

## MAOISTS KILL VILLAGER

PNN & AGENCIES

**Nabarangpur, Feb 24:** Maoists killed a villager in Nabarangpur district suspecting him to be a police informer, police said Friday. The incident occurred at Keradh under Raighar block Thursday night marking the reestablishment of Maoist pres-

ence and resumption of their activities after a long break.

According to reports, Maoists went to Chandan Mallik's house, forcibly took him away to a nearby jungle and slit his throat. Before leaving, the Maoists left a leaflet near the 42-year-old man's body saying that the Nabarangpur SP,

Chhattisgarh police and intelligence department were responsible for the death. The leaflet also said that the man was informing the police about Maoists' movements and had been warned earlier. But he continued to work as a police informer and was therefore killed, the reports added.



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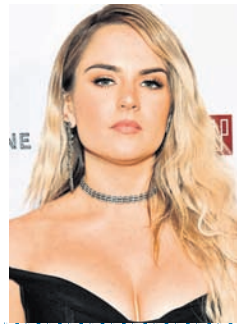

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# leisure



## JOJO TO MAKE BROADWAY DEBUT IN MOULIN ROUGE

Singer JoJo is making her Broadway debut as Satine in *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*. She will take the stage April 11 at Broadway's Al Hirschfeld Theatre for a 14-week limited engagement, reports *Variety*. The singer tweeted about how she fell head over heels in love when she first heard the musical.

## KELLY GETS 20-YR IN JAIL FOR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

R&B singer R Kelly has been sentenced to serve 20 years in prison for child sex crimes by a Chicago federal court. The 56-year-old singer was found guilty of six charges brought against him, including three counts of coercing minors into sexual activity and three of producing sex tapes involving a minor.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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#### ARIES

If you're looking to get married, buy the ring today. But before you take the leap, weigh all the pros and cons carefully, says Ganesha. All in all, this may be a day filled with activities related to your relationship and by the time the day ends, you may be on cloud nine!

#### TAURUS

You may face conflicts on the personal front and find your thoughts leaning towards aggression today, says Ganesha. There is a possibility of suffering losses due to loved ones. Exercise restraint in arguments with relatives and siblings, advises Ganesha.

#### GEMINI

You are desirous of perfection in everything that you do, and you practice this philosophy in every aspect of your life. You make sure that all of your energies are concentrated on taking forward your efforts in the right direction. You need to replenish your energies and increase your awareness today, to be able to continue your efforts, says Ganesha.

#### CANCER

Today, your ability to think clearly in the most adverse conditions will be your key weapon as you get cornered by unrelenting assaults of work and deadlines. The clarity will reflect in your work as you deal with inhuman work pressure.

#### LEO

Your children's health may be a cause of concern today, says Ganesha. The best way to put your and your family's fears to rest would be by paying a quick visit to the doctor. As always, kids remain a surprise package of delights; the happiness of your children shall double your joy as a parent. But then, Ganesha reminds, only a healthy kid is a happy kid.

#### VIRGO

Expenses will mount uncontrollably today, and they will be mostly wasteful in nature. However, positive energies are gathering momentum, and Ganesha says you would do well in making full use of them, both in your personal and professional spheres.

#### LIBRA

Ganesha says that that this is the right time to enhance your personality and prove your talents to the world. Today you will be able to buy new clothes too. It is essential that you pay attention to people close to you. Today is the day you will spend in your dream world.

#### SCORPIO

It's the same old rut today, says Ganesha. Nothing new, nothing exciting. People from the opposite sex, however, may bring you out of the routine and try to enliven your spirits, predicts Ganesha.

#### SAGITTARIUS

Ganesha foresees business expansion on your cards. Your friends, relatives and other contacts across seven seas will lend a helping hand to develop your business. And thanks to your super communication skills that make the task easier. The leader in you is all set to conquer the world. Way to go!

#### CAPRICORN

If at first you don't succeed, try again. Many people underestimate the power of perseverance and patience. But, these qualities will lead you success. Rather than exploding with anger and anxiety, keep your faith in your plans intact, especially when the results are not as per your plans, advises Ganesha.

#### AQUARIUS

Things have become stagnant but it fails to frustrate your spirit. Slow and steady wins the race and it seems you have imbibed it very well. You will be able to seize opportunities coming your way and march ahead on your path. Financially, you will be on a stable ground, says Ganesha.

#### PISCES

While you like cooperating with your colleagues, there is nothing like a little competition to spice things up. You will nonchalantly take on the challenges coming your way, and thrive on the sweet smell of success today.

## 9TH KALINGA LITERARY FESTIVAL BEGINS

# Globalisation is in India's DNA: Satyarthi

BHUBANESWAR: Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi Friday virtually inaugurated the much awaited 9th Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF), a three day literary event, here at a City hotel.

Attending the inaugural session via video conference, the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize winner said, "Globalisation is in India's DNA, and the country should make an endeavor to create a globalisation of compassion in this hour of need."

Elaborating on the theme 'India and the World' and country's age old concept *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, the activist said, "The full Sanskrit verse states that humans are not divided by geographical boundaries, rather united under a global family. In a world of globalised culture, information, and commerce, we are still short of compassion."



Playwright Ramesh Panigrahi received Kalinga Literary Award

Satyarthi later received the KLF non-fiction book award for his book, *Tum Pehle Kyon Nahi Aaye*. Odisha Governor Ganeshi

Lal attended the event as the chief guest and spoke about how literature can be a true guide to humanism and spirituality Speaking on the occasion,

KLF founder and director Rashmi Ranjan Parida said that the theme was primarily aimed at connecting India with global literature. As many as 18 writers in English, Hindi, Odia, Kannada, Nepali, and Maithili were awarded in categories such as fiction, non-fiction, regional language, women/dalit/tribal/minorities literature, and translation works.

Hindi novelist Geetanjali Shree and Odia playwright, and art critic Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi were conferred with prestigious Kalinga Literary Awards for the year 2023.

Penguin Random House and Rajkamal Prakashan, were felicitated as Publishing House of the Year for the English and Hindi categories, respectively, in the newly introduced award category.

## Ali Zafar slams Javed Akhtar's 'insensitive' 26/11 comments

Mumbai: After taking to social media to express his happiness about performing in front of Javed Akhtar recently, Pakistani actor and singer Ali Zafar has now slammed the veteran writer-lyricist for his comments about the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks at the Faiz Festival in Lahore last week. Ali, in an Instagram story, wrote about his love and devotion for his country, and how Akhtar's "insensitive and uncalled for remarks can deeply hurt the sentiments of so many people."



He wrote, "Guys, I love you all and truly value your praise and criticism equally. But I always request one thing - verify facts before reaching any conclusion or judge-

ment. I was not present at the Faiz Mela nor aware of what was said until the next day when I saw it on social media."

He further wrote, "I am a proud Pakistani and naturally no Pakistani would appreciate any statement against its country or people specially at an event meant to bring hearts closer than further."

## Mughals didn't come here to loot: Naseer



Mumbai: Veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah plays the emperor Akbar in the upcoming Zee5 series, *Taj-Divided by Blood*, and he has a few words to say about how some rulers from the dynasty have been unfairly villainised in recent times.

In a recent interview, the actor said, "It amuses me, because it is so utterly ridiculous. I mean, people can't tell the difference between Akbar and a murderous invader like Nader Shah or Babar's great grandfather, Taimur. These were people who came here to loot, the Mughals didn't come here to loot. They came here to make this their home and that's what they did. Who can deny their contribution?"

He added, "Perhaps it's true that mughals have been glorified at the expense of our own indigenous traditions, but there is no need to villainize them either. If everything they did was horrible, then knock down the Taj Mahal, knock down the Red Fort and Qutub Minar."

In the series, the ageing monarch, played by Naseeruddin Shah must decide which one of his three sons is to succeed him on the throne. Actor and legend Dharmendra will play Sheikh Salim Chisti. The Zee5 series will premiere March 3.

# 'Find me a boy, will consider marriage'



Parineeti Chopra

Mumbai: For the entertainment industry, the year has

started on a lovely note with the world witnessing two celebrity weddings back-to-back: cricketer KL Rahul and Athiya Shetty, and Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani. Actress Parineeti Chopra wants the same thing for her life, but only with the right person.

"All you have to do is find me a boy, and then my personal life will be sorted. If you have any recommendations, I am listening," she joked when she was asked about her personal and professional life, mentioning that she is single at the moment.

The 34-year-old continued, "In terms of my personal life, I would love to get married, and I would love to have children in my life. That is also important. I want to have a great, balanced career that is full of highs and lows. I welcome both equally. I want to be healthy, I want to be happy with my family and my friends."

The actor had a successful year in 2022 with her last release, Sooraj Barjatya's film, *Unchai*, which was a box office success in an otherwise bad year for the film industry.

## Uorfi calls her dad abusive



Mumbai: Uorfi Javed opened up about her difficult relationship with her father, accusing him of verbal and physical abuse. She also revealed how she attempted suicide 'a couple of times'.

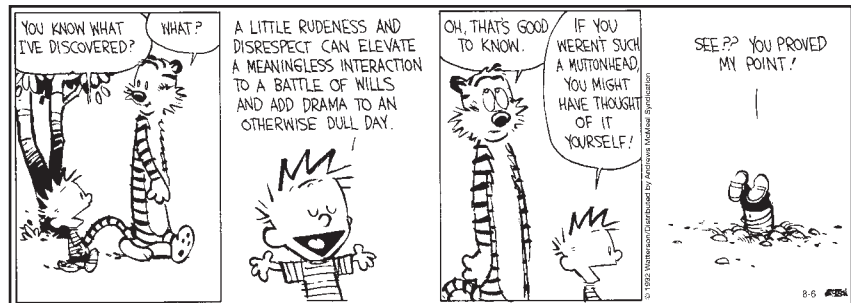
"He used to beat us a lot, used to beat my mother too. And the verbal abuse was a daily thing. I attempted suicide also a couple of times. I barely left the house, my father wouldn't allow it. But I used to watch a lot of TV, and I was always interested in fashion. I didn't have a lot of fashion knowledge, but I knew what I wanted to wear. I wanted to look different. I wanted to look the best. Like when I go to a party, everyone turns to look at me," Uorfi said in an interview to one of the agencies.

In the same interview, the social media influencer opened up about how she has been stressed about money all her life. Uorfi further said that instead of 'running after a man', women should 'run after money'.

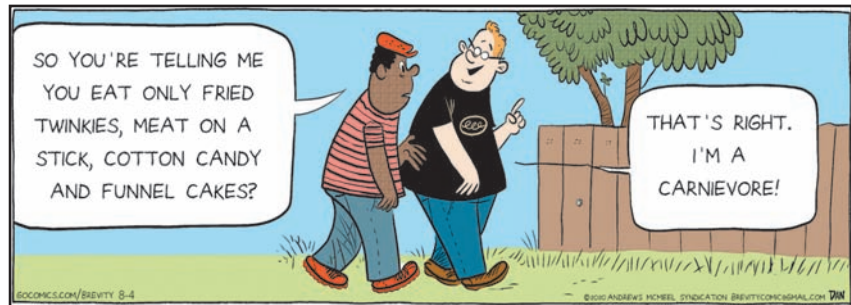
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

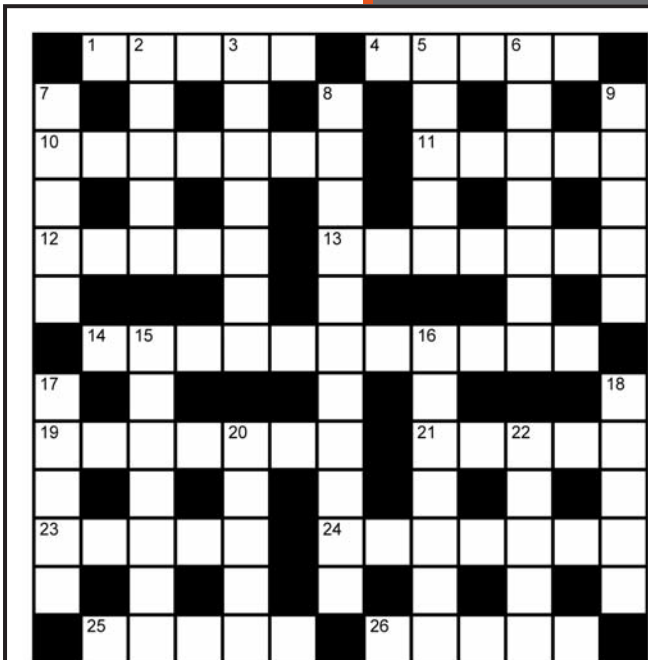


### BREVITY



### FUN post

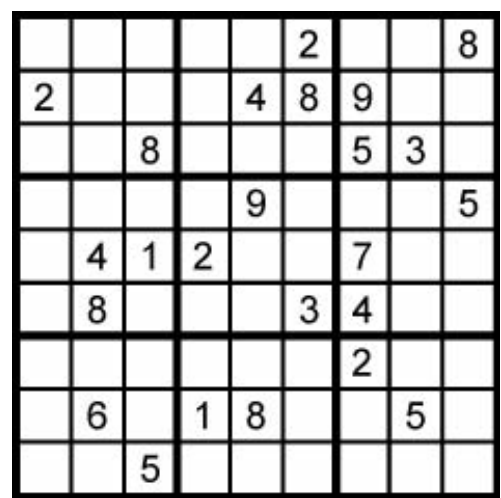
### CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Handbag
  - 4 Courtroom feature
  - 10 Legal guardian
  - 11 Republic on the Bay of Bengal
  - 12 Coconut meat
  - 13 Lumber processing plant
  - 14 Popular music genre (4-3-4)
  - 19 Beginning step
  - 21 Outside a theatre, usually
  - 23 Predatory ambulation
  - 24 Railroad bridge
  - 25 English race place
  - 26 Garment stiffeners
  - Down
  - 2 Seize without authority
  - 3 Reversal of fortune (3-4)
  - 5 Crazy bone, to some
  - 6 Friendly or an alcoholic drink
  - 7 Soup starter
  - 8 Individuality
  - 9 Place for valuables
  - 15 Sinister
  - 16 Solicitation
  - 17 Brisk and bouncy
  - 18 Lady of Troy
  - 20 Eskimo residence
  - 22 Foyer, for one

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## FARMER'S DEATH ROCKS ASSEMBLY

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 24:** The Odisha Assembly was adjourned for an hour Friday after a ruckus by Opposition members over the death of a farmer in Boudh district allegedly due to his loan burden.

As soon as the House assembled for Question Hour at 10.30 am, BJP and Congress lawmakers stormed into the well of the House and urged Speaker BK Arukha to suspend it to allow a discussion on farmer deaths.

As the Speaker's request to maintain order in the House failed to yield any result, the proceeding was adjourned for an hour to 11.30 AM. The Opposition members raised the issue of Dharani Behera who died at the Bausuni mandi in Boudh district while waiting to dispose his paddy. Though he was given a token to sell his produce January 25, his produce was allegedly not lifted and he waited for a long time.

The farmer died due to a heart attack Thursday, Opposition members alleged. When the House re-assembled at 11.30 AM, Leader of Opposition Jaynarayan Mishra (BJP) said that the farmer was under stress as he failed to sell his paddy at the government mandi and he had to repay his debt.

He said though farmers' issues are discussed in every session of the House their problems remained unresolved and they continued to suffer. Mishra also alleged that the farmers are not getting proper minimum support price of ₹2040 per quintal for paddy in the state-run mandis and therefore go for distress sale outside.

Arukha then informed the House the ruling party has given a notice on discussion on agriculture issue and Opposition members can speak on the subject during the debate.

