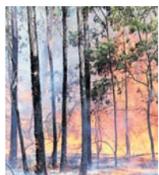




OSCAR GLORY

Jessica Chastain bagged her maiden Oscar trophy at the 94th Academy Awards for The Eyes of Tammy Faye

LEISURE P2



SIMILIPAL IN FLAMES

Fire engulfs parts of Similipal National Park, the Unesco biosphere reserve, in Mayurbhanj district

STATE P5



KIM'S STERN MESSAGE

North Korea says leader Kim Jong Un has vowed to develop more powerful means of attack

INTERNATIONAL P10

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HOUSE RUCKUS: FIVE WB BJP MLAS SUSPENDED

Kolkata: The budget session of the West Bengal Assembly ended in an exchange of fisticuffs Monday, as legislators of the TMC and the BJP came to blows after heated arguments over the Birbhumi killings, prompting the speaker to suspend five saffron party MLAs, including Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari, who was also accused of busting the nose of a rival MLA. Shortly after the House assembled at 11am, it plunged into pandemonium as BJP MLAs trooped to the well, demanding a statement by CM Mamata Banerjee over the worsening law and order situation in the wake of the tragedy in Birbhumi district. P9

PAK PM FACES NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

Islamabad: A no-confidence motion against Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was tabled Monday in the National Assembly by Leader of the Opposition and PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif, setting in motion the process in the lower house to remove the embattled cricketer-turned-politician from office. As the much-anticipated session began after a two-day recess Monday, Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri asked the members of the Parliament, who are in favour of the motion, to stand up so that their numbers could be counted. P10

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Oil prices up for 6th time in week

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 28: Petrol price Monday was hiked by 30 paise a litre and diesel by 35 paise, taking the total increase in rates in the last one week to ₹4.10 per litre. This is the sixth increase in prices since the ending of a four-and-half-month long hiatus in rate revision March 22.



CITY FUEL PRICES

PETROL	₹106.08/litre
DIESEL	₹95.98/litre

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending upon the incidence of local taxation. In the first four occasions, prices were increased by 80 paise a litre - the steepest single-day rise since the daily price revision was introduced in June 2017.

On Sunday, petrol price went up by 50 paise a litre and diesel by 55 paise. In all, petrol prices have gone up by ₹4 per litre and diesel by ₹4.10. Prices had been on a freeze since November 4 ahead of the assembly elections in states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab - a period during which the cost of raw material (crude oil) soared by about USD 30 per barrel.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Seems he too is into hate speech business

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	57593.49	↑ 231.29
NIFTY	17222.00	↑ 69.00
DOLLAR	76.71	↓ ₹0.10
EURO	83.46	↓ ₹0.30
GOLD	₹51,604	↓ ₹272
SILVER	₹68,051	↓ ₹785

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	37.2°C	37.2°C
TEMP MIN	26.1°C	25.6°C
Humidity	82%	85%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Dry weather very likely

STRIKE IN CITY



Police personnel remove a protester from the National Highway-16 in Nayapalli area of Bhubaneswar, Monday

Bandh disrupts rail, road traffic

■ In view of the bandh, varsities have deferred the exams scheduled March 28 and 29

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 28: The first day of the two-day Bharat Bandh called by a joint platform of central trade unions and bank employees' forum that began Monday hit normal life in Odisha with vehicular movement being affected across state.

Holding banners and placards, various trade union leaders reached the Bhubaneswar Railway Station, and also staged road blockade at different junctions. Two trains were blocked by the protesters at the railway station while buses were also stopped at Baramunda bus stand in City.

Hundreds of vehicles, including trucks, remained stranded on both sides of National Highway-16 near Jayadev Vihar in Bhubaneswar as the agitators blocked the road. Similar scenes were also observed in other parts of the state as the agitators resorted to picketing and sloganeering while protesting against the privatisation of government-owned companies, price rise, and other central government policies.

Police sources revealed that no incident of violence was reported during Bandh in the Capital. As many as 30 protesters were detained by city police for obstructing vehicular traffic on the national highway Monday morning.

Meanwhile, the previously scheduled examinations of Utkal University, RD Women's University and Sambalpur University March 28 and 29 have also been postponed.

CB nabs Sarmistha

■ Sarmistha along with her aide was arrested by the CB while they were returning to Bhubaneswar from Kolkata by bus. The duo allegedly spent a few days in Assam's Guwahati

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, March 28: In a major breakthrough, the joint team of Odisha Crime Branch (CB) and Chandbali police Monday arrested prime accused Sarmistha Rout and her close associate Jhuna Bhoi over the alleged murder of cameraman Manas Swain from Nalanga village of Bhadrak.

Sarmistha had been on the run for more than one month. Sources revealed that the duo was arrested by the joint team while they were returning to Bhubaneswar from Kolkata by bus. The duo allegedly spent a few days at Guwahati in Assam too. Both of them were produced in the Court of Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) at Chandbali in the district later in the day, informed



LENSMAN MURDER

Sanjeeb Panda, ADG, Crime Branch.

The court allowed the CB team to take the four accused, including on a 5-day remand for further probe into the murder case. The court granted remand for prime accused Sarmistha, Jhuna, former OIS officer Niranjan Sethi and Ranjan Nayak.

It is pertinent to mention here that the probing team is yet to unravel the mystery behind a memory chip for which the cameraman is believed to have been killed.

Interestingly, a friend of him has reportedly disclosed the content of the semiconductor device. A five-

member team of Crime Branch probing the alleged kidnap and murder Friday visited the kidnapping site at Palaspur village under Chandbali police limits in Bhadrak and quizzed a few villagers.

Swain was kidnapped in a car February 7 by his former employer Sarmistha and some of her associates while he was returning home after videographing a wedding ceremony. The accused later brought him to the old age home of Sarmistha here. He was severely beaten up prior to his death. Subsequently, the accused took his body and buried it at a hill in Nayagarh.

STATE TO GROW AT 10.1% THIS FISCAL: CM

■ The CM says the govt has successfully managed the pandemic and state's economy has been protected from the adverse impact of Covid-19

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 28: As per advance estimates made for the financial year 2021-22, the state is likely to register 10.1 per cent growth compared to 8.8 per cent growth in national economy, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said here Monday.

In his statement on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's speech in the Assembly, Patnaik said the state economy contracted by 5.3 per cent compared to 7.3 per cent contraction in the national economy during the financial year 2020-21 due to slowdown. However, now the economy has recovered, he said.

"Recovery of the economy from the impact of the pandemic was a huge challenge, and we have met this challenge with resolve and we have been able to successfully reboot our economy," he said.

Over the last 10 years, the state has grown at an average rate of 6.5 per cent against the national average of 5.3 per cent.

However, during the fiscal 2020-21, due to the slow down, the state's economy contracted by 5.3 per cent compared to 7.3 per cent contraction in the national economy and that would mean the state was comparatively less affected, Patnaik said, adding that Odisha is the only state to be fully FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management) compliant since enactment.

Odisha has emerged as a leading investment destination with attracting over ₹4.4 lakh crore investment intents during the last three years, with more than 1.53 lakh employment opportunities, he pointed out.

Patnaik said that the state government has provided special financial support to the MSME sector to tide over the Covid crisis. The government had continuous engagement with the industry to ensure that their production and logistics are not hampered by the pandemic.

SAMITI MEMBER'S HUBBY SHOT DEAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Belpada, March 28: A samiti member's husband was shot dead over political rivalry at Bagdor gram panchayat under Belpada block in Bolangir district Monday evening.

Two masked miscreants came on a motorcycle and opened fire at Loknath Biswal, husband of Banita Biswal, while the couple was sitting outside their residence at Banamal. A critically-injured Loknath was admitted to Belpada CHC where doctors declared him dead.

The bullets pierced through his heart, doctor Amar Mishra said. However, Loknath, just before his death, identified the duo as Giridhari and Basu of the same village, who had a political rivalry with him. Police have failed to reach the village as it is Maoist-prone but reports suggest the cops have detained the duo from Lathor.

Biggest ever Vig seizure at senior engineer's house

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 28: Vigilance sleuths Monday unearthed cash to the tune of Rs 1.36 crore during a raid at the house of Senior Engineer Ashis Kumar Dash in Trishulia area of Cuttack. The Vigilance sources claimed the seizure as the highest ever by the anti corruption agency so far.

Dash worked as the Superintendent Engineer at the Rural Works department in Malkangiri district. Monday morning, the Vigilance officials carried house search in Dash's apartment at Shantivan, Belgachia, Trishulia, Cuttack.

"During searches, Rs 1 crore 15 lakh cash and 632 gm gold including biscuits/coins were recovered. Earlier, Rs 21,75,470 cash and 602 gm gold was recovered at Malkangiri. With this, the total recovery comes to Rs 1 crore 36 lakh 75 thousand cash and 1.2 kg gold, the highest in the history of Odisha Vigilance," the Vigilance reported.

OSCAR 2022 Will Smith slaps Chris, wins best actor

The 94th Academy Awards, overshadowed by the shocking Smith moment that stunned millions of viewers watching the event on their screens, returned to glitz, glamour and spectacle for the first time since the pandemic

REUTERS

Los Angeles, March 28: In a moment that initially looked like one of the gags that enliven the Oscars telecast, Will Smith strode up to the stage and delivered an open-handed slap to Chris Rock after the presenter made a joke about the actor's wife, Jada Pinkett Smith.

But it swiftly became clear the moment was in fact unscripted when Smith, who had returned to his seat, exchanged words with Rock that included a twice-repeated obscenity, shocking the audience at the Dolby Theatre.

Minutes later, Smith learned he had won best actor. In his acceptance speech, he broke into tears and apologised to his fellow nominees and the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences - but not Rock.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Smith lost his cool at the comedian's reference to the 1997 movie G.I. Jane, in which actress Demi Moore shaved her head. The comment was directed at Smith's wife, who told Billboard in December

she has been battling the autoimmune disorder alopecia, which can cause hair loss and balding.

"Will Smith just smacked the shit out of me," Rock said as the audience laughed, at first thinking it

was a skit. Back in his seat, Smith shouted back. "Keep my wife's name out of your f*****g mouth." The comment was silenced during the live broadcast. Smith won best actor for playing the determined father of tennis legends Venus and Serena Williams in King Richard.

In his vague apology when accepting the award, he said, "Richard Williams was a fierce defender of his family. Art imitates life. I look like the crazy father, just like they said about Richard Williams. But love will make you do crazy things."

The film academy said on Twitter it does not condone violence of any form. Los Angeles police, without naming names, said in a statement that investigators were aware of the incident, but that the individual involved had so far declined to file a police report.

PROTECTIVE OR VIOLENT?

The clip, which has gone viral on social media, has divided people, with some commentators stating that Smith had done the right thing, while others felt his behaviour was out of control. Traditional ideas of masculinity often involve a male partner who is physically more powerful than his female partner, and able and willing to use it to protect her 'honour'. This sometimes extends to violence. Today, however, many people perceive violence as weakness, associating it with an inability to resolve conflict through verbal communication. While some viewers understood the apparent pain Smith appeared to feel to resort to such violence, others found his subsequent comment that "love makes you do crazy things" extremely problematic. MORE P2



ACTOR ASHLEY GREENE EXPECTING FIRST BABY

Twilight' actor Ashley Greene and her husband Paul Khoury are expecting their first baby, her rep confirmed to *People Magazine*, sharing the couple is "over the moon" with excitement.

NICKI MINAJ RELEASES NEW SINGLE WE GO UP

Trinidadian rapper and songwriter Nicki Minaj has recently dropped her fourth song in less than two months and it's a fiery track titled *We Go Up* in collaboration with Fivio Foreign.



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ARIES

Today, you want to do something for the environment. Ganesh says plant a tree, clean up your neighbourhood, ask for a paper bag. You wish to lead the world into a better place? Do it by all means, but one step at a time.

TAURUS

Nostalgia will paint your workplace a bright energetic red today, says Ganesh. All the problems that life throws at you will be deflected by your tough exterior and efficient capabilities. Medals and trophies beckon as you taste success and emerge a winner.

GEMINI

You will tend to be religiously inclined today, feels Ganesh. For this purpose, you may spend some time visiting a temple, mosque or church. You are also likely to go shopping, and chances are that this too is for a religious purpose. May God bless you, says Ganesh.

CANCER

Ganesh predicts an excellent and exceptional day for you at work. You are likely to need all your business acumen while negotiating deals. Your leadership skills are likely to come to the fore during the final stage of a deadline, be it about completing an order or launching new products and marketing them, says Ganesh.

LEO

Today may not be the best time to mess with you, considering the aura of invincibility that you possess. Be it a game, a competition, or an argument, you will have the edge over others in every sphere, says Ganesh. Also, you may come across people with whom you will have personal differences, and those who will try to change your fortunes.

VIRGO

Ganesh feels that today may be an important turning point in your life. You will look to secure the money much required for your bright future. Relationship matters will top your priorities during the afternoon today. You may also feel the need for spirituality, so try your hand at meditation and yoga.

LIBRA

Today is an important day for you, and you will learn a lot from your life partner. Even on the work front, business partners will extend their best possible cooperation to you. Your chances of winning in cut-throat competitions are very bright today, predicts Ganesh.

SCORPIO

You are likely to get overboard with your ambitions and be loud-mouthed, says Ganesh. But do not be too forceful or severe lest you end up tarnishing your image. It is best to stay clear of conflicts in the larger scheme of things, advises Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

A day full of cheer and joy is in store. You will probably enrol in a part-time course and sharpen your skills. But for those in police and legal professions, you will be the lions of the jungle! Roar and stamp your authority, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN

The wait for some good news may have been too long, but it will surely find its way to you today, says Ganesh. Your focus will remain fixed on work, and you may feel like you are finally starting to like your job. This, in turn, will lead you to take some well-informed decisions about your future. And if the good news comes at the right time, you will probably be saved the effort of finding a new job.

AQUARIUS

You may find your schedules running haywire today! Your workload may be daunting, especially if you're an administrator. However, Ganesh says your diligence and commitment will tide you through. And you are still ready to party in the evening. What energy!

PISCES

Your business associates will marvel at your business acumen, and will respect the insights you provide for them to work with. Meanwhile, you will be busy spending quality time with your family and showing them how much they mean to you today, says Ganesh.

ACADEMY HONOURS

CODA SCRIPTS HISTORY

ACTOR JESSICA CHASTAIN BAGS HER MAIDEN OSCAR TROPHY AT THE 94TH ACADEMY AWARDS FOR BIOGRAPHICAL DRAMA THE EYES OF TAMMY FAYE.

Los Angeles: The 94th Academy Awards returned to Dolby Theatre in Hollywood March 27, as the Oscars were held in person completely for the first time since the pandemic began. Stars showed up dressed in their snazziest outfits as they celebrated some great work of the year gone by. With Amy Schumer, Regina Hall and Wanda Sykes as hosts, here's everyone who managed to win the prestigious golden statuette this year.

The Power of the Dog earned 12 nominations. Close behind was *Dune* with 10, and *Belfast* and *West Side Story* tied with seven apiece. *King Richard* scored six nominations. Though Denis Villeneuve's sci-fi spectacle *Dune* registered six wins in technical categories, *CODA* was the big winner



of the night with three Oscars – adapted screenplay for director Sian Heder and supporting actor for Troy Kotsur.

