecting around ₹8.5 cr on day 2



Mumbai: Back in 2019 when Vivek Agnihotri's *The Tashkent Files* had been released, it emerged a sleeper hit. Released on a select count of screens, it had an opening day of Rs 0.40 crores, grew well over the weekend to bring in Rs 2.20 crores and stayed consistent during the first week to close at Rs 3.50 crores.

Well, now *The Kashmir Files* has done the unthinkable. Even though the release is still small, the occupancy is the best amongst all the films in the running, be it new arrival Radhe

Shyam or current success Gangubai Kathiawadi. Then on day 2, it has left every other film aside and has managed to take a huge jump. After earning around 3.5 cr on the first day, it showed a huge growth at the box-office by collecting around 8.5 cr.

From here, it's only going to be an upward and onward journey for 'The Kashmir Files' as the critical acclaim as well as the audience word of mouth is superlative. While the show count of the film has already been increased, it wouldn't be surprising if the Rs 5 crores mark is crossed today. This low budget film is set to be a hit in real quick time.

Awareness video on traffic rules, gender bias released

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: A music video album titled *Traffic Anthem- Don't Be a Fool Maano Traffic Rule* to create awareness on traffic rules was released here at Press Club of Odisha, Sunday.

The two minutes and 50 seconds clip also aims to break the bias against women bike riders, said Sangeeta Sahoo of We the Road Queens, a group of women bikers' team which has produced the video in collaboration with Team Odia, a wing of TEAM group of companies which is prominent name in the fields of outdoor marketing, event management and infrastructure among others.

The women riders are still judged on the basis of their gender and on their skills even as India has the highest percentage of women pilots



in the world, she added. They also have plans to popularise the video by seeking government help, Sahoo further said.

Directed by Gyana Ranjan Hota, the video has its music scored by Preet Priyo. Several women bikers including Sangeeta Sahoo, Satrupa

Samantray, Anasuya Kar, Supriya Jena, Sushree Rosalin Debasmita, Garima Sahu and Baijyanti Sahu have performed in the video.

Following the traffic rules is a collective responsibility which ensures everyone's safety, said director Hota.

STATE LEVEL THEATRE FESTIVAL CONCLUDES

Play Mankada depicts a father's vulnerability

BHUBANESWAR: Ranga Sangam, a five-day state level drama festival organised by Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi (OSNA) in collaboration with Odia Language, Literature and Culture department, Government of Odisha came to an end here at Rabindra Mandap, Sunday.

On the last evening, Divine theatre troupe from Jatni (Khurda), staged the play *Mankada*, written and directed by Biplab Keshari Satpath. Binay Das scored the music.

Joy knows no bounds when a child, especially a son, is born in a family. The parents try to live out their unfulfilled dreams through



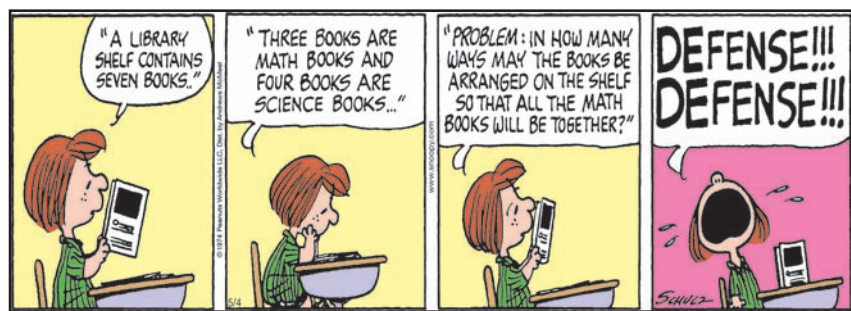
A scene from the play

their children. But the family gets ruined if the only son becomes disobedient and develops bad habits. That's exactly what happened in Prafulla's case in the play *Mankada*. Prafulla loses everything in life including his wife, property and job

after his son Manua gets involved in criminal activities. Later, he also left home. However, Prafulla continues to love his wayward child and waits for his return. Though the errant son returns home after a few years, the father is now in dilemma whether to accept his son who has now turned inhuman.

Among the dignitaries OSNA vice-president Manmath Kumar Satpathy, secretary Prabodh Rath, poet Ramakanta Mishra, Odisha Natya Sangh (ONS) secretary Subhakanta Padhee added a brief meeting coordinated by ONS public relation officer and actor Prakash Maharana ahead of the show.

PEANUTS



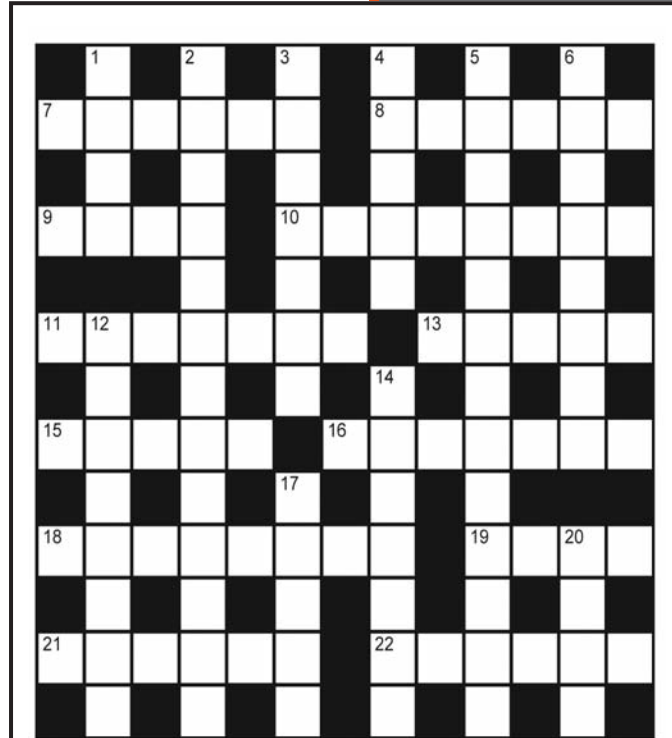
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2022 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 7 Fix
 - 8 Literary genre
 - 9 Mud dauber, e.g.
 - 10 Dormant
 - 11 Salty treat
 - 13 Oasts
 - 15 Kitten cries
 - 16 Scram
 - 18 Upbringing
 - 19 ET vehicles
 - 21 Words of achievement (4,2)
 - 22 Chew the fat
- Down**
- 1 Greek cheese
 - 2 Vacuum alternative (6,7)
 - 3 Got there
 - 4 Brisling
 - 5 He puts words in your mouth
 - 6 Hinders
 - 12 Sandwich choice (3,5)
 - 14 Travelling bags
 - 17 Jollity
 - 20 Exclude

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.

1	5			4				
			2					
			6	3		8		
		9			2			
	1		7	8		9		
3	9			4				
5	6			1				
	8				3			
2	3		5				7	

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

E	R	R	A	T	I	C	B	A	L	S	A	
X	I	A	H	A	A	B						
A	L	F	A	L	F	A	K	E	N	Y	A	
C	T	L	R	E	D	S						
T	A	S	T	Y	G	A	R	N	I	S	H	
			H	E		N	E					
P	I	L	L	O	W		I	M	A	G	E	S
O	E		S	I								
P	A	G	E	A	N	T	J	A	C	K	S	
U	R	S	O	E	A	T						
L	I	O	N	S	R	O	S	E	L	L	A	
A	O	E	E	T	L	L						
R	E	M	I	T		S	K	Y	L	A	R	K

SUDOKU

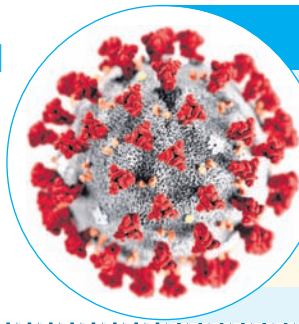
3	4	5	2	7	1	8	6	9
6	2	7	8	5	9	1	4	3
8	9	1	6	3	4	5	2	7
9	1	2	7	6	5	3	8	4
5	6	4	3	1	8	7	9	2
7	8	3	9	2	6	1	5	
4	7	9	5	8	6	2	3	1
2	3	6	1	4	7	9	5	8
1	5	8	9	2	3	4	7	6

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



SEEKING COOPERATION

The district administration Sunday convened a meeting of Sahi Akhada members in Puri to discuss various issues of Srimandir heritage corridor project



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	45,75,63,393	39,09,59,529	60,64,407
India	4,29,90,991	4,24,37,072	5,15,850
Odisha	12,86,626	12,76,675	9,111

Crackdown on bikes with modified silencers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The Commissionerate Police Sunday launched a drive against noise pollution in the city here and seized at least 27 motorcycles with modified silencers from different places. City Deputy Commissioner of Police Umashankar Dash has directed the cops to impose penalties on bikers for violation of the traffic rules that prohibit the use of modified silencers making noise in excess of 80 decibels. The seized bikes will be kept at the traffic police station till the end of the civic body elections, sources said.

"Many youths were found riding bikes with modified silencers during some rallies in the city here. The city police has launched a special drive to take action against such bikers," said the DCP to media persons. The Commissionerate Police also issued a WhatsApp number (8039028107) urging people to register their complaints against people who cause noise pollution by riding bikes with modified silencers.

Birthday Blessings



PRANEEL DASH

Mississauga, Canada
 On this auspicious day, we pray Mahaprabhu Jagannath to shower all happiness on your future life.
 With Blessings from:
 Jema, Jema, Aai, Daddy, Mummy
 Brother: Pranshu and all relatives.

Emergency landing at BPIA; flyer dies

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 13: An AirAsia flight from Bangalore to Kolkata Sunday made an emergency landing at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here after a passenger suddenly fell ill mid-air, an Airports Authority of India official said. The passenger, a resident of Midnapur in neighbouring West Bengal, was taken to a hospital where doctors declared him dead on arrival. The 28-year-old passenger, Habibur Khan, was travelling by flight 2472, the official said. The reason for his death is not immediately known.

CBI grills former AG Ashok Mohanty

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has grilled former Advocate General of Odisha, Ashok Mohanty, in connection with the multi crore chit fund scam in state, sources said. Earlier, the CBI had summoned Mohanty to be present before it March 11. The CBI officials questioned Mohanty over his alleged link with ponzi firm Artha Tatwa Group's CMD Pradip Sethy Mohanty reportedly had good relation with Sethy during his tenure. The CBI sleuths grilled Mohanty at its office here for over an hour Friday. However, the CBI officials are yet to reveal anything regarding the questioning of Mohanty. Mohanty, who had reportedly bought a landed property from Sethy in Cuttack, was arrested by the CBI in September 2014.

2 TN thermal plants shut as coal supply from Odisha fails

Chennai/Bhubaneswar: Two thermal power plants in Tamil Nadu at Mettur and Thoothukudi (each 210 MW capacity), have been temporarily shut down due to the shortage of coal. Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO) official said that this is due to the transportation of coal from Odisha which is the only source for Tamil Nadu power generation company.

Patras lock horns over Chilika MLA rampage

As many as 27 people including 10 police personnel and two journalists were injured when the suspended BJD MLA Prasant Jagadev's car ploughed through a crowd outside the Banapur BDO office in Khurda where the election for the block chairperson was on



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 13: A day after MLA Prasant Jagadev's car ploughed through a crowd leaving 27 people injured, the opposition BJP Sunday demanded his expulsion from the ruling BJD, calling the suspension of the lawmaker from the regional party an 'eyewash'. The demand was made by senior BJP leader and the party's national spokesperson Sambit Patra who met the injured people at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar after reaching here from New Delhi. He BJD claimed that the BJP wants to politicise the barbaric incident as the ruling party has already sought the strictest action against the suspended MLA.

As many as 27 people including 10 police personnel and two journalists were injured Saturday when the suspended BJD MLA's vehicle ploughed through a crowd outside the Banapur BDO's office in Khurda district where the election for the block chairperson was on. Jagadev, the MLA from Chilika, was also critically injured as he was roughed up by a mob after the incident. An attempt to murder case was registered against him and he will be arrested after his discharge from the hospital, police said.

Sambit said, "Jagdev was a habitual offender and his suspension from the ruling party was just eyewash to mislead people. Why has the BJD not expelled its Bahubali (muscleman) MLA despite his involvement in a series of violence?" Jagadev was suspended from the ruling party last year for attacking a Dalit leader of the BJP.

The BJP won Assembly elections in four states and lost in one. However, no violence has been reported in any of these states because BJP workers never indulge in violence. Poll-related violence is being reported from WB and Odisha. In Bengal, several BJP workers were killed and in Odisha, so many violent incidents have been reported during the entire panchayat election



SAMBIT PATRA | BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

The ruling BJD Saturday itself demanded the strictest action against Jagadev who is no longer in the party. Despite knowing this, if the BJP wants to politicise this barbaric incident, it's extremely sad and unfortunate. When a similar incident took place in a BJP-ruled state, its leaders said it should not be politicised. We appeal to the Odisha BJP not to indulge in double standards on such sensitive issues



SASMIT PATRA | BJD SPOKESPERSON

He was also accused of assaulting saffron party workers at Manmunda in 2016, attacking Bolgarh tehsildar in 2018 and a staff of Chilika Development Authority in 2020.

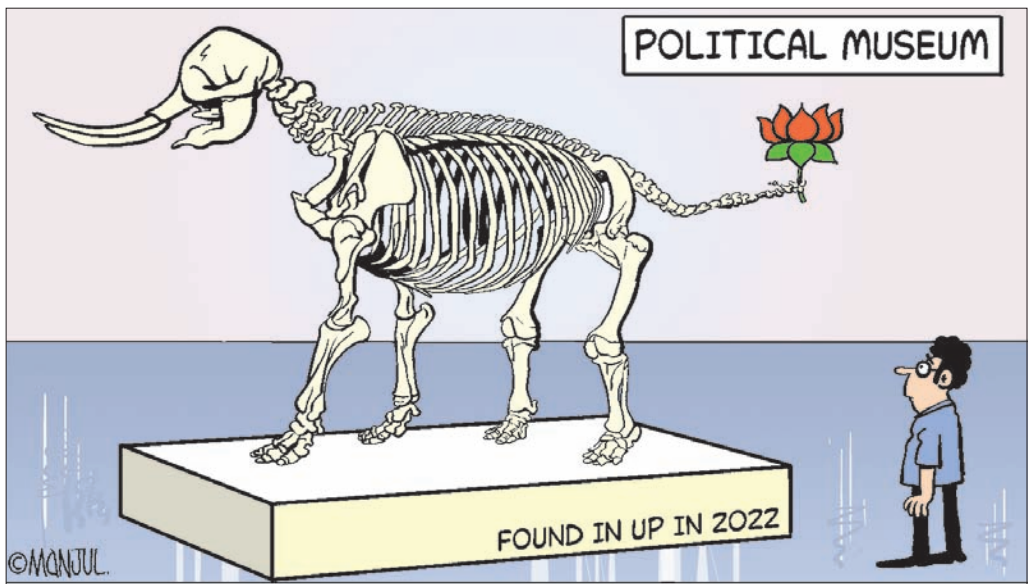
"There is no point in putting Jagadev under suspension as he is active in the party. He is participating in all party programmes. He was frustrated as the BJP performed well (in the panchayat election) in two blocks in his Chilika assembly constituency," he said. He claimed that Jagadev did not just attempt to kill people, but also tried to murder democracy.

"The MLA attempted to intervene when the election was underway for the post of chairperson at Banapur block," he said, claiming that Jagadev's act has maligned the image of Odisha at national level. BJP state general secretary Golak Mohapatra announced that the party will launch a satyagraha demand-

ing stern action against the MLA. Reacting to the BJP's accusations, BJD spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra said that the ruling party Saturday itself demanded that the police take the strictest action against Jagdev who is "no longer in the party".

"Despite knowing this truth, if the BJP wants to politicise this barbaric incident, it's extremely sad and unfortunate," he said. When a similar incident took place in a BJP-ruled state, its leaders said it should not be politicised, Sasmit Patra said. He was referring to the Lakhimpur Kheri violence in Uttar Pradesh in which eight people were killed in October last year. Of them, four were farmers who were knocked down by a vehicle. Union minister Ajay Mishra's son is a key accused in the case relating to the killing of the farmers.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



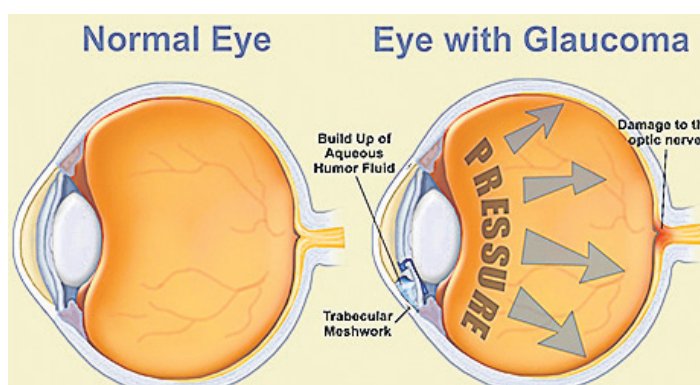
After cataract, glaucoma major cause of vision loss

Glaucoma is a public health issue of major concern globally as it is the second leading cause of vision loss after cataract, said Virat, eye specialist at Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Hospital, Saturday.

