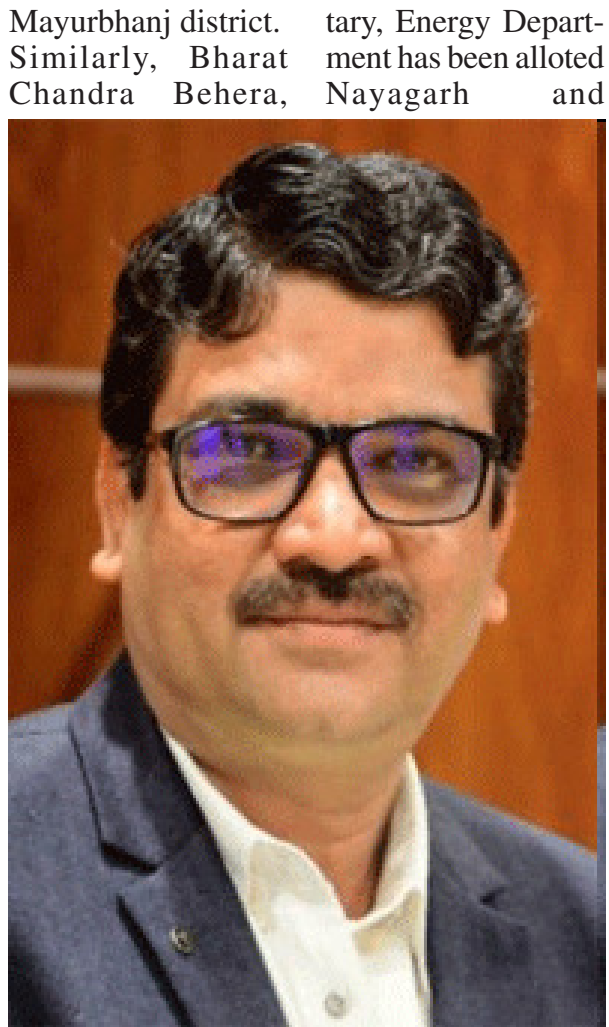


Observers for Urban Poll

Bhubaneswar(KCN): The State Election Commission (SEC) has appointed senior officers as General Observer for General Elections to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for all 30 districts. The SEC has issued an order appointing 25 officers on the job for various districts and Corporations. IAS Officer Indramani Tripathy, Director, Information and Public Relations, has been appointed as General Observer for Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC). Prasanta Kumar Rath, Special Secretary, Higher Education Department has been appointed as the General Observer for Balasore district while Biswamohan Ray, Special Secretary, F&ARD Department has given the charge of



Mayurbhanj district. Similarly, Bharat Chandra Behera, tary, Energy Department has been allotted Chandra Behera, Nayagarh and

Special Secretary, Commerce & Transport Department is the Observer for Keonjhar.

Chandramani Badanaik, Additional Commissioner, Addl. Revisional Court, Bhubaneswar Under Member, Board of Revenue, Cuttack has been appointed as General Observer for Jharsuguda and Sambalpur district. Madhusudan Mishra, Additional Secretary, Agriculture and FE Department is the General Observer for Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapada districts. The other officers assigned for the job includes Jyotiranjana Pradhan, Director, ESI, Bhubaneswar (Puri); Biswanath Sahu, Additional Commissioner (Ganjam Except BeMC); Alok Kumar Kar, Special Secre-

CONTINUED ON: P-7

Special Secretary, Cooperation Department has been given Angul and Deogarh districts; Dhananjaya Swain, Special Secre-

Fortunate to be back home, say Gujarat students on return from Ukraine

AHMEDABAD(KCN): Tears of joy, happy faces and smiles marked the arrival of the first batch of 56 students to their home state Gujarat from Ukraine on Sunday, as anxious parents welcomed them upon arrival from Mumbai after an overnight journey. The students also thanked the Indian authorities for helping them return home safely from war-hit Ukraine.



Two special buses arranged by the Gujarat government brought these students from Mumbai, where they had arrived on Saturday evening after being evacuated by a special flight from Bucharest in Romania. These students had gone to Ukraine to pursue highest studies, but got stranded after Russia launched a military offensive there. They were bought back from

CONTINUED ON: P-7

Invincible Naveen steers another BJD landslide, BJP falls by the wayside

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The conch continued to have an all-encompassing sway over Odisha as the BJD headed for a landslide victory with complete decimation of the opposition BJP and Congress in the panchayat elections, counting for which was taken up in the first phase on Saturday.

As per the latest trends received from the State Election Commission (SEC), the ruling party had established leads in 280 zilla parishad (ZP) zones of the total 315, with the Congress surprisingly occupying a distant second place leading 16 seats and BJP managing only 15 zones.

Independents and others were ahead in four seats. While the trends have come as a huge jolt for the BJP, the BJD was leading in all the 30 districts till reports last came in. The BJP which had



made massive gains in the 2017 rural polls and had emerged a serious challenger to the BJD has found the tables turned this time and staring at a complete wipeout even in its strongholds. It has failed to establish

leads in a single zone of as many as 17 districts.

These are Bhadrak, Deogarh, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Naba-

rangpur, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Puri, Rayagada and Sonapur districts. The ZP polls have thrown many surprises including the BJD resurgence in Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi and Jharsuguda

CONTINUED ON: P-7

districts. In the 2017 elections, BJP had won 48 zones out of the 56 ZP zones in Mayurbhanj district while five seats had gone to BJD. However, there is a complete turnaround this time with the BJP failing to lead in a single out of the 26 zones. While the BJD is leading in 23 seats, others are ahead in three zones in the district. Similarly in Kalahandi district, the BJP had won 33 zones out of 36 in 2017 elections with two and one going to Congress and BJD respectively. However, trends received so far show that BJD is ahead in 13 out of

CONTINUED ON: P-7

China's new-generation rocket launches 22 satellites into space

BEIJING (KCN): China's new Long March-8 rocket placed 22 satellites in space on Sunday, setting a domestic record for the most spacecraft launched by a single rocket.

The rocket blasted off at 11:06 am (Beijing Time) at the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in the southern Hainan Province before sending the satellites into pre-set orbits, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

These satellites will be mainly used for commercial remote sensing services, marine environment monitoring, forest fire prevention and disaster mitigation. The mission marked

Intensive Pulse Polio Immunization has been started in Sundargarh district

Rourkela (KCN): Intensive Pulse Polio Immunization (IPPI) has been



started on Sunday in Sundargarh District. The District Task Force Meeting under the Chair-

the 409th flight of the Long March carrier rockets.

The Long March-8 used for Sunday's launch is a modified version of the medium-lift carrier rocket and is 48 meters long with a take-off weight of 198 tonnes. It uses non-toxic and

chronous orbit, the Xinhua report said. Compared with the original model, the modified model does not have side boosters but can launch multiple satellites with different orbital re-

quirements. The Long March-8 is the new generation of

manSHIP of Collector & DM was held yesterday to ensure and appraise the

pollution-free propellants with a 3-tonne capacity for sun-syn-

chronous orbit, the Xinhua report said. Compared with the original model, the modified model does not have side boosters but can launch multiple satellites with different orbital re-

quirements. The Long March-8 is the new generation of

will be given with oral polio vaccine over a period of 3 days. Today most of the children will take this polio vaccine in 1670 no of booths in both urban and rural area. 1670 no of teams have been formed taking ASHA, AWW, ANM, MAS nomembers to execute this mega program. From tomorrow (2nd and 3rd day) House to House visit will be done by 3812 teams to feed oral polio. 58 no of transit

quirements. The Long March-8 is the new generation of

China's carrier rocket. Designed and built by the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, the rocket fills a gap in China's launch capability to the sun-synchronous

CONTINUED ON: P-7

Russia-Ukraine War LIVE Updates

Government working tirelessly to bring back Indians stuck in Ukraine: PM Modi

New Delhi (KCN): Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Saturday spoke with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and sought India's political support at the UN Security Council to stop Russia's military offensive against his country. Zelenskyy also informed Prime Minister Modi of



the course of Ukraine repulsing the Russian aggression. UP polls a fight between dynasts, diehard nationalists: PM Modi PM Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Uttar Pradesh elections are a fight between the dynasts and diehard nationalists, which the opposition parties do not understand. Government working tirelessly to bring back Indians stuck in Ukraine: PM Narendra Modi Air India's two evacuation flights, one from Romanian capital Bucharest and another from Hungarian capital Budapest, carrying 490 Indian na-

tionalists who were stranded in Ukraine landed at the Delhi airport on Sunday morning, government officials said.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says ready for talks with Russia, but not in Belarus. Russia claims to have besieged two big cities in south and southeast of Ukraine. Moscow claimed its troops had "entirely" besieged the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson and the city of Berdyansk in the southeast, as the Russian army pressed ahead with the invasion of the pro-Western country.

"Over the past 24 hours, the cities of Kherson and Berdyansk have been completely blocked by the Russian

armed forces," defence ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said in a statement carried by Russian news agencies.

