

LIVING A CHARACTER

Popular model-turned-actor Kanika Mann says she relates to her character in the web series 'Roohaniyat'

LEISURE P2

AID TO UKRAINE

Western leaders meeting in Brussels agree to strengthen forces in eastern Europe and increase military aid to Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL P10

JADEJA REPLACES MSD

MS Dhoni hands over captaincy duties of Chennai Super Kings to all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja

SPORTS P12

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UMAR KHALID DENIED BAIL

New Delhi: A Delhi court Thursday denied bail to former JNU student Umar Khalid in a case of larger conspiracy in connection with Delhi riots during February 2020. Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat had reserved the order March 3 after hearing arguments from the counsel appearing for Khalid and the prosecution. During the arguments, the accused told the court that the prosecution lacked the evidence to prove its case against him, but to no avail. Khalid and others have been booked under UAPA for being the 'masterminds' of the riots, which had left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.

N KOREA TESTS LONG-RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE

Seoul: North Korea test-fired Thursday possibly its biggest yet inter-continental ballistic missile toward the sea Thursday, according to its neighbours. Experts said that the move is aimed at forcing the US and other rivals including South Korea to accept it as a nuclear power and remove crippling sanctions. South Korea's military responded with live-fire drills of its own missiles launched from land vehicles and an aircraft. A top defence official of South Korea said that North fired the ICBM missile from Sunan area near capital Pyongyang.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL

The moment he started complaining about prices, I knew he was an anti-national

65% turnout in ULB polls

Voting percentage for Bhubaneswar and Berhampur Municipal Corporations was poor at 50% and 47% respectively

Bhubaneswar, March 24: Close to 65 per cent polling was recorded Thursday in the elections to the 106 urban local bodies (ULB) conducted Thursday, the State Election Commission informed in the evening. State Election Commissioner Aditya Prasad Padhi said, "These are approximate numbers. The exact voting percentage will be shared tomorrow (Friday)." Voting was also conducted for the three municipal corporations of Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Berhampur. While Cuttack recorded the highest, 65 per cent polling, among the three municipal corporations, the turnout was quite low for Bhubaneswar (50%) and Berhampur (47%). As per the SEC, 40.55 lakh voters were eligible to exercise their franchise in the ULB polls that were conducted for 1,825 wards in 47 municipalities, 59 NACs and three municipal corporations. A total of 4,360 polling booths were set up.



People wait for their turn to vote during the ULB polls at a school in Jharpada in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

While in few places voting was delayed to technical errors in EVMs most of the places reported smooth conduct of the civic polls. However, polling to the post of chairperson in Ward No. 8 of Umerkote municipality under Nabarangpur district was deferred due to wrong ballot papers. The polling will be done Thursday.

The SEC also informed that 73 candidates have been elected uncontested to the posts of corporators/councillors across the state. Out of these, 69 belonged to the BJD, one each to the BJP and Congress while two were independent candidates.

SC REFUSES URGENT HEARING ON HIJAB PLEA

New Delhi, March 24: The Supreme Court refused Thursday to accord urgent hearing on the pleas challenging the Karnataka High Court verdict, which dismissed the petitions seeking permission to wear Hijab inside the classroom and stated that the headscarf is not a part of the essential religious practice in Islam.

A bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justice Krishna Murari denied the request of senior advocate Devadatt Kamat who mentioned the matter seeking urgent listing saying that examinations are going on. "Exams have nothing to do with the issue," the bench said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that they are repeatedly mentioning the matter. "Mr SG, can you wait," the apex court said, while asking Kamat not to sensitise the issue. "These are girls...The exams are from 28th. They are being prevented from entering the schools. One year will go," Kamat said.

Even then the Supreme Court did not accede to the request.

The apex court had agreed March 16 to list for hearing after Holi vacation the pleas challenging the Karnataka High Court verdict which dismissed the petitions seeking permission to wear Hijab inside the classroom. It said Hijab is not a part of the essential religious practice in the Islamic faith.

It had taken note of the submissions of senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for some students, that urgent hearing was needed keeping in mind the upcoming examinations.

NAVEEN WALKS TO CAST HIS VOTE

Bhubaneswar: Sending a clear message to the people of Odisha on his health condition, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik walked Thursday from his residence to a polling booth for exercising his franchise in the elections to urban local bodies. Accompanied by security personnel, Patnaik walked from his residence 'Naveen Niwas' to the Aerodrome Upper Primary School in Ward No. 53 of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), covering a distance of around a quarter of a kilometre. Later, he came out of the booth and showed the waiting camera persons the indelible ink mark on his left hand index finger.

VIOLENCE RETURNS TO HAUNT ELECTIONS

Bhubaneswar, March 24: Violence returned once more Thursday to haunt the elections like it happened during the panchayat polls in February. The violence left quite a few people injured, some seriously.

Sources said a youth identified as Sheikh Astaq was creating ruckus at Booth-16 in Ward-9 of Dhamnagar Notified Area Council (NAC) in Bhadrak district. When Ramesh Chandra Lenka, 28, who was present there, tried to prevent him, Astaq stabbed him with a knife, leaving him critically injured. District Collector Trilochan Majhi and SP Charan Singh Meena reached the spot and rushed a profusely bleeding Lenka to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. Later, Astaq was arrested.

In another incident at Kolpada in Bolangir district, BJP workers assaulted Patnagarh BJD MLA Saroj Meher's brother Pradeep for allegedly distributing money to influence voters. Pradeep was rescued by BJD workers who took



An injured Ramesh Lenka undergoing treatment at a hospital

him to the hospital for treatment.

In Nayagarh, independent candidate Arati Pradhan's husband and his associate attacked Khandapada block vice-chairman Sisir Sahu in front of a booth at Khandapada Women's College. After Sahu filed a complaint, police have started a probe.

In another incident at Chikiti Notified Area Council (NAC) in Ganjam district three BJP workers sustained injuries and several vehicles were ransacked when more than 200 BJD workers allegedly barged into the Chikiti NAC chairperson candidate Pushpanjali Sethi's house and went on a rampage.

Contd... on P4

CNG, PNG rates hiked

(PNG) were hiked Thursday by one rupee per kilogram.

CNG price in NCT of Delhi has been increased to ₹59.01 per kg from ₹58.01, according to the information posted on the website of Indraprastha Gas Ltd - the firm which retails CNG and piped cooking gas in the national capital. This is the third increase in CNG rates this month. On the previous two occasions, rates had gone up by ₹0.50 per kilogram. With the latest hike, CNG prices have gone up by ₹5.50/kg in 2022.

Also, the price of piped natural gas that households get for cooking purposes has also been increased by ₹1 to ₹36.61 per standard cubic metre in Delhi.

STATE-RUN OIL COs LOSE ₹19K CRORE

New Delhi: India's top fuel retailers IOC, BPCL and HPCL have together lost around USD 2.25 billion (₹19,000 crore) in revenue in March by keeping petrol and diesel prices unchanged despite a sharp rise in crude oil prices, Moody's Investors Service said Thursday. Petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged between November 4, 2021, and March 21 despite prices of crude oil averaging around USD 111 per barrel in the first three weeks of March compared to around USD 82 in early November. Prices of petrol and diesel had gone up by 80 paise per litre each March 22 and 23.

No increase in power tariff

95 lakh electricity consumers in Odisha to benefit from the decision

The official also informed that a three per cent rebate over and above normal rebate will be allowed on the bill to the LT domestic and single phase general purpose category of consumers only and above all the rebates for payment through digital mode. Earlier, the rebate for online payment of power tariff was at two per cent.

The OPTCL transmission charge has remained unchanged at 28 paise per unit.

The mega lift consumers who use electricity for irrigation and are connected either to HT or EHT system will be treated as general purpose (GP) consumers. They will not pay any demand charges. Also, they will get additional rebate of ₹2 per unit (kVAh) on the respective energy charges.

The power purchase cost at GRIDCO end has been revised from 278.06 paise per unit to 297.69 paise per unit. Hence, the power purchase cost has gone up by 19.63 paise per unit, the OERC stated.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 24: Kalinga Stadium in the Odisha capital may well turn out to be the main venue for the U-17 FIFA Women's World Cup football tournament in October. The event was slated to be held in 2020, but was cancelled due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Initially five cities were selected to host the matches. They were Bhubaneswar; Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Guwahati and Navi Mumbai.

However, FIFA had recently said that it is ready to reduce the number of venues due to Covid guidelines IF that happens, the Kalinga Stadium may well emerge as the sole venue or the host for the maximum number of matches in the tourney.

A FIFA delegation visited Wednesday the Kalinga Stadium here to inspect the facilities. The team led by tournament director Jamie Yarza expressed satisfaction with the facilities available and also suggested some alterations and additions. Overall, it was clear that the members were not averse to holding the event in the Odisha capital only. They also had a fruitful meeting with state Sports Secretary Vineel Krishna.

"Odisha has emerged as the hub of sports. The stadium has been developed enormously. A FIFA team is evaluating all the functional areas as well as the renovations at the stadium," Yarza said.

Yarza also informed that discussions about the modalities of the tournament with the Odisha government are underway. "There are still many things to be done. Hopefully they will be completed in time," he said.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Birbhum massacre: Main accused nabbed

Post-mortem reports have revealed that all the victims had been badly beaten up before they were burnt alive



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee talks to relatives of the deceased in West Bengal's Bogtui village, Thursday

consequences. Hossain was arrested from Tarapith in the district. Other than Hossain, 20 people have been arrested so far in connection with the incident.

Hossain was picked up from near a hotel after police tracked his mobile phone tower location, said a police official. The local TMC leader will be questioned over the incident in which eight people including women and children were burnt alive Tuesday, he added.

Immediately after Banerjee's arrival at the Bogtui village, Rampurhat police station inspector-in-charge Tridib Pramanik was suspended for negligence.

Earlier in the afternoon, Banerjee

arrived in the village to meet the kin of the deceased. The massacre of eight persons has triggered a massive political backlash, and it was clear that the CM was on a placating mission.

"Police will ensure strictest punishment is handed out to culprits responsible for the Rampurhat carnage. The case filed before the court should be watertight," Banerjee told officials.

Banerjee also promised permanent government jobs to members of the 10 affected families. The chief minister announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the next of the kin of the victims, and ₹2 lakh each for rebuilding houses.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VIATION
SENSEX	57595.68	↓ 89.14
NIFTY	17222.80	↓ 22.90
DOLLAR	76.94	↓ ₹0.04
EURO	83.85	↓ ₹0.34
GOLD	₹51,981	↑ ₹214
SILVER	₹69,342	↑ ₹1078

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	35.6°C	35.0°C
MIN	25.8°C	25.5°C
Humidity	87%	88%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather very likely	

Rampurhat (West Bengal), March 24: Trinamool Congress Rampurhat-1 block president Anarul Hossain was arrested Thursday in connection with the killings in Bogtui village in West Bengal's Birbhum district, police said. His arrest came hours after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's ultimatum that police either trace out Hossain or face scathing

leisure



NICOLAS CAGE COMES OUT IN DEFENCE OF MARVEL MOVIES

Ghost Rider star Nicolas Cage has come out in the defence of Marvel movies against his uncle Francis Ford Coppola's and Martin Scorsese's fierce criticisms, reports *Variety*. Coppola made headlines in 2019 after he was quoted calling Marvel movies 'despicable' while supporting Scorsese's critical beliefs about comic book films hurting the film industry.

SCARLETT SELLS NEW YORK PENTHOUSE AT A LOSS

Scarlett Johansson has sold her penthouse in New York City for \$1.87 million. The 37-year-old actress acquired the two-bedroom, two-bathroom property for \$2.1 million in 2008. Scarlett put the property on the market nearly two years ago, but she's now accepted a cut-price deal, despite making expensive renovations and updates to her former home.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You will be torn between work and family as both try to grab your attention. You may reserve the evening for having fun. You crave to become famous and are likely to accomplish your ambition shortly. You have Ganesha's blessings to support you.

TAURUS

Ganesha sees you happily engaged in attending to day to day affairs. The day will turn out to be a hectic one. Do not expect too many time outs or even small breaks. Fortunately you will not be too uncomfortable with your tight schedule and will feel as fresh and easy at the end of the day. Having accomplished so much without stress or difficulty, you will feel very pleased and content.

GEMINI

You have a certain degree of equanimity when it comes to reacting to praise and criticism. Today, however, you will be emotional, and it won't be too bad. You will get appreciated at work and your liberal show of emotions will only make others like you more. Your colleagues will say three cheers for you.

CANCER

Today, Cupid will send its arrow right through your heart. You will be trembling with pain - the sweet pain of lust and love. But the overzealous Cupid may not stop at just that. Just to be completely sure, it will virtually do shooting practice at you. You can do nothing but tell your love interest about it.

LEO

It is good to be impulsive sometimes, but if one were to ask you today, you would be all for a meticulously planned approach to life. So much so that from now on, planning will become almost a part and parcel of your life, predicts Ganesha. So, it is expected that you plan everything to perfection today, although the execution of your plans may be a different story. But you can't do everything, can you? At least the good thing is that you make a great display of your organisational capabilities, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Today you need to carry on with your success without resting on your past laurels. You will also need to stay focused and organised to continue with the same success level that you enjoyed in the past. Pay attention to your relationship matters as they are the quintessential of your success and peace of mind.

LIBRA

It is very likely that you will arouse immense jealousy in others with your success and growth in business. Your business rivals may attempt to dent your credit worthiness in one way or the other. You may prefer to deal with them subtly rather than confront them openly, feels Ganesha.

SCORPIO

You may find yourself at crossroads, wondering which path to take. Crucial decisions regarding your personal life may numb your thoughts. Let this not interfere with your routine or it may lead to complications at work and with loved ones. Avoid making any hasty decisions, and in case you cannot find an apt solution, then delay the decision altogether, advises Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

You seem to be on a self-appreciation mode today. Grooming, makeover and attracting attention in on your cards today, you make extra efforts to get that glamorous look for your self. And as Ganesha says, it will surely not go unnoticed as you bag a lot of compliments for it. One of the fortunate days in store for you!

CAPRICORN

You regret spending hefty amount of money on branded items and luxuries, but you'll see a ray of hope today, feels Ganesha. Your bank account is strengthened by some heavy cash flow, and needless to say, it will give you a great relief. Now, you'll understand the value of money and curb on your urge to spend lavishly. Your work place will make you feel more comfortable.

AQUARIUS

Today is your day! Your performance will speak for itself and everyone at work, including bosses, will appreciate your efforts, says Ganesha. Work will not seem burdensome any more, in fact you will enjoy your job like never before. You may wish to contact some old friends and be in touch with them once again.

PISCES

You are likely to feel a lot of tension and stress today. You will feel down owing to some disagreement with someone or due to some unfathomable reason. Even that special someone will be unable to chase away your blues. A little meditation will help you to bounce back and get into your daily routine, says Ganesha.

Raashii opens up about being body-shamed

MUMBAI: Actress Raashii Khanna who starred in Ajay Devgn starrer *Rudra: The Edge of Darkness* recently opened up about being body-shamed during the initial days of her career in the South industry. When asked about the worst criticism she had received in her career, Raashii recalled people who nicknamed her 'gas tanker' for her body weight. The actress says, she became fitter because of her job requirement and not to please anyone. She went on to assert that bullying has never bothered her. Raashii also revealed her struggle with Polycystic Ovarian Disease (PCOD) which added problems to her weight management. She said that it made her wonder why the body-shaming comments were bothering her and said, "I had issues, PCOD, all those jazz which

everybody goes through. But that nobody knows, what they see is what they see on screen. So I can't blame them. Initially, it did hit me." She added that being a spiritual person has helped her to get rid of such negative thoughts. On the work front, Raashii is currently basking in the success of *Rudra*. She will be next seen with Sidharth Malhotra and Disha Patani in *Yodha*.



Kanika relates to her onscreen character

MUMBAI: Popular TV actress and model Kanika Mann talks about her role and how she relates to it in the web series *Roohaniyat*. She is seen playing a teenager Prisha, who faces break-up and later falls in love with another guy Kanika is playing the female lead opposite Arjun Bijlani. Commenting on her role, Kanika says: "I am fortunate to get the opportunity to work in this project.

Roohaniyat showcases how love works in its mysterious ways. My character Prisha is quite like me in real life. Prisha is an unpredictable girl who believes in the concept of true love and soulmates, and I could completely relate to this being a hopeless romantic myself." She further shares about her shooting experience with co-actors and says: "While working on the sets, I had a great experience with my co-stars, and I hope that the audience will appreciate the series as much as we loved shooting every scene." Directed by Glen Barretto and Ankush Mohla, *Roohaniyat* also features Aman Verma and Smita Bansal in pivotal roles. It streams on MX Player.

