

Vaccination of children in the 12-14 years age group kicked off Wednesday in Odisha. (Left): A student of Government High School at IRC Village in Bhubaneswar winces as she gets the jab; other students display their identity cards as they await their turn to get vaccinated OP PHOTO



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### **Teacher nabbed for** eloping with student

Sundargarh: Odisha Police arrested Wednesday from Siwan in Bihar a teacher for allegedly eloping with a minor Class VIII student. The mathematics teacher was working in an English medium school in Kutra locality of Sundargarh district. A printing machine, a bike, vermillion and bangles were also seized from the accused. The student and the teacher had gone missing in the evening hours of March 5. A kidnapping case was lodged at the Kutra police station following a complaint by the father of the girl. "We managed to rescue the girl and arrested the accused.' Rajgangpur SDPO Sashank Sekhar Beura said Wednesday.

# **Puri servitor shot dead**

Pratihari, in the case.

nabbed soon

Puri Collector Samarth Verma

and SPKV Singh visited the crime

scene. They assured locals that

those behind the incident would be

Police said they suspect the mur-

der of Pratihari could be the fallout

of past enmity. The incident trig-

gered tensions in the temple town as

Pratihari was known to be influen-

tial. A pall of gloom descended on the

sevayat fraternity as news about

Pratihari's death spread. Many res-

idents of the area condemned the

murder and demanded stringent ac-

In the police complaint,

Narasingha, brother of Krushna

Chandra, has named Baba Mahapatra,

Hari Panda, Tutu and Kunumuni as

the main persons behind the murder.

Narasingha said that before his death,

Pratihari had also mentioned the

four names as the persons involved

tion against the killers.

The deceased had been named as the 'main conspirator' in the murder of former BJD councillor Guna Singhari and had only been acquitted in the case in January

### POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, March 16: A servitor of the Jagannath temple here was shot dead Wednesday morning and the incident created tension in the temple town. Krushna Chandra Pratihari. secretary of Suar-Mahasuar Nijog and a former member of the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee, was murdered near his house at Barabati Jagaghar under Town police station, police said. Two persons came on a bike and opened fire at Pratihari before fleeing from the spot, police said. A couple of shots hit Pratihari on the head. Locals rushed the servitor to



### against Panigrahi: Lokayukta to SC

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 16: The Odisha Lokayukta told Wednesday the Supreme Court that 'huge' incriminating material has been found during preliminary investigation against MLA Pradeep Panigrahi in a corruption case.

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi and Abhay S Oka asked the Lokayukta to place on record the findings of the investigation against Panigrahi.

vocate Ravindra Srivastav appearing for Odisha Lokayukta. submitted to the Supreme Court that preliminary enquiry has con■*It was a scary sight as one* of the looters pushed the motorcycle while the second one followed with a gun in hand threatening to shoot anyone who came near

### PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 16: High drama was enacted Wednesday when two armed men looted a jewellerv shop near the outskirts of the Odisha capital. During the heist the plans of the looters went haywire as their motorcycle broke down. However, they hijacked an-

"I came outside and tried to h

**Evidence found** 

During the hearing, senior ad-

HIGH DRAMA IN JEWELLERY HEIST "They looted jewellery worth around ₹20 lakh from my shop, but

of Rama Devi Women's University who went miss-

ing Tuesday have been found

in Mathura town, Uttar

Pradesh. Sources said that

Railway Police personnel in

Mathura station rescued the

duo. A team of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar police have

already left for Mathura to

bring back the two students.

A missing complaint was

mated," the visibly-shaken owner told reporters. Few locals gathered after hearing the alarm. They peeped into the shop to see what was happening. However, they fled after seeing the

the exact value is yet to be esti-

Police said one of the two

girls was staying at a hostel

while the other was stay-

ing with her family. The stu-

dent staying with her fam-

ily left a note that she was

going outside Odisha. However, she had not men-

tioned where she was going.

the two girls as to why they

decided to leave town.

Police will also question

two dacoits armed with guns. The drama unfolded when the two looters came out of the shop in a hurry, but their motorcycle malfunctioned. One of them desperately tried to start the vehicle as the pillion rider kept on pointing the gun at someone inside the shop.

### Mann sworn in as Punjab CM

SBS Nagar (Punjab): AAP leader Bhagwant Mann was sworn in Wednesday as the Punjab chief minister. Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mann in the swearing-in ceremony which took place at Khatkar Kalan, the ancestral village of legendary freedom fighter Bhagat Singh. Only Mann took oath during the ceremony. Top AAP leaders including Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia were present at the function. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also congratulated Mann. "Congratulate Shri Bhagwant Mann Ji on being sworn in as the chief minister of Punjab," Patnaik wrote on Twitter. MORE P8

**IRREGULAR** by MANJUL

No, not for any election campaign.

For a change he's taken up a film

promotion campaign!

MIN

OMMU

pital, but he was pronounced dead on arrival Police informed that four teams have been formed to nab the culprits. The identities of the culprits are vet to be ascertained.

the Puri district headquarters hos-

Pratihari was recently acquitted in the murder case of former BJD councillor and servitor Taluchha Bhagaban Mohapatra alias Guna Singhari, which happened in August 2012.

In the chargesheet of that case. police had identified Pratihari as the 'prime conspirator' who allegedly hired goons to kill Singhari due to rivalry over land deals and real estate business. The court of the first Additional District Judge in Puri had in January this year acquitted six persons, including

A forensic team examining the place where Krushna Chandra Pratihari was shot dead in Puri; (Inset) Krushna Chandra Pratihari OP PHOTO

### Man kills mother during family feud

PURI: A man hacked his mother to death here Wednesday when he attacked his family members including parents, his brother and his wife. The man identified as Bishnu Prasad Dikhit, has been detained by the police. Sources said family feud led to the tragedy in Subhadra Nagar locality under Penthakata Marine police limits. They said an argument broke out between Bishnu and his mother Gulilata over some family issues Wednesday morning. The situation turned violent when Bishnu attacked his mother with a sharp weapon killing her on the spot. His father, brother and wife also suffered serious injuries as they tried to save the deceased. They are currently undergoing treatment at a hospital here.

cluded and the investigation is in an advanced stage

"Has something incriminating come on record," the bench asked the Lokayukta counsel. "Huge my Lords. There are transactions in crores," the Lokayukta counsel replied. The bench then directed the Lokayukta to file a report in two weeks. It posted the matter for hearing April 6.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Odisha Lokayukta had filed a special leave petition in the SC challenging the orders of the Orissa High Court which ruled that the Lokayukta cannot order preliminary enquiry against Panigrahi by the Vigilance department. This is because the department is the complainant in the matter.

The SC had April 23 last year stayed the Orissa HC order restraining the Vigilance department from conducting the enquiry. Gopalpur MLA Panigrahi was arrested in December 2020 for his alleged involvement in a job scam. He got bail in June 2021.

other two-wheeler and managed to escape.

CCTV footage showed two men parking their motorcycle near 'Sagarika Jewellers' in Janla. The accused were wearing helmets and the visors were pulled down as they entered the shop and hence their faces were not visible.

The moment they entered the shop, they sprayed some chemical on the shopkeeper's face and started looting jewellery. But the alert owner pressed an alarm bell beside him, police said.

them with a stick, following which one of them opened fire at me,' the owner said. "Had I not ducked and moved away, the bullet would have pierced my chest," he added.

After trying in vain to start the motorcycle, one of them started pushing it down the road as the other gave him cover from behind with the gun, according to the footage.

The looters then hijacked another motorcycle and fled, a police officer said. "An investigation is underway and we hope to nab the culprits soon," the official informed.



### ICJ asks Russia to stop war on Ukraine **MARKET WATCH** INDEX

■ Ukraine filed its case shortly after the attacks began and the country's president said the ruling is a 'complete victory'

### AGENCIES

The Hague, March 16: The United Nations' top court Wednesday ordered Russia to stop hostilities in Ukraine granting measures requested by Kyiv. However, many remain skeptical that Russia would

comply with the ruling. The court's president, US Judge Joan E Donoghue, demanded that 'the Russian Federation shall immediately suspend the special military operations it commenced on



in shooting him.

February 24' against Ukraine. However, it should be stated here that although rulings of the ICJ are binding, it has no direct means of enforcing them, and in rare cases in the past countries have ignored them.

"The Russian Federation shall immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced February 24, 2022 on the territory of Ukraine," the ICJ judges said in a 13-2 decision. They added that Russia must also ensure that other forces under its control or supported by Moscow should not continue the military operation.

Ukraine filed its case at the ICJ shortly after Russia's invasion began. It said that Moscow's stated justification that it was acting to prevent genocide in eastern Ukraine, was unfounded. In addition to disputing the grounds for the invasion, Kyiv also asked for emergency 'provisional' measures against Russia to halt the violence before the case was heard in full. Those measures were granted Wednesday.

During hearings earlier this month, Ukraine said there was no threat of genocide in eastern Ukraine, and that the 1948 Genocide Convention, which both countries

### ZELENSKYY PLEADS FOR MORE US HELP

Washington: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy summoned the memory of Pearl Harbour and the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in appealing Wednesday to the US Congress to do more to help Ukraine's fight against Russia. Zelenskyy however, acknowledged the no-fly zone he has sought to 'close the sky' to airstrikes on his country may not happen. Showing the packed auditorium of lawmakers a graphic video of the destruction and devastation his country has suffered in the war along with heartbreaking scenes of civilian casualties, Zelenskyy said, "We need you right now. I call on you to do more." Zelenskyy began in Ukrainian through an interpreter but then switched to English in a heartfelt appeal to help end the bloodshed. "I see no sense in life if it cannot stop the deaths," he said. MORE P10

have signed, does not allow an invasion to prevent one.

Russia said it had skipped the hearings at the ICJ 'in light of the apparent absurdity of the lawsuit'. It later filed a written document arguing that the court should not impose any measures

Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy welcomed Wednesday the ruling by the ICJ on emergency measures as 'a complete victory' in its case against Russia.

"The (ICJ) order is binding under international law. Russia must comply immediately. Ignoring the order will isolate Russia even further," Zelenskyy said on Twitter.

RSES	SENSEX	56816.65		1039.80	
BOU	NIFTY	16975.30		312.30	
CURRENCY BOURSES	DOLLAR	76.57	₽	₹0.38	
CURR	EURO	83.98	₽	₹0.40	
NO	GOLD	₹51,044	₽	₹520	
BULLION	SILVER	₹67,193	₽	₹1132	
WEATHER					

VARIATION

W	EAT			
		BHUB	СТК	
ЧΡ	MAX	37.6°C	38.0	2
ΞL	MIN	21.5°C	21.6	C Forecast
Humidity		79%	77%	Dry weather
Rai	nfall	Nil	Nil	most likely





### **BLANCHETT'S PASSION** FOR DAIRY DELIGHT

Samantha lured by

artificial brilliance

The two-time Academy Award winner Cate Blanchett is still passionate about acting but she has a yearning to do something completely different. During an appearance on a show when asked to name one thing she hasn't done yet that she'd like to do, she answered: "Honestly, I want to make cheese."

### ANIMATED COMEDY STRAYS **TO HAVE ISLA FISHER IN LEAD**

Actress Isla Fisher has signed on to star alongside Will Ferrell, Jamie Foxx, Will Forte and Randall Park in animated comedy Strays. The film from tells about an abandoned dog (Ferrell) who teams up with other strays, including one portrayed by Foxx, to get revenge on his former owner (Forte), reports deadline.com.

**18TH DHAULI-KALINGA MAHOTSAV** 

DANCE, MUSIC AT DHAULI

**FOOTHILLS FROM MAR 22** 



### FORTUNE FORECAST GaneshaSpeaks.com accuracy • reliability • trust FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

### ARIES

Your charismatic appeal is always ready-to-use. And today, you will possibly reap rich dividends through it. But there is always scope for improvement and you will find yourself drawn to altruism. Ganesha guarantees satisfaction in lend ing a helping hand to the needy

### TAURUS

You will be very sensitive about the image you project socially and professionally. Ganesha sees you treating this very seriously and doing everything you can to make this right impression. Today, you will remain decent, dignified and fosussed in all that you do. Do not be too eager to please others.

### GEMINI

A favourable day to put an end to all the doubts surrounding your ability to do well, especially in the field of communication. People around you will find you incredibly charming and enchanting. You will win hearts with your verve and panache

### 

It is quite possible that your personal life will take precedence over your professional life. You will not be able to repress or ignore your feelings, and you should not either, savs Ganesha. But you should be careful about how you express yourself in public

### LEO

Your decisions today will be not only be correct, but also resolute and steadfast. Your health will be fine. At the work-place, things ought to proceed as usual. However, you will concentrate more or work today. In personal relationships, some minor arguments could crop up.

### VIRGO

Opening up to your beloved about your whims and fancies as well as your goals shall be the key today. And, why not, urges Ganesha. Your intimate relations should be built on trust and mutual compatibility. Your energy levels will hit the sky.

### **LIBRA**

Ganesha says that you shall soon be able to travel or plan a trip, not for family or business matters, but for getting away from the mundane life. You will pay more nportance to your professional matte as opposed to your personal matters. Today you will be able to attain success in every thing you do with the blessings of Ganesha.



HYDERABAD: Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who is currently busy shooting for her up coming multilingual movie Yashoda, has apparently moved out of her house temporarily. As reported by the close sources, the actress was astonished to see the five star-hotel lookalike sets, which is erected for Yashoda. She simply said that she likes to stay on the set itself and continue shooting for the movie for a couple of days.

It is reported that art director Ashok Koralath has worked day and night with around 200 people for three months, to erect the set for Yashoda.

Touted to be a new-age thriller, the film Yashoda stars Samantha Ruth Prabhu as the titular character alongside Unni Mukundan, and Varalaxmi Sarathkumar. Yashoda is a multi-lingual drama, helmed by directors duo Hari Shankar & Harish. IANS

Prestigious Buddha Samman, an honour that carries a cash award of ₹1 lakh, will be conferred on eminent Odissi exponent professor Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi

### BHUBANESWAR: The 18th edition

of the Dhauli-Kalinga Mahotsav organised by Orissa Dance Academy (ODA) and Dept. of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha in association with Art Vision will be held from March 22-24 at the foothills of Dhauli, Shanti Vihar.

The event is intended to permeate the gospel of peace through the concerts of India classical & folk dances and music by synthesising the quintessence of religions and faiths, said ODA secretary Aruna Mohanty at a presser.



The event's schedule was released at Orissa Dance Akademy, Bhubaneswar, Wednesday OP PHOTO

Ileana Citaristi, director of Art & former vice-chancellor, Vision said, about 300 artistes Sambalpur University. She will refrom different disciplines will parceive a citation, anga bastra and ticipate in the event including cash award of ₹1,00,000/-. Manipuri dancer Bimbabati Devi Similarly, Odissi dance expo-& group, Kolkata, contemporary

nent Guru Durgacharan Ranbir, musician Laxmikanta Palit. Sanskrit scholar Nityananda Mishra and Somdutt Behura, a promoter of Odissi dance in the USA will receive Guru Gangadhar Pradhan Smruti Samman which carries a citation, anga bastra and cash award of ₹25,000/-

### Wellness benefits of Holi

martial artist Santosh Nair of

Sadhya-a unit of performing arts,

New Delhi, Kathak dancer Rekha

This apart, prestigious Buddha

Samman will be conferred on

Professor Privambada Mohantv

Hejmadi, eminent Odissi danseuse

Mehra & group and others.

NATURAL COLOURS ARE NOT JUST GOOD FOR THE SKIN. HAIR AND EYES BUT EVEN CLEANSE AND CLEAR THE DEAD SKIN

ssociated with the colour white, Holi symbolises the Lend of one phase and the beginning of a new tomorrow. As Holi nears us, we celebrate the return of colours on the trees, in the sunsets, the arrival of spring, the end of winter. The festival stresses the need to get rid of the impassive winters, long nights and dry skin and lackluster hair. Interestingly, traditional Holi ritual and customs step in as the perfect body-re-

While immersed in the vibrant colours of Holi, our mind and body experience myriads of benefits. Bright colours like red tend to stimulate the heartbeat & breathing. Colours like yellow and blue don't just bring in a calming effect on our senses but also surround us with a sense of joy and happiness.

**Deodorising environment** 

spring induces the growth of bacteria in the atmosphere as well as in the body Hence, the burning of Holika, the

such as these are used in Ayurveda for rejuvenating the body and giving it a healthy glow. Cool, energising drinks Renowned Holi drinks

day before Holi, where like many lights a bonfire that symbolises the burning of evil, follows the tra dition of walking around thefire

odorising our environment and cleansing the body from the bacteria. Natural and organic colours

Traditionally the Holi colours

were created with naturally help-

ful ingredients like hibiscus flow-

ers, henna leaves, Kesar, sandal-

de-

Thandai and Kaanji act as great coolants and are an excellent source of anti-oxidants. Thandai, comprising of delicious milk flavour, has the goodness of almonds, watermelon seeds, fennel seeds and rose petals. While Kaanji, a traditional north Indian drink is fermented and packed with rich nutrients and fibre AGENCIES

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9 8

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MI

### Salman boards Chiranjeevi's Godfather

HYDERABAD: Telugu megastar Chiranjeevi has welcomed Dabang hero Salman Khan on board for his upcoming movie *Godfather*. Putting a full stop to all the speculation around Salman's

cameo

Chiranjeevi's upcoming movie, official confirmation came out Wednesday. Chiranjeevi, who took to his Twitter, welcomed Salman Khan on board.



#Godfather,

@BeingSalmanKhan! Your entry has energized everyone & the excitement has gone to next level. Sharing screen with you is an absolute joy. Your presence will no doubt give that magical #KICK to the audience," Chiranjeevi tweeted. The Pratibandh actor also shared a picture with Salman, in which the duo is seen sharing a light moment. The makers have set a short shooting schedule for Salman Khan's shooting in

FUN

Hyderabad, a source reports. It is reported that Salman Khan is playing a key role in Chiranjeevi's movie helmed by Mohan Raia, Godfather has actress Nayanthara essaying the role of the female lead. Satya Dev will appear in a pivotal role as well. IANS

RATS! FOR ONE

BRIEF EXCITING MOMENT I THOUGHT

I HAD AN "N"!

Bhai

## juvenation therapy

### **Colours and the mind**

Holi, like many other festivals, falls on the cusp of winters and



### **SCORPIO**

Today promises to be a joy ride for your hidden gourmand side. Relish what you eat, and thank God for the good luck. Career wise, however, you may find yourself standing at a crossroads. But the good part about that is there shall be many paths to choose from. And, who knows the art of balancing better than you.

### **SAGITTARIUS**

Determined and dedicated, that's what you are when it comes to work. Well, this may even find you amidst heaps of files and loads of work. No wonder you become a workaholic. You are likely to enjoy during the latter half of the day. Have a fun-filled evening!

### CAPRICORN

You may be attentive, as much as an eagle is while chasing its prey, but you still need to be careful when signing any important legal documents, advises Ganesha. Brokers and dealers, especially, are likely to incur heavy losses unless they take necessary precautions to avert misfortune.

### 

Spirituality is your new passion and Calvin Klein matters less today! Mysticism attracts you, says Ganesha. This may lead you to seek solace in holy books and religious places. It's going to take some time for you to understand that spiritual attainment can be had in the flesh-and-blood world as well.