Russia has praised India's "independent and balanced" position after Delhi abstained from a UN Security Council vote that deplored Moscow's "aggression" against Ukraine. India, along with China and the UAE, did not vote on the resolution Friday, a move in line with the fine balance Delhi has sought to strike between partnerships with Moscow and Western allies.

China's envoy to Ukraine said current conditions were too unsafe to evacuate

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Naveen craze Continues

Bhubaneswar(KCN): It appears Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and his Biju Janata Dal are unbeatable. Naveen's victory march continues from 1997 unaffected by anti-incumbency factor or wrongdoings of his party colleagues. Look at the ongoing panchayat elections. The trend of results which is available by noon of Saturday, indicated that the governing party is all set to capture about 80 percent of seats of the 315 Zilla Parishad (ZP) seats fought with party symbols. The indications for other such posts like ward members, sarpanches and samiti members, where party symbols are not used in elections, also gave positive signals for Naveen's party.

Yet again the BJP and Congress are on the losing side. Congress is however, not affected as the party had won only 60 seats last time while BJP registered a remarkable growth by winning 297 ZP seats. It is another story whether the BJP can retain its earlier seats this time. If BJP spokesperson Dhiren Senapati is to be believed, the saffron party is struggling to retain its previous number leave alone replacing the BJD.

While BJD leaders and workers are overwhelmed by the trend, there is a pall of gloom in the saffron camp and many of them including party spokespersons have conceded that the villagers have rejected them. The state unit of BJP raised several issues like irregularities in

not address the people through virtual mode. He, however, spoke to some senior party leaders in all districts over video conferencing and stressed to confine their campaign on the good works of his government. This, in fact, made miracles for the BJD which is all set to raise its previous tally in the rural polls. Why did BJP suffer despite its all-out efforts? The saffron brigade has toiled a lot and worked day in and day out. Still it failed to catch the villagers' imagination in the panchayat elections. Lack of proper coordination among the senior leaders of BJP could be one of the factors for the party's dismal performance in the panchayat polls.

The BJP's face Dharmendra Pradhan did not campaign in the panchayat elections as the Union Education Minister was busy in his prior engagement in the Uttar Pradesh elections. But what about the other leaders like Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, MP Aparajita Sarangi and others?

Just ahead of the panchayat elections, PM Modi had allocated a good amount of funds for the railway development in Odisha. But, this factor also could not impress people as it was not publicized well. Vaishnaw, who came down to address a press conference on the railway allocations, remained confined to Bhubaneswar and Cuttack while rural people were to participate in the panchayat elections. Vaishnaw, Aparajita and for that matter Baijayant Panda also had limited roles to play while Pradhan was a no-show. It is another matter that Union Minister Bisheshwar Tudu, Sundergarh MP Jual Oram and former Union Minister Pratap Sarangi extensively campaigned in the rural polls. But, they were no match to

Naveen and they too failed to take advantage of Naveen's absence in the campaigning. What came as a major shock for the BJP leaders was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's praise for Naveen and the BJD Government in Odisha on the floor of the Parliament. This time the praise came for reforms in the mining and coal sector. The PM's message in the Upper House of the Parliament was enough for BJD and Naveen Patnaik in the thick of the campaign. The BJD leaders and workers carried Modi's message to the people which was sufficient to demoralize the saffron rank and file working restlessly in the villages for the party. The people in general took it seriously and considered that Naveen had a very good rapport with Modi and Shah. Why else would Modi praise the Odisha Chief Minister during the rural poll campaign? This could be one of the major factors for BJP's downward trend in rural Odisha, but the fact remains that Naveen still enjoys unconditional support of the masses. When Modi himself praises Naveen, who others matter in the party? The trend of the one day's vote counting has come to the fore, but the BJP has already conceded defeat. The results of three-tier panchayat elections may not be good for the BJP as an opposition party, but it will further strengthen the relationship between Modi and Naveen. Some people say it is a walkover for Naveen and his party in Odisha. The trend indicates a landslide victory for BJD and a performance below expectation for the BJP.



the rural housing schemes, mismanagement in paddy procurement, heinous crimes allegedly supported by BJD leaders and many more. But, the election trend indicates that all such allegations have no impact on the people. Many are also surprised over the performance of the BJD and the rejection of BJP by the people. The saffron think tank is puzzled over Naveen's popularity for which all sins of the party leaders and workers are washed away and the regional party comes victorious.

As usual, the opposition parties make allegations of money and muscle power of the ruling party. Congress MLA Suresh Routray, however, said that both the BJD and BJP used money and muscle power while Congress had nothing to attract or make people panic. Going by the logic of Routray, the BJP should also get a major share of the votes. But, that is not the case. If BJD gets votes by money and muscle power, the BJP also does not lack resources and the party rules at the Centre with Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister.

But, Naveen is all along fresh as his name suggests. He stands tallest among all the leaders and acts as a bulwark against the Modi-Shah juggernaut. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has also proved her mettle. No such proof is required for Naveen as he is already in the hearts of millions of people in the state.

Interestingly the younger son of legendary leader Biju Patnaik has not come out of his residence to campaign for party candidates or even did

Intensified Pulse Polio Immunization Programme (IPPI) Inaugurated in DHH Khordha

Khordha(KCN)-The Intensified Pulse Polio Immunization (IPPI) Programme for the children between 0-5 years age started in Khordha district today. Collector Khordha Sangram Keshari Mohapatra inaugurated the programme at District Head Quatre Hospital (DHH) Khordha and also administered polio drops to the children. Chief District Medical Officer(CDMO) Khordha Dr. Artabandhu Nayak,DPHO, Prasanna Mohapatra, ADMO(F&W) Dr. Raghunath Nayak, Hospital Manager Dr. Binayak Panigrahi & Sangeeta Swain, DPMO, Prakash Banarjee, Kadambari Tripathy and senior functionaries of health department were present in the programme. While speaking on the

aims and objective of the programme CDMO, Dr.



Nayak said that "Polio Immunization programme is a cam-

paigned established by the

dren under the age of five years against polio virus to reach the targeted children in the district. 620 pulse polio immunization booths have been established to provide vaccine to a target of approximately - 128157 children. He also revealed 1240 team required along with 120 supervisors, 40 transit team, 22 Mobile team have been engaged in the district to monitor from 27February -22 to 1st March -22 i.e. 3days vaccination programme effectively. So, that every child in the age group of 0.5 years get polio vaccine for healthy life. CDMO, Dr. Nayak enjoined upon the people of the district to bring their children who are of 0-5 years old to the nearest pulse polio booths and immunize them against the polio virus for their safe and secure growth

Regional Passport Office , Kolkata Organized a Special Exhibition and Cultural Programme at ICCR



Kolkata(KCN): On the eve of 75 years of India's independence, Regional passport office under the ministry of External Affairs and branch secretariat, in collaboration with Indian council for cultural relations Kolkata & protector of Immigrants Kolkata has organised a special programme on Satur-

day 26th February. In ICCR Satyajit Ray auditorium a special exhibition was formally inaugurated by Governor of West Bengal Sri Jagdeep Dhankhar with his wife Smt. Sudesh Dhankhar. In his inaugural speech, the Governor said the main objective of this 'Amrit Mahotsav' program is to unfold the story of our unsung heroes of our freedom movement. He said that the advancement of our digital platform has reduced the corruption rates in our country. Sri Uttam Kumar Biswas, regional passport officer, Sri R Parthiban ,Regional Director ICCR, Sri Kalyan Kumar Haldr pro-

Odisha Tourism presents 3rd Edition of Mycitylinks Corporate Icon Awards 2022

Konark(KCN): To present the exciting blend of leaders, thinkers, creators, innovators and trailblazers from the world of corporate and fashion, Odisha Tourism presents 3rd edition of the Mycitylinks Corporate Icon Awards 2022 was organized here at Eco Retreat in Konark, Odisha.

Famous Indian actress, fashion designer and television presenter Mandira Bedi inaugurated the event as the special guest of the occasion. This year, Corporate Icon Awards 2022 was conferred to Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC), Paradeep Phosphate Limited (PPL), Jindal Steel & Power Ltd., Gupta Power Infrastructure Limited,

Eco Tourism- Today, Tomorrow. Corporate Icon Awards 2022 aims to motivate the leaders and torch-bearers of the corporate world around Odisha. It is dedicated to encourage, cheer and felicitate all those who



Dilip Ray, Ms. Dutee Chand, Ms. Kiruthika Prabhakaran and Mr. Tapan Kumar Chand. In this occasion two conclave sessions were also chaired on Creative Entrepreneurship and

have made a difference or contributed to the development of Odisha. This is our token of appreciation towards supporting the corporate influencers of Odisha

who have led the way forward with innovation and excellence. As a city-centric publication, My City Links has made an earnest attempt to feel the pulse of urban life in Odisha by bringing to its readers the positive happenings and inspirational stories, applauding achievers, celebrating events, highlighting civic and other issues and reflecting the aspirations of the youth. My City Links has also carried articles about Odisha covering a wide range of topics starting from art, culture, food, travel, fashion, lifestyle, people and entertainment to news and current affairs. My City Links has also gone digital (www.mycitylinks.in) to create audio-visual content in a grand way.