World Glaucoma Week is being observed from March 6 to 12 to draw the public's attention to glaucoma, which is the leading cause of irreversible blindness in India. As per WHO report of 2021, around 4.5 million people have gone blind due to glaucoma.

In India, glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness with at least 12 million people affected and nearly 1.2 million being blinded from the disease. More than 90 per cent glaucoma cases remain undiagnosed in the community. Talking to IANS, Virat said that it can be prevented with early intervention. "Glaucoma is a condition where the pressure on the eye, called intraocular pressure, increases like blood pressure of the body," he said.

Intraocular pressure (IOP) is the fluid pressure of the eye. IOP is a measurement involving the magnitude of the force exerted by the aqueous humour on the internal surface



Glaucoma is symptomless in the early stage as there is no pain and no visual drop. Being a silent disease, it works like slow poison for your eyes. Patients with glaucoma are not reminded by symptoms of the disease regarding the importance of taking prescribed medication which leads to poor adherence to medication and worsens the disease

VIINEET SEHGAL | DELHI BASED SENIOR EYE SPECIALIST

area of the eye, Virat told IANS. "Drug defaulter i.e. stopping the medication on its own is the prime reason why we are losing the battle against glaucoma despite timely diagnosis," said Vineet Sehgal, Delhi based senior eye specialist. He said that glaucoma or 'Kala Motiya' is a

neurodegenerative disease of second cranial nerve, the optic nerve. "Glaucoma is symptomless in the early stage as there is no pain and no visual drop. Being a silent disease, it works like slow poison for your eyes. Patients with glaucoma are not reminded by

Students should aspire to be entrepreneurs: Dash

Technical education plays a key role in augmenting the human resources for the development of a country. Economic growth of a country primarily depends upon the upgradation in science and technology. Synergy Institute of Engineering has been working for the development in technical education in Odisha for the last two decades. In an interview to Orissa POST, Synergy Institute of Engineering Chairman and Managing Trustee Binod Dash speaks about the institute's journey, status of technical education in Odisha and more. Excerpts:



What was your aim at the time of completion of your education?

I completed master's degree in Mathematics from Ravenshaw College and started preparation for competitive examinations. I had a desire to get a high standard government job and spend rest of my life in happiness.

What prompted you to become an entrepreneur?

My father was a government servant and a few others in my family were also doing jobs in various fields. No one from our family had ever opted for business. However, one of my relatives, Ashok Kumar Mohapatra, was the director of SISI. His inspiration and guidance helped me a lot to enter into the industry sector. Easy finance from OSFC and helping hand from SBI official Murthy babu also played a key role. The state government's industrial policy also encouraged me a lot.

How did the idea of establishing a technical institute strike you?

I had got an opportunity to teach in a private college in Kalahandi upon completion of my post graduation. While working as a lecturer, I realised that education is the biggest capital for middle class people. I entered into this field to bring revolution in technical education in our society.

What were the key challenges in your path?

Usually, we need a big piece of land, adequate financial resources and modern laboratory for a good technical education institute. It was also not so easy to obtain the no-objection certificates (NOCs) from the Centre and state government. My maternal uncle's family had a good relation with the royals of Dhenkanal. Former Union Minister KP Singhdeo's help and advice helped me a lot. The government had also a policy to promote technical education in the districts, which were lagging behind in this regard. There was also a scope to run a technical education institute from rented buildings. These two factors came in handy for me.

How has been the journey of Synergy Institute?

We have been marching ahead for the last 23 years despite facing a lot of challenges. With hard work and strong determination, we have set up our first campus at Dhenkanal and the second one in Bhubaneswar. We have won the confidence of many parents through quality teaching, placement service and good relation with corporate houses. We are now offering BTech, MTech, Diploma,

BSc in nursing and other degrees in our institute. We are also providing vocational education and training to around 3,000 youths annually.

How did you overcome the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic?

Classroom teaching was a distant dream during the pandemic. Students were barred to carry mobile phones into the classrooms in the pre-Covid era. But, mobile phones enabled us to provide teaching through online mode during the pandemic. However, students of remote areas faced a lot of difficulties due to poor network. Students could not attend practical classes. The selfless service of our faculties and staff and necessary assistance from banks helped us to tide over the situation.

What is the status of technical education in Odisha?

The standard of our technical education is very good. It has also a bright future. Our students have the quality to get employment in every sector. But, we need to enhance the skills of our students for a better tomorrow. Students should have the desire to become entrepreneurs instead of searching for some well-paid jobs.

Your views on the state government's policy towards technical education?

Now, many private engineering colleges are facing problems to fill up their seats due to the implementation of Odisha Professional Education Act-2007. The managements of these colleges are bearing huge losses. The state government should introduce a new policy in this regard by talking into account the prevailing situation.

Your future plans?

We are working tirelessly to arrange employment opportunities for our students. We are planning to open a medical college soon. We have received the required approval in this regard from the government. Steps are being taken to set up a centre of excellence for engineering.



OBITUARY



"Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord"
 Romans 6-23
 With profound grief & utmost sorrow we inform the sad demise of our father
MR. T.P. MATHEW
 on 10 March 2022 at 8.30 P.M. at Bhubaneswar due to old age ailments.
 Deeply mourned by
 Children, Friends & Relatives

Drunken driving claimed 298 lives in '20: STA report



FACT FILE

Incidentally, over 90 per cent of road accidents registered in Odisha are due to over-speeding while 75 per cent of people who lost their lives in road accidents in the state were at the prime of their youth

Despite road safety measures being taken up by the state government under Supreme Court-monitored supervision, road fatalities continue to be on the upswing with over 18,000 human lives lost in the past four years

As per the notification issued by STA last year, the speed limit for motorcycles was restricted at 60kmph on the four-lane and above divided carriageway (roads with median strips/dividers)

On stretches of national and state highways passing through the municipality and notified area council areas, motorcycles could move at a maximum speed of 30kmph

Similarly, the limit is set at 50kmph for motorcycles in other national and state highways

road accidents registered in Odisha are due to over-speeding while 75

per cent of people who lost their lives in road accidents in the state were at the prime of their youth.

Despite road safety measures being taken up by the state government under Supreme Court-monitored supervision, road fatalities continue to be on the upswing with over 18,000 human lives lost in the past four years.

Use of mobile phones while driving, drunken driving, and driving on the wrong side against the Motor Vehicle Act provisions have also contributed towards the rising graph of road accidents in the state, it said.

As per the notification issued by STA last year, the speed limit for motorcycles was restricted at 60kmph on the four-lane and above divided carriageway (roads with median strips/dividers).

On stretches of national and state highways passing through the municipality and notified area council areas, motorcycles could move at a maximum speed of 30kmph. Similarly, the limit is set at 50kmph for motorcycles in other national and state highways.

The Motor Vehicle Act violations like over speeding, red light jumping, drunken driving, driving against flow of traffic, using mobile phones while driving, dangerous driving, triple driving in two wheelers, helmet-less driving, not wearing seat belts, and overloading are being dealt with stringently and hefty penalty are being levied upon the violators under the Motor Vehicle Amendment Act, 2019, they concluded.

ULB POLLS AHEAD



BJD Ward 35 corporator candidate Ranjulata Ray campaigns along with supporters in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

State logs 86 fresh Cov cases, 3 deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Odisha recorded 86 new Covid cases Sunday, while three more patients succumbed to the pathogen, the Health department said in a bulletin.

Out of the total 86 new infections, 50 were reported from quarantine centres while 36 persons contracted the virus locally.

Sambalpur district reported the highest number of new cases at 15, followed by Sundargarh with 14 new infections.

Idol rackets on prowl, laxity in probe alleged

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Smugglers involved in stealing of rare antique idols from temples have turned active in the state. Owing to its rich cultural heritage, Odisha has always been a happy hunting ground for them.

Sources said as many as 11 idol theft cases have been reported from several localities in Puri district in the last three months. During this period, the miscreants have reportedly decamped with as many as 30 idols from various temples in the district.

In the latest incident, the desperadoes reportedly stole five octo-metal idols weighing around 1.5 tonne from a temple in Kanaskh block of Puri late Friday night.

On March 8, a team of Puri police arrested a couple while they were trying to sell stolen idols. Sources said that the accused were involved in stealing of precious idols from a temple in Chandanpur area of Puri.

At least 10 precious octo-alloy idols were recovered by the cops during a raid at a residence of the accused at Nimapara. Locals, however, alleged that police often fails to arrest the accused and recover the idols.

"Idol thefts are rampant in the state and it is also rising constantly. However, the detection is extremely poor in the cases as it is an organised crime," Amiya Bhushan Tripathy, former Director General of Police and the state convener of INTACH, told Orissa POST.

"The accused who stole the idols from temples are just conduits.



FILE PHOTO

The accused persons who stole the idols from temples are just conduits. They hand over the idols to others in the chain who later smuggle them outside state. It needs specialised and dedicated investigation

AMIYA BHUSHAN TRIPATHY | FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE, STATE CONVENER OF INTACH

They hand over the idols to others in the chain who in turn smuggle them outside state. It needs specialised and dedicated investigation," added the former top cop.

The same cultural artifacts later find their way to different museums or residences of the wealthy in Western countries. Sources in Puri Police told the media that they found vital clues indicating towards the idol thefts' links to smugglers outside the state.

Moreover, Tripathy revealed that it was the duty of local police to inform the state Crime Branch following the receipt of a report after every idol theft in their locality. The Crime Branch's dedicated idol theft cell is supposed to take up the investigation to unearth the racket behind the crime.

Notably, a few decades ago, when idol thefts had become a menace in the state, especially in Puri dis-

trict, the state police issued an order (PCO199) directing local police to inform the Crime Branch following the registration of temple thefts and arrest of the accused.

Upon intimation, the Crime Branch has to depute a senior officer to interrogate the accused and also the bailers. However, it was found that many police officials at the ground level are ignorant about the orders.

The severity of the temple thefts can be gauged from the fact that one of the members of the INTACH during its annual state conveners' conference in 2020 had claimed that around 300 antique idols had gone missing in Prachi Valley area alone.

The situation prevalent in other districts is also equally bad. But they rarely come to the fore due to lack of awareness about the conservation and protection of our heritage.

MASS MARRIAGE



A mass marriage ceremony was organised by Prayas at Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Honorary Doctorate for Achyuta Samanta

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Eminent educationist and philanthropist, and the Founder of KIIT & KISS Achyuta Samanta was conferred with the prestigious Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science by the RK University, Rajkot, Gujarat.

He was awarded with the degree for his remarkable contributions in the field of tribal empowerment through quality education, healthcare, rural development, art, culture, and literature for tribal children at the 9th convocation of the University Saturday.

He was also the Guest of Honour at the convocation ceremony. This is the 48th Honorary Doctorate for Samanta. He has been awarded Honorary Doctorate degrees from many reputed institutions for his contributions in the fields of education and social work.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, March 13: Mobile applications could provide 'an uninterrupted tool for crisis response' for people experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours, according to research.

A team of international researchers, including from Universidad Autonoma de Madrid in Spain, said in a review of studies that apps based on an approach called ecological momentary intervention (EMI) may offer a useful tool for managing patients at risk of suicide.

"These interventions can be useful complements to traditional care, especially in situations in which face-to-face care is not possible," they wrote in the review published in the Harvard Review of Psychiatry.

Suicide remains a leading cause of potential life loss around the world, amid concerns that suicide rates may be increasing during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Mobile health interventions provide an excellent opportunity to provide 'low-cost, 24/7 support' for individuals at high risk of suicide, especially those with previous suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts.

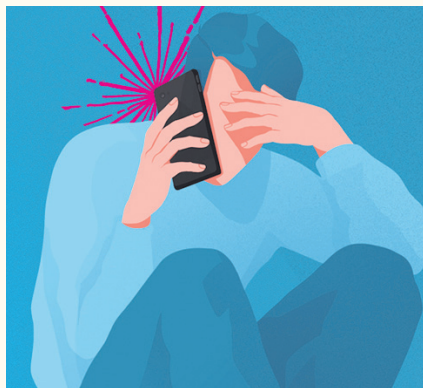
Ecological momentary interventions are a particularly promising approach, with the potential to deliver help in the moment for

For instance, EMIs may allow patients to adopt coping strategies when they experience a breakdown, or to interact with the environment in different ways, such as by contacting professionals or family members during a crisis

ENRIQUE BACA-GARCIA | HOSPITAL UNIVERSITARIO FUNDACION JIMENEZ DIAZ, MADRID

ECOLOGICAL MOMENTARY INTERVENTION

Mobile apps may offer support for those at risk of suicide



The team identified 27 studies of 19 different EMI interventions designed for suicide prevention, where safety planning was found to be the most common component of the EMI interventions

Some apps including safety plans took advantage of digital media - for example, showing pictures of loved ones, videos with relaxation techniques, or maps showing the quickest route to emergency help

The researchers said adolescents and young adults may benefit the most from new technologies in mental health, as they are comfortable in using digital technologies and remain the age group most affected by suicidal thoughts and behaviours

patients experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

"For instance, EMIs may allow patients to adopt coping strategies when they experience a breakdown, or to interact with the environment in different ways, such

as by contacting professionals or family members during a crisis," said Enrique Baca-Garcia, from Hospital Universitario Fundacion Jimenez Diaz in Madrid.

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signed for suicide prevention. Safety planning was the most common component of the EMI interventions.

Some apps including safety plans took advantage of digital media - for example, showing pictures of loved ones, videos with relaxation techniques, or maps showing the quickest route to emergency help.

The researchers said adolescents and young adults may benefit the most from new technologies in mental health. They are comfortable in using digital technologies and remain the age group most affected by suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

However, the review suggests that there is "still a long way to go before EMI interventions can be routinely implemented in clinical practice," Baca-Garcia wrote.

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SHORT TAKES

Woman elected sarpanch; hubby naib sarpanch

Jharbandh: An elderly couple at Kumir panchayat under Jharbandh block in Bargarh district has become the talk of the town after the woman was elected sarpanch and her husband the naib sarpanch. Jamuna Sahu was earlier elected as the sarpanch of Kumir panchayat. Meanwhile, her husband Bhikari Charan Sahu has been elected as the naib sarpanch. Interestingly, he has been the sarpanch of the panchayat for the last three terms. This year, however, as the sarpanch seat was reserved for females, his wife contested and won. On the other hand, Bhikari was also elected as the ward member in the panchayat. But, he was again elected as the naib sarpanch today.

Calf born with an eye, without nose

Mohana: A unique calf with just one eye and a long tongue was born at a farmer's house at Rankuda village under Jirang panchayat of Mohana block in Gajapati district Sunday. Huge number of people flocked the village just to get a glance of the rare calf. According to reports, the newborn calf has just one eye and does not have a nose. Besides, it has an unusually long tongue. However, the mother cow is missing from the spot. Photos and videos of the calf flooded the social media platforms Sunday.

Survey work for steel plant begins

Mahakalapara: An 11-member team launched a survey at Mahanadi delta region here in Kendrapada district for establishment of a mega steel plant in the area. The ArcelorMittal group has signed a memorandum of understanding with the state government for establishment of a mega steel plant in Mahakalapara block for which land has been identified. The matter came to the fore after an 11-member survey team from Kolkata reached the Mahanadi delta region here and launched a survey of the proposed plant site through GPS system. The team analysed the geographical condition of the area for construction of the steel plant, the team head Ajay Samant said. The survey work will continue for over a month during which team members will visit the villages under Petchhela panchayat.

Cameraman's body exhumed

Nayagarh: The Ranpur police Sunday exhumed the body of a missing cameraman from a forest on the outskirts of Badhipatna village in Narendrapur panchayat in this district. The deceased, Manas Swain (28) was a native of Godi Pokhari village under Ranpur police limits. Swain, a cameraman had been missing since February 5 following which his family had lodged a police complaint. Ranpur police suspect it to be a case of murder and have registered a case and launched a probe.

Paradip: Nurse's death sparks row

The deceased nurse had last year accused a doctor of inflicting mental torture and molesting her at Paradip Port Trust Hospital. Five other nurses also informed the media about similar harassment by the doctor, Saturday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, March 13: Tension ran high in port town Paradip after a female nurse, who was allegedly subjected to mental torture and molestation by a doctor at Paradip Port Trust Hospital, died in the wee hours of Sunday.

The incident sparked outrage in the area as irate people put up the body outside the hospital and staged a demonstration de-

of the hospital.

