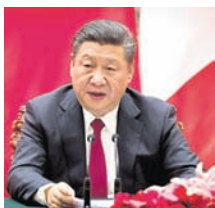




PEECEE HURT

Global star Priyanka Chopra reveals she cried to her singer husband Nick Jonas when she was body shamed in Hollywood

LEISURE P2



JINPING'S VOW

President Xi Jinping vows to build China's military into a 'Great Wall of Steel' to protect the country's sovereignty

INTERNATIONAL P10



REPEAT ACT

India beat World Champions Germany again to jump to top spot in the FIH Pro League standings

SPORTS P12

SHORT TAKES

SC rebukes Centre over OROP scheme

New Delhi: The Supreme Court said Monday the Ministry of Defence cannot take law in its own hands by issuing communication on payment of One Rank-One Pension (OROP) arrears in four installments. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala asked the Ministry to immediately withdraw its January 20 communication which said OROP arrears will be paid in four installments. The bench said the Defence Ministry's January 20 communication was completely contrary to its verdict and it cannot unilaterally say it will pay OROP arrears in four installments. P7

HSBC acquires UK arm of SVB for £1

London: The HSBC said Monday it is acquiring the UK subsidiary of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) for £1. "This acquisition makes excellent strategic sense for our business in the UK," HSBC CEO Noel Quinn said in a statement. The move comes after US authorities moved to shore up deposits and stem any wider fallout from the sudden collapse of its parent, tech start-up lender Silicon Valley Bank. As of March 10, Silicon Valley Bank UK Limited had loans of around £5.5 billion and deposits of around 6.7 billion, HSBC said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The day political speeches get entry into the Oscars, we are sure to win the best actor award too

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	58237.85 ↓ 897.28
NIFTY	17154.30 ↓ 258.60
DOLLAR	81.99 ↓ ₹0.03
EURO	88.16 ↑ ₹0.93
GOLD	₹57,429 ↑ ₹1279
SILVER	₹66,430 ↑ ₹3540

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	38.2°C	36.8°C
TEMP. MIN	20.2°C	21.0°C
Humidity	63%	75%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Dry weather most likely	



BRAWN AND BEAUTY: Women commandos of the BSF take part in a rope climbing training session Monday at a camp in Hoshiarpur in Punjab. PFI PHOTO

Police bust cough syrup gang in Bolangir; 37 held

BANK ACCOUNT OF COMPANY WITH ₹2CR FROZEN

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bolangir, March 13: In a major breakthrough, Bolangir police have busted an inter-state organised cough syrup racket. Officials said Monday that 'Eskuf' cough syrup worth ₹40 lakh were seized and 37 persons arrested in this connection Sunday. Police have also frozen ₹2 crore in the bank account of M/s Daffodils Drugs Pvt Ltd, the distribution firm for the cough syrup. Bolangir SP Nitin Kushalkar said Monday



Some of the arrested members of the gang involved in the illegal cough syrup trade

India RRRoars at the Oscars

First time two India-made productions win Academy Awards for song 'Naatu Naatu' and docu short *The Elephant Whisperers*

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 13: 'Naatu Naatu', the irrepressible, fun number from the film *RRR*, and documentary short *The Elephant Whisperers* made Oscar history Monday for India with one Academy Award each. The two awards showcased cinema beyond the Hindi film industry and the growing might of the Indian non-feature segment.

This is the first time two India-made productions have bagged world cinema's biggest prize. Dancers took over the stage at Los Angeles' Dolby Theatre, recreating the hugely popular hook steps from the four-minute Telugu track, and actor Deepika Padukone introduced the song to loud cheers.

It was not just a night for India. The 95th Academy Awards will also be remembered for recognising Asian talent with *Everything Everywhere All at Once* bagging seven awards, including 'Best Film', 'Best Director' for Daniel Scheinert and Daniel Kwan, 'Best Actress' for Malaysia's Michelle Yeoh and 'Best Supporting Actor' for Vietnamese American Ke Huy Quan.

All That Breathes, Shaunak Sen's climate change documentary set in Delhi, lost out to Canada's *Navalny* on Russian dissident leader Alexei Navalny in the Documentary Feature category.

The win for 'Naatu Naatu' composed by MM Keeravaani and penned by Chandrabose in SS Rajamouli's blockbuster film, is



HISTORICAL MOMENT: Chandrabose (left) and MM Keeravaani with the Oscar trophies at Los Angeles, Sunday night; (Inset) Kartiki Gonsalves (left) and Guneet Monga

the fourth non-English song to win an Oscar in the category and the first song in foreign language since 'Jai Ho' in 2009 to bag the prize.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi and a host of showbiz celebs, including Rajinikanth and Shah Rukh Khan hailed the twin Oscar wins.

"Exceptional! The popularity of 'Naatu Naatu' is global. It will be a song that will be remembered for years to come... India is elated and proud. #Oscars," Modi said on Twitter.

"Congratulations to @EarthSpectrum, @guneetm and

tween humans and an abandoned elephant calf' in a Tamil Nadu sanctuary, is India's first win in the Documentary Short category.

Gonsalves dedicated her win to 'motherland India'. Her producer Monga did not speak but struck an exultant pose, lifting the coveted golden statuette high in the air. "...To all the women watching..."



Michelle too has Indian connection

New Delhi: Malaysia-born Oscar winner Michelle Yeoh, who has become the first Asian woman to win the Academy Award for 'Best Actress' for her multifaceted performance in the film *Everything, Everywhere All at Once*, survived the deadly earthquake which struck Nepal while she was visiting the Himalayan nation in April 2015. Yeoh has an India connect too. In the 'background' of her life is Buddhist leader Gyalwang Drukpa, the spiritual head of the 'Drukpa Order' based in India. With the earthquake, killing 9,000 people and causing massive destruction, Michelle was stranded in Nepal with fiancé Jean Todd. After the couple's evacuation, she returned to the disaster-hit country again to help rehabilitate affected people. The 'Best Actress' award came after a long career in martial arts and action movies like *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*. "Ladies, don't ever let anyone tell you that you are past your prime, there is always something to look forward to," she said after winning the Oscar.

The future is audacious and the future is here. Let's go! Jai hind."

'Naatu Naatu' was competing against 'Applause' (sung by Sofia Carson) from *Tell It Like a Woman*, 'Hold My Hand' (Lady Gaga) from *Top Gun: Maverick*, 'Lift Me Up' (Rihanna) from *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* and 'This Is a Life' (Son Lux, Mitski, David Byrne) from *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. This is the third major international recognition for the Telugu song after 'Golden Globe' and 'Critics Choice Award' wins.

MORE P2 & P8

I GREW UP LISTENING TO THE CARPENTERS AND NOW HERE I AM WITH THE OSCAR. IT FEELS THAT I AM ON TOP OF THE WORLD
MM KEERAVAANI

the entire team of *The Elephant Whisperers* for this honour. Their work wonderfully highlights the importance of sustainable development and living in harmony with nature. #Oscars," Modi added.

The Elephant Whisperers, by Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga, which explores the bond be-

THREE HURT IN ATTACK BY INEBRIATED MAN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 13: Panicked students of the government-run primary school at Bhaliadihi in Danardapur panchayat under Sadar block fled for their lives after an inebriated man attacked them with a billhook.

Three persons including a woman teacher and two students sustained injuries as the youth went on a rampage, terrorising all present on the school premises. On being informed police reached the school and detained the youth. The headmistress of the school lodged a complaint in this regard.

Eye-witnesses said that the incident occurred at around 12.45pm when the youth identified as Naran Karji of Bhaliadihi village entered the school wielding a billhook when classes were on. He started harassing Jhunu Behera who was teaching inside the classroom. Seeing the youth with the sharp-edged weapon, students started running in panic.



In the ensuing melee, Class-I student, Srimati Dehury tripped and fell and was attacked by Naran who hit her with a billhook leaving her profusely bleeding from the back. He also attacked and injured Behera and another student identified as Anil Naik of Class-III.

Lack of proper sleep can cause severe dementia

Researchers are of the opinion that sleep shortage and even use of medication can result in various brain disorders and hence should not be ignored

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 13: Use of sleep medication and inability to fall asleep quickly are associated with an increased risk of developing dementia over a 10-year period, according to a study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. Scientists have found a significant link between three measures of sleep disturbance and the risk of developing dementia, a neurodegenerative disease. Dementia can severely cause disorders in the brain that may lead to forgetfulness and also limit social skills. The researchers associate sleep-initiation insomnia (trouble falling asleep within 30 minutes) and sleep



medication use with higher risk for developing dementia. They also found that people who reported having sleep-maintenance insomnia (trouble falling back to sleep after waking) were less likely to develop dementia.

"We expected sleep-initiation insomnia and sleep medication usage to increase dementia risk, but we were surprised to find sleep-maintenance insomnia decreased dementia risk," explained lead investigator Roger Wong, an assis-

tant professor at 'SUNY Upstate Medical University' in the US.

The research is the first to examine how long-term sleep disturbance measures are associated with dementia risk using a nationally representative US older adult sample.

Previous research has associated rapid eye movement (REM) sleep behaviour - which is thought to play an important role in memory and learning - less than five hours of sleep, and the use of short-acting benzodiazepines with cognitive decline. The findings for sleep-maintenance insomnia support other recent studies using smaller, separate data samples.

This study used 10 annual waves (2011-2020) of prospective data from

the National Health and Ageing Trends Study (NHATS), a longitudinal panel study that surveys a nationally representative sample of Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 years and older within the US.

The study included only people who were dementia-free at baseline in 2011. There is no cure for dementia and recent pharmaceutical approaches to treat dementia have had limited success, pointing to the importance of preventive approaches to dementia.

"By focusing on the variations in sleep disturbances, our findings can help to inform lifestyle changes that can reduce dementia risk," study co-investigator Margaret Anne Lovier from 'SUNY Upstate Medical University' pointed out.

546 PRISONER DEATHS IN LAST 10 YEARS: BEHERA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: A total of 546 prisoners, including those facing trial have died in different jails of Odisha in the past 10 years, MoS for Home, Tusharkanti Behera informed the state Assembly Monday. Behera informed about the figures while giving a written reply to a question by BJD MLA Soumya Ranjan Patnaik. He said deaths of 200 prisoners and 346 undertrial prisoners have been reported in different jails of the state from 2013 to 2022. While the deaths of 11 prisoners and 35 undertrial prisoners were registered in 2013, the figures stood at 24 and 49 in 2022. As per the statement of the MoS, 43 prisoners including undertrials died in 2014, 46 in 2015, 48 in 2016, 47

in 2017, 51 in 2018, 53 in 2019, 78 in 2020 and 61 in 2021. Apart from the above-mentioned demises, 51 custodial deaths were also reported in Odisha during the last 10 years.

Notably, last month, the State Cabinet had decided to provide compensation to the next of kin of prisoners who die inside the jails in the state. The compensation was announced following recommendations of Orissa High Court and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

In another reply, Behera said 1,57,432 Bangladeshi refugees are residing in 11 districts of Odisha. The Minister said that Malkangiri district has the highest (1,04,233) Bangladeshi refugees, followed by 46,848 in Nabarangpur and 4,653 in Khurda. **Contd...P4**

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
The stars are sending out a warning today, and it will prevent you from getting cheated. Even though you manage to remain a step ahead of people, you are likely to make a few enemies along the way. Ganesh says today is not auspicious for buying a house or a vehicle.

TAURUS
Today, says Ganesh, you will be likely to encounter someone who is bent upon provoking and getting on your nerves. You are urged not to retaliate and do things unbecoming of your good nature. Keep calm and unruffled. Respond and behave in a manner befitting your better nature.

GEMINI
You will be in an extremely emotional and romantic mood today. You may be worried about your personal relations, health, diet, career etc. You need to guard against giving into excessive stress and worry and look after your health, says Ganesh.

CANCER
The day is very favourable, says Ganesh. You will feel a sense of joy and happiness with your valuable possessions. You may fall into love or have a strong romantic ties with someone. A great time for lovers. Ganesh foresees chance of having new contacts and ties.

LEO
You will be extremely serious about your work today and will work diligently to finish your tasks. You will be focussed and disciplined about your projects. You will feel the need to improve your style of functioning. Traders can expect good financial gains today, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Your ambitions and desire to undertake more work will be very prominent today. After working hard all day, try to get yourself some recreation and relaxation, perhaps at a private party, a social gathering or maybe even at a marriage reception, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
You will be drawn towards those of the opposite sex today says Ganesh. You will meet people who share the same wavelength that you do in the afternoon, and this will lead to a lot of interesting discussions. You will want to expand upon your knowledge of the world today and will be successful in your efforts.

SCORPIO
Expressing your feelings becomes important at some point of time. Today, you are in a mood to express emotions for your near and dear ones. And why not? After all, they need to be appreciated. Though your heart is full of emotions today, do not express in a way that you become vulnerable in eyes of general public.

SAGITTARIUS
You are like a new hope for your company and you are assigned with many challenging projects, today. And your hard work and efforts are appreciated when you handle the projects successfully. If you are fortunate enough, you may also gain incentives very soon, predicts Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You are armed with good communication skills, it helps you convince the most adamant of those around you. But, you'll need to hone this talent once again, says Ganesh. You'll look into heart of the matter and find the answers you have been searching for. As the day progresses, your creativity will come to the fore, impressing the people around.

AQUARIUS
Sometimes it feels like you are stuck in a quicksand, and there is none out there to pull you out. But, the independent Aquarius is capable of dealing with adversities alone. And, that tendency shall hold you in a good stead even today.

PISCES
The mundane routine of daily life will finally catch up with you, and you will feel the urge to take a break and travel somewhere. And a break is well deserved considering the number of hours you have slaved over your current projects.



CATE BLANCHETT OFTEN FORGETS SHE IS FAMOUS

This year's BAFTA winning actress Cate Blanchett says she is always surprised by her own fame. "I get a shock when fans walk up to me in the supermarket," shares the 53-year-old. Blanchett has been a staple in Hollywood for decades and was nominated for an Oscar for her role in *Tar*.

WHEN ANA DE ARMAS FELT MARILYN MONROE'S PRESENCE

Oscar-nominated actress Ana de Armas has revealed she felt Marilyn Monroe's 'presence' while filming her movie *Blonde*. The 34-year-old actress admitted everyone on the production couldn't help but be affected by the "spiritual energy" of the star.



7 statues for Everything Everywhere ...

EAAO'S WIN WAS A STUNNING ACHIEVEMENT AT A TIME WHEN THE MARKET FOR ART HOUSE MOVIES CONTINUES TO SHRINK



Los Angeles: *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (EAAO) was named best picture at the 95th Academy Awards, capping off an improbable awards season run by winning the movie business's highest honour.

Chinese-American laundromat owner grappling with an IRS audit and inter-dimensional attackers, earned seven statues, including original screenplay and directing honours for its creators Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert (collectively known as the Daniels),

OSCARS 2023

reports Variety. The studio also managed the rare feat of nabbing all four acting honours -- three of which were won by EAAO and one by *The Whale*.

Brendan Fraser took best actor honours for his performance as a morbidly obese man trying to reconnect with his estranged daughter in *The Whale*, while Michelle Yeoh of EAAO became only the second woman of colour to be recognized as best actress.

"Ladies, don't ever let anyone tell you that you are past your prime," Yeoh said in her reaction and added, "For all the little boys and girls who look like me watching tonight, this is a beacon of hope and possibility."

MAJOR WINNERS

- Best Picture** - *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (EAAO)
- Best Lead Actress** - Michelle Yeoh for EAAO
- Best Lead Actor** - Brendan Fraser for *The Whale*
- Best Director** - Daniel Kwan, Daniel Scheinert for EAAO
- Best Film Editing** - EAAO
- Best Original Song** - Naatu Naatu from RRR
- Best Sound** - *Top Gun: Maverick*
- Best Adapted Screenplay** - *Women Talking*
- Best Original Screenplay** - EAAO
- Best Visual Effects** - *Avatar: The Way of Water*
- Best Original Score** - *All Quiet on the Western Front*
- Best Production Design** - *All Quiet on the Western Front*
- Best Animated Short Film** - *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*
- Best Documentary Short Film** - *The Elephant Whisperers*
- Best International Feature Film** - *All Quiet on the Western Front*
- Best Costume Design** - *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*
- Best Makeup and Hairstyling** - *The Whale*
- Best Cinematography** - *All Quiet on the Western Front*
- Best Live Action Short** - *An Irish Goodbye*
- Best Documentary Feature Film** - *Navalny*
- Best Supporting Actress** - Jamie Lee Curtis for EAAO
- Best Supporting Actor** - Ke Huy Quan for EAAO
- Best Animated Feature Film** - *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*

Ileana D'Cruz talks about film trends

Mumbai: The silver screen heart-throb, Ileana D'Cruz, enjoyed watching some big-scale, spectacular movies of the recent past. However, the actress believes that the recent success of hardcore commercial movies in theatres and the adoration they have received from viewers are only a phase or trend that will soon pass.

Ileana told a news portal, "We have seen so many trends. There was this trend of women-centric films too." With South films doing great, when asked if she would like to go back to doing them, she replied, "South films are doing well. It is great, absolutely. I feel in a way that I am not someone who would just jump into a running train. If the project feels right and the character feels right, then maybe. It all comes straight down to gut feeling."

On the professional front, she will be next seen in *Tera Kya Hoga Lovely* alongside Randeep Hooda. She will also appear in a Vidya Balan and Pratik Gandhi film.



Twitteratis slam Jimmy for addressing RRR as a 'Bollywood' film

The 95th Academy Awards kicked off, and host Jimmy Kimmel, while introducing the film *RRR*, mistakenly referred to it as a 'Bollywood' film. It did not go down well with social media users. Many of them went online to talk about their disappointment and to slam Jimmy for his lack of research. One of the comments read, "Jimmy saying Bollywood just pissed me off." "It's not a Bollywood song, Jimmy. It's a Telugu song, and there is nothing called Bollywood; it's Hindi movies", added one more. The song 'Naatu Naatu' from *RRR*, a Telugu period drama, picturised on the leading men Ram Charan and Jr NTR and composed by MM Keeravani.

Deepika makes it to Int'l Best Dressed Lists

Deepika Padukone has been listed among Vanity Fair and Vogue's picks for best-dressed celebrities at the 95th Academy Awards, sending the internet into a complete meltdown. She picked a custom-made classic black Louis Vuitton ballgown in velvet, which came with an off-shoulder design and a mermaid silhouette. A Cartier necklace with a pear-shaped yellow diamond in the centre, matching diamond bracelet, and a ring over the black velvet gloves were her accessories.

PANCHAMVEDA'S 4-DAY THEATRE FEST BEGINS

Full Tension leaves viewers in splits

Bhubaneswar: Artistes of Panchamveda, one of the prominent theatre troupes of the City, presented Odia play *Full Tension* here at Rabindra Mandap on the occasion of troupe's 19th state level theatre festival, Monday.