Publications Division stall to open at Kolkata International Book Fair tomorrow

Kolkata(KCN): Publications Division, the publication wing of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will put up a sales pavilion at Stall No-330 in the Kolkata International Book Fair-2022, starting tomorrow at the Central Park Mela

Ground, at Salt Lake, Kolkata. Shri Bhupendra Kainthola, Director General, Eastern Zone, Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will inaugurate the stall at 4: 30 pm in presence of Smt. Jane Namchu, Additional Director General,

the stall. Buyers will be offered discount upto 70% on various selected books. Newly published books will also be put for display and sale. The fair will be open to all from 12:00 noon to 08:00 pm on all days till March 13, 2022.

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Huma Qureshi floored by love of Ajith fans



CHENNAI: Actress Huma Qureshi, who plays the female lead in the just released Ajith-starrer 'Valimai', is overwhelmed by the love shown to her by Ajith's fans. The actress, who

plays a cop in director H Vinoth's 'Valimai', has been garnering praises for her performance in the action entertainer. In particular, her action blocks have come in for praise.

Pleased with the response to her performance, Huma Qureshi says: "I am literally amazed by the love and affection of enthusiastic Ajith fans. I want to extend my thanksgiving to Ajith

Kumar fans". "Working with Ajith sir has been a long-run dream that has come true now. I thank Ajith sir, producer Boney Kapoor, and director H Vinoth for gifting me this role,

which had so much importance. It was an amazing experience overall, and shooting for this movie has endowed me with an everlasting positive vibe." The actress, who

made her debut in Tamil with the Rajinikanth-starrer 'Kaala', is currently working in various regional languages, including the movie 'Double XL' with Tamil actor Mahat Raghavendra.

Alia Bhatt-starrer 'Gangubai Kathiawadi' mints Rs 10.5 crore on day one



MUMBAI: Alia Bhatt-starrer 'Gangubai Kathiawadi' has made a whopping Rs 10.5 crore on the first day of its release on February 25.

Trade analyst Taran Adarsh shared the earnings of Alia's hits such as 'Raazi' and 'Gangubai Kathiawadi' on Twitter.

Adarsh said: "#Raazi vs

#GangubaiKathiawadi: *Day 1* biza #Raazi: 7.53 cr (pre-Covid + 100% occupancy) #GangubaiKathiawadi: 10.50 cr (pandemic + 50% occupancy in #Maharashtra)... Note: #Mumbai, #Thane, #Pune, #Gujarat, #Delhi (some locs) are best performers on Day 1. #India biz."

'Gangubai Kathiawadi' tells the tale of a

young girl named Ganga who becomes Gangubai, a madame in the red light area of Kamathipura.

It is loosely based on the true story of Gangubai Harjivandas, popularly known as Gangubai Kothewali, whose life was documented in the book 'Mafia Queens of Mumbai', written by S. Hussain Zaidi.

Was nervous at first to work with Ajay Devgn, says Raashii Khanna

MUMBAI: Actress Raashii Khanna, who is all set to make her digital debut with 'Rudra - The Edge of Darkness', has talked about working with Bollywood star Ajay Devgn in the stories. Raashii said: "To be honest, I was nervous at first to work with him. But when I met him, I realised how down to earth he is. It's very easy to have a conversation with him. And whatever little that I have pulled off playing this character is all thanks to him and my director. Ajay sir was very supportive and made me feel very comfortable."

"I wouldn't have been able to pull off cer-

tain scenes if it wasn't for his support, especially my introduction. He obviously is very experienced and I learnt a lot from him in terms of camera angles, playing out certain emotions, playing it natural and the list is very long!"

A remake of the successful British series Luther, 'Rudra - The Edge of Darkness' is an engaging and dark take on a cop's journey of uncovering truths and bringing victims justice.

It will see Ajay Devgn's titular character of an intuitive and instinctive police officer fighting for the truth in darkness as he wades through a grim and complex web of

crimes and criminals and corruption with a wrathful, steely grit.

'Rudra - The Edge of Darkness' will be available exclusively on Disney+ Hotstar from March 4, 2022 in Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Bengali.

Helmed by ace director Rajesh Mapuskar, spanning across six episodes, the series has been shot across multiple unique locations in Mumbai and reimagines the city from the lens of the country's most wanted. Produced by Applause Entertainment in association with BBC Studios India, the crime drama features a stellar cast including Raashi Khanna, Esha Deol, Atul Kulkarni, Ashwini Kalsekar, Tarun Gahlot, Ashish Vidyarthi, and Satyadeep Misra in pivotal roles.



Amendments in Faceless Assessments by Finance Bill, 2022 Part 2

(Contd from article carried on 21st Feb 2022)



(q) The proposed substituted section 144B also provides that CBDT may, for the purposes of faceless assessment, set up the following Centre and units and specify their

- functions and jurisdiction, namely:
- (i) **National Faceless Assessment Centre** (NaFAC) to facilitate the conduct of faceless assessment proceedings in a centralised manner;
 - (ii) **Assessment units** (referred to as AU), as it may deem necessary to perform the function of making assessment, which includes identification of points or issues material for the determination of any liability (including refund) under the Act, seeking information or clarification on points or issues so identified, analysis of the material furnished by the assessee or any other person, and such other functions as may be required for the purposes of making faceless assessment and the term "assessment unit", wherever used in this section, shall refer to an Assessing Officer having powers to the extent so assigned by CBDT;
 - (iii) **Verification units** (referred to as VU), as it may deem necessary to facilitate the conduct of faceless assessment, to perform the function of verification, which includes enquiry, cross verification, examination of books of account, examination of witnesses and recording of statements, and such other functions as may be required for the purposes of verification and the term, "verification unit", wherever used in this section, shall refer to an Assessing Officer having powers so assigned by CBDT.
- Further, the function of verification unit may also be performed by a verification unit located in any other faceless centre set up by CBDT or under any scheme notified under the Act and the request for verification may also be assigned through the NaFAC to such verification unit.;
- (iv) **Technical units** (referred to as TU), as it may deem necessary to facilitate the conduct of faceless assessment, to perform the function of providing technical assistance which includes any assistance or advice on legal, accounting, forensic, information technology, valuation, transfer pricing, data analytics, management or any other technical matter or an agreement entered into under sections 90 or 90A, which may be required in a particular case or a class of cases and the term "technical unit", wherever used in section 144B, shall refer to an A.O. (Assessing Officer) having powers so assigned by CBDT;
 - (v) **Review Units** (referred to as RU), as it may deem necessary to facilitate the conduct of faceless assessment, to perform the function of review of the income determination proposal assigned under sub-clause (b) of clause (xix) of sub-section (1), which includes checking whether the

relevant and material evidence has been brought on record, relevant points of fact and law have been duly incorporated, the issues on which addition or disallowance should be made have been incorporated and such other functions as may be required for the purposes of review and the term "review unit", wherever used in this section, shall refer to an A.O. having powers so assigned by CBDT.

- (r) That the AU, VU, TU and the RU shall have the following authorities, namely:—
- (vi) Addl. CIT (Additional Commissioner) or Addl. Director (Additional Director) or JCIT (Joint Commissioner) or Joint Director, as the case may be;
- (vii) DCIT (Deputy Commissioner) or Deputy Director or ACIT (Assistant Commissioner) or Assistant Director, or ITO (Income-tax Officer), as the case may be;
- (viii) such other Income-tax authority, ministerial staff, executive or consultant, as considered necessary by CBDT.
- (s) The proposed section also provides that all communication, among the AU, RU, VU or TU or with the assessee or any other person with respect to the information or documents or evidence or any other details, as may be necessary for the purposes of making a faceless assessment shall be through the NaFAC, between the NaFAC and the assessee, or his authorised representative, or any other person and all internal communications between the NaFAC and various units shall be exchanged exclusively by electronic mode. However, this provision shall not apply to the enquiry or verification conducted by the verification unit in the circumstances as may be specified by CBDT in this regard.
- (t) That for the purposes of faceless assessment, an electronic record shall be authenticated by the NaFAC by way of an electronic communication, by the AU or VU or TU or RU, as the case may be, by affixing digital signature and by the assessee or any other person, by affixing his digital signature or under electronic verification code, or by logging into his registered account in the designated portal. It is also proposed that every notice or order or any other electronic communication shall be delivered to addressee/assessee, by way of placing an authenticated copy thereof in the registered account of assessee or by sending an authenticated copy thereof to registered email address of the assessee or his authorised representative or by uploading an authenticated copy on assessee's Mobile App, and followed by a real time alert.
- (u) That assessee shall file his response to any notice or order or any other electronic communication, through his registered account, and once an acknowledgement is sent by the NaFAC containing the hash result generated upon successful submission of response, the response shall be deemed to be authenticated.

