



## PRIYANKA ON A ROLL

Priyanka Chopra Jonas bags another Hollywood project, an adaptation of Shilpi Somaya Gowda's novel 'Secret Daughter'

LEISURE P2



## TALIBAN ECCENTRICITY

Taliban in Afghanistan close schools for girls, just hours after reopening them for the first time since August

INTERNATIONAL P10



## BARTY BIDS BYE-BYE

WTA World No.1 Ash Barty stuns the world announcing her retirement, just two months after winning Australian Open

SPORTS P12

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## 11 BIHAR WORKERS KILLED IN HYDERABAD FIRE

Hyderabad: Eleven migrant workers from Bihar were killed in an early morning blaze Wednesday which swept through a scrap godown here. Police said that only DNA tests can ascertain the victims' identities since the bodies were charred beyond recognition. The godown was allegedly operating without fire safety measures. Prime Minister Narendra Modi while expressing his condolences announced a compensation of ₹2 lakh each to the families of the deceased. Later on during the day, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu also announced an ex-gratia of ₹5,00,000 to families of the victims. P7

## DHAMI SWORN IN AS UTTARAKHAND CM

Dehradun: Pushkar Singh Dhami took oath Wednesday as Uttarakhand Chief Minister during a ceremony held at the Parade Ground here in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Apart from Dhami, eight ministers were also administered the oath by Uttarakhand Governor Lt Gen (retd) Gurmit Singh. This is the 46-year-old Dhami's second consecutive stint as Uttarakhand CM. Dhami had lost in the recently-conducted Assembly polls from the Khatima seat. However, the BJP chose to go ahead and retain him as CM. He needs to be elected to the state Assembly within six months to continue as chief minister. P7

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# 4 dead in Ganjam group clash

■ *Objectionable comments made by members of a group led to a violent fight which left three brothers and their cousin dead*

POST NEWS NETWORK

Hinjilicut, March 23: Four persons including three siblings and their minor cousin were killed late Tuesday night following a group clash over passing of comments at Pitala Square under this police limits in Ganjam district. The victims were identified as Raja Swain, 28, Shambhu Swain, 25, Pandav Swain, 23, all sons of Mangulu Swain in Narendrapur village and their minor cousin Chandan Swain, 16 of Baulaghai village. Another person, Amiya Swain alias Sadhu suffered grievous injuries and is currently undergoing treatment at the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur.



Angry residents of Narendrapur village block a portion of NH-59 demanding arrest of the culprits involved in the killing of four persons

rently undergoing treatment at the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur. The gruesome murders sparked tension in the area as angry residents of Narendrapur village burnt tires

and staged a road block on NH-59 connecting Berhampur with Aska from early Wednesday morning. The irate villagers demanded immediate arrest and stringent punishment to the culprits and

closure of two liquor shops at Pital Square. On being informed, armed police personnel and senior officials rushed to the spot and held talks with the villagers.

Ganjam District Collector Vijaya Amruta Kulange and SP Brijesh Kumar Roy visited the Hinjili police station and took stock of the situation. They also met the bereaved family members of the deceased. Kulange termed the incident 'unfortunate' and assured government assistance to the families of the victims.

Police have detained three persons from the other group involved in the clash. They are being interrogated. Police have also seized the wooden planks and iron bars allegedly used during the fight. Preliminary inquiries indicated that the incident occurred over passing of objectionable comments, the SP said.

Sources said Raja, the eldest among the three siblings and his cousin were running a food stall at Pital Square. Shambhu, a student assisted his brother in running the stall while Pandav was into another business. They were preparing to close shop and leave for home at around 11.30pm when some members of the rival group passed some objectionable comments.

Things then turned ugly and both sides were involved in a free for all using wooden planks and iron rods. Such was the intensity of the fight that all the four deceased and another person from the other group collapsed in a pool of blood after sustaining injuries.

Police reached the spot and rushed all the injured to Hinjilicut Hospital where doctors pronounced the three siblings and their minor cousin dead on arrival.

## Fuel prices increase for 2nd day in a row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Petrol and diesel prices were hiked Wednesday by 80 paise a litre each. This the second day in a row that the fuel prices have been hiked after a 137-day hiatus due to the Assembly elections in five states the results of which were announced March 10.

### CITY FUEL PRICES

PETROL	₹103.51/litre
DIESEL	₹93.33/litre

Petrol in Delhi will now cost ₹97.01 per litre as against ₹96.21 previously while the diesel rate has gone up from ₹87.47 per litre to ₹88.27, according to a price notification of state fuel retailers.

Rates differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes. In the Odisha capital, petrol will now cost ₹103.51 per litre, an increase of 77 paise over the price of ₹102.74 registered Tuesday.

## Privilege motion against Tudu for incorrect info

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, March 23: The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) gave notice Wednesday for moving a privilege motion in the Lok Sabha against Union Minister of

State for Tribal Affairs, Bishweswar Tudu for misleading the House, while answering a question on Telangana's proposal for increasing the quantum of reservation to Scheduled Tribes (STs). The TRS MPs submitted a notice to Speaker Om Birla saying they desire to move a privilege motion under Rule 222 against the minister for misleading the House in his answer March 21.

Tudu in his answer denied that there was any proposal by Telangana on the issue of reservation to STs. "The Telangana Government not only made a proposal for increase of reservations but passed a Bill No-6 of 2017 (sec 4(2) increasing the reservations to STs from 6.8 per cent to 10 per cent and sent it to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs," said the notice signed by nine Lok Sabha members of TRS. The MPs also pointed out that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in fact gave its consent through a letter dated December 18, 2017 on the issue of increase of reservations to STs. They said the minister's answer amounted to breach of privileges of the members.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Never rob anybody at one go. Increase the loot by 80 paise every time. It is safe. Victim never goes to the cops!

# CB takes over Manas murder investigation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: The Crime Branch of Odisha Police will take over the investigation of the murder of photographer Manas Swain, ADG Sanjeeb Panda informed here Wednesday. He also said that two teams have already been formed to conduct the probe and DSP Kalpana Sahu will lead the investigations.

One of the teams will conduct the probe in different districts linked to the alleged murder while the other one will try and trace the main accused in the case Sarmistha Rout, who has been absconding. Panda also stated that the teams will spread their probe to outside of Odisha if required. He said that there is information that Sarmistha has managed to flee outside the state.

Earlier in the day, police seized a car used to dispose the body of Manas after his murder. Police said that they have recovered some documents from the car which may help in investigations. The car was found at an apartment complex under Airfield police limits.

Even though police have so far arrested

## DISCOVERY OF SKULLS, BONES CREATES PANIC

Bhubaneswar: The discovery of 14 human skulls and skeleton parts Wednesday below the Kalarahanga Injana bridge under Mancheswar police station here created panic among the residents of the locality. On being informed, police visited the spot and sent the human remains to the AIIMS for forensic tests. The skulls and skeletal parts were first seen by a ragpicker who was cleaning the area. All were bound in a gunny bag. Police are trying to ascertain the origin of the skulls and body parts. They said only after forensic tests they would be able to say whether there is any foul play associated with matter.

six people for their involvement in the alleged murder, they are yet to trace Sarmistha. Among those arrested are former I&PR director Niranjan Sethi and Parameswar Rout, brother of Sarmistha. Pararemswar had allegedly planned for his sister's escape following the brutal murder of Manas.

# Group captain 'blamed' for misfiring missile

■ *The missile which was accidentally fired however, did not cause any damage inside Pakistan territory and also there were no loss of lives*

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 23: Even though the probe is on regarding the misfiring of the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile that landed inside Pakistan territory March 9, sources said Wednesday that a Group Captain-rank officer of the Indian Air Force is 'blameworthy' for the incident. As per a report in the Hindustan Times website, the probe is being conducted by an Air Vice-Marshal of the IAF.

The report states that the officer was in-charge of the mobile command post of the missile system when the accidental firing happened during a Command Air Staff Inspection (CASI) at its home base. However, all the final details will be available only after the probe is completed in a time-bound manner. The sources said the AVM probing the incident is highly qualified and is in-



charge of operations in the Air Force headquarters.

The incident had sparked of tension between both India and Pakistan with the latter threatening to retort. Pakistan has demanded a joint probe by both the countries into the missile misfire, but it has been turned down by India. Pakistan had also claimed that the missile flew through flight routes and could have caused grave danger to aircraft flying on the same path.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had stated March 15 in Parliament that a high-level probe has been ordered into the incident involving the accidental launch of a missile. India was also very quick to issue an apology to its neighbour regarding the misfiring of the missile.

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	ARIATION
SENSEX	57684.82	↓ 304.48
NIFTY	17245.70	↓ 69.80
DOLLAR	76.98	↑ ₹0.16
EURO	84.04	↑ ₹0.12
GOLD	₹51,690	↑ ₹311
SILVER	₹68,192	↑ ₹500

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	37.8°C	37.2°C
TEMP MIN	24.6°C	24.4°C
Humidity	95%	85%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Light to moderate rain

**OrissaPOST**

# BUSINESS EMINENCE AWARDS

2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL, 2022

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## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You will feel like going for a little excursion to some place today. It could be to some historical place that you have not visited before. However, Ganesh suggests, in keeping with your responsibility of being a family-man, you should pay heed to the needs of your loved ones. So a trip to the nearest park would be more desirable.

**TAURUS**  
You are likely to have differences with your parents in the early hours of the day. Ganesh urge you not to quarrel or confront them. Do not retaliate in any way. Act decent and discreet. Respect their views, wishes and sentiments. Be careful. You may have health problems later in the day. If your health does deteriorate, do not take things casually. Don't think twice. Go consult a medical specialist without delay.

**GEMINI**  
Emotional and material security will hold equal importance today. You want to be in love, but you know that love can't buy you dough. If you are a student, today you will make crucial choices concerning higher studies, predicts Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Today you will be forced to make quick decisions, foretells Ganesh. At workplace, you will probably refuse to yield to any kind of pressure. You will ace every test that your boss will throw at you. Your quest for fame will restart in the evening, says Ganesh.

**LEO**  
Self-belief and self-confidence are the two wheels of the bike on which you shall ride to success, says Ganesh. Add to that self-assurance, and you have a turbo boost that makes you unstoppable. Your dedication and devotion to your task is something that mystifies everyone at the workplace. It's as if for you, there is no substitute for work. So, it is no surprise that even on the social front, you are the first one finish your task, and even help out others. Ganesh wishes you all the best and hopes that you have a day full of vigour. May the force be with you!

**VIRGO**  
Today, you will be the epitome of sincerity and a model of punctuality. But caution should be the key word, warns Ganesh. Pay attention to the finer details and the finest of prints when it comes to contracts. Prevention is better than cure, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Life is a stage, and we are all characters in the play, so better put up a good show! Pay close attention to the image and emotions that you depict today, as you spruce up your outward show, says Ganesh. Work-wise, you will be on to something new — a new business tactic perhaps — to help you succeed. For those on the lookout for employment, the day promises to be lined up with interviews. On the personal front, Ganesh sees you spending time with your better half, much to his/her delight.

**SCORPIO**  
Although appearances are deceptive, they are probably the best with which to judge something or someone. Don't get stuck in the rat race, and make a mark for yourself. In the evening, you will probably take extra care to be a show-stopper, predicts Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Fuel those tanks and propel yourself today to meet your targets today. On the business front, the fast buck that you expected might just not materialise. Expect to sail into rough seas in the love journey. Ganesh advises playing the wait-and-watch game in matters of the heart.

**CAPRICORN**  
You will carve a niche in the area of your interest and will be recognised for your hard work, says Ganesh. For the enterprising lot, long-standing disputes with rivals will come to an end, and you will not only learn to take criticisms in your stride but will also respect your opponents' opinions. They, on the other hand, will realise that you have an edge over them in terms of strategy and resources.

**AQUARIUS**  
Artists, orators, musicians, your talent may finally see recognition. Even criticism won't ruffle you a bit. At work, you will remain your enthusiastic and exuberant self. Ganesh says it's your moment, and you should bask in it.

**PISCES**  
Financially, you will be treading cautiously today. Savings will take precedence over indulgences. You are likely to invest in debt instruments over equities. New business proposals may come your way in the afternoon. Cultural and social activities will keep you occupied as well, says Ganesh.



## AMANDA BYNES' CONSERVATORSHIP TERMINATED AFTER NINE YEARS

American actress Amanda Byne's conservatorship was terminated Tuesday. The 35-year-old actress has been under a conservatorship since 2013, after suffering drug and mental health problems, but Judge Roger L Lund announced that the conservatorship was no longer required.

## OSCAR ISAAC REVEALS THE KEY TO PLAYING MOON KNIGHT

Hollywood actor Oscar Isaac, who is set to play the titular character in the upcoming superhero series, *Moon Knight*, shared that for him the key to portray a character with Dissociative Identity Disorder was to stay honest to what the ailment is about.



## DHAULI-KALINGA MAHOTSAV

# Collage of classical & folk lits up second evening



A Kathak recital by Rekha Mehra and Group



Praveen Kumar & Group's Bharatnatyam performance

**BHUBANESWAR:** The second day of 18th Dhauli-Kalinga Mahotsav witnessed a beautiful blend of Indian classical and folk dance forms with renowned artists showcasing Bharatnatyam, Kathak and Prahallada Natak.

The opening act of the evening was a Bharatnatyam performance by Praveen Kumar & group of Chithkala School of Dance, Bangalore. The artists performed *Puspanjali* set to *Raga-Gambeer* *Nata* and *Tala-Adi* followed by *Krishnanjali* set to *Ragamalika*, *Tala-Adi* and the dance was com-

posed by Saint Purandaradasa. The group closed their performance with *Thillana* set to *Raga-Kuntalavari*, *Tala-Adi* and the dance was composed by M Balamuralikrishna.

A mesmerising Kathak performance by Rekha Mehra & Group of Urvashi Dance & Cultural Society, New Delhi was the second presentation of the evening. It was based on the description of the universe and how it is controlled by Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver) and Shiva (the destroyer). The music was composed by Pratip Banerjee and

Shiv Shankar Ray. The concluding presentation of the evening was Prahallada Natak by Gajendra Panda & Group of Tridhara Dance Academy from Ganjam, Odisha. Prahallada Natak based on the Narasimha incarnation of Lord Vishnu and has been conceived and composed as a highly stylised form of theatre that contains both the elements of *Natyadhama* and *Lakadhama*. While the dance was choreographed by Panda, Guru Ramahari Das composed the music to the rhythm by Guru Dhaneswar Swain.

## 24TH KALINGA NATYA MAHOTSAV: DAY 4



Artistes of Yuva Rangmanch from Ranchi performed Hindi play *Ulgulan* Wednesday, on the fourth evening of national multilingual theatre festival organised by Satadira Kalakar, at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar. Written and directed by Ajay Malkani, the drama highlighted the exploitations of the Jharkhand tribals by the British government. Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi vice-president Manmath Kumar Satpathy, noted film director Himanshu Khatua and Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalay principal Bijay Kumar Jena attended the meeting ahead of the show.

# Priyanka bags another biggie

**MUMBAI:** Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has done a lot to make herself and the country proud. She is a successful actor, author, producer, and has a strong personality in the media industry. Though her roots are Indian, she is now a known face in the Hollywood industry too.

After appearing in American science fiction action film *The Matrix Resurrections*, the Indian-born actress is teaming up with the British star Siena Miller for her next Hollywood project, a screen adaptation of Shilpi Somaya Gowda's novel *Secret Daughter*.

The film, to be helmed by Singaporean director Anthony Chen, traces the lives of two women interconnected by a child. While Kavita, the poor Mumbai woman

is compelled to save her newborn's life by giving her away, San Francisco-based Somer discovers that she may never be able to have children.

Besides the adaptation, Priyanka has Russo Brothers' *Citadel*, and *Ending Things* in her kitty. She is also slated to begin filming *Jee Le Zara*, along with Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt, later this year.

AGENCIES



## When Shefali had a crush on Aamir

**MUMBAI:** Shefali Shah, who is currently riding high on the success of her latest film, *Jalsa*, recently revealed that she had a crush on Aamir Khan.

During one of the promotional interviews, Shefali revealed that she had a crush on Aamir during her college days and she had tried to pursue him by writing a love letter to him. The actress also said that she wrote the actor a letter confessing her feelings and attached a photograph of hers with it. However, the *Human* actress did not spill the beans on how Aamir reacted after reading the letter.

Interestingly, Shefali made her big Hindi film debut with Ram Gopal Varma's *Rangeela* starring Aamir Khan, Urmila Matondkar and Jackie Shroff. The actress played a minor role in the film. On the work front, she will next be seen in Alia Bhatt's maiden production venture titled, *Darlings*. The film will also star Vijay Verma and Alia in lead roles.



AGENCIES

## MUMBAI COURT REJECTS SALMAN'S PETITION

**MUMBAI:** A Mumbai court Wednesday rejected a notice of motion filed by actor Salman Khan seeking a gag order to restrain his NRI neighbour from the US, Ketan R Kakkad from posting any content on social media.

Salman had sought an injunction barring Kakkad from posting any content about the alleged violations of laws being committed at the actor's 100-acre farmhouse in Panvel, Raigad. Kakkad's legal team submitted that there was truth in the allegations pointing how Salman had carried out constructions on his Panvel farmhouse which falls within the Matheran Eco-Sensitive Zone Notification.

In mid-January, a massive row erupted between the two neighbours - Salman and Kakkad - over the latter's social media comments, sparking huge controversies in film industry as well as in political circles.

Salman hit back with a civil

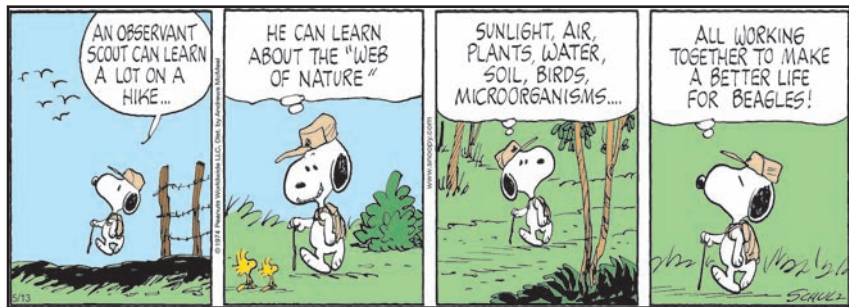
## Gag order on NRI neighbour sought

defamation suit against Kakkad and dragged in Google YouTube, Facebook and Twitter as parties and also sought a gag order to restrain his neighbour from posting objectionable statements till the outcome of the suit.