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NIFTY	17465.80	↓ 45.45
DOLLAR	82.85	↑ ₹0.05
EURO	87.42	↓ ₹0.07
GOLD	₹55,436	↓ ₹151
SILVER	₹63,464	↓ ₹887

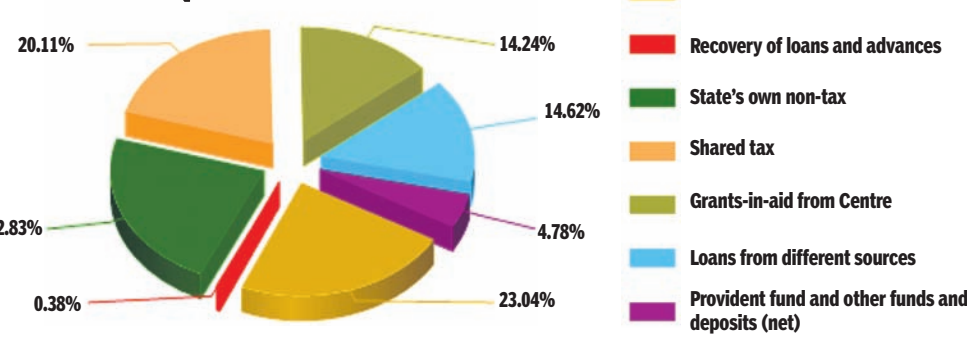
## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	38.0°C	35.4°C
MIN	21.7°C	23.0°C
Humidity	88%	91%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry	weather most likely

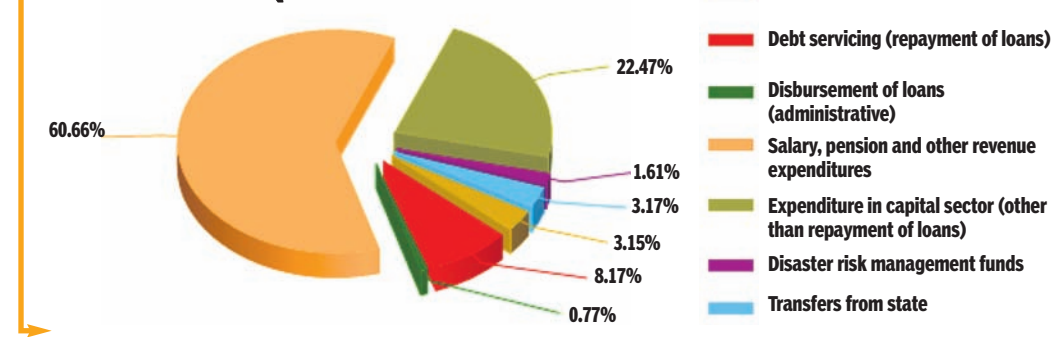
# Agri push in ₹2.30L-cr Budget

*In its last Budget before the General and Assembly elections, the state government has focused on all sections of society including women, farmers, tribals and youths*

## ₹ COMES FROM



## ₹ GOES OUT



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 24:** Eying the 2024 elections, Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari Friday presented an annual Budget of ₹2.30 lakh crore for 2023-24 in the Assembly. This outlay is 15% more than the Budget of 2022-23.

In its last Budget before the General and Assembly elections, the state government has touched all sections of society including women, farmers, tribals and youths.

A good amount of allocation has been made for drinking water, healthcare, infrastructure, and education. The government has also made allocation for 20 news schemes and programmes to be implemented from the next financial year.

Pujari said the programme Budget has been increased by 35 times from ₹3,538 crore in 2000-01 to ₹1,25,000 crore in 2023-24 budget estimates. The allocation for the programme expenditure is about 54% of total budgetary outlay.

Similarly, capital outlay has gone up by more than 60 times from ₹834 crore to ₹51,683 crore during the same period. The proposed capital outlay is about 6% of GSDP, he said.

The administrative expenditure was proposed at ₹94,000 crore in 2023-24, which includes ₹32,449 crore for salaries, ₹19,967 crore for



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Outlay of ₹24,829 crore made for agriculture and allied sector, 20% more than last year
- A total sum of ₹16,048 crore proposed for public healthcare, an increase of 27% over previous year
- 20 new schemes and programmes announced
- State's loan burden at ₹87,000 crore by Jan-end

pension, ₹7,241 crore for interest payment and ₹13,464 crore for maintenance of capital assets.

The outlay for disaster response funds will be ₹3,700 crore, while transfers from state will have an outlay of ₹7,300 crore.

Additionally, loans and advances, grants for creation of capital assets and other expenditure for capital formation together account for ₹12,421 crore, which is 1.4% of GSDP, Pujari stated.

The total budget outlay is proposed to be financed through revenue receipts of ₹1,84,500 crore

and borrowing and other receipts of ₹45,500 crore.

Total revenue receipts for 2023-24 include state's share in central taxes of ₹46,251 crore, state's own tax of ₹53,000 crore, own non-tax revenue of ₹52,500 crore and grants from Centre for ₹32,749 crore.

Presenting agriculture Budget with an outlay of ₹24,829 crore, Pujari Odisha is predominantly an agrarian economy with agriculture and allied activities constituting 22.5% in Gross State Value Added (GSVA).

The agriculture Budget outlay of

₹24,829 crore for 2023-24 is 20% more than last year and three times of the budget estimate during 2016-17, he said.

Similarly, a total sum of ₹16,048 crore has been proposed for public healthcare, which is an increase of about 27% over previous year and about three times of the allocation in 2017-18.

For development of healthcare infrastructure, an amount of ₹3,003 crore has been proposed in the budget under the State Scheme Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Seva Mission, which includes ₹1400 crore

for redevelopment of SCB Medical College and Hospital.

Similarly, total Budget allocation of ₹22,528 crore has been made for school and mass education department while ₹986 crore for Skill Development & Technical Education which is 22% higher than previous year's provision and ₹2,554 crore for the Department of Mission Shakti which is 27% more over the estimation for 2022-23.

Under the Mukhya Mantri Medhabi Chhatra Protsahan Yojana, an outlay of ₹811 crore is proposed for disbursement of scholarship to more than 23 lakh students of which 60% are girls.

The state government has also proposed to invest more than ₹13,215 crore during the year 2023-24 for piped drinking water from budget and off-budget sources, The Finance Minister said.

In 2023-24, the Works department will take up double-laning of about 3000 km of roads with improved riding quality at a cost of ₹4,600 crore. Further, the state has provided ₹2071 crore for construction of 6000 km of roads under Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana and ₹1,450 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

"When Chief Minister took over the reins of the state in 2000, Odisha was in such a severe financial crisis that it was unable to even pay

salaries and pensions regularly. Today, two decades later, we are amongst the very few states that are revenue surplus and capable of large-scale investments in people-centric and growth-oriented programmes," Pujari said in his budget speech.



**This budget is of the people, by the people and for the people. This budget will take Odisha to newer heights**

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CHIEF MINISTER

**As election is coming, they will distribute something to the people. But, no initiative has been taken to strengthen the public infrastructure and increase the per capita income of the people**

JAYANARAYAN MISHRA | LEADER OF OPPN

**The government has tried to put up a rosy picture before the people through its budget as election is nearing**

TARAPRASAD BAHINIPATI | CONG MLA

Contd...P4

## DRDO official held for spying

PNN & AGENCIES

**Balalore, Feb 24:** A senior official of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was arrested Friday for allegedly sharing secret information related to India's defence sector with a Pakistani spy, the Odisha Police said.

The accused Baburam Dey (51) was posted at the DRDO's Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Balasore district, it said.

Chandipur has two DRDO test ranges -- PXE (Proof and Experimental Establishment) and ITR. India evaluates the performance of its missiles, rockets and air-borne weapons systems at these two ranges. The accused managed to transmit some sensitive information regarding missile tests to a foreign agent, said Himansu Kumar Lal, Inspector-General of Police (Eastern Range).

The official was arrested on the

basis of a complaint filed at the Chandipur police station, he said.

The details of the information he shared could be ascertained after a thorough interrogation, said Balasore's Superintendent of Police Sagarika Nath.

A case has been registered against him under IPC sections 120A and 120B (criminal conspiracy), besides the Official Secrets Act, police said. Dey was allegedly sharing sensitive defence-related information with a Pakistani agent for sexual as well as monetary gratification, they said.

WhatsApp chats and sexually explicit photos and videos were found in his phone, which was seized, they added. In September 2021, five contractual employees of ITR-Chandipur were arrested in another espionage case.

A contractual employee of ITR-Chandipur was arrested in a similar case in 2015. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2021 for sharing information with Pakistan's ISI.



**WAR HERO:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy holds the flag of a military unit as an officer kisses it during a commemorative event on the occasion of the Russia-Ukraine war's one year anniversary in Kyiv, Friday

## Need to fix accountability at all levels: SC

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 24:** The common man in India is bogged down by corruption and there is a need to fix accountability at all levels, the Supreme Court observed Friday as it dealt with a petition seeking debarment of those against whom charges have been framed in criminal cases from contesting elections.

The top court said India will have to go back to its core values and character if it has to truly become what it is striving for.

"The common man in India is bogged down by corruption. Go to any government office, you cannot come out unscathed. Noted jurist Nani Palkhivala in his book 'We the People' has spoken about this. If we have to truly become a nation we are striving for, we need to come back to our core values and character. If we get back to our values, we will have a nation we strive for," Justice KM Joseph said while hearing the plea with Justice BV Nagarathna.

Advocate Ashwini Updhyay, who has filed the PIL, said a person against whom charges have been framed in heinous offence cannot become even a sweeper in a government office or a police constable but the same person can become a minister even if he has been booked for offences like extortion, kidnapping and murder.

Justice Joseph said he would prefer not to say anything on what is happening in the name of democracy. "I will not make any comments. There is a Constitution bench judgement on this issue and the court has held that it cannot add anything to the law, apart from what is added and it is up to the government to look into it," he said.

Justice Nagarathna said there is need to fix accountability at all levels.

Advocate Amit Sharma, appearing for ECI said under the existing law, a person is debarred from contesting elections if he has been convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years.

## Farmer earns ₹2.49 net profit on sale of 512kg onions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pune, Feb 24:** A farmer from Maharashtra's Solapur was in for a rude shock when he got to know that he has earned a profit of merely ₹2.49 against the sale of his 512 kg onions to a trader in the district.

The farmer, 63-year-old Rajendra Chavan who resides in Barshi tehsil of Solapur, said his onion yield fetched a price of ₹1 per kg at the Solapur market yard and after all the deductions he received this paltry sum as his net profit last week.

Talking to PTI, Chavan said, "I had sent 10 bags of onions weighing more than five quintals to an onion trader in Solapur for sale. But after deducting charges towards loading, transport, labour and oth-

ers, I received a net profit of just ₹2.49 from him."

The rate the trader offered to me was ₹100 per quintal. The overall weight of the crop was 512 kg and the total price he got for the produce was ₹512, he said.

"After deductions worth ₹509.51 against labour, weighing, transportation and other charges, I received a net profit of ₹2.49. This is an insult to me and other onion-growers in the state. If we get such returns, how will we survive?" he asked.

He said the onion farmers need to get a good price for the crop and the affected farmers get compensation. While Chavan claimed that the produce was of good quality, the trader said it was low grade. "The farmer had brought only 10 bags



and the produce was also of low grade. That is why, he got ₹100 per quintal rate. So after all the deductions, he got ₹2 as net profit," the trader said. He added that the same farmer had received good returns in the recent past by selling more than 400 bags to me.

**THIS IS AN INSULT TO ME AND OTHER ONION-GROWERS IN THE STATE. IF WE GET SUCH RETURNS, HOW WILL WE SURVIVE?**

RAJENDRA CHAVAN | FARMER

"This time he brought the remaining produce that was hardly 10 bags and since the prices have gone down, he got this rate," he said.

Speaking to PTI, farmer leader and former MP Raju Shetti said that the onion hitting the market now is a kharif produce and cannot be stored for a long time and that is why the shelf life of the product is short. "This onion needs to be sold in the market immediately and exported out. But due to glut, the

prices of onions have nosedived in the market," he said. He added that this onion is not being purchased by NAFED, so the only option is that the government should make the market available for this kharif onion.

"The government's export and import policy regarding onions is not consistent. We had two permanent markets - Pakistan and Bangladesh, but they preferred buying onions from Iran instead of us due to the inconsistent policy of the government. The third market is Sri Lanka, but everyone knows their situation and no one is taking risks to send their produce," he said.

He added that the government should buy this onion or give subsidies to farmers.

# 20 new schemes worth ₹7.2K cr in Budget

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 24:** The state government announced as many as 20 new schemes and programmes in the Budget presented in the Assembly, Friday.

According to the Budget documents, ₹2,000 crore has been allocated as Revolving Fund for Paddy Procurement to ensure that farmers get their dues within the prescribed time frame.

Likewise, ₹750 crore has been allocated for the newly-announced Ama Hospital Scheme while ₹ 811 crore has been earmarked for Mukhyamantri Medhabi Chhatra Protsahan scheme. Similarly, ₹139 crore has been allocated for Chief Minister's Awards for Education, ₹150 crore for Mukhyamantri Disaster Resilient Saline



Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari presents a digital copy of Budget 2023-24 to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at Odisha Legislative Assembly in Bhubaneswar, Friday, as department's Principal Secretary Vishal Dev looks on. OP PHOTO

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ₹2,000 crore has been allocated as Revolving Fund for Paddy Procurement
- ₹1,446 crore has been earmarked for Chief Minister's Power Development Programme
- ₹811 crore has been earmarked for Mukhyamantri Medhabi Chhatra Protsahan scheme
- ₹750 crore has been allocated for Ama Hospital Scheme
- ₹100 crore for Promotion of Entrepreneurship for women SHGs
- ₹50 crore for Mission Shakti Scooter Yojana

Embankment and ₹120 crore for Mukhyamantri Janajati Jeebika Mission.

The government has also made a provision of ₹100 crore for Location Accessible Multimodal Initiatives (LACMI), ₹150 crore for Ama Bus Stand, ₹100 crore for Promotion of Entrepreneurship for women SHGs and ₹126 crore for Coffee Mission.

Further, ₹1,446 crore has been earmarked for Chief Minister's Power Development Programme, ₹100 crore for International Air Connectivity, ₹210 crore for Mukhyamantri Maschya Jibi Kalyan Yojana, ₹250 crore for Building for Van Suraksha Samiti, ₹250 crore for Mukhyamantri Sampurna Pushti Yojana, ₹100 crore for NUA Odisha (Nutana Unnata Abhilasha), ₹50 crore for Mission Shakti Scooter Yojana and

₹50 crore towards Odisha Renewable Energy Development Fund.

Apart from these 20 new schemes, the government has also allocated a sizeable amount on ongoing schemes.

As per the Budget details, ₹ 1,879 crore has been provisioned for KALIA scheme, ₹500 crore for Parvati Giri Mega Lift Irrigation, ₹400 crore for Biju Krushak Vikash Yojana, ₹836 crore for Interest

Subvention to Farmers, ₹497 crore for Odisha Millets Mission, ₹854 crore for In-stream Storage and ₹3,003 crore for Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Seva Mission.

Similarly, an allocation of ₹2,380 crore has been made in the Budget for Health Assurance under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) while ₹805 crore has been given for Mo School Abhiyan and ₹1,035 crore for distribution of free rice.

## Budget evokes mixed response

**Govt fails to lessen debt burden**

BJP state president

**Samir Mohanty**

says, "The state Budget has made citizens unhappy. The government failed to lessen the huge debt of the state. Industrial growth is sluggish, employment generation is zero, infrastructure development is not happening. How would the government achieve 8.5% GDP growth?"



Budget to ₹4 crore but it didn't. The government also didn't provide any solution to rising unemployment problem."

**Inflation & unemployment remain unaddressed**

Samajwadi Party state president

**Rabindranath Behera**

says, "The Budget ignores measures to check price rise and unemployment."