DHAULI-KALINGA MAHOTSAV CONCLUDES

Hejmadi gets Buddha Samman



A performance by the students of Orissa Dance Academy, Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR: Renowned Odissi danseuse and former Sambalpur varsity Vice-Chancellor Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi received Buddha Samman for her immense contribution to the dance form here Thursday, on the concluding day of 18th Dhauli Kalinga Mahotsav. The event was organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha in collaboration with Orissa Dance Academy, and Art Vision, Bhubaneswar. The concluding



Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi received Buddha Samman

evening was a collage of music, dance and splendid display of martial arts. The programme began with tabla recital by Pramod Kumar Sahoo and Group from the institute of Colors of Rhythm, Bhubaneswar followed by Odissi performance by the students of Orissa Dance Academy, Bhubaneswar. They presented Aashara Kirana (Rays of Hope) based on the services rendered by SCB Medical College of Cuttack, a theme conceptualised and choreographed by Guru Padma Shri Aruna Mohanty. The last presentation of the event was martial dance Thang-Ta by G Bisheshwar Sharma & Group from Huyen Lallong Manipur Thang-Ta Cultural Association, Manipur. Their first item was Thang Leiting Haiba. The moves involved two swords and a shield. The troupe then displayed Thang-Ta Chainaba using swords and spears. The members also showcased their agility with a few more displays involving sticks, daggers and triple fights holding the audience spellbound.

CURTAIN FALLS ON MULTILINGUAL THEATRE FEST

Jaanch Padtaal leaves viewers in splits

BHUBANESWAR: Anukruti Rangamandal theatre troupe of Kanpur (UP) Thursday staged Hindi play *Jaanch Padtaal*, on the last evening of 24th Kalinga Natya Mahotsav, a five-day national multilingual theatre festival organised by Satabdira Kalakar, here at Rabindra Mandap. Adapted by Sanjay Sahay from Russian playwright Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, the comedy play was directed by Krishna Saxena. The drama was about a bunch of corrupt government officials in a small town of India. One day they come to know that the government, after learning about their wrongdoings, has sent an officer for a probe. Panicked, the officials including a mayor, judge, medical officer, school inspector, post master and police chief manage to meet the investigating officer and



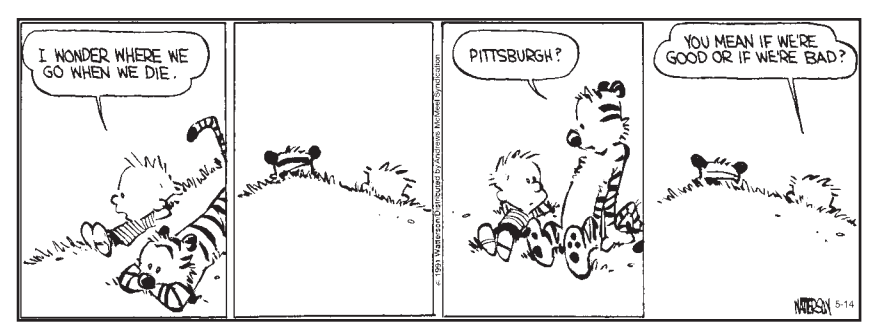
A scene from the Hindi play staged by Anukruti Rangamandal (UP) OP PHOTO

keep him quiet by paying a bribe. But they get shocked when find the officer missing from his hotel room next morning. The city mayor now gets information that the original probe officer is already in the town. The narration of the play was hilarious and packed with political satires. Needless to say, the show tickled the funny bones of the audience. Priyadarshi Mishra, the chairman of Odisha Housing Board Corporation was the chief guest of the evening while theatre artistes Gokulananda Sahoo and Prakash Maharana were felicitated on the occasion. Troupe's souvenir and a play book were also released in the evening.

PEANUTS



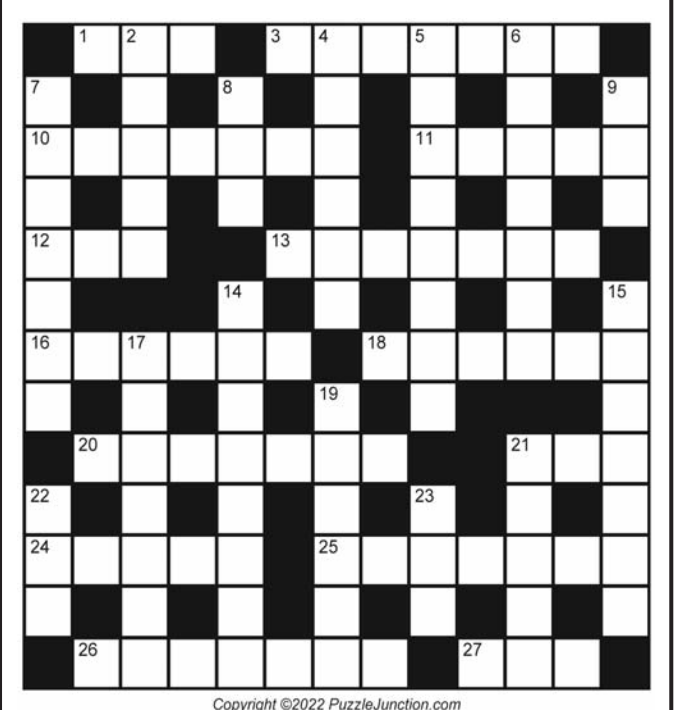
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



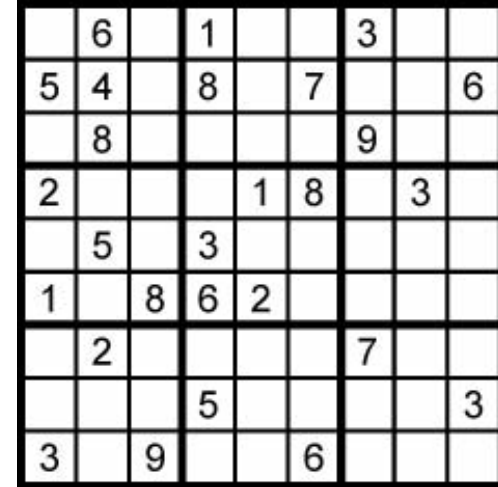
FUN post CROSSWORD



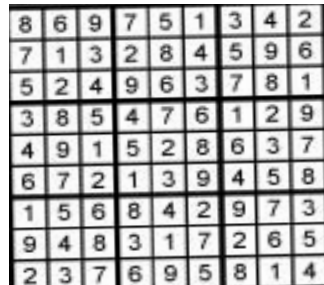
- Across**
- 1 Frequently, in verse
 - 3 New Zealand flightless bird
 - 10 Military school
 - 11 Factions
 - 12 Director's cry
 - 13 Dry red Italian wine
 - 16 Aura
 - 18 Bait, at times
 - 20 Cancel (4,3)
 - 21 Rummy starter
 - 24 Moving picture
 - 25 Examine
 - 26 Sidekicks
 - 27 Wild ox of Tibet
 - Down**
 - 2 Big spread
 - 4 Subconscious mind
 - 5 In seventh heaven
 - 6 Mexican peninsula
 - 7 Mezzanine
 - 8 Quagmire
 - 9 Cigar residue
 - 14 Night light (4,4)
 - 15 Lessen
 - 17 Wander aimlessly
 - 19 Lacking vitality
 - 21 Tropical fruit
 - 22 Common climbing vine
 - 23 Service charge

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



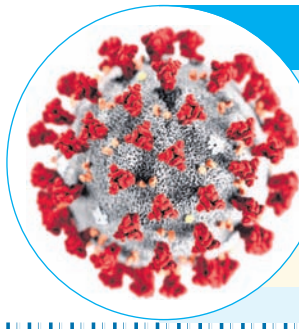
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



POLITICAL RIGHTS

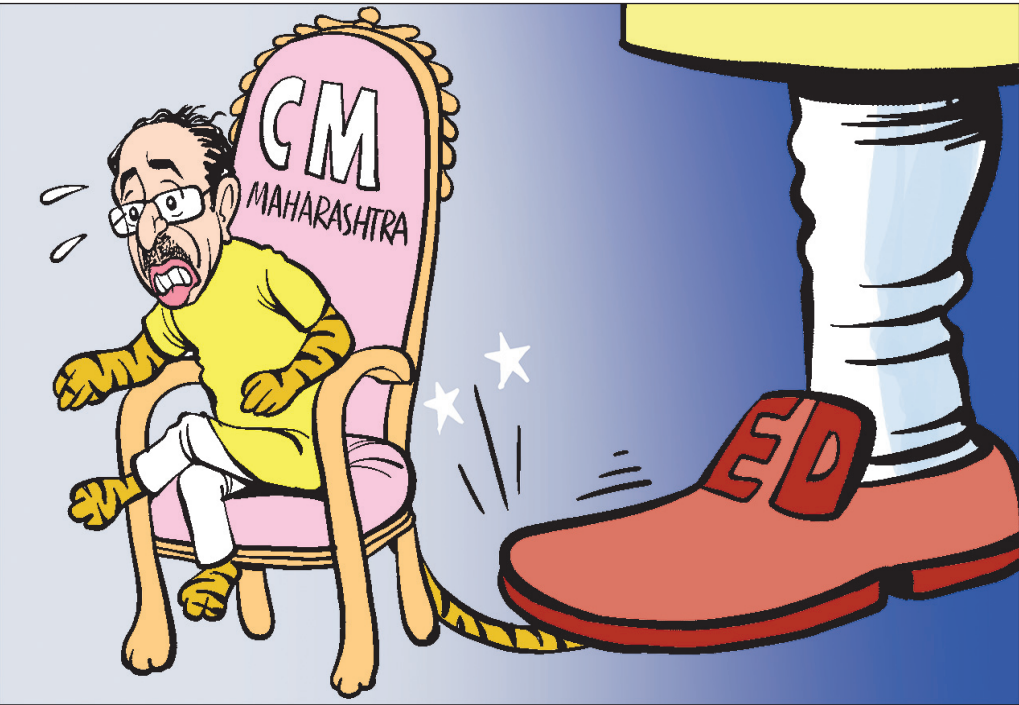
An elderly woman casts her vote for the civic body polls at the Board High School in Cuttack, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	47,71,29,773	41,23,00,816	61,30,395
India	4,30,14,687	4,24,75,588	5,16,672
Odisha	12,87,323	12,77,750	9,117

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Oppn to raise law and order in Budget session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 24: A day ahead of the commencement of Odisha Assembly's budget session, the opposition BJP and the Congress Thursday said they would seek answers and explanations in a range of matters, including the violence that broke out during the recently concluded panchayat polls and urban elections. The state BJP leadership said a strategy was in place to take on the ruling BJD, which had "unleashed violence to win elections." "We will certainly seek explanations for the violence that was unleashed by the ruling party during elections and also for the blatant use of official machinery during polls," said BJP chief whip Mohan Majhi after a meeting of the saffron camp's legislature party here. Congress Legislature party leader Narasingha Mishra said his party, besides raising questions over the law and order situation in the state, would also "flag matters such as gross mismanagement in paddy procurement and frequent power cuts". BJD leader and state minister Pratap Jena said the treasury bench was prepared to face the opposition on the floor of the Assembly.

Pujari calls for VSSUT upgrade

POST NEWS NETWORK

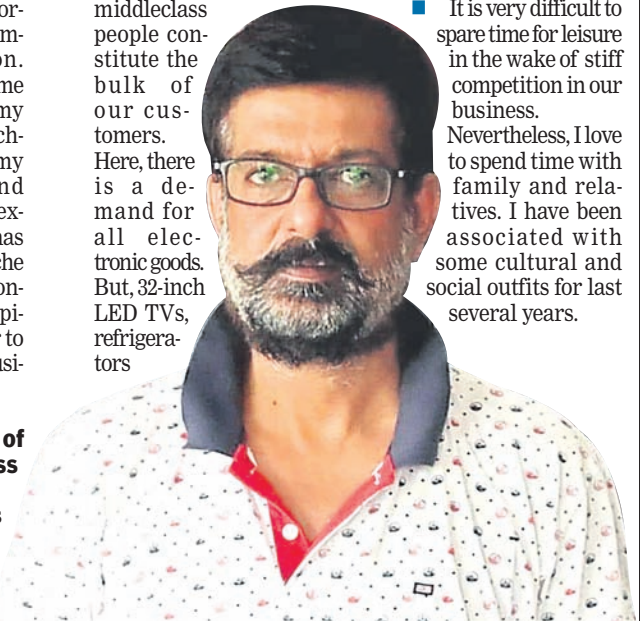
New Delhi, March 24: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Suresh Pujari Thursday urged the Centre to consider upgradation of Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT) in Burla to a Centrally Funded Technical Institute (CFTI). Established in 1956, VSSUT, formerly the University College of Engineering, is the oldest engineering college in Odisha. It has been a state unitary technical university with UGC recognition of 2(f) and 12(f), the Bargarh MP said while speaking during the Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha. "VSSUT's present student strength is 5,000 plus. Top rankers are choosing this university which offers 11 UG courses, 34 PG courses and 16 PhD programmes. The prestigious institution has so far produced 30,000 plus alumni, who are serving the nation and abroad in responsible positions," the BJP MP said. He informed the Lower House that the institution is within the vicinity of industrial belt, mines, and other institutes of higher learning like Sambalpur University, IIM, IIT and NIT. The university has a total land of 500 acres and has a scope to become a multi-disciplinary engineering research university (MERU) as mandated in NEP-2020, Pujari said. He said the Ministry of Education has been approached time and again for upgradation of the university to a CFTI and the Odisha government has also recommended for the same. "Under these circumstances, it is requested to consider upgrading VSSUT, Burla to a CFTI in line with Central Institute of Technology (CIT), Kokrajhar, Assam to act as a catalyst to the socio-economic and overall development of the 17 under-developed districts of western Odisha," Pujari said.

'We thrive on quality products & good PR'

He began assisting his father in their family business soon after completing his higher education in commerce. He got an opportunity to deal in electronics products and matured into a successful businessman. In a freewheeling chat with **Orissa POST**, Provisuals proprietor **Sanjay Didwania** speaks about his journey, market for electronics goods in Odisha and many more. Excerpts:



- **How has been your journey as a businessman?** My father had a business entity at Bhadrak. I got involved in our family business after completing my higher education. After gaining some experience, I got an opportunity to sell electronic goods in 1990s and opened Provisuals at Bhadrak. I have been marching ahead with cooperation from my family and goodwill of our customers.
- **What is your target market and which are the most sold electronics goods?** Bhadrak is an agrarian district. Here, we have both rural as well as urban markets. People from neighbouring districts also come to Bhadrak for buying electronics goods. The middleclass people constitute the bulk of our customers. Here, there is a demand for all electronic goods. But, 32-inch LED TVs, refrigerators
- **What are the major issues before electronics business?** The Covid-19 pandemic has posed several challenges to us. The electronic business has gone down by 40 per cent. There are also some obstacles due to international trade agreements and other reasons. We are facing several issues with regard to the production and import of electronics goods. The producers also encounter raw material crunch and other difficulties to ramp up outputs and meet dealer and customer requirements.
- **Your favourite pastime?** It is very difficult to spare time for leisure in the wake of stiff competition in our business. Nevertheless, I love to spend time with family and relatives. I have been associated with some cultural and social outfits for last several years.
- **How do you justify your decision to become a businessman after finishing higher education in Commerce?** In order to become a good businessman, it is not necessary from which stream you have completed your education. Here, hard work and good public relations matter. There was no job opportunity here when I completed my education. Many people advised me to do something of my own instead of searching for a job. I joined my family business and gained the required experience. Provisuals has managed to carve a niche for itself in the electronics business. I got inspiration from my father to become a successful businessman.
- **What is the status of electronics business now?** Electronics business was very good prior to Covid-19 pandemic. But, it has been facing several challenges since the first half of 2020. The advent of online business has taken a toll on offline business. Low price, home delivery facility and attractive offers in online business have harmed the offline business. We have survived due to quality products, timely service and good public relations. One needs hard labour and honesty to do well in business.



BJD member pushes for Legislative Council

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 24: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Muzibulla Khan Thursday raised the issue of establishment of a Legislative Council in Odisha and requested the Centre to take the necessary steps in this regard. Speaking during the Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, the BJD MP apprised the Upper House that the Legislative Assembly of Odisha had unanimously passed a resolution for the establishment of a Legislative Council in the state in 2018. The resolution was sent to the



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

Centre for further steps on the issue. The BJD MP criticised the Centre for saying that it could not find the resolution sent by the state

BJD MP MUZIBULLA KHAN CRITICISED THE CENTRE FOR SAYING THAT IT COULD NOT FIND THE RESOLUTION SENT BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

HE URGED THE CENTRE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN ODISHA

government for establishment of the Legislative Council. "We used to lose papers during the school days but it's astonishing that now even the Parliament or the Centre is also missing documents. This is very strange," the MP said. Earlier, in response to a question asked by BJD MP Prasanna Acharya, the Centre had replied that it didn't find any resolution from the state government for the establishment of the Legislative Council. The BJD MP urged the Centre to take necessary steps for establishment of a Legislative Council in Odisha. At present, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh have Legislative Councils. According to the Centre, Assam, Rajasthan and West Bengal have adopted resolutions for creation of Legislative Councils.