## FUN post

### PEANUTS



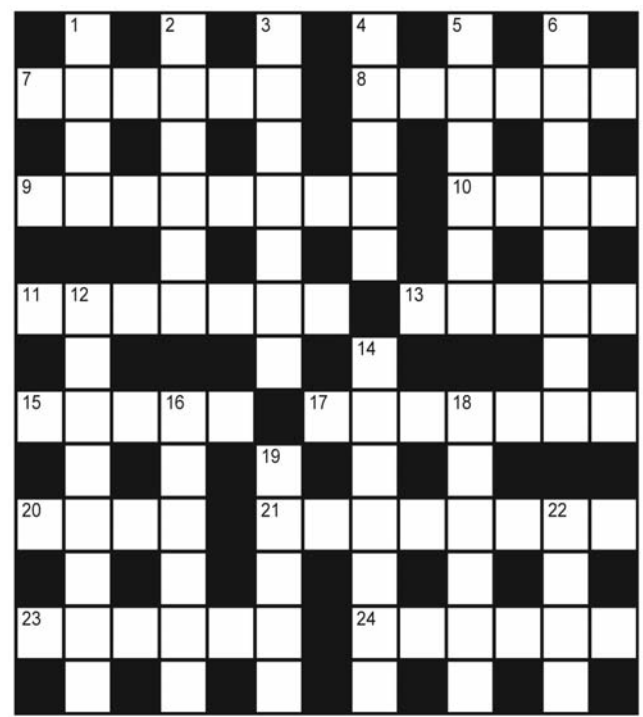
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



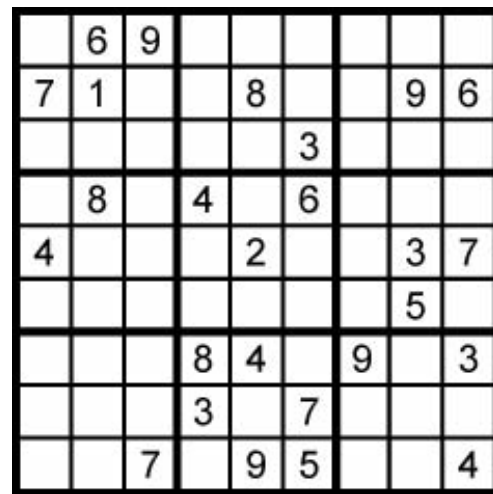
### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 7 Japanese robe
  - 8 Treatise
  - 9 Arrange in groups
  - 10 Precious stone
  - 11 Teetotal
  - 13 Brisk
  - 15 Certain African tribesman
  - 17 Instigates (5,2)
  - 20 Cameo stone
  - 21 Settle in a new land
  - 23 Perfect world
  - 24 Mass escape to a new place
  - 5 Formal order
  - 6 City in central Mali
  - 12 Rifle attachments
  - 14 German cake
  - 16 Mistakes caused by confusion (3-3)
  - 18 Haphazard
  - 19 Deep-six
  - 22 Ticket part

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD

SAFE LIKEABLE  
TALAMENNEA  
ALUMNUS VENUS  
NOR OOE  
DRAMA LAYOFF  
OGE FETTER  
FRPXP  
METEOR CREEL  
GWLJULIA  
AMPLE MISSION  
RUC AETK  
BABYTALK BETA

#### SUDOKU

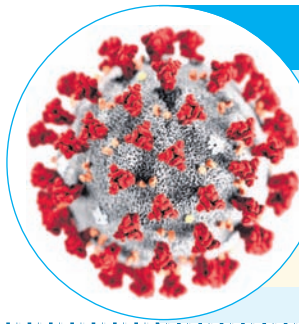
4 8 5 6 1 9 2 7 3  
6 9 3 2 4 7 1 8 5  
1 2 7 3 8 5 4 6 9  
3 4 2 9 7 6 8 5 1  
9 5 8 1 3 4 7 2 6  
7 1 6 5 2 8 3 9 4  
5 3 1 8 6 2 9 4 7  
2 6 4 7 9 1 5 3 8  
8 7 9 4 5 3 6 1 2

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



## HOLY LOGS

At least 18 logs from Nayagarh forest division were transported to Puri in the second phase, Wednesday, for their use in chariots for this year's Rath Yatra



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	47,52,87,953	41,07,70,661	61,24,620
India	4,30,12,749	4,24,73,057	5,16,605
Odisha	12,87,285	12,77,677	9,116

## ODISHA'S PRIDE



Work in progress for exhibition of chariot wheels of Puri Rath Yatra on the premises of Odisha Assembly in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

# 'Post-sales service key to growth in automobile biz'

His passion for automobile technology encouraged him to opt for technical education. He opened a vehicle service centre and an automobile showroom after completing his study in engineering. In an interview to **Orissa POST**, PMG Motors managing partner **Manoranjan Das** speaks about his journey, the status of automobile sector in Odisha and the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the sector. Excerpts:



### ■ What prompted you to become a businessman after completing your engineering study?

I had an interest in automobile technology since my childhood. I opted for Diploma in automobile engineering after completing by school education. I got an opportunity for probation in Telco (Tata Motors). The automobile sector was witnessing a boom around 2000. This has encouraged me to open an automobile service centre.

business. We have a pool of trained manpower and original spare parts to provide after-sales service. Sometimes, we provide doorstep service and service through mobile units. We have arrangements to provide hassle-free after-sales service to women customers as well.

registration and online service. Customers are now getting registration numbers, insurance and other documents together from the showrooms.

### ■ How has been the journey so far?

I along with a few youths opened a Tata car service centre at Mancheswar in Bhubaneswar in 2001. Later, we set up a branch in Cuttack. We also worked as a distributor for vehicle parts. We got an opportunity to sell Yamaha bikes in 2012. We have so far sold 27,000 bikes and been marching ahead due to our focus on after-sales service.

### ■ Your views on policies towards automobile business in Odisha?

The policies are conducive for automobile business. There is saving in both time and money due to paperless

### ■ How did you manage your business during Covid-19 pandemic?

Cooperation from our employees and continuous support from Yamaha helped us tide over the situation. We encountered several problems to provide service to our customers during the pandemic-induced lockdowns and shutdowns. We managed things with self-confidence and determination.

### ■ Your future plans?

Frequent hikes in fuel prices have led to the rise in the demand for e-vehicles. We have also started dealing in e-vehicles. There are plans to sell four-wheelers too. We are also planning to open service centres and quick charging centres for e-vehicles.

### ■ What is your favourite pastime?

I have weakness for cricket and tennis from my childhood. I have also a liking for swimming. Visiting new places is also a good option. I visit orphanages to spend time with inmates and share their pain and pleasure.

### ■ Any advice for youths?

Youths of Odisha should aspire to become entrepreneurs and create employment opportunities for others. This will bring the much needed relief to migrant labourers. Youths should have interest in vocational education.



## Norms laid down for care of kids of jailed parents

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: The state government Wednesday laid down a set of guidelines for care and protection of children living inside prisons with their parents or those living outside while their parents have been in jails.

The Women and Child Development Department (WCD), in its guidelines, specified that children between the age group of 0-6 years, staying inside the jail with his/her mother, will avail the benefits of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

Similarly, children of incarcerated parents staying outside the jail and declared as Children Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) by the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) will also be eligible for the same. "The Collectors will identify one nodal Anganwadi Centre (AWC) for extension of the ICDS service to a prison. In case of multiple children housed in a single prison, a temporary AWC will be set up as per the jail manual. Such children shall be provided with supplementary nutrition and immunisation facilities under the ICDS," said the guidelines.

"Children on attaining the age of 6 may be placed with guardian/remaining parent with the consent of the mother. Otherwise, the child may be produced before the nearest CWC for rehabilitation," it added.

Similarly, children residing outside jails will be produced before the nearest concerned CWC. If they are declared as CNCP, the children will be covered under different institutional and non-institutional care mechanisms available in the state. However, under non-institutional care the child in need shall be linked to different schemes available in the state, including sponsorship, Biju Sishu Surakhya Yojana (BSSY) and foster care or any other scheme in force to continue to live in a family/community based care. Meanwhile the department also instructed the district/circle jail administration to provide quarterly information like number of children, gender, age and others to the authorities concerned to avail benefits under ICDS.

## Centre lands blame on state govt for delay in Puri airport

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 23: The Union Civil Aviation Ministry Wednesday passed the buck to the state government for delay in initiating the process for setting up of an international airport in Puri.

While speaking in Lok Sabha on the demand for grants for 2022-23 fiscal, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia claimed that the pre-feasibility report of Shri Jagannath International Airport had been provided to the Odisha government and the ministry is waiting for the decision of the state government.

"We are waiting for the decision of the state government. We will fast-track work on the proposed project after receiving a decision in this regard from the state government," the minister said.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Sarmistha Sethi had earlier asked the Centre to expedite the process for the proposed international airport in Puri as the Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar has reached its optimum capacity.



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

**The pre-feasibility report of Shri Jagannath International Airport has been provided to Odisha government and the Civil Aviation Ministry is waiting for the decision of the state government. We will fast-track work on the proposed project after receiving a decision in this regard from the state government**

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER

Responding to a query on the shifting of the Dakota aircraft from Kolkata to Bhubaneswar to com-

memorate the legacy of former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik, the Union Minister said the Centre will grant permission for relocation of the aircraft as soon as possible.

The Union Minister also said the Centre has decided to set up a flight training centre at Jharsuguda airport in Odisha. Appreciating the UDAN scheme of the Centre, the minister said Jharsuguda has been connected to six cities—Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Raipur and Bhubaneswar—by air.

The minister further informed the lower house that around 2.5 lakh people have reached their destinations across the country through Jharsuguda Airport during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 6 more babus shown door

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 23: The state government ordered compulsory retirement of six more officials on corruption charges.

A chief engineer, three executive engineers and two block education officers (BEOs) have been sacked for indulging in corrupt practices. So far, 164 government servants have been shown the door by the state government due to corruption and inefficiency.

Chief Engineer-cum-Chief Electrical Inspector, Sambalpur, Sunil Kumar Panda has been removed from services for allegedly being involved in corruption through which he amassed disproportionate assets to the tune of ₹3.26 crore. He was suspended following the vigi-

lance raid. Similarly, executive engineer of Berhampur Rural Works Division, Jagannath Sethi is facing a corruption case which involved DA worth ₹7.63 crore. The executive engineer (testing and calibration) and the deputy electrical inspector, Deepak Kumar Bhuyan are facing two graft cases. He has been given compulsory retirement. Another executive engineer (ED & Inspection), Bhubaneswar Prashant Kumar Mishra, against whom two vigilance cases are pending, too has been asked to retire. Antaryami Behera, BEO, Gunupur, was arrested March 2, 2022 while taking a bribe of ₹10,000. BEO of Nuagada in Gajapati, Braja Kumar Nayak was caught red-handed by anti-corruption sleuths while accepting a bribe of ₹30,000 in his office.

## Organs from Covid fatalities are safe: Study

**A team from Duke University in the US analysed six abdominal organ transplants performed in four recipients using organs procured from four donors who tested positive for Covid and died**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, March 23: Evidence is mounting to show that organ donation from dying donors testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 appears to be safe and does not cause Covid-19 in the patient receiving the donated organ, according to a study.

The Covid pandemic exacerbated the shortage of abdominal organs for donation by increasing organ discard rates, due to the unclear risks of using organs from Covid-19 infected donors.

A team from Duke University in the US analysed six abdominal organ transplants performed (2 livers, 2 kidneys/pancreas transplanted together) in four recipients using organs procured from four donors who tested positive for Covid and died.

The donor evaluation protocol included additional review of organ quality, with all four donors undergoing macroscopic and/or mi-



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

croscopic biopsy review to confirm organ suitability.

Donors were assessed by considering organ type, the duration and severity of Covid-19 illness, whether any signs of hypercoagulable disease were present (meaning potentially increased clotting in the donated organ or vessels) as well as careful overall inspection at the time of organ procurement.

Further, if the organ to be donated was lung or intestine, it would only be considered if the donor last tested positive for Covid more than 20 days ago, a timeline consistent with infection control practices of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

And if the virus was found in the base of the lungs, the lungs were deemed unsuitable for transplan-

**T**he donor evaluation protocol included additional review of organ quality, with all four donors undergoing macroscopic and/or microscopic biopsy review to confirm organ suitability

**D**onors were assessed by considering organ type, the duration and severity of Covid-19 illness, whether any signs of hypercoagulable disease were present, as well as careful overall inspection at the time of organ procurement

tation, but other organs could still be transplanted safely, provided the donor was not dying from severe hyperinflammatory Covid-19

or showed signs of excessive clotting, the team explained.

Even after passing through all these barriers, doctors must still consider the ultimate cause of death for a donor and weigh up whether that is likely to negatively impact organ quality and/or surgical risk, they said.

Further, to reduce the transplant risk, recipients are now strongly encouraged to be fully Covid-19 vaccinated prior to surgery.

"Being unvaccinated can increase the risk of severe Covid-19 in transplanted patients due to their immunosuppression drugs post-transplant. For that reason, we strongly encourage our patients on the waiting list to get vaccinated. However, being unvaccinated does not take someone off the organ transplant waiting list at our institution at this time," said Dr Emily Eichenberger from the University's School of Medicine.

While a vaccinated donor is also desirable, as it likely reduces the risk of severe organ inflammation, unknown or negative donor vaccine status would not preclude the use of otherwise good quality organs from Covid-19 infected donors.

"While limited, our experience to date supports the use of abdominal organs from Covid-19 positive donors as safe and effective, even those actively infected, or with lung disease caused by Covid-19," Eichenberger said.

The research will be presented at this year's European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases to be held in Lisbon in April.

## COLOURS OF JOY



Devotees congregate during the Dola Melana festival at Madanpur on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



# ULB POLLS TODAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 23:** The much-awaited election to urban local bodies (ULBs) will be held in the state Thursday amid tight security.

The State Election Commission (SEC) and police have made elaborate arrangements for smooth conduct of the election in 109 ULBs of the state.

As many as 6,411 candidates are in the fray for election. While 569 candidates have remained in the battlefield for the posts of chairperson and mayor; 5,842 candidates are there for the election to councillor and corporator seats, SEC officials said.

Over 40.55 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in the election for which voting will be done between 8am and 5pm.

Two EVMs will be used in each booth- one to elect mayor/chairperson and the other for corporator and councillor. For the first time, there will be a none-of-the-

**40,55L voters to decide the fate of 6,411 candidates in 109 ULBs**  
**22,000 polling officials have been deployed for the poll**  
**105 platoons of force and 110 mobile patrolling parties along with police officers have been deployed for three municipal corporations**  
**100 platoons and 340 mobile patrolling parties along with district police officials have been deployed for 106 municipalities and NACs for the election**

above (NOTA) option in the EVMs for voters.

One presiding officer and four polling officers will be engaged in each booth. In total, 22,000 polling officials have been deployed for the poll, the officials said.

The state police have made adequate security arrangements for free, fair and peaceful elections. As many as 100 platoons and 340 mobile patrolling parties along with

district police officials have been deployed for 106 municipalities and NACs for the election. Total 1,731 wards will go for a poll consisting of 3,068 booths.

Similarly, 105 platoons of force and 110 mobile patrolling parties along with police officers have been deployed for three municipal corporations (Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Berhampur) for smooth conduct of elections. A total of 168 wards will go for the poll consisting of 1,407 booths in three municipal corporations.

Adequate security arrangements have been made in different strong rooms throughout the urban areas with CCTV coverage to ensure round the clock safety of EVMs, the police said.

The police have seized 24,663 litre liquor; 98 illegal arms, 3.444kg drugs, during the special drive launched in view of urban election. The police have registered 1,377 excise cases and executed 480 pending warrants during the election process so far.

## STAGE SET



Polling officials collect EVMs and other essentials from BJB Autonomous College in Bhubaneswar as they head to several booths in the City. (Bottom) A 'Pink Booth' being installed at Capital High School in Unit-III area of the City exclusively for female voters

## Road blockade over 35-year-old's death



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barang, March 23:** Traffic on Barang-Chandaka Road came to a grinding halt for over two hours as family members of a 35-year-old man, who succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack Wednesday morning, staged a road blockade at Kujimahal under Chandaka police limits here demanding justice for the deceased.

The deceased was identified as Sushant Pradhan of Kujimahal Adibasi Sahi under Chandaka police limits. The blockade was removed after a team of Chandaka police reached the place and assured the agitators of immediate arrest of the culprits.

According to sources, families of Kartik Pradhan and Garib Pradhan of Kujimahal Adibasi Sahi often quarrelled over a property.

"Garib's nephew Sushant was returning home after playing Holi Saturday afternoon when Kartik's sons - Nityananda, Ashok, Sudhir and Adhir attacked him with sharp weapons, leaving the 35-year-old critically injured. A profusely bleeding Sushant was admitted to SCBMCH, where he underwent treatment. However, he succumbed to injuries," Chandaka police sources said quoting the case (88/22).

While two persons have already been arrested, two others are on the run. Chandaka inspector-in-charge (IC) Surendra Kumar Bal said they will leave no stones unturned to arrest the accused.

## KHURDA ROAD-BOLANGIR RAIL LINE

# CRS vets patch between Mahipur and Nuagaon

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 23:** The Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), South Eastern Circle, Kolkata inspected the 13.050 km long rail line between Mahipur and Nuagaon stations of ongoing Khurda Road-Balangir Rail Line project, Wednesday.

A trial train run was conducted on the 13 km long railway stretch Wednesday under the high-level inspection by Commissioner, Railway Safety (CRS), South Eastern Circle, Kolkata.

The construction of the much awaited project has been completed and will be commissioned after clearance from the Commissioner of Railway Safety. Movement of train services will be allowed just

after getting clearance from CRS for train traffic.

The CRS inspected all safety related works between Mahipur and Nuagaon stations. A light engine was run between the two stations to measure the feasibility of the train line for train traffic.

The CRS will also inspect the newly constructed 3.099 km long Khurda Road-Bypass Line March 24 and will check the safety aspects of the line.

In view of the inspection by CRS, the 18424 Nayagarh Town-Bhubaneswar Express was cancelled Wednesday for movement of different machineries and inspection trains in the section.

The 289-km long Khurda-Bolangir project, sanctioned around 28 years ago, has seen multiple hiccups.

# Anganwadi centres to reopen March 28

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, March 23:** After remaining shut for almost a year, Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) across the state will reopen March 28. The Women and Child Development department has issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) in this regard Wednesday.

As the AWCs were shut April 19, 2021 due to outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, ration, in lieu of hot-cooked meals (HCMS) and eggs, were given to Anganwadi children in the age group of 3-6 at their doorsteps. This apart, Take Home Ration (THR) and eggs for children in the 6-month to 3-year age group and pregnant as well as nursing women were also delivered at their doorsteps, it was learnt.

"Taking the present situation

into account, it has been decided to open all AWCs in the state with effect from March 28, 2022 except the ones where district administration decides otherwise depending on the local situation," Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Social Welfare (SW) Director Aravind Agrawal said in a letter to Collectors.

If Covid cases are detected in any gram panchayat (GP), district administration may close down all the AWCs in that GP forthwith, ensure isolation and other protocols for the beneficiary so affected, he said, adding that the Collectors were requested to reopen AWCs and continue operating all Anganwadi services, including Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) as per the SOP. The AWCs remain open from



7.30am to 9.30am for 25 days a month. Morning snacks and HCMS will be served to the preschoolers (3-6 years) in such a way that the seating arrangement ensures a so-

cial distance amongst children.