**KALIA allocation insufficient**

Congress leader **Ganeshwar Behera** says, "We expected the government to increase KALIA



SL NO	DEPARTMENT	ALLOCATION (IN CR)	SL NO	DEPARTMENT	ALLOCATION (IN CR)
1	Home	7,313.61	23	Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment	6,935.89
2	General Administration & PG (GA)	544.49	24	Steel and Mines	292.42
3	Revenue	1,586.72	25	Information and Public Relations	137.77
4	Law	816.43	26	Excise	175.68
5	Finance	61,852.83	27	Science and Technology	119.08
6	Commerce	175.93	28	Rural Development	7,500.00
7	Works	9,133.00	29	Parliamentary Affairs	81.81
8	Odisha Legislative Assembly	194.94	30	Energy	3,002.53
9	Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare	1,229.95	31	Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts	219.49
10	School and Mass Education	22,527.95	32	Tourism	680.02
11	ST/SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare	4,651.78	33	Fisheries and ARD	1,769.29
12	Health and Family Welfare	15,756.53	34	Co-operation	1,936.01
13	Housing and Urban Development	7,913.82	35	Public Enterprises	11.60
14	Labour & Employees State Insurance	218.65	36	Women and Child Development	3,670.00
15	Sports and Youth Services	1,217.18	37	E & Information Technology	355.55
16	Planning and Convergence	13,103.70	38	Higher Education	3,172.87
17	Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water	25,318.55	39	Skill Development and Technical Education	986.26
18	PG&PA	2.50	40	Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises	647.77
19	Industries	710.20	41	SSEPD	4,298.76
20	Water Resources	10,775.36	42	Disaster Management	3,764.28
21	Transport	1,287.58	43	Odia Language, Literature and Culture	200.60
22	Forest, Environment & Climate Change	1,156.27	44	Mission Shakti	2,554.33
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>					<b>2,30,000.00</b>

sector and allocates large amounts. This year also ₹30,030 crore has been given to this sector which is about 12.3 per cent of the total Budget outlay for this financial year. "Out of that, ₹22,528 crore has been set for the School and Mass Education department and ₹805 crore has been earmarked for Mo School Abhiyan. But it's important to not get swayed by these amounts and instead focus on how this is spent. We still see many schools in several districts not having basic facilities like toilets. Instead of making new 5T transformed schools, we can always try to strengthen infra of the existing schools," Pujari said.

**State on progress path when it comes to health**

A total of ₹16,048 crore has been proposed for public health sector, which is an increase of about 27 per cent over previous year and about 3 times of the allocation in 2017-18, says

**Amrit Patojoshi**,

a health expert. "This apart, ₹750 crore has been allocated under Ama Hospital to transform 147 health facilities in a record period of one year. These are some good decisions. We have seen the health sector being given more importance after Covid. From being a state known for its poor health indicators in 2000, today Odisha stands tall as an 'Achiever State' in the country with the highest decline in



Infant Mortality Rate, highest Immunisation Coverage, highest decline of 94 per cent in Malaria, and second rank for TB reduction. These are proofs of good governance for the patients of the state," added Patojoshi.

**Forest sector should have more allocation**

Environmentalist

**Soumya Ranjan Biswal**

says, "More emphasis should be given to aquatic animals like Olive Ridley sea turtles. Forest sector has been allocated ₹2,184 crore which I think is still insufficient. The state government should focus more on rehabilitating the communities that live in coastal and forest areas."



## Agri push in...

Continued from P1

This transformation has been possible due to a futuristic and people-oriented model of governance combined with the vision of our beloved Chief Minister towards making Odisha a developed state, he added. Speaking to reporters, Pujari said the state government's loan burden stood at nearly ₹87,000 crore by the end of January, which is 11.5% of the GSDP. The state can borrow upto 25% of the GSDP, he said. It is estimated that the debt stock will increase to ₹97,000 crore by the end of the current financial year and to ₹1.12 lakh crore by the end of 2023-24.

## Free UPSC coaching

**Bhubaneswar:** The Higher Education department has invited applications for UPSC Civil Services Coaching Scheme under which the aspirants can apply for the government-sponsored free residential coaching. In order to avail the benefit of the scheme in which 200 seats are available, candidates have to qualify an examination, said sources.

## EOW busts int'l betting racket; 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 24:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha police has busted an international ponzi scheme and betting racket that allegedly siphoned off more than ₹1,000 crore from gullible investors from across the country including Odisha in last two years. The agency succeeded in arresting two persons, Rustam Khan and Md Hakim, directors of one of the shell companies, who used to launder the ill-gotten money.

Rustam and Hakim were arrested from Shibpur in Howrah district of West Bengal. "They have confessed to getting a small amount of commission to run this shell company. However, they got the directions from one Md Sheikh Saifi from Dubai," revealed EOW sources.

There are more than 100 shell companies located in different parts of the country involved in

**EOW has checked 17 bank accounts out of over 150 accounts involved in this racket and has traced transaction of ₹108 crore**

laundering money looted from victims.

The EOW has so far checked 17 bank accounts out of more than 150 accounts involved in this racket and traced transaction worth ₹108 crore. The cops suspect that money involved in this scam may go beyond ₹1,000 crore.

The agency had launched a probe after registering a case on the basis of a petition filed by more than 844 investors from Ganjam. The accused fraudsters reportedly duped these victims of more than ₹65 lakh.

"It is a huge international scam

running online from a website which has been registered in Hong Kong (China) and being operated from Dubai," EOW informed in its press note.

Their modus operandi involved promising the victims of lucrative benefits like 3 per cent daily compound return on investment, recharge bonus, referral bonus, extra bonus on the earning of the down line members, salary bonus, daily withdrawal option etc.

The victims later joined a betting app through either online and offline links shared by the other victims or advertisements posted on social media platforms. They were then asked to bet money in some football matches as prescribed in website/app.

The accused also promised these investors help and expert guidance on the process of betting on football matches and investments through help centres operated on messaging service Telegram.



**DIFFERENT ROUTE:** People under the banner of 'Subash Sangathan' clear sand from Ring Road in Cuttack and carry it to CMC office as a mark of protest against poor road in the Silver City, Friday. OP PHOTO

## CLASSIFIED

### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn-in before the Executive Magistrate, Sanakhemundi, Ganjam, dt. 13.06.2022 I, Subhashree Mall, At-Mahanala, P.S.- Pattapur, Ganjam have changed my minor son's name from Shreyanshu Baliarsingh to Shreeransh Baliar Thatoi. Henceforth, my son will be known as SHREANSH BALIAR THATOI for all purposes.

## Citizen-centric urban planning govt's thrust: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 24:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday said the state government is focusing on making urban planning reforms more citizen-centric and effective as Odisha is witnessing fast urbanisation.

The Chief Minister said this while addressing 71st National Town and Country Planners' Conference organised by Institute of Town Planners India (ITPI).

Inaugurating the three-day conference virtually, Patnaik

said, "We are witnessing fast urbanisation across the state including Bhubaneswar. We must develop our cities with sustainable infrastructure that can accommodate future population growth."

"In Odisha we focus on making urban planning reforms more citizen-centric and effective," he stated.

ITPI president DS Meshram said, "Urbanisation should not be seen as curse but as an opportunity and potential for development and prosperity." He also mentioned that to reduce the

burden of migration on large towns and metropolitan regions, development of small and medium towns is necessary.

Meshram said, "Bhubaneswar has secured No. 1 rank in smart city ranking and we can learn from cities like Bhubaneswar about the ways to move forward in making a smart city."

Bhubaneswar Mayor Sulochana Das said, "The Temple city is a confluence of rich heritage and modernity, it is one of the first planned cities in post-independence era and now the best smart city."

She also said that the City has emerged as a sports capital with hosting of two hockey world cups consecutively Bhubaneswar also has huge potential in industrial and real estate sector.

"We focus on green city with sustainable development. Bhubaneswar has more than 13 lakh population but we also have 436 registered slums. Through our schemes like JAGA Mission we are empowering slum dwellers. We also aim to make Bhubaneswar a livable city through our beautification drive," said Das.

## PETA volunteers rally for canine birth control

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 24:** In a bid to spread awareness about stray dog sterilisation, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India volunteers, dressed as giant condoms, staged a demonstration at Lower PMG here Friday.

The PETA volunteers were seen holding posters that read 'Dogs Can't Use Condoms. Sterilise Them'.

"Ahead of World Spay Day (February 28) our goal is to help residents brush up on ABCs: Animal Birth Control," said PETA India campaigns manager Radhika Suryavanshi.

Every year, millions of dogs and cats suffer on the streets or languish in animal shelters because of lack of adequate good homes for them," Radhika said.

She also said, "PETA urges everyone to get dogs and cats sterilised. And if you're considering welcoming a dog or a cat into your family, never buy one - always adopt a homeless animal instead. Countless strays end up in animal shelters as there aren't enough good homes for them. Every time someone buys a dog or a cat from a breeder or a pet store, a homeless animal roaming the streets or waiting in an animal shelter loses a chance at finding a home."

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EMPOWERING WOMEN

# With good food, Mission Shakti Cafés garner happy customers



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, Feb 24:** The state government has opened Mission Shakti Cafés to provide good and hygienic food to people visiting the district headquarters of Sundargarh on various works. Operated by women self-help groups (WSHGs), the cafés have been providing good and hygienic food to people at a fair price and empowering the women members by making them self-reliant. Managed by the Mission Shakti department of the state government and Odisha Livelihood Mission, these have also guaranteed the women a livelihood and helped them spread their work sphere in this non-traditional work. Notably, 'Mission Shakti' is the self-help mission for empowering women through the promotion of women SHGs to take up various socio-economic activities. With a humble beginning in 2001, Mission Shakti has evolved as a full-fledged department of the state government, endeavouring to provide sustainable livelihood support to women SHGs with a view to enable

IN 2021, A PILOT PROJECT NAMED 'UTKAL KITCHEN' WAS LAUNCHED IN KUANRUMUNDA BLOCK OF SUNDARGARH DISTRICT WITH FUNDS SUPPORT FROM OMBADC BUOYED WITH THE SUCCESS, MISSION SHAKTI CAFÉS WERE OPENED IN 16 BLOCKS OF THE DISTRICT WITH FUNDS SANCTIONED BY THE SUNDARGARH DMF

them to generate long-term and sustainable income. An SHG member Nilima Kullu of Kutra block said, "Earlier we were only doing traditional jobs to earn a living but now we are operating this cafe and preparing various types of foods as per the demands of people. Our priority is to cater to the culinary needs of people and make sure they can get tasty food in a homely environment." All this has been possible with the direct support and supervision of the district administration and Mission Shakti department, the Women SHG Members running the unit said. Be it a king-size breakfast or a sumptuous lunch comprising vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian

dishes, you get it all here. Another SHG member Mamina Kujur of Bishra block said, "We were first selected to run the Mission Shakti Café and later underwent training at Sundargarh. We received training to keep the café clean and how to prepare dishes as per the taste and choice of people. Now we are managing the café and earning a good income," she added "The quality of food, hygiene, quick service and behaviour of the employees are very affable. We feel like having food at a fine-dine restaurant," said some of the happy customers of Sundargarh's Mission Shakti Café. This is a novel initiative which is going to revolutionise the food business, where women (who are also housewives) take the charge, they added. Locals, office goers, employees of private firms, bankers, students and youths, and people from all walks of life and age groups can be seen at this joint relishing delicacies from a very flexible menu. "The cleanliness is most appealing apart from economical prices. We love hanging out at the Mission Shakti Café," a group of students said. In 2021, a pilot project named 'Utkal Kitchen' was launched in Kuanrumunda block of Sundargarh district with funds support from Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC). Buoyed with the success, Mission Shakti Cafés were opened in 16 blocks of the district with funds sanctioned by the district mineral foundation (DMF) of Sundargarh. Women SHG members serve food at the Mission Shakti Cafés six days a week from 8am to 6pm. Since their inception, these units have turned out to be self-sustainable and are able to generate a steady source of income for the women in just a couple of years.



**LITTLE LEARNERS:** Students pose with the 'Barnabodha' books distributed to them at Dhauragotha Anganwadi centre under Kishorenagar block of Angul district, Friday

## Bargarh CDMO accuses Collector of misbehaviour

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, Feb 24:** Charubala Rath, the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) of Bargarh, Friday accused district Collector Monisha Banerjee of misbehaviour and sought her transfer, Friday. In a letter to the secretary of the Health and Family Welfare department, Rath claimed that the Collector had mistreated her over a tender. Rath mentioned that she had received a sudden call from Collector Banerjee regarding a tender of the Health department, when she was on her way to visit a health programme February 21. She replied that she had joined recently and will enquire the District Project Manager (DPM). She told her that the tender was in process. But the Collector misbehaved with her in a

loud voice, Rath alleged. She further said in her letter that the Collector had misbehaved with her multiple times without understanding anything. "During CM Naveen Patnaik's visit to Jharbandh, Banerjee of misbehaviour and sought her transfer, Friday. In a letter to the secretary of the Health and Family Welfare department, Rath claimed that the Collector had mistreated her over a tender. Rath mentioned that she had received a sudden call from Collector Banerjee regarding a tender of the Health department, when she was on her way to visit a health programme February 21. She replied that she had joined recently and will enquire the District Project Manager (DPM). She told her that the tender was in process. But the Collector misbehaved with her in a



## 3 deer hides seized; 1 held

**Keonjhar:** Forest department personnel seized three deer hides and arrested one person in this connection from Kadbahali village in the Ghatagoan area of Keonjhar district Friday. The arrested accused was identified as Yadumani Naik. He is reportedly a hunter who killed deer and stored their skins for sale. Acting on a tip-off, a team of the Forest department led by ACF Ghanshyam Mahanth raided the village. With the seizure of the deer hides arrested Yadumani for illegal possession. The arrested was also produced in court, Friday.



**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**RURAL WORKS DIVISION, PHULBANI**  
Phone: 06842-253708, Email: r\_w\_phulbani@yahoo.co.in  
No. 0-1908: No. 983...RWPD, Dated the 23.02.2023

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- Name of the Work : Building Work (1 No.)
- Estimated Cost : Rs. 65.66 Lakhs
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- Date & Time of availability of : From 03.03.2023 10.00 A.M. to Bid documents in the Portal 13.03.2023 upto 5.00 P.M.
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Sd/- Superintending Engineer  
Rural Works Division, Phulbani  
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# 1.8L Olive Ridley turtles lay eggs on 1st day

PNN & AGENCIES

**Berhampur, Feb 24:** Over 1.8 lakh Olive Ridley turtles laid eggs on the first day of their mass nesting which started near the mouth of Rushikulya river a month ahead of last year's season, forest officials said Friday. The mass nesting began Thursday night and continued till Friday morning without a break when the sea turtles laid eggs in the four-km stretch of the beach from Posampeta to Bateshwar, said Berhampur divisional forest officer (DFO) Amlan Kumar Nayak who visited the mass nesting spot Thursday and took stock of the security arrangements. Mass nesting is likely to continue for some more days, he said. "Last year a record 5.5 lakh Olive Ridley turtles nested on the beach between March 28 and April 4. We can't tell the reason for the early nesting of the turtles this year. It is a natural phenomenon," Nayak said. Wildlife experts attributed suit-



able climatic conditions and clean beaches as reasons for the early mass nesting in the area. Anjan Prusty, professor of environmental science of Berhampur University, said climate change might be the cause of the early nesting of the turtles this year. The DFO said, "We have divided the beach in 50 sectors and engaged over 200 forest staff and volunteers to protect the eggs. The entire site was fenced to prevent the entry of wild dogs, jackals and other predators." Forest officials cleaned the beach before the mass nesting, he added.

Khallikote forest ranger Siddharth Shankar Sahu and other forest officials are keeping a close watch on the mass nesting. Rambha forester Abinash Choudhury also took stock of the mass nesting. Meanwhile, scientists of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have detected this time at least 17 adult female turtles they had tagged in the last two years. "The process of detection of tagged turtles and tagging of turtles is going on" said Anil Mohapatra, senior scientist and officer-in-charge of Estuarine Biology Research Center (EBRC), ZSI regional centre at

Gopalpur. On the first day 1,150 turtles were tagged. Around 8,500 turtles were tagged to study their routes of nesting and other activists, he said. Last year, around a dozen tagged turtles were detected on the beach in the mouth of Rushikulya, Mohapatra added. Forest department and the Rushikulya Sea Turtle Protection Committee have taken a number of steps to ensure that the turtles are conserved during the nesting period. These endangered species through the place every year from the third week of February to the first week of March for nesting. Notably, Odisha is the largest mass nesting site for Olive Ridelys in the world. To lay eggs, the turtles dig up a pit around two feet with their two hind legs. Usually, they lay over 120 eggs each. Later, they cover the pit in sand and return to the sea. The hatchlings come out of the eggs after 45 days and head to the sea.