### **PISCES**

You are ceaselessly driven to find room for improvement. A part-time course to enhance your skills or to increase your efficiency is what you will likely be pursuing today, says Ganesha.



spring. This season also exposes us to a number of bacteria and pollution in the air around us. The mutation period of winter and

wood and more. These natural colours are not just good for the skin, hair and eyes but even cleanse and clear the dead skin. Ingredients

SUDOKU

3

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWOR

6

9

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a

manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains

7 5

4

2

8

2

9

REAPMANDARIN

H E I

SA

H I

LR

OVERHANG

5 1

4

R

R

R

the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any

4







### CALVIN AND HOBBES



### BREVITY





### CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW













# downtown



### SUMMER BLUES

Girls cover their faces with stoles while riding bicycles in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, as the city witnessed a steep rise in daytime temperature



### **COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
orld	46,27,92,418	39,57,19,104	60,76,247
dia	4,29,98,938	4,24,50,055	5,16,072
lisha	12,86,852	12,77,045	9,115

ଧରିତ୍ରୀ | OrissaPC

AWARDS

### **SC ON KOTIA DISPUTE**

# **Decision on state's original suit first**

### POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 16: The Supreme Court Wednesday held that it would first take a decision on the original suit filed by Odisha against Andhra Pradesh over Kotia border dispute under Article 131 of the Constitution.

A two-judge bench of the SC comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and CT Ravikumar, however, gave liberty to both the states to mention the contempt petition, which was filed by Odisha in 2020, in the event of any change in the situation.

"The hearing in the contempt petition is deferred until the judgment is pronounced in the original suit," the bench said.

While appearing for Odisha, senior advocate Vikas Singh apprised the court that the state had conducted local body elections in the disputed villages. The senior advocate further submitted that Odisha has also filed an original suit in the matter and pleaded the court to either take up the contempt petition along with the original suit or dispose of the contempt petition.

Significantly, Odisha filed a fresh



original suit in the apex court over the border dispute with Andhra in January this year. The state pleaded before the SC to declare that Odisha has absolute right to administer and posses Kotia group of

"Indeed the proviso to Article 131 the bench said of the Constitution of India was misconstrued to render Odisha remediless. Therefore, the proviso to the Article 131 is liable to be struck down or read down in the manner by which judicial remedy is provided to the plaintiff for ad-

The hearing in the contempt petition is deferred until the judgment is pronounced in the original suit,

passed," Odisha submitted in the fresh original suit. Odisha contended that the cause

of action arose within the jurisdiction of Supreme Court only to try the present suit under Article 131

of Constitution after either declaring the proviso to the said article unconstitutional or reading it down.

Odisha had filed first original suit in SC in 1968 over the Kotia dispute but the SC had dismissed the suit in 2006, saying it is not maintainable under Article 131 in view of the bar contained in proviso of the article inserted in 1956.

Significantly, Article 131 deals with original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in any dispute between Union and any state or between two or more states. But there is a proviso which reads as, 'The jurisdiction shall not extend to a dispute arising out of any treaty, agreement, covenant, engagement, sanad or any other similar instrument which, having been entered into or executed before the commencement of the Constitution'.

In the contempt petition, Odisha had submitted that Andhra Pradesh willfully and deliberately violated the Supreme Court order dated December 2, 1968 and the judgment dated March 30, 2006 by transgressing into Odisha's territory. The apex court had asked both the states to maintain status quo on the boundary dispute.

### **Control room to ensure MCC** implementation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 16: For effective implementation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during urban elections and to ensure no violation, a control room will be functional in the office of the ADM cum-Election Officer.

The control room will receive and enlist complaints regarding violation of model code of conduct and disseminate complains to Officer in Charge MCC, Zonal Magistrates and concerned Zonal Squad for necessary action. Officer in-charge will submit the daily action taken report to election officer, BMC and upload it on Google sheet daily in the prescribed format by State Election Commission

Control room functions from 9 AM to 8 PM daily till MCC is in force. Moreover, a dedicated phone number of the control room is given below

### Several plans up our sleeves for real estate, agri: Mishra

He was involved in his family business after completing higher education in Commerce from prestigious Ravenshaw College in the 1980s. He matured into a successful businessman due BUSINESS to his strong determination and good public relations. In a EMINENCE

freewheeling talk with **Orissa POST**, Team Group of Companies Chairman Nishikant Mishra speaks about his journey, future plans and views on PPP model. Excerpts:

### How has been the journey of Team Admark?

Immediately after finishing my higher education from Ravenshaw College, I started looking after my father's business. I had several dreams but there was none to assist me. Team Admark was launched in 2004. This small business venture has matured into a group of companies due to our hard work and foresight. We have been marching ahead with each passing day.

#### **Despite being a Commerce** student. how did the idea to set up Team Admark strike you?

In order to become a good businessman, it does not matter from which stream you have completed your education. Here, we need hard work. good team work and an ability to fulfill customers' requirements. We were requiring an advertisement campaign to promote our familv business but there was no good advertising agency in Odisha to help us in this regard. We launched Team Admark to promote our family business as well as to help other businessmen in their publicity campaign.

### Your views on PPP model?

Team Group of Companies have been executing several programmes in public-private partnership (PPP) mode. Some of these programmes are still continuing while a few others have been stopped due to some issues. Starting from

the DTS bus service in urban areas to Jajabar hotel facility for tourists, several programmes are being executed under the PPP mode. PPP model has a lot of relevance in present circumstances. There should be cooperation and trust between the two parties for successful implementation of projects under the PPP mode

### Your future plans?

We have been doing something new with each passing year. But, almost all sectors of the economy have been adversely affected by Covid-19 pandemic. Despite prevailing difficulties, we have several plans up our sleeves for the development of real estate and agriculture sectors. We are also trying to expand our existing business. Steps are being taken to develop our FMCG unit and Jajabar hotel project. There are also plans to boost our digital channel

#### How do you balance your family, business and system?

I have long experience in business, which is helping me to manage things appropriately. My aim is to move forward with cooperation from my family. My business entity is like another family to me. As a businessman, you have to work in cooperation with the system. No business can survive without the help and assistance from the system.

On the first day March 25,

Governor Ganeshi Lal will address

the house and the proceeding is

likely to be adjourned later as a

Your favourite pastime? The word leisure has no meaning for entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, we are social beings. We have to devote some time to our society and culture. I always have a preference to get involved in cultural and social programmes. I have been residing in Bhubaneswar for last many years. I always try to spare some time for my friends and relatives.

### **CYCLONIC STORM LIKELY** AROUND MARCH 21: MeT

villages

THERE WILL BE NO IMPACT IN ODISHA, SAYS IMD DG. MERCURY SOARS TO 40 DEGREES AT 3 PLACES IN STATE

judication of the disputed encom-

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 16: A low pressure area has formed over central parts of south Bay of Bengal which will intensify into a cyclonic storm around March 21. However, the system will have no impact on Odisha, the IMD said Wednesday.

The low pressure area lay over central parts of south Bay of Bengal. It is likely to move eastnortheastwards & become a well marked low pressure area over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining south Andaman Sea around March 19 morning, the IMD said.

Thereafter, it is likely to move north-northwestwards initially along & off Andaman & Nicobar Islands, intensify into a depression by morning of March 20 and further intensify into a cyclonic storm around March 21. It would then continue to move north-northwestwards till March 22, the Met department said. Thereafter, the system will move



north-northeastwards and reach near Bangladesh and adjoining north Myanmar coast by morning of March 23, it said.

Thereafter, the cyclone system will move north-northeastwards and reach near Bangladesh and adjoining north Myanmar coast by morning of March 23.

Once the system intensifies into a cyclone, it will be named as Asani, which is a name suggested

Sea condition is very likely to become rough over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining south Andaman Sea on Thursday and

Friday. The weather office has advised fishermen not to venture into central parts of south Bay of Bengal and adjoining Equatorial Indian Ocean on Wednesday and into southeast Bay of Bengal and

Meanwhile, the mercury soared to 40 degrees Celsius at three places in Odisha today. Bolangir town of western Odisha was the hottest place of the state with a maximum temperature of 40.5 degrees Celsius. The temperature was 40.2 degrees at Titlagarh town of the

Andaman Sea area on Thursday and Friday

by Sri Lanka However, the cyclone will have no impact on Odisha. The state is

Odisha signs MoU with

rlys to provide free land

also unlikely to experience rainfall or heavy wind due to the system, said director general of IMD, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.

same district while Angul recorded 40 degrees.

Capital city Bhubaneswar and neighbouring town Cuttack recorded a maximum day temperature of 37.6 degrees and 38 degrees, respectively.

**BJD** seeks

Bahinipati

POST NEWS NETWORK

**MCC VIOLATION** 

action against

Bhubaneswar, March 16: A

delegation of the Biju Janata

Dal (BJD) Wednesday submitted a

memorandum to the State Election

Commission (SEC) seeking strict

### Assembly to function 5 hours a day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 16: The duration of the budget session of the Odisha Assembly starting March 25 will be five hours a day, which will be divided in two phases, Speaker S N Patro said. The decision in this regard was taken at the all-party meeting held Tuesday.

The budget session will continue till March 31. "The House will function for five hours (10.30 am to 1.30 pm and again from 4 pm to 6 pm) while adhering to all COVID-19 protocols," Patro told reporters.

During the meeting, Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra raised the demand for allowing journalists inside the Assembly, but it was turned down in order to maintain social distancing among members as per guidelines.

Since the outbreak of the pan-



demic, the press gallery accom-19 tests before the start of the sesmodates members of the Assembly sion, officials said. in order to adhere to social dis-

Assembly staff will undergo COVID-

**CULTURAL FETE** 

A II ministers, MLAs and Assembly staff will undergo COVID-19 tests before the start of the session

Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari will present votea -on-account for the 2022-23 fiscal in the house March 30 and table the appropriation Bill the next day

mark of respect to former Chief Minister Hemananda Biswal and ex-Speaker Kishore Mohanty, who passed away recently.

Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari will present votea -on-account for the 2022-23 fiscal in the house March 30 and table the appropriation Bill the next day. The full budget could not be presented this time due to the panchayat and urban polls in the state.



#### POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 16: The Odisha government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Railways to provide land free of cost for two ongoing new railway lines.

In response to a question by BJP MP Basant Panda in the Lok Sabha, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Odisha government has to provide land free of cost for Khurda Road-Bolangir new line project (289 km), anticipated cost of this project is Rs 3792 crore. The state has to share 50 per cent cost of the project from 112 km to 289 km from Khurda Road.

The minister further said the project involves acquisition of 6,162 acres and diversion of 1,844 acres of forest land, out of which 5,333 acres have been acquired and diversion of 170 acre forest land has been completed.

The Odisha government has to acquire 829 acres and divert 1,674 RAILWAY MINISTER ASHWINI VAISHNAW SAID ODISHA GOVERNMENT HAS TO PROVIDE LAND FREE OF COST FOR KHURDA ROAD-BOLANGIR NEW LINE PROJECT

HE MINISTER FURTHER SAID THE PROJECT INVOLVES ACQUISITION OF 6,162 ACRES AND DIVERSION OF 1,844 ACRES OF FOREST LAND

acres of forest land for the project. he added.

The minister further said Jeypore- Nabarangpur (38 km) new line was included in Budget 2016-17.

"The state government has to provide land free of cost and has to share 50 per cent construction cost of the project. The project involves acquisition of 772.19 acres of private land, 87.77 acres of government land and diversion of 9.70 acres of forest land," the min-

ister added.

action against Jeypore MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati for violating Model Code of Conduct for the urban polls by threatening government officials inside the office of Koraput municipality.

The BJD delegation alleged that Jeypore MLA Bahinipati barged into the municipality office and threatened the officials. He also threatened to ransack the municipality office if his work was not done within two days.

"Such behaviour by an elected representative inside the municipality office is unacceptable, especially when the Model Code of Conduct for the urban local body elections is in force," said BJD leader Sulata Deo.

The BJD delegation claimed that Bahinipati's wild behaviour inside the municipality office has been captured by some media persons and being telecast by news channels

"We demand strict and immediate action against Bahinipati," said BJD spokesperson Lora Mohapatra.

tancing norms All ministers, MLAs and



Girls perform at the concluding ceremony of cultural programme Pratikshya organised by Odisha State Bharat Scouts and Guides in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



## downtown

# **Forest hazards dropped by** 50 pc courtesy JFM: Ratho



**OrissaPOST** 

THURSDAY | MARCH 17 | 2022 | BHUBANESWAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 16: Forest hazards like fire have dropped by 50 per cent due to Joint Forest Management (JFM) efforts of the state government with active participation of the community, said Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and head of state forest force Sisir Kumar Ratho here Wednesday.

Ratho was addressing a one-day colloquium on the outcomes of an independent third party assessment study of JFM in the state.

Highlighting the outcomes of the study, Ratho said as of now, 14,222 Vana Sanrakshyana Samities (VSS) and Environment Development Committees (EDCs) have been formed in 30 districts of the state with a forest cover of 12,192sqkm.

"Their participation in forest development activities led to 70 per cent reduction in pressure on forests. The hazards like forest fire, use of poles and timbers, and grazing have been reduced to 50 per

### 80 new cases take state's Covid tally to 12,86,852

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 16: The state Wednesday recorded 80 new Covid-19 cases, two more than the previous day, with the tally rising to 12,86,852, a Health department bulletin said.

The death toll remained at 9.115 as the coastal state did not report any fresh fatality due to the infection for the second consecutive day, it said. Fifty-three other coronavirus patients have so far died due to comorbidities, the bulletin said. The daily positivity rate was at

0.17 per cent and 12 children were among the newly infected people, it said, adding that 46,795 samples

Secretary SC Mahapatra asks forest department to make forest management strategies

cent." he said Because of this, several benefits like increased regeneration of forest, increased employment and income generation opportunities for people, and increased collection of non-timber forest produce took place, which in turn added to income of the community from forest and forestry, the PCCF said. The JFM approach also led to cre-

ation of community assets like school buildings, godown, healthcare facilities, creation of nature camps and eco-destinations. These facilities also added to the socioeconomic wellbeing of the people and the area as well, Ratho added.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said Odisha model of JFM has proved successful during the last few years, leading to consistent growth in forest canopy, density and wildlife. "People inhabiting the core areas of the sanctuaries have come forward to accept the government's scheme for voluntary shifting to fringe areas,' he said.

Their belongingness towards

forest would be manifold when they would find more remunerative means of livelihood from it, he said

Mahapatra directed the Forest department to make the new strategies of forest management transformative keeping people and their livelihood at the centre. "Let the people feel that forest is reserved and protected for them, not for the government or anybody else," the Chief Secretary pointed out.

Further, Mahapatra directed the field-level forest officers to have regular meetings with the JFM and village committees, and assess their basic requirements through direct discussions. Those basic requirements could

be met through convergence with different departments and such an approach would win more confidence of the people, he said, assuring that funds for the purpose would not be a constraint, and the state government would provide all other support as well.

Additional Chief Secretary (forest) Mona Sharma said with encouraging learning from JFM, the state is now on its path of a more transformative model which she termed as JFM++.

Now, the focus will be on sustainable forest management through empowerment of the community, and collaborative efforts with different departments for enhancement of livelihood opportunities for the community, she pointed out.

The new strategy of JFM++ would be framed with inputs from the present colloquium, and would be rolled out with macro and micro plans from the coming year.

## 6 more govt officials get the boot

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar; March 16: Six more government officials in the state were given compulsory retirement on grounds of inefficiency and corruption, an official said Wednesday With this, the number of errant officials given compulsory retirement in the state since 2019 has increased to 158, an official said.

The officers who have been ordered to take compulsory retirement include three executive engineers. a police inspector, an additional supply officer and a district welfare officer.

Saroj Kumar Das, executive engineer, housing and urban development department has been issued the order due to lack of sincerity, dedication and commitment to service.

Another executive engineer of the same department. Davanidhi Samal has also been axed for inefficiency and unsatisfactory performance.

Executive engineer Karunakar Ghadei has been issued the compulsory retirement order as he is facing a corruption case.

Police inspector of Angul Ratnakar Mallik was also served the order for inefficiency, while action was taken against additional supply officer of Nuapada district Ratnakar Sethi for having two corruption cases against him.

The anti-corruption Vigilance department had seized properties worth over Rs 6.5 crore from the possession of Sethi following raids. Former district welfare officer

of Angul, Charulata Mallik, who was nabbed by Vigilance personnel while accepting bribe, had also been ordered compulsorv retirement.

POLLS AHEAD





BJD's Bhubaneswar mayoral candidate Sulochana Das (top) and BJP's pick for the coveted post in Cuttack-Sritam Das-and his supporters during their poll rally, Wednesday OP PHOTOS

### OHRC notice to S&ME dept for failure to carry out order

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 16: The Odisha Human Right Commission (OHRC) has asked the school and mass education department to explain non-implementation of its order on informing the availability of books as per NCERT syllabus to students and parents on schools website or through SMSes/WhatsApp. The rights body directed the department to sub-

mit the report by March 31, 2022. The commission issued the notice after an application was filed by the Odisha Parents Federation through its chairman Basudev Bhatt who wrote to the commission regarding non-implementation of its order by the department of school & mass education on availability of books as per NCERT syllabus to students and parents of all private English medium schools. Bhatt said the department directed the director, elementary education, secondary education & DEOs to implement the OHRC order.



The OHRC issued the notice after an application was filed by OPF regarding non-implementation of the commission's order by the S&ME department on availability of books as per the NCERT syllabus to students and parents of private English medium schools

### NEW COUNCIL TO SIT **AT OLD BMC BUILDING**

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 16: The new council which is set to be elected by the end of this month may have to wait longer to shift to their new office at Janpath as the proposed building is still in its final stage of completion.

The 11-storyed Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Intelligent City Operations and Management Centre (ICOMC) BMC-ICOMC building project was initiated by the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) in 2019 owing to the space crunch faced in BMC office at Kalpana. Spread at an



### Man gets life term for killing villager & molesting wife

#### PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, March 16: A local court here Wednesday sentenced a 49-year-old man to life imprisonment for killing a villager who tried to save his wife from a rape attempt by the convict eight years ago.

Kendrapara district and sessions judge Gopal Chandra Behera found Rangadhar Biswal guilty of



were tested in the past 24 hours.

Odisha now has 750 active cases. while 152 people recuperated from the disease on Tuesday, taking the total number of recoveries to 12,76,934. The state administration on Wednesday rolled out the vaccination drive for children in the 12-14 years age group at schools.

Altogether 15.21 lakh children will be given jabs by specially trained 600 health workers, an official had said.

### Morning session in subordinate courts

CUTTACK: In view of the onset of summer, all the subordinate courts in Odisha will hold morning sitting, starting from April 4, the Orissa High Court said Wednesday. The morning sitting of the subordinate courts at all places in the State shall commence from April 4, 2022 from 7am to 1pm with a break of half an hour from 10am to 10.30am

### **CLASSIFIED**

### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, I changed my name from Shaik Sidique, Sidique Shaik to SK. Sidique. Henceforth I shall known as SK. Sidique for all purpose.

Earlier, the OHRC had directed principal secretary, department of school & mass education to take steps for ensuring availability of

books to students/guardians of all private English medium schools so that the study of students is not affected during the lockdown.

But after 20 months, schools are not giving book lists to parents or BEOs or DEOs and have violated the OHRC order. Therefore, we request you to direct principal sec-

retary to implement it in 15 days and upload lists of books on website or send the lists to parents via SMSes/WhatsApp & emails, Bhatt

added.

area of over 4.04 acres, costing Rs80 crore, the project was set to be completed by 2021. However owing to delays due to Covid and other reasons, multiple deadlines were revised with the project presently now said to be in finishing stages.