Written by Anand Chandra Pahi and directed by Panchamveda's president Haren Sahoo, the humorous play highlighted how people invite unwanted troubles in life if they allow depression, high ambition and grief to govern their thoughts. Yet again, the pace and presentation of the play struck a chord with the viewers leaving them in splits. This was the 25th show of the play, said director Sahoo.

Actors who performed on stage included Mrutyunjay Panda,



Namita Bhattacharya, Jyoti Panda, Prakash Moharana, Pramod Dev and Surendra Nath Gauda. Among the dignitaries MLA Shashibhusan Behera and politician Abhimanyu Sethy were present on the occasion.

Bhubaneswar-based drama group Uttar Purush will present play *Shesha Adhyay* on the second evening of the festival, it was learnt.

'I cried when I was told my body was not sample-sized'

Los Angeles: The global star Priyanka Chopra recently revealed that she cried to her singer husband Nick Jonas and her team when she was body shamed for not being a 'size two'.

She said in a media portal, "Someone told me yesterday that I wasn't sample-sized. I was hurt, and I discussed it with my family. I cried to my husband and to my team. I felt really bad about the fact that I'm not sample size, and that's a problem, apparently. Most of us are not and sample size is size 2."

Priyanka, who had 13-month-old daughter Malti with Nick in January last

year via surrogacy, added she has taught herself to get support from people who want to 'see you smile'.

Sharing her coping mechanism, she said, "I think what you have to do is surround yourself with people who love you. People who want to see you smile and be enriched. It doesn't have to be a room full of people—I can count them on my hands."

The actress will be next seen in the spy-action thriller series *Citadel*.

PEANUTS



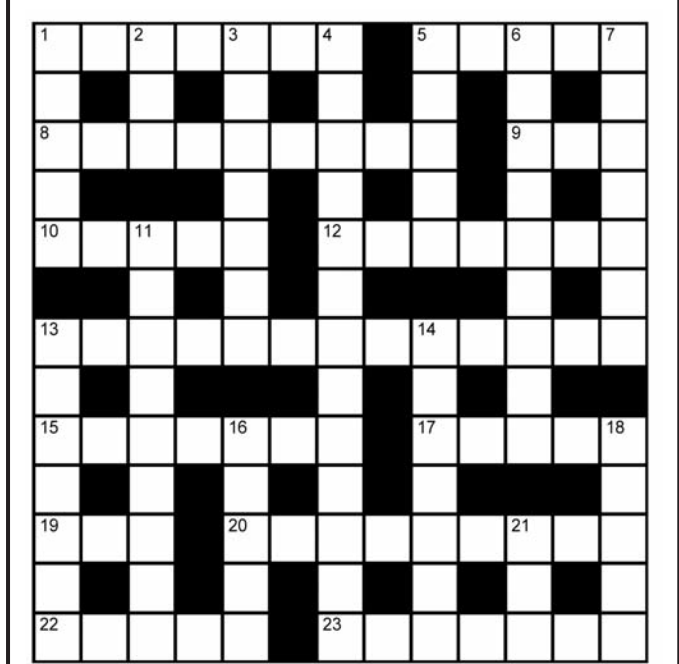
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



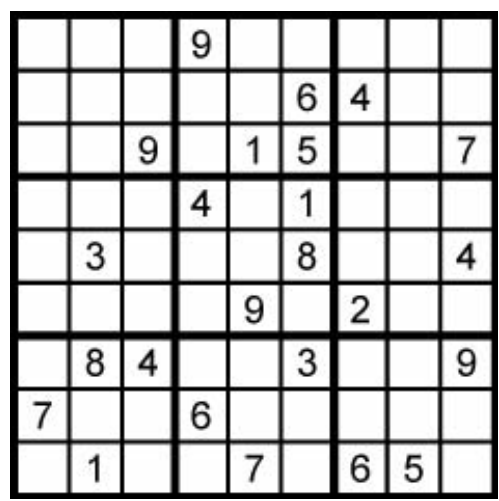
FUN post CROSSWORD



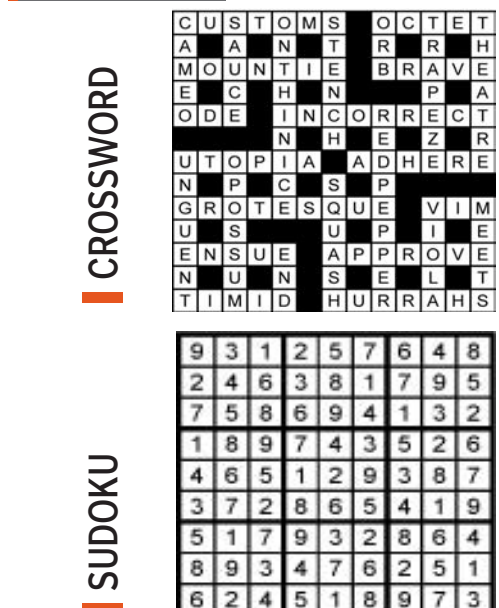
- Across**
- 1 Embroidery frame
 - 5 Ness and Achray are two
 - 8 Agent, for one
 - 9 Pastureland
 - 10 Cavalry sword
 - 12 Land characteristics
 - 13 Betrayer (6-7)
 - 15 Narrow waxing crescent in the sky (3,4)
 - 17 Pacific coast mountain range
 - 19 Historic period
 - 20 Mouth harp
 - 22 Soft leather
 - 23 Frog hangout (4,3)
 - 5 Cruise ship
 - 6 Caved in
 - 7 Office equipment
 - 11 Largest mammal ever known (4,5)
 - 13 Beasts of burden
 - 14 Having a streak of good luck (2,1,4)
 - 16 Orange yellow colour
 - 18 Group of trees
 - 21 Scallywag
- Down**
- 1 Domesticates
 - 2 Demented
 - 3 Money gusher (3,4)
 - 4 TV item (6,7)

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

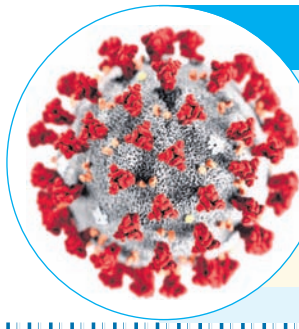


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



PREP FOR EXPO
Khadi and Village Industries Board chairperson Sangram Paikray, Monday, addresses the media on Khadi Mela to be held on the agency's office premises in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,15,91,554	65,45,50,333	68,12,126
India	4,46,90,936	4,41,56,345	5,30,782
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Not only marks, culture too is a crucial yardstick of edu: Mishra

A meritorious student, who devoted himself to social activities, imbibed the thought of how the future generation can reap the benefits of the efforts through ancient Gurukul system of education and finally started Times Scholars Gurukul (TSG) in 20th century. Chairman-cum-founder of the institution Sarada Prasad Mishra shares with **Orissa POST** his life's ups and downs as he succeeds in helping the institution reach the zenith of success...



- **How could the imagination of an educational institution take birth when you were engaged in social work?**
We were quite familiar with Bhubaneswar as it is my birthplace. I was very much involved in political and social activities along with my studies. Gradually, certain things like creating something new struck me which triggered the birth of a different kind of educational institution. The first-ever Gurukul-based educational institution started in the City at a time when the 20th century educational system was on the wane. The institution started after much deliberations, difficulties and hard work.
- **How useful is the present education system to the student community?**
The system of educating the children is heading in a different direction. Both parents and institutions are worried about good marks. They are never concerned about the fact that skill development is equally essential apart from sheer theoretical knowledge. Good career apart, parents/guardians want their children to be good human beings. Reform in education sector is very much essential failing which the future of the students, in race for good marks, may be pushed into uncertainty. We have to impart the kind of education which the child wants.
- **How do you see the National Education Policy (NEP) and what would be its impact on Odisha?**
The student reaches a cer-

tain destination after completing long years of education. But the NEP we are talking about is quite different. The new policy has the mechanism to adopt an education system that can help in development of every sector. As an educationist, I think it will be premature to discuss in details about the policy which is yet to be implemented.
- **How unique is TSG and why should a parent opt for it?**
All the educational institutions are equal, still there are some differences. But TSG is an institution that never compares itself with others. Other than academics and boarding or day boarding facilities, there is much more the Gurukul offers. Even the child can experience another home here. The institution provides all the facilities to improve the quality of the students which include culture, social etiquettes and various skill sets. Also, the students and the teachers work together towards getting better results in the examinations, which is lacking in other institutions. TSG students seem quite cultured even after having higher degrees. There are several examples of such students, for which many parents are interested to send their children to our institution without any hesitation.
- **How do you manage such an institution of a difference in the competitive market?**
Nowadays, competition is seen in every sector. Although it is difficult to

manage the institution in such an environment, the institution is marching ahead because of its unique environment and its interest in education.

- **Brief us about your future plans.**
Human mind always wavers. Many of the wishes remain unfulfilled but desires never settle down. Now, under the Times group, there is TSG, Sai Saburi Nursing & Health Science College and a medium-scale Sai Saburi Hospital. Infrastructure development at these facilities is on war footing to develop them. Also, we are planning to develop a 'Shantiniketan' or a pleasant home for elderly people of every class.



MLAs receive threats for raising Naba murder: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Seeking protection from Speaker BK Arukha, Congress legislative party leader Narasingha Mishra Monday alleged that Odisha MLAs are being threatened for speaking up on minister Naba Kishore Das's murder.
Raising the issue in the Assembly during Zero Hour, Mishra claimed the privilege of members was being breached as they were subjected to "threats" for taking up the minister's murder. "We are under pressure, receiving direct and indirect threats for talking on the ex-minister's assassination both inside and outside the House. This is a clear case of breach of privilege of members. The MLAs have the right to know the developments in the investigation being carried out by the Crime Branch (CB) of the Odisha Police," he said, without specifying the details of the "threats".
Mishra also urged the Speaker to act over his privilege notice against Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and MoS for Home TK Behera for allegedly "mis-



IN THE HOUSE

Jayanarayan for more clarity on 5T

Bhubaneswar: Senior BJP leader Jayanarayan Mishra Monday raised questions over the state government's flagship 5T initiative, claiming that not much has been revealed so far about its implementation and accomplishments. During the Zero Hour in the Assembly, the leader of opposition also wondered if the initiative, headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's private secretary VK Pandian, has been floated to undermine the authority of other departments in the state. 5T is a governance model in Odisha, based on teamwork, transparency, technology and time leading to transformation. Most of the departments are now covered under the initiative. "What is 5T? Is it a department? If so, where is its office, at Rajiv Bhavan, Lok Seva Bhavan or Kharavela Bhavan? Was it launched to diminish the authority of other departments? The Odisha government should clarify it," the BJP leader stated. Replying to Mishra's question, government chief whip Prasant Muduli said 5T is not a department, but Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's vision.

leading the House' on the murder case. "I have served the notice and it is under consideration of the speaker. I urge the chair to send the notice to the Privilege Committee," Mishra said. "The government has treated the Uttar Pradesh's Kheri incident as a precedent. The Supreme Court had appointed a former judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to investigate the Kheri incident," Mishra said, adding that the Orissa High Court has not issued judicial order for the appointment of a re-

tired judge to monitor the investigation into the minister's murder case. It was an administrative order but Behera gave an impression to the House that the appointment of the retired judge was a judicial step, he alleged. "This is an attempt to mislead the House," he claimed. He also targeted the police for not meeting the press or informing the people on the progress of the investigation. There is an effort to prove the prime accused Gopal Das, a policeperson, is mentally ill, he alleged.

BJP MLA Mukesh Mahaling said there was a need for a CBI probe into the case. "While the CB was entrusted with 180 cases in the last nine years, it has filed charge sheet in only 62 cases. This indicates CB's efficiency," he said. BJD MLA Amar Satpathy said the murder case has been discussed in the House several times, and the CM has also given a statement on it. "Therefore, there should be no more debate after the CM's statement as per the Rules of Business of the Assembly," he said.

Income Tax Department
Central Board of Direct Taxes

Attention Taxpayers

e-Verification Scheme, 2021

Any objection to the displayed financial transaction in AIS? We will verify from the source

DISAGREE

AGREE

- Check financial transactions available in AIS tab of your income tax account at www.incometax.gov.in
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- In such cases, return of income can be updated u/s 139(8A) of the IT Act, 1961, subject to eligibility.

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- Promote Voluntary Tax Compliance.

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STA latches on to 'Naatu Naatu' for road safety



Odia movie 'Daman' for spreading road safety awareness.
'Naatu Naatu', the fun number from 'RRR', and documentary short film 'The Elephant Whisperers' made Oscar history for India Monday with one Academy Award each. **Naveen congratulates Oscar winners**
Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday congratulated composer, lyricist, music director and entire team of RRR movie for winning Oscar for Best Original Song. In his Twitter account, he said, "Congratulate the composer, lyricist, music director & entire team of RRR Movie on being awarded Best Original Song for NaatuNaatu at #OSCAR first song from an Indian film to win #AcademyAwards. Indeed a proud moment and it will inspire generations of Indian film makers." He also congratulated the crew members of The Elephant Whisperers on winning the prestigious Academy Award in the Best Documentary Short Subject category at the 95th Academy Awards-the first Indian film to win an Oscar in this category.

Bhubaneswar, March 13: On the day when "Naatu Naatu", the fun number from Telugu movie 'RRR', brought Oscar glory for India with an Academy Award, the State Transport Authority (STA) Monday drew inspiration from the song to create awareness about drunk driving, using phone while driving and over-speeding.
In its social media account, the STA shared the 'Naatu Naatu' song's hook step and title line by twisting it to "Say NoTo NoTo NoTo Drunk Driving, Say NoTo NoTo NoTo Mobile while Driving, Say NoTo NoTo NoTo Over-speeding". Responsible Road Rides (RRRs) can take you to your destination safely, it said in the awareness message.



The transport authority also had earlier shared the popular movie scenes and dialogues to spread message of several traffic rules. They had used posters and dialogues of movies such as 'Pushpa' and

₹22,527.80 crore for school devt

Ex-vet officer gets 4-yr RI for graft

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The state government has allocated ₹22,527.80 crore for development of educational institutions in the 2023-24 Budget, said School and Mass Education (S&ME) Minister Samir Ranjan Dash Monday.

Addressing the media here on the allocation to S&ME department in the State Budget 2023-24, Dash said ₹22,527.80 crore has been allocated for the overall development of educational institutions. While ₹12,862.84 crore has been allocated for administrative expenditure, ₹9,664.96 crore will be spent towards programme expenditure, he said.

While ₹8,05.14 crore has been allocated to Mo School Abhiyan, ₹138.97 crore will be spent on the recently announced 'Mukhya Mantri Shiksha Puraskar'. "Rs 3,411 crore has already been allo-



ated for the first, second and third phase of High School Transformation (HST) Programme," Dash told the media. Under the 'Gangadhar Meher Shiksha Manakbrudhi Yojana', ₹155 crore has been allotted to provide bicycles to Class IX students of government schools, government fully aided schools, Sanskrit Tol and Madrasas.

A budgetary allocation of ₹1,918 crore has been made under 'Mukhya Mantri Medhabi Chatra

Protsahana Yojana'. For robust infrastructure development and ensuring holistic educational environment, a budgetary allocation of ₹1,000.14 crore will be made for construction of 237 new boys' hostels.

In a bid to maintaining the high-quality assets generated under the HST initiative, ₹130 crore has been allocated towards the provision of engaging services of Women Self-Help Groups (WSHG) for watch and ward and housekeeping.

₹1,045.00 crore has been allocated for the posting of 51,535 teachers under the S&ME department and 1,070 teachers for OAVs in 2023-24.

The state government has allocated ₹10 crore for 'Paradarshi Portal' that would facilitate the admission of financially disadvantaged students to private educational institutions. ₹254.27 lakh will be spent on Odia students reading in adjoining states.

S&ME commissioner-cum-secretary Aswathy S presented briefs of the budget while enunciating the course of the ongoing initiatives.

"We are also initiating counselling sessions for out of school children over the age of 17 with the support of Skill Development and Technical Education department. The government is prioritising to fill up vacancies through recruitment of over 50,000 teachers in high schools and higher secondary schools," she said.

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The Special Vigilance court here Monday sentenced a former block veterinary officer to undergo rigorous imprisonment of four years after pronouncing him guilty of receiving bribe from a farmer on the pretext of supplying necessary documents for availing livestock insurance in 2014.

The convict was identified as Pratap Ranjan Srichandan, retired block veterinary officer of Kakatpur in Puri district.

Srichandan has also been asked to deposit ₹10,000 as fine amount. In case, the convict has to serve two months' additional RI if he fails to pay the penalty within the stipulated time. The court pronounced the order while hearing a Vigilance case (46/14) registered on the basis of a complaint lodged by Bijay Kandi November 22, 2014.

Kandi accused Srichandan of demanding ₹2,000 to provide the

The convict was identified as Pratap Ranjan Srichandan of Kakatpur in Puri district



verification report and autopsy report of his dead cow. Kandi's cow died due to some unknown reasons November 14, 2014 and post-mortem was conducted by Srichandan.

"The informant (Kandi) submitted an application before the accused to get the insurance money of his cow. The accused demanded bribe of ₹2,000 from the informant for sending the verification and autopsy report to CDVO, Puri," said Himanshu Kumar Swain, special Public Prosecutor conducting the trial. Later, Kandi approached the

Vigilance officials who laid a trap and caught the convict red-handed while accepting the bribe amount at his official residence in Kakatpur November 22, 2014.

During trial, the court examined statements of eight eyewitnesses and several documentary evidence and held Srichandan guilty. "Today, the convict Pratap Ranjan Srichandan, ex-block veterinary officer has been forwarded to jail custody. Odisha Vigilance will now move the competent authority for stoppage of pension of Srichandan following his conviction," said the Vigilance sources.

SC adjourns chit-fund hearing to March 17

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 13: The Supreme Court Monday adjourned hearing on a petition seeking independent probe in the multi-crore chit-fund scam and return of money to thousands of investors duped by the chit-fund companies in Odisha.



Chit Fund

A two-judge bench comprising Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar adjourned the matter to March 17.

Earlier January 16, the Supreme Court had sought suggestions from the Union government, the state gov-

ernment and other parties in the case on the issue of payment of money to the duped investors.

The bench had observed that common people are the ultimate sufferers in case of delay in investigation. It had also asked solicitor general Tushar Mehta to present information on how many investors have been repaid their money.

"Everything sounds flowery. Common man is only interested in his money. These are your policies. You please work on your own policies," the bench had observed.

The Union Ministry of Cooperation had also filed an impleadment application in the apex court to become a party in the case. The counsel appearing for the ministry had submitted that the ministry wants to make certain suggestions based on the status report filed by it in the apex court on the issue.