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DIRECTOR

# Every two minutes a woman dies during pregnancy, childbirth: UN



AGENCIES

**Geneva, Feb 24:** A woman dies every two minutes during pregnancy or childbirth, according to a report released by UN agencies revealing alarming setbacks for women's health over recent years. The report, titled 'Trends in maternal mortality', showed that there were an estimated 287,000 maternal deaths worldwide in 2020. Severe bleeding, high blood pressure, pregnancy-related infections, complications from unsafe abortion, and underlying conditions that can be aggravated by pregnancy (such as HIV/AIDS and malaria) are the leading causes of maternal deaths. These are all largely preventable and

**While pregnancy should be a time of immense hope and a positive experience for all women, it is tragically still a shockingly dangerous experience for millions around the world who lack access to high quality, respectful health care**

TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

treatable with access to high-quality and respectful healthcare. While pregnancy should be a time of immense hope and a positive experience for all women, it is tragically still a shockingly dangerous experience for millions around the world who lack access to high quality, respectful health care, said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,

Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), in a statement. These new statistics reveal the urgent need to ensure every woman and girl has access to critical health services before, during and after childbirth, and that they can fully exercise their reproductive rights, he added. Community-centred primary health care can meet the needs of women, children and adolescents and enable equitable access to critical services such as assisted births and pre- and postnatal care, childhood vaccinations, nutrition and family planning. However, underfunding of primary health care systems, a lack of trained health care workers, and weak supply chains for medical products are threatening progress, the report noted. It is unacceptable that so many women continue to die needlessly in pregnancy and childbirth. Over 2,80,000 fatalities in a single year is unconscionable, said UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem. The Covid-19 pandemic may have further held back progress on maternal health, with the Covid infections increasing risks during pregnancy. The report suggested countries take action to significantly accelerate progress to meet global targets for reducing maternal deaths, or else risk the lives of over 1 million more women by 2030.

**UCO BANK** ZONAL OFFICE: C-2, Ashok Nagar, Unit-II, Bhubaneswar, PIN-751009, Ph.: 0674-2620423

**POSSESSION NOTICE**

(Under Section 13(4) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the UCO Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount as mentioned below within 60 days from the date of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken POSSESSION of the property/ies described here-in below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned below. The borrowers & guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the UCO Bank for the amount plus interest plus expenses thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to them, to redeem the secured assets.

BRANCH / Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Amount Outstanding as on Specified Date	Demand / Possession Notice Date	Description of the Immovable Property/ies
<b>JANLA BRANCH /</b> Borrowers: 1) M/s. Mahaveer General Store, Prop.: Mr. Hara Prasad Mohanty, 2) Mr. Hara Prasad Mohanty, S/o- Mr. Bijay Kumar Mohanty, Both are at Address: Uttaramundamuhan, Janla, Khordha-752054/ Guarantors: Mr. Bijay Kumar Mohanty, S/o-Late Prafulla Kumar Mohanty, Uttaramundamuhan, Janla, Khordha-752054.	₹14,83,077.94 as on 04.12.2022 + further interest & other charges thereon from 04.12.2022	19.12.2022 / 21.02.2023	Land & Building situated over Plot No.: 476/3047, Khata No.: 384/916, Area: Ac.0.139dec. out of Ac.0.278dec., KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Uttaramundamuhan, Janla, Tahasil/SRO: Jatni, P.S.: Jatni, Dist.: Khordha, State: Odisha, property in the name of Mr. Bijay Kumar Mohanty (Guarantor), S/o- Late Prafulla Kumar Mohanty, Bounded by- North: Road, East: Uma Charan Pattanaik, South: NH-5, West: Bimal Kumar Mohanty.
<b>MIRGANGUDA BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Mr. Sajjadulla Khan, S/o- Safiulla Khan, At: Assam Colony, Maitree Bihar, PO: Nabarangapur, Dist.: Nabarangapur, PIN-764059/ Guarantor: Mrs. Rubina Khanam, W/o- Sajjadulla Khan, At: Assam Colony, Maitree Bihar, PO: Nabarangapur, Dist.: Nabarangapur, PIN-764059	₹8,77,964.74 as on 31.08.2022 + further interest & other charges thereon from 31.08.2022	05.11.2022 / 20.02.2023	All that part and parcel of land standing in the name of Mr. Sajjadulla Khan, S/o- Safiulla Khan, Mouza: Nabarangpur, Tahasil: Nabarangapur, Dist.: Nabarangapur, Khata No.: 4030/182, Plot No.: 613/7283/8561, Area: Ac.0.031dec., Bounded by- North: Road, East: Plot of Sabbir Ulla Khan, South: Plot of G. Ch. Nayak, West: Dilip Panigrahi
<b>NARSINGHPUR BRANCH /</b> Borrower: M/s. Sahoo Supplier, Prop.: Mr. Mandardhar Sahoo, S/o- Mr. Arakitha Sahoo, Address: Nukhapada, Narsinghpur, Cuttack-754032 / Guarantor: Mrs. Sima Sahoo, W/o- Mr. Mandardhar Sahoo, At: Nukhapada, Narsinghpur, Cuttack-754032	₹10,11,736.90 as on 17.07.2022 + further interest & other charges thereon from 17.07.2022	30.08.2022 / 21.02.2023	All that part and parcel of property consisting of land & building situated at Khata No.: 677/34, Plot No.: 3855/5208, Area: Ac.0.08dec., Mouza: Bandhanuda, SRO: Narsinghpur, Cuttack-754032, in the name of Mr. Mandardhar Sahoo, S/o- Mr. Arakitha Sahoo, Bounded by- North: Plot No. 3854, East: Plot No. 3854, South: Road, West: Pond.
<b>CHAMPESWAR BRANCH /</b> Borrower: Legal Heirs of Late Basanta Kumar Sahoo, Prop. of M/s. Sahoo Brothers, At: Barakholi, PO: Nukhapada, PS: Narsinghpur, Cuttack-754032	₹19,20,803.99 + further interest & other charges thereon	15.11.2022 / 21.02.2023	All that Residential Land with Building thereon at Plot No.: 841/986, Area: Ac.0.05dec. and Plot No.: 841/987, Area: Ac.0.06dec., Khata No.: 98/43, admeasuring Total Area: Ac.0.11dec., KISSAM: Gharabari situated at Mouza: Barakholi, P.S./Tahasil: Narsinghpur, Dist.: Cuttack, Bounded by North: Property of Saroj Kumar Sahoo, South: Property of Mahendra Sahoo, East: Property of Duryodhan Sahoo, West: Road

Date: 24.02.2023, Place: Bhubaneswar

Sd/- Authorised Officer, UCO Bank



There are no true and false religions, but rather all religions are true in their own way and degree. Each is one of the thousand paths to the One Eternal.



SRI AUROBINDO

## Lure of Politics

Retired bureaucrats in India have long tried their luck in politics, and this trend appears to continue in the upcoming Karnataka assembly elections. It is not surprising that many retired babus are seeking tickets from all major political parties, including the BJP, Congress and AAP.

Sources have informed DKB that former IPS officer Basakar Rao has dumped the khaki and embraced khadi by joining the Aam Aadmi Party and is likely to contest from the Basavanagudi constituency. Retired information Commissioner and IRS officer Sudham Das too has resigned and is seeking a Congress ticket from the Nelamangala constituency. Interestingly, his predecessor L Krishnamurthy is also aspiring for a ticket from the same constituency. There are many more serving babus who are knocking at the doors of major political parties and are ready to resign from the service once the party ticket is confirmed.

Still, not every babu who was successful in the administrative world has been able to translate their success into politics. While some retired babus have been successful in their post-retirement political careers, many others have failed to make a mark. Political success requires more than administrative experience; a strong political acumen and the ability to connect with voters are equally important. Ambitious babus itching to become netas will need to remember this before taking the plunge.

### CMD extension in limbo

The recent proposal from the Union Ministry of Steel to extend the tenure of the current CMD of NMDC, Sumit Deb, has brought attention to the issue of extension of service for incumbents at the Board level in CPSEs. While the proposal seeks an extension of one year beyond Deb's retirement date, the Ministry of Personnel has raised concerns about the legality and appropriateness of such an extension.



### BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

Sources have informed DKB that the Ministry of Personnel has noted, rules generally do not permit extension in service, the exception being board-level incumbents of sick CPSEs who contributed exceptionally well to the turnaround of that CPSE. Since NMDC is not a sick CPSE, the proposal raises questions about the justification for an extension in Deb's case. Concern has been expressed about the delay in advertising the vacancy to fill the post of CMD for NMDC.

Could the proposed extension for Deb be an attempt to circumvent the selection process? The view of the Personnel Ministry seems to hint at this, with the Steel Ministry's failure to follow the prescribed timeline approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) for advertising and filling up the vacancy being seen as particularly troubling.

The ball is now back in the court of the Steel Ministry. It has one-and-a-half months left before Deb retires as NMDC CMD.

### Politics behind WB Raj Bhavan's removal of senior babu

As predicted by some babu watchers, West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose has relieved his principal secretary Nandini Chakravorty of her duties. The state's Governors have typically formed their own team of babus. Notably, former West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar (elevated to Vice-President of India) whose tenure was marred by multiple clashes with the Mamata Banerjee government over a variety of issues, had similarly assembled a team of his choice at Raj Bhavan.

Sources have informed DKB that the state unit of the BJP had been pressing Bose for Chakravorty's removal and alleged that the senior babu was "misleading" the Governor and making him go soft on the state government. Mamata has, so far, enjoyed cordial ties with Bose, but this could change if she believes that the BJP is trying to control the activities of the Raj Bhavan. A fresh outbreak of hostilities is not unexpected, given the recent history of the TMC government and the state's governors, and Chakravorty's removal from the Governor's office could become the most likely trigger.

Chakravorty, a 1994-batch IAS officer, was appointed as principal secretary to Governor La Ganesan in August last year and retained the post when Ananda Bose replaced Ganesan as Governor. Before being appointed as the principal secretary to the governor, Nandini Chakravorty was looking after the state's Non-Conventional and Renewable Energy Sources Department.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

There are two motives for reading a book; one, that you enjoy it; the other, that you can boast about it. BERTRAND RUSSELL

Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action. WILLIAM JAMES

### WORDSWORTH

#### Apocope

When you talk about mag instead of magazine, fab when you mean fabulous, or cred for credibility, you are committing apocope, that is, leaving out the last sound, syllable, or part of a word. Perhaps it's our rush-hurry-urgent age, but it seems that such energetic abbreviations are becoming more common, not merely with students who produce slangy in-terms such as psych, chem and maths (math in the US). Apocope comes from the Greek word apokoptein, to cut off, made up of apo-, from or away, plus koptein, to cut. Spelling abbreviations like huntin' or singin' aren't apocopic, because the missing last letter indicates that the final sound of the word has changed, not that it has been lost. Incidentally, if you instead cut the sound off the start of a word, the right name is apheresis (an example being squire, an apheric form of esquire); if you drop sounds in the middle (for which the classic - and extreme - example is fo'c's'le for the crews' quarters on board ship, in full forecastle), the process is called syncope.

#### Wobbeong

This Australian shark is brown with buff markings and a flattened body, one of an order called the orectolobes (from the Greek orektos, stretched out), which includes the nurse sharks and the whale shark; another name for them is carpet sharks. As a writer on Australian English has pointed out, "The fish is not peculiar to Australia, but the name is". Its name probably comes from a New South Wales Aboriginal language, though nobody seems sure which. The wobbeong disguises itself so well on the sea floor that unwary divers often step on it. Actually, one writer says it looks as though it has already been stepped on, but that's just rampant speciesism. It's notable, though, that few of those who describe it have much that's positive to say about it. One list of Australian species calls it "mostly harmless", uncannily like the updated description of Earth in the Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. A textbook on biology describes it as "small, sluggish and cryptic", this last epithet meaning not that it speaks in riddles but that it is well camouflaged. Though a normally inoffensive member of the shark clan, even a wobbeong may take umbrage at such descriptions, or to being stepped on, and bite the unwary.

### FOCUS UKRAINE

# THE FOREVER WAR



The situation in Russia continues to be grim with people sitting on the edge while Putin has surrounded himself with a coterie of oligarchs

The Washington Post recently ran a cover story to mark the first anniversary of the Ukraine invasion as "the forever war". The title seems apt. As the world sees the completion of a year of the "special military operation", an euphemism for a prolonged all-out war by a neo-imperial army under the command of a Russian dictator on a small but brave nation united under the banner of protecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the topic fuelled hot discussions in the Munich Security Conference (Feb 17-19) where US Vice President Kamala Harris called out the Russians for their "crimes against humanity". The point could not have gone overboard as both the warring sides firm up their guard and armies having lost 100,000 to 150,000 of men and war-time material. Yet the war goes on.



Malay Mishra

### PUTIN HAS SHOWN NO SIGNS OF BACKING OFF, EVEN IN THE FACE OF A UNITED EU AND NATO RESPONSE BACKING UKRAINE FIRMLY

The other friction point, no less important, during the Conference was US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's verbal duel with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, directly accusing the Chinese of supplying arms to Russia and threatening China with the same fate as had befallen Russia, namely an all-out sanctions threat. It is no secret that much of Iranian drones and North Korean missiles are being routed to Russia through China's intermediation. A recent online meeting between the Russian and Chinese leaders had debunked many of the myths associated with the war where both sides again committed their unwavering support for each other. This was further cemented by Wang Yi's visit to Moscow and meeting with Putin at the end of his European tour.

It may be recalled that when the military operation began, diplomats and military strategists were floundering for a closing date and the possible outcomes on either side. A year-long grishy duel has eliminated all such hopes and the outcomes are up for hope against despair in an increasingly fractured world order where the final and worst sufferers have been the poor import-based economies who have seen devastating results, as

the war progresses in one region of Europe. However, with de-globalisation having followed the Covid debacle, accompanied by global recession and disruption in global value chains, it is now a world disorder at play with powers involved in the war and those supporting or staying neutral fighting their own battles for survival.

The secret 6-hour visit of US President Joe Biden when he reached Kyiv by train from Warsaw was worked out much in advance with heightened security concerns. This was Biden's first visit to the war-torn nation after the war and aimed at committing further US support of financial, military and above all moral support. The President, with a promise of US\$ 460 million, much of it in military infrastructure (though the US is yet to confirm on the heavy tanks and superior missiles), left Kyiv with the defiant declaration that democracy still stands and could not be defeated with Russian aggression. Biden's fiery speech thereafter in Warsaw calling for NATO unity was meant to consolidate US leadership for an international rules-based (read democratic) order. The Biden administration has got acclamation in popularity charts at home while securing its NATO allies more space to work united. Hopefully the first anniversary of the Ukraine invasion will see further hike in sanctions and more rigorous pressure on Russia. Washington is now fighting two adversaries, both joined up in fighting a more vigorous war, with no end in sight. It's gamesmanship of

America at play, and Biden seems to be playing it well.

Russia having encircled Bakhmut on the eastern part of Ukraine would not stop at taking over the whole of the eastern Donetsk region and join it with the four territories where it had held referenda to annex those territories. Putin has been inspiring the Russian people with a lot of nationalistic fervour even while using its proxy mercenary Wagner Group to be in the battlefield along with junior recruits and break-away groups. His equally powerful "address to the nation" just two days before Biden's visit was precisely aimed at that. The Russian leader has shown no signs of backing off, even in the face of a united EU and NATO response backing Ukraine firmly. The situation in Russia, as per western reports, however continues to be grim with people demoralised and sitting on the edge while the Russian leader has surrounded himself with a coterie of self-serving generals and oligarchs who have kept the delusion of the Russian imperium alive.

Surviving a year in the trenches, Ukraine's President Zelenskyy has shown no signs of come-down either. With the first anniversary of the Feb 24 invasion, its fighting forces are prepared to take on the Russians on all counts, bolstered by the steady supplies of western arms and financial aids, and now with Belarusian fighters giving them support. Though no one yet thinks of a third World War, if the war keeps going on without any sign of truce, it could well amount

to one. As of now NATO has shown no signs of inducting Ukraine nor even Sweden or Finland to its membership with a Turkish veto dangling overhead. In this battle of wits and withering hubris, the larger sufferers have been the poor economies who have been cut off from the export cycle of food, fertilizers and energy, bring in a dire dependence of the poor on the rich countries and the world split into several factions in a violently changing geo-economic and political canvas.

This, in fact, would be the subject of a larger discussion among G20 economics and foreign ministers in India shortly within the remit of its G20 Presidency where the host is expected to speak up for the Global South. However, with the release of the BBC documentaries "India: The Modi Question" and the Hindenburg Research report on the Adani group's financial embezzlement in stocks manipulation and fraud, the question being asked in Parliament and public forums is, where does the truth lie? The government has maintained a studied silence on both the questions, instead calling it an affront on the nation. The George Soros incident at the Munich Conference where the billionaire-philanthropist pointedly accused the Modi-Adani connection to be the cause of attrition of democracy in India has further deepened the cleavages between autocracy and democracy and may not augur well for a leadership position for India, however much with western support. India seems to be on the defensive with its diplomacy having overrun its days of effectiveness.