Kotsur, a first-time Academy Award winner, became the second deaf person to win the best supporting actor trophy. "It is amazing to be here. I cannot believe that I am here. Thank you to the Academy for recognising my work," an emotional Kotsur said through an American sign language interpreter in his acceptance speech. *CODA*, a term for Child of Deaf Adults, centres around a deaf family with the exception of the daughter who aspires to be a singer. It is the first film with a cast of predominantly deaf actors, and backed by a streamer (Apple TV Plus), to scoop the coveted best picture award, leaving frontrunner *The Power of the Dog* behind in the Oscars race. AGENCIES

The complete list of winners

- Best picture**
CODA
- Best actress**
Jessica Chastain – *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*
- Best actor**
Will Smith – *King Richard*
- Best director**
The Power of the Dog – Jane Campion
- Best original song**
No Time To Die – *No Time To Die*; Music and Lyric by Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell
- Best documentary feature**
Summer of Soul
- Best adapted screenplay**
CODA – Screenplay by Sian Heder
- Best original screenplay**
Belfast – Written by Kenneth Branagh
- Best costume design**
Jenny Beavan – *Cruella*
- Best international feature**
Drive My Car (Japan)
- Best supporting actress**
Ariana DeBose – *West Side Story*
- Best supporting actor**
Troy Kotsur – *CODA*
- Best animated feature**
Encanto
- Best original score**
Hans Zimmer – *Dune*
- Best cinematography**
Greig Fraser – *Dune*
- Best documentary short**
The Queen of Basketball
- Best visual effects**
Dune – Paul Lambert, Tristan Myles, Brian Connor and Gerd Nefzer
- Best film editing**
Joe Walker – *Dune*
- Best sound**
Dune – Mac Ruth, Mark Mangini, Theo Green, Doug Hemphill and Ron Bartlett
- Best production design**
Dune – Production Design: Patrice Vermette; Set Decoration: Zsuzsanna Sipos
- Best make-up and hairstyling**
The Eyes of Tammy Faye – Linda Dowds, Stephanie Ingram and Justin Raleigh
- Best live action short**
The Long Goodbye
- Best animated short**
The Windshield Piper
- Best documentary short**
The Queen of Basketball

Little for India

Amid the glamour and glitz of the event, there was little for India. *Writing With Fire*, a documentary by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh chronicling the rise of a newspaper run by Dalit women in Uttar Pradesh, was shortlisted for the best documentary feature award but lost to *Summer of Soul*. And in an exclusion that led to many fans expressing their disappointment on social media and elsewhere, Lata Mangeshkar and Dilip Kumar, two of India's greatest artistes, were left out from the In Memoriam segment that honoured Hollywood veterans Betty White and Sidney Poitier among others.

Indian celebs too lost their cool

Will Smith punching Chris Rock at Oscars 2022 after he joked about his wife, Jada Pinkett, has gone viral now. However, if that hasn't surprised you, here are some other incidents involving celebrities like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Hrithik Roshan that surely will.

Shah Rukh Khan
Shah Rukh Khan allegedly beat up filmmaker Shirish Kunder, husband of director-choreographer Farah Khan, at a party hosted by Sanjay Dutt in 2012. SRK and Shirish's relationship was at an all-



time low after Kunder had criticised SRK's film *Ra One*. He had posted an insulting, 'I just heard a Rs 150 crore firework fizzle' remark on Twitter which led to the brawl. **Salman Khan**
Salman Khan once slapped his se-

curity guard after he allegedly manhandled a young fan. This incident, which took place during the premiere of *Bharat*, created quite a stir on social media. The actor reportedly got angry with the way the guard handled a child in the crowd and slapped him.

Govinda
Actor Govinda was once caught on camera slapping a visitor on the sets of the movie *Money Hai Toh Honey Hai*. The visitor was apparently accusing him of misbehaving with artistes, including women.

Hrithik Roshan

Hrithik Roshan once lost his cool when media professionals chased him at Shirdi just before the launch of his movie *Kites*. The actor was furious and had to shove his way through a bunch of cameras and media men to exit the temple.

Akshay Kumar

According to a report by *Mid-Day*, Akshay thought that the Priyanka Chopra's secretary, Prakash Jaju, was spreading rumours about them dating. Hence, in the heat of the moment, he slapped Prakash. AGENCIES

Twitter reacts to Smith's smack



Los Angeles: In a moment that will forever define the 2022 Academy Awards, Will Smith walked on-stage after Chris Rock improvised a joke about his wife Jada Pinkett Smith and smacked him in the face. Further complicating the evening was that Smith won the Oscar for best actor less than an hour later for his work on *King Richard*, and spent much of his speech tearfully justifying his actions to his peers and saying sorry.

Needless to say, the outburst drew a flood of reaction on Twitter. Here go the most notable reactions below:

Colman Domingo (Actor): I thought, he's from West Philly, just like I'm from West Philly. We're very passionate people

Billy Eichner (Actor): I thought it was a really great show until it took an odd, unexpected turn

Minnie Driver (Actress-Singer): It was deeply personal. We were all privy to...emotions running really high. I really hope they will make up later. It's hard to watch somebody's pain like that.

Michaela Jaé Rodriguez (Actress): Sometimes human emotions happen.



Smith in tears after receiving the trophy

Sometimes human interactions happen. We can't judge people based on their moments

Kenya Barris (Director): There need to be a clear distinction between work and home. We've gotten it confused

Quinta Brunson (Writer-Producer): I'm from Philly! It felt very Philly to me. That's all I have to say

Rob Reiner (Actor): Will Smith owes Chris Rock a huge apology. There is no excuse for what he did. He's lucky Chris is not filing assault charges. The excuses he made tonight were bullshit.

Gabriele Muccino (Director): I am really sorry for the way Will managed to ruin the most important evening of his life

Kandi Burruss (Producer): By the look of that slap, I guess everybody hates Chris literally! Damn... #ChrisRock #WillSmith

Kathy Griffin (Comedian): Let me tell you something, it's a very bad practice to walk up on stage and physically assault a Comedian. Now we all have to worry about who wants to be the next Will Smith in comedy clubs and theaters.

Michael Ian Black (Comedian): So disappointing that Will Smith played Muhammad Ali but he couldn't even knock out Chris Rock.

London Hughes (Comedian): Lol so public assault is the answer to an insensitive joke in 2022?? Good to know. I'll be doing my next Netflix special over Zoom. AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

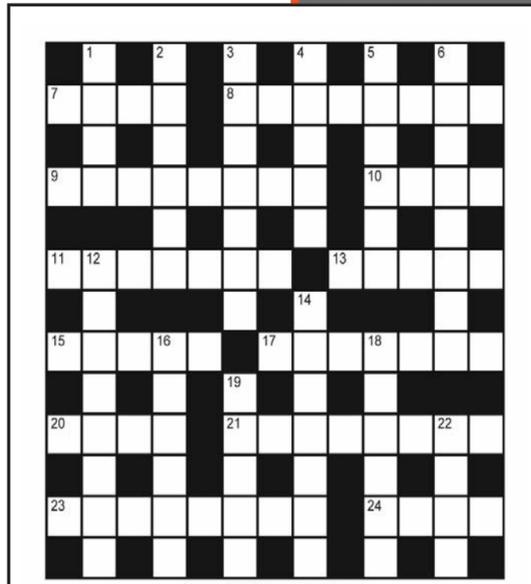


BREVITY



FUN post

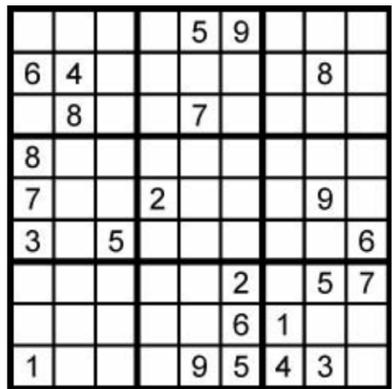
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Greek cheese
- 8 Infallible
- 9 Food and drink of the gods
- 10 Wedding wear
- 11 Taqueria offering
- 13 Playful aquatic animal
- 15 Judiciary
- 17 Military action
- 20 Antares, for one
- 21 Upbeat
- 23 The writing on the wall?
- 24 Persian, for one
- Down**
- 1 Squad
- 2 Cockatoo
- 3 Settle down
- 4 Roomy vehicle
- 5 Fancy neckwear
- 6 Mastermind
- 12 Invert
- 14 Field event
- 16 Coffee or wine decanter
- 18 Fodder
- 19 Pungent
- 22 Hideous

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



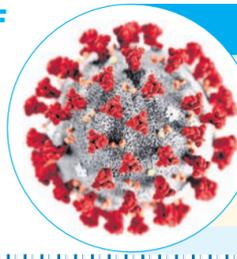
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



TOSHALI MELA KICKS OFF

With Pipli appliqué in background, visitors to the 16th Toshali National Crafts Mela capture the moment on the fair's inaugural occasion at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar, Monday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	48,25,33,065	41,69,72,989	61,49,619
India	4,30,20,723	4,24,83,829	5,21,035
Odisha	12,87,512	12,77,970	9,119

Awareness & stricter enforcement of law keys to defeat cancer: Krupasindhu Panda

Despite the astounding progress of medical science, cancer continues to be among the leading causes of death worldwide. However, contrary to popular belief, it can be leashed thanks to improved medical science and practice, consistent nursing and adequate care. That's exactly what the HCG Panda Cancer Hospital is doing - Facilitating the cancer sufferers with diagnosis, testing, observation, nursing and treatment under one roof - at the moment. Hospital's Director Professor Dr Krupasindhu Panda, in a conversation with **Orissa POST**, speaks about the dreaded ailment and more.



Born into a middle class family in a faraway village, how did you pursue medical education?

Since childhood, I was into social service along with studies. After passing out of Ravenshaw, I decided to pursue Medicine. As the selection process was mark-based back in 1964, I got the opportunity to study the same at the Srirama Chandra Bhanja Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack and passed in Surgery with distinction.

Elaborate a little more about your professional journey?

I began with treating TB in Phulbani. Later, I was

transferred to the SCB Medical College as an anatomy lecturer. Subsequently, I completed my PG in Surgery and began working as a cancer specialist in 1969. Soon after, I received training for cancer treatment from TATA Memorial College and also attended many national and international conferences to gain in-depth knowledge. Later, I joined the first cancer hospital in New York, USA, as a research fellow and the journey began which is still on.

How did the Panda Cancer Hospital come into existence?

Quitting government service in 1996, I began the Panda Cancer Hospital at Kesharpur in Cuttack to serve cancer patients relentlessly and won their trust and confidence. This inspired me to establish a bigger setup at Telengapenta in Cuttack in 2000. Subsequently, in 2005, we joined hands with the Bangalore-based national level HCG Group and then there was no looking back.

What is the status of cancer in Odisha?

Odisha has around five lakh cancer patients. Majority of the cases are of oral, breast and cervical cancers. Around 41 per cent and 26 per cent of people in rural and urban Odisha respectively consume gutkha, khaini

and pan masala, leading to the alarming rise of the disease in the state.

What steps are needed to curb cancer?

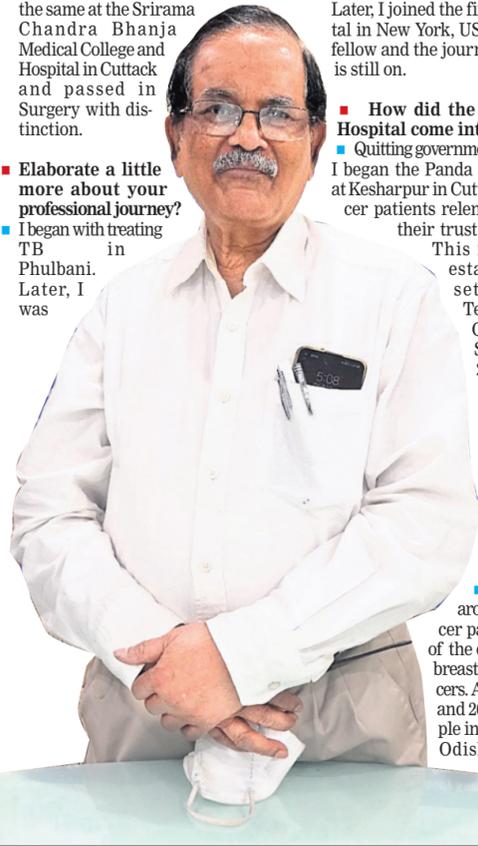
Nicotine consumption among youths, lack of cancer awareness among women and consultation hesitancy induced by fear of shaming are major contributors to the worsening situation. Although the government has ordered restrictions on production, distribution and consumption of gutkha, tobacco, pan masala, cigarettes and nicotine substances, the same are not being enforced strictly. Cancer awareness drive needs to be reinforced on governmental and non-governmental levels too.

What will be your advice to the people of Odisha?

First of all, usage of cancer-causing substances must be avoided or at least kept under control. At the government level, selling of food colour and spurious spices should be stopped. Abnormal usage of pesticides and fertilizers in farming is hazardous. Also, people should change their lifestyle and reliance on fast food and junk food as they take us closer to cancer.

Your advice to cancer victims?

Treating cancer is easier and possible if diagnosed at an early stage. It should be treated carefully and systematically through surgery, medicine and radiotherapy. Patients direly need accommodation, food and nursing. This apart, they need a comfortable and stress-free environment throughout their lifetime. As motivation and determination largely help the treatment process succeed, family members should support and encourage the patients all the time.



On Delhi visit, CM to meet Union ministers

NEW DELHI: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who arrived in Delhi Monday, said he will visit the Parliament and also meet several Union ministers to follow up on various state-specific issues during his stay in the national capital, Tuesday.

"I will be visiting Parliament and also have meetings with Union ministers to follow up on various issues of Odisha which are pending with the Centre," Naveen told the media.

The CM also attended the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year awards function here Monday.

Naveen's Delhi visit assumes significance in the context of the President's election in July this year as the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) may require the support of parties like BJD and YSRC to ensure victory of its candidate. The BJD had on many occasions backed the Union government in Parliament on various issues.

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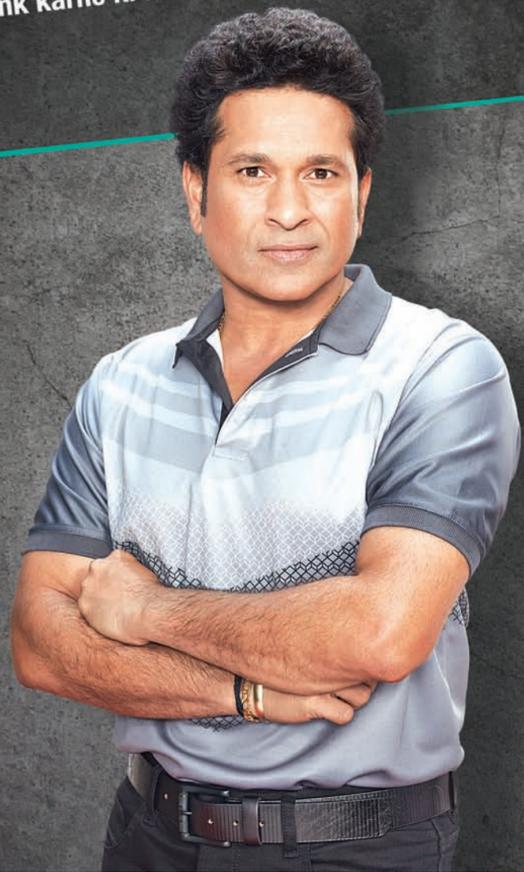


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Per capita loan burden at ₹22,827: Finance Minister



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 28: The per capita loan burden in the state has more than doubled in the past 12 years and has reached ₹22,827.54 by the end of January of the current financial year.

This was informed by Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari in Assembly while replying to a question of Congress MLA Suresh Routray, Monday.

As per Pujari's statement, from ₹9,358.35 in 2010-11, the per head debt burden has climbed up to ₹22,827.54 by January of the current fiscal. The burden was increased to ₹9,942.88 in 2014-15, and kept going up to ₹11,822.12 in 2015-16, ₹13,994.47 in 2016-17, ₹16,450.93 in 2017-18 and ₹18,029.87 in 2018-19.

The per head debt burden crossed ₹20,000 mark to ₹21,192.68 in 2019-20 and again rose to ₹23,761.82 in 2020-21. However, it dipped to ₹22,827.54 till January of the current fiscal (2021-22).

The state government has not borrowed a single penny from the open market during the current financial year 2021-22, Pujari informed the Assembly. He said all state governments in India borrow funds, which is as per the FRBM Act.