BASIC RIGHTS: Members of Basti Basinda Ekta Manch, Cuttack staged a demonstration at PMG in Bhubaneswar, Monday, demanding lease for land under Jaga Mission

NREGA workers seek job guarantee, social security

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Nikhila Odisha NREGA Shramika Sangha, a part of the All India Trade Union Congress, Monday sent a memorandum to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of India Droupadi Murmu demanding job guarantee & social security to the NREGA workers.

President of the union Jayanta Das said, "The memorandum has been drafted to draw the attention of the state government to the plight of unemployed citizens in the countryside. Over 30 lakh rural labourers have migrated from Odisha to other states in the recent past in search of employment opportunities." He said that such a high number of rural labourers are migrating because MNREGA wages are confined to ₹222 per day and minimum wages for unskilled labourers in Scheduled Employment is ₹337/- per day only in Odisha.

CONTINUED FROM P1 546 prisoners...

Similarly, 15 Bangladeshi refugees are staying in Angul, 75 in Balasore, 200 in Bhadrak, 379 in Jajpur, 90 in Kalahandi, 441 in Kendrapara, 304 in Rayagada and 194 in Koraput.

Behera further informed that 3,740 Bangladeshi infiltrators are living in seven districts. The districts in which illegal Bangladeshi migrants are staying include Kendrapara (1649), Jagatsinghpur (1112), Malkangiri (655), Bhadrak (199), Nabarangpur (106), Khurda (17) and Bargarh (2).

BJD to pitch for passage of Women's Reservation Bill

THE BJP AND CONGRESS WILL RAISE THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE OF THE STATE DURING THE BUDGET SESSION

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 13: The second phase of the Budget session commenced Monday amidst uproar in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha over Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's statements in London.

In the second phase, which is likely to continue till April 6, Odisha MPs are gearing up to highlight several state specific issues in both the houses. The Biju Janata Dal MPs will reiterate the party's long-standing demand for passing of Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to grant one-



ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. The party MPs would also likely raise the issue of inclusion of tribal communities in the state's ST list and highlight the alleged negligence of the Union government towards the Railway sector of the state.

On the other hand, the Congress and the BJP are set to raise the state's law and order issue. Unhappy with the progress made

by the SIT in the Naba Das case, Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka said he will demand a CBI probe or Supreme Court judge monitored probe in the case while also raising the law and order situation of state in the Parliament. The Congress MP alleged that three bauxite blocks namely Ballada, Sijimali and Kutrumali in Koraput, Rayagada and Kalahandi districts were auctioned without consultation with local communities to Adani group and Vedanta group. The Koraput MP said that he will protest this in the Parliament and will oppose the alleged privatisation of Nalco.

Meanwhile, BJP MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi accused the state government of politicising the work of administration saying he will raise the issue in the house. The BJP will also raise the Naba Das case and the law and order issue of the state during the session.

CP busts highway robbers' gang

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: The Commissionerate Police Sunday foiled a robbery bid arresting five members of a highway looters gang. The accused persons were identified as Bishnu Prasad Swain, 31, Ghanashyam Swain, 36, of Janla and Papi Swain alias Ashok Kumar Das, 24, of Gangapada under Info Valley police limits, Prakash Dehury, 24, and Mohan Majhi, 23, of Chachera Sahi in Khurda.

Sources claimed that patrolling team of Info Valley police station received vital inputs regarding the gathering of various anti-social elements near Badapokhari pond in Gohira Chowk area late Sunday night. The patrolling team immediately rushed to the spot and arrested the accused while trying to escape.

The cops seized motorcycles including one Apache (OD-02-AH-5456), one Hero Passion (OR-02-AW-3692), and weapons like a sword, one billhook, a steel pipe, iron rod, along with liquor bottle and chili powder from the spot during raid.

Pradhan for action plan to prevent forest fire



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Expressing concern over the sudden jump in incidents of forest fires in Odisha, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Monday urged Union Forest Minister Bhupender Yadav to prepare a long-term action plan for preventing and mitigating such fires in future.

Pradhan met his cabinet colleague in New Delhi Monday and submitted a letter in this regard. He urged Yadav to set up an empowered committee with representatives from the central and state forest department officials, environmentalists, and forest conservationists to come up with a detailed long-term action plan for preventing and mitigating future forest fires in the state.

In his letter, Pradhan said Odisha has recorded 871 large forest fires since November 1, 2022, the beginning of the fire seasons. It is followed by Andhra Pradesh (754), Karnataka (642), Telangana (447) and Madhya Pradesh (316).

As on today, there are 1,840 cases of forest fires in the state, out of which 153 have been large scale fires. Further, in the last 24 hours, a massive 1,625 incidents of forest fires have been reported in the state, he pointed out.

Stating about 35 percent of all forest fires in the country are being reported from Odisha, Pradhan said Odisha has reportedly lost 4,000 hectares of forest area due to forest fire in the last four months.

Such forest fires not only cause irreparable damage to the land's flora and fauna but also pose a threat to tribal and farming communities living on the periphery of forests. It destroys their livelihoods earned from MFPs such as timber, mahua flowers, kendu leaves, and medicinal plants, he said. Furthermore, it contributes to severe air pollution over urban dwellings and rising temperatures in the state.

"It is imperative to address these ongoing forest fires immediately with swift and coordinated action between the central and state forest departments while coming up with a long-term plan for prevention and mitigation of further forest fires in Odisha," read the letter. He suggested Yadav to involve the local community and rejuvenate the existing water bodies inside the forests to control the fires.

Though the forest and fire department have been provided with equipment to deal with forest fires, its reported that most men have not received training on their usage, he alleged. Pradhan further said that helicopters and airborne methods needed to be adopted for dousing the forest fires in some parts as most of these forest areas are still inaccessible to fire vans on ground.

Moreover, the Education minister urged Yadav to convene a meeting with officials of Forest Ministry and the Odisha government for launching urgent measures to contain and subdue the forest fires in the state.

Potable water dream for 50.55% households: Study

NEARLY 6,675 (56.12%) VILLAGERS USE CONTAMINATED WATER FOR CONSUMPTION

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 13: Over 40 per cent households in 15 districts of the state lack access to safe drinking water, according to a study, whose findings were revealed Monday.

Undertaken by Atmashakti Trust, Odisha Shramajeebe Mancha and Mahila Shramajeebe Mancha between January and mid-February this year, the study reveals that out of 9,37,152 households in 9,856 villages under 866 gram panchayats of 89 blocks in 15 districts, 3,68,694 (40.55 per cent) lack access to safe drinking water.



As per the survey, conducted in Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Gajapati, Boudh, Nabarangpur and Deogarh, out of 32,960 tubewells/hand pumps surveyed, 12,481 (40.93 per cent) were defunct. Also, of 12,478 stand posts, 6,066 (48.6 per cent) have gone kaput. Nearly 6,675 (56.12 per cent) villagers use contaminated water for consumption. While 28.51 per cent

villagers use muddy water; 29.55 per cent have iron in their drinking water. Out of 9,37,152 households, over 15,000 are deprived of regular drinking water sources and are fully dependent on streams, ponds, and chuans (excavated subterranean water).

"Despite implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission and Basudha schemes, safe drinking water continues to elude many rural areas of Odisha. The state government should expedite the implementation of its schemes to address water issues faced by the people," said Ruchi Kashyap, Executive Trustee of Atmashakti Trust.

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From teacher to edupreneur

A bright student, he had lost his parents quite early in childhood. Braving all odds, he had secured the third position with first class in Physics from Sambalpur University. After post graduation, he garnered success with his research on nuclear physics with BARC. To do something for the society and to give poor students access to quality Science education, he founded a unique private residential institute - Newton College of +2 Science in Sambalpur. A renowned educationist and a true edupreneur, Dr Tejaraj Patra in his conversation with Orissa POST says it is still not easy for him to grasp the fact that the same student is now taking the responsibility of hundreds of students, not only as a teacher, but also as their guardian. Excerpts:



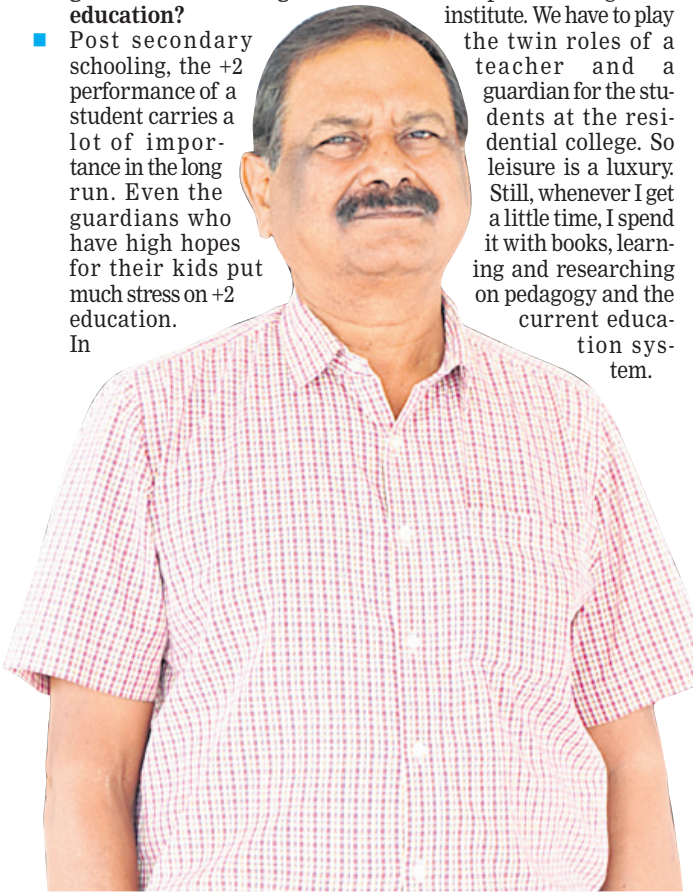
- **How has been the journey of Newton College of +2 Science so far?**
- During my ISC/ (intermediate), I used to spend my time giving private tuitions along with studies. I developed a knack for teaching while passing class after class. After long 30 years of teaching experience and fuelled by the drive to teach, then came the inception of a different kind of institution. Since the establishment of Newton College in 2007, the institute has nurtured a number of meritorious and bright students. As the founder of the college I take pride in the role it has played in moulding those minds.
- **What is your take on the National Education Policy (NEP)?**
- The NEP has touched upon all aspects of education. We hope that it will bring about a shift in tomorrow's education sector making it qualitatively superior. We expect that the policy's implementation will be a welcome step across levels. As an educationist, I welcome the NEP and take its new ways of imparting education as a challenge.
- **How do you see your opponents in this competitive field?**
- Competition and competitors are omnipresent. But it is the institute's responsibility to face the competitors. We never count anybody as opponents. Rather, it has been our policy to do things differently, and work hard to bring laurels to the institute keeping faith in God and our efforts.
- **What contrast do you see**

between the online and offline modes of education?

- The medium doesn't matter as long as the quality of education is optimum. But, the increased distance between the teacher and students does have its cons. Although, the same topics are taught in both mediums, physical presence in classroom is more effective as it comes with the educator's direct supervision. It also makes the student disciplined, which doesn't happen online.
- **What do you think is the reason behind the growing interest of students and guardians in +2 college education?**
- Post secondary schooling, the +2 performance of a student carries a lot of importance in the long run. Even the guardians who have high hopes for their kids put much stress on +2 education. In

contrast with government colleges, private colleges put double the time and effort for students, all in a specific area. Similarly, our teachers stay in constant touch with students for 18-20 hours a day doing extra classes. This definitely helps improve the performances to a great extent bringing name and fame to the institute and the guardians.

- **What do you do in your leisure?**
- We carry with us the great responsibility of the students' future and the hopes and expectation of the parents. So, its normal that most of my time is spent teaching in the institute. We have to play the twin roles of a teacher and a guardian for the students at the residential college. So leisure is a luxury. Still, whenever I get a little time, I spend it with books, learning and researching on pedagogy and the current education system.



Over 50 students, teacher injured in honeybee attack

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, March 13: Over 50 students and teachers sustained injuries after they were suddenly attacked by honeybees at the HSC examination centre in Harichandanpur Girls' High School in this district, Monday.

Two of them - a teacher Kishore Chandra Mohanty and student Biswanath Juanga - sustained critical injuries in the bee attack and were admitted to the hospital for treatment. The rest of the students appeared for the examination after primary treatment.

The incident occurred when the students reached the school at 7am to appear for their English language paper at the examination centre when they were suddenly attacked by a swarm of honeybees inside the school premises.

The headmaster has been asked to submit a report in this regard, the district education officer Purnachandra Sethy said.

GMDC bags 2 coal blocks in Odisha



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Mining PSU Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) Monday said it has emerged as the highest bidder for two coal blocks in Odisha in the recently concluded commercial mine auction.

The PSU won the bids for Burapahar block having a geological reserve of 548 million tonnes (MT) and the Baitarani (West) block having geological reserve of 1,152 MT.

With this development, GMDC's additional 21 million tonne per annum (MTPA) will fuel the country's demand for energy, the PSU said in a statement.

"We are committed to utilising our resources and expertise to develop these blocks to their fullest potential while ensuring the highest standards of safety and environmental sustainability," GMDC Managing Director Roopwant Singh said in a statement.

This expansion will help the PSU go beyond the geographical boundaries of Gujarat, GMDC said.

The state-owned company has five operational lignite mines located in Kutch, South Gujarat, and the Bhavnagar region. GMDC is leading merchant seller of lignite in the country.

Shares of GMDC closed down by 1.68 per cent at ₹140.05 on BSE.

Dip in groundwater level sparks alarm in Paradip

VILLAGERS BUY PACKAGED DRINKING WATER TO MEET THEIR NEEDS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paradip, March 13: Rapid industrialisation and modern lifestyle have led to an acute water crisis in this port town due to a sharp decline in groundwater level, a report said Monday.

The water crisis is not limited to Paradip only but its impact is also being felt in Nuagad and Paradipgaj panchayats adjoining the port town. The seriousness of the water crisis can be gauged from the fact that over 90 per cent of the families in these areas are purchasing packaged drinking water (40 litre jars) to meet their water needs as the tube wells have stopped pouring out water.

The sharp decline in groundwater level has sparked alarm among the residents and the authorities. However, the authorities are yet to take up any concrete step to alleviate the suffering of the people.

Some of the functioning tube wells give out water that is unfit for consumption as it is saline and rich in iron content. A villager Pramod Jena of Nuagad village alleged that the water is not only unfit for consumption but leaves stain on clothes and other materials. Clothes of the villagers turn red and black when they try to wash them under the tube well.

According to Jena, Nuagad village comprises 475 families where almost every family is purchasing packaged drinking water for consumption. A woman shopkeeper Soudamini Pradhan said that she sells a van load of water bottles daily in the village.



There used to be as many as 10 rivers and creeks in the area that have been buried after rapid industrialisation took place. Sharp decline in groundwater level is attributed to rampant use of groundwater by large industrial plants in the port town.

Another villager Dillip Swain said he had a 1,000 feet deep tube well in his house which his family members were using since a long time. However, water of the tube well has become unfit for consumption since last year as it gives off a pungent smell, a strong metallic and salty taste. The situation is almost same in Paradipgaj market area where one can get fresh water only after digging 1,400 feet down.

In past, there were as many as 10 rivers and creeks in between these two panchayats. However, these water bodies have been buried after rapid industrialisation took place in the area. Small creeks like Haldipani, Nayanjori and Samukatimunda have vanished

from the area. The only manmade water body Taladanda canal is present which is supplying water to the industrial plants.

The sharp decline in groundwater level is attributed to rampant use of groundwater by large industrial plants in the port town. A junior engineer Manas Murtu of public health engineering organisation (PHEO) confirmed the development. He said that water level is going down day by day since last three years and regretted that they can do nothing in this regard.

Senior engineer Gangadhar Sethy of Paradip Port pinned the blame on modern lifestyle. He said that before 2000 most people were attending to their daily chores in rivers and other water bodies in the area. A person then was using only five litre of water on a daily basis while now a person uses 220 litre of water to meet his daily needs. He said that people only are responsible for this development while warning that the situation might get worse in future.

Woman assaulted for questioning quality of food at Aahaar centre



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, March 13: In a shocking incident, a woman was allegedly assaulted for complaining about supply of sub-standard food at the Aahaar centre in this town, a report said.

The victim was identified as Sushree Sangita Moharana in the town. She was shooting a video the alleged distribution of sub-standard food to people on her mobile phone when the employees of the Aahaar centre beat her up. They also snatched away her

mobile phone. The matter came to the fore after Moharana lodged a complaint in the Town police station here. Similar allegations have also come from people visiting the centre for subsidised food. Chatters were abuzz after the incident as locals demanded a thorough probe into the charges and suitable action against the culprits.

Reports said that Moharana had gone to the Aahaar centre to have a meal, Saturday. There, she found out that the employees were hesitating to distribute food to the people and misbehaving if they complain about the poor quality of food.

Subsequently, she complained about the poor quality of food being served and shot a video on her mobile phone. However, the women

members of the SHG who were in charge beat her up and snatched away her mobile phone. Meanwhile, police have started an investigation.

Birthday Greeting

PRANEEL DASH
Mississauga, Canada

We wish you a happy birthday. On this auspicious day we pray before Mahaprabhu Jagannath to bless you with good health and bright future.

Well wishers: Japa, Jema, Aai, Bapa, Mama, Bhaina Pranshu, friends and relatives.

Jail inmates qualify for final round of online dance contest



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, March 13: A group of inmates of Berhampur Circle Jail in Ganjam district have qualified for the final round of a national online dance competition, an official said here Monday. These inmates in prison for different crimes, all of a sudden have become internet sensation and are winning hearts online for their performances at a national-level dance competition. They are now hoping that they will win the competition, the official informed.

These 13 prisoners aspired to show their talent in dance by participating in a competition. When the Kalantar Art Trust in Uttar Pradesh announced the online competition under the supervision of the state government, the inmates started working for it.

"We received intimation from the Prisons department of Odisha, that Noida-based Kalantar Art trust is organising a dance and art competition," said Dhirendranath Barik, superintendent of Berhampur Circle Jail.

"After receiving the letter, we had only four days in hand to

respond to the invitation. While organising functions inside the jail, we were aware, there are lots of hidden talents in the inmates, so we started practising with those inmates for four to five days and uploaded the video to the Kalantar art and dance site," Barik added. The Kalantar jury selected the prison team March 9 and uploaded the video to their youtube channel.

"Their perfect balance of rhythmic movements, choreography and timing is outstanding. It is a great achievement as this success could bring in great changes in the future of these inmates," Barik pointed out.