The survivor later lodged a complaint against the doctor at the Paradip Model Police Station after she failed to get justice from the hospital authorities. Alarmed over the FIR, the CMO reached the police station and assured police to resolve the issue amicably between the complainant nurse and the doctor.

Later, a team formed by the hospital authorities started an inquiry into the incident. The deceased had alleged Saturday before media that the probe team was only trying to cover up the matter and mentally harassing the five victim nurses during the seven month period of its probe.

Five other victim nurses had also informed the media of similar harassment by the doctor, Saturday. Later, the deceased was called to the hospital where she was subjected to severe mental torture, another victim nurse alleged, Saturday. The hospital au-



manding the dismissal and arrest of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Prahallad Panda, Sunday morning.

Apprehending unrest, forces from Paradip Model Police Station and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) were deployed at the spot to keep a close watch on the situation. The incident dates back to August 9 last year when a nurse on night duty at the hospital was allegedly molested by a physician Dr Badal Singh. The survivor had then filed a written complaint against the doctor accusing him of molestation before the CMO

thorities even went on to file FIRs in the police station against the complainant nurses.

As a result, the deceased reportedly experienced sudden high blood pressure. She was first rushed to the Port Trust Hospital and later shifted to a private hospital in Cuttack after her condition deteriorated. Her health conditions showed no sign of improvement following which she was shifted again to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Bhubaneswar. However, she failed to recover and succumbed during treatment in the wee hours of Sunday.

ANNUAL SPORTS MEET



Students of Dhamnagar College in Bhadrak district participated in their annual sports meet, Sunday

OP PHOTO

VYASANAGAR MUNICIPALITY POLLS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, March 13: After scrutiny of nominations, as many as 100 candidates are in the fray for posts of councilors and chairpersons in Vyasaganar municipality in Jajpur.

However, a number of rebel candidates contesting for the civic body polls have become a cause of concern for the ruling party.

According to reports, the party leaders have been trying hard to convince some of the rebels to withdraw their nominations. The last date of nomination withdrawal is March 14.

There are 26 wards in this municipality. Both political observers and ruling party leaders feel that rebel candidates may spoil the prospects of party nominees in the upcoming elections, unless they are made to withdraw their nominations.

On the other hand, opposition party BJP is not so much active in the civic body election as some BJP leaders and activists have been

BJD frets over rebels



JOLT FOR BJP: 16 KEY LEADERS DESERT PARTY

While only 11 days are left for urban local body polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party suffered a severe jolt in Jajpur. As many as 16 front-line leaders of the BJP resigned from the party Saturday, while campaigning by the BJD and Congress has been in full swing in Vyasaganar Municipality. The crack in BJP will pave easy way for BJD in the elections, political observers said. Leaders like Dushmant Kumar Rout, Basant Kumar Patra, Biswaranjan Pattnaik, Kamalini Samal, Bidyutprabha Ray, Sanatan Mallick, Asit Kumar Das, Rina Patra, Prabhati Patnaik, Umesh Kumar Mallick, Puspallata Das, Prafulla Barik, Suman Kumar Ray, Gourishankar Pati, Abhisekh Malla and Lili Mallick have put in their papers en masse after being sidelined by the top BJP leaders. These leaders had worked hard for the party in the last general elections, but later the organisation was not kept in a good state. The BJP's weak organisation has boosted BJD's poll prospects.

sidelined. Some also observed that though the BJD has a number of rebels, the party's candidates may manage to survive in the elections.

Well before the nomination filing, the BJD had a lot of hopefuls for councilor and the chairperson posts. However, many were deprived of tickets in the last minute.

In almost all wards, the party has rebel candidates, who are feared to affect the electoral fortune of the party candidates.

In ward 25, Mina Kumar Mallick was aspiring for a BJD ticket, but another leader was given ticket instead. He is now contesting as an independent candidate.

In ward 26, Ranju Rout was hopeful of the BJD ticket for a long time, but he was denied ticket. His wife Kalpana Rout is contesting independently. Many new leaders got tickets, leaving workers who have been working for the party for a long time angry and rebellious. Some workers, though with the BJD, are not coming out in the open against the negligence.

RALLY FOR ENVIRONMENT



A bicycle rally to spread environmental awareness was taken out from Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir at Gunupur in Rayagada district Sunday as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to celebrate 75 years of independence

OP PHOTO

Road accidents claim six lives

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul/Rayagada/Bolangir/Balasure, March 13: At least six persons, including women, minors and a scribe, were killed in separate road mishaps Sunday.

Two women lost their lives after a brick-laden tractor that they were travelling on overturned in between Guda village and Muniguda of Rayagada district. The deceased have been identified as Ilem Sikka and Lake Nandruka of Merakibandali village.

Similarly, a journalist died after he was knocked down by a speeding car on NH-53 near Kaniha in Angul district. The deceased was identified as Sushant Dhal. Another youth, Sarat Jena sustained serious injuries in the incident.

In the third incident, a dumper truck hit a bike near Batharla on



Katabanji road in Patnagarh town of Bolangir district. As a result, one person was killed while two persons were rendered hurt.

In another road accident near Kanpur Chhak in Soro area of Balasure district claimed the lives of two minor boys. The police in respective areas arrived at the spot after being reported about the accidents.

The dead bodies were retrieved and sent for post-mortem whereas the injured were sent to a nearby hospital for immediate medical treatment. Investigations into the incidents have been initiated.

ASI among four held for smuggling ganja

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, March 13: An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Odisha Police presently working at Kartanpalli PS of Malkangiri has been arrested for his alleged link with Ganja (cannabis) smugglers in the district, Sunday.

The policeman has been identified as Jayadash Khara.

Apart from ASI Khara, three more persons who are said to be illegal traders were also arrested for alleged ganja smuggling. Around 420 kilogram of cannabis, a laptop, Rs 10,000 cash, a car and two motorcycles have also been seized from their possession.

An official said that Malkangiri Police got information from a reliable source about Khara's involvement in assisting the peddlers in smuggling the contraband from the district to outside Odisha. Swinging into action, a special squad was formed to arrest the cop and the ganja traders.

Churning in Kotpad BJD: 3 leaders quit

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kotpad, March 13: Dissidence continues to grip the BJD unit in Kotpad of Koraput district. The factionalism came to the fore Saturday when three veteran leaders like Pankaj Patra, Iswar Mohanty and Ranjit Patra resigned from the party. They have sent their resignation letters to president of BJD's Koraput district unit Iswar Chandra Panigrahy. Two-time councillor Pankaj Patra alleged that his name and names of his family members were missing from the voter's list.

As a result, he could not file his nomination paper. He added that such mischief is part of a conspiracy against him to prevent him from contesting elections. Many other party leaders had been aspiring for party tickets in the urban local body polls. As they were denied party tickets, they are contesting as independents.

WATER WOES LOOM AS RIVERS GO DRY AGAIN

THE WATER CRISIS WILL GO FROM BAD TO WORSE IN THE NEXT THREE DECADES WITH THE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT GOING HAYWIRE IN KENDRAPARA DISTRICT, LOCAL INTELLIGENTSIA SAID

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, March 13: Water will soon become dearer for the dwellers of Kendrapara with the river systems flowing through the district going dry well ahead of the onset of summer for the last few years, a report said.

As many as seven rivers under Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani river systems flow through the district. The water from these rivers

is used by the residents in their daily chores and for agriculture and various purposes.

The groundwater situation is quite alarming with the water level going down in the district. According to a survey conducted by the Central Groundwater Board in 2017, the district will need 3,000 cubic metre water in excess in the next three decades than the amount of water that will flow in the Brahmani river during that time.

Moreover, with major river systems going dry, the Bhitarkanika National Park, which is a storehouse of bio-diversity, will be deprived of fresh water required for its sustenance and growth.

The water crisis is now seen in the Brahmani river after the Mahanadi. Moreover, the district will surely face severe water crisis after the second barrage at Jokadia on Baitarani is made operational. The Bhitarkanika sanctuary has failed to get adequate water with Mahanadi and Brahmani river systems going dry well ahead of the arrival of summer season. The per

KENDRAPARA



The groundwater situation is quite alarming with the water level going down in the district

A number of under-construction projects upstream of the rivers are further restricting the water flow worsening the situation

Bhitarkanika National Park, which is a storehouse of bio-diversity, will be deprived of fresh water required for its sustenance and growth

capita availability of water is going down in the state which will further decline when the water flow in these river systems will go down further.

The under-construction proj-

ects upstream of the river have sparked concern among the residents as they are likely to further prevent water flow in the rivers flowing through the district.

The water crisis will go from

bad to worse in the next three decades with the river management going haywire in the district, local intelligentsia said. Educationist Bhuban Mohan Jena, senior citizen Ganesh Chandra Samal, social activists Sanjay Kumar Behura, Khitish Kumar Singh and Srikant Nayak expressed concern over the shoddy management of river water.

They demanded that the Odisha and Chhattisgarh governments should immediately resolve the Mahanadi water dispute. This is because the construction of barrages on the Mahanadi upstream by Chhattisgarh is affecting the water flow to Kendrapara district located downstream and will also affect the establishment of a proposed steel plant and the first riverine port project in coming days.

Moreover, construction of a barrage at Jajpur will further restrict the water flow of the Baitarani into Bhitarkanika National Park. The Rengali project is under construction on the upstream of Brahmani river the water of which

will be used for agriculture.

Moreover, 10 industrial firms in Kalinganagar Industrial Complex draw 120 cusecs of water from Brahmani and Kharasrota rivers. The state owned IDCO has constructed a high powered pump house at Pankapur on the Brahmani river and at Marthapur on the Kharasrota river to supply water for industries.

More industries like Maithan and Mesco are likely to get water supply from these two rivers in coming days. Similarly, drinking water projects are coming up on these two rivers at Binjharpur, Jajpur, Korei and Rasulpur areas in Jajpur district which might disrupt the water flow.

Similarly, a mega drinking water project at Barunadiha under Rajkanika block on the Kharasrota for supply to four blocks of neighbouring Bhadrak district and to Pattamundai under Jal Jeevan Mission for supply to 65 panchayats could further worsen the situation.



There is nothing small in God's eyes; let there be nothing small in thine.

SRI AUROBINDO



Punjab Model

The people of Punjab have scripted a new chapter in the history of electoral politics in India by overwhelmingly voting to power the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the recent polls and throwing by the wayside political parties like the BJP, Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). The formation of AAP is an outcome of the common man's clamour for clean politics and angst against corruption and false promises given by established political parties irrespective of their ideological differences. That voters in Punjab have become sick of the politics of grabbing power for personal and family gains as displayed by other political parties is clear from their preference helping AAP bag 92 of 117 seats and heaping humiliation on the Congress, SAD, BJP, SP and the BSP. The Congress could win only 18 seats against the SAD's tally of three, BJP's two and SP and BSP's one each. The AAP's tally is a record since the state was formed in 1966. That it could win such trust of the people contesting only for the second time speaks volumes for the mood of the people in the state. AAP's vote share this time is 42.01 per cent against 23.7 per cent in the 2017 Assembly polls. Congress saw a sharp decline in its vote share dipping from 38.5 per cent to 22.98 per cent, while the SAD's share dropped from 25.2 per cent in 2017 to 18.38 per cent.

The new tactic adopted by the farmers of Punjab to consciously keep established political parties out of their recent year-long agitation against the three farm laws of the BJP-led government at the Centre appears to have got political legitimacy in the state Assembly polls. The SAD tried to cash in on the farmers' resentment against the now repealed farm laws by severing its ties with the BJP at the height of the agitation. The Congress also hoped to gain electoral dividends by supporting the agitation. However, the farmers scrupulously spurned overtures from all established parties and remained firm in their resolve not to give in till their demand for scrapping of the laws was conceded. Even during the run-up to the polls, there was speculation whether the Congress and SAD could get farmers on their side. The most telling example of the farmers' new electoral behaviour in favour of a party that wants to be the voice of the people is the sweeping victory of the AAP in the Malwa region which has 69 of the 117 Assembly seats. This massive win of AAP is an outright rejection of the duopoly of the Congress and the SAD which have so long been ruling the state by turns. Fed up with caste politics, corruption and nepotism with which the two parties have become synonymous, people probably wanted to let a new party that promises to work for the common man get a turn to rule. Delhi Chief Minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal's door-to-door and grassroots campaign also gave more power to the campaign. Interestingly though, the political party formed by the protesting farmers, the Sanyukt Samaj Morcha, failed to win a single seat.

In Punjab, power has alternated between the SAD, which had a 24-year-long partnership with the BJP from 1997 to 2021, and the Congress. The previous Captain Amarinder Singh-led Congress government incurred the wrath of the people by reneging on its promise of cracking down on drug racket allegedly patronised by the SAD during its tenure. Instead of taking action against the Badals of the SAD, it soft-pedalled their alleged involvement. Against this backdrop the AAP's promise of delivering its electoral pledges resonated with the people. The AAP could establish its credibility with the help of its Delhi model of governance, providing quality government education, health, power and water at cheap rates. A state that had been coughing up inordinately high rates for power, and where health and education are mostly privatised, people responded positively. Women and youth of Punjab also threw their lot in with the AAP with its promise of rooting out corruption and ensuring quality education and employment. AAP's promise of depositing a sum of ₹1,000 per month into the accounts of women in the state helped the party get women's votes in large numbers. This is an echo of the TMC's promise of giving West Bengal's poor women a monthly allowance of ₹500 each for which the party had reaped rich electoral dividends only a few months back. Moreover, AAP's promise of giving 300 units of free power to every household that would leave eight out of 10 households with no bills to pay each month, setting up village clinics like the mohalla clinics of Delhi, revamping Punjab's dilapidated government schools like what has been done in the capital and access to free hospital care have acted like magic for the AAP. The people of Punjab probably calculated these are not empty promises as AAP had delivered on them in Delhi. This is in sharp contrast to the failed electoral promises given by traditional ruling parties. The AAP has to deliver on its pledges. If it succeeds, the country's electoral politics may undergo a much needed transformation so that power does not become the monopoly of some greedy families with their worthless scions or a bunch of power-hungry leaders cozying up to their patrons - corporate big businesses - prospering at the cost of the people.

WISDOM CORNER

The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark. MICHELANGELO

A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them. JOHN C. MAXWELL

Talent is God given. Be humble. Fame is man-given. Be grateful. Conceit is self-given. Be careful. JOHN WOODEN

WORDSWORTH

Sequacious

The adjective started out simply enough in the seventeenth century to refer to a person who was inclined to follow a leader; almost at once it took on the idea of slavishly or unreasonably following the ideas of other people. It's unusual but still around: I could discern omens of nothing newer than the old fate of the sequacious: to be for ever at the mercy of the exploiting proclivities of the bold and buccaneering in their bullying and greed. -- Prelude to Waking, by Miles Franklin, 1950. Other senses you may very occasionally come across are of a thing that follows another with logic and unwavering direction of thought or form, or of musical notes that succeed each other with unvarying regularity (Coleridge described "long sequacious notes" in a poem). This is the sense meant in this rare modern example: When she closed her fingers around it, the shapes flared briefly once more, and she saw that they were indeed runes: inexplicable to her, but sequacious and acute. -- Fatal Reverent, by Stephen R Donaldson, 2007. To call writing non-sequacious is to say that it lacks logic, that it jumps about from one topic to another and that it's replete with non-sequiturs. That word is appropriate, since both sequacious and sequitur are from the Latin verb sequi, to follow, from which we also get sequel and sequence. The immediate source of sequacious is sequax, following; sequitur is the third-person present tense of sequi, meaning "it follows", though it so often doesn't that we mainly use the negative.

LOL

A kid's views on school

A little girl had just finished her first week of school. "I'm wasting my time," she said to her mother.



"I can't read, I can't write - and they won't let me talk!"



Jayati Ghosh

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT WILL BE FELT AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING IN MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THAT ARE ALREADY STRUGGLING TO RECOVER FROM THE PANDEMIC

It is difficult to see any winners in the ongoing war caused by Russia's irrational and devastating invasion of Ukraine. But the losers extend far beyond the people of Ukraine, who are being attacked, and the people of Russia, who did not choose this war but now must endure an economy being dismantled by trade and financial sanctions. The economic impact of the conflict will be felt around the world, including in many developing countries that are already struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

One immediate concern is the effect of rising oil prices. The price of benchmark Brent crude recently jumped by 20 per cent to more than \$139 per barrel, its highest level since 2008 - probably in response to news that the United States and its European allies were discussing a possible ban on imports of Russian oil, which had so far been exempt from Western sanctions. (March 8, the US announced a ban on imports of Russian energy products, while the United Kingdom pledged to phase out imports of Russian oil and oil products by the end of 2022.)