3,600 vacancies in rly in Odisha: Min

NEW DELHI: There are as many as 3,607 vacancies in the railways in Odisha, said Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in the Lok Sabha Wednesday. The minister said 5,264 vacancies exist in East Coast Railway which covers a large part of Odisha. Out of this, around 3,607 vacancies at entry level exist in Odisha, he added. The minister further said the occurrence and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process

and the vacancies are filled up as per operational requirements through placement of indents by the railways with recruitment agencies. "Group C and D posts in railways are filled up through selection from open market through Railway Recruitment Boards and Railway Recruitment Cells of zonal railways. Vacancies are notified and filled up periodically after following due process by these agencies," the minister said.

Fingers inked



(From L) BJD Mayoral candidate Sulochana Das, BJP's Suniti Mund and Congress's Madhusmita Acharya flash ink marks after casting their votes in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



(From L) Mayoral nominees of three major political parties for Cuttack Subhas Singh, Sritam Das and Giribala Behera after exercising their franchise



5T secy VK Pandian and his wife and Mission Shakti secy Sujata R Kartikeyan waiting for their turn to cast votes. People queuing up at a polling booth at Dagarpada in Cuttack. Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra and his wife Debayani Nanda cast their votes in Bhubaneswar. PHOTOCS

Rename Paradip Port after Biju: BJD

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 24: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Anubhav Mohanty Thursday urged the Centre to rename Paradip Port after former Odisha chief minister Biju Patnaik. Participating in the discussion on the demand for grants of Ministry of Port, Shipping and Waterways for 2022-23 fiscal, the BJD MP said Paradip Port was the brain child of late Biju Patnaik and he envisioned the port as the gateway to Odisha's prosperity.

"He braved immense struggle including non-availability of road communication, electricity and rejection of proposal by the Planning Commission for building an express highway connecting mining areas of Keonjhar and Sukinda. A determined Biju Babu had an inward impelling faith that once the construction of the port and expressway was completed, he could influence the Centre to convert them into central projects," Mohanty said. The BJD MP called Biju

Patnaik 'the chief architect of modern Odisha' and said the former chief minister had founded many innovative projects including Paradip Port, which has become one of the largest ports in the country and achieved the number one spot in handling of cargo in 2020. "We have been requesting the Union Ministry to accept this proposal since 2008. Against all odds, Biju Babu created Paradip Port. Renaming it after him would be a befitting tribute to the legendary leader," Mohanty said.

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Kalahandi, Puri now Covid-free districts

ODISHA CURRENTLY HAS 476 ACTIVE CASES, WHILE 12,77,750 PEOPLE HAVE RECOVERED FROM THE DISEASE, INCLUDING 73 IN THE LAST 24 HRS



PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, March 24: Odisha's Covid-19 tally rose to 12,87,323 Thursday as 38 more people tested positive for the infection, while one fresh fatality pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 9,117, the state Health department said in a bulletin.

The state had logged 60 Covid cases Monday. One fresh fatality was registered for the first time in a week as a 57-year-old patient succumbed to the infection in Jagatsinghpur district.

The state now has 476 active cases, while 12,77,750 people have so far recovered from the disease, including 73 in the last 24 hours. Two districts—Kalahandi and Puri—have turned Coronavirus-free with no active cases.

Fifty-three other coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities to date.

The coastal state's daily positivity rate (TPR) was at 0.09 per cent as 41,174 samples were tested for Covid-19.

A total of nine children were among the newly-infected, the health department bulletin said, adding that 41,174 samples were tested in the past 24 hours, a bulletin stated adding that 17 districts did not report any infection.

The state's recovery rate currently stands at 99.25 per cent while active cases (476) account for 0.03 per cent of total positive cases registered in Odisha.

The state's share is 3.44 per cent in the country's confirmed virus caseload while the active cases are 0.03 per cent of India's total active cases.

Odisha now has 476 active cases, while 12,77,750 people have so far recovered from the disease, including 73 in the last 24 hours

The state's recovery rate currently stands at 99.25 per cent while active cases account for 0.03 per cent of total positive cases registered

Odisha's share is 3.44 per cent in the country's confirmed virus caseload while the active cases are 0.03 per cent of India's total active cases

The number of cured patients in state accounts for 3.63 per cent of the country's total recovery

Odisha has so far reported 1.87 per cent of the country's coronavirus deaths

The number of cured patients accounts for 3.63 per cent of the country's total recovery. Odisha has so far reported 1.87 per cent of the country's coronavirus deaths.

Health authorities have so far administered 6,27,09,289 Covid-19 vaccine doses while 2,86,04,028 people out of 3.09 crore eligible adult population are fully vaccinated. A total of 8,66,359 have so far received booster or precaution dose. Around 93 per cent of the eligible population has so far received both the doses of vaccine.



An awareness campaign on tuberculosis was flagged off at the office of the Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer in Puri on the occasion of World TB Day, Thursday

HC fiat to state over arrear non-payment

CUTTACK: The Orissa High Court Thursday issued a notice to the state government directing it to file its reply over non-payment of arrears to a teacher even after his retirement. A High Court bench of Justice Sanjeeb Kumar Panigrahi issued the order and scheduled the next date of hearing on the matter to April 22, the advocate for the petitioner Kailash Chandra Satapathy said. According to reports, Prafulla Kumar Dash was working as a teacher at Badasiraipur UGME School under Banpur block in Khurda district. Later, he was promoted to the post of headmaster and retired from service June 30, 2010. However, he was not paid his time bound advancement payment till his superannuation following which he filed a petition in the Orissa High Court praying for justice.

CYSD bats for localising SDGs

Although Odisha's performance in achieving the SDGs has increased by 10 points in 2020, the state remains among the bottom five in the country

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 24: The Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) held a panel discussion on "Localising SDGs: Activating the Local Self-Governments, Panchayat Bodies" on its 40th foundation day here Thursday.

Addressing the event, CYSD co-founder and member secretary pointed out that even though Odisha's performance in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has increased by 10 points in 2020, the state remains among the bottom five.

In order to put Odisha on the fast track of realising the SDG 2030 agenda, it is high time the government, civil societies, corporate, business houses and other stakeholders worked for localising SDGs, said Jagadananda. SDGs cannot be realised without the partnership of people, he added.

Emphasising on the need for involving local self governments in understanding and implementation design of SDGs, Director General of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) SN Tripathy said Odisha has immense potential to carry out the planning and implementation at grassroots level with a new set of urban and



OP PHOTO

rural local bodies.

Palli Sabhas and Gram Sabhas need to be strengthened to take forward the SDGs. He emphasised that the current framework of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) be aligned with the SDGs and the capacity building framework for the PRIs be developed accordingly. Currently, the GPDP capacity building module is not aligned with the SDGs, Tripathy added.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj Additional Secretary Chandrasekhar Kumar said realisation of SDGs requires an integral approach and the PRI members should be involved in each process. SDGs should be simplified for proper understanding of the villagers and the CSOs need to be engaged in this, he added further.

Monika O Neilson, Chief of Field Office, Unicef India, said there should be partnership at the community level - local youth, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) members, NGOs and CSOs - to recognise the local contexts from setting of goals and targets to determining the means of implementation and facilitate stewardship. Simultaneously, partnership is required at the higher level - bureaucracy, academia, UN houses and media to influence the policy framework, she pointed out.

Saroj Dash, Joint Director of the State Institute for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (SIRD & PR), lamented that currently the SDGs are confined to district level. It is high time each stakeholder at block, panchayat and village level was sensitised to work for creating an appropriate framework for inclusive planning, budgeting and convergence.

When panchayats are able to design an inclusive planning and budgeting, they will be able to best utilise the funds available under the 15th Central Finance Commission and 5th State Finance Commission. It will also help them mobilise resources from other sources, Dash pointed out.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik through his video message lauded the efforts of CYSD for catalysing the development process in rural and tribal pockets.

Violence returns to haunt elections

CONTINUED FROM P1

Clashes also erupted between Congress and BJD workers at Booth-3 set up at Jhankarpada School in Kantabanji NAC in Bolangir district. Two BJD leaders - Pinki Kharsel and Bolangir district secretary Firoz Khan were injured in the scuffle. Similarly, at Booth-9 in Ward-7 of Pipili NAC in Puri district, a BJP agent was attacked by the workers of a rival party. The seriously injured agent has been admitted to the Pipili government hospital.

Meanwhile, polling in various wards of the capital city concluded peacefully barring few sporadic incidents of brawl and heated arguments between different groups at few places. Sources claimed a few incidents of tensions were reported at different polling booths in Jharapada, Gadakana, Gothapatana Rasulgargh and Tamando.

"No incidences of violence were reported from any part of the city and polling passed off peacefully in the city," Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar Dash told **Orissa POST**.

CHSE Class XII exam schedule out

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 24: The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) Thursday announced the schedule for annual higher secondary examination for Arts, Science and Commerce streams.

As per the schedule, examination for MIL (Odia) language will be conducted on the first day—April 28, followed by English April 30.

History and Business Mathematics and Statistics (BMS) for Arts and Commerce students respectively will be conducted May 4. Similarly, the Political Science and Accountancy paper for Arts students will be held May 7. For science and vocational students, the English paper will be conducted May 9.

The papers of Economics for

Arts stream, and Personnel Management Accounting, Fundamental of Management Accounting, Business Economics, Cost Accounting and Computer Application for commerce will be conducted May 10. Chemistry for science and BFC-History, BFC-Accounting, BFC-Physics for vocational students will be conducted May 11. Exams on Education, Indian music and Psychology subject for Arts students and Business Studies & Management for commerce students will be held May 13.

Physics exam for science and BFC- Political science, Business Studies & Management and Chemistry for vocational students will be held May 14. Botany paper for science will be held May 17.

The vocational trade subjects will be conducted May 18 and 19

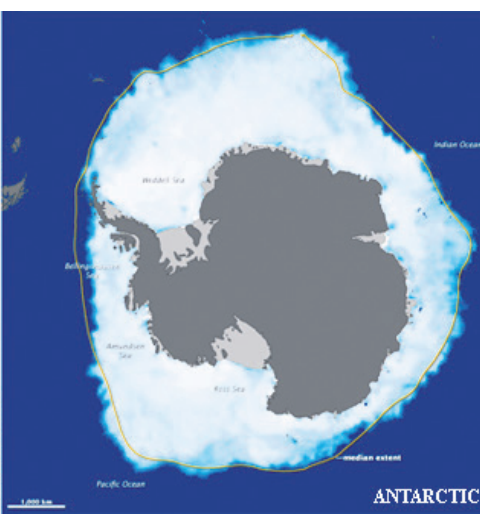
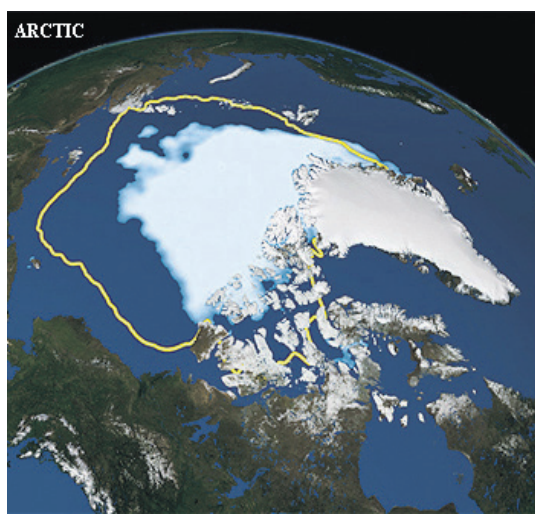
while integrated vocational subject exams will be conducted May 20 and 21. The practical exams will be conducted from April 4 to 17. More than 3.2 lakh students in Arts, Science, Commerce and Vocational streams will appear for the examination. In view of the heatwave, the examinations will be conducted in one sitting starting at 9.00am.

The Council has adopted two schemes for evaluation of marks. Under the first scheme, 20 per cent weightage will be given to marks obtained in the internal examination conducted by the concerned school. For this, out of three internal examinations, two tests where the student has secured higher marks will be taken into account. Remaining 80 per cent weightage will be given to the final examination to be conducted by the Council from April 28.

MENACING MELTDOWN

2022 Arctic winter sea ice 10th-lowest on record: NASA

NASA's analysis follows reports earlier this week that both the Earth's poles - Arctic and Antarctic - are undergoing 'freakish' heat waves - with parts of the Arctic more than 30°C warmer than average



Arctic is warming about three times faster than other regions.

Sea ice waxes and wanes with the seasons every year. In the Arctic, it reaches its maximum extent around March after growing through the colder months, and shrinks to its minimum extent in September after melting through the warmer months. In the Southern Hemisphere, Antarctic

sea ice follows an opposite cycle, NASA said.

To estimate sea ice extent, satellite sensors gather sea ice data that are processed into daily images, each image grid cell spanning an area of roughly 25 kilometres by 25 kilometres. Scientists then use these images to estimate the extent of the ocean where sea ice covers at least 15 per cent of the water.

Since satellites began reliably tracking sea ice in 1979, maximum extents in the Arctic have declined at a pace of about 13 per cent per decade, with minimum extents declining at about 2.7 per cent per decade. These trends are linked to warming caused by human activities such as emitting carbon dioxide, which traps heat in the atmosphere and causes temperatures

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These trends are linked to warming caused by human activities such as emitting carbon dioxide, which traps heat in the atmosphere and causes temperatures to rise.

NASA's analysis follows reports earlier this week that both the Earth's poles - Arctic and Antarctic - are undergoing 'freakish' heat

waves - with parts of the Arctic more than 30°C warmer than average.

The space agency confirmed that Antarctic sea ice also dropped to a record-low minimum extent in February. But unlike in the Arctic, this sea ice has shown irregular ups and downs mainly because of the geographical features that surround it. Winds and ocean currents specifically linked to the Southern Ocean and Antarctica have a strong influence on sea ice extent.

Sea ice in the Arctic is surrounded by land, whereas sea ice in the Antarctic is surrounded only by ocean and can thus spread out more freely. Overall, the Antarctic sea ice record shows a slightly upward - but nearly flat - trend or increase.

Gains in Antarctic sea ice are not large enough to offset the losses of the Arctic. The ice in both regions helps regulate global temperatures. Even if Antarctica gains balanced sea ice levels globally, Arctic sea ice losses could still contribute to further regional and global warming, the analysis showed.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

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

LOST

I, Sibasis Swain have lost my B. Tech. certificate in Electrical & Electronics regd. No. 0401209135 of Silicon Institute of Technology passing on 2007-08 on 18th March 2022 from Sikharpur Busstand. If anyone found call 9657640500.

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Whatsoever has courage can give courage to others just as the flame of the candle can light up another.

THE MOTHER



Ray of Hope

Advances in cancer care have yielded enormous benefits and saved millions of lives. Between 2000 and 2015, high-income countries cut cancer patients' probability of dying from the disease by 20 per cent.

But this progress has eluded much of the rest of the world, thereby deepening longstanding global inequalities. And the problem is getting worse. Seven of every ten people who will die from cancer in the coming two decades will be in low- and middle-income countries, many of which lack even the basic tools to address the crisis they face. By 2040, cancer will kill 11 million people annually in these countries.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there were nearly 1.5 million cancer cases in 2020. By 2040, annual cases are expected to rise by almost one million, with annual deaths increasing from 713,000 to 1.25 million. Likewise, Africa, which already has a cancer death rate 30 per cent above the global average, will experience a surge in cases in the coming decades.

Changing that trajectory must become a higher global priority. A profound epidemiological shift is underway and it is in everyone's interest to stay ahead of it. As standard-of-living improvements lead to longer lifespans, deaths from cancer are outpacing those from communicable diseases. In Africa, cancer now kills more people than tuberculosis and at least as many as malaria. Since late 2019, six times more Africans – and ten times more Asians – have died from cancer than have died from COVID-19.

The allocation of health-care spending has yet to account for this shift. In many low- and middle-income countries, funding to combat non-communicable diseases like cancer is still a small fraction of what is spent fighting communicable diseases. With 23 countries in Africa lacking even a single radiotherapy machine, over 70 per cent of the continent's population does not have access to this treatment, even though more than half of all patients will need it. The annual per capita expenditure on radiotherapy in Africa is \$0.53; in North America, where radiotherapy needs are fully met, the figure is 35 times higher (and a similar comparison can be made with Europe).