The time and place of dispatch and receipt of electronic record shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

- (v) A person shall not be required to appear either personally or through authorised representative in connection with any proceedings before any unit set up under proposed section.
- (w) Further, in a case where a variation is proposed in the income or loss determination proposal or the draft order, and an opportunity is provided to the assessee by serving a notice calling upon him to show cause as to why assessment should not be completed as per such income or loss determination proposal, assessee or his authorised representative, as the case may be, may request for personal hearing so as to make his oral submissions or present his case before income-tax authority of relevant unit. Where the request for personal hearing has been received, income-tax authority of relevant unit shall allow such hearing, through NaFAC, which shall be conducted exclusively through video conferencing or video telephony, including use of any telecommunication application software which supports video conferencing or video telephony, to the extent technologically feasible, in accordance with procedure laid down by the Board. Any examination or recording of the statement of the assessee or any other person (other than the statement recorded in course of survey u/s 133A) shall be conducted by an income-tax authority in relevant unit, exclusively through video conferencing or video telephony, including use of any telecommunication application software which supports video conferencing or video telephony, to the extent technologically feasible, in accordance with procedure laid down by CBDT.
- (x) CBDT shall establish suitable facilities for video conferencing or video telephony including telecommunication application software which supports video conferencing or video telephony at such locations as may be necessary, so as to ensure that the assessee, or his authorised representative, or any other person is not denied the benefit of faceless assessment merely on the consideration that such assessee or his authorised representative, or any other person does not have access to video conferencing or video telephony at his end. The Principal Chief Commissioner or the Principal Director General, as the case may be, in charge of the NaFAC shall, with the prior approval of CBDT, lay down the standards, procedures and processes in specified manner for effective functioning of NaFAC and units set up, in an automated and mechanised environment.
- (y) The proposed section also provides that if at any stage of the proceedings before it, AU having regard to nature and complexity of accounts, volume of accounts, doubts about the

correctness of accounts, multiplicity of transactions in accounts or specialized nature of business activity of assessee, and interests of the revenue, is of the opinion that it is necessary to do so, it may, upon recording its reasons in writing, refer the case to NaFAC stating that the provisions of section 142(2A) may be invoked in the case. The Principal CCIT or Principal DGIT, as the case may be, in charge of the NaFAC shall, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Board in this regard, if he considers appropriate that the provisions of for Special Audit under section 142(2A) may be invoked in the case, forward the reference received from the AU to the Principal CCIT or CCIT or Principal CIT or CIT having jurisdiction over such case, and inform AU accordingly. Such case shall also be taken up for transfer to jurisdictional Assessing Officer with the approval of CBDT. Where a reference has been received by the Principal CCIT or CCIT or Principal CIT or CIT, having jurisdiction over such case, he shall direct A.O. having jurisdiction over such case to invoke the provisions of section 142(2A). However, where a reference has not been forwarded to the Principal CCIT or CCIT or Principal CIT or CIT, having jurisdiction over such case, AU shall proceed to complete the assessment in accordance with procedure laid down.

- (z) That Principal CCIT or Principal DG, as the case may be, in charge of NaFAC may, at any stage of the assessment, if considered necessary, transfer the case, in addition to a case referred to in (y) to A.O. having jurisdiction over such case, with the prior approval of CBDT. It is also proposed to define the terms such as electronic verification code, assessment unit, technical unit, verification unit, review unit etc used in the proposed section. This amendment will take effect from 1st April, 2022.

Omission of Section 144B(9): Section 144B(9) provides that the assessment proceedings shall be void if the procedure mentioned in the section was not followed. The said sub-section refers to violation of the procedure laid down by the law whereas a large number of disputes have been raised under this subsection involving technical issues arising due to use of information technology, leading to litigation. It has been proposed to omit section 144B(9) from its date of inception. However the said sub-section should be retained in the interest of safeguarding the interest of taxpayers and to ensure proper justice. (This amendment will take effect retrospectively from 1st April, 2021).

(Concluded)

(Narayan Jain is former Secretary General of AIFTP and author of the books "How to Handle Income Tax Problems" and "Income Tax Pleading & Practice" with CA Dilip Loyalka).

Government working tirelessly to bring back Indians stuck in Ukraine: PM Modi

Continued from page-1

citizens, days after the embassy said it would prepare plans to help people leave after the Russian invasion.

In a lengthy video message on the embassy's official WeChat account, Chinese ambassador Fan Xianrong sought to dispel rumours he had left Kyiv and reassure Chinese nationals left stranded in the war-torn country.

"We must wait until it is safe before leaving," said Fan from his office, seated in front of a Chinese flag and what appeared to be a fold-out camp bed frame.

"As long as safety conditions are met and everyone's safety is guaranteed, we will make appropriate arrangements."

Elon Musk extends help to Ukraine

Elon Musk says his company SpaceX's Starlink satellite broadband service had been activated in Ukraine, after a Kyiv official urged the tech titan to provide his embattled country with stations. Bihar government launches helpline for students trapped in Ukraine With the evacuation of Indian students trapped in Ukraine picking up speed, the Bihar government has started helplines for boys and girls hailing from the state who had gone to the war-torn country for pursuing higher education and are now anxious to make an exit in the wake of the military crisis. The helpline numbers issued by the state Disaster Management Department are 0612-2294204, 0612-1070 and 7070290170.

The Ukrainian health minister says that 198 people have been killed and more than 1,000 others have been wounded in the Russian offensive. Health Minister Viktor Lyashko said Saturday that there were three children among those killed. His statement made it unclear whether the casualties included both military and civilians.

He said another 1,115 people, including 33 children, were wounded in the Russian invasion that began Thursday with massive air and missile strikes and troops forging into Ukraine from the north, east and south.

Some bars and liquor stores in US think they've found a potent way to punish Russia for invading Ukraine: They're pulling Russian vodka off their shelves and promoting Ukrainian brands instead. "I woke up yesterday morning, and I saw that Russia had invaded Ukraine. You wonder what you can do," said Bob Quay, owner of Bob's Bar in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

An empty space on a liquor shelf where Russian vodka used to be located at The Sidetrack, a gay bar on the north side of Chicago.

A Ukrainian company in charge of building and maintaining roads said it was removing all road signs that could be used by invading Russian forces to find their way around the country.

The Ukrainian president's office said Russian forces blew up a gas pipeline in Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city. The State Service of Special Communication and Information Protection warned that the explosion, which it said looked like a mushroom cloud, could cause an "environmental catastrophe" and advised residents to cover their windows with damp cloth or gauze and to drink plenty of fluids.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has stunned the global community with his ruthless use of military force to alter the political map of central Europe and the implications of this action are complex and multi-layered. The immediate fallout is on the urban citizenry of Ukraine whose population roughly is pegged at 41 million. Television visuals of the destruction of military assets by Russian ordnance bear similarity to the deadly convulsions witnessed in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan in the last two decades.

Indian nationals, mostly students, who were evacuated from Ukraine heaved a sigh of relief as the Air India flight carrying them landed at the airport in the early hours of Sunday.

Suriya Subhash from Maharashtra's Solapur, who was among the 250 Indian citizens brought back on the flight from Romanian capital Bucharest, said she was relieved to be back in her country after a "hectic journey".

The United States, European Union and United Kingdom agreed to block "selected" Russian banks from the SWIFT global financial messaging system and to impose "restrictive measures" on its central bank in retaliation for its invasion of Ukraine.

Air India's second evacuation flight from Romanian capital Bucharest carrying 250 Indian nationals who were stranded in Ukraine landed at the Delhi airport in the early hours of Sunday, government officials said. Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia welcomed the evacuees at the airport by handing out roses to them.

Diplomatic efforts to end the bloodshed have so far faltered.

Zelenskyy offered Friday to negotiate a key Russian demand: that Ukraine declare itself neutral and abandon its ambition of joining NATO. But movement to actually advance any diplomacy has appeared to sputter.

The Russian military on Saturday released images of the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine that it seized after President Vladimir Putin launched an invasion of the country this week.

Russian troops took control of the area -- one of the most radioactive places on earth -- on the first

day of their offensive into Ukraine.

Images released by Moscow's defence ministry showed Russian soldiers patrolling the plant, which is encased in a giant sarcophagus, with snipers dressed in black uniforms and a tank parked on the territory.

Lines of vehicles miles long are clogging border crossings out of Ukraine, as tens of thousands rush to neighboring countries to escape danger from invading Russian troops.

Nearly 120,000 people have so far fled Ukraine into Poland and other neighbouring countries in the wake of Russian invasion, the UN refugee agency said Saturday.

The largest numbers were arriving in Poland, where 2 million Ukrainians have already settled to work in recent years. Poland's government said Saturday that more than 100,000 Ukrainians had crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border in the past 48 hours alone.

At the border town of Medyka, the line of vehicles waiting to enter Poland stretched many miles into Ukraine.

Authorities in Ukraine's capital of Kyiv extend a curfew until early Monday amid fighting with Russian troops, reports AP.

A USD 350 million package of additional US military assistance to Ukraine announced on Saturday includes "anti-armour, small arms and various munitions, body armour and related equipment," according to John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary.