However, ration, in lieu of HCMS and eggs, will be given to the Anganwadi children at their doorsteps in case they are unable to attend the centres due to issues like Covid or on closure of AWC, he said.

Preschool education will be resumed at AWCs as per 'Nua Arunima' curriculum and outdoor activities will be promoted. Other ICDS such as immunization, health checkups, referrals and Nutrition & Health Education (NHEd) will continue as it is.

The government has restricted entry of outsiders into AWCs. All the Anganwadi staff should be fully vaccinated before attending the AWCs. If anyone is not vaccinated, the Collectors have been asked to take steps and ensure they are vaccinated immediately. The Anganwadi workers (AWWs)/ helpers (AWHs), children and everyone visiting AWC have to wear facemasks and maintain social distance for the entire period of stay in AWCs.

## State records lowest unemployment rate at 1 per cent

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, March 23:** The state has recorded the lowest unemployment rate in the country, shows the data provided by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) Wednesday.

The CMIE data shows Odisha has the lowest unemployment rate at 1 per cent in the month of February 2022.

Bihar has the highest unemployment rate at 14 per cent. The data further pegs the unemployment rate in India in February at 7.5 per cent. In rural areas, the unemployment rate was at 7.2 per cent while urban areas had 8.1 per cent unemployment rate.

## CLASSIFIED

**DOCUMENT LOST**  
By virtue an affidavit, I **Susanta Behera** declares that I had purchased property from **Aleksh Swain** wide sale deed no.4077, dated 05.09.2005. However, I have lost the sale deed & ROR of vendor mentioning **Khata no. 291/239 & Plot no.1384/3111, 2649/3112**. Requesting anyone may find the deed & ROR, please contact- **7978128846**.

## AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of affidavit I **Dinabandhu Bhakta, S/o Danardan Bhakta, Qr.No.B-611, Sector-2, Nalco, Damanjodi state, mine & my father's name is wrongly recorded as Dinabandhu Bhakto, S/o Danardhan Bhakto in my Matriculation Certificate. That Dinabandhu Bhakto and Dinabandhu Bhakta & Danardan Bhakta and Danardan Bhakta is one and same person.**

# IIT-Mandi researchers convert plastics to useful products

The generation of hydrogen from plastics is particularly useful because the gas is considered the most practical non-polluting fuel of the future

AGENCIES

**Mandi, March 23:** Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi have developed a method that can transform plastic into hydrogen when exposed to light. The generation of hydrogen from plastics is particularly useful because the gas is considered the most practical non-polluting fuel of the future.

Plastics, most of which are derived from petroleum, are not biodegradable, i.e., they cannot be easily broken down into harmless products. It is said most of the 4.9 billion tonnes of plastics ever produced would end up in landfills, threatening human health and the environment.

Fuelled by the need to prevent runaway plastic pollution, IIT-



Mandi researchers are developing methods that can transform plastic into useful chemicals.

This study was funded by the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration

search was led by Prem Felix Siril, Professor, School of Basic Sciences, IIT-Mandi, and Aditi Halder, Associate Professor, School of Basic Sciences, IIT-Mandi, and co-authored by their Ph.D. scholars, Rituporn Gogoi, Astha Singh, Vedasree Moutam, Lalita Sharma and Kajal Sharma.

"The ideal path to effective annihilation of plastics is to degrade them into useful chemicals. The generation of hydrogen from plastics is particularly useful because the gas is considered the most practical non-polluting fuel of the future," Siril said.

The researchers have developed a catalyst that can efficiently convert plastics into hydrogen and other useful chemicals when exposed to light.

Catalysts are substances that

drive otherwise difficult or impossible reactions and when they are activated by light, they are called photocatalysts.

The IIT-Mandi photocatalyst combines iron oxide in the form of nanoparticles (particles a hundred thousand times smaller than the diameter of a single hair strand), with a conducting polymer - polypyrrole.

The researchers found that combining iron oxide nanoparticles with pyrrole resulted in the formation of a semiconductor-semiconductor heterojunction, which in turn results in strong visible-light-induced photocatalytic activity.

Photocatalysts usually need UV light for activation and therefore require special bulbs. The IIT-Mandi catalyst can function simply with sunlight.

Explaining his research, Siril said, "We first ascertained the photocatalytic activity of our catalyst by seeing its action on methyl orange, whose colour change from orange to colourless showed the extent to which our catalyst was able to degrade it."

The researchers found there was 100 per cent degradation within four hours when they used a catalyst in which about four per cent weight iron oxide was present in the polypyrrole matrix.

They then tested this catalyst on polylactic acid (PLA), a plastic that is extensively used in food packaging, textiles, medical articles and cosmetics.

The team found hydrogen was evolved during the breakdown of PLA when the catalyst was exposed to visible light.

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SHORT TAKES

Elephant found dead in Sonepur

Sonepur: An elephant, aged about five, was found dead in Narayanpur-Bajikhola forest of Subarnapur district late Tuesday night.

5-yr jail for raping visually impaired

Kendrapara: A court here Wednesday sentenced a 45-year-old man to five years of imprisonment for raping a visually impaired woman on the pretext of a false promise of marriage in Kendrapara district.

World Forestry Day in Sundargarh div

Sundargarh: On the occasion of World Forestry Day, the Sundargarh forest division organised SAMEEKHYA 2021-22, annual review meeting of Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project-II at the Vikas Bhawan here Tuesday.

Tension over alleged cash distribution in Baripada



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, March 23: A woman candidate for councillor's post along with her supporters was allegedly distributing money in ward-17 of Baripada municipality.

Allegedly, the female candidate along with her husband came out on bike at night. A group of 10 supporters stoned at the house of some people, alerting them to wake up.

Another group of youths was angry over no action against the candidate's supporters. They alleged that police did not take the incident of money distribution seriously.

HC orders damages for kin

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, March 23: The Orissa High Court Tuesday directed the state government to pay ₹5 lakh each to the kin of two deceased Covid patients and ₹50,000 each to kin of 11 deceased Covid patients over their deaths due to alleged medical negligence.

The High Court ordered to pay ₹5 lakh each to the kin of two Covid deceased Prasant Pruseth of Burla and Sehadji Begum of Brajarajnagar.

VIMSAR COVID DEATHS

A two-member HC bench passed the order after hearing a PIL over the death of Covid patients due to alleged medical negligence



Similarly, the court also directed for payment of ₹50,000 each to the kin of 11 Covid deceased Shantilata Dishri of Barikel in Bargarh, Labang Pandey of Singhanpur near Padampur, Chanchala Badhei of Paikamal, Bhumisuta Bhoi of Bijepur, Hiralal Behera of Burla, Sanjay Chand of Bangalipada of Sambalpur, Jule Khan of Dhankauda, Isad Khan of Motijharan, Tarani Luha of Meghal, Shama Parween of

Pensionpada and Biranchi Podha of Lakhampur in Jharsuguda. The case had seven hearings which continued for a year. According to reports, the Covid patients undergoing treatment at the Covid hospital in VIMSAR succumbed to their illness during treatment.

case for hearing as a public interest litigation (PIL). Chief Justice S Muralidhar directed a retired district judge ABS Naidu to conduct a probe into the matter and submit a report before it.

The committee headed by the retired district judge visited VIMSAR and collected reports on the deaths. The committee also verified the treatment of the patients in the Covid hospital with various departments of VIMSAR.

The High Court conducted hearing of the case in the first week of March. When contacted advocate Chouhan said that the high court has passed the order after verifying all the reports in the case. The high court order has established that the patients died due to medical negligence, he added.

IIM Sambalpur set to develop tribals' entrepreneurship skills



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sambalpur, March 23: Indian Institute of Management, Sambalpur, has signed an agreement with a research institute to develop entrepreneurship skills among tribal youths and provide them with quality education.

The memorandum of understanding with the Center for Adivasi Research and Development was signed recently for multi-modal initiatives and projects on teaching, skilling, training and global outreach.

IIM Sambalpur Director Mahadeo Jaiswal described Odisha tribal handicraft

as impressive.

Tribal artisans and craftspeople could earn a good income, but they lack entrepreneurial skill and a good market for their products, Jaiswal said.

With the signing of the MoU, the IIM will now work to develop the entrepreneurship skill among tribal youths and work for their capacity building, he said.

Efforts will be made to provide equal space and opportunity by linking them with global market so that the exquisite tribal handicraft can get a good and competitive price, the official said.

The institute will also work to provide a good

market for agri products, which are high in demand but the tribals are not getting proper price for their products because of the lack of proper initiative, according to the director.

The B-School will also try to groom the next generation tribal kids for quality education.

Though there is reservation in educational institutions, one will not find many tribal students in the institutions of higher education.

"We will work on how more and more tribal students will go for higher education in good institutions," Jaiswal said.

The IIM facilities and students will visit tribal-dominated areas of the state from the next academic session. "We will also take the support of the Ravenshaw University and the Central University of Odisha for this purpose," he added.

ULB polls: 375 in fray in Koraput

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, March 23: All preparations for the urban local body elections in Koraput slated Thursday have been put in place. The voters will decide the fate of 41 candidates contesting for posts of chairperson and 334 candidates for councillors in Jeypore municipality, Koraput municipality, Sunabeda municipality and Kotpad NAC.

On the eve of elections, night patrolling has been stepped up in all the four civic body areas. To ensure peaceful and smooth conduct of elections, three additional superintendents of police have been tasked to look after law and order. Police have been

deployed in the four civic body areas, said additional superintendent of police Utkal Kishore Das. The administration has given special attention to sensitive booths.

As per reports, 32,875 voters will exercise their franchise in 21 wards of Koraput municipality where four candidates for chairperson and 80 candidates for councillor posts are in the fray.

In Jeypore municipality, there are 18 candidates contesting for the chairperson and 118 for councillors. In Sunabeda municipality, 14 candidates are contesting for chairperson and 93 for councillors. In Kotpad NAC, five candidates are in the fray for the chairperson and 43 for councillors.

Bhitarkanika: Green boat to ferry tourists

THE POLLUTION-FREE STATE-OF-THE-ART BOAT PROCURED AT A COST OF ₹23 LAKH, CAN CARRY EIGHT PEOPLE AT A TIME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, March 23: A battery-operated and soundless boat has been thrown open for tourists at the Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district, a forest official said.

The move was welcomed by an environmentalist, who elucidated that the sound of mechanised boats disturbs the serenity of the place, and distracts the saltwater crocodiles and other wild animals.

Tourists can make use of the paid services of the eco-friendly boat, which will make continuous trips in the water bodies of the country's second-largest mangrove ecosystem. The pollution-free state-of-the-art boat, was procured at the cost of ₹23 lakh. It can carry eight people, according to the official.

"We'll use this boat on an experimental basis for two months, follow-

ing which more such boats would be purchased," Divisional Forest Officer, JD Pati said.

The Forest Department had introduced solar-powered three-wheelers in the park earlier for tourists to move around. Green activist Hemant Rout said it was high time that the authorities motivated private boat operators to use noiseless boats in the water bodies of the sanctuary.

The mechanised boats should be

withdrawn in a phased manner, Rout added. The wildlife sanctuary, which is essentially a network of creeks and canals, is home to the largest congregation of the endangered saltwater crocodiles in the country, according to Odisha Tourism.

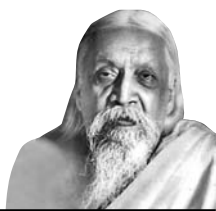
The Gahirmatha beach, which forms the boundary of the sanctuary in the east, is the largest colony of the Olive Ridley turtles, according to its website.



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Evolution of consciousness is the central motive of terrestrial existence.



SRI AUROBINDO

## Back to Unilateralism

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the West's unprecedented response, represent a watershed in international relations, marking the formal end of the post-Cold War era and setting the stage for seismic geopolitical and geo-economic shifts. But one defining feature of international relations will remain: to paraphrase Thucydides, the strong will continue to do what they can, and the weak will continue to suffer what they must.

It is true that leaders and observers around the world often speak of strengthening or defending the "rules-based international order." But that order was always more aspirational than real. Countries that possess military or economic might reserve the right not only to make and enforce the rules, but also to break them.

It is when the rule-makers disagree that the greatest risks arise. The Ukraine war – the first conflict of the post-Cold War period that pits great powers against each other – is a case in point. On one side, Russia has been carrying out a brutal conventional military assault on Ukraine, in an apparent effort to bring the country – which Russian President Vladimir Putin believes is rightly part of his country – back into the Kremlin fold. On the other side, NATO, led by the United States, has been waging a comprehensive hybrid war against Russia.

The West's war has included the supply of huge quantities of weapons to Ukrainian forces: US President Joe Biden alone has authorised the transfer of \$1.35 billion worth of lethal weapons since the war began, with much more to come. The West has also implemented ever-escalating economic and financial sanctions, virtually expelling Russia from the Western-led financial order and sequestering the assets of many wealthy Russians. And it has sought to shape international opinion, with many countries now blocking access to Russian state media.

For all the talk of a rules-based order, the world's rule-makers have reverted unhesitatingly to unilateralism. The risks are legion. The flood of weapons the West is sending to Ukraine – a country with a long history of weak governance and widespread corruption – could eventually flow westward, fueling organised crime, narcotics trafficking, and terrorist violence across Europe. And the Iron Curtain's revival may hasten the emergence of a militarily robust, neo-imperial Russia. Putin, who has called the Soviet Union's collapse a "tragedy" and the end of "historical Russia," has indicated that Kazakhstan, like Ukraine, is not a country.

And it is not just Russia that will become isolated. The Ukraine war could trigger the unraveling of decades of broader global economic engagement, long viewed as a key deterrent against great-power conflict.

Of course, the notion that countries would rather trade than invade has never been unsailable. Economic interdependence has not stopped China, for example, from engaging in relentless expansionism, from the South and East China Seas to the Himalayas.

Even today, however, economic interdependence has forced rule-makers to exercise some restraint. Despite the raft of financial and economic sanctions it has imposed on Russia, Europe continues to support the Russian economy's mainstay: oil and gas exports. This undermines the West's own mission, especially as the confrontation drives up energy prices. But Europe's longstanding dependence on Russian energy supplies has left it with no good alternatives – at least for now.

Such a tradeoff may not arise in the future. The European Union has already vowed to eliminate its dependence on Russian energy by 2030. At the same time, countries that want to uphold trade ties with Russia are seeking solutions outside Western-controlled channels. For example, India is buying Russian oil with rupees. Similar moves elsewhere – for example, Saudi Arabia is considering renminbi-based oil sales to China – threaten to erode the US dollar's global supremacy.

This is probably the beginning of a broader bifurcation of the global economy. At a time when economic power has shifted eastward but the West still controls the world's financial architecture – including the main international payments system, the primary currencies for trade and financial flows, and the leading credit-ratings agencies – the establishment of parallel arrangements seems imminent.

China, which dwarfs Russia in terms of both economic power and military spending, will likely lead this process. In fact, China is set to emerge as the real winner of the NATO-Russia conflict. An overstretched America's renewed preoccupation with European security will create strategic space for China to press its strategic objectives – its leaders have been as clear about absorbing Taiwan as Putin was about claiming Ukraine – and bolster its global influence, at the expense of the US.

China's global dominance would amount to the final nail in the coffin of the rules-based order. Since its establishment in 1949, the People's Republic has displayed blatant contempt for international law, more than doubling its land mass by annexing Xinjiang and Tibet and currently detaining over a million Muslims. Yet China has paid no tangible price. The Kremlin, for its part, probably did not think twice about rejecting the International Court of Justice order to suspend its military operations in Ukraine.

International law may be powerful against the powerless, but it is powerless against the powerful. The League of Nations, created after World War I, failed because it could not deter important powers from flouting international law. Its beleaguered successor, the United Nations, may be facing a similar reckoning. How can the UN Security Council fulfill its mandate of upholding international peace and stability if its five veto-wielding permanent members are arrayed into two opposing camps? The world is headed for an era of greater upheaval. However it plays out, the pretense of a shared commitment to international law will be the first casualty.

*The writer is Professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.*

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### WISDOM CORNER

- The most dangerous creation of any society is the man who has nothing to lose. JAMES BALDWIN
- The most violent element in society is ignorance. EMMA GOLDMAN
- The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat. LILY TOMLIN

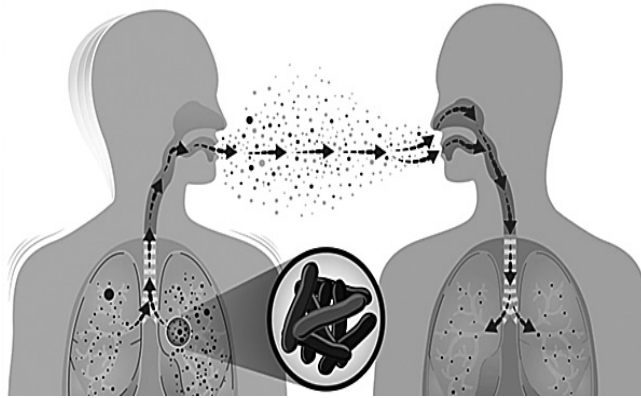
### WORDSWORTH

#### Shufti

**S**hufti (another way of writing it, the one usually given in dictionaries) is Arabic. In that language it means "have you seen?" It's a bit of military slang, picked up by British servicemen formerly based in the Middle East. The first recorded examples in print are from the Second World War, suggesting that it may have originated among soldiers in the desert campaign. However, Eric Partridge says that it actually started life with Royal Air Force stations in that area about 1925, but that it had spread to the Army by 1930. This seems probable, to judge from the extent of its use in World War Two, and the number of compounds it spawned, none of which seem to have survived the end of the War. Among them, Partridge mentions shuftiscope, which had a number of senses, one of which he defines with ponderous delicacy as "an instrument used by doctors for research in cases of dysentery".

# THE SILENT PANDEMIC

FOCUS WORLD TB DAY



**TB is identified as one of India's major public health problems. Around 1.8 million people developed TB in India, according to the Union Health Ministry's India TB Report 2021**

India ushers in World Tuberculosis Day in 2022 with mixed feelings. As the COVID pandemic (hopefully) wanes, how are we seeing the other major infection that has silently and surely continued to wreak havoc on the lives of millions of Indians, year after year? TB is our silent pandemic; away from the headlines, it rages on.

The early months of the pandemic saw much discussion around COVID leading to a drop in identification of new TB infection, and growing malnutrition, both of which are associated with a risk of increasing the burden of TB. It is estimated that this decline in access to services and an increase in malnutrition will lead to almost 0.1 million additional deaths due to TB in the coming years. TB is identified as one of India's major public health problems. Around 1.8 million people developed TB in India, according to the Union Health Ministry's India TB Report 2021. And over 0.4 million died due to TB in India in 2020, according to the World Health Organisation. Globally, India accounted for 26% of the new cases, and over 34% of the deaths due to TB.