"The complete work will be over by April and the building is likely to be operational by May. Some of the electric and furniture works are to be finished and we are expediting the entire process. The new building will jointly support BSCL and BMC's operations under one roof," said BSCL General Manager,

Kamaljit Das. Das also mentioned that the new building will have a capacity to accommodate more than 500 officials providing ample space for their offices. It will also have adequate parking in basement along with the BMC office on lower and upper ground floor.

The ICOMC facility will be operational on first and second floors

Programme in Pediatrics at the

Studies of Covid-19 in animals

have found that the Omicron strain

has more of a preference for the

while the third floor will have cafeteria and landscaped area with ter-Moreover, BMC race. Commissioner's office will be on fourth floor and all above floors will be used by BMC offices only.

The BMC elections which are set to take place March 24 will see the urban elections being held after a span of nine years. The mayor, deputy mayor along with corporators from 67 wards of the city will

be announced March 29

slapped a fine of Rs 10,000 on him. On March 28, 2014, Biswal had molested and tried to rape the woman when she moved out of home to attend to nature's call.

Her 44-vear-old husband rushed to the spot after hearing her screams and resisted the convict who hit him with a sharp weapon killing him on the spot.

The court convicted the accused after examining 15 witnesses

## Is barking cough new complication of Omicron in kids?

hile Covid-19 has been generally mild on children, the Omicron wave had a significant effect on them, with an increase in infection and hospi-

talisation Now physicians at Boston Children's Hospital, US, have found manifestation of a previously unrecognised complication of Covid-

19 in young children croup - a type of respiratory illness characterised with barking cough, and noisy breathing.

Known medically as laryngotracheitis, croup is a common respiratory illness in babies and young children. The Mayo Clinic defines croup as an infection of the upper airway, which obstructs breathing

and causes a characteristic barking cough and sometimes noisy, high-pitched intakes of breath (known as stridor). In severe cases, it can dangerously constrict breathing It usually happens when colds

and other viral infections cause inflammation and swelling around the voice box, windpipe, and bronchial tubes.

But in the report, published in a pre-publication in Pediatrics journal, the physicians noted that just over 80 per cent of croup cases occurred during the Omicron period. Some cases were surprisingly severe, requiring hospitalisation and more medication doses compared to croup caused by other viruses.

There was a very clear delineation from when Omicron be-



hospital

came the dominant variant to when we started seeing a rise in the number of croup patients, said Ryan Brewster, first author and a from the Boston Combined Residency

upper airway than earlier variants, which mainly targeted the lower respiratory tract. This may account for the sudden appearance of croup during the omicron surge, Brewster said.

In the first peer-reviewed report to date, physicians at the Children's Hospital describe 75 children who came to the hospital's emergency department (ED) with croup and Covid-19 from March 1, 2020 through January 15, 2022

In keeping with the general pattern of croup, most of the children with Covid-19 and croup were under age 2, and 72 per cent were boys. Except for one child with a common cold virus, none had a viral infection other than SARS-CoV-2.

Although no children died, nine of the 75 children with Covid-associated croup (12 per cent) needed to be hospitalised and four of them (44 per cent, or 5 per cent of the total) required intensive care. (By comparison, before Covid, fewer than 5 per cent of children with croup were hospitalised, and of those, only 1 to 3 per cent required intubation.)

Most cases of croup can be managed in the outpatient setting with dexamethasone and supportive care, Brewster said

The relatively high hospitalisation rate and the large number of medication doses our Covid-19 croup patients required suggests that Covid-19 might cause more severe croup compared to other viruses. Further research is needed to determine the best treatment options for these children. IANS

#### OR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STAT

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur-9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech-Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion-Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.









### SHORT TAKES

### Suspected murder in Berhampur

Berhampur: A woman was found dead under mysterious circumstances alongside the main road near Badaghati under Khallikote police limits in Ganiam district Wednesday. While the identity of the woman is yet to be ascertained, it is suspected that she was bludgeoned to death. According to sources, locals spotted the woman in a pool of blood early Wednesday morning and alerted the cops. Chhatrapur SDPO and other police officers rushed to the spot and initiated a probe. "The body has been seized and sent for an autopsy. Prima facie, it is a case of murder,' the SDPO said adding that a probe has been launched and the accused would be arrested soon.

### One dies on way to draw pension

Khaira: In a shocking incident, an elderly man died while going to receive his pension at Nuagaon under Khaira block of Balasore district Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Mayadhar Barik, 75. Mayadhar was walking to the panchayat office to get his pension when he slipped his leg and fall down. Villagers rushed to his rescue, but they were shocked to find him dead.

### 2 of family critical in leopard attack

Baripada: Two people - a man and his elder brother's wife were critically injured when a leopard attacked them late Tuesday night at Khadambeda under Bisoi police limits in Mayurbhanj district. The injured were identified as Dasarath Hansdah and Maina Hansdah. According to reports, Maina had stepped out of her house late Tuesday night to attend to the nature's call when a leopard pounced upon her. As she cried for help, her brother-in-law Dasarath came out for her help. The two fought with the big cat to save their lives and sustained severe injuries.

# 30-yr-old shot at in post-poll violence

### POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, March 16: A man sustained grievous injuries after he was shot at by miscreants in a case of post-poll violence at Limdihi village under Kurumpuri panchayat of Komna block in this district late

Tuesday night. The injured was identified as Rupesh Sahu, 30, of Chitramunda in Bolangir district. The incident occurred when Rupesh was on a visit to his brother-in-law's house in Limdihi village.

His brother-in-law is the son of Ishwar Mohan Sahu, who had contested as a ward member from ward no-10 in the village in the recently concluded panchayat polls to Kurumpuri panchayat. Ishwar, however, lost the polls to Ramgulal Sabar, a co-villager.

After the poll results were out,

Ishwar filed an application under Right to Information (RTI) Act alleging that the winning candidate Ramgulal has three children. This allegedly enraged Ramgulal and his supporters as they tried to exact revenge.

The incident occurred when four masked youths arrived near Ishwar's house and hurled abuses at him late Tuesday night. Ishwar, his wife and Rupesh came out when one of the masked miscreants fired at them through the openings of the entrance grille.

The bullets hit the wall and rebounded and hit Rupesh on his head and face. A profusely bleeding Rupesh was taken the district headquarters hospital in Nuapada by the neighbours, who rushed to the spot after hearing the screams. Lakhna police reached the spot and started an investigation.



Fire services personnel demonstrated firefighting skills before the students during a mock drill on fire safety for scouts and guides at Jarasingha High School under Banarpal block in Angul district, Wednesday OP PHOTO

# **PAY HURDLE FOR PAPER MILL REVIVAL**

### POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, March 16: Change in salary and service conditions of workers has posed a fresh challenge to the recommencement of production at Jeypore paper mill, a report said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, all preparations for revival of the paper mill have reached the final leg. The Sewa Paper Mills, initially owned by Ballarpur Industries Ltd. (BIL), was started in 1984 and was closed multiple times due to financial crisis.

Reports said the mill has been taken over by a Hyderabad-based firm Mother Earth Resources Private Limited. Due to the closure of the mill, at least 1,500 regular and contractual workers of the paper mill were rendered jobless. Many workers even allegedly died due to

joblessness stress and Covid-19. The new management, instead of paying the full salary, is paying some advance to the workers. It is proposing to pay the minimum wages as declared by the government if the workers go for overtime.

The workers, labourers and trade unions are vehemently op-



posing this proposal. They have refused to accept any cut in wages and salaries and warned that the management will be held responsible if the mill faces any problem during its operation.

Workers alleged that the new management is laying down fresh conditions which have led to unrest among the workers. The wages of the permanent workers and employees have been fixed as per a long-term tripartite agreement signed earlier. The agreement was signed by workers, trade unions, management and the labour com-

missioner. The Mother Earth firm is now claiming that it has taken a loan of ₹150 crore from IndusInd Bank to purchase the paper mill and will make it operational as per business transfer agreement.

The company claims that out of the ₹150 crore loan, it has given ₹100 crore to Goutam Thapar, the proprietor of Bilt Graphic Paper Products Ltd (BGPPL). However, it is not paying the arrears of workers and employees.

The firm while taking the ownership of the paper mill has not made any discussions about the service conditions of workers and employees.

Moreover, the firm after taking

THE MILL HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY A HYDERABAD-BASED FIRM MOTHER EARTH RESOURCES PRIVATE LIMITED

THE NEW MANAGEMENT, INSTEAD OF PAYING THE FULL SALARY, IS PAYING SOME ADVANCE TO THE WORKERS

IT IS PROPOSING TO PAY THE MINIMUM WAGES AS DECLARED BY THE GOVERNMENT IF THE WORKERS GO FOR OVERTIME

THE WORKERS, LABOURERS AND TRADE UNIONS ARE VEHEMENTLY OPPOSING THIS PROPOSAL

the bank loan in June 2020 did not expedite the revival of the paper mill but is now forcing the workers to work for overtime when the bank officials come on a visit to the paper mill.

The workers and employees have claimed that once the mill becomes operational, work will not stop at any cost. They claimed that there are not enough workers to work in the mill while the firm has also the scrapped the transport system to ferry the workers to their workplace inside the mill.

### 1 killed, 9 hurt as bus hits tree

**Pottangi:** The conductor of a Visakhapatnam-bound bus from Damanjodi was killed and nine others including its driver were injured when the vehicle hit a tree near Maliput in Koraput

## BJD scratches its head over dissident candidate

#### POST NEWS NETWORK

**Ranpur, March 16:** Although the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has fielded Rangin Mohanty for the post of chairperson in Ranpur NAC in Nayagarh district, a dissident candidate contesting for the post has given sleepless nights to the party

top brass

fight from its own dissident. The NAC consists of 15 wards. The BJD had earlier grabbed the chairperson's post. This time too, the ruling party is hopeful of repeating its poll performance.

Madhusmita is the wife of former NAC vice chairperson Priyabrata Praharaj (of the ruling party). She had earlier lobbied for a BJD ticket,



As per sources, four candidates are in the fray for NAC chief post. While BJP has picked Supriya Mohapatra, Congress has nominated Suchitra Matta for the post. However, Madhusmita Praharaj, a dissident of BJD, is contesting as an independent which has become a cause of concern for the ruling party.

Several attempts by the ruling party leaders to persuade the independent candidate to withdraw the papers have fallen flat.

dependent candidate to withdraw the papers have fallen flat. How On the other hand, the BJP has been trying its best to storm into the

but the party gave the ticket to Rangin Mohanty. Now, both Madhusmita along with her husband has intensified campaigning and is hopeful of a good performance.

In Ranpur block, the BJP candidate for zilla parishad zone 23 has won the election. So, the BJP leaders and workers are expecting a political windfall for its candidate for NAC chairperson post. The saffron party is trying to wean away the BJD's dissident workers.

However, the Congress candidate \_ is missing from the scene while her husband is conducting door-to-door campaign on her behalf.

### BJD fort here as the latter is facing campaign on her behalt

UMERKOTE NAC POLLS

tion firm Tata Power South Odisha Distribution Ltd (TPSODL) have locked horns after the latter snapped the power supply to a micro compost centre (MCC) owned by the former, a report said.

Bhanjanagar, March 16: The no-

tified area council (NAC) author-

ities here and the power distribu-

POST NEWS NETWORK

The power discom had disconnected power supply to the MCC last week over an outstanding energy bill of ₹40,000. The NAC authorities took a hard stance and retaliated against the move by sending a letter to Tata Power authorities to clear the outstanding bill of over ₹21.11 crore towards holding tax within a fortnight. The holding tax is outstanding on the power discom from 2007 to December 2021.

Reports said the power discom owes the NAC ₹1.17 lakh as outstanding holding tax way back in 2007. The annual charge is now



NAC, Tata Power face-off over dues

₹57, 26,000 which when calculated with compound interest turns out to be over ₹21 crore by December 31, 2021.

The MCC near the fingerling production centre in Bhanjanagar which manufactures organic compost was established a year back by Bhanjanagar block office. Electricity connection to the plant was also in the name of the local BDO.

Meanwhile, a power bill with

an outstanding of ₹40,000 was issued to the BDO. However, the local block office paid no heed in clearing the dues as the plant is owned by the local NAC authorities. Moreover, the NAC authorities failed to know about the bill as the

bill was served to the BDO. In this situation, Tata Power snapped the power supply to the plant last week. In the absence of power supply, the plant was shut

### OUTSTANDING ENERGY BILL OF ₹40,000

POWER PLAY

THE POWER DISCOM HAD

THE NAC AUTHORITIES ASKED TATA POWER TO CLEAR THE OUTSTANDING BILL OF OVER 1.11 CRORE TOWARDS HOLDIN TAX WITHIN A FORTNIGHT

down and the workers working in the plant were rendered jobless. Jagatjit Das, executive engineer of TPSODL said he has forwarded

of TPSODL, said he has forwarded the letter of the NAC authorities to his higher-ups for action at their end.

When contacted, Bhanjanagar NAC executive officer Ashutosh Gourav Kar said action would be taken against Tata Power as per rule if it fails to clear the arrears within the deadline.

#### district.While the driver who has been critically injured in the mishap was admitted to a hospital at Pottangi, at least nine passengers are undergoing treatment at the government hospital in Kunduli.

### Radiator explodes; 3 schoolkids hurt

Kendrapara: At least three schoolkids sustained injuries Wednesday after the radiator of a school van ferrying them exploded at Marshaghai in Kendrapara district. The kids aged between 9-12 years, all students of a private English Medium School, have been identified as Priyanshu Das, Biren Behera and Satyajit Sahu. Locals rescued them and admitted to Marshaghai government hospital. The school principal said, "As there is no bus in the school, parents send their children on private vehicles. We aren't aware of the condition of the vehicle."

### Double murder: Man gets life, bro 7-yr jail

Berhampur: A local court Wednesday sentenced a man to life imprisonment and seven year imprisonment to his elder brother after convicting them of murdering their stepmother and minor halfsister over property dispute. ADJ-II Rajashree Mohapatra also slapped a penalty of ₹20,000 on Ramesh Nahak, 42, son of Kulamani Nahak of Maheswarpur village under Khallikote police limits. In default, Ramesh would have to undergo an additional one year of imprisonment, the judge observed. The court also awarded seven-year imprisonment and penalty of ₹5,000 to Ramesh's elder brother Bijay Nahak, 44, who was also involved in the crime. The murder took place February 3, 1999 after Bijay and Ramesh feared that their stepmother and her daughter might stake claim over their property.

# Voters' thrust on right candidates, not party

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Umerkote, March 16:** With campaigning for urban local body (ULB) polls peaking up, candidates contesting for councillor posts have been trying to woo voters with promises and by raising some local issues in Umerkote notified area council (NAC) in Nabarangpur district. However, it was seen that most people are prioritising right candidates rather than their party affiliations. In ward no-10, a large section of

voters is educated and conscious. They said that they weigh pros and cons of a candidates on the basis of his/her qualification, sociability, helpfulness that will decide how far he can deliver if elected.

The post of councillor in this ward is reserved for women. It is the second largest ward in the NAC with 2,453 voters. BJD, BJP and Congress have fielded educated candidates like Kamala Pujari, Kanakalata Nayak and Kamini Padhi respectively.

The major issues in this ward are bad roads, poor drainage and lack of drinking water. Besides, scores of elderly people have been deprived of pension benefits.





Palanquins carrying idols of Radha-Krishna kept in a row for 'Munsi Melana' festival at Bhandaripokhari in Bhadrak district as part of Dola Utsav, Wednesday OP PHOTO



## power post

t's a New India since 2014,

where the country is ruled by

### FOCUS CONGRESS

**GANDHIS MUST QUIT** 

Be fearless and resolute, all obstacles will melt away before you THE MOTHER

### The Chemical Threat

Russia has claimed, without evidence, that the United States is operat-ing biowarfare laboratories in Ukraine. The US has dismissed the al-legations as "preposterous," and – along with NATO leaders – warned that the Kremlin might be seeking to manufacture a pretext for using chemical or biological weapons in its flailing military assault against its neighbour. Ukraine has previously said that, like many other countries, it has public-health laboratories dedicated to researching how to mitigate the threats of dangerous diseases affecting animals and humans.

March 11, the United Nations Security Council met at Russia's request to address the issue, but Russia was again unable to provide any credible proof of its allegations. The UN Secretariat briefed the UNSC members on the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention, and referred to the possibility of using a consultation mechanism when there are doubts about compliance.

Under the circumstances, it is unlikely that such consultations could take place between Russia and Ukraine. The World Health Organisation, evidently giving more credence to Ukraine's side of the story, has advised the country to destroy highly dangerous pathogens in its public-health labs in order to prevent their accidental release as a result of the fighting.

But what about chemical weapons? In assessing the risk of their use in Ukraine, we should recall key recent events, par-

ticularly in Syria, where chemical weapons were used on multiple occasions during the country's civil war. In September 2013, the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism – triggered by then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the basis of prohibitions contained in the 1925 Geneva Protocol – determined that the nerve agent Sarin had been used the previous month in Ghouta, on the outskirts of Damascus. The attack caused more than 1,400 civilian deaths.

Following an agreement between Russia and the US, Syria agreed to give up its chemical weapons and joined the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in October 2013. This meant that Syria became subject to the scrutiny of the comprehensive verification mechanism of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission subsequently confirmed the use of chemical weapons at other sites in Syria. The Joint Investigative Mechanism established by the UNSC in August 2015, and later the Investigation and Identification Team created by the OPCW Conference of the States Parties in June 2018, identified the Syrian government as being responsible for employing chemical weapons on several occasions.

Although the States Parties suspended Syria's voting and other rights in the OPCW in 2021, fur-

ther action by the UNSC is unlikely because of Russian opposition. In fact, Russia has fully supported the Syrian government in international forums following its military intervention in the country's civil war in September 2015. At the OPCW, Russia, together with a few other countries, launched a concerted campaign to discredit the findings of different investigations. They fabricated several, sometimes contradictory, narratives in order to sow confusion and doubt in the minds of third parties about the Syrian government's responsibility for chemical-weapon attacks. And they persistently tried to discredit the science-based reports that were sufficient to establish the facts. According to some Russian accounts, armed opposition groups in Syria used chemical weapons in such a way as to make Syria's Russia-backed government appear responsible.

The Syrian government argued that it did not need to use chemical weapons, because it had sufficient conventional capabilities to quell armed opposition groups. Military experts thought otherwise. In some areas where the Syrian army got bogged down, the use of chemical weapons apparently helped to create panic and terror among civilians, demoralise opposition forces, and capture territories controlled by them with fewer losses for the army.

Moreover, the recent use of chemical weapons has not been limited to Syria. The nerve agent Novichok was used to poison the former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter. Yulia, in 2018 in the United Kingdom, and Kremlin opponent Alexei Navalny in 2020 in Russia. In 2017, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was killed with VX - another nerve agent – at Kuala Lumpur airport. Russia, which inherited the world's largest stockpile of chemical weapons from the Soviet Union, is now not supposed to have any. Along with other states, Russia was obliged to declare all chemical weapons in its possession to the OPCW and destroy them, subject to the organisation's verification, which occurred in November 2017. But the subsequent uses of Novichok (albeit in very small quantities) attributed to Russia have fueled suspicions that it may have hidden some of its stockpile. If so, would Russia use chemical weapons in Ukraine, especially if the war drags on? Or should we rule out this possibility, particularly in view of the significant deterrent provided by the OPCW's reinforced attribution mechanism? To be sure, the verification procedures for investigating alleged chemical-weapons use have become more capable, sophisticated, and effective. CWC States Parties are determined to prevent any further uses, and since June 2018 the attribution mechanism can be invoked if there are new allegations of chemical-weapons use in any State Party. In my statement as OPCW director-general at the opening session of that 2018 meeting, I said that, "Chemical weapons use, wherever it occurs, is a serious offense requiring resolute action." Moreover, I added, "If accountability is avoided, the potential re-emergence and acceptance of chemicals as weapons of war and terror will not be deterred.' I stand by that statement today. All states have a collective responsibility to prevent the use of chemical weapons by anyone, in any circumstances, including in Ukraine. But if we fail to do so, I am confident that those responsible will be identified and held accountable.