The Act has empowered the state to raise funds upto 25 per cent of the GSDP Odisha is towards the bottom position but not the last in India on loan burden. Excluding Karnataka, all other states have remained in upper position than Odisha when it comes to loan burden, pointed out the Finance Minister.

"I am very much hopeful that Odisha will secure the bottom position in the loan burden after the end of this financial year," he stated.

For a developing state, loans are raised for development purposes. Whatever funds were raised through borrowing since 2004-05, all were spent for development activities, Pujari said adding, "Never was the loan utilised for non-plan purpose or providing salary to the employees."

During the current financial year till January, the state has borrowed ₹10,834.29 crore. The loan borrowing includes ₹7,078.58 crore from the Union government, ₹1,955.71 crore from NABARD and ₹1,800 crore from Rural Electrification Corporation and other sources.

However, the loan repayment figure succeeded the borrowing figure as the government has made repayment of ₹12,817.47 crore till January of this year. Moreover, the state has paid ₹3,607.13 crore as interest against the borrowed loans.

11,763 rape cases in 4 years

BHUBANESWAR: As many as 11,763 rape cases were registered in the state during the last four years (2018 to 2021), Minister of State (MoS) for Home, Dibya Shankar Mishra told the Assembly Monday.

The Minister's reply indicated a spurt in rape cases in the last four years. Altogether 2,502 rape cases were registered in the state in 2018, which increased to 2,950 in 2019, 2,984 in 2020 and 3,327 cases in 2021.

Similarly, the women murder cases, including dowry homicide cases, have remained in between 600 and 700 in the past four years.

"610 women murder cases, including 293 dowry homicide cases, were reported in 2021 whereas 676 women murder cases, including 320 dowry homicide cases, were registered with the Odisha Police in 2020. The state police reported 629 women murder cases in 2019 and 628 such cases in 2018," said the minister while replying to a question of Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja.

The number of non-dowry torture cases has increased by more than three times during past four years. While 1,616 non-dowry torture cases were registered in 2018, the number had gone up to 2,532 in 2019, 3,153 in 2020 and 4,889 in 2021.

COUNTRY'S FIRST



Former India hockey captain Padma Shri Dilip Tirkey and Arjuna awardee weightlifter K Ravi Kumar along with other dignitaries launch SSI Fanzine, country's first-ever newsletter on sports science, at an event organised in Bhubaneswar, Monday. The newsletter by Sports Science India offers an insight into several aspects of sports injuries and experts' advice for the sportspersons as well.

Naveen urges people to conserve Olive Ridleys

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 28: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday urged people of Odisha to make collective efforts towards conservation of the Olive Ridley turtles in state.

The chief minister's appeal comes when lakhs of Olive Ridley turtles have begun crowding the tranquil Gahirmatha beach in Kendrapada district to lay eggs presenting a rare natural phenomenon and a breathtaking sight.

In his official social media account, Patnaik said, "Olive Ridley Turtles have started arriving in large numbers for the annual arribada along Odisha coast. Urge everyone to make collective efforts to conserve the endangered species by protecting their nesting habitats. Let's join hands to protect and conserve the endangered Olive Ridley turtles."



The Gahirmatha beach is widely regarded as the world's largest known nesting ground of these reptiles. Apart from Gahirmatha,

the turtles also through the Rushikulaya and Devi river mouths for mass nesting.

Around 2.45 lakh female turtles crawled onto the seashore to dig pits with flippers Friday, Rajnagar Mangrove (Wildlife) DFO JD Pati said. Last year, as many as 3,49,694

female turtles had turned up at the nesting grounds to lay eggs from March 9 to March 23.

Arribada means the synchronised, large-scale nesting of some species of sea turtle such as the Kemp's Ridley and Olive Ridley. During an arribada, hundreds of thousands of these 2-foot-long turtles gather at certain beaches, and come ashore over several days to dig holes in the sand and lay eggs.

The females invade the nesting beaches usually at night for laying eggs. They lay around 120-150 eggs each and return to the sea. Hatchlings usually emerge in 45-60 days.

Out of every 1,000 hatchlings that enter the sea, only one manages to reach adulthood, according to official data.

1.32cr from Odisha register in eSHRAM portal

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 28: As many as 1.32 crore unorganised workers in Odisha have so far registered themselves with the eSHRAM portal, Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupendra Yadav told the Lok Sabha Monday.

The minister's response came while replying a question asked by BJP MP Basanta Panda.

According to Yadav, as many as 1.71 lakh unorganised workers in Odisha have been registered under

the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) scheme, which provides a monthly minimum assured pension of ₹3,000 after attaining the age of 60.

This apart, over 35 lakh workers have been registered under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), which provides life insurance cover for the people in the age group of 18-50 years. The benefit under PMJJBY is ₹2 lakh on death due to any reason at a premium of ₹330 per annum, Yadav said.

The Labour and Employment



Minister said over 98 lakh workers in Odisha have registered them-

6,999 villages without internet

New Delhi: While appreciating heavy emphasis on technology in budget, the BJD Monday apprised the Rajya Sabha about a disheartening fact that 25 per cent of villages in Odisha are without internet.

While speaking on the Finance Bill, 2022, BJD MP Amar Patnaik said, "We are in the age of technology but 6,999 villages out of 25,000 in Odisha are without internet connection."

"It requires 2,500 mobile stations/towers to achieve this target. When will that happen?" Patnaik asked.

Highlighting various issues of the state, the BJD MP said that an

amount of ₹1.623 crore of GST compensation along with the subsidy to be returned by the FCI for procurement of paddy is still pending. There is no clarity as to whether the Union government will lift 15 lakh metric tonnes of fortified par-boiled rice.

"About 12 lakh beneficiaries are still waiting for the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana houses. When you are having a Budget to address the common people and all sections of the society, I really do not understand as to why these specific areas of concern, as given by the state of Odisha, could not be addressed," Patnaik said.

selves under Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), which provides accidental insurance cover for workers in the age group of 18-70 years. The benefits

under PMSBY are ₹2 lakh on death due to accident and permanent total disability and ₹1 lakh on permanent partial disability at a premium of ₹12 per annum.

Mo School, HDFC ink pact to boost four Nayagarh schools



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, March 28: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Mo School Abhiyan and HDFC Bank Monday for integrated development of four schools in Nayagarh district.

The MoU will facilitate both infrastructural and academic development of these schools.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo and state School and Mass Education Department Minister Samir Ranjan Dash at Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) conference hall Monday.

OSEPA Project Director & Mo school Member Secretary Anupam Saha and HDFC Odisha Deputy Vice President Ajit Kumar Pady signed the MoU. "In the coming days, HDFC will take more steps towards the development of education in Odisha and the bank will take up more programmes in conjunction with the Mo School Campaign," said Animesh Biswal, HDFC Odisha Vice President.

On the occasion, Sahoo said the Mo School Campaign, launched in 2017 by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, is now being hailed across India. The state government had launched the campaign to link in-

dividuals with their alumni institutions. "It's a gift for government and government aided schools in the state. Mo school is not just a platform, it's an opportunity to connect with the institutions that you have studied," he said.

"Our goal is not to get only financial support from alumni. We encourage students to have an emotional connection with the school they have attend and to extend a helping hand in the teaching process," Sahoo said.

He said that those who are extending a hand of cooperation for education and healthcare are doing a great job for the country and the state. "HDFC Bank has set an example for other banks by extending a helping hand for the development of education," he added.

The MoU will address the overall development of three high schools and one upper primary school in Nayagarh district. The main goal will be to facilitate both infrastructural and academic development of these schools.

As a step forward in this endeavour, development activities will be taken up in Madhyakhanda Nodal High School, K.C. Nodal Vidyalaya, Govt. UP School, Rasanga and Ramachandra Pranabandhu Govt. High School in Gania block of Nayagarh district.

PADMA AWARDS FOR RAY, BHAGAT

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, March 28: Writer Pratibha Ray and para-badminton player Pramod Bhagat were among the distinguished personalities who were conferred with Padma awards by President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan here Monday.

The President conferred Padma Bhushan on Ray in Literature and Education and Padma Shri on paralympic gold medalist Bhagat in Sports categories. Amongst the prominent awardees at the second investiture ceremony were Padma Vibhushan recipients Kalyan Singh (posthumous), during whose tenure the Babri Masjid was demolished in 1992, and classical vocalist Prabha Atre.

Earlier March 21, the President had conferred Padma Shri on Aditya Prasad Dash (Science and Engineering), Narasingha Prasad Guru (Literature and Education), Shyamamani Devi (Art), Srimad Baba Balia (Social Work) and Guru Prasad Mohapatra (civil services).

COURTESY CALL



Apollo Hospitals Enterprises Limited Regional CEO Sudhir Diggikar, along with Apollo Hospitals-Bhubaneswar General Manager (Finance) Amar Behera and Public Relations Manager Rakesh Ray, congratulates Bhubaneswar mayor Sulochana Das for being elected to the top post in the City, Monday

Officers draw BJP ire for meeting CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, March 28: The opposition BJP Monday criticised the top bureaucrats and police officers in Odisha for visiting Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at his residence to congratulate him over the ruling BJD's spectacular performance in the recently concluded panchayat and urban polls.

Senior IAS, IPS and OAS officers including Chief Secretary Suresh Mohapatra, Development Commissioner PK Jena and DGP Sunil Kumar Bansal met Patnaik Sunday and extended their wishes to the BJD Chief for his party's historic win in the twin polls.

State BJP general secretary Prithviraj Harichandran dubbed the "behavior of the who's who" in Odisha Administration as a "black

spot" in the history of Odisha Administration.

"How can civil servants holding posts of the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police meet and thank a particular party president and congratulate him over his camp's victory? There is no such precedent in India. Top bureaucrats, police officers and other officials going in groups to congratulate the head of a party over victory in local polls... It's a blot on the administrative history of India," he told reporters.

The BJD said there was nothing wrong in what the bureaucrats did. "It was a courtesy visit to thank the CM. Such traditions of bonhomie should prevail. Senior officers in BJP-ruled states also meet their CMs," BJD MLA Bhupinder Singh said.

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Flames rip through Similipal

200 FIREFIGHTERS PRESSED INTO SERVICE TO DOUSE THE INFERNO

PNN/ AGENCIES

Baripada, March 28: Fire has engulfed parts of Similipal National Park in Mayurbhanj district, an official said Monday, as authorities battled to prevent a repeat of last year's havoc at the Unesco biosphere reserve.

Forest fire is an annual phenomenon in Similipal forest - spread over 2,750 sq km in Mayurbhanj district and home to Bengal tiger, Asian elephant and Indian bison among other animals. At least six places in the forest - including areas in Talabandha and Chahala ranges - were found to have caught fire Monday, the official said.

According to Regional Chief Conservator of Forests M Yogajayanand, 200 firefighters have been pressed into service to douse the flames. The firefighting teams have been able to put out the fire in Gudugudia range, while efforts to tackle the situation were underway in other locations.

Established in 1973, Similipal derives its name from the 'simul' (silk cotton) tree. Sal trees are also found abundantly in the region. Last year, between February and March, the fire situation had gone out of control, and it took authorities almost three weeks to contain the rage. The state government had to seek assistance of central forces to control the inferno.

The Similipal authority has un-



QUICK TAKES

At least six places in the forest - including areas in Talabandha and Chahala ranges - were found to have caught fire Monday

As many as 500 leaf blowers are being used to create fire breaks in buffer areas of Similipal. It will prevent the spread of fire towards the core areas

The firefighting teams have been able to put out the fire in Gudugudia range, while efforts to tackle the situation were underway in other locations

dertaken several steps to ensure safety of locals, including an awareness campaign conducted at the vil-

lages on the foothills of the wildlife sanctuary, Yogajayanand said.

As many as 500 leaf blowers are being used to create fire breaks in buffer areas of Similipal. It will prevent the spread of fire towards the core areas, he explained. Around 700 fire watchers have been deployed in various strategic locations of Similipal, he said.

Villagers are also extending help in carrying out the control burning exercise, under which dry vegetation on the landscape is intentionally set ablaze to reduce the risk of wildfires, the official added.

Meanwhile, two men were arrested last week for allegedly trying to kindle a fire inside Sadangi forest range of Dhenkanal district, an official said, adding that a country-made gun was seized from their possession.

Bharat Bandh hits life in Bolangir

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, March 28: Normal life was disrupted, offices remained closed and vehicular traffic came to a grinding halt on the first day of two-day countrywide bandh called by various trade unions, Monday.

The bandh call given by joint forum of trade unions and led by Congress against the anti-people policies of the state and Union governments had its wide ramifications here with all the government and private establishments, courts, insurance, post offices remaining closed and vehicles staying off the roads in the district headquarters town of Bolangir.



Members of various trade unions were seen staging a sit-in outside the district Collectorate. Tension prevailed as ASHA workers barged inside the Bolangir Municipality office and ransacked the premises when they found the office open and employees attending to their duties. The ASHA workers were led by their district coordinator-cum-secretary Saswati Dash and president Sanju Bag.

We ensure customers get the best in class services: Meher

Arundhati Hero is one of the dealers of Hero two-wheelers in Bolangir, Bhawanipatna and Bhubaneswar. In a freewheeling conversation with Orissa POST, its Director Achyutananda Meher speaks about the company's journey, uniqueness and future plans. Excerpts:



How has been Arundhati Hero's journey from Bolangir to Bhubaneswar?

It's thrilling. We hardly imagined expanding our automobile business from Bolangir to Bhawanipatna and then to Bhubaneswar. Opening a branch in Bhubaneswar is nothing less of pride for us. I must thank 'Hero' for keeping faith in us and teams in all our branches for their continued support.

have Pleasure, Maestro and Destini models.

Who do you thank for your success?

I would take this opportunity to thank 'Hero', our teams and customers for this success. It's the effort of our MD, man-

agement and ground teams that helped us scale new heights. Ensuring customer satisfaction through the best possible sales experience and after-sales service is key to success in the automobile industry.

Your take on Budget 2022-23?

Budget 2022-23 has some big announcements that will impact the entire auto sector in various ways. One of the welcome moves is the expansion of national highways under the Prime Minister's Gati-Shakti Plan. Quality roads will definitely reduce the travel time and subsequently increase the sale of vehicles.

Future business plans?

In this fast-changing world, it's not possible to say something concrete. However, we'll certainly expand our business, create employment opportunities and help aid the state's growth.



TRADITIONAL DANCE



Artists danced to a Sambalpuri number during the inauguration of Zilla Sanskruti Bhawan in Sundargarh, Monday

OP PHOTO

Elderly man killed over witchcraft

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, March 28: A 65-year-old man was killed and subsequently buried over suspicion of practicing witchcraft and past enmity. The horrendous incident has been reported from a village of Pasara panchayat under Chakapada police limits in Kandhamal district.

On being informed, cops reached the village and arrested two persons and detained four others in this connection.

The deceased has been identified as Raibaria Kanhar of Juikhoh village while the accused duo is Siba

Kanhar had also been to jail for killing a man 10-12 years back. Since then, his family has been ostracised

Behera of Tanangpadar and Gudru Pradhan of Juikhoh.

According to sources, Kanhar was allegedly practicing witchcraft in the village. He had also been to jail for killing a man 10-12 years back. Since then, his family has been ostracised.

Furthermore, an emnity pre-

vail between Kanhar and the family of the man he had killed.

On March 22, he had gone to a village to sell firewood on his bicycle. On his way back home, Siba and Gudru, who were waiting for his arrival, attacked him and bludgeoned him to death with a wooden plank.

A team led by Chakapad IIC Ambika Prasad Pattnaik conducted a probe and made the arrest. During interrogation, the two confessed to the crime. The cops have dug out the body from the forest and handed it over to family members.