The dance was choreographed and performed by the inmates themselves. Dressed in white shirts and red neckties, they danced to the tune of the famous Hindi song 'Kashmir Mei Tu Kanyakumari' from the blockbuster movie 'Chennai Express' starring Shah Rukh Khan.

They have been practising since last one year and there is no doubt they are super talented and hard-working, said Satyanarayan Das, Jailor of Berhampur Circle jail.

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There is no greater courage than that of recognising one's own mistakes.

THE MOTHER



Trump Vs Pence

Selective leaks of classified documents to a chosen media outlet to whitewash ugly truths has, by now, become a well known tactic of powers that be. Misinformation campaigns are launched in order to enhance the image of political leaders in the saddle or ones trying to make a bid to capture power. It is normally left to the people to sift facts from fiction and come to their own conclusions. But, rarely has a key political leader taken upon himself the task of challenging the doctored narrative dished out in this manner as has been done by former US Vice President Mike Pence who tore into his former boss, Donald Trump, 11 March.

Pence chose a well known platform – the Gridiron Club's annual dinner – to launch by far the most scathing attack against Trump for his exhortation to rioters to vandalise Capitol Hill 6 January, 2021 to overturn the verdict of the people in favour of the Presidential candidate Joe Biden. The dinner is a Washington tradition. The Gridiron Club, founded in 1885, just after the election of Grover Cleveland, hosted dinner for every President since then at least once a year. Fifteen journalists formed the club and instituted the formal dinner where top political leaders are expected to deliver speeches laced with humour and wit, cracking jokes at the expense of their rivals and co-travellers. Pence did stick to the format, but cleverly used the platform to strike a sombre note taking on Trump.

This immediately triggered speculation about his motive. Questions are being asked whether he wants to run for Presidency next year as a Republican candidate replacing Trump or is he challenging the narrative being given by pro-Trump Fox News to exonerate the mob that ran amok at Capitol Hill at the behest of Trump.

If Pence's intention is to call a spade a spade, he timed it well since he not only spoke before journalists, but also sought to expose the disinformation campaign by the pro-Trump media organisation. A well known anchor of a show hosted by the media outlet had recently got permission from the House Speaker Kevin McCarthy to use 40 hours of footage on the violence at Capitol. The permission itself is controversial since McCarthy turned down the same request made at the same time by several other media outlets. The Fox News host used the footage selectively to project the perpetrators of the crime as a peaceful mob enjoying a "tour" of the Capitol. With the doctored evidence he has called into question the narrative of reckless violence presented by the Democrats.

On that fateful day, it was Pence's duty to certify the election results in favour of Biden. Trump was instigating him not to do so. But, Pence went ahead with his task and the rioters were baying for his blood. He had to be whisked away to safety by the security. Referring to that incident, Pence told journalists at Gridiron Club that he had not been "afraid", but "angry". "President Trump was wrong. I had no right to overturn the election and his reckless words endangered my family and everyone at the Capitol that day. And I know that history will hold Donald Trump accountable," he declared.

Nor did Pence leave any one in doubt about his rejoinder to the Fox News host's attempt to rewrite the incident. He said, "It was not as some would have us believe a matter of tourists peacefully entering the building. Tourists do not injure 140 police officers, tourists do not break down doors to get to the Speaker of the House or threaten public officials."

These are strong words and solid evidence, indeed, as the death of one police officer and serious head and other injuries of scores of security personnel trying to protect the Capitol are incontrovertible facts that undermine the pro-Trump narrative.

Now, the question is whether Pence's diatribe against Trump after maintaining silence for a considerable period of time is prompted by his desire to run for Presidency. He did give broad hints at the dinner speech that he is willing to do so. He seems to project himself as a sober, balanced Republican who will not be partisan like Trump. He said so in so many words.

It looks like Pence is testing waters and scouting for the support of fellow Republicans after the sentence given by the court recently to the main culprit of the violence proved Trump's exhortation of the rioters is indefensible in the court of law. If he finally takes the plunge, the coming Presidential election will get a new twist.

WISDOM CORNER

- Nothing is permanent in this wicked world - not even our troubles. CHARLIE CHAPLIN
- If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way. NAPOLEON HILL
- You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great. ZIG ZIGLAR

WORDSWORTH

Gobbledygook

This is a truly maverick word, not only because it is surprisingly modern and also one whose genesis we can pin down to the day, but also because a maverick coined it – Maury Maverick, a Texas lawyer who was at various times a Democratic Congressman and mayor of San Antonio. He used the word in the New York Times Magazine on 21 May 1944, while he was chairman of the US Smaller War Plants Committee in Congress, as part of a complaint against the obscure language used by his colleagues. His inspiration, he said, was the turkey, "always gobbledygobbling and strutting with ludicrous pomposity". It met a clear need for a word with which to castigate unintelligible language, especially jargon or bureaucratise, and quickly became part of the language. It is sometimes abbreviated slightly to gobbledygoo. Word coining runs in the Maverick family, since Maury Maverick's grandfather, Samuel Maverick, a Texas rancher, was the inspiration for maverick, originally an animal not branded to identify its owner (because Sam Maverick didn't brand his own herds), later an unconventional person, and later still a politician who stands aside from the herd, refusing to conform to the party line.

Gobemouche

English borrowed this potentially useful word from French about two centuries ago, though it has long since abandoned it again. A search of newspaper archives suggests that it's used nowadays merely as a rare word with which to stump contestants in US spelling bees. The French continue to use it, hyphenated, for the bird that we call a flycatcher, appropriately so since it is made up of gober, to swallow, and mouche, a fly. In French it also means a credulous person who accepts everything said to him as the plain truth. Only the latter sense came over into English: These people are great gobemouches; they always report the most incredible things (Travels in the Great Desert of Sahara, in the Years of 1845 and 1846, by James Richardson, 1848). The inescapable image is of a naive individual thunderstruck by the world around him, perpetually open-mouthed in astonishment and ready to swallow whatever came his way, whether files or tall tales. This sense of the word is said to have been popularised in French through a play of 1759 by Charles Favart, La Soirée des Boulevards, which featured a character named Gobemouche. It's tempting to see a connection between gobemouche and gob, that infelicitous monosyllable which has been a British dialect and slang term for the mouth since the sixteenth century. The latter is most likely from the Gaelic and Irish word for a beak or mouth; if so, then there's indeed a link, as the French gober originated in the related pre-Roman Celtic tongue called Gaulish.

SHIELD AGAINST RUINOUS COSTS

FOCUS HEALTH INSURANCE



The current insurance plans cover many conditions but since they have been allocated very small amounts, they cover only 30% to 40% of the population

It was not like there was no cure. It was not like nothing could be done. It was just a matter of money, and there wasn't enough of it to save Palak (name changed), age 8. Palak was that child who beamed her big smile whenever she saw you. She loved to sing nursery rhymes and play clapping games. And then, she was diagnosed with blood cancer.

It would cost Rs 15 lakh for a cord blood transplant that would ensure that her bone marrow started to make healthy cells instead of cancerous ones. Medicine can now effectively cure not just blood cancers but many serious conditions. The costs of these treatments can be high, however. In many areas of Mumbai, Rs 15 lakh won't even buy a small room. But for more than 95% of Indians, not just the very poor, this sum is as out of reach as a flat in the city – just like it was for Palak's family.

But families are not meant to pay these large sums. Health insurance is. That's why it exists. Health insurance is like the extra hull on the Indonesian fishing boat, the Jukung, which 2000 years ago allowed them to sail across the Indian Ocean all the way to Australia. The additional hull gave them peace of mind even when not using it because they knew it could stabilise their boat and prevent it from sinking when the ocean turned fierce.

For every family to have this kind of protection regarding their health in the form of insurance, lakhs of families would have to come together to share in these risks. This is achieved only when everyone is able and willing to buy health insurance and pay the requisite premia. This does not happen naturally, not even in more developed countries. Therefore, governments need to step in to help. Recognising this, most state governments in India already offer free health insurance plans, which are paid for by taxes. These plans

work with thousands of hospitals, and the insurance pays all patient costs. This is wonderful news, but comes with a two-fold problem: a) the current insurance plans cover many conditions but since they have been allocated very small amounts, they cover only 30% to 40% of the population. And b) even for those that they do cover, the insurance plans carry upper limits which are insufficient to cover the full costs of many major diseases.

As a result, about half the payments under these plans are for amounts less than Rs 7,000 per event, which are too small to be meaningful, with only a tiny proportion (as little as 4%) of the claims being above Rs 1 lakh. Is this good use of already tight government budgets? Or is it like trying to teach everybody to swim in order to save them from drowning, which, while helpful, will involve a lot of wasted effort, when giving them life jackets would be much more effective?

With the very limited government money on offer and the need for protection being almost uni-

versal, states would do well to use that money instead to offer an insurance plan that covers their entire population (poor and non-poor) for only a limited number of very expensive and very rare conditions. Knowing that they have this coverage will give all their people peace of mind and stability, even though most will never use it. And, since the covered conditions are rare, even if each one costs lakhs of rupees, the total amount needed will still be within the allocated budget.

Offering this insurance coverage will allow state governments to take the time they need to build more robust health systems with the rest of their health budgets. These can offer free care to everybody for everyday conditions that afflict their residents (dengue, diabetes, high blood pressure) and for those that their insurance plans will no longer cover. With this new type of insurance in place, the government will have the comfort of knowing that if any household encounters a massive jolt on the health front, their boat will not sink, and lives will not be lost.

If everybody is automatically enrolled, the need to check and recheck people's identity and enrolment status – a major problem in the current system – will also disappear. Covering the entire population will also allow state governments to use their purchasing power to negotiate lower prices for the most expensive conditions. Keeping prices for the highest-cost conditions at the largest hospitals in check will not only help the plan but also have a cascading effect on all healthcare costs, making it much cheaper for them to, eventually, build a healthcare system which covers all conditions.

When the massive shock of blood cancer hit Palak's family, they had no choice but to let her and all of their joy go. The tragedy was that Palak did not have to die. Medicine already had the answers they needed. When it's not medicine falling short but money, the new insurance plans can prevent tragedies like Palak's.

This is a fundamentally different way of addressing the persistent worries that any family suffers from – of a disease that can ruin them financially or force them let a loved one die just because a cure is unaffordable. In other words, such an approach seeks to address the really "big" problems through insurance and works towards solving the "smaller" ones within the healthcare system. It is true that we cannot ignore the more common ailments which, too, cause death and devastation in families, but separating the rare high cost treatments from the more routine ones may be one way out of the impasse where both are poorly handled and people regularly die because health is out of their reach.

The writer is a Visiting Scientist at the Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health.

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SPECTRUM WORLD TRADE

Reimagining global integration

Global trade still conjures images of giant container ships. But our world has changed. The transport of physical goods across borders is no longer the only, or even the primary, driving force behind global integration. Instead, we are increasingly connected by flows of intangibles, services, and talent. From the cloud-based applications that companies use to manage customer relations to the research that led to the development of COVID-19 vaccines, knowledge is binding our world together.

Global flows associated with know-how have taken the baton from manufactured goods, resources, and capital – the primary drivers of interconnection until the late 2000s. Between 2010 and 2019, international trade in services, intellectual property, and education grew twice as fast as trade in goods. Cross-border data flows – the fuel of the digital era – have exploded, increasing at an annual rate of 45%. In terms of trade in services, knowledge-intensive categories – including professional, government, IT, and telecommunications services – are growing most rapidly.

Speculation that the world is deglobalising misses the mark: Global integration is evolving, not retreating, in the digital era. Every major world region imports 25% or more (in value-added terms) of at least one important type of resource or manufactured good that

it needs, and often much more.

The spread of intangible know-how is having a palpable influence on many sectors. In particular, research and development now involves much more cross-border cooperation. In the automotive sector, the share of R&D occurring in offshore locations rose from 5% to 15% between 2000 and 2018. The same is true of the pharmaceutical industry: Multinationals based in Europe and Asia use R&D performed outside of their home countries for more than half of innovation that produces new patents.

Likewise, highly qualified talent – one of the most important inputs across sectors – is globally mobile. Consider the semiconductor industry: An estimated 40% of high-skill semiconductor researchers working in the US were born in other countries, and foreign-born workers contribute over 80% of semiconductor patents.

Multinational corporations are pivotal players in world trade, accounting for about two-thirds of global exports. They are overrepresented in sectors where intangibles are the most relevant. For example, they account for about 80% of exports in some of the most innovative industries, including transport, pharmaceuticals, and electronics.

In knowledge-intensive global value chains, intangibles create highly scalable assets that can be deployed globally at low marginal cost. This, in turn, enables large

economies of scale and a self-reinforcing cycle of higher returns, concentrating market share and performance in a small number of superstar firms that drive a disproportionate amount of economic activity. Hence, the close correlation between dominant multinationals and intangibles.

Multinationals have the opportunity to unlock new sources of competitive advantage through increased investment in intangibles, particularly those with the potential to flow across borders. One example is MELLODDY, a public-private partnership coordinated by the AI biotech company Owkin. The project uses decentralised data from ten leading pharmaceutical companies to tweak models that predict molecule behaviour, in the hope of accelerating the drug discovery process. In some cases, investment in intangibles could enable multinationals to implement new business models in sectors that were previously less driven by knowledge flows.

According to MGI research, large companies are well positioned to outperform their peers when they master the deployment of intangibles investment: Firms in the top quartile for growth in gross value added invest 2.6 times more in intangibles than companies in the bottom two quartiles. This suggests new sources of growth for companies grappling with growing economic and geopolitical uncertainty. But there is room for all

on the fast-moving intangibles train, from the largest multinational corporations to the smallest microbusinesses, which can have a cross-border presence thanks to digital technology.

Firms on the hunt for growth opportunities would also do well to consider trade in services, which seem poised to deepen and expand. More economies are undergoing a transition to services, and there is much to gain from further liberalisation, as trade barriers affecting most services are two or three orders of magnitude higher than those for goods. Moreover, further technological advances could make these flows more seamless – the remote-everything of the pandemic era forced companies to provide services virtually, a practice that has become the norm for many services.

The widespread disruption to supply chains caused by the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine has prompted a new narrative about globalisation in retreat. Considering the full picture of flows, however, suggests that global integration is here to stay, and that knowledge and know-how are now an important part of the way forward. Firms will need to reconfigure value chains in order to capitalise on the growth potential in services, intangibles, and talent.

The writers are directors of the McKinsey Global Institute.

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Olivia White & Jonathan Woetzel

SPECULATION THAT THE WORLD IS DEGLOBALISING MISSES THE MARK: GLOBAL INTEGRATION IS EVOLVING, NOT RETREATING, IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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

Orissa POST
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Fresh controversy

Sir, The deployment of the personal staff of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar in 12 Standing Committees and 8 Departmental Standing Committees of the Parliament has triggered a new controversy. This needless controversy has emerged at a time when there is already a debate going on about the alleged dilution of democratic traditions and values in the country. Giving information about the decision, the Rajya Sabha Secretariat said that the concerned officers have been linked to these committees with 'immediate effect and until new instructions are issued'. As per the instructions, these officers will assist in the functioning of those committees. Obviously this work includes meetings that are considered confidential in nature. Many experts are calling this move against the accepted traditions and rules of Parliament. This is the first time that staff members of the Rajya Sabha Chairman have been associated with these committees. Usually these responsibilities are given to the officers of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariat. A clarification has already been given by the Vice President's office. Dhankhar too has admitted publicly that the aim was only to ensure adequate human resources in the parliamentary committees. But the question is more about the method than the intention. If there was a shortage of human resources in these parliamentary committees, then a request should have been sent to the chairman on behalf of the committees. Several opposition leaders associated with different committees, including Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, said that there was no dearth of human resources in the committees. The Vice President should have taken the Opposition into confidence before taking a step away from parliamentary traditions. After all the vehicle of parliamentary democracy moves forward only with the support of both the wheels of the ruling party and the opposition. The move has further added to the already existing tension and mistrust between the two sides.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR

Hockey marvel

Sir, It is a proud moment for Indians as the Guinness Book of World Records has recognised the Birs Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela as the world's largest fully-seated hockey stadium with a capacity of 20,011. The stadium was built in a record time of 15 months. We are glad that India's national sport and our pride - hockey - is gaining recognition and popularity. The Odisha government's initiative will inspire more youth and coaches to bring glory to India. Hockey is the key to India's medals tally.

TS Karthik, CHENNAI

national

of the day quote

We cannot allow our pudding to be spoiled by some who cannot see the growth story of this country

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

We have not left any scope to offer hospitality to ED officials. We have served tea, breakfast, and lunch

TEJASHWI YADAV | BIHAR DEPUTY CM

Along with traditional farming, livestock owners and farmers should also adopt other commercial activities like beekeeping, fisheries, floriculture, and setting up small-scale industries of food processing. The government is ready to extend all required support to them

MANOHAAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Pandit Deepak Chatterjee dies

New Delhi: Veteran Hindustani classical singer Pandit Deepak Chatterjee "Rasikrang", who has composed over 200 bandishes in various ragas, died here on Monday following age-related problems. He was 87. The death of Chatterjee was confirmed by his daughter Vidisha. "He had breathing issues in the morning, so we took him to a hospital where he was declared brought dead," Chatterjee's daughter said, adding that Sunday Chatterjee had attended a concert.

NIA conducts search in Srinagar

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Monday conducted a search at Uzair Azhar Bhat's house in Karfali Mohalla of Srinagar and seized digital devices. Bhat is suspected of spreading ISIS ideology, luring people to join the terrorist group and indulging in anti-national activities. The NIA said that in 2021, they started investigating Mohammed Ameen alias Abu Yahya who had been running various ISIS propaganda channels on different social media platforms, such as Telegram, Hoop and Instagram.

4 Naxalites held

Sukma: Four Naxalites, three of them allegedly involved in a 2014 ambush attack that killed 14 security personnel, were arrested in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh, the police said Monday. Barse Pojja, Podiyam Deva and Sodi Bheema were apprehended from the jungles of Tondamarka village while Podiyam Mukka alias Mukesh was held near Pidmel village in Chintagufa in separate operations by security forces Sunday.

H3N2 VIRUS

H3N2 AND H3N1 ARE BOTH TYPES OF INFLUENZA A VIRUSES, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE FLU

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: Even as India is seeing a spurt in Influenza cases, caused by H3N2 virus, health experts Monday have suggested people to take precautionary measures such as use of masks, better hand hygiene, as well as an annual flu shot.