But global energy prices had already been soaring, following a period of dramatic volatility during the pandemic. The price of Brent crude, which had fallen to as low as \$9 per barrel in April 2020 at the height of the pandemic's first wave, rose above \$90 per barrel in January 2022. Since then, the Ukraine war has put further upward pressure on oil and gas prices.

Western media have focused on the impact of rising energy prices in Europe, which relies heavily on natural gas imports from Russia. But most of the world's oil and gas importers are much poorer. Many of these countries were unable to mount fiscal responses to the pandemic on the scale of those in the US and other advanced economies, and have since experienced much weaker

FOCUS INFLATION

DOUBLE WHAMMY



This latest oil-price spike is likely to generate balance-of-payments problems and domestic inflationary pressures that will be tough to combat in the current uncertain context

recoveries in output and employment. This latest oil-price spike is a blow they can ill afford, as it is likely to generate balance-of-payments problems and domestic inflationary pressures that will be tough to combat in the current uncertain context.

Of course, the additional inflationary pressures from the Ukraine war are also complicating the challenge that policymakers in rich Western economies face in tackling rising prices without causing a hard economic landing. Oil is a universal intermediary good, which influences the costs of commodities and services, as well as transport costs, in multiple ways.

Oil-price increases can thus be a significant driver of cost-push inflation even at the best of times. But inflation in rich countries was already at levels they had almost forgotten. Policymakers also appear to consider only the most simplistic weapons against inflation, like raising interest rates and tightening liquidity, which do little to address cost-push pressure and could cause a real economic downturn.

But the challenges are greater still in the developing world, leaving policymakers with even less wiggle room. The dramatic recent increase in oil prices obviously affects oil-importing countries directly, and will feed into all other prices through rising input and transport costs.

The tragedy playing out in Ukraine is also increasing global food prices, creating even more pain in developing countries where hunger had already increased dramatically during the pandemic. Before the war, Ukraine was the world's fifth-largest wheat exporter, and also a major exporter of barley, corn, rapeseed, and sunflower oil. The prices of these commodities in global trade have risen significantly, adding to recent increases in crop prices generally.

Now there is a further danger: Financial investors who had been betting on speculative asset markets will need to find other places to park their money, and food futures could emerge as a favoured destination. In the first five days of March, the price of wheat futures at the Chicago Board of Trade increased by 40 per cent, put-

ting it on track for its largest weekly increase since 1959.

Crop production in developing countries could also be hit by fertilizer shortages. Russia, the world's largest wheat exporter, is also a major fertilizer producer, and disruptions to these exports will push global food prices even higher.

We previously saw parts of this movie in otherwise peaceful times, just before the global financial crisis, and it was a dark and depressing story even then. The food crisis that resulted from financial-market speculation in 2007-08 led to massive increases in hunger and devastated the lives of hundreds of millions of people in developing countries. That crisis occurred even though global supply and demand of food items did not change much. But now, with real reductions in global food supply almost inevitable, the price rises could be greater and longer-lasting. If speculative pressure increases, already fragile economies will be damaged even more.

It may not be surprising that the G7 (whose recent track record as a self-appointed leader of the global economy is hardly distinguished) is not expressing much concern about these real and pressing dangers. But multilateral organisations surely need to step up in this time of crisis, at the very least by providing compensatory financing to help the developing world cope with multiple price shocks, and suggesting and enabling regulations to prevent speculation in essential markets.

Without such efforts, Russia's war against Ukraine will wreak much more damage on the global economy - and poorer countries will be among the hardest hit.

The writer, Executive Secretary of International Development Economics Associates, is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

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SPECTRUM POLITICS

Going through a churn

The state elections 2022 have elements of surprise, feeling of relief, introspection for the Opposition, diminution of smaller parties and a question whether 2024 Lok Sabha would be a cakewalk for the BJP or counter a new challenge. It is naïve to believe that personal benefits motivate more for voting for a party than a focus on national economy. The path to 2024 can possibly be replicated through sound economic progress, less of privatisation, stable rupee and emancipation that can boost the pride of individual voters - a new order.

The BJP and allies reclaim UP with reduced mandate than 2017; unexpectedly trounce Congress in Uttarakhand; and retain Manipur and Goa. The Congress loses the remaining glory. The Samajwadi Party may not have been that powerful in dislodging BJP but certainly has broken barriers to cut the saffron party's numbers.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) springs the greatest surprise and shock for the political community bagging 92 of the 117 Punjab Assembly seats rummaging established contenders. The political tsunami of its leader Arvind Kejriwal started with Chandigarh Union Territory's local body. His rise is a challenge to the entire privileged political class.

It complicates comprehension of the electoral mood. The elec-

torate has gone through a period of turbulence, difficulties, social tension on account of three farm bills, Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, demonetisation, GST, marginalisation of SMEs, an acute pandemic that sent at least over 12 crore people trekking back to their homes. This follows severe stagflationary situation, with food, edible oil and commodity prices reaching new highs. The difficult economic pangs are forgiven not forgotten by the soothing new M-Y - Modi-Yogi touch.

Difficult questions alright, but the electorate possibly believing that the BJP dispensation can do better throws its plank with it. This leads the Opposition to raise accusations to the extent of expressing doubts over the mandate. That the contest was too close is testified by an array of seats being won or lost by hundreds to thousand votes symbolised by UP Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya's loss to Pallavi Patel, Apna Dal founder

Sonela Patel's daughter, almost like a game of see-saw. The likes of Swami Prasad Maurya, Dara Singh Chauhan who quit the BJP bite the dust but Apna Dal daughters Anupriya Patel and Pallavi Patel despite in opposing camps could have their kill.

Modi-Yogi's sharp assault on SP's love for minorities could not prevent 35 Muslims getting elected to the UP Assembly under a Hindu

leader Akhilesh against 24 in 2017. Now it is also being claimed that the poorest minority 'labharthis' (beneficiaries) with a house, gas cylinder and free food, tended by the Rashtriya Muslim Morcha of RSS executive member Indresh Kumar have sailed with the saffron. So have Christians, including the Nagas, in Manipur and South Goa due to the efforts of Indresh Kumar.

The minorities despite business relationship with the majority community have not been able to share the social space. Mutual suspicion, legacy of the Partition sours the ties leading to polarisation of the communities. The social tension was palpable at almost every stage of the seven phase elections becoming acute with the fourth phase in Avadh region. Strangely enough whenever there is blatant minority polarisation, the party being favoured by them slinks to play the second fiddle since 1991.

Parties such as the BSP must be worried with vote share plunging to 12 per cent. It means that Mayawati is no more the force to lead her Dalit vote bank particularly Jatavs despite Amit Shah exchanging niceties with her. It changes the scenario for BJP too in its march to 2024 elections. If SP acts with vigour, forges effective national alliances with TMC of Mamata Banerjee, NCP of Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena, TRS, the resid-

ual Left and may be also the Congress, a resistance can be put up. It, however, looks too farfetched. The impending Gujarat and Himachal polls would set the tone. If such alliances remain utopian as the Goa experiment of Mamata Banerjee, the BJP may remain comfortable.

But such comfort may elude it as a new political order emerges. The challenge in UP from SP-RLD was hackneyed. But an emerging Kejriwal can create a national alternative as voters can break away from identity silos to get their lives improved. Punjab is a lesson. Kejriwal's Tiranga Yatra burnishes his nationalist credentials. The committed Hindu voters turned against Congress and BJP. They voted along with Sikhs and other communities to usher in the change. Tainted Ram Rahim's furlough angered Dalit voters to vote for AAP.

The politics is changing. The voter does not want to remain in the 'labharthi' mode. There has to be economic and political emancipation. The BJP has to realise it and effectively improve its rhetoric into economic action, may be drastically away from privatisation, and respond to mundane concerns like junking of efficient cars, imposition of new rules every day, high tolls and prices and a review of National Education Policy Indian politics is going through a churn.

INF A

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Resume discounts

Sir, As the COVID-19 situation has improved in India (less than three active cases per lakh population), the railways has decided to provide linens and blankets (beddings) in AC coaches of trains as was provided two years ago before the pandemic struck the nation. Senior citizen discounts given on train tickets (40 per cent for men and 50 per cent for women) was also stopped two years ago. The government should resume these discounts as these elderly people have been badly affected by the pandemic.

Gopal Mittal, BHUBANESWAR

Indian stranglehold

Sir, On a day when wickets fell like ninetails, in-form batsman Shreyas Iyer proved his mettle once again, scoring a superb 92 in the pink-ball Test against Sri Lanka at Bangalore. On a pitch offering prodigious turn and bounce, Iyer put the Sri Lankan attack to the sword to take his team to a position of strength. Despite being reprieved thrice, there was no letup in his shotmaking as he took the Sri Lankan bowlers to the cleaners. We can gauge the quality of his innings as no other batsmen got past 50. Having claimed six Sri Lankan wickets for 86 after posting 252, Rohit and company have a stranglehold on the game.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Course correction needed

Sir, There is only one message: Unless the Indian National Congress (INC) rids itself of the Gandhi trio, there is no hope for it. Not only does INC suffers due to their presence, India fails to have a credible, effective, and a productive Opposition, which itself is misunderstood to mean 'oppose'. Checks and balances are for progress, as the BJP too will be better served just as the entire nation, in having a national party work in Opposition in lifting India past seven dreadful decades of decadence if not downright decline. Great civilizations need that, and India has had great civilizations for millennia. But the Congress in its current cadre is but a detriment, specifically because of that family. Since INC has not shown any backbone for years, and there are no signs this is likely to change anytime soon. It's time for the Gandhi family to vacate the top tier of the grand old party.

MR Jayanthi, MUMBAI

of the day quote

The ascent of India as a frontline nation of the world has already started through the medium of space. The next 25 years from here will be crucial for the country as said by the Prime Minister

JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

'Hunar Haat', a programme to promote traditional arts and crafts, has been able to help artisans of the country and ensure their socio-economic upliftment

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINISTER

Gujarat's conviction rate increased significantly after Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced several measures in the state policing during his stint as the Chief Minister

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Five killed in AP

Amaravati: Five members of a family were killed and one injured when a car ramed into a culvert in Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district Sunday, police said. According to police, the man driving the four-wheeler apparently lost control resulting in the accident on a bridge over Nagarjuna Sagar Left Bank canal near Gauravaram village on Vijayawada-Hyderabad national highway. Two women and a man died on the spot while the injured were admitted to government-run hospital at Jaggayapet, where a six-month-old child and a man succumbed. Another injured person was undergoing treatment.

Man ends life

New Delhi: A 21-year-old man allegedly died by suicide in the national capital's northwest area, a police official said Sunday. According to the official, the deceased identified as Prakhari Yadav, a native of Uttar Pradesh, was a Delhi University graduate and was residing at a rented accommodation in northwest Delhi's Vijay Nagar. "The intimation about the incident was received by a police party which was patrolling in the area at 8 p.m. on Friday after which they rushed to the spot," the police official said.

Woman dies

Mathura (Uttar Pradesh): A 63-year-old woman from Mumbai, who had come with a group of 50 devotees to offer prayers at the temples of Mathura-Vrindavan, died while awaiting 'darshan' inside the Banke Bihari temple in Vrindavan. The incident took place on Saturday and is the third such incident in the past one month. Police said the woman was identified as Madhu Agarwal, a resident of Cuffe Parade area of South Mumbai.

Killer of CRPF trooper held

Srinagar: In a prompt action, the Jammu and Kashmir Police said on Sunday that it has arrested the killer of a CRPF trooper, who was killed in Shopian district. Vijay Kumar, IGP (Kashmir) said the killer of CRPF personnel has been arrested by police. "We have arrested the killer of CRPF personnel. Weapon of offence (pistol) has also been recovered on his disclosure. "One overground worker (OGW), who accompanied him during the terror crime has also been arrested. Militant crime was committed on the direction of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander, Abid Ramzan Sheikh. A case under relevant sections of law has been registered", the IGP said.



Indian exporters are sitting on large orders as the Russia-Ukraine conflict has sharply increased logistics costs
NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

PROCESSION ATTACKED FOR PLAYING MODI-YOGI SONG

The members of a wedding procession were beaten up for playing an election theme song related to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Aurriaiya district in Uttar Pradesh



Budget session resumes today

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: The second part of the Budget session will resume Monday and will last until April 8, 2022.

The House will sit from 11 a.m. till 6 p.m. during the scheduled 19 sittings whereas it sat from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m. during the first part of the Budget session due to Covid-19 protocols during the first part of the Budget session.

The Rajya Sabha is likely to get over 64 hours to transact the legislative business besides taking up the issues of public importance during this part of the session.

The second part of the Budget session is resuming after a 30-day recess and during this the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSCs) examined the Demands for Grants of various Ministries and Departments.

The Upper House will have four days for Private Member's Business and the hour long 'Zero Hour' and 'Question Hour' to continue as usual. During the last session, the Question Hour was reduced to half an hour because of the reduced timing of the sitting.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu is likely to give an account of the working during this recess of the DRSCs of Rajya Sabha in the House Monday.

External Affairs Minister S.



The first part of this Budget session was concluded February 11, 2022 with 10 sittings and the productivity of the House was 101.40 per cent

The Rajya Sabha is likely to get over 64 hours to transact the legislative business besides taking up the issues of public importance during this part of the session

The Upper House will have four days for Private Member's Business and the hour long 'Zero Hour' and 'Question Hour' to continue as usual

Jaishankar is likely to make a statement in the Upper House on the evacuation of the Indian nationals from war torn country Ukraine under Operation Ganga.

During the last session, the duration of the question hour was reduced to half an hour because of the reduced time of the sitting, now this will be of one hour along while the Zero Hour will be of usual

one hour at the beginning of the sitting.

Four days have been allotted for the Private Member's Business on each Friday barring March 18 which is holiday on account of the festival.

The first part of this budget session was concluded February 11, 2022 with 10 sittings and the productivity of the House was 101.40 per cent

PM Modi reviews security situation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to review India's security preparedness and the prevailing global scenario in the context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Modi, official sources said, emphasised on integrating latest technology in the security apparatus and reiterated that every effort must be made to make India self-reliant in the defence sector so that it not only strengthens our security but also adds to the economy.

Modi was also given a detailed overview of global tech usage in the defence sector and India's advances in it, they said. An official statement said Modi was briefed on latest developments and different aspects of India's security preparedness in the border areas as well as in the maritime and air domain.

"The prime minister was also briefed on the latest developments in Ukraine, including the details of

Modi was given a detailed overview of global tech usage in the defence sector and India's advances in it

Modi directed that all possible efforts should be made to bring back the mortal remains of Naveen Shekharappa, who died in Kharkiv

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar were among those who attended the meeting

Operation Ganga to evacuate Indian nationals, along with some citizens of neighbouring countries, from Ukraine," it said.

Modi directed that all possible efforts should be made to bring back the mortal remains of Naveen Shekharappa, an Indian student studying in Ukraine, was killed in shelling following the Russian invasion of the country.

India has been able to evacuate most of its citizens, a large chunk of them students, from the war-hit country.



LITERARY EXTRAVAGANZA



Visitors during the Jaipur Literature Festival, in Jaipur, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

JMB terror module busted in Bhopal, 4 held

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, March 13: After hours long operation against suspected terrorists, the Madhya Pradesh police on Sunday claimed to have arrested four Bangladeshi nationals from two different locations in Bhopal.

Police said those arrested belong to the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the terrorist group involved in the 2018 Bodh Gaya bombing. They have been identified as Fazhar Ali alias Mehmood (32), Mohammad Aqeel alias Ahmed (24), Zahooruddin



Representative image

alias Ibrahim (28) and Fazhar Zainul Abdeen alias Akram Al Hasan (25), police said in an official statement on Sunday evening.

The operation was carried out jointly by Madhya Pradesh police and the central agencies in two

locations in the state capital Bhopal. The operation was carried out maintaining complete secrecy and without informing the local police station. The operation was carried out around 3.30 a.m. to 4 a.m., however, the official announcement from the state police came in the evening.

They have been arrested from a building located near Fatima Mosque in Bhopal. Police said, apart from Bhopal, a search operation was also conducted in Karond area, located in the outer circle of Bhopal.

Cases of suicide, fratricide on the rise among CAPF men

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: Amid rising incidents of suicides and fratricide, the Central government needs to initiate measures to check these incidents and the security personnel need to be de-stressed by taking steps to ensure adequate leave to them with a healthy camaraderie between senior and junior levels across the forces. Recently, in back to back incidents of fratricide this month, the BSF lost seven of its personnel.

March 6, five BSF jawans were killed in an incident of fratricide in Khasa in Punjab's Amritsar where a constable, identified as Sateppa S.K., fired at five of his colleagues in the camp, which is located 20 km from the Attari-Wagah border.

Next day on March 7, a BSF constable shot dead a colleague before

shooting himself with his service rifle in West Bengal's Murshidabad. According to official data, a total of 193 suicides have been reported in the force since 2018, with 52 incidents being registered in 2021 alone while 23 security personnel were killed in 15 incidents of fratricide since 2018.