SHORT TAKES

3 girls hurt as bombs go off

Bhadrak/Bant: Three minor girls, two of them siblings, sustained critical injuries after some country-made bombs in an abandoned bag went off near a brick kiln at Tilo Trikona Square under Bant police limits in Bhadrak district, Monday. The injured girls were identified as Sabita Murmu, 9, and two sisters Durga Hansdah, 12, and Basanti Hansdah, 8, of Debatagadhia village. Reports said the incident occurred when the three girls had gone to play near the brick kiln. They spotted an abandoned bag near a pond embankment and pulled the bombs out of the bag. One of the bombs exploded leaving the three girls injured.

3 sent to court in Jajpur bombing case

Jajpur: Binjharpur police Monday forwarded three persons to court in the bombing case at Maneiganda sand quarry on the banks of river Kharasrota in Jajpur district March 24, killing a sand mine supervisor. The accused were identified as Giridhari Mallick and Bishnu Mallick of Nagulapalli village, and Surendra Mallick of Mansada village. According to reports, the accused persons had hurled bombs at Maneiganda sand quarry which left Surendra Das critically injured. Surendra was first rushed to Binjharpur community health centre but was later shifted to Jajpur district headquarters hospital where he breathed his last. Binjharpur police had started an investigation into the matter and registered a case under Section 212, 120-B, 34, 345 and 227 of the IPC.

Ramco Cement pollution chokes Jajpur villages

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, March 28: The Ramco Cement Factory here has caused serious air, water and soil pollution in Raghunathpur, Jogarada, Guarang and Muraripur under Thanual panchayat of Dharmashala block.

The pollution crossing all the limits has pushed the lives of the local residents into misery. The pollution caused by the cement factory has assumed serious proportions and become a growing menace, local intellectuals rued.

Ambient air quality has gone for a toss due to transport of raw materials like gypsum dusts.

Besides, hundreds of machines are being engaged in loading and unloading of raw materials which further add to the pollution woes.

The Tamil Nadu-based cement firm was established here October 28, 2017 under various terms and conditions



by the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB). The firm has established its plant on a 100-acre land at a cost of Rs 440 crore without entering into an agreement with the local residents. Land was acquired at throwaway prices, it was alleged. The acquired area includes farmlands, temple lands, a cremation ground, pasturelands and water bodies.

The company is alleged to have acquired the lands of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people without conducting any public hearing and in complete violation of Odisha Land Reforms Act.

While, the locals here had hoped for employment opportunities, they are

instead haunted by pollution caused by the company.

"Villagers are affected by unwanted diseases due to the pollution. The grinding unit has hit more than 10,000 people of five villages. The cement unit has been openly violating norms," locals Jaydev Naik and Satyabrata Rout of Muraripur village and Tuna Barik of Guarang village complained.

"Instead of enjoying the benefits of industrialisation, we are forced to live a life of seclusion and put the lives of our children in danger. Hundreds of villagers suffer from diseases like chronic cough. So, we appeal Jajpur district administration to take away our villages and farmlands, but shift us to some other place," pleaded a local.

SPCB Kalinganagar Regional Officer Pramod Kumar Behera said, "We haven't received any complaints so far. However, we will look into the matter and take necessary steps."

5 held for death threats to defeated candidate

POST NEWS NETWORK



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, March 28: Gosaninagaon police Monday arrested five youths on charges of giving death threats to an independent corporator candidate and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) corporator candidate wife in Ganjam district.

The accused have been identified as Abhishek Behera alias Siba, 19, Sagar Patra, 29, Saroj Kumar Behera alias Arun, 27, Situn Sahu, 21, and Santosh Kumar Sahu alias

Santu, 29. The cops have also seized a Skoda car from them.

All the five accused have been forwarded to court and later remanded in judicial custody after their bail was rejected, Berhampur SDPO Bishnu Prasad Pati informed a presser.

According to sources, Biren Patnaik, an independent candidate of ward-12 and his wife Sasmita Dash, the BJP candidate of ward-14, faced defeat in the ULB elections, the results of which were announced Saturday. Late Saturday night, eight to 10 unidentified miscreants reportedly barged into the house of Biren and his wife Sasmita and gave them death threats.

The accused also damaged a two-wheeler parked on their house premises. Patnaik has recorded the incident in his phone.

The couple had brought the matter to the notice of Berhampur SP and Ganjam District Collector. They had also informed Berhampur MLA and MP in this regard.

Sambalpur Municipal Corporation
Sambalpur-768001
E-mail ID: sambalpurm.hud@nic.in

'e' Procurement NOTICE

Bid Identification No.11/SMC_SBP/2021-22

No.C-2003: The Municipal Commissioner on behalf of Municipal Corporation, Sambalpur invites tenders in Two Bid system Part-I: General & Technical Bid and Part-II: Price Bid (percentage rate bids) in conformity with Detailed Tender Call Notice (DTCN) for the following work.

Name of the Works: Interior furnishing work of newly constructed Composite Office building, such as: False ceiling, furniture, Acoustic treatment, wall Paneling & cladding, Air conditioning work with Electrical fitting & fixture including Information Technology Management Service (Data Networking, Audio Visual & Security system) for Sambalpur Municipal Corporation and Sambalpur Development Authority at Durgapali, Sambalpur.PHASE-I

2. Approximate Estimated Costs: Rs.3,47,58,417.25 (Excluding GST)

3. Period of completion : As per NIT

4.Date & time of availability of the bid documents in the portal: 11:00 A.M. of 28.03.2022

5. Last Date, Time for receipt of bids in the portal: 5:00 PM of 16.04.2022

6. Technical Bids will be opened on: 11:00 AM of 18.04.2022

7.Name & address of the officer inviting bid: Municipal Commissioner, Sambalpur Municipal Corporation, Sambalpur

Further the details can be seen from the procurement portal: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Sd./- Municipal Commissioner
Sambalpur Municipal Corporation
OIPR-13122/11/0036/2122

EAST COAST RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. PCEECoR2122TP12 & 13, Date : 24.03.2022

1) Tender No. PCEECoR2122TP12: Description of materials: SPECIAL PSC SLEEPERS FOR i) 60KG 1 IN 12 TURNOUTS FOR B.G CONFORMING TO RDSO LAYOUT DRG. NO. T-4218 AND ii) 60KG 1 IN 8.5 TURNOUTS FOR B.G CONFORMING TO RDSO LAYOUT DRG NO T-4865 WITH LATEST ALTERATIONS IF ANY AS ON DATE OF CLOSING OF THIS E-TENDER.. Quantity: i) 460 sets, ii) 206 sets.

2) Tender No. PCEECoR2122TP13: Description of materials: WIDER PSC SLEEPERS FOR i) CURVES CONFORMING TO RDSO DRG. NO RT-8979 TO RT-8982 AND ii) CURVES INSIDE TUNNELS CONFORMING TO RDSO DRG NO. RT-8979 TO RT-8982 AND RT-8970 (FOR FIXING OF PVC DOWELS FOR GUARD RAIL ON OPPOSITE SIDE OF CHECK RAIL) WITH LATEST ALTERATIONS IF ANY AS ON DATE OF CLOSING OF THIS E-TENDER. Quantity: i) 30156 Nos, ii) 18328 Nos.

Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1500 Hrs. of 18.04.2022 (for both the tenders)

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

Dy. Chief Engineer/T.P., Bhubaneswar
PR- 925/M/21-22

ODISHA GRAMYA BANK
Regional Office: Khurda, At: Sanapalla, P.O: Pallahat, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha, Ph. No.: 06755-296213

DEMAND NOTICE

Demand Notice as per section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Odisha Gramya Bank as per power conferred upon him under section 13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and under Rule 9 of Security Interest Enforcement Rule 2002 had issued demand notice (date mentioned below) against the below mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(s)/ mortgagor(s) and as per said notice they were called upon to discharge in full their liabilities along with future interest, costs & incidental expenses thereon to the Bank as secured creditor within 60 (sixty) days of the said notice. The said demand notice had been sent to the borrower(s)/ guarantor(s)/ mortgagor(s) by Registered post with A/D, but the same has been returned back undelivered to the undersigned by the Postal Authority. The details of the secured assets are given below. Once again the borrower(s)/ guarantor(s)/ mortgagor(s) are called upon to discharge in full their liabilities to the Bank with further interest, charges, costs within 60 days of publication of the said notice and if they fail to discharge their liability in full to the bank within 60 days hereof, the bank shall have to take recourse to one or more measures provided under u/s 13(4) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 as may be required besides further course of action in accordance with law. They are also debarred under section 13(13) of the aforesaid Act from transferring by way of sale / lease etc. or otherwise part with possession of the below mentioned secured assets (except in the ordinary course of business) without prior written consent of the bank. The notice has been issued without prejudice to the right of the secured creditor, Bank to initiate any other legal proceeding / action as it deemed fit and necessary under the provisions of any other law for the time being in force.

Sl. No.	ODAGAON BRANCH / Name of Address of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s)	Date of Notice Outstanding dues	Description of the Property/ies / Nature of Facility
1.	Borrower: Sri Prafulla Kumar Swain, S/o- Sri Biswanath Swain, At: Dalaka, PO: Odagaon, Dist.: Nayagarh, PIN-752081 / Guarantor & Mortgagor: Sri Biswanath Swain, S/o- Sri Laxman Swain, At: Dalaka, PO: Odagaon, Dist.: Nayagarh, PIN-752081 / Guarantor: Sri Kalu Charan Sahoo, S/o- Trinath Sahoo, At/PO: Odagaon, Dist.: Nayagarh, PIN-752081	06.01.2022 ₹3,15,303/- as on 06.01.2022 + interest, costs & expenses thereon	Creation of Equitable Mortgage of Land at Mouza: Dalaka, Hal Khata No.: 550/421, Hal Plot No.: 426, Area: Ac.0.04dec., Recorded owner- Sri Biswanath Swain/ Cash Credit- 01170200000218
2.	Borrower: Smt. Pratima Patra, W/o- Sri Kalu Charan Rout, At/PO: Odagaon, Near Dalaka Pond, Dist.: Nayagarh, PIN-752081 / Guarantor & Mortgagor: Smt. Nirmala Das, W/o- Sampad Kumar Das, At: Dalak, PO: Odagaon, Dist.: Nayagarh, PIN-752081 / Guarantor: Sri Banamali Behera, S/o- Raghunath Behera, At/PO: Odagaon (Near Union Bank of India), Dist.: Nayagarh, PIN-752081	06.01.2022 ₹2,52,765/- as on 06.01.2022 + interest, costs & expenses thereon	Creation of Equitable Mortgage of Land at Mouza: Dalaka, Khata No.: 550/1391, Plot No.: 739/1472, Area: Ac.0.03dec., Recorded owner Smt. Nirmala Das / Term Loan for MSME

Place: Khurda, Date: 28.03.2022 Sd/- Authorised Officer, Odisha Gramya Bank

FOCUS GLOBAL TRADE

THE PETRO DOLLAR'S FALL



The world will collectively be worse off if we go back to a quasi-barter economy, by mutually exchanging each other's currency. But given current trends it looks like the dollar's undisputed status as "king" of the trading and invoicing world, is being challenged

pees to Russia, and the Russians in turn use those rupees to buy their Indian goods and imports. This will work perfectly if our imports and exports to Russia are evenly balanced. Unfortunately, they are imbalanced. So, we have to find more goods to export to Russia, so that they can use the rupee payment which we make, to buy more stuff from us. We have used a similar arrangement for trade with Iran too, when it was under sanctions.

The Saudi Arabians made a deal with the Americans during the Nixon era, that they would only invoice their oil exports in dollars. That has been the source of global dominance of the dollar. During the mid 1970's after the first oil shock, the earnings of Saudi Arabia and other Middle East oil producers were so very large and all in dollars, that they were unable to absorb all the windfall gain. This was even after spending lavishly on arms and ammunition. So those dollars got deposited in Wall Street and recycled as hefty loans to South America, which eventually led to the debt crisis there. This was the story of petro dollars and their dominance. There are the first cracks now visible in that dollar edifice, built on what became known as the "petro dollar". The Saudis for the first time have agreed to sell oil to China in exchange for Chinese currency (which will presumably be used to buy Chinese exports). This is similar to the India-Russia rupee-ruble trade. If this Saudi oil sale in yuan to China deal takes off, then other countries may ask for similar treatment. This will surely shake the ground beneath the dollar's hegemony. We don't quite have a global currency, nor is there yet a viable alternative to the US dollar. The world will collectively be worse off if we go back to a quasi-barter economy, by mutually exchanging each other's currency. But given current trends it looks like the dollar's undisputed status as "king" of the trading and invoicing world, is being challenged.

The writer is a noted economist.
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India's export performance this year will be very impressive. The manufactured goods exports will cross 400 billion dollars, the highest ever. This is more than 40 per cent higher than last year, and five times the growth of our GDP. It was made possible due to a focused approach by the Commerce Ministry, which had given targets product-wise and country-wise and these were tracked closely. Even the various export promotion councils (EPCs) for textiles, apparel, engineering goods and chemicals were given targets. The government also launched the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme which has inbuilt export incentives. The major export products have been petrol and diesel, gems and jewellery, engineering goods and chemicals. It must be kept in mind that to export 100 dollars' worth of refined petroleum we import 90 dollars' worth of crude oil. Hence just as exports have done well, so have imports gone up. Imports of products like crude oil and mobile phones are close to 600 billion dollars. The import of gold too crossed 1,000 tonnes which means an outflow of 70 billion dollars of foreign exchange. The total trade deficit this fiscal year will probably reach 200 billion dollars.

That represents the dollar shortage i.e. the excess of imports over exports of goods and merchandise. Thankfully the country earns dollars even from the exports of services, chiefly software, i.e. IT and IT enabled services. In addition, there is tourism (which has gone down due to the pandemic) and consultants. India is also the highest recipient of inbound remittances, which is about 80 billion dollars (about as much as what goes out for gold imports). Hence after counting dollar earnings from services, we have a smaller deficit. But still there is a deficit of dollars. How does that gap get plugged? That is by the inflow of capital flows from investors who put dollars in the stock market, private equity and loans.

The international flow of dollars and balance of payments adjustment are okay in peacetime. But the Ukraine war has put a spanner in the works. Stiff sanc-

tioned led by the United States imposed on Russia means Russian exports cannot be paid in dollars. That's because the payment has to go through New York clearing, and the US refuses to honour any claim from Russian exporters. Even the overseas dollar wealth of Russian oligarchs and elite are being frozen and not denied access. The US will surely put pressure on Swiss banks to freeze Russian wealth in that country. Suddenly for the Russians, their big pile of 630 billion dollars in foreign exchange is looking worthless. That stock of forex is stored in the form of US government issued treasury bonds, or bonds from the European Union. These bonds can be encashed from those respective sovereign entities, or by trading. But if the sovereign nations who issued those bonds refuse to honour the claim, or repudiate the request for redemption, then those bonds become worthless.

Of course, Russia is not taking this lying down. Oil and gas are its major export earners. And the

countries which import oil and gas from Russia are not going to suddenly switch to other suppliers, most notably countries like Germany, and even India. So, the Russians are offering steep discounts in the price of oil to its customers. India imports less than 1 per cent of its crude oil requirement from Russia. But if it is getting oil at half the price, at a time when the oil price has crossed 100 dollars per barrel and threatens to hurt the Indian economy, why not take advantage of the offer? Indeed, this is in India's interest, and will help tame inflation and keep the trade and fiscal deficit in check. The Russians will be happy to see some of their oil being evacuated. But India cannot pay the Russians in dollars (even though India too has a very large pile of dollar denominated foreign exchange) since the dollar payment has to have a leg in New York clearing, which the Americans will obstruct. So, India and Russia have worked out a rupee-ruble trade deal, where India pays for its oil imports in ru-



Ajit Ranade

THE INTERNATIONAL FLOW OF DOLLARS AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS ADJUSTMENT ARE OKAY IN PEACETIME. BUT THE UKRAINE WAR HAS PUT A SPANNER IN THE WORKS

Humanitarian Cost

Putting up a human shield made up of women and children in front of State oppressors to prevent them from carrying out massacres has been a well known strategy used by defenders. Such a method of reaction to an oppressive regime is often employed to make the State authorities relent and stop harming the most vulnerable sections of society. What is now happening in Ukraine is indescribable. Children there are being slaughtered, shelled or traumatised by invading Russian troops even when they are not being used as shields. They are under attack no matter whether they are in hospitals or their homes. Russia, of course, claims Ukraine is placing its weaponry before children's hospitals to launch attacks on Russian troops. The UNICEF has warned March 28 that child casualties are expected to rise in Ukraine as fighting following the Russian invasion has reached densely populated areas across the country.