A total of 3,038 lab-confirmed cases of various subtypes of influenza including H3N2 have been



I want to ask all political parties in the country to wake up as what happened to J&K (after 2019) is finally reaching their necks

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARRESTS

The Aam Aadmi Party Monday kicked off its door-to-door campaign in 250 wards of Delhi as part of its protest against the arrest of party leaders Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain on corruption charges



SC rebukes Defence Ministry over OROP

The court asked the defence ministry to immediately withdraw its communication and told Attorney General R Venkataramani to prepare a note giving details of the quantum of payment to be paid, the modalities to be adopted and what's the priority segment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: The Supreme Court on Monday said the Ministry of Defence cannot take law in its own hands by issuing a communication "unilaterally" that One Rank-One Pension (OROP) arrears to pensioners of the armed forces will be paid in four installments and sought a payment plan by March 20.

The court observed that the defence ministry's January 20 communication was "directly contrary" to its verdict March 16, 2022 that had directed payment of complete arrears within three months and it cannot unilaterally say it will pay OROP arrears in four installments.

During the Monday hearing, the attorney general submitted that the Centre has paid to some pensioners and will be paying rest of them one installment of OROP arrears by March 31, but needed some more time for further disbursement. "First withdraw (your) January 20 notification on payment of OROP arrears, then we



will consider your application for time," a bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala sternly told Venkataramani.

"Mr. Attorney General, the ministry cannot take law in its own hands by issuing such communication on payment of OROP arrears in four installments. This January 20, communication is directly contrary to our verdict," the bench told Venkataramani that the concern of the court is that ex-servicemen get their amount at the earliest and there should not be any delay in payment of the arrears especially those who are above 60-70 years.

"We want that there has to be some kind of categorisation and older people should be paid the arrears first. Over four lakh pensioners have died since the litigation started." It posted the matter for further hearing March 20 and asked the Centre to file a note by that date giving specific details as asked. Venkataramani said he is personally in touch with the ministry over the payment of the arrears but the government has to look into the entire fiscal position and that there are several operational hurdles looking at the huge number of 25 lakh ex-servicemen.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for the ex-servicemen association, said four lakh pensioners have already died during the pendency of the original OROP petition filed in 2016 and the government has been seeking extension of time to pay the arrears time and again. The top court is hearing an application filed by Indian Ex-servicemen Movement (IESM), through advocate Balaji Srinivasan, in which it has sought setting aside of the defence ministry's January 20 communication. It said that an amount of ₹2,490 crore have been released in February 2023 and credited to 7.99 lakh pensioners and by March 9, 2023, a payment of additional ₹2,400 crore to approximately 5 lakh pensioners have been made.

The January 20, 2023 communication had said the OROP arrears will be paid in four equal installments to ex-servicemen

Passenger dies on Delhi-Doha IndiGo flight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Karachi, March 13: An IndiGo plane which took off from Delhi for Doha was diverted to Karachi Sunday night after a passenger fell ill onboard, officials said. The passenger, a Nigerian national aged around 60, was later declared dead on arrival, they said.

The officials said the aircraft, A320-271N, which was parked at the Karachi airport for nearly five hours, returned to Delhi after the authorities in Karachi issued the death certificate of the passenger and all formalities were completed. An IndiGo spokesperson on Monday said the flight, 6E-1736, operating from Delhi to Doha (Qatar), was diverted to Karachi (Pakistan) due to a medical emergency on board. "Unfortunately, on arrival, the passenger was declared dead by the airport medical team," the spokesperson said in a statement. "We are deeply saddened by the news and our prayers and wishes are with his family and loved ones (of the deceased passenger)," the spokesperson said.

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority officials in Karachi said the passenger fell ill onboard and the captain requested an emergency landing at the Jinnah International Airport. Doctors from the health department were sent to provide treatment but the passenger had passed away. After the death certificate of the passenger was issued and all formalities were completed, the plane returned to Delhi, the officials said.



LS, RS adjourned for the day after ruckus over Rahul's remarks



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi's "democracy under attack" remarks in the UK rocked Parliament Monday with a battery of senior Union ministers leading the charge against him, demanding an apology and the Congress countering it with its JPC demand on the Adani issue.

Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned without transacting any business on the first day of the second leg of the Budget Session following uproarious scenes and repeated disruptions amid vociferous sloganeering by both treasury benches and opposition members.

While in Lok Sabha, Defence Minister and Deputy Leader of the House Rajnath Singh and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi led the government's charge against Gandhi, Union minister Piyush Goyal in Rajya Sabha demanded that Gandhi's statements be condemned by the Upper House. Kharge objected to Goyal's statements, citing two previous rulings of the House, and asked Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to expunge the remarks of the leader of the House. Speaking to the media outside Parliament, Kharge hit back at the

government for raising the issue of Gandhi's remarks in Parliament, saying those "crushing" democracy are talking of saving it.

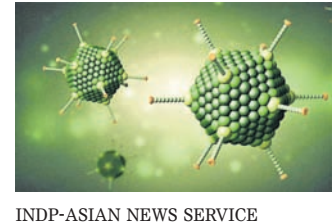
The BJP onslaught came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi lashed out at the Wayanad MP during an event in poll-bound Karnataka for his comments on democracy in India, saying the remarks were an affront to its people.

After obituary references in Lok Sabha, Singh stood up and charged that Gandhi has tried to defame India in London through his remarks on Indian democracy.

"Rahul Gandhi, who is a member of the Lok Sabha, had gone to London and tried to 'discredit' India and said the democratic system in India is completely crumbling. He also said that foreign powers should save India's democracy. He tried to 'deeply hurt' India's honour and prestige," he said. During his recent visit to the UK, Gandhi at various interactions alleged that the structures of Indian democracy are under attack and that there is a "full-scale assault" on the institutions of the country. Gandhi had also told British parliamentarians in London that microphones were often 'turned off' in the Lok Sabha when any opposition member raises important issues.

ADENOVIRUS ALARM

Four more deaths reported from WB



INDP-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Last week, CM Mamata Banerjee told media persons that the total adenovirus-related deaths stood at 19, out of which six were confirmed cases of the virus while the remaining had comorbidities

The same figure was also quoted in a notification issued by the state Health Department March 11

However, after that there had been no death figure update from it

Kolkata, March 13: Amid fear of spreading adenovirus in West Bengal, four more child deaths have been reported from a Kolkata hospital from Sunday night till Monday afternoon.

Though it is yet to be confirmed that four fresh deaths, all reported from B.C. Roy Children's Hospital, were confirmed cases of adenovirus, it is learnt that all the four children were admitted with the virus-related symptoms of cough, cold and severe breathing problems.

However, unofficial sources quote the figure of deaths with related symptoms at much higher at 147 from the beginning of January till date. Out of this, the maximum are from the B.C. Roy Children's Hospital at 75, where the pressure of admission of children with related symptoms had been maximum. The second highest death report had

been from Calcutta Medical College & Hospital at 25.

A recent survey by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED) has revealed that 38 per cent of the swab samples that have been tested adenovirus-positive throughout the country since from January 1 to March 9 have been reported from West Bengal making it the highest among all Indian states on this count.

Tamil Nadu comes in the distant second position with 19 per cent, Kerala at 13 per cent, Delhi at 11 per cent and Maharashtra at five per cent are in the third, fourth and fifth positions, respectively.



PROTEST TURNS UGLY: Police personnel use water cannons to disperse Punjab Congress supporters during 'Chalo Raj Bhawan' march in Chandigarh

PTI PHOTO

Massive fire engulfs Mumbai slums

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 13: An unidentified person was charred to death, while several families were rendered homeless after a major fire broke out in slums in suburban Malad on late Monday afternoon, a Fire Brigade official said.

The level 3 (major) fire engulfed slums located in the Appa Pada locality in Anand Nagar of the west-

ern suburb and has been brought under control, he said.

According to the official, 2,000 to 3,000 hutmuts spread across an area of 10,000 square metres were gutted in the blaze. "It was a level three fire confined to household articles, electric wiring, electric installation, LPG cylinders, cloths, bed cushions etc.," he said. Efforts were on to find out any injured or missing person, the official added.

One person was charred to death, while several others were rendered homeless and they have been provided temporary accommodation and food at three places, the official said. The deceased has not been identified yet, he said. Senior civic officials visited the fire site. Smoke billowing out of the area could be seen from several kilometres away. No details were immediately available on the cause of the fire.

Health experts call for masks, better hygiene & flu shot



reported till March 9 by the states, as per the latest data available on IDSP-IHIP (Integrated Health Information Platform).

This includes 1,245 cases in January, 1,307 in February, and 486 cases till March 9. "In my opinion, for the time being the government

can again make masks mandatory at least in highly vulnerable zones like public transports, hospitals, airports, railway stations and other public conveyances. People should avoid visiting crowded places, or wear a mask whenever in public," Dr. Sunil Sekri, Associate Consultant - Internal Medicine, Max hospital, Gurugram, told IANS.

The respiratory virus "spreads through droplets, so which means that the secretions can spread from person to person, and most people touch their nose and mouth at some point, or that secretions can remain on the fingers and when they shake hands with other people", it can likely spread, said Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, co-chairman of the Indian Medical Association's

National Covid-19 Task Force, making a case for the need of masks particularly in crowded indoor gatherings.

According to data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), there has been a combination of respiratory viruses ranging from Covid-19 virus, swine flu (H1N1), H3N2, and the seasonal Victoria and Yamagata lineages of influenza B viruses in circulation. Some of the most common symptoms include prolonged fever, cough, running nose, & body pain. But in severe cases people may also experience breathlessness and/or wheezing.

Meanwhile, the Covid infection has also reported a spike after four months as 524 daily Covid cases

were reported Sunday.

"For the last three years we have learned how respiratory infections can be prevented. Because the infections go out and come in from the nose and mouth, you need to cover this area and that is masking. Proper masks are needed, particularly when you are in crowded places," said Dr. Iswar Gilada, an infectious disease expert.

"Masking is important particularly for those who are both with comorbidities and the family members of those who are having such kind of people at their home," he said. The experts also suggested people to wash their hands before eating or utilising any public transit with soap or sanitiser to minimise the risk of infection.

The high court said, being a constitutional court, it was duty bound to see the best interest of the victim. The court was hearing a plea filed by the minor, through her father, for handing over her custody to him. While the matter was pending, the court was informed that the victim was pregnant which led to the formation of the medical board.

Thereafter, the minor and her father told the high court that they were ready for medical termination of pregnancy without any fear.



'ELEPHANTS ARE LIKE OUR CHILDREN'

THE 'LEADING LADY' OF THE 'THE ELEPHANT WHISPERERS' THAT WON THE OSCAR FOR THE BEST SHORT DOCUMENTARY, WAS UNAWARE OF THE AWARD BUT WAS EXCITED TO RECEIVE THE WISHES, WHICH WERE POURING IN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Udhagamandalam (TN), March 13: "I do not know about Oscar award," was Belli's response to 'The Elephant Whisperers' winning honours at the 95th Academy Awards but the documentary's 'leading lady,' loves being a 'Valarppu Thaa' (foster mother) for abandoned young pachyderms.

"Elephants are like our children. We see it as great service to a child, who lost its mother," says Belli, who featured in 'The Elephant Whisperers.' It won the award for the Best Short Documentary at the Oscars Monday.

Admitting that she did not know about the award, Belli however, said she was excited to receive the wishes, which were pouring in.

"I have reared many such elephants, treated them like my own



I have reared many such elephants, treated them like my own children, looking after them as a foster mother (valarppu thaa), particularly those who lose their mothers in the jungle

BELLI

children, looking after them as a foster mother (valarppu thaa), particularly those who lose their mothers in the jungle," Belli told PTI.

She further said, "This was in our blood, as our ancestors were also working like that, as described by our grandmother, who comes from

a mahout family."

On the documentary winning an Oscar, Belli quipped, "I do not know about the award. But I am

very happy and excited as congratulations are pouring in."

Asked about her 'hero and husband' Bomman in the documentary, she said that he had gone to Salem to bring an elephant which had some serious problem and was eagerly waiting to serve the new arrival.

The couple work as mahouts at the Theppakkadu elephant camp in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in the Nilgiris district and look after the needs of jumbos.

"The Elephant Whisperers," directed by Kartiki Gonsalves, in its 39-minute runtime, depicts an unbreakable bond between two abandoned elephant calves Raghu and Amu and their caretakers, Bomman and Belli. Meanwhile, the Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association Secretary Alwas termed the award as a recognition to the traditional profession of the tribals.

TN Guv prepares ground for another tussle with govt



The latest confrontation between the two commenced after Governor RN Ravi returned the Bill unanimously passed by the legislative assembly against online games including rummy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 13: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin while meeting people under his pet programme 'Ungalil Oruvan' (One Among You) said that Governors in opposition ruled states have only mouths not ears.

This was a clear message by the Chief Minister on how the waters are rolling vis-a-vis the relationship with the Governor. The latest confrontation between the two commenced after Governor RN Ravi returned the bill unanimously passed by the legislative assembly against online games including rummy.

The Governor returned the bill recently citing legislative and legal issues. The bill was lying on his table since October 19, 2022 when the assembly had passed it unanimously. When the bill was passed by the assembly around 22 people had taken their lives after heavy losses in online gambling especially in games like rummy. When the Governor returned the bill, the number of deaths had touched 40.

The government and the Governor have been at loggerheads ever since Ravi assumed office.

January 9 this year, the Governor during his address to the assembly skipped the paragraph of the printed copy which mentioned the names of Dravidian ideologue, EV

Ramaswamy Periyar, BR Ambedkar, K Kamraj, CN Annadurai and M Karunanidhi - all icons for Tamil Nadu.

Immediately after the Governor skipped the paragraph, Stalin was on his feet and condemned the Governor who left the assembly in a huff.

Stalin moved a resolution in the House that the official address prepared by the cabinet would be laid on the table and it was passed. The Governor's address was not recorded in the assembly.

This led to street protests against the Governor with DMK cadres, youth activists of Dravidian movements and Dalit outfits attacking Ravi and burning his effigy at many places in Tamil Nadu.

Earlier Ravi, while interacting with a batch of civil service aspirants who had cleared the Main examination, expressed his opposition to the Tamil term 'Ondriya Arasu' which was used by the state government for the Union Government.

He said that it was fine for him to use the term 'Union Government' but not the Tamil words 'Ondriya Arasu'. He said that 'Ondriya Arasu' was a term used to refer to a sub-district, sub-divisional level structure in the hierarchy. He alleged that the term was used for the Union Government with the intention to perhaps belittle it.

The Governor has also held the anti-NEET Bill passed by the state government. The assembly had to again re-enact the bill and send it to him for further action. Dravida Kazhagam, Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and other Dalit outfits had shown black flags to the Governor when he had returned the Anti-NEET Bill.

With the Governor and the government locked in another confrontation over the online gaming ban bill, it has to be seen how sparks will fly between them.

OPS to forge alliance with Sasikala and Dhinakaran

The three leaders are from the powerful Thevar community of South Tamil Nadu and Thevars have been the traditional support base of the AIADMK



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, March 13: In a move to bounce back into the AIADMK fold, the deposed party coordinator and former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, O Panneerselvam (OPS) is aligning with the expelled interim general secretary of the party, VK Sasikala and TTV Dhinakaran, sources said.

The three are from the powerful Thevar community of South Tamil Nadu and Thevars have been the traditional support base of the AIADMK. Recently, a meeting of the Thevar community decided to make an alliance between the three high profile leaders who had been very powerful during the golden time of AIADMK when J Jayalalithaa was at the helm.

Sources close to OPS while speaking to IANS said, "OPS is a leader

who can carry the grassroots of the party and there should be a unity between Sasikala, Dhinakaran and OPS to ensure that the Thevar vote bank is not split. A powerful OPS will have to be accommodated by the EPS faction and this is a movement for that."

With the 2024 Lok Sabha polls coming up, the AIADMK has to win a good number of seats from Tamil Nadu as in 2019 the party could win only one seat from the total 39 seats in the state. The lone winner was OP Raveendranathan, son of OPS from Theni constituency, the fiefdom of the OPS family.

The BJP also wants the two factions of the AIADMK to be together before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and the saffron party is providing support for the meeting between Sasikala, OPS, and Dhinakaran.

POLLUTED YAMUNA TOPS AGRA'S LIST OF WOES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, March 13: When voters in the Taj city elected 10 legislators, three MPs, one Mayor, and one district board chairman of the BJP in a series of elections, they thought their days of woes and agony would now be over, as in contrast to the earlier governments, the newly elected representatives were grassroots workers and understood the stark reality of life.

But the euphoria was short-lived. One by one their hopes were dashed and the long pending demands continued to remain cold-stored.

The international airport which was planned for Agra has now been shifted to Jewar near Noida. The international stadium, the Mughal Museum now rechristened as Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Museum, the opening of an agriculture university, the leather park, the IT hub and similar such demands including a bench of the Allahabad High Court, have all been forgotten.

The king of vegetables, potato, now in the dumps due to a price crash, could not be saved as the promised Vodka factory and a Potato Research Institute, could not be promoted. Agra region is the country's largest potato producer. The iron foundries, the glass factories, the handicrafts and the leather shoe units are still waiting for the package of benefits promised in the past. The tourism industry dented heavily during the Covid-19 pandemic period, and continues to remain in the doldrums, as reforms assured have yet to be acted upon.



The most brutal fall back on promises is the Yamuna barrage to store monsoon rains. Yamuna is virtually dead. "The dry and heavily polluted Yamuna is a clear threat to the Mughal monuments along its banks, including the Taj Mahal," says environmentalist Devashish Bhattacharya.

The holy Yamuna river in Braj Mandal (Agra, Mathura, Vrindavan) continues to run dry and polluted, and the promised start of a ferry service from Delhi to Agra for tourists that Union Minister Nitin Gadkari promised, is nowhere in sight.

An angry green activist Devashish Bhattacharya fumed furiously at the continued callous neglect of the holy Yamuna. "Not only UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, but also Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari had promised to take appropriate steps to rejuvenate and revive the ancient glory of Yamuna. Gadkari on three different occasions had assured that ferries would bring tourists from

Delhi to Agra and the Yamuna would be cleaned. But the ground reality continues to remain depressing."

"Yamuna is integral to the Sri Krishna-Radha-lore. For the Hindus, it is one of the holiest rivers. The Bhakti movement poets eulogized Kalindi (Yamuna). Even the Mughal rulers were fascinated by the majestic and resplendent Yamuna. Almost all great monuments were sited on the banks of river Yamuna from Delhi to Agra," says Goswami Nandan Shrotriya, priest of the 300-year-old Sri Mathuradheesh temple in Agra.

In a series of interventions in the MC Mehta PIL on Taj Mahal pollution, the Supreme Court had stressed not only cleaning pollution but also maintaining a regular flow of water in the Yamuna for the safety of the historical monuments. The National Green Tribunal too has on several occasions ordered an uninterrupted minimum flow of water in Yamuna to cleanse pollutants and support aqua life.

Politics over Atiq Ahmed as SP, BSP eye Muslim votes

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 13: Both the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh have been engaged in attracting votes of the Muslim community by softening their stand on mafia don Atiq Ahmed.