Global cancer mortality rates reflect this inequity. In high-income countries, seven in ten children with cancer survive; in Africa, fewer than three in ten children do. In Latin America and the Caribbean, where 10 per cent of the world's childhood cancer cases arise, more children and adolescents die of the disease than of any other cause. These inequalities need not persist. Investments in fighting cancer can yield significant returns. Expanding and improving treatment, imaging, and quality of care could increase the five-year survival rate by tenfold in low-income countries, and more than double it in lower-middle-income countries. Scaling up access to nuclear medicine (specialised radiology) and medical imaging services could avert nearly 2.5 million cancer deaths worldwide by 2030, yielding global lifetime productivity gains of some \$1.3 trillion – a net return of \$180 per \$1 invested.

Some readers may wonder why the head of the world's nuclear proliferation watchdog is writing about the gap in global cancer care. In fact, the International Atomic Energy Agency has a multifaceted mandate and was created to bring peaceful applications of nuclear science to the people who need them. Because nuclear medicine plays a leading role in fighting cancer, one of our primary tasks is to help member states avail themselves of this technology. From Niger to Uzbekistan, we have been helping countries expand their capacity to fight cancer for more than six decades.

While each country must determine its own priorities, the international community can and does play a valuable supporting role. Last month, World Health Organisation Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and I pledged to scale up our organisations' long-standing collaboration in helping countries fight cancer.

At the IAEA, we have put a lot of thought into how to do this, mapping cancer assets and needs across developing countries and calculating the positive returns on investment in a range of local scenarios. This work led us to launch Rays of Hope, an initiative that brings together donor governments, technical and medical experts, international organisations, public-finance institutions, and the private sector. Together, all can help countries with little or no capacity to build the necessary infrastructure, procure new equipment, support innovation, and provide the required training. Moreover, countries that are further along in these areas can become regional anchors, helping to widen access to care and training.

With the number of cancer cases increasing, standing still means going backwards. COVID-19 interrupted cancer care around the world. In Africa and Latin America, the number of nuclear medicine procedures initially fell by 69 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively.

Policy-makers worldwide now must reassess their priorities accordingly. Doing so will help to address a deep injustice, and it will put us on track to ensure that the progress made in fighting communicable diseases is not offset by the rise of non-communicable ones, particularly cancer.

The writer is Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

Let my soul smile through my heart and my heart smile through my eyes, that I may scatter rich smiles in sad hearts. PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Remember even though the outside world might be raining, if you keep on smiling the sun will soon show its face and smile back at you. ANNA LEE

A smile is the light in your window that tells others that there is a caring, sharing person inside. DENIS WAITLEY

WORDSWORTH

Siccity

If a weather forecaster were to predict a period of siccity, his audience would be unlikely to understand that he meant a drought was on its way. This ancient word for a state of extreme dryness has long ago been abandoned by English speakers. That might be because it's odd-looking, so that people have preferred the native English dryness. A century ago, it was already marked as "probably obsolete" in the OED. But it has never been popular. Eighteenth-century chemists might have referred to evaporating a liquid to siccity, to dryness, geographers might have described an area as characterised by extreme siccity when they meant that it was a desert, learned men might make a little joke on the siccity of a sermon, but otherwise it had small use and limited circulation.

LOL

Calming the baby

In the supermarket was a man pushing a cart which contained a screaming, bellowing baby. The gentleman kept repeating softly, "Don't get excited, Albert; don't



scream, Albert; don't yell, Albert; keep calm, Albert."

A woman standing next to him said, "You certainly are to be commended for trying to soothe your son, Albert." The man looked at her and said, "Lady, I'm Albert."



Dhanada K Mishra

WHILE IN NEWTON'S LAW, EVERY ACTION BEGETS AN EQUAL AND OPPOSITE REACTION, IN THE LAW OF 'NISKAM SEVA,' EVERY ACTION GETS MUCH MORE BACK IN RETURN!



Rafael Mariano Grossi

Scaling up access to nuclear medicine and medical imaging services could avert nearly 2.5 million cancer deaths worldwide by 2030

FOCUS SOCIETY

CYCLING & CULTURE

Prof (Dr) Kiran Seth - Padmashri, professor emeritus - IIT Delhi, 73 years young, spoke a few words to a small gathering of faithful at Rajghat in Delhi March 11 at 10 am. Then he set off for Manesar in Rajasthan on a curtain-raiser cycling trip before embarking on a Kashmir to Kanyakumari cycling expedition starting August 15. He will celebrate India's 75th year of Independence by embarking on his journey from Srinagar on the day India attained freedom. He plans to ride about 50 km every day at an average of 10 km/hr. He plans to do it all by himself except for the volunteers who may join him on the way! He plans to be back at Rajghat on Gandhi Jayanti - October 2. His goals are three-fold and straight-forward. The first is to promote India's composite culture. His life's mission has been through SPIC MACAY - the voluntary movement he founded in 1977. His second goal is to recruit volunteers on the way for the movement. Finally, he would like to promote cycling as an environmental mode of transport that can go a long way to address the climate crisis.

In 1977, he had just joined IIT Delhi fresh from his PhD at Columbia University and a short stint at the Bell Labs. Once, he asked his class of the brightest of India's students whether they had heard of Pt Ravi Shankar, who was well known globally for his exploits with the Sitar. Very few could recognise him or differentiate the Sitar from the Tanpura, for example. India's youth was more enamoured by Michael Jackson and Hollywood rather than the likes of Pt Shiv Kumar Sharma or Pt Hariprasad Chaurasia and Indian classical music. Having himself been profoundly moved by a live concert by the senior Dagar brothers in New York earlier, he decided to try and bring the essence of our culture to the youth by bringing the best exponents to the campuses and classrooms. A voluntary movement with students and teachers as volunteers with the generous support of the best of the exponents of Indian classical



As Prof Kiran Seth would like to promote, cycling is a great environmental mode of transport and must be adopted by as many as possible to reduce traffic congestion and pollution

music, dance, folk arts, theatre, art, cinema was born!

It was not just an effort to promote Indian classical music and arts but a much bigger aim to reorient the mindset of Indian youth towards what is arguably the greatest gift of ancient Indian culture and heritage. What Prof Seth had experienced in that famous recital of the senior Dagar Bandhu - the most accomplished exponents of Dhrupad was not merely a different form of musical entertainment but a higher calling inwards to explore one's spiritual potential. With its long history of spirituality, India has been a melting pot of almost all of the world's religions. It has developed a composite cultural tradition rooted in spirituality that is unique and can be considered our greatest gift to humankind. Yet, we are often ignorant of the same and risk losing out on the benefits it offers in making a holistic personality. Thus it makes obvious sense that Prof Seth would choose promotion of our composite culture and heritage as his first goal.

In its over forty years' journey, SPIC MACAY has depended on its volunteers to spread the movement

all over the country and abroad. It was clear from the beginning that a precious gift like India's cultural heritage cannot be offered free of any commercial intention. Therefore, not only are SPIC MACAY's many thousands of programmes held every year conducted for free, but all of the work is done by students, teachers, and others voluntarily. This helps keep the cost down and, more importantly, helps promote the spirit of 'Niskam Seva' or 'Selfless Service' - another of the key tenets of Indian culture itself. Prof Kiran Seth would often give the example of the law of 'Niskam Seva' as an analogue to Newton's famous third law of motion. While in Newton's law, every action begets an equal and opposite reaction, in the law of 'Niskam Seva,' every action gets much more back in return! While the concept is noble, it is increasingly difficult in these days of consumerism and materialistic outlooks to find true volunteers, and SPIC MACAY has been greatly affected by this trend. Hence Prof Seth's second goal is to meet SPIC MACAY's existing volunteers on the way and encourage many more

to come forward and volunteer to strengthen the movement.

The third goal of Prof Kiran Seth - who has been one of my idols and mentors for over 30 years - is to promote cycling as an environmental cause. Most of us have cycled now and then for most of our lives. Growing up, cycling in Bhubaneswar and then in college was always second nature. However, I discovered a whole new kind of cycling around a year and a half ago when I decided to try my hands at a proper multi-gear road cycle with properly cleated pedals! It's one of those sports that I occasionally saw on TV as the Tour de France! It was not an easy learning curve, but I learned the tricks over several weeks of painstaking efforts thanks to my friend and coach Federico Giovanni. In the process, I had many falls, near accidents, gasping for breath while tackling steep climbs and then the joy of improving my fitness and health gradually. Now I am at a point where I could cycle for the same distance of around 45 km that Prof Seth covered on the first day of his journey from Rajghat in Delhi to Manesar! That ride was dedicated to his epic effort. As Prof Seth would like to promote, cycling is a great environmental mode of transport and must be adopted by as many as possible to reduce traffic congestion and pollution. In addition, I can personally attest that it is a wonderful option for people of all ages looking to lead a healthier and more active life.

As I cycle every weekend in the hilly terrain of Hong Kong, I am in spirit with Prof Kiran Seth pedalling his way on India's much more challenging roads and conditions. I cycled around 2729 km last year in about 99 rides with an average of 28 km a ride. This year my goal would be to match Prof Seth's effort by cycling as many kilometres - hopefully, some of them alongside him!

The author is a civil engineer, academician and technologist. He has been a volunteer of SPIC MACAY since 1985 and is currently based in Hong Kong.

SPECTRUM WAR

A trade-off between peace & prosperity

The war historian Max Hastings once said, "The supreme irony of the First World War was that many rulers of Europe grossly overestimated military power and grossly underestimated economic power." Wars throughout the history have wreaked havoc in the battle fields and wrecked the lives of millions of ordinary people. But only bunkers and tankers dominate the war-time conversations.

Several researchers tried to understand the economic impact of wars on countries and citizens. However, there is no clear convergence on the impact of war on the economic measures. Economics recognises the increase in GDP due to the production of weapons and ammunitions but ignores the negative impact of resultant deaths of soldiers and civilians.

Some say, wars create prosperity as it creates demand, employment, innovation, which may even result in profit for some large corporations. That's what we are witnessing in the current war between Russia and Ukraine. Money is pouring into the war torn area from every direction: governments, corporate entities, and even ordinary citizens. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the total global mil-

itary expenditure rose to \$1,981 billion in 2020, an increase of 2.6 per cent in real terms from 2019.

Russia had spent about \$62 billion on its military in 2021 and the cost of war in Ukraine may exceed \$20 billion for Russia. Ukraine too is pumping money into the war. Ukraine's military expenditure was estimated at \$5.92 billion in 2020 and has been increasing since 2016. The US provided more than \$650 million in military aid to Ukraine in 2021. It has already called for more defence spending. Several other countries have started supporting Ukraine through direct and indirect funding.

Large corporations agreed to extend financial support to Ukraine. Google has committed to \$25 million in aid, Facebook has said it will donate \$5 million in cash to various UN agencies and non-profit organisations. Twitter is matching employee donations and will also make a direct contribution. Amazon pledged \$5 million to the UN's refugee agency and plans to match up to \$5 million more in donations made by its employees. Snapchat announced \$15 million for humanitarian support. Even individuals have come forward to donate money. Many individuals are anonymously donating money privately through

various sources to Ukraine. Where is all this money going? Who is benefiting from such huge spending? During war time a significant part of such funding is spent on the supply of military weapons such as aircraft, armoured vehicles, artillery, radar systems, missiles, and ships designed for military use.

According to the SIPRI's latest annual report, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the US account for 75% of the world's arms trade. It is irony that they are also the five permanent members of the UNSC. If the US increases military spending, the winners will be American defence corporations. How can we expect these countries to oppose wars, particularly when it is not taking place in their own countries? As quite aptly said by George Orwell in 1937, "War against a foreign country only happens when the moneyed classes think they are going to profit from it."

Capitalism and maximisation of profit drive the values of such countries, and they look for opportunities to maximise the valuation of the companies operating in their countries. Companies like Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, and General Dynamics are not only the large manufacturers of arms and ammunition, they are also the

funders of the influential think-tank which has been encouraging the US to engage in global wars.

These corporations see wars as opportunity to earn profit. It is not a wonder that these companies are openly discussing about the business potential of the Ukraine conflict. Profit of Lockheed Martin increased from \$2.0 billion in 2018 to more than \$6.0 billion in 2020 and the equity increased from negative \$0.68 billion to \$3.10 billion. The profitability of these companies depends on wars not on peace, so people in power do not hesitate to sacrifice peace for prosperity.

Since ages wars have been responsible for the prosperity of a small number of rich companies and powerful countries by robbing peace of millions of hapless citizens. President Eisenhower cautioned the world about the ill effects of war in 1953 when he said, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who are hungry and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."

A world without war will remain a dream as long as corporations rule the world.

The writer is a Professor in XIMB. Views are personal.



DV Ramana

A WORLD WITHOUT WAR WILL REMAIN A DREAM AS LONG AS CORPORATIONS RULE THE WORLD

Pollution concern

Sir, In spite of all advancements in different sectors, India continues to be in a pathetic state in air pollution levels. India ranks fifth in the top five most polluted countries in the world. For the fourth consecutive year, New Delhi continues to be the most polluted capital in the world. According to the World Air Quality Report 2021, 35 of the 50 cities with the worst air quality are in India. As a matter of fact, none of the cities in India meets the prescribed World Health Organisation air quality standards. India must take a leaf out of China's book and tackle the air pollution problem. Despite being the most populated country in the world, China has made progress in controlling air pollution. In contrast, tackling air pollution continues to be an insurmountable problem in India. Traffic exhaust, factory emissions, smoke from stubble burning, construction dust, solid fuel use - all these contribute to high air pollution. Notwithstanding the fact that there are anti-pollution laws in India, they are not strictly enforced. When cities succeed in controlling air pollution to some extent, pollution in rural areas continues unabated. Without proper coordination between urban and rural areas, pollution cannot be tackled. Urbanites find it difficult to convince farmers to use less polluting practices. Similarly, rural people cannot convince urban people to drive less. Considering the ill effects of high air pollution, the government needs to take drastic measures to control it. We need to shift to renewable sources of energy. Given that air pollution causes diseases and deaths and adversely affects normal life, stringent measures need to be taken to combat it.

Venu GS, KOLLAM (KERALA)

US bossism

Sir, The US President Joe Biden commenting that India's response to Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggression in Ukraine had been "somewhat shaky" is in poor taste. India has done well not to take sides and is among a handful of countries that have not called out Moscow for its attack on Ukraine. This is not the first time the US has taken a swipe at someone refusing to toe its line. We also believe that Uncle Sam triggered the war, asserting America's support for Kyiv's right to pursue membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The US would do well to shrug off its bossism.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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of the day quote

When the Ukraine war broke out, India was in a dilemma. So, we will have to wait and see how they move forward. But, as far as foreign policy is concerned, India's independent foreign policy, which was respected world-over, has been destroyed

SITARAM YECHURY | CPI(M) GENERAL SECRETARY

We stand for peace, we believe that there is no other way than a return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy. We recognize that the global order is anchored on international law, UN charter and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states and we call for humanitarian access to a conflict situation

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

The Railways will need to target a revenue of Rs 3.5 lakh crore and an investment of Rs 3-lakh crore every year to meet the country's aspirations

ASHWINI VAISHNAW | RAILWAY MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Abhishek Banerjee summoned again

New Delhi: Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee -- nephew of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who was Monday questioned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case pertaining to an alleged coal scam, has been again summoned by the probe agency to join the probe March 29.

Murder accused qualifies for IIT

Patna: A youth, lodged in the district prison in Bihar's Nawada after a case of murder was slapped on him, has cracked the IIT Joint Entrance Test for Masters. Suraj Kumar has achieved the 54th rank in the country and he will soon get admission in IIT Roorkee in Uttarakhand.

More than 100 children fall ill

Patna: More than 100 children, all students of schools in various districts brought here for participation in three-day celebrations of "Bihar Diwas", Thursday took ill, sending the administration into a tizzy. The girls and the boys have been here since Tuesday when the state's 110th foundation day commenced and many of them complained of gastric problems in the morning of their final day of stay.

Rajnath inaugurates BRO's tourism portal

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Thursday launched a tourism portal that will facilitate online booking of guided tours to the road infrastructure projects of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). In the initial phase, only e-booking for a guided tour to Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, will be available through the portal, and soon infrastructure projects in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh will be included under the initiative, the defence ministry said.

Lok Sabha passes Appropriation Bill

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha Thursday passed the Demands for Grants and Appropriation Bill, 2022, by a voice vote, giving the government authorisation to withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund of India for its working. The Bill, introduced by FM Nirmala Sitharaman, was passed after cut motions, moved by various opposition members, were rejected.



Iron Man of India, Sardar Patel's stature is far more taller in the hearts of the people than the 182 metres tall Statue of Unity at Kevaldiya

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

ALL SET FOR YOGI'S OATH TAKING CEREMONY TODAY

Yogi Adityanath Thursday staked claim to form the government in Uttar Pradesh for the second time, a day ahead of his swearing in as Chief Minister at a mega event which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a slew of dignitaries



Calcutta HC reserves order



AGENCIES

Kolkata, March 24: The Calcutta High court Thursday reserved its order in a suo motu petition, along with a bunch of PILs seeking a probe by CBI or NIA, in the death of eight people in West Bengal's Birbhum district.