For patients suffering from TB in large parts of rural India, the Primary Health Centres are by far the most accessible health facilities. Yet the PHCs take care of only a small proportion of the overall burden of TB. Many are understaffed, and many lack essential diagnostic capabilities. Despite these shortcomings, the PHCs can play a larger role if they are geared to build trust. This requires a greater attention to the patients, thorough examination, respectful behaviour, and kind words. Alongside, strengthening PHCs in general, and equipping them to diagnose and manage patients with TB in particular, will go a long way in promoting access and helping patients navigate what today are largely unresponsive health systems.

**Enhance diagnostics**  
Guidelines from the Indian government call for evaluation of all those with coughs for two weeks or more, for TB. This guidance has emerged from decades of careful attention and its importance cannot be overstated. We have seen many healthy-looking patients diagnosed with TB, only because as per the recommendations, the sputum test was performed. On the ground, we often see patients being denied these tests, for reasons that the

patient "does not look tubercular," or "looks healthy." Many such patients subsequently go back home, to return after a few weeks or months with severe disease.

It is thus essential to adhere to the guidance for testing for TB, however healthy or well the patient may appear. Major constraints in diagnosing TB are the availability of chest radiography, sputum testing and cartridge-based nucleic acid amplification test (CBNAAT), close enough and easily enough. Patients with suspected TB continue to make several trips to different places and spend enormous amounts of money and time to be able to get themselves tested.

In the absence of easy availability, many private practitioners start treatment without the necessary tests, and many public providers delay the management of the disease. The patients suffer, and also transmit the infection to others during this time. There is a need to urgently expand the diagnostic capabilities, specifically x-ray machines, sputum microscopic testing, and CBNAAT machines. We would need to ensure that x-ray machines are available close enough and affordable. For much of rural India, this would mean that we need to have x-ray diagnostic facilities at PHCs.

While the last decade has seen many advances in the tests for TB making it easier to detect TB as well as identify drug resistance, the process for collecting the sputum sample has remained unchanged. The onus for sample collection still rests with the patient, who may have to travel a few kms (such as when visiting a PHC), or even

50 kms or more (to the CHC or district hospital, for tests such as the CBNAAT). Sometimes even after making this arduous journey the test is denied as the sample collection for the day may be complete, or the technician is away, or the cartridges are finished, or the machine is out of order. With a lot of resources diverted towards COVID, and the laboratory technicians busy with COVID testing, such denials are now seen even more often. No wonder then that several patients drop out after this contact.

A simple solution to this problem is to transport the sample itself: the patients can deposit their sputum sample at a PHC, from where the PHC staff can transport it to the diagnostic facility. There is strong evidence that such transport of sputum samples helps significantly in improving the detection with much convenience. We need to expand the active transport of sputum urgently.

**Improve living conditions of migrants**

TB is an infectious as well as a social disease. Its close relationship with determinants including livelihood, nutrition, gender, and culture, influence who will develop the disease as well as the severity thereof. The relationship between TB, informal work and labour-migration is a case in point. South Rajasthan, where we work as physicians, is a rain scarce and food scarce region – malnutrition levels among children and adults are high, and many young men migrate to cities for employment. Poor nutrition levels, exposure to hazardous work, such as stone carving and mining; and living

in overcrowded conditions while in cities, lead to high levels of tuberculosis among the migrant workers. Once infected, the disease also transmits to the family members. The deadly combination affects young men the most leading to reduced work capacity, loss of work, worsening disease, and finally death. Many also contract silicosis.

Treatment and recovery from TB will be incomplete if the determinants are also not addressed. The Poshan scheme of the TB programme provides cash transfers towards nutrition and is a welcome move. However, the amount is inadequate for a nutritious diet and the scheme is also fraught with delays and omissions. Ensuring a nutritious diet will require cash transfers, nutritious food through the PDS, and measures such as promoting farming and poultry, especially in high-migration areas. Efforts will also be needed to influence deep-rooted practices and customs related to nutrition, such as not consuming eggs and animal products (especially among women), and stopping all sour foods and ghee/oil once the treatment has begun. It is imperative to make the workplaces safer, and reduce or ameliorate the risk of lung damage and development of irreversible conditions such as silicosis.

**Impacting TB across its lifecycle**

These steps have the potential to influence the disease and outcomes at the different steps in the lifecycle of the disease: by increasing linkages with public health systems, higher case detections, and improving treatment outcomes among those diagnosed with TB.

The last decade has seen several new initiatives introduced in the national programme for TB: an addition of new tests, a cash transfer towards nutrition, and a promise of newer drugs with the potential to reduce the treatment duration significantly. However, unless the foundation of the programme is made strong, the newer measures may offer little advantage and we may end up well short of the desired impact. We must remember that even today, 1200 persons die of TB in India each day

*The writers are doctors and co-founders of Basic Healthcare Services, a Rajasthan-based non-profit that runs primary healthcare centres.*

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### SPECTRUM CUSTOMER SERVICE

## The 'race to zero' has begun

One morning I discovered that the password for my internet banking expired and repeated attempts to re-set the same were in vain. The pop-up message appeared that there are technical issues, please try later. Thereafter, I sent e-mails to customer support and they asked for screenshots of the error message to understand the issue in detail and then revert. I obediently complied with but then there was no response. Post a reminder, the customer support team sent me a long mail detailing the next steps. It advised that the password generation request has to be created online and then it will be sent to the concerned branch. I was directed to contact the branch and follow up with them for approval. Once approved, I will have to log-in and then reset the new password. Needless to say, already 10 days have elapsed and the resolution is

still pending.

In a separate incident, my wife had sent an e-mail to the customer support team of a reputed air-conditioner brand for servicing the AC due to the onset of summer. There was a prompt auto-email response saying that the technician will contact within next 24 hours and attend the call. But 72 hours gone, still waiting for the call.

In both the above cases the wait is much longer than what it should have been. The experience is frustrating, annoying and stressful.

Will the modern-day customer be willing to provide the firms such luxury of time to get their act right for such 'routine requirements'?

Customers are changing and they expect companies to change faster. They want the service providers to recalibrate their responses to up the ante. There is zero patience and zero tolerance to such non-value-added activities.

Even two days wait is unrealistic for today's urban and time-constrained customers. Gen Z & millennials seek insta-action, results and closures or else they will just walk-out without even complaining, never to return. Consumers nowadays demand more than just value or convenience; they expect that there will be no shortfalls either in their expectations and actual experience, especially while fulfilling their transactional demands.

The service or delivery models need to be aligned to cater to such T-20 mindset devoid of the traditional "wait and see" approach. The implications of such changing preferences are profound on the brands. Companies or brands neglecting this aspect of customer service will soon find themselves languishing behind the curve without any early warnings. The shift will be sudden and swift with no time to recover lost ground. There

are brands that have already noticed this and are aggressively working towards zero waiting - be it in deliveries, resolution or repairs. This calls for evolving the entire ecosystem comprising of multiple stakeholders like employees, partners or service agents through training, IT infrastructure, logistics & Artificial Intelligence. The margin of error in meeting such consumer expectations is shrinking towards 'zero'.

It is apt to say that the 'Race to Zero' has already begun. Smart companies are queuing up to run this race faster to take the lead. The race is to win the loyalty and create new benchmarks in service standards. The question is - is there a finish line?

*The writer is a corporate professional, business advisor and a start-up mentor. Views are personal.*



SHIVAJI MOHINTA

**CUSTOMERS ARE CHANGING AND THEY EXPECT COMPANIES TO CHANGE FASTER**

### Indo-Australian ties

Sir, The virtual summit between Australia and India has concluded with major steps towards peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison held talks on various bilateral issues such as expanding economic ties and cooperation among the two nations, bilateral trade and investment, regional peace, and global stability. Both the leaders also agreed to step up in India's national investment and infrastructure fund and in Australia's pension and sovereign fund. The Australian Prime minister during the talks unveiled \$280 million of investment in India. The relationship between the two nations will help in stabilising the geo-political situation in the Indo-Pacific region. As two leading liberal democratic countries, they need to bring expansionist powers in the region under control.

*Deba Prasad Nayak, CUTTACK*

### Fuel shock is back

Sir, This refers to 'Fuel back to singe again,' Orissa POST March 23. It was expected any day, and it has come. Petrol and diesel prices have been increased between 80 paise and Re 1 across the country while LPG cooking gas price has been hiked by about ₹50 a cylinder. The Union government had held the hand of the oil companies to buy goodwill before the Assembly elections in February and March. The polls are now over, and the gloves are off. Also, more hikes are in the pipeline as oil companies scurry to match retail prices with the shooting costs of crude oil. Bulk diesel prices have in fact been raised by as much as ₹25-28 a litre above pump prices. This is likely to fuel inflation as big consumers such as the Railways and factories pass on the hit to small consumers. Meanwhile, oil industry watchers warn that for every \$1 rise in crude prices, petrol and diesel prices are jacked up by 50 paise a litre. This means fuel prices may go up by ₹20 per litre in the coming days to match the crude backlog. These are ominous clouds for the poor man's purse and the government will have to take proactive measures to soften the blows. But, the total incidence of central taxes and local VAT on retail petrol prices is currently around 50 per cent and that on diesel 40 per cent. While the government has little hold over international crude prices, a recalibration of the tax regime on fuel could provide some respite.

*N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE*

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**

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When schools were shut down, the mid-day meals scheme was also discontinued. But now, as children return to school, they need to be given better nutrition. Mid-day meals will help bring those children back to school who had dropped out during the pandemic

SONIA GANDHI | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

120 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES HIRED BY RLYS IN 2021-22: GOVT

The Indian Railways in 2021-22 hired 120 persons with disabilities, which is 69 per cent less than 2020-21 figures, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Wednesday



## of the day quote

Remembering Dr Ram Manohar Lohia on his birth anniversary. He was at the forefront of many historical events and played a key role in our freedom struggle



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Incidents of atrocities on Dalits and Adivasis have increased tremendously under the Congress government of Rajasthan. Recently, the rape of Dalit girls in Didwana and Dholpur, the killing of a Dalit youth with a tractor in Alwar and the murder of a Dalit youth in Pali, Jodhpur has shaken Dalit samaj



MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

We will continue to protest both inside and outside Parliament against this unjustified price hike of petrol and diesel. The government is looting Rs 10,000 crore from this price hike



MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN THE RAJYA SABHA

## SHORT TAKES

### I-T dept raids Hero Motorcorp

New Delhi: The Income Tax Department Wednesday conducted raids at multiple premises of Hero Motorcorp as part of a tax evasion investigation against the country's largest two-wheeler automobiles manufacturer, officials said. The company called it a "routine inquiry, which is not uncommon before the end of the financial year". Offices and residential premises of the company including that of chairman and CEO of the group Pawan Munjal located in Gurugram (Haryana), Delhi and few other locations were being covered, they said.

### 7 peacocks found dead in TN's Erode

Erode (TN): Seven peacocks were found dead in a private land near Perundurai here Wednesday, officials said. According to forest officials, they received information early morning about peacock carcasses lying in the land at Seenapuram near Perundurai. They said the land, belonging to Kannan, has some crops and some persons crossing the area noticed that the birds were lying dead there. Officials are conducting an investigation and also interrogating the land owner. Peacocks are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. It is the national bird of India.

### Dalit man forced to rub nose in temple

Jaipur: A Dalit man was allegedly forced to rub his nose on a platform inside a temple in Rajasthan's Alwar district after he made insulting remarks on Hindu gods in response to comments on social media for criticising the film 'The Kashmir Files', police said Wednesday. An FIR was registered against 11 persons Tuesday night and two of them have been arrested. Some other persons have also been rounded up for harassing the Dalit man, Circle Officer Behror Anand Kumar said.

### Ex-army man killed

Patna: An ex Indian Army man was killed and his son sustained serious injuries after a group of people attacked them in Bihar's Bhojpur district Wednesday morning over a property dispute. The deceased is identified as Ram Prakash Singh, 50, a native of Karisath village under Udwan Nagar police station of Bhojpur. The police said that Singh had a property dispute with two persons named Baldev Singh and Hari Om Singh. They were involved in a quarrel Monday.

# Cov curbs to end from March 31

Wearing of face mask and maintaining social distancing norms will continue as earlier

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 23: In view of the continuous dip in coronavirus cases, the home ministry has decided to end its all Covid-19 containment measures from March 31, two years after their implementation following the outbreak of the pandemic.

In a communication to the chief secretaries of all states, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said that over the last 24 months, significant capacities have been developed for various aspects of management of the pandemic, such as diagnostics, surveillance, contact tracing, treatment, vaccination, hospital infrastructure.

Also, the general public now has much higher level of awareness on the Covid-appropriate behavior, he said. The states and Union Territories have also developed their own capacities and systems and implemented their detailed specific plans for managing the pandemic, he said, adding over the last seven weeks or so there has been a steep decline in the number of cases. The total caseload in the country stands at 23,913 only (on March 22) and the daily positivity rate has declined to 0.28 per cent, he said. It is also worth mentioning that with the combined efforts, a total of 181.56 crore vaccine doses have been administered, he said.

"After taking into consideration the overall improvement in the situation and preparedness of the



Government to deal with the pandemic, National Disaster Management Authority has taken a decision that there may not be any further need to invoke the provisions of the DM Act for Covid containment measures," the communication said.

Accordingly, Bhalla said, after the expiry of the existing order March 31, no further order will be issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare advisories on Covid containment measures, including on the use of face mask and hand hygiene, will continue to guide the overall national response to the pandemic, he said.

The Home Secretary, however, said that in view of the nature of the disease, people still need to remain watchful of the situation. He said whenever any surge in the number of cases is observed, states and UTs may consider taking prompt and proactive action at local level, as advised by the Ministry of Health from time to time.

"I would, therefore, advise all the States and UTs to consider appropriately discontinuing issue

## Time to open economy but with caution: Centre

In view of a decline in Covid-19 cases, the Centre Wednesday asked states to follow a risk assessment-based approach on the opening of economic and social activities. The Union Health Ministry, however, suggested necessary curbs in areas reporting over 10 per cent positivity rate or 40 per cent occupancy in either oxygen-supported or ICU beds. The government stressed for continued focus on the five-fold strategy of Test-Track-Treat-Vaccination and adherence to Covid Appropriate Behaviour, while stating that a sustained and significant decline in the number of cases has been observed since the last couple of months.

of orders and guidelines under the DM Act, 2005 for Covid containment measures," Bhalla said.

The states and UTs may continue to follow the Standard Operating Measures and advisories that have been or are being issued by the Ministry of Health from time to time for containment measures, vaccination and other related aspects, he said.

## Govt starts process to amend IPC, CrPC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Aiming to make comprehensive changes in criminal laws, the government has initiated the process of amendment to laws such as Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act in consultation with all stakeholders, Rajya Sabha was informed Wednesday.

Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra also said that the Ministry of Home Affairs has sought suggestions from governors, Chief Ministers, lieutenant governors and administrators of union territories, Chief Justice of India, chief justices of various high courts, Bar Council of India, Bar Council of various states, various universities, law institutes and all MPs regarding comprehensive amendments in criminal laws.



Earlier the Parliamentary Standing Committee in its 111th and 128th reports had also stressed upon the need to reform and rationalise the criminal law of the country by introducing a comprehensive legislation in Parliament rather than bringing about piecemeal amendments in respective acts.

# 11 Bihar workers charred to death



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, March 23: Eleven migrant workers from Bihar were charred to death in a huge fire that broke out at a scrap godown in Secunderabad here early Wednesday, police said.

The incident occurred in the godown in IDH Colony of Bhoiguda area in Secunderabad around 4 am.

Police said one person managed to jump out of the fire and he was rushed to Gandhi Hospital. Others trapped in the fire due to heavy smoke were burnt alive. All the victims were migrant workers from Chapra district Bihar and were asleep when the fire broke out. Barring one, the rest were between 23 and 35 years of age.

The fire was doused with the help of five fire tenders which rushed to the scene from different areas. Short circuit is suspected to have caused the fire.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner CV Anand said the workers were asleep in rooms on the first while scrap material including plastic, newspapers and other scrap items were stored on the ground floor. Someone alerted the police after a

A police officer said the fire broke out around 4 am when around 13 workers were asleep on the upper floor of the warehouse in the densely populated residential colony

gas cylinder exploded due to the fire. The bodies were shifted to Gandhi Hospital. Hospital authorities said bodies of 10 deceased were charred beyond recognition.

Gandhi Hospital superintendent Dr Raja Rao said four teams were constituted for autopsy. "We have to do DNA tests to identify the bodies and after completing the procedure we will hand over the remains to their families," he said.

Police said the negligence by the timber depot owner and violation of safety rules led to the incident. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has expressed shock over the fire accident and mourned the death of Bihar workers. He announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh each for the families of those who died in the fire.

# Dhami sworn in as U'khand CM for second term



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Pushkar Singh Dhami Wednesday took oath as the Uttarakhand Chief Minister during a ceremony held at Parade Ground here in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Apart from Dhami, eight ministers were also administered the oath by Uttarakhand Governor Lt Gen (retd) Gurmit Singh. This is 46-year-old Dhami's second consecutive stint as the Chief Minister.

Speculation over the CM's post in Uttarakhand had ended on Monday, when the BJP declared that the former Khatima MLA will lead the state government. Dhami, under whose leadership the party had won

the just-concluded Assembly polls, had lost the elections from Khatima, the constituency he had been representing since 2012. Dhami needs to be elected to the state Assembly within six months to continue as chief minister. The BJP MLAs who took oath as state ministers were Satpal Maharaj, Dhan Singh Rawat, Subodh Niyaal, Premchand Agarwal, Rekha Arya, Ganesh Joshi, Chandan Ram Das and Saurabh Bahuguna.

Except former CM Vijay Bahuguna's son Saurabh Bahuguna, Bageshwar MLA Chandan Ram Das and Rishikesh legislator Premchand Agarwal, all other leaders were part of the previous Dhami-led cabinet. Agarwal was the Speaker in the previous Assembly.

Apart from PM Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, BJP president J P Nadda and chief ministers of BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Assam attended the swearing-in ceremony. The BJP had won 47 of the 70 Assembly seats in the elections, the results of which were declared March 10.

# 4 kids die after eating poisonous toffees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow/Kushinagar (UP), March 23: Four children, including three siblings Manjana (5), Sweety (3) and Samar (2). Five-year-old Arun who lived nearby is the fourth deceased, they said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed his condolences on the incident and ordered a probe into the matter and directed officials

to provide assistance to the grieving families.

The deceased children were identified as three siblings Manjana (5), Sweety (3) and Samar (2). Five-year-old Arun who lived nearby is the fourth deceased, they said.

According to villagers, Mukhia Devi, a resident of Diliipnagar village, discovered a plastic bag containing five toffees and some coins, while sweeping her house in the morning, Additional District



Magistrate (ADM) of Kushinagar, Varun Kumar Pandey said. Devi

offered the toffees to her three grandchildren and another child from the neighbourhood, ADM Pandey said.

The children went unconscious after consuming the alleged poisonous toffees and were rushed to the district hospital where doctors declared them brought dead, the ADM said. The remaining lone toffee has been preserved for forensic examination and a probe is underway, he added.