Analysing the possible causes of the incidents of suicide and fratricide in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), former BSF DG Prakash Singh said that the personnel seem to be under tremendous stress because of the pressure of their duties. Also the fact that they remain posted in hard areas for a long time and sometimes do not get adequate leave.

"Earlier, the BSF formation was of only six companies, subsequently the government of India decided to increase the strength to seven



companies and said that the seventh company will always be on training. The BSF officers also agreed that the seventh company will always remain on training, now I found that the seventh company is also deployed."Once the entire

strength of the battalion is deployed, no company will be going for training, rest and recuperation and it is duty, duty and duty round the year except when the security personnel go on leave and sometimes this leave is also not sanc-

tioned adequately," Singh added.

Soon after the fratricide incident in which four CRPF jawans were killed and three injured in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh in November 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) which has administrative control over all the CAPFs, directed them to initiate welfare measures like a 'get-together' like 'Chaupal' or open informal meetings of the officers and the juniors across all ranks and file to know the reasons behind their stress and strain and to find solutions to their problems.

The Ministry order specifically asked the DGs of all CAPFs to ensure good behaviour and camaraderie between the senior and junior officers. Noting that the CAPF personnel are over stressed, Singh stated that there was scope of improving the man-manage-

ment in the forces. He said that the senior officers have more responsibility to create healthy relations and it depends on how they treat their juniors, how they attend to their issues including their personal and family issues.

"When we were in service, we were expected to take care of their issues and needs. We were looked upon as 'Mai-Baap' (parents) and were expected to address the needs and issues of the personnel. In recent years, the gap between officers and junior constabulary has widened, a gulf has been created. The officers should fraternise with them, dine with them, play with them and create a healthy camaraderie among the force," Singh commented, adding that better relations with juniors will definitely improve the situation and will encourage them to speak out about their issues.

Manipur Assembly has 48 crorepatris

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: Of the 60 members of the new Manipur Assembly, as many as 48 are crorepatris with average assets of winning candidates amounting to Rs 3.75 crore, while 23 per cent of them have criminal cases and 18 per cent have serious criminal cases registered against them.

This was revealed by the Manipur Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) that analysed the self-sworn affidavits of all 60 winning candidates in the Manipur Assembly elections.

The BJP won 32 seats, National People's Party (NPP) won seven, Janta Dal (United) six, Congress five, Naga People's Front five, Independents three while Kuki People's Alliance won two seats.

Out of the 60 winning candidates analysed in 2022, 14 (23 per cent) have declared criminal cases against themselves. In 2017, two (3 per cent) MLAs had declared criminal cases against them. A total of 11 (18 per cent) winning candidates have declared serious criminal cases against them. In 2017, two (3 per cent) MLAs had declared serious criminal cases against them.

Party-wise, seven (22 per cent) out of the 32 winning candidates from the BJP, four (60 per cent) out of five from Congress, one (14 per cent) out of seven from NPP, one (17 per cent) out of six from JD(U) and one (33 per cent) out of three Independents have declared criminal cases against them in their affidavits, the ADR analysis showed.

Exercise on to smoke out Maoists in J'khand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, March 13: Parts of tribal-dominated Jharkhand suffering from the Maoist menace for long are of late witnessing a surge in clashes between security forces and the red rebels - an indication that exercises are on to get them out of their hiding places.

Jharkhand, with a population of little more than 3 crore, has 19 out of the total 90 extremist-hit districts across India. The country has 30 severely extremist affected districts and 13 of them are in this state. "The presence of left wing extremists has now been restricted to three-four regions of the state. The anti-Maoist operation will continue. We urge them to surrender under the state's surrender and rehabilitation policy," a top police official, who did not wish to be quoted, said.

There has been visible reduction in Maoists' activities in Jharkhand in the past few years due to continuous operations against them by security forces, the official



RED TERROR HUB THE STATE IS HOME TO 19 OUT OF THE 90 EXTREMIST-HIT DISTRICTS ACROSS INDIA

1,587 civilians were killed in Maoist violence since 2000

As many as 9,631 Maoists have been arrested since the formation of Jharkhand state in 2000 and 931 others have been killed

In the past two years, over 900 Naxalites, including several top-level leaders, have been arrested

said. The state police in association with central forces have been carrying out raids to nab Maoists, as part of the 'Operation Double Bull',

in the jungles of Lohardaga and its neighbouring districts since February 8. Till now, nine Maoists of the rank of sub-zonal com-

mander and area commander have been arrested, while one has been killed in 'Operation Double Bull'.

Since February 25, five top Maoist leaders, carrying rewards ranging from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 25 lakh on their heads, have also surrendered before the security forces.

Under the surrender policy, which was implemented by the Jharkhand government in 2010, altogether 231 Maoists have laid down arms till January this year, a police official said.

As many as 9,631 Maoists have been arrested since the formation of Jharkhand in 2000 and 931 others have been killed.

According to the police department data, 7,212 improvised explosive devices (IEDs), 1,64,143 detonators and over 5,000 different types of weapons were recovered from the red rebels since 2000.

Besides, a levy amount of over Rs 10.2 crore was also recovered during the period.

Altogether 1,587 civilians were killed in Maoist violence since 2000, and as per the policy, a fam-

ily member of each of them should have got a government job. However, only 794 people have got it.

An official said that giving jobs to legal beneficiaries on compassionate ground is a continuous process and it is proposed by respective district authorities on various parameters and evaluation like whether the beneficiary is a minor, the person's educational qualification and family identification.

In the past two years, over 900 Naxalites, including several top-level leaders, have been arrested.

An analysis of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data from 2017 to 2020 suggests that six police personnel of the state were killed by left-wing extremists.

Officials estimate that as many as 500 Maoists are active in Jharkhand.

Maoist movement from other states like Bihar and Chhattisgarh is another problem keeping the forces on their toes as Jharkhand shares about 600-km long boundary with them.

No let-up in police encounters in Assam

33 people have been killed and at least 88 injured in police action in the northeastern state since May 2021



AGENCIES

Nagaon, March 13: It seems there is no let-up in police encounters in Assam ever since the BJP government by Himanta Biswa Sarma resumed office in the northeastern state last year. A suspected drug peddler was injured when the police fired on him after he allegedly attacked them and tried to flee in a bid to evade arrest in Assam's Nagaon district Saturday, police said.

The man was hospitalised. Based on specific information, an operation was launched in an area under Juria police station. On being challenged, the accused allegedly attacked the police team

with a sharp weapon and attempted to flee. In response, the police team fired on him injuring him on the right hand. Altogether 59 vials of suspected drugs, Rs 10,200 in cash, one motorcycle and two mobile phones were recovered from his possession, police said.

Altogether 33 people have been killed and at least 88 injured in police action while allegedly trying to flee from custody or attacking the personnel since May 2021.

February 7, the Assam government informed the Gauhati High Court that due process of law and all guidelines issued by the NHRC were followed in all these cases.

Dhanbad grapples with worsening air quality



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jharia, March 13: Umesh Bhuiyan (28), an unorganised sector labourer, succumbed to lung cancer in 2017. He was a resident of the underground fire-affected Ghanudih area of Jharia in Jharkhand, working as a loader at the Kujama colliery. A year later, Ram Kumar Paswan, a BCLL employee and resident of the same locality, died of tuberculosis. He was exposed to coal dust both at his workplace and residence in Ghanudih.

Bhuiyan and Paswan aren't isolated cases in these parts of Jharkhand. In fact, Dr Nasir Iqbal, a private physician in Jharia, said that in a coal town, it was "common to come across patients suffering from respiratory diseases such as bronchitis, asthma, tuberculosis and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease". "The number of such patients, as well as those suffering from allergic rhinitis, had spiked in the past six to seven years due to rising pollution," he said.

In Jharia, exposure to coal dust and rising pollution has begun to affect unborn children, as well. According to Jharia-based physiotherapist and environmentalist Manoj Singh, the pollution is "affecting embryos in the womb, because of which the number of cases of deformities among newborns has increased in recent times".

Even though the Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board allotted Rs 54 crore to the DMC to implement measures like plantation, green walling and installation of pollution measurement equipment under the National Clean Air Programme, very few measures had been initiated; the fund is lying unused

RAJIV SHARMA | GENERAL SECRETARY, JHARKHAND INDUSTRIES & TRADE ASSOCIATION

In June 2019, Singh participated in a meeting organised by the Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board in Ranchi, to chalk out a strategy to control the pollution around Jharia's coalfields. "None of the measures promised by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCLL) and the Dhanbad Municipal Corporation (DMC) at the Ranchi meeting has been implemented yet, even though Greenpeace India ranked the coal town of Jharia

the worst polluted city/town in the country twice (in 2019 and 2020), in a list of around 300."

Furthermore, in a gross disregard for pollution-control norms, more than 50,000 trees have been uprooted from various parts of the district for road-broadening work. According to local social worker Akhlaque Ahmad, the plantation work carried out to offset the ill effects of the felled trees "is almost negligible".

Anup Sao, a former councillor of Ward 37, located near the fire-affected colliery project of Bastacola, highlighted several reasons for the abysmal state of the region. For one, he noted how activities carried out through open-cast mines add to the problem.

Rajiv Sharma, general secretary of the Jharkhand Industries and Trade Association, said: "Even though the Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board allotted Rs 54 crore to the DMC to implement measures like plantation, green walling and installation of pollution measurement equipment under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), very few measures had been initiated; the fund is lying unused."

He also pointed out that the five dust-sweeping machines that the civic body had procured as part of pollution control measures had been lying unused at garbage compactor stations because the DMC could not dole out Rs 19 lakhs per month to operate the equipment, which were obtained for Rs 2.65 crore in 2019.

"We also suggested that they adopt unconventional measures such as installation of air filtration plants, which the Delhi government implemented well, to control pollution effectively," Sharma added.

Hubban Mallick, Director of Pay and Clean, the firm entrusted with the task of operating the dust-sweeping machines, told 101Reporters: "These machines were procured by diverting funds meant for the District Mineral Foundation Trust. But the DMC failed to manage the Rs 19 lakh required for fuel and to employ drivers to operate the machines."

"Among the five machines bought, two are small machines that were meant to be used within colonies. However, they have not been utilised for this purpose, leaving residential areas heavily polluted. The payments take anywhere between three to six months, leaving the workers and drivers in a rut. This adds further pressure on the cleaning efforts of the entire enterprise."

Tribal party's mega rally rocks Tripura politics

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala, March 13: A mega rally in Agartala organised by the tribal based party TIPRA (Tiphra Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance) that has been demanding 'Greater Tripaland', displayed their strength ahead of the next year's assembly elections in Tripura, causing a concern to the major political parties.

Though TIPRA's 'Greater Tripaland' demand remained vague among the cross section of the people as it has no provision in the Indian Constitution, the slogan largely attracted the minority tribals, who constitute one third of Tripura's four million population.

The demand for a 'Greater Tripaland' was raised a few years back after the ruling BJP's ally Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) got a massive support from the indigenous tribals when it ahead of the 2018 assembly elections vociferously demanded for 'Tripaland' which sought a separate state for the Tripura tribals upgrading the existing Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).

The politically most important TTAADC has a jurisdiction on over two-thirds of Tripura's 10,491 sq km area and is home to over 12,16,000 people, of which around 84 per cent are tribals



J'khand's 'Jurassic Park' a treasure trove of prehistoric fossils

GEOLOGISTS AND PALEOBOTANISTS HAVE ESTIMATED THE AGE OF THE FOSSILS FOUND IN THE HILLS AND FOOTHILLS OF THE RAJMAHAL FROM 68 TO 150 MILLION YEARS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ranchi, March 13: Countless fossils dating to the Jurassic-era are present in the hills and foothills of the Rajmahal in Jharkhand, said to be 500 million years older than the Himalayas.

Geologists and paleobotanists have estimated the age of these fossils from 68 to 150 million years. The results of recent research for a project by Lucknow-based National Botanical Research Institute are expected to throw more light on the subject.

According to Dr. Ranjit Prasad Singh, Professor of Geology in PG College, Sahibganj, who participated in the research project, the hills of the palace are made of a large geological upheaval.

The indications from research and study are that it was a large oceanic field and many incidents of volcanic eruption changed the

TRIBAL CLOUT

Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council has a jurisdiction on over two-thirds of Tripura's 10,491 sq km area and is home to over 12,16,000 people, of which around 84 per cent are tribals

people, of which around 84 per cent are tribals. Focusing on the 'Tripaland' issue the IPFT in the 2018 assembly polls secured eight of the 20 tribal reserve seats, which over the decades were the strongholds of the CPI-M.

After the TIPRA, headed by Tripura's royal seon Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barman, captured the politically powerful TTAADC in April last year, the political significance of the new party in the mixed populated Tripura has further reinforced.

Defeating the BJP and the CPI-M, the TIPRA scripted history in the northeastern state by capturing the TTAADC, which is considered as a mini-legislative assembly of Tripura.

Political circles observed that Saturday's first mega rally of TIPRA was bigger than the BJP's public gathering March 8 and CPI-M's mass rally February 24.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah

and CPI-M general secretary Sitaram Yechury, party's politburo members Prakash Karat and Manik Sarkar addressed the respective party's gatherings. TIPRA supremo Deb Barman Saturday announced to put up candidates at least in 35 seats in the next assembly election on its own, putting a big challenge to the BJP and the CPI-M.

Political circles observed that Saturday's first mega rally of TIPRA was bigger than the BJP's public gathering March 8 and CPI-M's mass rally February 24

The TIPRA leaders while explaining about their 'Greater Tripaland' demand said that under the concept they wanted to improve the socio-economic conditions of the backward tribals living in the northeastern states of India, neighbouring Bangladesh, Myanmar and adjoining areas.

The BJP, CPI-M and the Congress though strongly opposed the IPFT's 'Tripaland' demand, the parties are officially not saying anything against the 'Greater Tripaland' demand apprehending loss of tribals' support in the next elections.

The BJP with two MLAs is a partner of the NPP-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government and with 12 MLAs is an ally of Nagaland's United Democratic Alliance (UDA) government in which the NPP with 25 MLAs is a major ally Meghalaya Chief Minister and NPP supremo Conrad K. Sangma has already indicated that they would play the role of an Opposition party in Manipur and continue to serve the people of the state with the utmost sincerity and hard work.

In the just concluded Manipur

Political realignments imminent in northeast



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, March 13: After the outcome of the Assembly elections in the BJP ruled Manipur and ahead of the crucial polls in the three northeastern states of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura, political realignments in the region were imminent.

The BJP's ally in Meghalaya, the National People's Party (NPP), which has been the partner of the saffron party since 2017 in Manipur, has now announced it will function as an Opposition party in the state after becoming the second largest party securing seven seats (against four seats five years ago).

Another influential political party in Manipur and Nagaland - the Naga People's Front (NPF), which after contesting against the BJP on 10 seats secured five seats this time against four in 2017, is yet to officially announce its final stand on supporting the BJP though it has indicated it will back the saffron party in Manipur.

The BJP with two MLAs is a partner of the NPP-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government and with 12 MLAs is an ally of Nagaland's United Democratic Alliance (UDA) government in which the NPP with 25 MLAs is a major ally Meghalaya Chief Minister and NPP supremo Conrad K. Sangma has already indicated that they would play the role of an Opposition party in Manipur and continue to serve the people of the state with the utmost sincerity and hard work.

In the just concluded Manipur

Assembly elections, the BJP, NPP and NPF had contested separately and fielded 60, 38 and 10 candidates, respectively, against each other. With its assertion to make a 'Congress Mukta (free) NE region', the BJP has been trying to consolidate its position in all the northeastern states. The Congress, which once dominated seven of the eight northeastern states, has no MLAs in Meghalaya, Tripura and Nagaland, where the Assembly elections are due in less than a year.

Among the eight states in the northeast, the Congress with 27 MLAs is the only Opposition party in the 60-member Assam Assembly.

Political commentators and analysts observed that though the regional parties, which are now ruling Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim are consolidating their positions at the cost of the Congress, the grand old party's political base is shrinking due to a weak organisational structure and a leadership crisis both in these states and at the Centre.

Besides the NPP a national party, NPF, Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) led by Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, ruling Mizo National Front in Mizoram, BJP's ally in Tripura Indigenous People's Front of Tripura and a few other regional and state parties are the constituents of the BJP-led anti-Congress alliance of regional parties -- the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), the northeast unit of the National Democratic Alliance at the Centre.

Experts lament that due to carelessness of the authorities, several crucial information and records were lost mainly due to the stone mafias' illegal activities. However, a few years ago, the Jharkhand government took an important step towards preserving the fossils.