The state opposed the prayer for CBI or NIA probe, submitting that an enquiry is being conducted by a Special Investigation Team formed by the West Bengal government and prayed that the SIT be given time to proceed with it.

Eight people, including two children, were charred to death as nearly a dozen huts were set ablaze in Bogtui village early Tuesday in a suspected fallout of the murder of a ruling Trinamool Congress leader and 'upa-pradhan' (deputy chief) of the local panchayat.

Following the conclusion of submissions by all parties over two days, a division bench comprising Chief Justice Prakash Shrivastava and Justice R Bharadwaj said it will consider the arguments and pass the order. Additional Solicitor General Y J Dastur submitted that the CBI or the NIA are ready to initiate a probe if an order is passed by the high court to that effect.

BIRBHUM KILLINGS

Plea in apex court seeks CBI probe

New Delhi: A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a CBI probe into the death of eight people. The plea filed by Vishnu Gupta, the national president of the Hindu Sena, alleged that local authorities are trying to shield the real culprits of the ghastly incident under the influence of the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in the state. It has sought directions to the investigating agency to take over all the FIRs registered by the local police in connection with the incident.

He informed the court that a seven-member team from Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Delhi, will proceed to Bogtui village upon reaching Kolkata on Thursday evening for collection of samples from the crime scene as ordered by the bench earlier. They will be provided with security by CRPF personnel, Dastur said.

Advocate General S N Mookherjee placed the case diaries of the criminal case lodged in connection with the matter along with a report on the investigation being carried out, as directed by the court. The advocate general opposed prayers by petitioners for transfer of the case to CBI or NIA and cited several earlier judgments of different courts in support of his argument.

Mookherjee submitted that 31 CCTV cameras have been installed at the place of crime as ordered by the bench Wednesday.

NO RESPITE



A man covers his face with a cloth to shield himself from the scorching heat in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Wang arrives on an unannounced visit

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 24: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in India Thursday evening in the highest-level visit between the two countries after the ties came under severe strain following the eastern Ladakh standoff nearly two years ago.

Wang flew into New Delhi from Kabul and is set to hold talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Friday morning.

It is learnt that the Chinese foreign minister's unannounced visit is more to do with the geopolitical power play in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine with China even signalling its willingness to assist



Moscow in dealing with crippling economic sanctions.

In the talks, India is unlikely to shift its focus from the eastern Ladakh border row as it is ex-

pected to press for complete disengagement of troops from all the first points in the region.

The border issue is likely to figure extensively in the meeting be-

This is the first high-level Chinese diplomatic visit to India in over two years since the border dispute began between the two countries in Eastern Ladakh

tween Wang and Doval who have been serving as the special representatives for boundary talks.

Both sides kept the visit under the wraps. It is not immediately clear whether the Indian side will facilitate a call on by Wang with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Ukraine crisis is expected to be the other major issue in the talks.

Defence Ministry bans import of 107 strategically important sub-systems

These 107 sub-systems will be indigenised in the coming years and will only be procured from Indian Industry after the timelines indicated against each of them in the list

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 24: Ministry of Defence has banned import of 107 strategically important line replacement units or sub-systems aimed to enhance self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

"In continuous pursuit of self-reliance in defence manufacturing and to minimise imports by DPSUs under 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', Ministry of Defence has approved another list of 107 strategically important Line replacement Units (LRUs)/sub-systems with a timeline beyond which there will be an embargo on their import," the ministry said in a statement. These 107 sub-systems will be indigenised in the

coming years and will only be procured from Indian Industry after the timelines indicated against each of them in the list. The Defence Public Sector Undertakings-wise and timeline-wise lists are:

Indigenisation of these items will be taken up by DPSUs under 'Make' category. 'Make' Category aims to achieve self-reliance by involving greater participation of Indian industry. Projects involving design and development of equipment, systems, major platforms or upgrades thereof by the industry can be taken up under this category. DPSUs will offer these identified LRUs/Sub-systems for industry led design and development. This will be a great op-

portunity for the Indian industry to get integrated in the supply chains of manufacturing major defence platforms. "The indigenous development of these LRUs/Sub-systems projects will bolster the economy and reduce the import dependence of DPSUs," the statement read. In addition, it will help harness the design capabilities of the domestic defence industry and position India as a design leader in these technologies. This list is in continuation to the positive indigenisation list of 2,851 sub-systems, assemblies, sub-assemblies and components which had been earlier notified by the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence December 27, 2021.

SC Pegasus panel seeks public views

THE PANEL HAS POSED 11 QUESTIONS AND ASKED FOR PUBLIC RESPONSE BY MARCH 31

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 24: The Supreme Court's Pegasus probe panel has sought public response enactment or amendment to existing laws and procedures surrounding surveillance, ensuring prevention of invasion of citizens' right to privacy, establishing a mechanism to raise grievances on suspicion of illegal surveillance etc.

The Supreme Court, in its order passed October 27, 2021, constituted a technical committee under the oversight of Justice RV Raveendran (ret'd) to enquire, investigate, and determine certain matters relating to the complaint of unauthorised use of Pegasus spyware against Indian citizens, in the matter of Manohar Lal Sharma v. Union of India and others.

As part of the terms of reference, the technical committee, in a press release, has been called to make recommendation on a range of issues: Regarding enactment



or amendment to existing law and procedures surrounding surveillance and for securing improved right to privacy, and regarding enhancing and improving the cyber security of the nation and its assets.

The committee was also called on to make recommendations to ensure prevention of invasion of citizens' right to privacy, otherwise than in accordance with law, by state and/or non-state entities through such spyware.

"Regarding the establishment of a mechanism for citizens to raise grievances on suspicion of illegal surveillance of their devices. Regarding the setting up of a well-equipped independent premier agency to investigate cyber security vulnerabilities, for threat assessment relating to cyberattacks and to investigate instances of cyberattacks in the country," the panel's press statement said.

NIA conducts search operations in Gujarat, Maha

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 24: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Thursday carried out search operations at four locations in Gujarat and Maharashtra in connection with an espionage case.

The case was initially lodged by the Vijaywada police station in Andhra Pradesh in 2020. Later, the NIA took over the probe. The case

ESPIONAGE ATTEMPT BY PAK AGENTS

pertains to the involvement of Pakistani agents in espionage activities in India.

The NIA learnt during the investigation that the accused had conspired with their associates based at Visakhapatnam, Mumbai and Gujarat for gathering sensitive information to carry out terror acts in India.

Indian SIM cards were fraudulently procured and OTPs were received through their Indian associates for activation of WhatsApp accounts by Pakistan-based handlers, which were then used to establish contact with defence personnel to elicit sensitive information related to vital installations.

Delhi Assembly to go paperless

New Delhi: The Delhi Assembly Thursday moved a step closer to being paperless with all the 70 MLAs getting iPads for receiving information and documents on legislative proceedings online Speaker Ram Niwas Goel urged the legislators to carry the iPads, provided by the Delhi government's finance department, during the ongoing Budget session. "We want to implement a completely paperless system for availing the documents and information online. The Assembly has also been provided with WiFi connectivity and the budget address of the Finance minister and other documents will be available on the iPads of the legislators," he said. The Assembly has taken up an automation project that will enable the MLAs to work digitally -- submit questions and notices and table Bills online. A request for proposal was issued by the Delhi Assembly Secretariat for selecting a successful bidder for the implementation of the automation project. The project also includes the creation of a facility to make the MLAs attend the House proceedings virtually.

64% with TB symptoms did not seek medical help: Survey

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 24: A national survey conducted from 2019 to 2021 by the Union government has found that 64 per cent people with tuberculosis symptoms did not seek healthcare services.

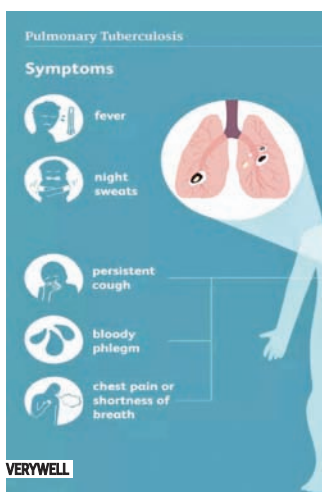
According to the National TB Prevalence Survey in India whose report was released Thursday on the occasion of World TB Day, the reasons for those not seeking medical care included ignoring the symptoms (68 per cent), not recognising the symptoms as TB (18 per cent), and self-treatment (12 per cent).

The survey also revealed that the prevalence of microbiologically confirmed pulmonary TB (PTB) among those aged 15 years

and above in India was 316 per lakh population, with the highest PTB prevalence of 534 per lakh in Delhi and the lowest prevalence of 115 per lakh in Kerala. The prevalence of PTB infection among the surveyed in India was 21.7 per cent, the report pointed out.

According to the survey, the prevalence of all forms of TB for all ages in India was 312 per lakh population for the year 2021. The highest prevalence for all forms of TB was 747 per lakh in Delhi and the lowest was 137 in Gujarat.

The prevalence of all forms of TB among population aged 15 years and above was 31.4 per cent. The survey found that COVID-19 has impacted the community level chest X-ray abnormality in general and would have



impacted the TB prevalence. The survey enumerated 4,85,010

We are determined and committed to achieve our PM's vision of eliminating TB by 2025, five years ahead of the target for TB set by SDG 2030. Through the active efforts of all the states and the sustained guidance to the programme by our country's leadership, the programme has advanced through challenging times

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

people and assessed them for eligibility for participation in the

survey, of which 3,54,541 (73.1 per cent) were found eligible. Of those eligible, 3,22,480 (90.9 per cent) participants consented for the survey and were screened by at least one method.

"A considerable amount of prevalent TB cases were contributed by patients with past history of TB. Hence, NTEP (National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme) needs close follow-up of patients completing treatment for early detection of recurrent TB and plan interventions for preventing recurrence of TB. NTEP needs to prioritise scale up of molecular test and chest X-ray screening under programme conditions for increasing the efficiency of case finding and early diagnosis of TB," the report said. The survey also

found that the prevalence-to-notification ratio of pulmonary TB for people aged 15 years and above in India and the state groups is about 2.84. The highest ratio was observed in Chhattisgarh and the lowest was observed in Gujarat.

"We need to prioritize the interventions in high prevalent states and plan for elimination in low prevalent states," the report recommended. More interventions for men like occupation screening for TB, nutritional interventions for malnourished, old age screening and interventions for promoting smoking and alcohol cessation needs to be scaled up for better control of PTB to address the factors which have more contribution towards the PTB burden, it said.

BATTLE ROYALE: SC THRUST ON IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATIONS

CBI to probe all Param Bir cases

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 24: Terming the legal clash between former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh and former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh as "battle royale", the Supreme Court Thursday ordered a CBI probe into all cases lodged against Singh by the Maharashtra Police.

Emphasising that an impartial probe into the matter is required, it clarified that it is not revoking Singh's suspension, and also, if there were any FIRs registered against Singh in future, then these will also be transferred to the CBI. A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and MM Sundresh said the CBI must hold an impartial probe in all the aspects of the matter and examine whether the allegations in the FIRs have any truth or not.

"What is the truth, who is at fault... How does such a scenario come to prevail is something which investigation must get into. CBI must hold an impartial inquiry into all these aspects," it said.

It directed the Maharashtra Police to hand over all the cases, which include 5 FIRs and two PEs, to the CBI within a week and render all assistance to the central agency in its probe into the cases against Singh.

Justice Kaul observed that a very murky affair is going on amid echelons of power on who should



The exigencies in the advancement of principles of justice require the investigation to be transferred to CBI... We are not saying the appellant is a whistle-blower or anyone involved in this case is washed with milk

SUPREME COURT BENCH

investigate the matter.

"The exigencies in the advancement of principles of justice require the investigation to be transferred to CBI... We are not saying the appellant is a whistle-blower or anyone involved in this case is washed with milk," the bench noted.

It also stressed that the objective is to embolden and gain people's confidence in the police and

this is not a reflection on Maharashtra Police.

The troubling situation arising at the higher echelons has been presented before us, said the bench. Senior advocate Darius Khambata, representing the Maharashtra government, vehemently argued that cases should not be transferred to the CBI, as it will be very demoralising for the state police.

During the hearing, the bench observed, "The murky churning from the battle royale between then Home Minister and the then Police Commissioner has given rise to these unfortunate proceedings on which we have commented before."

Senior advocate Puneet Bali, representing Singh, submitted that CBI should probe all the cases registered against his client, and not the state police on which he does not have faith, even though he headed the same.

The bench noted, "We are of the

view that the state itself should have allowed CBI to carry the investigation. It clarified that the court was commenting on the merits of the allegations, as it does not want to influence the investigation."

"The high court (Bombay) has treated this as a service dispute which it is not and thus, we set aside the HC verdict."

Singh is facing multiple cases of extortion, corruption, and misconduct, and was removed from the post of Mumbai Police chief over his alleged mishandling of the Antilia bomb scare case.

The bench was hearing a plea by Singh against the Bombay High Court judgment passed in September last year, dismissing his plea challenging the two inquiries ordered by the Home Ministry for allegedly violating service rules and corruption charges, as non-maintainable.

In November, last year, the apex court granted protection from arrest to Singh in criminal cases lodged against him. Singh had claimed that inquiries were initiated against him after he accused Deshmukh of ordering (now arrested) police officer Sachin Vaze to collect money from bars and restaurants to the tune of Rs 100 crore. Singh claimed the Home Department resorted to a witch hunt after he refused to withdraw his letter (written last year) to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, where he had made the corruption allegations.

TN beefs up security along coast as refugees land from Sri Lanka

A TOTAL OF 16 REFUGEES, INCLUDING CHILDREN, HAVE LANDED IN THE STATE AFTER BEING RESCUED BY THE INDIAN COAST GUARD

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 24: The elite 'Q' branch of the Tamil Nadu Police have increased security across the coastal areas of the state following the possibility of a huge refugee influx from Sri Lanka in view of the internal crisis in the island nation.

A total of 16 refugees, including children, have landed in the state after being rescued by the Indian Coast Guard and Tamil Nadu Marine Police.

The refugees were produced before a magistrate court which sentenced three adults from the first batch of six Sri Lankan refugees for 15 days of judicial custody. The first batch of Sri Lankan refugees included R. Gajendran (24), his wife Mary Clary (23), their four-month-old son, Nishanth, Duri (28), and her children, Esther (9) and Moses (6).

The court allowed Nishanth and Moses to stay with their mothers while Esther (9) was handed over to her grandmother who is in the Sri Lankan refugee camp at Vellore.

The second group of 10 refugees who reached the shores of India Tuesday late night were identified as Sivarethnam (30), his wife Mery Yalini (27), their children, Reshalini (8) and Sindhuja (5), Seythu Mohammed (45), his wife Sivasankankathi (33), and their children, Samila (17), Mujini (15),



It may be recalled that during the Civil war in Sri Lanka more than 1,00,000 people reached India, especially in Tamil Nadu

the authorities to keep such people at Rameswaram camp and to conduct inquiries at the camp itself."

It may be recalled that during the Civil war in Sri Lanka more than 1,00,000 people reached India and, especially in Tamil Nadu. They are lodged in 107 refugee camps across the state.

The Tamil Nadu Police along with the Indian Coast Guard have beefed up the security at the coastal line to prevent the huge refugee influx and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, MK Stalin has already written to the Government of India regarding the possible crisis.

The state government has also issued special advisories to Tamil Nadu fishermen to immediately inform the authorities if they spot any illegal movement in the sea.

Mohammed (13) and Bhoomika (8). All of them are from Vavuniya district of Sri Lanka and the state government has decided to keep them at the Mandapam refugee camp at Rameswaram.

Jacintha Lazarus, Commissioner for Rehabilitation and Welfare of Non-Resident Tamils while speaking to IANS said, "We have asked

TN idol wing stakes claim over idols returned by Oz

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 24: The Tamil Nadu police idol wing has staked claim over four of the 29 idols returned by Australia Monday. The idols were returned by Australia ahead of the virtual meet between the Prime Ministers of the two countries.

Of the four idols, one was stolen from Myladuthurai in 1965, the idol wing said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked his Australian coun-

terpart Scott Morrison for taking initiative to return the idols. He also inspected the idols that were returned. According to sources in the idol wing, out of the four idols that they have staked claim on, one is an idol of Shaivaita Saint, Thirugananasambandar in standing position, the other is in his dancing position, the third is of Chandeshvara Nayanmaragain and the last one is of Lord Shiva. All the idols are made of bronze.

Russia's Rosatom continues building N-plant for India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 24: Even as Russia is fighting a war against Ukraine, the former's integrated nuclear energy player Rosatom continues to manufacture the components needed for the 1,000 MW plant that is being built in Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu.

According to Rosatom, its machine building division Petrozavodskmash has started manufacturing guide vanes for the housings of reactor coolant pump sets (RCPS) intended for the fifth unit at Kudankulam.

