



## CROWNING GLORY

Manasa Varanasi, an engineer from Telangana, has bagged the VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020 title

LEISURE P2



## MAHA GUV SNUBBED

Maha Guv waits for hours at Mumbai airport to take a flight to Uttarakhand as he couldn't use state govt aircraft

TWO STATES P7



## BIDEN DIALS UP XI

US Prez Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping held their first telephone call as leaders

INTERNATIONAL P10

Kotia: SC to hear contempt plea against AP today

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 11: The Supreme Court Friday will hear the contempt petition filed by Odisha against Andhra Pradesh for holding elections in three villages of Kotia gram panchayat in Koraput district.

A two-judge bench of the SC comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and Aniruddha Bose will hear the matter.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for Odisha, made mentioning before the bench for urgent hearing of the contempt petition.



Significantly, Odisha has been seeking stay on the notification issued by Andhra Pradesh for holding elections in three villages of the Kotia panchayat in Koraput district and also initiating contempt proceedings against it.

# Centre pulls up Twitter

IT minister's statement comes a day after the Ministry expressed its displeasure over Twitter's conduct in the aftermath of Red Fort breach January 26



We have flagged certain issues to Twitter and social media has to take into consideration the Indian laws if they want to do business in the country

It can't be different for the Capitol Hill incident and some other parameters for the Red Fort incident

There is freedom of speech but Article 19A says that this is subject to reasonable restrictions

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD | INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MINISTER

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 11: The Centre Thursday categorically cautioned social media platforms against spreading 'fake news' or anything inciting violence, as Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said action will be taken if Indian laws were flouted. It can't be different for the Capitol Hill incident and some other parameters for the Red Fort incident, the minister said.

"There is freedom of speech but Article 19A says that this is subject to reasonable restrictions," the Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology told in the Rajya Sabha as he reminded platforms like Twitter and Facebook to comply with Indian rules while carrying out business.

"We respect social media a lot, it has empowered common people. Social media has a big role in the Digital India programme. However, if social media are misused to spread fake news and violence, then action will be taken on the misuse of social media in India whether Twitter or else," said Prasad.

He said all the social media platforms



will have to adhere to the Constitution of India. The Indian Constitution allows criticism of the government and the Prime Minister, but spreading fake news will not be allowed, he said. Prasad said, "We have flagged certain issues to Twitter and social media has to take into consideration of the Indian laws if they want to do business in the country."

"Different parameters can't be allowed for different countries. It can't be different for the Capitol Hill incident and some other parameters for the Red Fort incident."

The Indian government Wednesday

expressed displeasure over Twitter's delayed compliance on its order to remove "provocative" tweets amid the ongoing farmers' protests. IT Secretary Ajay Prakash Sawhney expressed Centre's displeasure to Twitter's management.

An official statement issued late Wednesday night said the Secretary told Monique Meche, Vice President, Global Public Policy and Jim Baker, Deputy General Counsel and Vice President Legal of Twitter that delayed compliance to lawfully passed orders are "meaningless."

"Lawfully passed orders are binding on any business entity. They must be obeyed immediately. If they are executed days later, it becomes meaningless," Sawhney was quoted as saying in the statement.

If sources are to be believed, Twitter has blocked Rajya Sabha MP Chaudhary Sukhram Singh Yadav's account in what is among the highest-profile blockings undertaken by the social media platform in the country so far. "@MPSukhram's account has been withheld in India in response to a legal demand," Twitter says to users accessing the page from India. From other countries, Yadav's tweets appear normally.

## HEADLESS BODY CASE

# Missing head found, 2 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Feb 11: The Commissionerate Police Thursday claimed to have solved the mystery surrounding the recovery of a headless woman's body February 4. Two persons were arrested in connection with this.

The torso of the deceased was found lying along the Andharua-Daspur road under Chandaka police limits in the state capital.

The deceased has been identified as Puspapala Roul, a resident of Phuleswari slum under Khandagiri police limits. Her severed head was recovered from a secluded spot in a jungle near Bharatpur.

The arrested accused were identified as Angad Das alias Sanjay, who worked as a mason and Srikant Das alias Chandu, the owner and driver of the vehicle used to dispose of the lady's body. They were arrested from a place in Dasapalla area in Nayagarh district.

## AN AFFAIR GOES SOUR

Sources said Puspapala was in a relationship with Sanjay since the death of her husband six years back. Sanjay came in contact with the victim when she was staying with her mother at Dhirikuti slum. But, later she started staying alone at Bharatpur. Sanjay and the victim had been meeting at Phuleswari slum in Patrapada area under Khandagiri police limits for the last six years.

During investigation, it came to the fore that Puspapala had married another person December 24 last year. However, December 29, she returned to Sanjay again. The latter however, refused to accept her for her fickle-minded attitude. Sanjay decided to kill Puspapala to get rid of her

THE SEVERED HEAD WAS RECOVERED FROM A SECLUDED SPOT IN A JUNGLE NEAR BHARATPUR

THE HEAD HAS BEEN SENT TO AIIMS, BHUB FOR FORENSIC CONFIRMATION

once and for all. He carried out the gruesome act with the help of his friend Chandu, sources added.

Sanjay strangulated Puspapala with her stole February 3 afternoon. Later, the duo, Sanjay and Chandu, purchased gloves and knife from the nearby Aiginia market. They reportedly cut off her head at the spot where the body was recovered. They threw the severed head on an elephant trench near Bharatpur.

A police team along with forensic experts led by Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar Dash took the accused to the spot at Bharatpur forest where the severed head was recovered to recreate the crime scene. The place is two kilometers away from the spot where the woman's torso was found. The torso was identified as that of Puspapala by her mother. She did so due to the presence of a tattoo on the deceased's body.

The severed head has been sent to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar for further examinations, it was learnt.

Notably, some locals first spotted the torso of the woman. They then informed the police. Since it was a headless body, police had difficulties in identifying the body. A forensic team and a sniffer dog were also used for the probe. Commissionerate Police had announced a cash award of ₹50,000 for anyone who would help identify the deceased.

## Leopard kills & eats woman in Nuapada

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tarbod/Nuapada, Feb 11: A woman was killed and eaten by a leopard at Chhotlora under Bharuamunda panchayat and Sadar block of Nuapada district Thursday evening, locals said. The deceased woman was identified as Bhanbai Majhi (47).

According to reports, the woman had been to a nearby forest to collect wild fruits, but did not return home. Her family members and locals searched for her.

They found a leopard feeding on her body. The villagers had informed forest officials about the incident. However, no forest officials had visited the spot till the last report came in.

Nuapada ranger Banita Bhoi said that complete information about the incident was not available and it will be confirmed only after an investigation.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Where do you want to deploy the armaments returning from Ladakh... Eastern border, Western border or Delhi border?



## FLUFFING AROUND

One of the two eighteen-month-old twin pandas plays in snow at Pairi Daiza zoo in Brugelette, Belgium

REUTERS PHOTO

# Contractual cameraman gets lifer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, Feb 11: A local court handed down life imprisonment to Ishwar Chandra Behera, contractual cameraman of Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in this district after convicting him of spying for Pakistani intelligence agency ISI, Thursday.

The district sessions judge Girija Prasad Mohapatra pronounced the order on Behera after a prolonged hearing in the espionage case. Behera was arrested on charge of spying for the ISI December 22, 2014. A native of

## DRDO ESPIONAGE CASE



Ishwar Behera being taken to court

Kantipur village near Baisinga in Mayurbhanj district, Ishwar was employed as a cameraperson at the ITR on contractual basis in 2007. He had been spying for ISI for eight-ten months prior to his arrest.

He was in touch with ISI agent

Asif Ali and providing him secret military details about our country to him in exchange of money.

The court held him guilty of passing confidential information to ISI regarding testing of missiles at the ITR in Chandipur. He was convicted under Sections 121A and 120B of the IPC, and 3, 4 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act. There are proofs of transfer of money to Ishwar's bank account from various countries like Abu Dhabi, reports said. Ishwar was in constant touch with his handler over phone and had met him at least 10 times during his trips to Kolkata, a police official had said.

# Koo cooing users' data, claims security researcher

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 11: Homegrown, vernacular microblogging platform Koo, which has emerged as a favourite among a section of users who want to quit Twitter, has found itself in the midst of several controversies including a data leak row and Chinese investment.

These issues have emerged at a time when the platform is trying to keep its systems up in the face of a sudden influx of users, including several Cabinet ministers and various Ministries in the wake of the ongoing Twitter-government war of words.

The issue of data leak row rocked the platform after a French security researcher who goes by the name Elliot Alderson Thursday claimed that the platform was leaking user data like date of birth, marital status, etc.

"You asked so I did it. I spent 30 min on this new Koo app. The app



is leaking the personal data of its users: email, DOB, name, marital status, gender," said Alderson as he also posted a screenshot of a user data.

Koo Co-founder and CEO Aprameya Radhakrishna denied

that there was any data leak. "Some news about data leaking being spoken about unnecessarily. Please read this: The data visible is something that the user has voluntarily shown on their profile of



...The data visible is something that the user has voluntarily shown on their profile of Koo. It can't be termed a data leak. If you visit a user profile you can see it anyway

APRAMEYA RADHAKRISHNA | KOO CO-FOUNDER AND CEO

Update: Koo founder commented on the leak. It's a lie. I did check this point before tweeting and it was not true

ELLIOT ALDERSON | SECURITY RESEARCHER

flaws in the Aadhaar platform and Aarogya Setu app, quickly reacted, saying, "Update: Koo founder commented the leak. It's a lie. I did check this point before tweeting and it was not true."

Another controversy that has hit the platform is the issue of investment from China as the platform pitches itself as an 'AatmaNirbhar (self-reliant) App'. However, the Koo CEO clarified that the Chinese investor, which had invested in the earlier brand Vokal, was on its way out.

"Koo is an India registered company with Indian founders. Raised earlier capital 2.5 years ago. Latest funds for Bombinate Technologies is led by a truly Indian investor 3one4 capital. Shunwei (single digit shareholder) which had invested in our Vokal journey will be exiting fully," Radhakrishna said.

Koo earlier this month announced that it has raised \$4.1 million as part of its Series A funding. Infosys veteran Mohandas Pai's 3one4 Capital

is the latest addition to the investors on board, it said, adding that Accel Partners, Kalaari Capital, Blume Ventures and Dream Incubator also participated in the round.

Koo currently has about three million users and traffic to the platform rose as much as by 30 times Wednesday, according to a source who is familiar with the matter. User base of the platform, according to the source, has also increased dramatically over the past two days.

The growth comes amid a controversy surrounding Twitter which refused to fully comply with the government's order for blocking some tweets and Twitter accounts, citing the right to freedom of expression. "We have got more love than we expected. Our systems are facing more load than ever. Thank you for placing your trust in us. Our team is working on overdrive to fix it. We request your patience and support through this time. Let's do this together," Radhakrishna said.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	51531.52 ↑ 222.13
NIFTY	15173.30 ↑ 66.80
DOLLAR	73.73 ↑ ₹0.07
EURO	88.46 ↑ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹47,856 ↓ ₹157
SILVER	₹68,987 ↑ ₹61

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	34.4°C	34.6°C
MIN	15.5°C	15.0°C
Humidity	94%	77%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
		Forecast Fog or mist in the morning



**HOLLYWOOD ON ITS WAY TO MAKE WOMEN FEEL SAFE: WINSLET**

Actress Kate Winslet says Hollywood is working toward making women feel safe. "There is a space that has been created for a younger generation that is going to be safe," Winslet told *The Hollywood Reporter*.

**GINA FIRED FOR COMPARING REPUBLICAN SUPPORTERS TO JEWS IN HOLOCAUST**

Actress Gina Carano has been fired from the hit show, *The Mandalorian*, following a social media post implying that being a Republican today is like being Jewish during the Holocaust. Carano has also been dropped by her talent agency UTA, reports *hollywoodreporter.com*.



**FORTUNE FORECAST**

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**ARIES**  
You may have a wide circle of casual friends, but today, these associations will prove to be beneficial. Your friends will help you chase away the blues. That way, you will also understand the deeper role of friendship, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
Hoist the sails and prepare to leave port. Your sugar-coated words will seal business deals with ease, predicts Ganesh. The activity and action may slow down as the day progresses. Resist the urge to get sentimental as it could lead to conflicts that will haunt you in the days to come, warns Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
You will ponder over religious and social issues and discuss and debate the issue with your family members and make your opinions known to them. This apart, you will probably discuss on issues like law, education, social obligations, and culture with those close to you, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You may have to give more priority to your job. You will swiftly finish the task entrusted to you with concentration. Your zeal for work will be high. You will give so much importance to friends that you will go out of way to meet them.

**LEO**  
Be it a job or business, you will face severe competition today. You will need to be extra cautious today. You will need to be more serious about whatever it is that you are doing. You will become more influential in your social circle or amongst your colleagues as a result, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Today may prove to be a turning point for you. You will explore the opportunities to secure the money needed to make your future bright. Matters regarding relationships will be on the top of your priority list today. You may feel inclined towards spirituality, and Ganesh says as such you may try doing meditation or yoga.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says your friend who is very influential will be lucky for you. You will be able to start a new joint venture business with out any obstacles. Your efficiency and hard work will be appreciated.

**SCORPIO**  
You reveal your true avatar of being adventurous today, feels Ganesh. It's a favourable day for businessmen as they would make plans that would yield them huge profits. With your great communication and convincing power, you are going to impress your superiors today.

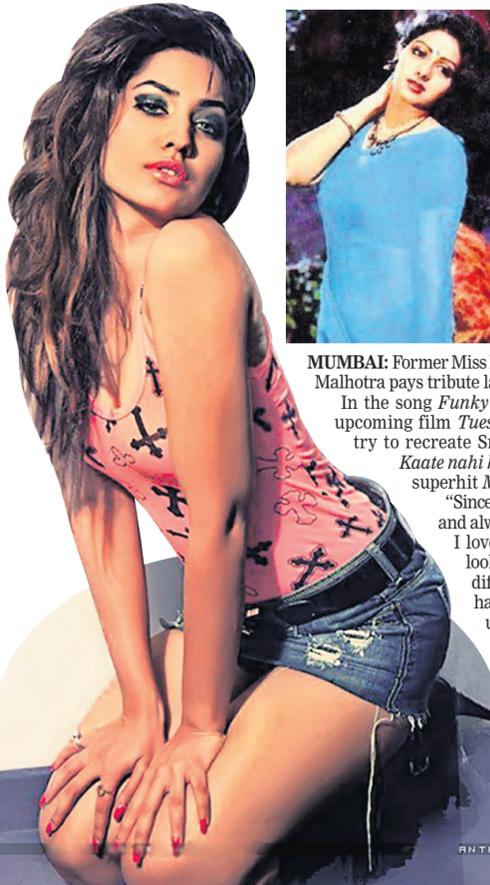
**SAGITTARIUS**  
Unnecessary expenditure might clog your bill today, feels Ganesh. Organising and detailing will be a time-sink as you will spend hapless hours trying to discipline things. The vibrant evening will be a contrast to your hectic day as you kick back and relax while socialising.

**CAPRICORN**  
You may feel utterly disappointed as all of your hard-work and planning will go in vain. You will have difference of opinion with others and at times these differences may turn into heated arguments, predicts Ganesh. Such disharmonious environment will add to your anxiety, but don't lose hope. There is light at the end of the tunnel and you'll surely get through these turbulent times.

**AQUARIUS**  
You have been turning a blind eye towards the pending work you are loaded with. But, today you will take up the challenge of getting done with the pile of work. You may clean your desk at work or room, make payments and purchases, and clear the mess. It will bring clarity to your life. Now it's time to bring clarity to your mind as well, suggests Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
It is important to plan your finances in life, and you will devote your energies towards the same today. You might turn stingy with your money all of a sudden. An unexpected illness in the family will leave you worried. But it is likely to be a crisis which will blow over soon. Do not let it stress you out, says Ganesh.

**JHATALEKA'S TRIBUTE TO SRIDEVI IN NEW SONG**



MUMBAI: Former Miss India and debutant actress Jhataleka Malhotra pays tribute late legend Sridevi in a new number. In the song *Funky Mohabbat*, which features in the upcoming film *Tuesdays And Fridays*, Jhataleka will try to recreate Sridevi's moves in the iconic song *Kaate nahi katte yeh din yeh raat* from her 1987 superhit *Mr India*.

"Since my childhood, I have watched Sridevi and always looked up to her performances. I loved playing and donning her iconic looks from the hit film *Mr India*. It was difficult getting the look because she had certainly set a benchmark for all of us. The responsibility to deliver my best and match up to a look written down in the history of Bollywood did get me nervous," said Jhataleka.

*Tuesdays And Fridays* is a love story directed by Taranveer Singh and jointly produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Bhushan Kumar. The film also features Anmol Dhillon, Niki Walia, Zoa Morani, Anuradha Patel and Parmet Sethi, and is set to release February 19.

**Nagesh Kukunoor roped in for 'Ramalinga Raju' biopic series**



MUMBAI: Filmmaker Nagesh Kukunoor will bring alive a bilingual series based on the life story of Satyam Computer Services founder B Ramalinga Raju, who was convicted of corporate fraud in 2015. Kukunoor's series will be based on Kingshuk Nag's

book, *The Double Life Of Ramalinga Raju, and capture: the rise and fall of the industrialist.*

"The Double Life of Ramalinga Raju' has been an interesting read and I am delighted to be a part of this visionary project," said Kukunoor. "The audio-visual medium allows other aspects and layers of the story to be told in a nuanced and engaging manner," Nag said.

On Kukunoor's directing the series, Sameer Nair of Applause Entertainment, who are backing the project, said, "An engineer turned filmmaker who hails from the very land this story comes from, Nagesh is uniquely positioned to understand the nuances and direct this series." The series is currently under development and will hit the floors soon.

**I'm not very marketable: Mahie**

New Delhi: Actress Mahie Gill feels that she is not very marketable, and adds that the pressure of delivering hits is surely scary for bigger actors.

"I say this about myself, I am not very marketable in the sense that I can run a movie on my shoulders," Mahie said, adding, "This scare is more for bigger actors. It is scary for these actors. It is scary for these people."

Mahie seems to have secured a position among actors for whom performance matters more than the box office pressure. "If your film doesn't work but if you are appreciated as an actor you keep getting work," she pointed out.

Mahie made her debut in Hindi film industry in 2003 with *Hawayein* but she became a familiar face playing a new-age Paro in Anurag Kashyap's 2009 release, *Dev D*. Her notable roles have been in *Saheb, Biwi Aur Gangster*, *Saheb, Biwi Aur Gangster Returns* and *Gulaal*. The actress will soon be seen in Mahesh Manjrekar's web series *1962: The War In The Hills*.



**Manasa Varanasi crowned Miss India World 2020**



The jury panel comprised actors Neha Dhupia, Chitrangada Singh, Pulkit Samrat and renowned designer duo Falguni and Shane Peacock

NEW DELHI: Manasa Varanasi, an engineer from Telangana, has bagged the VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020 title. Haryana's Manika Shekand was declared VLCC Femina Miss Grand India



2020 while Uttar Pradesh's Manya Singh crowned VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 Runner Up. In a nationwide virtual hunt, a total

of 31 finalists were shortlisted for finale that was held in Mumbai Wednesday. The jury panel comprised actors Neha Dhupia, Chitrangada Singh,

Pulkit Samrat and renowned designer duo Falguni and Shane Peacock.

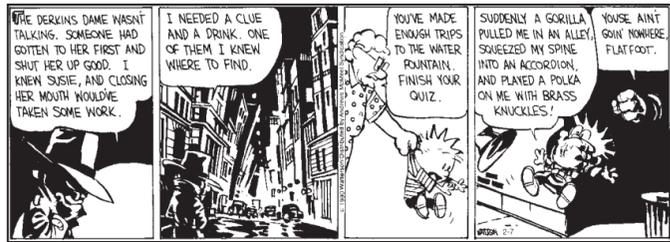
Miss World 2019 - 2nd Runner-up and Miss World Asia 2019; Suman Rao crowned her successor Manasa Varanasi who will represent India at the Miss World pageant that is scheduled to take place later this year.