Ahmet Üzümcü

### All states have a collective responsibility to prevent the use of chemical weapons by anyone, in any circumstances, including in Ukraine



Anita Saluja

IN THE LAST **EIGHT YEARS. THE CONGRESS HAS WON ONLY FIVE ELECTIONS** AND LOST **AROUND 40** 

a person, who has enamoured and mesmerised the people to such an extent that come what may, they have decided to stay by him! Ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi has come to power, no matter whether or not 'Achche Din' have arrived, the people have shown their solidarity with him. No matter if unemployment is on the rise, inflation is on the upward trend, people faced hardships due to COVID-19 mismanagement and communal politics took its toll, yet people are committed to Modi. Similarly, it can be stated about the Congress, though in an opposite way! Priyanka Gandhi tried her best, by attending as many as 200 rallies in the Hindi heartland state of Uttar Pradesh, but what she secured for her party was mere two seats. The party, which had 6.22 per cent vote share and secured seven seats in the UP Assembly elections in 2017, was reduced to 2.33 per cent vote share and two seats in 2022! It's not as if Privanka didn't try hard. In fact, from her 'Ladki Hun, Lad Sakti Hun' campaign, others like the BJP and SP took a cue and announced several welfare and promotional schemes for women. The ladies, in fact, voted en masse for the BJP, impressed by the freebies announced by Prime Minister Modi. However, in the highly polarised polls, where AIMIM had also fielded candidates in all the constituencies people opted to vote either for BJP. or the Samajwadi Party. The latter failed to secure the Jats and non-Yadav votes, as expected, after the alliance with the Rashtriya Lok Dal. One expected that in

Uttarakhand, where governments change after every term, the Congress would get the chance this time, but here, too, due to internal wrangling within the party, even the chief ministerial candidate Harish Rawat couldn't save his own seat. Similar was the case in Goa and Manipur, where the Congress failed to garner votes for itself, paving the way, once again, for the BJP to retain both governments. In Punjab, all the renowned faces, including Chief Minister Charanjit Singh



The Gandhis, who had offered to resign at the CWC meeting but agreed to stay on as per the wishes of the majority of the leaders, should comprehend that the way ahead is full of hurdles

Channi and Punjab PCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu, were trounced by their rivals.

The supporters of Gandhi dynasty can argue that it was the AAP wave in Punjab that rooted out the Congress, but the fact remains that due to the mishandling by the Congress siblings -- Rahul and Priyanka -- the Congress was routed in the state, where it had the maximum chance of winning. There was no need for the removal of Amarinder Singh, prior to the Assembly elections. Why was Harish Rawat sent as AICC incharge to Punjab, when his presence was required more in his home state of Uttarakhand?

There are many questions, which need to be asked to the Gandhis, but who will bell the cat? In the CWC meeting, as usual, the supporters outnumbered the dissenters and as is the age-old practice, everyone agreed for the continuation of the status-quo. However, a 'Chintan Shivir' will be organised after the Budget session of Parliament to chalk out a strategy for the future.

Ever since the debacle of the Congress, right from 2014, various committees have been formed to analyse the poll results, but the party high command has failed to implement those recommendations. In the 'Chintan Shivir', again, the chorus in support of retaining the Gandhis would subdue the

voice of the handful of dissenters. The lovalists youch for split in the party, if the Gandhis are shown the door. With the remaining two states of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, which are still in their hold, they hope to make a comeback. But, is it so easy, after the success of the AAP in Punjab? Arvind Kejriwal will choose those very states to strengthen his organisation where the Congress is in power. an easier task than wresting power from the BJP in their strongholds. The dissenters will not sit quietly, as for them 'enough is enough.'

Seniors like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Mukul Wasnik. Manish Tewari, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, along with Kapil Sibal and Shashi Tharoor, feel that urgent surgery is required to revive the Congress. At the 'Chintan Shivir', or much before, they are likely to raise the demand for the convening of the AICC session, where the demand for the ouster of the Gandhis would gain momentum. For all of them, nothing is more important than the party. They are ready to make any sacrifice to prevent the Congress from collapsing or fading away. In the last eight years, the Congress has won only five elections and lost around 40. The Gandhis, who had offered

to resign at the CWC meeting but agreed to stay on as per the wishes of the majority of the leaders, should comprehend that the way ahead is full of hurdles. It is very difficult to arrest or reverse the winning streak of Modi, given the polarisation in the country. Moreover, with the AAP ready to replace it with an impressive record of development in Delhi, chances for the revival of the Congress look bleak.

It's better to quit gracefully, than wait to be ousted by your own partymen. The next round of elec tions in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh would again be tough for the Congress. The AAP has already declared that it would contest all the 68 seats in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections slated for November: Similarly, in Gujarat the home-turf of Modi and Amit Shah, it would be impossible for the Congress to wrest the state government from the BJP.

The two Congress states of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan are ridden with factionalism. Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel is often confronted with TS Singh Deo, who feels that it is his turn to govern the state after the completion of the two and-a-half-year term of Baghel as promised by the Congress high command. In Rajasthan, similarly, the fight between CM Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot is well-known. The Gandhis, who messed up in Punjab due to the differences in the state-Unit, would find it difficult to handle these two states. With the Gandhis already on a sticky wicket, it will be rather nightmarish for them to quell the dissidence.

Instead of being at the receivingend from their own party leaders and an object of ridicule from their rivals or bowing to other Opposition leaders like Sharad Pawar, Mamata Banerjee or Akhilesh Yadav, it will be far better if the Gandhis, as stated in the CWC meeting, choose to "sacrifice" and "step away" for the larger cause and more so, for their own peaceful and bright future. They have nothing to achieve, nothing to gain, if they continue under the present dispensation, where the 'Modi Magic' is getting stronger with every passing day.

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

### SPECTRUM CONFLICT Humanity is one minute from midnight

very year since 1947, the total of 13,100 nuclear weapons, it jectories, and deliver nuclear pay- conflict-prevention and resolution  $\dashv$  Bulletin of the Atomic may now be necessary to reset the ✓ Scientists – founded by Albert Einstein and scientists from the Manhattan Project who helped develop the atomic weapons used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki - has set the Doomsday Clock. The clock uses "the imagery of apocalypse (midnight) and the contemporary idiom of nuclear explosion (countdown to zero)" to indicate humanity's vulnerability to manmade disasters. In January 2022, the Bulletin's Science and Security Board set the clock for the third consecutive year at 100 seconds to midnight, marking the closest humanity has come to extinction in the last 75 years. Barely a month after that gloomy prognosis, Russia launched a wide-ranging "special military operation" against Ukraine. Worse still, Russian President Vladimir Putin shortly afterward ordered Russia's nuclear forces to be put on high alert, and threatened to use this arsenal should the West attempt to intervene militarily in Ukraine. Given such incendiary rhetoric, the apparent erosion of collective mechanisms to manage conflict and global security risks, and the fact that nine countries possess a

loads undetected by radar.

mechanisms, particularly to address disputes between leading political, economic, and military powers, are needed to advocate for mutual assured survival instead of mutual assured destruction. In January 2022, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States reiterated the 1985 statement by then-US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." Leaders know that no country will be spared the grave toll of such a war. We therefore appeal to the international community to facilitate negotiations for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine and take steps to build a sustainable architecture for peace.

The writer is a former director-general of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WORDS**WORTH**

### Sharpshooter

t's a story that's sometimes told and you can understand why, as a connection between sharp and Sharps seems obvious. It has also been said that the term was popularised during the American Civil War of the 1860s. Wrong war, wrong country, wrong rifle. The stimulus was the Napoleonic Wars and the term is British. So the short and sharp answer is, no, there's no truth in it. Doubters may like the facts. The Sharps rifle was designed by Christian Sharps in the late 1840s and made from 1850 onwards by his firm, the Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company. But the term sharp shooter had been in use in Britain since no later than 1801. The Experimental Group of Riflemen had been set up in the British army in 1800; this led to the creation of the 95th (Rifle) Regiment in 1802 as a specialist sharpshooting force using the Baker rifle. If you're familiar with Bernard Cornwell's books about Richard Sharpe of the 95th Rifles, then you will already know about this period and milieu. The Tirailleurs (French for sharpshooters) were Austrians who fought on the French side early in the Napoleonic Wars. The German term Scharfschütze for them is recorded in Jacobsson's Technologisches Wörterbuch of 1781, so it seems certain that the term was borrowed into English from German as what linguists call a calque or loan translation, in which each element of the word is translated literally.



El Hassan bin Talal & Sundeep Waslekar

**THE FACT THAT NINE COUNTRIES POSSESS A TOTAL OF 13,100 NUCLEAR** WEAPONS, **IT MAY NOW BE NECESSARY TO RESET THE DOOMSDAY CLOCK ONCE AGAIN** 

Doomsday Clock once again. This time, it should move forward to just one minute to midnight.

Thucydides, the Greek historian and philosopher, warned of how the dreadful collapse of humane values under the pressure of war could push humans to exalt "vengeance above innocence and profit above justice." These are malicious values, and yet powers around the world are increasingly promoting them. In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, even relatively pacifist countries have started to rearm.

Instead of withdrawing from the precipice, the world seems to be hastening toward it. After years of geopolitical rifts, civil wars, and human catastrophes, we appear to have arrived at a point where leaders can brandish the nuclear threat in the most cavalier fashion.

Amid the incalculable suffering caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the world's great powers remained more focused on their military capabilities than on human welfare. Russia, for example, threatened to use newly tested hypersonic missiles that can travel at more than 15 times the speed of sound, autonomously determine their tra-

The use of such weapons would undoubtedly trigger immediate retaliation, destroying much of the planet within hours. Anything surviving would soon be killed by radiation, a severe nuclear winter, and ecosystem collapse. More generally, the myriad flashpoints and conflicts around the world have pushed countries toward a nuclear tipping point, triggering a "proliferation epidemic" instead of constructive dialogue.

To reverse this grim trend, we need a new global security architecture to constrain nuclear weapons, hypersonic missiles, killer pathogens, and the mounting military capability of automated weapons powered by artificial intelligence. Quite simply, the world needs to construct a new "world order" that safeguards humanity.

Whether the issue is climate change or nuclear weapons, we need a global governance grid capable of addressing existential problems that nation-states alone cannot tackle. A fundamental component of such an arrangement must be the elimination of nuclear. biological, chemical, and autonomous lethal weapons. New

As the hands of the Doomsday Clock approach midnight, the choice facing the world is clear. It is more critical than ever, as Einstein and the philosopher Bertrand Russell noted, for everyone to "remember your humanity, and forget the rest."

El Hassan bin Talal is an emeritus board member of the Nuclear Threat Initiative. Sundeep Waslekar is President of Strategic Foresight Group. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

### Oil deal with Russia

Sir, Indian refiners have clinched an oil deal with Russia for buying 3.5 million barrels at deep discounts. Indian refiners should buy as much oil as possible from Russia as India is not violating any West-imposed sanctions. This is a golden opportunity for India and the country must take advantage of it. India is a developing country and we have our own problems. If India doesn't buy discounted oil from Russia, we will face huge inflation.

> Anushka Panwar, UJJAIN

# etters

### TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are (0) 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

### rissapost B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Tough road ahead

Sir, A beleaguered Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav has a tough road ahead. He had made tall predictions for the SP before the polling in Uttar Pradesh. Nothing succeeds like success; failure is an orphan. The 48-year-old son of party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav has this lost two consecutive elections to the BJP. When he first emerged on the political scene the big way, people wanted a change and they saw a young and matured mind in Akhilesh Yaday. He brought in fresh, educated faces to the party and tried his best to convince the people of Uttar Pradesh that SP would not tolerate criminals in the garb of politicians. His organisational skill was an added plus. Chief Minister at the age of 38 is a record, but the spat and reconciliation with his father, orchestrated or not, before that was not exactly for the record. Much water has flowed under the bridge since then, and the former CM has an uphill task of keeping the party cadres together. Like in West Bengal, before the elections, where some top TMC leaders switched sides only to be rejected by the electorate, some top BJP leaders jumped to the Samajwadi Party bandwagon before polls. Having lost badly, will they stay put with Akhilesh? Can Akhilesh hold them together? The 'young' Yadav has managed to double the party's seats alright but numbers cannot substitute foresight, patience and balance. It is time for him to emulate Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati's famous "social engineering" of 2007. A party can neither afford to take its vote bank for granted nor can it make the mistake of consistently sidetracking a section of voters. Every section of the society needs to be pampered. Likewise, both old timers and new entrants need to be placated. Modern day politics is all about reaching out to workers of all hues twenty four hours

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA











Amid a rise in the Covid cases in China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Singapore, and some European countries, a high-level meeting was held by the Union health minister with senior government officials and experts MANSUKH MANDAVIYA UNION HEALTH MINISTER

### **SCINDIA BATS FOR PATERNITY** LEAVE FOR AIRLINE EMPLOYEES

Airlines must consider giving male employees paternity leave so that they, too, can share the responsibility of bringing up children, Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said Wednesday. He also batted for increasing the share of women pilots in the country from 15 per cent to 50%



rection for permission to wear

hijab in classrooms. The HC also

stated that "wearing of hijab is

not an essential part of Islam.

Prescription of uniform is con-

stitutional and students can't object

to it." Other women speakers said

that they are "deeply distressed

by this judgment" and believe that

not only is it setting a bad precedent

in constitutional law, but also that

it enables outright discrimination

against Muslim women in public

for hearing after Holi vacation

"" G-23' leaders meet



weaponising pain of Kashmiri Pandits makes their ill intention obvious MEHBOOBA MUFTI PDP PRESIDENT

The Eklayva schools meant for tribal students will be modified on the lines of the central government-rur Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

ARJUN MUNDA TRIBAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

The Maharashtra government is monitoring the heatwave conditions in Mumbai and neighbouring areas

and taking various steps to tackle it, like keeping hospital beds reserved for heat stroke patients and creating awareness among people about heatwave management

RAJESH TOPE MAHA HEALTH MINISTER

### SHORT TAKES

### MP Budget session adjourned sine die

Bhopal: The Budget session of the Madhya Pradesh assembly on Wednesday was adjourned sine die, nine days ahead of its schedule. After completing the business listed for the day, assembly speaker Girish Gautam adjourned the house till the next session. After the **Question Hour was** completed and the House finished its listed business, including passage of the budget on demand of grants related to various departments by a voice vote, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Narottam Mishra moved a resolution proposing that the Assembly be adjourned sine die.

### K'taka: 5 killed in road accident

Ballari(KTK): Five people,

### Among the leaders who attended the meeting were Sibal, Anand Sharma, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Prithviraj Chavan, Manish Tewari, Shashi Tharoor, Vivek Tankha, Raj Babbar, Akhilesh Prasad Singh and Sandeep Dikshit AGENCIES New Delhi, March 16: The leaders of the Congress's "Group of 23" Wednesday said the only way forward for the grand old party is to adopt a model of collective

cision making at all levels. In a statement, they also urged the Congress leadership to initiate talks with like-minded forces to create a way for a credible alternative in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

and inclusive leadership and de-

The G-23 leaders met at the residence of former Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad over dinner Wednesday to work

out the grouping's future strategy and discuss the Congress's debacle in the just-concluded Assembly polls in five states. Sources said the grouping had earlier planned a dinner at Kapil Sibal's residence, but it was changed at the last minute.

The ambit of the G-23 grouping increased this time as some more leaders -- Patiala MP Preneet Kaur, former Gujarat Chief Minister Shankar Singh Vaghela, former Union minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, former Rajya Sabha deputy chairman PJ Kurian and former Haryana speaker Kuldeep Sharma joined the dinner meeting. The grouping had given an open invite to other



Congress leader Shashi Tharoor arrives for the meeting at Azad's residence PTI

### Azad, Sonia to meet for sorting out issues

at Azad's residence

New Delhi: Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who is leading the 'G-23' group demanding sweeping organisational changes in the party, is likely to meet party interim chief Sonia Gandhi Thursday to address the grievances of the group sources said. Its likely that Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi will also be present at this meeting.

dinner meeting. The sources said the meeting was convened to apprise all the G-23 members of the decisions taken at the crucial **Congress Working Committee** (CWC) meet Sunday.

Two prominent G-23 members -- Azad and Sharma -- were to apprise the other members of the developments at the CWC meeting and what they said on strengthening the party in the wake of its drubbing in the Assembly polls, they said.

The G-23 grouping has been critical of the Congress leadership. It has been demanding an organisational overhaul, after they wrote a joint letter to party president Sonia Gandhi in 2020. The decision to convene a meeting of the G-23 came a day after Gandhi sought the resignation of the Congress presidents of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa.

The G-23 has, however, got weakened over time with senior leader M Veerappa Moily distancing himself from the group, Jitin Prasada joining the BJP and Mukul Wasnik not attending its meetings in recent times



### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 16: The Supreme Court Wednesday permitted the Tamil Nadu government to provide 50 per cent reservation in super speciality courses (DM/M.Ch.) for in-service candidates in government medical colleges in academic year 2021-22.

A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and BR Gavai said: "We are ... of the view that no case is made out for continuing the interim protection which was granted for the academic year 2020-21 vide interim order dated November 27, 2020 and thus. we reject the prayer in that regard. Needless to say, that the state of Tamil Nadu would be at liberty to continue the counselling for academic year 2021-22 by taking into consideration the reservation provided by it as per the said GO (government order).

The apex court declined to entertain a plea by Dr N Karthikevan and others, seeking interim protection as issued by it for academic year 2020-2021

Citing the 1992 Indra Sawhney (Mandal Commission) case, the petitioners argued that there cannot be any reservation for admission in super speciality courses as per nine-judge bench decision.

Tamil Nadu issued a GO November 7, 2020, granting reservation of 50 super specialty seats (DM/M.Ch.) for in-service candidates in government medical colleges in the state.

The petitioners claimed that this was not permissible in law.

### **HIJAB BAN** Protests soar over K'taka HC verdict missed all petitions seeking di



New Delhi, March 16: Muslim organisations in Karnataka have given a call for a 'bandh' in the state Thursday (March 17)opposing the verdict of the Karnataka High Court on the hijab row.

Meanwhile, a group of Muslim women Wednesday expressed their strong resentment against the Karnataka High Court's judgement in which the court upheld the restriction on wearing Hijab in classrooms and educational in stitutions in the state.

"The Karnataka High Court said that wearing the Hijab is not an essential religious practice in Islam and is not, therefore, protected under by the right to freedom of religion guaranteed by Article 25 of the Constitution. This was not even the question," said social activist Khalida Parveen while addressing a press conference in the national capital. Earlier, a Karnataka High Court's special bench dis-

the pleas challenging the Karnataka High Court verdict which dismissed the petitions seeking permission to wear hijab inside the classroom saying it is not part of the essential religious practice in Islamic faith. Some petitions have been filed against the full bench high court verdict on the case in which it was held that wearing hijab is not a part of essential religious practice in Islamic faith under Article 25 of the Constitution.