India's atomic power plant operator Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) has two 1,000 MW plants (Units 1 and 2) at Kudankulam, while four more (Units 3, 4, 5 and 6) are under construction. All the six units are built with Russian technology and equipment supplied by Rosatom.

According to Rosatom, the first guide vane has already passed the fitting-up and welding operations.

As related to other three guide vanes, the fit-up quality was inspected, and Petrozavodskmash workers have set about welding operations. The guide vane refers

to the RCPS internals and consists of upper and lower disks, between which 13 guide blades are to be welded.

The guide vane is to be mounted in the pump housing rigidly and is intended for setting centrifugal direction of coolant flow inside the pump. The RCPS housing is the first safety class item. The reactor plant equipment of one power unit includes four RCP sets.

Be that as it may, NPCIL officials are wondering about the impact of Russia-Ukraine conflict on the delivery of atomic power plant components from Russia's Rosatom for four plants under construction. The NPCIL has to arrange ships for bringing the reactor components from Russia to India.

Following the Russian military operation in Ukraine, the US, the UK and other Western countries have imposed economic sanctions on Russia. Speaking to IANS, a senior NPCIL official, preferring anonymity, had said the shipping sector is affected because of the conflict. The official also said Rosatom will inform about the items that can be lifted from Russia and ships will be arranged accordingly.



OIL OUTCRY



Women stage a protest over hike in diesel price in Mumbai, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

GI tag for TN classical wind instrument

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 24: Tamil Nadu's traditional wind instrument, 'Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram' made by traditional village artisans of Kumbakonam has got the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

The GI registry has issued the registration certificate based on the application filed on January 31, 2014. Nodal officer for GI reg-

istration of products of Tamil Nadu government, P. Sanjai Gandhi, in a statement, said that the application for the GI tag for the Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram was filed on behalf of the Thanjavur Musical Instruments Workers Cooperative Cottage Industrial society and facilitated by his team.

He said that the artisans based in Narasinganpetti village are making them through specialised

processing skills. The technique and skill of making these instruments were inherited from their forefathers. Sanjai Gandhi said that the nagaswaram now used by artists throughout is called pari naggeswaram and is longer than Thimiri. A major portion of Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram is made from the traditional wood acha, according to the makers, and provides a unique sound modulation.

BDD chawls named after Rajiv, Balasaheb, Pawar

THE THREE MAJOR ERSTWHILE BDD CHAWLS COMPLEXES ARE CURRENTLY UNDERGOING WHAT IS BILLED AS ASIA'S BIGGEST REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT WORTH ₹20,000 CRORE, STARTED IN AUGUST 2021

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, March 24: The Maharashtra government Thursday said it has renamed the century-old clusters of eyeseore matchbox tenements, commonly known as 'British Development Department' (BDD) chawls, after three prominent leaders.

While the BDD Chawl in Worli has been named after the Shiv Sena founder as 'Balasaheb Thackeray Nagar', the cluster on NM Joshi Marg shall be henceforth known as 'Rajiv Gandhi Nagar', and the third one in Naigaon has been rechristened as 'Sharad Pawar Nagar' after the Nationalist Congress President supremo, said Housing Minister Jitendra Awhad.

The three major erstwhile BDD chawls complexes - where once Mahatma Gandhi spent a night among the Mehtar Samaj (sweepers) in 1937 - are currently undergoing what is billed as Asia's biggest

redevelopment project worth Rs 20,000 crore, started in August 2021.

Built between 1921-1924, there are a total of 207 ground-plus-three-storey buildings, each with identical 160-sq feet 'face-to-face' chawls, a 20-foot-wide centre passage, common water supply, bathing and toilet areas, housing around 17,000 families and spread across 93 acres of the most prime chunks of land in south Mumbai.

Dr Awhad said that the work on the complexes is progressing well and all the residents shall get their new homes over the next five years in the upcoming 32 swank towers with 500 sq feet 2-BHK ultra-modern flats and other top amenities, bringing a sea-change to their lives.

Being built by Tatas, L&T and Shapoorji Pallonji for different projects, the well-planned new complexes will have 40-storied and 22-floor tall towers with floors for parking, wide roads, at least 40 schools, welfare centres, mini-hos-



pitals, gardens, playgrounds, markets and shopping plazas.

Besides Mahatma Gandhi, a regular visitor there was the Chief Architect of Indian Constitution, Bharat Ratna Dr BR Ambedkar who had planted a 'Peepal' sapling which has now bloomed into a gigantic shady tree.

Months before his assassination (May 1991), the former Prime

Minister and Bharat Ratna Rajiv Gandhi - then the Leader of Opposition - was delayed for an evening rally in the Gandhi Maidan here, but finally turned up early the next morning around 3.30 am, but the venue was full of enthusiastic, though groggy-eyed people still waiting to hear him out!

The other prominent 'products' of BDD Chawls include the founder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 24: The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and the Council Thursday unanimously passed a Bill that aims to make use of Marathi language mandatory in official works of local authorities, including civic bodies and corporations formed by the state government.

State minister Subhash Desai said the introduction of the bill was necessitated as the Maharashtra Official Language Act, 1964 did not make it mandatory for the local authorities to use Marathi in their official works.

He also cited examples of the authorities taking "advantage" of the lack of the provision in the Act.

"It is our effort to do away with that mistake," Desai said.

Any (local) authority, be it established by the state government or the central government or (state-run) corporations, will have to use Marathi while interacting with people and in internal works too," he said.

The minister also said the use of English or Hindi by local au-

thorities for certain government works like communicating with foreign ambassadors has been allowed.

Speaking in the Legislative Council, Desai said, "We are this time not leaving any loopholes for anyone to find an excuse to not use Marathi language in public and commercial places. The state government is also coming up with a dictionary of simple Marathi words that can be used in day-to-day work."

Earlier, BJP MLA Yogesh Sagar, while speaking on the bill in the Assembly, wondered why the "love for Marathi" surfaces when elections are around. He was apparently referring to local body polls, including that of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), which are due.

Sagar backed the bill and said all the files must be in Marathi only. Countering him, Desai said the issue should not be linked to politics. "Should we not discharge our duties just because the elections are around the corner. It is our right to bring the bill. Elections will come and go," he added.



of the day quote

Police has been ordered to throw a dragnet to unearth secret caches of illicit firearms and bombs across Bengal

In the past 37 years, no party got full majority again in Uttar Pradesh. It is historic that the BJP is the only party, which got over two-third seats for the second consecutive time

Muslim roadside vendors should not be put to inconvenience. There are 2.60 lakh registered roadside vendors in Karnataka. Among them, more than 20 per cent are Muslims

SHORT TAKES

4 of family killed in road accident

Chitradurga: Four members of a family, including two children, were killed on the spot in a road accident when a bike they were travelling on collided with a private bus coming from opposite direction in Holakere police station limits in Karnataka.

SL Navy arrests 16 Indian fishermen

Chennai: The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 16 Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu and seized two mechanized fishing boats for violation of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).

BJP leader's son killed

Mhow/Bhopal (MP): Son of a local BJP leader was killed after he intervened to pacify two groups of people who were fighting over the digging of a borewell in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district.

FIR against 51

Gurugram: A total of 10 FIRs have been registered against 51 people on the complaint of the District Town and Country Planner to initiate action against individuals involved in developing illegal colonies here in Farrukhnagar area.



The biggest party of the world (BJP) got scared by the smallest party of the world (AAP)

PM MODI TO INTERACT WITH STUDENTS APRIL 1

The fifth edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' with Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be held April 1 at the Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi.



9 judges appointed to five high courts

New Delhi, March 24: Nine judges, including two whose names were reiterated by the Supreme Court collegium, were Thursday appointed to five high courts.

EX GRATIA FOR COVID-19 DEATHS

SC allows Centre to conduct inquiry into fake claims

The court had earlier expressed concern over fake claims for getting ex gratia compensation of ₹50,000, meant for family members of those who have lost their lives due to Covid



AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 24: The Supreme Court Thursday said nobody can be permitted to misuse ₹50,000 ex-gratia compensation to next of kin of those who succumbed to Covid-19.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and BV Nagarathna said: "This Court passed the order directing the Union of India/NDMA/concerned states to pay ex-gratia amount keeping in mind the humanity and keeping in mind the sufferings of the family members who lost one of their family members due to Covid-19.

The bench noted that 7,38,610 claims are received and, therefore, it may be very difficult to verify each and every claim.

Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala and Maharashtra at the first instance." It emphasised that nobody can be permitted to avail the ex-gratia compensation by making a false claim or submitting the false certificate.

The bench said state governments are directed to assist in carrying out the scrutiny of the claim applications, while asking the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to carry out the scrutiny within a period of three months and submit the report before it.

"If it is found that anybody has made a fake claim, the same shall be considered under Section 52 of the Act, 2005 (Disaster Management Act) and liable to be punished accordingly," it added.

The bench considered Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's submissions that if there is no outer time limit fixed, then the process of receiving the claims would go endless and, in that case, there is all possibility of submitting false claims.

The top court was hearing a plea, filed by advocate Gaurav Bansal, where it is monitoring various state governments for the distribution of ₹50,000 fixed by the NDMA as compensation to the family members of persons who died due to Covid.

1990 MASSACRES

Kashmiri Pandit body moves SC seeking CBI/NIA probe

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 24: A Kashmiri Pandit organisation has moved a curative petition in the Supreme Court seeking a probe either by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or National Investigation Agency (NIA) into the alleged mass murders and genocide of Kashmiri Pandits during 1989-90.

The plea, filed by Roots in Kashmir, has challenged an order of the top court passed in 2017 dismissing the plea saying: "The instances referred in the petition pertain to the year 1989-90, and more than 27 years have passed by since then.

A statement from the organisation said that in support of the curative petition, a certificate has been issued by senior advocate and Supreme Court Bar Association President, Vikas Singh. The curative petition also cited a 2018 Delhi High Court order on Sajjan Kumar in anti-Sikh riots case, where, allowing the appeal, it said: "It is important to assure those countless victims waiting patiently that de-



spite the challenges, truth will prevail and justice will be done..."

The plea said: "Transfer of investigation of all the FIRs/cases of murder and other allied crimes against Kashmiri Pandits in year 1989-90, 1997 and 1998, to some other independent investigating agency like the CBI or the NIA or any other agency as appointed by this Court, as till date J&K Police has failed miserably to make any progress in hundreds of FIRs lying pending with them."

The plea sought prosecution of Yasin Malik and Farooq Ahmed Daar @ Bitta Karate, Javed Nalka

and others, for hundreds of FIRs of murders of Kashmiri Pandits during 1989-90, 1997 and 1998, and which are lying uninvestigated by J&K Police even after expiry of 26 years.

"Transfer of all the FIRs/cases pertaining to murders of Kashmiri Pandits, from State of J&K to some other State (preferably NCT of Delhi), so that the witnesses, who were reluctant to approach police or courts in view of their safety concerns, can freely and fearlessly come and depose before investigating agencies and courts," added the plea.

PUNJAB CM SEEKS SPECIAL FINANCIAL PACKAGE OF ₹1CR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 24: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Thursday sought a special financial package of ₹1 lakh crore from the Centre for the revival of state's economy, besides ensuring holistic development and welfare of its people.

Mann called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi here in his office.

Apprising the Prime Minister about pathetic fiscal position of the state, he said the previous governments have left a whopping burden of ₹3 lakh crore on the state and demanded immediate financial package of ₹50,000 crore each for two years to put the derailed economy on the rails.

All 5 AAP candidates from Punjab elected to RS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, March 24: All five Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidates from Punjab for the equal number of Rajya Sabha seats were elected unopposed on Thursday, Returning Officer-cum-Assembly Secretary, Surinder Pal, said.

On the last day of withdrawing nomination papers for the election, no candidate withdrew the paper. Those who have been elected were politicians Sandeep Kumar Pathak and Raghav Chadha (both in the first cycle) and ex-cricketer Harbhajan Singh, educationist Ashok Mittal, and businessman Sanjeev Arora (all in the second cycle).

The AAP had registered a landslide victory in Punjab Assembly elections 2022, winning 92 seats in the 117-member Assembly.

Chadha, who is the party's Punjab



affairs co-in-charge, is a confidant of AAP's national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. In the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections, Chadha won from Rajinder Nagar Assembly constituency and became an MLA. He is also the Vice-Chairman of the Delhi Jal Board.

Pathak joined the party to contribute to Kejriwal's dream of a corruption-free India.

Famous cricketer and former India off-spin bowler Harbhajan Singh played for the Indian cricket team from 1998 to 2016 and made a

special place in the hearts of the people of the country with his amazing and unique bowling.

Mittal, founder and Chancellor of Lovely Professional University, is known for his work and social service in the field of higher education. Born in a normal family, Mittal achieved success on the basis of his hard work and ability and achieved so much.

To contribute to the education sector in Punjab, he established Lovely Professional University in Jalandhar, and it became one of the largest universities in India, drawing students from more than 50 countries.

Arora, an eminent businessman of Ludhiana, runs the Krishna Pran Breast Cancer Charitable Trust. He founded it after his parents lost their lives due to cancer and treated more than 160 cancer patients free of cost.

QUENCHING THIRST



An antelope and a crow quench their thirst inside an enclosure of TATA Steel Zoological Park (TSZP) in Jamshedpur

'Shape Our Future' theme of Earth Hour 2022

THE WORLD WIDE FUND-INDIA HAS COME OUT WITH THE 'EARTH HOUR INDIA' ANTHEM, COMPOSED BY SHANTANU MOITRA WITH VOCALS BY MOHIT CHAUHAN THAT ALSO APPEALS TO PEOPLE FOR URGENT ACTION TO SAVE THE PLANET

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 24: Skylines across Delhi and other cities in India would go dark, as every year, to observe the 'Earth Hour 2022' Saturday, March 26 at 8.30 p.m. with the theme 'Shape Our Future' which aims to herald a new era that puts people and the planet first.

In Delhi, the BSES has appealed to its over 46 lakh consumers - around 1.8 crore residents - to join the effort to make the "right choice

for the planet and for the future generations that will inherit it".

"As we continue adapting our lives to the impacts of Covid-19 and the catastrophic events of the past two years, Earth Hour 2022 aims to signal to Shape Our Future. It will herald a new era that puts people and the planet first," WWF said.

Sharing his experience about working on the anthem, Harmony and Hope Ambassador for WWF India, Shantanu Moitra said: "The Earth Hour anthem is the bind-



ing force for everyone to be part of this global movement. I want to thank Mohit Chauhan, who has

lent his voice to this noble cause. Lyrics written by Tanveer Ghazi share the sentiments of people to protect nature before it is too late."

Mohit Chauhan sharing his views said: "I'm very glad to be part of Earth Hour through the Earth Hour anthem. I look forward to millions getting together this Earth Hour, to support and act for our mother nature."

Ravi Singh, secretary general and CEO, WWF India, said: "Earth Hour is an important step forward in our lives every year. Spend

this hour to meditate and think of positive actions that we can take, individually and collectively, to better the environment."

As many as 190 countries across the globe participate in the Earth Hour every year, this year being the 16th edition, with residents switching off their electrical appliances and non-essential lighting fixtures for one hour starting at 8.30 p.m. (local time) to show their concern for the environment.

A BSES spokesperson said: "We sincerely appeal to our over 46

lakh consumers and around 1.8 crore residents in our area to make the right choice for the planet and for the future generations that will inherit it. This Earth Hour, all our actions, albeit small, will Shape Our Future'. Citizens can help protect the natural world to safeguard our future by switching off."

Moreover, BRPL and BYPL will also switch off all non-essential lights at their over 400 offices, spread across an area of around 900 sq km, during the appointed hour.

international

LAVROV'S STEPDAUGHTER ON NEW UK SANCTION LIST

Britain is sanctioning 65 more companies and individuals over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The targets include Russia's largest private bank and a woman the British government said was the stepdaughter of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said the new round of sanctions target strategic industries, banks and business elites. Among those sanctioned are Alfa Bank, Russia's largest private bank and Alrosa, the world's largest diamond mining company



WHEN WAR CAME HOME

NATO extends Stoltenberg term

Oslo: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will remain in his role for an extra year to help steer the 30-nation military organisation through the security crisis sparked by Russia's war on Ukraine. Stoltenberg tweeted Thursday that he is "honoured" by the decision of NATO leaders to extend his term until Sept 30, 2023. "As we face the biggest security crisis in a generation, we stand united to keep our alliance strong and our people safe," he said. The former Norwegian prime minister was named to NATO's top civilian post in October 2014.



Russia retaliates

Moscow: Russia has said it is expelling US diplomats in response to Washington's recent expulsion of Russian diplomats from the United Nations (UN). The Russian Foreign Ministry said Wednesday in a statement that it summoned a senior diplomat of the US embassy in Moscow on Wednesday and declared a list of American diplomats "persona non grata", Xinhua news agency reported. The US side was told that any hostile actions against Russia will receive a decisive and adequate response, it added. The Ministry did not disclose how many US diplomats are targeted and the deadline of their departure.