The government has constructed Fossils Park in Sahibganj Kemandro at a cost of Rs 16 crore. The work is now almost in its final stages. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren has shown interest in this project. He had said in the Jharkhand State Wildlife Board meeting last month that the fossils present in the Rajmahal Hills are not 'minor stones', but pages of history and the government will leave no stone unturned to preserve them.

The father of Indian Palaeobotany Between 1935 and 1945, he had come here dozens of times in search and research of fossils and spent a long time in the hills. There, he discovered some new species of plants.

In view of this key research, the Geological Survey of India has given the status of 'Geological Heritage Site' to the Rajmahal Hills. Geologist Dr Ranjit Prasad Singh, who was part of several research projects on the Rajmahal, told IANS that many mysteries related to the existence of di-



BJP won elections by giving statements cleverly in the name of Hindutva and polarisation. The situation is serious in the whole country, in states. Everyone knows how was the management of the corona pandemic in UP. Such questions are left behind because they speak cleverly
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

VAIKO WANTS TN GOVERNOR REMOVED

MDMK leader Vaiko Sunday called upon the removal of Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi from the post for making political comments



of the day quote

Adventure instills in a person the courage to face risks, which develops confidence, determination and leadership ability



MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CM

Start-ups are the flavour of the season, as the number of 'unicorns' in the country has jumped, by leaps and bounds



HARDEEP SINGH PURI | UNION MINISTER

Ironically, the CPI(M), which is on a killing spree of political opponents, has set aside ₹2 crore in the state budget for world peace. First, they need to bring peace in Kerala, then they can do a drama about world peace



V MURALEEDHARAN | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Actor arrested

Kolkata: Actor Rupa Dutta has been arrested for allegedly committing attention diversion theft at the venue of the International Kolkata Book Fair, police said Sunday. Dutta, who has acted in television soaps, was arrested on Saturday after a policeman saw her throwing a purse into a dustbin, an officer of Bidhan Nagar North police station said. She was then detained and questioned, during which discrepancies were found in her answers. Several purses and ₹75,000 in cash were found from her bag during a search, he said.

Three drown

Hyderabad: A man, his son, and grandson drowned in a lake in Telangana's Warangal district Sunday. The incident occurred in Chinna Gurijala village in Narsampet mandal of the district. The deceased were identified as Krishnamurthy (65), Nagaraju (35), and Lucky (12). Quoting the eyewitnesses, police said Krishnamurthy was washing his feet in the lake, when he slipped and accidentally fell into the water. His grandson who was accompanying him jumped into the lake to save him. However, both started drowning.

Woman killed

Bahraich: A 35-year-old woman was trampled to death by a wild elephant near Katarniaghat range of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR) in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich district. The woman, along with two others, was grazing cattle near the forest area when a herd of wild elephants suddenly came out of the forest and charged at them.

3 dead, 2 injured

Anuppur: Three people were killed and two injured after their car crashed into a tree in Madhya Pradesh's Anuppur district Sunday, police said. The incident took place at Karaundi crossing near Rajendra village, 28 kilometres from the district headquarters, at 8:30am when the vehicle was on its way to Amarkantak, where the Narmada River originates, an official said.

2 jawans injured

Raipur: Two jawans of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) were injured in an exchange of fire with Naxals in Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Sukma district Sunday, a senior official said. The skirmish took place in the morning in a forest near Chichorguda village under Kerlapal police station limits when a team of the state's anti-Naxal force DRG was patrolling to ensure security to a road construction work, Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P said.

Punjab got honest CM after years: Kejriwal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amritsar, March 13: Just three days after AAP marked its maiden stupendous victory in Punjab, party convener Arvind Kejriwal, accompanied by Chief Minister-designate Bhagwant Mann, Sunday paid obeisance at the holiest Sikh and Hindu shrines in the city and later in a victory road show thanked the people for giving thumping win to the party.

Stressing that three crore Punjabis have ushered in an "inqulab" (revolution), the Delhi Chief Minister said for the first time after so many years, Punjab has got an honest Chief Minister.

"Tusi kamaal kar dita" (you did wonders). I love you Punjab. The whole world knew that Punjabis bring revolution, but still could not believe that such an incredible 'inqulab' could sweep. All were defeated, Sukhbir ji, Parkash Singh Badal ji, Manpreet Badal got defeated, Channi defeated on both the seats, Majithia ji, Navjot Singh Sidhu ji tasted defeat," he said.

"Now all the money will be spent on Punjab and its people. We will fulfill all the guarantees and make a 'rangla' or 'happy Punjab,'" he added. The road show passed through various areas with AAP supporters led by legislators showing flower petals on both Kejriwal and Mann, who stood out an open vehicle.

Thousands of supporters, many of them holding the tricolour and party flags, comprising elderly and women, greeted the AAP leaders amid cheers and loud applause. Earlier, Kejriwal and Mann paid obeisance at the Golden Temple and the Durgiana Temple and prayed for the prosperity and peace of Punjab. They also paid a floral tribute at the Jallianwala Bagh memorial, close to the



AAP Punjab CM-elect Bhagwant Mann with Delhi CM and party convener Arvind Kejriwal being greeted by supporters in Amritsar, Sunday

Golden Temple complex.

At least 16 councillors of the Amritsar Municipal Corporation joined the road show amidst the presence of party leaders Manish Sisodia and Raghav Chadha and Amritsar Mayor Karamjit Singh Rintu. The AAP wiped out the Congress and the SAD-BSP combine by defeating stalwarts like sitting and former Chief Ministers like Charanjit Singh Channi, Parkash Singh Badal, and Amarinder Singh.

Chief Minister-designate Mann will take oath alone on Wednesday, a source said. AAP has won 92 seats in Punjab - up from 20 in 2017 with its vote share rising to 42.4%.

A day earlier, Mann met Governor Banwarilal Purohit at the Raj Bhawan here and staked claim to form the government. He is set to take oath as the 17th Chief Minister of Punjab at Khatkar Kalan, the ancestral vil-

lage of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district, March 16 at 12:30 p.m.

Addressing the media outside the Raj Bhawan on Saturday, Mann said: "We also informed the Governor about the place and time of the swearing-in ceremony. I have invited all the people of Punjab to come to Khatkar Kalan for this historic occasion. On March 16, not only us and our ministers, all the people of Punjab will take an oath to make Punjab prosperous again. We all together make Punjab prosperous."

In his directive to newly elected party legislators, Mann asked them to spend maximum time in their constituencies, not in capital Chandigarh, and not to hanker for Cabinet berths. "We have to work for all those places where we went to seek votes. All MLAs must work in the areas from where they have been elected, not just stay in Chandigarh," Mann was quoted as saying.

FESTIVE SPIRIT



Artists perform at Dashashwamedh Ghat on the banks of Ganga river, ahead of Holi, in Varanasi

51% MLAs in UP have criminal cases: ADR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 13: Out of the 403 newly elected legislators in Uttar Pradesh, 205 (nearly 51 per cent) have declared criminal cases against themselves.

Of these 143 (36 per cent) MLAs have made the declarations in their affidavits. According to an analysis report released by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), 158 (39 per cent) winning candidates have declared serious criminal cases, including cases related to murder, attempt to

murder, kidnapping, crimes against women, etc.

There are five winning candidates who have declared cases related to murder (IPC Section-302) against themselves. Winning candidates with cases



related to attempt to murder are 29 while six winning candidates have declared cases related to crimes against women - one of

whom has a case related to rape. According to ADR analysis, there are 111 (44 per cent) out of 255 winning candidates from the BJP who have criminal antecedents, 71 out of 111 winning candidates are from SP, 7 out of 8 winning candidates from RLD, 4 out of 6 winning candidates from Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, 4 out of 6 winning candidates from Nishad Part, 3 out of 12 winning candidates from Apna Dal, 2 from Jansatta Dal Loktantrik, 2 from Congress and 1 from the BSP.



Huge loss for Cong in RS

The hopes of many Congress leaders to get a Rajya Sabha seat from Punjab have been dashed to the ground with the AAP sweeping the Assembly polls. Even the BJP and Akali Dal together cannot claim a single Rajya Sabha seat from the state. The AAP will have a bonanza of

winning at least four out of five Rajya Sabha seats. Be it Shamsher Singh Dullu or Pratap Singh Bajwa, both will retire April 2 from the Rajya Sabha. Since the Rajya Sabha polls for three seats will be held first, each candidate will require 40 votes. The AAP will win at least two seats in the first round of Rajya Sabha polls. The third seat could go to the Opposition parties if Congress, Akali Dal and BJP and others could come together. Otherwise, the third seat will also go to the AAP.

Praveen may be next CBI chief

The government is keen to make Praveen Sinha the next CBI director. Sinha is currently number-two as Special Director. He is a 1988 batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre and is due to retire in April this year.

If he is not made CBI director before April, he cannot become a regular director.

When Subodh Kumar Jaiswal was chosen as the CBI director last year, Sinha was not eligible for consideration for the post as officers belonging to batches between 1984 and 1987 were considered. If the post of the CBI director falls vacant now, he can emerge as a strong contender for the top job. In any case, he can be given the charge of a director without delay if Jaiswal quits before tenure and goes to RAW.

Clouds over Gehlot, Baghel

Having lost power in Punjab rather badly, the leaders in two Congress-ruled states - Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh are waiting with bated breath for the high

command to focus on restructuring the party and even change of guards. A decision will have to be taken on the new party president in these two states. While Sachin Pilot loyalists hope there will be a leadership change in Rajasthan, in Chhattisgarh, a group led by TS Singh Deo, the current health minister, is hoping for something similar. The incumbent Chhattisgarh Chief Minister, Bhupesh Baghel, is extremely close to Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and has played key roles in recent assembly elections in Assam and Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, there is no possibility of a leadership change. In the case of Rajasthan CM, Ashok Gehlot, the high command has committed that the next Assembly polls will be fought under his leadership. It means that his loyalists will be accommodated in the government.

Nitish worried

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is a worried man. Ever since BJP emerged as number one party in 2020 Assembly polls forcing Janata Dal (U) to play a second fiddle, the "Sushashan Babu" has been desperately trying to find a way out. The day is not far when the BJP will split other parties in Bihar and form its own government in the event of winning the UP Assembly polls. It was in this background that Nitish Kumar's name suddenly made headlines as the possible Presidential candidate for the July 2022 polls. It emerged that freelance poll strategist Prashant Kishor was behind it. It is Kishor who wants Nitish to move to the national scene to fill the vacuum among the non-BJP forces.

Mumbai cops record Fadnavis' statement

Maharashtra minister Aaditya Thackeray claimed the Maha Vikas Aghadi government does not use its agencies against the opponents as "campaign machineries" like the Centre does



Police personnel arrive to investigate leader of opposition and former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 13: A team of the BKC cyber police in Mumbai recorded senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis' statement for almost two hours on Sunday at his residence in connection with a case of alleged illegal tapping of phones, an official said.

IPS officer Rashmi Shukla is accused of tapping phones of political leaders and senior officials illegally when she was chief of the SID. Former Maharashtra chief minister Fadnavis had 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.

Following a complaint lodged by the State Intelligence Department (SID), 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.

Before the FIR was registered, the then Maharashtra chief secretary Sitaram Kunte had alleged in his inquiry report that Shukla had leaked the confidential report. Sunday, a team comprising Deputy Commissioner of Police Hemraj Singh Rajput, Assistant Commissioner of Police Nitin Jadhav and two inspectors, reached Fadnavis' bungalow 'Sagar' around noon. They recorded the BJP leader's statement for about two hours and then left his residence, an official said.

Heavy security was deployed outside Fadnavis' home, where a number of BJP leaders gathered, including MLA Nitesh Rane, MLCs Prakash Lad and Pravin Darekar; and party leader Kripashankar Singh. The police had issued a notice to

Fadnavis in connection with the case and BJP workers Sunday staged protests and burnt copies of the notice in parts of the state, including Pune, Pandharpur (in Solapur district), Nagpur, Chandrapur and Sangli.

BJP MLA Ashish Shelar said, "...Let them record it (the statement). The truth never hides and it can never be defeated."

"In fact, Devendra Fadnavis has brought to light corruption in this case. It was expected that those who engaged in corruption or are facing corruption allegations were probed in this case. But, the Maharashtra government is somewhere trying to use pressure tactics on the opponents," he told a news channel.

Leader of Opposition in the state Legislative Council Pravin Darekar told another channel that, "He (Fadnavis) brought before the people corruption in transfers (of officials)...now this (state) government is trying to counter that allegation."

Darekar claimed the MVA government (comprising the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress) was facing embarrassment in Maharashtra due to the corruption allegations levelled against it and therefore, making the "poor and unfortunate" attempt to target Fadnavis. However, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut in a Twitter post asked, "Why some people and political parties think of themselves as being above the law?"

"The central agencies summoned several ministers and public representatives in Maharashtra for probe out of political vendetta and they appeared before the agencies. No one has special rights in democracy. All are equal before the law. Why this drama then?" asked the Shiv Sena's chief spokesperson. Maharashtra minister Aaditya Thackeray claimed the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government does not use its agencies against the opponents as "campaign machineries" like the Centre does.

international

SUNAK URGES FIRMS TO LEAVE RUSSIA

British finance minister Rishi Sunak called on more British companies Sunday to wind down their existing investments in Russia and said new investments should be halted after President Vladimir Putin's decision to invade Ukraine. "While I recognise it may be challenging to wind down existing investments, I believe there is no argument for new investment in the Russian economy," Sunak said in a video message on Twitter



RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

Cold War echoes reverberate



AGENCIES
New York, March 13: A rivalry with Russia. A proxy battleground. Nuclear brinkmanship. For many generations of Americans, it's just like old times.

The invasion of Ukraine has rapidly returned echoes of a Cold War mentality to the United States, with a familiar foe in Russia. Bars have poured out their Russian vodka. McDonald's, a symbol of the end of the Soviet Union when it first opened in Moscow, has shuttered its Russian locations. Once again, a US President sees a pitched ideological battle. "We will save democracy," President Joe Biden said in his State of the Union address.

For an America where Russia never quite went out of style as an evergreen villain in film and television, revived tensions with the Kremlin have drawn from a well-worn geopolitical script. A familiar, chilly East-West wind is blowing again.

"It's very much a Cold War echo," says James Hershberg, professor of history and international affairs at Georgetown University and former director of the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson Center.

Hershberg sees much that's different about today's inflamed tensions with Russia. Vladimir Putin's aggressions, he says, don't seem driven by ideology the way communism was for the Soviet Union. A transformed media landscape, too, has helped turn Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy into a global protagonist.

But in a crisis that pits two nuclear superpowers on opposing sides, history is repeating in other ways. A Russian strategic overreach, Hershberg says, is again sparking a potentially perilous moment in international order.

"We are in a second Cuban

Missile Crisis in many ways in terms of the danger of escalation," says Hershberg, whose books include "Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam." "Putin is acting so irrationally he makes Nikita Khrushchev appear like a rational actor in comparison."

The largest land conflict in Europe since World War II, Russia's two-plus weeks of war in Ukraine has rallied Western allies like few events before it. In repudiating Putin's invasion, the US and its European allies have enacted crippling economic sanctions on Russia - which Biden Tuesday extended to Russian crude oil - while still drawing the line on military engagement with Russia.

"If we're talking about a capitalized Cold War, I don't think I could call this Cold War II," says Fredrik Logevall, professor of history and international affairs at Harvard and Pulitzer-Prize winning author most recently of "JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917-1956."

"But," Logevall says, "if we're talking more generally about a cold war, if we mean a titanic struggle that involves all aspects of national power waged between two incompatible systems but short of outright military conflict - then yeah, I guess this is a cold war."

The Cold War is innately con-

nected to the crisis in Ukraine partly because it so much informs Putin's world view. A former KGB agent, he once called the collapse of the Soviet Union "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the 20th century. The invasion of Ukraine is intended to deter Western influence and NATO infringement from Russia's sphere of influence, and potentially to restore a Texas-sized part of the former Soviet Union.

Barely two weeks in, the Cold War has often been invoked. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said "the threat to global security now is more complex and probably higher" than during the Cold War, partly because there aren't the same back channels of communication. A Russian Foreign Ministry official, Alexander Darchiyev, according to an Interfax report, recently suggested that "perhaps it would be worth recalling the well-forgotten principle that worked during the Cold War - peaceful coexistence."

Even before war began in Ukraine, Americans had a historically dim view of Russia. According to Gallup poll conducted in February, 85% of Americans viewed Russia unfavorably, easily the country's worst rating in more than three decades - a slide accelerated by Russia's meddling

Russian strike on base brings Ukr war close to NATO's border

Russian missiles hit a large Ukrainian base near the border with NATO member Poland on Sunday, killing 35 people and wounding 134, a local official said, in an escalation of the war to the west of the country as intense fighting was reported elsewhere. Russia's defence ministry said the air strike had destroyed a large amount of weapons supplied by foreign nations that were being stored at the sprawling training facility, and that it had killed "up to 180 foreign mercenaries", significant escalation", saying: "We know that Vladimir Putin has no moral limits when it comes to the

actions he's willing to take, and he's pushing the boundaries in military terms." The assault came a day after Moscow threatened to take action against Western countries' continued supply of arms to Ukraine, Politico reported. Reuters could not independently verify the casualties reported by either side. The attack on the Yavoriv International Centre for Peacekeeping and Security, a training base just 15 miles (25 km) from the Polish border that has previously hosted NATO military instructors, brought the conflict to the doorstep of the Western defence alliance.