### Two rape accused killed in police firing

### AGENCIES

Guwahati, March 16: Two persons, prime accused in the rapes of two girls of whom one has died, were gunned down by Assam Police in separate incidents while allegedly trying to escape from custody, a senior officer said Wednesday. Both the accused were arrested

Congressmen to join them at the

Tuesday, and they were being taken to their respective crime scenes

The 15-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped at a hotel in Guwahati by five men, two of whom had assaulted her on an earlier occasion too, police had said.

As per the complaint lodged by the minor's mother, two of the five culprits, who had first sexually assaulted the girl February 16 and videographed it, allegedly threatened to leak the clip if she revealed the matter to anyone



institutions in Karnatka. The six Muslim girl students of the Government Pre University Girls College in the coastal town of Udupi did not turn up for classes Wednesday. The girls stuck to their stand that they will not enter the college without the headscarf and would fight the case legally. They were absent when the preparatory exams of the second pre-university classes were going on. SC to hear pleas against verdict after Holi: The Supreme Court Wednesday agreed to list

including four women were killed and nine others injured when the speeding transport vehicle they were travelling in overturned on the National Highway-50 at Banavikallu in Vijayanagara district, police said. The mishap occurred Tuesday night when the deceased and injured were heading to Rameswaram. While two died on the spot, the others died on the way to the hospital. The injured have been admitted to the hospital.

for further investigation when both attempted to flee.

In the first incident in Guwahati. the accused allegedly attacked the police personnel who then opened fire at him

The accused was taken to the Gauhati Medical College Hospital (GMCH), where he was declared brought dead.

 $GMCH\,Superintendent\,Abhijit$ Sharma said he was brought to the hospital around 1 AM with four bullet injuries in his body.

Police said that two women personnel were also injured in the attack by the accused, but they were out of danger.

On February 19, however, the accused, promising to delete the video, met the girl again in another hotel, and along with others forced themselves on her.

A search operation is underway to nab the other accused, police added. In the other incident, the accused had allegedly raped and killed an eight-year-old girl in a tea garden in Udalguri district March 10 and the child's body was recovered the next day, Singh said. The accused was arrested from

a factory in Changsari area in Kamrup district and he attempted to escape following which he was shot dead by the police.

Women toss flower petals on each other during celebrations of the Holi festival in Ahmedabad

PTI PHOTO

### 'Golden Baba' goes missing, probe starts

Kanpur (UP): Manoj Sengar, popularly known as Golden Baba, has gone missing from his house under mysterious circumstances. The family members, after a frantic search, have informed the local police. The police. however, said that there is no apprehension of any untoward incident, and going by the preliminary findings it appears that he had gone somewhere on his own will.

### **SL Finance Minister** calls on PM Modi

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday conveyed to visiting Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa that India would always stand with the island nation as it occupies a central role in New Delhi's 'neighbourhood first policy'. Sri Lanka is expecting a USD 1 billion Line of Credit (LOC) from India to tide over its economic crisis and a pact on the additional financial assistance is likely to be finalised Thursday, people familiar with the developments said.

### **HEAT WAVE CONTINUES** Akola, Barmer register max of 42.9 degrees C

### The IMD said Jammu, west Raj and small pockets of Guj are experiencing severe heat wave, there is a heat wave to severe heat wave over isolated pockets of HP and U'khand and there is a heat wave condition over many pockets of Vidarbha, isolated

pockets of MP, and interior Odisha

### AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 16: As a heat wave continued over large parts of the country, Akola in Maharashtra and Barmer in Rajasthan recorded a maximum temperature of 42.9



degrees, the highest across India on Wednesday, the IMD said.

Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh recorded maximum temperature of 42.3 degrees Celsius, which is 2nd highest value for this month for that station while Jaisalmer in Rajasthan recorded the maximum temperature of 42 degrees Celsius, which is 2nd highest value for this month for the station, the evening bulletin of India Meteorological Department (IMD)

said Wednesday. Jammu recorded 35 degrees Celsius, nine notches above normal, while Shimla recorded 25.1 degrees Celsius, 9.6 notches above normal. In the eastern side, Mohanbari (Dibrugarh) recorded the maximum temperature of 34.3 degrees Celsius while Tezpur recorded 36 degrees Celsius

The IMD said Jammu, west Rajasthan and small pockets of Gujarat are experiencing severe heat wave, there is a heat wave to severe heat wave over isolated pockets of Himachal Pradesh and . Uttarakhand and there is a heat wave condition over many pockets of Vidarbha, isolated pockets of Madhya Pradesh, and interior Odisha. Jammu, Western Rajasthan, small pockets of Gujarat, pockets of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, pockets of Vidarbha and isolated pockets of Madhya Pradesh, interior Odisha and Telangana will witness heat wave conditions Thursday while on Friday, it will be west Rajasthan, interior Odisha, and Telangana that would experience heat wave conditions, it said.

The IMD also predicted heatwave conditions to heatwave conditions are very likely to prevail in isolated pockets over Konkan and Saurashtra-Kutch on March 16 while heat wave conditions is very likely to prevail in isolated pockets over Gujarat region, west Madhya Pradesh till March 17, over east Rajasthan March 16 and 17, and over Odisha during March 16-18.

As the sun marches northwards and according to the climatology, the month of March is when the region extending from

Maharashtra to Odisha is a heat zone. In its March to May seasonal forecast issued March 1, the IMD had already predicted that it was expecting above normal maximum temperatures most likely over many parts of western and central India and hence a heat wave can be expected extending from south Gujarat to Maharashtra to Odisha. On the reasons for the heatwave, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the higher than normal tempera-

tures are because of the wind flow pattern in these areas. The lower level winds in these areas are from south towards north and that brings hotter air from land (as against when north to south winds bring colder air).

The winds are southeasterly over southern peninsular area, mainly Karnataka, Telangana with some feeble circulation which is favouring the advent of heat from south to north Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and up to Vidarbha area of Maharashtra.

New Delhi, March 16: The Opposition in Lok Sabha Wednesday pressed for increasing the budget for maintenance of roads and stringent laws to deal with overloading of vehicles, even as the BJP asserted that the "era of bad roads" has come to an end.

**Oppn demands** 

more Budget for

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

road maintenance



Initiating a debate on demand for grants of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Congress member A R Reddy said India has only one per cent of the vehicles while it accounts for 11 per cent of road accidents globally.

He said the government should increase the budget for maintenance of roads to prevent such accidents. He also criticised the government for not being able to attractprivate investments in the highways sector.















dirty and needed a fresh coat of

paint. There is nothing wrong with

saffron colour. Chhatrapati Shivaji

Maharaj and Rani Lakshmi Bai

also used saffron flags. We work for

the betterment of society, but if

people have issues, then it must

District nodal officer, TN Mishra,

reacting to the issue, said, "The

paintings depict the guards of

He confirmed that seven water

tanks were painted under the proj-

ect before polling day, including

democracy and the republic."

be corrected.'

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Moradabad (UP), March 16: Seven water tanks, owned by the Nagar Nigam, have been painted with pictures of men on horses, holding saffron-coloured flags. Samajwadi Party councillor,

Shiri Gul said, "It is a deliberate attempt to intimidate a particular community. We will raise the matter with the municipal commissioner and the district magistrate."

Vinod Agarwal, mayor of Moradabad, said, "The tanks were

### Official sacked for painting swings in SP colours

UNNAO: The district horticulture officer of Unnao has been suspended by the Yogi Adityanath government for getting the swings at a children's park painted in red and green, the colour of Samajwadi Party (SP) flag, before the counting of votes March 5. The additional chief secretary (horticulture) suspended district horticulture officer Sunil Kumar on a report of the Unnao district magistrate. Sunil Kumar has now been attached to the Lucknow headquarters. Sunil Kumar allegedly got the swings and the grills at the Nirala Udyan Park, located close to the Unnao Collectorate, painted in the colour of flag of SP, which hogged the limelight after pictures and videos of the same went viral on social media platforms. Sunil Kumar had then said that the colour of the swings was the same before also but was not visible since it had become jaded. On March 6, the colour of the swings of the park was changed again, with yellow being inserted in between red and green. Unnao district magistrate has confirmed the report of the suspension of the district horticulture officer.

the ones in Pilikothi, Jigar Colony and MDA Park area. While there was no immediate comment from the municipal commissioner over the issue, a staffer said that a uniform colour, which is light pink, was used under the government's Smart City Project.

Shailendra Kumar Singh, district magistrate, said that nobody had approached him yet regarding the issue.

If anybody complains in future, we will definitely hold talks with the mayor and find a solution, he stated.

The timing of the UP

government's expression of

interest – and desire – to

'bulldoze' its economy has

raised questions like "why

now" among experts

and corporates here

Pradesh government now finally

plans to pay attention on the state

Accordingly, the UP government

has decided to hire a consultant to

advise on how to boost the state's

economy to \$1 trillion by 2027 -

or during the second term of Chief

Minister-designate Yogi Adityanath.

Tuesday released ads in promi-

nent Mumbai media oulets to this

effect, soliciting request for proposal

wishes to engage Consultant to

boost up the size of the Economy

of Uttar Pradesh to One Trillion

Dollar in five years (2022-2027),'

The step evoked some curios-

ity and chortles among economic

experts and India Inc., though it

could not be immediately con-

firmed if similar releases were is-

The measure came just four

days after the Maha Vikas Aghadi

government's Deputy Chief

Minister and state Finance Minister

Ajit Pawar announced in the

Legislature that Maharashtra is

well-poised to become the first

state in the country to achieve \$1

trillion economy in the next three

sued in UP media too.

"The Department of Planning

(RFP) by April 14.

read the ad.

The UP Department of Planning

its

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

of

economy.



# Saffron paintings on water tanks trigger row Sworn in as CM, ex-comedian gets down to serious business

Mann, the first non-Congress and non-Akali leader to become the CM after the reorganisation of Punjab in 1966, told people of Punjab it will be their government

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, March 16: From a comedian to Punjab chief minister. Bhagwant Mann has seen a phenomenal rise in a political career of just over a decade.

Mann Wednesday was sworn in as chief minister at Khatkar Kalan, the ancestral village of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh in Punjab's Shaheed Bhagat Singh (SBS) Nagar district.

At the mega public event, Mann accepted a huge burden of expectations -- his Aam Aadmi Party had swept the assembly polls, winning 92 of the 117 assembly seats. How he runs the show in Punjab will also have a bearing on AAP's fortunes in the coming years as the party seeks to expand its footprint further across the nation.

Mann, 48, was elected twice as a Member of Parliament from Sangrur parliamentary constituency before his legislative assembly debut this time. He resigned as MP Monday.

He now becomes the first non-Congress and non-Akali leader to become the CM after the reorganisation of Punjab in 1966. Inviting people of Punjab to his oath-taking ceremony, Mann told them it will be their government. Weeks before election day, Arvind

Kejriwal's AAP declared him its CM face after a phone-in poll, called 'Janta Chunegi Apna CM' (people will pick their own CM).

The AAP state unit president was the first choice of over 90 per cent of the 21 lakh callers.

He fought the polls from Dhuri, an assembly segment in his Sangrur parliamentary constituency, winning

by a margin of over 58,000.

Born in Sangrur's Satoj village in October 1973, Mann enrolled for a BCom degree from Shaheed Udham Singh Government College in Sunam in the same district. He didn't complete the course, but college gave him a chance to take part in several youth festivals.

He later brought out comedy videos and music albums, including the very popular 'Jugnu Mast Mast' and 'Kulfi Garma Garam'. Appearing in 'The Great Indian

Laughter Challenge' was a high point in his career as an enter-



tainer: Navjot Singh Sidhu, who has now resigned as the Punjab Congress chief, also happened to have made several ap-

pearances on the would start today TV show. Mann's itself. We are already very late. We are late by 70 years. People from all over India come to Delhi to see schools and 'mohalla' clinics, political career began in 2011 foreigners would come to Punjab and click photos with

the Manpreet BHAGWANT MANN I CM, PUNJAE Singh Badal-led

People's Party of Punjab, an offshoot of the Shiromani Akali Dal. The PPP was to merge later with the Congress

Next year, Mann fought from the Lehra assembly constituency in Sangrur as a PPP candidate but lost to senior Congress leader Rajinder Kaur Bhattal.

In 2014, Mann joined the AAP and contested against Akali heavyweight Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa for the Sangrur Lok Sabha seat. He won by over two lakh votes and the AAP itself went on to win four Lok Sabha seats in Puniab.

Mann unsuccessfully contested the 2017 assembly polls against Shiromani Akali Dal's Sukhbir Singh Badal for the Jalalabad seat. But the AAP won 20 seats in the Punjab Assembly, ending up as the state's main opposition party. Mann was made its state unit president.

He resigned from the post in 2018 after Kejriwal apologised to Akali leader Bikram Singh Majithia in a defamation case but was back in the AAP-fold soon.

Mann won the Sangrur seat again in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls with a margin of over one lakh votes. During his career, Mann has been hounded by accusations that he has a drinking problem. In 2016, the then AAP MP Harinder Singh Khalsa complained against him to the Lok Sabha Speaker, seeking a change in his seat. He alleged that Mann, who sat next to him, reeked of liquor. At a 2019 rally in Barnala, in the presence of Kejriwal and his mother, Mann vowed to give up liquor. Mann had then accused his political rivals of defaming him by portraying him as a born drunkard.

### Sidhu resigns as Punjab Cong chief



A day earlier, Sonia Gandhi asked party chiefs of Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Goa and Manipur to resign

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, March 16: Days after facing humiliating defeat in Punjab from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), state Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu Wednesday resigned from the post.

In a one-line resignation to party President Sonia Gandhi, Sidhu wrote, I hereby resign as President (PPCC). The AAP came to power by sweeping the Assembly polls with a three-fourths majority as heavyweights fall by wayside.

A day earlier, Sonia Gandhi asked party chiefs Sidhu in Punjab, Ganesh Godiyal in Uttarakhand, Ajay Kumar Lallu in Uttar Pradesh, Girish Chodankar in Goa and Nameirakpam Loken Singh in Manipur to resign.

Sidhu, once a Chief Minister

aspirant, faced defeat from his stronghold Amritsar (East) seat. He was locked in a high-profile contest with Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia but faced defeat from the hands of AAP greenhorn candidate Jeevanjyot Kaur, who defeated him by a margin of 6,750 votes.

Low-profile hygiene activist Kaur, who believed in door-to-door connect with electorate, emerged as the 'giant slayer' by showing the door to two political heavyweights --Sidhu and Majithia, who were busy in mudslinging against each other.

In 2017, cricketer-turned-politician Sidhu not only defeated his BJP rival Rajesh Honey with a big margin of over 42,000 votes but also played a role of a game-changer for the party by winning 10 out of 11 seats in Amritsar district, once the citadel of the SAD-BJP combine. Sidhu is a three-time Amritsar

MP from the BJP. In 2014 he sacrificed this seat for his 'guru' Arun Jaitley. Later he was adjusted in the Rajya Sabha by the BJP but not finding a bigger role in Punjab, he quit the party and resigned from Parliament

### LAKHIMPUR KHERI VIOLENCE See witnesses are protected: SC seeks **UP** govt response

### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 16: The Supreme Court Wednesday told the Uttar Pradesh government counsel to ensure witnesses are protected in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, and agreed to examine a plea filed by the family members of the farmers, mowed by a car belonging to Ashish Misra, challenging bail granted to him by the Allahabad High Court.

The bench said it will issue notice in the matter.

Misra is the son of Union Minister and BJP MP Ajay Kumar Misra. Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, representing the family members, submitted before a bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana that March 10, a protected witness in the case had been attacked and the state government did not file an appeal challenging the

bail granted to Misra in the case. The Chief Justice told the Uttar Pradesh government counsel: "What is this? There is a specific mention that a witness is attacked. File a detailed counter affidavit.'

The Chief Justice emphasised that the UP government should ensure that witnesses in the case are protected. At the outset, Dave criticized the high court order granting bail to Misra, despite sufficient material on record connecting him with the incident. The bench, also comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli, scheduled the matter for further hearing March 24.

On March 15, the Supreme Court said a bench will be constituted, which heard the matter earlier and scheduled the matter for hearing Wednesday.

### After polls, UP eyes trillion dollar economy

Mumbai, March 16: With five years of heat and dust of temple and politics behind, the Uttar

> The UP Department of Planning The Department of Planning wishes to Tuesday released ads in prominent engage Consultant to boost up the Mumbai media oulets to this effect. size of the Economy of Uttar Pradesh soliciting request for proposal to One Trillion Dollar in five years (RFP) by April 14 (2022-2027), read the ad

The measure came just four days after Maha Finance Minister Ajit Pawar announced in the Legislature that Maharashtra is well-poised to become the first state in the country to achieve \$1 trillion economy in the next three years, spelling cheers

years, spelling cheers. The timing of the UP government's expression of interest - and desire - to 'bulldoze' its economy has raised questions like "why now" among experts and corporates here.

'There are other concerns... How much investment does the UP government expect for this and whether it will be able to arrange and manage the fund inflows, said Ratnakar Mahajan, a wellknown economic expert and former Executive Chairman of Maharashtra State Planning Board.

Bhalchandra Mungekar, a former member of the Planning Commission and ex-UGC Chairman, feels the UP government is attempting to "blindly imitate" Maharashtra as its "well nigh impossible for any expert or consultant to advise on turning them into a \$1 trillion economy within a specified time-frame" like this. "For this, factors like the basic strengths of the UP economy, the sectoral position of agriculture, industry, services, infrastructure, domestic and foreign investments, ease of doing business, plus a certain gestation period are the chief parameters which any prospective investors would consider," Mungekar pointed out.

Mahajan said that traditionally. Maharashtra has been an advanced state, both agriculturally and industrially, since 1960, and later it evolved its visionary 'agro-industrial policy' with equal emphasis on both these engines of development. "UP is largely dependent on agriculture... Kanpur is an economic hub, but the state lags in industrialisation, urbanisation, skilled talent etc. It seems they are 'clueless' as to how to go about it... So they need outside experts to advise them," Mahajan said.

Mungekar said India is cur rently a \$3 trillion economy, so if Maharashtra and UP end up contributing two-thirds to it, the rest of India would contribute only \$1 trillion.

"This could result in a regional economic imbalance... But I wish the UP government the very best in its endeavour, and hope that all Indian states also progress in a similar fashion," Mungekar said.

US-returned NRI in Mumbai, Ketan R Kakkad, feels the UP government is showing yet another 'lollipop' to the people, which may not materialise in the near future.

"As in the US or any other advanced country, economics and politics must always remain independent. After the polls, the government must shift into the 'economic mode' rather than continuing in the 'election mode', as we have witnessed since 2014. Then only a clear message will go and the economy can flourish," Kakkad explained.

"For good economic growth, a multi-pronged approach is essential -- enhancing the manufacturing sector, an annual growth in GDP and distributing it among various sections of the society. While UP's GDP stands at around 6.4 per cent, Maharashtra's GDP has crossed 12.1 per cent this year," said Mahajan

Endorsing the view, Kakkad urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and state Chief Ministers to appoint or elect economists and influential NRIs to guide on the economy instead of 'sadhus' (saints) whose vision is limited to religion or temple politics.

Despite repeated attempts, the UP Planning Department Special Secretary could not be reachedfor comments on his landline numbers.