SP secretary general Ram Gopal Yadav has come forward in support of Ahmed's minor sons. Yadav said that the police are unable to find the real accused in the Prayagraj incident and that there was pressure on them to catch and frame anyone. He added that Ahmed's two sons were caught on the first day of the incident itself.

Yadav stated that it is suspected that one of them may have been killed. He said that the Constitution gives every citizen the fundamental right to life and the police cannot just apprehend someone and kill them, as that is a punishable offence.

The SP leader added that those who have done fake encounters will be prosecuted for murder.

He said that the culprits of Umesh Pal murder case should be punished severely but called the policies adopted by the state government destructive.

A senior SP leader said that the party, which has emerged as the largest opposition in the 2022 Assembly elections, does not want to lose the Muslim vote bank as the community has played a big



Umesh Pal in broad daylight.

She said that the whole country had its eyes on the state government on whether it would follow the rule of law or stop crime by killing criminals on the streets.

A BSP leader said that the party would perform well with the strong Dalit-Muslim alliance even if it does not team up with SP.

He added that Mayawati knows that better results cannot be achieved only on the Dalit vote bank, therefore, after the setback in the Assembly elections, BSP has been trying to reconnect with the prominent Muslim community.

Significantly, the BSP was reduced to one seat and 13 per cent vote bank in the Assembly elections. Meanwhile, in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, 10 BSP MPs won when it was in alliance with SP, prior to which the BSP had zero seats in 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Political experts believe that SP got the Muslim vote bank in UP in bulk in the 2022 Assembly elections, but could not form the government. The party is now trying to save the vote bank, which is why BSP leaders are giving such statements.

Mayawati has included the Muslim leaders in her party to bring the community's votes in her fold, by campaigning with leaders like Shah Alam aka Guddu Jamal from eastern UP and Imran Masood.

BJP sees bulldozer as ticket to clean sweep

IN THE MIDST OF THE LAST ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, A LOCAL DAILY NAMED YOGI ADITYANATH AS 'BULLDOZER BABA' AND THIS TOOK THE BJP CAMPAIGN TO THE NEXT LEVEL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, March 13: The bulldozer politics that originated in Uttar Pradesh in 2020 has now become the mainstay of the Yogi Adityanath government.

The bulldozer - usually seen as a tool of destruction and upheaval - has become a symbol of good governance not only in Uttar Pradesh but outside the state too. Most governments in the country, mainly the BJP-led ones, are now betting on the bulldozer that is apparently bringing in more bouquets than brickbats.

The bulldozer first gained prominence in the Yogi Adityanath government in July 2020 when this mean machine was used to pull down the house of gangster Vikas Dubey in Bikru village in Kanpur.

Dubey was the main accused in the massacre of eight police personnel and bulldozing his palatial house seemed like speedy jus-



tice in the terror-stricken area.

Muslim voices protesting Nupur Sharma's statement on the Prophet, then became the target of the bulldozer in Prayagraj and this gave a Hindu approval to the action.

Thereafter, the bulldozer was used to demolish the ill-gotten properties of mafia dons like Mukhtar Ansari and Atiq Ahmad, both of whom were behind bars.

The state government happily released photographs and videos of the houses, shopping complexes, hotels and buildings of the mafia crumbling under the power of the bulldozer.

A social activist says, "All these recent bulldozer politics of the BJP government is nothing but to create a narrative that anything

bly elections where the BJP staged a return to power, put the seal of approval on bulldozer politics and the opposition that had tried to project the bulldozer as a symbol of tyranny, was put on the backfoot.

The popularity of the bulldozer politics was evident from the fact that Holi sprinklers now come in the shape of a bulldozer and even the rakhi comes with a miniature bulldozer. A whole range of bulldozer toys are now being sold on e-commerce sites like Amazon and Flipkart.

Some young men in Agra have even tattooed the images of the bulldozer and Bulldozer Baba on their bodies after Yogi Adityanath's victory.

While the results made other states like Madhya Pradesh and Delhi adopt the bulldozer formula with open arms, it also gave Yogi Adityanath the opportunity to pursue this brand of politics even more aggressively in his second term.

The UP police are now targeting those linked to mafia dons on an almost daily basis and people are lapping it up.

The bulldozer now noisily dawdles across Uttar Pradesh and for the BJP, it is a case of the more the merrier.

The Uttar Pradesh BJP leaders claim that it is the bulldozer that will again yield rich dividends in the 2024 general elections.

And no one is questioning the claim.

of the day quote

Will Allah listen only if the prayers are given through loudspeakers. I have not shown disrespect to any religion by my statement

K S ESHWARAPPA | SENIOR BJP LEADER

The BSP has strayed from the path of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and its founder Kanshi Ram. The BSP has colluded with the BJP and works as the B-team of the ruling party.

The governor's address to the House is a document that lays the roadmap of development and belongs to the whole state. Shouting slogans when the governor is reading it does not set a healthy precedent

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

The governor's address to the House is a document that lays the roadmap of development and belongs to the whole state. Shouting slogans when the governor is reading it does not set a healthy precedent

PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI | UTTARAKHAND CM

SHORT TAKES

Ruckus in WB Assembly

Kolkata: The last day of the West Bengal Assembly's extended Budget session Monday witnessed protests by BJP legislators over the plight of potato farmers in the state.

Chaos in J'khand Assembly

Ranchi: Chaos reigned supreme in the Jharkhand assembly Monday as members of the opposition demonstrated, seeking clarification from the government on the state's employment policy.

NIRDPR, ICRISAT sign MoU

Hyderabad: City-based National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) Monday signed a MoU to strengthen evidence-based research and capacity building on critical development issues.

African swine fever reported in Kerala

Pathanamthitta (Ker): African swine fever has been reported from a pig farm in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district, officials said here Monday.



Parliament was adjourned for the day because the Government simply didn't want it to function. It created a completely bogus diversion to keep the attention away from the combined Opposition demand for a JPC into PM-linked Adani MahaMegaScam

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

DELHI MLAS GET OVER 66 PER CENT SALARY HIKE

Ahead of the Delhi Budget session scheduled to begin from March 17, the salaries and allowances of MLAs and ministers have been increased to more than 66 per cent.



SC refers pleas for same-sex marriage to 5-judge bench

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: The Supreme Monday referred the pleas seeking legal validation of same-sex marriages to a five-judge constitution bench for adjudication, saying it is a "very seminal issue".

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said the submissions on the issue involve an interplay between constitutional rights on the one hand and special legislative enactments, including the Special Marriage Act, on the other.

"very seminal issue". "We accordingly direct that the hearing of these petitions be placed before a constitution bench," the apex court said while posting the pleas for hearing April 18.

Article 145(3) of Indian Constitution says there should at least five judges to hear cases that involve "a substantial question of law as to the interpretation" of the Constitution, or any reference under article 143, which deals with the power of the President of India to consult the Supreme court of India.

Emphasising that the question of granting legal sanction to a relationship is essentially a function of the legislature, the Centre said the issue may have impact on state like the one for adoption if recognition is granted to same-sex marriage.

"The adopted child of a lesbian couple or of a gay couple does not have to be necessarily a lesbian or a gay," the bench told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was representing the Centre.

The case is being seen as a milestone event for LGBT rights in the country. India's top court decriminalised homosexuality in 2018 by scrapping a colonial-era ban on gay sex.



NATURE'S BOUNTY: A girl touches the flowers of an almond tree in full bloom to mark the arrival of the spring in the Valley in Pulwama, South Kashmir PTI PHOTO

Ties with China 'complex': MEA

In its detailed report, the MEA noted that India's engagement with China is "complex" and Chinese attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh starting from April-May 2020 seriously disturbed the peace and tranquility in border areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: India's engagement with China is "complex" and Chinese attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh starting from April-May 2020 seriously disturbed the peace and tranquility in border areas.



India's engagement with China is "complex" and Chinese attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh starting from April-May 2020 seriously disturbed the peace and tranquility in border areas

ate response" from Indian armed forces. "India's engagement with China is complex. The two sides have agreed that pending the final settlement of the boundary question, maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas is an essential basis for the overall development of the bilateral relationship," the MEA's annual report for 2022 said.

ship," it said. The government refers to eastern Ladakh as the Western sector. "However, the continued unilateral attempts by China to change the status quo have impacted the bilateral relationship since then," it said.

23 DRDO projects missed deadlines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Twenty-three of the 55 high-priority projects being implemented by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) could not meet the deadlines, the government informed Parliament Monday.

The high-priority projects included developing anti-air field weapons, surface-to-air missiles, anti-ship missiles, long-range radars, combat vehicles, combat suits for submarines and submarine periscopes. Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt provided the details in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

"Currently, there are 55 numbers of ongoing MM (Mission Mode) projects such as anti-air field weapons, solid fuel ducted ramjet technology, surface to air missiles, anti-ship missiles, long range radars, combat vehicles, high endurance autonomous underwater vehicles, combat suits for submarines, submarine periscopes etc," he said.

"Of these 55 numbers of ongoing MM projects, 23 numbers did not meet deadlines. Of the 23 numbers of ongoing MM projects which did not meet the deadlines, nine have undergone cost overruns. However, not all cost overruns were necessitated due to time overruns," Bhatt said.

The minister, however, did not provide the details about the deadlines and period of implementation of the projects. A total of 1,35,743 posts, including 8,070 at the level of officers, were lying vacant in the Indian Army as on March 10, according to data provided by Bhatt.



Gujarat was in no position to do so as its sole seaplane was undergoing repairs. The earlier Rupun government had sought ₹120 crore from Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia for purchase of two seaplanes. None have materialised so far.

Pak continues its hostile anti-India propaganda

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: There is no let-up in Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism and Islamabad is yet to show sincerity in delivering justice to the families of the victims of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The MEA noted that India has consistently stressed the need for Pakistan to take "credible, irreversible and verifiable" action to end cross-border terrorism. The MEA said India desires normal neighbourly ties with Pakistan.



time, it said the onus is on Pakistan to create such a conducive environment. "Pakistan continues to engage in hostile and fabricated propaganda to vilify India, and to divert attention from its domestic political and economic failures," it said.

political and economic failures. It said India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan and New Delhi's consistent position has been that issues, if any, should be resolved bilaterally and peacefully, in an atmosphere free of terror and violence. At the same

time, it said the onus is on Pakistan to create such a conducive environment. "Pakistan continues to engage in hostile and fabricated propaganda to vilify India, and to divert attention from its domestic political and economic failures," it said.

Family attacked at Goa's Anjuna beach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, March 13: Members of a New Delhi-based family holidaying in Goa were attacked at the famous Anjuna beach by a group of assailants armed with a knife and other weapons, police said Monday.



Superintendent of Police (Mapusa) Jivba Dalvi said a 47-year-old man, a resident of Delhi, March 5 lodged a complaint saying he and his family members were attacked by a gang armed with belts, a baseball bat, and a knife.

The assailants also rained blows on the complainant and his kin, leaving them injured, as per the First Information Report (FIR). However, the police did not disclose how many members of the family were injured in the assault at the Anjuna beach in North Goa.

SEAPLANE SERVICE FAILS TO TAKE OFF

Lakhs of people watching, Prime Minister Narendra Modi literally set the Sabarmati on fire when he boarded a seaplane from the riverfront in Ahmedabad to end his party's 2017 Gujarat election campaign in spectacular style.

A new dawn of development beckoned. True to promise, the Prime Minister launched the country's first seaplane service between the Statue of Unity (SAU), the world's tallest statue of Sardar Patel erected at the Narmada dam site and the Sabarmati riverfront October 31, 2020.

The service was stopped April 11, 2021 due to 'operational' reasons. Almost two years later the Gujarat government still remains at sea on when the seaplane services will resume. There is many a slip be-

tween flashy optics and focused operations. Or so it seems.

The issue came into focus last week during the Budget session of the Gujarat Assembly when the government reiterated its intent to restart the seaplane services but remained non-committal on the timeframe.

To a question, the government's reply was that the seaplane's services will resume after completing the procedures prescribed under the rules. The logical question would be, why the hurry in launching the service without doing so? Opposition leaders were categorical that the government had avoided discussion on the subject.

In June 2021, the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Ports and Shipping signed a Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU) for the development of seaplane services to enhance seamless connectivity.

The MoU envisaged development of non-scheduled/scheduled operations countrywide under the RCS-UDAN (Regional Connectivity Scheme - Udde Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) of the Centre. One hundred routes for seaplane services have been etched and 14 water aerodromes underway besides the Sardar Sarovar Dam (SAU) and the Sabarmati riverfront are, Shatrunjay Dam (Gujarat), Guwahati riverfront, Umrangso Reservoir (Assam), Nagarjuna Sagar Dam (Telangana), Prakasam barrage, (Andhra Pradesh), Swaraj Dweep Havelock island and Shaheed Dweep, Port Blair (Andaman and Nicobar islands),

Minicoy, Kavaratti, Agatti (Lakshadweep) are under various stages of development involving a total outlay of ₹450 crore. It is part of the ambitious Sagarmala Project



which was given in-principle approval by the Modi-led NDA government in 2015.

Seaplanes are not new to India and were in use by royalties and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has rules in place

for it. The UPA Civil Aviation Minister Pratul Patel visualised immense potential in this offshoot of tourism and had launched an Andaman and Nicobar-based pilot project, Jal Hans in 2010 under Pawan Hans.

The Sabarmati to SAU seaplane service was initially given over to SpiceShuttle, a subsidiary of SpiceJet which pulled out in April 2021 citing operational difficulties in the midst of the pandemic.

In November 2021, after a change of guard in Gujarat when Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and his entire cabinet was replaced by Bhupendra Patel, the new state Civil Aviation Minister Purnesh Modi had urged the Centre to start services at six places in the state and provide two seaplanes as

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international

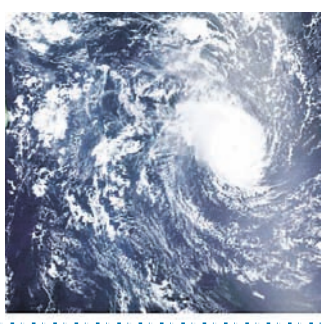


We have seen all too clearly in the last year how global crises impact us at home, with Russia's appalling invasion of Ukraine driving up energy and food prices

RISHI SUNAK | BRITISH PM

STORM FREDDY WREAKS HAVOC

Mozambique and Malawi Monday were counting the cost of Tropical Storm Freddy, which killed more than 60 people, injured scores and left a trail of destruction as it ripped through southern Africa for the second time in a month over the weekend



of the day quote

Achieving the five per cent GDP target for the slowing down economy is not an easy task for the world's second-largest economy and requires redoubled efforts

LI QIANG | CHINA'S NEW PREMIER

China has been using nefarious tactics, including spying and offering bribes, in an effort to ensure that if it goes to war with Taiwan, Micronesia would be aligned with China rather than the United States, or would at least abstain from taking sides

DAVID PANUELO | MICRONESIA'S PRESIDENT

Tehran and Washington have reached an agreement on the exchange of prisoners over the past few days

HOSSEIN AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Girl kills sister accidentally

Houston: A 3-year-old girl found a loaded gun in a Texas home and accidentally shot her sister, killing the 4-year-old on Sunday, police said. Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said the girls were in the bedroom of an apartment on Bammel North Houston Road in Houston, where they lived with their parents, around 8 pm. Five adults, who were all family members or family friends, were in other parts of the apartment and the girls unintentionally were left unsupervised, Gonzalez said.

Crowd stopped at border

El Paso (US): A large number of migrants in Mexico who were "posing a potential threat to make a mass entry" into the United States were prevented from crossing a bridge leading to El Paso, Texas, a US Customs and Border Protection spokesperson said. Physical barriers were put up to restrict entry at the Paso Del Norte International Bridge on Sunday afternoon, spokesperson Roger Maier said in a statement. Barricades also were used for a short time Sunday afternoon at an El Paso crossing at the Bridge of Americas and at one in Stanton, Maier said. Traffic was reopened and flowing in both directions as of Sunday evening, he said.

Doctors kick off 3-day strike

London: Tens of thousands of junior doctors went on strike across England on Monday to demand better pay, kicking off three days of widespread disruption at the UK's state-funded hospitals and health clinics. Junior doctors make up 45 per cent of all NHS doctors. Senior doctors and other medics have had to be drafted in to cover for emergency services, critical care and maternity services. The British Medical Association, the doctors' trade union, says pay for junior doctors has fallen 26 per cent in real terms since 2008, while workload and patient waiting lists are at record highs.

Harris to visit Africa

Washington: Vice President Kamala Harris will spend a week in Africa at the end of March as the United States deepens its outreach to the continent amid global competition, notably with China. "The trip will strengthen the United States' partnerships throughout Africa and advance our shared efforts on security and economic prosperity," said a statement.

FIRST SPEECH OF NEW PRESIDENTIAL TERM

Xi vows to build army into 'Great Wall of steel'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, March 13: President Xi Jinping Monday vowed to build China's military into a "Great Wall of steel" to protect the its sovereignty and developmental interests as he sought a bigger role for Beijing in global affairs, days after brokering a Saudi Arabia-Iran detente, regarded as a diplomatic coup.

Speaking for the first time since the rubber-stamp Parliament last week approved his precedent-breaking third term as head of state, Xi called on the nation to uphold the leadership of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) headed by him.

"This is my third term assuming the lofty office of president," Xi, 69, said at the closing ceremony of China's national legislature, adding that "the trust of the people is the biggest driving force for me to move forward, and it is also a heavy responsibility on my shoulders".

He pledged that he would "faithfully perform the duties entrusted



by the Constitution" and would "never let down the great trust" of all Chinese people. "Security is the bedrock of development, while stability is a prerequisite for prosperity," Xi said.

Xi also called for efforts to advance the modernisation of China's defence forces and build the people's armed forces into a "Great Wall of steel" that is capable of effectively safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests.

Xi's reference to the Great Wall was significant as the mammoth structure, with a total length of more than 20,000 km, was built

over centuries by China's emperors to protect their territory. It also came amidst growing tensions between China and the US and some neighbouring countries.

Xi is regarded as the 'core leader' of the party very much like the party founder Mao Zedong. He was endorsed by the rubber-stamp Parliament last week as the President and head of the Central Military Commission (CMC) the high command of the Chinese military, marking the beginning of his new five-year term.

He was elected as the head of the CPC for an unprecedented third

■ Speaking for the first time since the rubber-stamp Parliament last week approved his precedent-breaking third term as head of state, Xi called on the nation to uphold the leadership of the ruling Communist Party of China headed by him

■ Xi also called for efforts to advance the modernisation of China's defence forces and build the people's armed forces into a "Great Wall of steel" that is capable of effectively safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests

His comments came in the backdrop of China clinching a Saudi-Iran deal, regarded as a diplomatic coup, to end their years of hostilities and restore diplomatic ties. Also speculation is rife that Xi is planning a visit to Russia next week to meet President Vladimir Putin to discuss a negotiated settlement to end the Ukraine war. Russia's state-run Tass news agency quoted Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying that "as a rule, announcements of official foreign visits are made synchronously, by mutual agreement".