The India story intertwined with the political-corporate nexus has given full play to the neoliberal phase of Hindutva economics where the government's face, except for the fading Modi charisma, has been exposed, and that would be a sad story to be played right when India could have boosted its global profile in two back-to-back summits, G20 and SCO this year.

The writer is a retired diplomat. Views expressed are personal.

### SPECTRUM SOCIETY

# Moral imperative of refugee education



Filippo Grandi

### INVESTING IN EDUCATION MEANS INVESTING IN DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND PEACE, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT COMES TO REFUGEES WHO COULD REBUILD THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN WHEN THEY ARE ABLE TO RETURN

Talent might be universal, but opportunity is not. Throughout my life, I have met numerous schoolchildren and university students who were enjoying their studies, acquiring knowledge and skills, making life-long friends, and working toward their future before a dramatic, life-changing event took it all away. Suddenly, they were in danger and forced to flee their homes. Their talent remained undiminished, along with their enthusiasm and desire, but the opportunity disappeared - sometimes for good.

In addition to jeopardising young people's physical and mental well-being, forced displacement has a devastating effect on their education, imperiling their future health, employment prospects, and incomes. If every adult in the world completed primary and secondary education, according to UNESCO, the global poverty rate would be more than halved. A World Bank study found that each additional school year can increase a girl's future earning power by 12%. Moreover, adults with a college education and above have been shown to live healthier and longer lives, marry later, and be less likely to experience early pregnancy. But there's more. Beyond creat-

ing opportunities for career advancement, education can provide a safe environment, particularly for displaced children. For young people uprooted from their homes, playgrounds, sports teams, and friend groups, school offers a protected space, a measure of stability and normality, and the chance to form new connections, enabling children and adolescents to explore and investigate while giving them the tools to thrive in the adult world.

Given the benefits that education can bring, it is unacceptable that nearly half the world's school-age refugee children are currently not in school. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which I lead, refugee children's gross enrollment rate at the primary level stood at 68% during the 2021-22 school year, compared to roughly 100% enrollment for their non-refugee peers. At the secondary level, the gross enrollment rate for refugees was significantly lower: at 37%, which was below the average for non-refugees in every region.

Encouragingly, refugee enrollment at the tertiary level has increased from 1% to 6% over the past few years, reflecting the UNHCR's efforts to increase young refugees' enrollment in higher ed-

ucation by 2030.

Investing in education means investing in development, human rights, and peace, particularly when it comes to refugees who could rebuild their countries of origin when they are able to return. But to ensure that they are educated by qualified teachers and have access to up-to-date learning materials, young refugees must be integrated into their host countries' education systems.

Accomplishing this would require a massive collective effort, which is why the international community must support host countries, many of which have relaxed immigration controls to allow for the integration of refugees. In January 2021, a joint UNHCR-World Bank report estimated the annual cost of educating all refugee students in low-, lower-middle, and upper-middle-income host countries, from the first grade to the last year of high school, at \$4.9 billion. But this was well before Russia's invasion of Ukraine displaced millions more pupils.

The World Bank study also showed that by focusing on low- and lower-middle-income countries, which account for just 20% of global education expenditures, we could ensure that nearly half of

all school-age refugees complete their education.

At the UNHCR's first Global Refugee Forum in 2019, hundreds of companies, foundations, universities, and philanthropists committed to provide support for refugee education, from funding to policy and advocacy work. The second forum, which will be held in Geneva in December, offers an opportunity to scale up these commitments. Several countries, including Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, have already introduced or pledged to adopt more inclusive policies. But to capitalise on these measures and develop the necessary infrastructure, more investment is needed.

Providing all children in crisis with the educational opportunities they deserve is among the defining challenges of our time. Ensuring that children fleeing from conflict can still learn will contribute to a more peaceful, resilient world and help close the yawning gap between talent and opportunity. The cost of failure could be immense, but success would pay dividends for many years to come.

The writer is United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. COPYRIGHT: PROJECT SYNDICATE

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Welcome move

Sir, This refers to the report, EPFO unveils procedure to apply for higher pension under Employees' Pension Scheme. It is heartening to see that the retirement body focuses on higher pension under EPS. Finally it will become a happy end to all, if the circular by the Union Labour Minister is executed in right spirit. It may be mentioned that senior citizens are the prime components of society. The revision of EPS-95 pension should be effectively aimed towards the current weaker section of the society, who live with a paltry monthly pension after their retirement. There are nearly forty lakh pensioners who are getting pensions less than rupees 1.5K and are facing financial crisis. At this time the authorities quickly may consider on humanitarian grounds for the enhancement of the monthly pension of EPS pensioners as it is very hard to live with the increase in prices of all essential commodities these days. This is the time to look sympathetically and ensure a minimum pension of Rs 7.5K plus DA and medical facilities and annual DA as in the case of other pension schemes.

Venkatadri Suresh, CHENNAI

### Respect people's mandate

Sir, It is really sad that the sanctity and integrity of our Parliamentary democratic process have taken some beating in recent times due to the ruling BJP's disregard for it. The recent debates at the hallowed hall of Rajya Sabha seem to only accentuate this belief, as portions of speeches from the Leader of the Opposition and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and MP Rahul Gandhi were expunged from Parliamentary records impromptu just because both raised questions over the alleged facilitation of the growth of the industrialist Gautam Adani. Parliamentary debates are the cornerstone of a truly vibrant democracy. Without debate and discussion, a democracy is reduced to a body without soul. PM Narendra Modi may well know that the Opposition only performs its duties of holding the government accountable through Parliamentary debates. The Modi government's tendency to undermine the Opposition legitimacy will only weaken India's democratic fabric and reduce the Parliament into BJP headquarters where only 'yes man' rule applies. Opposition is also a people's mandate. Is it not?

Ranganathan Sivkumar, CHENNAI

# national

## of the day quote

'Ahatas' or areas near liquor vends for people to drink will be shut down from April 1 as part of Madhya Pradesh's new excise policies as these are causing harassment to women

All political leaders must congratulate noted lyricist and poet Javed Akhtar for criticising Pakistan on its own soil for its role in fomenting terror activities in India

The down sliding of democracy has hurt every sector of Jammu and Kashmir without any exception. The litmus test for a democracy is if the policy decisions are made through democratic procedure and have popular support. Unfortunately, the current administration's decisions sans both!

## SHORT TAKES

### Student ends life

**Jaipur:** Another coaching student in Rajasthan's Kota committed suicide by hanging himself, police said Friday. The incident took place in Kunhadi area of the city, which is a hub for students preparing for various competitive examinations, on Wednesday night. Abhishek, 17, a resident of UP's Badaun, UP, was living in a Kota hostel for the last two years and was preparing for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET). He was not going to coaching for some time but was taking online classes from the hostel itself. Police officials said that it was reported at 9 p.m. on Thursday that a student was not opening a room in Datar Residency for nearly 24 hours.

### 7 killed, 20 injured

**Meerut (UP):** At least seven people were killed and 20 sustained injuries after an under-construction roof of a cold storage collapsed in Daurala here Friday, police said. The incident occurred at around 3 pm and senior administrative and police officials along with a team of the National Disaster Response Force rushed to the spot -- 30 km from here -- to carry out rescue work, they said. Preliminary investigation suggested that the collapse was triggered by an explosion allegedly caused by a leakage of ammonia gas inside the cold storage that was used to store potatoes, officials said.

### Student booked

**Varanasi:** A foreign student of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has been booked for allegedly harassing a woman teacher. He has been charged with sexual harassment and criminal intimidation, following the assistant professor's allegation that he had sent her obscene photos and messages and also tried to touch her inappropriately several times, ignoring her warnings. The professor alleged that the student had targeted and threatened her inside and outside the BHU campus over the past two months, which, she feared, could lead to an attempt on her life.

### Civilian injured

**Srinagar:** Militants shot at and injured a civilian in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir Friday, officials said. Unidentified militants fired at Asif Ali Ganie outside a mosque near his residence in Hassanpoa Tavela area of Bijbehara in the south Kashmir district on Friday evening, leaving him injured, the officials said. The injured was taken to a hospital in Bijbehara, from where he was referred to another facility here, they said.



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BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

## MATTER OF CONCERN

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Friday urged the elected representatives and legislators to undertake a 'Jan Andolan' in their respective states to collectively eradicate drugs abuse in India



# PM counters 'your grave will be dug' barb

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shillong, Feb 24:** Hitting out at the Congress members, who had purportedly raised the 'Modi teri kabar khudegi' slogan a day ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday asserted that people, instead, are chanting 'Modi tera kamal khilega'.

Addressing a public rally here, he exuded confidence that 'lotus', the BJP symbol, will bloom in the state, as the saffron party-led government has always prioritised the well-being of its people. "Those who have been rejected by the country, deemed unacceptable by people and find themselves immersed in hopelessness are now chanting 'Modi teri kabar khudegi' (Modi, your grave will be dug). But, people in every nook and corner of India are saying 'Modi tera kamal khilega' (Modi, your lotus will bloom)," the Prime Minister said.

Congress members had on Thursday purportedly raised the controversial slogan after one of its leaders, Pawan Khera, was deplaned in Delhi from a Raipur-bound flight.

Khera was arrested in connection with an FIR over alleged remarks against Modi, and later released on bail on the same day.

At the rally, Modi asserted that India is scaling new heights of suc-



**Lack of road, rail, and air connectivity had in the past obstructed development in Meghalaya. During the last nine years, however, the BJP government at the Centre has brought about positive changes in the state and the northeastern region. Be it youth, women, traders, or government servants, everyone wants the BJP to be in power in Meghalaya**

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

cess and Meghalaya is making strong contributions to it. "Lack of road, rail, and air connectivity had in the past obstructed development in Meghalaya. During the last nine years, however, the BJP government at the Centre has brought about positive changes in the state and the northeastern re-

gion." Be it youth, women, traders, or government servants, everyone wants the BJP to be in power in Meghalaya," the PM said. At another public meeting in Tura, Modi said BJP considers northeast as the growth engine of the country and it has always been dedicated to tribal development.

# CHAOS REIGNS IN MCD HOUSE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 24:** A fight broke out in the MCD House as BJP and AAP members kicked, punched and pushed one another amid shouting after Mayor Shelly Oberoi declared one vote invalid in the election to six members of a key municipal committee on Friday.

One councillor, Ashok Manu, collapsed amid the chaos and he was rushed to a nearby hospital. AAP MLA Atishi alleged that BJP members got agitated and attacked the Delhi mayor when they sensed their party would lose the election.

BJP councillor Pankaj Luthra alleged that it was AAP's fault that led to the chaos. He is one of the candidates for the standing committee election. In a video, Aam Aadmi Party and BJP councillors are seen hurling water bottles and apples at each other inside the House. In another video, women councillors are seen hitting each other on the floor of the House.

The election process for the six members of the Standing Committee began at around 11 am and concluded at 2:30 pm. The counting began 10 minutes later.

The counting process went on for more than two hours. Mayor Shelly



**One councillor, Ashok Manu, collapsed amid the chaos and he was rushed to a hospital**

Oberoi asked members that result will be declared without the invalid vote, a move that was opposed by BJP members.

The mayor's decision led to the House descending into a chaos as councillors from the BJP and the AAP started pushing one another amid shouting. In a video, a few councillors were seen with their kurtas torn.

# Stop taking direct orders from Lt Governor: Delhi govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 24:** The AAP government Friday asked officials to stop taking directives from Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena and report any such orders from him to their respective ministers, a move that may trigger a fresh tussle between the ruling party and the LG office.

According to an official statement, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said the government has warned that any such orders received directly from the LG are a violation of the Constitution and directives of the Supreme Court.

He said the implementation of orders, that are in violation of SC directives and the Constitution, will be viewed seriously. The LG office and the AAP dispensation have been engaged in a tussle over a host of issues, including the government's proposal to send school teachers to Finland for training.

On several occasions in the past, AAP leaders have accused the LG of bypassing the elected government of Delhi and issuing orders to officials.

The vexatious Centre-Delhi government row over control of services is being heard by the Supreme Court. "The Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government has instructed

**On several occasions in the past, AAP leaders have accused the elected government of Delhi and issuing orders to officials**

government officers to respect the Constitution of India and Supreme Court orders, and stop taking direct orders from the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Delhi," the statement read.

"All ministers have written to their department secretaries, directing strict compliance with the Constitution, Transaction of Business Rules (TBR), and Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court. Secretaries have been instructed to report any direct orders received from the LG to the minister-in-charge," said the statement.

The order issued by the government states that as per the Constitution and orders of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of July 4, 2018, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) has exclusive executive control over all subjects except for three -- land, police, and public order.



Farm workers plant sugarcane in a field on the outskirts of Jalandhar

PTI PHOTO

# Approach govt for menstrual leave: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 24:** The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking a direction to all the states to frame rules for menstrual pain leave for female students and working women at their respective workplaces, observing that the issue falls under the policy domain of the government.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud disposed of the petition and granted liberty to the PIL petitioner to approach the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development with a representation seeking a policy decision on the issue. "This is a policy matter so we are not dealing with this...Having regard to the policy



views, it would be appropriate if the petitioner approaches the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development. The petition is accordingly disposed of," said the bench which also comprised justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala.

During the brief hearing, the bench took note of the submissions of a law student, opposing the PIL, that if employers are compelled to grant menstrual pain leaves to women employees every month then it may disincentivise

**The petition, filed by Delhi resident Shailendra Mani Tripathi through lawyer Vishal Tiwari, had sought a direction to the Centre and all the states for compliance of section 14 of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961**

them from hiring them. The court, however, said though the plea had raised some important points, but the issue being a policy related, it cannot entertain this.

# Amritpal's aide released from jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Amritsar/Chandigarh, Feb 24:** Radical preacher Amritpal Singh's aide and kidnapping accused Lovepreet Singh Toofan walked out of jail Friday, a day after hundreds of protesters stormed a police station to extract an assurance that he would be released.

A local court ordered his discharge from Amritsar Central Jail, basing its decision on an appeal filed by the police. In a volte-face, the police had submitted that their investigations did not indicate that Toofan was at the spot where the alleged abduction took place.

Critics see Toofan's release as a sign of the state's Aam Aadmi Party government succumbing to pressure from Sikh radicals. "Nip the evil in the bud," Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring had said Thursday when protesters brandishing swords and firearms barged into Ajnala police station on the outskirts of Amritsar, forcing the police to cave in.

"What we are seeing today is reminiscent of the past which every Punjabi is scared of," he said, in an apparent reference to the violent "Khalistan" agitation in the 1980s. Amritpal Singh, who heads an organisation called "Waris Punjab De" is often described as a Khalistan sympathiser.

Asked in Chandigarh whether a case has been registered in connection with Thursday's violence, Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said video footage from the scene is being analysed and statements of the six injured policemen will be recorded.

But the preacher remained defiant, warning that a protest will be held again if any action is taken.

# Amritpal Singh: Rise of 'Bhindranwale 2.0' in Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Amritsar, Feb 24:** Just a Khalistan sympathiser or is he really Bhindranwale 2.0? If optics were everything, Amritpal Singh, with his flowing white robes, navy blue turban and fiery speech, the answer would be easy.

For the moment, however, the 29-year-old radical preacher at the volatile centre of the storming of a police station in Ajnala on the outskirts of Amritsar city by hundreds of armed men is the name who has taken on the government -- both the state and the Centre. And thus forcing the establishment to cave in and release a key aide and issuing threats to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Amritpal Singh has been quite active in Punjab for some time. On Thursday, the 29-year-old's sup-



porters, some of them brandishing swords and guns, broke through barricades and stormed the Ajnala police station, demanding that Lovepreet Singh alias Toofan, an accused in a case involving kidnapping, be released.

A few policemen were injured during the clash, according to officials. A case was registered against Amritpal Singh and his 30 supporters for allegedly kidnapping and thrashing Barinder Singh, a resident of Chamkaur

Sahib in Rupnagar district.