The presidential elections will not that be easy for the BJP this time. They don't have even half of the total MLAs in the country. Opposition parties together have more MLAs across the nation MAMATA BANEFJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

### SECURITY SITUATION IMPROVED IN NE STATES

Security situation in the Northeastern states has improved substantially since 2014 and insurgency violence in the region is down by 74% and civilian deaths decreased by 89%, Union minister Nityanand Rai said Wednesday



# India rolls out Cov vax for kids aged 12 to 14

Many congratulations and best wishes to the newly elected Chief Minister of Punjab Shri Bhagwant Mann

ji for the oath ceremony! Hope that under his able leadership, the crops of progress, brotherhood and new perspective will flourish in Punjab AKHILESH YADAV SAMAJWADI PARTY (SP) CHIEF

ARHILESH YADAV SAMAJWADI PARTY (SP) CHIE

India does not have a very good record on road accident front and registers the world's highest deaths due to it at 1.5 lakh every year

NITIN GADKARI MINISTER FOR ROAD

If the BJP invites us to join the government in Manipur, we are ready to join. If they do not invite us we would examine the matter subsequently

CONRAD K SANGMA MEGHALAYA CM &

### SHORT TAKES

### Women lynch rape accused

Agartala: A group of women tied a 46-year-old rape accused to a tree and beat him to death in Tripura's Dhalai district Wednesday, police said. The incident took place in Gandacherra police station area. The deceased, who had completed eight years of rigorous imprisonment in a murder case, allegedly took a fiveyear-old girl, who had come to a religious programme with her mother Tuesday night, to a nearby jungle and raped her, leaving the girl at the spot, a police officer said.

### 1 dead, 8 critical as taxi falls into gorge

.....

**Gangtok:** One person died and eight others were critically injured when the taxi they were travelling in fell into a 150-metre-deep gorge in Sikkim Wednesday, police said. The accident took place at Pipaley in West Sikkim when the Siliguri-bound taxi was coming from Pelling, a police officer said.

### AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 16:** The inoculation of children in the age group of 12 to 14 years against Covid-19 started Wednesday with Corbevax vaccine.

Besides, the government has also decided to waive the condition of comorbidity for those above 60 years in order to receive the precaution dose.

"Taking the Covid-19 vaccination campaign forward, under the '#SabkoVaccineMuftVaccine' campaign led by PM @NarendraModi ji, the Covid vaccination of children in the age group of 12-14 has started from today. All people of 60+ age will also be able to get precaution dose from today. Let's secure the country together; get the vaccine," Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya tweeted.

Two doses of Biological E's intramuscular vaccine Corbevax would be administered to the beneficiaries in the 12 to 14 years age group in an interval of 28 days, the guidelines said.

As of March 1, 2021, there were 4.7 crore children aged 12 and 13 years in the country.

No need for special

recruitment drives

in Railways: Centre

New Delhi, March 16: The Centre

Wednesday ruled out special re-

cruitment drives for filling va-

cancies of scheduled castes and

the Lok Sabha, Railway Minister

Ashwini Vaishnaw said the

Railways has been recruiting per-

sonnel at regular intervals and

there was no need to launch special

drives. He said the last special re-

cruitment drive by the Railways was

held in 2008 to clear the backlog of

vacancies of SCs, STs and OBCs.

Recruitment Drive launched in

the year 2008 as per the directives

of DOP&T, as many as 14868 back-

log vacancies [SCs (4003), STs (4143)

& OBCs (6722)] were identified for

clearance in a time-bound man-

ner and the same had been fully

cleared as on 31.03.2017," Vaishnaw

said. He said since 2010, the re-

"In pursuance of Special

Replying to supplementaries in

scheduled tribes in Railways.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Also, the precaution dose can now be administered to all people



Students pose for photos after receiving a dose of Covid-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre in a parking plaza, in Thane

aged 60 years and above, and the prioritisation and sequencing of this dose would be based on completion of nine months to 39 weeks from the date of administration of the second dose. As per the guidelines, the precaution dose should be of the same vaccine that was administered to a person during primary vaccination.

"The vaccination slots will be booked for 12-14 years age group for "CorBEvax" only through Co-WIN. Vaccinator has to ensure

FEARLESS AC

that the vaccine is administered to only those children who have completed the age of 12 years on the date of vaccination and if a child is registered but has not attained the age of 12 years, the vaccination is not to be given," the guidelines released by the Health ministry Monday said.

The children eligible for vaccination can register through through an existing account of a family member on Co-WIN or by creating a new account through

### Corbevax to cost ₹990 in market, ₹145 for Govt

New Delhi: Biological E produced Corbevax vaccine shot for children between 12 to 14 age group will cost ₹990 in the private market including all taxes and ₹145 at government hospitals and facilities. Biological E said that it is providing the most affordable Covid vaccine on a global scale due to process of innovation, largescale manufacturing and highquality operations. Corbevax is India's first indigenously developed Receptor Binding Domain (RBD) protein sub-unit vaccine against Covid-19.

a unique mobile number (this facility is available for all eligible citizens presently), it said.

The Centre has asked states to organise dedicated Covid-19 vaccination sessions through earmarked centres and train vaccinators to avoid mixing of vaccines during the inoculation of adolescents. The states were also advised to ensure judicious utilisation of available Covid-19 vaccines.

### AGUSTA WESTLAND SCAM CBI charge sheet against ex-Defence Secy SK Sharma



The first charge sheet in the case was filed in September 2017 naming former IAF chief Tyagi and others

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 16: The CBI has filed a supplementary charge sheet in the ₹3,600-crore AgustaWestland scam against former Defence Secretary Shashi Kant Sharma and four Indian Air Force personnel, officials said Wednesday.

The CBI filed the charge sheet in a special court in Delhi after getting the nod from the government to prosecute Sharma, who was the Defence Secretary between 2011 and 2013 before being appointed the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The central probe agency also named the then Air Vice Marshal Jasbir Singh Panesar (now retired), deputy chief test pilot S A Kunte, the then Wing Commander Thomas Mathew and Group Captain N Santosh, they said.

Kunte and Santosh retired as air commodore. The case pertains to alleged bribery to swing a deal to procure 12 VVIP helicopters in favour of AgustaWestland which was ineligible as its helicopters did not meet the 6,000-meter operational ceiling parameter set by the Indian Air Force.

The need for new helicopters to ferry VVIPs -- the president, the Prime Minister, the vice president It was followed by another charge sheet in September 2020 against Michel and others

and the defence minister -- was felt in 1999 when a proposal was moved to find an alternative to the IAF's Soviet-era Mi8s.

The CBI has accused then IAF Chief S P Tyagi of recommending reduction in the operational ceiling of the helicopters from 6,000 meters to 4,500 meters which brought AgustaWestland into the race, the CBI has alleged.

The IAF was strongly opposed to the changes but when Tyagi became the chief, he recommended it, the agency has alleged.

This, according to the CBI, was allegedly done at the behest of Finmeccanica and AgustaWestland top executives who engaged the services of three middlemen --Christian Michel, Guido Haschke and Carlos Gerosa -- who allegedly paid bribes to Tyagi and his cousins Rajiv, Sandeep and Julie.

The agency has alleged that Michel's firms received about 42.27 million Euros, approximately seven per cent of the deal amount, from the companies to swing the ₹3,600crore deal in their favour.

The bribes were allegedly routed through companies of Michel and an advocate, Gautam Khaitan, in the form of multiple contracts through layered transactions to camouflage them.

## SC upholds govt's Three LeT militants killed in encounter

Srinagar. March 16: Three

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants,

involved in the recent killing of a

sarpanch in Khonmoh, were killed

in an encounter with security forces

on the outskirts of the city here in

Jammu and Kashmir Wednesday,

Nowgam area early morning after

receiving specific inputs about the

presence of militants in the area,

turned into an encounter after the

hiding militants fired upon the

forces, who retaliated. "They have

been identified as Adil Teli and

Saqib Tantray from Shopian. The

third one most probably is Umer

He said the search operation

a police official said.

The security forces launched a cordon and search operation in

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

police said

CRPF personnel blow fire during a performance on the 83rd Raising Day of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at Maulana Azad Stadium in Jammu

Govt restores all valid e-visas

**New Delhi:** India has restored all currently valid five year e-tourist visa given to citizens of 156 countries and regular paper visa to nationals of all countries with

Z

### Two workers buried alive

Amaravati: Two construction workers were killed and four others injured when earth caved in during digging work at a construction site in Guntur Wednesday. The injured were shifted to a hospital, where the condition of one of them is stated to be critical. The deceased workers were from Bihar and West Bengal.

### 7-yr-old mauled to death by stray dogs

Rampur (Uttar Pradesh): A seven-year-old boy was attacked by a pack of dogs and he bled to death on way to the nearby community health centre (CHC) in the Suar area. The incident took place Tuesday. The boy Saurabh was the nephew of Chanchal Singh, head of Zamirganj village under the Kotwali area of Suar. The boy's family said he had gone to fetch vegetables from their farmland and was attacked by a pack of stray dogs on his way back

### Man gets death rap in rape, murder case

Lucknow: Special judge, POCSO court, Arvind Mishra has awarded death penalty to one Mohd Asif Khan, who was found guilty of raping and killing his five-year-old niece eight years ago. Pronouncing the verdict, the judge said that the quilty be hanged till death. cruitment process in Railways was being done regularly through authorised recruiting agencies namely Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) and Railway Recruitment Cells (RRCs). "The shortfall or backlog vacancies of SCs, STs and OBCs left unfilled are taken care of in the subsequent recruitment cycle," Vaishnaw said. immediate effect, two years after their suspension follow the Covid outbreak. Officials also said all currently valid old long duration (10 years) regular tourist visa given to nationals of the US and Japan have been restored. Fresh long duration (10 year) tourist visa will also be issued to the US and Japanese nationals. The government has decided that currently valid e-tourist visa issued for five years, which was suspended since March 2020, shall stand restored to the nationals of 156 countries, an official told PTI. Nationals of these 156 countries will also be eligible for issuance of fresh e-tourist visa as per the Visa Manual, 2019. Currently valid regular (paper) tourist visa with validity of 5 years, issued to foreign nationals of all countries, which remained suspended since March 2020, shall stand restored.

### Every 4th kid with SARS-CoV-2 at risk of long Covid-19: Study

Long Covid is a heterogeneous multisystemic condition for which there is still no precise definition and includes signs and symptoms that persist, develop, or fluctuate after SARS-CoV-2 infection

#### INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 16: Over 25 per cent children and adolescents infected with SARS-CoV-2 are likely to suffer long-Covid symptoms, according to a study not peer-reviewed yet.

The study led by an international team of researchers from the US, Mexico and Sweden found that the prevalence of long Covid in children and adolescents, following a Covid-19 infection was 25.24 per cent.

The team identified more than 40 long-term effects associated with Covid-19 in children and adolescents. The five most prevalent clinical manifestations were mood symptoms (16.50 per cent), fatigue (9.66 per cent), sleep disorders (8.42 per cent), headache (7.84 per cent), and respi-

ratory symptoms (7.62 per cent). Even though most symptoms improve with time, there is evidence in adult studies that suggests some symptoms can persist one year after Covid-19 diagnosis, the researchers said.

Long Covid is a heterogeneous multisystemic condition for which there is still no precise definition and includes signs and symptoms that persist, develop, or fluctuate



after SARS-CoV-2 infection. "Long Covid represents a significant public health concern, and there are no guidelines to address its diagnosis and management," Sonia Villapol, Department of Neurosurgery, at Houston Methodist Research Institute, in Texas, US, wrote in the paper along with co-authors.

"Identifying the main signs and symptoms of paediatric long Covid can not only help diagnose, develop better treatments, but also help support clinical management systems, establish rehabilitation programmes, and design guidelines and therapeutic research," she added. The team conducted a meta-analysis of 21 studies, which included a total of 80,071 children and adolescents with Covid. When compared to controls, children infected by SARS-CoV-2 had a higher risk of persistent dyspnea (shortness of breath), anosmia/ageusia (loss of smell and taste), and fever. Other commonly reported symptoms included nasal congestion, cognitive symptoms such as faltering concentration and memory.

The study acefurther supports the importance of continuously monitoring the impact of long Covid in children and adolescents, and the need to include all variables and appropriate control cohorts in studies to have a better knowledge of the real burden of paediatric long Covid," Villapol said.

### decision on OROP

OROP is short for 'One Rank One Pension', which aims at pension uniformity for armed forces personnel retiring at the same rank with the same length of service



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 16: The Supreme Court Wednesday said the One Rank-One Pension (OROP) scheme in the Armed forces is a policy decision, which does not suffer from any constitutional infirmity.

A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud and comprising Justices Surya Kant and Vikram Nath said the policy decision of the Centre of OROP is not arbitrary. The bench said the central government has taken a policy decision and it lies within the ambit of policy making powers. The bench added that it is not for the court to go into the policy matters of the government.

The bench said: "We do not find any constitutional infirmity on the OROP principle and the notification dated November 7, 2015".

The top court's judgment came on a plea filed by the Ex-servicemen Association seeking implementation of OROP, as recommended by the Bhagat Singh Koshyari Committee with an automatic annual revision. The plea had challenged the current policy of periodic review once in five years.

The bench said a refixation exercise must be conducted by the gov-

ernment for a period of 5 years in connection with pension payable to Army personnel, as mentioned in the OROP policy. The detailed judgment in the matter will be uploaded later in the day.

The Centre had said. "One Rank One Pension implies that uniform pension be paid to the armed forces personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service irrespective of the date of retirement and any future enhancement in the rates of pension to be automatically passed on to the past pensioners".

The petitioner Indian Ex-servicemen Movement (IESM) laid repeated emphasis on the expression 'automatically' to convey that the revision of OROP should be automatic and the Centre had failed to do so and has instead made the OROP revision as once in five years.

Emphasizing on rejecting this argument, the Centre said: "The dynamic calculations as contended by the petitioners is unheard of in practice whether it is pay scale or pension or any other financial emoluments given to a government servant. This is not in vogue for the simple reason that it is impossible to put it as a scheme of implementation".

### Teli. We have called his family for identification. All the three were local terrorists of LeT," Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said.



An AK-47 and two pistols were recovered from the encounter site, he said. The three men were involved in the killing of sarpanch in Khonmoh on March 9, the IGP said, adding, they used to carry out attacks on Panchayati Raj institution members and protected persons. "Their killing is a huge success for the police. We have busted all the modules involved in the recent killings of sarpanches, CRPF, etc, including a Territorial Army soldier of Budgam. "Pakistan does not want democratic process or development to continue, so they are targeting panches, sarpanches. But we are giving them a befitting reply. We are identifying them, arresting them or neutralising them in encounters," Kumar said.





### international

### **EIFFEL TOWER NOW 6 MTR TALLER**

The Eiffel Tower grew 6 metres Tuesday after a new digital radio antenna was attached to the top of the Paris monument. The tower, built by Gustave Eiffel in the late 19th century, now measures 330 metres after the DAB+ (digital audio) antenna was airlifted onto its peak by helicopter under a leaden sky



# Some hope for breakthrough in peace talks

Kyiv: New talk of compromise from both Moscow and Kyiv on a status for Ukraine outside of NATO lifted hope Wednesday for a potential breakthrough after three weeks of war.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said negotiations were becoming "more realistic", while Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said there was "some hope for compromise".

The Kremlin said the sides were discussing status for Ukraine similar to that of Austria or Sweden, both members of the European Union that are outside the NATO military alliance. Ukraine's chief negotiator said it would give Kyiv binding international security guarantees to prevent future attacks.

Though the war still ground on with Ukrainian civilians trapped in cities under Russian

#### About 20,000 flee Mariupol in private cars-Ukraine

- Hundreds of thousands still trapped in city
- UK says Russian forces struggling to make progress

### Ukraine president says peace talks more 'realistic'

bombardment, the signs of compromise sent relief through global financial markets. Shares in Germany-Russia's biggest energy market - were up 3.4%.

Three weeks into the invasion, Russian troops have been halted at the gates of Kviv, having taken heavy losses and failed to seize any of Ukraine's biggest cities in a war Western officials say Moscow

thought it would win within days. Ukrainian officials had expressed hope this week that the war could end sooner than expected.

### Ukraine operation a success: Putin

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that the operation in Ukraine is unfolding "successfully, in strict accordance with pre-approved plans" and decried Western sanctions against Russia, describing them as "aggression and

war with economic, political, information means." At the same time Putin said that the West has failed to wage "an economic blitzkrieg" against Russia. "In effect these steps are aimed at worsening the lives of millions of people," Putin said of the sanctions that have delivered a crippling blow to Russia's economy. "One should clearly understand that the new set of sanctions and restrictions against us would have followed in any case, I want to emphasise this. Our military operation in Ukraine is just a pretext for the next sanctions," said Putin



### ZELENSKYY ADDRESSES US CONGRESS **WE NEED YOU RIGHT NOW' APPEARING IN HIS NOW-TRADEMARK ARMY**

**GREEN T-SHIRT AS HE APPEALS TO WORLD** LEADERS, VOLODYMR ZELENSKYY HAS **EMERGED AS A HEROIC FIGURE AT THE CENTER** OF WHAT MANY VIEW AS THE BIGGEST SECURITY THREAT TO EUROPE SINCE WORLD WAR II. ALMOST 3 MILLION REFUGEES HAVE FLED UKRAINE, THE FASTEST EXODUS IN **MODERN TIMES** 

### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, March 16: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy cited Pearl Harbor and the terror attacks of Sept 11, 2001 Wednesday as he appealed to the US Congress to do more to help Ukraine's fight against Russia. Livestreamed into the Capitol

complex, Zelenskyy said the US must sanction Russian lawmakers and block imports, and he showed a packed auditorium of US lawmakers an emotional video of the destruction and devastation in his country has suffered in the war. "We need you right now,"

Zelenskyy said, adding, "I call on you to do more." In calling for more economic hit to the Russians, he said: "Peace is more important than income."

Nearing the three-week mark in an ever-escalating war, Zelenskyy has used his campaign to implore allied leaders to "close the sky" to prevent the Russian airstrikes that are devastating his country. It has also put Zelenskyy at odds with President Joe Biden, whose ad-Remember

**Remember September 11? Our countries experience** the same every day right now. You are the leader of the nation. wish you be the leader of the world. Being the leader of the world means being the leader of peace

#### VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY RESIDENT, UKRAINE

sisted there will be no US troops on the ground in Ukraine be." Tuesday, he appealed to "Dear and has resisted Zelenskyy's re-Justin" as he addressed the lentless pleas for warplanes as too Canadian Parliament and Prime risky, potentially escalating into Minister Justin Trudeau, Zelenskyv a direct confrontation with nu-

called on European Union leaders clear-armed Russia. at the start of the war to do the "Direct conflict between NATO politically unthinkable and fastand Russia is World War III," Biden track Ukraine's membership -

has said US defence officials say they are puzzled by Zelenskyy's demand

racy than Lawmakers world leadgave him a ers have so standing far pledged to ovation, before and Biden has in-

sky" to prevent after his Russian remarks airstrikes den is expected to ann

an additional \$800 million in security assistance to Ukraine

He again

leaders to

"close the

requested allied

for more warplanes. They say Ukraine isn't often flying the planes it has now, while making good use of other weapons the West is providing, including Stinger missiles for shooting down helicopters and other aircraft

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Zelenskyy asked for help in rebuilding his country when they spoke last week. It was in that call that Zelenskyy asked to address the US Congress, something the Democratic leader readily agreed to.

"The Congress, our country and the world are in awe of the people of Ukraine," said Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer in a statement Monday announcing the address.

They said Congress "remains unwavering in our commitment to supporting Ukraine as they face Putin's cruel and diabolical aggression.