As announced by earlier by China, Saudi Arabia and Iran on last Friday reached a deal that includes the agreement to resume diplomatic relations and reopen embassies and missions within two months. The deal reached after talks in Beijing from March 6 to 10 was regarded as a major achievement for China in expanding its global outreach and countering the US influence, especially in the Middle East.

Iran pardons 22,000 protesters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, March 13: Iran announced Monday that the country's supreme leader has pardoned 22,000 people arrested in the recent anti-government protests that swept the Islamic Republic. There was no immediate independent confirmation of the mass release.

The statement by Iran's judiciary head Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejehi offered for the first time a glimpse of the full scope of the government's crackdown that followed the demonstrations over the September death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who had been detained by the country's morality police.

It also suggests that Iran's theocracy now feels secure enough to admit the scale of the unrest, which represented one of the most-serious challenges to the establishment since the aftermath of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Tens of thousands also were detained in the purges that followed the revolution. However, anger still remains in the country as it struggles through the collapse of the nation's currency, the rial, economic woes, and uncertainty over its ties to the wider world after the collapse of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The state-run IRNA news agency quoted Ejehi as announcing the figure Monday. Iranian state media had previously suggested Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei could pardon that many people swept up in the demonstrations, ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, when the pious fast from dawn to dusk. Ramadan starts later next week.

Ejehi said a total of 82,656 prisoners and those facing charges had been pardoned. Of those, some 22,000 had been arrested amid the demonstrations, he said. Those pardoned had not committed theft or violent crimes, he added.

His comments suggest that the true total of those detained in the demonstrations is even greater. In February, Iran had acknowledged "tens of thousands" had been detained in the protests. Monday's acknowledgment from Ejehi offered an even higher than what activists had previously cited.



Visitors crowd a shopping street at the Asakusa district in Tokyo Monday. Japan Monday dropped its request for people to wear masks after three years

US, SK hold drills as North sub test-fires missiles

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, March 13: The South Korean and US militaries launched their biggest joint exercises in years Monday while North Korea said it tested submarine-fired cruise missiles in an apparent protest of the drills it views as an invasion rehearsal.

North Korea's launches Sunday signal the country likely will conduct provocative weapons testing during the US-South Korean drills that are expected to run for 11 days. Last week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered his troops to be ready to repel rivals' "frantic war preparation moves."

North Korea's increasing nuclear threats, along with concerns about China's ambitions, is pushing the United States to beef up its Asian alliances. In the past year, North Korea has been steadily expanding its nuclear arsenal, as China and Russia repeatedly blocked US-led efforts to toughen sanctions on the North despite its barrage of banned missile tests.

The South Korean-US drills include a computer simulation and



several combined field training exercises. South Korean officials said the field exercises would return to the scale of the allies' earlier largest field training that was last held in 2018.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said that the launches of two cruise missiles from a submarine off its east coast showed a resolve to respond with "overwhelming powerful" force to the intensifying military maneuvers by "the US imperialists and the South Korean puppet forces."

NBWs against ousted Imran

■ The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was in the crosshairs for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana and selling them for profit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, March 13: Two non-bailable arrest warrants were issued against ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday for failing to appear in courts in the Toshakhana case and for threatening a woman magistrate while addressing a public gathering here last year.

Khan, the 70-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician, who has been recovering from a gunshot injury from an assassination attempt in Wazirabad last year, has skipped indictment hearings in these cases.

The courts of Additional District and Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal (hearing the Toshakhana case) and Senior Civil Judge Rana Mujahid Rahim (hearing the threatening judge case) issued arrest warrants for Imran and instructed the police to present him before the courts on March 18 and March 21 respectively.



The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was in the crosshairs for buying gifts, including an expensive Graff wristwatch he had received as the premier at a discounted price from the state depository called Toshakhana and selling them for profit.

Meanwhile, a team of Islamabad Police flew to Lahore to arrest Khan for threatening a woman judge after a district and sessions court issued his non-bailable arrest warrant for failing to attend the hearing in that case.

The case against Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party was registered

PAUDEL SWORN IN AS NEPAL'S PRESIDENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, March 13: Senior Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Paudel was Monday sworn in as Nepal's third President, days after he comfortably defeated a candidate fielded by an alliance led by CPN-UML.

At a special ceremony at Sheelal



Niwasi, the President's Office, Acting Chief Justice Hari Krishna Karki administered the oath to 78-year-old Paudel. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Vice-President Nanda Bahadur Pun, outgoing President Bidya Devi Bhandari, Speaker Dev Raj Ghimire, National Assembly Chairman Ganesh Prasad Timilsina and other high-ranking government officials were present on the occasion.

Nepali Congress senior leader Paudel was elected the third President of the country on Thursday, defeating Subas Chandra Nembang of the CPN-UML. Former Speaker and multiple-time minister, Paudel has traversed a long political journey to make it to the country's highest state position. He spent over a decade in jail. He was a lawmaker six times, a minister five times, and Speaker for one term.

Paudel replaces Bidya Devi Bhandari, whose term ended on March 12. This is the third presidential election in Nepal since the country became a republic in 2008. Paudel had support from eight political parties. Out of 52,628 weightage-based votes, Paudel secured 33,802 while Nembang got 15,518 votes.

The outcome of the Presidential election came as a relief for the government headed by Prime Minister 'Prachanda' as former premier KP Sharma Oli-led CPN-UML withdrew its support to his government following a rift over backing Paudel for the presidential poll. Oli on Monday appointed Nembang as the deputy parliamentary party leader.

Khan leads thousands at election rally

Pakistan's ousted premier Imran Khan Monday led a march of thousands of his supporters as Islamabad police arrived here to arrest him after two non-bailable arrest warrants were issued against him, a day after he called off his party's election rally following a ban on public gatherings in Punjab's provincial capital. The 70-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician's supporters threw rose petals at a convoy carrying him to Data Darbar shrine where he is expected to address his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers. A large number of women also joined the rally.

In August last year, over his remarks at a rally here, in which he warned Additional District and Sessions Judge Zeba Chaudhry and top police officials of dire consequences for their "biased" attitude towards his party.

In September last year, Khan appeared before the sessions judge to personally apologise to Chaudhry. Consequently, the Islamabad High Court removed terrorism charges against Khan.

Two decades after Saddam's fall, Iraqis still haunted by disappearances

REUTERS

Baghdad, March 13: When he first heard that US troops had toppled Saddam Hussein, Iraqi engineer Hazem Mohammed thought he would finally be able to find his brother, who had been shot dead and dumped in a mass grave after a failed uprising against Saddam's rule in 1991.

It wasn't just Mohammed's hopes that were raised after the US-led invasion in March 2003. Relatives of tens of thousands of people who were killed or disappeared under the dictator believed they would soon find out the fate of lost loved ones.

Twenty years later, Mohammed, who was hit by two bullets but sur-

vived the mass killing in which his brother perished, and countless other Iraqis are still waiting for answers. Dozens of mass graves were found, testimony to atrocities committed under Saddam's Baath Party. But work to identify victims of historic killings has been slow and partial in the chaos and conflict engulfing Iraq in the past two decades.

"When I saw how mass graves were being opened, randomly, I decided to keep the location of the grave secret until a stronger state would be in place," Mohammed said. As exhumations dragged on, more atrocities were committed in sectarian conflict and amid the rise and fall of armed groups, such



as Al Qaeda and Islamic State militants, as well as Shi'ite Muslim militias. Today Iraq has one of the highest numbers of missing persons

in the world, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which says estimates of the total range up to hundreds of

▶ Iraq has one of world's highest rates of missing people -ICRC

▶ After Saddam's fall, violence fuelled more disappearances

▶ Medics, archivists match evidence from graves and documents

▶ Work is slow and some atrocities left unexplored, families say

thousands of people.

It was another 10 years before Mohammed led a team of experts to the site where he, his brother and others were rounded up as Saddam's troops crushed a mainly Shi'ite

uprising at the end of the 1991 Gulf War. At the time, they were forced to their knees next to trenches summarily dug in the outskirts of the southern city of Najaf, and shot. Tens of thousands of Iraqis were killed by Saddam's forces during his rule. The remains of 46 people were exhumed from the site, now surrounded by farms, but Mohammed's brother was never found. He believes more bodies are still there, unaccounted for.

"A country that is not dealing with its past will not be able to deal with its present or future," he said. "At the same time, I sometimes forgive the government. They have so many ... victims to deal with."

of the day quote

The collapse of the US-based Silicon Valley Bank will create a gap in the startup ecosystem and the budding entrepreneurs will have to find ways to survive the winter

SOPNENDU MOHANTY
CFO, SINGAPORE MONETARY AUTHORITY

The Reserve Bank is likely to hike benchmark lending rates by 25 basis points in its bi-monthly policy next month to bring down inflation within the central bank's comfort zone

RADHIKA RAO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DBS GROUP RESEARCH

To meet the growing demand of large bandwidth and ultra-low latency, 65 per cent of the telecom towers need to be fibreised and 12 lakh towers need to be deployed by FY 2023-24

TR DUA
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, DIPA

SHORT TAKES

LIC's debt in Adani cos dips marginally

New Delhi: LIC's debt exposure in Adani group companies fell marginally to Rs 6,183 crore as of March 5 from Rs 6,347 crore as of December 31, 2022. Parliament was informed Monday. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has informed that its debt exposure to Adani Group of Companies, was Rs 6,347.32 crore and Rs 6,182.64 crore, as on December 31, 2022, and March 5, 2023, respectively. LIC has a debt exposure of Rs 5,388.60 in Adani Ports and SEZ as of March 5. The exposure in Adani Power (Mundra) was Rs 266 crore, Adani Power Maharashtra Ltd - Phase I (Rs 81.60 crore), Adani Power Maharashtra Ltd - Phase III (Rs 254.87 crore), Raigarh Energy Generation Ltd (Rs 45 crore) and Raipur Energen Ltd (Rs 145.67 crore), as per the reply.

Koo integrates ChatGPT

New Delhi: Koo, an India-based social media app that aims to rival Twitter, has integrated OpenAI's ChatGPT to help users more easily create posts, the company's co-founder told Reuters. ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence bot that can create prose in response to prompts and has set off a tech industry craze over generative AI. Koo users will be able to use ChatGPT directly within the app to help them draft posts about current events, politics or pop culture, said Mayank Bidawatka, co-founder of Koo, in an interview. "This will help creators get inspiration on what to create," he said. "They could ask (ChatGPT) for the trending news in their region and then write their thoughts."

REUTERS

New York, March 13: State regulators closed New York-based Signature Bank Sunday, the third largest failure in US banking history, two days after authorities shuttered Silicon Valley Bank in a collapse that stranded billions in deposits.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) took control of Signature, which had \$110.36 billion in assets and \$88.59 billion in deposits at the end of last year, according to New York state's Department of Financial Services.

Employees appeared to gather at the company's Manhattan headquarters for meetings Sunday, ordering catering from Carmine's, an Italian restaurant, and Starbucks coffee, according to a Reuters reporter on the scene. People trickled out of the building after the news of the closure was announced.

Investors were unnerved by the speed at which startup-focused SVB, the 16th largest lender in the US, was toppled by customer withdrawals. The episode last week erased more than \$100 billion in market value from US banks, prompting swift action from government officials over the weekend to try and restore confidence in the financial system.

The FDIC established a "bridge" successor bank Sunday which will

OVER \$100BN IN MARKET VALUE ERASED FROM US BANKS

SIGNATURE HAD \$110.36BN IN ASSETS AND \$88.59BN IN DEPOSITS AT THE END OF LAST YEAR

enable customers to access their funds Monday. Signature Bank's depositors and borrowers will automatically become customers of the bridge bank, the FDIC said.

The regulator named former Fifth Third Bancorp (FITB.O) Chief Executive Greg Carmichael as CEO of the bridge bank.

Silicon Valley Bank customers will have access to their deposits starting Monday, US officials said Sunday. The federal government also announced actions to shore up deposits and try and stem any broader fallout.

Signature was a commercial bank with private client offices in New York, Connecticut, California, Nevada and North Carolina, and had nine national business lines including commercial real estate and digital asset banking.

As of September, almost a quarter of its deposits came from the cryptocurrency sector, but the bank announced in December that it would shrink its crypto-related deposits by \$8 billion.

The exploitation of lithium (in J&K) will depend upon successful auction of the mineral block

PRALHAD JOSHI
MINES MINISTER



TCS IN US' BEST LARGE EMPLOYERS LIST

Software major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Monday said that it has been named to the Forbes annual list of "America's Best Large Employers". This recognition is based on an independent survey of 45,000 employees working for American companies with more than 1,000 employees



US BANKING SYSTEM IN TATTERS

Signature Bank shut; 3rd largest failure in US history

SIGNATURE'S FAILURE FOLLOWED SILICON VALLEY BANK'S FRIDAY SHUTDOWN, THE SECOND LARGEST IN US HISTORY BEHIND WASHINGTON MUTUAL, WHICH COLLAPSED DURING THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS

US bails out SVB, Signature customers

US President Joe Biden vowed stiffer bank regulations



Americans can have confidence that the banking system is safe. No losses, and this is an important point, no losses will be borne by the taxpayers. Let me repeat that: no losses will be borne by the taxpayers. Instead the money will come from the fees that banks pay into the Deposit Insurance Fund

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

uninsured depositors will be recovered by a special assessment on banks, as required by law, officials said.

Washington: In an extraordinary action to restore confidence in the US's banking system, President Joe Biden's administration guaranteed that customers of the failed Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and Signature Bank will have access to all their money starting Monday.

In a joint statement, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Chairman Martin J Gruenberg said the FDIC will make SVB and Signature's customers whole.

President Joe Biden declared the US banking system "safe" and vowed stiffer bank regulation, after US regulators were forced to step in with a series of emergency measures after Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank collapse, threatening to trigger a broader crisis.

The managers of the banks will be fired, Biden noted, and investors will lose money. "They knowingly took a risk, and when the risk didn't pay off his adjusters lose their money. That's how capitalism works," he said.

Biden also promised new regulation after the biggest US bank failure since the 2008 financial

Had the @FDICgov @USTreasury and @federalreserve not intervened today, we would have had a 1930s bank run continuing first thing Monday causing enormous economic damage and hardship to millions. More banks will likely fail despite the intervention, but we now have a clear roadmap for how the gov't will manage them

BILL ACKMAN
BILLIONAIRE HEDGE FUND MANAGER

crisis. Some of the Dodd Frank law passed after that crisis to prevent a repeat was rolled back by Republicans under former president Donald Trump, he noted.

The price of gold meanwhile raced towards the key \$1,900 level, emboldened by bets that the US Federal Reserve may have to tone down its rate hikes as investors sought safe havens.

US regulators Sunday stepped in after the collapse of SVB - the largest US bank failure since 2008, which suffered a run after a big hit on a portfolio of bonds.

Bank stocks bleed

Monday's US market open saw First Republic Bank tumble 65.1% despite news it had secured fresh financing, while Western Alliance Bancorp, PacWest Bancorp and Charles Schwab fell 75.9%, 41.0% and 19%, respectively. Big US banks including JP Morgan Chase, Morgan Stanley and Bank of America also fell. The SVB shockwaves were felt in Europe too, where the STOXX banking index was down 6.3% in its largest one-day fall in more than a year. Germany's Commerzbank fell as much as 12.7%, while Credit Suisse (hit a new record low after falling 15%.

Over \$70bn wiped off global crypto market

The collapse of three banks in the US, including the giant Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), within a week has hammered the global crypto market, wiping off more than \$70 billion as Bitcoin fell below \$20,000 per single coin. On Monday, Bitcoin was hovering around \$18,000 and Peter Schiff, CEO of Euro Pacific Capital, predicted the world's largest cryptocurrency could soon drop below \$4,000.

AMERICA'S \$620BN TICKING TIME BOMB

London, March 13: Banks across the US are sitting on \$620 billion of 'unrealized losses' -- assets which have decreased in value but have not yet been sold -- the head of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation warned, the media reported. Yet the revelation about the 'unrealized losses' will only serve to raise concerns about the US banking industry, it reported. The ticking time bomb is due to US banks buying Treasuries and bonds while interest rates were low, but, with interest rates now rising, finding these bonds have declined in value. When interest rates rise, newly issued bonds start paying higher rates to investors, which makes the older bonds with lower rates less attractive and less valuable. Most banks and pension funds are affected. "The current interest rate environment has had dramatic effects on the profitability and risk profile of banks' funding and investment strategies," said Martin Gruenberg, chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), Daily Mail reported. Speaking March 6, at the Institute of International Bankers, he confirmed the \$620 billion figure. "Most banks have some amount of unrealized losses on securities," he said. "The total of these unrealized losses, including securities that are available for sale or held to maturity, was about \$620 billion at year-end 2022," Daily Mail reported. "Unrealized losses on securities have meaningfully reduced the reported equity capital of the banking industry," he said.

Vedanta, Dalmia partner for low-carbon cement making

Bhubaneswar: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of Aluminium, has entered into a long-term partnership with Dalmia Cement for supply of industrial wastes such as fly ash and spent pot lining for manufacturing low carbon cement. Under this partnership, Vedanta's mega aluminium smelter at Jharsuguda will transport around 20 rakes of fly ash per month for 5 years to Dalmia Cement's manufacturing units in Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya, and Assam, and supply SPL for 3 years to the company's plant at Rajgangpur, Odisha. Vedanta Aluminium is a preferred supplier of high-quality fly ash to some of India's leading cement producers, fostering industrial collaboration for production of low-carbon cement. Fly ash is a high-volume by-product of thermal power generation using coal that caters to the electricity requirements of Vedanta's aluminium smelters at Jharsuguda. Fly ash is a sought-after raw material in the cement industry, owing to its inherent cementitious properties which can be leveraged by cement makers to improve product quality, conserve energy, water and other valuable resources, and reduce the industry's carbon footprint.