The Dubai-returned Amritpal Singh, often described as a Khalistan sympathiser, was recently anointed the head of 'Waris Punjab De', the organisation founded by actor and activist Deep Sidhu who died in a road accident in February last year.

The event was held at Rode in Moga district, the native village of slain militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

Earlier, Amritpal Singh worked in his family-owned transport business. He was made the head of the organisation that Sidhu had formed to "protect the rights of Punjab and raise social issues".

Amritpal Singh, who claims to be a follower of Bhindranwale, has made some controversial speeches during the past few

weeks. Hailing from Jallapur Khera village in Amritsar, he moves around with armed men like slain militant Bhindranwale. Some of his supporters call him "Bhindranwale 2.0".

The preacher reportedly issued a threat to Shah recently, saying he will meet the same fate as that of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Earlier this month, he tied the knot with UK-based NRI, Kirandeep Kaur, in a simple ceremony at Jallapur Khera, his native village here.

When asked whether he will stay in Amritsar with his NRI wife -- as he has been asking youths not to go abroad -- Amritpal Singh said his marriage was an example of reverse migration, noting that he and his wife will remain in Punjab.

# Shinde faction's focus now on 'ownership' of Sena Bhavan & Saamana



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 24:** With the Election Commission (EC) recognising Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's faction as the real Shiv Sena, it remains to be seen whether his group also stakes claim to the party headquarters 'Shiv Sena Bhavan' and party mouthpiece 'Saamana', both currently controlled by the Uddhav Thackeray camp.

While the Shiv Sena Bhavan is located at Dadar in central Mumbai, the 'Saamana' head office is situated in the nearby Prabhadevi area. Both these establishments are currently run by different trusts. CM Shinde has maintained that he would not stake claim to the Shiv Sena Bhavan even though he has got the party name and symbol.

However, the rival camp is wary and on guard. Recently Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader and Thane MP Rajan Vichare submitted a letter to Thane Police Commissioner Jai Jeet Singh, urging him to thwart any attempts by the Shinde group to usurp the Shiv Sena 'shakhas' (local party offices) in the city.

The Supreme Court is hearing various petitions related to the tussle between the Shinde and Thackeray factions. Due to the EC verdict, the Thackeray family lost control of the party that was founded in 1966 by Bal Thackeray.

The party, founded on the principles of justice for the sons of the soil, had adopted Hindutva as its key ideology and partnered with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1984, an alliance that continued till 2019 when Uddhav Thackeray joined hands with arch-rivals Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress to become the chief minister. The Shiv Sena Bhavan is controlled by 'Shivai Seva Trust'.

Its founding trustees include late Bal Thackeray and his wife late Meena Thackeray. Its present trustees include senior leaders Subhash Desai, Diwakar Raote, Leeladhar Dake, former Mumbai

mayor Vishaka Raut and Uddhav Thackeray himself.

THE EC LAST WEEK RECOGNISED THE SHINDE FACTION AS THE REAL SHIV SENA AND ALLOTTED IT THE PARTY'S 'BOW AND ARROW' SYMBOL, GIVING A JOLT TO THE THACKERAY CAMP

EARLIER, THE SHINDE GROUP WAS OFFICIALLY REFERRED TO AS 'BALASAHEBANCHI SHIV SENA' AND THE THACKERAY GROUP AS SHIV SENA (UDDHAV BALASAHEB THACKERAY)

While 'Saamana', the Shiv Sena mouthpiece founded by late Bal Thackeray, is managed by Prabhodhan Prakashan, whose printer-publisher is Thackeray loyalist Subhash Desai. Uddhav

Thackeray had resigned as the editor of 'Saamana' after assuming the Chief Minister's charge in November 2019. He had handed over the editor's post to his wife Rashmi Thackeray in March 2020. However, after the Shiv Sena split, Uddhav again took over as the editor in August 2022.

Sanjay Raut is the executive editor of the party mouthpiece. Senior journalist Prakash Akolkar, who has written 'Jai Maharashtra' - a book on Shiv Sena's history, said, "CM Shinde has taken a mature decision of not staking claim to the Shiv Sena Bhavan and Saamana as both these institutions are operated by private trusts.

It is also his indirect message to supporters to exercise restraint." Harshal Pradhan, a close aide of Uddhav Thackeray, said there are 350 Shiv Sena 'shakhas' in Mumbai, while outside Mumbai there is one such unit in each municipal ward. Shakhas are the premises where the Shiv Sainiks (party workers) gather for political meetings, resolving local issues of citizens.

## US-based Kashmiri Hindu outfit supports Pandit employees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Jan 24:** A US-based Kashmiri Pandit group has supported the demand of community members employed under a special government package for relocation outside Kashmir Valley in view of targeted killings by terrorists.

Alleging that the issues related to Pandits are being used for politics across the country, the Kashmiri Hindu Foundation (KHF) urged the central government to initiate a dialogue with the Panun Kashmir, an organisation representing the displaced Kashmiri Pandit community, to address their grievances.

"The series of selective killings (by terrorists) in Kashmir shows that normalcy has not been restored.... Taking our minuscule community back by force in a scattered way, like it is being done under the prime minister's (employment) package, is destined to prove to be a fatal experiment," the foundation said in a resolution passed at its special session.

## BUFFALO MILK PRICE TO SHOOT UP BY ₹5/LITRE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Feb 24:** Hitting the consumers hard, the Mumbai Milk Producers Association (MMPA) has announced a steep price hike of ₹5/litre of buffalo milk in the city from March 1, an official said Friday.

MMPA President CK Singh said that the price of buffalo milk which is sold by over 3,000 retailers in the city - will be increased from ₹80 per litre to ₹85 per litre, and will remain in force till August 31.

This is the second steep hike coming after September 2022, when buffalo milk price was hiked from ₹75 a litre to ₹80 per litre, making the domestic budget of the poor and middle-class families go haywire.

Singh said that the unanimous decision was taken at the MMPA general body meeting late Thursday.

All the members felt that since the price of milch animals as well their food items like dana, tuvar, chuni, chana-chuni etc. have gone up by 15-25 per cent, besides steep hike in the rates of grass, hay, pinda etc., the rate of milk should

# Museum on tiger hunting tourism coming up near Gadchiroli

**More than five decades after hunting of wild animals became an illegal activity under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, a museum giving information on tiger hunting and related activity is being built at Navargaon**



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

Porla estate for foreign tourists before 1972, is now building this museum, one of its members said. A company operated by Nawab Yusuf Ali at that time used to organise tiger hunting trails for tourists

from across the world. Talking to PTI, 70-year-old Nawab Mir Arif Ali, one of the members of the Nawab family, said, "The government banned hunting of wild animals in 1972, but before that tiger hunting tourism used

to take place in the country. Tourists from across the world used to come here for wildlife hunting and the region had become very famous for tiger hunting." "Tiger-hunting tourism was at its peak between 1934 and 1945 and there were 21 com-

panies involved in running this business. The company run by Nawab Yusuf Ali was at the second position in this business at that time and its activities continued till 1970," he said. The government at that time earned ₹3 crore through tiger tourism. The company used to charge ₹1.50 lakh per head for tiger hunting with tourists coming from America, Denmark, Germany and other parts of Europe, Ali said. There used to be eight-day tiger hunting packages. Before hunting was banned in 1972, the company had advanced bookings for the next 15 years. But after the ban, it had to return the money to the tourists, he added. Presently, the Nawab family members are involved in different businesses in Nagpur and Dubai.

## Record surge in tourism in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 24:** After a "record surge" in tourism in Jammu and Kashmir, some politicians are also having a leisure time in the Valley and other parts of the Union Territory, Union minister G Kishan Reddy has said.

He, however, did not name anyone. Recently, videos of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi skiing in Gulmarg in north Kashmir, and he and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra enjoying a ride on a snow scooter there went viral on social media.

"After Independence, the tourism footfall in Jammu and Kashmir has seen a record surge. If we look at figures for one year; in 2022, it was about 1.8 crore tourists in J-K," Reddy, the Union tourism minister, said. There were "hardly any tourists" but today some politicians are "also playing there" and having a leisure time in Srinagar and other parts of Jammu and Kashmir; Reddy said.

"It is a good thing, people must go, it is part of our India. That is the situation today, people are eager to visit Jammu and Kashmir," he said. Reddy was addressing a function held at the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition (IHMC), Pusa, here Thursday.

The Union minister on August 4 last year had said Jammu and Kashmir had registered a "record footfall" of tourists at airports and sightseeing places in the last several months due to "transformative initiatives" of the Narendra Modi government such as the abrogation of Article 370.



MATTER OF FAITH: Devotees pray while head priest displays a holy relic on the Friday following Mehraj-ul-Alam, at Hazratbal shrine on the outskirts of Srinagar. PTI PHOTO

## No property tax for small houses in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, Feb 24:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration Thursday said people who have small houses of built-up area of up to 1,000 square feet have been exempted from paying the property tax that will be levied from April 1 onwards.

In a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Mehta to deliberate upon "misinformation created regarding property tax in Jammu and Kashmir; it was clarified that all the poor, marginalised having small houses having built-up area up to 1000 square feet have been exempted by the government from paying any property tax to be levied from April onwards this

year", an official spokesman said on Thursday night.

"The levy of property tax is essential part of urban sector reforms. Jammu and Kashmir is one of the last states and UTs (union territories) to levy property tax and non-imposition of the tax was depriving local bodies to become self sustaining. Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) are required to render multiple civic services in their jurisdiction and need resources," he said.

The levy of this tax will improve the financial health of these institutions and improve services, besides creating employment, the spokesman said.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

tax would be levied, officials said that there is no tax liability for those having houses of built-up area of less than 1,000 square feet. Besides this, the proportion of tax is considerably lesser here than that levied in other parts of the country, he claimed.

Similarly, all places of worship such as temples, masjids, gurudwaras, churches and ziarats, and cremation and burial grounds are exempt from payment of property tax, the spokesman said.

The officials said that tax is proposed to be levied at just five per cent of taxable annual value (TAV) of the property in case of a residential property and at six per cent of TAV in case of non-residential property.

The tax rates, even in municipal corporations, are one of the lowest in the country, almost half that of Himachal Pradesh, and one-fourth to one-sixth, overall, of other progressive states and UTs such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Delhi, they claimed.

## Groom brings bride's 'doli' in chopper to his village

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Flote (J&K), Feb 24:** A groom got off to a flying start Thursday when he brought his bride in a chopper from Punjab to his home in Flote village in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district.

Hundreds of villagers gathered to watch Paras Mehta and his bride Smiley alighting from the helicopter after its landing at a specially setup helipad here, in what turned into a gala media event.

Amid bursting of crackers and beats of dholaks, villagers and groom's relatives welcomed the newly married couple as they were overwhelmed to see a chopper landing in the village for the first time

groom's relatives welcomed the newly married couple as they were overwhelmed to see a chopper landing in the village for the first time. "It was my grandfather's wish to bring 'doli' of my wife in a unique way. So, this happened. It's a dream



also be increased.

Mumbai consumes over 50 lakh litres of buffalo milk daily, of which more than seven lakh is supplied by the MMPA through its chain of dairies and neighbourhood retailers, through their farms spread in and around the country's commercial capital.

Incidentally, in February this year, all the major cow milk producers' associations in Maharashtra, along with other major branded producers, have hiked the prices of cow milk by at least ₹2 per litre.

## Left, farmer groups protest against eviction drive in J&K

At a protest organised by the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) and Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Tehreek (JKKT), the groups also demanded withdrawal of changes in land laws, and said the evictions should be stopped



right," Yechury said. "In 1927, Maharaja Hari Singh enacted a law barring outsiders from buying land in J&K. This law is not exclusive for Jammu and Kashmir, many states have similar laws," he said. The CPI-M leader also questioned why elections were not being held in the Union Territory, even though the delimitation exercise is over.

"People of J&K have no representatives, they cannot raise this issue with anyone. It's been five years, and they've not held elections yet," he said.

CPI-M leader from Jammu and Kashmir Md. Yusuf Tarigami said no consultations were held with local bodies before carrying out the evictions.

He said evictions should be stopped immediately, and also slammed the administration over recently introduced property tax. "They're not some land mafia, if a small farmer is cultivating common land, or has made a small house, they should not be evicted," he said in a statement.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 24:** Farmer groups and Left leaders from Jammu and Kashmir protested at the Jantar Mantar here Friday, demanding the withdrawal of the land eviction order 2020 under which the Union Territory administration has launched a drive to retrieve state land from encroachers.

Speaking at the protest, Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury said while a petition on abrogation of Article 370 and 35A is still pending with the Supreme Court, laws are being changed in the Union Territory.

"Laws are being changed in Jammu and Kashmir, and common, working class people, specially farmers, are getting affected. The change in law which allows outsiders to buy land in J&K is not

bride Smiley expressed her happiness over flying in a chopper to her in-laws home. "I am very happy. I have no words to express my feelings," she said.

Villagers said that it was the first time that a man brought his bride to the village in a chopper. "It was the first time that such an extraordinary event took place. The bridegroom and his family members had desired to bring the bride in a helicopter and they fulfilled it," a villager said.

This is probably the second such event in Jammu and Kashmir. In October 2017, Anil Kumar flew his baraat in a chopper from R S Pura border area in Jammu district and brought his bride in the chopper.

come true for all of us," Paras told reporters.

Paras is son of Ajit Mehta, who is a businessman. The family hired a private helicopter from Katra for about ₹6 lakh for the event. A native of Dinanagar district in Punjab,



of the day quote

Indian arts can spread peace and harmony in a world replete with tension and conflict

Considerable time and energy has been spent for bringing a solution for the Naga Political problem and we have covered a lot of ground while the next five years will be very important towards achieving that objective

The image of India today is that of a country that is willing to go to any extent to protect its national security

SHORT TAKES

5 killed in accident

Vadodara (Gujarat): Five members of a family were killed after a car rammed into an auto-rickshaw, in which the deceased were travelling, in Gujarat's Vadodara Thursday.

Pratibha Patil's husband no more

Pune: Academician and politician, Dr Devisingh Ransingh Shekhawat - the husband of former President Pratibha Patil - passed away here on Friday morning, official sources said.

Sukesh's ED custody extended

New Delhi: Delhi Patiala House court Friday extended alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar's Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody for three more days.



The Enforcement Directorate raided Congress leaders in Chhattisgarh, clearly timed to 'intimidate' the party's Chhattisgarh unit during the crucial planning stage of the plenary.

NAZEER TAKES OATH

Former Supreme Court judge Justice S. Abdul Nazeer Friday took oath as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh.



No polls, Kharge to nominate CWC members

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nava Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Feb 24: The Congress Steering Committee unanimously decided Friday not to hold the CWC polls and authorised party chief Mallikarjun Kharge to nominate its members.



At its 85th plenary session, the Congress is set to amend its constitution to provide a 50-per cent reservation to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), women, youngsters and minorities at all levels, including in the CWC.

A key amendment in the party's constitution proposes to ensure that the members abstain from consuming any psychotropic substances or drugs and propagate against the use of such substances, sources said.

The CWC currently has 25 members, including the Congress president and the leader of the Congress parliamentary party, besides 12 elected members and 11 nominated ones

STs, OBCs, minorities and youngsters in the CWC.

The Congress steering committee decided unanimously to empower the Congress president to nominate the members of the CWC. We had a two-and-a-half-hour discussion on the issue and the dominant, overwhelming view was to authorise the party chief to nominate the members, keeping in mind the political challenges facing the country and the party and considering the far-reaching amendments that we are going to bring about in our constitution,"

'Will not induct Panneerselvam'

THE SUPREME COURT THURSDAY AFFIRMED A MADRAS HIGH COURT ORDER UPHOLDING THE CONDUCT OF A SPECIAL GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING IN JULY 2022 THAT CHOSE PALANISWAMI AS INTERIM GENERAL SECRETARY



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Feb 24: A day after the Supreme Court upheld the position of K. Palaniswami as the leader of AIADMK, the party's Organising Secretary D. Jayakumar Friday said that the AIADMK will welcome anyone other than deposed coordinator O. Panneerselvam, former interim General Secretary V.K. Sasikala and ANMK General Secretary T.T.V. Dhinakaran.

Rajya Sabha member Shanmugam would submit a copy of the Supreme Court judgment in the AIADMK case to the EC, after which the poll panel would conduct itself as per the court's ruling.