An injured serviceman is escorted by medical workers, following an attack on the Yavoriv military base

in US elections, its annexation of Crimea and the nerve agent attack on Putin's leading opposition leader, Alexei Navalny, who's currently imprisoned.

And while former president Donald Trump has maintained

his esteem for Putin, anti-Russian opinion has uncommon bipartisan support. Gallup found that 88% of both Republicans and Democrats have an unfavorable view of Russia. Nothing unites like a common enemy.

Role of Javelin anti-tank missiles in Ukr's defence



The United States and allies have surged weapons to Ukraine in recent weeks in the face of the Russian invasion. As per reports, the US and other NATO countries sent more than 17,000 anti-tank weapons, including Javelin missiles, overland to Ukraine via Poland and Romania in the span of less than a week this month. President Joe Biden Saturday authorised the additional security assistance, the White House said, paving the way for the "immediate" shipment of fresh military equipment to Ukraine, a senior administration official said. Weapons experts say the Javelin could prove particularly effective against Russian tanks, though they caution that the missile systems alone are unlikely to change the tra-

jectory of the war. The Javelin is an antitank missile system that locks onto a target's thermal picture. The Javelin missile has an estimated range of approximately 3 kilometres. Its only shortcoming is that it weighs approximately 50 pounds (22.6 kg), not being the easiest missile to sling around. When fired, the missile's launch motor thrusts it out of the tube before its primary motor turns on and sends the rocket flying. The gentler start reduces debris and smoke, making it harder for the enemy to see where it was launched. It makes use of what is known as a "fire and forget" system, which allows the soldier to take cover or load a new missile while the other one is tracking to its target.

American journalist killed near Kyiv

Lviv: US journalist, Brent Renaud, has been shot dead in the town of Irpin outside Kyiv, police say, BBC reported. Kyiv's police chief Andriy Nebytov said he had been targeted by Russian soldiers. Two other journalists were injured and taken to hospital. It is the first reported death of a foreign journalist covering the war in Ukraine, BBC reported. Photographs are circulating showing a press ID for Renaud that was issued by the New York Times. In a statement, the newspaper said it was saddened to hear of Renaud's death but that he had not been working for the newspaper in Ukraine. He last worked for the newspaper in 2015, the NYT said, and the press ID he was wearing in Ukraine had been issued years ago.



SHORT TAKES

Anti-war protests across Europe

Berlin: Tens of thousands of people are expected to gather Sunday in cities across Europe to protest against the ongoing war in Ukraine, with small rallies taking place in Russia as well despite a crackdown by authorities against such demonstrations. Trade unions called a protest in Berlin where sunny weather was expected to boost the turnout. Organisers planned to march from the city's Alexanderplatz - a large square named after Russian Tsar Alexander I - to a site near the Brandenburg Gate.

Sri Lanka to hold all-party conference

Colombo: An all-party conference in Sri Lanka will be held March 23 to discuss the current economic situation in the South Asian country, local media reports said Sunday citing the presidential secretariat. The conference will be presided over by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, and attended by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and figures from all political parties represented in Parliament, Xinhua news agency quoted the reports as saying.

Bus full of refugees overturns; 1 dead

Rome: A bus carrying about 50 Ukrainian refugees overturned on a major highway in northern Italy at dawn Sunday, killing one person, Italian firefighters said. Italian state radio said there were several injured in the accident on the A14 autostrada near Forlì, a town in the Emilia-Romagna region in northeastern Italy. It said the rest of those aboard were safely evacuated. The bus landed on its side on a grassy slope just beyond a highway guardrail and near a farm field. Firefighters used two cranes in an operation to set the bus upright and remove it.

'Missiles fired from Iran hit near US consulate in Iraq'

AGENCIES
Baghdad, March 13: As many as 12 missiles struck near a sprawling US consulate complex in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil Sunday, in what a US defense official and an Iraqi official said was a strike launched from neighboring Iran.

No injuries were reported in the attack, which marked a significant escalation between the US and Iran. Hostility between the longtime foes has often played out in Iraq, whose government is allied with both countries. The Iraqi official in Baghdad initially said several missiles had hit the US consulate in Irbil and that it was the target of the attack. Later, Lawk Ghafari, the head of Kurdistan's foreign media office, said none of the missiles had struck the US facility but that areas around the compound had been hit.

The US Defense official said it was still uncertain exactly how many missiles were fired and exactly where they landed. A second US Official said there was no damage at any US government facil-



A damaged building after an overnight attack in Irbil

ity and that there was no indication the target was the consulate building, which is new and currently unoccupied. Neither the Iraqi official nor the US Officials were authorized to discuss the event with the media and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. Satellite broadcast channel Kurdistan24, which is located near the US Consulate, went on air from their studio shortly after the attack, showing shattered glass and debris on their studio floor. The attack came several days after Iran said it would retaliate for an Israeli strike near Damascus, Syria, that killed two members of its Revolutionary Guard.

Iran suspends talks with Saudi: Report

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tehran, March 13: Iran has decided to temporarily suspend its secret Baghdad-brokered talks aimed at defusing yearslong tensions with regional rival Saudi Arabia, Iranian state-linked media reported Sunday, a day after Saudi Arabia carried out its largest known mass execution in its modern history.

The Iranian news website Nournews, considered close to the country's Supreme National Security Council, reported the government had unilaterally paused the talks with Saudi Arabia that have been ongoing in Baghdad over the past year aimed at restoring diplomatic ties.

Shiites, who live primarily in the kingdom's oil-rich east, have long complained of being treated as second-class citizens. Saudi Arabia's executions of Shiites have stirred regional unrest in the past.

Iran, the largest Shiite Muslim country in the world, and Sunni powerhouse Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties in 2016 after Saudi Arabia executed prominent Shiite



cleric Nimr al-Nimr: Angry Iranians protesting the execution stormed two Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran, fueling years of animosity between the nations.

Late Saturday, sporadic protests erupted among Shiites in the nearby island kingdom of Bahrain over the mass executions.

The Baghdad-mediated talks between the regional foes began quietly in Iraq's capital last year as

Saudi Arabia sought a way to end its disastrous war against Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen, a conflict that has spawned the world's worst humanitarian disaster and brought rebel drones and missiles raining down on Saudi airports and oil facilities. Iran-backed militias also have attacked Saudi targets and launched drones against the kingdom from Iraq. The pause in diplomatic talks between the

IRAQ'S FOREIGN MINISTER EARLIER HAD SAID THE FIFTH ROUND OF TALKS BETWEEN SAUDI AND IRANIAN REPRESENTATIVES WAS DUE TO RESUME WEDNESDAY

THE REPORT DID NOT GIVE A REASON FOR IRAN'S SUSPENSION, BUT IT COMES AFTER SAUDI PUT TO DEATH 81 CONVICTED OF CRIMES RANGING FROM KILLINGS TO TIES TO MILITANT GROUPS, A GROUP THAT ACTIVISTS BELIEVE INCLUDED OVER THREE DOZEN SHIITES

countries that have long competed for influence across the Middle East comes at a tense time for the region. On Sunday, a missile strike landed in the vicinity of the US Consulate in Iraq's northern city of Irbil, an attack a US defense official said originated from neighboring Iran.

Talks to revive Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers meanwhile broke off last week without an agreement, casting uncertainty over months of negotiations that had nearly reached a breakthrough.

CHINA SHUTS BUSINESS CENTER TO FIGHT VIRUS SURGE

Everyone in Shenzhen, a finance and technology center that abuts Hong Kong, will undergo three rounds of testing after 60 new cases were reported Sunday. All businesses except those that supply food, fuel and other necessities were ordered to close or work from home

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, March 13: China's government responded Sunday to a spike in coronavirus infections by shutting down its southern business

center of Shenzhen, a city of 17.5 million people, and restricted access to Shanghai by suspending bus service.

Everyone in Shenzhen, a finance and technology center that abuts Hong Kong, will undergo three rounds of testing after 60 new cases were reported Sunday. All businesses except those that supply food, fuel and other necessities were ordered to close or work from home.

Case numbers in China's latest infection surge are low compared with other countries and with Hong Kong, which reported more than 32,000 Sunday. But mainland authorities are enforcing a "zero tolerance" strategy and have locked down entire cities to find and isolate every infected person.

Shenzhen is home to some of China's most prominent companies, including telecom equipment maker Huawei Technologies Ltd.,



electric car brand BYD Auto, Ping An Insurance Co. And Tencent Holding, operator of the popular WeChat message service.

On the mainland, the government reported 1,938 new cases, more than triple Saturday's total.

About three-quarters, or 1,412 cases, were in Jilin province in the northeast, where the industrial metropolis of Changchun was

placed under lockdown Friday and families were told to stay home after a spate of infections. China, where the first coronavirus cases were detected in late 2019 in the central city of Wuhan, has reported a total of 4,636 deaths on the mainland out of 115,466 confirmed cases since the pandemic started.

In Shanghai, China's most populous city with 24 million people,

the number of cases in the latest surge rose by 15 to 432. The city government called on the public not to leave unless necessary. It said in-tercity bus service would be suspended starting on Sunday.

"Those who come or return to Shanghai must have a negative nucleic acid test report within 48 hours before arrival," said a city health agency statement.

In Hong Kong, a health official warned the public not to assume the territory's deadly coronavirus surge was under control as the government reported 190 new fatalities, most of them elderly people, and 32,430 new cases. That's down from above 50,000 after stringent travel and business curbs were imposed.

Hong Kong, a crowded financial hub of 7.4 million, is trying to contain an outbreak that has killed 3,993 people, most of them in the lat-

est surge driven by the omicron variant, and swamped hospitals.

Construction crews sent from the mainland have built temporary isolation centers in Hong Kong for thousands of patients.

On the mainland, 831 new cases were reported Sunday in Changchun, 571 in the nearby provincial capital city of Jilin and 150 in the eastern port city of Qingdao.

Authorities in Jilin are stepping up anti-disease measures after concluding their earlier response was inadequate, according to Zhang Yan, deputy director of the provincial Health Commission.

Also Sunday, some residents of Cangzhou, south of Beijing, were told to stay home after nine cases were reported there, according to a government notice. It wasn't clear how many of its 7.3 million people were affected.

of the day quote

At the same time, the digital economy in India is being pegged at \$85-90 billion in the calendar year of 2020 and that will see an exponential rise to \$800 billion by 2030. They should be reaching \$800 billion in the backdrop of increased internet penetration

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

Plan is to cover all the banks by the end of next financial year. So we will have all the banks offering their products on the platform

RAJIV RATTAN | CHAIRPERSON, RATTANINDIA ENTERPRISES

This financial year we will close at about ₹11,000 crore and for the next financial year we want to grow our GTV by 40 per cent but we are planning to almost double our net revenue

PRAVEEN DHARBAI | CEO, PAYWORLD

SHORT TAKES

FPI net outflows at ₹45,608cr

New Delhi: Continuing their selling spree for the sixth straight month, overseas investors have pulled out a net ₹45,608 crore from the Indian markets in March so far. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) fear that India would be impacted more by commodity price hikes, particularly in crude oil, since India is a major importer, said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. As per depositors' data, FPIs pulled out ₹41,168 crore from equities, ₹4,431 crore from the debt segment and ₹9 crore from hybrid instruments, taking the total net outflow between March 2-11 to ₹45,608 crore.

Reffin raises ₹100cr in debt

New Delhi: EV financing digital platform Reffin has raised ₹100 crore in debt, which it plans to use to expand into new geographies for financing three-wheelers and make foray into providing loans for two-wheelers in the e-commerce delivery space, according to a top company official. It is looking to enter states like Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab for electric three-wheeler financing as it targets to grow revenue up to five-fold in the new fiscal year, up from its current rate of ₹12 crore per annum.

9 of top-10 cos gain ₹1.91L cr

New Delhi: Nine of the 10 most valued companies together added a whopping ₹1,91,434.41 crore in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries, Infosys and TCS emerging as the biggest gainers. ICICI Bank was the only laggard from the top-10 pack. Last week, the benchmark Sensex jumped 1,216.49 points or 2.23 per cent. From the gainers' pack, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) added ₹49,492.7 crore, taking its valuation to ₹16,22,543.06 crore.

NMDC's iron ore output grows 13%

New Delhi: State-owned mining giant NMDC has produced 8.87 million tonne (MT) of iron ore during January-February 2022, a year-on-year rise of about 13 per cent. According to company data, NMDC had produced 7.72 MT of iron ore during the first two months of 2021. During the period under review, the country's largest iron ore miner saw its sales growing 17 per cent to 8.21 MT, from 6.99 MT in January-February 2021. NMDC, under the Ministry of Steel, is the country's largest iron ore mining company with mines in states including Karnataka and Chhattisgarh.



India's economic recovery from Covid-19 is progressing well, with better than generally expected growth rates. Higher growth is not just due to a base effect, because Indian growth in 2021 exceeds that of many countries, which had a worse fall in growth in 2020

ASHIMA GOYAL | EMINENT ECONOMIST

RANJIT RATH PICKED TO HEAD OIL INDIA

Government headhunter PESB has picked a non-upstream executive, Ranjit Rath to head India's second largest state oil and gas producer, Oil India Ltd. Rath, 50, who is currently chairman and managing director of Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd (MECL), was selected after interviews of five applicants March 9



Morgan Stanley cuts growth hope to 7.9%

The key channel of impact for the Indian economy will be higher cost-push inflation, feeding into broader price pressures, which will weigh on all economic agents -- households, business, and government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



India's GDP forecast is lowered by 50 basis points for the fiscal year beginning April 1

Morgan Stanley expects retail inflation to rise by 6% and CAD to widen by 3% of GDP

The report saw upside risks of 0.5 per cent of GDP to the fiscal deficit target of 6.4 per cent of GDP for FY23

New Delhi, March 13: As higher oil prices torpedo economic recovery worldwide, Morgan Stanley has cut India's GDP forecast for the fiscal year beginning April 1 by 50 basis points to 7.9 per cent, raised retail inflation projection to 6 per cent and expects current account deficit (CAD) to widen to 3 per cent of GDP.

"Even as we expect the cyclical recovery trend to continue, we expect it to be softer than we previously projected," it said in a report. "We believe that the ongoing geopolitical tensions exacerbate external risks and impart a stagflationary impulse to the economy."

India is affected through three key channels - higher prices for oil and other commodities; trade, and tighter financial conditions, influencing business/investment sentiment.

"Building in higher oil prices, we trim our F23 GDP growth forecast 50bps, to 7.9 per cent, lift our CPI inflation forecast to 6 per cent, and expect the current account deficit

to widen to 10-year high of 3 per cent of GDP," it said.

India is 85 per cent dependent on imports to meet its oil needs and the recent surge in international oil prices, which pushed rates to a 14-year high of \$140 per barrel before retracting, will result in the country paying more for the commodity. Also, higher prices will result in inflationary pressure.

Regarding India's exposure to macro stability risks, Morgan Stanley said even as macro stability indicators are expected to worsen, lack of domestic imbalances and focus on improving the productivity dynamic will help to mitigate risks.

"As such, we do not expect that fiscal or monetary policy will need to tighten disruptively to manage macro stability risks. The risk would stem from a further sustained rise in oil prices, leading to quick deterioration in macro stability and currency volatility," it said.

The brokerage expected a repo rate hike in the June meeting of RBI's Monetary Policy Committee. "But we now expect the April policy to mark the process of policy normalization with a reverse repo rate hike. However, if the RBI were to delay its normalisation process, the risk of disruptive policy rate hikes would rise. We see less room for fiscal policy stimulus to support growth given high deficit and debt levels - we see a possibility of a modest fuel tax cut and reliance on the national rural employment program as an automatic stabilizer," it said.

"We see risks skewed to the downside for growth and to the upside for inflation and the CAD," it said. "Again, the key risk would be a sharp and sustained rise in oil prices, exacerbating macro stability concerns and leading to disruptive monetary tightening. Further, risks could arise if global growth conditions weaken further, which would impair India's export and capex cycle," it noted.

Centre has time till May 12 for LIC IPO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: The government has time till May 12 to launch the initial public offering (IPO) of LIC without filing fresh papers with market regulator Sebi, an official said.

The government's sale of about 31.6 crore shares or 5 per cent stake in Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), which was estimated to fetch around ₹60,000 crore to the exchequer, was originally planned to be launched in March, but the Russia-Ukraine crisis has derailed the plans as stock markets are highly volatile.