Neha said, "Each year as the journey of Femina Miss India begins, it brings back all the memories of the priceless experiences I've had with this pageant. It's almost like reliving every moment of my journey with these young glamorous girls who are so full of enthusiasm and capability to take on the world with power and elegance. Certainly there are challenges with the digital process in the wake of the pandemic, however I'm confident it will be as exciting and worthwhile irrespective of the layout."

**PEANUTS**



**CALVIN AND HOBBS**

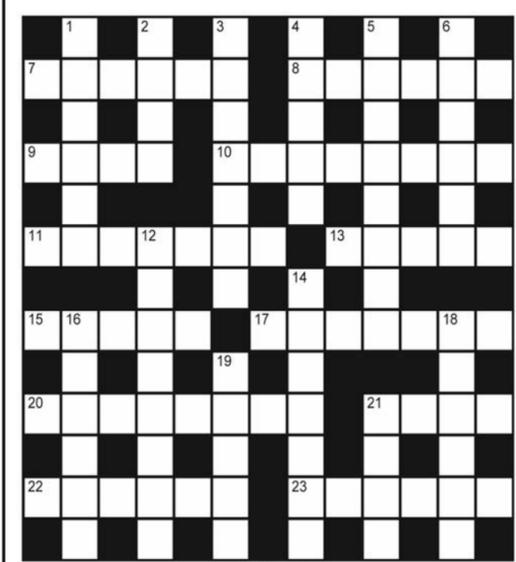


**BREVITY**



**FUN post**

**CROSSWORD**



- Across**  
7 Bordeaux wine  
8 Earth colours  
9 Opera set in Egypt  
10 Fidgety  
11 Strikes out  
13 "Excuse me!"  
15 Take a powder  
17 Fate  
20 Tame
- Down**  
1 Mountainous  
2 Marine menace  
3 Narratives  
4 Tilt for a knight  
5 Relax (5,3)
- 6** It blows off steam  
**12** Looked at closely  
**14** Former name of Sulawesi  
**16** Trite remark  
**18** Campania port  
**19** Cat-like mammal  
**21** Streetcar

**SUDOKU**

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.

	D	C			8			1	7				
A									3				
	7	E			3	0	C		8		4		
			9	4	D	3		6	A	2		8	
					B	1		4	D			9	
					C	E		9	2				
								5	2		1	4	3
4					B	6					C		
	0	5	3	7	9			4			B		
3		1		4	B			0	D		8		
	5		D		8	2		C	7		9		
	3				7								2
D	A						1	B			0	6	
					C		7				1	E	9
	1	B		0	A	8				6		D	

**SOLUTIONS**

**CROSSWORD**

H	E	O	J	A	C						
B	I	G	A	P	P	L	E	E			
D	T	T	T	L	R						
D	E	R	L	I	C	T	O	P	E	N	
R	O	Y	A	M	B						
K	E	N	Y	A	N	S	B	U	R	Y	
M	S	G	A								
A	P	E	S	W	E	A	S	E	L	S	
H	W	O	E	O	C						
R	A	R	E	S	U	R	P	R	I	S	E
S	R	S	G	A	E						
K	I	E	P	I	C	P	O	E	M		
S	E	N	A	S	K						

**SUDOKU**

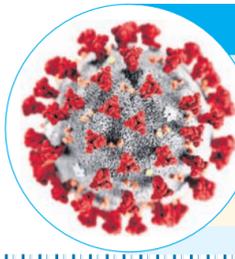
D	4	3	A	6	8	E	5	1	0	9	7	2	C	B
0	1	C	2	E	3	7	A	B	6	5	4	9	8	D
9	8	5	7	D	B	6	3	2	C	A	E	1	0	4
E	2	B	5	1	C	0	9	4	D	8	3	A	7	6
A	6	7	9	0	4	D	C	8	1	2	B	E	3	5
1	5	4	6	7	9	C	8	A	3	D	2	0	B	E
2	C	9	E	4	A	1	7	0	B	6	5	3	D	8
6	A	E	1	B	2	5	0	3	4	0	8	C	9	7
B	D	8	3	C	0	4	2	9	E	7	A	6	5	1
7	3	0	8	9	6	5	0	6	1	C	4	A	2	1
5	0	2	8	A	9	6	5	0	6	1	C	4	A	2
5	0	2	8	A	9	6	5	0	6	1	C	4	A	2
5	0	2	8	A	9	6	5	0	6	1	C	4	A	2
8	9	6	5	0	6	1	C	4	A	2	1	5	2	C
C	E	D	4	5	1	2	8	7	A	3	9	8	6	0
3	7	1	C	9	D	8	0	5	2	E	6	B	4	A

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



## SAFETY FIRST

A traffic cop enforces the helmet rule for pillion riders near Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	10,80,12,365	8,00,53,702	23,68,858
India	1,08,71,294	1,05,73,372	1,55,360
Odisha	3,35,984	3,33,280	1,910

# Withdraw bylaws for Lingaraj temple: State

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** Two days after the Centre withdrew the notification of the draft bylaws of National Monuments Authority (NMA) for Puri Srimandir, the state government Thursday urged the Ministry of Culture to withdraw the proposed restrictions for Lingaraj and Brahmeswar temples here.

The Commissioner of the Endowment and Khurda district Collector, who is also the president of Lord Lingaraj Temple Trust Board, have written two separate letters to the NMA demanding that the notification be withdrawn immediately as the two temples, like the Jagannath temple in Puri, are 'living monuments'.

Lingaraj Temple Trust Board president SK Mohanty in his letter said that the draft bylaws prohibit beautification and construction works around the temple. The state government has cleared structures on 75 metre radius of the Lingaraj temple to develop a heritage corridor.

It was to get the technical know-how of the Archaeological Survey



State gov't's Ekamra Development Plan will provide the pilgrims with facilities like drinking water, cloak rooms and queue management system. The draft bylaws prohibit beautification and construction works around the temple

## KEY CONTENTIONS

A large number of habitations housing servitors which are more than a millennium old exist around Lingaraj temple. Any adverse impact on servitors will have a direct bearing on the continuity of Niti Kanti (rituals) of Lord Lingaraj

of India (ASI) for conservation of the ancient structure that the trustees of Lord Lingaraj Temple Trust Board entered into an agreement with ASI in February 1958.

"The agreement restricts and codifies duties and responsibilities of ASI vis-a-vis Temple Trust. The bare reading of the agreement indicates that the importance of Lord Lingaraj temple as one of the 'Shaiva Pithas' for Hindus all over the world was given due consideration when the trust board agreed to involve ASI in certain conservation works of the ancient built structures," the

Collector wrote. He said that a large number of habitations (Sahis) housing servitors which are more than millennium old exist around Lingaraj temple.

These servitors have been providing services to the temple and the deity for long. As they are likely to be severely and adversely affected by the draft notification, they must be consulted before any process to restrict their rights is undertaken by NMA, the Collector said.

This is also important as any adverse impact on servitors will have a direct bearing on the continuity

of Niti Kanti (rituals) of Lord Lingaraj, he further said.

Moreover, the state government has recently acquired land and properties for strengthening the safety and security of the centuries-old shrine and also beautification of the peripheral areas under Ekamra Development Plan. This project will provide the pilgrims with facilities like drinking water, cloak rooms and queue management system, he said.

The acquisition by the government was made through negotiations and most of the people came forward to give away their ancestral lands and properties for the comfort of the devotees who come to the city from faraway places, he said.

If the NMA still thinks that further regulatory framework is need to protect the temple, the government invites the Ministry officials to make a detailed discussion with Lingaraj temple authorities before any such attempt is made. The Commissioner of Endowments CR Mohapatra in his recent letter to the NMA urged for withdrawal of the bylaws framed for Brahmeswar temple.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Man killed, wife attacked in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** A week after the headless body of a woman was found on the outskirts of the city, a person was killed and his wife was seriously injured after being attacked brutally by some neighbours at Jharanasahi under Mancheswar police limits late Wednesday night.

## NEIGHBOURS TURN ENEMIES



Preliminary investigations revealed that the family had borrowed some money from their neighbours

However, they had not returned the amount. So, the irate neighbours attacked the family

The condition of the woman is stated to be critical and she is battling for life in a hospital. The deceased has been identified as Chhotulal Besra.

Chhotulal along with his wife and son was living in

Jharanasahi. Like every other night, the three had their dinner and went to sleep Wednesday. Later in the night, Chhotulal's neighbours identified as Chandni Nayak, Sukant Das, Sunita Nayak, Raju Nayak, Malati Das, Anita Das, Pradeep Singh along with others allegedly barged into Chhotulal's house and attacked the three.

As per the FIR lodged by the deceased's son Tabisha Besra, Sukant allegedly attacked Chhotulal and his wife with a sharp weapon (knife). The complainant said Raju and Chandni, also the neighbours of the victim, attacked them with sticks and broken bottles. Chhotulal died on the spot while his wife was grievously injured. Hearing the commotion some others rushed to the spot, rescued her and took her to the hospital.

On being informed, police reached the spot and recovered the body of Chhotulal. On the basis of Tabisha's FIR, the police registered a case (48/21) and detained Sukant.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the family had borrowed some money from their neighbours. However, they had not returned the amount.

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NOWHERE ELSE

# All-party meeting for Budget Session Feb 17

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** Speaker Surya Narayan Patro Thursday said that an all-party meeting for the upcoming Budget Session of the Odisha Assembly has been planned for February 17.

Patro was briefing the media on the preparedness of the Assembly for the Budget Session, scheduled to commence February 18.

The Speaker said that the House would function as per the Covid-19 protocols. "The Budget Session will commence February 18 with Governor's address. The Finance Minister will present the Budget February 22. An all-party meeting has been called for February 17," he said.

Patro said that the meeting would be held on Assembly premises. "We have decided to follow the same Covid-19 protocols which were in force during previous two sessions. All the employees of Odisha Assembly, MLAs, media persons, security personnel and others will undergo Covid test before the commencement of the Budget Session," Patro added.

As per the plan, the testing



**The Budget Session will commence February 18 with Governor's address. The Finance Minister will present the Budget February 22. An all-party meeting has been called for February 17**

SURYA NARAYAN PATRO | SPEAKER

would be done for two days starting February 15. "The House would be sanitised multiple times to keep the virus at bay. We will make adequate arrangements to ensure social distancing and other safety measures against the deadly virus," said the Speaker.

# Expand rail network in state, Sujeet Kumar tells Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Thursday expressed dissatisfaction over poor allocation to Odisha in the Railway Budget this year and urged the Union government to take steps for expansion of rail network in the state.

Speaking on the general discussion on Union Budget 2021-22 in the Rajya Sabha, BJD MP Sujeet Kumar said that six districts in the



## ODISHA IN PARLIAMENT

zones in the country, Kumar said, the rail density in Odisha stands at 15 which is less than national average of 19.

"The Odisha government had requested allocation of Rs 7,200 crore in this year's Rail Budget, but we got only Rs 5,528 crore. I request the Union government that there is an urgent need to expand the rail network in the state to improve rail density. The state government is committed to extend all help to the Railway Ministry for implementation of railway projects in the state, including filling the viability gap, offering free land, forming special purpose vehicles, if required," Kumar said.

The BJD MP also raised concern over the marginal hike in defence budget this year.

"At Rs 4.78 lakh crore, the total Defence Budget Estimates for FY 2021-22 is only 1.4 per cent higher over last year's Rs 4.71 lakh crore. While we face two hostile nations

## BJD seeks funds for Odia language promotion

**New Delhi:** Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Sujeet Kumar Thursday urged the Union government to make budgetary allocation for research, documentation, translation and promotion of Odia language.

Speaking during the Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha, the BJD MP said Odia is one of the oldest languages in the country and the Union government has recognised Odia as the sixth official classical language in 2014 to give impetus to scholarships in the language.

"However, Odia is yet to derive the benefits of classical language status. Neither the Centre established any dedicated Centre of Excellence nor did it make any budgetary allocation for promotion of the Odia language. It would be gross injustice to the people of Odisha if they don't get their due share for the promotion of Odia language," Kumar said.

-Pakistan and China, Pakistan has increased its recent 2020-21 Defence Budget with 5 per cent hike as compared to 2019-20 and China has increased its 2020-21 Defence Budget by 6.6 per cent as compared to 2019-20," Kumar pointed out.

# Protruding cargo transport under scanner

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** The state government has asked the State Transport Authority (STA) to strengthen enforcement activities to restrict transportation of protruding cargo by trucks and other commercial vehicles as it causes road mishaps.

In a letter to Transport Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda, Commerce and Transport secretary Madhu Sudan Padhi said protruding cargo in trucks and commercial vehicles is one of the biggest contributors to road mishaps.

About 8,500 people lost their lives and 21,200 persons were injured in the entire country during 2019 due transportation of protruding cargo. In Odisha, 870 persons killed and 2,110 people were injured due to road mishaps involving overloading, hanging of cargo/passengers in 2019.

Carrying of overloaded cargo is an offence as per the Motor Vehicles Rules and is a non-compounding offence and punishable with im-

prisonment of not less than six months with fine of not less than Rs 1,000. Therefore, Padhi has directed the Commissioner to ensure strict enforcement throughout the state against protruding cargo.

Speaking during the Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha, the BJD MP said Odia is one of the oldest languages in the country and the Union government has recognised Odia as the sixth official classical language in 2014 to give impetus to scholarships in the language.

"However, Odia is yet to derive the benefits of classical language status. Neither the Centre established any dedicated Centre of Excellence nor did it make any budgetary allocation for promotion of the Odia language. It would be gross injustice to the people of Odisha if they don't get their due share for the promotion of Odia language," Kumar said.

## HONING SKILLS



Lifeguards conduct a mock drill in Puri sea, Thursday

OP PHOTO

# DELIVERY BOY HELD FOR CHEATING

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** The Commissionerate Police Thursday arrested a man, engaged as a delivery boy with a private logistics firm here, on charges of cheating his employer.

The accused, identified as Milan Das alias Lipu, hails from Hindol area in Dhenkanal and was residing at Chintamaniswar under Laxmisagar police limits here.

According to a senior Kharavel Nagar police official, Milan worked with Sitics Logistic Solutions Private Limited using a fake ID. "Milan used the identity details like Aadhaar and Driving Licence of one Alok Kumar Das to get a job with the logistics firm in November 2020. The accused had delivered at least 10 items worth Rs 57,000 to the buyers and decamped with the money instead of depositing it with the firm," the official said.

The company had approached the police alleging fraud November 23 last year.

## Capital city to have two alternative roads by June

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** The state government has set a target to complete construction of two alternative roads which would go parallel to each other on busy Jaydev Vihar-Nandankanan route.

The two new road projects have been hanging fire due to issues like encroachment and forest clearance. Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra Thursday took a spot review with senior officials of departments and agencies concerned.

Mahapatra has asked the Works department and the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) to complete the road by June so that it can be used for traffic movement.

The construction of roads on either sides of the Jaydev Vihar-Nandankanan route is in progress. The left parallel road will connect Khandagiri, Sundarpur, Pathargadia, Infocity (behind Mind Tree office), Lumbini Vihar, Sailashree Vihar, Rail Vihar and Xavier Square. The total length of the road will be 12 km, official sources said.

The right parallel road will be linking Acharya Vihar to Sainik School, Press Chowk, Railway Stadium, Netaji Subhas Enclave and Damana square. Very soon, the road will also be extended to Big Bazaar square passing through Patia railway station, the source said. The new road will facilitate smooth management of city traffic and decongest the busy traffic road.

The Jaydev Vihar-Nandankanan Road is one of the busiest in the city. The road is home to several educational institutions and commercial establishments. It also has residential areas in localities such as Sailashree Vihar and Niladri Vihar.

## Temple land sold through forged papers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** The Endowment Commissioner has lodged a complaint with Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch to investigate into the alleged sale of temple land using forged NOC of the Law department at Berhampur in Ganjam.

The EOW has started an investigation into the matter after registering a case in this regard.

According to sources, the hereditary managing Trustee of Sree Mallikeshwara Mahadev, Berhampur approached the Law department to give formal permission for the selling of 11.25 acre land belonging to the deity through public auction. The department also issued NOC to the hereditary trustees to sell the land worth over Rs 1.50 crore through public auction July 11, 2020.

During the hearing of a grievance petition by some members of the Dera Community, the department came to know that the said land has already been sold through NOC of the Law department issued February 20, 2020. However, the department through enquiry found that the NOC on which the land had been sold was not issued by it.

# Safety inside prisons goes for a toss

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** Some recent incidents like death of under trial prisoners (UTPs), alleged ill-treatment and sexual harassment of prisoners indicate that all is not well in the state jails.

According to reports, two UTPs died under mysterious circumstances during this week. The UTP lodged in Puri District Jail, identified as Sridhar Das, died while undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital Sunday morning. Similarly, another UTP Ramadhara Bothra, who was lodged in Nabarangpur sub-jail, breathed his last at a hospital Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Sridhar's wife accused the jail authorities of killing him and suppressing the issue that they had hospitalised him.

Several jail inmates, their relatives and well-wishers often alleged ill-treatment and torture of the prisoners by the jail staffers.

According to available data, as many as 117 petitions have been

## COMPLAINTS GALORE



Two UTPs died under mysterious circumstances during this week

A lady UTP was allegedly sexually abused by a fellow inmate in Titlagarh in Bolangir district

117 petitions have been lodged in OHRC during 2016 to 2019 in connection with allegations of ill-treatment and torture of inmates inside jails

The OHRC has received 59 complaints from the prisoners or their relatives in 2018 only

lodged in Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) during 2016 to 2019 in connection with allegations of ill-treatment and torture of inmates inside jails. The OHRC has received 59 complaints from the prisoners or their relatives in 2018 only.

Similarly, the inmates lodged 66 complaints with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) alleging ill-treatment in state prisons. The NHRC received

18 complaints from the prisoners from Odisha in 2019 while as many as 21 applications were lodged in 2018.

On the other hand, a recent shameful incident has exposed the tall claims of enhanced surveillance through closed circuit television cameras (CCTVs) installed in the state prisons. A lady UTP accused a fellow male inmate of sexually abusing her in alleged connivance with some jail au-

thorities in Titlagarh in Bolangir district. An audio recording of the conversation between the victim lady and the accused male prisoner was also received by the local police.

The incident raised questions about the security at the jail as the accused succeeded in bringing a mobile phone inside the prison.

Director General for state Prisons Directorate Santosh Upadhyay said, "The DIG, Prisons of Sambalpur has been asked to enquire into the sexual abuse of the woman UTP in Titlagarh jail. He has started the investigation. We will take stringent action after the receipt of probe reports by the DIG and local police."

The UTPs died recently were sick and undergoing treatment, said Upadhyay, adding the probe into all the custodial deaths is monitored by NHRC and OHRC. "There are NHRC guidelines to investigate such incidents. The judicial magistrate also conducts an independent investigation," he said.

## 81.9% health workers got Covid-19 vaccine

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** Health workers who could not take Covid-19 vaccine earlier Thursday thronged the vaccination centres in good numbers.

The state Health department had Wednesday extended the first round of vaccination for healthcare workers for three more days aiming for universal coverage of listed healthcare workers.

The department had planned 46 sessions for vaccination for health workers and targeted a total of 3,795 health workers Thursday. However, the drive ended up seeing a total of 3,873 beneficiaries, taking the coverage to 102 per cent.

The department claimed that till date, 81.9 per cent of the health workers registered with the database received the vaccination. Out of the 3,38,700 registered healthcare workers, 2,77,520 beneficiaries had been vaccinated till February 11, the data from the Health de-

partment said. Out of 207 vaccination sessions organised in the state, 161 were meant for frontline workers. The department had planned to inoculate 17,630 frontline workers out of which 17,527 beneficiaries were given the shots making the success rate to 99.4 per cent.