To another query, he said that a letter had already been given to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla stating that MP P. Ravindharnath had nothing to do with the party. He said another letter would be submitted to the Speaker, reiterating the party position.

Meanwhile, Palaniswami inaugurated 75th birth anniversary of former Chief Minister Jayalalitha at AIADMK headquarters. He cut a 75 kg cake to mark the celebrations.

Reacting to the Supreme Court order, Palaniswami had said on Thursday that it has injected life to 1.50 crore cadres of AIADMK. He had declared that AIADMK is now a united party. The leader of opposition said the Supreme Court judgment ripped apart the facemask of the party's betrayers, who were functioning as "B Team" of the DMK.

Full emergency declared at airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 24: A Dammam-bound Air India Express flight from Kozhikode, was Friday diverted to the international airport here, following a 'suspected' tail strike during takeoff.

The Air India Express flight IX 385, carrying 168 passengers, landed safely at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport at 12.15 PM, following which airport authorities withdrew the full emergency which was declared earlier.

Air India said the flight on Kozhikode-Dammam route was diverted to Thiruvananthapuram due to suspected tail strike while taking off from Calicut airport. The airlines made arrangements to send the passengers to Dammam by an alternate flight which is scheduled to take off from Thiruvananthapuram this evening itself.

"The airline staff is attending to all the requirements of the passengers at Thiruvananthapuram," Air India said in a release. Meanwhile, Aviation regulator DGCA said it will probe the incident.

The Adani Group, which manages the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, said they had announced a standby as soon as they received the information about the incident at Calicut.

"Initially the flight was scheduled to land at 11.03 AM but later it was rescheduled to 12.15 PM. At 11.36 we declared full emergency at the airport and all the emergency services were pressed into action," the airport authority said.

All the ambulances and the three Crash Fire Tenders at the airport were ready and the emergency gates were opened. Ambulances from nearby hospitals and three buses carrying police reached the Airport as a precautionary measure." However, other flights operated normally," the airport authority said.

The flight, after orbiting for around two-and-a-half hours for burning excess fuel as precaution, landed at 12.15 PM. The airport authority conducted a two-way inspection of the runway and later withdrew the emergency.



Workers dry coloured powder ahead of Holi in Sambhal district

PTI PHOTO

NAWAZUDDIN ACCUSED OF RAPE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Feb 24: In another twist to their ongoing saga, Bollywood actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui's estranged wife Aaliya Siddiqui has charged him with alleged rape and lodged a complaint with Versova Police Station here Friday.

Aaliya, who had slapped a divorce notice to Nawazuddin in 2021, herself made the announcement on her Instagram account, though police officials declined to comment.

"A rape complaint (with proof) has been filed against him at Versova Police Station yesterday (Thursday)," she said in the video post. "Whatever may happen, I will not allow my innocent kids go in their heartless hands," Aaliya declared, becoming emotional while recounting her purported ordeal.

Married in 2009, the couple has been in the limelight for the past few weeks hurling allegations at each other on various domestic and personal issues and their children, daughter Shora and son Yaani.



Aaliya, who had slapped a divorce notice to Nawazuddin in 2021, herself made the announcement on her Instagram account, though police officials declined to comment

She alleged how she was grappling with financial losses and now Nawazuddin has weakened her more from all sides, but she had full faith in the courts and law and expressed confidence that the verdict would be in her favour

In January 2022, Nawazuddin's mother had filed a police complaint against Aaliya for allegedly trespassing into the actor's home and she lodged a counter-complaint

against her mother-in-law alleging domestic violence.

This time, Aaliya has labelled her mother-in-law as "heartless" who allegedly called her "my innocent

child illegitimate" even as Nawazuddin remained silent.

Slamming Nawazuddin for seeking custody of their kids, Aaliya countered how he has never experienced the joy of the children, didn't know how to use a diaper, didn't realise when the kids grew up, and now he is trying to "steal" them from her to prove he is a good father.

"He is a coward dada he is stealing the kids (who are admitted to a Dubai school) from a mother by abusing his power and fame, but forgets that the Almighty is the most powerful," she said.

Aaliya contended that she had always considered Nawazuddin as her husband, but he never accepted her as his wife though she had given the most important years of her life to him.

She alleged how she was grappling with financial losses and now Nawazuddin has weakened her more from all sides, but she had full faith in the courts and law and expressed confidence that the verdict would be in her favour.

AI to hire 5,100 cabin crew, pilots

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: Air India plans to hire more than 4,200 cabin crew and 900 pilots this year as the Tata Group-owned airline expands its fleet and operations.

The announcement comes close on the heels of the carrier placing an order to buy 470 aircraft from Boeing and Airbus, including 70 wide-body planes. The airline, which was taken over by the Tata Group in January 2022, also plans to lease 36 aircraft and out of them, two B 777-200 LR have already been inducted.



In a release on Friday, Air India said it "plans to hire over 4,200 cabin crew trainees and 900 pilots in 2023 as the airline adds new aircraft and rapidly expands its domestic and international operations".

Between May 2022 and February 2023, the airline hired more than 1,900 cabin crew. "Over 1,100 cabin crew have been trained in the last seven months (between July 2022-January 2023), and in the past three months, approximately 500 cabin crew have been released for flying by the airline," the release said.

Sandeep Verma, Head - In-flight Services at Air India, said the addition of fresh talent will accelerate the pace of cultural transformation at the airline and added that it is also looking to step up hiring of more pilots and maintenance engineers.

The cabin crew will undergo a 15-week programme to impart safety and service skills, and will be coached to exemplify the best of Indian hospitality and Tata group culture. The training programme will include extensive classroom and in-flight training at the airline's training facility in Mumbai as well as familiarisation flights, the release said.

Over 3.4mn lives saved by India's Covid vax strategy: Report

Mandaviya said much before Covid was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organization in January 2020, processes and structures to focus dedicatedly on various facets of the pandemic management were put in place

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: India was able to save more than 3.4 million lives by undertaking a nationwide COVID-19 vaccination campaign at an unprecedented scale, a report by Stanford University said.

The Covid vaccination campaign also yielded a positive economic impact by preventing a loss of USD 18.3 billion, the working paper by Stanford University and Institute for Competitiveness titled 'Healing the Economy: Estimating the Economic Impact on India's

Vaccination and Related Issues' released by Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday said.

Mandaviya said much before COVID-19 was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) in January 2020, processes and structures to focus dedicatedly on various facets of the pandemic management were put in place.

He virtually addressed the 'The India Dialog' session on the Economic Impact of Vaccination and Related Matters. "India under



the leadership of honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji adopted a 'Whole of Government' and 'Whole of Society' approach in a proactive, preemptive and graded manner, thus adopting a holistic response strategy for effective management of COVID-19," the

minister said. The dialogue was organised by Institute for Competitiveness and US-Asia Technology Management Center, Stanford University. The paper also highlighted the impact of the lockdown and referred to the Union Ministry of Health and

Family Welfare's statistical analysis that the COVID-19 tally could have reached about two lakh (0.2 million) without lockdown by April 11, 2020.

Due to lockdown measures, the actual cases only went up to about 7,500 by April 11, 2020, making a case for the lockdown stronger. The imposition of the lockdown also avoided two million deaths. It further mentions that 100,000 lives were saved due to the lockdown (March-April), according to the Economic Survey (2020-21), and a COVID-19 tally of 200,000 if there was no lockdown and containment by April 11, 2020.

"India was able to save more than 100,000 (0.1 million) lives through the lockdown in March-April 2020. Moreover, the country took around 175 days to reach the peak from its first 100 cases while

most countries reached their first peak in less than 50 days (Russia, Canada, France, Italy, Germany, etc.)," the report said.

The paper discusses the role of containment as a measure to prevent the spread of the virus. It highlights that, as against the top-down approach, a bottom-up approach was critical in containing the virus.

Moreover, the report remarkably notes that robust measures at the ground level, like contact tracing, mass testing, home quarantine, distribution of essential medical equipment, revamping healthcare infrastructure and constant coordination among stakeholders at the centre, state and district levels not only helped contain the spread of the virus but also in augmenting the health infrastructure.

# international



I am proud that the UK has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine through this horrific conflict  
RISHI SUNAK | UK PM

## BLINKEN TO VISIT INDIA

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to India next week to attend the meeting of G20 foreign ministers and meet senior Indian officials to reaffirm America's strong partnership with the country. India has taken over the Presidency of the G20 on December 1, last year



## of the day quote

Our duty to our audiences around the world is to pursue the facts through independent and impartial journalism, and to produce and distribute the very best creative content  
TIM DAVIE | DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE BBC

After the Peshawar incident, I invited all political stakeholders... but they [PTI] did not consider it appropriate to participate in the huddle and they are still trying to resolve matters on the streets  
SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PAK PRIME MINISTER

In order to absolutely not allow one-sided changes to the status quo, we must firmly carry out support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia to regain peace and international order based on the rule of law  
FUMIO KISHIDA | JAPANESE PM

## SHORT TAKES

### Powerful winter storm continues to slam US

Washington: A massive winter storm with heavy snow, rain and powerful winds has continued to hit much of the US, triggering major power outages, flight cancellations and road closures, while some regions in the south were experiencing record-high heat. More than 995,000 people were without power in five states Thursday, including more than 772,000 in Michigan.

### Pakistan receives \$700mn from China

Islamabad: Pakistan Friday received a much-needed cash injection of \$700 million from all-weather ally China to help its ailing economy before the finalisation of talks with the IMF for financial assistance. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, who earlier this week announced Pakistan was expecting to get help from China, took to social media to confirm that the money had been transferred. "Funds \$700 million received today by State Bank of Pakistan from China Development Bank," Dar tweeted.

### 10 killed in riots

Jayapura (Indonesia): Ten people were killed and more than 20 others wounded in a riot in Indonesia's Papua province, police said Friday. The riots began Thursday afternoon in Wamena town in the Jayawijaya district of Papua, the country's easternmost province, amid reports of a child kidnapping. Local police who had responded to a report about the kidnapping — which police later said was a hoax — were attacked with rocks and arrows. Officers fired warning shots, hoping the people would disperse, Papua police spokesperson Ignatius Benny Ady Prabowo said in a written statement Friday.

# Ukrainians vow to fight on

AGENCIES

Kyiv, Feb 24: Ukrainians paid tribute to fallen loved ones Friday and vowed to fight on to victory, while Russia said its forces were making gains in battle in the east as its invasion entered a second year with no end in sight.

At a ceremony on Kyiv's St Sophia Square, a visibly emotional President Volodymyr Zelenskyy bestowed medals on soldiers and the mother of one killed. He fought



Commander-in-Chief of Ukraine's Armed Forces Valeriy Zaluzhnyi attends a commemorative event on the occasion of the Russia Ukraine war one year anniversary, in Kyiv, Ukraine

ZELENSKYY FIGHTS BACK TEARS AT CEREMONY  
G7 TO ANNOUNCE NEW SANCTIONS AT VIRTUAL SUMMIT WITH ZELENSKYY  
BIDEN: "UKRAINE WILL NEVER BE A VICTORY FOR RUSSIA"  
FIRST HANDFUL OF LEOPARD TANKS ARRIVE IN UKRAINE

We have become one family. There are no more strangers among us... Ukrainians have sheltered Ukrainians, opened their homes and hearts to those who were forced to flee the war. We withstand all threats, shelling, cluster bombs, cruise missiles, kamikaze drones, blackouts and cold. And we will do everything to gain victory this year  
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY | PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE

Ukraine will never be a victory for Russia. Never."

back tears when a band played the national anthem.

Zelenskyy was due later to attend an online summit with US President Joe Biden and other leaders of the Group of Seven wealthy democracies, expected to pledge more support for Ukraine and tighten sanctions against Russia.

"I'll repeat today what I said one year ago as Russia invaded Ukraine," Biden tweeted. "A dictator bent on rebuilding an empire will never erase the people's love of liberty. Brutality will never grind down the will of the free. And



A man dressed as a peace angel stands in front of a Russian tank destroyed in Ukraine, Berlin, Germany

For ordinary Ukrainians who have spent much of the year hiding in bomb shelters and supporting the war effort any way they can, the anniversary meant reflection. Ukraine sees it as a bid to subjugate an independent state. Its outnumbered and outgunned forces repelled Russia's attempt to seize the capital Kyiv early in the war and later recaptured swathes of occupied territory. But Moscow still occupies nearly a fifth of Ukraine, which it claims to have annexed.

Russian troops have destroyed Ukrainian cities, set a third of the population to flight and left behind streets littered with corpses in towns they occupied and lost. Moscow denies war crimes.

In recent weeks, Russian forces, replenished with hundreds of thousands of conscripts in the first mobilisation since World War Two, have launched a winter offensive of intense trench warfare, making only small gains despite fighting that both sides call the bloodiest so far.

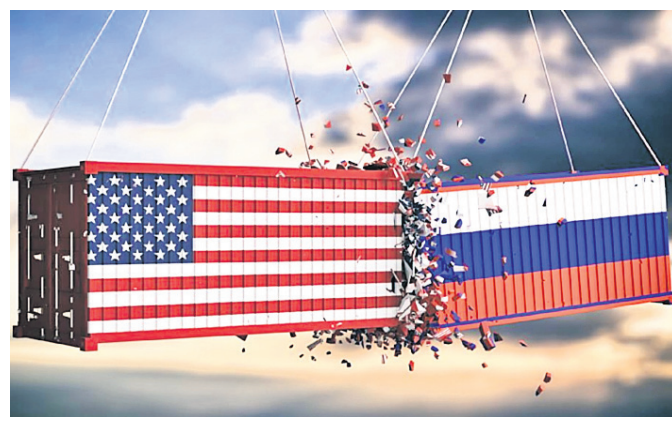
NO PEACE There is no sign of any peace

## FATF suspends Russia's membership

New Delhi: The FATF Friday suspended Russia's membership for its "illegal, unprovoked and unjustified" full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, an official statement said. Russia's actions were "unacceptably run" counter to FATF's core principles that aims to promote security, safety, and integrity of the global financial system, it said.



# US targets Russia with new sanctions



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Feb 24: The US announced a new round of sanctions on Russian firms, banks, manufacturers and people Friday, aiming them at entities that helped Russia evade sanctions earlier in the year-old war against Ukraine.

Russia's metals and mining sector is among those targeted in one of the U.S. Treasury Department's "most significant sanctions actions to date," according to the agency.

The action, taken in coordination with Group of Seven allies, seeks to punish 250 people and firms, puts financial blocks on banks, arms dealers and technology companies tied to weapons production, and goes after alleged sanctions evaders in countries from the United Arab Emirates to Switzerland.

"Our sanctions have had both short-term and long-term impact, seen acutely in Russia's struggle to replenish its weapons and in its isolated economy," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a written statement.

"Our actions today with our G7 partners show that we will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes."

Yellen is attending the G-20 finance ministers' meetings in Bengaluru, India, this week. On Friday morning she told senior Russian officials attending meetings that "their continued work for the Kremlin makes them complicit in Putin's atrocities."

"They bear responsibility for the lives and livelihoods being taken in Ukraine and the harm caused globally," she said. The sanctions come after the White House announced early

More than 30 countries representing more than half the world's economy have already imposed unprecedented sanctions on the Russian economy, making it the most sanctioned nation in the world

They have imposed price caps on Russian oil and diesel, frozen Russian Central Bank funds and restricted access to SWIFT, the dominant system for global financial transactions

Friday morning that the Pentagon would commit \$2 billion for more rounds of ammunition and a variety of small, high-tech drones into the fight against Russia.

These steps increase tariffs on Russian products and add nearly 90 Russian and third-country companies, including from China, to a list of identified sanctions evaders. Named in Friday's sanctions package are a dozen financial institutions, including Russia's largest non-state public bank, importers of microelectronics and producers of carbon fibre, a key material for defense systems.

The package names more than 30 people and firms allegedly connected to Russia's sanctions evasion efforts.

Among them: Swiss-Italian businessman Walter Moretti and his businesses; Nurmurad Kurbanov, a Russian-Turkmen arms dealer who is alleged to have represented Russian and Belarusian defense firms abroad; and Russian businessman Aleksandr Yevgenyevich Udodov, the former brother-in-law of Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin.