Separately, a senior defense official said the assistance includes Javelin anti-tank weapons and that it will be delivered to Ukraine in phases and as soon as possible. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal planning, said the US has delivered military assistance to Ukraine by unspecified means as recently as "the last couple of days", and that ground routes for delivery of the additional material would certainly be on the list of options we would consider. Second evacuation flight departs from Romania with 250 Indians

EAM S Jaishankar said the second Air India flight for evacuation of Indian nationals stranded in Ukraine has departed from Bucharest with 250 passengers.

UK's Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force deployed to bolster NATO's eastern front. The Russian army has been ordered to broaden its offensive in Ukraine "from all directions" after Kyiv refused to hold talks in Belarus, Moscow's defence ministry said in a statement Saturday. "After the Ukrainian side rejected the negotiation process, today all units were given orders to develop the advance from all directions in accordance with the operation's plans," Russian Army spokesman Igor Konashenkov said in a statement. Ukrainian soldiers at the site after a fight with Russian troops in Kyiv on Saturday.

Ukraine on Saturday rejected Russian suggestions that it was refusing to negotiate a ceasefire but said it was not ready to accept unacceptable conditions, according to media reports.

The first evacuation flight carrying 219 passengers from Ukraine, has landed in Mumbai.

"Since the beginning of this crisis, our main objective was to bring back each & every Indian stranded in Ukraine. 219 students have arrived here. This was the first batch, the second will reach Delhi soon. We'll not stop until all of them are back home," tweeted Union Minister Piyush Goyal.

Russia on Saturday closed its airspace to flights from Bulgaria, Poland, and the Czech Republic in tit-for-tat punitive measures following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Britain has banned Russian flagship carrier Aeroflot from flying over the UK and several countries, including Bulgaria, Poland, and the Czech Republic, have closed their airspace to Russian carriers.

Russia is suspending space launches from French Guiana and withdrawing its technical personnel in response to EU sanctions over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the space agency said Saturday. Moscow may respond to Western sanctions by opting out of the last nuclear arms deal with the US, cutting diplomatic ties with Western nations and freezing their assets, a senior Russian official warned Saturday as Russia's ties with the West dived to new lows over its invasion of Ukraine.

The Embassy of India in Kyiv, Ukraine, issued another advisory on Saturday urging Indian nationals not to move to any of the border posts without prior coordination with Government of India officials.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday told the state Assembly that 130 state residents are stuck in Ukraine and 32 of them are being brought back to India on two chartered flights.

Indian students stranded in crisis-stricken Ukraine are advised to carry the national flag on their vehicles for safety, said Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Saturday

The Indian Embassy in Hungary on Saturday issued a fresh advisory for Indians in Ukraine barring them not to cross the border from other checkpoints than Zahony- Uzhhorod as there is no presence of the Indian Embassy unit to facilitate entry into the Hungarian side.

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Saturday said the Russia-Ukraine war will affect the entire world including India, causing spike in inflation that will severely hit the poor sections and remote areas of the country.

The Goa government is working with the Embassy

of India to ensure safe evacuation of stranded Goans from Ukraine, which has been invaded by Russia, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said on Saturday.

Amid the ongoing tensions in Ukraine and India's attempts to bring back stranded students from the Eastern European country, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Saturday said that the Central government is taking all necessary measures to evacuate its citizens from the country.

Indian students rush to reach Ukraine-Poland border, only to find long queues.

Amid chaos and confusion, 21-year-old medical student Mehul Rathore and his elder sister Meghna travelled in a bus for 200 kilometres from the Ukrainian city of Ternopil and walked for around 20 kilometres at night in freezing cold to reach the Ukraine-Poland border to seek safe shelter in Poland, but they have no option other than waiting in a long queue, that too in uncertainty. Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Saturday said six students from the state, who have been stranded in war-ravaged Ukraine, are on their way to Romania in a specially arranged bus, as part of the evacuation mission.

After a barrage of airstrikes on cities and military bases around the country, Russian forces were closing in on Ukraine's capital on Saturday.

Some oligarchs have also obtained dual citizenship in Britain and other Western countries, adding legal complications to attempts to unilaterally seize their assets.

We 'derailed' Russian attack plan, says Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that the Ukrainian forces have managed to 'derailed' Russian attack plan.

Serbia remained a rare European state not to join a call for Western sanctions against Moscow for its invasion of a sovereign European state.

The world is already facing high energy prices and a supply crunch that has hit consumers with high utility bills and pain at the gasoline pump. Though the invasion, for U.S. kids, is playing out several thousand miles from home, social media and television coverage can make it seem just next door.

The Kerala government will bear the cost of flight tickets for the students arriving in Delhi and Mumbai on evacuation flights arranged by the Union Government from Ukraine which is under attack from Russian forces, state Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Saturday.

Air India's first evacuation flight departed from Romanian capital Bucharest on Saturday afternoon for Mumbai with 219 Indian nationals who were stranded in Ukraine due to the ongoing Russian military offensive, officials said.

The Union Cabinet was learnt to have been briefed on Saturday about the situation in Ukraine and efforts being taken to evacuate Indian nationals from the war-hit country. The Cabinet Committee on Security is also learnt to have met on Saturday amid the crisis in Ukraine after it was attacked by Russia.

Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine, Mykhailo Fedorov, on Saturday urged Apple CEO Tim Cook to stop supplying products and services to Russian users as a response to its invasion of Ukraine. The Haryana government has assured the state's residents who are stuck in Ukraine due to a Russian military offensive that the Centre is making all-out efforts to evacuate stranded Indians. Officials of the Haryana government's Foreign Cooperation Department interacted with some members of the Haryanvi community stuck in Ukraine and their relatives back home virtually on Friday. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday assured Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai full cooperation and support from the Government of India to evacuate people from Karnataka who are stranded in Ukraine.

Ukrainian forces are putting up resistance and inflicting damage on Russia's invading military as it seeks to push deeper into the country, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg says after an alliance video summit.

Russian President Vladimir Putin calls on the Ukrainian army to overthrow the government whose leaders he describes as "terrorists" and "a gang of drug addicts and neo-Nazis".

Ukraine says it is battling with Russian armoured units in two locations between 40 and 80 kilometres (25 and 50 miles) north of Kyiv.

Ukraine claims to have shot down a Russian bomber and helicopter in the east as well as a transport plane southwest of Kyiv.

More than 50,000 people have fled Ukraine since the start of the Russian invasion, mainly to Poland and Moldova, the United Nations refugee chief says.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) appealed to the Indian students stranded in Ukraine on Saturday to follow all the guidelines issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Indian embassy. It also assured the students that all possible efforts are being made by the government to bring them back from Ukraine.

The United States and the European Union add Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to their sanctions list. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also says he is planning "imminent" sanctions against them.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg says the alliance is deploying its rapid response forces to bolster defences on its eastern flank.

Ukrainian officials say radiation levels have increased in the Chernobyl exclusion zone and warn

the capture of the plant by Russian soldiers could have "terrible consequences".

The Council of Europe says it is suspending Russia from the rights body over the attack against Ukraine.

Anti-war rallies against the invasion are held in Madrid, Rome and Barcelona with Russians marching alongside Ukrainians.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday highlighted the plight of Indian students stuck in Ukraine and appealed to the central government to carry out their evacuation urgently.

"Visuals of Indian students in bunkers are disturbing. Many are stuck in eastern Ukraine which is under heavy attack. My thoughts are with their worried family members. Again, I appeal to Government of India to execute urgent evacuation," Gandhi said on Twitter.

Ukrainian soldiers beat back a Russian attack in the capital Kyiv only hours after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warns Moscow would attempt to take the city before dawn.

Civilians -- some of whom have never held a gun before -- prepare to battle with Russian tanks with the Ukrainian defence ministry urging them "to make Molotov cocktails and neutralise the enemy".

After an earlier Russian attack was repulsed in the centre of the city, AFP saw a dead man in civilian clothes lying sprawled on the pavement as nearby medics helped another whose car was crushed by an armoured vehicle.

Russia says it is bombarding Ukraine's military infrastructure with air- and sea-based cruise missiles.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday spoke to some of the students from the state stranded in Ukraine, against which Russia has mounted a military offensive since February 24.

Ukraine crisis: Air India evacuation flight expected to land in Mumbai at 8 pm

An Air India Boeing aircraft, which departed from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport here for Romanian capital Bucharest early morning on Saturday to bring back Indian citizens stranded in Ukraine due to the Russian military offensive, is expected to arrive here at 8 pm, the airport operator said.

Do not move to border posts without coordination with us: Indian embassy in Ukraine

With Russian troops advancing on Kyiv and other key cities, India on Saturday asked its nationals stranded in Ukraine to exercise caution at all times and not move towards any border post to exit the country without prior coordination with its officials.

As Russia's offensive against Ukraine continued on Saturday, Indian students hailing from Tamil Nadu made a fervent appeal for their early evacuation, saying they were short on supplies and virtually feared for their lives amidst repeated sounds of explosions.

The Andhra Pradesh government has so far traced 423 students from the state studying in war-hit Ukraine and established contact with them, a senior official said on Saturday.