STUDY ON STREET: A street child observes a passing BJP rally while studying on the roadside in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

# Significant rise in young TB patients in India after Cov: Experts

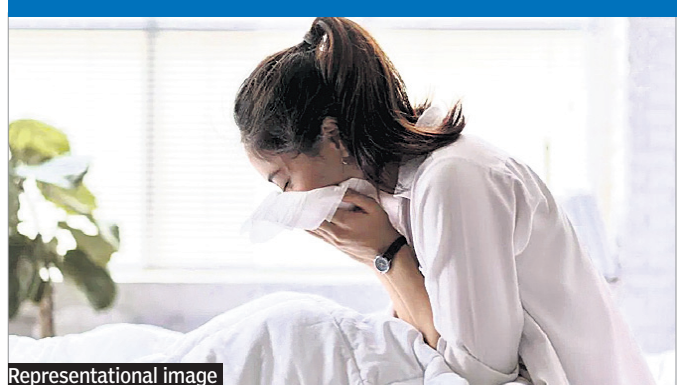
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Covid has significantly reversed the gains made in tuberculosis (TB) control and has led to an increase of about 25-30 per cent patients, particularly young adults, said experts on Wednesday ahead of World Tuberculosis Day.

March 24 is globally observed as World Tuberculosis Day every year to raise awareness about the disease that is curable but affects approximately 4.1 million people across the world, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

India contributes to 27 per cent of the global TB burden. It is estimated that over 35-50 crore people in India have TB infection and over 26 lakh people develop TB annually. "The pandemic has reversed years of progress made in tuber-

## WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY



Representational image

culosis control not just in India but across the globe. The absolute percentage of those succumbing to the disease has risen to 5-7 per cent now, up from 1-2 per cent during pre-Covid times," Anand K., CEO, SRL

Diagnostics, told IANS. "There has been an approximately 25-30 per cent increase in tuberculosis patients especially after Covid wave, as compared to the previous year when there was no

AS COVID HOGGED THE LIMELIGHT, HEALTHCARE RESOURCES WERE DIVERTED TO COMBAT THE RISING CASES. TB SERVICES WERE THUS DISRUPTED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS

INDIA ALSO ACCOUNTED FOR 34 PER CENT OF AN ESTIMATED 1.48 MILLION DEATHS DUE TO TB GLOBALLY IN 2020. DEATHS DUE TO TB IN THE COUNTRY ALSO ROSE BY 3 PER CENT COMPARED TO 2019, WHO'S 2021 GLOBAL TB REPORT SAID. AS PER EXPERTS, THE DEATHS DUE TO THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE IS STILL ON THE HIGH

Covid," Dr Vikas Maurya, Hod and Director, Pulmonology, Fortis Hospital Shalimar Bagh, told IANS.

While India is on a mission to become TB free by 2025, there is a significant rise in TB cases among youngsters.

A recent report by Mumbai-based health-tech startup HaystackAnalytics has indicated

that India continues to bear the largest share of TB cases in the world, with 65 per cent of the cases being reported in the most economically productive population segment between the ages 15-45.

"We are seeing an increase in the number of young people coming to us with tuberculosis cases. In most cases, they are otherwise

healthy people who developed symptoms in the last few months. We've discovered that the majority of the time, it's due to poor lifestyle choices and insufficient sleep," said Dr. Akshay Budhraya, Senior Consultant, Respiratory & Sleep Medicine, Aakash Healthcare Hospital, Dwarka.

Budhraya added that Aakash hospital has seen more than 50 instances of tuberculosis in youngsters, in the last three months.

The reason is, "during the Covid 19 pandemic, many people had irregular sleep patterns like staying up till late night or early morning, skipping breakfast, and a lot many also followed a strict diet plan or did fasting without consulting the experts", he said, adding "this lowers the immune system, which leads to diseases like TB".

## 'THE KASHMIR FILES'

# Mehbooba's dig at BJP over movie promotion

BJP promoting 'The Kashmir Files' to instigate people on religious lines, said Mehbooba



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, March 23:** PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti alleged Wednesday that the BJP is promoting 'The Kashmir Files', a film on the plight of displaced Kashmiri Hindus, to incite people on religious lines and called for the setting up of a panel to probe the circumstances that led to the exodus of Pandits from the Valley.

Her demand came a day after National Conference (NC) chief Farooq Abdullah also called for setting up a panel to investigate the killings and the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley. Asking people to watch the film but not harbour hatred towards Muslims, Mufti said the circumstances that led to the 2020 Delhi riots and the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002 should also be probed.

Of course, the government of India should take a decision in this regard (probing the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits), she told reporters on the sidelines of her party's convention here.

The former Jammu and Kashmir

Chief Minister said the Centre should set up a truth and reconciliation commission to probe not only the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, but also the Gujarat and Delhi riots.

"I have not seen 'The Kashmir Files'. I have heard that the film shows a lot of violence and bloodshed and that it has painful scenes. What happened with the Kashmiri Pandits was horrible. We feel their pain. But you cannot hate every Kashmiri Muslim (for the exodus of Pandits)," she said.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief recounted the massacres of Sikhs in Chittisinghpura, Hindus in Bajrala (Doda) and Kothdara, and Muslims in Surankote and said, "Every community faced the worst oppression in Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Jammu and Kashmir were caught between the guns of Pakistan and India. The Kashmiri Pandits were also victims of it."

Maintaining that the makers of the 'The Kashmir Files' have to make money, Mufti accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of promoting the film to incite people on religious lines.

"The Prime Minister and the BJP are promoting it by giving free tickets and making it tax-free. They are inciting people. They divide people on religious lines," she said.

Taking a dig at the saffron party for its failure to address the concerns of Kashmiri Pandits, Mufti said had it done anything for the Pandits in the last eight years, their situation could have improved.

# In second term, Yogi set to promote religious tourism

**THE YOGI GOVERNMENT, IN ITS FIRST TERM ITSELF, GAVE PRIORITY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS SECTOR, ACCELERATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLACES INCLUDING AYODHYA, KASHI AND MATHURA**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, March 23:** In its second term, the Yogi Adityanath government will be taking forward its vision to establish Uttar Pradesh as the 'religious tourism hub' of the country.

The Yogi Adityanath government has several reforms in store which will provide immense employment opportunities to the people in the state.

According to a spokesperson for the state government, concerned authorities have been working for the past five years for developing religious sites and increasing facilities for the devotees.

The Yogi government, in its first term itself, gave priority to the development of the religious sector, accelerating the development of places including Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura. The construction work of Ram temple in Ayodhya is going on in full swing. At the same time, the infrastructure development in Ayodhya is also going on



a rapid pace. More than 17 projects worth Rs 138 crore have been completed in Ayodhya. Work is going on a war-footing on 54 projects at a cost of Rs 3,126 crore.

The pilgrimage centres falling on the 84 Kosi Parikrama Marg are being developed. The government also plans to develop Ayodhya as a Vedic City under which roads are being constructed for Panchkosi, 14 Kosi and 84 Kosi Parikrama.

In these religious places, airports are being widened and markets are being organised so that tourism can be facilitated. Varanasi, despite being a big centre of religious faith, could not achieve the position that it should have in terms of tourism due to meagre facilities.

Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham was constructed at a cost of more than Rs 600 crore within five years of the BJP government. Cruise service started operating to woo tourists. Along with this, a new development project was prepared for the 70 km long Panchkosi road. This has further strengthened the identity of Kashi at the international level, thereby increasing the

number of tourists coming from India and abroad.

Continuing with its policy of promoting religious tourism in the state, the state gave priority to maintaining the purity of the Braj region. The Yogi Adityanath government is constantly trying to make Braj region a world class tourist destination through the Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad.

Also, there is a grand celebration of 'Krishnotsav' in Mathura and 'Rangotsav' in Barsana. The construction of ropeway is going on in Barsana. The Yogi government had declared Vrindavan, Nandgaon, Govardhan, Gokul, Baldev and Radhakund pilgrimage areas in 2017 itself. The country's largest city forest is being developed near Kalidah Ghat of Yamuna River in Vrindavan, which will be the centre of tourist attraction.

A Tourist Facilitation Centre, Geeta Research Institute and Auditorium, construction of Annapurna Bhawan is being undertaken in Vrindavan, Jubilee Park in Mathura, Barsana and Nandgaon are also being developed for tourist facilities.

# J&K attracts major Gulf investments

The LG has indicated that the UT was expecting to attract ₹70,000 crore worth of investment in the following six months; this is a huge number versus the total of ₹15,000 crore investment in the last 75 years of Independence

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Srinagar, March 23:** While the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit is taking place in Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) top-drawer business delegation arrived in Srinagar March 20 to further solidify the relationship with the Union Territory and gauge business opportunities in the region at the invitation of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The beginning of the year saw a trade momentum destined to result in a monumental business pact between the two nations.

Commerce, and J&K Administration's top officials to assist the UT with its recent evolution of the global business landscape and industry. After the reading down of Article 370, investors are feeling comfortable travelling to the UT and take business decisions. GCC's attitude, especially the Emirati investors' keen interest in capitalizing on the investment potential of J&K will increase confidence and open gateways for European, American, and Japanese investments.

UAE's intentions in J&K are evident through their genuine interest in UT's growth compared to



The UT received \$2.5 billion (approximately Rs 18,568 crore) in investments, indicative of the region's potential in January 2022. The LG has indicated that the UT was expecting to attract Rs 70,000 crore worth of investment in the following six months; this is a huge number versus the total of Rs 15,000 crore investment in the last 75 years of Independence.

After LG visited Dubai this year, a 40-member delegation from the UAE representing 33 companies from UAE, Hong Kong, and Saudi Arabia is participating in a four-day (March 20-23) visit.

Century Financial's CEO, Bal Krishen is heading this delegation of Gulf businessmen along with Saudi CEOs. The delegation includes prominent businessmen in the real estate and commercial trading industries and it is for the first time, an investor from Saudi has taken interest in J&K.

Jammu and Kashmir is gaining pace, transitioning fast from a doormat commercial tourist destination to the land of investment and opportunity. J&K administration will be displaying investment opportunities to the delegation with a focus on Hospitality, Tourism, and Entrepreneurship sector. The delegation includes industrialists involved in the manufacture of cement, textile, pharmaceuticals, and fiber & cables. Hospitals, Hotels, Agro-industry, IT, and Horticulture growth are high on the delegation's list.

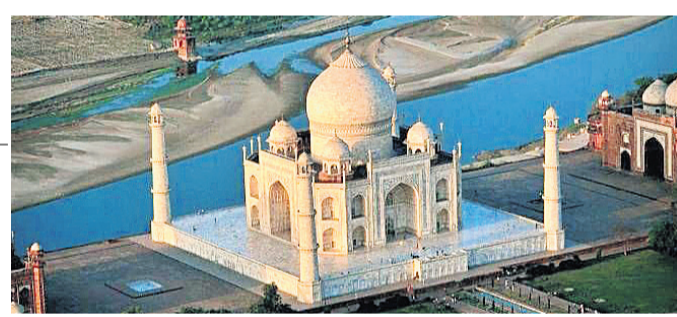
UAE delegation is meeting the Lieutenant Governor along with Principal Secretary Industries and

Pakistan's terror ideology which operates in the undercurrents of all militant schemes in the Valley. This meeting will destabilize Pakistan's efforts in vilifying India at the OIC on the Kashmir Issue. Now Pakistan's acts against Kashmir will place them in the court against the UAE businesses, who are also Pakistan's allies.

A dinner and a visit to Pari Mahal in Srinagar were organized by the LG for the CEOs Monday. The group is visiting all corners of Kashmir as per their choice to clear the misconception that Kashmir is an unsafe place. An interaction with local businessmen at Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) was held on Tuesday to get a taste of the business climate. Talks on private investments for tourist places like Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and Sonmarg are underway. South Kashmir's Pulwama and Pampore are other gold mines where 5,000 kanals of government land will be offered to the investors.

Not long before Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented a Rs 1.12 lakh crore (13.33 billion US dollars) budget for J&K for the year 2022-23 in the Lok Sabha directed at rebuilding the economy and creating jobs in the region. In the same news, the annual budget of Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) in 2021-22 was 141 billion Pakistan rupees, amounting to just 78.55 million US dollars. This means New Delhi allocates about five times more money to J&K than Islamabad grants to PoK.

# NGT for action plan against environmental flouting at Taj



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, March 23:** The National Green Tribunal has directed a joint panel headed by Taj Trapezium Zone Pollution Authority and the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board to prepare a remedial action plan in a plea alleging environmental violations hazardous to the Yamuna river and Taj Mahal.

The principal bench of the NGT headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel was hearing a plea against the operation of stone crushers and other such industries in the Agra district in violation of environmental norms.

As per the petitioner, the stone crushers are also using groundwater by deep boring without requisite permission. They are neither maintaining distance nor safe distance from the habitations. The pollution is adversely affecting the public health and the environment apart from being a hazard to the Yamuna river and Taj Mahal, it said.

Acting on the grievance, a joint committee had February 22 reported that some units were found operating while some units were not operating. They were extracting groundwater which stands ex-

empted by the state from regulation for the small industries. It was also found that out of 35 units, only 16 units are operational having valid consent from the State Pollution Control Board, and rest of the 19 units are closed as per the direction of closure order issued from the State Pollution Control Board.

As the village land of Tantpur, Ghaskata and Gugaband is not too much fertile and has rocky land, the only business is red stone cutting and selling of stone pieces, it said.

After hearing the submissions, the tribunal said, "We are of the opinion that the report mentioned above is not complete. The units in question may be small falling in Green Category as per classification of CPCB, as submitted by the State PCB. There can be no objection to helping them in all legal ways but not at the cost of the right of other citizens to access potable water and to clean environment, including conservation of groundwater meant for all."

Referring to the Supreme Court order, the tribunal said permitting small industries in Taj areas can also not mean violation of environmental norms when the so-called green category is not in fact environmentally benign.

# Kashmiri Pandits pay tributes to Nadimarg massacre victims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, March 23:** Displaced Kashmiri Pandits Wednesday paid rich tributes to 24 community members who were killed by Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists at Nadimarg village in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district in 2003.

They also demanded setting up of a "commission of inquiry" to probe the killings and exodus of the Pandit community from Kashmir in 1990.

"We demand setting up of a commission to probe the killings of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 and their exodus. The probe should also include investigation into three massacres of Pandits who had preferred to sit back in the valley," president of Muthi Kahmiri Migrant camp Anil Bhan told reporters here at a function to observe the 19th anniversary of the Nadimarg massacre.

The probe should also include cir-



cumstances, political involvement, administrative and police failure, creation of environment of terror and burning of properties and encroachments of lands of Pandits that led to the exodus of the community, he said.

"We hope Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP will order a probe and provide us justice. We are seeking justice for the past 32 years," Bhan said.

Kashmiri Pandit community has been commemorating the day every year and this time a func-

tion was held by Ard Nadeshwar Trust at Geeta Bhawan here in which heads of many associations, prominent persons and political leaders offered floral tributes to the "martyrs" of the Nadimarg massacre.

A 'shradhanjali' programme was organised and tributes were paid to the victims amid recitation of hymns led by Bhushan Lal Bhat.

Bhat, who belongs to Nadimarg, narrated the story of the March 23 massacre.

Youth leader of Jagti migrant camp Sahil Pandita urged the government to ensure that justice is provided to the community.

"We hope people of this country will support us in our battle for reversal of our genocide and exodus from Kashmir. We hope Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah will ensure our return and rehabilitation in Kashmir," he said.

# Asia's largest Tulip garden opens for visitors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, March 23:** Asia's largest tulip garden overlooking the famous Dal Lake here was thrown open to the public Wednesday marking the beginning of the new tourism season in the Kashmir Valley. The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, formerly known as Siraj Bagh, was opened in 2008 by then Chief Minister of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state Ghulam Nabi Azad.

The idea of the garden, spread over 30 hectares in the foothills of the snow-clad Zabarwan range, was conceived to advance the tourism season in the Valley by two months. The garden was thrown open to the public by J-K chief secretary Arun Kumar Mehta Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters, Mehta said the last six months have seen the highest-ever tourist footfall in the Valley. He said the tourism has been revived and people are not getting rooms as hotels in the Valley are fully booked.

He said the administration was working on opening and promoting 75 new tourist destinations.

"I had seen flowers in bouquets only so far. This is the first time I am seeing such a vast variety of flowers in a garden, in so many colours. This is beautiful and mesmerising. We have had so many wonderful moments in Kashmir like a Shikara ride and playing in snow, which is a dream come true. But, this Tulip garden is a cherry on top

VIKRAMSHI | TOURIST

This year the garden houses 1.5 million flowers of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and muscari.

"The flowers include 68 varieties of tulips," In-charge of Tulip Garden Inam Rehman Sofi said.

He said the visitors will be able to see six new varieties of tulips. Sofi said last year, 2.25 lakh people visited the garden and this year "we expect more".

"Most of the visitors (today) were from outside the UT, which is



Tourists click photos during their visit to the tulip garden in Srinagar, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

a good signal. The garden pre-pones our tourist season and I think this is a good omen for this year's tourist season," Sofi said. This year, the department has made provisions for online ticket sales as well to avoid

the rush at the ticket counter. The average lifespan of tulip flowers is three to four weeks, but heavy rains or too much heat can destroy them.

The Floriculture Department plants tulip bulbs in a phased man-

ner so that the flowers remain in the garden for a month or more.

"It feels so good to be here. We are seeing unbelievable flowers, the beauty of Kashmir," a tourist from Gujarat, Nehal Mehta, said.

## ALL SET



Preparations underway at Ekana Stadium for the oath taking ceremony of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the second term, in Lucknow, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO



# national

## of the day quote

Tamil Nadu government will set an example as to the manner in which a sexual assault case is handled and punishment is secured for the accused

Colleges and universities can contribute in a number of ways such as research, policy development, and engagement with societies for creating awareness and effective implementation of sustainable development strategies

The BJP has done no work for the welfare of the common man. The entire country is watching the hooliganism the BJP is doing to get majority

## SHORT TAKES

### Anti-corruption helpline in Punjab

**Chandigarh:** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Wednesday launched an anti-corruption helpline that will allow people to upload videos of officials asking for a bribe or indulging in other malpractices. Punjab's Vigilance Bureau will examine the complaints received -- in recorded video or audio formats -- on the anti-corruption helpline and take action. A dedicated team of police officials has also been set up for this purpose, said official sources here, adding that the helpline would work round-the-clock.

### Student beaten to death by classmates

**Dhanbad:** A class 10 student of a private school in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district was allegedly beaten to death in the classroom by his classmates Wednesday, police said. The father of the 15-year-old boy said he received a call from the principal of the school in the morning, stating that his son had fallen sick. "When I reached the school I found him unconscious. I immediately took him to Shahid Nirmal Mahto Medical College and Hospital where doctors declared him dead," he said.