The government was able to give Covidshield vaccines to a total of 18,920 persons against the target of 18,425 thereby achieving 102.7 per cent coverage.

The government had planned to give Covaxin in the state capital to 3,000 persons out of which 2,480 persons were actually vaccinated, making the success rate at 82.7 per cent.

Government data claimed that till now 51.56 per cent of the frontline workers have been vaccinated against the pandemic. The department had planned to vaccinate a total of 2,04,469 persons while a total of 1,05,503 frontline workers have been vaccinated till now.

## CM launches project worth ₹28Cr for Hinjili

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday inaugurated development projects worth Rs 28 crore in Hinjili municipality through videoconferencing.

The projects included new bus stand, Netaji Park, modern hygienic fish, chicken and mutton market, recreation centre for senior citizens, vending zone, market complex, extension of office building of the Hinjili municipality, guest house and two mini kalyan mandaps of the Hinjili Municipality.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated the sub-divisional hospital, e-name hall of the Hinjili Regional Marketing Society, cold storage and market complex of the society

## FOUNDATION STONES LAID FOR ILLUMINATION, DEVELOPMENT OF TALASARI-UDAYAPUR BEACH

through online.

Naveen expressed his regret as he did not visit his own constituency due to Covid-19 pandemic and said he would visit Hinjili very soon. "Development of the state along with Hinjili was his priority area," he stated.

The Chief Minister said the work for the centre of excellence of all 25 high schools in Hinjili block and municipality area was going on.

The work would be completed by the Independence Day this year, he said.

Announcing that projects worth over Rs 28 crore are inaugurated for development of Hinjili town, he said that efforts are underway to make all the facilities available to residents of Hinjili that are available in modern towns. The state government has been giving importance to development of small towns, he added.

A short video film on the new projects in Hinjili was exhibited during the occasion. The function was conducted and coordinated by Secretary to CM (ST) VK Pandian.

Meanwhile, Naveen also laid foundation stones for development of Talasari-Udayapur beach in Balasore district.



Students cross a busy road near Rasulgah Square in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, as they head to school after months

## Politics heats up on 'Aparajita missing' row

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** Different political parties have now started a blame game over the issue of 'Aparajita Sarangi missing' posters that have been displayed in several parts of the state capital to target her on the development works of Ekamra Kshetra.

A number of such posters were seen in the city, accusing the MP of being absent in the constituency and remaining silent on the issue. BJD MLA Ashok Chandra Panda with whom she had a verbal duel on record in a recent event targeted her and accused her of remaining non-committal on the Ekamra

Kshetra projects. The BJP accused the rival parties of being intolerant. Party leader Lekhashree Samantsinghar said, "This is condemnable how a woman MP from the state has been targeted. She has now been taking part in the Budget Session of the Parliament and actively participating in the debates and raising the issues of Odisha at the national level."

She also said that some malicious campaign has started in the state against her. "This has been done by intolerant people who have gone too low to target her," she said.

Taking a dig at the bureaucrat-turned politician, Congress leader

Suresh Routray said, "She is a very popular lady. She had been an IAS officer. Tracing her is not an easy job. She must be busy drafting some documents or secretly working. The posters must have been posted by their dear ones who could not see her for a long time."

The MP however used Twitter to post her reaction to the whole episode. She said, "I am amused that these posters have come up in Bhubaneswar at a time when the budget session of Parliament is on; it is my duty to be in the Lok Sabha now. I am glad Bhubaneswar is 'missing' me. It is a great feeling, indeed! As always, I will be among my people from 15th Feb onwards."

## MP's PA arrested

Laxmisagar Police Thursday arrested Daneshwar Barik, the personal assistant (PA) of Lok Sabha MP Aparajita Sarangi. Barik and another person were accused of indulging in deliberate and malicious act voluntarily causing hurt, theft and criminal intimidation as per the sections imposed by the police. The police has booked the duo under Sections 323, 295 (A), 379 and 506 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The duo however citing medical reasons was shifted to hospital for treatment.

## Puri woman turns labourer to pay college course fee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** No work is small or insignificant, said Lozy Behera, 22, an engineering diploma holder, who had enrolled her name as a labourer under the MGNREGA scheme to fund her college fees.

Behera, born in a poor Dalit family, worked for 20 days at a construction site at Delang block in Puri for a daily wage of Rs 207, as she wanted to gather money to be able to pay the fees and earn her diploma certificate, something that the 'college had withheld seeking clearance of dues'.

Behera, the student of a Bhubaneswar-based private college, was first noticed by a local news channel when she was carrying a basket of mud at the road construction site.

Her story soon became the talk of the town, prompting district officials to reach out to her with help.

Shortly after, college authorities rushed to her residence with the certificate.

"I never felt ashamed of the work that I was doing. Some may look down upon me, but I don't see a reason why I should feel ashamed. I worked for the community road development project and earned Rs 207 a day," Behera, daughter of a mason, said.

She also had two of her five sis-

ters, one of them pursuing BTech, working by her side at the construction site.

"We were sitting idle at home during the lockdown, when sarpanch Pradyumna Parida asked villagers to work for the road development project. I found it to be a good opportunity to earn something to pay my college fees. Authorities at my college had refused to give me my certificate for not being able to pay hostel fees of Rs 44,500. My father works as a mason, and we are five sisters... I could deposit only Rs 20,000," she said.

Several appeals to college authorities fell on deaf ears, but a news clip on a local TV channel worked wonders, Behera, who wishes to pursue higher education, said.

Members of 'Odisha Mo Parivar', the social service wing of the ruling BJD, has recently handed over a cheque of Rs 30,000 to the gritty woman for her education.

Heaping praise on Behera for her hard work and perseverance, Puri Collector Samarth Verma said that he would try and find her a job in the district.

Behera, the eldest among the siblings, said she would want to help her sisters with their education. "Puri Collector Samarth Verma has promised to find me a job. I am hopeful that I will be able to support my family once I get a job," she added.

## TAKING STOCK



Senior officials from Bihar's Department of Labour Resources visit state-run ITI at Khapuria in Cuttack, Thursday

## Commodore NP Pradeep visits Sainik School

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 11:** Commodore NP Pradeep, Commanding Officer (CO) of INS Chilka, NOIC (Odisha) of Indian Navy visited the Sainik School here Thursday.

This is his first official visit to Sainik School since he assumed as CO of INS Chilka January 26 this year. On his arrival, the School extended a warm welcome. During his visit, Commodore Pradeep inspected the school Cadets' hostel, the proposed site of girls' hostel, school gymnasium, martyrs' memorial, swimming pool and other important areas of cadets' training and appreciated the efforts.

Gp Capt S Dominic Rayan, Principal, explained all school activities and the future projects that the school would be undertaking. Commodore Pradeep assured the school authority that his office shall extend all the necessary support to the educational training and welfare of the Sainik School Cadets.



Heaping praise on the 22-year-old gritty woman for her hard work and perseverance, Puri Collector Samarth Verma said that he would try and find her a job in the district

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Sri N. Mohanty, Notary, Bhubaneswar I, Sayed Munir Ahmed, son of Sri Hamauddin Ahmed, resident of Plot No. 84, 85/D-29, Green Garden, K9A, Kalinga Vihar, P.O.: Patrapada, Bhubaneswar - 751019, Dist.- Khordha, Odisha has changed my name to Syed Monir Ahmed. Hence, I will be known as Syed Monir Ahmed for all purpose.

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# Now, Andhra sets sight on 3 Malkangiri villages

# Fresh cracks on Brahmani bridge, traffic disrupted

# JUMBO TRAMPLES BABY TO DEATH IN SUNDARGARH

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Feb 11:** Even as the row between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha over Koraput's Kotia panchayat remains unresolved (the case is sub-judice in Supreme Court), the neighbouring state has stoked another border row in Malkangiri district.

In the Google map, three villages of Swabhimani Anchal under Chittrakonda block were shown as part of Andhra Pradesh.

As panchayat elections are underway in the neighbouring state, annexing three border villages of Malkangiri in the Google map has drawn sharp reactions from various quarters in the state.

According to reports, Jamukadi, Katapalli and Kumtang villages of Dhuliput panchayat are now found to be under Paderu block in Vishakhapatnam district.

Locals suspect that such attempts to add Malkangiri villages in Google map is a prelude to AP's real bid to encroach upon these areas in future.

Chittrakonda block has 18 panchayats, but there are no people's representatives like sarpanchs, samiti members, Zilla Parishad chairperson in Kapaturi, Papalur, Kurmanur, Nuaguda, Gunthabada, Doraguda, Tonelcamp, Badapada, Badapadar, Jantri, Dhuliput,



**Jamukadi, Katapalli and Kumtang villages of Dhuliput panchayat are now found to be under Paderu block in Vishakhapatnam district**

**As panchayat elections are underway in the Andhra Pradesh, annexing three border villages of Malkangiri in the Google map has drawn sharp reactions from various quarters in the state**

Panasput, Andrappalli, Raleguda, Gajulmamudi panchayats.

It was alleged that the AP government has been trying to lure

people of these three panchayats with sops like Aadhar cards, ration cards, free healthcare and old age pension. Andhra traders have been collecting minor forest produce and minerals from people in these three villages.

After the Gurupriya bridge was commissioned, the administration has reached out to people in bordering villages and trying to push development activities.

Locals demanded that the administration should lay stress on development in these villages and set up concrete pillars on these three villages, demarcating the Odisha borders.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, Feb 11:** The river bridge on Brahmani, termed as the lifeline of the Steel City and Sundargarh district is dilapidating day by day with cracks appearing on the bridge in regular intervals. In the latest case, traffic on the river bridge came to a standstill Thursday morning after a large crack appeared on the left side of the bridge. The matter came to the fore after motorists witnessed the crack and informed local police.

Heavy traffic jam was seen on the bridge with hundreds of vehicles and commuters remaining stranded on it for long hours. The worst sufferers were the patients ferried in ambulances and students. Vehicular movement resumed after police intervened. The fresh development has sparked panic among residents and motorists.

Rabi Narayan Das, a resident, of Panposh alleged that thousand of vehicles ply on the route. However, with cracks appearing in regular in-



tervals and iron rods protruding out of it, it has become a risky affair to travel on the bridge. Most of the railings of the bridge are broken.

The highway authorities carry out minimum repairing leaving the rods protruding which often results in mishap on the bridge. Moreover, commuters fear that the bridge might collapse anytime as it had been shaking due to movement of heavy vehicles.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

had promised a second bridge on the Brahmani in 2014. Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone in 2017. However, several years have passed since then but work on the bridge is yet to begin.

When contacted, Sourav Chaurasia, director NHAI said that a complete renovation works of the bridge will be undertaken in the first week of June for which traffic on the bridge will be closed for fortnight.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, Feb 11:** In an untoward incident, a tusker trampled a one-and-a-half-year-old girl to death in Hatibari village in Sundargarh district Wednesday night.

According to sources, the incident occurred when the mother and the baby were returning home from a wedding reception at a nearby village in the district. When the mother and daughter were passing by through a forest area, the pachyderm suddenly appeared before them. After seeing the duo, the jumbo became ferocious and attacked the mother and the child.

At the outset, the elephant grabbed the child with its trunk and smashed her on the ground. The baby died on the spot.

Later, the jumbo turned towards the woman and severely injured her.

As the child and her mother did not return home, their family members searched for them and found the child dead.

# OSOU OFFERS FREE EDU TO JAIL INMATES, STAFF IN SAMBALPUR

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, Feb 11:** The Odisha State Open University (OSOU) in Sambalpur is trying to provide education to people from all walks of life. As part of its fresh initiative, the university has launched a plan to educate jail inmates and staff on different courses on the circle jail premises here Thursday. It was learnt that 12 inmates and six staff of the jail have enrolled themselves for various courses offered by the university.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Arka Kumar Das Mohapatra said that age and places have no bar for receiving education.

The jail inmates who are keen to pursue their higher studies will be imparted education on different streams and subjects so that they will be

brought back to the social mainstream.

As part of this new system, lecturers will visit the jail premises four days a month and take classes. The inmates will be imparted education free of cost along with study material. The inmates will sit for examinations on the jail premises.

The VC said that this learning system for inmates will be started in three other jails in the state in a phased manner.



# City couple kills driver during journey in Koraput

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Borigumma, Feb 11:** Police Thursday cracked the case wherein a person's body was recovered from a farmland near Chhatrala under Borigumma police limits in Koraput district January 26.

Koraput SP Barun Guntupalli informed journalists at a press meet at Borigumma police station that a couple had killed the person who was later identified as Sudhir Sahu, a car driver from Bhubaneswar. And the couple had hired his car from Bhubaneswar for travelling to Guptheswar in Koraput district.

The couple had killed Sudhir

for his misbehaving with the girl during the journey.

The SP said the couple was remanded to judicial custody after they were produced in a local court and after their bail pleas were rejected.

According to the police, the couple was staying in an apartment near Nandankanan in Bhubaneswar. The duo hired a car from Bhubaneswar to travel to Guptheswar. They reached Koraput, January 25. They and the driver had dinner at a Dhaba. Thereafter they set out for Guptheswar. But on the way, the couple asked the driver to take them to Harishankar in Bolangir and killed him on way.

# Home guard held for ganja smuggling

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Phulbani, Feb 11:** In a major crackdown, a team of Baliguda police personnel Wednesday afternoon arrested three persons including a home guard for allegedly smuggling cannabis in Kandhamal.

Later, the three were forwarded to a local court. Police also seized the car which was being used to transport the ganja.

According to sources, the home guard was identified as Khirod Kumar Sahoo of Salepur area in Cuttack district. The two others were identified as Purna Chandra Mallik of Balisuga village and Sashi Mallik of Madinatara area under Baliguda block in the district.

# 11 protection units, 8 hatching centres ready



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, Feb 11:** Even as the district administration has laid stress on team work for ensuring protection of Olive Ridley turtles on the coast, it has ordered routine patrolling for safety of turtles that are now laying eggs at different places along the coast in Ganjam.

Meanwhile, 11 protection units have been formed while eight hatcheries have been built for incubation of turtle eggs, a report said.

Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange chaired a meeting at DRDA Rushikulya Conference Hall on the protection of turtles Wednesday. "All stakeholders have to work as a team to ensure safety and smooth conservation of the sea turtles. There is need for community cooperation for it," he noted.

The Collector underscored the need for keeping the coast clean, not touching the turtles, stopping the illegal fishing, stepping up sea patrolling and creating public awareness on the protection of turtles.

SP Brijesh Kumar Ray said that all need to work together for safety of turtles and necessary police force

will be provided. Berhampur DFO Amlan Nayak detailed about a number of measures taken for safety of turtles.

Nayak added that 11 turtle protection units have been set up at Prayagi, Bateswar, Podampeta, Kantiagad, Gokharakuda, Purunabandh under Khalikote range; at Agastinuagan, Gopalpur, Markandi, Ananarayapur and Rameyapatana under Berhampur range.

Besides, eight hatchling centres have been set up at Bateswar, Kantiagad, Gokharakuda, Purunabandh, Agastinuagan, Markand, Ananarayapur and Rameyapatana.

"After turtle eggs are hatched, such hatchling centres are very beneficial for care of hatchling. Local fishermen have been topped in the turtle conservation and protection activities," the DFO said.

The forest department has made provision of a boat, a trawler, two speed boats and a fibre glass boat for patrolling in the sea. Police men, the officials of the forest department and the fisheries department are carrying out joint patrolling in the sea so as to prevent illegal fishing and smooth mass nesting and mating of turtles, the DFO informed.

CCTV cameras have been put on surveillance as mass egg-laying is presently going on day and night. Gopalpur port authorities, Grisam, IRE and Tata Company have been asked to cooperate in this turtle protection exercise.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT V.S.S INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES & RESEARCH, BURLA (SAMBALPUR)**  
Mail id : suptd.vimsar@gmail.com

**TENDER CALL NOTICE**

**No. 1808/VIMSAR, Burla Dated 10th Feb., 2021**  
No.E-573:- Sealed tenders in two bids system are hereby invited by the undersigned from the Registered Firms/ Agencies/Companies/NGOs having Labour License, with at least five years experience in the field of collection, treatment of Bio medical Waste Management in any 500 or more beds in Govt. Hospital for Outsourcing of the Bio Medical Waste Management along with Effluent Treatment Plant of this Hospital. The tenders should reach the office of the Superintendent, VSS IMSAR, Burla on or before 02.03.2021 up to 3.30 PM through Regd. Post / Speed Post/ Courier Service only which will be opened on the same day at 4.00 PM.

The details terms and conditions of the Tender Call Notice can be collected from Office of the Superintendent, VIMSAR, Burla from the date of publish in newspapers / display in website to last date of submission on all working days during the office hours on payment of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the User fee collection counter towards cost of the Tender paper in favour of the Superintendent, VIMSAR, Burla or it can be downloaded from the website [www.sambalpur.nic.in](http://www.sambalpur.nic.in) / [www.vimsar.ac.in](http://www.vimsar.ac.in) and submit the tender with a Bank Draft of Rs.5000/- in favour of the Superintendent, VSS IMSAR, Burla. The VIMSAR Authority reserves the full rights to cancel or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Superintendent, VIMSAR, Burla  
N.B.: The tender paper will be rejected if the bidder changes or omit any clause or annexure of the bid document downloaded from the website. Tender paper received beyond time limit will not be entertained.  
OIPR-10026/11/0030/2021

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RWSS DIVISION, RAIRANGPUR**  
**INVITATION FOR BIDS**  
E-mail-[eerwss\\_rai@nic.in](mailto:eerwss_rai@nic.in), [eerwss\\_rai@gmail.com](mailto:eerwss_rai@gmail.com)

**e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE**

**IDENTIFICATION No. 64 RWSS/RRPUR- 2020-2021 / Dated 09.02.2021**  
No.O-1065:- The Executive Engineer, RWSS Division, Rairangpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids to be received in online mode for the following works from the eligible experienced contractors in similar nature of work, registered with State Govt. & contractor of equivalent Grade/class registered with Central Govt. / Railways.

- Nature of work :- a) Retrofitting of 40 LPCD PWS Scheme to 70 LPCD to village Sandalima, Badanarini (JMM) under RWS&S Division, Rairangpur.
- No. of work :- 2 (Two) Nos.
- Period of Completion : 04 (Four) months
- Cost of tender :- ₹6000.00
- Estimated cost :- ₹18.25 to 18.75 lakhs
- Class of Contractor :- (As mentioned in Tender Call Notice)
- Date and time of availability of bid documents in Portal: -from 9 hours of 11.02.2021 to 17.00 hours of 21.02.2021
- Receipt of bid cost, bid security, documents :- Online only
- Date & time of opening of technical bid :- Dt. 22.02.2021 at 11.00 hours onwards.
- Other Documents :- (As mentioned in DTCN)
- The bidders have to participate in on-line bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.
- Any addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.
- Concession of 10 % will be considered to ST/SC contractors up to B class only on submission of an affidavit over the general category contractors falling which such concession will not be extended to him / her.

Sd/-09.02.2021, Executive Engineer  
OIPR-25010/11/0032/2021 RWSS Division, Rairangpur

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**

Tender Notice No. SBP-ELECT-2020-T-114, Dtd.05.02.2021

**Name of Work :- HIRING OF DESERT AIR COOLER FOR A PERIOD OF 315 DAYS IN SUMMER SEASON FOR THE YEAR 2021-22-2023 (03 YEAR SUMMER) OVER SAMBALPUR DIVISION.**

**Approx Cost of the work (₹) :-** 41,97,753/-, EMD :- Nil, Cost of Tender Document :- Nil, Period of Completion :- 36 (Thirty Six) Months.