The constraints humanitarian workers are facing and the rapidly shifting front lines are hampering the delivery of life-saving aid, said a worried UNICEF's executive director, Catherine Russell.

Briefing the UN Security Council, she described the plight of Ukrainian children as 'a moral outrage'. She took stock of the plight of these children since Russia took Crimea over in 2014 and put up its own men in charge of the eastern parts of Ukraine till the ongoing invasion. She warned that the escalation of hostilities poses an immediate threat to eight million youngsters who have already suffered profound and lasting harm. The UN has recorded 1,207 civilian casualties in Ukraine since the war began February 24. Of those, at least 27 are children and about 42 youngsters have been wounded. One month of war in Ukraine has led to the displacement of 4.3 million children - more than half of the country's estimated 7.5 million child population. This includes more than 1.8 million children who have crossed into neighbouring countries as refugees and 2.5 million who are now internally displaced inside Ukraine.

The war has caused one of the fastest large-scale displacement of children since World War II, UNICEF has noted. Incalculable harm is being done to these children who would grow up without being able to shake off the trauma they are going through now. Children's safety, wellbeing and access to essential services are all under threat from the war. As the armed conflict shows no sign of let-up, the human costs are increasing exponentially by the day. Reports indicate children are being taken out of schools and from their homes at a moment's notice to escape the bombing or shelling. The trauma they are going through as they hear the terrifying sounds of shelling and gunfire cannot be easily imagined by people in India. Homes, schools, orphanages and hospitals are also said to be coming under attack and civilian infrastructure such as water supplies and sanitation facilities are being indiscriminately hit. The magnitude of the humanitarian crisis can be gauged from the fact that families are seeking safety in shelters, subways or basements, while women are giving birth in makeshift maternity wards with limited medical supplies. According to a report, most stores are closed making it difficult for people to buy essential items, including basic necessities for children such as diapers and medicines. Even when stores open, most people are too afraid to leave their homes because of continuous shelling.

The top priority looming large before the world community should be to minimise the humanitarian cost of the ongoing war. France and Mexico have initiated discussions among some member countries in the United Nations on a draft resolution addressing the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. The report that 100 refugees are crossing into Poland every minute is cause for grave concern. The war has already wreaked havoc on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and access to basic services. World Health Organisation has reported 52 attacks affecting healthcare facilities across the country over the last four weeks. An estimated 1.4 million people now lack access to water, while 4.6 million people have limited access to water or are at risk of being cut off. Over 450,000 children aged 6 to 23 months need complimentary food support. There are reports of reduction in vaccination coverage for routine and childhood immunisations, including measles and polio. This could quickly lead to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, especially in overcrowded areas where people are sheltering from the violence.

The human tragedy that is unfolding in Ukraine is the outcome of the warring attitude of Russia's Vladimir Putin as much as the vacillation of the West and the USA in according NATO member status to Ukraine. This has been used by Russia as a ruse for its invasion and relentless attacks on civilians.

WISDOM CORNER

- Trust in dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity. **KHALIL GIBRAN**
- Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose. **LYNDON B. JOHNSON**
- Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow. **HELEN KELLER**

WORDSWORTH

Sisyphian

This term for a task that is endless and ineffective comes straight out of Greek myth. Sisyphus was a king of Corinth, a son of Aeolus (the ruler of the winds, hence our word aeolian for something produced by or borne on the wind). In later legend he was the father of Odysseus or Ulysses. His name actually meant "crafty" in Greek; he was noted for his deception and he's the equivalent in Greek folklore of the master trickster who turns up in many folk beliefs, such as Coyote in American Indian mythology. He even managed to cheat Death the first time around, surviving the experience to live to a ripe old age. In Greek legend Sisyphus was punished in Hades for his misdeeds in life by being condemned eternally to roll a heavy stone up a hill. As he neared the top, the stone rolled down again, so that his labour was everlasting and futile. The word first appeared in English in the middle of the seventeenth century. It isn't used so much these days because so few people understand the reference to classical literature.

Sitooterie

This word is a Scots colloquial term, though not a common one in print. It means a place to sit out in, a summerhouse or gazebo, from sit plus out (a Scots pronunciation of out) plus the noun ending -erie of French origin that's familiar from words like menagerie and rotisserie. English newspaper readers suddenly started to see this word during the summer of 2000 because it was applied to an art exhibition in the historic landscaped gardens of Belsay House in Northumberland, near Newcastle upon Tyne. A dozen designers and architects were each given a budget and invited to interpret the idea of a sitooterie as a meditation on the perception of landscape. This resulted in intriguing structures, some practical, some more like follies. The exhibition had the minor consequential effect of turning sitooterie for a brief period into part of the English - as opposed to the Scots - tongue.

LOL

Eat the melons

A farmer in the country has a watermelon patch and upon inspection he discovers that some of the local kids have been helping themselves to a feast. The farmer thinks of ways to discourage this profit-eating situation. So he puts up a sign that



reads: "WARNING! ONE OF THESE WATERMELONS CONTAINS CYANIDE!" He smiled smugly as he watched the kids run off the next night without eating any of his melons. The farmer returns to the watermelon patch a week later to discover that none of the watermelons have been eaten, but finds another sign that reads: "NOW THERE ARE TWO!"

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Subsidies vital to check inflation



Shivaji Sarkar

SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN USING PETROLEUM AS A TAX-SPINNER FORGETTING THAT EVEN A PAISA HIKE ON PETROL HAS CASCADING EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY

The country needs a new approach on prices, taxes, tolls and issues of progress. It wants to control prices as often the leaders proclaim and then goes on increasing every bit that is under the administrative control. India must rethink introducing fuel subsidies to boost manufacturing and other activities that could bring more revenue to the nation's kitty.

Post-polls the fuel prices are rising almost 85 to 90 paise a day on the plea of rising crude prices. But the companies did not reduce prices when crude prices crushed to a virtual zero during the pandemic. The high fuel prices have stoked inflation as transport prices spiral making goods and commodities expensive when the people need relief.

The administration says that petroleum companies decide the prices but despite supposed 'genuine' needs they freeze prices for over a month during elections. Rightly, the Ukrainian situation has put the country in a difficult situation but wisely it could firm up an agreement with Russia for continued fuel supply. That is prudent though was not easy in an era of US-

led sanctions. The balancing act is possible because of India's moral authority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the corps of diplomats.

The world can see that Sri Lanka has failed in doing it and again Indian Oil has to come to its rescue by continuing fuel supplies. Sri Lanka is in deep economic crisis. Rice is being sold there for ₹500 a kg and all commodity prices are soaring. Inflation spikes to 14 per cent. India has over 13 per cent wholesale and 6 per cent retail inflation. Income levels in India are either thawed or at a low level post-COVID. Lanka got into the crisis as it deliberately chose to go into Chinese ambit to keep off India. Its main foreign exchange reserves shrunk due to reckless borrowings from China to finance infrastructure projects.

Successive governments in India have been using petroleum as a tax-spinner forgetting that even a paisa hike on petrol has cascading effects on the entire economy.

Alternate fuel like ethanol, processed largely from sugarcane, is being proposed for mixing with petrol. It is likely to make sugar expensive. It is a myth that it would

sell cheap. Processing cost is high. Ethanol production can, according to US studies, cause air, water pollution, soil erosion and habitat loss. It is being seen to benefit Maharashtra cane growers. Besides, ethanol is not supposed to be engine-friendly with its high moisture.

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2021 on which battery recharging is to be based would make coal and power dearer. Besides, more use of batteries will lead to higher coal generated power production causing heavy emission pollution and spike power rates.

India's domestic crude oil production has steadily decreased in recent years. In 2013-14, Indian companies produced 37.8 million tonnes of crude oil and condensate. That dropped to 32.2 million tonnes in 2019-20, a sharp slide of 15 per cent. During the last 15 years it was noticed that as petrol prices rise, the economy gets into a spin. Under the World Bank and IMF pressure India gave up subsidies causing immense harm to the poor, middle and small enterprises. A little subsidy, not direct benefit, helps every section of the society. Small hair cut is always preferable than its total loss. It is a myth

that India has a rich class of people and the middle class is able to fend for itself. There is nothing like a middle class, except that it is slightly above the poverty level. A bumpy situation hits it hard. Overall subsidies benefit a larger population and help the economy keep prices under check.

India needs to understand the Lankan stress on infrastructure that drained its resources. India must go slow on infrastructure now. Infrastructure builds expensive assets with a higher recurring expenditure that stresses the economy severely. Had it conserved its reserves, put off expensive infrastructure projects, Lanka could have avoided getting into the mess.

The symptoms of Lankan and Indian economy are not different except that India has the capacity and the size to sustain which Lanka does not have. It would be prudent on the part of India to reintroduce subsidies on petrol as alternate energy is yet not available. It would change the dynamics of economy, generate more revenue and can do better if infrastructure is put in the backburner and manufacturing is boosted to give the economy a kick-start. **INFA**

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Protecting Sundarbans

Sir, This refers to the new report 'Sundarbans and its Royal Bengal Tigers fall prey to human greed' (Orissa Post, March 28). For a few years we have seen tigers entering human-inhabited islands and attacking domestic animals and villagers. But the main reason behind those incidents is that after the cyclone 'Amphan' in May 2020, the ecological system of Sundarbans has been devastated and then another cyclone 'Yaas' completely destroyed the habitat of wild animals. Because of food scarcity tigers enter villages. On the other hand, several people died in tiger attacks because they entered the core reserve forest. But the poor villagers of the Sundarbans are compelled to enter the deep forest to catch crabs, prawns and fish. Their livelihood depends on agriculture and fishing. But after the cyclones, farm lands were inundated with saline water, rendering them barren. Hence, both the Union and state governments need to take proper steps to reconstruct the ecological system and offer financial assistance or alternative livelihood to the poor inhabitants of Sundarbans. Then the animals and human beings will both be safe. **Sourav Malik**, BISHNUPUR (WEST BENGAL)

The war over gas

Sir, The advent of hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' has transformed the US into an oil and gas superpower. Though environmentalists are staunchly opposed to fracking because the extraction process poisons local groundwater quality and causes seismic events, most of US gas production is by fracking. To store and transport natural gas extracted through fracking, it is chilled to minus 162 C (minus 260 F), which transforms it to liquefied natural gas, which is 1/600th of its volume in a gaseous state. The liquid is shipped in reinforced massive tankers called LNG carriers in large, on-board, super-cooled (cryogenic) tanks to the special LNG terminals in Europe. With fracking technology in operation, the US has become the largest exporter of LNG in the world. The US has also surpassed Russia as the world's largest gas producer. The US oil and gas giants, as well as their pliant bourgeois leaders have been pushing European countries to increase their capacity to receive LNG. At present, Germany imports 35 per cent of the gas it needs from Russia, and ex-Chancellor Angela Merkel thought that Nord Stream 2 would be a way of getting much more Russian gas delivered directly to Germany through transmission under the Baltic Sea bypassing Ukrainian transit infrastructure. Here is the contradiction. **Asit Mohanty**, JAJPUR

national

of the day quote

Pariksha pe Charcha (PPC) is becoming a formal institution through which the Prime Minister interacts directly with students.

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | UNION EDUCATION MINISTER

For quite some time since our electoral loss, there has been a barrage of unfounded allegations against me on social media without rhyme or reason.

HARISH RAWAT | FORMER UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER

At least you (BJP MPs) should raise the issues related to water, electricity or coal in Rajasthan. No one is raising those problems.

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

TDP demands financial help

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh's opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Monday demanded financial emergency in the state in the wake of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's observation of a Rs 48,000 crore financial irregularity.

SpiceJet aircraft hits lightning pole

New Delhi: A SpiceJet plane was damaged Monday when its wing hit a lightning pole at the Delhi airport when the aircraft was pushed back from the parking position to be ready for take off to Jammu, DGCA officials said.

FIR against Maha ministers

Mumbai: An FIR was registered Monday against Maharashtra education minister Varsha Gaikwad, textiles minister Aslam Shaikh, and others for allegedly brandishing swords at a function in suburban Bandra, a Mumbai Police official said.

OVER 10,000 WOMEN OFFICERS SERVING ACROSS DEFENCE FORCES

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 28: The number of women officers serving in the defence forces is 10,493, of which nearly 4,734 are Military Nursing Service officers, the Parliament was told Monday.



are being commissioned into the Army into ten arms and services - Corps of Engineers, Corps of Signals, Army Air Defence, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Army Aviation Corps, Intelligence Corps, Judge Advocate General Branch and Army Education Corps in addition to the



The historians should be committed to truth and called for an objective re-evaluation of Indian history through fact-based research. Untold history must be told

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

YOGI-AKHILESH GREET EACH OTHER

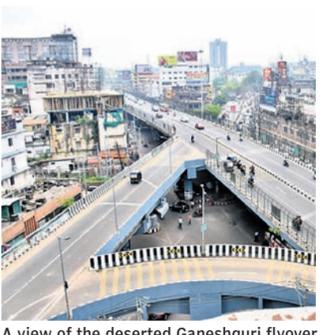
Putting an end to the acrimony of recent elections, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Monday, walked across to Leader of Opposition Akhilesh Yadav's seat in the Assembly and greeted him. The two leaders exchanged a few words



LAVROV MAY VISIT INDIA WITHIN A WEEK

NEW DELHI: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is likely to visit India in the next one week and the key focus is expected to be discussions on a payment system for New Delhi's procurement of oil and military hardware from Moscow, people familiar with the developments said Monday.

Bandh hits banking, public transport services



A view of the deserted Ganeshguri flyover during Bharat Bandh

Essential services like healthcare, electricity and fuel supplies remained unaffected. Public offices as well as educational institutions were not impacted by the strike called by nearly a dozen trade unions.

Some bank branches, particularly in cities with a strong trade union movement, did very limited over-the-counter public dealings such as cash deposits and withdrawals.

The joint forum of central trade unions, which has called for the two-day strike that started Monday, said that bandh-like situation prevailed in at least eight states due to the nationwide strike against various policies of the government.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, March 28: Public dealings at some bank branches were hit and public transport services were thrown out of gear in states like West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu as thousands of workers on Monday began a two-day nationwide strike to protest against policies of the Union government.

auto-rickshaws and private buses were off the road in Kerala but essential services, including supply of milk, hospital and ambulance services were not affected.

Public transport services were hit in Haryana as employees of state roadways joined the strike. Thousands of workers of state-owned SAIL, RINL and NMD also joined the strike, affecting production at steel plants and mines.

Banking services were partially impacted on Monday as a section of bank employees did not report for duty. However, there was hardly any impact on the functioning of new generation private sector banks.

There might have been a delay in cheque clearances and government treasury operation might have also been affected by the strike. The impact of the strike is prominent in eastern India as many branches of public sector banks there are closed.

Workers staged protests at several places and unions claimed the agitation has had an impact in coal mining belts in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. The joint forum of central trade unions is protesting against the government policies affecting workers, farmers, and people.

In the other regions, branches are open as officers are present but services are being impacted due to many employees participating in the strike, he said. Bank unions are protesting against the government's move to privatise two public sector banks as announced in Budget 2021-22.

They are also demanding an increase in interest rate on deposits and reduction in service charges. The central trade unions that are part of this joint forum are INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF and UTUC.

According to her, there was a good response for the strike call in industrial areas of Assam, Haryana, Delhi, West Bengal, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.