### Lalu readmitted to AIIMS

**New Delhi:** Former Bihar Chief Minister and Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad was Wednesday readmitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here after being discharged from the hospital in the wee hours of the day. Lalu Prasad was airlifted to Delhi Tuesday night after being referred to AIIMS by the medical board of the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Ranchi, as his condition began deteriorating.

### Umar Khalid's bail plea deferred

**New Delhi:** A Delhi court Wednesday deferred the pronouncement of its verdict for the third time on the bail application of former JNU student-activist Umar Khalid in a case related to the alleged "larger conspiracy" behind Delhi riots. The pronouncement of the order, which was deferred twice before, was set to deliver by Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat Wednesday.

### Soldier kills self

**Srinagar:** An Indian Army soldier killed himself with his service rifle in his post on the LoC in J&K's Uri Wednesday, police said. Police sources said that the soldier was identified as Vikram Kumar Yadav of Kumaon Regiment.



**I am happy to learn that World Tuberculosis Day is being observed 24th March, 2022 to raise public awareness about TB. On this day in the year 1882, Dr. Robert Koch announced the discovery of the bacteria that causes TB. It paved the way for diagnosis and cure of this deadly disease**

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

### FISH IMPORT IN HP PARTIALLY BANNED

Fish import will be partially banned in Himachal Pradesh from the next fiscal, state Fisheries Minister Virendra Kanwar said Wednesday. He said the fish import permits would be issued only in favour of registered contractors by the department. Keeping in view the interests of the fishermen and to ensure the security of their employment, the fish import is being partially banned in all the districts



## Sexual assault on wife against her consent is rape: K'taka HC

**Bangalore, March 23:** A man cannot escape trial for rape only because the victim is his wife as it is against the right to equality, the Karnataka High Court held Wednesday, and suggested that lawmakers should heed the "voices of silence" and remove the inequalities in statute. The age-old regressive thought that the husbands are the rulers of their wives, their body, mind and soul should be effaced, a single bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna said while refusing to drop the charge of rape against the petitioner who had allegedly sexually assaulted his wife.

"Woman and man being equal under the Constitution cannot be made unequal by Exception-2 to Section 375 of the IPC," it further said, noting that it is for the lawmakers to ponder over the existence of such inequalities in law. Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which defines the offence of rape, has the Exception-2 clause that says the non-consensual intercourse or sexual act by a man with his wife, not below 15 years, is not a rape. The court said such sexual assault by a husband on his wife will have "grave consequences on the mental state of the wife: it has both psychological and physiological impact on her".



Further stating that such acts of husbands scar the soul of the wives, the court observed that it is, therefore, imperative for the lawmakers to now "hear the voices of silence". The court held that any such exemption for husbands will go against Article 14 which guarantees the right to equality.

"If a man, a husband, a man he is, can be exempted from the allegation of commission of ingredients of Section 375 of the IPC (rape), inequality percolates into such provision of law," the court said. All human beings under the Constitution are to be treated equally, be it a man, be it a woman and others, it said, adding any thought of inequality, in any provision of law, would fail the test of Article 14 of the Constitution. "Woman and man being equal under the Constitution cannot be made unequal by Exception-2 to Section 375 of the IPC," it further said, noting that it is for the lawmakers to ponder over the existence of such inequalities in law.

"For ages man donning the robes of a husband has used the wife as his chattel; but his crude behavior notwithstanding his existence because of a woman, the court said. "The age-old thought and tradition that the husbands are the rulers of their wives, their body, mind and soul should be effaced. It is only on this archaic, regressive and preconceived notion, the cases of this kind are mushrooming in the nation." The court refused to interfere with the proceedings initiated against the petitioner on charges of rape, cruelty, along with offences under the POCSO Act, for alleged sexual acts against his wife and daughter.

## Huge uproar in Bihar Assembly over spate of 'liquor deaths' since Holi

**Patna, March 23:** In wake of a string of deaths across four districts purportedly due to consumption of poisonous liquor; legislators of opposition parties arrived in the Bihar Assembly wearing black bands. The opposition leaders brought adjournment motion on the issue and due to huge uproar, the Assembly was adjourned twice in the day. In a jibe at Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, RJD member Mukesh Raushan, wearing a black black over his eyes, introduced himself as "Sushashan Babu" of Bihar.



"I am Sushashan Babu of Bihar and I have completely turned blind. I am unable to see so many deaths due to poisonous liquor. In Bihar, liquor is completely banned. Still, a large number of people are dying due to poisonous liquor. Brazenly, the government officials are declaring these natural deaths due to illness. Who is responsible for it? The state government is suffering from a disease called blindness. When they (NDA leaders) become ill, they used to go to Delhi for treatments," Raushan said. "The liquor ban in Bihar has completely failed here. The nexus of mafias, bureaucrats and ruling party leaders are earning in the cover of the liquor ban. This is the real agenda of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. When liquor is banned in Bihar, how it is available in every locality, and villages. People are consuming it and dying," he added. As many as 42 persons lost their lives since Holi (March 18) in four districts - 22 in Bhagalpur; 12 in Banka, three in Madhepura and five in Siwan.

## BIRBHUM KILLINGS

# 20 held, HC asks for report by 2pm today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, describing the killings in Birbhum district, said the culprits should not be forgiven



AGENCIES

**Kolkata, March 23:** The day after 8 people were burnt to death in a village in Bengal's Birbhum district, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday described the killings as "heinous" and said the culprits should not be forgiven. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday too vowed that strict action would be taken against the perpetrators regardless of their party "colour" and announced plans to visit the village of Bogtui, where some ten houses were set ablaze by throwing petrol bombs in the early hours of Tuesday in a suspected revenge attack after the slaying of a local TMC leader. The blaze killed eight people including three women and two children. Investigations by the special investigation team set up by the state government are on and some 20 people who have been arrested. The village of Bogtui, on the outskirts of Rampurhat town, itself had a deserted look Wednesday as many anxious residents afraid

of both the violence which ripped apart their lives on Tuesday night and the fear of arrests by police seeking answers to a series of attacks and counter-attacks fled to other villages. Those that remained had fear writ large on their faces as the smouldering remains of the houses charred by Tuesday's bombings and the blaze it lit remained poignant reminders of the wages of internecine violence that rural Bengal has been witnessing over the last few decades. Noor Ali, 40, the brother of Bhadu Sheikh, the Trinamool Panchayat deputy chief who was killed Monday around 8.30 pm, said among the suspects picked up by the police were Sheikh's sons. The arrival of delegations led by top politicians from the CPI(M) and BJP including Mohammed Salim, the communist party's new state unit chief and BJP's leader of

## Covovax gets nod for phase-3 clinical trial from DCGI



THE DCGI APPROVED COVOVAX FOR RESTRICTED USE IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS IN ADULTS DECEMBER 28 LAST YEAR AND FOR INOCULATING THE BENEFICIARIES IN THE 12-17 YEARS AGE GROUP, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS, MARCH 9

THE VACCINE HAS NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THE COUNTRY'S INOCULATION PROGRAMME AGAINST COVID-19

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 23:** The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) granted permission on Wednesday for conducting the phase-3 clinical trial of COVID-19 vaccine Covovax as a booster dose in adults, official sources said. The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on COVID-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) had, March 5, recommended permission for conducting the phase-3 clinical trial for Covovax as a booster dose in adults who have been fully vaccinated with either Covaxin or Covishield at least three months ago. Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs at the Serum Institute of India (SII), Prakash Kumar Singh, submitted an application to the DCGI in February, seeking permission to conduct a phase-3, observer-blind, randomised, controlled study to evaluate the safety and immunogenicity of Covovax for booster doses in adults who had received primary vaccination either with Covishield or Covaxin at least three months ago, an official source had said. Singh had stated that many countries were administering

booster doses to their citizens, considering the uncertainties of the pandemic. "We are sure that your approval for conducting this clinical trial will ensure an early availability of Covovax for booster dose use for the people of our country as well as the world at large, in line with our prime minister's vision of 'Making in India for the World'." "Our firm is committed to providing world-class life-saving vaccines at an affordable price under the visionary leadership of our CEO, Dr Adar C Poonawalla. We request you to kindly grant us permission to conduct a phase-3 clinical trial for booster dose of Covovax in Indian adults," he had stated in the application. Covovax is manufactured by technology transfer from Novavax and is approved by the European Medicines Agency for conditional marketing authorisation. It was granted emergency-use listing by the World Health Organization (WHO) in December 2020. In August 2020, US-based vaccine-maker Novavax Inc. Had announced a licence agreement with the SII for the development and commercialisation of NVX-CoV2373, its COVID-19 vaccine candidate, in low-and-middle-income countries and in India.

## PROTEST TURNS UGLY



Police use water cannon to disperse BJP activists protesting against the new excise policy of the Delhi government at Chandgiram Akhara, Civil Lines in New Delhi

## Justice HC Mishra is new Delhi Lokayukta

**New Delhi:** Former Jharkhand High Court judge Justice Harish Chandra Mishra was Wednesday sworn-in as Delhi's Lokayukta and will have a term of five years. Lt Governor Anil Bajjal administered the oath of office to the new Lokayukta in the presence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Justice Mishra had enrolled as an advocate with the Bar Council of Patna in 1984 and entered the Bihar Superior Judicial Service in 1997. During his career he held various posts including that of District and Sessions Judge, Member Secretary, Jharkhand State Legal Services Authority, and Registrar General of the Jharkhand High Court. He was elevated as Judge of the Jharkhand High Court in 2013, where he also served as the Acting Chief Justice in 2019 and superannuated in 2021. His appointment was made in consultation with the Chief Minister and the Delhi government.

# Air pollution 2nd biggest health risk in India: Report

THE MAJOR SOURCES OF AIR POLLUTION IN INDIA INCLUDE VEHICULAR EMISSIONS, POWER GENERATION, INDUSTRIAL WASTE, BIOMASS COMBUSTION FOR COOKING, THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR, AND EPISODIC EVENTS LIKE CROP BURNING

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, March 23:** Air pollution is the second biggest factor affecting human health in India and its economic cost is estimated to exceed \$150 billion annually, a latest report said. The World Air Quality Report 2022, prepared by Swiss organization IQAir and released globally Tuesday, found that India's PM2.5 level returned to pre-Covid lockdown concentrations measured in 2019. "Air pollution has a massive impact on human health in India. It is the second biggest risk factor for disease, and the economic cost of air pollution is estimated to exceed \$150 billion dollars an-

nually," it stated. The major sources of air pollution in India include vehicular emissions, power generation, industrial waste, biomass combustion for cooking, the construction sector, and episodic events like crop burning. In 2019, the Environment Ministry enacted the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) which seeks to reduce particulate matter (PM) concentrations by 20 to 30 per cent by 2024 in all identified non-attainment cities, increase air quality monitoring, and implement a city, regional, and state-specific clean air action plan as well as conduct source apportionment studies. The report observed that the



lockdowns, restrictions and the resulting economic downturn due to the Covid-19 pandemic have made it difficult to determine NCAP's impact based on air pollution levels alone. It said apart

## BHIWADI WORLD'S MOST POLLUTED CITY

**Jaipur:** Bhiwadi, the industrial town of Alwar district in Rajasthan, has left behind Delhi in topping the air pollution charts on world index for the year 2021. IQAir, which monitors air pollution around the world, has released its 2021 Global Air Quality Report covering 6,475 cities in 117 countries. According to this report, Bhiwadi is the most polluted city. The average level of PM-2.5 has been recorded at 106.2 in Bhiwadi in 2021 against 96.4 in Delhi. PM-2.5 is the unit to measure the level of pollution. In the category of cities, Ghaziabad is at number two after Bhiwadi, where the pollution level is 102. "It is estimated that 20 to 35 per cent of total urban PM2.5 concentrations is directly or indirectly due to internal combustion engines in motor vehicles. Annual vehicle sales in India are expected to increase, with an estimated fleet number reaching 10.5 million in 2030," the report noted.

# international

A month into Russia's invasion of Ukraine February 24, there has been no major breakthrough on the battlefield or the negotiating table. With its govt still standing and its outnumbered troops battling Russian forces to bloody stalemates in multiple places, Ukraine is scarred, mourning its dead but far from beaten as it braces for a second month of bombing, combat, casualties and resistance. When Russia unleashed its force in Europe's biggest offensive since World War II and floated the prospect of nuclear escalation if the West intervened, a lightning-swift toppling of Ukraine's democratically elected government seemed possible

4 WEEKS, STILL DEFIANT

## Russia bombs Ukraine cities

## Russia gets Chinese backing to stay in G20

REUTERS Lviv/Mykolaiv/Kharkiv, March 23: US President Joe Biden flies to Europe Wednesday for an emergency NATO summit on Ukraine, where invading Russian troops are stalled, cities are under bombardment and the besieged port of Mariupol is in flames.

Four weeks into a war that has driven a quarter of Ukraine's 44 million people from their homes, Russia has failed to capture a single major Ukrainian city, while Western sanctions have ostracised it from the world economy.

After failing in what Western countries say was an attempt to seize Kyiv swiftly and depose the government, Russian forces have taken heavy losses, are frozen in place for at least a week on most fronts and face supply problems and fierce resistance.

Worst hit has been Mariupol, a southern port completely surrounded by Russian forces, where hundreds of thousands of people have been sheltering since the war's early days, under constant bombardment and with food, water and heat supplies cut.

New satellite photographs from commercial firm Maxar released overnight showed massive destruction of what was once a city of 400,000 people, with columns of smoke rising from residential apart-



- Biden on first foreign trip since war began
- Russians have turned to siege tactics and bombardment of cities, causing massive destruction and many civilian deaths
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warns against sending NATO peacekeepers to Ukraine
- US, NATO, EU expected to roll out more sanctions against Russia

On the first, the brave citizens of Ukraine are refusing to submit. They're fighting back. They're defending their homes. And although Russia may take more territory in these brutal military operations, it will never take the country away from the Ukrainian people

JAKE SULLIVAN | US NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

ment buildings in flames.

No journalists have been able to report from inside the Ukrainian-held parts of the city for more than a week, during which time Ukrainian officials say Russia has bombed a theatre and an art school used as bomb shelters, burying hundreds of people alive. Russia denies targeting those buildings.

Biden, due to arrive in Brussels Wednesday evening, will meet NATO and European leaders in an emergency summit at the Western military alliance's headquarters. The leaders are expected to roll out additional sanctions against Russia Thursday. Sources said the US package would include measures targeting Russian members of parliament.

Biden will also visit Poland,

which has taken in most of the more than 3.6 million refugees who have fled Ukraine and served as the main route for Western supplies of weapons to Ukraine.

### TALKS 'CONFRONTATIONAL'

Kyiv hopes that Russia's President Vladimir Putin, having failed to swiftly subdue what he describes as an illegitimate nation, can now be compelled to negotiate a ceasefire and withdrawal. Peace talks have been ongoing since last week.

"It's very difficult, sometimes confrontational," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in an overnight address. "But step by step we are moving forward."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also described the talks as

difficult, saying the Ukrainian side "constantly changes its mind and backs away from its own proposals".

Poland has proposed sending NATO peacekeepers to Ukraine, although Biden has long since ruled out any such ground presence. Lavrov said that could lead to war with the West.

Despite its losses so far, Russia may still be hoping to make more gains on the battlefield, especially in the east, in territory including Mariupol which Moscow demands Ukraine cede to Russian-backed separatists.

In the east, the Russians were trying to link troops at Mariupol with those near Kharkiv in the hope of encircling Ukrainian forces, while in the southwest they were bypassing the city of Mykolayiv to try

### Putin wants rubles for Russian gas from 'unfriendly countries'

Moscow: Russia will now accept payment for gas exports to "unfriendly countries" in rubles only, President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting with the government Wednesday. The Russian President explained that Russia plans to abandon all "compromised" currencies in payment settlements, RT reported. He added that illegitimate decisions by a number of Western countries to freeze Russia's assets destroyed all confidence in their currencies. "I have decided to implement in the shortest possible time a set of measures to change the payments for - yes let's start with this - for our natural gas supplied to the so-called unfriendly countries in Russian rubles, that is to stop using all compromised currencies for transactions," the Russian President said. Putin gave the Central Bank and the government a week to determine the procedure for operations for buying rubles on the domestic market for importers of Russian gas. The President added that Russia will continue to supply gas in accordance with the volumes and pricing principles of the contracts. Only the currency of payment will change, the report said.

to advance on Odesa, Ukraine's biggest port.



Russian leader plans to be at next G20 summit in Indonesia. US, allies mull barring Russia over invasion of Ukraine. Move could face vetoes from others in G20, sources say. China: Russia is 'important member' of big economies group.

JAKARTA: Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to attend the next G20 summit in Indonesia later this year and received valuable backing from Beijing Wednesday in a pushback to suggestions by some members that Russia could be barred from the group.

The United States and its Western allies are assessing whether Russia should remain within the Group of Twenty major economies following its invasion of Ukraine, sources involved in the discussions said.

But any move to exclude Russia would probably be vetoed by others in the group, raising the prospect of some countries instead skipping G20 meetings, the sources said.

Russia's ambassador to Indonesia, which currently holds the rotating G20 chair, said Putin intended to travel to the Indonesian resort island of Bali for the G20 summit in November.

"It will depend on many, many

things, including the COVID situation, which is getting better. So far, his intention is... he wants to," Ambassador Lyudmila Vorobieva told a news conference.

China, which has not condemned Russia's invasion and criticised Western sanctions, defended Moscow on Wednesday, calling Russia an "important member" of the G20.

The G20 is a group that needs to find answers to critical issues, such as economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said.

"No member has the right to remove another country as a member. The G20 should implement real multilateralism, strengthen unity and cooperation," he told a news briefing.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Assange to get married in jail

London: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange will marry his long-term partner Stella Morris inside a high-security prison in southeast London Wednesday at a small ceremony attended by four guests, two official witnesses and two guards. Assange is being held in jail while US authorities seek his extradition to face trial on 18 counts relating to WikiLeaks' release of vast troves of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables more than a decade ago. The 50-year-old Australian, who denies any wrongdoing, has been in Belmarsh prison since 2019 and before that was holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London for seven years.

#### Thailand bans crypto payments

Bangkok: Thailand's securities regulator Wednesday announced it was barring the use of crypto-currencies for payment of goods and services. The ruling effective April 1 does not ban investment in crypto-currencies, which has become increasingly popular in the past year after being promoted by local exchanges. The Securities and Exchange Commission said it was taking action in order to protect the stability of the country's financial and monetary systems from threats including money laundering and other cyber-crimes. The regulation also specifically bans the promotion of crypto-currencies for payment along with the distribution of software and devices for that purpose.

#### Poland expels 45 Russian diplomats

Warsaw: Poland is expelling 45 Russian diplomats suspected of working for Russian intelligence, the foreign ministry said Wednesday. Russia said the accusations were baseless. Relations between Russia and Central European countries that once formed part of its sphere of influence have long been fraught but the invasion of Ukraine has significantly increased fear and suspicion about Moscow's intentions. "In total, 45 people with varying diplomatic status... were ordered to leave the territory of the Republic of Poland within 5 days," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lukasz Jasina told a news conference. "Russia is our neighbour, it will not disappear from the map of Europe, but the aggression towards Ukraine proves that it is an unfriendly state, and even hostile to Poland." The 45 diplomats being expelled represented around half of those currently working at the embassy, he said.