**Date and time of closing of tender :-** At 1530 hours of 01.03.2021.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be 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 considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

**NOTE :- The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.vreps.gov.in>.**

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer(G), Sambalpur  
PR-533/L/20-21

**NATIONAL ENTRANCE SCREENING TEST 2021**

**NEST 2021**

**Admission to 5-year Integrated MSc Programmes in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics at NISER (Bhubaneswar) and UM-DAE CEBS (Mumbai)**  
(Autonomous Institutions under the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India)

The National Entrance Screening Test (NEST) is a compulsory test for admission to the 5-year Integrated MSc programme in basic sciences - Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics - at National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER), Bhubaneswar and University of Mumbai - Department of Atomic Energy Centre for Excellence in Basic Sciences (UM-DAE CEBS), Mumbai. NEST 2021 will be conducted in around 90 towns and cities all over India on Monday, June 14, 2021.

The candidates admitted to the programme are eligible to receive an annual scholarship of Rs 60,000 through DISHA program of Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India. In addition, the scholarship recipients receive a grant of Rs 20,000 per annum for summer internship. Candidates selected by DST for the INSPIRE-SHE program are endorsed for INSPIRE scholarship by NISER and CEBS.

For detailed information on NEST 2021 application procedure and previous years' question papers please visit NEST 2021 website: [www.nestexam.in](http://www.nestexam.in)

**Application:** Through ONLINE portal ONLY. Visit [www.nestexam.in](http://www.nestexam.in) to apply. Online portal opens on Feb. 24, 2021, & closes on Apr. 30, 2021

**Examination:** ONLINE/computer based ONLY. Date of examination: June 14, 2021 (Monday) Time: 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM (1<sup>st</sup> session) 2:30 PM - 6:00 PM (2<sup>nd</sup> session) Results announcement : June 30, 2021

**Address for correspondence :** The Chief Coordinator, NEST 2021 NISER Bhubaneswar, P.O. Jatni Jatni, Khurda 752050, Odisha, India E-mail: [nest-exam@niser.ac.in](mailto:nest-exam@niser.ac.in) Website: [www.nestexam.in](http://www.nestexam.in)

**Fees structure and mode of payment :** Male (General and OBC categories) : Rs 1200/- Male (SC and ST categories) : Rs 600/- Female (all categories) : Rs 600/- Divyangjan candidates : Rs 600/- Pay ONLY via Net banking/ Credit card/ Debit card

**SURYO FOODS & INDUSTRIES LIMITED**

Regd. Office: A-54/1 & A-55/1, Dinalipi Bawan, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003  
Email: [suryofoods.industries@gmail.com](mailto:suryofoods.industries@gmail.com), website: [www.suryofoods.com](http://www.suryofoods.com), CIN - L05004OR1989PLC002264

**Extract of Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and Nine months ended 31st December, 2020**  
(Rs. in 'Thousands', except EPS)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended			Nine Months Ended		Year Ended
		31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	30.09.2020 (Unaudited)	31.12.2019 (Unaudited)	31.12.2020 (UnAudited)	31.12.2019 (UnAudited)	31.03.2020 (Audited)
1	Total Income	136	126	1,059	412	17,455	18,537
2	Net Profit / (Loss) (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(855)	(1,161)	(268)	(3,316)	(5,341)	(6,546)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(855)	(1,161)	(268)	(3,316)	(5,341)	(6,387)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) after Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(855)	(1,161)	(268)	(3,316)	(5,341)	(6,387)
5	Total Comprehensive Income [Comprising Profit / (Loss) after tax and Other Comprehensive Income after tax]	(855)	(1,161)	(268)	(3,316)	(5,341)	(6,387)
6	Equity Share Capital (Face Value of Rs. 10/- each)	39,600	39,600	39,600	39,600	39,600	39,600
7	Reserves (Excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of P. Y.	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	Earnings per share (of Rs 10/- each) Basic & Diluted (Rs.)	(0.22)	(0.29)	(0.07)	(0.84)	(1.35)	(1.61)

**Note:**  
a) The above Unaudited financial results of the Company for the Quarter and Nine months ended 31st December, 2020 have been reviewed and recommended by the audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company in their respective board meetings held on 11th February, 2021. These results are being published in accordance with Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.  
b) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and Nine months ended 31st December, 2019 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Statement of Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter and Nine months ended 31st December, 2020, are available on the website of the Stock Exchanges - [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and on the website of the Company - [www.suryofoods.com](http://www.suryofoods.com).

Place: Bhubaneswar  
Date: 11th February, 2021

For Suryo Foods & Industries Limited  
Sd./- Amarendra Dash  
Chairman Cum Managing Director



Consider the Divine Life as the most important thing to obtain.

THE MOTHER



## Cut tax on fuel

Fuel prices in the country have been relentlessly rising. There is a consistent upward pressure on diesel and petrol rates. Petrol in the city cost ₹88.27 per litre Wednesday, while diesel sold at ₹84.68 per litre. The apparent reason for the upward movement in prices is the increase in international crude rates. The movement in oil price follows an illogical trend. In fact, it operates in an anti-people way. When international crude rates go up, the hike is inevitably passed on to consumers. But when global crude prices come down, it is the oil marketing companies (read the government) that skin the margin. Therefore, the consumer is at a loss both the times. It is a typical case of heads I win tails you lose. With anti-Covid-19 vaccination gradually expanding in the world, economy is slowly beginning to look up. With this there is a corresponding rise in the demand for fuel. This has led to a gradual escalation in international crude prices. People are already reeling under a prolonged economic recession accentuated by the pandemic-triggered distress. And, in this backdrop, the upward movement in fuel prices is hurting the common man. Jobs have gone. Most salaried individuals are getting truncated pay. Even as household incomes are at rock bottom, high fuel rates are adding to the general woes of people. Retail petrol rates have risen by ₹18.01 per litre since mid-March 2020 after the government raised taxes by a record margin to mop up gains arising from the fall in international oil prices. Similarly, diesel rates have gone up by ₹15.44. As if this was not enough, the Union Finance Minister in the Union Budget added agri-marketing cess to petrol and diesel on the flimsy ground that there won't be a fresh burden on the consumer on this count and the said tax will be adjusted against the existing taxes. But this was just eyewash. The rise in fuel prices is posing a major challenge to the Indian economy even as it struggles to come out of the deep morass of recession caused by the pandemic-induced economic slowdown. In this backdrop, there is no point to wait for the international crude prices to soften up. This is under nobody's control. Therefore, relief to consumers can come only from a cut in government taxes which currently constitute a lion's share of the fuel rates. Almost 60-70 per cent of the end cost of petrol and diesel are taxes and other charges, only 30-40 per cent of the oil component in India, is linked to the benchmark prices of crude oil in international markets. Therefore, the relief, if any, has to come from the taxes. India is notorious for its high taxes on fuel. This is high time the government slashed the size of the tax component to bring in immediate relief to general people. As both the Centre and the state governments earn immensely from fuel taxes, we hardly hear a murmur of protest from political parties unless it's in the Opposition both at the Centre and the state. The Centre should reduce the excise component while the state governments should cut value added tax. The Centre levies around ₹35 as tax on petrol and diesel. This includes basic excise, special additional excise and road or infra cess. Added to that are taxes being levied by the state governments, which vary from one state to another. There has been a demand to include petrol and diesel under the goods and services tax (GST). However, it has evoked zero political response. As pricey fuel encourages people to cut down on consumption. Therefore, rising fuel rates will stunt economic recovery.



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

**DARWIN CAME UP WITH THE THEORY THAT THE PRESENT MAN HAD EVOLVED FROM APES AT A TIME WHEN THE WESTERN WORLD BELIEVED THAT GOD HAD MADE MAN AS A SCULPTOR MAKES A STATUE WITH HAMMER AND CHISEL**

### WISDOM CORNER

- The same boiling water that softens the potato hardens the egg. It's what you're made of. Not the circumstances. **UNKNOWN**
- If we have the attitude that it's going to be a great day it usually is. **CATHERINE PULSFIER**
- You can either experience the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. The choice is yours. **UNKNOWN**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Brown study

Its first meaning in the language was indeed a state of gloomy meditation. These days it usually means a state of abstraction, absent-mindedness or deep thought. The expression is old, dating at least from the sixteenth century. We've now lost the original meanings of both halves of the phrase and so it has long since turned into an idiom. Brown does refer to the colour, but it seems that in the late medieval period it could also mean no more than dark or gloomy and it was then transferred figuratively to the mental state. A study at that time could be a state of reverie or abstraction, a sense of the word that is long since obsolete.

#### Brown Windsor soup

Brown Windsor is a British soup that rarely appears on menus these days, though chefs such as Jamie Oliver have reinterpreted it for a new generation. Some recent books and foodie websites salute it as a grand old traditional dish which fuelled the nineteenth-century middle classes and sustained the British Empire. The name brown Windsor soup may have been a mashup of several other terms. A Windsor soup is known from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and appeared on many menus, one classic recipe requiring chopped beef, veal and bacon. White Windsor soup also existed; a vegetable soup which a recipe of 1911 says was made from white stock, mashed potato and sago. Some writers have used Windsor soup for calves' feet soup, a food for invalids said to have been served to Queen Victoria in childhood. A few very early recipes for Windsor soup say it should include Windsor beans, presumably the source of the name (despite one claim online, there's no connection with the British royal family, which changed its name from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor only in 1917).

#### Brownie points

It's originally American. The Oxford English Dictionary notes its first appearance in print in 1963, but it was definitely old even then. A trawl through a database of US newspapers yields a lot of examples from the 1950s, two from 1954 describing it as school slang. (Being able to find these is not to denigrate the skill of the OED editor who compiled that entry two decades ago, for whom such searchable electronic files would have been a paradise beyond imagining.) However, flake out, in the sense of being exhausted, is actually American services slang from early in World War Two. The Historical Dictionary of American Slang argues that Brownie points, too, was US army slang from that period.

### LOL

#### Fooling the cops

This is the true story of George Phillips of Meridian, Mississippi, who was going to bed when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the shed. George opened the door to go turn off the light but saw there were people in the shed in the process of stealing things. He immediately phoned the police, who asked, "Is someone in your house?" and George said, "No," and explained the situation. Then they explained that all patrols were busy, and that he should simply lock his door and an officer would be there



when available. George said, "Okay," hung up, counted to 30, and phoned the police again. "Hello, I just called you a few seconds ago because there were people in my shed. Well, you don't have to worry about them now because I've just shot them all." Then he hung up. Within five minutes three squad cars, an Armed Response unit, and an ambulance showed up. Of course, the police caught the burglars red-handed. One of the policemen said to George, "I thought you said that you'd shot them!" George said, "I thought you said there was nobody available!"

### SPECTRUM RABINDRA MOHAN DAS

## A forgotten socialist



Rup Narayan Das

**BORN IN BALASORE ON 12TH FEBRUARY 1912, RABINDRA MOHAN DAS, A GANDHIAN, DEDICATED HIS LIFE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND UPLIFT OF THE POOR AND DOWN TRODDEN**

At a time when disparity and inequality among and within the nations is rising with the rich becoming richer and poor becoming poorer, it is imperative to recall the contributions of socialism and its protagonists the world over and also in India, including Odisha. Odisha had produced a galaxy of socialist and progressive leaders who have made seminal contributions in the socialist movement in the country. To name a few they include the unsung Sarangadhara Das, Surendranath Dwivedi and Rabi Ray. One such leader was Rabindra Mohan Das whose 110th birth anniversary falls today.

Born in Balasore on 12th February 1912, late Das, a Gandhian, dedicated his life for public service and uplift of the poor and down trodden. Like a moth driven to fire, he joined the protracted freedom struggle at a very young age of seventeen. In 1930, he joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and Salt Satyagraha at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Rustedicated from the school for taking part in Salt Satyagraha, he was arrested by the British police for one-and-half months. During the year 1932-1933, he was jailed

twice for two months and six months respectively. He went to Calcutta for higher studies and job, but was driven to trade union and labour movement being influenced by indomitable Dr Suresh Chandra Benerjee and Deven Sen, who became the national president of Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) in 1959, 1965 and in 1976. He organised free distribution of medicine among the slum dwellers of Calcutta and also helped to set up a dispensary and a dedicated school for Harijans. He worked for the welfare of the jute mill workers and the underprivileged people working in gun shell factory, electric company. He organised the Calcutta Electric Supply and became its secretary and fought for the legitimate demands and rights of the workers.

His role and involvement in the freedom struggle was no less impressive. While in Calcutta he came in contact with Netaji Subash Chandra Bose in 1939. Later, he moved to Odisha in 1940 and was associated with organizational work of Congress. In Odisha, he organised workers in Talcher Coal Field, Barbil Iron Mines, and Jatni Rice Mills. He participated in the

Quit India Movement in 1942 and was arrested on 9th August 1942 for three years. During his life time he spent total four years and ten months in different jails of the country such as Patna Central jail, Balasore and Berhampur jail, New Central Jail Howrah, District Jail Calcutta, Presidency Jail, Dumdum and Hugli Jails, Calcutta. In the post-Independent India, he played a very important role in the socialist movement in Odisha. He became the acting general secretary of Socialist Party in Odisha, formed 28th October 1946. He left the Congress Party along with other leaders and got actively involved with the socialist movement. He organised peasants and agricultural labourers. Besides he also participated in the Gadij movement and abolition of Zamindari in Odisha. He was imprisoned for "Seema Andolan" in 1955.

He was elected to Odisha Assembly in 1957 and 1967 from Balasore constituency on Praja Socialist Party (PSP) ticket and was leader of the Opposition party in the House from 1967 to 1971. The Odisha government had nominated him to participate in the 'Exppo 70' held in Tokyo Japan

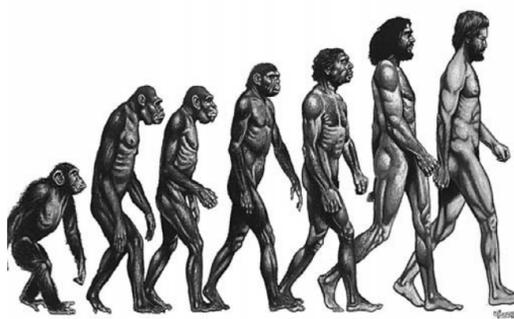
in 1970. He left active politics in 1986 and associated himself with socio-economic activities such as setting up the Vyasakabi Institute of Post Graduate Studies, which later became Fakir Mohan University. The then President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam conferred on him honorary doctorate degree in December 2005 in recognition of his long social service, ceaseless work for the society and the nation. He was married to an equally accomplished woman Godavari Devi, a renowned Gandhian and writer of eminence, who taught Odia to Gandhi during his visit to Odisha in 1934. Rabindra Mohan Das breathed his last on 1st January 2011 at the age of ninety-nine. Political leaders cutting across party lines paid fulsome tribute to him. He was indeed a man of simplicity, modesty, character and conviction having empathy for the poor.

*The writer, a retired joint secretary of Lok Sabha Secretariat, is a senior fellow of Indian Council of Social Science Research at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.*

### FOCUS EVOLUTION OF MAN

## DARWIN'S CHALLENGE

Charles Darwin was born this same day 12th February in 1809. He studied the evolution of turtles in the Galapagos island of South America and came up with the theory that the present man had evolved from apes. At that time the Western world believed that God had made man as a sculptor makes a statue with hammer and chisel. Thus, the Bible says, "God created humankind in his own image... male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). Instead, Darwin suggested that there was no intervention by an external entity such as "God" in the process. Humankind evolved by the process of natural selection. There is a variation in all living species. Some monkeys are supple, others are strong. Those among these that adjusted to the available environment procreated in larger numbers and survived while those who did not adapt died. His theory challenged the Biblical conception of God "creating" mankind.



**Darwin represents a fundamental break in the understanding of God. He has caused us to think whether God was an external entity that created man, so to say, with a hammer and a chisel; or God was an all-pervasive internal entity that evolved itself. The road opened by Darwin still needs to be walked**

man, ancestors, and birds and animals from "darkness" (9:6). Next, the Bible tells of the creation of Eve from Adam's ribs (Genesis 2:21-22). In parallel, the Purana says that Swayambhu and his wife Shatarupa were created by splitting of the body of Brahma (10:7-8). Next, the Bible says that after being expelled from the garden, Adam started to till the ground (Genesis 3:23). In parallel, the Vayu Purana says that the trees began to die at one time. The people meditated on the matter: Then trees began to grow again in their homes (8:83-90). Therefore, Darwin's refuting the Biblical creation of man by God equally refutes the Hindu creation of man by Brahma.

I believe that Darwin does not actually refute the Bible or the Vayu Purana. The issue hinges on how we understand "God" or "Brahma." Scientists tell us that there was a time when the entire universe was contained in a Black Hole. Then there was an explosion and elements like hydrogen, oxygen, Earth, plants, animals and man were created sequentially. Question arises, where was God or Brahma when the entire universe was contained in the Black

Hole? If we consider that God was in the Black Hole, then it would follow that "God" and "universe" were the same entity and that God-Universe itself exploded or divided its own body and it came out as if a person suddenly comes of a jail. In this formula, "God" is the name of the consciousness of the Universe as contained in the Black Hole. God is Universal Consciousness. This possibility matches with the statement in the Upanishads that Brahman thought "I am one, let me be many." This description of God is known as "Monist" philosophy. If, on the other hand, if we think that God was outside the Black Hole and He created the explosion in the Black Hole as if by planting dynamite, then the question arises where was God when there was nothing in the Universe except the Black Hole? This description of God is known as "Monotheist" philosophy. Be that as it may, if we accept the Monist approach of God then Darwin's, Biblical and Hindu ideas of the creation of man become consistent with each other. In that case we may understand that the inner consciousness of the ape caused the ape to evolve and

it became man.

In continuation of above, when the Bible says that God created Eve from Adam's ribs (Genesis 2:21-22), or the Vayu Purana says that Brahma divided his body of darkness into Swayambhu Manu and his wife Shatarupa; we may understand this as the evolution of the human consciousness into male and female consciousnesses. Mankind had already been made both according to the Bible and the Vayu Purana. However, they may be living without dividing their physical and mental work between the male and female just as we see among the monkeys and other animals. This uniform human stock may have divided its physical and mental labour and between the male and the female. Biblical scholars such as Nahum M Sarna, author of the JPS Biblical Commentary and David Wenham, author of the Word Biblical Commentary say that the creation of Eve from Adam's ribs actually describes the beginning of the institution of marriage. Previously a woman used to cohabit with any man. After God "created" Eve from the ribs of Adam, one woman began to cohabit with one man. The same idea is encapsulated in the Vayu Purana saying that Shatarupa accepted Swayambhu Manu as her husband.

Darwin represents a fundamental break in the understanding of God. He has caused us to think whether God was an external entity that created man, so to say, with a hammer and a chisel; or God was an all-pervasive internal entity that evolved itself. The road opened by Darwin still needs to be walked. One key difference in the Abrahamic and Hindu religions is that the Abrahamic religions think of God as an external entity while Hindu religions think of Brahma as an internal and all-pervasive entity. Time is at hand to resolve this debate, thanks to Darwin.