A baby was reportedly born in Kyiv subway, now being used as a bomb shelter, overnight on February 25.

With air raid alerts blaring during the night, residents of the Ukrainian capital were forced to shelter in underground structures.

Ukraine's foreign minister has shared the picture of a partially destroyed apartment building in Kyiv after being hit by a missile.

Videos shared by multiple journalists showed a missile hitting a private flat in the apartment complex in Lobanovsky Avenue 6, in the centre of Kyiv. The building is located less than 5 km from the Kyiv airport.

The number of casualties is yet to be known.

As the fighting in Ukraine intensifies by the hour, Indian students find themselves in a dangerous situation.

With the Indian embassy in Kyiv giving no clear guidelines about a possible evacuation, the students wait in agony.

TNIE has accessed visuals of students who are stuck in Kharkiv, a city on the eastern front of the Russia-Ukraine battle.

A new day on the diplomatic frontline began with a conversation with Emmanuel Macron, tweeted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

He added that the anti-war coalition is working and his country's western partners are sending help in the form of weapons.

Air raid alerts were issued in Kyiv and Zhytomyr, a town that is 140 km to the west of the capital. Authorities have urged the residents to find their nearest shelters.

Ukrainian forces have also claimed to have repelled Russian forces in Vasylykiv, which is just 40 km to the Southwest of the Ukrainian capital. Ukraine's military said it has shot down a Russian military transport plane with paratroopers on board. According to a statement from the military's General Staff, the Il-76 heavy transport plane was shot down near Vasylykiv, a city 40 kilometres south of Kyiv. The Russian military has not commented on the incident so far, and the report could not be immediately verified.

UN Security Council resolution demanding that Moscow stop its attack on Ukraine and withdraw all troops faced a straightforward defeat. Friday's vote was 11-1, with China, India and the United Arab Emirates abstaining. It showed significant but not total opposition to Russia's invasion of its smaller, militarily weaker neighbour.

Rudderless BJP stares at washout Odisha's Kotia villagers shift to strawberry farming for better life

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): If the early trends in the counting of votes to 315 zilla parishad

assistance was needed the most," summed up a party insider.



(ZP) zones are any indication, Chief Minister and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik has once again demolished the dreams of the saffron party of coming to power in the State in the near future.

With the BJD heading for a clean sweep and the Congress improving its position, the BJP's claim of improving its 2017 tally has not only fallen flat but also exposed the growing divide among the top leaders of the party. What has come as a shock to the BJP is that the BJD has made massive inroads in western Odisha and some other pockets where the saffron party had a strong base.

The few tribal districts including Mayurbhanj which had been favouring the BJP have also shown the door to the party.

"The inevitable has happened. We were no match for the BJD from the beginning. The top leaders left the State BJP president Samir Mohanty and his team in the lurch when their

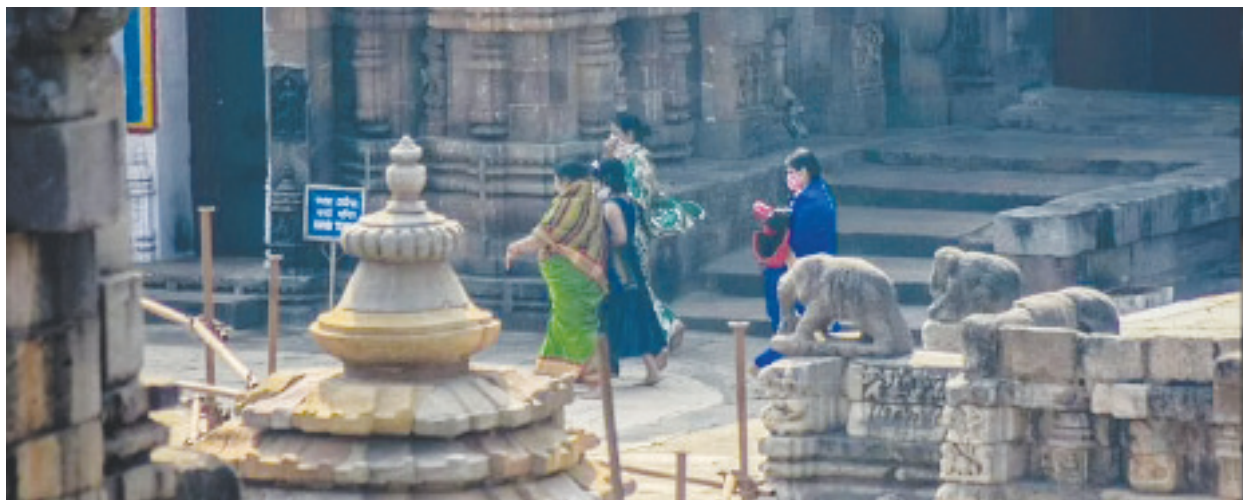
No Shivaratri congregation at Lingaraj shrine

BHUBANESWAR: The BMC on Friday allowed celebration of Maha Shivaratri at

devotees will not be allowed for 's a h a n a m e l a' darshan and entry

ever, they cannot offer puja at the Aada Katha. Servitors will per-

social distance of six feet and wear masks. The civic body has also banned any kind



11th century Lingaraj temple in a restricted manner on March 1. According to the civic body order,

into the sanctum sanctorum. Devotees will be allowed 'darshan' of Lord Lingaraj from Aada Katha only. How-

form all rituals on the day with strict adherence to Covid appropriate behaviour and devotees will be required to maintain a

of mela or congregation of temporary vendors outside the temple to avoid crowding and keep the transmission of the virus in check.

BJD's winning spree continues as Opposition fails to capitalise

BHUBANESWAR: The ruling BJD's performance in the zilla parishad (ZP) elections in which the party established early leads in more than 85 per cent of the zones in the first phase counting, does not come as a surprise with the Opposition giving it up much before the fight started. Meticulous planning and positioning of senior leaders at the district and block levels nearly three months before the panchayat elections enabled the BJD to turn the tables despite the Opposition raising several issues. While the BJP top brass in the State stayed away from campaigning, all the senior leaders of the BJD including party MPs were entrusted with the charge of districts at least six months before the

polls were announced. Besides the organisational outreach of the BJD which was far ahead of its rivals BJP and Congress, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also played a crucial role in the party's spectacular performance even though he stayed away from the direct campaign. The Chief Minister visited all the 30 districts twice during the last three years, to launch different programmes and schemes. The poll trends have proved that there was no anti-incumbency factor in play against the Chief Minister even after 22 years of BJD rule. Though all political activities were suspended for more than a year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Chief Minister virtually vis-

ited all the districts or launched schemes. Distribution of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) smart health cards in all districts by the Chief Minister even during the pandemic and payment of cash to different sections of voters as subsistence assistance seems to have favoured the BJD immensely during the panchayat elections. The Chief Minister had similarly gone around all the districts before the 2019 general elections to launch 'Ama Gaon, Ama Bikash' programme which turned out to be a success in creating a favourable ground for his party during the polls. However, the surprise element in these elections is BJD's success in Kalahandi, Balangir, Sambalpur,

Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj districts which are considered BJP strongholds. The Mamita Meher murder case could not make much of an impact on the voters in Kalahandi and Balangir districts where the BJD is all set to sweep the polls. A senior BJD leader said that the results are beyond expectation. Though the Opposition had several issues, they failed to translate those into votes, he said and added that the number of zones to be won by the party may reach 651, which was its tally in 2012 panchayat elections. WHAT WORKED Meticulous planning Positioning of senior leaders at dist, block levels Organisational out-

BHUBANESWAR: Ajesh Nag, a youth of Doliamba village in the disputed Kotia gram panchayat, does not want to migrate to other states for work any more. He now hopes for a stable source of income by growing organic strawberries in the fertile lands of Koraput. Working outside the State till two years back, the 28-year-old man faced several difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic. Eking out livelihood had become a struggle for Nag and many others like him in the village till Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) introduced them to strawberry cultivation last year. "All the families of Doliamba village are now engaged in strawberry cultivation. As of now, the demand is higher than the supply and we are hopeful the market for organic strawberries will expand further in the coming years," Nag said. While

the villagers cultivated strawberries over 5 acres of land in January this year, they have so far harvested 15 to 16 kg of the fruit which they are

selling at Rs 400 per kg. Another villager Anil Panji expressed similar views and said that income from strawberry cultivation will increase in the coming years. "The ITDA and Department of Agriculture officials provided us with the training to cultivate strawberries. We have now become acquainted with the process and will continue this in the coming years," said Panji. There are about 50 families in Doliamba village and the authorities had to convince them to take up strawberry farming instead of traditional



chased about 55,000 strawberry plants for Rs 30 each from a registered firm in Pune. "Koraput district has the ideal climate for strawberry cultivation as it requires temperature between 15 degree and 25 degree, adequate sunlight and availability of water. In a bid to provide sustainable livelihood to Doliamba villagers, the plantation drive was started in January this year. So far, we have got 15 kg to 17 kg strawberries," said Koraput ITDA's project coordinator Kasi Prasad Nayak. These strawber-

ries are 100 per cent organic as bio-fertilizers are being used to grow them. The strawberry saplings are planted at a distance of 1.5 feet. Each plant can give at least half a kg fruits and the administration is hoping for a yield of over 10 tonne by April or May.