# Lanka postpones March 9 elections

Earlier this month, the EC informed the Supreme Court that it was difficult to conduct local body polls March 9 due to a plethora of reasons linked to the current economic crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Feb 24: Sri Lanka's Election Commission Friday formally announced that the local body elections will not be held March 9 as planned and a fresh date will be notified March 3.

The formal announcement was made after deliberations among the Election Commission officials Friday, a day after the cash-strapped-hit country's apex court postponed hearing a petition against the hold-

ing of the polls until May. The Commission will now seek the Speaker of Parliament, Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena's intervention to secure requisite funds from the Treasury to conduct the polls.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe Thursday stressed that his job as the president was, at this stage, to revive the crisis-struck economy, hinting that conducting the local election with already lean state finances would only bring additional pressure. But opposition parties like the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) pin the blame on Wickremesinghe, who is also the country's finance minister, for trying to sabotage the local body election, fearing a loss, by blocking the funds from the Treasury.

They are also accusing him of influencing the state officials and the Election Commission against the holding of the polls.



LIGHT SHOW: The Eiffel Tower is lit up in the national blue-and-yellow colours of Ukraine, to mark the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in Paris, France

# Bird flu situation 'worrying'; WHO working with Cambodia

REUTERS

London, Feb 24: The World Health Organisation is working with Cambodian authorities after two confirmed human cases of H5N1 bird flu were found among one family in the country.

Describing the situation as "worrying" due to the recent rise in cases in birds and mammals, Dr Sylvie Briand, the director of epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention, told reporters in a virtual briefing that WHO was reviewing its global risk assessment in light of the recent developments.

The UN health agency last assessed the risk to humans from avian flu as low earlier this month. Cambodian authorities Thursday reported the death of an 11-year-old

girl due to H5N1, and began testing 12 of her contacts. Her father, who had been showing symptoms, has also tested positive for the virus.

"The global H5N1 situation is worrying given the wide spread of the virus in birds around the world and the increasing reports of cases in mammals including humans," Briand said. "WHO takes the risk from this virus seriously and urges heightened vigilance from all countries."

Briand said it was not yet clear whether there had been any human-to-human transmission, which was a key reason to focus on the cases in Cambodia, or if the two cases were due to the "same environmental conditions," likely close contact with infected birds or other animals.



A new strain of H5N1, clade 2.3.4.4b, emerged in 2020 and has

BIRD FLU, ALSO KNOWN AS AVIAN INFLUENZA, NORMALLY SPREADS BETWEEN SICK POULTRY BUT CAN SOMETIMES SPREAD FROM POULTRY TO HUMANS

THE RECENT DETECTION OF INFECTIONS IN A VARIETY OF MAMMALS, INCLUDING AT A LARGE MINK FARM IN SPAIN, HAS RAISED CONCERN AMONG EXPERTS THAT THE VIRUS COULD EVOLVE TO SPREAD MORE EASILY BETWEEN PEOPLE, AND POTENTIALLY TRIGGER A PANDEMIC

mestic poultry in recent months. It has also infected mammals, raising global concerns.

However, unlike earlier outbreaks of H5N1, which has been around for more than two decades, this subtype is not causing significant illness in people. So far, only about a half dozen cases have been reported to the WHO in people who had close contact with infected birds, and most of those have been mild. Experts have suggested that the virus might need to change in order for human transmission to occur.

However, WHO said it was stepping up preparedness efforts regardless, and noted that there were antivirals available, as well as 20 licensed pandemic vaccines if the situation changes, although they

would have to be updated to more closely match the circulating strain of H5N1 if needed.

That could take four to five months, said Richard Webby, director of the WHO Collaborating Center for Studies on the Ecology of Influenza in Animals and Birds at St. Jude Children's Hospital. However, some stockpiled vaccines would be available in the meantime.

WHO-affiliated labs already hold two flu virus strains that are closely related to the circulating H5N1 virus, which manufacturers can use to develop new shots if needed. A global meeting of flu experts this week suggested developing another strain that more closely matches H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, Webby told the briefing.

# Pak-Afghanistan border reopens for pedestrians

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Peshawar, Feb 24: The Pakistani government Friday reopened for pedestrians the Pakistan-Afghanistan Torkham border, but the crossing is still inaccessible for over 7,000 trucks laden with goods, including perishable items like vegetables, poultry, and eggs, stranded for the last five days due to the closure of the crossing point.

The movement of cargo vehicles is still restricted, security sources said.

The sources said the Pakistani government will likely open the border for vehicular traffic Saturday afternoon.

Director Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, said the closure of the border would inflict enormous losses to exporters and businessmen if the Pakistan government did not open the gate. The Torkham border crossing — a vital commercial artery and a trade route for Pakistan to Central Asian countries — was shut by the Afghan Taliban Sunday after Islamabad accused Kabul of providing safe havens to the Pakistan Taliban militants whose cross-border attacks have led to a spike in violence in the country.

The Afghan government opened its gate at the border crossing point Thursday. The stoppage of containers on the way to Afghanistan is inflicting demurrage charges to exporters in thousands of rupees on a daily basis besides the concern of the rotting up of perishable items.



of the day quote

There is now greater optimism that the world may avoid a deep recession and only experience slow growth or a softer recession. Yet uncertainties lie ahead of us

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RBI

Active negotiations for the FTAs (free trade agreements) are ongoing with two-three countries and the EU. EU will take a longer time, because there are 27 countries which have to come on the same page

PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE MINISTER

The pandemic years strengthened people's awareness about the significance of digital economy

SAURABH GARG | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, UIIAI

SHORT TAKES

1st Municipal Bond Index launched

New Delhi: NSE Indices Ltd, an NSE arm, Friday said it has launched the country's first ever municipal bond index. The new Nifty India Municipal Bond Index will track the performance of municipal bonds issued by Indian municipal corporations across maturities and having investment grade credit rating, NSE Indices said in a statement.

SpiceJet profit jumps five-fold

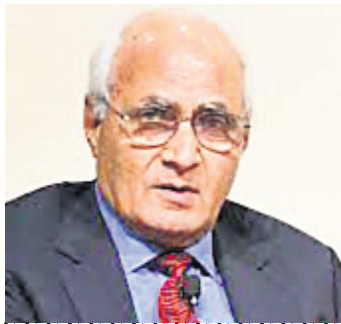
New Delhi: No-frills airline SpiceJet Friday reported a higher net profit of ₹107 crore in the three months ended December 2022, helped by better performance in passenger and cargo businesses. The carrier had a net profit of ₹23.28 crore in the year-ago period.

Air India to hire 5,100 in 2023

New Delhi: Air India plans to hire more than 4,200 cabin crew and 900 pilots this year as the Tata Group-owned airline expands its fleet and operations. The announcement comes close on the heels of the carrier placing an order to buy 470 aircraft from Boeing and Airbus, including 70 wide-body planes.

50 Gap stores by December

New Delhi: Reliance Retail plans to open 50 exclusive stores of American apparel brand Gap by the end of this year, said a top company official. As part of the strategy, Gap's offering would also consist of Indian preferences in designs and colours and select patterns, said Reliance Retail President & CEO, Fashion & Lifestyle, Akhilesh Prasad.



Thinking small and managing shortages in urban policies have been a disaster for India

KUSHAL PAL SINGH | CHAIRMAN EMERITUS, DLF LTD

DARK DAYS FOR META EMPLOYEES

Meta (formerly Facebook) is set for another big round of layoffs -- similar to the one it announced in November last year -- as early as next month once the performance bonuses are paid out, the media reported.



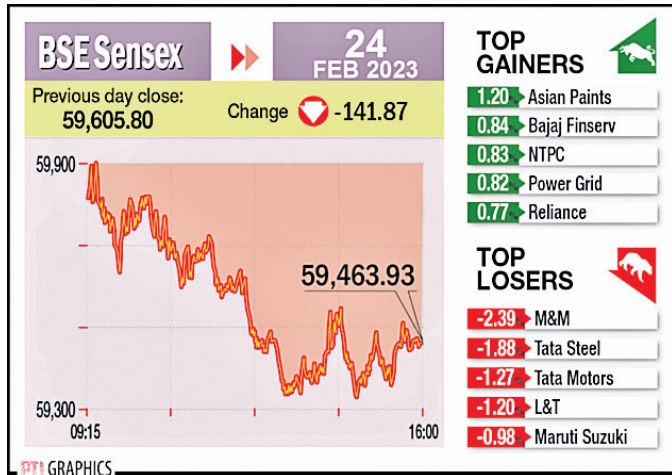
6TH LOSING SESSION

D-St's worst week in 8 months

Benchmark indices are witnessing losses in line with weak trend in Asian markets and concerns that the US Federal Reserve might raise interest rates further to curb inflation

REUTERS

Bangalore, Feb 24: Indian shares extended losses to post their worst week in more than eight months Friday on fears of aggressive interest rate hikes by global central banks and a fall in liquidity. The Nifty 50 index fell 0.26% to 17,465.80, while the S&P BSE Sensex closed 0.24% lower to 59,463.93, their sixth straight session of loss.



The domestic market is broadly demonstrating a lack of confidence, registering its sixth consecutive day of losses despite global markets turning green. Continued selling in the domestic market by FIIs is acting as an overhang in sustaining the early gains.

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GJEOTI FINANCIAL SERVICES

- Markets lost 2.5% in the week, the worst since June 17, 2022. FIIs have remained net sellers in equities in 2023 so far. Adani Enterprises lost over 5% and was the top Nifty 50 loser

Investors' wealth plunges ₹8.30L-cr

Stock market investors became poorer by ₹8.30 lakh crore as equities continued their slide for the sixth consecutive day Friday. During this period, the combined market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms has tanked ₹8,30,322.61 crore to reach ₹2,60,00,662.99 crore.

six peers, hovered near a two-month high of 104.78.

Wall Street equities ended positively, with the S&P 500 snapping a four-session losing streak, even as weekly jobs data heightened chances of the Federal Reserve continuing with its tight monetary policy stance.

Among individual stocks, Adani Enterprises lost over 5% and was the top Nifty 50 loser. "Investors are unwilling to touch Adani group stocks as there is no surety that the companies will bounce back," Gorakshakar said.

DOWN FOR THIRD WEEK Forex kitty at 11-week low

Mumbai: India's foreign exchange reserves fell for the third straight week to hit an eleven-week low of \$561.27 billion as of the week ended February 17, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) statistical supplement showed Friday. The reserves fell by \$5.68 billion at the end of last week, data showed.

Coal production up 16% during Apr-Jan

The increase in domestic coal production has helped the country curb import to a large extent in face of sharp increase in coal demand arising due to continuous rise in power consumption



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Feb 24: India's domestic coal production has shown impressive growth during the past few years and this rise in output has helped the nation to check the import of fossil fuel considerably, the government said Friday.

In the current financial year, the country's total coal production recorded a more than 16 per cent rise to 698.25 MT during the period from April 2022 to January 2023, as compared to 601.97 MT during the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

In this period, Coal India Limited (CIL) production has also gone up by about 15.23 per cent to 550.93 MT from 478.12 MT, the coal ministry said in a statement.

The country's total coal pro-

duction has increased from 730.87 MT (Million Tonne) in 2019-20 to 778.19 MT in 2021-22, achieving a growth of 6.47 per cent.

The Coal Ministry has fixed the target of 1.31 BT (Billion Tonne) for FY 25 and the same is likely to go up to 1.5 BT by FY30.

The Ministry has been actively engaging with various state governments and central government agencies both for starting new coal mines and also for increasing coal production in the currently operational mines.

As a result of such initiatives, production from captive and commercial coal mines has increased to 93.22 MT in April 2022 to January 2023 period of FY 22-23 from 71.31 MT in the same period of FY 21-22, showing a growth of more than 30 per cent, the statement said.

Khimji opens 7th showroom in Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Feb 24: Khimji Jewellers, the largest and most celebrated jewellery brand of Odisha, has opened its 7th showroom in Puri February 24. The store is home to an exquisite collection of fine jewellery, designed to cater to a wide range of jewellery tastes and preferences.

The exclusive jewellery store was inaugurated traditionally by lighting the lamp by Jagannath Swain Mohapatra, Chief Badagrahi to Lord Jagannath, in the presence of Dinesh Khimji, Chairman; Kishore Khimji, Managing Director; Mitesh Khimji, Director and Sumeet Khimji from Khimji Jewellers.

To celebrate the opening of its new showroom, the brand has announced a special inaugural offer. Customers who will purchase gold jewellery worth ₹30,000/- will receive one free gold coin, while customers who purchase diamond jewellery worth ₹30,000/- will receive two free gold coins. Furthermore, it also offers an old-gold exchange facility to the customers.



Located on VIP road, opposite Police Line, Khimji's new showroom is all set to provide a world-class experience to the jewellery enthusiasts of the city and outskirts. Customers can choose from a variety of precious metals, including gold, diamond, and silver, and for the first time the people of Puri will also get to choose from a wide range of luxury platinum jewellery. All the jewellery in the showroom are 100% BIS hallmarked and IGI and GIA certified. Congratulating Khimji Jewellers on their new showroom, Mohapatra

said, "I am delighted that Khimji Jewellers has opened its 7th Showroom in Shri Jagannath Dham, Puri. This new jewellery destination promises to provide a world-class shopping experience for the citizens of Puri, and I am confident that they will be amazed by the exquisite collection."

"Moreover, on this auspicious occasion, I must acknowledge Khimji Jewellers' enduring connection with the repair and restoration of Lord Shri Jagannath's gold jewellery on this momentous occasion. It is truly impressive that the brand has now made its mark

in this holy city, and I am sure that it will become an integral part of the pious city," he further added. "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Khimji Jewellers for this remarkable achievement, and I wish the new showroom continued success and prosperity in the years to come."

Speaking on the occasion Mitesh Khimji, Director of Khimji Jewellers said, "Lord Jagannath is very close to every Odia's heart and we are extremely delighted to launch our first showroom in Puri. We are very delighted to serve the Puri people as we are closely associated for the restoration work of Lord Jagannath's ornaments. It's our privilege to be associated with such a divine cause and we look forward to continuing our efforts in this regard."

"Puri is the holy Land of Lord Jagannath where many devotees from across the world come to get a glimpse of him. With Khimji's new store in Puri, our endeavour is to give people of Puri as well as the guests of the city an experience of top-notch jewellery shopping with thousands of exquisite collections for all occasions," he added.

World's 1st car powered by sodium-ion battery rolled out

SODIUM-ION BATTERIES HAVE LOWER DENSITY THAN THEIR LITHIUM-ION COUNTERPARTS AND COULD HELP REDUCE COST OF EVS BY 10%

Beijing, Feb 24: Chinese EV maker JAC has showcased the world's first electric vehicle (EV) that is powered by a cheaper sodium-ion battery which could help reduce the cost of future EVs by 10 per cent, the media reported Friday. Sodium-ion batteries use cheaper raw materials and can offer EV makers an alternative to existing technologies that rely on lithium and cobalt as the main ingredients.

The sodium-ion battery was developed by Beijing-based startup Hina Battery Technologies, reports South China Morning Post.

The JAC EV is fitted with a 25 kilowatt-hour (kWh) battery that can go as far as 250 kms on a single charge, Hina said in a statement.

Sodium-ion batteries have lower density than their lithium-ion counterparts. These batteries have advantages such as low-temperature performance and charging speed. Hina, founded in 2017, engages



A surge in lithium carbonate prices last year made many battery manufacturers and downstream users face ever-rising cost pressures. Therefore, sodium-ion batteries offering better cost-performance, high safety as well as excellent cycle performance, have been widely expected as the most promising alternative to lithium-ion batteries

HINA BATTERY TECHNOLOGIES | BEIJING-BASED STARTUP

in the development and commercialisation of sodium-ion batteries. Meanwhile, Chinese electric car-maker BYD is expanding operations

overseas, setting a unit sales target for 2023 to overtake Elon Musk-run Tesla. Operating in more than 40 nations, BYD plans to sell nearly two million EVs this year, including in Japan and countries in Southeast Asia and Europe, according to a Nikkei Asia report. In December last year, BYD Auto remained the global market leader, shipping more than 5,37,000 EV units -- an increase of 197 per cent (on-year).

The global electric vehicle (EV) charging revenue is likely to exceed \$900 billion by 2027, up from \$66 billion in 2023, a report said this week.

According to Juniper Research, the total number of plug-in vehicles will surpass 137 million globally by 2027, up from 49 million in 2023.