*The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore. The views are personal.*

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**

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#### Saving leopards

Sir, The huge positive difference big cats bring to the ecosystem, and the sheer joy they are by their mere presence, have propelled governments to go all the way in preventing the beautiful big cats from going extinct by taking measures to protect them. India's "Status Leopards in India, 2018", has warned the cockles of cat lovers by giving numbers that denote a 60 per cent leap in leopard number in the country in the last four years. From 7910 in 2014, the leopard number has jumped to 12,852 by the end of 2018. It is heartening that despite a 75 per cent global habitat loss over the decades and more, there has been a steady rise in leopard numbers in India. Moreover, the official study did not take into consideration the non-forest habitats, higher elevated areas and a vast Northeast landscape area - the count could have been even more. Some experts are skeptical because they feel such a drastic hike in leopard count in four years is unbelievable. It could be either due to an underestimation in 2014 or increase in sample area in 2018, they aver. Anyway, beyond criticism and cynicism, the lovely spotted, big cat has lived to its reputation of being flexible to changes. In general, landscape fragmentation, electrocution, poisoning and road accidents continue to be hazards for the lovely creatures. Particularly, deforestation and destruction of wildlife habitats have forced the leopards to stray into towns and cities. There should be more sanctuaries and ground water to prevent the animal from straying to human dwellings. Stringent laws have to be put in place to preserve leopards.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

#### Parliamentary etiquette

Sir, It is a matter of grave concern that the Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu has warned members against the usage of mobile phones within the House. He mentioned that there is a restriction on the usage of cellular phones within Rajya Sabha chambers. It has been noticed that some members are using their mobile phones to record proceedings of the house while sitting in the chamber and such conduct is against parliamentary etiquette. This indicates that some members are not concerned about the proceedings of the House. The session of the House is held for a short time and costs crores of rupees in its operation. Hope that all members should ensure parliamentary etiquette during the proceedings of the House.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA (MP)

# Row after Maha Guv refused state plane

THE GOVERNOR TOOK A COMMERCIAL FLIGHT TO DEHRADUN BECAUSE PERMISSION FOR THE SPECIAL AIRCRAFT DID NOT COME UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE, SAY REPORTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Feb 11:** Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari reportedly had to wait for over two hours at the Mumbai airport Thursday morning to take a flight to Uttarakhand as he could not use the state government aircraft.

The Governor took a commercial flight to Dehradun because permission for the special aircraft did not come until the last minute, say reports. Reports suggest the Governor was to take a flight at 10 am to Uttarakhand, his home state. "Accordingly, a state government plane was booked earlier. But, the permission did not come till the last moment," a source said.

"Normally, governors do not wait for the permission to come. He sat in the aircraft. The pilot then said the permission was not given yet," this source told this news agency.

The Governor's office later booked a seat in a private aircraft and he left for Dehradun at around 12.15 pm, said. Maharashtra's Opposition BJP accused the Shiv Sena-led government of denying use of the state government special plane out of vendetta; the ruling alliance accuses Governor Koshiyari of displaying open bias.

The BJP has demanded an apology from Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for what it calls "insult to the Governor".

The rift between the state government and the Governor is currently playing out over 12 nomi-



nees for the Maharashtra Legislative Council or upper house in the Assembly. Koshiyari is yet to sign off on names suggested by the government.

Former Maharashtra minister and senior BJP leader Sudhir Mungantiwar said: "If the state government has purposefully denied permission, it is a blot on the state's reputation. If this embarrassment is not intentional, then the state government should suspend the official who failed to issue the flying permission in time to the Governor."

Senior Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut denied any politics behind the episode. "We will not resort to revenge politics. Just because he hasn't signed on 12 names for council, we won't stop his plane from flying," he said.

Another Sena leader, Priyanka

Chaturvedi, stressed that no one is allowed to take special government planes if not for official purposes, implying that Koshiyari's visit was a personal one.

"There should be no debate on this. The Prime Minister himself says whatever the post, we must shun VVIP culture. Government planes can go anywhere but if the reasons are personal, not even the Chief Minister uses them," Chaturvedi said.

The Governor had said he wanted to survey damage after the Uttarakhand glacier burst, it was pointed out. "But his constitutional obligations are towards Maharashtra. He can take a commercial flight. There can be questions if government aircraft is used for personal reasons," said the Shiv Sena MP.

## Govt's plane is not anyone's personal property: Fadnavis

**MUMBAI:** Former Chief Minister of Maharashtra and leader of Opposition in legislative Assembly Devendra Fadnavis has hit out at the state government over the issue of Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari being denied the state aircraft for travel. Fadnavis tweeted, "Government's plane is not anyone's personal property! Making Hon Governor get off the plane? Where does so much ego in MVA Govt come from? Never ever seen such egoistic Govt in Maharashtra." When Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was asked about the incident, he said he was not aware of the incident. "Since morning I have been busy with the junta darbar and I do not have any idea about this issue. I am hearing this from the media. I will find out details about this issue and then comment," he said. The incident has the potential to deepen the fault-lines between the Shiv Sena and BJP. BJP leader Ashish Shelar said that Sena had set bad precedent acting in an egoistic fashion and that the people will soon teach them a lesson.

# Panchayati results 'beginning of end of YSRCP': TDP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati, Feb 11:** Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo and former Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu claimed that the 'beginning of the end' of Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) has arrived with the results of the panchayati elections.

He asserted that the TDP-aligned candidates posted impressive victories in the first phase of the four-phase panchayati elections.

According to a TDP source, the opposition party-aligned candidates won 1,005 sarpanch positions out of 2,723 by 1 a.m. Wednesday, including nine in alliance with it, while the ruling YSRCP won 1,494 sarpanch positions.

In TDP's calculations, the combination of Janasena and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won just one sarpanch post.

"Party supported candidates posted impressive victories in the first phase panchayat elections by courageously fighting against the attacks, kidnappings, threats and atrocities committed by the ruling YSRCP with the connivance of official and police machinery," claimed Naidu. He claimed that people gave a mandate against the misrule and misdeeds of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's regime in the past 20 months.

Naidu alleged that the state election commission (SEC) and the director general of police (DGP) failed to take action against violence, misuse of cash, liquor and muscle



## 61 villages go for unanimous polls

**VISAKHAPATNAM:** As many as 61 villages in Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam district went for unanimous sarpanch elections in the first phase of the four-phase panchayat elections. "In Narsipatnam, 21 panchayats went for unanimous polls and about 40 in Anakapalle so far. We are yet to receive information from Paderu. That makes it 61," Visakhapatnam district collector V. Vinay Chand said. One of the major driving forces for many villages to go for unanimous polls was the financial incentives declared by the state government, which stretch up to Rs 20 lakh depending on the population of a village. "I think after the conclusion of the poll process," said Chand when quizzed as to when these villages could cash their incentives. According to the IAS officer, the trend of unanimous polls was almost similar in the last panchayat elections in 2013 in the north Andhra district.

power exerted by YSRCP.

The opposition leader claimed that TDP will go to the Court against the alleged election offences in Panchayat Raj Minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy's Punganuru Assembly constituency and also Macherla.

"TDP has brought this to the notice of the SEC hour to hour but there has been no remedial action.

The minister, officials and the ruling party leaders responsible for rejections of nominations would be answerable to the court," he claimed.

The TDP supremo alleged that Peddireddi was 'unfortunately' allowed to continue as the minister even after allegedly threatening to blacklist IAS, IPS and other officers if they followed the SEC's directives.

# MAHA TO HAVE COVID-19 TESTING MOBILE LABS SOON



A health worker undertaking a thermal check of a woman in Andheri, Mumbai, to test whether the latter has been infected by coronavirus

general public will definitely benefit from it."

Speaking at the inauguration of three mobile test laboratories BMC Commissioner Iqbal Chahal said that additional 3,000 corona tests will be conducted daily in Mumbai through the three mobile vans. "The report will be made available in 24 hours and it will be possible to get the test done for Rs. 499," he said.

The three mobile test laboratory vans have been made available at Covid-19 Centre at Goregaon, BKC and NIC Dome Worli. Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray, SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Ashish Kumar Singh, Brihanmumbai Municipal Commissioner IS Chahal, Additional Commissioner Suresh Kakani, Sanjay Jaiswal, Zubair Khan of Spice Health and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Ajay Singh of Spice Health said that the facilities available in the van could be used to test for HIV and other diseases in the future.

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Feb 11:** Is the resumption of local train services for the common public in Mumbai resulting in the rising number of coronavirus cases in the city? Medical experts have opined that the first fortnight since the resumption of local train services will be critical to analyse the link. But the recent rise in coronavirus cases in Mumbai has many wondering if the rising number of commuters in locals is responsible for it.

On February 10, Mumbai recorded 558 new Covid-19 cases and the count of active cases rose to 5,368 while the progressive death count stood at 11,400. On February 9 the city had recorded 375 Covid-19 cases and three deaths. The sudden spike in the numbers has raised questions.

Mumbai local train services were opened for the general public with restricted timings from February 1. Nearly 3.4 million passengers had travelled by the suburban local train network on day one. Pictures of long queues outside the railway



stations went viral on social media and many complained that there was no social distancing being maintained at the queues and at the platforms and the decision of opening Mumbai's lifeline for the general public would spell disaster.

And now the sudden rise in cases after ten days has drawn focus towards the local train services yet again.

Officials, however, say that the marginal increase in numbers is not

to be attributed to the resumption of local train services because the testing generally goes down during the weekends and rises again during the weekdays. But officials also say they would need to observe a fortnight's data to come to any conclusion.

Medical experts on their part say that the local train factor cannot be ignored. Doctor Om Shrivastava, Director, Infectious Diseases, Jaslok Hospital and

Research Centre says, "If numbers are rising then there are definitely many others contributing factors to it than just resumption of local train services. The numbers in many parts of the world are seeing a rise and we need to apply caution so that the numbers remain manageable as against what we saw in the early part of last year. So presently numbers are showing rise owing to various factors and local train is one of them."

AGENCIES

**MUMBAI:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has declared that the entire state will soon have Covid-19 testing mobile laboratories across the state. Three mobile testing Laboratories were handed over to Mumbai by Spice Health.

Maharashtra Chief Minister said, "When the corona outbreak started last year, there were only two

corona testing laboratories at Kasturba in Pune and Mumbai. The government increased this number to 500 in a few days...Although vaccines are now available yet new strains of corona are appearing in various countries. Research is also underway. In such a time of need, Spice Health has come forward to provide the facility to test coronavirus at an affordable rate; the test report will be available in a short time, so the

# Ajit rejects rumours about BJP, NCP tie-up

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Feb 11:** Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar has denied the rumours that after the Sindhgurd visit of Amit Shah, BJP is now testing the political waters with NCP and that Amit Shah had called upon NCP supremo Sharad Pawar and discussed the political affairs in the state.

Talking to the media, Ajit Pawar said that there was no truth to the rumours. When Ajit Pawar was asked that it was being said that BJP was ready for a NCP-led government in the state and BJP wants Shiv Sena out of the political equations, Pawar said, "I am hearing this from the media. The three political parties Sena, Congress and NCP are together in the government and no one should be listening to such talks. But we are hearing this news and we will find out about this in the party."

While the Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister denied the news of the newfound BJP-NCP political closeness, he also reflected on his party's difference of opinion with alliance partner Congress over the EVM issue.

Congress state chief Nana Patole had recently talked in favour of



ballot papers over EVM machines and asked Maharashtra legislature to frame laws to give voters the option of using ballot papers besides EVMs in local governing body polls.

"These could have been his views. But then he was the Speaker of the assembly and didn't belong to any party but now as state Congress chief if he still has such opinions, then it can be discussed. But I feel there is nothing wrong with EVM voting," said Ajit Pawar.

Ajit Pawar further said that the EVM was just an excuse when people didn't get the votes. He added that Congress had won state elections with EVM machines in Rajasthan and Punjab. "Often when people win, there is nothing on the EVM but when they lose by a huge margin, they say that the EVM is managed. We feel that there is nothing wrong with the EVM process."

# YSR's daughter Sharmila to debut in Telangana politics

SHARMILA MET SUPPORTERS FROM NALGONDA AND CHEVELLA TUESDAY IN AN ATTEMPT TO "UNDERSTAND GROUND REALITIES" IN TELANGANA

AGENCIES

**Amaravati, Feb 11:** YS Sharmila, daughter of the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy, has decided to step into Telangana politics. Her mission, formally stated, is to establish the kind of rule the region saw in a united Andhra Pradesh when her father was Chief Minister Rajasekhara Reddy was fondly referred to as Rajanna by his admirers.

On Tuesday, Sharmila met supporters from Nalgonda and Chevella in an attempt to "understand ground realities" in Telangana. Quizzed about the formation of a political outfit, she remained non-committal, maintaining that she needed to meet a cross-section of people and travel around Telangana.

"There is no Rajanna Rajyam here. Why is it not there? Why can't we bring it? We will bring Rajanna Rajyam," she said. That has not stopped speculation that her party will be christened YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) and will be launched this summer.

But the real headline was not Sharmila's plunge into Telangana politics. Her brother YS Jaganmohan Reddy's cold shoulder and absence was the real headline. The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, who speaks about usher-

ing in 'Rajanna Rajyam' in his state, was missing from the flexis that prominently featured Sharmila and YSR.

Jagan's party, the YSRCP admitted as much. It distanced itself from Sharmila's decision to venture into Telangana, saying Jagan is not in favour of continuing political party activity in the neighbouring state. The YSRCP did not contest the 2018 assembly elections and the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in Telangana.

"There is a difference of opinion between the siblings but there are no differences between them," said Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy Advisor (Public Affairs) to the Andhra Pradesh government. Clearly, Jagan wants to dispel notions that he is trying to test Telangana's political waters through his sister.

But will this be a storm in a T-cup or can Sharmila indeed become a factor in Telangana politics? Will d/o YSR be a good enough CV to gain a foothold in India's youngest state? To those who debunk Sharmila as a greenhorn in politics, her supporters point out that she was the face of the YSRCP when Jagan was in prison and undertook a 3,000 km long padyatra through Andhra Pradesh in 2013. It is also an attempt to claim the YSR legacy in a



different territory, to avoid any conflict with her elder brother.

The belief is that Sharmila, who the grapevine suggests will like to be now known as YS Sharmila Reddy (YSSR) instead of just YS Sharmila, will target two specific communities in Telangana. The Reddys and the SC Christians – because of her Christian faith and her husband is a much sought-after evangelist in these parts.

With K Chandrasekhara Rao's ascent to power in Telangana in 2014, the Reddy community that wielded power and political clout in united Andhra Pradesh whenever the Congress was in power, has felt left out. The Telama community to which KCR belongs, is said to have

the upper hand. With the Congress fortunes on a downswing in Telangana, there is a possible opening for a party to woo the Reddy vote bank. More so a party that has the YSR brand name associated with it.

But the Reddys in the Congress aren't amused. Revanth Reddy, who is MP from Malkajgiri, points out that YSR's identity was as a Congress leader and the schemes he implemented were Congress schemes.

There is another hurdle. YSR was known to be opposed to the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and that is bound to limit Sharmila's appeal and traction in Telangana.

The ruling TRS has responded with scorn too. KCR, without nam-

ing Sharmila, spoke of several players like the late Ale Narendra, Devender Goud and Vijayashanti who launched parties in Telangana, but could not sustain the momentum. The reaction came as a surprise because Sharmila's party, if it manages to consolidate itself, could benefit the TRS. One, it could eat into the anti-TRS vote thereby helping the ruling party in a tight electoral contest. Two, it would further weaken the Congress in Telangana.

Sharmila's entry won't be music to BJP's ears. The saffron party sees Telangana as a low-hanging fruit that should be ripe for plucking by the time the next Assembly elections are held in 2023. In G Kishen Reddy, who is Amit Shah's deputy in the Union Home ministry, the BJP has a Reddy face to woo the community. In case, Sharmila manages to gain influence among the Reddys in Telangana, the BJP will have to work out a strategy to neutralise it.

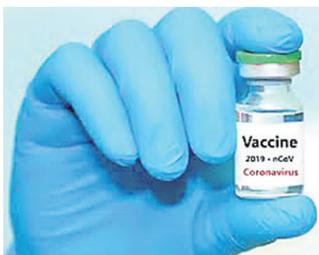
Who will be Sharmila's party cadre? The answer is all YSRCP cadres in Telangana, who have been left rudderless after the party shut down political operations in the state. But where are they, is the question given that most have migrated to the TRS.



**The BJP frequently says that TMC is corrupt, the TMC siphoned off money. It is not Modi's money. It is sent by one government to another. Then you should not collect taxes from the state and there will be no need to give it back**  
MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

## CHHATTISGARH REJECTS BHARAT BIOTECH VAX

Opposition-ruled Chhattisgarh said Thursday it had asked the federal government to halt the supply of a homegrown Covid-19 vaccine until its efficacy could be proven in an ongoing late-stage trial.



## of the day quote

In public life, one is either a politician, an ideologue or an organiser but he was three-in-one and outstanding in all three fields



J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

A total of 1,995 personnel of Air India have tested positive for coronavirus till February 1 and its 19 ground staff have succumbed due to COVID-19 and other complications.



HARDEEP SINGH PURI | CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER

First of all, they (BJP) made a U-turn on Aadhaar, then on GST, MGNREGA, FDI and so many issues. The Congress said we want to get new investments (in the agri sector) and technological inputs, want more 'mandis', liberalise the system, but never said we will make laws contrary to the interest of the farmers



SACHIN PILOT | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

## SHORT TAKES

### Chargesheet against PFI

**New Delhi:** The Enforcement Directorate has filed its first chargesheet against Popular Front of India and its students' wing on money laundering charges, claiming its members wanted to "incite communal riots and spread terror" in the aftermath of the last year Hathras gang rape case. The central agency has been probing the Popular Front of India (PFI), formed in 2006 in Kerala and headquartered in Delhi, since 2018.

### Abhaya case: Nun moves HC

**Kochi:** A nun convicted in the Sister Abhaya murder case moved the Kerala High Court on Thursday, seeking to suspend the sentence pending disposal of the appeal filed against the verdict of the Special CBI court, Thiruvananthapuram, awarding her life sentence. In her plea, Sister Sephy, who has challenged her conviction before the high court last month, alleged she was convicted only on the basis of assumption and not evidence. Seeking to suspend her sentence, the 58-year-old nun submitted she was advised that there is every likelihood of the criminal appeal being allowed and she being acquitted.

### Five drug peddlers held

**Srinagar:** The Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) police on Thursday arrested five drug peddlers from Kulgam and Budgam districts and recovered contraband substances from their possession. Police officers at a checkpoint in Kulgam district intercepted a truck with two persons on board. They have been identified as Mohinder Singh and Harpal Singh, both residents of RS Pora Jammu.

### Gold seized

**Coimbatore:** Over 5 kg gold of foreign origin valued at Rs 2.85 crore has been seized at the airport here, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) said on Thursday. Five passengers who arrived from Sharjah were intercepted early on February 1 and on being searched, gold weighing 6,318 grams in paste form was recovered. They had concealed it in their rectum, DRI Deputy Director G Satish said in a release.

# 'India, China to pull back troops in phased manner'



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** India and China have reached an agreement on disengagement in the North and South bank of Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh that mandates both sides to cease forward deployment of troops in a "phased, coordinated and verifiable" manner, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced in Parliament Thursday in a breakthrough after a nine-month border standoff.

Sharing details of the pact to defuse the tense military face-off in eastern Ladakh that severely strained ties between the two Asian giants, Singh also assured the Rajya Sabha that India has not conceded anything in the sustained talks with China.

India will not allow even an inch of its territory to be taken by anyone, he said. The defence minister said implementation of the pact will "substantially restore" the situation to the one which existed prior to the standoff that erupted May 5 last, adding the two sides have agreed they should achieve complete disengagement at the "earliest" and abide fully by the bilateral agreements and protocols.

The defence minister said under

the agreement the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) will keep its troops in the North bank area to east of Finger 8 and the Indian troops will be based at their permanent base at Dhan Singh Thapa Post near Finger 3 in the Pangong lake areas, a major site of friction between the two large armies.

He said the implementation of the pact started on Wednesday and it was agreed to convene the next meeting of senior commanders of both sides within 48 hours of completion of the disengagement in the Pangong lake area so as to resolve all other remaining issues.

"I am happy to inform the House today that as a result of our well thought out approach and sustained talks with the Chinese side, we have now been able to reach an agreement on disengagement in the North and South bank of the Pangong lake," the defence minister said. The border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5 following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas and both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry even as the two sides continued military and diplomatic talks.