Koraput Collector M Abdaal Akhtar said the strawberry plantation is aimed at improving the livelihood of people in Doliamba village. Funds for the purpose have been arranged from ITDA, DMF and CSR wings of different companies.

The cultivation has been taken up in a small scale and considering the overwhelming response, the district administration is mulling to expand it further to nearby villages after examining their soil and other conditions. The produce will be sold in Jeypore and Koraput besides retail outlets and cities like Visakhapatnam, Raipur and Bhubaneswar.



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DGFT opens Helpdesk

New Delhi: In view of the current international situation, Department of Commerce and DGFT have undertaken to monitor the status and related difficulties being faced by stakeholders on Russia/Ukraine trade related issues, said DGFT Santosh Sarangi.



Department of Commerce/DGFT has operationalised a Helpdesk to support and seek suitable resolutions to issues related to India's International Trade in this regard with immediate effect, said Dr. Sarangi, DGFT Export-Import community may submit details of their issues on the DGFT website, on which support is required, using the following steps—

i. Navigate to the DGFT Website (<https://dgft.gov.in>) —> Services —> DGFT Helpdesk Service

'Create New Request' and select the Category as 'Russia-Ukraine'
ii. Alternatively, issues may be sent directly over email to: dgftedi@nic.in with the subject header: 'Russia-Ukraine Trade Helpdesk', or call the Toll-Free No at 1800-111-550.

The status may be tracked using the Status tracker under the DGFT Helpdesk Services. Email and SMS would be generated for immediate intimation as and when the status of these tickets are updated. DGFT has requested the Trade Community to make use of the given Helpdesk facility suitably.

Further, a weekly meeting with concerned exporters/importers/other trade stakeholders will also be held by DGFT & FT(CIS) division of Department of Commerce every Monday at 03:00 pm IST via Video Conference. Concerned stakeholders may consider joining the said virtual meeting to flag specific issues.

Audi eyes 15 per cent of sales from EVs by 2025, says Head of Audi India

Balbir Singh Dhillon, Head of Audi India, speaks about the company's electric vehicle and used car

We recently launched Audi Q7 as a petrol-only variant with mild-hybrid technology in the country

fantastic response with the first batch of cars being sold within days. We have a strong order bank for 2022 and this reiterates the strong demand for EV's in India.

As a brand, we are targeting 15% of our sales to come from EV's by 2025. Our goal is to move towards complete electrification by 2033.

Vedantu to buy Screwvala-backed Lido Learning

BENGALURU(KCN): Online tutoring platform Vedantu is likely to acquire Ronnie Screwvala-backed edtech start-up Lido Learning, which was on the verge of shutting down due to lack of funds. Sources confirmed that the second-largest



company Lido and is likely to

will buy the deal be closed

in the coming weeks. However, Vedantu could not be reached for comment. Lido has been facing severe financial constraints, as it could not pay salaries to 700 employees since January. A Lido employee said apart from 700 people, the company needs to pay salaries to many teachers and some contract employees too. A source confirmed that Lido Learning has to pay salaries amounting to Rs 9 crore.

China's new-generation rocket launches 22 satellites into space

Continued from page-1 orbit and meets the needs of more than 80 per cent of launch missions for medium and low-orbit spacecraft.

Xiao Yun, chief commander of the rocket, said an assembly and test plant for the Long March-8 family is being built outside the Wenchang launch site.

Once completed, it is expected to shorten the launch interval of the Long March-8 rocket to seven days, enabling 50 launches a year.

On February 10, China unveiled an ambitious plan for its burgeoning space industry this year which included over 50 space launches and six manned space flights to complete the building of its space station.

The China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) said China will carry out more than 50 space launches in 2022, sending over 140 spacecraft into space, "The year 2022 will see China's projects in space at the top of its game," Ma Tao, the deputy chief of the space department at China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) said.

Among the many tasks planned for 2022, Ma noted that six launches will be dedicated to China's manned space project to build space station, which is expected to be completed this year. "We will complete the rendezvous and docking of the two lad modules with the core module under manned condition to complete the T-shaped design for the space station," Bai Linhou, the deputy chief designer of space station system at CASC, state-run CGTN reported.

Last month the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, (CASTC) said China will complete the building of the space station this year.

Last year, China has carried out 55 space launch missions according to China's blue book on the space industry.

BitConnect's Indian origin founder indicted in USD 2.4 billion cryptocurrency fraud

Satish Kumbhani, the founder of BitConnect, was indicted by a US federal grand jury on charges that he orchestrated a

global Ponzi scheme and raised USD 2.4 billion from investors. Kumbhani has also been charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and ma-

manipulation in addition to the fraudulent cryptocurrency investment platform. Kumbhani could face a maximum of 70 years of prison penalty.

Fortunate to be back home, say Gujarat students on return from Ukraine

Continued from page-1 Bucharest in a special flight of Air India. As they alighted from the buses in Surat, Vadodara and Ahmedabad on Sunday, local politicians and government officials greeted them with flowers.

Some students wept as they hugged their parents, while others flashed a smile of relief. Some also shared the story of their journey stretching over three days - walking for several kilometres to cross the border into Romania before boarding the special planes, and then an overnight bus journey to reach their native places in Gujarat.

One of the evacuees, Puja Patel, who reached Surat on Sunday, said she had gone to Chernivtsi in Ukraine to pursue a medical course in December last year. But, she had to rush back home after just two months.

"We were trying to come back to India after the talks of war between Russia and Ukraine started. Our parents were quite worried. We were provided support from the Indian Embassy, but a lot of our friends are still living there in an environment of fear. I will truly be happy when all of them are brought back safely," she said.

Another Surat native Araswi Shah, who was studying in Ukraine's Bukovinian city, said many students were hopeful that there would be no war, until it actually broke out.

"On February 15, the Indian Embassy directed us to leave Ukraine at the earliest. Many students believed that the war would not happen due to the intervention of other countries, but as soon as it broke out, the cost of tickets skyrocketed and were not even available after some time," she said.

But, she managed to get out of Ukraine with the help of the Indian embassy, she said. A student after arriving in Vadodara said, "It took us three days to finally reach our home state. We reached safely, and we are thankful to the government for making all the arrangements. We pray for the safe journey of the other students who are trying to come back."

Another evacuee in Vadodara said several students trying to leave Ukraine have to drag their heavy bags and luggage for 5-6 kilometres, or even more, to make it to the Romanian border, before they can board a special flight. "At the border, they have to wait for hours without food and water," said another student of the ordeal her friends who are left behind are undergoing.

Another student said they feel lucky to come back home safely, with the help of the Indian embassy. "People are rushing to the Romanian border, but we managed to move out early as we were living in a city not very far from the border. Many of our friends are still there. With the cold weather and crowds at the border, which is being sealed, they are facing difficulties, but will be able to return home," said another student.

The Vadodara-based father of a student, whose daughter managed to come back, said the family had forgotten to smile ever since they got the news of the war in Ukraine.

"We can smile now that our daughter is back," he said. Vadodara MP Ranjan Bhatt said 16 students from Vadodara have reached their destinations, and many more are on the way.

"We are making all efforts to bring all of them back home. The Indian embassy and the Ministry of External Affairs are making all efforts to bring them home safely," the BJP Lok Sabha member told reporters. As these students reach home, the parents of those who left behind are still worried.

The father of a student from Vadodara said his son left for Poland border last night.

"He and his friends were dropped 15 kilometres ahead of the border. They had to walk all the way to the border, only to be denied a safe passage by the authorities there. My son called me to say there is no arrangement, and it is difficult for them to cross over into Poland from Ukraine," he said.

Attorney for the Southern District of California, Randy Grossman, said, "This indictment alleges a

massive cryptocurrency scheme that defrauded investors of more than \$2 Bn. The U.S. Attorney's Office and our law enforcement partners are committed to pursuing justice for victims of cryptocurrency fraud."

According to court documents, he reportedly misled investors about the platform's supposed proprietary technology - 'BitConnect Trading Bot' and 'Volatility Software.'

Invincible Naveen steers another BJD landslide, BJP falls by the wayside

Continued from page-1 the 16 zones with only three zones for the saffron party. In Jharsuguda, BJD had drawn nil in 2012 and 2017 ZP polls out of the total nine seats.

However, this time, trends show that the BJD has led in five seats there. The BJP also suffered major reverses in Nuapada, the home district of BJP strongman and Kalahandi MP Basant Panda, by not leading in even a single zone. In Balangir, another BJP stronghold, the party is leading in only two as against 12 by BJD. The counting of votes will continue on February 27 and February 28.

Congress's performance is noteworthy even though it has not been able to establish any lead in 23 districts. It has spectacularly managed to maintain its traditional strongholds in the southern districts of Koraput and Rayagada.