CONTAGION FEARS

Sensex, Nifty dip to 5-month lows

STOCK INDICES WITNESS PLUNGE FOR THE THIRD STRAIGHT SESSION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

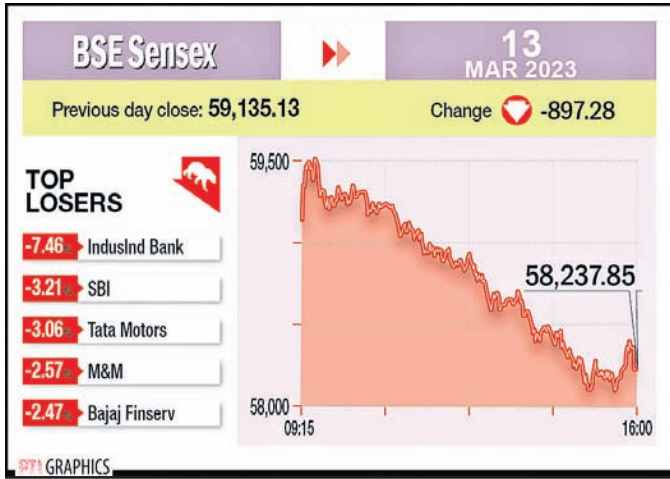
Mumbai, March 13: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty declined for a third day on the trot to close at five-month low levels Monday due to a massive sell-off in banking, finance and auto stocks triggered by fears of potential contagion from the biggest bank failure in the US since 2008.

Unabated flight of foreign capital and a weak domestic currency amid global rate hike fears added to the gloom, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plunged 897.28 points or 1.52 per cent to settle at 58,237.85, the lowest closing level in five months. Only one Sensex stock ended higher while the rest 29 dropped.

The index opened higher and later rose by 375 points to touch a high of 59,510.92 in early trade amid positive Asian markets. However, bears gripped the markets and the index tanked over 1,400 points from the day's high to 58,094.55.

The NSE Nifty tanked 258.60



points or 1.49 per cent to end at a five-month low of 17,154.30, with 45 of its scrips ending in the red.

IndusInd Bank was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 7.46 per cent, followed by SBI, Tata Motors, M&M, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank and Infosys. In contrast, Tech Mahindra was the only winner. The selling pressure was wide-

spread wherein banking, auto and IT majors were beaten down badly. The broader indices too plunged sharply lower and lost nearly 2 per cent each.

Meanwhile, the rupee declined 10 paise to close at 82.16 against the US dollar Monday International oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.79 per cent to \$81.30 per barrel.

Investors poorer by over ₹4.4L-cr

Domestic equity investors' wealth eroded by more than Rs 4.43 lakh crore Monday as fears of a financial contagion triggered by one of the biggest bank failures in the US roiled market sentiments. Reflecting the massive sell-off across sectors, the total market valuation of BSE-listed companies stood at Rs 2,58,56,295.60, leaving investors poorer by Rs 4,43,023.89 compared to the closing level Friday. The total market valuation was at Rs 2,62,99,319.49 at the end of trading on Friday, when the key index had crashed more than 670 points.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) offloaded shares worth Rs 1,546.86 crore Monday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul ended in the green, while Tokyo settled lower. European equity markets were trading with significant losses in the afternoon trade.

Retail inflation declines to 6.44% in February

Retail inflation is still above RBI's comfort level of 6%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 13: Retail inflation dipped marginally to 6.44 per cent in February, mainly on account of a slight easing in prices of food and fuel items though it remained above the Reserve Bank's comfort level of 6 per cent for the second month in a row.

As per the government data released Monday, the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation was at 6.52 per cent in January and 6.07 per cent in February 2022.

The retail inflation rate for the food basket worked out to be 5.95 per cent in February, marginally

lower than 6 per cent in January. It was 5.85 per cent in February last year.

As per the data, vegetable prices dipped by 11.61 per cent on an annual basis, though it recorded a double-digit increase in spices (20.20 per cent) and cereals and products (16.73 per cent).

A decline in inflation was also witnessed in the oils and fats segment. The price rise remained subdued in segments like meat and fish, eggs, pulses and products, sugar and confectionery and non-alcoholic beverages.

On the other hand, the inflation in the fuel and light segment worked



out to be 9.90 per cent in February. Also milk and products, clothing and footwear became dearer during the month.

The data also revealed that inflation in rural areas was higher at

6.72 per cent during the month compared to 6.10 per cent in urban centres.

Except for November and December 2022, retail inflation has remained above the RBI's upper

tolerance level of 6 per cent since January 2022. The central bank has been mandated by the government to ensure the retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

The Reserve Bank has projected retail inflation at 6.5 per cent for 2022-23, with the January-December quarter at 5.7 per cent.

To contain the rising prices, the RBI has hiked interest rates by 250 basis points since May last year. The latest rate hike of 25 basis points in February took the benchmark policy rate to 6.50 per cent.

The Reserve Bank is scheduled to announce the next bi-monthly monetary policy, the first for fiscal 2023-24, April 6

Centre seeks Parl approval for additional spending of ₹1.48L-cr

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 13: The Centre Monday sought Parliament's approval for an additional expenditure of Rs 1,48,133 crore for the remaining period of 2022-23, under the second batch of supplementary demands for grants for the current fiscal.

A statement showing the supplementary demands for grants (second batch) for 2022-23, was laid in Lok Sabha Monday.

Out of this amount, government intends to spend a major chunk of funds towards defence pensions, GST compensation to states, fer-

tiliser and urea subsidies, sovereign green fund and universal service obligation (USO) fund of the telecom ministry.

The government plans to spend Rs 21,000 crore on disbursing fertiliser subsidy and Rs 15,325 crore on urea subsidy.

On defence pensions, the government would be spending Rs 33,718 crore. An amount of Rs 29,616 crore is to be spent on disbursing GST compensation to states.

Under the USO fund of telecom ministry, it intends to spend Rs 25,052 crore. On the sovereign green fund, the government will be spending Rs 5,536 crore.

ULTIMATE TEST IS ON

New Zealand's thrilling win over Sri Lanka seals India's World Test Championship final qualification; Rohit's men win Border-Gavaskar Trophy for fourth consecutive time after the final match ends in a draw

Kiwis give wings to Men in Blue

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christchurch, March 13: Kane Williamson (121 n o, 194b, 11x4, 1x6) and Neil Wagner stole a bye from the last ball of the first cricket Test Monday to beat Sri Lanka by two wickets and emphasize New Zealand's aptitude for extraordinary Test match victories.

The run on the final delivery of the Test not only sealed a memorable win for the Kiwis, but also paved the way for India to WTC final.

Only two weeks after New Zealand beat England by a single run at the Basin Reserve, the Black Caps again played a part in one of the most incredible finishes in Test match history.

Rain seemed to have wrecked the final day of the match in Christchurch when it prevented play in the scheduled first two sessions. When it cleared the umpires announced a single extended session in which New Zealand needed 257 runs to win and Sri Lanka needed nine wickets.

A winning result seemed impossible though the session was extended to at least 52 overs and more than 3-1/2 hours. In what turned into a 50-over match, then a 20-over match.

New Zealand needed 131 runs off the last 20 overs, then 101 off the last 15 with Williamson steering the innings. Williamson had support from Daryl Mitchell (81, 86b, 3x4, 4x6), who made 102 in the first innings. When he was out New Zealand still needed 53 to win.

Asitha Fernando bowled superbly through more than the last



MOMENT OF RECKONING: Kane Williamson successfully slides the bat past the crease to complete the winning run in Christchurch, Monday

hour, removing Mitchell with a magnificent yorker. He then dismissed Tom Blundell with 47 to win and Michael Bracewell with 19 required.

Finally eight runs were needed off the last over with Williamson in charge. One run came from the first ball bowled by Asitha, one run from the second and then Matt Henry was run out and the drama increased.

Neil Wagner, the hero of New Zealand's win over England, had been supposed to be ruled out of the match and the next Test with a bulging disc in his back and a hamstring strain. But he couldn't resist the drama of the moment, discharging himself from the spinal unit of a local hospital and jogging to the crease with five runs needed and three balls remaining.

Williamson struck a boundary and there was one run needed off two balls. The next ball from Asitha was short, it passed over Williamson's head as he stood upright but no wide was called. That left the equation as one ball remaining, one run needed.

Williamson played at but missed another short ball and ran through, arriving as the stumps were shattered by a Sri Lanka throw at the non-striker's end. The final and crucial decision was left to the video umpire.

He considered the footage and decided Williamson had made his ground and New Zealand had won by two wickets with no time to spare. New Zealand's winning run chase was its third-largest in Test cricket.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ahmedabad, March 13: On an uneventful day of cricket, India qualified for the World Test Championship (WTC) final and clinched the Border-Gavaskar Trophy for the fourth successive time after the fourth and final match against Australia ended in a draw, here Monday.

India's spot in the WTC final against Australia was locked before the post-lunch session when Sri Lanka lost the Christchurch Test to New Zealand by two wickets as Kane Williamson's magnificent hundred steered his side to one of the most thrilling wins in Test cricket.

Australia were 175/2 in 78.1 overs in their second innings with a lead of 84 runs when the two teams agreed to settle for a draw.

India have now beaten Australia by an identical 2-1 margin in the last four series - 2017 (home), 2018-19 (away), 2020-21 (away) and now 2023 at home.

It was a 'Memorable Monday' for India as a country in both performing arts and sports with 'RRR's song 'Naatu Naatu' getting the Oscar for the best song and Elephant Whisperers winning the 'Best Documentary Award'.

By the afternoon, cricket added to the list of global accomplishments and now Rohit Sharma would love to break the decade-long ICC Trophy jinx.

With a feathered of a track on offer, which former Australian opener Mark Waugh sarcastically said can host a "22-day Test match", an outcome favouring either side was almost impossible, with only two completed innings in four days.

For Australia, it was important that their batters made the best use of the flat surface without being under pressure as they had already qualified for the WTC final.

Travis Head (90, 163b, 10x4, 2x6) will certainly put pressure on David



MILESTONE MAN: Axar Patel was in jolly mood after dismissing Travis Head (not in pic) for his 50th Test wicket, Monday

Warner when he comes back while Marnus Labuschagne (63 n o, 213b, 7x4) also did well.

The Indian team could feel chuffed after back-to-back WTC final qualification but head coach Rahul Dravid and captain Rohit would know well that Australia will be a different proposition in the final where the track will certainly not aid the Indian spinners like it did in the first three Tests at home.

An Australian attack, comprising Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, skipper Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon on an early June English track, could prove to be a handful but India have won two series against this attack in Australia.

In England, India will have to play with a single spinner and that will be all-rounder Jadeja if he remains injury free. But not having Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant will hurt them in England way more

than it would have in Indian conditions where spinners did bulk of the job in favourable conditions.

KS Bharat (101 runs in 4 Tests) isn't cut out for elite cricket and as a wicketkeeper isn't great shakes as he struggled against turning deliveries as well as when the wobbly seamers were bowling. He dropped three catches on the day and having him as a keeper-batter in England would be a risk that Indian team management can ill-afford.

KL Rahul's form deserted him big time but there were two very significant gains that will boost the Indian team's confidence.

No one would have believed at the start of the series that Axar Patel (264 runs) will end up as the team's No.2 run getter behind Virat Kohli (297 runs) with three half centuries in four games. His batting has improved tremendously but less than five wickets in a four-Test series,

where he was grossly under-bowled, doesn't do justice to his abilities.

Also, the Indian spin attack's limitations on a batting belter was once again exposed. Ashwin had a tremendous first innings where he took six wickets and also ended up as the highest wicket-taker (25) in the series.

Ashwin, by far, looked the best spinner when the going got tough but the same couldn't be said about Jadeja and Patel, who were pedestrian and slightly out of sync the moment the surface had nothing to offer.

BRIEF SCORES
Australia 480 & 175/2 (Travis Head 90, Marnus Labuschagne 63 n o; Axar Patel 1/36); India 571. Match drawn.

ROHIT SHARMA

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT: It's quite critical for us. We are going to keep in constant touch with all the players (during IPL) who are going to play that final and monitor their workload and see what's happening with them. Around 21st May, there will be six teams who will be possibly out of IPL play-off contention and so whichever players are available, we will try and find time to get them to UK early as possible and get some time and we will monitor as much as possible.

EARLY PREPARATION: We are sending some (red) Duke Balls to all fast bowlers and if they get some time to bowl with that but again it all depends on individuals. Look, I believe that preparations will be key for us, come the finals.

WTC FINAL: Speaking of playing them (Australia) in finals, it will be a different ball game with neutral venue for both teams. Both teams have played lot of cricket in that part of the world and I won't say it will be alien conditions for



Skippers Rohit Sharma and Steve Smith shake hands after the Ahmedabad Test

both teams but yes, compared to what it is like playing India in India or Australia in Australia, it is not going to be like that, it would be slightly different from that which I am sure both teams will prepare for it.

RAHUL DRAVID
We just qualified at lunchtime today (Monday). I wasn't counting my chickens before they hatched. We'll celebrate this for starters. It is going to be a challenge. There's going to be a lot of logis-

tics involved given the IPL final is only a week before the WTC final. We'll think about it.

VIKAS KOHLI

The expectations that I have for myself as a player are more important to me. I am not in a space now where I will go out and prove someone wrong. I also need to justify why I am there on the field. I think in Test cricket I wasn't able to play with my tempo and template that I have played with for the last 10 years for awhile now. So that was the one thing I was trying to do.

R ASHWIN

It's been a great journey together (with Jadeja). We wouldn't be the same without the other. He gives me a lot of freedom to be creative on the field with the ball. Credit to him. I thought he bowled beautifully in the Delhi Test. That's why we're here

RAVINDRA JADEJA

I'm not happy with my batting in the series. I missed on a few occasions... especially in this game. Hopefully I'll work harder and be more focussed on my batting for the next series.

Capitals hand RCB fifth consecutive loss in WPL



Jess Jonassen & Marizanne Kapp (R)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Navi Mumbai, March 13: Royal Challengers Bangalore succumbed to a fifth consecutive defeat in the Women's Premier League here Monday night as Delhi Capitals clinched a six-wicket win in a tense finish.

Chasing 151 on what turned out to be a challenging surface to bat on, Delhi Capitals were guided by the pair of Jess Jonassen (29 n o) and Marizanne Kapp (32 n o; 0/17 in 4 overs), who produced an all-round show.

Delhi remained on the second spot in the points table with four wins giving them eight points, whereas RCB were pushed closer to elimination since they have endured a horror campaign in the inaugural WPL, losing all their five matches.

Delhi were rocked early by Megan Schutt, who cleaned up the dangerous Shafali Verma on the sec-

ond ball of the innings to provide her side with a promising start.

But Alice Capsey (38) took charge as she launched a flurry of boundaries to put Delhi on track. However, her charge was halted by Preeti Bose, who dismissed the right-handed batter.

Delhi's leadership pair of Meg Lanning and Jemimah Rodrigues could add only 25 runs before their stand was broken, in the ninth over. Sobhana Asha got rid of Lanning.

A crucial moment arrived in the game on the first ball of the 12th over, when Preeti at point dropped a regulation catch to give a reprieve to Rodrigues, batting on 17. However, Rodrigues perished in the 15th over. The remaining runs were knocked off by Kapp and Jonassen, who added 45 runs for the fifth wicket.

Earlier in the game, RCB scored a competitive score with Ellyse Perry (67 n o) and Richa Ghosh (37) providing them late impetus. RCB had managed 50/2 at the halfway mark, but their batters found rhythm and did well to add another 100 to their total in the final 10 overs. The final six overs yielded 82 runs for RCB.

BRIEF SCORES: RCB Women 150/4 (Ellyse Perry 67 n o, Richa Ghosh 37; Shikha Pandey 3/23) lost to DC Women 154/4 (Alice Capsey 38, Marizanne Kapp 32 n o; Sobhana Asha 2/27) by 6 wickets.

Indian juggernaut continues

HARMANPREET & Co SEE OFF WORLD CHAMPIONS GERMANY SECOND TIME IN THREE DAYS TO TOP THE FIH PRO LEAGUE STANDINGS



ON A ROLL: Indian players celebrate a goal against Germany at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, Monday

AGENCIES

Rourkela, March 13: India's impressive show in the FIH Pro League at Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium here continues as they put on another offensive masterclass to register a superb 6-3 win against reigning World Champions Germany.

Abhishek and Selvam Karthi scored a brace apiece for the hosts, while Jugraj Singh and Harmanpreet Singh added a goal each from the penalty corners.

Tom Grambusch, Gonzalo Peillat and Malte Hellwig were on target for Germany.

With the win, India go to the top of the men's Pro League table, level on points with Spain, but one spot above them, thanks to a superior goal difference.

Germany went 1-0 up through Grambusch and maintained the lead. The hosts first found the equaliser in the 21st minute through Jugraj. A minute later Abhishek put India ahead after the hosts caught

Germany out with a long aerial ball that was missed by Peillat and Barry, leaving Abhishek for a one-on-one with Stadler and he did that with ease.

Peillat responded just a minute later, bringing Germany level. However, India were back ahead inside 30 seconds as Sukhjeet received an aerial ball on the left side of the German circle and his cross was deflected in at the near post by Karthi. The goals kept flowing as India doubled their lead with Harmanpreet Singh scoring from his first penalty corner attempt of the game. India were 4-2 ahead at the halftime break.

Germany reduced the deficit in the opening minute of the second half. Hellwig, after getting a cross by Miltkau, got in behind Jugraj to get a deflection that Pawan had no hope of reaching. Pawan made a crucial save from a German penalty corner midway through the third quarter as Germany went into the final quarter with a goal down.

India made the perfect start to the final quarter as Jarmanpreet Singh's pass across the face of the goal found Karthi who scored his second of the game with a smart deflection. India made it 6-3 in the 51st minute following a brilliant crossfield pass by Dilpreet found Sukhjeet all alone. But he selflessly passed to Abhishek who rolled the ball into an empty goal.

Barca beat Bilbao amid more refereeing storm



Raphinha (C) reacts after scoring against Athletic Bilbao, Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, March 13: Still mired in controversy over their payments to the company of a former refereeing committee official, Barcelona restored their lead over Real Madrid to nine points in the Spanish league Sunday after a late VAR decision went their way.

Barcelona beat Athletic Bilbao 1-0 after video review disallowed an 87th-minute goal by Bilbao forward Inaki Williams for a handball in the buildup. Williams laughed at the decision on Twitter after the game. "We are upset," Bilbao coach Ernesto Valverde said. "Nobody on the field had seen anything, not even the referee or the fourth official or the other assistants."

The review of Williams' goal took nearly three minutes. When the decision was announced, it drew loud jeers from the home

fans at San Mamés Stadium.

The controversy came hours after Madrid had announced it would side against Barcelona in the legal proceedings that the rivals are facing over their payments of millions of euros over several years to a company that belonged to the former vice-president of Spain's football refereeing committee.

Raphinha scored the winner in first-half stoppage time with a shot from inside the area after a superb pass by Sergio Busquets. The line-man raised his flag but video review determined the Brazil forward was in a legal position.

There didn't immediately appear to be anything wrong with the goal by Williams, but the referee was asked to look at Iker Muniain's touch of the ball with his arm earlier in the buildup, and it was deemed to have been enough to disallow the goal.