#### Russian veteran quits, leaves country

Lviv: A veteran aide of President Vladimir Putin has resigned over the Ukraine war and left Russia with no intention to return, two sources said on Wednesday, the first senior official to break with the Kremlin since Putin launched his invasion a month ago. The Kremlin confirmed that the aide, Anatoly Chubais, had resigned of his own accord. Chubais hung up the phone when contacted by Reuters. Chubais was one of the principal architects of Boris Yeltsin's economic reforms of the 1990s and was Putin's boss in the future president's first Kremlin job. He later ran big state businesses under Putin and held political jobs, lately serving as Kremlin special envoy to international organisations.



#### Humanitarian convoy attacked: Zelenskyy

Lviv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russian forces not only blocked a humanitarian convoy trying to reach besieged Mariupol but with desperately needed supplies Tuesday but took captive some of the rescue workers and bus drivers. He said the Russians had agreed to the route ahead of time. "We are trying to organize stable humanitarian corridors for Mariupol residents, but almost all of our attempts, unfortunately, are foiled by the Russian occupiers, by shelling, or deliberate terror," Zelenskyy said. Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said the Russians seized 11 bus drivers and four rescue workers along with their vehicles. More than 7,000 people were evacuated from Mariupol Tuesday, but about 100,000 remain in the city "in inhuman conditions, under a full blockade, without food, without water, without medicine and under constant shelling, under constant bombardment," he said.



### CHINA PLANE CRASH

## Relatives wait in grim vigil

MOST OF THE JET WAS DISINTEGRATED UPON IMPACT AND NO SURVIVORS HAVE BEEN FOUND YET

REUTERS

Wuzhou, March 23: As recovery teams searched mountainous terrain for victims of Monday's plane crash in southern China, a man named Zhang whose nephew was among the 132 people aboard the Boeing 737-800 said his biggest hope, of finding him alive, was unrealistic.

A retiree in his 60s who asked that his full name not be used, Zhang had driven with his son Tuesday from the southern city of Shenzhen.

"I hope the country can thoroughly investigate this matter and find out whether it is the manufacturer's fault or a maintenance problem," he told Reuters Wednesday. "I came with my son and planned to stay until the matter is sorted out and take his ashes back. But this depends on the work of the government," he said.

Dozens of family members congregated at the heavily-secured checkpoint leading to the site in Teng county in southern China's Guangxi region in pairs or small groups Wednesday. Some arrived in government convoys, accompanied by officials.

"To start with... I just felt shocked about the news," Zhang recalled



during a break in heavy rain that disrupted search efforts, speaking slowly and holding back tears.

As he spoke to reporters, Zhang tried to give them lunchboxes provided by officials, saying they looked hungry. "About half an hour later, I found out that someone from my family was on this plane, you can imagine how we feel," he said.

"Such a big disaster, the whole country feels hurt," he said of hearing the news of Monday afternoon's accident, China's first deadly airline crash in over a decade. Another relative at the site, a 57-year-old man surnamed Ding whose brother's sister-in-law had been on the plane, had not given up hope.

"All I want is hope, the hope of survival," he said.

### One of two black boxes found

Chinese searchers found Wednesday one of two black boxes from a China Eastern Airlines plane that crashed this week in forest-clad mountains with 132 people onboard, the aviation regulator said. The device was severely damaged, and it was not immediately clear if it was the flight data recorder or the cockpit voice recorder, an official of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) told a media briefing. The cause of the crash has yet to be determined, with aviation authorities warning that their investigation would be very difficult because of the severe damage to the aircraft. "We found a black box on the scene but this black box has been severely damaged on the outside, so the investigation team on the front-line is still ascertaining whether it is the flight data recorder or the cockpit voice recorder," Mao Yanfeng, head of aircraft investigation at CAAC, told the briefing.

### DESPITE PLEDGES

## Taliban nixes girls higher education

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kabul, March 23: In a surprise decision the hardline leadership of Afghanistan's new rulers has decided against opening educational institutions to girls beyond Grade six, a Taliban official said Wednesday the first day of Afghanistan's new school year.

The unexpected decision came late Tuesday as Afghanistan's education ministry prepared for the new year opening of school, which was expected to herald the return of girls to school. A statement by the ministry earlier in the week urged "all students" to come to school.

The religiously-driven Taliban administration fears going forward with enrolling girls beyond Grade 6 could erode their base, said Waheedullah Hashmi, external relations and donor representative with the Taliban-led administration.

"The leadership hasn't decided when or how they will allow girls to return to school," Hashmi said. While he accepted that urban centers are mostly supportive of girls



The latest setback for girls' education is certain to receive widespread condemnation from the international community that has been urging the Taliban leaders to open schools and give women their right to public space

education, much of rural Afghanistan is opposed, particularly in tribal Pashtun regions.

# business

## of the day quote

Due to Omicron it came down 1.60 lakh per day. I am happy to report that in last seven days we are again back to 3.82 lakh per day. There is a hope of revival and based on that we expect that by 2023-24 we will take the number of 40 crore

**JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA** | CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER

Deployment of 5,000 EV chargers across the country is just a stepping stone towards achieving the bigger vision of supporting charging network for EVs in the country with products that are future proof, reliable and are industry leading in terms of performance

**ANANT NAHATA** | MD AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, EXICOM GROUP

Our partnership with Kotak Prime is another step to offer comfortable and smooth funding options beyond Tier-1 cities to foster eco-friendly commuting. This will benefit our customers to save significantly on their commute costs and consciously build a greener tomorrow

**SOHINDER GILL** | CEO, HERO ELECTRIC

## SHORT TAKES

### Greek FM in India

**New Delhi:** Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias arrived here Tuesday night on a visit during which he would undertake a comprehensive review of bilateral relations with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar and discuss regional and international issues of mutual interest. At the invitation of the external affairs minister, Dendias is on an official visit to India March 22-23, 2022. This is his first to India. "A warm welcome to Greek Foreign Minister @NikosDendias on his first official visit to India," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

### HDFC approves ₹2L cr home loans

**New Delhi:** Mortgage lender HDFC Wednesday said it has approved the highest ever retail home loans of over Rs 2 lakh crore in 2021-22. The demand for these loans was from across the country, HDFC said in a statement. HDFC MD Renu Sud Karnad said, "In over four and half decades, I have not seen a better time for the housing sector than now due to lower interest rates, stable property prices, favourable demographics, increasing urbanisation and rising aspirations".

### Kotak, Axis buy 8% stake in ONDC

**New Delhi:** Kotak Mahindra Bank and Axis Bank have acquired 7.84 per cent stake each in the open public digital infrastructure framework entity ONDC. Both the banks have invested Rs 10 crore each in the entity. "Kotak Mahindra Bank has subscribed to 10,00,000 equity shares of Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) for a consideration of Rs 10 crore, translating into an equity shareholding of 7.84 per cent in ONDC as on March 22, 2022," Kotak said.

### HMSI exports cross 30L unit milestone

**New Delhi:** Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) Wednesday said it has crossed the cumulative exports milestone of 30 lakh units in its 21st year of operations in the country. The company, which started exports from India started in 2001 with its debut model Activa, said it crossed the first 15 lakh units mark in 2016 and doubled it in the last 5 years.



There is no plan under consideration for disinvestment of BSNL. There is no plan under consideration for disinvestment of BSNL. **DEVUSINH CHAUHAN** | MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS

## BOOKMYSHOW BAGS TICKETING RIGHTS FOR IPL

Ticket booking platform Bookmyshow has bagged the exclusive ticketing rights from the BCCI for the 15th edition of the Indian Premier League this summer. Along with the exclusive ticketing rights, they will also manage the venue services for all the stadia, including the gate entry and spectator management services of the 15th edition of the IPL



## MILESTONE MOMENT

# India exports breach \$400bn

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that despite all adversities including Covid-19 pandemic, and Russia-Ukraine war, India has achieved this milestone. The highest ever goods export target was achieved nine days ahead of the March 31 deadline



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, March 23:** The country's exports for the first time crossed the \$400 billion mark in a fiscal on healthy performance by sectors such as petroleum products, engineering, gems and jewellery, and chemicals, according to the commerce ministry's data released Wednesday.

Hailing the country's success in achieving its goods export target, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that this is a key milestone in India's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' journey. "First time in history, India has crossed \$400 billion in merchandise exports...If this was a movie like The Kashmir Files, it would be called a Make in India blockbuster," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal told reporters here. He added that closer interaction

Previously, the outbound shipments had touched a record of \$330.07 billion in 2018-19. Imports during 2018-19 stood at \$589 billion, leaving a trade deficit of about \$189 billion. On average, goods worth about \$33 billion were shipped every month and about \$1 billion every day. Engineering goods exports have gone up by nearly 50 per cent so far this fiscal. Agriculture exports too have recorded the highest ever export in 2021-22

with states and districts; engagement with exporters; faster resolution of their issues; actively engaging with different export promotion councils, industry associations and other stakeholders have helped in reaching this milestone. The key export sectors, which contributed to record healthy growth include petroleum products, engineering, gems and jewellery, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. The top five export destinations are the US, the UAE, China, Bangladesh, and

India set an ambitious target of \$400 billion of goods exports and achieves this target for the first time ever. I congratulate our farmers, weavers, MSMEs, manufacturers, exporters for this success. This is a key milestone in our Aatmanirbhar Bharat journey. **NARENDRA MODI** | PM

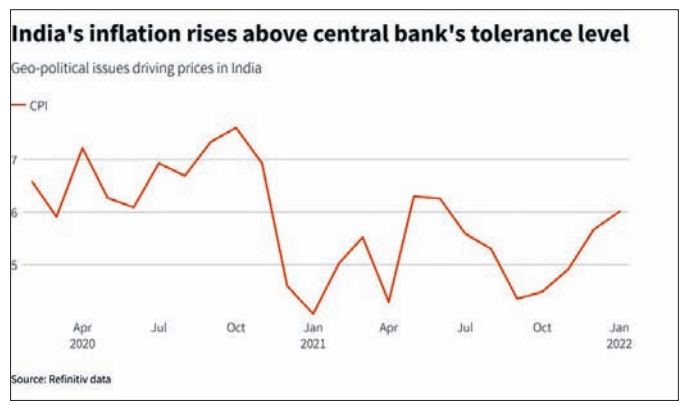
the Netherlands. Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said that going by the trend, "we would be adding \$10-12 billion in the remaining nine days", taking the exports by end of 2021-22 to over \$410 billion.

Commenting on the data, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said crossing \$400 billion is a remarkable achievement as exporters have added over \$110 billion in one year to reach here despite huge logistics challenges, including container shortage, skyrocketing freight and liquidity constraints.

FIEO Vice-President Khalid Khan termed the achievement as a "landmark" and said that despite the Covid-19 pandemic exports have "done so well". Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP) Chairman Narendra Goenka said that India crossing \$400 billion merchandise exports marks the beginning of an era of exponential growth and dominance in world trade. "From here, the growth rates are going to be exponential," Goenka added.

Till March 21, export targets set for major countries such as Australia, Taiwan, Korea, Bangladesh, Poland, Brazil, Indonesia, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Italy, Japan, Canada, the US, South Africa, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Egypt and Mexico have been achieved.

## Indians tighten belts as Ukraine war drives up prices of necessities



Consumers in Asia's third-largest economy are feeling the bite as companies pass on a surge in costs since the invasion, battling the first hikes in the prices of diesel and petrol, as well as more expensive vegetable oils

HIGHER PRICES FROM UKRAINE CONFLICT PUT RECOVERY AT RISK. COMPANIES UP PRICES TO PASS ON HIGHER COSTS OF FUEL, MATERIALS. Inflation. But since the invasion late in February, which Russia calls a special operation, Indian firms have raised prices of milk, instant noodles, chicken and other key items by about 5% to 20%. About 800 million of a population of nearly 1.4 billion received free government supplies of staple foods during the pandemic, and even small price rises now can mean a knock for their budgets. Families' finances could stay anaemic for the third year in a row, warned Pronab Sen, formerly India's chief statistician. "The process of rebuilding savings was only beginning post the pandemic," he added. "Because of this latest shock, they will have to cut back on consumption."

## BIZ BUZZ

### ET Healthcare Awards-2021: Laurels for Care Hospitals

**Bhubaneswar:** Care Hospitals and Care Hospitals, Bhubaneswar bagged the "Best Hospital Chain" and "Excellence in Hospital Management during Covid-19" respectively in the Economic Times Healthcare Awards 2021. Hospital Chief Operating Officer (Care Hospitals, Bhubaneswar) Kishay Anand said, "The award has boosted our credentials as the leading healthcare service provider in Eastern India." The Care Hospitals, Bhubaneswar is the Group's first greenfield hospital, with multi-specialty healthcare. It offers services in the core specialties of Cardiac Sciences, Orthopedics, Neuro Sciences, Renal Sciences, Medical and Surgical Gastroenterology, as well as high-end critical care and emergency medicine with all major specialties. The 300-bed hospital along with best in class ICU & OT infrastructure is strategically located and is well connected to the railway station, airport and National Highway. The hospital is NABH and NABL accredited and offers the highest standard of quality service and best in class infrastructure. Today Care Hospitals is not just a hospital but a complete healthcare ecosystem, with related components of education, training and research.



### Sadashiv Samantaray takes charge as Director (Commercial) of NALCO

**Bhubaneswar:** Sadashiv Samantaray has taken charge as the new Director (Commercial) of NALCO, a Navratna CPSE under the Ministry of Mines, Government of India, March 22, 2022. Samantaray is a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar and MBA from Utkal University. After joining NALCO as a Graduate Engineer Trainee of the second batch in 1985, he has acquired more than 36 years of experience in technical and commercial areas of the organisation. He has been instrumental in introducing many new initiatives in the company like MOU system with customers, LME linked pricing mechanism, LME registration of metal, e-tendering for export, formulation of commercial manuals and guidelines to bring transparency, and development of an efficient and effective logistics system for effective supply chain and cost savings. Sridhar Patra, CMD, NALCO congratulated Shri Samantaray on his assuming the position as Director (Commercial) and expressed the hope that with his joining, the Board of NALCO will be further strengthened.



### Nayara buys Russian Urals after 1 yr; IOC books another 3mn

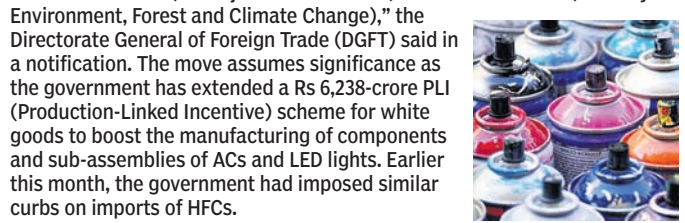
**New Delhi, March 23:** Indian private refiner Nayara Energy, part-owned by Russia's Rosneft, has purchased Russian oil after a gap of a year, buying about 1.8 million barrels of Urals from trader Trafigura, two trade sources said and Refinitiv data shows. Indian companies are snapping up Russian oil as it is available at a deep discount after some companies and countries shunned purchases from Moscow due to sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine. Wednesday Indian Oil Corp, the country's top refiner, also bought 3 million barrels of Russian oil via a tender for May loading from trader Vitol, traders said. This is the second purchase of Russian oil by IOC this month. Nayara's deal, struck after Russia launched what it calls a "special operation" in Ukraine Feb 24, involves use of Liberia-flagged Aframax Moskovsky Prospect, managed by a unit of Russia's state-run shipping firm Sovcomflot, Refinitiv data show. Sovcomflot was blacklisted by the United States last month. Britain and Canada also banned vessels flagged, operated or owned by Russia from docking at their ports. "Like any other refinery, Nayara Energy has ongoing crude sourcing agreements to optimise its crude basket with an aim to achieve the best option for our refinery," it said. Earlier this month, Hindustan Petroleum also bought Russian oil on delivered basis at deep discounts through tenders. India rarely bought Russian oil in the past due to high freight costs.



### Curbs on exports of hydrofluorocarbons

**New Delhi:** The government Wednesday imposed curbs on exports of hydrofluorocarbons, used in refrigeration and air-conditioning, to boost domestic availability of the chemical. Exporters will now have to seek permission from the government to export hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). "Export policy of hydrofluorocarbons has been revised from free to restricted category with immediate effect, and export authorisations would be issued on NOC (No Objection Certificate) from MoEF and CC (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change)," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification. The move assumes significance as the government has extended a Rs 6,238-crore PLI (Production-Linked Incentive) scheme for white goods to boost the manufacturing of components and sub-assemblies of ACs and LED lights. Earlier this month, the government had imposed similar curbs on imports of HFCs.

DARKENING PICTURE. Surging global prices of crude have prompted companies in the import-dependent nation to raise retail prices of petrol and diesel twice this week. India imports 85% of its crude oil, which has seen prices rise nearly 50% this year. Some wholesalers said their sales of edible oil had fallen by a quarter in the past month as prices rose. These factors helped keep India's retail inflation in February above the central bank's comfort level of 6% for the second month in a row, while the wholesale rate was more than 13%. The Confederation of All India Traders estimates input costs for makers of consumer durables and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) to rise another 10% to 15% this month as fuel prices rise, an expense destined to be passed on to the final consumer.



# India freezes plan to allow local firms list overseas

REUTERS

**New Delhi, March 23:** India has frozen plans to allow local firms to list overseas as it seeks to bolster its own capital markets, government officials and industry sources said, in a blow to foreign funds and stock exchanges seeking to tap into the country's tech boom. New Delhi's decision marks a sudden reversal in policy after officials said late last year that the new rules for overseas listings would be announced in February. Three senior government officials with direct knowledge of the decision told Reuters the plan had been put on hold as India believes there is enough depth in local capital markets for firms to raise funds and get good valuations.