The party is leading in four and five ZP zones in Koraput and Rayagada while it was ahead in one ZP zone in Cuttack. The party has won the Malkangiri-Chitrakonda zone in Malkangiri district.

Observers for Urban Poll

Continued from page-1 tary, S&ME Department (BeMC); Biswajit Biswal, Special Secretary, Water Resources Department (Bhadrak); Susanta Kumar Dash, Director of Textiles, Odisha, Bhubaneswar (Bargarh); Sudarsan Parida, Director, RD (Dhenkanal); Bimalendu Ray Additional Secretary, Works Department (Jajpur); Raghmani Gamango, Special Secretary, ST&SC Development Department (Rayagada an Nawarangpur).

Moreover, Dharam Hansada, Additional Secretary, School and Mass Education Dept has been assigned Koraput and Malkangiri districts while Kabindra Kumar Sahoo, Secretary, Bhubaneswar Development Authority has been allotted Boudh and Subarnapur districts, Pradeep Kumar Garadia, Managing Director, Odisha State Warehousing Corporation given Gajapati district; Gangadhar Nayak, Special Secretary, F and ARD Department (Bolangir), Abanikant Pattanaik, Additional Secretary, Steel and Mines Department (Cuttack Municipal Corporation); Laxmikant Pyarilal Pradhan (Kalahandi and Nuapada); Shyamabhakta Mishra, Managing Director, Boyanika (Khurda Except BMC).

Besides, OAS officer Birendra Korkora, Additional Secretary, Higher Education Department has been given Cuttack district (except CMC).

The elections to 47 Municipalities, 59 Notified Area Councils (NACs) and three Municipal Corporations will be held on March 24. The election results will be declared on March 26.

The Election Officer will issue formal notification for the election on February 28 while candidates can file their nominations in between March 2 and March 7.

The Model Code of Conduct issued by the Commission will remain in force only in the jurisdictions of the ULBs from today till March 26.

This time there will be a direct election for the post of Mayor and Chairperson. Over 41 lakh voters are eligible to cast their votes in the Urban Elections. About 27 lakh voters, 3,030 booths and 1731 wards are there in 106 Municipalities and NACs while there are 14.26 lakh voters, 168 wards and 1407 booths in three Corporations.

strategy in India in an interview with TNIE.

You recently opened a used Audi store - what's the outlook for that part of the business in luxury cars? Audi India's pre-owned car business has consistently grown and continues to be an important part of our overall business strategy. We believe it is going to be one of the major growth drivers for us in the future as we have a clear focus on selling every car twice.

We are currently expanding our Audi Approved: plus showroom network with a series of inaugurations. We started 2021 with seven Audi Approved: plus facilities and currently stand at fourteen, including recently inaugurated facilities in Ahmedabad, Nashik, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Surat and Mumbai (South). We will further expand Audi Approved: plus facilities beyond 20 this year.

Q7 has just been launched, and in a world where electric and carbon footprints are the buzz, will you have a similar electric version out soon?

and we are aligned with Audi's focus to shift towards electrification by 2033. In 2021, we launched five electric cars under the e-tron brand between July - August 2021. Not only did we launch these cars but also created an ecosystem for our customers.

How do you foresee the luxury car market sales-wise this year? The luxury car market is showing encouraging signs and we believe that pace will pick-up in the months ahead. It is important to note that the luxury segment has remained less than 2% of the overall passenger vehicle vertical and has great potential for growth provided we have a stable policy regime and reasonable duties / tax structure.

Your EV strategy seems to be pretty aggressive. How many you have in the line-up and what percent is that of your line-up?

We are a brand with the widest EV range on offer in India - our Audi e-tron 50, Audi e-tron 55, Audi e-tron Sportback 55, Audi e-tron GT and Audi RS e-tron GT have received a

I-League may rethink allowing spectators after two weeks

KOLKATA: The I-League, which is set to resume on Thursday, two months after it was suspended owing to COVID-19 cases in its bio-bubble, will take a call on entry of spectators after reviewing the situation in the second week of March. On 3 January, the I-League was suspended by the AIFF after a fresh COVID-19 outbreak hit the participating teams inside the bio-bubble here. The call to suspend the I-League was taken after consulting Dr Harsh Mahajan, a member of AIFF's Sports Medical Committee.

"Personally looking at the wave, maybe two weeks down the line one may revisit the issue and allow spectators to a limited extent," said Dr Mahajan during a virtual media interaction on Sunday. "If we look at the advisory of the health ministry, the states have been asked to open up and I think we are in the right position to do so in a graded manner. "As we go along, we may reshape how to go about the bio-bubble. There is less than one per cent positivity rate now and unlocking is happening all over the country.

Rafael Nadal beats Norrie in Acapulco for his 91st career title



MEXICO: Rafael Nadal said earlier in the week that he wasn't aware of his career statistics. Now, he might want to have a look at them. The 35-year-old Spaniard defeated Cameron Norrie 6-4, 6-4 on Saturday to win the Mexican Open and extend his career-best start for a season to 15-0 as he won his 91st ATP title.

Nadal, who won his third title in 2022, including the Australian Open for his record 21st Grand Slam singles title, is three victories from tying Ivan Lendl's total of 94 for third place for most championships in the Open Era. Jimmy Connors leads with 109 and Roger Federer has 103. The Spaniard won for the fourth

time in Acapulco (2005, 2013 and 2020) where he is a fan favourite. Norrie, who was on an eight-game winning streak, was trying to become the first British man to win the Mexican Open in its 29-year history. At the start of the match, Nadal had a break in the fifth game to take a 3-2 lead and went on to win in the first set in 51

minutes. In the second set, Nadal had a break in the first game, but Norrie returned it and appeared to be back into the match, but the Spaniard added breaks in the fifth and seventh games to take home the trophy. In the doubles final, Feliciano Lopez and Stefanos Tsitsipas defeated Marcelo Arevalo and Jean-Julien Rojer 7-5, 6-4.

CSK launch Super Kings Academy, Michael Hussey terms it 'fantastic initiative'

CHENNAI: Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Chennai Super Kings (CSK) will be establishing Super Kings Academy - cricket coaching centres for both boys and girls. The Super Kings Academy will start with two centres - Chennai and Salem - and expand across Tamil Nadu, India and the rest of the world over time. The first Super Kings Academy in Chennai will be located at Thoraipakkam, while the one in Salem will be at the Salem Cricket Foundation. "We have been involved with cricket for five decades and believe this is an ideal way to give back to the sport. This will be the right opportunity for us to share our experience and help nurture the next generation of cricketers," said

facilities that include floodlit outdoor and indoor nets and various types of turf pitches to help prepare for all conditions in addition to concrete, indoor and open net facilities. A ground with turf pitches will also be available for match simulation. The facility is well equipped with a fitness centre, cafeteria and other essential amenities for learners and parents. The Super Kings Academy at Salem is a stadium of international standards and spread across 16 acres. The academy is well equipped with a full-size floodlit ground with turf & practice pitches, players' pavilion and a media centre.

The Academy will have experienced, BCCI certified coaches who will impart the CSK system of learning to students. The academy will have access to learning and training methodology from CSK and guest lectures from CSK players and support staff.

Chennai Super Kings Batting Coach Mike Hussey on Super Kings Academy: "I think it's a fantastic initiative, really excited about it. I think this gives opportunities to so many youngsters out there to get access to some great facilities, great coaching and then hopefully improve their game and come up the ranks and then one day, it would be awesome to see a number of players coming out of these academies playing for CSK in the IPL."



Chennai Super Kings CEO KS Viswanathan in an official release. "With experienced coaches and best of facilities, the Super Kings Academy will not only provide top class coaching but also take a holistic approach in guiding boys and girls," he added. Super Kings Academy at Thoraipakkam, Chennai is a centre with state-of-the-art fa-

Indian star Smriti Mandhana hit on head in World Cup warm-up game

CHRISTCHURCH: Star opener Smriti Mandhana suffered

blow on her helmet in the early stages of the game in

doctor after the incident and was initially deemed fit to

field at the start of South Africa's innings.



an injury scare ahead of the women's ODI World Cup after being hit on the head during India's first warm-up match against South Africa here on Sunday. The left-handed batter retired hurt after copping a nasty

Rangiora. According to a report on the ICC website, it was a bouncer from South African fast bowler Shabnim Ismail who hit her, leaving Mandhana visibly shaken. The 25-year-old Mandhana was assessed by the team

continue, only to retire hurt an over and a half later following another consultation. According to the medical staff, she didn't feel any initial concussion symptoms but left the ground as a precautionary measure. She did not take the

Mandhana, who played only the last two ODIs against New Zealand after being in extended quarantine, is a vital cog in India's ODI side and is expected to play a key role in the World Cup which gets underway on Friday. The Mumbaier ranked 8th in ICC women's ODI player rankings, has scored 2461 runs in 64 ODIs at an average of 41.71. She had hit 71 off 84 balls in the final ODI to deny the White Ferns a whitewash in the five-match series.

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