February 13, the government filed the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) for the IPO with Sebi, which granted its approval for the same last week. "We have a window till May 12 to launch the IPO based on the papers filed with Sebi. We are watching the volatility and will file the DRHP giving the price band soon," an official said.

The DRHP filed with Sebi had de-



tails of the financial results of LIC and also the embedded value till September 2021. If the government misses the May 12 window available with it, LIC would have to file fresh papers with Sebi giving the results of December quarter and also update the embedded value.

The official further said that although the market volatility has reduced in the last fortnight, it would wait for the market to stabilise further so that retail investors get confidence to invest in the stock. LIC has reserved up to 35 per cent of its total IPO size for retail investors.

The government was expecting to garner over ₹60,000 crore by selling about 31.6 crore or 5 per cent stake in LIC to meet the disinvestment target of ₹78,000 crore in the current fiscal year.

MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS CELEBRATES 1ST ANNIVERSARY



Bhubaneswar: Malabar Gold & Diamonds Bhubaneswar, one of the largest gold and diamond retail jewellers in the country, organised an event to celebrate the first anniversary of the store at Rupali Square here, March 13. Shikha Gayatri (Former Mrs INDIA 2021 Winner Of Queen Of Hearts) graced the event as the Chief Guest. During the event, customers along with management staffs were present. On this occasion, Ashraf (Store Head) said that Malabar will be launching two new stores shortly at Cuttack and Chandrasekharpur

ASSOTECH UNVEILS LUXURY APARTMENTS KRONOS, ATLAS



Bhubaneswar: Assotech Limited, one of the leading real estate agencies in Odisha, unveiled two super-luxury condominium apartments - Kronos & Atlas here, March 13. During the event, Sanjeev Srivastava, Managing Director of Assotech, said their aim is to provide premium living experience to their customers and assured that the work will start by next month. The apartments will be allotted to the buyers by the end of 2025/26

AS RUSSIA REELS UNDER SANCTIONS

THE BIRTH OF A NEW MONETARY WORLD ORDER

EXPERTS FEEL IT IS A PERFECT STORM BECAUSE THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE WEST SANCTIONS THE SINGLE-LARGEST COMMODITY PRODUCER OF THE WORLD, WHICH SELLS VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: As US President Joe Biden unveiled new sanctions against Russia, he made it clear that the totality of the sanctions and export controls is "crushing the Russian economy".

"The ruble has lost more than half its value. They tell me it takes about 200 rubles to equal 1 dollar these days. The Moscow stock exchange has been closed fully for two weeks because they know the moment it opens, it will probably collapse," Biden said.

Zoltan Pozsar of Credit Suisse said in a report. "We are witnessing the birth of Bretton Woods III - a new world (monetary) order centred around commodity-based currencies in the East that will likely weaken the Eurodollar system and also contribute to inflationary forces in the West."

"What we are seeing at the 50-year anniversary of the 1973 OPEC supply shock is something similar but substantially worse -- the 2022 Russia supply shock, which isn't driven by the supplier but the consumer. The commodities market is much more financialised and leveraged today than it was during the 1973 OPEC supply crisis, and



A crisis is unfolding. A crisis of commodities. Commodities are collateral, and collateral is money, and this crisis is about the rising allure of outside money over inside money

ZOLTAN POZSAR | CREDIT SUISSE

Russian supply crisis is much bigger, much more broad-based, and much more correlated. It's scarier," Pozsar said.

There are Russian commodities that are collapsing in price and there are non-Russian commodities that are rallying -- this rally is due

Sanctions-driven commodity price moves threaten financial stability in the West

Russia may default on sovereign bonds for the first time since the Bolshevik revolution in 1917

Removing Russian oil from the market would make energy prices skyrocket to over \$300 per barrel

Credit rating agencies have downgraded Russia to 'junk' status

to the 2022 Russia supply shock. "It's a buyers' strike. Not a seller's strike, to make things all the more absurd... Russian commodities today are like subprime CDOs were in 2008. Conversely, non-Russian commodities are like what US Treasury securities were back in 2008. One collapsing in price, and the other surging in price, with

margin calls on both regardless of which side you are on," he added.

The ban on technology exports to Russia, in response to the war in Ukraine, could backfire on global manufacturers of computer processors and semiconductors, as many crucial components for their production are made exclusively in Russia, an industry expert warned.

If Russia does fail to make payments on its debt, it raises the possibility of the first major default on the country's sovereign bonds since the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, BBC reported.

Removing Russian oil from the market would make energy prices skyrocket to over \$300 per barrel of oil, Russia's Deputy PM Aleksandr Novak said, adding that Russia is not dependent on the West and can "reroute" its supplies elsewhere.

Price shocks will have an impact worldwide, especially on poor households for whom food and fuel are a higher proportion of expenses.

No stopping RONALDO

Man United striker becomes all-time highest scorer in competitive football with hat-trick against Spurs

Name	Duration	Total games	Goals
Cristiano Ronaldo	2001-present	1,110	807
Josef Bican	1931-1956	530	805
Romario	1985-2007	994	772
Lionel Messi	2003-present	961	759
Pele	1957-77	831	757
Ferenc Puskas	1943-1966	754	746
Gerd Muller	1962-1981	793	734
Ferenc Deak	1940-1957	455	576
Uwe Seeler	1953-1978	549	575
Tulio Maravilha	1988-2019	609	575

AGENCIES

London, March 13: Cristiano Ronaldo set another goalscoring record in a return to form with a hat-trick to keep Manchester United's chances of playing in the Champions League next

season alive with a 3-2 win Saturday evening over Tottenham Hotspur. Ronaldo had scored just once in his previous 10 games, but three fantastic finishes took him clear as the highest scorer in professional men's football history according to FIFA's records with 807 goals for club and country. Statistically there should not be any doubt that Ronaldo is greatest of all times (GOAT).

Victory lifted Manchester United back into fourth, although they are just two points ahead of Arsenal who have four games in hand. A fifth defeat in eight Premier League games is another blow to Tottenham's hopes of a top-four finish as they remain seventh, now five points behind United.

Ronaldo's second spell at Old Trafford has so far proven to be an anti-climax with his poor form sparking debate over whether the 37-year-old's powers are waning. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner missed United's thrashing in the Manchester derby last weekend and was criticised for a perceived lack of commitment as he jetted off to Portugal to rehab a hip injury rather than watch his teammates losing 1-4 at the Etihad.

Ronaldo was restored to Ralf Rangnick's starting line-up as one of five changes from that damaging defeat with Bruno Fernandes the notable absentee due to illness. It took him just 12 minutes to make his mark with a stunning strike into the top corner from outside the box.

However, United failed to build on the early goal and were instead forced back in a familiar pattern to previous home games this season against stronger opposition.

Bumrah, Iyer put India in command

PANT BEATS KAPIL'S RECORD OF FASTEST TEST 50 BY AN INDIAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, March 13: India are once more in command in the second Test against Sri Lanka here. At stumps Sunday, the visitors chasing a mammoth 447 runs for victory were 28 for one in the first innings. On a fast crumbling pitch it will be a miracle even if they survive the whole of the third day.

In the first innings Sri Lanka were bowled out for 109 with Jasprit Bumrah (5/24) and Ravichandran Ashwin (2/30) sharing the remaining four wickets. The hosts in their second innings declared at 303 for the loss of nine wickets and thus setting a mammoth victory target.

Shreyas Iyer (67, 87b, 9x4) again emerged the top-scorer for India. But the day belonged to Rishabh Pant (50, 31b, 7x4, 2x6) who reached his half century in just 28 balls. It was the fastest Test 50 by an Indian, obliterating the 30-ball effort by Kapil Dev against Pakistan in 1982. As they say, there can never be a dull moment when he is at the crease.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (46, 79b, 4x4) gifted away his wicket, but before that he had put on 42 runs for the first wicket with Mayank Agarwal (22) and then 56 runs for the second with Hanuma Vihari (35). Rohit was calculative in selecting his shots before lofting off-spinner Dhananjaya de Silva straight to Angelo Mathews.

Vihari, who seemed to be making the No. 3 spot his own, missed a straight one from Jayawickrama and lost his off stump. The bowler also sent back Virat Kohli (13), who again fell before, the 73rd consecutive innings that he is without a century.

In the first session India polished off the Sri Lankan lower-order in a jiffy. Sri Lanka resumed at 86 for six and India required less than 30 minutes to wrap their innings. Bumrah and off-spinner R Ashwin (2/30) scalped two batters each as Sri Lanka's shoddy display continued. It was Bumrah's



Jasprit Bumrah

BRIEF SCORES

India 252 and 303 for 9 decl (Shreyas Iyer 67, Rishabh Pant 50, Praveen Jayawickrama 4/78) versus Sri Lanka 109 all out (Jasprit Bumrah 5/24) and 28 for 1 (Bumrah 1/9)

eighth five-wicket haul in Tests.

During the day Bumrah also reached the magical 300 international wickets mark. He currently has 121 Test wickets, 113 in ODIs and 67 in T20is.

In the Sri Lankan second innings also Bumrah struck early dismissing Lahiru Thirimanne for a duck. Kusal Mendis (16 batting) and Dimuth Karunaratne (10 batting) were at the crease when stumps were called.

Tremendously happy with my first hat-trick since I came back to Old Trafford! Nothing beats the feeling of being back on the pitch and help the team with goals and effort

CRISTIANO RONALDO



SHORT TAKES

Windies eves fined

Hamilton: The West Indies team were fined 40 per cent of their match fees for maintaining a slow over-rate during the ICC Women's ODI World Cup match against India here Saturday which they lost by 155 runs. Shandre Fritz of the ICC International Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after Stafanie Taylor's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration. "Players are fined 20 per cent of their match fees for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time," the ICC said in a statement.

Thumping win

Wellington: Ellyse Perry (68), Tahila McGrath (57) and Ashleigh Gardner's (48 runs and two wickets) powered Australia to a crushing 141-run win over New Zealand, their third on the trot in the ICC Women's ODI World Cup here Sunday. The Aussies posted 269 for eight after being put in. Then they bowled out New Zealand for 128 in 30.2 overs. Darcie Brown (3/22) was the pick of the Aussie bowlers while Amanda-Jade Wellington (2/34), Gardner (2/15), Perry (1/18), McGrath (1/17) and Megan Schutt (1/22) provided the perfect support from the other end.

Chelsea in trouble

London: Roman Abramovich has been disqualified as a Chelsea director by the Premier League board, while Hyundai became the latest major sponsor to suspend their deal with the troubled club after the British government sanctioned the Russian billionaire. Chelsea owner Abramovich was one of seven oligarchs sanctioned this week by the UK following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "Following the imposition of sanctions by the UK government, the Premier League board has disqualified Roman Abramovich as a director of Chelsea Football Club," a statement said Saturday. The European champions are now in financial crunch. AGENCIES

Contrasting wins for Rafa, Daniil



Rafa Nadal celebrates after his win over Sebastian Korda at Indian Wells AP/PHOTO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indian Wells, March 13: Daniil Medvedev beat Tomas Machac 6-3, 6-2 in the second round of the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament here Saturday. The World No.1 made quick work of his Czech opponent, finishing Machac off in just over an hour. The Russian won 80 per cent of his first-serve points and saved the lone breakpoint he faced.

However, Rafael Nadal didn't have it as easy in opening his pursuit of a fourth title at Indian Wells. He got pushed to the limit by practice partner Sebastian Korda before winning 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 (7-3), giving Nadal a 16-0 record this year.

Nadal trailed 2-5 in the third set before winning four straight

games with two breaks of Korda to take a 6-5 lead. Korda held at six-all to force the tie-breaker. The 38th-ranked Korda led 3-2 and then Nadal reeled off five straight points to close out the match in 150 minutes.

In the women's segment, Jasmine Paolini upset second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 in the second round for the Italian's first career win over a top-10 player. Sabalenka fired eight aces to go with 10 double faults.

Osaka hekkled However, four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka was brought to tears by a heckler as she lost 0-6, 4-6 to Veronika Kudermetova. Osaka, now ranked 78th in the world was really no

Nadal pulls out

MIAMI GARDENS: Rafa Nadal became Saturday, the latest big draw to pull out of the Miami Open tennis tournament. Nadal is a five-time finalist at the event but hasn't played here since 2017. Nadal's decision came three days after Novak Djokovic announced that he wouldn't be playing at Indian Wells or Miami because he is unvaccinated and can't travel to the United States. "Rafa will certainly be missed. He has so many fans here in South Florida, and we hope to see him back in Miami next year," tournament director James Blake said.

match for her opponent.

She pleaded with the chair umpire to take action to no avail after a man from the stands barked 'Naomi you suck'. At 0-3 down in the first set of the second round match, her emotions spilled over. Osaka pulled herself together and resumed the match, but Kudermetova, the 21st seed, raced through the opening set before Osaka managed to hold serve to open the second. However, that was not enough for the Japanese to come back into the match.

In another match, defending champion Paula Badosa beat Tereza Martincova 6-2, 7-6 (7-4).



Commonwealth Day celebrated in Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata commemorated Commonwealth Day 2022 with a friendly beach volleyball match Sunday at the Blue Flag Beach in Puri. The match was conducted in collaboration with Sports & Youth Services Department, Government of Odisha and the Puri administration.

British Deputy High Commissioner to East and Northeast India, Nick Low kicked off the game with Samarth Verma, IAS, Collector and District Magistrate, Puri.

A team of 'UK in Kolkata' played against the 'Odisha Sports' in the

match. The latter won the match.

Low said: "I'm delighted to return to Odisha, where I'll renew old friendships and make new ones. Celebrating Commonwealth Day in Puri and in Bhubaneswar as we look forward to the XXII Commonwealth Games, Birmingham 2022 will be special.

R Vineel Krishna, Commissioner-Secretary, Sports & Youth Services Department said: "It is an honour for us and we are extremely delighted to partner with the British Deputy High Commission in Kolkata, once again, and celebrate the spirit of the Commonwealth Games. It is our shared vision to promote sports and we look forward to collectively working towards that goal."

EVES EXACT SWEET REVENGE

GOALKEEPER SAVITA EMERGES HERO, MAKES 3 STUNNING SAVES DURING SHOOTOUT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The Indian women's hockey team beat Germany 3-0 in a dramatic shootout to avenge their first leg defeat to share the honours in the two-legged tie of the FIH Pro League here Sunday at the Kalinga Stadium. The evs thus exacted sweet revenge for the loss they suffered Saturday.

Kumari Sangita, Tete Salima and Sonika scored from their attempts in the shootout while none of the Germans from among Lilly Stoffelsma, Lena Frerichs and Sara Strauss could score from their three tries with the home side skipper and goalkeeper Savita doing a brilliant job to deny the visitors.



Indian skipper Savita effecting a safe during the shootout against Germany

Just like Saturday, both the teams were locked at 1-1 at the end of the regulation time, leading to the shootout.

India got three penalty corners in the match but could not utilise

any one of them while Germany converted one from the five PCs they earned in the match.

The first quarter was dominated by India with 89 per cent ball possession and five circle entries but

a goal eluded them. The Germans came back stronger in the second quarter and they took the lead a minute before half time when Felicia Wiedermann converted a penalty corner. India's debutant goalkeeper Bichu Devi also saved a crucial penalty stroke in the second quarter.

The home side came out with renewed vigour in the third quarter and equalised in the 40th minute through a field goal from the stick of Nisha, following a nice build-up.

India's next matches are against England on April 2 and 3 at the same venue. There were talks that the players may be allowed to return to their respective homes to get rid of the bubble fatigue. But a final decision is to be taken in the matter.

BLISTERS CAUSE HEART-BREAKING LOSS

LAKSHYA FAILS TO CROSS FINAL HURDLE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Muelheim An Der Ruhr (Germany), March 12: World Championships bronze medalist Lakshya Sen's giant-killing run ended with a straight-game loss to Thailand's rising star Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the summit clash of the German Open Super 300 badminton tournament here Sunday. The 20-year-old Sen lost 18-21, 15-21 in 57 minutes to the three-time world junior champion Vitidsarn in the final.

World No.12 Sen came into the match with a 33 head-to-head record against Vitidsarn, ranked 20th. Sen had beaten the Thai in their last

meeting at Hylo Open last year.

In the first game it was neck and neck till 4-4. However, then Vitidsarn upped the ante. He went into the break with a commanding 11-6 lead. The closest that Sen got to him was 15-16. The Thai player then played a drop shot and a smash to close out the game. However, blisters troubled Sen all throughout the tie and he needed medical attention twice.

The semifinal against Viktor Axelsen seemed to have taken a toll on Sen as Vitidsarn jumped to a 7-3 lead in the second game before moving to a 11-5 advantage after the change of sides. The match was as good as over then.