### NATO CHIEF RULES OUT NO-FLY ZONE OVER UKRAINE



responsibility to ensure that this conflict, this war, doesn't escalate beyond Ukraine." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly appealed for NATO to set up a no-fly zone given Russia's air superiority, as civilian casualties

### ENDANGERED RHINO BORN IN CZECH ZOO, NAMED KYIV

PRAGUE: A Czech zoo has welcomed a critically endangered eastern black rhinoceros baby that has taken the name of Ukraine's capital Kyiv in honour of that country's resistance to invading Russian forces. The rhino was born early March 4 in the Dvur Kralove zoo, a rare occurrence for

the facility even if it has the most rhinos belonging to the subspecies. "The name is another expression of our support for the Ukrainian heroes," zoo Director Premysl Rabas said. Kyiv's mother Eva has been taking care of him in a best possible way, the zoo said, with the baby gaining 1 kilogram a day. It currently weighs about 50 kilograms.

### **RUSSIAN JOURNO FINED** FOR PROTEST ON LIVE TV



news broadcast on state TV was released with a fine Tuesday after an international outcry over her detention. She was released after a judge at Moscow's

MOSCOW: A Russian editor

Moscow's military action in

Ukraine during a prime-time

who protested against

Ostankino district court ordered her to pay a fine of 30,000 rubles (\$280) Tuesday. Marina Ovsvannikova, an editor at Channel One television. barged onto the set of its flagship Vremva (Time) evening news late Monday, holding a poster reading 'No War' in

### MUSK CHANGES TWITTER NAME AFTER BEING TROLLED



SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla CEO Elon Musk has changed his name on Twitter to Elona Muska after his challenge to fight Russian president Vladimir Putin grabbed the attention of Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of the Chechen Republic. In a statement on Telegram, which was shared by the Tesla and Space X chief executive, the

Chechen leader cautioned him against seeking out a challenge with the Russian president, reports The Independent. "Elon Musk, a word of advice. Don't measure strength against that of Putin's," wrote Kadyrov. On Monday, Musk had challenged the



ministration has stopped short of providing a no-fly zone or the transfer of military jets from neighbor-

Shakespeare's

hero last week,

Zelenskyy asked

the British House

of Commons whether

Ukraine is "to be or not to

and he has continued to push for

more help to save his young democ-

**Pearl Harbor?** ing Poland as the US seeks to avoid a direct confrontation with Russia. Invoking

Finalish. The mother of two still risks criminal charges with a penalty of up to 15 years in jail, one of her lawyers said.

Russian president to a single combat fight over his invasion of Ukraine.

### SHORT TAKES

### Pak, Japan lift **Covid-19 curbs**

#### Islamabad: Pakistan Wednesday lifted all

coronavirus related restrictions imposed across the country, saying it "has come close to eliminating the pandemic". Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar, who heads the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) against COVID-19. in a press conference here said. "We have decided that all restrictions we have imposed related to the coronavirus on weddings, indoor dining and markets, we are ending all of them." Japan also said it is lifting Covid-19 restrictions imposed on Tokyo and 17 other prefectures as a wave of infections caused by the Omicron variant ebbs.

### ALERT ISSUED 7.3 earthquake hits Japan

### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, March 16: A powerful 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Fukushima in northern Japan Wednesday evening, triggering a tsunami advisory and plunging more than 2 million homes in the Tokyo area into darkness. The region is part of northern

Japan that was devastated by a deadly 9.0 quake and tsunami 11 years ago that also caused nuclear plant meltdowns.

The Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, which operates the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant where the cooling systems failed after the 2011 disaster. said that workers were checking for any possible damage. The Japan Meteorological



Agency said the quake hit at 11.36pm at a depth of 60 kilometers below the sea

The agency issued a tsunami advisory for up to a meter (3-foot) sea surge in parts of Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures. NHK national television said

the tsunami might have reached some areas already. Japan's Air Self-Defense Force

said it dispatched fighter jets from the Hyakuri base in Ibaraki prefecture, just south of Fukushima, for information gathering and damage assessment.

More than 2 million homes were without electricity in the Tokyo region serviced by TEPCO due to the quake, the utility said on its website. The quake shook large parts of eastern Japan, including Tokyo, where buildings swayed violently. East Japan Railway Co said most

of its train services were suspended for safety checks.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters that the government was assessing the extent of damage and promised to do its utmost for rescue and relief operations.

"Please first take action to save your life, Kishida tweeted.

Morgues overflowing as HK suffers deadly Covid wave

A funeral industry representative told local media the soaring death toll had seen a crunch in the city's coffins

supply, with only 300 remaining and expected to be gone by the weekend

### MONSTER MISSILE N Korea fires "unidentified projectile" but launch fails

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Seoul, March 16: North Korea fired a projectile Wednesday but the launch appears to have immediately failed, Seoul said, with analysts warning it was likely a test of Pyongyang's so-called 'monster missile'

The launch - North Korea's tenth suspected weapons test this year -- comes after the US said the nucleararmed country was preparing to fire an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) "at full range" for the first time since 2017.

South Korea and the US said

last week those tests were actually of a new ICBM system that has never been launched before -- likely the Hwasong-17, dubbed a "monster missile" by analysts after it was first unveiled at a parade in October 2020.

"North Korea fired an unknown projectile from the Sunan area around 09:30 today but it is presumed that it failed immediately after launch," Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

The February 27 and March 5 'satellite' tests were also from the Sunan area in Pyongyang, according to South Korea's military.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe, fellow **British-Iranian leave** Iran: State media REUTERS

Dubai, March 16: British-Iranian aid worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and dual national Anousheh Ashouri left Iran Wednesday, ending years of detention, after the UK government paid its \$530 million debt to Tehran, Iranian state media reported.

Iran's semi-official Fars news agency said she was handed over to a British team at the International Imam Khomeini Airport. Ashouri has also left Iran, a source close to his family told Reuters.

There was no immediate confirmation whether they were being taken directly to London.

'Britain released \$530 million...ahead of the release," Fars said. Reuters was unable to independently confirm the Fars report.

Earlier, British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said Britain was looking at ways to pay a historic debt to Iran related to the sale of battle tanks to Iran's former ruler, the Shah.

### Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a project manager with the Thomson Reuters Foundation was arrested at a Tehran airport in April 2016 and later convicted by an Iranian court

of plotting to overthrow the clerical establishment Her family and the foundation,

a charity that operates independently of Thomson Reuters and its news subsidiary Reuters, deny the charge. Britain's Foreign Office, the foundation and Zaghari-Ratcliffe's husband Richard did not respond to a request for comment.

Ashouri was sentenced to 10 years in jail in 2019 for spying for Israel's Mossad and two years for -( "acquiring illegitimate wealth", according to Iran's judiciary.

### 11 killed during **Iran Fire Festival**

Tehran: At least 11 people have been killed and 486 injured in Iran during the celebrations of Chaharshanbe Suri, or Fire Festival. Among the wounded, 49 people were amputated following severe injuries Tuesday, said Mojtaba Khaledi, spokesman of Iran's Emergency Organisation. Most of the casualties, up by 47 per cent from last year, occurred in the past four or five days, Khaledi said. The Fire Festival is celebrated by Iranians on the eve of the last Wednesday before Nowruz, the Iranian new year, which begins March 21 this year.

### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Hong Kong, March 16: Workers mainland soon. in PPE gear in Hong Kong carted the bodies of coronavirus victims into refrigerated shipping con-

tainers Wednesday, as the city's morgues run out of space from a deadly Omicron surge. In under three months since the highly transmissible variant broke through, Hong Kong has recorded nearly a million infections and

Leader Carrie Lam acknowledged the supply issues during a press conference Wednesday, and said two more shipments of coffins will arrive in Hong Kong from the

"I learned from the Food and Health Bureau last night that they are endeavouring to arrange transportation (of coffins) by water," she said. She added that officials have been trying to help families concerned about post-mortem affairs, including how to retrieve bodies already transported to public morgues without a doctor is-

pacity," Lam said.

Outside Fu Shan Public Mortuary Wednesday, workers in full PPE gear moved bodies covered in black tarp from a truck into

rows of shipping containers. **BEACHES CLOSED** Researchers estimate the infec-

tion toll in Hong Kong is significantly higher than official figures, likely already reaching half its 7.4 million population.

Lam has taken hits from all sides on her handling of the crisis, with her administration blamed for the spiralling deaths and unclear messaging about a potential lockdown and mass testing.

Chinese social media users have reacted angrily in the past few days, saying the spread of Covid in the mainland is due to Hong Kong's sluggish epidemic response.

Tens of millions in mainland China were abruptly placed under stay at home orders this week, after the emergence of more than 3,000 daily new cases as Beijing battles to maintain its zero-Covid strategy.





working day and night at full ca-









# business

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

rates, sources said

New Delhi, March 16: Indian Oil

Corporation (IOC), the nation's top

oil firm, has bought as much as 3

million barrels of crude oil that

Russia had offered at steep dis-

count to prevailing international

IOC made the purchase on mod-

ified terms that require the seller

to deliver it to the Indian coast so

as to avoid any complications that

sanctions may lead to in arranging

Airlines may go for

another round of fare

hikes as crude prices bite

Jet fuel prices Wednesday were hiked by over 18 per cent - the

steepest ever increase - to all-time

high levels after international oil

shipping and insurance

from Russia, they said.



It is only a hypothetical point...The track belongs to railways, stations belong to railways, engines belong to railways, trains belong to railways, signalling systems belong to railways...(there is) no talk of privatisation...No plans to privatise railways ASHWINI VAISHNAW RAILWAY MINISTER

### **STARBUCKS CEO TO RETIRE**

Starbucks President and CEO Kevin Johnson said Wednesday he will retire next month, and former CEO and company founder Howard Schultz will replace him on an interim basis. Johnson, 61, said he told the company's board last year that he was considering retirement after five years as CEO and 13 years at Starbucks



### uote

As per the feedback received from the industry, exports of some products from India are likely

to be affected including pharmaceuticals, telecom instruments, tea, coffee, marine products, etc

PIYUSH GOYAL UNION MINISTER

Bilateral trade in goods is projected to increase from the current \$60 billion to \$100 billion annually within five years of implementation of the India-UAE CEPA

ANUPRIYA PATEL MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The government is considering development of the Operating System, as part of the government's efforts

to create a vibrant design and innovation ecosystem in Electronics and Information Technology

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### SHORT TAKES

### EU hikes tariffs for steel makers

Brussels: The European Union has determined that imports of cold-rolled flat stainless steel products from India and Indonesia benefit from unfair subsidies and imposed tariffs. on top of those already in place to avert dumping. The European Commission, which conducted the investigation, has set the anti-subsidy duties at rates of between 4.3 per cent and 21.4 per cent, the FU official journal said Wednesday. The new rates for India's Jindal Stainless I td and Jindal Stainless Hisar Ltd are 4.3 per cent, bringing the total tariff to 14.3 per cent.

### **PE/VC inflows** double in Feb

Mumbai: Record fund inflows through private equity and

# **IOC buys Russian oil at deep discount**

The purchase, made through a trader, is the first since Russia's February 24 invasion of Ukraine that brought international pressure for isolating Putin

administration. As the US and other western nations slapped sanctions on Moscow, Russia has begun offering oil and other commodities at discounted prices to India and other large importers

national money and security transfer system, SWIFT. Also, companies or entities investing or buying oil from Iran were sanctioned. Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri

Monday told the Rajya Sabha that the country will evaluate the Russian offer to sell crude oil at discounted prices after considering aspects such as insurance and freight required to move the fuel from the

non-traditional supplier. "Let me again reiterate that in a situation like the one characterised by the pandemic in the last

Unlike the sanctions the US imtwo years and in the last few weeks posed on Iran over its controversial by a war or a military action taknuclear programme, oil and ening place between Russia and ergy trade with Russia has not Ukraine, the government will exbeen banned. This means interplore all options which are availnational payment systems are available," he had said.

The minister said he has had able to settle any purchase made discussions with the Russian gov-This wasn't the case with Iran. ernment officials which was cut off from the inter-Many countries, including

ALL-TIME HIGH **ATF PRICE HIKED BY STEEPEST EVER 18%** 



price surged to a multi-year high. The increase - sixth straight this vear - led to prices soaring past the ₹1-lakh-per-kilolitre mark for the first time ever. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) - the fuel that helps aeroplanes fly - was hiked by 17,135.63 per kl, or 18.3 per cent, to ₹110,666.29 benchmark fuel in the preceding fortnight. In Mumbai, ATF price



The US sanctions have not banned Russian IOC bought Urals crude for May delivery at a discount of oil and energy unlike Iran \$20-25 a barrel to dated Bren

The firm modified the seller to deliver the shipment

European nations, remain heavily dependent on fuel from Russia, the world's second-largest crude oil exporter behind Saudi Arabia. India buys just 1.3 per cent of all its oil needs from Russia. itself off Russian hydrocarbons

US President Joe Biden last and starve Putin's addiction to oil week announced a ban on Russian oil and gas imports over the country's invasion of Ukraine.

### **HOARDING ON PRICE HIKE FEAR LEADS TO RISE IN CRUDE SALES**

New Delhi: India's auto fuel sales surged past pre-pandemic levels in the first half of March as consumers and dealers topped tanks in anticipation of a likely price hike post assembly elections.

Dealers, as well as the public, topped up their tanks as they anticipated prices, that have been put on hold in the run-up to the elections in states like Utta Pradesh, will rise by a big margin to make up for as much as 60 per cent surge in the cost of raw material. Petrol sales by state-owned fuel retailers, which control roughly 90 per cent of the market. at 1.23 million tonnes during March 1-15 were nearly 18 per cent higher than the same period last year and 24.4 per cent higher than the period in 2019, preliminary industry data showed.

Diesel, the most-used fuel in the country, saw sales jumping 23.7 per cent year-on-year to 3.53 million tonnes. This was 17.3 per cent higher than sales in March 1-15, 2019. While petrol sales were 24.3 per cent higher than the sales during March 1-15, 2020 diesel sales were up 33.5 per cent over the same reference period. Month-on-month, petrol sales were up 18.8 per cent and diesel sales surged 32.8 per cent.

Diesel sales during March 1 to 15 is the most in the first half of any month in the last two years and more than the total volume of diesel sold in April 2020 when the country was under a complete lockdown. Industry sources said while there was a panic buying by individual vehicle owners, petrol pumps dealers topped up not just their storage tanks but also any mobile browser or tanker truck they had. The dealers hoped to make a quick buck by buying fuel at a lower rate and selling at revised higher prices. LPG sales were up 17 per cent to 1.3 million tonnes in

### India's 1st green H<sub>2</sub> fuel-cell EV unveiled

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 16: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Wednesday launched India's first green hydrogen-based advanced fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV), Toyota Mirai, and said this is the first-ofits-kind project in India that aims to create an ecosystem for such vehicles in the country.

Speaking at the event, Gadkari said FCEV, powered by hydrogen, is one of the best zero-emission solutions. It is completely environment-friendly with no tailpipe emissions other than water, the road transport and highways minister said.

Gadkari said green hydrogen can be generated from renewable energy and abundantly available biomass. He noted that the introduction and adoption of technology to tap into the green hydrogen's potential will play a key role in securing a clean and affordable energy future for India.

'Toyota Mirai' is powered by a hydrogen fuel cell battery pack and capable of providing a range up to 650 km in a single charge, with a refuelling time of five minutes. In Japanese, the word 'Mirai' means 'future'

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM), along with the International Center for Automotive Technology (ICAT), is conducting a pilot project to study and evaluate the world's most advanced FCEV Toyota Mirai. which runs on hydrogen, on Indian roads and climatic conditions.

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Power Minister RK Singh and Heavy Industries Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey were also present at the event. Gadkari had previously said he will also start using the Tovota Mirai.

### BIZ BU **PNB organises customer meet** on world consumer rights day

per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification by state-owned fuel retailers. Jet fuel prices are revised on the 1st and 16th of every month based on the average international price of

soared to ₹109,119.83 a kl and it costs ₹114,979.70 in Kolkata. Jet fuel is priced at ₹114,133.73 per kl in Chennai, Jet fuel, which makes up for almost 40 per cent of the running cost of an airline, has this year surged to new highs. The previous peak of ₹71,028.26 per kl was recorded in August 2008, when international crude oil prices touched USD 147 per barrel. ATF prices have increased every fortnight since the start of 2022. In six hikes beginning January 1, ATF prices have been increased by ₹36,643.88 kl or almost 50 per cent.

Will act to reverse store takeovers by **Reliance:** Future

counted crude oil, Psaki said, "I don't believe this would be violating that (sanctions). India, which imports 85 per cent of its oil needs, is looking to cut spiralling energy bill through purchases from anywhere it can get at March 1-15, the data showed. cheaper rates 347 FDI proposals from

tar-

geting

the main artery of

#### India buying Russian oil will not violate US sanctions: White House purchase terms by telling the Brent crude rose \$1.47 or 1.5% to \$101.38 a barrel while US WTI crude added \$2.50 or to the Indian coast 2.6% to \$98.94 The UK is building an international coalition to

deal with the new reality we

face. The world must wean

and gas. Saudi Arabia and the

**United Arab Emirates are key** 

international partners

in that effort

BORIS JOHNSON | PM, UK

Russia's economy. "Our message to

any country continues to be that

abide by the sanctions that we have

put in place and recommended,'

White House Press Secretary Jen

Asked about a media report on

the possibility that India could

take up the Russian offer of dis-

Psaki told reporters at her daily

news conference Tuesday.

venture capital funds, primarily into the start-up ecosystem, have propelled the overall inflows to \$5.8 billion in February, which is double the amounts annualised, according to industry data. According to the monthly data tabulated by the IVCA-EY (Indian Venture and Alternate Capital Association), PE/VC fund inflows in February jumped to \$5.8 billion, 2.3 times more than what was seen in February 2021 at \$2.5 billion.

### BPCL defers crude unit shutdown

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New Delhi: Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) has deferred a maintenance shutdown of a crude unit at 240.000 barrels per day (bpd) Mumbai refinery to May as it seeks to gain from solid fuel cracks, two sources aware of the plan said. India's secondbiggest state refiner had plans to shut a 120,000 bpd crude unit and some secondary units, including a diesel hydro desulphuriser and a hydrogen generation unit, for 20-25 days from the end of this month. they said. Indian state refiners have not raised pump prices since Nov 4 despite a global oil and fuel prices surge.

### AirAsia cuts extra baggage charges

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New Delhi: AirAsia India Tuesday announced reduced excess baggage charges for passengers travelling on its domestic flights and are scheduled to take connecting international flights. "The excess baggage slabs have been configured in line with the predominant international baggage allowances of major international carriers, i.e. 8kg at ₹1,600; 15kg at ₹3,000; and 30kg at ₹6,000, the carrier stated.

Bhubaneswar: Punjab National Bank, Circle Office, Bhubaneswar organised a customer meet on the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day. Paresh Dash, Circle Head, Bhubaneswar presided over the meeting. He welcomed the customers from different branches of the circle and highlighted the services offered by the Bank. Umakant Das, Deputy Circle Head discussed about the Consumer Rights and highlighted the services offered by the bank to safeguard the consumer's interest. Jagabandhu Dalai, Chief Manager gave vote of thanks to all the participants in the customer meet.



#### REUTERS

New Delhi, March 16: India's Future Retail said Wednesday it was committed to taking back its stores which were seized by rival Reliance, saying it had been surprised by the move

Reliance, India's biggest retailer, stunned Future Feb 25 with its staff suddenly showing up at many of Future's biggest stores to assume control, in what was seen as a de facto takeover. The takeover occurred even though Future's sparring partner, Amazon.com Inc , says it had legal injunctions in place prohibiting such store transfers. Reuters has reported that many in Future's management were in the dark about Reliance's plans.