Western nations to bolster aid

INDIA THURSDAY ABSTAINED IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON A RESOLUTION BY UKRAINE AND ITS ALLIES ON THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN WAR-TORN EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY

REUTERS

Brussels/Lviv/Mariupol: Western leaders meeting in Brussels Thursday agreed to strengthen their forces in Eastern Europe, increase military aid to Ukraine and tighten their sanctions on Russia as Moscow's assault on its neighbour entered its second month. In a display of unity at an unprecedented triple summit of NATO, the G7 and the European Union, the military alliance announced new battle groups to be stationed in four Eastern European countries. The United States and Britain expanded their sanctions blacklists. Countries announced new packages of military and humanitarian aid and promises to take in refugees. The EU was due to announce steps to wean itself off Russian energy. "We agreed to strengthen our deterrence and defence for the

longer-term. We also agreed to give further support to Ukraine and to continue to impose costs on Russia," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said after leaders gathered at NATO headquarters. Still, those pledges stopped short of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's calls for a full boycott of Russian energy products and a no-fly zone over Ukraine, where thousands of people have been killed, millions become refugees, and cities pulverised since Russian leader Vladimir Putin unleashed his invasion on February 24. UNICEF said Thursday more than half of Ukraine's children had now been driven from their homes. In the besieged southern port of Mariupol, hundreds of thousands of people have been hiding in basements with no running water, food, medicine or power. In a part of the city now captured by Russian troops, a patch of grass



US President Joe Biden talks with France's President Emmanuel Macron and Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson ahead of an extraordinary summit at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium

This morning, by the way, phosphorus bombs were used, Russian phosphorus bombs. Adults were killed again and children were killed again

her 73-year-old stepfather Leonid, killed when the car ferrying him to a hospital was blown up 12 days ago. He had taken her seat in the car, she told Reuters, pointing to the mangled remains of the vehicle. "It could have been me," she sobbed. Ukrainian officials accused Russia on Thursday of having forcibly deported 15,000 people from the city to Russia. Moscow denies this. REUTERS PHOTOS

Coalition backs war crimes probe over Russia-Ukraine war

The Hague: A coalition of nations that asked the International Criminal Court to open an investigation over possible Russian war crimes in Ukraine met Thursday to pledge support for the probe. The court's chief prosecutor urged them to stand up in support of the global legal order. "If we don't put our money where our collective mouths are, if we don't give actual support but we wring our hands with lamentations, things can get worse," Prosecutor Karim Khan told a meeting of representatives from more than 20 nations at the British ambassador's residence in The Hague. "And history will not judge us well; victims throughout the world will not judge us well."



UK sanctions Wagner Group

London: The UK has announced it will be sanctioning the Wagner Group, BBC reported. The organisation is a group of mercenaries that was first identified in 2014 when it was backing pro-Russian separatists in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Since then, it has been involved in other regions too, including Syria, Mozambique, Sudan, and the Central Asian Republic. The paramilitary group has been described as Vladimir Putin's private army. It's been warned that the group has been tasked with assassinating Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, BBC reported.



Countries brace for hit to tourism

COUNTRIES FROM TURKEY TO THAILAND, EGYPT AND CUBA ARE BRACING FOR THE LOSS OF RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN VISITORS JUST AS THEIR TRAVEL SECTORS WERE LOOKING TO REBOUND FROM THE PANDEMIC



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Belek: After losing two years to the COVID-19 pandemic, shopkeepers in the heart of the Turkish Riviera had hoped for a strong tourism season this year to help keep their businesses afloat. But Russia's war in Ukraine is fast dampening their spirits. "We're trying to earn our bread through tourism, but it looks like the war has finished off this (tourism) season, too," Devrim Akcay said outside his clothing shop in the resort town of Belek, along the Mediterranean coast's Antalya province.

Nowhere is the threat of just one ripple effect of the war — lost tourism — felt more strongly than in Antalya, a region dotted with shimmering beaches and archaeological sites where visitors from Russia and Ukraine, along with Germany, make up the top contributors to tourism revenue. Countries from Turkey to Thailand, Egypt and Cuba are bracing for the loss of Russian and Ukrainian visitors just as their travel sectors were looking to rebound from the pandemic. With many tourist-dependent economies also struggling with surging in-

flation and other woes, hotel workers, guides and others who serve visitors from the two warring nations expect more pain. The turquoise waters and white sand beaches of the Cuban resort of Varadero, which until recently received a significant number of tourists — mainly Russians — are now almost empty. Russians accounted for almost a third of Cuba's visitors last year — more than 146,000 — and some saw them as the way to get some oxygen to an industry ailing from the pandemic and tighter sanctions imposed by former US President Donald Trump.

4 dead after family falls from building

Montreux, (Switzerland): Swiss police say three adults and a child have died and a teenager was seriously injured after falling from a seven-story residential building Thursday in the lakeside town of Montreux. Police said the victims were all French citizens and members of the same family. Officers had tried to execute a warrant in connection with the home-schooling of a child shortly before the incident, police said. In a statement, police identified the people killed as a 40-year-old man, his 41-year-old wife, her twin sister and the couple's 8-year-old daughter. They said the couple's 15-year-old son was seriously injured. Authorities have opened an investigation "to determine the exact circumstances and reasons for this tragedy," police said.

Early polls can be held: Pak minister

Islamabad: Pakistan's Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid said Thursday that early elections can be held in the country to end the current political uncertainty due to a no-trust motion against embattled Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is struggling to save his government. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Rashid also warned party dissidents that switching sides would not do them any good. Pakistan has been on the edge since Opposition parties March 8 submitted a no-confidence motion before the National Assembly Secretariat, alleging that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government led by Prime Minister Khan was responsible for the economic crisis and the spiralling inflation in the country. Khan, 69, is heading a coalition government and he can be removed if some of the partners decide to switch sides.



S Korea's ex-President returns home

Seoul: Three months after being pardoned for one of South Korea's worst government-corruption scandals, former President Park Geun-hye Thursday went home after being released from a hospital. She slowly walked out of Samsung Medical Centre here as cameras flashed and dozens of supporters shouted: "Park Geun-hye! President!" "I express my greetings to our people for the first time in five years. My health has really improved, thanks to your worries," Park said. She thanked the hospital's medical staff and stepped into a black sedan without taking questions. She then stopped by a cemetery and offered flowers and incense at the grave of her father, slain military dictator Park Chung-hee, and bowed quietly in tribute. Hours later, a crowd of thousands waving national flags and balloons chanted her name amid a heavy police presence as Park arrived at her high-walled residence in her southern hometown of Daegu, where supporters covered a path near her home with hundreds of wreaths.



Lankans feel pain of spiralling economic crisis

REUTERS

Minuwangoda: Thusitha Hadaragama stood at a corner store near his home in Sri Lanka's Minuwangoda town this week and surveyed groceries to buy for his family of five, including two school-age children, who live on his monthly salary of 50,000 rupees (\$181.82). "Prices have gone up again. I will buy a little bit," said the 43-year-old driver, who works in Sri Lanka's commercial capital of Colombo, 40 kilometres away. "We will have to eat half of what we ate before." Across Sri Lanka, families like Hadaragama's are feeling the growing pain of the country's worst economic crisis in years, which has driven up prices of essentials

The reason for the shortages is not a shortage of any commodity but the shortage of dollars

DHANANATH FERNANDO
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OF COLOMBO
THINK-TANK ADVOCATA INSTITUTE

and triggered shortages of everything from food to fuel. Historically weak government finances, badly timed tax cuts and the COVID-19 pandemic, which pummeled the tourism industry and foreign remittances, have wreaked havoc on the economy. The country is left with foreign reserves of only around \$2.31 billion as of February, even as it faces debt payments of about \$4 billion



through the rest of the year. "The reason for the shortages is not a shortage of any commodity but the shortage of dollars," said Dhananath Fernando, chief operating officer of Colombo think-

tank Advocata Institute. Shedding months of resistance, Sri Lanka's government last week said it would begin talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a way out of the crisis. The country of 22 million people has also sought assistance from India and China. But for ordinary Sri Lankans, everyday chores have become an ordeal. To fill up his motorcycle, Hadaragama now must stand in long queues and pay more than double for a litre of petrol compared to three months ago. At home, his wife, Varuni, has cut down on how much she cooks to feed her family, which includes two teenage boys and a daughter. "Earlier I cooked three potatoes," she said. "Now I make only two."

business

of the day quote

During the last five years i.e. from 2016-17 to 2020-21, AAI has received revenues of approximately ₹8,093 crore from Delhi airport, ₹5,346 crore from Mumbai airport.

VK SINGH | UNION MINISTER

We are delighted to partner with RBI Innovation Hub on Swanari. It is our strong belief that greater financial inclusion of women will go a long way in moving our nation closer to the \$5-trillion economy mark

SHALINI WARRIER | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BANK

After effectively catering to over a million customers through the MG online buying platform, we intend to take a step further and simplify customer journey to avail suitable financing options for buying cars online

GAURAV GUPTA | CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, MG MOTOR

SHORT TAKES

Ruchi Soya hits capital market

New Delhi: Baba Ramdev-led Patanjali Ayurved-owned Ruchi Soya Thursday hit the capital market to raise ₹4,300 crore through its follow-on public offer (FPO) as it aims to become a debt-free company. The issue closes March 28. The price band has been fixed at ₹615 to ₹650 per share. Addressing a press conference here, Ramdev said the company has launched its FPO despite volatility in the stock market because of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

BoM raises ₹290cr via AT1 bonds

Mumbai: Public sector lender Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) Thursday said it has raised ₹290 crore by issuing Basel III compliant bonds. The bank issued Basel III compliant additional tier 1 (AT1) bonds of ₹290 crore, including green shoe option of ₹40 crore, Wednesday at a coupon rate of 8.75 per cent, the lender said in a statement. "The issue garnered overwhelming response from investors with bids of ₹1,055 crore received against a base issue size of ₹250 crore, which is an indicator of the trust the investors place on the bank," BoM said.

IOC to raise oil prices from today

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corp, the country's top fuel retailer, will raise prices of a litre of petrol and diesel by 0.80 rupees from Friday, its third such increase this week, a notification sent to fuel dealers showed. A litre of petrol will cost Rs 97.81 (\$1.28) while diesel will be sold at ₹9.07 rupees in Delhi, the notification said. Indian state fuel retailers - IOC, Bharat Petroleum Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp - dominate local fuel sales market and move prices in tandem.

EKI, Shell float JV

New Delhi: EKI Energy Services Ltd and Shell Overseas Investments BV Thursday floated a joint venture company for nature-based solutions in India to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. "EKI Energy Services Ltd (EKI) and Shell Overseas Investments BV (The Netherlands), a unit of Shell plc, have joined hands to develop Nature-based Solutions (NBS) in India," a company statement said. As a part of their joint venture, a company is incorporated with the name Amrut Nature Solutions Pvt Ltd having its registered office in Indore.



Happy to know that Government e-Marketplace has achieved order value of ₹1 Lakh Crore in a single year! This is a significant increase from previous years. The GeM platform is especially empowering MSMEs, with 57% of order value coming from MSME sector

NARENDRA MODI | PM

NEPAL ADOPTS INDIA'S UPI

Nepal has adopted the unified payment interface (UPI) developed by India for digital transactions, a government periodical said in its latest edition. Earlier this year, Bhutan also launched a BHIM-UPI based payment service for digital transactions, as per the article tweeted by PIB Thursday



FUEL PRICE FREEZE

IOC, BPCL, HPCL lost ₹19K cr: Moody's

If crude oil prices continue to average around \$111 a barrel, the three rated entities - IOC, BPCL and HPCL - will incur a combined daily loss of around \$65-70 million on the sale of petrol and diesel unless fuel prices are increased to cover the rising crude oil prices



Oil companies will need to raise diesel prices by ₹13.1-24.9 per litre and ₹10.6-22.3 a litre on gasoline (petrol) at an underlying crude price of \$100-120 per barrel

KOTAK INSTITUTIONAL EQUITIES

petrol and diesel, respectively," Moody's said in a report. "Based on our estimates of average sales volume between November and first three weeks of March, the state-owned refining and marketing companies together have lost around \$2.25 billion in revenue on petrol and diesel sales," Moody's said. This equates to around 20 per cent of the combined FY2021 EBITDA for the three entities. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) March 22 and 23 raised

GRAVE DANGER

IOC's loss was around \$1-1.1 billion while that of BPCL and HPCL was about \$550-650 million each for the period between November and March

A sustained increase in crude oil prices will result in inventory valuation gains for the refiners, which will partially mitigate the impact of lower selling prices

Higher crude oil prices will also result in increased working capital requirements, resulting in incremental borrowings for the refiners

"We do expect that the government will allow the refiners to adjust prices appropriately and avoid a situation where refiners continue to make losses of this magnitude for a prolonged period," it said. Commenting on the two days of price increase, Moody's said this underpins the expectation that the price increases will be gradual and occur over a period of time rather than being a one-time adjustment. "Until such time, the refining and marketing companies can cover the increase in feedstock costs either by an increase in selling prices or a reduction in excise duties or both, they will have to continue to absorb a proportion of the increased feedstock costs which will hurt their profitability and increase borrowings," it said.

CRISIL Research said a ₹9-12 per litre increase in retail will be required for a full pass-through of an average \$100 per barrel crude oil and ₹15-20 a litre if the average crude oil price rises to \$110-120. While fuel prices in India are deregulated and the refiners can pass on cost increases to the consumer, a steep price hike such as the one required under the current oil price environment will be in coordination with the government and may involve a reduction in excise duties.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 24: India's top fuel retailers IOC, BPCL and HPCL together lost around \$2.25 billion (Rs 19,000 crore) in revenue for keeping petrol and diesel prices on hold during elections in five states, including Uttar Pradesh, Moody's Investors Services said Thursday. State fuel retailers did not revise petrol and diesel rates for a record 137 days despite prices of crude oil (raw material for producing fuel) rising to \$120 per barrel compared to around \$82 in early November when the hiatus began. "Based on current market prices, the oil marketing companies are currently incurring a revenue loss of around \$25 (over ₹1,900) per barrel and \$24 per barrel on sale of

INDUSTRY IN A SPOT

FinMin seeks to tighten norms for crypto taxation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 24: The government Thursday proposed to tighten the norms for taxation of cryptocurrencies by disallowing set off of any losses with gains from other virtual digital assets. As per the amendments to the Finance Bill, 2022, circulated among the Lok Sabha members, the ministry proposes to remove the word 'other' from section relating to set off of losses from gains in virtual digital assets. This would mean that loss from the transfer of virtual digital assets (VDA) will not be allowed to be set off against the income arising from the transfer of another VDA. According to the Finance Bill, 2022, a VDA could be a code or number or token which can be transferred, stored or traded electronically. The VDAs will include prevailing cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) which has gained fad over the past couple of years. A 1 per cent TDS on payments towards virtual currencies beyond ₹10,000 in a year and taxation of such gifts in the hands of the recipient. The threshold limit for TDS would be ₹50,000 a year for specified persons, which include individuals/HUFs who are required to get their accounts audited under the I-T Act. The provisions related to 1 per cent TDS will come into effect from July 1, 2022, while the gains will be taxed effective April 1. The amendments to the Finance Bill also propose to dilute the penalty provision relating to publication of export-import data. The amendments seek to do away with six-month imprisonment and the ₹50,000 penalty. Separately, the government is working on legislation to regulate cryptocurrencies, but no draft has yet been released publicly.

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According to the Finance Bill, 2022, a VDA could be a code or number or token which can be transferred, stored or traded electronically

The VDAs will include prevailing cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) which has gained fad over the past couple of years

BIZ BUZZ

Dr Chand felicitated in Puri Rural Sports Meet

Bhubaneswar: With voluntary initiatives of Puri rural youth, a Rural Sports Meet of more than thirty villages is getting organized for the last one decade. This year the day and night cricket was held from March 20 to March 22. On valedictory day, Dr Tapan Chand a top industry professional and Padmashree Prabhakar Maharana, the eminent sculptor participated in the meet encouraging the youth. Incidentally, both are natives of the villages participating in the meet. In his address Padmashree Prabhakar Maharana who has earned laurels for the state at national and international level informed that he always cherish his native village Sudhanagar. He also told that Dr Chand a native of adjacent village has never forgotten his village roots even though he has become a top business executive in corporate world. During all natural disasters like Super-cyclone, Fani etc, Dr Chand came to village with relief material from his far off working place and distributed them among the affected. Village president Shri Mohani Behera, Organizing Committee President and newly elected Panchayat representative Kanuhcharan Behera and Padmashree Prabhakar Maharana felicitated Dr Chand. In his address as Chief Guest, Dr Tapan Chand complimented 'Maa Benidhari Youngsters Association' and encouraged them to promote sports in rural side. He also told that Rural India is coming up in a big way and rural bazaar has become a buzzword in business world. Sports and Games are no more hobbies alone it has become a means of livelihood for many. Rural sports is the key for development of wholesome personality of rural youth. The sports meet ended with distribution of prizes to the winners and participants.