They declined to be named as the move has not been made public. Indian equity markets have boomed as enthusiastic retail investors and a pandemic-induced flood of easy money pushed prices to record highs, encouraging a slew of Indian tech founders to go local with their initial public offerings (IPOs). More than 60 companies made their market debut in India in 2021 and raised a total of more than \$13.7 billion, which was more than the previous three years combined. Like other global markets, Indian stocks have been rattled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the volatility has delayed IPO plans. But the outlook for such listings dimmed after digital payments app Paytm, backed by China's Alibaba and Ant and

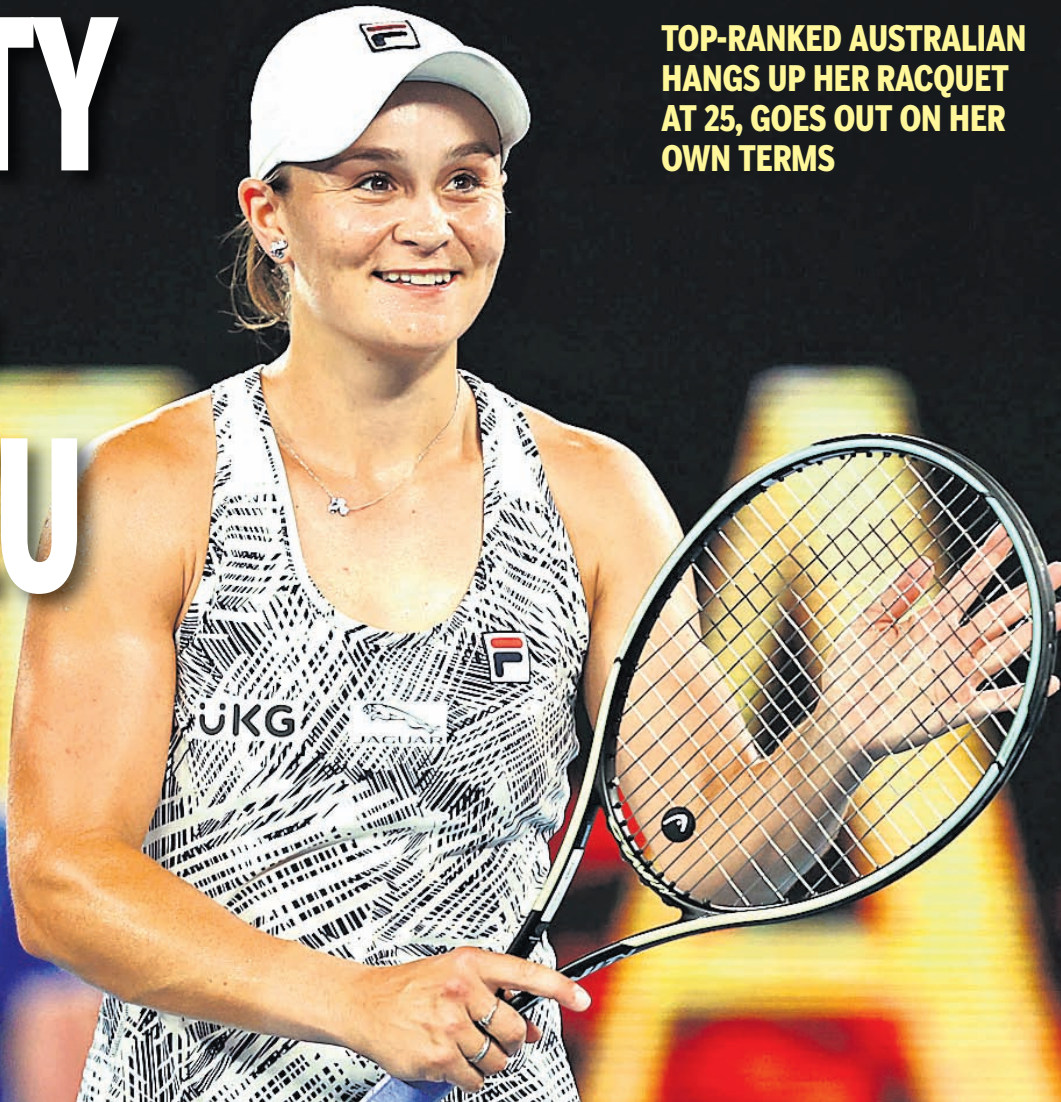


Japan's Softbank, plunged on its debut in November, raising questions about valuations. Its shares have slumped 75% from its issue price. Even before Paytm's rout, US venture capitalists such as Tiger Global and Sequoia Capital had lobbied Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow Indian firms to list

abroad to achieve better valuations, Reuters has reported. A second government official said the overseas listing rules were now in "limbo" and both the officials cited the stock market debut of food-delivery giant Zomato, which clocked a high valuation, as contributing to the change of view. When Zomato went public on Mumbai's exchange in July, its

offer was 38 times oversubscribed and its stock jumped 66%. And Indian cosmetics-to-fashion platform Nykaa surged 96% on its debut, achieving a valuation of nearly \$14 billion. Two industry sources briefed by government officials also said they had been told the plan was on hold, which also marks a setback for exchanges in New York and London, which had been vying for a slice of India's rapidly growing start-up economy. Global investors have pushed for India to allow overseas listings, saying foreign markets would give Indian companies better access to liquidity and capital. But such a move, which has been under consideration since at least 2020, has deeply divided Indian policy makers.

# BARTY BIDS ADIEU



**TOP-RANKED AUSTRALIAN  
HANGS UP HER RACQUET  
AT 25, GOES OUT ON HER  
OWN TERMS**

## Desai bags gold at Para Athletics GP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, March 23: Sprinter Pranav Prashant Desai won India's first gold medal at the 2022 World Para Athletics Grand Prix here on Wednesday, claiming the top prize in the men's 200m T64 final.

T64 classification is for athletes with a leg amputation, who compete with prosthetics in a standing position. Desai's gold was the only medal for India on the day as throwers faltered at the Dubai Club for People of Determination grounds.

Desai, a former gold medalist at the Fazza Championships, led from start to finish to end the race in 24.42 seconds, ahead of Thailand's Denpoom Kotcharang (25.78 sec) and Kenneth Jenssen Heggdal of Norway (27.08 sec).

"I came here with the gold in my mind and I am happy to lead the race from start to finish. It's nice to be back here. I have been working on my endurance speed for the past few months. Happy to execute my plans here," said Desai.

"My target is to win 100m and 200m gold for India at the Asian Para Games which would pave my way to the Paris 2024 Paralympics," added the 22-year-old, who trains in Sports Authority of India Centre, Gandhinagar. The day also witnessed a world record in men's javelin F40 finals when Iraq's Naas Ahmed hurled the javelin to a distance of 39.08 metres to take the gold.

After two days, Colombia sits on top of the medals table with 13 podiums, including six gold, followed by Thailand (16) and Tunisia (7). India lies in the 15th place with four medals.

## WC spot on line for CR7, Portugal



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lisbon, March 23: At 37 years old, it's no secret time is running out for Cristiano Ronaldo. Playing at a high level is not getting any easier, and the opportunities to compete in top tournaments are becoming scarce. Missing out on the World Cup, at his age, could mean he's never playing in soccer's showcase event again.

Portugal faces two must-win games in the European qualifying playoffs, beginning Thursday when it hosts Turkey. The winner then plays next Tuesday against the winner of European champion Italy vs. North Macedonia for a ticket to Qatar.

Although no one knows if Ronaldo would still play in the next World Cup at age 41, not qualifying for this one would be one of the biggest setbacks of his career.

Ronaldo tried not to think past the task at hand, though. "Totally focused on the 2022 World Cup," he said this week on Instagram. "As always, I'm proud to represent Portugal. We know it won't be easy. We have the maximum respect for the opponents that we will face and they have the same goals as us. But together we will fight to put Portugal where it deserves to be. Let's do it!"

Ronaldo is trying to make it to his 10th consecutive major tournament. He is the only player to have scored at least once in the finals of nine top tournament in a row, a streak that started at the 2004 European Championship and includes four other Euros

and four World Cups.

He is the active Portugal player with seven, two shy of Eusebio. Portugal was relegated to the play-offs after a heartbreaking 1-2 loss to Serbia at home in the final Group A game in November, when the hosts opened the scoring but conceded the deciding goal in the 90th minute. A draw would have been enough for Portugal, which is trying to qualify for the World Cup for the sixth straight time.

Only two consecutive victories will do now. "It's not the ideal situation, but it is what it is and we have to face it with responsibility," Liverpool forward Diogo Jota said. "We can't make too much drama about it. It's a soccer match and I believe we can win and make it to the World Cup."

To make it harder for Portugal, coach Fernando Santos has a depleted squad heading into the game against Turkey because of injuries, suspensions and the coronavirus. His regular-starting defenders are both out — Pepe because of COVID-19 and Rúben Dias because of an injury.

Santos also won't be able to count on goalkeeper Anthony Lopes, defender Nelson Semedo and midfielders Renato Sanches and Rúben Neves because of injuries, while defender Joao Cancelo is out because of a suspension.

In the playoffs could also mean the end of the road in the national team for the 39-year-old Pepe, and maybe even for coach Santos, who has been at Portugal's helm since 2014.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brisbane, March 23: Ash Barty did things on her own terms as she won three Grand Slam singles titles and spent more than two consecutive years at No. 1 in the women's tennis rankings.

She retired on her own terms, too. At the age of 25, just two months after winning the Australian Open title. The announcement stunned the tennis world Wednesday.

"I just know at the moment, in my heart, for me as a person, this is right," Barty said, her voice shaky at times, during a six-minute video posted on her Instagram account Wednesday in Australia.

Saying it was time to "chase other dreams," Barty, who announced her engagement to trainee golf professional Garry Kissick in November, said she no longer feels compelled to do what she knows is required to be the best she can be at tennis.

"It's the first time I've actually said out loud and, yeah, it's hard to say," Barty said during an informal interview with her former doubles partner, Casey Dellacqua. "I don't have the physical drive, the emotional want and everything it takes to challenge yourself at the

very top level any more. I am spent."

This is not the first time Barty walked away from tennis: She was the Wimbledon junior champion at age 15 in 2011, presaging a promising professional career, but left the tour entirely for nearly two years in 2014 because of burnout, overwhelmed by the pressure and travel required.

She played professional cricket back home in Australia, then eventually picked up a racket once again and returned to her other sport.

Barty went on to win singles major championships on three different surfaces — on clay at the 2019 French Open, on grass at Wimbledon last year and on the hard courts of Melbourne Park in January, becoming the first Australian player in 44 years to triumph at the nation's Grand Slam tournament.

But she hasn't played a tournament since being presented with her Australian Open trophy by seven-time Grand Slam singles champion Evonne Goolagong Cawley, her mentor and Indigenous and Australian tennis icon, after a straight-sets final victory over Danielle Collins.

"I am so supportive of Ash that she does what makes her happy," Goolagong Cawley told this agency.

"I can't wait to see what happens in the next chapter of Ash's life, and what helps her achieve her dreams."

Barty won 15 tour-level titles in singles and 12 in doubles since first turning pro in 2010. She spent 121 weeks at No. 1 in the rankings, including the last 114 in a row.

Her announcement was all the more stunning from an on-court perspective given her recent run of success: Barty had won 25 of her last 26 matches and three of her past four events.

Only one other woman has walked away from the sport while atop the WTA rankings: Justine Henin was No. 1 when she retired in May 2008. In a statement released by the WTA, CEO Steve Simon called Barty "the ultimate competitor."

During her 21-month sabbatical from tennis as a teen, Barty played cricket with the Brisbane Heat of the Women's Big Bash League. She returned to tennis in May 2016, playing a USD 50,000 ITF event in Eastbourne.

One year later, she was ranked No. 88; by the end of 2017, Barty was an established member of the top 20. "I know I've done this before," Barty said with a laugh in the retirement video, "but in a very different feeling. I'm so grateful to

everything that tennis has given me. It's given me all of my dreams, plus more, but I know that the time is right now for me to step away and chase other dreams and to, yeah, put the rackets down."

A semifinal loss to Petra Kvitova in Doha in February was the last match she played in 2020; Barty stayed home in Australia for the balance of the season when the global pandemic emerged.

After six months on the road in 2021 and after winning five titles, including at Wimbledon, Barty ended her season abruptly after a loss to Shelby Rogers at the U.S. Open.

"Wimbledon last year changed a lot for me as a person and for me as an athlete," Barty said. "When you work so hard your whole life for one goal — to be able to win Wimbledon, which was my dream, the one true dream that I wanted in tennis, that really changed my perspective."

She described what she termed a "gut feeling" after Wimbledon about maybe being ready to move on, but she also described herself then as not "quite fulfilled."

Her victory at the Australian Open satisfied another gap, and Barty said she was completely aware that "my happiness wasn't dependent on the results."

## Srikanth, Saina, Chirag-Satwik pair sail through

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Basel, March 23: Seventh seed Kidambi Srikanth and Saina Nehwal made a winning start in the singles competition while Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy battled past All England champions Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Bagas Maulana to progress in the Swiss Open here Wednesday.

Srikanth defeated Mads Christophersen 21-16, 21-17 in a match lasting 32 minutes. Parupalli Kashyap too cruised to a 21-17, 21-9 win over France's Enogat Roy to enter the second round. Third seeds Chirag and Satwiksairaj got past the Indonesian pair 17-21, 21-11, 21-18.

In the women's singles, Ashmita Chaliha scripted a come-from-behind win over France's LéOnice Huet, prevailing 19-21, 21-10, 21-11. Later in the day, London Olympics bronze medallist Saina outplayed Yaelle Hoyaux 21-8, 21-13 in her opening round fixture.

## MOEEN TO MISS SEASON-OPENER



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 23: Defending champions Chennai Super Kings will miss the services of Moeen Ali for their IPL-opener as the star England all-rounder is yet to receive his India visa for competing in the lucrative T20 tournament, beginning in Mumbai Saturday.

CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan confirmed the development. "It is almost certain that Moeen Ali will miss the first game. He has still not got the visa. We are on it as well as BCCI. Hope it is sorted in a day or two," Viswanathan told this agency.

"It is disappointing that he has not been able to join us. They follow set procedures for players with Pakistan descent. That looks like the reason [for delay]."

His grandfather migrated to England from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir but Moeen is born in England and is a frequent visitor to India.

CSK, four-time IPL champions, will take on last edition's runner-up side Kolkata Knight Riders in the opening match of this year's IPL at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai Saturday.

Viswanathan said even if he

manages to reach India by Thursday, Ali will be unavailable for the opener because of the quarantine protocol laid down by the IPL organisers.

"There is three-day mandatory quarantine which Moeen has to undergo before joining the IPL bio-bubble. So he will be out of the first game even if he gets his visa today or tomorrow."

Because of his fine all-round show which helped the team lift its fourth IPL title, Moeen was retained by CSK alongside inspirational captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja and Ruturaj Gaikwad. Moeen scored 357 runs from 15 innings for CSK in the IPL last year while also taking six wickets from 15 games with his off-spin bowling.

**CHAHAR UNAVAILABLE**

Besides Moeen, CSK will also miss their star pacer Deepak Chahar, who has been ruled out of the first half of the IPL due to a right quadriceps injury which he sustained during the third and final T20 match against the West Indies in Kolkata last month.

Asked about Chahar's progress, Viswanathan said: "He will remain in the NCA until he gets fitness clearance from the BCCI."

## No added advantage of playing in Mumbai: Rohit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 23: Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma Wednesday said they will have no "added advantage" of playing their IPL matches in the city's three grounds as many in the "relatively new team" have not played a single game here in last two years.

The IPL-15 begins at the Wankhede Stadium with a clash between Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday.

"I hope you saw the auction, relatively new team, lot of new guys have come into the team, so I don't believe in added advantage because these guys, like lot of the guys 70 (or) 80 percent of the squad has not played in Bombay before," Rohit said at a virtual press conference. "So there is no such thing as added advantage," the five-time IPL winning captain added.

The league phase of the IPL will be held in Mumbai and Pune. Mumbai have been playing their home games at the Wankhede Stadium since the start of the tournament in 2008.

"Only myself, Surya



Rohit Sharma and MI coach Mahela Jayawardene ahead of press conference

(Suryakumar Yadav), (Kieron Pollard, Ishan (Kishan), (Jasprit Bumrah have played in Bombay (Mumbai) a lot. Others have not played, so there is no such thing as added advantage," he reiterated.

"We all are playing in Bombay after two years, we have not played a single game in Mumbai, in fact the other franchisees have played in Bombay last year, we didn't get to play, so no advantage," Rohit maintained.

**SURYA TO JOIN AFTER CLEARANCE**

Rohit also said that batter Suryakumar is still undergoing rehab at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bangalore and would join the team after getting clearance from there.

"Surya is at NCA at the moment, he is recovering well, he will be here soon and I can't give you his availability now, whether he will be available for first game or not, but we are trying to get him as soon as

possible, once we have the clearance from the NCA," said Rohit.

**WELCOMES EXTRA DRS**

Rohit welcomed the move to have two DRS per innings in the forthcoming season. "Having two DRS is also a good rule, because fewer mistakes in the game, the better it is. In international cricket we play with two DRS, so it should be there in the IPL, so I think it is a good move to bring two DRS by the IPL," said Rohit.

## 25% crowd allowed

**NEW DELHI:** The 15th edition of the Indian Premier League, which is set to begin in Mumbai Saturday, will witness 25 per cent crowd attendance in stadiums, the organisers said Wednesday. The lucrative league gets underway at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday with defending champions Chennai Super Kings taking on Kolkata Knight Riders. "The matches will be played across stadiums in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai & Pune with an audience occupancy rate of 25% as per COVID-19 protocols," the release added. As many as 20 games each will be held at Wankhede and DY Patil, while 15 each will be hosted at Brabourne and MCA International stadium, Pune.

## Jadeja regains top spot among all-rounders in Tests

**DUBAI:** India's Ravindra Jadeja reclaimed the top spot from West Indies' Jason Holder in the latest ICC Test rankings for all-rounders released Wednesday. Jadeja had risen to No.1 after his 175 not out and nine wickets in the first Test against Sri Lanka in Mohali earlier this month. However, he had lost the place to Holder last week. But the two players have once again interchanged places with Jadeja back on top with 385 rating points. Jadeja's compatriot Ravichandran Ashwin held on to his third place among all-rounders and continued to be second in the bowlers' chart. Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah remained static on fourth in the bowling list. India skipper Rohit, the country's top-ranked batter, fell a spot down to seventh in the latest Test rankings for batters. While former India skipper Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant remained static on the ninth and 10th place respectively. In the ODI chart, Kohli retained his second spot even as Rohit moved down a rung to be fourth among batters.

## Mandhana, Yastika move up in women's ODI rankings

**DUBAI:** India's Smriti Mandhana and Yastika Bhatia moved up to the 10th and 39th spots respectively in the recently-released ICC Women's ODI Player Rankings, but skipper Mithali Raj's descent in the batters' chart continued as she dropped to eighth position. Star opener Mandhana climbed up one place to enter the top 10 with a rating of 663. Bhatia's impressive run was also reflected in the rankings issued Tuesday as she moved up eight places to the 39th spot. Mithali, who has slipped five places in the past two weeks, has dropped one more spot to be joint eighth alongside New Zealand's Amy Satterthwaite. In the bowlers' chart, India pacer Pooja Vastrakar has risen 13 spots and is currently placed 56th while veteran Jhulan Goswami dropped a rung to be seventh.

## CSK unveil jersey

**CHENNAI:** Four-time IPL champions Chennai Super Kings Wednesday unveiled their new jersey for IPL-15. CSK captain MS Dhoni, in a video, unveiled the new-look jersey featuring camouflage design on the shoulders and four stars atop the franchise's logo. Last year, CSK added the camouflage on the jersey as a tribute to the Indian armed forces. The four stars highlight the four titles they have won so far in the IPL — in 2010, 2011, 2018 and 2021. The trademark roaring lion logo has been placed at the left corner of the shirt. The new jersey also features the logo of CSK's principal sponsor, TVS Eurogrip, the two and three-wheeler tyre brand.