Criminal Procedure Identification Bill introduced in Lok Sabha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 28: The government Monday introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to provide legal sanction to the police to take physical and biological samples of convicts as well as persons accused of crimes, amid uproar by the opposition which dubbed the measure as "illegal" and "un-constitutional".

He pointed out that the existing law - the Identification of Prisoners Act - dated back to 1920 and allowed taking only finger print and foot print impressions of a limited category of convicted persons.

Senior ministers such as Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari were not present in the House when the opposition demanded division on the motion for introduction of the bill, that seeks to replace the 102-year-old Identification of Prisoners Act. The bill seeks to expand the scope and ambit of the "measurements" that can be taken under the law as it will help in unique identification of a person involved in crime and help investigating agencies in solving criminal cases.

Opposition members Manish Tewari, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Saugata Roy and N K Premachandran forced a vote on the introduction of the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill. The opposition move was defeated as 120 members voted in favour of introduction of the bill, while 58 members were against it.

Union Minister of State Ajay Mishra 'Teni' introduced the bill, dismissing the apprehensions voiced by the members and asserted that the move was required to make provisions for the use of modern techniques to capture and record appro-

propriate body measurements. The bill defines "measurements" to include finger impressions, palm print and foot-print impressions, photographs, iris and retina scan, physical, biological samples and their analysis.

The minister also said that provision for enrollment of women as Other Ranks in Corps of Military Police in the Indian Army has been introduced in 2019, and under it, 1,700 women personnel have been planned to be inducted in a phased manner - approximately 100 per year.

The induction of women has commenced from 2020, and a total 300 vacancies for recruitment of Women Military Police have been released till date.

Armed Forces Medical Services.

The IAF has commissioned 15 women fighter pilots till date and women officers are now being inducted in all combat roles, while the Navy has already deputed 28 women officers onboard ships. Women officers are also deployed in combat role onboard naval aircraft and ship borne helicopters.

The minister also said that provision for enrollment of women as Other Ranks in Corps of Military Police in the Indian Army has been introduced in 2019, and under it, 1,700 women personnel have been planned to be inducted in a phased manner - approximately 100 per year.

The induction of women has commenced from 2020, and a total 300 vacancies for recruitment of Women Military Police have been released till date.

Union Bank of India advertisement containing regional office details for Balasore and a large section of auction notices for various properties, including details on borrower names, addresses, and property descriptions.

national

of the day quote

The Bangalore-Nidaghatta-Mysuru section of NH-275 is a 10-lane, 117 km-long stretch in the state of Karnataka. It is being developed at a cost of Rs 8,350 crore. The construction work is nearing completion and will be completed by October 2022

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

I would like to request the finance minister that the 30% tax that you have imposed on crypto, please consider in the coming days if this tax can be further increased

SUSHIL KUMAR MODI | BJP LEADER

Today is an important day. Hindustan's crown (Jammu-Kashmir) is getting connected with the heart of the country, Indore, the historic city of Maa Ahilya and the cleanest city in the nation

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

School van runs over Class II student

Chennai: A Class 2 student died after a school van that dropped him at his school ran over him Monday morning. The incident occurred at Chennai's Alwartinagar when the van driver was reversing the vehicle. Identified as Deekshith, the boy was a student of Sree Venkateshwara Matriculation School, Alwartinagar, Chennai. While reversing the vehicle, the van driver ran over the boy who was walking behind it. There was no assistant in the van which is mandatory as per the Tamil Nadu school education department rules.

Hijab-clad invigilator suspended in K'taka

Bangalore: First day of the SSLC (Class 10) exams was conducted peacefully across Karnataka amid hijab row. Most of the students gave their exams in uniform and only a few abstained and some were sent back for wearing hijab. The Department of Education has suspended an invigilator for refusing to take off hijab while conducting the examination at KSTV High School. Noor Fathima, who was on exam duty, came clad in a hijab. When she was asked to remove it, she refused and was later sent back from the examination centre and suspended, sources in the education department said.

T'gana: Five killed in bus-car collision

Hyderabad: Five people were killed when a TSRTC bus hit a car after a tyre burst in Telangana's Kamareddy district Monday. The accident occurred near the Ghanpur (M) village of Machareddy mandal when a Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) bus rammed into the car coming from the opposite direction. Five occupants of the car were killed and a child was critically injured. According to police the collision occurred after one of the tyres of the bus burst and the driver lost control of the vehicle.

Two ultras arrested

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Police along with other security forces have arrested two active terrorists linked with proscribed terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in South Kashmir's Budgam district, officials said Monday. The Budgam Police along with the Army's 62 RR arrested the two terrorists from the Sunnergund area of Budgam.



Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann ji has made a great announcement today that ration will be delivered to the very doorstep of people, and it will immensely benefit the poor. And, I feel, it will have impact on people across the country

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

TIKAIT ALLEGES THREAT CALL

Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait Monday lodged a complaint with Muzaffarnagar Police Station against an unknown person who threatened him of dire consequences. Tikait has alleged in the complaint that the caller threatened to kill him. The complaint was lodged by Pravez Tyagi, the driver of Tikait. It was lodged with the Civil Lines Police Station of Muzaffarnagar



BIRBHUM KILLINGS

Ruckus in WB Assembly; 5 BJP MLAs suspended



Guv meets Shah

New Delhi: West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar Monday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and reportedly apprised him about the ground situation in the state. Though the details of the meeting which was held at Shah's residence were not shared, but it is understood that the West Bengal Governor has updated the Home Minister about the situation after eight persons including three women and two children were burnt alive in Baguti village in West Bengal's Birbhum district March 21. He requested Shah for speedy investigation of the case, a source in the Ministry said.

AGENCIES

Kolkata, March 28: The budget session of the West Bengal Assembly ended in an exchange of fisticuffs Monday as legislators of the TMC and the BJP came to blows after heated arguments over the Birbhum killings, prompting the speaker to suspend five saffron party MLAs, including Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari, who was also accused of busting the nose of a rival MLA.

Shortly after the House assembled at 11 am, it plunged into pandemonium as BJP MLAs trooped to the well, demanding a statement by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over the "worsening" law and order situation in the wake of the tragedy in Birbhum district, where eight people were burnt alive last week.

Speaker Biman Banerjee tried to pacify the BJP MLAs, who continued with sloganeering inside the House, leading to a war of words with legislators of the treasury bench and an eventual ugly scuffle.

Adhikari then walked out of the assembly, claiming that TMC MLAs roughed up party legislators. "MLAs are not safe even inside the assembly... At least 8-10 of our legislators were beaten up, including Chief Whip Manoj Tigga, by some TMC MLAs, as we demanded that the CM make a statement in the House on the law and order issue," Adhikari said. "TMC leader and

state minister Firhad Hakim claimed the BJP is staging a drama to create chaos in the assembly. "Few of our MLAs were injured inside the House. We condemn the conduct of the BJP," he said. Among those who were injured in the melee were TMC MLA Asit Majumdar and BJP chief whip Manoj Tigga, both of whom were taken to hospital. Majumdar claimed that Adhikari had punched him on the nose, but the BJP leader denied the charge. Adhikari, along with BJP legislators Dipak Burman, Shankar Ghosh, Manoj Tigga and Narahari Mahata, were suspended by the Speaker for the entire session till the House is prorogued.

Prorogation is discontinuing a session of Parliament or a legislative assembly without dissolving it. "What happened today is completely unacceptable. The way in which the five MLAs behaved with the women staff of the House is a shame for parliamentary

democracy," he told reporters. Banerjee then adjourned the assembly sine die.

"The BJP MLAs even assaulted female staff of the assembly and misbehaved with them. The saffron party legislators are faking injuries to hide their misdeeds," Hakim alleged.

Speaking in a similar vein, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Partha Chatterjee said BJP leaders tried to create disturbance both inside and outside the House.

"Though the session ended today, they will continue with their disruptive politics. I urge everyone to be on guard to foil the game plan of BJP. They are demanding the CM's statement, but when she speaks in the House, they create disturbance in the House," Chatterjee said.

The BJP, however, denied all allegations, and accused the ruling TMC of letting loose a reign of terror in the assembly.

TOLL RISES TO NINE

Rampurhat/Kolkata (WB): A woman who had suffered burns in the petrol bomb attack in Bogtui village in Birbhum district last week died in a hospital on Monday, raising the toll to nine, a police officer said. The Birbhum killings also spawned violence in Bengal's legislature, with legislators of the ruling TMC and the BJP exchanging fisticuffs over heated arguments over Birbhum killings, prompting the speaker to suspend five saffron party MLAs, including Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari. Out of the nine deceased, seven are women and two are children.

Sawant sworn in as Goa CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, March 28: Three-time MLA Pramod Sawant, who led the BJP to win 20 seats in the recently concluded elections to the 40-member Goa Assembly, was sworn in as the state's chief minister for the second time on Monday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries.

Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai administered the oath to Sawant (48) and eight other BJP MLAs as cabinet ministers in a ceremony held at Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee stadium at Bambolim near Panaji, four km from the Raj Bhavan. Over 10,000 people were present during the function.

Prime Minister Modi, Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Shripad Naik, BJP national president J P Nadda, Himachal Pradesh Governor Rajendra Arlekar (who hails from Goa) and Maharashtra's former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, who was the Goa election in-charge, were among those



who attended the event. This was the second time that Goa's chief minister was sworn in outside the Raj Bhavan. In 2012, Manohar Parrikar had taken oath as the CM at a ground in Campal area of the state capital Panaji after the BJP emerged as the single largest party in the House. Sawant took the oath in Konkani language. This is his second term

MoD signs deal for eight Fast Patrol Vessels

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 28: The Defence of Ministry (MoD) Monday signed a contract with Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) for construction of eight Fast Patrol Vessels for the Indian Coast Guard at a total project cost of Rs 473 crore, an official statement said.

The contract was signed by the Ministry's Joint Secretary, Maritime and Systems, Dinesh Kumar and GSL Chairman and Managing Director, Commodore B.B. Nagpal (retd) here.

These surface platforms will be indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by GSL under Buy (Indian-IDDM) Category.

These eight high speed vessels will be based along the coast with capability to operate in shallow waters and enhance the security apparatus along the vast coastline, the statement said, adding that while meeting the objectives of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', it would boost the indigenous shipbuilding capability and increase employment opportunities in the sector.

FEARLESS ACT



Army personnel perform Mallakhamb during the Mendhar Fest 2022, organised by Indian Army at Mendhar in Poonch district, Monday

MINORITY TAG FOR HINDUS

SC gives Centre more time on plea



The Ministry of Minority Affairs, in an affidavit, says: "It is submitted that the state governments can also declare a religious or linguistic community as a minority community within the said state. For instance, the government of Maharashtra has notified Jews as a minority community within the state of Maharashtra"

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, March 28: The Supreme Court Monday gave more time to Centre to bring on record its stand on a plea against its power to notify minorities under the National Minorities Commission Act, 1992, and also seeking minority status for Hindus in states, where their numbers are less than others.

"I have received the reply... what stand the department has taken, I could not go through it," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, submitted before a bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, urging the court to grant some more time in the matter.

The bench, also comprising Justice MM Sundresh, on a lighter note, said the reply from the

Ministry of Minority Affairs has been carried by the newspapers Monday.

The ministry said that certain states, where Hindus or other communities are less in number, can declare them a minority community within its territory, to enable them set up and administer their own institutions.

The bench, in its order, said that the Solicitor General submits that he will place the stand on the matter on record as he has yet not vetted the affidavit, even though it may have appeared in the newspapers. To this, a smiling Mehta replied: "I have not read it... I am not aware of the view of the department."

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing the petitioner BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, said: "This Act will have to go. And, they will have to come up with something like RERA, where every state will have to have these committees."

After a brief hearing in the matter, the top court scheduled the matter for further hearing May 10, and gave four weeks' time to Centre to place its stand before it.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs said the allegations made by Upadhyay in the PIL that "followers of Judaism, Bahais and Hinduism, who are minorities in Ladakh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur, can't establish and administer their institutions of choice is not correct".

EARLY SUMMER TRIGGERS WATER WOES IN TAJ CITY

AGRA, HOME TO THE MAJESTIC TAJ MAHAL, ATTRACTS MORE TOURISTS THAN ANY OTHER CITY IN INDIA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, March 28: The abrupt rise in temperature has triggered a massive demand for water in the Taj city.

While the ruling party cadres are still enjoying the hangover of a spectacular victory at the hustings, ordinary folks in Agra are battling water scarcity.

In the past six months, the old and rusted pipelines in the city have set

a new record of bursting, depriving chunks of population in new colonies and old 'mohallas' of precious drinking water. "For almost a year, the main Yamuna Kinara road from the Water Works to Taj Ganj, was dug up for laying a new pipeline to supply Ganga Jal, and again they have dug up the Jeoni Mandi road. All they do is to dig up the roads every now and then, but the problem is never resolved," says river activist Rahul Raj.

"The problem is of management. A basic need like clean potable water is not on the priority list of the politicians. Yamuna continues to flow dirty, carrying all the industrial effluents and toxics posing health hazards," laments environmentalist Devashish Bhattacharya.

Each year during the lean sum-



mer months, the Yamuna water level goes alarmingly low, disrupting supply from the Jeoni Mandi Water Works, he adds.

"Each year the water table is

going down... A demand repeatedly made for a barrage on Yamuna river has not received the attention of the state government," said River Connect Campaign activist

The city of around 2.5 million citizens needs around 400 mld water, only around 300 mld is being supplied by the two water works

During peak summer months, the demand for water goes up which is met by ubiquitous submersible pumps, tube wells and hand pumps

Since the water table has fallen drastically, a deep crisis is looming, more in the vast rural hinterland

Ranjan Sharma.

For the past fortnight, dozens of localities in the city have been struggling with water shortages. The municipal water works has arranged tanker supplies, but these are inadequate and erratic, say cit-

izens of these neighbourhoods.

Water supply has been badly affected in the newer colonies. The taps release more air than water, says an angry resident of the Awais Vikas Colony.

Ramnagar in Shah ganj area saw the 12 inch water pipeline leak, which led to suspension of supply to over a dozen colonies. In Panchkula area, close to the Joota Mandi, another pipeline leaked which deprived residents of Jaipur House colony of water. Loha mandi, Surya Nagar, some colonies in the Trans Yamuna area did not get water causing hardships to the residents. The general manager of the Water Works, however, said leaks were being promptly attended and water tankers were being sent to area where there was some delay.

international



An extra economic package will be compiled by the end of April to soften the blow of soaring prices for crude oil along with other resource

FUMIO KISHIDA | JAPANESE PM

ISRAELI PM TESTS COVID POSITIVE

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has tested positive for Covid-19, his office announced Monday in a statement. "The Prime Minister is feeling well and will continue his schedule as planned from his home," Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying



of the day quote

The world cannot let Russian President Vladimir Putin win in Ukraine because if he can get away with it, this will be a message to other countries that perhaps they could get away with it too

ELON MUSK | SPACEX AND TESLA CEO

The world needs to act immediately to help Mariupol, as the scale of the disaster in Ukraine's south-eastern city demands immediate action

JEAN YVES LE DRIAN | FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER

The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories must end through a political solution

MAHMOUD ABBAS | PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT

UKRAINE TALKS TO RESUME

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lviv/Charkiv, Ukraine, March 28: Ukraine is prepared to declare its neutrality and consider a compromise on contested areas in the country's east, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said ahead of another round of talks set for Tuesday on stopping the fighting. But he said only a face-to-face meeting with Russia's leader can end the war.

While hinting at possible concessions, Zelenskyy also stressed that Ukraine's priority is ensuring its sovereignty and its "territorial integrity" — preventing Russia from carving up the country, something Ukraine and the West say could now be Moscow's goal.

Russia has long demanded that Ukraine drop any hope of joining the Western NATO alliance, which Moscow sees as a threat. Zelenskyy has also repeatedly stressed that Ukraine needs security guarantees of its own as part of any deal.