# Rising Dhauliganga triggers another scare

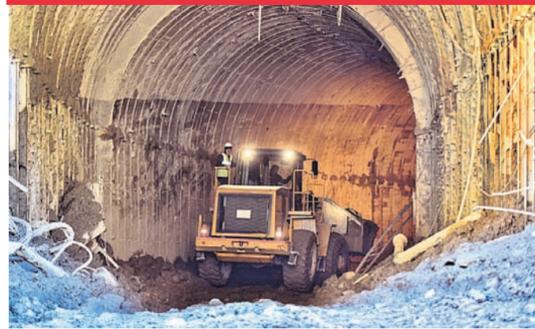
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Tapovan (U'khand)/New Delhi, Feb 11:** Rescue agencies began drilling through the debris in the Tapovan tunnel to establish contact with the over 30 people trapped inside after a flash flood, an operation which stalled briefly Thursday when the Dhauliganga river began swelling again.

The confirmed death toll in the Uttarakhand disaster rose to 35 with the recovery of another body in Gauchar and 169 people remain missing since Sunday, after an avalanche or a glacier break triggered a surge of water in the Alaknanda river system.

In an apparent change in strategy, the rescuers are now also focusing on drilling through the hardened debris in the choked tunnel in Chamoli district, rather than just shifting mounds of silt and sludge

## UTTARAKHAND DISASTER



heaped there by the sudden flood. The aim for now is to set up a "life-saving system", possibly to pump oxygen into the blocked tunnel.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the National Disaster

Response Force (NDRF), the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and the Army are part of the multi-agency rescue effort, which continues even as hopes of finding the trapped workers alive recede with

each passing hour.

On Thursday afternoon, there was another scare when the water of the Dhauliganga – a tributary of the Alaknanda – began rising again.

Rescue workers at the Tapovan site scrambled to safety, pulling their heavy machinery to higher ground. A press briefing ended midway and the operation halted. It resumed after 45 minutes with cautious officials saying they will send in only small teams to the rescue site for now. The centre of the rescue operation remains the 1.5-km "head-race tunnel" – a part of the 2.5-km long network of tunnels – at the 480-MW Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel power project of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC). Rescuers began the drilling in the early hours of Thursday.

The drilling is to be done for 12 metres to access their probable location.

# 'More Indians opting for healthy food in 2021'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** After binging a lot on junk food during the lockdown, Indians are moving towards healthier food options as a new survey on Thursday showed that people are ordering healthier, nutritious food in 2021.

According to Swiggy's Health Hub survey based on lakhs of orders, healthy food orders saw a jump of 20 per cent in January as compared to December, clearly indicating a resolve to start the year on a healthy note.

While most binged on biryani and pizzas on New Year's Eve, the food delivery app witnessed a rise in healthy meals and even healthy desserts being ordered on the first day of the year.

Dishes such as millet khichdi, multi-grain masala dosa, Mexican burrito bowl, caesar salad, corn sandwich, along with Belgian bites and sugarfree ice cream



Representative image

made for the maximum orders, the food delivery app said in a statement. India's IT hub Bengaluru was crowned as the city with the maximum orders for healthy food in the country.

A look at city-wise preferences for healthy meals shows that Hyderabad ordered the most barbeque grilled salads, protein guacamole bowls and healthy breakfasts. Mumbaikars opted for

burrito bowls, caesar salads, homestyle north Indian khichdis and combos. And healthy eaters in NCR ordered healthy breakfast items such as poha and upma – protein salads and bowls for other meals. The survey also reported that the average calorie count per meal was higher for lunch orders at 360 calories with people ordering meals with 335 calories for dinner orders.

# 'Only four people running this country': Rahul slams govt in LS

*The former Congress chief also said the agitation is not of the farmers' alone but a movement of the country and the government will have to repeal the laws*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** Stepping up the attack against the government over the three farm laws, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Thursday alleged that these legislations would damage country's food security system as also "break the spine of farmers" and that the country is being run by only four people with a "Hum do, Hamare do" approach.

Rahul Gandhi, who was participating in the debate on Union budget in Lok Sabha, kept speaking on the three contentious agri laws, triggering protests from BJP members with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi urging Speaker Om Birla to direct Rahul to speak on the budget.

When the Speaker told Rahul to speak on the budget, he said he would talk only on the farmers' issue. Rahul said the Prime Minister, in his reply to the discussions on motion of thanks to the President's address, had mentioned that the opposition is talking about the

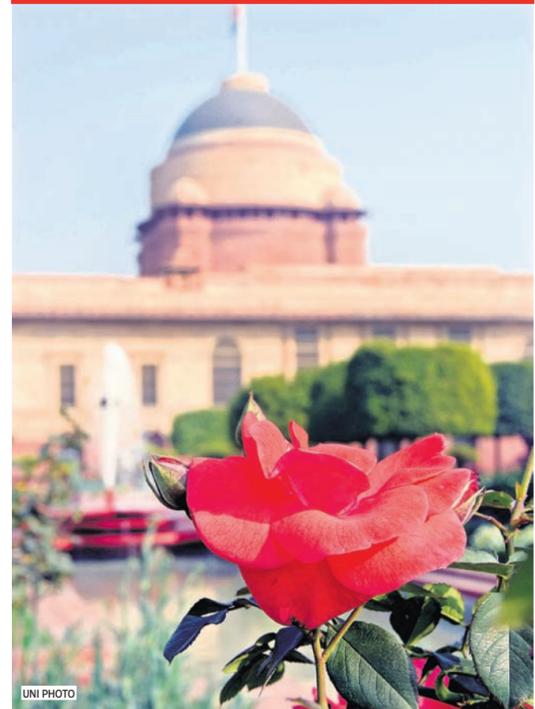


farmers agitation but was not speaking about the content and intent of the laws. "So I thought let us make the Prime Minister happy and talk of the content and intent of these laws," he said, and alleged that "the intent of these three laws is to allow industrialists to buy unlimited quantities of foodgrains and hoard them as much as they want." Claiming that these measures will end the 'mandis' and will end the Essential Commodities Act, he said, "the new farm laws will destroy India's food security system and will hurt rural economy. The farmers are not going anywhere but

will overthrow the government." Invoking the family planning slogan – "Hum do Hamare do", Rahul Gandhi attacked the government and said just 4 people are running the country. "Now four people are running the country... And everyone knows who they are," he said. The Prime Minister had said that these laws have given options to farmers – "Yes, options are – hunger, unemployment and suicide", Rahul Gandhi alleged.

Asserting that the farmers were only showing the way, he warned the Modi government that the ongoing farmers' protests against three agriculture laws will "dethrone" it from the power. In a dramatic move, Rahul Gandhi also led his party members and those from the TMC and the DMK to observe a two-minute silence by standing to mourn the death of farmers during the ongoing agitation. Claiming that "200 farmers" have died during protests, he said he was doing this as the government has not paid tributes to them.

## NATURE'S GIFT



Flower blooms in the Mughal Garden at Rashtrapati Bhavan Thursday



Police uses water cannon to disperse the Youth Congress, Left party and youth organisation activists

"The way police unleashed atrocities on the participants in the march to Nabanna, it created a situation somewhat akin to the historic Jallianwala Bagh incident," Bose said in a statement.

The Left Front chairman claimed that more than 150 students and young men and women were injured in the police action while participating in the Nabanna abhiyan' programme of the student and youth wings of the Left and Congress demanding jobs and better education facilities.

The Left-Congress alliance has come up to make the Bengal polls a triangular fight with the TMC and the BJP. The march to Nabanna started at College Street but was stopped by the police on SN Banerjee Road in the Esplanade area. Amid slogans against the Mamata Banerjee government, the Left-wing youths and students tried to climb up the barricades, following which police began a baton-charge and also fired tear-gas shells.

# 20 % of India has toxic levels of arsenic in groundwater: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** Almost 20 per cent of India's total land area has toxic levels of arsenic in its groundwater, exposing more than 250 million people across the country to the poisonous element, says a new IIT Kharagpur study which used artificial intelligence (AI)-based prediction modelling.

According to the researchers, the findings suggest a much greater extent of the high arsenic zones and total population exposed than already known from arsenic sampling exercises and reports by various governmental and non-governmental organisations.

The research, published in the journal Science of the Total Environment, indicates the need

for much more rigorous sampling of arsenic levels across India than what exists.

Arsenic is highly toxic in its inorganic form, with long-term exposure to the element from drinking-water and food potentially causing cancer and skin lesions, among other disorders, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The current study noted that these high arsenic areas are mostly located along the Indus-Ganga-Brahmaputra river basin and in pockets in Peninsular India.

It said the states of Punjab (92 per cent), Bihar (70 per cent), West Bengal (69 per cent), Assam (48 per cent), Haryana (43 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (28 per cent), and Gujarat (24 per cent) show the highest areal



Representative image

extent of elevated groundwater arsenic zones.

These are followed by sporadic occurrences in the states of Madhya Pradesh (9 per cent), Karnataka (8 per cent), Odisha (4 per cent),

added. "A total of more than 250 million people are estimated to be exposed to high arsenic in India," said Abhijit Mukherjee, Associate Professor at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, West Bengal. "Our study indicates a strong influence of irrigational abstraction (of groundwater) and regional geology on arsenic distribution patterns within India," Mukherjee, the lead author of the study, told PTL.

In the study, the scientists used advanced AI to model the occurrence of arsenic above its national permissible limit of 10 microgrammes per litre (µg/L) in the groundwater across India based on the various geologic, hydrogeologic and anthropogenic factors that have been known to control the groundwater arsenic distribution in the

aquifers. Mukherjee said the study is the first integrated report on the field-sampled arsenic distribution patterns along with an arsenic prediction model using advanced AI across India.

The researchers, including co-authors Soumyajit Sarkar and Madhumita Chakraborty, said they chose AI techniques to model the groundwater arsenic hazard across India since they suspected that a large part of arsenic-contaminated areas in India is still not sufficiently sampled.

According to the researchers, the outcome of the study is particularly important for policymakers and administrators as this knowledge can provide a vital input in identifying safe drinking water sources in arsenic affected areas of India.

## of the day quote

We value consensus in politics. When I arrived here in 2014, I had said the government may run with majority but the country runs with consensus. We are not here merely to run the government but to take the country forward



Our party is with the government on the farmers' protest issue and the Centre has opted for the right path by holding talks with the farmer unions agitating against the three laws



No status quo ante = No peace & tranquility. Why is government of India insulting the sacrifice of our jawans and letting go of our territory



RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

**Cyber gang dupes senior citizen**  
New Delhi: A cyber fraud gang duped a senior citizen of ₹60 lakh after a gang member posed as the US-based sister of the victim and asked for immediate monetary help. As the victim was not in regular touch with his sister he fell for the trick. "The accused through their shrewd social engineering skills successfully made the complainant deposit ₹60 lakh in his bank accounts and crypto-currency Bitcoin wallets," Urvija Goel, DCP West Delhi said.

**Two killed in road accident**  
Gangtok: Two persons were killed and three others injured in a road accident here in the early hours of Thursday, police said. The incident took place at Selep Tanki near Tashi View Point under Sadar police station area as a four-wheeler with five occupants overturned after the driver lost control of the vehicle, the police said.

**Arms & ammunition seized, four held**  
Munger (Bihar): Four persons have been arrested and arms and ammunition seized from their possession in Bihar's Munger district, police said Thursday. Acting on a tip-off, police arrested the four persons, accused in robbery cases, in Kasimbazar and Purabsarai police station areas and seized four country-made pistols and eight cartridges from their possession on Wednesday night, Superintendent of Police Manavjit Singh Dhillon said.

**Woman, teenager allegedly raped**  
Gurugram: A 27-year-old woman and a teenage girl were allegedly raped in two separate incidents in Gurugram, police said Thursday. In the first incident, a woman in her complaint said that in August 2019, she came in contact with Hari Prakash Pathak, a resident of Om Nagar area in Gurugram. The duo met near Huda City Centre metro station and then went for a movie. Later, at around 1.30 pm, the accused took her to a hotel at Rajiv Chowk and raped her against her wishes. The woman, a resident of Delhi, also alleged that she was being raped by Pathak for two years on several occasions on the pretext of marriage, following which she got pregnant.



While the Indian Army will continue to prepare and adapt to the future, the more proximate, real and present dangers, on our active borders cannot be ignored

MM NARAVANE | CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF GEN

## 1,374 VACANT POSTS IN CBI

As many as 1,374 posts were vacant in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as on December 31, 2020, Parliament was informed Thursday



# Farmers improve infra for protest

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** Installation of CCTV cameras for enhanced security, electric fans to beat the heat in the coming months and even a separate optical fibre line for wifi facility in case there is another internet shutdown at the protest site.



These are some of the measures taken by the agitating farmers at the Singhu border to prepare for a long haul as a resolution of the stalemate over the new farm legislation seems unlikely anytime soon. "We are strengthening our communication and other infrastructure to continue the agitation for a long period," said Deep Khatri associated with managing logistics at the Singhu Border protest site. To increase security measures and keep miscreants at bay, 100 CCTV cameras with digital video recorders are being installed at the main stage used by the Morcha and also at some identified spots across the protest site's stretch on the GT Karnal Road. "We are also readying a control room behind the main stage for monitoring and keeping a tab on the happenings here as a lot of people come and go everyday," Khatri said. Further, a team of 600 volunteers has been raised for patrolling the

protest site, managing traffic and keeping a watch at night. These volunteers have been provided with easily identifiable green jackets and identity cards, he said. Work is also on to install large LCD screens at 10 vantage points, at a distance of 700-800 metres, to enable the protesting farmers to watch activities like speeches of the leaders from the main stage. "We will also use these points as pit stops for ambulances and teams of volunteers to coordinate traffic management, patrolling and response in case of any emergency," Khatri said. In order to deal with any disruption in internet service as was done recently by the govern-

**Can amend farm laws if needed: Rajnath**  
Bhopal: The Union government is ready to discuss the new agriculture laws with farmers' leaders with an open mind and even to amend them if necessary, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here Thursday. The new laws are aimed at doubling farmers' income, Singh said, speaking at a function to inaugurate thousands of small-scale irrigation projects in Madhya Pradesh. Singh's statement follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's fresh appeal to protesting farmers on Wednesday to come forward for talks and the assurance that the government is open to amending the laws if there are any shortcomings. The Morcha is also hiring a separate optical fibre line for wifi facility, Khatri said. He said in view of the approaching summer, electric fans and air conditioners are also being installed at the main stage used by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha

- The leaders of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, leading the protest, have reiterated to continue the agitation indefinitely till the Modi government scraps the farm laws
- The farmers protesting at Singhu asserted that they were ready to camp in protest for months and there was no dearth of people and resources to do so
- The farmers are protesting at Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri border points of Delhi since November, demanding that the Centre scrap the new farm legislation

others come and join us. This is going on and there is no lack of farmers' strength here," said Ranjit Singh from Moga in Punjab. Morcha leader Rakesh Tikait who is staging the protest at Delhi's Ghazipur border had on Wednesday said the farmers' agitation will be long drawn and it will spread across the country in the coming days. The stalemate over the farm laws continues as 11 rounds of talks between the Central government ministers and farmer leaders have failed to achieve any breakthrough.

## SHUTDOWN IN KASHMIR

**Srinagar, Feb 11:** Normal life was affected in Kashmir Thursday due to a shutdown to mark the 37th death anniversary of JKLF founder Mohammad Maqbool Bhat, who was hanged in New Delhi's Tihar Jail on this day in 1984, officials said. Most of the shops, fuel stations and other business establishments were shut in Srinagar; the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, while public transport was largely off the roads, they officials said. However, they said, private cars, auto-rickshaws and cabs were plying in the city. The officials said similar reports of shutdown were also received from other district headquarters of the valley. Security forces were deployed in strength at vulnerable places in the city and elsewhere in the valley to avoid any untoward incident, the officials added. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) had last week called for a complete strike February 9 and 11 to mark the death anniversaries of Parliament attack convict Mohammad Afzal Guru and its founder Bhat. Also, posters, purportedly issued by Hurriyat Conference, were pasted in some areas of the city, calling for a shutdown Tuesday and Thursday. However, the officials said the authenticity of the posters could not be verified.

## BOAT RIDE



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and her daughter Mirava Vadra ride on a boat after taking a holy dip in River Ganga on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya during the ongoing Magh Mela, at Sangam in Prayagraj

## ARCHWAY TO HISTORY

### INDIA GATE TURNS 100

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** Here's one for history buffs. After whom is Delhi's iconic shopping centre Connaught Place named? Prince Arthur; the Duke of Connaught. That was easy. Here's a tough one. Who set the ball rolling for the construction of India Gate? Duke of Connaught again. He laid the foundation stone of the All India War Memorial Arch in Delhi, or India Gate as it is now known, exactly 100 years ago February 10 in 1921 during a visit to the country. The 42-metre-high sandstone monument, sometimes compared to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, was opened after a decade. Ninety years on, it is still the centre of India's sprawling capital, an eternal flame burning under the arch in memory of soldiers who laid down their lives for the country. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, was an uncle of King George V, the then reigning monarch of the British Empire who held a grand durbar in Delhi in 1911, where he also announced the shifting of the imperial capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Following this decision, work began to create a new capital in the Raisina Hill area, the foundation stone of which was laid by the king December 15, 1911. Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker laid out their plans for a new imperial capital, with the Viceroy's House (now Rashtrapati Bhavan) and the North Block and South Block as the centrepiece of "New Delhi", as the city was officially named in 1926.



## CAA will be implemented after vaccination ends: Shah

**Thakurnagar (WB), Feb 11:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday said the process of granting Indian citizenship to refugees under the CAA, including to the Matua community of West Bengal, will begin once the process of COVID vaccination has ended. Accusing the opposition parties of misleading the minorities about the Citizenship (amendment) Act, he said its implementation will not impact the citizenship status of Indian minorities. Shah said the Modi government had in 2018 promised it will

bring in a new citizenship law and kept it when the BJP was voted to power in 2019. He said, after the country was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, its implementation had to be kept in abeyance. "Mamata didi said we made a false promise. She started opposing the CAA and saying she will never allow it. The BJP always fulfils the promises it makes. We have brought this law and refugees will get citizenship. "As soon as the COVID vaccination process ends the process of granting citizenship under CAA will begin," he said, addressing a rally here in the bastion of the Matua community.

## CBSE issues guidelines for Class IX, XI exams

THE CBSE HAD EARLIER THIS MONTH ANNOUNCED THE SCHEDULE FOR BOARD EXAMS FOR CLASSES 10 AND 12

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** The Central Board of Secondary Education has directed schools under it to take steps to identify and resolve learning gaps, and then conduct examinations for Classes 9 and 11 by following COVID-19 safety protocols. The board has also recommended that the new academic session begin from April 1. "For Classes 9 and 11, schools should take steps to identify and remedy the learning gaps and thereafter, conduct examinations by strictly following COVID-19 safety protocols as per the



Examination Bye-Laws," the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Controller of Examination Sanyam Bhardwaj said in a letter to school principals.

"This exam will also help in identifying learning gaps which could be addressed by schools in the new academic session, at the beginning of classes, by having a bridge course specially designed to address learning gaps," he said. Schools were shut in March last year as a precautionary measure following the outbreak of the coronavirus. During the subsequent nationwide lockdown, students moved to online classes. But as restrictions were gradually eased from June last year, schools reopened partially in a few states from October 2020 onwards.