BYJU'S becomes Qatar World Cup sponsor

Bangalore, March 24: Indian education technology firm BYJU'S was named as a sponsor of the 2022 Qatar World Cup Thursday. The Bangalore-based firm, which offers online education catering to all age groups, also sponsors the Indian cricket team and said the deal was its first major move into soccer. Financial details of the agreement were not announced. "It is a matter of pride for us to represent India on such a prestigious global stage and champion the integration of education and sport," said BYJU'S founder and CEO Byju Raveendran in a statement. Kay Madati, chief commercial



officer of world soccer's governing body FIFA, said: "We are delighted to be partnered with a company like BYJU'S, which is also engaging communities and empowering young people wherever they may be in the world."

The deal comes after FIFA said Tuesday it had entered into a sponsorship agreement with Singapore-based Crypto.com for the World Cup, which will be held from November 21 to December 18.

Airbus bets big on India's aviation sector

Hyderabad, March 24: Airbus expects Indian airlines to order 2,210 planes over the next 20 years, up from a previous forecast of 1,900, it said Thursday, citing growth in the country's aviation sector. With low-cost carriers making up the bulk of the Indian market, Airbus expects airlines will need 1,770 narrowbody planes to grow their fleets and replace old planes, with the remainder being wide-body planes, Brent McBratney, head of airline marketing for India and South Asia, said at an air show. "India's domestic and international air travel market is expected to grow 6.2% per year over the next 20 years, outpacing average global growth of about 3.9%," McBratney said.



While a proliferation of low-cost carriers has spurred demand for narrowbody planes in India, McBratney also expects growth in long-haul travel, which he said was a largely untapped market for Indian carriers. Domestic air travel in India is recovering from the pandemic, helping airlines such as IndiGo,

which is Airbus' biggest customer for its A320 narrowbody planes, and Vistara, a joint venture between Singapore Airlines and Tata Sons, to boost capacity and utilisation levels. But as crude prices hit record highs following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the cost of jet fuel has risen, which could lead to higher ticket prices and temper demand. However, Airbus expects domestic air travel in India to reach pre-COVID levels by mid-2022, while international travel traffic is expected to recover by next year. Airbus said in November it expected a market total of 39,020 jetliner deliveries over the next 20 years, fractionally lower than the 39,213 it forecast two years earlier.

Zee shares plunge after Invesco drops plans to shake up management



Alleging corporate governance issues, Invesco, which owns nearly 18% of Zee, had sought the ouster of Zee's MD, CEO Punit Goenka and the appointment of new independent board members

the company acknowledges the support. Under the able guidance of its esteemed Board and the strategic approach undertaken by its management, the company remains focused on the completion of the proposed merger with SPNI, which is in the best interest of all the stakeholders," the media and entertainment company said in a statement Thursday. Invesco said, however, it would continue to monitor the progress of the proposed merger and if it failed, it might again seek a Zee shareholder meeting.

Maruti Suzuki names Takeuchi as MD, CEO

New Delhi, March 24: Automobile major Maruti Suzuki's Board Thursday appointed Hisashi Takeuchi as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the company with effect from April 1. The new appointment is consequent to the completion of the incumbent Kenichi Ayukawa's term March 31, 2022. Besides, the company said that in order to facilitate smooth transition, Kenichi Ayukawa will continue as a Whole-time Director designated as Executive Vice Chairman till September 30, 2022, and will continue to provide guidance to the company. Furthermore, these appointments are subject to shareholders' approval.

"India is one of the most interesting and promising automobile markets in the world and it has been both a challenging and a fulfilling stint for me. Takeuchi has an excellent understanding of the Indian as well as international markets and is placed well to lead Maruti Suzuki into the future," said Ayukawa. Ayukawa has been the Managing Director of Maruti Suzuki India Limited since April 2013. According to Takeuchi: "Maruti Suzuki is a great organisation with a rich legacy and it will be my endeavour that we keep serving more and more customers both in India and the world with exciting cars that are good for them, environment and society. We will also try to build our business in a manner that strengthens Aatmanirbhar Bharat and the economic growth of India."

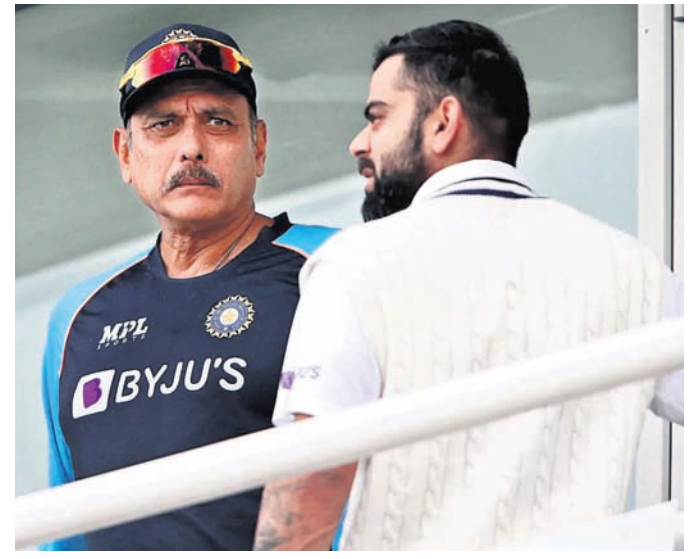
MSD PASSES BATON TO JADDU

Ravi hails Virat for giving up captaincy



MOEEN GETS VISA

New Delhi: Chennai Super Kings' star all-rounder Moeen Ali has secured his India visa and will be available for selection from the second game of the upcoming IPL, the franchise's CEO Kasi Viswanathan said Thursday. Though the England player is arriving in Mumbai Thursday, the defending champions will miss the services of Moeen for Saturday's IPL-15 opener against Kolkata Knight Riders, as he will have to complete a three-day quarantine before joining the team. "Moeen has got his visa and is landing in Mumbai in the afternoon. He will be available for the second game after completing a three-day quarantine," Viswanathan told PTI. There was a delay in procuring the visa as a set procedure is followed for players of Pakistan descent. Moeen's grandfather migrated to England from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir but Moeen is born in England and is a frequent visitor to India.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

as ODI skipper also.

New Delhi, March 24: Former India coach Ravi Shastri thinks Virat Kohli has taken a "smart decision" by giving up captaincy from all forms of cricket, paving the way to express himself better in the upcoming Indian Premier League.

Shastri, who witnessed Kohli's leadership from close quarters during his stint as India coach, however, also feels the 33-year-old star batter could have continued as the captain in Test cricket.

"I think this (giving up captaincy) could be a blessing in disguise, to be honest. The pressures of captaincy off his shoulders, the expectations that come with being captain no longer there, he can go out, express himself, play freely, and I think he'll look to do just that," Shastri said.

"I think he has taken a smart decision of relinquishing captaincy. I would have still preferred if he stayed on as India's red-ball captain but that's his personal choice," Shastri was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.Com.

Kohli left many in shock when he stepped down as Royal Challengers Bangalore captain after 2021 IPL. Subsequently, Kohli quit Test captaincy following India's 1-2 series loss to South Africa. He had earlier relinquished T20 captaincy after the World Cup last year, a decision which led the BCCI to remove him

as ODI skipper also. "I think the most important thing is not to worry about his own performances, because he's done enough in world cricket for people to know where he stands. It's about him wanting to enjoy himself out there. I think that is the key. It's mind over matter, it's a case of telling yourself, 'I want to go there, express myself, and enjoy myself'."

The former all-rounder said captaining the Indian cricket team has its own challenges. "It (captaincy) certainly does (have a shelf life). It's not easy to be captain of a team in all three formats of the game, more so India because it is the most demanding job in the world.

"No other team captain faces the kind of pressure that the Indian team captain faces and that is simply because of the expectations of the billion people. Expectations are huge.

"And especially as a captain if you set standards like Virat Kohli has, people expect you to win every game but that's never going to happen. Even the greatest of team will have an off season, will have a period where nothing fires and the pressure will build," Shastri said.

Asked if Kohli can be used as an opener by RCB this year, Shastri said: "That depends on the balance of the team. I don't know what their middle-order is. Just in case they have got a very strong middle-order, there is no harm in Virat opening."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 24: Twelve seasons, four title triumphs and five runner-up finishes later, the iconic MS Dhoni has decided to hand over the captaincy of Chennai Super Kings to his trusted lieutenant, Ravindra Jadeja.

However, in a brief statement, CSK said the 40-year-old will continue to represent the franchise for the "season and beyond", having led one of the most successful IPL sides since the tournament's inception in 2008 - barring the two seasons when the team was suspended in the wake of the spot-fixing scandal.

"MS Dhoni has decided to hand over the leadership of Chennai Super Kings and picked Ravindra Jadeja to lead the team. Jadeja, who has been an integral part of

Chennai Super Kings since 2012, will only be the third player to lead CSK," said CSK in a statement Thursday. "Dhoni will continue to represent Chennai Super Kings this season and beyond," the franchise added.

Dhoni, 40, who had announced his international retirement August 15, 2020, had led CSK to their fourth title last season. CSK play KKR in the IPL 2022 opener here Saturday.

The World Cup-winning captain has always been his own man when it comes to leaving captaincy or announcing his retirement.

He quit Test captaincy and also the five-day game in the middle of a series in Australia in 2014. And when he was sure Virat Kohli was ready to lead India across formats, Dhoni made way for him in 2017.

Though the inspirational leader carried on to play the IPL after an-

nouncing his international retirement in his inimitable style, his decision to hand over the CSK leadership to Jadeja was not entirely surprising.

Dhoni knew that he can't go on forever and the 33-year-old Jadeja, who is at the peak of his prowess, is ready for the challenge. The southpaw was CSK's number one retention before the auction ahead of Dhoni, Moeen Ali and Ruturaj Gaekwad.

The announcement still took CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan by surprise but he said, "If Dhoni takes a decision, it has to be in the best interest of the team."

"See whatever decision MS takes it is in the best interest of the team. So there is nothing to worry for us. We respect his decision. He is always there to guide us," Viswanathan told this agency. "He has always been the

guiding force and will continue to be the guiding force."

Asked if the 2022 edition can be his last season, the CEO added: "I don't think it will be his last season. As long as he is fit, we want him to play. That is my wish, I don't know about him (what he thinks)."

On Jadeja's ascension as captain, Viswanathan said the all-rounder is primed to do well. "See Jaddu will do well. He is probably in the best form of his career. He will definitely do well under MS' guidance. Jaddu has been with us for 10 years and he very well knows the team culture," he added.

It can be safely said that CSK couldn't have become the brand it became without the charismatic Dhoni, who developed a special bond with the team and its fanatical fans.

Even when representing Pune

Sathiyam-Manika pair bags silver; bronze for Kamal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Doha, March 24: India paddlers finished the WTT Contender Doha 2022 with two medals, including a singles bronze won by Achanta Satharath Kamal, as seniors showed the way on the concluding day of the competition.

As expected, G Sathiyam and Manika Batra settled for the silver, capitulating in the final of the mixed doubles against the top-seeded Chinese Taipei pair of Lin Yun-Ju and Cheng I-Ching. The Indians lost 4-11, 5-11, 3-11.

Sharath Kamal, on the other hand, failed to up the ante from an advantageous position in the sixth game and went down fighting 3-4 (5-11, 11-8, 6-11, 11-7, 11-5, 10-12, 9-11 in the semifinals of the men's singles against Yuan Licen of China.



This was the first medal for Satharath in two years. The Indian veteran had won a gold in the Oman Open in 2020.

The No.7 Indian mixed pair found the going tough against the Taipei combine right from the start. Their troubles only multiplied when Sathiyam and Manika failed to comprehend the left-right combination that went about the task clinically.

Yet, it was creditable for the Indians to resist as much as they could before eventually surrendering to the Taipei paddlers.

Ramudri, Dharambir set Asian records



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, March 24: Indian long jumper Someswara Rao Ramudri and javelin thrower Mohit clinched gold medals in their individual events at the 2022 World Para Athletics Grand Prix here Thursday.

Overall, the Indian contingent won six medals on the penultimate day and set two Asian records, thanks to the efforts of Ramudri in long jump men T64 final and par-

alympian Dharambir in discus wheelchair men F51 final.

In one of the latest events of the day, Ramudri came out with a personal best effort - a leap of 6.40m - to take the long jump men T64 gold medal, in the combined T43/44/63/64 final.

Thailand's Kantinan Khumphonng (5.74 m) and Malaysia's Eddy Bernard (6.20m) finished second and third, respectively. "This is my international gold

to long jump, which he is competing in for the past one year.

In javelin men final F44/46/63/64 final, Mohit achieved an impressive 54.71m distance in his very first throw which was enough to clinch the gold medal.

Kazakhstan's Rufat Khabibullin (45.72m) and Nigeria's Sunday Adebayo (42.55m) took the silver and bronze medals, respectively.

"I am very happy to take the gold here. Though I think I could have done better given the conditions. I want to win more medals for India," said Mohit.

Meanwhile, paralympian Dharambir claimed his second silver medal in the Championships, this time in discus wheelchair men final F51 where he attained a distance of 10.93m.

Algeria's Mohamed Berrahal (12.29m) took the gold, as Dharambir's fellow thrower Ajitkumar Amrutla Panchal claimed the bronze in F52 category with a throw of 18.57m.

In women's track events, Jayanti Behera claimed the silver medal in 200m women final T46/47 clocking 26.94s, finishing behind USA's Britni Mason (26.08s).

Ishwari Nishad also took second place with a timing of 1:25.50 in 400m women's final T11. Kenya's Nancy Chelangat Koeh secured the top position clocking 1:04.25.

SRIKANTH, KASHYAP IN LAST 8 AT SWISS OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Basel, March 24: World Championships silver medalist Kidambi Srikanth staved off aspirited challenge from France's Christo Popov to progress to the men's singles quarterfinals of the Swiss Open Super 300 tournament here Thursday.

World No.12 Srikanth, who had missed India leg of the BWF tour in January after testing positive for COVID-19, eked out a fighting 13-21, 25-23, 21-11 win over Popov, ranked 60th, in a second-round match that lasted an hour and 13 minutes. The seventh seeded Indian will face second seeded Dane Anders Antonsen next.

Former Commonwealth Games gold medalist Parupalli Kashyap too entered the quarterfinals after top seed and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen gave a walkover.

Third seeds Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, however, lost 19-21, 20-22 to Indonesian pairing of Pramudya Kusumawardana and Yeremia Erich Yoche Yacob Rambitan in the men's doubles.

In the women's singles, Ashmita Chaliha put up a tough fight before going down 18-21, 20-22 to eighth



KIDAMBI SRIKANTH

seeded Scot Kirsty Gilmour in the second round.

Wednesday night, Sindhu had entered the second round with a 21-14, 21-12 win over Denmark's Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt here. Sindhu, also a former world champion, will face Neslihan Yigit of Turkey.

Also progressing was the women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy, who got the better of local pair Aline Muller and Jenjira Stadelmann 21-15, 21-16 in straight games.

FIH HOCKEY PRO LEAGUE 2022-23

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 24: The Indian men's hockey team will begin the new season of FIH Hockey Pro League against New Zealand and Spain, the world governing body (FIH) said Thursday, announcing the schedule of the fourth edition of its ambitious tournament.

India will host New Zealand and Spain in the tournament opener between October 28 and November 6 later this year. India will play New Zealand in the first match October 28, followed by the second game against Spain October 30.

The Indians will play their return leg matches against New Zealand and Spain October 4 and 6 respec-

INDIA TO BEGIN RUN AGAINST NZ, SPAIN



tively in between, both New Zealand and Spain will also play a double-

header against each other October 29 and November 5.

"Interesting to see the 2022-23 Pro League schedule released today.

As far as our draw is concerned, it is well spaced out and provides us with practice opportunity before the 2023 World Cup," Indian men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid said.

In March next year, India will play Germany and Australia at home. India will face off against Germany on March 10 and after a day's break will take on Australia in their first match of the two-legged tie.

The second-leg matches against both Germany and Australia will be played March 13 and 15 respectively. Germany and Australia too will play their FIH Pro League tie against each other in India.

In what appears to be an action-packed Olympic cycle, India will

next embark on a tour to Europe for their away matches against reigning Olympic Champions Belgium (May 26 and June 2), Great Britain (May 27 and June 3), Netherlands (June 7 and 10) and Argentina (June 8 and 11).

Reid lauded FIH for its effort to cut down on travelling, terming the new schedule a "good development" for the league. "FIH is using the experience of utilising multiple teams in one location from this year, to provide more of a traditional tournament feel," he said.

"I think it's a good development. This will also provide a different tactical preparation between games where traditionally the games against the same team are back-to-back."