"Security guarantees and neutrality, non-nuclear status of our state — we are ready to go for it," Zelenskyy said in an interview Sunday with independent Russian media outlets.

The Ukrainian leader has suggested as much before, but rarely



NO SIGN OF RESPITE

- Russia has long demanded that Ukraine drop any hope of joining the Western NATO alliance, which Moscow sees as a threat
- In an overnight video address to his nation, Zelenskyy said Ukraine is seeking peace "without delay"

so forcefully and the latest remarks could create momentum for the talks scheduled to take place in Istanbul.

"We must come to an agreement with the president of the Russian Federation, and in order to reach an agreement, he needs to get out of there on his own feet ... And come to meet me," Zelenskyy said in the interview, which Russia barred its media from publishing.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Monday that the two presidents could meet, but only after the key elements of a potential deal are negotiated.

"The meeting is necessary once we have clarity regarding solutions on all key issues," Lavrov said in an interview with Serbian media. He accused Ukraine of only wanting to "imitate talks," and said Russia needs concrete results.

19 KILLED IN SHOOTING AT MEXICO PARTY

REUTERS

Mexico City, March 28: Gunmen killed 19 people Sunday night in an attack on a clandestine cockfighting venue in western Mexico, authorities said, in one of the worst mass shootings under the current government.

The killings took place in Las Tinajas in the state of Michoacan, where the powerful Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) has been fighting local gangs for control of drug routes.

Sixteen of the dead were men and three were women, and officials were trying to establish who was responsible for the shootings, which were reported to authorities about 10.30 p.m. local time, Michoacan state prosecutors said in a statement.

All the victims had gunshot wounds, and crime scene investigators were checking reports that several other people were injured and taken to hospital, it added.

Michoacan has long been one of the most lawless areas in Mexico, and last month the United States temporarily suspended shipments of avocados from the state after US inspectors received threats. The suspension was later lifted.

Gang violence was fuelling record levels of homicides by the time President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took office in late 2018 pledging to pacify the country, adopting a less confrontational approach to dealing with organized crime.

But widespread violence has persisted, and average annual homicide totals are on track to be the highest under any Mexican administration since modern records began.

Homicides were down nationally during the first two months of 2022 compared to the same period last year, but they were up in Michoacan, according to official government data.

Will develop stronger means of attack: Kim

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, March 28: North Korea said Monday leader Kim Jong Un has vowed to develop more powerful means of attack, days after the country's first intercontinental ballistic missile launch in more than four years.

The statement suggests North Korea might perform additional launches or even test a nuclear device soon as it pushes to modernize its arsenal and increase pressure on the Biden administration while nuclear diplomacy remains stalled.

Last Thursday, the North performed its 12th round of weapons tests this year, launching the newly developed, long-range Hwasong-17, which analysts say was designed to reach anywhere in the U.S. Mainland.

During a photo session with

MODERNISING ARSENAL



scientists and others involved in the Hwasong-17 test, Kim expressed a resolve to build up the country's attack capability to cope with threats, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

"Only when one is equipped with the formidable striking capabilities, overwhelming military

Only when one is equipped with the formidable striking capabilities, overwhelming military power that cannot be stopped by anyone, one can prevent a war, guarantee the security of the country and contain and put under control all threats and blackmails by the imperialists

KIM JONG UN | NORTH KOREAN LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Philippines, US begin military drills

Manila: The Philippines and the US Monday began their large-scale annual joint military drills in the Southeast Asian country. The participants in the exercise, codenamed Balikatan 2022, include 3,800 Filipino and 5,100 US military personnel, as well as observers from various armed forces in the region, reports Xinhua news agency. As the largest iteration of the Philippines-US joint drills since 2015, Balikatan 2022 will be conducted across the main Luzon island until April 8. According to the military, the drills will focus on "maritime security, amphibious operations, live-fire training, urban operations, aviation operations, counterterrorism, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief".

El Salvador declares state of emergency

San Salvador: El Salvador has declared a state of emergency for 30 days after 62 homicides were registered on March 26, the highest number reported in a single day. The state of emergency suspends certain constitutional rights such as the freedom of association, the inviolability of mail and telecommunications, while religious services, sporting events, businesses and educational programmes continue to operate normally, Xinhua news agency quoted President Nayib Bukele as saying on social media Sunday.

WH spokeswoman tests Covid positive

Washington: The White House's Principal Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre announced that she has tested positive for Covid-19 after returning from President Joe Biden's recent trip to Europe. In a statement on Sunday, she said: "This afternoon, after returning from the President's trip to Europe, I took a PCR test. That test came back positive. "I last saw the President during a socially distanced meeting yesterday (Saturday), and the President is not considered a close contact as defined by CDC guidance. I am sharing the news of my positive test today out of an abundance of transparency."

Two Israelis killed

Jerusalem: Two gunmen killed two Israelis and wounded six others in a shooting spree in northern Israel before being shot dead by Border Police officers, according to Israeli police, medics and local media. The two gunmen opened fire Sunday evening at a bus stop in Hadera before they were shot dead by police officers at a restaurant near the scene, Police spokesman Eli Levy told the press.

POLITICAL TURMOIL

No-confidence motion moved against Imran



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, March 28: A no-confidence motion against Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was tabled Monday in the National Assembly by Leader of the Opposition and PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif, setting in motion the process in the lower house to remove the embattled cricket-turned-politician from office.

As the much-anticipated session began after a two-day recess on Monday, Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri asked the members of the Parliament, who are in favour of the motion, to stand up to that their numbers could be counted.

Sharif first moved a resolution to allow tabling of the no-confidence motion in the National Assembly, the lower house of bicameral parliament, which was approved by 161 yes votes. It was followed by tabling of the no-confidence motion by Sharif, capping

PTI nominates Pervaiz for Pak Punjab CM

Islamabad: Usman Buzdar has resigned following the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) nomination of Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi as the next Chief Minister of Pakistan Punjab, Friday Times reported. Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Political Communication, Shahbaz Gill, announced the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q) leader's candidacy on Twitter. Gill also said that the PML-Q would support the government in the imminent vote of no-confidence against the Prime Minister, despite earlier remarks from senior leaders within the PML-Q, including MNA Kamil Ali Agha, indicating that it was 'too late' for the Prime Minister to cajole potential government allies, the report said.

Since the voting should be held between 3-7 days, Deputy Speaker Suri who was chairing the session in the absence of Speaker Asad Qaidar, prorogued the session until 4 pm March 31, when it would reconvene for debate and voting

Prime Minister Khan needs 172 votes in the house of 342 to foil the bid

the first phase of the constitutional procedure.

Since the voting should be held between 3-7 days, Deputy Speaker Suri who was chairing the session in the absence of Speaker Asad Qaidar, prorogued the session until 4 pm March 31, when it would reconvene for debate and voting.

Prime Minister Khan needs 172 votes in the house of 342 to foil the bid. Since Khan's allies with 23 members are still not committed to support him and about two dozen lawmakers from within the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf have revolted, the situation was still fluid.

Khan was meeting Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid, a key ally, while opposition was scheduled to hold a massive rally in the capital, as both sides claim having numbers to succeed. The country plunged into uncertainty on March 8 after the combined opposition submitted the motion with the National Assembly along with a requisition to the speaker to summon the session within mandatory 14 days.

Though the session was called on March 25, three days after the deadline, the speaker refused to allow the motion to be tabled. Talking to media, Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid said that the no-confidence resolution would be decided by March 31, adding that Prime Minister Khan was not going anywhere.

Jaishankar calls on SL Prez, PM; assures help

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, March 28: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Monday called on Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and assured them of India's continued cooperation and understanding as the island nation was facing an unprecedented economic crisis.

Sri Lanka is facing an acute economic and energy crisis triggered due to the shortage of foreign exchange. India recently announced to extend a USD 1 billion line of credit to Sri Lanka as part of its financial assistance to the country

to deal with the economic crisis. Jaishankar is here to hold bilateral talks with the country's top leadership and attend the seven-nation BIMSTEC summit.

In his talks with President Gotabaya, the minister reviewed various dimensions of our close neighbourly relationship. "Pleased to call on President @GotabayaR of Sri Lanka. Reviewed various dimensions of our close neighbourly relationship. Assured him of India's continued cooperation and understanding," Jaishankar said on Twitter. Gotabaya expressed his gratitude to the government of India for the invaluable assistance provided via the line of credit.



Bahrain's foreign minister Abdullatif al-Zayani waves as he poses for a photo with attendees following the Negev Summit in Kibbutz Sde Boker, southern Israel, Monday

SHANGHAI LOCKS DOWN AS COVID SURGES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, March 28: China began its most extensive coronavirus lockdown in two years Monday to conduct mass testing and control a growing outbreak in Shanghai as questions are raised about the economic toll of the nation's "zero-COVID" strategy.

Shanghai, China's financial capital and largest city with 26 million people, had managed its smaller previous outbreaks with limited lockdowns of housing compounds and workplaces where the virus was spreading.

But the citywide lockdown that will be conducted in two phases will be China's most extensive since the central city of Wuhan, where the virus was first detected in late 2019, confined its 11 million peo-

ple to their homes for 76 days in early 2020. Millions more have been kept in lockdown since then.

Shanghai's Pudong financial district and nearby areas will be locked down from Monday to Friday as mass testing gets underway, the local government said. In the second phase of the lockdown, the vast downtown area west of the Huangpu River that divides the city will start its own five-day lockdown Friday.

Residents will be required to stay home and deliveries will be left at checkpoints to ensure there is no contact with the outside world. Offices and all businesses not considered essential will be closed and public transport suspended.

Already, many communities within Shanghai have been locked down for the past week, with their

GROWING OUTBREAK



housing compounds blocked off with blue and yellow plastic barriers and residents required to submit to multiple tests for COVID-19. Shanghai's Disneyland theme park is among the businesses that closed earlier. Automaker Tesla is also sus-

pending production at its Shanghai plant, according to media reports. Panic-buying was reported on Sunday, with supermarket shelves cleared of food, beverages and household items. Additional barriers were being erected in neighbor-

hoods Monday, with workers in hazmat suits staffing checkpoints.

In-person observations of the April 5 Tomb Sweeping Festival have been canceled and memorials will instead be held online. Some workers, including traders at the city's stock market, were preparing to stay within a COVID-19 "bubble" for the duration of the lockdown.

Li Jiamin, 31, who works in the finance industry, said she had packed several days of clothing and supplies, and her company was sorting out sleeping and eating arrangements. "The overall impact is still great," Li told said, pointing especially to losses suffered by workers in the informal sector who have no such support.

Huang Qi, 35, who works at a local university, said he had undergone a lockdown at home be-

fore and prepared for the new round by stocking up. "I think if the closure continues like this, our school workers will not be affected much, but what about those who work in the real economy? How can their business be maintained?" Huang said. "I still hope that our society can find a better balance between ensuring normal life and epidemic prevention and control," Huang added.

Shanghai detected another 3,500 cases of infection on Sunday though all but 50 were people who tested positive for the coronavirus but were not showing symptoms of COVID-19. While people who are asymptomatic can still infect others, China categorizes such cases separately from "confirmed cases" — those in people who are sick — leading to much lower totals in daily reports.

business

of the day quote

Heightened geopolitical uncertainties will lead the Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel to opt for a status quo at the next week's meeting

SAUGATA BHATTACHARYA | CHIEF ECONOMIST, AXIS BANK

We are pleased to announce the achievement of 400 Lamborghini in India and mark the Lamborghini Day experience with this milestone achievement along with our customers who have supported us in this journey

SHARAD AGARWAL | HEAD, LAMBORGHINI INDIA

It is a privilege for me to be associated with Kalyan Jewellers, a company which has built the highest levels of trust amongst its stakeholders, conducts its business in an ethical and transparent manner and upholds the standards of good corporate governance

VINOD RAI | FORMER COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL

SHORT TAKES

Sensex up 231 pts

New Delhi: Paring its opening session losses, India's key equity indices -- Sensex and Nifty -- settled higher Monday. Sensex gained 0.4 per cent or 231 points at 57,593 points, whereas Nifty settled at 17,222 points, up by 0.4 per cent or 69 points. Among the individual stocks, Bharti Airtel, Coal India, Axis Bank, Eicher Motors, and ICICI Bank were the top gainers among the Nifty 50 companies, rising 3.9 per cent, 2.7 per cent, 2.1 per cent, 1.6 per cent, and 1.6 per cent, respectively.

Inox, PVR shares up post merger news

New Delhi: Shares of Inox Leisure and PVR Monday jumped sharply after the leading film exhibition players announced a merger to create the largest multiplex chain in the country. Inox Leisure shares jumped 11.33 per cent to settle at ₹522.90 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 19.99 per cent to its 52-week high of ₹563.60. PVR also gained 3.06 per cent to settle at ₹1,883.50 on the BSE. During the day, it rallied 9.99 per cent to its 52-week high of ₹2,010.35.

Adani partners Google Cloud

New Delhi: Ports-to-energy conglomerate Adani Group Monday announced a multi-year partnership with Google Cloud, as the duo teamed up to modernise Adani's IT operations for future scale and group-wide innovation. The strategic collaboration will tap each organisation's expertise across infrastructure, technology, and industry solutions to modernise Adani Group's IT operations, the companies said in a joint statement. Gautam Adani, Chairman of Adani Group, said the inevitability and pace of cloud adoption mandates that every business redefines its business model.

Bitcoin up 4.4%; Ether rises 3.92%

Washington: Bitcoin surged 4.41 per cent to \$46,499.29 Sunday, adding \$1,963.64 to its previous close. Bitcoin, the world's biggest and best-known cryptocurrency, is up 41.1 per cent from the year's low of \$32,950.72 January 24. Ether, the coin linked to the ethereum blockchain network, surged 3.92 per cent to \$3,270.67 Sunday, adding \$123.45 to its previous close.



Over ₹10,000 crore, I am saying 'over' as I don't want to disclose the actual figure, have been recovered by PSU banks from loan defaulters after taking over their assets

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

INDIA'S FIRST MUSIC NFTS

India's first fully curated NFT marketplace, Jupiter Meta, is all set to announce the launch of music NFTs in the country. Singer and composer, Karthik, who is known for his work in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam films will be making the music NFTs available through his special metaverse solo concert April 14, 2022



Sea e-commerce arm Shopee to exit India



REUTERS

Singapore, March 28: E-commerce and gaming firm Sea Ltd said Monday it is withdrawing from India's retail market just months after starting operations there, the second pullback this month in an overseas expansion drive, as the loss-making firm faces a weak growth outlook.

The withdrawal, effective beginning March 29, comes weeks after its e-commerce arm Shopee said it was pulling out of France and after India banned Sea's popular gaming app "Free Fire".

After the ban, the market value of New York-listed Sea dropped by \$16 billion in a single day, leading some investors to cut holdings in the Singapore-headquartered company.

Sea earlier this month said revenue growth of its e-commerce business was expected to halve to around 76% this year from a blistering 157% in 2021, amid fewer online purchases and engagements as more countries emerge from the pandemic.

"Due to a drastic shift in the market sentiment towards growth stocks, all these e-commerce companies are under real pressure to at least break

Shopee said in a statement its withdrawal came "in view of global market uncertainties"

even as soon as possible," said LightStream Research equity analyst Oshadhi Kumarasiri, who publishes on the Smartkarma platform.

Sea's shares had already dropped 11% in January after Chinese tech giant Tencent announced it was selling 14.5 million shares in the group.

Shopee's India business began in October 2021 as part of an aggressive international push that saw it expand into Europe. Sea's market cap at the time was as much as \$200 billion. It has since dropped to \$64.76 billion in March 2022.

The local unit, Shopee India, recruited local sellers and launched a shopping website and app. India's fast-growing e-commerce market was already dominated by such players as Amazon and Flipkart.

Shopee was planning to invest up to \$1 billion in India, and that the pullback would hurt Indian logistics firms with whom it had signed lucrative contracts.