In a statement to Indian stock exchanges Wednesday, Future said it was committed to take all action to seek "reversal of takeover of the stores" by Reliance.

## neighbours; 66 approved

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 16: As many as 347 foreign direct investment (FDI) proposals, worth about ₹75,951 crore, have been received by the government from countries sharing land border with India since April 18, 2020, Parliament was informed Wednesday.

Out of 347, 66 proposals have so far been granted approval by the government and 193 cases have been rejected or closed or withdrawn, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha

Since 18th April, 2020, 347 FDI proposals have been received by the government from countries sharing land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an investment into India is situated in or is a cit-



izen of any such country...The

value of investments proposed in the aforementioned proposals received by the government is approximately ₹75,951 crore, he said. In April 2020, the government

had made its prior approval mandatory for foreign investments from countries that share land border with India to curb opportunistic takeovers of domestic firms following the COVID-19 pandemic.

### The total value of investments of these 66 proposals aggregated to ₹13,624.88 crore

Countries which share land border with India are China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan. As per that decision, FDI proposals from these countries need government approval for investments in India in any sector.

The 66 approved proposals are from sectors including automobile (7), chemicals (5), computer software and hardware (3), pharma (4), education (1), electronics (8), food processing (2), information and broadcasting (1), machine tools (1), petroleum and natural gas (1), power (1), services sector (11).

### Adani adds \$49bn wealth in '21, higher than Bezos, Musk THE 2022 M3M HURUN GLOBAL RICH LIST RANKED 3,381 BILLIONAIRES FROM 2,557 COMPANIES AND 69 COUNTRIES. INDIA

HAS 215 BILLIONAIRES COMPARED TO 1,133 CHINESE BILLIONÁIRES AND 716 AMERICANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 16: Gautam Adani, India's and Asia's secondrichest person, added \$49 billion to his wealth last year - more than the net addition of wealth by the top three global billionaires Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Bernard Arnault, the 2022 M3M Hurun Global Rich List said Wednesday.

Mukesh Ambani, who runs the

oil-to-retail conglomerate Reliance

Industries, continues to be the

richest Indian with a wealth of

\$103 billion, a 24 per cent rise

Adani, the head of ports-to-

energy conglomerate Adani

Group, is a close second with his

wealth surging 153 per cent to

year-on-year.

\$81 billion. In the last 10 years, while Ambani's wealth has grown 400 per cent, Adani has seen a 1,830 per cent increase, the list said.

HCL's Shiv Nadar is ranked third with \$28 billion wealth, followed by Serum Institute's Cvrus Poonawalla (\$26 billion) and steel magnate Lakshmi N Mittal (\$25 billion). "Gautam Adani, 59, is the

biggest gainer in the M3M Hurun Global List 2022 and added \$49 billion to his wealth last year,' M3M Hurun Global Rich List said in a statement. His net wealth addition is "more than top three global billionaires such as Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Bernard Arnault.'



After the listing of renewable energy company Adani Green,

Over the last 10 years, Indian billionaires added circa \$700 billion to their cumulative wealth - this is equivalent to Switzerland's GDP and twice the GDP of the UAE

ANAS RAHMAN JUNAID | MD AND CHIEF RESEARCHER, M3M HURUN GLOBAL RICH LIST

lion in 2020. Ambani's wealth grew by \$20 billion in 2021, it said. Nykaa founder Falguni Nayar (\$7.6 billion) is the wealthiest new entrant in the Hurun Global Rich List 2022. India has 18 per cent of the world's population and 8 per cent of the world's 'known' billionaires, up from 4.9 per cent five years ago.

The statement said Adani is the biggest wealth gainer in the 2022 list, followed by Google cofounders Larry Page and Sergey Brin and founder and CEO of luxury goods conglomerate LVMH, Bernard Arnault (\$39 billion addition). Ambani is ranked 8th in terms of wealth addition.

According to the List, Ambani's wealth was \$45 billion five years back and \$20.5 billion 10 years ago. Adani was worth \$8.8 billion 10 years back and \$14 billion five years back. With a net worth of \$23 billion each, Radhakishan Damani of Avenue Supermarts and SP Hinduja of Hinduja entered intothe top 100 in 2022 M3M Hurun Global Rich List for the first time.





his wealth increased nearly five

times to \$81 billion from \$17 bil-





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# Inconsistent eves go down

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mount Maunganui, March 16: An inconsistent India paid the price for a shoddy batting effort but England infused new life into their title defence with a fourwicket win in a league-stage game of the ICC Women's World Cup, here Wednesday.

Inconsistency returned to haunt Indian batters as they were bundled out for a meagre 134 by England who chased down the target in 31.2 overs to record their first win in the tournament after a hat-trick of defeats

India got some runs on the board, thanks to previous game's centurion Smriti Mandhana, who topscored for the side with a 35-run knock while wicketkeeper batter Richa Ghosh made 33.

With wickets falling intermittently, England bowled out India in 36.2 overs. England also made a stuttering start to their chase as they lost both their openers - Danielle Wyatt (1) and Tammy Beaumont (1) -cheaply with the scoreboard reading 4/2 in the third over.

Wyatt was first to depart in the second over, courtesy a sensational diving catch by Sneh Rana off medium pacer Meghna Singh (3/26)

Veteran Jhulan Goswami, the highest wicket-taker in the history of the tournament, then trapped Beaumont in the second over after India went for the review. It was 250th wicket for the pacer in ODIs.

England skipper Heather Knight (53 not out) and Nat Sciver (45 off 46) then steadied England innings, playing cautiously to reach 34/2 in 10 overs. While Knight played a captain's

knock by anchoring the chase, Sciver took the attack to the Indian bowlers, hitting as many as eight boundaries during her entertaining knock, in which she pulled off some pull shots.

With just 135 required for a win, what England needed was a de-



Meghna Singh stares at Danielle Wyatt after dismissing her during their match at Mount Maunganui, Wednesday

cent partnership after the early blows and Knight and Sciver provided that by sharing 65 runs for the third wicket.

Sciver's innings was cut short by Pooja Vastrakar. It was a soft dismissal and against the run of play as Sciver spooned a length ball to Goswami while looking to work the ball on the on-side.

Amy Jones (10) then stitched a 33-run stand for the next wicket with Knight before the former fell to a stunning backward running catch by India vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur at mid-on off Rajeshwari Gayakwad's bowling. By then it was all over for India

by then as England needed just 32 more runs. The Indians picked up two more wickets in the 30th over before England completed the formality.

Meghna dismissed Sophia Dunkley (17) and Katherine Brunt (0) within a span of three balls in identical fashion - caught behind by wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh. Earlier, in sharp contrast to

India's performance against the West Indies in their last match when they rode on centuries from Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur to post 317 for 8, their highest total in the history of the showpiece

Charlie Dean (4/23) was the pick of the bowlers for England while Anya Shrubsole also chipped in with two wickets as the Indians failed to build partnerships.

Despite defeat India kept their third place in the eight-team standings. They have four points from two wins and as many losses. England have moved to sixth from seventh with two points from four matches.

Brief scores: India Women 134 (Smriti Mandhana 35, Richa Ghosh 33; Charlie Dean 4/23, Anya Shrubsole 2/20) lost to England 136/6 (Heather Knight 53 n o, Nat Sciver 45; Meghna Singh 3/26) by 4 wickets

# MITHALI, JHULAN POINT

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mount Maunganui, March 16: India captain Mithali Raj and senior pacer Jhulan Goswami Wednesday said top-order batters haven't been performing to the level that is expected of them but expressed hope that they would make amends soon in the ongoing ICC Women's World Cup.

"We definitely didn't have partnership at the top of order, despite getting what we wanted after losing the toss. The thought of putting 200+, the match could have gone either ways," Raj said after the loss that came just after a massive win over the West Indies in the previous match in which Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur scored hundreds.

"Every game as a fielding unit we are doing well and we hope to continue to do that. Batting is a concern but we'll try to address that in the next match, we are playing a team that hasn't lost to anyone," she added about the clash against mighty Australia next.

The view was echoed by Goswami in the post-math press conference. "Honestly speaking, at this moment, yes our top order, the way we are thinking, they haven't fired but I am sure you will have to be positive about that, because they have done really well in the past," she said.

'The way we have been thinking, they have not batted, but I am very much hopeful they are going to come back hard in the next game,' Goswami added.

Despite the defeat, India kept their third place in the eight-team standings with four points from two wins and as many losses. England moved up one place to sixth with two points from four matches.

"Because everybody wants to do well and this is the biggest plat-



Yastika Bhatia is bowled by Anya Shrubsole (not in picture) at Mount Maunganui, Wednesday

form, everybody wants to do well and contribute to the team. Again I am very much hopeful that they are going to come back stronger in the next game," added Goswami, who picked up her 250th ODI wicket in the game.

Prodded further on whether there was any strategy in place to avoid such collapses, she said, 'There is no solution to it. It is a process and the game goes like it. 'Someday the top-order will not

work, some day the middle order will not work; this is how this game has been played. In bowling also, one day bowlers will not bowl well, some others will come and support, that is the way this game has been played.'

Goswami also said that the team

was disappointed at not being able to complete its share of 50 overs while batting. "Definitely, we had a plan to play 300 balls, but unfortunately we could not play the full 50 overs. Definitely, we had to pay a price for it. Our target was to reach 240 or 250 at par.

"If we could have reached there, we could have restricted them, but in cricket, some days it happens, you plan very well, but some things don't work in your way," the rightarm pacer explained.

"You have to understand you are playing against one of the best sides (in) England, they have done really well in the past few years. Unfortunately today, we could not execute our plan properly," she maintained.

### SINDHU, SAINA WIN RD-1 TIES **IN ALL ENGLAND**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Birmingham, March 16: Ace Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal began their All England Championships campaign with easy straight-game wins over their respective opponents in the women's singles here Wednesday

Sixth seed Sindhu beat Zhi Yi Wang of China 21-18, 21-13 in her first round match that lasted 42 minutes while Saina defeated Beatriz Corrales of Spain 21-17,

21-19 in 38 minutes. The World No.7 Sindhu



### 10-point tie-breakers in final set at Grand Slams

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, March 16: All four Grand Slam tennis tournaments will now use a 10-point tiebreaker when matches reach 6-6 in the final set.

The Grand Slam Board announced the trial move, taking effect immediately, on behalf of the Australian, French and US Opens and Wimbledon Wednesday.

"The Grand Slam Board's decision is based on a strong desire to create greater consistency in the rules of the game at the Grand Slams, and thus enhance the experience for the players and fans alike," it said.

reaches six games all in the final set, the match winner(s) will be the first player(s) to win 10 points with an advantage of two or more points," the Grand Slam Board said.

The plan has been approved by the Rules of Tennis Committee governed by the International Tennis Federation and applies to all Grand Slams across qualifying, men's singles and doubles, women's singles and doubles, wheelchair and junior events in singles.

Rule changes were sought after

# Atletico pile more misery on Man Utd

the winner of the first round match between Savaka Takahashi of Japan and Supanida Katethong of Thailand in the second round.

Saina will face the winner of the first round match between Akane Yamaguchi of Japan and Kristin Kuuba of Estonia. If Sindhu and Saina win their respective second round matches, they will face each other in the quarterfinals.



In men's singles, B Sai Praneeth lost to top seed and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen 20-22, 11-21 in the first round match that lasted 48 minutes. HS Prannoy went down fighting to Kunlavut Vitidsarn 15-21, 22-24 in 56 minutes while Sameer Verma also lost to Mark Caljouw of the Netherlands 18-21 11-21 in a 41 minute opening match

In men's doubles, fifth seeded Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty beat Scottish pair of Alexander Dunn and Adam Hall 21-17. 21-19 in 38 minutes. But MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila lost 21-15, 12-21, 18-21 to second seed Indonesian pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan.

The other Indian men's doubles pair of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala also suffered defeat at the hands of the German duo of Mark Lamfuss and Marvin Seidel 16-21, 19-21 in just 37 minutes.

In women's doubles, Treesa Jolly and Pullela Gayatri Gopichand made it to the second round with a 17-21, 22-20, 21-14 victory over the Thailand pair of Benyapa Aimsaard and Nuntakarn Aimsaard in one hour and seven minutes.

TWO SIDES OF EMOTION: Cristiano Ronaldo looks dejected after losing the game at the Old Trafford, while the visiting Atletico players rejoice their qualification for the Champions League quarterfinals

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, March 16: Expensive mediocrity confirmed: Manchester United's trophy drought completes a fifth season. The last path to a title was ended at an Old Trafford now accustomed to letdowns as United was knocked out of the Champions League in a 0-1 loss to Atlético Madrid Tuesday.

In a tight and tense game, it was United defender Diogo Dalot leaving Renan Lodi unmarked at the far post to head in Antoine Griezmann's cross that made the difference in the 41st minute. So often the team's savior, David de Gea was beaten. The goalkeeper feels the pain more, being the only starter still in the team from the end of the trophyvantage filled Alex Ferguson era in 2013.

Cristiano Ronaldo departed Old Trafford before Ferguson retired and the malaise kicked in. The 37vear-old star returned this season - after collecting trophies at Real Madrid and Juventus — to be the difference-maker. Rather than dazzling, as he did with Saturday's hattrick against Tottenham, Ronaldo didn't manage a single shot against the Spanish champions

Instead, United was left relying on defender Raphaël Varane attempting to equalise in the second half, and his header was kept out by Jan Oblak. United could find no way past the goalkeeper three weeks after a 1-1 draw in Madrid that counted for nothing with awaygoals no longer carrying an ad-

Atlético showed the blueprint

to grab a win away, by scoring from one of only three shots on target. Diego Simeone, a two-time Champions League runners-up, leads Atlético back into the quarterfinals like in 2020. Europe is the platform for Atlético to raise its game this season, with the team clinging onto fourth place domestically after winning the title last season

United goes backward, with only two appearances in the Champions League quarterfinals in a decade, in 2014 and 2019. Not since the 1970s has United gone as long without a trophy with the second-tier Europa League in 2017 the last honor for, historically at least, English football's most successful club.

There's not much to show for more than USD 1 billion in transfer spending since the two-time Champions League winner Ferguson retired as manager nine years ago.

Such is the instability at United that it's an interim coach in Ralf Rangnick who has presided over United's exits from the FA Cup and Champions League early in 2022.

Now the priority is just regaining the fourth spot in the Premier League to return to the Champions League next season for whoever is in charge of United.

A potential full-time successor to Ole Gunnar Solskjær, who United fired in December, is Erik ten Hag whose Ajax team was also eliminated in Tuesday's other last-16 second leg. Darwin Núñez's goal gave Benfica a 1-0 win in Amsterdam to advance 3-2 on aggregate.

The Australian Open already uses the 10-point tiebreaker. The French Open, which begins May 22, was the only major to not use a deciding tiebreaker. Wimbledon had employed a seven-point tiebreaker from 12-12, and the US Open used a seven-point tiebreaker from 6-6.

John Isner beat Nicolas Mahut 70-68 in the final set of their first round match at Wimbledon in 2010. The match lasted 11 hours, 5 minutes and stretched over three days.

"The Grand Slam Board plans to review the trial during the course of a full Grand Slam year, in consultation with the WTA, ATP and ITF, before applying for any permanent rule change," it added.

"Under this trial, if the score

### Rublev eases past home favourite Tiafoe

INDIAN WELLS: World No.7 Andrey Rublev of Russia overcame home favourite Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 6-4 in a potentially tricky matchup to secure a place in the fourth round of the BNP Paribas Open here. The 24-year-old Rublev crashed 21 winners during the 70minute match to extend his winning streak to 11 after he took the titles in both Marseille and Dubai. He will now take on World No.11



Hubert Hurkacz of Poland in the fourth round. The World No.11 beat American Steve Johnson 7-6(9-7), 6-3 earlier in the day. Grigor Dimitrov defeated Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan 6-3, 6-4. Dimitrov next meets 23rd seed John Isner of the US, who was a 7-5, 6-3 winner over 14th seed Diego Schwartzman of Argentina 7-5, 6-3. Sixth seed Matteo Berrettini survived a mid-match slump to reach the fourth round of the tournament for the first time, moving past Lloyd Harris of South Africa 6-4, 7-5.

**Chess Olympiad gets new host** CHENNAI: The 44th Chess Olympiad, which was 

moved out of Russia after it invaded Ukraine, will be organised in Chennai later this year, making it the second major global event of the sport to be held in India after the World Championship 

match in 2013. The announcement was made by Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin on his Twitter page Tuesday night. "Delighted that the Chess Capital of India is set to host the 44th Chess Olympiad! A proud moment for Tamil Nadu! Chennai warmly welcomes all the Kings and Queens from around the world! #ChessOlympiad2022," he said in the tweet. "It's official now....India will host the 44th World Chess Olympiad 2022 at Chennai!" the All-India Chess Federation added on its Twitter handle. The All-India Chess federation (AICF) had submitted a guarantee of USD10 million (approx Rs 70 crore) to FIDE to host the tournament. The Olympiad was moved out of Russia after it invaded neighbouring Ukraine February 24.

### **FIA changes F1 rules**

- PARIS: Formula One introduced new
- safety car rules to prevent a repeat of
- the drama surrounding the title
- deciding 2021 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.
- Race director Michael Masi, who was
- replaced last month, changed the
- procedure in the closing laps at Yas
- Marina in a move that allowed Red
- Bull's Max Verstappen to overtake
- Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and win his
- first Formula One World
- Championship. In order to ensure that there won't be a repeat, and after a
- discussion with the teams, the FIA has
- amended the relevant rule, which now
- specifies that all lapped cars must be
- waved past the leader if it is
- considered safe to do so. A full report
- into the Abu Dhabi race is expected to
- be published during this weekend's
- opening Grand Prix in Bahrain.

### **Barca stadium renamed**

MADRID: Barcelona is teaming up with Spotify – and changing its stadium name – to ease some of the financial struggles that hindered the Spanish club recently. Barcelona's stadium will be called Spotify Camp Nou after the club announced a "long-term partnership" with the audio-streaming company Tuesday. The agreement includes sponsorship of the main shirt and title rights for the stadium, which will have a sponsor name linked to it for the first time beginning in July. The Spotify brand will appear on the front of both men's and women's team shirts for four seasons beginning in 2022-23. The Swedish company will also sponsor the training shirts for three seasons. The club did not say when the title rights for the stadium will end. Financial details were not disclosed by the club but Spanish media said the agreement was worth about 60 million euros (USD 65 million) to 70 million euros (USD 76 million) per season.

### Bumrah 4th, Kohli 9th in Tests

DUBAI: Fresh from his maiden Test five-wicket • haul at home, Indian pace spearhead Jasprit • Bumrah jumped six spots to fourth but struggling star batter Virat Kohli slipped to ninth in the latest ICC rankings released Wednesday. Bumrah • climbed past Shaheen Afridi, Kyle Jamieson, Tim Southee, James Anderson, Neil Wagner and Josh Hazlewood in the Test rankings for bowlers. Kohli • dropped four places, but managed to remain • inside the top 10 just ahead of Rishabh Pant who remained static at 10th. India skipper Rohit • Sharma, however, held on to his sixth position to be the best-placed Indian in the batting charts. In the all-rounders' table, Ravindra Jadeaja was ٠ displaced from the No.1 position as West Indies' • Jason Holder reclaimed the top spot. • Ravichandran Ashwin, Shakib Al Hasan and Ben Stokes rounded off the top five in the all-rounders' • list. In the bowlers' ranking, Pat Cummins, Ashwin and Kagiso Rabada have retained the top three spots among the bowlers.

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