## PARIS AGREEMENT TARGETS

# Carbon emission cuts need to be 80% more ambitious: Study

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** Carbon emission cuts need to be about 80 per cent more ambitious to stay below 2 degree Celsius global warming - considered a threshold for climate stability and climate-related risks such as excessive heat, drought, extreme weather and sea level rise - a new study says. The scientists, including those from the University of Washington in the US, used statistical tools to reevaluate the cuts in carbon emissions that would be needed globally to stay below the 2 degree target proposed in the Paris Agreement international climate treaty. According to the study, published

in the journal Communications Earth and Environment, an average of 1.8 per cent drop in emissions per year rather than the previously agreed 1 per cent per year, would be required to stay within the 2 degree threshold. "To have an even chance of staying below 2 degrees Celsius, the average rate of decline in emissions would need to increase from the 1 per cent per year needed to meet the nationally determined contributions, to 1.8 per cent per year," the scientists wrote in the study. In the research, the scientists used the same statistical approach to model the three main drivers of human-produced greenhouse gases - national population, gross do-



Representative image of carbon intensity. "A number of people have been saying, particularly in the past few years, that the emis-

sions targets need to be more ambitious. We went beyond that to ask in a more precise way: How much more ambitious do they need to be?" said study lead author Adrian Raftery from the University of Washington in the US. The analysis revealed a range of likely future outcomes based on data and projections so far. Even with updated methods and five more years of data, the conclusion remained similar to the previous estimates: Meeting Paris Agreement targets would give only a 5 per cent probability of staying below 2 degrees Celsius warming. Since climate policies may not targeting population growth or eco-

nomical growth, the researchers calculated what change in the "carbon intensity" measure could likely be needed to meet the 2 degrees warming goal. They now believe increasing the overall targets to cut carbon emissions by an average of 1.8 per cent annually, as opposed to 1 per cent, and continuing on that path after the Paris Agreement expires in 2030, would give the planet a 50 per cent chance of staying below 2 degrees warming by 2100. The scientists also estimated how much more each country needed to increase its target - known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs) - in order to lower its emissions by 80 per cent.

# international



We have this great uncertainty with the mutation. It will gain the upper hand. The old virus will disappear. We will live with the new virus and we can't yet judge this new virus and its behaviour

ANGELA MERKEL | GERMAN CHANCELLOR

## COUNTRIES WEIGH SANCTIONS ON MYANMAR

A growing number of governments are curbing diplomatic ties with Myanmar and increasing economic pressure on its military over the coup last week that erased the fragile democratic progress in the long-oppressed SE Asian nation



### of the day quote

Africa has much to be proud of for the initial response, and it certainly did much better than Europe (in tackling the coronavirus)



PETER PIOT | DIRECTOR, LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE & TROPICAL MEDICINE

The rate of vaccinations will greatly accelerate in coming months. The forthcoming deliveries of two approved vaccines, the potential approval of a third and moves taken by the Biden administration to increase US capacity to deliver doses should be credited



ANTHONY FAUCI | SCIENCE ADVISER TO US PRESIDENT

I want to be very clear there has been no change in US policy in the region (Kashmir)



NED PRICE | SPOKESPERSON STATE DEPARTMENT, US

### SHORT TAKES

#### Pak vaccinates health workers

Islamabad: Pakistan has vaccinated about 27,000 frontline healthcare workers against the coronavirus during its ongoing anti-Covid-19 vaccination drive. Prime Minister Imran Khan launched the anti-coronavirus vaccination drive February 2, a day after the country received 500,000 doses of anti-coronavirus vaccine from China's Sinopharm. Khan said that the healthcare workers would be given the vaccine first as they are exposed to maximum risk. The National Command and Operation Centre (NCO) Thursday said that 27,000 have been given the vaccine.

#### Undersea quake sets off tsunami

Wellington: Small tsunami waves were detected in South Pacific islands after an undersea earthquake early Thursday morning. Waves of 10 centimetres (4 inches) were measured in Vanuatu and a smaller tsunami was detected in New Caledonia, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said. Vassiti Soko, the director of Fiji's National Disaster Management Office, tweeted that the tsunami warning had been cancelled and wrote: "Fiji we are safe." The tsunami followed an undersea earthquake near the Loyalty Islands.

#### Cardinal unhappy with 'probe'

Colombo: The head of Sri Lanka's Catholic church once again expressed disappointment Thursday over the probe in the 2019 Easter Sunday blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels, cautioning the government that if justice is not served, he would approach international organisations.

#### Markle wins privacy claim

London: Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex as the wife of Britain's Prince Harry, won her privacy claim against the Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) over articles that published extracts of a letter to her father at the High Court in London Thursday. The 39-year-old former actress' legal team sought a "summary judgment" in the case, which was granted by Justice Mark Warby in her claim for misuse of private information.

## A MEANDERING SIGHT



A view shows the snow-covered Bay of Mont Saint-Michel in the French western region of Normandy, as winter weather with snow and cold temperatures hits a large northern part of the country, France

REUTERS

## Kim orders legal supervision over economic plan

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, Feb 11: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered tougher legal supervision to support his development plans and eradicate various economy-related unlawful acts, state media said Thursday, as he works to salvage an economy battered by the pandemic and other challenges.



Kim spoke Wednesday during a Workers' Party meeting convened to follow up on decisions made at the ruling party's congress in January, where he admitted previous economic plans had failed

and announced a new five-year development plan. Kim "stressed the importance to strengthen legal supervision and control over the establishment and executive process of the national economic plan," the official Korean Central News Agency said. He said prosecutors and other law enforcement organizations must do more to ensure

the economic plan is correctly executed and "stage a strong legal struggle for checking all kinds of illegal practices revealed in economic activities." Kim added that "all sectors and units should obey them unconditionally," KCNA said. North Korea's top prosecutor U Sang Chol told the party meeting that he will firmly implement Kim's order. He said he'll "offensively" keep legal watch over agencies violating the socialist economic management order and take "powerful measures" against any acts hampering efforts to strengthen industries, according to KCNA.

## ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE

### EU urged to 'close legal gap' to protect children



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Geneva, Feb 11: UN human rights experts have called on the European Union (EU) to "close the legal gap" to protect children from online sexual abuse. In a statement issued Wednesday, Mama Fatima Singhateh, UN Special Rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children, said: "The fact that there currently exists no legislation within the EU that allows for the technology companies to detect and report child sexual abuse online is very concerning to me."

in the statement. Joseph Cannataci, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, urged the EU member states to "review their legal frameworks to enable voluntary action by companies to lawfully and proportionately detect online child sexual abuse." The call for action came in the wake of a recent law enforcement survey conducted by tech company NetClean, which confirmed that within the EU that allows for the technology companies to detect and report child sexual abuse online this year.

If no agreement is reached on temporary legislation to allow for the continued use of technological tools to tackle such abuse, "many children will continue to be abused with impunity with no hope in sight for assistance", Xinhua news agency quoted Singhateh as saying

European, the EU's law enforcement agency, has also warned of "increased activity relating to child sexual abuse and exploitation". The European Commission plans to introduce legislation addressing child sexual abuse online this year.

# Study finds new 'game changer' drug to fight obesity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Feb 11: The findings from a large-scale international trial are being hailed as a "game changer" in the UK for improving the health of people with obesity and could even play a major part in helping reduce the impact of diseases such as Covid-19.

The drug, semaglutide, works by hijacking the body's own appetite regulating system in the brain leading to reduced hunger and calorie intake, according to a study published on Thursday in the 'New England Journal for Medicine'.

One third (35%) of people who took the new drug for treating obesity lost more than one-fifth of their total body weight, according to the major global study involving University College London (UCL) re-

searchers and almost 2,000 trial participants in 16 countries.

"The findings of this study represent a major breakthrough for improving the health of people with obesity. Three quarters (75 per cent) of people who received semaglutide 2.4mg lost more than 10 per cent of their body weight and more than one-third lost more than 20 per cent," said principal author Rachel Batterham, Professor of Obesity, Diabetes and Endocrinology who leads the Centre for Obesity Research at UCL and the UCLH Centre for Weight Management.

"No other drug has come close to producing this level of weight loss - this really is a game changer. For the first time, people can achieve through drugs what was only possible through weight-loss surgery," she said.



The average participant in the trial lost 15.3kg; this was accompanied by reductions in risk factors for heart disease and diabetes, such as waist circumference, blood fats, blood sugar and blood pres-

sure and reported improvements in their overall quality of life.

"The impact of obesity on health has been brought into sharp focus by COVID-19 where obesity markedly increases the risk of dying from

the virus, as well as increasing the risk of many life-limiting serious diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, liver disease and certain types of cancers.

This drug could have major implications for UK health policy for years to come," added Professor Batterham.

The trial's UK Chief Investigator, Professor John Wilding from the University of Liverpool, said semaglutide is already approved and used clinically at a lower dose for treatment of diabetes, so doctors are already familiar with its use.

"So it is good to see this translated into an effective treatment for people with obesity," he said.

With evidence from the international trial, semaglutide has been submitted for regulatory approval as

a treatment for obesity to the UK's National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The international trial was funded by the pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk.

No other drug has come close to producing this level of weight loss - this really is a game changer. For the first time, people can achieve through drugs what was only possible through weight-loss surgery

RACHEL BATTERHAM | PROFESSOR, CENTRE FOR OBESITY RESEARCH, UCL

# Biden, Xi hold first phone call amid tense US-China relations

REUTERS

Washington/Beijing, Feb 11: US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping held their first telephone call as leaders, with Biden saying a free and open Indo-Pacific was a priority and Xi warning confrontation would be a 'disaster' for both nations.

Biden also underscored his "fundamental concerns about Beijing's coercive and unfair practices, its crackdown in Hong Kong, reported human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and increasingly assertive actions in the region, including toward Taiwan", the White House said in a statement.

Xi told Biden that confrontation



would be a "disaster" and the two sides should re-establish the means to avoid misjudgments, according to the Chinese foreign ministry's account of the call, which took place Thursday morning in Beijing time but Wednesday evening in the United States.

The Chinese leader maintained a hardline tone regarding Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Taiwan, which Xi told Biden were matters of "sovereignty and territorial integrity" that he hopes the United States will approach cautiously.

Taiwan's government, which has complained of China's repeated military drills near the Chinese-claimed and democratic island, thanked Biden for expressing his concern. The telephone call was the first call between Xi and a US president since the Chinese leader spoke with former President Donald Trump in March last year. Since then, relations between the two countries have plunged to their

worst level in decades, with Trump blaming China for the Covid-19 pandemic. During the Trump administration, the United States launched a series of actions against China, including a trade war, sanctions against Chinese officials and firms perceived to be security threats and challenging Beijing's South China Sea territorial claims.

Xi congratulated Biden on his election in a message in November, even though Biden had called him a "thug" during the campaign and vowed to lead an international effort to "pressure, isolate and punish China."

Chinese officials have expressed cautious optimism that bilateral relations will improve under Biden and urged Washington to meet Beijing halfway.

The US and Chinese read outs of the call mentioned areas for potential cooperation, with both honing in on climate change and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

## NO CHANGE IN US-CHINA POLICY

The Biden administration has made it clear that it will continue to maintain pressure on China, however, although it has also pledged to take a more multilateral approach. A senior Biden administration official told reporters ahead of the telephone call that Biden would be "practical, hard-headed, clear-eyed" in dealings with Xi, but wanted to ensure they had the opportunity to have an open line of communication, despite U.S. concerns about Chinese behavior.

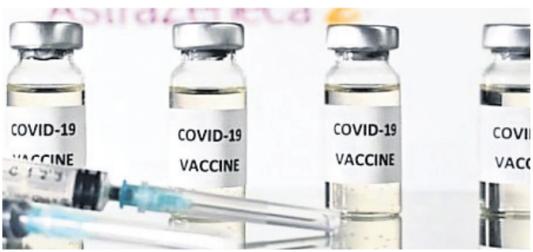
# WHO recommends Astra jab for Covid-19 variants

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Geneva, Feb 11: The World Health Organization (WHO) has decided that potential benefits of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine outweigh known and potential risks, amid concerns over its efficacy against the virus variant found in South Africa.

The WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) panel Wednesday said the two-dose AstraZeneca vaccine efficacy tended to be higher when the interval between doses was within the four to 12 weeks range, reports Xinhua news agency.

It also added that although preliminary analyses based on a small sample size in South Africa indicate a marked reduction in vaccine effectiveness against mild and moderate disease, it did not allow a specific assessment of vaccine efficacy against severe Covid-19.



As indirect evidence is compatible with protection against severe Covid-19, the situation remains to be demonstrated in ongoing clinical trials and post-implementation evaluations.

In view of this, WHO currently recommends the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine even if the variants are present in a country.

Countries should conduct a benefit-risk assessment according to the local epidemiological situation, in-

cluding the extent of circulating virus variants.

"We have made a recommendation that even if there is a reduction in the possibility of this vaccine having a full impact in its protection capacity, especially against severe disease, there is no reason not to recommend its use even in countries that have circulation of the variant," said SAGE chair Alejandro Cravioto at a briefing Wednesday.

## AstraZeneca working to adapt vax to new strains

London: AstraZeneca said Thursday it's working with the University of Oxford to adapt its Covid-19 vaccine to protect against new strains of the virus as public health officials raise concerns about mutations that may make the virus more resistant to existing vaccines. The Anglo-Swedish drugmaker worked with Oxford to develop one of the first Covid-19 vaccines authorized for widespread use. AstraZeneca said it hopes to cut the time needed to produce large amounts of any new vaccine to between six and nine months. The comments came as AstraZeneca said fourth-quarter net income rose to \$1.01 billion from \$313 million in the same quarter a year earlier. Drug sales increased 11% to \$7.41 billion, driven by a 24% increase in cancer treatments. The company posted \$2 million of revenue from its Covid-19 vaccine, which it has pledged to supply on a non-profit basis during the pandemic, and said it would begin reporting sales of the vaccine separately beginning in the next quarter.

# business



**We have a committee which is working on issues like how to increase localisation, how to boost manufacturing of components. It is a public-private partnership committee**  
PIYUSH GOYAL | COMMERCE & INDUSTRY MINISTER

## GEMS, JEWELLERY EXPORTS DIP IN JAN

Gems and jewellery exports dipped 7.8% in January to \$2.7 billion as against \$2.9 billion a year ago, according to data of the Gem Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC). During April-January 2021, exports declined about 37% to \$19.24 billion as compared with \$30.52 billion during the 10 months of 2019-20



## of the day quote

I think we are targeting the first quarter (of 2021-22 fiscal). The engagement is intense now, it is at the due diligence stage. Our process is of value maximisation, and we have to take all precautions to see the value is maximised



TUHI KANTA PANDEY, DIPAM SECRETARY

The textiles ministry is formulating a scheme to promote identified man-made fibre apparel and technical textile products to capture substantial share in global trade



SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI | TEXTILES MINISTER

The government does not maintain data for the number of instances individual call detail records (cdrs) have been collected



SANJAY DHOTRE | MOS FOR COMMUNICATIONS

## SHORT TAKES

### Jan PV sales rise over 11% Y-o-Y

**New Delhi:** Base effect, along with low interest rates and pent-up demand, accelerated domestic passenger vehicle sales in January on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis. Sale of passenger vehicles (PV) increased by 11.14% in January 2021, according to data from the SIAM released Thursday. The data showed 276,554 lakh passenger vehicles were sold last month compared to over 248,840 lakh units during the same period of 2020.

### IndiGo to start 22 new flights

**New Delhi:** IndiGo Thursday said it will start 22 new flights from March 28 onwards from various cities including Agartala, Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, Chennai, Bangalore, Patna and Tirupati. "IndiGo will operate new flights between Agartala-Aizawl under regional connectivity scheme and exclusive flights between Bhubaneswar-Patna, Jaipur-Vadodara, Chennai-Vadodara, Bangalore-Shirdi, Patna-Kochi, and Rajahmundry-Tirupati," the airline said in a release.

### US jobless claims fall

**Washington:** The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell slightly last week to 793,000, evidence that job cuts remain high despite a substantial decline in new viral infections. Last week's total declined from 812,000 the previous week, the Labor Department said Thursday. That figure was revised higher from the previously-reported figure of 779,000.

# Industry must live up to expectations: India Inc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** India Inc Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's acknowledgement of the private sector's role in India's growth, national progress and enhancing the country's prestige globally is a much-needed shot in the arm for entrepreneurs, and the industry must live up to the expectations.

Industry chamber FICCI hoped that the statement by Modi will lead to a fresh new discourse towards the national consensus on the role industry and enterprise play in this country.

Industry leaders Anand Mahindra and Sajjan Jindal also took the PM's words as a great encouragement for the "community that has been creating wealth and jobs in the country".

FICCI President Uday Shankar said in a statement said, "At a time when the COVID-19 hit Indian industry is trying to pick up its rhythm of high growth, the prime minister's acknowledgement would be a much-needed shot in the arm for entrepreneurs and the business community."

They were referring to Modi's remarks praising the private sector on Wednesday during his reply in the Lok Sabha to the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address. Modi had stated that the public sector is essential but at the same time, the role of the private sector is also vital.

Shankar said, "We are grateful to him for the trust reposed in the private sector. While this speaks of the vision of the prime minister in the role played by the industry in nation building, it also puts enormous responsibility on the business community to rise up to keep national interest above everything else."



**At a time when the Covid-19-hit Indian industry is trying to pick up its rhythm of high growth, the prime minister's acknowledgement would be a much-needed shot in the arm for entrepreneurs and the business community**

UDAY SHANKAR | PRESIDENT, FICCI

Expressing similar views, earlier in the day, Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra tweeted, "Welcome words of encouragement at a fragile time for private enterprise due to the pandemic. Now, we have to live up to the expectations...Both in performance and governance."

Pitching for private enterprises, Modi in his address had also said there should be faith in the abilities of India's young population and everyone should get opportunities.

The prime minister had cited the examples of telecom and pharma sectors to note as to how the robust presence of private firms in these fields has helped people, with even the poor using smartphones, and mobile calls costing virtually nothing due to competitiveness.

Similarly, JSW Group Chairman and MD Sajjan Jindal tweeted, "For the first time ever, a prime minister of our country has publicly shared his respect for the Indian entrepreneurs. This is great encouragement for the community that has been creating wealth and jobs in the country."

But Dombrovskis warned that

## BIZ BUZZ

### Truecaller's Vernacular Solutions creates impact on 150 mn DAU



**Bhubaneswar:** Truecaller announced that the company's Brand Solutions platform has enabled exponential growth for a lot of brands in the vernacular segment, delivering significantly higher engagement compared to industry standards across India. Truecaller's strong presence in tier 2 and 3 cities as well as the capability to connect with the vernacular audience has enabled several brands to scale up their brand visibility and engage with millions of users across India. Its programmatic platform facilitates brands with innovative advertising vehicles that are carefully chosen to deliver contextually relevant messages to its over 145 million monthly active users from the vernacular market. Truecaller's programmatic advertising inculcates the values of fostering a safe environment for brands so that the focus remains on achieving meaningful impact and constructively sustained partner campaigns. The platform is currently providing creatives in Odia and 8 other languages.

### IDFC Mutual Fund launches floating rate fund



**Bhubaneswar:** IDFC Mutual Fund launched of IDFC Floating Rate Fund, with the New Fund Offer (NFO) opening February 10, 2021 and closing February 16, 2021. According to officials, the fund will endeavour to generate relatively stable returns through a portfolio comprising substantially of floating rate debt, fixed rate debt instruments swapped for floating rate returns and money market instruments. The company officials also claimed that it aims to invest a minimum of 65% of its corpus in floating rate securities issued by corporates or the government, or convert fixed interest securities to floating via derivatives. The fund currently targets a low to short duration portfolio such that it is suitable for a minimum recommended investment horizon of six months. At the time of investing, the portfolio strategy will aim to maintain a minimum of 70% in A/A1+Equivalent/Sovereign/Quasi Sovereign securities.

# 'Centre preparing spectrum roadmap for 10 yrs'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** The communications ministry has begun work on preparing a spectrum roadmap for the next 10 years in consultation with stakeholders, Parliament was informed Thursday.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Communications and IT Sanjay Dhotre also said 5G services would be introduced gradually, and will advance to full range of services as the ecosystem and demand for services grow.

Asked whether telcos have urged the government to outline a clear roadmap for spectrum allocation and



5G frequency bands, Dhotre said, "Ministry of Communications has started to prepare a spectrum roadmap for next 10 years in consultation with the stakeholders."

To another question, Dhotre said registration of entities such as Public Data Office Aggregators

(PDOAs) and app providers as envisaged under the PM-WANI scheme for proliferation of broadband through public wi-fi, has started from January 7.

The central registry managed by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT) is also operational, the minister informed the Upper House. The Cabinet had approved the scheme for broadband proliferation through public wi-fi networks based on Wireless Access Network Interface (WANI) framework in December, 2020.