No plan to buy Russian oil in rupees

With Western sanctions hitting Russia's dollar-based trading, there is focus on Moscow's efforts to switch to other currencies, including the possible use of the yuan and rupee in deals with China and India



The sources said the trade with Russia is being settled through in dollars as the international payment mechanism has so far been kept out of the western sanctions ambit

India buys less than one per cent of its total oil imports from Russia, but Ukraine invasion by Russia has given way to talk of a rupee trade for the oil and gas purchases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 28: India has no plans to pay in rupees for the Russian oil its public sector companies buy, Parliament was informed Monday.

"At present, oil public sector undertakings neither have any contract nor is any such proposal under consideration from Russia or any other country for the purchase of crude oil in Indian rupees," Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Rameswar Tell said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has bought two parcels or shipments of distressed Russian oil through traders at deep discounts. IOC bought 3 million barrels in each trade through European trader Vitol.

Separately, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) bought two million barrels of Russian crude Urals through a trader.

Western sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine have prompted many companies and

countries to shun its oil. This has led to Russian crude being available in the market at deep discounts.

To capture the opportunity, Indian refiners are floating tenders to buy such discounted oil. The tenders are mostly won by traders, who would have stocked inventories of the cheap Russian oil.

Since 2020, IOC has had a term or fixed volume deal to buy crude oil from Russia's Rosneft. But, it rarely imported volumes under the term deal as the cost of transporting the oil from Russia made it uneconomical.

But, discounts of \$20-25 per barrel have turned the tide in favour of Russian crude and Indian refiners are lapping it up, sources said.

IOC had in February 2020 signed a deal with Rosneft Oil Company to import up to two million tonne of oil via the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. In 2021, the deal en-

visaged supply of up to 1.7 million tonne of crude oil but IOC bought just one parcel or shipment as the cost of transporting the oil made it uneconomical. In December 2021,

UAE reiterates OPEC alliance with Russia

Abu Dhabi: The United Arab Emirates' Energy Minister, Suhail al-Mazrouei, doubled down Monday on an oil alliance with Russia that's helped buoy crude prices to their highest in years as Moscow's war on Ukraine rattles markets and sends energy and commodity prices soaring. The minister said Russia, with its 10 million barrels of oil a day, is an important member of the global OPEC+ energy alliance. Led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, the alliance has the capacity to increase oil output and bring down crude prices that have soared past \$100 a barrel. The United States, European nations, Japan and others have been calling on Gulf Arab oil producers to do more to help bring down prices. Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson paid an in-person visit this month to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where he raised the issue. Al-Mazrouei described the OPEC+ alliance as one that is here to stay and shot down any suggestion that the UAE would strike out on its own and increase production unilaterally.

Leaving the politics aside, that volume is needed today. Unless someone is willing to come and bring 10 million barrels, we don't see that someone can substitute Russia

SUHAIL AL-MAZROUEI | ENERGY MINISTER, UAE

it renewed the deal to buy up to two million tonne of crude oil in 2022 from Rosneft.

Govt's total liabilities up in Q4

PUBLIC DEBT ACCOUNTED FOR 91.60% OF THE TOTAL OUTSTANDING LIABILITIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 28: The government's total liabilities rose to ₹128.41 lakh crore in December quarter from ₹125.71 lakh crore in the three months ended September 2021, according to the latest public debt management report. The increase reflects a quarter-on-quarter increase of 2.15 per cent in October-December 2021-22.

In absolute terms, the total liabilities, including liabilities under the 'Public Account' of the government, jumped to ₹1,28,41,996 crore at the end of December 2021. As of September 30, the total liabilities stood at ₹1,25,71,747 crore.

Nearly 25 per cent of the outstanding dated securities had a residual maturity of less than 5 years. The ownership pattern of the central government securities indicates that the share of



commercial banks stood at 35.40 per cent at end-December 2021, lower than 37.82 per cent at end-September 2021.

The central government issued dated securities worth ₹2,88,000 crore as against ₹2,83,975 crore in Q3 of FY21, while repayments were at ₹75,300 crore, it said. During the quarter, it said, yields on government securities hardened across the curve.

On domestic front, it said, market was largely disappointed by discontinuation of Government

Securities Acquisition Plan by the RBI in third quarter. The spread of Omicron variant of coronavirus to most parts of the country led to apprehension of additional borrowings as well as higher retail inflation also affected the sentiments.

The yields on the 10-year benchmark security increased from 6.22 per cent at the end of September quarter to 6.45 per cent at the end of third quarter, thus hardening by 23 basis points during October-December, it said.

New Delhi, March 28: The government Monday said ₹95.86 crore has been recovered from 11 cryptocurrency exchanges for evasion of Goods and Services Tax (GST). The total amount includes penalty and interest.

Zanmai Labs (WAZIRX), Coin DCX, CoinSwitch Kuber, Buy Ucoin, UnoCoin and Flitpay were among the exchanges that were involved in GST evasion cases.

Others were Zeb IT Services, Secure Bitcoin Traders, Giottus Technologies, Awlencan

GST EVASION

₹95.86cr recovered from 11 crypto firms



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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RUCHI SOYA FPO

SEBI gives option to investors to withdraw bids

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 28: Capital markets regulator SEBI Monday asked bankers of Baba Ramdev-led Patanjali group's Ruchi Soya to give an option to investors in its ongoing follow-on public offer of shares to withdraw their bids while also cautioning them about "circulation of unsolicited SMS" about the share sale.

The development assumes significance as the share sale was already oversubscribed 3.6 times and withdrawal of bids can have a bearing on the final numbers.

According to a regulatory filing, Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd informed the regulator and stock exchanges that it has come across some messages on social media "speculating" about investment opportunities in the FPO and the company shares being available at discount to the market price.

The company claimed this message has not been issued by it or any of its directors, promoters, promoter group or group companies.

It further said that an FIR has been lodged by the company in Haridwar to investigate these messages under the IT Act and Section 420 of the IPC.

"As directed by SEBI, we wish to bring to attention of the investors that all Bidders (other than Anchor Investors), have an option to withdraw their Bids from March 28, 2022, till March 30, 2022," Ruchi Soya said.

"Investors should further note that bidding in the Issue is closed i.e. March 28, 2022, and accordingly no further Bids will be accepted in the Issue. Any Bids, after the Bid/Issue closure will be rejected," it added.

This regulatory filing followed a direction issued by Sebi after a meeting held earlier in the day with the bankers managing the Rs 4,300 crore FPO.

Sebi asked bankers to issue an advertisement in newspapers Tuesday and Wednesday cautioning investors about the circulation of SMSs. Besides, Sebi asked bankers to give an option to investors to withdraw their already placed bids till March 30th.

The issue opened March 24 and the subscription level was 3.6 times at the close of the scheduled closing this evening. The company has already raised Rs 1,290 crore from anchor investors.

5231 cos with credit exposure of over ₹5cr declared NPAs

RBI DATA MAINTAINED SINCE 2015-16 SHOWS THAT ACTION HAS BEEN INITIATED AGAINST 11.25 LAKH BORROWERS BY BANKS UNDER THE SARFAESI ACT FROM 2015-16 TO 2020-21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 28: More than 5,200 companies having credit exposure of ₹5 crore or above were categorised as non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans on the banks' books as of December 31, 2021, Parliament was informed Monday.

Scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) and All Indian Financial Institutions report certain credit information of all borrowers having aggregate credit exposure of

₹5 crore and above to the RBI, under its CRILC database, since the quarter ended June 2014, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said.

The number of unique borrowers having aggregate credit exposure of ₹5 crore and above, identified as companies, and classified as non-performing assets (NPA) stood at 5,231 as of December 31, 2021, Karad said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

The Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) is tasked to collect, store, and disseminate credit data to lenders.

Under this, banks are required to furnish credit information to CRILC on all their borrowers, having aggregate fund-based and non-fund based exposure of ₹5 crore and above.

The number of companies with large credit exposure fell when compared to 5,623 such entities as of March 31, 2021, the minister said citing data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



"RBI has informed that the details of properties attached under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002, are not maintained at it," Karad said.

On being asked if the government has any data on the number of suicides that took place as

a result of non-availability of sufficient bank credit, rising interest rates, unauthorised private lending apps among others, he said there were a total of 5,213 cases related to suicides due to bankruptcy or indebtedness in 2020, citing data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

In reply to a separate ques-

SHORT TAKES

No Deepika in Asiad for 1st time since '10

SONIPAT: World No.2 Deepika Kumari has failed to make the Indian squad for the upcoming Asian Games, suffering one of the biggest setbacks in her illustrious career. Deepika lost two of her three round robin matches in the final leg to miss the Asian Games berth at the SAI centre here Sunday. Deepika had finished a lowly fifth in the two-phase eliminations Saturday to determine the top-eight, as she had to fight in the round robin matches. The Asian Games will take place in Hangzhou, September 10-25. This is for the first time since winning a gold medal at the New Delhi Commonwealth Games 2010, Deepika will be out of a multi-discipline showpiece event. The 27-year-old has represented India at the Asian Games in 2010, 2014 and 2018, winning a team bronze in Guangzhou 12 years ago.



Glenn Maxwell had tied the knot with his Indian origin fiancée Vini Raman, a week ago in Australia. However, the couple conducted the Indian wedding rituals in Chennai, the visuals of which have gone viral.

Bopanna, Shapovalov in Miami Open last 8

MIAMI (US): India's Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov stunned top seeded Croatian pair of Nikola Mektic and Mate Pavic in straight sets to enter men's doubles quarterfinals at the Miami Open tennis tournament here. The unseeded Indo-Canadian pair surprised Mektic and Pavic 6-3, 7-6(7-3) in a second round doubles match Sunday. Bopanna and Shapovalov will now face the sixth seeded pair of Wesley Koolhof of Netherlands and Great Britain's Neal Skupski for a place in the semifinals

GT WIN 'CLASH OF NEWBIES'



Mohammed Shami reacts after dismissing KL Rahul with the first delivery of the innings during their match, Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, March 28: Rahul Tewatia (40 n o, 24b, 5x4, 2x6) blasted an impactful knock after Mohammad Shami's sensational new ball spell (3/25) to set up a five-wicket win for Gujarat Titans against Lucknow Super Giants in the battle of IPL debutants here Monday.

Deepak Hooda (55, 41b, 6x4, 2x6) and Ayush Badoni (54, 41, 4x4, 3x6) smashed quick-fire half centuries to help Super Giants recover to a respectable 158/6 after Shami blew away their top-order.

Needing 68 off the last 30 balls, Titans were up against it but Tewatia, David Miller (30) and IPL debutant Abhinav Manohar (15 n

o) pulled off a memorable win for their team with two balls to spare. In pursuit of 159, Gujarat were down and out at 78/4 before Miller and Tewatia forged a match-winning 60 run-stand off just 34 balls. Before that, skipper Hardik Pandya (33) and Matthew Wade (30) forged 57 runs for the third wicket to take the innings forward after two early losses.

Earlier, Hooda and IPL debutant Badoni took Super Giants to a respectable score after Shami reduced them to 29/4. But then the duo took the onus on themselves and resurrected the Lucknow innings with an 87-run-stand off 68 balls. After Hooda was trapped in front of the wicket by Rashid Khan (1/27) in the 16th over, Badoni upped the ante.

Lucknow lost captain KL Rahul (0) on the first ball of the game as Shami had him caught behind with a beauty. Shami then cleaned up Quinton de Kock (7) in the third over as Lucknow was reeling at 13/2. Lucknow were in all sorts of trouble at 20/3 as Evin Lewis (10) was dismissed, courtesy a stunning catch by Shubman Gill in the deep off pacer Varun Aaron (2/45).

BRIEF SCORES: Lucknow Super Giants 158/6 (Deepak Hooda 55, Ayush Badoni 54; Mohammed Shami 3/25) lost to Gujarat Titans 161/5 (Rahul Tewatia 40 n o, Hardik Pandya 33; Dushmantha Chameera 2/22) by 5 wickets.

TODAY'S MATCH

RR vs SRH

Time: 07:30 pm

TELECAST

Star Sports channels & Hotstar

Portugal ready to avoid an upset like Italy's: CR7

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Porto, March 28: With a spot on the line for what could be his fifth and final World Cup, Cristiano Ronaldo needs to avoid an upset like the one that ended Italy's hopes of making it to the tournament in Qatar.

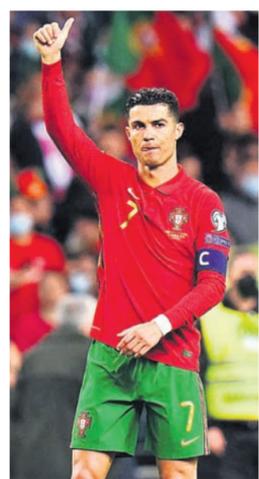
Portugal faces a winner-take-all game Tuesday against North Macedonia, the team that shocked Italy last week to keep the four-time champions out of the World Cup for the second straight time.

"We were surprised," Ronaldo said Monday. "North Macedonia has surprised in many matches. But I don't think they will surprise us tomorrow. Portugal will play better and we will make it to the World Cup."

Portugal is trying to reach its sixth straight World Cup, and Ronaldo is hoping to play in his 10th consecutive major tournament after appearing in four World Cups and five European Championships since 2004.

"We know that if we win we will go to the World Cup and if we lose we are out," he said. "We have the responsibility to be positive and win the match. I see everyone well prepared and wanting to be at their best."

Ronaldo is the only player to



have scored at least once in the finals of nine top tournaments in a row. The highest scorer in men's international football, Ronaldo would be 41 by the time of the next World Cup if Portugal doesn't qualify to play this year in Qatar.

The Manchester United forward didn't want to talk about the possibility of a World Cup without Portugal, Ronaldo said. "There are no individualities here."

EVENT KICKS OFF



Odisha para athlete Jayanti Behera leads the Odisha contingent in the teams' marching during the inauguration ceremony of 20th National Para Athletics Championships at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Monday

Max vs Leclerc shaping up as F1 rivalry of 2022

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jiddah, March 28: Two races into the Formula One season and defending champion Max Verstappen is already going toe-to-toe with Charles Leclerc rather than veteran Lewis Hamilton, the seven-time F1 champion whose crown he took last year.

Verstappen and Leclerc, both 24 and rivals since their karting days, went wheel-to-wheel on Sunday, before Verstappen made a decisive pass three laps from the end of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix for his first win of the season and 21st of his career. The race under floodlights was



held two days after an attack on a nearby oil depot by Yemen's Houthis rebels. Hamilton is F1's record holder with 103 wins, but managed one meager point for Mercedes in 10th. Leclerc was aiming for back-to-back victories after winning the season-opener in Bahrain from pole position last Sunday. After coming close, Leclerc congratulated his

rival on the radio and then gave him a thumbs-up afterward.

And intense. After a virtual safety car came out, following apparent power failures on Daniel Ricciardo's McLaren and then Fernando Alonso's Alpine, Verstappen found himself lurking behind Leclerc with eight laps to go on the sinewy 50-lap street circuit.

Verstappen overtook on the outside at the end of Lap 42. But it was a clever dummy by Leclerc, who dived straight back inside Verstappen on Turn 1 of the next lap. Verstappen had another go on Lap 44, locking his brakes trying a risky overtake on the DRS line, but overtook on

Lap 47 with a clean pass.

Leclerc missed out on a fourth career win, as Verstappen edged him by half a second, but remains top of the standings after two races. Leclerc has 45 points, Carlos Sainz Jr. 33 and Verstappen 25. Hamilton is fifth overall with 16.

Sainz's third place in this race made it another podium double for Ferrari after he was second in Bahrain where Leclerc had brilliantly repelled three attacks from Verstappen, who retired right near the end of that race with teammate Sergio Perez. Perez bounced back with a superb pole position but finished fourth.

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For more details: Odisha: Bhubaneswar: Honda BigWing Bhubaneswar North: 8093014422, 9777065544; Angul: Honda BigWing Angul West: 8908040000, 8908044555.