Under the scheme, the last mile broadband connectivity will be through a network of public wi-fi access points. The backhaul re-

quirement for these wi-fi access points would be met by internet bandwidth from the telecom operators and internet service providers.

Public Data Office (PDO) would be responsible for establishing, maintaining, and operating WANI compliant wi-fi access points and deliver broadband services to subscribers. Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA), the aggregator of PDOs, would perform the functions relating to authorisation and accounting, while the app provider would enable registration of users and discovering such wi-fi hotspots in the vicinity, and displaying the same within the app for accessing the internet service.

# Government raises limits on domestic airfares by 10-30%

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** Passengers will have to shell out more money for air travel from now as the Civil Aviation Ministry Thursday increased the lower and upper limits on domestic airfares by 10 to 30%.

These new limits would remain "in force up to March 31, 2021, or until further orders", the ministry said its order on Thursday.

While announcing the resumption of scheduled domestic flights on May 21 last year, the ministry had

## AIR TRAVEL BECOMES EXPENSIVE



placed limits on airfares through seven bands classified on the basis of flight duration.

The first such band consists of flights that are of less than 40 minutes duration. The lower limit for the first band was increased Thursday from ₹2,000 to ₹2,200. The upper limit in this band was set at ₹7,800, which was ₹6,000 earlier.

The subsequent bands are for flights with durations of 40-60 minutes, 60-90 minutes, 90-120 minutes, 120-150 minutes, 150-180 minutes and 180-210 minutes. The fresh lower and upper limits set by the ministry for these bands on Thursday were: ₹2,800 - ₹9,800; ₹3,300 - ₹11,700; ₹3,900 - ₹13,000; ₹5,000 - ₹16,900; ₹6,100 - ₹20,400; ₹7,200 - ₹24,200, respectively. Till date, the lower and upper limits for these bands were: ₹2,500 - ₹7,500; ₹3,000 - ₹9,000; ₹3,500 - ₹10,000; ₹4,500 - ₹13,000; ₹5,500 - ₹15,700 and ₹6,500 - ₹18,600, respectively.

# Malaysia reports biggest GDP decline in 23 yrs

AGENCIES

**Kuala Lumpur, Feb 11:** Malaysia's GDP contracted 3.4% year-on-year in the fourth quarter of last year, rendering a 5.6% drop for 2020, the biggest decline since the last 23 years, the country's central bank said in a statement Thursday.

The bank said that the negative growth in Q4 was largely attributable to the imposition of the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) on a number of states since October 2020 to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, reports Xinhua news agency.

"The restrictions on mobility, especially on inter-district and inter-state travel, weighed on economic activity during the fourth quarter," it said, despite the fact that continued improvement in



external demand provided support to growth. Except for manufacturing, all economic sectors continued to record negative growth. On the expenditure side, moderating private consumption and public investment activities weighed on domestic demand.

"On a q-o-q seasonally-adjusted basis, the economy registered a decline of 0.3%," said the bank.

# 'Avg time spent by Indians on smartphones highest globally'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Feb 11:** Average time spent by Indians on smartphones is the highest in the world and the duration for watching short videos is likely to rise 4-fold by 2025, telecom gear maker firm Nokia said in a report Thursday.

The annual report - Mobile Broadband India Traffic Index, (Mbit) 2021 - found that India ranked second in the world in terms of broadband usage on mobile phones after Finland, and the data traffic in the country has increased around 60 times over the last five years, which is also highest globally.

"In the last five years, we have grown 63 times in terms of data growth that has happened. It is phenomenal. It is a record. I don't think any country, any region, any mar-

ket can beat this record of how data have been consumed in the last five years," Nokia CMO Amit Marwah said while sharing details of the report.

According to the report, 164 petabytes of data was consumed in December 2015, which reached close to 10,000 petabytes in December 2020 on mobile networks.

The average consumption of data per user per month also increased by 76% CAGR (compound annual growth rate) over the last five years to 13.5 GB (gigabyte) on 3G and 4G network combined. Average data consumed on 4G network are 13.7 GB per user per month.

"An average user in India has increased his consumption on smartphones by 4 times in the last year. An average person consumes close to 5 hours per day, in fact, it is 4.48



hours per day, on their devices. Even from today, we will grow 4 times more in terms of more content getting used," Marwah said.

Almost 55 per cent of this consumption is being now spearheaded

by short content, which is available on channels like YouTube, social media and other OTT apps and the rest of the 45% is getting consumed on other kinds of content like fintech, e-commerce and other kinds

## LEADERS IN DATA CONSUMPTION

- THE ANNUAL REPORT FINDS THAT INDIA RANKED SECOND IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF BROADBAND USAGE ON MOBILE PHONES AFTER FINLAND
- IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, INDIA HAS GROWN 63 TIMES IN TERMS OF DATA GROWTH
- THE TIME SPENT ON EDUCATION APPS INCREASED 30% AND OTT TRAFFIC INCREASED 265% IN APRIL 2020

of browsing activities. The consumption pattern on smartphones is driven by the enablement of short videos, penetration of high-end devices and attention of millennials over short

content. Marwah said the need for fixed broadband connections in the country increased in 2020 due to work from home.

Fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) and fixed wireless are going to see huge growth in years to come. In December 2014, there were 690 thousand homes that were connected with FTTH which grew over 5-fold to 4 million in December 2020, the report said.

Nokia Mbit report projects fibre-based broadband connections to increase from less than 15% of total fixed broadband connections in 2019 to almost 48% by 2025.

There were just 22 million fixed broadband (FBB) subscribers in 2020 and the revenue of the segment is expected to increase 1.5 times by 2025.

# CITY IN FA CUP LAST 8

# Barca go down against Sevilla



Gabriel Jesus finishes the ball into the net as hapless Swansea City goalie attempts a futile dive during their match, Wednesday



Ivan Rakitic (R) and Jules Kounde (No.2) celebrate the former's goal against Barcelona, Wednesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Feb 11:** One of the most relentless schedules in the history of English football hasn't stopped Manchester City putting together a record-setting run of wins. It's 15 straight victories and counting for Pep Guardiola's irrepressible team, which has another domestic treble in its sights.

By beating second-tier Swansea 3-1 to reach the FA Cup quarterfinals Wednesday, City broke the record for most consecutive wins in all competitions by a top-flight team, a mark that had lasted for nearly 130 years. Preston won 14 in a row in 1882 and that was later matched by Arsenal's class of 1987.

City has gone one better during a pandemic, when matches in the Premier League or domestic cup

competitions are being played every three or four days to fit them into a condensed season that started a month later than usual.

Indeed, by also advancing last month to the English League Cup final, City has played every weekend and midweek since November 21 — except for an eight-day break from December 26-January 3 during which the team's training ground was closed because of a coronavirus outbreak. The number of first-team players to test positive ran into double figures.

"That means a lot in this toughest period, in the Christmas and winter time," said Guardiola, whose side leads the Premier League by five points with a game in hand. "To do what we have done in this time is quite remarkable."

Guardiola earned his 200th win

in 268 games in charge of the team. City won 20 straight games in all competitions from August-December 2017, also under Guardiola, but one of those victories came in a penalty shootout in the League Cup after a 0-0 draw after extra time.

Also advancing to the last eight was Sheffield United, a 1-0 winner against second-tier Bristol City, and Leicester, which beat Brighton by the same score thanks to Kelechi Iheanacho's goal in the fourth minute of stoppage time.

In the 2018-19 season, City became the first English team to achieve the domestic treble, beating Swansea en route to winning the FA Cup that year by coming from 0-2 down to win 3-2 in the quarterfinals.

City didn't need to produce

anything as dramatic this time, taking the lead in the 30th when Kyle Walker's low cross into the penalty area was missed by the sliding Ferran Torres at the near post and ended up creeping inside the far post.

Rodri played in Raheem Sterling to double the advantage in the 47th, before Gabriel Jesus controlled a header across goal by Bernardo Silva and slammed in a left-footed shot three minutes later.

Morgan Whittaker grabbed a consolation for Swansea, which included two United States internationals — Jordan Morris, who made his first start, and Paul Arriola, who made his debut as a second-half substitute following his loan move from DC United. Their US teammate, Zack Steffen, played in goal for City.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, Feb 11:** Taking advantage of a quiet game from Lionel Messi in his 900th career match, Sevilla defeated Barcelona 2-0 in the first leg of the Copa del Rey semifinals.

Messi squandered a couple of chances as Sevilla won its eighth consecutive match in all competitions Wednesday thanks to a goal by Jules Kounde in the first half and another by former Barcelona midfielder Ivan Rakitic near the end.

The second leg will be February 27 at the Camp Nou Stadium in Barcelona. Athletic Bilbao host Levante Thursday in the first leg of the other semifinal.

Sevilla and Barcelona entered the semis as the hottest teams in Spain. The Catalan club was coming off six straight wins in all competitions.

The teams played in the Copa final in 2016 and 2018, with Barcelona coming out on top both times. The Catalan club is trying to make it to its ninth final in 11 years. It made it to the last four nine straight times before being eliminated by Athletic in the quarterfinals last season.

Barcelona controlled possession but it struggled to create many significant chances at the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan Stadium, with Sevilla goalkeeper Bono stopping the few efforts he faced. Sevilla constantly threatened on counter-attacks, especially after opening

the scoring in the first half.

Messi, making his 758th appearance with Barcelona to add to his 142 with Argentina, commanded the attack but failed to capitalize on his chances, including one with only Bono to beat in the 11th minute. He nearly scored with a stoppage-time free kick that again was stopped by Bono.

Messi had been rested in the Spanish league game against Real Betis Sunday, when he came off the bench in the second half to lead the team to a come-from-behind victory.

Kounde put Sevilla ahead in the 25th with a nice run that culmi-

nated with him slipping the ball in between the legs of Barcelona defender Samuel Umtiti before shooting into the net from inside the area.

Rakitic sealed the victory in an 85th-minute breakthrough, beating goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen with a shot into the top of the net. The midfielder didn't celebrate the goal against his former club.

Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman was without three players because of injuries — Martin Braithwaite, Sergio Dest and Miralem Pjanic. Sevilla's Julien Lopetegui was without injured players Lucas Ocampos and Jesus Navas.

## Atalanta reach Italian Cup final

**BERGAMO:** Atalanta beat defending champion Napoli 3-1 Wednesday to set up an Italian Cup final against Juventus. Matteo Pessina scored twice after Duvan Zapata had given Atalanta an early lead in the semifinal. Hirving Lozano netted early in the second half for Napoli. The final will be played May 19 with Juventus looking for a record-extending 14th Italian Cup title. Juventus beat Inter Milan 2-1 on aggregate to reach its 20th final. It will be Atalanta's fifth final. Its most recent was in 2019 but it hasn't won the trophy since 1963. The first leg between Napoli and Atalanta ended 0-0 last week. Atalanta broke the deadlock in the 10th minute with a long-range strike from Zapata that swerved into the far side of the net. Zapata turned provider six minutes later, laying off Robin Gosens' pass for Pessina to fire in off the inside of the left post. Atalanta had chances to score a third before Lozano reduced the deficit eight minutes into the second half, firing in a rebound after being denied by a save from goalkeeper Pierluigi Gollini. Atalanta sealed the match in the 78th, when Pessina mazed his way between two Napoli players before chipping the ball over goalkeeper David Ospina.

## Neymar limps off in PSG win in French Cup

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, Feb 11:** Neymar limped off injured as French Cup holder Paris Saint-Germain held on for a 1-0 win at second-tier Caen in the round of 64.

The Brazil star was replaced with about one hour played, a few minutes after a heavy challenge from behind by central defender Alexis Beka Beka in the 54th minute Wednesday.

Neymar clutched his left knee as he lay on the ground and went off moments later after trying to keep on playing. The injury is bad news for coach Mauricio Pochettino with PSG playing Barcelona — Neymar's former club — next week in the first leg of the Champions League's round of 16. PSG is already sweating on the fitness of winger Angel Di Maria, who injured his thigh last Sunday against Marseille.

Caen did well in the first half, twice testing the goalie, and held firm until striker Moise Kean put 13-time Cup winner PSG ahead early in the second half when he volleyed home Neymar's left-wing cross.

Kean had another chance saved shortly after, but Caen could have equalized near the end when substitute Caleb Zady Sery dragged his shot wide.

Monaco won 1-0 at second-division Grenoble to make it eight straight wins in all competitions, while league leader Lille notched a seventh consecutive victory with a 1-0 success at Dijon.

Attacking midfielder Stevan Jovetic scored in the first half for Niko Kovac's side, while 19-year-old Guinea midfielder Aguibou Camara got his first goal for Lille.

# Svitolina advances in Australian Open



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Melbourne, Feb 11:** Fifth-seeded Elina Svitolina beat 16-year-old Coco Gauff 6-4, 6-3 in the second round of the Australian Open. Svitolina will play No.26-seeded Yulia Putintseva in the third round.

Svitolina has reached the quarterfinals in Australia twice and showed her experience as she took on Gauff for the first time. She made the most of her only breakpoint chance in the second set to take a 5-3 lead and then served it out.

Gauff was the youngest player in the women's draw. She was unable to repeat her performances from her breakout major in Melbourne last year. She reached the round of 16 at the 2020 Australian Open with wins over Venus Williams and Naomi Osaka before losing to eventual champion Sofia Kenin.

Fifth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas has been pushed all the way in a 6-7(5-7), 6-4, 6-1, 6-7(5-7), 6-4 win over Australian wild-card entry Thanasi Kokkinakis in a second-round match that delayed the night program on Rod Laver Arena. He will next play Mikael Ymer, who beat 17-year-old Spanish qualifier Carlos Alcaraz.

Mackenzie McDonald, who won NCAA tennis titles at UCLA, eliminated No.22-seeded Borna Coric 6-

## NADAL THROUGH

**MELBOURNE:** Rafa Nadal stormed into the Australian Open third round with a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 win over Michael Mmoh, Thursday. Among others, fourth seed Daniil Medvedev, seventh seed Andrey Rublev and Fabio Fognini also advanced to the third round. Medvedev saw off Roberto Carballes Baena 6-2, 7-5, 6-1 to advance while Rublev had to sweat it out to beat Thiago Monteiro 6-4, 6-4, 7-6(10-8). Fognini, however, had to toil hard before edging past unseeded Salvatore Caruso 4-6, 6-2, 2-6, 6-3, 7-6(14-12).

4, 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 to reach the Australian Open's third round for the first time.

Defending champion Sofia Kenin is out of the Australian Open in the second round after a 3-6, 2-6 loss to Kaia Kanepi. Top-seeded Ash Barty followed up her 6-0, 6-0 drubbing of Danka Kovinic in the first round with a much tighter 6-1, 7-6(9-7) win over fellow Australian Daria Gavrilova.

Former No.1 Karolina Pliskova advanced by beating American Danielle Collins, a semifinalist at Melbourne Park in 2019, 7-5, 6-2. American Shelby Rogers advanced to the third round here for the first time by beating qualifier Olga Danilovic 6-2, 6-3.

# Mauricio brace saves Odisha's day

AGENCIES

**Goa, Feb 11:** Diego Mauricio scored twice to help Odisha FC bag a point against Kerala Blasters as their Indian Super League (ISL) encounter ended 2-2, Thursday.

In the first half, towards the stoppage time, Diego Mauricio put the Bhubaneswar-based side in front. The passionate and determined Jordan Murray levelled the proceedings for Blasters in the 52nd minute.

Gary Hooper put Blasters ahead in the 68th. However, that wasn't the end of the action. Mauricio struck the equaliser in the 74th.

Odisha had the last laugh at the break when Mauricio put his side 1-0 up at the stroke of halftime. Jerry Mawihmingthanga had the ball in midfield and he chipped a cute ball to Mauricio into the box. He took a few touches to evade the onrushing Albino Gomes before striking it into the back of the net. It's his eighth goal of this season.

However, Blasters restored parity soon after the break when Murray struck in the 52nd. Sandeep



Diego Mauricio celebrates his second goal against Kerala Blasters, Thursday  
PIC: ISL

Singh passed the ball towards Hooper. Jacob Tratt, the center back miscontrolled and allowed Hooper to get on the ball. Hooper put a low cross in the middle of the box which was met by Murray and he made no mistake to put the ball into the net.

Blasters took the lead in the 68th as Hooper turned scorer this time. Vicente Gomez played a long ball to Sahal Abdul Samad from the midfield around the edge of the box.

The inventive Indian, with his back to goal, played a fine reverse ball for Hooper into the left. Hooper took a touch and shot it into the back of the net at the far post.

However, their joy was short-lived as Mauricio found the equaliser six minutes later. Vinit Rai squeezed a pass from right flank to Bradden Inman on the right side of the box.

The Australian rolled the ball to the far post for Mauricio and the Brazilian's tap-in went into the back of the net after hitting Albino Gomes on the thigh.

There was still time for both the goalkeepers to make match-saving stops for their teams.

# 3 mountaineers banned for 6 yrs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kathmandu, Feb 11:** Nepal has banned two Indian climbers and their team leader from carrying out any mountaineering expeditions in the country for six years after a probe found that they faked their Mt Everest summit in 2016, according to a media report Thursday.

Indian nationals Narender Singh Yadav and Seema Rani Goswami received expedition certificates during the spring season of 2016 without successfully climbing the world's highest mountain, the Himalayan Times reported, quoting a spokesperson of the Ministry of Culture,

Tourism and Civil Aviation.

Both the climbers had received the certificates of climbing the 8,848.86m (29,032 ft) mountain by submitting false details to the Department of Tourism. Their certificates have been revoked, the ministry said.

After receiving a complaint about the fake ascent, the ministry had formed a committee to investigate the matter. "The investigation has confirmed that both of them had obtained certificates by giving false details," the spokesperson was quoted as saying by the daily.

They have been banned from ascending any mountain in Nepal for six years. The ban will be ef-

fective starting May 20, 2016, it said.

Their Indian team leader Naba Kumar Phukon, who led the expedition, has also been banned for six years starting May 20, 2016.

The government has also imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on the Seven Summit Treks Pvt Ltd, the agency which organised the expedition for the Indian nationals.

The ministry has also warned Pawan Kumar Ghimire, the liaison officer of the team, not to repeat such mistakes in the future. The ministry has also decided to impose a fine of ₹10,000 on Nga Dawa Sherpa, the climbing supporter during the expedition. Sherpa had filed false documents claiming that Yadav had successfully climbed Mt Everest.

This is not the first time that climbers have been confirmed of faking the summit of Mt Everest. Dinesh and Tarakeshwari Rathod, an Indian couple, who were part of a different expedition in the spring of 2016, had also claimed that they had scaled Mt Everest and obtained the expedition certificate by submitting false details, the daily said. Their climbing recognition was also revoked by the DoT.

# Buttler, Bairstow back for T20Is against India



Jos Buttler (R) and Jonny Bairstow  
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Feb 11:** Senior wicket-keeper-batsmen Jos Buttler and Jonny Bairstow were Thursday named in a 16-member England squad for the five T20Is matches against India, scheduled in Ahmedabad, March 12-20.

Buttler has gone back home after the opening Test against India, which the visitors won by 227 runs, while Bairstow has been rested for the first two five-day games of the four-match series as part of

**THE SQUAD**

Eoin Morgan (C), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Sam Billings, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Dawid Malan, Adil Rashid, Jason Roy, Ben Stokes, Reece Topley & Mark Wood.

England's rotational policy.

Also coming back is IPL franchise Chennai Super Kings' all-rounder Sam Curran, who was rested for the Test series.

Veteran pacers James Anderson and Stuart Broad no longer play white-ball games but Jofra Archer will be available for the five-match series, which means he might be rested at some point during the ongoing Test rubber.

The squad also has latest T20 dasher Dawid Malan, who, according to many, could be a hot pick at the February 18 IPL auction in Chennai. The squad for the three ODIs that follow the IT20 series will be announced in due course.